

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

The India Office Library

Contributed by Mr. S. C. Sutton, Librarian,
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The India Office Library in London is at once an orientalist research library open to scholars in every country and an official reference library of the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The anomalous combination of these two functions in a single institution is largely the result of historical chance. The Library was founded in 1801 by the Honourable East India Company. Its function as originally conceived was simply to serve as a repository for the Oriental books and manuscripts placed in the Company's care by its servants in the East and by others. The materials so acquired rapidly grew in range and volume. Before long the Company began systematically to search for and to acquire literary material bearing upon the whole of the territories with which it was concerned. The contents of the Library were from the outset made accessible to scholars as well as being available for reference by the Company's servants in the discharge of their duties. In 1858, on the transfer of the Company's powers and material possessions to the Crown, the Library came under the administration of the newly created Department of State, the India Office, and in 1867 was installed in its present quarters in King Charles Street, Whitehall. With the extinction of the India Office in 1947 as a result of the Indian Independence Act of that year the Library came under the control of the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to whom responsibility for the conduct of relations with India and Pakistan was transferred.

The domain and trading activities of the Company extended beyond the frontiers of the Indian subcontinent to places as far apart as St. Helena, the Cape, the Malayan archipelago, and the Philippines. Literary material on all these places is accordingly to be found in the

Library. Much the greater part of the Library's resources however falls within the field of Indology. They relate, that is to say, to every aspect of the history and peoples of the Indian subcontinent and of contiguous territories of related culture.

Disregarding certain miscellaneous properties, the resources of the Library fall into four main divisions: printed books, manuscripts, the art collections, and photographs.

Printed Books

There are about a quarter of a million printed books, of which about 70,000 are in English and other European languages, and the rest in Oriental languages. The European books form what is probably the world's largest collection on Indian studies. The Library tries to acquire everything that is published in this field. The Oriental language collections have been built up to a large degree by the operation of the copyright deposit privilege which the Library enjoyed in respect of Indian publications from 1867 to 1947. The main collections are Arabic (about 5,500 vols.), Persian (5,000), Sanskrit and the Prakrits (20,000), Bengali (24,000), Gujarati (19,000), Hindi (20,000), Marathi (9,000), Panjabi (5,000), Urdu (20,000), Tamil (15,000), and Telugu (6,000). There are smaller collections in some eighty other Oriental, mainly Indian languages. Such minor linguistic collections are not without interest because books in certain of the rarer Indian languages are not to be found elsewhere in the West.

Manuscripts

The manuscripts are also divided into language collections, those in European languages forming one collection. The European manu-

scripts principally bear upon Indian and British-Indian History since the beginning of the British connection. The earliest collection received in the Library consisted of the material which Robert Orme gathered in the preparation of his *History of the Operations of the British Nation in Indostan from the Year 1745* (London, 1763–78). Many large collections have since been received—for example, the Colin Mackenzie, the Philip Francis, the Raffles, the Wellesley, and the Moorcroft Collections. Accessions to the European manuscripts have been particularly numerous and valuable since 1947. Indeed it may be said that the size of this department of the Library has been doubled during the last decade. The collections received during this period, mainly on permanent loan, include the private papers of many former Secretaries of State for India in Council,¹ Viceroys and Governors-General of India,² Governors of Indian Provinces, and Indian civilians. Such quasi-official private muniments contain many documents not to be found in the official records, and are accordingly of high importance in the study of the formation of policy. In addition to these collections recent acquisitions include many other historical collections, some very large, like the Clive Collection of more than 10,000 documents deposited by the Earl of Powis in 1955.

The Oriental manuscripts number about 20,000, to which must be added many hundreds of fragmentary manuscripts in Tibetan, Khotanese, and Kuchean. In the "classical" Oriental languages the largest collections are Arabic (3,200 manuscripts), Persian (4,800), Sanskrit (8,300), and Tibetan (1,900). The modern Indian collections are necessarily smaller. They include Bengali (30 manuscripts), Gujarati (140), Hindi (160), Marathi (250), Oriya (50), Pashto (60), Urdu (270). Of manuscript collections from beyond the Indian subcontinent, the most notable are Burmese (400), Indonesian (110), Mo-so (111), Siamese (21), Sinhalese (70), and Turki and Turkish (23).

¹ For example, Sir Charles Wood (1859–66), Viscount Cross (1886–92), H. H. Fowler (1894–95), and Lord George Hamilton (1895–1903).

² For example, the 8th Earl of Elgin (1862–63), Sir John Lawrence (1864–69), Lord Northbrook (1872–76), the Marquess of Lansdowne (1888–94), and the 9th Earl of Elgin (1894–99).

Art collections

There are four art collections: Indian miniatures; Persian miniatures; watercolours, drawings, and sketches by Western artists; and natural history drawings. The Indian miniatures number about 1,500. Most of these form part of the Johnson Collection which the Library acquired in 1807 from the widow of Richard Johnson, banker to Warren Hastings; but numerous additional miniatures have since been acquired, especially in recent years. The Johnson Collection consists of miniatures principally of the eighteenth century, but includes also some fine examples of Murghal painting the seventeenth century. Today the Library aims to acquire pictures mainly of the same period as the Johnson Collection and also any which are of particular interest for the history of the East India Company. The Persian miniatures, to the number of about 2,000, consist partly of separate miniatures in the Johnson Collection, partly of illustrations contained in Persian manuscripts. The Western watercolours, drawings, and sketches constitute a very mixed collection of work not only by professional artists such as the Daniells but by amateur artists of many sorts, such as Company soldiers and civilians, travellers, etc. The collection is of particular interest in providing illustrative material of British life in India and of architecture and topography during the British period. The natural history drawings consist of some 5,000 paintings of mammals, birds, insects, and plants from India and other parts of South and South-East Asia, mainly of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. They were executed chiefly by Indian artists, primarily for scientific purposes, but now have an interest which is artistic rather than scientific. There is in addition an almost complete set of prints published in Britain and India of Indian subjects.

Photographs

The chief collection of photographic material in the Library consists of 2,300 negative plates and more than 30,000 prints of Indian archaeological interest.

Catalogues

It is a settled policy of the Library to publish, so far as possible, catalogues of the various language collections of books and of manu-

scripts. There are recently published catalogues of the books in Sanskrit (4 vols.) and in Persian. There are older catalogues of books in Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya, Panjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu; a revised catalogue of the Urdu books, and catalogues of the Hindi books, the Tamil books, and the European periodical publications are in preparation. A catalogue of the Malayalam books is ready for the press. An author catalogue of the European books was published towards the end of the nineteenth century, and supplements to it printed at intervals until 1936. In that year it was decided to discontinue the printing of these supplements, and instead to prepare for publication a complete subject catalogue of the European books. It will be a good many years before this work is ready for the press. Catalogues have been published of the manuscripts in European languages (5 vols.), Sanskrit (9 vols.), Persian (2 vols., in progress), Arabic (2 vols., in progress), Avestan and Pahlavi, Pali, Assamese and Bengali, Gujarati and Rajasthani, Marathi, Oriya, Urdu, Malayalam, and Burmese. A catalogue of the Tibetan texts from Sir Aurel Stein's second expedition to Central Asia is in print and almost ready for publication.³ Some of the smaller manuscript collections have been catalogued in articles published in journals—for example, the Ethiopic, Javanese, Malay, and Syriac manuscripts. A catalogue of the natural history drawings is in the press; catalogues of the other art collections are being prepared.

Other publications of the Library include *The Library of the India Office: An Historical Sketch* (1938), and *A Guide to the India Office Library* (1952), which describes in detail the Library's resources and their catalogues. A printed Annual Report describes the principal manuscript accessions. A list of accessions of printed books in European languages is distributed in typescript to Orientalist libraries and other interested institutions. Reproductions of selected Oriental miniature paintings are being published in two series, monochrome photographic prints and colour prints.

The Indian records

The records of the East India Company

³ It will include a supplement describing the fragmentary Stein Chinese manuscripts.

from its foundation in 1600 to its extinction in 1858 and of the India Office from 1858 to 1947, comprising altogether about 100,000 volumes, are in the custody of the Indian Records Section of the Commonwealth Relations Office. Strictly therefore they do not form part of the India Office Library. They are however available for use⁴ in the Library's Reading Room, and the Librarian is also Keeper of the Records. The late Sir William Foster, Superintendent of Records from 1907 to 1923, published a *Guide to the East India Company Records* (London, 1919, 2nd ed. 1924), which is now out of print. No similar guide has yet been published to the Records of the India Office. It is hoped to start the compilation of such a guide within the next year or two. More than fifty volumes of lists, calendars, narrative calendars, and other material have been published by the India Office and Commonwealth Relations Office about the East India Company Records. The Indian Records Section also contains two other very large collections of research material available for use in the Library: a virtually complete collection of the publications of the Government of India, of the Indian provincial governments, and of the Indian States, together with all publications of the United Kingdom bearing upon India; and a collection of some 5,000 maps of India and the East generally.

Indian historical studies

Research material bearing upon every aspect of Indology is to be found in the Library. The subject most generally studied there however is modern Indian history—political, constitutional, legal, social, and economic—and the historical connection between India and the United Kingdom. The Library's resources for such studies are as a whole unique. The great archive group of the Company and India Office Records exists side by side with the collection of Indian official publications, the map collection, the virtually complete collection of

⁴ The India Office records, in common with other official records of the United Kingdom, are open to the public only when fifty years old or more. They are thus at present open to the end of 1908. The quasi-official private muniments of Secretaries of State for India, Viceroys and Governors-General of India, etc., include papers duplicated in the official records, and the Library accordingly places the same limitation on access to them.

printed material in Western languages bearing upon India, and the constantly expanding European manuscript collections of the Library, including the quasi-official muniments of former Viceroys of India, etc., which are valuable in supplementing the official records. Certain other departments of the Library also have material of importance for historical studies; for example, the Oriental manuscripts, especially the Persian, and the Oriental printed books. The study of Indian history in the British period has become very much more active since 1947, partly, so far as British scholarship is concerned, as a result of the expansion of university Oriental departments brought about by the implementation of the Scarbrough Commission Report of 1947, partly as a result of the greatly stimulated interest of the newly independent Asian states in their own history and culture. The resources of the India Office Library are so preponderant that almost

all modern Indian historical research pursued in the West is dependent upon them to a greater or lesser degree.⁵

The India Office Library may be used on application to the Librarian by any student or scholar from any country. Printed books are lent within the United Kingdom; manuscripts are lent, under certain conditions of security, to any university library or academy of learning anywhere in the world. Microfilms, photostats, and other photographic material can be supplied of any of the Library's resources.

⁵ The India Office Library and the School of Oriental and African Studies are co-operating in compiling a survey of all Western manuscripts bearing upon Southern Asian studies in the British Isles outside the India Office Library. The survey will eventually be published and is likely to prove of great value to Asian studies, especially historical studies, partly in showing what material exists upon particular topics and where it may be found, partly in indicating topics on which documentary material is available.

Sovetskoye Kitayevdenie [*Soviet Sinology*]

Contributed by Professor Derk Bodde,
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The appearance of the first number of the new journal, *Sovetskoye Kitayevdenie* [*Soviet Sinology*] (1958), one and a half years after the establishment of its parent organization, the Institute of Sinology (Institut Kitayevdeniya)¹ of the USSR Academy of Sciences, is further indication of the rapid growth of Soviet scholarly interest in China.² The journal is attractively printed, uses an abundance of Chinese characters, and is similar in format to

the *Journal of Asian Studies*, save that its pages have slightly narrower margins and this first issue contains more pages. Though it was originally planned to begin the journal in 1957 and thereafter publish six issues annually,³ this first number, consisting of 240 pages, appeared only in mid-1958 and seemingly says nothing about future frequency of publication.⁴

Non-Russian readers of *Soviet Sinology* will welcome the fact that its table of contents is printed not only in Russian, but also in Chinese, English, French, and German, and that brief summaries in Chinese and English (half a dozen lines or so each) appear at the end of each article. The following English summary

¹ I am greatly indebted to members of the Institute of Sinology for their cordial hospitality when I visited the Institute in Moscow on July 15, 1958, and for presenting me then with a copy of this journal. To my wife, Galia S. Bodde, I am likewise indebted for the linguistic assistance which made the writing of this notice possible.

² The Institute was created late in 1956 by detaching and expanding what had been the Chinese Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences, in Moscow. See translation of the Russian announcement by Ivar Spector in *JAS*, XVI (1957), 677-678, and Rodger Swearingen, "Asian Studies in the Soviet Union," *JAS*, XVII (1958), 524-525.

³ See Spector, loc. cit.

⁴ A notice on its final page states that its materials were ready for typesetting on January 3, 1958, and were approved for final printing on May 26, 1958. Hence Swearingen's statement (p. 536) that the first issue was published in January 1958 should be corrected.