SILVER JUBILEE OF BHĀRATA GANITA PARISAD

By R. C. Gupta

Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi

The Bhārata Ganita Parisad (=BGP) was formed in 1950 with the aim to revitalize the activities of the then almost defunct Benares Mathematical Society founded in 1919. The BGP soon began functioning under the leadership of Dr. A. N. Singh (1901-1954), a noted historian of Indian Mathematics. It has its headquarters at the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy, Lucknow University and has been bringing out the half-yearly journal *GANITA* (formerly the *Proc. Benares Math. Soc.*) which accepts papers on history of mathematics.

The BGP and the department have been the foremost institutions in India for research in the field of Hindu astronomy and mathematics. The department issues the "Hindu Astronomical & Mathematical Texts Series" in which four works have already been published. Their critical editing has been done by Dr. K. S. Shukla, a pioneer in the field for the last thirty years. Professor R. P. Agarwal, Head of the department, hopes to establish an advance centre of research in Hindu Mathematics and astronomy there.

It was fitting that the BGP started celebrating its Silver Jubilee (happily coinciding it with the 1500th Birth Anniversary of Aryabhata I) with a symposium on Hindu astronomy.

The Symposium on Hindu astronomy was held at Lucknow on 24-25 October, 1976 under the joint auspices of the BGP and the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy, Lucknow University. It was inaugurated by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. R. V. Singh. In his welcome address, Dr. R. P. Agarwal briefly outlined the activities of the BGP and the department in the field of history of Hindu astronomy and mathematics.

A key-note address on "Some Aspects of Hindu Astronomy and Hindu Mathematics" was delivered by Professor J. N. Kapur (I. I. T., Kanpur). Regarding activity in the field of history of mathematics and astronomy, he said that "the amount of research necessary is tremendous and our present efforts look pitifully small when compared to the needs and urgency of the tasks ahead".

The inaugural function was followed by four academic sessions, presided over by J. N. Kapur, S. D. Sinvhal (State Observatory, Naini Tal), L. C. Jain (S. N. College, Khandwa) and R. C. Gupta (Birla Inst., Mesra. Ranchi) respectively. There were thirteen speakers, of which the following are of special interest to historians of mathematics:

L. C. Jain: *On Certain Physical Theories in Hindu Astronomy.*

R. C. Gupta: *Time-Altitude and Altitude-Azimuth Equations in Hindu Astronomy.*

Markandeya Misra (Lucknow University): *Original Contribu-
tions of Aryabhata* (in Hindi).
K. S. Shukla (Lucknow University): *Astronomy in India
before Aryabhata I.*
An exhibition of 127 manuscripts (including photocopies
and transcripts) on Hindu astronomy and mathematics was also
held during the celebrations.

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CORRESPONDENCE

*This department welcomes comments on the contents or
policy of HM, corrections of errors in the literature, ques-
tions and discussion of previously published questions, brief
notices of historical discoveries, and other communications of
interest to the history of mathematics community.*

C. S. PEIRCE AND DE MORGAN ON THE
FOUR-COLOUR CONJECTURE

*A letter from
Norman L. Biggs (University of London),
E. Keith Lloyd (University of Southampton), and
Robin J. Wilson (The Open University)*

A recent letter (in your August 1976 issue, *HM* 3(3), 329-
330) from John Wilson drew attention to a reference by De
Morgan to the four-colour problem, in the journal *Athenaeum*
[1860, 501-503]. We should like to make some further comments
on this important discovery.
The *Athenaeum* article is the first known printed reference
to the four-colour problem. Also, it is almost certainly the
article referred to by C. S. Peirce in a manuscript, now in the
Houghton Library at Harvard. Peirce cites, in vague terms, a
reference by De Morgan to the four-colour problem in the
Athenaeum, and he goes on to mention his own attempted solution,
which he presented to a mathematical society at Harvard in the
1860s. Of course, Peirce was primarily a logician and philoso-
pher, which explains why he would have read De Morgan's review
of Whewell's book *The Philosophy of Discovery*. He retained a
lifelong interest in the four-colour problem and addressed the
National Academy of Sciences on the subject in November 1899.
It is quite possible that he was the first American to interest