

“One of our major misfortunes is that we have lost so much of the world’s ancient literature – in Greece, in India and elsewhere... Probably an organized search for old manuscripts in the libraries of religious institutions, monasteries and private persons would yield rich results. That, and the critical examination of these manuscripts and, where considered desirable, their publication and translation, are among the many things we have to do in India when we succeed in breaking through our shackles and can function for ourselves. Such a study is bound to throw light on many phases of Indian history and especially on the social background behind historic events and changing ideas.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*

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From the Editor

The first issue of *Kriti Rakshana*, published two months ago, received a warm response from readers across the country, and for this we would like to thank you all. In that issue, among other articles, we had also outlined some of the concerns that NMM is constantly addressing with regard to manuscripts, for instance survey and documentation as well as increasing public awareness and participation in manuscript heritage.

In this second issue of *Kriti Rakshana*, therefore, we have attempted to discuss other aspects of heritage management, as it relates to manuscripts – digitization of manuscripts and conservation of manuscripts. Readers who find themselves fascinated by tales of serendipitous occurrences will probably find the anecdotes from Gujarat, related by Dr. Jitubhai Shah, very satisfying. As for *Siribhuvalaya*, the text in focus this time, we would like to mention that as astonishing as the form and the idea of text itself are, it is even more interesting to note that such texts also exist in other regions of India such as Gujarat.

We request you to send us your feedback on this publication at our mailing address. I would also like to mention that if you know of any such Institution, manuscript repository or educational organization that does not receive *Kriti Rakshana*, NMM's free bi-monthly publication, but would be interested in doing so, please let us know at the following address – NMM, No. 5, Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi – 110001 or at our website www.namami.nic.in. You could also e-mail us at director.namami@nic.in.

Neha Paliwal

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Digital Restoration

Anurag Arora

A tremendous quantity of information in various formats is created daily through various media and it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain orientated in this flood of information without the help of computer technology. In fact, the issue of effective consumption of information is presently more relevant than its longevity and has not been addressed comprehensively so far. As common sense indicates, the more the information created, the less assured is its longevity. This dilemma necessitates a process of selection; some information must be prioritized and its existence ensured, even while other kinds of information are sidelined.

For those working in the heritage arena, this raises an important question: What information from this gigantic output needs to be preserved for future generations? To preserve all of it would be technologically impossible. A point to be kept in mind when talking about information from the distant past, information that is frequently unique, is that it is possible that its loss will be definitive and irrevocable.

National Mission for Manuscripts was established on the premise that society and the government have the responsibility to preserve information about the country's history and to make it accessible to future generations. It aims to stimulate a responsible approach to sources from which our historical consciousness grows and to contribute to the general availability of information about our history, culture and indigenous knowledge systems. This mission, therefore, aims to initiate and support the safeguarding of existing documents.

While it is heartening to note that interest in old manuscripts and their aesthetic and scientific value is growing by the day, it is also worth stressing that public access to old manuscripts and archive holdings causes a substantially quicker disintegration of these originals. The

solution is to limit or discontinue public access to the originals and offer an alternative way of accessing them. One of the tried and tested ways of doing this is through the use of computer technology that enables the digitization of manuscripts.

The need to increase accessibility and prevent the disintegration of manuscripts clearly makes for the digitization of manuscripts an urgent case. The next step would be to understand the process of digitization. The conditions for digitization are outlined below.

Conditions for Implementation

Digitization is a process that tries to replace the original manuscript with a facsimile. In order to make this facsimile acceptable and to decrease the use of originals in a radical manner, it is necessary to comply with the following basic conditions:

1. **Quality of digitization**
High-quality digitization of basic image data is the most significant requirement. Clear visuals and readability of the data must be ensured.
2. **Applicability**
Data must be made available in a reasonable amount of time and the hardware and software enabling the work with the digital facsimile must be easily accessible. The hardware should be affordable so as to require minimum funds from the budgets of libraries.
3. **User-friendliness**
Users must be able and willing to accept the digital facsimile. The software should be easy to use and must include multiple options to ensure that the data can be viewed in every way that the users would want to view it in.

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Goals of Digitization

The reasons for implementing a digitization project, or more precisely for digital conversion of non-digital source material, are varied. The decision to digitize may be in order to:

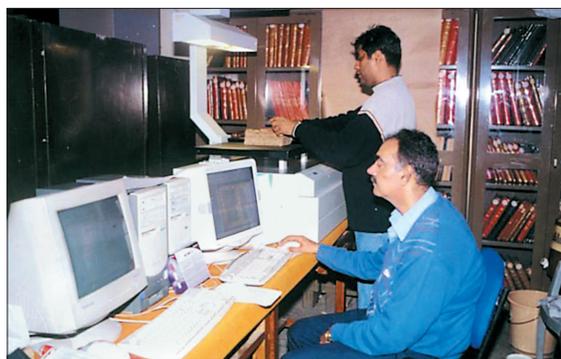
- Increase access: this is the most obvious and primary reason, where there is a high demand from users and the library or source has the desire to improve access to a specific collection.
- Improve services to an expanding users group by providing enhanced access to the institution's resources with respect to education.
- Reduce the handling and use of fragile or heavily used original material and create a backup copy of endangered material.

However, it should be emphasized once again that the originals are irreplaceable, and therefore access to them should be limited as quickly and in as many sources as possible.

Selection of Manuscripts for Digitization

Given that a good facsimile requires high quality and user-friendliness, the process itself is quite costly - in both manpower and monetary terms. It is inevitable therefore that it be a selective process. In India alone, NMM has estimated that there are more than five million manuscripts. Since the digitization of each of these is almost impossible, there is a need to limit the focus to a few very significant collections that are threatened by disintegration.

The nature of digital information is independent of the original media on which it is found and can be stored with certain redundancy enabling its full and exact reconstruction even when the original media has been partly damaged. Further, the



Digital scanner in use, Kashmir

material that the manuscript is composed on is itself a carrier of interesting and vital information. Even very little damage caused to that material results in an irrecoverable loss of information. The matter contained in the manuscript needs to be understood and defined. This is the information that the scribe wanted to communicate to the reader of the manuscript. Today we could say that it is the basic image data but when the manuscript was written the scribe wanted to transmit certain information by underlining or embellishing it. The importance and relevance of the information needs to be realised and the manuscript accordingly selected for digitization.

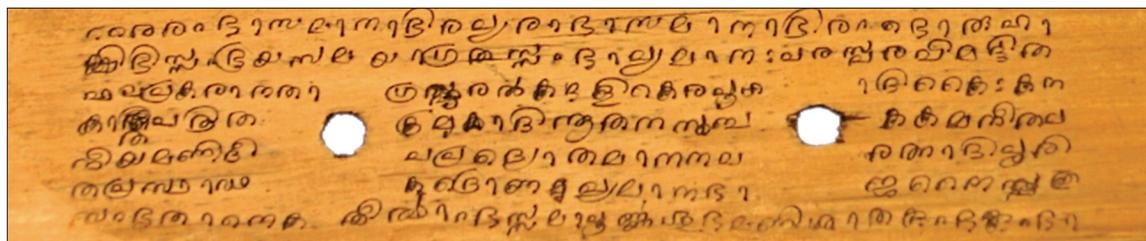
National Mission for Manuscripts and Digitization

India has perhaps one of the oldest and largest collections of manuscripts in the world. These manuscripts are in different languages and scripts and are written on different materials, such as birch bark, palm leaf, cloth, paper etc. They are in the custody of libraries, museums, *madrasas*, monasteries, *mutts* and individuals. A significant proportion is not preserved scientifically. Experts estimate that almost all palm leaf manuscripts may perish due to wear and tear over the next fifty or hundred years. In this regard the National Mission for Manuscripts has taken the first step to save some of the most valuable representatives of our cultural inheritance.

NMM has started a pilot project for digitizing five caches of manuscripts in five states across India. These are as follows:

- Six thousand manuscripts of Iqbal Library in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Six thousand five hundred Siddha manuscripts in the state of Tamil Nadu which discuss medicinal issues.
- Three thousand five hundred illustrated manuscripts of Orissa State Museum, characterized by some wonderful illustrations (hand-made graphical images).
- One thousand Kutiyattam manuscripts from Kerala.
- Four thousand Vaishnava manuscripts in Majuli Islands, Assam, which are under constant threat of being damaged due to increased flooding in this part of India in recent years.

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Digitalized folio from an image of a Kutiyattam manuscript, Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala

Appropriate Quality Levels for Digitization and Benchmarking

This can be defined as the process undertaken at the beginning of a digitization project that attempts to set the levels used in the capture process to ensure that the most significant information is captured, like setting the resolution or bit depth correctly and so on. More formally it requires the following:

- Full knowledge of the main attributes of the source document.
- Recognition of present and future users need.
- Exact guidelines on standards of acceptability that will meet all requirements and future requirements of the digital surrogate.

If these three attributes are present, the assessor will be able to:

- Make a final decision about the standard of digitization (in terms of resolution, etc).
- Establish hardware and software requirements of project.
- Have a set of strict requirements by which vendor claims can be judged, and the decision of which out-sourcing agency, if any, should be used.
- Establish workflow procedures and a delivery timetable.

In this regard, the Mission has already published a set of guidelines and standards that can be followed by any organization practicing the digitization of manuscripts. The brief document guides the digitizing agency in selecting the Digitization Equipment, Handling of Manuscripts, Image Capturing, Quality Checks et al.

Archival Storage of Digital Data

The optimum storage material used for storing digital images is either a CD or a DVD. It is important to note that while both these materials invariably show low longevity, there is no other medium with such widespread usage and

comparable capacity and price. Under such conditions, the problem can be solved only by designing specialized DIGITAL ARCHIVES where the CD-ROMs/DVD ROMs will be preserved in optimal conditions and periodically tested for quality. These archival conditions must ensure that the digital data created will never be lost.

Conclusion

It would be premature to say that based on this pilot project in scanning manuscripts, NMM has arrived at any conclusive decisions about the kind of digitization projects it will undertake in the future. Technologies associated with digital conversion, storage, retrieval and delivery to remote users is subject to rapid change. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that some of the preliminary criteria have emerged through the digitization project that is helping to shape the Mission's direction. Apart from the aesthetic advantages of a digital image, especially a colour one, over microfilm or a photocopy, the Mission sees scholarly benefit to be gained from comprehensive scanning of the more heavily used collections. A number of important factors need to be considered – the up-front cost of scanning, the practical realities of managing thousands of digital files and the various delivery issues for digital images made accessible over the web.

However, these issues will not deter us from taking up digitization projects in the future and helping the cultural community preserve the artistic heritage of the country. The encouraging response we continue to receive from the world community regarding our digitization programme has strengthened our resolve as well as our confidence and we are committed to making it more effective and efficient.

Anurag Arora is the Coordinator for Digitization at NMM.

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Travelogue

In Search of Manuscripts in Manipur

Gitanjali Surendran

Recently the National Mission for Manuscripts organized the first ever National Survey for Manuscripts in Manipur. Each state has a unique set of circumstances that necessitate a modification of the Survey and other Mission programmes. In Manipur, the insurgency makes the Mission's programmes all the more difficult to see through and also that much more important.

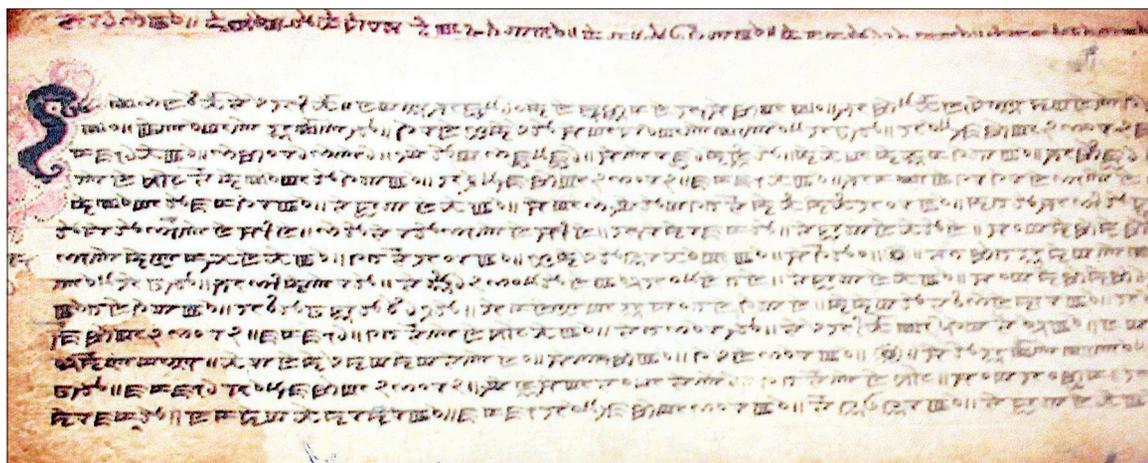
Imphal Diary

Pandit Nehru referred to this tiny state as the 'Jewel of India' and Lord Irwin called it 'India's Switzerland'. As our plane comes down on the compact runway in Imphal, the green hills and lolling landscape hold much promise. The famous Loktak Lake, the largest fresh water lake in the North East, is visible from the airplane window. The strange green circles, floating houses and endless stretches of water at once capture the mystery and uniqueness of Manipur. The airport must be one of the last truly quaint ones left in India. We get off the plane and walk to the attractive, green roofed airport admiring the view. Manipur burst onto the collective Indian conscience with the tragic death of Manorama Devi last year. The military and

police presence is apparent from the moment one gets off the plane. I make the mistake of first entering the airport and then walking back out to the tarmac to look for a colleague. A soldier barks at me menacingly to get back in. I protest that I'm only looking for a younger colleague, but the first sign of tension only subsides when I give in, his rather large gun working in his favour. Later we find there are many military men with big guns in the streets, the tourist spots, everywhere.

Manuscript Matters

When we reach the Manipur State Archives, where the Mission has set up a Manuscript Resource Centre and that works with us to document and conserve Manipur's quite unique collection of handwritten manuscripts, we are told that manuscripts here urgently need conservation. One look at the manuscripts reveals a rare history and culture that is a blend of both pre-Hindu Meiti cultural fragments and formations and Manipuri Hinduism. Most of the manuscripts are on agarbak or the bark of the agar tree, and there exists a special group of distinctive, illustrated manuscripts. Most of the manuscripts have to do with astrology and



The first page of *Loiyumba Silyen*, Manipur State Archives.

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genealogical histories of the Manipuri clans. Manuscripts like the Leithak Leikharol or 'The Creation of the World' represent the distinctive Meiti world view that combines many elements of Manipur's history. We are shown the Khumanlol, which is written on Tengna leaves which look like palm leaves and which are also inscribed using a sharp needle. The manuscript covers tell the genealogy of the Khuman clan starting from the creation of the world by god. Subika Agarbak is on astrology, household rules and predicting earthquakes. I am told that no king would take any step without consulting this manuscript!

We are told that Meiti manuscripts are always begun with the sacred letter or the anji to ensure that each manuscript is protected. Every manuscript we see is begun with an anji that often resembles a serpent.

At the Archives, we discuss a census-like survey for manuscripts in all the districts for November. We are told that the documentation work is slow because there is no electricity to work the computers. Last year, for months on end, people could not come to work. Electricity is a total failure in Manipur says one of our hosts, as we sit later, in the darkness of our dilapidated hotel room. As evening falls, the candles come out all over Imphal's roadsides as people continue to sell their wares all along the pavements.

Culture Contests

There are thirty six tribes in Manipur but the population is still predominantly Hindu, our host points out. Everyone in Manipur can also trace themselves to one of the seven original clans. There are many manuscripts of the totemic symbols that seem mostly to be various depictions of contorted serpents. We are told that a manuscript utterly unique to Manipur is that of the Paphal that depicts 364 symbols using the originary and mythic python. The serpent's head is always shown as eating its own tail as if to signify the circle of life or life's eternal cycle. Our host's clan is the Luwang whose totemic symbol is a white snake. At the Archives we are shown a document of hand-painted totemic symbols of each of the clans. In older times, people wore the colours and symbols of their

clan. Not any more though. Apparently, in the seventeenth century, a queen of Manipur had an illicit affair with a Bengali Hindu. She produced a son who went on to become the king and forcibly converted most of the population to Hinduism. As a mark of the victory of Hinduism, he ordered that the kingdom's non-Hindu manuscripts be burnt. In silent protest, many manuscripts were hidden away from the wrath of the king and we hope that the Survey finds these.

In April 2005, four hundred years later, Imphal's Central Library was burnt down. The arsonists wanted the prevalent Bengali script to be replaced with the Meiti script. A case of history repeating itself? Asserting cultural identity through language and script is an old story in India. As a result of the attack on the Library, the Manipur State Archives was flooded with a surfeit of documents that were saved from fire. Unsurprisingly, Bollywood is banned in Imphal. Apparently there is a flourishing Manipuri film industry as a result.

The Mother's Market

The Mother's Market dates back to the time of Akbar we are told. Here, only women are leased plots to sell their wares including vegetables, dried fish and deadly red chillies. This is a pleasant change from Imphal's other markets that are dominated by goods coming through Myanmar. Apparently tax on non-Indian mainland goods makes them cheaper to buy. I purchase a tin incense burner and a Manipuri doll. Our host buys a cosmetically-challenged pineapple that later on turns out to be the sweetest, most juicy pineapple we have ever eaten. So famous was this market that it became a target in times of war. The Japanese bombed it during the Second World War, the Burmese before them. A small war memorial has been set up. The patron gods of the market stand beatifically in a shrine in one corner. On another street, I look on as an old woman selling dried fish on the pavement takes out a lighter, lights a cigarette and puffs away. Our host says that the 'Awalal' or the war with Burma was followed by seven years of suffering during which most of the males were killed. Thereafter, the women had to organize themselves to protect their property

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and people. The ratio of women to men dropped to 7:1. Our host insists that that's why, 'Manipuris are crazy'! A local saying goes, 'The King has everything but he cannot get a piece of charcoal'. This is because his three or four wives control the kitchen! Perhaps that's why the Yumbanlol manuscripts on copper plates lay down the rules for married couples to ensure the smooth running of families! However, since then, Manipur has caught up with the rest of the country, and its sex ratio now firmly in favour of males.

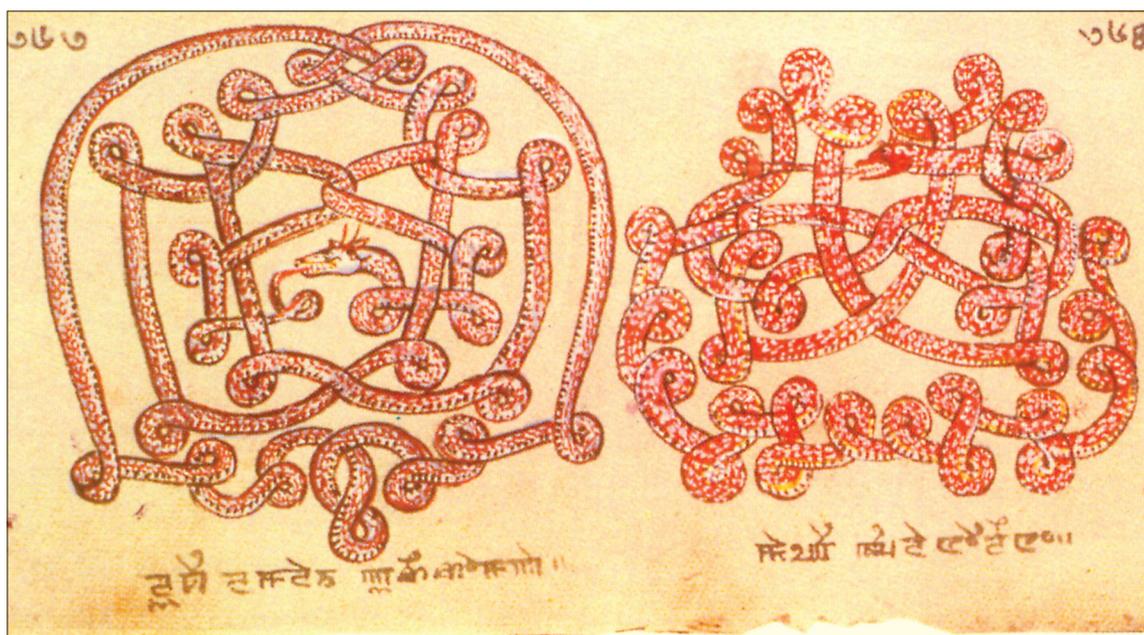
Death in a Far Corner

D.J. Miller, Age 23, Wilson, Aspbury Jones, Trotter of the Scots, Age 25, Royal New Zealand Airforce Air Gunner, S. E. Sadler, Age 27, died on 23 January 1945 and so the tombstones read. There are many unknown soldiers "known only unto God". The soldiers at the Imphal War Cemetery died in the Second World War fighting the Japanese and the INA, the enemies. It's strikingly well-maintained in this strife-ridden land. When we arrive at six in the evening, the gates are closed but we jump over anyway. We are told that the British Government owns and maintains this little plot. Imagine that, a small relic of the mighty Pax Britannica still remains in this corner of its greatest colony. And so a tombstone solemnly

reads "I keep in my heart the love of the past for it was planted forever to last". Just outside of Imphal, another war cemetery commemorates the Japanese dead and at Moirang, the INA war memorial and museum dominate the small town. Militants destroyed the statue of Subhash Chandra Bose more than ten years ago. Now a new statue stands in its place and a military barracks protects it.

At Moirang, we meet many of the elderly keepers of manuscripts. The men tell us at the meeting that they want to pass on the knowledge in these manuscripts to a younger generation that finds few connections with the knowledge of the past. We try to impress upon them that the Mission hopes to highlight the relevance of the knowledge in manuscripts – a relevance that may not always be so obvious. We request them to give us information on manuscripts in their care during the Survey. Our hosts organise a beautiful exhibition of manuscripts of which many are illustrated. The theme of the circle of life, without beginning or end, the belief in the destinies written in the stars, of looking for signs in nature dominate the beautiful manuscripts on display.

Gitanjali Surendran is the Co-ordinator for Surveys at the National Mission for Manuscripts



Paphal, from 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Manipur' by Mutua Bahadur, 2005

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दो दुर्लभ ग्रंथों का समुद्धार

अर्चट कृत हेतुविंदु टीका एवं जयरशिभट्ट कृत तत्त्वपल्लवसिंह

डा० जितेन्द्र बी शाह

‘पाटण’ गुजरात का एक सुप्रसिद्ध, ऐतिहासिक नगर है। एक हजार वर्ष पूर्व यह नगरी गुजरात राज्य की राजधानी थी। उस समय गुजरात का विकास चरम सीमा पर पहुँचा था। चालुक्य वंश के प्रतापी एवं पराक्रमी राजा सिद्धराज, जयसिंह एवं कुमारपाल आदि ने अपने साम्राज्य की सीमाओं का अप्रत्याशित रूप से विस्तार किया था। ये राजा न केवल अपने साम्राज्य के विस्तार में आसक्त थे, अपितु प्रजावत्सल तथा विद्याप्रिय भी थे। ऐसे राजा के शासन से प्रजा सुखी थी। फलस्वरूप इनके राज्यकाल में वेद, उपनिषद्, न्याय, व्याकरण, साहित्य आदि का अध्ययन-अध्यापन कार्य भी चरमसीमा पर था। इसी युग में अनेक महत्त्वपूर्ण ग्रंथों का निर्माण भी हुआ। जैनधर्म के कलिकालसर्वज्ञ आचार्य हेमचन्द्रसूरिजी का यह कर्मभूमि था। यहीं रहकर उन्होंने सिद्धहेमशब्दानुशासन जैसे कई ग्रंथों की रचना की थी। उन दिनों में भारत के विभिन्न प्रांतों से प्रतिष्ठित ग्रंथों को गंथालय में संगृहीत किया जाता था। किंतु दुर्भाग्य से कुमारपाल की मृत्यु के पश्चात् गुजरात के साम्राज्य का प्रभाव विलीन होता गया और धीरे-धीरे पाटण से विद्वान्

अन्यत्र चल बसे। तथापि जैनधर्म के विद्वान् मुनियों का आवागमन सदा होता रहा और विद्यालय आदि भी चलता रहा।

कुछ वर्ष पूर्व आगम प्रभाकर मुनिश्री पुण्यविजयजी ने पाटण के विभिन्न ग्रंथसंग्रहों को सुरक्षित रखने का अभियान प्रारंभ किया। प्रतिकूल परिस्थिति के बावजूद उन्होंने परंपरागत ग्रंथभण्डारण शैली को छोड़कर १९३५ में ‘हेमचंद्राचार्य ग्रंथभण्डार’ नामक संस्था की स्थापना की। इसमें सभी ग्रंथों को सुरक्षित रखने के लिए भूकम्परोधी, युद्धादि मानवसर्जित आपत्तियों में भी सुरक्षित रहे, ऐसी एक इमारत का निर्माण करवाया। तथा ग्रंथ सुरक्षित रहे, उसके लिए अग्नि, जल, वायु आदि से सुरक्षित अलमारी आदि में ग्रंथों को रखवाया गया।

इस अभियान के दौरान उन्हें पता चला कि एक धोबी के घर में कुछ पाण्डुलिपियाँ हैं। मुनिश्री ने धोबी को बुलाकर ग्रंथ दिखाने के लिए कहा। किंतु धोबी तैयार नहीं हुआ। धोबी का मानना था कि उन ग्रंथों में कोई मंत्र-तंत्र और धनप्राप्ति के उपाय दर्शाये गए हैं। अतः ये मुनि मेरे पीछे पड़े हैं। मुनिश्री के बहुत मनाने पर भी

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A folio from *Utradhyayan Sutra*, presently in the collection of L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad



A folio from *Kalpasutra*, presently in the collection of L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad

जब धोबी ने ग्रंथ दिखाने से मना किया, तो मुनिश्री ने कहा कम-से-कम आप अपने घर में बैठकर ग्रंथों को अवलोकन करने का मौका दीजिए। धोबी इस बात पर सहमत हुआ। मुनिश्री ने अहमदाबाद से बहुश्रुत पंडित बेचरदास दोशी को बुलाकर प्रस्तुत कार्य उनको सौंपा। पंडितजी धोबी के घर पहुँचे और वहाँ उन्होंने टूटे-फटे कपड़े में अस्तव्यस्त ढंग से रखे गए ग्रंथों को देखा, तो उन्हें गहरा दुःख हुआ। पंडितजी ने काम शुरू किया। ग्रंथों को खोलकर देखा तो मिला कि सभी पृष्ठ अस्तव्यस्त हो गए हैं। एक भी ग्रंथ आद्यन्त सुव्यवस्थित नहीं था। धोबी कभी-कभी ग्रंथों की गटरी को खोलकर ग्रंथों को उलटपलट करके रख देता था। उसके लिए तो ये ग्रंथ एक जादुई चिराग जैसे थे और उसी आशा में बैठा था कि इनसे मेरा दारिद्र्य दूर हो जाएगा। पंडितजी ने जब काम शुरू किया और धीरे-धीरे धोबी के मन में पंडितजी के प्रति आस्था होने लगी, तब उसने पंडितजी से पूछा कि -ये किस विषय के ग्रंथ हैं? तब पंडितजी ने बताया कि -ये धर्म और दर्शन के ग्रंथ हैं। उसमें कोई विद्या या मन्त्र-तन्त्र है नहीं-यह सुनकर धोबी का भ्रम दूर हो गया। उसने सभी ग्रंथ मुनिश्री को समर्पित किया। पंडितजी ने एक-एक पन्ना पढ़कर ग्रंथों को सुव्यवस्थित करने का कार्य चालू रखा। छः महीने के कठोर परिश्रम के उपरान्त ग्रंथों को सुव्यवस्थित कर पाए। इस परिश्रम के फलस्वरूप दो ऐसे ग्रंथ प्राप्त हुए, जो अपरिचित एवं अनुपलब्ध थे। एक बौद्ध पंडित अर्चट द्वारा रचित 'हेतुबिंदु' की टीका एवं दूसरा जयरशि भट्ट का 'तत्त्वोपप्लवसिंह' ये दोनों दार्शनिक ग्रंथ हैं। इनके संपादन का कार्य पंडित सुखलालजी को सौंपा गया।

संपादन कार्य का प्रारंभ करने से पूर्व उन्होंने इन ग्रंथों की अन्य पांडुलिपि प्राप्त करने की कोशिश की। परंतु सभी प्रयास असफल रहे। पूरे विश्व में इन दोनों ग्रंथों की एकमात्र प्रति प्राप्त हुई वह भी धोबी के घर से यह बड़ा सुखद आश्चर्य था।

जैनग्रंथों में बौद्धदर्शन मीमांसा के अवसर पर कई बार उल्लेख प्राप्त होते हैं कि "अर्चटस्तु चर्चाचतुरः"। अर्थात् अर्चट चर्चा करने में चतुर है। किंतु उनके ग्रंथ प्राप्त नहीं हो रहे थे। उसका लिखा हुआ एक ग्रंथ प्राप्त हुआ, यह विद्या जगत् के लिए आश्चर्य की घटना है। उससे भी आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि भारतीय परंपरा में चार्वाक दर्शन की चर्चा सर्वत्र प्राप्त होती है। किंतु उनका कोई भी ग्रंथ उपलब्ध नहीं होता है। मात्रा चार्वाक दर्शन के खण्डन के अवसर पर पूर्वपक्ष के रूप में ही चार्वाक दर्शन के सिद्धन्तों का वर्णन प्राप्त होता है। कुछ विशेष वर्णन हमें 'षड्दर्शनसमुच्चय' एवं 'सर्वदर्शनसंग्रह' में प्राप्त होता है। किन्तु स्वतंत्र ग्रंथ प्राप्त नहीं हो पाया था। यह उल्लेख जरूर पाया जाता है कि 'जयरशिभट्ट' ने 'तत्त्वोपप्लवसिंह' की रचना की थी परंतु ग्रंथ प्राप्त हो नहीं रहा था। यही ग्रंथ धोबी के घर से प्राप्त हुआ। इसकी भी एकमात्र प्रति उपलब्ध होती है और यह हर्ष का विषय है कि दोनों ग्रंथों का संपादन पंडित सुखलालजी ने किया है। तथा दोनों ग्रंथों का प्रकाशन ओरिएण्टल रिसर्च सेन्टर ने किया है।

डा० जितेन्द्र बी शाह, निदेशक, लालभाई दलपतभाई भारतीय संस्कृत विधामन्दिर, अहमदाबाद

Kriti Rakshana



Profile

Mahamahopadhyaya Gopinath Kaviraj

Kanika Singh

As part of a new feature, we will be featuring one great philosopher, manuscript hunter or contributor to manuscripts or our knowledge of manuscripts in every issue of Kriti Rakshana. We begin by featuring the great Gopinath Kaviraj.

Gopinath Kaviraj is a name familiar to anyone with even a faint interest in Indian philosophy. As perhaps one of the greatest scholars of Indian philosophy, he is remembered not only as a great jnani, but also as a sadhak, a yogi and a guru. His knowledge of Indian philosophy was not confined to a single branch. On the contrary, he was equally knowledgeable of in all its branches, be it Tantra, Buddhist philosophy or Kashmiri Shaivism.

Kaviraj was born in 1887 in Dharamrai, Dhaka district of the East Bengal (now Bangladesh). His early years were spent living with relatives in Kanthalia and Dhamrai, where he completed his primary education. Kaviraj showed a philosophical bent of mind very early in his life. He inherited his father's vast collection of Sanskrit books and this served as his first exposure to the world of literature and kindled his interest in Sanskrit texts and literature. As a young boy, he attended bhajan-kirtans in Brahma Samaj mandirs. His academic interests were continuously supported by his teachers and well-wishers. His teachers were a great influence in his life—one of them being Babu Mathuramohan Chakravarti, who was assistant to the Principal in Jubilee School, Dhaka. Babu Chakravarti regularly guided the students towards moral and spiritual well-being. As a student, he regularly wrote for magazines.

He completed his B.A. from Jaipur and then M.A. from Allahabad University. He was appointed the librarian of Sanskrit Bhawan, Government Sanskrit College, Benares eventually being appointed Principal. During his tenure at Sanskrit Bhawan, he published more than seventy works. His mastery over a number of languages is evident from the fact that he wrote in Bengali, English, Hindi and Sanskrit. His writings include the Saraswati Bhawan Series, Aspects of Indian Thought, Sri Sri

Vishuddhananda Prasanga, Tantric Sadhna. He also compiled A Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts Acquired for the Sanskrit College, Benares during 1918-1919 and A Descriptive Catalogue of Mimamsa Manuscripts in Sanskrit College, Benares with Introduction. His theology on Akhanda Manhayog is a masterpiece on the subject. Kaviraj stepped down as the Principal of Government Sanskrit College to continue his spiritual quest and academic activities. He was initiated into Yog by Swami Vishuddhananda Paramhans and became increasingly interested in it.

His penury while a student ensured that he had little interest in things material. He devoted his life to his work. But the quality that made Kaviraj special was that he was not merely a scholar. His theoretical knowledge was supplemented strongly by perceived experience. His quest for Reality, the Ultimate Truth and spirituality is not only confined to his scholarship—they were part of his very being because he was a sadhak. These qualities earned him the title Sachala Vishwanath or Living Vishwanath.

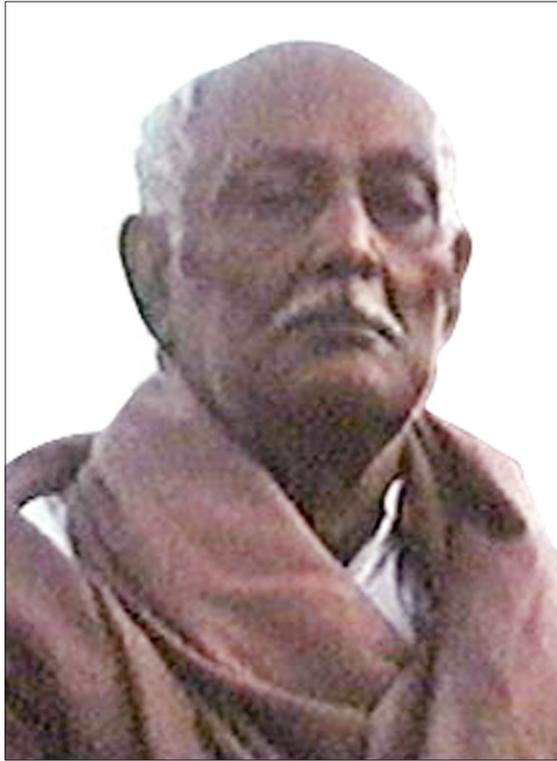
His writings reflect the precision of an extremely rational mind. Some have gone as far as to say that Kaviraj's work infused modern science into Indian philosophy. Yet, his students and acquaintances maintain that as a teacher, his oratory surpassed his writings in excellence. Many of his students later said that his delivery was so powerful and so inspired that he often took his audiences to a kind of transcendental plane. Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Verma, writing in Kaviraj Abhinandana Grantha remarks that "Kaviraj ji bora hain!" i.e. he is the sack from which a learner may extract as much knowledge as he/she may want as his vast store of knowledge was overwhelming. The book contains another anecdote narrated by one of Kaviraj's students, S. Bhattacharya. He

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remembers his first meeting with him where Kaviraj gave him three hundred loose sheets of Saamkhya Pravacana Bhasya (a commentary of a Saamkhya Philosophy text). He was instructed to find out in a day, the points dealing with the question of illusion. Printed in old style, the whole work was a continuous narration without any punctuation. Moreover, Bhattacharya was not familiar with the text and had never read a new text on his own. However, as he began working on the text, he recalls, "I discovered myself!" He was amazed at his own ability to understand and enjoy the text. This is just one of the many examples of how Kaviraj guided his students. He inspired them to venture into unknown territory and gain the confidence through which they could understand the true beauty of philosophical thought.

From what is known about the great philosopher, contrary to what one might expect, he was indifferent to the publication of his works. Many of his works accumulated around him in manuscripts, for years. He would respond to any queries regarding their publication by saying that they were for his personal reference and what would the world do with it? He was awarded the title of Mahamahopadhaya by the



British in 1934 and received the Padma Vibhushan in 1964 by the Government of India. He was honoured by many institutions and universities, but he remained unaffected by the accolades. He took voluntary retirement from the post of Principal of Government College. Later, he refused the Vice-Chancellorship of the same. He spent the last years of his professional life as the Head of Department of the Yoga-Tantra Department at the newly started Varanaseya Sanskrit Visvavidyalaya between 1964 and 1969. But his work and philosophical reflection never ceased till the last.

He suffered much tragedy in his life. His father died before he was born. He was married at the age of thirteen and outlived his wife. His son died early as well and his own health suffered much. And yet his scholarly endeavours were never affected by his personal tragedies. The encouragement and support of his relatives and teachers helped him pursue his academic career. To them India owes a debt of gratitude for supporting the genius of Gopinath Kaviraj.

Renowned for his deep spiritual attainment, he became involved in his spiritual quest alongside researching the practical aspects of sadhana. Deeply interested in mysticism, Kaviraj was first influenced by his guru, Swami Vishuddhananda Paramhans whose ashram in Varanasi he looked after the latter's death and later by Ma Anandamayi in whose care he lived the last seven years of life till he passed away in 1976.

Kanika Singh is an Assistant Co-ordinator for Surveys at the National Mission for Manuscripts.

Mahamahopadhaya
Gopinath Kaviraj

Kriti Rakshana



The Story of Ink

Neeraja Gopi

Most people, when they look at manuscripts, hardly give a moment's thought to the type of ink that is used to write or illustrate it. However, ink is one of the most important elements of a manuscript and deserves due consideration.

While it is now a common perception to associate ink only with writing, it is actually defined as a liquid containing various pigments and/or dyes used for colouring a surface to render either an image or some text. From a technical aspect, for an ink to fulfill its function it must have certain basic components: a colouring matter (pigments which colour the ink), a solvent (a medium in which the pigment is dissolved or dispersed), a binding agent (which holds the particles of pigment together and binds it to the support) and a mordant (a chemical substance which fixes the ink to the support and which may replace the binding agent). These are fixed components irrespective of whether there also exist within it other elements such as thickeners, fragrances, antiseptics, etc.

The origin of ink follows the invention of writing when the practice of art had advanced beyond the age of stone inscriptions/clay tablet and necessitated the use of some material for marking the reed and the use of brushes. It was not difficult to prepare black/coloured mixtures for this purpose. With the advent of these mixtures, forty centuries or more ago, we may link the genesis of ink. Therefore, even before the birth of Christ, making coloured mixtures from inorganic substances found in the earth and different types of stones was prevalent in India and elsewhere. While indigo had been in common use even before the eighteenth century, the most common type of ink now used – Prussian blue – was only invented around 1700 A.D.

Regional origins of Ink

If we look closer into the history of ink, we find that blue inks were potentially possible for many years before writing inks of that colour actually appear to be used. The Hebrew word for ink is *Deyo*, so called for its blackness. Primitively prepared for ritualistic purposes and for a continuing period of more than two thousand years, it was a simple mixture of powdered charcoal or soot with water, to which gum was sometimes added.

The Arabian method of making ink (*alchiber*) was more complex. Lampblack was first made by the burning of oil, tar or rosin, which was then commingled with gum and honey and pressed into small wafers or cakes to which water could be added when wanted for use. Charcoal made from the young shoots of grape vines could be used in stick form for drawing or could be ground fine to make ink. Mortars and pestles were used in the first step to break up the large pieces. To grind the particles even finer, the pigment was ground on a stone slab. Egyptian porphyry, granite, and marble were all used in this process. A smaller stone, known as a muller, was used to grind against the slab. The muller was flat on the bottom side, while the top was gently rounded to fit comfortably in the grinder's hand.

In Assam to create white colour, chalk (dhal) was in use for a long time. Lac (sealing wax) was mixed with red and yellow pigments to produce a golden colour. This practice was known as 'Lasoluwa'. The red colour of the '*Bhagavada Gita*', which is preserved at Rampur village in Kamrup, was derived from Puroi (a kind of reddish ripe seed, having a violet colour).

Chemical Composition of Ink

Carbon based inks are among the oldest of inks and were perhaps the first to be used. These were obtained by a process of semi-combustion

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Use of metallic inks with gold, silver and copper in a folio from *Vinaya*, a Buddhist text from Kargon Gompa, Ladakh.

of organic materials, which were then dispersed in water. Carbon inks are usually made from charcoal/soot suspended in a gum/glue or a varnish medium. In fact, much of the best quality ink was made from lamp black. The colour varied from dark brown to blue-black. Occasionally it was moulded into sticks and allowed to dry. Carbon based inks were used in ancient Egypt, China and India, and perhaps the reason for its popularity was its most important characteristic – it is permanent and has no adverse effect on the material written upon.

India ink, sometimes also called China ink, or formerly known by the ancients and in classical and later times as ‘Indian Ink’ is now used more for drawing and engrossing than it is for commercial purposes. It belongs to the carbon class discussed above, and in some form, was the first one used in the earliest times. About 1200 years before the Christian era, the Chinese perfected this method and invented ‘Indian Ink’, ostensibly for blackening the surface of raised hieroglyphics. This was obtained from soot produced by the smoke of pines and the oil in lamps, mixed with the isinglass (gelatin) of asses’ skin and musk to improve the odour of the oil. In China it is applied with a brush or pith of some reed to the ‘rice’ paper that is manufactured there. This ink is easily washed away unless bichromate of ammonium or potassium in minute quantities is added to it. If

the paper is exposed to sunlight for a short time, this gummy compound will be rendered insoluble and cannot be removed with any fluid, chemical or otherwise. Since it acts as paint, it also possesses great advantages for drawing purposes and will give any degree of blackness according to the quantity of water mixed with it.

Metallo-acid inks are very common in manuscripts and are characterised by their colour, obtained from a metal to which acid is added as a fixative. Iron Tannin inks replaced carbon inks in the middle ages as the general writing ink fluid because they were easier to handle. Iron-gall ink is the most important ink in Western history. It has been analysed and proved that Leonardo da Vinci wrote his notes using iron-gall ink. To make iron-gall ink, galls from oak trees were crushed to obtain gallic acid and finally mixed with water to form gallic acid. As the ink is prepared by the reaction of iron with gall solution, it is known as iron-gall ink. The other sources of tannin are bark of acacia (*Babool*), chestnut wood and bark, and some leaves. When freshly made, the ink has very little colour and cannot be used, but with time, oxidation takes place and gradually a blue-black colour develops. The oxidation of ink continues even after it has been used to write on paper and the ink fixes itself permanently on paper. This oxidation of iron-gall ink leads to the formation of acid. The acid is mixed with hydrochloric or

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sulphuric acid to the ink to improve its flow but has an adverse effect on paper. Often a dye, usually of blue colour, is added to the iron-gall ink which turns the initial blue writing to blue black on oxidation.

There are also other inks such as **logwood inks**, made by boiling the roots and branches of the Campeachy tree and combined with a variety of metal salts for obtaining the desired colour. Logwood also yielded tannin, and at one time logwood inks were among the most popular in use. Some of the early violet inks came from logwood. The best logwood inks were an intense blue-black. They were non-corrosive and flowed freely. Once dry, they could be wetted without smearing or spreading.

Commercially, logwood inks were produced with copper or iron sulphate, with the former preferred but the latter used more often. These inks use less logwood and were cheaper, but being acidic, they could corrode pens. For many years such logwood inks were the standard copying ink.

Matured logwood and iron-gall inks both look the same. However, they can be readily identified and separated by use of a 5% hydrochloric acid solution that gives the iron-gall ink an immediate blue or blue-green reaction while logwood yields a red or purple-red color. A pipette with only a very small amount of acid can be used so that only a tiny portion of the paper is affected, or a flake of ink can be scraped away and tested. This also holds true for **vanadium inks** where this element replaces the iron of the ferro gallic inks. Blue inks are acid inks. For example, Prussian blue is mixed eight parts to one part oxalic acid and dissolved in water. The early blues are not particularly water-soluble and the paper can be washed without having the ink run.

The next major development in blue-black inks was the introduction of **nigrosine ink**, a coal tar dye derivative. This ink is a strain obtained by dissolving nigrosine in water to create a suspension rather than a solution. Many nigrosine inks (both black and blue) can be identified by microscopic examination, for the lines have dark outer edges, like a black border, in addition to a peculiar metallic luster.

Secret or sympathetic inks are invisible till the writing is subjected to a subsequent operation like warming or exposing to sunlight. To further aid the object in view, the paper may be first steeped in a liquid and the writing only made visible by using another liquid, which has some chemical affinity with the previous one. The numbers of this kind were few but have multiplied as chemistry progressed. The ancient scholars were acquainted with several modes of producing these. Ovid indiscreetly advised Roman wives and maidens that if they intend to make their correspondence unreadable to the wrong persons they should write with new milk, which when dried may be rendered visible by rubbing ashes upon it or a hot iron. Pliny suggests milky juices of certain plants of which there are a considerable variety.

Current Inks, at present many inks are available in the market that come under the classification of **modern inks**. Modern fountain pen inks contain several other substances like humectants, which promote retention of moisture. Organic corrosion inhibitors are also added to protect the metal components of the pen. Today, the most popular type of writing implement is the ballpoint pen. Inks of such pens are prepared by mixing basic dyes in fatty acid solutions like oleic acid or acidic resins.

Printing inks are more viscous, dense and less soluble than normal writing inks. They are prepared with pigments mixed in a varnish base. Stamping ink is another type of ink and is used to stamp a seal on paper. In earlier days, oil based carbon inks were used to fix a seal on paper. It is now prepared by anionic and cationic in water or ethylene glycol. With new inventions, ink manufacturers produce ink according to their own formula and it is difficult to specify the components mixed in them.

As we have seen, the story of ink is a fascinating one, and for conservationists a most important tool to understand in order to preserve the heritage inked in the millions of manuscripts scattered across the world.

Neeraja Gopi is a Conservator in the Conservation Section of NMM.



Institution in Focus

Oriental Research Institute, Mysore

Dr. H.R. Nagaraja Sharma

Origin of the Institute

Standing tall amongst the many heritage centers of India, the Oriental Research Institute of Mysore is a repository where the ancient Indian traditions and knowledge systems have been preserved for more than a hundred years in the form of manuscripts. Established in 1891 by Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar Bahaddur, the then Maharaja of the erstwhile State of Mysore, this renowned institute was originally named the Government Oriental Library. It was housed in the Jubilee Hall built in 1887 to commemorate the Golden jubilee year of Queen Victoria's accession to the imperial throne. While it was initially affiliated with the Department of Education, it was subsequently merged with the University of Mysore and re-baptised as the Oriental Research Institute in 1916. It is interesting to note that this re-orientation of



The complete manuscript of *Arthashastra* was discovered and edited for the first time by Dr. Shamashastry of Oriental Research Institute, Mysore in 1908

sorts involved the development of a wider perspective on 'oriental studies' at ORI, Mysore. The Institute's collection, post 1916, included such items as ancient copper plates, stone inscriptions, palm leaf and paper manuscripts.

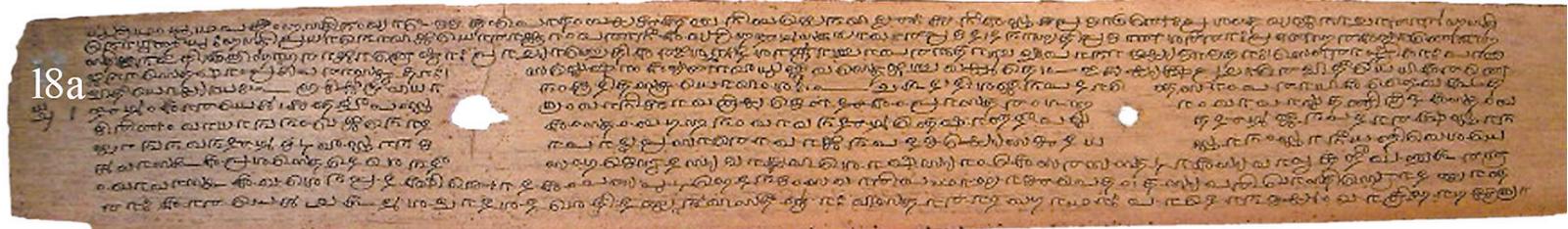
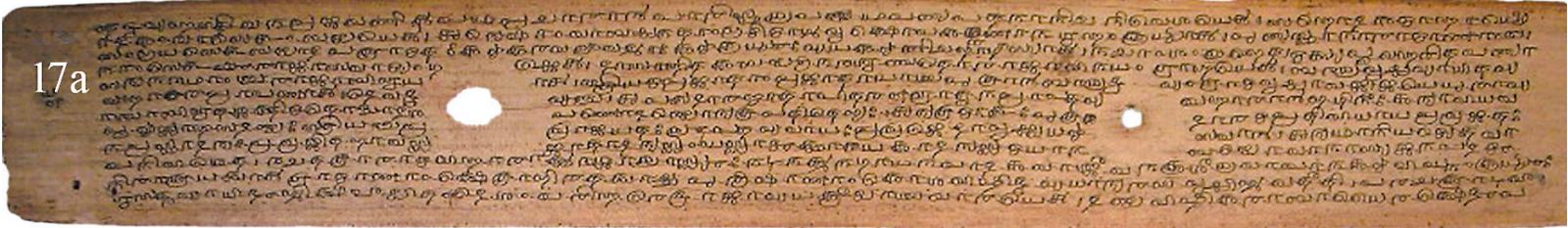
Nature of the ORI Collection

For more than a century now, scholars in and around Karnataka have been collecting thousands of bundles of manuscripts on behalf of ORI, Mysore. Until the 1960s, the institute had a widely varied collection of manuscripts ranging in languages from Devanagari to Kannada. However, in 1966 the collection was bifurcated and more than ten thousand Kannada manuscripts were shifted to Kuvempu Institute of Kannada Studies, also a branch of the University of Mysore. Therefore, the ORI collection as it stands today, consists largely of Sanskrit language manuscripts written in various scripts, like Devanagari, Nandinagari, Grantha, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and so on. In addition to the original manuscripts, the Institute has a collection of more than thirty thousand rare printed books on various subjects. The library has also housed a microfilm section since 1954, established with the generous contribution from the Ford Foundation. This section has a collection of more than three thousand titles of important literary works.

Focus on Research

In recent decades, with the intention of promoting specialization, the Oriental Research Institute has been focusing largely on the collection and research of manuscripts, including those on palm leaf and paper. As a part of the three important activities of the Institute – collection, research and publication – more than two hundred rare and unique works have been published by the Institute. Among the most popular published works are Kautilya's

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Arthashastra is a work on Indian politics, economics, military science, business management, administration, civil law and governance

'Arthashastra', Shankaracharya's 'Soundarya Lahari', Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar's 'Shakthi Nidhi', 'Vishmunidhi' and 'Shivanidhi' which are in great demand by scholars and the public alike. Catalogus Catalogorum, the list of manuscripts collection of the Institute published in eighteen volumes, is also in demand by many libraries. ORI also brings out its own journal called 'Mysore Orientalist' containing articles from learned Indian and foreign scholars and eighteen volumes of this journal have been published so far.

Focus on Digitization

This century old Institution is also designing itself as a significant meeting point between ancient wisdom and new technology. Therefore, under the guidance of the University of Mysore it has initiated the process of scanning and digitizing the most precious manuscripts of its collection. This will facilitate the supply and dissemination of information to scholars across the world. Many digital experiments have been carried out successfully at ORI's lab in connection with image restoration and enhancement. Plans for the future include a project to upgrade the Institute to an Electronic Library on the web with digital index facility.

Public Outreach Programmes

Apart from the institutionalized academic programmes outlined above, ORI has also

initiated public awareness efforts such as seminars and conferences. These attempts vary from the local awareness campaigns to international seminars on important topics. In the past, among the most important of these have been the National Seminar on 'the importance of Sanskrit sources in the study of Archaeology and Epigraphy', held in 2000 and the International symposium on 'Kautilya's Arthashastra' held in 2002. Exhibitions of rare manuscripts along with exhibits on the evolutionary process of writing are some popular media through which awareness continues to be created among the general public.

New Initiatives

In view of the large number of manuscripts on scientific subjects, such as Astronomy, Mathematics, Ayurveda, Veterinary Science, Plant Science and Gemology etc., available in the collection of the ORI, the University Grants Commission (UGC) established the National Centre for History of Science (NCHS) as a part of ORI and made a generous grant towards this programme in 2002. A part of these substantial fund is meant for putting up a state-of-the-art building for NCHS which will include a well-equipped digital lab and a seminar hall. The primary objective of the NCHS is to invite eminent scientists as Visiting Fellows to ORI and enhance their interactions with the Sanskrit

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scholars of the ORI for bringing out critical editions of works on Indian science knowledge systems.

ORI is also a platform for a few other projects like serving as a Manuscript Resource Centre for the National Mission for Manuscripts, through which the survey of manuscripts is being conducted and awareness among general public is created; and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), wherein microfilming of the entire collection of ORI is being carried out.

Conservation Activities

Mysore, with its temperate climate, usually sports great conditions for the preservation of manuscripts over a long period and warrants minimum concern on the conservation front. Therefore, periodical cleaning and oiling are the primary tasks for the conservators. The Institute is also equipped with two Fumigation Chambers where the contaminated manuscripts are filtered to rid them of destructive organic elements. Extra care towards the conservation of the

collection is being proposed by ICPAC/INTAC unit of NMM of Karnataka.

Apart from its monumental collection of manuscripts and the work being done on them, ORI is one of the oldest buildings in the royal city of Mysore, and has been identified as one of the heritage buildings of the city. Interestingly enough, this otherwise classical European structure also has some quaint Hindu features. It has some beautiful Hoysala sculptures dating back eight hundred years, brought from the ruined temple of Halebid, the capital city of Hoysalas.

For those interested in contacting ORI, Mysore, please note the following details
The Director, Oriental Research Institute,
Kautilya Circle, (opposite Crawford Hall),
Mysore-5
e-mail id - orimys@yahoo.com
Phone no. - 0821-2423136 / 7

Dr. H. R. Nagaraja Sharma is Project Coordinator, MRC, Mysore.



Library, Oriental Research Institute, Mysore

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Focus on Text: Siri Bhupalaya

Siri Bhupalaya is an extraordinary work in Kannada believed to be composed earlier than 10th century A.D. and attributed to Kumudendu, a Digambara saint. *Siri Bhupalaya* is said to be composed according to mathematical and phonetical formulae and claims to be readable in seven hundred eighteen languages and include three hundred sixty three philosophical systems and sixty four kalas (arts), in fact all the arts and science of the time. It is also said to have the 'Jayakhyana' of Vyasa (the original nucleus of the Mahabharata in ten thousand three hundred and sixty eight stanzas) and the original Bhagavadgita in five different languages within the body of its text.

The author Kumudendu calls himself the teacher of Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha and Gangas of Talakad, and a disciple of Virasena and Jinasena – the celebrated authors of 'Dhavalata' and 'Jaya Dhavalata Tika'. He belongs to the line of Senagana, Jnata Vamsa, Saddharma gotra, Dravyanga Sakha, Ikshvaku dynasty carrying down to Prabhavasena, Dharasena and Bhutbali. Though a Digambara Jain, Kumudendu declares Rgveda to be the source of all knowledge and tries to prove it in various ways.

Siri Bhupalaya is a compendium of Indian culture, philosophy, religion, art and science. It

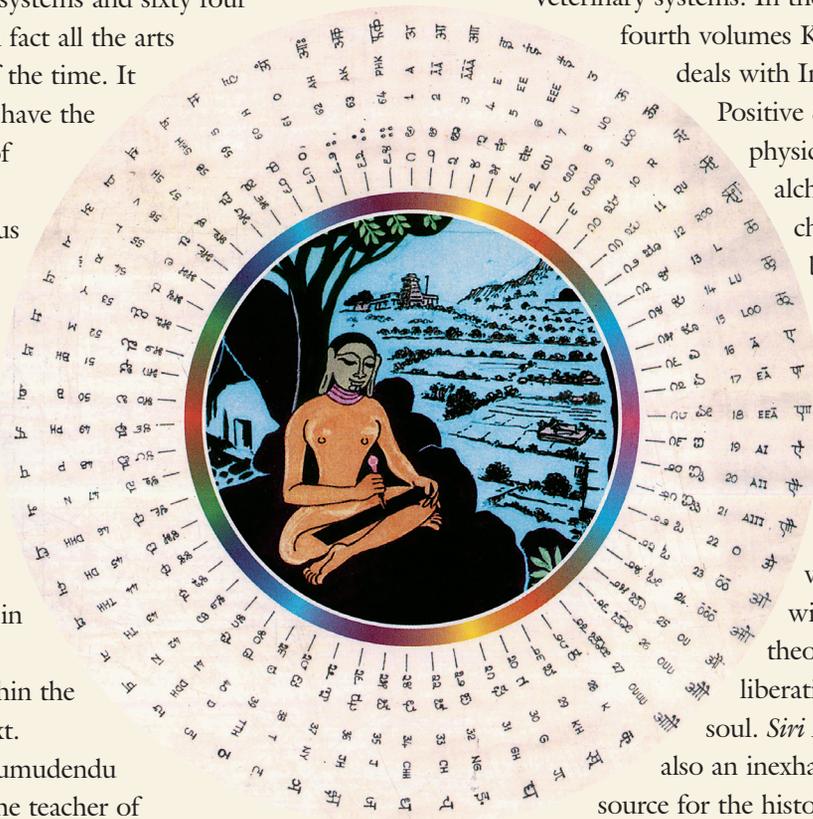
contains six million verses in Kannada and is divided into nine parts (volumes), the first of which, 'Mangala Prabhrta', is an epitome of the remaining volumes. The first four volumes contain almost all the canonical literature of the Vedic school, Brahmanas, Upanishads and important Jain texts. It also contains original texts belonging to different Ayurvedic and Veterinary systems. In the third and fourth volumes Kumudendu deals with Indian

Positive Sciences like physics, chemistry, alchemy, bio-chemistry, biology, botony, zoology, astronomy, space science etc. The last four volumes deal with Karma theory and liberation of the soul. *Siri Bhupalaya* is also an inexhaustible source for the history of fine arts like architecture, sculpture, iconography and painting.

Kumudendu mentioned more than twenty seven Ayurvedic systems that existed in India. Clearly an important work from the aspects of both positive science and Indian symbolic worldview of the 10th century A.D., *Siri Bhupalaya* is also important for its coded composition format.

Write up on the text by **Dr. M. A.**

Lakshmithathachar, Director, Veda-Vijnana-Vikasa-Pratishthanam, Mysore





Tracing Manuscripts on Medicine

Sudha Gopalakrishnan

National Seminar on “Saving India’s Medical Manuscripts” jointly organized by the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and the Foundation for the Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT)

Bangalore, 5-6 October, 2005

India is the repository of an astounding wealth of ancient knowledge contained in manuscripts belonging to different periods of history, going back to thousands of years. Among these, a sizeable portion of manuscripts are on medical knowledge, concerned with good health, disease, healing principles and practices. These texts, composed in different Indian languages and scripts, are spread all over the country and abroad in different libraries, academic institutions, museums, temples and monasteries and with individuals as private collections. They cover different traditions of medicine such as Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Swa-ri-pa as well as the rich resource of medical practices in the folk and tribal traditions. However, they are presently scattered all over the country, and information on them is not readily available.

The seminar on “Saving India’s Medical Manuscripts” sought to address the urgent need

to locate, classify and catalogue the rich wealth of India’s manuscripts on medicine, to make the information available to future generations. The seminar brought together a group of practitioners, experts, scholars, holders of repositories, library professionals, conservators and interested laypersons, to further the cause of the resuscitation of the rich heritage of medical manuscripts of India.

Inaugurating the event, Dr. T.N. Chaturvedi, the Governor of Karnataka appreciated the efforts of NMM and FRLHT in taking up the revitalization of the medical heritage of India through the safeguarding of texts. He planted a rudraksha tree in FRLHT to mark the occasion. Prof. Thyagarajan, Vice Chancellor of the University of Madras stressed the need to bring together the institutions working in that area for compiling information on the medical manuscripts of India.

The seminar was attended by more than seventy five participants representing thirty nine manuscripts centres from different parts of the country. The representatives of different repositories elaborated on the significance of each of their own collections. There were overviews of different systems of medicine by experts from each field. Prof. S. Prema from Tamil University



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detailed the history and evaluation of Siddha manuscripts, while Dr. Pema Dorjee made a presentation on the Tibetan system of medicine through manuscripts. Prof. K.C. Chunekar talked about the various discrepancies that have entered texts while critical editing, through wrong interpretation and copying of the manuscripts from time to time. Dr. Dominik Wujastyk, Senior Research Fellow, Wellcom Institute, U.K., spoke on Indian medical manuscripts in Europe and USA, in both public and private libraries. Elaborating on the sheer extent of the Indian collections, he said that the entire collection of non-Indian manuscripts on medicine in Europe and USA put together will not go beyond a few thousands, while the Indian manuscripts abroad may exceed fifty thousand!

The seminar was directed towards making a concerted action plan for identifying, documenting and conserving the medical manuscripts. The participants representing different disciplines, regions, repositories expressed their needs—academic, institutional and infrastructural—for the proper documentation and conservation of manuscripts. It was decided that a network would be established between all concerned institutions and practitioners and a comprehensive catalogue compiled on the medical manuscripts in India on the format provided by NMM.

As a follow-up to the seminar, a project for cataloguing of medical manuscripts was initiated by FRLHT with the sponsorship of National Mission for Manuscripts.

Quiz

1. By what name do we know the metallic tool that is used to carve letters on the surface of palm leaves?
2. What is the term used for describing the original manuscript that is written by the author or written under the permission of the author?
3. Name the person who first deciphered the Brahmi script and the year in which he did so.
4. How many types of scripts does the *Lalitavistara* mention in its exposition of scripts in India?
5. By what name do we refer to the science of writing inscriptions?
6. How do we better know the manuscripts that used all upper case letters, dating from the 3rd to 8th centuries AD, and written by Latin and Greek scribes?
7. In whose possession is the only known illustrated manuscript of the *Padshahnama*?
8. What is the Indian term for colophon?
9. How do we better know the root copy of a text from which scribes subsequently copy and prepare new manuscript copies?
10. In which language are the largest number of Indian manuscripts available to us today?



A shamsa (image of the sun) on the fontispiece of Padshahnama

Answers on page 24

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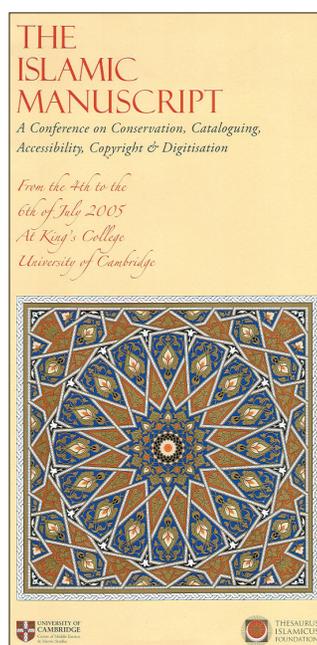


Heritage Watch

The Islamic Manuscript Conference 2005

Conservation, Cataloguing, Accessibility, Copyright and Digitisation

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad



The Islamic Manuscript Conference 2005 was held between 4th and 6th July 2005 at King's College, University of Cambridge. Hosted by the Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation in association with the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge, the Conference was an exceptional gathering of representatives from the largest and most important collections of Islamic manuscripts around the world. Discussions at the conference focused on issues of conservation, cataloguing, accessibility, copyright and digitisation and took the first step towards the establishment of the Islamic Manuscript Association

Manuscripts constitute an important and intrinsic component of the Islamic heritage. The Holy Qur'an is the most commonly copied text in the Islamic tradition followed by books on Hadees (traditions of the Holy Prophet), Exegesis, Commentaries and Sufism (Islamic Mysticism). However, a larger number of texts relate to secular subjects like History, Geography, Mathematics, Literature, Prosody, Grammar, Sciences, Lexicons, Philosophy and Biographical

Works (some relating to religious personalities) in the form of Travelogues, Diaries and Memoirs.

The Arabs, under whom Islamic culture attained its highest efflorescence, developed a refined and ornamental style of calligraphy, coupled with various techniques of book-decoration using gold, silver and natural colours to adorn large geometrical and floral designs. Paper was the most important contribution of the Arabs to the medieval world. It is interesting to note that in the early centuries of Islam we find largely geometrical patterns or other purely ornamental designs being used in manuscripts. In due course, largely under Persian influence, paintings of various kinds adorned Islamic manuscripts that are found in different languages, notably Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Pushto and Punjabi. The scripts used in Islamic manuscripts vary from Suls, Kufic and Naskh (mainly for Arabic), Nastaliq (mainly for Persian, Urdu, Pushto and Punjabi) to Shikast.

Though the origin of the writing tradition in the Islamic World is from Northern Africa to Western India, an immensely rich corpus of manuscripts is now spread, for the most part, over the four continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and America, in both private and public repositories. In the absence of comprehensive catalogues, the very existence of many of these manuscripts is a well-kept secret and often, lack of funding rends them in a poor deteriorating condition. They are likely to suffer from the ravages of time, the vagaries of nature as well as mishandling by people. The large-scale destruction of Islamic manuscripts in strife-torn

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Bosnia is a recent example of the threats that persist in this respect.

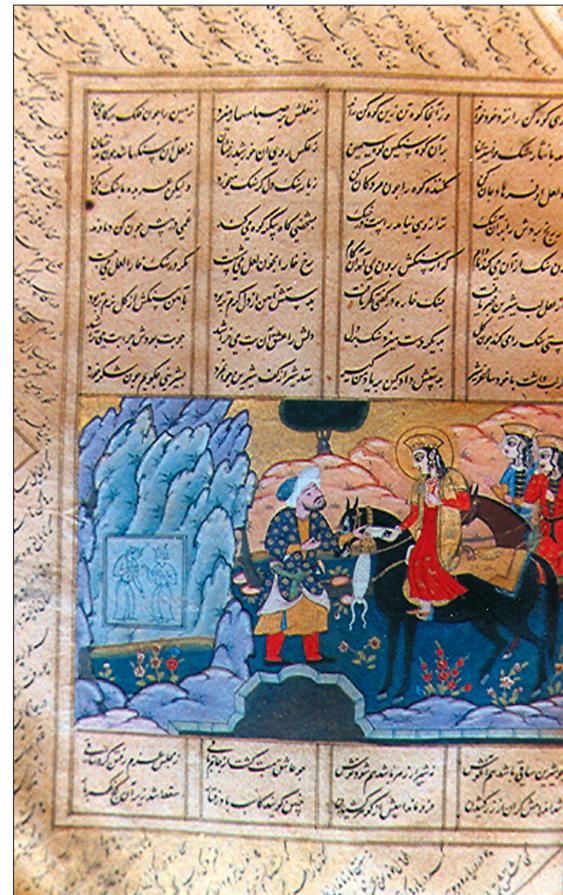
Even when manuscripts are well-preserved and catalogued their rarity and fragility presents serious problems of access for scholars. The Conference addressed these issues and explored how modern technologies could assist in the conservation of manuscript making them more accessible, as well as offer new tools for codicology and textual criticism.

Forty delegates representing 17 countries and 30 institutions attended the Conference. Discussions were divided into seven panels:

1. Manuscript and Manuscript Libraries in India
2. Manuscript and Manuscript Libraries in Turkey
3. Manuscripts and Digital Library
4. Manuscripts and Manuscript Libraries in Egypt
5. Multimedia Publishing
6. Manuscripts and Manuscript Libraries in Continental Europe
7. Manuscripts and Manuscript Libraries in the United Kingdom

India was represented by Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Director, the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna and Dr. W.H.Siddiqui, Director, the Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, both Manuscript Resource Centers (MRCs) for the National Mission for Manuscripts. It was noted at the Conference that no other country had in operation a programme on the lines and magnitude of the National Mission for Manuscripts. The delegates warmly appreciated the care and concern displayed for the preservation and protection of the written heritage, even more so since the number and variety of manuscripts in India is much larger than in most other countries. The results of the recently conducted surveys by NMM were also brought to notice and participants were happy to know that these efforts had led to the discovery of 37,000 new repositories and location of about 6,50,000 manuscripts in three states of the country alone.

The ultimate aim of the conference was the creation of an international body whose members would work towards the eventual standardization of Islamic manuscript cataloguing, access and charges, as well as promote conservation and digitization. The



A folio from an illustrated Islamic manuscript, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna

conference participants were unanimous in advocating the establishment of an Islamic Manuscript Association and a steering committee has been formed for this purpose.

The problems facing libraries and scholars are undoubtedly great and will take many years to solve, but this conference was the first step in assessing current difficulties and setting future goals. A new scholarly journal to be published by the Association will provide librarians and scholars with a platform for debate and an opportunity to propose innovative ideas and solutions, as well as provide information about successful projects already in progress.

The next session of the Islamic Manuscript Conference is to be held in 2006 at Istanbul, Turkey.

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad is Director, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna.



Summary of Events

28th July: In her lecture titled ‘Reality and the Written Word: The Work and Vision of Abul Fazl’ Prof. Shireen Moosvi transported the audience to the court of Emperor Akbar through extracts from works of the time and images of actual manuscripts, She also reopened many debates on the nature of the Mughal state, religion and attitude towards subjects. Chaired by Dr. Najaf Haider, the lecture was prefaced on the importance of the written word and going back to the original manuscripts despite the availability of critical editions. Prof. Moosvi substantiated this appeal with examples several misinterpretations and misprints of data from manuscripts that have led to inaccurate academic pronunciations on the period. Dr. Najaf Haider, set the tone for the lecture by reading from the *Ain-i-akbari*, where Abul Fazl says, “the word may embody the wisdom of bygone ages and



Prof. Shireen Moosvi



Dr. Subas Pani and Prof. Kapil Kapoor

becomes a means to intellectual progress... a keepsake of those that have gone by”.

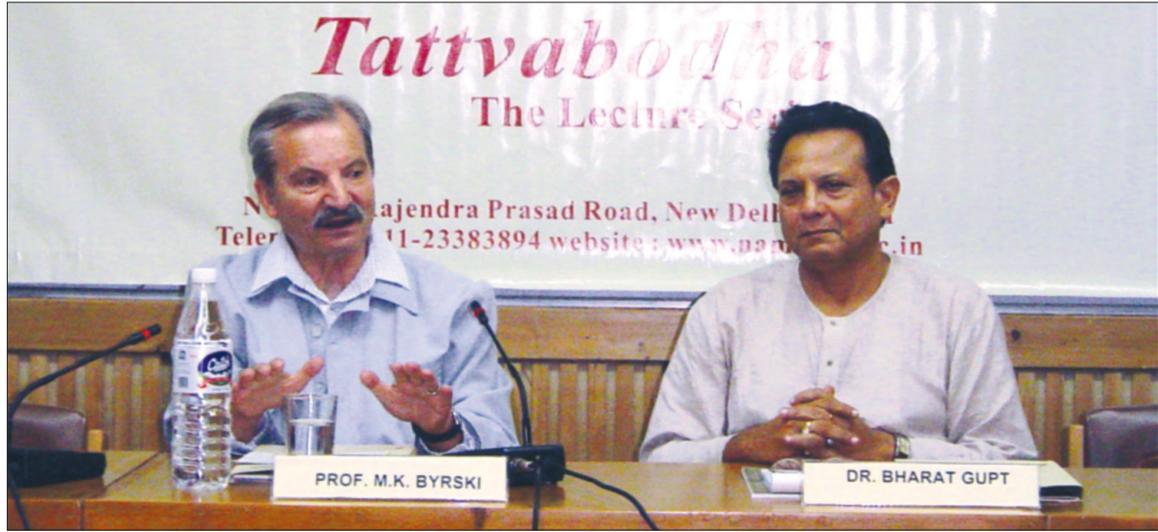
25th August: Dr Subas Pani’s lecture on ‘Tradition and Spirituality: An Exploration of the Mantras of *Gita Govinda*’ explored the historical context and spiritual atmosphere in Orissa at the time of the *Gita Govinda*. He chronicled the Krishna-isation of Jagannath in the 12th century and explained how Jayadeva and his *Gita Govinda* were an intrinsic part of this process, the text itself perhaps seeing its first enactment at the consecration of the Puri Jagannath Temple in 1142 A.D. This identification of the Vedic god (traditionally depicted as Chaturbhuj Vishnu) with Krishna as the lover and object of devotion of Radha was a part of this new process. According to Dr. Pani the kernel of this new belief system was simple surrender and devotion (though the Jagannath temple was run like a palace with elaborate ritual). Hence, through the *Gita Govinda*, Jayadeva allows this new consciousness to pass through him and emerge in the form of powerful mantras and verses. This naturally lent itself to pictorial depiction and Dr. Pani greatly enriched the audience’s experience through an visual exploration of the Orissa manuscripts and the rendition of the mantras of the *Gita Govinda*.

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National Mission for Manuscripts hosts a lecture series, **Tattvabodha**, whereby we organise one lecture every month at IIC, New Delhi at 6:30 pm on the last Thursday of every month. Along with this we also organise lectures at our various Manuscript Resource Centers and Manuscript Conservation Centers across the country. For more information please visit our website – www.namami.nic.in

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Prof. M.K. Byrski and Dr. Bharat Gupta

29th September: Prof. M. K. Byrski, University of Warsaw, spoke on 'Natyashastra: The Text and the Context' at India International Centre Annexe, New Delhi.

27th October: Prof. M. A. Lakshmithathachar, the founding director of the Veda Vijnana Vikasa Pratishthanam and currently the Director of the Samskriti Foundation presented a lecture on 'Sanskrit and Information Technology'. He elucidated the pioneering work being done to develop innovative technology to further the ties between IT and culture. Through the recitation of various Sanskrit verses, he further elaborated on the importance of Sanskrit language in the development of language technology. The lexicography in Sanskrit, its grammar and phonetics were highlighted and IT's contribution in the fields of Philosophy, Science and Technology was stated with examples. Prof. Lakshmithathachar also elaborated upon how Sanskrit and Information Technology could be both complimentary and supplementary to each other. He listed the ways in which IT could be utilized in the field of Sanskrit through programs to get verbal forms, programs on *Amarakosha*, *Tarkasangraha* teaching package and in Manuscriptology. Similarly, Sanskrit can be useful for the development of Information Technology through various ways. Developing tools for information retrieval, Knowledge Structuring, Knowledge Engineering, Speech Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Machine

Translation and Compression Techniques were some of the areas mentioned.

The **National Survey** was held recently in **Manipur, Karnataka and Assam**. The Survey was launched in Imphal on 16 October by senior government officials at the auditorium in the Kangla. The Survey in Karnataka was launched on 19 November by the Governor of Karnataka, Dr. T. Chaturvedi and inaugurated by the President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam on 21 November. In Assam, the Governor of Assam, Lt Gen (Retd.) Ajai Singh, launched the Survey on 27 November. The results of all three Surveys are eagerly awaited.

Answers to the Quiz

1. Stylus
2. Autograph
3. James Princep, 1835 A.D.
4. Sixty four
5. Epigraphy
6. Uncials
7. The Royal Collection of the House of Windsor, UK
8. Puspika
9. Archetype
10. Devanagari