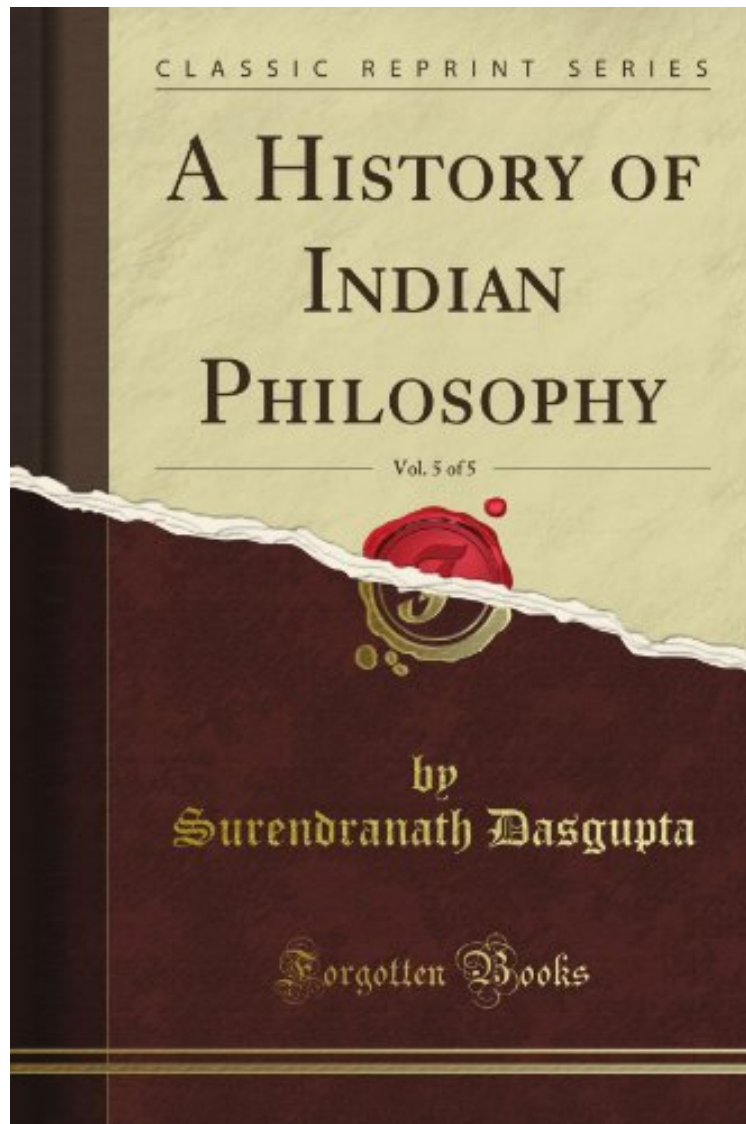


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Schools of Saivism By Rama Rao This is one of the scholarly works of Surendranath Dasgupta. His work on Indian philosophy is published in five volumes, and each volume is devoted to the study of the particular school of thought of Indian Philosophy. In this volume, he focuses his study on the southern schools of Saivism, viz., Saiva Siddhanta, Vira-Saivism, philosophy of Srikantha, and Saiva philosophy. This book documents the ethical, mystical and philosophical ideas of the Southern Schools of Saivism. A brief summary of the book is as follows: The earliest Sanskrit philosophical literature in which Saivism is mentioned is in a bhāṣya of Sankara on Brahma-Sutra II.2.37. Sankara refers to a doctrine called Siddhanta written by the God Mahesvara. It states that God, Lord Siva, also known as Pasupati, is both the instrumental and material cause of the world. In his bhāṣya, Sankara refers to one particular system of Saivism. But Saiva Philosophy was widely known long before eighth century A.D., (before the time of Sankara.) Different sects of Saivism also existed from ancient times; the Pasupata Saivism of Gujarat, Agamic Saivism of Tamil region, Pratyabhijna Saivism of Kashmir, and Vira-Saivism of Kannada speaking region of the South defines the length and breadth of Saivism in India. Major Siva temples in Nepal, Kashmir, Benares, Kathiawar, Calcutta and Ramesvaram illustrate the popularity of Saiva culture. The concept of Pasupati may have evolved at the earliest times of Indus Valley Civilization. The statue of Siva sitting on a bull surrounded by snakes and other animals has been found in pre-Vedic times, and ancient Indians worshipped the lord of pasus (animals) or Pasupati. Siva is also mentioned in Vedas and Upanishads, especially Svetasvatara Upanishad, and also in Mahabharata and Puranas. Siva Mahapurana refers to Saiva-Agama as the original instructions of Lord Siva, but unfortunately these texts are lost. Most writers of Saivism believed that Siva was the author of all Saiva literature which includes Agamas, the earliest scriptures of Saivism. There is a list of 28 Sivacaryas in Vayaviya-samhita of the Siva Mahapurana, which consists of 100,000 verses in seven sections and Siva is known to be its author. The gist of the Agama teaching is that all individual souls are infected with the impurities of Maya or karma. These are ultimately destroyed by the grace of God after being initiated into the worship of Siva. The Agama literature strongly supports a highly moralistic life coupled with the worship Lord Siva. The doctrine of Pasupata-sutra provides the spiritual and traditional practices in the worship of Siva. This text has some metaphysical elements, but largely spiritual in nature. It is believed that Siva re-incarnated himself as Nakulisa and wrote Pasupata text. In the bhāṣya of Pasupata-sutra, sage Kaundinya vividly describes the spiritual path of Saiva life. Kaundinya is known to have written his bhāṣya of Pasupata anywhere between fourth and sixth century B.C. Saiva philosophy of Srikantha is another subject widely discussed in this book. His ideas are expounded in the commentary on Brahma-sutra and later by Appaya Dixita. Srikantha illuminated his views by the interpretation of Brahma-sutra by accepting the supremacy of Upanishads, but he suggested that Lord Siva is the personal form of Brahman. I enjoyed reading the vast literature covered in this book, especially Chapter XXXVI/VII about the philosophy of Saivism. This is an exhaustive review of the Saiva literature and the author expounds the interpretation of several scholars like Sankara, Srikantha and Appaya Dixita with respect to Brahma Sutra and Lord Siva as the Supreme Personality Godhead. I found the discussion very fascinating and deeply engrossing.

Surendranath Dasgupta was born in Kusthia, a subdivision of Bengal, in October 1885 (10th of Ashvina). He came from a well-known family in Goila, District Barishal, East Bengal. This family was particularly known for its great tradition of Sanskrit learning and culture. His great-grandfather was a distinguished scholar and also a vaidya (physician of the Ayurvedic school of medicine). He was known by his title Kavindra, and was running a Sanskrit institution known as Kavindra College, which continued in existence up to the time of the partition of India in 1947. This institution maintained about 150 students with free board and lodging, and taught Kavya, Grammar, Nyaya, Vedanta and Ayurveda in traditional Indian style. Professor Dasgupta's father, Kaliprasanna Dasgupta, was the only member of the family who learnt English and took up the job of a surveyor. In his early years, between five and eight, while he did not know any Sanskrit, he showed certain remarkable gifts of answering philosophical and religious questions in a very easy and spontaneous manner. He could demonstrate the various Yogic postures (asanas); and used to pass easily into trance states, while looking at the river Ganges or listening to some Kirtan song. He was visited by hundreds of learned men and pious saints at his father's residence at Kalighat and was styled Khoka Bhagawan (Child God). Mention may particularly be made of Srīmat Bijay Krishna Goswami, Prabhu Jagat Bandhu and Śivanarayan Paramhansa. He was sometimes taken to the Theosophical Society, Calcutta, where a big audience used to assemble, and the boy was put on the table and questioned on religious and theological matters. The answers that he gave were published in the Bengali and English newspapers along with the questions. Some of these are still preserved. He was educated at Diamond Harbour for a time, and then for seven years (Typographical errors above are due to OCR software and don't occur in the book.)

About the Author Late Dr. Surendranath Dasgupta, C.I.F., I.F.S., Ph.D (Cal. Et Cantab.), D.Litt (Hony, Rome), was the Principal, Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta and King George V. Prof. of Mental and Moral Science, Calcutta Univ. He represented Cambridge Univ. at the Congress of Philosophy in Paris in 1921 and the Calcutta Univ. at the International Congress of Philosophy at Naples in 1924 and at Harvard in 1926. He represented India at the

International Congress of Religion in London in 1936 and in Paris 1939. Among his several works a few are mentioned.