



International symposium

Cultures of Knowledge in Mutual Encounter

Scholars between India and Europe from Early Modernity to the Present

July 6 and 7, 2017

Organizer:

Association “Sammlung De Nobili – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Indologie und Religionsforschung“ (ZVR 503703432), Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna (www.istb.univie.ac.at/sdn)

Organizing committee:

Johanna Buss (Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna; deputy treasurer of the association)

Marion Rastelli (Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Austrian Academy of Sciences; deputy chairperson of the association)

Karin Preisendanz (Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna; chairperson of the association)

Himal Trikha (Erwin Schrödinger scholar of the FWF – Austrian Science Fund, currently Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, Unité mixte de recherche 7528 “Mondes iranien et indien”; treasurer of the association)

Place:

Lecture room 1, Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna, Universitätscampus, Spitalgasse 2-4, entrance 2.7, A-1090 Vienna

Registration:

Participation in the symposium and the coffee breaks is free of charge. We request informal registration until June 30, 2017 at sdn.istb@univie.ac.at. If you want to join the speakers and board members of the association during the two lunch breaks, please transfer the amount of € 20,- until June 30, 2017 to the account of the association with BAWAG/PSK, Alserstraße 31, A-1080 Wien, IBAN AT05 1400 0072 1001 2111; SWIFT Code (BIC) BAWAATWW; account owner: Sammlung De Nobili. The transfer of this contribution to the costs will count as registration for the symposium.

Backdrop, aims and relevance

In December 1926, the historian of Indian philosophy and Indian philosopher Surendranath Dasgupta (1887–1952) delivered a series of public lectures on “Ways to Philosophy in India and Europe” at the University of Vienna. Furthermore, at the invitation of the Association of Friends of Asian Art and Culture in Vienna the well-known scholar from Bengal presented a lecture accompanied by slides on “The Spirit of Indian Art” in the lecture hall of the ethnological collection of Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne assassinated in 1914, in the Neue Hofburg (new castle). At this time, the first volume of Dasgupta’s comprehensive and influential “History of Indian Philosophy,” based on the Sanskrit sources, had already been published by Cambridge University Press, to be concluded in 1955 with the posthumously published fifth volume.

The association “Sammlung De Nobili – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Indologie und Religionsforschung” (“De Nobili Research Library – Association for Indology and the Study of Religions”) at the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the University of Vienna, founded in 1989, is devoted to research on the encounter between the Indian and European intellectual worlds, the dissemination of the results of research on this broad topic through publications and the organization of pertinent functions, and the promotion of this encounter in the present. Even before the inception of the association, its founder, Gerhard Oberhammer, established a special research library called “Sammlung De Nobili” (“De Nobili Research Library”) in close cooperation with the Austrian cardinal Franz König who generously supported the acquisition of its first holdings. The association continues to build up this library which is nowadays maintained by the branch library for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the Vienna University Library. Considering that Dasgupta had been in lively dialogue with renowned European philosophers, Indologists and scholars of religion ever since his doctoral studies with the British philosopher John McTaggart at Trinity College, Cambridge, the association has taken the ninetieth anniversary of Dasgupta’s visit to Vienna as the occasion for an international symposium on “Cultures of Knowledge in Mutual Encounter: Scholars between India and Europe from Early Modernity to the Present.”

The nine speakers will throw new light on Dasgupta’s scholarly personality and his relation to European scholars, especially Mircea Eliade, author of “Yoga, Immortality and Freedom,” and will further elaborate on general and specific aspects of the cooperation and relation between Indian, i.e., South Asian, scholars and scholars in the European intellectual tradition from early modernity to the present by reference to other prominent exponents of the two cultures of knowledge. Two of these exponents are the Jesuit missionary in South India, Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656), the Italian name giver of the association and its library who brought together the two cultures of knowledge in a very special way in his own person, and the German Indologist Georg Bühler (1837–1898), who was Professor for Ancient Indian Philology and Antiquities at the University of Vienna from 1880 onwards after he had worked for many years for the British government in India. Inter alia through the closely related topics of translation, language acquisition and scholarly practice in the colonial context of nineteenth-century India and the psychological analysis of key concepts of the two worlds of knowledge, the lectures will present a broad-ranging image of the mutual interaction and enrichment of the two cultures of knowledge. Especially in a period of cultural confrontation and conflicts, they will highlight examples and possibilities of peaceful intellectual encounter and the mutual expansion of horizons under the banner of openness to the Other.

Program

July 6, 2017

9:30 Welcome and introduction by Karin Preisendanz, chairperson of the association “Sammlung De Nobili”

9:45 Claudia Guggenbühl (Thalwil, Switzerland): “Mircea Eliade and Surendranath Dasgupta: Friendship, Hope, Disappointment and Drama at the Origin of Eliade’s *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*”

10:45 Coffee break

11:15 Jonardon Ganeri (New York): “The Interjacent Intellectual: Conceptual Struggles for Authenticity in Three Indian Philosophers”

12:15 Lunch break

14:15 Sudhir Kakar (Benaulim, Goa): “Psychological Encounters: India and Europe”

15:15 Hephzibah Israel (Edinburgh): “Shifting Cultures of Knowledge: Translation, Language Learning and Scholarly Practices”

16:15 Coffee break

16:45 Anand Amaladass (Chennai): “Translating Cultures between India and Europe by an Italian Jesuit Scholar in Seventeenth-century South India, Roberto de Nobili”

17:45 Conclusion of the program of the first day

July 7, 2017

10:00 Klaus Karttunen (Helsinki): “Mailed Relations: Personal Correspondence and the History of Indology”

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 Amruta Natu (Pune): “Georg Bühler: A Historian Advocating the Indigenous Genesis of Indian Literature”

12:30 Lunch break

14:30 Jayendra Soni (Innsbruck): “Letters to the Jaina Monk Vijayendra Suri (b. 1881)”

15:30 Diwakar Acharya (Oxford): “Half a Century of Nepal–German Collaboration in Indological Research – A Reflection and Appraisal”

16:30 Coffee break

17:00 Eli Franco (Leipzig/Wien), synopsis und synthesis, followed by the concluding discussion

18:00 Joint dinner for the speakers and board members of the association “Sammlung de Nobili”

Abstracts and brief information on the speakers

(in alphabetical order)

Diwakar Acharya: “Half a Century of Nepal–German Collaboration in Indological Research – A Reflection and Appraisal”

Nepal–German scholarly collaboration has brought important Indological materials to light and led to the development and advancement of a number of research areas. Because in Nepal the religious and philosophical literature both of Hinduism and Buddhism is preserved in an abundance unparalleled in South Asia, this collaboration had special impact on all branches of Tantric, Puranic, and Buddhist studies. It also contributed to the study of Sanskrit literary texts, grammatical and philosophical texts, as well as medical and astrological literature. Unknown texts have come to light, and texts thought to be lost were recovered. Furthermore, researchers have found important historical materials in Nepalese manuscript sources. Last but not least, Nepal–German collaboration has facilitated the study of local languages like Newari and Maithili.

Through the international careers of successful research associates of the Nepal–German Manuscript Preservation/Cataloguing Projects, Nepal–German academic collaboration has played an important role in developing an awareness of Nepal's rich cultural heritage both in Nepal and abroad.

This talk will elaborate on the inception, implementation, and advancement of Nepal–German academic collaboration in the area of Indology during the late twentieth to early twenty-first century.

Professor Dr. Diwakar Acharya is Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at All Souls College, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford.

Anand Amaladass: “Translating Cultures between India and Europe by an Italian Jesuit Scholar in Seventeenth-century South India, Roberto de Nobili”

Even before the dawn of modernity, East and West were connected by trade and commercial interests. The trade routes also served to transport ideas. People who travelled then took with them

their world of beliefs and thought patterns, like migratory birds that carry their home along as they fly. That these trade routes eventually turned into paths of war is part of history.

More concretely, this presentation will focus on what happened in South India (Tamilnadu) with the arrival of the “missionary scholars” from the West. This aspect of history could be described as a period of cultural translation. The prominent players in this project can be identified as Henrique Henriques (1520–1600), Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656) and Constantine Joseph Beschi (1680–1747) – all three were Jesuit travelers under the patronage of the Portuguese empire. Today, they are remembered as translators of Indian culture for an European audience and of European texts through Indian categories for an Indian audience.

The most significant among the three was Roberto de Nobili who with his European type of reasoning interacted with the intellectual traditions of India from 1606, the year of his arrival in South India, until his death in 1656. A few examples from his writings will be presented here to illustrate how European scholastic categories found their expression in Tamil and how Indian culture reached the western shores.

Professor emeritus Dr. Anand Amaladass was professor and principal at Sacred Heart College – Satya Nilayam Research Institute, Chennai.

Jonardon Ganeri: “The Interjacent Intellectual: Conceptual Struggles for Authenticity in Three Indian Philosophers”

Analytical philosophers from the largely Anglophone twentieth-century analytical tradition tend to present themselves as engaged in a detached, observer-independent, search for a body of context-free universal truths about human capacity, that is, as scientists of the human condition. Yet there are compelling reasons to think that the style of a philosopher's work in the manufacture and manipulation of concepts is closely associated with the circumstances philosophers find themselves in, in some broad sense of circumstance; that there is a puzzle which their situation and experience confronts them with, and for which their philosophy is an attempt to find a resolution. The phenomenological circumstance of another group of twentieth-century Anglophone philosophers was quite different from that of the analytical philosophers. I am speaking about those profoundly articulate and learned thinkers of late colonial and early post-independence India, philosophers of the calibre of Krishnachandra Bhattacharya, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Surendranatha Dasgupta, A.C. Mukherji, and Daya Krishna, to mention just a few. The situation that demanded philosophical engagement, for this second group of intellectuals, was to make sense of their transcultural positioning “in between” two worlds of thought. Reviewing the extraordinary work of Dasgupta

from this perspective enables me to appreciate better the originality and importance of this group of thinkers, and of Dasgupta in particular.

Professor Dr. Jonardon Ganeri is Abu Dhabi Global Network Professor of Philosophy at New York University.

Claudia Guggenbühl: “Mircea Eliade and Surendranath Dasgupta: Friendship, Hope, Disappointment and Drama at the Origin of Eliade’s *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*”

The story of Eliade and Dasgupta illustrates how a meeting planned only for intellectual purposes turned into something quite different and far more complicated. When the brilliant young student from Europe met the towering Indian scholar, an intense exchange of knowledge began. At the same time, their relationship became subject to imponderabilia beyond their control. Unuttered hopes based on cultural misunderstandings, unfulfilled expectations and personal limitations led to disappointment on either side. Thus, a father-and-son-like friendship as well as a fruitful and highly promising cooperation ended in an emotional outbreak, severing their ties from one day to the next. They parted never to meet again. However, this is not the end of the story. Their breakup sowed the seeds for yet another personal drama of a much wider scope, ruining Dasgupta’s unparalleled career and leading to his death as a lonely and forgotten man. And, last but not least, a few of these events were mirrored in my own story that unfolded as I was unravelling the threads of this sad tale in Calcutta some 75 years after Eliade first got there.

Dr. Claudia Guggenbühl is a former staff member of the Department of Indology, University of Zürich, a qualified yoga instructor and director of the Meditationszentrum Thalwil in Switzerland.

Hephzibah Israel: “Shifting Cultures of Knowledge: Translation, Language Learning and Scholarly Practices”

This paper explores the significance of the introduction of translation for pedagogical purposes in realigning existing linguistic boundaries and forms of knowledge in early nineteenth-century India. I will focus on two distinct contexts of 'learning' where translation played a significant part: the learning of 'Oriental' languages by British civil servants and missionaries in the Madras Presidency aspiring to a career in colonial administration or mission field and the training of Indian catechists aspiring to church ordination in the Bombay Presidency. Translation as pedagogy introduces in the

scholarly worlds of Madras and Bombay Presidencies important new conceptions of what 'translation' is and of how languages function and relate to each other. I will explore how this brings in a new understanding in the relation between languages and modernity. I suggest that the pursuit of commensurability through academic translation exercises both produces different ways of knowing as well as introduces new measures of competencies in the real world.

Dr. Hephzibah Israel is Lecturer in Translation Studies at the Department of Asian Studies, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, University of Edinburgh.

Sudhir Kakar: “Psychological Encounters: India and Europe”

European cultures of knowledge have been all conquering in academic studies in India. Are there Indian cultures of knowledge that can contribute to the various disciplines in the humanities and, in some cases, suggest a radical reorientation? Some of the greatest Indian icons, from Buddha in ancient India to Gandhi and Tagore in more recent times, are in complete agreement that there are two key concepts, connectedness and sympathy, that define Indian civilization. I will trace these concepts through Indian thought and life and show how, as complementary to Western emphasis on understanding the world and the role of power in social relations, they could give fresh impetus to some disciplines, such as psychology and literary studies.

Professor emeritus Dr. Sudhir Kakar is a world-renowned award-winning psychoanalyst, writer and scholar in the areas of cultural psychology and psychology of religions.

Klaus Karttunen: “Mailed Relations: Personal Correspondence and the History of Indology”

Several letter collections that have recently been published (e.g., of Otto von Böhtlingk, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Sylvain Lévi and Franz Anton Schiefner) remind us that the great importance of correspondences for the history of learning also concerns the field of Indology. The internet age has greatly facilitated the use of letters in writing such a history as the collections of numerous important libraries are now available online; for example, the excellent Kalliope portal covers many German collections of scholarly correspondence. Thanks to such resources, we know where to go to find relevant material. Surprisingly, letters were also exchanged between Europe and several Asian countries from early on. European scholars first corresponded with missionaries who had gone to India, but soon also with Indian scholars. An early example is Rāja Rādhākānta

Deva (1784–1867), the compiler of the massive Sanskrit encyclopedia *Śabdakalpadruma* and also one of the leading figures of the Hindu renaissance in Calcutta in the early nineteenth century. He was correspondent or honorary member of no less than five academies and scholarly societies in the West and corresponded frequently with these institutions as well as with individual colleagues.

Professor emeritus Dr. Klaus Karttunen continues to conduct his research at the Department of World Cultures, University of Helsinki.

Amruta Natu: “Georg Bühler: A Historian Advocating the Indigenous Genesis of Indian Literature”

The present paper is set to explore the encounter of cultures of knowledge in a nineteenth-century scholar, Georg Bühler (1837–1898). It will be attempted to show that this scholar of German origin who travelled extensively in India and interacted with traditional scholars became an ardent advocate of traditional views, especially regarding the origin and antiquity of Sanskrit texts.

It is notable that after Bühler had discovered the *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, a historical poem in Sanskrit, he turned his attention more and more from texts transmitted in manuscripts to inscriptions. He confined the second half of his career to the decipherment and publication of new epigraphs. Exceptions to this were such of his writings he felt obliged to compose in response to some theories, like those developed by Max Müller and Adolf Holtzmann, suggesting the origin of Sanskrit literature outside the Indian subcontinent. The reactions to them by the scholarly world were of a diametrically opposed nature. It will be surmised at the end that on the issue of an indigenous genesis of Indian literature Bühler’s views were inconvenient to the scholarly world, whether that of the West or the East.

Dr. Amruta Natu is curator of the manuscript collection of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.

Jayendra Soni: “Letters to the Jaina Monk Vijayendra Suri (b. 1881)”

The title of this presentation slightly modifies that of the book “Letters to Vijayendra Suri”, published in 1960/61. This collection of letters is both remarkable and revealing: remarkable for the large number of European scholars (like Ludwig Alsdorf, Sylvain Lévi, Walther Schubring, Friedrich Weller, Maurice Winternitz, to name but just a few), who corresponded with, and in

several cases even visited, the Jaina monk Vijayendra Suri in the early twentieth century, and revealing for the wide range of interest in the field of Indology for which the monk was approached. The presentation will strive to bring out the significance of the institution represented by Vijayendra Suri and his teacher Vijaya Dharma Suri (1868–1922) and the invaluable assistance provided by Vijayendra Suri not only in academic matters (related e.g. to manuscripts), but also personally. An attempt will also be made to explore how at that time this exceptional interaction was initiated and nurtured, and to delve into the factors that facilitated such an intense communication. On the basis of some selected letters from the book, the dynamics and interaction between the Jaina Ācāryas and renowned Indologists will be highlighted.

Dr. Jayendra Soni is a former staff member of the Indological and Tibetological unit of the Department of Classical Languages and Literatures, University of Marburg, and general secretary of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies.