

About Martin Gansten

I began to teach myself Sanskrit in 1982 at the age of thirteen, using Michael Coulson's primer and Whitney's grammar, and within a few years became reasonably proficient. My interest in Indian forms of thought and religion eventually led me to academia, reading Indology and Sanskrit at Stockholm University (1994–96) followed by History of Religions at Lund University (MA 1998). In addition to Sanskrit, in which I am now fairly fluent – reading it, writing it, conversing in it at a pinch – I read some Pali, medieval Latin and Koine Greek, especially astrological sources. My doctoral thesis (2003) combined the area of Indic religions with that of astrology in a study of South Indian *nāḍi* divination, based partly on ethnographic methods but chiefly on Sanskrit texts apparently originating in Kerala and dating to the 18th and 19th centuries. In 2010 I was made *docent* in History of Religions at Lund.

My research, which is historical and philological in a broad sense, has continued to revolve around these two areas: on the one hand, the indigenous religions of India – in particular, classical and modern Hinduism – and on the other, the intercultural transmission and development of horoscopic astrology. The latter field of research, occupying the borderland between the historiographies of science and religion, is of immense importance for global intellectual history but has only recently begun to come into its own. Within that field I have tried to move beyond the common discourse of 'western esotericism' to include the much-neglected contributions of South Asia and a plurality of intellectual contexts.

My latest major research project, undertaken jointly with Professor Olle Qvarnström and entitled *The Hindu Reception of Perso-Arabic Traditions of Knowledge and the Role of Jainism in Cultural Transmission*, was funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. It recently resulted in the publication of my edition/translation of *The Jewel of Annual Astrology*, an encyclopaedic seventeenth-century work on Tājika (Sanskritized Perso-Arabic) astrology, available under Open Access [here](#).

Teaching and outreach

I have been a university teacher since 1998 (senior lecturer since 2004), primarily in History of Religions, which I have taught for many years at Lund University and for shorter periods of time at other institutions, including Stockholm University and Linnæus University. I also taught Indology, primarily Sanskrit at all levels, for several years at the University of Copenhagen.

From 1998 to 2007 I was responsible for developing and teaching a number of courses at Lund University relating to religion and culture in South Asia, including introductory courses on *Astrology and Divination in Indic Religions*; *The Bhagavad-gītā*; *Indian Philosophy*; *Jainism, Non-violence and Vegetarianism*; *Tantra and Tantrism*; *Western Buddhism*; and *Yoga and Meditation in Indic Religions*. During this period I also succeeded in briefly reintroducing the teaching of Sanskrit, which had not been taught at Lund since the 1960s. I was one of the initiators of the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), serving on its board from 2001 to 2006.

In addition to teaching, I occasionally take part in media broadcasts designed to communicate scholarly perspectives on Indic knowledge systems and religions, and/or the history of astrology, to the general public; some samples are found at the bottom of this page. In 2001, I published an annotated Sanskrit-to-Swedish translation of the Bhagavadgītā (the first such translation since 1908), and in 2005, the first ever direct translation of the early Upaniṣads into Swedish (with Dr Måns Broo), both of which were very well received