

*Pūrvaraṅga*

**(INTRODUCTION)**

*ĀGAMA* (*tantra*) and *nigama* (*veda*) are the two major currents of India's intellectual traditions. The tradition believes that these two streams have always existed together. In ontology and epistemology they deserve equal status and prestige.<sup>1</sup> However, there are distinctions between the two, not in their ultimate goals but depending on the means, the points of departure and where the emphasis on some of the important aspects of life and the reality. Leaving the social, ritualistic and religious implications apart, we may broadly record here that Veda and its associated streams accept *nivṛtti* (abstinence from the modes of mind), whereas *āgama* advocates for the *pravṛtti* (inclination towards the mental modes). The former teaches the use of the discriminating cognitive faculties to know what is real and what are the evolutes of *māyā* (illusion). The latter expounds that there is nothing to accept and nothing to renounce, as the apparent world is indistinguishable from its Creator who has projected it on the canvas of His own Self<sup>2</sup>. The picture *hides* the canvas very much the way a form *veils* the substance. The canvas goes into deep oblivion and the picture it holds becomes the object of experience and enquiry.

We may posit another point of distinction between these modes of thought, significant in the present context is that the Veda(s) are the *dr̥ṣṭa* ('seen' or 'visualized;' hence self-evident), whereas *āgama*(s) are *upadiṣṭa* ('stated' or 'interpreted'). This distinction of these two streams is crucial and needs to be

---

<sup>1</sup> *Sarvaṃ śivamayam jagat*; "Śiva is all-pervasive" in the Śaivāgama and *sarvaṃ khalvamidaṃ Brahma*; "Brahman permeates in all" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad, III.14.1). See the diagrams in the Appendix: Taxonomy of Indian Philosophical Systems, and Classification of Indian Verbal Discourses. See also the entries on *āgama* and *nigama* in the Glossary of Conceptual Sanskrit Terms.

<sup>2</sup> Abhinavagupta's *Anuttarāṣṭikā* (included in the 8<sup>th</sup> vol. of *Śrītantrāloka* (ed./comm. Dr. Paramhans Mishra, 1992-99) and *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* 2 of Rājānaka Kṣemarāja.

interpreted carefully as it provides space to the `modern' educated mind, trained at modern/western institutions and quite often tempted to import dichotomic/conflicting theoretical categories/models from the West without realizing their disastrous effect on the thought-content under discussion.<sup>3</sup> In the present century(-ies) we are destined to be more obsessed with the `theories' than the existing data. This distinction of *veda* and *āgama* does not involve any hierarchy or dichotomy. If *āgama* comes under the category of *upadiṣṭa* (`stated'), we must note at the same time that it is articulated by none other than Śiva (`one of the epithets of Śiva is *pañcavaktra* or *pañcānana* of five faces or mouths') – Himself to His beloved wife Pārvatī. The setting of this dialogue is marked for its calm, serene and extremely intimate environments. We do not notice the `presence' of any third person here; in fact there is no space for the `other' at all. There is no space even for the two. This is a dialogue between wife and husband, and the *ardhanārīśvara*'<sup>4</sup> (image of Śiva as half male

---

<sup>3</sup> Marco Pallis rightly observes "...present day Indians and other Orientals; since so many of them, through being made to suffer the elaborately organized ignorance that passes under the name of a "modern education" – often dearly purchased for them by still pious but unsuspecting or complacent parents have had their powers of discernment so disastrously upset that they seem no longer capable of receiving ideas through the medium of their own language; and their readiness to swallow quite uncritically the most hazardous hypotheses, even those relating to their own traditional doctrine, provided they have been put forward by some European sociologist or philosophers is the evidence of a state of mind that can only be described as defeatist; and among these people are to be found men of supposedly high standing and illustrious lineage, occupying responsible positions as rulers, leaders and instructors, but whose professed leadership is of the very essence of dependence and servility."p.12.

"... if for the Westerner a true knowledge of the traditional doctrines offer the only effective means of escaping the impending disaster that so many dread but feel powerless to prevent, through a process of inward reintegration and of reform in the literal sense of the word, so also for the Easterners it remains of consolidation, self-renewal, independence and recollection; and for the two jointly it spells the bridging of the existing rift." p. 15. (Translator's Foreword)

Rene Guenon (1945), *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrine*, (tr.) Marco Pallis.

<sup>4</sup> The Indian realization of `male' and `female' principle in a single substratum. No dichotomy or opposition can ever exist in the philosophical thought and speculations in this tradition. Bringing about a greater synthesis

and half female; *śiva* and *śakti*) principle establishes the perennial unity of two into a single substratum. In this intimate dialogue, the 'inter-space' demands a complete dissolution of a second or third being. In short, there is space for 'absence' but not for 'presence' at all. The 'duality' inherent in the term 'dialogue' in the present context is only morphemic and does not hold any ontological content. By altering or conditioning its *signified* (may be a *violence* in a way) we may use it in the sense of *saṁvāda* or more appropriately *hṛdaya saṁvāda* (lit. perfect expression), which does not involve any second or third person. To become a part of this 'dialogue' (henceforth substituted for *saṁvāda*), we need not only to get rid of our identity(-ies) that form(s), 'duality' but also 'to become of the same heart' (*sahṛdaya*) by harmonizing our 'self' – as 'harmony' is a prerequisite in such an intimate dialogue. This perpetual dialogue in this sense constitutes a 'close text'<sup>5</sup>. An ontological readership for such a 'text' (the dialogue) sets two necessary conditions:

- (i) ***nairmalya***: purity of mind and heart like a clean shining surface of the mirror as it is essential for receiving the reflection of image; and
- (ii) ***tanmayābhavana***: the ability to become one with the object or goal inquiry.

To become a part of this dialogue one has to qualify on two parameters. The goal is to know and to experience the content of the 'text'. There does not exist any 'author' or 'authority', hence no question of author's intention or meaning arises.

---

among the apparently different or opposite views and objects characterizes the Indian mode of thinking 'Advaita' (non-dualism) remains a dominant mode in the intellectual traditions of India.

<sup>5</sup> Umberto Eco (1981), *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of the Texts*, p.49.

There is no apprehension to become an easy prey of what has been termed as 'intentional or affective fallacies'<sup>6</sup>.

This is the setting and form of dialogue in which Bhairavī puts her queries to Bhairava and he responds to them with deep love and reverence<sup>7</sup>. The content of this dialogue is intense and deep and to some extent 'obscure'. Also, the mode in which this content has been uttered/articulated is of great significance. The verb in *samvāda* ( $\sqrt{vad}$ ) and the verbs we are using for  $\sqrt{vad}$  as their English equivalents are all intransitive. They do not have space to accommodate any 'object' in their thematic grid. The verb  $\sqrt{vad}$  requires only self-contained and self-affected agent. This is a *samvāda* with the self and does not necessarily communicate any explicit *message* as such in the first place. By implication, of course, it is concerned with many levels of human conditions and discourses. But this is the all-pervasive Self and its dialogue constitutes 'a self-contained text' in a sense. We may write a biography of this 'close text' by depending on its inner conceptual structures and evidences.

Indian theoreticians discuss another interesting parameter of nature of statements and their relationship with the audience. Three modes of *upadeśa* (expression/dialogue) have been recorded:

1. ***prabhu sammita*** : characterized by *śabda* and authoritativeness (as the *Veda*).

---

<sup>6</sup> Terms popularized by Wimsatt and Beardsley (in *The Verbal Icon*, 1954)

<sup>7</sup> *Rudrayāmala Tantra* is an exception in this regard in which Ānanda Bhairava asks questions and Ānanda Bhairavi answers.

2. *suhṛd sammita*: characterized by the authority of the friend/well-wisher where *artha*/intended meaning is more important (*smṛti/purāna*)
3. *kāntā sammita*: characterized by *rasa* (charm) like the words of a beloved/wife.

The *āgama* and the words of a beloved/wife come under the category of expression that is characterized by its charm and aesthetic content. Literature in the Indian paradigm has been recognized as *kāntā sammita*<sup>8</sup>. Here neither the authoritative words (*pauruṣa*/harsh words) as in *prabhu sammita*, nor the *artha*/or intended meaning as in *suhṛda sammita* is of much importance. Literature as *kāntā sammuddeśa* offers every *puruṣārtha* (chief goals of life as also of the other *śastra*(s): *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*) but in a more intimate, aesthetic and suggestive fashion.

*Agama* or *tantra* necessarily involves a 'vision' (*darśana*) of reality. As the Veda(s) remained the major sources of all the theistic and atheistic principles and philosophical systems, in the same way *āgama* is the source of all the Śaiva and the Śākta philosophical systems like (s) like *Pratyabhijñā* (Recognition), *Kula*, *Krama*, *Vīra-Śaiva*, *Siddhānta Śaiva*, *Lakulīśa Pāśupata* and many more cults like *Tripurā*, *Tārā* etc. *Agama* also pertains to the *Vaiṣṇava* (*Pāñcarātra*) Śākta, Bauddha, Jaina, etc. The Śaiva-Śākta systems, especially that which flourished in Kashmir and its adjacent areas in 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century excelled in the disciplines like philosophy, poetics, aesthetics, art and *tantra*. One may need to find a convincing reason as to why the

---

<sup>8</sup> KPI.2

major theoretician of Indian poetics and aesthetics belong to Kashmir and either professedly or some other way associated with the Śaiva philosophical systems. For centuries Kashmir remained one of the most illustrious seats of learning for the Buddhists (4<sup>th</sup> Buddhist council, Kashmir *Ābhidhārmika*) and the Śaivites— up to the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century. Bhāmaha, Vāmana, Udbhata, Ānandavardhana, Kuntaka, Bhaṭṭatauta, Vāmanagupta, Mahimabhaṭṭa, Rudrabhaṭṭa, Mammaṭa, Mañkhaka (Ruyyaka), Jayaratha and many more belong to Kashmir. Mahāmāheśvara Śrī Abhinavaguptapādācārya is, of course, the most celebrated and authoritative exponent of *tantra*, poetics, aesthetics and philosophy of Kashmir.

Philosophy in the sense of 'vision' (*darśana*) is also a way to experience reality; it comes closer to the basic assumptions of literature and literary theories. There is no apparent gap or opposition existing between these two disciplines particularly in the Indian context. In fact, interdisciplinarity and integrity of thought-systems characterize the Indian intellectual discourse<sup>9</sup>. This distinction becomes more superficial when we examine these two disciplines with reference to the Trika system of Kashmir. It is not only the common theoretical assumptions, but to a great extent the methods, devices and modes of exposition are also same. The great traditions of *tantra*, philosophy and poetics culminate in Ācārya Abhinavagupta and his *magnum opus Śrī Tantrālokaḥ*, which is not only an encyclopedic work of *Tantra* philosophy but also the most authoritative and authentic exposition of this system. The theoretical assumptions of *pratyabhijñā* (theory/philosophy of recognition), *ābhāsa*

---

<sup>9</sup> *sāstram hi sāstrāntarānubandhi*, "one discipline is intrinsically associated with other disciplines."

(theory of appearance, or Realistic Idealism)<sup>10</sup>, *svātantrya* (theory of absolute freedom of will), *bimba-pratibimbavāda* (theory of image and counter-image) and the concept of *pratibhā* (intuitive experience or knowledge) constitute an extensive background for his philosophical *tantrika* and literary expositions. Apart from this the concept like *ānanda*, *ullāsa*, *rasa*, *dhvani*, *vāk*, *anubhāvana*, (aesthetic reception), *anukīrtana*, *sādrśya*, *sajātīya*, *upalakṣaṇa*, *nairmalya*, *upāya* and many more,<sup>11</sup> which are so frequent in philosophy and literary theories, further strengthen this common bond.

These are the basic insights that define the conception and the structuration principle of this work. Throughout the last millennium, Abhinavagupta with his two exceptionally rich literary commentary *Dhvanyālakalocana* and *Abhinavabharati* has always registered his conspicuous position and presence in the domains of literature and aesthetics. In fact, no discussion in Indian philosophy, poetics and aesthetics can be considered complete and conclusive without the contribution of Ācārya Abhinavagupta.

It remains a requirement to examine his sources of literary and aesthetic theory and also as to how the Trika philosophy system, of which he himself is the most outstanding exponent, constitutes the background of such discussion. No study has been carried out so far in this regard with special reference to *Tantrāloka*, which assimilates all the trends and theoretical assumptions of *āgama(s)* and the Śaiva-

---

<sup>10</sup> Terms offered by Prof. K.C. Pandey (1963), *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, p.319.

<sup>11</sup> All such pertinent terms are defined with reference to the original texts in the Appendices of this work. See Glossary of Conceptual Sanskrit Terms.

Śākta philosophies. The present work offers 'a partial fulfillment' of this requirement.

The existing literature in this area is mainly of historical and philosophical nature. For example, Prof. K.C. Pandey's pioneering works (1959, 1963, 1986) take into account the issue like ascertaining the date, text-authorship and origin/evolution of the Śaiva philosophical system along with their major premises. The works of Prof. V. Raghavan (1940, 1973 and 1980) are of immense help in which he has explored into the number of *rasa* and concepts of *alamkāra śāstra*. Professor Gnoli's work (1968, see under Gnoli in the bibliography) is an insightful exposition of Abhinava's concept of aesthetic experience. The works of Prof. G. T. Despande (1989, mainly based on Prof. K.C. Pandey's 1963), B.N. Pandit (1993), M.M. Gopinath Kaviraj (1966), R.K. Kaw (1967), Dr. Navajeevan Rastogi (1987) have generated immense interest among the modern scholars through the exposition of Abhinava's aesthetic theory mainly in the background of Pratyabhijñā philosophy. Some modern learned commentaries and translations of the major philosophical and literary commentaries by Shri Jaidev Singh (1979, 1980, 1982, 1988), Dr. Paramhansa Mishra "Hansa" (1992-1999, a brilliant Hindi commentary on both *TA* along with Jayaratha's commentary *Viveka* on *TA* and other minor works of Abhinavagupta), Ācārya Viśveśara (1973), Jagannath Pathak (1997), Vrajvallabha Dwivedi (1984, 1988) (see the Select Bibliography) are also of great value, especially for their philosophical expositions and making these text available to the larger readership. Amarjit Kaur (1979) has studied the influence of Indian philosophical systems on Sanskrit poetics.

Contemporary researches evidence an emerging interest especially in Kashmir Śaivism with special reference to the works of Ācārya Abhinavagupta. One such work is by Andre Padoux (1992, tr. Into English in 1992), which studies the concept of *Vāk* in selected Hindu *Tantras*. Mark S.G. Dyez.kowski's (1988) work on the western Kaula traditions is also noteworthy.

But there is no work to examine in detail the interface of Śaiva philosophy and literary theory. As stated above, *āgamic* traditions are enriched with philosophic and literary thought, no research project undertaken or completed so far examines them with the perspectives of current debates in literature, philosophy of language and aesthetics. Śiva is the abode of all fine arts (*lalita kala* 64 in number, see Appendix) including grammar. The *Astādhyāyī* of Pānini is considered an important work in the *āgamic* traditions as well. Unlike the modern grammars, *Astādhyāyī* contains the perspectives on culture, philosophy and aesthetics. The *śiva sūtra* (classification of speech sounds in Sanskrit), the division of the work in eight chapters, a number of *sūtra-s*<sup>12</sup>-- all consolidate the roots and place of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* in the *āgamic* traditions. Though some of these ideas have been discussed in the third chapter of this work but it still remains a subject matter of full-fledged independent research project.

Moreover, Abhinavagupta has been mainly studied as a literary and philosophical commentator. It is strange that no study takes a serious concern of the unity and

---

<sup>12</sup> *Aṣṭaka* (set of 8, eight fold) is so crucial to the Śaiva system. *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* begins with the enumeration of eight *mūrti(s)* (images/principles) of Śiva. Abhinavagupta (*TA* VIII,IX, *TS* Ch.12) records many types of eight-fold sets. The *P.Sūtra(s)* like I.1.71 (*ādirantyena sahetā*) and I.4.54. (*Svatantraḥ kartā*) have been produced at several places in support of the philosophical arguments by both Abhinavagupta and his celebrated commentator on *TA* Rājānaka Jayratha. See *TS* Ch. 3.

integrity that characterize his poetics and aesthetics. Even in philosophical circuit he is known more as a philosopher of Pratyabhijñā. His deep interest in Kaula system, of which *Tāntrāloka* is remarkable evidence, has been mainly ignored. His literary expositions owe a lot to these other sources of *Trika* system. As Abhinavagupta is the representative of all the branches of Kashmir Śaivīsm, his *Tāntrāloka* is the most comprehensive, authoritative and representative text of this system of thought. He himself takes note of this complex and intensive nature this work. In his own gloss:

*vitatasTantrāloko vigāhituṃ naiva śakyate sarvaiḥ.*

*rijuvacanaviracitamidaṃ tu Tantrasāraḥ tataḥ śrṇuta.*<sup>13</sup> [“That not all are capable of diving deep into the depth of *Tāntrālokaḥ*, hence hear this *Tantrasāraḥ* (an abridgement of *TA*) composed as lucid statement”].

Like the mode of composition of all the *āgamic vāṅmaya* (discussed above), *Tāntrāloka* is also composed in the form of dialogue. The identity of the listener of this *āgamic* discourse remains a secret unless one touches upon its concluding verse<sup>14</sup>. Paramaśiva, in His all-pervasive form is the sole listener of this *tantra vāṅmaya*. The identities of two, exponent and listener get dissolved and these two get merged into each other and become one.

*Tāntrāloka* and its compendium *Tantrasāra* constitute the multifaceted foundation for his literary and aesthetic expositions. For exposition of *dhvani* and *rasa*, Abhinava is sourced by these rich *agamic* traditions that have been skillfully

---

<sup>13</sup> *TS* Ch.I.2

<sup>14</sup> *TA* XXXVII.85

woven, foregrounded and contextualized in *Tantrāloka*. Abhinavagupta's literary commentaries – *Dhvanyālokalocana* and *Abhinavabhāratī* are enriched with technical terminology of Trika philosophy. He freely uses them, may be with anticipation that the readers are familiar with his philosophical assumptions. So he does not feel the need to explain them there. Such conceptual terms are discussed and commented upon at length in his philosophical and *tantric* treatises but more specifically in *Tantrāloka*. This is the rationale of selecting this encyclopedic and *upaniṣdic* text as the source material to study the interface domain of Śaiva philosophy and literary theory with specific reference to its major exponent Abhinavagupta. Philosophy, literature and *tantra* are minutely interwoven in his exceptionally vast amount of writings<sup>15</sup>. This is a rare blending, perhaps singular, in India and in the world very much like the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. The classical debate relating to the hierarchy/ranking of the human discourses<sup>16</sup> and 'contest of faculties' does not appear much relevant in this context. It seems that there has always been a quest for comparatively subtle and universal base for laying the foundation of theory amidst the apparent differences, conflict and flux in India. The existence of differences and flux, have been, no doubt recognized but only at the surface level. Philosophers and theoreticians in India, as also in the world, have always strived for a 'universals' or 'deep structures' where all the contesting views submerge and emerge from the same substratum. This seems to be

---

<sup>15</sup> 41 works to his credit (See the Appendix )out of which 20 have been available so far.

<sup>16</sup> Vide Plato's *The Republic*, Ch. X and Aristotle's *Poetics*.

the human destiny that we are bound to live with the universals because only this can bring about integrity and immortality to our efforts and can bind different individuals (*mūrti*) 'each to each by natural piety'. A theory expounded with this insight survives the constraints and tests of time and space. No Indian theory in philosophy, literature or in other discipline has ever suffered extinction. The tradition has been characterized as 'perennial flow of the Ganges' acquiring many hues and forms as per in winter, summer and the rainy seasons, where several tributaries merge together to constitute major flow or sometimes the main current flows into many directions. Maintenance is a 'norm' – not only in language but also in thought and culture in India.

Śaivism, especially Kashmir Śaivism is perhaps, the most forgotten chapter of Indian philosophy. Scholars have often sounded its richness, intellectual input and relevance (cf. extensive work done by Prof. K.C. Pandey, Thakur Jaidev Singh, Navajivan Rastogi, Balajinath Pandit, Dr. Parmahans Mishra, Dr. R.S. Dwivedi, Dr. Vraj Vallabha Dviwedi). But as we have seen above, the *āgamic* works are based on different assumptions and they can be maintained in a living tradition only. It is extremely difficult to study and to live with them without the able guidance of a competent teacher coming from the tradition of *āgama* itself. Many commonplace instructions and topics have been left un-commented. Sometimes one *āgama* relates to the another for its meaning and constitution. Abhinavagupta names and quotes from 182 *āgamic* texts in his *Tantrāloka* (most of them are no more available). Rājānaka Jayaratha in his celebrated commentary *Viveka* (on *Tantrāloka*) records 275 *tāntric*

text<sup>17</sup>. In addition to this vast literature, there is a large number of un-sourced statements quoted either in support or reputation of the ongoing arguments throughout the *Tantrāloka* and *Viveka*. This gap can never be fulfilled by the modern academia. It is again sad to note that the most outstanding scholar and *yogī* of the Śaiva traditions of Kashmir. Śri Lakshman Ju Maharaj left the world of impure *adhvan*/principles some five years back. After him, this field has literally become void. Late Maharaj ji initiated and guided a member of scholars to work in Kashmir Śaiva philosophy. Thousands of invaluable agamic manuscripts are dumped in various libraries and they are yet to see the light. Some texts published under auspices of Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir and the Royal patronage are out of print for long. The surviving texts need rigorous editorial exercise and to be translated in modern Indian and world languages for their wider readership and dissemination.

Observing a sharp contrast/contradiction between the Kashmir (Śāradādeśa/Kaśyapamīra) which Abhinavagupta left exactly a millennium ago and which he has so fondly depicted in the last forty verses of the last chapter of *Tantrāloka*,<sup>18</sup> and Kashmir today, one may simply get disheartened and depressed. The oblivion of such a brilliant thought system will ultimately cause a setback to the intellectual traditions of India. Would it be too ambitious to state that studies, like the present one, may contribute something to build up necessary condition for *pratyabhiñā* (recognition) of Kashmir's unparallel glory?

---

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed list with complete referential details see *Tantrāloka* vol.1 (eds. R.C. Dwivedi and Navajivan Rastogi) pp. 253-283; 286-345.

<sup>18</sup> *TA* XXXVII. 39-84

In the *Kulārṇava Tantra*, Śiva declares, “For the four *yuga*(s) (ages) there are four corresponding literatures:<sup>19</sup>

Ages	Type of literature
1. Satyuga	Vedas (from <i>apauruṣeya</i> / contingent texts)
2. Treta	Smṛiti (recollected texts)
3. Dvāpara	Purāṇa (mythical accounts)
4. Kali	Āgama

This is the scriptural support to establish the relevance of the work.

Abhinavagupta himself discusses the methodology of interpreting an *āgamic* text<sup>20</sup> which is more of the nature of textual exegesis- a common mode of interpretation of a *śāstra* in the Indian traditions. The present study involves a simple methodology i.e. ‘exposure to and the familiarity with the text’. The goal is to approach *Tantraāloka* in terms of what the Formalists terms ‘ontological critic’.

The choice of the topic is not inspired by any ‘Classical prejudice’<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, this impression is generally created with the work relating to Indological studies. Rene Guenon makes a remarkable observation in this regard: “Indeed the study of the East as we know it today, it undertaken in a really direct way, would be of great assistance of all Antiquity.....”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Prof. Kapil Kapoor opines: “...comparison with the Western tradition of thought are best avoided because

---

<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Acharya Baladev Upadhyaya (1997) p.435

<sup>20</sup> TA XXVIII.400-405. See also TA (ed.) R.C. Dwivedi and Navajivan Rastogi, (1987) vol.1, pp. 63-85. Also Abh.I. 5-7.

<sup>21</sup> Rene Guenon (1945) *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, ‘it (classical prejudice) consists essentially in a predisposition to attribute the origin of all civilization to the Greeks and Romans’, p.38.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid* p. 34

isolated comparison make no sense and may even be misleading and what we need to do is to compare the whole system and that need a separate study. Such a study has to be preceded by a study of one system *per se*”...<sup>23</sup> So both the *pūrva pakṣa* (the opponent) and the *uttara pakṣa* (the exponent) come from the same cultural milieu. Not much space is thus available for comparison in this study. Some studies indeed have been made comparing and contrasting Coleridge and Abhinavagupta, and Croce and Abhinavagupta (refer to Bibliography), but they hardly establish any crucial credibility in this domain of study.

The work has been structured in five chapters (Śiva is described as having five *ānana* (mouths/faces; also *ānana* is used for chapter by Pt. Jagannātha in his *Rasagaṅgādhara*) of Śiva

Chapter One (Philosophy and Literary Theory: The Śaiva Perspective) foregrounds the common issues and assumptions of philosophy and literary theory. It examines and collates the recurrent issues like - nature of reality and its linguistic/literary representation, nature and status of representation of reality in art and literature, nature and sources of creative process, status of literature as verbal discourse and its validity as discourse of knowledge, literature as linguistic enterprise, literature as ontological and epistemology, nature of literary meaning/experience, concept of *pratibhā* in creation and reception of a literary work,

---

<sup>23</sup> Kapil Kapoor, (1995) *Literary Theory: Indian Conceptual Framework*, pp. xii-xiii.

art and yoga and the goals of philosophy and literature. These issues have been studied with a perspective from the Trika philosophy.

Chapter Two (Abhinavagupta and the Śaiva Traditions) delves into tracing the intellectual sources that establish Abhinavagupta as a representative authority in the *agamic*, philosophical and literary schools of the Kashmir Śaiva philosophy. This also contextualizes the extensive works of Abhinavagupta in the traditions of Pratijabhiñā, Kaula, and Krama systems and thus completes the theoretical background for the next three chapters. This chapter lists the topics from all 37 chapter of *Tantrāloka* relevant to the examination of Abhinavagupta's poetics and aesthetics.

*Vāk* (speech, language) is subtle and ontological in the Kashmir Śaiva systems and it is an integral part of creative process, both in the spheres of world and art. This school of thought recognizes four stages of speech (sometimes five also as *sūksamā* has been separately enumerated and discussed in the Kaula system). The Śaiva philosophers also offer a critique of the three stages of *Vāk* of the school to Grammarians. The concept of *Vāk* is also a concept of manifestation and in this process simultaneous turns sequential, one becomes many, integrated content appears as differential. This third chapter (Śaiva Concept of *Vāk*: Meaning and Creative Process) examines all such aspects of *Vāk* along with some contentious issues like *vivarta* (multiple manifest form) and *pariṇāma* (transformation) with reference to Vedānta, Nyāya and Grammar and the Śaiva theoretical positions.

#### Chapter Four (Abhinavagupta's Poetics: Its Philosophical Assumptions)

examines the philosophical concerns of Abhinavagupta's literary theory. The three dimensions of his creative self -- philosopher, literary theorist and poet make his exposition exceptionally rich in content. Major theories of the Śaiva systems like theory of *jñāna* (knowledge), *smṛti* (memory) and *apohana* (differentiation); *bimba/pratibimbavāda* (theory of image and counter image) *pratyabhijñā* (theory of recognition), *ābhāsavāda* and *svātantryavāda* (theories of appearance and of absolute free will) and other related concepts have been studied and examined as the sources of philosophical assumptions implicit in Abhinavagupta's literary theory.

Sourced by the two celebrated literary commentaries, the last chapter (Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics and Poetics) *Dhvanyālokalocana* and *Abhinavabhāratī* examines Abhinavagupta's poetics and aesthetics. The idea is not to examine him as literary commentator only though it involves a great prestige in the tradition,<sup>24</sup> but as an independent theorist in the *āgamic* traditions and the deep influence that his brilliant exposition brought on the later Śaiva philosophers and poetics (like Mammaṭa) is evidence of Abhinavagupta's remarkable place in the Indian verbal discourses.

A Glossary of Conceptual Sanskrit Terms has been appended to the work for the technical requirements from such a research project.

---

<sup>24</sup> In the context of Grammar, the well known maxim is: *munināmuttarottaram prāmāṇyam*, among the three sages- Pāṇini, Kātyāyana and Patañjali- one who follows acquires comparatively more epistemic credibility. Pāṇini's I.4.2. (*vipratīṣedhe param kāryam*) may be interpreted in support of this convention.