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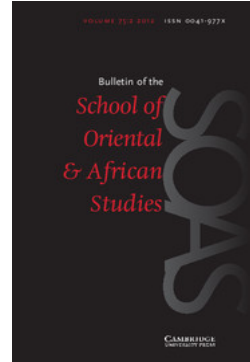
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**M. J. Hutt: *Nepali: a national language and its literature*. xii, 252 pp., map. London: School of Oriental and African Studies; New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., 1988. £12.**

R. K. Sprigg

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of the thirteenth-century Vaiṣṇava Varada's *Śrībhāgyaprāmēyamālā*. Half of the first volume is given to an account of the texts, an explanation of the points of controversy, and a discussion of their aims and methods. The rest of this volume contains four Advaita texts, in romanization and translation, and the second volume contains five Viśiṣṭādvaita texts and a set of indexes.

The points of controversy concern the initiation and way of life of the *saṁnyāsin*. They are apparently superficial but, like similar points in other religious traditions, have far-reaching theological implications. That according to Advaita a *saṁnyāsin* should discard his topknot and sacred thread, while according to Viśiṣṭādvaita he should retain them, is not hard to understand; it is of a piece with Śāṅkara's understanding of the old opposition between knowledge and action, for the topknot and sacred thread are the badges of one who performs Vedic ritual, the action *par excellence*, and the performance of ritual presupposes assumptions which are incompatible with the highest knowledge. On the other hand, it seems to be purely arbitrary that the Advaita ascetic should carry a single staff, while the Viśiṣṭādvaitin should carry a bundle of three. Yet this is a difference on which the texts expend considerable ingenuity and polemical force. Olivelle shows that the reason for their insistence on this apparently arbitrary difference is that the triple staff was originally a portable tripod, used by ascetics, Buddhists as well as brahmanical, to keep their water pots from being polluted by contact with the ground, a concern which should not affect the *saṁnyāsin* according to Advaita Vedānta. The situation is complicated by the fact that Viśiṣṭādvaita texts sometimes, but not always, distinguish between the *tridaṇḍa* or triple staff and the *triviṣṭabdhā*, literally 'fixed apart three ways', or tripod. The opposition between *tridaṇḍin* and *ekadaṇḍin* ascetics is much older than Viśiṣṭādvaita as we now know it, being found in the *Mahābhārata*. It seems that the original function of the triple staff has been lost, and it has become a mere emblem, like a pharmacist's coloured bottles; but it remains associated with the view that the *saṁnyāsin* is not exempt from ritual rules. If we may venture beyond Olivelle's arguments, the tripod may have once been both a piece of equipment and a symbol of the *saṁnyāsin*'s homelessness; for householders hang their pots from the rafters, but a man with no roof over his head needs something else to hang his pot from. Once *saṁnyāsin*s took to living in houses or *maths*, the function of the tripod disappeared.

The arguments are conducted in terms of scriptural authority and its interpretation, rather than in terms of perception and inference; this is natural when dealing with ritual questions which are not amenable to worldly proof. Texts can be found to support both the wearing and the discarding of the topknot and sacred thread, or the carrying of both the single and the triple staff. This incidentally shows that these variations in ascetic practice are more ancient than the existing schools of Vedānta; but this of course is not the theologians' concern. As Olivelle shows, the two schools of Vedānta exemplified here use divergent forms of argument when faced with

texts which contradict their own views. Neither of them resorts to the usual Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā explanation that contradictory texts indicate an option (*vikalpa*); for in a dispute of this kind it is necessary to prove that one's opponent is not just different but wrong. Advaitins treat texts enjoining the topknot, the sacred thread or the triple staff as applying to lower grades of *saṁnyāsin*; Viśiṣṭādvaitins, on the other hand, treat the contrary texts, not always plausibly, as *āpaddharma*, applying only in emergencies. Occasionally the authenticity of a text is impugned, and such arguments throw interesting light on the nature of authority as viewed by these thinkers.

Olivelle discusses the views and methods shown in the texts with great clarity. The translations are clear and scholarly, but one might question the habitual translation of *parimokṣa* as 'nudity', and *vṛtti* as 'lifestyle' (which usually refers to what one does with one's surplus of time and resources) rather than 'livelihood' (referring to how one acquires the necessities of life). For Vedic mantras he relies on Griffith, without acknowledgement. By an oversight, notes 55 and 67 of volume I refer to the same iconographic material, but describe it differently. The word 'hypocrisy' is misspelt. But these are minor and infrequent blemishes in an excellent work.

D. H. KILLINGLEY

M. J. HUTT: *Nepali: a national language and its literature*. xii, 252 pp., map. London: School of Oriental and African Studies; New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., 1988. £12.

Since the very name *Nepali* has recently been rejected by some Indian speakers of the language that they share with a majority of the people of Nepal, Dr. Hutt's book can certainly claim to be topical; but, though he does not ignore Darjeeling, Dehra Dun, and other parts of India where emigrants from Nepal have settled, it is with the Nepali of the Kingdom of Nepal that he is mainly concerned.

The greater part of the book (pp. 71–231) is an account of Nepali literature, as a major indication of the language's growing strength and prestige; but the author begins by putting literary achievements in Nepali in perspective with a chapter dealing with the topography of the Kingdom of Nepal within the frontiers fixed in 1816. He follows this with a brief history of that area going back in time beyond the conquests of Prithvi Narayan Shah, King of Gorkha, and his immediate successors (1744–90) to the immigration of the Khas, probably during the ninth century, and of Rajput refugees about two centuries later.

Hutt thinks it likely that it was the Khas who founded the kingdom of Jumla, in what is now western Nepal, in the twelfth century. The importance of this kingdom for Nepali lies in the fact that it is in the Jumla area, about 200 miles to the west of Kathmandu, that the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century inscriptions have been found that are claimed to be Nepali in its earliest written form. In addition, his table

of statistics of 'Nepali-speakers in the Zones of Nepal (1971)' shows the highest percentage, 96%, for Karnali, the Zone in which Jumla is situated, and the next highest figures, all of them between 82.2% and 90.7%, for Dhaulagiri and for Rapti, adjoining Karnali to the east and south-east, and for the Seti and the Mahakal Zones lying between Karnali and Nepal's western frontier with the Indian district of Kumaon (by contrast, the Bagmati Zone, in which Kathmandu lies, in central Nepal, has only 56.4% Nepali-speakers, a bare majority).

With this historical connexion with the Khas in mind it is not surprising that *khas kurā* should appear prominently in the section in which Hutt deals with the various names by which Nepali has been known during the last 700 years, together with such other names as *parbate*, or *parbatīya*, *pahāri*, *gorkhālī*, and *gorkhā bhāsā*, eventually giving way to *Nepālī* (it was not until 1932, incidentally, that *gorkhā* and *gorkhā sarkār* were replaced by *nepāl sarkār* on Nepalese postage stamps, which had been issued since 1881).

In a few paragraphs on its relationship to other Indo-European languages the author compares Nepali with Hindi, Gujerati, Panjabi, and Bengali; but there is no mention of Kumaoni. Since Kumaoni is also considered to have developed from the language spoken by the Khas, and is, moreover, Nepali's linguistic neighbour to the west, as well as being a fellow member of the Pahari language group, some information on the affinity of Nepali to Kumaoni would have been instructive. How well, for example, does the linguistic boundary of Nepali with Kumaoni correspond to the political frontier of Nepal to the west?

In the Jumla area, not far from that western frontier, Hutt has listed 17 inscriptions for the period 1245–1591. In trying to establish whether the language of these inscriptions is indeed in a direct line of ancestry for Nepali he is influenced by such factors as that it is not until 1498 that the *ho* form of the verb 'to be', together with *garnu* as opposed to the *kar-* root, appears, that the first use of the agentive suffix *le* appears in a *lāl mohar* of 1529, and that the perfect participle form in *-āko* (current-Nepali *-eko*) first appears in 1581.

The chapter 'Early Nepali literature' (pp. 77–112) contains a list of 17 works written between circa 1401 and 1798, and 16 Nepali poets of the early nineteenth century are listed, with the titles of their works. This chapter is a prelude to a chapter on Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814–68) as the 'founder poet' of Nepali literature, on his translation of the *Rāmāyana* into something approaching the spoken form of his mother tongue, and on his biographer, Motiram Bhatt.

The three more recent literary figures to receive individual consideration, Lekhnath Paudyal (1884–1965), Balakrishna Sam (1902–81), and Lakshmi Prasad Devkota (1909–59), also demonstrate the Nepali language's debt to Brahmins; for Balakrishna Sam, a Chettri, is the only one of the five thus far mentioned not to have been a Brahmin. Each of these three receives a pen portrait, in about 20 pages, with some mention of influence on his written style from Sanskrit originals or from

English, especially from Shakespeare and Tennyson for Sam, but Wordsworth for Devkota.

The closing chapter, 'Modern Nepali literature', brings the literary survey up to date, with subsections on fiction, the novel, the short story, and poetry. It is in this chapter that Darjeeling's contribution to Nepali literature appears; and, partly for this reason, personalities from outside the Brahmin and Chettri communities come into the picture, Rais, Tamangs, and Thakalis, for example, including Lainsingh Bangdel, Accha Rai 'Rasik', Parijat, and Bhupi Sherchan.

A few passages in the nine chapters on Nepali literature have been given in both Nepali and English; so those readers with a sufficient knowledge of Nepali can form an opinion of Hutt's skill in conveying the rhythm and subtleties of Nepali in an English translation, and an estimate of the poetic inspiration and literary talent to be found in the passages that he has chosen for his illustrations.

Conflict with authority seems to have been a recurring feature of the literary life of Nepal during the Rana régime (1846–1950): Bhanubhakta, Paudyal, Sam, and Devkota suffered detention, censorship, proscription, fines, and voluntary exile, which can hardly have left their literary output unaffected. Another factor restricting literary production at that time must have been the limited opportunities for would-be authors to publish; so Hutt's chapter on early publishing in Nepali is important for a proper understanding of the difficulties under which Nepali writers worked, in Nepal at least. It is significant that Bhanubhakta's translation of the *Ramayana* was published, in 1887, not in Nepal but at Benares. With the exception of *Gorkhapatra*, published continuously since 1901, the nine titles comprised in Hutt's list of periodicals published in Nepal prior to 1950 seem to have had short and erratic careers. Indeed, it was outside Nepal, in Calcutta, that the first grammar of Nepali, Ayton's *A grammar of the Nepalese language*, was published, in 1820. Hutt has not failed to mention this grammar; but he has nowhere mentioned a landmark in translation into Nepali, *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments translated from the originals into the Nepala language*. The Mission Press, Serampore, printed a thousand copies of *Volume v containing the New Testament* a year later than the *Grammar*, in 1821.

The author has listed 31 'Nepali periodicals published in India prior to 1950'. About half of these publications are from Darjeeling District; so it is not surprising that names other than those of Brahmins and Chettris should appear in this field of literary activity too, as well as those already mentioned in the chapter 'Modern Nepali literature'. Prominent among these are the names of Newars, of Tibeto-Burman linguistic ancestry, Ganga Prasad Pradhan and Paras Mani Pradhan.

Another of Hutt's numerous tables, 'Languages of the Nepalese population of Darjeeling (1961)', shows a clear majority for Nepali, with 369,100 speakers (approximately 70%), easily outnumbering such other immigrant languages, Tibeto-Burman languages, as Rai, Tamang, and Limbu. For Nepal itself his table 'Languages of Nepal' (1971) also gives a majority for Nepali, 52.44% (6,060,800 speakers), with two other

Indo-European languages coming second and third, Maithili, a distant second, though with over a million speakers (1,327,200; 11.48%), and Bhojpuri third, with 806,500 speakers (6.98%). The increasing importance of Nepali can be seen in the chapters 'Nationalism and the National Language' and 'The standardization of the National Language' (pp. 37-70), in which Hutt deals with his second main topic, and chronicles a century of attempts to prepare the language for a national role through standardizing its orthography and through providing it with a unified grammar and lexicon. He makes it clear that these efforts have been so far successful during the present century that Nepali has been formally declared the language of administration and education, and is *de facto* the language of the law courts. Even so, he quotes Ballabh Mani Dahal as having, as recently as 1976, 'bemoaned the fact that Nepali lexicographers have failed to standardize Nepali spelling as much as is required'. The difficulties to be faced in any attempt to reconcile Nepali spelling with the facts of Nepali pronunciation can be clearly seen in the innovations proposed by R. L. Turner more than sixty years ago, and followed in printing his *Comparative and etymological dictionary of the Nepali language*. His solution to the problem of having two symbols, *i* and *ī*, for the single vowel unit *ī*, and *u* and *ū*, similarly, for the single vowel unit *ū*, was to make an arbitrary choice in favour of *i* and *u*, except that loan words from Sanskrit should follow their own usage; but it failed to commend itself to Nepali writers. To phoneticians, too, his choice, *i* and *u*, is likely to seem anti-phonetic, because the two Nepali vowels generally sound closer in quality to the long vowels of Sanskrit, but these are symbolized by *ī* and *ū*. It seems a little odd to find the Nepali for 'Nepali' spelt *nepāli* in Turner's *Dictionary* rather than *Nepālī*.

Attractive in its general appearance the book suffers here and there from letters that have made only half an impression on the printed page; especially is this so in Romanizations containing a macron, it seems. As regards accuracy there are occasional misprints of figures and dates; '1950', for example, can hardly have been the date on which Chandra Shamsheer (Prime Minister, 1901-29) was said to have 'declared Nepali the language of his administration' (p. 43). The index seems a little haphazard; *Jumla*, for example, does not appear in it, nor does *Kathmandu*, nor *Prithvi Narayan Shah*.

These, however, are only minor blemishes. Dr. Hutt's survey of the history, status, and literature of the language that has not only become the *rāṣṭra bhāṣā* of Nepal but has also extended its sphere of influence well beyond the frontiers of that country is highly informative and generously supported with statistics; it is also highly readable.

R. K. SPRIGG

PETER SCHREINER AND RENATE SÖHNEN: *Sanskrit indices and text of the Brahmapurāna*. (Purāna Research Publications, Tübingen, Vol. 1.) xxiii, 826 pp. *Brahmapurāna*

*indices on [26] microfiches*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987. DM 146.

This work consists of the printed text of the *Brahmapurāna*, in Roman transliteration, together with full indexes. It is the first of a projected three-volume set which is to include an English summary with subject indexes, and a general bibliography of *purāna* studies.

In the introduction, the authors make it clear that they consider the indexes to be the main work, and the text itself merely a concrete reference for the convenience of the user of the indexes. However, *purāna* scholars will be glad of the text too, which, apart from being beautifully printed, provides advantages over other existing editions.

The text is a reproduction of the Anandāśrama edition (Poona 1895), which was based on six manuscripts. The Poona editors presented manuscript variants in footnotes, although they made no apparent attempt to weigh them. The only other edition of the work not derived from the Poona edition is the Venkatesvara Press edition (Bombay 1906), based on four unidentified manuscripts. The Bombay editors gave no variants, but only the occasional passages in parentheses or in footnotes. The present text has been created intelligently and carefully so as to preserve all the manuscript and printed text evidence provided by the two earlier editions. Once again, the available textual variants are not weighed, and no attempt has been made to gather further manuscript evidence. These policies have not been adopted lightly, and are satisfactorily defended in the introduction. The authors have preferred to devote their present labours to providing tools that will make the resolution of these and other questions very much easier in the future. In this, their main purpose, they have succeeded admirably. It might at first glance seem that an elaborate set of indexes based on an admittedly unsure textual foundation might itself be unsure. But there is a major mitigating factor: the indexes *include all variants*. This is unusual enough to be worth remarking upon, and it means that the indexes are in fact not merely based on the texts as decided upon by the Poona and Bombay editors, but also upon the six individual manuscripts that were used by the Poona editors (inasmuch as they are represented in the footnotes). A kwic index to any of the printed texts alone would be a useful tool: when one uses these indexes, one is scanning both the manuscripts and the printed texts for evidence. This broadens the base of the indexes to an acceptable degree, in relation to the current state of *purāna* studies. A further mitigating factor is that the methodology employed in creating this work (see below) is flexible enough to permit the seamless addition of more textual evidence in the future and, if necessary, a semi-automatic new edition.

There are three distinct indexes. The largest, which at 4728 pages is indeed vast, is the kwic index. Let us consider the word *vedhyam*, as it appears in the line

kāraṇavam cāvedhyam<sup>9c</sup>ca triviṣṭapam  
athāparam |