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## IMAGE OF TRUTH IN TRADITIONAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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Truth is one of the key values in Western culture, and in the History of Western Philosophy it had different images. The position of truth in the History of Indian Philosophy was similar. But sometimes in India it is very difficult to retrace the way from the word 'truth' to the philosophical category. In this article are traced main lines of discussions about the truth and principal senses of Indian terms (satya, jñāna, Dharma, prāmāṇya). Buddhists were the firsts who introduced the concept of truth, originally in a form of the Four noble truths doctrine then as Mahayana concept of the two truths (conventional and absolute). In Indian tradition, as well as in Western philosophy, truth was considered differently in existential, moral, ontological, soteriological, epistemological and logical perspectives. Indians also distinguished between inferential and semantic concepts of truth. From Western point of view their aspiration to build a theory of the World, which will explain the existence of its different natural and supernatural levels, which are cognizable by rational and super-rational means, brought Indians to paradoxical, contradictory results. Typical example of such contradictory theory of truth can be found in Jaina relative truth doctrine about impermanent and pluralistic reality (syādvāda or anekāntavāda).

**Key words:** cognitive practice, epistemological truth, Indian epistemology, logical truth, requirements for truth, satya, stratification of being, truth in Indian philosophy.

In Western culture truth is considered to be the ideal of cognition and as one of its basic values. In the History of Western Philosophy truth as well as other cultural values appeared in different images. In Antiquity it was viewed like Good, being (Plato, Aristotle), like ideal of inquiry and the way of its attainment or proving [1. C. 323] (in modern epistemology), like meanings of propositions (in Logic), the logical ontology (in 'semantic conception of truth' of A. Tarski) or even superfluous property of the propositions (in deflationary conception of truth by A. Ayer). Among current theories of truth one can choose between the correspondence theory, conventional and coherence theories of truth. Historically philosophers discussed the ideas of absolute truth and relative one, an empirical and theoretical truth, and now more frequently we are even hearing that notion 'truth' is not really a productive concept and so there is no need in this notion at all. This list of the truth's images transformations in the history of Western Philosophy is a vindication of its innate pluralism in comprehension and it compels us to perceive the truth pluralism as philosophical norm [2. C. 50].

Truth in India was also very significant category, but along of original character of Indian thought the word 'truth' had its own way for transforming to the philosophical category. Sometimes it is very difficult to retrace this transformation for the reason that truth in Paṇḍitas (1) discussions had divers names and sometimes wasn't named explicitly at all. But it is necessary to identify the meaning of the Indian philosophers' discussions as the discussions about truth, because this meaning provides understand-

ing of the level Indian theoretical thought as very high and it helps to see the peculiarity of Indian philosophy. Such reasons became the foundations for the choice of our topic of study. I am planning to show the beginnings of truth question in Indian philosophy and how Indian thinkers began to use term 'truth' as the philosophical category. I'll try to fetch out main lines of discussions about truth and principal senses of the term which are comparable with Western ones. Basic method of my research will be semantic analysis of the pre-philosophical and philosophical texts in Sanskrit where are present different conceptions associated with the terms indicating truth.

Most correlative with term for 'truth' in Sanskrit is word 'satya'. It was derived from 'sat' — 'being', 'existing', 'good', 'right', 'venerable', 'reality', 'a sage' and so on [3. P. 1134] and inherited from 'sat' some meanings: 'truth', 'reality', 'entity'. They use 'satya' also as adjectival words: 'true', 'real', 'actual', 'genuine', 'truthful', 'successful', 'pure', 'virtuous', 'good', 'valid' and so on [3. P. 1135]. Word satya was employed in vedic literature from the Ancient time. Ṛgveda teems with derivatives from satya, Upaniṣads and epic poems 'Mahābhārata' and 'Rāmāyaṇa' include set of names and epithets for heroes which are secondary from 'satya' like Satyavatī (mother of Vyāsa), satyā (epithets of Durgā and Sitā), in purāṇas (2) highest sky in the world structure, Brahma loka, was named Satya-loka (Sky of truth) and they told about Satya-yuga (Golden age of truth and purity).

Thanks to Buddhists word 'satya' became the philosophical category. They were the first who suggested their concepts of truth. Brahmans had no need in satya-category, because they had dharma-category. Dharma was universal category and it was signify the universal law, World order, religion, moral prescriptions, status rules, principles of law, various kinds of systematical teachings, Good etc. Dharma-universalia has its roots in Vedic religion (3) and for this reason it acquired religious, sacral character. So meanings 'reality' and 'truth' were attributed to word 'Dharma'. So it was impossible for Brahmins to ask any questions about validity of Dharma and they had no need in its rational justification. Vedic religion is a belief not only in the pantheon of thousands gods but in the Vedic language, Sanskrit, as in force of World's creation. Belief in Dharma as the embodied eternal word of Vedas (śabda) was one of the conditions for using the 'dharma' as 'truth'. It would be tautology for Brahmins to talk about truthfulness of Dharma in their sacred contexts.

Brahmanical Dharma was struck by śramaṇas and Buddhists were among them. Buddhists brought up the issue of truthfulness of Brahmanical Dharma as well as the issue of the validity of the instruments for its acknowledgment, which were enumerated in Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. It was historical irony that śramaṇas for the disavowal of Brahmanism employed the same theory of dialectics (theory of public debates or — in modern terms — theory of argumentation) which was originally elaborated in Brahmanical schools. In Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads dialectics appeared under the name vākovākya (the art to ask questions) [4. P. 6], and in smṛti-literature it was named ānvīkṣikī (consideration, clarification, research, analysis) [5. P. 792]. Ānvīkṣikī didn't employ dialectics for the solution of metaphysical problems and justification of those solutions before the birth of the philosophical reflection of World and human life in V AD.

Brahmins applied ānvīkṣikī to discussions about special issues of theology, eristic, principles of law and medicine in their professional schools. This Brahmanical tool Śramaṇas began to use against them for disestablishment of Brahmanical pre-philosophical ideology and so they demonstrated themselves as match opponents for Brahmins.

Why are we talking about Buddhists as the beginners of truth conceptualization? Buddhists were the firsts who identified their own (not Brahmanical) Dharma with satya and proposed two theories of truth at once. The first one we find already in earliest Buddha's sermons about Four noble truths, the second one is two truths theory. It was created by early Buddhists schools while later scholars subscribed it to Siddhartha Gautama himself (4). According to L. de la Vallée Poussin in Chinese schools of Buddhism were elaborated theories in which the correlations of two and four truths was set down [6. P. 159—187].

The Doctrine of Four noble truths not only articulates sense of each 'truths' but also explains how to reach their realization. The first Buddha's sermon (according to 'Dhamma-cakka-ppavātana-sutta') stated that the first truth (about suffering) must be understood completely, the second one (about thirst) must be helpful for refusing from thirst, the third one (about nirvāṇa) must be attained and the fourth one (about way) ought to be put into the practice. In 'Saṃyuttanikāya' (LVI. 30) and 'Visuddhimagga' (XVI. 84) process of realization of the four truths received some different features, but it was described in the first sermon too. Two ways of the Truths' realization (sacca-ñāṇa) were told in those texts: understanding (anubodha-ñāṇa) and penetration (paṭivedha-ñāṇa). Understanding is mundane (lokiya) knowledge and it aids to drop suffering; penetration is super-mundane (lokuttara) knowledge and it refers to cessation of suffering and realization of all four truths at the same moment.

The doctrine of Four noble truths have four senses in one: an existential (because they all are serving to human existence), moral (because they are imperatives for a good behavior), ontological (because they distinguished levels of being — lower, with suffering, and higher, without suffering) and soteriological one (for they all show the way to the salvation). Those senses were also the points of bifurcation in Buddhists Philosophy: each of them was the beginning for new conceptions of truth which entered in the whole Indian tradition of Philosophical thought.

Doctrine of two truths became the logical corollary from the primary stratification of being in the tenet of Four truths. It is also acquired epistemological sense. In epistemological frame term 'truth' is equivalent to term 'knowledge' (in Pali — ñāṇa, in Sanskrit — jñāna). In doctrine of two truths Buddhists distinguished ontological and epistemological senses. Existence of two levels of reality they fixed in special terms: higher being (paramārtha-sat) and lower being (vyavahārika-sat), and they validated them by designation of two correlative kinds of truths: higher truth (paramārtha-satya) and lower one (vyavahārika-satya).

Being heavy at odds with validity of supernatural reality Buddhists provoked variety conceptions about the structure and knowability of that reality. Later this Buddhist stratification of reality in two levels was adopted in Vedānta (5). In 'Abhidharmakośa' by Vasubandhu quite different conceptions of reality by Sarvāstivādins, Sautrāntikas

and Vaibhāṣikās are presented. In realistic Sarvāstivādin ontology higher reality was explained as ultimate truth “consists of irreducible spatial units” (paramāṇu), which exist the only moment (kṣaṇa), and of “irreducible temporal units (e.g., point-instant consciousnesses) of the five basic categories”; lower reality was explained as the conventional truth “consists of reducible spatial wholes or temporal continua” [7]. Sautrāntikas placed in higher reality the essences of some moments (dharmas) of consciousness flow (dravyasat) and other dharmas, which they named unreal (prajñāptisat), they regarded as lower reality [8. C. 625]. Their conception of two realities developed by Yogacārins Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara in conception of particularia (svalakṣaṇa) and universalia (sāmānya-lakṣaṇa) [9. C. 182]. And when Yogacārins came in with development of epistemology and logic of their own, they introduced in Buddhist ontology de facto the third, ideal reality: the world of thought, “where there is no Matter at all, there are only Ideas” [10. P. 509].

One may read background for Buddhist conception of two truths in such Brahmanical texts like ‘Muṇḍakopaniṣada’ and others in which two kinds of knowledge, higher and lower (parā caivāparā), mentioned. But in ‘Muṇḍakopaniṣada’ (III. 2.4-6) and in other texts the old, Vedic knowledge is opposed to the new post-Vedic knowledge (Atman comprehension, which ascetics-ṛṣi achieve by yoga and saṅnyāsa). From this fact another reason and another goal for the conception of two truths follow. World pictures in four Vedas and in Upaniṣadas were different, but Brahmins couldn’t say that first of them was a delusion. Two truths conception let to legitimized the contradictions between them and in this way it preserves the idea of the continuity of sacred tradition. This is why Buddhist theory of two truths cannot be considered just as a result of evolution of Brahmanical ideas.

Teaching of epistemological truth as a result of different cognitive practices in Indian philosophical tradition is much elaborated. It also includes a part which tells about logical truth, because Logic didn’t become in India a special science. Epistemological truth was considered in the frame of doctrines of sources or instruments of valid cognition (pramāṇavāda). In such theories truth always go as cognition (pramā, jñāna) and it was opposed to not-truth (apramā, ajñāna). Even Buddhists in their pramāṇavāda prefer agnominate it jñāna, not satya. This preference seemed to be determined by traditionalism of Indian intellectual life and by the fact that in the beginning of this tradition Brahmins (who were its creators) didn’t employ ‘satya’ as philosophical term. One of the main epistemological problems for Indian paṇḍitas was the problem of the ability of instruments of knowledge to give valid knowledge (prāmāṇya) [11. P. 133] while for a philosopher of Western tradition the meaning of this problem is a question about existence of epistemological truth. Among ten pramāṇas which named by different schools, most allowed were perception (pratyakṣa), inference (anumāna) and testimony which often was treated as eternal word or sound (śabda) (6). Logical truth was investigated in two relatively independent theories and Indian logicians asked two questions connected with such truth: 1) about the inference of truthful propositions in the frame of theory of inference (anumānavāda), and 2) about meanings of the words in the frame of theory of meanings (apohavāda). Named theories allow

us to talk about the fact that Indians distinguished among inferential truth and truth as semantic concept. The answers for the first question were definitions of invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*, *anyathānupapatti*) of Major (*sādhya*) and Middle (*hetu*) terms in inference (*anumāna*). *Anumānavāda* allowed of resolution the justification problem for inferential knowledge. *Apoḥavāda* explained truth-conditions for sentences which are made up of words and phrases. As a result of this division of reality into two levels in Indian tradition, empirical and logical truths, which are produced with the help of reason, received lower status of the conventional truth. In Western Philosophy the same kinds of truth have been seen as the higher ones for a much long time.

The receiving of perception as valid source of knowledge sets before epistemologists the problem of the criteria of perceptual truth. Indian realists, who admitted the existence of universalia and a soul as subject of cognition, had got the royal road for its resolving. So realists of six orthodox *darśanas* argued sense organs (*indriya*) and its objects (*viśaya*) contacted and just at the precise moment the soul received knowledge of the universalia which was verbalized. Buddhists nominalists didn't recognize reality any objects, any universalia, any soul, that's why their cognitive situation was more difficult. But it was more convenient to the things in reality. And they have found an exit from the situation when they have seen truth-criteria for perceptual judgments in its empirical effectiveness. "Knowledge is right when it makes us reach the object," wrote Dharmottara in his "*Nyāyabinduṭīkā*" [12. P. 6]. Judgment "This shell is yellow" will be true only in the case when shell is really yellow but it is not only seemed yellow for the reason of eyes disease.

Very significant factors influenced deeply on Indian conceptions of epistemological and logical truths were the comprehension of cognition aims not as the truths about first elements of the World (as in Ancient Greece), but as the truths of human entity, and that truths did not considered as fruitless for practical activities. In India epistemology was elaborated as discipline useful for practice, admittedly, practice was understood in a special sense: not as material production of one's own life but first of all as its spiritual production. And main aim of life they saw in finding the way out of circle of re-birth and death, the way of release (*mokṣa*). Material production of goods was not interesting issue for Indian thinkers. Epistemology was taken in the sense of teaching about most important means (*sādhana*) for *mokṣa* — knowledge. Such practical (inherently soteriological) orientation of *pramāṇavāda* determined requirements for any truths as ideals of knowledge. Those requirements weren't written but implicitly were in the scholars reasoning and they may be reconstructed and uttered in the words. The reconstructed requirements are: 1) clarity and obviousness (*nirṇaya*, *niścaya*, *adhyavasāya*) those propositions which pretend to be truthful; 2) they must have the practical value; 3) they must be verifiable by practice. Seeing higher truth isn't verifiable by practice in physical World (because it is transcendent) they formulated rule 4) truthful knowledge must be gained in accordance with special rules, which are fixed in authoritative texts. And at last rule 5) truthful knowledge must open the whole picture of reality, not a piece of it. It is clear that perceptual and inferential truths didn't satisfy last rule. For this reason they never were higher truths in India though they were such ones in

Western philosophy. Higher truth for Indian scholars was unspeakable truth which became a result of insight into transcendent reality by means of super-abilities like numinous perception of yogin (yogīpratyakṣa) and meditative practices (for Buddhists), omniscience (kevalajñāna), telepathy (manaḥparyāya), clairvoyance (avadhi) (for Jainas) and mystic love for God (bhakti) (for Vedantists).

Aspiration to built theory of World which would explain the existence of its different levels, natural and supernatural, cognizable by rational and super-rational methods, brought from Western point of view paradoxical, contradictory results, but from the point of view of Indian tradition they were not the paradox. Such example of the contradictory epistemology we find in Jainism. Jainas didn't accept the two realities conception from Buddhists, but conception of two truths they accepted. They opposed the ontological doctrine of plural, manifold reality (anekāntavāda) to Buddhists two realities and also they opposed two theories, "connected with anekāntavāda like wings are connected with bird" [13. P. 177], to epistemological conceptions of other darśanas. They were the doctrine about points of view (naya-vāda) and method of conditioned predication (syādvāda) or sevenfold parallogism (saptabhaṅgī). Named theories showed their consanguinity with the methods of public debates from which they grow and they agreed in a rude fashion with postdate conception of instruments of cognition (pramāṇavāda), which Jainas included in their philosophy later. According them, diversity of reality doesn't mean, its stratification and insulation of such level which is materially incommensurable with human cognitive abilities. It doesn't mean also that various kinds of knowledge are materially incommensurable. But for Jainas it means that it is possible to articulate the propositions about reality which are true in some or other aspect (by form-rūpa or by substance-dravya or by place-kṣetra or by time-kāla) that is they are relatively true. Question 'What to do with relative truths?' wasn't a problem for Jainas. They didn't feel embarrassment about truths' relativity. For them it is normal because reality is changing permanently and we can't obtain permanent truth about it. Indeed, their conceptions naya-vāda and syādvāda prescribe to form a lot of propositions about the same object (7), and all they are relative truths. Why so? Because Jainas had no need in positive knowledge about physical things for material practice but they used their methods for the demonstration of relative character of all theses advanced by their opponents. Nobody intended to formulate 700 or 4900 propositions about one predicate during the debate with opponents. However possible quantity of such propositions shows very well relativity and falsity of opponent doctrines, so epistemological methods must to help non-Jainas to accept Jīna Mahāvīra's darśana which value is not in its truthfulness but in its effectiveness and this effectiveness is founded upon belief.

Even those few observations and generalizations about Indian conceptions of truth which were presented here by the author show as high level theoretical thought in India as grand differences just in foundations of theoretical reasoning of Indian and of Western philosophers. Such dissimilarities convince of the need to go on study of the foundations for authentic comprehension of Indian Philosophy.

## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Specialists in Sanskrit learning.
- (2) The beginning of such pseudo-historical texts specialists refer to III—V AD, though they admit information codified in purāṇas is more earlier, because they mentioned in Vedas already (for example, in ‘Atharvaveda’, XI. 7. 24).
- (3) In Ṛgveda there are as the word ‘Dharma’, as a lot of derivatives from it, for example: Indra was named dharmakṛta — ‘creator of universal order’ (see: <http://www.sanskritweb.net/rigveda/rv08.pdf>).
- (4) According to Nāgārjuna’s ‘Mūlamadhyamakakārikās’, 24.10. Texts from Buddhist canon teem with such citation as L. de la Vallée Poussin found, see: Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā Commentaire de Candrakīrti. Publié par L. de la Vallée Poussin. Fasc. I—VII. SPb., 1903—1913. (Bibliotheca Buddhica. IV).
- (5) Vedantists discourse on two kinds of truth one may see in ‘Maṇḍūkyakārikā’ by Gauḍapāda and ‘Brahmasūtrabhāṣya’ by Śaṅkara.
- (6) The last one is directly connected with vedic conception of Eternal Word of Veda.
- (7) In accordance with syādvāda we must formulate 7 modal propositions about some predicate of an object, then according with nayavāda we must see each of them from 7 points of view; and if we’ll follow “Nayakarṇikā” (19) by Vinayavijaya, each of 7 points of view has 100 subspecies, then we may formulate 4900 propositions about one predicate of single object.

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## **ОБРАЗ ИСТИНЫ В ТРАДИЦИОННОЙ ИНДИЙСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ**

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Будучи одной из ключевых ценностей западной культуры, истина исторически являлась в западной философии в разных образах. В истории индийской философии истина также рассматривалась как ценность, но не всегда путь превращения слова «истина» в философскую категорию там можно проследить. В статье выделены основные направления дискуссий и главные смыслы индийских терминов (*satya*, *jñāna*, *Dharma*, *ṛgāmāṇya*), обозначающих истину. Первыми предложили свои концепции истины буддисты, сначала — как учение о четырех благородных истинах, затем — как учение о двух истинах (высшей и низшей). В индийской традиции, также как в западной философии, истина исследовалась в разных образах: как экзистенциальная, моральная, онтологическая, сотериологическая, эпистемологическая и логическая. Индийцы различали также выводную истину и истину как семантический концепт. Стремление построить теоретическое учение о мире, которое объясняло бы существование разных его уровней, природного и сверхприродного, познаваемых рациональными и сверхрациональными способами, привело, с западной точки зрения, к парадоксальным, противоречивым результатам. Пример такой противоречивой эпистемологии можно найти в джайнизме.

**Ключевые слова:** индийская эпистемология, истина в индийской философии, когнитивная практика, логическая истина, сатья, стратификация бытия, требования к истине, эпистемологическая истина.