

***Mantra* and *dhāraṇī* in the religious traditions of Asia**

The papers collected in this special issue of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* are the outcome of a workshop that I organized for the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr Universität Bochum. The workshop took place on 12–13 April 2012 and focused on the uses and meanings of *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* texts in the religious traditions of Asia. The workshop was part of my research activity while a visiting fellow at Ruhr Universität in the Käte Hamburger Kolleg. I am extremely grateful to everyone at the KHK for their warm welcome and for their generous support of my research. My experience at Bochum was memorable and enriching in every way.

The CERES workshop was attended by scholars from Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands, Greece, France and the United States. This international gathering provided an extraordinary opportunity to explore this little-studied but important genre of religious literature. We are very grateful to Prof. Dr Volkhard Krech for his enthusiastic support of this specialist work and, more especially, for his ability to see its wider theoretical impacts. We are equally appreciative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for supporting the KHK consortium at Ruhr Universität.

I would like to thank the authors whose papers appear in this number for their contributions and, in addition, Prof. Dr Oskar von Hinüber for his comments and guidance. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of Dr Ulrich Pagel and the editorial board at the *Bulletin* for accepting my proposal and agreeing to publish the articles as a set. Elizabeth Gant and Cambridge University Press are to be especially praised for the efficient handling of editorial matters. As always, the British Museum has been unfailing in its support of my research activities. I hope the trust the Museum and my department have placed in me will be paid back, at least in part, by the fascinating studies of collection items that are included in this special number.

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