

## FOREWORD

Authorship is like parentage; even when not dubious one is sometimes reluctant to acknowledge the end product. But sometimes one must, warts and all, when it constitutes a rite of passage by which one becomes a "twice-born" in the academia, when one's doctoral dissertation appears again as a book.

The book to which I am writing this foreword thus started as my doctoral dissertation. It then consisted of a translation of the first six chapters of Abhinavagupta's Commentary on the *Bhagavadgītā* and of an essay based on that Commentary. This book completes the translation. If it does not include a distinct discussion of the Tāntrika elements in Abhinavagupta's Commentary it is because that is the topic of a separate study currently under progress.

My doctoral work was supervised by Professor D. H. H. Ingalls to whom, like all his students, I remain grateful. But my personal sentiments extend further. I am specially grateful to him for insisting that before seeking embellishment I at least achieve precision; that while seeking literary felicity I at least achieve clarity and that in seeking originality I at least first achieve plausibility.

Much has been written on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Much is being written on the *Bhagavadgītā*. And much will perhaps be written on the *Bhagavadgītā*. Some of it may even be by me, until perhaps I realize that when one encounters a religious classic like the *Bhagavadgītā* it is the reader rather than the text which may be in need of illumination!

Philadelphia  
June 18, 1982

Arvind Sharma