

dissemination of materials, so an Indian publisher will have to come forward to take the book to the larger audience in third world countries where the intelligentsia of the local peoples in Paulo Freire's terms, will have to negotiate with the ways in which colonialism and science do not go away!

The subject of who is the intelligentsia of the people will always be of interest to the historian. In an interesting paragraph, J.N.Sinha writes,

After virtually maneuvering the removal of the Director of the Institute, Nobel Laureate, Sir C.V.Raman, the Government of India wanted to have a British as the new Director. The Council of the Institute however opposed the move and wanted to have an Indian instead. Knowing this, the government entered into a secret liaison, among others, with the Dewan of Mysore State, Sir Mirza Ismail – a Muslim who disliked Bengalis, the British Resident in Mysore, and the Tatas, the Tatas and Mysore State being the principal founding trustees of the Institute. While authorities received enthusiastic support from the Dewan and the British Resident, the Tatas declined to interfere with the decisions of the Council. The official maneuver failed as a result, and J.C. Ghosh, another Indian scientist of repute who espoused the cause of science for national reconstruction, was eventually appointed Director. This episode makes two points clear. First, the refusal of the Tatas to toe the official line proves how the Indian Industrialist, despite their association with the government and the global system of capitalism, had come closer to the local scientific leadership on the question of managing science in the interest of the country. Secondly the Indian Scientific leadership was no less concerned and jealous of their rights and independence than their counterparts in politics (p.50).

C.F. Andrews, as a former teacher of St Stephen's college, always believed that learning from History was important for reconnaissance with the present. When the scion of the Tata house embraces Narendra Modi to enhance a deal, which will statistically in terms of mobile-metal, clog up the roads, we know that the corollary of economic actions, which are for immediate personal gratification will cause intense disruption of the ecological system. Decades ago, Shiv Visvanathan argued that there is no such thing as peaceful use of nuclear energy, because the problem of waste and societal surveillance will always be larger than the problem of immediate energy gratification. Many social scientists and millions of grass roots activists have argued for the right of peasants to survival, so that ecology must be foregrounded as the natural right of local communities. Today, Bharat Jhunjoo, with his team, fights for the recognition of the Ganga as the right of the people to survive on her banks. Peoples' movements have always believed that the co-existence of industry and agriculture is possible. In fact the work of people like Uzamma and Laila Tyebji, of Dastkar, has set up the symbioses of traditional knowledge groups and artisans, and IIT trained activists

to recover indigo as an agricultural and craft commodity.

If we are to understand the impact of people's struggle to make sense of their environment in the new contexts of globalization, where the malls and the waste generated are the new idioms of imperialism in the 21st century, the recovery of these debates that Sinha brings to us are crucial. That Binayak Sen gets arrested and charged for sedition is the symptom of what is seen to be the real syndrome, thirty percent of India as the Ministers at the Centre says, is in the hands of Maoists. Why is it so? The PUCL and the PUDR will have a great deal of mobilization to do, before they too become banned. Hunger and poverty are very visible details of life, the wealth of the earth spills out spite of its commercialization, and when treated as the spoils of one group or community, the human context of life becomes decimated. Binayak Sen is very well loved in Vellore, where he trained as a Doctor, and where he came to recuperate when he was released on bail. If he spent his life working with the poor, then that is what he will be remembered for. Community Health has always depended on those who gave their time, so JNU scholars too will have a lot to say about new forms of hegemony!

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Ernst Furlinger, *The Touch of Sakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Shaivism of Kashmir*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2009, Pp. 288, Rs. 690.

The so-called 'Kashmir Saivism', more correctly the non-dualistic Shaivism of Kashmir or Trika with its philosophy of Recognition or *Pratyabhijna*, has been studied in the last few decades in its various dimensions: philosophical, historical, Tantric exegesis, aesthetical, and the traditions and texts involved are so rich and varied that there is much scope for further detailed studies. The present study focuses on a very specific concept, or rather symbol, the Sanskrit word *sparsa*, 'touch', and more specifically *saktisparsa*, 'the touch of the divine energy'. Although it seems to refer to a limited area, this concept can be used as a key to the understanding of the spirituality of the school, as the author aptly shows.

Professor Andre Padoux, eminent scholar of Tantra and Kashmir Saivism, especially of *mantrasastra*, has contributed a very perceptive Foreword to the book *The Touch of Sakti: A Study in Non-dualistic Trika Shaivism of Kashmir* by Ernst Furlinger. The author in his Introduction gives a survey of the history and literature of Kashmir Saivism, mainly based on the extensive historical and

textual researches of Professor Alexis Sanderson. He then goes into the "different meanings of Sparsa in Indian tradition," as a necessary background for the specific meanings in non-dualistic Kashmir Saivism.

The second chapter is devoted to important hermeneutical reflections. Here he elaborates on the difficulty of translation, or rather on the untranslatability of certain terms of the Sanskrit philosophical terminology. He analyses the most central concept of practically all Indian philosophy, *cit* (with its synonyms *caitanya*, *samvit*): "Is Cit 'Consciousness'?" Although I agree with his posing the problem, the solution to leave such terms untranslated does not really serve the purpose of mediating between two traditions (and that is what every translation tries to do). He also addresses the important term *vimarsa* in the philosophy of *Pratyabhijna*. Whether or not one agrees with the conclusions arrived, the importance of this chapter is to make the reader aware of the hermeneutical implications while interpreting such terms and texts of another tradition. The sharpening of the awareness of difference is essential.

Chapter three is the centre of the study: "The Touch of Sakti (*Saktisparsa*)" which he analyses in selected texts of Trika. This chapter shows the fruitfulness of the approach of the author, because he takes into account not only the philosophical or sensual meanings of 'touch' but its many other implications: linguistic, spiritual, sexual etc. The first section analyses the term in the *Sivastotravali* of Utpaladeva, along with its commentary by Ksemaraja (foremost disciple of Abhinavagupta and a prolific commentator). Here the word *sparsa* (and synonyms) assumes the mystical connotation, as Utpaladeva again and again prays for the bliss arising from the touch of the lotus feet of the Divine, an image based on the widespread tradition of touching the feet of the guru or the *murti*. However, this devotional meaning is interpreted in a non-dualistic way, where the 'feet' are understood as the divine energies or Saktis. The poetic and mystical beauty of the *Sivastotravali* is particularly present in the verses connected with 'touch'. In this connection the author also makes an excursus on the term *samavesa*, 'absorption'. A major section of the study is devoted to the Tantraloka of Abhinavagupta and its various uses of the concept of *sparsa*. In this text the manifold meanings of the term unfold, particularly in the Tantric and yogic sense. This chapter is particularly rich.

In the conclusion the author reflects on "The question of the liberating and critical potential of Trika Saivism." To quote from his conclusion: "Focusing on our topic, 'the touch of Sakti', we have found different contexts and meanings in which the word *sparsa* occurs in connection with Sakti, the divine power, revered as the Goddess.

An interesting conclusion is how significant is this experience of touch in the context of *kundalini yoga*, associated with the experience of 'the touch of ants'! The most important result of our study is that we found that *sparsa* denotes one of the highest stages of the spiritual process, of the rise of *kundalini*, even above the experience of enlightenment (*vijnana*). . ." (p. 248) He shows that the importance of *sparsa* in the spiritual ascent is connected with the centrality of Sakti in non-dualistic Saivism. "And every moment it can happen that one is touched by the rays of the Power and one's true nature of supreme light and joy (*ananda*) unfolds. . ." (p. 250)

The importance of "the touch of Sakti" lies precisely in the connection between the sensual and the transcendental, a connection which Abhinavagupta has presented in the most rigorous and consistent way.

The author ends with some reflections on the present-day relevance of such a study. This relevance is obvious when considering the problems and tensions humankind is facing at this juncture. One of the insights of Trika is precisely: "At the core of this Tantric Advaita tradition is the conviction or the experience of the interconnectedness of reality. . ." (p. 254), a connectedness which is essential for modern man to re-discover.

The present book is part of a thesis submitted at the University of Vienna. Unfortunately the second part has not been translated, which deals with a comparison with Western mysticism (Heraclitus, Plotinus, Augustine), and the metaphor or experience of 'touch' in these authors. This part would throw much light on how spiritual-philosophical and mystical traditions, each one seen in its own light, can also enrich and enlighten each other.¹

Anyone interested in the Tantric and Saiva traditions will profit from reading this book, and also those who are interested in mysticism in a wider sense.

NOTE

1. The German publication contains the entire thesis: *Verstehen durch Berühren. Interreligiöse Hermeneutik am Beispiel des nichtdualistischen Sivaismus von Kashmir*, Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia, 2006.

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A. R. Kidwai, *Literary Orientalism: a companion*, New Delhi: Viva Books, 2009. Pp. xix + 374, Rs. 895.

Said did not treat Orientalism as "a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship or institutions; nor ... a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative