

concrete shape to the work on the Index that was going on over the years. The fascicule was styled "Tentative" because it was attempted at a time when not all the cards on the various entries included in the Specimen Fascicule were available to the author.

The stage was now set for a further internal classification of the cards, which then fell into six main divisions, and their alphabetization. This was taken up in the early months of 1992 by Shri Marathe, Dr. Deshmukh and Dr. Mehendale, when Dr. R. N. Dandekar suggested to Mehendale that a beginning might be made to write out the final entries of the Index and publish them as a first fascicule. A suitable occasion had presented itself by Providence, since on July 6, 1992, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute completed its 75th year of existence, and it was decided by the authorities of the Institute to celebrate 1992-93 as the *Amṛtamahotsava* year.

Ideally the publication of the first section of the Cultural Index should have begun with the names of persons, gods and other mythological beings. But the condition of the corpus at that stage was not suitable for this. Hence it was decided to start with smaller sections, material for which could be readily gathered and suitably organized. The choice therefore fell on the names of serpents, birds, etc., to be followed by those of missiles, weapons, etc. In a way this beginning with the names of *snakes* and *missiles* also can have some justification. The *Mahābhārata*, as it is available today, is supposed to have been narrated by Sūta Ugrasravas, which he, in his turn, had heard at the *snake* sacrifice of king Janamejaya. And the basic theme of his narrative centered round the war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas which was fought with various *missiles*.

The work of writing out the Index-entries for the two sections noted above and seeing them through the press was started by Mehendale leaving the work of further internal classification of the cards and their alphabetization to Shri Marathe and Dr. Deshmukh. In addition to this work, Shri Marathe and Dr. Deshmukh also helped Mehendale in going through the proofs, Shri Marathe specially paying attention to verifying the textual references in the proofs. The result of this work is now being presented to the world of scholars in the form of the first fascicule of the *Cultural Index*.

The Index entries hardly require any orientation. However, the following few features may be noted :

1. References, when necessary, are given not only for the actual occurrence of a given name, but also to the additional information that may have been supplied for it. For example, of the two references 1.31.15, 2 given under the name Akarkara, the first reference (15) indicates the stanza where the name occurs, the second (2) indicates the stanza where it is said that the name Akarkara was listed by Sūta at the request of Śaunaka.