

EAST VERSUS WEST

A DENIAL OF CONTRAST

By P. Kodanda Rao.

(Servants of India Society)

With an Introduction by Sir S. Radhakrishnan and dedicated to the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri.

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The Argument

The current concepts of cultures and civilizations have led to conflicts between peoples and to much human misery and unhappiness. For instance, the division of Civilization into Eastern and Western, or Western or Non-Western, has become one of the axioms of current thought and, as such, has profoundly influenced public policies. It has been held that each of these two Civilizations is an integrated pattern which has been and will continue to be true to its own type, and can and will and should develop along its own lines. It has been variously held that the one Civilization is different from, complementary to, contradictory of, and conflicting with, the other. Differences between the two Civilizations have been held to be correlated with differences in physical environment, in race, in social, economic and political institutions, and in character and in values. Some have held that acculturation was disastrous, if not impossible, without miscegenation, while others have urged a contrary view. It has been debated if the Westernization of the East has been good or evil. The East has been warned against Westernization and earnestly urged to remain true to itself.

On the other hand, the very concept of Western and Eastern Civilizations has been denied by some, who conceive only of a time sequence in Civilization,—ancient, medieval, and modern.

The present study seeks to survey some of the connotations and implications of the concept of East and West and to examine their significance and validity by an analysis of some of the typical pronouncements on the subject.

The analysis reveals that the concept of East and West, as well as most current concepts of cultures, leading to conflicts of peoples, which have been the cause of much human misery in the world, including India, in ancient and modern times, have no foundation and validity.

The study seeks to suggest what seems to be a truer interpretation of the nature of culture and civilization, and of the spread and the differential diffusion of different culture factors. It seeks to show that most of the present day conflicts based on differences of race and civilization are wholly unnecessary.

Pre-publication Opinions of the Book.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Professor of Indian Philosophy, Oxford University.

I was greatly impressed with the scholarship and detachment which the work shows. The treatment is thoroughly scientific and the work will be a notable contribution to the literature on the subject. I hope that it will soon be published.

Dr. Bronislav Malinovski, Professor of Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, London.

He (Prof. Malinovski) regards the work as one of the greatest importance.

The Rev. A. P. Elkin, Professor of Anthropology, University of Sydney, Australia.

I have not been able to read it all, but what I have read, especially Part III, convinces me that it is a thesis of importance and was very well worth the writing. It is

especially good for those of us who have been brought up in the so-called Western culture to read an objective criticism of the terms Western and Eastern by one who has been brought up for, the most part, in the so-called Eastern culture. The thesis is important not only for academic sociologists, but also for those actively engaged in finding solutions for problems arising out of the contact of cultures. I hope that the thesis, or at least a very large resume of it, may be published.

Prof. E. A. Ross, Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin.

I have found it a privilege to make the acquaintance of a treatment so rational and clarifying and so urbane in manner.

I have no criticism of your manuscript to offer and shall be happy if it should ere long appear as a book. Yours is a quite classic discussion of the nature of culture and of its mode of spreading, so that it would delight all sociologists and probably attract wide attention.

Prof. Franz Boas, Head of the Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University.

I have read your manuscript with great deal of interest. I think you have put all the data in regard to the important question of racial and cultural characteristics, particularly in reference to East and West, very clearly, and it seems to me that you have proved your point clearly.

I hope it will be possible to bring out your book which, I am sure, will help a good deal to clear up misunderstandings.

Prof. Clark Wissler, Curator-in-Chief, Department of Anthropology, the American Museum of Natural History New York, and Professor of Anthropology, Yale University.

If I understand your object, it was to demolish certain recognized concepts, and in the main I think you have successfully called them into question. However, it still remains possible that there are differences between East and West or that differences which you believe unimportant are of considerable significance.

Prof. Ellsworth Huntington, Yale University.

I have read the entire manuscript with great interest. You have improved it a great deal and there is much in it of value. It is well-written and holds the attention. It is particularly interesting as setting forth the views of a member of the "eastern" civilization concerning the relation of his civilization to "western" civilization. Even though you may believe that these civilizations are not distinct entities, their members do have diverse views in some respects, and it will do us good to see how the matter presents itself to a thoughtful member of the eastern group. Therefore, I should like to see your manuscript published.

Prof. Ellsworth Faris, Head of the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago.

I appreciate the deference you have shown me in soliciting my opinion, but I fear you rate it too highly. You have already a very cordial endorsement from Professor Ross, Professor Davis, Professor Boas, and Professor Wissler. I feel quite sure that any author who has the endorsement of such weighty names would have the right to be encouraged. If Professor Sapir and Professor MacIver join in the already hearty approval of the other scholars, I am sure you will be encouraged and very appropriately confirmed in your conclusions and opinions. The fact that I have not been able to concur so heartily will not, I am sure, be disconcerting to you in the least.

Prof. Edward Sapir, Head of the Department of Anthropology, Yale University.

I think you have made an excellent statement of the case which you present, namely, the fundamental fallacy of talking about Western and Eastern cultures as though they were antagonistic entities and represented thoroughly objective realities. I think you have exploded all the myths that reside in this kind of ideology and I sincerely hope that your presentation may cause many people to be more factual-minded and sympathetic about questions of race and culture.

I hope that you succeed in placing this manuscript with a worth-while publisher and I wish you every success in your practical endeavours.

Prof. Robert MacIver, Head of the Department of Sociology, Columbia University.

I have read with much interest and appreciation your study of Western and Eastern Civilization. It is a very timely pronouncement in my judgment and I very much hope you will find a way to publish it in this country. I regard your work as written with much clarity containing much wisdom and I wish it success.

REVIEWS

Asiatic Review: In this book Mr. P. Kodanda Rao has rendered a very real service by applying not merely a breath, but a powerful gale, of commonsense to a superstition that has done infinite harm to international and inter-imperial relations, and he has blown it to pieces with devastating thoroughness . . . What one notes with interest is the calmness of his treatment of his subject, the objective quality of his analysis, the readiness and aptness of his illustration, and the pungency and terseness of his conclusions.

Adelphi: It is good that a book has been written to show how fallacious are our common generalisations about what is typically "oriental" or "occidental" . . . It is a timely and useful piece of work in a world where racialism and race-hatred are on the up-grade.

Times Literary Supplement: Mr. Kodanda Rao, in especial, makes a strong and justifiable protest against Macaulay's contempt for Indian culture and his imposition of English culture upon Indians. He would see not a Western culture nor an Eastern Culture but a World Culture.

Great Britain and the East: Mr. Kodanda Rao, who is a member of the Servants of India Society, has added one more item to the tale of the Society's distinguished contributions to the clarification of political thinking.

Reynolds News : Most interesting and stimulating book.

Oriental Literary Digest : Mr. Kodanda Rao has argued in support of one extreme, while Kipling and others have argued for the other. The foregoing remarks, however, will not affect the undoubted general excellence of Mr. Kodanda Rao's treatment. He has examined with great care, caution, circumspection and critical judgment the entire range of relevant literature bearing on the relation between the East and the West, and sociologists and politicians who strive for a better understanding between the East and the West would find this volume instructive, entertaining and challenging.

Ceylon Daily News : A superficial study of the terms East and West may provide confirmation to the "never the twain shall meet" theory, but an objective analysis, such as the one by Mr. P. Kodanda Rao, Secretary of the Servants of India Society, in his book, "East versus West", demolishes the theory completely The book will be an eye-opener. The book is a challenge and an affirmation that civilization is a common heritage and that each individual is heir to all knowledge.

Ceylon Observer : Mr. Rao's book is particularly valuable in this respect. He unravels the tangled skein of racial prejudice.

Leader : The book deserves commendation. It should be an eye-opener to the political leaders who attempt, directly, or indirectly, to perpetuate cultural and racial differences.

The Aryan Path : Mr Rao's book is valuable for reminding us that, despite all the differences of tradition, geography, race or religion, the real values of civilization are constant, and that the apparent opposition of East and West is, at most, a reflection of one-sidedness, and may prove a means to that real integration for which each needs the other.

Hindustan Review : Though some of his statements or deductions may not be unreservedly accepted by all readers of the book, they will find its perusal thought-compelling and highly stimulating and *East versus West* merits careful consideration.