

Report on the Thirteenth World Sanskrit Conference

The Thirteenth World Sanskrit Conference took place in Edinburgh Scotland, from 10th to 14th July, 2006. It was attended by around 380 participants from thirty different countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Iran, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, U.K., U.S.A.); the largest single contingent came from from India itself, followed by the United States and Japan. The conference was organised by John Brockington, Paul Dundas and Peter Bisschop, with the help of Janet Pearse as secretary and volunteers from the School of Asian Studies and the Centre for South Asian Studies. After an opening reception on Sunday evening 9th July, held in the Kirkland Room at the Pollock Halls of Residence, where most of the participants were accommodated, the conference itself took place in the George Square area of the university (in the David Hume Tower and immediately adjacent buildings).

The conference was organised into fourteen sections (Veda; Epics; Purāṇas & Āgamas and Tantras & Vyākaraṇa & Linguistics; Poetry, Drama and Aesthetics; Scientific Literature; Buddhist Studies; Jaina Studies; Philosophy; History, Epigraphy and the Arts; Law and Society; and Culture and Tradition) and a Saṃstracarcaṃsadas (held on the Friday morning), with five sessions being held concurrently throughout Monday afternoon to Friday morning. The main feature of the opening plenary session on the Monday morning was an address by Professor Ram Karan Sharma, the retiring President of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies: "Svaṃgatam"; Smt. Rashmi Chowdhary, Director of the Language Section, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, also spoke a few words on behalf of the Ministry. Throughout the conference, the displays by various booksellers were well frequented especially during the coffee breaks and proved a useful adjunct to the conference. The National Library of Scotland hosted an event on Tuesday evening, 11th July, at which its holdings, both manuscripts and printed books, in the field of South Asian Studies were highlighted, as well as new or forthcoming books by all the Edinburgh Sanskritists. On Wednesday evening, 12th July, the Consul General of India, Shri P. S. Randhawa (a member of the local organising committee) hosted a well-attended reception for participants in the magnificent setting of the Assembly Rooms on George Street, Edinburgh. The conference dinner was held on Thursday evening, 13th July in the South Hall at Pollock Halls.

The General Meeting of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies preceding the closing plenary session on Friday afternoon, 14th July, passed a formal vote of thanks for the munificent grant from the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India,

which had made possible substantial subsidies on accommodation for the Indian participants (and certain others needing such assistance), as well as contributing to the S:apstracarçasadas and the Kavisam̃melana. The General Meeting also ratified the decision approved by the Board that the next conference in 2009 would be hosted by colleagues at the University of Kyoto was announced and accepted the offer (recommended by the Board and Consultative Committee) from the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan to organise the following conference in 2012. Participants were reminded that the Treasurer would be happy to receive subscriptions to the International Association of Sanskrit Studies. The proceedings also included several presentations of books to Edinburgh University Library.

The final event of the conference on the Friday evening again took place in the Kirkland Room at Pollock Halls: a well attended Kavisam̃melana. A considerable number of our Indian colleagues recited their original Sanskrit poetry, some of it published in the volume, *Kavidvaçdas;ê*, which had been released at the opening plenary session, thus fittingly rounding off the conference as a whole.

John Brockington
Secretary General, International Association of Sanskrit Studies