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OBITUARY

John Brough (1917–1984)

Friends and colleagues of Dr. John Brough, the late Professor of Sanskrit at the Universities of London and Cambridge, mourn the passing of one of the most eminent scholars of our generation. Brough's interests were wide-ranging, and his contributions covered a broad expanse of fields, from Sanskrit literature, Indian linguistics and Nepalese folk tales, to Central Asian history and Chinese Buddhist texts.

Early in his career, Brough made his mark in Indian and Sanskrit literature with the publication of such pioneering articles as "Legends of Khotan and Nepal" (*BSOAS* 12 [1948]), and his primer, *Selections from Classical Sanskrit Literature* (London: Luzac and Co., 1951). Branching out into still more technical areas of Sanskrit, Brough examined Indian philosophy of language in the light of modern linguistic theory in such pioneering articles as "Theories of General Linguistics in the Sanskrit Grammarians" (*Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1951) and "Some Indian Theories of Meaning" (*TPS*, 1953); in recognition of their status as classics in the field, Fritz Staal reprinted both in his *A Reader on the Sanskrit Grammarians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1972). Brough also brought Tibetan and Chinese materials to bear on treatments of questions in Sanskrit and Buddhist studies. In one of his most well known articles, "Thus Have I Heard . . ." (*BSOAS* 13 [1950]), Brough challenged this most sacrosanct translation of the opening line of Buddhist sūtras, proposing instead the translation, "Thus have I heard at one time," following the Tibetan punctuation.

Brough also became known as a specialist in Prakrit dialectology, and especially in Gāndhārī Prakrit. In "The Language of the Buddhist Sanskrit Texts" (*BSOAS* 16–2 [1954]), his review of Franklin Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Brough warned of the danger of treating Nepalese orthographic idiosyncracies as authentic dialectical forms of Buddhist Sanskrit. Perhaps Brough's singularly most important contribution to Buddhist studies and Indology was his

monumental *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962). His masterful edition of the Central Asian fragments of this important text, with detailed notes on the Pāli and Prakrit parallels, provided definitive evidence concerning the phonetic and semantic features of the Gāndhārī language.

In later years, Brough turned to Chinese sources with ever greater frequency. In his “Comments on Third-Century Shan-shan and the History of Buddhism” (*BSOAS* 28 [1965]), Brough drew upon Chinese and Khāroṣṭhī evidence to detail the importance of Northwest India, and especially Gāndhāra, in the transmission of Buddhism to central and east Asia. Brough’s writing frequently displayed the acerbic wit and dry humor for which he was so well known in person, making his articles provocative and entertaining, as well as informative. In his “The Chinese Pseudo-Translation of Ārya-śūra’s *Jātaka-māla*” (*Asia Major* 11 [1964–5]), for example, Brough waggishly examined the ludicrous attempt of two Sung-dynasty Chinese translators, who knew no Sanskrit grammar and only a few Sanskrit words, to render Ārya-śūra’s ornate *kāvya* into their native language, and the disastrous results ensuing therefrom. Returning to one of his earlier loves, Brough examined references in Chinese materials to earlier Sanskrit grammarians in his “I-ching on the Sanskrit Grammarians” (*BSOAS* 36 [1973]). Late in his career, Brough used Chinese renderings of Buddhist texts to ferret out the underlying Prakrit forms as, for example, in his “Buddhist Chinese Etymological Notes” (*BSOAS* 38 [1975]), and “The *Arapacana* Syllabary in the Old *Lalita-vistara*” (*BSOAS* 40 [1977]).

I had the privilege of being Professor Brough’s student and, later, colleague at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and benefitted greatly from his extraordinary range of knowledge in Sanskrit, Pāli, Prakrit, Tibetan, and Chinese. He was extremely generous in providing the younger scholars whose work he supervised with copious notes and comments on their research. In so doing, he offered them ever-new critical insight into the vast area of Oriental studies and was himself a paragon of the cross-cultural, multi-language orientation so necessary for serious work in the field. The world of Buddhist and Indological scholarship has lost a

truly eminent scholar and conscientious teacher; his contributions, however, will continue to inspire new generations of students long after his passing.

Padmanabh S. Jaini