International Seminar

# Journeys and Travellers, Routes and Destinations in Indian Literature and Art

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## ABSTRACTS

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Soňa Bendíková
(Charles University, Prague)

## Travellers' imprints in Kota stories

The Nilgiris, mountainous region on the border of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu, is place where original dwellers (approximately twenty tribal groups) and newcomers have been living for more than two hundred years. It was believed that the Nilgiris were isolated for centuries until missionaries discovered it. Nevertheless, from the latest archaeological discoveries we can assume that the region has always been place of vivid contacts between original inhabitants and traders from lowlands.

First report about this area was written by Italian Jesuit Giacomo Fenicio almost four centuries ago. He mentioned ancient communities speaking strange languages. Although his journey was a missionary failure, many others followed his footsteps. However, until 1812 we cannot find any written information about the area. In the beginning of nineteenth century the British discovered the pleasant climate of the Nilgiris and the massive settlement began and the outpour of many reports of British civil servants started. The British, and later Indian population, gradually exceeded the tribal population with enormous impact in every sphere of the daily life of tribes.

The influence of different culture on tribal communities brought many changes: new approach of some tribal people to their own tradition, changes in material culture, economic sphere, social organisation, dress and hair style, and others.

In this paper we shall focus on imprints of these newcomers and changes they brought to the area in oral literature of tribal societies of the Nilgiris. We would like to present the approach of tribal people to the "new" culture and its reflexion in their life. We shall try to evaluate how the "traditional" overcame the disagreements with the "new" with the help of oral stories.

Monika Browarczyk
(Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan)

## Journeys, transfers, business trips and pilgrimages in Hindi autobiographies by women

Women writing their autobiographical narratives in Hindi describe various journeys, routes and destinations. In my paper I want to discuss how in their autobiographies Krishna Agnihotri, Maitreyi Pushpa, Chandrakiran Sonrexa and Prabha Khetan narrate their both conspicuous and unobtrusive travels or expected and unexpected routes and destinations. Agnihotri dwells on her peregrinations from the provincial towns of Madhya Pradesh into the hubs of Hindi literary production (Delhi and Varanasi); Pushpa describes visits to her ancestral village in the countryside with all the emotional tensions of a mother and daughter relationship; Sonrexa depicts how her husband's government job

transfers to various cities in India affected the family life, she also pictures pilgrimages as family holidays; and Khetan provides glimpses of Europe and the United States of America through travelogue passages on her business trips.

**Hermina Cielas**
**(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)**

## Life's destination in the eyes of a poet

Life stories are central to human experience. For that reason, although relatively modern, various ways of their recalling are omnipresent literary forms. Sanskrit literature is lacking in the testimonies describing authors' lives. The paradigm of collectivity prevails in India and there is no space for the emergence of selfhood and individualism in the field of literature. Probably for that reason, excluding few exceptions, reflective poetry was not common and biographical works in Sanskrit fall within the scope of hagiographical literature with a tendency to place the narrative within a mythic framework. Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita's *Śāntivilāsa* (*The Manifestation of Peace*) shows the way in which, despite of lack of many available models, the 17th-century writer left behind the unique poetical vision of his life's journey in the form of a short composition dealing with *nirveda*. The paper investigates means by which the minister of Tirumala Nayaka contributed to the development of reflective poetry with biographical elements in Sanskrit.

**Sabrina Ciolfi**
**(University of Milan)**

## Shooting Bollywood in Italy: *Bachna Ae Haseeno*, a case study. The impact of foreign locations on Indian tourist's destination

Foreign countries serve more and more as the ideal backdrop for popular Hindi films. In particular, after Yash Chopra introduced Switzerland to Bollywood in the mid 80s, directors and producers of the Hindi film industry are extremely attracted to paradisiacal natural landscapes, charming old towns and historical sites, which Europe can offer.

Foreign locations are meant to represent consumerism, recreation, leisure and travelling of the emerging upper-middle class in India, which is depicted in these films.

The popularity of Hindi cinema among the Indians in India and in the diaspora, makes these films an extraordinary way to promote tourist destinations.

As outbound travel from India is growing tremendously over the past few years, many countries are trying to attract Indian film productions by offering financial incentives and additional film funds.

The shooting in Italy of two main sequences from *Bachna Ae Haseeno* (2008) will be examined as a case study in the paper. The analysis proposes to investigate both the artistic and the economic motivations behind the location choices.

**Marzenna Czerniak-Drożdżowicz**
**(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)**

## Travelling to Vaikuṇṭha, crossing the borders of Heaven

Reaching the highest abode (*paramapada*) of the beloved god is one of the goals of the followers of Hindu traditions. Though this abode is a sphere of sacred, unimaginable and unattainable, nevertheless god gives the chance to reach it – it can be acquired due to the practice leading to emancipation. This possibility is described in some religious texts, which we would like to refer to. But it is also possible to visit an earthly simulacrum of this highest abode in some particular, holy places. In the South Indian context god Viṣṇu gives the chance to arrive to Vaikuṇṭha on earth and to experience the presence of god in a particular holy place at the bank of the eternal Kāverī. But even while visiting other Vaiṣṇava sites, the devotee is able to cross the boundary between profane and sacred and enter Vaikuṇṭha through the "Vaikuṇṭha door" in a particular moment of the year.

In my paper I would like to discuss these different ways of "travelling" to the highest abode of Viṣṇu, crossing its boundaries and experiencing its holiness and uniqueness.

**Alexander Dubyanskiy**
**(Moscow State University)**

## Travels of the ancient Tamil bards

The paper outlines a well known habit of Tamil bards (poets, singers, performers) to undertake journeys in search of rich and generous patrons. Such journeys were a part of what was termed 'a panegyric ritual' described by me earlier. Often bards met each other in the middle of the way and one of them gave advices as to where one should go to find a proper donator.

Thus a poetic form *ārṟupaṭai* ("stepping on a route" or "invitation to a route") was formed and became a productive genre of the old and medieval Tamil poetry.

Several small examples of *ārṟupaṭai* poems are found in the famous anthology of heroic poetry *Puṟanānūṟu* ("Four hundred poems on heroic theme") but the genre fledges up in the big poems

collected under the name *Pattuppāṭṭu* (“Ten Songs”). The main feature of these poems (four out of ten) is a detailed description of the route the poet should follow. This feature together with some other poetical conventions (addressing a fellow-poet, sending him to a certain person, formulating a message he is to deliver) makes one see an undoubted similarity with Kālidāsa’s *Meghadūta*. In the present state of a comparative research in Tamil and Sanskrit literatures it is not possible to come to a resolute conclusion about possible interchanges and influences between them in a given case, but the literary data presented here may be taken into consideration.

**Danielle Feller**
**(University of Lausanne)**

## Travelling through the millennia

The Sanskrit Epics – the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa – on the one hand, and the “Bṛhatkathā-cycle” on the other, comprising works such as Budhasvāmin’s *Bṛhatkathāślokasaṃgraha* (10th century), Somadeva’s *Kathāsaritsāgara* (11th century) and Kṣemendra’s *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (1037) are separated by practically a millennium.

Both the Sanskrit Epics and the extant works of the Bṛhatkathā-cycle (the *Bṛhatkathā* itself being lost) have this in common, that they are quite bulky and contain numerous stories of travels.

The aim of this paper will be to examine in the broad lines what are the main types of travels undertaken in both categories of works, and what are the differences (or similarities) in the types of travellers, the modes of locomotion which are used, and the purposes for which journeys are undertaken.

**Cezary Galewicz**
**(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)**

## Down the river with a song:
## On traveling as transformation and space-producing practice
## in the riverine temple culture of central Kerala

The trajectories of movements across lands and waters, traces left on dusty roads by the hasty steps of the pilgrims, places connected by a resolve of a messenger, lines drawn in space by errands on their ways, the spatial imprints of the zeal of the missionaries, sites frequented by traders and paddlers, the rhythms and modalities of setting off and arriving at destinations by devotees visiting temples that both house as well as belong to gods impatiently waiting to be visited, invisible leftovers of the bare feet of devotees marking the patterns of circumambulation… seem to write messages to be read by someone ready to see the whole web. The traces of festival practices tying invisible threads of

connections between and among shrines, temples, mosques and churches; knots knitting the fabric of networks that relate places and human emotions, weaving the texture of interdependencies between rites of location, loci of worship and the human need for identification and making sense of one's place in the world: all transient marks of movement that produce and re-create the space. All of them add to and augment reality. The essay attempts to identify some of the space-producing practices making the socio-cultural environment of the riverine temple culture of Kerala in their relationship to a tradition of traveling song called *vañci-pāṭṭu*.

**K.K. Geethakumary**
**(Calicut University)**

## Candrāpīḍa's story: From expedition to transformation

Sanskrit rhetoricians have divided the prose compositions into two classes namely Kathā and Ākhyāyikā. Kathā is a simple romance and a work of imagination. On the other hand Ākhyāyikā is a narrative based upon some historical facts and is generally autobiographical using the poetic language. The text *Kādambarī*, which is included in the group of Kathā, is unparalleled in treatment of subject, construction of story and style of narration. The *Harṣacarita,* which is a good example of Ākhyāyikā, is one of the few remarkable historical Kāvya-s in Sanskrit literature.

The text *Kādambarī* is titled after the name of its heroine, Kādambarī. The hero in this book is Candrāpīḍa. This paper is a humble attempt to reveal the transformation of Candrāpīḍa from one life to another as a device employed by the poet in the composition of the story of *Kādambarī*. Once a beautiful *caṇḍāla* maiden entered the palace of king Śūdraka with a parrot called Vaiśampāyana. The parrot was well versed in all sciences and arts and able to speak like human. The king asked the parrot to narrate its story. The parrot described its story as follows. He along with his father was living on *śālmali* tree near the lake Pampā. One day *śabara* army attacked them, but by luck he escaped and reached the hermitage of sage Jābāli. On seeing him, Jābāli said that he was reaping the fruits of his own misdeeds and narrated the story to hermits.

The city called Ujjayinī was ruled by the king Tārāpīḍa. His son was Candrāpīḍa. After education, Candrāpīḍa was given a horse named Indrāyudha and a maiden called Patralekhā to act as personal attendant. As per the advice of minister, Candrāpīḍa was sent for world conquest and at the end of that expedition he reached the lake Acchoda. There he heard a heavenly music blended with the sound of a lute. He went to the direction of music and reached a temple of Śiva where he saw a young maiden who was extremely white and was singing a song in front of the image of Śiva. When asked why she was leading a lonely and ascetic life, she narrated her story.

For smooth switch over from one story to another story and from one birth to another birth, Bāṇabhaṭṭa skillfully employs the concept 'transformation'. Almost all characters narrate their own stories extending from one birth to previous birth and the entire set of stories that make up the whole

story is inter-woven. While dying, Puṇḍarīka cursed Moon to take two births on earth on charges of accelerating his sorrow. Subsequently Moon got birth as Candrāpīḍa and thereafter as King Śūdraka. Here, from expedition he met death and was reborn as Śūdraka. When Śūdraka became lifeless, the corpse of Candrāpīḍa became alive. Such transformation from one form to another form as re-incarnation with remembrance of former life can also be seen in the story of Candrāpīḍa. While female characters become the epitome of patience without being subjected to transitional process, the male characters transit from one life to another through rebirth. Thus it can reasonably be said that the sub narratives which constitute the whole story of the text *Kādambarī* are skillfully tied together by the concept 'transformation'.

A large number of similes seen in *Kādambarī* are based on Epics and Purāṇas. The poetic beauty of the text *Kādambarī* is enhanced by the metrical touch found in it. The Vṛttagandhi type of prose is seen in the passages. In Bāṇabhaṭṭa's writing it can be found that the use of charming words and letters are inclined to the sentiments and emotions. Bāṇabhaṭṭa profusely employs puns and alliterations which are considered as essential features of great prose. He was very skilled in the art of composition and was also familiar with the different style of writing prevalent at the various parts of the country.

**Martin Hříbek**
**(Charles University, Prague)**

## Journeys of Rabindranath Tagore across Central and Eastern Europe

In the Bengali milieu Rabindranath Tagore serves not only as a prototype of a multifaceted artistic personality but also as a prototype traveller who impersonated his ideas of East and West coming together in the course of his travels over five continents. It was his third trip to England in 1912, en route to the USA, when he handed over the manuscript of *Gitanjali* to the painter William Rothenstein. Next year he returned to Europe already as a celebrity. *Gitanjali* was published ten times from November 1912 to November 1913, the month he was awarded the Noble prize. All his subsequent travels were filled with strings of lecture tours attracting mass public attendance, with meeting high-profile intellectuals and statesmen and, last but not least, with untiring effort to raise money and support for his school in Santiniketan.

His journeys led him across continents as well as across various national and ideological discursive spaces. His lectures and meetings provoked many serious responses and his writing invited multiple interpretations. Rabindranath's message about India and humanity was received in different parts of the world often in the context of local affairs. This paper will focus on journeys of Rabindranath Tagore and his ideas across the CEE region and their reception in order to show how his perspective of a representative of cosmopolitan humanism from a colonial metropolis intersected with local nationalist discourses, namely in the interwar period.

Simona Jandová
(Charles University, Prague)

## Travels of Kuratti fortune-teller and map of her world

Kuravanji is one of a number of Tamil literary genres that emerged and flourished between 17th and 19th centuries and blended elements of both high and folk traditions. The texts of kuravanjis served as librettos for dance performances enacted during major festivals in South Indian temples. Their emergence responded to major social, political and economic changes that followed the fall of Vijayanagar Empire. The subsequent wave of migrations produced interest in various groups of migrating people. Kuratti, a woman fortune-teller of the nomadic Kurava tribe, became the main character of kuravanjis. She is a well-travelled person and in order to show the width of her knowledge and experience and to gain confidence of the high-born heroine she starts talking in some detail about places she had visited in connection with her profession and her way of living. By talking about countries, mountains, rivers and sacred places (*sthala*s) she creates a certain map of the world as it was known and relevant to the people of her time. Local kingdom or area is presented by densely described network of local mountains, rivers and sacred places, with a distance the map becomes thinner and the world beyond Indian subcontinent is represented by few randomly selected names. The geographic descriptions in kuravanjis were an important source of devotion, patriotism, and education. Their educational aspect was further highlighted in king Serfoji´s *Devendra kuravanji* which included information from the latest maps.

Joanna Jurewicz
(University of Warsaw)

## The metaphor of journey in the early Indian thought

In this paper, I will analyse how the concept of journey was used in order to express abstract concepts in philosophy in the early Indian thought. I will begin with the accounts attested in the Ṛgveda, then I will show how they were elaborated in the later Brahmanic thought (attested in the later Śruti and early Smṛ̊ti texts). The analysis will be done with use of cognitive linguistics tools of conceptual metonymy, metaphor and blending. This will allow me to show the universal aspects of the early Indian thinking and its specific realisations due to the specific cultural background. I will also demonstrate that the main conceptual foundations are present already in the Ṛgveda and how they were transformed and enriched by the later philosophers.

**Justyna Kurowska**
**(Uppsala University)**

## Inside out – journeys in time and space through the other worlds of Vinod Kumar Shukla's fantastic novels

This paper aims at investigating Vinod Kumar Shukla's (Vinod Kumār Śukla) three novels *Naukar kī kamīz* (The Servant's Shirt, 1979), *Khilegā to dekhẽge* (We See Once It Blossoms, 1996) and *Dīvār mẽ ek khiṛkī rahtī thī* (A Window Lived in a Wall, 1999), focusing on the motif of travel as one of the key tools for emphasizing differences between inner and outer space, and fantastic and realistic realms of the world. We discuss the role of fantastic objects, non-linear time flows, private and public spaces, and examine the concept of travel as enabling an escape from the reality and transfer to a counter-reality – 'other worlds', often being an extension of our known world. Shukla uses fantasy to question behaviours and attitudes of contemporary middle class living far from the nature in claustrophobic urban spaces, deprived of simple pleasures, and trapped in their socio-cultural environment. In parallel, he presents 'otherness' and 'weirdness' of his religious, working class, family-loving characters, who are simple yet extraordinary, comfortable in their small and self-created worlds, divided into 'inside' and 'outside' zones, private (inside) and public (outside) spaces. The private is the space of home, village or garden entered through the "window lived in a wall", the place where one can regain and maintain control over one's self after frustrating and incomprehensible negotiations with the outside.

**Magdalena Lipińska**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## Exile, journey into the unknown, unpredictable destination – fate of the refugee in *Arjun* by Sunil Gangopadhyay

The paper examines the theme of journey and destination in a Bengali novel "Arjun" by Sunil Gangopadhyay. The main plot of the book revolves around the Partition of India (1947) and ensuing migration and refugee crisis, told from a perspective of a bright young man. The method used is analysis of the appropriate passages of the text and their interpretation.

In the aftermath of the Partition, the eponymous hero, Arjun, together with his family and fellow countrymen has to set out on a dangerous journey to India on foot. Some of them die on the way even before getting a chance to achieve their goal – India – laden with hope of safety and warm welcome. However, the reality proves to be much harsher and the destination presents yet another challenge and a new set of dangers, hardships and humiliations.

This long and troublesome journey provides the reader with a wide variety of experience related to journey and destination. Here, the journey happens not only in a physical sense, but it also stands for a remarkable rite of passage. It becomes a journey through life towards the new identity, when one has to leave the past behind, can never retrieve it and yet has to face a very unpredictable future. The destination is in turn a permanent refugee stigma, which one can never completely erase.

**Chiara Neri and Tiziana Pontillo**
**(University of Cagliari)**

## Setu, "bridge", a connection between places and states in Brahmanical and early Buddhist sources

This research is part of a broader project of comparative study between the Vedic and Pali sources, which we have been committed to from 2013 onward. The shared aim has mainly been to single out matching phrases (sentences, compounds, and formulas) which sometimes seem to be explained as partially independent developments of the same archetypal utterance tracing back to the same ancient Indo-Āryan speculative background.

Focusing on the lexicon involved in the imagery of real or figurative travels, namely on the analysis of a special kind of path, we have in the research presented in this paper concentrated on the Old and Middle Indian noun *setu*, which seems to hover in meaning in brahmanical and Pali sources between its function of connecting as a bridge (see e.g. TS 3.2.1.2; M I.134-135) and its undeniable outcome, consisting in keeping apart two neighbouring entities as an effective dam (see e.g. BAU 4.4.22; ChUp 8.4). However, there are also several occurrences of *setu* used metaphorically (e.g. ṚV 7.65.3; Th 63 v. 615). In some Pali compounds, such as *setughāta* "the destruction of the bridge" (cf. e.g. A I 220; A I 261), the meaning is particularly obscure and difficult to interpret, although the meaning given in commentarial texts (e.g. Mp II 332) is particularly interesting since this is also well connected to Vedic texts (e.g. ṚV 10.67.4 = AVŚ 20.91.4).

**Anna Nitecka**
**(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)**

## Agastya's travel to the South in Sanskrit sources

Agastya, a legendary sage and scholar revered in both Sanskrit and Tamil traditions, is attributed with numerous texts on various topics, ranging from Vedic hymns to treatises on gemmology. It is believed that he travelled from the North to the South across the Vindhya range blazing a trail for other migrants to follow. Agastya's origin and aims of his expedition are the source of controversy. While Sanskrit

sources hold that he introduced brahmanical religion and culture in the South, Tamil tradition venerates him as the father of the Tamil language and the author of the first Tamil grammar. G.S. Ghurye sees him as an agent of mutual acculturation.

Accounts contained in Sanskrit *purāṇa*s are inconsistent regarding Agastya's route and the location of his Southern hermitage. The present paper considers authors' strategies to depict Agastya as a universally recognised sage, who conquers various regions with his learning and virtues. Successive stages of his journey and descriptions of Southern regions and their inhabitants may preserve memory of past migrations. The last part deals with the incorporation of Agastya's cult into brahmanical Devī tradition in Kanchipuram.

**Monika Nowakowska**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## From fire to fire – the life journey of one mīmāṃsaka, according to *Śaṃkara-digvijaya*

(*Mādhavīya-*)*Śaṃkara-digvijaya*, one of a number of so titled hagiographies of Advaita-Vedānta philosopher, Śaṃkara, is usually dated to ca. 14th century and attributed to (Mādhava) Vidyāraṇya. Construed as a Sanskrit poem of 16 *sarga*s, boasting to be composed by Nava-Kālidāsa, it describes the conquest of the earth by the ideas of Śaṃkara, who is physically travelling on (and sometimes above) the (Indian) soil, defeating opponents in debates and gaining new followers and supporters. He meets on his way various prominent figures of Indian culture and literature, one of them being a famous mīmāṃsaka Kumārila. The text places the latter as an embodiment of god Skanda and sketches his human life as a path from Vedic ritual to final comprehension and embracement of *brahmavidyā* taught by Śaṃkara, i.e. Śiva. In this paper I will present a concise analysis of relevant portions of the poem in terms on the one hand of the imaginary of understanding and arriving at knowledge, and on the other hand of a specific biographical narrative of salvation.

**Michał Panasiuk**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## Train, boat and steamer – talking about body and *sādhanā* in Bengali *dehatattva* songs

*Bartamān panthī*s or "the followers of the existent", especially those commonly called *bāul*s, can be classified as travellers *par excellence* in Bengali culture. Apart from their engagement in secret rituals, they often spend time travelling through the Bengali-speaking regions, visit various *melā*s or village

fairs, participate in *sādhusaṅga*s, meeting *guru*s and adepts of their path. In Bengal, they are perceived as wandering minstrels, free men not bound by restrictions imposed by the society. That romantic view, which has its origin in the 19th century, is still prevalent not only in the native land of *bāul*s but also in other parts of India and even abroad.

My paper will concentrate on the image of travel that is depicted in their songs, especially in those connected with their *sādhanā* or religious practice, often described as *dehatattva* songs, songs about "the knowledge of the body", one of the most important vehicles of passing or exchanging the secret knowledge in *bartamān panthī* circles. I will describe symbols and metaphors reflecting journey and crossing, arriving and departing, searching, loosing and finding. I intend to point out the introduction of new symbols that entered their songs and are still connected with the journey. Some composers, like Dīn Śarat, introduced new images that enriched the tradition and still function as symbols of the body of practitioner, directly connected with their secret *sādhanā.*

**David Pierdominici**
**(Sapienza University of Rome)**

## The painful journey through existences: Cycle of rebirths and satire in Vādirāja's *Yaśodharacarita*

The *Yaśodharacarita* is an "untypical" *mahākāvya* in four *sarga*s composed by Vādirāja, Jaina philosopher and poet at the court of the Western Chalukyan king Jayasiṃha II (1018-1042 CE). The work opens with the depiction of cruel animal slaughtering during the festival of the goddess Māri; at this very moment, the King requests for a couple of people for his bloody celebration. Two young Jaina monks are captured and taken as prisoners to be sacrificed in goddess' name; they managed to move the King's heart to compassion and told the stories of their former lives, in animal form. In *sarga* III, the fast and rolling cycle of rebirths is described in vivid and, sometimes, sinister tones. Vādirāja depicts not only a metaphysical journey of two souls; his description is also a journey through human existence and its vanity. The subtle irony which pervades this descriptive moment leads at the end of the work to the moral celebration of the concept of *ahiṃsā* and to Jaina attacks to the world of sacrifice and its values.

**Cinzia Pieruccini**
**(University of Milan)**

## Travelling Śākyamuni and the Deer Park

As we know, according to Buddhist literature the Buddha spent the second part of his long life travelling through North-East India, teaching his doctrine wherever he decided to halt. Analysing a

large section of the Pāli Canon, in a 1982 paper B. G. Gokhale counted 1009 quotations of places as settings for Śākyamuni's *sutta*s, among which 842 refer to five cities, while the remaining names include 76 other sites: various towns, market places, villages, and so on. But, in general, when referring to cities and towns, the textual sources do not have the Buddha halting – or staying for the rainy season – and preaching *inside* built-up areas, but rather in places just *outside* them, places whose name is commonly translated as "park", "garden" or "grove": starting with the famous *migadāya*, the so-called Deer Park where he delivered his first sermon. In these halting places of the Buddha during his travelling we have often to see various kinds of reserves and orchards, and only occasionally the "pleasure parks" outside the cities so well-known from *kāvya* literature. Anyhow, whatever their original purpose, exactly in sites of this kind the textual sources locate the birth of the first Buddhist monasteries. This choice of Śākyamuni's halting places and the transformations of the places into permanent residences are probably to be considered as a deliberate strategy by the new creed to profitably occupy a sort of middle space between the forest – the domain of Brahmanic asceticism – and the city proper, the place of politics and commerce. Specifically, this paper will try to analyse what exactly was a "Deer Park", and, possibly, the reasons of a choice.

**Paola M. Rossi**
**(University of Milan)**

## The routes of Vessantara/Viśvāntara: A Buddhist travelling tale

As it is well known, the tale of the generous prince Vessantara/Viśvāntara, who renounces his royal realm and gives away his children and his wife, is one of the best known and the most widely spread stories in the Buddhist culture. Not only are the Pāli and Sanskrit versions attested, but also Sogdian, Newar and Tibetan variants, even Chinese, Thai, Lao, Khmer and Burmese "tellings" are famous. Likewise, different modalities of transmission are adopted: textual/literary, visual/iconic or performative/dramatic modalities are applied to the "story". However, despite the diversity implied in so manifold "tellings", it is evident that the Vessantara/Viśvāntara tale represents a sort of "travelling" tale, that is a narrative plot "wandering" along many routes, through that "popular imagery" or folklore, which, inserted in the Buddhist context, contributed to the diffusion of the Buddhism itself.

In fact, according to the sociological studies applied to the early Buddhism, the rise and the widespread of Buddhism is mainly due to the political organization in the urban-based centralized state, in which a very important role was played by the social class of merchants. Actually, along the commercial routes the Buddhism was spread, together with the Buddhist tales, or better, through and by means of the tellings, as well.

Recently, Jason Neelis, in his work *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks* (2011), has claimed that the early spread of Buddhism to China through Central Asia and especially, through Xinjiang, can represent an example of Zurcher's model of long-distance transmission of religious

phenomena: according to Erik Zurcher's studies (1990; 1999) in case of a "transit zone", such as the Tarim basin, the diffusion of Buddhism was not merely the result of a "contact expansion", promoted by a dominant core – a centre of economic and political power – and corresponding to a clear "religious politics" of expansion, marked by the establishment of monastic institutions, "doctrinally" affiliated to the promoting centre. On the contrary, a long-distance transmission implies a spread of Buddhism not "institutionalized", depending especially on commercial exchanges of merchants and on their travelling routes. It must be mainly based on a sort of "spontaneous" diffusion of "stories" told by travellers or "passeurs" along the commercial routes, during journeys – especially stories of extraordinary facts, such as the lives of extraordinary beings like the Buddha, and of course stories of journeys, well corresponding to the so called *mārga*-type imagery implied in the Buddhism teaching. Taking into account the spread of the Vessantara/Viśvāntara story in the Tarim basin as a case-study, the point is how such a story can be conceived of as a "travelling" tale.

**Zuzana Špicová**
**(Charles University, Prague)**

## Crossing the rivers: The metamorphoses of Bhīṣma's life

In the Mahābhārata, Bhīṣma is mostly more of a static than dynamic character, which makes his rare and usually solitary journeys outside Hastināpura even more significant. In Bhīṣma's life, in his journeys and battles, rivers seem to have a special importance, notably as a crucial element of Bhīṣma's initiation journeys. There can be found five important characters and their respective rivers or streams which he metaphorically crosses and enters a new stage of his life: (1) his childhood ends when he leaves his mother Gaṅgā (a journey from childhood/river to youth/city); (2) he confirms his allegiance to his father and the Kuru kingdom by his terrible vow on the bank of Yamunā because of his stepmother Satyavatī (a journey during which he becomes "himself", i. e. Bhīṣma); (3) he travels to Kurukṣetra in order to fight against his guru Rāma Jāmadagnya near the Sarasvatī river, with both Gaṅgā and Ambā present (fighting one's father figure represents a journey to adulthood); (4) as a result of Gaṅgā's curse, Ambā becomes half a "crooked river" in Vatsa and half a maiden, in her next birth as Śikhaṇḍī, (s)he brings about Bhīṣma's death; and finally, (5) the pure, auspicious and cool stream of water Arjuna produces for Bhīṣma who is lying on the bed of arrows (both represent the initiation to death). The proposed paper will deal with the importance and symbolism of rivers in Bhīṣma's life, since they may represent the journey itself, a border, or a spot (not) to be crossed, of their obvious maternal and feminine principle, as a symbol of (a)morality, narcissism, amorousness, purification, metamorphosis, and the final journey, death.

**Danuta Stasik**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## A journey within a journey:
## The imaginary of home(land) in Bhīṣma Sāhnī's short story 'O Harāmzāde'

'O Harāmzāde', which opens a collection of short stories under the title *Vāṅcū* (1978), is one of Bhīṣma Sāhnī's most popular works. Because of its subject matter, a story of an Indian who settled in Europe, it can be considered to belong to the group of works that began to emerge at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, in which the theme of migration to, and generally speaking of contact with, the West was prominent. With years, parallel to the growth of the Indian diaspora in the West, their presence in Hindi literature has become more and more pronounced, not only taking the shape of what is now commonly referred to in Hindi as *pravāsī sāhitya*, 'diasporic literature', but also testifying to its continuing importance in the socio-cultural realities of India and of the Indian diaspora. However, published and discussed, to date its literary *topos* has not received much scholarly attention (unlike the Indian diaspora literature written in English).

This paper, which is a small sample of a wider project, seeks to provide a multi-layered, contextualised analysis and interpretation of Sāhnī's short story with special regard to the diasporic imaginary used by the author in search for his characters' identity and belonging. Referring to theoretical findings of scholars specialising in diaspora criticism, I put the main emphasis on the narratives of home(land) – *ghar*, *(sva)deś*, *apnā deś*. It is hoped that such an approach will allow for better understanding of the phenomenon of 'the veneration of the homeland as a sacred space', rather than of demythologizing or desentimentalizing it, which is closely related to 'the imaginary we carry and sustain within the diaspora' (Fernandez 2009, Maleh 2009). It is also hoped that at a more general level the achieved results of this analysis will provide deeper insights into the hyphenated diasporic identities.

**Lidia Sudyka**
**(Jagiellonian University, Cracow)**

## A Parsi gara (sari) or distant travels of objects of arts
## through space, time and cultures

The travels of culturally encoded objects can be equally fascinating as accounts of distant voyages of famous travellers. Obviously, the objects are very responsive to movements of people and social practices, such as economic exchange, gifts giving and many others. However, there is more than that; certain objects can be observed as an "organic" binding of different cultural conventions and

symbols as well as a kind of final destination of other travelling objects and ideas. That is the biography of a gara – richly embroidered silk sari, worn by Parsi women.

**Lidia Szczepanik-Wojtczak**
**(School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)**

## The chase from which poetry sprung.
## The third chapter of the *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* and the emergence of *rīti*

This paper will explore the genesis of *kāvya* as it is presented in the third chapter of the *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* (10 CE) wherein Rājaśekhara draws upon Vedic cosmogony, the Indian epics, and treatises on poetics and grammar to concoct the legend of the Kāvyapuruṣa, "Poetry-Man," son of Sarasvatī and embodiment of literature. Over the course of my presentation, I will outline the narrative of the Kāvyapuruṣa and his wife Sāhityavidyā, concentrating on their journey around India. As the couple travels counter-clockwise, starting from the east, Sāhityavidyā attempts to captivate Poetry-Man with her charms. In each place they sojourn, a new poetic style (*rīti*) is brought into existence and poetry itself is re-created. This is one of the few theoretical treatises which gives importance to the geo-cultural placement of styles but, as I hope to prove in my paper, Rājaśekhara's intention was much more subtle than simply voicing his support for the unpopular *rīti* theory – his was a voice which aimed to bolster the importance of poetry and poetics in the intellectual discussion taking place in India at the turn of the millennia.

**Herman Tieken**

## Moving to and from between Rāmagiri and Alakā:
## Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* and *Rāmāyaṇa* 6, 111 and 7, 1-30

Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* spawned many epigones in which the route taken by the messenger provides a pretext for describing the region in question. However, as I will try to show, Kālidāsa may likewise have been inspired by earlier sources, in particular by certain incidents in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Anna Trynkowska
(University of Warsaw)

## Miraculous journeys in the *mahākāvya*

When looking for the motif of journeys in Sanskrit court epic poems (*mahākāvya*, *sargabandha*), one is faced with an embarrassment of riches. Beginning with two earliest specimens of the genre, namely Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* (1st century AD), the authors of numerous *mahākāvya*s make the heroes of their works, as well as many secondary characters, travel: alone or with companions; from different points of departure, by different routes, at different distances, to different destinations; by different means of transport and with a different speed; with different aims and different results.

For this paper, I have chosen the minor – but, I think, interesting – motif of miraculous (instantaneous / high-speed and aerial) journeys in Sanskrit court epic poems. The first part of the presentation will give a brief overview of its occurrences in the best and most famous *mahākāvya*s. In the second part, I will discuss several selected passages in more detail.

Aleksandra Turek
(University of Warsaw)

## A journey through Marwar from the perspective of a camel

With the example of selected fragments of the *Dhola Maru ra duha*, a poem from the sixteenth century, composed in old Rajasthani, I would like to present how the peculiarity of Marwar is described during a journey through this region made by the main character on his miraculous camel. Marwar as the desert part of Rajasthan is a distinctive region with its characteristic fauna, flora and as the natural habitat of camels. The description of Marwar is, however, presented in the poem in a quite extraordinary way – in the form of a dialogue provoked by the camel who is disappointed that he had to arrive in this region with his master. This surprising but interesting twist provides a pretext for a positive evaluation of Marwar by the stranger Dhola and a negative one by the typical desert animal. Nevertheless in the paper I will try to demonstrate that the paradox is ostensible as the twist was used to spice up the storyline.

**Jakub Wilanowski-Hilchen**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## (Post)colonial homelands.
## Travels through North-East India
## in Anil Yādav's travelogue-reportage *Vah bhī koī des hai mahārāj*

Published in 2012, Anil Yādav's *Vah bhī koī des hai mahārāj* (*Is that even a country, sir*), caused a considerable furore on the Hindi literary scene, quickly attaining what some critics called a cult status. The critical acclaim of the book is due in big part to its relentlessly honest language, pushing the limits of what can be written (and published) in Hindi, but also to the fact that it came from an author almost perfectly antithetical to the usual upper-class English-speaking Indian travel writer: a poor Bihari writing in Hindi. The book is a literary record of a journey to the North-East that the author took with a friend in December 2000. Apart from being a report from the part of India that, despite being in an almost perpetual political and social upheaval since the country's independence, is often romanticised as India's land of promise, the book offers numerous glimpses into discoursive practices of power that surround it, and quickly swallow up the author himself. For it is not only as a writer that the author travels to the Indian "Wild East", but, just as importantly, as a Hindi-speaking Bihari. This paper will try to examine the book through the lens of postcolonial theory, focusing on representations of the North-East, but also on representations of Bihari-ness, and the unsettled imaginaries of homeland that these discoursive practices produce in the postcolonial Indian context.

**Justyna Wiśniewska-Singh**
**(University of Warsaw)**

## Wanderings in the mysterious space (*tilism*)
## in Devakīnandan Khatrī's novel *Candrakāntā*

The paper explores the notion of journeys and wanderings in the late nineteenth century Hindi work by Devakīnandan Khatrī. The thesis of the paper is that a journey becomes an important theme in the novel, as from its very first chapter Prince Vīrendra Siṁh plans to visit his beloved Princess Candrakāntā and, thanks to his clever helper (*aiyār*), he finally manages to do so in spite of numerous adversities. Moreover, towards the middle of the book, the eponymous heroine gets trapped in a mysterious space (*tilism*), where during her subsequent wanderings she discovers marvellous sights and acquires precious treasure. This event begins Vīrendra's quest to find and save Candrakāntā; *tilism*, however, has its own demands.

Jacek Woźniak
(University of Warsaw)

# God as a place of destination.
# On the urge to go and praise the Lord-(of the)-Place
# in Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār's *Periya tirumoḻi*

According to Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition Viṣṇu can manifest Himself in the form of temple idols. Although all temples are believed to be the places of God's own abode, visiting them brings different effects. Therefore one should be well advised in which temple one should pay his/her visits.

This paper deals with the stanzas of *Periya tirumoḻi* in which Tirumaṅkaiyāḻvār urges others to go and praise the God in peculiar places which are often identified with the person of Viṣṇu. Thus, he evidently reworks the classical theme of *āṟṟuppaṭai*, or guiding the bards to their prospective patrons, and uses it to suit his own religious purposes. However, the travel and the route are seemingly not much important for him. Instead, his main concern is the very place of destination, or the temple which is God Himself. Consequently, reaching the Lord-(of the)-Place as one's own goal is understood as a final liberation of the soul.