

Note from the Editor

About two millennia ago Megasthenes lit the spark of knowledge with the composition of his four-volume book on India, *Indica*, fulfilling the desire to learn about India across the world at that time. Several thousand compositions and centuries later there still remains a desire to learn more. The *American Journal of Indic Studies* is launched in the same spirit of inquiry, which characterized the interest to learn, understand, and transmit knowledge of/about India. In order to lead and continue that quest for knowledge, *American Journal of Indic Studies (AJIS)*, the flagship journal of **American Academy of Indic Studies (AAIS)** publishes biannually examining various subject areas in connection with India. We are also happy to announce that *AJIS* is published in fully accessible online format under Creative Commons license attribution with all articles available across the world freely and immediately upon publication.

The first issue of the journal contains three articles (Section Academic Reflection) by well-known academics drawn from decades of experience working at the intersection of academic and practitioner perspectives of Hindu religion as well as Indian history and culture. Arvind Sharma's article "Dharma and the Academy: A Hindu Academic's View," investigates academic (mainly western) enterprises of interpreting Hinduism and the recent decade-long reactions emanating from Hindus, both practitioners and academics. Kusumita Pedersen's article, "Hinduism and Universality in Religion," examines the limitations of Western perspectives and especially the category of 'religion' to understand Hinduism, through her examination of Vivekananda's universality as an important principle of Hinduism. Continuing discussion on western understanding of India, Makarand Paranjape's article, "'postal' Discontents: A Ground Report on the Anthropology of Knowledge in India," discusses the debacles of imported theoretical perspectives, post-colonialism and post-modernism, as limited theoretical perspectives to understanding India and Indian culture. Paranjape demonstrates through his examination of knowledge production in India the less than adequate ways of academic understanding of India within India and across the world.

The two book reviews included in this issue (Section Book Reviews) also continue the examination of Hinduism from the perspectives of East and West. Arvind Sharma's review of the book, *Brahman and Dao: Comparative Studies in Indian and Chinese Philosophy and Religion*, shows that comparative examination might be more fruitful and further the understanding of Hinduism and India. Narasingha Sil's review of the book, *Redeeming Kamasutra*, explores the less than adequate understanding of Indian culture as represented in a Western academic's translation and interpretation of *Kāmasūtra*, again!

Deliberate or not such misrepresentations of Indian history and culture have led to widespread misunderstanding and miscommunication alienating the land of diversity and multiplicity from fair representation in the popular imagination.

On this occasion, I would like to record my deepest thanks to members of the editorial board, authors of this volume, and the University of North Texas libraries for their support.

Lavanya Vemsani
Editor-in-Chief