SHASTRIC TRADITIONS IN INDIAN ARTS

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The idea of Śāstra in traditional India

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> anekasaṃśayocchedi parokṣār-
> thasya darśakam/
> sarvasya locanaṃ śāstram
> yasya nāsty andha eva saḥ//
> (Clearing up all uncertain-
> ties and revealing the
> imperceptible, *śāstra* is the
> all-seeing eye - to lack it
> is to be truly blind.)
> --Sanskrit proverb

Of the keywords for our comprehension and appreciation of Indian cultural and intellectual history, few have the importance of *śāstra*. And like any such keyword - *dharma* would be another important example - *śāstra* is multivalent. Its precise scope is variously understood in the tradition itself. There are early texts that, while perhaps not explicitly named *śāstra*, definitely bear the stamp of the classical genre, and there are later texts that may be excluded from the genre by the learned tradition at the same time as they are popularly referred to as *śāstra*. In a sense, then, our definition and under-standing of the idea of *śāstra* must be developed partly in dependence on the Indian tra-dition, and partly in defiance of it.

Etymologically, *śāstra* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *śās*, to teach or instruct. Traditional etymologies, such as that of Candrakīrti at the beginning of his commentary on the *Kārikās* of Nāgārjuna - "*śāstra* is so called because it 'chastises' [*śās*] all one's inimical impurities and 'saves' [*tra*] one from evil rebirth" - provide us with an index of the cultural authority and centrality of the genre, if at the expense of linguistic veracity.

We obtain our first intimations of what *śāstra* signifies generically from the gram-matical tradition. There the word is frequently employed in the sense of "rule," and Patañjali explicitly states that what *śāstra* effects in the realm of linguistic behavior is rule-governance, the regulating and constraining of usage.[1]

It is not until the medieval period that we are provided with a comprehensive defini-tion of *śāstra*. The Vedic exegetical discipline, Mīmāṃsā, as part of its project of argu-ing out and defending the unique character of authoritative Brahmanical texts, was com-pelled to specify the nature and scope of *śāstra*. The great 7th century Mīmāṃsaka,

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[1] Cf. for example *Kāśikāvṛtti* on 1.2.43, where *śāstra* = "rule"; also *Mahābhāṣya* 6.1.135 *vārt.* 4 for the working definition of the term.

Kumārilabhatta, defines it thus: "Śāstra is that which teaches people what they should and should not do. It does this by means of eternal words or those made by men."[2]

Combining the evidence provided by etymology, the usage of the grammatical tradition, and the Mīmāṃsā definition, we may provisionally conclude that śāstra was thought of generally as a verbal codification of rules, whether of divine or human provenance, for the positive and negative regulation of particular cultural practices.[3]

Before discussing the texts that are expressly included in the genre śāstra, or that should be, I want to call particular attention to one of its basic characteristics that may not be sufficiently appreciated. I am referring to what we may call śāstra's "textuality", in the widest sense of the word. However disputed or indeterminate the boundary lines of the term śāstra may be - and we shall find some uncertainty in the Indian scholarly tradition itself as to precisely how far they are to be extended - there should be no doubt that the codified rules śāstra provides must, axiomatically, be organized into a "text". To assert this is not to require a written text, produced and received by literates, for as we shall see the existence of the fact and of the idea of śāstra far antedates the rise of literacy in Sanskritic India (c. 4th century B.C.?). Śāstra may well be oral, but not all cultural knowledge, whether oral or not, merits the designation śāstra.

It may be a little difficult to specify precisely wherein the difference here lies. For Sanskritic India, at least, what counts as "authentic" knowledge in any discipline came to be virtually co-terminus with shastric knowledge. This view in embryonic form is as old as the Chāndogya Upaniṣad[4] and continues throughout the medieval period. Kumārila, for example, in discussing the knowledge of language argues that "only those who know the [grammatical] śāstra, who seek the full holy merit of acts punctiliously performed, can distinguish [solecisms], as experts can select out a counterfeit coin. The knowledge of one trained [in the śāstras] is far 'stronger' than that of one who isn't; the latter can easily be confuted".[5]

Such shastric material that is able to produce "authentic" knowledge of any sort (technical and artisanal no less than religious and philosophical) has a relatively formalized and public character, which may be distinguished from other sorts of knowledge of a more individual and localized sort. Of course, this is always going to be a matter of

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[2] Ślokavārttika (ed. Varanasi: Tārā Press, 1978), p. 288.

[3] See my 'The Theory of Practice and the Practice of Theory in Indian Intellectual History' (JAOS 105 [1986], p. 499-519) for references and a fuller discussion of several of the ideas in the present essay.

[4] 1.1.10; compare my remarks in 'The Theory of Practice', p. 504.

[5] Tantravārttika (Poona: Ānandāśrama Press, 1970), Vol. I, p. 144.4-6. Unless I misunderstand, this appears to contradict Kumārila's earlier statement that "the knowledge of the distinction between correct and incorrect usage is clearly a result of perception, as is the [knowledge of] the distinction between [things in the world] like trees" (Tantravārttika, Vol. I, p. 79.21-22). But trees are objectively different, not better or worse, like human acts; only śāstra provides norms allowing us to distinguish among the latter.

degree. Yet there is an unmistakable aspect - an aspect constitutive of the genre - of systematicity, stability, and repetition to be found in the information presented by the various shastric texts that seems to attest - and this is essential - to their adoption, or potential adoption (or mere pretension of adoption) as widely accepted normative models.

The earliest shastric works, those which conform substantively to the later definitions, are the *Vedāngas*, the "limbs" of the Vedas (c. 600-300 B.C.). These comprise six ancillary disciplines that developed out of the perceived need to preserve and understand obsolescent Vedic texts and to enact their complex rites: grammar, prosody, phonetics, etymology, astronomy, and sacrificial liturgy. They are in the first instance descriptive and their subject matter sacred. But both these features are modulated in the *Vedānga* texts themselves in ways crucial for the later development of *śāstra*. Several of these texts (grammar and prosody most noticeably) unexpectedly comprise a considerable or even preponderant amount of *laukika* (non-sacred, worldly) material. Their mode of exposition, moreover, easily and perhaps inevitably takes on an injunctive, prescriptive aspect. These two features - the extension of discursive analysis to "worldly" culture and the inherently nomothetic character of presentation - become hallmarks of the classical genre.

The desire to codify and "textualize" important cultural knowledge, regardless of whether the "text" be committed to writing, is perhaps common to all societies to some degree. In India this natural tendency may have been stimulated by the high-culture tradition associated with Vedic learning and exemplified by the *Vedāngas* (and even extrapolated from or patterned after the codification of the all-important sacred rituals). What is certain is that the textualizing impulse intensified in the post-Vedic period and the shastric organization of cultural knowledge came to be extended to a wide variety of areas of human activity. The most critical of these areas in the view of the Indian tradition itself - those comprised under the term *trivarga* (the "triad"), namely, *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, or the realms of social/legal, economic/political, and sexual/aesthetic activity - were provided with shastric codes at a relatively early date. The *dharmaśāstras* of the classical period acquired their distinctive cast as early as the 3rd or 2nd century B.C., the *Arthaśāstra* and *Kāmaśāstra* following successively and through various stages of development over the next three or four centuries.

Since the *trivarga* as an episteme came to be viewed as a comprehensive articulation of human life,[6] it might be suggested that the early *śāstras* devoted to its three components provided the conceptual justification and model that would make possible the proliferation of the specialized shastric texts of the classical and medieval periods. In other words, if the *trivarga* incorporates all domains of human life, and if it is appropriate and necessary to textualize rules for this triad - something that clearly was acknowledged, as we can see from the case of *dharma*, the only source of which was explicitly held to be

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[6] The most recent discussion is that of Charles Malamoud, 'On the Rhetoric and Semantics of puruṣārtha' (in *Way of Life ... Essays in Honour of Louis Dumont* ed. T.N. Madan [New Delhi: Vikas, 1982], pp. 33-54.

the Veda, i.e., to be[7] - then anything left unexamined in the *śāstras* pertaining to its three principal components could justifiably claim comparable treatment in separate, supplementary treatises.

This line of argument is substantially reflected in the popular, mythical accounts of the origins of *śāstra*. A relatively early one is found in the *Mahābhārata* (ed. crit. 12.59.13ff.): In order to establish cultural order (*dharma*), the god Brahmā "composed a work of one hundred thousand chapters, arising from his own mind, in which *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* were described [vs. 29]; . . . the triple *Veda*, philosophy [*ānvīkṣikī*], economy, political science, and many other sciences were set forth there" (vs. 33). Included in Brahmā's text were all manner of political practices (vss. 34-70), the *dharmas* of country, sub-caste, and family, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* expositions of witchcraft, magic, yoga, the application of poisons, history, the *Upavedas* [see below], and logic in its entirety (vss. 71-82). In fact, whatever was able to be formulated in language (*vacogatam*) was all contained in it (vs. 84). Śiva took that vast *śāstra* of Brahmā's and, in view of the brevity of human life, abridged it into ten thousand chapters; Indra abridged it further to five thousand chapters; Bṛhaspati to three thousand; Kāvya [= Śukra] to one thousand (vss. 86-91). With the first legitimate king, Vainya, that *śāstra* then took refuge (vs. 106), and he was ever protected by it (vs. 131).

Whatever may be the support such mythic representations - which crop up again and again, in one form or another, in a wide variety of epic, classical, and medieval epic texts - provide for the genetic explanation of the proliferation of *śāstra* offered above, they thematize several key components of the dominant Sanskrit conceptualization of cultural production worth noting. Cultural knowledge is transcendent in origin,[8] and its authority is therefore unimpeachable. Since this knowledge is always already revealed to human beings via *śāstra* their mastery of the practices inscribed therein is a function of conformity to the pre-existent paradigm. Thus, the process of amelioration conceived of as "progress" in the post- Enlightenment West is here instead "regression" to the normative divine model; what is there viewed as "discovery" is here in essence nothing but recovery.

Thus the semantic range of the term in much early literature, the genetic history of the expansion of the genre, and the mythic representations of its origins may allow us to reach some tentative conclusions about the characteristics of *śāstra* and its claims to universality. When we turn to the indigenous learned - more precisely, Vaidika - taxonomies of the organization of shastric knowledge, we find that they are founded on principles that presuppose a rather different understanding of the nature and function of *śāstra*.

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[7] See, 'Playing by the rules: Śāstra and Sanskrit literature', in this volume, pp. 301-312.

[8] This representation is very old. Cf. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.4.10: "... from the great Being were breathed forth the Ṛgveda, the Yajurveda, the Sāmaveda, the Atharvaveda, the Histories [*itihāsa*], the Legends [*purāṇa*], the magical Sciences [*vidyā*], the Upaniṣads, the Verses [*śloka*], the Sūtras, the Explanations [*anuvyākhyāna*] and Commentaries [*vyākhyāna*]. From it, to be sure, have all these been breathed forth."

In addition to what we saw to be the denotation of *śāstra* in the early literature, we find the term used elsewhere as a simple synonym of "Veda." This seems to be an ancient meaning of the term, preserved in the classical period above all in the Pūrva- and Uttaramīmāmsā disciplines.[9] As I remark elsewhere, the fact that a single signifier is shared in two quite disparate domains ("rule" or "book of rules" on the one hand and "revelation" on the other), testifies to a important convergence between them that can be observed already in the mythic representations.[10] But, however far this usage derives from the larger, implied acceptation of "Veda" as knowledge *tout court* (its radical signification), the association of *śāstra* with Veda provided for a rather narrower - sometimes jealously narrow - conception of the scope and purpose of *śāstra*.

In contrast to what I have suggested was the dominant view that shastric codification was appropriate and indeed necessary for all cultural knowledge and practices, this narrower conception would in essence restrict it to areas of sacred activity (*adṛṣṭārtha*), excluding the worldly (*dṛṣṭārtha*). The distinction between these two realms is addressed in greater detail elsewhere in this volume,[11] yet it requires notice here in as much as it has some bearing on one relatively early categorization of shastric knowledge known as the *vidyāsthānas*.

The term *vidyāsthāna* (attested at least from the time of the *Nirukta*, 1.15) refers, according to the oldest formulations, to fourteen "branches of knowledge" provided with shastric textual organization: the Vedas, the six *Vedāṅgas*, Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāmsā, and Dharmaśāstra.[12] What appears to be the first extended analysis of the *vidyāsthānas* is offered by the 9th century Kashmiri logician Jayantabhaṭṭa in the introduction to his *Nyāyamañjarī*:[13]

> People who act with deliberation and intention in this world and wish to ful-
> fil the principal goals of life [*puruṣārtha*] realize they cannot do so without
> attaining the means of achieving them, and so they proceed first to compre-
> hend these means. Now, the nature of the principal life-goals is two-fold,

9   See for example, *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.3, where *brahma* is described as *śāstrayoni*, "that, the source of our knowledge of which is *śāstra*" (that is, the Vedas and in particular the *Upaniṣads*). Frequent in the *Pūrvamīmāmsāsūtra* (4.1.3, 6.2.17-18, etc.).

10   Compare, 'The Theory of Practice', p. 502.

11   See, 'Playing by the rules: Śāstra and Sanskrit literature', in this volume, pp. 301-312.

12   See *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.3; cf. also P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962-1975), Vol. 2, pp. 354 ff.; Vol. 5, pp. 820, 926 and n. 1478). From the viewpoint of orthodox Brahmanism, heterodox texts cannot qualify for the title *śāstra*. For Mīmāmsakas like Kumārila "heterodox" texts (which comprise not only the works of Buddhism and Jainism but also Sāmkhya, Yoga, Pāñcarātra, and Pāśupata), with very few exceptions stand altogether in contradiction to the entire fourteen *vidyāsthānas* (*Tantravārttika* Vol. I, pp. 112.18-19, 113.24-25; see also 164.10, 166.19).

13   Ed. Gaurinath Sastri (Varanasi: Sampūrnāndasamskrtaviśvavidyālaya, 1982-1984), vol. 1, pp. 6-10 (my translation). For reasons of space I reluctantly abbreviate Jayanta's important discussion.

being either worldly or transcendent [*dṛṣṭādṛṣṭa*]. It is simple gratification that leads one to fulfil worldly goals: one proceeds, indifferent to *śāstra*, to such acts as eating and the like; and it is through immemorial custom and empirical experiment [*anvayavyatireka*] that we attain the means to such ends. No shastric injunction, for example, need tell us that "One must bathe if dirty," or "One must eat if hungry". But with respect to transcendent goals such as reaching heaven or attaining release from transmigration, there is nothing able to enlighten us other than *śāstra*, in as much as a man's vision is naturally occluded by ignorance and spiritual blindness. . . .

This *śāstra* is fourteeen-fold, what the learned call the fourteeen *vidyāsthānas*. These consist of A) The four Vedas . . . which in their very nature and self-evidently teach the means of attaining the life-goals. . . . B) The *smṛtiśāstra* composed by Manu and so on [i.e., the *dharmaśāstra*] . . . which leads to the fulfilment of life-goals even in those rites prescribed without any explicit enunciation of such goals. This is so because the point of *śāstra* is ultimately and necessarily the attainment of life-goals. C) History and legend [which together form one *vidyāsthāna*]. . . . D) The six *Vedāṅgas*. . . . E) *Mīmāṃsā* . . . and *Nyāya*[14] [which form two, having different spheres of application, as do all the "sciences", cf. p, 10 line 4]. . . .

The application of the term "*vidyāsthāna-*" to these fourteen *śāstras* is justified by the fact of their revealing the means of achieving the life-goals. They are "bases" or "methods" [-*sthāna*] of "knowing" or "cognizing [*vidyā-*] the means of attaining the life-goals. . . .

[Another traditional formulation comprises only four sciences, i.e.] "Logic [*ānvīkṣikī*], the three Vedas, economics, [*vārttā*] and political science [*daṇḍanīti*; cf. *ArthŚā*]. 1.2.11.[15] But there is no contradiction between the formulation of now four, now fourteen "sciences" [*vidyā*]. Economics and political scien·e, which have exclusively worldly purposes, cannot properly be included in a category of sciences concerned with *universal* life-goals [rather than the goals specifically associated with the king, as is the case in the *ArthaŚā*.]. And since the Vedas and logic are already included [in the list of fourteen *vidyāsthānas*], this number remains fourteen and no more. . . .

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[14]   That is, Brahmanical logic. "The Buddhists have swelled heads by reason of their admittedly penetrating insights into inference, but their logic contradicts the Vedas, and so could hardly be included among the *vidyāsthānas* - and frankly, beyond the matter of inference, we'll show that the logic of the Buddhists is not such a big deal anyway," p. 9.

[15]   Cf. also *Manusmṛti* 7.43, and *Raghuvaṃśa* 3.30, and V.S. Sukthankar, *Critical Studies in the Mahabharata* (Poona: Sukthankar Memorial Ed. Comm., 1944), pp. 73 ff., and addendum ad *MBh*. ed crit. 3.149.31.

All these sciences have existed, like the Vedas, from the beginning of time; when people ascribe them to one or another author, they are merely acknowledging someone who has sought to give them concise or detailed expression.

Jayanta's analysis, while historically important and informative, seems an insufficient account of the most generally accepted traditional view of *śāstra* for several reasons. One problem is the ascription of an exclusively transcendent (*adṛṣṭārtha*) nature to those texts he allows to be classified among the *vidyāsthānas* and so to be considered as *śāstra*. Another is the attribution of a thoroughly "worldly" (*dṛṣṭārtha*) nature to those activities from which he would (thereby) exclude shastric attention. We have already remarked that the *Vedāṅgas*, to cite the early instance, contain a large, sometimes preponderant amount of "worldly" material, which would not be the case were their normative domain restricted to the transcendent Vedas. Conversely, the fact is that, while the impulse to eat or bathe may be something to which we are naturally impelled by a desire for gratification (*ruci*), as we may not be impelled to acts of sacrificial ritual, the procedures for these activities in Indian culture are subject to extraordinary, ritualistic, in fact shastric, regulation.[16] In general, Jayanta, like most Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas, operates with a far more restrictive view than the more popular tradition of what should be understood by " *dharma*" - the term par excellence used for covering the domain of the *adṛṣṭa*- or transcendent - and so of what may be comprised in the "branches of knowledge" liable to shastric codification. This realm seems to be vast, indeed, all encompassing, and to know and satisfy the demands of *dharma* requires access to the rules available only in *śāstra*.

That this more popular tradition does not share Jayanta's restrictive view may be seen in as early a text as the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, which markedly expands the scope of the *vidyāsthānas*:

The *Vedāṅgas*, the four Vedas, Mīmāṃsā, Nyāya, Purāṇa, Dharmaśāstra are the ʼourteen sciences. These number eighteen by the addition of Ayurveda [medicine], Dhanurveda [the science of weapons], Gandharva [music, dance, drama, etc.] and Arthaśāstra [politics and all its ancillary sciences]. (*Viṣṇupurāṇa 3.6.28-29*).[17]

By the time of Aparārka (12th century), an important commentator on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, this puranic taxonomy is explained as "referring to *vidyāsthānas* plain

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[16] See for example the rules pertaining to bodily functions cited in this volume, p. 306.

[17] Surprisingly, this is also Kumārila's position: "The learned have accepted as authoritative in matters of *dharma* only a limited number of texts, the fourteen *or eighteen vidyāsthānas*: the [4] Vedas; the [3] Upavedas [Āyurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharvaveda]; the [6] [Ved-]āṅgas; the [2] Upāṅgas [Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya]; the eighteen Dharmasaṃhitās; Purāṇaśāstra; and Śikṣādandaniti [ʼthe science of Punishment-for-Deterrenceʼ; cf. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 4.26.21; contra *Nyāyasudhā*]" *Tantravārttika* Vol. I, p. 122.3-5.

and simple, not the *dharmasthānas*."[18] Here we encounter a new dichotomy, whereby the need was met to provide a category for existent shastric texts not able to be accomodated in the strictly Vaidika tradition.

The totalizing claims of shastric competence are fully realized in the next significant indigenous contribution to the categorization of knowledge in general, and in particular to the analysis of the genre *śāstra*, the *Kāvyamīmāmsā* of the late 9th century poet, Rājaśekhara.[19] Rājaśekhara explains that *śāstra* is two-fold, being in origin either human (*pauruṣeya*) or transcendent (*apauruṣeya*). *Śāstra* of transcendent origin consists of: the four *Vedas* with their various mutual differentiations; the four *Upavedas* or secondary Vedas: history (*Itihāsaveda*, i.e., the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*), the science of weapons or war generally (*Dhanurveda*), music (*Gandharvaveda*), and medicine (*Āyurveda*); these are affiliated respectively with the *Atharvaveda, Yajurveda, Sāmaveda, and Ṛgveda*; the history and legitimating function of such "affiliation", by the way, deserve notice in their own right; and the six *Vedāṅgas*, to which Rājaśekhara adds *Alaṃkāraśāstra* or rhetoric as the seventh limb.[20] *Śāstra* of human origin[21] consists of the (eighteen) collections of ancient legends (*purāṇa*), logic or philosophy in general (*ānvīkṣikī*), Mīmāmsā (that is, both Pūrva- and Uttara-), and the *smṛtitantra* (that is, the eighteen *dharmaśāstra*s). To the old fourteeen *vidyāsthāna*s (which Rājaśekhara yet describes as embracing all objects of earth, sky, and heaven) he adds poetry, the "foundation of them all"; others, he continues, add economics (*vārttā* = agriculture, animal husbandry, commerce), erotology (*kāmasūtra*), art/architecture (*śilpaśāstra*), and civil and criminal law (*daṇḍanīti*), and so reckon eighteen *vidyāsthāna*s.

As the full range of Rājaśekhara's categories demonstrates, in the last analysis no domain of human activity was theoretically denied the possibly of shastric organization. This becomes all the more apparent in the last important analysis of shastric learning, the *Prasthānabheda* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (16th cen.).[22] While for Madhusūdana, too, there existed only eighteeen *vidyāsthāna*s, these had become very capacious categories: Just as within the class "*dharmaśāstra*" all the scriptures of the Pāśupatas and Vaiṣṇavas could be comprised, (though previously excluded by the Mīmāṃsakas, cf. n. 12), so in the category Āyurveda the *kāmaśāstra* could be included (p. 8), or in the cate-

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[18]   Ed. Poona: Ānandāśrama Press, 1903, p. 6. Cf. Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara: "The fourteen *vidyāsthāna*s are by and large meant for gaining knowledge of *dharma*; the remaining four are by and large concerned with worldly affairs, but they can also provide knowledge of *dharma* in those passages where their concern is otherworldly" (*Kṛtyakalpataru* [ed. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1948], Vol. 1, p. 22).

[19]   Ed. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1934, pp. 2-4.

[20]   It is somewhat unclear how far Rājaśekhara intends the category "transcendent" to extend. The marked division created by *pauruṣeya* (p. 3, line 12) naturally suggests that everything listed prior is *apauruṣeya*. But the inclusion of the *Vedāṅgas* (not to mention the *Upavedas*) in the latter category would be at variance with the *vaidika* tradition. See *Pūrvamīmāmsāsūtra* 1.3.11-14, and the detailed analysis ad loc. of *Tantravārttika*.

[21]   On this (ultimately empty) category see, 'The Theory of Practice', pp. 501-2, 516.

[22]   Ed. Poona: Ānandāśrama Press, 1906 (as appendix to the *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*).

gory *Arthaśāstra*, not only political science but also veterinary science, art/architecture, cooking, and all the fine arts (p. 9).[23]

It is clear that brahmanical scholars came increasingly to define the categories of the *vidyāsthānas* to be as elastic as possible in order to embrace the mass of actually existing shastric texts from classical and medieval India.[24] An idea of the broad area penetrated by this genre of learned inquiry can be suggested by a bare inventory of lexically attested *śāstras*: agriculture, elephant-training, arithmetic, perfumery, thievery, painting, carpentry, cooking, fishing, sculpture, liberation-from-transmigration, ascetic renunciation, the lapidary's art, alchemy, penmanship, augury, music (instrumental, vocal, and dancing), hawk-training, horse-training.[25] And this is omitting what is usually termed the *catuḥ-saṣṭikalāśāstra*, the "*śāstras* of the sixty-four arts", which include codified treatises on everything from jewelry-making to magic, needle-work, gardening, and cock-fighting.[26]

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It is the task of the cultural historian to determine what precisely may be the relationship between the learned discourse identified (or generically identifiable) as *śāstra* and actual cultural practices of traditional India. There is a variety of ways in which this relationship may be conceived of, whether singly or more likely in combination, and much will depend on the nature of the practices in question: *śāstra* could be viewed as offering a real blueprint for practice; as merely describing, *ex post facto*, a cultural product and thereby explicating its components for the benefit of a cultivated public; as providing, in the guise of normative injunctions, something like a standard of taste and judgment to critics, that is, as defining the "classic"; even as functioning in some cases to "invent" a tradition;[27] as constituting, in the hegemonic manner of high cultures elsewhere, practices as "sciences" for theoretical or actual control; or - last in order but per-

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[23]   "The orthodox reckon only these [eighteen] branches of knowledge, the specialized sciences. however, in fact being included within them", p. 1.

[24]   So already in the (later) *MBh.*: When Śiva "creates all the *śāstras*", he created the *eighteen vidyāsthānas* (all of them "*samhitās* of *dharma*"), compiling them into 300 *śāstras* and 70 "systems" (*tantras*) (ed. Poona: Chitrashala Press, 1932), 12.122.28-32 (= ed. crit. 12. App. 13.1-13).

[25]   These are, in Sanskrit, respectively, *kṛṣi-śāstra, gaja-, gaṇita-, gandha-, caura-, citra-, takṣa-, pāka- (sūda-, sūpa-), matsya-, mūrti-, mokṣa-, yati-, ratna-, rasa-, lekha-, śakuna-, saṃgīta-, śyainika-, haya-*.

[26]   See *Kāmasūtra* (ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1964), 1.3.15. For a discussion of the development of the category "64 arts", Buddhist and Jain evidence, and early Indian categories of knowledge and genres of literature generally, see Paul Horsch, *Die vedische Gāthā- und Śloka-Literatur* (Bern: Francke), 1966, pp. 5-71, esp. 55 ff.

[27]   "Invented traditions . . . take the form of reference to old situations, or . . . establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. . . . Inventing traditions . . . is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition" (Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *Invention of Tradition* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1983], pp. 2, 4).

haps first in importance - as endowing a practice with the status, legitimacy, and author-
ity directly conferred by any "Vedic" charter, something most *śāstras* aspire to become.

These are questions the participants in the Heidelberg Conference collectively pon-
dered. However diverse their conclusions, it remains clear that the shastric tradition of
India, with an array of discursive texts on cultural practices that is probably unparalleled
in antiquity, is one of the great intellectual achievements of world culture. To become
familiar with this tradition is not only a fascinating intellectual adventure in itself, but
also a condition for understanding and appreciating the Indian intellectual and artistic
experience.