

Foreword

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Prasanta Pattanaik is one of those rare intellectuals who has been a leading contributor in twenty different fields, and who has produced work of outstanding value in each of them. It is not surprising that so many distinguished academics have lined up to join in paying tribute to this wonderful thinker and analyst. I feel very privileged to be allowed to join in the line and to say a few welcoming words in presenting this fine collection of essays, all written to honor Pattanaik.

I still remember my first meeting with Prasanta. I was then a young teacher at the Delhi School of Economics, having just resigned from my job at Cambridge. It was in the post-monsoon season of 1963 when the Indian academic year begins. There was this extremely shy boy from Orissa—and he was not much more than a boy then—joining the new class of Master’s students at what used to be called the D-School, which was, at that time, beginning to acquire a real standing in the world of academia. It was clear to me from our first conversations that Prasanta was a remarkably modest person, but what of course I did not know then was that he had nothing whatsoever to be modest about. As I came to know him, what became absolutely clear was the totally exceptional combination of merits and talents that this young scholar had, which was altogether enviable. Not only could he solve any analytical problem that was given to him (and there were several very hard ones that I had the opportunity of putting to him over his student years), but also on every subject that came up in our conversations, Prasanta had new and innovative things to say which would startle me. It was, I imagined, like running into an unassuming young Kalidasa in a fifth century village fair, who answered questions by breaking into dazzling Sanskrit verses that blew the mind.

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After his Master's degree and 1 year of teaching at an affiliated college, Prasanta proceeded to do his doctoral work with me. There were a number of open and unsolved issues in social choice theory, which had not been addressed at all at that time, both in voting theory and in other areas of collective choice. When I put a collection of these problems to him, he solved them all and resolved the issues fully at an alarming speed. I faced a real problem then, since Prasanta was just finishing his first year as a research student when all this was behind him. The basket of problems I had thought of, solving which would certainly be more than enough for an excellent Ph.D. thesis, stood exhausted. So, even though Prasanta was still not allowed to submit his thesis for the Doctoral degree (the university regulations said, in effect, that this would be "much too quick"), he went on to do other things, getting equally interesting and important results. I also encouraged him to produce a book based on his thesis. Well, with sanctification by the passage of time, Prasanta did become Dr. Pattanaik, and his book, published by Cambridge University Press, *Voting and Collective Choice*, made an immediate mark in the field, especially impressing the more discerning theorists, such as Kenneth Arrow and Frank Hahn.

Then came, over the decades, dizzying clusters of contributions from Prasanta in an astonishingly wide variety of topics and subjects, varying from welfare economics, choice under uncertainty, social choice rules, manipulability and stability of choice procedures, to poverty, deprivation, fuzzy sets and fuzzy relations, and moral and political philosophy. Not only was his range of work immensely broad and diverse, the quality of his contribution in each area varied from being merely superb to being altogether path-breaking.

Pattanaik also became an active editor of the new journal *Social Choice and Welfare*, after having served as an indispensable member of the editorial board of several leading analytical journals of economics. He was—and I suppose still is—an outstanding referee of submissions: careful, helpful, thorough, and totally selfless in assisting authors to improve their papers, sometimes even with new results and twists that were essentially Prasanta's own contributions. I still remember with immense gratefulness the enormous help I got from him when I was editorially active for the *Journal of Economic Theory* and *Econometrica*, for the huge "value added" he gifted to the authors of papers he refereed. I sometimes wonder whether I was too tolerant in letting him disguise his own contributions as the work of paper submitters, especially when some of these results went on to become extremely famous. I knew that given Prasanta's generosity and his understanding of the role of a journal referee, he did not mind this one bit, but the question that lingers in my mind is whether I should have minded, on his behalf. I suppose I shall never resolve that moral issue, but it was, I must also admit, a matter of great pride for me that someone as close to me, as Prasanta was (and of course, still is), was capable of such exceptional benevolence, in addition to the altogether extraordinary analytical and intellectual talents and skills he had.

I must not ramble on, though it is hard for me to resist this in talking about someone whom I have known so closely for so many decades, and interaction with whom has been so important in my own intellectual development. I know that others will have different perspectives to offer on Prasanta's greatness. In particular, those who have known him as a teacher rather than as a student (a group that is well represented

among the contributors to this volume) would have very different ways of looking at this astonishing person.

I end by expressing my appreciation of those who have made this volume possible, in particular Taradas Bandyopadhyay, Rajat Deb, and Maurice Salles, by leading this enterprise and working hard for it. I hope they enjoy this remarkable volume as much as the readers will. And may I take the liberty here of offering my warmest congratulations to Prasanta Pattanaik both for what he has done and for what he is? I hope he can share some of our thrill in being a part of this wonderful engagement.