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# Einladung zum Vortrag

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## Purity and Impurity in Non-dualistic Śaiva Tantrism

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Indian civilisation has been strongly characterised by the containment erected by the Brahminical elite over the almost two thousand years of its grandiose attempt to culturally and socially dominate the Indian world as a whole. Lacking any direct power, the Brahmins have alternatively and successfully imposed an opposition between purity and impurity that marked every aspect of Indian culture: purity of spirit, purity of philosophy, purity of rites, purity of language, purity of social and religious conduct, etc. The response of non-dualistic Śaiva Tantrism starts by questioning the legitimacy and very basis of the division between pure and impure, which is destined to crumble progressively beneath the thrust of deliberate "non-dual" behaviour (*advaitācāra*). Purity and impurity are not properties of things. They are rather qualifications pertaining to the knower that depend on whether he perceives the object as united with consciousness or not. "Impure is what has fallen away from consciousness: therefore everything is pure if it has achieved identity with consciousness." Moreover, if Śiva "is" the universe, there may be no impurity. In the Tantric texts, special emphasis is laid on the necessity to overcome *śankā* ("hesitation, inhibition") which is viewed as the ultimate purpose of the Brahminical rules concerning purity and impurity, acting as a subtle and effective *instrumentum regni*.