GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Devendra Nath Tiwari

Indian culture, rooted in the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Gītā, Yoga, and commentaries on the Śūtrika (aphorism) foundation, is often characterized as a spiritual philosophy that emphasizes sublime values, ethics, and Yoga as ways of living a spiritual life. By spiritual life, we mean a life of action with full awareness of the spirit's freedom from the captors of conflicting phenomena that cause suffering. Here, values are inseparable from the duties for one's well-being and the welfare of the world and humanity. Such values, inseparable from human existence, are essentially our desires, categorized broadly into four: Artha, Kāma, Dharma, and Mokṣa. through our performance of duties to others are transformed to values.; by performing honest labour for earning the wealth and prosperity, one's desires of wealth are transformed to Artha-puruṣārtha; after enjoying family life with socially sanctioned married wife for legal children, educating them well and making them fit for entering into household one' desires of Kāma transformed to Kāma-puruṣārtha, after that one performs the welfare duties(Dharma) like donating, making hospitals, providing food and water, giving scholarships to poor students, caring needy persons, etc. one's desires of dharma is transformed to Dharma-puruṣārtha and finally after satiation of all categories of desires one gets freedom from all desires. Another way to gain freedom is by paying off the inborn debts with which one is born.

Isolated from such human values, a man ceases to be a man; that is why the Vedas very emphatically teach spinning the system/thread of life/sacrifice, protecting the paths of light fashioned by following the radiant space of your wisdom. Weave duty and life without flaw, resonating with 'be a man, that is, a wise, a thinker, and bring forth a race of divine (Tantum tanvan rajaso bhānumanvihi jyotiṣmataḥ patho rakṣa dhiya kṛtān. Anulbaṇam vayata joguvāmapo manuḥbhava janayā daivyam janam' Ṛgveda 10/53/6). This is the purpose of all the classical Indian texts and the goal of human life in the organic concept of society as well. Unlike dry knowledge, Indian Philosophy focuses on perennial and uncontradicted knowledge meant for the welfare of humanity. Dry knowledge, and so is dry intelligence, is not for agreement but always for disagreement; it is for confusion and endless confusion in the name of intelligence, and is least concerned with resolving issues and cultivating human conduct for welfare. Here, there is no respect for language, expression, and wisdom. Wisdom, in Indian philosophical thinking, means respectful perception of others and venerable conduct toward all others without discrimination. Intelligence can contradict wisdom but not vice versa. Intelligence can approve that, while drinking wine in the classroom, a teacher can teach the students, 'drinking wine is harmful, do not drink'; this is moral, which in Kantian terms is a rational imperative, but from the view of the welfare of the students, it is an immoral act and contradicts the two acts of the same teacher, 'drinking wine and, during teaching, 'not to drink' at the same time.

This special issue on Indian Studies comprises seven articles that discuss the specific problems their authors selected. The authors are distinguished scholars in their fields, as evidenced by the articles included in the issue.

Professor A. K. Rai's article is an excellent exposition of Annam Bhaṭṭa's views; Bhaṭṭa has produced several commentaries on different systems of orthodox philosophy. Rai examines Annam Bhaṭṭa's contribution more broadly to better understand his philosophical orientation. He rightly concludes that, in the Dīpikā, Annam briefly explains that liberation is attained through

knowledge of the categories propounded in Nyāya philosophy. Like Advaita-vedāntins, Annam negates the synthesis of action and knowledge as a means of liberation. Action is a means to attain knowledge, and liberation is attained directly by knowledge.

The article by Dr. Kumari Puja on the moral virtues of Yoga philosophy is a well-organized presentation of the eightfold paths, emphasizing the conditioned and unconditioned practices of basic human values, presented in simple, understandable words, as the basis for the cultivation and purification of the individual and for social welfare needed for communion with the transcendental spirit.

Dr. Rajan's well-conceived article titled 'Between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta: A Critical Reading of Arthur Schopenhauer and the Problem of Suffering is a comprehensive exposition of philosophy that is the outcome of Schopenhauer's exposition of the Indian philosophical system, especially Mahāyana and Advaita Vedānta, which, according to Rajan, places his thinking swinging between Mahāyana and Advaita Vedānta. This strongly encourages re-engagement with these concerns, opening space to reconsider whether Indian metaphysical traditions truly neglect the individual or address human suffering and agency through a different yet philosophically meaningful principle of moral welfare duties.

Prof. Ananda Mishra and Prof. Grace Darling, in their scholarly article 'Agency, Autonomy and Individual Responsibility in Theism with special reference to the Hindu Religious Text Śrīmadbhagavadgītā', present a comprehensive account of the commentaries and popular readings of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. They show that the responses of world religions and their theologians to the perplexing dichotomy between 'divine determinism' and free will, and between autonomy and free agency in a completely God-regulated world, are not immune to logical criticism. The two authors observe that *Gītā's* treatment of the problem and the solutions it offers, presented in a philosophical and rational way, are unique gifts that other world religions and their theologians may use. Advaitins do not reject the value of action and devotion, which, according to Mishra and Grace, are mankind's most precious gems. They have only instrumental value that leads us to the highest wisdom, the ultimate destiny. This is the Advaitin view, but it is not acceptable to theists.

S. Paneerselvam, in his scholarly paper entitled "Contextualizing Tradition as Primordial Ontological Condition in Contemporary Advaitic Discourse," has analyzed and evaluated the discourses of Advaitic contemporary thinkers on the ontology of Advaita, and he has concluded that R. Puligandla's approach to Advaita philosophy is unique and revelatory.

In addition, Dr. Rajan's philosophically excellent review article on the latest publication (2024) of Devendra Nath Tiwari's monograph, entitled "Nature of Philosophy: Objects and their Utility in Daily Life," is worth noting. Dr. Rajan, in his review article, has precisely pointed out the philosophy of radiance of the consciousness for which knowledge is always determinate knowledge; it flashes always in the present; it is infused by language that is not confined to verbal articulations and written scripts that are only instrumental in the manifestation of the intelligible being of language. Through them, the intelligible being of language reveals its nature, and then its meaning non-differently. The intelligible beings of language and meaning are non-dual and are the sole objects of cognition we know. Rajan's article on Tiwari's cognitive holism, confined to the analysis of thoughts/concepts, is also a new trend in spiritual philosophy. For Tiwari, knowledge is not dry but the cause of incentive to welfare duties and hence blissful.

No doubt, the analysis in this issue is attractive and successful in creating interest among scholars and readers who want to understand the correct position of the concepts discussed in the articles included in it. I thank the authors for their scholarly contributions, Professor John Zijiang Ding of the Department of Philosophy, CSP University, Pomona, USA, and the Editor–in–Chief for entrusting me with editing this issue of the Journal of East-West Thought on New Trends in Indian Studies.