

## Report of the Lecture Program

The School of Philosophy & Culture has hosted Prof. P. K. Mukhopadhyaya's lecture series from November 24 – 25, 2008. He is one of the distinguished National Fellows of the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi. The program was sponsored by the Council. Prof. Mukhopadhyaya began his first lecture with a remark that we often mistake familiarity for clarity. The same is true with the concept of Logic. We discuss so many things in the name of Logic, but unfortunately, we miss to make clear what we mean by Logic. More often than not, we think that there is only one Logic, and variations in different Logical studies developed in different cultures are peripheral to the discipline. His remark in this regard has generated a lot of heat whether there is culture-specific logical thinking or it is neutral to any cultural specificity. He argued that Indian Logic, as a discourse, is strikingly different from that of Western Logic, particularly Formal Logic: Whereas Indian Logic is epistemological in nature; Western Logic is essentially formal and detached from any psychological content. Furthermore, he made a distinction between “doing logic” and “philosophically reflecting” on Logic. Doing logic is more of mechanical in nature and therefore hardly gives any knowledge in true sense of the term. However, reflections on the methods of logical thinking are something that makes it an enterprise of philosophical kind and hence the study of Logic is included in the course of philosophy.

Alluding to sheer mechanical nature of Western Formal Logic, he remarked that such Logic does not enable us to distinguish one valid inference from another valid inference of the same form. Being epistemologically inclined, Indian Logicians do provide a framework for such distinction. In furtherance of this discussion, he introduced another distinction between Philosophy of Logic and Philosophical Logic: whereas the former is concerned with the scope and nature of Logic, the latter focuses specifically on the philosophical aspects of Logic. This issue was discussed in his second delivery.

In the third session, he delivered on philosophy of language from both Indian and Western perspectives. In this regard, he distinguished between the approaches of both the traditions: whereas Western philosophy of language is “meaning-oriented”, Indian philosophy of language is *pramāṇa*-theoretic. As in the case of Formal Logic, Western

philosophy of language (i.e., Analytic philosophy) has replaced epistemology from the central point of philosophical discourse. For, language is a source of knowledge of meaning, not of facts. Indian philosophy considers language as verbalization of cognition. Therefore, language in India has always been part of general epistemology. Moreover, some philosophical systems have recognized language as an independent source of knowledge. Others, who do not recognize language as an independent source of knowledge, reduce it to inferential knowledge.

Apart from the three technical lectures, he delivered a general lecture on the theme “Science, Technology & Society: A Philosopher’s Response”. The lecture was a great success and was profusely attended by faculty members and students of the University. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. N. K. Bansal, was the Chairperson of the session. In this talk, he emphasized the need of science and technology in our society. Technology always develops in a regular dialogue with the needs of society. Initially, the development in this area was to facilitate human beings for survival. But the way it is developed today, it has called forth the issue of survival, not of only human race but of organism as such. Such existential crisis has arisen basically due to two reasons: (1) people are quite obsessed with *scientific* knowledge so much so that the so-called sciences became the *saviour* of knowledge, and thus developed a tendency to look down on other domains of knowledge, and (2) people have entertained a faulty (predominantly Western) conception of development: Golden age is always ahead. This conception of progress draws upon the *linear* notion of time as opposed to the circular notion of time. Unless we realize that there is no end to our desires and therefore it is imprudent to pour in more and more sophisticated technology to fulfill those desires, we would never be able to get over the present existential crisis. All the lectures were thought-provoking and were highly appreciated. On behalf of the School of Philosophy & Culture and the University, V.K. Tripathi expressed thanks to Prof. Mukhopadhyaya and the audience.

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