

Personal Background

Perhaps I should explain some personal background for this project. During my time as a doctoral student, when I desperately wanted to distract myself from finishing my PhD, I thought that living at London's Russel Square for half a year was like an invitation to go through the manuscripts in the SOAS. Now the SOAS does not have that many manuscripts, but some very interesting ones with unpublished works of authors like Sāhib Kaul. I started editing some of them, but had to pause this work again and again. Firstly, I did have to finish my PhD at some point, then I had to get a job and work in Indological positions, and could only occasionally return to my private editing project. Every time I encountered a new interesting manuscript of Sāhib Kaul, I continued.

Since I have to care for a small Indological institute, there is even less time for this hobby and seeing that I might not get anywhere, I applied for many projects of editing Kashmirian texts so that at least others might push forward, whereas I could as a supervisor at least be in touch with the process. This had the interesting side effect that after some time we had a group of editors in Marburg, well-trained in Kashmirian Sanskrit texts.

My attempts at editing had always been hampered by the fact that it was easy to get few manuscripts of a text, but very difficult to acquire a number covering enough sources to call it a critical edition. This problem had in the meantime been miraculously alleviated by the generally positive view of digitization of sources in India. Suddenly Indian libraries that had before been like fortresses against academic intruders

were suddenly o.k. with sharing scans, and there was the prospect that we would also be able to do what I had always dreamed of: to search for and edit works that have never been printed.

To cut the story short, when the occasion arose I applied for a project that would allow me to collect manuscripts, select the most interesting unedited works and print critical editions with or without translation. Colleagues thought that no institution would provide this type of academic freedom, but out of sheer luck and of course a larger number of friendly anonymous reviewers, we got an ERC grant and now we have our team of editors working in the project. And unlike in a DFG project, I have my own part in the project, which I greatly enjoy.