

the numerical details of Indian chronometry and astrology, but also a document that significantly records customs and practices of interest to social scientists and historians of religion. As the *pañcāṅga* is used by the Hindu in tracing both the specific events and the larger movements in the undertakings of his or her life, whether mundane or spiritual, so the *pañcāṅga* should be studied by the researcher as if it were a musical score, which through the examination of each note as well as of the whole piece can bring one to a closer understanding of the rhythms that govern the socio-religious life cycles and lifestyles of Hindus.

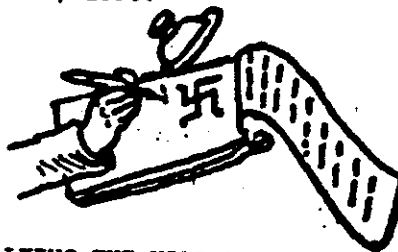
Suggested reading:

*Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures, Madras. Part I (Issue on Indian Calendar).* Madras: University of Madras, 1968.

Government of India. *Report of the Calendar Reform Committee.* New Delhi: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1955.

Kane, P.V. *History of Dharmasastra. Vol. V, Part I (Vratas, Utsavas, and Kāla, etc.).* Second Edition. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1974.

Sewell, R. and S.B. Dikshit. *The Indian Calendar.* London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd., 1896.



STALKING THE WILD EPHEMERA:  
RESOURCES FOR COLLECTING, STUDYING, AND PRESERVING  
SOUTH ASIAN PAMPHLET LITERATURE

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Seven years ago I started stalking my own chosen species of ephemeral pamphlet literature, the romantic folk tales of the Hindi and Urdu *qissa* genre. At the time it seemed to a number of people - especially in India - a distinctly odd, not to say deviant, form of dissertation research. In the beginning I had doubts myself. I was afraid the genre might prove as light and flimsy as the pamphlets that composed it, and might somehow fade in the sunlight or disintegrate into pulp in the rains. What if it let me down, and left me stranded in some limbo between the high ground of elite literature and the jungles of oral folklore? But somehow it never did. The *qissa* genre kept me company during some good years of research, the dissertation got written, and the interest of the subject matter is by no means exhausted. By now, pamphlet literature, though still largely unknown territory, is beginning to attract a bit more attention. Here is a brief, practical summary of what I have learned about finding, studying, and preserving such ephemera.

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Finding modern pamphlet literature is usually easy; researchers often get interested in it, in fact, after they have seen samples of it used in the cultures they are studying. Look in pilgrimage centers, in old bazaars, in the less Westernized cultural settings. When in doubt, buy first and ask questions later, for you may not always find the same thing again. If the pamphlets are cheap, as they usually are, buy at least two copies of anything that looks at all interesting. Buy things that are only peripherally related to your area too - they will help you get a perspective on the niche that each genre fills in relation to the others. Talk to the booksellers about the pamphlets and the people who buy them. In the beginning of your work, buy lots of things; buy works with the same title by many publishers, and see if they really are the same. Carry plastic bags to store your purchases in if their paper seems frail. Most pamphlet literature identifies the publisher and includes his address, and often a catalog of related works that he also publishes. Seek out the publishers themselves, interview them, ask for full information about their publications, ask about their history and so forth. Ask whether they have any old copies. Usually they will not, since everyone in the pamphlet world loves bright new covers, but it never hurts to ask, and serendipity happens mostly to the persistent. You will quickly discover that much of what publishers tell you about authorship, sources, dates, etc. of their publications is unreliable. Nevertheless, if you can find some promising booksellers or publishers, cultivate them and visit them repeatedly; it may take them a while to understand your interest or to decide they like you enough to help you.

As an appendix to this article, I include a list of some of the most important *qissa* publishers. Most of these also publish a number of other genres in Hindi and/or Urdu. I offer this list diffidently, because it dates from 1977-1978 and things evolve very fast in the world of ephemera. Small new publishers are always coming up, but most of them fold after a few years; big well-established ones tend to go on and on, but may split between brothers, or diversify into other kinds of publications. So I emphasize that this list can only be a starting point for research.

\* \* \*

Studying pamphlet literature in historical depth is of course basically a library activity. A detailed record of all the good sources I found is available in my dissertation, *Marvelous Encounters: Qissa Literature in Urdu and Hindi* (University of Chicago 1980; to be published this year by Manohar Book Service, New Delhi). People working in Hindi and Urdu might like to consult it. Here I want to make only some general suggestions. Everyone will know how to locate the classical texts from which ephemeral often are derived, or claim to be derived. But tracing earlier pamphlet literature is much more difficult. Basically, pamphlet literature could not begin to be published until printing presses became widespread enough to be in the hands not just of missionaries and local elites, but also of ordinary businessmen looking to print things that would sell. In North India, as I argue in my dissertation, this does not happen until the 1880's. So nineteenth century records are scattered and chancy. The best general source I know of is the series of annotated

catalogs prepared by James Fuller Blumhardt for the India Office Library and the British Museum Library. These exist for a great number of Indian languages and were mostly prepared in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth; they sometimes include elementary catalogs of later acquisitions as well. I understand that not all of the materials mentioned in these catalogs have survived, but the catalogs themselves are a treasure and no one should fail to take advantage of them.

The other invaluable source for this kind of research is basically a twentieth century one, founded on late nineteenth century legislation which required every provincial capital in British India to publish quarterly lists of every single item published in that province during that quarter; publishers were required to furnish specimen copies of each such item. These records are invaluable primary sources, for they include even five-page and ten-page pamphlets of the most ephemeral sort (perhaps because the British were interested in detecting subversive political ideas wherever they might occur?). The records are certainly incomplete, as I can demonstrate in the case of Hindi and Urdu *qissa* literature, but not systematically so or in an un-representative way, as far as I can tell.

Each province's record for each quarter is divided first by language, then by genre (broad English generic terms are used). Each entry consists of the title in the original script and roman transliteration, author's name, place of publication, publisher, exact month and year of publication, number of pages, number of copies printed, size, and cost per copy. Often items are annotated with a description of the nature and/or source of the work; sometimes this annotation is quite extensive and may even include a plot summary. I have found the annotation to be generally reliable, though not perfectly so: sometimes plausible guesses about textual sources and antecedents are presented as facts. In these records one can follow the course of religious disputation as pamphlets are printed to answer earlier pamphlets, and can detect the beginnings of nationalist pamphleteering, and can chart the comparative popularity of particular genres and individual works over wide areas of time and space.

These records begin in the 1890's or early 1900's, and continue basically until Independence. I cannot imagine a scholar of modern South Asia who would not find them delightful and fascinating to read. They not only help with one's present project, but also suggest future projects. And fortunately they are quite accessible: they are in microfiche form in the South Asia Microform Project (SAMP) collection, housed in the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago (6050 South Kenwood, Chicago 60637). They can be looked at either by visiting the Center personally, or by having a member library requisition them for you to use. I provide a list of the SAMP holdings that I have consulted in Appendix B with my own annotations about their completeness. My list covers only the Hindi-Urdu area, but the SAMP collection definitely does have South Indian records too, especially a large set for Madras.

Unfortunately, though perhaps understandably, post-Independence pamphlet publishing records are much less satisfactory. Everyone agrees that the volume of such publishing is greater than ever, and that fact along with decentralization and rapid change make the world

of ephemera particularly hard to monitor. The Indian National Bibliography specifically excludes ephemera from its coverage, and the Library of Congress' Accessions List records only occasional particularly substantial items which happen to fall into their acquisition channels. The researcher must therefore rely on field work and good luck to trace developments between Independence and the present.

\* \* \*

Preserving such ephemera is an enterprise that is only now getting started, and one in which we all need to cooperate. I am sure I need not labor its special urgency. No libraries systematically preserve this material, no bibliographies record it, no publishers keep reliable records of it. Scholars of the future will have only as much perspective on it as we are able to give them. Fortunately, I have found that basically the financial, technological, and administrative resources are available for preserving this material; it rests with us to take advantage of them. We should do this even selfishly, for our own sakes, since owning the only extant copies of research material is unjustifiably risky. What would you do if your house or office burned down? In any case, how will you induce others to share your perspectives and continue your work, if they have no access to your material? This is why I recommend buying at least two copies of pamphlets, and buying things of related as well as central interest. You can have one for yourself, and one to make available for preservation.

My own collection of several hundred *qissas*, *saḡits*, and other related Hindi and Urdu narrative genres is available in two places: in pamphlet form in a series of manila envelopes in the reference room of Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, and in microfiche form as part of the SAMP collection in the Center for Research Libraries. I devised a very simple cataloging procedure for these materials, and one well suited to expansion into other languages and genres, in the hope that other scholars would add to the nucleus of this Popular Literature Collection. There are now encouraging signs that this may begin to happen. Prof. K.C. Bahl of the University of Chicago has just begun to donate folk literature to the University of Chicago Library from his now extensive collection, and we hope more scholars will follow his example. Other libraries are also quite prepared to welcome such materials. Dr. Karine Schomer is arranging for library copying of her tapes of oral *alḡa* recitations for safe preservation, and has promised to write an article for SALNAQ reporting on this process. We hope to hear from others as well. SALNAQ is an excellent channel for us to use to keep each other informed about such newly available materials.



Those who may pass through Delhi should not forget the Library of Congress' acquisitions office there (N-11 South Extension Part I, New Delhi 110 049, phone 61-6207), with its extensive and technologically sophisticated preservation facilities. There are bibliographers there who deal with virtually every South Asian language; most of them are quite friendly and eager to work with scholars in their area. Often they are able to borrow (or even sometimes buy) your materials, microfiche them for preservation in the Library of Congress collection, and return the originals to you, rebound, if their paper quality will permit. What more could a scholar ask for in the way of convenience and safe preservation? More of us should take advantage of the services they offer, and work with them in their acquisitions process; after all, when we preserve ephemera, the people who benefit most are really ourselves, our students, and future scholars of South Asia.

APPENDIX A -----

PUBLISHERS OF QISSA AND RELATED LITERATURE IN  
HINDI AND URDU, 1977-1978

Allahabad

BAMBA'Ī PUSTAKĀLAY, 527/A2, Dariyābād.

I have not visited them but have seen many of their publications.

Bombay

ŚRĪ VENKATEŚVAR STEAM PRESS, 7 Khetwādi, Khambattā Lane.

They were an old and most important firm. Out of business now, but it might be possible to track down some heirs or old texts.

Calcutta

ŚRĪ LOKNĀTH PUSTAKĀLAY, 173 Mahatma Gandhi Road.

The owner of this, Sri B.N. Trivedi, owns other firms as well: ŚRĪ DŪDHNĀTH PUSTAKĀLAY AND PRESS, ARUN PUSTAKĀLAY AND PRESS. He's an excellent source of information about the popular publishing scene in Calcutta.

SACDEV PUSTAKĀLAY AND PRESS, 105 Mahatma Gandhi Road.

This firm also puts out RĀJŪ PUBLICATIONS.

Delhi

DEHĀTĪ PUSTAK BHANDĀR, Cauk Barshābulā, Cawri Bāzār.

An old and prosperous firm, now upwardly mobile away from pamphlets.

HIND PUSTAK BHANDĀR, Khāri Bāvli.

An offshoot of DEHATI PUSTAK BHANDAR (partition between heirs).

AGRAWĀL BOOK DEPOT, GUPTĀ AND CO., GARG AND CO., Khāri Bāvli.

All under the same ownership.

PANJĀBĪ PUSTAK BHANDĀR, Daribā Kalān.

RATAN AND CO., Daribā Kalān.

**Hathras**

**ŚYĀM PRESS (N.S. ŚARMĀ GAUR BOOK DEPOT), Śyām Bagh, Pt. Nathārām Road, Hathras City.**

The present owner is Pt. Rādhā Ballabh Gauṛ. They specialize in *saṅgīt* texts, and are the home of the Hathrasi school of this form of folk opera. Pt. R.B. Gaur is very knowledgeable and delighted to discuss *saṅgīt*.

**Jodhpur**

**KHATRĪ BHIMAKĀND BOOKSELLER, Katla Bāzār.**

I've never been there but have seen their publications.

**Kanpur**

**ŚRĪ KRṢṆ PUSTAKĀLAY, Cauk.**

Along with the Hathras firm, this is the other great source of *saṅgīt* (also called *naṭṭānki*) literature, home of the Kanpur school. But they also publish other genres, as do the Hathras people too.

**Lucknow**

**RAJĀ RĀM KUMĀR PRESS BOOK DEPOT, MUNSHĪ TEK KUMĀR PRESS BOOK DEPOT, Hazrat Ganj.**

These are joint heirs of the famous Naval Kishor Press so important in the history of Urdu literature. They have stocks of old texts, and reissue some themselves, all in Urdu. Both are located just to the left of the Nainital Bank near the Post Office, around the corner from the main Hazrat Ganj road.

**Mathura**

**ŚYĀMKĀŚĪ PRESS, Gandhi Park ke sānne.**

A very old firm run by V.P. Agrawāl. They have a remarkable collection of early popular literature (their own and others) in their storeroom, but nowadays are inclining more towards school textbooks.

**HINDĪ PUSTAKĀLAY, No. 68 Holiwāli Gali.**

Hard to find, but good material and very pleasant people. Go to Holiwali Gate and start asking directions! It's a very small gali on the right, 3rd or 4th as you come in.

**ŚRĪ GOPĀL PUSTAKĀLAY, Bidrām Bāzār.**

**KĪSAN PUSTAK BHANḌĀR, Gurhā'i Bāzār.**  
Small, but a nice owner.

**Patna**

**KANHAIYĀLĀL BOOKSELLER, Patna City.**

I haven't visited it but it's an old firm and should be worth a try.

**Varanasi**

**TRĀKURPRASĀD AND SONS BOOKSELLER, Rājadarwāzā.**

**BHĀRGAV PUSTAKĀLAY, BHĀRGAV BHUṢAN PRESS, Gayghaṭ.**

GOOD SOURCES FOR OLD TEXTS

Delhi

KUTUBKHANA ANJUMAN-E TARAQQI-E URDU, Urdu Bazar, Jam'a Masjid.  
Drink tea with Maulvi Niyaz ud-Din, meet the Urdu literary  
world; visit regularly and you'll be surprised what the  
Maulvi will find for you.

Lucknow

SIDDIQ BOOK DEPOT, Aminibad (near the temple).  
Another good source for old Urdu material.

Varanasi

BHAGWANDAS BOOKSELLER, Ashbhairo, Bank of India ke nice, Cauk.  
A fine source for old Hindi material.

APPENDIX B -----

THE SOUTH ASIA MICROFORM PROJECT'S PUBLICATION RECORDS  
FOR NORTH INDIA

Ajmer-Marwara

Catalogue of Books and Periodicals Published in Ajmere-Marwara  
and Registered under Act XXV of 1867.  
Holdings: 1886-1919. Complete.

Bengal

Bengal Library. Catalogue of Books. Calcutta  
Holdings: 1900-1952. Missing: 1939, part 4; 1941, parts  
1, 2, 4; 1946-1949; 1951.

Bihar and Orissa

Catalogue of Books and Periodicals. Patna, Cuttack. Office  
of the Director of Public Instruction.  
Holdings: 1912-1941. Missing: 1921, some of part 4.

Central Provinces and Berar

Catalogue of Books and Pamphlets, Nagpur.  
Holdings: 1892-1938. Missing: 1924-1930; 1932, part 3;  
1937, part 1.

Punjab

Catalogue of Books and Periodicals Registered in the Punjab  
under Act XXV of 1867 and Act X of 1890.  
Holdings: 1910-1940. Complete.

United Provinces of Agra and Oudh

Statement of Particulars Regarding Books and Periodicals  
Published in the United Provinces. Allahabad.  
Holdings: 1904-1945. Missing: 1919-1921; 1940, part 3.