Editorial

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We start this issue by commemorating Lance Cousins, whose death was mentioned in our previous Editorial. He was a regular participant in the annual Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions, whether or not he had a paper of his own to contribute; and whenever any Buddhist topic was raised, his comprehensive knowledge of the Pali texts and their language enabled him to contribute constructively to the discussion. We are grateful to Peter Harvey and *Buddhist Studies Review*, Equinox Publishing Sheffield, for allowing us to reprint his very informative obituary, with its bibliography and collection of tributes from people who have benefited from Lance's wisdom and compassion, and to Valerie Roebuck for adding her own personal recollection of him as her teacher, colleague and friend.

In the first of our four research articles, Adam Bowles, of the University of Queensland, Australia, examines many uses of the key term *dharma*, in the *Mahābhārata*, in the literature on dharma, in Buddhist texts, in the *Arthaśāstra*, in Vedic hymns, and elsewhere. He focuses in particular upon the use of the word *dharma* in a simple descriptive sense, meaning 'custom'. Dr Bowles demonstrates that this usage is as old as the *Atharvaveda*, and he argues that as the Dharmaśāstra tradition developed and the word *dharma* was increasingly used in a prescriptive and even transcendental sense, the scope and interpretation of such descriptive usages had to be carefully controlled.

R. K. K. Rajarajan, of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, examines two forms of the feminine in South Indian iconography: the lion-riding goddess

(*siṃhavāhinī*), and the seven mothers (*saptamātṛkā*). Examples of both were unearthed recently from a dried-up tank in Vēppaṅkuḷam, between Madurai and Tirunelveli, bringing the geographical extension of these images much further south than previously supposed. Dr Rajarajan discusses the iconography in detail, relating it to literary sources as well as to comparable images found elsewhere. As some of his photographs show, these long-lost images have now taken their place in village life as objects of worship, adorned with forehead marks and offerings of clothing.

Ankur Barua, of Cambridge University, examines the discourses and silences of the twentieth-century sage Ramana Maharshi, who had a considerable following both in South India and internationally. Though Ramana had no formal training in any philosophical tradition, Dr Barua relates his teaching to both Advaita Vedānta and to Sāṃkhya-Yoga. By doing so, he suggests that the highly verbal and dialectical methods of the Sanskrit authors in these schools and the often non-verbal pedagogic techniques of Ramana Maharshi both point to the same paradox: that the mind and language must be used to find what is beyond mind and language.

In our last article, Gwilym Beckerlegge of the Open University examines *sevā,* which has taken its place alongside *dharma* as one of the key terms of contemporary Hinduism. As well as an analysis of *sevā* itself, as a term and as an ideal, his article is a survey of the scholarly literature on the subject—to which he has himself contributed important studies, particularly in the context of the Ramakrishna movement, but also in that of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Professor Beckerlegge starts by looking at pre-modern uses of the word, but is mainly interested in its rise to prominence during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, along with *karmayoga* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, and its deployment by contemporary movements.