

Rakesh Peter-Dass - Asian Interpretations of Philippians 2:5–11

Abstract

Interpretations of Philippians 2 have a conspicuous place in the theological imagination of Asian Christians. This is a paradoxical state of affairs. The biblical pericope is kenotic in content, but its function in Asia has been to assert liberation. Asian scholarship on the passage has generated a variety of goals: economic justice, social equality, interfaith relations, and national development. The choice of the passage as a catch-all anchor is not an accident. Its kenotic content constitutes the very ground used by marginal voices to theologize for influence. As a result, a study of theological interpretations of Philippians 2 in Asia reveals the particular goals of Asian theologies and constitutes a case study on the religious imagination of Christians in Asia.

Keywords

Philippians 2 – Asian theology – kenosis – liber

Namrata Chaturvedi – Indian Christian Spiritual Autobiography: Krupabai Satthianadhan’s Saguna

Abstract

Krupabai Satthianadhan’s *Saguna* (1887–88), initially serialised in the Madras Christian College magazine is rightfully regarded as the first Indian spiritual autobiographical novel. Any study of this narrative compels one to explore the influence of the Evangelical autobiography on this genre in nineteenth century India as well as to engage with the distinctive aspects of an Indian Christian woman’s spiritual quest in British India. This study also argues for focus on the spiritual life of Indian Christianity as a valid way of according recognition to the experiences and struggles of the life of a religion that is outside of mainstream religious discourse in contemporary India.

Keywords

spiritual autobiography – Indian Christianity – native – Evangelical – Christ

Mark E. Balmforth - A Tamil Pietist in Ceylon: The Educational Experiments of Christian David

Abstract

This microhistory of the early nineteenth-century school-building efforts of a Tamil preacher in British Ceylon tracks an intersection between missionary education, British colonialism, and South Asian modernity. Christian David (1771–1852) was born into a Tamil Christian family with deep connections to the Royal Danish-Halle Mission at Tranquebar and educated by German missionaries Christian Friedrich Schwartz and Christoph Samuel John, like his more famous contemporaries King Serfoji II of Tanjore and the celebrated Christian poet Vētanāyakam Cāstiriyār. In the year 1801, after declining employment in Serfoji’s court, David accepted an offer to become ‘Preacher in the Malabar Language in the District of Jafnapatam’. Drawing upon his extensive, albeit little-known writings, this essay argues that David expanded upon the mixed Tamil-German education of his childhood and the pedagogical experimentation of his missionary mentors to propose and construct a pioneering and consequential state-funded boarding school explicitly seeking to cultivate governable subjects.

Keywords

South Asia – colonial education – Christianity – Christian David (1771 – 1852) – Ceylon – Royal Danish-Halle Mission – Tranquebar

Ashok Kumar Mocherla - We Called Her Peddamma: A Sociological Appraisal of Caste, Gender, and Missionary Medicine in Guntur: 1880–1930

Abstract

The medical work carried out by Dr. Anna Sarah Kugler in the town of Guntur (1880–1930), which was a part of the Telugu speaking region of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, as a foreign medical missionary associated with the mission field of the then General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, constitutes a significant phase in the history of medicine and gender in South India. Despite bringing about visible changes in gender perceptions of medical professions, strangely, she or her work finds no mention in the social science literature on history of medicine in modern South India in general and coastal Andhra Pradesh in particular. This paper explores the nature and patterns of definitive changes that gender roles and patriarchal structures among the Telugus residing in coastal Andhra Pradesh have undergone after coming under the influence of a mission hospital in Guntur established by Dr. Anna Sarah Kugler. By doing so, it also brings out an analysis on how this medical institution transformed the firmly-

held traditional perceptions and stereotypes on the sources of illness, disease, and treatments, and in turn laid the foundation for modern medicine to establish itself in South India.

Keywords - missionary medicine – Guntur – mission hospital – woman missionary

David Emmanuel Singh – **Constructing ‘Alternative Masculinity’: A vision for the Homecoming of Indian**

Christian Converts in the 19th century South Asia

Abstract

This paper examines evidence from the 19th century in support of the argument that the reformation of Hinduism was a strategy to persuade Indian Christians (and Muslims) to consider ‘homecoming’ (*gharvāpasī*). It focusses on ‘Hindu masculinity’ and highlights Lekhram’s distinctive perspective which undermines traditional patriarchy and offers relative equality to women through ‘positive discrimination’. This is argued with evidence from *strī śikṣā, rāmcandarjī kā saccā darśan* and *śrī kṛiṣṇa kā jīvancaitr* as well as Shraddhananda’s editorial in *kulliyāt-e ārya musāfir* and Dayananda Saraswati’s *satyārtha prakāsh*.

Keywords

Pundit Lekhram – Arya Samaj – masculinity – Christianity

Glenn Shive - **Refugees and Religion in Hong Kong: 1945–1960**

Abstract

This article points to the importance of religion for refugees and the migration process. After World War II and civil war in China, many refugees flocked to Hong Kong (HK) for safe haven in the British colony, and possible subsequent migration abroad. Christian congregations in HK, and missionaries who themselves were refugees from China, offered hospitality and support services across refugee groups. They advocated for the colonial government to help settle refugees by building low-cost urban housing, schools, medical clinics and new infrastructure. This new workforce was crucial to HK’s industrialization which took-off in the 1950s. With the decline of HK’s trade economy due to the Cold War embargo of China, many refugees became entrepreneurs-of necessity by starting family businesses that absorbed migrant labour. Religiously-inspired assistance to refugees, from within one’s group and beyond, made a big difference in assimilating newcomers and helping them to rebuild their lives in adverse conditions. Beyond Christian responses, the article also explores the role of the Wong Tai Sin Taoist temple in Kowloon, itself uprooted from Guangzhou and replanted in HK. It reassured displaced people with cultural continuity to their ancestor halls and offered psycho-social assistance through spirit-writing divination, herbal medicine and Taoist worship adapted from rural Chinese villages to urban workers struggling to improve their lives and adapt to Hong Kong.

Keywords

refugee – migration – religion – christianity – Taoism – hospitality – Hong Kong – prc – assimilation