

BOOK REVIEWS

Die Burushaski-Sprache von Hunza und Nager. Teil I: Grammatik, Teil II: Texte mit Übersetzungen, Teil III: Wörterbuch Burushaski-Deutsch, Deutsch-Burushaski by Hermann Berger. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998 (Neuindische Studien 13).

Reviewed by Hermann Kreutzmann

The long-awaited publication of Hermann Berger's studies of the isolated language of Burushaski has finally appeared after more than 35 years of work. Together with his previous tome on the Yasin-Burushaski (*Das Yasin-Burushaski (Werchikwar): Grammatik, Texte, Wörterbuch*, published as Vol. 3 in the Neuindische Studien series) which belongs to the same group of isolated languages, this means that a most extensive collection of texts and lexemes is now available. The work comes in three volumes: a grammar (271 pp.), a collection of texts (273 pp.), and a dictionary (646 pp.). Based on Berger's own collection, the 67 texts are provided in transcription and in German translation. The material consists mainly of ghost stories and was recorded in 1959 and subsequently checked (mainly in 1961) and analysed.

The dictionary was extended substantially through the provision of entries by Allama Nasir-ud-din Hunzai, who features as co-author of the dictionary (Volume III). Allama Nasir-ud-din Hunzai is the best known and most respected local scholar of the Hunza Valley who independently had started the compilation of a dictionary which can now fortunately be merged with Berger's work. Certain aspects of the Nager-Burushaski and local variants

were contributed by Hugh van Skyhawk. Thus we are now in a favourable position to use the most comprehensive language study of Burushaski to date.

Burushaski still remains an unwritten language: although some efforts have been made by local scholars to provide it with a script, these are not widely accepted. This would be necessary for the further collection and preservation of texts and poems, for the provision of Burushaski classes to young students, and for the processing of material for transmission by the local radio station at Gilgit as part of the Burushaski medium programme. Although the release of the three volumes was greatly appreciated when they were formally launched in Gilgit recently, some expectations of the interested public (not necessarily only the academic public) should be mentioned. It was suggested that an English-Burushaski version of the dictionary would be more helpful than a German one, because the language of academic institutions in Pakistan, and increasingly the medium of instruction in schools as well, is English. Some professional advice and support for the introduction of a written form of Burushaski remains a desideratum. Obviously it was not the aim of the present publication; none the less, expectations are high. Now that it has finally become available it is to be hoped that Berger's contribution will provide a sound foundation for further publications on Burushaski which fulfill the expectations of the Burushaski speakers. They are the only ones who can preserve and develop their language and use it as their domestic medium of communication and for the maintenance of their cultural heritage.

Ascètes et Rois : Un monastère de Kanphata Yogis au Népal by
Véronique Bouillier. Paris: CNRS Editions, coll. CNRS
Ethnologie, 1997. 263pp.

Reviewed by Philippe Ramirez

At first sight, this book looks like a monograph about a Nepalese monastery occupied by Kanphata yogi renunciators. As such, the monograph in itself would have constituted a very respectable contribution to Indian and Himalayan studies. However, its bearing is much wider. The Caughera monastery, which was founded at an uncertain date by Ratannath, a follower