

## FOREWORD

Messrs Motilal Banarsidas are to be congratulated on bringing out this edition of Macdonald and Keith's Vedic Index of names and subjects. This is a very useful compilation and every student of Vedic literature finds it invaluable. It is much more than what its name implies. There are illuminating notes on a variety of subjects, Civil Law for instance, which supply the background without which an exegesis of Vedic texts, including in the term the compendia of religion, ritual, tradition and philosophy known as Brahmanas would not be possible. It is not necessary to accept all the theses which the learned authors have laid down for themselves. For instance, they are not prepared to believe that Vedic literature is much earlier than 1200 B.C. for reasons which are not very difficult to understand. Western scholars find it difficult to accord Indian culture and civilization an antiquity as great as that of the Egyptians. They are not prepared to admit, as Macdonald specifically states in his preface, that the cult of Vedic gods like Indra, Varuna and the Nasatyas could have travelled from India to Middle Asia. For them the researches of Tilak and other Indian scholars who find internal evidence in Vedic literature itself to carry Vedic chronology back by several centuries and of an Aryan culture, though not necessarily an Aryan race, rooted firmly in Indian soil and sending out its off shoots to countries further west, have no meaning. Normally, perhaps, such differences in matters apparently of purely an academic interest should not affect the value of a book like the present Index. But, it can easily be seen that at times the interpretation of particular terms would be affected by such considerations. To take the word 'Sindhu' by way of example, a person who is wedded to the theory of the Central Asian origin of Aryan culture cannot but translate the word as river. Obviously, there are no oceans in Central Asia. On the other hand, a scholar who is convinced that the original home of the Aryans as we know them in the Rig Veda