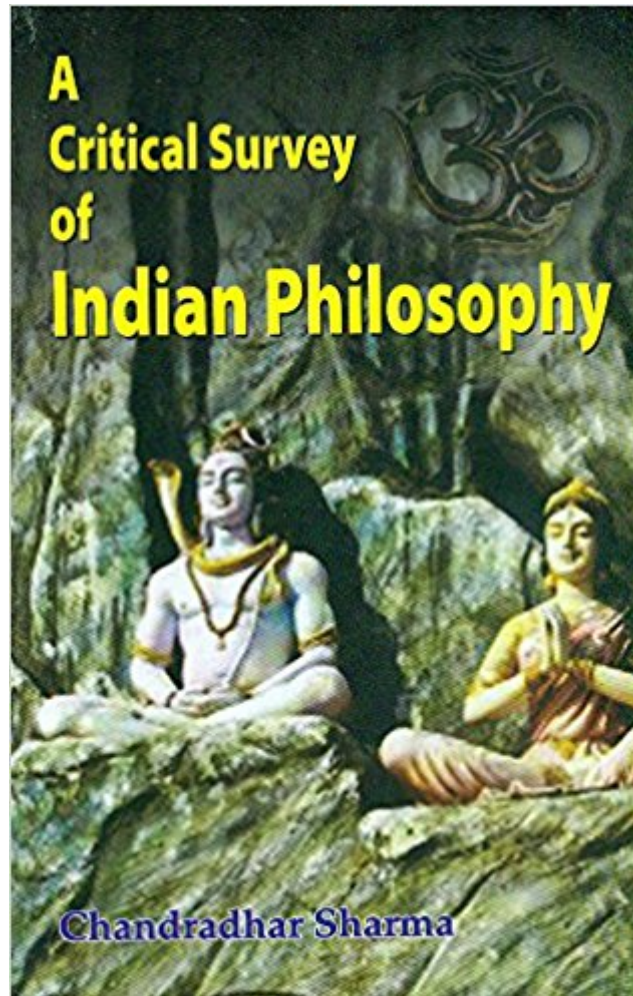




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A Critical Survey Of Indian Philosophy



Synopsis

Aim in this work has been to give a clear, comprehensive and critical account of the various systems of Indian philosophy. The book will be found useful by all those who want a clear and accurate exposition of the development of Indian philosophical thought in one volume which is neither too small nor too big. On almost all fundamental points the author has either quoted from the original texts or referred to them to enable the interested reader to compare the interpretations with the texts. Throughout the exposition of the different systems which involves criticism and evaluation, the author has tried to be fair and impartial to them and to present many difficult and obscure points in as clear and correct a manner. Ignorance of Indian philosophy, specially of Buddhism and Vedanta, is still profound and has given rise to un-informed or ill-informed accounts and misleading criticisms. It has been the aim of the book to remove such misconceptions. Honest difference of opinion in interpretation is legitimate in philosophy, but it does not entitle us to impose our own preconceived notions on a system which are repelled by its original texts. The work is only an outline of a vast subject and has no pretensions to completeness. The present treatise is a critical study of different systems of Indian Philosophy based on original sources and its principal value lies in their interpretation. On almost all fundamental points the author has quoted from the original texts to enable the reader to compare the interpretations with the text. The book opens with the survey of Indian philosophical thought as found in the Vedas, the Upanisads and Bhagavadgita. It proceeds to the study of Materialism, Jainism and Early Buddhism, Sunyavada, Vijnanavada and Svatantra Vijnanavada. It expounds the tenets of the six systems of Indian Philosophy with special reference to Sankara, the pre-Sankara and the post-Sankara Vedanta, and the essentials of Buddhism and Vedanta in comparison and contrast. It discusses the doctrines of Vedanta as interpreted by Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha, Caitanya and Aurobindo. It also contains a clear exposition of Saiva Siddhanta, Kashmir Saivism and Sakta Schools.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Indian philosophy contains an immense number of traditions, works, arguments and counter-arguments, so no single introductory work can do full justice to this subject. A great obstacle for non-Indian students is that the vocabulary of Indian philosophy is very specialized and translations to English concepts are bound to be more or less erroneous. Authors of introductory books have to walk a fine line in mixing translated concepts with original concepts, too much of either will render the book incomprehensible. Translation is the area where this book excels. Chandradhar Sharma's approach to translation is meticulous, consistent and effective. Concepts such as reality and cause are generally given in English, but always with the Sanskrit translation in parenthesis if the occasion requires it. More difficult concepts are often presented the other way around, with the approximate English translation in parenthesis. Highly important and specialized concepts, such as prakṛti and puruṣa, are not translated but are explained in great detail. The clarity of this approach is admirable and the message is clear: there are some concepts which you need to learn from the Indian point of view in order to understand Indian philosophy. However, although the philosophical translation is excellent, this is still not an easy book to read. It is littered with sentences like "Taking his stand on the Brhadaranyaka, the Chhandogya and the Manukya, Gaudapada identified the Unborn and Non-dual Absolute with the Atman or Brahman or Amatra or Turiya or Advaita which can be realized by Pure Knowledge or Asparshayoga or Vaisharadya or Amanibhava" (p. 248). Learning to understand Indian philosophy requires dedication, and so does this book. But for the dedicated student, this is an excellent resource for getting acquainted with this vast topic, above all with its vocabulary. The ideas might seem incomprehensible the first time around, but the next time you read a book on Indian philosophy you will probably have a vague sense of familiarity. I do have one point of minor criticism also. I would have enjoyed some form of chronology and maybe brief philosopher biographies in this book, just to know in which centuries each philosopher and school of philosophy thrived and their social context. But on the other hand I appreciate the fact that the book is fairly short, and related information can of course easily be found from other sources such as Wikipedia with a little effort.

good overview by a very respected Indian academic.

I have the paperback edition and have found this book quite valuable. But the Kindle edition has quality issues and I returned it for refund.(1) Numerous typos on each page.(2) Font size changes abruptly(3) The original text appears as an image. It is followed by the same text as non-image.The process that was used to convert this book to the kindle edition is flawed and makes for an unpleasant reading experience.

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