

Review

Reviewed Work(s): PERIODIZATION AND HISTORIGRAPHY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY.
[Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, Volume 37.] by Eli Franco

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the details of the work with the categories of the author, title of the work and the subject or form of the work. While doing this survey the author has noted the works both in Prakrit and Sanskrit languages in the following categories – Philosophy, Logic, Grammar, Poetics, Metrics, Ethics, Biographies, Epics, Mythologies, Narratives etc. It helps the reader to get the information of the literary productions of one century at a glance. This is a unique way of presenting the survey of this vast literature. The analysis given at the end of the tabular chart is very important. It summarizes all the creations of that period. The survey is brief but comprehensive and takes into consideration all the types of Prakrit literature in their chronological framework. This is a very important aspect for the Indological and Jainological studies as it gives a complete picture of the development of the literature in the chronological order, which, in turn helps to understand the development of various thoughts over a period of time. This will definitely help the students doing research in this field. Hence this is a welcome addition in the works giving history of Prakrit literature.

-- Manjiri Bhalerao

PERIODIZATION AND HISTORIGRAPHY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY edited by Eli FRANCO (2013). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. [Publications of the De Nobili Research Library, Wien, Volume 37.] viii+388 pp., ISBN 3-900271-43-7.

Indian philosophy has developed through ‘schools’ or ‘systems’ which the editor of the volume under consideration calls ‘traditions’ and ‘world-views’. Those who contributed to the growth and development of Indian philosophy did not generally present themselves as individual philosophers, but as representatives of a ‘school’ or ‘a tradition’. Though important changes or innovations were introduced in a tradition, their innovative character was often suppressed in the guise of a clearer understanding of the tradition. Therefore, a ‘history of Indian philosophy’ becomes possible only through its deconstruction. When a commentator claims that he is merely bringing the truths hidden in the source text to the surface, the historian has to point out how the former is in fact innovating and deviating from the source text.

Because of the belief in the authenticity (*prāmāṇya*) of some texts and in the eternality (*sanātanatva*) of the thought contained in them, traditional Indian philosophy was almost devoid of a historical sense. Hence writing a history of Indian philosophy by periodizing it becomes a challenge. The authors of this volume come to terms with this challenge from diverse perspectives. The editor Eli Franco is well aware of the diversity. As he confesses in the preface, “neither comprehension nor unity could be reached here.” According to him different historians giving an outline of the historical development of Indian thought are reminiscent of the proverbial blind persons trying to describe an elephant.

The volume contains, twelve articles based on lectures delivered at the fourteenth World Sanskrit Conference (Kyoto, September 1-5, 2009). Eli Franco’s article and those by Claus Oetke and Johannes Bronkhorst are about Indian philosophy in general. Other articles are about specific schools of Indian philosophy.

Eli Franco’s article, bearing the same title as that of the volume, provides a critical survey of the major periodizations of Indian philosophy – those propounded by Deussen, Frauwallner, Ruben and Biardeau. He gives as an appendix to his article, additional periodizations introduced by some Japanese scholars. He also offers his own periodization according to which Diñnāga marks a turning point in the history of Indian philosophy. His periodization acknowledges three major periods: (1) the period up to Diñnāga, (2) the period between Diñnāga and Udayana, and (3) the Navya-Nyāya period.

One might feel here that any such periodization is very much likely to be a biased or oversimplified description of a complex phenomenon. For example, Franco’s focus on the Buddhist influence on non-Buddhist philosophies, which gave a new turn to Indian philosophy, is well taken. But it is possible to claim that Buddhism had a wider-ranging influence on Indian philosophy. In addition to the logical-epistemological contributions of Buddhism, there are at least two other aspects of Buddhism, which seem to have given a new turn to non-Buddhist Indian philosophy: (a) the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism on Vedānta: Śaṅkara does not derive his philosophical position directly from the Prasthānatrayī, though he claims to do so. In between them we have Gauḍapāda who was influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is clearly reflected in his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad*. Hence Mahāyāna Buddhism seems to have shaped Śaṅkara’s Advaitism through Gauḍapāda, (b) the influence of Buddhist Abhidharma on the

Yoga tradition: Abhidharma philosophers such as Aśaṅga and Vasubandhu posed a challenge before classical Sāṅkhya. Accordingly, the soteriology of Sāṅkhya, based on the abstract metaphysics of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, was reorganized by Patañjali in the light of Buddhist Abhidharma psychology and soteriology. Hence it would be simplistic to periodize Indian philosophy by giving a pivotal role to Dinnāga.

Franco himself is not emphatic about his periodization. He seems to accept the possibility of skepticism and relativism about the question of correct periodization. However, taken to an extreme, such a stand would frustrate any genuine attempt to periodize the history of Indian philosophy (or any history for that matter), which is not desirable.

Bronkhorst's article, "Periodization of Indian Ontology" also deals with Indian philosophy as a whole. He accepts the criticism advanced by Eli Franco and Karin Preisendanz against Frauwallner's periodization. Frauwallner proposed a division of the history of Indian philosophy into two large periods, Āryan and Non-Āryan. While disagreeing with it, Bronkhorst replaces the racial terminology of Āryan and non-Āryan by a more cultural terminology of Vedic and Non-Vedic. He also changes the order such that the period influenced by the Non-Vedic approach precedes the period influenced by Vedicism. He also shows how changes in the philosophical realm were related to changes in the socio-political realm. One could appreciate his claims and suggestions in a broad way. But some of his claims are debatable. For instance, his claim that Mīmāṃsā was opposed to Karma and Rebirth (when it is well-known that the Mīmāṃsā notion of *apūrva* supported the idea of *karmaphala*) and that Lokāyata was a Vedic school. His view that the Vaiśeṣika ontology was influenced by Sarvāstivāda *abhidharma* is equally an invitation to debate.

Claus Oetke's article is the third one which deals with the periodization of Indian philosophy in general. It talks about periodization as well as classification. One of the points the article makes is that it is possible and permissible to classify and periodize Indian philosophical traditions in diverse ways.

Now let us turn to the other nine articles, each one of which discusses a particular school. These articles, however, do not discuss the whole period covered by the respective schools. They generally choose a particular period, whether the earlier, the later or the classical.

Shujun Motegi's article focuses on the early history of Sāṅkhya thought. He broadly follows Frauwallner's scheme regarding the development of Sāṅkhya thought, though at times he disagrees on details.

Moegi's main contribution in the paper is that he gives a consistent picture of the early stages of Sāṅkhya based on the *Mokṣadharmā* of the *Mahābhārata*. He correlates the early Sāṅkhya thought with the discussion of Sāṅkhya categories in *Carakasāṅhitā* (*Śārīrasthāna: Katidhāpuruṣīya-adhyāya*) as well as the philosophy of Arāḍa in the *Buddhacarita*. While discussing the chapters 187, 198 and then 291-296 of the *Mokṣadharmā*, Motegi notices certain stages of development of the Sāṅkhya thought within the early period. For instance he notices that *Prakṛti* as the ultimate principle does not occur in the earliest Sāṅkhya thought, but it is found in the later chapters. The article throws light on many questions and leaves some questions open. For example, it leaves open the question of the role of *ahaṅkāra* in Sāṅkhya philosophy. He makes the important suggestion that *ahaṅkāra* is erroneous cognition that leads to transmigration. The idea can be strengthened if we focus on the interrelation between terms such as '*ahaṅkāra*, *asmitā* and *ātmabuddhi*'. According to a statement attributed to Pañcaśikha, 'The one, who does not see *puruṣa* as different from *buddhi*, produces in relation to it the notion of the self (*ātmabuddhi*) out of ignorance'¹. Patañjali defines *asmitā* ('am'-ness, equivalent to I-notion) as the projection of identity between *drkśakti* (i.e. *puruṣa*) and *darśanaśakti* (i.e. *buddhi*). Hence the notion of 'I' or '(I) am' or 'the self' arises when *puruṣa* and *buddhi* (transcendent awareness and empirical cognition) are conflated. Though Motegi rightly claims that Frauwallner, without giving evidence, attributes the introduction of the concept of *ahaṅkāra* to Pañcaśikha, the above statement attributed to Pañcaśikha could probably be cited in support of Frauwallner.

Philipp Maas has written on the historiography of classical Yoga philosophy. According to popular beliefs about Pātañjalayoga, Patañjali, the author of *Yogasūtra*, was the same as the author of *Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣya* and *Carakasāṅhitā*. Indological researches about Pātañjalayoga in the last few decades have challenged this and many other common beliefs about Pātañjalayoga. In his learned article, Maas points out how different primary Sanskrit sources suggest that Patañjali, or someone who was named as Patañjali later on, was the author of both *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya*. He substantiates the thesis on the basis of various evidences. The thesis has two parts – (a) *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya* are not two different texts, but a single text which was called

¹ "buddhitaḥ param puruṣam ākāraśīlavidyābhir vibhaktam apaśyan kuryāt tatrātma-buddhiṃ mohena", *Yoga-bhāṣya*, II. 6. Vācaspatimiśra attributes this statement to Pañcaśikha.

Pātāñjalayogaśāstra. (b) The same author wrote both the *sūtra* and the auto-commentary. Some doubt can be raised about this thesis, particularly about its second part. For example Bronkhorst has pointed out some discrepancies between the unforced interpretation of *Yogasūtras* and the way they are interpreted in the *Bhāṣya*².

Bronkhorst concludes from the discrepancies that probably a single person collected the *sūtras* from older sources and provided them with his own explanations and comments in the *Bhāṣya*. This leaves open the possibility of the *Sūtra* and the *Bhāṣya* having been authored by two different persons. Maas's own hypothesis that the work is the result of a single, roughly datable philosophical authorial intention cannot be confirmed unless the question of the discrepancies between the *Sūtras* and the *Bhāṣya* is taken to its logical conclusion.

Parimal Patil's article is his response to Sheldon Pollock's analysis of the history of Sanskrit knowledge systems pertaining to the period 1550-1750. Pollock has argued that during this period the Sanskrit knowledge systems underwent three moments or phases: (i) reformation or renewal, (ii) a progressive phase, and (iii) a regressive phase or the phase of counter-reformation. Patil seeks to determine how far this model fits the history of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as a knowledge system. He finds that in the case of this joint system, periodization will be different. He suggests three major phases (a) the eleventh/twelfth century phase of creation by the work of Udayana³, (b) the fourteenth/fifteenth century phase of

² In fact many discrepancies can be pointed out. Just to cite two: (a) the classification of *cittavṛttis* found in the *sūtra* distinguishes between a twofold classification (*kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa*) which is of soteriological significance, and a fivefold classification which is of epistemological significance. The commentator confuses between the two classifications when he identifies *viparyaya* with *avidyā*. (b) The *sūtra* statement about four *bhāvanās* (*maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekṣā*) the objects of *maitrī* and *karuṇā* as happiness and suffering respectively. This suggests the form of *maitrī* as "May all being attain happiness" and the form of *karuṇā* as "May all beings get rid of suffering". The commentary interprets them differently. According to it *maitrī* should be addressed to happy persons and *karuṇā* to unhappy persons. Such discrepancies suggest that the commentator many times did not understand the import of the *sūtras*.

³ Patil's claim that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika knowledge system began its life in the collected works of Udayana (11th century) is questioned by the editor by referring to Haribhadra's statement in *Ṣaḍdarśana Samuccaya* (8th century) that characterises Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika as a single *darśana*. It seems that the close affinity between Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika can be stretched back to quite an early period, that of the *Carakasamhitā* (1st century). The author of the *Carakasamhitā* in the section called *Sambhāṣā-vidhi* of *Vimānasthāna*, gives a list of 44 terms (that should be grasped for understanding the method of debate), which begins with the six *padārthas* of Vaiśeṣika, followed by the terms which anticipate the 16

recreation initiated by the work of Gangeśa, and (c) the eighteenth century phase of transformation. Patil rebuts Pollock's claim that the eighteenth century marks the phase of counter-reformation or regress and subsequent death of the system. He tries to show this with a systematic and detailed argument.

In his short but insightful paper on Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, Lawrence McCrea focuses on the transformation of the system which took place in the works of Kumārila and Prabhākara. He shows how both were responses to the radical criticism of the Pūrva-mīmāṃsā theory of knowledge by Diñnāga in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. For the Mīmāṃsakas, the authenticity (*prāmāṇya*) of *śabda* – particularly the impersonal (*apauruṣeya*) Vedas – was of prime importance. Diñnāga attacked it by establishing a system of two *pramāṇas* in which only perception (which is non-conceptual cognition) had absolute authenticity and inference (which is conceptual cognition) can be authentic only conditionally. In response to this attack Kumārila presented his theory of intrinsic authenticity (*svataḥprāmāṇya*) of all *pramāṇas* and by treating the particular and the universal as two equally real aspects of the object, and by treating perception, inference and *śabda* as on par. Prabhākara followed a different route by claiming that there is no error even in the so-called false cognition, that it is only a case of non-cognition (*akhyāti*).

It should be noted in passing that the dual nature of the object (as having both a particular and a universal character) was not a position peculiar to Kumārila; it was accepted by almost all the realist schools – Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Pātañjala-Yoga, Jainism and even by the Vaibhāṣika Buddhists. This underlines the uniqueness of the Diñnāga-Dharmakīrti approach.

One-third of Julius Lipner's article, "The Perils of Periodization or How to Finesse History with Reference to Vedānta", is about the general question of periodization of Indian philosophy. Lipner's view about periodization, which according to him is a kind of classification, is similar to Eli Franco's view according to which an objective and absolute classification is not possible. Like Eli Franco, Lipner is also critical of Frauwallner's periodization in terms of Aryan and Non-Aryan eras.

The remaining two-thirds of the article are devoted to a discussion of the historical process of the Vedānta system. Here Lipner first explains his notion of a developed Vedānta system. According to him, it is a critical inquiry based on the *Prasthāna-trayī* (the *Upaniṣads*, the

basic concepts of Gautama's Nyāya. Thus, the theory of the method of debate in the *Carakasamhitā*, is a combination of Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya. This cannot be a coincidence.

Brahmasūtra and the *Gītā*) and on a philosophical approach incorporating four disciplines (namely ontology/cosmology, epistemology, ethics and soteriology). He holds that Vedānta as a philosophical tradition begins with Śaṅkara because Śaṅkara's writings fulfil this criterion.⁴

Lipner describes the historical process of three schools of Vedānta – those initiated by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. Among them his main focus is on two – Śaṅkara's Advaita and Madhva's Dvaita. He discusses B.N.K. Sharma's periodization of Dvaita-Vedānta and Swami Satchidanandendra's evaluation of Advaita Vedānta. Similarly he discusses modern formulations of these systems. Thus, he tries to bring out the importance as well as the perils of periodization of Vedānta.

Vincent Eltschinger's article, "Buddhist Esoterism and Epistemology: Two Sixth-century Innovations as Buddhist Responses to Social and Religio-Political Transformations", is the longest article in the volume (about 100 pages in a volume of 400 pages). It discusses two major transformations which took place around the sixth century. One was the rise of the epistemology of Diñnāga (fifth-sixth century) and Dharmakīrti (seventh century). The other was the rise of Tantric Buddhism. Drawing from the researches of R.M. Davidson and A. Sanderson, Eltschinger explains how Śaivism posed a challenge to Buddhism and how the latter responded by adopting several concepts, doctrines and ritualistic practices of Śaivism, and by transforming them into a Buddhist mold as also by counterattacking Śaivism. This interaction was not purely philosophical, but had a socio-political and religious background and implications. The author tries to show that an equivalent (though different) transition took place in Buddhist epistemology during this period. Here his main point, substantiated with many details, seems to be that before Diñnāga and Dharmakīrti, Buddhist Abhidharma involved intra-sectarian debate on the nature of true Buddhism. After Diñnāga, however, Buddhist epistemology was primarily concerned with countering non-Buddhist systems rather than other Buddhist sects. I believe that the author's claims regarding the epistemological transition are to be taken as indicating a change in

⁴ This claim can be debated. In the so-called *prasthāna-trayī* (three points of departure) the Upaniṣads are the basic point of departure. The *Brahmasūtras* synoptically present the contents of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* is said to present the essence of the Upaniṣads. Hence the role of the latter two should be regarded as secondary. It can be argued that the Vedānta tradition (particularly that of Advaita-Vedānta) starts with Gauḍapāda (who developed his version of Advaita Vedānta by commenting on the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad*) rather than with Śaṅkara.

degree rather than a categorical change. Buddhism was engaged in combating Brahmanism since its inception. It had been critical of Brahmanical epistemology since the time of Nāgārjuna (who criticized Nyāyasūtra in his *Vaidalyasūtra*). On the other hand, internal controversies in Buddhism did not come to an end with Dharmakīrti. They took new shapes such as Sākāravāda versus Nirākāravāda, Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika versus Yogācāra-Mādhyamika and Svātantrika versus Prāsaṅgika.

I In her article, “Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras: A Differentiated Periodization?”, Anne Cravel deals with two periodizations of the history of Jaina philosophy – one by K.K. Dixit and the other by Indra Chandra Shastri. The common point between the two periodizations is that they divide the history into two manifestations of Jainism: Āgamic and Logical (rather, logical-epistemological). The difference between the two versions is that Dixit describes them as two ages (the age of the Āgamas: 5th century B.C.E. to 6th century C.E. and the age of Tarka: 6th century C.E. to 18th century C.E.), whereas I.C. Shastri describes them as two schools: Āgama school (and its period as 3000 B.C.E. to 1000 C.E.) and Tarka school (and its period as 600 C.E. to 1100 C.E.). Cravel regards Shastri’s terminology of ‘two schools’ as more appropriate than Dixit’s terminology of ‘two ages’ because the former allows the creation of the literature of both the schools in the same period, whereas the latter does not have this advantage. While acknowledging this merit of Shastri’s categorization, Cravel goes one step ahead and shows that elements of the two schools can be found even in a single text. For example, Akalaṅka’s *Laghīyastraya* has this feature.

The author also discusses how the difference between the Śvetāmbara and Digambara cults and the difference between their geographical locations had a bearing on their āgamik and logical attitudes. While appreciating the insightful observations of the author one may feel that the theme of the article needs to be pursued also in the light of (a) the relation between ontology and epistemology, and also (b) the interaction of Jainism and other epistemological schools such as Nyāya and Buddhism. The ontological position of Jainism was rooted in the Jaina Āgamas. But when Jainism interacted with other schools, the need was felt to have a strong logical-epistemological position for justifying the ontological position. The Naiyāyikas and the Buddhist Dīnnāga had presented their logical-epistemological systems consistent with their own respective ontologies and this posed a challenge before Jainas to defend

their ontology. Jaina epistemology and logic can be understood as a response to this challenge.

Lyne Bansat-Boudon's article is a study of the concept of *jīvanmukti* as it appears in non-dual Kashmir Śaiva literature. The author also discusses how this concept is related to the concepts of liberation found in other schools, particularly Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and Śaivasiddhānta. The Sāṅkhya system, as the author shows, accepts the possibility of *jīvanmukti* as a result of *kevalajñāna*. Similarly the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* and Śaṅkara's Advaita, all possess the concept of *jīvanmukti*. Kashmir Śaivism was influenced by these currents of thought. The author also points out that the Sāṅkhya concept of *jīvanmukti* does not contain the notion of felicity or bliss (*ānanda*), whereas Śaṅkara's Advaita emphasizes it. It may be noted here that both Vedānta and Kashmir Śaivism conceptualize *jīvanmukti* in terms of *sadehamukti* or embodied liberation; but there is a divergence in their approaches to the 'body'. According to Kevalādvaita, the *jīvanmukta* 'realizes' that in fact his body is not real; that though he appears to be embodied, in reality he is disembodied. According to non-dual Kashmir Śaivism, the *jīvanmukta* 'realizes' that his body is as real as the play of Śiva.

In his article, "The History of Sphoṭa: From Ontology to Epistemology?" Alexis Pinchard discusses the concept of '*sphoṭa*' as it is reflected in the writings of the grammarian Patañjali, Maṇḍanamiśra, Bhartrhari and others. He centers his discussion around the question whether there was a transformation in Indian philosophy from ontology to epistemology with respect to the concept of *sphoṭa*. According to Immanuel Kant's distinction between ontology and epistemology, the latter is an alternative to the former. Hence the author tries to check whether the Kantian dichotomy is applicable to the transformations in the theory of *sphoṭa* and observes that it is not so applicable.

Perhaps it is futile to try to apply Kant's dichotomy of epistemology and ontology to the history of Indian philosophy; rather, one has to understand the relation between epistemology and ontology – that is, theory of knowledge and theory of being – in Indian philosophy in its own terms, which is much more intimate and complex. In fact, axiology – the theory of values – should also be added as a partner to this relational complex. In Indian philosophy an epistemological theory comes forward not as an alternative to ontology, but as a means to the justification of a particular ontological or axiological position. Every system of Indian philosophy claims to be a consistent combination of the three theories – those of *pramāṇa*, *prameya* and *puruṣārtha*. The debate between

darśanas takes place at all the three levels. Or if it takes place at one level, it has implications for the other two levels. Perhaps periodization and historiography of Indian philosophy need to be developed by taking this complex situation into account.

The volume edited by Eli Franco, apart from having a lot of informative value, is full of important observations, perspectives and insights which modern scholars of Indian philosophy have to take seriously. Particularly, it is a must-read for those who are ready to approach Indian philosophy without dogmatism and blind beliefs⁵.

-- Pradeep P. Gokhale

⁵ I thank Dr. Mangesh Kulkarni for his comments on the earlier version of this review.