

Lesson 7.A

We have examined how to write a consonant that is followed by any vowel, now we consider how to write a consonant that is followed by no vowel at all.

7.A.1 Halanta Consonants

The adjective **halanta** is derived from **hal** (a technical term referring to any consonant), and **anta** ('end'), so **halanta** means 'ending in a consonant'. Thus the letter **pa** for example, without its following **a** sound, namely **p**, is called '**halanta pa**'. In the **devanāgarī** script this is written as a short stroke (्) called **virāma** ('stop'), below and to the right of the consonant. For example:

halanta pa प् halanta ka क् halanta ṭa ट्

This is the form used when a word ends in a consonant, however the **virāma** should (ideally) not be used within a word. Where a word uses a non-final **halanta** letter, for example the **s** in **svara**, it forms a consonant cluster, or conjunct consonant, and a different method is used.

7.A.2 Conjunct Consonants

A conjunct consonant (**saṃyoga**, literally 'yoked together') comprises two or more consonants with nothing separating them; in particular there is no vowel between them.

At a first glance through these **saṃyoga**, familiarity with them may seem like a daunting task, but fortunately you don't have to learn them. It is the general principles that are important: once you understand the principles, you can discard the notes. Simply read through the general principles and use the illustrative examples to understand the principle. Thereafter it is just a matter of applying the principles, and you will find that, in practice, it is a lot simpler than it looks.

- The symbols may be written continuously in the usual order from left to right with the rightmost vertical stroke dropped from all but the last letter:

त् + म > त्म tma

ण् + य > ण्य ṇya

न् + त् + य > न्त्य ntya

- Or they may be written one above the other, in which case they are read from top to bottom:

म् + न > म्न mna

ब्र् + व > ब्रव bva

ष् + ट > ष्ट ष्टा

- This arrangement can be useful where the first letter has no vertical stroke on the right:

द् + ग > द्ग dga

ट् + ट > ट्ट ष्टा

ङ् + क > ङ्क ङका

- Left to right and vertical arrangements may appear in the same compound:

स् + न् + य > स्न्य snya

ष् + ठ् + य > ष्ठ्या ष्ठ्या

ङ् + क् + य > ङ्क्या ङक्या

- Most symbols retain their familiar shape in compounds, but some are modified:

द् + द > द्द dda

द् + ध > द्ध ddha

क् + म > क्म kma

- When symbols are modified, it is often only in combination with other particular symbols, for example:

त् + त > त्त tta

ह्र् + न > ह्र्न hna

द् + य > द्य dya

ट् + य > ट्य त्या

ह्र् + म > ह्र्म hma

- The symbol क (ka) may be compressed to क्, or even further to क्, for example:

क् + क > क्क kka

क् + त > क्त kta

- The symbol श is often written as श् or श् in combination, for example:

श् + व > श्व or श्व or श्व śva

श् + च > श्च or श्च or श्च śca

- The same group of symbols can be found in different forms:

ञ् + च > ञ्च or ञ्च ñca

क् + त् + व > क्तव or क्तव ktva

प् + ल > प्ल or प्ल pla

च् + च > च्च or च्च cca

ल् + ल > ल्ल or ल्ल lla

While there may be different conventions and styles for making compounds, there are no obvious absolute rules. Ideas that familiar forms are right and others wrong should be avoided: both proportions and angles of the symbols may be varied.

- The symbol **ra** changes form in compounds. It always appears in a vertical arrangement and is read in the sequence top to bottom. When **ra** comes at the beginning of a compound it takes the form of a hook above the line (the same as above the **dīrgha ī**): it is attached above the rightmost vertical of a compound. For example:

र् + प > र्प rpa

र् + ध् + वा > र्ध्वा rdhvā

- This form is also used when **ra** is the only consonant before the vowels **ṛ** and **ḷ**, i.e.:

र् + ऋ > र्ऋ rṛ

र् + ḷ > र्ḷ rḷ

- When **ra** is final in a compound, it is represented by a small diagonal stroke:

प् + र > प्र pra

ड् + र > ड्र dra

ट् + र > ट्र tra

त् + र > त्र tra (note the truncation of the त्)

- This form is retained when **ra** appears in the middle of a cluster of consonants:

ग् + र + य > ग्य grya

म् + र् + य > म्र्य mrya

7.A.3 Special Conjunct Consonants kṣa and jña

Normally the symbols for a **saṃyoga** are constructed from their component symbols and are quite obvious to see, and their construction reflects their pronunciation. However, there are two which are quite different from their component parts:

क् + ष > क्ष kṣa

ज् + ञ > ज्ञ jña

Although these two **saṃyoga** may be separated into their component parts when, for example, the alphabetical order is required in looking up a word in the dictionary, the symbols being so different from their components, reflect their sounds which are somewhat different from their components.

A practical method of approaching the pronunciation of these two sounds is offered next.

7.A.4 Pronunciation of kṣa

The idea may be novel, but it is quite straightforward to pronounce **halanta ṣa** prolonged: try it. Now, sound **halanta ka** through the sound of **halanta ṣa** — i.e. the prolonged **halanta ṣa** begins with **halanta ka**; the important point is that the tip of the tongue is in the **mūrdhanya** position throughout. Before sounding the **halanta ka** the breath is fully cut off by the back of the tongue in the **kaṇṭhya** position as for the normal pronunciation of **ka**; the difference for **kṣa** is that the tip of the tongue is raised to the **mūrdhanya** position before sounding the **halanta**

ka. This means that **halanta kṣa** may be sounded repeatedly without moving the tip of the tongue from the **mūrdhanya** position. (This sound is reminiscent of ten-year-olds playing cops and robbers!)

Although the **kṣa** is originally formed by **halanta ka** joining with a following **ṣa** (i.e. **k + ṣa > kṣa**), and may be thus separated when, for example, the alphabetical order is required in looking up a word in the dictionary, the pronunciation, as reflected in the changed symbol, is in practice $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \mathbf{k} \\ \mathbf{\underset{\cdot}{\mathfrak{s}}} \end{smallmatrix} \right) + \mathbf{\underset{\cdot}{\mathfrak{s}}} + \mathbf{a}$.

7.A.5 Pronunciation of **jña**

The pronunciation of this is similar to the French ‘J’ as in ‘Jean-Jacques’, or as in the ‘z’ sound in the English words ‘mirage’, ‘rouge’, ‘measure’, or ‘vision’; but in all cases it is sounded through the **tālavya** mouth position, and is strongly nasalized.

As a practical method of approaching this sound, begin by sounding the English ‘hiss’ and holding the sibilant — this sibilant is much like the Sanskrit **halanta sa**. Now sound the English ‘his’, again holding the sibilant: note that the difference between these sibilants is that the vocal cords vibrate for ‘his’ and not for ‘hiss’.

Now with the tongue in the **tālavya** position, sound a prolonged **halanta śa**. And then repeat the sound but allowing the vocal cords to vibrate — with some imagination, this is beginning to sound like a prolonged **halanta ja**, which is of course, impossible to sound. Now repeat this voiced sound allowing it to be strongly nasalized. This is about as close as one can get to describing the sound of **halanta jña**.

There are two common errors in sounding **jña**. Firstly, the **halanta jña** tends to be followed by an additional nasal consonant before the vowel (i.e. **jñ + ñ + a**); the **halanta jña** is a single sound. Secondly, the nasalization is often carried over into the vowel: to correct this, practise sounding **ajña**, attending to both **a** sounds, which should be the same.

Although the **jña** is originally formed by **halanta ja** joining with a following **ña** (i.e. **j + ña > jña**), and may be thus separated when, for example, the alphabetical order is required in looking up a word in the dictionary, the pronunciation, as reflected in the changed symbol, is in practice $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \mathbf{j} \\ \mathbf{\underset{\cdot}{\mathfrak{n}}} \end{smallmatrix} \right) + \mathbf{a}$.

ध dhra	ध्य dhrya	ध्व dhva	न्त nta	न्त्य ntya	न्त्र ntra
न्द nda	न्द्र ndra	न्ध ndha	न्ध्र ndhra	न्न nna	न्प npa
न्प्र npra	न्म nma	न्य nya	न्न nra	न्स nsa	प्त pta
प्त ptya	प्न pna	प्प ppa	प्म pma	प्य pya	प्र pra
प्ल pla	प्व pva	प्स psa	प्स्व psva	व्य bgha	ब्ज bja
ब्द bda	ब्ध bdha	ब्ब bna	ब्ब bba	ब्म bbha	ब्भ्य bbhya
व्य bya	व्र bra	व्व bva	भ्न bhna	भ्य bhya	भ्र bhra
भ्व bhva	भ्न mna	म्प mpa	म्प्र mpra	म्ब mba	म्म mbha
म्म mma	म्य mya	म्र mra	म्ल mla	म्व mva	य्य yya
य्व yva	ल्क lka	ल्प lpa	ल्म lma	ल्य lya	ल्ल lla
ल्व lva	ल्ह lha	व्व vna	व्य vya	व्र vra	व्व vva
श्च śca	श्च्य ścya	श्च śna	श्च्य śya	श्च śra	श्च्य śrya
श्ल śla	श्च śva	श्च्य śvya	श्श śśa	श्च ष्टा śṭa	श्च्य ष्ट्या śṭya
ष्ट्र ṣṭra	ष्ट्र्य ṣṭrya	ष्ट्र्य ṣṭva	ष्ट्र्य ṣṭha	ष्ण ṣṇa	ष्ण्य ṣṇya
ष्प ṣpa	ष्प्र ṣpra	ष्म ṣma	ष्प ṣya	ष्व ṣva	स्क ska
स्व skha	स्त sta	स्त्य stya	स्त्र stra	स्त्व stva	स्थ stha
स्न sna	स्न्य snya	स्प spa	स्फ spha	स्म sma	स्म्य smya
स्य sya	स्र sra	स्व sva	स्स ssa	ह्न hṇa	ह्न hna
ह्न hma	ह्य hya	ह्र hra	ह्ल hla	ह्व hva	

The table does not cover all possible combinations of consonants, but, on the other hand, it does contain many that are quite rare and which you may never come across in print. So, having worked through the table, you may be confident that you will be able to decipher any **saṃyoga** that you may meet.

Just as a matter of interest, the greatest number of conjunct consonants in a real word is five: the usual example quoted for this is **कार्त्स्न्य** (kārtsnya).

Lesson 7.B

7.B.1 Verbal Prefixes

The English verb ‘to tend’ derives from the PIE root $\sqrt{\text{TEN}}$, to stretch: when a prefix is appended to it, its meaning alters. For example (with prefix meanings given):

attend	(at- , towards, to, at)
contend	(con- , with, together, wholly)
distend	(dis- , apart, away)
extend	(ex- , out of, very)
intend	(in- , towards, in)
portend	(por- , before, instead of)
pretend	(pre- , instead of, before)
subtend	(sub- , under)

Assuming that the meaning of these verbs is already understood (more or less), then a grasp of their etymological derivation from the root and prefixes should contribute to enlarging that understanding. Again, given the meanings of these verbs, it can be appreciated that the prefixes are instrumental in modifying the original root to give its particular meaning, but the converse is not necessarily so: given the meanings of the root and prefixes only, it may prove difficult to arrive at the meanings of the particular verbs.

The situation in Sanskrit is similar: the meaning of a prefixed verb (as a compound) needs to be looked up in the dictionary, which will also give its component parts of prefix(es) and **dhātu**, which may then be separately looked up. Other words may be derived from that prefixed verb, and they carry the sense of this compound as though it were a separate **dhātu**; this is also the case in English, as for example, the derivation of attention, attentive, attendance, attendant, from the verb ‘attend’.

A prefix, when appended to a verb, is called an **upasarga** in Sanskrit grammar. The grammarians list just twenty-two of these; in alphabetical order they are:

ati-	beyond, over, across, past, surpassing, to excess
adhi-	over, above, upon, on, onto
anu-	after, along, like, towards, following
apa-	away, off, from, forth
api-	over, on, close, proximate
abhi-	to, towards, into, against, near, opposite
ava-	down, off, away, from
ā-	towards, to, near, into, at, from, back, return, (reversing)
ud-	up, upwards, out, above
upa-	towards, near, to, next to, less, down, under
dur-	bad, difficult, hard
dus-	bad, difficult, hard
ni-	down, in, on, under, into
nir-	away, out, forth
nis-	away, out, forth
parā-	back, backwards, away, forth, to a distance
pari-	around, about
pra-	before, forward, forth, onward, fore
prati-	against, towards, to, at near, back, again, return, (reversing)
vi-	apart, asunder, away, out, implying separation or dispersion
sam-	with, together, along with, conjoined with
su-	good, excellent, well

The above list is included here for reference only, and should not be learned; however, a familiarity with the Sanskrit forms will be useful.

An **upasarga** may simply emphasize the original sense of the **dhātu**, but usually modifies the sense; sometimes the change is so great as to make the sense of the original **dhātu** quite unrecognizable, for example:

dhātu hṛ	to take away
pra-hṛ	to hit
ā-hṛ	to eat
sam-hṛ	to destroy
vi-hṛ	to roam
pari-hṛ	to abandon

7.B.2 Exercises

- (a) Practise sounding the alphabetical order as summarized in 3.A.5.
- (b) By now the alphabet should be familiar: practise writing all the characters of the alphabet with particular attention to their proportions (see the note at the end of 4.A.1).
- (c) Write out a fair copy of the **devanāgarī** sentences given in (e) below.
- (d) Look up the words 'attend' etc. given 7.B.1, in a good English dictionary, to see how their meanings link to the given etymology.
- (e) Write the following sentences in Roman transliteration:
1. बालाम् वृक्षात् नरस्य अश्वम् वहावः ॥
 2. नरः बाला च तिष्ठतः वदतः च ॥
 3. अश्वः वृक्षस्य फले बालाम्यः लभते ॥
 4. बालायाः अश्वः फलानि नराय वहति ॥
 5. नराः वृक्षस्य फलम् बालायै लभन्ते ॥
 6. नरस्य बाला अश्वान् वृक्षान् नयते ॥
- (f) Now translate the sentences in (e) into English.
- (g) Translate the following sentences into Sanskrit using Roman transliteration:
1. You (pl.) carry the fruit (pl.) from the tree by horse.
 2. The girl's horses (two) take the fruit (pl.) to the man.
 3. You (two) lead the horse to the fruit (pl.) of the tree.
 4. The man takes the tree from the horse for the girl.
 5. The girl and the horse go among the trees (pl.) for fruit (pl.).
 6. The horses (pl.) carry the trees (pl.) for the men (pl.).
- (h) Now write your answers to (g) in **devanāgarī**.