

**The Great Pandits: Twentieth
Century Bengal's Contribution to
Classical Indian Philosophy**

*A Research Project of
Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath
Sanskrita Siksha Samsad*

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Pandit Dinanāth Tripāthī

Pandit Dinanāth Tripāthī was born in a village in Medinipur, West Bengal in the year 1914 (probably in December). His father was Gajendra Nārāyan Tripāthī and his mother was Sailajā Devī. He received his early training from his father and then he joined Contai Sanskrit College, Medinipur. Here Tripāthī was initiated into the classical works of Indian Philosophy. Then he moved to Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta where he completed 'tīrtha' examinations in Kāvya, Vyākaraṇa, Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, Sādhāraṇa Darśana, Mīmāṃsā, 'ka' 'kha' and 'ga' group in Nyāya. Later Tripāthī was also awarded 'Nyāya Mahāchārya' from Government Sanskrit College.

Pandit Tripāthī received his vyākaraṇa lessons from Kṛṣṇa Prasād Sāṃkhya tīrtha. Trailokyanāth Kāvyaśāṃkhyatīrtha of Contain imparted lessons on Kāvya to Pandit Tripāthī. Pandit Tripāthī's Vedānta teacher was Tārāsār Vedāntatīrtha. His Nyāya teacher was Pandit Viśvabandhu Nyāyāchārya. Pandit Tripāthī received lessons on Nyāya also from Kālīpada Tarkāchārya and Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya.

Pandit Tripāthī taught Mīmāṃsā at the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta. He was a professor in Sanskrit Department of University of Calcutta. He joined Rabīndra Bhāratī University as a guest Professor and taught Indian Philosophy for some time. Pandit Tripāthī was a Research Professor in Indian Philosophy in Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

Uniqueness of Pandit Tripāthī's method of teaching consisted in the fact that while explaining one particular issue from one specific philosophical system, he used to bring in comparative discussion that one can find in other philosophical systems, thus turning the whole deliberation into a holistic one.

As a recognition of his outstanding contribution to the field of classical Indian Philosophy Pandit Tripāthī was awarded Presidential award in 1984 by Hon'ble President Giāni Jail Singh.

Pandit Dinanāth Tripāthī is an embodiment of plain living and high thinking. To this day at the age of 98 years he still continues to write. Presently he is working on the Anumānakhaṇḍa of Gangeśa's Tattvacintāmaṇī.

The following is a list of Pandit Tripāthī's' publication.

What follows is a brief description of all of his available works. The books have been arranged not in terms of their year of publication, but in terms of their themes.

Īśopaniṣad (Ādyāpeeth, Kolkata, 1413 beng.)

Vedas are divided into four parts: Ṛk, Sāma, Yajuh and Atharva. Yajurveda is again divided into two branches: Kṛṣṇa and Śukla. Īśopaniṣad is included in Śukla Yajurveda. This forms the last part of Vājasaneyā Saṁhitā of Śukla Yajurveda. Īśopaniṣad consists of the last eighteen mantras of Vājasaneyā Saṁhitā. Since the first matra starts with 'Īśavāsyamidam' etc. this Upaniṣad is called Īśopaniṣad. The first mantra of this Upaniṣad describes the path of knowledge that a monk is required to follow by meditating on the identity on the Brahman and the self. The second mantra prescribes the path of action for those who are not fit to follow the path of knowledge. The third mantra asserts the supremacy of the path of knowledge. From the fourth till eighth mantra we find the description of the nature of self, etc. In ninth, tenth and eleventh mantras we find the description of the consequences of each of the actions prescribed. From twelve till fourteen we find elaboration of the upāsanā of Hiranyagarbha and Prakṛti and its consequence. The mantras from fifteen to eighteen tell us how those who follow the joint path of upāsanā and action desire to attain Brahman. The essential teaching of this Upaniṣad is to show how by following the paths of karma and upāsanā one grows the desire to attain mokṣa and then through the destruction of the veil of ignorance one gets himself free from the eternal movement of birth and death. Dīnanāth Tripathī has explained each of the verses with a detail exposition, often showing the etymological significance of the crucial terms involved.

Mundakopaniṣad (Ādyāpeeth, Kolkata, 1415 beng.)

Mundakopaniṣad is a part of Atharva Veda. Mundakopaniṣad is divided into three mundakas: first, second and third. Each mundaka is again divided into two chapters. First chapter of first mundaka consists of nine mantras and the second chapter contains thirteen mantras. First chapter of second mundaka contains ten mantras and there are eleven mantras in the second chapter of second mundaka. First chapter of the third mundaka contains ten mantras and there are eleven mantras in the second chapter of third mundaka. Altogether there are sixty four mantras in Mundakopaniṣad. Dīnanāth Tripathī has translated the mantras into Bengali and has given detail exposition following Śaṅkarāchārya's commentary.

The first chapter of first mundaka contains description of how the knowledge of Brahman was carried down through the teachers to their students starting from Brahma. The second chapter eulogises the Vedic sacrifices. The first chapter of second mundaka asserts that Akṣara is the ultimate reality. The second chapter of second mundaka contains description of Brahman. The first chapter of third mundaka describes the qualities that one is required to have in order to gain the knowledge of Brahman. The second chapter of third mundaka has a description of the qualities that a person possesses once he attains the knowledge of Brahman.

Kenopaniṣad (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 2011)

Kenopaniṣad is a part of Sāma Veda. Kenopaniṣad contains parts of Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa of Sāma Veda. Sometimes Kenopaniṣad is also called Talabakāropaniṣad following the name of Talabakāra who is the original advocate of Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa. Kenopaniṣad starts with the word 'Kena'. The discussion in this Upaniṣad continues in the form of question and answer. The first chapter argues that all the sense organs are ultimately driven by Brahman. The second chapter argues that Brahman is beyond the scope of human knowledge. The third chapter discusses the mystery of Brahman, for it is both beyond knowledge and also can be known. The fourth chapter discusses in greater detail the mystical nature of Brahman. This Upaniṣad hints at the mystical nature of the experience of Brahman. This Upaniṣad is unique in its reference to śakti, other than Brahman.

Kāṭhakopaniṣad (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, year not mentioned)

The story goes that there was a rishi called Kāṭha who insisted on studying a part of the Vedas and this part later became known as Kāṭha branch of the Vedas. Kāṭhakopaniṣad is a part of this kāṭha branch. This Upaniṣad is divided into two chapters. Each chapter is divided into three sections. The first section of the first chapter contains twenty nine mantras, while there are twenty five and seventeen mantras in the second and third section respectively. The first section of the second chapter contains fifteen mantras and there are fifteen and nineteen mantras in the second and third section respectively. This Upaniṣad contains a dialogue between Yama and Naciketā whereby the knowledge of Brahman is discussed. The first chapter contains the description of how Naciketā went to meet Yama and asked Yama to impart him the knowledge of what happens to people after they die. Yama describes the distinction between vidyā and avidyā, the distinction between the two

manifestations of self. The second chapter contains discussion of the eternal nature of the self, the status of the self in the body.

Vedānter Mahāvākya (Vivekānanda Maṭh, Barrāckpore, 1996)

In the beginning of this work Dīnanāth Tripāthī discusses in great detail the definition and nature of mahāvākya. He proves, in this context, the eternal nature of the Vedas. In the second half of the book Tripāthī establishes why mokṣa is to be considered the ultimate value of human life. Then he undertakes a discussion of the four mahāvākyas along with several allusions to Vedāngas, kāvyā and tantra.

Vedāntasāra (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 2003)

Sadānanda Yogīndra authored the book called Vedāntasāra most probably between 1400 and 1500 saka. Various Vaishṇava scholars opposed the Advaita arguments in very many different ways. These arguments were refuted by later Advaita scholars. And amidst all these debates, the fundamentals of Advaita philosophy became intractable to common people. Sadānanda in his Vedāntasāra puts forward the main tenets of Advaita philosophy. If Brahman alone is real, then what is the status of the sensible world? In an answer to this question the concept of avidyā is brought in. Later the author refutes all the possible oppositions to Advaita stand point. The book ends with a description of jivanmukti and videhamukti. Pandit Dīnanāth Tripāthī, in this book, undertakes a detail study of the several commentaries of Vedāntasāra.

***Vedāntasārer Tintī Ṭīkar Viśad Bangānuvād
(Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 1416 beng.)***

In this book Dīnanāth Tripāthī adds a detail Bengali translation and explanation of the three commentaries of Vedāntasāra viz. Subodhini, Valābodhini and Vidvanmanorañjanī.

Vivekacūdamaṇi (Vivekānanda Maṭh, Barrāckpore, 2010)

Originally Advaita Vedānta philosophy can be divided into three prasthanas: śruti, smṛti and nyāya. Upaniṣad belongs to śrutiprasthāna, Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā belongs to smṛtiprasthāna and Brahmasūtra belongs to nyāyaprasthāna. In the Brahma sutras it has been established that Brahman is both the efficient cause and the material cause of the world. The independent existence of the world along with its vagaries has been denied. Alongside many commentaries, some independent works have been authored to establish the Advaita Vedānta position. Vivekacūdamaṇi is one of them which is composed by

Śamkarāchārya. Since this book is aimed at ascertaining the Vedāntic knowledge of those who have already been initiated into it, refutation of others' views has taken a backstage. The identity of the individual self and Brahman has been explained and proved. Vivekacūdamāṇi, that is edited by Dīnanāth Tripāthī, contains five hundred and eighty one verses. Each of the verses has been translated with their philosophical significance. Starting with the eligibility of the knowledge of Brahman, issues like the nature of self, the nature of ignorance, the nature of liberation etc. have been discussed in great detail.

***Niruktam* (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 2002)**

Out of the six Vedāngas Nirukta is one. Nirukta is one. Nirukta is subsidiary to vyākaraṇa. In order to gain complete knowledge of the meaning of the Vedic sentences knowledge of Nirukta is required in addition to the knowledge of vyākaraṇa. Detail knowledge of phonetics and pronunciation can be had only from study of Nirukta. According to some scholars, Yaska wrote Nirukta as a commentary on an earlier work called Nighantu. There is a debate about the authorship of Nighantu. However, Nirukta consists of three chapters: 1. Naighantukakānda, 2. Naigamakānda and 3. Daivatakānda. From the word 'gauh' till 'apare'-all these words have been discussed in Naighantukakānda. From the word 'jahā' till 'ulvamṛvisam'-all these words have been analysed in the Naigamakānda. The daivatakānda contains an analysis of word from 'agni' till 'devapatnī'. There have been many commentaries on Nirukta. Dīnanāth Tripāthī, based on the commentaries of Amareśwar Thākur, Mukunda Sharmabakṣī and Durgāchārya, has translated each of the words taken up for consideration along with their philosophical import. At some places Tripāthī has relied more on Durgāchārya than on Amareśwar Thākur.

***Paspaśāhnikā* (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 1925 saka)**

The origin of Sanskrit grammar lies in the hands of three rishis viz. Pāṇinī, Kātyāyana and Patañjali. Patañjali's commentary is mainly based on Kātyāyana's Vārttika, though at places Patañjali discusses Pāṇinī's sutras as well. Patañjali's commentary is known as 'Mahābhāṣya'. One finds a unique combination of simplicity of language and depth of thoughts in this Mahābhāṣya. This Mahābhāṣya consists of eighty four āhnikas or chapters. The first chapter is called Paspaśā. Paspaśā literally means that which touches deeply. This chapter contains a discussion on the nature and necessity of studying grammar. There is a detail discussion on the nature of word in this chapter. Dīnanāth Tripāthī translates each of the kārīkas and then explains the purport of these.

There are twenty three original verses and seventy five kārīkas as ways of explanation.

Tantrāloka (Ādyāpeeth, Kolkata, Vol. 1, 1400 beng.
And Vol. 2, 1402 beng.)

Tantrāloka is a work on Śaiva philosophy, authored by Abhināvagupta. Tantrāloka belongs to Advaita school of Tantra. The main thesis of Tantrāloka is that there is one indivisible knowledge, that is of the nature of eternal ānanda. Śiva is of the nature of this knowledge. Śiva expands himself in the form of world and constructs himself in the form of individual selves. Individual selves are not distinct from Śiva. There is no material existence except knowledge. The world appears to us as material in nature only because of our ignorance. Ignorance is incomplete knowledge, or knowing otherwise. Śiva with his power manifests himself in the form of world and this power is nothing more than Śiva himself. Man can attain liberation only when he acquires complete knowledge. There is a detail discussion on the four kinds of people that are eligible for complete knowledge. Though knowledge as such is indivisible, it manifests itself in the world in four forms: 1. Aṇavajñāna, 2. Śāktajñāna, 3. Sambhavajñāna and 4. Anupāyajñāna. When one attains the anupāyajñāna, he attains śivahood, becomes one with Śiva. Dīnanāth Tripāthī has edited the first and second chapters of Tantrāloka. In this Tripāthī has followed mainly Jayaratha's commentary called 'Viveka'. The first chapter contains three hundred thirty two verses and second chapter consists of forty nine verses.

Ātmatattvaviveka, Vol. 1, 2 & 3 (Sanskrit College, Kolkata,
Vol. 1, 1984, Vol. 2, 1989, Vol. 3, 1990)

Udayanāchārya, in his Ātmatattvaviveka, has refuted the Buddhist position by defending the Nyāya view of self. In the first chapter Buddhist theory of momentariness has been refuted. In the second chapter reality of the external world independent of knowing consciousness has been proved. In the third chapter the Buddhist view regarding the identity of guṇa and guṇī has been refuted paving the way to prove the existence of self as possessing the quality of knowledge. The fourth chapter contains discussion concerning the alleged non-apprehension of the self that is independent of body etc. and refutes any such non-apprehension. Since this book is mainly aimed at refuting the Buddhist position, it is also known as 'Bauddhādhikāra.' Dīnanāth Tripāthī has edited the entire Ātmatattvaviveka, but only first and second chapters have been published. Tripāthī has translated the original text and at places has

added detail exposition by referring to the views of Raghunātha Śiromaṇi and Sāṅkara Miśra.

Īśvarasiddhivivecanam, Part 1 & 2 (Sanskrit Sahitya Parishat, Kolkata, Part 1, 1989, Part 2, 1996)

One of the most important works in Nyāya concerning the proofs for the existence of God is called Nyāyakusumañjali. Dīnanāth Tripaṭhī, in his Īśvarasiddhivivecanam analyses the first two chapters of Nyāyakusumañjali in lucid Sanskrit. The first volume contains a detail discussion on refuting the Cārvāka view, with special reference to their theory of causation. Mīmāṃsaka views on śakti have also been criticized in this context. Sāṅkhya view has also come under attack here. In the second volume a detail analysis and refutation of Mīmāṃsaka views concerning the authority and eternity of the Vedas have been taken up.

Prāśastapādabhāṣyam (Ādyāpeeth, Kolkata, Vol. 1, year not mentioned, Vol. 2, 2000)

Prāśastapādabhāṣyam is authored by Prāśastapāda who probably lived during third-first century B.C. Prāśastapādabhāṣyam is written following Kaṇāda sūtra, although it does not take up all the sūtras individually. Many important commentaries on Vaiśeṣika philosophy are written later in the history based on this Prāśastapādabhāṣyam. This book contains detail discussion of the six categories accepted by the Vaiśeṣika philosophers along with the similarities and differences between them. It is held that knowledge of these six categories is the cause of liberation. The entire Prāśastapādabhāṣyam contains fifty verses. Dīnanāth Tripaṭhī has edited Prāśastapādabhāṣyam in two volumes. The first volume is edited jointly with Śrī Śhāmāpada Miśra while the second volume is edited solely by Dīnanāth Tripaṭhī. Tripaṭhī has translated and added elaborate explanations banking on Nyāyakandali, a book written on the basis of Prāśastapādabhāṣyam.

Tattvacintāmaṇi (Pratyakṣa khandā), (Ādyāpeeth, Kolkata, 1417 beng.)

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika philosophies are regarded as sister systems, because of their affinities in their philosophical ideas. Later in the course of history Navya-Nyāya arises as a further development of Nyāya system. Gaṅgeśopādhyāya is regarded as the originator of this movement. Although in ancient Nyāya all the sixteen categories have been explained, Gaṅgeśa in his works on Navya-Nyāya has mainly explained the four sources of knowledge viz. perception, inference, testimony and comparison. Dīnanāth Tripaṭhī, in this book, has explained the views of

Gangeśa on perception. The nature of veridicality, the nature of pramāṇa, theory of anyathākhyāti, sannikarṣavāda, samavāyavāda, refutation of non-apprehension as a pramāṇa, abhāvavāda, pratyakṣakāraṇavāda and manoṇutvavāda etc. have been elaborately explained in this book.

***Mīmāṃsāparibhāṣā* (Sanskrit Sahitya Prishat, Kolkata, 1968)**

Mīmāṃsā is one of the most important schools of Indian philosophy, whose sole concern is to explain the meaning of the Vedic sentences prescriptive of actions. *Mīmāṃsāparibhāṣā* is written by kṛṣṇayajvana. This book is a lucid commentary on the main tenets of Mīmāṃsā philosophy. People with minimum expertise can follow this book. This book contains twenty two verses. Dīnanāth Tripāṭhī has translated each of the verses into Bengali and has added elaborate explanations with citing the divisions in the content of the discourse.

***Mānameyodaya* (Vol. 1), (Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1990)**

Mānameyodaya is a Mīmāṃsā work that explains the Mīmāṃsā views on pramāṇa and prameya. The first part of the book contains discussion on the pramanas, viz. perception, inference, testimony, comparison and non-apprehension. In the latter part of the book we find a detail analysis of categories accepted by Mīmāṃsakas like dravya, guṇa, karma, sāmānya, samavāya, śakti, sāmkhya and sādṛśya. Dīnanāth Tripāṭhī has explained all these Mīmāṃsaka views in great detail.

***Sacitra Hathayoga Pradīpikā* (Sanskrit Pustak Bhandār, Kolkata, 2011)**

Yoga is considered as the method to attain health, knowledge and happiness. The term 'hatha' means the control of breathing. Svātmarāma Yogi is the author of Hathayoga Pradīpikā. Śiva is considered the originator of Hathayoga. There is a commentary on Hathayoga Pradīpikā called 'Jyotsnā' written by Brahmānanda. This book consists of four chapters. The first chapter deals with the various schools of Hathayoga and also talks about dos and don'ts in the practice of Hathayoga. The second chapter is concerned with the details of control of breathing, its different kinds. In the third chapter we find description of different ways of controlling different body parts (mudrās). The fourth chapter consists of a description of Samādhi and the different ways of attaining Samādhi. The book ends with a discussion of nāda that the yogīs are capable of hearing. Dīnanāth Tripāṭhī, himself being a practicing yogī, has added

his experiences to his explanation which is of immense value. Tripāthī has also included several pictures of different yogic postures.

Pratiṣṭhāvidhi (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 2008)

This book of Dīnanāth Tripāthī is a collection of several Vedic rituals where methods of digging up new lakes, beginning building new houses, building new temples etc. have been described.

Pratiṣṭhāsārasaṅgraha (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 1996)

This book was collected by Dīnanāth Tripāthī from a priest where several rituals of worship have been described. And Tripāthī then included some more rituals like śrāddha ceremony etc. along with the prayers of several Gods and Goddesses.

Sanātanakriyāvidhivāridhi (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 1408 beng.)

This book by Dīnanāth Tripāthī is again a collection of description of several Vedic rituals like sacrifices to the stars, rituals aimed at having peace at home etc.

Śrī Rāmakrishnapūjapaddhati (Ādyapeeth, Kolkata, 1977)

This book by Dīnanāth Tripāthī contains a description of the ritual of performing worship addressed to Rāmakrishna, Sārādā Devī and Vivekānanda. There are several prayers addressed to Rāmakrishna and Sārādā Devī.

Saubhāgyalakṣmītantram (Navabharat Publishers, Kolkata, 1384 beng.)

This book by Dīnanāth Tripāthī contains a detail description of worshipping Goddess Lakṣmī including prayers addressed to her. Tripāthī has translated all the verses into Bengali. The book ends with a prayer addressed to Kṛṣṇa.

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