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General Editor
George F. McLean

Knowledge and Belief in the Dialogue of Cultures

Edited by
Marietta Stepanyants

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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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DEDICATION

It is a special honor for the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), and for me personally as its President and General Editor, to dedicate this volume, *Knowledge and Belief in the Dialogue of Cultures*, to Professor Marietta Stepanyants on the occasion of her 75th birthday and her 30th anniversary as head of the Academy's Center for Oriental Studies.

I first met Professor Stepanyants in India on the burning plains of the Punjab and some years later at the University of Andhra Pradesh. Though coming from opposite sides of a very Cold War her combination of personal warmth and high professionalism have made these first meetings stand out in my mind to this day.

It was typical of her to reach out at the cost of personal inconvenience, not to mention danger, in order to immerse herself personally in the culture of India and to be wherever its philosophers gathered for their annual All-Indian Congresses. As a result she not only read about this totally different culture and civilization, but formed the kind of deep personal friendships which enable profound and sympathetic understanding.

But whereas most scholars would focus on but one cultural area, Professor Stepanyants shared a broad concern for all Eastern philosophies. This can be seen as well from her intensive work on Islam as seen from her books: *Pakistan Philosophy* and *Sufi Wisdom*, and the editing of a number of major reference works on Islamic thought.

Indeed, these collections reflect the amazing breadth of her professional philosophical range from *Philosophy of Religion* and *God-Man-Society in Traditional Cultures* to *the Rationalist Tradition*, to *Feminism*, and to a forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*.

What is especially remarkable is that she managed all this gigantic accomplishment in the midst of the most diverse and dramatic socio-political transformations of her native Russia. Throughout Professor Stepanyants managed to hold together her team of eminent scholars and to train new and newly professional specialists in the classical Eastern languages and philosophical traditions of the East. It was her personal achievement that the rich Russian heritage of work in this field, while in transformation, continues to shed bright light that illumine the path for the emerging engagements with the East in this global 21st century.

All this she did as head of Oriental Philosophies and Director of Oriental Philosophical Studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow since 1980 and Professor and head of the Chair of Philosophy and Political Thought of the East at the Russian State University of Humanities. Thus when the University of Hawaii wished to expand globally its prestigious 7th and 8th East-West conferences it appointed Professor Stepanyants as their director just as the International

Federation of Philosophical Societies appointed her as its present Vice President.

It is then with the warmest regards that The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP) dedicates this volume in honor of her many professional accomplishments and esteemed abilities: personal, as wife and mother; professional, as professor and editor; and administrative in leading philosophers of the world across boundaries, East and West, so that all can bring their gifts to our global future.

George F. McLean