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FEATURE REVIEW

In Search of Affinities: Knowledge and Action in Indian Thought

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Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge: Themes in Ethics, Metaphysics and Soteriology. By Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2007. Pp. xiv + 176.

In *Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge: Themes in Ethics, Metaphysics and Soteriology,* his newly-released contribution to the fields of Indian and cross-cultural philosophy, Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad offers a collection of essays published over the past eight years exploring important ethical, epistemological, and soteriological issues in Jainism, the Brāhmiṇical *darśana*s, and Indian Buddhist thought. The very broadly construed theme that unifies the essays in this collection is an explication of the various uses of knowledge articulated in the Indian tradition. This explication, Ram-Prasad tells us, is "about both conducting a purely intellectual study of reality and seeking some higher end that this study is held to secure" (p. xi). That the pursuit of knowledge is conceived as meaningful in classical India in order to attain some "higher end" is a perfectly valid focus for any study of this philosophical tradition. What makes Ram-Prasad's collection especially valuable is the clarity with which this focus is trained on fundamental and defining problems that the tradition struggles with, and how the analysis of these problems by classical Indian philosophers still holds great value for contemporary reflection and discussion. As Ram-Prasad himself points out, the value of studying Indian philosophy lies not merely in giving a precise linguistic and conceptual interpretation of ancient Saṇskṛta texts nor in constructing some abstract apologia for the genuinely philosophical character of Indian thought (p. xii). The value of Indian philosophy for us lies in understanding its continued relevance to persistent human problems and aims. Ram-Prasad's essays succeed in revealing this relevance with the characteristic felicity and *svayaṃprakāśattva,* "luminosity all his own," that we have come to expect from his works.

The book's first essay, "Multiplist Metaphysics and Ethics," recasts the fundamental Jaina philosophical notions of *syādvāda* ("conditionality"), *anekāntavāda* ("multiplicity"), and *nayavāda* ("circumscribed schemas") in order to build a reflective and attitudinal nonviolent "multiplist" engagement toward the "Other" (p. 13). Though he follows the classical Jain authors Mahāvīra, Kundakunda, and Siddhasena in giving precise formulations of these concepts, Ram-Prasad repeatedly emphasizes that the goal he is after in this reconstruction is "affinity" with the Other, a goal not found in the Jaina literature but one not incompatible with Jain principles (p. 43). The modern discursive context within which this search for affinity takes place

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is one that deals with the cultural, intellectual, and religio-ethical "Other" in terms of three alternative strategies that have ultimately proved ineffective. The strategies have been "homogenization," in which the Other is to be overcome through overt physical violence or cultural coercion; exclusion, in which the other is marginalized and neglected; and pluralism, in which one nonviolently acknowledges otherness by "tolerating" but not sympathetically engaging with its difference (pp. 5–11).

The "multiplist metaphysic" of Jainism offers us a more active form of nonviolent engagement with the Other through a philosophical justification of the Other's worldview that renders it an indispensable perspective on reality. It will not do, as conventional interpretations of the logical formulations of *syādvāda* have done, to understand Jaina philosophy to be claiming that the complexity of reality lends itself to only apparently contradictory points of view. This would only minimize contradictions between views by resolving epistemic disagreements through adequate predication (pp. 15–16). Relativistic construals of *syādvāda* cannot successfully depict true contradiction of views either, for they deny that the putatively contradictory views are being asserted about the same reality (pp. 25–29). The limbs of logical conditionality according to *syādvāda* claim alternatively of a thing that is p, not p, is non-simultaneously p and not p, simultaneously p and not p, or combinations of these, and thus is a depiction of irreducible conflict.

This brings us to the second principle of *anekāntavāda,* which asserts that between contradictory views, for example of Brāmiṇical philosophers who think that things have *svabhāva* and Buddhists who deny that things have *svabhāva,* there is no way to determine which view is correct or incorrect from the schema of the respective systems, and since neither view can be refuted, neither can be justifiably discarded (pp. 31–33).

The third principle of *nayavāda* or "circumspection" finally shows how no ultimate rational justification can be given for why a person chooses to hold one or another of contrary points of view (pp. 33–35). The comprehension of these principles leads us to strive for "affinity" with the Other, which amounts to not merely tolerating their view, but entering into it and reasoning through its internal coherence as a perspective on the same reality that I share with the Other (pp. 35–36). Affinity challenges me to engage nonviolently with the Other through imagining the world through her eyes, and confirms that "we are or may become like the Other (instead of the other way around)" (p. 44). "Affinity," Ram-Prasad summarizes, "respects both the integrity and accessibility—the boundaries but also the gates—of the Other" (p. 45).

This first chapter makes a very convincing and appealing case for using Jaina philosophical concepts as methodological tools for the kind of "multiplist life" that Ram-Prasad envisions. Indeed, this reenvisioning and application of classical Jaina thought is brilliant as far as it goes, specifically as a powerful, ethically demanding, and meaningful alternative to either the cultural hegemony of domination of the Other or the cultural indifference of tolerant relativization of the Other. I wonder, though, if the conflicting metaphysical claims that this reconstruction of *syādvāda* and affinity have been applied to here give us a cognitive and axiological orientation

to the Other that still needs to be ethically fleshed out. As philosophy students we are taught, for example, that we cannot possibly accurately assess a view until we have understood or "inhabited" its perspective as much as possible, and as philosophy teachers we must expound the coherence of philosophical views contrary to our own with sufficient "charity" in order for our students to understand them. In these respects, affinity ought already to be an attitude that any good philosopher or philosophy teacher can exhibit, at least some of the time.

But what of the conflicting ethical claims made from within these opposed systems of metaphysics, or the conflicting demands of social justice in a "multiplist society?" If conflicting social and moral claims, like metaphysical claims, are all justified by the methods of multiplism to be ultimately indispensable, then how do we decide which ones to recommend, adopt, and socially or legally endorse and which not to recommend, adopt, or endorse? Does the "multiplist society," for example, resemble a contemporary India with its nationalized criminal law courts and local personal law courts (an innovation, incidentally, of British colonial design) along with wide-ranging regional and linguistic pluralism to allow for a diversity of cultural ontologies on the one hand while providing the minimal legal conditions for a stable nation-state on the other, or something more or less centralized? Ram-Prasad cites Gandhi several times in this chapter, espousing "multiplist" principles in view of Gandhi's many sources of Jain influence. But Gandhi's justification for *ahimsa,* instead of being predominantly cognitivist, was akin to the classical Jaina articulation in its positive metaphysical commitment, namely that it is wrong to harm any living being because they are in essence a divine soul. If Ram-Prasad's "multiplism" disdains to reject any given metaphysical commitment, including the one completely contrary to the one that Gandhi espouses, could a social and ethical activisim such as Gandhi's be as effectively recommended over those forms of social oppression it is meant to resist? These questions should be taken not as a critique of Ram-Prasad's defense of "multiplism," but rather a challenge for him as well as the rest of us to explore what kind of relevance "multiplism" has when applied concretely to the socioethical sphere, for this relevance would make clear for us the suggested metaphysic's consequences.

The second chapter, "Consciousness and Luminosity: On How Knowledge is Possible," delves into major theories of justification and their underlying assumptions about the structure of cognitions in Brāhmiṇical and Buddhist schools. Ram-Prasad begins by noting that there are two general theories of justified cognition or knowledge *(pramanya)* in the classical Indian tradition, namely the "auto-epistemic theory" *(svataḥprāmāṇyavāda)* and the "hetero-epistemic theory" *(parataḥprāmāṇyavāda)* (p. 52). The former posits that the criteria for assessing a knowledge claim are drawn from features internal to a cognition, and the latter holds that justificatory criteria are external and objective. But all such theories of knowledge must not just be based on an explanation of the content, or "phenomenality," of cognitions; an elucidation of subjectivity or "what it is like to undergo the cognition" is also required, and the latter is captured with the Saṇskṛta metaphor of *prakāśata* or "luminosity" (p. 54). Corresponding to the epistemological debate, therefore, is a debate

regarding how subjectivity, or the access of consciousness to its own objective awareness, is accounted for. The two variants are "autoluminosity" *(svataḥprakāśata),* which maintains that cognitions in one way or another are self-apprehending, and "heteroluminosity" *(parataḥprakāśata),* which argues that cognitions, like external objects, can only be apprehended by other cognitions (p. 55).

The bulk of this second essay is devoted to the explanation of four major representatives of these theories in India. The first is the heteroluminosity view of Nyāya or the school of Brāhmiṇical Logic, a theory Ram-Prasad characterizes as one of "pure intentionality" (p. 59). The earliest version of this model was that any given cognition is only immediately aware of its objective content, and since not all cognitions perform self-ascription or are apprehended, any cognition must be made the object of another cognition in order for subjectivity to be experienced. Faced with the objections from other schools that this account of subjectivity would lead to an infinite regress, the New Nyāya philosopher Gaṅgeśa argued that cognitions by their nature were characterized by a relation to an object (p. 60). This means that, for Nyāya, for a state of consciousness to be luminous means for that state of consciousness to be objective, where phenomenality and intentionality are one and the same (p. 60).

The second theory of heteroluminosity belongs to the Vedic exegetical school of Bhāṭṭa Mimāṃsa, for which the content of a cognition is ascribed the property of "cognizedness" *(jñātatā)* by a subsequent inferential cognition. This innovation successfully stops the regress problem that bedeviled the Naiyāyikas, for the object of the inferential cognition is the same as that of the initial perceptual cognition, and thus secures subjectivity through "reflectivity rather than reflexivity" (pp. 164–165).

The third theory belongs to the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti school of Yogācāra Buddhism, and it defends the autoluminosity of consciousness. Though the Buddhists are keen to deny that subjectivity entails ascription of a cognition to a persistent underlying self as in all the Brāhmiṇical models, each cognition is nonetheless for them its own "unmediated apprehension" *(svasaṃvedanā)* (p. 66). This can be known because to be aware of an object is always to be aware of its cognition, along with the fact that pain and pleasure are cognitions that have no externalized intentional content (pp. 68, 70). This account of subjectivity can thus be thought of as "intrinsic reflexivity" (p. 70).

Fourth comes what Ram-Prasad calls a "hybrid autoluminosity theory," belonging to the Prābhākara Mimāṃsikas, which claims that a threefold content *(tripuṭi)* constitutes the structure of each cognition, namely the object, the awareness of the object, and the "I" or "self" to whom the cognition belongs (p. 71). The goal of the Prābhākara architectonic is to account for intentionality, reflexivity, and ascription, all with reference to any single cognition. Though the problem with the theory is that it wishes to marry two different accounts of reflexivity, one of a cognition's self-transparency and the other of the self's awareness of each cognition, the virtue of the theory is its attempt to save both extrinsic intentionality and ascribed selfhood from the autoluminosity theory of the Buddhists (pp. 73–74).

Finally, there is the autoluminosity theory of Advaita Vedānta, for which a self-luminous consciousness is the irreducible condition for any state of awareness to occur, though this self-luminous consciousness is never itself intentional nor is it ever objectified by any cognition (pp. 75–78). This metaphysic makes consciousness into "pure reflexivity" and reduces intentionality and concrete self-ascription to contingent delimitations in which consciousness reveals merely unconscious brain states occurring in an individuated physical body (pp. 80–83).

In a brief attempt to assess the relative merits of these theories, Ram-Prasad intimates that any convincing theory of subjectivity or "luminosity" must preserve the intentional content of cognitions, their reflexivity, and a robust sense of self-ascription, making the Nyāya, Bhāṭṭa and Prābhākara theories intuitively more plausible then their Buddhist and Advaita alternatives (pp. 84–85). The weakness of the early Nyāya view, however, is that it cannot purchase reflexivity because its strict intentionality of cognitions lapses into regress by claiming that a cognition could only be apprehended by a succeeding one (p. 85). This problem was only addressed by New Nyāya, which defined luminosity as the very intentionality of cognition and bypassed the temptation to account for reflexivity at all (p. 86).

The final, and perhaps most exciting, section of the chapter attempts to bring particularly Nyāya, Mimāṃsa, and Advaita models into dialogue with contemporary physicalist depictions of the mind. The Nyāya and Mimāṃsa conceptualizations of cognition are especially amenable to dialogue with contemporary physicalist theories because the Indian realists unremittingly insist that in order for cognitions to take place the self needs to be embodied and in contact with the physical mind *(manas)* and the sense organs (pp. 90–94). Advaita may also hold open intriguing possibilities for dialogue with the physicalist, given its generalization of consciousness as not necessarily tied to bodily states, which could appeal to contemporary theorists interested in the possibility of artificial consciousness or intelligence not bound by a certain form of biological embodiment (pp. 95–98).

This chapter, the book's longest and most detailed, is superbly constructed and explained, and suggests possibilities for dialogue between classical Indian and modern physicalist models of consciousness that are well worth pursuing. In recent years, Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti has taken some pains to represent Nyāya as a system resistant to physicalist reduction because the spiritual self is a necessary condition for cognition. Ram-Prasad acknowledges this, of course, but emphasizes that conscious awareness is only possible in Nyāya when the self is embodied and connected with the physical sense organs and "brain," a point highlighted by the Nyāya insistence that the liberated, disembodied self is no longer conscious.

I have thought for some time that the Nyāya model of consciousness could be construed as a kind of emergent property dualism that makes the bodily organs and brain necessary conditions for cognitive awareness but at the same time resists an eliminative materialist reduction of consciousness to these physical organs. For Nyāya, consciousness emerges as a new property of physical existence when the body is inhabited and enlivened by *ātman.* The Nyāya model is very different from the modern Western emergent property dualism to the extent that the latter sees con-

sciousness as an emergent property of the body alone. But a reconstruction of Nyāya that does not insist on the metaphysical independence of *ātman* could lend itself quite readily to contemporary theories. In other respects, the narrative of the various versions of luminosity that Ram-Prasad provides us is outstanding for its clarity and accuracy and the justice it does to the putative justifications for and nuances of each, and it is eminently useful for those who seek an introduction to or clarification of alternative theories of consciousness in the Indian tradition.

I have a few minor reservations. Ram-Prasad follows commentators like Mohanty and Phillips in hermeneutically characterizing the "phenomenality" or objective orientation of consciousness in Indian theories as its "intentionality." I still find myself rather reluctant to use this appellation as a description of Brāhmiṇical representations of consciousness. In its most generic sense, in Western philosophical parlance intentionality connotes the "object-directedness" of consciousness, and for many this can include and in some cases primarily includes the directedness of cognitive states (or propositions) to concrete particulars. But, for the early revivalists of intentional vocabulary—Brentano, Frege, and Husserl—this notion of object-directedness is a constituting feature of meaningful cognitions (or propositions) that is explained by appealing to representational capacities and modes that are internal consciousness (or sentential sense). The Western debates over how best to characterize intentionality vis-à-vis realism in the ensuing decades have hardly permitted a blanket assumption about what sort of epistemology the term implies. Brāhmiṇical philosophers, on the other hand, are practically all direct realists when it comes to explicating the awareness of objects, and their corresponding descriptions of *manas* or *buddhi* are that these are "object-transparent" and not "object-constitutive," the latter view for these realists being uniquely Buddhist. The unstructured *(nirākāra)* mind of Nyāya and Mimāṃsa corresponds far better to G. E. Moore's characterization of consciousness as "diaphanous" than it does to a vague representation of consciousness as "intentional."

To his credit, Ram-Prasad is always rigorously careful to point out this important detail about Nyāya and Mimāṃsa theories (pp. 59–60), but it seems to me that this makes it all the more desirable to drop the "intentionality" vocabulary, or at least its unqualified use, with regard to Brāhmiṇical constructions, for such vocabulary leads too easily to hermeneutic ambiguity or confusion.

A second minor reservation has to do with the conflation of Nyāya arguments about luminosity *(prakāśata)* and their arguments about knowledge *(prameya).* The Nyāya regress problem that the chapter cites as a major flaw in the Logicians' account of subjectivity was actually flagged by classical Indian opponents as a bad account of justification. Buddhist, Mimāṃsa, and Advaita critics of Nyāya did not censor the latter's model of cognition for failing to purchase any sense of apprehension, ascription, or subjectivity at all, though these critics surely had different accounts of apprehension and self-ascription, but rather for supposedly requiring an endless series of justificatory cognitions to validate a putative initially true one. Even Gaṅgeśa's later reformulations of earlier Nyāya theories were meant to give an adequate narrative about how the qualities that veridical cognitions located in substances could be

verified as genuine, and were not intended as a patching up of Nyāya's commitment to heteroluminosity, seen in the fact that Gaṅgeśa made virtually no changes to the classical heteroluminosity theory. The Mimāmsa, Advaita, and Buddhist arguments defending autoluminosity rehearsed by Ram-Prasad are, on the other hand, indeed strictly about subjectivity and not knowledge.

These minor reservations hardly dilute the value of the chapter's excellent explication and hermeneutically important speculative comparisons.

The next two chapters, "Knowledge and Action: On How to Attain the Highest Good" and "Liberation without Annihilation: Pārthasārati Miśra on *Jñānaśakti,*" seem to form the thematic core of the book. In this section, Ram-Prasad reviews the debate between classical Mimāṃsa and Advaita thinkers on whether action or knowledge was most immediately instrumental in attaining final release from rebirth. Though very often the schools' respective participants in this debate made it appear that Mimāṃsa and Advaita were diametrically opposed on this issue, chapter 3 convincingly demonstrates that this was not the case. On the Mimāṃsa side of the argument, Kumārila and Pārthasārati adopt the view that knowledge of the true nature of *ātman* serves the positive purpose of motivating the performance of Vedically mandated ritual sacrifices, which are ultimately responsible for effecting *mokṣa* (pp. 105–111). This means that knowledge, while clearly subordinate to the liberating power of action, does contribute both epistemically and axiologically to the effort required for liberation. For Śaṅkara's Advaita, actions that conform to the caste and ritual duties enjoined by the Vedas confer upon the individuated and embodied subject a kind of knowledge that motivates the desire to attain the highest awareness of the true self, and this highest knowledge transcends ritual action and alone facilitates liberation (pp. 111–118). This, according to Śaṅkara, entails that action, while subordinate to knowledge, plays a role in providing cues to the knowledge of the true self and some motivation to acquire this knowledge.

The Mimāṃsika commentator Pārthasārati, in response to the force and influence of the Advaita arguments, qualifies his school's position further still by maintaining that, because knowledge of the true nature of the self is validated by the same sacred texts that command ritual performances, which enable its release, ritual actions are performed in a "mode" of self-knowledge (pp. 118–119). Pārthasārati argues that the knowledge of the self's "distinctness" *(viveka)* from the body provokes "disinterest" *(virakta)* in goal-oriented activity, and at that point the performance of ritual action simply removes the conditions that lead to another rebirth and fulfills Vedic obligations (pp. 122–123). Ram-Prasad seems to suggest that this later Mimāṃsa attempt to ameliorate between the relative priority of knowledge and action is more clear-cut than the Advaita gesture to do the same. After all, the Advaita philosophers separate liberating knowledge so radically from worldly praxis that they deprive themselves both of any justification for why orthopraxy should be observed and for how, if worldly cognitions are also activities, liberating knowledge can be in any clear sense known by anyone except as the final self-denying cognition of an individual (pp. 126–129). What a close examination of this Mimāṃsa-Advaita conflict does make clear, however, is that both schools acknowledge the

purview of knowledge and action and argue only over which is subordinate to the other in the pursuit of life's ultimate soteriological goal.

Chapter 4 is focused on a closer exegesis of Pārthasārati's rejection of the Advaita contention that the liberated self should be understood as a pure, self-luminous and eternal selfhood that is not qualified by any determinate and thus limited cognitions. Drawing on early Mimāṃsa conceptions of the "extraordinary potential" *(apūrvaṃ)* produced by the observance of rituals in the process of release as well as the presumption *(arthāpatti)* that phenomena of various sorts have inherent potencies *(śakti),* Pārthasārati conceives the released self as retaining the "potential for cognition" *(jñānaśakti)* (pp. 136–138). Pārthasārati argues in this context that, since the self is indestructible, its potency to have cognitions is not dissolved by liberation, only the embodied conditions under which it has cognitions, and were the self after liberation hypothetically to be reborn, its *jñānaśakti* would enable it to illuminate cognitions once again (pp. 140–142). Ram-Prasad critiques the notion of *jñānaśakti* as being both irrelevant and unconfirmable. It is irrelevant because even on the Mimāṃsa account, the liberated self is never again made incarnate and so its cognitive potency is never reactivated. It is likewise unconfirmable because the liberated self has no cognitions through which a particular cognitive potency could be identified (pp. 145–146). Pārthasārati's peculiar form of resistance, then, to the Advaita depiction of the self as unqualified pure consciousness is, I would agree with Ram-Prasad, fundamentally misguided.

The overall exegetical debate between Mimāṃsa and Advaita over whether the Vedic scriptures endorse action or knowledge as the key to liberation is suggestively ameliorated by the reading Ram-Prasad gives us. This reading, though he never overtly states this implication, also coheres quite well with what Ram-Prasad has declared to be the entire collection's purpose, namely the demonstration of the inextricable relationship between knowledge and action in classical Brāhmiṇical discourse. In either the everyday, pragmatic world or in pursuit of ultimate liberation, Indian philosophers tended to affirm the transformative and transforming character of both knowledge and behavior. Schools that were primarily interested in articulating the spiritual *(adhyātmika)* character of human existence and the "gnostic" techniques required for release nevertheless affirmed that the provisional truth-bearing character of the empirical means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*s) leads to practical success *(pravṛtisamārthya)* in the world of action. Likewise, schools that primarily concerned themselves with the business of validating worldly practices and ritual efficacy acknowledged that *mokṣa* was the ultimate end toward which the highest forms of knowledge led. We should therefore not be surprised to see either a defense of the integrity of ritual observance and practical success in Śaṅkara's Advaita or the acknowledgment that scriptural study and sacrificial performance are based on and motivated by the special knowledge about *ātman* conferred by the Vedic corpus in Pārthasārati's Mimāṃsa. Regardless of whether knowledge or action happens to be emphasized by one or another school in classical Indian thought, the transforming of the individual's character and the transformation of the world and one's ultimate spiritual condition constitute the telos of both.

The book's final chapter, "Conceptuality in Question: Teaching and Pure Cognition in Yogācāra-Madhyamaka" addresses the matter of how the Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition dealt with a tension in their uniquely formulated connection between knowledge and action. The enlightened human being according to Buddhism has attained a state of experience that has transcended conceptuality and therefore transcends communicability, but at the same that very enlightened being is given a commission in Mahāyāna to articulate the meaning of enlightenment for the sake of suffering beings (pp. 148, 150). This dilemma may call into question both the authority and veracity of the enlightened teacher. Ram-Prasad shows how Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, in their synthetic Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka system, attempt to resolve this apparent dilemma. The first line of response posits that a *bodhisattva* does not eliminate conceptual knowledge after his or her enlightenment, but only realizes that concepts are strictly ideational constructs and so does not engage with them out of desirous attachment (pp. 152–153). Furthermore, the "noumenal contemplation" *(bhāvana)* that produces this insight into the constructed nature of concepts "is an epistemic achievement and, therefore, capable of being communicated and taught" (p. 155).

The second strategy for dealing with the difficulty confronts the tension that the concepts used by the enlightened person to guide others are "errors" *(bhrānta),* which the enlightenment experience is specifically supposed to purge. Śāntarakṣita responds to this charge by agreeing that the concepts that continue to be experienced and used by the enlightened person in his teaching are indeed ultimately erroneous falsifications of the true nature of things, but because the enlightened person knows that these concepts are merely magical illusions, he is not deluded or deceived by them (p. 158). Ram-Prasad finds these strategies of Buddhist accommodation successful on two counts, in their acknowledgment that conceptual awareness does indeed continue for the enlightened person and in their transformation of conceptual engagement from one of desirous and selfish attachment to one of compassionate, selfless service (p. 160).

This concluding chapter highlights what has always struck me as the central philosophical problem in Indian Mahāyāna, namely how ultimately false conceptual constructions can be used by an enlightened teacher to guide suffering beings toward the true realization of awakening. Theravāda Buddhists did not have a dilemma of precisely this sort, for in this tradition the Buddha conceded the incommunicability of the enlightenment experience but insisted that the approach to it, the eightfold path, could be taught straightforwardly and without deception. That is to say, in early Buddhist thought and practice, while pure, nondesirous and liberating experience could never be articulated even by the enlightened person, the method for attaining that experience could be linguistically described and disseminated in the same plain and literal way to ordinary people that any other method could be taught.

Certain concepts are thought by early Buddhists to be perniciously false, of course, these being specifically metaphysical concepts about the origin of the world, selfhood, and afterlife states, but these specific concepts are not used by enlightened

beings at all in Theravāda pedagogy. Early Mādhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophers like Candrakīrti and Dignāga commit themselves to epistemological positions that render all concepts whatsoever as falsifications of reality, so that conceptual knowledge in Indian Mahāyāna is believed by its very nature to entail metaphysical reification or subject/object distinctions that falsify the ever-changing or irreducibly unique nature of phenomena. According to this view, concepts can be neither literally or even metaphorically true representations of things as they are. This is why Candrakīrti insists repeatedly that completely enlightened beings never speak at all, and *bodhisattva*s only speak to uphold worldly practices as being merely conventional, and why Dignāga takes such great theoretical pains to prove that linguistic meaning is wholly inferential and not perceptual at all. This reformulation and reevaluation of the nature of concepts and language as fabrication saddled later Mahāyāna philosophers with the serious problem of how such concepts, despite their falsity, can be used to aid the unenlightened. Ram-Prasad's review of Śāntarakṣita's and Kamalaśīla's solutions very successfully illustrates how their synthetic school sought some sort of accommodation by admitting that the enlightened person continues to entertain concepts and that, like a magician, he or she can continue to use these concepts without being deluded by their ultimate falsity.

Unfortunately, I cannot share Ram-Prasad's apparent satisfaction with the Yogācāra-Mādhyamaka resolution of the problem because I think the proposed solution fundamentally begs the most important part of the problem of conceptuality in Indian Mahāyāna. Let us allow for the sake of argument that conceptual falsifications do not delude the enlightened teacher. But what about the unenlightened students for the sake of whom Buddhism needs to be taught? The very problem of being unenlightened is presumably that one in this state is desirously and selfishly attached to the world because one is not cognizant of the illusory nature of one's conceptual orientation. The enlightened teacher responds to this problem, because he or she has no choice, by using false concepts to show that concepts are false so that the unenlightened seeker won't buy into them. The most important question then becomes: how can this be done? Under these circumstances, the magician analogy of the enlightened teacher used by Kamalaśīla turns out to be a rather unhappy one from the perspective of the unenlightened student, because the magician knows he is deceiving and wants to deceive the audience on purpose in order to astonish them into believing his supposed magical "authority." The delusions of the audience can only be removed when they are taught how the trick is really performed. But the method of the *bodhisattva* used to debrief the unenlightened about the false nature and damaging consequences of conceptual attachment is always threatened by the fact that the concepts that the method depends on are thought themselves to be falsifications.

The fact that Śāntarakṣita's and Kamalaśīla failed to solve this most crucial part of the dilemma is witnessed by the ongoing debates between the Tibetan Sa-gya and Ge-luk schools that they inspired. In the end, I think this problem of communicability and teachability simply could not be solved satisfactorily in Indian Mahāyāna because of the radical doctrine of concepts as inescapably false laid down primarily by

figures such as Candrakīrti, Vasabandhu, and Dignāga. Much more appealing and creative solutions can be found in the Theravāda strategy noted above and in the later Ch'an Buddhist pedagogies of the "encounter dialogue" and *gong an.*

The collection of essays in *Indian Philosophy and the Consequences of Knowledge* represents the concerted and brilliant efforts of one of our generation's most talented scholars of Indian philosophy to make the tradition both accessible and relevant to the most significant of our ongoing reflections. Each one of the chapters is coherently constructed, lucidly written, superbly argued, hermeneutically sound, and ingeniously suggestive. In the book's Preface, Ram-Prasad, acknowledging the support of his family during the writing of the book, parenthetically reveals that his son "professed bafflement at why I should write a book that 'nobody will read'" (p. vii). While we may charitably entertain some affinity for the feelings of Ram-Prasad's helpful little boy, I can say that for anyone seeking a better understanding of classical Indian thought and a model of how its debates can engage the contemporary philosopher, this book is surely indispensable.

Douglas L. Berger