

## GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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Indian Philosophical thinking is centered to freedom from problems and the basic problem is identified as ignorance. Ignorance gives birth to all limitations, conflicts, sorrow and suffering. The purpose of philosophical thinking is therapeutic that is, to show ways for getting rid of ignorance to move to the knowledge, mortality to move to the immortality, darkness to the light, mundane to the spiritual, limitations to the infinite. This highest goal for some is freedom from the chains of life, realization of the true nature of one own spirit, discriminating knowledge and for some other a transcendental state beyond description. Different schools and thinkers approach to the highest goal by means of positive (*pravṛtti mārga*) and negative ways (*nivṛtti mārga*). The two ways are not conflicting because they approach the same pure knowledge in their own way based on their attitude towards ignorance. Two persons claiming highest knowledge of two disciplines may conflict about their superiority but the aspirants of 'pure knowledge' do not because the pure knowledge has no opposition, no conflict, and no contradiction with any. Pure knowledge does not differ with the different approaches to it. Some may take pure knowledge as substance, some as quality of consciousness, some as creativity of soul (*kr̥tya* or karma) and still some other as extinction (*śūnya*). But they all agree that the state of purity is freedom from worldliness, that is, from ignorance with all its forms and modifications. This issue of *the Journal of East-West Thought* includes nine articles that representing five trends of Indian Philosophical Studies, can grossly be categorized into – *Dharma-centric* (article 1, 2, 3), *value-centric* (article 4, 5, 6), *spirit-centric* (article 7 & 9), *meaning-centric* (article 8) and *cognition-centric* (article 9) approaching 'pure knowledge' as its goal. Each of the articles in this volume is a complete statement analyzed well and discussed conclusively. A brief evaluation of the merits of the article as per the trend they represent is given below to draw the attention of the readers.

### I. Dharma-Centric

*Ṛta* is primary Dharmic concept. In Indian Classical tradition it is the principle of creativity, the other side of the ultimate Reality (sat); Cosmic law that is operative inside as the rational and moral law of mind and outside as law of the nature. In the second section of his article 'Vedic Concept of Ṛta' Bhupendra Chandra Das has discussed precisely various senses this concept is used in Vedic literature. The first section deals with the Vedic values; it facilitates the author to find out the value of Ṛta and in last section, he concludes that *ṛta* is the basis of the functions of gods and men through which they maintain both their relation with *ṛta* and the security of the

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cosmos. Mīmāṃsā system is the staunch advocate of Dharma and the concept of Apūrva occupies the same position of Ṛta in Mīmāṃsā philosophy. The contribution of Scholarly article on ‘Mīmāṃsā Theory of Apūrva’ by Ujjwal Jha is specific in the sense that she has for refereed to the points of controversies on the nature and definition of apūrva in Mīmāṃsā. She is quite true in evaluating the relevance of the concept. The original theory of *Apūrva*, she has discussed herein her article when applied to the *karma* theory, is capable of explaining all apparent gaps and disparities in the world. If there is no such potency as Apūrva then it will mean the performance and the non-performance of the rite are the same. In the eyes of the text *Apūrva* is the name of the potential generated by the performance of duty in the performer as well as in the performance. Besides the two perspectives of dharma covered by the articles by Dr. Das and Dr. Ujjwal Jha, Arvind Kumar Rai in his very beautiful scholarly article entitled “The Concept of Dharma”, has discussed four very popular senses the word Dharma is taken in the Indian tradition. Dharma, as Rai observes is not merely understanding of transcendental being in order to cross the river of world. It is also rules for living in the river. *Artha* (property), *kāma* (sexual enjoyment) and empirical knowledge etc. are objects found in the worldly river, and Dharma also provides the basis for realizing them (*yatoabhudaya niḥśreyasasiddhiḥ*). Management of worldly affairs and liberation is also governed by dharma (*daivī sampad-vimokṣāya*). Dharma, as Rai perceives is free from religious, theological or book dogma and has no contradiction. It is the matrix of rules sustaining the whole world and a rule always implies difference and adjustment of particularity with universality. In this context, he rightly concludes, if we violate the dharma, we will bring misfortunes for ourselves, because everything is ultimately grounded in dharma.

## II. Value-Centric

Gita in Dharmic matter has the same respect of Veda because of its value orientation. Raghunath Ghosh, in his short but precise presentation “Values embedded in the Bhagavadgītā” has perceived its teachings as centered on the assimilation of diverse values and it can provide a harmonized ethical view of life and hence it may be called *Jīvangītā* (song of life). It rejects the extreme conditions and hedonistic attitude for the attainment of pleasure of life. Values bring harmony between reason and passion after solving the conflicts. Bhagavadgītā teaches the harmonization of ascent to the transcendental from the empirical and descends from the absolute stage of realization of Supreme Self to the practical concerns of everyday life, which has some specific value of its own. *Nyāya Philosophy of Emotion* by V. N. Jha is a brilliant exposition on the analysis of human emotion, behaviour, action and purpose. A philosophy of transformation in human life as laid down in the text Nyāyasūtra 1.1.2. Jha discusses rationale of analysis of emotions that can be good and bad. Misunderstanding creates emotions. But looking from the point of view of ultimate goal of life namely, liberation, even good emotions are nothing but binding factors and as long as these are entertained one cannot be out of the cycle of death and birth. All human

sufferings, therefore, are rooted in misunderstanding. One must, therefore, break this chain and that can be broken only by true cognition or knowledge of fact or truth. For a wise and reflecting man, everything is nothing but 'pain' which needs to be avoided. Concluding the purpose of the analysis of emotion, he remarks well pointedly that, without human body, there is no chance to attain salvation, in the same way, and without emotions too the journey of transformation cannot begin. Gandhi was the worshipper of non-violence. His perspective of environment is based on the idea of non-violence. Taking this view in consideration, Kewal Nayeck in his short article "Gandhi's Concern with Environment" observes his idea as always against a violent consumption of the natural resources and loving the sustainable use of the things the nature gives us as a gift. Eat the fruit and not the tree, and even in eating the fruit Gandhi's sense is to avoid its misuse that may lead to its waste. Gandhi's logic of non-violence is based on love and venerable conduct to the nature outside that according to Nayeck is workable in solving the environmental crisis.

### III. Spirit-Centric

Ananda Mishra has a critical approach to at least two views of Śūnyatā in his article "Nāgārjuna's: Beyond Being and Nothingness." Śūnyatā, as he evaluates, is neither Being nor Nothingness; it is beyond all the dichotomies of real and unreal, being and non-being. Nāgārjuna, Mishra observes neither refutes any metaphysics nor presents any new one; he just puts everything as it is and evokes us to be just in tuned with it. By proving all the dharmas (phenomena) empty of their own independent existence and essence Nāgārjuna invites us to enter the realm of Dharmatā and Tathatā, the highest experience or realization, that for *Mādhyamikas*, as Mishra perceives, is beyond the self-conscious experience of Śūnyatā as the highest truth. Mishra is successful in concluding that this experience of Śūnyatā too is ultimately *śūnya*.

### IV. Meaning Centric

When a word cannot convey the literal meaning, the next resort is to suggest meaning and finally, the meaning is apprehended through *vyañjanā*. Vedika Mati Hurdoyal Chekhori, in her article "Poetics and Understanding Suggestive Meaning" has made the point clear by the analogy of an arrow piercing a body. To reach the flesh the arrow has to first pierce the shirt, the skin, the flesh and then the heart. Mrs. Chekhori has rightly remarked that Abhinavagupta turned his attention away from the linguistic and related abstractions which had preoccupied even Ānandavardhana, focusing his attention instead on the human mind, specifically, to the mind of a reader or viewer of a literary work. Different sorts of intended and suggestive meanings have been analyzed well by the author.

### V. Cognition-Centric

Knowledge is the light, the light of the lights that must be understood as it is revealed. Devendra Nath Tiwari in his article “Cognitive Holism” analyses and discusses precisely the indivisible cognition as it is revealed by language. Language determinates cognition in a wise and in an ignorant equally and, hence, knowledge as it is revealed is disinterested but ignorant impose it on their interests that causes deviated effects. Cognition is flashing of consciousness; it comprises intelligible beings of language and the meaning it expresses non-differently. Cognitive holism perceives that understanding the indivisible cognition through the analytic skill has its own beauty but that must aim at clarity and conception of the indivisible cognition. Imposition of the cognition on allegiance of our interests has a different beauty but if one understands them discriminately, as what is revealed and what is imposed, only then he can get the wisdom of perceiving different skills as ways leading to the understanding of the indivisible. For wisdom and bliss, knowledge, be freed from it by imposition. The first Special Issue of the *Journal of East-West Thought* on the trends in Indian Philosophy and Religion was published, Spring, Number 1, Volume 5, March 2015. I was the guest editor of that volume. Professor J. Z. Ding, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of East-West Thought* informed me the decision of the board of editors of the journal to ask me to serve as the guest editor of a second special issue on the trends in Indian Philosophy and Religion II, for Spring, Number 1, Volume 8, March 2018. I must thank to Professor Ding for the present volume and his dedication for promoting the cause of Indian philosophical studies on a global level.

I am thankful deeply to all the distinguished scholars for their contributed articles which make this volume a valuable contribution to Indian philosophical studies.