

SIEGFRIED LIENHARD



REPORT ON THE TENTH WORLD SANSKRIT CONFERENCE

The Xth World Sanskrit Conference (WSC) took place in Bangalore, India, from January 3-9, 1997. It was attended by about 1000 scholars from all over the world. The venue of the conference was the Taralabalu Kendra, an important Centre for the promotion of the Indian cultural heritage and academic research, situated in the Rabindranath Tagore Nagar area of the capital or Karnataka. It was here and in the neighbouring educational institutions that all the sessions were held. The Director of the Tarabalabalu Kendra and Honorary President of the Conference, Dr. Shivamurthy Swamiji, and his staff spared no pain to facilitate the work of the Conference and to render the numerous meetings pleasant as well as successful. It was characteristic of the extremely generous atmosphere of the Bangalore venue that, after each morning or afternoon session, lunch or dinner respectively was offered free of charge to all participants, including their spouses, in the large dining hall of the Kendra.

The subject areas of the Conference had been classified into twenty sections, namely (1) Agamas and Tantras, (2) Art, Architecture and Archaeology, (3) Buddhist Studies, (4) Classical Sanskrit Literature, (5) Dharma Shastra and Artha Shastra, (6) Epics and Puranas, (7) Hindu Studies, (8) Jaina Studies, (9) Manuscripts and Historical Resources, (10) Modern Sanskrit Literature, (11) Music and Performing Arts, (12) Philosophy, (13) Poetics and Aesthetics, (14) Sanskrit and Regional Languages, (15) Sanskrit

Scientific Literature, (16) Sanskrit Medical Literature, (17) Sanskrit and the Environment, (18) Sanskrit and Computers, (19) Veda and Vedangas and, finally, (20) Vyakarana and Linguistics. In addition to these sections, there were three special panels devoted to (1) Contributions of Karnataka to Sanskrit Literature, (2) Sanskrit and Computing and (3) Sanskrit and Agriculture as well as a Sanskrit-Parishad which met almost every evening. Dr.K.K.Mishra, the Director or the Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan in Delhi, kindly agreed to publish the numerous papers presented.

Evenings were free but various cultural programmes with Indian music, Indian dance and theatre performances, most skilfully executed by students of the Taralabalu Kendra, were arranged by the local organization committee on the evenings of January 4th, 5th, 7th and 8th. On January 6th, sightseeing tours were organized to visit (1) the City of Bangalore, (2) Sravanabelagola-Belur-Halebid, (3) Tirupati or (4) Mysore-Srirangapatnam.

After the registration of the participants and a get-together followed by dinner in the Taralabalu Kendra on the first conference day, the Xth World Sanskrit Conference was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister of India, Deve Gowda, in the Vidhana Soudha, the Karnataka State Legislature building. On the evening preceding the inauguration a book exhibition was opened at which the participants were able to become acquainted with new publications.

The Board and the General Body, that is to say, Board, Consultative Committee and individual members, of the IASS were called to two meetings. The meeting of the Board took place in the late afternoon of January, 4th, the joint meeting of the Board and the General Body in the afternoon of January, 7th. The main issues of these two meetings were the modification of § 13 of the Statute of the IASS, the date and the place of the XIth World Sanskrit Conference and, thirdly, a discussion of various possibilities to encrease IASS membership.

The Valedictory Ceremony was held on January 8th, 6:00 p.m. After the Honorary President of the Conference, Dr.Shivamurthy Swamiji, had presented garlands to distinguished guests, the Board Members, Members of the Consultative Committee and some other delegates, Dr. K.P.A.Menon, Former Defence Secretary, Government

of India, distributed a number of recent Indian publications. The list of speakers was long. The President of the IASS, Prof. R.K.Sharma, commented on the Bangalore Conference. Profs. A.N. Aklujkar (Canada), J.Bronkhorst (Switzerland), (Mrs.) T.S.Rukmani (Canada) and P.Bilimoria (Australia) delivered short speeches, welcoming the initiative of the local organizers in holding the meeting, while Dr.D.Wujastyk (England) read out the resolutions passed during the Conference. The Secretary General, Prof.S.Lienhard (Sweden), made some remarks on the work of the IASS and also announced to the assembly that the XIth World Sanskrit Conference will be held in Turin, Italy, in the year 2000. The ceremony was concluded by a presidential address by Dr.Shivamurthy Swamiji, a valedictory address by H.E.Shri Kurshid Alam Khan, Governor, Karnataka, and a vote of thanks expressed by Prof. Shrinivasa Rao, the Executive Secretary of the Bangalore Conference.