

sanskrit garland of phonemes

guttural	palatal	labial	retroflex	dental	palatoguttural	labioguttural								
a	a	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḻ	e	ai	o	au	
अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	
svara											am̐	अं	ah̐	अः

		unvoiced		voiced		
		unaspirated	aspirated	unaspirated	aspirated	unaspirated
plosive <i>sparśa</i>	guttural <i>kaṇṭhya</i>	ka क k	kha ख kʰ	ga ग g	gha घ gʰ	ṅa ङ ŋ
	palatal <i>tālavya</i>	ca च tʃ	cha छ tʃʰ	ja ज dʒ	jha झ dʒʰ	ña ञ ɲ
	retroflex <i>mūrdhanya</i>	ṭa ट t̪	ṭha ठ t̪ʰ	ḍa ड d̪	ḍha ढ d̪ʰ	ṇa ण ɳ
	dental <i>dantya</i>	ta त t̪	tha थ t̪ʰ	da द d̪	dha ध d̪ʰ	na न n
	labial <i>oṣṭhya</i>	pa प p	pha फ pʰ	ba ब b	bha भ bʰ	ma म m
	approximant <i>antastha</i>		ya य j	ra र r	la ल l	va व v
fricative <i>ūṣman/saṃgharṣṭī</i>		ha ह h	śa श ʃ	ṣa ष ʂ	sa स s	kṣa क्ष

an american varnamala mantra

ʌ - ɑ ɛ - æ ɪ - i ʊ - u e - aɪ ɔ - ɔɪ o - aʊ(m)
up on yet at if each put to aid eye awe oil go now

kə gə ŋ tʃə dʒə tə də n pə bə m
kit gag sing churn jut tap dew nod puff bell moo

yʌ rʌ lʌ wʌ
yip rub lit weft

ʃə ʒə sə zə θə ðə fə və hmm
shh siege so zag thaw thy fad vow

A VARNAMALA recitation of the alphabet (actually the phonemes)

The original mantra was recitation of the alphabet as phoneme-syllables. It's called the *Ali-Kali* (vowel and consonant recitation) or *Varnamala* (garland of letters). As a purification of speech it typically precedes recitation and study of Tibetan scriptures. It also stimulates the major prosodic (vagus) nerve, opens the subtle channels and the space of the heart, as well as being cosmogonic (a phonemic emanation of the cosmos). Cosmogony is the nature of poets.

(But what is the alphabet, actually? Our ABCs are a conventional mishmash of phonographs.)

The letters of the Sanskrit and Tibetan (and other Asian) alphabets precisely follow the path of articulatory phonetics. In terms of the place of articulation, both vowels and consonants move from the back of the mouth forward, from guttural to palatal, retroflex, dental and labial. The vowel sequence is ordered as short-long pairings, ending with the compounds (diphthongs). In terms of the manner of articulation, the consonants are first ordered as plosives (stops,) with each place of articulation having a double-pairing of unaspirated/unaspirated voiceless stops and unaspirated/unaspirated voiced stops followed by the corresponding nasal stop. The plosive sequence is followed by the glides (semi-vowels/approximates.) (Note: in Sanskrit the 'r' and 'l' sounds are also proper vowels.) Finally, there are the sibilants, ordered according to the place at which each sound is shaped.

As an immediate practice, I've adapted American English to the Varnamala's articulatory ordering.

