



CAMA ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

CAMA ORIENTAL INSTITUTE (K. R. Cama Oriental Institute), a research institute in Bombay established in memory of the Parsi orientalist, teacher, and social reformer [Kharshedji Rustomji Cama](#), inaugurated 18 December 1916.

i. Foundation and functions.

ii. The library.

i. Foundation and Functions

During the last few years of Cama's life he had hoped to build a hall atop the Dadisett Agiary ([fire temple](#)) in Bombay to house a number of research societies and institutions of the Parsi community in that city, but his efforts had been unsuccessful. After his death a meeting of influential citizens was convened (8 December 1909), with the governor of Bombay, Sir George Sydenham Clark (later Lord Sydenham), presiding, to determine a proper means of commemorating this respected scholar. The consensus favored establishment of a research institute to advance oriental studies in general and Iranian studies in particular and to provide the kind of facilities that Cama had been seeking. The Institute was inaugurated by Sydenham's successor as governor, Lord Willingdon, on 18 December 1916 in the presence of a large and influential gathering of the citizens of Bombay. The first



president was Dr. D. Mackichan (1910-17).

The purposes of the Institute are specified in the deed of trust: to further oriental studies, to provide research facilities for other learned societies and institutions, and if necessary to fund research scholarships. The board of trustees, chosen from among respected oriental scholars, educators, and other prominent citizens, is charged with guiding the development and overseeing the operations of the Institute. An executive committee is responsible for its various activities.

Among the most important ways in which the Institute facilitates oriental and Persian studies is through the maintenance of an extensive specialized library (see ii, below). Between 1922 and 1944 it also published *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute*. Space is provided for the Mulla Firuz (Feroze) Madressa, where Avestan and Pahlavi subjects are taught; the Zoroastrian Research Society; the Gnyan Prasarak Maṇḍal; the Rahnumay Mazdayasnan Sabha; the Gatha Society; the Parsi Lekhak Maṇḍal; the Parsi Fasali Sal Maṇḍal; and several other associations.

In 1919, with the aid of a grant of 30,000 rupees from the government of Bombay, a research fellowship in oriental studies was established at the Institute. Internationally known scholars are appointed to this fellowship, which entails delivery of a series of public lectures; the lectures are published under the terms of the grant. The first fellow was B. N. Dhabhar, who lectured on the catalogue of books in the Institute library. Among the distinguished scholars who have followed him have been—to name a few: in 1920-21, B. T. Anklesaria, who lectured on Pahlavi inscriptions and coins; in 1931, W. Ivanow, on the Gabri or Dari dialect; in 1944, J. M. Unvala, on archeological subjects; in 1965-66, R. N. Frye, on various aspects of Iranian studies; and in 1984, H. Humbach, “A Western Approach to Zarathushtra” (publ. in *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 51, 1984).

Other special endowments include the Dr. M. N. Dhalla Memorial Fund for reprinting his books, encouraging research in Zoroastrian religion and literature and Iranian languages, and awarding scholarships to deserving students; the Shri Damodardas G. Sukhadwalla Fund for promotion of oriental studies; and the Prof. Ibrahim Pour-e Davoud Memorial Fund for translating his works into English or Gujarati and providing essay competitions.

The institute published numerous books, including translations of Western



books, of which the following may be mentioned: L. H. Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions*, Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute 15, 1929 (Ratanbai Katrak Lectures); E. P. Horowitz, *Indo-Iranian Philology*, 1929; B. N. Dhabhar, *The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz and Others. Their Version with Introduction and Notes*, 1932; K. Geldner, *The Zoroastrian Religion in the Avesta*, tr. J. C. Tavadia, 1933; B. T. Anklesaria and D. D. Kapadia, *Pahlavi Vendidad*, 1949; *Prof. Jackson Memorial Volume*, 1954; B. T. Anklesaria, *Rivâyat-i Hêmit-i Asavahistân*, 1962; B. N. Dhabhar, *Translation of the Zand-i Khürtak Avistāk*, 1963.

In 1936 the growing need for space to house the Institute's thriving activities led the trustees to purchase a large plot of land, 1,019 yds², for a new building on Apollo Street. The opening ceremony took place on 11 November 1937. The ground floor houses the Dr. Sir Jivanji Modi Memorial Hall, with a mezzanine gallery; Jivanji J. Modi (b. 1854, d. 1933), hereditary priest-in charge of a Bombay fire temple and secretary of the [Bombay Parsi Panchayat](#) (see M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London, etc., 1979, p. 217) was a great admirer and friend of Cama, a guiding force in the Institute, and its third president. On the second floor are accommodated the offices, the Mulla Firoze Library, and the general Institute library (see ii, below).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

P. J. Shroff, "A Note on the History and the Activities of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute," *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*, Bombay, 1969, pp. i-xxii.

(M. F. Kanga)

ii. The Library

The Cama Institute library and reading room opened in November 1915, even before the official inauguration of the Institute itself, on one floor of the new Sukhadwalla Building in Hornby Road. It is open to students, scholars, and



general readers.

The librarians of the Institute seek to provide as complete a collection as possible of works directly relevant not only to Iranian studies but also the Sanskrit and Semitic sources necessary for local and visiting scholars in these fields. The nucleus of the collection was the private library of Cama himself, presented by his family. In addition, the Mulla Firoze library (see i, above), with which Cama had long been associated as treasurer and later as president, was incorporated as a distinct part of the Institute collection. Other collections that have since come to the library include those of M. L. Hataria, J. J. Modi, S. B. Bharucha, J. N. Tata, B. T. Anklesaria, J. M. Unvala, P. K. Anklesaria, J. D. Nadirshah, M. C. Wadia, M. N. Kooka, S. R. Anjirbaug, P. F. Masani, J. B. Vaccha, B. Behramji, N. H. Billimoria, J. E. Saklatwala (pertaining particularly to 'Omar Kayyām), P. B. Vachha, H. D. Banaji, Dr. S. H. Batlivala, D. H. Noshirwan, B. M. Irani, and M. B. Patel.

The library now possesses about 20,000 books on Iranian religion, philosophy, history, geography, language, literature, art, and archaeology and 1,828 manuscripts in Avestan, Middle Persian, Pazand, Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Gujarati, Urdu, Hindustani, and Punjabi, of which only a half have been classified. The rarest manuscripts were microfilmed in 1967-68.

The manuscript collection includes many unique Avestan and Pahlavi manuscripts, but also some old Persian ones. The following may be mentioned:

D 58: Vendidad Sade with Nirang, 324 folios, dated 1721 or 1741, Geldner's ms. MF₂ (MF = Mulla Firoze Library; see *Avesta*, ed. Geldner, p. XI).

D 83: Yasna with Nirang, 145 folios, dated 1671, Geldner's MF₁ (see *Avesta*, ed. Geldner, p. XI).

D 90: Yasna with Pahlavi translation, 357 folios, no date, Geldner's MF₄ (see *Avesta*, ed. Geldner, p. XI). This manuscript D 90 = MF₄, which was not available to Geldner until after the Avestan text of his edition had been printed, has now been published in facsimile edition: *Manuscript D 90 Yasna*, pts. 1-2, ed. K. M. JamaspAsa and M. Nawabi, Shiraz, 1976.

Geldner's *yašt* ms. F₁ (F = Framji Fardunji Madan, see *Avesta*, ed. Geldner, p. III), 277 folios, dated 1591, the ancestor of most other *yašt* manuscripts.

R 400: contains the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* and other texts, Kermān, 1572.



D 13: contains books 3-9 of the *Dēnkard* (DkB), copied in 1659 from a manuscript dated 1020. On this manuscript see *Dēnkard*, ed. Dresden, introduction.

D 39, containing *Mādayān ī hazār dādistān* and some other texts, copied for the Mulla Firoze library in 1878.

R 176, *dīvān* of Ḥāfeẓ, 964/1594; and RI 65, Bīrūnī's *al-Qānūn al-mas'ūdī*, dated 1677.

The first printed catalogues included the catalogue of the Institute in three parts by B. N. Dhabhar, 1923; printed catalogues of Arabic, Hindustani, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts in the Library by E. Rehatsek, 1873, with a supplementary catalogue by S. A. Brelvi and B. N. Dhabhar, 1917; and printed author's catalogue of the Library, 1928.

The first published catalogues of the Cama and Mulla Firoze libraries were organized according to the Institute's own system of classification. The entire holdings have now been classified according to the Dewey Decimal Classification (16th ed.) and catalogued under modified Anglo-American Catalogue Rules-2 in cardex form. The manuscript collections are classified according to subject; several catalogues have been compiled, and this collection is also in the process of recataloguing. Catalogues of the manuscripts in the Mulla Firoze library have been prepared by Edward Rehatsek, S. A. Brelvi and B. N. Dhabhar, and S. Mehdi Gharavi.

The library is maintained through the general fund of the Institute and occasional donations from supporters. There are also some funds for specified purposes, like the Sir J. J. Modi Library Fund for purchase of books in his areas of interest, the M. L. Hataria Library Fund for maintaining the donor's manuscripts, and the Mrs. Pouruchisti R. Cama Memorial Fund for purchase of books.

(Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa)