

My Agreements with My Great-grandfather Diwan Bahadur B.C. Bhattacharya and My Disagreements with My Maternal Great-uncle Dr. P.C. Bagchi

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First of all, published writings of all three of us, me, my great-grandfather Diwan Bahadur B.C. Bhattacharya and my maternal great-uncle Dr. P.C. Bagchi, are in the library of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, a short walk from my home in south Kolkata. Though separated by generations, that fact binds us together. But while I agree with my great-grandfather, I disagree with my maternal great-uncle.

My great-grandfather Diwan Bahadur B.C. Bhattacharya felt and wrote that the Aryans came to India from central Asia. He noted that the Amu Darya or Oxus river, which originates from the western side of the Pamirs and flows into the Aral Sea, has an Indian name, Vakshu, even though no part of it falls in India. He also opined that the Caspian Sea is named after Kashyapa or Mahakashyapa, one of the disciples of Lord Buddha, and who convened the First Council, in which Ananda recited the Sutras and Upali recited the Vinaya. It may be mentioned here that both my great-grandfather and I are united in our vehement opposition to the Tantras, which both of us consider to be nothing short of a disease. According to both of us, it is highly unfortunate that Buddhism got infected by the Tantras.

My maternal great-uncle Dr. P.C. Bagchi dabbled in the Tantras and, sadly, considered the Tantras a subject worth of some study. He has two articles entitled 'Evolution of the Tantras' and 'The Cult of the Buddhist Siddhacharyas' in the book 'Studies on the Tantras' published by the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture in 1989.

The ill-effects of the Tantras are open for all to see. I have failed to find any reference to the name Tara in any ancient book predating the Tantras, thereby, conclusively proving that Tara was a product of the Tantras and yet there is a Hindu temple of Tara a short distance from my home. Those who worship her - I pity those ignorant people - consider her to be an omnipotent goddess. It is indubitably true that the Tantras emerged in Hinduism first and then infected Buddhism. Mantras can be found even in the Vedas whereas they are absent in Theravada Buddhism and only begin to appear in Mahayana Buddhist Sutras.

Another fact to be noted is this - the Buddhist Tantras are divided into four groups, namely, Kriya Tantras, Charya Tantras, Yoga Tantras and Anuttarayoga Tantras. It is only in the last class of the Buddhist Tantras that we find the highly repugnant matter that is characteristic of the Hindu Tantras. Hinduism does not go in for division of its Tantras in this way and one clearly feels that the Mahanirvana Tantra, on which both the worship of Durga and the worship of Kali are based, leads to anything but Nirvana.

My father, Prof. A.C. Bhattacharya, even though he did not put this in writing, was one with me and my great-grandfather in whole-heartedly condemning the Tantras.

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