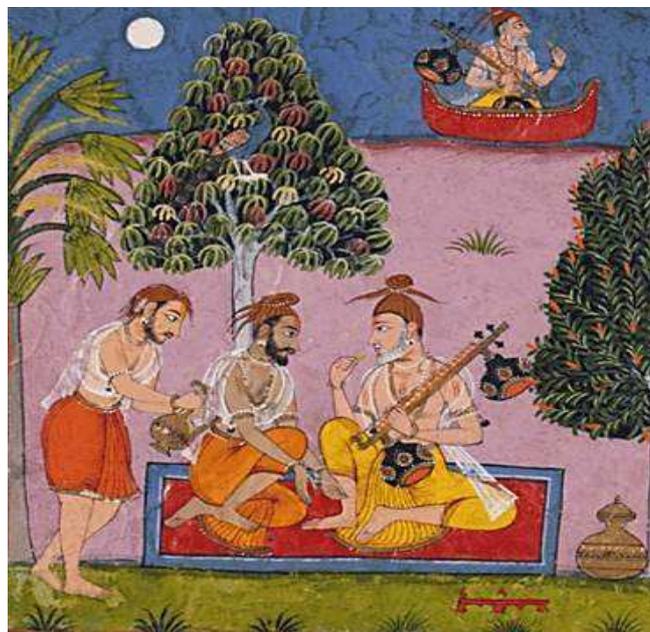


## Literary Circulations in South Asia: Producing, Translating, Preserving Texts

International Conference  
French Institute of Pondicherry, India  
21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018



Meeting of Nārada and Vālmīki<sup>1</sup>

### Call for papers

#### About the organizers

The international conference is organised by the research project DELI — Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Littératures de l'Inde — and the Institut Français de Pondichéry, with the support of the research units “Mondes iranien et indien”, the Centre d'Études et de Recherches Comparatistes and the Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (UMR 8564).

The DELI project of “A Dictionary of South Asian Literatures” is a French collaborative research project which aims at collecting, disseminating and promoting scholarship on South Asian languages and literatures towards a French-reading public. Launched in 2015, it gathers around 80 contributors, and is coordinated by Drs Anne Castaing (CNRS / CEIAS), Nicolas

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<sup>1</sup> The Mewar Rāmāyaṇa (Reunified version), 17th c., British Library, C 2, f.4 images © Private Collection, India.

Dejenne (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 / Institut Français de Pondichéry) and Claudine Le Blanc (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 / CERC).

The Institut Français de Pondichéry is a multidisciplinary research institution founded in 1955, under the French ministries of Foreign Affairs and Higher Education. Its publications include a number of editions, translations and studies about Sanskrit, classical Tamil and modern Tamil literatures.

## **Rationale**

The international conference *Literary Circulations in South Asia: Producing, Translating, Preserving Texts* takes place in the wake of five previous thematic workshops organized by the DELI project in Paris since 2015. For the first time, such an academic meeting in the framework of the DELI project will be held in India itself thanks to the collaboration of the French Institute of Pondicherry with the hope of benefitting more directly from the expertise and knowledge of Indian and international scholars as well as other professionals of South Asian editing world. Like in the previous thematic workshops, this conference aims at strengthening, sometimes even initiating, interdisciplinary discussions around a notion which is crucial for the understanding of literary cultures in South Asia, beyond the chronological, spatial and linguistic boundaries. The “circulation” of persons, groups, things and ideas, has obviously played a major role in shaping the evolution of the South Asian subcontinent since the ancient times up to the contemporary period. However, the notion itself and most studies fall in the domain of social history (in the broader sense of the word) from the medieval period onwards, in keeping with the diversity of factors – rather political, religious, economic, or technical...– involved in the phenomenon of mobility and of short or long-distance movements. A remarkable rise of studies using and elaborating the notion of “circulation” in the cultural, even more precisely literary, fields in South Asia, mostly for the early modern period, could be noticed in recent years (Orsini / Sheikh 2014, de Bruijn / Busch 2014, Pauwels 2015); older periods have been far less researched. In parallel, the studies of “book history in South Asia” have emerged as quite active and innovative ones, around the collective volumes co-edited by Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty (2004, 2008, 2011, 2016); some scholars (Orsini 2013) have been involved equally in both of these trends. It is quite understandable as the study of “circulation” in the cultural and literary fields requires a broad outlook and a holistic approach of the diverse elements fuelling such circulation: liveliness of a literary culture, networks of authors and of their patrons, material, technical and economic constraints of the book production and the book market, existence of an interested readership, availability of translators acting as brokers between different languages (in parallel with the various kinds of adaptations of texts circulating between South Asian literatures since the earliest evidence), appropriation by very diverse groups of the same literary text or corpus...

This conference can be thus conceived as being primarily at the confluence of two major scientific trends, the history of circulations of literary texts through translations, rewritings and re-enactments in South Asia, and the book history, with its emphasis on material factors in the production, movement and preservation of texts in South Asia.

As a consequence, the conference needs to be multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, with the intent to bring together scholars and researchers from literature, history, art history, book history, translation studies, cultural studies, anthropology, musicology *etc.* We welcome papers exploring works (texts, songs, oral literature, adaptations, performances...), authors or centres of literary production and preservation.

## Themes

We particularly invite paper proposals, for 30 minutes presentations, related to the following themes:

- **The history of translations and adaptations of literary texts in South Asia from the classical period onwards:** it can concern translations between Sanskrit literature and vernacular languages, between regional languages, either directly or through an intermediate language (as happens to be often the case of English, and to a lesser extent of Hindi, in contemporary times), as well as the other numerous modalities through which texts move and morph between cultural contexts in South Asia.
- **Specificities of “literary circulations”:** if some phenomena in the realm of circulation should be common to literary texts and texts outside the field of literature (*śāstra*-s, scientific texts,..) in South Asia, it would be worth investigating in which respects the circulation of literature presents unique features. How can we describe and account for the circulation of characters, narratives, motives... from one literary genre to another? Is it also possible to characterize various patterns of circulations according to literary genres?
- **Production and preservation of literary texts:** in producing as well as in preserving texts, either as manuscripts or as printed books, multiple criteria interact — cultural, religious, political, economic or material... Orality, manuscript production, book printing (and re-printing), and far more recently digitalisation and dematerialization and storage of contents, are as many ways through which texts are produced, preserved and transmitted. Case studies about audiences for various kinds of performance of texts, about communities of readers, about libraries, publishers specialized in literature, book traders... would be welcome.
- **Patronage and sponsorship of literature, old and new:** production, diffusion and preservation of texts heavily depend on the kind and extent of patronage received from powerful individuals or from State institutions. For which reasons and under which forms does a literary text attract A special interest will be devoted to the goals, activities and results of post-Independence public bodies involved in the support of publication of literature and of promotion of translations between Indian languages (Sahitya Akademi, National Book Trust...)

## Submission guidelines

Abstracts in English, of no more than 300 words, along brief bio-data of the author, must be submitted by **Monday May 7<sup>th</sup> 2018** to [projetdeli2015@gmail.com](mailto:projetdeli2015@gmail.com). The notification for acceptance will be given by May 15<sup>th</sup> 2018.

## Scientific committee

Anne Castaing (CNRS / CEIAS)

Nicolas Dejenne (U. Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3 / IFP, Indology Department)

Claudine Le Blanc (U. Sorbonne Nouvelle / CERC)

Kannan M. (IFP, Contemporary Tamil Culture programme)

## Practical information

No registration fee is requested from the participants. Accommodation in Pondicherry for the duration of the conference, as well as lunches on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, will be provided to the participants by the organization. Regarding transportation from their place, international participants must bear its cost. Transportation fare of Indian delegates inside India will be covered by the organization.

For more information, you may contact the organizers at: [projetdeli2015@gmail.com](mailto:projetdeli2015@gmail.com)