

DETLEF KANTOWSKY: *Von Südasien lernen. Erfahrungen in Indien und Sri Lanka.* Frankfurt/M. / New York: Edition Qumran im Campus-Verlag, 1985. 200 pages, 4 illustr., DM 26.-

Detlef Kantowsky's new book deals with his scientific career in an autobiographic manner. He reflects on his experiences in India and Sri Lanka in eight essays. The first essay "Von Südasien lernen" (Learning from South Asia) already reveals his essential motives. He intends to write a subjective and committed book based on personal experience and suggesting possible solutions. The main thread throughout the whole book is the tension between the South Asian and the Western "progressive" way of thinking. But Kantowsky does not only criticise the latter; he also tries to show alternatives. Here the decisive point is that those are not alternatives for the "underdeveloped", but rather for the "developed" countries. He contrasts the dualistic, destructive categorizing of the "either/or" of our "Brave New World" with the "not only / but also" South Asian mentality that he experienced and which he considers a possible alternative for the industrial countries. In the following essays he deals with this main subject in different contexts. First he shows Gandhi's merit in changing the interpretation of the Hindu tradition, changes which have been put into practice by the Sarvodaya movement in both India and Sri Lanka. The next two essays are devoted to this movement, describing its practice, ideas and aims.

The following three essays analyse more specifically the differences between Western and Eastern thinking patterns, referring first to the field of development policies, where the problems of the modernization strategies are brought out clearly. Then he takes a literary topic, Aldous Huxley's two books "Brave New World" and "Island". The seventh essay highlights the different views of man and nature in the two cultures.

The last essay "Vom Eingeborenen zum Unterentwickelten" (From native to underdeveloped) describes the changes of attitude of the Western world towards the developing countries since World War II. The native became transformed into an underdeveloped individual, his work becoming part of an "informal sector" of a "postcolonial deformed economy". Here Kantowsky clearly shows the new dilemma of "homo faber" following the creation of a new religion of "progress".

But what happens if this religion fails, if progress does not fulfill the expectations? Kantowsky argues here on two different levels. First he shows the absorptive capacity of the Hindu way of life, and, second, he suggests an individual solution for modern Western man confronted with the failure of his ideals. To escape from the "iron cage of modern capitalism" (one of Kantowsky's many references to Max Weber) does not seem possible, but the search for a meaningful life is by no means obsolete.

According to Kantowsky, the Western world should learn from the Eastern way of life, in order to become able to defeat its destructive and dualistic categorizing of "to be or not to be". Eastern thinking can be experienced individually and understood by anyone who really wants to follow it.

Kantowsky points out at the beginning that his intention was to write a personal, subjective book reflecting his experiences and the resulting consequences. This only leaves the possibility of saying whether one liked the book or not. Nevertheless, I wish to make a few remarks. One great merit of this book is that it shows that the present problems of our time are not due to any constraints but result from our way of thinking. The changes of opinion which occur in any scientific career are described in a very impressive manner based on the author's own experience. But it is nevertheless doubtful whether this way via South Asian thinking is really necessary in order to find new alternatives. As Kantowsky says, the virtues of Buddhism are not bound to it, they can also be found in other cultures.

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JACOB RÖSEL: Der Palast des Herrn der Welt. Entstehungsgeschichte und Organisation der indischen Tempel- und Pilgerstadt Puri. (Materialien zu Entwicklung und Politik, 27). München: Weltforum-Verlag, 1980. XXXVIII, 378 pages, DM 59.-

Jagannath and the temple city of Puri which Claudius Buchanau, the first Christian missionary to visit Puri in 1806, had called "the Moloch of the heathen world which is to the Hindoos what Mecca is to the Mohammedans, the stronghold and fountain-head of their idolatry" form the fascinating subjects of J. Rösel's monograph. With its Great Temple of Jagannatha, "The Lord of the World", and about 500 other temples and holy places and about 10 000 priests and temple servants Puri attracts and accommodates according to Rösel's calculations each year about 20 times as many pilgrims (c. 1.5 million) as its own population which amounts to c. 65 000. Puri can thus still be regarded as one of India's major temple cities.

Rösel's first major chapter contains an exhaustive study of the social, economic and ritual organization of the temple city. In the context of this short review it must suffice to mention only a few major conclusions of this analysis. The chapter on the social organization and its 118 priestly groups (sevakas) and some 70 monasteries (matha) is introduced by a structural comparison of the cult of village deities and the imperial cult ("Reichskult") of Jagannatha. Whereas the ideas of the equality of the devotees of Jagannatha and his "territoriality" had their origin in his tribal and post-tribal village background, the highly sophisticated organization of Puri's Brahmanical priests served as a model for the Hinduization of the emergent class society of medieval Orissa and the political organization of the regional kingdom of Orissa. In this context Rösel's description of "the structure of traditional division of labour" is of particular interest. Despite its outward appearance of a dis-