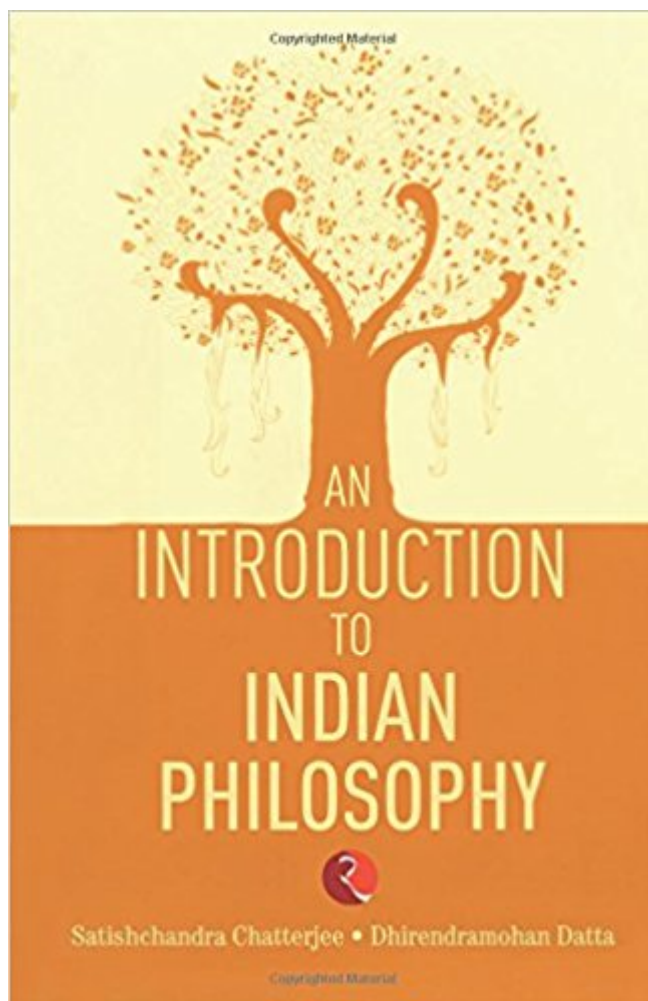


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Introduction To Indian Philosophy



Synopsis

An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, termed by Srila Prabhupada as 'very authoritative', while introducing the reader to the spirit, vast ocean of knowledge and outlook of Indian philosophy, also helps him to grasp thoroughly the central ideas. Philosophy, in its widest etymological sense, means 'love of knowledge'. It tries to search for knowledge of himself, the world and God, and describes the Indian way of life as we know it. Indian philosophy denotes the philosophical speculations of all Indian thinkers, ancient or modern, Hindus or non-Hindus, theists or atheists. Some believe 'Indian philosophy' to be synonymous with 'Hindu philosophy', however, this would be true only if the word 'Hindu' were taken in the geographical sense of 'Indian'. But if 'Hindu' means the followers of a particular religious faith known as Hinduism, the supposition would be wrong and misleading. The authors have, with considerable merit, highlighted the significance of Indian views in terms of modern Western thought. An Introduction to Indian Philosophy is a seminal work covering topics as varied as the Carvaka, Jain, Vaisesika, Mimamsa, Buddha, Sankhya Systems, amongst others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have the 1960 version in hardback and wanted an updated copy to keep and another to share with my step daughter who is finding her way forward. You can't find a better compilation of Indian philosophy in one book than this one. I have a degree in Philosophy from Berkeley in the 70's and am a graduate as a doctor of law. You can't go wrong with this balanced and profound dissection of Indian thought.

not as good as Koller's The Indian Way.

great book!

India has spawned a number of philosophical systems over the centuries. Chatterjee and Datta provide an overview of Indian philosophy by comparing and contrasting nine major schools of Indian philosophy—the six orthodox schools plus three well-known heterodox schools. The dividing line between orthodox and unorthodox hinges upon whether a philosophy accepts the Vedas as sources of authority. After an introductory chapter that lays out the concepts that will be needed throughout the remainder of the book as well as providing brief sketches of nine philosophical schools, the remainder of the book is a one chapter per school examination of metaphysics, ethics, theology, epistemology, etc. The authors first consider the heterodox schools: i.e. Carvaka (a materialist /atheist approach), Jain (one of the major Indian religions), and Buddhist. After examining the heterodox approaches, Chatterjee and Datta take on the orthodox schools in the following order: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga (which you may not have realized was a philosophical system), Mimamsa, and Vedanta. There are a number of questions that recur as the authors compare these schools to each other. A major point of consideration is presence or absence of belief in a god, and—for those systems that believe in a God or gods—what is the role of said deity. It might seem that all the orthodox systems would be theistic, but this isn't the case (e.g. Sankhya.) Another key question is how one can know something, i.e. what is acceptable authority—can one only trust one's own senses or can one trust everything but one's own senses? Then there is the matter of ethics and how each system regards ethical behavior. Of course, there are some elements that are unique to a given system, and so it's not entirely a matter of comparison and contrast. There are no graphics in the book and the ancillary material is limited to footnotes, a select bibliography, and prefaces to the various editions of the book. Note: I read the 2007 / 7th Edition of the book. I won't say this book isn't dry. It's a philosophy textbook, after all. However, it does provide a solid overview of the topic and seems to take great efforts to be unbiased (to the extent of sometimes not challenging philosophical ideas that are patently unsound in favor of reporting what advocates of the tradition propose.) I'd recommend this book for anyone who's looking for an overview of Indian philosophy.

I didn't know much about Indian philosophy before this so this was a very good intro for me

I have the 5th edition (1954) and it was first printed in 1939. Chatterjee and Data have a chip on their shoulders. They attempt to prove that the traditional philosophies of India are the full equal of anything the west has to offer. We in the west have a romantic notion that eastern philosophy apart from the religion is somehow fundamentally different from ours. This is simply not so. Nyaya logic, the original logic of India, for instance is for all intents and purposes identical to that of Aristotle. The authors painstakingly demonstrate that the goals of classic Indian philosophy are not irrational.

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