

FOREWORD

Dictionaries had always formed the 'a—b—c' in the learning and study of a language. Sanskrit education for ages had started with the committing to heart of the *Amarakoṣa*. When Western scholars took to Sanskrit study in modern times, they prepared Dictionaries of Sanskrit with meanings in English and other European languages. With the adoption to modern education and the English medium, Indian scholars followed suit with their own Sanskrit-English Dictionaries.

As Monier Williams says in the Preface to his English-Sanskrit Dictionary, an ability to translate from and compose in a language has always been held as a measure of the proficiency in that language. As an aid to such translation and composition, a Dictionary from English to one Indian language is a necessity. So far as Indian languages are concerned, the first Dictionaries of this kind to appear related to some of the regional languages of India—Hindustani, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada.

The first effort to provide an English-Sanskrit Dictionary was that of Monier Williams, who produced his work 'A Dictionary of English and Sanskrit' under the patronage of the East India Company in 1851, i.e. twenty years before he brought out his better known Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Regarding the all-round importance of such a Dictionary he pointed out in his Preface to it that it would be helpful even to those who use the modern Indian languages, as "no vernacular tongue is adequate to express the ideas of religion and science without borrowing its terms from the Sanskrit" (p. iii) and that "the influence which it (Sanskrit) exercises on the spoken dialects of India" was "far greater than that of Latin, or English, Italian or French." (p. iii). The labour involved and the method of compilation followed for his pioneering work in about 860 pages are set forth by him in the same Preface. According to his statement, it took him eight years to complete his English-Sanskrit Dictionary.

Twentyfive years after this, the pioneer Indian scholar to undertake an English-Sanskrit Dictionary was Anundoram Borooah who was also the pioneer in the whole field of modern Sanskrit scholarship among the Assamese. Born in 1850, an I.C.S. Officer in 1872, Borooah enjoyed hardly a decade and a half for his literary career and yet within that brief span, he undertook and accomplished more than one literary project, besides editing and publishing some important Sanskrit classics. In 1881, this modern Assamese Amarasinha, who had mastered his *Amarakoṣa* at fourteen, planned a work in Sanskrit grammar more arduous and prodigious than the undertakings of Bhandarkar or any other scholar, a comprehensive Sanskrit grammar in twelve volumes of one thousand