

GERHARD OBERHAMMER (ed.): *Inklusivismus: eine indische Denkform*. (De Nobili Research Library. Occasional Papers, 2). 113 pp. Wien: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, 1983. Ös. 140. (Commission Agents: E. J. Brill, Leiden; Gerold & Co., Vienna; Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.)

This book, dedicated to the late Paul Hacker (1913–79), is a retrospective view of an aspect of his Indological thought which concerned him very much, but to which he was unable to devote a complete publication. It consists of a lecture given by him in 1977 (edited by K. Rüping from Hacker's revised draft and a tape), followed by essays by three other scholars.

The first piece, 'Inklusivismus', is not Hacker at his trenchant and innovatory best, but it does bring together much of his earlier thinking on the feature of Indian thought to which he gave this name. Inclusivism has two essential features: acceptance of beliefs, myths or practices in another religion as having some validity, and subordination of them to one's own. *Bhagavadgītā*, 7, 20–23, with 9, 23,

Hacker tells us, represents the classic form of inclusivism. The passage is a clear theological statement: worshippers of gods other than Kṛṣṇa receive their desires, though these are actually granted by Kṛṣṇa and their worship is really (unknown to them) an irregular form of Kṛṣṇa worship; but their reward is finite (unlike that of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, who reach an eternal state). A similar attitude is expressed mythologically in a Śaiva sequel to the Vaiṣṇava myth of Narasiṃha: it accepts that Narasiṃha saved the world, but adds that the world had then to be saved from Narasiṃha by Śiva in a yet more wonderful form, the *śarabha*. In the late nineteenth century—and here we come to material with which Hacker felt personally involved—it became commonplace to accept all religions while subordinating them to Advaita Vedānta.

Inclusivism is thus an attitude towards, and a kind of belief about, other religions. Hacker rightly distinguishes it from tolerance, with which it is often confused; but he tends to exaggerate the difference. He defines it (p. 12) as a claim that a central idea of another religious group is identical with some central idea of one's own group. Yet this definition does not represent the whole of what Hacker means by the term, since in the next paragraph he says that not every case of inclusivism directly involves or consists of an identification; indeed, neither the 'classic' case in the *Bhagavadgītā* nor the *śarabha* story fits the definition.

Hacker ends by claiming that inclusivism is peculiar to India. Here, he almost comes to a passionate concern of his last years: his apprehension of danger to the Roman Catholic church (which he had joined in 1962) from the new Christian inclusivism taught by K. Rahner and R. Panikkar. But his lecture is an Indological one, and this concern remains under the surface.

W. Halbfass, though he does not deal explicitly with the above concern, relates the development of Hacker's views on inclusivism to his recurrent critique of neo-Hinduism, and to the wider perspective of the intellectual encounter of India and the West, of which Hacker's work is itself a part. He carries the analysis of the concept rather further than Hacker did; indeed, he shows that in the course of his career Hacker became less inclined to analyse it. Both Halbfass and A. Wezler dispute Hacker's claim that inclusivism is peculiar to India, and give interesting counter-examples. Wezler looks for factors which might favour inclusivism in the Indian tradition; he links it more closely than Hacker would to the Vedic practice of identification, and also to the Indian reverence for tradition, which requires new ideas to be given ancient authority. He calls for more examination of features of Indian society which might have encouraged inclusivism. Curiously, none of the writers points to the importance of the belief in rebirth: in both Hinduism and Buddhism, a rival programme for salvation can be given some validity, yet subordinated to one's own, by claiming that it leads to something high in the hierarchy of post-mortem states, but less than final release—what Śaṅkara (on *Vedānta-*

*Sūtra* 4, 2, 7) calls 'relative immortality' (*āpekṣikam amṛtatvam*).

G. Oberhammer's concluding essay examines Hacker's ideas about inclusivism in the light of his theological concerns, pointing out his anxiety to distinguish it from the use of pagan ideas by the early Church, and his insistence that modern Christian theologians should follow the methods of the Fathers and not those of Hinduism.

Sometimes these papers overlap ; sometimes, too, they are at odds with each other over what inclusivism is. Oberhammer, for instance, doubts whether the 'classic' case in the *Bhagavadgītā* is inclusivism at all. For anyone interested in Hacker's valuable contribution to our understanding of Indian ideas and of the intellectual encounter of India and the West, they complement his monographs and his volume of *Kleine Schriften* ; but they do not quite add up to a book—a view apparently shared by whoever is responsible for the absence of an index.

D. H. KILLINGLEY

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