

KUSHAN STUDIES IN U. S. S. R.

Papers Presented by the Soviet Scholars
at the UNESCO Conference on History,
Archaeology and Culture of Central
Asia in the Kushan Period, Dushanbe 1968.
With 18 Plates.

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AND OTHERS

INDIAN
STUDIES
PAST & PRESENT

Printed by R. K. Maitra at the R. D. Press,
11/B, Chowringhee Terrace, Calcutta 20 and
published by him on behalf of *Indian Studies :
Past & Present*, 3 Sambhunath Pandit Street,
Calcutta 20

Revised Price Rs.—80 00

Price Rs. 52 00

First Published
March 31, 1970

EDITOR'S NOTE

The importance of developing closer cooperation between the Soviet and Indian scholars in the field of Indian studies—of developing better mutual understanding and direct exchange of ideas between them—is stupendous and its possibilities literally immense. Here in India one can afford to doubt this only by banking on sheer ignorance of the actual academic output of the Soviet Indologists, who are the direct inheritors of the grand tradition of the Indological studies set up in St. Petersburg by veritable giants like Minaev, Ol'denburg, Stcherbatsky and others and, moreover, whose passionate love for the Indian people leads them also to take an intensely human interest in their subject, however much technical it may be. It was perhaps this human interest that moved me most when, in 1968, I had the opportunity of meeting a large number of them. The study of India's past is not prompted in them by an antiquarian interest : to lift the veil on the past, as they understand it, is an aid to understand the present and therefore also to shape the future. And yet, how little I myself knew before this the real magnitude and dimensions of their contributions to Indian studies ! How little, indeed, I myself knew of their deep concern for the varied problems of Indian cultural heritage ! It was imperative, I then felt, that more and more of the works of the Soviet colleagues had to be made available to the Indian readers, in the way in which the Soviet scholars themselves feel about the works of their Indian colleagues.

And it was with this purpose that we, on behalf of the *Indian Studies : Past & Present*, launched the present series, extremely humble though our private resources are for the purpose.

Fortunately, the response of the Soviet scholars has been immediate. We have been receiving books and microfilms of archive materials from them and also of course invaluable suggestions for making this series a success. It was in this way that we received a warm letter from Academician B. Gafurov, offering us the priority of publishing the Kushan papers. Apart from these papers, which we received in English translation, Academician B. Gafurov kindly sent us 18 selected photographs, which we have used in the form of a bunch at the beginning of the present volume. From the Soviet end, Dr. B. M. Bongard-Levin has done everything in the matter of editing and arranging the present papers. He has also kindly acceded to my request for a *Foreword* to the papers, inclusive of biographical data on the major contributors to the volume.

We take this opportunity of expressing our grateful thanks to Sri Harish Chandra Gupta for helping us in all sorts of ways not only for the publication of the present volume but also for doing everything needed for making the *Soviet Indology Series* a success. He has translated from the Russian language two major works for this series. One of these is already published as *Papers of Stcherbatsky*. The other one is the monumental work on *Tibetan Historical Literature* by A. I. Vostrikov, now in press.

Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya
Editor, *Indian Studies : Past & Present*

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