

Eli Franco, On the Periodization of Indian Philosophy

The paper will present four influential conceptions, each accompanied by its own periodization, and tentatively argue in favour of a fifth one. 1) The idealistic interpretation of Paul Deussen (followed by Radhakrishnan and others) consider Indian philosophy to culminate in the idealism of the Upanishads/Vedānta, and which divides Indian philosophy into three periods; 2) The racialist interpretation of Erich Frauwallner that divides Indian philosophy into two periods, the Aryan and the non-Aryan; 3) The Marxist-Leninist presentation of Walter Ruben (also Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya) with its sixfold division; 4) Helmuth von Glasenapp's attempt to coordinate the development of Indian philosophy with socio-political history and the coordination of Indian philosophy with ruling dynasties (Maurya Period, Gupta Period, Period of Islamic Dominance, Mogul Period).

As a basis for further discussion I will propose a division into three periods: 1) The period up to Dignāga; 2) Dignāga to Udayana; 3) Udayana to the 17th/18th century. (To these a fourth period may be added, which is characterized by the encounter of Indian intellectuals with the Western philosophical tradition.) A similar division has been proposed for the first time by Satish Chandra Vidyabhushana in the somewhat narrower framework of Indian logic (cf. *A History of Indian Logic*, posthumously published Calcutta, 1920), but to my knowledge has not been hitherto applied to the history of Indian philosophy in general.

The first period is characterized by the development of metaphysics; its beginnings are uncertain, but it ends by the fifth century CE. Indian philosophy stopped being metaphysically productive by the 4th or 5th century. By that time the Dualism of Sāṃkhya, the Atomism of Vaiśeṣika and the idealism of Vedānta are already in place. On the Buddhist side, the Sarvāstivāda (and Sautrāntika, if it ever existed as a school) the Theravāda, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra (including Tathāgatagarbha) have already reached their peak. Put provocatively, the only important metaphysical developments after the 5th century are the diversification of Vedānta and the integration of "God" into Sāṃkhya metaphysics.

The second period is characterized by the development of epistemology and polemical debates primarily between Buddhists of the *pramāṇa* tradition, Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas. The Vedāntins, Jainas and Śaivas (notably Abhinavagupta) play an interesting role on the sidelines, which needs to be studied in more detail.

The third period is marked by the disappearance of the Buddhists from the philosophical scene and the development of Navya Nyāya; Vedānta and theistic traditions become increasingly prominent; further developments in Neo-Jainism and Neo-Mīmāṃsā remain largely unstudied.

Obviously this rough scheme needs to be examined in detail, expanded and nuanced, and attention has to be paid to methodological problems.