

National Library of India



National Library of India: History



Leafing through the pages of history beyond 188 years, the origin of National Library is traced back to 1836, when Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore and Pyari Chand Mitra founded the Calcutta Public Library. The present day National Library, formerly, Imperial Library, owes its foundation to Lord Curzon, who amalgamated in 1902 the Calcutta Public Library with the then Imperial Library, which itself had been formed in 1891, by combining a number of Departmental libraries of the then Govt. of India.



Genesis

1836 - Opening of the Calcutta Public Library.

1891 - Amalgamated with the Imperial Library.

1903 - Imperial Library opened to the public

1948 - National Library of India renamed by Act of Parliament

The Calcutta Public Library

The Calcutta Public Library began its journey at house of F.B. Strong on 21st March 1836



The Imperial Library

The Imperial Library was opened at Metcalfe Hall to the public in January 1903



National Library of India

The National Library came into being at the Belvedere Estate in place of Imperial Library by the “Imperial Library (Change of Name) Act” in 1948. Shri Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Union Minister of Education opened the Library to Public on 1st February 1953.



NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA: FACTS

- **Largest Repository Library in India**
- **An Institution of National Importance under Article 62 of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution**
- **Sub-ordinate organization under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India**
- **Shelf space more than 45 Kms**
- **Consisting of 60 divisions, including 27 General Professional Divisions, 23 Indian Languages Divisions, 5 Foreign Languages Divisions and 5 Administrative Divisions.**
- **Collection: More than four million books and bound periodicals, around one million of loose periodicals and newspapers (including 905 newspaper titles); 88,162 maps; above 3,231 manuscripts; nearly 1,04,388 microfilm roles etc.**
- **More than one million of Online resources.**

The Library Complex



**Dr. Syma Prasad Mookherjee
Bhasha Bhavan**



Annexe Building



New Annexe Building



Chemical Laboratory Building



**Esplanade Reading Room
(Proposed City Hub)**



Belvedere House

Major Functions of National Library

- **Maintaining repository in 22 Language**
- **Information Dissemination & Services to Readers**
- **Preservation & Conservation of Resources**
- **Digitization of Resources of Public Domain**
- **Collaborating with other Countries on behalf of Govt**

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

COLLECTION BUILDING

- Acquisition and conservation of all significant printed materials produced in the country to the exclusion of ephemera.
- Collection of printed materials concerning the country wherever published and also acquisition of photographic record of such materials that are not available within the country.
- Acquisition and conservation of manuscripts having national importance.
- Acquisition of foreign materials required by the country.
- Rendering of bibliographical and documentation service of retrospective materials, both general and specialized.
- Acting as referral centre purveying full and accurate knowledge of all sources of bibliographical activities.
- Providing reprographic services.
- Acting as the centre for international book exchange and international loan.



**INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
&
SERVICES TO READERS**

Services of the Library: at a glance

- **The Library serve its readers 362 days of the year.**
- **Library serves every citizen above 14 years of age irrespective of caste, creed or religion**
- **Children Library for below 14 years of age**
- **Lending Services**
- **Photocopying services**
- **Inter Library Loan services**
- **Consultancy & training services to libraries and librarians**
- **Electronic catalogue service.**
- **Bibliographic service.**
- **Reference service.**
- **Electronic document delivery service**
- **E-directory for e-journals**
- **E-Resource Centre**
- **Readers' Awareness Programme**



Digitized Material for Readers

- **More than twelve million pages from thousands of rare & old documents have been digitized**
- **These are available to the readers through <https://indianculture.gov.in/> worldwide**

The screenshot displays the Indian Culture Repository website interface. At the top, the header includes the Government of India logo, the text 'INDIAN CULTURE Discover, Learn, Immerse, Connect', and a search bar containing 'National Library'. Navigation links for 'Kartavya Path', 'Museum Dir.', and 'Join Us' are visible. Below the header, a horizontal menu lists various categories: Museum Collections, Archives, Photo Archives, Gazettes and Gazetteers, Union Catalogue, Indian National Bibliography, Videos, and Images. The main content area shows search results for 'National Library', with a filter for 'Data Type' set to 'Digital Records (17325)'. The results are displayed in a grid format, showing four items: two 'The quarterly civil list...' documents from the National Library of India, and two 'উদ্বোধন' (Udbodhan) documents from the National Library of India. The page also indicates 'Showing 1 - 16 Results of 17325' and 'Show as 16 per page'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system time as 7:58 AM on 7/26/2024.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a row of old, worn books on a shelf. The books have aged, brownish covers and some show signs of damage. The text is overlaid in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
of
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA

Buhar Collection

Munshi Sayyid Sadr-ud-Din of Buhar, Mir Munshi of Mir Jafar, Nawwab of Murshidabad, also served subsequently as Munshi to Warren Hastings, laid the foundation of the Buhar Library.

The heirs of Munshi Sayyid Sadr-ud-Din of Buhar deposited the collection of the Buhar Library in the Imperial Library on 22nd August 1904. The collection contains about 950 manuscripts and 1,450 books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu.

Sir Abdur Rahim Collection

The Collection was handed over to the Imperial Library in 1946 by the donor himself, consisting of Arabic printed books only, mainly religious in character, and also of books dealing with the subject of Islamic Jurisprudence consisting of 333 volumes, was brought under the control of the Buhar Library.

Sanskrit, Pali & Prakrit Collection

The Imperial Library had acquired a notable collection of Sanskrit Manuscripts belonging to Dr. Thibaut, the renowned Indologist.

The **Tripura Sankar Banerjee collection** of one hundred Sanskrit manuscripts was deposited in the Library in 1949-50.

The **Swami Kamleshwarananda Maharaj collection**, comprising 260 Sanskrit books, was deposited in the Library by his disciples, M. P. Chatterjee and R. N. Basu, Calcutta, in 1953-1954.

Sir Asutosh Collection

This is the largest personal collection of the world gifted to the National Library in 1949 by the heirs of Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay comprising about 87,500 volumes and was formally opened to the public in its new home at Belvedere on 1st February 1953. This collection was kept on the 2nd floor of the Western Wing of the Belvedere mansion for a pretty long time before its final shifting and arrangement in 1973 in the Annexe, 4th floor, occupying 13,524 running feet of shelves.

The heirs of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee deposited a further lot of 2484 volumes to the collections mostly printed books in Bengali, Sanskrit and English. Uma Prasad Mukherjee, the only surviving son of Sir Asutosh deposited 1104 volumes in 1970-71 for use in the collection. The Library on the other hand purchased for Sir Asutosh collection missing volumes to complete the sets of books and journals. In 1961-62 the Library acquired a number of back numbers of periodicals at a cost of Rs. 34,496 for Sir Asutosh collection.

Ram Das Sen Collection

In 1951, Shri Anuttam Sen made over a collection of about 3500 volumes which belonged to the Late Dr. Ramdas Sen of Baharampur in the district of Murshidabad. He has authored a number of books like "Tathyasangeetlahari", "Buddhadarshan", "Mahakabi Kalidas" etc.

Many nineteenth century basic books on Literature, History, Philosophy, Religion, Philology etc. are available in the Collection. There are many rare books in Sanskrit and rare items as Renell's Bengal Atlas (1770) are available. There are also about 75 Bengali and Sanskrit manuscripts. The manuscripts of Uvvata's Mantra Bhasya is five hundred years old and the manuscript of SuptiKarnamrita of Shridhar Das, the court poet of Lakshman Sen, was written about seven hundred years ago.

Sapru Papers

In the year 1952, National Library received from the sons of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the magnificent gift of a dossier of their illustrious father's 5000 correspondence consisting of several thousand letters and other papers. Sir Tej (born 1872, died 1949), one of the brightest luminaries of his times, a doyen of the bar and a veteran of liberal views, came into intimate personal contact with almost all the men of his day, who were working for the country's liberation from within and outside the existing Government.

Hidayat Husain Collection

The collection was made over to the National Library by his son Janab Sayyid Inayat Husain in 1952. This consists of 94 Arabic books, 47 Persian books, 147 Urdu books, 9 Arabic manuscripts and 6 Persian manuscripts making a total of 288 books and 15 manuscripts.

Dr Barid Baran Mukherjee Collection

Dr. Barid Baran Mukherji, a doctor by profession continuously acquired books for his personal library. His personal library consisted of books on all subjects viz Literature, Science, Medicine, History, Geography, Philosophy, Religion, etc. At the time of his death his personal library consisted about 50,000 volumes.

Zakariya Collection

This is a rare collection of Arabic and Persian books and manuscripts, which was made over to the National Library in 1953 and belonged to Janab A.K.M. Zakariya, an ex-Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation. consisting of 55 books and 43 manuscripts (50 Arabic and 5 Persian books; 9 Arabic, 29 Persian and 5 Urdu manuscripts).

Imambara Collection

The Hooghly Imambara collection of about 1000 books and manuscripts (140) in Arabic, Persian and Urdu was deposited in the Library in 1956 by Prince Yusuf Mirza, the managing trustee. The collection consists of 274 Arabic books, 269 Persian books, 211 Urdu books, 72 Arabic manuscripts and 68 Persian manuscripts, making a total of 754 books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu, and 140 manuscripts.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar Collection

A number of invaluable books, maps, manuscripts etc in Persian, English and other languages relating to Mogul and Maratha periods of Indian History, numbering no less than 2500 items were presented to the Library in 1959 by the family of the great historian, Sir Jadunath.

Dr Surendra Nath Sen Collection

Dr.SurendraNathSen's collection of 2736 books (3620 volumes) relating to the British Period of Indian History was presented to the Library by the historian himself in 1960. This collection is kept separately in the Main Building

Prof Vaiyapuri Pillai Collection

Late Prof. VaiyapuriPillai (1891-1956) was an outstanding lexicographer in Tamil Nadu and also remembered with reverence for his many scholarly contributions which have helped in establishing on a scientific basis the chronology of many of the ancient Tamil classics.

The collection of books and manuscripts, numbering 2943 volumes was gifted to the nation by his family soon after the death of that Tamil lexicographer in 1960. This collection is very rich in Tamil manuscripts (265 palm leaf MSS) and books in English/Tamil relating to Tamil language and culture. There are 1543 books in English, French and German and the rest mostly in Tamil, some in Sanskrit (113) and Malayalam (16).

Prof C N Chakravarti Collection

The collection comprises over 700 precious publications in Russian Language on Russian and Soviet literature, Linguistics and Methodology of teaching Russian as a foreign language. The gift collection was procured in 1987.

Prof Sunit Bose Collection

About 950 publications on Russian language and literature were received in 1998.

Treasures of National Library



Treasures of National Library of India

Plinius, Secundus, Caius

Title is written in the colophon in ee recto all the capital letters of the book had been illustrated in red by hand.

The language of the book is Latin. **This is the oldest book available in National Library of India**

204 d 5

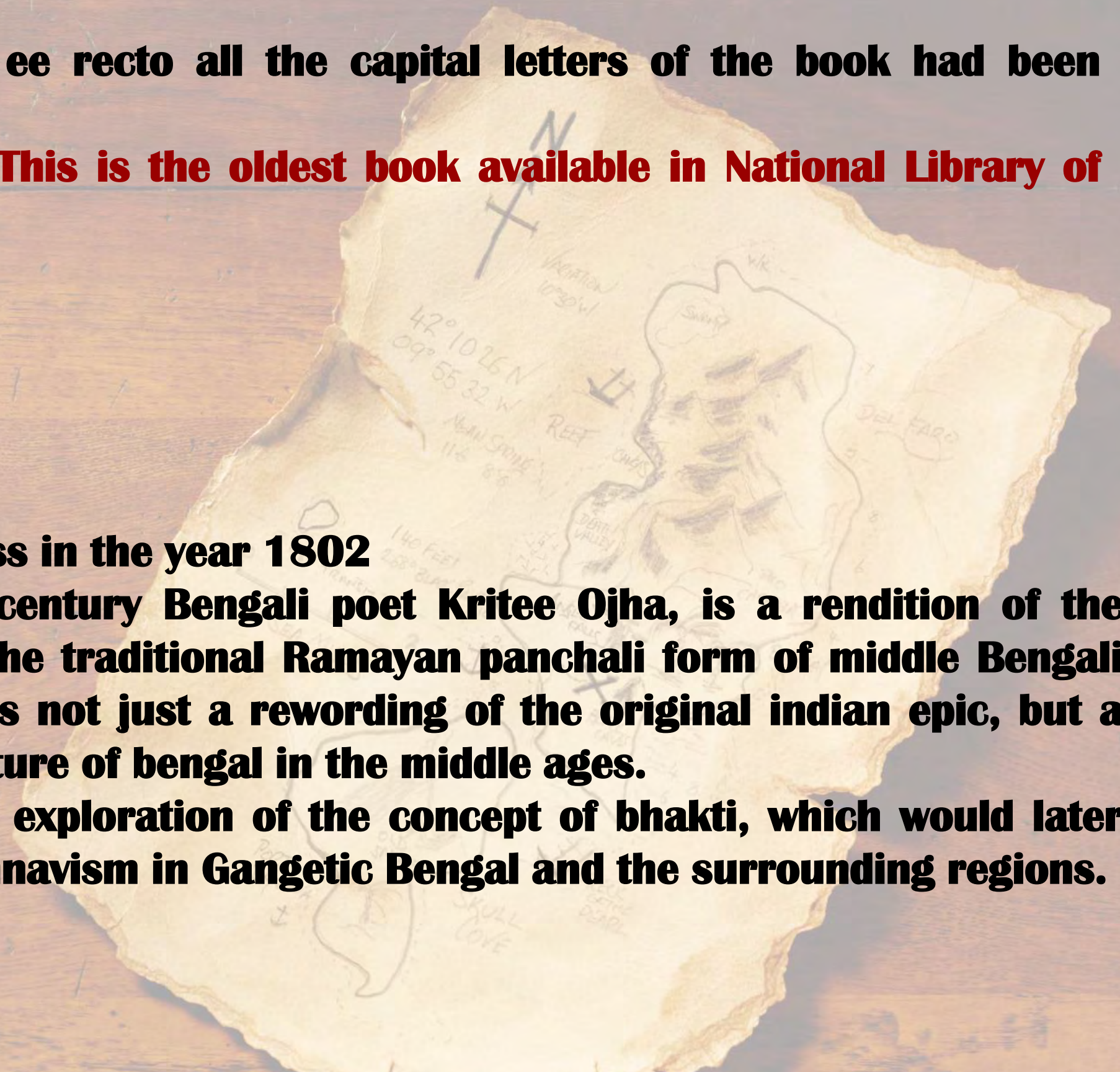
The Ramayana, a poem

Translated into Bengali by Kritee Bass in the year 1802

The poem was composed by 15th century Bengali poet Kritee Ojha, is a rendition of the Ramayana into Bengali. Written in the traditional Ramayan panchali form of middle Bengali literature, the Krittivasi Ramayana is not just a rewording of the original indian epic, but a vivid depiction of the society and culture of bengal in the middle ages.

The text is also remembered for its exploration of the concept of bhakti, which would later contribute to the emergence of Vaishnavism in Gangetic Bengal and the surrounding regions.

182 jd 80.14



Treasures of National Library of India

The persecuted, or dramatic scenes, illustrative of the present state of Hindoo society, in Calcutta.

The book was written by Krishna Mohan Banerjee.

The book was published by the author in Calcutta in 1831.

Size : 19cm.

It is perhaps the first English Drama by an Indian.

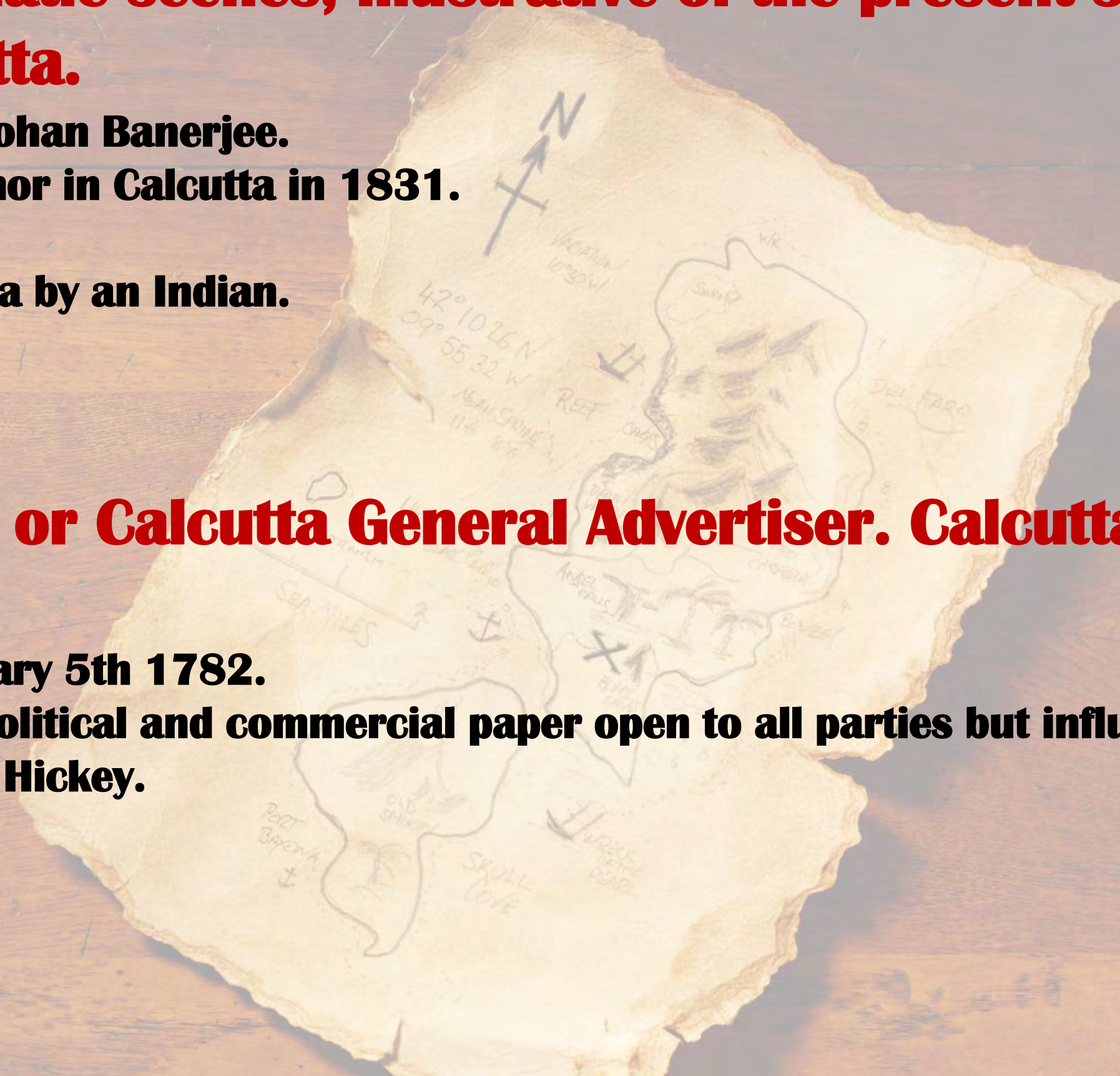
174 e 15

Hickey's Bengal Gazette; or Calcutta General Advertiser. Calcutta, 1780-

Lib. Has: January 29th 1780- January 5th 1782.

India's first newspaper: 'A weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influence by none'. Founded by James Augustus Hickey.

204 d 3



Treasures of National Library of India

Debates of the House of Lords on evidence delivered during the trial of Warren Hastings

The book was written by J. Debrett and published by Picadilly in London.

This volume was presented by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, writer of the “Grammar of language” on 19th April, 1812. The book bears the signature of Warren Hastings.

Size : 29cm

E 345.0202620941 g 798

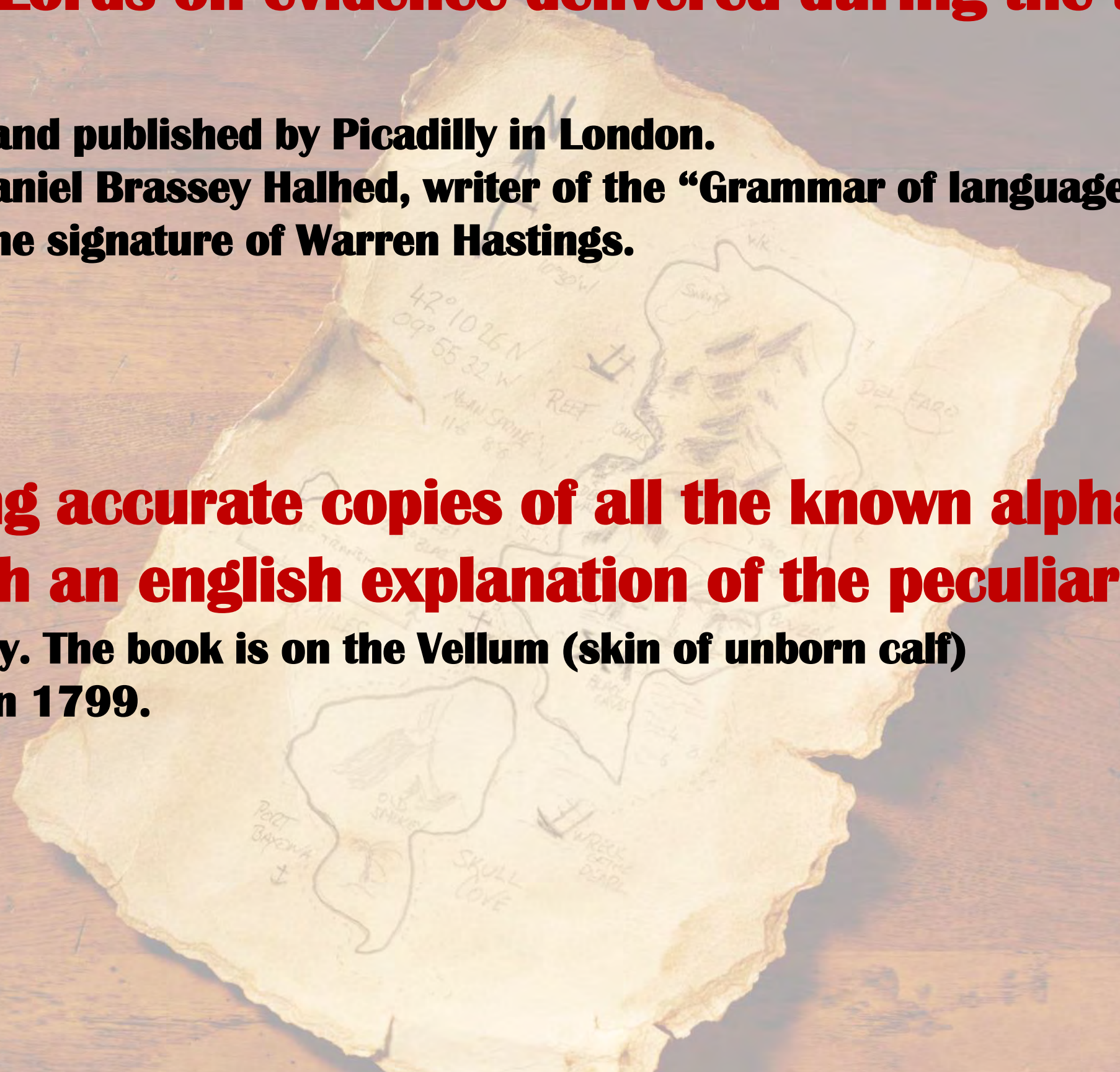
Pantographia : containing accurate copies of all the known alphabets in the world together with an english explanation of the peculiar force

The book was written by Edmund Fry. The book is on the Vellum (skin of unborn calf)

The book was published in london in 1799.

Size : 22cm

203 a 3



Treasures of National Library of India

Raja Tarangini: history of Cashmir

The book was published by the Baptist Mission Press in the year 1835

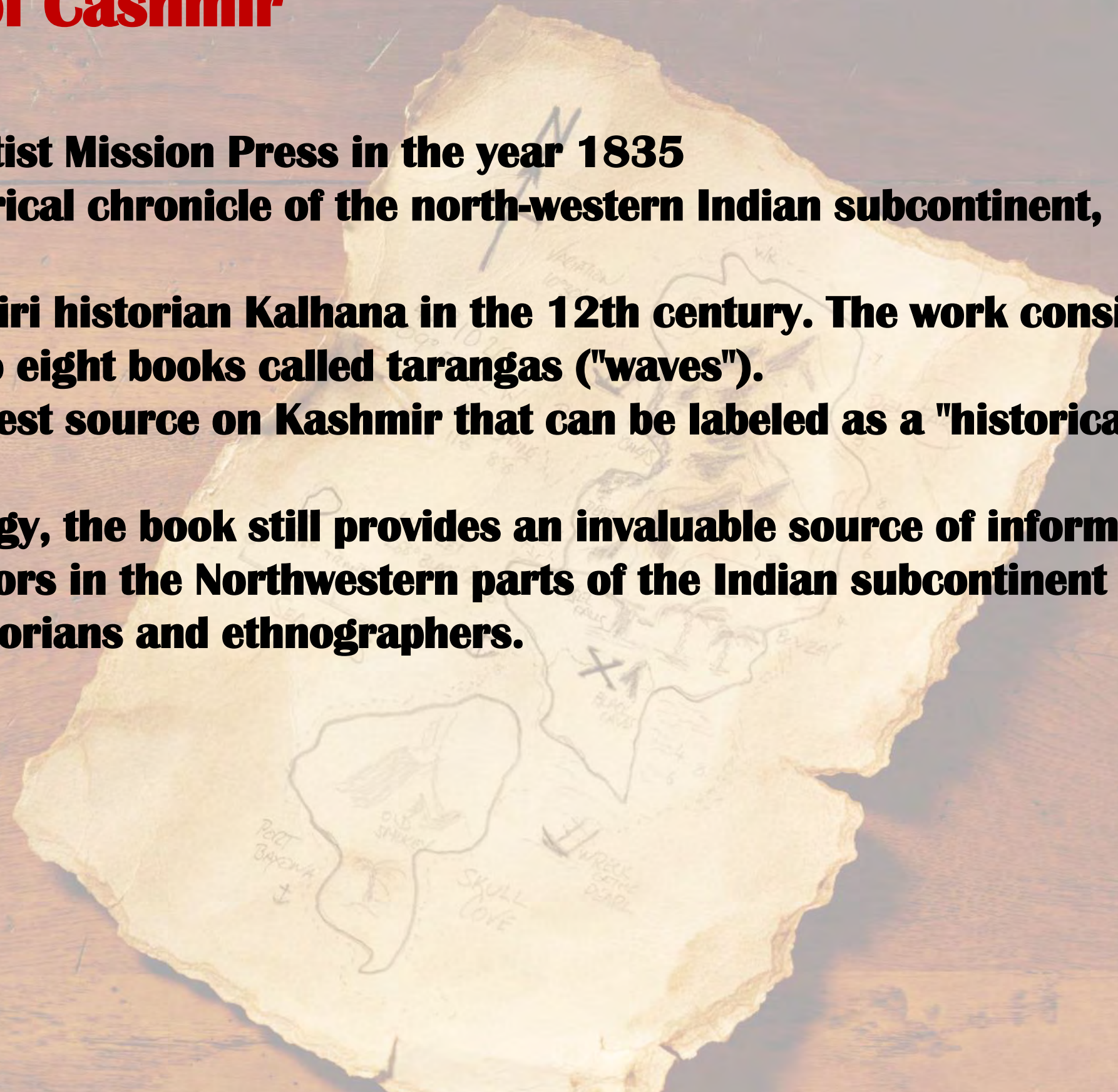
It is a metrical legendary and historical chronicle of the north-western Indian subcontinent, particularly the kings of Kashmir.

It was written in Sanskrit by Kashmiri historian Kalhana in the 12th century. The work consists of 7826 verses, which are divided into eight books called tarangas ("waves").

The Rajatarangini provides the earliest source on Kashmir that can be labeled as a "historical" text on this region.

Although inaccurate in its chronology, the book still provides an invaluable source of information about early Kashmir and its neighbors in the Northwestern parts of the Indian subcontinent and has been widely referenced by later historians and ethnographers.

180 ba 83.1

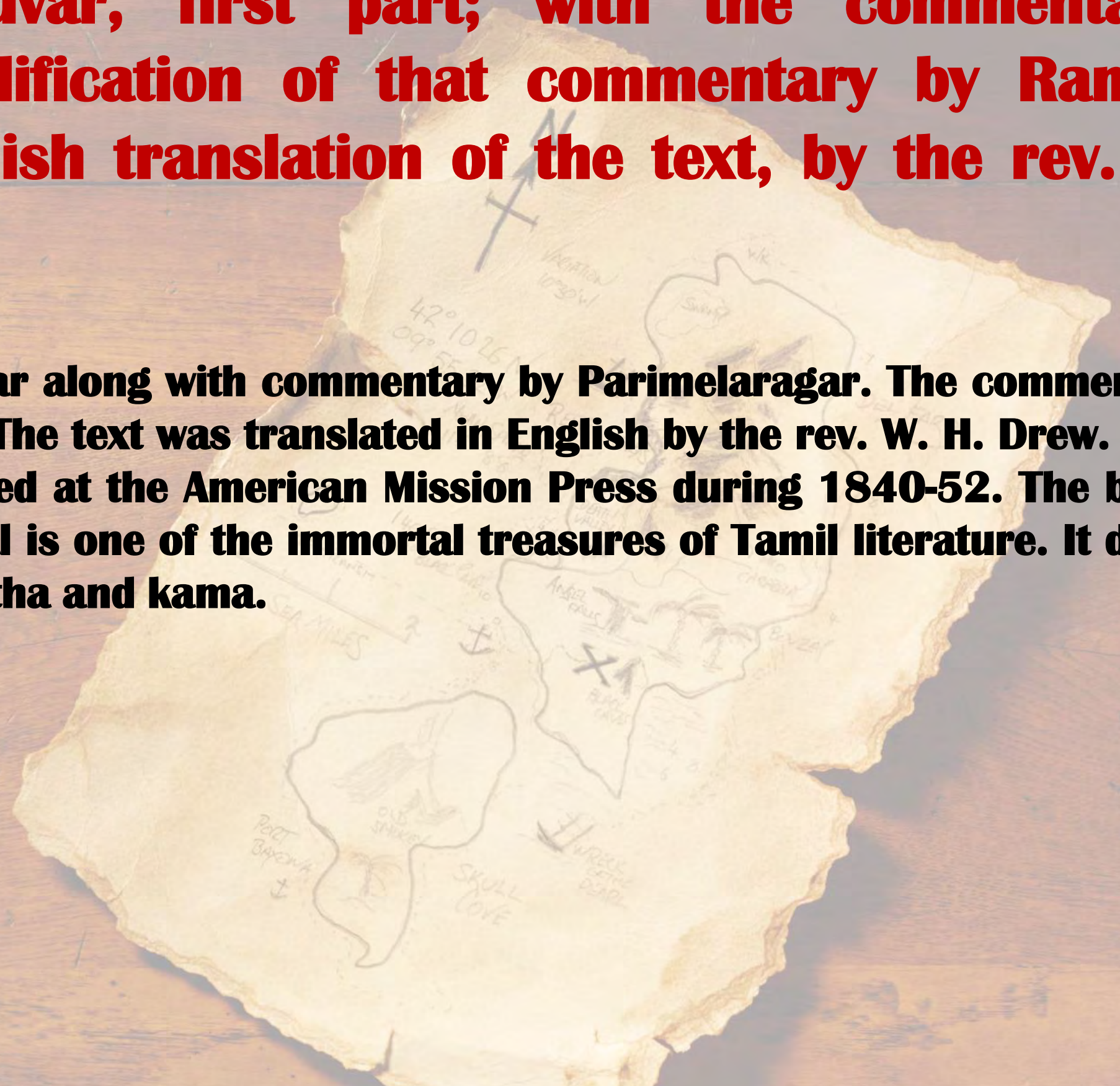


Treasures of National Library of India

The Cural of Tiruvalluvar, first part; with the commentary of parimelaragar, an amplification of that commentary by Ramanuja Cavi-Rayar, and an English translation of the text, by the rev. W. H. Drew, Missionary.

The book was written by Tiruvalluvar along with commentary by Parimelaragar. The commentary was amplified by Ramanuja Cavi-rayar. The text was translated in English by the rev. W. H. Drew. The book was published in Madras and printed at the American Mission Press during 1840-52. The book is in Tamil and English. The sacred kural is one of the immortal treasures of Tamil literature. It deals with the three objects of life dharma, artha and kama.

187 b 52(1)



Rare Documents and Manuscripts Gallery



Life of St. Francis of Assisi from Dante's poem, Text and illustration with illuminated borders dotted with Gold reliefs



The Prisoner of Chillon poem by Lord Byron, London 1865, Text printed on Decorated Leaves with colour Chromolithographed by W.R. Tymms



Shah Namah a famous epic poem by the Hakim Qasim Firdausi (16th century) written in Fine Nasta'Liq



Khawar Namah epic poem of Firdausi's written in a very beautiful bold Nasta'Liq within four Gold Ruled columns



Tuti Namah Rare Persian 18th century manuscript

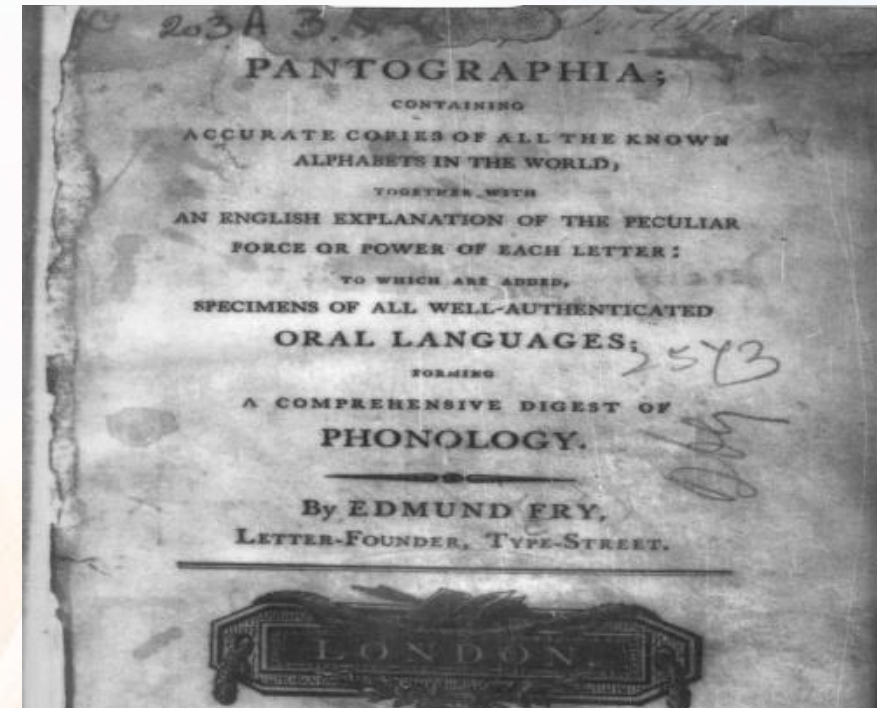


Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Faust. A rare copy, bound in original Morocco Leather with Gold tooling and Silver alloy medallions depicting the various characters of the Play.

Rare Documents and Manuscripts Gallery



Hicky's Bengal Gazette
India's first newspaper by James Augustus Hicky



Pantographia
All known alphabets available in the world on Vellum (skin of unborn calf)



Facsimile of
rare Sanskrit manuscript



Facsimile of
rare Sanskrit manuscript



Kamba Ramayanam
Supposed to belong to 12th century A.D. in Tamil script on Palm Leaf



Manuscript of Hari Das Nandi collection on Tullot paper



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS & FUTURE PLANS OF NATIONAL LIBRARY

MUSEUM OF WORDS

Organising the Story

Museum of the Word will exhibit the **multilingual oral and written diversity of Indian Languages.**

The galleries look at the **civilisational evolution of languages in the subcontinent** along with the major linguistic trends.

The focus shifts from **verbal use transmission to the written word** and the spread and use of the same. Alongside there is an **exploration of the impact of literature on society** and vice-versa.

Language is thus seen as a living organism learning from and imparting information to.



Themes and Galleries

Sound and Word in India

Creation Myths and origin of languages

Word in Indian Languages

Five major language groups, geographical diversity and migration of languages in India (22 official plus dialects)

Indian Word in Global Languages

Influence of Indian languages and Indian literary traditions across the world

Civilizational Journey of Languages

Development of various languages through different time periods in Indian history
From Rock Art to Motion Pictures and Digital Legacy

The Library Movement

Growing public libraries from the NLI to present day

The Spoken Word

Oral knowledge systems in the country

Performing Arts/ The Dancing Word

Growth in the performing cultures







Display panels showing translations from the different courtly texts, the *adab* of courtly culture and how that impacted society, text blurbs from some of the major literary texts from the period.

Workshop Areas, Lecture Halls, Book Reading



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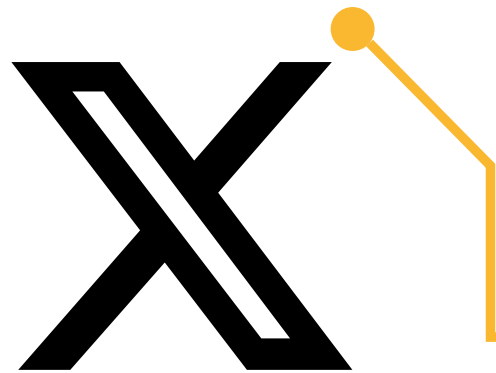


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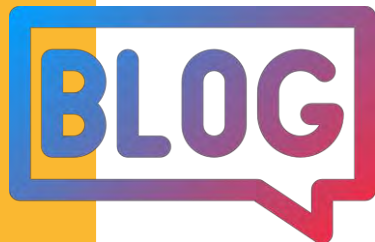


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