

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

*A Research Project of
Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath
Sanskrita Siksha Samsad*

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Pandit Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya

Pandit Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya was born on 27th October, 1900 (11 Kartik, 1307 beng.) in a village called Āmtali in the district of Faridpur, Bangladesh. He was born in the family of Pāścātya Brahmin. His father was Śibdās Smṛtibhūsan and his mother was Umātārā Devī. Madhusūdan's grand father (from his mother's side) was a famous Naiyāvika of Kotālīpārā known as Śasīkumār Śiroratna.

Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya received his early training from his father. In his native village he got himself admitted in Rabindra College where he studied Vyākaraṇa. Afterward he came to Calcutta to study Nyāya. He received his Navya-Nyāya lessons from Manmathanāth Tarkatīrtha, a resident of Bhattapallī. Then he got admission at Mulajore Sanskrit College. Here he stood first in the Madhya and upadhi examination in Nyāya. Afterward he went to Kāshi to study Nyāya in greater detail. He met Bāmācharan Nyāyāchārya there and had lessons on Nyāya from him. There he got the on title 'Nyāyāchārya. (Here he got the title 'Nyayacharya').

Pandit Nyāyāchārya received his training from Śibdās Smṛtibhūsan, Niśīkānta Tarkatīrtha and Tārānāth Nyāyātarkatīrtha.

Pandit Nyāyāchārya taught in Kāshi and then he joined Bālānanda Sanskrit College in 1945, Deoghar. Later he moved to Navadvipa Government Sanskrit College, before joining Sanskrit College, Calcutta in 1956. After retiring from Sanskrit College, Calcutta, in 1969, he stayed back as a Mahācharya (Distinguished Professor).

Pandit Nyāyāchārya led a simple life wearing simple traditional clothes like dhoti and angavastrā. He was extremely caring to his students. He enjoyed comparing the philosophical ideas of different philosophical schools. His valuable advice to Nyāya students was to raise new and new questions and possible oppositions and then to refute each of them. In this way Nyāya philosophy could be developed further.

Pandit Nyāyāchārya breathed his last on 26th August, 1985.

Some of his well-known students are Bimal Kriṣṇa Matilal, Gopikā Mohan Bhattāchārya, Shyāmāpada Tarkatīrtha, Jaśodādulāl Tarkatīrtha, Pradyot Mukhopādhyāy, Minati Kar, Sabitā Miśra, Sukharanjan Sāhā, Mrināl Kānti Gangopādhyāy, Brahmachāriṇī Belā Devī etc.

Impressed by his scholarship he was awarded the title 'Tarkālamkāra' and a gold medal. Pandit Nyāyāchārya was conferred National Award by Hon'ble President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddi on 20th August, 1982.

The following is a brief description of his major works in Philosophy so far available.

Sabdasaktiprakāśikā by Jagadīśa Tarkālamkāra

(Sanskrit College, Calcutta, Vol. 1, 1980; Vol. 2, 1981; Vol. 3, 1985)

Sabdasaktiprakāśikā is one of the seminal works on Navya-Nyāya philosophy of language authored by Jagadīśa Tarkālamkāra. Pandit Gadādhara Nyāyāchārya edited this book and translated it into Bengali with extensive explanation. This book has come out in three volumes. This book deals with the nature of testimonial knowledge (śābdabodha) in great details from a Navya-Nyāya perspective. After listening to a sentence, when one gets the knowledge of one object, corresponding to one word, as related to another object corresponding to another word, what one acquires is what can be called 'knowledge from words'. The detail mechanism of knowing from words has been described. Nyāyāchārya has also addressed the question whether this knowing from words could be reduced to other kinds of knowledge like perceptual or inferential etc. A whole bunch of grammatical notions like prefix, suffix, case-ending etc. have been taken up for critical analysis. One interesting point made by Nyāyāchārya is that in this work sometimes the Nyāya view is defended and sometimes the Grammarian view is defended. This book contains a detail presentation and refutation of Prabhākara's Kubjaśaktivāda, sometimes also known as Anvitābhīdhānavāda. And in this context Nyāyāchārya refers to the views of Gadādhara Bhattāchārya who opposes Anvitābhīdhānavāda.

Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam by Raghunātha Śiromaṇi (Sanskrit College, Kolkata, 1976)

Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam is a unique work in Nyāya system, for here Raghunātha opposes many of the views that have been traditionally accepted by Nyāya philosophers. Raghunātha accepts śakti, svatva, phala as independent categories. On the other hand, Raghunātha opposes the traditional view that dik, kāla and ākāśa are separate categories. He also refutes paramāṇuvāda, a view that is generally accepted by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers. Nyāyāchārya translates the original text of Raghunātha into Bengali and has added elaborate

explanatory notes. Raghunātha goes against his tradition by claiming that sattā cannot be regarded as a jāti. According to Nyāyāchārya, Raghunātha's *Padārthatattvanirūpaṇam* is unique in the sense that here Raghunātha breaks away from the traditional Nyāya ontology and defends in a brilliant way his original ideas. This is a beautiful example of internal criticism.

Tattvacintāmaṇimayūkha

(anumāna khanda till sāmānyalakṣaṇa)

by Jagadīśa Tarkalāmkara (Sanskrit Sāhitya Parishat, Kolkata, 1980)

Tattvacintāmaṇimayūkha is one of the most important works in Navya-Nyāya school. Pandit Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya has supplemented detail explanatory notes to Jagadīśa's commentary. This book is edited by Gaurīnāth Shāstrī. The main theme of the book is vyāpti, a topic that is close to the heart of all the Navya-Naiyāyikas. Some of the main points that have been discussed in the book are: 1. All the possible definitions of vyāpti, 2. Siddhāntalakṣaṇā, 3. Ways of acquiring the knowledge of vyāpti, 4. The nature of Tarka etc.

Pakṣatāprakaraṇam of Tattvacintāmaṇi

(Our Heritage, July-December, 1956; January-June, 1958;
July-December, 1958)

This is a series of articles that Pandit Nyāyāchārya published in the journal *Our Heritage*, a Sanskrit College publication. In this work, Pandit Nyāyāchārya wrote a long commentary called 'Suṣamā'. In this commentary Pandit Nyāyāchārya incorporated a detail discussion on the commentaries of Raghunātha and Jagadīśa that they wrote on the original text *Tattvacintāmaṇi*.

Nyāya-vaiśeṣikasammata - jñānavimarsāh

(Our Heritage, Special Number, 1979)

Pandit Madhusūdan Nyāyāchārya in this article called '*Nyāya-vaiśeṣikasammata jñānavimarsāh*' presents a detail analysis of the Nyāya theory of knowledge. Pandit Nyāyāchārya discusses all the different ways of knowledge accepted by the Naiyāyikas. He, quite interestingly, compares the Nyāya view with the Buddhist theory. An interesting part of this article is that here we find an elaborate discussion on different theories of error like asatkhyātivāda anyathākhyā tivāda and anirvacanīyakhyātivāda etc.

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a leading organisation dedicated to disseminating Vedic knowledge.

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