CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DO YOU SPEAK SANSKRIT?
ON A CLASS OF SANSKRIT TEXTS COMPOSED IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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1. In 1960 appeared—as No. 4 of The Maharaja Sayajirao University Oriental Series of the Oriental Institute, Baroda—a booklet of only 38 + 86 pages entitled Gīrvāṇapadaṃjāri and Gīrvāṇavāṃjāri. According to the information given on the reverse of the title page it is “reprinted from the Journal of the Oriental Institute.” The editor of these two short Sanskrit texts, and author of the “Introduction”—which is in fact only appended to the texts themselves—is Umakant Premand Shah. In publishing them, however, he but took up, and carried out, a suggestion of P. K. (=Parashuram Krishna) Gode’s, as is quite frankly stated by Shah himself. It is hence Gode to whom the credit goes for having first drawn attention to these texts and for having recognized their importance, though mainly in terms of their cultural and historical significance only.

Of the two texts the first one, the Gīrvāṇapadaṃjāri (GPM), was composed by Varadarāja, the well-known author of the Madhva- Laghu- and Śāra-Siddhāntakaumudi, i.e. “a medium, short and super-short version”—to use Cardona’s (1976:287) apt rendering—of the Siddhāntakaumudi of the famous grammarian Bhaṭṭoji Dīksita, who was also his guru. Varadarāja “may be assigned to ca. 1600-1650

1 Viz. the “Text” as “Supplement” to JOI Baroda VII (1957-1958) and the “Introduction” as “Supplement” to JOI Baroda VIII (1958-1959) and IX (1959-1960), respectively. Note that these supplements are not (normally) bound together with the journal in one volume.


A.D.4 As usual, i.e. as in most other cases in the history of Indian literature, practically nothing is known about the author's life, etc.5

The second text, viz. the Gīrvāṇavāṁśūtājī (GVM), was in its turn composed by a certain Dhuṇḍirāja (alias Dhuṇḍirāja)—one of the 35 authors of this name listed in the New Catalogus Catalogorum. 6 His date is also discussed by Gode who assigns this work to ca. 1702-1704. Shah flatly states that "the GVM is an imitation of the GPM,"7 but as a literary composition he regards it as superior to the latter.8 The GPM is quite aptly described in the India Office MSS Catalogue 9 as "being courses of elementary conversational questions and answers on everyday occurrences, on literary, devotional and other subjects."

As far as I can see, the publication of these two previously unedited texts has almost totally been ignored by Sanskrit scholars.10 That is to say, the GPM and the GVM have drowned in the growing, and indeed really terrifying, mass of new books appearing year after year. Yet I for one don't at all think that they in fact deserve this fate; but my own earlier attempt at drawing attention to them11 has evidently not been successful. As for the GVM, however, the situation has changed for the better, though only quite recently; for Madhav M. Deshpande's book of 1993 on Sanskrit & Prakrit Sociolinguistic Issues contains a chapter "On Vernacular Sanskrit: The Gīrvāṇavāṁśūtājī of Dhuṇḍirāja Kavi," published in his book for the first time. Yet I shall have to refer to his findings not before the third part of the present paper.

According to Shah (1960:1) both texts were "composed with a view to teach Sanskrit by Direct Method ... in the form of dialogues (uktipratyukti bhīh)."12 He feels "reminded of the Ukti-Vyakti-Prakarana of Pandit Dāmodara" of Vārānasi also insofar as in both, the GPM and the GVM, too, "the scene is laid in Banaras," and hence assumes that "all three texts preserve for us the direct method of teaching Sanskrit in Banaras, the great centre of Hindu culture and Sanskrit learning." "Both the texts," he says a little later (1960:7), "are written in a simple language, the main object being to acquaint a student with Sanskrit composition," but in the sentence next but one he contends that they "are originally meant for teaching Sanskrit," and at the end of his "Introduction" (1960:86) he states by way of summary that "the GVM and the GPM are, on a very modest scale, works meant for those who wish to obtain proficiency in reading, writing and speaking in Sanskrit." Already Rajendralal Mitra had described the GPM as "an elementary grammar of Sanskrit language, in the form of a dialogue interspersed with moral tales"13 and Gode, on his part, had, apparently elaborating the notion "elementary grammar," classified it as "a Sanskrit conversational grammar," meant "to enable junior students of Sanskrit to pick up the language quickly without frightening them with dry grammatical forms."14

Shah's own description of the character, or rather purpose, of the two texts is slightly self-contradictory and—especially when taken together with those of Rajendralal Mitra and Gode—puzzling to such an extent that it seems imperative to do what we could, or perhaps even ought to, have done right at the beginning, viz. look for relevant statements by the authors, Varadarāja and Dhuṇḍirāja, themselves. The usual bow to Gāṇeśa apart, the first sentence of the GPM reads as follows:

kevalavaidikāṃ vyavahārātthān katipayasāmskritapadāni mayā vilikhyante 15

I am going to write some words (i.e. a few lines/a short text) in Sanskrit for the vyavahāra of people who are only vaidikās (i.e. know, or are supposed to know—but not necessarily also understand)—those Vedic

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1 Quoted from Shah 1960:1, cf. Cardona 1976:286 (the reference to "Gode 1950" is not clear to me).
2 For the little that is known cf. Gode 1941.
3 Vib. Vol. VIII, 10ff., i.e. s.v. Dhuṇḍirāja.
5 Shah 1960:5; for the reasons cf. also Gode 1941.
6 1904: 1574, Ms. No. 4108.
7 I know of just one review, viz. by V. S. Agrawala, published in JOI, Baroda X (1961-1962) 327f.; but the article of R. Salomon (1982) is another of the very few exceptions.
9 See p. 5.
11 Ibidem.
12 One of the MSS. used by Shah for his edition omits this phrase; cf. Shah 1960 ("Text"):1.
mantras which are obligatory for the performance of religious ceremonies like the upanayana, marriage, etc.).

This is evidently a much clearer statement: The specific ‘target group’ is named and the aim to be achieved by the work is given with equal clarity; for vyavahāra cannot but be used here in the sense of ‘communicative activity’ the emphasis lying—rightly, as of old in India—on the verbal aspect. Varadarāja’s intention is hence expressly to provide a means for the active use of the Sanskrit language by brahmīns who have some knowledge only of the Vedic form of Old Indic. It should be noted, though in passing only, that the expression saṃskṛta seems to be used here in exactly the same manner as in the West, viz. to denote the ‘classical’ form of this language as opposed to and insofar as it is to be distinguished from the older Vedic Sanskrit.

This introductory statement of the GPM is echoed, as it were, in its concluding verse which reads

\[ \text{kṛtā varadabhaṭṭena girvānapadamaṭjari} \]
\[ \text{ganeṣapī ṭaye caiva vaiḍiΚapī ṭaye bhavet} \]

(in which the addition of God Gaṇeṣa among those the author wants to delight by his work may be taken to express his hope that it will spread over a larger area to be studied by many without tears).

Dhunḍirāja’s statement of his aim is much more detailed; for apart from the first half of the first verse, in the sārdūlavikṛīḍita metre, all the ārambhaślokas without exception are meant to reveal the purpose of his GVM. For they read thus:

\[ \text{kāśīsthena hi dhunḍirājakavinā girvānavāmaṭjarī} \]
\[ \text{bālānāṁ sukhabodhānāya racita saṃsādhaniyā buddhaīḥ} \]
\[ \text{kevalam vaiḍikānāṁ tu saδbābdhim aiδustaram} \]
\[ \text{svaplayāsenā sanartum nimtā tarani dhṛgha} \]
\[ \text{śabdālingavibhāktyādi kartākarmakriyāvyayam} \]

\[ ^{18} \text{As was pointed out to me by Ashok Aklujkar, vaiḍikā brahmīns are not śrotriyas, and can, at this point of time, not any longer be considered as “well-versed in the Vedas” (as V. S. Apte (1957) characterises them).} \]
\[ ^{17} \text{Cf. Wezler 1994. —Note, however, that Varadarāja himself professes that he writes.} \]
\[ ^{16} \text{Shah 1960 (“Text”): 18.} \]
\[ ^{15} \text{Cf., however, Gode 1941:196 (1954:325) who asks whether “it is possible to suppose that Gaṇeṣa was the name of VR’s father and Durgā the name of VR’s grandmother.”} \]
\[ ^{14} \text{Shah 1960 (“Text”): 19.} \]

DO YOU SPEAK Sanskrit!

nānāpadarthaśaṁjñāthām anayā bhudhyate ‘khilam’
For the poet/writer Dhunḍirāja, who lives in Vāraṇaśī, has composed the GVM—which is to be can be corrected by the learned—for the easy understanding of beginners.

But [thus] a firm (i.e. reliable) boat has been made by which (those who are) only vaiḍika (brahmīns) are able with little effort to successfully cross over the ocean of words that [otherwise] is extremely difficult to cross.

Nouns, [their] gender, case endings, etc., [the] kārakas agent, direct object, [the] verbs and intransitives become fully intelligible by this GVM so that various matters (padartha) become clear.

Which padartha the author has in mind he explains in the last two of his introductory verses:

prātar āraḥhyā vidyaḥ kartavyam karma yad bhavet
uktam āsāyoparyantam asti yat kramaśo ‘khilam’
uktrapradhikritāḥ kārikāḥ striṇabhṛtyāḥ vīnodatāḥ
grhasthāyaśvām ṣvām vākyamānaṁ udpairte

The duties to be observed by an educated man (i.e. a brahmīn), starting from the morning right till the evening, are completely taught in accordance with the sequence [of their performance], part of it in dialogues, and [what is done] by husband and wife as a diversion / when amusing themselves. Whatever calls for instruction regarding the rules about household matters is stated [in the GVM].

This shows that Dhunḍirāja is not only much more explicit than Varadarāja, but that he also pursues a second didactic aim: In addition to leading ‘beginners’ to an easy understanding of, nay to mastery of Sanskrit, the ‘language of the gods’—which necessarily includes its active use—he wishes to instruct as regards the daily duties of a brahmīn and similar household matters, and significantly, he even touches on the topic of love-making, i.e. the GVM ends, as Shah (1960:5) remarks, “in the climax of śṛṅgārā, with the happy union of the Brāhmaṇa householder and his wife—a romantic end (for a Brāhmaṇa on a parvada) in a work which is professed to have been composed as a primer of Sanskrit for bālas (bālānāṁ sukhabodhāya [sic !]);” the exclamation

\[ ^{19} \text{The particle hi does not, however, seem to have a real semantic function here.} \]
\[ ^{18} \text{Cf. the preverb sam-.} \]
\[ ^{17} \text{-da- is an emendation (by the editor) of -di- attested in all the MSS.} \]
\[ ^{16} \text{In later Sanskrit, e.g. Nāyānāyāya texts, the passive participle of the future is often used in a sense similar to that of the gerund.} \]
\[ ^{15} \text{This is after all the literary meaning of girvānavāni / vāc .} \]
mark Shah puts at the end of this sentence is a clear signal of his indignation, flowing from the well-known ‘modern’, i.e. Victorian, Indian prudishness; one has the impression that he is undecided only insofar as he does not know what is worse, sex between a brahmanical husband and his wife at the end of a parvan-day—i.e. a day of full moon or new moon on which a particular ritual has to be performed by the couple throughout their lives which includes inviting sāmnyāsins and (other) brāhmanas for dinner, and a day further on which one should give up sexual intercourse as well as oil and meat according to the Śāstra—or the fact that sexual intercourse is at all referred to in a text meant for boys. In reality, however, Shah’s indignation is not justified, at least not in the latter case; for clearly, the expression bāla is not used here to denote a male person who is biologically not yet mature, but a vaidska, i.e. a man of uncertain age who has learned by heart at least a number of Vedic mantras and knows how to perform certain important rituals. And it is this special ‘target group’ which the GVM has in common with the GPM—a remarkable fact to which we shall have to return later.

2. Shah (1960:3) correctly observes that “manuscripts of both works are not rare” and that “they seem to have been popular in Northern and Western India within a century of their composition”; but he fails to note that there are also more works of this type. Two of these other works I should like to present here, viz. texts manuscripts of which happened to arrest my attention more than 20 years ago when they were put on my desk (I was working at that time for the “Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project” in the National Archives of Nepal at Kathmandu). Already at that time it occurred to me that they should be made accessible to scholars, perhaps even in critical editions, and I hope that the ‘Introduction into Spoken Sanskrit’, the publication of which I announced long ago and which will contain these texts, too, will now definitely appear in the near future.

3. For still others see Madhav M. Deshpande 1993a:37f.

The first of these two works bears, according to the colophons, the title Samskṛtatattvabodhini (STB); it was composed by a certain Vāmadeva Miśra about whom I have been unable so far to find any information. It is basically a story about a brahmin, Devadattaśarman, and his extraordinarily gifted son, Gopibhaṭṭaśarman, who is also his pupil. They live in Viśālā, i.e. Ujjainī or the modern Besād in Bihar. One day the father takes his son to the ‘royal assembly’ (ṛajasabhā) where the young man gives so convincing and astonishing evidence of his Sanskrit erudition that the king spontaneously decides to entrust his father with the education of his own son, prince Candradhavāvarman. Out of deep respect for the learned brahmin the prince then comes every day—except, of course, those days on which teaching is prohibited—to the house of Devadattaśarman. The narration of the education the prince is given is interrupted, as it were, by a detailed description of the invitation of brahmans and svāmīns to Devadattaśarman’s place—on the occasion of a parvan-day: An account is given of the preparations of the arrival and reception of the guests, of the meal with its many courses and of the conversation between the svāmīns and their host. After the departure of the ascetics one of the brahmanical neighbours, Mahādevaḥata, starts a conversation mainly with his host’s son which, however, before long assumes the character of a veritable examination; that part of the ‘curriculum’ which Gopibhaṭṭaśarman still has to cover is outlined and finally he is given the opportunity to show his extraordinary capacities as an extempore poet (samasyāpūrana etc.)

The observation that he is not yet married quite naturally leads to the discussion of the suitability of a brahmin girl from Pāṭaliputra as bride. The arrival of prince Candradhavā who comes for his daily class prompts the brahmanical guests who had stayed behind to take leave in

Dr. S. Ramaratnam, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Vivekananda College, Madras, was kind enough to check the entries under “Vāmadeva Miśra” in the manuscript of the relevant, yet still unpublished volume of “New Catalogus Catalogorum,” but could not find a Sanskritatattvabodhini among the texts written by various Vāmadeva Miśras. Internal evidence in the STB seems to point to the 18th or 19th century as the date of its composition.

Quite oddly, in the body of the text itself the city clearly referred to is Vārānasi! I don’t know how to explain this striking contradiction. Did Vāmadeva Miśra—like the author of a roman à clef—want to veil the identity of persons he mentions?

Cf. e.g. Balbir 1990: especially 50ff.
their turn. The reader is informed about the subjects the prince is being taught—evidently for quite some years now—which reach from the Prakriyākaumudī down to the Kañḍāśāstra. Then the guru declares his education to be complete. When the king has convinced himself, through his own questioning, in fact examining, of his son, that the brahmīn has surpassed the hopes set on him as a de-facto rājopādhyāya, he secretly orders various gifts to be fetched and then to be presented to him by the prince. This gurudaksinā consists in various animals (an elephant, horses, cows), jewellery, gold, coins, a house and land, clothes, and even Gopiḥattra is given some presents. The return of father and son to their place hence becomes a veritable procession, accompanied as they are by the prince and his retinue. “Rescued from the ocean of poverty,” as they now were thanks to the generosity of the king, Devadattaśārmā and Gopiḥattraśārmā henceforth lived happily.

In his introductory verse Vāmadeva Miśra also discloses his aim in composing the STB, viz. by stating

vināpi kurya bahubhīḥ prayāśāir
śrīvyānampujūpūrī kisorān ī
I shall make youngsters familiar with/proficient in the language of the gods (i.e. Sanskrit) without much effort.

Quite evidently his expression kisorā is used here as a synonym of bāla which is quite common in the text itself. Since it is first of all Gopiḥattra who is referred to by it, there cannot be any doubt that bāla denotes a young man, not yet married, but a husband-to-be.

No similar statement is found in the verses at the beginning of the second text I should now like to deal with briefly. The text is entitled Varasamskṛtaṁahaṁari in the second of the three ārambhaślokas, but only Sanskritāṁahaṁari (SM) in the colophons. The author calls himself “son of Makarandasūri” (Śrīmakarandasūrīśānu) and declares that he has been entreated—to compose his work—by his beloved one. He further says that the work consists of three parts, i.e. “flowers” (kusuma), and that he resides near the gate “of the city of the ‘destroyer of strongholds’”—which could be a periphrasis for Vārānasi (puraharasya pure puragopure), but most probably refers to Deopatan (now a part of Kathmandu).

But in the body of the text itself, viz. at the very outset of the prose text preceded by the three verses just mentioned, a relevant statement is found; significantly however it forms an integral part of the story itself. A young man, a ‘poet’ (kavi), whose name is to be disclosed only later, is again and again requested by his priyatama—while he is sitting with her at a window on the upper story of a temple—to teach her ‘the language of the gods’ (gīvānāvānī); willing to comply with her wish he asks her the name of her father and similar matters, pretending that he does not already know the answers. She answers in Sanskrit, and in the course of this conversation tells him that she has learned “the Amarakośa, etc., from her father,” together with the youngest of her brothers, and that she should like her husband to teach her brother the Vyākaraṇasūtra. What she actually says is: tasya buddhiḥ samucīnā vartate tasmai vyākaraṇasūstraṁ tavyā pathyatām, “he is very intelligent, thou shouldst teach him grammar,” whereupon he replies: re mārke, tavyā ity ekavacanam aṃsaṁ kimarthan prayuṅka, “you stupid girl, why do you use the singular ‘thou’ with reference to us (i.e. me)?” She apologizes and admits that she does not know how many numbers there are and when which of them has to be used. What then follows is Sanskrit morphology presented as dryly as imaginable; the case affixes are enumerated as they have metalinguistically been named by Pāṇini. i.e. together with their ‘markers’ (anubandhas); paradigmata of the nominal and pronominal declensions are given, some of the cardinal numbers are taught, etc., etc. In short, as the young lady herself states at the beginning of the second ‘chapter’ ("flower"), she is taught the “knowledge of the case endings” (vibhaktijñāna), “of the genders” (liṅgajñāna) and "of the numbers" (vacanajñāna), and in some detail at that (vistāreṇa). It is, however, this second chapter which really makes up for the hard task of reading practically only paradigmata of Sanskrit declensions. For this is not just, as indicated by its title, a chapter on the...

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5 In one of the MSS, this title is also given to the GPM; cf. Shah 1960:3 n. 2.
6 According to what he tells about himself, and his descent, in the concluding verses, his name was Sivasarman, he was the youngest of three sons, and a muni. It seems that the SM was composed by him during the reign of the eldest son of Prthivinārayana Sāha—who conquered Kathmandu—viz. Pratāpa Surendra, i.e. Simha, Sāha (1775-1777).
7 dayitāyā brdayasthitāyā kayācid api viśeṣam muddānanānāṁ ī
vikasitaṁ kusumais tribhir uttamaṁ puraharasya pure puragopure ī
8 The third part deals with the daily duties of people.
9 Viz. Śrīgararasasanāgraḥa.
śāṅgārasa—and hence an elaboration, so to say, of the concluding part of the ČVMA—but in fact an highly amusing and funny dialogue in which growing erotic tension is built up, only that its finding relief is tactfully not described by the author. Much of the charm of this chapter—which leads the readers into the house or rather bedroom of the couple—I feel, ultimately lies in the character of the young wife who is, at least within the Indian context, remarkably self-assured and frank, and with an unusual lack of shyness.

Thus after having listened to the almost endless series of paradigmata of declensions, etc., she resumes the topic of the use of the singular with reference to her husband and argues that he himself has stated that the singular is used to denote what is numerically one, i.e. a single entity. His reply is that with reference to one’s husband the singular should not be used. She asks on which authority this is based, and he then quotes a śruti passage to the effect that the singular should not be used with reference to a guru or to oneself. But she does not regard her case to be lost and objects that he is after all her husband and not her guru, whereupon she is informed by him about the various meanings the substantive guru has in Sanskrit—with the help of two verses quoted from a Nitiśastra which are then explained to her word by word. The husband is so pleased by her eagerness to learn and the manner in which she apologizes for her lack of knowledge that he declares his love for her, assures her that his only happiness is she and declares that on that day there will be no class. “Play [a game] with us! Do you know [to play] or not?” She confesses that as a young girl she had secretly watched her parents playing and therefore has some knowledge of the rules. Before they actually start playing, they discuss which stake each of them is to make. He promises to give her 50 coins with which she could have jewellery made for her in case he loses, and suggests that if she loses she should “give” him every day two additional ratis.

The game the young couple plays is evidently similar to or identical with backgammon or tric-trac. She wins and gets the 50 coins, but the game is continued. She catches him attempting to cheat, but in the end she loses nevertheless. When he demands her stake, and wants to kiss her, she confesses, or pretends, to be hindered by bashfulness to comply with his wish. This provokes a lesson about lajja, most eloquently given by her husband, culminating in his request that while staying with him in the antahpura she should abandon all bashfulness and behave like a veśyā. She admits that he is right, but says that for her, born and brought up in a ‘great family’ as she is, it is simply impossible to do that; even talking about such behaviour is improper. The husband then quotes the following verse from the Mahānājāka:

kāryeṣu mantri karaneṣu dāsi
dharmeṣu patiṃ kṣamaye dhāritri l
sneheṣu mātā sayaṇeṣu veśyā
śayyāsakhi l lakṣmaṇa sā priyā me ll

in which the various roles an Indian wife ideally should fulfil—in the view of the Indian macho—are clearly stated. The detailed explanation of this verse is followed by quoting another relevant one, from the Rasaviveka, viz.

sārṣaṙaṃ na jāṇati surate yāpi pundari l
nāyakāṇāṃ tayā sārdham sunī maithunam ucyate ll
Sexual intercourse of lovers with a beautiful [young lady] who does not know the good and the bad side in love-making is called intercourse with a she-dog.

This, too, is explained word by word, and thus she is finally persuaded to do what he wishes her to do, but only after more of such coquetish, and by no means only verbal, foreplay. And again she proves a most worthy partner of her husband, full of self-confidence: e.g. she says that she is strong enough to throw him down on the bed in her turn, she ridicules him for being himself not free from bashfulness, she tries to em-

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8 If one takes into consideration works like the Kumārasambhava and the—Nepalese—Svāhānirvratakāthā, one wonders whether and, if so, to what extent, the author of the SM could have been influenced by religious erotic literature. As is well-known, “one of the most basic forms of presentation of a narrative in ancient Indian literature is to have one person telling a story to another” (Warder 1974:117)—and to make this an event within another story (on the literary device of the ‘frame story’ cf. Witzel 1987); no work, however, has been done as far as I know on the role of females, especially of female narrators or instructors.

9 Viz. ekavacanan na prayudhinā guru caṁmanī, which I have not yet been able to identify; besides, I am not at all certain whether this is really a quote from a śruti text.

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11 Viz. 5:9; the problem of the variants is something I don’t want to address now.
12 In spite of my endeavours I have not been able to procure a copy of this text (edited by T.K.V. N. Sudarśanācārya, Tirupati 1956) and hence have not managed to identify the quotation.
barrass him in that she refuses to take such a position that her feet are directed towards him—which would indeed not be in accordance with the rules of the Śāstra although these, of course, refer to quite different a situation—and in that she asks him to do what he wants to do standing at the head of the bed, etc. All this makes for good reading and is in fact so amusing that the third chapter, devoted to a description of the daily religious duties of a brahmin and similar subjects, cannot but compare rather badly with the preceding one; therefore, and not only because time and space are limited, I deem it legitimate to break off my presentation of the SM here, in order to turn now to a number of problems posed by all the four texts, the GPM, the GVM, the STB and the SM; for it cannot be disputed that the latter two belong to the same class as the first two, although questions like that of relative chronology and hence that of their relation to each other have still to be answered.

3. The significance of this class of texts for our knowledge of the cultural history, especially of the way of life of brahmins in Northern and Western India, was already recognized by Gode, and the relevant testimony of the GPM and GVM has been used and discussed in great detail by Shah in his “Introduction.” With regard to the STB it has to be emphasized that much information can be gathered also about the ‘system of education’ of the times when this text was composed, the usual ‘curriculum’ of a brahmin or a prince, i.e. which works or parts of works they were expected to study and in which sequence. The history of traditional Indian education has great gaps and not only in this regard.

It should not, however, be forgotten that texts like the GPM, etc., cannot by any means be classed as documentary reports; on the contrary, they are quite evidently literary fiction, although of widely unequal a quality. Yet it is no less evident that their authors wish to draw a basically and virtually ‘realistic’ and colourful picture, and that they by and large also know from their own experience and/or observation what they are talking about. It is precisely this conspicuous endeavour to describe elements of everyday life—of members of the class of brahmins—, by which these texts clearly and remarkably stand out against most of the known Sanskrit literature.

Nevertheless there are, of course, also features which have a long ‘prehistory’ in Indian literature, e.g. the aesthetically highly problematic—‘device’ of merely enumerating names of trees or vegetables or fruits or dishes, etc. The ‘originality’ of texts like the GPM, etc., can hence at best be styled a relative one, especially as the description of a normal day, i.e. a day conforming to the norms of the Dharmaśāstra, valid for brahmins, cannot be dislinked from the didactic goal the authors evidently have set themselves. I do not mean so much the ‘secondary’ aim of (most probably) impressing these norms by describing their being, so to say, naturally obeyed by brahmanical householders; what I have in mind is rather the ‘primary’ didactic aim of teaching Sanskrit by using this language itself in describing that which is best known to the pupils-to-be, viz. everyday life as they themselves led. In the case of the STB and even more so of the SM it is less clear precisely of whom the ‘target group’ consists. The contents of the narrative parts of the STB, it should be noted, do not warrant the conclusion that it was written with the aim of teaching Sanskrit to brahmin ladies who have a more or less limited previous knowledge of the language. On the contrary, the conclusion which really suggests itself—if the outline of Sanskrit morphology is taken into consideration, too—is that the author had in view members of his own class in general who do not any longer speak Sanskrit svabhāvena daivānągraḥena vā, to modify a phrase of Patañjali’s, the Mahābhāṣyakāra, or who have learnt or picked it up as children from their fathers and other male adult

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the knowledge of Sanskrit at the time when these texts were composed? And why did the authors deem it at all necessary, or at least desirable, to produce such ‘Sanskrit conversation textbooks’? It is by far more difficult to answer these questions than to ask them. For even in those cases where a text can be dated with a high degree of certainty and precision and where it is possible to determine the city in which its author lived and worked, our knowledge of the contemporary situation, cultural, political, sociolinguistic, etc., is unfortunately such that we cannot deduce a plausible explanation for the composition of texts like the GPM. That is to say, I am not fully convinced that Shah is right in assuming that what he calls “a great revival” of literary activity and Sanskrit learning at Kāśi in the 16th century is alone, or even basically, responsible for the appearance of texts like those under discussion. I also do not want to dispute the existence of “a periodic Sanskritizing language reformism among the orthodox elements of Hindu society” that Salomon (1982:15) finds “vividly attested for medieval times . . . in the UVP.” But should we not go at least one step further and wonder why brahmans regarded such a ‘revival’ at all as necessary? In this connection it is also important to note that—with the exception of a portion of the GVM— all four ‘textbooks’ attest an ideal world of brahmanical life, not in the least affected by political events, e.g. the fact that political power is in the hands of Muslims or other mlecchas, etc. But this latter observation perhaps gives a clue for finding an answer to the questions just mentioned: The appearance of these ‘Sanskrit conversational textbooks’, of these works of “Sanskrit instructional literature,” to use Salomon’s term for this genre, might well have been provoked by the fact, or the feeling, that traditional Sanskrit learning was endangered in brahmanical circles, real pandits apart, or that it had become too bookish, too much a language of the Veda and the Śāstra only, and was not any longer a living means of communication among the brahmans; after all brahmans are according to their self-understanding gods on earth, though of a special kind, who not only have a special adhikāra with re-

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^ I am referring, of course, to those which are in fact meant to teach Sanskrit, in contradistinction to earlier works like Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhhyāyī. Cf. also fn. 53 below.


* I have in view e.g. Kumamoto 1988, or a text which my friend Dr. Ch. Cüppers has published, the first part of which is a kind of Tibetan-Newari Dictionary and the second a corresponding phrase book, i.e. Cüppers 1992.


* An interesting and highly informative picture of “The Pandits and their Manner of Teaching” has been drawn by Dr. J. R. Ballantyne (1866-67).

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^ Viz. that dealt with in detail by Gode 1956.

* In this connection it should also be noted that according to its concluding verse Varadarāja’s Śārasiddhāntakaumudī ed. . . . by G. V. Devasthali 1968:224 has been composed vedavedapravīśaśya (only this is quoted by Gode 1941:191 [1954:320]) as also sarvaśāstraapravīśaśya.

* I.e. different from the kṣatriyas; see e.g. Manusmṛti 1.92; 2.135; 9.245, 313ff.
guard to the ġīrvāṇavāṇī but whose specific ‘weapon’ also is speech, i.e. Sanskrit. Do we hence have to reckon with the possibility that not only the strict observation of traditional custom or the transmission of Vedic or Śāstric texts was regarded by members of the highest varna as a central element of their self-identity, but also the active use of that language which had become ‘theirs’ in a very singular sense? And that the contemporary political etc. conditions were of importance only insofar as they were essentially responsible for a general ‘climate’ which was either in favour or against expressing this self-identity?

Be that as it may, one cannot help wondering whether the authors of these texts were sufficiently qualified for the task they set themselves, i.e. how good their own knowledge of Sanskrit actually was. Now, in the case of the texts under discussion the situation is clearly different from that of the UVP: It is perhaps true that the Sanskrit used in the GPM, etc., may be called ‘popular’, too, but the question whether it is “an artificial ‘Easy Sanskrit’, invented and propagated” by their authors, which Salomon has to address, does not arise because strange verbs and odd constructions like those found in the UVP, in no small a number at that, are practically absent. Nevertheless, it suffices to read one page of any of these texts in order to see that the language in which they are composed cannot be classified as pure ‘classical’ Sanskrit either. Quite evidently this is due, at least to a very large extent, to the influence exercised on this Sanskrit by the NIA languages, i.e. mother-tongues, of the authors; the influence, however, becomes apparent first of all in the sphere of semantics and of the choice of words. Let me give just two examples: the participle vijñāpita is used, in the third ārambhaśloka of the SM, as we have already seen, in the sense of ‘entreated’, and this is decidedly nearer to the meaning the historically related verbs have in Old Awadhī, Gujarāṭī and Marāṭhī than to that of Skt. vijñāpayati. Again, the comparatively frequent use of the root mil, and deratives, is equally a vernacularism.

That is to say, though in a different manner, these texts, too, testify to a ‘peculiar Sanskrit’ just like the UVP, but the results of the interferences between certain NIA languages and Sanskrit is markedly different. Hence the language of the GPM, etc., also calls for a thorough and comprehensive examination; and the results it will certainly yield in abundance will draw the attention of scholars—who seem to have been particularly fascinated by the perhaps indeed more spectacular interferences, e.g. between Tamil, or other Dravidian languages, or Newār and Sanskrit—to the less conspicuous, but no less interesting interference between the Sanskrit of the late middle ages and various NIA languages, or rather their old(er) forms. The study of the language of these texts will thus ultimately contribute to throwing some light on a phase in the development of Sanskrit of which very little is known so far, i.e. the last centuries before British Civil Servants became more and more interested in the ‘sacred’ language of the brahmīns.

In fact, Madhav M. Deshpande has already carried out such a study, and a detailed and penetrating one at that, though with regard to the GVM only, viz. in his latest book (1993a). Our thanks are due to him also for drawing our attention to J. Hertel’s half-forgotten essay of 1922. “On the Literature of the Śvetāmbaras of Gujarat” and the highly impressive—and in my view fully justified—plea Hertel makes for an entirely unbiased study of the various types of Sanskrit as they are actually attested not only in texts, but also in speech. I do agree with both, Hertel and Deshpande, in most of what they say; nevertheless, I should like to add on my part a few remarks which are, however, critical in their regard only to some extent.

I don’t find Deshpande’s term ‘vernacular Sanskrit’ really appropriate: what is meant is a variety of non-standard Sanskrit which is admittedly heavily influenced by a vernacular, or by vernaculars, i.e. “a lan-

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* Cf. e.g. Manusmṛti 11.33.
* I agree with Shah (1960:7) that the authors of the GPM and GVM are not to be expected to have made any morphological mistakes and that it is hence methodically correct to accept the grammatically correct forms or even restore them by emendation wherever necessary.
* Cf. Salomon 1982:16; see however p. 4.
* Quoted from Salomon 1928:18.
guage/languages widely spoken in a country or region,” and a language/languages or a dialect/dialects native to a region or country,” but it does not itself have this character. Hertel’s proposal to call it ‘popular Sanskrit’ is equally unconvincing: we are not in a position to prove that it was “enjoyed or liked by a lot of people” or even “approved of or held by most people” or else that it “aimed at the needs or tastes of ordinary people.”

I should even go so far as to wonder whether Hertel is right in assuming a continuous tradition of “a popular and colloquial spoken Sanskrit,” although I admit that the evidence given by Deshpande speaks in favour of this assumption, i.e. to be more precise, the assumption that brahmins who happened to meet at traditional centres of Sanskrit learning like Vārāṇasi or at places of pilgrimage used Sanskrit as means of communication (among themselves), and that this sub-species of the “language of the gods,” strongly influenced by various vernaculars as it was, may be regarded as continuation of ‘spoken Sanskrit,’ of the bhāṣā of former times. Nevertheless to me it rather seems necessary to first study much more comprehensively and thoroughly all the relevant material and data before a final conclusion can be drawn. The peculiar Sanskrit used by the authors of texts like the GVM, etc., i.e. the extent to which it is influenced by their first language, or perhaps we could say, their mother tongue, could after all also be explained by presuming that they just did not generally, or hardly ever, use Sanskrit in conversation about everyday matters, but only in connection with Śāṅkara discussions. It is at this point that I should like to draw attention to a statement found in the Vṛtti on Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadiya 14, which reads thus: sarvo hi prāyena svasyaṁ vidyāyaṁ

vyākaraṇam anugacchati, apabhramśaprayogena ca niyatam aparapat, “for everybody usually follows grammar in his field of learning and is certainly ashamed by the use of (i.e. if he by negligence uses) an incorrect word form.” By sarva the author of the Vṛtti most probably refers to a particular group of people only, i.e. the brahmins, or even a particular elite of them; in any case this statement not only testifies to diglossia and not only to a clear functional differentiation between correct Sanskrit (i.e. a Sanskrit that is in conformity with Pāṇiniyan grammar) and a vernacular—at a particular point of time in history—but it testifies equally, at least implicitly, to a much more liberal, if not even indifferent, attitude toward the type of Sanskrit which is written or spoken when other subjects than one’s own vidyā are dealt with.

Quite recently I read again Kumārasambhava 3.3

ājñāpaya jñātaviśeṣa punāṁ lokesu yate karaniyam asīt i
anugrahaṁ saṁsmariṣaprayān ācārāṁ śaṁvārdhitam ājñāya te II

where Kāma addressing Indra says: “O you who discard the special qualifications of men, command what you desire to be done for you in the [three] worlds. I should like this favour, shown by your remembrance [of me], to be enhanced by [the bestowing of] a command.” What occurred to me once more in reading this, was that Sanskrit has not only been, as Hertel states, “also the language of the courts and of diplomacy,” but that it is, and in no small measure, a ‘courteous’ language in the etymological sense of the word; yet this is but another feature of the ‘language of the gods’, which has still to be studied, and I need not add that it ought to be studied precisely because of its signifi-

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* Quoted from Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary, London 1990.
* Cf. n. 64.
* As kindly pointed out to me by Thomas Oberlies, Sukumar Sen 1957, contains a chapter (36-51) on “Spoken Sanskrit,” yet his peculiar conception of the language which he gives this label quite clearly calls for a critical reexamination—as also his theory about the nature and development of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.—Hālíyudha Miśra’s Sēkāśabhodāyā, edited by Sen, however, deserves full attention, at least as regards the interference between Sanskrit and Nā (cf. also Sen 1928). As for the type of language used in the texts under discussion in the present article, mention should also be made of Edgerton 1926:27.
* According to another of Ashok Aklujkar’s useful comments this should include Jambhalalattā’s version of the Vaiśālapatevamśati and the Sūkasaptati, two texts which could very well have served, if not even been composed, as a kind of accompanying reader.

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* That is to say, I by and large agree with M. Biurdeau’s (1964a: 51) rendering of this passage.
* The translation is that of M. R. Kale 1967.
* As quoted by M. M. Deshpande 1993a:38. In passing I note that the second paragraph quoted by Deshpande from Hertel (1922) contains an irritating misprint: instead of “that in this country” read “that in his country”, what Bhāṣa describes in the last canto of his Vīramānakhadavacarīta is Śrīnagar, and Kashmir.
* With the locus classicus of the idea of a peculiar common responsibility of śāṅkaraṇa and brahmanas for the other living beings and the ‘world’—which in my view forms the basis of the Indian ideology of the relation of the upper two varnas—viz. Gauḍīya 1.8.1f., I shall deal at some length in an essay still under preparation.
cance for the "Ideology and Status of Sanskrit in South and Southeast Asia."  

Ceterum censeo terram Tibetanam

in veterem dignitatem ac libertatem

esse vindicandam.

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3 As for the designation, I should like to note that P. Thieme very recently (1994b:323) has expressed his sad feeling about M. Mayrhofer’s “throwing aside the name ‘Sanskrit’”; indeed, one could very well consider using ‘Sanskrit’ as the designation for Vedic as well as all the various forms of standard and non-standard ‘classical’ Sanskrit.

Though scholars of Indo-European studies will, I am afraid, hesitate to follow Thieme or me, Indologists, especially those among them who attended this Seminar, or now read the present Volume, will accept this proposal much more readily because the Indian grammarians, and not only they, did not after all regard ‘Vedic Sanskrit’ and ‘Classical Sanskrit’ as two different languages, but distinguished only between ‘Vedic’ and ārukīka words. Hence the notion of a linguistic continuum to which Ashok Aklujkar rightly draws our attention (see his contribution to this Volume) also covers these two varieties of ‘correct speech’, and not only ‘Sanskrit’ and the apabhraṃśas.

Finally, regarding the question where sanskṛta is first attested as designation of a language — and the verse from the Rāmāyana (Rāmāyana 5.28.17-18) quoted by Sheldon Pollock in the discussion of Aklujkar’s paper—, I should like to add that this whole issue including this passage has already been discussed by E. W. Hopkins 1902:83ff. (cf. Hinüber 1986:19), who in his turn refers to Jacobi 1893:112-119.