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HARI DUTT SHARMA, *Glimpses of Sanskrit Poetics and Poetry*. Raka Prakashan, Allahabad, 2008, XVII et 221 pages, 14 x 22 cm

Hari Dutt Sharma is an active member of a new school of Indologists who practice Sanskrit as a living language engaged in the linguistic and literary life of the modern age. He is a creative poet of to-day and a pandit well-versed in Sanskrit *alamkāraśāstra*. He has traveled the world over and is an active participant in the World Sanskrit Conferences held every three years in different places of the planet. The volume under review is a collection of eighteen articles, which are the outcome of his travels and his trend of research. In an introduction he gives the list of all his missions and activities abroad, as an emissary of Indian culture, traditional and new. This is not a book of philological research and it should not be viewed in the scientific perspective of philological and historical study of literature. It is praiseworthy as a representative of the culture of a Sanskrit poet of our times. It testifies to the living nature of Sanskrit literature. The contemporary school of modern Sanskrit poetry is active, creative and enjoys a non-negligible place in the present Indian literary conjunction. Literature in the Indian subcontinent is shared between numerous regional languages. Sanskrit has a unique position in the whole. The knowledge of Sanskrit entails familiarity with the full range of the ancient and medieval literary heritage of India, a heritage to which no other language can open equally wide access. With this background he undertakes a quest of adaptation to the changing world.

Hari Dutt Sharma has a vocation for bringing novelty in the traditional Sanskrit culture. His field is poetry and poetics. Well-read in the works of Sanskrit classical poets from the Ādikavi Vālmīki to the most recent innovators, and in the medieval *alamkāra śāstra*, he has a strong interest in new trends of modern poetry. First he has extended his vision to many countries outside India, especially Thailand where he has spent several years and has come in close contact with Thai culture and poetry. A first article outlines the influence of Sanskrit

language and literature. This influence goes back to the age of Dvāravati and continues all throughout the medieval period. It is noteworthy that it goes on with new force in our days, since the vocabulary of modern things and amenities is created from Sanskrit roots and models, as it is done in India. A Thailand University names its departments with Sanskrit words adapted to Thai phonetics, with *vitthayā* for *vidyā*, *sāt* for *śāstra*, etc. Another article shows elements of Sanskrit Poetics in Thai poetry, and reckons different *alaṃkāras* and *rasas* from the two aspects of *sambhoga* and *vipralambha śṛṅgāra* to *śānta* so well expressed under the inspiration of Buddhism. It is a striking fact of Indian influence that a Thai poet in quest of religious peace and solitude says:

“The soul floats slipping away with songs
Resting in solitude of the vast Himalaya.”

Another article deals with the affinity of Indian and Thai festivals, such as the swinging ceremony celebrated once a year in Pauṣa to honour and please Śiva when he comes for a period of ten days, before a visit of Viṣṇu for five days. There is a festival of ploughing, a festival of lights, a saṃkrānti festival, etc. all of Indian origin.

Another set of articles considers great classics of Sanskrit literature. An interesting article studies the relation between sentiment and metre in Sanskrit poetry, for example the appropriateness of the “slow-pace” *mandākrāntā* to the heaviness of heart of separated lovers in the genre of messenger-poems. This is an important subject for the study of modes of poetical composition. In the same line the relations of sentiment and embellishment with metrical and musical rendering is to be explored. Sanskrit poetry is a sung poetry, and is best appreciated, has its full expressivity of sentiments, when it is rendered in an appropriate *rāga*. This art has been largely cultivated in ancient times, is largely forgotten nowadays and has to be revived. Two articles deal with *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* and show the resonance of the ancient Epics in the modern world. One discusses the conflicting views between

severe social morality which condemned Sītā to banishment and more lenient admiration towards her purity of soul. The *Mahābhārata* is called a “clarion call for world peace”, a call of all times. It is an Epic of war which advocated the primacy of non-violence among all virtues:

“Ahiṃsā sarvabhūteṣu dharmam jyāyastaram viduḥ”
Droṇaparvan 192.38.

That reminds the primacy also given to *ahiṃsā* by Patañjali in his list of *yamas*: “ahiṃsāsatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahāyamāḥ” *Yogasūtra* II.30. The primacy of non-violence even over veracity is a very ancient ideal in Indian culture. Mahātmā Gandhi made it world famous in the 20th century. That is a testimony to his deep-rooted Indian culture.

The volume culminates with a presentation of “Modern Sanskrit Poetry in global perspective”. It contains a useful catalogue of poetical compositions produced in the last two centuries and opening to the 21st. It emphasizes the upsurge of poetry inspired by the Independence movement. The recourse to Sanskrit to express the rejection of foreign governance and to extol the authentic Indian culture, to compose and publish poetry in support of an independence fight, facing persecution, is an important fact of Indian modern history. The name of the poetess Kṣamā Rao who had her *Satyāgrahagītā* and other works on the movement of Civil Disobedience printed in Paris to escape British surveillance, is to be remembered, not only for her heroism, but also for her great literary talent. Creativity in subjects, in forms, in imagination goes on unabated year after year. I must conclude by mentioning the talent of Hari Dutt Sharma who belongs to this generation of new Pandits and by recalling his visit to Paris University not for discussions and lecturing, but for composition of a poem describing the city of Paris, its ladies walking fast in a constant agitation, and which he kindly read to a group of Sanskrit students in my home.

Pierre-Sylvain Filliozat

Vasugupta, *Gli aforismi di Śiva con il commento di Kṣemarāja (Śivasūtravimarśinī)*, a cura di Raffaele Torella, Milano, Adelphi (Piccola Biblioteca 641) 2013.

The *Śivasūtras* are a foundational text of the non-dualist Śaivism of Kashmir, and they have received the attention of scholars with translations into English, French and Italian, along with the commentary by Kṣemarāja, illustrious disciple of Abhinavagupta. The present book by the eminent scholar of Pratyabhijñā, Professor Raffaele Torella (RT), is a third revised edition of his first edition which was published in 1979. The English translation by Jaideva Singh appeared in the same year (*Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of the Supreme Identity, Text of the Sūtras and the Commentary Vimarśinī of Kṣemarāja*, Translated into English, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1979), and the French by Lilian Silburn in 1980 (*Śivasūtra et Vimarśinī de Kṣemarāja*, traduction et introduction, Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, Fasc. 47, Paris 1980). The English version by Swami Lakshmanjoo (2002) is not a translation but an oral teaching transcribed and edited after his death.

The years separating the editions by RT have been crucial in the study of this tradition which “has been revealed by and by as one of the highest moments reached by Indian speculation and spirituality of all times”.

“Gli insegnamenti di queste scuole, che rientrano nell’ambito più ampio del Tantrismo, si sono andati via via rivelando come uno dei momenti più alti raggiunti dalla speculazione e dalla spiritualità indiane di ogni tempo, arrivando poi con le loro ultime propaggini fino ai nostri giorni”, (pp. 9-10).

It is above all thanks to the present author and Professor Alexis Sanderson of Oxford that we are now on a more firm ground as far as the understanding, historical context and interpretation of the texts and traditions of Trika and Pratyabhijñā are concerned. RT has explored the philosophical and philological aspects and placed them in the entire context of

the Indian philosophical systems (cp. also his book *Il pensiero dell'India*, Roma, Carocci 2008, of which an English translation has appeared in 2011: *The Philosophical Traditions of India: an Appraisal*, Varanasi, Indica Books). Instead of considering the non-dualist Śaivism a marginal tradition, he has again and again shown that it provides “the principal theoretical coordinates for the entire Hindu tantrism” (“le principali coordinate teoretiche dell'intero Tantrismo hindu”, p. 11). All the more important is the correct translation and interpretation of the basic texts.

At the outset I would like to state that the present Italian translation, with an exhaustive introduction and illuminating notes, is the best and most authoritative translation in any language of this difficult text. With the humility of the true scholar RT states:

“A ciò si unisce la consapevolezza che la densità di testi come questo e altri della tradizione indiana richiede un'opera di scavo sempre più profondo sotto la superficie, senza mai però indulgere in un delirio di filologica onnipotenza che pretenda di infrangere anche l'ultimo, ineludibile diaframma di alterità del testo.” (p. 12)

I entirely agree with his principles of translation and annotation which aim at a middle way between an overweight of scholarly notes and the necessity of explanations, and which tend more “to sanskritize Italian than to italianize the Sanskrit” (p. 80), at the same time “taking the reader by the hand and guiding him discretely and with authority towards understanding” (p. 80, “...che il lettore sia preso per mano, discretamente e autorevolmente guidato verso la comprensione...”). Indeed, such a translator becomes a mediator between two spiritual and intellectual worlds.

The extensive introduction does take the reader by the hand, leading him from the Vedic Rudra to the non-dualist Śaivāgamas and finally to the *Śivasūtras* and their commentaries (pp. 13-77). It is based on the latest researches and insights into this tradition. RT describes very aptly the *Śivasūtras* in themselves, without a commentary: “...la natura stessa degli *Śivasūtra*, i quali, significando di per sé poco o nulla nella loro

estrema e ricercata concisione, appaiono rimandare continuamente ad altro – a una dottrina articolata, rispetto alla quale essi si pongono quasi come annotazioni stenografiche.” (p. 61) The comparison with Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras* is apt, insofar as both seem to be “una raccolta a posteriori di brevi aforismi [in this case] correnti nelle scuole śākta...” (p. 64).

In the introduction the author draws attention to some of the original contributions of the *Śivasūtras*. The first is the importance given to language, following Bhartṛhari, “in its double power as source of liberation or of bondage.” (“[...] nel suo doppio potere di fonte di liberazione e di asservimento,” p. 65) Furthermore, the theme of the three states of Consciousness and the “Fourth” (*turiya*, *caturtha*) has received special treatment in text and commentary.

“Peculiare agli *Śivasūtra* è poi una nuova concezione dello stato quarto, di upaniṣadica memoria, vale a dire la modalità dell’essere che trascende la condizione ordinaria, rappresentata dagli altri tre stati (veglia, sonno con sogni e sonno profondo), rispettivamente caratterizzati dalla percezione dei dati obiettivi (*jñāna*), dall’attività concettualizzante del pensiero discorsivo (*vikalpa*) e dall’ assenza della retta discriminazione (*aviveka*). Tale quarto stato – è detto a più riprese e a vari livelli –, in cui il soggetto entra in contatto con la purezza della Coscienza, non è pienamente realizzato se non quando è calato nell’ambito stesso dell’esperienza ordinaria (“Nei tre deve essere versato come olio di sesamo il quarto”, III, 20): si ha allora lo stato detto “transquarto”, che non si pone come punta ulteriore che verticalmente trascende gli altri quattro, ma come quello che tutti li attraversa e travolge. L’esito non è la soppressione del mondo fenomenico, ma la trasfigurazione del reale nella sua integralità, recuperato alla sua dimensione autentica di manifestazione della libertà della Coscienza.” (p.65-66)

Another original concept is the idea of “wonder, surprise” (*vismaya*, *Śivasūtras* I.12),

“[...] destinato ad avere importanti sviluppi nelle successive speculazioni filosofiche ed estetiche col termine sinonimo di

camatkāra, usato per la prima volta in senso pregnante forse da Utpaladeva. La meraviglia è la modalità del soggetto illuminato, il suo prendere coscienza del Sé e del tutto nel segno di un perpetuo e infinito meravigliarsi, come opposto della ristrettezza e dell'automatismo della coscienza ordinaria. Tale gustazione, di ordine essenzialmente estetico, salvaguarda la realtà dell'oggetto, ma nello stesso tempo lo fa gravitare verso il soggetto, e non viceversa, come usualmente succede. L'esperienza quotidiana diventa un continuo stupore, ovvero, come mi piace tradurre il termine chiave *camatkāra*, un 'meravigliato assaporamento'." (pp. 66-67)

The part of the introduction related to Kṣemarāja, the commentator, gives an excellent survey of his work and thought. RT highlights the strong influence of the Krama system on Kṣemarāja's way of interpretation. In his commentaries on the *Śivasūtras* and *Spandakārikās* he attempts to make them enter with full right into the philosophical frame of the new Trika, represented by the Pratyabhijñā, and to reading their spiritual itinerary in terms of the Krama doctrine. Krama, in fact, seems to be particularly personally close to Kṣemarāja, much more than to the mature Abhinavagupta.

Nel caso degli *Śivasūtra* e delle *Spandakārikā* la situazione è diversa: qui non si tratta di rivendicare la natura non-dualistica di questi due testi, indisputabile, ma di farli rientrare a pieno titolo nella cornice filosofica del nuovo Trika, rappresentata dalla Pratyabhijñā, e di leggere il loro iter spirituale in termini di dottrina Krama. Il Krama, infatti, sembra essere particolarmente e personalmente vicino a Kṣemarāja, molto più che all'Abhinavagupta maturo, il quale pur assegnando il posto più elevato alle dottrine del Krama, in ultima analisi lo fa gravitare sul Trika, come sua propaggine estrema." (p. 71)

The translation is a masterly work, combining readability and the beauty of language with the effect mentioned above, preserving the "alterità" of the original. The choice of terms and their elaboration in the notes is excellent and comes as close as possible to the intended meaning. An example could be: *udyamo bhairavaḥ* (Sūtra I.5), translated as "Bhairava è slancio"

(p. 111), although “slancio” does not fully contain the implications of *ud-*, “upward, rising”, which is compensated by an illuminating note on *udyama* and related terms. The complexities of the mysticism of language contained in Sūtra I.7: *mātrkācakrasambodhaḥ*, with the extensive *Vimarśinī*, are explained in the masterly way of a specialist in Sanskrit linguistic speculation in the comprehensive notes (pp. 173-184). Considering the Indian commentarial tradition, the notes could be considered another authoritative *Ṭīkā*, bringing the tradition up to the present!

Without going into other examples from the annotated translation, one can evaluate the present work as a model, which makes the difficult and esoteric (*rahasya-*) texts accessible to both the scholar and the interested reader, an extraordinary synthesis to achieve. In view of the importance of this text it is highly recommended to bring out an edition in bigger size and more reader-friendly. It would be desirable to bring out an English translation for making this excellent work known to an international audience.

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