

The names

Sanskrit has three s-sounds, a set of long vowels Mackenzie usually does not mark, and a final -a that is pronounced. Four things to know before the names start arriving. Valice Press's writing.

Sanskrit names in this book are printed as Mackenzie printed them, and his spellings are neither modern nor entirely consistent. Four things are worth knowing before the names start arriving.

The long vowels matter and are usually not marked. Mackenzie writes *Rama, Yama, Savitri*. The first vowel of *Rāma* is long, the first of *Yama* is short, and in Sanskrit that is a difference of meaning as well as of sound. Where he marks length at all he uses an acute or a circumflex — *Mahābhārata, Brahmā* — and he does not do it reliably.

c is not k. In modern transliteration Sanskrit *c* is the *ch* of church. Mackenzie mostly writes *ch* outright, which is easier to read and is why his spellings look old-fashioned beside a modern edition.

There are three s sounds and he writes two of them sh. Modern texts distinguish ś (roughly the *sh* of ship) from ṣ (a retroflex sh, made with the tongue curled back) from plain *s*. Mackenzie's Shiva is Śiva; his rakshasas are rākṣasas.

Doubled consonants and the -a ending are real. The final *a* of *Rama, Yama, Indra* is pronounced, not silent as in English. It is a short vowel, close to the *u* of cut.

One more oddity. Exactly once in these five chapters Mackenzie stops to tell the reader how a name sounds — *the goddess Prithivi (prit'hi-vee)* — and then never does it again. It is the only respelling in the volume, and it is a fair sign of how the book was made: a popular series, written at speed, in which a helpful impulse arrives once and is not carried through.

The spellings stand as Mackenzie set them. Changing them would silently produce a text he did not write, and would break every cross-reference to the century of scholarship that uses his forms. Where a name in this volume is likely to be met elsewhere in a very different shape, the who's-who gives the modern form beside it.

The names in this volume, as Mackenzie spells them

Adityas · Agni · Apsaras
Asuras · Bhima · Brahma
Dyaus · Dyumatsena · Gandharvas
Hanuman · Indra · Manu
Maruts · Mitra · Narayana
Prithivi · Rakshasas · Ratri
Ribhus · Rudra · Satyavan
Savitri (the god) · Savitri (the princess) · Soma
Surya · Twashtri · Ushas
Varuna · Vayu · Vritra
Yama · Yami