



# Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court (South Asia Across the Disciplines)

*Audrey Truschke*

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*Culture of Encounters* documents the fascinating exchange between the Persian-speaking Islamic elite of the Mughal Empire and traditional Sanskrit scholars, which engendered a dynamic idea of Mughal rule essential to the empire's survival. This history begins with the invitation of Brahman and Jain intellectuals to King Akbar's court in the 1560s, then details the numerous Mughal-backed texts they and their Mughal interlocutors produced under emperors Akbar, Jahangir (1605–1627), and Shah Jahan (1628–1658). Many works, including Sanskrit epics and historical texts, were translated into Persian, elevating the political position of Brahmans and Jains and cultivating a voracious appetite for Indian writings throughout the Mughal world.

The first book to read these Sanskrit and Persian works in tandem, *Culture of Encounters* recasts the Mughal Empire as a polyglot polity that collaborated with its Indian subjects to envision its sovereignty. The work also reframes the development of Brahman and Jain communities under Mughal rule, which coalesced around carefully selected, politically salient memories of imperial interaction. Along with its groundbreaking findings, *Culture of Encounters* certifies the critical role of the sociology of empire in building the Mughal polity, which came to irrevocably shape the literary and ruling cultures of early modern India.

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