

A HISTORY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

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BY

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INTRODUCTION, VEDA, NATIONAL EPICS,
PURĀÑAS, AND TANTRAS

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To

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The Great Poet, Educator, and Lover of Man

This English Version of the "History of Indian Literature"

is dedicated

as a token of loving admiration and sincere gratitude

by the Author.

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

Both in Santiniketan, where I held the visiting professorship at Viśvabharati University in 1922-23, and elsewhere in India, I often heard expressions of regret that my 'History of Indian Literature,' written in German, was not accessible to the majority of Indian students. I talked about this to some of my Indian friends, and one day Professor Taraporewala suggested that an English translation might be published by the University of Calcutta. He spoke about it to the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the great champion and inspirer of Oriental Studies in Calcutta University, who at once showed great interest in the work, and at his suggestion the Syndicate of the University agreed to undertake the publication. It was not difficult to find a translator. When I came to Poona in November 1922, to visit the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, I was introduced to Dr. S. V. Ketkar, the learned Editor of the Marathi Encyclopædia, and to my great surprise he showed me two big volumes, containing a type-written English translation of the first two volumes of my "History of Indian Literature." The translation, I understood, was the work of Mrs. Ketkar, who had made it for the use of her husband, not for publication. Mrs. Ketkar, being German by her mother tongue, English by education, and Indian by marriage, seemed to me as if predestined for the work, and she agreed to revise and rewrite her translation for the purpose of publication.

But not only the translator had to revise her work, I myself had to revise mine. The first part of the German original, dealing with Vedic literature, had been published in 1905, the second part, treating the Epic and Puranic literature,

in 1908. It was, therefore, necessary to revise the whole work for the English translation, in order to bring it up to date. Many chapters had to be rewritten entirely, smaller changes, corrections and additions, had to be made almost on every page, and the more important publications of the last twenty years had to be added to the references in the Notes. Thus this English translation is at the same time a second, revised and, I hope, improved edition of the original work.

It is not for me to say how far the translator has succeeded in her task. But I know that she has spared no pains to make her translation as accurate and as readable as possible. And for this it is my pleasant duty to thank her. I have also to thank my pupil Wilhelm Gampert for preparing the Index.

Prague, Sept. 5th, 1926.

M. WINTERNITZ.

PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION.

The publishers of this work have announced in a notice that the series in which the present volume, dedicated to the oldest period of Indian literature, appears, is intended, "not for learned circles, but for the educated people of the nation." With this idea in mind, the class of reader which I have kept constantly in view in the course of my work is the reader who as yet knows nothing of Indian literature, and possesses no special Indological knowledge of any kind:—and yet not that reader who merely desires a desultory acquaintance with Indian literature in a leisure hour, but him who wants to make himself as thoroughly acquainted with it as it is at all possible without a knowledge of the Indian languages. An English, German or French literary history need only be a bare presentation of the course of development of a literature which presumably is already familiar. A history of Indian literature, however, in all cases in which there are no German translations—and this is unfortunately so in the majority of cases—must also instruct the German reader as far as possible in the contents of the literary productions, by means of quotations and summaries of the contents. In other words: A history of the literature must be at the same time a description of the literature. Thus of the national epics and the Purāṇas, with which the second half of the present volume deals, only few portions have so far become known in German translations. Without extensive descriptive summaries and quotations it is impossible for the reader to gain any conception at all of the works treated.

In this way, indeed, the volume assumed larger proportions than it was originally anticipated. A second consideration also accounts for this increase in the size of the work. It is precisely the oldest Indian literature, treated in this volume, which, with reference to chronology, is to a certain extent "hovering in the air." Not a single one of the numerous and extensive works which belong to the Vedas, to the national Epics, or to the Purāṇas, can be ascribed with certainty even to this or that century. It is simply impossible, in one sentence or in a few lines, to give information on the age of the Vedas, of the Mahābhārata, of the Rāmāyaṇa and even of the Purāṇas. Even for the general reader it is not sufficient to tell him that we do not know anything definite about the date of these works. It is necessary to mark off the boundaries within which our ignorance moves, and to state the grounds on which an approximate, even though only conjectural, date of these works is supported. Therefore considerable sections had to be devoted to the enquiry concerning the age of the Vedas, the Epics and the Purāṇas. I emphasize expressly that these chapters, too, are not indeed written only for the specialist, but in the first place for the layman as characterised above, whom I had in view as my reader. If, notwithstanding, they contain something new for the specialist also,—and probably also some points which might challenge contradiction,—then it is because questions are here dealt with, which, just in recent years, have been the subject of new investigations, new discoveries, and manifold controversies.

The references given in the Notes are partly intended for the specialist, in whose eyes they are to justify the editor's standpoint in the most important debatable questions. For it is a matter of course, that a book which is addressed to the "educated people of the nation," must also stand before the judgment of the specialist, and submit entirely to the same. On the other hand, in the Notes intended for the non-specialist,

I have also made a point of referring to all German translations which are accessible by any means—and where these are wanting, to the English and French ones. I have utilised these translations only in a few cases, in which they appeared to me to reproduce the original in a particularly admirable manner. Where no translator is mentioned, the translations are my own.

After what has been said, it will not be surprising that the originally intended size of *one* volume proved to be too narrow for this Indian Literary History. I am sincerely thankful to the Publisher for raising no opposition to the reasons which were given for the widening of the originally planned size, and for giving his consent for a second volume. This widening also thoroughly corresponds with the extent and the significance of Indian literature,—for which I refer to the Introduction (p. 1 ff.). As the present volume deals in a certain sense with the “prehistoric” period of Indian literature,—at least in their beginnings, both the Vedas and the national epics reach back to far-off epochs which cannot be fixed by means of any dates—so the second volume shall begin with the Buddhist literature, and introduce the reader to the literature of the actually historical period of India.

Regarding the works upon which I have drawn and to which I am indebted, the Notes to the separate sections give information. What I owe to the “Akademische Vorlesungen über Indische Literaturgeschichte” by Albrecht Weber (2nd edition, Berlin 1876) which paved the way for Indian literary historiography, and to those stimulating and valuable lectures on “Indiens Literatur und Cultur in historischer Entwicklung” by Leopold v. Schroeder (Leipzig 1887) could naturally not be recorded in every single case. I also owe much, without always having specially mentioned it, to the valuable “Bulletins des Religions de l’Inde” by A. Barth in the *Revue de l’Histoire des Religions*, Tomes I, III, V, XI, XIV, XXVIIIIf, XLIf, and XLV (1880-1902). The ingenious

essays of H. Oldenberg, "Die Literatur des alten Indien" (Stuttgart and Berlin 1903) deal more with an aesthetic view and appreciation of Indian literature, which was somewhat outside the scope of my plans. The works of A. Baumgartner (*Geschichte der Weltliteratur II. Die Literaturen Indiens und Ostasiens*, 3. und 4. Aufl., Freiburg i. B. 1902), A. A. Macdonell (*A History of Sanskrit Literature*, London 1900) and V. Henry (*Les Littératures de l'Inde*, Paris 1904), though quite useful for their own purposes, hardly offered me anything new. The outlines of Indian literature by Richard Pischel in Part I, Section VII ("Die Orientalischen Literaturen"), of the series "Die Kultur der Gegenwart" (Berlin and Leipzig 1906), exceedingly short, but a masterpiece in their brevity, appeared only when my MS. was already finished and partly printed. I would not wish to leave unmentioned the services rendered to me by the "Orientalische Bibliographie" by Lucian Scherman, which is so indispensable to every Orientalist. Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to all those who have written friendly reviews or offered expert criticism on the first half volume which appeared two years ago.

Prag, Kgl. Weinberge,
15th October, 1907.

M. WINTERNITZ.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES.

ABA=Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

ABayA=Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil. Klasse.

AGGW=Abhandlungen der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

AKM=Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, herausg. von der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

Album Kern=Album-Kern : Opstellen geschreven ter eere von Dr. H. Kern...op zijn zeventigsten verjaardag. Leiden 1903.

AMG=Annales du Musée Guimet (Paris).

Ann. Bh. Inst.=Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute, Poona.

ĀnSS=Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series (Poona).

AR=Archiv für Religionsgeschichte.

ASGW=Abhandlungen der philol.-histor. Klasse der Königl. Sächs. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften.

Aufrecht, Bodl. Cat.=Th. Aufrecht, Catalogus Codicum MSS. Sanscritorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae, Oxonii 1859-64.

Aufrecht CC=Th. Aufrecht: Catalogus Catalogorum. Leipzig 1891; II, 1896; III, 1903.

Aufrecht, Leipzig=Katalog der Sanskrit-Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek zu Leipzig, 1901.

BEFEO=Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême Orient.

BenSS=Benares Sanskrit Series.

Bezz. Beitr.=Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen, herausg. von A. Bezzemberger.

Bhandarkar, Report 1882-83=R. G. Bhandarkar, Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bombay Presidency during the year 1882-83, Bombay 1884.

Bhandarkar, Report 1883-84 = R. G. Bhandarkar, Report etc. during the year 1883-84, Bombay 1887.

Bhandarkar Comm. Vol. = Commemorative Essays presented to Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Poona 1917.

Bhandarkar, Vaisṇavism etc. = R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaisṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems (Grundriss III, 6, 1913).

Bibl. Ind. = Bibliotheca Indica.

BSGW = Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philol.-histor. Klasse.

BSOS = Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution.

BSS = Bombay Sanskrit Series.

Bühler, Report = G. Bühler, Detailed Report of a Tour in Search of Sanskrit MSS. made in Kaśmir, Rajputana, and Central India. (Extra Number of the JBRAS 1877).

Burnell, Tanjore = A. C. Burnell, A Classified Index to the Sanskrit MSS. in the Palace at Tanjore, London 1880.

Cambridge History = The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I. Ancient India. Ed. by E. J. Rapson, Cambridge 1922.

Deussen, AGPh = P. Deussen, Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, I, 1—3, Leipzig 1894 (2nd ed. 1906)-1908.

DLZ = Deutsche Literaturzeitung.

Ep. Ind. = Epigraphia Indica.

ERE = Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, edited by James Hastings.

Farquhar, Outline = J. N. Farquhar: An Outline of the Religious Literature of India, London 1920.

Festschrift Kuhn = Aufsätze zur Kultur- und Sprachgeschichte vornehmlich des Orients Ernst Kuhn...gewidmet... München 1916.

Festschrift Wackernagel = Antidoron, Festschrift Jacob-Wackernagel zur Vollendung des 70. Lebensjahres, Göttingen 1924.

- Festschrift Windisch = Festschrift Ernst Windisch zum 70. Geburtstag .. dargebracht... Leipzig 1914.
- GGA = Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen.
- GOS = Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda.
- Grundriss = Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde.
- GSAI = Giornale della societa Asiatica Italiana.
- Gurupūjākaumudī = Gurupūjākaumudī, Festgabe zum fünfzigjährigen Doctorjubiläum Albrecht Weber dargebracht von seinen Freunden und Schülern, Leipzig 1896.
- Haraprasād, Report I, II. = Haraprasād Śāstri, Report on the Search of Sanskrit MSS. (1895-1900), Calcutta 1901 and (1901-02 to 1905-06), Calcutta 1905.
- HOS = Harvard Oriental Series, ed. by Ch. R. Lanman.
- Ind. Hist. Qu. = The Indian Historical Quarterly, edited by Narendra Nath Law.
- Ind. Ant. = Indian Antiquary.
- Ind. Off. Cat. = Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office, London 1887 ff.
- Ind. Stud. = Indische Studien, herausgegeben von A. Weber.
- JA = Journal Asiatique.
- JAOS = Journal of the American Oriental Society.
- JASB = Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- JBRAS = Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
- JRAS = Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
- LZB = Literarisches Zentralblatt.
- Mélanges Lévi = Mélanges d'Indianisme offerts par ses élèves à M. Sylvain Lévi... Paris 1911.
- NGGW = Nachrichten von der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften Göttingen, Philolog.-histor. Klasse.
- NSP = Nirṇaya Sāgara Press (Bombay).

OC=Transactions (Verhandlungen, Actes) of Congresses of Orientalists.

OTF=Oriental Translation Fund.

Pischel, KG=R. Pischel, Die indische Literatur, in Kultur der Gegenwart I, 7, 1906.

Proc. I (II, III) OC=Proceedings and Transactions of the First (Second, Third) Oriental Conference.

RHR=Revue de l'histoire des Religions, Paris.

RSO=Rivista degli studi orientali, Rome.

SBA=Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften.

SBayA=Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wiss., Phil.-histor. Kl.

SBE=Sacred Books of the East (Oxford).

SBH=Sacred Books of the Hindus, published by the Panini Office, Allahabad.

Schroeder, ILC=L. von Schroeder, Indiens Literatur und Cultur, Leipzig 1887.

SIFI=Studi Italiani di Filologia Indo-Iranica.

Smith, Early History=Vincent A. Smith, The Early History of India. Fourth Edition, revised by S. M. Edwardes, Oxford 1924.

SWA=Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften.

TSS=Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.

Weber, HSS. Verz.=A. Weber, Verzeichnis der Sanskrit und Prakrit-Handschriften der K. Bibliothek zu Berlin.

Weber, HIL=A. Weber, History of Indian Literature, Fourth Edition, 1904, Popular Re-issue, 1914.

Winternitz-Keith, Bodl. Cat.=Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, vol. II begun by M. Winternitz, continued and completed by A. B. Keith, Oxford, 1905.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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WZKM=Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.

ZB=Zeitschrift für Buddhismus (Oskar Schloss, München).

ZDMG=Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZII=Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik, herausg. von der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZVV=Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde in Berlin.

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COMPILED BY W. GAMPERT.

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