
PRESENTING THE COLLECTIONS

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NEW MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF W. NORMAN BROWN ADDED TO THE INDIC MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION OF THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA*

The University of Pennsylvania Library's Indic manuscript collection is today the largest collection of native Indic books in the Western hemisphere. The acquisition of this collection was begun in 1930. Provost Penniman of the University of Pennsylvania himself gave the first sum for the purchase of Indic manuscripts, and shortly after obtained additional funds from Mr. John Gribbel, Dr. Charles W. Burr and the Faculty Research Committee. The manuscripts obtained were added to gifts of a few manuscripts which had been given the Library in previous years, and the collection became at that time the second largest in the United States and Canada. Further funds came from the Library through its Colton Fund. By 1935, with the acquisition of an additional 1,800 Indic manuscripts, the University of Pennsylvania Library's Indic manuscript collection became the largest such collection in North America. When Horace I. Poleman's *Census of Indic Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, American Oriental Series, vol. 14 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1938) was published, the 2,700-odd manuscripts then at the University of Pennsylvania, together with the 2,400-odd catalogued manuscripts at Harvard University Library, accounted for most of the 7,273 individual entries in his catalogue. As an individual manuscript often contains more than one text, the total number of manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania Library and Harvard University Library account for more than this number in the total number of entries in

Poleman's *Census*. There is in the University of Pennsylvania collection, for instance, a manuscript of *Upaniṣads* which contains approximately 30 texts. Each of these texts is a separate entry in Poleman's *Census*. The number of Indic manuscripts in the Western hemisphere outside the United States and Canada is minimal.

Since that time, the University of Pennsylvania obtained still more Indic manuscripts. These came from a donation of Sanskrit manuscripts by the United States Information Service to a worthy American institution, from a donation of a beautiful collection of Southeast Asian manuscripts by Mr. John Lester of Haverford, and from donations of still other manuscripts from other sources, swelling its number up to the present to just under 3,000. In addition, the 50-odd Indic manuscripts which had been donated through the years to the University Museum were given in loan to the Library and placed together with these manuscripts for reasons of access, storage and preservation.

Most of the Library's acquisitions were of whole collections. One such large collection, for instance, came from Marwar, an area in the present-day state of Rajasthan. The manuscripts themselves come mainly from central, northern and western India, with a comparative few from eastern and southern India. The South Indian manuscripts, however, though few from the vantage of the larger collection, account for most of the palm leaf *Grantha* script manuscripts listed in Poleman's *Census*. Among the more

* Several articles referring to the University of Pennsylvania Library's holdings of Indic manuscripts have appeared in *The Library Chronicle*. These appeared in vol. 2 (1934), pp. 18—23; vol. 3 (1935), pp. 58—61; vol. 6 (1938), pp. 34—9; vol. 40 (1976), pp. 151—61; and vol. 44 (1980), pp. 97—152. The first three were by W. Norman Brown. The work presented here was originally begun in September and October 1982. It was not possible to complete the work immediately, but not long afterward a writeup was prepared in a more popular and less technical form than that presented here. I was informed at that time, though, that *The Library Chronicle* for which the article had been prepared had ceased publication. This of course was discouraging, but I proceeded to xerox the first lines, etc. of certain of the manuscripts so I would be able to work further on this material from a distance in New York City. This was necessary so as to make the article more acceptable to a professional Oriental journal *per se* than would be the less technical article which had been prepared at first. As few folios as possible were xeroxed, and only as absolutely necessary for clear identification purposes. In some instances, film was taken instead. Despite discouragement, the work pushed ahead and certain points were checked with various people. Then in May 1983 I took ill, which period of illness lasted until mid-September or October 1983. After this I turned my attention to things which were less discouraging until recently in 1994, when I turned to working further on the *Śāradā* script material in the collection and to pulling everything together in clean copy. This work was slow-going, but a typescript was at last finished in the summer of 1995. This was revised in the winter of 1998. I would like to thank the Library of the University of Pennsylvania for permission to reproduce here material from W. Norman Brown's collection.