

The civilizations and societies of Asia represent the field of research covered by three research institutions of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. These three institutions employ a variety of different working methods, are open to interdisciplinary approaches and within each of their broad working areas develop special focal areas of interest which are anchored in the context of the individual projects.

## Commission for Iranian Studies

The fields of research covered include Old Iranian philology and linguistics, Middle and New Iranian languages and literatures, the history and cultural history of Iran, Islamic studies, Iranian onomastics, numismatics and archaeology.

- Research centres on philological and linguistic projects. Here the continuation of the long-term project on the *Iranisches Personennamenbuch (Lexicon of Iranian Personal Names)* constitutes one of the focal areas of research. Of the projected 11 volumes, two volumes and three individual fascicles have been published to date. During the scheduled period it is intended to complete the fascicles entitled *Iranische Personennamen in der neupersischen Überlieferung (Iranian Personal Names in New Persian Sources)* together with a volume entitled *Hauptfiguren der klassischen neupersischen Epik (Main Characters in Classical New Persian Epics)* and *Iranische Personennamen in der zoroastrisch-mittelpersischen Literatur (Iranian Personal Names in Zoroastrian-Middle Persian Literature)* as well as continuing work on Iranian names in the Armenian and Georgian secondary sources and Manichaean-Middle Persian, Khotanese and Bactrian names. An edition of a Persian-German dictionary compiled from the material from U. von Melzer's literary estate, as well as studies in the field of a comparative grammar of Old and Middle Iranian in the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European context are planned.
- Projects focusing on the documenting and publishing of collections include a catalogue of Persian manuscripts in Austria, Persian documents in the Austrian State Archives (in collaboration with the University of Bamberg) together with a facsimile edition of the codex mixt. 845 of the Austrian National Library, and a CD-ROM edition of Pollak's translation of the *Shahnama*.

- Work on a history of Manichaeism in Chinese Turkestan, based on Middle Iranian and other sources, is of particular significance in terms of history and the history of religion.
- Projects of an interdisciplinary nature include the *Archäologisch-sprachwissenschaftliches Corpus der Denkmäler in lykischer Schrift (Archaeologico-Linguistic Corpus of Monuments in Lycian Script)*, on which various international scholars are collaborating, as well as the *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidorum*, also being undertaken with international cooperation.

The Commission continues to concern itself with the circumspect development of academic contacts with Iranian-language states such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## Institute for Asian Studies

This institute conducts research into the historical development of Asian civilizations seen from the perspective of a history of ideas and intellectual currents as well as of ways of life. The focus is on four areas of South Asia (including the areas of influence of Indian culture), Buddhist Studies (India and Tibet), research on religion and interreligious communication, as well as East Asia (currently Japan). Starting from philological and historical work on primary sources, the results of this research are intended to facilitate the expansion of knowledge in the individual subject areas as well as to promote an understanding of Asia's civilizations past and present and their manifold points of contact and mutual influences. Research is currently focused on the following areas:

- Epistemology, logical methodology of the classical philosophical traditions of India
- Early debate-theory in the history of Indian medicine
- The epistemological-logical school of Buddhism in India and Tibet
- Religion and the history of religion in South Asia
- Social history of life stages in Japan
- The development of Japanese religious ideas with relevance for practice

### South Asia

The completion of the long-term project entitled *Terminologie der frühen philosophischen Scholastik in Indien, Ein Begriffswörterbuch zur altindischen Dialek-*

tik, *Erkenntnislehre und Methodologie (The Terminology of Early Philosophical Scholastics in India. A dictionary of concepts of Old Indian dialectics, epistemology and methodology)* in 2001 will be followed by a critical edition with translation and an essay on the debate chapter of the Carakasamhitā. This will also take into account aspects of didactics, the sociology of science and the theory of science in classical Indian medicine, as well as examining the efforts to bring about a renaissance of classical Indian medicine in the context of its points of contact with and divergence from Western medical practice.

A further topic is the examination of the philosophical and theological Mīmāṃsā School. Here the objectives are a critical edition with translation of the philosophical section of the Brhatī, and an examination of the positions of the two traditions founded by Kumārila and Prabhākara.

#### Buddhist Studies

Efforts in this field focus on an understanding of the development of the history of ideas in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. One branch of research focuses on the exploration of the epistemological school of Buddhism via critical editions of texts, annotated translations as well as systematic and historical studies. Another consists of philological and historical studies of the reception of Buddhism in Tibet.

Owing to the unique situation of this subject area in terms of the history of academic research, the focus here is mainly on the publishing of major editions. Work continues on the diplomatic and critical edition of Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasamuccaya-ṭīkā*, while new projects include the reconstruction of the Sanskrit text of the chapters on perception and inference in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, a critical edition of the Sanskrit text of the chapters on perception and inference in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, as well as the critical edition of the Sanskrit text of the chapter on inference in Dharmottara's *Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā*.

In the field of the history of philosophy and ideas, a *Description of the theories on supranormal cognition (yogijñāna) from the aspect of the history of problems* is planned. This will start by examining and describing in terms of historical development and systematic differentiation the contribution made by the Buddhist epistemological school in its main representatives to the analysis and critique of supranormal cognition as well as to the defence of its possibility.

#### Research on religion and interreligious communication

The main areas of research in this field are the examination of the philosophical disputes between the tradition of Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedānta and the representatives of the tradition of the Advaita-Vedānta, the study of Tantrism as well as the relations between the Tantric tradition of Pāñcarātra and the Rāmānuja school.

In this connection an *Examination of the central fundamental concepts of the tradition of the Viśiṣṭādvaita-Vedānta on the basis of Meghanādārisūri's Nayadyumani and Venkaṭanātha's Śatadūṣanī* is planned. In view of the fact that the role of Tantrism as a living ritualistic and spiritual tradition which has a major influence on the religions and cultures of Asia has still not been adequately studied, a further project will focus on an *Examination of the philosophy and theology of the Viṣṇuītic-Tantric Pāñcarātra tradition in its historical development and relation to the Rāmānuja school*.

In addition, work on the Tāntrikābhidhānakośa, a specialized dictionary of the terminology of Hindu tantras will be continued, a project in which leading international scholars are participating.

#### East Asia

The main focus of projects relating to Japan are studies of historical ways of interpreting life stages and the development of Japanese religious ideas with relevance for practice. The approaches to these questions take account of the paradigm shift in the humanities towards questions of the history of mentalities.

The project *Exploring the tradition of how old age was treated in pre-modern Japan* will be completed during the course of 2001 with a monograph on the Edo period. This will be followed by a thematic analysis and translation of the *Kasshi yawa* (recording period 1821–1841), a representative of *zuihitsu* literature, as a source for the history of Japanese culture and mentality. This will constitute the starting point for a project on the *History of childhood and youth in the Edo period*. The results of a study of religious practices in the Edo period are intended to form the first in a series of articles for a *Handbook of folk religious ideas in Japan*.

Individual studies will provide in-depth examination of partial aspects of this subject area such as the development of Buddhist concepts of the after-life, belief in the "Ten Judges" and burial practices.

*Studies of the historical development of Shinto* as reflected in the influential school of the Yoshida Shinto, an area in which little research has hitherto been undertaken, will be devoted to the Edo period in a second phase of development.

Research programmes at the Institute are accompanied by regular symposia with international participation as well as existing joint projects with institutions in France, Great Britain, Japan, Tibet and China.

#### Commission for Social Anthropology

The work of the Commission is concerned with human beings, seen from the aspect of their social relations as embedded in their differing forms of knowledge and belief, and their varying modes of shaping their existence according to their technological context. Interdisciplinary emphasis results

from the inclusion of subjects from the fields of Arab, Islamic, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. The programme of the Commission for Social Anthropology for the next five-year period has been considerably extended by the inclusion of the project examining *Local identities and supra-local influences*, made possible by the funding from the Wittgenstein Prize 2000 awarded to Andre Gingrich, Fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

The projects *Landscape and political domain in Tibet* and *Oral culture and nature in the age of globalization* are nearing completion. A new regional/factual project entitled *Tradition and modernity and the relationship between local identity and state in Tibet* is at the preparatory stage. A socio-anthropological analysis entitled *The "Hadramaut Minor" in Java* focuses on the Arab minority in Indonesia, while the study of *Muslims in Vienna, guidelines for conflict prevention*, which focuses on intra-ethnic and inter-confessional dialogue among Muslims, is praxis-oriented. Walter Dostal, Fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, will present the results of long-term field research in the study *Social anthropology of the Arabian Peninsula*.

Research over the coming years will on the one hand reinforce the existing factual/regional emphasis of previous projects but will also be extended by the connections with Europe, and by interdisciplinary as well as theoretical and methodological components. The central issue here will be the internal development and external interlinking of local cultures under the conditions of intensive external, supra-local influences. Work will concentrate on three groups of themes: *Literality and popular religiosity in the Islam of North Africa and West Asia*, *Village identity and state influence in Buddhist Central and South-East Asia* and *Ethnicity and nationalism in post-communist South-East Europe*. The expected results of this empirical research and its theoretical interpretation are not only answers to the questions of the shaping, interlinking and potential for change of local cultures under the effects of supra-local influences but in a much larger sense to the question of an interdisciplinary order of the humanities and social sciences, which can be understood as a new orientation in this field.

