

## Revisiting Tipu Sultan's Library – Journeys in India and the United Kingdom

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**ABSTRACT:** This article traces the journey of an iconic collection housed by Tipu Sultan at Srirangapatnam in present day Karnataka State of South India. Tipu Sultan was the ruler of Mysore from 1782 to 1799 A. D. He remains a most debated, yet fascinating person among rulers and his death at Srirangapatnam on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1799, is an important one in Indian history. Known as the "Tiger of Mysore" he has gone down in history as one of the bravest warriors of all time. Tipu had learnt Persian, Arabic, Kannada, Telugu and Marathi. He learnt military arts under Ghazi Khan and the French. 'Mysuru' or Mysore is on a plateau between the mountains of the Eastern and Western Ghats; named after the demon Mahisasura of the Mahisasuramardini legend of India, from the *Devi Mahatmyam*, the *devi* being worshipped as Chamundeshwari, at the famous temple at Chamundi Hills in Mysore. The "Wodeyars" were the nominal rulers of Mysore. But its *de facto* ruler from 1782-1799 A.D, was Tipu Sultan. With his father Haider Ali who ruled as Sultan from 1761-1782 A.D, he is the only ruler to have successfully fought against the British forces. His capital was Srirangapatna or Seringapatnam, though he had a palace at Bangalore as well. Among his many treasures, his royal library at Srirangapatnam housed manuscripts on different subjects which was also dismantled after he fell, and sent to different places, as "spoils of war", mostly British colonial destinations in early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The journey of the royal collection with some of its highlights and where it is preserved and provided to readers today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is the mainstay of this article, along with some illustrations to convey the story well. The collection is now at various locations in India and the United Kingdom. The British Library, London and New India Office, also at London, The National Archives, New Delhi and the Asiatic Society Office at Kolkata house many of his treasures. His collection included a variety of books on different topics. Mentionable are the *Kashf-al-Mahjub* by Abul Hasan Ali bin Uthman bin ali Al Hujwiri on Sufism, *Ain- i- Akbari* by Abul Fazl, *Majmua-i-Khurrami* by Bahadur Singh, *Alamgirnama* on the rule of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, *Tarikh-i-Alam-ara-ara-i-Abbasi* on the reign of King Abbas of Persia by Iskandar. Tipu maintained a binding unit in his library and was an expert calligraphist who kept his own writings like *Ahkamnamah*, *Iqrarnamah*, *Kayfiyat-i-vilayat-i-Faransis*, *Hukmnamah-i-Tipu Sultan among others*. Also research is continuously being done and getting published on the Tipu Sultan collection, as a kind of outreach, which is elucidated here to evoke further interest in the topic.

**KEYWORDS:** Tipu Sultan, Seringapatnam, Srirangapatna, Library of Tipu Sultan, Mysore, Haidar Ali, Historical libraries, Rulers of Mysore, Library outreach, Spoils of War.

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### **INTRODUCTION:** *libraries in the history of India*

Libraries in India initially started more as collections of written records in the form of manuscripts. Ancient India wrote and read from manuscripts from 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C to 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D The most celebrated library of that time was the Nalanda University of Bihar in Northern India, around 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The libraries were at Vikramshila, Somapuri, Mithila, Vallabhi, Kanheri among others. Buddhism and Jainism had emphasised on learning and patronised education and literary activities. Monastic and religious organisations maintained libraries as validated by famous Chinese travellers like Fa-Hien (visited 399 A.D to 414 A.D) and Hieun Tsang (visited 629 to 645 A.D). A knowledge collection was called *dharmaganja*, *granthakuthi*, *pustakabhandar*, *saraswatibhandar*, *saraswatimahar*, *kitabkhana* or *puthikhana* during ancient and medieval times. Rulers across India maintained manuscripts libraries well upto the 19<sup>th</sup> century and encouraged copying of manuscripts. During 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century in Western India Jainism flourished and lot of literary activity happened where Jain literature was produced and housed in Jaina Bhandars or libraries at Jaisalmer, Pattan, Surat, Cambay and Ahmedabad. Emperors of the Khilji, Slave, Tughlaq dynasty were patrons of learning and so also the Mughal rulers who supported libraries, except perhaps Emperor Aurangzeb. Emperor Jahangir had a mobile library and Emperor Akbar maintained an Imperial library. Emperor Humayun had converted a pleasure pavillion to a library at Purana Qila in Delhi. By 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century European settlers were in India. The East India Company started the Fort St. David Library in 1707 at Cuddalore, other libraries established in India during that time include Fort St. George library (organised 1663 - 1714), Madras and the Library at Fort William College, Calcutta (1800). Libraries have been considered as important centres of learning in India. Royal collections by the princely states of Alwar, Bikaner, Jammu, Mysore, Tanjore were housed at their libraries

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[3]. With the advent of the modern era and shift in political realities many scattered manuscripts have been collected and kept in various libraries in cities like Baroda, Banaras, Mumbai, Kolkata, Mysore, Pune, Thanjavur and Trivandrum.

### Tipu Sultan : *benevolent tyrant*

The cries of a newborn fill the air, the day is 20<sup>th</sup> November, *circa* 1750. A boy has been born to Haider Ali Khan and his second wife, Fatima Fakhr-un-nissa amidst a lot of rejoicing at the Devanahalli Fort, near Bangalore. The child is named Mir Fateh Ali, later also called Tipu Sultan and Tipu Sahab, after Hazrath Tipu Mastaan Aulia, a Sufi saint at whose *dargah* Haider Ali and Fakhr-un-nissa used to pray for a son and a troublefree childbirth. Even today, the name of Mysore, a former princely state in South India, conjures the images of Tipu Sultan and Haider Ali, and reminds one of the Wodeyars whose descendants are still part of regal Mysore. 'Mysuru' or Mysore is on a plateau between the mountains of the Eastern and Western Ghats; named after the demon Mahisasura of the Mahisasuramardini legend from the *Devi Mahatmyam*, the *devi* being worshipped as Chamundeshwari, at the famous temple at Chamundi Hills in Mysore. The Wodeyars were the nominal rulers of Mysore. But none can forget Tipu Sultan, its *de facto* ruler from 1782-1799 A.D[8].



**Figure 1: Tipu Sultan, portrait, Deccani painting, 20<sup>th</sup> century, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad**

Known as the ‘‘Tiger of Mysore’’ he has gone down in history as one of the bravest warriors of all time. With his father Haider Ali who ruled as Sultan from 1761-1782 A.D, he is the only ruler to have successfully fought against the British forces. As per sources, he has descended from the Quraish of Mecca and his ancestors had travelled to India at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Tipu grew up in the shadow of his father, who had risen from sepoy to *Dalwai* or Commander-in-chief and *de facto* ruler of Mysore State. During their tenure, the nominal rulers of Mysore were from the Wodeyar family but Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan held the actual powers.

Along with his father, Tipu fought in the Mysore-Malabar war in 1763 and in the Mysore-Maratha war of 1769-72. The British were anxious to subdue Mysore and control the entire region of India. They formed an alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam leading to the first Anglo-Mysore war in 1767. The British could not face the speed of Tipu Sultan's cavalry. Both Haider Ali and

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Tipu Sultan took the help of the French during some of their battles. Tipu assisted Haider Ali, who had laid siege to the British forts in Northern Arcot in the Second Anglo-Mysore War in 1779. He was active in September, 1780 against Colonel Baillie and Colonel Braithwaite in February, 1782. Haider Ali and Tipu had fought battles at Arcot, Pollilur, Ambur, Cuddalore, Porto Novo, Thanjavur, Erode, Daharpuram, Tirupattur, Vaniyambadi, Sholingur, Vandavasi and Kanchipuram. During the time of the death of his father, Tipu was in battle with Colonel Humberstone on the Malabar coast. He took over as *de facto* ruler in 1782 and inherited a powerful, though troubled kingdom. Tipu succeeded in recapturing Baidanur and Mangalore. The treaty of Mangalore was signed in 1784 and there was peace for some time. Tipu succeeded in subduing the Kingdom of Travancore in 1790, who were a British ally, leading to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anglo-Mysore War. However this war was decisive and Tipu had to cede a lot of territory and even hand over two of his sons, Muiz-ud-din Mohammad Sultan and Abdul Khaliq Sultan to Lord Cornwallis in 1792, as security as per The Treaty of Seringapatam, the sons were released after two years on paying the required indemnity[7].

Tipu fought many battles and used not only the finest swords but also deployed rockets against advances of British forces and their allies during the Anglo-Mysore Wars, including the Battle of Pollilur and the Siege of Seringapatam; the *Mysorean rockets* to which Late President of India Dr.A.P.J Abdul Kalam has alluded during his speeches. The British used the Mysorean rocket technology to make the Congreve rocket used against Napoleon I. The British diplomacy worked against Tipu Sultan who wanted to unite Indian forces against the British. Tipu stays debated to the present day because of certain stances taken by him regarding forced religious conversions and some harsh military acts which are attributed to him. He has also been called a fanatical Muslim ruler and also a martyr who waged war against the British forces before the uprising of 1857 A.D. On the other hand he is also lauded for his administrative reforms, economic progress of his kingdom, help given to temples and contributions to the development of Unani medicine.



Figure 2: View of Seringapatam, capital of Tipu Sultan, early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

### Sunset at Srirangapatna : the fall of Tipu Sultan

Tipu Sultan's rule was a short but stormy one, mostly opposing the British in India. He fought fiercely like a tiger, and believed in living like one. Tipu used *Tiger* imagery on his golden throne, textiles, coins, swords, and his soldier's uniforms. And that is how, *Tiger* came to be associated with him. According to a legend, while hunting in a forest, Tipu Sultan was faced with a tiger. He wanted to shoot the animal but his gun didn't work and at the same time, just as the tiger attacked him, Tipu Sultan's dagger also fell on the ground. But the brave Sultan quickly picked up the dagger and killed the tiger. From then on, he came to be known as "The Tiger of Mysore." He called his state as *Saltanat-e-khudadad* meaning God-given state and himself *Sarkar-e-khudadad* or God-given overseer. The gates of his palace at Seringapatnam were guarded by chained tigers; also Tipu Sultan introduced the 'tiger' or *babri* motif in art as seen in the decorations in his buildings, weapons and textiles[7].

In an era where rulers were fighting against each other, wanting to capture as much land as possible, Tipu was the only Indian ruler who identified the British as the real threat to India. He improved the general well-being of the people and made the state of Mysore into an economic power. He encouraged trade, commerce, industry and agriculture. His system of administration



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was an efficient one. Tipu applied Western techniques to the art of government and set up a separate commercial department. He started factories in his state and brought people from other countries like France to make guns, muskets and bronze cannons. He encouraged the manufacture and export of silk textile. Mysore was a leader as a source of pepper, cardamom, sandalwood, ivory, coconut tobacco and elephants. He built up a Navy, reformed coinage and introduced the "Muhammadi" calendar; increased diplomatic ties with other countries. Mysore had some of the world's highest real wages and living standards in the late 18th century. Tipu Sultan had tried for military aid from Turkish rulers and sent emissaries to Ottoman-Turkey, King Louis XVI at France, Sultanate of Oman, Zand dynasty of Iran and the Durrani Empire of Afghansitan. He promoted trade and commerce with Turkey, China, Muscat, Pegu, Armenia, Jiddah, Ormuz and Kutch. Tipu Sultan died on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1799 in the Fourth Anglo Mysore War, during the siege of Srirangapatna or Seringapatam, his capital. He was defeated by the combined forces of British East India Company, the Nizam and Travancore[2].



**Figure 3: The fall of Tipu Sultan during the Siege of Seringapatnam in 1799.**

A huge thunderstorm is believed to have broken out when Tipu Sultan was buried next to his father at Lal Bagh tomb in Seringapatam, the following afternoon on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1799. His family was sent to Vellore Fort by the British, including his sons, daughters, wife and mother. After the 1806 Sepoy Mutiny, the British sent Tipu's sons and daughters to Calcutta. The tombs of Bakshi Begum (died 1806), widow of Hyder Ali and Padshah Begum, Tipu's wife and sons, who died in 1834 are located within a kilometre of the eastern side of the Vellore fort[7].





Figure 4: Mausoleum, Lal Bagh, Seringapatam, with tombs of Hyder Ali and son Tipu Sultan, drawing, Henry Jervis, 1832.

#### Tipu's treasures - his royal Library

Tipu Sultan had a beautiful throne, palaces, gold, exquisite jewellery, carpets, ornate chandeliers and many precious things as owned by powerful rulers. Tipu Sultan's rich library was housed near his palace Lal Mahal in Srirangapatna, near Mysore. Tipu Sultan's library had around 2000 items. This is as per the list prepared by William Kirkpatrick appointed by the British, who indexed the library. Many of his books bore his signature and jottings, some had his stamp as well. In fact he had a personal seal and an official seal. Many of the manuscripts in his collection earlier belonged to the Adil Shah kingdom at Bijapur, the Qutub Shahi's of Golconda, the Nawab of Savanur of the Carnatic and royal libraries at Chittoor and Kadapa. He might have got these as "spoils of war". Tipu Sultan had a fondness for books, and he read his books regularly as one can see from the jottings. The subjects included in his library were from diverse areas of knowledge. He had many Qurans and commentaries on the Holy Quran, books of prayers, Sufism, Philosophy, Ethics, arts and sciences, Law and jurisprudence, history, astronomy, poetry, fables and stories. There were also Dictionaries, letters, maps, drawings, Turkish prose and books on Physics and Mathematics. Since he knew many languages Tipu had books in Persian, Arabic, Kannada, French and English in the library. Tipu Sultan himself maintained a register of his "dreams" which was discovered after his death. In 1809 a "Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the Late Tipoo Sultan" was published by the Cambridge University Press, written by Charles Stewart. The catalogue has varied and interesting listings. The catalogue mentions 46 works on theology, 115 volumes on Sufism, 24 on Ethics, 95 texts on law and jurisprudence, 19 on arts and sciences, 118 on history, 53 letters, 190 works on poetry, 7 on Mathematics, 20 on astronomy, 20 on lexicography, 45 on philosophy, 23 on Hindi and Dekhany poetry, four on Delhavi prose, 2 on Rurkish prose and 18 fables and stories. Among his book treasures he had : the *Tarikh Rozet al Suffa* in Nastaliq, a book on history of Central Asia in the Persian Language by Mohammad Mir Khavund Shah, died 1497 A.D.; *Tarikh Tabbery* a history of the ancient world, the lives of the Patriarchs, the Prophets, Philosophers, the history of Mohammad and his descendants, the history of the Khalifs upto 1118 A.D and famous men. This is a translated work from the original Arabic by Abu Jafier Ben Jorair 912 A.D, *Tarikh Shah Roukh* in Nastaliq, an abridgement of the History of Timour, with nine years of the reign of his successor Shahrookh, by Lutf Allah, 1413 A.D. On History of India : *Tabkat Akberry* written in Nastaliq script, an account of the history of India upto Mughal Emperor Akbar; also includes details about the geography and climate of India, by Nizam Addeen Ahmed Ben Mohammed Miokim of Herat in 1600 A.D., *Tarikh Bahmeny* is a history of the Bahmani rulers of Gulbarga along with memoirs of the Barid Shahi kings of Bidar 1346 to 1595, author is unknown, written in Nastaliq, year is not clear. Also the *Shah Jehan Nameh* which is the history of the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan written by Mohammad Taher Anayet Khan in Nastaliq script, year is not mentioned. The listings mention *Mukalat Amir Khusrou* which has the memoirs of the first four Caliphs, with a treatise on the tenets of Sufism, author Amir Khusrou, 1324 A.D written in Nastaliq. Persian books on Sufism include *Adab al Mureed va Vujud al ashikin* in 2 volumes on the duty of a Sufi disciple, essays on Divine love and the soul, authored by Sufi saint Mohammad Husseiny, Gesu Daraz of Gulbarga, Deccan. Another is *Gulzari Abrar* by Mohammad Ghouse of Gwalior, a Sufi who wrote the memoirs of the Sufi sheikhs of India in *shikasta* script, date not mentioned. The title *Tarikh*

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*Husseiny* written by Abdul Aziz, dedicated to Ahmad Shah Bahmani in 1445 A.D is about the life of venerated Sufi saint Gesu Daraaz of Gulbarga. Arabic titles include *Auarif al Hukaik*, a work containing 63 chapters in *naskh* script about the duties of a Sufi, author Shehab Addeen Seherverdy, year not mentioned. Another title is *Kuaid al Terik va Insani kamil*, a treatise on Sufism, in two volumes written in *naskh* script by Abdul Wahib. A Persian title on ethics *Kimia Saadet* by Imam Abu Mohammad Ghazaly written in Nastaliq script, who died in 1111 A.D. Persian poetry was well represented by *Shah Nameh*, a celebrated heroic poem about the Persian Kings right from ancient times of from 530 A D to 579 A.D, by author Hussein Ben is-hak Sherif Shah Ferdousi Toosy, Nastaliq script, highly ornamented borders and illustrations. Another title is *Yousuf and Zuleikha*, script and year is not mentioned. Tipu's library also had the *Kulliyat-e-Fareed uddeen Attar*, a collection of the poetry of Attar of Nishapur of Persia, beautifully written in Nastaliq hand and the Masnawi of Jalaluddin Rumi who died in 1262 A.D; copied in Nastaliq script; a highly esteemed poetical work on morality, religion, history, politics and the Sufi doctrines[1].

The *Kuliyat-e-Sadi*, *Kuliyat-e-Amir Khusro* and *Hayatnameh* composed by Beha Addeen Sufy are some more jewels in Persian poetry among many more works. Books of letters had the *Tahmasp Nameh* in Persian, a series of correspondence between Shah Tahmasp of Persia and Emperor Akbar of Hindustan and with other princes. This work includes royal orders or *farmans* and also private letters to friends, written in nastaliq script. A title in Persian on the science of precious stones and noble metals, written in *shikasta* script – *Juahir Nameh* by Mohammad Bin Munsur, 1300 A.D. Books on medicine include among others a rare book *Tibbi Yadgar* in common hand which is a treatise on Medicine in 14 chapters by Ismail Bin Hussain bin Mohammad Jorjany, 1110 A.D. The library had a Persian treatise in 2 volumes on Astronomy like *Nujum al Hind va Senaati Astorlab* by Abdal Aziz, the first volume being translated from the Sanskrit and the second volume giving details of the science of the astrolabe[1].

In Arabic language was a manuscript *Kanun Fil Tibb* consisting of five books written in *naskh* hand of the Canons of Avicenna, the great Philosopher and Physician who died in 1036 A.D. Tipu Sultan's library also had select dictionaries in Persian and Arabic, called *loghat*. Books on theology, jurisprudence, tradition, and prayer books graced his collection in both Persian and Arabic. Tipu Sultan's Holy Qurans numbered 44 as per this published catalogue; also 35 smaller volumes having few chapters only from the holy book. Among the Hindi and Dekhani books he had *Tuzkerah al shaorah Hindi* in *shikasta* script authored by fateh Al Husseiny the lives and memoirs of 108 Hindi and Dekhani poets, including extracts from their works. The library had *Quliyate-Quli-Qutub Shah* written in *nastalik* and *naskh* characters, a compendium of poems in Hindi, Dekhani and Persian on a variety of subjects. The author of the work was Sultan Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah who founded the city of Hyderabad in the Deccan in 1582 A.D[1].

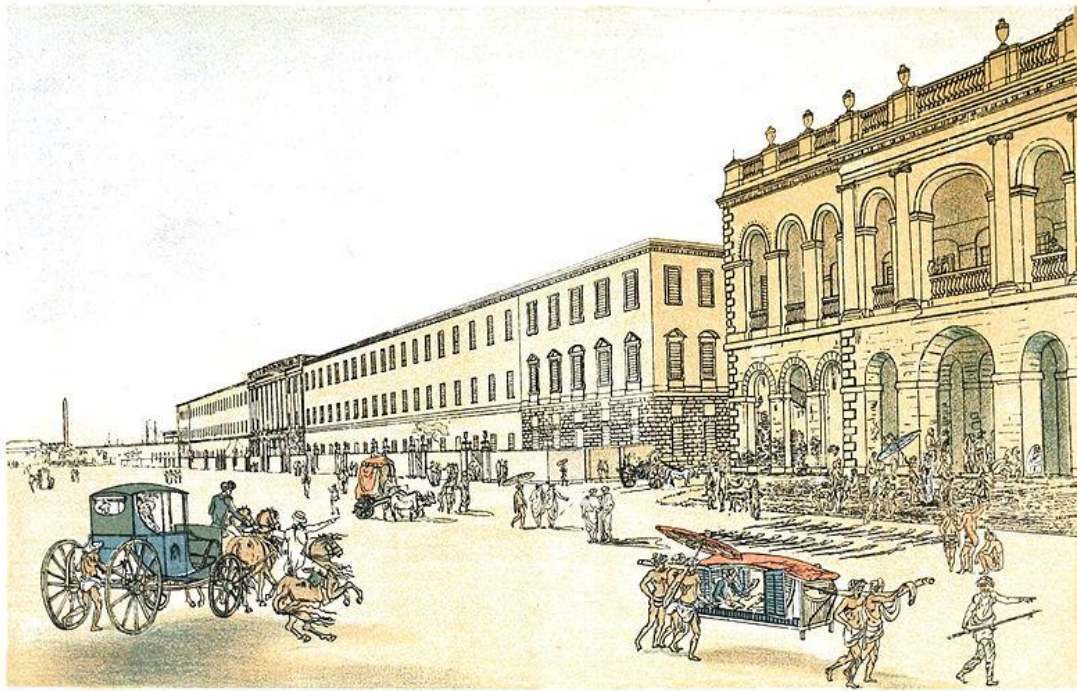
The Sultan had commissioned translation work of manuscripts; many works bore the signature of Tipu Sultan or his seal, he preferred leather binding and rebound many volumes, which has the names of God, Mohammed, his daughter Fatima and her sons Hassan and Hussain stamped on the middle of the cover, also the name of the first four caliphs at the corners. On the top used to be *Sarkar-e-khudadad* meaning the "Government given by God" and in the bottom *Allah Kafy* meaning "God is enough"[1].

### Spoils of War– the journeys of the treasures

After the seige of Srirangapatna in 1799, all of Tipu's treasures were looted and distributed among the British as "spoils of war". His library was completely emptied of its manuscripts, journals, chronicles, maps and drawings. The stuff was either taken away to England or sent to British offices in India. Tipu Sultan's library had nearly 2000 volumes with manuscripts in Kannada, Marathi, Telugu, Persian, Arabic, French and English. The books had been acquired both by prize or plunder and purchase. After his fall, several volumes were sent to the Library at East India House, London in 1801. From here some part of his collection went to the Cambridge and Oxford Universities; while some had already been sent to the library at Fort William College (housed in the Writers' Building), founded in 1800 by Marquess Wellesley and the existing Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta, from Mysore[7].

Some books from his library reached Robert Orme, the historiographer of the East India Company. Around 600 volumes reached the library of the college of the East India Company between 1806 and 1808 and again in 1837 after the Library of Fort William College was dismantled[8].





FORT WILLIAM AND WRITERS' BUILDINGS. IN 1786, AFTER DANIELL.

**Figure 5: Fort William and Writer's Building in 1786, from a coloured engraving by Thomas Daniell.**



**Figure 6: Marquess Wellesley, Governor-General, 1798 – 1805, painting, Courtesy: Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.**

Tipu's library had an illuminated Holy Quran from 1655 A.D, bound in gold with medallions, which is now In England, taken to the Cambridge University, by the East India Company in 1806. Tipu's personal Quran is now at the Bodleian, Oxford University. The holy book has been listed as one of its masterpieces , given to the University by the Directors of the Comapny in 1806 and descibed to be from mid 16<sup>th</sup> century; "the opening carpet page of this manuscript is typical of the decorations found in Shirazi

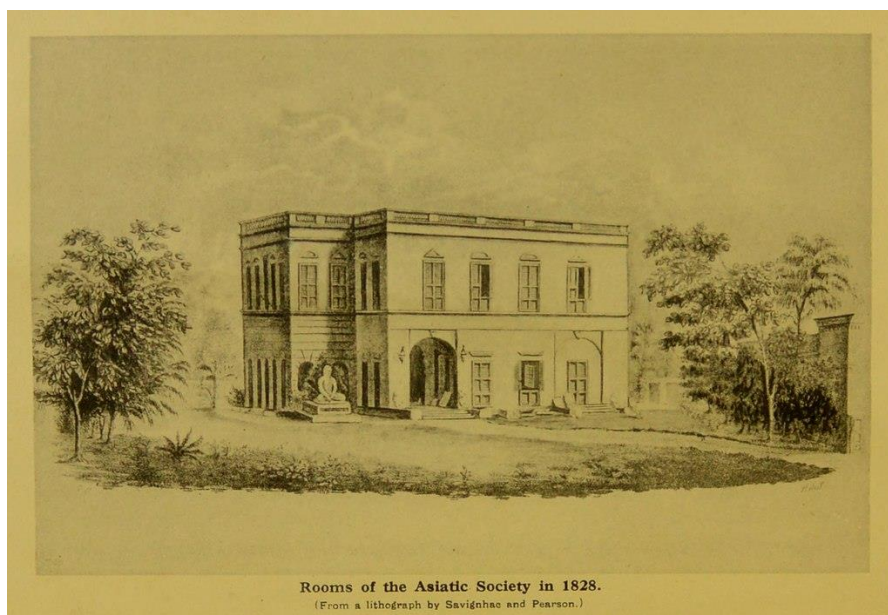
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manuscripts of the 16<sup>th</sup> century” and “bound in Persian goatskin over paper pasteboards decorated with gilt blocked panels, some of which sunk into the boards, the doublures are red, green, orange and blue paper filigree, combined with gilt tooling” [15].

The library of the Governor-General, received some books, later shifted to Delhi in 1917 when the capital was changed from Calcutta. Some of this collection is now at The National Archives at New Delhi and some remain at the Asiatic Society at Kolkata (previously Calcutta) which had been established by Sir William Jones, British Civil Servant, in 1784. Much of his collection exists today at and at the India Office, the British Library, London. The British Library has 600 manuscripts from his library. There are few in the British Royal Collection managed by the Royal Collection Trust. Some of the items from his collection is listed and described for a revisit of his library; as they have travelled and exist today, preserved and researched on, in different places in India and the United Kingdom.

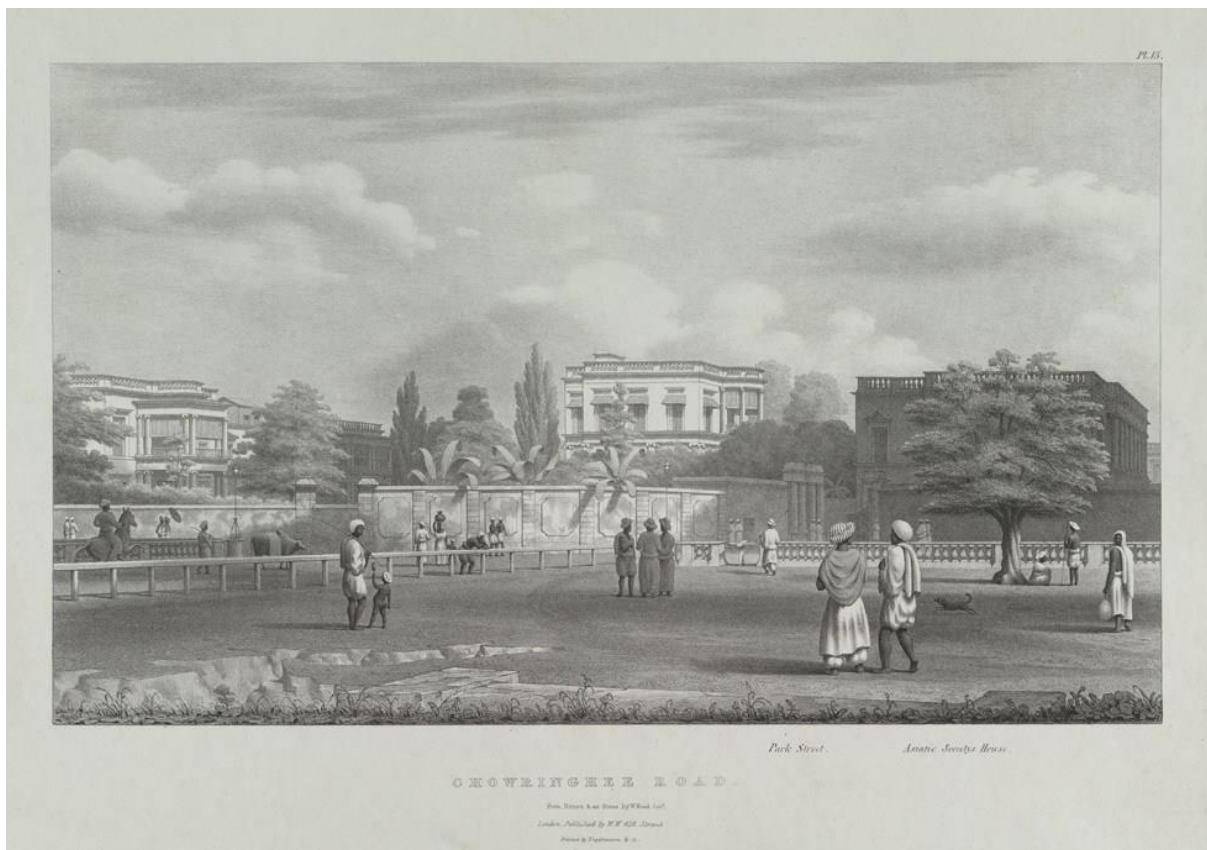
The Asiatic Society office stands at #1, Park Street in Kolkata where it originally began. Here in its archives are a part of Tipu's collection. The collection has the *Nasab Nama-i-maysur* – a catalogue of the various rulers of the Mysore and Nagar states; showing their names and names of children and wives. Originally in Carnatic language but translated into Persian by Asad Anwar Ghulam Husayn by Tipu Sultan. *Ma'kul-u-mashrub* – a verified treatise of the kinds of drinks and food which are favourable to digestion with eulogies of Tipu Sultan, by Abdul Qadir, written 1224 Mauludi era. Another interesting register is a collection *Majmua-i-ashar*, a scrap book of miscellaneous poetry and quotes mostly from poets at Tipu's court, 1198 H and 1217-1226 of Mauludi era; includes a *mathnawi* poem in praise of Mohammad, methods of annihilation of the evil eye, poems by Hafiz Habibullah, list of verses suitable to be written on buildings, 1224 Mauludi era, *mathnawis* for palaces, *dabitas* or army regulations, a treatise in prose on the influence of Quranic verses to ensure victory, meanings of isolated letters found in the Holy Quran, *dabitas* for the cavalry. Another *Majmua al-ashar* has poetry from authors of Tipu's court, chronograms upto 1220 of the Muhammadi era, poetry in Persian and Hindustani magical formulas, effective prayers, a poem by Hafiz Habibullah, poems of Zayn'ul Abideen Shustari upto 1220 Muhammadi era, *Tarkibband* in praise of Tipu, poems of Hassan Ali Izzat, *qasidas* and other poems of Mahdi Ali Khan, poems by Khaliluddin Agahi and Sutfullah and poems of Sayyid Ali Qadi. A manuscript *Fakhr'ush Shuyukh* written in Indian *nastaliq* is a concise exposition of the Mohammedan religious system, with reference to various observances and practices prescribed by it. Composed in 1200 H or 1786 A.D by Ali Rida Sharaf by the order of Tipu Sultan. *Arus-i-Irfan* is an interesting treatise on Sufic and ethical matters with many anecdotes. Written in 1117/1705 A.D by Mahmud-Baqir Muhammad Pishagi Qadiri/Mahmud Bahri, an eminent Sufi; this work is divided into ten *ziwars* which is incomplete, the introduction is prefixed with eulogies of Tipu; on good Oriental paper in Indian *nastaliq*[4].

Another interesting title now at the Asiatic Society in Kolkakta is the *Tarjuma-i-Ruzmnama*; a translation of a diary of the prescription of various medicines for different diseases kept in a hospital under European management in the times of the East India Company, the compiler is unknown, written on European paper in Indian *nastaliq*, beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century H. The Asiatic Society has *dabitas* and *hukumnamas* of Tipu Sultan. The *Fath'ul Mujahideen* was composed under the direction of Tipu Sultan and used a military encyclopedia in his army. It deals with the organisation of army, rules of arithmetic, accounts, drill etc. Composed by Zayn'ul Abideen in 1197/1783 A.D, transcribed by Ghulam Murtada Ali in Indian *nastaliq* on European paper. There are many copies of it at the Society. The diary of Ghulam Ali Khan, an envoy of Tipu who travelled with his mission in 1200-1201 A H to as far as Constantinople – the *Waq'a-i-manazil-i-rum*, written on European paper in Indian *shikasta-nastaliq* script is also housed here[4].



**Figure 7: Asiatic Society, lithograph, 1828.**





**Figure 8: Asiatic Society** buildings at the junction with Park Street. Founded in 1784, the society acquired this land from the government in 1805 and had constructed these buildings by 1808, lithograph 'Views of Calcutta', an album of paintings by William Wood.

As mentioned the Fort William College was founded at the Writers' Building in Calcutta by Marquess Wellesley in 1800 A.D. to educate young civil servants and make it centre for Western and Oriental knowledge confluence and a liaison point between many institutions. However it was closed down in 1854 after having accomplished its aims as envisaged[5]. It had a good library which got disbanded. Manuscripts from the Fort William College were sent to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, the Imperial Library at Calcutta and the Imperial Records Department at Delhi.; which became the National Library and The National Archives of India respectively. Much of the distribution took place in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A part of the collection of Tipu Sultan which was at the Fort William College found its way to the Imperial Records Department, which is thus kept now at the 'National Archives' at New Delhi. The manuscripts mostly relate to Quranic literature and Islamic law. A title in Arabic *Kenz al Ducaic* corresponds with a title in the catalogue compiled by Charles Stewart, published in 1809; a digest of the Mohammedan law, according to the doctrine of Imam Abu Hanifah Nuuman Ben Sadit, one of the juriconsults of Mecca who died in 767 A.D. The author of the work is Imam Abd al Berkat Ata Allah Ben Ahmed Hafiz Addeen Nessafy who died in 1310. The copy at the National Archives is transcribed in 1092 A.H or 1681-1682 A.D in *nasqh* script. Another Persian title under Sufism is *Nafs-i-Rehmany*, an enquiry into the nature of divinity, rectitude and conduct with explanation of important words from the Holy Quran which is mentioned in the same catalogue, is also available here [1].





Figure 9: The National Archives, Janpath, New Delhi.

Another Persian title under Ethics, *Zakhirat-al-muluk* made up of ten chapters written in *nastaliq* is in Persian by Sayyid Ali Bin Hamadani who lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century is from the Tipu collection which reached here. Also *Akhlaq Muhsini*, a title in Persian on a “general system of ethics divided into 40 chapters” under worship, prayers, patience, hope among others by Hussain bin Ali al-Waiz bin Kashifi of Herat, written in *nastaliq* script, dedicated to Hussain Mirza, Son of Sultan Abul Ghazi Bahadur of Khoressan, in 1494 A.D [1].



Figure 10: The British Library Reading room upto 1997, a part of British Museum, London.





Figure 11: Front board of Tipu Sultan's personal Holy Qur'an including the flap, The British Library, London.

"The British Library has about 600 volumes from Tipu Sultan's collection. These consist of 197 volumes of Arabic and Persian manuscripts deposited in the Library on 16 July 1806, further volumes deposited in 1807 (204 vols) and April 1808 (68 vols) and a proportion of the 308 manuscripts sent to London in 1837 after the closure of Fort William College in Calcutta and the dispersal of its collections"; notes Ursula Sims-Williams, Lead Curator, Persian, at the British Library. The collection of Tipu Sultan includes his personal Holy Quran "decorated heavily in gilt on a diced patterned background" with inscriptions and the highly illuminated and calligraphic *Mi'at Kalimah aliyah' aliyah Murtadawiyah* (the 100 sayings of Ali Ibn Abi Talib) which has Tipu's personal seal dated 1186 (1772/73 A.D). This work is probably acquired by his father Hyder Ali from Nawab Abd'al Wahhab of Chittoor when he defeated and sent him with his family to Seringapatnam. The British Library houses volumes of poetry by Amir Khusro, Attar of Nishapur, Ahmadi Jam among others, history titles and books on letter writing or *insha*. The collection includes *Mu'ayyid al mujahidin*, a collection of 104 sermons to be read during prayers, composed by order of Tipu Sultan by Zayn al-Abideen Shustari in 1207 H or 1793 A.D. This work has Tipu's official seal of that time. Tipu Sultan used different seals at different points during his rule. Ursula Sims-Williams, Lead Curator, Persian, at the British Library further notes that the royal insignia to be used in his seals is described in *Zavabit-i-sultani* – a set of regulations issued 1211H/1796 A.D[10]. In his seals and official cyphers, the tiger (*babri*) stripe and shape of the tiger's mouth is well used[12].

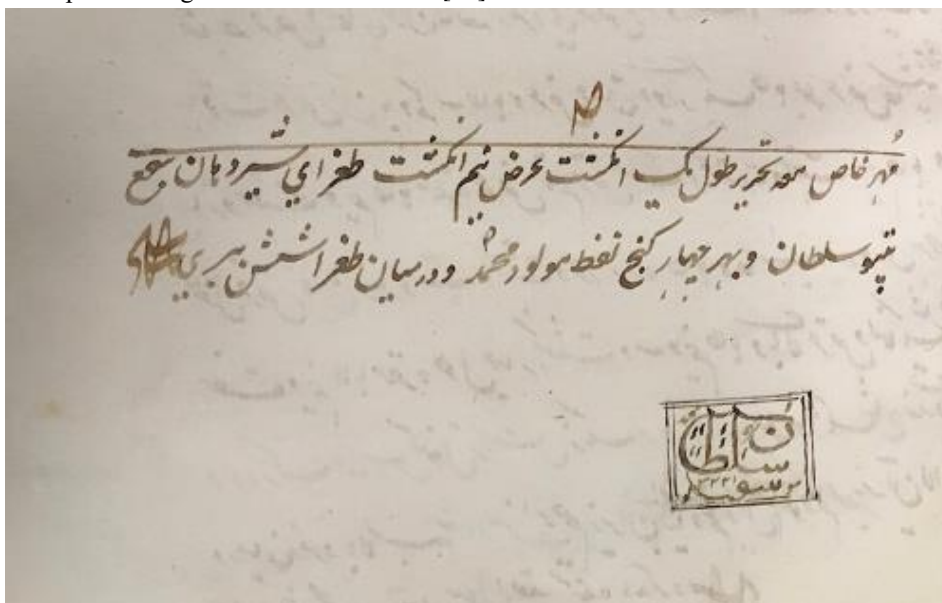


Figure 12: A seal as depicted in *Zavabit-i-Sultani*, British Library, London.

## Revisiting Tipu Sultan's Library – Journeys in India and the United Kingdom

Some other titles with seals housed in the British Library India Office include *Mufarrih-al-qulub*, a book of Dakhni and Persian songs collected by Hasan Ali Izzat in 1199 AH/1784/5 A.D) for Tipu Sultan, another copy of *Zavabit-i-Sultani*. A set of consultations to the six government departments from 1798 A.D is in the collection which has a European style wax seal[12]. The library also houses, a late 18<sup>th</sup> century copy of works by Gesu Daraz and Attar of Nishapur, *Javāhir al-qur'ān*, an index to bowing places (*rukū'*) copied for Tipu in 1225 of the Mauludi era (1797/98) Also the translation into Persian from Dakhni by Ḥasan 'Alī 'Izzat, of the love story of Lal and Gohar which was commissioned by Tipu Sultan in 1778 and his army regulations *Fath al-mujāhidīn* by Zayn al-Abideen Shushtari[9]. The *Kitab Hakeem Sindbad* - the poetical works of Hakeem Sindbad, with paintings, which are instructions of the philosopher Sindbād to his pupil, the ignorant son of a king, is a part of the collection at British Library [13].

Another personal Holy Quran from the Library of Tipu Sultan is with the British Royal Collection Trust. This Holy book has had a long journey. It was taken from Tipu Sultan's palace in Seringapatam in 1799 and reached the College of Fort William by 15 August 1805 and then the library of East India House by 4 February 1807. It was presented to King George III after this date, c. 1807 by Charles Wilkins, Librarian to the East India Company[14].

The book is having Deccani binding of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, similar to Persian binding techniques, featuring gold tooling and gold paint. Full leather bound with gold and blue paint, with arabesques at the centre, and tooling of various florals. The fore-edge flap features Koranic verses. It was copied by Harun ibn Bayazid al-Bayhaqi, and several additions in Persian were made for Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan's regime saw the making of official manuals and *hukumnamas*, which were directives to State officials. The Royal collection has a volume of a Kannada translation of one of Tipu's *hukumnamas* relating to the accounts and land grants of a monastery. The manuscript is written on gold-flecked paper with a illuminated frontispiece. The calligraphy is in ornate Telugu script. This volume was rebound in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in European red velvet covers with neoclassical-style gold tooling [14].

Thus we see how a collection of a powerful Muslim ruler in South India has travelled to different libraries in India and collections in the United Kingdom, and is being researched and looked upon from a historical perspective; to reveal more about the life and times of kingdoms which no longer exist except through these powerful reminders from libraries and palaces.

### ENDNOTES, REFERENCES AND IMAGE ATTRIBUTIONS

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- 12) <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2017/07/some-bindings-from-tipu-sultans-court.html>
- 13) <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2018/04/making-his-mark-the-seals-of-tipu-sultan.html#>
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- 15) Islamic Manuscripts in the British Royal Collection, Leiden 1994 via <https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005001/the-holy-quran>
- 16) <http://genius.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/exhibits/browse/a-copy-of-the-quran/>
- 17) Figure 1 – Courtesy, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, Telangana State
- 18) Figure 2 – Courtesy, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, Telangana State
- 19) Figure 3 - via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)
- 20) Figure 4 - via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)
- 21) Figure 5 - via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)
- 22) Figure 6 — Courtesy, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, Telangana State
- 23) Figure 7 - via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)
- 24) Figure 8 – from 'Views of Calcutta', an album of paintings by William Wood.
- 25) Figure 9 - via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)
- 26) Figure 10 – via Wikimedia Commons(Public domain)



## Revisiting Tipu Sultan's Library – Journeys in India and the United Kingdom

27) Figure 11 - British Library, London (Public domain)

28) Figure 12 - British Library, London (Public domain).