

Theodore Riccardi, ed. 2015. *Gian Gualberto da Massa: A Dictionary of the Newari Language with Glossary in Italian, 1792*. Kathmandu: Vajra Books.

This *Dictionary*, released at a function held in Lalitpur in early 2015, was compiled by Gian Gualberto da Massa, a Capuchin missionary, during 1761 to 1780. This is the oldest and the largest dictionary of the Newar language. The Capuchin missionaries lived in Kathmandu and Lalitpur to propagate their faith among the Newars until they were deported by Prithvinarayan Shah in 1769. Luciano Patech has given a historical account of the work of the Capuchin missionaries in Nepal in his publication on the Italian missionaries, *I missionary Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal* (1954), now available in Nepali translation as well.

The present facsimile edition is based on the manuscript, deposited at the Capuchin Archives in Rome, Italy, and written with black ink on the Nepali *loktā* handmade paper. It is edited with an introduction by Theodore Riccardi, Professor Emeritus at Columbia University. Riccardi is an Indologist and philologist whose chief interest is in the history and culture of Nepal, Tibet and adjoining areas. This impressive dictionary was designed and produced by Fernando Azevedo. It has i-xxvii, 502 pages with more than three thousand entries, making it the most comprehensive dictionary of the Newar language to date. The entries are compiled in the Pracalit Newar script which is the most popular script compared to the more elegant Ranjana, traditionally used in religious texts and metal engravings in temples.

Prior to further commentary on the *Dictionary*, a brief outline of the history of Newar lexicographic practices over the past few centuries will be relevant. The earliest known compilation of Newar words dates back to the bilingual Sanskrit-Newar *Amarakośa* dated 591 Nepal Samvat (1471). This was followed by the works of three British scholars and historians namely, William Kirkpatrick's "English-Purbuti-Newar" vocabulary in *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (1811); B.H. Hodgson's Newar and Tibetan word lists in *Comparative Vocabulary of the Several Dialects of the Eastern Sub-Himalayas* (1874), and Daniel Wright's "Comparative Word Lists of English-Parabatiya-Newar" in *History of Nepal* (1877). In the 20th century, both foreign and Newar scholars, both individually or in collaboration, published a variety of lexicons: Hans Jorgensen, a Danish scholar, published a Newar-English *Dictionary of Classical Newari* in 1936. A Japanese linguist Mantaro Hashimoto compiled a classified lexicon of Bhaktapur Newar in 1977. Recent dictionaries compiled by the Newar scholars are mostly bilingual Newar-Nepali or Newar-English. These include Adivajra Bajracarya's lexicon of synonyms, *Chum Paryāyavācī Koś* (1954); Pannaprasad Joshi's concise Newar-Nepali dictionary, *Samkṣipta Nepālbhāṣā Śabda Koś* (1956); Thakurlal Manandhar's *Newar Dictionary: Modern Language of Kathmandu Valley* (1987); Sugat Das Tuladhar's classified lexicon in Newar-English-Nepali and Hindi, *Nepālbhāṣā Śabda Saṁgraha* (1960); Kamal P. Malla and Tej R. Kansakar's *A Dictionary of Classical Newari* (2000); and Indra Mali's monolingual volume, *A Practical Dictionary of Nepal Bhasa* (2009). The two collaborative lexicon projects include Niels Gutschow, B. Kolver and I. Shresthacarya's *Newar Towns and Buildings Illustrative Dictionary* (1987), and Ulrike Kolver and I. Shresthacarya's *A Dictionary of Contemporary Newari* (1994). Within this tradition, the Capuchin's *Dictionary* stands out as being the oldest and largest lexicon of Newari to any European language.

The *Dictionary* entries follow the Newar alphabetical order, but do not have grammatical labels such as noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, postpositions, etc. All the definitions are in the Italian language, and there are no illustrative sentences or cross references to related entries. I was particularly pleased to see that the order of vowels and consonants do not follow the Devanagari alphabets. For example, there are no entries with /ṛ, ṙ /, /ḷ, ḻ/ of the Devanagari vowel chart; and also excludes the Palatal Fricatives /sa, ṣa/, the Retroflex series /ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ/ as well as the compound letters /kṣa, tra, jña/ of the Devanagari consonant chart occur only in loan words used

in Newar texts. The *Dictionary* entries, on the other hand, include all the native Newar aspirated and breathy sounds such as /pha, tha, kha/, /bha, dha, gha/, /mha, nha, ŋha, nhya/, /lha, wha, yha/, all of which are the essential phonemes of spoken Newar. This *Dictionary* thus clearly shows that these native sounds of the Newar language were attested in the eighteenth century, and the editor has rightly indicated that it reflects the spoken language more than the written form.

The essential facts of Newar phonology and writing conventions as outlined briefly above clearly show that the description of Newar language should not include all the Devanagari alphabets. The Lipi Guthis of Kathmandu and Lalitpur as well as all the social, cultural, literary and philanthropic organizations of the Newar society should realize this and help to preserve the native character of Nepalbhasha.

The *Dictionary* consist predominantly of lexical nouns and verbs together with some compound nouns and verb phrases, e.g., **Eko misaa** which, in modern Newar is pronounced as *yākaḥ misā* which means an unmarried woman or a widow. The verb phrase **waasala yaaye** is rendered in modern Newar as *wāsa: yāe* with the loss of the stem-final *-la* which is retained in the locative and ablative case forms as in *wāsala-e* (“in the medicine”), and *wāsal-an* (“by/from the medicine”). This is described as stem alternation process in morphological analysis. A large number of compound verbs also occur in the *Dictionary*, e.g., **chhoḃe** (“to send”), and **biyaa chhoḃe** (lit. give and send) can also have an extended/metaphorical meaning “to give away a daughter in marriage.” The Italian gloss however would not have taken account of such meaning relations.

In view of the present state of the *Dictionary*, I would like make a few concluding remarks on some of the problems I had to face in scrutinizing a large number of entries, and the work that remains to be done to give a final shape to this facsimile edition of the *Dictionary*. A few of the main problems can be summarized as follows. First, I could not make judgments about the accuracy of meaning due to the Italian gloss (I do not understand Italian). Second, the total absence of grammatical labels makes it difficult to judge how the lexical forms are related to their grammatical functions. Third, there are no illustrative phrases/sentences to show how the lexical forms are actually used in given contexts. In other words, are there distinctions in synonyms and antonyms, or polysemous words with multiple meanings? This is a question which is difficult to answer. Fourth, I also tried to find out if

this *Dictionary* contains loan words from Nepali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Prakrit and other Indic languages, but I could not pinpoint any. Since it consists of over three thousand entries, it was not possible to go through all the 504 pages. Fifth, since this is a facsimile edition of the *Dictionary*, it is an exact copy of the original. There are a large number of pages that are hardly readable due mainly to fading ink marks and the poor condition of the paper. I had to use my magnifying glass to scrutinize most of the pages. I felt that the photo prints could have been enlarged as there is lot of space for this, considering the size of the *Dictionary*. However, its designer and producer, Fernando Azevedo explained at the launch function that this could not be done due to an image resolution problem.

Professor Riccardi has put before us a very large corpus of lexical data compiled during the 18th century. The *Dictionary* is indeed a very valuable resource material to study the history, etymology and the linguistic configuration of Nepalbhasa 250 years ago. The Nepali scholars, who have lexicographic expertise, will now need to collaborate and work on this extensive collection of Newar lexicon to give it a final shape.

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