

## INTRODUCTION TO THIS EDITION

Several factors have weighed with the Publication Board, Assam, in undertaking to reprint the priceless works of the great Sanskrit scholar, Anundoram Borooah, which were first published about a hundred years ago. Our prime consideration has been the fact that Anundoram Borooah belonged to that pioneering and noble band of Indian scholars who had addressed themselves to the task of rehabilitating the glory and greatness of the Sanskrit language, Sanskrit literature and Sanskrit education. Secondly, the brilliance and profundity of the commentaries and criticisms written by him on a number of important Sanskrit books are almost without parallel in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. Thirdly, by reprinting his works we aspire to rediscover for lovers of Sanskrit all over the world a fund of literary treasures which is now almost forgotten. Finally, we do hope that our endeavour will enable present generations of Indians to become acquainted with the achievements of one of the most eminent scholars of Assam and of the country as a whole who died at the early age of thirty-nine.

People of today cannot but marvel at Anundoram Borooah's stupendous creative genius which found its fulfilment within the span of a short life and which refused to be bogged down in the day-to-day problems of administration that he had to tackle in the capacity of a high official in the civil service of the British Government. The short biography included in the book would help readers to have an idea of the richness and vitality of his wonderful mind. In those days few Indians could aspire to a fame that extended beyond the frontiers of the country, and this was true especially for a man belonging to this remote corner of India. But Anundoram's deep devotion to literature and his great erudition had won for him the appreciation and admiration of scholars from all over the world. The truth of this is amply borne out by the tributes which are included in the appendix of this book. Anundoram was the first graduate from Assam and the first and the only member of Indian Civil Service from this State.

Anundoram Borooah's entire life was dedicated to literary pursuits. In fact, the story of his brief life may be said to be a story of the love and devotion which inspired his studies of Sanskrit literature. Only a few others can rival him in the zeal that he brought to bear upon his efforts to restore Sanskrit literature to its rightful pre-eminent position. The noble faith that informed his pursuit of Sanskrit literature is clearly expressed in the following words quoted from the book, *Mahāvīracharita*: "To me, Sanskrit is dearer than any other language. Its music has charms which no words can express. Its capability of representing every form of human thought in most appropriate language is probably not rivalled, certainly not surpassed, by any other language. Most touching scenes have been drawn in heart-rending words. Most noble images have been clothed in most sublime language. Most terrific pictures have been couched in terror-producing expressions; and among the foremost to elevate the language and enrich the literature of ancient India stands the name of our poet Vaśyavāk Kāśyapa Bhavabhūti Śrīkaṇṭha. His plays have been all translated into English, two by more than one writer, and it can be confidently predicted that before another hundred years, they will be rendered into almost every language of civilized Europe. May we hope that with the diffusion of Sanskrit, he will be as appreciated in the farthest corners of the world as he is on the banks of the Śiprā and near the ruins of Vijayanagara."

There is hardly any scope for adding to what Anundoram Borooah himself had said about this great book in his illuminating and comprehensive preface. It was originally published about a hundred years ago (1877) in three parts. After Monier William's *English-Sanskrit Dictionary*, Anundoram's is the second lexicon of its kind to be compiled anywhere in the world. This monu-