New Perspectives in
Indian Philosophy

DAYA KRISHNA

Rawat Publications
Jaipur and New Delhi

ISBN 81-7033-652-X

Published by
Prem Rawat for *Rawat Publications*
Satyam Apartments, Sector 3, Jain Temple Road, Jawahar Nagar, Jaipur 4
Phone: 0141 651748 / 657006 Fax: 0141 651748
e-mail : rawatbooks@pinkline.net

Delhi Office
G-4, 4832/24, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002
Phone: 3263290

Typeset by Rawat Computers, Jaipur
Printed at Nice Printing Press, New Delhi

Contents

III

IV

V

VI

VII

ERRATUM :
Chapter 8 to read as : "Mīmāmsā before Jaiminī: Some Problems in the Interpretation of *Śruti* in the Indian Tradition"

Introduction

These essays on Indian philosophy continue the "dialogue" initiated in the earlier collection entitled *Indian Philosophy: A Counter Perspective*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991). The tradition of questioning continues and many of the beliefs accepted as unquestionably true, are subjected to a close scrutiny that reveals them to be totally 'unfounded'.

The myths abound. One such myth, for example, is that Śaṁkara was responsible for the disappearance of Buddhism, as an, active, vibrant philosophical presence from the Indian scene when it is a matter of common knowledge that Nālandā flourished as an international centre of Buddhist learning till 1200 A.D., when it was destroyed by Bakhtiar Khilji.

The injustice done to Buddhism by the historians of Indian philosophy is unbelievable. The amazing suppression of their dominance in the first millennium A.D., and of the central role they played in the controversies raging around them during that period can hardly be believed in the face of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The

Jainas have fared no better at the hands of the historians of Indian philosophy though that has not been the subject matter of any article I have written up till now.

What is more surprising is the absence of any specific exegesis or commentary on the *Vedas* after Yāska, a fact highlighted in the article "Where are the Vedas in the First Millennium A.D."? It appears that the centrality of the Vedic stream for the philosophical traditions of India has been highly exaggerated at least for the period extending from the time of the Mahāvīra and the Buddha upto about 1200 A.D. Prof. Wilhelm Halbfass' attempt to argue, for it, in his *Tradition and Reflection*, is based on the well-known technique of *suppressio vari, suggestio falsi*, as he has almost totally over looked the counter evidence presented by us in that article.

In fact, the counter evidence is even more overwhelming if one takes note of the facts presented in other articles included in this book. The whole Mīmāṃsā notion of *Śruti* will be seen as spurious if the evidence and the arguments presented in the articles concerned with this theme are taken seriously. The article on Śyena Yāga and Arthavāda treat the issue directly, while those entitled *Mīmāṃsā Before Jaiminī* and *The Mīmāṃsaka versus The Yājñika* deal with it indirectly.

The orthodox believer in the *Śruti* not only ignores all this but also the fact that the foundation of his belief lies in the doctrine of *arthavāda* which is intrinsically inconsistent with the belief itself. The argument is developed in detail in the article on Arthavāda where the idea of Śruti is extended to secular text also which face the same problem as the ones encountered in the context of the 'religious' texts deemed "sacred".

The Brahama-sūtra tradition of the Śruti has its own problem of arthavāda, though it does not have the same importance as it does in the Mīmāmsā tradition. The problem of the ontological status of "difference" or *bheda* and the related problem of *adhyāsa* that arises there from is discussed in the following two chapters dealing with it. The chapter on *adhyāsa* deals directly with it, while the one entitled "*Is 'Tattvamasi' the same type of statement as The Morning Star is the Evening Star*" explores the problem of 'identity' statement in general.

The problem of identity raised by such basic statements in the vedāntika tradition as *Tattvamasi* is discussed in the article under that title and compared with the similar problem raised by Frege in his well known article entitled "Sense and reference" in the Western tradition. The problem of *adhyāsa* involved in erroneous identification is discussed in the next article and it is shown that it does not necessarily imply the *advaitika* conclusion, as has generally been supposed by the *advaitins*. The Next article in the section questions the widespread view that Ācārya Śaṁkara was responsible for the disappearance of Buddhist philosophy from India.

Both Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta have been the centre of attention amongst those who have been interested in Indian philosophy. But, for some reason, the same has not been the case with *bhakti* or *dharma* as there has hardly been any philosophical reflection amongst those who have written on the subject. In the articles *Did the Gopis really love Kṛṣṇa* and *The Varṇāśrama Syndrome of Indian Sociology*, the former raises the question that if the Gopīs really loved Kṛṣṇa, why did they not seek him after he left Vṛandāvana, while the latter questions the centrality of the notions of *varṇa* and *āśrama* in the understanding of Indian society.

The last part consists of three short pieces, the first raises some unconventional questions about Nyāya. The second is an answer to the observations made on the above issues raised by eminent *Naiyāyikas* in the pages of the JICPR. The third answers the objections raised against the article, "Vedanta in the first millennium AD", while fourth tries to draw attention to the distinction between the activity of creative thinking on the one hand and its products which generally are not seen in relation to each other. The article attempts to outline strategy for creative thinking in general and philosophising in particular.

My writings on Indian philosophy have generally aroused a negative Response amongst established scholars, even though their writings show an increasing awareness of them in spite of the fact that they question the conclusion that I have drawn. Rudolph Brandnar's observations published in the *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research* Vol. xvi No.2, are perhaps the clearest

expression of this attitude, though Mohanty said this earlier in his article in the volume on my philosophy to which I have replied in the same volume. In Review article on *Indian Philosophy-Counter Perspective: Philosophys, East and West*, Prof. Arvind Sharma has elaborated the objections further and contrasted my position with that of Radhakrishnan whose picture is the "orthodox" one believed by almost everyone, who were "taught" the subject in the formative periods of their youth in India and abroad. The view provides a striking contrast with the usual picture of "Western" philosophy as it is presented in the text books prescribed for both the Western and the Indian students. The elaborate discussion of Potter's view of Indian philosophy was argued in the article entitled "Three Conceptions of Indian Philosophy". The issue was debated and clarified further in the articles entitled "Indian Philosophy and Mokṣa Revisiting an old Controversy" published in the same Journal. The matter was taken up further by five protagonists of the traditional view, N.S. Dravid, J.N. Mohanty, K.J. Shah, Harsh Narain and Pratap Chandra in the Volume entitled *The Philosophy of Daya Krishna* and my reply to each of them was published along with their papers in the same volume. Recently, Prof. Arvind Sharma has returned to the theme in an extended Review Article in *Philosophy-East and West*, and suggested that drawing sharp boundaries for concepts in Indian philosophy is as futile as drawing boundary on waters in the ocean, conveniently forgetting that the latter is done all the time and that if one inadvertently strays across the boundary without permission, one is liable to be arrested. He may, of course, dismiss "legal" analogy as irrelevant to discussion of philosophical issues, but how can he do the same with the long tradition of "Lakṣaṇā Vicāra" in the Indian philosophical tradition and founded on "*ativyāpti* or *avyāpti doṣa*" in the definitions offered by anybody.

"Love is blind", they say and philosophers seem to be so much in love with the traditional view of Indian philosophy that neither argument nor evidence (however, compelling or basic) does seem to produce the slightest change in their perception of things as they obtain in the 'text-books' on the tradition. How can one explain otherwise the fact that the evidence presented in the article on the *Upaniṣads* or the *Vedas*

in the earlier collection or the ones relating to Indian philosophy in the first millennium A.D., in the present volume have not produced change in the picture relating to these fields amongst scholars of the subject.

A picture once built is difficult to dismantle, but the evidence and the argument slowly undermine it and the younger generation which is not so indissolubly "wedded" to "orthodoxy" as the older one, begins to be more open and responsive to the critique as it finds some substance in it. An alternative picture to the normally accepted one is attempted in my book, *Indian Philosophy-A New Approach* it is only the first draft of a new enterprise whose outline is indicated in the article "A Plea for a New History of Philosophy in India" included in this volume. The radical inadequacy of the currently accepted view about Indian Philosophy will be evident to any one who even casually glances through these pages. The articles "Did the Gopi really love Kṛṣṇa" and the "Varṇāśrama Syndrome of Indian Sociology" along with the queries on Nyāya included in the volume, should provide additional evidence for the same. My writings on Indian Philosophy have been usually dubbed as "provocative", a convenient way of dismissing them lightly and not paying any serious attention to the content and argument contained in them. I may say, in all seriousness, that no article of mine has ever been written with the intention to shock or provoke any one, instead they have been the result of the surprise and shock that I have felt at the evidence that was there in the texts that have been commented upon for millennia and which openly contradict the usual picture presented by scholars and commentators all these years. In fact my own picture of Indian Philosophy was the usual one acquired from the tradition and the 'shock' was the result of the encounter with the "original" texts when I opened them accidentally for the first time.

India's intellectual tradition is so varied and complex that it is impossible for any one person to take hold of it all and make, a systematic and coherent presentation of it to persons who are trained in the Western tradition in those subjects. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that neither the problems nor the conceptual structures in those domains have yet been articulated by anybody. The traditional

pandit thinks in terms of the 'schools' and not in terms of the problems or the questions to which the 'schools' provided different answers. Nor is he aware of the serious and the radical changes that occurred in the concepts over historical time, except in the case of Nyāya where a distinction is drawn between the *Prācīna* and the *Navya-Nyāya* by everybody. But, even in this case, the intellectual need for this radical "break" has hardly been articulated. Modern scholars have continued this habit without questioning the concepts or the categories in the thinking process in which and through which, the traditional *pandit* still carries the theme forward. This is one reason why the preservation of traditional thought is seen in terms of an articulation of that which has already been thought as if there were no imperfections or incompleteness in it, or as if it was a finished picture or product of thought in those areas. The maintenance and preservation programme is missing the living quality of thought as it grew and developed to successive thinkers and changed slowly, and some times rapidly, during the long period of at least 2,500 years. The usually presented static picture of the school freezes Indian thought and treats it as if it was "dead" and mummified and buried in pyramids of India's past civilization.

A preliminary attempt at such an articulation of the problematic and conceptual structures of Indian thought about men, society and polity was attempted by me in the book with this name [Book published by OUP, Delhi]. But the task is immense and it requires to be carried forward for every field of thought pursued in the tradition. The essays collected in this volume, it is hoped, will help in activating this by making us free from our "dogmatic slumbers" and by making us aware of the need for a fresh look at the philosophical traditions of India, so that they may become alive once again and may be pursued with renewed vigour once more.

☙ 1 ❧

A Plea for a New History of Philosophy in India

Few will dispute the fact that most of the existing books on Indian philosophy are outmoded. Yet, these are the books that have always been used all the world over to teach what Indian philosophy is, and have been so used through the ages. A lot of important information and new material has accumulated which needs to be assimilated and organised afresh in an interrelated manner around philosophical issues which are being dealt with by a succession of thinkers over at least three millennia of recorded history. Each of these thinkers has an originality of his own and makes some new contribution, even though he may have written only a *bhāṣya*, a *vārtika*, a *vṛtti*, a *ṭikā* or a *pariśuddhi* on an earlier work. There have also been new departures and radical breaks, many a time self consciously, as when Udayana calls himself an "*ādhunika*" or a school calls itself '*navyanyāya*'.

The philosophical insight, which is found in such abundance in the earliest texts, needs not only to be highlighted but linked with the later developments which assume a more differentiated and systematized

"form" from the *Sūtra* period onwards. The differentiation, however, is not a loss of active interrelationship, though it is usually presented as such. Even the earliest texts such as those of Yāska present views ascribed to previous thinkers and the *Nyāya-Sūtras* explicitly refute the Mīmāṃsā views of the *nityatva* and *apauruṣeyatva* of *śabda*, the *aikatva vāda* of the Upaniṣads and the *sarva pramāṇa khaṇḍana* of the Mādhyamika Buddhists, besides many others.

It is not only the interactional dialectic that is missing from the usual presentations, but its historical development over a period of time. D.N. Shashtri's pioneering work in this regard in his *Critique of Indian Realism* has hardly found any followers, or been pursued further.

The shifting focus and emphasis in the discussion of issues has hardly been noticed, or the reasons for them explored. The long absence of certain schools of thought from the centre of philosophical debate and their sudden reappearance into prominence has totally escaped the attention of historians, as has been the background of socio-political events surrounding philosophical activity in the country. The sudden disappearance of Buddhism on the philosophical scene from 1200 A.D., onwards has hardly been noticed; nor has the dramatic rise in the number of Jain thinkers from, say, 1000 A.D., onwards. The rise and fall in the fortunes of schools seems to have totally escaped the attention of scholars, as have the radical shifts and developments within the schools themselves. Never has history been so absent from the writing of the history of any subject as has been the case of the history of philosophy of India. How unbelievable it seems that hardly any attempt has been made to see its inner connections with developments in thought in other civilizations, or even with those that occurred within its own civilizational space in the field of art, or the sciences, or the theoretic reflection that occurred on them. The realm of social, political, legal thought seems to have been segregated apart as if they had no relation to philosophical thought in the country. The same has been the case with the thought about the arts; even though poetics is known to have had a long history of distinguished thinkers in the tradition and the actual achievement in the field of sculpture and architecture is of such an outstanding quality as to arouse the wonder of the world. Theoretical

thought in astronomy, mathematics and medicine has met the same fate, implying that knowledge enterprises in these domains had no relevance to philosophical thought in this country.

Both the timeless and insulated perspective in which Indian philosophy is seen has been aggravated by the almost total absence of any awareness of the way it has been influenced by thought current in sister civilizations, or the way it might have influenced them. The Persian, the Greek, the Central Asian and the Chinese civilizations were in active interaction for long periods of time with the Indian civilization and it is extremely unlikely that they were not influenced by one another. In fact, it might be intellectually more rewarding to see this as one whole civilizational area with diverse, relatively autonomous centres in it. The parochial ego-centricism of the currently, 'national' and 'civilizational' identification stands in the way one looks at the past, and forgets that at that time no such identifications existed and that people did not need passports and visas to cross the boundaries.

The "creation" of history by the way it has been written during the past four centuries itself, is however, the root cause of such a distorted way of looking at the past. History writing has been a child of the exposition and domination of the world by a few West European powers during the last four centuries and they have systematically produced a history in their own way, to suit their own interests. This is not the history as "others" see it and, even at its best, it may be regarded *only* as history from the viewpoint of modern West European man who did not exist at the time when Greece and Rome flourished.

The total appropriation of the Greek heritage by the West would have remained a strange curiosity in the intellectual history of mankind, were it not for the fact that it has not only been accepted by most scholars in the world, but also given rise to a persistent denial of any influence on Greek thought and culture by the other civilizations, which flourished in those times. The close similarity of Greek thought, particularly in Plato and Parmenides has always been a "problem" to Western scholars, as if the admission of any influence would contaminate the purity which they had achieved solely on their own. The thought from Plato to Plotinus has such an Indian echo that only a "purist" about civilization would even feel like decrying it.

If the western historian of thought is allergic to admitting even the possibility of any influence on Greek thought from any "outside" source, his Indian counterpart is not even aware of the problem and takes it almost as axiomatically true that the Indian civilization has grown in complete isolation from the Vedic or the Harappan times onward. The "monadic self sufficiency of Indian thought and culture is taken for granted in spite of the fact that in the field of mathematics, explicit mention of borrowing from the Greeks has been made in the Indian tradition and the development of what is known as "Gandhara Art" unambiguously confirms this. It is extremely unlikely that the Greek influences were confined *only* to these two fields. The Indo-Greek kingdoms in North-West India in the post-Alexander period must have fostered interaction in all fields. Later, during the Śaka and Kuṣāṇa periods (I-III century A.D.) large parts of North India were integrated intimately with Central and West Asia and it is highly improbable that only administrative and commercial interaction occurred between the different units of the region. We have also evidence of active trade links with the Roman Empire on the South-Western coast of the Indian peninsula and, better still, of a long intellectual interchange with China, centering around the Buddhist University at Nālandā. The latter seems to have been connected both by land and sea routes to China and there is evidence that a strong intermediary intellectual centre emerged at Palembang in what is now known as Indonesia.

The Buddhist connection with Śri Lanka and Tibet is well known, but little is known of the counter-influence from these countries except in the field of Tantra from the latter. The story of non-Buddhist, primarily Hindu, influences in South and South-East Asia is usually vaguely known, but the awareness of its intellectual side seems totally absent. Similar is the case with the changes and modifications that they underwent there. Hardly anyone knows, for example, that a work from Thailand entitled, *The Three Worlds of King Ruan* (Ed. B.L. Smith, Pennsylvania: Anima Books, 1978, pp. 194-203) shows a distinct influence of Indian thinking in the intellectual domain but presents noticeable differences with it also.

The pre-Islamic encounters and interactions are, however, at least

dimly present on the margins of the intellectual consciousness about the past of this country. But even this is absent in respect to the intellectual interaction with the world of Arabic learning, its science and philosophy. From at least 1200 A.D., onwards, Islam may be said to have a definitive presence in North India. Yet, the histories of thought in the second millennium A.D., in this country, show hardly any awareness of its presence, or of the possible influence that it might have had on the varied fields of intellectual life in this country. Normally, it is taken for granted that, except for the arts and religion, there was nothing substantive in this regard. Yet, Prof. A. Rehman's pioneering work on this subject has shown that from the eighth century A.D., there is evidence of active interchange between Arabian, Persian and Sanskrit learning in the different fields of specific knowledge, particularly medicine, mathematics and astronomy. More than seven thousand works are listed in his *Bibliography* and they include translation of texts from the two different traditions in their languages.

These figures need an upward revision in the light of recent work, but this does not make any difference in respect to the problem that we are trying to point out in connection with the writing of the history of philosophy in India. There is, as far as we know, no mention of any interaction or influence between the Arabic and Indian philosophical traditions, even though there was ample opportunity for such interaction to occur in this country. How could the rich traditions of Arabic philosophy remain unknown in India in spite of this long presence of West Asian learning in India? It is extremely unlikely that this was the case, particularly when there is substantive evidence of an opposite situation in so many other fields of knowledge. And, in case it was really so, it requires exploration and explanation.

The absence of any discussion regarding this issue in the histories of Indian philosophy is an anomaly that can hardly be understood in any way. So also, perhaps, is the total neglect of the presence of Christian theological thought in this country, or its influence on Indian philosophy. Christianity is supposed to have come very early in India, and yet as far as I know, its influence has hardly been a subject of any investigation.

The need for a new history of philosophy in India, thus, can hardly be denied. But even if the plea is accepted, how shall one go about implementing it? The usual method, is for some institution to approach an outstanding scholar to undertake the work who, in turn would ask other scholars to write for the volume. But as they are generally well-known specialists in the field, when they are invited to write upon the subject, they only summarize, repeating what they have already said on the subject. Few scholars are prepared to do any new research to write for a volume edited by someone else and hardly anyone can adopt the viewpoint or perspective of someone else to do the task he/she is asked to do. Thus, at the end, what one usually gets is a volume of uneven quality, repeating the old things with the addition of some new information which has appeared since the earlier volumes were published on the subject.

What, then, is to be done to avoid such a situation? Perhaps, only a long-term plan consisting of diverse strategies at various levels would yield the desired result. One could start with a stock-taking of what has been done, spell out what needs to be done and then locate persons at various levels who could be involved in the thinking and execution of the project. A detailed spelling-out of interrelated research could be given to see that research work is done in those domains. Similarly, successive seminars could be planned in such a way as to explore questions that need and answer on problems that need to be resolved.

The idea of a long term collaborative, cumulative research has not happened in the Humanities though it is now a commonplace in the natural sciences even though. It is true that disciplines in the Humanities need this particularly in the context of projects such as this. What one needs is imagination, will and commitment to undertake these enterprises. Potter's *Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophies*, Thangaswami Sharma's *Darśanamañjarī* and some of the forthcoming volumes in the "Project on Historical Science, Philosophy and Culture of India" have already done some fieldwork in this connection. The challenge is to carry the work further, and let us hope the challenge will be met. But, first, there has to be an awareness of the need for such a work. The rest will follow, at least, let us hope so.

2

Towards a Field Theory of Indian Philosophy: Suggestions for a New Way of Looking at Indian Philosophy

Indian philosophy is usually treated in terms of the so-called six 'orthodox' and three 'non-orthodox' schools which are designated as Mīmāmsā, Vedānta, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, on the one hand, and Buddhism, Jainism and Cārvāka, on the other. One may add a few more, but this is the usual way of presentation and it is taken as adequate by everybody. But, is it really so? Does it help us in understanding or grasping the philosophical scene in India as it is unfolded over three millennia of its recorded existence?

Philosophers of diverse persuasions were not thinking in a vaccum or treating problems in monadic isolation from each other. The problem of understanding the Vedic text, and the Vedic ritual haunts all thinkers who had anything to do with them. The oldest Brāhmaṇa texts already evidence this concern, and so does the *Nirukta*, possibly the first text to deal with the problem. And so do the *Mīmāmsā-Sūtras*, and the *Brahma-Sūtras*, though the latter deals primarily with the Upaniṣadika portion of the Vedic text. The problem, however, is a wider one and

concerns the Buddhist and the Jain Canonical texts as well. The texts deemed 'sacred' have to be preserved, unaltered in every way and transmitted from generation to generation and carried to places far off from where the original was placed.

The purity in the preservation of a linguistic text, whether oral or written is, however, one thing and the understanding of what it means quite another. The two require very different sorts of skills and hence give rise to two different classes of specialists. Before the invention of tape-recording and writing, the task of preservation was so enormously complicated that it gave rise to the cultivation and development of specialized skills which are difficult to imagine today. We hear of persons who could remember after hearing just once and others who could do so after hearing only two or three or four times, and then we had persons continuously 'repeating' what they had heard so that what they had heard would not get lost.

That this activity of 'ceaseless repetition' was continued for millennia is a miracle, but man as a species has been performing miracles continuously and this may be regarded as one of his defining features, even if it may not be the only one; once the 'miracle' is produced, it no more remains a 'miracle' and, if it is repeated often enough, it is hardly even thought or felt to be so. But the task of understanding what is so preserved requires a different kind of activity and a different kind of skill. But however different, it has to be as continuously undertaken as the former. This brings into being a specialized class whose whole activity consists in preserving the texts and interpreting them with a fairly clear-cut division between the two.

In India this class came to be known by the name 'Brāhmaṇa'. It consisted mainly of three different groups specializing in the task of preservation, interpretation and knowledge of the ritual according to which the Vedic *yajñas* were to be performed. The division is well known in the context of the Vedic tradition, but it must have obtained in the Buddhist and Jain traditions also, though one would have to find what the counterpart of the ritual of the *yajña* was in those traditions. Also one would have to find what the counterpart of the Vedic *Śākhās* was in those traditions, as the task of preservation and interpretation

cannot be carried out for long without a specialized class of persons who are entrusted by the society for doing so and who are given sufficient honour, patronage and prestige to carry on the task they are entrusted with.

The task of understanding or interpreting a text has, however, an intrinsic 'undecidability' about it which has generally not been noticed until now. It was because of the essential ambiguity of language and the fact that it has not only literal but metaphysical meaning as well. There is also the problem of the 'uses' to which a language is put and the context in which it is being used. Similarly, there is also the presupposition of 'coherence' which imposes both an external and an 'internal' limitation on the interpretation.

The diversity of interpretation is thus in-built in the very task of interpreting as it never is in the case of the preservation of either the text or the ritual practice. One may, of course, make mistakes in these, but the 'mistakes' not only arise because of different factors, but are also of a different order. The variation in 'preservation' may occur because of not hearing properly what was said or the inability to decipher what was written because time or accident had obliterated something and different scribes had imagined what was to be inserted differently. This, as everyone knows, continues to be the situation in spite of all the advancements in the technology of preservation.

The problem in the preservation of the purity of exact instructions regarding ritual observances is of a different order as it emanates from the fact that no instruction manual, whether oral or written, can ever give all the details which are required for the performance of the action. These have to be learnt by actually observing the action performed and by repeating it where every deviation is corrected by the master. This is one of the reasons for the importance that is accorded by the tradition to the 'Guru' as he alone can tell you the 'how' of the action and demonstrate it to you. The vocal preservation of the text involves this to a certain extent, particularly when it involves *svarānupūrvī* or even the singing of the *sāma*, as was the case with the Vedic texts. But the whole sequence and repertoire of a Vedic *yajña* was a totally different thing and its exact preservation became the prototype and the paradigm

of the *prayoga śāstras* in the tradition.

The text known as *Brāhmaṇas* which are the primary manuals describing how to perform a particular *yajña* also discuss the possible meanings that the ritual may have. Dr Mukund Lath has recently drawn our attention to this neglected aspect of the *Brāhmaṇa* text. Thus, the *vidhi* texts themselves have two different parts, relatively unrelated to each other; one relating to the performance of the ritual and the other to its interpretation. But these interests were not only different but divergent in character, as was shown by later developments. The *Mīmāmsā Sūtras* carry on the task of filling in and accounting for the apparent discrepancies and inconsistencies in the instructions given regarding the actual performance of the various *yajñas*, while the *Āraṇyakas* and the Upaniṣads carry on the interpretative part not only independently, but even in opposition to them. The statement of Nārada in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* already indicates this, for he includes the four *Vedas* in the knowledge which he had acquired of the various disciplines known in his times though he remained unsatisfied and unfulfilled in spite of them.

The *Brahma Sūtras* thus ignore the *Brāhmaṇa* discussions almost completely and concentrate only on the Upaniṣads. The later commentators on the *Brahma Sūtras* and the Upaniṣads who wrote *bhāṣyas* on them by-pass the discussions of Yāska on the interpretation of the Vedic text in his *Nirukta*.

The *Nirukta*, in fact, has no direct successor and till almost the seventh century A.D., when we have the *Bhāṣya* on the *Ṛgveda* by Skandaswāmin and some others of the Valabhi region of West India. But while there appears to have been no direct continuation of Vedic exegesis after Yāska for almost a thousand years, the concerns with the problems relating to the interpretations of linguistic meaning continued to exercise the Indian philosophical mind till today. *Śabda-Bodha* or *Vakyārtha-Vicāra* became one of the perennial concerns of all schools of thought, and one cannot understand the positions they take on the issue in isolation from those taken by others as if there were no relationship between them.

The same is true of the problem concerning the means and criteria

of valid knowledge in the tradition against Nāgārjuna's questioning of the very possibility of there being any ground or criteria for such knowledge. It became incumbent for all to fight such radical scepticism. Even earlier, the Upaniṣads had raised the question as to how the knower itself can even be known or as in the *Nāsadīya Sūkta*, how the question of ultimate beginnings could ever be answered. The author of the *Mīmāmsā Sūtra* had argued that the knowledge of *dharma* or 'what ought to be done' cannot be derived either from perception or inference and hence required a third independent source for its knowledge. The *Brahma Sūtras* on their part explicitly declared that 'tarka' has no place in the knowledge of Brāhmaṇa.

But all these have restricted the role of the *pramāṇas* to a certain realm usually that of *vyavahāra* and not denied its relevance altogether. It is only Jayarāśi, the extreme sceptic, who is supposed to have done that. Matilal in his book entitled *Perception* appears to have treated his position as the standard one and had seen the whole of Indian philosophy as an attempt to meet the challenge. But there are degrees and variations of scepticism and to restrict the application of a particular one, or even to exclude *all pramāṇas* from application to a certain privileged one is not to deny the relevance of *pramāṇa* altogether as the debate between the votaries of *pramāṇa, samplava* and *pramāṇa vyavasthā* shows. It should also not be forgotten in this connection that *anubhava* or *sākṣātakāra* itself is a sort of *pramāṇa* and the authority of all *āpta vacana* is based on that. As in the case of *śabda bodha*, so also in the case of *pramāṇa vicāra*, there is a host of problems cutting across various schools. The different schools are responding to a common concern, and unless we become aware of the common concern we cannot appreciate or understand what they are trying to do.

Take the notion of *duhkha* or 'suffering'. What exactly is the notion and why is there such a persistent and prevalent concern with *atyanta duhkhanivṛtti*, or the complete cessation of the very possibility of all sufferings for all times? This will involve a discussion of possibility and what it means. One solution is the state of the soul where it loses the very possibility of being conscious. But then what is the difference between such a soul and an inanimate object except that it is still characterized by having had such a consciousness in the past

which the inanimate object can never be said to have had. Also, the difference of such a position with that of the Cārvāka would only be something like postulating a soul to survive after the destruction of the body. But, then, even for the grossest materialist something survives and it is generally called 'matter'. The only difference between this matter and the soul would be that the latter is still supposed to have a uniqueness of its own which the surviving matter lacks. But then what could this uniqueness consist of except with reference to the past which is now no more? This is something similar to what Strawson has discussed in his book entitled, *Individuals*. But, then, such a reference to the past would also be there in the case of whatever matter is regarded as surviving after the destruction of the whole which constituted the body.

The problem of the whole and the part, of divisibility and indivisibility, of the atom and the *ātman* are usually considered to be different and treated separately in the tradition. However, once it is seen that they are inter-related and the way one deals with any one of them has important consequences for the others, one would begin to see Indian philosophy in a different way.

There are so many other facets of Indian philosophy which would appear in a very different light if seen in this way. Take, for example, the problem of the ultimate constituents of the world as given in human experience. The Sāṁkhya, the Vaiśeṣika and the Jain scholars have treated this problem in a prominent manner. But in the usual presentation they are treated as if they were not dealing with the same problem and had nothing to do with each other. Yet, the moment we see them as attempting to deal with the same problem, we begin to notice the commonalities and the differences. Also, once we see them as tentative and provisional answers, we do not feel bound to the specificities of their positions and can benefit from the insights of all of them. But this can happen only if we see Indian philosophy as an 'ongoing enterprise' and not as something which only has a past and no future as if all the potentialities have already been exhausted.

But even if one does not believe that the creative potential of Indian thought in the realm of philosophy has not been exhausted and its

immense possibilities of development in different directions are still unexplored, one would first have to realize the nature of the philosophical problems and questions with which the Indian thinkers struggled for at least two and a half millennia of recorded history. Unless this preliminary work is attempted, we cannot even hope to understand what they were attempting to do, let alone carry on their unfinished enterprise in any meaningful way. We have made a preliminary attempt in this direction, but it is confined only to the problematic and conceptual structure of their thought about man, society, polity and law. But the logical, epistemological, ontological and axiological issues, which they struggled with, have still to be articulated. Not only this, we have to see them in their development aspect, the way in which they developed over time.

To give but one example, we have to ask ourselves what was exactly meant by the terms *Veda* and *vidyā*, *śāstra* and *darśana*, and how these terms were related to each other. The term *Veda* has now acquired a sacred meaning, restricted only to the four *Saṁhitās*, but in ancient times it had no associations, as is evident in the use of such terms as '*Āyurveda*', *Dhanurveda*, *Nāṭyaveda*, etc. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mentions the four *Vedas* along with the other '*vidyās*' that Nārada had learnt and which had left him unfulfilled. The knowledge of the *Samhitās* was not given any special shape and was not included in what the Upaniṣads called the '*parā vidyā*'. The Mīmāmsā tradition explicitly included the Brāhmaṇa texts in the term '*Veda*' and treated them as equally authoritative.

The inclusion of *vārtā*, *daṇḍanīti* and *ānvīkṣikī* amongst *vidyās* raised the question as to what the human end was, that these *vidyās* served. Mukund Lath has recently drawn our attention to an interesting discussion by Udyotkara on this point. In his *vārtika* on the *Nyāya Sūtra*, 1.1.1. he says that every *vidyā* has its own *prayojana* and '*niḥśreyas*' and specifically mentions *vārtā* and *daṇḍanīti* in this connection. According to him, only *atmavidyā* has *moksa* as its *niḥśreyas*. There is an interesting discussion regarding this move of Udyotkara by Jayanta and Vācaspati Misra I. But there appears to have been hardly any attempt to articulate and critically evaluate the different moves made on this issue in the tradition. Dr. V. Shekhawat

has recently made an attempt to do this and has seen the whole of India's cognitive enterprise in a unique, developmental manner on the basis of the twin notions of 'models' and 'paradigms' derived from the recent work on the history of science by Kuhn and others.

The problem is the same with many other issues in Indian philosophy such as, say, the one relating to '*pramāṇa samplava*' or '*pramāṇa vyavasthā*', or, '*svataḥ pramāṇatva*' vs. '*parataḥ prakāśatva*' or, '*abhitānvayavāda*' vs. '*anvitabhidhānavāda*'. There is, in fact, no problem the discussion of which does not end across the boundaries of a traditionally demarcated system. Yet, even though the fact is well known, its radical implications for the understanding, comprehension and presentation of philosophical thinking in India has not been seen. It is not the problems and the issues that are seen as central and the *siddhantas* of the so-called schools as peripheral, but instead the latter are viewed as central and the forms as peripheral. This is because the self-identification of the thinker is treated as more important than the problem he is concerned with. But, philosophically viewed, it is the latter that is important and not the former. The question, for example, of what is meant by '*śruti*' and what is to be regarded as such is more important then the specific answer that a Mīmāmsaka or a Vedāntika or a Naiyāyika or even a Buddhist or a Jain thinker gives to it. Once the situation is seen in this way, the distinction between the so-called '*āgama*' and the '*śruti*' will be seen as relating to the specificities of what is to be regarded as the foundational, authoritative text for a tradition. Similarly, the discussion about '*sarvajñatā*' and '*apauruṣeyatva*' would be seen in a new perspective and the question as to how the author of the *Nyāya Sūtras*, who seems to reject both, can still maintain the notion in his system. The example of *Āyurveda* given by him cannot be accommodated. Under neither case, does the bringing of Īśvara solve the problem. At least the author of the *Nyāya Sūtras* does not appear to treat him as the author of the Vedas which seem to be regarded as '*śruti*' by him. In fact the text *rejects* both the *Mīmāmsā* and the *Brahma Sūtra's* interpretation of the so-called *śruti* as it nowhere talks of the *yajñas* and criticizes the view that all reality is one which it probably ascribes to the Upaniṣads.

It is, therefore, imperative that we get out of the prison-house of

systems and focus attention on the problems, issues and questions that troubled philosophers in India through the ages and the way they grappled with them and the arguments they gave for tentative answers and solution to them. Only through some such effort will we be able to enter into their philosophical world and see the inner, motivative force of the philosophical enterprise they were engaged in. And once this happens and we internalize their philosophical enterprise, making it an integral part of our own intellectual life, we will no more talk *about* it, but *do* it ourselves. Doing philosophy as an ongoing enterprise of philosophizing is *different* from talking *about* philosophy and we still have to learn the lesson, both about philosophy in the West and India, for unless we do that, we will always be 'outsiders' to both the traditions, making hardly any contribution to either.

৩

Indian Philosophy in the First Millennium A.D.: Fact and Fiction

Histories of Indian philosophy are usually centred around the so-called six schools of Indian philosophy designated as 'orthodox' and the three schools designated as 'unorthodox'. This seems to be the standard practice and, as far as I know, there is hardly any exception to it. The very acceptance of the designations 'orthodox' and 'unorthodox', which are supposed to be translations of the terms '*āstika*' and '*nāstika*' generally used by Indians to describe these systems, underwrites the perspective in which Indian philosophy is to be viewed and treats it by this very strategy, as a natural objective or given classification. However, it is little realized that such a way of viewing philosophy in India is merely to accept uncritically the way the philosophical scene in India was perceived by a particular set of thinkers belonging to a certain tradition of philosophizing, which they thought was derived from the Vedas. Such a move treated the Vedas as central to the philosophical enterprise and gave primacy to those traditions which accepted in some sense or other the so-called

authority of the Vedas at the expense of those which explicitly denied it or refused to accept it.

The implicit presuppositions of such a way of looking at the history of Indian philosophy would perhaps become clearer if we try to see it from the viewpoint of the Buddhists or the Jains. The Buddhists, for example, characterized all non-Buddhist thought as 'heretic' as for them the world of philosophy was divided into that of the Buddhists and of the non-Buddhists. On the other hand, the Jains always describe the other schools of philosophy as propounding partial perspectives of the total truth which they alone have captured in their view of reality as being essentially *anekāntika* (multifaceted) in character. The others are therefore all *ekāntika* (one-faceted) according to the Jain perspective and they criticize them basically on this ground.

It may of course be said that as the Vedas are prior to both the Buddhists and the Jains, the treatment of them as the basic term of reference for defining the centrality of the Indian philosophical tradition is justified and that those who, like the Buddhists and the Jains, treat themselves as central do so only for sectarian reasons. But, though this argument may have some force, ultimately it will be the quantity and the quality of the philosophical achievement derived from these various perspectives that should be taken as determining more appropriately the characterization of a philosophical period in Indian philosophy in its own terms. In any case it would be best to be aware of the presuppositions involved and to try to see the picture of Indian philosophy as it developed over a period of time from alternative points of view so that no specific centrality is imposed on the material without one being aware of what is being done. For, even if we accept that large parts of the Vedic corpus, including the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas and some of the older Upaniṣads, were prior to the times when the Buddha and the Mahavira emerged on the Indian scene, there can be little doubt that traditions of non-Vedic thought had already emerged which are referred to in the Vedic literature itself. The distinction between the *ṛṣi* and the *muni* is drawn in the Vedic literature and the reference to Ṛṣabhadeva, the first Jain Tīrthankara, is supposed to be found in the *Ṛg Veda* itself, at least according to the *Śrīmad Bhāgāvat*. Also, Sāṁkhyan thought, which by common consent is supposed to be non-Vedic, is found earlier to the period of

the Buddha and the Mahāvīra, if we accept that Sāṁkhya or what Larson has called 'proto-Sāṁkhya thought' is found in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*. Besides these, it is significant that all the other contemporaries of the Buddha and the Mahāvīra who are referred to in the Buddhist and the Jain texts hardly hold views which can be described as deriving from the Vedic texts in any significant manner. Makkālī Ghoṣala or Gośālaka, who played a significant role in the early accounts of the Mahāvīra and the Buddha, for example, cannot be considered to hold views which can be regarded as deriving from the Vedic tradition by any stretch of the imagination. Similarly, the views of others such as Purāṇa Kassapa, Ajita Keśa Kambalī, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sanjaya Velaṭṭhiputta, have little to do with the thought found in the texts deriving from the Vedic tradition. This points to the fact that the contemporary climate of philosophical opinion in the sixth century BC was hardly dominated by the thought derived from the Vedic tradition and that the reflections on the *yajña* in the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas and the debates and discussions on various subjects in the Upaniṣads formed only one stream in the philosophical picture of these times and were scarcely the dominant ones as has been projected by those who have written on the history of philosophy in India until now.

The point may become clearer if we reflect on the developments in the philosophical traditions of India after the appearance of the Buddha and the Mahāvīra and the self-conscious writings of their disciples who treated themselves as representing a tradition radically distinct, even if not completely opposed, to that deriving from the Vedas. In fact, the term '*Veda-Vādina*' is used by them for their opponents to indicate those who held the doctrines propounded in the Veda. It is perhaps ironic that the *Gita* which later came to occupy such a prestigious position amongst the so-called orthodox texts of the Indian tradition also described the '*Veda-Vādina*' as '*Vedavāda ratāḥ*' and characterized them as '*Nānyadātītivādinaḥ*', that is, those who say that nothing else is to be believed except what they say.[1] 'The Veda-Vādins themselves of course emphasized either the *yajña*-centric interpretation of the Vedic texts epitomized in the *Mīmāmsā Sūtras* erroneously ascribed to Jaimini or the Brahman-centric interpretation deriving mainly from that part of the Vedic corpus

usually designated as the Upaniṣads and epitomized in the *Brahma-Sūtras* ascribed to Bādarāyaṇa.'[2] There were earlier attempts to interpret the Upaniṣadic texts, some of which are referred to by the author of the *Brahma-Sūtras*, but their authority seems to have been superseded by the appearance of Bādarāyaṇa's text on the subject. It is of course true that the texts designated as the Upaniṣads breathe a common philosophical atmosphere and are witnesses to a common enquiry and discourse which seems substantially different from the one that is found in the Āgamic literature of the Buddhists and the Jains. In fact, if we confine ourselves to the Upaniṣadic texts alone we might get a wrong picture of the philosophical activity during that period. Such a picture can only be corrected if one moves to the Buddhist and Jain texts, and such works as the *Kathāvatthu* and the *Milindapañho*. It is not that the questions do not concern the ultimate aim of life and its meaning in this world governed by space, time and causality, but that the modes of analysis and the terms of discourse appear to be distinctively different and it would be difficult to say that the Upaniṣadic perspective prevails and dominates the philosophical scene as revealed in those texts in the India of those times. Ultimately, it was but one of the many strands in the philosophical activity that was emerging in what may be regarded as different sectors of Indian civilization at that time, and if one chooses to designate the thought contained in the texts known as the Upaniṣads as Vedānta, however mistaken such a description may be, it is clear that it did not occupy any privileged or pre-eminent place amongst the thinkers of those times. This fact, however unpalatable it may be to the Vedantins of modern times, is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the compilation of the *Brahma-Sūtras* did not seem to have had much effect on the philosophical scene of India as it not only failed to make any impact on any of the dominant philosophical schools of that time but itself remained uncommented upon till about Śaṃkara's time, seven hundred years later.

The situation, however, is not confined to Vedānta alone or to the *Brahma-Sūtras* which are supposed to epitomize it, but extends to all the other so-called schools of Indian philosophy which arise from the various Sūtras which are generally supposed to be their

foundational texts and on which not only a large number of commentaries have been written, time and again, but which have also been the source of continuous inspiration for those who have believed in the tenets of that school. But there appears to be a radical difference between the *Brahma-Sūtras* and all the other Sūtras which are supposed to be the foundational texts of other traditions of Indian philosophy. The *Brahma-Sūtras* do not supersede in any way the authority of the Upaniṣads whose diverse views they present in an organized, coherent and harmonious form. Rather, they seem to have continued to enjoy a superior and independent status as is evidenced by the fact that many of those who wrote a commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras* felt it necessary to write independent commentaries on the Upaniṣads also. Not only this, many a time, thinkers have written commentaries on the Upaniṣads without being concerned with what the author of the *Brahma-Sūtras* had said about them. This fact assumes a radical significance if it is remembered that the *Mīmāmsā Sūtras* which try to do the same thing for the pre-Upaniṣadic part of the Vedic corpus which the *Brahma-Sūtra* attempts to do for the Upaniṣadic texts written before their composition, replaced completely for all future times the authority of the texts which they had tried to coherently summarize. There is, as far as I know, no independent commentary on those portions of the Brāhmaṇa texts which deal with the issues treated by the author of the *Mīmāmsā Sūtras* in his text devoted to those subjects.

The case of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* and the *Nyāya Sūtras* is of course well known, as in their case one does not even know what were the pre-existent texts or traditions which they attempt to present in a coherent, systematic manner. This itself should be sufficient to indicate that the traditions they represent have only a very tenuous link with the Vedic corpus which they do not directly disown. Indirectly, of course, the *Nyāya Sūtras* question the eternity of sound and the so-called *apauruṣeyatva* of the *śruti*, and the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* not only propound a radically different analysis of *dharma* than the one given in the *Mīmāmsā Sūtras*, but also, at least according to Nakamura, question the so-called Upaniṣadic doctrines in Sūtras 7.2.3, 7.2.4, 4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3.4.[3] As for Sāṁkhya, it is a matter of common knowledge that, while there are no specific Sāṁkhya texts before

Ṣaṣṭhitantra which is ascribed by Larson to 100 BC and which Potter in the third edition of his *Bibliography* has assigned to AD 100, there are ample references to Sāṁkhyan thought scattered in almost all the texts that are dated prior to that period. The first important Sāṁkhyan text after *Ṣaṣṭhitantra* is supposed to be *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* which is ascribed to around AD 350. However, there seems to be a peculiarity in the case of Sāṁkhya in that though the *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* did enjoy some sort of a pre-eminence after it was written, independent works differing from it continued to be composed and it never occupied the status which the Sūtras of other schools of philosophy normally did in the Indian philosophical tradition. The *Sāṁkhya Sūtras*, as is well known, are a later work and never enjoyed the authority which the foundational Sūtras of other philosophical traditions enjoyed.

The *Yoga Sūtras*, composed around AD 400, are a compendium of the yogic practices prevalent in India from primordial times and have little philosophical interest, except for the fact that they provide a common background for the existential realization of the various truths propounded in the diverse philosophical traditions of India. Hardly anybody has raised the question as to how almost the same meditational practices would lead to the realization of different existential truths so elaborately argued and defended by the protagonists of the conflicting schools of philosophy which show a tradition of extreme polemical intolerance verging sometimes on unbelievable abuses against one another.[4]

The story of the crystallization of the diverse schools of Indian philosophy around the first century AD is well known and their subsequent development during the first millennium AD is fairly well documented in the texts devoted to that subject. However, by and large, the story of the development of these schools is treated in relative isolation as if they had nothing to do with one another and had no influence or impact or interaction resulting in a modification of their positions under the influence of the criticisms they received from others. This, of course, is generally true only of the so-called 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy which are supposed to be derived from the Vedic tradition, for Buddhism is generally treated as the adversary whose critical responses led to significant developments primarily in Nyāya

and secondarily in some other schools of Indian philosophy. In fact, Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* is supposed to have been profoundly influenced by Buddhism, while Śaṁkara's thought is regarded as having assimilated significant insights of Buddhism in his reconstruction of Advaitic thought on the basis of the *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā*.

But in whatever way the story is told, the chief protagonists on the philosophical scene of India during the first millennium AD are the so called 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy, that is, the Mīmāmsā, the Vedānta, the Nyāya, the Vaiśeṣika and the Yoga, without anyone ever realizing that the total number of works produced by all these schools together bear hardly any comparison with those which have been produced by the Buddhists or even the Jains both in quantity and quality during this period. The Buddhist thinking continued unabated from Nāgārjuna onwards, that is, from around AD 150 till about AD 1200, when it suddenly stopped in India due to the destruction of Nālandā by Bakhtiyar Khilji in that year. Nāgārjuna not only shows as much sophistication in his argumentation as any of the thinkers who are supposed to have been the authors of the foundational texts relating to the 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy, but his radical critique of all the *pramāṇas* regarding their capacity to grasp the nature of ultimate reality appears to have centrally grasped and formulated the issue between intellectual ratiocination and spiritual realization which has hardly caught the serious attention of any other thinker in the Indian tradition including Śaṁkara. The problem seems to have been evaded or camouflaged by raising the issue of the relation between *śruti* and *yukti* or *tarka* in its non-technical sense, as the *śruti* was supposed to proclaim the ultimate truth.

Strangely, neither for Nāgārjuna, nor for any of the subsequent thinkers in the Buddhist tradition, do Buddha's discourses, as handed down and accepted in the Buddhist tradition, play a similar role as the Vedic corpus seems to have done in the case of those who try to align themselves with it. There appears to have been an obsession with the original texts amongst those who belonged to the Vedic tradition, whether directly or indirectly. And, perhaps it is for this reason that the foundational Sūtras of the various schools of Indian philosophy are accorded almost the same status as the one given to the *śruti* in the Vedic tradition. On the other hand, neither had the work of Nāgārjuna

nor that of any of his successors ever acquired the same authority as the works produced by the thinkers belonging to the so-called 'orthodox' schools of Indian philosophy. It is, of course, not the case that commentaries were not written on the works of the Buddhist masters, but somehow they never achieved the kind of status that those in the non-*śramaṇic* schools of philosophy did.

The Buddhist philosophical position is generally divided into four schools which are known as Śūnyavāda, Vijñanavāda, Vaibhāṣikas, and Śrautantrikas. However, while there are outstanding thinkers belonging to all these schools of Buddhist philosophy, there seems to be no one who is given the same status as, say, Gotama or Jaimini or Kaṇāda or Bādarāyaṇa. This itself is a significant difference which has seldom been noted as the Buddhist thinkers appear to have a more individual stamp of their own and are known for their outstanding contribution to philosophical thought rather than as exemplars of some primordial schools of philosophical thought arising from a foundational text which not only has an over-riding authority but also a finality in the formulation of the school's philosophical position. A Nāgārjuna, an Asanga or a Vasubandhu do not obviously have the same status; nor for that matter, do a Digñāga or a Dharmakīrti. These appear to be thinkers on their own and are not just carriers or explicators of a prior tradition of philosophizing to which their own philosophies are subservient.

The story of the Buddhist traditions of philosophizing in the first millennium AD has to be written differently and not seen merely in the context of the debate with the non-*śramaṇic* traditions as has been done up till now. The need for this will be realized even more if we try to see the presence of Buddhist philosophers and their works in the first millennium AD and compare them with the works of all other schools of philosophy in that period. If we take the third edition of Potter's *Bibliography* in his well-known *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* as our source of information, we find that in the first millennium AD there are more than 400 entries relating to Buddhist works and thinkers as against 83 entries relating to all others, including even Kaśmira Śaivism and Śaiva Siddhānta.[5] If we include Jain works, the situation does not change very much as the total number of Jain

entries add up only to 39. Thus, even if we include the thinkers the situation does not change substantially as the number of all non-Buddhist thinkers and works will not be more than 122. The Buddhist works are in a ratio of 4 to 1, thus clearly indicating their dominance on the philosophical scene of India during the first millennium AD, a picture which one would hardly get from any of the histories of Indian philosophy that have been written till now. It is surprising that this fact which should have been so obvious to anyone who had looked into the extant material of philosophical texts in India should not have been noticed. The only reason one can think of is the overwhelming obsession with the picture of Indian philosophy as it obtained in the second millennium AD, when Buddhism had practically disappeared from the Indian scene after the destruction of Nālandā in AD 1200 and the rise of non-Advaitic schools of Vedānta, starting from Rāmānuja (AD 1120), and their debate with the Advaitins who swept the philosophical scene in India by their radical advocacy of the denial of all difference, both in terms of ontology and epistemology. The radicalism of Buddhism was replaced by the radicalism of Advaita Vedānta which thus became the main centre of controversy in the second millennium AD. Along with this, there was the dramatic rise of Nyāya whose total number of thinkers matches those of Advaita Vedānta and even outnumbers them.

It appears therefore that the philosophical perception of the historians of Indian philosophy has been profoundly shaped by the situation as it obtained in the second millennium AD which has made them see Indian philosophy right from the beginning in a certain way, disregarding the facts as they actually occurred. This seems to have been facilitated further by the emergence of neo-Vedāntism in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through works written mostly in the English language which re-interpreted India's cultural past in a certain light to make it acceptable to the modern mind, primarily shaped by western influences which became increasingly dominant from the middle of the nineteenth century in this country. In fact, even the domination of Nyāya was underplayed by these thinkers who practically dismissed it as unnecessary hair-splitting. Not only this, they even ignored the dominant Jain presence in the second millennium AD which has about 180 thinkers in this

period and which had already outnumbered the Vedāntins and the Naiyāyikas even in the first millennium AD. In fact, the Jains are only second to the Buddhists in the first millennium and the total number of thinkers in each of the schools of Indian philosophy is substantially less than theirs in this period. The historians of Indian philosophy, then, seem to have been not only greatly biased but almost blind to the reality which stared them in the face.

The fiction that goes in the name of the history of Indian philosophy has thus to be recognized for what it is and needs to be replaced by a more authentic, objective and balanced picture of the way philosophy in India developed over the last two-and-a-half millennia, doing justice to each and every school of Indian thought as it has developed over a period of time in interaction and inter-relation with other schools of thought in this country.

The trans-civilizational linkages of India's philosophical thought have also to be kept in mind, as the history of Buddhism in the first 750 years of the first millennium AD is a story of its spreading in West Asia, Central Asia, China and Tibet, and it is unlikely that it would have been a one-way affair only. Buddhism itself must have been influenced by this international expansion. In fact, if Nālanda was an international centre for over 500 years where students from all over Asia came to study, it is unlikely that they would not have influenced the development of Buddhist thought to some extent. The untold story of Buddhism in the first millennium AD has, thus, still to be written and its influence on the other schools of philosophy has to be seen in a different way than it has been seen until now. It is not just that it makes a marginal impact on Nyāya and Advaita Vedānta by its criticism, but that it plays a central role in terms of which the other schools of Indian philosophy are developing and defining their position with respect to it. The story is, however, far more complex as the inter-relationships between the other schools of Indian philosophy are far more variegated than it has been thought until now. All in all, we need a new history of Indian philosophy and not the fiction that goes under its name.

Notes and References

1. The literal translation of the phrase used in the *Gītā* would be 'those who say that nothing else exists'.
2. On the question of the authorship of the *Mīmāmsā Sūtras* and the *Brahma Sūtras*, see Nakamura, *History of Early Vedanta Philosophy*.
3. Ibid, p. 330.
4. Sādhu Śāntinātha is perhaps the only exception to this statement. His book entitled *Sādhanā* tries to explain and explore this phenomenon. However, nobody seems to have taken it seriously, perhaps because of his negative conclusion that the very structure of meditational practices ensures that whatever the theoretical truth with which one starts it, is bound to be realized as existentially true because of the very nature of the meditative practices through which its truth is sought to be actualized and realized in consciousness. The positive counterpart of this contention is perhaps more explicitly exemplified in the life of Shri Ramakrishna which has attracted more attention and appreciation without any attempt at its epistemological analysis or comparison with Sādhu Śāntinatha's negative conclusions.
5. It may be said that the predominance of the Buddhist texts during the first millennium AD may be due to the availability of Buddhist texts outside India where they were better preserved. But this can hardly explain the overwhelming discrepancies in the proportion of the texts; or the fact that even the Jain texts during this period outnumber those of the Vedānta, the Nyāya, the Mīmāmsā the Sāṁkhya, etc. The Jains, of course, were confined to India alone and hence the question of their texts being preserved outside India does not arise.

☙ 4 ☙

Where are the Vedas in the First Millennium A.D.?*

I

The Vedas are supposed to be the most authoritative source both for rituals and knowledge in the non-Śramanic and non-Āgamic traditions of India. In fact, many people in contemporary India believe that they contain all knowledge including that of modern science if one has the capacity and insight to find it there. Many others, like Śri Aurobindo and those who have followed him in the understanding and the interpretation of the Vedas, feel that they are the store-house of all mystical knowledge that man might possibly possess. Yet, their exact place in the Indian tradition has never been clearly stated. Nor do we

* This article is dedicated to Prof. R.N. Dandekar, one of the most outstanding Vedic scholars in the world today, whose paper entitled 'Commentators of the *Rgveda*: A Recapitulation' has provided much of the substantive evidence referred to in it.