PREFACE

Nine years have passed away since the first volume of this work was published, and the present volume has been in the press for more than two years. During the last seven years bad health has been responsible for many interruptions. In the first volume manuscripts were sparingly used, but in the present work numerous unpublished and almost unknown manuscripts have been referred to. These could not be collected easily, and it took time to read them; many of them were old and moth-eaten and it was not often easy to decipher the handwriting. It has not always been possible, however, to give an elaborate account of the content of all these manuscripts, for in many cases they contained no new matter and had therefore only been mentioned by name, a fact which could be ascertained only after long and patient study, since records of them were previously unknown. A considerable delay was also caused in the writing of this volume by the fact that large portions of what will appear in the third volume had to be compiled before the manuscripts had left the author’s hands. In any event, the author offers his sincere apologies for the delay.

The manuscript of the third volume has made good progress and, barring illness and other accidents, will soon be sent to press. This volume will contain a fairly elaborate account of the principal dualistic and pluralistic systems, such as the philosophy of the Pañca-rātra, Bhāskara, Yāmuna, Rāmānuja and his followers, Madhva and his followers, the Bhāgavata-purāṇa and the Gaudīya school of Vaiṣṇavism. The fourth and the fifth volumes will deal with the philosophy of Vallabha and some other lesser known schools of Vaiṣṇavism, the philosophy of the Purāṇas, Tantras, the different schools of Śaivas, Śāktas, Indian Aesthetics, the philosophy of right and law and the religious systems that have found their expression in some of the leading vernaculars of India.

A new impression of the first volume is now in the press. The present volume contains four chapters on Śaṅkara Vedānta, the Medical Speculations of the Ancient Hindus, and the Philosophy of the Yoga-vāsiṣṭha and the Bhagavad-gītā. A good deal of the Śaṅkara Vedānta, especially in regard to its controversy with
Preface

Bhāskara, Rāmānuja, Madhva and their followers, still remains to be treated in the third volume.

A word of explanation may be needed with regard to the inclusion in a work on Indian philosophy of the speculations of the Indian medical schools. Biology has recently played a great part in liberating philosophy from its old-world ideas. In ancient India, Biology had not grown into a separate science; whatever biological ideas were current in India were mixed up with medical, osteological and physiological speculations, the only branches of study in ancient India which may be regarded as constituting an experimental science. It was therefore thought that a comprehensive work on the history of Indian philosophy would be sadly defective without a chapter on these speculations, which introduce also some distinctly new ethical and eschatological concepts and a view of life which is wholly original. The biological notions of growth, development and heredity of these schools are no less interesting, and their relations to the logical categories of Nyāya are very instructive.

No attempt has been made to draw any comparisons or contrasts with Western philosophy, since in a work of this type it would most likely have been misleading and would have obscured the real philosophical issues. The study here presented is strictly faithful to the original Sanskrit texts within the limits of the present writer's capacities. Often the ground covered has been wholly new and the materials have been obtained by a direct and first-hand study of all available texts and manuscripts. Nevertheless some sources, containing, possibly, valuable materials, inevitably remain unconsulted, for many new manuscripts will be discovered in future, and our knowledge of Indian philosophy must advance but slowly. In spite of the greatest care, errors of interpretation, exposition and expression may have crept in and for these the author craves the indulgence of sympathetic readers.

Since the publication of the first volume of the present work, many treatises on Indian philosophy have appeared in India and elsewhere. But it has not been possible to refer to many of these. The present attempt is mainly intended to give an exposition of Indian thought strictly on the basis of the original texts and commentaries, and not to eradicate false views by indulging in controversy; and, since the author takes upon himself the responsibility of all the interpretations of the texts that he has used, and since
he has drawn his materials mostly from them, it has seldom been 
possible to refer to the efforts of his fellow-workers in the field. 
Occasionally, however, he has had to discuss and sometimes to bor-
row the views of other writers in the assessment of chronological 
facts, and he also expresses his indebtedness to such other writers 
who have worked upon some of the special problems of Indian 
thought. It has been suggested to him that it would have been better 
if the views of other writers had been fully criticized, but however 
that may be, such criticism has been considered as beyond the 
scope of this work, which, as at present planned, will cover some 
3000 pages when completed.

The chronological views regarding the antiquity of the Gîtâ may 
appear heretical, but it is hoped that they may be deemed ex-
cusable, for this is an age of toleration, and they are not more 
heretical than the views of many distinguished writers on Indian 
chronology. In the chapter on the Gîtâ, some repetition of the 
same views in different contexts was inevitable on account of the 
looseness of the structure of the Gîtâ, which is an ethico-religious 
treatise and not a system of philosophy. This, however, has been 
studiously avoided in the other chapters. Neither the Yoga-vâsîtha 
nor the Gîtâ are systematic works on philosophy, and yet no 
treatment of Indian philosophy can legitimately ignore their 
claims. For in a country where philosophy and religion have 
been inseparably associated, the value of such writings as breathe 
the spirit of philosophy cannot be over-estimated, and no history 
of Indian philosophy worth the name can do without them.

I have no words sufficient to express my gratitude to my 
esteeemed friend, Dr F. W. Thomas, Boden Professor of Sanskrit, 
Oxford, who went through the proofs in two of their stages 
and thus co-operated with me in the trouble of correcting 
them. I fear that in spite of our joint efforts many errors have 
escaped our eyes, but had it not been for his kind help the 
imperfections of the book would have been greater. I must similarly 
thank my friend, Mr Douglas Ainstie, for help with the proofs. 
My thanks are also due to my pupils, Dr M. Eleade (Bucharest), 
Mr Janakiballabh Bhattacharyya, M.A., and my other friends, 
Messrs Satkari Mookerjee, M.A., Durgacharan Chatterjee, M.A., 
Srish Chandra Das Gupta, M.A., and my daughter, Miss Maitreyi 
Devi, for the assistance they rendered me in getting the manuscript
Preface

ready for the press, inserting diacritical marks, comparing the references and the like, and also in arranging the index cards. But as none of them had the whole charge of any of these tasks, and as their help was only of an occasional nature, the responsibility for imperfections belongs to the author and not to them.

SURENDرانNATH DASGUPTA

Calcutta, 1931