

Bhanté and languages from Sanskrit to Cambodian, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Hindi, English, Greek and Latin

In the decades we had together, that Bhanté was an accomplished linguist was demonstrated multiple times.

From French to Cambodian he distinguished himself. For example, if you spoke French Canadian so did Bhanté; if you spoke French from the south so did he; same for Parisian French. Several people commented to me at how nuanced his command of various languages.

He had studied with the Sanskrit master of India; he studied languages the way most people study a map. He started with the root language and progressed through the linguistic construction and grammar to the nuances and idioms of the dialectic. The Sanskrit scholar had become a renunciate. He was reluctant to take Bhanté on as a student. Eventually, he agreed that Bhanté could study on one hill top and when the teacher was willing to be a mentor, he would send smoke signals for Bhanté to respond.

In my presence, he spoke Pali with HH The Dalai Lama, Cambodian and French with the Cambodian Ambassador, German with the Konrad Adenauer representatives in Washington DC, Italian Spanish and Portuguese with diplomats from those countries. The papal nuncio to Washington DC was impressed with this Latin Skills as was the Greek Orthodox Prelate on a visit to Washington, DC.

Having spent extended time in India, he spoke Hindi and several local dialectics in order to communicate with The Nehru family and the Congress Party that he advised under guidance from Mohandas Ghandi.