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**THE MODERNIZATION OF SANSKRIT
EDUCATION**

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The modernization of Sanskrit education

There are many ways to understand the role of Sanskrit education in the 19th century and the changes it underwent from the middle of that century onwards. The discussion in this paper should be taken as one preferred approach towards it. Sanskrit teaching here is taken as a system that ascribed a natural role of special, superior sanctity to the teacher, with a host of rituals, symbols, and ideas to support this sacredness. A separation of the system as "political" and "cultural" is not desirable, because the values it propagated were effective in maintaining a hierarchy precisely because they were shared common-sensically across certain classes. In taking over and adapting this system, the colonial government dispensed with these practices and replaced many of the crucial meanings with its own. Sanskrit education 'ended' as a system because of larger social and economic changes, of course, as a general precondition, but more precisely because the very naturalness that had come to characterise it was not defended by its practitioners who perhaps believed that something 'natural' would naturally last forever.

This approach highlights some methodological points which makes the case of Sanskrit education of wider interest. First, precolonial belief systems, regarding social hierarchies for instance, were no more natural than colonial

ones. The intervention and domination by the state certainly extended the range of control into new, let us say, capillaries of control. But the state, precolonial, colonial, or postcolonial, has no monopoly on the exercise of power. The state's discourse, once it became the normative one, must not be analytically privileged by us above that of marginalised and dominated discourses. But apart from representing the latter as asserting their own ideologies in protest or self-definition, we must read these resistant or subversive ideologies also as power-constructions. For every "cultural system", no matter how superseded or defeated in history, is also a system of classification, of categorisation, of power.

Second, an analysis of process or change must problematise the question of dominating-dominated, normative-subversive, and control-protest more than has been done. The temporal dimension of Sanskrit education shows us that the very same procedure of Sanskrit guru-shishya teaching which was dominating and normative and exclusive at one time (approximately until the 1850s-60s), came to be dominated, subversive, and excluded at a later time (1860s-70s onwards). There is no way to fit these dichotomous relations of control to the process of control once and for all. At the same time, the possible variations in an understanding of 'resistance' should be emphasised. Given a colonial, normative model of what correct education consists of, would resistance lie in (i) rejecting it and sticking to an old, condemned model? (ii) rejecting it but discovering one's own route from a variety of pragmatic and idealistic considerations? (iii) accepting it as a matter of convenience, but reinterpreting it silently to

bring an alteration in its meanings closer to one's preferred values?

Third, no matter who the subjects of our story, or the objects of our analysis, a similar basic respect has to be paid to them in the writing of our narratives. That is, whether undervalued lower caste females or overvalued Brahman males, whether the illiterate and despised, or the divinely learned and insightful, our subjects still remain a group of people heterogeneous, able to exercise agency and autonomy, rational by their own lights, reflexive, and probably grossly under-articulated in the historical materials accessible to us. We come to the ironic but logical position of striving to recover the voices of those who had in high-principled thoroughness been very effective in silencing the voices of others. The feminist scholar in us worries about these last, but the very approach of feminist scholarship leads us to this complicated ideological pursuit.

The naturalness of Sanskrit education

By the middle of the 18th century, Banaras city was noted particularly for its wealth and patronage. At the base of its growing importance were economic factors. Not only did it have some of the most fertile land in India in alluvial tracts along the Ganges, it was situated on what became the single safe highway for money and goods passing from Bengal and Bihar to Delhi. In the 18th century these roads westward from Patna, Murshidabad, and Hughli became specially important, and "the economic and political importance of the great trader-bankers was enhanced in the period."¹ This process, strengthened by the role of patron played by the

new Kashi Rajas, continued into the 19th century.

Eighteenth century political uncertainty on the North Indian stage further served to consolidate the city of Kashi, as it was known in religious contexts, as a centre of ritual and pilgrimage for the Hindus. There was a massive rebuilding of temples, ghats, tanks, wells, and mansions by the nobility from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Kashmir, Mysore and Madras. They set up officers and Trusts to maintain these, and to manage the other related activities of providing for poor pilgrims, beggars, and scholars of Sanskrit through grants of cash, food, and living space. Even a preliminary survey of the biographical facts about some of the Sanskrit pandits of Banaras produces these names as prominent among the patrons of Sanskrit learning: the Hathua Maharaja Krishna Pratap Sahi, the Rampur Darbar, the Banaras Maharaja Ishwari Prasad, the Riwa Raja, the Nepal Maharaja, Vinayak Rao Peshwa, the Gwalior Maharaja, the Raja of Kashmir, the Mitras of Chaukhambha, the court of Bajirao II, the Maharja of Mandi, the Raja of Vijayanagram, the Darbhanga Raja Lakshmishwar Singh, Jayaji Rao of Gwalior, and the Raja (or Rani?) of Ruinya.

All this activity served to re-articulate and re-invigorate a discourse regarding a particular relationship between power, knowledge, and hierarchy. Those who migrated to Kashi were even more interested in the sacred nature of the city--exemplified in its lifestyle, its learning, its "traditions"--than they had been before, or that other, non-immigrant, residents were. This sacralization was no doubt led by the ritual specialists of Kashi, whose source of livelihood was the pilgrimage industry.²

Types of Schools

Types	No. of Schools	No. of Scholars
Arabic	8	60
Kuran	129	929
Persian	966	9164
Urdu	4	57
Sanskrit	265	1865
{ Nagari	471	4261
Hindi { Kayasthi	508	3661
{ Sarrafi	45	723
Arabic-Persian	40	241
Kuran-Persian	378	3236
Persian-Urdu	60	671
Persian-Nagari	14	155
Persian-Kayasthi	12	89
Sanskrit-Hindi	254	3160
Urdu-Hindi	7	122
Nagari-Kayasthi	12	127
Nagari-Sarrafi	36	597
Kuran-Persian-Urdu	13	192
Arabic-Persian-Urdu	5	100
Arabic-Kuran-Persian	7	81
Kuran-Arabic-Persian-Urdu	2	41
Sanskrit-Nagari-Mahajani	6	152
Persian-Urdu-Hindi	2	62
Do. (Romanized)	1	26
English-Vernacular	19	1950
Tahsili Schools	59	2945

These 18th and 19th century developments are no less significant for the history of education in the two following centuries than the processes launched by the colonial government. According to statistics compiled in 1850, there were 193 Sanskrit "schools" and 1,939 scholars in the city of Banaras itself, and 318 Hindi and Sanskrit mixed schools, with 1,949 scholars, altogether the largest number of Sanskrit schools and scholars in the province. A direct connection between wealth and learning was often made: "the city of Banaras, as might have been expected from its wealth and reputation, ranks higher than any other in the North-west Provinces in the means of instruction for its inhabitants".

If we ourselves accept this direct correlation between the wealth of the city and its educational patronage, it is because we take for granted the centrality of symbolic representation, that motivation for patronage could arise as much from cultural considerations as from more directly formulated utilitarian ones. To understand investment in activities such as learning requires a particular notion of "capital". We have been made sufficiently aware of the importance of symbolic capital, which, of course, bears rewards within a social lifetime. We have discussion of symbolic capital in anthropological literature, as in the discussion of the dominant caste seeking to occupy central place in the control of other castes through symbolic and ritual means. In extension of this, we might consider the notion, given the symbolic world we are dealing with, of "merit capital", or the rewards of certain investment in future lifetimes. What we would partly achieve is the

restoration to the discussion of the meanings of the particular symbols chosen, in this case, Sanskrit education. The elite, as patrons of culture, are always equally engaged in meaningful as utilitarian activity, as seems to be missed by many studies that credit ordinary people with religiosity--sometimes in an unexamined way--but a raja or maharaja only with a political calculation regarding the returns from religious patronage.⁵ Religion is itself a discourse of power, and whereas power typically came from money or status, it could equally be a product of confidence in the merit of the action.

Rulers and the elite patronised Sanskrit education because that bestowed legitimacy on them. To comprehend the choice of pandits and Sanskrit we would have to take seriously their symbolic world, in which the role of the guru was venerated and his knowledge belonged to a tradition accepted as old, given, and established by the 18th and 19th centuries. Folklore, mythology, and the arts are replete with references to these values:

Guru rup Brahma jano. Shiv ka swarup mano

Guru ke saman nahi dusra jahan men

("The guru should be looked on as Brahma, as the image of Shiva. There is none in the world comparable to the guru").

Guru Govind dono khare. kake lago paye

("If God and the guru are both standing before me, at whose feet shall I fall first? The guru's.")

In short, whether the Brahman was practically dominant over the economically powerful caste, family, or raja, or not,⁶ he was ideologically revered in articulation in his role of guru. The proper treatment of a guru resulted directly both in increased worldly status and in the accumulation of merit. The symbolic efficacy (to use Bourdieu's term) of Sanskrit learning made a case for its continuing domination judging from the fact that it was the one single type of learning patronised by the aristocracy and royal houses from West (Rajasthan, Gujarat, Baroda, Poona); South (Mysore, Madras); Central (Nagpur, Gwalior); East (Calcutta, Darbhanga, Orissa); and North (Kashmir, Punjab) India. The exact dates of the beginning of patronage by the royal houses, landlords, and merchants from these places is not easily ascertainable because in the sources the meaning of patronage has come to be a named institution with official registration in the 20th century. The answer characteristically given today in reply to a question regarding the history of an institution becomes "It was registered in 1920/ 1930... etc."⁷ In fact there were no institutions as such in the 19th century or before, as will be discussed below. The institutions that possess actual histories are the following Sanskrit pathshalas: Darbhanga Pathshala founded by Raja Lakshishvar Singh in c.1880 (214), Nagwa Sangveda Vidyalaya, founded by Pandit Govind Pandey at the beginning of the 20th century (223-4), Ruinya, a breakaway branch of the Nagwa school maintained by the Marwari seth Ruinya (224), Ranabir Sanskrit Pathshala, founded by Kashi naresh Ranabir Singh, c. 1875 (231), Balaji mandir, founded by Bahina Bai (279-80), and Goinka Vidyalaya, established by Seth

Gaurishankar Goinka in 1926 (409).

Such a varied and generous patronage implied a consensus regarding the power of the guru. What has been less interesting to scholars and what we would like to do here is to inspect the mechanisms by which the discourse of the Sanskrit guru claimed immutability, untraceable lineages, and a permanence that could not be challenged.

The Discourse of Sanskrit education: the place of the guru

One of the most interesting facets of Sanskrit education is its "hidden curriculum", to use the term of education literature, its "latent function", to translate it into anthropological theory, or its discourse, to use the most recent and powerful version of the idea. That is, while ostensibly imparting learning in ways we can ethnographically re-create, and doing so for the sake of the learning itself, what the "schools" were equally pursuing was a different goal altogether. The notion of "hidden curriculum" tells us that while the knowledge-pursuit function of schools stands in a non-consensual relationship to society (that of re-building or improving it), the other goal of institutions makes them functionally adapted to society (that of preserving and reproducing it). Sanskrit learning, we may hypothesize, fulfilled this need: reproduced the social hierarchy and supported the largely unannounced value system. The notion of discourse works similarly. What was announced as True and Natural was a relationship and an exclusion that enabled the maintenance of a power structure.

The purpose, function, and end result of the Sanskritic system of education was to perpetuate the position of the teacher and to maintain necessary hierarchical relationships in place. But this in itself is not an exhaustive insight into the workings of the system, particularly into the dramatic transformations it underwent in the later 19th and 20th centuries. It is only by giving attention to the ways by which the power was maintained, that is, to the technology of rituals, that we may glimpse the nature of its passing.

There are two sets of source materials available to us: official reports and alternative narratives. The bulk of our information regarding all pre-colonial schooling comes from the Reports on Indigenous Education and similar reports of administrators like Henry Stewart Reid, M. Kempson, R. Thornton, R.T.H. Griffith, and Sir Alfred Lyall. These are invaluable from the statistical point of view. From the point of view of comprehending the working of the system, they are a mixed blessing. They exhibit almost always a cool and simple ethnocentrism; a sentiment that of course there is validity in this indigenous practice of education for its practitioners, but by the British, accustomed to their superior system of indigenous learning, it can only be regarded with a mixture of sarcasm, amusement, and occasional patronising tolerance. The attitude is present in the merest mention of the subject, as when a school is "supposed to exist" where "an individual with leisure at his command, believing that to impart instruction to the rising youth around him is an imperative duty, collects as many scholars as will place themselves under his care."⁸ Given our reliance on these sources, we experience an insidious, unconscious conversion to an understanding of these practices as inherently limited.

This is particularly so since most of the reports date from the second half of the nineteenth century in the case of the N.W. Provinces, when an earlier defensiveness of the British government regarding their lack of success against established educational practice had almost disappeared.

Methodologically, this problem can be resolved by paying special attention to what may be called "alternative narratives." These consist of pseudo-academic accounts of pre-colonial education culled from literary and biographical/hagiographical sources, such as in the chapter called "Kashistha panditon ki samanya visheshtayen" ("the general character of Kashi pandits") by Baldev Upadhyaya.⁹ He discusses here some seven features of the pandits of Banaras: spirituality and other worldliness, simple living and pursuit of high minded questions, devotion to students, love of Sanskrit, skill in debate, sweetness of speech, and purity of oration of Sanskrit, especially the Vedas. This kind of account is unreflectively casual in its attention to the niceties of research procedures though very impressive in the labour that has obviously gone into its data collection. It also makes no secret of its reliance on nostalgia (the author, himself a Sanskrit pandit, typically belongs to the lost world) and compensation for victimisation by colonialism. However the description is important because it refers to an ideal, an ideal that even today is evoked when a question regarding the status of Sanskrit learning or the Sanskrit pandit is put to a scholar or student.

A more "uncontaminated" source is the corpus of anecdotes about pandits, both oral and written. In an ironic parallel to research on women--ironic in that we would be comparing Brahman males, quite at the top of the ritual and

gender hierarchies, and non-Brahman females, at the other end of the pole--we have to reconstruct the power of the pandits from these unofficial anecdotes with imagination and generosity, since the narratives officially available to us give only one side of the story.¹⁰

We also know from the case of many older scholars alive today what the world of the student of Sanskrit felt like in their youth. We can interpret the characteristics of the older scheme that continue on in Sanskrit education today for what their implication may have been. Finally we know from chance remarks in discussions of scholarship in general about how it was imparted. The fact of the guru's importance is elaborated for instance in a detailed discussion of the discipline by Ballantyne in his essay "The Pandits and their Manner of Teaching" published over several issues of the Pandit in the 1860s.¹¹ From more tangential references, we know that all interested Englishmen, prominent among them William Jones, experienced "the power of the guru", initially perhaps in not finding a co-operative "pandit", as they called their teachers, and later perhaps with the teachers' expectations of their students.¹² We can recreate from these sources an ethnographic account of Sanskrit education in the 19th century.

The first and perhaps simplest point concerns the use of space. In "school" we are today accustomed to a term whose modern connotations were not applicable to Indian practices in the 19th century. There were at that time no indigenous institutions of the kind becoming the norm in England. A "school" in the Indian system must be understood with careful attention to its own associations and

meanings. There was no Sanskrit or Hindustani term equivalent to "school". The closest equivalent is shiksha-diksha, or the giving and receipt of teaching.¹³ A school equalled a single teacher, and a school was the place where the teacher sat, typically his home. A school was not understood as a building, a specialised space apart from the physical presence of the teacher.

A second point concerns the meanings of time, including the layout of the day, the week, the month and the life of the student.

The hours of study were from 6 or 7 a.m. to 11 in the morning, and then again in the late afternoon from 3 to 4 p.m. Morning study always began after only milk and fruit; the study of Vedas or any other uchch granth (high or special works) was forbidden after eating cereal. There were eight monthly holidays : two at Ashtami (the 8th and 23rd of every month), two at Parwa (the 1st and 16th of every month), and two at Chaturdashi (the 14th and 29th of every month), plus one each at Amavasya and Purnamashi (the 15th and 30th of every month). Holidays were further specialised, such as for those who could read, for those who studied grammar (Panini's death anniversary--trayodashi, or the 13th day), those who studied literature (ekadashi, or the 11th day) etc. The course of study lasted for approximately 10 years and could begin at any age from 8 to 18. Thus young boys, older boys, and young men could be studying together.

The understanding of the student's age and capacity and of the teacher's centrality led naturally to a series of principles regarding the student's craft. Since there were many students of varying abilities together and at various

stages of progress, the first and longest process in the school day consisted of revision with a senior student, or path lagana, i.e., recitation of verses. No progress could be made until everything previously taught had been memorised and could be recited to perfection. The guru, in his turn, looked after each student while the others recited and perfected.

James Ballantyne, the principal of the Government Sanskrit College from 1846 to 1861, translated many Sanskrit works into English with commentaries on their implications for the Western student, and the process of their study in general. Some of his essays, published in The Pandit, give an excellent insight into those features of Sanskrit education which struck an outsider as remarkable--the very features that elicit no comment from the pandits themselves who took them for granted. He describes the initial stage of learning as follows:

"The pupil [having mastered the alphabet] proceeds to commit to memory some twenty pages of the grammar--written in Sanskrit--without understanding one word of it. As he is about nine year old, an age at which the memory is strong and the reflective faculties comparatively inactive, this toil of sheer learning by rote--which, to a mature mind, would be a drudgery simply insupportable--appears neither to fatigue nor to distress him. He commits to memory every thing as he goes along; and in anticipation of this, whatever occurs in the course of the grammar pre-supposes the most complete recollection of all that went before. Any previous matter is therefore referred to, when reference is not tacit, with such shorthand brevity of allusion as is of no earthly use to any one whose recollection is much less perfect than that pre-supposed.

This principle--of the pre-supposition of perfect recollection of all that went before--runs through the whole grammatical literature of the Sanskrit..."¹⁴

As to the actual content of the curriculum, there is clear notation in government records, and more than that, we have examples of several institutions and teachers in Banaras who can give us details either as remembered or even as currently practised. As such, there is no distinct line to be drawn between the "old" and the "new", between the 19th and 20th centuries.

Subjects between which choices could be made were Grammar (Nyaya), Literature (Sahitya), Logic (Nyaya), Astrology (Jyotish), Philosophy (Darshan) with emphasis on any of the schools, and the Vedas, with choice of any branch. The choice had been made for the most part when the student came to the teacher because each teacher, therefore each "institution", specialised in one or two of these fields, or specifically in the Vedas (or one of them) or Vedanta. Naturally, each field had its own "syllabus", rules, texts, and standards, and community of scholars. It was not unusual for a specialist in one to begin taking interest in a different area while he was teaching his own, and take up the study of his new interest with a specialist of that area. An example is Pandit Ramyash Tripathi, grammarian, who taught, among other places, at Marwari Sanskrit College and Goinka Sanskrit College between 1918 and 1941. While teaching Grammar he studied Nyaya for 11 years with Vamacharan Bhattacharya; then Shankar Vedanta for 8 years with Lakshman Shastri, and Mimansa for 6 years with Chinn Swami.¹⁵

The tailored individual course work plus self-established

mutual relations between teacher and student, as well as the ideas of service that went with education, ensured that the level of responsibility in education was high. But "discipline" was clearly a matter of interpretation. To a progressive such as Bharatendu Harishchandra, himself unrelated to the Sanskrit system and anxious for his countrymen to adopt the British one, the process of study seemed to go like this.

"There is not any great discipline in vogue....The teacher devotes certain hours to teaching [as opposed to having fixed hours and demanding punctuality]...no curriculum is fixed and each boy reads his own books and has his own lesson. Even the boys reading the same book have different lessons. The teacher will not retard the progress of a sharp boy in order to push on with him an indolent one. Each student goes to the tutor for a short time to receive his lesson. Advanced students help those who are backward. The schools sadly lack the discipline in vogue in government schools."¹⁶

But according to another observer, this one a specialist, the Deputy Inspector of Schools of Allahabad District: "the discipline, so far as reverence and obedience is concerned, is far superior to that in our government schools, though lax in other respects."¹⁷

Underlying these presuppositions about space, time, and curricula ran some basic principles of hierarchy. Age hierarchy has already been indicated, as has been the superiority of fine matter (fruits and milk) over gross (cereals), and of the individual over the group. Caste hierarchy required no mentioning; it was coincidental with occupational specialisation for the most part. Students of

Sanskrit were almost exclusively Brahman, with the occasional Baniya or Kayastha venturing in. Teachers were typically Brahman, again with Kayasthas and more rarely, Baniyas as exceptions, but the subdivisions within the large varna category of "Brahman" were secondary in importance to the status of learning reached by the scholar.

Gender hierarchy was not up for questioning or challenge. The patron of learning was a goddess, Saraswati, one of the forms of the Goddess of many names and forms in the Hindu iconical system, with many characteristics of other goddesses and some peculiarly her own. She is described as "glowing with the cool beauty of the snow, pearls, camphor and the moon, the bestower of welfare, decorated with golden garlands of champak flowers, with attractive limbs rising from full-bodied breasts" (him. muktahar. Kapoor tatha chandrama ki abha ke saman shubhra kantiwali. kalvan pradan karnewali, suvarnasadrisha pit champak pushpon ki mala se vibhushit. uthe huve supushta kuchkumbhon se manohar angawali...) --a figure of noticeable feminine charms and comparable to the Shakta goddesses in that she "is known through Brahma vidya by yogis who can then destroy all bonds and reach the first place..."¹⁸

No females were taught the Vedas or any other branch of the shastras. No girls went to pandits to study, and if any of them did acquire Sanskrit it was within the family, as daughter or sister or, more rarely, wife, of a pandit.¹⁹ However, apart from the essential patronage for learning from Saraswati, there is an underlying androgynity to the main gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and a corresponding lack of rigid and separating 'masculinity' in the language and metaphor of Sanskrit. This contrasts, for

instance, with the use of 'male' as a celebratory adjective in English, as when Muir praised English itself "as opening up to you [his Sanskrit students] the sources of the purest, the most masculine, and most salutary truth."²⁰ Learning was perhaps female in the Hindu/Sanskrit system, as it was masculine in the Christian/English. The pandits, all householders, were ranked lower than sanyasis or ascetics because of their embroilment in the world of kama and karma, but ranked higher in their learning. Yogeshwar Shastri (b.1828) "did not look down upon sadhus and saints no matter how ill-educated they were."²¹ Brahmacharya, or celibacy, supposedly a central value in Hinduism, is not mentioned in connection with the pandits, presumably because of their householder status.

There was no celebration, however, of this householder status. It was perhaps a duty as a stage in life, perhaps a necessary evil. The pandits were "other-worldly", as will be expanded below, and part of this distancing from the gross and material world was a disinterest in wife and family. No wives are ever mentioned in connection with the pandits' lives or achievements. Among many other pandits, Jaydev Misra (b.1844), Shivkumar Shastri (b. 1857), and Yogeshwar Shastri (b.1828) are described as having no time for domestic duties or a normal life. "Studying and teaching, recitation and prayers...there was no other activity in his life." is a fair description of a good Sanskrit pandit's routine.²²

To grasp the nuances of these concepts, and further understand the notion of learning, of the text and the word, the teacher and the student, and the very purpose of education, we should look further at some recorded

experiences of actual pandits.

The lore about Pandits

Ramyash Tripathi (b.1884) grew up in a village near Varanasi, and according to the wishes of his father studied Astrology and rituals locally. "But after he studied the Muhurt Chintamani, the Saraswati residing within him specially encouraged him to study Grammar and other texts. As a result he left home one night and reached Kashi. In a few days, with the grace of Mother-of-the-world Annapurna, a rais of Kashi, Jagatganj resident Sri Babu Kavindra Narayan Singh gave him a place to stay in his Shiva temple, and gave him every kind of help towards his studies."²³

We see exemplified here two typical features of Sanskrit education. No matter where a person starts, directed by a parent and so on, the ultimate choice of specialty is made by him under an internal directive.²⁴ Second, patronage finds the individual who is serious and dedicated in the way described above, that is, in no predictable way. The ambitious student must be prepared to face hardship in the form of poverty, simplicity, scarcity, and physical discomfort of any nature. As for an ascetic, the rigours of these may be directly related to his struggles at his studies. Even his guru may act as an obstacle, as in the case of Dronacharya who demanded the right thumb of his star archery pupil as dakshina, knowing fully well that an archer without a right thumb is incapacitated. All kinds of tests are considered typical of the stumbling road one must travel in order to woo Saraswati. Hence the vision of learning as tapas,

meditation, yoga, or concentration.

Anecdotes like the following tell us of many other significant characteristics of the education. When Sudhakar Dwivedi (b. 1860) was ready to begin his Astrology lessons in the Sanskrit College, he went and sat down near Pandit Devkrishna Mishra by mistake rather than Pandit Bapudev Shastri as was his father's instruction and his own intention. Upon his mistake being discovered, his father upbraided him and insisted he go to Bapudev Shastri now. But Sudhakar Dwivedi said, "I have opened my book in front of a guru, and that guru only will be my guru from now on."²⁵

When Pandit Nityanand Pant (b. 1867) finished his Vedanta and Dharmashastra studies, he wanted to take sanyas and went to his guru Pandit Gangadhar Shastri for advice. Shastriji told him, "Everyone in Kashi is a guru; no one wants to be a follower. There is no need for such a learned man as you to take sanyas. But if you must, you have to first present before me two such students whom you have enriched with your teaching of the shastras and made them truly learned. The tireless labour that has gone into my making you such a scholar can only be repaid by such a gurudakshina." On hearing this, Pantji gave up his resolve of sanyas for the time and devoted himself to producing many excellent students. Two of them received the title of "Mahamahopadhyaya" like himself. Then in the last days of his life he finally fulfilled his great desire to take sanyas.²⁶

The importance of the guru is highlighted by both the stories, as someone that you do not abandon once you have taken him as guru, as well as someone whose permission you seek for every important move in your life. But equally clear is the great importance of the student. He is

indispensable to the success of the guru. He voluntarily chooses the guru, but after that the guru is as bound to him as the student is to the guru. The very measure of the teacher's success is the number and still more, the quality of his students. If he does not reproduce his learning, he is nothing, he is known by the students he produces.

All this is, of course, worldly activity, and the world of these transactions is contrasted to that of sanyas, or renunciation. A scholar and/or teacher of Sanskrit was not a renouncer, and there is little doubt that the sanyasi's position was higher than that of the pandit's. The purpose of the renouncer was to free himself from all bonds as far as possible and prepare himself for moksha. The purpose of the scholar was to serve the cause of his students, of Sanskrit, and of learning in general. And a pandit could have other interests as well. The biographies of these wise men are replete with references to their love of life: Rajaram Shastri's (b.c.1830) for wrestling;²⁷ Yogeshwar Shastri's (b.1828), Shivkumar Shastri's (b.1857), Gangadhar Shastri Telang's (b.1853), and Batunknath Sharma's (b.1895) for music and poetry;²⁸ Ramanath Vyas' (b.c.1860) for art,²⁹ and Taracharan Bhattacharya's (b. 1884) for theatre,³⁰ among other passions.

The disembodied notion of Sanskrit

The pursuit of knowledge may have revolved around the body of the guru, but the nature of knowledge itself was disembodied and anti-material. The central notion embedded in the ideal of the scholar was that of other-worldliness, based on the premise that involvement in worldly affairs

distracts from the pursuit of knowledge. This inverse relationship between knowledge and everyday concerns was made into a central philosophic principle whereby the pandit was certainly rewarded for his learning and given recognition, both material and social, but all of this he accepted with relative indifference. Ramyash Tripathi (b. 1884) and Hariharkripalu Dwivedi (b.c. 1870) were typical of most pandits in that they spent none of their earnings on themselves, but on expenditure like the building of a village school or a temple.³¹ Among the questions we may ask are: how did the Sanskrit scholar support himself, if so indifferent? And, why should learning and material success be so antithetical to each other?

Regarding the first, Sanskrit scholars in fact worked. Either they were directly supported as teachers by the aristocracy, or they were less directly supported by students through irregular but predictable gifts at certain times of the year, and dakshina at the end of the course of study. The best scholars were supported directly and liberally by wealthy patrons simply as scholars, as show pieces in their courts and mansions. They had to work even at his, however, through expositions, composition, and shastrarth. Hariharkripalu Dwivedi won the shastrartha at the crowning of the Riwa Maharaj Venkatesh Narayan Singh, and then at a Brahman boy's upnayana ceremony. The latter changed his life: he was offered teaching positions and patronage.³² Scholars kept their ears open for news of shastrarthas, and actively sought them out.

Shivkumar Shastri (b.1857) lost his job at the Sanskrit College and was in debt and very keen to free himself. He got the idea of going with some devoted students to some

royal courts to show his wonderful learning and with that dakshina pay off his debts. And this is exactly what he did. He went to Darbhanga, whose ruler Lakshmeshvar Singh, himself a learned Sanskritist, liked to honour his own and visiting scholars according to their learning, and to gauge this learning the best method that can be employed is a shastrarth. Shivkumar Shastri was eager for a shastrarth.³³

Why did Sanskrit scholars shun dravya (wealth) as an ideal? There was an understanding of learning (shiksha) as a search for truth (satya), and truth as lying in knowledge (gyan), not in prosperity or accumulation of riches. The force of knowledge was such that it decided social status, including among scholars. Rajaram Shastri (b.1805) once heard his ex-pupil, now a sanyasi, expound a katha and was much taken by an explanation of a particular phrase. On his doing pranam (touching the feet) to his ex-pupil, the latter remonstrated, but Shastri declared, "You were my student when you studied with me. Now I am listening to your katha and you are my guru. I have the right to give you my pranam. Please accept it."³⁴ What was comprehended by one scholar could well be something that had eluded many others, and when brought to the notice (even privately, not only publicly in shastrarth) of his colleagues, some of whom may have had bigger claims to knowledge, it was accepted as an achievement worthy of homage. Thus Bapudev Shastri (b.1819) acknowledged the sixteen year old Sudhakar Dwivedi's corrections of his math problems, and recommended him for a scholarship.³⁵ Shivkumar Shastri (b.1857) was pleased at the interpretation offered by his colleague Umapati Dwivedi (b.1853) which he himself had been unable to come up with.³⁶

The status of knowledge

All of which is not to say that there was any dearth of rivalry and competition among pandits. That this could assume cut throat dimensions is amply illustrated by anecdotes of the tricks played by one against another to bring a rival down, tricks which lacked nothing in meanness, cruelty, and even dishonesty, such as when a prostitute was paid to insult Shivkumar Shastri in the middle of the market-place.³⁷ The shastrarth was a formal way of challenging and defeating rivals, and while the material reward was an enticement, it could often be undertaken for its own sake, to establish one's status, an effort that could prepossess a whole lifetime and become obsessive as a necessity to scholarly prestige. Such seems to have been the case with Damodar Shastri (1847-1909).³⁸ This obsession was extended to rivalry between regions; a pandit of Kashi going for shastrarth to Cochin or Darbhanga was expected to keep the flag of Kashi flying and not accept defeat from those outside Kashi.³⁹

The pursuit of knowledge then brought direct prestige on the best pursuer within academic circles; it also brought status in the larger society. We have no way of recreating the actual scenario for a hundred or hundred and fifty years ago, including rituals of the presentation of the self in everyday life. From all written and oral accounts we may say that though (predominantly Brahman) scholars and (chiefly Kshatriya) rulers were interdependent in that the former depended on the latter for material support and the latter depended on the former for social legitimacy, as far as the demonstration of hierarchy went, the scholar, the pandit or

vidwan, whether Brahman or not, was always given precedence. Whereas the pandit's dharma was simply the pursuit of knowledge, the ruler's dharma was to support and honour him. This involved a range of practices from the ruler's rising to greet the teacher, touching his feet, garlanding him, and addressing him as guru, acharya, or even bhagwan or deva; to inviting him specially on important occasions, seating him symbolically high, giving him gifts, and otherwise ensuring his physical presence near himself (the ruler). Such marks of respect did not come automatically with a Sanskrit teacher's profession. Those who were understood as more learned earned more respect, and those aristocrats who comprehended and valued learning better than others could better offer this respect. The maharajas of Banaras, Kashmir, Darbhanga, among others, were outstanding in thus fulfilling their dharma.⁴⁰

Since the quality of learning and the perspicacity of anobleman's judgement bordered on subjective matters, there could be occasional tension. Similarly, if a pandit or a raja was a trifle hot headed, either could impinge on the bounds of a closely negotiated agreement of mutual respect that tilted theoretically towards superiority of the teacher. Such tensions indicate that historically there had been many changes in the relationship, and that the system had an inbuilt flexibility, but that the very best of Sanskrit pandits could reach to the top of the social hierarchy.

Respect such as that given to very exceptional pandits was given for the mastery of a certain branch of knowledge, not for the routine of teaching. But all the best pandits went through the same system and no other, and all in the system could potentially aspire to it, so it tells us about one kind of

limit of the system, and that at this outer limit, it could carry a scholar to the very top of the social hierarchy.

Anecdotes of such scholars, again, abound in literature, starting with the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In 19th century Banaras we have the tale of the Raja of Kashmir Ranbir Singh and Pandit Shivkumar Shastri (1857-1918). The former had organised a sabha of pandits to which the latter arrived in a palanquin. As he was about to alight the following words escaped the Raja's lips: "This place was not so far. Shastriji could well have walked. Palanquins are appropriate for Rajas and Maharajas..." As these harsh words reached the Shastri's ears, he changed his mind and returned home. The Maharaja was extremely repentent but helpless. At Shivkumar Shastri's departure all the scholars arose and left, saying "How can there be a learned assembly without Shastriji?" The Maharaja had to beg forgiveness the next day, and even assent to some tough conditions before Shivkumar relented.⁴¹

This same Shivkumar had reached such a status that he was worshipped as a deity. Outside his home in Chauk a mali (gardner and flower seller) stationed himself and everyone who visited him felt obligated to buy a garland or flowers to present to him as to a deity. Another pandit, Umapati Dwivedi (b. 1853), acting like an incarnation of the sage Vashishtha, considered himself the priest of the jajman Rama. Far from treating Rama as a god, he would regularly give him his blessings for a long and happy life.⁴² With such incarnations and godly beings obviously no merely worldly achievements could compete. The closest in the nature of competition arose when a prince also becomes a scholar and perhaps a very good one, but this of course went

hand in hand with an increased love of scholarship, that is, the desire to honour other and even greater Sanskrit scholars. In any case, it is unlikely that there was any open strife or display of the innate Brahman-Kshatriya competitiveness. It was tackled by the simple strategy of each side emphasizing their own strength while making a virtue of forbearance in what they lacked. Thus, pandits were not only not interested in money, they made it into such a natural statement--the very sparsh touch, of dravva money, is unclean--that there has been no questioning or articulation of why exactly money is so bad (whereas it rates highest in many anthropological ranking systems as a transactive medium⁴³) and what might happen if it was to go together with vidya.

The Sanskrit College

The threat to the Sanskrit system embodied in the Benares Sanskrit College, established in 1791, went unrecognised for many decades. Its twofold purpose was, in the words of the Resident Jonathan Duncan, that of "endearing our Government to the Native Hindoos...for...no public Institution of the kind here proposed ever appears to have existed" and the better known one of "proving a nursery of future doctors and expounders [of the Hindoo Law] to assist the European judges."⁴⁴ From 1791 it went through a series of changes in nomenclature and status that are indicative of its history.

It was founded as the Kashi Rajkiya Sanskrit Pathshala. The Resident Jonathan Duncan persuaded the Maharaja Mahipnarayan Singh to donate the money and land for a

school. In this school Vedas, Philosophy, and Shastras were taught, but the weight of government interest was on Dharmashastras from the very beginning, needing as they did experts to help their judges in the dispensation of "Hindoo law". Rajaram Shastri (1805-1875), the most respected scholar of Kashi, was appointed as judge, Azamgarh District, because of his knowledge of the Dharmashastras. For decades the college ran along 'indigenous' lines in the sense that it was viewed by British visitors as characterised by "a want of system, a carelessness, slovenliness, and indifference," continuing the teaching of "anti-Newtonian" sciences and full of other abuses that seemed to defeat the purpose of Government aid to it.⁴⁵

In 1843 it was decided that British principals should be appointed who would be experts both in Sanskrit and in Western literature and science so that the college could expand to include more than the Indian classics. The agenda of the government is made amply clear by the statement made on the occasion. Students of the Banaras College, as it was now called, were addressed by the first British principal, J. Muir, on February 10, 1845. He exhorted them first to realize the wealth of Sanskrit learning "distinguished in the several branches of knowledge." Names of venerable scholars were cited "to prove the native genius and independent civilisation of your countrymen in the most ancient times, when most countries which are now the foremost in Europe were still peopled by barbarous tribes".⁴⁶ Muir appealed to the students' love of their country to stimulate them to greater exertions. He desired that their studies should particularly take the following two directions:

(i) English "as the best means of extending your knowledge", and general and scientific knowledge; and (ii) their "moral improvement", the "love of goodness, of truth, integrity, justice, purity, and piety." "True wisdom cannot exist apart from goodness....None of you can be unaware of the corrupt principles...which sway the society around you of which you are so soon to become active members. Let me entreat you, then, to propose to yourselves a nobler career than that which the majority of your countrymen pursue..."⁴⁷

Muir was principal for only one year and under him the two branches, English and Sanskrit, were amalgamated. The institution which had been run by Brahmans along their own ideas for a few years was given an overhauling by Muir and the European secretaries to college committees. His successor Dr Ballantyne, in office from 1846 to 1861, "avowed as his object the formation of a class of Pundits, who, skilled in all that is taught in native schools, should also have their minds so tinctured with European habits of feeling, as to be pre-eminent amongst their countrymen. In order to accomplish this object he first himself mastered the Hindu philosophy, and he ascertained how much of truth there was in it, and where error commenced. He, at the same time, made available to his Pundit pupils the works of European philosophers, and showed, by treatises of his own composition, how advancing from the premises of Hindu philosophy, the correct conclusions of European philosophy might be attained. In following this course, he acted in consonance with the whole character of our administration in this country. We have not swept the country like a torrent....Our course has rather been that of a gently swelling

inundation, which leaves the former surface undisturbed, and spreads over it a richer mould, from which the vegetation may derive a new verdure, and the landscape possess a beauty which was unknown before".⁴⁸

James Thomason, Lt. Governor of the N.W. Provinces, at the inauguration of the new building of the Banaras College, referred to a trip to Sarnath, from which was clear that one system--Buddhism--was buried and forgotten, and another--Hinduism--prevailed, "still vigorous, but already on its wane. And that system may pass away, and give place to another and a better one. From this place [Banaras College] may this system spread throughout; nor is it vain to hope that the building in which we are assembled may be one instrument in the mighty change. When it is so, the highest aspirations of those who first designed and mainly promoted its erection will be fully realised."⁴⁹ James Thomason exhorted his audience particularly to remember "the influence exercised on the minds of persons in our own country by the building in which our Colleges and Schools are placed."⁵⁰

This Sanskrit College was a key agent in the process of change visualised by the British. Sanskrit has to be understood in many ways, literally as a language, and metaphorically as a language, that is a code, a discourse, a cultural system, that is both reflective of a social structure and an ideology. The Sanskrit college initiated change in all these areas. In the language, by "improving" the methods of scholarship, introducing historical-critical methods, using Western treatises as models, and carefully directing the studies through European professors.⁵¹ In the social structure, by rendering useless both the practice of patronage

and the tense ideology of equality at the top between pandit and patron. It was this tension that was removed by the British. They were the new upper castes as well as the upper class, the top of the hierarchy beyond dispute, and everyone was their beneficiary or subordinate. Pandits did not have to compete for higher places because they could all have a job if they qualified. The aristocracy did not have to worry about either patronising pandits, or being legitimized by them, or the proper education of their own children. All these tasks were taken over by the government.

Similarly, the teaching within the Sanskrit College, seemingly continuous with the older teaching, was responsible for transforming the discourse of Sanskrit by a simple strategy. All the rituals of the older system, those regarding time, space, the body, food, work, hierarchy, and so on, were wrenched from their positions and were treated as superficial. They could be retained or discarded at random, were in almost all cases clearly in conflict with a more rational and efficient system, and were at any rate pliable, not immutable. The teacher was an employee. His exclusiveness, mystery, and centrality was gone forever.

The pandits' floundering discourse

If we look at the written and oral records of the Sanskritists of Banaras, we find that they have even today a collective memory of a threat in mid nineteenth century when government wanted to anglicize them and Christianise them. Their argument sounds overly oriented to a conspiracy theory: that everything the British government did, from introducing English to constructing a new campus was for the hidden purpose of economic exploitation and

political power, with which went an all-out effort to weaken indigenous culture in all its dimensions and replace it with Western values. The curriculum introduced by the British is specifically regarded by them as "not reducible simply to an expression of cultural power; rather, it served to confer power,"³² an attitude that indicates their high evaluation of the power of the curriculum.

If there was a conspiracy, that was surely within the rules of war. When the Sanskrit College required regular service and paid salaries for it, the recruitment of the first pandits marked the beginning of a process of change that is often cited as the central characteristic in the fall of Sanskrit education in particular, and education in general. In the early and middle nineteenth century there must have been an actual tension experienced by Sanskritists in Banaras regarding whether to make this compromise of serving a foreign government for a salary in an institution otherwise regarded as perhaps a boon for Sanskrit learning, or whether to resist its overtures. The tension may have lasted for many decades, perhaps until about 1900. As one contemporary professor describes the process, "Huge salaries were offered in 1791. Two hundred rupees to the head pandit, one hundred rupees to the others, ten rupees stipend for students, all at a time when four rupees a month was enough to live on. No one came! No one came to sell vidya. But slowly, as the net was thrown again and again, wider and wider, some were caught. Some started coming."³³ One might feel that it was partly a matter of semantics, or at least of form. What exactly was "service"? What a foreign government was, was clearer. Gangadhar Shastri Telang was invited to a meeting with Lord Curzon

in 1903 on another subject, and to upset him, the Viceroy threw to him the question, "Why does telang accept a salary from an un-Aryan government which is against sanatan dharma?" Telang's well wrought reply was: "The name of my institution is Kashirajkiya Pathshala, that is not to say, the Rajkiya or Government Pathshala in Kashi but rather the Pathshala of the Kashi Raj. Does not the British Government know that an Indian Hindu, in fact Brahman, Raja has given a special pargana of Mirzapur as donation to the school and even the land on which the school building stands? The British Government only manages it; it has no other responsibility. It belongs to the Kashi Raja, not the Government of India. And I take salary from a sanatandharmi Maharaja, not a non-Hindu ruler." Dr Venis and Lord Curzon were both apparently impressed by this reply into silence.⁵⁴

As an ideal all the pandits would probably first have cited the aphorism of Kalidas, "Those who acquire knowledge of the shastras only to earn money deserve the name of "vaniks" (traders)". This, as discussed earlier, was only an ideal, because except for those few who had inherited independent means, others were all supported by patrons, and these patrons were as liable to request specific teaching or performance services as not. The pandits in turn were obliged to earn their living, although it could never be expressed like that. So while the idea of a College was new, the idea of teaching and patronage was not of course. When the British offered their alternate form of patronage, there was already well established both the ideal and practice of working for students and education through the medium of a fond patron's generosity. The difficulty of

accepting money could be overlooked with the argument of the patron's sole interest (and the teacher's, it goes without saying) lying in the propagation of Sanskrit.

The first of the historiographical problems in describing the pandits' attitudes towards the colonial moves must be confronted here. Because we speak of "the Pandits", we fall into the fallacy of believing that there in fact was one class, category, or identity like a "pandit". In fact, like any other caste or grouping they were not homogeneous in their actions and reactions. While some were drawn out of their "holes", others were content to stay in.⁵⁵ The British government occupied an ambiguous position. Those who cooperated with it convinced themselves that its interest in Sanskrit and education overcame other characteristics. Those who remained indifferent to it maintained--presumably--that what was most significant about the British was that they were mlechha, which means, relevantly for us, not only untouchable and foreigner, but one who cannot pronounce Sanskrit. The numbers of these indifferent pandits is difficult to gauge because they left no such records such as those preserved of the Sanskrit College pandits, but popular opinion has it that the number was very large.

In fact, the heterogeneous category of "pandit" reacted in many ways to the threat of, and actuality of, cultural violence at the hands of the British. There were some who "co-operated", teaching in the Sanskrit College at the first offer, accepting government titles such as Mahamahopadhyaya, officiating at official functions, and taking up positions outside. There were those who were also co-opted but after an initial resistance, or who, while

serving the British, remained sceptical of their own sell-out. The vast majority were those viewed by the British, including by Annie Besant, as "passive". When Besant laid the foundations for her Hindu School at the end of the nineteenth century, she complained that her invitation to the Sanskrit pandits to assist her in the great project of the rejuvenation of the Hindu nation was met by utter indifference and disregard. This particular indifference may have been due to a low assessment of the worth of Besant's project. But such a low assessment must be understood to be based both on a real pride regarding themselves as the actual bearers of sanatan dharmi or Sanskrit culture, as opposed to some eccentric ex-Christian lady; and to a casualness regarding the import of political and social developments around them. Pandits were, traditionally, proud to be "wise fools", that is, very learned in their own specialities, but so ignorant of material realities as to need the care of a patron often for mere survival.

It was in the very nature of Sanskrit learning itself to keep learners indifferent to larger socio-economic processes. The actual term should be smaller socio-economic processes, because the cultural system of Sanskrit implied that it was regulated by a dharma, by laws that were outside temporal changes of the historically measurable kind. The British threat, for example, would be typically interpreted by a late nineteenth century pandit as a ripple on the surface of a deep and impenetrable ocean that constituted "sanatan dharma" (the eternal law), that was beyond the influence of minor historical events like changes in government and transfers of Directors of Education.⁵⁶

To some extent these pandits were "right" of course. That

is, as Bourdieu points out, the symbolic efficacy of a system is generated by its own ability to assert its power.⁵⁷ The self sufficiency of the pandits was such that the British had to initially take recognition of it, as the observations of many officials and all missionaries tell us. For decades after the inception of the Banaras College, all policies related to it and to Sanskrit education had to however partially and reluctantly, accept the fact that Sanskrit constituted a closed and complete system. If we look at the report on the progress of education in the NW Provinces until, say, the year 1867-68, we have less than happy news: "Dr Ballantyne's efforts to induce his disciples to turn their attention to Western modes of thought and discipline were in a great measure fruitless. It is a melancholy chapter in the history of education in this part of India. The Pandits admired him for his proficiency in Sanskrit learning but would not follow him into a Western grove [sic]."⁵⁸

The numbers of these who held aloof are totally lost to us, as are any details about them and their internal discourses. We only know of their presence from taking seriously the historiographical strategy of wondering about the master narrative's complaint. We know of Ballantyne's failure; we have other evidence of similar aborted leadership in Banaras, the classical case being Annie Besant's; we know of missionaries of assorted denomination giving "not a very cheering account"; and we know of visitors exclaiming at the failure of the government.⁵⁹

To continue with Bourdieu's argument, the symbolic efficacy of a field must be related to power of a socio-economic kind. This the British progressively did, and not the pandits. Half a century later, the victory of 'armies'

had been taken for granted, and because the victory of 'ideas' was so much more subtle and impressive, it was given the causal role in change. An announcement for the Banaras Hindu University declared in 1915: "Narrow-minded men may sometimes talk of the material or military conquest of India, but those who can see deep and see far are much more struck by the intellectual conquest made by the British. The invasion of British armies could have been resisted under favourable conditions, but the invasion of ideas never can be."⁶⁰

The nature of the clash itself becomes clearer upon looking at the example of the fourth kind of pandit, after (i) those who co-operated easily, (ii) those who co-operated with difficulty, and (iii) those who demonstrated indifference. This fourth kind were those who protested actively and challenged the British alternatives. There are very few recorded instances, and we must remind ourselves that our historicist preoccupations give us very rigorous standards of 'success'. Those who succeeded may be said to have done so when they actually participated in some form of educational alternatives. Here we know of a few pathshalas in Banaras that present explicit alternatives to the British model, of which the most interesting case is that of the Sangveda Vidyalaya.

The Sangveda Vidyalaya

As with all major institutions, the Darbhanga, Ruinya, Ranabir and Goinka Schools/Colleges, the Sangveda Vidyalaya was the result of the collaborative effort of a wealthy patron and a learned pandit, Vallabhram Mehta and

Pandit Lakshman Shastri Dravid, respectively. With the former's inspiration and desire to protect the Vedas, and the latter's dedication to serve the cause of Sanskrit learning, the Vidyalaya was founded in 1920 by Maharaja Prabhu Narayan Singh.⁶¹ With a beautiful site on the bank of the Ganges in the centre of Banaras, this school is different to most others in that it does not follow Government syllabus or directives. It was given the title of "Vishudh Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya" or "Pure Sanskrit University" by a large meeting of pandits in 1928.

The most striking characteristics of this school, and those that tell us what marks the difference between the system of Sanskrit teaching as it existed and the revised version in colonial schools, are the absence of written exams and fixed curricula, government degrees such as B.A., M.A. or their sanskrit equivalents of Shastri, Upadhyaya etc., and the requirement that teachers should have degrees or teach fixed subjects in pre-determined ways. Although I could not vouchsafe for the actual practice of teaching in the school, from the reports of the Secretary, professors, and the written accounts in the 70th annual returns, it seems that in all these fundamental ways, the "old" system of teaching sanskrit is being honoured by the Sangveda Vidyalaya.

The question that arises then, is, what permits the school to survive, to draw students, and to invite respect, if it is outside the government controlled system which has evolved as hegemonic and destructive of all alternatives? And if the system is indeed not that totally hegemonic and is even compatible to alternative systems, then why are there not more schools like the Sangveda vidyalaya, given the fact that even contemporary pandits when questioned consider

that the more superior system? The contrast is as stark as between the "real thing" (the milk) and the "froth" (phen).⁶²

There are few, if any, jobs outside the government network of schools and colleges. All of them require government degrees. Even those who study at Sangveda Vidyalaya out of a love of learning and desire to pursue the Vedas beyond the superficial level of the government aided schools, almost always acquire a "regular" degree elsewhere. The answer, therefore, as to how the Sangveda survives as an alternative institution, is that it survives precisely because it has other institutions to be alternative to, and those who patronise it do so together with taking the best from the other schools as well.

Sangveda Vidyalaya stands as a landmark in the reversal of the centre-periphery relationship that marked Pandit-government relations over the 19th century. At one time, Sanskrit teaching was remarked on by all as normative and natural, and colonial education had to be pleaded for. Sanskrit was the centre. Within the century, it came to mark the 'past', the periphery, and was mourned by those awake to the changes as 'finished'.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have concentrated on the pandits' side of the story, with patrons and the British both forming a backdrop. As I have discussed at some length, the pandits' particular discourse was maintained by building up the notion of the guru, the special guru-shishya relationship, the particular and un-specifiable nature of the knowledge imparted, the means of impartation, and the powers generated. It was this, I have argued, that while in its time contributed to their very special position, also led to a radical transformation in the system once the discourse lost its naturalness. I continue to view them as agents and actors, and regard their earlier success as theirs. Their failure in the nineteenth century should equally be viewed not as due to economic changes in their patrons' positions, as usually understood, but as the pandits' failure. Given the excessive care taken by Sanskritists to construct a system of power and meaning, I think this is only fair.

Reference

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3. R. Thornton, *Memoir on the statistics of indigenous education within the Northwest Provinces of the Bengal Presidency* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1850)
4. Henry Stewart Reid, *Report on Indigenous Education and Vernacular Schools* (Agra: Secundra Orphan Press, 1852)
5. For instance, Philip Lutgendorf and Sandria Freitag in S. Freitag, ed., *Culture and Power in Banaras* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
6. For rituals establishing dominance of a caste. see Gloria G. Raheja, *The Poison in the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Of course when she discusses the Brahman, it is only the Brahman as ritual specialist, not as learned man.
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8. Reid 1852, p. 13.
9. B. Upadhyaya, *Kashi ki Panditya Parampara*.
10. These arguments are elaborated in Nita Kumar, ed., *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories* (Calcutta: Stree, and Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1994), especially the Introduction and "Oranges for the Girls."

11. *The Pandit* Dec. 1, 1871, pp. 175-76.
12. See Vasudha Dalmia, "Sanskrit Scholars and Pandits of the Old School: the Benares Sanskrit College and the Constitution of Authority in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24: 321-337, 1996.
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16. Harishchandra's testimony in *Report on the Progress of Education in the NW Provinces for 1884*, p. 197
17. Deen Dayal Tiwari in *ibid.*, p. 174
18. *Kalyan*, 1993
19. As an all-India phenomenon, see examples of self-study and hidden study in *Women Writing in India* (Delhi. Oxford University Press, 1991)
20. J. Muir, "An address to the students of the Benares College," Feb. 10, 1845, Papers Relating to the Benares College, India Office Library.
21. B. Upadhyaya, pp 483-4
22. *Ibid.*, p. 290
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 483-4
24. The same expectation exists in other kinds of learning, such as that of the crafts; see Nita Kumar, *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, c. 1880-1984* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), especially chaps 1-3.
25. B. Upadhyaya, p. 290
26. *Ibid.*, p. 388
27. *Ibid.*, pp 161, 358

28. Ibid., pp. 205, 227, 257, 258, 428
29. Ibid., p. 342
30. Ibid., p. 408
31. Ibid., pp. 503-4
32. Ibid., pp. 502-4
33. Ibid., p. 229
34. Ibid., p. 163
35. Ibid., 179
36. Ibid., pp. 360-61
37. Ibid., p. 228
38. Ibid., pp 265-72
39. Ibid., pp. 232, 266
40. Ibid., pp. 229-30, 216
41. Ibid., pp. 231-32
42. Ibid., pp. 232, 359
43. McKim Marriott's transactional theory of caste in South Asia includes this principle, as for instance in "Samsara," "a game-simulation of rural life in India" (*Chicago South Asia Newsletter* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 4-5). See also McKim Marriott, *India Through Hindu Categories* (New Delhi: Sage, 1990)
44. George Nicholls, *Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Benares Patschalla or Sanskrit College, now forming the Sanskrit Department of the Sanskrit College* (Allahabad: Government Press, orig. 1848, repr. 1907), p.1, cited in V. Dalmia, "Sanskrit Scholars and Pandits", p. 323.
45. "An Officer's Letter", March 1835, in "The Calcutta Christian Observer", pp. 270-1
46. V/23/128 (IOL): 21-22

47. Ibid., pp. 25-26
48. Ibid., p. 28
49. Ibid., pp. 29-30
50. B. Upadhyaya, p. 276
51. See V. Dalmia, "Sanskrit Scholars and Pandits" for discussion of this point.
52. Gauri Vishwanathan, *Masks of Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989): 167
53. Interview, Vidya Niwas Mishra, Vice-Chancellor, Sanskrit University, September 1992. I have not checked the accuracy of the statistics quoted by him. They may be exaggerated, but what is interesting is the idea behind the statement.
54. B. Upadhyaya, p. 262
55. Interview, Murli Dhar Pandey, April 1992
56. Interview, Vishwanath Bhattacharya, August 1992
57. Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power", pp. 21-
58. V/24/910 (IOL): 34
59. B. Upadhyaya, p. 205, accounts by missionaries and visitors in "The Calcutta Christian Observer", 1835-37; *Ninth Report of Schools and other Missionary Operations, carried on by the agents of the Baptist Missionary Society at Benares during MDCCCLIII* (Calcutta: Baptist Missionary Press, 1854); *Central Hindu College Magazine*, 1904-1911.
60. *The Leader* March 24 1915. Also, Butler papers (IOL) F 116, pp 69-70
61. B. Upadhyaya, p. 454; *Sri Vallabhram Shaligram Sangveda Vidyalaya Rajat Jayanti 2002* (Silver Jubilee Souvenir 1945)
62. B. Upadhyaya, pp. 503-4

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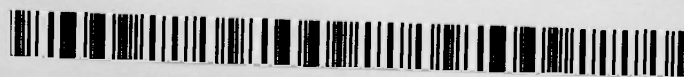
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