

# Book Reviews

## THE MESSAGE OF THE TIBETANS.

By *Arnaud Desjardins*.

(Allen and Unwin. £1.75).

Review by J. C. Cooper

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Desjardins' book is the result of some months spent in the monasteries in the Himalayas, with Tibetan Sages, and tells of the impact on a non-Buddhist of meeting the Dalai Lama and other Lamas of profound learning and spirituality, as well as experiences amongst all types of the exiled Tibetan communities, during the course of the making of a film on Tibetan religion, life and culture.

The author suggests that if the people of the East find western technological development a source of amazement and a realization of the limitations of their own effort and achievement, is it not also a case of the West's contact with the profound spiritual knowledge and techniques providing a similarly outstanding experience and realization of inadequacy? Meeting both older and younger *tylkus* he is struck by their innate dignity and nobility. Particularly impressive is the naturalness and simplicity of child *tulkus* receiving homage that would, in the West, turn any child's head, yet not only maintaining a serene dignity but also showing an attentive sensitivity to the needs of others and at the same time submitting to the most rigorous disciplines, such as no one would dare to impose in the West. What is it in these contrasting temperaments and methods of education that makes the product of one so natural, spontaneous, disciplined and compassionate, and the other egoistic, neurosis-ridden and disintegrated? It is suggested that the western world would do well to study the implications of these contrasts.

A brief outline is given of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Tantrayana branches of Buddhist thought, with an excellent exposition on some of the misunderstandings of Tantrayana and of its true meaning.