

Editorial

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The last three issues of *RoSA* were devoted to special subjects. We are most grateful to Balbinder Singh Bhogal, the guest editor of *RoSA* 4.2, and to Simon Brodbeck and James Hegarty, the guest editors of *RoSA* 5, and also to *Equinox*'s editor Audrey Mann, who communicated with them and the authors to check innumerable details and prepare the copy for the press. *RoSA* 6.2 will be another special issue, on 'Tradition and the Re-use of Indic Texts', edited by Jacqueline Suthren Hirst, and mainly comprising papers from the 2010 Sanskrit Tradition in the Modern World seminar.

The succession of guest-edited special issues has delayed the publication of independent articles, for which we apologize to authors and readers. With this in mind, we have accepted *Equinox*'s proposal to move from two issues a year to three. The first such volume will be *RoSA* 7 (2013), edited by Fabrizio Ferrari and Thomas Dähnhardt; all three issues will contain the fruits of a conference on non-human animals in South Asian religions. The move to three issues will entail more work for the editors, and we are glad to announce that Simon Brodbeck, of Cardiff University, one of the guest editors of *RoSA* 5, has accepted our invitation to join us as a third editor. We are also grateful to Professor Uma Chakravarti, formerly of Delhi University, for joining us on the Editorial Board.

While remaining grateful to our guest editors, we are pleased that the present issue allows a return to the publication of independent articles. The subjects span the centuries, and the authors span four continents. The issue begins with an obituary of Raimon Panikkar, whose own interests ranged from the Vedic age to the present, not forgetting eternity. In the first of the five research articles, Michael Nichols, of Northwestern University, USA, who contributed an article on early relations between brahmanism and Buddhism to

RoSA 3.1, examines the figure of Death in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, the *Mahābhārata*, the Purāṇas and the Pali texts, exploring the permeable boundary between brahminical and Buddhist traditions. The same two traditions appear in the next article, in which Birendra Nath Prasad, of B. B. Ambedkar Central University, Lucknow, studies brahminical temples and Buddhist monasteries in eastern Bengal from the seventh to eleventh centuries CE, following his earlier article in RoSA 4.1. He relates them to the development of agriculture, state formation and royal patronage, and questions the influential theory that links rice cultivation in this region to the coming of Islam.

The other three articles deal with contemporary or recent ritual events. Nick Swann, of the University of Wales, Newport, draws on his fieldwork among the Tibetan exiles in Himachal Pradesh. Here, he describes Tibetan wedding rituals, showing how the poems recited by the respective champions of the bride and groom emphasize the adversarial aspect of the wedding, and relate the persons involved to the house, the environment and the astrological situation. McComas Taylor, of the Australian National University, describes a *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* recitation in the pilgrimage centre of Vrindavan, comparing the event he observed with the instructions given in the *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-māhātmya*, and also with another such event recorded on DVD. Swann and Taylor each examine indications of change from earlier practice. Finally, Anna King, of Winchester University, UK, describes and discusses the ways in which ISKCON devotees deal with death, starting with the death of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami when the movement was less than twelve years old. With the ageing of what started as a youth movement, death has necessarily become commonplace, and King describes the routines and institutions that have been developed to provide for the ritual, clinical and pastoral needs of the dying, the dead and the bereaved.

RoSA 8.1, to appear in 2014, will contain the long-delayed selection of papers from the thirty-fifth Spalding Symposium on Indian Religions. We will welcome submissions for publication in the other two issues of volume 8, and also proposals for further guest-edited special issues.