



Indian Philosophy, Volume 1

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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This classic work is a general introduction to Indian philosophy that covers the Vedic and Epic periods, including expositions on the hymns of the Rig Veda, the Upanisads, Jainism, Buddhism and the theism of the Bhagavadgita. Long acknowledged as a classic, this pioneering survey of Indian thought charts a fascinating course through an intricate history. From the Rig Veda to Ramanuja, Radhakrishnan traces the development of Indian philosophy as a single tradition of thought through the ages. The author showcases ancient philosophical texts and relates them to contemporary issues of philosophy and religion. This second edition with a new Introduction by eminent philosopher J.N. Mohanty, highlights the continuing relevance of the work and the philosophic tradition it represents.

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From Reader Review Indian Philosophy, Volume 1 for online ebook

Abdul Wadood says

a

Guy says

Great book to introduce the Indian philosophy. A bit biased but perhaps that is understandable when considering the place of that philosophy when the book came out.

The language is academic but not too hard and it covers the vast ideas of the sub-continent. I am looking forward to read 2nd part. Hey!! if anyone has this and want to share...

Akilesh Srikantaiah says

For people who want to know how Indians, that tribe to the east of River Indus developed a way of life from pre historic times to the time of Ramanujam, this is a must read. One can't help but wonder how people realized the potential of looking inwards and understanding life. Dr. Radhakrishnan explains in detail about philosophies that have evolved as an off shoot of this thinking of going inwards. At the end of the book, you feel proud that our ancestors were the first in the world to be using their brains to understand the universe around us in simple thoughts. A must read for people interested in philosophy...

Nandini Goel says

"Indian Philosophy" by S. Radhakrishnan, the second president of India, beautifully depicts the transition of Indian Thought from Rig Veda to Ramanuja. The reason why Indian Philosophy is regarded as one of the best around the world is due to its progressive nature of transforming itself according to the needs of the present time. Also, it is one of the few philosophies, which recognize the three states of human: conscious, unconscious and subconscious.

Indian Philosophy can be broadly divided into the following periods:

- a) Vedic Period: 1500 BC to 600 BC
- b) Epic Period: 600 BC to 200 AD
- c) Sutra Period: 200 AD onwards
- d) Scholastic Period

The Vedas are the earliest documents of human mind that we possess. They consist of hymns to be sung at sacrifices. There are four vedas, namely, Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva. Each Veda is divided into three parts: Mantras, Brahmanas and Upanisads.

Mantras are the hymns to be recited. Their collection is known as "Samhita".

Brahmanas are the precepts and religious duties while Upanisads and the Aranyakas are the concluding portions of Brahmanas which discuss the philosophical problems.

While the Brahmanas provide the religious duties of a householder, the Aranyakas serve as objects of meditation for those who resort to forests in their old age.

The Upanisads focus on ideals like Karma. The Law of Karma is the law of the conservation of moral energy. In simple words. "We reap what we sow."

The author then discusses about the materialist philosophy. Materialist are those people who believe in the non-existence of soul and after life. They believe that, "Its an error of Judgement that leads to the assumption of another world. There is no world other than this, neither heaven or hell. Religion is a foolish aberration, a mental disease. A god is not necessary to account for the world"

The materialists donot believe in the philosophy of Karma. This philosophy was laid down by "Caravaka"

Jainism is another philosophy which is long existent in Indian Society. Jainas are the followers of Jina, the victor, a title applied to Vardhamana, the last prophet of the Jainas. Vardhamana is also known as Mahavira. The philosophy however was founded by Risaba. The prophets in Jainism are known as Tirthankaras. The Jainas divide the knowledge into five kinds: mati, sruti, avadhi, manhaparyaya and kevala. Jainas donot believe in the existence of a Supreme Being but only in the cleanliness of soul. The main aim of Jainism is the liberation of Soul.

The book then also discusses about the establishment of Buddhism, its teachings and how and why it has become successful in the modern day.

The book also discusses about the various deities of the Vedic and Epic Period and how cults like Vaisnavism and Shaivism started. During the Vedic Period, Hiranyagarbha and Prajapati were regarded as the creator of the world. Indira, the lord of sky, rain and thunder was regarded as the king of gods and the father of the whole world. He was compared to Zeus. During the Epic Period, Shiva, earlier referred to as Rudra in the Rig Veda was endowed with the title of Pashupatinath. Krisna and his life has been discussed elaborately in the book.

The Indian Philosophy has always been related to science. Where Aryans not only developed a sun god for the day but also an invisible sun god of the night, Savitr. This proves the fact that Aryans believed that sun didn't disappear during the night. The ten avatars or incarnations of Vishnu have also been in order where first comes the fish, "Matsya" (just like aquatic animals came first). Then, a man like that of Prehistoric times with an ax (Parsuram), then a settled warrior and herdsman (Krishna). Later came Buddha, a preacher of Peace. At the end, we will have Kalki, who will work on destroying the evil when it will be out of control and reconstruct an era of peace.

All the activity that happens in our world is due to two forces, Purusa(man) or Prakriti(Nature). Purusa has acquired intelligence, while Prakriti has acquired matter.

It was indeed an educating book with a lot of insight on Indian Philosophy.

Regards
Nandini Goel

D. says

Aargh, this was impossible to read. It's written in that early 20th century, dense British scholarly style...I kept trying until finally the library needed it back. Maybe some other time, or another more accessible book on the same topic.

Sally says

Good coverage of Indian philosophy from Vedic times, through the Upanishads, and up through Buddhism and the Bhagavad-Gita.

Simone Roberts says

Got a philosophical question? India got there first. The two vols by Radhakrishnan and several other "short" introductions to the traditions of the subcontinent are my intro course for the next book.

SR makes some great jokes when linking lines of argument and observation in India's traditions to the works of European philosophers. It sounds like after learning his whole tradition, the Euro stuff was a nice review. A refreshing turn of the table.

Kogilavani says

Read the ethical part, useful and applicable in cyber-ethics study as well.

Arjun Ravichandran says

Comprehensive and thorough. Radhakrishnan writes like your favourite uncle ; calm and composed.

Viji (Bookish endeavors) says

A comprehensive work on Indian philosophy, with even the basics covered.. You don't have to worry if you don't know anything, you can go straight into it.. Because everything is explained word by word.. And that too, like notes. And that itself is the main problem with this book. Reading it is much time-consuming since it is unnecessarily elaborative for a regular philosophy reader.. It's definitely not something I'd suggest to a student for first reading. It will make you bored like anything. But if you want clarity in some points, this is where you should go. But you should be sure about what you want to know. Otherwise it would be the proverbial story of needle and haystack..

Yognik1789 says

This is a standard version of Indian Philosophical thoughts that I'd safely recommend for all students of philosophy. Volume 1 of Indian Philosophy by Radhakrishnan, an Advaita himself, mostly deals with the early philosophical texts that originated here.

I read the Vedas, Upanishads, the Epic Literature, Bhagvad Gita, The Materialists, Buddhism and Jainism.

A very interesting read with all the necessary references and sources. Radhakrishnan was a grand master in philosophy and he did a huge contribution to the Indian School of thought vis-a-vis the Western 'organized' schools.

This is also a must read for all students of comparative religions.

I am on my religious voyage currently and this book made me sail through early Indian texts seamlessly. (Although it goes without saying, it has explanations which does not mean you do not read the original texts or their simpler translations)

the gift says

dense and deliberate. this is a historical document (1923), of english academic style, though i do not know how significantly different is current understanding of indian philosophy. i have grown up more or less a-religious, but in a nominally christian society, so have no sense of either the original texts eg. vedas, upanishads, epics, or the usual human corruption of faiths eg. brahmanism and caste, buddhism and dissolution, and no idea of more contemporary thinkers...

i found it very useful on vedas and upanishads- even jains- as my original study of indian thought always begins with buddhism, and of that mostly the philosophy of the four noble truths, the eightfold path, the schism between theravada and mahayana, the original diffusion of thought throughout asia, but the argument is that such dharma (teachings) grew organically even when revolutionary, out of indian culture eg. upanishads, that unsurprisingly the person of the buddha was soon imagined superhuman, divine, avatar, that his teachings were oral and only recorded years later- but with such consistency of thought if not event that there is not much dispute of the core diagnosis, teachings, path...

there is a lot of information given. i now know better the mahabharata and ramayana, i now have a better sense of development of somewhat unified 'indian' culture, development and some apology for caste (could have just killed the defeated), the attempt to find monotheism in brahma, and by this recount it certainly seems obvious why buddhism has declined as a religious force, as it is both too 'cold'? (the pali texts) and too diffuse and adaptive to local traditions (mahayana), such that either case does not suggest comforting metaphysical pictures needed to make a religion appeal (more a psychological assertion than philosophical claim). from what limited reading and here in comparison, i can see why rises in conflict the ways of brahma- we are all brahmin and this is a specific, wondrous being we must discover, through acts, faith, thoughts- and the ways of buddhism- the world is a cycle of pain, we are essentially empty, we are of 'dependent origination'... though both ways incorporate karma and ethical rules...

on the other, after slamming buddhism the author does attempt to recount the various schools of thought, from something like materialism, idealism, does try to explain nagarjuna's genius (someone to read again), and uses that great 'four limbs' logic, rather than simple is, is not, excluded middle- the distinction between 'conventional' and 'ultimate' knowledge that is or is not, or both is and is not, or neither is or is not... and on the other this is only volume 1, so i have more reading to do...

also encourages me to learn more advaita vedanta...

Xincheng Zhang says

