

Editorial

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As we mentioned in the editorial to *RoSA* 15.3, the editorial team has changed. Simon Brodbeck has joined Suzanne Newcombe as an additional reviews editor, while Arkotong Longkumer and Karen O'Brien-Kop have become editors, and have already made valuable contributions to our work, for which Dermot Killingley and Anna King, who have been editors from the beginning of *RoSA* in 2007, are very grateful.

Again we have only three articles, but they all make substantial contributions to their very different fields: one on medieval north-eastern India (including part of what is now Bangladesh), one on present-day India and one on Latvia. This last may be surprising, but it accords with *RoSA*'s policy of publishing research on developments outside South Asia of traditions of South Asian origin, and takes its place beside Adrián Muñoz's article on a Mexican interpretation of yoga (*RoSA* 15.2).

'New Discoveries in Smaller Antiquities and a Unique Portrait Sculpture from Medieval Bengal Duars' by Archishman Sarker is an archaeological study of objects housed in a university museum and in a shed maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India, both in the far north of West Bengal, adjoining Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. These objects throw light on the history of the region sometimes known as the Western Duars, and on the medieval

kingdom of Kāmatā. As Sarker shows, the archaeological study of the region has been impaired not only by its remoteness but by the instability of the terrain, and by its division between India and Bangladesh—and also, he suggests in his concluding section, by aesthetic bias on the part of art historians. The objects studied show traces of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism in the region, and possibly Jainism, while Buddhism is represented by votive *stūpas*, and more remarkably by a *yab-yum* couple. Sarker pays special attention to a fine stone sculpture which may represent a king, Kāmateśvara Pṛthu, who is commemorated in legends and place-names of the region.

'*Jugaad* Authorities: Hyperlocal *Peers* and Trajectories of Vernacular Power in Contemporary Delhi' by Ronie Parciack is an ethnographic and historical account of a class of Muslim religious figures that could have escaped notice but for her careful observation. These are Sufi *peers* who are known only locally, and lack the formal authority conferred by membership of a transmission lineage (*silsila*, *tareeqah*) or by occupancy of a shrine complex (*dargah*). Their authority is improvised, or as she terms it *jugaad*—a word that commonly refers to the makeshift contrivances that enable people to get by when resources of all kinds are scarce. One resource that they do have is digital media, and one of the four *peers* studied is exceptional in having a transmission lineage going back to the Prophet himself. Such lineages are always male, even if a *peer* has been instructed by his mother. The article begins in an account of an occasion at a large *dargah* in Delhi, at which three of the four were present; the fourth had introduced Parciack to the event, but did not attend it.

In 'Self-Orientalism at Europe's Margins: Historical Imaginary, Ritual Practice and Interfaith Dialogue in an Indo-Baltic Nāth Network', Eloisa Stuparich examines a yoga centre in Riga which, like the earlier movement studied by Adrián Muñoz in the article mentioned above, is distinct from the modern postural yoga that has been the subject of many other studies. The centre is a temple, and claims affinity with the Nāth *saṃpradāya*, through a Russian initiate who founded it in 2011; but it is distinct from the International Nath Order. It is also connected with the Śrī Vidyā tantric tradition, but is distinct again from modern globalized tantrism. On another level, it is inspired by a view that Latvia (with Lithuania) has a special relationship with ancient Indian culture, and its language with Sanskrit: a variant of F. Max Müller's romantic vision of an affinity between Germans and Vedic Āryans, and an example of what Stuparich terms 'self-orientalism'. Interfaith dialogue is, as she says, an unexpected element; it seems to be confined to the visit of one Australian Jesuit and enthusiast for *tantra*. But the account of his visit throws further light on how this remote outpost of a South Asian tradition sees itself.