

*Perspektivismus und Kritik: Das pluralistische Erkenntnismodell der Jainas angesichts der Polemik gegen das Vaiśeṣika in Vidyānandin's Satyaśāsanaparīkṣā.* By HIMAL TRIKHA. Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, vol. 36. Vienna: INSTITUT FÜR SÜDASIEN-, TIBET- UND BUDDHISMUSKUNDE DER UNIVERSITÄT WIEN, 2012. Pp. 401. €28.

In my review of another book on Jaina philosophy in 2008 I noted, “Not only are reliable and textual studies in the field of Jainism few and far between, but also, even less attention has been paid to texts dealing with philosophy. Consequently, Jaina studies have lagged behind in comparison to studies in Buddhism and Hinduism. Piotr Balcerowicz’s study on the *Nyāyāvātāra*, therefore, is a most welcome publication in the slow but ongoing attempt at broadening the scope of work in Jainism” (*Orientalische Literaturzeitung* 103 [2008]: 411). In the inside flap of a recent publication Hegewald says, “Jaina studies are expanding and increasingly gaining in international recognition” (*The Jaina Heritage: Distinction, Decline and Resilience*, ed. Julia A. B. Hegewald [New Delhi: Saṃskṛiti, 2011]). Slowly but surely, more and more attention is being given to Jaina studies, and, particularly in the field of Jaina philosophy, the work being reviewed here is a further welcome publication helping to close the yawning gap between studies in Jaina philosophy and those in Buddhism and Hinduism.

In Jaina circles Vidyānandin is renowned as a scholastic thinker who had a profound command of Buddhist and Hindu thought. Indeed, he could be seen as a culmination of a rich phase in Jaina thought, following predecessors such as Kundakunda, Umāsvāti, Samantabhadra, Pūjyapāda, and Akalaṅka. Vidyānandin wrote both commentaries and independent works; see a short description of his major nine works in the appendix (pp. 161–62) to my “Aspects of Jaina Epistemology with Special Reference to Vidyānandin” (in *Approaches to Jaina Studies: Philosophy, Logic Rituals and Symbols*, ed. N. K. Wagle and Olle Qvarnström. Pp. 138–68. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1999).

The *Satyāśāsanaparīkṣā* (SŚP) is an independent work by Vidyānandin, the original plan of which was an investigation (*parīkṣā*) of fourteen teachings (*śāsanas*) for their truth (*satya*), but the version we have goes only up to the incomplete twelfth teaching (of the Prābhākara Mimāṃsā school). Trikha has done a detailed study and analysis “only” of the tenth teaching of the Vaiśeṣika school. The depth and comprehensiveness of his study is evidence of the fact that Vidyānandin’s contribution as a profound thinker has yet to be fully appreciated, because works like Trikha’s also need to be done for the other schools.

In translation, Trikha’s title would be *Perspectivism and Criticism: The Pluralistic Epistemological Model of the Jainas with Reference to the Polemics against the Vaiśeṣika School in Vidyānandin’s Satyāśāsanaparīkṣā*. Trikha divides his work into three parts, two appendices, and three indices. Part I is entitled (in my translation from the German) “The role of criticism in the pluralistic epistemological model of the Jainas” (pp. 37–104), with two subsections dealing with pluralism and the term “inherence.” The title of part II (pp. 105–57) is “Vidyānandin’s polemics in the *Satyāśāsanaparīkṣā* against the Vaiśeṣika” with four subsections preparing the reader for the main part III, which contains the text with an annotated translation (pp. 159–301). Appendix I contains eight parts relevant for the study and includes text passages from other Jaina works, extracting references to the key terms “inherence” and “connection” from other works. Appendix II is very useful, for example, for a vivid depiction of the *naya* and *syād-vāda*, crucial terms in Jaina philosophy (briefly explained below). The three indices are for the text passages, Sanskrit words, and names/subjects.

Trikha’s excellent philological study is by and large his PhD dissertation, submitted to the Institute for South Asian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna. When he was approaching the end of his dissertation work, Trikha had occasion to expand his study in two articles in English of about twenty pages each, summarizing some parts of his work. and he announced these in the book being reviewed here (p. 12 nn. 1 and 2). The titles of these essays are also revealing for the content and focus of his work: “Competing World Views: Perspectivism and Polemics in the *Satyāśāsanaparīkṣā* and Other Jaina Works” (*Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40 [2012]: 25–45; published online 1 July 2011). His abstract says, “Jaina authors use a pluralistic epistemological model as a tool to claim the superiority of Jainism over the other schools of Indian thought. In this article the general tendency of the Jaina’s epistemic pluralism is discussed and it is shown how the Digambara Jaina Vidyānandin tries to establish the Jainas’ pluralism on rational grounds by identifying erroneous epistemic alternatives through methodological falsification.”

The second article in English that draws on the work being reviewed here is “Composition Areas in Vidyānandin’s *Satyāśāsanaparīkṣā*: The First Part of the *uttarapakṣa* in the Chapter on Vaiśeṣika” (in *Jaina Studies: Proceedings of the DOT 2010 Panel in Marburg, Germany*, ed. Jayandra Soni. Pp. 77–96. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan 2012). Here Trikha has striven quite convincingly to bring out Vidyānandin’s “specific achievement” in the number of arguments he, Vidyānandin, uses “which to a large extent correspond literally to passages transmitted in other Sanskrit works of the classical and medieval period,” as stated in the abstract (p. 77). Once again, Vidyānandin’s expertise in dealing with the philosophical content of other thinkers in Indian thought is brought to light. It also indicates how a serious study of Jaina philosophy demands a good background in the other schools. Indeed, as John Cort once noted to this effect: studies in Indian philosophy that ignore Jainism are incomplete.

Obviously the key to understanding Trikha’s study is the Jaina theory of manifoldness or non-one-sidedness (*anekānta-vāda*), split into the theory of standpoints (*naya-vāda*) when talking about an object, say, from the universal or particular standpoint (for the other five see p. 337) and of perspectives from which the object can be predicated, where the word *syāt/syāḍ/syān* plays a crucial role. Indeed, this *syād-vāda*, the theory using the word *syāt*, has been seen as the hallmark of Jaina philosophy—so much so that, apart from misunderstanding the Jaina use of it, renowned thinkers in the other schools seem to throw overboard the whole of Jaina philosophy as such (see below). The significance of the word *syāt* lies in its double function in asserting that a predication is made from *one* perspective (e.g., that a particular person is a mother), and that *at the same time* there can be another perspective. From that perspective she is not a mother, but a sister, aunt, etc. (for the other five perspectives see p. 338, and pp. 41–56 on Jaina perspectivism). The person is highlighted as a mother or a sister depending on the context with a specific perspective, without the others being in any way contradictory.

In his commentary to Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma-sūtra* (2, 2, 28–32) Śāṅkara directs his criticism at the Jainas by accusing them of ascribing to a theory of indeterminacy; that is, that the Jainas subscribe to a theory of uncertainty about the nature of reality, that they are in doubt (*samśaya*) about how to describe an object of inquiry definitively, or that they uphold a theory of scepticism or agnosticism. Dharmakīrti, too, attacks the Jainas in his *Pramāṇavārttika* (*svārthānumāna-pariccheda*, 181–84), calling them “shameless ones” for ascribing identity and difference to a single object. In taking the Jaina view to an absurd extreme, claiming that for the Jainas there would be no difference between a camel and yoghurt, Dharmakīrti asks: “and when he is told to eat yoghurt, why does not the proud fellow run to the camel?” (For more details see the chapter on “*Syādvāda* is not *Samśayavāda*” in my *Aspects of Jaina Philosophy* [Madras: Research Foundation for Jainology, 1996], 20–45.)

In his exhaustive, critical, and clear presentation of the Jaina position vis-à-vis the Vaiśeṣika school, Trikha has faithfully rendered the Jaina position in Vidyānandin's words, namely as the tradition itself regards it. The clarity in reproducing the different levels on the basis of which the Jainas uphold their theory comes out graphically in the diagrammatic illustrations that are abundant in the work in German being reviewed here; the few samples in the articles in English are based on it. It is clear that Trikha strives to make his treatment of a difficult text understandable to the reader, so that the translations, comments, and explanations become vivid through well-thought-out pictorial diagrams.

It is also significant that of the twelve teachings preserved in the SŚP Trikha has chosen the Vaiśeṣika school, for which there is now a vast literature. William Halbfass points out that “Jainism has been linked with Vaiśeṣika pluralism” and goes on to say, “However, the nature of the relationship between Jainism and early Vaiśeṣika has not yet been established” (*On Being and What There Is: Classical Vaiśeṣika and the History of Indian Ontology* [New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1992], 52). Trikha's work certainly goes a long way in not only clarifying the link but also in showing, through Vidyānandin's eyes, how the Jainas disconnect themselves from the Vaiśeṣika school on philosophical grounds.

Scholars of Indian philosophy interested in the Jaina contribution to the history of ideas in Indian thought will certainly welcome this exemplary study by Trikha for its clarity and in-depth work.