



PERSO-INDICA

*An Analytical Survey of Persian Works
on Indian Learned Traditions*

THE THIRD PERSO-INDICA WORKSHOP

INDIC TEXTS AND ISLAMICATE CULTURE FROM THE GHAZNAVID TO THE SULTANATE PERIODS

Tokyo, October 6th 2018, 13:30-17:30

PROGRAM

- 13:30–13:35 **Nobuhiro Ota** (ILCAA): Opening address.
- 13:35–13:50 **Fabrizio Speziale** (EHESS): Introduction to the Third Perso-Indica Workshop.
- 13:50–14:30 **Noémie Verdon** (Swiss National Science Foundation): “Al-Bīrūnī’s *Kitāb Pātāṅgal* and *Kitāb Sānk*: Methods and Strategies of Translation.”
- 14:30–15:10 **Satoshi Ogura** (ILCAA): “Revisiting Sanskrit Epic-Purāṇic Elements in Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India.”
- 15:10–15:25 **BREAK**
- 15:25–16:05 **Fabrizio Speziale** (EHESS): “Šihāb al-Dīn Nāgawrī’s *Šifā al-marāz*: Reconsidering Greco-Arabic and Ayurvedic Theories of the Humours in 14th century India.”
- 16:05–16:45 **Kazuyo Sakaki** (Hokkaido Musashi Women’s College): “Ways for liberation – The early textual transmission of Indian traditional science in Persian works.”
- 16:45–17:00 **Michio Yano** (Kyoto Sangyo University): General comments.
- 17:00–17:30 **DISCUSSION.**

VENUE: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Hongo Satellite Campus, 5 floor seminar room, 2-4-10, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo.

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<http://www.perso-indica.net/events-news/34>

ABSTRACTS

- ✿ **Noémie Verdon** (Swiss National Science Foundation, Berne), “Al-Bīrūnī’s *Kitāb Pātāṅgal* and *Kitāb Sānk*: Methods and Strategies of Translation.”

The Perso-Muslim polymath al-Bīrūnī lived in Central Asia between the tenth and the eleventh centuries CE. His monograph on India, the *Tahqīq mā li-l-Hind* (ca. 1030), is particularly remarkable, as the scholar describes Indian religion, sciences, literatures and customs in an extremely exhaustive, meticulous and objective way; which remains unparalleled for his time. In this work, al-Bīrūnī abundantly quotes two texts related to classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies which he had also translated from Sanskrit to Arabic. The two texts are respectively titled in Arabic the *Kitāb Sānk* and the *Kitāb Pātāṅgal*. As for the former, extracts of it are scattered in the *Tahqīq mā li-l-Hind*; which remains our only source of knowledge of this work. A complete manuscript of the latter exists today and was edited by Hellmut Ritter in 1956. Several established scholars, such as Carl Edward Sachau (1888), Richard Garbe (1894; 1917), Junjiro Takakusu (1904) or Schlomo Pines and Tuvia Gelblum (1966; 1977; 1983; 1989) attempted to identify the Sanskrit sources of these translations. Their efforts however never reached conclusive results.

After an introduction to al-Bīrūnī’s life and intellectual context, the presentation will focus on the methods and strategies he adopted when composing the *Kitāb Sānk* and the *Kitāb Pātāṅgal*. Rather than proposing a literal translation, al-Bīrūnī is offering his own interpretation of Indian philosophical concepts to a Perso-Muslim readership. During this process of cultural translation, the scholar negotiated a great deal with his Sanskrit sources. The presentation will analyse several passages of his interpretations and discuss the possible Sanskrit sources of the two Arabic translations.

- ✿ **Satoshi Ogura** (Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo), “Revisiting Sanskrit Epic-Purāṇic Elements in Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India.”

The *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīḥ* or The Compendium of Chronicles is a Persian historical work composed by Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī (d. 718/1318), a vizier who served to Ilkhanid rulers Gāzān (r. 1295–1304) and Öljaitü (r. 1304–16), comprising a history of the Turks and Mongols, and a history of Genghis Khan’s family up to Gāzān’s death (volume one), the history of Öljaitü which is now missing and the so-called the histories of the people of the world (volume two), and a geographical compendium which is too missing (volume three). The history of India arranged at the end of volume two is in two parts (*qism*): the first part contains (i) the measures of time and eras; (ii) the geography; (iii) brief histories of Delhi and Kashmir; and (iv) the kings who ruled in each of the four epochs in Indic thought (*yuga*). The second part contains (v) the beliefs and thoughts of Indic religions; (vi) the life and teachings of Śakyamuni; (vii) explanations about hells (*dūzah*), heavens (*bihīšt*), and metempsychosis (*tanāsuḥ*) in Buddhist thought; and (viii) the description of diffusion of Buddhist schools and other Indic religions in India and Mongolia at the beginning of the fourteenth century. This chapter ends with (ix) a note on Rašīd al-Dīn’s refutation of the belief of metempsychosis from an Islamic viewpoint.

By contrast to the second part which has attracted scholars’ interest due to its descriptions on Buddhism, the first part has less studied after a series of treatises by Karl Jahn. Indeed, the first part provides a unique depiction of the ancient history of India that colligates the contents of multiple Sanskrit epics and purāṇas including the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, the *Raghuvamśa*, the *Rāmāyana*, and the *Mahābhārata*, according to the chronological order of the Indian concept of time of four *yugas*, making slight alternations to the stories in the sources; the concept of the four *yugas* in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīḥ* is based on the information given by the *Kitāb al-Hind* of Abū Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, and the contents of each Sanskrit epics and purāṇas were given by a Kashmiri Buddhist monk Kamālaśrī. In this presentation I will focus on how the stories in the abovementioned Sanskrit epics and purāṇas are chronologically arranged and altered in writing Rashīd al-Dīn’s history of India. In addition, I will explore a profile of Kamālaśrī as an informant of epics and purāṇas in spite of being a Buddhist.

- ✿ **Fabrizio Speziale** (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Center for South Asian Studies, Paris), “Šihāb al-Dīn Nāgawrī’s *Šifā al-marāz*: Reconsidering Greco-Arabic and Ayurvedic Theories of the Humours in 14th century India.”

The fundamental concepts of the theory of humours of the Greco-Arabic thought are often seen as static and a-historical entities whose identity and function were defined once and for all in the classical sources. This paper questions this view by looking at the *Šifā al-marāz*, a Persian medical handbook written in India by Šihāb al-Dīn Nāgawrī in 790/1388. In the first chapter, Nāgawrī proposes a shift of perspective in the classical categorisation of humoral pathology of the Arabic and Persian texts. His proposal is based on a combination of Muslim and Indian physicians’ views through the assimilation of notions of the latter into the conceptual framework of the former. Nāgawrī’s audacious proposal addresses a key question, since the classification of humours constitutes a central element of the doctrinal identities of both the Avicennian and the Ayurvedic schools. Moreover, a closer reading of this chapter raises the question of whether Nāgawrī’s intent was to revise both doctrines at the base of his hybrid nosography. His model can be read not only as a key adjustment to the Greco-Arabic view but also as a reconsideration of the Ayurvedic theory which does not count blood among the humours.

- ✿ **Kazuyo Sakaki** (Hokkaido Musashi Women’s College, Sapporo), “Ways for liberation – The early textual transmission of Indian traditional science in Persian works.”

In the context of tantric tradition, astrological and divinatory knowledge were required for seekers of liberation. In India, astrology has been a part of the political, cultural, and social apparatus, and received ideological foundations in the Vedic tradition. It has been developed as one of the important knowledge systems as Vedic auxiliaries. In Islamic world, due to the contact with Hellenistic sciences, when the classification of knowledge systems was formulated, astrology was classified into foreign sciences. In medieval Islamic society, despite of the debate between the pros and cons of astrology, inherited from Hellenistic doctrines and other foreign sources, it remained as popular practice among the people regardless of rank just as in the pre-Islamic times. In the early stage of the intercultural communications among Iranian, Arabic, Greek and Indian intellectual traditions, astrological knowledge was transmitted through translation activities. However, the source texts, even in the field of science, were subjected to undergo the transformation in their own socio-cultural context, and the translated texts were widely transmitted in their transformed shape beyond their original context. In order to provide textual evidences of literary transformation and various ways of transmission, we will examine two scholarly works of renowned astrologers from Ujjain, i.e., Varāhamihira and Narapati. In the case of Varāhamihira’s *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, al-Bīrūnī made success in his intertextual studies and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Shams-i Bahā’ Nūrī showed his intentional neglect to appeal to his target audience. As one of the source texts of the *Amṛtakunḍa*, the *Narapatijayacaryā*, having inherited traditional knowledge systems, transmitted the science of *svara* to Islamic spiritual seekers for liberation and was incorporated in encyclopedic works as one of the indigenous knowledge systems in India. In the context of translation studies, both cases will provide typical examples of knowledge translation strategies.



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