

Theme Note

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN LATIN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY AND INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Academic communities in general, and philosophers in particular, have historically been at the vanguard of intellectual endeavors to identify and to rectify issues of social injustice, and have helped to initiate educational reforms and opportunities to improve the well-being of the citizens of this or that nation-state, as well as providing the critical thinking skills that are at the heart of contemporary democracies and the various institutional structures with which they function. For India and for the many countries and regions of the world that constitute Latin America, philosophers and other scholars, politicians, and community leaders influenced by their philosophies have been deeply involved in roles of intellectual leadership that have helped to build nations and to guide the peoples of their regions to improve their communities by improving their educational practices and ethical and political relations. Our intent is to create structures with which Indian and Latin American philosophers and scholars can learn from each other by studying the writings and teachings of each other's intellectual, political, and cultural traditions.

Classical Indian Philosophy traces its roots to the ancient traditions originating with Vedic literature, Sanskrit, and its social and religious incarnations and reorganizations over 3500 years. That includes Mīmāṃsā (the study of the Vedas), Vedānta (especially the study of the later Vedas—including the Bhāgavad Gīta and the Upaniṣads, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika (two forms of realism). Jain philosophy, the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Buddhist and Ārvāka schools of thought also constitute dominant expressions in epistemology, metaphysics, Indian ethics, aesthetics, and social-political philosophies.

It could be said that Latin American Philosophy is relatively young by those standards. However, Latin American Philosophy also draws on 'classical' indigenous traditions that have historically served as ancient well-springs of wisdom for the historical development of that philosophy. Those include traditions that also passed

on written records: the classical Mayan philosophy and culture (2600 BCE-1700 CE)—which includes the later civilizations of the Aztecs and Incas; the Olmec (1500-400 BCE); the Mixtec of Oaxaca and Puebla (pre-Columbian 1.5 million, today about 800,000); and the Nahua of Mexico and El Salvador (500 BCE – today; about 2.5 million). These are just a few of the ancient civilizations that continue to play an evolving normative role for what is called Latin American Philosophy. There are many others including pre-Columbian nomadic and tribal traditions as well as Caribbean oceanic traditions.

Given that both of these philosophical traditions similarly have ancient roots, our proposal is to initiate a dialogue between them on the basis of another fundamental similarity, namely, the creation of a first-ever dialogue between Indian philosophers/scholars and Latin American philosophers/scholars on the basis of the common theme of *POST-COLONIALISM* which refers to the fact that the original experience of colonialism continues to affect both peoples on nearly every level of their diverse societies. One of our guiding questions for the workshop is: what role has colonialism played in defining and directing the current tasks and future ideals of contemporary Indian communities and contemporary Latin American communities? Framing the inquiry in these terms could lead to many different but fruitful ways to address the remarkable similarities and the complexity of differences in the philosophies and cultural expressions of these two great peoples.

Sub-title or allied aspects of the theme/area in which papers will be presented:

- a. The relationship of primary colonialism to decolonialism and national sovereignty: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- b. The phenomenon of neo-colonialism and internalization of the oppressor (as Paulo Freire): Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- c. Philosophies of Liberation: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- d. Struggle with the Colonial Past: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- e. Social-political Philosophies and Thinkers: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- f. Philosophies of Dialogue: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- g. Philosophies of Language: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- h. Philosophy of Indigenism: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- i. Assimilation, integration, and ongoing exploitation: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies
- j. Gender and Culture: Perspectives from Indian & Latin American Philosophies

The guiding light for our dialogue will be coming to terms with current forms of socio-political power, economic order and (in)justice, humanity and community, and the degree to which language and education continue to resonate with traces of colonial imposition and the adoption, in the post-colonial period, of enduring forms of colonial oppression—British, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.