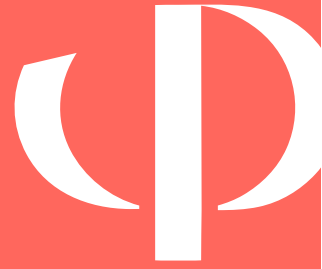


# Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies



SPRING 2017

VOLUME 16 | NUMBER 2

## FROM THE EDITOR

Prasanta S. Bandyopadhyay

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

## ARTICLES

Julianne Chung

*The Upside of Non-Specialist Teaching: A Reply to Cline*

Philip F. Williams

*Fundamentalist Thinking in Chinese Maoist “Thought Remolding”*

Niranjan Saha

*A Brief Note on the Probable Place of Origin of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and the Influence of Caitanyaite Movement on Him*

## CALL FOR PAPERS



APA NEWSLETTER ON

# Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies

---

PRASANTA S. BANDYOPADHYAY, EDITOR

VOLUME 16 | NUMBER 2 | SPRING 2017

---

---

## FROM THE EDITOR

Prasanta S. Bandyopadhyay  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

I have edited three issues of the newsletter so far pivoting around “Indian philosophy and culture.”<sup>1</sup> The rationale for it is that I have more familiarity with India and its cultural dynamics than the rest of Asia. However, the purpose of our newsletters is to be more inclusive in terms of integrating topics and issues that do not always fall under the rubric of typical philosophical scholarship, in addition to not being limited to one specific part of Asia. So it is time to expand our horizons, as philosophical issues developed in both classical and modern China are similarly important for our readers. This issue of the newsletter contains two papers on China and one on India where the names of those countries are used broadly. One of the papers on China deals with issues regarding the teaching of Chinese philosophy by a non-specialist, and the second one concerns philosophical and political problems stemming from the hegemony of the Communist Party in China. The third and final paper is dedicated to a well-known Advaita Vedānta philosopher in seventh century Bengal.

The paper by Julianne Chung discusses several potential advantages associated with non-specialist teaching of Chinese philosophy. Here, she responds to an earlier paper by Erin Cline, published in the spring 2016 edition of the newsletter (for reference, please see Chung’s paper). Cline contends that a recent trend toward having non-experts teach Chinese philosophy has generated two-fold problems: (i) It prevents departments from hiring a specialist in Chinese philosophy; and (ii) It overlooks difficulties involved in imparting Chinese philosophy to students, connected with the fact that specialized training in Chinese philosophy is needed to teach it well. Merely requiring some acquaintance with Chinese philosophy, Cline rejoins, fails to appreciate its complexity, which only a specialist can discern. Agreeing with Cline on most issues, Chung, however, launches a sustained defense of the benefits of non-specialists offering courses that include Chinese philosophy, for any philosophy department in particular and the profession in general. Moreover, she thinks that non-specialists are uniquely poised to provide new insights and novel ways of interpreting Chinese philosophy than otherwise possible. She believes that this is because a non-specialist is able to cross the aisles of two traditions (Western and non-Western) while utilizing their particular specialization(s) to bring to bear on their teaching. She concludes, for this reason, that a non-specialist is able

to contribute significantly both to the teaching of Chinese philosophy to students and to the philosophy profession at large, as the work of specialists and non-specialists might be mutually informative.

Philip Williams looks at contemporary China from the perspective of its political and social development during and after the Mao Zedong Era (1949–1976). He investigates the relevance of Corliss Lamont’s comments on some nagging problems that political doctrines could beget. Lamont, who is a well-known American social/political philosopher with a strong leaning toward left-wing and civil liberties, writes that the worst feature of authoritarianism arises when a political doctrine saps into the vitality of an individual in the name of “Utopian promises.” Borrowing a cue from Lamont, Williams has weaved a narrative of how fundamentalism and orthodoxy have prevailed in modern China. To familiarize the reader with the debilitating influence of Maoist’s ideology, he distinguishes among five features of fundamentalist thought. They are (i) exclusivity of doctrines, (ii) incontestability of doctrine, (iii) salvationist rhetoric, (iv) demands for confession, and, finally, (v) oppositional character. Under the first category, he points out that although there exists some religious freedom in China in terms of what citizens could practice, he aptly argues that they are required to show allegiance to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which totally controls the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), as there exists nothing over and above the authority of the CCP. Although both the Dalai Lama and Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi were long trying to co-exist with the Party-state, the power and influence of these two religious leaders have posed threats for the Beijing powerhouse. In the end, Williams explores a possible reason for the emergence of fundamentalism both in Europe and East Asian countries. His diagnosis for Russia and China is that dictators like Stalin and Mao, although belonging to the opposite ends of a spectrum, are at bottom of the same mold. They wanted to transform the citizens of their respective countries into a New Socialist Human framework where citizens are obliged to forfeit all the attributes of a human individual at the altar of social development.

The third and final paper by Niranjana Saha addresses two historical issues. The first concerns the point of origin of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, and the second one handles the influence of Śrīcāitanya (fifteenth century) movement on him. Sarasvatī is a fifteenth-seventeenth century intellectual icon in Advaita Vedānta, a non-dualistic philosophy advanced first by Śaṅkara in the seventh-eighth century Common Era. Although Sarasvatī’s polemical skill was legendary, he also authored books on devotional theory in Advaita tradition.

---

There are controversies about the place where Sarasvatī both developed and sharpened his analytic acumen. Some scholars have argued that he might have hailed from the South rather than from Bengal. Saha is inclined to believe that it is very likely that Sarasvatī was from Bengal, and that the Bengal Vaiṣṇavism or Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism propagated by Śrīcaitanya and his followers in the later period had a far-reaching bearing on his philosophical consideration and vice versa. However, although Saha is cautious that it is hardly possible to be conclusive regarding the genealogy and birth place for such a scholar when data are skimpy and lack historical underpinning, he tried to draw his conclusion both based on primary (textual) evidence and modern scholarship on the subject.

There is a list of referees who have contributed to the quality of the papers for this issue by their insightful comments. I am indebted to three such referees, Bo Mou, Ethan Mills, and Joseph Yick, for their helpful comments. As always, I am thankful to both Jay Garfield and Erin Shepherd for their constant help and guidance regarding the contents and formatting of the issue, and Philip Williams for some editorial suggestions.

#### NOTES

1. In fact, I co-edited those three issues with Matthew Dasti. It is possible that he may not fully agree with my take on the contents of the previous newsletters as I have stated here. This is why I have not mentioned his name in the body of the introduction.

---

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

### GOAL OF THE NEWSLETTER ON ASIANS AND ASIAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS

The *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* is sponsored by the APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies to report on the philosophical work of Asian and Asian-American philosophy, to report on new work in Asian philosophy, and to provide a forum for the discussion of topics of importance to Asian and Asian-American philosophers and those engaged with Asian and Asian-American philosophy. We encourage a diversity of views and topics within this broad rubric. None of the varied philosophical views provided by authors of newsletter articles necessarily represents the views of any or all the members of the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies, including the editor(s) of the newsletter. The committee and the newsletter are committed to advancing Asian and Asian-American philosophical scholarships and bringing this work and this community to the attention of the larger philosophical community; we do not endorse any particular approach to Asian or Asian-American philosophy.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- 1) **Purpose:** The purpose of the newsletter is to publish information about the status of Asians and Asian

Americans and their philosophy and to make the resources of Asians and Asian-American philosophy available to a larger philosophical community. The newsletter presents discussions of recent developments in Asians and Asian-American philosophy (including, for example, both modern and classical East-Asian philosophy, both modern and classical South Asian philosophy, and Asians and Asian Americans doing philosophy in its various forms), related work in other disciplines, literature overviews, reviews of the discipline as a whole, timely book reviews, and suggestions for both spreading and improving the teaching of Asian philosophy in the current curriculum. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies. One way the dissemination of knowledge of the relevant areas occurs is by holding highly visible, interactive sessions on Asian philosophy at the American Philosophical Association's three annual divisional meetings. Potential authors should follow the submission guidelines below:

- i) Please submit essays electronically to the editor(s). Articles submitted to the newsletter should be limited to ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA submission guidelines.
- ii) All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. Each submission shall be sent to two referees. Reports will be shared with authors. References should follow *The Chicago Manual Style*.
- iii) If the paper is accepted, each author is required to sign a copyright transfer form, available on the APA website, prior to publication.

- 2) **Book reviews and reviewers:** If you have published a book that you consider appropriate for review in the newsletter, please ask your publisher to send the editor(s) a copy of your book. Each call for papers may also include a list of books for possible review. To volunteer to review books (or some specific book), kindly send the editor(s) a CV and letter of interest mentioning your areas of research and teaching.
- 3) **Where to send papers/reviews:** Please send all articles, comments, reviews, suggestions, books, and other communications to the editor(s): Jay L. Garfield ([jgarfield@smith.edu](mailto:jgarfield@smith.edu)) and Prasanta Bandyopadhyay ([psb@montana.edu](mailto:psb@montana.edu)).
- 4) **Submission deadlines:** Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1, and submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.
- 5) **Guest editorship:** It is possible that one or more members of the Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies could act as guest editors for one of the issues of the newsletter depending on their expertise in the field. To produce a high-quality newsletter, one of the co-editors could even come from outside the members of the committee depending on his/her area of research interest.

## ARTICLES

### *The Upside of Non-Specialist Teaching: A Reply to Cline*

Julianne Chung  
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

In “What’s Missing in Philosophy Departments? Specialists in Chinese Philosophy,” (published in the spring 2016 edition of this newsletter) Erin Cline argues that while “it is quite common in the United States for non-specialists to teach a token course in Chinese philosophy (or Asian philosophy) . . . this practice is an often-overlooked obstacle to the greater inclusion of Chinese philosophy in the discipline because it can prevent departments from ever hiring a specialist.” Further, according to Cline, “these departments appear relatively unconcerned about the quality of a course in Chinese philosophy that is taught by someone without graduate-level training in this area,” which “reveals some mistaken and troubling views about Chinese philosophy”: principally, that no formal training is needed to teach Chinese philosophy well. This, however, is patently false, and problematically so. For it betrays an ignorance of the vastness and complexity of the Chinese philosophical landscape and overlooks the fact that many of the relevant texts are not available in translation (along with the consequent need for specialists in Chinese philosophy to learn Classical Chinese—“a literary language that requires formal training and cannot simply be ‘picked up’ by those who are proficient or even fluent in Modern Chinese, any more than one who is proficient in Spanish could ‘pick up’ Latin enough to do serious scholarly work in it”).<sup>1</sup>

I agree wholeheartedly, along with Cline, that philosophy departments should endeavor to hire more specialists—indeed, far more—in Chinese philosophy (as well as in other areas of so-called “non-Western” philosophy, as her arguments can be suitably reformulated so as to apply to them), and that the concerns that she raises are worth attending to very carefully. At the same time, however, I can’t help but wonder whether one of the best ways of promoting the hiring of specialists, as well as an increased appreciation of some of the problems engendered by current practices involving, e.g., the teaching of, and research in, Chinese philosophy, might, in fact, be to encourage and support serious, *non-specialist* teaching interests. In other words, I think that while Cline’s worries are warranted, it may be the case that, all things considered, having non-specialists teach at least some Chinese philosophy—and even to some degree specialized courses in it, depending on the circumstances—might help, rather than hinder, its greater inclusion.

Before I survey some of the reasons for entertaining this possibility, a caveat: while it is commonly remarked that having non-specialists teach at least some Chinese philosophy is apt to make it the case that more philosophers will take an active interest in it, whatever their area of specialization, this is perhaps likely to obtain only if their

initial interest is sufficiently serious. This qualification is arguably crucial, though often overlooked. For, as Cline points out, it is easy to mistake the practice of having interested non-specialists teach courses in Chinese philosophy for an encouraging sign of interest in Chinese philosophy.<sup>2</sup> It could, after all, be a sign of something else: a department’s desire to appear—if only to themselves, or their university’s administration—to be genuinely inclusive, for example (although I say this with some hesitation, the reasons for which will become apparent when case-specific anecdotal evidence is discussed below). Further, given the points that she raises pertaining to the richness and difficulty of Chinese philosophy, Cline is right to note that the practice of having (just) anyone (regardless of whether they have a sufficiently serious interest in Chinese philosophy) teach specialized courses in it reveals a failure to take Chinese philosophy seriously.<sup>3</sup>

But what I am not so sure about, *pace* Cline, is that departments who have non-specialists teaching, e.g., courses in Chinese philosophy will actually be less likely to hire a specialist (or to at least promote the hiring of specialists in some other way—more on that later), or that simply having a non-specialist teach specialized courses in Chinese philosophy reveals a failure to take it seriously. Granted, not just *anyone* with an interest in Chinese philosophy ought to be teaching specialized courses in it. But must that interest rise to the level of being a specialist in order to be serious enough for the purpose? Or might a highly dedicated non-specialist be considered to have a sufficiently serious interest, and might their teaching such courses encourage, rather than discourage, the hiring of specialists?

Here are a few reasons to think that the answer to this last question might well be “yes,” at least in certain cases. First, observe that what counts as a sufficiently serious interest in Chinese philosophy will presumably vary depending on the nature of the course being taught. I take it that the goal of incorporating some Chinese philosophy into, e.g., an introduction to philosophy course is worthwhile, and that one needn’t be a specialist to do so responsibly. Rather, interested non-specialists might begin to approach the task of incorporating Chinese philosophy into their courses by consulting the work of specialists, and teaching it through the lens of such work. If such a practice were to become more widespread, it is reasonable to expect that it would bring with it at least two immediate benefits. The first is that it would result in more non-specialists being better educated about Chinese philosophy (something that they might not have had the opportunity to accomplish, say, in graduate school, given the current dearth of specialists—a factor which Amy Olberding, David Wong, Alexis McLeod, Yong Huang, and Bryan Van Norden also comment on in their contributions to the spring 2016 edition of this newsletter). After all, most professional philosophers’ educations after graduate school aren’t course, or even workshop, based—at least, not at first. Rather, they’re more along the lines of series of (self-) directed studies, done for the purpose of teaching or research. Also, it is often the case that one is not only more motivated to learn something, but is more motivated to and, indeed, learns it better if one has to teach it. (In connection with this, Bryan Van Norden

reminded me of this old joke about one professor asking another whether he had read some particular classic text in the field. The other professor replies, “Read it?! I haven’t even taught it yet!”) Because of this, one of the best ways to encourage non-specialists to learn about Chinese philosophy, and to do it well, is to encourage them to teach it—if in a small way, at least at the outset. And this, in turn, will help to offset some of the educational deficits and their resultant problems that have arisen as a result of the lack of specialists in Asian philosophies currently employed at Ph.D.-granting departments in North America: not only will it remedy ignorance about, e.g., Chinese philosophy to a certain degree, but as a result, it will naturally remedy apathy (at best) and dismissiveness (at worst) toward it as well—an important starting point, as others (including Huang and Van Norden) have pointed out.

The second—which would in part be a result of the first—is that non-specialists would be more likely to see specialists’ work as relevant and valuable. Thus, we can suppose that they would endeavor to engage it, which is apt to result in more specialists, e.g., being invited to give talks at conferences or contribute articles to edited volumes or special issues, or having their work published in mainstream, non-specialist peer-reviewed journals, whose organizers, referees, and editors tend to include far more non-specialists than specialists. For interested non-specialists will not only be more motivated to promote the inclusion of Chinese philosophy than will be disinterested ones, but they will be better able to do so as well, once they have an improved understanding of what it involves. And this, in turn, will help to address what Amy Olberding argues (in her spring 2016 contribution to this newsletter) is a problem less often addressed than the problem concerning the dearth of specialists discussed by Cline, but perhaps equally fundamental to winning greater inclusion for Chinese philosophy: publication rates for work in the field in non-specialist, general audience, philosophy journals. It will also help to make less problematic a phenomenon, discussed by both Olberding and Huang, that can be characterized as a *double-bind* on specialists in Chinese philosophy, who are expected to make their work appear at once applicable to the concerns of Western philosophy while nonetheless offering something of distinct value.<sup>4</sup>

Granted, these considerations so far are framed so as to apply to those who would seek to include some Chinese philosophy in their teaching, and not to non-specialists who would propose to teach a specialized course in it. Why think, however, that they apply in their case? One way of responding to this question is to point out that, typically, with increased engagement comes both increased appreciation and decreased tendencies to overestimate one’s own competence. This claim is motivated, at least in part, by anecdotal evidence (which will be provided shortly) as well as by literature regarding the Dunning-Kruger effect: roughly, a psychological phenomenon that involves a common tendency for those with low competence levels to dramatically overestimate, and feel confident in, their competence regarding things that they know very little about. (Sometimes, when this effect is mapped on a graph using the x axis to represent, e.g., level of competence,

and the y axis to represent, e.g., level of confidence, the resultant line is not anything like what one might expect, with relatively incompetent participants often professing nearly the same levels of confidence as highly competent participants, and with somewhat competent participants often professing less, making for something of a “U”-shaped dip in the line).<sup>5</sup> Because of this, we might consider cautioning non-specialists who would engage Chinese philosophy to engage more than just a little (at least pending more targeted empirical evidence to the contrary), and to strive to teach, at minimum, a major course component, if not an introductory-to-intermediate specialized course, in it, depending on the circumstances—provided again, that their interest is sufficiently serious (the idea being that it might be better to know literally nothing about Chinese philosophy than just a scant amount, especially if one is not already disposed to give it its due). But, just how serious must one’s interest in Chinese philosophy be for one to responsibly teach such a course or course component in it, if not specialist-level interest? One proposal that I think worth considering, and that I alluded to earlier, is this: non-specialists who would teach a specialized course in Chinese philosophy should be able to characterize themselves as having a highly dedicated interest in it. Such an interest would presumably include a commitment to, at minimum, do it justice in its own right and promote its greater inclusion by actively incorporating it into one’s research as well as one’s teaching.<sup>6</sup> For if this were so, it would be less likely that such non-specialists would see themselves as adequate replacements for specialists (after all, the more they do learn about Chinese philosophy, the more they will realize that they don’t know and need to learn, and they will have a better idea of its problems, its challenges, its complexities, etc.), and more likely that they would see themselves as contributing to the flourishing of a burgeoning and worthwhile trend toward inclusivity. Such non-specialists would be highly interested in, just for starters, getting things right and understanding the nuances of Chinese philosophy, as well as the complications associated with studying it that Cline mentions. They would also be interested in promoting the work of current and future specialists and developing their own expertise in Chinese philosophy, given that they would aim to produce high-quality scholarly work that incorporates it.

This perspective is bolstered by anecdotal evidence pertaining to a variety of examples of philosophers who have developed (at least some level of) expertise in non-Western philosophy after having left graduate school. Indeed, many who would currently qualify as leading figures in Chinese and Indian philosophy—at least in the English-speaking world—began their careers having been trained in what some might describe as “hard-core, Western analytic philosophy,”<sup>7</sup> including (but of course not limited to) Eric Schwitzgebel, Owen Flanagan, Joel Kupperman, David Wong, Graham Priest, and Jay Garfield. In fact, as Garfield noted in an interview with the online magazine 3:AM, his initial reasons for seriously exploring Indian philosophy were—as it turns out—connected with teaching obligations. As he tells the story:

I was introduced to non-Western philosophy by the first student who walked into my office on my first

day of work at Hampshire College, where I taught for about 15 years. He wanted me to chair his senior thesis on “Indo-Tibetan Madhyamaka and the Social Contract Tradition.” I thought he was joking. But of course he wasn’t. Bob Thurman was then teaching up the road at Amherst College, part of the same Five College consortium, and was supervising the Tibetan end of the thesis. So I signed on, and had to read some Tibetan philosophy. It was pretty compelling, but not anything I could spend time on at that stage of my career. Only about seven years later, when Hampshire introduced a strong multicultural requirement that demanded that we each teach some non-Western approach to our discipline did I start studying Buddhist philosophy, and then only to incorporate a little bit in an epistemology class to satisfy that requirement. But once I started, I got drawn deeper and deeper into the field, and it quickly became an important research area for me. An NEH Summer Institute on Nāgārjuna at the University of Hawai’i sealed my interest, and then a year on an Indo-American fellowship with my family at the Central University of Tibetan Studies in India where I studied Madhyamaka under the ven Prof Geshe Yeshe Thabkhas provided the foundation for my subsequent work in Buddhist philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

For what it’s worth, much of what I say above is also motivated by my own experiences. I personally did not encounter any Chinese philosophy until just before I began to write my dissertation, and when I did, it was by way of a non-specialist (at least in Chinese philosophy): none other than Jay Garfield, who had a visiting appointment at Yale, as he was affiliated with Yale-NUS at the time. Through Jay’s encouragement, and then, later, Bryan Van Norden’s (whom I met at a conference a few months after having defended, and a couple of months into my first job), I have been consistently inspired to learn more and more about Chinese philosophy, and hope to eventually cultivate genuine expertise in it, though this will obviously take much more time and effort than I can presently afford pre-tenure (especially given the language requirement discussed by Cline). Thus I count myself—and rightly so—as a highly dedicated non-specialist who relies on the hard-earned expertise of specialists in Chinese philosophy in my teaching and research. This, however, has only made me more appreciative of their importance, more respectful of their skill and hard-work, more awed by the vastness and complexity of the philosophical landscape that they survey, and more dedicated to their inclusion—rather than less. And I suspect that many who began their careers similarly, but later engaged non-Western philosophy, would feel much the same.

I would like to conclude by briefly remarking on just one more exciting—although admittedly less immediate—potential benefit of encouraging non-specialist teaching of Chinese (and other non-Western forms of) philosophy. Encouraging more non-specialists to take, e.g., Chinese philosophy seriously (say, by supporting their interests in teaching it) is not only more likely to raise its profile and the profile of those who specialize in it, but also more likely to make not only excellent comparative, but truly cross-

cultural philosophy (a.k.a. “comparative philosophy without borders,” “fusion philosophy,” or “global philosophy”) possible. For if what is needed to do excellent cross-cultural philosophy is to have sufficient expertise in more than one major philosophical tradition, and we can expect for philosophers—given the current state of Ph.D.-granting departments—to generally emerge from graduate school having specialized in only one, then in order to do excellent cross-cultural philosophy, they will have to supplement their education afterward. And, for the aforementioned reasons, there is perhaps no better way to do this than by incorporating philosophy from unfamiliar traditions into one’s teaching—if in a gradual way—being sure all the while to rely on the work of established experts as a trusted, and necessary, guide. What’s more—and although this point deserves more elaboration than I am able to give it here—it should be noted that when the focus is on philosophical topics shared across traditions (rather than on dimensions of, e.g., Chinese thought in particular), non-specialists are often uniquely poised to make fruitful contributions, as they can utilize resources and draw on insights taken from their own areas of specialization to suggest alternative ways of interpreting and engaging Chinese philosophy, and to propose new approaches for bringing discussions from various traditions together. Thus, just as the work of specialists in Chinese philosophy might inform the work of non-specialists who engage it, so might the work of non-specialists in Chinese philosophy inform the work of specialists, too.<sup>9</sup>

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to Bryan Van Norden and Jay Garfield for reading and commenting on a previous version of this essay, as well as to an anonymous referee for providing a wealth of insightful remarks and suggestions.

**NOTES**

1. E. Cline, “What’s Missing in Philosophy Departments? Specialists in Chinese Philosophy,” *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 10–11.
2. *Ibid.*, 11.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Y. Huang, “The ‘Double Bind’ on Specialists in Chinese Philosophy,” *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 20.
5. J. Kruger and D. Dunning, “Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One’s Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77, no. 6 (1999): 1121–34.
6. This is not to say that someone seriously interested in Chinese philosophy should have published, or be working on publishing, e.g., an article on Chinese philosophy in a refereed journal, exactly, but rather that they should at minimum be working on, e.g., an article that engages Chinese philosophy in a substantive way. Thank you to Bryan Van Norden for encouraging me to clarify this point.
7. D. Wong, “Some Reflections on the Status of Chinese Philosophy in U.S. Graduate Programs,” *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 10.
8. R. Marshall, “Buddhist Howls: Jay L. Garfield Interviewed by Richard Marshall,” in *3:AM Magazine*, <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/buddhist-howls/>, last accessed September 27, 2016.
9. Cf. B. Mou, “On Some Methodological Issues Concerning Chinese Philosophy,” in *History of Chinese Philosophy* (Routledge, 2009), 8–9. I would like to thank an anonymous referee for very helpfully suggesting that I elaborate this point along these lines.

REFERENCES

Cline, E. "What's Missing in Philosophy Departments? Specialists in Chinese Philosophy." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 10–11.

Huang, Y. "The 'Double Bind' on Specialists in Chinese Philosophy." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 18–23.

Kruger, J. and Dunning, D. "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77, no. 6, 1121–34.

Marshall, R. "Buddhist Howls: Jay L. Garfield Interviewed by Richard Marshall." *3:AM Magazine*. <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/buddhist-howls/>, accessed September 27, 2016.

McLeod, A. "May You Live in Interesting Times: The State of the Field of Chinese Philosophy." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 11–18.

Mou, B. "On Some Methodological Issues Concerning Chinese Philosophy." In *History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Bo Mou (Routledge, 2009), 8–9.

Olberding, A. "Chinese Philosophy and Wider Philosophical Discourses: Including Chinese Philosophy in General Audience Philosophy Journals." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 2–9.

Van Norden, B. "Problems and Prospects for the Study of Chinese Philosophy in the English-Speaking World." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 23–26.

Wong, D. "Some Reflections on the Status of Chinese Philosophy in U.S. Graduate Programs." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 15, no. 2 (2016): 9–10.

*Fundamentalist Thinking in Chinese Maoist "Thought Remolding"*

Philip F. Williams  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The American philosopher Corliss Lamont has noted that some political doctrines have "functioned religiously, reflecting the worst features of orthodoxy and authoritarianism, especially when they sacrifice individuals on the altar of Utopian promises."<sup>2</sup> The Maoist institution and ideology of "thought remolding" [*sixiang gaizao* 思想改造, sometimes loosely translated as "thought reform"] would thus seem a likely candidate for fruitful analysis under the rubric of fundamentalist thought in twentieth-century East Asia. Untold millions of mostly professional-class citizens of the People's Republic of China (PRC) were coercively subjected to the form of indoctrination known as thought remolding during the Mao Zedong Era (1949–1976), and the recent revival of coerced public confessions under the rule of Communist Party strongman Xi Jinping since 2013 suggests that this fundamentalist mode of thought might well be on the rise again.<sup>3</sup>

Confessional, charismatic, and doctrinaire aspects of this Maoist ideology that peaked during the middle of the twentieth century resonate strongly with many fundamentalist religious movements both then and

since in East Asia and elsewhere in the world. In the face of optimistic twentieth-century predictions that fundamentalism would probably recede before an irresistibly advancing tide of scientific knowledge and the spread of relative affluence to more regions worldwide, the all-or-nothing mentality characteristic of fundamentalism has nonetheless continued to thrive in a world marked by accelerating progress in education and technology.<sup>4</sup>

Researchers of fundamentalism, such as Lionel Caplan, have highlighted a range of typical characteristics of fundamentalist thought, five of which I consider particularly applicable to the ideology and institution of Maoist thought remolding.<sup>5</sup> First, fundamentalism embodies a pronounced *exclusivity* in what it will accept as a source of truth or understanding, whether through an infallible leader, canonical doctrine, or a combination thereof. The fundamentalist True Believer is expected to adopt a credulous, literalistic approach to understanding the favored religious or philosophical tract, and to assume that all major questions of worldview or sectarian belief have been resolved by that favored tract or collection of sacred tracts.

Second, fundamentalism typically assumes an *incontestability of doctrine* that tends to rule out debate over key tenets of the favored belief. In this view, rival doctrines are not merely wrong, but stubbornly wrong-headed. In other words, rival doctrines cannot ordinarily be tolerated as having different emphases but sharing certain basic common goals of the preferred doctrine, as is typical among individuals of liberalist rather than fundamentalist bent. Instead, rival doctrines come across as threatening heterodoxies towards which fundamentalists must remain vigilant and even combative.

Third, fundamentalism tends to adopt *salvationist rhetoric* when discussing the necessity of conversion or praising the favored source of its doctrine, such as a founder who purportedly "saved" the sectarian or national group from a terrible fate at the hands of non-believing outsiders. The gratitude that the multitude would be assumed to feel for having been "saved" by the founder and other sectarian leaders is often expected to result in a level of obedience and deference before sect authorities that would be considered excessively uncritical from a liberalist perspective.

Fourth, fundamentalists' high expectations about the purity of others' devotion to the creed often takes the form of pressure on group members to confess to real or imagined shortcomings. A layer of ritualism often develops around the sect's *demands for confession*.

This preoccupation with confession is related to a fifth and final tendency among fundamentalists, namely, its *oppositional character*, in that it commonly defines itself as being in sharp contrast with one or more modes of thought that it reviles as absolutely objectionable or loathsome. Confessions commonly mention that the confessor's sins or other failings to live up to the sect's expectations stem from the baleful influence of one or another loathsome rival ideology or faith.

The following sections analyze the ideology of Maoist thought remolding in terms of the five typical attributes of fundamentalist thought as defined above. The concluding section of the article traces the imperative for the conversion or remolding of an individual's thought back before Marx to late eighteenth-century European socialist ideology, as well as discussing the relevance of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century East Asian assumption of the government's need to provide its allegedly deficient citizenry with potentially endless "political tutelage."

### EXCLUSIVITY OF DOCTRINE

In the PRC, Marxist-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought have been all along enshrined as orthodox by both the state-controlled media and the PRC Constitution itself. Even within more recent iterations of the PRC Constitution under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s and Hu Jintao in the first decade of the twenty-first century, when the economy's market-oriented sector has consistently outperformed the deeply troubled state-owned sector, state-socialist Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought has continued to be held up as the regime's exclusively and eternally true founding doctrine. As Caplan has characterized the fundamentalist's narrow view of seeking truth, "Knowledge is gained not through expansion, but as an archaeology of truths that are already present in canonical texts."<sup>6</sup>

The giant portrait of Mao Zedong that has hung prominently above Beijing's Tiananmen Square for over six decades serves as a daily reminder that Mao and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) he led to rule over the nation have an exclusive hold over doctrinal correctness.<sup>7</sup> Although the post-Mao CCP's policies have veered away from old-fashioned state socialist central planning to something akin to bureaucratic or state capitalism with a heavy nationalistic overlay, the open and public challenging of the founder's state socialist doctrine remains a punishable offense, while writings along those lines cannot be legally published in the PRC. In an early twenty-first-century tally by a notable Australian scholar, the PRC imprisoned more politically "subversive" journalists and internet bloggers than the rest of the world combined for those two categories.<sup>8</sup>

Except for the PRC's many underground churches and temples, religious organizations are invariably registered with the government as "patriotic" faiths that accept the supervision of the Party-state, not a mere religious leader, as their highest authority. Unlike some former Warsaw Pact countries in Eastern Europe, the Chinese Party-state has never allowed an appointee of the Pope to take up a Catholic post in the PRC, since recognizing the Pope's spiritual eminence would dilute the Party-state's exclusive privilege to have the final say on all doctrinal matters in China. Similarly, although both the Tibetan Dalai Lama and the Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi had been trying to peacefully co-exist with the PRC Party-state, the two religious leaders' relative independence of Beijing and their followers' tendency to submit to a holy man's authority rather than to the Party-state's have made these two religious figures anathema in Beijing's eyes. According to an agnostic researcher of the Falun Gong movement, in cracking down so violently on the movement since 1999,

Jiang Zemin and other PRC leaders were "like religious zealots themselves, [whose] ideology seems to preclude flexibility or even reason."<sup>9</sup>

The expatriate dissident scholar Hu Ping (b. 1947) has quoted a related CCP slogan used during the early 1950s campaign to "remold commerce and industry" in the direction of nationalizing private enterprise: "With machine-gun nests pinning you down on three sides, you're allowed to head off in only one direction."<sup>10</sup> Hu Ping argues that by having systematically and coercively closed off the intelligentsia's doctrinal and practical alternatives to thought remolding in the early 1950s, the CCP helped promote the exclusivity of its own doctrine and praxis. In having done so, the CCP was taking China in a determinedly fundamentalist direction.

### INCONTESTABILITY OF DOCTRINE

Fundamentalist doctrine purports to have been established in a once-and-for-all fashion, and thus is presented as something that cannot be properly questioned ever again. Mao Zedong sweepingly claimed that every ideology other than Marxist-Leninism that had been tried in China turned out to be a failure; he portrayed his CCP's military victory over the Nationalist party-state in the late 1940s civil war as an historic and irreversible choice of the Chinese people in favor of the ascendant Marxist-Leninist CCP party-state. Hu Ping has argued that having taken this late-1940s military success as the basis for a permanent Chinese political monopoly unrestrained by meaningful popular referenda or elections, the CCP demanded from the populace under its autocratic rule a thoroughgoing submissiveness that set the stage for the ideology of remolding to be implemented.<sup>11</sup> This proclamation of a lofty triumph beyond the range of accountability measures manifests a program of political emasculation of the citizenry and reveals an overriding tone of anti-intellectualism and hostility to independent thought.

Writing about anti-intellectualism in American life, Richard Hofstadter similarly characterizes the fundamentalists' typical stance as "the one-hundred-per-cent mentality."<sup>12</sup> Such True Believers, he adds, are "inclined to proclaim certainties, to affirm universal, timeless moralities . . . [and] tolerate no equivocations, no reservations. . . . This conviction in the incontestability of their claims allows fundamentalists to deny others the validity of their own beliefs."<sup>13</sup>

Maoist thought remolding goes beyond denying other people the validity of their own beliefs to actively attack and in many cases dismantle or destroy those beliefs through a variety of pressure tactics that have been analyzed by scholars such as Hu Ping, Kathleen Taylor, and Robert Jay Lifton.<sup>14</sup> This article is not intended to provide a typology or analysis of thought remolding's pressure tactics such as isolation of the victim from sources of emotional support and the use of loaded language in interrogations.<sup>15</sup> However, it should be noted that while the scale of thought remolding has decreased during the post-Mao Era compared to what it formerly was under Mao Zedong's dictatorship, certain politically anathematized groups within the PRC such as Falun Gong practitioners continue to be subjected to quite severe thought remolding regimens.<sup>16</sup> The crackdown on



the Falun Gong has much to do with the way CCP leaders have viewed this popular native-born sect as a threat to the incontestability of the Party's doctrine and to the Party's self-appointed imperative to maintain tight control and supervision over all large PRC organizations.<sup>17</sup>

### SALVATIONIST RHETORIC

Since thought remolding implies a serious and intrusive intervention in an individual's sense of self, the organization or group that is implementing this intervention may wish to dignify and even sanctify its motives through the use of salvationist rhetoric. Apter and Saich have pointed out that as a shrewd propagandist and accomplished storyteller, Mao Zedong had convinced many compatriots during China's 1937–1945 war against Japan that the Communist forces under his command would "save" China—when all along he knew full well that only the Allies, chiefly the English-speaking countries and Russia, would actually be able to defeat Japan.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, during Mao's Yan'an Rectification purge of 1942–1944, he and his security chief and spymaster Kang Sheng presented themselves to the denizens of the CCP's wartime capital as saviors when referring to an especially high-pressured phase of interrogations and forced confessions as "the Rescue Campaign"—as if the rank-and-file objects of this repressive ordeal were being saved from peril.<sup>19</sup>

During and after the late 1940s civil war between the Nationalists (Guomindang or GMD) and the CCP, the Maoists again drew upon salvationist rhetoric to dub this the War of Liberation—even though "liberation" is typically understood as throwing off the yoke of a *foreign* invader or military occupier, which the Chinese Nationalists were definitely not. Yet the CCP rulers of the PRC have never stopped referring to the late-1940s civil war in this salvationist manner. Moreover, though nearly seven decades have elapsed since the Chinese Communist army proved victorious in the civil war, it is still referred to in salvationist terms as the "People's Liberation Army." In similar fashion, even in the twenty-first century, eulogistic PRC songs and other propaganda continue to insist that "only the Communist Party can save China."<sup>20</sup>

From the standpoint of fundamentalist ideology, the unconverted individual is in urgent need of being "saved," however painful or coercive that might turn out to be. Conversion to the correct Party ideology and especially a tamed deference before Party authority are considered to be so valuable in the salvation of an individual that even a two-decade stint in prisons and labor camps has not been considered too high a price to pay for it.

### DEMANDS FOR CONFESSION

Salvationist rhetoric is often connected to a fourth feature of modern PRC fundamentalism, namely, a tendency toward inquisitorial demands for confessions from the ideologically impure. Lifton has termed this the "cult of confession" and remarked on how drawn out the confessions demanded by the CCP authorities have tended to become.<sup>21</sup> Lifton has also etched a clear distinction between the thought-remolding cult of confession's demands for individual self-abasement and deference to authority, on the one hand—and more benign types of confession that aim to help

individuals unburden themselves of matters troubling their consciences, receive forgiveness, and hold their heads up in society, as sometimes encountered in Confucian or Judeo-Christian contexts. Thought remolding's cult of confession is instead designed to psychologically bludgeon persons into throwing themselves on the mercy of their Party-ordained inquisitors.

The astonishing lengths to which confession has been taken in PRC thought remolding strikes many observers as pathetic or even risible at times. An example of this may be found in a short story by the liberal-minded fiction writer Wang Meng (b. 1936) entitled "The Anecdotes of Section Chief Maimaiti."<sup>22</sup> This satire features a low-level Uighur official in Xinjiang who is undergoing coercive thought remolding at a May Seventh Cadre School during Mao's Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In order to make his confession seem weightier and more sincere, Section Chief Maimaiti uses an ambiguity in the Uighur language to make it appear as though he is a friend of the recently purged top cultural official Zhou Yang, even though Maimaiti had merely heard about Zhou Yang's recent downfall and had never actually met such a high-ranking official in the PRC's cultural bureaucracy. Nevertheless, this was still not scandalous enough for the interrogator, who pressured Maimaiti to confess something even more damaging or shameful. Maimaiti thought for a moment and finally came out with a confession to make all the others seem pale by comparison. Not only was Maimaiti responsible for having started both World War One and World War Two, he confesses, but he was also currently hatching a plot to ignite World War Three.

### OPPOSITIONAL CHARACTER

A fifth and final feature of fundamentalism that is closely connected to thought remolding is its oppositional character. Fundamentalists tend to make high demands on others for purity of doctrine and deed, as they conceive them. Such demands for purity often are in tension with the everyday world, and commonly lead to what Sidney Greenblatt has characterized as "the manufacture of deviance."<sup>23</sup> Behavior and beliefs that would not ordinarily be considered deviant, or at least would not be criticized as such, frequently come under condemnation by fundamentalist purists. Confessions written by objects of thought remolding would thus have to become even lengthier, more detailed, and more self-flagellating to satisfy the demands for purity of the Party inquisitor.

There has also been a very practical organizational motivation behind the ideology of thought remolding's intolerance of deviance, institutionalization of the cult of confession, and demands for ideological purity. Many of the CCP's key successes in its struggle with the Nationalist Party were due to having infiltrated numerous moles and other spies into the upper levels of the Nationalist army and bureaucracy, especially during the 1940s. By requiring the ideologically suspect within their area of jurisdiction to detail in confessions all of their personal and career relationships, no matter how minor or temporary, the Chinese Communists greatly reduced the likelihood of having the same tactic used against them by Nationalist moles and spies. Of course, this feat was achieved at the

expense of respect for civil liberties and the right to privacy, but the CCP has never in practice placed a high priority on civil liberties or civil rights, anyway.

An analogous manifestation of fundamentalist oppositionalism that has a pragmatic side was in the CCP high cadre Chen Yun's opposition to relaxing Party restrictions over PRC publishers in the early 1980s. The proposed change at that time to the Publication Law would have made the PRC Publication Law as lacking in thoroughgoing control by the ruling party as the Nationalists' Publication Law had been in the 1930s and 1940s. In a secret statement that was made only for the eyes and ears of other top CCP leaders, and not for public consumption, Chen Yun advised that the CCP not allow rival or oppositional political forces to use the freedom the press against the CCP in the same way that the CCP had formerly used freedom of the press during the 1930s and 1940s against the then-ruling Nationalist Party.<sup>24</sup>

### FROM FUNDAMENTALIST FERVOR TO CYNICISM ABOUT SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE

The above-mentioned calculated stratagem by Chen Yun can be said to have gone beyond mere philosophical pragmatism and entered the realm of pure cynicism. As Hu Ping has persuasively argued in his 1999 monograph about thought remolding, post-Mao attitudinal cynicism has been one of the most widely observed outcomes of decades of Mao Era thought remolding.<sup>25</sup>

Sketched in broader terms, the outcome of attitudinal cynicism has been part of a three-phase process which begins with a fundamentalist project of social engineering that is supposed to create a radically "new socialist human" and eventually lead to a "socialist heaven on earth."<sup>26</sup>

Of course, the fundamentalist fervor that gave rise to this misguided project of social engineering in the first place gradually has to rely more and more on coercion and other dystopian pressure tactics in the face of practical setbacks that any social engineer eventually encounters. Limitations in both human nature and in actually existing human societies inevitably frustrate implementation of the grandiose blueprints of social engineers. Thereupon, the initial phase of the launching of the project of social engineering gradually shifts into the dystopian and coercive Phase Two, in which annoyingly recalcitrant human subjects must be pressured and manipulated into converting themselves into new socialist humans.

Finally, a growing fatigue and disillusionment with thought remolding's waste of human energies and human potential results in Phase Three, marked chiefly by a widespread cynicism about the possibilities of social and political change for the better. Phase Three also manifests an over-emphasis on improving the material conditions of life—that is, it has left a legacy of avid consumerism in the post-Mao PRC.

PRC thought remolding has thus left a quite negative legacy of having stifled independent and critical thought, along with having encouraged a widespread cynicism both inside

and outside the Party about meaningful societal change. Perhaps this is no better than what most observers might have expected, given the middling-to-poor track record of fundamentalist movements worldwide.

### EUROPEAN AND EAST ASIAN CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO FUNDAMENTALIST THOUGHT REMOLDING

One might take a step back at this point to ponder various key factors that may have left China under Maoism vulnerable to the blandishments of fundamentalist thought remolding. One such factor is the set of assumptions about human nature that have been made from the beginnings of state socialism as a fighting creed rather than merely a speculative fantasy. This occurred under political theorist and activist François-Noël Babeuf (1760–1797) in the late eighteenth century, especially during France's tumultuous 1790s. The human psyche was commonly viewed by various utopian thinkers like Babeuf to be a highly malleable *tabula rasa*, and little or no thought appears to have been given to the unintended consequences that might spring from coercive manipulation of the psyche.

As the most important philosophical antecedent to Marx, Babeuf argued that socialism was not out merely to change the social and political systems, but to transform the human being itself. Babeuf's chief goal, in his own words, was "to eradicate once and for all the desire of a person to be richer, or wiser, or more powerful than others."<sup>27</sup>

To be sure, various state socialist strongmen and dictators gave more or less emphasis to Babeuf's founding dicta. Josef Stalin and Mao Zedong were at opposite ends of a spectrum ranging from tepid to fervent interest in transforming the citizen into a New Socialist Human. Stalin focused on the citizen's outward compliance with the Soviet Party-state's dictates and was mostly uninterested in the private thoughts of Soviet citizens. The Soviet dictator's stance on this issue greatly contrasted with that of his Chinese counterpart, for Mao demanded that the Chinese citizen's private thoughts must march in lock-step with the citizen's outward obedience to the Party-state's decrees. Therefore, even though the Maoist concept of remolding unorthodox thought and behavior was to some extent anticipated by and modeled upon the 1920s Soviet Russian concept of *perekovka* [reforging] prisoners and other "troublemakers" into obedient and industrious citizens, the Soviets never implemented this conception with anything resembling the intensity with which the Maoists brought to bear on this issue.<sup>28</sup>

There are other factors in the legacy of state socialism worldwide that contributed to fundamentalist thought remolding, including Karl Marx's advocacy of "dictatorship of the proletariat" and Lenin's insistence that the doctrines of the Party "vanguard" take precedence over the "natural revolutionary tendencies" of the proletariat.<sup>29</sup> However, instead of dwelling further here on issues outside of the East Asian orbit, it would be more appropriate to conclude by discussing the second set of factors that set the local stage for fundamentalist thought remolding.

This second set of factors turns upon the modern nation-building ethos that gained ascendancy in both Meiji Japan and late Qing and Republican China. As analyzed by scholars such as Ann Anagnost, Takeshi Fujitani, and Prasenjit Duara, this late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century nation-building program advocated political tutelage of the citizenry in order to transform the people from passive subjects into active followers of government mobilization in such realms as the military, industry, and political participation.<sup>30</sup> In this developmental model, the citizenry was regarded as not yet capable of the sort of political participation that had been noticed overseas among the industrialized nations of the West.<sup>31</sup> That is, the rank and file among the populace in early modern Japan and China were not considered ready for full political participation in a modern nation until after having undergone a protracted period of political tutelage under government supervision.<sup>32</sup>

Under this nation-building ethos, ordinary citizens were described as needing “renovation” [*xin min* 新民] or “remaking”; everyday folkways and traditions that were incompatible with the modernizing project were to be suppressed by the centralizing modern nation-state. Unfortunately, this period of political tutelage lingered on for decades under the Chinese Nationalists, not finally concluding until the first direct election of the president in Taiwan in the 1990s. Political tutelage has dragged on for even longer under Chinese Communist rule on the mainland, whose leaders to this very day still insist that the citizenry’s educational level or “quality” [*suzhi* 素质] is still too low to make them competent to elect government officials above the village level. This *longue durée* of political tutelage under the CCP continues in the face of obvious counterexamples such as democratically ruled India, whose demographic profile is not very dissimilar to China’s.

Thought remolding has been a particularly aggressive type of government intervention in the thought of citizens under endless political tutelage from patronizing and autocratic officials. Much less noticeable today than it was during the heyday of Mao Zedong’s fundamentalist rule, the legacy of thought remolding nonetheless continues to make its presence felt in China in two major ways: the widespread cynicism about politics that Hu Ping has analyzed, and the ongoing crackdowns on anathematized religious sects and on political dissent, whether real or imagined. As well as any other ideological phenomenon, thought remolding bespeaks the continuing presence of fundamentalist convictions at the highest levels of the CCP and the Chinese nation-state it dominates.

**NOTES**

1. This article has been peer-reviewed. Any inaccuracies are solely the responsibility of the author.
2. Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 7th ed. (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1990), 293.
3. For an example of coerced televised confessions of PRC lawyers in 2015 and 2016, see Abby Seiff, “China’s Latest Crackdown on Lawyers Is Unprecedented, Human Rights Monitors Say,” *ABA Journal*, [http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/chinas\\_latest\\_crackdown\\_on\\_lawyers\\_is\\_unprecedented\\_human\\_rights\\_monitors](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/chinas_latest_crackdown_on_lawyers_is_unprecedented_human_rights_monitors), 01 February 2016.

4. For instance, Lamont opines that the 21st century “can and should be the humanistic century” in *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 290.
5. Lionel Caplan, Introduction, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, ed. L. Caplan (London: Macmillan, 1987), 10, 14.
6. Caplan, Introduction, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism*, 17.
7. Philip F. Williams, “Mao Zedong [Mao Tse-tung], 1893-1976,” *Encyclopedia of Dictators*, ed. Frank J. Coppa (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 172-178, esp. 177.
8. Ross Terrill suggests that PRC government attempts to gag politically dissident bloggers will fall short of the regime’s ambitions to maintain its exclusive control over the flow of politically sensitive information. See *The New Chinese Empire* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 326. Information related to the dozens of politically imprisoned bloggers in the PRC—more than in the rest of the world combined—came from BBC Radio News, 29 July 2006.
9. Danny Schechter, *Falun Gong’s Challenge to China: Spiritual Practice or “Evil Cult”?* (New York: Akashic Books, 2001), 16.
10. Hu Ping 胡平, *Ren de xunhua, duobi yu fanpan* 人的驯化, 躲避, 與反叛 [*Taming of the Human, and the Responses of Evasion and Rebellion*] (Hong Kong: Yazhou kexue chubanshe, 1999), 52. Translated into English by Philip F. Williams and Yenna Wu as *The Thought Remolding Campaign of the Chinese Communist Party-state* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 61.
11. Hu Ping, *The Taming of the Human*, 25.
12. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), 118–19. His remarks would aptly characterize the thought of many U.S. evangelicals.
13. Hofstadter, *Anti-intellectualism*, 118-119.
14. Kathleen Taylor, *Brainwashing: the Science of Thought Control* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 91, 98-100; Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of “Brainwashing” in China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), 419–37.
15. Elsewhere I have analyzed such pressure tactics; see Philip F. Williams and Yenna Wu, *The Great Wall of Confinement: The Chinese Prison Camp through Contemporary Fiction and Reportage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 67–72, 107–18, 122–35.
16. Schechter, *Falun Gong’s Challenge to China*, 124–33.
17. The CCP’s control and supervision over all large organizations in the PRC helps prevent any such organization from metamorphosing into a rival power base within the country. This is a deep-seated fear that the CCP leadership shares with premodern China’s imperial rulers, who often suppressed millenarian sects out of fear that the latter might develop into a rival political force—as indeed occurred from time to time, such as with the Taiping rebels who came close to toppling the Qing dynasty in the mid-nineteenth century.
18. David E Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao’s Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 97.
19. Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse*, 25.
20. Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 128.
21. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, 425–27.
22. Wang Meng 王蒙, “Maimaiti chuzhang yishi” 买买提处长轶事, Wang Meng xiaoshuo baogao wenxue xuan 王蒙小说报告文学选 [*An Anthology of Wang Meng’s Fiction and Reportage*] (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1981), 177-191. Translated into English by Philip F. Williams as “The Anecdotes of Section Chief Maimaiti: ‘Black Humor’ of the Uighurs,” *Journal of Asian Culture* 8 (1984): 1–30.
23. Sidney Greenblatt, “The Manufacture of Deviance,” in *Deviance and Control in Chinese Society*, eds. Amy Wilson, Sidney Greenblatt, and Richard Wilson (New York: Praeger, 1972), 82–120.
24. Hu Ping, *Taming of the Human*, Chapter 7.
25. Ibid.

26. The Chinese terms are *shehuizhuyi xinren* 社会主义新人 and *shehuizhuyi tiantang* 社会主义天堂, respectively.
27. Joshua Muravchik, *Heaven on Earth: the Rise and Fall of Socialism* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), 11.
28. Williams and Wu, *The Great Wall of Confinement*, 48.
29. The existence of Marxian-inspired one-party state socialist dictatorships facilitated the necessary milieu control over human objects of thought remolding. Leninist Party vanguards consisting mainly of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals (such as Mao Zedong) were more likely to promote Utopian or fundamentalist policies such as thought remolding than would a true proletariat of working-class types.
30. Ann S. Anagnost discusses the Chinese early modern "project of moving toward *wenming* 文明, a state of civility closely identified with the advanced industrial cultures of Asia and the West." See Anagnost, "The Politics of Ritual Displacement," in *Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia*, eds. Charles F. Keyes, Lauren Kendall, and Helen Hardacre (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 221–54, esp. 230.
31. For more information on this issue in the context of Meiji Japan, see Takeshi Fujitani, "Inventing, Forgetting, Remembering: Toward a Historical Ethnography of the Nation-state," in *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity*, ed. Harumi Befu (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), 77–106.
32. Further discussion of what Prasenjit Duara calls the "logic of modernizing legitimation" may be found in Duara, "Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity: The Campaigns Against Popular Religion in Early 20th-century China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 1 (1990): 67–83, esp. 74.

## A Brief Note on the Probable Place of Origin of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and the Influence of Caitanyaite Movement on Him

Niranjan Saha

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (INDIAN SCHOOL OF MINES),  
DHANBAD, [SHRINSAHA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SHRINSAHA@GMAIL.COM)

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (ca. sixteenth century CE), one of the seminal figures in post-Śaṅkara (Śaṅkara, ca. eighth century CE) Advaita (i.e., non-dualism) Vedānta philosophy, authored various works, including the *Advaitasiddhi*, a polemic of the highest kind against theistic dualism, which is considered to be one of the influential works of this Vedāntic system of philosophy. In contrast, his *Bhaktirasāyana* is the only extant independent exposition on the nature of devotion written by a staunch exponent of Advaita. Thus, while his other works like the *Siddhāntabindu*, *Advaitaratnarakṣaṇa*, etc., establish his amazing polemic skills as an uncompromising defender of Śaṅkara's non-dualistic Vedānta, *Gūḍhārthadīpikā* on the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Mahimnastotraṭīkā* (including the *Prasthānabheda* therein), *Bhāgavatapurāṇaprathamaślokovyākhyā*, *Harilīlavyākhyā*, etc., point him out to be a proponent of devotional theology in Advaitic tradition, a fact that seems to be an apparent dichotomy in both Indian philosophical and Vedāntic discourses. However, despite his renown, his concrete biographical details are scanty, as, like any other ascetic follower of the tradition, Madhusūdana has not given any significant autobiographical details in any of his

works other than his name and the names of his preceptors appearing in colophons and salutatory verses. References to Madhusūdana in later literature are the only sources upon which a biographical history of the author may be based, but these are often hagiographical in nature and cannot be accepted uncritically.

Thus, with the acceptance of the fact that there is general agreement among scholars that Madhusūdana flourished sometime between the fifteenth and the seventeenth century CE, we must speculate on his place of origin, as scholars are not unanimous about this point either. It is commonly believed that Madhusūdana hails from Bengal and was a junior contemporary of Śrīcāitanya (1486–1533 CE, a mystic Vaiṣṇava saint from Bengal) as is evident both in numerous legends and the supports of the exponents of Gauḍīya or Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in later period. However, before proceeding with this point proper, a brief description of the basic philosophical tenets of Madhusūdana and the movement initiated by Caitanya might be plausible.

Let us thus, reaffirming the content of introductory paragraph of this paper, introduce first briefly Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and his philosophical principles, with the following quote of a contemporary scholar of repute:

In the firmament of Indian philosophical thought Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is the last great luminary. Sixteenth century Bengal was the dawn of Renaissance in India. Raghunandana with his Smṛtis, Raghunātha with his New-logic, Kṛṣṇānanda with his Tantricism, to name a few, opened up new vistas of human mind. Madhusūdana was a true representative of this epoch. He freely drew upon the rich heritage of the past, as he imbibed the treasures of the period, including new devotionalism initiated by Śrī Caitanya. In him the Vedantic tradition of Ācārya Śaṅkara fused with the devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Indeed Madhusūdana was the unique triumph of opposite forces... The genius of Madhusūdana soared beyond contradictions. It knit into existence a world in which the uncompromising monism of Śaṅkara was wedded to unreserved surrender to the Almighty (sic).<sup>1</sup>

While the above note refers to Madhusūdana not only as a true representative of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedāntic tradition, but also as a promulgator of devotional theology there (a subject, the introduction with which this tradition came under fierce attack of the dualists, and that Madhusūdana, without forging his own root, succeeded in synthesizing between his non-dualistic philosophy and his theology of emotional love for personal God), he seems to have been one of the precursors of all-round revitalization that Bengal underwent in the sixteenth century CE. Thus, it can be noted that Madhusūdana, despite being a follower of Advaita Vedānta, according to which the sole and highest reality is *nirguṇa brahman* (unqualified *brahman*) that can only be attained through the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*), found no incompatibility with the sentiment of devotion (*bhakti*), which entails a total surrender by the devotee to a personal Godhead like Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa or Hari, whom

the dualist Vedāntins (e.g., Rāmānuja [eleventh century CE], Madhva [thirteenth century CE], Vallabha [fifteenth century CE], Nimbārka [ca. fifteenth century CE]) identify with *brahman*. And like all other advocates of Vaiṣṇavism, Madhusūdana was an upholder of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a text considered to be the foundational source of Vaiṣṇava schools. In short, the basic philosophical principles of Madhusūdana could be viewed as non-dualism substantiated by the theistic-dualistic approach.

Regarding Caitanya and Caitanyaite movement, it can be pointed that, while the Gauḍīya or Bengal Vaiṣṇavism is commonly applied to the religious movement started by Śrīcaitanya, he, unlike the proponents of other Vedānta schools, was not a philosopher or a theologian, but a mystic absorbed in devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. But some of his noted followers like Śrīrūpa Gosvāmin, Śrīsanātana Gosvāmin, Śrījīva Gosvāmin (sixteenth century CE), Viśvanātha Cakravartin and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (eighteenth century CE) gave a theological and philosophical overtone to this movement with their fundamental compositions, which subsequently came to be known as Acintyabhedābheda (Identity-in difference, the nature of which is inexplicable) Vedānta. Though before the advent of Caitanya, a number of works by Jayadeva (1175 CE), Śrīdharadāsa (1205 CE), Caṇḍīdāsa (ca. 1400 CE), Vidyāpati (1352–1448 CE), etc., enjoyed popularity among the mass in Bengal, propagating Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu religion, it was with Caitanya that a particular religious belief and metaphysical consideration developed there, and that none of these works could be solely considered to be a source of inspiration for Caitanya's peculiar emotional and mystical path of devotion, i.e., Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship. He, however, as noted earlier, must have derived much of his inspiration from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, a perpetual source of loving devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.<sup>2</sup> Thus, while the teaching of Caitanya is basically rooted in religion (where, following the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the myths of Kṛṣṇa and his youthful beloved Rādhā represent the reciprocal love of God and human soul), it gradually led to a socio-religious movement in Bengal and in the eastern part of Orissa, the presence of which is still conspicuous in the broader cultural scenario of these places.<sup>3</sup>

Now, in support of the view that Madhusūdana hails from Bengal, the following points have been considered by scholars such as 1) the family lineage; 2) hagiographical details; 3) Madhusūdana's own reference to a disciple, viz. Baladeva Bhaṭṭācārya (the surname, i.e., Bhaṭṭācārya, which this disciple carries, is a common surname in Bengal) in his *Siddhāntabindu*;<sup>4</sup> 4) other factors like reference in Madhusūdana's *Vedāntakalpalatikā* to the Lord of Blue Mountain (i.e., Nīlācala-nāyaka or Nīlācala-nātha), etc., who is treated as Lord Jagannātha (a tutelary deity for many inhabitants of Bengal that time) of Puri;<sup>5</sup> the place that belongs to the eastern part of India of which the then Bengal or Gauḍa was a part; 5) support of intellectual or rather socio-religious (such as finding similarity with Caitanya tradition's way of treating ecstatic devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa) and institutional (such as efforts to preserve relics and memorials in Madhusūdana's birth place) milieu of his time. If his Bengali origin is accepted, then it is likely that Madhusūdana was influenced by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and that the socio-cultural movement initiated by Caitanya

and later continued by his followers might have influenced Madhusūdana's thought. But while some of the later exponents of Gauḍīya or Bengal Vaiṣṇavism have made use of the comments of Madhusūdana's *Gītā* in support of their respective positions in their comments on the *Gītā*, none of the earlier proponents of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is referred to by Madhusūdana in his work and vice versa. Besides, he does not explicitly discuss the philosophical views of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in any of his works.

Again, in one of the legends it goes that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī perplexed the famous logicians of Navadvīpa in Bengal, namely, Mathurānātha Tarkavāgīśa (1550 CE) and Gadādhara Bhaṭṭācārya (1604–1708 CE), during his visit there: "When Madhusūdana Vākpāti (Sarasvatī) visited Navadvīpa, Tarkavāgīśa was trembling in fear and Gadādhara got confused."<sup>6</sup> Further, despite their dissimilarities in principles with those of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, the fact that the *Gūḍhārthadīpikā* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is referred to by Viśvanātha Cakravartin and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa (of the Bengal school Vaiṣṇavism in the eighteenth century CE), in their respective commentaries on the *Bhagavadgītā*, is noteworthy. On *Bhagavadgītā* 3.1, Viśvanātha, like Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, explains the term *keśava* as meaning *ka* as "Brahmā," *īśa* as "Śiva," and *va* as "controller of both of them." Śrīcaitanya's monastic teacher (*dīkṣā-guru*) Keśava Bhāratī too seems to belong to the order of *daśanāmī-sampradāya* initiated by Śaṅkara, as the title *bhāratī* is one of the ten titles used for the saints belonging to this order. Some hagiographical sources claim that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava first and accepted Advaitic monastic orders later, in order to preach *bhakti* to the followers of the latter tradition. Further, we find that the concept of *jīvanmukti*, a prominent component of Advaita doctrines, is also accepted by Baladeva in his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 2.69-71, in almost a similar manner. Baladeva maintains that although controlling the senses appears to be hard while undergoing spiritual discipline, it becomes natural for one who is of steady knowledge (*sthita-prajña*) once he reaches his goal. Baladeva characterizes this person as one who is content with the bliss of his own self and unaffected by the results of *prārabdha-karma*-s, just as rivers cannot change the course of action of the ocean, though they mingle with it during the rainy season. The *sthita-prajña* maintains his body just for its bare necessity, without having any sense of possessiveness and egoism.<sup>7</sup> Viśvanātha also quotes Gauḍapāda in his comments on *Bhagavadgītā* 6.20-23, while his comments on *Bhagavadgītā* 15.18 note Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's explanation that eulogizes Lord Kṛṣṇa, with approbation. This is an admission that Viśvanātha has no objection to the non-dualistic interpretation of these verses equating Lord Kṛṣṇa as the supreme *brahman*.<sup>8</sup> These points show that the exponents of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism are not always antithetical to the interpretations provided by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, though they disagree with the basic principles of Advaita Vedānta. Again, we find that the commentaries on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* by Viśvanātha and Jīva Gosvāmin (of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school) are sometimes compatible with the teaching of Advaita Vedānta.

However, there is also a minor body of opinion that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī belonged to the south rather than

Bengal. The reasons for this view are that 1) "Sarasvatī," which is one of the ten titles for monks of the Śaṅkara school, known as *daśanāmī-sampradayā*, is generally assigned to the Śrīgerī Mutt in south India<sup>9</sup> and that some Śrīgerī records talk about one Madhusūdana Bhāratī Svāmī as occupying the place of pontiff there around the thirteenth century CE;<sup>10</sup> 2) Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was mainly preoccupied with rebutting the views of the Mādhyā and Rāmānuja schools that flourished in south India, where the former was the bitterest critic of Advaita Vedānta, and against whose works Madhusūdana composed his *magnum opus Advaitasiddhi*; 3) Lord Kṛṣṇa, especially Lord Gopāla (i.e., Lord Kṛṣṇa as a child), with whom Madhusūdana Sarasvatī has great fascination, is worshipped mainly in Udupī Mutt in Karnataka established by the Mādhyā school and in Guruvayur temple in Kerala; 4) there has been a tradition that there are a number of Brahmin families settled near Kaladi in Kerala, who are known as Gauḍa Sārasvata Brahmins and are believed to have been migrated to Kerala from Gauḍadeśa (i.e., the then Bengal) many generations ago, and that Gauḍa Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, a fellow commentator of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī might have belonged to this Sārasvata Brahmin community;<sup>11</sup> and 5) the origin of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and Vaiṣṇava devotional movement, to which Madhusūdana Sarasvatī had great attachment, is generally held to have been rooted in south India.

Thus, in the case of authors who belong to any of the monastic orders in India, it is almost impossible to find definite data about their genealogy and place of birth because once they enter such a monastic order, they virtually obliterate all data pertaining to their pre-monastic life. While it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusion regarding the place of origin of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī with the data currently available, the view that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī hails from Bengal takes precedence while we take into consideration the nitty-gritty of his various works in the light of socio-religious scenario of Bengal and the observations of modern scholars in this regard. If his Bengali origin is proved convincingly, it will lead to better understanding of his philosophy, if one agrees with the scholars who describe him as belonging to the post-Caitanya period.

So, as a sequel of assessing the foregoing discussion, it should be pointed out that, though we do not have any concrete evidence of Madhusūdana's being influenced by the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism or Caitanyaite's movement but the other way round, as an upholder of devotional theology promulgated in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Madhusūdana stands unique, and that he was close in time to the Vaiṣṇava theology propagated by the followers of Caitanya (for whom too the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was held in high esteem). But Madhusūdana's strong allegiance to Advaita Vedānta indicates that his ideas of *bhakti* are significantly different from those of theistic Vedāntins including Caitanya. As a modern scholar remarks:

Nevertheless, as part of the intellectual milieu of his time, he must have known Caitanya's life and activities. Madhusūdana's description of a Vaiṣṇava devotee who has achieved a devotee's goal that is, the state of constant enjoyment of ecstatic devotion for Kṛṣṇa reminds one strongly

of the traditional picture of Caitanya in ecstasy. I think it is Madhusūdana's intellectual loyalty to Śaṅkara's non-dualistic Vedānta that prompted him to develop his own type of Vaiṣṇava theology. Though he stands alone in his interpretation of non-dualistic philosophy of *bhakti* based on the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, he has forged a bridge between the Śaṅkara-school of philosophy and the Caitanya's school of theology (sic).<sup>12</sup>

However, the abovementioned view can be easily corroborated with reference to Madhusūdana's own work. In formulating his definition of *bhakti*, Madhusūdana not only followed the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as a basis, he was also influenced by its two important monistic commentators, e.g., Vopadeva (thirteenth century CE) and Śrīdhara Svāmī (fourteenth century CE). Thus, by giving a new orientation in Vaiṣṇavism, they (i.e., Śrīdhara and Vopadeva) developed a devotional mysticism based on the Upaniṣadic unqualified indefinable *brahman* acclimatized to a personal godhead like Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, etc.<sup>13</sup>—a fact that is the fountainhead of the entire gamut of Madhusūdana's philosophy. Again, the *Harilīlāmṛta*, a summary of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* by Vopadeva, has been commented upon by Madhusūdana in his *Harilīlāmṛtavākyā*.<sup>14</sup> Madhusūdana also quotes the *Muktāphala* of Vopadeva in his *Īśvarapratipatti prakāśa*.<sup>15</sup> Though Śrīdhara adhered to Śaṅkara's non-dualism while erecting his philosophical foundation (by way of writing commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, etc.), his admission to the superiority of devotion as a means to liberation made his work acceptable to the Vaiṣṇava groups like the followers of Caitanya in Bengal, as is very much attested by Caitanya and his immediate followers.<sup>16</sup> Besides Madhusūdana's *Gūḍhārthadīpikā* on the *Bhagavadgītā*, his *Harilīlāmṛtavākyā* bears frequent references to Śrīdhara.<sup>17</sup> This textual support, however, even if the legends are ignored, directs us to appreciate Madhusūdana's philosophy better, so much so that a connection between Caitanyaism and Madhusūdana is established. Thus, to put it briefly, if it is determined that Madhusūdana hails from Bengal (where Caitanyaism too flourished close to his time), and that Madhusūdana was influenced by the factors common to Caitanyaism as well, then a lead could be found in answering an age-old dichotomy of giving *bhakti* a prominent place within the fundamental tenets of non-dualism and in considering *nirguṇa brahman* (of Advaita Vedānta) as an object of devotion—in Indian philosophy in general and Vedānta philosophy in particular—thereby professing *nirguṇa-bhakti-mārga*, which has been an important component of both the pre and post-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta and, of course, of the theistic Vedānta and other schools, who were the forbearers of various devotional movements in India's cultural history.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This humble attempt is dedicated to the memory of my late philosophy teacher in school (Habra High School, Habra, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal), Durgasankar Sen (d. September 12, 2015), and of my late philosophy professors in college (Barasat Government College, West Bengal State University; erstwhile University of Calcutta) Sarojnath Sanyal (d. February 22, 2012) and Papri Dhar (nee Bhadra) [d. March 21, 2013], whose "teaching-cum-affection" (for me) is a matter of continuance in perpetuity.

NOTES

1. Sanjukta Gupta, *Studies in the Philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī* (Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966), Foreword.
2. For a detailed discussion, see Friehelm Hardy "Mādhavendra Purī: A Link between Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and South Indian Bhakti." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1974): 23–41.
3. However, it is the six (ṣaḍ) Gosvāmins (e.g., Raghunātha Dāsa, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Sanātana Gosvāmin, Rūpa Gosvāmin, Jīva Gosvāmin) who were instrumental in formulating the doctrinal trend of Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism in its history and building up modern Vṅdvāna in the northern part of India as one of the chief intellectual and religious centers of this cult [Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (Calcutta: Firma Klm Private Limited, 1986, reprint; 2nd ed., 1961), 111ff]. For a detailed history of this movement, especially its earlier phase, a critical approach to its philosophical foundation, and a brief note on its social implication with the emergence of different sects in the subsequent period, etc., see De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*; Sudhinda Chandra Chakravarti, *Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism (A Critical Exposition)* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2004) [originally published by Academic Publishers, Calcutta, 1969]; N. N. Bhattacharyya (ed.), *Medieval Bhakti Movement in India (Śrī Caitanya Quincentenary Commemoration Volume)* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1999) [first published in 1989], respectively.
4. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Siddhāntabindu by Madhusūdanarasvatī, A Commentary on the Daśaśloki of Śaṅkarācārya* [Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1986 (3rd ed.; 1st ed., 1928), last concluding verse, 154.
5. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Vedāntakalpalatikā*, edited with an Introduction, English translation, and appendices by R. D. Karmakar (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962), 10, 123.
6. *navadvīpe samāyāte madhusūdanavākṛpatau / cakampe tarkavāgīśaḥ kātaro'bhūd gadādharaḥ //* This incident relates to the fact that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, having left home (i.e., Unasiyā village in Koṭālipādā, a suburb of Faridpur district in East Bengal or present Bangladesh) in childhood, proceeded to Navadvīpa to study Nyāya and then to Benares to study Vedānta. It is during his visit to Navadvīpa, much later from Banaras, that the scholars of Nyāya in Navadvīpa got frightened of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's scholarship. To highlight this point with more subtlety, we could mention that Phaṇibhūṣaṇa Tarkavāgīśa (a famous Naiyāyika from Bengal in the twentieth century CE) used to hold, "When Madhusūdana Paṇḍita visited (Navadvīpa) from Mathura Jagadīśa Tarkālaṅkāra (1500–1600 CE) became bashful and Gadādhara left his conceit" (*mathurāyāḥ samāyāte madhusūdanapaṇḍite / anīṣo jagadīśo'bhūt na jagarjja gadādharaḥ //*) [Rājendranātha Ghoṣa (ed.), *Advaitasiddhiḥ —Śrīyogendranātha Tarkasāmkhyavedāntatīrtha pariśodhitā, tatkrāntikā-vaigānuvāda-tātparyasametā ca*, part 1, in Bengali script (Kalikātā: Śrīkṣetrapāla Ghoṣa, 1931), *Advaitasiddhibhūmikā*, 92–96; P. M. Modi (trans.). *Translation of Siddhantabindu being Madhusūdana's Commentary on the Das'as'loki of Śrī S'ankaracharya* (sic) [Allahabad: Vohra Publishers and Distributors (1st reprint; 1st ed., 1929)], Introduction, 2.

However, D. C. Bhattacharya, in his treatise on the history of learning neo-logic (Navya-Nyāya) in Bengal, refers to one logician, Madhusūdana Vācaspatī, who, according to him, visited Navadvīpa from Mithilā and perplexed Govinda Nyāyavāgīśa and Gadādhara. The verse quoted by him reads as *mithilātaḥ samāyāte madhusūdanavākṛpatau / cakampe nyāyavāgīśaḥ kātaro'bhūd gadādharaḥ //*, its source being an old manuscript in Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad. Bhattacharya also holds that our author, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, precedes Gadādhara by one hundred years or so and that there is no proof that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī studied either in Navadvīpa or Mithilā, thereby professing that Madhusūdana Sarasvatī is different from Madhusūdana Vācaspatī [D. C. Bhattacharya. *Baṅge Navya-Nyāya Carcā*, in Bengali script (Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣat, 1952), 144.

All this account thus leads one to wonder about Madhusūdana's place of origin, which is generally held to be Bengal.

7. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā Śrīpādaviśvanāthacakravarttimahodaya viracita'Sārārthavarṣiṇī' tīkayā evaṃ Śrīyutabaladevavidyābhū ṣaṇmahodayaviracita 'Gītābhūṣaṇa' bhāṣyena samalaṅkrītā* (Mathurā: Kṛṣṇadāsabābā, Gaurahari Press, Kusumasarovara, date unknown), *Gītābhūṣaṇa*, 81–83.
8. *Ibid.*, *Sārārthavarṣiṇī*, 175 and 404.
9. For the enumeration of ten titles for monks of the Śaṅkara order, see Svāmī Vāsdudevānanda (trans. and explained), *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā Śaṅkarabhāṣya o tāra vyākhyā*, in Bengali script [Kalakātā: Udbodhana kāryālaya, 2006 (fifth reprint; 1st ed., 1968)], 1198–99.
10. Kāshināth Trimbak Telang, "A Note on the Age of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1886) X.XXX: 368, 373–74; and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, *Siddhāntabindu of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī with two commentaries Nyāyaratnāvalī of Gauḍabrahmānanda and Laghuvyākhyā of Nārāyaṇatīrtha*, ed. Tryambakram Śāstri Vedāntāchārya (sic) [Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, 1989 (2nd ed.), Introduction, 8.
11. V. Rajagopalan, "Madhusūdana Sarasvatī," in *Preceptors of Advaita*, ed. T. M. P. Mahadevan [Chennai: Samata Books, 2003] (Samata edition; first published, 1968), 254–61.
12. Sanjukta Gupta, *Advaitavedānta and Vaiṣṇavism: The Philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 1–2.
13. *Ibid.*, 2.
14. *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. The Harillāmṛtam by Śrī Bopadeva with a Commentary by Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and Śrīmad Bhāgavata (First śloka)* [sic] *with the Paramahamsapriyā Commentary by the Same Commentator*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series No. 411, ed. Devi Datta Upadhyā (Benares: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1933).
15. *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. The Īśvarapratipattiprakāsa of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī* (sic), Trivendrum Sanskrit Series no. LXXIII, ed. Mm. T. Gaṇapati Śāstri (Trivendrum: Government Press, 1921), 7 (Vopadeva's *Mugdhabodhavyākaraṇa* is also widely read in the eastern part of India, particularly in Bengal).
16. In the *antyalīlā* of chapter 7 of the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*, Caitanya himself is said to have paid high regard to Śrīdhara Svāmin and his commentary on the *Bhāgavata* [Upendranātha Mukhopādhyāya (ed.), *Śrīśrīcāitanyacaritāmṛta*, in Bengali script with simple Bengali translation (Kalikātā: Vasumatī Sāhitya Mandira, 1997 (11th ed.), 321]. Besides, Sanātana Gosvāmin too in his *Vaiṣṇavatoṣiṇī* commentary on the *Bhāgavata* and Jīva Goṣvāmin in his *Bhagavatsaṁdarbha, Paramātmasaṁdarbha*, and *Bhaktisaṁdarbha* have referred to Śrīdhara with due reverence (quoted from Sushil Kumar De, *Early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, 20, fn. 2).
17. See *Madhusūdanivyākhyā* on *Bhagavadgītā* 2.41, 5.7, 6.27, 13.12, 15.16, 17.10, 18.12, etc. (Wāsudev Laxman Śāstrī Paṅsīkar (ed.). *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā with the commentaries Śrīmat-Śaṅkarabhāṣya with Ānandagiri; Nīlakanṭhi; Bhāshyotkarshadīpikā of Dhanapati; Śrīdhari; Gītārthasangraha of Abhinavaguptāchārya; and Gūdhārthadīpikā of Madhusūdana with Gūdhārthatattvāloka of Śrīdharmadattasarmā (Bachchāśarmā)* (sic) (Delhi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan, 1999); and Sarasvatī, *The Harillāmṛtam by Śrī Bopadeva with a Commentary by Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and Śrīmad Bhāgavata (First śloka)* [sic] *with the Paramahamsapriyā Commentary by the Same Commentator, Daśamaskandhakathāsārah*, 32, etc.

---

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **B. K. MATILAL: THE PAST AND FUTURE OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY**

B. K. Matilal (1935–1991) had an extraordinary influence on the direction of the study of Indian philosophy during his lifetime, and this influence has grown in the twenty-five years since his untimely death. The newsletter of the APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies seeks short papers (1,000–3,000 words) on the legacy of B. K. Matilal and his influence, both direct and indirect, on the study of Indian philosophy today and into the future. Topics might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Matilal is known for his efforts at comparing classical Indian and contemporary analytic philosophy. Is this a promising strategy for scholars of Indian philosophy today, or are there other methodological approaches that might be just as fruitful? Might Matilal's approach be combined with other approaches? For instance, Matilal himself became more interested in continental philosophy toward the end of his life, and he always considered his work to be a kind of history of philosophy as well.
- What were Matilal's reasons for engaging in analytic-Indian comparative projects? Are his reasons still relevant going forward into the future of the study of Indian philosophy?
- How have Matilal's contributions in areas such as logic, epistemology, ethics, the philosophical relevance of literature, etc., added to contemporary understandings of these topics? What are some avenues for new research in these areas that might be inspired by Matilal, either directly or indirectly?
- How has the story of Matilal's legacy been told in the last twenty-five years? How is he likely to be remembered into the future?

Please submit your paper of roughly 1,000–3,000 words to Ethan Mills ([Ethan-Mills@utc.edu](mailto:Ethan-Mills@utc.edu)) by June 15, 2017. Papers chosen for publication will appear in the fall 2017 issue of the newsletter.