

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## 1. SIR M. MONIER-WILLIAMS ON TRANSLITERATION.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR RHYS DAVIDS,—While heartily concurring in what Sir Monier Monier-Williams says about the urgent necessity of some uniform system of transliterating the Dēvanāgarī and related alphabets, I venture to think that he has omitted to lay sufficient stress on an aspect of the subject which is not very familiar to scholars in England, though it is pressed daily, almost hourly, on the attention of those of us who study the vernaculars on the spot in India. I must commence by apologizing for any mistakes I may make as to the contents of Sir M. Monier-Williams' article, for I have no books by me. The article went to India with all my books a day or two after I received it.

The point to which I wish to direct attention is that it is not sufficient to deal with the Dēvanāgarī alphabet merely so far as it relates to Sanskrit. The alphabet, variously modified, is used in all the Neo-Aryan languages, and in some of the Dravidian languages, of India. No system of transliteration would be complete which did not consider their needs as well as those of Sanskrit.

To begin with, the vowel *ṛi* presents difficulties, for the usual transliteration clashes with the Neo-Aryan rolled *ṛa* (ॠ). Under the usual system it is impossible to say whether *ṛi* represents ॠ or ॡ. As both the vowel *ṛi* and the rolled *ṛa* are cerebrals, it is convenient to use, in transliteration, a diacritical mark below them in both cases. Probably it would be simplest to represent ॠ and ॡ by *two* dots, thus *ṛa*, *ṛha*. Or if printers object to this, a short line underneath might be adopted, or a hollow circle, thus, *ṛa*, *ṛha* or *ṛa*, *ṛha*. I do not advocate any particular sign, I only wish to point

out that it is necessary to be able to distinguish between ऋ and ॠ, when transliterated.

I think that a long mark should certainly be used in transliterating ए and ओ, thus ē, ō, not e, o. These vowels (or diphthongs) are certainly long, and in the Neo-Indo-Aryan (which I shall henceforth call, for shortness, the Gaudian) languages, they have each a short fellow, —thus ए, and ओ, which it would be against analogy to transliterate e and o. In my opinion, just as उ and ऊ are transliterated u and ū, so ए and ओ should be transliterated e and ē, and ओ and ओ, o and ō. It should be noted that the short e and o both occur in Prākṛit.

The diphthongs ai and au, though long, I would not propose to mark as long, simply on grounds of convenience to printers. āi and āu, and especially (with capital letters) Āi and Āu, are clumsy, and printers object to them. At the same time it must be noted that, at least in Hindī poetry, cases occur of these diphthongs being metrically short (ऐ, औ); as the cases are comparatively rare, I see no objections to then transliterating them āi and āū.

In certain dialects (Bhoj'purī for instance) the vowel a has a special sound, corresponding almost to aw in *haw*. This is *not* instead of the usual "a in America" sound, but *in addition* to it. There are in fact two long as, viz. the ordinary ā, and this aw sound. Natives represent this aw sound in two ways. Some use the *avagraha*, thus कहः, and others the *visarga*, thus कहः, in either case the word is pronounced *kahaw*. As neither *avagraha* nor *visarga* are used in the Gaudian languages for their proper purposes (the Bangālī पितः, 'O Father,' is an invention of the pandits) there is no risk of confusion in reading the native character, but it would never do to transliterate the *avagraha* or *visarga*, as if they were the same as the signs used in Sanskrit. The sound invariably results from a contraction of the older Apabhraṃṣa Prākṛit *ahu*, thus *kahahu*, *kahau*, "*kahaw*," and I would suggest that it should be represented in transliteration by á, the sign ^ representing contraction, thus *káha*.

add that this is the sign used by Dr. Hoernle and myself, in our Bihārī dictionary.

One other point about *a* may be noticed here, though it is not directly connected with the question of transliteration, for natives rarely mark it themselves in the Dēvanāgarī character. It is the shortened sound of *ā* (आ) which that letter takes in the antepenultimate or before a double consonant. Thus मारिबे, हास्तिन (vulgar for हस्तिनापुर). In these cases the vowel is pronounced short and sharp like the *a* in the Italian *ballo*. The representation of the sound by a diacritical mark would not, strictly speaking, be transliteration, for, as already stated, natives rarely denote it in Dēvanāgarī, but the attention of the committee might be drawn to the fact of the existence of this sound, and arrangements made for its representation in the Roman character. In the Bihārī dictionary we represent it by *ā*, thus *māribē*, *hāstin*. The mark is, however, purely arbitrary.

So much for the vowels. We now come to one point which I think purely Sanskrit scholars are apt to neglect. This is the distinction between *anusvāra* and *anunāsika*. The latter sign is rare in Sanskrit, practically occurring only in one rather uncommon instance of external *saṁdhi*, and nine Sanskrit scholars out of ten would maintain that the two signs are practically identical. I have not my books by me, but if I had, I think I could point out passages in standard Sanskrit grammars to the same effect. As a matter of fact these two signs are essentially different. I do not venture here on to the thorny ground of discussion as to the real pronunciation of *anusvāra*, but there can be no doubt that from very early times *anunāsika* was not a distinct letter or sound, but simply a nasal qualification of an already existing vowel sound. *Anunāsika* is very common in the literary Prākṛits, and it is to be regretted that some editors of Prākṛit texts have not always made the distinction between it and *anusvāra* sufficiently clear. Putting all questions of pronunciation to one side, there is this grand difference between the two, that while *anusvāra* makes a preceding short vowel long by position, *anunāsika* has no effect on the

quantity of the preceding vowel. Thus हि is metrically long, but both हि and हिँ are short. Almost any page of the fourth book of Hēmacandra's Prākṛit grammar will give examples of this. *Anusvāra* proper is rare in the modern languages, being confined to *tatsama* words, though the sign also occurs in the by-use of it as a compendious way of writing a class nasal. Examples, हंस (*tatsama*) a swan, (but हँस (*tadbhava*) a smile), अंडा an egg. *Anunāsika* on the contrary is very common in these languages. For instance, in Hindī it occurs in every feminine plural, in every oblique plural, and in numerous verbal terminations. A useful example is the very common word मेँ (not मे) for "in." This is usually transliterated *meṅ*, or in some such way, the nasalization of the vowel *ē* (wrongly written *e*) being denoted by an *n*, to which some diacritical mark is added. I give this word as an example of the evil which may unconsciously be worked by a bad system of transliteration. It should be remembered that transliteration is not meant for scholars only, it is also meant for learners.

Now a great many learners go to India with a small knowledge of Hindūstānī picked up from Forbes' Manual, quite enough for any conversational requirements which may present themselves, *provided they properly pronounce the words they have learned*. As a rule they do pronounce wonderfully well, but this one word *meṅ* proves a stumbling-block to eight out of ten of them, and as it is of common occurrence, they are frequently unable to make themselves understood. I have known cases in which, the vicious pronunciation having been once acquired, it took people several years to get rid of it and acquire the correct one. The fact is that the *n* at the end of *meṅ* is too much for the learner. Instinctively he neglects the dot, and pronounces the word like the English word "men"; in which case he pronounces two out of the three letters absolutely wrongly. All this arises from a misconception of the proper power of *anunāsika*. It is no more a letter than the dot under a cerebral *ṛ* is a letter. It is merely a diacritical mark, notifying that the vowel over

which it is written is to be pronounced through the nose,— exactly as the *o* in the French *bon* is pronounced. It is true that the grammars tell learners that this is the effect of the *ñ*, but the latter forget the instruction and are misled by the transliteration. Therefore I strongly urge (1) that *anunāsika* be represented by a different sign from that of *anusvāra*, as representing an entirely different sound, and (2) that this sign should be a diacritical mark (over or under) the vowel which it nasalizes, and never by another letter following it. What sign should be used is a matter of secondary importance. I myself use the mark  $\tilde{\text{~}}$ , thus *hās*, a smile, *mē*, in, and this has received the *imprimatur* both of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the German Oriental Society. Prof. Pischel uses the original  $\text{̣}$ , thus *ha $\text{̣}$ s*, *mē $\text{̣}$* , and if this sign could be used over, instead of after, the affected vowel, it would be every bit as good as mine. Some printers object to forms like *ạ̄*, *ẹ̄*, etc., as involving new types, and in that case I believe that no difficulty would be experienced in printing *ạ̄*, *ẹ̄*, if the *ā* and the *ē* were cast “kern.” This would obviate the necessity of cutting new punches.

Regarding the class-consonants and the semi-vowels, I have no remarks to offer. I have already drawn attention to the awkwardness of the present system of transliterating  $\text{ॠ}$  and  $\text{ॡ}$ . As for the sibilants the matter is a little more complicated than in Sanskrit, owing to the existence of Persian words in the Gaudian languages. Personally I prefer *ç* for  $\text{श्र}$  and *ş* for  $\text{ष}$  because they “run” better in appearance with their class-consonants *çc*, *çch*, *şţ*, *şth*, look neater, more workmanlike, than *śc*, *śch*, *şţ*, *şth*. This is, however, merely a matter of personal taste, and I do not wish to insist upon it. But the existence of the Persian *shīn*  $\text{ش}$  in Hindī has to be considered. This will require a little explanation, and the following facts have to be borne in mind.

(1) The written character does not make the language, and there are certain Hindī works written in the Persian character, just as there are certain Ūrdū works written in

the Dēvanāgarī character. An example of the former class is the *Padmāvat* of Malik Muḥammad, the language of which is very old, and very pure, Hindī.

(2) Hindī, whether written in the Persian or in the Dēvanāgarī character, borrows a portion of its vocabulary from Persian; an example is the word شمشیر *shamshēr*, a sword.

(3) Hindī writers differ in the use of the Sanskrit sibilants. Some, who form the pedantic class, write श् when it occurs in Sanskrit. Thus, they write शुद्ध, "pure." Others, including all the great writers of past centuries, as well as a large class of modern writers, invariably change a Sanskrit श् to स, thus following the pronunciation. They write सुद्ध, because in Hindī pronunciation, a Sanskrit श् is always pronounced as if it was स.

(4) The writers of the second class, having in this manner found the श् thrown upon their hands, and available for other purposes, have adopted it to represent in Dēvanāgarī the Persian ش. Thus they write *shamshēr* शमशेर.

To sum up, Hindī and Sanskrit have between them (omitting the cerebral ष for the present) three sibilants represented by two signs. They both have the dental स *sa*. Sanskrit, and Hindī as written by pedants, have also the palatal श् *ṣa*. Hindī, as written by the best writers, has also the Persian ش represented by श्. This last श् requires a separate transliteration, for though शमशेर might be transliterated *ṣam'ṣēr* in transliterating from Hindī written in Dēvanāgarī, this transliteration would never do in transliterating شمشیر from a Hindī book written in the Persian character, for we must be consistent. I therefore propose that the dental स should be transliterated *sa*, that the sign श् should be transliterated *ṣa* when it represents the Sanskrit palatal sibilant, and that it should be transliterated *sha* when it represents the Persian *shin*.

This conclusion drives us to adopting *ṣa* for the Sanskrit cerebral sibilant ष. There is one point, however, to which

the attention of the Committee may be drawn, and that is that in Hindī ष standing alone is usually pronounced *kha*, and is indeed often actually written ख. Thus the Sanskrit षष्ठ is in Hindī pronounced *khashth*, and is frequently written खष्ठ *khashth*. The transliteration of ष under these circumstances deserves consideration.

One other point, and I shall conclude. The Gaudian languages have a series of what Dr. Hoernle and I call "imperfect vowels" These are vowels one half pronounced, like the final vowel in Brighton, pronounced *Bright'n*. The commonest is the imperfect *a*, in words like देखता *dēkhatā*, pronounced in prose *dēkh'tā*. Some European scholars treat the vowel as elided altogether, and write देखा, *dēkhtā*, but this is wrong. The vowel is distinctly audible, though very imperfectly pronounced. I would suggest that this imperfect *a* should be represented by an apostrophe, thus *dēkh'tā*. In the Dēvanāgarī character it is sometimes represented by the sign ँ, thus देखता, which I have heard called *arddha-halanta*. The imperfect *i* and *u* are less common. They occur at the end of words as in *mati*, *madhu*, written in Dēvanāgarī मति or मत, मधु or मध. In either case the *i* or *u* is there, though very faintly pronounced. I would represent them in transliteration by *i* and *u*, thus *mati*, *madhū*.

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully,

G. A. GRIERSON.

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Sept. 25, 1890.

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,—I thank you for allowing me to see the proof of Mr. Grierson's letter on transliteration. As we have now a transliteration committee sitting—of which I am a member—I will not anticipate our report by any comment on Mr. Grierson's valuable suggestions. Permit me, however, to say that in my own paper on transliteration (p. 628