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S*ubverting Hatred* is an engaging collection that provides an overview of religious contributions to the burgeoning study of peace and violence. The breadth of the potential subject matter is daunting, given the continuing propensity to myriad forms of violence found in our words and actions at the close of this millennium. This volume attempts to meet the challenge by offering a plethora of religious perspectives in a series of creative, scholarly, and provocative essays. While some of the essayists take human warfare as the paradigmatic form of violence and thus seem to ignore much violence that occurs in more quotidian forms, others engage issues of social justice, environmental damage, and harm to nonhuman animals. As a whole, then, this series of altogether readable essays succeeds in raising issues regarding a wide range of modern violence.

The volume reflects well the many ways in which religious traditions find themselves in ferment. To be sure, individual traditions have much to offer. This is not only for the obvious reason that religious traditions have preached peace-promoting values, *but also* because some traditions have at times uncritically justified many forms of violence as legitimate tools and even the order of nature. As past contributors to violence-justifying discourse, religious traditions need to address crucial issues such as harmony among different communities. In this volume, a great deal of creative work toward this end is made readily available.

Consider how broadly “violence” occurs in our world. Apart from the appalling wars which have dominated recent history, much contemporary violence is perpetrated against marginalized groups, women in patriarchal cultures, or nonhuman animals whose interests conflict with human interests. There is also an astonishing amount of violence committed against entire ecosystems or bioregions, and, as is now well known, the larger whole we call “the environment.” The perpetrators of this violence are not exclusively the militarists who have contributed dramatically to violence in this and other centuries. They are also consumers, industrialists, proponents of many forms of agriculture and resource extraction, and entire societies that generate and mismanage the streams of waste so typical of “developed” countries.

Some essayists in this collection treat violence under very narrow definitions, while others use much broader ones. For example, in the essays dealing with the Abrahamic and Chinese traditions, there is a tendency to speak about violence as if it was primarily a “human against human” problem. In the essay on Judaism, the way phrases are employed is revealing, as when “the world” (at page 116) means “the world of humans” or when *shalom* is talked about as if it is naturally directed *solely* at the human community (for example, at page 128). What makes this unusual is that the Jewish tradition is marked by an ancient concern which is far broader, epitomized by the phrase *tsaar baale hayyim* (often translated as “pain/suffering of living things”). In the essay on Christianity, the vocabulary is similarly employed in a narrow fashion. “[T]he challenge of modern non-violence within the Christian tradition” is spoken of as if the relevant community is, again, *uniquely* the human community (at, for example, page 144) and the phrase “cults of violence” (p. 142) refers only to violence that affects members of the human community. The allusion to modern issues is especially ironic, given the dramatic increase in the use *and* systematic subjugation of nonhuman animals that has occurred since the end of World War II, particularly in the form of environmental destruction and the intensive stock raising system known generally as “factory farming.” In like fashion, the otherwise very provocative essay on Islam remains within anthropocentric parameters (see, for example, the discussion of the need to reject “dominance,” which is handled exclusively as a “human against human” issue, summarized at page 109). This is equally true of the engaging essay focusing on folk level views of violence in the indigenous Chinese traditions (see, for example, pages 54, 55, and 57, where the only references to nonhuman animals assume that they are merely instrumental objects of property, food, or war machines, and that violence considerations do not pertain to them).

Contrast this with the essays dealing with the Indic traditions, each of which speaks regularly of nonhuman animals and the broader issues often referred to as “ecological” or “environmental” (see, for example, pages 13–15, 27, 69, 75–77). One might argue forcefully that these differences are merely the result of scholarly emphasis, characterization, or advocacy, because each of these traditions has, at times, had important and sensitive engagements with both domesticated animals and those in the world out beyond the boundary posts of human settlements. In important ways, then, each of the traditions dealt with in this volume has much to say about framing the parameters of “violence” and peace too narrowly.

The contrast does, however, make the volume valuable in several ways to scholars and students whose main emphasis is a field other than peace studies or ethics. For example, the text has value for the study of comparative issues, since the juxtaposition of such different analyses is implicitly an invitation to delve into the many different ways we use the terms “violence” and “peace.” The volume will also appeal to those who are interested in the ways in which scholars’ predispositions, cultural and personal biases, and general adherence to or rejection of traditional perspectives operate as determinative factors in their analyses. Since many of the traditions included in this text are internally diverse and of several minds on the legitimacy of violence of different kinds against different living beings, the reader cannot help but be fascinated by the creative approaches taken by each essayist in presenting a vision of what “peace” includes. The volume thus places Buddhist concerns, formulations, and claims in a framework that begs comparison. Because the treatment is not systematic, however, the reader will easily recognize both the allure *and* difficulty of comparative ventures.

Harvard University’s Christopher S. Queen is the author of the Buddhism piece, which is titled “The Peace Wheel: Nonviolent Activism in the Buddhist Tradition.” The essay reads well even as it covers an astonishing amount of ground in its twenty pages. Queen begins by focusing on the evolution of the image of the wheel (*cakra*) as it moved from a symbol of sacred warfare (most famously the chariot wheel) to symbol of sacred peacemaking (the “truth wheel” or *dharmacakra*) (see, generally, pages 25–28). This analysis provides a very succinct example of how images within religious and cultural traditions can change in fundamental ways. Queen’s material on the theme of the wheel also offers a fine exemplification of the ways in which artistic traditions communicate differently than do the words of any canon, and thereby suggests the myriad sources available for an assessment of what believers may have felt, held, and done regarding a broad range of nonviolence concerns.

Of particular relevance to the topic of violence and peace is the complementary, almost dialectical, relationship between the emphasis on the individual within the Buddhist tradition and a profound preoccupation with the community of all beings. Consider, for example, the important interplay between moral causation, so heavily focused on the individual (Queen's comments are at page 31), and the counterbalancing emphasis in the tradition on a concern for all beings as members of our community (at, for example, page 29). These are, so to speak, the two foci or poles of Buddhist ethics, and an orientation to each is necessary to any informed practice of compassion, nonviolence, and peace in their various forms. Queen makes this point at page 31:

Because moral causation is deeply individual — each person reaps his or her own rewards and punishments — and because the penalties for unwholesome reactions such as anger and violence are extreme — rebirth as a tormented being in one of the hell realms — the incentives to ethical behavior have always been great in Buddhist societies. But rather than cutting individuals off from one another, the notion of a circle of life connects all beings. Every being was once your own mother and thus deserving of respect....

Notice that, since in the Buddhist view the “others” in one’s community include all beings, this inclusiveness affects dramatically what is considered to come under the rubric “violence.” Indeed, Queen’s insights regarding peace turn out to be applicable to areas as diverse as environmental ethics, daily living, relations with and ethical considerations regarding other animals, and surely our need to understand the plight of marginalized humans.

Importantly, Queen’s analysis pushes beyond mere theory and ideas, inviting the reader to consider day-to-day realizations of Buddhist concerns in practice and the obligation to work for peace. While forthrightly pointing out that there have been exceptions in the Buddhist tradition (for example, at page 36, Queen relates the *Mahāvamsa* story about monks who advised King Dutthagamani not to worry about the war-caused deaths of unbelievers), Queen concentrates on the modern examples of B. R. Ambedkar and Daisaku Ikeda to inform the reader about “engaged Buddhism.” Queen’s essay is, in this regard, exemplary of the concern of authors in this volume to emphasize ethical behavior and not merely scholarly analysis.

In fact, Queen’s insights, and indeed all of the essays when considered together, invite one to speculate about further implementation of a truly non-violent mentality. For example, how does the extraordinary

inclusivism of Buddhist compassion play out in relation to the tradition's investment in the claim that human status is, relative to that of all other animals, a very high status? Do human interests matter more, such that some violent eclipse of nonhuman beings' interests can be, from a Buddhist standpoint, ethically sound? Does compassion work similarly or differently with regard to, respectively, elephants, dolphins, insects, yeast, viruses, plants, and ecosystems? How relevant to such questions are *empirical* investigations regarding the lives of different kinds of life? Indeed, how can one know which acts are truly compassionate, and which are not, if one is *not* informed about the actual realities of other lives?

These are, to be sure, not simple questions. The difficulties are, however, indicative of the important realm which peace studies and general concerns for nonviolence beckon us to enter. Because this collection prompts the reader to consider the breadth of a nonviolent life, this collection is a fine starting point for those who want to journey into this realm. *Subverting Hatred* reveals that religious traditions have much to contribute and are vital to the future shape of peace, harmony, nonviolence, and community.