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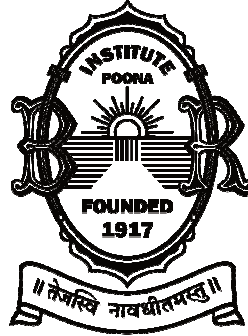
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CONTENTS
Volume XCV
(September 01, 2018)

ARTICLES	PAGES
A Pandit's Journey: Peri Sarveshvara Sharma in Germany -- by Jürgen Hanneder	5 – 23
Sheep in Ancient Indian Literature and Culture -- by K. G. Sheshadri	24 – 49
Recent Changes in Perception of the Prehistoric Past -- by P. P. Joglekar	50 – 69
Dvārakā in Tamil Literature and Historical Tradition -- by R. K. K. Rajarajan	70 – 90
Pāta: A Unique Observational Phenomenon of Indian Astronomy -- by K. Chandra Hari	91 – 107
Story of Conversation: A Vyākaraṇa Version -- by Pradeep Gokhale	108 – 120
The Derivation of Declension of <i>Yuṣmad</i> and <i>Asmad</i> in <i>Saṅkṣiptasārvyākaraṇa</i> -- by Malhar Kulkarni and Anuja Ajotikar	121 – 135
Subhūticandra's Kavikāmadhenu -- by Lata Deokar	136 – 147
Addenda and Corrigenda to "Vedic-Ancient Meso- potamian Interconnections and the Dating of the Indian Tradition" (<i>ABORI</i> 93, pp. 137-192) -- by Stephan Hillyer Levitt	148 – 150

REVIEWS

- Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara (With Special Reference to His Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya)*
by M. P. Marathe 151 – 156
- A Critical Examination of Nyāya*
by M. P. Marathe 156 – 160
- Early Tantric Vaiṣṇavism: Three Newly Discovered Works of the Pañcarātra*
by Diwakar Acharya 160 – 162
- Sūkṣmāgamaḥ, Vol. I*
Ed. by S. Sambanadhaśivācārya, et al. 162 – 163
- Sūkṣmāgamaḥ, Vol. III*
Ed. by S. Sambanadhaśivācārya, et al. 163 – 164
- Dīptāgamaḥ, Edition critique Tome II*
Ed. by Marie Luce Barazar-Billoret, et al. 164
- Śaiva Rites of Expiation*
Ed. and Tr. by R. Sathyanarayanan 165 – 167
- The Brahmayāmalatantra or Picumata, Vol. II*
Ed. and Tr. by Csaba Kiss 167 – 170
- Two Śaiva Teachers of the Sixteenth Century:
Nigamajñāna I and His Disciple Nigamajñāna II*
By T. Ganesan 170 – 172

(All reviews by Shailaja Bapat)

OBITUARY NOTICE

- Professor Madhukar Keshav Dhavalikar
-- by Shreenand L. Bapat 173 – 175

**ANNALS OF THE
BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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[2014

**A PANDIT'S JOURNEY:
PERI SARVESHVARA SHARMA IN GERMANY**

By

Jürgen Hanneder

The following pages are devoted to one aspect of Sanskrit Studies in Germany, which has remained mostly undocumented, that is, the presence of traditional Indian scholars of Sanskrit in many Indological Institutes in Germany during the second half of the 20th century. Such a collaboration with Indian “lecturers”, employed often for modern Indian languages, but working at the same time in Sanskrit Studies, was a feature so much taken for granted that now, with that system falling away through the radical downsizing of most departments of Indology in Germany, one is slowly realising the unique working environment it had provided to all who had the advantage of studying in it.

One such scholar was Sarveshwara Sharma Peri, who was born 15.5.1926 in Pedanandipalli Agraharam, Andhra Pradesh and died 16.3.2000 in Marburg, Germany. Peri Sharma, as he was usually called in Germany, was an expert on Vyākaraṇa, and was called to Marburg by the head of the department Wilhelm Rau as a lecturer for modern Indian languages. He also enrolled as a regular PhD student in Marburg so that after graduating he could remain in Germany on a permanent position. He continued to teach at Philipps-University, Marburg until his retirement and thus spent most of his life in a small and comparatively secluded German university town. To his colleagues he remained very much a traditional Pandit.

It was known in Indological circles that he enjoyed writing Sanskrit, as for instance *praśasti*-style eulogies in felicitation volumes, but it was only near the end of his life that he realized the plan to compose an autobiographical poem in the metre of the *Meghadūta*. The work, which was published under the name *Madvṛttāntam* was explicitly not intended as a Kāvya in the classical sense of a highly ornate piece of writing.¹ In this he probably agreed with his colleague Wilhelm Rau, who made a point of expressing his dislike for the later Kāvya style, which he considered artificial.

Private reactions of colleagues from Germany who read his work were sometimes hesitant. They seemed to miss the classical refinement the author wanted to avoid. It was only later, after some deliberation on Modern and Contemporary Sanskrit Poetry² that the work struck me as not so much a piece that failed to live up to classical standards, but instead an interesting specimen of Modern Sanskrit, written mostly on and in the diaspora. There are no explicit parallels to the *pravāsa* of the Yakṣa in the *Meghadūta*, but it is almost impossible to avoid reading the piece on the background of this much-adapted³ classic. Our institute collection holds a few more occasional writings of him, but first some historical background may be helpful.

Indian scholars in Early Indology

Historically Germany was at the onset of Sanskrit Studies in a material disadvantage over England. While some employees of the East India Company could find enough time to pursue studies of languages and cultures and had unique access to all the sources then available, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century German nationals could travel to India only either as employees in the British East India Company, or as missionaries. The German Sanskritists usually were not willing to be one or the other, nor did they have the funds necessary for such a journey. Since in Germany there were no materials to study the language, and neither printed texts nor manuscripts to read, in the beginning of the 19th century, in order to learn Sanskrit, scholars had to travel to Paris and to London. There they could receive first instructions from local experts, and the materials necessary for learning the language,

¹ In one discussion I could have with him, he stated that he preferred the simple and natural language.

² See Jürgen Hanneder: "Modernes Sanskrit. Eine vergessene Literatur." In: *Pāsādikadānam. Festschrift für Bhikkhu Pāsāsika*. Marburg 2009.

³ See for instance S. RANGANATH: *Post Independence Doota Kavyas*. Bangalore 1994.

which included a grammar, a list of verbal roots and if one was lucky a glossary or dictionary.⁴ Even when Wilson's Sanskrit-English Dictionary was published in 1819, German scholars could first neither obtain nor afford it. For instance, the Jena professor of Oriental Languages, Kosegarten, had to ask an influential acquaintance at the court, the poet Goethe, whether he could ask the Duke of Weimar to be so kind to bring one exemplar from England.

After a few decades European Sanskritists could travel to India. One of the first was a Danish scholar studying in Bonn, Niels Westergaard, who visited India in the 1840s with funds from his government, then another Bonn student Martin Haug spent some years in Pune. After that it became very common for German Indologists to go to India.⁵ This resulted in turn in Indian students coming to Germany for education.⁶ Much research in archives would be needed to establish all the names, dates and facts, here I can only list the prominent examples I could collect so far.

One of the first known cases is Vasudev Anant Sukhtankar, who studied with Hermann Jacobi in Bonn and completed his Ph.D. on *The teachings of Vedānta according to Rāmānuja* in 1908. Then there was Tukaram Laddu who studied in Halle with Hultsch and completed in Ph.D. on *Prolegomena zu Trivikramas Prakrit-Grammatik* in 1912. Kunhan Raja dedicates his work *Poet-Philosophers of the Rigveda*⁷ to Karl Friedrich Geldner, "under whom I studied Veda and Avesta in Marburg". Lüders in Berlin supervised Vishnu Sitaram Sukthankar, who graduated in 1921. Nobel in Marburg supervised the thesis by Manilal Patel: *Die Dānastutis des Rigveda* (Marburg 1929). Patel is listed as member of the German Oriental Society in 1930. Then there is R. N. Dandekar, who completed his Ph.D. in Heidelberg on *Der vedische Mensch: Studien zur Selbstauffassung des Inders in Ṛg- und Atharvaveda* (1938) and Aryendra Sharma, who graduated 1939 from Munich. We may assume that not all cases are so easy to find as those of such eminent Indian Sanskrit scholars as Sukthankar, Dandekar or Kunhan Raja, in any case contacts between

⁴ Some copied the index to Colebrooke's edition of the *Amarakośa*.

⁵ Since in some publications the notion of a German "arm-chair philology" seems to prevail, I give a list of scholars who went to India in the latter half of 19th or early 20th century: Bühler, Kielhorn, Hoernle, Thibaut, Jolly, Jacobi, Oldenberg, Geiger, Garbe, Hultsch, Winternitz, Lüders, Heitmann, Beythän, Schrader, Führer, Strauss and Horsch.

⁶ Especially the recession in Germany between the wars made studying in Germany more affordable for Indian students.

⁷ Madras 1963.

Indian and German scholars were in fact quite frequent.⁸

With the establishment of chairs for modern Indian languages in the second half of the 20th century, a more permanent influx and presence of Indian scholars started to characterize Indological institutes. There were now professors or lecturers for modern Indian Languages, as Paramesvara Aithal in Heidelberg,⁹ Srinivas Ayya Srinivasan in Hamburg,¹⁰ Tilak Raj Chopra in Bonn etc.¹¹ Many of these scholars have published in their fields, some in German; one outstanding book would be Srinivasa Ayya Srinivasan's critical edition of the *Sāṃkhyatattva-kaumudī*,¹² which contains perhaps the best treatment of textual criticism of Sanskrit works in contaminated recensions and is written in superb German.

It is impossible to do justice to the diversity of this interesting research configuration in German Indology here: there were lecturers for modern Indian languages with permanent positions,¹³ and an unknown number of teachers of Indian origin who taught for a few semesters. Even the unsystematically collected data testifies to an intensive cooperation of Indian with German based scholars. Here we shall focus on one case, for which we have the advantage of being in possession of a larger quantity of unpublished sources: Peri Sarweshvara Sharma in Marburg.

Sanskrit Studies in Marburg

Marburg University was founded in 1527 by Landgrave Philipp the Magnanimous—hence its present name “Philipps-Universität”—and like other European universities it was for a long time a religious institution, or at least one dominated by theology. It was only in the nineteenth

⁸ There was, for instance, the case of Tara Chand Roy, a student of Windisch, who must have stayed for some time in Leipzig and whose letters, written in perfect German, are kept in the “Nachlaß Hertel” in the Leipzig University Library. As far as we could reconstruct from the letters dated between 1922 and 1923 neither Windisch's successor Hertel nor Schubring accepted his PhD. He must have gone to Kiel, because this is the address given, when he quit his membership of the “Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft”. See ZDMG 78 (1924), p. xc.

⁹ See the *Foreword to The Pandit: traditional scholarship in India* (“Festschrift Parameswara Aithal”). New Delhi 2001.

¹⁰ Srinivasan came to Germany in 1954 as a Bombay graduate and stayed in Hamburg. Following his Ph.D. and habilitation he was elected there as professor of Indology, a post he held from 1977 to his retirement in 1997.

¹¹ The list is far from complete and the total number of Indian scholars is of course much larger.

¹² *Vācaspatimiśras Tattvakaumudī. Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik bei kontaminierter Überlieferung*. Hamburg 1967.

¹³ E.g. Chandran Tucker as Tamil lecturer in Cologne.

century that something recognisable to us as a modern university took shape. Many of the academic subjects were defined by then, the dominance of theology slackened, and theology itself was transformed by its secular academic environment. It was this environment, in which the first students of Sanskrit made their way into academia. The first European Sanskrit chair was established in 1815 in Paris, soon to be followed by those who studied in Paris, and returned to start their own Sanskrit courses in Germany. These were in 1818 August Wilhelm Schlegel in Bonn, Franz Bopp in Berlin, and Kosegarten in Jena. Since “Indology” or “Indian Studies” or “Sanskrit Studies” did not exist, denominations of the chairs and academic interests did not always match: the chair of A.W. Schlegel was for literature and art, and he renegotiated with the Prussian authorities to be permitted to devote himself more exclusively to Sanskrit—and receive special funds for setting up a Sanskrit press. Kosegarten¹⁴ was employed within theology and there in the department of “oriental languages”, which of course historically meant biblical languages, but soon came to include Persian and Sanskrit. Until posts for Indian Studies were created, which meant persuading the philosophical faculties that Sanskrit was ill-placed in theology, some Sanskritists taught half in theology, half in the philosophical faculty, and this is how Sanskrit started in Marburg in 1845.¹⁵ Only in the second generation of Indological Studies chairs for Sanskrit were increasingly situated at the philosophical faculties.

In Marburg, Sanskrit studies started almost by accident. Johannes Gildemeister, a theologian from Bonn, who had studied Sanskrit with A.W. Schlegel, and taught Sanskrit, Oriental Languages and the exegesis of the Old Testament, was called to the Marburg chair of Oriental Languages in 1845, because his book against the catholic practice of reliquary worship had delighted the protestant Duke (“Kurfürst”) of Marburg. Only few of the 200 students who were enrolled in the whole of the university then, will have learnt Sanskrit. But we read in a letter by Haug that when Schlegel’s successor in Bonn, Christian Lassen, became too ill to teach, people turned either to Berlin or, for some time, to Marburg.

Gildemeister had almost a habit of intervening in theological disputes of his time, which prevented him from contributing much to Sanskrit

¹⁴ Who is the almost forgotten expert, to whom Goethe turned for his famous *West-östlicher Diwan*. On the Sanskrit side he is credited with the first critical edition of the *Pañcatantra*.

¹⁵ For the following see JÜRGEN HANNEDER: *Indologie im Umbruch*. Marburg 2010.

studies itself, but it was also the fact that he had to teach Arabic and Syriac as well, that may have dispersed his energies. When he returned to the oriental professorship in Bonn in 1859, he concentrated on Semitic languages and Persian. It is interesting that the first to teach Sanskrit in Marburg was not Gildemeister, but one Prof. Vorlaender, who had studied in Bonn and Berlin—presumably with Schlegel and Bopp—and was called to Marburg to the chair of philosophy! He—thus the only brief biography we have—was never promoted, because he was not “Christian enough and did not hesitate to express his ideas.”¹⁶ It is unfortunate that we know next to nothing about this interesting Sanskritic “dissident” in Marburg.

But Sanskrit studies were not continued for some years after Gildemeister’s departure. Only in 1865 Ferdinand Justi became professor of comparative grammar and German philology and continued Sanskrit to some extent, without however contributing visibly to the expanding field. His teaching included such wide-ranging subjects as Anglo-Saxon, Vedic, Persian, Gothic, Latin, Old-German etc. and no real progress in Sanskrit was to be expected.

It was in 1907 with Geldner that things changed. Karl Friedrich Geldner (1852–1929) marks the real inception of Indological Studies in Marburg. Geldner was specialized on the Veda and Avesta and had together with Richard Pischel been involved in a long and heated academic dispute about the usefulness of Vedic commentaries like that of Sāyaṇa. While almost all other Indologists denied the historical value of such commentaries, Pischel and Geldner held that they had been dismissed prematurely.¹⁷ Geldner is famous for his complete translation of the Rigveda, which is still unsurpassed and a monumental achievement. Following two short term employments,¹⁸ Johannes Nobel, an expert for Kāvya and Alaṃkāśāstra, who later specialized on Buddhism became chair of Indology to be succeeded by Wilhelm Rau.

Wilhelm Rau was born 15.2.1922 in Gera, Germany, studied in Leipzig, and was then drafted in 1941. When he was released from American internment after World War II he continued his studies in Marburg where he received his Ph.D. in 1949. Only days after his “habilitation” he left for Santiniketan on a scholarship of the Indian government.

¹⁶ See Jürgen Hanneder: *Indologie im Umbruch*, p.22ff.

¹⁷ See JÜRGEN HANNEDER: *Indien für die Inder*. München 2015, p.49ff.

¹⁸ Jakob Wilhelm Hauer, who is notorious for his close involvement with the Nazi regime, stayed for two years, then Hanns Oertel followed again for two years. For details please refer to my *Indologie im Umbruch*, p.37ff.

Following Rau's time in Santiniketan and presumably a wealth of contacts, Rau, when back in Germany, was virtually flooded with Indian enquiries. Those of few years make up a whole file.¹⁹ Rau summarizes the state of affairs in a letter to an Indian official: "[...] I have lately received from Indian scholars many times more applications either to obtain a scholarship, or admission as candidate for the degree of PH.D., or an appointment to teach Sanskrit and/or modern Indian languages, than I can possibly accept."²⁰

Unfortunately the chances for such invitations were low. There were no funds whatsoever, even students who had passed their exams could not continue teaching even on a small scale: In 1954 Rau told the German Embassy ("Gesandtschaft") in Delhi that his South-Indian student had just graduated with excellent results, but all his attempts to keep him with a small remuneration for teaching Hindi and Tamil had been turned down by the government.²¹

Nevertheless there was a lively exchange with India. In 1958 Nobel and Rau wrote a reference for Biswanath Bhattacharya, who had just completed his dissertation with Nobel.²² In the same year S. Rajesvara Sarma wrote an application in German from Santiniketan and was advised to contact the cultural branch of the German embassy for a stipend. He eventually came to Marburg and wrote his dissertation in 1966.²³ He spent his further academic life as professor of Sanskrit in Aligarh Muslim University, but held visiting professorships in many institutes around the world, and lives in Germany.

In a letter dated 29.9.1958 Rau received an invitation to be second examiner for the dissertation of Shanti Bhikshu Shastri on the *Āgamasamuccaya of Bhartṛhari* in Leipzig. Rau knew Friedrich Weller very well and also the candidate, whose details are quite interesting. Shanti Bhikshu Shastri²⁴ was born in Bibipur (Lucknow) on 27.12.1912, studied Sanskrit in Lahore, took his Shastri degree in 1936, Acharya in

¹⁹ The following report is based on letters kept in the Indological Institute at the University of Marburg.

²⁰ A recipient is not given, the letter is dated 6.11.1958.

²¹ Letter to H. Heimsoeth, dated 17.8.1954.

²² Biswanath Bhattacharya: *A History of rūpaka in the Alankāraśāstra*. Marburg 1958.

²³ *The Pūrvagaṇita of Āryabhata's (II) Mahāsiddhānta. Edited and translated.*

²⁴ The documents, on which the following summary rests, are kept in the *Universitätsarchiv Leipzig* "Nachlaß Weller". The following is based on a brief curriculum vitae. Additional information is contained in a letter of Weller to a university administrator, where we read that Shanti Bhikshu Shastri was born as a Brahmin, then became a Buddhist and lived in a Ceylonese monastery for some time. Eventually he left the order and married. His wife was from Assam and also a Buddhist.

1938 from Jaipur. He then studied Tibetan in Shimla (1940–41) and Chinese in Shantiniketan (1942–45). In 1946 he joined the Vidyalankara College, Kelaniya, Ceylon as a visiting professor for Sanskrit. After 21 months he rejoined Shantiniketan as a lecturer and in November 1956 he was called to Leipzig as a visiting lecturer. During that time he completed a doctoral dissertation on the *Āgamasamuccaya of Bhartṛhari* in Leipzig in 1959. It is interesting to note that Bhartṛhari then became the focus not only of Rau’s work, but also of many of the Indian scholars who came to Marburg.

The Leipzig archives hold interesting documents on Shanti Bhikshu Shastri’s dissertation. Since the candidate was not expected to be examined—as any German aspiring to acquire a Doctor philosophiae would—in (European) philosophy, Weller applied for a special permission to the officials in the *Staatssekretariat für Hochschulwesen* in the GDR, which was rejected with the argument that there cannot be a separate set of rules for foreign students, but left it to the university to decide in the particular case. The Dean of the faculty agreed and the oral exam in philosophy was waived. Particularly interesting was Rau’s written assessment of the PhD. He explains that a German student would perhaps have been able to make better use of the methods of philology, but as regards contents would have far lagged behind the achievement of Shanti Bhikshu Shastri. Rau highly valued that “in this work an Indian scholar of the old school joins us in cooperation. Consequently we ourselves will have to take steps in his direction.”²⁵ After his dissertation Shanti Bhikshu Shastri returned to Kelaniya, where he taught between 1959 and 1972, but there were attempts to invite him as a visiting professor to Leipzig for two years. The process was started in 1966, the invitation was sent two years later, but the attempt failed, because the costs of travel for his wife Sujātā and his daughter Bodhīśrī exceeded his means. Shanti Bhikshu Shastri is still well-known for his Sanskrit teaching in Ceylon,²⁶ and furthermore acquired pan-Indian fame with the Sahitya Academy Award for his *Buddhavijayakāvya* (1974), which with its 100 Sargas is regarded as the largest Sanskrit-Kāvya ever written.

One drawback of the system in place, where German institutions in India were assessing the qualifications of the students to be sent to Germany, was that local Sanskritists could not sufficiently control the qualification of students. When one such candidate was sent to Germany

²⁵ “[...] uns hier ein indischer Gelehrter alten Stils zur Zusammenarbeit entgegenkommt. Wir werden unsererseits Schritte in seiner Richtung unternehmen müssen.”

²⁶ I owe this information to Mudagamuwe Maithrimurti.

on a scholarship of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) the embassy begged Rau to accept him in order to avoid nervous breakdowns—thus the writer of this letter—on all sides. One person from the embassy apparently well-known to Rau added jokingly that he, having become professor, should not disappoint his old friends.²⁷

The Marburg Chair for Modern Languages

From 1958 onwards Wilhelm Rau used his contacts to Indian scholars to pursue the establishment of a chair for Modern Indian Languages in Marburg. We find numerous letters of application, references and other documents. After receiving the permission of the government, he started in 1962 to send out letters to enquire after suitable candidates. The details of these arrangements were complicated and had to be discussed with potential applicants beforehand: Rau preferred someone who would be able to go back into his original position, because the lectureship terminated after a few years and would leave the Indian scholar without a job. In the case of some applicants it was not clear whether the home universities would grant leave. There were other practical questions to be discussed, as for instance: would there be schools for the children that would accompany a scholar etc. Of course, at that time, there were no English schools, and certainly not in Marburg!

When Rau sent out letters to colleagues to enquire about suitable candidates, he asked for experts in Vyākaraṇa, since he was at the time working intensively on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*. One correspondent found out that there were indeed suitable experts, but neither of these were able to teach in English. In another letter, to Shanti Bhikshu Shastri (3.8.1962), he stopped mentioning that the candidate be an expert in Sanskrit also, by that time he had apparently given up upon the hope to find someone who could teach a modern Indian language while at the same time collaborating with him on Sanskrit grammar.

²⁷ Addendum by one K. Pfauter: “Wir wollen uns von unserem alten Freund Rau, auch wenn er jetzt ordentlicher öffentlicher Professor geworden ist, doch nicht enttäuschen lassen! Ich schließe mich sonst in allem meiner Vorrednerin an, auch was den Forscher Raghu Vira betrifft.” This referred to a passage in the letter by Mrs Duckwitz, where she wrote: “Von Herrn Dr. Vogel höre ich, daß Prof. Nobel und Sie möglicherweise nach Delhi kommen wollen, um mit Raghu Vira zu arbeiten. Wir würden sehr gerne näheres darüber hören, zumal wir nie genau wissen, wie wir uns der International Academy of Indian Culture gegenüber verhalten sollen. Prof. Raghu Viras Beziehungen zu uns und wohl auch anderen Missionen bestanden bisher nur in geschickten Manövern seinerseits, sich Geld und Sachwerte geschenkweise zu besorgen. Dagegen ist seine deutschen Gelehrten erwiesene Gastfreundschaft natürlich sehr anzuerkennen.«

One person he contacted directly was Shrikrishna Sharma, who had studied with Nobel in Marburg,²⁸ but at the time when Rau was in Santiniketan, so that they had never met. After some negotiations with his home university in Tirupati, it turned out that he was unable to get the necessary leave, so in the end he had to turn down the offer. The letters received in that matter make up a whole file, which demonstrates that the selection of the right candidate was not taken lightly by Rau. In one of these letters by Shanti Bhiksu Shastri (dated 7.9.1962), a person from Shantiniketan is recommended, but the writer who knew Rau well, is quite convinced that he would not want a candidate from that institution. Then there are no further letters on that matter for almost a year.

In one earlier letter of April 1962 K. M. Varma[Varma] had answered Rau that he had not succeed in finding a suitable candidate, and announced that he would be coming to Germany. On 26.7.1963 he wrote from Berlin that one of his colleagues had found a suitable specialist in grammar, and enquired whether Rau had “still the idea of bringing a traditional Paṇḍita”. This candidate had studied Vyākaraṇa in the Sanskrit college in Vizianagaram, then an M.A. for four years in Benares. Varma described his family as orthodox, but promised that they would be able to adapt in a European atmosphere.

Shortly after this letter, Rau asked the candidate, P. Sarvesvara Sarma, whether he would be willing to come to Marburg to teach two Modern Indian languages and merely a few days later Sharma accepted the offer. One of the questions Rau asked every candidate was whether he would have a post in India to return to which Sharma answered “No.” Rau explicitly told Sharma that the post could be offered for a maximum duration of six years, but it seemed clear that since Sharma would not get any leave from his government post, he would have to resign in order to be able to come to Germany.

Sharma informed Rau that he would come to Germany without his family and would need accommodation, and that some measure should be taken to ensure that he could get vegetarian meals. Here we may add that quite contrary to expectations and the practice in larger subjects, in a small field as Indology, the head of the department used to and still has to take care of every small organisational detail, as—in Rau’s case—transferring the money for the sea travel to Delhi, acquiring a visa, accommodation, even organizing some pocket money for the journey, since he rightly suspected that a typical Indian scholar would be without

²⁸ He completed his Ph.D. *The theories of the ancient Indian philosophers about word, meaning, their mutual relationship and syntactical connection* in 1954.

the necessary means for even buying his meals during the weeks on the vessel. The letters give an impression of how tedious the process of employment in Germany was at the time: even the contact person at the German embassy in Delhi was permanently involved to ensure that the documents arrived in time. (Please see appendix.)

Eventually Sharma could write that everything had worked out and that he would leave on the 17th of March 1964 on the steamboat “Roma” from Bombay via Port Said, Malta and Naples to Genua, the scheduled arrival was the 30th of the month, his appointment was to be on the 1st of April.

Sharma was born in 1926 in the “Brahmin village”²⁹ Pedanapalli in Andhra Pradesh, where his grandfather was head of the Pāṭhaśālā.³⁰ Until he was at the age of twelve sent to the Sanskrit College in Vizianagaram, he had received a traditional Sanskrit education from his father.³¹ From 1944 he studied in Benares, and subsequently worked in a government job in Delhi. The perspective to continue with “Vyākaraṇa-Śāstra” in Germany must have been quite tempting.

It is interesting to notice the diligence with which the German officials assessed his previous employments in India in order to convert him into a proper civil servant (“Beamter”), a status usually reserved for permanent positions funded by the German federal states. These usually involve special “*adhikāras*” as in the case of judges, police, or teachers, but for academics the status can be given also for the limited time of the tenure of a post. In view of the insecure perspective in Marburg, Sharma first did not bring his family to Germany, and returned for a visit to his homeland after a year. Since the travel costs exceeded his income by far, Rau had to apply for a travel subsidy.

We can only deduce Rau’s plans, when he accepted Sharma on a non-permanent position without an option to return, from what followed: Many letters had to be written to get permission for Sharma to study in Marburg while being employed at the university, but this enabled him to graduate with a Ph.D. in Indian Philology with subsidiary subjects Modern German and Comparative Religion. Apparently the timing was tough. Sharma handed in his dissertation on the 16.12.1964, on 7.1.1965 Rau applied for a

²⁹ In the sense of a donation to Brahmins (*agrahāra*).

³⁰ See the summary and excerpts from an autobiographical lecture held by Peri Sharma in Heidelberg, in AXEL MICHAELS: “Traditional Sanskrit Learning in Contemporary India”. In: *The Pandit*, op. cit., p.12f.

³¹ Once he told me that while his mother tongue was Telugu, his “father tongue” was Sanskrit, in which they always conversed.

conversion of his post to a permanent one (“Akademischer Rat”) and adduced all sorts of personal, academic and financial arguments in favour of such an arrangement. The plan worked out.

Everyone familiar with the history of student life at that time will realize that Sharma was living through the times of the turbulent German student revolt, which took on considerable proportions in Marburg. Rau protested against the changes that were introduced and became increasingly frustrated with the university, traces of which can found in caustic remarks in his books. Unfortunately we do not know what Peri thought about the German student unrest, but perhaps he did not care too much. His own world view was—it seemed to outsiders—only marginally changed by his *pravāsa*.

The Autobiography

Peri’s autobiographical work *Madvṛttāntam*³² is quite obviously modelled after the *Meghadūta*. When as a PhD student I had the pleasure to receive some private lessons in Sanskrit from him, he mentioned his plan to write a biographical poem in the Māndākrānta metre and recited—if I remember correctly—the beginning to me. But apart from using the metre and occasionally phrases that are reminiscent of Kālidāsa, the similarity is weak, because *Madvṛttāntam* is an autobiography written not in a poetically elaborate, but in a very simple and lucid language.

This is the beginning of the work, which introduces his new place of residence and work, the federal state of Hassia (“Hessen” in German), its university and the head of the Sanskrit Department:

ऐरोपारख्ये त्रिदिवतुलिते भूमिखण्डे विशाले
जर्मन्याख्यं गिरिवननदीशोभितं देशरत्नम्।
हेस्सेनाख्यं सकलविभवैर्भ्राजितं तत्र राज्यं
मार्वुर्गाख्या विलसति पुरी तत्र राज्ये सुरम्या ॥ १ ॥

तस्यां पुर्यां भुवनविदितो विश्वविद्यालयोऽस्ति
ख्यातं पीठं विबुधवचसां पाठनायास्ति तत्र।
तस्याध्यक्षः प्रखरधिषणो वेदवेदाङ्गवेत्ता
विल्हेल्माख्यः सदयहृदयो रावुपश्चार्धनामा ॥ २ ॥

In the work Peri describes the history of his taking up the post in Marburg, the journey there, and how he is greeted there on his first visit by Rau with two students: Martin Kraatz and S. R. Sarma:

³² The work has been published privately.

उत्तीर्याहं विकसितमुखो ह्यायसाच्चक्रयाना-
दद्रक्षं वै धृतियुतमना दिक्षु सर्वासु शीघ्रम्।
काले याते क्षणपरिमिते चागताः क्रात्सरावु-
श्रीरामूलास्त्वरितगमना स्वागतं व्याहरन्मे ॥ १७ ॥

Unlike Kālidāsa's Yakṣa the author is, as he says, brought by his good fortunes to a distant land and this *pravāsa* enables him to visit foreign countries inaccessible to his fellow countrymen.

दारिद्र्येण प्रतिहतमना भारते को मनुष्यो
द्रष्टुं शक्तो बहुधनहरं दूरसंस्थं विदेशम्।
दिष्टादिष्टः शुभफलकरात्पूर्वकर्मप्रभावात्
द्रष्टुं शक्तोऽभवमहमत्यन्तदूरस्थदेशान् ॥ ६२ ॥

But in another verse (110) he says that since his horoscope predicted a positive second half of his life, he accepted living in Germany as this fate.

Thus, while the story of the exiled Yakṣa has only few points of contact with Peri's autobiography one is nevertheless reminded of the *Meghadūta* through occasionally similar phrasing:

साकं तेन प्रथितयशसा नाम मेऽपि प्रसिद्धम्
जातं लोके सकलविदुषां गण्यतां च प्रपन्नम्।
त्रैलोक्येऽस्मिन्बलयुतमहाव्यक्तिसांगत्यमास्त्वा
को वा न स्यादवलपुरुषः सर्वलोकप्रसिद्धः ॥ ९८ ॥

Despite the fact that associations with Kālidāsa's work are rather weak, these echos of the *Meghadūta* nevertheless suggest to the reader to take the Yakṣa's exile like an underlying reference point, from which the text departs, but the association with which he cannot really avoid. The work is an interesting specimen of Modern Sanskrit, but since it was published only in small numbers it has never made it into the records of any library.

Greeting Cards

The institute has a collection of cards written by Peri Sharma on occasions as Rau's birthday, for Christmas etc. Sometimes he addresses the recipient in German as "Sehr verehrter Herr Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Rau", then giving several Sanskrit stanzas and concluding with "Ihr Ergebener P. Sarveswara Sharma"

Sometimes he signs his composition with his name, in some places with इत्थं स्तोता or इत्थं आशंसिता. The dates are given in Western style, sometimes with an added मारबुर्गः.

Here is one example:

21. 12. 83

Sehr verehrter Herr Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Rau

मोहाभक्त्या देवतायाः कामरूपत्वसंभवः ।
 मरियायां महादेवः क्रिस्तरूपेण जातवान् ॥
 क्रिस्ता जन्मात्सवा मेके महानन्दप्रदायकः ।
 कोला वृद्धा युवान् च नन्वन्ति तदुपक्रमे ॥

नेवं वर्षे भूया तव च सुखदं दिव्य मतुलं
 नेवं वर्षे प्रसा तव भवेतु सद्भावसहिता ।
 नेवं वर्षे भूया तव विविधचिन्ताविरहितं
 नेवं वर्षे भूया तव सकेलमत्यन्तशुभदम् ॥
 युवासि कोलेन तथा च वृद्धो जातोऽसि विज्ञानविशेषभारत ।
 दौरे च पुत्रैः सहिताय तुभ्यं भूया नेवं वर्षे मभूतपूर्वम् ॥
 Ihr Ergebenster
 P. Sarveswara Sharma

Marburgnagare Bhāratīyavidyā

This short history of Indian studies in Marburg by Peri Sharma in Sanskrit is based on a German text, whose author is not given, but might go back to Rau himself who was very interested and well-informed about the history of Indology.

The original is in roman transcription, which freed the translator from inventing a Nāgarī spelling for the German proper names.

Marburgnagare Bhāratīyavidyā

Marburgnagare bhāratīyabhāṣāṅām adhyayanam ekaśatavarṣebhyaḥ kiṃ cid evādhikakālikam asti / **Johannes Gildemeister** (1812–1890) prathamō vidvān āsīd yo hi saṃskṛtāṃ vācaṃ Marburgnagare prāveśayat / sa ācāryaḥ 1845 taḥ 1859 paryantaṃ Marburgnagare'vāsīt / protestantmatānuyāyī sa vipāścid arabīhīrūbhāṣayor iva saṃskṛtabhāṣāyām apī (Christian Lassen mahodayasya śiṣyo bhūtvā) tulyarūpeṇa śikṣita āsīt / viduṣā tena śarmaṇyadeṣe prathamam meghadūtasyānvākhyānapūrṇam prakāśanam (Bonn 1841) samapādi / anantaram “adya yāvan mudritānām (āyasamudritānām phalakamudritānām ca) saṃskṛtagranthānām siṃhāvalokanam savivaraṇasūcī ca” (Bonn 1847) nāmnī samupayoginī granthasūcī viduṣā tena praṇītā / etadartham bhāratīyavidyā taṃ vidvāṃsam dhanyavādārham manyate / tenācāryeṇa bhāratīyavidyā-dhyayanasaṃyuktārabvānmayādhyayanasya phalasvarūpeṇa niṣpannaḥ kaścīn nibandho yo hi “hastalikhitarābivānmaye bhāratīyaviśayikasamuddharaṇanirdeśasaṃgrahaḥ” iti nāmnā (Bonn 1830) prakāśitaḥ / upary uktāḥ sarve granthā Latinbhāṣāyām likhitāḥ / yato hi tasmin samaye Europakhaṇḍe Latinbhāṣāyām grantharacanācāra āsīt / 1859 tame varṣe Gildemeistermahodayānām Bonn-nagaraṃ prati niṣkramaṇān Marburgnagare 1865 paryantaṃ ṣaḍ varṣāṇi saṃskṛtādhyayanasya virāma āsīt / 1865 tame varṣe ācāryaḥ Ferdinand Justi (1857–1907) Marburgnagare tulanātmakavyākaraṇasya śarmaṇyabhāṣāśāstrasya ca pravacanāya samāhūtaḥ / tasya viduṣo bhāratīyavānmayam prati viśeṣataḥ pārasikavānmayam prati mahaty abhirucir āsīt / ataḥ 1902 tame varṣe indo-europīyabhāṣāvijñānārtham Albert Thumb (1865–1915) mahodayasya niyuktir āsīt / Marburgnagare svanivāsakāle Albert Thumb mahodayaḥ “saṃskṛtabālavyākaraṇa”nāmakaṃ grantham vyaracīt (Heidelberg 1905) / ayam grantho Richard Hauschild mahodayena kṛtasya nūtanapariśramasya phalasvarūpeṇādyāpy atīvopayogī bhavati / Albert thumb mahodayaḥ pariśiṣṭe kāle navīnagrīkabhāṣānveṣaṇam akārṣīt / Ferdinand Justi mahodayasya sthānam Karl Friedrich Geldner (1858–1929) ācāryeṇa 1907 tame varṣe samadhiṣṭhitam / so'pi vipāścit pārasīkabhāratīyabhāṣāśāstrayoḥ pariśramam kurvan kālam vyanaiṣīt / daśa varṣāṇi kṛtabhūripariśrameṇa tena viduṣā 1855 tama eva varṣe avestāsaṃbandhinī Westergaard-prakāśanasya navīnā kṛtiḥ pūrṇatām nītā / Halle-nagare Richard Pischel vidvattallajena saha viśeṣasaṃparkād “vedādhyayana” nāmakasya granthasya trayāḥ khaṇḍāḥ 1889–1901

madhyakāle prakāśatām nītāḥ / vipāścin Marburgnagare sarvaprāthamyena ṛgvedasamhitāyā bhāṣāntarīkaraṇakarmaṇi saṃlagna āsīt / idaṃ ca bhāṣāntarīkaraṇakarma bhūmikāracanāyāḥ pūrvam eva Geldner ācāryasya mṛtyā viratam āsīt / yadi bhūmikā tenālikhiṣyata, abhirucikarī sāmagry avaśyam evāsmābhiḥ samupālapsyata / parantv idaṃ bhāṣāntarīkaraṇam dvitīyaviśvayuddhānantaram ācāryasya Johannes Nobel nāmnāḥ pariśrameṇa prakāśatām nītam / Geldner ācāryaḥ 1921 tame varṣe kāryabhārān muktaḥ / tasyācāryapīṭham adhiṣṭhitum Hans Oertel (1868–1952) ācāryaḥ samāhūtaḥ / sa vidvān vaidikabhāṣāśāstravākya-racana-yoḥ sārāpūrṇasamīkṣābhir vedādhyayana-paramparām prakrāmayat / varṣadvayam Marburgnagare prādhyāpya sa vidvān 1925 tame varṣe Münchennagaram agamat / tatsthānāpanno Wilhelm Hauer (1881–1962) ācāryaḥ, yasya hi kṛtiṣu yogaśāstrīya-samīkṣāḥ pradhānā bhavanti / Johannes Nobel (1887–1960) ācāryo yo hi tasmin samaye Berlinnagare pustakālayanirīkṣako 'nadhikṛta-prādhyāpakaścāsīt, 1928 tame varṣe Marburgnagare ācāryapīṭhādhiṣṭhānāyāhvānam aṅgīkṛtavān / pūrvam alaṅkāraśāstrasya mūlasrotoviṣaye pariśramānantaram (eta-dviṣaye tena “bhāratīyālaṅkāraśāstrasyādhāraśilāḥ, tasyaitihāsikavikāśaś ca, sāmānyacitraṇam” (Calcutta 1925) (The Foundations of Indian Poetries, and their Historical Development, General outlines, Calcutta, 1925) mahāyānaśākhīyabauddha-mataparīśodhane saṃlagnaṃ tasya manaḥ / tadarthaṃ sa vidvān na kevalam saṃskṛtavānmayaparcayena kiṃ tu bhoṭīya-cīnīyajapānīyavānmayaparcayenāpi yogyatām labdhavān / asmin viṣaye tasya prakhyātā kṛtiḥ “suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtrasya vividhabhāṣānuvādāḥ” (1937, 1944, 1950, 1958) iti / Mārburgīyabhāratīyavidyācāryeṣu mahodayaḥ,³³ –Hauer chraistavamatasamghayātrā anapekṣya– prathama ācārya āsīt yo hi bhāratam paryatāt / 1951–52 tame 1953–54 tame ca varṣe sa khalu ṣaṇ māsāni yāvan nāgapure sthitāyā bhāratīyasamskṛter antardeśīyasamsthāyā atithir āsīt / atra tasya saptatitame janmadināvasare kaś cid utsavagrantho'pi saṃpāditaḥ/

1957 tame varṣe Wilhelm Rau (janma-1922) vipāścitā samadhiṣṭhitam ācāryapīṭham / viduṣānena “māghakṛtaśīsupālavadhasya vallabhadevakṛtavayākhyām” uddiśya 1949 tame varṣe D. Phil. upādhiprāpako nibandho likhitaḥ / brāhmaṇāny atyantāsaktyādhiyānenānena budhena teṣv anveṣaṇakāryam ārabdham yatphalasvarūpeṇāsyācāryapīṭhādhiṣṭhānayogyatā sampannā / nibandhaviṣayaḥ “prācīnabhārate rāṣṭram samājaś ca” (Wiesbaden 1957) iti / idānīm ācāryeṇānena

³³ Wilhelm Hauer as missionary.

bhāratīyavyākaraṇadarśane mukhyato bhartṭharer vākyapadīye mahān pariśramah kriyate / vidvattallajenānena vākyapadīyasambandhino daśādhikā samcitāḥ / acireṇaiva kālena grantho'yaṁ prakāśatām eṣyati /

1964 taḥ Claus Vogel mahodayo'pi (janma-1933) Marburgnagare prādhyāpayati / ayaṁ vidvān Johannes Nobel ācāryasya paramparām anusarati / samskṛtena sākam bhoṭīyavānmayam api prādhyāpayati /

navīnabhāratīyabhāṣāḥ— āndhrapradeśavāstavyo vyākaraṇācāryaḥ peryupanāmakah sarveśvara-śarmā (janma-1926) hindītelugubhāṣe pāṭhayati /

Marburgnagare Philipp-viśva-vidyālayasyaikasmin samsthāne bhāratīyavidyādhyayanāni samcālyante / adyatve samsthānam idaṁ “bhāratīya-prāgāśīyasamsthānam” (Indisch-Ostasiatisches Seminar) iti nāmnā prakhyātam asti / ācāryo Wilhelm Rau mahodayo'sya samsthānasya samcālako vartate / asmin samsthāne chātrāṇaṁ samkhyā mukhyato na gaṇyate / adhijigāṁsamāna eko'pi chātraḥ samsthā-samcālanāyālaṁ bhavati / viśvavidyālayīyaṁ pustakālayam atiricya samsthānasyāśya svīyaḥ pustakālayo'sti yasmin hi catuṣsahasrādhika-samkhyākā granthā vidyante /

samsthānād asmād atīteṣu varṣeṣu D. Phil. upādhiprāpakāḥ katipaye nibandhā grathitāḥ / “bharatanātyaśāstram” adhikṛtya (Minati Dās nāmnyā bhāratīyayuvatyā) nibandhaḥ / “raghunāthasārvabhaumasya smārta-vyavasthārṇavam” adhikṛtya (Prītama Lāla Aneja nāmnyā bhāratīyayūnā) nibandhaḥ / “dārāśukohakāritam upaniṣadāṁ pārasika-bhāṣāntarīkaraṇam” adhikṛtya (Erhard Göbel Gross nāmnyā) nibandhaḥ / “gaṇeśatāpanīyopaniṣadam” adhikṛtya (Ursula Bergmann nāmnyā) nibandhaḥ / “jaiminīyabrāhmaṇe ākhyātāni” iti viśayam adhikṛtya (Albrech Frenz nāmnyā) nibandhaḥ / “arvācīnāryabhaṭasya mahā-siddhāntam” adhikṛtya (Śrīrāmula Rājeśvaraśarmanāmnyā bhāratīyayūnā) nibandhaḥ / “Ṣaṇmukhakalpam” adhikṛtya (Dieter George namnā) nibandh/ “hindībhāṣāyāṁ sādharmaṇakriyāpadāni samyuktakriyāpadāni ca” iti viśayam adhikṛtya (Konrad Meissner nāmnyā) nibandhaḥ /

Marburgnagare viśvavidyālayīyam etat samsthānaṁ pustakālayaṁ ca vihāya kaścid anyo bṛhatkāyaḥ pustakālayo vidyate, yasya hi nāma “rājakīyapustakālaya” (Staats-Bibliothek) iti / asmin pustakālaye bhāratīyavidyāsambandhino (bauddha-jaina-matādisambandhino) bahavo

mudritā adyāpy amudritāḥ sahasraśo hastalikhitagranthā saṃskṛta-prākṛta-apabhraṃśa-navīnabhāratīya-bhāṣāsu, lipiṣu ca vidyante / eṣāṃ granthānāṃ bṛhatkāyā sūcī bahuṣu khaṇḍeṣu prakāśitā vidyate, yā hi “Die Staatsbibliothek, 355 Marburg/L. Universitätsstrasse 25 West Germany” taḥ prāptuṃ śakyate / (jñānamuktāvalī, 1963 tame varṣe Claus Vogel mahodayena prakāśitā)

The reason for writing this short historical essay is of course that the system has mostly disappeared in Germany, due to changes in German universities, but also because new generations of Indian lecturers have received a very different training. Only in retrospect one realizes what a unique chance we had as students, where in a sense classical Indian scholarship was never far away.

APPENDIX

Prof. Dr. S. B. Shastri
2 Jayatilakagarden
Waragoda, Kalamija
7.9.1962

To
Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Rau
Marburg / Lahn
Georg-Voigt-Strasse 5

स्वस्ति। श्रीमते प्रध्यापकाय राउमहाभाग्य निलसतु मदीयं
मङ्गलानुशंसकम्॥

गतमासे भवतः पत्रं लब्ध्वापि यन्नाद्य भावत् प्रतिवचनं
दत्तं तदर्थं क्षाम्यतु भवान् । सर्वेऽपि मिलम्बः सकारण एवासीत् ।
भवतः पत्रेण ज्ञायते यद् भवान् शान्तिनिकेतनात्तु कस्यपि जनं
जिघृक्षति । मम मती तु तत्रत्यः श्रीराम प्रजनतिवारी महाराजः
समुचिततरो जनः । भाव्यमेव न केवलां साहित्यमपि निवेचनपूर्वकं
पाठयितुं उदीणः । एतादृशे जने सति किमन्य जनगवेषणेन॥

वाक्यपदीयकारिका भवता स्तेशोधिता इति उद्योगिर्मम
मनः श्रद्धादयति । अहं भवतोऽति दूरस्थः । समीपस्थो भवेद्यं
चेद् अनुवादकार्येऽपि भवतेः साहाय्यं नितरेयम् । परमेतादृशः
संयोगः केवलं दैवाधीनः॥

अन्यत् सर्वं कुरुलम् । सुजाता भवतः पत्नीं स्मरति । तस्मै
मंगलकामनाश्च मया सह प्रेषयति । शिशुभ्योऽस्माकं
सर्वेषां जीतिपूर्वकाणि शिशुभ्युम्बनानि । आशाति भवान्
यदा कदा स्वविस्तृतवृत्तानिनास्माद् सुखयिष्यति ॥ इति

स्नेहाधीनस्य

शान्तिनिकेतनशास्त्रिणः