

History

Baroda has been taking interest in Oriental Research since 1893 A.D. when Shri Manibhai Jashbhai, the Diwan of Baroda State, had appointed Shri Manibhai Nabhubhai Dwivedi, the veteran scholar of Gujarat, for the purpose of translating several important Sanskrit works relating to Sanskrit studies from the library at Patan. Baroda has been a centre of Sanskrit and Prakrit learning for a long time and many traditional Pandits are still living in Baroda. At the instance of H.H. Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, a small nucleolus collection of printed texts and original mss. was set up as Sanskrit section in well-known central Library of Baroda. H.H. Maharaja Sayajirao appointed the late Shri Annata Krishna Shastri in that section to explore and acquire precious rare mss. from all over India and about 10,000 mss. were collected.

The Baroda Vitthal Mandir collection was taken over to form the nucleus of a Sanskrit library. Shrimant Sampat Rao Gaekwad, His Highness's brother, thereupon generously added his own collection of 630 printed books and the Library was further enriched by the acquisition of a valuable collection of 446 manuscripts and 60 printed books, belonging to one Yajneshwara Sastri of Baroda. Her Highness Shrimant Chimnabai Maharani Saheb was also graciously pleased to present from the Royal Deogarh, five exquisitely illuminated scrolls containing the complete *Mahabharata*, *Bhagvatgita*, *Bhagavata* and *Harivamsa*. These manuscripts by reason of the delicacy of their minute calligraphy and richness of their illustrations, form one of the most attractive treasures of the library.

The late Shri Chimanlal Dalal, Curator of the Sanskrit Section, was deputed to inspect and study Jain Manuscripts Collections of Patan and Jesalmer and on the basis of his reports and the copies of rare mss. prepared by him, the late Maharaja Sayajirao issued orders in 1915 for starting the **Gaekwad's Oriental Series**, viz. the *Kavyamimamsa of Rajasekhara*, was published in **1916**.

Officers appointed later, carried on extensive tours through-out the length and breadth of India in search of mss. and collected nearly ten thousands of them. This was also the material for the Gaekwad's Oriental series in which unpublished and original works of oriental literature were to be edited critically by adopting modern methods of research. The late Shri C.D. Dalal was the first General Editor of the G.O.S. and the whistle-blower of the activities of the Oriental Institute. He died very young and was succeeded by Dr. Binoytosh Bhattacharya (1897-1964), the well-known scholar of Buddhist Iconography and editor of many rare works who was a brilliant and able son of the eminent Sanskritist, Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasada Shastri. The Institute grew rapidly during the years 1924 to 1950, on account of the most enlightened policy of The Maharaja Sayajirao and his distinguished Prime Ministers. In 1927, it was thought to separate it from the Central Library and organize it into a specialized institution, and under orders of the Baroda Government, the present Oriental Institute came into existence.

In 1931, the Translation Branch which was attached to the office of the Education Department, was transferred to the Oriental Institute, and in the same year at the request of the Principal, Baroda College, the Post-graduate teaching in Sanskrit and Prakrit was undertaken by it. Attracted by the facilities for research offered by this establishment, Ph.D. students joined later.

In 1933, the Institute hosted successfully the Seventh Session of the All India Oriental Conference at Baroda, in which the late Maharaja took an active part. In 1935, the proceedings and transactions of the Conference were printed and published in a volume of more than 1,400 pages and presented to the Eighth Session at Mysore. (*photo of Conference at Darbar-hall*).

The idea of the establishment of a separate university for Baroda was first mooted as early as 1927 by the late Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad and it came to fruition in the year 1949, on the eve of the merger of the Baroda State with the State of Bombay (30th April 1949). With the establishment of this University, the Oriental Institute became a constituent Institution of the University.

Aims and Objects

The principal object in founding an Oriental Institute in Baroda was to provide a well-equipped library of oriental books and manuscripts to the advanced students and scholars, as also to preserve the valuable manuscript-treasure otherwise doomed to destruction. Another object in having an Institute of this kind is to publish original works of Sanskrit and allied literature as providing reliable material of abiding value for the study of history and culture of ancient India on all conceivable subjects, especially in those branches where information is extremely meager. The latter object has been well-achieved since the publications of G.O.S. are famous all over the world.

Manuscript-Collection

The bulk of the manuscript-collection is the result of the initial mammoth-efforts of Pandit R. Anant Krishna Shastri who was commissioned by the Ex-Baroda State to make extensive tours all over India in search of rare and valuable manuscripts and whose labors extending over seven years resulted in adding 10,000 manuscripts to the library. The last accession number entered in the register till date is 30,211. It ranks as one of the first class manuscripts libraries in India. This huge collection is possible due to the large hearted manuscript-donors who voluntarily donated their prized possessions of generations to keep in safe hands and for the scholars to work on them.

The collection carries vivid aspects of Ancient Indian intelligencia starting from Vedas, Upanisads, Dharmasastras, Smrtis, Nyaya, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Darsana, Vyakarana, Itihasa, Gita, Purana, Mahatmya, Vrata, Bhakti, Stotra, Sahitya, Kamasashtra, Sangita, Jyotisa, Silpa, Ayurveda, Tantra, Bauddha, Jain, Percian etc.

The manuscripts are written in various Indian scripts including Devanagari (mostly), Sarada, Grantha, Telugu, Malyalam, Oriya, Bengali and Persian, Arabic and Urdu also. The material is mostly paper and Palm-leaf. In later period, a good number of Xerox-copies of manuscripts were acquired from renowned manuscript-libraries.

Publications of Oriental Institute

Gaekwad's Oriental Series (GOS)

The publication of the world-famous *Gaekwad's Oriental Series* is the principal work of the Oriental Institute and it contains critical editions of unpublished Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa, Persian and Arabic works beside some others relating to indology in general. 187 works are published so far. Started in 1916 with the work of *Rajasekhar's Kavyamimamsa*, the publications of GOS are well-known to all learned centres in the world, and since its very inception it has earned universal approbation from savants and learned societies. Professor Sylvain Levi, the doyen of the French School of Orientalists, characterized the Series as '**standing at the head of the many collections now published in India**'. *The Aisatic Review*, London remarked that 'It is one of the best series issued in the East'. *The London Times Literary Supplement* opined that 'These studies are a valuable addition to western learning and reflect great credit on the editor and His Highness'. The Series has exchange-relations with Universities, learned Societies, Institutions etc. throughout the world as per the Distribution List of Exchange and Presentation sanctioned by the University.

Some Important Publications of GOS

The contribution of the *Gaekwad's Oriental series* to the History and Culture of India are many and various. In the field of Buddhism, it has published the hitherto unknown work in Sanskrit -the *Tattvasangraha* of Santaraksita with the *Panjika* or Commentary of Kamalasila, both professors at the Nalanda University. This work is a veritable mine of information on the imperfectly known Yogacara system of Buddhism. The original Sanskrit text on Buddhist Logic by the famous logician Dinnaga is another important contribution, the value of which is enhanced by the commentary attached to the edition. On the Buddhist Psychic Science, mention may be made of the *Sadhanamala* which contains 312 *Sadhanas* or rituals relating to an equal number of deities. The *Guhyasamaja* regarded as the earliest tantric work, *Advya vajrasangraha* and *Pre-Dinnaga Buddhist Texts on Logic* are some of the many original contributions to Buddhist studies made by the Gaekwad's Oriental Series.

On Hinduism, the English translation of the *Sabarbhasya* in three magnificent volumes, stands pre-eminent. The *Nayakaratra*, a work on the *Purvamimamsa* system of philosophy of the school of Prabhakara; the *Jayakhyasamhita*, an authoritative work of the *Pancaratra* school of the vaisnavas; *Ganakarika*, a very rare text of the Lakulisa-sect which had its origin in Gujarat, are among those that may be cited here as important. On technical sciences and fine-arts, several important works have been published. They include *Samaranganasutradhara*, an extensive work on ancient Hindu architecture by King Bhoja; the *Aparajitaprccha*, another rare and valuable text on Indian architecture; the *Natyasastra* on dramaturgy with the commentary of the celebrated scholar

abhinavagupta of Kashmir; the **Bhavaprakasana** on dramaturgy and rasa of Saradatanaya and the **Natyadarpana** of Ramacandra Suri - a Jain work on dramaturgy. The **Kalpadruma** of Kesava and the **Sabdaratnasamanvaya** of the Maratha king Sahaji of Tanjore, relate to Sanskrit lexicography.

There have been several rare texts on the Indian Music are published in the series. They include **Sangitamakaranda** of narada, **Sangitacudamani** of Kavindra Cakravarti, **Vinalaksana**, **Rasakaumudi**, **Sangitopanisadsaroddhara** - a rare early text by a Jain monk from Gujarat, **Nrtyadhyaya** etc. There are important historical poems like **Hammiramadamardana** of Jayasimhasuri and **Sankhaparabhava** of Harihara among others. In the field of **Dharmasastra** or Hindu Law, we have several very valuable contributions. The re-constructed text of the **Brhaspati-smrti** is a master-piece of Indian scholarship. The **Dandaviveka** is a very rare work on criminal law in ancient India. The **Rajadharmakaustubha** of Anantadeva is a mine of valuable information on the coronation of kings and other matter relating to the royal house-hold. The **Krtyakalpataru** of Laksmidhara represents one of the most stupendous, voluminous and encyclopaedic works written in India in the time of king Govindacandra of Kannauj. Twelve volumes of it are already published.

Amongst Persian and Arabic publications, the five volumes of the text and translation of the **Mirat-i-Ahmadi**, the English translation of the **Ahsan-ut-tawarikh**, **Rehla of Ibn Batuta** and the **Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran** - are some notable works. The English translation of the **Arabic History of Gujarat Vol II** is also published under this series. The **Portuguese Vocables in Asiatic Languages** deals with words of Portuguese origin in Indian languages and is considered to be an authoritative contribution.

The **Manasollasa** in three volumes is a mine of information of Indian culture of the 11th and 12th centuries. Apabhramsa texts like **Bhavisyattakaha** of Dhanapala and the **Apabhramsakavyatrayi** are also published in the Series. A rare text on the technique of wrestling entitled Mallapurana is also published. Another rare text on Ancient Indian perfumery and cosmetics titled "Gandhasara" is also published. A complete **Descriptive Bibliography of Ancient Pancaratra Agams of the Vaisnavas** is also printed.

The publication of Critical Edition of complete **Natyasastra of Bharatamuni** with systematic commentary of Abhinavagupta called Abhinavabharati in GOS, is perhaps one of the best gift of the Oriental Institute to the whole world of scholars. The Series has not only published four volumes of the Catalogues of the List of Manuscripts in Oriental Institute, covering 25000 MSs under **An Alphabetical List of the Manuscripts in the Oriental Institute**, Baroda, but, catalogues of famous Bhandaras of Jaisalmer, Jain Bhandars of Patan describing all Palm-leaf mss., two volumes of PL mss in Santinatha Bhadars, Cambay are also published in this series.

Amongst the distinguished collaborators in the publication of the Gaekwad's Oriental Series, were the two distinguished Sanskritists, Dr. S.N.dasgupta, CIE and Rao Bahadur Dr. S.K.Belwalkar. Mention may be made of the following: Dr. R.Shamashastry - the discoverer of **Arthasastra** edited **Varahagrhyasutra** (1920) and **Tantrarahasya** (1930); Mm. T.Ganapatisastri-the editor of the Trivendram Sanskrit Series and who discovered 13 plays of Bhasa, edited the two volumes of the **Samarangana-sutradhara** (1924-25) of this Series; Principal A.B.Dhruva - the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Benaras Hindu University, edited the **Nyayapravesa** (1930); Mr. C.N.Seddon ICS -formerly a minister in the Government of baroda and a reader in the University of Oxford, translated the **Mirat-i-Ahamadi** Supplement (1928) and edited two volumes of **Ahsan-ut-Tawarikh** (1932-34); Prof. Giuseppe Tucci - member of the Italian Academy, edited the **Pre-Dinnaga Buddhist Texts on Logic from Chinese sources** (1930) and **Abhisamayalankara** of Haribhadra (1932); Dr. Helen M. Johnson of Osceola-Missouri, USA and a Jain scholar of repute, translated the **Trisastisalakapurussacarita** in six volumes; Mahamahopadhyaya Sir Ganganatha Jha who was very closely associated with the institute gave the three monumental volumes of **Sabarabhasya** translation (1933-36), the entire English translation of the **Tattvasangraha** of Santarakṣita in two volumes (1937-39) and the English translation of the standard work on law, the **Vivadacintamani** (1943); Prof. Sylvain Levi, one of the greatest orientalisists of Europe, contributed a critical edition of the **Sanskrit Texts from Bali** in the year 1933; Arthur Jeffery, a great authority on Arabic, the **Foreign Vocabulary of the Quran** in 1938; Rao Bahadur K.V.Rangaswamy Aiyangar of Madras, a very eminent scholar of India, has edited **Brhaspati smrti** (1941) and the volumes of the **Krtyakalpataru -Dana** (1941), **Tirtha** (1943), **Rajadharm** (1944), **Grhashta** (1944), and **Moksa** (1945). The world of scholars will be eternally grateful to these scholars for their invaluable contribution to the Series.

Valmiki-Ramayana in seven Volumes

A critical edition of the complete *Valmiki-Ramayana*, on the lines of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata*, published by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute was launched in the Oriental Institute in 1951. For this huge project, a separate department of critical Edition wing named **Ramayana-department** was established in the Institute. The project was funded by UGC and came to completion in 1975. Under the able editorship of Prof. G.H.Bhatt, P.L.Vaidya, P.C.Diwanji, D.R.Mankad, G.C.Jhala and U.P.Shah - the Institute presented the most authentic critical edition of complete *Valmiki Ramayana* in seven volumes to the Sanskrit world. This department has also published the critical editions of *Visnupurana* (in two Vols.) and *Markandeyapurana* (in two Vols.).

Other Publication Series

Over and above the publications of GOS and Critical Edition section, the Institute has other five publication series under the Section of **Translation Branch** for publication of popular literature of Gujarati, Marathi and Hindi. Funded and founded by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III in 1912 with two lakhs of rupees, the publications of these series' address different age-group of readers like- *Sri sayaji Sahityamala* for Adults, *Sri Sayaji Balajnanamala* for Juveniles, *Sri Sayaji Gramavikasamala* for rural uplift, *Matusri Jamanabai Smaraka Granthamala* for Women, *Sri Sisujnanamala* for Children and *Maharaja Sayajirao Memorial lecture Series*. Through these six series, 695 books have been published so far on various subjects in Gujarati, Marathi and English, thus the purpose of establishing the Translation Branch is truly served.