

# Epic Threads John Brockington On The Sanskrit Epic

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## SANTOS JAIDYN

*Visions of Peace* Univ of South Carolina Press

A major contribution to the study of South Asian literature, offering a landmark view of Mahābhārata studies. Many Mahābhāratas is an introduction to the spectacular and long-lived diversity of Mahābhārata literature in South Asia. This diversity begins with the Sanskrit Mahābhārata, an early epic poem that narrates the events of a catastrophic fratricidal war. Along the way, it draws in nearly everything else in Hindu mythology, philosophy, and story literature. The magnitude of its scope and the relentless complexity of its worldview primed the Mahābhārata for uncountable tellings in South Asia and beyond. For two thousand years, the instinctive approach to the Mahābhārata has been not to consume it but to create it anew. The many Mahābhāratas of this book come from the first century to the twenty-first. They are composed in nine different languages—Apabhramsha, Bengali, English, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu. Early chapters illuminate themes of retelling within the Sanskrit Mahābhārata itself, demonstrating that the story's propensity for regeneration emerges from within. The majority of the book, however, reaches far beyond the Sanskrit epic. Readers dive into classical dramas, premodern vernacular poems, regional performance traditions, commentaries, graphic novels, political essays, novels, and contemporary theater productions—all of them Mahābhāratas. Because of its historical and linguistic breadth, its commitment to primary sources, and its exploration of multiplicity and diversity as essential features of the Mahābhārata's long life in South Asia, Many Mahābhāratas constitutes a major contribution to the study of South Asian literature and offers a landmark view of the field of Mahābhārata studies. Nell Shapiro Hawley is Preceptor in Sanskrit at Harvard University. Sohini Sarah Pillai is a PhD candidate in South and Southeast Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

*Archives polonaises d'études orientales* BRILL

This collection of essays features a significant selection of the specialized fields of knowledge that have shaped classical South Asian intellectual history, focusing on the different and complex processes employed during the 'invention', construction, preservation and renewal of a given tradition.

*Sūtras, Stories and Yoga Philosophy* Routledge

Philology and Criticism contrasts the Mahābhārata's preservation and transmission within the Indian

scribal and commentarial traditions with Sanskrit philology after 1900, as German Indologists proposed a critical edition of the Mahābhārata to validate their racial and nationalist views. Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee show how, in contrast to the Indologists' unscientific theories, V. S. Sukthankar assimilated the principles of neo-Lachmannian textual criticism to defend the transmitted text and its traditional reception as a work of law, philosophy and salvation. The authors demonstrate why, after the edition's completion, no justification exists for claiming that an earlier heroic epic existed, that the Brahmans redacted the heroic epic to produce the Mahābhārata or that they interpolated "sectarian" gods such as Vis.n.u and Śiva into the work. By demonstrating how the Indologists committed technical errors, cited flawed and biased scholarship and used circular argumentation to validate their racist and anti-Semitic theories, Philology and Criticism frees readers to approach the Mahābhārata as "the principal monument of bhakti" (Madeleine Biardeau). The authoritative guide to the critical edition's correct use and interpretation, Philology and Criticism urges South Asianists to view Hinduism as a complex debate about ontology and ethics rather than through the lenses of "Brahmanism" and "sectarianism." It launches a new world philology—one that is plural and self-reflexive rather than Eurocentric and ahistorical.

*Hinduism and the Ethics of Warfare in South Asia* Routledge

This book challenges the view, common among Western scholars, that precolonial India lacked a tradition of military philosophy. It traces the evolution of theories of warfare in India from the dawn of civilization, focusing on the debate between Dharmayuddha (Just War) and Kutayuddha (Unjust War) within Hindu philosophy. This debate centers around four questions: What is war? What justifies it? How should it be waged? And what are its potential repercussions? This body of literature provides evidence of the historical evolution of strategic thought in the Indian subcontinent that has heretofore been neglected by modern historians. Further, it provides a counterpoint to scholarship in political science that engages solely with Western theories in its analysis of independent India's philosophy of warfare. Ultimately, a better understanding of the legacy of ancient India's strategic theorizing will enable more accurate analysis of modern India's military and nuclear policies.

*Many Mahābhāratas* Anthem Press

In 1587, Abū al-Faḍl ibn Mubārak – a favourite at the Mughal court and author of the Akbarnāmah – completed his Preface to the Persian translation of the Mahābhārata. This book is the first detailed study of Abū al-Faḍl's Preface. It offers insights into manuscript practices at the Mughal court, the role a Persian version of the Mahābhārata was meant to play, and the religious interactions that characterised 16th-century India.

Religion, War, and Ethics Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG

Recent years have witnessed continued and growing interest in the massive and fascinating poems we know as the Sanskrit epics. This interest has manifested itself in the continuing translations of texts, a steady stream of publications and numerous scholarly meetings of Sanskrit epic scholars. A number of these scholars assembled in Helsinki to constitute the Epic Section of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference in the summer of 2003. The present volume places before the indological community the sixteen learned papers presented at the conference by the distinguished group of scholars who were in attendance. The topics and methodologies of the authors are as varied and diverse as the contents of the monumental poems themselves but each contribution sheds new light on some aspect of the genetic and/or receptive history of these works, their relationship to each other and to other index texts, or the representation and analysis of specific characters and episodes in the poems

**Essays in Indian Philosophy, Religion and Literature** Motilal Banarsidass Publishers

*Visions of Peace: Asia and the West* explores the diversity of past conceptualizations as well as the remarkable continuity in the hope for peace across global intellectual traditions. Current literature, prompted by September 11, predominantly focuses on the laws and ethics of just wars or modern ideals of peace. Asian and Western ideals of peace before the modern era have largely escaped scholarly attention. This book examines Western and Asian visions of peace that existed prior to c.1800 by bringing together experts from a variety of intellectual traditions. The historical survey ranges from ancient Greek thought, early Christianity and medieval scholasticism to Hinduism, classical Confucianism and Tokugawa Japanese learning, before illuminating unfamiliar aspects of peace visions in the European Enlightenment. Each chapter offers a particular case study and attempts to rehabilitate a 'forgotten' conception of peace and reclaim its contemporary relevance. Collectively they provide the conceptual resources to inspire more creative thinking towards a new vision of peace in the present. Students and specialists in international relations, peace studies, history, political theory, philosophy, and religious studies will find this book a valuable resource on diverse conceptions of peace.

**Participles in Rigvedic Sanskrit** Routledge

Traditions of asceticism, yoga, and devotion (bhakti), including dance and music, developed in Hinduism over long periods of time. Some of these practices, notably those denoted by the term yoga, are orientated towards salvation from the cycle of reincarnation and go back several thousand years. These practices, borne witness to in ancient texts called Upaniṣads, as well as in other traditions, notably early Buddhism and Jainism, are the subject of this volume in the Oxford History of Hinduism. Practices of meditation are also linked to asceticism (tapas) and its institutional articulation in renunciation (saṃnyāsa). There is a range of practices or disciplines from ascetic fasting to taking a vow (vrata) for a deity in return for a favour. There are also devotional practices that might involve ritual, making an offering to a deity and receiving a blessing, dancing, or visualization of the master (guru). The overall theme--the history of religious practices--might even be seen as being within a broader intellectual trajectory of cultural history. In the substantial introduction by the editor this broad history is sketched, paying particular attention to what we might call the medieval period (post-Gupta) through to modernity when traditions had significantly

developed in relation to each other. The chapters in the book chart the history of Hindu practice, paying particular attention to indigenous terms and recognizing indigenous distinctions such as between the ritual life of the householder and the renouncer seeking liberation, between 'inner' practices of and 'external' practices of ritual, and between those desirous of liberation (mumukṣu) and those desirous of pleasure and worldly success (bubhukṣu). This whole range of meditative and devotional practices that have developed in the history of Hinduism are represented in this book. The Multivalence of an Epic: Retelling the Ramayana in South India and Southeast Asia Bloomsbury Publishing

An accessible and up-to-date survey of scholarly thinking about Hinduism, perfect for courses on Hinduism or world religions *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Hinduism* examines the historical trajectories that have led to the modern religion of Hinduism. Covering main themes such as philosophy, practice, society, and science, this comprehensive volume brings together a variety of approaches and perspectives in Hindu Studies to help readers better appreciate the richness, complexity, and diversity of Hinduism. Essays by acknowledged experts in the field present historical accounts of all major traditions, analyze key texts, engage with Hindu theology and philosophy, address contemporary questions of colonialism and identity, and more. Throughout the text, the authors highlight the links, common threads, and issues that reoccur in the history of Hinduism. Fully revised and updated, the second edition of the Companion incorporates the most recent scholarship and reflects the trend away from essentialist understandings of Hinduism. New chapters examine the Goddess tradition, Hindu diaspora, Hinduism and inter-religious comparison, Hindu philosophy, and Indian astronomy, medicine, language, and mathematics. This edition places further emphasis on the importance of region-specific studies in analyzing Hinduism, discusses important theoretical issues, and offers fresh perspectives on current discourse in Hindu society and politics. Provides a thorough overview of major texts, their histories, and the traditions that preserve them Describes the major textual traditions in Sanskrit with examples in different Indian vernacular languages Addresses major issues and contemporary debates about the nature and study of Hinduism Discusses the importance of systematic, rational thinking in Indian sciences, philosophy, and theology Examines key socio-political themes in Hinduism that are of particular relevance to the modern world *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Hinduism, Second Edition* is an excellent text for undergraduate courses on Hinduism in Religious Studies and Philosophy departments, and an invaluable resource for scholars and researchers in Hindu Studies.

*The Study of Hinduism* Penguin UK

The issues discussed in the essays pertain to various aspects of Indian culture. Analysis of the Vedic pantheon is juxtaposed with comparative approach to Indian mythology Examination of different historical and textual layers of vedic exegesis is enriched by reflection on Sanskrit epics and Puranas. Insightful pursuance of various semantic development combined with Bhartrhari's philosophy of language and complexities and are interwoven with on the one hand the question of reationality and philosophic discourse as reflected on Indian dialectical traditiona Ganeri, Shoryu katsura, Ernst Prets and the vedantic hermeneutics and with on the other the issue of individual freedom against the soteriological background.

*People of Today* Motilal Banarsidass Publishers

The Intimate Other explores the theme of the devotional element in Indic Religions not only in Hinduism in which bhakti has become the dominant form, but also in Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam. The essays by scholars of international repute, show the strength of this devotion to the divine as a living and powerful source of value, aesthetic imagination, creativity and well-being. They also analyse the sometimes divergent interests of scholar and devotee, problematising devotion and exposing its historical development as complex, contested and 'political'. Of particular interest are the chapters on the Jain and Buddhist traditions where the existence of devotion has often been doubted or denied. Contributors investigate widely ranging topics: these include an analysis of bhakti within the Sanskrit epics; a text-historical approach to Valmiki; Kabir's authorship of the poems attributed to him; contemporary attitudes to devotion to the Ganga: devotion within a syncretistic Jain movement, in Theravada Buddhism, subcontinental Sufi Islam, young Sikhs in Britain and in the shared musical and poetic traditions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The volume ends with a sensitive exploration of the devotional love that overpowers death within the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The volume ends with a sensitive exploration of the devotional love that overpowers death within the Hindu bhakti context. Together they demonstrate vividly just how passionate love for the intimate other penetrates and inspires so many aspects of the religious culture of South Asia.

*The Sanskrit Epics* Cambridge University Press

The Sanskrit Mahabharata is one of the greatest works of world literature and pivotal for the understanding of both Hindu traditions and wider society in ancient, medieval and modern South Asia. This book presents a new synthesis of philological, anthropological and cognitive-linguistic method and theory in relation to the study of narrative text by focusing on the form and function of the Mahabharata in the context of early South Asia. Arguing that the combination of structural and thematic features that have helped to establish the enduring cultural centrality of religious narrative in South Asia was first outlined in the text, the book highlights the Mahabharata's complex orientation to the cosmic, social and textual past. The book shows the extent to which narrative is integral to human social life, and more generally the creation and maintenance of religious ideologies. It highlights the contexts of origin and transmission and the cultural function of the Mahabharata in first millennium South Asia and, by extension, in medieval and modern South Asia by drawing on both textual and epigraphic sources. The book draws attention to what is culturally specific about the origination and transmission of early South Asian narrative and what can be used to enrich our orientation to narrative in human social life more globally.

**The Moral Imagination of the Mahabharata** Routledge

This volume consists of a collection of studies which are based on papers presented at the symposium «Erlöst leben - oder sterben, um befreit zu werden?» (Zurich, May 2008), organized in honour of Peter Schreiner. It offers a selective overview of individual liberation as dealt with in Indian texts and rituals at different times. Starting from the two prominent approaches to this problem, namely, that of jīvanmukti ('liberation in one's lifetime') and that of videhamukti ('liberation beyond the body'), some important questions have to be considered: How has life been thought compatible with mokṣa? How have 'life' in the concept of the 'liberated living' and 'death' in the concept of the 'disembodied liberated' been conceived by philosophers, poets, religious thinkers, ritual practitioners and social activists? Coming from various disciplinary backgrounds - Indology, Religious Studies,

Social Anthropology - the contributors explore these questions in the context of their particular fields of research. Through this multi-faceted approach, the volume presents an original and substantial analysis of an intriguing topic touching on many aspects of religious and secular life. The careful interpretation of the sources by a group of internationally renowned scholars leads to critical perspectives on some crucial developments in the history of Indian religion.

*The Other Ramayana Women* BRILL

Bringing together Hildebeitel's major essays on the the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyaṇa, and the south Indian cults of Draupadī and Kṛttivāra along with new articles written especially for this collection, this two volume work offers a comprehensive re-reading of the Indian epic tradition by the foremost scholar in Indian epic studies today.

*Boundaries, Dynamics and Construction of Traditions in South Asia* Oxford University Press

14 leading 'Ramayana' scholars examine the epic in its myriad contexts throughout South and Southeast Asia. They explore the role the narrative plays in societies as varied as India Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia. The essays also expand the understanding of the 'text' to include non-verbal renditions of the epic.

*The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Hinduism* Anthem Press

Argument and Design features fifteen essays by leading scholars of the Sanskrit epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, discussing the Mahābhārata's upākhyānas, subtales that branch off from the central storyline and provide vantage points for reflecting on it.

**Epic Undertakings** Manipal Universal Press

The past decades public interest in history is booming. This creates new opportunities but also challenges for professional historians. This book asks how historians deal with changing public demands for history and how these affect their professional practices, values and identities. The volume offers a great variety of detailed studies of cases where historians have applied their expertise outside the academic sphere. With contributions focusing on Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and Europe the book has a broad geographical scope. Subdivided in five sections, the book starts with a critical look back on some historians who broke with mainstream academic positions by combining their professional activities with an explicit political partisanship or social engagement. The second section focusses on the challenges historians are confronted with when entering the court room or more generally exposing their expertise to legal frameworks. The third section focuses on the effects of policy driven demands as well as direct political interventions and regulations on the historical profession. A fourth section looks at the challenges and opportunities related to the rise of new digital media. Finally several authors offer their view on normative standards that may help to better respond to new demands and to define role models for publicly engaged historians. This book aims at historians and other academics interested in public uses of history.

*Reading the Fifth Veda* Lulu.com

The Mahabharata, one of the most popular epics, has had a remarkable impact on literary and cultural thought in India through the centuries. It is also of immense religious and philosophical importance and is considered itihāsa, literally 'that which happened', or sacred history. Though the setting of the Mahabharata is distant in time, something of its indefatigable, insistent formulation of

the pivotal dilemmas of our shared human moral imagination remains insistent and inextinguishable even today. The Moral Imagination of the Mahabharata closely reads the conceptual and narrative intricacies of the epic through the four foundational terms of dharma (law), artha (worldliness), kama (desire) and moksha (freedom), offering riveting insights on the moral psychology of Indic civilization. Drawing from scholarly forays in philology, history, religious studies and pre-modern Asian traditions, this critical attention by a literary scholar to the Mahabharata's narrative impulses and the internal vigour of select episodes brings to fore the gripping dilemmas that animate the epic. The book travels through an atmospheric and exuberant pre-modern milieu to provoke prescient metaphysical and ethical questions that are only accumulating in relevance in the contemporary world.

*Professional Historians in Public* Peter Lang

This title was first published in 2003. Can a text be used either to validate or to invalidate contemporary understandings? Texts may be deemed 'sacred', but sacred to whom? Do conflicting understandings matter? Is it appropriate to try to offer a resolution? For Hindus and non-Hindus, in India and beyond, Valmiki is the poet-saint who composed the epic Rā mĀ yaōa. Yet for a vocal community of dalits (once called 'untouchables'), within and outside India, Valmiki is God. How then does one explain the popular story that he started out as an ignorant and violent bandit, attacking and killing travellers for material gain? And what happens when these two accounts, Valmiki as God

and Valmiki as villain, are held simultaneously by two different religious groups, both contemporary, and both vocal? This situation came to a head with controversial demonstrations by the Valmiki community in Britain in 2000, giving rise to some searching questions which Julia Leslie now seeks to address.

*Epic Threads* Oxford University Press

This book explores the wealth of evidence from early Indo-Aryan for the existence of transitive nouns and adjectives, a rare linguistic phenomenon which, according to some categorizations of word classes, should not occur. John Lowe shows that most transitive nouns and adjectives attested in early Indo-Aryan cannot be analysed as a type of non-finite verb category, but must be acknowledged as a distinct constructional type. The volume provides a detailed introduction to transitivity (verbal and adpositional), the categories of agent and action noun, and to early Indo-Aryan. Four periods of early Indo-Aryan are selected for study: Rigvedic Sanskrit, the earliest Indo-Aryan; Vedic Prose, a slightly later form of Sanskrit; Epic Sanskrit, a form of Sanskrit close to the standardized 'Classical' Sanskrit; and Pali, the early Middle Indo-Aryan language of the Buddhist scriptures. John Lowe shows that while each linguistic stage is different, there are shared features of transitive nouns and adjectives which apply throughout the history of early Indo-Aryan. The data is set in the wider historical context, from Proto-Indo-European to Modern Indo-Aryan, and a formal linguistic analysis of transitive nouns and adjectives is provided in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar.