

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

*A Research Project of
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Mahāmahopādhyāy Kālipada Tarkāchārya

Long ago a group of Brahmins migrated to Bengal from Kānyakubja and settled down in different places of Bengal. One of them started living in a village called Ūnāshiyā, now in Faridpur district of Bangladesh. Gradually this place gave birth to several well-known scholars including the famous Madhusūdan Saraswatī. In this lineage we have Mahāmahopādhyāy Kālipada Tarkāchārya. Kālipada Tarkāchārya was born in the year of 1888. Kālipada is the eldest son of Haridās Tarkatīrtha and Sītāsundarī Devī. By the grace of goddess Kālī the parents gave birth to this son and so he was called Kālipada. At the beginning Kālipada was brought to Calcutta by his father to receive education, but he had to discontinue partly because of his illness and partly because he did not like the English education system. After coming back to his native village he received his lessons on Sanskrit grammar from his teacher Kālikānta Siromaṇi. In his early age he already had the ability to compose poems in Sanskrit and he impressed people by his oratory skill in Sanskrit.

After some time, Kālipada returned to Calcutta, successfully completed his Madhya examination in Vyākaraṇa and Kāvya under the tutelage of Bhubaneśwar Vidyālaṃkāra. Then he moved to Mulajore Sanskrit College, studied Kāvya and Alāṃkāra under the supervision of Haripada Vidyāratna. He topped the upādhi examination. He had already started composing original Sanskrit works like 'Vidarbha Samāgamam.' Then Kalipada was initiated into Nyāya by Śibchandra Sārvabhaum, principal of Mulajore Sanskrit College and was a topper in the 'Tarka Tīrtha' examination. Sārvabhaum, being impressed by Kālipada's scholarship in Nyaya, offered him the title 'Tarkacharya'. This is indeed a great accomplishment. By this time he had several works to his credit like 'Anuvādanavodayah', 'Kāvya-chintā', 'Sāṃkhyakārikā', 'Gaudapāda-bhaṣyatīkā', 'Sāṃkhyasāratīkā', 'Sāramañjarī-tīkā' etc.

After completing his studies Kālipada joined Sanskrit Sahitya Parishat as a Sanskrit teacher. He was also made the sub-editor of Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā where he published several of his original compositions that stand as a witness to his creative genius. Kālipada joined Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta as an Assistant Professor in Nyaya in 1931 where later he became head of the Department of Nyāya. The British Government conferred the title 'Mahāmahopādhyāy' on him in the year 1941 and the Government of India honoured him with a Certificate of Honour that was awarded to

him by Dr. Rājendra Prasād, Hon'ble President of India in 1961. Burdwan University conferred Doctorate (Honoris Causa) on him in the year 1972. Kālipada left his mortal body on 27th July, 1972.

The following is a list of his major works.

Drama

1. Naladamayantiyam
2. Prasānta ratnākaram,
3. Māṇavaka gauravam,
4. Syamantakoddhāra Vyāyogah,
5. Mahānātakam (incomplete).

Poetry

1. Satyānubhāvam,
2. Yogibhaktacaritam,
3. Mandākrāntāvṛttam,
4. Ālokatimiravairam,
5. Gītānjaliḥ (translation of Rabindranath's Gītānjali),
6. Ashutoṣāvadānam. Other than these, many of his Sanskrit translations of poems of Tagore, Madhūsudan Dutta etc. have been printed in several journals. Kālipada has also translated Śrīmad Bhāgavad Gītā and Śrī Śrī Chandi into Bengali Blank Verse form.

Nyāya

1. Jativādhakavicārah (not found)
2. Akṣapādadarśanam
3. Navyanyāyabhāsāpradīp
4. Vaiśeṣikadarśane Praśastapādabhāṣyam
5. Bhāsarātnam of Kaṇāda Tarkavāgiśa
6. Tattvacintāmaṇidīdhitiprakāśa by Bhavānanda Siddhāntavāgiśa
7. Navamuktivāda by Gadādhara Bhattāchārya
8. Muktivādavicārah by Harirāma Tarkavāgiśa
9. Sāramañjari by Jayakṛṣṇa Tarkāchārya
10. Pravacanatrāyī (not found).

Since we are dealing with the philosophical contribution of the pandits, the following description is confined to the philosophical works of Kālipada Tarkāchārya.

Akṣapādadarśanam (Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1975)

This book explains how the knowledge of tattva (essence of things) leads one to liberation (niḥśreyas). Knowledge of tattva stands for knowledge of the sixteen prameyas like ātmā etc. Knowledge of prameya depends on knowledge of pramāṇas. So there is also a discussion of pramāṇas accepted by Nyāya viz. pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna and śabda. Although this discourse is mainly concerned with the path that leads to liberation, this is called Nyāya, for after all any study of inference aimed at convincing others (parārthanumāna) is called Nyāya and in this sense Nyāya is regarded as the basis of all disciplines and actions. Following the steps of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana when one gains the knowledge of the ātmā, one attains niḥśreyas.

***Navyanyāyabhāṣāpradīp* (Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1973)**

This book is a Bengali translation of *Brief Notes on The Modern Nyāya System of Philosophy and its Technical terms* authored by Mahāmahopādhyāya Mahesh Chandra Nyāyaratna Tarkāchārya adds his own commentary in Bengali called 'Suprabhā'. The book starts with a description of what we call property (dharma) of a padārtha. Dharma is divided into jāti and upādhi. Upādhi could be of two types viz. sakhanda and akhanda. Tarkāchārya refers to Jagadīśa's definition of sambandha and distinguishes sambandha into saksat and purampara. Sambandha could be vṛttiniyāmaka and vṛttianiyāmaka. Tarkāchārya also talks about a sambandha called 'paryāpta' to denote the object that is the substratum of 'twoness' (dvitva) but by itself is not considered two things. In this context, Tarkāchārya deliberates on viśayatā and viśayitā as well as adhikaranatā. There is a detail explanation of pratiyogī and anuyogī of sambandha and also abhāva.

Vaiśeṣīkadarsāne Praśastapādabhāṣyam

(Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat, Kolkata, year not mentioned)

Kālipada Tarkāchārya has edited the chapter on Dravya of Praśastapādabhāṣya along with his own commentary on it called 'Yuktidipika'. In this commentary of Tarkacharya we find a detail deliberation on the nature of knowledge of tattva, division of dravya, division of guṇa, division of karma, division of sāmānya, division of viśeṣa, division of samavāya. The topology of these various categories accepted by Vaiśeṣika philosophers have been explained and justified. In the latter half of the book Tarkāchārya discusses other categories like pṛthivī, jala, tejas, vāyu, ākāśa, dik, ātmā, manas etc. The interesting part of this book consists in a detail explanation of the sādharmya and vaidharmya of different padārthas accepted by Vaiśeṣika philosophers. There is also an interesting discussion on kūla and its nature.

Bhāṣaratnam of Kaṇāda Tarkāvagīśa

(Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat, Kolkata, 1936)

Bhāṣaratnam is an ancient work belonging to Nyāya school. Kālipada Tarkāchārya edited this work along with a commentary of his own. In his commentary Tarkāchārya devotes several chapters on the fundamental categories accepted in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system. The book has got lengthy analysis on the classification of categories and then goes on analysing pṛthivī, jala, tejas, vāyu, ākāśa, ātmā, manas, paramātmā, guṇa, rūpa, karma, sāmānya, viśeṣa, samavāya, sadharmya and vaidharmya, abhāva, pramāṇa, karaṇa. Tarkāchārya also takes up the

pramānas accepted in Nyāya for discussion. He starts with the nature of knowledge in general and then moves on to all the four pramānas viz. pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna and śabda. In the chapter on śabda, interesting analysis of ākāṁkṣa and śakti could be found.

***Tattvacintāmaṇidīdhitiprakāśa* by Bhāvananda Siddhāntavāgīśa
(The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 1963)**

Kālipada Tarkāchārya edited this work of Navya-Nyāya with great acumen. This volume extends from tarkaprakaraṇa to pakṣatāprakaraṇa of the original work *Tattvacintāmaṇi*. The book starts with a detail analysis of tarka and then moves on to the discourse on vyāpti. There is an illuminating discussion on sāmānya lakṣaṇa, a concept that generated lot of debate among the Navya-Nyāya philosophers themselves. The book ends with a thought provoking analysis of upādhi followed by pakṣatā.

***Navamuktivāda* by Gadādhara Bhattāchārya
(Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat, Kolkata, year not mentioned)**

Kālipada Tarkāchārya edited *Navamuktivāda* along with a commentary of Śivarāma. Tarkāchārya has added his own explanation of the original text in Bengali. The main theme of the work centres round the idea of liberation. The author distinguishes two kinds of necessity, viz. 1. Intrinsic and 2. Secondary. In reply to the question what is the necessity of driving towards liberation? Tarkāchārya, following the spirit of the original text, argues that the nature of the necessity of attaining liberation is an intrinsic one. One of the significant aspects of this work that one comes across is a stimulating discussion of the various ideas of liberation that have been defended by very many philosophers like Patañjali, Kapila, Bhartṛhari etc.

***Muktivādavacārah* by Harirāma Tarkāvāgīśa
(Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1959)**

Muktivādavacārah undertakes an analysis of the idea of liberation and arrives at a startling conclusion. Kālipada Tarkāchārya edited this book and has written a commentary on it called Muktilakṣmīh. The main question that the book addresses is that if by liberation we understand a permanent cessation of suffering, then 'permanent cessation' meaning absolute negation (atyantābhāvā), liberation would turn out to be eternal simply because absolute negation is eternal. And then nobody would engage in any attempt to attain liberation for it is already there, being eternal. The answer that Harirāma gives and Tarkāchārya elaborates on is that 'permanent cessation' is better understood as post-negation

(dhvaṃsābhāva). And this post-negation is not an eternal entity, but a temporal product. This book along with Tarkāchārya's commentary assumes great significance in view of the fact that this novel interpretation of liberation is quite different from the traditional understanding of liberation as one can find in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. In fact the book goes on to prove that liberation is the permanent cessation of sin and not suffering, as usually held.

***Sāramañjari* by Jayakṛṣṇa Tarkāchārya
(Sadash, Kolkata, 1405 beng.)**

Sāramañjari (the complete name being *Śabdārthasāramañjarī*) is a work on vyākaraṇa, encasing many Nyāya techniques. Jayakṛṣṇa produced this work towards the end of eighteenth century. Tarkāchārya wrote a commentary on this *Sāramañjarī*. Tarkāchārya at many places of his commentary uses the Nyāya methodology while defending the vyākaraṇa standpoint. This only shows the academic catholicity that Tarkāchārya and people of his genre had. Many of the salient topics of vyākaraṇa have been taken up here like all the case endings and different grammatical categories like suffix, prefix etc. And of course there is an illuminating discussion on the word-object relation and the nature of testimonial knowledge.

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