

---

S.L. Burmistrov. *Rukopisi shkoly Vedanta v sobraniiaxh Instituta vostochnykh rukopisei RAN: annotirovannyi katalog* [Manuscripts of Vedānta School in the collections of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of RAS: annotated catalogue] — Moscow: Nauka–Vostochnaia Literatura, 2018. — 479 pp. (Pismenniiie pamiatniki Vostoka. CLII). — ISBN 978-5-02-039832-0

Sergey Burmistrov’s monograph “Manuscripts of the Vedānta School in the collections of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences: An Annotated Catalog” is the result of three years research conducted by S. Burmistrov in the IOM, RAS. The value and relevance of this work is undoubtful: for the first time in Russian Indology the description and systematization of the handwritten heritage of the Vedānta religious and philosophical tradition, stored in the Indian Fund of IOM, RAS and rightly considered one of the largest in the world, are carried out. Despite of the almost three hundred year history of Indology, the pioneers of which were H.T. Colebrooke (1765–1837), W. Jones (1746–1794), F. Schlegel (1772–1829), Vedānta still remains out of sight of professional researchers. Therefore, this peer-reviewed work is the first and very important step on the way to systematic academic research of Vedānta in Russia.

Being a one of the six orthodox (which recognized the absolute authority of the Vedic texts, unlike Jainism and Buddhism) schools of religious and philosophical thought of India, Vedānta was central to the field of traditional

---

Indian scholarship. In addition, Vedānta had a certain influence on the European philosophical tradition: G.W.F. Hegel, A. Schopenhauer, F.W. Nietzsche, H.K. Hesse, A.J. Toynbee and others.

The annotated catalog of Sergey Burmistrov is opened by Preface, short in form but capacious in content, where the author indicated the sources used in compiling this catalog — the well-known catalog of N.D. Mironov and the “Short Catalog of Indian Manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences” by T.K. Posova and K.L. Chizhikova. Within the Preface Sergey Burmistrov presented one of the principles for the compilation of his Catalog: articles are placed in chronological order — according to the dates of texts’ (not manuscripts) compilation. This principle is quite justified because it allows to get a primary understanding of the evolution of Vedānta religious and philosophical thought already at the stage of working with the Catalog. Thus, the Annotated Catalog by Sergey Burmistrov — the first step of historical and philosophical research of Vedānta.

The catalog is preceded by a serious historical and philosophical research which reflects such aspects as the history of the formation of the Indian Foundation of the Asian Museum (pp. 2–7), the history of Vedānta Studies in Europe and Russia (pp. 8–76), Vedānta Studies in India properly (pp. 77–87), a brief essay on Vedānta history (p. 88–126).

Starting to research the history of Indian fund of IOM, RAS, Sergey Burmistrov rightly calls Gerasim Lebedev (1749–1817) as the founder of the collection, briefly outlining Lebedev’s Indian journey and the history of the collecting of first manuscripts that founded the Indian Fund of IOM, RAS. S.L. Burmistrov quite out of place mentions the foreign policy circumstances of Gerasim Lebedev journey — the colonial British government as an absolute monopolist in their colonies in every way prevented the representatives of another countries from developing any activity, including research (p. 3).

Manuscripts collected by Lebedev subsequently replenished the collection of P.L. Schilling von Kannstadt (1786–1837) which consisted mainly of Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian, Tibetan writings and books about the culture of the Far East. The Indian part of Shilling collection was very modest — only eight items but they later became the basis of the Indian Fund of Asian Museum–IOM, RAS (p. 5).

Sergot Burmistrov rightly names J. Haerberlin and Baron Alexander von Staël-Holstein as the founders of the formation of the Vedānta part of In-

---

dian Manuscript Fund of IOM, RAS. Thus, J. Haeberlin acquired in Calcutta a collection of Vedānta texts that was transferred to the Asian Museum in 1855 (p. 5). Thank to A. von Staël-Holstein in 1908 the Indian Fund was replenished with many manuscripts mainly Advaita Vedānta tradition (p. 6).

The serious research essay on the history of Vedānta Studies in Europe and Russia Sergey Burmistrov opens with the consideration of first attempts in Vedānta researching undertaken by W. Jones and H.T. Colebrooke. Burmistrov examines in detail the entire history of Vedānta Studies until the beginning of XXI c. The Catalogue's author introduces the reader not only to the results of Vedānta researchers' activity but also their own philosophical views. Burmistrov also demonstrates how the Vedānta influenced European philosophy (p. 46). Sergey Burmistrov as an experienced comparatist analyzes the ideas of Indian, European, ancient philosophy, revealing typologically similar features (pp. 44–45).

The chapter "The history of Vedānta Studies" is devoted to the review of the intellectual environment that definitely influenced the formation of Indian historical and philosophical science. It's necessary to agree that so-called 'Indian, or Bengal, Renaissance' was an important stage in the development of Indian philosophical thought. As Burmistrov notes, the synthesis of Indian and Western cultures became a kind of response of Indian culture to a powerful challenge — a clash with Western civilization and was a characteristic feature of the 'Bengal Renaissance'. "Rethinking of place of Indian culture in the world made by Indian intellectuals has led to the emergence of traditionalism: in a past times customs and religious ideas were taken as a something usual and didn't become an object of special reflection, but now they, as a 'tradition', are opposed to innovations brought by Western civilization and Advaita Vedānta has become its core" (p. 77).

The undoubtful merit of Sergey Burmistrov's monograph is — the main part — Annotated catalogue immediately. Despite of the fact that the author relies on the "Short Catalogue of Indian Manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences," the Annotated catalogue's articles have the structure, because of which it can rightfully be considered *annotated*.

Each Catalogue's article contains the transliteration of the beginning and the end of the text, colophon. The annotation of each manuscript has a detailed paleographic description. Thus, the using of this Annotated catalogue greatly facilitates the subsequent work of the researcher.

The Annex completes this Catalogue where selectively presented transliteration, translation and commentaries of texts belonging to prominent thinkers of Vedānta — Śaṅkara and Rāmatīrtha.

Safarali Haybulloevich Shomakhmadov  
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts,  
Russian Academy of Sciences  
(safaralihshom@mail.ru)

---