

It is sincerely hoped that the author would rectify these mistakes in the future edition of this otherwise laudable production, so as to make it more dependable and popular with laymen and scholars alike.

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*Unfolding The Petals — A New Sanskrit Grammar*

By David Teplitz, Tulsi Publishing House, New Delhi 110005, India. Price: Rs. 200/

Numerous have been the attempts from the occident as well as the orient to teach Saṁskṛt to beginners, but the book under review is a unique instance of poor workmanship both in terms of presentation and perfection. Any serious teacher of Saṁskṛt, or even a sincere student for that matter, will, even on a cursory glance, be convinced that the book suffers from many errors and howlers. The nature and number of these mistakes are so serious and staggering that one almost feels that the author himself is a novice at the language, assuming the role of a "navaprasthānadātā" ("inventor of a new method") in Saṁskṛt teaching!

The book, presented in the unwieldy quarto size, contains twelve chapters (pp. 1-264) and has, in addition, a Preface and Introduction (where, without any justification, Oriya is called a South Indian language), five Appendixes, bibliography, Saṁskṛt-English and English-Saṁskṛt Glossaries (pp. 265-467). There is unnecessary padding in the book which can conveniently be cut off (pp. 239-264). Thus, what is relevant to the purpose on hand, is the portion from pp. 1-238 and the two glossaries at the end, pp. 362-467.

The author seems to be an enthusiast in *Yoga* also, and is therefore obliged to introduce . . . though quite unnecessarily. . . some random remarks and diagrams on *Yoga*, the six spinal plexuses, *mantras* for meditation, 84 *āsana*-postures, etc. He advises the student to chant the "mantras", which he has given in his own way (p. 254), ignoring the fact that a *mantra* should be learnt direct from a qualified teacher. He asks the student to practise the series of consonant-vowel combinations (which he calls "vowel interpolation") as a "devotional act" rather than as a chore (p. 31). A beginner in Saṁskṛt fails to know what the author exactly means by this. Well, everything in this world is a devotional act for one of a religious attitude. But why should one confuse this with the simple fact of learning a script which is the result of a series of transformations down the centuries? One will be at a loss to know what exactly the author intends to achieve through this misplaced enthusiasm. He does not seem to have bothered to check with those who know Saṁskṛt or with the standard books already available, if the characters, nouns, verbs, declensions, conjugations and sentences, translations and quotations given here are correct or not, both from the viewpoint of palaeography and Saṁskṛt grammar.

Now for a general assessment of the book:

- (a) The author claims to have "devised" an easy way of writing the Devanāgarī alphabet using the Arabic numerals from "0" to "5" (p. 27). But this method is quite unsatisfactory and confusing, since the author picks up at random some letters and tries to show their writing. But there are several letters in the alphabet which do not resemble any of these numerals. Further, this method could have been useful if each of these numerals can help writing a set of vowels or consonants occurring in an order. Moreover, there are a number of overlappings. It is not clear, for instance why the author includes the letter "ṭha" (ṭ) in the "5" type, whereas it can easily go under the "0" type. So are the cases of "ca" (c) and "ṇa" (ṇ) included under the "0" type, and "ṛ" (ṛ) and "ṝ" (ṝ) brought under the "5" type.



- (b) The author also introduces the long form of ‘ī’ (ई), much against the practice of the traditional grammar books. This letter has no usage in Saṁskṛt, excepting in a few syllables of *mantras*.
- (c) The author has left blanks for ‘r’ and ‘l’ conjoined with the vowels ‘ī’, ‘ī̄’, ‘ī̄’, and ‘ī̄’ (p. 39). Perhaps he got confused since ‘r’ and ‘r̄’ and ‘l’ and ‘l̄’ almost sound alike. As a matter of fact, these combinations can be clearly and easily represented in writing.
- (d) One glaring point is that much distinction is not shown between the Devanāgarī letters ‘tha’ (थ), ‘bha’ (भ) and ‘ya’ (य). Further, the representation of the letters ‘e’ (ए), ‘ai’ (ऐ), ‘ra’ (र) and ‘sa’ (स) is not quite correct.
- (e) Regarding pronunciation, the author states that the Saṁskṛt vowels ‘a’ (अ) and ‘ā’ (आ) should be pronounced as ‘uh’ in ‘America’ and as ‘ah’ respectively (p. 16). One fails to understand the presence of the aspirate ‘h’ since the two vowels in Saṁskṛt have no aspiration whatsoever.
- (f) Though on p. 135 the author refers to the use of the signs ‘I’ and ‘II’ to mark the end of an idea and sentence (the former in prose and the latter in verse), he never bothers to use them in his book, excepting on pp. 141-144.
- (g) Another disturbing feature of the book is that diacritical marks for the Romanised forms are not properly used, although the author himself observes that these marks are very important (p. 21). The wrong form ‘Sanskṛta’ has throughout been used, whereas it should be ‘Saṁskṛta’. A number of instances for this non-employment or wrong employment of diacritical marks may be seen almost throughout the book. A few examples should suffice: p. 22 (2 instances); p. 24 (4 instances); p. 26, & p. 35 (7 instances).
- (h) The Devanāgarī forms given on pp. 36-37 for different words (no. 5, 7, 10, 38, 44) are all wrong.
- (i) The author has completely left out the treatment of the Parasmaipada Roots belonging to II conjugation. At least a few roots like ‘as’ (to be), ‘ad’ (to eat) and ‘han’ (to go, to kill) could have been given, in view of their frequent occurrence.

Listed below are twentyfour types of mistakes noticed at random. The reviewer is quite certain that anyone with a little more patience will be amply ‘rewarded’ in the hunt for howlers, by the hundreds!

1. The most frequent feature plaguing the entire book is wrong spelling. The instances are too many to be enumerated. Shown below in Roman are a ‘few’ wrong forms given by the author, along with the forms in which they should have been presented. These mistakes are all the more glaring when seen in the Devanāgarī script!

‘Srrgāla’ for ‘śrgāla’ (p. 86); ‘adhūnā’ for ‘adhunā’ (p. 113); ‘paṣyati’ for ‘paśyati’ (p. 116); ‘paṭhaḥ’ for ‘pāṭhaḥ’ (p. 124); ‘dulabha’ for ‘durlabha’ (p. 125); ‘bāla’ for ‘bālam’; ‘manuṣyāt’ for ‘manuṣyān’ (p. 136); ‘Kupam’ for ‘Kūpam’ (pp. 138, 157, 171); ‘yuddhyāya’ for ‘yuddhāya’ (pp. 137, 139); ‘vijam’ for ‘bijam’ or ‘vijam’ (p. 142); ‘śāśācchāntim’ for ‘śāśvacchāntim’ (p. 143); ‘śiṣyo’ for ‘śiṣyo’, ‘sūkham’ for ‘sukham’ (p. 156); ‘bhijam’ for ‘bijam’, ‘śiṣam’ for ‘śiṣam’, ‘udyanam’ for ‘udyānam’ (p. 157); ‘bākān’ for ‘bakāḥ’ (p. 169); ‘dukhāt’ for ‘duḥkhāt’ (p. 171); ‘Kariyā’ for ‘Kriyā’ (p. 188); ‘jayate’ for ‘jāyate’, ‘mṛyate’ for ‘mriyate’, ‘udhyate’ for ‘yudhyate’ (p. 191); ‘grhyate’ for ‘grhyate’ (p. 201); ‘medhu’ for ‘madhu’, ‘danatṛi’ for ‘dātṛi’ (p. 211); ‘nedayis’ for ‘nediyas’ (p. 214); ‘mañcati’ for ‘muñcati’ (p. 217); ‘draṣṭum’ for ‘draṣṭum’ (p. 220); ‘vadhah’ for ‘vadhūḥ’ (p. 227).



Still more disturbing and disgusting is the fact that Appendix E, which is supposed to provide the “key” for different exercises, is full of such spelling mistakes. One can see them on pp. 282, 285 to 293, 297-98, 300-01, 311 to 315, etc., etc.

2. As instances for wrong construction may be cited “naraḥ bhavati vīram” (p. 83) and “yuvām likhāmaḥ” (p. 205).

3. The author has given wrong English translations for certain words: “rathaḥ” as “chariot wheel” for “chariot” (p. 86); “bhaktaḥ” as “union” for “devotee” (p. 143); “guḍākeśa” as “O Lord!” for “O Arjuna!”, “pārtha” as “O Lord!” for “O Arjuna!” (p. 144); and “hutam” as “family” for “offering” (p. 157).

4. Copious are the instances where the sentences are not clear in their import.

Ex. “Satyena ca śīlena vṛkṣāḥ kṣayanti” (p. 110); “duḥkhena hutam ca” etc., and “mātā putrā na sukhena” etc. (p. 130); “Kutra meghāt calanti” (p. 136); “sūkham (sukham?) Yogam anasarati” and “bālo mastakam nikṣipati” etc. (p. 156); “āvām puṣpāni” etc. (p. 161); “bālāḥ pustakāni śāstreṣu” etc. (p. 173); and “dhane mamatvam kartavyam praśnam” (p. 238).

5. In some places the author is confused regarding the exact meaning of the verbal roots.

Ex. “muc” is said to mean “to cry” (while it actually means “to release, to set free” etc.) (p. 169). “yaj” (worshipping the divine beings) is wrongly used with reference to human beings (p. 300). “hatam” is wrongly used in the place of “hṛtam” (p. 309). Likewise “kropiṣyāmi” is wrongly used for “kopiṣyāmi” (p. 311).

6. In a few cases the author has used wrong stem-forms. Thus he gives “mahata” for “mahat” and “mahāta” for “mahā” (both on p. 125). He has also wrongly retained the stems in a few instances.

Ex. “atra manas” for “atra manaḥ” (pp. 125, 152, 313), “yathālanākārātman” for “yathālanākāra ātmānam” (p. 237); and “mahatānilaḥ” for “mahānilaḥ” (p. 307).

7. We also find wrong root and verbal forms in the book.

E. “khat” for “khan”, “jat” for “jan”, “tyay” for “tyaj” (p. 133); “muj” for “muñc” (“mujjati” for “muñcati”) (p. 152); “bhūj” & “bhūjayati” for “pūj” and “pūjayati” (p. 153). The word “Veda” is wrongly traced to “vyadh”, while it is to be traced to “vid” (p. 239).

8. In a few cases the author gives wrong past participle forms.

Ex. “hṛkta” for “hṛta”, “pīna” for “pīta” (p. 133).

9. As instances for wrong conjugation may be mentioned “cint”, a Xth conjugational root treated as 1st conjugation (p. 68) and “krudh”, a IVth conjugational root treated as 1st conjugation (pp. 72, 287).

10. The author has treated many well-known Ātmanepada-roots as Parasmaipada ones.

Ex. “ḍayati” for “ḍayate” (pp. 75, 76, 104, 297); “plavati” for “plavate” (pp. 106, 296); “prakāṣati” for “prakāṣate” (p. 209); “labhet” for “labheta” (p. 220); “kalpati” for “kalpate” (p. 284); “dyotanti” for “dyotante” (pp. 290, 296).



11. The author has split some words wrongly. Thus the noun “samadarśanaḥ” is split as “sam + darśanaḥ” (for “sama + darśanaḥ”) and is also wrongly rendered as “together unite with the Divine inflow!” (p. 141). “bhūtāśayasthita” is wrongly split as “bhūtā + śayasthita” (for “bhūtā + āśayasthita”) (p. 143).

12. As instances of wrong *sandhi* may be mentioned “etām lokān” for “etāmllokān” (p. 158); “gaṅgodaka” and “gaṅgauha” for “gaṅgodaka” and “gaṅgauha” respectively (p. 312).

13. As an instance of wrong hiatus or absence of *sandhi* may be cited “bandhu atithi” for “bandhū atithi” (p. 149).

14. In a number of places the author has retained the *repha* (‘r’), contrary to the rules of Sāṃskṛt grammar.

Ex. “janair saha” for “janaissaha” (p. 109); “punar patati” for “punaḥ patati” (p. 128); “punar taranti” for “punas taranti” (p. 152); “mātar śiśum” for “mātaśśiśum” (p. 217); “śucir kṛṣṇam” for “śuciḥ kṛṣṇam” (p. 236); “munir satyam” for “munissatyam”, “arirśocati” for “ariś śocati”, “śiśur phalam” for “śiśuḥ phalam”, “gurur śāstram” for “guruśśāstram” (all on p. 291); and “śatrur carati” for “śātruścarati” (p. 313).

15. As instances of wrong dropping of the *visarga* may be mentioned the following.

“narā” for “narāḥ” (pp. 106, 310); “vrkṣā” for “vrkṣāḥ” (p. 110); “vyāghrā” for “vyāghrāḥ” (p. 116); “aśva” for “aśvaḥ” (p. 128); “putrā” for “putrāḥ”, “kanyā” for “kanyāḥ” (p. 130); “bālā” for “bālāḥ” (pp. 132, 300); “meghā” for “meghāḥ” (p. 314) and “pānthā” for “pānthāḥ” (p. 315).

16. As instances of wrong gender may be listed “vyākaraṇān” (p. 123), a neuter gender noun treated as one of masculine gender, and “bālīkena” and “kanyena” (p. 127), feminine nouns treated as masculine gender nouns, by the author.

17. The author has also used wrong numbers (i.e., plural for singular and dual) in a number of places. As instances may be cited p. 104 (3 sentences), p. 209 (2 sentences), p. 237 (one sentence) and p. 297 (8 sentences).

18. Another instance of the violation of grammatical rules is the usage of wrong case — forms.

The Nominative and Vocative Case-forms of the noun ‘rūpa’ in all the three numbers are given wrongly (p. 85). Likewise, the Accusative case form of ‘grāma’ in singular number is wrong (p. 85). As further instances may be listed: “ārāman” for “ārāme”, “parvatān” for “parvatāt” (p. 156); “śarade” for “śaradi”, “nṛpe” for “nṛpāya” (p. 173); “gaṅgam” for “gaṅgām”, “chāyam” for “chāyām” (p. 189); “śirṣam” for “śirṣe” (p. 196); “tṛptih” for “tṛptaye” (p. 198); “mātaḥ” for “mātaraḥ” (p. 207); “svasari” for “svasre” (p. 209); “rūpa” for “rūpam” (p. 302); “nare” for “nara” or “naram”; “śṛgāle” for “śṛgālo” (p. 307).

19. There are a number of instances for non-substitution of the dental ‘n’ by the cerebral ‘n’. The author, of course, refers to this grammatical requirement on p. 160 but practically ignores it.

“grāmena” for “grāmeṇa”, “grāmānām” for “grāmāṇām” (p. 85); “śiṣyena” for “śiṣyeṇa”, “ācārena” for “ācāreṇa” (p. 109), “mṛgena” for “mṛgeṇa” (p. 111); “puṣpāni” for “puṣpāṇi” (pp. 138, 302, 307, 311, 314); “divyaśāstrāni” for “divyaśāstrāṇi” (p. 156); “śāstrāni” for “śāstrāṇi” (pp. 156, 236); “nṛpena” for “nṛpeṇa” (p. 189); “īṣvarena” for “īṣvareṇa” (p. 302), and “pātrāni” for “pātrāṇi” (p. 315).

20. One of the fundamental rules of Samskrt grammar is that adjectives take the same gender, number and case of the substantives they qualify. There are a few instance of violation of this rule, in the present book.

“vaktā” for “vaktī”; “vaktṛṇām” for “vaktṛiṇām” and “andheṣu” for “andhāsu” (all on p. 327).

21. In a few cases, the author has not used the causal form where it had to be used: “śamyāmi” for “śamayāmi” (p. 161) and “tuṣyati” for “toṣayati” (p. 185).

22. The author has also given wrong passive voice form on p. 230: “mayā vṛkṣān draṣṭum ārabhante” for “mayā vṛkṣān draṣṭum ārabhyate”.

23. An instance of wrong compounding is “sundarabhavati” (p. 189).

24. For wrong usage of particles may be cited the following instances:

(i) ‘vā’ is wrongly used in “simyā (?) vaṇī sundarabhavati vā śrgālasya” (p. 189).

(ii) The particle ‘saha’ is wrongly used in “saha karābhyām” (p. 108) and “duḥkhena saha” for “duḥkhena” (p. 116).

A glance at the above list of blunders in a book meant for beginners learning a language speaks for itself about the merits of this production. In short, this is a classical example of how a book should not be written.

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