

BOOK REVIEW

Environmental Ethics: Indian Perspectives, Edited by Devendra Nath Tiwari & Ananda Mishra, Banaras Hindu University, India, 2012, pp208.

Environmental Ethics is a recent branch of knowledge and from the very beginning it has attracted the mind of the scholars for exploring this branch of knowledge in Indian perspective. Department of Philosophy & Religion, Banaras Hindu University organized two seminars during 2012: one is International and another is National. In the continuation, University Administration funded a grant for the publication of the papers presented in those seminars. The anthology entitled 'Environmental Ethics: Indian Perspectives' under review is a collection of selected papers presented in those seminars. The book is edited by Devendra Nath Tiwari and Ananda Mishra. It contains thirteen essays written by distinguished scholars aiming to understand the man-nature relationship in various perspectives of Jainism, Buddhism, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Vedānta and Sikhism. The book starts with an introduction written by Devendra Nath Tiwari. He has touched almost all the aspects of Environmental Ethical theories, especially in relation with Indian thoughts and philosophy. From Veda to Purāṇa and Bauddha & Jain traditions, he has critically observed the glimpses of Environmental Ethics in all the Indian school of thoughts.

The first essay is by Pradeep Gokhale who in his paper entitled "The problem of Anthropocentrism and Non-Anthropocentrism in Indian Ethical Approaches: Some Reflections" has discussed the environmental views in three different Indian models- the Brahmanical, the śramaṇa and the Lokāyata model and tried to establish the fact that the Indian ethical approach is non-anthropocentric. He argues against the view that the root cause of the environmental crisis is anthropocentrism. In fact bio-centrism and eco-centrism also do not fare well in this regard. The second paper "Environmental Ethics and Human Freedom: An Indian Representation" is by Varun Kumar Tripathi. Varun advocates a revised kind of anthropocentrism which must be free from egocentricity. He found that present crisis is due to the wrong attitude of Human being and can be cured by transformation of our attitude towards nature. "Teleological Environmental Ethics" by R. C. Sinha pleads for teleological environmental ethics, which he claims is a form of anthropocentrism incorporating the consequentialists as well as deontological traits of a sound ethical system. Sinha does not find any unbridgeable gap between the anthropocentric and ecocentric shows that the trends of anthropocentric teleological ethics are found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Rana P. B. Singh's paper "Ecospirituality in Indian Tradition: message for Global order" present his thesis of eco-spirituality or sacred ecology. The paper unravels the significance of an environmental ethics of reverence based on a sacred worldview of nature. Rana finds in Hindu tradition an ecospiritual worldview – a spirit of wholeness, a sense of holiness- grounded on an evolutionary cosmology in the core of which lies the sanctity and faith- the vision of ecospirituality and harmonious coexistence: Kyosei. In the paper "Nature – Man Relationship: A Comprehensive Survey and Appraisal" Rajesh Ranjan Tiwari attempts to bring out

the right perspective in which nature should be approached. Nature cannot be conceived a complete 'Other' for man. Neither should it be approached with only a cognitive or empirical outlook. The paper supports looking at nature with a sense of beauty and aesthetic. The next five papers represent the variant Indian schools of thought.

Baleshwar Prasad Yadav's paper "Ecological Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads" confines itself to the worldview and ethics presented in the Vedas and Upaniṣads. Sanjay Kumar Shukla in his "Ecological Perspectives of Jainism" sheds light on the Jaina environmental ethics. K.C. Pandey's paper "Ecological Interdependence in Buddhism" brings out the significance of Buddhist ecological ethics based on its central doctrine of *pratīyasamutpāda*. "Environmental Concerns and Guru Granth Sahib" by Jodh Singh expounds the Sikh perspective of environmental ethics. In Ravindra K.S. Choudhary's paper "Advaitic Attitude to Natural Environment" he discusses the Advaitic worldview and related environmental ethics. He finds environmental consciousness innate in the Advaita. In his paper "Ramchandra Guha and Vandana Shiva on Environment and Environmental Crises: A Critical Appreciation" Debashis Guha presents a thorough analysis of the concept of "Environment" and highlights the need for a philosophical study of environment. After this he engages himself in elaborating the positions of eco-feminism and deep ecology and finally presents a critique of the philosophical perspectives of Vandana Shiva and Ramchandra Guha. Any ethical discourse is incomplete if it does not incorporate the legal perspective with it and this lack is beautifully met out in this book with the paper by Rana Navneet Roy titled "Protection of Environment through Precautionary Principle: Some Observation in Indian Perspective". Roy discusses environmental jurisprudence in post-independent India. With the help of different court cases the author explores the meaning, definition, origin, development, and other legal aspects of precautionary principle within the Indian perspective. "Sri Dattātreya's 24 Gurus: Learning from the World in Hindu Tradition" is the final essay and thought provoking paper of Martin J. Haigh. Martin studies resources in Vaiṣṇava and Vedic scriptures containing the Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD). Avadhūta Duttātreya discovered 24 gurus like- Earth, Wind, Sky, Water, Sun, Fish etc. and Martin Haigh discusses the teaching which Dattātreya got from these ;finding in them wonderful resources for EESD. Martin Haigh emphasizes that non-possession has ever been a central teaching of Indians from early Jaina Tīrthankaras to Gandhi. Since greed and attachment to possessions are the root cause of crisis, the recipe of simple living and high thinking coupled with a search for spiritual wealth and well being is a sure remedy. This book is excellent collective compilation. It fulfills the long needed comprehensive work on Indian Environmental Ethics. It is very useful for the scholars, researchers and students who have a keen interest in the area of Environmental Ethics. As well, it is very interesting for general readers who want to see this particular Environmental issue through the perspective or lenses of Indian philosophy and culture.

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