

Call for papers for the international Indological conference

## **Tradition and Innovation in the Languages and Cultures of Premodern South Asia**

3–4 September 2026

Department of Indian Studies  
Faculty of Humanities  
Eötvös Loránd University  
Budapest

### *Description:*

The international Indological conference “Tradition and Innovation in the Languages and Cultures of Premodern South Asia” invites papers exploring the role of consciously and unconsciously established canons and standards in the cultural and linguistic history of the South Asian subcontinent — with particular attention to India — as well as the phenomena and processes that drove their formation and shaped their preservation, transformation, and reception across time.

The conference will serve as the closing event of a four-year [research project](#) hosted by Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and funded by the Hungarian National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH). The project (No. K 142535) has investigated processes of canonisation in premodern South Asia from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including philology, philosophy, linguistics, literary history, and religious studies.

The organisers welcome contributions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

- The formation, consolidation, preservation, and reception of literary, religious, philosophical, and cultural canons in premodern South Asia
- The foundational texts of South Asian cultures and their canonisation
- Archaisms and innovations in the cultural and linguistic history and prehistory of South Asia
- Neologisms and conscious innovation in the literary and learned languages of South Asia (Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, classical Tamil)
- The standardisation of language: grammatical traditions, prescriptivism, and the codification of literary norms
- Commentary, sub-commentary, and the interpretation of authoritative texts
- Quotation, allusion, and intertextuality as modes of engaging with canonical sources
- Tradition and innovation in literary genres: epic, *kāvya*, drama, lyric, narrative, didactic literature
- The aesthetics of originality versus adherence to convention; the concept of *aucitya* (propriety) and related notions
- Scriptural authority and the canon in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions
- Philosophical traditions and their self-positioning relative to textual authority
- Hagiography, mythography, and the canonisation of figures and narratives

### *Invited speakers*

Shonaleeka Kaul (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)  
Alexander Lubotsky (Universiteit Leiden)  
Peter Bisschop (Universiteit Leiden)  
Harunaga Isaacson (Universität Hamburg)  
Hugo David (École française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris)

### *Presentation format*

Presentations (in English) will be 20 minutes in length, followed by 10 minutes of discussion.

### *Publication*

Selected papers of the conference will be considered for publication in a special issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

### ***Abstract submission deadline: 1 May 2026***

*Notification of acceptance:* 31 May 2026

### *Submission guidelines*

Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words (excluding references) and must be submitted in Word or PDF format to [tradition\\_innovation\\_conference@btk.elte.hu](mailto:tradition_innovation_conference@btk.elte.hu) by **1 May 2026**. Abstracts should include the title of the paper, the name(s) and affiliation(s) of the author(s), and a brief indication of the primary sources, languages, or traditions addressed. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by **31 May 2026**.

### *Venue*

[Department of Indian Studies](#)  
[Faculty of Humanities](#)  
[Eötvös Loránd University](#)  
H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 4/A and 6-8/A

*Conference fee:* 60 EUR for waged participants (30 EUR for students)

### *Organisers*

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