

Editor's Preface and Acknowledgements

When *Beyond Orientalism* was published in 1997¹ in order to highlight Wilhelm Halbfass's fundamental contribution to our understanding of Indian philosophy and Indian intellectual history in general as well as the long history of intellectual encounter and exchange between India and the West, no one imagined that the life and work of this great Indologist–philosopher would come to a sudden end only three years later. At the time of publication, Halbfass was returning to his earlier historical–philosophical studies on the notion of *karman* and rebirth in Indian religious and philosophical thought, an area that had held his interest since the late 1970s.² He planned to present the gist of his research results and his overall interpretation of the historical development and implications of these notions to the general, German-reading audience, and then to prepare a more extensive English-language monograph replete with annotation and detailed discussion. *Karma und Wiedergeburt im indischen Denken* (Kreuzlingen 2000) came to be Halbfass's last major publication. The admirably wide range of sources used and their insightful analysis and interpretation lead us to surmise that the follow-up volume would have been magisterial, and might even have become a second *India and Europe*; unfortunately, it was not destined to be written.

In July 2000, some months after Halbfass's demise, Minoru Hara – who had been a contributor to *Beyond Orientalism* – urged Eli Franco and me to edit a Halbfass Commemoration Volume because no other initiative had been taken by then. At this time Professor Hara himself was engaged in editing volumes in commemoration of two other great scholars, D.H.H. Ingalls (together with David Pingree) and J.W. de Jong (together with Henk Bodewitz), who had been his teacher and mentor respectively; it is sad to note that in the meantime one of his co-editors, who also contributed to the present volume, has passed away – David Pingree, another luminary in Indian Studies, as have our contributors John Clayton, who is greatly missed in Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Peter Gaeffke, professor emeritus of Modern Indian Literature. Although we felt that it would be more appropriate for the task to be undertaken in the country where Halbfass had pursued his academic career for more than a quarter of a century or in his native Germany, we gladly complied with the request of our respected senior colleague. Indeed, Halbfass had had good and close relations with Vienna Indology; he was a Visiting Professor at the former Institute for Indology of the University of Vienna in 1994, participated in several symposia organized there and at the Austrian Academy of Sciences by Gerhard Oberhammer,³ and published a number of seminal papers in the

¹ Cf. Eli Franco and Karin Preisendanz (eds.), *Beyond Orientalism: The Work of Wilhelm Halbfass and its Impact on Indian and Cross-Cultural Studies*, Amsterdam/Atlanta 1997. An Indian reprint by Motilal Banarsidass is forthcoming.

² Cf. his fascinating “Karma, *Apūrva* and ‘Natural’ Causes: Observations on the Growth and Limits of the Theory of *Samsāra*,” in: Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty (ed.), *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London 1980, pp. 268-302. The present editor was fortunate to be a student in his lecture class on *karman* and rebirth when Halbfass was Visiting Professor at the University of Hamburg in 1981/1982; in this class, he presented a first sketch, or blue-print, of what would later become *Karma und Wiedergeburt*.

³ “Epiphanie des Heils: Zur Heilsgegenwart in indischer und christlicher Religion” (1981), “Beiträge zur Hermeneutik indischer und abendländischer Religionstraditionen” (1988), “Im Tod gewinnt der Mensch sein Selbst” (1992), and “Raum-zeitliche Vermittlung der Transzendenz” (1996). Halbfass was also scheduled to participate in the symposium “Mythisierung der Transzendenz als Entwurf ihrer Erfahrung” in September 2000 (cf. the unspecific reference in Helga Halbfass, „Dedicato a Wilhelm Halbfass,“ in: Federico Squarcini [ed.],

“Archiv für indische Philosophie” (“Archive for Indian Philosophy”) of the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens / Vienna Journal of South Asian Studies* and in the Vienna series *Publications of the De Nobili Research Library*, both edited by Oberhammer. In 1961/1962, when Erich Frauwallner was teaching a small circle of students who would later on become well-known and influential scholars in the areas of Indian philosophy and Buddhist Studies (Lambert Schmithausen, Ernst Steinkellner and Tilmann Vetter), Halbfass even spent one semester as a student at the Institute.⁴

Following our invitation to contribute to the present volume in early 2001, there was an overwhelming response from colleagues all over the world. Eli Franco and I started our joint editorial work later the same year when the first papers began to arrive; however, due to changing circumstances implying *inter alia* separate places of work and residence, it was decided in 2003 that I would continue the work alone and Eli Franco would provide the foreword. The following year, the last papers were submitted, bringing the total number of contributions by colleagues, students, former teachers and fellow students, and friends to 48. Many others who were invited but not in a position to participate in this project expressed their high esteem for Wilhelm Halbfass and his work.

In the initial phase of the project, the editorial ground work for a considerable number of papers was done by Philipp Kubisch. After an unfortunate hiatus of more than half a year, Christian Ferstl took over the job of editorial assistant, which he performed in an exemplary manner. I would like to take the opportunity to thank him for his devotion, carefulness, creative expertise, unflagging enthusiasm and endless patience with authors and editor alike. I am also greatly indebted to my colleague Dr. Anne MacDonald who was so kind to do the final check in matters of English style and clarity of expression for all contributions written by authors who are not native speakers of English after the substantial editing on my part had been completed. Thanks to her competence and great sensitivity, and to the friendly cooperation of the authors, the accessibility of these contributions to non-specialist readers has been greatly improved. Furthermore, I would like to thank all contributors for their invaluable cooperation and patience, and Eli Franco for contributing the insightful foreword to the present volume. Finally, I want to express my gratefulness to my esteemed senior colleague Ernst Steinkellner for submitting the present volume for publication by the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, and to the Austrian Academy of Sciences for accepting it in its series *Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens (Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse)*. Thanks to the efforts of George Cardona and Aditya Behl, part of the printing costs was covered by the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, School of Arts and Sciences. A further subsidy was kindly granted by the association “Sammlung De Nobili – Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Indologie und Religionsforschung,” Vienna.

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Verso l'India Oltre l'India: Scritti e ricerche sulle tradizioni intellettuali sudasiatiche, Milano 2002, pp. 13-14, at p. 14).

⁴ According to the course calendar of the University of Vienna for the winter semester of 1961/1962, Frauwallner taught the following courses: “Leichte Sanskrittexte” (easy readings in Sanskrit), “indische Literaturen” (Indian *belles lettres*), “Texte zur Erkenntnislehre der Mīmāṃsā” (textual sources on Mīmāṃsā epistemology), and “Übungen an philosophischen Texten” (hermeneutical practices on the basis of philosophical texts). Another, more senior visitor at the time, who participated in Frauwallner’s classes, was Shozen Kumoi.