PREFACE INTRODUCING THE SUBJECT

There are two dominant senses in which the word 'jñāṇa' has been used in epistemological enterprise by Indian philosophers. In a sense, it refers only to pramā, the non-erring and non-dubious awareness. The philosophers who hold this view consider erroneous cognition (bhrama/viparyaya) as theoretic impossibility. The chief propounders of this view are Prābhākaras. Their view seems to resemble the western view of knowledge which is necessarily non-erring. Contrary to this, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers accept the word 'Knowledge' in the episodic sense and advocate thus a wider view, according to which 'jñāna' includes not only pramā, the non-erring and non-dubious awareness episode, but also contains 'apramā', the erring and dubious awareness etc. For them, 'jñāna' is infallible in some cases and fallible in some other. They also put forward various causal and justificatory grounds (pramāṇas) for distinguishing the infallible kind of 'jñāna' from fallible one. Naturally, they advanced logistic for admitting apramā within the scope of 'jñāna'. The historical study of the genesis and development of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika epistemology reveals the fact that their view of jñāna which includes 'apramā ' uses to serve as logistic warrant for their pluralistic and realistic view of the world. Accordingly, through the different phases of time, it had been the target of attack of the philosophical schools in India and in order to give rejoinder to the critics throughout the ages, the later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika developed an exhaustive store house of subtle polimics of epistemological grounds, many of which are akin to the modern techniques
and tools of philosophical logic of the west, say, *tarka* seems very much like the method of *reductio ad absurdum*. Notwithstanding, a few exceptions like B.K. Matilal, J.N. Mohanty in modern times who have tried to give some momentum to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy through their interpretative works in the light of the conceptual structure of western intellectual tradition, most of the researches in Indian epistemology centres round the *pramāṇya* and *pramā*. As a result of this *pramā*-centric focus, a vast literature related to the concept of *apramā* and its varieties remains comparatively unexplored and neglected in modern times. A critical and exhaustive exposition of ‘*apramā*’ in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition thus deserves special attention for a comprehensive understanding of their contribution to the epistemological literature of India. And the proposed thesis will be an humble attempt in this direction.

The proposed thesis has two-fold objectives, viz., (1) to give a critical exposition of different types of *apramā* as admitted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers, and (2) a defence to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of fallibilistic conception of ‘*jñāna*’ against the Prabhākara’s view of ‘*jñāna*’ as something exclusively infallible. And for doing this, we propose to develop logical grounds for the wider conception of ‘*jñāna*’ which includes ‘*apramā*’. It is in this second point that we believe has enabled the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers to give a more comprehensive and wider account of knowledge from realistic point of view against the Prabhākara’s marginal account of knowledge as necessarily valid. Besides, our dissertation contains occasional comparisons of the key
concepts like *saṁśaya* (doubt) *viparyaya* (error) and *tarka* (hypothetical reasoning) etc. with the position of other schools of Indian Philosophy and that of Western Philosophy. Our analysis may also highlight some of the baffling issues the epistemologist have been facing in the west from the day of plato to modern times.

Our thesis is divided into several broad chapters. However, each chapter will again be divided into various sections and subsections. The details of chapterwise schematization of this dissertation has been shown in the contents. The first chapter is devoted to the explication of the concept of 'jñāna' and its classification, because the concept of 'apraṃā' (non-valid cognition) comes into epistemological discourse as a subdivision of jñāna. Naturally, the very conception of 'jñāna' as necessarily valid as propounded by Prābhākara Mīmāṃsakas and as has been contested by the Naiyāyikas attracted our attention in a section, because it is that backdrop, the very conception of knowledge as 'it is liable to fallibility' that makes room for non-valid cognition (apraṃā). The main contention of the second chapter is to elucidate the nature and varieties of *saṁśaya* (doubt) as an apraṃā. This chapter also highlights a comparative account of the Nyāya concept of *saṁśaya* with the concept of doubt as endorsed by Rene Descartes in Modern Philosophy. The third chapter deals with seven different theories of *viparyaya* as admitted by different schools of Indian Philosophy. After a thorough critical analysis of different theories of *viparyaya* we have tried to give a defence of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory named as 'anyathākhyāti'. The fourth chapter
exposes the defining characteristics (lakṣaṇa) of tarka and its various types. It also embodies a brief comparison of tarka with Nāgārjuna\'s prasiṅga. A defence of Paratathāprāmāṇyavāda is also given in this chapter.

Besides containing a resume, the conclusion gives a defence of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view of fallibilistic epistemology with special emphasis on non-valid cognition (apramā) from common-sense points of view. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, being realistic and pluralistic one, approaches to the problem of knowledge from practical considerations. In our practical way of life we cannot deny the fact of doubt, error and application of hypothetical reasoning. Therefore, these must be accommodated within the scope of knowledge. Any view against this, that is to say, knowledge is necessarily valid and the exclusion of apramā from the scope of knowledge cannot be supported even from common-sense point of view. The subtle analysis of the problem of knowledge from the Navya-Nyāya standpoint, as given in this dissertation, would reveal a defensive account of comprehensiveness of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view and the refutation of the charges against the possibility of apramā. Last but not least, our interpretation of the concept of apramā as it is focused in our critical exposition, would clear many misunderstandings about the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika epistemology and thus our dissertation may be considered as a strong defence of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika stand.

In this dissertation, for exposition of the views I have relied mainly on the philosophical texts (in Sanskrit) and their commentaries written in Sanskrit, English and Bengali. However, I have also consulted modern works on Indian
Philosophy related to the content of this dissertation and this has been acknowledged in details in the references.

Now I feel it my duty to express my indebtedness to all those who have contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this thesis. It is not possible to mention the names of all the authors of the works by which I have been benefitted.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Dilip Kumar Mohanta, my Ph.D. thesis supervisor and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Assam University, Silchar, who introduced and guided me into the world of Classical Indian Philosophy. I wish to thank my Joint-Supervisor Dr. Swapna Devi, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Assam University, Silchar, for her help in making transposition of thought from the technical philosophical sanskrit to modern intelligible english. I wish to record my sincere gratitude to Professor R.N. Sharma, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Gauhati University, Professor Prabal Kumar Sen, Department of Philosophy, Calcutta University with whom I had the opportunity to discuss some of the problems dealt with in this thesis and who kindly helped me to collect some of the rare reading materials related to this thesis. I thankfully acknowledge the Financial Assistance I received from the University Grants Commission, North-Eastern Regional Office, Guwahati, under the head of a Minor Research Project with the same title. I would like to thank Dr. K. Ahmed, Principal of Karimganj College, all my colleagues at Karimganj College for their encouragement and help. I am thankful to Dr. Sabujkali Sen, Head of the Department of Philosophy and
Religion, Visva Bharati, for helping me in getting Guest House accommodation at Santiniketan and allowing me to use Visva Bharati Library of Advanced Centre of Philosophy. I am thankful to the authorities of Assam University Library, Karimganj College Library, National Library (Calcutta), Library of Indian Council of Philosophical Research at Butler Palace, Lucknow, Gauhati University Library, Asiatic Society Library (Calcutta) for their help and cooperation in different stages of collecting research materials for this thesis.

I wish to express my gratitude to Professor Ramaprasad Das, Professor Karuna Bhattacharya, Professor Sanat Kumar Sen of Indian Academy of Philosophy (Calcutta), Professor Mrinal Kanti Gangopadhyaya (Asutosh Professor of Sanskrit, Calcutta University) and Professor Sushanta Sen (Department of Philosophy, Visva-Bharati) for their valuable suggestions with regard to the core problem of this thesis in the discussion I have had with them. I am grateful to all the teachers of the Department of Philosophy, Assam University and academic supporting staff for their help and cooperation.

Last but not least, I owe my debt to Anamika, my wife, for her constant inspiration which has definitely helped me in completing the thesis.

Date: April, 2001

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