

OBITUARY NOTICES

J. Przyluski

The early termination (27th October, 1944) of Professor Przyluski's work should not be without commemoration on the part of British Orientalism or an expression of the Society's sympathy in the loss sustained by the Société Asiatique and the University of Paris. His original insight had opened, and his strength of judgment had assured, new approaches to little investigated areas of research in Indian linguistics, sociology, and religion. Receiving in 1907 a post in Indo-China, he found opportunity to deepen his original equipment in Chinese and Annamite language and lore, and came to hold a lectureship in the latter subject. From his intimate knowledge of the peoples he derived his conception of the interdependence of languages, usages, rites, and beliefs.

As deputy Professor (1913) of Annamite at the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris, he joined in organizing instruction in the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Chinese languages. His wide linguistic competence, evidenced by papers contributed to the *Mémoires* of the Société de Linguistique or to *Scientia*, was recognized in 1928 by his election as Vice-President of the first Congress of Linguists and later by Meillet's choice of him, in *Les Langues du Monde*, as authority for nearly all the language groups of South-Eastern Asia. His venturesome Indian etymologies have needed, and may sometimes require, this background.

To Buddhist studies Przyluski came by way of a long historico-geographical investigation of the data concerning N.W. India contained in the *Vinaya* of the Mūla-Sarvāstivādin sect. Two further articles also dealt with early populations of the same region. Ethnological and cultural matters figure largely in his very original discussions of the beginnings of Buddhism, its early practices, personalities, sects, and councils; of which work his treatise on the *Aśoka-avadāna* and that on the Council of Rājagṛha are the most substantial outcome. Extraneous elements in Buddhism, detected as Iranian, drew his attention to possible Western origins of early Indian, and not only Buddhist, conceptions: to which subject he frequently recurred, more especially with regard to a very

widespread cult of a "Mother Goddess", discoverable also in Vedic, and in far earlier, India.

Przyluski's accomplishment in Chinese did not confine his interest in Buddhism to its "Northern" developments. He held that all features of its manifold manifestation must be taken into account: he was founder in conjunction with Mdlle. Lalou, of the *Bibliographie Bouddhique*.

Mdlle. Lalou, who on other occasions also lent her collaboration and whose finely appreciative memoir of Przyluski may shortly, it is hoped, be available in English, insists that behind the rain of multifarious notes there was always the developing structure of a great conception. Mdlle. Lalou informs us that during the war years Przyluski published *La Participation* (1940, *L'Évolution Humaine* (1943), and *Créer* (1943), as instalments thereof, and that he left in the press a volume on *La Grande Déesse*.

Born in 1885 of French nationality, Przyluski had at the date of his death attained his sixtieth year. His Polish descent may be manifest in a vigorous originality which he seems to share with leaders of modern Polish Indology, and which was appropriately recognized (1938) by the Honorary Doctorate of the University of Warsaw.

F. W. THOMAS.

Sten Konow

Professor Sten Konow, whose distinguished activities as an Orientalist had been maintained into his eighty-second year, died on the 29th of June, 1948. Though a very patriotic Norwegian, whose national flag in symbolic size adorned his writing-table in foreign residences, he may be credited also to both German and British Orientalism. His scholarly outlook and method were, no doubt, formed, or confirmed, by his period of study under Pischel in Halle: he entered fully into the spirit of German University life, acquired familiarity with idioms, usages and cliques and formed lasting friendships; his appointment in later life to the Professorship of Indology in the University of Hamburg was not regarded in Germany as in any way abnormal. The claim of British scholarship may be dated from his first association (1900) with Grierson in the compilation of the Linguistic Survey of India: years of service in the Archæological Survey, as Government Epigraphist, familiarized him with a further side of English and official life. His