

Vol. XX: In honour of SIR RALPH TURNER

BULLETIN
OF THE
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND
AFRICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

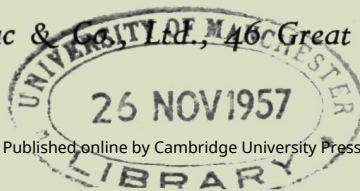


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STUDIES
IN HONOUR OF
SIR RALPH TURNER
DIRECTOR OF THE
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
1937-57

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[Lafayette]

SIR RALPH TURNER

BSOAS. XX]

[Frontispiece

आदौ वाराणसीपुर्या विशालनगरे ततः ।
प्राग्व्याकरणं नैकपर्यायेण सुबुद्धिमान् ॥
सम्मानितो राजगृहे जम्बुद्वीपे प्रकीर्तितः ।
आर्यवाणीविदां नेता नेपालविषयप्रियः ॥
प्रीतिभावेन मैत्र्या च सर्वलोकानुरञ्जकः ।
अधिष्ठाता विनेयार्थं धर्मेण विनयं व्यधात् ॥
इत्थं बहुविधं तेन बुद्धानुकरणं कृतम् ।
शास्त्रारं तमहं वन्दे भाषाचक्रप्रवर्तकम् ॥

SIR RALPH,

In an age of dynamic change you have most worthily upheld the great tradition of a long line of British scholar-administrators, men who from Sir William Jones to Sir George Grierson have studied the languages and life of India and fostered Britain's connexion with the wider world. On the occasion of your retirement your fellow-workers in the many fields of oriental and African studies unite to acclaim this achievement and to offer you their homage.

In your twenty-third year, already a student of Sanskrit and appointed a member of the Indian Educational Service, you left Cambridge for Banaras, thence to be drawn by the vicissitudes of war on to the North-West Frontier and across the seas to Suez. As officer and adjutant in the 3rd Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles you fought your way with Allenby's victorious army through the stony Judæan hills, and in the searching comradeship of war conceived a life-long love for the men of Nepal. There was nurtured your *Dictionary of the Nepali language*. Although seeking originally to make a practical dictionary, you have assured us with happy understatement that the work as published in 1931 had 'somewhat outgrown' the first intention. Equally happy, though no doubt accidental, was the fact (discovered by your friend, Grahame Bailey) that the *Dictionary* weighed 9 lb. 3 oz., exactly the weight of the service rifle and bayonet carried by the Gurkha soldier, to whom you lovingly and characteristically dedicated the results of your labour.

Building on the foundations of Sir George Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, searching the dictionaries and vocabularies of forty or fifty languages to discover parallels to your 26,000 entries, your *Dictionary* gave for the first time in a scientifically accurate form the etymologies of an Indo-Aryan language as a whole. By so doing you elevated Nepali in the world of scholarship for ever since it has become the custom for scholars working on the etymology of modern Indo-Aryan languages to refer first for purposes of comparison to Nepali. This formative contribution to the history of the modern Indo-Aryan languages marked at once the first fruits of your tenure of the Chair of Sanskrit in the University of London to which you had been elected in 1922, and your dedication to a life's work of lexicography, for you then set yourself to the task of creating a comparative dictionary of the Indo-Aryan languages. But no sooner were you fully committed than the invitation in 1937 to become the Director of the School of Oriental Studies challenged you to accept the responsibilities of administration; and from this, like your distinguished predecessors, you did not shrink, but rather saw to it that the mind and outlook of the scholar should inspire and fortify the work of the Director.

Under you the School of Oriental and African Studies has become a great institution of learning, unique of its kind, standing in its own buildings on the University site, with an academic staff which has grown under your direction

from 44 to 140 in number. In these developments you have been the prime and urgent mover.

Aware that from the opening of the twentieth century one committee after another had presented largely unavailing reports urging the development of oriental studies, you were unremitting in keeping the problem before the British Government and people. In 1933 you took a hand in securing a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation under which a separate Africa Department was established, a development reflected in 1938 in the inclusion of Africa in the School's title. In 1942, when you made the difficult decision to bring the School from its temporary war-time home back to hopelessly inadequate accommodation in a London under air attack, back to a struggle with a war-time ministry for the occupation of even a part of the School's own buildings, the future must have seemed dark. But with your heart and mind in the matter, you were not to be baffled.

It was characteristic that, in these dark months, when the British Government finally recognized the war-time need for linguists trained in the languages of Asia, your own thoughts were already leaping ahead to the post-war period, and that you were pressing for a Commission to review the future of oriental and African studies. In 1943 you publicly drew attention to the 'Lamentable state of Indian studies in Great Britain'. In the following year a Commission was established under the guidance of Lord Scarbrough, which conducted an inquiry with energy and despatch, and in April 1946 produced that new charter for oriental and African studies in Great Britain which you had so long sought. Year by year through the following decade your statesmanlike reports have described the School's increasing fulfilment of the responsibilities placed on it by this Commission, revealing the gradual creation of a house of teaching and research, peopled by young scholars of all races, dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the growth of understanding. The full part you have taken in the work of the University as a whole has inspired your colleagues and placed the School in the main stream of University life.

Learned societies the world over have recognized your eminence; Orientalists and Linguists have named you their President; Governments and Universities have bestowed on you their honours. On all sides your counsel is readily sought and readily given. Your colleagues, who have long enjoyed your austere wisdom in formal committee, your intermingling of jest with earnest round the common room table, your silences when deep in a three-pipe problem, hold you in true affection. Yet they are but a small proportion of the many who wish on this occasion to acclaim your qualities as a man and to salute you as a great Director.

C. H. PHILIPS

HONOURS AND DECORATIONS CONFERRED ON RALPH LILLEY TURNER

Knight Bachelor ; Military Cross ; Nepalese Order of Gorkhā Dakṣiṇa Bāhu ; D.Litt. (Hon. Causa), Banaras ; Fellow of the British Academy (Vice-President, 1952) ; Professor Emeritus of Sanskrit in the University of London ; Honorary Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge ; Honorary Fellow of Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Poona ; President (1952–55) of the Royal Asiatic Society ; President (1939–43) of the Philological Society ; President of the Seventh International Congress of Linguists, 1952 ; President of the Twenty-third International Congress of Orientalists, 1954 ; Vice-President of the All-India Sanskrit Parishad ; Corresponding Member of the Czechoslovakian Oriental Institute of Prague ; Honorary Member of the International Academy of Indian Culture, Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Société Asiatique of Paris, American Oriental Society, Bihar Research Society, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras, Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute, Linguistic Society of India, Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft ; Triennial Gold Medal (Royal Asiatic Society), 1953.

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(BOOKS AND ARTICLES)

Compiled by D. M. JOHNSON

[This list excludes the series 'The Director's review at the Annual Ceremony', printed in *School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Report of the Governing Body for the Session.*]

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In progress

A comparative dictionary of the Indo-Aryan languages.

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