



Vernacularisation Processes in Early Modern Jain Literature: A Two-Day Workshop

Date: 28th and 29th May 2026

Venue: Massey Room, Balliol College (28th May) Lecture Room 1 and Spalding Room, AMES (29th May)

Speakers: Prof. Eva De Clercq and Prof. Imre Bangha

This workshop, organised under the aegis of CEMS, aims to examine the complex processes of vernacularisation in early modern North India, focusing especially on the crystallisation of new literary registers in the so-called *bhāṣā* languages. We will explore how early vernacular literary cultures emerged from and transformed the linguistic and prosodic traditions of earlier texts. Central themes include the identification of prosodic, linguistic, and literary continuities and innovations in early texts, and the social and institutional contexts in which these new registers took shape. Of particular interest is the role of Jain monastic communities in authorising, producing, and disseminating vernacular literature, and their impact on shaping readerships and regional literary ecologies.

The workshop will be led by Prof. Eva De Clercq (Ghent University) and Prof. Imre Bangha (University of Oxford).

The workshop will focus on close readings of Jain texts in Sanskrit, Apabhramsha and *bhasha*. Prof. De Clercq will read Jain retellings of the Mahabharata in three languages, namely—Yasahkīrti's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Apabhramsha), Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Sanskrit) and Bulakidās *Bhārata-bhāṣā / Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Classical Hindi). Prof. Bangha on the other hand, will read the *Jñānapañcamī-śopāī* composed in Madhyadeshi. Together, close readings of these texts will lead to discussions on the linguistic, literary and cultural innovations that represent the wider historical process of vernacularisation.

To further discuss Jain literary production and the shifting dynamic between cosmopolitan and regional textual cultures, the close reading sessions will be accompanied by seminar talks by the speakers on the first day of the workshop. These talks will engage with wider questions of South Asian literary history and hold a lens to the role of Jain monastic and lay communities as mediators and authorities in vernacularisation in early modern north India.

Schedule

Thursday, 28th May 2026

Venue: Massey Room

9:30–11:00 : Reading Session 1

Prof. Eva De Clercq

Yaśahkīrti's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Apabhramśa)

11:15-12:45 : Reading Session 2

Prof. Imre Bangha

The *Jñānapañcamī-copāī*

Lunch Break

2:00-3:15: Reading Session 3

Prof. Eva De Clercq

Śubhacandra's *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Sanskrit)

Seminar Talks

4:00: Prof. Eva De Clercq: Vernacular Transcreations of the Mahabharata: Jain Retellings in Sanskrit, Apabhramsha and Classical Hindi

5:00: Prof. Imre Bangha: The *Jñānapañcamī-copāī* (1366) in Madhyadeshi, the earliest New Indo-Aryan literary idiom in the 'Hindi Belt'

Friday, 29th May 2026

Venue: Lecture Room 1, AMES

9:30-11:00: Reading Session 4

Prof. Imre Bangha

The *Jñānapañcamī-copāī*

11:15-12:45: Reading Session 5

Prof. Eva De Clercq

Bulakidās' *Bhārata-bhāṣā* / *Pāṇḍavapurāṇa* (Classical Hindi)

2:00-3:30: Reading Session 6

Prof. Imre Bangha

The *Jñānapañcamī-copāī*

Venue: Spalding Room, AMES