

“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*

Editor: Neha Paliwal

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Assistant Editor : Mrinmoy Chakraborty

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National Mission for Manuscripts
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From the Editor

On 7th February 2006, the National Mission for Manuscripts celebrated its third anniversary as well as the commencement of many programs during its third year, the lessons learnt and experiences gained from them.

On this occasion, therefore, we wish to thank all of you who have shown us encouragement and helped us to make our work more effective and efficient. We could not have accomplished what we have without the constant support that you have provided us.

In this issue of *Kriti Rakshana*, the authors have addressed a variety of issues in as many fashions - stimulating concern regarding the study of Indian manuscripts; providing suggestions for the preservation of paper manuscripts; uncovering a truly remarkable storehouse of knowledge, the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library; attempting to understand the origins of Brahmi, the earliest deciphered script used in India, among others.

Once again, let us say that since we wish the publication to be read as widely as possible, we are mailing it, free of cost, to as many academic institutions, manuscript repositories and public organizations as possible. If you know of any such institution that we should mail *Kriti Rakshana* to, but are not currently doing so, please let us know.

If you have any queries or comments on any article or would like to tell us what you think about *Kriti Rakshana*, do let us know at director.namami@nic.in, or at Publications Division, NMM, No. 5, Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi – 110001. *Kriti Rakshana* is also available online and may be downloaded from www.namami.nic.in.

Neha Paliwal

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Manuscripts and Traditional Knowledge Systems

V.R. Panchamukhi

This is an excerpt from the inaugural address, delivered by V. R. Panchamukhi, at the international conference on 'Manuscripts and Indian Knowledge Systems' held in Chennai. The conference was jointly organised by National Mission for Manuscripts and Madras University from 9 to 11 February, 2006.

It is universally accepted that manuscripts constitute one of the most important basic source materials for 'knowledge' about diverse dimensions. However, cataloguing and mapping of manuscripts is not sufficient for understanding the knowledge that is contained in them. The following dimensions of research must also be attended to:

- (a) The systematic survey of works in both printed and manuscript form pertaining to different disciplines
- (b) The creation of what is called a prosopographical data base which will provide the means for reconstructing the linkages among intellectuals and the aspects of their social existence (educational lineages, patronage linkages and institutional and political affiliations)
- (c) The critical analysis of key texts of different disciplines

For this, the constituents of knowledge systems need to be spelt out clearly at the outset. Disciplines such as language and literature, history and culture, philosophy and religion, science and technology, medicinal knowledge, folklore and art that will be covered in this international conference form the different constituents of knowledge systems. However, the traditional categories of disciplines, such as, *siksha*, *kalpa*, *nirukta*, *vyakarana*, *chandas* and *vyotisha* need to be need to be reassessed alongside modern categories. Further, the typology of knowledge systems has to be useful

in the context of contemporary life. For example, the disciplines such as sociology, political science, economics, psychology, physics, botany, biology, law, administration, governance and environment could be considered for documenting ancient Indian knowledge systems in different categories in order to make them relevant for problems of contemporary life.

Scholars studying the history of civilization and culture have often raised the question as to why and when the glory of Sanskrit knowledge system has had its ups and downs over the past millennium. It is also often observed that the pre-colonial period two hundred years prior to 1750 was a golden period for the development of Sanskrit knowledge systems. It is during this period that many seminal contributions to diverse fields such as literature, *nyaya*, *mimamsa*, *vyakarana*, mathematics and physical sciences were made by intellectual stalwarts. However, there has been a decline in the glory of the Sanskrit knowledge systems since the beginning of the colonial era in the middle of the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, other historians have identified the beginning of the eleventh century as the starting point of this decline.

Unfortunately, even after independence we have done little to re-establish the glory of our ancient knowledge system and to demonstrate its usefulness to contemporary problems. It would be useful if we identify the indicators of this decay process and work out ways and means of averting this prospect in the future.

The tasks of survey of manuscripts, analyzing the knowledge systems and editing and publishing manuscripts will have to be pursued seriously. The fact that a large number of manuscripts had been taken away by foreign scholars and also the fact that a large number of manuscripts of great intellectual value are still remaining unedited and unpublished are matters of great shame and disgrace to the Indian

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intellectual community. We are all aware that Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which belongs to about fourth century BC, was edited and published only a hundred years ago, (in 1902 A.D.) by the illustrious scholar, Pandit Shyama Shastri, on the basis of a single copy of the manuscript, then available with the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore. What a wonderful store-house of knowledge system in the field of political science, economics, moral science and diplomacy would have been lost to us if it had remained unpublished!

My point is that our approach to the task of preservation of knowledge systems should go beyond the initial exercise of survey and digital preservation of manuscripts. The scope of our activities should be extended, sooner rather than later, to the tasks of editing and publishing of manuscripts of seminal intellectual value. For this purpose, the National Mission for Manuscripts needs to be further strengthened in terms of resources and extended to the next phase of activities.

Knowledge Society - Is it a new concept?

We often hear in recent times that the latter part of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty first century constitute a new era of 'knowledge' and it is also argued that all sections of the society should equip themselves adequately to become partners in the global knowledge society with a view to reap advantages from the emerging knowledge revolutions. But this is not the first time when mankind has had the opportunity of stepping into the realm of 'a knowledge society'. The primacy of 'knowledge' in influencing the behaviour of man has been recognized from time immemorial. Bhagavadgita pronounces:

'Na hi jnanena sadrisam pavitramiha vidyate'
(There is nothing as sacred as knowledge in this world)

'Sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapyate'
(Oh, Partha, all activities have acquisition of knowledge as their ultimate goal)

In the past there have been many epochs of new knowledge that have changed the course of

civilizations and cultures, and have determined the framework of 'human welfare'. It is important to recognize that the scope and content of 'the notion of knowledge' have also undergone significant changes from time to time. We will be making a grievous error in our assessment of human capabilities if we do not recognize and admire the knowledge revolutions that have occurred in the past. There was a knowledge revolution when Panini introduced a fundamental theory and practice in the fields of linguistics, phonetics and grammar in seventh century BC. A century later there was yet another defining moment when Kanada made pioneering contributions to the field of physical sciences by classifying the physical world into seven categories with several sub-categories (*dravya, guna, karma, samanya, visesha, samavaya* and *abhava*) by explicitly mentioning the physical and chemical properties of different objects (such as *gandhavati prithivi*) and also by introducing the concept of atom (*Anu*) in the analysis of the material world. Cole Book pronounced that it is the *Bharatadesha* that was the pioneer in the field of atomic theory. There was an epoch of knowledge revolution when Kautilya wrote a treatise on statecraft and economic management. Similarly, there were knowledge revolutions when Aryabhata of the fifth century AD, Varahamihira of the sixth century AD and Bhaskaracharya of the thirteenth century AD made their pioneering contributions to the fields of mathematics and astronomy. In later periods, too, there have been many epochs of knowledge revolutions.

Thus, the recent IT revolution should be considered in this perspective of a history of knowledge revolutions that the Indian genius has brought about from time to time. It is important to recognize that the reservoir of manuscripts has been crucial in understanding the turning points of knowledge revolutions in India. It is also necessary to assert here that pride in our knowledge heritage is an essential pre-requisite for capacity-building required to face the challenges of the new knowledge societies that are evolving at present.

Information, Knowledge and Wisdom

There is a subtle but extremely important distinction between information, knowledge, and

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wisdom. Knowledge is a relatively more purposeful attribute than information which, by itself, may be purposeless. In order to convert information into knowledge we need some special skills and capabilities. The IT revolution has substantially expanded the scope and opportunities for accumulation of information. But unfortunately, we are failing to build appropriately strong infrastructure systems for information holders to convert this information into knowledge. Again, not all types of knowledge are conducive to the promotion of human welfare. An individual should be equipped with the capability to distinguish between right and wrong, to ensure that information and knowledge become instruments for the promotion of human welfare and not mechanisms for its destruction. One should also be able to align information and knowledge with the needs of contemporary society. It is here that the role of wisdom becomes important. Thus, it is our responsibility not only to convert information into knowledge, but also to ensure that wisdom employs knowledge to serve the cause of human welfare.

It is worthwhile to recall what Krishna preached to Arjuna:

*Yada te mohakalilam buddhirvyatitarishyati,
Tada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya srutasya cha.*

(Oh. Arjuna, you have a lot of information and a lot of knowledge too. But your power of reasoning has been polluted. It is only when that becomes free from perverse obsessions that you will be able to distinguish right from wrong and recognize your prime duty)

In the traditional Indian knowledge system, the indriyas, manas, and buddhi constitute the basic sources for information, knowledge and wisdom. The contact of indriyas with the objects of the world generates information. It is the manas and buddhi, which together convert information into knowledge. However, it is buddhi that provides the flow of reasoning for distinguishing right from wrong. Therefore, the promotion of human welfare depends upon the nature of the interface between indriyas, manas and buddhi. While Bhagavadgita – a great treatise on human psychology and behaviour –

provides a cogent theory and practice for promoting the welfare of mankind, we need to do a lot more to demonstrate the relevance of this aspect of the knowledge system to face contemporary societal challenges.

Jnana, Vijnana and the Attributes of the Knower

Another unique feature of the Indian traditional knowledge system is a subtle but important distinction between jnana and *vijnana*. Bhagavadgita pronounces that it is the combination of these two that would help in liberating oneself from the bondage of this world. In common terms, *jnana* refers to information and general knowledge about the material world around us. The term *vijnana* refers to a deeper knowledge of the material world in terms of its physical and chemical properties, the genesis of its existence and transformations that take place in the physical world around us. Since the prefix ‘vi’ refers to paramatman, the word *vijnana* also brings in the spiritual dimension of our knowledge system. *Jnana* and *vijnana* together imply holistic knowledge about the physical and spiritual dimensions of the material world around us. Unless we understand the fact that the attributes of the material world are governed by the influence of the supreme authority called paramatman, our knowledge of the material world will remain partial and hence useless in liberating ourselves from the bondage of distorted influences upon us.

Bhagavadgita says:

*Jnanam vijnanasahitam yajnatwa mokshyase
asubhat.*

The traditional knowledge system goes further in strengthening even this holistic approach. Bhagavadgita spells out the thesis that it is not enough to possess *jnana* and *vijnana*. It is essential that the knower have some special attributes if he desires to make knowledge a useful instrument. These attributes are as follows: absence of selfishness, craze and possessiveness and control on sense organs. It is also desired that a truly knowledgeable person should focus on his duties and not rights. He is also expected to care for the welfare of the

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society even at the cost of sacrificing his personal benefits. He should be conscious of the fact that the ultimate purpose of acquiring knowledge is to free his mind from the bondages of prejudices, pettiness and narrow dispositions. The Upanishadic statement runs as follows: “*Sa vidya ya vimuktaye*”, which means, “that alone is education which enables you to free yourself from the bondage of mental prejudices and biases”.

Bhagavadgita says:

*Jnanavijnana triptatma kootastho vijitendriyah.
Yukta ityuchyate yogi sama loshtashma kanchanah.*
(Even though one is saturated with material knowledge and even spiritual knowledge, one should become a *yogi (yukta)*, by acquiring the required attributes, such as, control over sense organs, being equanimous and considering both gold and earth equally. Only then, he would be able to serve the cause of human welfare and happiness.)

It is only in the Indian knowledge system that such a perfectly integrated approach to the process of acquiring knowledge is recognized. As stated earlier, three dimensions of the knowledge system namely, the physical aspect, the spiritual aspect, and the attributes of the knower, are emphasized as the pre-requisites for happiness and welfare.

Contextualizing Ancient Knowledge System

Furthermore, in order to enhance respect for and acceptability of our ancient knowledge system, we should demonstrate its relevance to the contemporary world. I would only illustrate this point by referring to some specific parts of our ancient knowledge system. Take for instance, the knowledge base contained in Bhagavadgita. In the traditional parlance, Bhagavadgita is regarded as a profound text of philosophy useful in understanding the *sadhana marga* for realizing ultimate Mukti. However, if we analyze the content of Bhagavadgita from the point of view of its relevance to our everyday life, it could be regarded as a fundamental treatise of human behaviour and as a source book for techniques of management, useful in the modern world. It

begins by conceiving man in a holistic framework – as a blend of materialism and spiritualism, (Dharma Kshetra and Kuru Kshetra), and puts forward a holistic paradigm of efficient management of human resources. It sets out the theory and practice for optimum management of oneself and presents the necessary and sufficient conditions for a manager to be efficient in all respects. The description of a *Satwika Karta* given in Bhagavadgita is relevant here:

*Muktasango anahamvadi dhrityutsahasamanvitah.
Sidhysidhyoh nirvikarah karta satwika uchyate.*
(A *satwika karta* is one who has the following attributes: freedom from obsession, never appropriating credit for oneself, possession of courage and enthusiasm and equanimity between successes and failures).

Similarly, it may be noted that the ancient *Mimamsa* Rules of Interpretation could be effectively used in our contemporary judicial system for resolving many complex situations that cannot be resolved by the modern principles of jurisprudence.

I am making these points to emphasize the need for mustering new faith, confidence and courage in the task of demonstrating the applicability of our ancient knowledge system to the challenges of the modern world. We need not be apologetic whenever we make references to the source materials of our ancient knowledge system, such as, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavadgita and Puranas, when we are able to use them in the contemporary situations. I would urge all the researchers both in the National Mission for Manuscripts and also in the study of the knowledge systems to keep in mind that contextualization is one of the very effective modalities for the preservation of our knowledge system.

Editing, Publication and Dissemination

Let me in this final section present, some of my suggestions for making our exercise on the National Mission for Manuscripts hitherto more effective and enduring. The exercise of survey and documentation of manuscripts should be much more decentralized than what is happening

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today. We have in our midst a large number of *Pathasalas*, *Gurukulas*, *Mutts*, and also Deemed Universities, Sanskrit departments, and individual scholars. All these micro level institutions need to be actively participating in the exercise of survey and cataloguing. I am aware that some decentralization of the work programme has been put in place. But, maybe the message of the sharing of the responsibility has to be more widely canvassed by involving more institutions.

There are a large number of Post-graduate, M. Phil. and Ph.D. students in many Sanskrit departments and institutions in the different parts of the country. Editing, preparation of press copy and publication of at least one manuscript should be made mandatory for getting their final degrees for all these students. If this step is taken, we can hope that thousands of manuscripts would be published in the course of the next five to ten years.

There should be special incentives to the teachers and researchers in the different universities and vidyapeethas for editing and

publishing the manuscripts. Institutions should be given special funds for editing and publishing all the holdings of manuscripts that they possess in their libraries. Of course, some special allocation of funds would become necessary for this purpose.

Special research teams should be set up for preparing details of contextualization of the knowledge systems in the different disciplines, for the contemporary world. Syllabi and reading materials should be so designed that the relevance of the knowledge systems to the contemporary world is brought out. Such an exercise should be conducted for education at the school level, college level, and the university level. There should also be some general books in simple readable style for the benefit of the public at large. Such multidisciplinary initiatives are required to propagate the greatness and relevance of our ancient knowledge system.

V. R. Panchamukhi is Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, (Deemed University), Tirupati

Quiz

1. What is the study of ancient handwriting and scripts called?
2. In which state of India was *Lasoluwa*, the traditional practice of preparing ink prevalent?
3. In which language was the old Jaina literature mostly written?
4. Who is the author of *Lilavati*?
5. In which script was the medieval Marathi royal documents written?
6. The New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC) is one of the most important catalogueing projects of manuscripts in India. Name the institution that has started this project.
7. Name the script from which the Devanagari script evolved.
8. He wrote *Astadhyayi* and gave authentic grammatical rules to literary Sanskrit language. He is the most famous grammarian of India and regarded as the father of classical Sanskrit. Who is he?
9. What does the word 'Veda' mean?
10. Who is the author of *Soundarya Lahari*?



Brahmi script in seal of Gupta Period, Gurukul, Jhajjar

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Origin of Brahmi Script: A Continuing Debate

Kiran Kumar Thaplyal

Period of Emergence

The tradition of writing in India goes back to the Harappan period. However, from the end of the Harappan civilization, circa 1500 BC, until the third century BC, no inscriptions have come to light. There is a view that with the decline of the urban Harappan civilization, the art of writing was lost, although this point may be countered by certain graffiti marks on the pottery of the post-Harappan period, resembling some Harappan signs, may indicate the continuation of Harappan writing for some more centuries. It is also argued that the non-availability of inscriptions for the period marking the end of the Harappan civilization and the third century BC may be because perishable material was used for writing, and this did not last long in the tropical climate of India. It may also be stated that a few inscriptions on stone, such as the Piprahwa Relic Casket inscription recording the consecration of the relics of Buddha, the Mahasthan Stone inscription and the Sahagaura copper plate inscription, may be dated two centuries before Asoka. Both the Mahasthan Stone inscription and the Sahagaura copper plate inscription are related to store houses that were meant to store grains and allied materials as preventive measures to counter the famine. Many scholars consider the Asokan inscriptions recorded on rocks, stone pillars, excavated caves and stone slabs to be the earliest Brahmi records.

Origin of the Script

There is considerable difference of opinion amongst scholars regarding the origin of the Brahmi script. While some scholars consider it to be of foreign origin, others believe it has indigenous origins. Interestingly, there is a lack of unanimity of opinion even amongst scholars who believe it has foreign origins and North Semetic, South Semetic, Phoenician, Aramaic

and Greek have been suggested variously by different scholars. Certain letters of these scripts resemble Brahmi letters but many differ, and in some cases, even those letters that resemble those of Brahmi do not have the same phonetic value as the original. Brahmi is written from left to right, while the Semetic scripts are written from right to left. The view that Indians borrowed the script but made definitive changes in it including changing the direction of writing is not fully convincing. Cunningham had suggested that Brahmi evolved from pictographs. Some scholars are of the view that it was derived from the Harappan script. Though certain letters of that script resemble those of Brahmi, yet in the absence of our knowledge about their phonetic value, the theory remains tentative. S. R. Goyal is of the opinion that the Brahmi of Asokan period was invented on Asoka's initiative. Asoka was keen that people should be acquainted with his policies, the works of public welfare carried out by him and the measures taken by him for the material and moral upliftment of his own subjects as also people residing in the neighbouring kingdoms.

The suggestion made by S. R. Goyal is indeed ingenious. But the references to writing in early Buddhist scriptures, the sutras, Panini's *Astadhyayi* etc. and references to writing on India in the accounts of Greek historians in the time of Chandragupta Maurya would indicate that writing was practiced at least a couple of centuries earlier than this theory suggests. Some scholars believe that it should have taken two centuries for the script to attain the form it displays in Asokan time. There are scholars who believe that writing existed even during the Vedic age, which is to be dated several centuries before the Buddha. It has been pointed out that at least the Brahmi literature which is in prose could not have been preserved without committing it to writing.

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Institution in Focus

Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library

P. Perumal

The literary treasures of ancient India were preserved in the houses of *pandits*, temples, mutts and palaces of kings who were patrons of art and letters. One such collection is the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, amongst the few medieval libraries that still function at present. An almost inexhaustible treasure house of knowledge, it was built up by the successive dynasties of the Nayakas and Marathas of Thanjavur. This library embodies very rare and valuable collection of manuscripts, books, maps and paintings on all aspects of arts, culture and literature.

Although it was conceived and christened as the Royal Palace Library by the Nayaka Kings of Thanjavur (1535- 1676), the development of the library into a monumental institution took place under the patronage of the Maratha kings of Thanjavur (1676-1855). Until the reign of the last Maratha queen, the library was part of the palace property. In 1918, however, the royal family made it a public library. Since then the library has been called the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library. In 1986, the library was registered as a society under the Tamil Nadu Registered Societies Act, 1975. The society consists of ex-officio members of both Central and State governments, nominated scholars, member from the royal family and the director of the library. The Honourable Education Minister of the Government of Tamil Nadu functions as the chairman of the society. The library receives funds from the Government of Tamil Nadu for its maintenance and from the Government of India for its developmental activities.

Manuscript Collection

This library has a rich collection of manuscripts that are truly reflective of the history and culture of India. In addition to this, and over the

passage of time, the library has also gained possession of manuscript collections formerly maintained by *pandits* and their patrons living in and around Thanjavur. The manuscripts are available both on palm leaf and paper. These are written in Sanskrit, Tamil, Marathi and Telugu and deal with a wide range of subjects.

Linguistic Composition of the Library Sanskrit Manuscripts

A majority of the manuscripts in the library, numbering thirty nine thousand and three hundred, are in Sanskrit. These manuscripts are written in Grantha, Devanagari, Nandinagari and Telugu scripts. Some of the outstanding Sanskrit works, unique to this library, deserve a special mention. Amongst these, some of the most valuable ones are rare lexicons, the grammar of a rare dialect called Bhandira Bhasha, a play written by King Krishnadevaraya titled *Jambavatiparinaya*, *Vivarnadarpana* by Rangaraja (father of the great Appayya Dikshita), *Krishnacharita* of *Agastyapandita*, *Tattva Chintamanivakyahya* by Dharmarajadhvrin, poetess Ramabhadramba's biographical poem on her patron King Raghunatha Nayak, works of Venkadamakin and Sadasiva Brahmentra Saraswati and a large number of short *Advaita-Prakaranas*. *Sakaladhikaram* and *Vimanarchana Kalpam*, a work on temple architecture and *Viswakarmiyavastu Sastra* on construction of houses respectively, may also be found here. Two texts in this section which show the scholar's mastery of the language and grammar are *Shabdārtha Chinatamani* and the *Kathatrayi* of Chidamabara Kavi. In *Shabdārtha Chintamani*, the poet uses several rare techniques of writing. Reading the stanza from left to right, we find ourselves reading Ramayana and reading the same stanza from right to left, we come across the story of Krishna. His other work, *Kathatrayi* narrates stories from Ramayana and Bhagavatam.

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This library has a large number of manuscripts on music and dance, ayurveda medicine, architecture etc. Sarasvati Mahal library also has manuscripts on *Kshetramahatmyas*, the puranic accounts of the sanctity and legends attached to great shrines and sacred villages and towns found in the Cauvery delta. The post scripts of several manuscripts carry very interesting historical, biographical and other information related to owners, copyists, date of copying et al.

Marathi Manuscripts

The Marathi manuscripts in this collection are largely in paper form, although a few of them, written in the Telugu script and on palm leaf may also be found. Marathi manuscripts. Collected during the reign of the Marathas in Thanjavur, these manuscripts are the works of saint poets of the Ramadas and the Dattatreya mutts. The total number of Marathi manuscripts exceed three thousand and they are on varied subjects like philosophy, literature, drama, music, lexicon, medicine, science and several others. The works by the poets of Thanjavur are unique to

this library. Ramayana and Mahabharata by Madhava Swami, *Avadhuta Gita Tika* and *Ramasohala* by Meru Swami, *Sri Ramakrupa Vilasa* by Mukunda Swami, *Aatmabodha* by Raghava Swami and Bhagvat Gita by Ananta Mouni are some of the noteworthy works. Sarasvati Mahal Library also has a manuscript of Dasabodham by Bhaktha Ramadas and a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by Ambar Hussain, a Muslim poet. Several manuscripts related to music, dance and drama were written during Shahaji's reign (1684-1712) who seems to have been a prolific composer of *patham* and *sringara rasa*, both of which are philosophical works.

The Library's collection also shows that the Maratha kings of Thanjavur maintained day to day diaries: letters, orders, daily accounts and petitions which were written solely in Modi script and in Marathi language. Written on paper, these have been preserved in one thousand three hundred and forty two bundles. These are the only indigenous source materials on the history of the Marathas of Thanjavur

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Entrance of the Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur



Telugu Manuscripts

The Telugu Manuscript section of the Library has one thousand and forty three palm leaf manuscripts and forty four paper manuscripts. *Padya Kavyas*, *Dvipada Kavyas*, *Satakas*, *Yakshaganas* are some of the manuscripts found in this section. The works of Nannaiya, Tikkanna, Bodanna, Krishnadevaraya, Vijayaraghava Nayak are also available. These are extremely valuable collections of manuscripts, particularly those related to the southern school of Telugu literature. The *Bhagavatamela*, a collection of dramas, was first written in Telugu language and is available here along with many other dramas written on palm leaves. Some of the rare Telugu works in this collection are *Prabhulinga Leela* by Piduparti Somanna, *Andhra Mahabharatam* and *Kamandaka Nitisastram*.

Tamil Manuscripts

The Tamil manuscript section has more than four thousand which on literature and medical sciences. All the manuscripts are in palm leaf form. Some of the rare works belonging to the Chola period are written in the *manipravala* style. The medical manuscripts, like Kottaiyur *Sivakolundu Sivarahasyam*, written by Tamil scholars, are amongst the oldest Tamil manuscripts, written as they were during the reign of Serfoji I; *Kumbakona-p-puranam* and *Sarabendra Bhoopala Kuravanchi* are notable in this regard.

Rare Manuscripts

Some of the oldest manuscripts, perhaps belonging to eleventh century, and currently in the possession of the library are *Phalavati*, *Makudagamah*, *Karanagamah*, *Vijayaratnam - Rathalakshnam Shivanubhava Sutrnam* and the *Vathulottara Tantra*. The earliest dated palm leaf manuscript of this library is the *Andhrabhagavatam* by Pottanna in Telugu.

Reference Books

Along with manuscripts, the library also has rare printed books. The book collection of this library was started in 1820 A.D. by King Serfoji II who collected nearly four thousand five hundred books in English, French, Latin and Italian from

foreign countries. There are sixty five thousand books available for research scholars and readers. They are in different languages, namely Tamil, English, Sanskrit, Telugu, Marathi, Hindi and other Indian languages.

Other Collections

Besides books and manuscripts, this library possesses beautifully decorated Thanjavur style paintings on wood, canvas, glass and about five thousand folios of illustrated paper paintings such as *Gaja Sastra*, *Aswa Sastra*, mythological paintings, botanical specimen paintings, military costumes, *Chitra Ramayana* etc. This library has twenty rare atlases comprising five hundred maps and drawings.

The library also has a rich collection of miniature manuscripts, miniature paintings and manuscripts of micrographic writings. One such manuscript is *Shivaprapancharatna* stotram. Each letter in this work is made up of the microscopic term '*shiva shiva*'. It features an excellent calligraphy as well.

Circadian Functions

The main functions of this library are preservation, publication, cataloguing and service to scholars. This library publishes rare and unpublished manuscripts in the form of books to disseminate knowledge contained in the manuscripts. So far, the library has published four hundred and seventy three books. The digitization of all the manuscripts and rare books in the collection is in the pipeline and the work will start shortly.

The contact details of the Library are as follows:

Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library
Thanjavur - 613 009, Tamil Nadu
Phone no.: 04362-234-107

P. Perumal is a Conservator and Librarian (In-charge) at Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library. He is also the Project Coordinator for NMM's Manuscript Resource Center at the Library.

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Profile: King Serfoji II

The Greek philosopher Plato maintained that a philosopher king should be a man of learning as well as a selfless and a pious patriot. Kautilya also had more or less a similar notion. In India one such man was the Maratha king of Thanjavur, Maharaja Serfoji II who had a widespread range of interests. A monumental contribution of the scholarly king was the development of the Sarasvati Mahal Library as a treasure-house of knowledge.

As a child, Serfoji was adopted by King Tulajaji, although he was born in the royal Bhosale family. He studied at St. George's School in Madras under the direct supervision of Rev. C.F. Schwartz and in course of time became a scholar in his own right.

Serfoji II ascended the throne of Thanjavur in AD 1798 although the British deprived him of his power and took over Thanjavur in 1799 itself. However, he continued to manage all the temples and choultries in the kingdom and through these, he embarked on a project to promote social, cultural and educational activities on a hitherto unparalleled scale. He devoted his life to the pursuit of literature and culture, and as a result Thanjavur emerged as a great seat of learning.

During the reign of Serfoji II, the Dhanvanthari Mahal, a medical research centre dedicated to the research and practice of the alternate systems of medicine of Siddha, Unani and Ayurveda, became the nucleus of medical care in the state. He requested some scholars to document all the health disorders of the time and the result was a scholarly treatise *Sarabendra Vaidya Muraiga* that dealt with, among other things, diseases of the eye. Furthermore, he also practised surgery. The removal of the cataract by the couching method that he advocated and practiced as early as in the eighteenth century was perhaps as stunning an achievement as those of his European counterparts of that era.

Serfoji's love of learning and thirst for knowledge led him to enrich Sarasvati Mahal Library. The old books in European languages in this library were largely collected by him

and for these he sent many pundits far and wide to collect a large number of books and manuscripts for this library. When he visited Benares, he employed many pundits to collect, buy and copy a vast number of works from all the renowned centers of Sanskrit learning in the north and other far-flung areas. In his collection, there were more than four thousand five hundred books in English, French, Italian and Danish. These books deal with many subjects including musical notations. In almost each book one may note the autograph of Serfoji recording the years of acquisition and some of them also feature marginalia in his own hand. It is a fitting tribute to Serfoji that the oldest existing library in India is named after him.

In leaving us such an enriching legacy as the Serfoji Sarasvati Mahal Library is, as also in living an exemplary life, Serfoji II clearly set a standard for his contemporaries as well as the rest of us.



King Serfoji II

Kriti Rakshana



Thanjavur Library as a Realm of Knowledge

Dominik Wujastyk

A visitor to the Indian city of Thanjavur finds two great cultural monuments. The first is the Temple of Brihadisvara, one of the most magnificent temples in India. The temple was founded almost one thousand years ago by King Rajrajesvara of the Chola dynasty (985-1016).



Manuscripts collection at Saraswati Mahal Library, Thanjavur

The second is a library, called The Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library. The library is four hundred and fifty years old, and has functioned as a repository for the literature, music and paintings of many generations of south Indian scholars and artists, and as a focus for the intellectual and social world that surrounded and supported this activity. The Brihadisvara temple - primarily, of course, a religious space - functioned in cooperation with the library as a performance space in which new devotional music could be sung, or newly composed plays be performed.

Local Literary Culture

It was the kings of the Chola dynasty who initiated the building of the great Temple, and moulded Thanjavur into a religious and cultural centre. It was the kings and ministers of their successors, the Nayakas, who encouraged Sanskrit learning, and who began to collect the manuscripts that would form the nucleus of the great Library. King Sevappa Nayaka (1532 - 1580) who founded the Nayaka dynasty in Thanjavur in 1532 had a long, predominantly peaceful and prosperous reign. He is remembered for his generosity, his building and upkeep of temples and his gift of tax-free land to Brahmin communities. In the latter years of his rule, or perhaps after his retirement from the throne, Sevappa engaged the services of a learned Brahmin, Govinda Diksita, as priest and advisor. King Sevappa and Govinda Dikshita embarked on an ambitious programme of cultural renewal and development. Sevappa's son Achyutappa began his rule of Thanjavur in 1580. Like his father he also patronized learning and devoted substantial resources to the repair and development of many temples in the Kaveri river delta.

Achyutappa appointed his son Raghunatha as regent quite early in his reign. The young prince

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was a favourite at the court and celebrated for his remarkable academic aptitude. Raghunatha was educated by Govinda Dikshita among others, and showed great promise in the Sanskrit scholarly disciplines and the martial arts. He is said to have written plays, poems and dramas in both Sanskrit and Telugu, and to have been a fine musician. The king also gave benefactions and prizes to scholars, and attracted learned academics to his court. More than any of the earlier Nayaka rulers of Thanjavur, Raghunatha was himself a creative writer and musician and patron of scholarship.

Govinda Dikshita's association with the court of Thanjavur lasted approximately from 1575 to 1634. During this long period, Govinda's intellectual and organizational influence on the south Indian court and on the culture of the entire Kaveri delta was most powerful.

Govinda Dikshita was a pivotal figure in the intellectual configuration of Thanjavur district around 1600 AD. Two of his sons, Yajnanarayana and Venkatesvara, were themselves leading scholars. The former wrote two biographical memoirs of the court, focusing on king Raghunatha, as well as a work on rhetoric and poetics. The latter wrote a series of works of high scholastic theory in liturgical hermeneutics on ritual, on trigonometry and on music. Govinda's descendants appear to have continued the tradition of scholarship for hundreds of years. Although little of Govinda Dikshita's own writing survives, his reputation as a scholar and patron emerges powerfully in the inscriptional record and in stray references in the scholarly and biographical works of his son, contemporaries and successors. In Govinda Dikshita's direct patronage of Sanskrit culture, and in the network of scholars that grew up around him and the Thanjavur court in this period, the earliest seeds of the great Thanjavur library can be found.

A vibrant network of Sanskrit and Telugu scholars, and a library to support their productivity, was established in Thanjavur from the start of the seventeenth century, and this cultural formation continued until the 1670s under Vijayaraghava Nayaka. But the dynasty was entering its last years. A disastrous series of events was about to destroy the Nayakas of Thanjavur, but the same events were to open an

entirely new set of cultural opportunities.

Under the Maratha king Ekoji and his influential and cultured wife Dipamba, Thanjavur once again became a vibrant centre of Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Maratha culture. Dance, music and painting flourished, and scholars from all over south India began to migrate to Thanjavur to participate in the new court.

By the end of the seventeenth century, when Thanjavur was under the rule of Ekoji's eldest son, who transformed the palace library from a modest royal collection into a major cultural centre. Through king Sahaji's patronage, encouraged by his mother Dipamba, a new surge of scholarship delivered a new cache of manuscripts to the Thanjavur library. King Sahaji himself was a prolific author, composing no less than twenty five works in Telugu. The subsequent rulers of the Thanjavur Maratha dynasty also contributed many of their scholarly works to the library collections. For example, king Tulaji, Sahaji's youngest brother, wrote several interesting and original treatises on medicine, astrology and music.

The Foundation of a New College

In or just before 1693, in south India, king Sahaji founded an academic community in the village of Tiruvisainallur, on the bank of the river Kaveri. He arranged for homes and land in the village to be donated tax-free and in perpetuity to a group of forty six scholars and their descendants. Some of these scholars settled in the village itself, while others made Thanjavur their base. But they formed a single intellectual community, networked not only through their academic work but in many cases, through ties of family and origin. In the years to come, the scholars of this college would produce a flood of literature on all aspects of the arts and sciences, including linguistics, theology, philosophy, law and ethics, drama and medicine. The manuscripts of all this work are housed in the Thanjavur library.

One of the first scholars to arrive in Tiruvisainallur was the great Ramabhadra Dikshita who was a pivotal intellectual figure of the period. Through his education, he was in receipt of scholarly influences from some of the

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greatest teachers of the age. Through his students and his own writings, he amplified and passed on the learning to a large number of later scholars. Some names worth mentioning are Chokkanatha Dikshita, Neelakantha Dikshita and Sreedharavenkatesa.

But it was king Serfoji II (reign 1798-1833) who projected the library to a new level of importance. This development was of a character quite different from the earlier history of the library. Presiding over a great cultural flowering in Thanjavur, he gathered over twenty-five Marathi scholars and poets in his court, and at least half a dozen specialists each in Sanskrit and Telugu. Serfoji's interests in Sanskrit literature were similar to those of a modern historian: he studied and collected these materials as authoritative sources for his own intellectual pursuits, which were conducted not in Sanskrit but in Marathi, Tamil, and to some extent even in English.

Serfoji collected manuscripts actively and was responsible for the transformation of the Sarasvati Mahal Library from a relatively small courtly manuscript collection into a colossal trans-regional library. Records of many of his acquisitions still survive. The library contains a long list of the manuscripts that Serfoji brought from Varanasi. This was the largest single accession ever made to the library.

Following Serfoji's death, his son King Shivaji (reign 1832-1855), the last king of Thanjavur, continued to add manuscripts and printed books imported from England. By the nineteen eighties, the total number of manuscripts in the Sarasvati Mahal Library had risen to forty four thousand, of which thirty seven thousand were in Sanskrit. In the twentieth century, the library has adopted a policy of receiving collections from the families of noted scholars.

Reflections

Through approximately twenty generations, the multiple intersecting lines of family, teachers, pupils and patrons have created incredibly complex networks of high knowledge in the Kaveri delta. In many cases these lines are still traceable in the twentieth century and some even to the present day. At the political heart of the region stands the temple city of Thanjavur, with its great library, filled with thousands of quiet manuscripts that preserve the thoughts of scholars from Thanjavur, the surrounding villages, from south India and from the whole Indian subcontinent.

"A fuller version of this paper will appear in French translation in the book Lieux et Communautés vol.1 of Les Lieux de Savoir, edited by Christian Jacob (Paris: Michel Albin, 2006)



Folio from manuscript preserved at Sarasvati Mahal Library, Thanjavur

Kriti Rakshana



गीतगोविन्द की संस्कृति

दिलीप कुमार राणा

उपक्रम-

‘संस्कृति’ शब्द से मानव के व्यक्तित्व का विकास या उसकी जीवनशैली का ही ज्ञान होता है। प्राकृतिक परिस्थिति, सामाजिक परिस्थिति, दार्शनिक प्रवृत्तियाँ, तथा धार्मिक जीवन आदि के द्वारा सांस्कृतिक सिद्धान्तों का आविर्भाव होता है। भारतीय संस्कृति वैदिक साहित्य, धर्म, दर्शन, इतिहास तथा पुराणों के ऊपर आधारित है। पण्डित जयदेव विरचित सुललित गीतिकाव्य ‘गीतगोविन्द’ वैष्णवधर्माश्रित भक्तिभावयुक्त, संगीत, कला, शृंगार तत्त्व तथा अभिनयात्मक काव्य-कला से परिपूर्ण है। कवि जयदेव वैष्णव पण्डित थे। अतः गीतगोविन्द काव्य में श्रीमद्भागवत तथा ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण का छाप स्पष्ट दिखाई पड़ता है। इसलिए गीतगोविन्द तथा इसके अनुकृति काव्यों से सांस्कृतिक और सामाजिक जीवन का अध्ययन करना प्रायः कठिन-सा हो जाता है। फिर भी काव्य की रचना और ललितपदावली के आभास से ही इसका सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन सम्भव है। गीतगोविन्द का सांस्कृतिक अध्ययन करने से पहले कवि जयदेव का समय निर्धारण करना उचित है। यद्यपि उनका समय और जन्मस्थान केन्दुविल्व (3/10) मात्र संकेत के अलावा स्पष्टरूप से कहीं उल्लेख नहीं है; तथापि शिलालेख और प्रामाणिक ग्रंथों के आधार से अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है। परमवैष्णव जगन्नाथभक्त कवि जयदेव ने ‘पुरी’ के निवासकाल में गीतगोविन्द की रचना की थी (Descriptive Cat. Vol. II.05m)

कवि माधव पट्टनायक विरचित ‘वैष्णवलीलामृत’ तथा उत्कल के गंगवंशी इतिहास से ज्ञात होता है कि कामार्णवदेव (सन् 1147-1168), उसके बाद राघवदेव (1166-1170) ने उनके उत्तराधिकारी के रूप में उड़ीशा राज्य में शासन किया था। उसके बाद गंगवंश का अनीयदेव (1170-1198) ने राजत्व किया था। इसी के शासनकाल में ‘गीतगोविन्द’ की रचना हुई थी। राघवदेव के शासनकाल (1170-1198) के बीच में गोवर्धनाचार्य जी के अनुज उदयनाचार्य (1169-70) ने गीतगोविन्द की पहली टीका ‘भावविभाविनी’ लिखी थी, जो कि अभी केवल उदयपुर में उपलब्ध है। (New Catalogos Catalogorum, Uni. of Madras, Vol. and Des. Cat. of Skt. Mss. Orissa State Museum, vol. II) उड़ीशा के राजवंशीय राजा राजदेव के द्वारा निर्मित नियालि के शोभनेश्वर मंदिर तथा भुवनेश्वर के मेघेश्वर मंदिर (सन् 1170-1193) के शिलालेख से उदयनाचार्य कृत

गीतगोविन्द की प्रथम टीका तथा उस समय की सांस्कृतिक परिवेश के विषय में संकेत भी मिलता है। (S.N. Rajguru, Inscription of Orissa, part-II)

उस समय जगन्नाथ मंदिर में गीतगोविन्द का नित्य-नैमित्तिक गान किया जाता था। जिसका प्रचार राजस्थान तक व्याप्त था। चन्द्रवरदायी रचित ‘पृथ्वीराजरासो’ नामक प्रशस्तिपरक ग्रंथ का उल्लेख 1169-70 सन् में किया गया है। कवि ने अपने इस काव्य में जयदेव का तथा गीतगोविन्द का जयगान किया है। यथा- “जयदेव अट्टं कवि कव्वरायम्। किनै केवलं कीर्ति गोविन्दगायम्॥” आदि। अतः सन् 1169 से पहले या उसी समय तक गीतगोविन्द की रचना हो चुकी थी। यद्यपि अनेक विद्वान् जयदेव को बंगाल के राजा लक्ष्मणसेन के राजसभा पण्डित या उनके समसामयिक मानते हैं, किन्तु यह असत्य और निराधार है। क्योंकि लक्ष्मणसेन का समय सन् 1184 से 1205 ईस्वी था। संपूर्ण गीतगोविन्द में लक्ष्मणसेन के नाम का कहीं भी जिक्र नहीं है। अतः गीतगोविन्द की रचना सन् 1156 से 1168 ईस्वी सन् के बीच में ही माना जाता है।

धार्मिक-जीवन

इतिहासकारों के अनुसार रामानुज के ‘पुरी’ में आगमन के बाद सन् 1122 में जगन्नाथ मंदिर का निर्माण कार्य आरम्भ हुआ, तथा अनङ्गभीमदेव के समय में पूर्ण हुआ; परन्तु यह युक्तियुक्त नहीं है। क्योंकि इससे 450 साल पहले आदि शंकराचार्य जी ने ‘पुरी’ आकर यहाँ अपना मठ स्थापित किया था। इतना ही नहीं, अपितु जगन्नाथ को श्रीकृष्ण या विष्णु का अवतार मानकर श्री शंकराचार्यजी ने ‘जगन्नाथाष्टक’ की रचना की थी। अतः उस समय भी ‘पुरी’ एक वैष्णवक्षेत्र के रूप में प्रसिद्ध था। रामानुज के समसामयिक निम्बार्काचार्य ने सर्वप्रथम ‘दशश्लोकी’ के माध्यम से राधाकृष्ण की उपासना का प्रचार किया था। अतः राधामाधव की उपासना समाज में प्रचलित थी, जिसकी झलक गीतगोविन्द के प्रथम श्लोक “मेघैर्मेदुरमम्बरं---” (1/1) में स्पष्ट मिलता है। संपूर्ण गीतगोविन्द में राधा का विरह, राधा-गोविन्द के कथोपकथन तथा उनकी दूतियों के संवादों से ज्ञात होता है कि, यह एक शृंगारिक-काव्य होने के साथ-साथ वैष्णवभक्ति की पराकाष्ठा को प्रदर्शित करनेवाला काव्य है। इसलिए जयदेवजी ने स्वयं द्वादश सर्ग में कहा है-

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“यद् गान्धर्वकलासु कौशलमनुध्यानं ----
श्रीगीतगोविन्दतः॥” (12/8)

उस समय वैष्णव समाज में देवदासी या देवगणिकाप्रथा प्रचलित थी। जगन्नाथ मंदिर में देवगणिका द्वारा नृत्य और गीतगोविन्द का गायन हुआ करता था। चोडगंगदेव के ‘मुखलिंगं शिलालेख’ से इसका पता चलता है (Inscription of Orissa Pt-II) डॉ. सत्यनारायण राजगुरु के अनुसार (Inscription of Orissa Pt. I, PP246) यह देवगणिकाप्रथा रामानुज के शिष्यों ने श्रीकूर्म मंदिर में प्रारंभ करवाया था। बाद में जगन्नाथ मंदिर में प्रचलित हुआ। कवि ने काव्य के प्रारंभ में ही “यदि हरिस्मरणे सरसं मनो --” कहा है, इससे स्पष्ट ज्ञात होता है कि इस काव्य में विष्णुभक्ति का रस प्रवाहित है। पुनश्च आदि में ही विष्णु का दशावतार वर्णन करके विष्णुभक्ति के स्रोत को और प्रखर किया है। तत्कालीन समाज में लक्ष्मी-नृसिंह तथा लक्ष्मी-नारायण की पूजा प्रचलित थी। किन्तु जयदेव ने निम्बार्कपंथी होने के कारण राधा की उपासना पर बल दिया है। अतः वैष्णवीय भक्ति को शृंगार, गीत तथा गान्धर्वकला के माध्यम से जनमानस को आकर्षित करने तथा उस रस में प्रवाहित करने के लिए जयदेव ने निःसंदेह एक नये युग का सूत्रपात किया था।

गान्धर्वकला-

द्वादश शती में जयदेव ने पहली बार एकरूपक के रूप में सु-शब्द योजना तथा ताल और लय के साथ गीतिकाव्य की रचना की। गीतगोविन्द के द्वादशसर्ग में नृत्य, गीत, वाद्य तथा गान्धर्वकला आदि के वर्णन से पता चलता है कि ये सब तत्कालीन सामाजिक संस्कृति का बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा था। जयदेव की पत्नी पद्मावती स्वयं एक नर्तकी तथा देवदासी थीं। उस समय के ब्रह्मेश्वर, लिंगराज, जगन्नाथ, शोभनेश्वर आदि मन्दिरों के उत्कीर्णित दिवारों को देखने से भी पता चलता है कि नृत्यांगना, वाद्य, वादक आदि गान्धर्वविद्या का समाज में विशेष आदर था एवं राजाओं के द्वारा कला का प्रचार-प्रसार होता था। गीतगोविन्द में “नृत्यति युवतीजनेन सखी” (1/28), “करतलतालतरलवलया वलितकलितकलस्वनवंशे, स सरसे सह नृत्यपरा॥” (1/45), अर्थात् वसन्त के आगमन

पर कोयल के गुंजन के साथ-साथ गीत गाना, नर्तकियों का सखियों के साथ नाचना, फिर कृष्ण के साथ करतालध्वनि और कंगनों के ताल के साथ नाचना आदि। इन सबसे स्पष्ट होता है कि समाज में लोकनृत्य और गीत तथा सामूहिकनृत्य आदि का आदर था। फिर “पीनपयोधरभारभरेण --- काचिदुदचित पंचमरागम्॥” (1/41)। विरहीजनों के द्वारा एक के बाद एक पंचमराग में गीत गाने से लगता है कि सामूहिक गान या कीर्तन होता था। जयदेव स्वयं संगीतज्ञ थे ही, साथ में उनकी पत्नी भी संगीत के साथ नृत्यज्ञान रखती थीं। पुनश्च “यदि मनसा नटनीयम्” (4-8) से समाज में अभिनय का प्रचलन ज्ञात होता है। अन्यच्च, जयदेव ने गीतगोविन्द में मालव, गुर्जरी, वसन्त, रामकेरी, गुणकेरी, कर्णाट-देशाख्य, देशवराही, मालवगौड, भैरवी, विभास आदि रागों का तथा रूपक, निःसार, यति, एकताली, अष्टताली आदि तालों का प्रयोग किया है। अतः तत्कालीन समाज में संगीत का आदर कितना था, इससे अनुमान किया जा सकता है।

अलंकार, वेशभूषा और प्रसाधन

गीतगोविन्द में जयदेव ने जिन अलंकारों, वेशभूषाओं तथा प्रसाधनों का प्रयोग किया है, उससे प्रतीत होता है कि तत्कालीन समाज में उनका प्रयोग होता था। तृतीय सर्ग में वर्णित- “हृदि विषलता हारो नायं भुजगनायकः। कुवलयदलश्रेणी कण्ठे न सा गरलद्युतिः॥” (3-11)। कृष्ण के कण्ठ में कोमल पत्तों के हार का सुशोभित होना इत्यादि से लगता है कि उस समय स्त्रियों की तरह पुरुष भी साजसज्जा करते थे। गीतगोविन्द में वर्णित वस्त्रों में “शीलय नीलनिचोलम्” (5-11), “संवीत पीताशुकं राधायाः” (7-14), “ध्वान्त नीलनिचोलचारुः” (11-11) आदि से राधा नीलरंग की साड़ी धारण करती थी ऐसा स्पष्ट होता है। पुरुष धोती या रेशमीवस्त्र धारण करते थे। जैसे “पीतवसनमनुगीत” (2-7), “नीलनिचोलमच्युत कनकनिकषरुचिशुचिवसनेन” (7-36) आदि से कृष्ण का शूद्र तथा पीतवस्त्र धारण करना भी स्पष्ट है। अर्थात् स्त्री और पुरुष साड़ी और धोती धारण करते थे। “विचकर्षकरेण दुकूले” (1-44) से लगता है कि लड़कियाँ दुपट्टा भी धारण करती थीं। गीतगोविन्द में व्यवहृत कांचीदाम, दुकूल, वसनभरणानि, कनकनिकषरुचि, सूची आदि शब्दों से प्रतीत हो रहा है कि -साधारणतः पुरुष और स्त्रियाँ उभय रेशमीवस्त्र परिधान करते थे। डॉ. रत्नगिरि राव ने भी इस बात की पुष्टि की है, कि कलिंग में उस समय हस्ततन्तु या वस्त्रवयन का उद्योग उच्चस्तर पर था (Cultural Advancement of Orissa under the Gangeas of Orissa, P P 115)। गीतगोविन्द में अलंकारों का वर्णन “तरलवलया वलिकलितस्वनवंशे” (1-45), “अहह कलयामि वलयादिमणिभूषणम्” (7-7), “मरकतवलयं मधुकरनिचयं च” (7-25), “चलवलयक्वपितैः” (11-5),



Folios from Gitagovinda, RORI, Jodhpur

Kriti Rakshana



Kriti Rakshana

“मंजीरकंकणमणिद्युतिदीपितस्य” (11-12),
 “कुचकुम्भयोरुपरि मणिमंजरी रंजयतु तव हृदयेशम्”
 (10-6), इत्यादिओं से ज्ञात होता है कि तत्कालीन समाज में स्त्रियाँ मणि तथा मणिजड़ित अलंकार धारण करती थीं। पुरुष भी हाथों में सुवर्ण वलय धारण करते थे। एकादश सर्ग में वर्णित राधा का सुन्दर शरीर मणिओं के किरण से देदीप्यमान हो रहा था, जो मणिग्रथित अलंकार धारण करने की रिवाज को सूचित करता है। यथा
 “मणिगणकिरणसमूहसमुज्ज्वलसुभगशरीरम्” (11/30)
 (Rajguru) स्त्री-पुरुष प्रकृति का सहारा लेकर भी अपने आप को सुसज्जित करते थे। जैसे – “विहित विशदकिसलयवलयो” (6-4), “नवभवदशाकदल-शयनसारे” (11-15), “कुरुवककुसुमं चपला सुषम” (7-23) आदि पद्यों से प्रतीत होता है कि पुष्पहार पुरुष और स्त्री दोनों गले में धारण करते थे। केशों को सुसज्जित करने के लिए स्त्रियाँ जूड़ों में पुष्प लगाती, कानों में पुष्पकनिका धारण करती तथा हाथों में पुष्प ग्रंथ करके बाँधती थी। इस तरह लोग प्राकृतिक संसाधनों से अपने शरीर को अलंकृत करते थे। इस प्रकार कोणार्क मंदिर, जगन्नाथ मंदिर, ब्रह्मेश्वर मंदिर तथा लिंगराज मंदिर के दीवारों में खुदी हुई नर्तकी, वाद्यकार, तथा अन्य मूर्तियों से भी तत्कालीन समाज के अलंकार विषयक रुचि के बारे में बहुत जानकारी मिलती है। उस समय स्त्री-पुरुष दोनों केशविन्यास करते थे। गीतगाविन्द में वेणी व जूड़ों का वर्णन मिलता है। स्त्री-पुरुष उभय शरीर में ठंडक लाने के लिए चन्दन का लेप करते थे तथा ललाट में भी चंदन बिन्दु लगाते थे। स्त्रियाँ कभी-कभी स्तन प्रदेश में भी चंदन, कंकुम, सुगन्ध कस्तुरी आदि लगाती थीं। इन बातों के बारे में गीतगाविन्द में “पद्मापयोधरतटी ---” “दिक् सुन्दरी चन्दनबिन्दुरिन्दु” (7-1), “चंदनचर्चितनीलकलेवर” आदि उदाहरण मिलते हैं। “अक्षौ निक्षिपदंजनम्, कज्जलमलिनविलोचनचुम्बन” (8-3) आदि से भी पता चलता है कि स्त्री का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली राधा अपनी आँखों में काजल लगाया करती थी। गीतगाविन्द में कृष्ण का काजल लगाने वाली बात स्पष्ट नहीं है। किन्तु रत्नगिरि राव ने अपने पुस्तक में पुरुषों का काजल लगाना स्वीकार किया है। तत्कालीन लिखित ग्रंथ ‘एकावली’ और ‘आर्यासप्तशती’ से भी पता चलता है कि पुरुष और स्त्री दोनों काजल लगाते थे। “चरणकमलदलक्तसिक्त,” (8-5), “प्रियापादालक्तच्छुरित” (8-10) आदि से पता चलता है कि स्त्रियाँ पैरों में लाक्षारस या अलक्त लगाया करती थीं। “नखरुचि किंशुकजाले” वर्णन से नखों पर प्राकृतिकरंग (नैल पालिश) का व्यवहार करने का उदाहरण मिलता है। होठों पर कुंकुम व्यवहार करने का वर्णन भी मिलता है। यथा – “बन्धुकद्युति बांधवोऽयमधरः” (10-14), “सुधासंवाधविम्बाधर” (11-22), “निर्धृताऽधरशोणिमाविलुलितः” (12-4) राधाकृष्ण के

मिलन के बाद राधा के अधर से शोणिमा अर्थात् रक्तिमा छूट जाना स्पष्ट करता है कि उस समय होठों पर प्रसाधन व्यवहार किया जाता था। स्त्रियाँ सीमन्तप्रदेश में सिन्दूर धारण करती थीं। यथा – “स्वयं सिंदूरेण द्विपरणमुदा” (11-34)। अतः यह स्पष्ट हो रहा है कि आजकल की तरह उस समय स्त्री और पुरुष अपने आप को सजाते और सँवारते थे। अन्तर केवल इतना है कि अब रासायनिक वस्तुओं का प्रयोग अधिक होता है, उस समय प्रसाधन के लिए अधिकतर प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का व्यवहार होता था। अन्ततो गत्वा यह कह सकते हैं कि उस समय अलंकार, वेशभूषा आदि का निर्माण-तकनीक उच्चस्तर पर रही होगी।

समाज, नारी और पुरुष

गीतगाविन्द में जयदेव ने तत्कालीन समाज में नारियों का स्थान क्या था? तथा नारी किसप्रकार समाज में आदृत थी? अपने कतिपय शब्दों से दर्शाने का प्रयत्न किया है। जैसे – राधा को गोपवधू, व्रजसुन्दरी, आभीरनारी, ललना, युवती-सभा, तरुणी-जन, तन्वी, नितम्बिनी, रमणी, भामिनी, कलावती, दूती, अवला, नायिका, नर्तकी, मानिनी, चण्डी, कामिनी, साध्वी, भगिनी कुलटा आदि शब्द विशेषों से चित्रित किया गया है। इसके अलावा समाज में देवदासी प्रथा (विवुधयौवन) का प्रचलन था। समाज में वैष्णवधर्म का आधिक्य होने के साथ-साथ रामायण, भागवत, हरिवंश तथा पुराणों की लोकप्रियता थी। यह बात रामायण के पात्रों (जनक, राम, दशरथ, खरदूषण), भागवत में वर्णित पात्रों (श्रीकृष्ण, नन्दि, केशि, कंस आदि) के वर्णन से स्पष्ट हो जाती है। दशावतारवर्णन से गीतगाविन्द में वर्णित ‘मृदुवचन, स्मितवचन, मधुरवचन, मधुरमृदुतरवचन, वदतु मधुरं, चाटुवचन, वाचा पल्लवयितुम्, सौन्दर्यशुद्धिं गिराम्’ आदि शब्दों से तथा राधा, कृष्ण तथा उनकी दूती आदि के परस्पर संवादों से ज्ञात होता है कि समाज में संभाषण में शालीनता थी। अतिथियों का सत्कार हृदय से किया जाता था, यथा – “प्रत्युद्गच्छति, सेवित पदाम्भोज, सम्भाषणम् आदि उदाहरण से यह बात स्पष्ट हो जाती है कि तत्कालीन भारतीय समाज संस्कारपूर्ण तथा सौहार्दपूर्ण था। उस समय समाज में क्रीतदासप्रथा का प्रचलन रहा होगा, जिसमें लोगों को कम मूल्य में खरीदकर मजदूरी का काम करवाते थे। क्योंकि एकादश सर्ग में कृष्ण के माध्यम से जयदेव ने “क्रीतदास इवोपसेवित” (11-22) का वर्णन किया है। परन्तु अन्य इतिहासकारों ने उसका वर्णन नहीं किया है। इस प्रकार गीतगाविन्द में संपूर्ण समाज का झलक स्पष्टरूप से प्रतिभासित हो रहा है।

दिलीप कुमार राणा, उपनिदेशक, राष्ट्रीय पाण्डुलिपि मिशन



Preventive Conservation of Paper Manuscripts

K.K. Gupta

Writing materials have played a very prominent role in the development of cultures. They have helped not only in preserving the history and culture of mankind, but also influenced the scripts, languages as well as people's mode of thinking.

Today paper is the main material used for writing. But its origin was not in India. Modern paper is a Chinese invention and the word 'paper' is from the Greek word papyrus, the tall paper-reed plant once very common in Egypt. The Hindi word kagaj (paper) is of Persian origin. Paper has been used in India only for about a thousand years. Before that, the main writing materials in our country were birch-bark, palm-leaves and copper plates. Besides these, agaru-bark, bricks, earthenware, shell, ivory, cloth, wood etc. were also used for writing.

Most of our history is recorded on paper. Books, manuscripts, photographs, documents, and many works of art are connected to paper. Like all other materials, paper is also subject to degradation with time. Unless proper care is taken, the graphic records of our historical and

artistic heritage do not survive far into the future. Paper conservation is a term used to describe preventive and restorative methods employed to ensure the preservation of paper and thereby the history recorded on it.

Unfortunately, most people don't recognize a potential problem until severe damage has already occurred. This information is offered to help you understand the challenges that paper faces and the possible remedies. Paper, is by its very nature fragile. Paper can last for centuries if it is properly made but it is highly susceptible to damage caused by environmental conditions, insects, and people.

Deterioration of Manuscripts

Various internal and external factors are responsible for the deterioration of paper. The internal factors are based on the raw materials used for preparing the paper, which can hardly be changed. The external factors include the environment to which paper is exposed. The more important among the factors responsible for deterioration of paper are:



Providing the healing touch to manuscripts: manuscript conservation at Prof. Pritam Singh Manuscript Library, Patiala

Temperature and Humidity: The chief danger of excessive humidity, especially when combined with high temperatures, is the growth of mold and foxing. Mold affects the sizing and paper fibers, thereby weakening the sheet. Paper naturally expands and contracts with changes in temperature and humidity. Therefore, any extreme fluctuations can cause the paper to curl or become wavy.

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Light: The ultraviolet rays in sunlight and florescent lighting can also cause severe problems for paper. It would fade all art mediums and types of ink. It also speeds up the deterioration of paper by acids causing discoloration or 'acid burn'.

Air Pollution: The most harmful contaminant in the atmosphere is sulphur dioxide, a gas produced by the combustion of fossil fuels. Sulphur dioxide is absorbed by the paper and converted into sulfuric acid. This acid causes discoloration, brittleness and eventual disintegration of the paper fibres.

Insects: Many insects are attracted to paper. These pests, including houseflies, leave permanent brown specks; cockroaches and silverfish eat the sizing and paint; and termites, crickets and woodworms actually consume the paper.

Handling and Storage: Severe damage to paper is caused by improper handling, storage and display methods. Poor handling causes tears. People often attempt to repair tears with pressure sensitive tapes or glues. These adhesives cause irreversible stains and are very difficult to remove.

Preventive Conservation

Prevention is always the best way of maintaining a collection in good condition. Despite the skills of the conservators, most damages cannot be reversed and so, prevention is more preferable than treatment. This prevention of damage is known as 'Preventive conservation'

Preventive conservation is the control of factors of deterioration responsible for the decay of manuscripts. Internal factors of deterioration, which are inherently present in the painting or writing itself, can hardly be changed and so one has to bear with them. The external factors which include natural factors, however, can be controlled to some extent. Preventive conservation can be said to be the control of external factors of deterioration of manuscripts.

Control of Temperature and Humidity

By lowering ambient temperature, most chemical and biological reactions can be slowed down. The recommended optimum temperature for a display or storage area is between twenty and

twenty five degree centigrade. Even within these limits, sharp fluctuations in the temperature should not be allowed. Relative humidity (RH) in the area also should neither be too high nor too low as both these conditions may result in dimensional strain on paper, leading to its deterioration.

Control of Light

Light, even though it is a potent factor of deterioration, is essential for reading a manuscript; and may be considered a necessary evil. The recommended upper limit of intensity of light and its ultraviolet proportion are fifty lux and fifty microwatt per Lumen respectively, in case of paper manuscripts. Also, since the deteriorating effect of light is cumulative, apart from its intensity the time of exposure of the manuscript to light should be minimized. This can be done by a judicious selection of a light source and use of filters etc.

While ultra violet radiations are particularly damaging to paintings, visible light is not completely harmless to them. The intensity and duration of visible light falling on paper also needs to be controlled. These are, therefore, not exposed to light unnecessarily.

Control of Pollution

Atmospheric pollution has also been playing a major role in the degradation of paper, more so with increasing industrialization. Pollution can be controlled by taking suitable measures like using sulphur-free fuel and installing pollution-control devices in factories, powerhouses and means of transportation. This effort can be reinforced by supplementary measures for preventing pollution from reaching manuscript repositories such as developing green belts and treating incoming air to filter out all pollutants. Since no such method is foolproof, all possible measures should be taken simultaneously.

Control of Biological Growth

Biological factors like insects and fungi also play a significant role in the decay of manuscripts. It is, therefore, important to eradicate these from storage areas of the manuscripts. This can be done by exposing these areas to certain biocides to kill all the insects and fungi. Care should be

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taken not to use any chemical which may adversely affect the illustrations on the manuscripts. Sulphur containing biocides, for example, may cause tarnishing of some pigments like lead white which is used in illustrations. Wrapping the paintings with cotton cloth while in storage can also help protecting paintings from these insects. It is also important to avoid/rectify conditions, such as a stagnant, warm or humid atmosphere, which favour the growth of bio-deteriogens in these areas. Cleanliness and good housekeeping to control the insects must be emphasized.

Various types of chemicals are used to eradicate insects from the collections. Some of them are used as repellants because of their smell. Commonly used repellants are para-di-chloro-benzene, naphthalene, camphor etc. They are meant to discourage their entry and stay, rather than killing the insects. Chemicals used as insecticides are compounds of arsenic and fluorine (stomach poison), sulphur compounds and the petroleum products (contact poison) and some lethal gasses like ethylene oxide (respiratory poison). In using these insecticides for the eradication of insects, it is important to note that suitable doses of these are used so that it is lethal for the insects, as intended.

It is important to note that most of these chemicals are toxic to human beings also. Many chemicals may not have any ill effect at the time of exposure, but may be absorbed into the body to cause health problems years later. Growing awareness of the risks in using the chemical insecticides has brought about increased emphasis on non-chemical pest-control methods.

Non-Chemical Treatments

A variety of non-chemical processes for exterminating insects have recently been explored. Controlled freezing has been found to be quite effective for eradicating insects. This is attractive because it involves no chemical and thus poses no hazard to the staff working in the area and does not appear to damage the collection. The research to back this contention, however, is not yet complete. Very fragile objects, those made from a combination of different materials, should not be frozen.

The use of a modified atmosphere is also

being explored for the control of insect infestation. The term refers to several processes e.g. increased carbon dioxide, use of inert gases, primarily nitrogen, and decrease of oxygen.

Carbon dioxide, if used for the process, can cause some damage due to the formation of carbonic acid if it comes in contact with water. There is also a potential danger to members of the staff from exposure to high level of carbon dioxide. In this method the air is evacuated from the chamber, and carbon dioxide (usually at about sixty per cent concentration) or nitrogen (to achieve atmosphere of less than one per cent oxygen) is introduced. This is kept for the necessary time period.

Conclusion

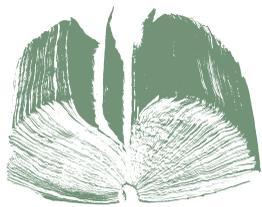
Manuscripts are important not only as the objects of the past but also because of the information and knowledge they contain. It is, therefore, one of the main duties of the present generation to save this form of national heritage and to pass them on to future generation. Therefore, both preventive and curative measures must be taken to protect the manuscripts from deterioration and to bring them back as close as possible to their original strength, flexibility and legibility. However, it is also important to note that preventive conservation is the only means by which we can slow down the degradation of the whole collection simultaneously, and it may therefore said to be the most essential form of conservation.

KK Gupta is Senior Conservator, National Museum, New Delhi

Answers to the Quiz

1. Palaeography
2. Assam
3. Prakrit
4. Bhaskaracharya
5. Modi script
6. Madras University, Chennai
7. Brahmi
8. Panini
9. Knowledge
10. Shankaracharya

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Travelogue

Majuli: Where Manuscripts are Worshipped

Anurag Arora

Recently a team comprising of delegates from National Mission for Manuscripts and National Informatics Centre visited Majuli islands in Assam to attend a state level workshop on 'Manuscriptology & Preventive Conservation'. The purpose of the visit was to assess the ground realities for launching a digitization program of manuscripts kept in satras. Majuli has been an important religious and cultural hot spot of Assam for nearly five hundred years and a store house of a large number of manuscripts. The frequency and the overwhelming nature of floods in Assam as well as the insurgency factor make it important and at the same time difficult to save these rich cultural inheritances.

The Islands

Majuli has supposedly derived its name from its location between the two streams of Brahmaputra, Lohit and Kherkatia Suti. Acknowledged as the largest inhabited river island of the world, it falls in the Jorhat district of Assam. Before 1950, the total area of Majuli was one thousand two hundred and fifty six square kilometers. However, continuous erosion has resulted in the depletion of its size to nine hundred square kilometers currently. It is a unique exhibition of nature's wrath and rapture. Majuli boasts of a number of wetlands to which migratory birds flock in large numbers.. In fact, isolation from the mainland has helped in the protection and preservation of some very rare species of birds. Endangered storks and innumerable migratory birds visit Majuli in the winter season and it has been declared as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Government of India. It also boasts of more than one hundred wetlands or beels, more than twenty species of mammals, nearly ten types of amphibians and more than one hundred types of local fish, including sixty five varieties of ornamental fish. In flora, there are more than one thousand species of trees, grasses, creepers,

flowers, orchids, ferns and other forms of plants are found. Sufficient rain and humidity endow Majuli with evergreen and deciduous forests.

Emergence of a Distinctive Cultural Identity

As fascinating as its biological diversity is, the cultural make-up of the island of Majuli is no less deserving of attention. A nerve-centre of the neo-Vaishnavite religion, art and culture, Majuli has been influenced and moulded by the Satriya culture. This may be witnessed in the degree of influence that the historical property of the satras - the antiques, manuscripts, relics etc. - have exercised on its inhabitants.

To trace the roots of this development, one must step back to the sixteenth century when Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev and his chief disciple, Madhabdev, laid the foundation of satriya culture in Majuli and ushered in an era with a distinctive religio-cultural flavour. Sankardev, the great social reformer, founded a new cult of Vaishnavism known as '*Ek Sarania*' (devotion to sole Almighty). He believed that Vishnu or Krishna is the supreme lord and he is to be worshipped only through naam prasanga - prayers; *choidhya prasanga* or fourteen prayers; *gayan-bayan* or playing of drum and cymbals; *borgeet* or devotional songs and *bhaona* or theatrical



Priest at Auniati Satra worshipping manuscript

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performances. These are some of the mediums to chant the glory of god. The satras situated here are the centers of religious, cultural and social life of the people of Assam and are important pilgrimage centers for Vaishnavites and others.

Satras

The Belguri Satra, the first satra to be established in Majuli, was named after the place where Sankardev and Madhabdev met for the first time. That meeting was followed by the establishment of satras and the rising religious prominence of Majuli in Assam. The followers of Sankardev and Madhabdev established sixty four satras in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, practicing and propagating Vaishnavism as preached by them. Of the sixty four satras which were established there, only twenty two are in existence at present. The rest have either been eroded away or have been shifted to other places.

In terms of functioning, satras resemble Buddhist monasteries where a number of inmates, called *bhaktas*, dedicate themselves to religious activities. In each satra, there is a *satradbhikari* or the head of the satra and a *deka satradbhikari* or the deputy head of the satra. Both these office-bearers reside within the satra campus. A model satra has a naamghar or prayer hall, the monikeet or the sanctum sanctorum and four hatis or rows of cottages for the inmates arranged in a rectangular or square form.

Sanchi Pat: Assamese Manuscripts

Every satra has its own collection of manuscripts, the numbers range from ten to three hundred and fifty in different satras and a total of around four thousand manuscripts between them. Most of these are original texts written by Sankardev and Madhabdev. The most popular themes are religion (mainly concerned with the worship of Lord Krishna), medicine, astrology and zoology. Almost all manuscripts are written on *Sanchi Pat* or the bark of a tree. The satras also house rare collections of illustrated manuscripts. The most important manuscripts preserved at the satras include *Hasti Vidyarnava*, a treatise on elephants (Auniati Satra); illustrated Bhagawat and the *Nidana*, a manuscript on etiology (Bengenaati Satra); *Tantrasar*, a manuscript about rituals of worship; *Charit-Puthi*, a biographical manuscript

on saints and Purana, Hindu scripture (Dakhimpat Satra); *Nam-Malika*, *Ratnawali*, a scripture written by Madhabdev and Dasama a scripture written by Sankardev (Uttar Kamalabari Satra)

Living Manuscript Traditions

One interesting fact about these satras is that the head priest worships the manuscripts twice everyday - once in the morning and once in the evening, for one hour each. It is considered a tribute to the Lord. Although one notes the presence of deities in the main temple complex, it is the manuscripts that are worshipped, and not idols of gods. We were privileged to be allowed to witness this activity at Auniati Satra. The priest starts the worship by paying his tribute to the manuscript by bowing his head down and then, opening the manuscript, starts reading from where he had left earlier. It is customary to read the manuscript in the light of a mustard oil lamp. Upon completion of the day's reading, a bookmark is placed to indicate the start of next day's reading. He again pays homage to the manuscript and then wraps it up. The manuscript that is worshipped is a copy of the original which is kept in a box in the praying room or a 'brass *sarai*'. They do not take the manuscript out of the box. For conservation purposes they change the cloth of the manuscript from time to time and this is also done by the head priest behind closed doors.

Uncertain Future

The current situation at Majuli, pervaded as it is by fear of militant activities, is not the most optimistic. There are clearly many hurdles posed by the perpetual threat of violence, the continuing erosion of the island and the prevalent inclement weather.

First-hand observation of all of the above has only made us more determined to start the digitization work as early as possible. Immediate plans include providing support to the satras for the upkeep of manuscripts, to impart training for the conservation of manuscripts (basic level training) and setting up of technological and logistical support for digitization.

Anurag Arora is the Coordinator for Digitization at the National Mission for Manuscripts.

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Report of Seminar on 'Manuscripts and Indian Knowledge Systems'

In Collaboration with the University of Madras, 9th - 11th February, 2006

Sudha Gopalakrishnan

The National Mission for Manuscripts celebrated its third anniversary in February 2006 with a series of programmes titled 'Kriti Rakshana: Manuscript Week'. One of these was a three-day seminar titled 'Manuscripts and Indian Knowledge Systems', held in Chennai in collaboration with the Madras University from 9th to 11th February. The University, which celebrates hundred and fifty years of its inception in 2006, organized the seminar through its Sanskrit and Tamil departments and hosted the event in its own premises.

The seminar, which explored the theme of India's contribution to the world of knowledge in the context of globalization, was divided into seven academic sessions including History and Culture, Language and Literature, Philosophy and Religion, Science and Technology, Folklore and the Arts, Medicinal Knowledge and Conservation, Documentation and Digitization. More than forty scholars participated in the seminar, representing different academic disciplines reflecting India's intellectual history.

In the inaugural session Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan, Mission Director, NMM, welcomed the participants and summarized the activities of the Mission in the last three years and spoke on the course of action for the future. In his presidential address, Prof. S. P. Thyagarajan, Vice Chancellor, Madras University, talked about contextualizing the knowledge contained in manuscripts through research and application to benefit contemporary society. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. V. R. Panchamukhi, Chancellor, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Tirupati) who made clear the distinctions between the categories of information, knowledge and wisdom. Stressing the scope and content on the "notion of knowledge", he traced the contribution of

different thinkers like Panini, Kanada, Kautilya, Aryabata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya and several others to India's intellectual tradition, and emphasized that India always had an integrated approach in the pursuit of knowledge. In his keynote address, Prof. George Cardona, Emeritus Professor, University of Pennsylvania cautioned that terminologies such as knowledge systems should not be used casually. Speaking on the Indian principles of mimamsa, he compared them to western theories of exegesis and also dwelt on the power of oral transmission in India.

In the first session on History and Culture, Dr. R. Nagaswami who chaired the session spoke on the importance of inscriptions in the pursuit of knowledge, while Prof. Champakalakshmi traced the evolution of the textual tradition in South India. Referring to Tamil inscriptions on pottery, Sri Iravatham Mahadevan emphasized that inscriptions on pottery should also be considered as manuscripts, for these are prior to the Sanskrit ones. In the session on Language and Literature chaired by Dr. Saroja Bhate, Prof. Cardona spoke about the history of manuscripts and the problem of dating in India's textual history. Prof. Muraleemadhavan traced the manuscript repositories outside India in different countries such as Germany, Britain, Italy as well as in Southeast Asia. Prof. Kutumba Sastri, speaking on the manuscript heritage of India, observed that the different scripts in India have evolved from the availability of different base materials such as palm leaf, birch bark and metal, and also stressed the importance of grammar in the tradition of India's knowledge. In the third session on Philosophy and Religion, Prof. B.B. Chaubey traced Indian knowledge through the corpus of Vedic literature including samhita-s, brahmana-s, aranyaka-s, Upanishad-s and other ancillary literature. Dr. Dominik Goodall observed that manuscripts should be made more

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easily accessible to scholars and cited the example of the Nepal-German project on digitization.

In the fourth session on Science and Technology, there were impressive papers and presentations devoted to jyotisha, dharmasastra-s, mineral science and several other scientific disciplines in India. The different schools and practices of scientific systems that were prevalent in India during the ancient and medieval periods were discussed in detail. The session on Folklore and Arts chaired by Dr. Muthukumarswamy had several presentations including those by Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan, Dr. B. M. Sundaram, Dr. V. Arasu and Dr. Muthukumarswamy himself. India's contribution to the field of Medicinal Knowledge was the topic of the sixth session. The participants were experts on Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha, apart from leading medical practitioners from the field of allopathic medicine who have also combined in them the strengths of the Indian medical knowledge systems. Dr. B. M. Hegde, talked about the medical practices prevalent in India much before they were invented in the west, such as vaccination. However, he stressed that India needs to take up methods of research and application more seriously so that it can become acceptable all over the world. Dr. S. Prema, an expert on Siddha medicine and manuscripts, gave a presentation on the text Maruttubharatam which symbolically uses the characters from the epic Mahabharata to explain precepts of Siddha medical practice. Dr. HKM. M.D. Alam, highlighted the Unani system of medicine as gleaned from the manuscript heritage of India, while Dr. Solomon Victor in his impressive presentation stressed that it is not enough to dwell on India's past glory, and that it needs to be applied in today's context. His moving appeal was to study all systems of medicine and aim for a unified system which would benefit all sections of society. In the seventh session on Conservation, Documentation and Digitization of Manuscripts chaired by Dr. T. N. Dharmadhikari, Mr. T. S. Shridhar,

Commissioner, Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu, described the different activities of Department of Archaeology of the Government of Tamil Nadu including that of the Oriental Library, Chennai. The other presentations included the digitization efforts of C-Dit by Mr. Asok Kumar, IGNCA by Mr. P. Jha, Mahabharata Samsodhana Pratisthanam by Mr. Ramachandara Budihal. Dr. Jeyaraj from Tamil Nadu Government Museum (Chennai) gave a presentation on the methods of preventive conservation of manuscripts. Prof. Siniruddha Dash gave the detailed description of the history, relevance and practice of the New Catalogus Catalogorum project of the Madras University. In the valedictory function, the Registrar of Madras University expressed her happiness at the collaboration of NMM and Madras University in several areas, including the organization of this important seminar.

The most critical issue that kept reappearing through the seminar was that India's great tradition of knowledge should be made relevant, through research and application, to suit expertise required in contemporary India. For this, manuscripts need to be documented properly and made available to scholars who wish to work on them. The world has come to recognize knowledge as the key resource for change, and there is an urgency to the task of reclaiming inheritance of knowledge contained in manuscripts.



Seminar on "Manuscripts and Indian Knowledge Systems" in Chennai

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Summary of Events

January – February 2006

JNU Workshop

1st - 10th February: The fifth **National Workshop on Manuscriptology and Palaeography** was jointly organized by the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi wherein sixty five students of post-graduate courses and research scholars were taught various aspects of manuscriptology and palaeography including critical editing, conservation, history of writing, cataloguing and the use of information technology in manuscript preservation and research.

The workshop was inaugurated by Prof. Satya Vrat Sastri from JNU. Prof. K. K. Thapliyal (Lucknow), Prof. Ratna Basu, Calcutta University, Dr. Subhas Chandra Dash, Utkal University (Bhubaneswar), Dr. Surendra Mohan Mishra, Kurukshetra University, Prof. R. K. Pandey, Sri Lalbahadur Shastri Sanskrit University (New Delhi) and Prof. Shafiq Ahmed Khan Nadwi, Jamia Milia Islamia (New Delhi) presented lectures on critical editing of manuscripts. Dr. Pratap Jha, IGNCA, addressed the issue of preservation of manuscripts through electronic media and Mr. K.K. Gupta, National Museum (New Delhi) discussed the subject of

preventive conservation of manuscripts. The workshop was coordinated by Prof. Shashi Prabha Kumar and the valedictory function witnessed the presence of Dr. Ramkaran Sharma and Prof. Lokesh Chandra.

The workshop was also enlivened by the news that Jawaharlal Nehru University has now introduced a course on Manuscriptology.

The National Survey for Manuscripts

The National Survey took place in Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in the months of January and February 2006. All the Surveys were a big success keeping in mind the specific conditions of each State. In Tripura, the Honourable Governor Shri D. N. Sahaya, inaugurated the Survey in a fitting ceremony in which he spoke of the need to save the manuscript wealth of Tripura. Most of the manuscripts found were from the tribal areas in a variety of scripts. In Tamil Nadu, the Honourable Chief Minister issued an appeal to the people to give information on manuscripts in their possession. The Survey was inaugurated by the Minister for Education and Commercial Taxes on 1 February 2006. The Survey received widespread publicity and

preliminary reports suggest that upto three lakh manuscripts and more than 16,000 repositories have been located. The Survey in Andhra Pradesh was launched by the Honourable Chief Minister Shri Y.S. Rajashekhara Reddy on 14 February 2006. The Survey was covered extensively in the Telugu press and according to preliminary reports, more than two lakh manuscripts have been found. In Gujarat, the Survey concluded on 1 March 2006. Preliminary reports are awaited.



Scholars and participants at JNU Workshop

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An Evening of Sacred Music

The Mission celebrated the occasion of its third anniversary with an evening of sacred music at the India International Centre, New Delhi on 7 February 2006. Pleasant weather, a beautiful setting in the Fountain Lawns and two spectacular performances of two very different and yet very rich styles of devotional music made for a wonderful evening and a fitting anniversary. The renowned Tevaram and *Bhajan* singer Shri Pithukuli Murugadas and his troupe opened the evening with notes from the Tamil devotional music form that originated as far back as the time of the Nayanar saints between the seventh and ninth centuries AD. The hymns comprise a part of the devotional Shaiva Siddhanta corpus of literature. Following him was the different but an equally moving performance of Qawwali by the renowned Nizami brothers and their large troupe of background vocalists and instrumentalists the youngest of whom was just eight years old! Expressively rendered, they sang songs of longing and devotion with great panache. More than five hundred people attended and most stayed right till the end of a memorable evening!

Tattvabodha Lecture Series

27th January: B. N. Goswamy, Professor Emeritus, Punjab University, and an eminent art historian, presented a lecture on '**Unsung Documents: Books Kept by Priests at Pilgrim Centres**'.

This lecture dealt with priests in pilgrim centres of India and the records they continue to keep of pilgrims such as their ancestors, place of origin, caste, community, profession, etc. The keeping of such genealogical records by the priests in pilgrim centres is an age-old practice. People can come across the names and handwriting of their ancestors of several generations in the elephantine record books maintained by the priests. The priests follow a unique and systematic way to maintain these records. They inherit these records and the practice of writing records from their forefathers, which facilitate their profession as priests.

Prof. Goswamy also stressed the importance of these records as source materials for students of history. Not only that, they may also be



Prof. B. N. Goswamy

presented as authentic evidence in courts of justice in cases involving disputes over property inheritance. However, in most of the cases, these invaluable records are piled up, left unattended, and are vulnerable to ravages of time. The priests jealously maintain the secrecy of these records but take little care to preserve them properly.

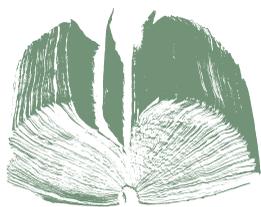
Prof. Goswamy related the value of such documents through the story of his own search for the traces of Nainsukh, an eighteenth century Pahari painter, and explained how he came across references to him in the record books of pandas. He also showed some slides of Nainsukh's masterpieces as well as the illustrations he made in his own family's genealogical document.

23rd February: Prof. Laxman S. Thakur, Department of History, Himachal Pradesh University, Simla delivered a lecture on '**Revered Word of the Buddha: Tibetan Manuscripts in Western Himalayan Buddhist Monasteries**'.

Prof. Thakur started with the definition of Western Himalayan region and his presentation was related to frontier districts of Lahaul, Spiti, Kinnaur and adjoining areas of Laddak. He presented an account of the Tibetan manuscripts preserved in Buddhist monasteries in this region of the Western Himalayas. Many of these manuscripts preserved in monasteries, are as old as the period of Rin-Chen bzang-po (988 – 1055), the person who was responsible for the renaissance of Buddhism in this area.

During the Great Revision the rulers of western Tibet had taken up the stupendous task of translating Sanskrit Buddhist literature into Tibetan language. The royalty supported the construction of monasteries along the main trade routes in the region. Several monastic complexes

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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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that emerged along the trade routs virtually became centres of scriptorium, preserving either translated or edited works accomplished during the 'second diffusion' of Buddhism. Each monastery was provided with the copies of authentic *Sutras*, *Pragyaparamitas* and other texts along with ceremonial items. The most important role in this great revision of Sanskrit Buddhist literature was played by Rin-Chen bzang-po and later Dipankar Shri Jnan, who was popularly known as Atish.

Tibetan manuscripts are preserved in monasteries located at places called Sarahan, Tipo, Namgaya, Tasigam, all in Kinnaur; Tabo, Kungri, Kye, Gondla, these are the places which are in Lahaul and Spiti district. The collection at Tabo monastery constitutes the largest in the region. Nearly 36,000 folios, rapped up in sixty large bundles are there in this monastery. About seventy percent of the manuscripts belong to the *Pragyaparamita* class of literature. Indeed, what is surprising is that, only twenty percent of the collection has survived.

Conservation Efforts in Punjab

The National Mission for Manuscripts has marked its presence in all regions of India and in its endeavour Punjab is not left out. In Punjab, the mission has located different potential manuscript repositories, both private and institutional.

There are some large repositories of manuscripts, such as Prof. Pritam Singh Manuscripts Library and Bhasha Bhavan in Patiala. After locating these centres, the Mission has launched a massive programme of providing technical assistance to these repositories with respect to preservation of manuscripts.

While implementing this strategy, the Mission has chosen Prof. Pritam Singh Manuscripts Library collection first. The central team for conservation visited this library in the month of February and provided assistance in the form of preventive conservation. The team has attended eight hundred and six manuscripts. These manuscripts were wrapped in plastic bags and kept in steel cupboards. In that condition these were vulnerable to various problems such as accumulation of dust, foxing, stains, charring, tearing, sticking of folios, fungus and damaged



Prof. Laxman S. Thakur and Lama Doboom Tulku

binding. The task accomplished by the central team includes reorganization of collection and emergency treatment, such as segregation of infected manuscripts, dusting, and cleaning, wrapping, threading and spreading insecticidal paper on shelves.

This collection at Prof. Pritam Singh Manuscripts Library is of great importance. Manuscripts preserved here deal with various subjects like religion, poetry and philosophy and are written in Punjabi, Persian and Sanskrit. These manuscripts are yet to be documented. So the Mission has decided to make this library Manuscripts Partner Center (MPC) which will document the manuscripts in proper format and help the Mission to make the data available on the internet.

Forthcoming Events

- Lecture by **Dr. R. A. Mashelkar**, Director General, CSIR, New Delhi, on 'Traditional Knowledge Digital Library: A Perspective and the Challenges Ahead' on 30th March, 2006, at India International Centre Annexe at 6:30 p.m.
- Exhibition **Akshara: The Enduring Syllable**, in collaboration with the National Museum at the National Museum, New Delhi from 18th April onwards