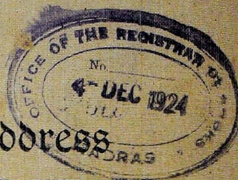
# HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

## PAST AND PRESENT




**Convocation Address**

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE

On October 29th, 1924

BY

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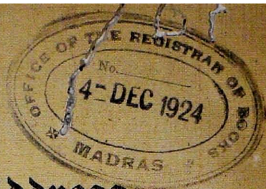
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# Convocation Address

TO

## THE UNIVERSITY OF MYSORE

By ANNIE BESANT, D. L.

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MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HIGHNESS:
YOUR HIGHNESSES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IT is impossible for me to stand here to deliver the Convocation Address before the Chancellor and the University of Mysore, the first University founded in our own time by an Indian Ruler for the benefit of his people, without remembering that in the Past of India the greatest and wisest of her Monarchs found in the promotion of learning their noblest and most beneficent achievement, and saw in the foundation of a University the most enduring memorial of their thrones. Learning in India has ever been regarded as greater than wealth and rank, the fillet of wisdom as more worthy of reverence than the jewelled diadem of Kings.

Who does not remember how the famous Madura Sangam, as highest honor, tied round the head of a greatly learned man a fillet —like the laurel crown of Greece—placed him on a platform supported on poles, borne on the shoulders of men of learning, sometimes a King among them, and carried him in procession along the royal roads? In these days in which Indian women are recovering their ancient position, it may be worth while to note that not only do we come across the names of learned women, but that, as Professor S. Krishna Swami Aiyangar tells us:

> A ruler of Tanjore, poet, musician, warrior and administrater, did extraordinary honor to a lady of the Court by name Râmachandrâmbâ, who composed an epic on the achievements of her patron, Raghunâtha Nâyaka of Tanjore. It appears she was a poetess of extraordinary powers, who could compose with equal facility in eight languages, and

was accorded the honor of Kanaka-Ratna Abhisheka (bath in gold and gems). She was, by assent of the Court, made to occupy the position of the "Emperor of Learning," *Kavitâ Sârvabhaumâ.* [1]

That such honor was no ephemeral thing in India we may see if we recall the scene in the Royal University of Vikramasîlâ, ten centuries later (founded by King Dharmapâla of Gauda). When the University had gathered together to lend their Principal to Tibet, to bring about a revival of Buddhism there, the Tibetan envoy describes the waiting, and is eager to see the Sage, and he enquires whether one venerable Lâmâ after another is not he. The Râjâ came "and took an exalted seat," but no monk rose to greet him. "When all the seats were filled up, there came Jovo Atisa, the Venerable of venerables, in all his glory, at whose sight the eyes felt no satiety." [2]

Thoroughly do I believe the maxim, spoken by Professor Sidgwick to his University undergraduates: "If you would know what England can do, you must know what England has done in the past." To you I would say: "If you would know what India can do, you must know what India has done in the past." You have here, in the shaping, a young University, to be moulded by Indian Ruler and Indian men of learning into what shape they will. Will you, I venture to ask you, make it only a copy, an imitation of Western Universities, or will you lift your eyes to the Universities born on the Indian soil, breathing the Indian air, nourished by Indian traditions, and then set an example so inspiring that every great Indian State shall follow the example that you set, the example of the Ashramas and Sangams of the Hindu, the Vihâras of the Buddhist, the Madrasahs of the Muslims?

Even in such a record as *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, may be found an acknowledgment of the value of indigenous education in India, though not recording the splendor of its achievements. After mentioning the fact that "the existing system of education in India is mainly dependent upon the Government, being directly organised by the State, at least in its higher departments," the writer proceeds:

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[1] *Calcutta Review*, "How Learning was honored among the Ancient Hindus," by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, January, 1922, p. 49.

[2] *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow*, by Sarat Chandra Das, quoted in the *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*, April, 1924, pp. 58, 59.

At no period of its history has India been an altogether unenlightened country. The origin of the Deva-Nâgari alphabet is lost in antiquity, though that is generally admitted not to be of indigenous invention. Inscriptions on stone and copper, the palm-leaf records of the Temples, and, in later days, the widespread manufacture of paper, all alike indicate, not only the general knowledge, but also the common use of the art of writing. From the earliest times the caste of Brâhmanas has preserved, by oral tradition as well as in Mss., a literature unrivalled alike in its antiquity and in the intellectual subtlety of its contents. The Muhammadan invaders introduced the profession of the historian, which reached a high degree of excellence, even as compared with contemporary Europe. Through all changes of Government vernacular instruction in its simplest form has always been given, at least to the children of respectable classes, in every large village. On the one hand, the Toles, or seminaries for teaching Samskrit philosophy at Benares and Nadiya, recall the schools of Athens and Alexandria; on the other, the importance attached to instruction in accounts reminds us of the picture which Horace has left of a Roman education. Even at the present day, knowledge of reading and writing is, owing to the teaching of Buddhist monks, as widely diffused throughout Burma as it is in some countries of Europe. English efforts to stimulate education have ever been most successful, when based upon the existing indigenous institutions. ("India," p. 384, col. 1.)

This is too much forgotten. Therefore I ask you to wander with me for a short space in the forests of the Ashramas, the exquisite gardens of the Vihâras, and let us see whether they do not present something that we may learn to utilise. We may consider the higher education in Ancient, Middle and Modern India, the Vaidic, the Buddhistic and the Muslim periods.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has, in his *Tapovana*, a striking passage on learning in Ancient India:

A most wonderful thing that we notice in India is, that here the forest, not the town, is the fountain-head of all its civilisation.

Wherever, in India, its earliest and most wonderful manifestations are noticed, we find that men have not come into such close contact as to be rolled or fused into a compact mass. There, trees and plants, rivers and lakes, had ample opportunity to live in close relationship with men.

In these forests, though there was human society, there was enough of open space, of aloofness; there was no jostling. Still, this aloofness did not produce inertness in the Indian mind; rather it rendered it all the brighter. It is the forest that has nurtured the two great Ancient Ages of India, the Vaidic and the Buddhistic.

As did the Vaidic Rishis, Lord Buddha also showered His teaching in many woods of India. The royal palace had no room for Him, it is the forest that took Him into its lap. The current of civilisation that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India.[1]

[1] *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*, p. 64. April, 1924. This is a most delightful and instructive magazine for all lovers of India.

It may be pointed out that the supreme literature of India, the Upanishats and the Brahma Sutras, are said to have been taught by Sages and studied by reverent pupils, in these forest depths. For that supreme literature cannot be understood in its deepest meanings except with the aid of meditation and the discipline of the Râja Yoga. A Teacher would give an aphorism, say, to his pupil, and send him away to meditate on it, and to bring back the result to him, when he had reached a definite understanding thereof. The well-known story of Indra Deva and the Devas and Asuras may serve as an illustration. Such exercise drew out the latent powers of the student, and may explain the profundity of thought of the great Teachers of the Past. They were not concerned with explaining a difficulty, but with stimulating the intellectual powers of their pupils, so that these themselves might overcome it. The modern fashion of pouring well-digested facts, with lucid explanations of their inter-relationships, into the brains of the students tends to produce clever superficiality and success in the examination room, but does not conduce to original thinking and deep knowledge. [The hint may be worth considering in modern Universities.] Even after the forest was no longer used, Indian Universities were ever built in scenes of natural beauty, surrounded by lovely gardens, fragrant with blossoms and shady with trees, surrounded by a high wall, with guarded gates. The site of an insignificant village may sometimes be selected, because of its beauty. Thus Nâgârjuna (*cir.* 300)with his pupil Arya Deva is said to have visited a then insignificant village on a beautiful site south of Patalipura, and this led to the foundation of the great Vihâra of Nâlandâ by Arya Deva, later in this fourth century of the Christian Era. The influence of natural beauty on the development of the mind is little thought of now-a-days, when a Civic University is founded in Birmingham, in Leeds, in Manchester.

The numbers of students attached to an Ashrama or Vihâra in Ancient or Middle India sometimes surprises one. But in a forest there was plenty of room, and in the Vihâra, the spaces were large; one courtyard in the University of Vikramasîlâ accommodated 8,000 people. Kalidâsa speaks of Kanva, the Sage, as Kulapati, *i.e.*, a Sage who feeds and teaches 10,000 students. It may be well to

remember that studious adults would long remain as pupils of a much-respected Sage, giving their time to meditation and profound philosophical study, and also to helping the Guru with the younger pupils. In *The Modern Review* (August, 1923, p. 216), there is a paragraph under the heading, "A University in the Shakuntala," noticing a paper in *To-morrow* by Mr. R. G. Kulkarni, who draws attention to this name of Kulapati, given to Kanva, and says:

> The original study of the *Mahâbhârata* gives a graphic description of Kanva's Ashram. It is plainly stated, therein, that thousands of Sages were seen in the Ashram by King Dushyanta, engaged in the study of different lores and sciences. It, therefore, clearly follows that the term Kulapati is not without its meaning in the play, and that the Ashram really consisted of not less than ten thousand students coming from different parts of the country.
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> It would be extremely entertaining to the imagination to try to depict a mental picture of an educational institution that consisted of ten thousand students, all bright, pure, inspiring faces, living together, learning together. Even such a big number in an educational institution was not a novelty in Ancient India.

It may also be remembered that the periods for the full study of the three *Vedas* were very long, and that the method of teaching alluded to above made little inroad on the time of the Kulapati. It is stated that the number of pupils to be taught by one professor was limited to five hundred in some Universities. Again, much time was devoted to learning by heart. A student took up one or more branches of study, as a Brâhmana would take up one, two, or three *Vedas*, and he had to commit to memory the whole book, or books, which he studied. You will remember the astonishing feat of Pandit Vâsudeva Sârvabhauma, the head of the Nadiya University; the University of Mithilâ was the only happy possessor of a text-book of Nyâya, and refused to allow it to be copied for the benefit of another University. So the great Pandit went as a student to Mithilâ, learned the whole text-book by heart, and returning to his own University, he set up a first-rate College for the study of Nyâya, instead of the unsatisfactory one existing until then.

It may also be remembered how Suta was begged to visit the great gathering of those who sought his learning in the Naimisharanya, and how many of the Vaidic treatises bear the affix, showing that they were studied in forests.

Among the Homes of Learning in Ancient India, the Sangams of the South demand notice. The Sangam is evidently the Sangha

of Northern India; we find the word Sanghârâma applied to Buddhist Monasteries, all of which were practically either Schools, Colleges or Universities. Hiouen-Tsang mentions that there were one hundred Sanghârâmas in Kashmir, with five thousand monks. The Buddhist monks were both teachers and students, and this seems to have been usual in Buddhist Vihâras everywhere; in Burma, elementary education is still given in the Monasteries. The boy for the time is a Bhikshu. The residence for long periods in Monasteries and Sangams was due to the deep desire for knowledge which is ingrained in the Indian temperament, and also to the high honor paid to learning. I have already referred to the interesting article in *The Calcutta Review*, of January, 1922, by Professor S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, who is so high an authority on Tamil Land. He rightly says that "if at times we come upon references which lead us to the inference that learning, as such, was held in extraordinarily high veneration, the explanation is clearly to hand that that veneration was in proportion to the labor and single-minded devotion that it called for in its acquisition". Learning was sought for love of learning and not for collateral advantages, such as making a livelihood.

Dr. Aiyangar proceeds by summarising the traditional account of the famous three Sangams of Madura, of which the first was said to have lasted for 16,149 years, the second 3700, and the third 1850. It is by no means impossible that the institution lasted through the periods named, and that specially brilliant assemblages were regarded as marking a literary age. (I should add that Professor Aiyangar regarded the terms mentioned as "fabulously long," so he must not be credited with the above remark.) He comes to a view which appears to me to be correct, and very important, as implying a high standard of critical culture, and a wide extension of general education. He writes:

> There are two features with regard to these assemblies that call for special remark. The first, the academies were standing bodies of the most eminent among the learned men of the time in all branches of knowledge. The next, it was the approval of this learned body as a whole that set the seal of authority on the works presented to it (p. 43).

In fact, the Madura Sangam held in the Tamil Land a position closely resembling that held by the Académie Française in France. A French book which receives its imprimatur is accepted by the whole literary world. Similar assemblies, the learned pro-

fessor says, existed in other parts of India, and they seem also to have exercised the function of examining bodies.

Dr. Aiyangar, in a learned work on the Southern India's contributions to Indian culture, remarks:

> The main source of information for the period previous to the rise of the Pallavas into importance is Tamil Literature, of which we have a body with a character all its own. This body of works is known among Tamil Scholars by the collective designation, "Sangam Works". This designation assumes the existence of a body, of an academy, of scholars and critics, whose imprimatur was necessary for the publication of any work of literature in Tamil. The Tamil word "*Sangam*" is the Samskrit "*Sangha*" and means ordinarily no more than an assembly. In this particular application, however, it means a body of scholars of recognised worth and standing in the world of letters, who were maintained by the contemporary kings and constituted themselves a board before whom every work seeking recognition had to be read. It is only when this body as a whole signified its approval that the work could go forth into the world as a Sangam work. It does not, however, mean that other works were not written and published. There are some which have come down to us, which do not appear to have gone before the Sangam. The function of this body seems, therefore, to be merely to set up a standard of excellence for works which aspire to the dignity of Sangam works. [1]

The Rishi Agastya is said to have been a member of the first and second Sangams, and to have written the authoritative grammar of the Age, the *Agattiyam.*

In a work entitled *Tamil Studies,* by M. Srinivasa Aiyangar, M.A., (1914)—an interesting and useful work, summarising the early history of Tamil culture and civilisation from original sources—the author frankly says that the "topics have been treated from the standpoint of modern criticism, traditions and legends being discarded or utilised with great caution". Archæological researches have verified so many "traditions and legends" discarded in the boyish days of western science, that later writers treat them with more and more respect, though with suspended judgment, until they are duly verified by some bones or stones. Mr. M. S. Aiyangar thinks that the Rishi Agastya's "date" cannot be earlier than the 5th or 6th century B. C. (loc. cit. p. 238). Yet *The Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency* puts the meeting of Shrî Râmachandra with the Rishi Agastya at 2000 B. C., and mentions His great influence over an early Pândyan King, Kulashekara. Obviously, the "date" of a Rishi cannot be fixed; the most that is

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[1] *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture,* by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, M. A., Ph. D. (pp. 9, 10). 1923.

possible would be the finding of a date, or dates, at which He temporarily appeared in our physical history.

Mr. Aiyangar has the following on the coming of the Rishi from the North:

The life of Agastya is clothed in myth; but this much is certain, that he was a Brâhman of North India and that he led the first colony of Brâhmans which settled in the Tamil Districts. According to another tradition, he was a member of the Samskrit Academy at Benares, which was presided over by Vyâsa, the compiler of the *Vedas*, and, after quarrelling with his colleagues there, he wended his way down to the Tamil country and established the first Tamil Academy at Madura. It is said that the Tamil language is indebted to him for its grammar. He was the first to introduce the worship of Siva and the science of medicine among the South Indian Dravidians. Though most of the Tamil works now existing on chemistry, physiology and medicine, which are commonly attributed to him, are pure forgeries, he might have been acquainted with the art of medicine and the first Rishi to teach it to the Tamil Nation. [1]

As to the 5th or 6th century, B. C., the learned author must surely be aware that the date of King Solomon at the building of the Temple was, according to the canonical version of the Anglican Bible, B. C. 1014 to 1005. It is clear that King Hiram of Tyre traded with Tamil Land, because Tamil names are given, in the Hebrew *Bible*, to some of the things he bought. According to Dr. Sayce's statement in *The Hibbert Lectures of 1887*, there was trade between India and Babylon 3000 B. C., so that *The Madras Manual* is far too late in putting the meeting of Shrî Râmachandra and the Rishi at B. C. 2000.

A curious sidelight is thrown by Rao Sahab R. Krishna Rao Bhonslé, Joint Secretary of the South Indian Research Committee, which publishes a useful magazine. He tells a story from an ancient Tamil classic, showing that some system of shorthand must have been used by the reporters at the Third Madura Tamil Sangam, A. D. 108. All those who sought its imprimatur had to read their work before them. Moved by some undesirable feeling, they arranged to have reporters concealed in the hall, where a poet was to recite his poem, and would claim certificate from them. The reporters took down the poem verbatim, and when the time came for decision they said that the poem was not original, and produced their verbatim copy. The fraud was exposed by a Poet-Saint Idaikadar, who went to the Sangam with the Poet

[1] *Tamil Studies*, by M. Srinivasa Aiyangar, M. A. p. 237. 1914.

Tiruvalluvar, author of the *Kural*, and his sister, the Poetess Anvai. The Poet-Saint introduced into his poem words imitating the cries of birds and beasts. The reporters could not take them down, and the fraud was exposed. The poem still exists, and is entitled *Oosi-murri*, oosi meaning stylus and murri breaking—breaking the reporter's stylus! The Tamil word for a phonographer is *oli* (sound), *yelluthu* (letter), *aan* (writer), but the reporters had no signs for the animal cries.[1] Let us hope, for the credit of the Sangam, that this story is a libel; the *Oosi-murri* may have been a mere *jeu d'esprit*. The mere fact of its existence no more proves that the Sangam acted dishonorably, than the picking up of a piece of wood on the top of Mount Ararat proved, as the finder thought, that the Ark of Noah had come to an anchorage there, as the flood subsided.

The point that strikes one with amazement—amazement because of the entire ignorance about it in the West, except among scholars—is the astounding spread of literary and scientific learning in India from an unknown antiquity down to the middle of the eighteenth century. If possible, this wonder is increased when we turn to the famous University in the North, on which we hear so many eulogies and of which we know so little, Takshashilâ, or Takkashilâ, Grecised into Taxila, that perished from 450 to 500 A. D., Taxilâ, whose bones have been unburied in the present century.

When we go northward and seek to find particulars of the famous Takshashilâ, we are sorely disappointed. We are told that "the remains of Taxilâ" are twenty miles north-west of the present Rawalpindi; that the valley is "a singularly pleasant one, well-watered by the rivers Hard and its tributaries, and protected by a girdle of hills"; that it was a very important city in "early times," being on the great trade route which used to connect Hindustan with Central and Western Asia; that in the days of Alexander it was a great and flourishing city; that the country was "thickly populated and extremely fertile". Nearly a thousand years afterwards Hiouen-Tsang found it still fertile with rich harvests, flowing streams and luxuriant vegetation. But the great University had gone. It is mentioned in the *Mahâbhârata*, in connection with King Janmejaya, who had conquered it, and his

[1] *South Indian Research*, Monthly Supplement, December, 1923, "Shorthand in Ancient India," by Rao Sahab R. Krishna Rao Bhonslé, M. R. A. S., pp. 12, 13.

Snake Sacrifice; it became part of the Persian Empire (521—485, B. C.), and between that and about A. D. 510, was occupied in turn by six more Nations. "That Taxilâ at this time and during the centuries immediately following enjoyed a great reputation as a University town, famous for the arts and sciences of the day, is evident from numerous passages in the Buddhist Jâtakas; but apart from this fact nothing is known of its history prior to the invasion of Alexander the Great." That is B. C. 326, when Ambhi is King of the town and makes submission to him. "The city was then very wealthy, populous and well-governed, and [that] its territories extended from the Indus to the Hydaspes." Apollonius of Tyana probably visited Taxilâ, for some of the details are corroborated by the excavations lately made. In 400 A.D., Fa-Hian visited the town, but says nothing about it, but his accounts of other places in that part of the world show that "the great Buddhist sanctuaries of the North-West were still relatively vigorous and flourishing". But the excavations have shown that

the monuments of Taxilâ were wantonly and ruthlessly devastated in the course of the same century. This work of destruction is almost certainly to be attributed to the hordes of barbarian White Huns, who, after the year 455 A. D., swept down into India in ever-increasing numbers, carrying sword and fire wherever they went, and not only possessed themselves of the kingdom of the Kinshāns, but eventually overthrew the great Empire of the Guptas. From this calamity Taxilâ never again recovered.

Such is the interesting account of Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archæology in India. To his patient and persevering labors during four years, we owe the knowledge of the dead Taxilâ. His valuable *Guide to Taxilâ*, published in 1921, gives us the skeleton of the wonderful body, once pulsing and thrilling with splendid intellectual life, life so strong and vivid that even its tradition still inspires those who would fain see in every great Indian State a University, which would do for the future what Taxilâ, Nâlandâ and Vikramâsilâ did in the past. And why not, since the descendants of some of the Kings who founded them are still here?

Let us see, however hastily, what may be learned from the *Jâtakas*.

In a very interesting article by Professor Radhakumud Mookerji, on "Indian Education from the *Jâtakas*," he gives a very useful extract from Jâtaka No. 252, showing how Princes went to Taxilâ:

Once on a time, Brahmadatta, the King of Benares, had a son named Prince Brahmadatta. Now Kings of former times, though there might be a famous teacher living in their own city, often used to send their sons to foreign countries afar off to complete their education, that by this means they might learn to quell their pride and high-mindedness, and endure heat or cold, and be made acquainted with the ways of the world. So did this King. Calling his boy to him—now the lad was sixteen years old—he gave him one-soled sandals, a sunshade of leaves, and a thousand pieces of money, with these words: "My son, get you to Takkasilâ, and study there."

The boy obeyed. He bade his parents farewell, and in due course arrived at Takkasilâ. There he enquired for the teacher's dwelling, and reached it at the time when the teacher had finished his lecture and was walking up and down at the door of the house. When the lad set eyes upon the teacher, he loosed his shoes, closed his sunshade, and, with a respectful greeting, stood still where he was. The teacher saw that he was weary, and welcomed the newcomer. The lad ate, and rested a little. Then he returned to the teacher, and stood respectfully by him:

"Where have you come from?" he asked.
"From Benares."
"Whose son are you?"
"I am the son of the King of Benares."
"What brings you here?"
"I come to learn," replied the lad.
"Well, have you brought a teacher's fee, or do you wish to attend on me in return for teaching you?"
"I have brought a fee with me," and with this he laid at the teacher's feet his purse of a thousand pieces.

The resident pupils attend on their teacher by day and at night they learn of him; but they who bring a fee are treated like the eldest sons in his house, and thus they learn. And this teacher, like the rest, gave schooling to the Prince on every light and lucky day. Thus the young Prince was taught.[1]

The learned Professor points out that "this extract introduces us practically to all the principal features of the education of the time". To go to Taxilâ is "to complete their education". The appropriate age for the University was sixteen: "The Prince of Benares is, as we have seen, sent to Takkasîlâ for his studies with the modest equipment given him by his own royal father of 'a pair of one-soled sandals, a sunshade of leaves and a thousand pieces of money' as his teacher's fees, of which not a single pice could he retain for his private use. Thus the Prince enters his school as a poor man, divested of all riches." A very good thing for him, and likely, as the *Jâtaka* says of Princes, "to quell their pride and high-mindedness". Taxilâ seems to have held the place in Ancient India that Nâlandâ held in Middle Age India. The Professor says:

[1] *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*, October, 1923, p. 227.

The fame of Takkasilâ (Taxilâ) as a seat of learning was, of course, due to that of its teachers. They are always spoken of as being "world-renowned," being authorities, specialists and experts in the subjects they professed. And it was the presence of scholars of such acknowleged excellence and widespread reputation that caused a steady movement of qualified students drawn from all classes and ranks of society towards Taxila from different and distant parts of the Indian Continent, making it the intellectual capital of the India of those days. Thus the various centres of learning in the different parts of the country became affiliated, as it were, to the educational centre, or the central University of Taxila which exercised a kind of intellectual suzerainty over the wide world of letters in India (p. 228).

A good general idea of the education given may be gathered from casual references in the *Jâtakas*, which, as the Editor, Professor E. B. Cowell says, are "full of interest as giving a vivid picture of the social life and customs of Ancient India......They form in fact an ever-shifting panorama of the village life such as Fa-Hien and Hiouen-Tsang saw it in the old days before the Muhammadan Conquest, when Hindu institutions and native rule prevailed in every Province throughout the land.'[1]

There are no less than 105 references to Taxila in these tales, shewing how it was recognised as the centre of high education; the sons of Kings, Princes, and Nobles were sent there, and paid fees; the sons of the poor also went there and paid by services, or by promises to pay later, when they beg for their fees.

500 young Brâhmanas studied under one teacher (No. 97). This number is several times mentioned, and was evidently the number of students placed under the charge of a single teacher. The students gathered firewood (No. 71). The journey thither, 2000 leagues from Benares, was dangerous while passing through a great forest, inhabited by ogresses, but the safe journey round the forest was twice as long as passing through it (No. 96). A pupil is beaten for stealing sweets (No. 252). Youths of the Kshattriya and Brâhmana castes "came from all India to be taught the Arts" from a "world-renowned teacher"; the three Vedas were also taught by him (No. 353). "A world-famed teacher preached the moral law to any one that he might see..............But though they received it they kept it nct (No. 356). "A young Brâhmana of Benares, having acquired all the liberal Arts at

[1] Preface, pp. ix, x. I am using the six-volume edition, "translated from the Pâli by various hands under the Editorship of Professor E. B. Cowell,' published at various dates. The numbers of the *Jâtakas* are given, not the pages.

Takkasîlâ, and having attained to proficiency in archery, etc. (No. 374). The Arts taught at Takkasîlâ included majic spells (No. 416). As soon as a lad of Benares "came of age;" his father gave him a thousand pieces and sent him to study at Takkasîlâ; thither he went, and studied with an world-famed teacher," and became the chief pupil in a company of 500 youths; while the teacher was absent, the pupils were put in this lad's charge; when the teacher returned, he taught the lad "all branches of skill and learning," and "dismissed him with a great troop of followers" (No. 447). "Skill" is evidently the Arts—shilpa. Prince Junha of Benares, studying at Takkasîlâ, accidentally knocked down a man and broke his bowl. He picked up the man, who asked the price of a meal as his bowl was broken. The Prince answered that he could not then give it, but when he became King in Kâshi, the man could come and ask for it (No. 456). Students were penniless, as mentioned on p. 11. Outcastes were not admitted to the Academy, but two young Chandâlas, having suffered from their birth, disguised themselves as Brâhmanas and went to Takkasîlâ, where they studied law; they went with others, invited to a meal (rice porridge), and were discovered, beaten and driven out [No. 498].

Mr. Bimala Charan Law, in his *Historical Gleanings*, has a short essay on "Taxilâ as a Seat of Learning in Sanskrit and Pâli Literature". He mentions that the King of Kosala, and Jîvaka, "the renowned physician," were students there, the first generally for education and the second for Medicine and Surgery. The three Vedas were taught, but the *Atharva* is never mentioned in the Pâli *Jâtakas*. He thinks the word sippa (shilpa) is used in "the comprehensive sense of learning"; but surely it is better taken in its usual meaning of Arts, as the eighteen Vijjas would cover the branches of learning, and Arts are needed to include the use of the bow, the javelin, the finding of hidden treasure, magic charms, etc. Professor Radhakumud takes the word as Arts, and considers that it covers scientific and technical education. The latter also mentions military, medical and law schools.

The last great centre of Hindu learning that I have time to mention is Nadiya. The town of Navadwipa or Nadiya, a town about 70 miles north of Calcutta on the banks of the Bhagirathi, was built in 1063, and the College appears to have been founded about the same time. The town was taken in

the Muslim Invasion of 1203, but neither town nor Colleges suffered. It was a great centre of Samskrit learning, the course of study including the Vedas, Vedângas, the six Darshanas, the Purva and Uttara Mimamsas, Yoga and Logic.

Mr. Shishir Kumar Ghose, in his work, *Lord Gouranga*, writes:

The one absorbing idea of all the respectable citizens was the acquisition of knowledge. The old and the young, men and women, among the higher classes, were constantly engaged in intellectual pursuits, as if there was no other business in the world. Wealth, politics, war, pleasures and amusements had no attraction for them. Fighting they abhorred as being the occupation of beasts of prey and unworthy of human beings. Gratification of the senses, they knew, debased the soul, and they had such an aversion for sensual pleasures that no liquor shop was permitted to be established in the city. It was considered disgraceful to hold office, even that of the Prime Minister of the King, an office-holder being likened to a dog.

In the opinion of the citizens, man was born only to acquire knowledge, which was the end and aim of human life. The student was the only being who could claim the title of man......

The intense devotion to learning, by the majority of the citizens of Navadwipa, gave a peculiar character to the town, distinguishing it from any other city in the world. Students thronged everywhere. They filled the market-place, the streets, the bathing-ghats and the strand. They assembled in thousands at every convenient spot to hold literary discussions. When the students walked in the street they talked on literary subjects. Literary tournaments were held every day at every ghat of the city. And so earnest were the combatants that sometimes these tournaments ended in free fights, and the defeated parties had to swim across to the other bank of the river to save themselves. Each student held a book in his left hand—that being his distinguishing badge to mark him out from others. It was his ornament, his friend and his strength, which secured for him respectful attention everywhere.

In each street there were several Toles (Colleges); and each College contained, according to The *Chaitanya Bhagabat*, hundreds and, sometimes, thousands, of students. Says Thakur Brindaban, himself a citizen, a saint, a student, and an eye-witness: "Thousands every day came to the city from all parts of India, some to begin and some to finish their education, and thousands left every day after having obtained their diplomas."

This account reminds one of the description given of Alexandria in the days of the great controversy over the internal relations of the Persons in the Christian Trinity. It was said that the controversy raged so widely that if you went into a shop to buy a piece of cloth, the shopman tried to discuss with you these relations instead of supplying you with his goods.

It will be noticed from the dates that Hindu and Buddhist schools taught side by side, and that the "Ages" are named with

regard to the most famous seminaries of the time. So also in passing to the Musalmân Period, the older educational institutions continued, except for temporary destructions, in which Buddhism suffered most from the Huns, and some were entirely blotted out.

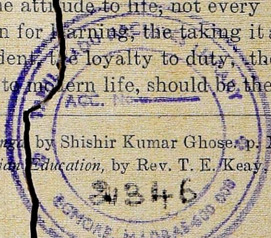
In the villages, especially in the South, the little schools continued, as we shall see later, but these perished—save for a few feeble survivals even down to our own time—with the destruction of the village governments in 1816.

A wonderful feat of memory is told, which gave it the one College it lacked, one for the proper teaching of Nyâya. There was no available text book; Nyâya was taught at Mithilâ, but the Bengali students were not allowed to make a copy of the text-book. So Vasudeva Sârvabhauma went to Mithilâ to study Nyâya, and committed the whole text-book to memory. He then returned home and opened a college for Nyâya. At that time the College contained a youth of wonderful intellect, Nimai by name. He was destined to become the glory of Nadiya, has been called the Avatara of Nadiya, known later as Chaitanya, or the Lord Gouranga. It is interesting to read that as late as in the year 1867, Professor Cowell visited this ancient College, he writes:

> I could not help looking at these unpretending lecture-halls with a deep interest, as I thought of the pandits lecturing there to generation after generation of eager, inquisitive minds. Seated on the floor with his "corona" of listening pupils round him, the teacher expatiates on those refinements of infinitesimal logic which make a European's brain dizzy to think of, but whose labyrinth a trained Nadiya student will thread with unfaltering precision. I noticed during my visit middle-aged and even grey-haired men among the students.[2]

As a late as 1908, Mr. Ward found there 30 Toles and 250 pupils. Each school taught a single subject.

In closing this review of the Hindu Age, I may add that, with regard to both Hindu and Buddhist, it is the spirit which I would see revived, the attitude to life, not every detail of the outer rules: The veneration for learning, the taking it as a vocation, the simple life of the student, the loyalty to duty, the recognition of dharma. This, adapted to modern life, should be the ideal.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[1] *Lord Gouranga*, by Shishir Kumar Ghose, p. XII.
[2] *Ancient Indian Education*, by Rev. T. E. Keay, M.A., p. 63.

## THE BUDDHIST AGE[1]

Coming to the Buddhist Period, Nâlandâ University at once springs up before our eyes, Nâlandâ, visited by the three famous Chinese travellers, Fa-Hien, travelling in India from 399 to 414 A. D.; Hiouen-Tsang, from 629 to 645 A. D.; I-Tsing from 673 to 693 A. D., who lived in the monastery for ten years and gives a minute account of Buddhist observances in *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India*. etc., A. D. 671—695 (the dates of his leaving and his return to China) by I-Tsing, translated by J. Takakusu, B. A., Ph. D., 1896.

Nâlandâ was situated on the bank of Gangā, to the S. E. of Pâtaliputra (now Patna), built by Ajâtashatru, and N. of Râjagriha, his older capital of Magadha: Fa-Hien visited it in the 5th century before it was completed by King Bâlâditya, about the middle of the same century, the three Kings before him having labored at it successively, after it had been founded by Arya Deva on the spot chosen by his Guru, Nâgârjuna, as noted on p. 4. Its architecture was splendid, its gardens beautiful. J. Talbhoys Wheeler says (quoted in an article on Nâlandâ by Rao Sahab Krishna Rao Bonslé, in *South Indian Research*, pp. 55 to 57, January, 1922):

> The huge monastery was a vast University. Towers, domes and pavilions stood amidst a paradise of trees, gardens and fountains...... Ten thousand Buddhist monks and novices were lodged and supplied with every necessary. All the inmates were lodged, boarded, taught, and supplied with vestments without charge. They studied the sacred books of all religions. In like manner, they studied all the sciences, especially arithmetic and medicine.

This is confirmed by Hiouen-Tsang, in the translation by Stanilaus Julien, quoted in the same article:

> The richly adorned towers were arranged in regular order, the pavilions decorated with coral appeared like pointed hill tops; the soaring domes reached to the clouds, and the pinnacles of the Temples seemed to be lost in the mist of the morning. From the windows one could see the movements of the winds and the clouds, and above their lofty roofs the sun and moon could be seen in conjunction. All around, pools of translucent water shone with the pearls of the blue lotus flowers; here and there the lovely kanaka trees hung between them. In the different courts, the houses of the monks were each four stories in height. The pavilions had pillars ornamented with dragons, and beams resplendent with all the colors of the rainbow, rafters, richly carved columns ornamented with jade and richly chiselled, and balustrades of carved open work. The lintels of the doors were decorated with ele-

[1] It must be remembered that the Hindu Period ran also concurrently with the Buddhist. They ran peaceably side by side.

gance, and the roofs covered with glazed tiles of brilliant colors, which multiplied themselves by reflection, and varied the effect at every moment in a thousand manners (p. 55).

Later Kings erected Vihâras outside its surrounding wall, through which only one gate gave admission. This gate was guarded by a Dvâra Pandita, who asked the would-be student some difficult question, and he had to take himself off if he could not answer. In fact, it was what would now be called a Post-Graduate University. Within were six great ranges of buildings each four stories high. The one which contained the library, said to be the largest in India, had nine stories. It had one hundred lecture rooms. He mentions in his travels many other Vihâras, where "resident priests, having chambers, have their beds, mats, food, drink, and clothes provided without stint; in all cases, this is the same."[1] In those days and later it had some 10,000 monks. It was in the fullest sense of the word a University where all religions and sciences were studied, especially arithmetic and medicine. Dr. Macdonnell, quoted by Rao Sahab R. Krishna Rao Bhonslé, says that in some subjects, "as Science, Phonetics, Grammar, Mathematics, Anatomy, Medicine and Law, the attainment of Indians was far in advance of what was achieved by the Greeks". Little wonder that students travelled to Nâlandâ from Europe, as from all parts of Asia. There was no attempt to discourage the study of the eighteen Buddhist Schools, while the *Vedas* also were taught and discussed, as said by Mr. R. C. Dutt:

> Buddhism had never assumed a hostile attitude towards the parent religion of India; and the fact that the two religions existed side by side for long centuries increased their toleration of each other. In every country, Buddhists and orthodox Hindus lived side by side. Hindus went to Buddhist monasteries and universities, and Buddhists learned from Brahmana Sages. The same kings favored the followers of both systems of religion. The Gupta Emperors were often worshippers of Siva and Vishnu, but loaded Buddhists and Buddhist monasteries with gifts, presents and favors. One King was often a Buddhist and his son an orthodox Hindu; and often two brothers followed or favored the two religions without fighting. Every Court had learned men belonging to both the religions, and Vikramâditya's Court was no exception to the rule.[2]

Mr. Dutt in the book above quoted (p. 148) summarises the account given by Hiouen-Tsang of Nâlandâ as a seat of learning:

[1] Quoted in *Civilisation in Ancient India,* by Romesh Chandra Dutt, C. I. E., Vol ii, p. 56, 1893.

[2] *Civilisation in Ancient India,* by R. C. Dutt, p. 127.

Our traveller now came to the great Nâlandâ University, if we may call it by that name. The monks of this place, to the number of several thousands, were men of the highest ability, talent, and distinction. "The countries of India respect them and follow them. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion; the old and the young mutually help one another. Those who cannot discuss questions out of the *Tripitaka* are little esteemed, and are obliged to hide themselves for shame. Learned men from different cities, on this account, who desire to acquire quickly a renown in discussion, come here in multitudes to settle their doubts, and then the streams (of their wisdom) spread far and wide. For this reason some persons usurp the name (of Nâlandâ students) and in going to and fro receive honor in consequence."

Dr. Fergusson justly remarks that what Cluny and Clairvaux were to France in the Middle Ages, Nâlandâ was to Central India, the depository of true learning, the centre from which it spread over to other lands.

It is noted above that medicine was much studied, and Mr. Dutt remarks that

medicine appears to have made great progress in the Buddhist Age, when hospitals were established all over the country. The great writers on Hindu medicine, Charaka and Sushruta, lived and wrote in the Buddhist Age, but their works seem to have been recast in the Purânic Age (p. 123). But it was in astronomy that the most brilliant results were achieved in the Buddhist Age. We have seen before that astronomical observations were made as early as the Vaidic Age; and that early in the Epic Age the lunar zodiac was fixed, the position of the solstitial points marked, and other phenomena carefully observed and noted (p. 119).

At Nâlandâ, the five great Siddhântas were studied, and its curriculum included: Logic, Grammar, Philosophy and Metaphysics, History, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Samskrit, Pâli, Music and Tântrik Medicine. I mention this last, because I am inclined to think that the interest taken in the Tantras put a close to its splendid existence. No one can read I-Tsing's laborious and minute work without recognising that little attention was paid to the Lord Buddha's perfect Ethics and his superb Philosophy. I-Tsing's account is all about minute and mostly unimportant sittings, and walkings, and gestures. There is no life, no inspiration. At his time, there were only 8,000 monks there, and the great University was growing weak. Its place was taken by the "Royal University of Vikramasilâ," founded by King Dharmapâla of Gauda, in the 8th century, A. D. He gave it four groups of 27 monks, each group belonging to a separate sect. Its

high wall had six gates, and each opened the way to a College, if the applicant could pass the Dvâra Pandita, who protected the gate and was the head of the College. An interesting article on the University appears in the *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly* of April, 1924, from the pen of Professor J. N. Samaddar. Mr. Phanindranath Bose says, on the authority of Lama Târânâtha, it stood on a precipitous hill in Magadha on the bank of Gangâ, in what is now known as the District of Bhagalpur. The University flourished for four centuries, and was destroyed, with those of Nâlandâ and Odantapuri, of which last little is known ; it had 1,000 monks, and it is said that many students came to it from all parts of India. These three Universities perished in the Muslim Invasion of 1199, and Mr. Samaddar remarks, in the article above qouted (p.62), that by the destruction of these three Buddhist seats of learning, "Buddhism received a blow from which it has never been able to recover". And the monastery of Jâgaddala, founded by King Râmâpâla, King of Bengal and Magadha, 1084 to 1130, in his new capital, Râmâvati, at the beginning of the twelfth century in Northern Bengal, became a centre of culture in Bengal, but only lived for a century, wiped out by the Muslim Invasion in 1203. Then also perished the University of Kartayâ. Tolerance is shown in the various Universities; in Tâmralipli, at the mouth of the Hugli, there were twenty-two Vihâras and hostels for students, and these were filled by Brâhmanas and Buddhists.

## THE MUHAMMADAN AGE

When we turn from the Hindu and Buddhist Temples of Learning to the Muhammadan work for and influence on Education in India, we must remember the splendid record of Islâm in Arabia, its birth-place, its great University at Baghdad—destroyed by the same White Huns who devastated Taxilâ—the University that created Moorish Learning, and sent the torch of Science in the hands of the Moors to Spain. The Huns were enemies of all learning and of all culture, and almost succeeded in murdering the young civilisation of Europe, slowly rising since the decay of Greece and the fall of the Roman Empire. It is well known that the great Prophet of Arabia set the ink of the scholar above the blood of the

martyr, and that Ali, His beloved son-in-law, was the strong patron of learning.

The early raids from the North, which devastated, were succeeded by invaders who came to stay and who used discretion in their destruction. Even the fierce raider, Mahmûd of Ghazni (A. D. 1000-26), fostered education in his own country, but he was a fanatical hater of images, and much of his destruction of schools was probably due to the fact that they were usually attached to Temples. [The great authority on Muslim Education in India is Narendranath Law, whose *Promotion of Learning in India During Muhammadan Rule (by Muhammadans)* is a splendid monograph, and may be taken as authoritative. For his learning, the fact that he was a Premchand Roychand Scholar may be taken as a guarantee. It was published in 1916.] It is customary for every Masjid to have an elementary school attached to it, the Maktab, but the Muslim College is the Madrasah. Sultân Mahmûd had a University in Ghazni, with a fine library and museum, and it was rendered famous by the presence of the poet Firdausi, and his Court was crowded with learned men. But he was only known in India as a raider of great ferocity. Muhammad Ghori, of the House which overthrew that of Ghazni, was the first to settle in Delhi (1192), and it became a resort of learned men. It was his lieutenant who destroyed Vikramâsilâ, leaving not "a single scholar alive" (p. 20), and other great seats of learning shared its fate. His name, Bakhtiyâr Khilji, remains for ever infamous. A Sultânâ Raziyah was a patron of learning, following the example of her father Altamash, who built a Muslim College at Delhi between 1210 and 1236. Amid changes of dynasties and wars, learned men shone out from time to time, like Sultân Fîrûz (1351—1388), a scholar himself and a patron of learning. He brought two Ashoka pillars to Delhi instead of destroying them—a mark of grace, shewing a welcome taste for Art. He says of himself:

> Among the gifts which God has bestowed upon me, His humble servant, was a desire to erect public buildings. So I built many Masjids, Colleges and Monasteries, that the learned and the elders, the devout and the holy, might worship God in these edifices and aid the kind builder by their prayers. The digging of canals, the planting of trees, and the endowing with lands are in accordance with the directions of the Law (p. 57).

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He also repaired buildings that had fallen into decay, like the Jami Masjid of old Delhi. He built at Firûzâbâd the Firûz-Shâhi Madrasah, of which Mr. N. Law writes :

The Madrasah was a very commodious building embellished with lofty domes and situated in an extensive garden adorned with alleys and avenues, and all that human art combined with nature could contribute to make the place fit for meditation. An adjacent tank mirrored in its shiny and placid breast the high and massive house of study standing on its brink. What a charming sight was it when the Madrasah hummed with hundreds of busy students, walking its clean and smooth floors, diverting themselves on the side of the tank, or listening in attentive masses to the learned lectures of the professors from their respective seats!

Of the learned men to whom the responsible task of educating the young alumni of the college was entrusted, we hear only of two. There was Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, the renowned master of many subjects, who used to lecture on Theology, explain to the students the Fiqh (Jurisprudence) and the commentaries on the *Quran*, and teach them the time-honored traditions. The other professor was a great religious teacher, and had hailed from Samarqand.

Both the students and the professors had to reside within the College, and so there were the facilities that a constant communion among the students themselves as well as between the tutors and the taught could afford. The College was not, as can already be anticipated, a place for exclusively secular studies only, but in it was also carefully looked after the spiritual well-being of the students. There was a big Masjid attached thereto, in which the five compulsory as well as extra prayers were regularly said, the former being performed in gatherings conducted by the Sufis, who at other times remained engaged in counting beads and praying for the well-being of the Sultân. The Hafizes (those who learnt by heart the *Quran*) had to recite the whole *Quran* and pray for the Emperor and all the Musalmâns.

There were separate apartments in the College for the reception and accommodation of the travellers who, attracted by its reputation, paid it visits from distant countries.

The College was also noted for bounty and charity to the poor and the needy, for in its Masjid they received the help they wanted.

There was a suitable provision for the bestowal of stipends and scholarships upon the successful students, and over and above these, every inmate of the Madrasah, be he a student, professor or traveller lodging there, received a fixed daily allowance for his maintenance. All these expenses were defrayed out of the State endowments as well as, in this particular case, out of the sums of money that were set apart by the State for being given in charity to contribute to the well-being of the Emperor.

Where is now this Madrasah, the glory of its age, with which the Colleges of Delhi, though famous, could never, according to Barni, stand in rivalry? It is now buried, along with its beauty and grandeur, its students and professors, its Masjid and all, in the deep abyss of Time (Loc. cit. pp. 60 to 63).

Another was the beautiful Qudam Sharîf, of which we are given a most attractive picture. It was raised to the memory of his son. Among the greatest merits of this Sultân must be noted his avoidance of persecution. He appointed Hindus to important offices, restored to his kingdom a Hindu Râjâ he had conquered, and when a fine library of 1300 books was found in a Hindu Temple, he ordered that some learned Hindus should be sent there for translating a few books (pp. 64, 65).

Sultân Sikandar (1488—1518) was another who attracted many learned men to his Court from Arabia, Persia and Bokhârâ, as well as from India (p. 77), and it is noted that in his reign Hindus began to study Persian (p. 75), and Professor Blockman is quoted who remarked that this study began in the 16th century and "that before another century had elapsed they had fully come up to the Muhammadans in point of literary acquirements (pp. 75, 76, Note). He also gives the following interesting note from Keene:

> The name Urdû is of Turkish origin and means literally "camp". But the Mughals of India restricted its use to the precincts of the Imperial camp, so that Urdû-î-Mu'allâ (high camp) came to be a synonym for new Delhi after Shâh Jahân had made it his permanent capital. The classical languages of Arabia and Persia were exclusively devoted to uses of State and religion; the Hindus cherished their Samskrit and Hindi for their own purposes of business or worship; while the Emperor and his Mughal courtiers kept their Turkish speech as a means of free intercourse in private life. Out of such elements was the rich and growing language of Hindustan formed, and it was yearly becoming more widely spread.—Keene's *Mughal Empire*. Note, p. 76.

Mr. Law notes that many small Muslim Kingdoms sprang up all over India, each making its own contribution to the general progress of Islâmic learning in the country (pp. 80 to 113). He mentions ten of these. A Ruler of the Bahmani Kingdom, Mahmûd Shâh, was a great patron of letters, and founded a Madrasah in the Deccan in 1378 for the education of orphans, feeding and lodging them, and providing learned professors for their training. He also started many schools and endowed them amply. The famous poet, Hâfiz, was invited to his Court, and started for it, but was beaten back by a storm. Another ruler, Firûz, not only went to lectures on botany, geometry and logic, but he sent ships annually to different countries to invite learned men to his Court. He also built an observatory. A Minister of a later Sultân built at Bîdar a College which became famous. Our writer quotes Meadows Taylor as saying:

'The noble College of Mahmûd Gâwân, in the city of Bidar, was perhaps the grandest completed work of the period. It consisted of a spacious square with arches all round it, of two storeys, divided into convenient rooms. The minarets at each corner of the front were upwards of 100 feet high, and also the front itself, covered with enamel tiles, on which were flowers on blue, yellow and red grounds and sentences of the *Quran* in large kûfic letters, the effect of which was at once chaste and superb. (Note from Meadows Taylor, pp. 67, 68.)

Bîjâpur—perhaps Vidyâpur—had a College in Hindu times, and Mr. Law remarks:

The College building, made of granite, is very extensive and the most venerable in Bîjâpûr, consisting of an oblong, set out with rows. It is three-storied, and is still wonderfully perfect, though necessarily out of repair.

With the disappearance of Hindu sovereignty Bîjâpûr did not cease to be a centre of learning. The Muhammadans took the place of the Hindus and kept up its literary reputation (p. 92).

A part of the royal Adi Shâhî Library is still to be found at Bîjâpûr in the Asâri Mahal. Mr. Fergusson tells us:

Some of its books are curious and interesting to any one acquainted with Arabic and Persian literature. All the most valuable manuscripts were, it is said, taken away by Aurangzib in cart-loads, and what remain are literally only a remnant, but a precious one to the persons in charge of the building, who show them with a mournful pride and regret (p. 94).

The King of Ahmadnagar was fond of single-stick, it seems, so "all men, both high and low, began to copy the Prince, and instead of Colleges, as is usual in Muhammadan cities, schools for single-sword and wrestling were established in all quarters of the city" (p. 95).

The fine Chaliâr Minâr and its Masjid in Haiderabad Government with the minarets containing rooms for professors and students "is one of the most splendid buildings in the city, and a brilliant specimen of Saracenic architecture. It was built by Muhammad Qulî Qutb Shah, who founded many other Colleges and Schools, while there were Primary Schools in the houses of the masters (pp. 95, 96).

Among these smaller Kingdoms Jaunpur stood high and became "a great seat of learning under its famous King Ibrâhîm Sharqî, and it is said that during his reign the Court far outshone that of Delhi, and was the resort of the learned men of the East" (p. 100). His daughter-in-law built a Masjid, a College and a Monastery, giving stipends to professors and students. It had hundreds of Madrasahs and Masjids, stipends being given to

teachers and students "that they might devote themselves to learning, in complete freedom from material needs and anxieties. Both literature and the arts were followed (pp. 101 to 104). It is sad that in so many of these Kingdoms and in Bengal these Madrasahs have almost vanished, though it was Muhammadans who had the *Bhâgavata Purâna* and part of the *Mahâbhârata* translated into Bengali (pp. 109 to 110).

Of the Mughals, Bâbar himself was very learned, but Mr. Law does not give any details of his aid to education. Hûmayûn was fond of study and conversation, but apparently did not follow the great traditions of past Muslim Rulers.

Akbar (1566 to 1605) was remarkable for his love of learning and his Ibâdat Khânâ, with its four halls in Fatehpur Sîkrî where "Sûfîs, doctors, preachers, lawyers, Sûnnîs, Shî'as, Brâhmanas, Jains, Buddhists, Charbâkas, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and learned men of every belief" argued on "profound points of science, the curiosities of history, the wonders of nature" (p. 144, 145). Many parts of the *Mahâbhârata*, the *Râmâyana*, the *Atharva Veda*, the *Lilavati* and many other books were translated into Persian. Akbar collected books assiduously, and Faizi's library of 4600 volumes passed to the Emperor on his death. He introduced an improved system of education, and Hindus and Musalmâns studied in the same schools. Mr. Law says:

> The sciences were taught in the following order: morality, arithmetic, accounts, agriculture, geometry, longimetry, astronomy, geomancy, economics, the art of government, physics, logic, natural philosophy, abstract mathematics, divinity and history (pp. 161, 162).

Great men and nobles also did much for education. Jehangir kept up the traditions of his father, repairing Madrasahs which had fallen into disuse. Agra, which had become a seat of learning during Akbar's reign, continued to attract both professors and craftsmen, and the progress in Arts and Crafts was remarkable—music, painting as well as architecture lent beauty to life. Shâh Jahân was more devoted to the last splendid Art than to education in general. But he founded an Imperial College to the south of the Jâmî Masjid; it had fallen into ruins before the Sepoy War, and was levelled with the ground soon afterwards (p. 181). It is startling to find Bernier speaking of the "profound ignorance" in Hindustan, and asking "how is it possible there should be academies and

Colleges" (p. 1807)? and so on. Strange, what profound ignorance a European traveller could show of the deeper side of a country new to him.

## THE IMPACT OF EUROPE

When the East India Company made its way in its early days, it did not trouble itself about education, except so far as it needed clerks and accountants. These it obtained from the village schools, for although these did not make much mark in history except by the prosperity they ensured to the country, their disappearance meant the descent of the night of ignorance over the land. In the huge number of inscriptions collected by the Madras Government we find many lists of village officials and servants. Among these the village schoolmaster—or the Temple priest acting as schoolmaster in small villages—appears. Mr. John Matthai writes:

> It is obvious that when the British took possession of the country, in the different Provinces they found that, though in most parts of the country except Western and Central India, there existed a widespread system of National Education, so far as they could trace, the position of the schoolmaster had in many cases changed from that of a village servant with a defined position in the community into that of a casual worker—honored in the village by reason of his sacred calling, but not sufficiently identified with the village to hold his ancient place on the village staff. This statement is true in the main, but nevertheless there were various trrces left which pointed to the original connection of the schoolmaster with the village economy. [1]

In the evidence given before the two Houses of Parliament in March and April, 1813, Sir Thomas Munro mentioned, as one of the reasons why England might gain in her contact with India, was "schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing and arithemetic". [2]

In a despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, dated June 3, 1814, the following passage occurs, referring to village communities and their schools:

> This venerable and benevolent institution of the Hindus is represented to have withstood the shock of revolutions, and to its operation is ascribed the general intelligence of the natives as scribes and

[1] *Village Administration in British India*, quoted in *Lectures on Political Science*, by Annie Besant, pp. 95, 96, 1919.

[2] Ibid. p. 96; See Note D, appended to James Mill's *History of British* India vol. I, p. 371.

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accountants. We are so strongly persuaded of its great utility that we are desirous you should take early measures to inform yourselves of its present state and that you will report to us the result of your enquiries, affording in the meantime the protection of Government to the village teachers in all their just rights and immunities, and marking, by some favorable distinction, any individual amongst them who may be recommended by superior merit or acquirements; for, humble as their situation may appear, if judged by a comparison with any corresponding character in this country, we understand those village teachers are held in great veneration throughout India.[1]

The destruction of the village system in 1816 in Madras, left the schools uncared for; the imposition of rent on cultivators who had had their share in the land of the village community, made them poorer, and the schoolmaster, no longer provided for, disappeared. These "pial schools" are still occasionally to be met with. In Adam's Reports in which appear the results of an enquiry in the Bengal Presidency, 1835-1838, Mr. Adams took typical Districts, not the whole Presidency, and found, in addition to the Toles and Madrasahs, pâthashâlas and maktabs. The first were found in "all the larger villages as in the towns . . . . The age of the scholars was from about five or six to sixteen. The curriculum included reading, writing, the composition of letters, and elementary arithmetic and accounts, either commercial, or agricultural or both."[2] Mr. Ward gives a similar account. With regard to Muhammadan education, it went down rapidly. *The Quinquennial Review* for 1907-1912 reports that in 1912 there were 1446 Arabic and Persian schools (Madrasahs) and 8288 Qurân schools (Maktabs) as against 2051 and 10,504 in 1907.

It was natural that a foreign merchants trading company, intent on gains, should not trouble itself about the education of the people of the country, except for their own purposes. The enquiry of 1814 was due to the fact that the renewal of their Charter by Parliament was conditioned by their setting aside a lakh for educational purposes. They wanted, however, English-speaking subordinate officials merely, and did nothing for the languages of the country. Deprived of all the support given by Hindu and Muslim Courts, higher education in Samskrit, Arabic, Persian and

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[1] Ibid, pp. 96, 97. See Loc. cit., chap. II, para 5, p. 43.

[2] *Ancient Indian Education*, by Rev. F. E. Keay, pp. 145, 14[illegible].

Hindi languished, and the loss of common land starved popular education to death. Nothing changes the state of a Nation so rapidly as the education or non-education of two or three generations. When Sir Charles Wood in 1854 introduced, and Government patronised, English-speaking schools, the masses of the people rapidly sank into ignorance. Education, in every country, must be given to the masses in their own tongue. The want of it has made India admittedly the most ignorant country in the civilised World. There is a stratum of highly educated people, and huge masses of uneducated.

Matters are, however, improving, and the Indian languages are at last beginning to come into their own.

The fundamental reform needed in the schools is the teaching of all subjects in the mother-tongue, and English as a second language in the Middle and High Schools, *modern* English, largely taught by conversation, by much reading aloud of interesting books, stories, and short recitations. Indian history, written by Indians, must be studied, to arouse and cultivate civic emotion and broad-minded patriotism. The study of literature belongs properly to the Universities, is the material of culture rather than of education.

To restore the village community with the village school, the village industries, a right system of land-holding and, where necessary, irrigation—these are tasks for Rulers and the Statesmen. But the work of a University is to prepare the young men and women of the Nation to take up these heavy duties, these mighty tasks, demanding noble character, trained brain, and loving, well-disciplined heart, and stalwart active body.

Precious to you, young men and women who are students here, should be these brief years of preparation, for if they are wasted, life will bring you no other opportunity such as you now enjoy.

Before some of you to-day the door into a wider life is opened; you step over the threshold of youth into manhood and womanhood, with its duties, its burdens, its joys, its freedom to achieve and to serve. Never forget that Life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely, gallantly, as a splendid Adventure, in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to face many a

danger, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and to lose many a battle. Consecrate yourselves to-day, my young brothers and sisters, to the Service of God and Man, and you will find that both are one; that in you will show forth in His strength, in His wisdom, in His love, the Inner Ruler Immortal, and that in serving man you shall see in each you help the Hidden God, till all the world shall become radiant with the Divine Beauty, and weakness shall turn to strength, sorrow shall turn to joy, for Brahman is Bliss, and TAT TWAM ASI.

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