



The Great Circle: Asia, David and God Consciousness

Rollan McCleary

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A mandala is a great circle whose finest examples in world art derive from Tibet. But though mandalas are acknowledged symbols of spiritual and psychic wholeness, God is not necessarily at their centre. In Tibet God is never at the centre because Buddhism knows only the Buddha who teaches the gods. How atheistic is Buddhism and with it Asia, or do they own suppressed notions of God? And is Buddhism, a major player in the emerging religious and New Age paradigm, quite what it appears? On a return trip to the Asia where he once lived for many years, the author looks again at Asian spirituality. He also re-reads, with surprising results, a distinctive and classic form of God consciousness, though by contemporary standards a problematic one, namely the Psalms of David. Between issues raised by Asian art and biblical poetry, the author is driven beyond these to radical questions concerning the whole idea of truth and exclusivity in religion, and critically examines modern voices of mysticism and interfaith theory from Thomas Merton to the Dalai Lama. In the Asian century this is a book that ranges widely across history and between East and West offering unexpected insights.

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