



The Trika School - A Religio-Philosophical Emergence

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Abstract

The worship of *Śiva* as a deity was the dominant form of theistic and religious devotion which flowed through Kashmir to other parts of India from the first century BC. The Trika school is an idealistic, monistic, and theistic school of philosophy in *Śaivism*, that originated in the ninth century C.E. in Kashmir. The study attempts to elucidate the historical development of Trika school along with the idiosyncratic and unique philosophy of the school. The paper further endeavours to explain the enthralling development of this particular school which can best be understood from a religio-philosophical context. The study employs textual analysis and conceptual enquiry as the research method to analyse and present the development and distinct nature of the Trika school.

Keywords: Trika, Pratyabhijñā, Religion, Philosophy, Kashmir

1. Introduction

The worship of *Śiva* as a deity was the dominant form of theistic and religious devotion which flowed through Kashmir to other parts of India from the first century BC. *Śaivism* is known as a religious cult* that propounds *Śiva* as the Ultimate Reality. Contemporary scholars such as R. K. Kaw (1967) among others

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believe that Śaivism sprang from the Nāgā cult (tradition) and branched out into different schools. Radhakrishnan (2008) has broadly categorised Śaivism into four schools: the *Nakulisa-pāsupata*, the *Śaiva*, the *Pratyabhijñā* and the *Raseśvara*. This study takes into account the Trika school, the school which is considered under the *Pratyabhijñā* category. The Kashmir Śaiva system is fundamentally a monistic system of philosophy. It represents the absolutistic development of Śaiva tradition which can be described as theistic absolutism. The paper explores the historical development i.e., the religious foundation and lineage of Trika school, alongside its philosophy. The former has a substantial bearing on the latter. The absolutist ontology of this philosophy is founded on its theistic origins. The paper mainly highlights the inter-relationship of religion and philosophy in the development of the Trika school. It is interesting to observe the religious foundation of this school on which the philosophical tower stands and in turn enriches the religious foundation. The objective of this paper is realised through qualitative philosophical methodologies such as textual analysis and conceptual enquiry. Thus, the threefold aim of the present work is first, to elucidate the religious foundation of Trika school, secondly, to explain the idiosyncratic and unique philosophy of this school, and thirdly, to highlight the inter-relationship between the religion and philosophy that inform the Trika school i.e., the importance of religio-philosophical emergence of the school.

2. The Historical Development of Trika School

2.1. Śaivism as part of a religion

Śaivism is one of the major theistic cults in the Hindu religion advocating Śiva as the ultimate reality. Contemporary scholar Jaideva Singh, in his translation of *Pratyabhijñāhrdayam*, considers Śaivism as the oldest living religious cult. Theologically, Śiva is the creator, preserver, and destroyer, in addition to being conceived as identical with the Self. The existence of this theistic cult spans several thousand years, extending to modern times. In the fourth adhyāya of the ancient Upanishadic text - Svetashvatara Upanishad (first millennium BC) the names, Rudra and Śiva, are used to denote Brahman. The earliest available textual evidence for Śaivism is recorded in *Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya* (140 BC). In sūtra -

5.2.76, *Patañjali* mentions a group of people who denote Śiva as bhagavān. They are described as Śiva-bhāgavatas who carry a spear (*ayahśūla*) (Giuliano, 2004) (Wallis, 2014). There is also evidence of small images of deities such as Śiva, Skanda, and Viśākha (*arcāhprakalpitāh*) in the later Maurya period (200 BC)**. According to Francis Richard Cefalu, Śaivism or a similar faith existed in the Indus Valley regions (3250 to 2750 BC) (Cefalu, 1973, p. 5). Sir John Hubert Marshall, an archaeologist who oversaw the excavations of Harappa and Mohenjodāro (two of the main cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation) prematurely called the Mohenjodāro seal (number 420), Proto-Śiva. The *mahakāvya Rājataranginī* describes the history of different dynasties (that ruled Kashmir) and the temple architecture dedicated to Śiva. R. K. Kaw states that Śaivism had a history going back to the chalcolithic age or perhaps even further still, that it takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world, that Śiva was the God of the Dravidians or Proto-Indians, and the Śaiva movement in India dates from centuries earlier than the Vedic movement (Kaw, 1967, p. 239). But according to Christopher Wallis, there is a lack of evidence to associate Rudra with Śiva in the Vedic period (Wallis, 2014). There is a lack of historic and linguistic evidence to relate the deity Rudra mentioned in the Vedas to Śiva (theological deity). Evidence has accumulated in recent times to establish the independent existence of Śaivism, beyond its role as a major stream of Hinduism. According to Christopher Wallis, there are two reasons for Śaivism to be subsumed under the ambit of Vaidika-dharma in the late medieval period. Firstly, both Śaivism and Vaidika-dharma acknowledged the authority of the *Vedās* and *Āgamas*. Secondly, both did not transgress the norms of the *Varṇāśrama*-dharma (Wallis, 2014). Śaivism gave importance to *Āgamas* and also progressed beyond the notion of *Varṇāśrama*-dharma. According to Kamalika Mishra, it's a colossal misunderstanding that the Vedic traditions alone form the basic trend of Indian culture, the Tantric tradition being a side current or even a perversion (Mishra, 1999, p. 21). The Śaiva cult is known to consist of sixty-four schools that regard Śiva as the ultimate reality in dualistic, non-dualistic and other approaches. The Trika school is one of the non-dualistic schools among the sixty-four schools.

The *Purāṇic* literature is a vast genre that includes diverse topics such as theology, philosophy, traditional lore, among others. The early *Purāṇas* were composed in the Gupta period (400 AD - 500 AD) in an attempt to revive *Brāhmaṇism* as an after effect of the decay of Buddhism and Jainism. The *Purāṇic* philosophy was associated with theistic *Sāṅkhya* philosophy and also preached about the cults - *Viṣṇuism*, *Śaivism* and *Śāktaism*. Saivism in the *Purāṇic* literature emphasises knowledge as the means of release. For instance, *Kūrmapurāṇa* (550 AD - 650 AD) preaches the worship of *Śiva* describing him as indeterminate, attributeless, pure, eternal consciousness, which appears to be the multiform world and finite souls owing to *māyā*. Similarly, *Vāyu Purāṇa* advocates the worship of *Śiva*. It propounds the duality of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, and the evolution of the world out of *Prakṛti* under the guidance of *Śiva*. Its philosophy is a blend of *Sāṅkhya* dualism and theism of the *Upaniṣads*.

In contrast to the dualistic view, *Skanda Purāṇa* preaches the cult of *Śiva* and advocates monism (Sinha, 2016). The *Mahabharata* mentions *Śiva* ascetics in chapters four (*sūtra* - 13) and thirteen (*sūtra* - 140) (Meister, 1984: pp. 274-276). The epigraphical evidence for the worship of *Śiva* discussed by Wallis is based on a *Kharoṣṭhī Prakṛt* inscription from *Panjtār* in the *Swāt* region dated to 65 AD. According to R K Kaw and Christopher Wallis, the earliest numismatic evidence for the prevalence of *Śiva* cult comes from the *Kuṣāṇa* coins beginning either with the reign of Wima II Kadphises (100 AD) or that of Kaniṣka (125-150 AD) (Kaw, 1967: 5) (Wallis, 2014:14). However, this evidence cannot be taken into account as the *Kuṣāṇas* worshipped the Iranian deities of their homeland. There are still unknown details related to the history of *Śaivism*. The scholars of diverse fields have put forth their discoveries and conjectures throughout the twentieth and the present century. Whereas the origin of *Śaivism* goes far back to around 100 BC, the unclassified body of *Śaiva* literature dealing with *Trika* Philosophy was discovered only as recently as 1876 AD by Dr G. Bühler (Kaw, 1967, p. 1). The manuscripts (texts) had been sealed and conserved in a handful of traditional *Pandit* households. Indological research identified the sui generis *Trika* Philosophy of *Śaivism* as a school much later.

2.2. The lineage and foundation of the Trika School

Traditionally *Śiva* Sutras is considered to be the foundational text of the Trika school. Vasugupta authored this text in the early ninth century thus marking the beginning of an idealistic, monistic and theistic school of philosophy in *Śaivism*. The only known evidence of Vasugupta's life is through his disciple Kallaṭa. In the book, *Chronicles of the Kings of Kashmir (Rājtaranginī)* written by Kalhaṇa, Kallaṭa is referred to as a perfected yogi. Kallaṭa in his writings, states that Vasugupta received the nearly eighty aphorisms, *Śiva* Sutras, directly from *Śiva* on the *Mahādeva* mountains. Later scholars such as *Bhāskara* and *Kṣemarāja* presented different accounts on the emergence of *Śiva* Sutras through Vasugupta (Brooks, 1994). The common thread in all these accounts is based on the folk tales that describe *Śiva* as bestowing the aphorisms directly or through a perfected yogi to Vasugupta.

The school owes its mythological origin to Lord *Śiva* showing compassion on humans who were devoid of knowledge and directed the great Sage *Durvāsa* (known as '*Krodha Bhaṭṭāraka*' in *Āgamic* literature) to propagate the Truth. *Durvāsa* in turn directed his three *mānasaputras* (mind-born sons) to further spread the Truth. This is the basis for categorising the *Āgamic* literature of *Śaivism* into three streams: *Advaita*, *Dvaita*, and *Dvaitādvaita*. *Tryambaka*, one of the *mānasaputras* of *Durvāsa* propounded the Advaita perspective (Kaw, 1967, p.4). The literature of the Trika system is divided into three: *ĀgamaŚāstra*, *Spanda Śāstra*, and *Pratyabhijñā Śāstra* (Singh, 2017, p.xv). The foundational text, *Śiva śūtras* and the commentaries on this text, namely, *Vivṛti* (Vasugupta), *Vārtika* (Rajanaka Bhaskara), *Vimarśini* (Kṣemarāja), and *Mālinīvijaya Tantra* among others fall under the head of *Āgama Śāstra* i.e., revelations by *Śiva*. Texts such as *Spanda Kārika* written by Kallaṭa, *Vṛitti on Kārikas* by Kallaṭa, *Nirṇaya* by Kṣemarāja and others fall under *Spanda Śāstra*, which is the elaboration of advaitic principles without logical argumentation in support of the principles.

The lineage of Trika school started from Vasugupta (c. 855-883). Its first known author was *Somānanda* (c. 900-950), who wrote *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*. *Somānanda*'s disciple was *Utpaladeva* (c. 925-975), best known for the *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-kārikās*††. *Utpala*'s disciple was

Lakṣmaṇagupta. The latter's disciple, Abhinavagupta, the most prolific author of the lineage wrote the two major commentaries on Utpaladeva's work and the magnum opus, namely *Tantrāloka*. Abhinavagupta's disciple *Kṣemarāja* wrote *Pratyabhijñāhrdayam*. The most noticeable notion of this non-dualistic philosophical school is *Pratyabhijñā* (doctrine of recognition) which is derived from the writings of the above-mentioned proponents. It is hence not possible to attribute the concept of *Pratyabhijñā* to one person.

Contemporary scholars have argued upon the multi-pointed origin of the term *Pratyabhijñā* in their recent studies on Trika philosophy. In his book *Kashmir Shaivism*, J. C. Chatterji states that Kallaṭa handed down the doctrines as a system of religion, but *Somānanda* gave the logical reasoning and made the religious system into an absolutist philosophy. Scholars like John Nemeč argue that *Somānanda* remained almost an enigma for two prominent reasons. Firstly, he states that there was no detailed study of *Śiva-drṣṭi*. Secondly, no complete and unbroken translation of this work exists (Nemeč, 2011, p. 12). Other scholars, such as David Peter Lawrence and Raffaella Torella, give credit to Utpaladeva for the philosophical conception. According to Torella, Utpaladeva is known to have extensively worked on the philosophical conception of *Pratyabhijñā* (recognition) derived from the pioneering and distinctive work of *Somānanda*. Utpaladeva's works stand out by their unique blend of epistemology, metaphysics, religious experience, linguistic philosophy, and aesthetic speculation (Torella, 2006, p. 10). Eminent scholars of Kashmiri *Śaivism* such as K. C. Pandey and K. A. S. Iyer focused on Abhinavagupta rather than the authors who preceded him in the lineage. Abhinavagupta (c. 950 – 1016), a polymath is not only famous for his exegetical and philosophical writings but also his writings on aesthetics or Rasa Theory.

The philosophy of Trika school emerged as something unique in its own right through the study of *Mādhavācārya's* (14th Century) *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha* by scholars in the eighteenth century. The school was identified as a minor philosophical school in comparison to Advaita *Vedānta*, which was considered the highest among the sixteen schools dealt in the aforementioned work. The Trika School was defined as a philosophy of pure idealism and

application of Advaita *Vedānta* to *Śaiva* thought by Dr G. Bühler (Bühler, 1887, p. 78). Trika school was referred to as *Pratyabhijñā Darśana* in *Sarvadarśana Saṁgraha*. *Mādhavācārya* might have so named the philosophy bearing in mind Utpaladeva who gave the name - *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā* - to his *kārikās*, which are the essential treatise of this system. The school is known as *Śaiva Darśana* alluding to *Somānanda's Śivadr̥ṣṭi*. *Pratyabhijñā* or *Śaiva Darśana*, both names of the school, revolve around its primary literature. J. C. Chatterji, the first Director of the 'Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies' (KSTS), popularly introduced this school as Kashmir Shaivism considering the geographical discovery of the literature about the Spanda and *Pratyabhijñā* doctrines in Kashmir. K. C. Pandey and Christopher D. Wallis argue that this system should be known as the Trika Philosophy. K. C. Pandey argues in his pioneer work, *Abhinavagupta - An Historical and Philosophical Study* - that denoting this school as *Pratyabhijñā Darśana* is similar to misrepresenting India as Calcutta or Bombay (Pandey, 1867, p. 169). Abhinavagupta himself denotes this school as *Trika Darśana* in his writings. 'Trika' (triple or threefold) represents the central ideology of the ultimate nature of things - *Śiva*, *Śakti* and *Aṇu* or *Pati*, *Pāśa* and *Paśu* or *Parā*, *Parāparā*, and *Aparā* which dictate the philosophy of this school.

3. The Philosophical Trajectory

Trika system is one of the sixty-four systems of the *Śaiva*-cult which seems to have borrowed most of the philosophical ideas from *Vaidika-s*, the *Śaiva-s*, the *Śākta-s*, the *Vaiyākaraṇa-s*, the *Sāṅkhya-s*, the *Naiyāyika-s*, the Vedantins and the upholders of the Yoga system for its enrichment (Kaw, 1967, p. 11). The school developed in a rich syncretism (Alpher, 1979, p. 347). The Ultimate Reality is denoted as *Parāsamvit*, whose nature is Pure Consciousness (*śuddha-cit-svabhāva*). It is one, indivisible, infinite, and self-aware. It is not limited by - *deśa*, *kāla* or *rūpa*. It is also described as transcendental (*viśvottīrṇa*), immanent (*viśvamaya*), all-pervading (*sarvavyāpī*), absolute (*pūrṇa*), beyond ontological principles (*Tatvōtīta*), all-inclusive Universal Consciousness (Anuttara), and endowed with *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*. *Prakāśa* is the Eternal Light or Pure Illumination through which everything appears. *Vimarśa* is the very nature of

power or energy of Śiva. Śiva is the possessor of powers or attributes (Śakti, in its multiple forms). Vimarśa is also known as *Kartr̥toa Śakti* (the power of doers). Vimarśa is defined as non-relational, immediate awareness of “I” (*‘akṛtrimāhamitivispurānam’††*). Thanks to *vimarśa*, the Ultimate Reality is powerful and not inert (*‘yadinirvimarśahsyātānīśvarojaḍaścprasajyeta’§§*). The Ultimate Reality is incomplete without Śakti or Vimarśa.

There is the primacy of consciousness in Indian Philosophy. Everything known is known through consciousness; there is nothing that can be known outside or separate from consciousness (Radhakrishnan, 1940, p. 732). Utpaladeva claims to demonstrate that there is nothing outside of consciousness not merely by pointing out the impossibility of knowing what is external to consciousness, but rather, by questioning the very meaning of the distinction between externality and internality concerning consciousness (Ratié, 2011). According to Trika philosophy, manifestation and creativity are the very essences of Ultimate Reality or Divinity. If there is no manifestation, then the Ultimate Reality is just not-Self, similar to an inert object like a jar (Singh, 2019, p.xxi). Śakti and Śiva are considered to be inseparable (*prakāśavimarśamaya*) in the Trika system. “The first moment of will, however, occurs when, due to the expansion of the joy of power, consciousness becomes eager to undertake the creation of multiple objects, a variegated arrangement.” (Nemec, 2011, p. 113)***. Trika Philosophy elaborates on how *ānanda* gives rise to the various kinds of forces that make the creation possible. The self-awareness of Cit††† or Consciousness is *ānanda†††*, i.e., bliss or delight§§§. After *ānanda* arises *icchā***** or desire to know the hidden infinite wealth within oneself. *Ichchā* leads to *jñāna††††* or knowledge of the manifestations around and finally, *kriyā†††††* or action starts to actualise what was ideal in the state of *jñāna*. So, the five facets of Reality/Śiva are *cit*, *ānanda*, *icchā*, *jñāna*, and *kriyā*. By posting these five aspects of Reality, the Trika system endeavours to show that the creation or manifestation is nothing but the self-projection of *cit* or consciousness. That what was within, compressed within oneself as one focal point (*Bindu*) is bifurcated and brought outside (*visarga*). Consciousness is eternally free and this freedom lies in its power (*śakti*). It is free to limit itself, show itself as the 'other' and it

is again free to draw into itself the other which it had projected outside wilfully (Mukhopadhyaya, 1967, p. 233). The manifestation of the universe is seen in the process of opening out (*unmeṣa*) or expansion (*prasara*) of *Śiva* as/through *Śakti*.

The process of manifestation of Parama *Śiva* is explained through the thirty-six tattvas (principles) in Trika metaphysics. Trika school does not believe in material or prompt cause. It diverts itself from illusion to be the cause of manifestation and asserts that the being is a result of the *svātantryaśakti* (free will) of the Lord himself. The conception of *svacchanda* stands out in Trika philosophy. It is because of *Śiva's* will that the world comes into being. On his free will (*svātantrya*), thirty-six tattvas come into existence. Abhinavagupta elucidates this by explaining the creation process linearly and urges students to imagine no division of space and time, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, which are thus free from all classifications and regarded as the highest plane. Furthermore, he narrates about the first moment (merely for explanation), where self-awareness exists. Then the bifurcation of *Śiva* and *Śakti* happens. This makes the *Śakti* project "I," making it its object. An object of knowledge has to be known somewhat differently from the subject of knowledge. There are thirty-six tattvas§§§§ each with a part of *Śiva* and *Śakti* in it.

The process of manifestation of Parama *Śiva* is explained through the thirty-six tattvas in Trika metaphysics, enriching the explanatory twenty-five principled evolution process of *Prakṛti* in *Sāṅkhya* metaphysics. In the Trika philosophy, there is perfect non-dualism, not a dualism of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, as seen in *Sāṅkhya* philosophy where *Puruṣa* is *bhoktā* (experient) and *Prakṛti* is *bhogyā* (experienced). *Sāṅkhya* believes that consciousness remains ever aloof. Creation is the evolution of Nature. This Nature is one, but conscious *Puruṣa*-s are many. However, in Trika philosophy, *Śiva* is consciousness, and the manifestation happens within that consciousness through *śakti*-s. According to Trika philosophy, *Puruṣa* has limited knowledge and experience, since it is the fifth tattva that manifests from *Śiva* after his power of *māyā* comes to force.

Early Buddhism rejects the substantiality of consciousness. In the later development, Consciousness-is only admitted in the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism, whereas, *Śūnyavādin*-s defy any ontological

reality whatsoever from an absolutist perspective. Unlike all the above, *Nyāyatakes* consciousness to be a contingent quality of *ātman*. For Advaita Vedantins, Brahman is real, conscious, and blissful in its primary nature. Creation is super-imposed on Brahman, not innate to its nature. Thus, consciousness is the sole substantial reality. Advaita Vedanta and Trika philosophy are both non-dual philosophies that give primacy to Universal Consciousness (Brahman and *Parāsamvit*, respectively)(Singh, 2017). Reality is one and indivisible which is not only pure consciousness or *cit*, as described in Advaita Vedanta, but also perfect consciousness. This perfection consists in the self-awareness of consciousness or *prakāśa* through *vimarśa* or reflection, which is an integral part of it. Reality is thus fundamentally biguine in its nature. *Prakāśa* or *Śiva* is in eternal coalescence with *vimarśa* or *Śakti* (Mukhopadhyaya, 1986). The Trika school advocates self-aware Ultimate Reality unlike the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta. This is the subtle difference from Advaita *Vedānta*, where Brahman is only *Prakāśa* or *Jñāna*. Trika philosophy advocates the inseparability of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. *Śiva* unlike the Brahman of Vedanta is self-aware and incomplete without *Śakti*-s.

The question that arises after comprehending the philosophy of the Trika school is regarding the process by which *Śiva* is attained. According to the Trika school, liberation or *Śiva* is attained through the recognition (*Pratyabhijñā*) of one's true nature. The attainment of Ultimate Reality where the universe is just in the form of *Śiva* is through *anugraha* (Grace) or Divine *Śakti* (*Śaktipāta*). Divine Grace is the key to unravelling Reality. *Kṣemarāja* wrote a commentary on the primary text - *Vijñānabhairava*, in which *svātantrya* (absolute freedom) is mentioned as the essential characteristic of Bhairava (*Śiva*). This *svātantrya* is uncovered in *icchā* (desire), *jñāna* (knowledge) and *kriya* (knowledge). The highest state of Bhairava is explained in *Vijñānabhairava* as follows: "The highest state of Bhairava is free of all notions about direction, time, nor can that be particularised, by some definite space or designation. In verity that can neither be indicated nor described in words. One can be aware of that only when one is completely free of all thought-constructs. One can have an experience of that bliss in his inmost Self (Divine I - consciousness). That state of Bhairava which is full of the bliss of non-difference from the entire world (*bharitākārā*) is alone *Bhairavī*

or *Śakti* of Bhairava”***** (Singh, 2019, pg-xii). *Kṣemarāja* also wrote a popular commentary on the foundational text, *Śiva Sūtras* by Vasugupta, which elucidates four *upāyas* (means) to earn this Divine Grace. The *Upāyas* propounded in the aforementioned text are fourfold: *Āṇava - upāya*, *Śākta - upāya*, *Śāmbhava - upāya*, and *Anupāya*. The first three are definite techniques.

1. *Anupāya* - The attainment of Self-realisation is said to result from *Anupāya* when the individual realises the true nature of Consciousness through extreme *Śaktipāta*, (just by hearing one word from the spiritual director). *Anupāya* does not involve any specific yogic practice.††††
2. *Śāmbhavopāya* - It is said to occur when there is identification with *Śiva* without any mentation or thought process, merely by an intensive orientation of Will power towards the inner Reality. The realisation of *Śāmbhavopāya* is the highest, and that is the goal of all the *upāyas*.
3. *Śāktopāya* - For this *upāya*, one has to resort to *jñāna-śakti* or *Vimarśa-śakti* for realisation. Here, *Citta* is the means of approach to the Divine. The practitioner considers the I-consciousness to be the source of everything. *Śāktopāya* naturally terminates in *Śāmbhavopāya* in which I-consciousness is not simply an expression of *Śiva* but is also inclusive of the universe, which is simply an expansion of His *Śakti*.
4. *Āṇavopāya* - Here *aṇu*, the limited, conditioned individual takes up some limited aspect such as *buddhi*, *prāṇa*, body, or some object in space from which he starts his yogic practice. *Āṇavopāya* must necessarily lead to *Śāktopāya* and thence to *Śāmbhavopāya*. Even when something different from the Self is worshipped as an aspect or expression of the Divine, it finally terminates in *Śāktopāya* (Singh, 2017, pp xxxi-l).

Several commentaries were written for the *Śiva Sūtras* by Vasugupta. *Kṣemarāja* wrote the *Vimarśini* in 10th Century C.E. Jaideva Singh and Swami translated the *Vimarśini* into English. Another commentary called the *Varttika* was written by Bhaskara in the 11th Century C.E. which has been translated into English by Dr Mark Dyczkowski.

4. The importance of religio-philosophical emergence in the context of Trika School

Unlike other Indian philosophical schools, Trika philosophy has developed from the *Śaiva* tradition to an absolutistic Indian philosophical school. The school puts forward an extraordinary entanglement of consciousness (*parāsamvit*), true logic (*sattarka*), and authoritative texts (*Āgamaśāstra*). The theistic component makes up the formation of the school but also enriches its monistic philosophy. However, the school was relatively unknown and erroneously considered as a tantric or religious ideology till recent times. Mukhopadhyaya suggests three reasons behind the obscurity of the Trika school which are: 1. The paucity of polemic discussions; 2. Lack of direct affiliation to *Śruti*; 3. The deep esoteric nature of its teachings (Mukhopadhyaya, 1986, p. 231). While the aforementioned reasons put forth by Mukhopadhyaya seem to limit the school in the shackles of unimportance and uphold the popular bias against the Trika School, Wallis asserts that *Śaivism* is worth studying in its own right. According to him, the major obstacle to this study is the largely unpublished literature which in turn is unedited and untranslated. Keeping in mind this premise, the study of Trika school has turned into a philological one rather than a philosophical one (Wallis, 2014, p. 1).

The religio-philosophical emergence of this school is unique and significant to the very essence of Trika school. The foundational premise of the school is based on *Śiva* being the Ultimate Reality. The *Āgamic* literature which existed even before the emergence of Trika school implied the same. The literature for the aforementioned *Upāyas* was present in the *Āgamic* literature in a scattered form. Vasugupta authored *Śiva* Sutras, in which discussions regarding the four experiential Yogas correspond. *Kṣemarāja* in his commentary classified the sutras of these Yogas present in the *Śiva* Sutras text into specific *Upāyas*. He further highlighted the philosophical background that the text upholds, thus explaining the connection between the religious and philosophical emergence. *Kṣemarāja* propounds that the narration at the formation of the Trika school was on *Mahādeva* mountains, where a self-realised Guru, a devotee of *Maheśvara*, namely Vasugupta experienced the Grace of *Śiva*. Vasugupta in turn

intended to impart the esoteric traditional teaching which might have been lost in the world due to the influence of dualistic philosophies. If we observe closely, Vasugupta gathered the knowledge from the *Āgamic* literature by taking an absolutist viewpoint which was further developed and simplified by *Kṣemarāja*. Jaideva Singh further translated and provided notes on the commentary written by *Kṣemarāja*. The importance of the *Vimarśini* of *Kṣemarāja* is expressed at the beginning of the translation. The translation included an introduction to the philosophy and *Āgamic* background of the school. The translation also includes the specific features of the *Upāyas*. For instance, the first sutra in *Śiva Sutras* is '*Caitamātmā*'. *Kṣemarāja* explains it as "Awareness which has absolute freedom of all knowledge and activity is the Self or nature of Reality" (Sinha, 2017, p. 6). Jaideva Singh further comprehends and adds the nature of *Śiva* and the different types of mala.

A similar process is followed with the text, *Vijñānabhairava*. The text *Vijñānabhairava*, is an exposition of *yogajamārga*####, thus establishing its importance in *Āgamic* literature. Abhinavagupta refers to *Vijñānabhairava*, as *Āgāma*, *Śivavijñānopaniṣad*, and *Rudrayāmalaśāra* in *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśini*. The incomplete commentary by *Kṣemarāja* of *Vijñānabhairava* was published by KSTS. Jaideva Singh argues that the complete commentaries by *Śivopādhyāya* and *Bhaṭṭa Ānanda*, are not reliable as they both are followers of *Śāṅkara Vedānta*. Jaideva Singh developed on the aforementioned commentaries and classified the 112 *dhāraṇā* into *Upāyas*. For instance, *Jhagitiḥchāṃsamutpannāvalokyāśamaṇayet | Yataevasamudbhūtā tatas tatraivalīyate ||* (*Vijñānabhairava Sutra* - 96) Translation - "Having observed a desire that has sprung up, the aspirant should put an end to it immediately. It will be absorbed in that very place from which it arose" (Sinha, 2019, p. 88). Jaideva explains why 'desire' should be dissolved. He classifies this as *Śaktopāya* leading to *Śāmbhavopāya*. This is one example taken from *Vijñānabhairava* which was present as an existing and scattered *Āgamic* literature that was streamlined with time. The school suggests the blend of the essential elements of both religion and philosophy within its system which makes it a unique philosophy of all time.

Not only did Trika philosophy go beyond the Ultimate principles described in other Indian philosophies, for example, *Puruṣa* in *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, by positing *Śiva* – Consciousness but also resorted to the already-existing *Āgamas* literature for evolving the notion of *upāyas* to aid the Saivite practitioner in step-wise attainment of this consciousness.

5. Conclusion

The paper has focused on the religious premise which made up the foundation of the school. The foundation in turn aided the ontology of the school. The study also signifies the lineage of propounders who developed the school philosophically. The development didn't abandon the premise but built on it. The foundational text of Vasugupta brought the scattered *Āgamic* literature in one place. *Somānanda* and *Utpaladeva* developed the philosophical ideology from *Āgamic* literature by borrowing the absolutistic notion of Vasugupta. *Abhinavagupta* and *Kṣemarāja* did not just amplify the philosophical aspect but gave due importance to the lineage and development of the school from a religious aspect. The scholars who followed them were able to comprehend and enhance the idiosyncratic nature of the Trika school. The paper discusses a couple of examples to substantiate this claim.

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End Notes

* Religion in the context of this article means faith or belief in *Śiva* (the Ultimate Reality).

† The text summarises the complex doctrines of Trika school in a concise and lucid manner.

‡ Self in this context refers to the all-encompassing the Universal Self and not the limited individual self.

§ The text contains a mantra requesting Rudra (a fierce, destructive, slaying Vedic deity) to become Shiva (literally, kind, benign, blessed). Rudra in this text is used to denote Brahman. The following mantras are in third and fourth *adhyāya* of Svetashvatara Upanishad:

yaeko jālavānīśataīśanībhihsarvāmllokānīśataīśanībhih /

yaevaikaudbhavesambhave ca yaetadviduramrtāstebhavanti // 3.1 //

eko hi rudronadvitīyāyatastheyaimāmllokānīśataīśanībhih /

pratyāñjanāstisthatisamcukocāntakālesamsrjyaviśvābhuvanānigopāh // 3.2 //

yadātamas tan nadvānarātrirnasannacāsachivaevakevalah /

tad aksaram tat saviturvarenyamprajñā ca tasmātprasrtāpurānī // 4.18 //

mānastoketanayemānaāyusimā no gosumā no aśvesurīrisah /

vīrānmā no rudrabhāmitovadhīrhavismantahsadam it tvāhāvāmahe // 4.22 //

***apanyei tiucyatetatraidamnasidhyatiśivahskandahviśākha hitikimkāranammaury aihhiranyārthibhiharcāhprakalpītābhavettāsunasatyāhtuetāhsampratipūjārth āhtāsuhavisyati | | PatañjaliMahābhāṣya (Sutra - 5.3.99). (Wallis 2014)*

†† This monumental yet concise work of philosophical dialectic is deeply engaged with Buddhist thought, and not only that: it paraphrases or alludes to arguments of the *Sāñkhyas*, *Kaumārilas*, *Vijñānavādins*, *Sautrāntikas*, *Vaibhāsikas*, *Prāmānikas*, and *Vaiyākaranas*, especially the figures of *Dignāga*, *Dharmakīrti*, and *Bhartrhari*. These *pūroapaksins* are sometimes agreed with and other times opposed. (Wallis, 2014)

‡‡ *Parāprāveśikā*, commentary under aphorism.

§§ *Parāprāveśikā*, commentary under aphorism.

***yadātutasyacidharmavibhavāmodajrmbhayā |

vicitraracanānānākāryasrstipravartane |

bhavatyunmukhitācittāsecchāyāhprathamātutih || (Śivadrsti 1.8.)

††† Power of Self-revelation, the changeless principle of all changes which is denoted as Śiva in this aspect. (Singh, 1982: 7)

‡‡‡ Absolute bliss. Also denoted as *svātantrya* and Śakti in this aspect. (Singh, 1982: 7)

§§§ Cit and *ānanda* are the essence or *svarūpa* of Parama Śiva. Rest can be treated as his Śakti-s.

**** Will. Known as *Sadāśiva* in this aspect. (Singh, 1982, p. 7)

†††† Knowledge. Also referred to as *Īśvara* in this aspect. (Singh, 1982, p.7)

‡‡‡‡ Power of assuming any and every form. Known as *Sadvidyā* or *ŚuddhaVidyā* in this aspect. (Singh, 1982, p. 7)

§§§§ *śiva, śakti, sadāśiva, īśvara, suddhavidyā, māyā, kalā, vidyā, rāga, niyati, kāla, purusa, prakṛti, buddhi, ahamkār, manas, śrotra, tvak, caksus, rasanā, ghrāna, vāc, pāyū, upashta, pāda, sabda, sparśa, rupa, gandha, rasa, akaśa, vāyu, tejas, jala and prithvi.*

***** *Dikālakalanonmuktādeśoddeśāviśesinī /*

Vyapadestumaśakyāsavakathyāparamārthatah // (Vijñānabhairava sutra - 14)

Antahsvānubhavānandāvikalponmuktagarā /

Yāvasthābharitākārābhairavābhairavātmanah // (Vijñānabhairava sutra - 15)

††††† Transcends all yogic practices.

‡‡‡‡‡ The goal of this way is not isolation of the Self from *Māyā* or *Prakṛti* but the integration of the individual Self to the Universal Self or Bhairava and the realisation of the universe as the expression of His Śakti or spiritual Energy.

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