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★ ADYAR LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

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President :

DR. G. S. ARUNDALE,

President of The Theosophical Society

THE THEOSOPHICAL HEADQUARTERS

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1 January, 1936

THE ADYAR LIBRARY

A GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

The Adyar Library attained its Golden Jubilee on December 29, 1935, and on 1st January 1936 (in the midst of the Diamond Jubilee Convention of The Theosophical Society) an Adyar Library Association was formed to extend its world-wide influence as a cultural centre.

THE purpose of the Adyar Library Association is to promote the interests of the Library along specific lines: (1) The issue of a quarterly bulletin to make known to the world the kind of books available; (2) A research staff to be attached to the Library by making provision for studentships, thereby encouraging research in philosophy, occult science, religion, and so on. What follows is the material which Mr. A. J. Hamerster, Joint-Director, presented in a talk before the Adyar Library Conference:

It was our late President, Dr. Besant, who once pondered that on the one hand H. P. Blavatsky had given Theosophy to the world, and that on the other hand, H. S. Olcott had given The Theosophical Society, and that it was still an open question which of these two had given the world the greater gift. It is true that the world over, Colonel Olcott is best remembered for his gift of The Theosophical Society, but to those who live at Adyar, as well as to those thousands and thousands who yearly visit Adyar, the one great gift of the Colonel which comes

next to that of The Theosophical Society is surely the Adyar Library. The Society the Colonel did not so much consider as his own creation, nor did H. P. Blavatsky think of the Theosophy she gave to the world as her Theosophy—both these were the Masters' own, but with the Adyar Library it was quite another thing. In his General Report of 1890, the President-Founder spoke of it with the deepest emotion as "that child of my brain, that hope of my heart, the Adyar Library," and we cannot be less thankful to the President-Founder for The Theosophical Society than for the Library. What would Adyar be without it? Would Adyar have ever become the great central spiritual pulsing heart and brain of The Society all over the world, if it had not possessed in the Adyar Library and its books the physical receptacle for the life-blood of the Theosophical Movement, that is the Wisdom of the Ages!

I will take you back in mind to that time, now fifty years ago, when Colonel Olcott laid its foundations, by reproducing three short passages from his *Old Diary*

Leaves, relevant to the event. The Colonel tells us :

"The Delegates to the Tenth Annual Convention began arriving on the 23rd December [1885], and thenceforward poured in by every train and steamer until the 27th when the sessions began. In my annual address I strongly pleaded for the creation of an Oriental Library at the Headquarters . . . I suggested that we should begin the work as a monument of the completion of our first decade . . . And see how friends have arisen to help us with their money and influence to build up The Society and make the Adyar Library what I had hoped for it, before twenty years have come and gone. We had no ancient MSS. then [in 1885], and only a couple of hundred or so of books ; whereas now [1904] we have 16,000 volumes in the two beautiful libraries [rooms] that we have opened, and the prospect of the command of ample means in due course. With all the earnestness I can express, I again appeal to our members and sympathizers to hasten, by their individual exertions, the day when scholars will make pilgrimages to Adyar to study what they may make the finest Oriental literary collection in the world."¹

Let me here for a moment break off the Colonel's story, to see how far we have indeed, in the years that have since passed, come up to our old leader's expectations, and fulfilled his hopes. From 1885 to 1904 or 1905, say in the first 20 years, he tells us that the Library

acquired 16,000 volumes. Therefore in 1935, that is after 30 years more, if it had grown at the same rate, the Library should be able to give an account of 40,000 volumes. I am happy to be able to announce that we have even exceeded this figure generously, that instead of 40,000 volumes, the Adyar Library can now actually boast of being in possession of not less than 56,000 volumes, divided over the Eastern and Western sections. The Oriental manuscript section contains 10,000 volumes. To this we have to add 11,000 printed volumes in the Eastern section, and 35,000 volumes in the Western section.

Let us now continue with the Colonel's story : "On the third day of the Convention [that is the 29th December, 1885] a resolution was adopted [by the General Council] approving of the plan suggested by the President-Founder for the erection of a building for the Samskrit Library and Picture Gallery, and he was requested to carry it out as soon as practicable."²

That was not whispered into a deaf man's ears. Neither the Colonel's own active, busy nature, nor apparently the Masters' driving power behind, would let him rest in peace, before he brought down, in some way or other, the mental idea into physical existence. And so we read a few pages further on in his *Old Diary Leaves* :

"As we crossed the threshold of the eleventh year, the erection of the building for the Adyar Oriental Library was begun at the lovely

¹ *Op. cit.*, iii, 327-28. Cf. also *Supplement to The Theosophist*, January 1886, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

² *Loc. cit.*, xii, 331-32. Cf. also *Supplement to The Theosophist*, January 1886, p. lxxxii.

Headquarters which had been bought for The Society and paid for. In my Diary of 1886 the entry for January 1st says :

“*In the name of the Masters and for the sake of Their cause,*’ I, Henry S. Olcott, President of The Theosophical Society, this day turned the first sod for the Samskrit Library and Museum at Adyar. The only witnesses present were T. Vijiaraghava Charlu, [F.T.S. (‘Ananda’)] and two of the gardeners. The impulse to do it came so strongly [suddenly]—after staking out the ground for the building that I did not call any of the other people in the house.”

“A very simple affair, one will see: no speeches, no music, no processions, no humbug of any sort, just a real beginning of what is meant to be a great work, accompanied by a declaration of the motive at bottom; one which, though not heard by more than two or three spectators, yet certainly must have been heard and noted in the quarter where the Wise Ones sit and watch the actions of men.”¹

From the foregoing it is clear that the *Foundation Day* of the Adyar Library must be considered the 29th December 1885, when the resolution was passed by the General Council at its tenth annual meeting. The Colonel himself thought of it in that way, for just before the resolution was passed he addressed the General Council with the words that “he had perfect confidence in the future of the Library *they were about to*

found.”² The official opening of the new building took place just a year later, on 28th December 1886.³

I come now to more material points regarding the Adyar Library. In the first place the finances. What were the first beginnings in this respect? On that same first day of the Tenth Annual Convention, when he read his Presidential Address, and for the first time publicly and officially broached the subject of the founding of an Oriental Library, we find that the Colonel made in his manuscript Diary, comprising thirty volumes, which are among the most treasured possessions of the Adyar Archives, the following entry: “*Opening of the Convention. Splendid day, beautiful appearance of the Hall, full attendance, excellent spirit. Rs. 3,500 subscribed for Permanent Fund and Library and Picture Gallery.*”

If we look through the Treasurer’s Report for 1935, we shall find that the Adyar Library has an “Endowment Fund” of more than a lakh of rupees, and a “Building Fund” of more than half a lakh of rupees, so that in this respect also we have done rather well. Yet we could do much better still. As has been the case for many years now, nearly half of the total receipts of Rs. 11,000 is made up from a donation by The Theosophical Society of Rs. 5,000. Now, The Society needs its own funds for the ever extending field and intensified quality of its manifold activities. Therefore, the

¹ *Old Diary Leaves*, iii, 336. The words between square brackets are added from the Colonel’s manuscript Diary.

² *Supplement to The Theosophist*, January 1886, p. lxxxii.

³ *Old Diary Leaves*, iii, 389.

President of The Society and the Directors of the Library have been for some time on the watch to achieve, if possible, what I am certain was Col. Olcott's ideal, that is the financial independence of the Adyar Library from The Theosophical Society.

One of the ways to come to this realization was the institution of what is called *Adyar Day*, on 17th February, the day of the passing away, in 1907, of the Father of both The Theosophical Society and The Adyar Library, as well as of the Olcott Harijan (Panchama) Free Schools. The special contributions asked for and received on Adyar day are allocated by the President in a certain proportion to these three institutions, according to the urgency of their different needs. The above-mentioned budget of the Adyar Library for 1936 shows that we count on an income from this source of Rs. 1,000. But I am anxious to raise that amount from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 6,000, so that the Library may become self-supporting, and The Society may gain Rs. 5,000 for other branches of work.

There are other ways still of helping the Adyar Library. I am thinking for example of an organization all over the world, consisting of a few people in every country, finding ways and means of their own to obtain for the Library one copy of every important book that comes from the press, and is judged suitable for a central library with a primal Theosophical interest.

* * *

All these facts and ideas were presented by Mr. Hamerster, to

the Adyar Library Conference. The resolutions for the formation of an Adyar Library Association were proposed by Dr. D. Guruswami, Vice-Principal of the Theosophical College, Madanapalle, who, in a fiery peroration leading up to them, indicated that the Rs. 6,000 needed would be raised if one thousand members would subscribe Rs. 6 per annum.

An earlier speaker was Dr. Srinivasa Murthi, Director of the Adyar Library, who visualized the day when a University would come into being at Adyar, "a second Nalanda, and scholars from East and West will throng to it in large numbers. The vital triads of a centre of learning, whether at Alexandria in Egypt; Nalanda, Taxila, or Benares in India; or Paris or Oxford in Europe are," as he made it clear, "a spiritual centre, a university and a library. These centres of learning are all great national institutions of international reputation, although they began as religious centres of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism or Catholicism. The Theosophical Society has been from its start an international institution; and its vital triad will therefore be an international Spiritual Centre, an international University, and an international Library."

FOUNDING OF THE ADYAR LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

On 1st January 1936, Dr. G. S. Arundale, President of The Theosophical Society, formally announced the establishment on this day of the Adyar Library Association, in grateful memory of the Founder of the Adyar Library, Colonel Henry Steele Olcott.

The Board of the Adyar Library Association comprises: *President*, Dr. G. S. Arundale; *Vice-President*, Dr. G. Srinivasa Murti; *Secretary*, A. J. Hamerster; *Treasurer*, H. J. Neervoort van de Poll; *Members*, Hirendranath Datta, Dr. D. Gurumurti, Prof. D. D. Kanga.

RULES OF THE ADYAR LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

I. The Association shall be called the Adyar Library Association.

II. The general object of the Association shall be to develop the Adyar Library as the International Centre for Eastern and Western cultural studies and researches in the light of Theosophy—"cultural" taken in its broadest sense as including Philosophy, Science, Religion and Art.

III. For the furtherance of this object the Association is :

1. To collect and preserve the necessary books and manuscripts for the Adyar Library ;
2. To erect, furnish, and maintain the required buildings for the Adyar Library ;
3. To publish a Quarterly Bulletin, and such other writings and studies as are deemed conducive to the general object ;
4. To establish Fellowships and Scholarships ;
5. To hold regular meetings and conferences, at least once a year ;
6. To receive and administer donations and subscriptions ;

7. To do all other things judged conducive to the general object.

IV. There shall be three classes of Membership : (1) Ordinary Members, who pay an annual subscription of Re. 1 ; (2) Corporate Members, who pay an annual subscription of Rs. 6 ; (3) Life Members, who donate Rs. 600. The Corporate and Life-Members shall receive the *Adyar Library Bulletin* gratis.

V. The Association shall be administered by a Board, consisting of the President of The Theosophical Society as President, the Director of the Adyar Library as Vice-President, and of a Secretary and Treasurer, appointed by the President of The Theosophical Society. The Board may co-opt other members.

Explanation : The rules are kept as simple as possible. The three classes of membership have been devised to make it possible for nearly *everyone*, by the low contribution of the first class, to join in this undertaking. No serious financial obstacle should stand in the way of as large a contingent as possible of interested people taking actual part in the realization of the ideals of a spiritual centre as sketched by Dr. G. Srinivasa Murti. The contribution of the second class of members is still held rather low, and is intended for all those who have a more direct and practical interest in all the Library stands for ; and the third class of membership is of course destined for those who, well favoured by fortune, wish to consecrate part of their worldly goods to the spiritual benefit of mankind. It is of course evident that not all the objects mentioned under Rule III can be carried out at once. The Quarterly Bulletin will be published as soon as a sufficient number of members have joined the Association.

Who will join the Adyar Library Association?

At least 1000 members required!

LIST OF MEMBERS

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. G. S. Arundale, C. | 17. Anandamurti, Benares, C. |
| 2. Shrimati Rukmini Devi, C. | 18. W. N. Nadkarni, Bombay. |
| 3. C. Jinarajadasa, C. | C. |
| 4. Dr. G. Srinivasa Murti, C. | 19. T. G. Krishnamurti, Gudivada, C. |
| 5. Dr. D. Gurumurti, Madanapalle, C. | 20. H. Frei, Ceylon, C. |
| 6. Hirendranath Datta, Calcutta, C. | 21. Hariher Prasad, Gaya, C. |
| 7. H. Hotchener, C. | 22. Dr. R. V. Phansalkar, Benares, C. |
| 8. R. V. Phansalkar, Benares, C. | 23. Professor D. D. Kanga, C. |
| 9. A. J. Hamerster, C. | 24. J. Kruisheer, Holland, O. |
| 10. A. L. Hamerster, O. | 25. N. Sri Ram, O. |
| 11. Venishankar, Bhavnagar, C. | 26. M. Subramaniam, Madras, O. |
| 12. G. D. Zal, Udhaipur, C. | 27. C. V. Shah, O. |
| 13. H. J. Neervoort van de Poll, Switzerland, C. | 28. Mrs. N. Gonggrijp, O. |
| 14. Mrs. Paula Kemperling, Vienna, C. | 29. Miss E. Lyner, Winterthur, C. |
| 15. Mrs. Paula Balfour Clarke, Hyderabad, Deccan, O. | 30. Miss Maria Taaks, Hannover, C. |
| 16. T. Kennedy, C. | 31. Glasbergen, Holland, C. |
| | 32. Panda Baijnath, Benares, O. |
| | 33. Capt. E. M. Sellon, C. |
| | 34. Mrs. B. A. Sellon, C. |

DONATIONS

J. C. Billimoria, Rangoon, Rs. 5, P.

Those who have not yet paid their contribution are hereby asked kindly to do so at their earliest convenience.

Legenda :

O. = Ordinary Member, Annual Contribution, Re. 1. (1s. 6d.)

C. = Corporate " " " Rs. 6. (9s.)

L. = Life " " " Donation, Rs. 600, or more, (£.45.)

JOIN

THE

ADYAR LIBRARY

ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION :

Ordinary Membership Re. 1. (1s. 6d.)

Corporate „ Rs. 6. (9s.)

Life „ Rs. 600 (£.45.)

or more for once.
