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Jean Philippe Vogel's letters to Nityanand Shastri

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Vihagottama – Superbird

The multifaceted life of Jean Philippe Vogel



Edited by

Lennart Bes, Alied de Cock and Dory Heilijgers

This volume is published on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the *Vereniging Vrienden van het Instituut Kern* (VVIK, Society of Friends of the Kern Institute). The Sanskrit term *Vihagottama*, Superbird or in Dutch *Oppervogel*, was a nickname for professor Jean Philippe Vogel (1871-1958), to whom this work is devoted. Vogel was a Sanskritist and archaeologist, and also the founder of both the VVIK and Leiden's Indological centre, the Kern Institute. In this volume, the VVIK presents seven articles about various aspects of Vogel's multifaceted life, highlighting his countless and varied activities, his extensive network and his rich legacy up to the present day.

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Published on the occasion of the
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Society of Friends of the Kern Institute
Leiden, 1 December 2024

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Dory Heilijgers

Cover illustration: drawing by Johan Huizinga showing Jean Philippe Vogel as “Superbird” at the top, with the Sanskrit term *Vihagottama* next to his left temple, ca. 1921 (for an extensive explanation, see Chapter 2).

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7.

Jean Philippe Vogel's letters to Nityanand Shastri

Peter C. Bisschop

The collection of Jean Philippe Vogel's archives now held at Leiden University Libraries includes a folder with letters addressed to Vogel written in Sanskrit.¹ These letters, from several Indian and Kashmiri pandits, are a treasure trove for the study of Sanskrit letter writing at the beginning of the twentieth century and attest to a period of lively intercultural exchange.² Pandits with whom Vogel corresponded in Sanskrit include Sahaja Bhatta, Uday Candra, Tulsi Ram Sharma, Mukunda Ram Shastri, Nityanand Shastri and Tailanga Ram Shastri.

Many of the letters in the collection are from Nityanand Shastri, a Kashmiri pandit whom Vogel met in Kashmir in the summer of 1900 (figure 7.1).³ Vogel was brought into contact with Nityanand by Mark Aurel Stein, the famous Hungarian explorer of Central Asia, who advised him to read Sanskrit with him. Nityanand was a traditionally trained pandit who was in contact with many Western Indologists at the time, who went to him for study and advice. After a spell as a young Sanskrit teacher at a government school in Srinagar, he was later appointed professor of Sanskrit at Sri Pratap College in 1916.⁴ His most remarkable output, published posthumously only a few years ago, is a Sanskrit translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (*Dān Kvikṣoṭah*).⁵



Figure 7.1. Pandit Nityanand Shastri, 1910.

¹ Vogel archives, no. Or.26.821. Folder 33: "brieven en aantekeningen in Sanskrit c. 1905."

² See Bisschop forthcoming, where I discuss two sample letters by Shastri and Vogel in more detail in the light of the Sanskrit epistolary tradition.

³ In total, Leiden University Libraries holds fourteen letters to Vogel by Nityanand, the majority of which stem from the first decade of the twentieth century, the period when Vogel was stationed in India (1899-1912).

⁴ For more on Nityanand Shastri and other Kashmirian pandits, see Pandita 2002.

⁵ Dimitrov 2019. See the introduction for a fascinating account of the circumstances of this extraordinary enterprise.

Last year I was able to acquire digital photographs of Vogel's own letters to Nityanand Shastri from his grandson, S.N. Pandita.⁶ With the exception of a handful of letters written in English, most of Vogel's letters to Nityanand are written in Sanskrit, in Devanāgarī script. I plan to publish an edition, translation and study of both sides of the correspondence. For this occasion, I have transcribed and translated Vogel's side of the correspondence. A full study with explanatory notes will have to follow later. Not all the letters are dated; I show them here in what I consider to be the most likely chronological order.⁷ Following the collection of Sanskrit letters, I present Vogel's English letters to Nityanand. Finally, I include a transcript of Vogel's original draft of one of the Sanskrit letters sent to Nityanand; this draft was kept by Vogel and is now in the Leiden collection.

For the sake of easier comprehension of the lengthy Sanskrit compounds, I have added hyphens inside the compounds, without however dissolving the sandhi. Round brackets indicate characters difficult to read; plus signs indicate additions made by Vogel; square brackets indicate deletions by Vogel. The abbreviation "ac" in the notes stands for *ante correctionem* and "pc" for *post correctionem*. Accidental errors in Vogel's writing are marked with "NB," followed by the presumed intended reading, preceded by "for." Double dashes (--) indicate that a character is illegible. The layout of the letters is reproduced in the transcription and translation as much as possible. The spelling of Sanskrit names and terms in the translation has been normalized, with no use of diacritics.

Sanskrit Letters

1. 4 August 1900, from Srinagar:⁸

śrīnagare 4/8/1900

*paṇḍita-nityānanda-śāstrī prathamam dāktar-staina-sāhibena mama darśanāya preṣitaḥ
paścād mamaiva saṃskṛta-pāṭhārtham āhūta ekaṃ māsaṃ yāvat prāyaśaḥ pratidinaṃ mat-samīpam
āgato 'sti pāṭhanena ca vinayena ca parisamtoṣo mayy utpannaḥ*

dāktar ja.pa.vogel

Srinagar, 4 August 1900

Pandit Nityanand Shastri was first sent to see me by Dr. Stein Sahib. Afterwards, I invited him to teach me Sanskrit, and for a month he has come to me almost every day. I have been highly pleased with his teaching and humility.

2. 3 February 1901, from Lahore:⁹

om śrīśaḥ prasīdatu |

⁶ I would like to thank S.N. Pandita for sharing images of these letters with me, as well as for his advice on several aspects of the correspondence and the friendship between Vogel and his grandfather.

⁷ See the notes to the undated letters for relevant details on the possible time and place of writing.

⁸ Image 6916. This is not a letter addressed to Nityanand as such, but a brief recommendation letter for him. See also the English letter addressed to "Off Director General Archaeology with India" dated 31 July 1900 (i.e., four days before this one) included below in the English section.

⁹ Images 6912-6913.

*śrīnagarasya rājakīya-pāṭhaśāloṇpādhyāyam aneka-śāstra-pāra-gataṃ sva-priya-vayasyam anvarthataḥ*¹⁰ *śrī-nityānanda iti sugr̥hīta-nāmadheyam paṇḍitavaram prati svastivāda-puraḥsaram nivedanam idam preṣayati dāktar-vogel-sāhib holanda-deśīyaḥ* |

*bhavato viṇaya-maitra-mahācihnam*¹¹ *“kṛstamasakārṭ” yad ucyate śubha-patram holanda-deśam prati preritam punar bahūn udadhīn unnatāṃś ca girīn laṅghayitvā gata-saptāhne gr̥ha-kapota iva mama haste nilīno 'sti* |

*kaśmīra-deśād dhi nirgata-mātrasya me pāñcanada-viṣaya-bhogapatinā “ārkheolojikāl sarveyar iti*¹² *ya aṅgala-bhāṣāyām abhidhīyata adhikāro datta āsit*

*tat-kāraṇāt svalpam eva kālam yuropa-deśe nivāsam kṛtvā sarvāṃś ca bāndhavāṃ sakhīṃś ca haulandikāṃ śāstra-niṣṇātāṃ mahāpaṇḍitāṃ*¹³ *viśeṣato mama videśa-vṛttānta-kathābhir modayitvā bhūyo mahānāvi praviśya bhārata-varṣam pratyāvṛtto 'smi | gata-varṣānte lavapure prāpto nave cādhikāre sthāpito bahūni kāryāṇy anusthātum arhāmi | sarvāni hi pāñcanadasya jīrṇāni mandira-prāsāda-durga-stūpa-stambhādīni dṛṣṭavyāni nivarṇitavyāni ca | tad-vaśāt śāstra-paṭhanāya bho kaṣṭam atyapo 'vakāma avaśīsyate* |

*yadī tu varṣo gato bhaviṣyati deva-prasādāt punaḥ kaśmīra-deśam deśa-ratnam adhigamya padma-saras-tāre*¹⁴ *nirantara-pāda(pa)-chāyā-śītale 'tīramaṇīya upavane bhavatā pāṭhaka-kāvyāni pāṭhitāḥ*¹⁵ *paramam sukham anubhaviṣyāmīti yat satyam mamāśā vartate | śubham astu* ||

lavapurāt 3.2.1901

Oṃ. May the Lord be pleased.

Dr. Vogel Sahib from Holland sends this message preceded by blessings to the best of pandits, who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand (Constant Delight), who is a teacher at the royal school of Srinagar, a master of all the scriptures, my dear friend.

The nice letter called “Christmas Card,” a great sign of your courtesy and friendship, sent to the land of Holland, after crossing many oceans and lofty mountains, has reached my hand last week, like a homing pigeon.

At the time of my departure from the land of Kashmir, I was given the office of what in English language is called “Archaeological Surveyor,” by the governor of the region of Punjab.

For this reason, having spent only a short time in Europe entertaining all my relatives, friends and the great scholars of Holland learned in the scriptures with stories of my adventures abroad, I again boarded a great ship and returned to Bharata Varsha (India). At the end of last year, I arrived in Lahore, where I was appointed to my new position, and now have many duties to perform. For all the ancient temples, palaces, forts, stupas and pillars of Punjab, etc. must be seen and described. Consequently, alas, very little opportunity remains for the study of the scriptures.

After a year, however, by God's grace I hope to return to the land of Kashmir, the supreme land, and experience the highest pleasure while listening to your recitations of poems in the very beautiful garden, cool in the uninterrupted shade of trees, on the bank of the lotus lake. This truly is my hope. May it be well.

From Lahore, 3 February 1901

¹⁰ *svapriyavayasyam anvarthataḥ*: pc; *priyavayasyanvarthataḥ*: ac.

¹¹ *-mahācihnam*: pc; *-mahācihnam*: ac. NB: *viṇaya-* for *vinaya-*.

¹² Vogel does not add closing quotation marks here but lets Sanskrit *iti* do the job.

¹³ I presume Vogel intended: *haulandikān śāstra-niṣṇātān mahāpaṇḍitān*.

¹⁴ NB: for *-tīre*. There are more problems in this part of the text.

¹⁵ *pāṭhitāḥ*: pc; *pāṭhayan*: ac.

3. Undated (end of 1902, from Lahore?):¹⁶

om |
śrīśārādā jayatu |

śrīmac-chrīnagarasya vidvaj-jana-tilaka-bhūta aganya-guṇa-gaṇālamkṛta-mūrtiḥ suhrj-jana-hṛdaya-nityānanda-kārī śrī-nityānanda-śāstri-nāma paṇḍita-variṣṭho svastivāda-puraḥsaram ḍāktar-vogel-sāhiba-preṣitam nivedanam idam ākarṇayatu |

bhavac-chubha-pattra-prāpti-samayāt prabhṛti māsa-catuṣṭayam gatam adyāpi mayā kimścit prativacanam na dattam iti kāraṇād mahatī¹⁷ mad-manasi¹⁸ vartate lajjā | kiṃ bahunā | adhikāra-kārya-bāhulyam eva tad vilambana-hetu na tu vātsalya-svalpatā |

gata-grīṣma-rtu-māsa-dvayam parvata-rāja-cintāmaṇi-bhūtāyām śrī-campāpuryām nivāsaḥ kṛtaḥ | tatra deśe ca bahūni sanātanāni saṃskṛta-lipi-viśeṣālamkṛtāni prācīna-bhūpati-nāma-śāsanāśrayāṇi tāmra-paṭṭakāni dṛṣṭāni yāni mudrālaya-vaśena prāduṣkartum vyavasito 'smi | api tādrśāni śāsanapattrāni kaśmīra-deśe 'pi vidyanta iti mama kutūhalo vartate ||

campā-nagarād lavapuram praṇivṛtyāsmadīya-mitrottam(ā)¹⁹-kāla-maraṇa-vṛttānta-śravaṇenātimahān mad-hṛdaye samutpāditaḥ śokaḥ | satyenaivāsmādrśānām manda-bhāgyānām bhāgadheyam paṅkaja-dala-patita-salila-bindur iva cañcalam ucyate | tasya tu mahātmano lokāntara-gatasyāpi saujanya-vinayādi-guṇa-viśeṣa-smṛtiḥ sakhi-jana-mānaseṣu sadaivāvaśikṣyate ||

yad bhavatas parameśvara-prasādāt satatāroga-kuśala-dīrghāyusṭvam syād iti mama param vartate prārthanā ||

śubham astu ||

Om.

Victory to the goddess Shri Sharada.

Let the best of pandits, Shri Nityanand Shastri – who is an ornament among the savants of glorious Srinagar, whose appearance is adorned with countless qualities, who brings constant delight to the hearts of his friends – listen to this message preceded by blessings sent by Dr. Vogel Sahib:

Since the time I received your kind letter, four months have passed, and I have still not given any reply. For this reason, I feel great shame in my heart. What more is there to say? It is only the abundance of duties of my office that has caused this delay, but not shortage of affection. I spent two months of the past summer in the glorious city of Chamba, the crest-gem of the king of mountains (Himalaya). And in that region, I saw many ancient copper plates, adorned with specific scripts in Sanskrit, bearing the edicts and names of former kings, which I am determined to bring to light with the help of the printing-press. I am eager to know whether such plates with edicts are also found in the land of Kashmir.

After my return from the city of Chamba to Lahore, I was struck with immense grief in my heart at the news of the untimely death of our best friend. Truly, the fate of unfortunate beings like us is said to be transient like a drop of water fallen on a lotus petal. However, the memory of the special virtues like kindness, modesty, etc. of that great soul, who has gone to the other world, will always remain in the hearts of his friends.

¹⁶ Images 6904-6903 (reversed). The death referred to in this letter most likely is that of the Canadian Indologist Alfred William Stratton, who died 23 August 1902. From 1899 until his early death he was principal of Oriental College in Lahore. For a draft of this letter in the Leiden collections, see the letter reproduced at the end of this chapter.

¹⁷ mahatī: pc; mahātī: ac.

¹⁸ NB: for manmanasi.

¹⁹ The long -ā ending is not visible due to damage.

My highest prayer is that you may always enjoy health, happiness and a long life by the grace of the Supreme Lord.

May it be well.

4. Undated (June 1903, from Chamba?).²⁰

śrīśaḥ prasīdatu

śrīnagarī-cūḍāmaṇi-bhūtam aneka-śāstra-rasa-tṛpta-mānasam kāśmīra-dviḥja-vidvaj-janālaṃkāra-viśeṣam sva-priyatara-vayasyam paṇḍita-varam śrī-nityānanda-śāstrīty anvartha-sugṛhīta-nāmadheyam dāktar-vogel holanda-deśīya āśirvāda-puraḥsaram idaṃ nivedayati ||

asmin saṃvatsare yad bhavatā śrīnagarād mat-pārśvam preṣitam śubha-pattra-trayam tasya hy adyāpi prativacanam mayā na kṛtam | navīnādhikārāśrayam²¹ kārya-bāhulyam eva tasya mat-pramādasya kāraṇam āsīt | tad bharṣayatu bhavān | adya hi prativacana-preṣaṇasya vilambanam na bhavet |

kāśmīra-deśam punar draṣṭum paramā mama vartate āśā | sāmpratam tu sva-tantro nāsmi | ataḥ kasmīns samaye tatra gamanam bhaviṣyati tad adyaiva na vaditum śakyate | avasyatam tu yadi daivam prasannam syāt tatra gamiṣyāmi | atiramaṇīyam hi me pratibhāti himālayācalasya pradhāna-bhūṣaṇam śrī-mūrti-bhūtam śrīnagaram | bhavantam api²² draṣṭum utkaṇṭhito 'smi | anyac ca | prāk pāñcanadasya balūcīsthānasya ca prācīna-mandirānām mamādhikāro datta āsīt | adya-prabhṛti tu kāśmīra-deśa rāja-sthāne 'pi tad eva kāryam karaṇīyam ity ādiṣṭo 'smi | tad-anantaram yad bhavām punar api kuśala-pattrena mama hṛdayam prasannī-kuryāt tad eva prārthayāmi |

śubham astu ||

May the Lord be pleased.

Dr. Vogel from Holland, informs the following preceded by blessings to the best of pandits, who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand Shastri, his dearest friend, the crest-jewel of the city of Srinagar, whose mind is satisfied by the essence of numerous scriptures, the distinguished ornament of the twice-born of Kashmir:

I have still not replied to the three kind letters that you have sent me from Srinagar this year. The reason for my oversight has been the abundance of duties that come with my new office. May you please forgive it. Today, however, there shall be no delay in sending a response.

My highest hope remains to see the land of Kashmir again. At present, however, I am not a free man. Hence, it is not possible to say right now at which moment I might go there. But if fate should be kind, I will go there. For I find Srinagar, the pre-eminent ornament of the Himalaya Mountain, exceptionally beautiful. I am also eager to see you. And there is more. Earlier, the superintendence of the ancient temples in the Punjab and Baluchistan was assigned to me. From today onwards, I have been instructed to carry out the same office in the kingdom of Kashmir as well. Next, I request that you please my heart again with a friendly letter.

May it be well.

²⁰ Images 6900-6901. In June 1903 the former Panjab and the United Provinces Circles were amalgated and renamed Northern Circle. During this month Vogel was researching inscriptions in Chamba. Cf. Theuns de Boer 2008: 180.

²¹ -kāraśrayam: pc; -kārośrayam: ac.

²² NB: for *bhavantam api*.

5. Undated (1903-1904):²³

aneka-śāstra-sāgara-pāra-gataṃ nirmala-guṇa-gaṇālaṃkṛta-mūrtiṃ śrīnagara-stha-vidvaj-jana-tilaka-bhūtaṃ paṇḍita-śrī-nityānanda-śāstriṇaṃ prati dākṭar-vāgālayaḥ svastivāda-puraḥsaraṃ nivedanam idaṃ preṣayati ||

atha varṣa eko 'tigato 'sti yataḥ prabhṛti mūrtimatīva śrīḥ śrīnagarī mayā dṛṣṭā | kadā kaśmīra-deśasya kaśmīra-deśīyānāṃś ca viśiṣṭa-paṇḍita-varānāṃ darśanena punar anugrḥīto bhaveyam iti mama (mana)si kautūhalaṃ vartate | sa(rṣapā) bhavatā -- -- -- vṛttānta-vyavahāraḥ pattra-bhāgena nacirād (nive)dayitavyaḥ ||

anyac ca | amerika-deśād (bho.) mīsis-stretan-preṣitaḥ śubha-lekho ma(d)-hasta āgato 'sti | (ta)smin iyaṃ prārthanā vartate | yāni yāni dākṭar-stretan-mahāśayena likhitāni sva-mitta-śiṣyādīnāṃ²⁴ pārśve pattrāṇi vartante teṣāṃ teṣāṃ pratibimbāni (copy)²⁵ mamaiva pārśvaṃ preṣayitavyānīti | bhavato dākṭar-stretan- sāhiva-vareṇa saha dr̥dhaṃ mitratvaṃ āsīd²⁶ iti jñāyate | tasmād mīsis-stretan-prārthanā-prāmāṇyād eva kartavyam | yāni cic chrī-mukunda-rāma-

Dr. Vagalaya²⁷ sends this message preceded by blessings to paṇḍit Shri Nityanand Shastri, who has mastered the ocean of numerous scriptures, whose appearance is adorned with pure qualities, and who is an ornament of the savants residing in Srinagar.

Now, one year has passed since I saw Srinagar, which is as it were the embodiment of fortune. When will I once again be blessed with the sight of the land of Kashmir and the distinguished scholars from the land of Kashmir? Such is the longing in my heart. I have a great desire to be informed by you about the current events and dealings through a letter soon.

Something else. A kind letter sent by Mrs. Stratton from America has reached my hand. In it, there is the following request: Whatever copies of letters written by the honourable Dr. Stratton sent to his friends, pupils and others there are, please send them to me. It is known that you had a strong friendship with Dr. Stratton Sahib. Therefore, please do so, because of the genuineness of Mrs. Stratton's request. Whatever [letters] Shri Mukunda Rama [...]

6. Undated, from Chamba (1902-1908):²⁸

śrīśaḥ prasīdatu

kāśmīra-deśa-stha-vidvaj-jana-tilaka-bhūta-sakala-śāstra-pāra-gata-samasta-śubha-guṇa-gaṇālaṃkṛta-śrīnagara-śrī-vardhana-śrī-nityānanda-śāstrīti yathārtha-nāma paṇḍita-variṣṭhaṃ holanda-deśīyo vāgālaya-saṃjñō jñānārthī svasti-vādena²⁹ vandayitvā vijñāpayati ||

²³ Image 6905. Parts of this letter are damaged and illegible; the second part of the letter is missing. In the preface to Stratton's collected letters from India (Stratton 1908), Stratton's widow, Anna Booth Stratton, mentions that she started collecting and editing her husband's letters after the meeting of the American Oriental Society in 1903, at the suggestion of Maurice Bloomfield and Charles Lanman. In a letter dated 20 October 1904, Nityanand mentions sending Vogel copies of the letters. So, I suppose this letter dates from around 1903-1904.

²⁴ NB: for *svamitra*-.

²⁵ Inserted by Vogel in English between brackets.

²⁶ NB: for *mitratvam āsīd*.

²⁷ *vāgālaya* (abode of speech): Sanskrit nickname for Vogel.

²⁸ Images 6898-6899. Between 1902 and 1908 Vogel spent multiple summer months in Chamba to explore the antiquities and inscriptions there. The inscriptions were published in two heavy volumes years apart (Vogel 1911 and 1957).

²⁹ *svasti*:- pc; *svāsti*:- ac.

asti girīśa-bhūṣaṇa-bhūtaś campā-nāmātīva-ramaṇīyaḥ pradeśaḥ | tatra kasmimścic cāmuṇḍā-devī-prāsāda-prasādine sthāne prācīnaś toyādhāro vartate | atijīrṇa-śilā-paṭṭa-likhita-śāradā-lipyakṣara-śobhanālāṅkāra-vṛtta-viśeṣa-viśeṣitātyanta-ramya-prasastis tatraiva vidyate | asyāḥ pratibimbaś ca devanāgarī-lipi-likhitāḥ caiva chāyāḥ bhavataḥ samīpaḥ preṣayāmi | kim arthaḥ | pāṇḍita-vareṇa saṃskṛta-bhāṣā-kuśalatayā yad yad asyāḥ prasastyāḥ śilāpaṭṭa-bhaṅgād vinaṣṭaḥ syāt tat tat saṃbhāvitavyaḥ likhitavyaś ceti mama paramāśā vartate | suṣṭhu hi kenacid uktaḥ hanumān abdhim atarad duṣkaraḥ kiṃ mahātmanām | anyāpi me hṛdaya iyaṃ āśā paramāsti śīghraḥ eva mitra-vārīṣṭhānanendu-darśanena locana-kumudaḥ me vikasvaraḥ bhaved iti śubhaḥ ||

May the Lord be pleased.

The student from the land of Holland, known as Vagalaya, pays his respects with a blessing and informs the best of pandits, who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand Shastri, the increaser of the fortune of Srinagar, who is an ornament among the savants of the land of Kashmir, who has mastered all the scriptures, and is adorned with all auspicious qualities.

There is an exceptionally beautiful region called Chamba, which is an ornament of the lord of mountains (Himalaya). In that place, at a particular spot which is blessed with a temple of the goddess Camunda, there is an ancient water tank. At that place, there is a remarkably beautiful eulogistic inscription distinguished with special splendid figures of speech and verse in Sharada script written on a very old stone slab. I am sending you a copy and a transcript of it written in Devanagari script. For what reason? My utmost hope is that you, the best of pandits, because of your expertise in the Sanskrit language will be able to reconstruct and transcribe any part in this eulogistic inscription that is lost because of damage of the stone slab. Indeed, it has been well said by someone, "Hanuman crossed the ocean. What is impossible for great souls?" And the other hope in my heart is that very soon my eyes like lotuses will open and blossom at the sight of the moon-like face of my best of friends. May it be well.

7. Undated, from Simla (Summer 1907).³⁰

śrīśaḥ prasīdatu ||

samasta-śāstrārtha-svī-karaṇa-kāraṇa-yaśaḥ-prasasti-candrikā-dūrīkṛtāvidyā-niśāndhakāraḥ sakala-vimala-guṇa-ratnāvalī-vibhūṣita-mūrtiḥ kaśmīra-deśīya-prasasta-vidvat-sabhā-tilaka-bhūtaḥ śrīnagara-śrī-varḍhano mitra-jana-nityānanda-kārī śrī-nityānanda-śāstrī nāma paṇḍita-varīṣṭhaḥ svastivāda-puraḥsaraḥ vāgālaya-preṣitaḥ nivedanam idam ākarṇayatu ||

bhavat-kuśala-samācārāviṣkaraṇa-kara-kamalālaṃkṛta-śubha-patraḥ prāpya mama manasi mahatī prītiḥ samutpannaḥ | athavā bhavad-gr̥ha-dahana-vitta-nāśa-vṛttāntaḥ śrutvā suduḥkhito 'smi | āścaryaḥ viśama-kṛtānta-khalena kim arthaḥ śānta-śīleṣu tādr̥śaḥ krodho vihitaḥ | athavā paṇḍitasya pāṇḍityam eva kośaḥ |

ahaḥ manda-bhāgyatayā māsa-trayaḥ yāvac caṇḍa-rogeṇākrānta āsam | adyāpi śarīre daurbalyaḥ vartate svādhikāra-kāryāṇi tu bhūyaḥ kartuḥ śaknōmi | itaḥ paraḥ saptaḥasyāntare mārāśāla-(Marshall)supuṇya(Spooner)nāmñī man-mitrau śimla-nagarāt kaśmīra-deśaḥ

³⁰ Images 6910-6911. A letter of Nityanand dated 31 May 1907 reports the burning down of his house, so this letter must be a response to it. In April of that year Vogel was hospitalized in Lucknow for a liver disorder and afterwards nursed for three months in Simla (Theuns-de Boer 2008: 181). This appears to be alluded to in the letter, suggesting that it dates to the late summer of 1907. I thank S.N. Pandita for his help with the dating of Nityanand's own letter which adopts a combination of the Georgian calendar and Vikrama Saṃvat.

*pratiprasthātu*³¹ vyavasitau smaḥ | mārtaṇḍādi-prasasta-devālaya-darśanaṁ katum³² icchataḥ | ahaṁ
tu daurbalya-vaśān na gamiṣyāmi | na jñāyate kasmin samaye vidhi-prasādāt kaśmīra-deśasya bhavan-
mukha-candrasya ca darśanaṁ kuryām iti | bhavatas tu sarvathā kuśalaṁ bhavet ity āśaṁse ||
śubham astu ||

May the Lord be pleased.

May the best of pandits, Shri Nityanand Shastri – who removes the darkness of the night of ignorance with the moonlight of his fame and glory which are based on his mastery of the meanings of all the scriptures, whose appearance is adorned with the string of pearls that are all his pure virtues, who is the ornament among the assembly of the celebrated savants in the land of Kashmir, who increases the glory of Srinagar, and who brings constant delight to his friends – listen to this message preceded by blessings sent by Vagalaya.

When I received your kind letter adorned with your lotus-hand bringing news of your well-being, it produced great joy in my heart. However, upon hearing the report of the destruction of your property by the burning of your house, I am deeply grieved. It is baffling why such anger is imposed upon those of peaceful disposition by cruel and wicked fate. Or rather, the true treasure of a scholar is his learning.

By ill fortune I have been afflicted with a fierce illness for three months. Even now, my body is still weak, but I am again able to carry out the duties of my office. Soon, within a week, my two friends Marashala (Marshall) and Supunya (Spoonier) have decided to set out for the land of Kashmir from Simla city. They want to go and see the famous temples like Martanda. But because of my weakness, I will not be able to go. I do not know when, by the grace of fate, I may see Kashmir and your moon-like face. However, I hope that you stay well in every respect.

May it be well.

8. Undated, from Simla (Summer 1910).³³

śrīśaḥ prasīdatu |

*aneka-śāstra-pāra-prāpti-kīrti-jyotsnā-bhāsita-sarvāśaḥ samasta-guṇa-ratnāvalyālankṛta-mānasah
kaśmīra-deśīya-vidvaj-jana-cintāmaṇiḥ śrīmad-yathārtha-nityānanda iti sugr̥hīta-nāmadheyah
pāṇḍita-variṣṭhaḥ svastivāda-puraḥsaram holanda-deśīya-vāgālaya-nāmno vidyārthino nivedanam
avadhārayatu ||*

*śāradākṣarālankṛta-pañcāṅga-pattra-sahitaṁ bhavac-chubha-kara-kamala-śobhita-lekham
avalokya mama mahān harṣaḥ samutpannaḥ | tat-preṣanād atīva-kṛtajño 'smi | tādr̥śasyaiva pañcāṅga-
pattrasya mamāpekṣāsīt | anyad api mama prārthanam vatate³⁴ | yadi kasyacid dāridrya-pīḍita-
brāhmaṇasya gr̥he gopatha-brāhmaṇa-nāma-hasta-likhita-prācīna-pustakaṁ syāt tadā mamārthaṁ tat
pustakaṁ gr̥haṇīyam | ahaṁ hi tasmai daridrīya dvijottamāya dakṣiṇām avaśyam eva dāsyāmi | yadi
burja-pattra-nirmīta-pustakaṁ militum śaknoti tarhi viśeṣa-śobhanaṁ syāt | kāṣṭhamaya-karaṇḍa-
gataṁ tat pustakaṁ "tāka" dvārā simala-nagaraṁ preṣayitavyam | iti śubham ||*

³¹ NB: for *pratiprasthātum*.

³² NB: for *kartum*.

³³ Images 6919-6920. In a letter dated 3 May 1910 Nityanand mentions sending the *pañcāṅga* (ritual calendar). From 1 May 1910 Vogel worked as deputy director of the Archaeological Survey, based in Simla.

³⁴ *vatate*: pc; *vateta*: ac. Obviously Vogel meant to write *vartate*.

May the Lord be pleased.

May the best of pandits – who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand Shastri, possessed of fortune, who shines all around with the light of the fame of his mastery of many scriptures, whose mind is adorned with a string of pearls of all virtues, and who is the wish-fulfilling gem among the savants of the land of Kashmir – accept the message preceded by blessings from his student named Vagalaya from the land of Holland.

Upon seeing your letter beautified by your splendid lotus-hand, accompanied by a ritual calendar decorated with Sharada letters, I experienced great joy. I am extremely grateful for your sending it. I had been hoping for such a ritual calendar. I have another request as well. If any poor and wretched brahmin should have an old hand-written manuscript of the Gopatha Brahmana, then please acquire the manuscript for me. I will certainly give the poor excellent twice-born man money. It would be especially good if it is possible to acquire a birch-bark manuscript. Please send the manuscript in a wooden box by tonga to the city of Simla. May it be well.

9. Undated (1910-1912?).³⁵

śrīśaḥ prasīdatu ||

auṃ svasti || śrīgaṇādhipataye namaḥ ||

*aneka-śāstra-pāra-gata-sakala-guṇa-gaṇālaṃkṛta-mūrtiḥ kāśmīra-deśīya-vidvaj-jana-tilaka-bhūtaḥ
śrīnagara-śrī-varadhana-yathārtha-śrī-nityānanda-śāstrīti sugr̥hīta-nāmadheya-paṇḍita-varīṣṭho
holanda-deśīyasya vāgālayākhyasya vidyārthinah svastivāda-puraḥsaram lekham imaṃ svīkarotu ||*

*kim arthaṃ dīrgha-kālam eva priya-vayasya śrī-paṇḍita-nityānanda-śāstriṇo nityānanda-
vardhanaḥ kuśala-nivedana-śubha-lekho na prāptaḥ | kiṃ tatra-bhavato bahu-kārya-vaśān mama
smaraṇāvakāśo na bhavet | athavā [śāntaṃ pāpam]³⁶ paṇḍita-varasya vyādhy-ākṛāntasya
lekhanāśaktatā syād iti bahuśaś cintayato mama hṛdaya-vidāraṇaḥ saṃdeha āsīt ||*

*atha varṣārambha-puṇya-dīne bhavat-kausalyādi-nivedanaṃ śubha-pattraṃ mūrtimantīva caiva
maitra-phalāni phala-varāṇi prāpya parama-harṣa-harṣita-hṛdaya āsam | prativacana-preṣaṇe tu
rājyādhikārādi-bahu-kārya-vaśāt kim api vilambanaṃ jātam | [kiṃ bahunā]³⁷ śīghram eva priya-
vayasya punar-darśanaṃ bhaved iti mama paramāśā vartate | iti śubham ||*

May the Lord be pleased.

Om. (May there be) well-being. Homage to Ganesha.

May the best of pandits – who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand Shastri, the increaser of the fortune of Srinagar, whose appearance is adorned with all qualities and who has mastered numerous scriptures, who is an ornament among the savants of the land of Kashmir – accept this letter preceded by blessings from his student named Vagalaya from the land of Holland.

Why has a kind letter telling of the well-being of my dear friend, pandit Nityanand Shastri, the increaser of constant delight, not arrived for such a long time? Is it due to your many duties that you have no occasion to remember me? Or is it that the best of pandits is not able to write because he is afflicted by illness? As I was worrying a lot like this, I experienced a constant doubt that tore my heart.

Then, on an auspicious day at the start of the year, when I received your kind letter informing me of your well-being etc. like the fruits of friendship, which are the best of fruits, embodied, my heart was

³⁵ Images 6914-6915. I suppose the “duties for the kingdom” refer to Vogel’s position as deputy director of the Archaeological Survey, which he occupied from 1910-1912.

³⁶ Placed between round brackets by Vogel.

³⁷ Placed between round brackets by Vogel.

overjoyed with joy. However, the many duties related to my office for the kingdom etc., have led to some delay in sending a reply. My highest hope is that I may soon see my dear friend again. May it be well.

10. 20 June 1921, from Leiden.³⁸

laiḍana-nagarāt 20-6-1921

aneka-vyākaraṇālaṃkāraḍi-śāstra-sāgara-pāraga-gamana-saṃskṛtaḥ saṃskṛta-bhāṣā-jñāna-niṣṇāta-buddhir buddhimaj-jana-suhr̥t suhr̥j-jana-pūjanārha-guṇo 'gaṇita-guṇa-gaṇālaṃkāṛta-mūrtiḥ kāśmīra-deśīya-panḍita-cūḍāmaṇi-bhūto yathārthābhīdhāna-śrī-nityānandaśāstrīti-sugr̥hīta-nāmadheya-panḍita-variṣṭhaḥ svastivāda-puraḥsaram svasakhyā ḍākṭar je. pī. ec. vogala-nāmnā preṣitaṃ lekham imaṃ svīkarotutarām ||

bahava eva varṣā atītāḥ santi yataḥ prabhṛti bhavad-darśanenānugr̥hīto 'smi | suṣṭhu khalv idam ucyate |

yathā kāṣṭhaṃ ca kāṣṭhaṃ +ca+ sameyātām mahodadhau |

sametya ca vyapeyātām tadvad bhūta-samāgamaḥ ||

na tu yāvaj jīvam amūni kāśmīra-deśe phulla-śobhita-sarasas tīra udyāna-pāda-parāji-chāyāyām bhavatā saha kāvya-nāṭakāḍy-adhyayanātiramaṇīyāni dīnāni vismarīṣyāmi | kadāpi bhāgadheyātīśayād bhārata-vaṣaṃ³⁹ puṇya-deśaṃ bhārata-varṣe ca himagiri-mekhalam kāśmīra-maṇḍalam kīśmāra-viṣaye⁴⁰ ca śrī-devī+kula+nivāsaṃ śrī-nagaraṃ tatra ca nityānanda-kāri suhr̥ttama-śrī-nityānanda-bhadra-mukhaṃ punar api paśyeyam | iti dīne dīne cintayitvā mama paramāśā vartate | kiṃ bahunā | vidhātrā vidheyam ||

śīghram eva śubha-pattra-preṣaṇena mām anugr̥hṇātu bhavān ||

bhavataḥ kuśalaiṣī

J. Ph. Vogel

(Address: University Leiden. Holland)

From the city of Leiden 20-6-1921

Let the best of pandits – who stands true to the meaning of his name, Shri Nityanand Shastri, who is refined in reaching complete mastery of the ocean of multiple scriptures, starting with grammar and poetics, whose mind is deeply versed in the knowledge of the Sanskrit language, who is the friend of learned men, whose qualities are worthy of worship by his friends, whose appearance is adorned by innumerable qualities, and who is the crest-jewel of pandits from the land of Kashmir – please very much accept this letter preceded by blessings sent by his friend, Dr. J.Ph. Vogel.

Many years have gone by since I was blessed by your sight. It has been well said, indeed:

“Just as two pieces of wood may come together in the great ocean, and after coming together separate again, so is the meeting of living beings.”⁴¹

But, as long as I live, I shall not forget those most delightful days of studying poetry, drama, etc. with you in the shade of the rows of trees in the garden at the bank of the lake beautified by the blossoming lotuses in the land of Kashmir. One day, through an excess of good fortune, I may again see the beautiful country of Bharata Varsha, and in Bharata Varsha the region of Kashmir, which is encircled

³⁸ Images 6907-6908.

³⁹ NB: for *bhāratavarṣaṃ*.

⁴⁰ NB: for *kāśmīraviṣaye*. For a detailed study of this letter and Nityanand's response on 21 August 1921, see Bisschop forthcoming.

⁴¹ This traditional verse may have been cited from *Hitopadeśa* 4.74. The same verse also appears in *Mahābhārata* 12.28.36 (variant: *vyatīyātām*) and *Mahābhārata* 12.168.15.

by the Mountain of Snow (Himalaya), and in the land of Kashmir Srinagar, which is the abode of the family of the venerable goddess,⁴² and there the auspicious face of the venerable Nityananda Shastri, the best of friends, who brings constant delight. Thinking thus, each day, my highest hope remains. What is the use of more words? It is ordained by the Creator.

May you please favour me by sending a kind letter.

Wishing for your well-being.

J.Ph. Vogel

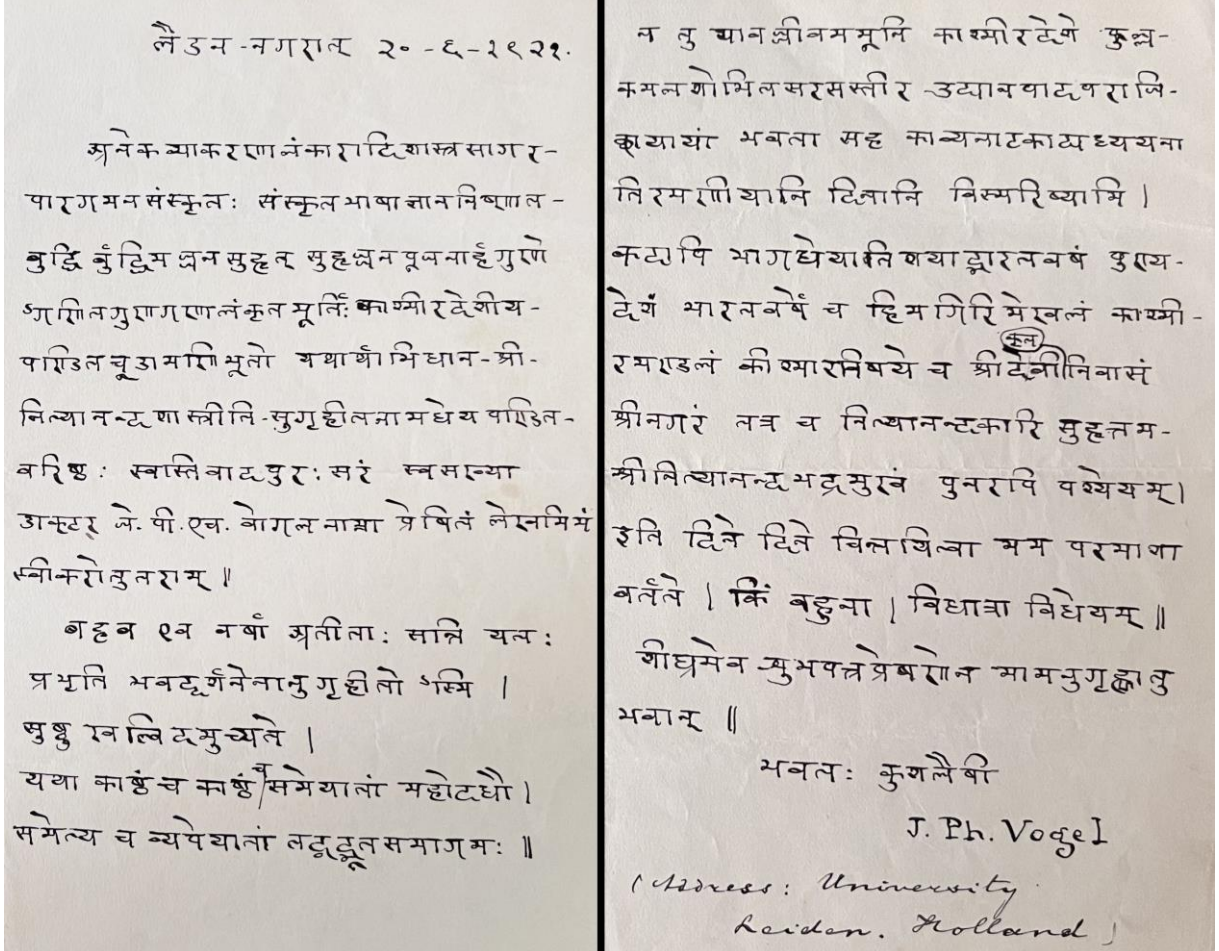


Figure 7.2. Sanskrit letter by J.Ph. Vogel to Nityanand Shastri, 20 June 1921 (front and back).

11. 1 October 1924, from Leiden:⁴³

[left side:]

To Paṇḍit Nityānandaśāstrī

Professor of Sanskrit

⁴² As Dragomir Dimitrov has suggested to me (email correspondence, 14 October 2024), this might refer to the residents of Srinagar. Alternatively, Vogel may have intended *devīkula* to mean “goddess temple” (compare *devakula* “temple”). The reference is to Śārādā Devī, the goddess of learning and tutelary deity of the land of Kashmir.

⁴³ Images 6908-6909. Curiously enough a second copy of the same letter, with very minor differences, exists in the collection (images 6917-6918). On both letters, somebody else (presumably Nityanand) has written notes in a curved Devanāgarī script.

S.P. College

Srinagar

Leiden, Holland

Noordeindsplein 4a

Oct. 1st, 1924

oṃ svasti ||

sakala-śāstra-pāra-gataṃ sarva-guṇa-gaṇa-vibhūṣita-manaskaṃ kāśmīra-deśīya-vidvaj-jana-mukūṭa-bhūtaṃ śrīnagara-tilakaṃ paṇḍita-variṣṭhaṃ yathārtha-nāmakam śrī-nityānanda-śāstrīti sugrīta-nāmadheyaṃ namaskṛtya hollanda-deśa-stho dāktar-vogal pattram idaṃ sānurodham preṣayati ||

dīrgha-kālād bhavataḥ sakāśād atra śubha-patraṃ⁴⁴ nāgatam | yad bhavato manasi śarīre ca sarvataḥ kuśalaṃ vartata iti me paramāśā ||

gata-māse kāśmīra-deśīya-paṇḍita-dvayena prakāśitaṃ lavapure ca mudritaṃ nīlamata-purāṇam nāma pustakaṃ mayā paṭhitam⁴⁵ | atra viśaye mama vastu-traye saṃdeho vartate 'yaṃ bhavān śāstra-jñāna-śāstreṇa chettum arhati ||

nīlamate śl. 760-803 irāmañjarī-pūjā-varṇanam vidyate | atha praṣṭum icchāmi | irāmañjarī-pūjā kāśmīra-deśa adyāpi kriyate | irāpuṣpaṃ kāśmīra-bhāṣāyām hindi-bhāṣāyām aṅgrezī-bhāṣāyām ca kim ucyate | kena ca nāmnā sāmprataṃ prasiddham asti⁴⁶ ||

nīlamate śl. 1226-1128 kāśmīra-stha-lokapālānām catvāri nāmāny ucyante | bindusaraḥ śrīmāḍaka uttaramānasa elāpattraś ca kasmin sthāne vidyante | adya teṣāṃ lokapāla-nāgānām kīdrśāni nāmāni bhavanti ||

nīlamate śl. 867 dhanada iti khyātaḥ parvata ucyate | atha dhanada-parvataḥ kutra vidyate | tasya cādyatanaṃ nāma kiṃ bhavati ||

yadi bhavān saujanya-vaśād⁴⁷ asya pattrasyottaram preṣitum icched atīvānugrīto bhaveyam | bhavān hi mama gurur mitraṃ ca mato 'sti ||

kiṃ bahunā | paramesvaraḥ prasīdatu bhavate ca sarvāṇi puṇyāni prayacchatu ||
śubham astu

Oṃ. May it be well.

Having bowed to Shri Nityanand Shastri – who stands true to the meaning of his name, who has mastered all the scriptures, whose mind is adorned with all virtues, who is the crown jewel of the savants from the land of Kashmir, an ornament of Srinagar, and the best of pandits – Dr. Vogel who is resident in Holland sends this letter which comes with a request:

For a long time, no kind letter has arrived here from you. My highest hope is that you are well in mind and body, in all respects.

In the past month, I have been reading the book called Nilamata Purana, published by two pandits from the land of Kashmir and printed in Lahore. In this regard, I have the following doubt concerning three things, which you should be able to cut with the weapon that is the knowledge of scriptures.

In verses 760-803 of the Nilamata, a description of the worship of Iramanjari is found. Now, I wish to ask: Is the worship of Iramanjari still performed in the land of Kashmir today? What is the name of the Ira flower in Kashmiri, Hindi and English? And by what name is it known at present?

⁴⁴ In the second version Vogel spells this as *śubhapatram*.

⁴⁵ In the second version Vogel indicates that *gatamose* (sic!) should be placed after *pustakaṃ*. Furthermore, he inserts *ca* after *lavapure*, after having omitted it earlier.

⁴⁶ In the second version Vogel omits this last sentence.

⁴⁷ In the second version Vogel writes *maitravaśād* “out of friendliness.”

In verses 1226-1128 of the Nilamata, four names of the local guardians in Kashmir are mentioned. In which place are Bindusara, Srimadaka, Uttaramanasa and Elapattra found? What are the names of these local guardian serpents today?

In verse 867 of the Nilamata, a mountain called Dhanada is mentioned. Now, where is this Dhanada Mountain located? And what is its current name?

If you, out of kindness, would want to send a reply to this letter, I would be greatly obliged. You indeed are considered as my teacher and friend.

What more is there to say? May the Supreme Lord be pleased and grant you all good things.

May it be well.

English Letters

1. 31 July 1900, from Srinagar:⁴⁸

[on the side:] Off Director General Archaeology with India.

Śrīnagar. July 31st 1900.

During my stay at Srinagar in the summer of the year 1900 I read some specimens of the dramatic & Kāvya literature with the assistance of Pt. Nityānanda Śāstri, recommended to me by Dr. Aurel Stein, Principal of the Madrasah College at Calcutta & better than any one else acquainted with the learned chiefs of Kashmir.

I declare very satisfied with the vivid & agreeable way of reading & explaining Sanskrit followed by Pt. Nityānanda whom I found well versed in the branch of literature mentioned. I may add that his pronunciation of the sacred language appeared to me much correcter & less affected by vernacular influence than of most Kashmirian Pandits I had the pleasure to meet at Śrīnagar.

In other respects also, as in the acquirement of manuscripts I found the Pt's help very useful & in any way I can strongly recommend him to any European Colleague who might visit the capital of Kashmir.

Dr. J.Ph. Vogel
Priv.Doc. Amsterdam University

2. 24 August 1905, from Kilar (Chamba):⁴⁹

Kilar (Chamba) 24-8-05

My dear Pandit-ji!

I am sending you an impression and Nāgarī transcript of an inscription which I found at Devi-ri-Kothi in Chamba State. The inscription must have been written on two stones, but one of them has disappeared so that half of the praśasti (*praśasti*)⁵⁰ is lost. This explains why the impression which I am sending commences with verse 10.

In this part of the inscription also many letters are missing or broken, but it will be possible to a certain extent to restore them. I would ask you to try how much you can restore of the missing portions. You will see that the inscription is the record of the construction of a tank by a lady called Balhā, the mother of a Rānā Nāgapāla. You need not return the impression to me.

⁴⁸ Images 6932-6933.

⁴⁹ Images 6929-6930.

⁵⁰ The same word in Devanāgarī has been repeated between brackets by Vogel.

Yours sincerely
J Ph Vogel

(Address:
Chamba.)

3. 28 March 1910, from Lahore:⁵¹

Lahore 28-3-10

My dear Pandit Nityanand,

I am sending you enclosed an impression of a Śāradā inscription on the image of Kālī Devi at Markula in Chamba State.

I should be very much obliged if you could help me to a Nāgarī transcript and English translation of it. The language is not pure Sanskrit, but some of the words appear to be vernacular bhāṣhā perhaps Kashmiri.

I hope you will kindly return the impression to me when sending me a reply.

Please remember me very kindly to my old friend Pandit Mukunda Rām Shastri and believe me.

Yours sincerely

J Ph Vogel

4. 27 August 1932, from Leiden:⁵²

Leiden, the 27th August 1932
Noordeindsplein 4a

My dear Pandit Nityananda,

It is many years since I had the pleasure of exchanging letters with you. But although you have not heard from me for such a long time, you may be sure that I have not forgotten you. I hope that you are keeping good health.

May I venture to trouble you with a request on behalf of one of my pupils, Mr. K. de Vreese, who is writing his doctor's thesis and has selected the Nīlamata-purāṇa for his subject. You know no doubt the printed edition of this work brought out by Pandits R.L. Kanjilal and J. Zadoo (Lahore 1924).

Mr. K. de Vreese who is preparing a new edition and translation of the Nīlamata-purāṇa, is very anxious to consult some of the manuscripts mentioned in the Preface of the Lahore edition. In particular:

B.⁵³ Old Śāradā manuscript belonging to Pandit Srikantha Rajanaka

C. Modern Śāradā manuscript belonging to your very good self

We shall feel very much obliged by your kindly agreeing to send us the two manuscripts on loan for a few months. They may be sent to my address.

In case there is any objection to the manuscripts being sent out of Kashmir, I would request for you to be good enough to have an +accurate+ copy of each of them made either in Nāgarī or Śāradā by a reliable Pandit. I shall be very glad to meet the expense.

Hoping that you will kindly comply with my request and with best thanks in anticipation.

Yours very sincerely
J Ph Vogel

⁵¹ Images 6927-6928.

⁵² Images 6936-6937.

⁵³ Vogel starts listing with "B."

P.S. May I add a personal request. I still retain your photograph which you gave me in the summer of the year 1900. That is thirty-two years ago! I should be very glad to have your portrait showing your present appearance.

5. 13 November 1932, from Leiden:⁵⁴

Leiden, 13th November 1932
Noordeindsplein 4a

My dear Pandit Nityananda,

Please accept my best thanks for your kind letter dated the 15th Oct and for your promise to send me either an old manuscript of the *Nīlamatapūrāṇa* if procurable, on loan, or a reliable copy of such a manuscript for the use of my pupil, mr. de Vreese. I am sorry to hear that the manuscript belonging to the late Raja Ram Shastri is not available at present owing to a dispute among his sons.

The manuscript belonging to Sir Aurel Stein to which you refer in your letter has been deposited by the owner in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. As it is said to be the best of the *Nīlamata* existing, Mr. de Vreese has been allowed to utilize it for his new edition.

I am very pleased indeed to learn from your letter that you are quite well with the members of your family. Have you any grown-up sons who continue the family tradition by devoting themselves to the study of the *Śāstras*? I am looking forward to your photograph which you kindly promise to send me.

Last summer I had the pleasure of meeting a former pupil of yours, a young Dogra Brāhmaṇ called Mr. Gauri Shankar who is taking his doctor's degree at Oxford.

With kindest greetings

Yours very sincerely

J Ph Vogel

6. 20 December 1932, from Leiden:⁵⁵

[envelope:]

To

Pandit Nityānanda Sāstrī

Professor of Sanskrit

Kashmir State

Br. India

Prof. Dr. J.Ph. Vogel

Noordeindsplein 4a

Leiden

Holland

Leiden, 20th December 1932
Noordeindsplein 4a

⁵⁴ Images 6925-6926.

⁵⁵ Images 6923-6924.

My dear Pandit Nityananda

Please accept my last thanks for your kind letter of 16th November and for the copy (Śārādā manuscript) of the Nīlamatapūrāṇa kindly acquired by you for the sake of my pupil, mr. K de Vreese. We are greatly obliged to you for the trouble taken in this matter.

I am sending you enclosed a cheque for Rs. 28 – in payment of the price of the manuscript and of additional charges incurred by you for postage, commission, etc

Your previous letter, too, was duly received. Very many thanks!

I wonder whether I shall ever have the pleasures of revisiting Kashmir and meeting you again. It does not seem to be very likely that this will ever happen. Next month I hope to reach the age of sixty-two years. According to the rules prevailing in this country a University Professor has to resign at the age of seventy. Then I shall have the leisure to make a tour in India, but shall I have the strength? Possibly my pupil, Mr. K. de Vreese will be able to pay a visit to Kashmir and profit from your learning as I did.

With kindest greetings and renewed thanks

Yours very sincerely
J Ph Vogel

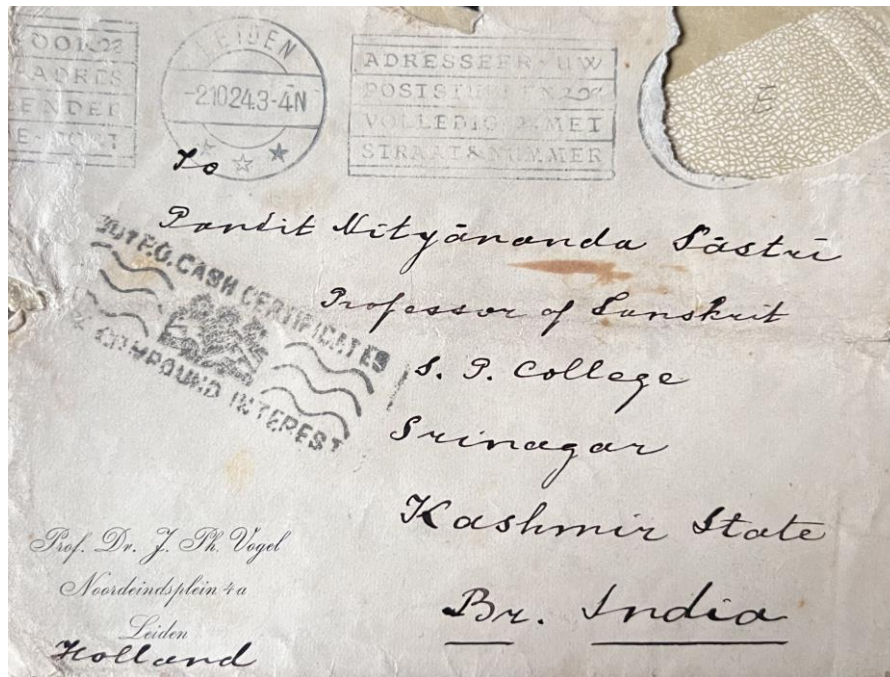


Figure 7.3. Envelope of English letter by J.Ph. Vogel to Nityanand Shastri, 20 December 1932.

7. 5 March 1933, from Leiden:⁵⁶

Leiden, 5th March 1933
Noordeindsplein 4a

My dear Pandit Nityananda,

Very many thanks for your kind letter dated 27th January and for the accompanying photographs of your good self. I am glad to state that you are looking vigorous and healthy. What you tell me about your family interests me very much. Your sons will no doubt do honour to their father. One of them, I

⁵⁶ Images 6934-6944.

am glad to see, follows in his father's footsteps and devotes himself to the study of Sanskrit. But I presume the other two know also the sacred language.

Last summer I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Gauri Shankar of Jammu who is, if I am not mistaken, a former pupil of yours. He is now working for his doctor degree at Oxford.

My pupil, Mr. K. de Vreese is making steady progress with his edition of the Nīlamata, but his educational duties take up much of his time and, besides, he is not enjoying a very robust health. I do hope that some time he may have the privilege of visiting the Happy Valley and availing himself of your guidance.

With kindest greetings

Yours very sincerely

J Ph Vogel

Draft of a Sanskrit Letter

Leiden University Libraries holds one Sanskrit letter written by Vogel (Or. 26.811, box 18, file 54a, no. 76), which is a draft of the third letter printed above. It gives a good insight into his attempt at formulation and composition. In the draft Vogel does not use Devanāgarī script. It has been written in Roman script and includes hyphenation to separate the individual members of the compounds.

<...> indicates that Vogel intended to omit something written earlier.

+...+ indicates additions/corrections by Vogel.

ṣrī-ṣārādā jayatu.

ṣrīnagara-stha-vidvaj-jana-tilakabhūta aganya-gaṇa-guṇālaṅkṛta-mūrtiḥ suhrj-jana-hṛdaya-nityānanda-kārī ṣrī-nityānandaṣāstri-<naro>+nāma paṇḍitavaristho+ dāktar-vogel-sāhibena preṣitaṃ svastivāda-puraḥsaram nivedanam idaṃ <ṣṛṇotutarām>+ākaraṇayatu+.

<ṣrīmac>+bhavac+chubhapattra-prāpti-samayāt prabhṛti⁵⁷ māśacatuṣṭayam gatam adhyāpi mayā kiṃṣcid prativacanam na dattam iti mahatī manasi vartate lajjā. kim bahunā. adhikāra-kārya-bāhulyam eva na tu vilambakāraṇam

vātsalya+svaḥpatā+<kṣudratvam tasya vilambasya kāraṇam>

gaṭagrīṣmartumāsadvayam parvata+rāja+cintāmaṇi-bhūtāyām +ṣrī+campāpuryām +mayā+nivāsah kṛtaḥ

tatrāpi bahūni sanātānāni tāmra<paṭṭakāni>+patrāni+ prācīna<rāja>+bhūpatiṣāsana+nāmaṅkitāni drṣṭāni. <etaṅcācirād> yāni mudrālaya-vaṣena prādurkartum vyavasito 'smi.

Api tādrṣāni ṣāsana-patrāni Kaṣmīra-deṣe 'pi vidyanta iti mama +manasi+ sandeho <'sti>+vartate+<bhavate>+yadi santi+ tu tad avaṣyam jñātam syāt.

Campā-<purāt>+nagarāt Lavapuram+ praṇivṛtya asmadmitro+ttamā+ +akāla+marāṇa-vṛttānta-ṣṛavaṇena mahān mad<..>-hṛdaye samutpāditāḥ ṣokaḥ satyenaiva asmādrṣānām mandabhāgyānam bhāgadheyam paṅkajadalapatita-salilabinduriva cancelam ucyate tasya +mahātmanah lokāntaragatasyāpi+ saujanyādiguṇasmṛtis tu sakhijanamānaseṣu sadaivāva<c>+s+ikṣyate <alpāyus>

yad bhavatas parameṣvaraprasādāt +sakalā+<a>rogakuṣaladīrghāyus tvaṃ syād iti mama paramā vartate prārthanā

iti cubham

⁵⁷ prabhṛti: pc; prabhṛtya: ac.

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About the authors and editors

Lennart Bes is historian and Indologist. At the Institute for History of Leiden University he teaches Asian and colonial history, focusing on India and Dutch colonial sources. His publications concern south India's political culture and the Dutch East India Company archives. These include *The heirs of Vijayanagara: court politics in early modern south India* (2022) and the three-volume archival guide, *Dutch sources on South Asia c. 1600-1825*. He is also editor-in-chief of the series *Colonial and global history through Dutch sources*.

Peter C. Bisschop is professor of Sanskrit and Ancient Cultures of South Asia at Leiden University. His main publications bear on the history of Śaivism and include *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa* (2006), *Universal Śaivism* (2018), *The Vārāṇasīmāhātmya of the Bhairavaprādurbhāva* (2021), *A Śaiva utopia* (2021), *Primary sources and Asian pasts* (2021) and three volumes of the critical edition of the *Skandapurāṇa* (2014, 2018, 2021). He is the general editor of the *Indo-Iranian Journal* and *Gonda Indological Studies*.

Alied de Cock studied chemistry at Leiden University and got her master's degree in economy at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in IT management in large companies. She worked as management consultant for various companies between 1972 and 2019. Meanwhile she has been studying linguistics, including Sanskrit, at Leiden University. She is a member of the Society of Friends of the Kern Institute since 2002 and has been sitting on the Society's board as secretary/treasurer from 2008 to 2016 and from 2022 until the present.

Sanne Dokter-Mersch is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at Leiden University. She is specialized in Sanskrit, Purāṇa literature, classical Hinduism, in particular early Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, Sanskrit manuscripts and mythological narratives. Her current research revolves around the composition, development, transmission and intertextuality of Purāṇas. Focussing mainly on the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa*, she combines textual criticism with narratology in order to better understand this type of literature and its agents.

Dory Heilijgers studied Sanskrit and took her PhD at Utrecht University on texts from the Kubjikā tradition. Next, she was appointed librarian for the Utrecht Indological Institute. After the merger of the Indological departments of Leiden and Utrecht, she continued as librarian at the Kern Institute until 2010. Since then, she has been researching the goddess Kubjikā and the origins of her name. Further, she is the editor of the website "Dutch studies on South Asia, Tibet and classical Southeast Asia" (www.dutchstudies-satsea.nl).

Ellen M. Raven enrolled as a student in Indology at the Kern Institute in 1975 and got her PhD at Leiden University in 1991. She was an assistant librarian at the Kern Institute Library and subsequently coordinating editor for the *Annual bibliography of Indian archaeology* from 1997 until the present. Raven lectured in South Asian arts and material culture at Leiden University from 2002 until her retirement in 2021. The focus in her research and publications is on the artistic gold coinage of the Gupta dynasty of North India. Raven has been a "frequent flyer" in the VVIK board since its revival in 1986.

Gerda Theuns-de Boer studied art, archaeology and material culture of South and Southeast Asia at Utrecht University. She specialized in early photography. She headed the project *Conservation and digital accessibility of the Kern Institute photographic collections* (1998-2010) and was guest curator of the Isidore van Kinsbergen exhibition in Huis Marseille, Amsterdam (2005), the Jean Philippe Vogel exhibition in The National Museum of India, Delhi (2008) and "First Frames, in the Footsteps of early Explorers" at Leh (2012). She is editor of the *Art & Archaeology Index for South and Southeast Asia*.