

Lesson 3.A

The sound or letter **ka** is called **kakāra** ('ka-action'); the sound or letter **ga** is called **gakāra**, and so on. This applies to all the sounds/letters, including the vowels (e.g. **akāra**), except for **ra** which is traditionally called **repha** ('snarl' or 'burr') or simply **ra**, but not **rakāra**. The **anusvāra** and **visarga** (or **visarjanīya**), which only arise through the rules of **sandhi** (euphonic combination) and are thus not strictly part of the alphabet, are always referred to by their own name and have no **-kāra** name.

We shall now consider the final eight consonants (**vyañjana**).

3.A.1 The Four Semi-Vowels: ya ra la va

A semivowel (**antaḥstha**) arises when one of the basic vowels moves to the **a** sound: **i** moving to **a** gives rise to the sound **ya**, similarly, **ṛ** moving to **a** produces **ra**, **ḷ** to **a** produces **la**, and **u** to **a** produces **va**. As **a** moving to **a** will not produce a new sound, there are only four semivowels. These are considered to be between vowels and consonants, and so are called **antaḥstha** ('stand between'), and are naturally voiced (**ghoṣa**). They are formed by slight contact (**īṣatsprṣṭa**), and thus allow a restricted flow of air through the mouth.

kaṇṭhya	tālava	mūrdhanya	dantya	oṣṭhya
guttural	palatal	cerebral	dental	labial
—	ya	ra	la	va

The first three of these, **ya ra** and **la**, are similar to the English sounds in 'yum', 'rum', and 'luck', but do pay attention to the mouth position. The derivation of the last semivowel (**antaḥstha**), although transliterated as **va**, produces a sound akin to the English 'wa': this latter pronunciation accords with the grammatical tradition and makes the rules of **sandhi** (euphonic combination) easier to grasp. Other traditions pronounce this as the English 'va', in which case its mouth position, making use of both teeth and lips is called **dantoṣṭya**.

In the alphabetical order, these follow after the twenty-five stops, i.e. :

... pa pha ba bha ma ya ra la va ...

3.A.2 The Three Sibilants: śa ṣa sa

A sibilant (hissing sound) is called **ūṣman** ('heated'). They are considered to be **īṣadvivṛta** (slightly open) or **ardhaspṛṣṭa** (half-contact), which allows a restricted (hissing) flow of breath through the mouth. The sibilants are aspirated (**mahāprāṇa**) and unvoiced (**aghoṣa**).

kaṇṭhya	tālavya	mūrdhanya	dantya	oṣṭhya
guttural	palatal	cerebral	dental	labial
—	śa	ṣa	sa	—

The **sa** sounds like the sibilant in the English words 'seek' and 'kiss', **ṣa** like the 'sh' in 'ship' or 'wish', and **śa** like the sibilant in the German 'ich'. These sound analogies are given as a very rough guide: the description given above, and the mouth position in particular, are to be taken as authoritative.

In theory, there are two more sibilants, called the **jihvāmūliya** and **upadhmānīya**, which are described as a 'half-visarga' before **ka/kha** and **pa/pha** respectively. These are so very rare that for all practical purposes they can be ignored.

In the alphabetical order these follow the semivowels, i.e. :

... ya ra la va śa ṣa sa ...

3.A.3 The Final Consonant: ha

This aspirate (sometimes considered a sibilant) is also called **ūṣman** ('heated'), with similar qualities. It is generally pronounced as unvoiced (**aghoṣa**), however, according to the grammatical tradition it is voiced (**ghoṣa**).

In the alphabetical order this follows the sibilants and is the last letter of the alphabet:

... śa ṣa sa ha.

3.A.4 Summary of the Consonants

The definitive qualities of the consonants are given in tabular form:

kaṅṭhya	tālavya	mūrdhanya	dantya	oṣṭhya	
guttural	palatal	cerebral	dental	labial	Qualities
ka	ca	ṭa	ta	pa	unvoiced unaspirated full contact
kha	cha	ṭha	tha	pha	unvoiced aspirated full contact
ga	ja	ḍa	da	ba	voiced unaspirated full contact
gha	jha	ḍha	dha	bha	voiced aspirated full contact
ṅa	ṅa	ṇa	na	ma	voiced unaspirated full contact nasal
	ya	ra	la	va	voiced unaspirated slight contact
	śa	ṣa	sa		unvoiced aspirated slightly open
ha					voiced aspirated slightly open

3.A.5 The Alphabetical Order

Having now considered the whole alphabet in sound and Roman transliteration, it would be useful to start becoming familiar with the alphabetical order. The order is best memorized in groups as shown below:

a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ ḷ ḹ e ai o au aṃ aḥ

ka kha ga gha ṅa

ca cha ja jha ṅa

ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa

ta tha da dha na

pa pha ba bha ma

ya ra la va

śa ṣa sa

ha

3.A.6 Devanāgarī Alphabet

Here are the first ten consonants in **devanāgarī** script. Each symbol includes the sound **a**; for example, the first symbol is **ka** and not just **k**. Note the similarity between the forms of **i** and **jha**.

The transliteration of the two rows of **devanāgarī** characters is:

ka kha ga gha ṅa

ca cha ja jha ña

क ख ग घ ङ

च छ ज झ ञ

The loop on the **kha** and **ga** is written as follows:

1. write the down-stroke with the curl at the end,
2. then change direction to start the loop,
3. complete the loop, and for **kha**, continue the stroke,
4. this portion of the symbol is written without lifting the pen!

Lesson 3.B

3.B.1 More on Verbs

The personal endings of verbs given thus far are called **parasmai-pada** ('an expression for another') because the fruit, or result of the action, is transmitted to another. These are the normal endings for an active transitive verb. The **ātmane-pada** ('an expression for oneself') personal endings used in the active form of the verb (called the middle voice) imply an action whose fruit reverts to oneself: this does not mean reflexive. By way of illustration, the sentence "I married her" would be expressed in **ātmane-pada** or **parasmai-pada** when spoken by the husband or priest respectively.

Some verbs are conjugated in one **pada** only, some in both, and some partly in one and partly in another. The division is not at all definite, and has come to be a matter of conventional usage; nevertheless many verbs do retain the formal distinction between **parasmai-pada** (active voice) and **ātmane-pada** (middle voice).

	parasmai-pada			ātmane-pada		
	eka- vacana	dvi- vacana	bahu- vacana	eka- vacana	dvi- vacana	bahu- vacana
prathama- puruṣa	nayati	nayataḥ	nayanti	nayate	nayete	nayante
madhyama- puruṣa	nayasi	nayathaḥ	nayatha	nayase	nayethe	nayadhve
uttama- puruṣa	nayāmi	nayāvaḥ	nayāmaḥ	naye	nayāvahe	nayāmahe

These are the only two forms of personal endings to verbs that will be used in this course. When verbs are presented for use in the exercises, they will be presented in the form:

√nī **nayate** he leads.

where the **dhātu** is followed by the **eka-vacana prathama-puruṣa** form, and the English translation of that form.

Many of the verbs in this course may be conjugated in either **pada**, but within the limits of the simple sentences in the exercises, please use the **pada** given: in the case of **dhātu nī** for example, use the **ātmane-pada** endings.

3.B.2 Introduction to Nouns

A noun, like the verb, has its ultimate origin in a **dhātu** (root); affixes to the **dhātu** form the noun-stem (**prātipadika**) which will have a particular grammatical gender (**liṅga**): masculine (**puṃ-liṅga**), feminine (**stri-liṅga**), and neuter (**napuṃsakaliṅga**). To the **prātipadika** form are added case-endings (**sup-vibhakti**) which indicate the relationship of the noun to the verb.

There are seven such grammatical relationships; and, like the verb, each of these has a singular (**eka-vacana**), dual (**dvi-vacana**), and plural (**bahu-vacana**) form. The first (**prathamā**) of these is the nominative or naming case, and usually names the subject of a simple sentence or the agent (initiator or instigator of the action) of the verb; the second (**dvitīyā**) case ending generally indicates the immediate destination of the action expressed by the verb, i.e. the direct object of the sentence.

The word **nara** (the **prātipadika** form, as listed in Monier-Williams' dictionary) means 'man', and with its **sup-vibhakti** endings appears as:

	eka-vacana	dvi-vacana	bahu-vacana
prathamā	naraḥ	narau	narāḥ
dvitīyā	naram	narau	narān

Other nouns that take this form of declension are **aśva** 'horse', and **vṛkṣa** 'tree'.

Where '**tiṣṭhanti**' is translated as 'they (pl.) stand', the pronoun 'they' is implied in the verb and it is not necessary to add an explicit Sanskrit pronoun. When the subject of the sentence is explicitly stated, for example 'the men (pl.) stand', then the implied pronoun falls away, and this is translated as '**narāḥ tiṣṭhanti**'.

For verbs having a sense of motion (such as go, walk, run), the destination is expressed in **dvitīyā**. There are some verbs (such as **nī**) which have both a direct object and a destination, in which case both are expressed in **dvitīyā**.

naraḥ aśvam vṛkṣam nayate
the man leads the horse to the tree.

Since the noun endings define the relationship to the verb, the word order is not important (as contrasted with English where it is), and allows the poet for example, to juggle the word order to fit the rules of scansion. Normally however, the verb is found at the end of the sentence, and the subject precedes the object and destination, as in the above example.

3.B.3 Exercises

- (a) Practise sounding the alphabetical order as summarized in 3.A.5.
- (b) Practise pronouncing the first ten consonants (**vyañjana**), as well as reading and writing them in Roman script and **devanāgarī**.
- (c) Translate the following sentences into English:
1. **aśvaḥ naram nayate**
 2. **naraḥ aśvau ca tiṣṭhanti**
 3. **aśvau naram vṛkṣān nayete**
 4. **aśvaḥ tiṣṭhati ca naraḥ vadati ca**
 5. **naraḥ aśvaḥ ca nayete**
 6. **narau vṛkṣān nayāmahe**
- (d) Translate the following sentences into Sanskrit:
1. The man leads the horse,
 2. The (two) horses lead the man,
 3. The men (pl.) are speaking and leading,
 4. The horse leads the man to the tree,
 5. The tree and the horse are standing,
 6. The men (pl.) lead the horses (pl.).

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ṅa jha ja cha ca

