

Foreword

Harald Wiese's book on "Sanskrit as an Indo-European Language" fills an urgent need in the field of Sanskrit-related materials. While scholarly books on this topic can indeed be found, his book is the first one to take the didactic challenges and opportunities seriously.

I have been teaching courses in Spoken Sanskrit for many years. Part of the success story behind Spoken Sanskrit courses lies in the pattern drill employed in the class room. The students learn by heart the perfect past participles like *gata*, *labdha*, *ūḍha*, and others. These and many other, often bewildering forms, just get into their ears and are quickly memorized without too much pain and effort. And that is fine, I think, because learning should be *kaṇṭhastha* (based in the throat, learned by heart) to a large extent.

Learning should also be *buddhistha*, an intellectual affair. Students like to understand the forms they are learning. And here, Harald Wiese's book is extremely useful. He explains how and why *gata* and *ūḍha* employ the zero grade of the verbal roots *gam* and *vah*, respectively. And why the suffix *ta* (clearly seen in *gata*) is also present in both *labdha* and *ūḍha*. Indeed, *ūḍha* is the perfectly regular past perfect participle of *vah*! This book deals with words and grammatical forms from an Indo-European point of view. The author explains certain words, their sound laws, sound changes, word derivation and their etymology with much clarity. This not only helps us to understand Sanskrit better but also to understand our mother tongues and their connection with Sanskrit with much clarity.

To give an example, the Sanskrit root *ad* (to eat) is historically related to both English *eat* and German *essen*. There are many such exciting examples which Wiese explains in his book in detail. I am tempted to give another example here that even certain grammar rules are also similar in Sanskrit and in German languages. For example in the case of remembering we use accusative case and genitive case in Sanskrit, and German retains the same as well. "I remember my mother" in Sanskrit would be "ahaṃ mātaraṃ (Acc.)/mātuḥ (Gen.) smarāmi" and in German we may say "Ich erinnere mich an meine Mutter (Acc.)" or "Ich denke an meine Mutter (Acc.)" or "Ich erinnere mich meiner Mutter (Gen.)".

The way Wiese explains certain topics such as word formation, Sandhi rules, rules about visarga, thematic and athematic verbal conjugations, rules on declensions, root nouns, desiderative, gerundive and other forms with much clarity, it will certainly be a great help for the students of Sanskrit and Linguistics to master Sanskrit.

I think that learning needs to bring pattern drill and intellect together and thus it should be both *kaṇṭhastha* and *buddhistha*. The Indo-European perspective brings exciting intellectual insights to students. Insights that may go unnoticed to students all over the world. I am sure this book will help the students of Sanskrit as well as linguistics (both Indian and European) to understand Sanskrit and some other European languages and their back-

Foreword

ground better and will be an asset especially for the Sanskrit learners. Spoken Sanskrit and Sanskrit as an Indo-European Language seem perfect complements to me. That is why I highly recommend Harald Wiese's wonderful book and congratulate him for his hard and valuable work.

Sadananda Das

Institute of Indology and Central Asian Studies, Leipzig University, Germany