

INTRODUCTION

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In a discipline as venerable as Sanskrit, where the average age of the texts under discussion can be thousands of years old, it may perhaps be possible to forgive a delay of papers being published nearly two decades after they were originally delivered. At least that is the hope with the current volume, which consists of presentations from the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, which was held in 13–18 July 2003, in Helsinki, Finland.

The conference has provided a veritable treasure trove to the field. Since 2003, thirteen volumes in the Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference series were published through Motilal Banarsidass, reflecting the wide breadth of the themes covered. Under the patient and erudite supervision of the General Editors Asko Parpola and Petteri Koskikallio, these include:

- Vedic Investigations* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 1). Ed. Asko Parpola & Petteri Koskikallio. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2016.
- Epic Undertakings* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 2). Ed. Robert Goldman & Muneo Tokunaga. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009.
- Origin and Growth of the Purāṇic Text Corpus: With Special Reference to the Skanda Purāṇa* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 3.2). Ed. Hans T. Bakker. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004.
- Indian Grammars: Philology and History* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 4). Ed. George Cardona & Madhav M. Deshpande. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2012.
- Themes and Tasks in Old and Middle Indo-Aryan Linguistics* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 5). Ed. Bertil Tikkanen & Heinrich Hettrich, 2006.
- Mathematics and Medicine in Sanskrit* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 7). Ed. Dominik Wujastyk. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010.
- Buddhist Studies* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 8). Ed. Richard Gombrich & Cristina Scherrer-Schaub. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008.
- Jaina Studies* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 9). Ed. Colette Caillat & Nalini Balbir. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008.
- From Vasubandhu to Caitanya: Studies in Indian Philosophy and Its Textual History* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 10.1). Ed. Johannes Bronkhorst & Karin Preisendanz. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010.
- Logic in Earliest Classical India* (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 10.2). Ed. Brendan S. Gillon. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010.

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Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta: Interaction and Continuity (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 10.3). Ed. Johannes Bronkhorst. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007.

Script and Image: Papers on Art and Epigraphy (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 11.1). Ed. Adalbert J. Gail, Gerd J.R. Mevissen & Richard Salomon. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006.

History of Indological Studies (Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference 11.2). Ed. Klaus Karttunen. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2015.

Due to various factors, it was not possible for the series to be brought to conclusion. In question was the fate of the volume on Purāṇas, Āgamas, and Tantras and the volume on Poetry, Drama, and Aesthetics, respectively intended as Volumes 3.1 and 6 in the series. However, with the agreement of the general editors and the support of the Finnish Oriental Society (Suomen Itämainen Seura), it was decided that these two last volumes would be published in *Studia Orientalia*. In 2020, the first of these two volumes was published as *Studia Orientalia* 121, and the current volume concludes the series.

While the passing of time meant that some of the papers delivered in 2003 could not be included, due to having been published elsewhere or the inability to contact their authors, we are fortunate to have a sufficient number to comprise a volume. I would like to thank all the authors included here for their patience and diligence. I would also like to thank Professor Emeritus Asko Parpola for his detailed review of all the texts and Dr. Petteri Koskikallio for his technical assistance in resurrecting decrepit files and salvaging lost diacritics. Lotta Aunio and Sari Nieminen were of invaluable help in the production and layout process.

As a brief overview of the papers included herein, Lyne Bansat-Boudon explores the theater's myth of origin in the first chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni, Mandakranta Bose examines drama in relation to dance by exploring the category known as *uparūpaka*, compared to the more common term *rūpaka*, and Albion M. Butters examines Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* in relation to both its erotic double-imagery and its devotional aspects. Anna A. Esposito critically considers the Prakrit in the so-called "Trivandrum plays" attributed to Bhāsa, while E.H. Rick Jarow further opens the *Meghadūta*, exposing the landscapes of the poem in terms of interiority and exteriority, and subjectivity and the natural world. Marina V. Orelskaya offers some brief notes on the practical tradition of Sanskrit manuals on Indian classical dance, and Daniela Rossella argues that Indian sacred poetry and mystical-erotic texts should be considered in terms of the rhetorical device of polysemy, operating simultaneously on multiple levels to profound spiritual effect. Finally, Bożena Śliwaczyńska discusses the character Vidūṣaka of Sanskrit theater, specifically analyzing this fool figure in the context of the Kūṭiyāṭṭam tradition of Kerala.

The papers delivered during the Poetry, Drama, and Aesthetics panel at the 12th World Sanskrit Conference exhibit great richness and depth, and in that regard they continue to have enduring value for the field. It is with great satisfaction that they may finally be enjoyed by the wider public.