

IIAS Fellowship Programme

In the spotlight

The International Institute for Asian Studies annually hosts a large number of visiting researchers (affiliated fellows) who come to Leiden to work on their own individual research project. In addition, IIAS also facilitates the teaching and research by various professorial fellows as part of agreements with Dutch universities, foreign ministries and funding organisations. Meet our fellows at www.iias.asia/fellows



Iris Farkhondeh

University Sorbonne
Nouvelle – Paris 3, France

Editing a Sanskrit satire
in sunny Leiden

My research in Leiden centres on the *Samayamātrkā*, a satirical work composed by the 11th century Kashmirian author Kṣemendra. In this satire, Kṣemendra tells us how a cunning matron teaches a young courtesan the tricks of the trade. One gets the impression that the men who surround them are the main subjects of the satire, whereas the ways of the matron and the courtesan somehow command admiration. However, the two characters are definitely depicted as con-artists.

In general, the main topics of Kṣemendra's different satires are bigotry or feigned morality, affectedness, overzealousness and, more in general, hypocrisy. However, more often than not, it seems that under Kṣemendra's pen, literary pleasure has the upper hand on the desire to edify. Kṣemendra's Sanskrit is both difficult and fun to read. The author frequently plays with the polysemy of words. The text is far from easy and still riddled with uncertain readings. I translated the whole *Samayamātrkā* into French as an appendix to my dissertation on 'the representation of female characters in the Sanskrit literature of Kashmir, 8th-12th centuries' (defended in November 2017 at University Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3).

During my stay in Leiden as a Gonda fellow with IIAS, I have been working on a critical edition of the *Samayamātrkā* that I am preparing on the basis of the *Śāradā* manuscript (preserved in the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute) and of manu-scripts of the Stein Collection (Oxford's Bodleian Library), also considering the readings of the two existing editions of the text.

I have spent most of my time here in the Asian Library, which somehow has become my second home in Leiden, or maybe, even my first. With the rich Indological collection, inherited from the Kern Institute, its extended opening hours, and its unobstructed view of the gorgeous, lively skies of the Netherlands, the Asian Library is indeed an ideal place for an Indologist to take up residence, even on Sundays, if one's in the mood.

After my fellowship in Leiden, I will be spending six months at the University of Hamburg as a fellow of the Cluster of Excellence 'Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Studies', where I will work on my new project on *Śāradā* manuscripts. I was already looking forward to reading Sanskrit with Professor Isaacson in

Hamburg. Now that he is the Numata Visiting Professor at Leiden University, I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in his reading rooms – kindly organised here in Leiden by Professor Silk. I am also very pleased that I was in Leiden during the meeting of the 'Skandapurāṇa project'; it was a precious opportunity for me to spend a few hours with Professor Bisschop, Professor Yokochi and Professor Bakker to see how they are working on the edition of this text.

Besides my research, I also practice *Bharatanatyam*. On 12 September, I was very happy to be able to share my love for this Indian classical dance by presenting a dance piece during the '444 Years of Humanities Festivities' in the Leiden *Stadsgehoorzaal* theatre ('City Auditorium'). The very rich museums of the Netherlands, the beauty of the city of Leiden, its contagious *joie de vivre*, and its many cats were all very precious to me and I am already looking forward to coming back! I would like to thank the staff members of IIAS, my colleagues, my friends in Leiden and all the nice people I have met and who have made my stay so pleasant.

IIAS Fellowship possibilities and requirements



Apply for an IIAS fellowship

The International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden, the Netherlands, invites outstanding researchers to apply for an IIAS fellowship to work on a relevant piece of research in the social sciences and humanities.



Combine your IIAS fellowship with two extra months of research in Paris

When applying for an IIAS Fellowship, you have the option of simultaneously submitting an application for an additional two months of research at the Collège d'études mondiales of the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (CEM-FMSH), in Paris, France, immediately after your stay in Leiden.

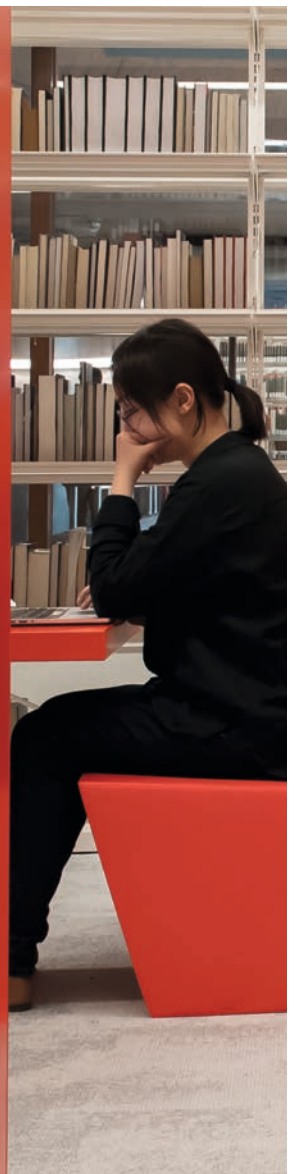
Application deadlines: 1 March & 1 October



Apply for a Gonda fellowship

For promising young Indologists at the post-doctorate level it is possible to apply for funding with the J. Gonda Foundation of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) to spend three to six months doing research at IIAS.

Application deadlines: 1 April & 1 October



Information and application forms:
www.iias.asia/fellowships