

## Introduction

**H**istory, as a cognitive enterprise, seems to be amongst the strangest of endeavours undertaken by man for it claims to know the past, that is, something which does not presently exist. But, how can that which is 'not', be understood? For, to understand that, it would be to endow it with some sort of 'being'. The anomaly and paradox inherent in this attempt to know and understand the past has generally been ignored, as it raises questions about the very foundations of the enterprise in which historians are engaged. For the 'past' that one tries to know was at one time existent and hence cannot be regarded as a 'pure nothing'. If it were so, it would not have left any evidence of itself. 'Non-being' does not produce effects or leave any evidence from which it can be constructed as the 'cause' of that which is in the present and on the basis of which we try to understand what was. Thus, the cognitive justification for the enterprise named history is said to lie in the relation between the present and the past and the linkages that can be established between the two.

But even if this is accepted, the question remains of how one who claims to be a historian 'validates' this linkage between the present and the past, as the past, that is no more and can never be there, in principle shall never be 'present' to verify the linkage that is postulated. Normally, the hypotheses that one forms to explain or understand what is in the present are supposed to lead to further consequences which can be observed or met with in the future, which would be the 'present' at that time, and thus establish, to some extent at least, the plausible truths of the hypotheses that were formed. This is, to a large extent, the established method in most of the cognitive enterprises of man. But as far as history is concerned, the situation seems to be just the reverse. Here the evidence which is supposed to be in the present, validates or corroborates or establishes the truth of the hypothesis which is postulated about the past without any further attempt at finding whether the hypothesis so postulated is itself valid or not. In fact, the terms 'hypothesis', 'postulation', 'validation', 'corroboration' are seldom used in

the cognitive enterprise known as 'history'. Rather, the whole thing about the past is presented as if it were 'really' so, and that the historian has somehow got access to it and 'knows' it as if he himself had been a star witness to the events he is writing about and that his veracity is itself the guarantee of the truth of what he is writing about.

There is bound to be also the objection that we are assuming a momentary, evanescent view of reality which is Heraclitean or Buddhist in character. But this is just not true. There are things which endure and which survive the passage of time without any serious damage being done to what they essentially are. The Aśoka pillar which we find today existed when it was constructed on Aśoka's orders, even though subsequently it may have been damaged or the inscription on it dimmed or defaced to some extent. Thus it can legitimately be said to provide incontrovertible evidence in the present of something that occurred thousands of years ago as is also the case with many other things present today on the basis of which the historian tries to know about the past. Further, the use of memory in the self-conscious attempts at preservation and transmission, with exact fidelity, is also evident in what is preserved. This was so with the oral transmission of the Vedic *mantras* and the dialogues of the Buddha and the Mahāvīra, to give but some examples from the oral traditions of India, as is also the case in respect of the sacred texts in other traditions. The invention of writing added another dimension to the preservation and transmission of the 'evidence' establishing the truth of the so-called hypothesis about the past namely that it is present here in the 'present'.

However, the 'decision' to preserve, perpetuate and transmit, in as unadulterated a form as possible, is itself a decision of someone or some institution. It is based on certain reasons and implies that certain things among others were considered 'worthy' of preservation, perpetuation and transmission. Thus, the decision-makers of the past determined in a selective, substantive sense what should constitute the basis through which the past itself would be known and the 'real', the veridical 'truth' about it, be determined. This is a strange situation where one's access to the truth itself is edited, censored from the beginning and, strangely, the historian, willingly or unwillingly, conspires by selecting what was to be preserved for posterity. However, all that was selected to be preserved has not been preserved. That which has been lost far outnumbers that which has survived even the most self-conscious attempts at its preservation. This may have been the result of deliberate destruction on the part of those who did not want that what was preserved be available to succeeding generations. Besides this, there were also accidents which no one can help and which destroyed things that the earlier generations had tried to preserve and perpetuate with such perseverance and care. Thus, the basis on which the historian constructs his knowledge of the past is subject not only to the deliberate decisions of those who decided what was to be preserved or destroyed, but also to the vagaries of time or accident or chance. It is, of course, true that 'chance' also preserves things that were never

intended to be preserved in the sense in which the so-called sacred texts and other *sāstric* works are generally sought to be preserved.

But, then, what is this knowledge of the past that the historian claims to know or to have discovered and about which he writes with such authority, and the truth of which he wants others to believe without any shadow of doubt or disbelief. The past, in other words, is what the historian has "created". It is his/her creation and he/she does not let the reader have the least suspicion that it is so. Rather, one is lulled into thinking that what one is reading about is the 'real' past, the past as it actually occurred, the past to which the historian has a special access and which he/she is sharing with the reader. In fact, most of the 'past' is irretrievably lost and is, in a fundamental sense, meant to be lost. But the past which the historian creates is not fully a function of the evidence that is available for one reason or another but is usually built on the basis of a half-conscious selection by the historian in respect of the available evidence itself. It is this fact which is generally never made known to the reader and, many a time, the historian himself is not aware of it. It is, of course, true that the notion of 'evidence' is itself a function of relevant knowledge in other domains, and as this knowledge changes over a period of time, what is to be counted as evidence also changes. The historian, of course, is not responsible for this change in the character of what is to be counted as evidence, but he/she is certainly responsible for the act of selection that generally operates in connection with what is to be counted as evidence in the context of the relevant knowledge that is obtained in his/her own time. Many a time, it is assumed that the evidence which has not been taken into account will not substantially affect the picture being built. In fact, in many other disciplines statistical evidence is compiled on the basis of selection, but there it is generally methodologically ensured that new data will not substantially affect the conclusion by adopting the simple device of including further instances of the evidence to see whether or not they affect the result in any substantial sense. The historian, unfortunately, does not do this, and even where it is difficult for him to do so for any reason, his reader does not know that he has not been able to use the relevant evidence in his construction even though it was available when he was building his picture.

There exists also the startling fact that while in most of the social sciences the relevant data can be statistically treated in terms of the investigation that is being carried on, such cannot be the case with regard to history. What history studies is almost a unique phenomenon and to the extent that it is repeatable and is seen as an instance of some "universal", it ceases to be the subject of historical investigation. There are, of course, historians who have tried to turn their study into something which may be nearer to what is considered a science and have even gone so far as to change the very title of their discipline from 'history' to something such as 'Cliometrics'. In fact, many of the historians of today try to distance their discipline from what is usually called the humanities to have this included instead in what is termed the social sciences. At the other extreme are those who can be regarded as philosophers of history and those who

try to see historical events in terms of some general pattern in which individual events are subsumed under or seen as mere illustrations of something higher or nobler or of some principles that are more abstract and universal. The so-called Christian view of history, the Marxist and the Hegelian views, and the views embodied in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin, may be said to represent this trend. But then, these are even more selective in their approach and hardly care for the counter evidence which abounds in plenty, as it would refute their theory if it were seriously taken into consideration. In fact, their theories are not subject to refutation in principle as the evidence, whatever it is, is bound to fit, in an *a priori* manner, with those theories.

This paradoxical character of the 'evidence' on the basis of which the historian builds his picture has seldom been seriously considered. How and why is it that this type of evidence permits 'constructions' of alternative pictures—'pictures' from among which it is difficult to decide as to which is the valid construction given the evidence on which it is built. Perhaps it is the differences in the principles of interpretation employed by different historians which give rise to these alternative constructions. But if it is so, then the principles themselves, on the basis of which the historian has built his construction, should be clearly articulated; as without knowing what they are, the reader will be left in the dark regarding how the whole thing has been built up in one way rather than in another. The principles of interpretation may require a justification which is seldom found in the writings of historians, nor is it ever stated as to why the principles employed are 'better' or more 'suitable' to the evidence concerned than are others which could perhaps also be employed to build different pictures.

The situation gets even more complicated if the distinction between 'manifest' and 'latent' meanings with respect to the evidence is taken seriously, for then, the interpretation that is in accordance with the manifest content of the evidence, may be seen to be unreal or illusory, as the so-called real meaning is hidden by it and can be revealed only if the 'manifest' is ignored or not seriously taken into account. Not only this, but also, as the source of most of the evidence on which the historians build their pictures is based on what human beings have written or said, the problem of "intentionality" enters in a serious way to affect the interpretation that one chooses to make.

It is true that there has been strong criticism regarding the bringing in of intentionality in respect of interpretation in literature. The debate about the 'intentionalist fallacy' is well known, and the autonomy of the text has been repeatedly emphasised to underline the independence of the text from its author. On the other hand, most of the interpretation of evidence in the legal context has necessarily to take into account the intentions of the agent, as otherwise, there would remain no difference between murder and manslaughter. The texts of the historian may be said to lie somewhere between the pure literary text which may be treated as autonomous, and legal evidence, where intentionality is the heart of the matter, so that intentionality of agents and authors can

never be completely ignored in a historical construction built on the basis of evidence. But, as everyone knows, it is almost impossible to get at intentionality correctly, and one can never be sure if what one has assumed about it is really correct.

The essential ambiguity in the evidence, an ambiguity intrinsic and unavoidable, renders the historian's construction always suspect unless he/she makes a determined effort to lay his/her cards on the table to make the reader aware of all that has gone into the making of the construction. This, of course, is a difficult demand to fulfil, and even when attempted, is bound to fall short of what is 'objectively' necessary in the situation. Not only this, it is bound also to affect the readability of the historian's construction, as no 'narrative' can be written if one tries to fully expose the machinery behind the construction of the narrative. The reader is bound to be bored by whatever is written even if it be true that what is so written becomes more scientific in character.

The conflict between being objective, scientific, veridical on the one hand, and something interesting, readable, imaginatively gripping on the other, is thus always present. So is the 'know-all' impression which the historian inevitably tries to create in the reader's mind about what he is writing, as any element of doubt or tentativeness would affect adversely the reader's interest in what he has constructed.

## II

An objection is bound to occur that most of the considerations we have been urging against the 'honest' practice of the historian's craft are irrelevant not only because they are akin to the usual arguments which philosophical skepticism puts forth against the possibility of any knowledge whatsoever, but because any enterprise is always carried on within the limitations imposed by the subject matter on the one hand and the feasible means on the other. The historian practises his craft within the limitations imposed by these two factors and, ultimately, history is what the historian does.

This all may be regarded as a fair refutation of what we have been saying but what we have urged has arisen not out of generalised, abstract philosophical considerations with which we are all too familiar, but from a direct 'living' encounter with the problems as they have arisen in our attempt to write about developments in classical Indian thought from the eighteenth century onwards, a task which I accepted in almost complete ignorance of what it might entail if I was to do it with even some honesty to myself and to the task I had undertaken. I am no historian and, in fact, never was one. My own training was in the field of philosophy, being primarily concerned with 'thinking' about things in general. As for history, I generally felt that it was totally irrelevant to the vital cognitive concerns of man. How could it ever matter that someone did something at some time in the past? The activity of 'thinking' was always exercised on a

problem that had a non-temporal dimension, and that was the real heart of the matter. If Plato thought more than two and a half millennia ago, the time when he thought about things was irrelevant: what really mattered was the content of his thought, and this *was*, and *is* and *will be* relevant for ever. Thus, to undertake an exercise which had an essential temporal dimension to it was something new, at least as far as I was concerned.

The problems that I encountered therefore, in this exercise were a matter of 'discovery' and hence posed challenges in the strictly cognitive sense of the term which I had not thought of before. But whatever the historians may feel about the issues I have raised, I, at least, feel that they are genuine enough to be articulated and shared with others, particularly for the reason that they have 'shaped' the format of this work.

The first 'discovery' that I made was that one could not understand what was happening in the various domains of classical Indian thought from the eighteenth century onwards without becoming aware of what had gone on before. This going 'backwards' to understand the period I had been given to write about had literally no boundary. Thinking in India shows such a remarkable continuity that the temporal divisions one usually makes prove to be utterly irrelevant. There certainly are landmarks in its history, but they have little to do with the socio-political history of this civilisation. This provided the necessity and the justification for a chapter dealing with the earlier history of these thought currents so that what happened from the eighteenth century onwards might make some sense to the reader. But the real problems emerged while dealing with 'material' from the eighteenth century onwards. What was this material? What did it consist in? Did we have a complete roster of it? And if we had it, how could it all be handled, understood and made sense of in the context of the task that we had set for ourselves?

The search for material written during this period concerning the intellectual disciplines in which we were primarily interested was made possible due to two major bibliographical sources—the first by Karl H. Potter and the second by Thangaswami Sarma. The former comprises Volume I of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, which contains the most comprehensive bibliographical source material for the subject available in English. The bibliography volume had run into the second edition when we started our work, and hence this became the major source for the collection of reference material along with the dating given in it. However, in the last stages of the work, the third edition of the bibliography was published, and needed to be examined to rule out any substantial changes in the dating, or in the material, which we had not taken into account. A comparative study of the two editions led to the review article, 'Potter's bibliography' published in the *Journal of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research*.<sup>1</sup> The review article led to a comment by Prof. Karl H. Potter himself, resulting subsequently in a reply by myself.<sup>2</sup> Basically, however, no substantial changes were occasioned by the modifications in the third edition of the bibliography.

Thangaswami Sarma's work is little known in the scholarly world as it is in Sanskrit and has received no great publicity or even reviews in reputed journals.<sup>3</sup> Yet, in many ways, it is superior to Potter's work, as it gives not only brief summaries of the contents of the works cited but also the interrelationships between them in terms of the schools and sub-schools that proliferated around some seminal works in the field that was being dealt with. Also, it gives some biographical information about the authors of the works, including information about their teachers or gurus, which is of vital importance in the Indian tradition. However, Thangaswami Sarma's work covered only Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Advaita Vedānta when we started our work and dealt only with works in Sanskrit, caring little for the secondary material with respect of these or the translations that had been made into various languages of the world. The bibliographical volume on Mīmāṃsā by Thangaswami Sarma was published later and, thus, was available to us only in the final stages of the completion of our work.

The two major sources of our bibliographical information, however, related only to the field of philosophy and provided no information regarding either the literature on Alankāra Śāstra or that which dealt with the political, social and legal thought of India. Luckily for us the *Dharma Kośa* volumes edited by Paṇḍit Laxman Shastri Joshi provided a fairly comprehensive introduction to the material on the subject even though it was not primarily meant to be a bibliographical source of information on it.<sup>4</sup> The volumes dealing with *rājnīti*, *saṃskāra* and *vyavahāra* provided ample information which could be used for bibliographical purposes also. As for material on Alankāra śāstra, there was hardly any information regarding the works written from the eighteenth century onwards even though fairly adequate information was available about the major works written up to Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Later we stumbled upon a work in Hindi by A.K. Srivastava which provided detailed information regarding the authors who had written on this subject in recent times.<sup>5</sup> We had been given information about this work by Professor Radhavallabha Tripathi, Professor of Sanskrit, Sagar University, and we are grateful to him. Later still we had the good fortune of getting the manuscript of a monograph on the post-Jagannātha period of Alankāra Śāstra by Professor Siva Kumar Swamy, Sanskrit Department, Bangalore University, which gave a more comprehensive account of the developments in this field from the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>6</sup>

The bibliographical material collected from these sources is given in the appendices to this volume as evidence of the extent of the material that should provide the basis for the 'construction' of any reasonable and legitimate picture of intellectual developments during the period in the fields we are concerned with. But as would be evident to any reader of this volume, this was an impossible task not only for us, it would have been impossible for anyone else who might have undertaken to do this work. The texts have generally been written in the technical language of Navya Nyāya, which is scarcely intelligible except to a few specialists in the discipline. Unfortunately, their number is sharply declining, and even those who have specialised in the field we find that they are conversant with

only a few well known texts which they probably learnt from their teachers. There is also the added problem that in the absence of any qualitative assessment of the works mentioned, there is hardly any substantive ground for choosing between them except on the basis of some vague hunch that some might be more important than others as they have been written by a well known person held in high esteem in the tradition or because they deal with a subject that is important in itself.

A preliminary attempt, therefore, was made to find which traditional thinkers during this period were considered to be of outstanding importance by living scholars within the field; and the result thereof is given in the appendix, particularly highlighting those whose names occurred in the lists provided by different scholars independent of each other. But most of these belong to the period after the middle of the nineteenth century, and hardly any one belongs to the earlier period covered by us. However, even among these, if we take only the most common names from the list provided to us by scholars from different regions, there is hardly a single one on whom intensive work has been done or on whose work monographs have been written. Basically, it is a *terra incognita* which no one seems to have explored up to now.

Besides these obvious difficulties there were others which, in our opinion, were even more fundamental. Our initial survey of developments in various fields of knowledge before the eighteenth century had revealed that their centre was around certain key controversies which had occurred earlier and were carried into the period that we were concerned with. The whole material thus had to be seen from the perspective of these debates and discussions. Unless there was a clear awareness of the stage that the controversy had reached before the dawn of the eighteenth century, subsequent developments in the debate could not be properly understood or assessed. This, however, was not the perspective from which the scholars viewed their own disciplines. Thus, the questions that we asked them appeared both new and inconvenient, as they had to reorganise their whole knowledge in the context of the way in which we were trying to look at material which was familiar to them but which they had not seen from this perspective. Scholars are generally as conservative in their intellectual habits and ways of looking at things as are most of us, and thus it was not easy to find persons who had both the ability and the willingness to look at familiar texts in a new way. Luckily, we did find some outstanding scholars who were willing not only to look at the material from the new perspective that we had suggested, but also to answer our unending queries regarding what they wrote. The names of Professor Prahlada Char, Kutumba Shastri and Thangaswami Sarma stand out in this connection, but there were others like Paṇḍit Kishornath Jha and Dr Achyutanand Das who also helped us.

Besides the new perspective of discussion and debate around the central issues which had emerged earlier and which were carried on incessantly during this period, there was the even more difficult problem of what may be called sensitivity to philosophical novelty in the points that were being made by a

particular thinker and the promise or potential they had for significant departures in philosophical thought seen in the way it had developed until then. This was obstructed by an almost axiomatic belief shared by everybody whom we approached that, fundamentally, there was nothing new in the writings of this period and that, at best, there was only what is called *pariṣkāra* in the tradition, which we may render as refinement or a more exact and subtler reformulation of what had already been said. This was the view commonly shared by traditional and modern scholars alike, and we had great difficulty in getting over this prejudice of those who 'knew' the material in the original better than we could ever hope to do. But once we became self-consciously aware of the fact that this widely-shared opinion had only a superficial basis in the situation as it really obtained, we repeatedly found what, in our opinion, were genuinely new insights which had a great deal of philosophical relevance even in the context of what is called modern thought in relation to these subjects. A careful reader will become aware of this fact if he or she compares our 'construction' with the texts in the appendices prepared by scholars who were profoundly acquainted with the material they were writing about. Perhaps this is nowhere more evident than in our chapter on Sāṅkhya, which is almost completely based on the volume on the same subject in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* edited by Gerald Larson and Ramasankara Bhattacharya. The volume contains summaries of the works of almost all the writers of that period, and our own 'construction' is based on what different scholars have written about them in the volume. The most outstanding of these summaries are given by Kalidasa Bhattacharya, who himself happened to be one of the most eminent philosophers of his time in the country. Yet, as far as we were concerned, we found that even he had missed the philosophical significance of many of the points that he was writing about, which were raised in the works that he was summarising for the volume. As for others, the less said the better. Professor Larson himself, one of the most outstanding authorities on Sāṅkhya in the world today and the chief editor of the volume concerned, has not said anything about the developments that took place during the period covered in the volume. Basically, this seems to result from a firmly-held, unconscious view that all these systems of thought belong to the past and that there can only be exegetical work now with regard to them.

Surprisingly, the situation seems no different in respect of the philosophical writings in India during the last hundred years under the impact of the new system of education introduced by the British. Here there was no need to postulate that nothing new could be said on the issues that were being written about. But, somehow, the same attitude seems to have persisted, and the general feeling is that nothing significant or new has been said by any one who has written on these subjects in the English language. An exception is grudgingly made in the case of one or two philosophers, but no one has used their thinking as a point of departure for his own or subjected it to the critical attention that it deserved. Perhaps this is due to another unconscious attitude amongst the English-educated persons in this country: that the sources of real knowledge are all in the

West and that nothing new can ever be discovered by any non-western thinker except accidentally. The two attitudes combine to create an intellectual atmosphere in which all cognitive enterprises seem to be carried on in this country. They seem to ensure that, however innovative and significant may be the departures by any one, in the context of thought in the past or in the present and deriving from the tradition of the West, they would not be seen as such by colleagues, who would ignore it altogether even if their attention were drawn to it.

There is, thus, a double "innovation" in our 'construction' of the developments in both Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic traditions of Indian thought from the eighteenth century onwards in that we have continuously focussed upon the novelty and the innovativeness of thinking in these fields. Also, as our construction of the picture itself is based on what others have said or written about them, we have continually pointed to the need for a more careful examination of the original material in the light of what we have said about it or 'discovered' in it. Not only this, the new lines of investigation and research that are needed have also been pointed out so that any one who is interested in and concerned with the developments that took place during this period may pursue them on his own to find whether what we have said is correct or not and/or discover something different from what we have been able to do with our limited capacities.

To focus attention on the extremely limited nature of the material on the basis of which we have built our picture of developments from the eighteenth century onwards, and the tentativeness of even this construction because of various limiting factors mentioned above, we have explicitly added a separate chapter wherein we have tried to point out in detail the work that remains to be done. We hope that this will provide an incentive to future researchers in this area to test our construction and conclusions on the basis of new data. They may, we hope, arrive at new insights of their own and compare them critically with those which we have discovered.

### III

An enterprise of this size can obviously not be carried on by a single person. It needs the cooperation of many scholars with different specialisations, hence the format of the volumes in this project consists of various chapters written by different scholars at the request of the editor. We have departed from this format in a fundamental manner as it was difficult to build a coherent and consistent picture if the usual procedure were to be followed in the preparation of the volume, except perhaps through the introduction, which the editor may have written for the volume concerned. But the introduction can never take the place of the multifarious chapters that constitute the main body of the book. We decided to take upon ourselves the entire responsibility for presenting the full picture as we saw it ourselves. But as no one can satisfactorily render the material

relating to so many disciplines, we also had to request specialists to give us their pictures of developments in their areas. But there was a radical difference between the approach we adopted and the approach of the editors of most of the other volumes in the project. We not only indicated to the specialists what we wanted them to do with the material but constantly interrogated them with respect to what they wrote about it. This resulted in a continuous give-and-take, a clarification, modification and amendment of what they had written in the first instance. Our continuous questioning and raising of objections made the scholars look at the material again and also search for additional information regarding it as it became clear during the process that things were not as clear-cut as they had assumed when they had sent us their first drafts. The developments in Nyāya, and specially the controversy regarding *sāmsargatā* and *prakāratā*, are a classic example of this. Professor Prahlada Char is a rare scholar who never lost his patience in spite of our repeated questioning of the material that he sent to us in this connection. In fact, the questioning resulted in a joint exploration of the issues, in which others began to take part, and ultimately we discovered that there was a real difference of opinion between reputed scholars. Thus, though we talk of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, etc., basically there seem to be only Naiyāyikas, Mīmāṃsakas, Vedāntins or Sāṅkhyans who have their individual, personal ideas about what these so-called schools of Indian philosophy consisted in. There is, no doubt, a fair amount of agreement regarding certain things and also a distinctive approach to the problems that scholars raise and the manner in which they deal with them. But the seeming unanimity and overlapping of views hides important differences which cannot be resolved by reference to any particular text, as the so-called standard texts themselves differ substantially on many issues.

The truth of the matter is that the 'systems' of Indian philosophy are themselves a 'construct' out of innumerable texts that are supposed to articulate their positions, and as these have changed over a period of time and have been written by individual thinkers who had something to say of their own regarding the tenets of the system, they have undergone substantive modifications over time, some of which are openly acknowledged, such as the intrusion of personal God or Īśvara into Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, while others remain unacknowledged. A close look at developments in various fields of thought from the eighteenth century onwards reveals that thinkers with independent personalities have tried to approach traditional formulations creatively and to make original contributions of their own. Many a time things have been added, or modifications made, which are generally treated as *pañṣkāra* only. But this characterisation is basically self-deceptive, as it often undermines the traditional formulation or takes it in a new and unexpected direction.

The same appears to be true of those who have written in the English language after the coming of the British and have obviously been influenced by the western traditions of philosophising to which they were exposed by their education. This was internationalised so deeply that much of the thinking in

India may be seen as a branching-off and an important development of the western philosophical tradition in a new intellectual and cultural setting. It has not, of course, been seen in this way. There has been much talk of 'Commonwealth' literature but little of new developments in western thought that occurred after its transplantation into Commonwealth countries. Nor has any continuity or development been seen in the successive thinkers of this period, or in their interaction with traditional learning in the areas they were writing about. This aspect, though highlighted, wherever it struck us could not be examined in detail. A lot, thus, remains to be done, and we have focussed attention on this for the benefit of those who may be concerned with exploring it further.

It is difficult to imagine how a work of this magnitude could ever have taken its present shape without the scholarly contributions of Professors Prahlada Char and Kutumba Shastri, Sri Thangaswami Sarma, Shri Kishornath Jha, Shri K.T. Pandurangi and others. All of them have continuously given guidance without which the volume was not possible. Professor Prahlada Char's articles on Kroḍapatra and on the developments in Nyāya from the eighteenth century onwards form an important part of this volume. Professor Kutumba Shastri has written on the arguments given by Pt. Anantakrishna Shastri in his *Ṣaṭbhūṣaṇī and Advaitatattva Sudhā* wherein has been refuted the criticism of *Vedāntadeśika* in his *Ṣaṭdūṣaṇī* and of Jayatīrtha in his *Nyāya Sudhā*, respectively. Pt. Thangaswami Sarma wrote for us a basic paper on developments in Mīmāṃsā from the eighteenth century onwards and Pt. Kishornath Jha wrote, at our request, a long piece on the contribution of Bachcha Jha to developments in Nyāya in the early twentieth century. The said paper gave rise to a long debate seeking clarification regarding the concepts of *samsargatā* and *prakāratā* and the respective positions of Jagdīśa and Gadādhara on these. Later, Dr Acyutanand Das joined the controversy with his own contribution. The triangular discussion between these scholars gave us 'outsiders' a surprisingly intimate view of the internal tensions in the understanding of Nyāya among those who are regarded as 'specialists' on the subject. I must confess, though, that I find myself still undecided about the issue in spite of the repeated attempts of Professor Prahlada Char to clarify it and satisfy my doubts regarding their views concerning this. Similarly, very few scholars really understand the Kroḍapatras, and even those who do have hardly taken note of all the Kroḍapatras that are available. My response to Professor Prahlada Char's excellent but difficult piece on the Kroḍapatras evoked an angry response from Professor N.S. Dravid while Professor V.N. Jha, who had seen it earlier in manuscript form, simply said that I did not understand the 'Nyāya position' at all.<sup>7</sup> I, of course, have yet to be convinced but, ultimately, it is not a question of what the Nyāya position is but whether, however it may be formulated, it is adequate and can be sustained against objections that are philosophically relevant and important. Also, the question is not one of who is right or wrong, but how the thinking itself becomes clarified through the process of incessant questioning, that raises new possibilities for thinking on the subject which were not seen before.

The debate between the Advaitin and the non-Advaitin, as exemplified in the work of Pt. Anantakrishna Shastri, revealed another facet of the same issue. Most scholars identify themselves with one or the other sampradāya and hence can seldom see the importance of the points being made independently of the context in which they are advanced.

As for the other participants in this long debate, we could find hardly anybody to undertake the difficult task of scrutinising closely the texts for the arguments and counter-arguments given in them.

Regarding the other schools of Indian philosophy, we had the good fortune of getting a piece from Pt. Thangaswami Sarma on developments in Mīmāṃsā from the eighteenth century onwards, which provided us with the main basis for our reconstruction of contributions made to Mīmāṃsā during this period. The volume on Sāṃkhya in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, as pointed out earlier, provided us with the basis for our own construction which, however, departs substantially from it and breathes a different spirit. But we were surprised to learn that even Professor Ramashankar Bhattacharya, one of the editors of the volume, did not quite agree with the way Sāṃkhya was presented in it. There were many others who seemed to have a different idea of Sāṃkhya, giving some support to our view that each scholar has his/her own version of the particular school of Indian philosophy in which he/she has specialised, and that the so-called general picture is only the one that is repeated in textbooks on the subject. But this hardly affected the picture of developments in Sāṃkhya from the eighteenth century onwards, as none of the scholars seems to have been interested in that period or in what was happening amongst Sāṃkhyan thinkers then.

Apart from the contributions of the scholars whose names we have mentioned (see appendices), we have had the good fortune of getting information/assistance at the right time from diverse sources convincing us that there were 'transcendental forces' helping us in our work on the project even though it appears irrational to believe in them. The monograph of Siva Kumar Swamy on developments in Alaṅkāra Śāstra thus arrived just when we had despaired of finding any material on the subject relating to the period we were covering. Only a little earlier we had been told by Professor Radhavallabh Tripathi of Sagar University about a book in Hindi on the subject which with great difficulty we subsequently procured from the author himself. Similarly, our attention was drawn to the lectures of Pt. Omkaranath Thakur by Dr Mukund Lath, who had learnt of them during a visit to Banaras. We discovered that the lectures were in Gujarati, and it was only when Jyotsna Milan, a well-known writer and a personal friend, agreed to translate them that we became aware of their relevance to the work that we were engaged in. We could multiply the instances further. It was only in response to a chance remark in a letter, for example, that Professor Navjivan Rastogi, the well-known scholar on Kashmir Śaivism, brought to our attention the work of Sankara Chaitanya Bharati, who had discussed Abhinava-gupta's position and refuted it from the Advaitic point of view.

The story of this book would not be complete without mention of the Bangalore seminar on "Creative development of Indian philosophy during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries", which was organised by Professors K.T. Pandurangi and Prahlada Char in August 1995 with such meticulous precision. Almost all the papers that were presented there, both in English and in Sanskrit, helped us in carrying our work further in a way which would have been inconceivable in their absence. These papers have since been bound and made available by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research. The very titles of the papers would be sufficient to give an idea of the wide range of topics covered therein. Besides general reviews of works in the fields of Nyāya, Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Dvaita Vedānta, there were several papers on important individual works and commentaries written in the period by well known Paṇḍits such as Abhyankar Vasudeva Shastri, Vijayendrathirtha, Ramanuja Tatacharya, Satyapramodatirtha, Uttamurvira Raghavacharya, and several others. As for the participants in the seminar, these included some of the most outstanding Paṇḍits in the field who were available in the country: Shri R. Thangaswami Sarma, Dr V.N. Jha, Dr U.N. Shaulhag, Shri Ramanuja Tatacharya, Dr Ujjvala Pannse, Dr S. Revthi, Shri P.S. Sheshgiri Rao, to name but a few of them.

A research project of this nature requires continuous information and access to reference material of all kinds and, luckily for us, Dr S.C. Biswas, one of the foremost librarians of the country, was always there to help us in this regard. As has been that of others who helped to get us photocopies of material scattered in different libraries all over the world. The help that Professor R.S. Bhatnagar extended in connection with the part of the work dealing with modern philosophy was of a radically different kind, as it practically meant reading through the Presidential Addresses to the Indian Philosophical Conference which had, again, by a strange coincidence, been brought together and published by Professor S.C. Dube of Jabalpur University just as our work was being finalised. Professor Bhatnagar not merely accepted our request to make a brief summary of each Presidential Address published in the four volumes, but did the job so thoroughly that just by reading the summary one could feel the strength of the insights presented in the original address, before one turned to that for more details and clarification. This difficult job was undertaken by Professor Bhatnagar who is a rare person, in not only performing this task for us but doing it with a love, affection, concern and commitment which he alone can combine in his personality.

No scholar, howsoever eminent, can by himself accomplish a work of this kind. One needs a lot of what can only be called scholarly infrastructural support without which little can be really achieved. Dr Rashmi Patni, Dr Francine Krishna and Shri D.D. Mathur too stand out in this connection for having provided scholarly support. Rashmi has been associated with this project since its beginning six years ago. Her commitment and dedication to the spirit of this project has been truly amazing. In fact, few persons, would have been able to devote so much of their time, energy and patience to considering the multifarious and

unsuspected directions in which the project unfolded over all these years. Perhaps it is her interest in history, for she is a professional historian, being an Associate Professor in the Department of History in the University of Rajasthan, that has sustained her involvement in this work over so long a period.

Francine has been associated with almost everything I wrote and in scrutinising each line and word that was written, she pointed out with meticulous care ambiguities and inadequacies in the formulations so that they could be rewritten with greater clarity and simplicity. She ensured that nothing was missing, not even the bibliographical references that I always find hard to take care of.

Shri D.D. Mathur has assisted me for so long now that it is difficult to say what I would have done if he had not been there. The enormous correspondence that the work has entailed has been taken care of by him, and he alone has kept the record of correspondence with scholars scattered all over the country. In the last stages of the work, Rachana Sharma also helped in editing this volume.

Finally, Dr Mukund Lath has continually stood behind us and helped us with all the work that we have done during this period. Apart from his generous devotion of time his amazing interest in almost all fields of learning combined with a knowledge of the Sanskrit language made him a perennial source for information and clarification on any issue in the wide range of disciplines that we have covered in this volume. His help and advice has always been invaluable, and perhaps there is not a single page of this volume which has not benefited from what he has said directly or indirectly.

Long work on a project of this kind inevitably throws up directions which sometimes are only tangentially related to it. Much has been written during this period which may be considered as having arisen from our concerns in this volume. The volume entitled *Prolegomena to Any Future Historiography of Cultures and Civilisations* was directly concerned with the writing of this volume and has already been published under the auspices of the Project. Other publications such as *Indian Philosophy: A New Approach* and *Problematic and Conceptual Structure of Classical Indian Thought about Man, Society and Polity* have also arisen partly as a result of our involvement in the project. So also the numerous articles which have been written in response to the questions which have arisen during work on the project. Besides these, there still remain a very large number of questions that demand answers but which we have not been able to attend to for one reason or another. Many of the more important ones are mentioned in the chapter devoted to this subject, and it is hoped that others will take up the endeavour from where we have left it. We wish them luck and hope that they will have learnt something from the achievements and deficiencies of this volume, which attempted the writing of a new type of history. How professional historians will respond to this effort is difficult to say. But new departures are generally not welcome and intellectuals, as a class, happen to be as 'conservative' as anyone else. Perhaps I was 'saved' from the usual traditions of history writing as I was never trained as a historian and, even in the field of philosophy, I have been an

'outsider' as I have not belonged to any 'school', whether modern or traditional. I have been, if anything, a 'thinker' at large for whom the activity of 'thinking' has always been more important than the products of that activity, and hence, have always questioned the obvious, so easily accepted by most. My encounter with 'history', or rather, the practice of historical writing, fortunately or unfortunately, is of the same character evident in the other subjects/topics on which I have written. Let the reader or the student, unencumbered with the 'prejudices' of the past, judge for himself/herself whether or not the departure from the traditional way of writing history has been successful.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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7. For this discussion see D. Prahlada Char, On the Kroḍapatras: A Brief Discussion of Some of the Issues Contained in This New Genre of Philosophical Writing in India, *JICPR*, XIV(3) (May-August 1997): 99-119, on which I published my comments: Have the Neo-Naiyāyikas been leading us up the garden path?, along with the comments of V.N. Jha, in *JICPR*, XV(3) (May-August 1998), 121-141. Professor Prahlada Char's reply to my comment is contained in the same issue of *JICPR*, p. 141.