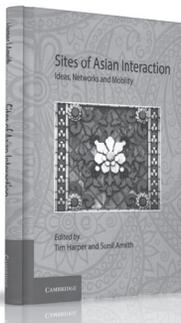


remained shrouded in mystery but for the pioneering work of Sir John Woodroffe aka Arthur Avalon, who gave us clear English translations of many Tantric texts. He spent a lifetime in the systematic presentation and exposition of the basic tenets of Tantra, in a time when India, the birthplace of this discipline, was still a slave nation, considered by the West as a land of magic tricks and savage customs.

Sir John Woodroffe was a judge in the High Court of Calcutta. Though belonging to the ruling race, he imbibed the Indian ethos, which led M P Pandit to call him 'truly an Indian Soul in a European body' (vi). He learnt various Sanskrit texts, including those of Tantra, under the tutelage of his friend, Atal Bihari Ghose. The result of the doctoral work of the author, this volume reflects well her painstaking efforts of the investigative trail into the life of Sir John Woodroffe. This book gives a concise yet overall view of the large and multifarious canvas of the personality that Woodroffe was. Including rare photographs, facsimiles of letters and notes, an elaborate bibliography and index, this book fills a void by fulfilling the long-felt need of a good biography of a soul, who preferred to remain anonymous and speak to the world only through this writings under his pen name, Arthur Avalon.

PB



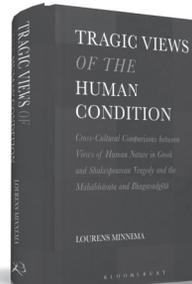
**Sites of Asian Interaction:
Ideas, Networks and Mobility**
Edited by Tim Harper and
Sunil Amrith

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge House, 4381/4 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002. Website: www.cambridge.org. 2014. viii + 254 pp. ₹ 795. HB. ISBN 9781107082083.

Transnational encounters are a daily occurrence today. This book explores different inter-Asian interactions and tries to situate them as various paths of communication of ideas and ethos across Asia and studies 'how they are reshaped by myriad encounters along the way' (vii). A collection of essays originally published in a special issue of *Modern Asia Studies* in March 2012, this volume comprises the interactions of various

cultures including Singapore, Ladakh, Penang, and Istanbul. It also traces interactions over the sea and between various religious spaces. Businesses or inter-Asian joint-ventures are also included. Edited by professors of history, this book is a welcome addition to the scarce literature on transnational interactions within Asia.

PB



**Tragic Views of the Human
Condition**

Lourens Minnema

Bloomsbury Academic. 2013. xii + 572 pp. £ 227.99. HB. ISBN 9781441194244.

This is an extraordinary work of comparative literature studying the depiction of human tragedies from the Eastern and Western perspectives. The author takes the Mahabharata and the Bhagavadgita as samples of the Eastern stand on tragedy and compares it with the Greek and Shakespearean literature. This in-depth analysis shows that the very meaning of the word 'tragedy' changes considerably between these cultures. The narrative, artistic, communicative, social, political, literary, cultural, martial, psychological, ethical, and religious aspects of tragedy are dealt with. The thoroughness of the work is simply amazing and invites the reader to look at tragedy from an informed perspective. This book is a handy reference for all students of comparative literature.

PB



Truth

Alexis G Burgess and
John P Burgess

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, USA. Website: www.press.princeton.edu. 2011. xiv + 158 pp. \$ 19.95. PB. ISBN 9780691163673.

Truth and its various connotations have always intrigued us. Professors of philosophy, the authors have done a succinct and critical analysis of some theories of truth: deflationism, indeterminacy, insolubility, realism, and antirealism.