

On Regaining *Svarāja* and the Lost Sarasvatī

Presidential Address
On Regaining *Svarāja* and the Lost Sarasvatī

By the General President
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GUWAHATI

पूर्व प्राच्यां समुत्यां दिशि, भुवि बहुधा च प्रसारं प्रयातां
प्राच्यां विद्यां शुभां तां बुधजनमहितां सर्वदा पोषयन्ती।
गोवाहाट्यां प्रगल्भैः पुनरपि कुशलैर्योजकैर्योज्यमाना
सेयं स्याद् प्राच्यविद्यापरिषदिह शिवं साधयन्ती सदा नः।

I am extremely grateful to this august body for extending to me the honor of serving as the General President for its 47th session. I find myself similar to a dwarf in comparison to several great scholars who have been General Presidents of this conference in the past -- Har Prasad Sastri at Lahore (1928), R.C. Majumdar at Darbhanga (1948), Sushil Kumar De at the Bombay (1949) Suniti Kumar Chatterji at the Ahmedabad (1953), Jan Gonda at Pune (1978)¹ and Nihar Ranjan Ray at Santiniketan (1980). I accept the privilege of presiding over the present session with humility and obeisance.

At the outset, let me pay humble tribute to three stalwarts of oriental learning belonging to this land of Assam - Anundoram Borooah, K.K. Handiqui and Mukunda Madhav Sharma. The studies and critical translations of three classics *Naiṣadhīyacarita*, *Setubandha* and *Yaśastilakacampū* by Handiqui form the 'setubandhas' or bridges across cultures and literary traditions, M.M. Sharma did pioneering work on comparative poetics in his *Vyañjanāprapañcasamīkṣā*. However, I specially look to Anundoram Borooah (1850-1889) as a source of inspiration for my address today. He was a prodigy of intellect and a scholar of extra-ordinary nature who became one of the makers of modern India. He was the first Assamese to graduate from any university, the first Assamese to become a Barrister-at-Law and the first Assamese to join the administrative service under the ICS. He was also the first Indian to become the administrative head of an entire district under British rule. In the list of so many official 'firsts' that Borooah has to his credit, we can add some other 'firsts' that he could achieve as a scholar of Oriental learning. He was the first Indian to have authored an authentic research work on the topology of ancient India;² and also the first non-traditional scholar to have authored a Sanskrit commentary on a classical Sanskrit play³. He was also perhaps the first Indian scholar to have criticized the misrepresentations of James Mill as a historian in the preface to I vol. of his *English-Sanskrit Dictionary*, and it is this critique by him that provides a take-off point for my address for this conference.

¹ Gonda could not come to India and did not preside over the Pune session in personae, his address as General president was circulated.

² *Ancient Geography of India* by Borooah was originally attached to the preface of the III edn. of his Dictionary published in 1877. Earlier, Alexander Cunningham published *The ancient geography of India I. The Buddhist period, including the campaigns of Alexander, and the travels of Hwen-Thsang* (London, Trübner and Co., 1871).

³ The Preface of Borooah's *Jānakīrāmahāṣyam* on Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīracarita* is dated October 17, 1877 (*Works of Anundoram Borooah*, Publication Board, Assam, 2007, Introduction by Malinee Goswami, p. 13). *Jānakīrāmahāṣyam* an excellent example of a Sanskrit commentary on the lines of Mallinātha.

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Both H.H. Wilson and Monier Williams had ulterior motifs for the compilation of their Sanskrit-English and English-Sanskrit Dictionaries, i.e., to cater to the needs of the education policy of the British Colonizers in India. Borroah's had the natives of his country in his mind when he proceeded to prepare his *English -Sanskrit Dictionary*.⁴ If Monier Williams aimed at helping the British civil servants, Borroah chose to re-discover the roots of the tradition through lexicography and serve his countrymen.

Having attended a number of sessions of this prestigious conference for the past 42 years, (The first session of AIOC that I attended as a participant was at Ujjain in 1972), I have certain reservations about the management and academic planning of this conference. For my convenience I have started this address with a *maṅgala śloka* in Sanskrit composed for this occasion. However, it is my considered opinion that the oriental conference should be different from a Sanskrit conference, and the disciplines like Ancient Indian History, Indian Art and Archeology, Asian studies or the Persian, Iranian and Islamic Studies must receive due weight in this conference. It is high time we give some serious thought to the questions relating to the future course of oriental studies. Should oriental learning only mean studies in Indology, as we, for all practical purposes in our country understand it, or will it include critical and detailed study of the histories, cultures and literatures of all the countries of Asia? It is a sad comment that ever since its inception, this conference has continued to be hosted mostly by the Sanskrit departments of our universities. It will be better if we explore the possibilities of a larger involvement of the departments belonging to the other disciplines under the oriental learning.

The horizons of this conference may be further broadened. And also, grown as it has tremendously in respect of the size and quantity throughout a century, it should have equal qualitative growth.

I am happy to note that the organizers of the present session of the AIOC have taken an initiative in the right direction on both these scores by seeking the cooperation from the professors of Persian and other subjects in the academic planning. They have also made sincere efforts at improving the presentations in various sections of the conference qualitatively. I am confident that these initiatives will go a long way to help us in facing the challenges and the crises that loom large on oriental studies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you might be aware, some scholars in our times have been raising serious questions about 'orientalism' as a tendency to view the orient in a negatively biased way. To quote Edward Said - "If the knowledge of orientalism has any meaning, it is being a reminder of the seductive degradation of knowledge, of any knowledge, anywhere, at

⁴ See his remarks in the preface to the First Volume of *English-Sanskrit Dictionary* (Re-print, 1971) p. xv -"To coin new equivalents, expressive of prominent ideas conveyed by new scientific and philosophical terms, is not only in harmony with the genius of Sanskrit language. ...but is likely to facilitate the study of science and philosophy among our countrymen who are not acquainted with foreign tongues."

any time. Now perhaps more than before.”⁵ Said is right to an extent by the way of suggesting that the orientalist discourse has been a part of western power-politics, and it still remains euro-centric there. Said finds ‘orient’ as a fictitious category invented by westerners out of their whims and romantic imaginations. Nihar Ranjan Ray agrees with him - “By about the middle of eighteenth century India, a part, almost the core part of the ‘mysterious’ East or Orient, had emerged from the fables and fairy tales, medieval romances and adventure stories of European travelers and merchant-men, stories that were full of truths, half truths and untruths and were imaginatively more thrilling than romances. The orient was now being confronted by more than a couple of European powers with colonial visions, ambitions and aspirations which slowly but surely translated themselves, a century or so later, in terms of actual imperial experiences”⁶

The intellectual quest of the East by the West which began on the edifice of fairy tales and romantic imaginations joined with a force of imperialism, formed the discipline of Orientalology. The conditionings and colorings given by the western discourses to this discipline still persist, and their traces with the memories of our colonial past linger on. The theory that no theory is possible outside the west was postulated by James Mill and G.W.F. Hegel. It still survives in the post-modern discourse. Europe is presumed to be the centre of universal knowledge. On the other hand serious orientalists like Sylvain Le’vi had been questioning the validity and ethics of such a discourse⁷ and the words of I.A. Richards do echo as a warning note to such discourse of power “... to us the Western world is still the World (or part of the World that counts); but an impartial observer would perhaps say that such provincialism is dangerous. We are not yet so happy in the west that we can be sure that we are not suffering from its effects.”⁸

The oriental studies initiated during eighteenth-nineteenth centuries by western scholars initially served the colonial masters in India and other Asian countries, but it is also true that the orientalists from the west tried to establish contacts with traditional pundits in India and quite often also depended on them for original sources. This also led to a process of dialogue and some times debates between the orientalists and the pundits. Referring to his indebtedness to traditional pundits, William Jones appreciated “the superior accuracy of their

⁵ Orientalism: Edward Said p.328

⁶ The Orient, Orientalism And Orientalia: The East and The West in Indian History: Nihar Ranjan Ray, Address of the General President, of the the All India Oriental Conference, Visva-Bharata, Santiniketan, 1-3 November, 1980, p. 1

⁷ In 1835 Sylvain Le’vi wrote - ‘These peoples are inheritors of a long tradition of history, of art, and of religion, the sense of which they have not entirely lost and which they are probably anxious to prolong. We have assumed the responsibility of intervening in their development, sometimes without consulting them, sometimes in answer to their request.... We claim, rightly or wrongly, to represent a superior civilization, and because of the right given to us by the virtue of this superiority, which we regularly affirm with such assurance as makes it seem incontestable to the natives, we have called in question all their traditions.’ Q. in Orientalism: Edward Said p.249

⁸ Q. in Orientalism: Edward Said p. 254

scholarship” and the authenticity with which they helped.⁹ The orientalist scholars from the west, to a certain extent, did work for empowerment of colonial rule, but their correspondences with Indian scholars and Sanskrit pundits gave an opportunity to the pundits also to develop their own vision to compete with the orientalist discourse.

In this background, the feasibility of cross-cultural and trans-national dialogues through oriental learning needs to be considered. Perhaps a meaningful dialogue where the traditions and wisdom of the so – called orient is not side-tracked by the forces of geo-politics, is still a possibility. Wilhelm Hulbfass, an esteemed philosopher of our times, rightly sums up this situation - “Modern Indian thought finds itself in a historical context created by Europe, and it has difficulties speaking for itself. Even in its self-representation and self-assertion, it speaks to a large extent in a European idiom. This does not however mean that the dialogue between India and Europe has been decided in favor of Europe, or that India has been superseded by Europe. The power of the Indian tradition has not exhausted itself in the self-representation and self-interpretation of modern India. The dialogic situation is still open.”¹⁰

I do not intend to present any survey of recent developments in oriental studies. These studies cover such a vast area that any survey would be fraught with serious omissions. I would refer to some significant researches and publications. Doing so, I am fully conscious of my own limitations and also of the fact that any attempt at picking some significant works will always suffer from the subjectivity of the selector. I here remember the remarks of Professor Jan Gonda in his address as the General President of the 29th session of the AIOC at Pune on June 1, 1978 - “...absolute objectivity, complete freedom from subjective values, is pure illusion.” I cannot even claim that I will be exemplifying the trends in oriental studies by *sthālīpulākanyāya*-- picking up a bit of grain from the pan, to show how far the dish has been cooked. In the grand feast of oriental learning today, numerous *sthālīs* are being boiled up and hundreds of dishes are being put on fire, while the *pulav* in some of the pots is already cold and stale, is recycled again and again. But I intend to use the random selection out of this complex scenario to substantiate my view of the future course and the prospects of oriental studies.

One of the remarkable works that I have gone through very recently is *Sarasvatī Drowned: Rescuing Her from Scholarly Whirlpools* by Ashok Aklujkar. As suggested by the highly metaphorical title, Aklujkar has made an attempt to rescue Sarasvatī, the river, from being drowned in the whirlpool of modern scholarship, but I also take this kind of attempt in the sense of rescuing Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, from the whirlpools of our age, fraught with conflicts and contradictions.

Aklujkar has considered at least 75 passages from the *Ṛgveda* where Sarasvatī is mentioned and several references from later texts - specially the *Pañca-vimśa-brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. He has tried to read the messages out of the absence of the references to Sarasvatī in the IV and IX books of the *Ṛgveda*. References in the other *maṇḍalas* are sufficient to prove how the river Sarasvatī functioned as a part of the geographical and cultural landscape providing impetus to the creativity of the Vedic seers. With the available data, Aklujkar determines the process of the deification of Sarasvatī the river on the basis of the

⁹ William Jones: The tenth Anniversary Discourse: 28th February, Asiatic Researches, no. 4, (1775)

¹⁰ Extract from the preface to the German edition of *India and Europe*: Wilhelm Hulbfass, p. xiii

oldest *maṇḍalas* of the *Ṛgveda*. Drawing a distinction between the descriptions of its earthly form and its abstractions with the help of commentators like Sāyaṇa, Skanda Veṅkaṭa-Mādhava and Udgītha, he does not ‘find it justifiable to give priority to the divinity reading’. He considers various options suggested by modern researches for locating or identifying the lost Sarasvatī. His novel interpretation rests on the notion of seven sisters or seven streams mentioned right from the time of *Ṛgveda*. It is not one single stream of Sarasvatī, the course of which is being sought after here, it is the Sarasvatī with its at least six streams known to the Vedic ṛsis for their force and speed, that has been focused on. He suggests that ‘all the streams originated in approximately the same area and united with what came to be thought of as the main stream in various ways, at various points and to various extents,’ and referred by a collective name were the “Sarasvatī”. Setting aside the earlier assumption that the Sarasvatī had a wide or impressively broad bed and that it was glacier-fed, Aklujkar locates the origin of Sarasvatī as perceived by the *Ṛgvedic* seers, in the Shivalik range. It is different from the Gagghar and was majestic (*mahas*) rather than unusually wide. The expositions of Ramvilas Sharma¹¹ and Bhagwan Singh¹², who had much earlier produced valuable studies on *Ṛgveda* and Harappan culture also support the implications of his research work.

I consider this ‘rescuing of Sarasvatī’ by Aklujkar an important work because it will hopefully provoke debates and discussions on some other crucial questions. The theory of Āryan invasion has been a part of a euro-centric and imperialistic discourse. The fact that the description of Sarasvatī as a river in the *Ṛgveda* is pre-Harappan is corroborated by modern scientific researches through satellite as well. Aklujkar gives substantial evidence to prove that older parts of the *Ṛgveda* cannot be later than 1900 B.C. There are increasing number of evidences pointing towards greater antiquity of Indian civilization. A revisit to Indian History and reconsideration of many chronologies has now become imperative.

The description of the search for the lost river in the early 15th century as described in *Tarikh-i Mubarakshahi* is an attestation of the fact that in every age the search for the lost ‘Sarasvatī’ was taken up in some way or other.

I may note here some recent publications of rare Vedic texts and studies on Vedic lore¹³. *Ṛgveda of Śāṅkhāyana śākhā* (vols. 1-4, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Vedavidya Pratishthan, 2012), *Full Moon and New Moon Sacrifices* and *The Agnyādheya of the Kaṭha Śākhā* both by P.D Navathe, Vedic Samshodhan Mandal, 2010; *Preservation of Techniques of Ṛgveda Chanting of Kerala* : C.M Neelkathan & K.A. Ravindran, Sri Sankaracharya University of Kerala, 2010; *Vādhūlasūtram* - with *vṛtti*, ed. By B.B. Chaube, NMM, 2012; and *Ekākṣarī Baiṭhaparibhāṣā* : edited and translated by Bhagyalata Pataskar, (VSM, Pune, 2014) are worth mentioning¹⁴

¹¹ *Paścimī Eśiyā aura Ṛgveda*, Ram Vilas Sharma, Hindi Madhya Karyanvayan Nideshalaya, Delhi University, 1994

¹² *Harappa Sabhyatā aura Vedic Sāhitya*: Bhagwan Singh, IV Edition, Delhi.

¹³ Pl. note abbreviations for publishers – DKPW (D.K. Print World, Delhi), IGNC (Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Delhi), IAS (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla), LDII (L.D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad), MLBD (Motilal Bebarasidas, Delhi), NMM (National Manuscripts Mission, Delhi) and VSM (Vedic Samshodhan Mandal, Pune).

¹⁴ Some other works in the field of Vedic studies are - *Veda-Vyākhyā-Paddhatayaḥ* (in Sanskrit), an original research work on Vedic interpretations, *Bhashyas* and *Bhasyakaras*, by Shashi Tiwari, *Creation and Existence in Indian Tradition* (ed.) Shashi Tiwari (both by Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi, 2014);, *Sanskrit-Sahitya men*

One of the monumental works in field of Indian Philosophy in general and Upaniṣadic studies in particular is *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad with 51 Sanskrit Commentaries* edited with copious notes by Yajñeshwar Shastri & Sunanda Shastri. Out of the 51 commentaries 21 belong to *Advaitavedānta*, six to *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, 12 to *Mādhvavedānta*, one to *Nimbarka* system, four to *Śuddhādvaita*, one to Chaitanya's philosophy, two to Śrī *Svamīnārāyaṇa Sampradāya*, one to Ārya Samāj. The 51st commentary is '*Samājavādarahasyam*' by a modern scholar Venkata Rao Rayas translated in Sanskrit by Bhola Jha.¹⁵ One more work in Upaniṣadic learning is *Thirty Minor Upaniṣads* edited by Madhu Khanna (Tantra Foundation, 2011).

I now come to some significant studies and publications in the field of classical Sanskrit. For the past few decades Michael Hahn has been working on the texts of Candragomin, Śivasvāmin and Haribhadra. The fruition of his lifelong work of these authors was made available to us only recently. The publication of the Indian edition of Haribhadra's *Jātakamālā*¹⁶ by him and his sustained efforts at translating the *Kapphiṇābhyudaya* of Śivasvāmin are important.

Mention may be made here of another very important work in the field of Sanskrit poetry - the *Lokasamvyavahārapravṛttiḥ* of Ravigupta a poet of seventh century AD. A new edition based on fresh manuscript material has been brought out by Vijaypal Shastri in 2012 with exhaustive notes, introduction and Hindi translation. Nilanjana Shah was the first scholar to have brought out an edition of this work. The work had not been translated in any Indian language so far. Michael Hahn had published another critical edition with English translation in 2007 in *South Asian Classical Studies* - a research Journal from Japan. Hahn had recently published a unique work, Jnanasrimitra's *Vṛttamalastuti* with Sakyaraksita's Commentary and was in the process of bringing out a revised edition of Haribhatta's *Jatakamala* to be published by Aditya Prakashan. I am Glad to note that S. Bahukar is engaged in completing remaining work of Haribhatta's *Jatakamala* with the help of three of Hahn's colleagues, Dr. Mitsuyo Demoto-Hahn (his wife), Dr. Martin Straube and Peter Khoroché. A Devanagari edition of *Vṛttamalastuti* with glossary and English translation, by Bahulkar in association with his colleagues at pune.

Publication of some unknown *kāvya*s from classical Sanskrit literature has added to the treasure of oriental studies. Amongst these, mention may be made of *Alivilāsisamlāpaḥ* of Gangadhar Shastri and *Kachchavaṁśamahākāvyaṁ* both edited with scholarly commentaries by Ramakant Pandey.

It is heartening to note that several rare and valuable commentaries, opening vistas in hermeneutics with their application of literary theories, are recently brought out in critical

Rashtravada aur Bharatiya Rajashastra (in Hindi and Sanskrit), Study of nation and nationality on the basis of various Vedic and Sanskrit texts, Vidya Nidhi Prakashan, Delhi, 2013.

¹⁵ My thanks to Arindam Chakravarti for drawing my attention to this publication.

¹⁶ *Poetical Versions of the Buddha's Former Lives - Seventeen Legends from Haribhadra's Jātakamālā*, ed. Michael Hahn; Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1911

editions. Publication of the four commentaries on *Kirātārjunīyam* - of Nṛsiṃha, Prakāśavarṣa, Jonarāja and the commentary *Pradīpikā* has presented new horizons in the study of Bhāravi. Vasant Kumar Bhatta's critical edition of the *Sandarbhādīpikā* commentary on the Bengali version of the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* (2013) and the publication of *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*¹⁷ on the plays of King Kulaśekhavarman under the editorship of K.G. Paulose are notable events. Authored by a scholar who lived during the very reign of the King Kulaśekhara, *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā* is a rare and valuable text providing insights into the dramatic world of Kulaśekhavarman from the view point of performance. The renewed interest in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata and Indian aesthetics has opened promising areas of study.¹⁸

The publication of a revised and complete edition of Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* is one of the great events in the world of Indology. The discovery of the manuscripts of *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* of Bhoja around 1918 was as much an important event as the discovery of the manuscripts of Bhāsa plays in 1910. Rewa Prasad Dwivedi has not only utilised the existing manuscript material along with the four volumes of Josyer's edition and the first volume of *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* published by Raghavan, he could also get access to the text that Raghavan had prepared for the next volume of his edition. Drawing from all available sources Dwivedi has made an

¹⁷ Vyaṅgyavyākhyā The Aesthetics of Dhvani in Theatre, Ed K.G. Paulose, RSKS and DKPW, 2013

¹⁸ Some other publications in the field of theatre, aesthetics and drama are – (1) Schechner, Richard, *Performed Imaginaries*, New York: Routledge, 2014.

performance studies scholar bearing upon some of the key themes of society in the 21st century, with reflections on the avant garde and terror, the counter-cultural movement of the 1960s/70s and the Occupy movement; self-wounding art, popular culture, and ritual; the Ramlila cycle play of India and the way imagination structures reality; the corporate world and conservative artists. (2) Nair, Sreenath, *The Natyasastra and the Body in Performance: Essays on Indian Theories of Dance and Drama*, North Carolina: McFarland, 2015 essays exploring the *Nāṭyaśāstra* from the multiple perspectives of Indian performance studies - epistemological, aesthetic, scientific, religious, ethnological and practical; (3) Namboodiripad, Narayanan, *Revealing the Art of Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2014 – dealing with world of Indian classical theatre, the fundamental principles of sublime, grace, stage presence, and effective communication of emotions, analyzing the techniques of Centripetal Effect, Centre Point, and the Introspective Illusion that influence the presentation of plays. (4) Kennedy, Dennis, Li Lan, *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014 (edited)- Addressing both theoretical and practical questions surrounding Shakespeare in contemporary Asia, (5) Hollander, Julia, *Indian Folk Theatres (Theatres of the World)*, London: Routledge, 2013 –a work on theatre anthropology as a lived experience, it looks at folk theatre forms from three corners of the Indian subcontinent. (6) Madhavan, Arya, *Kudiyattam Theatre and the Actor's Consciousness*, New York & Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010: explores the training methods, performance and aesthetics of *Kudiyattam*, with a comprehensive analysis of the psycho-physical techniques employed by the *cākyārs*; (7) Purkayastha, Prarthana, *Indian Modern Dance, Feminism and Transnationalism*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014 : examines modern dance in India as it emerged simultaneously and in parallel with European and North American modernism in the twentieth century. (8) Horowitz, E.P. *The Indian Theatre*, Stoughton: Books on Demand, 2013: replication of a book originally published before 1912. (9) Sengupta, Ashish, *Mapping South Asia Through Contemporary Theatre*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014:

I am thankful to Sreenath nair for information about these publications. *Nāṭyaśāstra in the Modern World* edited by me forms the proceedings of special panel on *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the 15th World Sanskrit Conference. Ramratnam has published *Sanskrit Drama, with special reference to Prahāsana and Vīthī* (2014, DK Printworld). And *Dance Drama traditions*, (published by Munshiram Manoharlal).

attempt to present one of the most comprehensive editions. Dwivedi has also rewritten the whole chapter, 26th, that could not be fully recovered in the surviving manuscripts.¹⁹

The Khudabakhsh Library of Patna, the Raza Library at Rampur, the National Manuscript Mission and the Iran Culture House at Delhi have done yeoman's job for the cause of Islamic, Persian and Arabic studies. They have dealt with the neglected aspects of oriental studies. *Qand e Paarsi*- a Journal of Iran Culture House published its special number based on Persian literature of Deccan in 2014. The National Museum of Tehran, Iran has brought out the volume 14th of its descriptive catalogue edited by Mohammad Hussain Hakim (2014). Some of the important publication in Persian are as follows. *Chahar Gulshan - Chaturman Kayastha*, edited by Prof. Chander Shekhar (NMM, 2013) - deals with the cultural environment prevalent in India in later Moghul Period; *Miraat-ul-Istelaah* - ; edited by Anand Ram Mukhlis, ed. By Prof. Chander Shekhar; *MiraatulIstelaah* edited by Hamid Reza Ghilichkhani and Houman Yousefdehi; Published in two volumes (NMM, 2013) - is a rich source of information on administrative working of late Moghul period especially that of Muhammad Shah; it also contains reference of the colloquial Hindwi Language of common folk prevalent in 18th Century Hindostan; *Tazkira e Ilahi- Imaduddin Al Husaini*, edited by Prof. Abdul Haq, (NMM, 2013 in two volumes) - contains information of multitude of writers comprising poets, mystic Sufis, learned Divines, reputed Calligraphers and politicians of 17th Century AD; '*Descriptive Catalogue of Persian Translation of Indian Works*'- ed- Prof. Sharif Husain Qasmi, (NMM, Delhi, 2013) which is a monument to living interactions between Persian and Sanskrit scholars; *Ghazaliyaat e Bedil- Bedil Dehlavi*- ed. Dr. Ali Reza Ghazve and Syed Mehdi Tabatabaaii, (Shahristaan e Kitaab, Tehran, Iran 2014); *Dawaazdah Band of Mohtasham Kashani* - translated by Balram Shukla, (Rampur Raza Library, Rampur, 2014) - an elegy of Imam Hussain and a masterpiece of Persian Poetry; *-Kileed e Fahm e Masnavi* - Dr. Paimaan Azaad, (Ilm Pulication, 2014) - is the key to understand Masnavi of Rumi; *A Dictionary of Persian Calligraphy and Related Arts*- Dr. Hamid Reza Ghilichkhani, (Brill, 2014); *Ahvaal e Khushnavisaan* of Mohammad Husain Alavi, ed- Hamid Reza Ghilichkhani, (Majlis e Shura, Tehran, Iran, 2013) - the only biographical memoir of calligraphers in Persian poetry, ms. copied in 1888 A.D. The Raza library of Rampur has around 150 important publications to its credit, their recent release of the Persian translation of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* is a landmark.²⁰

Of the studies of civilizations that have recently appeared *Perspectives on the Origin of Indian Civilization* edited by Angela Marcantonio and Girish Nath Jha (D.K. Print world, 2011) is noteworthy. "Kosambi - *Kalpanā se Yathārtha taka*" (in Hindi) by historian Bhagwan Singh is a

¹⁹ Śṛṅgāraprakāśa of Bhoja : Edited by M.M. Rewa Prasad Dwivedi & Sadashiv Kumar Dwivedi, jointly published by Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi and Kalidasa Samsthan, Varanasi, 2007.

²⁰ I am thankful to Balram Shukla for the information on these publications.

post-modern deconstruction of the life and works D.D. Kosambi.²¹ It seriously questions the postulations of Kosambi.

Amongst the Studies on Indian and South East Asian Art, *Śilpa in Indian Tradition: Concepts and Instruments* by R.N. Mishra (IIAS & Rupa & Co. Delhi, 2012) examines basic concepts and the dynamic traditions of Indian art. Mishra is known for his his work *Ancient Aesthetics and Art Activity* (1975). Here he devotes three chapters to Śilpa and Śilpins and canons of arts, the IV chapter discusses the creative process. The work provides fascinating studies in Mason's marks on ancient Indian architectures. *Traditions and Modernity in Indian Arts* by Nilima Vashishtha (IIAS & Aryan, Delhi 2010) makes a study of modern art and the role of tradition in their creativity. *Phillippinī Rāmakathāyen* (in Hindi) by Ratna Lahiri (IIAS & Aryan, 2014) is a unique study in the tradition of *Rāmāyana* in Phillippines. Ratna Lahiri has researched intensively and has spent several years in Phillippines and is known for her work in this field. *Archeology of the Gaṅgā Plane* (IIAS Shimla & Aryan Books Delhi 2010) by Purushottam Singh is an attempt at cultural and historical study of some of the most valuable treasures of our heritage. *The Hindu Temples in South East Asia* – by Sacchidanand Shai is a monumental work coming after hard work of decades. Sinha with his rare assesses the social, economic, cultural dimensions of the Temples in South East Asia covering the vast span of 1400 years. His study unfolds facets of history as gleaned from inscriptions of South East Asia. *The Body in Indian Art and Thought* by Naman P. Ahuja, Europiala, 2013-14; *Art and Archeology Of SEA* : Ed. Bachchan Kumar, IGCA & Aryan Books, 2011; and *Recent Studies in Indonesian Archeology* edited by Sedyawati, I Wayan, Ardika (GNCA & B.R, Publishers, 2012) are some other works I would like to mention here to substantiate the view of oriental studies emerging today. I feel especially re-assured by three recent volumes of R. Nagaswami - *Vedic Roots of Hindu Iconography* (Kaveri Books, New Delhi 2012), *Masterpieces of Chola Art* (Tamil Arts Academy, 2011) and *Brhadīśvara Temple* - which give a new focus to the study of Indian civilization and art traditions.

Delivering his Sectional President's address for the 71st session of the Indian History Congress (2010), R. N. Mishra rightly remarked – 'It will be easily conceded that the beginnings of Indian art historical writings remained shadowed by racial, colonial and 'Orientalist' constructions which considered Indian art as merely 'decorative' in form and content; and its manifestations characteristically in the nature of craft, 'beneath the attention of English public.'²² Mishra however rightly points out how the Indian scholarship has been able to transcend of these limitations, and is discovering its roots with an approach to Indian aesthetics, so that 'there is a greater clarity of thought about the utility of Poetics and its

²¹ Aryan Books International, 2012

²² Guha-Thakurta (2004): *Monuments, Objects and Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial India*, Delhi: Permanent Black, p.210, quoting James Fergusson; as quoted by R.N. Mishra.

principles in understanding art forms.’²³

In the field of literary theory, parallel to the studies on Sanskrit poetics by authors in other languages, the tradition itself has remained vibrant in the nineteenth, twentieth and the twenty-first centuries in the continuous flow of commentaries on the old texts as well as creation of entirely new texts in Sanskrit. New *śāstric* texts or commentaries in Sanskrit on the *Alaṅkāraśāstra* were created for re-interpreting the old concepts and theories with a view to present the hermeneutics and application on new writings in Sanskrit and other languages, for evolving new categories and concepts, and for defining new forms of literature. This could happen because of the continuous flow of creativity in Sanskrit.²⁴

In the field of Jainology, the new edition of *Isibhāsiāi* (*Ladnun*, 2011) and a rare illustrated manuscript of *Paryuṣaṇākalpasūtra* edited by M.K. Dhavalikar and Shreenand Bapat are notable.²⁵ *Paryuṣaṇaparva* or *Aṣṭāhnikā* is a very important religious rite for both *Digambara* and *Śvetāmbara* sects and the sermons delivered for the monks form the corpus of the *sūtra*. It is the most widely circulated *ardhamāgadhī* scripture.

In the field of Prakrit studies, four volumes of *The Comprehensive and critical Dictionary of Prakrit Languages*, a project started under the editorship of A.M Ghatage have been published and a part of the V volume has also been printed during 2013-14. This covers words upto *oḍvohovaggaha* and shows the remarkable progress made.

In field of Indian Philosophy, Shashiprabha Kumar has further contributed to the studies on *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy by *Classical Vaiśeṣika in Indian Philosophy : On Knowing and What is to be Known*,²⁶ Some other works in the area of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy* are - Katsunori Hirano, *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy and Text Science*²⁷ In the area of Buddhist philosophy, the publication of the *Pramāṇavārtika* with commentary by Ramashankar Tripathi (I chapter) is worth mentioning. Navjeevan Rastogi is one of the very few experts in the area of Kashmir Śaivism. I consider his *Kashmir Śivādvayavāda men Pramāṇacintana*’ (LDII, 2013) as a masterly work of rare value. Śaivism and Tantra are specially enriched by Bettina Bäumer’s study as presented in her ‘*Abhinavagupta’s Hermeneutics of the Absolute: Anuttaraprakriyā – An interpretation of Parātrimśikāvivarāṇa*’ (IIAS and DKPW) commentary and intensive study of the text. A new edition of *Śāktapramoda* (2013) is also important. Sthaneshwar Timalsima has been working on two fronts of Tantra and Indian Philosophy.

²³ Nardi, Isabella (2006) *The Theory of Chitrasutra in Indian Painting...* London/New York: Routledge; Ranta, Michael (2001) *Mimesis as Representation of Types: Historical Basis of an Aesthetic Idea*, Stockholm: Elander and Gotab A.B. as quoted by R.N. Mishra.

²⁴ For details see *Samśkrta kā Arvācīna Samikṣātma-Kāvyaśāstra* by Rajendra Mishra, Vishvavidyalaya Prakashan, Varanasi, 2010

²⁵ *Paryuṣaṇākalpasūtra* edited by M.K. Dhavalikar and Shreenand Bapat, BORI, Pune, 2011

²⁶ Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge Publishers, Oxford, U.K. 2013.

²⁷ MLBD (2012)

Facets of Indian Philosophy - edited by Ambika Datta Sharma and S.P. Dube in four volumes presents a comprehensive picture of the whole course of Indian philosophy up to modern period. *Indian Philosophy in English - from Renaissance to Independence* (2011) edited by Nalini Bhushan and J.R. Garfield presents a detailed study of the Indian philosophical works of the past two centuries. Yashdev Shalya is one of the original thinkers. After the publication of *Cidvimarśa* (1978) comprising studies in human consciousness, he has traversed a long journey through the past four decades. In his '*Cit kī Ātmaḡaveṣaṇā*' (2009), he views the two dimensional movement of human psyche - *pratyaṇmukha* (forward) and *parāṇmukha*' (backward).²⁸ The publication of the *Modern Perspectives on Vedānta* - Proceedings of 20th International congress of Vedānta, December 28-31, 2011, (JNU) is also noteworthy.

There is growing emphasis on revisiting Sanskrit texts with a view to explore their potentiality in the contemporary world. Examples are - Dharm Bhawuk: *Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavadgīta* and Anand Paranjpe: *A Handbook of Indian Psychology*. A recent interpretative study of Gītā as a modern spiritual and scientific discourse has been attempted by Rajanish Garg (Fusion Books, 2013).²⁹

There are attempts at developing an Indian philosophical framework to address the global issues in humanities and the social sciences. Ram-Prasad Chakrabarti is making studies emotions, David Lawrence is working on Consciousness theories from India, Glen Hayes is working to address Tantra in light of the Cognitive Science, Purushottama Bilimoria is working on semantics, ethics, and various other issues. Arindam chakrabarti just submitted his manuscript on 'Objects,' a comparative work on Indian and Western Philosophies. There is also a growing interest in reading Aurobindo; and Devashish Benerji and Stephan Phillips are writing separate books on Aurobindo's philosophical and aesthetic contributions.³⁰ *Management mantras* by Ramratnam (DKPW) co-relates modern management concepts to Sanskrit texts like the *Arthaśāstra* and *Bhagavadgītā*,

Some of the publications related to science and technology as evinced from Sanskrit sources may also be noted here - *Evolution of Physical Sciences in Ancient and Medieval India*: K.V.Sarma, Akhil Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad, Lucknow, 2010; *Sanskrit Computational Linguistics*: Ed. Grish Nath Jha, Springer, 2010; *Saving India's Medical manuscripts*: Samikṣikā series-5, NMM, 2012 etc.

It is a healthy sign for the sustenance of oriental wisdom that more and more ancient Sanskrit texts or works by European scholars are being translated in vernaculars. Kannad translations of two well known encyclopedic works - *Śivatatvaratnākara* and *Mānasollāsa* have been recently brought out by Mallepuram Venkatesh. A new editions of Bhaskarācārya's *Līlāvati* with English translation with detailed notes based on commentary *Budhaviḷāsini* by A. B. Padmanabha Rao, a mathematician of his own standing is also worth mentioning. This

²⁸ References are from *Bhāratīya Darśana aur Uskā Svātantryottara Yuga*' Ambikadatta Sharma, Unmilana, XXVII.2, July 2013

²⁹ Ed GN Jha etc. D.K. Print World, 2011

³⁰ I am thankful to Sthaneshwar Timalisina for the information about these publications.

publication coincides with the International conference on Bhāskarācārya – the great Indian Mathematician and Astronomer organized on the occasion of his 900th birth anniversary by Vidya Prasarak Mandal, Thane (19-21 September 2014).³¹ K.G. Paulose has edited the Malayalam translations of all the 18 *Purāṇas*. Vijay Pandya has translated Jacobi's monograph on the *Rāmāyaṇa* (L.D. Institute of Indology, 2012).

'The Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture' is one of the most monumental projects taken up by D.P. Chattopadhyaya in 1980. Out of the series of 115 volumes to be published under this project, ninety have already been released. On the study of Sanskrit sources in Indian Science and technology, I may cite *Science and Technology in Ancient Indian Texts*, edited by Balram Singh and others.³²

This constant re-visiting and unraveling the old texts through translations and publications of old commentaries on them will certainly provide impetus for establishing what I call a '*svarāja*' of oriental studies in India.

In his '*Svaraj in Ideas*,³³ K.C. Bhattacharya called for developing indigenous systems of thinking and a warned against blind adherence to western thoughts and systems. It is to be noted that in recent decades discussions have been revolved again and again on this lecture by Bhattacharya and philosophers like Kalidasa Bhattacharya, Dayakrishna, Rajendra Prasad, Ramchandra Gandhi and S.P. Gautam come out with their commentaries on it. The Hindi translation of this lecture was published in '*Pratiman*' – a journal of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (New Delhi) with critical comments. A seminar on it was conducted at the IIAS. Bhagwandas, one of the modern Indian philosophers, had emphasized the need to understand the idea of '*svarāj*' in the context of social, moral and organizational frame works. Ambika Datta Sharma rightly suggests that Bhattacharya's postulations should be considered in the context of the hermeneutics of the idea of '*svaraj*' presented by Bhagwandas (1869-1958) and R.D. Ranade (1886-1957) as well as its linkage with Vedic concept of '*svārāṅjyam*' and '*vairāṅjyam*'.

The question that I want to raise through this lecture remains yet to be answered – is the '*svarāja*' of oriental studies attained and is the lost Sarasvatī regained? I can only say that perhaps we have moved a little forward in finding out a solution to this question. In conformity with this judgment, I would again like to cite two very recent publications that I have gone through. They do not come in the ambit of academic research works or oriental studies as such, but they do extend the frontiers of the process of east-west dialogue carried on the fountainhead of Indian wisdom which I referred to at the beginning of this lecture. The first of them is '*From the Ganges to the Mediterranean* (2011) edited and published in separately in Spanish and English by Oscar Pujol. It comprises the series of discussions between Vidya Niwas Mishra, one of the renowned thinkers and writers from India and Rafael Argullol, a Spanish writer and philosopher. This kind of bilateral dialogue between intellectuals, each representing distinct culture and philosophy, happens rarely. Pujol's experiment incorporates

³¹ I am grateful to S.R. Sarma for information and details on the publication and the conference.

³² D.K. Printworld, Delhi: 2012

³³ delivered as a lecture in 1929, published in *Vishvabharati Journal*, vol. XX, pp. 103-14; in 1954 and reprinted in 1984 in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* XI.4.

the best of human intellect where both the discussants look into the inner recesses of the minds of each other, and they are able to look beyond as well. Over and above, it is the frank admittance of differences and distinctions that makes these dialogues valuable for us. The basic difference between the east and the west remains. Both have imbibed the experience of loneliness, but in a different way; as Vidya Niwas Mishra aptly puts it - 'You arrive at loneliness through all your actions and achievements. We start from loneliness, but we do not want to remain lonely, we want to see ourselves in the other.' While Rafael overrules the possibility of a dialogue between two diverse cultures, Vidya Niwas Mishra believes that it is possible to create dialogue across cultures, the very continuity of Indian traditions and their relevance in modern world would lead to the viability of such dialogue. These dialogues present critiques of our times and without taking recourse to the post-modern techniques, they de-construct several ancient and modern myths. The myth of progress, the myth of golden age or locating paradise in the past - together with some of the modern myths like the myth of science and the myth of social equality have been deconstructed through the edge of these discussions. There are several gods, several centres are perceived, with every centre having several gods in its periphery. There is a continuous shift of centres and peripheries. Vidya Niwas Mishra thus spells out the concept of 'cosmic movement' through this idea of moving centres and moving peripheries.

Another work of a different nature, but attempting a similar dialogue is '*Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism*'³⁴ by Rajiv Malhotra. Rajiv offers fresh insights on dichotomies in the East-West dialogue. He repositions and reverses the gaze. Instead of being observed by west, he becomes the observer. 'I am simply using the *dharmic* perspective to reverse the analytical gaze which normally goes from West to East and unconsciously privileges the former'. He finds the distinctiveness of cultural and spiritual matrix of *dharmic* civilizations under siege. 'not only from unsustainable and inequitable development but also from something more insidious: the widespread dismantling, rearrangement and digestion of *dharmic* culture into Western frameworks, disingenuously characterized as 'universal' (p.12).

Anand Coomarswamy says -'India's soul would come out unscathed from the colonial onslaught though its body was badly damaged.'³⁵

Let us make sustained efforts for the realization of this proclamation. We will have to undertake vigorous exercises for holding such dialogues as cited above. Our studies should adoptive to multi-lingualism and plurality of thought.

The tendency to overlook researches and studies presented through languages other than English is one of the serious drawbacks of oriental studies as pursued by us. There is need

³⁴ Malhotra Rajiv: *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism*-, Harper Collins Publishers India,

³⁵ Raghuramaraju A: *Debates in Indian Philosophy: Classical Colonial and Contemporary*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p. 6

to make sustained efforts at producing translations of excellent research works or studies in the areas of oriental learning from German, French, Spanish and other languages into Indian languages. It is equally necessary that the new publications of high standard in our vernaculars are translated in English and Sanskrit. The availability of such translations will definitely promote healthy dialogues between researchers. This will perhaps help in eradicating the global tendency to neglect or overlook the researches and studies made by Indian or Asian scholars which still persists. Before Pischel postulated his theory of the origin of Sanskrit drama through puppet-theatre, Shankar Pandurang Pundit from Maharashtra had advanced the same opinion. But the theory of the origin of Sanskrit drama through puppet theatre, though obsolete now, continues to be referred by the name of Pischel alone. I have referred to two important works by Ramvilas Sharma and Bhagwan Singh on Vedic and Harappan Culture. These works generated some serious debates in Hindi circles. But beyond it, they remained ignored. One of my books in Hindi, *Kālidāsa kī Samīkṣāparamparā*, was awarded as best research work by the AIOC in its Haridwar session. Some of my esteemed friends have been telling me that if an English translation of this work had been published, it would have led to the revision of the view of some of the modern scholars, who quite often complain about the lack of critical faculty in Sanskrit tradition.

While I appreciate the great works done by western scholars for sustaining oriental studies, I feel that the researches in the Asian countries should assume equal brilliance to match the contribution of the western scholars and where ever necessary, be able to offer critiques and counter-questionings. The Oriental learning should essentially belong to us, the orients, and must be cultivated by us as a major concern. We should be able to tell the west rather than the west telling us, about the oriental culture, wisdom and civilization.

Ladies and Gentleman, I do not want to close this address with a pessimist note. New gateways for entering into fruitful dialogues are opening. There are immense possibilities of correspondences and interaction between the pundits and the modern scholars. *Vajrayānadarśanamīmāṃsā* (Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2009) is a thesis submitted for the research degree of the Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya by Wangchuk Dorjee Negi. It has been edited by Dharmadatta Chaturvedi for publication. Similarly, *Vaidikaṃ Padavijñānaṃ* is also a Thesis submitted for the same university by Vishvanātha Vāmana Lele presenting comparative studies in the *padapāṭhas* of *Ṛgveda* and other *samhitās*. Bhagyalata Pataskar has edited and published it (VSM, 2013). The fact that these theses by traditional pundits were taken up as research works indicates the continuity of the tradition and its dialogue with modernity.

The first session of the AIOC was held at Poona on 5th, 6th and 7th November, 1919. Very soon this conference will complete one hundred years of its glorious existence and will be holding its 50th session. I hope that it will be promoting Oriental studies in a more meaningful way. Aklujkar tells us that there were six streams of the river Sarasvatī in additions to its main stream. The Sarasvatī of oriental learning also has seven streams for us, comprising the West Asian, South Asian, East Asian, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan and Japanese Studies along with the main stream of Indology. Let us rejuvenate and resuscitate the flow of all the seven streams of Oriental Learning.

On Regaining *Svarāja* and the Lost Sarasvatī

सप्तधाराभिसम्पन्ना सप्तरूपविभास्वरा।।
सेविता वर्धिता नित्यं रक्षेदस्मान् सरस्वती।
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