

# Recent Trends in Indian Philosophy<sup>†</sup>

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The philosophical tradition in India has various strands which have at the same time some basic similarities that justify our calling it a tradition. It has been predominantly reflective and idealistic from the very beginning. The different *sampradāyas* (traditions) are sometimes realistic and at others idealistic. But, except the Carvaka system, none took the world to be of ultimate value; hence there is recognition of an ideal state outside this world.

Idealism and realism are the Western categories to classify our philosophical thinking. And since the present speaker is addressing an English speaking audience, it would be more appropriate to use these categories so that our tradition could be made more at home. Otherwise, the popular categories to distinguish the different traditions of Indian philosophy are those of *āstika* (orthodox, meaning thereby the adherents of the Vedic tradition) and *nāstika* (heterodox, denouncing the authority of the Vedas: *nāstika Veda mindakah*).

In India today, both in the traditional as well as in the secular sense, we have the living traditions (*sāmpradāyas*) with the only exceptions of the Ajivikas and the Lokayatas (*cārvākas*). But the compilers of the books on contemporary Indian philosophy noted earlier have ignored our varied tradition. We can divide these *sāmpradāyas* into idealistic and realistic groups, as noted above. Accordingly, the two schools of Mahayana Buddhism, and the Advaita Vedanta and Pratyabhijna philosophy would be idealistic. In the realistic camp we can put Jainism, Nyaya-Vaisisika, Samkhya-yoga, Mimamsa, the theistic Vedanta schools and Saiva Siddhanta. Apart from these two sets of categories we also find several Indian scholars of philosophy these days who have been influenced by more recent trends prevailing in European and American countries. Thus, the Anglo-American analytical and existentialist currents and some kinds of Marxism can be seen in the writings of contemporary Indians.

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## IDEALISM

Contemporary Indian idealism began early in the present century when in 1908 Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya (1875-1949) published his first work.<sup>1</sup> His was a philosophy that combined Eastern idealism, Western influence and his own original manner of handling the problems. This was an attempt to go beyond the narrowness of the East as well as that of the West and to make philosophy universal. He also tried to meet the objections against idealism in general and developed a philosophy of the Self on a Vedantic pattern. Dr. Surendranath Dasgupta (b. 1887) wrote his *Indian Idealism*<sup>2</sup> in 1933 wherein he discussed Upaniṣadic, Buddhist and Vedantic idealism and also compared these philosophies with those of Western countries. His philosophy could be called that of dependent emergency wherein he denied the existence of subjects and of knowledge. That was the time when Indian scholars of philosophy were enthusiastic to develop comparative philosophy.

### Comparative Philosophy

The pioneer of comparative philosophy in India was Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975). His aim, first, was to introduce Indian thought to the Western world by employing English terminology. But this led him to develop more thoroughly a method of comparative philosophy that is found in his writings.<sup>3</sup>

The next person to develop comparative philosophy was P.T. Raju (b. 1903) who is currently in the United States (Wooster College, Ohio). He is said to be the leading advocate of comparative philosophy today although the Vedanta scholars try to keep him exclusively within their camp. In 1951 he brought out one title<sup>4</sup> along with Dean Inge and others. His book *Idealistic Thought of India*<sup>5</sup> discusses Vedantic and Buddhist traditions and also includes some of the contemporary Indian idealists. His Vedantic idealism will be considered at some length in the following section. Here it suffices to say that Dr. Raju attempts to develop comparative philosophy into a distinct discipline with an aim and method of its own, without leaving the subject at a level of random comparisons. He develops a more rigorous method for this than that of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Professors A. C. Mukerji (b. 1890) of Allahabad and D. M. Datta (1898-

<sup>1</sup> K. C. Bhattacharya, *Studies in Philosophy* (2 volumes), Calcutta, 1958.

<sup>2</sup> S. N. Dasgupta, *Indian Idealism*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1933 ; 1962.

<sup>3</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, London, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> P. T. Raju, *Comparative Studies in Philosophy*, Harper Brothers, New York, 1951.

<sup>5</sup> P. T. Raju, *Idealistic Thought of India*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1953.

1973) of Patna University were the other leaders of comparative philosophy.

The fashion of comparative philosophy is almost outdated, only visible in the researches conducted in several university departments of philosophy. (The present speaker was subjected to such a comparison of Sankara and Bradley<sup>6</sup> at Banaras.) In spite of methodological formulations comparative philosophy could not become a distinct system. Comparison by itself is not entitled to be considered an independent philosophy. It is comparing two or more systems in order to understand them. Hence it can only be a methodology and not a philosophy. But comparison of systems within the Indian tradition and outside it is still not very unpopular. Professor N. S. S. Raman (b. 1928) of Banaras Hindu University seems to be advocating the cause of comparative philosophy with a fresh vigour in his essay<sup>7</sup> contributed to the volume of Devaraja. According to him, comparative philosophy brings about mutual understanding of two or more different people and their culture. In order to develop a more rigorous method of comparative philosophy he presents a five point programme that includes :

- (i) extensive translation of texts ;
- (ii) comparative study of basic ideas of East and West ;
- (iii) familiarizing oneself with current linguistic problems ;
- (iv) study of problems of contemporary relevance and concern for situational context ;
- (v) adoption of a more rigorous method of studying alternative beliefs in parallel or different intellectual contexts. Professor Raman feels that the traditionally tolerant attitude of Indians provides great incentive to develop a comparative philosophy.

### Buddhist Idealism

Of those Hindu thinkers who focused their attention to interpret Buddhist idealism, Professor T. R. V. Murti (b. 1902) is the foremost. Within the general framework of Advaita he interprets the Madhyamika philosophy<sup>8</sup> and tries to harmonise it with that of Sankara. The Madhyamika system also has its parallels in the Western idealism of Kant, Hegel and Bradley. Adopting the dialectical method, Dr. Murti tries to supplement the negative of the Madhyamika with the positive elements in Advaita. Ultimately for him reality is Being

<sup>6</sup> S. P. Dubey, *Treatment of Appearances in Sankara and Bradley*, (Ph. D. Thesis submitted to Banaras Hindu University in 1966).

<sup>7</sup> N. S. S. Raman, 'Is Comparative Philosophy Possible?' in *Indian Philosophy Today*, pp. 201-216.

<sup>8</sup> T. R. V. Murti, *Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1955.

as the basic category. Under his own supervision Dr. Murti made Dr. A. K. Chatterji (b. 1925) discuss the other Mahayana school of Buddhism,<sup>9</sup> thus completing the task of interpreting Buddhist idealism in two generations. Adopting the dialectical method, Dr. C. D. Sharma (b. 1920) of Jabalpur University also compared the two Mahayana traditions with Advaitic idealism.<sup>10</sup>

Certain attempts were made to recover the philosophies of the lost Sanskrit texts which were preserved in translation in countries like China and Tibet. Dr. Krishnaiah Venkata Ramanam of Visva Bharati published his study of Nāgājuna's *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sāstra*<sup>11</sup> after scrutinizing the Chinese text. Earlier Acharya Narendradeva had written a good account of Buddhist philosophy of religion<sup>12</sup> based on Chinese, French and Sanskrit sources. This book took care of both the realistic and idealistic traditions in Buddhism. Dr. Govind Chand Pande (b. 1923) of Jaipur traces out the origins of the different systems in Buddhist philosophy in his work.<sup>13</sup> While heading the department of Buddhist Studies at Delhi University, Dr. R. C. Pandeya (b. 1932) published *Buddhist Studies in India*.<sup>14</sup> Pt. Jaganath Upadhyaya of Sanskrit University, Varanasi, is another neo-Buddhist making an all out effort to establish Buddhist supremacy in philosophical circles.

## Western Idealists Interpreted

Apart from studying Indian idealism in the light of the West, there was also a trend from the beginning of the second quarter of this century to interpret Western idealism by Indian torch-light. *Neo-Hegelianism* of Dr. Hiralal Haldar (b. 1865) was one of the earliest and influential publications.<sup>15</sup> He himself was a realistic idealist. Dr. B. N. Seal was another advocate of Hegelianism but with a logic of his own. Unfortunately we do not have any representative writing of Professor Seal on the subject. By the close of the second quarter Dr. Dharendra Mohan Datta's (1898-1973) book<sup>16</sup> was published. This discussed Indian, European and American idealistic trends of contemporary importance. He attempted answers for R. D. Perry's objection to idealism and showed that on similar grounds realism also would be one-sided and incomplete. His was an ethical idealism which had a sweeping impact on Gandhian philosophy. The work

<sup>9</sup> A. K. Chatterjee, *The Yogacara Idealism*, B.H.U., 1962.

<sup>10</sup> C. D. Sharma, *Dialectic in Buddhism and Vedanta*.

<sup>11</sup> K. V. Ramanan, *Nagarjuna's Philosophies*, Indian ed. Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Varanasi, 1971; orig. ed. Charles E. Tuttle.

<sup>12</sup> Narendradeva, *Bauddha Dharma Darshan*, Bihar Rashtrabhasa Parishad, Patna, 1956.

<sup>13</sup> G. C. Pande, *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, Varanasi, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> Published by Motilal Banarsidas, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> H. Haldar, *Neo-Hegelianism*, Health Cranton, London, 1927.

<sup>16</sup> D. M. Datta, *Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, Art Press, Calcutta, 1950.

of Dr. R. K. Tripathi (b. 1918) on Spinoza<sup>17</sup> is another good review of an important European idealist by an Advaitin, while also, being an essay in comparative philosophy, this book presupposes an emendation of Spinoza in the light of Sankara. Accepting Spinoza's conception of God and his notion of causality as mandatorially defining his philosophy, Dr. Tripathi shows that many of the inconsistencies in Spinozistic idealism could be remedied by the Advaitic interpretation.

## Advaitic Idealism

As mentioned earlier, the Advaitic tradition has been the dominant trend for a long time and continues to be so even today. Of those who were living with us till recently mention may be made of the philosophy of S. K. Maitra, R. D. Ranade, G. R. Malkani and A. C. Mukerji. Professor S. K. Maitra (1887-1963) was an illustrious Professor of Philosophy at Banaras Hindu University whose thought was considerably influenced by Sri Aurobindo.<sup>18</sup> His approach was axiological: he believed in the Upaniṣadic declaration that reality is the truth of truth (*satyasya satyam*). Professor R. D. Ranade (1886-1957) was another great name at Allahabad University who belonged to the Advaita tradition drawing heavily on mystic philosophy. He became a myth during his own life time. He was in search of philosophical justification for spiritual experience. The other Vedantin at Allahabad was Professor A. C. Mukerji (b. 1890) who developed an idealistic theory of self<sup>19</sup> which could be free from the duality of realism and idealism. Reality for him is a system of identity and difference. His thought was influenced by Sankara on the one hand and the British Hegelians, Caird and Green, on the other. Professor G. R. Malkani (1892-1977) headed the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner (in Bombay Presidency) for a considerable period with formidable contributions of his own. He was an Advaitin and philosophy for him was the search for Truth. Knowledge releases us from the bonds of ignorance. Knowledge at rational and philosophical levels plays only a negative role. Reality as such is self-revealing and immediate without being known.<sup>20</sup> Professor N. G. Damle (b. 1893) of Poona also contributes to Advaitic idealism and advocates an integral idealism<sup>21</sup> where the synthetic philosophy of the spirit treats existence and value as inseparable.

Here mention may be made of Dr. B. L. Atreya (b. 1897) ex-Professor of Philosophy at Banaras who, as a very senior member of

<sup>17</sup> R. K. Tripathi, *Spinoza in the Light of Vedanta*, Banaras Hindu University, 1957, p. 349.

<sup>18</sup> S. K. Maitra, *Studies in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*, Banaras Hindu University, 1945.

<sup>19</sup> A. C. Mukerji, *The Nature of Self*, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1938.

<sup>20</sup> G. R. Malkani, *Vedantic Epistemology*, Amalner, 1953; *Metaphysics of Advaita Vedanta*, Amalner, 1961; *Philosophy of the Self*, Amalner, 1939.

<sup>21</sup> N. G. Damle, 'The Faith of an Idealist' in Radhakrishnan-Muirhead's *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, pp. 175-194.

the still living older generation, still actively serves the cause of philosophy. He specialises in the Advaitic philosophy of *Yogavisistha* and makes an attempt to prove, in the light of Western idealistic thought, that the idealism of *Yogavisistha* is the most perfect one.<sup>22</sup> In *Yogavisistha* he finds an agreement of the East and West on fundamental problems. Under his guidance and inspiration his son, Dr. S. P. Atreya, publishes the English journal *Darshana International* from Moradabad.

### Advaitic Idealism

Other leading Advaita thinkers of the day, whose philosophies are introduced in the coming section, are Professor T. R. V. Murti, Dr. P. T. Raju, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan and Dr. R. K. Tripathi. Here it would be more convenient to postpone talking about them. But mention may be made of some scholars of the oriental tradition who have been living and doing the philosophy of Advaita without publishing much. Pt. Raghunath Sharma (retired Professor of Vedanta at Sanskrit University, Varanasi) is a formidable scholar of Advaita and of late he has been writing his commentary on Vakyapadiya. Pt. Ramachandra Dixitar of Sanskrit College (in Banaras Hindu University) at Varanasi also is an important name in the field with equal command over Sanskrit and English.

### Kashmir Saivism

Kashmir Saivism is more technically known as *Pratyabhijnā darsana* or philosophy of recognition. Ultimately it is the recognition of one's own self as Siva that liberates us from bondage. The system was ignored for a couple of centuries but now has gained some importance. Thakur Jaideva Singh of Varanasi has edited some texts of this school. The book of Kaw on doctrines of recognition is an important title in the area. Dr. L. N. Sharma of Banaras Hindu University has studied Kashmir Saivism in the Advaita context and has compared it with Sankarite theories.<sup>23</sup>

### Sphotayada

The Grammarian's philosophy of the absoluteness of Sound (*sphota*) is mostly confined to class-room discussion with few exceptions of occasional writings like the one of R. Pathak.<sup>24</sup>

### Aesthetics

The philosophical study of important concepts in aesthetics is gaining some currency in Indian universities. The most popular

<sup>22</sup> B. L. Atreya, *Yogavisistha and Modern Thought*, Moradabad.

<sup>23</sup> L. N. Sharma, *Kashmir Saivism*, Varanasi, 1972.

<sup>24</sup> R. Pathak, *Sphota Darsana*, Bihar Rashtrabhasa Parisad, Patna.

name in the field is that of K. C. Pandey whose *Comparative Aesthetics* (volume I on Indian aesthetics) is quite interesting. Dr. Sushil Kumar Saxena (b. 1921) of Delhi University has written several articles on aesthetic subjects in *Diogenes*, *Marg*, etc. He gives a new definition of art as a creative invocation with a view to setting up 'presence' in place of other worlds, as the key concept of aesthetics. He reviews the theories of L. A. Reid and S. K. Langer before he comes to conclude that 'art is the creative invocation of a presence'.<sup>25</sup> Dr. S. Vahiduddin (ex-Professor of Philosophy at Delhi University) is the other notable figure who, in addition to his contributions to Islamic studies and religion, has found this area interesting. He invites our attention to certain factors that are often neglected in the analysis of aesthetic experience and analyses the categories of the tragic, the comic and the sublime. He also examines their fusion with experiences which are supposed to be extra-aesthetic.<sup>26</sup> He finds art and aesthetic experience to be pointers to the divine which is not manifest.

## Aurobindo Cult

The late Dr. S. K. Maitra<sup>27</sup> of Varanasi was the centre of inspiration for students and admirers of Aurobindo philosophy. During his own life time Sri Aurobindo became a focus of myth. But his writings drew the attention of scholars and researchers all over the world. Independently, Dr. J. H. Chubb of Bombay has also been an admirer of Sri Aurobindo. The Pondicherry Ashram has been the nucleus around which Aurobindo studies continue even today. Among the followers of Sri Aurobindo, the names of Anilbaran Roy,<sup>28</sup> Nalini Kant Guha<sup>29</sup> and Indra Sen are worth mentioning. Sri M. P. Pandit,<sup>30</sup> Aurobindo Basu and Dr. Maheshwari continue their devoted scholarship at Pondicherry. Some research work on Aurobindo's philosophy was done at Banaras when Dr. S. K. Maitra was dominating the scene. The works of Dr. R. S. Mishra (1923)<sup>31</sup> and of Dr. R. S. Srivastava<sup>32</sup> are notable.

## Comparative Religion

Both the names noted just now are more significant from the point of view of the comparative study of religions. It was mainly the theoso-

<sup>25</sup> S. K. Saxena, 'Embodiment and the Quest for Key Aesthetic Terms' in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (2nd series), pp. 194-221.

<sup>26</sup> S. Vahiduddin, 'Aesthetic Experience and Beyond' in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (2nd series) pp. 294-312.

<sup>27</sup> S. K. Maitra, *Studies in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy*, Banaras Hindu University, 1945.

<sup>28</sup> A. Roy, *The World Crisis: Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*, 1947.

<sup>29</sup> N. K. Gupta, *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, 6 parts.

<sup>30</sup> M. P. Pandit, *The Mystic Approach to the Vedas and Upanishads*.

<sup>31</sup> R. S. Mishra, *The Integral Advaitism of Sri Aurobindo*, Banaras Hindu University, 1957.

<sup>32</sup> R. S. Srivastava, *Sri Aurobindo and the Theories of Evolution*, Varanasi.

phical movement in India which led Indian scholars to take an interest in this area. Gandhi, of course, had been practising it in his life by including texts and scriptures from all the world religions in his prayers. The most important scholar in this field was Dr. Bhagavadandas (1869-1958) of Varanasi. His *Essential Unity of All Religions*<sup>33</sup> is a landmark in the short history of comparative religion in India. Although comparative studies in India are not lacking, the understanding of comparative religions as a distinctive discipline is very recent. The Punjabi University at Patiala has taken a lead in establishing a Department of Comparative Religion after Guru Gobinda Singh. Visva Bharati offers a course on the subject. Textually, the recent work of Dr. R. S. Srivastava, Professor of Ranchi University, is an important addition to the subject.<sup>34</sup> The work gives a good account of the world religions by way of comparison and evaluation. The fundamentals of all the major religions of the world, along with their discussion regarding the path of realisation of the ultimate, are introduced lucidly. The concepts of God, soul, freedom, karma, prayer, grace, evil, revelation, etc., in tribal and cultural religions, find lucid exposition. The author has also attempted to give a picture of the future course of religions and has outlined a picture of a prospective world religion.

Dr. R. S. Mishra is the Malaviya Professor of Comparative Religion at Banaras Hindu University and has been contemplating the problems of religion for quite a number of years. He is a reluctant writer and has contributed a few essays on the subject.<sup>35</sup> In one of the essays he discusses the concepts of realisation, religionism and values. Religion for him is the way to realise the Divine or the Holy. Irrespective of denominations, it is a way to realise the supreme value of man that is salvation or *mokṣa*. Those who are able to appreciate this fundamental of religion, which can be appreciated better by comparing world religions in objective and faithful fashion, would not insist upon intellectual or social dogmas which give birth to religionism.

## Philosophy of Religion

In a sense the whole of Indian philosophy could be called the philosophy of religion. Religious grounding has never been lacking in any of the philosophies of India. And religion has never been taken to be unexamined. Reason, when used, has not simply been used to defend the scriptures. In fact, reason and scripture and all the talk at the intellectual level are just outside the main gate of reality. It is intuition that is the final vehicle to approach the real.

<sup>33</sup> Published from Kashi Vidyadith, Varanasi, 1939.

<sup>34</sup> R. S. Srivastava, *Comparative Religions*, New Delhi.

<sup>35</sup> R. S. Mishra, *Studies in Philosophy and Religions*, Varanasi.

The philosophy of religion as a distinct subject has its Western origin in Hegelian philosophy. Most of the texts written on the subject by Western scholars confine themselves to Semitic religions. But the growing contact between different religions and scholars has shown that a narrower approach to the philosophy of religion is not possible now. We shall have to consider all the major problems of world religions while discussing the subject.

Amongst Indian scholars pondering over the problems of the philosophy of religions the name of Dr. Yakub Masih (b. 1916) of Magadha University (currently heading the Bihar University Service Commission at Patna) is the most important. In his person we find the best of the Muslim, Christian and Hindu traditions. He has written extensively on religion both in Hindi and English and has inspired several others in Bihar to take up the study of religions.

According to Dr. Masih religion is never divorced from life. It is an integrative experience of men collectively and individually. All the religions are occupied with the task of living and adjustment to the various demands of life and society. The *a priori* phenomena of religion require some basis for adjustments to changing situations. This is what we call God in the popular sense. If one wants to take pleasure in declaring the traditional God to be dead, one has to enthrone a modern God, which may be humanity itself. Man must have some image whom he worships in order to have some meaningful existence in the face of all kinds of hostile forces. To hold fast to a deathless God is to realise salvation.<sup>36</sup>

Dr. Santosh Chandra Sengupta of Visva Bharati is another important scholar of the day who has contributed to the philosophy of religion.<sup>37</sup> He has studied the philosophy of Josiah Royce with this viewpoint and holds that God is the end of religion. This view is subject to similar criticisms that could be directed against Cantwell Smith's view when he holds God to be the end.<sup>38</sup> If God is defined in terms of Semitic or Vaisnava theologians, he cannot be the end of all religions. To be the end of all religions, God will have to be conceived in a broader manner that will perhaps deprive him of his very Godhood.

It is the conviction of the present writer that somehow it is *mokṣa* or freedom that will have to be accepted as the common goal of all religions, theistic or atheistic inclusive. As mentioned earlier, the writers on the subject ignore the total religious situation and it is important to take note of all the significant developments of world religions.<sup>39</sup> The Indian group of religions has immense possibilities

<sup>36</sup> Y. Masih, *Introduction to Religious Philosophy*, Motilal, Delhi, 1971, p.vii.

<sup>37</sup> S. C. Sengupta, *An Enquiry into the Existence of God*.

<sup>38</sup> W. C. Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religions*, New American Library of Canada Ltd., Toronto, 1962.

<sup>39</sup> S. P. Dubey, *Otto and Hinduism*, Varanasi, 1969.

for correcting our incomplete understanding of the nature of religions. This task has been engaging the mind of the present author for quite a few years and the result of the efforts made might appear in the course of time.

## REALISM

If India has been fertile for the growth of idealistic philosophies she cannot be said to be barren for realism. The realism of Samkhya-yoga, Nyaya-Vaisisika, Mimamsa and several Vedanta schools on the one hand and the Carvaka, Ajivakas and Jain philosophy on the other are systems that cannot be overlooked in the course of the history of ideas in this country. In contemporary India too, the realistic trends are visible in their traditional as well as moral fashion.

Roughly speaking, realism is the philosophical viewpoint that considers the world to be real. Materialism and empiricism are other associate words that are used in this context. Materialism is another name for the school of thought that treats matter to be real and foundational. Empiricism is rather an epistemological position that holds sense experience to be of utmost importance, when the question of the validity of knowledge arises. In the wider sense of the term 'experience', even spiritual and religious experiences can be called empiricistic. But the usual meaning of this term is a narrower one where knowledge is supposed to arise out of sense experience. Some radical empiricists hold that all knowledge, whether factual or conceptual, comes from sense experience. But the liberal ones believe that only the former comes from sense experience and the conceptual is obtained by rational analysis only. In the modern sense the word empiricism is identified with the analytical method and is used for philosophical investigations. Logical positivism is empiricism in this particular sense.<sup>40</sup>

Though the number of realistic systems in traditional India has been many, in contemporary India the number of realistic or empiricistic thinkers, either in the traditional or in the modern sense, is comparatively small.

### Radical Humanism

M. N. Roy (1887-1954) belongs to the front line of the early contemporary realists in India. Roy was a radical empiricist and a Marxist earlier but became a humanist and freedom fighter later. His ideal was the cosmopolitan commonwealth where individuals will be free from the limitations of nationality and class. Roy wrote his monumental work *Philosophical Consequences of Modern Science* (unpublished) during six years of imprisonment.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See Rajendra Prasad's article in *Samakalina Bharatiya Darsana*.

<sup>41</sup> M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, Bombay 1971, p. 288; cf. *New Humanism*, Renaissance, 1947.

Professor G. C. Chatterji (b. 1894) of Lahore was an advocate of common sense empiricism. For him philosophy is a natural activity of man which springs from the actual condition of his being. To him experience is not only the starting point of philosophy but in a certain sense it is also the criterion and touchstone of every philosophy. By experience he means the actual concrete experience of some finite individual.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Rashvibary Das (b. 1897) is another typical realist who reacts against all forms of absolutism.<sup>43</sup> Though he found more depth in idealistic writers, he preferred to be a realist with Nyaya-Vaisisika systems in India and the Kantian form of critical realism in Europe as guidelines. Of late he has moved towards the phenomenism of Husserl and also seems to be inclined towards a Sartrean form of nihilistic existentialism. These varied interests have deprived him of building a systematic philosophy of his own and he himself denies that he is a philosopher in the sense of building a well reasoned systematic view of the universe, whether theoretical or practical. But he does take an interest in problems of traditional and contemporary thought. Philosophy for him is critical reflection. He is a practical idealist and a realist and believes in values.<sup>44</sup> His realism holds that the object of knowledge exists independently of the act of knowing. His approach is sceptical.

Professor N. V. Bannerjee, former professor of philosophy of Delhi, is the senior living empiricist in our country. His realism maintains the independent existence of the knowable.<sup>45</sup> It is the common end of both science and philosophy to explain the nature of the world. Our ordinary knowledge is the basis for both. The major differences between the two approaches is that, whereas scientific explanation is factual, philosophical analysis aims at the 'ought' of the world. Therefore, philosophy is value centred. According to Professor Bannerjee, to understand the world simply by *a priori* rational concepts is not possible. However, he admits certain facts which are not the subject of experience and without which our experience cannot be explained. One such fact is the self of the knower. Natural laws are another example of such facts.

Dr. K. Satchidananda Murty (b. 1924) of Andhra University (currently Vice-Chancellor at Tirupathi) is a typical traditional realist. He has given an empiricist exposition of religion.<sup>46</sup> He explains religious feelings on realistic grounds: this is a unique position that

<sup>42</sup> G. C. Chatterji, 'Common-sense Empiricism,' in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, ed. S. Radhakrishnan (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1936, pp. 129-148.

<sup>43</sup> R. Das, *The Essentials of Advaitism and The Self and Ideal*.

<sup>44</sup> *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, pp. 231-248.

<sup>45</sup> N. V. Bannerjee, *Concerning Human Understanding*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1958.

<sup>46</sup> K. S. Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta*, Bombay, 1959.

no other contemporary Indian has attempted. Religious experience, though not devoid of feeling, is mainly thought-based. The end of religious experience is knowledge of God—and not morality.

According to Murti, though it is difficult to put religious experience into words, it can be compared with other experiences like those of music and aesthetics. Several of our religious beliefs are not within the grasp of an intellect but they are not opposed to reason. But the ideas that are not supported by experience cannot be true.

## Existentialism

Existentialism has made its way into Indian thinking and literature. Philosophically, the name of Professor J. L. Mehta of Banaras Hindu University (now at the World Religion Centre, Harvard) is most important because of his study of Martin Heidegger.<sup>47</sup> Dr. J. N. Mohanty is another follower of Husserl's philosophy. He has also now settled in New York as the Director of the Husserl Archives. The other name in the field is that of Dr. Ramakanta Sinari (b. 1930) of I.I.T. Bombay, who has published a book *Reason in Existentialism*.

The thinking of other leading scholars like Dayakrishna, Yashdeva Sahlya, Rajendra Prasad and the like falling in the realistic group will be introduced in the next section where we take up individual thinkers chronologically. Here we may survey, in brief, the situation prevailing in the traditional schools of realistic inclinations in India. In general, we find some revivalist tendencies in most of such scholars, with a few exceptions where efforts are being made to reinterpret the tradition in the modern context.

## JAINISM

To take up the Svetambaras (white-clothed) first, we find here a long list of saints and laymen trying to revive the philosophy and literature that was in vogue earlier. L. D. Institute at Ahmedabad (with Dalsukh Bhai Malvaniya as its Director) and Parswanath Vidyashram at Varanasi (with Dr. M. L. Mehta<sup>48</sup> as its Director till recently) have taken up the responsibility for research and publication of a high standard. The newly established Virayatana (at Rajagrih) with its magnetic saint Upadhyaya Amar Muniji (b. 1902) has immense possibilities. The Virayatana publishes *Amara Bharati* (ed. by Pt. Chandra Bhusan Mani, Tripathi) as its monthly journal. Muni Mahendra Kumarji (of Calcutta), Muni Nathmalji and Muni Nagrajaji (of Kanpur) also continue to contribute. The Tilak Ratna Sthanakavasi Centre at Pathardi (Ahmednagar), inspired by Ananda Risiji, also publishes books on Jain philosophy along with its monthly *Sudharma* (ed. by Pt. Badrinarayana Shukla). The present Director

<sup>47</sup> J. L. Mehta, *Philosophy of M. Heidegger*, Banaras Hindu University, 1976.

<sup>48</sup> M. L. Mehta, *Jain Psychology*, Amritsar, 1955.

of Jain Visva Bharati (at Ladru, Rajasthan), Dr. N. M. Tatia, has earlier done good work on Jainism.<sup>49</sup> H. V. Dhayani (at Ahmedabad), U.P. Shah and B. L. Sandesara of Baroda also continue to work in their own manner.

The Digambara tradition of Jainism is also not lagging behind in enriching the treasure of Indian philosophy and religion. Bharatiya Jnanapitha is the leading publishing agency that not only works for this tradition but is known for its wider contribution to Indian literature. Pt. Kailash Chandraji Shastri, Dr. Darbarilal Kothia and Dr. Gokul Chand Jain (all three from Varanasi) may be said to be the academic sustainers of the North. In Central India the most important contributor is Sri Sumeru Chandraji Diwakar (b. 1905) at Seoni. Being a freedom fighter and a dedicated soul of Jain philosophy and literature, he is highly esteemed amongst his contemporaries. His edition of *Mahabandha* (a text about 2000 years old on Karma philosophy) is well known. *Jaina Shashana* is the other important contribution of Pt. Diwakar. He has about fifty titles to his credit and continues his writings even today. Dr. Nemi Chandra Jain of Indore and Dr. V. P. Jain<sup>50</sup> (b. 1933) of Jabalpur also have contributed to the bulk in their own humble ways. In the South the most notable scholar of Jainism is Dr. T. G. Kalghatgi,<sup>51</sup> Professor and Head of the Philosophy Department at Karnataka University, Dharwar. He has several books and articles to his credit.

## BUDDHISM

Realistic Buddhism is not very popular at the moment, but mention may be made here of the work of Satkari Mookerjee in which he makes a study of critical realism in the philosophy of Dignaga.<sup>52</sup> The Nava Nalanda Mahavihar takes up some studies of both the schools of Buddhism in modern times.

### Samkhya Yoga

Of the realistic systems in the Vedic tradition Samkhya is the oldest, but because of the great influence of Sankara (who considered it to be the *pradhana malla* or the arch-rival), in later centuries it could not be revived as a living tradition. The system, however, remains academically important,<sup>53</sup> especially when we have several new theories of evolution in the West. The Yoga system, fortunately, has gained more popularity during the present century. Though

<sup>49</sup> N. M. Tatia, *Studies in Jain Philosophy*, Banaras, 1951.

<sup>50</sup> See his *Jambu Swami Chariu*, Bharatiya Jnanapitha, Varanasi, 1968.

<sup>51</sup> T. G. Kalghatgi, *Some Problems in Jaina Psychology*, 1961.

<sup>52</sup> S. Mookerjee, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, Calcutta, 1935; Delhi, 1975.

<sup>53</sup> R. S. Bhattacharya, *Samkhya Karika*, Varanasi, 1976.

in the system as a whole the prescribed physical control is not of the utmost value, the modern world has been attracted towards it for different reasons. The conceptual aspect of this system is occasionally reinterpreted by Indian and Western scholars. The work of Sri Hariharananda Aranya on the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali<sup>54</sup> is noteworthy in this connection.

### Nyaya-Vaisisika

With the growing popularity of Logical Positivism in the West, Indian scholars turned towards the traditional Nyaya logic and also to Navya-Nyaya (neo-logic as developed in West Bengal during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries A.D.). The debate between Nyaya and Buddhist systems also attracted modern Pandits of whom mention may be made of Dr. D. N. Shastri who has studied the philosophy of Nyaya-Vaisisika and its conflict with the Buddhist Dignaga school.<sup>55</sup> Dr. J. N. Mohanty (now at the New School of Social Research, New York) has done good work on Gangesha's philosophy,<sup>56</sup> but now he is more interested in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Dr. Dinesh Chandra Guha (formerly of the Sanskrit Department of Banaras Hindu University) has done good work on Navya-Nyaya logic.<sup>57</sup> He has discussed some basic theories of Navya-Nyaya like *avacchedakata pratiyogita*, *prakarita*, *visavata*, on which the entire edifice of the system is built, along with some important techniques of Navya-Nyaya.

### Mimamsa

Not many scholars of modern taste are attracted towards the ritualistic system of Mimamsa. Earlier Dr. Ganganath Jha created some interest in Mimamsa philosophy and published a source book on it. The G. N. Jha Research Institute at Allahabad, after its revival in 1973, has taken up the publication of some Mimamsa texts with enthusiasm. But the single scholar who, without any institutional encouragement, has devoted all his energies to the study of this system is Pt. A. Subrahmanya Shastri (of the Sanskrit College at Banaras Hindu University). He has edited and published more than six valuable texts of different Mimamsa schools, including *Bhattatantra Rahasyam* and *Shastra Dipika*.

### Vaisnavism

Realistic Vedanta or Vaisnavism is very much living in the traditional way as well as in the modern sense. The Southern States of India give a clear picture of this living religion as different from Saivism.

<sup>54</sup> H. Aranya, *Patanjali Yoga Darsana*, Varanasi, 1976.

<sup>55</sup> D. N. Shastri, *Critique of Indian Realism*, Delhi, 1964; 1976.

<sup>56</sup> J. N. Mohanty, *Gangesha's Theory of Truth*, Santiniketan.

<sup>57</sup> D. C. Guha, *Navya-Nyaya System of Logic*, Varanasi, 1968.

Academically P. N. Srinivasachari of Madras has taken the lead in studying the philosophy of Ramanuja. His two books, *Philosophy of Visistadvaita* and *Ramanuja's Idea of the Finite Self*, are still important texts of Ramanuja. K. C. Varadachari has worked on Ramanuja's theory of knowledge and aspects of Bhakti. Dr. (Mrs.) Anima Sengupta (b. 1918) of Patna has also made a study of the critical philosophy of Ramanuja. Of the younger generation of students of Ramanuja mention may be made of Dr. S. R. Bhatt (b. 1939) of Delhi University and Dr. G. Srinivasan of Mysore University. Dr. Bhatt has studied the philosophy of Pancaratra and Ramanuja Vedanta in detail.<sup>58</sup> Dr. G. Srinivasan has studied all the schools of Vedanta and gives a lucid exposition of the systems of Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhava.<sup>59</sup> The dualistic Vedanta of Madhvacharya has interested B. N. K. Sharma who, in addition to *A History of Dvaita School of Vedanta and the Literature* (in 2 volumes) and his edition of Madhva's *Sutra Bhasya*, has written on the philosophy of Sri Madhvacharya as well.<sup>60</sup>

### Saiva Siddhanta

The Saivism of South India is popularly known as Saiva Siddhanta. Its ancient Tamil tradition is now being made available to English readers and its affinities with other theistic schools and religions like Christianity are being explored. It was S. S. Suryanarayana Shastri of Madras who contributed a chapter on this school in *The Cultural Heritage of India* (Volume I). The book of Violet Paranjoti was a good introduction to this system. The book of Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi (of Madras University) is a good exposition of Siddhanta as expounded in the *Siva Jnana Siddhiyar* and its six commentaries.<sup>61</sup> Dr. K. Shivaraman of Banaras (now at McMaster University, Canada) has given a more philosophical presentation of the system in his book<sup>62</sup> which is the latest profound work on the subject.

<sup>58</sup> S. R. Bhatt, *Studies in Ramanuja's Vedanta*, New Delhi, 1975.

<sup>59</sup> G. Srinivasan, *Essentials of Vedanta*, Bangalore, 1974.

<sup>60</sup> B. N. K. Sharma, *The Philosophy of Sri Madhvacharya : Certain Philosophical Bases on Madhva's Theistic Vedanta*.

<sup>61</sup> V. A. Devasenapathi, *Saiva Siddhanta*, Madras, 1974.

<sup>62</sup> K. Shivaraman, *Saivism in Philosophical Perspective*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1973.