

Editor's Note

In his inaugural address on the occasion of the founding of the IAS, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, then the President of India, had underlined the need and objectives of the Institute which should be remembered again and again. He had identified the tragedy of the present times that man knows what is right, but is defeated by circumstances. He called it 'the essence of human tragedy today' which the Institute should focus upon in its academic endeavours. He noted that today our professions are one thing, but our practices are quite different. It is that divorce, in his view, which has brought us to this present condition and it is that divorce which we should try to overcome if we wish to improve our condition. Therefore, he stressed on studying and research in Humanities for the institute, to "correct this one-sidedness of our culture, this deficiency in our (human) equipment, and enable us to expand our consciousness, to transcend, to make us understand clearly what is it we are attempting to do". The main focus areas of the academic activities of the Institute were envisaged accordingly as philosophy, comparative religion, and Indian epics, along with some related subjects. The journals of the Institute had been planned to communicate to the outside scholars and young academics the scholarship in its focus areas.

In this backdrop the papers and reviews have been selected for this issue. Dr Alka Tyagi, a former Fellow of the Institute, has analysed two pre-medieval Sanskrit texts, Acarya Shankara's *Saundaryā Laharī* and Dharmacharya's *Pancastavi*, as delineation of cosmic power as *Sakti*, the highest principle considered to be beyond all philosophical conceptualization. Dr Koenraad Elst, the well-known Belgian Indologist, has presented a counterpoint to the Hindu traditionalists' claim that the *Vedas* are a revealed scripture, not made by human hand, *apauruṣeya*. This is not acceptable for modernists, both outsiders and Hindu reformists. Elst argues that such a view can be problematic for devout Hindus too. That a closer look at the content of the *Vedas* shows that the *Ṛṣis* themselves didn't see it that way. Dr Chirayu Pandit,

a young scholar, has compared two great personalities in modern India, Sir Syed Ahmed and Veer Savarkar, as polar opposites but counter-strategic thinkers. His research brings into light some obscure, but significant facets of the thinkers, useful for present social and political discourse as well. Prof. Kapil Kapoor, Padma Bhushan, has painstakingly outlined the essential points of a national education for our country. With half a century of experience in the field he draws attention to issues our educationists and policy makers have been constantly missing to deal with or at least failed so far to address adequately. In view of the new national education policy the paper, though written earlier, appears interesting to compare the theory and practice of education in independent India so far. Prof. Harpal Singh has reviewed the book *Walking with Nanak: Travels in his footsteps*, written by Haroon Khalid, to assess his specific concern with the rationalist and argumentative Nanak, as a perfect teacher, not as a religious Guru. Dr Siddharth Satpathy in his paper, takes a historical look into the thoughts and works of Madhusudan Das (1848-1934), a widely studied figure in the history of colonial Odisha. Prof. P. K. Chaubey presents a detailed assessment of the idea of sustainable development through the prism of technology, institutions and management. In the context of present concerns about climate change in some Western circles, the paper seems to be a critical backgrounder. Prof. Ravinder Singh, in his paper, continues his quest of some contested issues about the Indian knowledge tradition. Especially an interpretation and reinterpretation of some key Vedic terms by scholars here and abroad. Prof. Yogesh Kumar, with his vast experience as an educationist, delved into the life and works of a great Hindi litterateur, Babu Shyam Sunder Das through his autobiography. It offers valuable information about the great efforts the pioneers of modern Hindi language and literature had made more than a hundred years ago. It also provides some lessons as to the progress and regress made in the field since those times. Dr Aziz Mahdi has made a historical comparison of

two epics, *Mahabharat* and *Shahnameh*, finding similarities of mores between two ancient cultures of the world. Finally, going through the great work of Rudyard Kipling, his novel *Kim*, a relook is offered about the views Kipling had formed about the people, culture, and religion of India. At one time the author was highly celebrated in the world, but lately detested and even denounced as a racist and imperialist apologist of the British Empire. His book under discussion presents a different picture. That Kipling was a humane and truthful observer of life and times. His personal situation as a white British man

hardly prejudiced him against the people and culture of India in late 19th century as he keenly saw it for years.

The issue also carries brief information about the academic activities during the second half of the year. Weekly seminars, lectures by Visiting Professors, Visiting Scholars, Guest Fellows, presentations by the Associates in the UGC-Inter-University Centre, and special events at the Institute. Readers are invited to kindly go through the articles in this issue of *Summerhill* and evaluate it in view of the objectives of the Institute.