CHAPTER 5

KUNJUNNI RAJA AND NEW CATALOGUS CATALOGORUM
Critical edition is a fundamental area of Sanskrit Research. Critical edition and works related to the preparation of Catalogue were considered by some scholars as outcome of inferior type of scholarship. It is utterly a false consumption. The process of editing is scientific in nature. It comprises of various phases. When examining the contributions of Raja, one must consider his valuable works of editing. Among his edited works, NCC stands unique in several respects. It is just like a biblical text for Sanskrit researchers in particular and Indological researchers in general.

The New Catalogus Catalogorum

The NCC is a huge 40-volume project started earlier in 1935 by the British Government. This massive project is an encyclopedic work on unpublished manuscripts, an alphabetical register of Sanskrit manuscripts and allied works and authors found anywhere in the world. The project is allocated to the Department of Sanskrit of the University of Madras. It was A.C.Woolner, the Vice chancellor of the Punjab University, who suggested that the work of bringing out a revised edition of the Catalogus Catalogorum. Millions of manuscripts are available all over the country, preserved in libraries, muths,
museums and many other public and private collections, and many have travelled to different parts of the world. The purpose of the project is to take stock of manuscripts, available anywhere in the world, cataloguing and documenting them to assist researchers and student enthusiasts of Indology.¹ The manuscripts cover a variety of subjects ranging from Religion, Philosophy and Literature to sciences like Astronomy, Mathematics, Medicine, Architecture, Metallurgy, Yoga, Management, Governance, Polity, Town planning and the like.

**Earlier Catalogues**

The knowledge of the hidden manuscripts is essential in research. That is why a number of Catalogues existed here. In 1891, 1896 and 1903 the Aufrecht edited Catalogues of Sanskrit Manuscripts. In 1962 Franz Steiner verlag and Aufrecht edited the work. A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in Adayar Library has two parts. One is published in 1926 the other one in 1928. Several Volumes of Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts, in the Adayar Library is published in 1942. From 1916 onwards Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, published several volumes of 'Descriptive catalogue of Government collection of Manuscripts and deposited it in the Bhandarkar oriental research institute.
Here lists some more catalogues cited by K.V. Sarma in the

‘Research in Sanskrit’.


The NCC - Earlier Volumes

Sanskrit department, University of Madras, started the NCC project and the first volume of the NCC, edited by C.Kunhan Raja, was published in 1949. Following the retirement of Kunhan Raja, V.Raghavan became the editor. He took pain to obtain the required materials for the NCC Project from various institutions both from India and abroad. In 1966, he published second volume of the NCC. The revised version of Vol.I was published in 1968. In 1966 Raja was appointed as Associate Editor and with the assistance of Raja, V.Raghavan published three volumes — III, IV and V, in 1967, 1968 and 1969 respectively.

It was in 1969, Raja took charge as the editor after the retirement of V.Raghavan. It was the greatest period because, 5 Volumes of NCC were published during that period. Volume VI published in 1971, VII in 1973, VIII in 1974, IX in 1977 and volume X published in 1979.
In the preface of the *NCC* V.Raghavan records that ‘work was started in the end of the November 1935. The first few years were taken up in the collection of the catalogues needed for the work. In December 1937 a provisional fasciculus of 55 pages was printed and circulated for eliciting the views and suggestions of scholars and to secure further catalogues and list of Manuscripts. The work was interrupted by the second world war; however I carried on the work single handed and brought out in 1949 Volume one of the work, covering works and authors under the first letter of alphabet.’

**The Support from Other Bodies**

The *NCC* achieved National and International attention. The Rochfeller foundation was associated with it for some time. During the third and fourth plan the University Grants Commission assisted the project for ten years. The international council of Philosophy and Human Science of the UNESCO held at Mexico in 1976 gave it strong moral support.

Raja notes thankfully that, the Vice chancellor Malcome Adiseshiah was very decisive in the crucial stage of this project.
The Later Volumes

The Volume XI of the project was published in 1983 edited by Raja with the assistance of Veezhinathan. The next Volume XII, edited by Veezhinathan was published in 1988. Volume XIII was published in 1991, edited by Veezhinathan with C.S.Sundaram and N.Gangadharan as joint editors. The present HOD of Sanskrit, Siniruddha Dash successor of Veezhinathan and Rema Bai in the department of Sanskrit, in University of Madras brought out many succeeding volumes of NCC. In 2012 Volume XX – XXV has been published and the project is nearing its completion.

The Uniqueness of the NCC

While going through the volumes of NCC one may realize the uniqueness of the massive project. The scientific information brought out in connection with manuscripts, both published and unpublished paved new vistas and emerged new topic in the Sanskrit research.

The Role of Raja in NCC

Raja dedicated a major part of his life to seek knowledge. In that long period he spent more than 35 years for the works related to NCC. It was in 1966 he joined this project as Associate editor and helped V.Raghavan for publishing Volume III, IV and V. After taking charge
from V.Raghavan as the Editor of NCC, Raja published five volumes in the greater interest of scholars. Volumes VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI were published in 1971, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1979 and 1983 respectively. Raja has put all his effort to bring out these volumes in such a short span. In the preface of Volume VIII of NCC, Raja mentioned that ‘I have tried to see that, the speed in publication of the volumes does not in any way affect the standard of Scholarship, for after all the value of a publication like the Catalogus Catalogorum depends on the wealth and accuracy of the information supplied’. Raja involved in the capacity of Associate Editor and Editor for nine volumes of this series. At the age of 79, Raja has been appointed as the convener of a five member advisory committee in 1999, by the Vice Chancellor Pon Kodandaraman to plan and execute the remaining volumes of the NCC in an efficient manner.

The National Mission of Manuscripts, then headed by Kapila Vatsyayan appointed Raja and P.C.Muraleemadhavan to inspect manuscript repositories in Kerala. They could enlist and preserve a good number of manuscripts from Thrissur and suburb area.
Notes

1. https://www.unom.ac.in/index.php?route=department/department/about&deptid=64department