

JNU Seminar on Botanical & Meteorological History of the Indian Ocean, 1600-1900

The Vidyajyoti College located now in Civil Lines, North of old Delhi (4/A Raj Niwas Marg, Delhi 110054) was started in 1879 as a seminary for Jesuit missionaries from Belgium who came to India young and had to do the course of church study (theology) before being ordained priests. In 1889 the seminary was transferred to Kurseong, in the mountains of Darjeeling, West Bengal, where it grew for 72 years. In the course of all this time it collected a good library of books on India, some quite old, printed in Europe in the 16th to 19th centuries. They can be considered 'incunabilia' in a broad sense (act

there are observations of all kinds from India. As samples I may mention the *Journal generale des voyages* by Abbe Antoine Francois Prevost (1747-1800) in 25 volumes, including one on Indian cartography with a very good index. Year 8 (?! is it 1808?) for those interested I brought 6 pages from a librarian's shorthand shorthand catalogue mentioning collections of travel in the world, in Asia and in India. I Do not know if anything can help the implementation of the programme of this seminar.

10. In the library section on Indian flora we have five large volumes of the research of Fr. K. M. Mathew, a former alumnus of Vidyajyoti College when in Kurseong, on the flora of Karnataka and Tamilnadu. He followed the footsteps of Heemeclid Santapau, S.J., of Mumbai, for one year the Chief Botanist of India, who worked on the plants in Maharashtra and the orchids of India and revived the Blatter Herbarium in Mumbai. Fr. Cecil Saldanha, S.J., like other less well equipped missionaries, was a researcher in Karnataka flora. Interesting in this section is also the 1567 book of Garcia de Orta (1501-1568), a Portuguese Jew who settled in Goa, *Aromatum et implicium aliquot medicamentorum apud indos nascentium*. Carlos Clusio, quoting the Latin text, translated into Portuguese. The book in our library is a reprint of 1954. in the section on Indian fauna, mention the book on butterflies of India by M.A. Wynne, published in 1857 and 30 volumes (out of 65?) of the impressive collection *The Fauna of British India* (1838).

11. finally, may I mention a Delhi source outside Vidyajyoti. When our institution was transferred to Delhi after 82 years in Kurseong we brought a thick collection of charts recording daily data about temperature, rain, pressure and perhaps other weather information in Kurseong, about 5000 above sea level. If I am not mistaken the charts were donated to the department of Geography (or of Human Geography) in the University of Delhi. Presumably the charts, if of any use are still preserved. I am not sure how many there were. I suspect that the data is of the 19th century, but they might have started earlier.

12. There are of course all over India other libraries and institutions where the missionary contribution is specially preserved. May I mention the Goethals Library in St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, the Xavier Centre of Historical Research in Goa, the Madurai Jesuit Archives and Natural Museum in Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Kodaikanal.

George Gispers, S.J.
Vidyajyoti, Delhi, 30 August 2013
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Indian Travels

1. Foster, W. Early Travels in India 1593-1619
2. Oaten, E.F. European travellers in India during the 15th

33.12. Wilson, Horace Hayman, Travels in the Himilayan province of N

