

## IKGA NEWSLETTER No. 1 / April 2021

With the year 2021, the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia (IKGA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences is celebrating its 30th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, we are pleased to introduce this inaugural issue of the annual IKGA Newsletter. The objective of the Newsletter is to highlight developments at the Institute over the past year.

We have included you among its recipients based on your previous communications with us. Please let us know by e-mail to [office.ikga@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:office.ikga@oeaw.ac.at) if you do not wish to receive future issues of the Newsletter, or would like to receive it at a different e-mail address.

Further and more detailed information about the Institute, its history, and its activities—including upcoming events—can be found at our website: <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/ikga/>.



The Buddhist scholar Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva  
(Eastern Tibet, 19th c. © Rubin Museum of Art, New York)

## THE INSTITUTE AND ITS ACTIVITIES

This being the first of our Newsletters, we would briefly like to introduce the IKGA and present its profile. The Institute is one of 25 institutes of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the leading Austrian non-university institution for science and research with a history extending back to 1847. The IKGA conducts long-term research on Asian cultures, above all research dealing with questions concerning cultural and intellectual history. Formally founded in 1991 with seven research fellows, the Institute was initially focused on the history of ancient—meaning in this context: pre-modern—Indian philosophies and religions, as well as on the history of Japanese society and religions. Under its five successive directors Gerhard Oberhammer, Ernst Steinkellner, Helmut Krasser, Vincent Eltschinger and (since 2015) Birgit Kellner the Institute has continually grown and expanded its areas of research. Today it counts twenty-five research fellows in the fields of Buddhist Studies, Indology, Tibetan Studies, Japanology, and Chinese Studies.

The Institute pursues basic research on new sources in their original languages with the overarching goal of addressing problems in historical research. The Institute further aims to support the formation of a more credible global cultural and historical awareness, and to offer methodological correctives where Eurocentric premises continue to exert

distorting influence. To support the dissemination of knowledge in its areas of research, the Institute also actively maintains and supports several peer-reviewed monograph series at the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. These series publish results of the Institute's own research, as well as outstanding books and conference volumes by scholars worldwide. To date 104 volumes have appeared in the series *Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens*. Increasingly these are also available in Open Access.

Research at the Institute is conducted in close cooperation with international experts in the respective fields, many of whom have sojourned in Vienna as visiting scholars. Within Asia, the Institute entertains long-term cooperation with scholars and institutions in Japan, the People's Republic of China, India, and Nepal. Within Austria, we collaborate with several departments at the University of Vienna, most closely with the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. Academic events are regularly held, these ranging from workshops dedicated to the joint study of specific manuscripts to large-scale international conferences. Among other events, the Institute co-hosted the seventh Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies (Seggau, 1997), the 4<sup>th</sup> International Dharmakīrti Conference (Vienna, 2005), the 20<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art (Vienna, 2010), and the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (Vienna, 2014).

As part of an academy of sciences, the Institute itself is a dedicated research institution. Its members also regularly teach at universities—in Vienna and abroad—and in their respective areas of expertise also supervise undergraduate and graduate students. Students interested in pursuing a degree while part of the Institute's vibrant scholarly community are welcome to contact members to discuss options. Lastly, the Institute is also committed to public service. In addition to organizing and presenting lectures aimed at the general public, members regularly respond to media queries, offer expertise in projects geared towards intercultural and interreligious understanding, and provide advice connected to educational projects.

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## CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS

Within its broadly conceived mission of studying Asian cultural and intellectual history, the Institute has managed to establish four special long-term areas of focus that are historically and systematically interrelated:

- Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, chiefly Dignāga-Dharmakīrtian logic and epistemology and the Madhyamaka school;
- Hinduism (the tradition of Rāmānuja, Pāñcarātra) and associated philosophies (Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta);
- Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism;
- Japanese religious history with a focus on Shintō and its interactions with Buddhism.

Within the long-term project "Sanskrit Texts from Tibet" linked to its focus on Buddhist philosophy, the Institute cooperates with the China Tibetology Research Center (CTRC) in Beijing to promote joint research on copies of rare and often unique Sanskrit

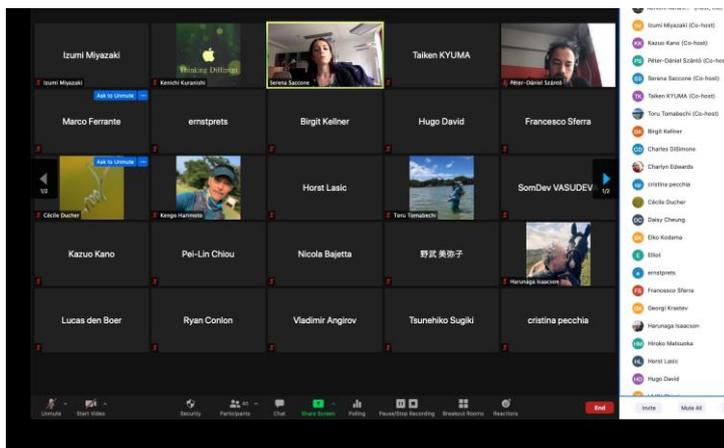
manuscripts from the CTRC's library. The dictionary project "Tāntrikābhīdhānakośa – Wörterbuch zur Terminologie hinduistischer Tantra" pursues basic lexicographic research, much of this based on unpublished materials extant only in manuscript form.

To supplement and further focus its long-term research, the Institute hosts short-term research projects conducted with third-party funding, primarily with support by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Altogether 45 staffed FWF-projects with durations between two and four years have been conducted since 1991. These have not only supported basic research, but also attracted international talent, helped develop and sustain a vibrant scholarly community, and fostered academic careers on an international level. A recently approved ERC Consolidator Grant additionally confirms the scholarly quality of the Institute's research.

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## HIGHLIGHTS 2020

The Institute's activities in the year 2020 were greatly impacted by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, as members worked from home and were confined to online communication for most of the year. Academic events were postponed or canceled. Nonetheless, online formats, with all their disadvantages, also offered new opportunities. This was best illustrated by the online workshop "Monasteries and Doxography in Indian Buddhism" organized by Serena Saccone



together with Péter-Dániel Szántó (Leiden University) and Miyazaki Izumi (Mie University, Japan). Held on two successive weekends in September 2020, the workshop subjected three doxographical and philosophical works currently being edited to particularly close scrutiny, and gathered together not only an impressive group of senior and junior scholars, but also students based chiefly in Europe and Japan

who would not otherwise have been able to join such a workshop. Other projects were of course not affected by the pandemic. Among various book projects, the Japanology team was engaged in finalizing the manuscript "Power and the Rise of Shinto in Early Modern Japan" for the Bloomsbury Shinto Series on Religion; the volume is scheduled to appear in May 2021.

In December 2020, Pascale Hugon was awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant that will allow her to expand her research on the early development of scholastic traditions in Tibetan Buddhism. The project "The Dawn of Tibetan Buddhist Scholasticism (11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> c.)" (TibSchol) will begin in July 2021 and is scheduled to last for five years. The project focuses on a phase of Tibetan history marked by highest levels of intellectual creativity. It will undertake pioneering work on a large corpus of manuscripts that has newly become available as part of the Bka' gdams gsung 'bum collection.

Also in 2020, two new research projects were granted funding by the FWF. Both are beginning in 2021. One is part of the Institute's long-term focus on the study of rare Sanskrit manuscripts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region and involves the first-time editing of the Sanskrit text of the *Ratnameghasūtra*, a Buddhist scripture that was important for mediating Buddhist ideals of rulership to Central and East Asia (project head: Horst Lasic; project researcher: Vinita Tseng; cooperation with Jens-Uwe Hartmann/LMU Munich). The second is a Tibetological project on the history of the most widespread narrative on the origin of the "Tibetans." Directed by Pascale Hugon, with Reinier Langelaar as the main researcher, it will combine historical studies and ethnographic field research with the philological examination of early materials from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

While new projects are beginning, others recently came to their conclusion, and those involved were appointed to positions both abroad and in Austria. The Sanskritist Elisa Freschi and the Indologist Alessandro Graheli, who are active in the field of the history of Indian philosophy, received appointments as assistant professors at the University of Toronto. The Buddhologist Serena Saccone accepted a position as associate professor at the University of Naples "L'Orientale." Erika Forte, who while at the Institute worked on networks of Buddhist monasteries on the Silk Road, was appointed professor at Kyoto University. The Indologist Himal Trikha assumed a position at the University of Vienna upon the conclusion of a project on Jaina philosophy.

In addition, the Indologist Nina Mirnig, who does research on the religious, cultural and political landscape of early medieval Nepal within a prestigious self-directed Elise-Richter-project of the FWF, was elected a member of the ÖAW's "Young Academy." The Young Academy forms the third pillar of the Academy's learned society, alongside the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Division of Mathematics and Natural Sciences. The Young Academy is comprised of exceptional junior researchers from all disciplines, and is designed to strengthen innovative research and to promote young scholars.



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## PUBLICATION HIGHLIGHTS 2020

David, Hugo, *Une philosophie de la parole : L'Enquête sur la connaissance verbale (Śābdanirṇaya) de Prakāśātman, maître Advaitin du Xe siècle* [Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 101]. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press; Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2 vols., xii + 879 pp.

Hugon, Pascale, in collaboration with Takashi Iwata and Toshikazu Watanabe, *Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā, Chapter 3 : Diplomatic Edition* [Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region 21]. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press; Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, lxxix + 248 pp.  
Open Access link: <https://austriaca.at/9783700187233>

Kellner, Birgit; Li, Xuezhong; Kramer, Jowita (eds.), *Sanskrit Manuscripts in China III : Proceedings of a panel at the 2016 Beijing International Seminar on Tibetan Studies, August 1 to 4*. Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 458 pp. Open Access link: [https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/IKGA/PDF/digitales/Kellner\\_Li\\_Kramer\\_2020.pdf](https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/IKGA/PDF/digitales/Kellner_Li_Kramer_2020.pdf)

Kellner, Birgit; McAllister, Patrick; Lasic, Horst; McClintock, Sara (eds.), *Reverberations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy : Proceedings of the Fifth International Dharmakīrti Conference Heidelberg, August 26 to 30, 2014* [Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 104]. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, xxix + 555 pp. Open Access link: <https://austriaca.at/9783700188605>

Pecchia, Cristina; Eltschinger, Vincent (eds.), *Mārga : Paths to Liberation in South Asian Buddhist Traditions* [Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 100]. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, vi + 426 pp.

To purchase copies of Austrian Academy of Sciences Press publications, please see the website of the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press at <http://verlag.oeaw.ac.at>.

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## ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

To mark its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Institute will be hosting several events. While we regret not being able to hold them physically at the Institute given the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, online formats have the advantage of allowing colleagues worldwide to participate.

The Institute's main anniversary event is a series of online lectures under the rubric "Method and Region" being jointly organized by Marco Ferrante, Cristina Pecchia, and Bernhard Scheid. The title "Method and Region" is related to a cluster of problems linked to research on non-European cultures and societies. Broadly speaking, the methodologies used by the humanities and social sciences have long been shaped by the analysis of "Western" societies and their relationship to their European cultural heritage—an analysis conducted by scholars sharing and continuing that heritage. In the context of Asian Studies, applying such methodologies has increasingly become the focus of criticism, ranging from Said's concept of "Orientalism" to Chakrabarty's idea of "provincializing Europe." It is clear that new approaches are needed, approaches developed by intense engagement with Asian intellectual traditions and scholarly disciplines, both past and present.

The "Method and Region" events invite reflection on the relationship between *method*, comprising the entire apparatus that enables us to conduct scholarly studies, including non-European theories and concepts, and *region*, standing for what is contextually specific, such as language, history, or thought. In this sense, "method and region" is directly relevant to the fields represented at the IKGA, as well as to neighboring disciplines.

The "Method and Region" lectures series is designed to foster intellectual exchange and promote cross-fertilization on this subject. The topics of the lectures relate these overarching ideas to specific research foci from various disciplinary backgrounds.

Speaker: **Tom J.F. Tillemans** (University of Lausanne)  
Title: *Methodology: Meditations of a philosophical Buddhologist*  
Time: 30 March 2021, 18:00–19:30 CEST

Speaker: **Philippe Buc** (University of Vienna)  
Title: *Regnum et sacerdotium, by Japanese analogy, and retour* (organized in cooperation with the Institute for Medieval Research, ÖAW)  
Time: 20 April 2021, 17:00–18:30 CEST

Speaker: **Sonja Brentjes** (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)  
Title: *What do we look for and what are we engaged in? Self-confirmation, culture wars, respectful treatment of our subjects – or “all of the above”?*  
Time: 25 May 2021, 17:00–18:30 CEST (organized in cooperation with the Institute of Iranian Studies, ÖAW)

Speaker: **Michael Willis** (The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland)  
Title: *Method and Region: What’s a region and what’s in it? What methods are appropriate to use?*  
Time: 22 June 2021, 17:00–18:30 CEST

Speaker: **Franz Winter** (University of Graz)  
Title: *Searching for the hidden “One”. Muslim and early European interpretation of the Upanishads*  
Time: 7 December 2021, 17:00–18:30 CET

For more details about each lecture and information on how to register, please visit the Institute’s website: <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/ikga/>. Further activities in connection with the Institute’s anniversary will also be announced on the website.

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