ISSN 972-33315

jnanadeepa

Pune Journal of Religious Studies

Tradition, Freedom & Development

Volume 16 No. 2 July 2013

Jnanadeepa:
Pune Journal of Religious Studies

Contents

Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies

Jnanadeepa (="Light of Wisdom") is a biannual interdisciplinary journal of religious studies from an Indian Christian perspective. It is closely associated with Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth: Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune 411014, India.

Jnanadeepa is published biannually, in January and July. Views expressed by the writers are not necessarily those of the editors. Manuscripts submitted for publication should be original and cannot be returned (writers' style sheet is available on request); they could be sent (preferrably as a text or RTF file) in a computer diskette or through E-mail as file attachment.

All **correspondence** (requests for subscription, manuscripts, books for review – two copies, please – exchange copies of journals, advertisements, etc.) to:
The Editor, *Jnanadeepa*, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune 411014, India Tel (office): +91-20-41036364, (res): +91-20-41036111
E-mail:<thomaskuri@hotmail.com>
<journalpune@gmail.com>

Subscriptions could be sent from India either by Money Order or Demand Draft.From foreign countries International Money Order or Crossed Cheque is preferred. From Commonwealth countries British Postal Order is preferred. All payments are to be made in the name of ***Jnanadeepa Journal.*** Email:subscriptioninch@gmail.com

Typeset & print:	JDV Computer Centre
Publisher:	Thomas Kuriacose for Jnana Deepa Publications.
ISSN:	0972-33315

Subscription Rates

Country	*One year*	*Three years*
India	Ind. Rs. 100	Ind. Rs. 250
SAARC Countries	Ind. Rs.140	Ind. Rs. 400
Other Countries (Air Mail)	US $ 25; Euro 20	US $ 55; Euro 50
Institutional Rate	US $ 50; Euro 40	US $ 110;Euro 100
Personal Life Subscription	Rs 3,000(India)	US $ 400;Euro 350

JPJRS 16/2 ISSN 0971-33315 July 2013: 3-9

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4284377
Stable URL: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4284377

Editorial

Today we live in a world of unimaginable change and undeniable progress. No generation earlier has seen so much development in so short a time. How does the development that we see around us affect us? How is it related to our rootedness or freedom? How does it enhance our freedom? How can we foster a development that is rooted in the tradition and open to the new? Can we dream of a humane and all-inclusive development that does justice to humanity? These are some of the questions that we take up in this volume, which tries to relate human development to freedom.

The first article takes up Gandhi who have been dealing with the issues connected with freedom and development. Prof George Pattery, President (Acting), Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, enquires into the concept of development and its hermeneutical role with regard to tradition and freedom. This will take us to view the evolutionary contribution in an appreciative frame. In the light of these we review Gandhi's notion of development and its linkage with tradition and freedom. Wholeness/holon-movement/interdependence is the point of departure of the author. The choice of the model of development will define our understanding of tradition and freedom. Wholeness takes the evolutionary tradition forward. The author invites us to augment the fields of compassion so that sarvodaya and antyodaya, as visualized by Gandhi could be reinterpreted and appropriated.

The Gandhian vision of freedom may be contrasted to the materialistic approach of M.N. Roy. Dr James Ponniah, Dean of

Philosophy, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, explores the philosophy of one of the modern atheistic philosophers of India, M.N. Roy, to find out how he critiqued and re-interpreted the tradition that he came from, i.e. Marxism, to develop his own system, namely, Radical Humanism. It further dwells on its key concepts of freedom, rationality and morality to find their relevance for a secular development ethics. For this, according to the author, we need to look for philosophies and world-views that would put us on the right path of living for all. While so much has been written about the role of religion to orient ourselves for a holistic future, the author holds that M.N. Roy's radical humanism provides an alternative worldview from which all irrespective of religious creeds and ideological colours can draw inspiration and motivations for a holistic environmental ethics.

The next two articles give an overview of the challenges facing contemporary world. The first one by Dr. Nishant Irudayadason, Director, JDV Centre for Applied Ethics, examines the technological challenges that India faces and explores some of the moral responses, based on the German philosopher, Hans Jonas's imperative of responsibility.

The comprehensive and life-long task Hans Jonas sets himself is to find an ethics for our age, the technological one. He develops this approach mainly in his book The Imperative of Responsibility. Jonas is certainly not against technology especially since technological innovations play positive roles in the field of health and medicine, communication and transport. While the technological potential itself is not the problem, the lack of ethical restrictions, the unbridled and uncontrolled development and increase of technological power is indeed a problem. The destructive potential of technology cannot be contained on its own and Jonas metaphorically describes this ethical impasse as 'the finally unbound Prometheus.' The limitlessness and infiniteness of human dominion are expressions of our Promethean arrogance and immodesty. It is one thing that we have reached such degree

of technical mastery that we can cultivate, manipulate, shape and change life up to the point that we irreversibly damage or even destroy it. It is another that there are no ethical restrictions that can protect us from effectuating our own demise as well as the destruction of the environment. It is in this context that Jonas underscores the importance of human responsibility.

The author holds that everyone can participate in the critique of technological utopianism and construction of a new world, more human and more clean. Whether through an artistic practice, through participation in events, by creating a website, or through discussions and debates, everyone can add a stone to build our future world and to bring about change in the attitude of humanity. The Imperative of Responsibility is one of those stones which humanity needs today. It seems then that the ethics of Jonas by criticizing the enslavement of human person to our modern economy and comfort technology, addresses one of the biggest problems that humanity must address in the twenty-first century.

The next article reflects on some of the challenges that modern India faces, given its paradoxical model of development. Kuruvilla Pandikattu, Director, JDV Centre for Science-Religion Studies, holds that India, with a rich tradition and history of more than 5000 years is still a vibrant democracy, where freedom is very much cherished, if not always realised. The modern India that is progressing is truly a story of living contradictions and creative paradoxes. In this chapter, he shows that only debate and dialogue can make India a viable player in the globalized world of today, where democracy is cherished, development is furthered and freedom realized.

In the first part, the author highlights the contribution of Amartya Sen, who equates genuine freedom with enabling development and fostering capabilities. Later he reflects on the present state of political freedom and democratic polity in India following the analysis of Mukulika Banerjee. This takes him to the burn-

ing problem of corruption in India and the sad, ambivalent and unending story of Anna Hazare movement. These issues point to the need to carry on dialoging with adversaries of different sorts, an imperative to foster development and freedom. In the concluding part, basing on the novel The White Tiger, the author takes up some of the contradictions inherent in our vibrant India, which makes it an incomplete story, a dynamic and complex movement forward. The author dreams that we can move towards "completing" the story of progress and development by emphasizing respectful and on-going dialogue with all players that constitute the larger or entangled stories that the emerging India is: something to be achieved by reinterpreting and appropriating the weakest individual man or woman in India!

The following article by Ginish Cheruparambil, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune, explores Amartya Sens capability approach to freedom. The center of Sen's vision is what he calls a 'capability approach', where the basic concern of human development is 'our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value,' rather than the usual concentration on rising GDP, technical progress, or industrialization. His approach 'inescapably focuses on the agency and judgment of individuals' including their capability, responsibility, and opportunity. Raising human capability is good because it improves the choices, wellbeing, and freedom of people. Further, human capability plays a significant role in influencing social change and in influencing economic production. In this context, the author proposes a creative interprreation and criticism of Sen's approach to freedom.

The next article deals with Buddhist hermeneutics and its relevance for contemporary India. Prof. Dr. Mangala R. Chinchore, Department of Philosophy, University of Pune, dwells into the significance of Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra. According to her, knowledge is not merely for its own sake, but it is to be used, practised and lived actually. Such knowledge is a mark of unity of Indian Civilization. Naturally, various sages and seers have

spoken out their own revelations of truth/s. Since their comprehensions and visions not being the same, interpretative varieties have emerged. Further, due to differences in the modes of thinking and living truth, traditions of interpretation, reinterpretation and multiple understandings surfaced. Thus, cultural diversity which is lived/ experienced actually has been a living fact.

Within the fold of Indian Civilisation, Gautama the Buddha in the 5th century B.C. attempted to discover the truth and excel the then prevalent modes of thoughts and practices. He, after his enlightenment, initially kept silence, and was hesitant to respond to the questions posed by the people, but after repeated requests from humans and super-natural entities, he attempted to speak about his revelation/realisation of the truth. Then he delivered the first discourse known as the Dhammacakka-pabattana-sutta. After his Bodhi (enlightenment) till his Mahāparinirvāṭa (death), – i.e., for almost 50 years – he expressed his views and thoughts at different places and times, and in response to various issues of the numerous individuals. His understanding and comprehension about himself, others, and the world at large, consists of the four basic truths viz, the Ārya-satyas (Four Noble Truths). Although he was clear enough that realisation cannot be substituted by the description and discourse of truth, nonetheless it is out of compassion and love towards others that he preached and disseminated his knowledge of truth. After Buddha's passing away the need and necessity of interpreting and reunderstanding his thought and experiences arose and multiplied in course of time. And this is how within the fold of Buddhism, hermeneutics originated and flourished.

This legacy of interpretative tradition further was reinforced by the movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and Yogācāra tradition of Buddhism in particular, and later on against which the Mādhyamika trend within Buddhism emerged. In the Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra (approximately 100 B.C.) the seeds were sown and Saṅdhinirmocana-sūtra further added some points, but it is

Asaṅga ((c.300 - 370 CE), an Indian Buddhist master and scholar and major exponent of Yogācāra, who systematically pioneered this trend of thought and hence is honoured by the status of one of the "Six Ornaments of Buddhism in the Jaṃbu-dvipa".

This paper is an attempt to inquire into Buddhist hermeneutics in particular, by using Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra as a starting point. It is a modest endeavour to re-interpret and re-understand Buddhist thought and bring out its relevance by way of its appropriation for the present. This two-fold task – of interpretation and making it relevant in the present contexts – is attempted in three sections: first, a question of what is the nature and status of hermeneutic within Buddhism in general and Asaṅga's Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra in particular is considered. Then, we attempt to inquire as to why hermeneutics is required. Finally, we concentrate on the question as to how it is to be used significantly – the methods and procedures of its use for philosophy and practice. The entire exercise, we hope, is a methodological appropriation of historical facts, and focusing on linking our understanding of them to the present context.

The papers in this volume are mostly based on an international seminar on "Tradition, Freedom and Development: Hermeneutic Appropriations" held on August 10-12, 2012 at Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth (JDV), Pune 411014, India. Its primary goal is to understand and appreciate one's own culture and the values that shape its aspirations and motivate its actions. And its objective was to mobilize research teams to study the nature, interpretation and development of cultures and to apply them to the challenges of contemporary globalised world. In this venture Centre for Values, Research and Philosophy has teamed up with JDV and organised the three day seminar cum workshop.

The final article in this issue is the inaugural Lecture '*Schola Brevis*' at Jnana-Deep Vidyapeeth, delivered on June 10, 2013, by Rudolf C. Heredia SJ, Independent researcher, Mumbai. He reflects on Pope Francis's vision of a poor Church for the poor

is a call to be more authentic and focused in their mission. However, we need to constantly contextualise our understanding of what it means to be poor for our Church today and every day; as also who the poor are and how they are to be served. It is particularly pertinent for ecclesial studies in a poor country. For as institutions of higher learning Catholic faculties are concerned with not just the transmission but the transformation of the social heritage of the Church.Given the huge institutional investment of the Church, what is needed today is prophetic witnessing not just by charismatic individuals, but by Church institutions. Catholic faculties are called to give such prophetic institutional witness.

Pope Francis's vision and mission for the Church is a defining moment, a *kairos*, that challenges local churches to come out from our comfort zones to a prophetic witness that contextualises their option for the poor and the promotion of justice in solidarity with them. This demands a renewed priority for charismatic elements in the Church and its institutions, even as it must still be balanced by the institutional one.

This requires an option for a pedagogic praxis that is liberative and transformative in counter-cultural solidarity with the poor. Such pedagogies focus less on teaching course content than on transforming learners and reorienting teachers. Taken together these pedagogies have the potential for a community that is creative and humane, ethical and non-violent, participative and affirmative, inculturated and diverse. Catholic faculties are missioned to a critical and constructive role in facilitating such ecclesial communities in solidarity with and for the poor, for they encapsulate the learning and the teaching Church, *eccelsia docens*, *ecclesia discerns*, in the quest for the kingdom of God.

I do hope that these articles give us enough theological fodder for reflection and assimilation.

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ
(Guest Editor)