

# Orientalism and Neo-Hinduism

## Lecture III

### *College of Fort William and Projects of Literary and Cultural Revival*

# Situation and Strategy of Wellesley

- French Revolution, spread of its ideas and successes of French army – College of Fort William as a counter act:
  - It cannot be denied that during the convulsions with which the doctrines of French Revolution have agitated the Continent of Europe, erroneous principles of the same dangerous tendency had reached the minds of some individuals in civil and military service of the Company in India. ...To fix and establish sound and correct principles of religion and government in their minds at an early period of life was the best security which could be provided for the stability of the British power in India... (*Minute of the Foundation of a College at Fort William*, July 10, 1800 – Kopf, 47)
- Before no special education for boys at the age of thirteen to sixteen coming to India as Company servants - writers, factors, merchants – who, after Parliamentary Acts from 1773, 1784 and 1793, ought to work as judges, administrators and statesmen.
- 'From mid-summer 1800 on, these young men transferred from docks 'to the dormitory, and bluntly informed that they were to spend the next three years at an institution of higher learning where they would study subjects never before taught in Europe at any level' (Kopf, 63-64).

# Organization of College

- 'The College of Fort William, as Wellesley conceived it, had its aim to extend and routinize the Hastings-derived Orientalist credo: to rule effectively, one must love India...'
- Founded November 24, 1800.
- Financial management: small contribution from all the civil servants in India deducted from their salaries, additional income from the profits of a government printing press, Because it would be hardly accepted by the Court of Directors if its cost reduced the dividends of Company stockholders.
- Comparable to Oxford and Cambridge in size 'and in the diversity of means it offered for enriching the intellect.' (Kopf, 48).
- Drinking and eating at Company expenses.
- Monthly allowance of 300 rupees [compare: members of assisting Asian staff received monthly salaries ranging from 40-200 rupees (see Kopf, 62)]+ yearly achievement prizes up to 5000 rupees each.
- Free textbooks.
- Public examinations and disputations in the native languages held annually.

# Subjects Taught

- Establishments:
  - Oriental - emphasized a) due to recruitment of the faculty mainly from the AS, b) due to government's well-publicized offer of monetary and professional rewards.
  - European
- Languages:
  - Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and six vernaculars (Hindustani, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil and Kanada), and modern languages of Europe as well as Latin and Greek
- History and literature:
  - English classics, ancient and modern European history, History and Antiquities of Hindustan and Deccan, political economy
- Law:
  - Muslim, Hindu, English and jurisprudence and the laws enacted by the Governor-General-in-Council
- Natural sciences:
  - natural history, botany, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, world geography

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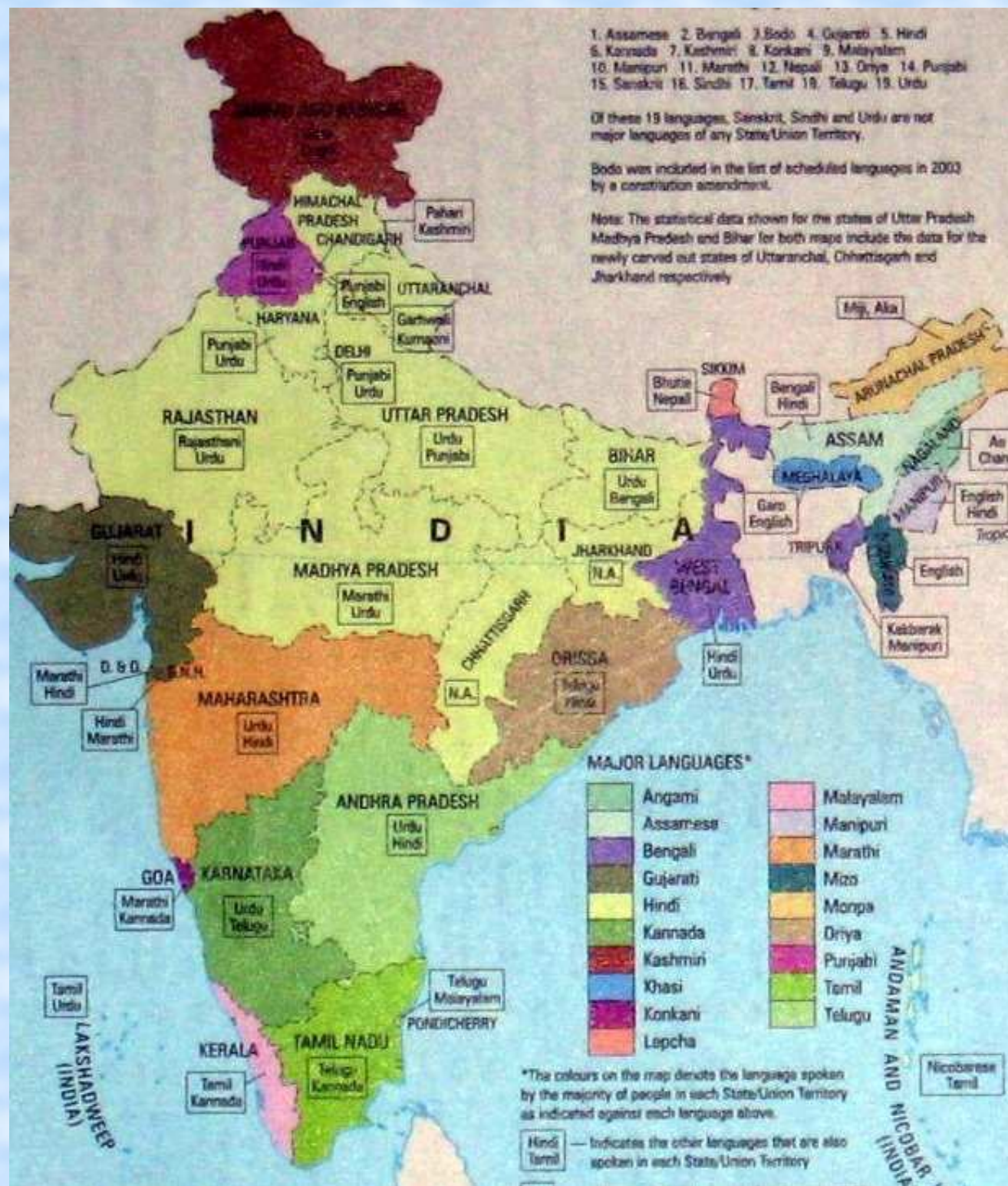


1. Assamese
2. Bengali
3. Bodo
4. Gujarati
5. Hindi
6. Kannada
7. Kashmiri
8. Konkani
9. Malayalam
10. Manipuri
11. Marathi
12. Nepali
13. Oriya
14. Punjabi
15. Sanskrit
16. Sindhi
17. Tamil
18. Telugu
19. Urdu

Of these 19 languages, Sanskrit, Sindhi and Urdu are not major languages of any State/Union Territory.

Bodo was included in the list of scheduled languages in 2003 by a constitution amendment.

Note: The statistical data shown for the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar for both maps include the data for the newly carved out states of Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand respectively.



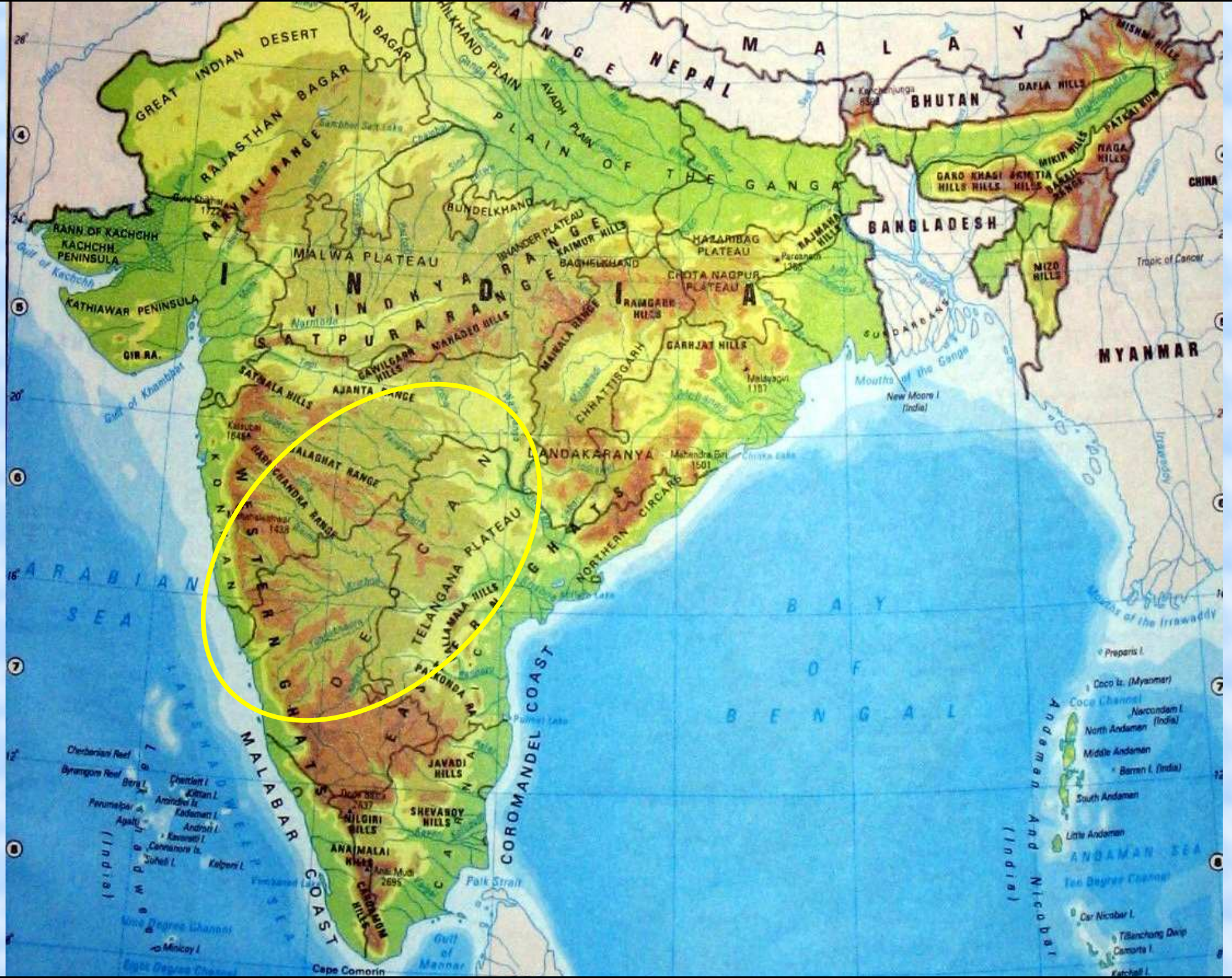
# Departments and Recruitment

- From Hasting's generation, Asiatic Society
- Department of Persian
  - high priority – Neil B. Edmonstone – official Persian translator to the government and key official in the Diplomatic Office (Kopf, 50).
- Arabic
  - John Baillie – one of few available proficient in language after Jone's death and Halhed's departure for Britain.
  - second priority because of business and as language of many key Mughal legal texts (50)
- Hindustani Language and Literature
  - author of An Urdu grammar John B. Gilchrist
- Sanskrit
  - H. T. Colebrooke
- Hindu popular languages
  - Baptist missionary William Carey – just one for all vernaculars – 'probably out of ignorance' because 'English knew virtually nothing of the Hindu vernaculars' (Kopf, 51).

# Departments and Recruitment

- **Comparative Legal Studies**
  - H. Barlow – helped draft permanent settlement
- **European Classics**
  - C. Buchanan – chaplain, B. A. Degree from Cambridge
- **European History**
  - Buchanan
- **History and Antiquities of Hindustan and Deccan**
  - Asiatic Society members
- **Religious Instructions**
  - D. Brown, chief Company chaplain (Anglican Clergyman)
- **Science and Mathematics**
  - R. Dinwiddie, qualification unknown







# College: Pivotal Institution for Research and Revival

## Threefold task:

- Research
  - expeditions to Mysore, Travancore, Ceylon organized and sponsored for the purpose of discovering and cataloguing manuscripts for the use of College library, projects to publish European translations of Indian classics initiated in cooperation with AS.
- Education
  - **Between 1801-1805** more than 50 civil servants exposed to education; in the same period more than 100 original works published; most of publications textbook quality – simplification and generalisation, all departments emphasize on grammars and dictionaries; transliteration schemes worked out; spoken languages regularized into precise grammatical forms.
- Revitalization of languages and cultures
  - through again regularization of grammars, publishing of classics in vernaculars, Sanskrit and English, support of vernacular prose for the purpose of readers.

# College and Asiatic Society

- strengthening organizational structure - since 1796 regular admission fee, and other regular fees, weekly meetings (as in Jone's era), construction of a Society building to house a library and museum (finished 1808) + transference of the part of college manuscript library to the AS house during Colebrooke's presidency (1808).
- between 1801-1804 recruitment of College faculty members from AS.
- ***Joining activities with the College:*** 'Whenever manuscripts or copies of inscriptions were sent from a remote place in India to Calcutta for analyses by the Asiatic Society, the college often paid the bill.' (Kopf, 70)
- **'Wellesley's College of Fort William therefore revitalized the Asiatic Society by giving it a viable structure, by supporting its scholarship, and by making available its library and other resources for the promotion of Orientalism. Perhaps most important, the college, as a training centre for civil servants, supplied the Asiatic Society with a young generation of potential scholars to carry on the work of the men originally inspired by Hastings.'** (Kopf, 70)

# College and Serampore Mission

- Wellesley needed the linguistic abilities of Carey and the press of Ward. Missionaries needed money and permission to act outside the boundaries of Serampore (Ward and Fountain had police records in England for the support or advocacy of the French Revolutionary cause).
- Asiatic Society's emphasize on the classical languages insufficient for civil servants. **'In 1800, only the Serampore missionaries seemed organized for studying the popular culture or languages.'** (Kopf, 71) – as the means for reaching masses with the gospel.
- Only **Serampore Mission Press** equipped for with costly fonts of type for irregular and neglected languages of the Indian people. **By 1805 it could print any work in Bengali, Urdu, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, or Marathi.'** (Kopf, 71)
- Missionaries' work secured by Carey's regular and special incomes from the college, the payments for the press jobs and buys of fixed numbers of publications (for example 100 pieces of Carey's *Bengali Grammar* ).
- Marshman's English-style boarding schools for European and Eurasian boys and girls – established rather as a means of income – became the leading source of inspiration for later 'experiments in popular and higher-level education for Bengalis, such as Serampore College and the Calcutta School Society.' (Kopf, 73)



# College and Serampore Mission

## Utilization of college resources:

- Respectability of institution: 'It [i.e. Carey's joining the faculty] would make the Mission respectable... It would spread books into the whole Country... It would open Calcutta to preaching and would put a number of respectable Hindoos under my direction as *Moonchis*...' (Letter to Sutcliffe, April 13, 1801 - Kopf, 75)
- Help of college pundits: Carey had derived the grammatical and lexicographical principles of given language with the assistance of college pundits no sooner ' than he promptly translated the Bible into that language and had it published at the Serampore Press.' (Kopf, 72)
- By 1809 Carey translated the New Testament and Psalms into Oriya, NT and Pentateuch into Sanskrit, and the NT into Telugu, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujarati (Kopf, 72).

# Cooperation and the Jone's Ideal

- **Jone's ideal of publishing Asian classics not fulfilled after establishment of the College because of its educational purpose - preparation of textbooks based on these classics. The original texts were carefully abridged and altered in such a way as to make them acceptable to British students.**
- **The Serampore Mission had the best Sanskrit press in the world and many excellent Hindu scholars associated with it.**
- **In 1805 the Serampore missionaries drew a plan for a cooperative project involving the Asiatic Society, the college, and Serampore. William Carey was selected as the European in charge of the operation. In May, 1805, Claudius Buchanan, vice-prost of the College of Fort William, presented the Serampore plan to fellow Orientalists. And in 1806, Carey chose the *Ramayana* as *the first classic to be translated.***

# Projects

## Hindustani Dep.

- 1801 Gilchrist appointed as a head – task: a) prepare and publish textbooks; b) to develop a complete system of Hindoostanee Philology.
- Launched Hindoostanee Press (1802) with the European principles of punctuation, word separation, and 'joining the letters of each vocable as much as possible.' (Kopf, 82) – **press as one of means for the revival of the gleam of learning in Orient and of rise of the Hindustani language.**
- Precise transliteration scheme for Persian, Arabic and Nagree Alphabets – Romanization together with the adaptation of syntax to English as a means for effective teaching and learning (*Later Orientalists ridiculed Gilchrist's method as an exercise in wishful thinking, since he was actually less interested in disclosing and regularizing the established literary and spoken patterns of the indigenous culture than he was in altering those patterns to fit those of an alien language and culture.*” (Kopf, 111)
- Urging development of vernaculars - aim to establish precise similarities and difference between Muslim and Hindu languages for easier recognition by foreigners »» *Oriental Fabulist* (1803) - translations of Aesop into Urdu, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Bengali and English - by Asians at the department.
- <sup>14/11/2006</sup> His project of revival finished by his return to England (1804) because of bad health (84)



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Handwritten text in Devanagari script, likely a Sanskrit manuscript. The text is densely packed and covers most of the page.

Handwritten text in Devanagari script, likely a Sanskrit manuscript. The text is densely packed and covers most of the page.

भारत  
भाषा : संस्कृत  
लिपी : शारदा  
दाखल अंक : १५९/१८७५-७६  
व्या धिकित्सित आवृत्तीला आधारभूत ठरलेली पोथी

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# Projects

## Persian Dep.

- 1805 Mathew Lumsden - first plan for improving Persian typography and for establishing printing press for **general diffusion of Persian literature by introducing the use of printed books among the natives of India**: 'the adoption of that art [of printing] by the Natives of India will doubtless ensure the preservation as well as the general circulation of many valuable works in either language that are now in danger of being lost.' (Kopf, 86)

## Sanskrit Dep.

- Colebrooke – writing for the use of students made him describe 'consciously and deliberately India's cultural configurations' (Kopf, 87).
- 1801 first paper at AS: *The Sanscrit and Prakrit Languages* – first analyses of contemporary vernaculars: contended the Jone's opinion that languages such as Hindi preceded Sanskrit, saying the opposite. He was also 'probably the first European to recognize that Hindi had existed prior to and separate from Persianized Urdu.' (Kopf, 88)
- New scholarship: utilization of new possibilities of College's concentration of resources – translation of *Hitopadesha* (1804) with Carey's assistance – comparison of six available manuscripts »» improvement of previous translations of Jones and Wilkins.

# Projects

## Sanskrit Dep.

- 1809 – *Sanskrit Dictionary*
- 1810 – *The Translation of Two Treatises on the Hindu Law of Inheritance* – two treatises designed to assist Fort William graduates - judicial officers in Bengal. Aim to determine actually operative law in Bengal: No single textual law of inheritance operates through all India; treatise *Mitāksharā* 'might be said to be in general use in parts of southern India and Benares'; the Bengal school takes for its guide *Jimutavabava's* treatise which is 'on almost ever dispute point, opposite in doctrine to *Mitāksharā* and has no deference for its authority. (Kopf, 89)
- 1806 succeeded by Carey - *Sanskrit grammar with alphabetical list of Sanskrit roots*.

## *Hindu Popular Languages - Carey*

- *emphasize on Bengali (as a means to reach Bengali masses with the Christian message).*
- *The second edition of Bengali grammar - Halhed's conjectures on Bengali syntax formulated into rules, fixation of 'the chaotic and dialectical variety of the vernacular into definite forms'. (Kopf, 93)*



# Projects

## *Hindu Languages - Carey*

- *1801 reader Kathopakathan (Dialogs): 'It was the first book by European that did not concern itself with Hindu high culture. For the first time idiomatic language, manners and customs of merchant, fishermen, women, beggars day-laborers, and other common folk were given the dignity of "minute and sympathetic observation".'* (Kopf, 93) Thus he was first to describe the diversity of Bengali tradition.

## *Cooperation of the College, AS and Serampore Mission*

- *Jone's ideal of publishing Asian classics not fulfilled after establishment of the College because of its educational purpose. **The Serampore Mission had the best Sanskrit press in the world and many excellent Hindu scholars associated with it.***
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# Outcomes of Training

- 'If essays left behind the students are true reflection of their attitudes, than the educational process at the college was a success.' (Kopf, 97)
- In 1802 a Bengali disputation focused on whether 'the Asiatics are capable of as high degree of civilization as the Europeans', in other various languages 'On the best method of acquiring a knowledge of the manners and customs of the natives of India', or 'On the character and capacity of the Asiatics and particularly of the natives of Hindoostan' (see Kopf, 100) 'In 1804 Alexander Tod delivered a brilliant dissertation in Bengali on whether "The translation of the best works extant in the Shanscrit into the popular languages of India would promote the extension of Science and civilization". (Kopf, 100)
- Advocation of social and cultural change in India through the help to rediscover the lost roots of its civilization. Even advocacy of the introduction of Christian morality and European science into only the way that it is done within the general structure of the Hindu civilization.
- Other students held that 'the Asiatics' 'climbed the heights of science before Greeks had learned their alphabet' but now live in dark period and 'might find resurrection once more.' (Kopf, 102)

# Outcomes of Training

- **Students of Colebrooke's Sanskrit Department in opposition to others 'reflected a more differentiated conception of India's cultures. The others were inclined, in the manner of Jones, to speak of specific Asian cultures on the one hand but to view them also as a greater unity vaguely subsumed under 'Asiatic Civilization'.' (Kopf, 102)**
- **'The tendency was to link the Hindu medievalism to European medievalism and to maintain that Brahmins, like the European monks, kept their people in darkness by substituting superstition for religion and by stifling intellectual curiosity that might lead to scientific knowledge. Just as Europe liberated itself by reviving its classical literature, so might Hindu India do the same.' (Kopf, 102)**
- **'Most of the young men under Colebrooke and Carey seemed to identify India with Hinduism and regarded the Muslims as intruders.**
- **Though there were many generalizations about the golden age of Hindu civilization, no one was quite sure just what the Hindu ethos was. Caste was condemned as 'medieval' and idolatry was attacked with strong Protestant indignation. All the students whose essays have been read by the author were convinced that institutions such as the Asiatic Society and the College of Fort William would make substantial contribution toward uncovering and revitalizing Asian cultures.'** (Kopf, 103)



# College and Administration

- Wellesley – continuity with Hastings – reservation of certain positions for the most accomplished Orientalist (continued together with monetary awards policy for students during Minto era [1807-1813]).
- Recruitment of the best students for the highest bureaus of state under his personal supervision »»»
- »»» hence creation of a small clique into which all later students sought admission, and which was identified fully with Wellesley's policy and eager to contribute to its success.

Charles Metcalfe in charge of Delhi's civil and judicial administration

- Some members of the high clique assigned out of Calcutta.
- He doubted the effectiveness of European-style law courts in India: 'Indians were more happier under their own freer and more personal regimes.' By personalizing justice through his own office, Metcalfe was sustaining the paternalistic policy of the Moghul rulers, but this way he was able to forbid widow burning, letting it be known that he was merely reintroducing the state that an 'Asiatick' emperor, Akbar, had already enacted. Metcalfe also abolished slavery in Delhi in 1812.' (Kopf, 107)