

# Sanskrit Knowledge Systems on the Eve of Colonialism (Panel Abstract)

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This panel continues the exploration of problems concerning the conceptual structure and social context of Sanskrit knowledge from roughly 1550 to 1750. The shared premise of the work of scholars presenting papers in this panel is that this period witnessed a special flowering of scholarship in the Sanskrit medium that continued until the establishment of British colonial power. The indigenous intellectual developments of this time have been occluded partly by the grandeur of the Mughal spectacle which dominates historical writing on this period, and partly by an implicit fundamentalist view of Sanskrit as a key to earlier periods of Indian cultural life.

Little research has been specifically devoted to the intellectual history of this period, in spite of the fact that historical sources exist in abundance, and that the period produced exceptionally interesting scholarly movements which in some ways contributed to the construction of aspects of Indian modernity, in spite of having themselves disappeared in the face of the establishment of European models of education and scholarship.

The papers of Preisendanz (Vienna) and Ganeri (Liverpool) focus on the work of formal logicians, their schools, goals, and self-images as scholars. Bronkhorst (Lausanne) discusses the work of a small but hugely important group of grammarians who for some reason opened up lines of enquiry into the philosophy and metaphysics of language which had been dead for over a millennium. Wujastyk (London) examines the social background and motivations of innovative writers on medicine science at the end of the seventeenth century.