

Rethinking the History of Philosophy

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Among the radical changes that occurred in the twentieth century (especially in its latter half) and reflected the current trends in the development of a human community, there are quite a few transformations that, though clearly outlined, have failed so far to be sufficiently described and, what is more, to be fully understood. In particular, this concerns a cardinal change in the status of what until recently was commonly known as ‘Oriental philosophy.’

By the early twentieth century the view of Greek ancient thought as the ‘cradle of philosophy’ took deep root in Westerners’ minds. It was believed that the idea of any other philosophy existing apart from Western philosophy was groundless and, therefore, the very expression ‘Western philosophy’ should be regarded as tautology (Husserl). Even those who shared Hegel’s view and recognized that ‘the so called Oriental philosophy was the first to appear in terms of time’ (implying Chinese and Indian thought) nonetheless deemed it out of place in the history of philosophy (Hegel, 1996: 44).

According to inflexible Western notions it was customary to oppose the so-called Oriental mode of thought to the Western type of thinking within many parameters. For example, it was stated that philosophy in the East was never detached from religion in contrast to their dissociation in the West; that Oriental spiritualism was offset by Western naturalism; that the dominant characteristics intrinsic to the Oriental type of reflection such as idealism, irrationalism, introversion, cosmocentrism and pessimism differed from Western materialism, rationalism, extraversion, anthropocentrism and optimism, etc. Under such interpretations, the Indians were looked down upon as incapable of scientific speculative thinking (Oldenberg, 1910: 38), the Chinese were described as ‘strikingly lacking in the creative power of imagination’ (Grube, 1910: 43), while the Arabs were alleged to be ‘utterly devoid of critical ability’ (Goldziher, 1910: 87).

By the late twentieth century, though the stereotyped attitude to the Oriental types of thinking had not as yet been entirely superseded, there occurred nevertheless

a noticeable turnabout in this approach. The range of those who still reduce the concept of philosophy exclusively to the Western type of reflection has considerably narrowed. The contributions of Chinese, Indian, Arab-Muslim (quite often as well as Japanese and Iranian) spiritual cultures to the world philosophical heritage are being recognized. The relevant courses in 'non-Western' philosophy have appeared in university curricula. A rapid growth is evident in the number of publications dealing with major trends, schools, personalities, concepts and categories of Oriental philosophical traditions. The philosophers' community is starting to take seriously the representatives of Eastern cultures, as the latter's voices become more and more often discernible at international philosophical forums, including the world philosophers' congresses: philosophers from the East acting as chair persons at various conferences have a chance to express their viewpoints on the most pressing problems; the XXI World Congress of Philosophy in Istanbul in 2003 was held, for the first time since its foundation in Paris in 1900, outside Europe at the borderline between Europe and Asia; and the XXII Congress took place in Seoul, capital of South Korea, in 2008.

Special mention should be made of philosophical comparative studies as one of the leading fields in the development of modern thought. Initially, comparative studies were quite closely linked with imperial ideological claims. Their main areas of focus were reduced to identifying the differences between 'one's own' and 'alien' world outlooks, verifying the principled superiority of Western ideas as compared with the Eastern notions, and justifying one's own missionary function. Gradually, the comparatists started to take a truly academic interest in Oriental cultures, as there was a sincere and growing desire to understand them and, as far as possible, to make them comprehensible and accessible to the perception of those who were brought up in the Western culture. In recent decades comparative philosophy has acquired particular importance in view of the mounting critical attitude to the various aspects of the Western civilization, and the search for a new civilizational paradigm. Finally, one cannot but notice that Western philosophers have turned to the 'Eastern' experience in resolving various philosophical problems when formulating their theories and systems.

Such sweeping changes in the attitude to Oriental philosophical traditions are explained by several reasons. Let us look only at some of them which seem from our point of view to be the most significant.

To do justice to European thinkers, it should be recognized that a major part in the changed status of Oriental philosophies belonged to those among them who were the first to perceive the groundlessness of pejorative judgments. The younger contemporaries of Hegel – Schelling and Schopenhauer – leveled their criticism at the Eurocentric structure of the historical philosophical process. Schelling defined this approach by posing the following question: 'What is Europe as such but just a fruitless tree trunk which was cultivated by all that has come from the East and which was improved solely owing to this factor?' Schopenhauer believed that the invigoration and enrichment of European thought was possible only through turning to a 'life-giving source' of Oriental religious philosophical culture (in particular, that of India). Nietzsche used to insist on the 'family likeness' of the whole of philosophical thought – Indian, Greek and German. In some cases it was 'spiritualism,' a mysti-

cal spirit of the Oriental mentality that was regarded as evidence of its superiority over the Western type of thinking. The eminent Orientalist Max Müller believed that the bearers of the former view were 'superior to most Western philosophers' (Müller, 1919: XIII). Last but not least, the abovementioned stereotypes were sometimes perceived as equal or as mutually complementary. This approach was shared, for example, by Hermann Hesse, a great admirer of Oriental philosophy, who perceived in the 'wisdom of the East and the West . . . not hostile, conflicting forces but the poles by which life swings in between' (Hesse, 1986: 235).

It would not be vulgar sociologization to admit that the decisive objective factor in the changes occurring in the field of philosophy was the collapse of the colonial system, the establishment of sovereignty by the nations earlier dependent on their mother countries, consolidation of their economic independence (according to some forecasts, China and India are to achieve the level of superpowers in the twenty-first century), and their participation in international life as independent actors. All of this taken together could not fail to have a telling effect on the interrelations between East and West.

The global processes are evolving in the same direction. Though in the West, particularly in the USA, there are many who would like to set up a global community exclusively in conformity with their own notions and values, this position is nonetheless viewed as unacceptable, meeting strong resistance at many levels on the part of those wishing to get rid of any types of hegemony, including that in the cultural sphere, so as to retain intact a wealth of cultural varieties.

And finally, we have to assess one more factor, namely, a spiritual transformation of the eastern nations themselves. It is not accidental that Oriental societies are still called traditional. Indeed, the 'authority' of traditions has been predominating in these societies over many centuries. Suffice it to recall Confucius and his legendary maxims: 'Reviewing the old as a means of realizing the new—such a person can be considered a teacher' or 'I do not forge new paths; with confidence I cherish the ancients' (Ames and Rosemont, 1998: 111).

The same unreserved adherence to the values and institutions of the past is characteristic of Indian society wherein, in spite of all the current changes, the regulatory role of the *varna-asrama-dharma* system is still preserved.

The sacral attitude of many Muslims to tradition is clearly evidenced from the following utterance of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a luminary of the modern Islamic world: 'The Muslim civilization is disinterested in changes and adaptation,' its symbol is not 'a flowing river but the cube of Kaaba, with stability incarnating the permanent and immutable character of Islam' (Nasr, 1968: 21).

The fidelity to traditions allowed the eastern nations to maintain their identity in spite of all intrusions from the outside (the most illustrative example is India) in the conditions of colonial or semi-colonial dependence. Yet, the same devotion was frequently one of the major causes for spiritual and social stagnation.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the eastern nations found themselves in a situation where their destiny became closely linked with and in many respects dependant on world processes. This time is often defined as the age of 'Asia's awakening,' implying the general arousal of public thought there, primarily, in sociopolitical, economic and religious philosophical thinking. Intellectual efforts were directed

at resolving the crucial problems, which taken together represented concurrently a search for a way out of stagnation burdened by outdated traditions and the intention to overcome backwardness without the loss of cultural identity.

In the historical situation of that period the problem of a correlation between national traditions and Western ideals and values acquired a key importance in the public discourse. On the one hand, you could see the non-acceptance of all Western ideals and the excessive adulation of national traditions and, on the other hand, a critical attitude to the latter, sometimes even their complete rejection as absolutely obsolete and unfitting to the new times along with unwarranted idealization of Western values and institutions. As it turned out, both attitudes to national traditions, apologetic and nihilist, failed to prevail. The reformative approach came to predominate as more realistic and promising. It combined respect for the national spiritual heritage and a sober critical appraisal of outdated traditions, anti-imperialist sentiments and the recognition of unquestionable achievements of Western civilization, the immutability of a religious faith and the understanding of the need to employ the achievements of modern science and technology. As Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (Munshi and Diwakar, 1988: 418) declared, 'As long as a society lives by its ideals, its tools and forms have meaning. If the faith fails, the society loses its guides and direction.' Hence it is more sensible and preferable to build upon on the previously laid foundation of national culture, which does not exclude but, quite the reverse, necessarily implies the adoption of valuable elements in the Western civilization.

However, in the course of time, reformism found itself on the pan being fiercely criticized by advocates of the ideological trend conventionally called 'revivalism' or fundamentalism. The latter calls for returning to the 'golden age' when Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam manifested themselves in 'pure' form. But the understanding of this purity is quite ambiguous. The diversity of opinions among the champions of 'revivalism' is wide, ranging from the most conservative to extreme leftist views.

The manifold phenomenon of fundamentalism is not to be reduced merely to its counter-reformism variety. The intensifying movement for 'revivalism' points not to the end of the reformative process but rather to its new level: this time it will not amount to elitist progress (as it was until recently) but a large-scale movement for a radical transformation of traditional society. To make it real here, it is necessary to identify and spur on the internal driving forces of development.

It is to this end that current philosophical thought is oriented in the East. Its attention is drawn to the 'forgotten' or ignored components of cultural heritage, which remained undeveloped owing to circumstances but which have acquired an essential importance today. These include rationalism and scientific knowledge, free will and respect of individual rights, and the capacity for social transformation and innovation. In short, it embraces all that would make it possible to mobilize national potentials and resources for attaining modern levels in material and spiritual development.

Not long ago the Western model of development was regarded as the standard type of progress. It was used as a guideline in the reappraisal of national heritage. Nonetheless, by the end of the last millennium the flaws had become readily apparent in the model that seemed so ideal to many people up until then. The awareness of the necessity to look out for a new civilizational paradigm has been growing. Hence,

now people in the West as well as in the East come to realize that it is indispensable to have a dialogue of cultures that would make it possible not only to forestall a conflict between civilizations but also to take the human community on to new levels of relations by relying on the wisdom and experience of different nations, primarily, those associated with the history of great civilizations.

All the above considerations bear out the need to reappraise several fundamental tenets in the history of philosophy and the methods of its teaching. First of all, it is high time we renounce the erroneous notion that philosophy has originated only in one place and that Greece alone was its 'cradle.' The great minds of the past used to warn us against unfounded conceit in our attitude to the non-Western cultures. In his letter to Nicolas de Rémond about Chinese philosophy, Georg W. Leibniz (1968: 41) pointed out: 'It would be too unwise and presumptuous on our part . . . [who] have just emerged from the barbarian state, to allow ourselves to denounce such an ancient teaching just because it, to our mind, fails to conform immediately to our habitual scholastic concepts.' 'Discovering the traces of truth in the ancients we can extract gold from the sediment, a diamond from its primary rocks, light from darkness; and this will really be certain perennial philosophy (*perennis quaedam Philosophia*)' (Leibniz, 1977: 69).

It is high time we recognize it as a norm that '[p]hilosophy has come into the world not once but a number of times and in various places' (Solomon & Higgins, 1996: 5–6). However, it calls for revising our customary understanding of philosophy *per se*.

It is common knowledge that throughout the history of Western thought the concept of 'philosophy' has never been unequivocal. It had the diverse meanings depending on the times, specific fields of knowledge that appeared to be the most essential to a certain thinker and, lastly, subjective personality traits. Nevertheless, it is presumed to be justifiable to give a generalized definition of philosophy as a rational, consistent and systematic reflection on problems that seem to be of vital social importance (*The New Encyclopedia Britannica. Macropedia*, 1973–1974: 248).

The focus on rationality as the fundamental characteristic of philosophizing is generally accepted among Russian philosophers as well, which is evident, in particular, from its definition in the *New Philosophical Encyclopedia*: 'Philosophy is a specific type of rational cognition within which cardinal problems of human existence are systematically formulated and discussed. Philosophy endeavors to provide by rational means a maximally generalized picture of the world and man's place in it' (Stepin, 2001: 195).

In line with such a definition of philosophy, it seems allowable to make judgments 'excommunicating' Oriental cultures from philosophy and alleging in the vein of Diogenes Laertius that 'philosophy . . . began with the Greeks' or like Immanuel Kant asserting that 'Philosophy is not to be found in the whole Orient.'

It should be admitted in all fairness that the concept of 'philosophy' in its Western understanding is missing in non-Western cultures. For example, in India, there has never been a single and authentic equivalent to this concept. Some scholars are inclined to believe that *anviksiki* (literally meaning 'investigation') comes closest to the concept of philosophy. The term *anviksiki* in *Arthasastra* (circa I–II century AD) denotes: (1) generic unity of several philosophical trends; (2) investigation by means

of argumentation; and (3) a kind of meta-science studying the subjects of discrete 'particular' disciplines of knowledge, namely, the Vedas, economics and politics (I.2).

All the more often preference is given to the concept of *darsana* (literally meaning 'vision'). Even in the Samkhya-Yoga *darsana*, which is called 'the barometer of rationality in classical Indian culture' (Shekhawat, 1992: 132), the rational character of cognition is believed to have limited capacities. In the debates and discussions that unfolded between the various schools of thought in India on the problems of knowledge, there arose a special discipline – *pramanavada*, a teaching on the instruments of authentic cognition. In present-day studies the term *pramanavada* is often used as the Sanskrit analogy to the European terms 'epistemology' and 'gnoseology.'

Pramana is an instrument used to measure, check, verify, certify and, therefore, get 'true' knowledge – *pramaa*. The most significant pramanas include *pratyaksa* or perception, *anumana* or logical inference from immediate perception and *sabda*, or knowledge acquired through verbal evidence. The first two need no special commentary because their meaning is quite obvious: the matter involves universally acknowledged sources of knowledge such as perception and deduction. According to the Yoga-Sutras of Patañjali, the basic text of Samkhya-Yoga, 'Perception is that source of valid ideas when the mind-stuff has been affected by some external thing through the channel of the sense-organs. This fluctuation is directly related to that [object], but, whereas the intended object . . . consists of a genus and particular . . . Inference is [that] fluctuation [of the mind-stuff] which refers to that relation which is present in things belonging to the same class as the subject-of-the-illusion . . . and absent from things belonging to classes different [from that of the subject-of-the-illusion]; and it is chiefly concerned with the ascertainment of the genus' (Patañjali, 1966: 20).

Sabda-pramana provides knowledge of that which is inaccessible to observation and deductions and related to extralogical realities. It presents evidence taken for granted. Samkhya proclaims that there are three available sources of *sabda-pramana*. These are: first and foremost, the eternal and imperishable Vedas, a kind of Holy Writ and Scripture for Hindus; second, the tradition of *smṛti* (literally 'remembered', i.e. a cherished tradition handed down from memory), embracing *Dharmasastras*, *Itihasas* and *Puranas*; and third, the spiritual experience of the 'perfect,' 'competent' and 'passionless.'

Some scholars point out that *sabda-pramana* in classical Samkhya-Yoga reveals 'the normative Hindu approach to the matter, as well as the models of thinking and antinomy inherent in the Hindu consciousness. At issue is the notorious contradiction between a striving for "orthodoxy" and an apparent relativism and pragmatism in their confessional affiliations. On the one hand, the Samkhya followers emphasize the prime authority of *śruti* and *smṛti*, while on the other hand, they acknowledge the authority of any spiritual experience gathered by those who, in their opinion, are "passionless" and endowed with "supernatural" faculties' (Shokhin, 1988: 180).

One resorts to *sabda-pramana* as a source of true knowledge when observation and reflection prove fruitless. The objects of *sabda-pramana* are supersensible and logically undeducible. The most reliable way to their cognition is 'inward knowledge' that makes a distinction between *gunas* and *Purusa*, transforms one's consciousness and leads one to a state of utter 'estrangement.'

Each Indian school subjected to criticism the understanding of *pramanas* by other schools. For instance, the Carvakas acknowledged only *pratyaksa*, the Vaisesikas and Buddhists, *pratyaksa* and *anumana*; the Samkhya followers, *pratyaksa*, *anumana* and *sabda*; the Nyaya, the latter three plus *upamana* (comparison); the Mimamsa of Prabhakara, the latter four plus *arthapatti* ('hypothetical assumption'); and the Mimamsa of Kumarila and the Vedanta, the latter five plus *abhava* ('absence'). In Jainism *pramanas* were divided into direct (*pratyaksa*, various forms of intuition) and mediated (*paroksa*, a verbalized sensory perception, memory, inference, and *agama*, a hallowed tradition).

Indian realistic ontology recognized the existence of the external world and hence the possibility of its cognition by individuals. 'There are neither innate ideas nor a priori principles. Everything comes into the cognizing individual from without . . . Cognition apprehends external reality, reality itself' (Shokhin, 1988: 77–78). But some Indian thinkers criticized all the *pramanas*, e.g. the Advaita followers stressed that *pramanas* were workable only in the sphere of empirical experience (*vyavaharika*), i.e. illusory reality from the viewpoint of Advaita.

The ontological tenets of Buddhism also deny the actuality of both Being and Non-being. According to Nagarjuna, Buddha had taught to avoid extremes in theories of origin and destruction. Therefore, *nirvana* is logically unrelated to either Being or Non-being. If *nirvana* were two-fold, Being and Non-being, salvation would have also involved Being and Non-being. But this is logically impossible. It is in the cessation of all perceptions and diverse mental manifestations (*prapañca*) wherein the divine blessing lies. Hence we have Buddha's refusal to discuss or answer any metaphysical questions, preferring to keep silent on matters such as these. Paradoxically enough, despite all the aforesaid, the Buddhists turned out to be the most accomplished masters of dialectical logic, who employed its methods in polemics with their ideological opponents in India and, subsequently, in other regions where Buddhism came to enjoy wide currency.

As for the Chinese model of reflection, it was primarily determined by a peculiar perception of the world, viewing the universe as a self-sufficient, self-regulated dynamic system with an immanent and intrinsic order. Order *li* is immanent in its relation to a world governed by its own basic, self-organizing and self-regulating principles. Therefore, one's mission is to apprehend the interdependence and correlative nature of all the 'ten thousand things.' Hence there is singularity of the Chinese model of thinking and its peculiar mental strategy.

The correlative, associative thinking of the Chinese called for using a special methodology, namely, the symbolization of spatial and numerical structures, termed in Chinese *xiang shu zhi xue*, or 'the teaching on symbols and numbers,' defined by some sinologists as numerology. The European analogy to Chinese numerology was the Pythagorean-Platonic arhythmology, or structurology, which was also based on the categories of symbols, or images, and numbers. In contrast to Europe, however, where the Aristotelian-Stoic logic prevailed over Pythagorean-Platonic numerology, in China it was the reverse insofar as Confucian-Taoist numerology overpowered the embryonic logical methods used by the Mohists, the 'School of Names' (*ming tzu*), and partly by the Legists (*fa tzu*) and Chuang Tzu.

Despite its extreme formalization, numerology is nonetheless socially oriented.

Some scholars point out that the singular nature of major numerological classifications is determined by the human factor. The basic numbers in the case of the Chinese are 2, 3 and 5: the 'dual images' of *yin* and *yang* as the feminine and masculine principles; a system of 'three movers'—Heaven, the Human Being and Earth, with the human being in the center; and the five elements of 'water, fire, wood, metal, and land,' all of them in their primordial essence being the fundamental categories of objects involved in human economic and labor activity (Kobzev, 1994: 34). It is noteworthy that the same three numbers made the basis of computation practices in ancient Babylonia.

The Chinese associate symbols and numbers with the quite real pneuma (*chi*) and objective things (*wu*). This is evident, among other things, from the treatise *Zuozhuan* (*Commentary of Zuo to the Spring and Autumn Annals*, v-iv centuries B.C.): 'The birth of things gives rise to symbols; these are followed by reproduction; the latter give rise to numbers.' Thus, virtually the entire cosmological system is presented in numerical form.

Numerology, which deals with symbols and numbers, could conceivably become a mediating link in the transition from empiricism to logic. But this potential was never realized in China. One plausible explanation for this fact is the lack of developed forms of idealism in classical Chinese philosophy, which instead has no notion of a conceptual sphere or special kind of reality governed by its own logical laws.

The predominant cultural disposition in China views the 'ten thousand things' as a constantly interacting diversity oriented toward the maintenance of a harmonious unity. The idea of unity is symbolized, in particular, by the principle of *he*. It is interesting that, under the obvious influence of Marxian precepts that establish the law-governed validity of the dialectical conflict of opposites, many Chinese and Russian sinologists interpret *he* as the principle of attaining unity through confrontation (Perelomov, 1993: 34–37). The untenability of such an interpretation, however, is quite apparent even for those trying to 'get the gist' of classical Chinese texts in translation. As an illustration, let us consider one among numerous examples by turning to the record of a conversation between the Duke of Qi (547–490 B.C.) and one of his advisers. Explicating the essence of the principle *he* to the Duke, the advisor says: 'The unity underlying *he* may be compared to cooking a dish. Having water, fire, vinegar, pickled vegetables, salt, and plums near at hand, one starts cooking fish. Having boiled water on the firewood and mixing all the components, the cook adds, according to his taste, what is missing and takes away what is superfluous, thus attaining the *he* unity.' (Perelomov, 1993: 37; cf. *Zuozhuan*, 20th year of the reign of Duke Zhao).

《左传\昭公20年》：

‘公曰：和与同异乎？对曰：异。和如羹焉，……宰夫和之，齐之以味，济其不及，以泄其过。……君臣亦然，君所谓可，而有否焉，臣献其否，以成其可；君所谓否，而有可焉，臣献其可，以去其否。是以政平而不干……若以水济，谁能食之？若琴瑟之专一，谁能听之？同之不可也如是’

Therefore, unity is to be achieved not through a clash of opposites, resolved or 'removed' eventually by synthesis in a new formation, but rather through harmoni-

zation, equilibrium among all available elements of a multiplicity. Hence the peculiarly Chinese attitude toward any activity and the mind-set associated with it: to strive for harmony by cherishing the traditions of the ancients who once used to live in harmony with the world.

The above peculiarity manifests itself in the special terms used in the Chinese language for defining cognitive activity. Three are the most essential: *hsieh* (learning), *ssu* (contemplation, reflection) and *chih* (to know, to anticipate, to realize).

The first means 'learning' not in the customary European sense of obtaining knowledge through reflection, but in the traditionally Confucian treatment of knowledge as the assimilation of a tradition and the resultant possession of relevant information. The term *ssu* means contemplation and reflection in some specific sense of the word, that is, as the assimilation of a tradition and its reapplication in the present-day life. Lastly, *chih* is also associated with tradition, implying wisdom and the knowledge that facilitates compliance with the sagacity of the ancients, i.e. tradition. In short, all three terms imply orientation not toward the cognition of what was previously unknown, not innovation, but rather stress one's loyalty and adherence to the established world order. The most eloquent words on this matter belong to the Great Teacher himself: 'Reviewing the old as a means of realizing the new . . .' and 'I do not forge new paths; with confidence I cherish the ancients' (Ames and Rosemont, 1998: 111).

In contrast to the Western tradition, which associates philosophy with perpetual skepticism and an unflagging search for the truth, the Chinese traditionally admonish doubt and emphasize instead its futility and, therefore, harmfulness. As Confucius instructs, 'Listen broadly, set aside what you are unsure of' and 'There are probably those who can initiate new paths while still not understanding them, but I am not one of them. I learned much, select out of it what works well, and then follow it. I observe much, and remember it. This is a lower level of wisdom' (Ames and Rosemont, 1998: 78, 117). One might say that in contrast to the Western-European proclivity 'to query and to reason,' the Chinese disposition is one 'to learn first and foremost' (Ames and Rosemont, 1998: 79). As Confucius said, 'Repeatedly apply what you have learned' (Ames and Rosemont, 1998: 71). Hence the goal of knowledge turns out to lie in cognizing not the truth but what is right and proper, that is, order. Right thinking implies the ability to classify. According to Sima Qian, the founder of Chinese historical science, 'it is through classification that one cognizes.'

Even though the focus above was placed on India and China, the other non-Western cultures also provide evidence of the rational character of reflection. Any human being as *Homo sapiens* is endowed with a certain measure of rationality and, therefore, rationality is an integral part of any national culture. The rational type of thinking may be ascertained wherever use is made of logical concepts. In this sense not only philosophical or scientific theories but also theological conceptions and mystical theosophical constructs are rational to some extent.

Indeed, rationality as such is not identical to rationalism. The latter concerns the type of thinking oriented exclusively toward reasoning as the only authentic and boundless source of knowledge. Consistent rationalism lays reason into the foundation not only of epistemology but also ontology when Reason acts as the Divine Absolute, as the beginning of being and the universe. In contrast to rationality char-

acterizing the thinking of all civilized nations, rationalism is certainly not universal but rather an exclusive phenomenon associated with quite definite times and levels of cultural development.

The stereotyped view of Western thinking as rationalistic is unmistakably prompted by the status and trends in the development of philosophical thought in Europe in new and modern times. But it is definitely irrelevant, for instance, with regard to European medieval philosophy. The categorical assessment of the Eastern type of thinking as absolutely irrational is explained mainly by comparing Oriental philosophy in its present-day state with modern Western philosophy. Having failed to locate the Cartesian tendency in the East, some scholars are inclined to conclude that rationality is in principle alien to the 'Oriental' mentality. The problem, however, is not in the lack of rationalistic potentials as such but in the fact that in the East these potentials have not been realized to the same extent as in the West.

The nonexistence of uniformity in the methods of cognition cannot testify to the lacking phenomenon of 'philosophy' outside the Western world. It would be more correct to admit that in the East you witness adherence to the broad interpretation of 'philosophy,' etymologically much nearer to this concept (as 'love of wisdom'), presuming the existence, along with rationality and often greater authority, of other sources of cognition. And in this sense one can quite confidently say that philosophy had not a single but several 'cradles' because it came into the world not once but a number of times and in various places.

Of course, it is dangerous to draw analogies because of their conventionality and inaccuracy. Nevertheless, since it is common to apply the word 'cradle' to the birth of philosophy, let me extend this analogy. No 'birth' proceeds in the same way as another: the 'birth pangs' of each 'child' have their own distinctive features.

The genesis of philosophy in India involved an opposition to Brahmanism, which had assimilated tribal creeds and customs and was based on the Vedic rituals. The brahmins, members of the highest caste, were regarded as the true connoisseurs and interpreters of Vedic wisdom. The rupture of tribal relationships, however, and a crisis in patrimonial morality shook the unwavering authority of the brahmin priests and the unfaltering belief in the rites they cultivated. The preachers who led an ascetic life became the first 'heretics' who challenged the omnipotence of the brahmins and the ritualistic routines. These early opponents were called *sramanas*, 'selfless zealots.' Their efforts were not confined to leading an ascetic life but also involved intellectual quests directed at appraising the precepts of the Vedic religion.

The sixth and fifth centuries B.C. saw the emergence of diverse trends opposed to Brahmanism, among them *Ajivika* (a naturalistic-fatalistic teaching), Jainism and Buddhism. The *sramana* schools gave rise to the main philosophical systems that subsequently gained ground in India. The first evidence of an independent systematic exposition of Indian philosophy can be found in *sutras* (pithy statements and aphorisms, dating from the seventh–sixth centuries B.C. through the first centuries A.D.). Further developments in Indian philosophy were virtually unfolding within the framework of the *darsana*, embracing six classical systems (Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta), all oriented toward the authority of the Vedas; there were also unorthodox trends such as the materialistic Carvaka, or Lokayata, Jainism and Buddhism.

In China ascetic vagrant sages, appearing as the first 'opposition members' during the Warring States period, paved the way for a 'golden age' of Chinese philosophy. Although philosophical ideas can occasionally be discovered in the *Shijing* (*Book of Songs*) and *Yijing* (*The Book of Changes*), philosophical schools took shape in approximately the sixth century B.C. Moreover, after having developed anonymously for a long period of time, philosophy began from that time to be associated with the names of Confucius, the first Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu, the Taoist sage, et al.

In contrast to Greece, the transition from mythology to philosophy in India and China was based on an explicit and extremely deep-rooted ritual structure.

In India, sacrifice is the core of ritual. The Vedas, Aranyakas, and Upanisads, i.e., the texts that gave rise to later theoretical constructs, had been oriented not so much toward cognition as toward eschatological practice, first and foremost. The authors of these texts were primarily interested in the path of attaining *moksa* rather than in proving or disproving its actual existence. Only by achieving *moksa* could one finally be liberated from *sanasara*, that is, from an endless course of new births. They were seeking *moksa* through a special kind of ritualistic knowledge, one characterized by prolonged and active remembrance of a certain image (mythologeme) used to accompany certain external, verbal and/or bodily ritualistic acts. The physical rituals were gradually replaced by strictly verbal and mental ones.

Paramount importance attached to ritual in the most diverse spheres of Chinese life proved decisive in the rise of philosophy. In contrast to India where, as mentioned above, rituals had practical eschatological implications, in China rituals were oriented toward keeping order in the phenomenal world and adjusting it to the world of non-manifested things. Ritual was designed to achieve harmonious relations between heaven and nature, earth and society, and among human beings, thus revealing its explicitly social orientations.

The unshakable authority of ritual and its decisive role in the genesis of Indian and Chinese philosophical thought predetermined the rigorous confines of philosophical discourse. In contrast to mythology that, with its characteristic flight of human fancy, provided for a multifarious perception of the world and raised the possibility of employing more diversified forms of discussion and theoretical methods, a rigid system of rituals restricted such diversity, binding reflection firmly to tradition.

The above does not necessarily imply that deviation from tradition, divergence of opinion and varied reflexive trends were out of the question in the East. Yet, as the history of spiritual culture in the regions under consideration testifies, the normative style of thinking prevailed there up to the late eighteenth century.

As philosophy was brought up in various 'cradles,' it had inevitably to bear out, along with common generic traits, its specific 'patrimonial' characteristics, in other words, those revealing its own culture. In its turn, each culture is built up around a certain 'frame' made up of universal conceptual constituents. The history of philosophy will remain incomplete and one-sided (with the 'Western bias') until it ignores the fundamental universals of other cultures, such as Brahman and Atman, karma, *moksa*, *samsara*, *nirvana*, etc. in India, or Tao, te, yin-yang, li, zheng, hsing and so on in China.

Even the universals and values recognized as common to all mankind (e.g. in

ontology these are the Absolute, being, time, space, or in ethics, divine blessing, justice, goodness, duty) are frequently imbued with basically different substance depending on the context of relevant culture. This is recurrently and convincingly demonstrated by comparatists.

The above is quite sufficient to realize that this kind of reappraisal should entail revision of the entire system of teaching the history of philosophy. Here at least two approaches are possible. The first is to include into the university curriculum in the history of philosophy, in addition to Western philosophy, as a minimum, the basic 'Oriental' philosophical traditions (Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Arab-Muslim). The second approach, more advisable to my mind, is to include the 'cross-cultural', i.e. non-Western, material into the courses in all the fields of philosophical knowledge, be it ontology, epistemology, logics, philosophical anthropology, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy, the philosophy of science and technology, etc. The latter approach, however, is not currently feasible. It will take much time and effort to prepare competent teachers who would understand the culture of peoples living outside the Western world.

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