

Band 40 | 2023

# Zeitschrift für Indologie und Südasiestudien

वरुण॒ खामृ॒तस्य॑

अत्रा॑ण्यस्मै प॒द्भिः सं भ॑रंत्युत्ता॒नह॑स्ता॒ नम॑साधि॒ विश्व॑ ॥

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# Zeitschrift für Indologie und Südasiastudien

herausgegeben von  
Hans Harder und Ute Hüsken

Band 40/2023



BUSKE

# Zeitschrift für Indologie und Südasiastudien

von O. von Hinüber, G. Klingenschmitt, A. Wezler und M. Witzel  
gegründet als »Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik«,  
ab Band 28 mit dem neuen Titel

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Erscheinungsweise: jährlich

## Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der  
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im  
Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

ISSN 2193-9144  
ISBN (Print) 978-3-96769-413-0  
ISBN (eBook-PDF) 978-3-96769-414-7

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Vervielfältigungen, Übertragungen, Mikroverfilmungen und die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung  
in elektronischen Systemen, soweit es nicht §§ 53 und 54 UrhG ausdrücklich gestatten.

Umschlaggestaltung: Detemple Design, Igel b. Trier. Umschlagillustrationen: Fotos von  
Matthias Walliser, Göttingen. Vorderseite: Sarasvatī und Text von RV 2.28.5, 10.79.2 und  
5.45.8; Rückseite: Harax<sup>a</sup>aitī und Text von Y 10.5, 28.1 und Y 51.5. Druck und Bindung:  
CPI books, Ulm. Printed in Germany.

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# Premchands Hindi: Zur Genese des Standard-registers in der gegenwärtigen Hindi-Prosa

Gautam Liu

## Abstract

Modern Standard Hindi can be a contested category. When Sanskritization of the language is debated, Premchand's use of the language and the notion of Hindustani is often resorted to so as to invoke a successfully calibrated style that retains a balance between Sanskritic and Perso-Arabic lexical orientations. Rarely, however, do critics actually go beyond such invocations, and for good reasons, since Premchand's practice and metalinguistic considerations are numerous and complex. The following article brings together and scrutinizes Premchand's and his contemporaries' relevant contributions to the debate about what kind of Hindi should be cultivated. One of the outcomes of this scrutiny is that Premchand continues to provide a solid base for Hindi to draw on; another is that the alternative "Hindustani" as a middle variant between Perso-Arabicized Urdu and Sanskritized Hindi is futile and certainly neither warranted by Premchand's linguistic usages nor by his normative considerations.

**Keywords:** Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani, standard Hindi, Premchand, Hindi literature, language ideologies, linguistic standardization.

## Ausgangslage

Als Hindi-Dozent ist man alle Jahre von angehenden Kursteilnehmern mit der Frage konfrontiert, welches Hindi in Bezug auf die Schriftprosa denn unterrichtet werde, ein sanskritisiertes Hindi oder ein mischsprachliches Hindustani? Es gibt wohl kaum eine andere südasiatische Sprache, die auf eine solche Binarität fixiert wird. Selbst Urdu, das Alter ego von Hindi, bleibt in der Regel von solchen Fragen verschont. Wohlwissend, dass die Antwort, dass an hiesigen Universitäten weder ein sanskritisiertes Hindi noch Hindustani, sondern Hindi unterrichtet wird, immer noch für Unklarheit sorgen würde, könnte man die Replik mit Standard-Hindi oder Premchands Hindi präzisieren.

Der Autor Premchand (1880–1936) ist zweifelsohne die Schlüsselfigur, um zu verstehen, welches Register der gegenwärtigen Hindi-

# Conditional Vows: Exchange and Reciprocity between the Deity and Laity in Chaṭh<sup>1</sup>

Akanksha Yadav & Vinita Chandra

## Abstract

Chaṭh is a popular festival in North India, where the devotees invoke the blessings of the Sun God Sūrya and Chaṭhī Māī (the Goddess Mother Chaṭhī) by fasting and offering water ablutions. The festival is known for its extravagant rituals of penance and collective participation. Moreover, our interviews and observations revealed *manautī* as a significant lay practice to achieve mundane pursuits. These vows are made any time of the year, and the devotees reciprocate differently at the annual festival. A wish or desire for which the vow is made by the worshipper, if unfulfilled by Chaṭhī Māī (the Goddess Mother Chaṭhī), annuls the obligation on the worshipper to reciprocate her. On the other hand, a failure to reciprocate a granted wish is met with her wrath. With a qualitative approach, this article shows that, and how these vows bind both the deity and the devotee in obligatory bonds of exchange and reciprocity.

**Keywords:** conditional vows, *vrata*, *manautī*, exchange, reciprocity.

Chaṭh is a popular festival in North India, where the devotees invoke the blessings of the Sun God Sūrya and Chaṭhī Māī (the Goddess Mother Chaṭhī) by fasting and offering water ablutions. The festival is celebrated in the Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

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- 1 We gratefully acknowledge the grant of DAAD Short Term Fellowship to the first author for the project. We are especially thankful to Prof. Ute Hüsken, Professor and Head of the Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia, Heidelberg University; Dr. Anand Mishra, Assistant Faculty Member, Department of Cultural and Religious History of South Asia Heidelberg University; Prof. Jörg Gengnagel, Chair of Indology, Würzburg University; and Prof. Rana P.B. Singh, Professor, Department of Geography, Banaras Hindu University for their comments and suggestions. We also thank Dr. Nirmalya Guha, Associate Professor, Department of Humanistic Studies, IIT (BHU), for his comments and help regarding transliteration. We gratefully acknowledge the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions, which helped us improve the article.

# Das *Rāmā'in* in der Urdu-Literatur

Arian Hopf

## Abstract

If today, Urdu literature's engagement with the *Ramayana*, one of the two classical Hindu *mahākāvya*s or epics, may seem counter-intuitive, then such perception is clearly a result of ideological shifts in recent history. This article traces manifold Urdu renditions of (parts of) the *Rāmā'in*, as the *Rāmāyana* is called in Urdu, and discusses various literary uses of *Rāmāyana* plots, motifs and characters from the 19th century well into the present. A retrospective assessment of this engagement thus bears ample proof of the fact that before the 20th century, Urdu was *not* the language of the Indian Muslims as which it came to be regarded afterwards, but a malleable, urbane and transregional literary idiom that belonged to no particular religious community. As the article shows, recent and present-day Urdu literary production, too, often treats the epic as a part of South Asian heritage – irrespective of, or despite, or even because of its religious affiliation.

**Keywords:** *Rāmāyana*, Urdu literature, Hindi-Urdu controversy, language ideologies.

*Rāmā'in*<sup>1</sup> – wie das *Rāmāyana* im Urdu zumeist geschrieben wird – ist eine der zentralen Erzählungen des Hinduismus und beschreibt die

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1 Titel sowie Orts- und Personennamen werden bewusst in ihrer im Urdu üblichen Schreibweise belassen, die zum Teil deutlich von der im Sanskrit üblichen Form abweichen kann. So fällt das inhärente *a* am Ende eines Wortes aus und wird im Urdu nicht wiedergegeben, bspw. Rām oder *Rāmā'in*. Darüber hinaus haben manche Namen eine Lautwandlung durchlaufen, so erscheint Lakṣman zugleich auch als Lachman oder Lakhan. Diese Entscheidung wurde aus zweierlei Gründen getroffen. Zum einen soll die Atmosphäre der Originaltexte im Urdu erhalten bleiben. Zum anderen soll hiermit aber auch bewusst einer Ursprungsthese, die von einem originalen *Rāmāyana* ausgeht und alle anderen Texte als Derivate oder Abweichungen interpretiert, entgegengesteuert werden. Tatsächlich ist die Überlieferungsgeschichte deutlich komplexer und kann nicht linear auf Vālmiki zurückgeführt werden. Vielmehr existiert die *Rāmāyana*-Erzählung schon vor Vālmiki und hat auch danach keinen linearen Verlauf genommen. So ist diese Tradition vielmehr als ein Rhizom

# Syed Mujtaba Ali's Unpainted Canvas: The *Chacha* Stories and a Bengali View of Weimar Germany, c. 1929–1932

Benjamin Zachariah

## Abstract

Syed Mujtaba Ali (1904–74), the Bengali writer, spent the years 1929 to 1931 in interwar Germany as Humboldt fellow, and was an eyewitness to the rise of the Nazis in the later years of the Weimar Republic. Among his various writings about Germany, his *Chacha Kahini*, a number of short stories, stand out as the most well-known. These stories, written and published a number of years after the end of the Weimar Republic and the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, provide a number of images of Germany and Germans for a literary readership across a few generations of Bengali readers. But how did Ali portray Germany, and particularly Berlin? How did the author depict the rise of the NSDAP, the public presence of Nazis and the growing popularity of Hitler? By setting the *Chacha Kahini* stories and storylines against their historical contexts, this article argues that in *these stories* Syed Mujtaba Ali used Germany as a somewhat exotic background against which to set his narrative plots. Thus, the article argues, Germany in *Chacha Kahini* serves the reader a rather flat and stereotypical grounding, and the canvas upon which the stories are drawn remains strangely unpainted.

**Keywords:** Bengali literature, Syed Mujtaba Ali, Weimar Republic, Nazism, exotism.

## Introduction: The Unpainted Canvas

The Bengali writer Syed Mujtaba Ali (1904–1974) was in Germany between 1929 and 1932, at the Universities of Berlin and Bonn, an eyewitness to the rising Nazi movement and the impending end of the Weimar Republic. Much nostalgic literature on this period of transition is readily available for those times; this is not the place to add to that, nor is it apt to continuously refer to the Weimar Republic only in terms

## Two Books on Visva-Bharati

Bipasha Bhattacharyya

Swati Ganguly. *Tagore's University: A History of Visva-Bharati 1921–1961*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2022.

Jolita Zabarskaitė. *'Greater India' and the Indian Expansionist Imagination, c.1885–1965: The Rise and Decline of the Idea of a Lost Hindu Empire*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2023.

The legacy of Rabindranath Tagore is retained on many levels, as a form of oral tradition. In the Indian State of West Bengal, material manifestations of this orality are not unlike the idols of Hindu deities that are discarded in copious amounts on the sides of streets by local neighbourhood clubs in the aftermath of annual ceremonies. Every other year or so, busts of Tagore pop up in locations in West Bengal that had inexplicable relevance to his life or work. His sage-like image greets us in the many metro stations that connect Kolkata. His songs blare on loudspeakers on days ordinary or otherwise. In the words of one Scottish author, if 'Calcuttans – which is to say Bengalis – have an appetite for cultures outside their own [...] which reduces the averagely sophisticated European to the level of the Essex lager lout' (Jack 2013: 20), a simultaneous overflow of reverence is reserved for Tagore, their own homegrown deity exported to the world. In the Italian author Italo Calvino's 1979 novel *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, we encounter a peculiarly humorous list of types of books:

the Books You Needn't Read, the Books Made For Purposes Other Than Reading, Books Read Even Before You Open Them Since They Belong To The Category Of Books Read Before Being Written. And thus you pass the outer girdle of ramparts, but then you are attacked by the infantry of the Books That If You Had More Than One Life You Would Certainly Also Read But Unfortunately Your Days Are Numbered. With a rapid maneuver you bypass them and move into the phalanxes of the Books You Mean To Read But There Are Others You Must Read First, the Books Too Expensive Now And You'll Wait Till They're Remaindered, the Books ditto When They Come Out In Paperback, Books You Can Borrow From Somebody, Books That

# A Path of Liberation That Fetches Prosperity: Juxtaposing the Śākta View of *bhukti-mukti* and the Philosophy of Action-Liberation

Shruti Krishna Bhat

## Abstract

It is a popular notion among the Indian philosophical schools that a means to prosperity and a means to liberation are distinctive and they lead to two completely opposing destinations. Prosperity is temporary and is said to be obtainable through sacrificial actions prescribed by Veda. Liberation is something eternal and makes one come out of the cycle of pain and pleasure. It is said to be achieved by knowledge of the self. With internal disagreements about the means and nature of liberation, Śaṅkara and Sureśvara from Advaita school and Kumārila and Prabhākara from Pūrva-mīmāṃsā school still agree that a means to liberation cannot result in any prosperity. As against this view, we come across a concept of *bhukti-mukti*, mainly pertaining to Śāktāgamas, that the means prescribed by them is a means that leads both to prosperity and liberation. While discussing the nuanced standpoints of Advaita and Pūrva-mīmāṃsā schools on the concepts of means to prosperity and liberation, this paper aims at studying the logical coherence of the concept of *bhukti-mukti* specifically considering the thoughts from *Tripurārahasya*, one of the prominent texts of Śāktāgama.

## 1 Introduction

In Indian philosophical and theological literature, we encounter assertions emphasizing that prosperity<sup>1</sup> (*bhoga*) and actions leading to pros-

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1 *Bhoga*, in its simplest form, means enjoyment. The word *bhukti/bhoga* emerges from the root *bhuj* (*bhujyate 'sau iti*). *Bhoga* is used in different ways in various contexts in Indian philosophy and theology. It is used to refer to the experience of both pleasure and pain (*sukhaduḥkḥādyanubhava*) and also to refer to worldly enjoyment (*sukha*). For these meanings of *bhoga*, see the lexicon entry in Vācaspatyaṃ for the word *bhoga* in Tarkavachaspati 1873, 4805 or in the link <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/csl-apidev/servepdf.php?dict=vcp&page=4705> (accessed December 15, 2023).