

Paul Marnay

# Basic concepts of ethics in the darsanas

Presented in the light  
of their respective concepts of man

Trajectoires, mouvements,  
changements  
dans le sous-continent  
**indien**

L'Harmattan

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**Trajectoires, mouvements, changements  
dans le sous-continent indien**  
Coll. Dirigée par Brigitte Tison

Cette collection est destinée à décrire, analyser, développer les mouvements de populations originaires du Sous-Continent indien ainsi que les populations du sud-est de l'Asie, de la Chine, des îles. Les raisons de ces mouvements de populations sont multiples tant économiques que religieuses ou guerrières. Parmi ces populations, nous ferons une place aux trajectoires d'écrivains, d'artistes, de défenseurs des libertés et aux voyageurs. L'influence de pays à travers leurs populations expatriées pourra faire partie de cette collection : comment vivent-elles ? Quelles adaptations ? Cloisonnements, ghettos ? Quels échanges ont-elles entre elles ? Une attention toute particulière sera portée aux champs de l'éducation et du soin. Les objectifs seront de mieux informer, d'apporter des compléments de connaissances pour mieux comprendre et améliorer les relations entre les peuples, la cohabitation dans nos villes. Les théories et pratiques seront le « fer-de-lance » de la collection ainsi que l'acquisition de savoir faire et de savoir être.

**Courses, Movements, Changes in India**  
Coll. Directed by Brigitte Tison

This collection is intended to describe, to analyze, develop the movements of populations originated from India as well as populations from south east asia, China, islands.

The causes of these movements of populations are many as much as economic, religious or warlike. Among these populations, we shall make a special place to the writers, the artists, the actor's freedom, the travellers ... We shall make the same with the diaspora ' populations. How they lived ? Which adaptations ? Ghettos or not. Have they any exchange among them ?

We shall look after fields of education and care in particular. The aims will be informations, knowledges to improve people's relations and understandings, the housing in our cities.

Theories and Practices will be the most important in this collection just as the gains of knowledges (how, being).

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Thank very much to the brother Xavier Chevillard for the confidence he gave me.

The christian thoughts of paul Marnay focused on the hindou thoughts. This reflexion could be known for the researchers in philosophy and religious sciences.

M. Pryen, director of L'Harmattan, has accepted that this text could be published in english. Thanks to him.

It's therefore published in english, in which Paul Marnay wrote his text and presented to Madras university (Tamil Nad – South India).

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## Introduction

The hindu traditions which found their classical expression in the six darsanas, were living and lived answers to man's questions about himself, his destiny, the significance of his insertion in society and in the universe, the nature of reality, etc ... Each one sprung from creative insights and beliefs<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the present study is : (1) to analyze their ethico-religious views in reference to their respective concepts of man as embedded in different outlooks on reality and in the light of their originating insights and beliefs, (2) and to compare their different approaches to the basic concepts of ethics.

We take the term ethics as denoting the practical knowledge which regulates man's conscious actions in relation to his ultimate end or ends. This alternative refers to the fact that the early Mimamskas up to the time of kumarila Bhatta believed that man's unique end was happiness as experienced in this universe, whereas all the other traditions (and the later Mimamskas too) teach that man is faced with a radical choice: happiness within this and other (finite) worlds at the cost of transmigrating existence which is inescapably beset with suffering, or liberation from the bondage that sorrowful transmigration is. These two mutually inconsistent ends determine therefore two ethical perspectives : the one is secular (secular ethics), the other is trans-worldly (meta-ethics).

We have selected four dasanas : Purva-Mimamsa (first exegesis), the Nyaya-darsana, the Yoga-darsana and the Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta. This selection that is primarily meant to keep the present work within reasonable limits, is however not arbitrary. The well known affinities between the Vais'esika-darsana and the Nyaya-darsana on the one hand and between the Samkhya-darsana

And the Yoga-darsana on the other hand, would have caused fastidious repetitions if they had been separately considered. We preferred the Yoga-darsana to the Samkya-darsana because for the former's role in hindu spirituality and because of its special attention to ethical matters. The choice of the Nyaya-darsana is justified by its exhaustive study of the law of karma. The Vedanta is represented by Sankara's non-dualism (advaita-Vedanta) and by Ramanuja's "Non dualism of the differenced as such" (visista-advaita). It is not without regret that Madhava's affinities with Ramanuja's views, it is the echo of a different religious and mystical tradition and contains some original insights about man's destiny.

The present work is based on the earliest commentary on the aphoristic manifest of each tradition that is now extant. References to subsequent works will be made whenever these works clarify obscure points, present relevant developments and help to single out the originating insights and beliefs. Moreover, the choice of first commentaries is not arbitrary and can be justified on the following

grounds : (1) although the authors of the Bhasyas were not the founders<sup>2</sup> of new schools of thought, their deep personal understanding of the stand-point of their tradition and their existential commitment to the corresponding way of life and spirituality, enabled them to expound forcefully the comprehensive wisdom that they had inherited, in the light of its original insights and beliefs ; (2) later, these creative elements became obscured by an excess of conceptual technicalities due partly to the propensity of teachers to indulge in abstract teaching and to stress marginal differences within one selfsame tradition at the expense of their fundamental agreement and partly to the requirements of controversies between orthodox traditions or with opponents from outside.

The twofold aspect of the present study determines its method and structure. Each tradition is considered in itself and analyzed separately so as to grasp its inner dynamism and, in function of this, the consistency and harmony of its different elements ; special psychological basis of the image of man, and the ethical climate which determines the understanding of the basic concepts of ethics. After five quasi monographs, the ethical views of the different schools will be compared and their complementarity and opposition analyzed.

A comparative consideration of the direct means to salvation in reference to the nature of the saving experience leads to recognize different spiritualities : the Yoga spirituality of aloneness as rooted in the natural inclination of the mental faculty toward the saving experience. The advaitic spirituality of beatitudinous aloneness as the echo of the absolute and blissful autonomy of the non-dual Brahman that is the Self, the Ramanujiya spirituality of aloneness in dependence, and the Ramajiya spirituality of union as befitting a being whose sole essence-and-joy “to serve” his Lord through loving intuitive meditation. Special attention is given in the analysis of the path to salvation to the function of the discipline of action and the nature and function of bhakti and grace.

The present comparative approach tends to emphasize the specificity of the ethical views and spiritualities which correspond to different “images of man” within the Brahmanic orthodoxy ; this should not however blur their profound affinities ; a brief comparison with the Indian non-brahmanic view-points and with the Christian approach will manifest them.

My grateful thanks are due specially to Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan who helped me, through his commentary of the Bhagavad-Gita, to perceive the existential coherence of the Advaitic view-point, and to Prof. K Balasubramania. May I be permitted also to recall my debt of gratitude to Prof. O. Lacombe who introduced me to the Vedanta and to J. Marit in who awakened me to the philosophical approach to Being-Truth.

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## Abbreviations

Remark – In the following list, the numbers refer to the bibliography

Ap	17	Mimamsa Nyaya prakasa
As	15	The Arthasamgraha of Laugaksi Bhaskara
AV	7	L’Absolu selon le Vedanta
Br	18	Brhati (in V Br p. 43/P, V=Vol. V and / P the pancika)
BrB	26	Part II, Sankara’s commentary on the Brhadaranyaka-Upanisad
BS		Brahma-sutras
BSB	25	Brahmasutrabhasya of Sankara
BrU		Brhadaranyaka-upanisad
CB	2	Theorie de la connaissance et philosophie de la parole.
Ch, ChU		Chandogya-upanisad
ChB	26	Part I, Sankara’s commentary on the Chandogya-upanisad
CIP	3	Contemporary Indian Philosophy
EIP	5	Essentiel of Indian philosophy
H	4	L’hindouisme
HP	43	A history of philosophy
IC	6	L’Inde classique, tome II
IIP	8	Invitation to Indian philosophy
Ci		Bhagavad-Gita
Ci Zae	1	The Bhagavad-Gita, R.C. Zaehner
Ka		Katha-upanisad
Kau (U)		Kausitaki-upanisad
MS	9	Mimamsa-sutra
Mu, MuU		Mundaka-upanisad
MuB	26	Part I, sankara’s commentary on the Mundaka-upanisad
NB	21	Nyayabhasya
NR	10	Nyayaratnakara

NS	21	Nyayasutra
PA	32	The Philosophy of Advaita
PD	31	Pancadasi
PP	19	Prakaranapancika
PWM	20	Philosophy of word and Meaning
RB	37	Ramanuja on the Bhagavad-Gita
RGB	34	Gitabhasya of Ramanuja
RY	24	Reappraisal of Yoga
Sb	9	Sabara bhasya
SB	33	Sribhasya ; for the first sutra the references are given to 36 La doctrine morale et métaphysique de Ramanuja
SGB	27	Sankara's commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita
SD	13	Sastradipika (Sanskrit text)
SD Et	14	id. (English translation)
Sv	10 et 11	Slokavarttika
SvU		Svetasvatara-upanisad
Ta1B	26	Part I, sankara's commentary on the Taittiriya-upanisad
TaiU		Taittiriya-Upanisad
TV	22	Tattvavaisaradi
TVK	21	Tantravarttika
VS	38	Vedārtha samgraha
YB	22	Vyasabhasyam
YS	22	Yoga-sutra
YSP	23	Yoga-System of philosophy
YV		Yogavarttika

NB : Whenever a reference is followed either by/123 or 10/or 95/27, the number to the right of/ refers to the page in the Sanskrit text, and the one to the left indicates the page of the English translation.

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**BASIC CONCEPTS OF ETHICS IN THE DARSHANAS**

Presented

**IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE  
CONCEPTS OF MAN**

## Introduction

The Hindu traditions which found classical expression in the six darsanas, were living and lived answers to man's questions about himself, his destiny, the significance of his insertion in society and in the universe, the nature of reality, etc ... Each one sprung from creative insights and beliefs<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the present study is: (1) to analyse their ethico-religious views in reference to their respective concepts of man as embedded in different outlooks on reality and in the light of their originating insights and beliefs, (2) and to compare their different approaches to the basic concepts of ethics.

We take the term ethics as denoting the practical knowledge which regulates man's conscious actions in relation to his ultimate end or ends. This alternative refers to the fact that the early Mimamsakas up to the time of Kumarila Bhatta believed that man's unique end was happiness as experienced in this universe, whereas all the other traditions (and the later Mimamsakas too) teach that man is faced with a radical choice: happiness within this and other (finite) worlds at the cost of transmigrating existence which is inescapably beset with suffering, or liberation from the bondage that sorrowful transmigration is. These two mutually inconsistent ends determine therefore two ethical perspectives: the one is secular (secular ethics), the other is trans-worldly (meta-ethics).

We have selected four darsanas: Purva-Mimamsa (First Exegesis), the Nyaya-darsana, the Yoga-darsanas, and the Uttara-Mimamsa or Vedanta. This selection that is primarily meant to keep the present work within reasonable limits, is however not arbitrary. The well known affinities between the Vaisesika-darsana and the Nyaya-darsana on the one hand, and, between the Sankhya-darsana and the Yoga-darsana on the other hand, would have caused fastidious repetitions if they had been separately considered. We preferred the Yoga-darsana to the Sankhya-darsana because of the former's role in Hindu spirituality and because of its special attention to ethical matters. The choice of the Nyaya-darsana is justified by its exhaustive study of the law of karma. The Vedanta is represented by Sankara's non-dualism (advaita-Vedanta) and by Ramanuja's "Non-dualism of the differenced as such" (visista-advaita). It is not without regret that Madhava's dualism has been left out of our enquiry; for in spite of its affinities with Ramanuja's views, it is the echo of a different religious and mystical tradition and contains some original insights about man's destiny.

The present work is based on the earliest commentary on the aphoristic manifest of each tradition that is now extant. References to subsequent works will be made whenever those works clarify obscure points, present relevant developments and help to single out the originating insights and beliefs. Moreover, the choice of first commentaries is not arbitrary and can be justified on the following grounds : (1) although the Authors of the Bhasyas were not the founders<sup>2</sup> of

new schools of thought, their deep personal understanding of the stand-point of their tradition and their existential commitment to the corresponding way of life and spirituality, enabled them to expound forcefully the comprehensible wisdom that they had inherited, in the light of its original insights and beliefs ; (2) later, these creative elements became obscured by an excess of conceptual technicalities due partly to the propensity of teachers to indulge in abstract teaching and to stress marginal differences within one selfsame tradition at the expense of their fundamental agreement, and partly to the requirements of controversies between orthodox traditions or with opponents from outside.

The twofold aspect of the present study determines its method and structure. Each tradition is considered in itself and analyzed separately so as to grasp its inner dynamism and, in function of this, the consistency and harmony of its different elements; special attention is given to the correlation between the ontological and psychological basis of the image of man, and the ethical climate which determines the understanding of the basic concepts of ethics. After five quasi monographs, the ethical views of the different schools will be compared, and their complementarity and opposition analysed.

Here are the ethical themes which emerge from the monographs as worthy points of comparison : the concept of dharma, its structure and its relation to the concept of value ; authority in ethico-religious matters ; the role of Reason in discriminating values or in founding them; the concept of obligation with its psychological and ontological aspects ; dominant ethical virtue(s), its/their relation to spiritual experience and to the ontological concept of reality ; ends of man ; motivation for turning away from happiness in objects and conversion to liberation ; the belief and existential inclination which make one able to tread the path to liberation.

The first chapter presents Sabara's outlook on life. It corresponds to a society sure of itself, deeply rooted in immemorial traditions and whose unity was based on its being the depository of the Vedic Revelation. Man experiences himself as an earth-bound being who seeks from birth to birth happiness through his actions. The experienced efficacy of experience-based actions and the "super-efficacy" of Vedic rites induce in him a naïve optimism as yet unaware of the destressing aspects of metempsychosis.

The insights and beliefs that animate this naively optimistic image of man are: the awareness that man's unique motive to act is happiness ; the belief that happiness consists in enjoying material goods, high social status, and other secular values that are held in high esteem in the Brahmanic society (Cf. the role of the elitist group of the Sistas, i.e. the learned in Vedic lore) ; and the belief in the absolute auto-efficacy of the Vedic dharmas (rites) as conducive to happiness.

The Veda sets forth new means (rites, spells, etc ...) toward already known ends, and these ends are morally objectionable only if they are objects of Ve-