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**CURRENT SCIENCE—50 YEARS AGO**


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**AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN INDIA\***

The report of progress in agriculture and animal husbandry in India during the year 1936–37, issued under the authority of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, affords as usual a comprehensive summary of agricultural development in all its aspects and forms, like its predecessors, a very useful book of reference to all those interested in the agriculture of this great country. Progress has been so many-sided and scientific activities so numerous that it is no easy task to make a connected and comprehensive narrative of all of them in their due perspective, but the Council has succeeded very well in the attempt. The report, however, relates to work which is now nearly two years old, and though the delay is somewhat unavoidable, one wishes that some arrangement may be made by which future reports can be published without such a long interval elapsing. The information is grouped and dealt with along the same lines as in former reports, with the exception that more attention is devoted to "Fruit development" and "Fodder crops and grazing", which are each given a special chapter.

Considerably more money was made available for agricultural research and development during the year; the total gross expenditure for the whole country rose by Rs. 18 lakhs for agriculture and by Rs. 5 lakhs for veterinary science. The Central Government also made a special grant of the large sum of Rs. 2.82 crores for rural development out of which agriculture has had its due share. The year was notable for the visit of Sir John Russell and Dr N. C. Wright to India to examine and report on the work carried on by the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. The recommendations contained in their reports which are of a far-reaching character, are summarised in this report, but the action taken or proposed to be taken in respect of these recommendations which are really what would interest one more, do not come within the purview of this report. As regards the adoption of improvements by cultivators, notable progress has been reported in the cultivation of improved varieties of the various crops; the area under such varieties rose

from 21.4 million acres in 1935–36 to 23.9 million acres in 1936–37, though this by no means represents the whole extent of such increase. Extensive and well-organised schemes of seed distribution following on crop improvement work by all the departments, central and provincial, continued to make steady progress. Similar progress is reported in respect of fertilisers; the import of chemical fertilisers rose from 72,210 tons to 83,653 tons in the year. Though the consumption of sulphate of ammonia rose from 57,164 tons to 76,360 tons, the share of local production was only 17,748 tons. Local production indeed recorded a slight fall from 17,851 tons to 17,748 tons. One would wish to see the day when India's requirements of phosphatic and nitrogenous fertilisers at least will be fully met from Indian production. In respect of improved implements progress has been moderate, but the redeeming feature is that they are of Indian manufacture, a development which is showing encouraging signs of expansion. Progress in well-boring operations and the installations of pumping sets for irrigation makes interesting reading, both in the variety of operations and in the success that has attended them. In respect of crops aside from the various manurial, cultural and crop improvement investigations, those relating to "quality" deserve special mention and results of considerable practical value are already reported in respect of one, viz., rice. This line of work is eminently worthy of expansion so as to embrace other crops as well and more of their "quality" characters. Questions relating to fodder and grazing were the subjects of discussion at three conferences in the year at which forest grazing, improvement of grasslands, better utilisation of waste lands and kindred matters were gone into and a recommendation made for the establishment of a central and provincial fodder and grazing committees for paying special attention to these matters. Under "Fruit development" the results of work on cold storage being conducted in Poona are notable, their practical application in the fruit trade of the country will no doubt soon follow. Progress is reported in many fields of animal husbandry especially in respect of the supply of breeding bulls. A compilation of the

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type characters of certain important breeds of cattle and buffaloes was arranged for in the year. Many of the numerous investigations under crops, pests and diseases, dairying and cattle improvement were in varying stages of progress and many of them are referred to in broad outline. Forty schemes were completed and there were as many as 136 schemes in the course of investigation at the end of March 1937—a fact which shows that after all agricultural

research is not altogether neglected in India. The chapters on agricultural education, veterinary education, District-work and agricultural co-operation give relevant information for the year under report and a number of appendices furnish much statistical details.

A. K. Y

### A METAL IMAGE OF MANJUSRI\*

Manjusri had enjoyed a chief place in the Buddhist Polytheism. The cult of Manjusri seems to have originated in India but, when it was introduced into China, had taken a different form; and it was from China that the cult had spread to Nepal. In Mahayanism, Manjusri is regarded as a Bodhisattva<sup>1</sup>.

It is difficult to determine the date of the introduction of this deity into the Buddhist pantheon. However, the Chinese pilgrims, namely, Fa-hien, Huen Tsang, and I-tsing, speak of the worship of Manjusri in India.

The *Sadhanamala*<sup>2</sup>, a work in Sanskrit, contains *Dhyanas* describing several forms of Manjusri; and the most common representation of this form in sculpture carries the Sword and the Book in its right and left hands.



A metal image of Manjusri, measuring two and a half inches in height, comes from Kanchi (Conjeevaram) having been discovered there (I am informed)

in a gutter. The pedestal on which this image must have been installed is now lost and the image itself is faintly corroded at the back. Though small, the figure looks beautiful and was probably (judging by its size) under private worship and discarded later by someone.

That Kanchi had been a great centre of Buddhist faith and that many schools of Buddhist philosophy flourished therein are only too well known. A large number of stone images of the Lord have been noticed here but a figure of Manjusri representing a particular type of Mahayanism has not been so far traced. This metal image, therefore, appears to be a valuable archaeological find.

One form of Manjusri has the nomenclature of Vak or Vajraraga which is described by Bhattacharya<sup>3</sup> as follows:

Vajraraga or Amitabha Manjusri is one-faced and two-armed. His hands are joined in the lap, forming the *Dhyana* or *Samadhi Mudra*. In this respect he is identical with his Sire whom he bears on his tongue. But he may be distinguished by the ornaments he wears and by the image of his Sire if represented on the crown. . . . . Images of this form of Manjusri are extremely rare in India with the exception of the one at the temple of Baudhanath in Nepal.

The special features which characterise this image are (1) *Mudra-Samadhi*, (2) *Asana-Vajraparyanka*, (3) *Ornaments and Dress*.

The image from Kanchi seems to agree well with the description given above of Vak or Vajraraga Manjusri with the exception of an object which the figure holds in its hands. Even in the case of the Manjusri whose figure is reproduced by Bhattacharya, a more or less similar kind of object is visible though

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unexplained by the author. As regards the Conjeevaram image, the object appears to be a human head which, perhaps, represents the head of Amitabha or the Sire on whom the Manjusri is supposed to concentrate.

Since the provenance of this image is Kanchi we may suppose that Manjusri cult was prevalent in this historic city in the early centuries of the Christian era. The very fact that Kanchi attracted the attention of Vajrabodhi, a Great Worshipper of Manjusri, proves the existence of Tantric form of Buddhism in Kanchi in the seventh century A.D. In this connection it is well to remember the statement

of the late Gopinatha Rao who says that the famous Kamakshi temple was originally dedicated to the Tantric Goddess Tara<sup>4</sup>.

C. MINAKSHI

Madras

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1. Hastings' *Ency. of Religion and Ethics*.
  2. *Gaekwad Oriental Series, Sadhanamala*.
  3. *Buddhist Iconography*, (2), p. 18.
  4. *Ind. Ant.*, 44.