Preface

This book has been written to provide the Western reader with a concise survey of Hindu political ideas. Various works have been published by Indian scholars, but these erudite studies have generally been written for Indian readers or Orientalists, and deal with rather specialized fields. Although there are several American publications on Chinese political theory, the Indian field has been largely neglected in this country. The plan of the present work is to construct a brief analysis of Indian thought together with a series of selections from the Hindu political classics.

This is not a history of the origin and development of ideas, but rather a presentation of the landmarks of the Hindu political tradition as seen by Indians themselves. No claim is made that these elements were fixed and unchanging. Such studies as Ghoshal's *History of Hindu Political Theories* and Kane's monumental *History of Dharmashastra* have indicated a long evolution. But the ideas presented here are those which have been most persistent in historical times. There is considerable semantic controversy over the terms "Indian," "Hindu," "Hindi," etc., which is beyond the scope of this work. Although "Hindi" has been suggested as a more fitting word than "Hindu" (Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 65), the latter has become established in Western usage. In these pages (except in occasional specific context), "Hindu" is used not in the narrow sectarian sense, but
simply to indicate the main stream of Indian culture of which Buddhism, for example, is an early offshoot. The Buddhist and Jain versions of the Indian theme have roots in this heritage, but have not been dominant factors in Indian political life. The Moslem element, a comparatively late addition, is based on another culture and was never truly assimilated into the classical tradition—though its own heritage is rich and enduring, as Sherwani and others have shown. There is of course no implication that this "Hindu" tradition is or was necessarily "sound or unsound," "good or bad" for India's political and social life—now or in the distant past. There are many possible criticisms to be made of the various writings from the viewpoint of modern thought, but our purpose here is to present ideas rather than to debate issues. Such value judgments are left to the reader.

Although the studies in this volume have been based upon a wide range of sources, the bibliography is limited to English-language works cited in the text, commentaries, and notes. Detailed citations have been given with each chapter to suggest sources of additional material. These are not always of even quality, since some are given merely as examples of a particular viewpoint.

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The texts of the quoted materials selected have been followed as faithfully as seemed advisable for the purposes of this publication. Some repetitious or less pertinent material
has been omitted, but in such manner as to leave continuous and consistent passages that should fairly present the arguments of the different authors. I have occasionally departed from the existing standard translations to bring the vocabulary into conformity with modern usage. The authors, titles, and passages used of each of the quoted texts or translations are listed in the notes at the end of the volume.

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