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Editorial

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With the publication of this issue, which was due in June 2010, *RoSA* is in the process of catching up with the calendar. We are very pleased to be able to publish four articles from overseas—two from North America and two from India—as well as two from scholars in Britain. As before, subjects range from the ancient to the contemporary; they also deal with Hinduism (including Western movements), Buddhism, Christianity and, for the first time, Judaism (if only of a marginally Jewish kind).

The interrelation between early Buddhism and Brahmanism, the theme of Brian Black's guest-edited issue (*RoSA* 3.1), appears again in the first two articles. Matthew Sayers investigates the early history of the association of Gayā, south-west of Patna, with Brahmanical ancestral rituals, and of neighbouring Uruvelā or Bodhgayā with the Buddha, questioning the assumption that Gayā had always been associated with these rituals. A later phase of Buddhist practice, and its relation to Brahmanism, appears in Birendra Nath Prasad's account of votive inscriptions in an eastern region of Bengal. Comparing data from this region with the far more abundant data from Sāñcī and elsewhere, he notes the absence of women, except for one queen, the failure to mention the *jāti* of the donor, and a blurring of the boundary between Buddhist and Brahmanical intentions. Ankur Barua's article deals not with a particular historical period or place, but with the strikingly similar, though significantly contrasting, theological concerns of the Christian Augustinian tradition and the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition of Rāmānuja: both have to reconcile the concept of divine grace with that of free will, but do so within very different views of the individual and of cosmic time. The other three articles are about the contemporary world: two on Western movements looking to India as a source of authority, and one on a small-scale Indian movement which

looks westwards. Ellen Goldberg looks at the way the biography or hagiography of the yoga teacher Kṛpalvānanda serves as a model for the progress of his followers, and examines its relation to earlier traditions of yoga. Graham Dwyer shows the importance of food in ISKCON—as an expression of the movement's ethical values, as a way of participating in worship, as a medium for the transmission of sancitity, and as a 'preaching tool' which has overtaken public chanting and the distribution of literature in the course of changes in the relation of ISKCON to the surrounding society. Finally, Yulia Egorova studies a group of Dalit families in Andhra Pradesh which claim an origin in the lost tribes of Israel; she assesses the motives and effects of this claim as a means of self-assertion, and as an appeal for international help.

All these articles, in different ways, deal with texts, and include textual references, quotations and terms in various languages: Sanskrit, Hebrew, Latin and English, including the distinctive English vocabulary used within ISKCON, which reflects the speech habits of its founder. One of our tasks as editors, in collaboration with the authors and our publisher Equinox, is to ensure that textual references are both clear and economical, and that quotations, cited words and names are accurately and unambiguously spelt. We considered, but rejected, the view that these things should be left to the author and the publisher's editor, guided by the anonymous reviewer. The author may not be familiar with our style guide, and the publisher's editor cannot be expected to have a specialized knowledge of the subject—though in our case she has been extremely helpful in asking the sort of innocent questions that might not occur to a specialist. As for the reviewers, it is very kind of them to advise us on the suitability of an article and give guidance for revision, but they should not be expected to deal with all the details.

We also rejected any attempt to establish a standard system of spelling for languages that are not primarily written in roman script. Our style guide indicates that exact romanization, with diacritics, is not needed in disciplines such as history where it is not usual, but that it should be used where literary sources in Asian languages are cited. But since many of our articles straddle both these categories, it is quite possible to find the spelling Krishna alongside *Kṛṣṇa* in a single article, as may be appropriate in the particular context. Any attempt to be rigidly consistent leads to absurdities; we consider such attempts misguided. The above example shows, incidentally, that the difference between exact and popular romanization is not just a matter of adding or omitting diacritics: the spelling Krsna is unacceptable in any context, though it is unfortunately to be found in some publications.

While we try to standardize references, we could not impose a single standard. For modern works, we use the bracketed author and date, and page where appropriate, making sure that each citation leads immediately and unambiguously to an item in the list of references. But this system would be inappropriate for classical texts which exist in many editions; for these we use chapter-and-verse references, and if an abbreviated title is used, it is

clarified in a list of abbreviations. Where there are substantial variants in the text, we cite the edition used.

Researchers, especially if they are young or inexperienced, are often unaware of the interest their work can arouse outside their immediate field, and the consequent need to make the landmarks of that field, so familiar to themselves, comprehensible to outsiders. Editors and anonymous reviewers (and also examiners of theses) often encounter citations of unfamiliar texts, unknown words, names of places or people, and historical periodizations which may mean little or nothing to them, or may mean something other than what they mean to the author. In the medieval scholastic world, or the eighteenth-century enlightenment world, in which all knowledge was in principle open to all scholars, the problem might not have arisen; at the other extreme, in the Babel of mutually incomprehensible specialisms towards which we in the twenty-first century may seem to be heading, it would not be soluble. Poised as we are between an ideal past which probably was never quite like that, and a future which we hope will never happen, we try to make knowledge and ideas as widely accessible as possible. We also try to avoid the implication, intentional or otherwise: 'If you can't understand this you're not one of us, so keep out.' With these considerations in mind, we as editors join with the authors to do a lot of work, so that when the article is published there will be less work for the reader.