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VIII. BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS

A User's Appraisal of "South Asian Fonts" Software

Review by: Dale L. Nafziger
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Software Developer: George Hart III.
South and South East Asia Studies
University of California, Berkeley

Cost of Standard Package: \$10
Laser Writer Font: \$20

The South Asian Fonts software developed by Dr. George Hart represents a quantum advance for South Asian language lovers. This software was developed for use on the Macintosh and allows the user font options including Panjabi, Bengali, Telugu, Gurmukhi, Times India, Kanchi, Kanchi N, Devanagari, Tamil, and Tamil Laser. Devanagari and other scripts will also soon be available for the Laser Writer.

You don't need to be a linguistics major to get a lot of productivity and enjoyment from using this software. My experience in South Asia focuses upon the country of Nepal, so my examination of this software is immediately limited to the Kanchi, Kanchi N, and Devanagari fonts. Furthermore, I write from the viewpoint of an engineer who has developed a love for the Nepali language. Thus I have a very practical interest in using software, including survey preparation, writing research abstracts, and doing my Nepali homework! As a word of encouragement to those who have never used a Macintosh, I might also add that I never had--until I began using this software package a few months ago.

For persons desiring to use the Nepali script, the software contains three fonts. Kanchi and Devanagari both operate in the same basic manner, using Macwrite to develop Devanagari characters. The only distinguishing difference I could detect is that Devanagari produces very fine characters, while Kanchi produces slightly larger and bolder characters--which in some cases I find to be esthetically more pleasing. Examples are provided for comparison at the conclusion of this article. The Kanchi characters and Kanchi N characters (also generated by Macwrite) are nearly identical. The major difference between these fonts is that Kanchi N supersedes Kanchi, by providing a simplified form of character entry. Using Kanchi, the symbolic vowel is entered before the consonant. Kanchi N enters the symbolic vowel after the consonant--using the style typically followed when writing by hand.

The keyboard is set up so that using the "open key," the "open + SHIFT key," the "open + OPTION key," and the "open + SHIFT + OPTION key" produces four different characters. An attempt has been made to assign similar English and Devanagari letters to the same keys. For example, pressing "open t" yields त, "open s" yields स, etc. "Half" characters are generated by pressing SHIFT. For example, pressing "SHIFT t" yields त्, "SHIFT s" yields स्, etc. When I initially started using the software my typing was very slow, and in an absolute sense it still continues to be so! However, the generally logical association between Roman and Devanagari letters on the keyboard made the learning process much faster than it would have otherwise been. For Nepali writers there are only a few commonly-used characters not included:

क
ः used in words such as
स
ः used in words such as
उ
ः used in words such as

शक्ति
क्षेत्र
गर्ज्यो

The क character may be formed using क + त्, and the ञ character may be formed using ञ्, but thus far I have resorted to inserting the क character by hand.

As I noted above, I had never used a Macintosh prior to using the South Asian Fonts software. After a few sessions with an Indian friend, however, I was "off and running" on my own. Given the large memory space required by the software, it runs best on a dual-drive system, with one disk for the fonts software and the other for work files. The "Macs" I work on are only single drive, however, and to my dismay I once found that I had typed in far more information than could be saved on a single disk.

These are problems a more advanced user would have anticipated, but for those who are beginners--be warned!

A final subject I would like to touch upon briefly is other software packages, particularly those designed for IBM compatibility. Given IBM's dominance in the field of personal computing, I expected to find at least a few good IBM compatible software packages written for South Asian languages. The results of several telephone calls proved this hypothesis to be almost entirely false. The one package I did succeed in locating is a program called "Sarasvati," developed by Donald A. Becker at the University of Wisconsin. To quote his description of the program:

"Sarasvati" is actually not a word processing program at all, but rather a printer driven program for the IBM PC and Toshiba P1340 (Parallel) dot matrix printer. The "Sarasvati" user composes a text in Romanized Hindi or Sanskrit with the aid of a standard word processing package, saves the text in ASCII format in a disk file, and then has "Sarasvati" print the final hard copy in Devanagari script.

A major drawback to using this program is that it only works properly for the model P1340 parallel printer. Dr. Becker is working on a version of "Sarasvati" that will run on the other printers in the Toshiba line, but it will probably be late summer before that program is ready for distribution. The current version of "Sarasvati" is available for \$80. Readers interested in contacting Dr. Becker may do so at:

6439 Bridge Road, Apt. 204
Madison, WI 54713

Thus, it appears that those of us with IBM compatibility will have to wait a little while longer for a good generic South Asian fonts package to appear. In the meantime, if you have access to a Mac and \$10 in your checking account, I can't think of a better bargain!

Examples:

Devanagari: नेपालमा हिमाल तथा पहाडबाट बग्ने पानी ८३००० मेगा वाट

बराबरको बिद्युत शक्तिको काम दिन सक्ने क्षमता छ ।

Kanchi: नेपालमा हिमाल तथा पहाडबाट बग्ने पानी ८३००० मेगा वाट

बराबरको बिद्युत शक्तिको काम दिन सक्ने क्षमता छ ।

Kanchi N: नेपालमा हिमाल तथा पहाडबाट बग्ने पानी ८३००० मेगा वाट

बराबरको बिद्युत शक्तिको काम दिन सक्ने क्षमता छ ।

The Lion's Roar

1985

Directed by Mark Elliot. Narrated by James Coburn. Nalanda Foundation. (Available from Centre Productions, 1800 30th Street, Suite 207, Boulder, CO 80301. Telephone (303) 444-1166. Length: 49 minutes)

Reviewed by:

Heidi J. Larson
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"The Lion's Roar" is a tribute to the 16th Gyahwang Karmapa. Through his story and the impact of his death on the Buddhist community around him--from Tibet, Sikkim and the United States--where he died in 1981, the film provides both a personal insight on his relationship with his students and a more general look at the ideology and practices of Tibetan Buddhism.

The film opens with a good background on Buddhism--its birth in India through the teachings of Siddhartha, and its spread throughout Asia. In a sequence of stunning images (primarily from Nepal), the narrator James Coburn describes the particular stronghold of Buddhism in Tibet, where four schools of Buddhism emerged. Among these schools, the 16th Karmapa is from the "Kagyu" school's order of "Black cap lamas."

The 16th Karmapa, like all Karmapas, was identified in a letter left by his predecessor. Before he died in 1922, the 15th Karmapa wrote in a letter the parents' names and the place and time of the 16th Karmapa's birth which occurred in 1924.

Unlike his predecessor, the 16th Karmapa was not allowed to stay and, as his name denotes, "perform the activities of the Buddha" in the land of his birth. In 1959, when the Chinese invaded Tibet, the 16th Karmapa fled to Sikkim where he was invited to establish his seat at Rumtek Monastery. The 16th Karmapa settled at Rumtek, but was moved to build his own monastery according to his memory and the inspiration of his residence in Tibet. The new monastery now houses 250 monks and it is the spiritual center for the lay community which has grown around it.

The 16th Karmapa brought from Tibet four students whom he identified as being enlightened while they were still infants. Through interviews with his disciples, the film explores the relationship between the 16th Karmapa and those he teaches. One follower, Ti Situ, explains the difference between the master-disciple relationship and a student-teacher relationship. He comments that, as a disciple, "you have a deep devotion from deep inside." He adds that deep devotion inherent in a master-disciple relationship coincides with a sense of patience, a patience which challenges the expectations of Western students of Buddhism. The Western students, who tend to get excited hoping for immediate results, learn that "if you rush to the top of the ladder, there is more chance that you will fall on your head."

The 16th Karmapa's teachings in the West were primarily during three visits he made to the United States between 1974 and 1981. The film takes the viewer along on some of the Karmapa's travels and teachings in the United States, up to his death in an Illinois hospital. The impact of the Karmapa on those around him was epitomized in the reactions of the hospital staff who attended him before his death. In an interview with his physician, Dr. Michael Levy, we learn of the Karmapa's unceasing kindness and his insistence that he felt no pain, despite his advanced state of cancer. Dr. Levy particularly comments on the staff's unprecedented experience of being "confronted with a dying person more concerned with how they felt."

After the Karmapa's death, Dr. Levy and his staff witnessed an even more unusual phenomenon. During the days in which the Karmapa's body was allowed to rest in his hospital bed for the sake of his disciples--in itself a practice usually prohibited--Dr. Levy found that the area around the Karmapa's heart stayed warm for 24, 48 and even 72 hours and more after death. Levy had never known a heart to stay warm 48 hours and more after death.

The unceasing warmth--and ongoing life--of the 16th Karmapa's heart was dramatically expressed in the seven weeks of ceremonies in Sikkim where his remains were sent. The ceremonies are led by his four main students, guardians of the lineage, who are requesting, as one remarked, "the quick return of his holiness for the guidance of the people."

The film's story ends (and begins) with the notion of Buddha's unceasing guidance--manifest in the lineage of Karmapas. A rainbow appears when the cremation fire is lit, and one disciple recounts a visit to the 16th Karmapa one week before his death. "I saw an accepting look in his eyes ... as simple as birth, is death," the disciple remarks, noting, "I cried, and he said 'Nothing happens'."

Biota and Ecology of Eastern Nepal

1983 Makoto Numata, editor and compiler. Chiba, Japan: The Himalayan Committee of Chiba University. 485 pp.

Structure and Dynamics of Vegetation in Eastern Nepal

1983 Makoto Numata, editor. Chiba, Japan: Laboratory of Ecology, Faculty of Science, Chiba University. 184 pp.

Reviewed by: Naomi Bishop, Associate Professor and Chairperson
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Professor Makoto Numata, Professor of Ecology and Chairman of the Himalayan Committee of Chiba University, has led four expeditions to east Nepal over the past twenty years to pursue studies of plant ecology in this region. In 1963, they went to the summit of Mt. Number. In 1971 and 1977, they investigated the area around Mt. Numbur. In 1971 and in 1981, they worked on the area around Mt. Baruntse. These expeditions were interdisciplinary, collecting among other things, higher plants, bryophytes, lichens, butterflies, soil samples, meteorological data, and ecological transect data and have led to numerous publications, primarily in Japanese journals. The two books being reviewed represent a compilation of these papers and this work, all in English.

Biota and Ecology of Eastern Nepal is a compilation of articles published between 1965 and 1980 in Japanese journals. There is also one new article written by Numata, a review of ecological studies in the Nepal Himalaya. The volume is divided into three major sections: I. Flora, II. Fauna, and III. Ecology.

I. Flora: includes 17 articles (authors: S. Kurokawa, A. Noguchi, N. Takaki, H. Inoue, M. Mizutani, M. Nishida, J. Ohwi, M. Tamura, G. Murata, S. Kitamura, S. Horie and S. Udagawa) describing types of plants collected on the 1963, 1971, and 1977 expeditions. All articles are essentially descriptive lists of species collected which include: lichens, bryophytes, hepatics (liverworts), mosses, pteridophyta, and higher plants. Four papers by Gen. Murata list the plants collected by the 1963 expedition. There is also a paper on Ascomycetes (sac fungus) in the sampled soils.

II. Fauna: includes 11 articles on fauna collected during the 1963 expedition to Mt. Numbur region. The fauna are all insects and the papers describe the specimens, noting in several cases discovery of new species, and in others new distributional patterns. (Authors: K. Morikawa, S. Suzuki, J. Aoki, K. Shinohara, G. Imadate, R. Yosii, S. Asahina, T. Yamasaki, S. Miyamoto, M. Chujo, S. Ueno).

III. Ecology: There are ten articles in this section. One is a meteorological report, by M. Mitsudera and M. Numata, based on observations in the area of Mt. Numbur in 1963. Two are Numata's ecological journals of the trip in 1963, while another two by K. Yoda present data from sample vegetation plots from different zones around Junbesi in Solu (4 plots around Seta village, 6 plots around Junbesi village, and 9 plots up the Beni Kola from Junbesi). A paper by M. Ohsawa, P. Shakya, and M. Numata describes their observations in 1971 of a cool-temperate deciduous broadleaved forest zone in the Sedua area in the upper Arun Valley, an area of extremely high rainfall. This type of forest, common in Japan and China in that zone, had not been observed in central or west Nepal and results from the high humidity of this region. M. Numata has two more papers in this section: one on "Semi-Natural Pastures and Their Management in the Himalayas" in which he describes his methodology for measuring pasture vegetation, its succession, and its forage value, and the other originally published in 1966 on "Vegetation and Conservation in Eastern Nepal." Finally there is a brief note on population sizes and resident ratios of swallowtail butterflies in Dharan, by M. Watanabe, based on investigations made on the 1977 expedition.

Structure and Dynamics of Vegetation in Eastern Nepal is a collection of 8 papers, all previously unpublished except for the two which appear in the previous volume. Nearly all of them focus on the research expedition of 1981 to the upper Arun valley. The new papers are:

- 1) Ecological Studies of Weed Vegetation in the Himalayas of Eastern Nepal, by Makoto Numata.

- 2) Grassland Vegetation and Succession in Eastern Nepal, by Katsuyoshi Tsuchida.
- 3) Distribution, Structure, and Regeneration of Forest Communities in Eastern Nepal, by Masahiko Ohsawa.
- 4) Chorology of East Nepal Plants in Relation to the Adjoining Floristic Region, by Puspa Ratna Shayka.
- 5) Leguminosae Collected in the Arun Valley, East Nepal, by Yoichi Tateishi.
- 6) List of Flowering Plants Collected by Himalayan Expeditions of Chiba University 1977 and 1981, by Puspa Ratna Shakya.

From the standpoint of a generalist interested in the ecology of the Himalayas, I found the most interesting papers in the above two volumes to be those dealing with 1) weeds and grasslands, 2) biogeography (or chorology) of Eastern Nepalese flora, 3) forest zonation/structure/regeneration, and 4) the anecdotal journals of the expedition in 1971. 1) For scientists working in agriculture or animal husbandry, the analysis of weeds, pastures, and grassland is useful both from a taxonomic as well as an ecological standpoint. The papers by Numata and Tsuchida (in *Structure and Dynamics*) discuss the composition of grasslands, plants as they affect cattle, and the succession of grasslands as indicators of the health of the vegetation, as well as weed/crop relationships. These articles would be of special interest to people with applied interests in Himalayan or mountain ecology. 2) The biogeography of Nepal is an area in which both taxonomic and ecological studies can also contribute. In addition to Shakya's paper relating the plants found on these expeditions to adjacent floristic regions, there are a number of observations on the biogeography of the fauna and flora tucked into the individual papers describing them. This makes the strictly descriptive, taxonomic papers of wider relevance to ecologists and expands the usefulness of the volume.

3) In his opening article (both volumes), Numata reviews the various schemes for describing the vertical climatic and vegetational zones in the Himalayas, with particular reference to east Nepal. The papers by Yoda contribute valuable descriptive and quantitative analysis of vegetation zones in this region, while the papers by Numata ("Altitudinal Vegetation and Climate Zones of the Humid Himalayas") and Ohsawa ("Distribution, Structure and Regeneration of Forest Communities in East Nepal") are more synthetic with Numata identifying climax vegetation zones, secondary vegetation zones, and climatic types and Ohsawa discussing mechanisms of regeneration in each of the vegetation zones. 4) These journals include a number of small observations that are valuable for their anecdotal quality. Descriptions of the areas surrounding major trails, fixed in time, provide comparative material for others travelling and working in those same areas. Often such observations, from the trained eye of a scientist, provide useful information that is not possible to include in the lists and tables of their more scholarly works.

The work of the Chiba University team over the past twenty years has been focused on an ecological understanding of this region, which bears close biogeographic ties to Japan (the Western tip of the Sino-Japanese region is called the "Himalayan corridor"). These two volumes are convenient compilation of much of the material collected on their expeditions, and serve as useful reference material for botanists, zoologists, ecologists, anthropologists, and geographers interested in Himalayan ecology. Although there is some redundancy in the papers, these are valuable reference volumes which make this body of research easily available to non-Japanese scholars.

Sangharakshita
1985

The Eternal Legacy: An Introduction to the Canonical Literature of Buddhism.
London: Tharpa Publications

Reviewed by: Janice D. Willis
Wesleyan University

Buddhism is coming to the West. That transmission is signaled, in part, by the great outpouring in recent years of Buddhist texts in western language translations. While scholars of Buddhism with specialized language skills have access to large swathes of the canonical literature in the original languages, still to read through every text of a particular "canon" in its entirety would require perhaps several lifetimes of work. Indeed, even to read through the available translated collections--such as the Sacred Books of the Buddhists or other volumes issued by the Pali Text Society--requires a good deal of time and effort. Moreover, such large anthologies in translation, even coupled with the steadily increasing numbers of individual text translations, represent only the tip of the vast repository of Buddhist scripture still extant only in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese and Khotanese language

versions. And yet, an understanding of Buddhism cannot be divorced from knowledge of Buddhism's sacred scriptures.

In an attempt to introduce western students to the vast storehouse of Buddhist canonical literature (and especially to that literature which is now available in English translations), the British-born monk Sangharakshita has authored The Eternal Legacy. To this end, he provides descriptive summaries of certain classic works of the Theravadin and Mahayana Buddhist traditions together with comments which seek to place them in both doctrinal and historical context.

Abbreviated summaries/overviews in English of Buddhist canonical literature have appeared previously. In 1952 Clarence Hamilton had provided a four-page overview of Buddhist literature in the introduction to his Buddhism: A Religion of Infinite Compassion. In 1968 Lucien Stryk included a seven-page summary of the literature in the "Foreword" to his World of The Buddha: A Reader--From the Three Baskets to Modern Zen. Both scholars included such overviews as contextual and introductory remarks for the respective anthologies each edited. Sometime earlier--in 1927--E.J. Thomas had supplied a twenty-one page annotated listing of the "Theravada (Pali) Canon" as an appendix to his classic investigation of The Life of Buddha as Legend and History. To the "Canonical Works of Other Schools," Thomas devoted only a single-paged summary. Sangharakshita's study, comprising some three hundred pages, obviously greatly extends such earlier, more cursory, treatments; and at the same time it attempts to give a fuller assessment of the historical and doctrinal contexts of the texts under discussion. Thus Sangharakshita's study is not only timely but extremely valuable as well.

Now, for the first time in one place, the student wishing to learn more about the sacred books of Buddhism--"what their names are, how they came into existence, and what they actually contain"--can turn to this handy reference. Moreover, the sampling is a very rich one. Sangharakshita surveys the "Monastic Code," the "Dialogues," the "Anthologies," the "Birth Stories and Glorious Deeds" and the "Fundamental Abhidharma" of the Theravadin tradition. Turning to the Mahayana, he then examines the "White Lotus," the "Perfection of Wisdom," the "Vimalakirti," the "Jewel-Heap," the "Lankavatara," the "Flower-Ornament," the "Nirvana" and the "Golden Light" Sutras. For making such a sourcebook available to us, both Sangharakshita and Tharpa Publications should be applauded.

There are to be sure problems with Sangharakshita's work. A primary issue, much open to debate, has to do with the definition of "canon" upon which he bases his selection of texts. It is certainly proper, in my opinion, that Sangharakshita chooses to break from the overly conservative view that only the Theravadin Pali Tripitaka represents the "orthodox" canon. Yet in order to incorporate into his study works of the Mahayana, Sangharakshita perhaps goes too much to the other extreme. He claims that his study is devoted to "what tradition terms the Buddhavacana or Word of the Buddha." He then further defines his subject matter as "the written records of the Buddhavacana or living Word of the Buddha, or what purports to be such, whether original or translated, or what is traditionally regarded as such by the Buddhist community or any section thereof." Such a broad definition clearly may present problems for all but the most holistically/mystically inclined.

Moreover, Sangharakshita's own selection of certain Mahayana works evidences a sometimes objective (i.e. chronological) organizing principle and sometimes a clearly subjective one (as when he groups together and discusses the Lotus sutra, the Perfection of Wisdom sutras, and the Vimalakirti sutra as representative respectively of the "Three Jewels" of the Buddhist refuge). A last problem has to do with the relative spaces devoted to respective texts or classes of texts. The Lotus sutra receives twenty-three pages; the "Tantras" only five. This latter issue of unevenness was addressed by Sangharakshita himself, when early on in his work (p. xiv) he wrote: "It has not even been possible for me to deal with the different canonical texts at a length proportionate to their comparative historical and spiritual significance, with the result that within the limited perspectives of this work some of the grandest monuments of Buddhist canonical literature may appear strangely foreshortened."

The above criticisms aside, we in the West can be gladdened that such a work as The Eternal Legacy has appeared. Especially for students of Buddhism, it represents a timely and comprehensive introduction, and a lucidly presented guidebook, to the vast and bejewelled treasury of Buddhist literature.