

FOREWORD

by

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As a person interested in, among other things, working with manuscripts, I have travelled to departments of Sanskrit at many Indian universities and colleges in the last few years. During these travels, I have come across many excellent and potentially excellent Sanskritists. However, the general picture I have developed of Sanskritists at Indian institutions of higher learning is that of persons who put in relatively few hours of professional work everyday and who depend on someone else for the initiative to undertake research. It is not only that many of their publications are old wine in new bottles, but also that many do not seem to have been required at all to remain active in publication in order to hold on to their positions or to win promotions. In fact, I know one case in which the person enjoyed the benefits of professorship, curatorship, deanship etc. first solely on the basis of having completed a Ph.D. at a foreign university and later simply by publishing the Ph.D. dissertation without the correction of even obvious errors.

Against the background provided by such 'functional' Sanskritists, for whom the pursuit of knowledge expected of a professor is to be carried out only between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. (between the times of the last convenient bus to the university campus and the time of the first convenient bus from the university campus) and then too between tea-breaks, the few dedicated scholars such as the late Professor K. A. Subramania Iyer seemed, remarkable as they were, even more remarkable. Their commitment to their professional field was not chalked out by a clock. Nor did it come to an end with the beginning of retirement. In fact they worked at their subject with redoubled vigour, once

they were free from administrative duties, examinations and formal teaching.

I am aware that Sanskritists are human beings too and they cannot remain unaffected by what is going on outside the academia. Particularly, the commercialization and politicization of college and university campuses and the application in the educational system of irrelevant criteria have landed them in an incongenial situation. As persons whose expertise is mostly deemed unnecessary for 'modern' India and is, in fact, viewed by many as an obstacle to the modernization of India, they are especially vulnerable. They are also caught in a bind, as society continues to make conventional expectations of them (that they should be self-sacrificing, etc.) but does not accord them the same degree of prestige as it does to persons occupying political and 'high-paying' positions. However, it should also be noted that the level of material support has gone up considerably in the last few years for Sanskritists at Indian universities. Salaries have increased, individual offices have been provided, libraries have been funded relatively generously, the demands on faculties' time for teaching have been very reasonable, and the number of students working for degrees has certainly become manageable. If in this situation the spirit of constant pursuit of knowledge displayed by professors such as K. A. Subramania Iyer, V. Raghavan, P. L. Vaidya, R. N. Dandekar, T. G. Mainkar, and K. Kunjunni Raja (to name only some of the prominent Sanskritists of the last few generations) is not maintained, India will be the poorer for it.

It is in the context of considerations such as these that the work of the late Iyer, the editor of the present volume, is to be viewed. True, he was active as a researcher when he was Reader, Professor, Head of the Department, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Vice-chancellor and so on. But the incontrovertible indication of how deeply embedded in his personality real professorship or true *brāhmaṇya* was is furnished by the fact that his major achievement, the research on Bharṭṛ-hari, mostly followed his retirement as professor of Sanskrit. There was no degree to be obtained, no tenure or permanent appointment to be sought, no salary increments to be won, and no promotions to be pursued. Yet, Professor Iyer went on studying and writing as if he was at

the threshold of his career. His *niṣkāraṇa adhyayana* in the post-retirement period resulted in at least ten volumes and forty articles, forewords, introductions, etc. If the vigour and rigour of the Sanskrit tradition have been maintained through hundreds of years—many of these centuries contained one or other force working against Sanskrit—the credit for that astounding achievement should mainly go to the *agrhyamāṇa-kāraṇa* persons such as Professor Iyer.

I met Professor Iyer first in 1972 at the time of the first International Sanskrit Conference in Delhi. We had corresponded with each other since 1967. I began the correspondence almost immediately after I decided to write my Ph.D. dissertation on the philosophy of Bharṭṛ-hari's *Trikāṇḍī* or *Vākyapadīya*. Many of the texts I needed were not available to me at Harvard University where I was writing the dissertation. Professor Iyer was most kind in supplying the information regarding where the texts could be found and in encouraging a younger Sanskritist along the way. He also wrote to me from time to time about his own work that was in the press and about the work he had planned. There was no secretiveness, no *ācārya-muṣṭi*, in his dealings.

Our meeting in Delhi was brief, but I still remember it vividly. I read my paper on the contribution of Sanskrit to linguistics. Professor Iyer, whom I did not identify at that time, asked a question about the etymology of *vaikhari*. Only after the particular session of paper-reading was over and we were coming out of the lecture hall, did Iyer identify himself. His unassuming manner immediately led to a straightforward discussion. My mind noted his 'white' smile. There was warmth as well as a scholarly aloofness about it. Simultaneously it indicated his simplicity and approachability as an individual and a detachment from the subject he was discussing.

To use Bharṭṛ-hari's words, Iyer was never *abhiniṣṭa* or *pratinivṣṭa*. Although he worked on Bharṭṛ-hari for more than forty years, he did not express his views aggressively or become intolerant toward differing views. We disagreed in our perceptions, expectations, methods and conclusions. While he did not go to the extent of accepting views in writing, he did not indicate any rigidity of position or criticize me for taking a different line.¹

Our second and last meeting took place in Lucknow in July 1977. I had informed Iyer about the date of my visit, but could not communicate the time of arrival in Lucknow. The overnight train I took from Delhi brought me to Lucknow very early in the morning. Even after a couple of hours spent in the waiting room, it was barely eight o'clock when I rang the bell of the Iyer residence on 38 Major Banks Road (renamed but not really re-known as Darabārīlāla Śarmā Mārga as Iyer pointed out to me later). For a long time there was no answer. An 'early-bird' like me had thought that a good time to catch anyone at home in India would be early morning and that a Sanskritist of a senior generation like Iyer must be in the habit of getting up early. However, I was about to be disappointed. I waited for nearly fifteen minutes and even asked the passersby if Professor Iyer was out of station. Finally, I was asked by a female voice (which I later identified as Mrs. Iyer's) who I was and told to wait on the porch for a while. Later, when I entered the house everything was as if the Iyer couple had been ready to receive me for over a week. The tasteful, unostentatious decor of the spacious house made as deep an impression on my mind as the talk of Professor and Mrs. Iyer. They treated me as if they had known me directly for a long time and we were picking up the thread of conversation from where we left it a day earlier.

At that time I had been successful in tracing the Malayalam original, lost for nearly fifty years, of the Madras transcript (cited as "M." in the Vṛtti portion of this volume) to a remote part of Kerala and had discovered eight more leaves of the incomplete Vākya-kāṇḍa-vṛtti manuscript at Pāṭaṇ, Gujarat (cited as "P." in the Vṛtti portion of this volume). Iyer was very happy to know about these developments and seemed to be saying to himself, 'The interest I have generated in Bharṭṛ-hari is bearing fruit.'

From what I heard from Professor T. G. Mainkar (in whose death the world of Sanskrit has suffered another serious setback in the last two years), Professor Iyer's passing away also occurred in the cause of knowledge. Iyer was engaged in delivering a lecture series. Despite a long history of heart trouble, he

extended himself to deal with his subject to his satisfaction. His heart could not take the strain. His death at Pune on 31 March 1980, although saddening, was appropriately an offering in the life-long *jñāna-yajña*.²

Koḍuvāyūra Anantarāma Subrahmaṇya Ayyara was born in Pālghāṭ, Kerala, on 7 September 1896 of Koḍuvāyūra V. Anantarāma and Raṅganāyikī Ammāla. His ancestors hailed from Tanjore and the immediate family included five brothers and three sisters. His maternal grandfather, Raghu-nātha-bhaṭṭa-(or-bhaṭṭār) was a well known Sanskrit scholar. The credit for developing a liking for Sanskrit in the child Subrahmaṇya should largely go to this grandfather who was skilled in delivering popular lectures on the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, etc. After passing the 'Inter' examination, young Subrahmaṇya went to Paris in March 1914 and began the study of Indology with Professor Silvain Levi in November 1914. He received a Diploma of University Studies from the University of Paris. Thereafter he proceeded to Britain and attempted to enter an M.A. (honours) program under the guidance of Professor A. B. Keith at Edinburgh. However, Keith advised him that facilities for such a program did not really exist. Disappointed, Iyer came to London and completed an M.A. in Sanskrit at the University of London in 1919 with Dr. L. D. Barnett as his supervisor.³ For the next two years he taught Malayalam in London. Upon returning to India, he became Reader in Sanskrit and Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Prakrit at Lucknow University on 18 July 1921. In the course of time, he began to take part also in the work of the committee looking after the Department of Oriental Learning in which Sanskrit was taught along traditional lines. He was instrumental in expanding both the departments in terms of enrolments as well as faculty appointments. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that he attracted many capable, dedicated and well-known traditional scholars to the Department of Oriental Learning. Through his efforts a Department of Hindi was established at the University of Lucknow. He was its caretaker Head at the time of its establishment and thus simultaneously managed two departments for a while. He also played a leading role in founding the

Akhila Bhāratiya Sanskrit Parishad and was its President as well as Director of Research for many years.

Iyer's formal relationship with Lucknow University came to an end in 1960, but not before he had received professional honours such as a professorship in 1948, deanship of the Faculty of Arts and appointment as Vice-Chancellor (1957-60). His administration in these capacities was marked by fairness and an aversion to the growing politicization of institutions of learning. He did not lose sight of the fact that the spirit of the various academic rules was more important than the words in which they were couched.

Subsequent to fulfilment of his duties at Lucknow, Iyer became the Vice-Chancellor of the Sanskrit University at Varanasi, now known as Sampūrṇānanda Saṁskṛta Viśva-vidyālaya. This was a renewal of ties for him, as he had been the Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, the institution that preceded the University, in 1950-51 at the request of Dr. Sampūrṇānanda, the Minister of Education in the Uttar Pradesh government at that time. Professor Iyer was also a Visiting Professor from time to time at the Centre of Advanced Study in Linguistics at Pune. He toured the U.S.S.R. in 1954 as a member of the Government of India delegation and the U.K. in 1957 as an invitee of the British government. Member of the senates and special committees at several north Indian universities (Lucknow, Allahabad, Kashi, Rurki, Varanasi) and a long-time examiner of advanced students, he generally led a very busy life. The President of India honored him in 1974 with a certificate of Merit and the Government of Uttar Pradesh presented him with an award of Rs. 15,000 in 1976.

Through his linguistic accomplishments, constant devotion to learning, integrity and unassuming, gentle personality, Iyer earned a large following of admirers, especially in the Lucknow-Varanasi area. He was one of those relatively few South Indians who felt completely at home in north India and who were deeply and widely respected in north India. Although a native speaker of a south Indian language and an ardent admirer of Sanskrit, he advocated, on practical grounds, the use of Hindi as a link language within India. Despite his long

association with 'western-style' academic set-ups, he was a great admirer and supporter of traditional 'panditic' learning. He trained himself to wield Sanskrit as a medium of expression for serious academic writing just as he cultivated English. Even when his mind was occupied with the thoughts of classical authors like Bharṭṛ-hari and Abhinava-gupta, he had time to encourage new writing in Sanskrit, both *kāvya* and *śāstra*. Although he was born in an orthodox family, he was 'open' enough to marry a Polish lady and give his house in Lucknow the name 'Hindska.'

Iyer was the first scholar who was able to edit the entire Trikāṇḍī (or Vākyapadiya) kārikā text along with all the available ancient commentaries : the Vṛtti of Bharṭṛ-hari (erroneously referred to as Hari-vṛṣabha) on the first two books, the Paddhati or Sphuṭākṣarā of Vṛṣabha or Vṛṣabha-deva on the kārikās and Vṛtti of the first book, the Ṭikā of Puṇya-rāja or Helā-rāja on the kārikās of the second book, and the Prakīrṇa-prakāśa of Helā-rāja on the kārikās of the third book. (See Deccan College Monograph Series nos. 32, 21 and presumably 21.2 published respectively in 1966, 1963, and 1973 and the following part of the present volume.) He was deprived by death of the pleasure of seeing his edition of the Vākya-kāṇḍa Vṛtti and Ṭikā (the present volume) in print. It makes me particularly sad to realise this, as one of the considerations I had in mind in delaying my edition of the Vākyapadiya-vṛtti, ready in a penultimate version since 1978, was to give Professor Iyer the honour of being the first scholar to publish in its entirety the text of the Vākya-kāṇḍa-vṛtti (incomplete texts have been published in Charu Deva Shastri's and Raghu-nātha Śarma's editions, the former around 1941 and the latter in 1968).

Iyer was also the first scholar to translate the entire kārikā text into English (see Deccan College Building Centenary and Silver Jubilee Series nos. 26 and 71, published respectively in 1965 and 1971, and Motilal Banarsidass 1974 and 1977). These translations contain glosses based on the commentaries of Vṛṣabha-deva, Puṇya-rāja and Helā-rāja. In the case of the first book, Iyer's translation of the Vṛtti also accompanies that of the kārikās. It is not known whether he had prepared any draft of a

translation of the Vṛtti of the second book.

From 1937 on Iyer wrote a number of articles aimed at facilitating an understanding of Bharṭṛhari (see George Cardona, *Pāṇini : a survey of research*, pp. 119-121). Many of these were incorporated, with changes and additions, in his 1969 monograph of over 600 pages entitled *Bharṭṛhari : a study of the Vākyapadiya in the light of the ancient commentaries* (Deccan College Building Centenary and Silver Jubilee Series no. 68). The last of such articles of which I am aware has now appeared in the Adyar Library Bulletin vols. 44-45 (= Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja Felicitation Volume), 1980-81.

There are many differences between my approach to Bharṭṛhari and Iyer's. Although I have benefited from his work and deeply appreciate the difficult conditions under which he worked, I do not agree with him in many matters of approach and method; there is a definite 'generation gap' between us. I believe that if Sanskritology or Indology has to register real progress we must now discourage approximate summary-type translations and dissertations dominated by a survey of the views of earlier scholars. True, surveys of specific fields, histories of selected branches of learning and translations aiming at a general rendering of the original work have a certain utility. They serve to facilitate the progress of new entrants to a particular domain of scholarship. However, they cannot advance scholarship itself, unless they are written by a meticulous master of the field (as, for example, is the case with George Cardona's *Pāṇini : a survey of research*, The Hague-Paris : Mouton, 1976). Indology has now reached a stage in which it will make real progress only if attention is paid primarily to bringing new works to light, to publishing carefully prepared editions of new works, to attempting reliable and well-indexed editions of previously published works, and to focusing on specific problems of interpretation. The difficulties of a text should now be identified and discussed as perspicuously as possible. An interpretive commentary that gives the *general* sense of text passage or a translation that renders the original without specifically acknowledging the uncertain and problematic expressions has a rather limited progress value. Professor Iyer could have been privately aware of this consider-

ation, but he has not given expression to it or tried to put it in practice. Probably, realising that the difficulties of the Vākyapadiya were too many to be individually discussed by a scholar advanced in years, he seems to have decided to be content with penning whatever he understood of the text. His achievement is not small. Yet, it is frequently the situation that a reader cannot understand the purpose of a number of Vākyapadiya expressions from Iyer's translation.

In the present volume, Iyer is to be commended for his decision to print the Vṛtti and the Ṭikā separately. Firstly, the extent and division of the *kārikā* text are not identical in these two commentaries. Secondly, the readings presupposed by the Ṭikā are not always the same as the ones in the Vṛtti. The interpretations too differ in the case of more than fifteen *kārikās*. The strain these factors create for the editor as well as for the reader is evident in Charu Deva Shastri's incomplete edition and Raghu-nātha Sarma's edition based on Charu Deva Shastri's, in which the Vṛtti and the Ṭikā have been printed together, probably to avoid repeated printing of *kārikās*.

My edition of the Vṛtti will differ from Iyer's in some significant respects. In the first place, it will be based entirely on the original manuscripts, not their transcripts. Only the Pāṭaṇ manuscript of the Vākyā-kāṇḍa-vṛtti was available to Iyer in the form of photographs and it too only for the portion discovered by Muni Puṇya-vijayaji (containing the text from p. 285 line 22 of this volume). I had sent him photocopies of the eight more sheets I identified in 1977 at Pāṭaṇ (giving the Vṛtti text from p. 263, line 14, of this volume). However, he was not able to use them.⁴ Furthermore, his access to the only other known Vākyā-kāṇḍa-vṛtti manuscript, the one in Malayalam script, was through its transcript at the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras. This access was in a less than ideal form—as a poorly prepared photocopy and a partial transcript.⁵ Fortunately, I was able to rediscover the original Malayalam manuscript in 1977 and am now in a position to use it for my edition. At the time of this discovery, Iyer's press-copy of the present volume was almost ready and hence he decided to be content with whatever copy he had of the Madras transcript.

The second difference in my edition will be that I shall follow the enumeration of *kārikās* as given in Professor Wilhelm Rau's 1977 edition (Wiesbaden : Franz Steiner Verlag). Thirdly I shall specifically identify and discuss the problematic phrases in the text, proposing probable solutions wherever possible. The individual readings too will be different in scores of places. None of this difference in method and approach should be interpreted as a negative comment on Iyer's work. He achieved the best results he could in rather difficult circumstances—in different health, generally uncooperative curators of manuscript collections, want of research money specifically allocated to search for new manuscripts and to examine known manuscripts on-the-spot, and publishers less devoted to the accuracy of printing than the firm of Motilal Banarsidass. As Abhinavagupta, another author who serves as a bond between Iyer and myself, says : *ūrdhvordhvam āruhya yad artha-tattvaṃ dhiḥ paśyati śrāntim avedayanti/phalaṃ tad ādyaiḥ parikalpitānāṃ viveka-sopāna-paramparāṇām*|| 'Having risen to higher and higher levels, the mind, untouched by fatigue, sees the true nature of something. This phenomenon is but an outcome of the staircases of analysis that one's forebears laid out.'

Footnotes to Foreword

1. At the time I wrote my first letter to Iyer I had not penned even ten lines of my Ph.D. dissertation, but I had the audacity to write to him that I did not agree with him on many matters. In his response dated 08/12/67, Iyer writes: 'It is normal that there should be difference of opinion among workers in the same field. I would appreciate it if you could let me know where you differ from me.'

2. Iyer's commitment to knowledge and interest in the work of even considerably junior scholars is evident from the following sentences in his letter of 29/09/72: 'I am very anxious to see your Philosophy of Bhartṛhari's Trikaṇḍi [= unpublished Ph. D. dissertation]. You said that you would send me a copy of it. I am waiting eagerly for it.' In response, I informed Iyer on 23 October, 1972 that I would make my personal copy of the dissertation available to him for about one month. On 02/11/72, Iyer wrote back: 'I shall try to read your thesis within thirty days. I understand that it is a rather voluminous one, but I shall put away all other work in order to finish it.'

3. Iyer's letter of 20/01/73 contains the following statement : 'I was a student of Sylvain Lévi, A. foucher, Antoine Meillet, Dr. Barnett, Daniel Jones, Mrs. Rhys Davids and Louis de la Vallée Poussin.'

4. Cf. Iyer's letter of 24/07/77: 'May I request you to send me a copy of those eight pages of the *Vṛtti* which you were able to recover in Patan? I may be able, with their help, to make some alterations in my edition of the *Vṛtti* at time of the proof-reading.' It is clear from the final phrase that Iyer's edition was in the press or was on its way to the press at the time the letter was written. He did not live to complete proof-reading as is confirmed by the publisher of this volume.

5. Cf. Iyer's letter of 11/03/74: 'M. turned out to be a very unsatisfactory photocopy of the *Vṛtti* because a very large number of pages are very smudgy and illegible and some totally missing.—I had to write to the Curator of the Madras Govt. Mss. Library to send me transcripts of those pages.—As for M., I do not know whether its defective condition is due to the person who took the microfilm or to the person who made the photocopies from it in the Lucknow University.' See also pp. 252, 259, 260, 267, of this Volume.'