

Intermediate Level of Spoken Sanskrit
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Lecture-02

Introduction to the devanāgarī script_ combining consonants

ā(A), ī(I), ū(U), ṛ(R^i), ṅ(~N), ñ(~n), ṭ(T), ḍ(D), ṇ(N), ś(sh), ṣ(Sh), ṁ(M), ḥ(H)

Namaste,

Welcome once again to the course intermediate level of spoken Sanskrit.

svāgatam, punarapi asmin varge yatra vayam saṁskṛtasya agre adhyayanam kurmah. In our previous class, we had looked at writing of the alphabet in the Devanāgarī script. In this one we are going to look at how we are going to combine different letters together. tarhi this particular lecture is going to be an introduction to the Devanāgarī script combining consonants and the content will be on revising the varṇamālā or alphabet in the Devanāgarī script. combining consonants with consonants in the previous class we had looked at the combination of consonants with vowels where the vowels independently look have particular symbols but when they combined with consonants they acquire different symbols that we will also revise today and then we will do an intro I will introduce you to Sanskrit nyāyas which are also the Maxim's in Sanskrit and then we will look at another special creation in the Sanskrit language. So a quick recap of the sound structure of Sanskrit we had the five places of pronunciations that got a gutturals or kaṅṭhya, palatals or tālavya, cerebrals or mūrdhanya, dentals or dantya, and then oṣṭhya or labials there and so we had the different vowels that were associated with them and we learned how to write them so we had a-ā; i-ī; u-ū; ṛ-ṛ; Ḍ-Ḍ, e, ai, o, au, 'am', 'ah'. Sincerely hope that you have been practicing the letters in the meanwhile and that you have a little more familiarity with these letters as you see them now. Moving on to the consonants we had so this is the area that we are going to be focusing on today so please pay attention to the forms of the letters so that you can play around with them more freely astu. So ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa; gutturals, next palatals ca, cha, ja, jha, ṅa; next ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa; that's the tomato series. Next ta, tha, da, dha, na; that's like the tap a bit series it's a combination and then the pa, pha, ba, bha, ma the labials and what is important to remember in this is that these letters follow the order in which sound comes out of the human vocal system which is actually remarkable in if you think of how letters have been organized in such a systematic manner. The next one, that we have are the semivowels or the antaḥsthaḥ, so we had ya, ra, la, va; then the uṣmāṇaḥ, the sibilance sounds śa- palatal, ṣa-cerebral or mudanya and sa-dental or dantya and ha okay the one from the chest and then we had three conjunct consonants that we had already encountered which were kṣa now the 'kṣa' is a combination. I'll do that for you of k+ṣ okay. this halant is what gives you the pure the net consonant sound so k+ṣ already give you the kṣa, you see that there is no resemblance of either of the letters in this combination and that's why this letters these three letters are generally included into the alphabets system itself. The next one you have tra which is a combination of t+r So, tra and then we have the jña which has a little resemblance but still it's not easy to figure out so you have the j+ñ that's the jña. So therefore sometimes when there is a bit of a debate whether it should be the gña or jña or what my logic is that it is a combination of ja and ña and therefore jña. You go over the ja really fast which jña would be the more accurate pronunciation of this letter and that's the logic that I tend to follow when I'm asked about it. So we have kṣa,tra, jña combined consonants already appearing in our main alphabet the kṣa,tra, jña atra varṇante yataḥ saṁyuktākṣarāṇi santi kintu teṣu rūpaṁ bahu bhinnam asti| ataḥ, and then we looked at a combination of consonant with a vowel. So we had k+a is a 'ka', kā ka+ā= kā, ki kī ku kū kṛ kṛ kḷ kḷ ke kai ko kau kaṁ kaḥ. astu. so you're seeing how a part sometimes you can recognize a part of the original letter in this symbol itself okay next we have the combination of consonants with consonants which is a focus of today's class tarhi adya vayam vyañjanamadhye saṁyuktākṣaram drakṣyāmaḥ| so what I would like you to do is that if you have the alphabet sheet with you it would be good to keep it beside you so that as I refer to certain things you can start identifying those letters on your sheet itself. so what we see here is that in the set of letters that are already there in the alphabet there are different ways in which the letters connect to the śirorekḥā. so you have certain letters which have a single touch like you see in the first row there in the second row that you can see there each of the letters has a double point

of touch on the top and then some of them are quite different here because there is no connection between the letters themselves as you can see here and then you have some letters which have a first part and a second part to them like the ka and the pha so we're going to see how these letters come together and what I normally say is they're a bit like the human relationship with their neighbours so when you live on along with your neighbours there are different ways in which you can coexist so sometimes you have to drop something in order to accommodate the other sometimes you have to squeeze yourself you have to make certain compromises and allow the other to exist so there are different ways in which they combine and that is what we will study next so here we see that ca, ja, ña are all palatal sounds then the tālavya sounds then the ta na, are dental so the 'ba' is a labial; the 'va' a semivowel, and 'tra', 'jña' are already combined consonants now let's see what happens so letters where there is a single touch what they tend to do is they tend to drop the stick that is attaching that letter and connect to the letter beside it so I'll give you the example of the letter ta, we have the ta, let's take a combination of 't' + 'y', so we have t + the letter, so we have a draw it out for you so the t+y we will combine here so t+y so that's t+ the ya so you see the t doesn't have the a sound because it's only the half of the countenance just the net consonant and then t + ya I told you the rule was that the t will drop its stick and attach itself to the next letter. So it becomes tya, all right and if you have to write it out in transliteration it would look like that tya and I'll give you a word for example you have satya a very very important word that is truth itself and so you see how it combines there satya right. Now moving on the letter ta is one of those strange ones which does a different thing a little bit when it combines with itself so that's why I have kept it apart so when ta combines with another ta then it becomes like a double-decker a little bit tta like that okay. so t+ta is a double tta and for example you have the word one of my favorites which is uttamam. so uttamam meaning excellent or in Italian you also have the Optimo you see that the sounds are a bit similar they're nice so you have uttamam there we go okay now let's move on and see what happens to the other letter so we have seen that letters that have a single touch drop the stick attached themselves to the other letter but just before we continue I'd like to just point out another one you have two ways that they combine so one is they attach themselves besides but there are some letters that also become like a double-decker a little bit so if you have let's say the word ca the sound ca the letter ca and then it combines with itself again or in it can combine even with the ja or other letters meaning this group what happens is that it sort of becomes a ca + ca becomes a double-decker see that it sort of sits one on top of the other and I'll give you an example of a word another very important three words that I combined is the word saccidānanda-saccidānandaḥ so we see that it has become sacci so saccidānandaḥ ok so the word has stretched out but I will erase it again and just write it out below it so it's easier for you to follow more strictly saccidānandaḥ but this just one more way that the cici could be there so you could also have it as c+ca on the side ok just to give you the different options that are available so saccidānandaḥ as an objective will take on the different endings of the different genders that you are following ok now moving on to the next group of letters the ka, kha I mean ka and kha they are gutturals then you have jha which is a palatal and then you have tha and dha which are the dental ones pa, bha, ma all three of them are labial and then we have the three sibilance uṣmāṇa kṣa combined consonant there and ya semi vowel so here what we find is that there are two points of touch and therefore what happens is that the second stick drops and it connects to the next letter so let's take an example of ambā it's a word that we are very familiar with and we keep looking at in the feminine with our ending with ā so we have m bā so we have m+ bā now what happens is I said the second stick drops and connects to the next so it becomes ambā and then in the word ambā you also add the ā that is there so it becomes ambā okay ambā is that fine? alright now what I'd like us to do here so this is generally what would happen or I'll give you another word like asti is another one that we are familiar with. So s + ta becomes drop the stick join to the other one ta so s + ta becomes sta and then you combine it with a vowel and you have the word asti. So you have to cater for that stick in advance. I'll just write that for you again, so, us, so you have to cater for the i before hand and then put it and the reason I have shown you this letter combination is because now the question is on which head would you add the i you see the i has this hook that comes onto the head of the letter now where you put it will you put it on top here or will you put it in on the second letter so what the rule is that you have to use the second letter now this entire thing becomes one combination and the main body of it would be the second head that is touching okay. So asti, similarly you would have had astu so I'll just write stu here so if you had astu you would do this like that so the u beside it so it's stu beside it like that okay that's just to give you a variation of that huh so asti you see that it adds to the second one stu it will come before it so asti and astu - now another letter that you need to know is the letter śa because it does a bit of a different thing so because there are two ways of writing it when you combine it with another vowel or sorry when you combine it with another consonant you can do it in two ways so I'll take the word śvaḥ so śvaḥ

is a combination of ś + vaḥ okay, which already has the the viasarga included in it here so that can either become śvaḥ and sometimes like I tend to write it with a small stick like that you will see that variation as well so śvaḥ or if you have the other variant of śa which is like that plus vaḥ that will become it will share the stick of the va or the stick that drops and it becomes a bit of a double decker śvaḥ and that is ś plus vaḥ all right so hope that is clear now. Now moving on, we have another two letters which are the ga and the ṇa and you see a bit like the śa they have two independent access points and they are not connected in any way. So what happens very typically is that the stick will drop and one part of it will remain then ṇa of course has three points of touch but the the U remains like one set okay that never breaks. So I will do a combination of in a word called ghaṅṭā so you have ṇa which is just the ṇa Plus the ṭa, the ṭa, so this is it will become the ṇṭa okay. ṇṭa and then you have the word, you have the word there which is ghaṅṭā and then you have gha ṇ ṭa ā. you can literally break up the sounds one at a time and represents them symbolically through the letters okay. so ghaṅṭā that ṭ I'll just write that a little better for you okay so that's the ghaṅṭā alright. Now the next kind of letter that we have is the ka and so the ka as you can see is has one head but it has a part before and it has a part afterwards so what happens in that case so the second part gets cut the tail sort of gets cut and attaches itself to the next letter or they do a double decker sometimes so if you have the word k Plus va so k + va becomes kva. In this case and so you have a word for example kva. You have a word pakvam, pakva is an adjective meaning ripe so you see how they come beside each other so pakva or like I said the ka when it combines with itself it becomes a double-decker it becomes like that kukkuṭa, for example so k + ka becomes kka and you have the word kukkuṭa meaning the cock, kukkuṭa, so as you can see has a kukkuṭa, I've just written it in the in the root form here so what you can see one way that what I was doing is I put the letter I put the head on it I put the next two letters I put the head on it the śīrorekhā and then I put the turn the śīrorekhā. So generally when you're starting it is easy to write the whole let whole word and then put one line right across as you get more practice you can do this kind of a joint handwriting but don't worry about it now what we see next is the letter pha, the letter pha doesn't really have any combinations not that I have come across but if it you do encounter it then all you need to do is drop the cut half the tail and attach it to the next letter but the other important one that we need to still look at is the la so what happens to the la is that you have the l + la becomes the double lla like that you can either make it a double lla as you know it can become a double decker like that or the other one that you can see the other combination that you can see is the la with anything else so that becomes a la so the other one that I'd show you is if you do a la with a pa, it'll become lpa. So we have the word alpa meaning less. So we have l + pa lpa okay. It's getting a bit squeal squashy this so this the English of it would be alpa okay. So is that clear it's a little but it's a very full table there but I think if you have just followed along the different steps I have shown you you will be able to understand what I was saying so just moving on now so we have seen how single touch double touch and the different front back letters behave with each other the next ones that we'd like to I'd like to show you are the letters which have a rounded bottom so the rounded bottom letters are interesting because what they do is that they accept the other letters below them so we have the ṇa which is a guttural and cha, palatal and then we have the ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha you see the half tomato series all of them come in there and those are the cerebral or the mūdhanya sounds so what happens is that you put it below so if you have the sound ṅga so ṅ half of that that's the transliteration of ṅ plus ga so it becomes ṅga. Sorry, ga so it will become, it will take the letter below it ṅga. So we have the famous river that you know which is gaṅgā, so ga-ṅ-g and then the ā. comes beside it as a whole gaṅgā right now there's just another letter I'd like to indicate here is the cha so the cha is it a bit differently so if you have a combination of ca plus cha like you have in the word cha you have the word gacchati. so in this particular letter you would just put the ca alongside that cha though this letter is more about the ca but I'm just trying to show how it did the two of them combine so you have the ca plus cha, sorry, this becomes ccha like that okay so you have the word ccha, it's an extra c here, so ca plus cha so ccha like that and you have the word gacchati, gacchati. Something that you're very familiar with and we are going to encounter it quite often so you can pay attention to the way it is written. So with the da, it's interesting because the tail of it acts like the stick of the letters so we have the word the famous word that you have a buddha okay. So you have the combination of the d plus dha. So what happens there is you have so the d plus dha so the although this is the half letter but this starts behaving like the full one and the dha comes under it and that's what the dha tends to do so it becomes the d plus dha ddha comes under it and uses the tail as if it is at stick okay so you have the word so this is dha in buddha becomes bu ddha see that buddha all right. Now the da also does another funny thing with the ya, it completely changes form a little bit so if you have the the letter da plus ya what happens is a very new combination a little bit it becomes a dya like that like for example the word in for knowledge which is vidyā. So what happens here is you have bi and then the dya

and ā Vidyā all right. So this is it and in another combination you have the letter d da with itself it becomes a double decker but a little different one it sort of uses the stick of its other one to do that but then this also transfers itself into something like that alright so you will encounter these different ways of writing them. Now the next one is the ra and the ra does different things when it comes before as a half letter and after, after another consonant so in the case of the ra when it comes before so if you have it r Plus ka, so r + ka it becomes 1/2 C on the head so that's your ka and it becomes 1/2 C so the are sort of becomes 1/2 C on the head like that, so it becomes like that and you have a word arka which means the Sun, which is written like that, in the other case when the r comes afterwards but combining with a consonant so if you have the word p plus ra so the ra is full but the p is half, So p Plus ra this the ra that follows it becomes like a line across. So it becomes this way you always have this line that is there so this becomes pra and we have the word prātaḥ for example prātaḥ meaning morning, suprabhātam remember, the word suprabhātam so prātaḥ uttamam. Now the one of the last letters that we have here is the letter ha and ha is a very motherly letter. So it tends to take everything into its belly. So if you have, for example, the combination of h plus ra so as we've just seen here h plus ra, so this the ra became that line across which comes inside the belly and that becomes hra. So you have a word like hrāsaḥ, meaning 'less', So that's a line there I'll just do that for you a little clearly again so hrāsaḥ which means less now so this is hra and this is hrāsaḥ ok. You have another letter now which is the another combination which is like the ha with a single letter with a single touch point in that case it goes entirely into the belly like that hla and you have a word Prahlādaḥ, Pra hlā daḥ. I'll just write that one again for you in order to keep the letters equal because you should normally try and keep the letters within the same range so Pra hlā daḥ, Prahlādaḥ, was the name of a important character in hindus in the Indians on Sanskrit literature la becomes la and you have Prahlādaḥ okay. The last one that we will look at here with the ha is when you have a double touch point with the śirorekhā what happens in that case so another very important word is the word brahma. So it's a combination of h plus the letter ma which has a double touch with the śirorekhā, so what happens in this case is one of them gets into the stomach and the other one sticks out and joins the top of the letter so you have h it comes under and the other one goes all the way to the top hma, so we have the word bra-h-ma. You see as you're saying it you can literally write it out which is again a very special feature h plus ma gives you hma and this's brahma. Yeah. So I think with this we have more or less covered the different possibilities of consonance combining with consonants and so what we'll do now is that the special tips revolve around the different groups of letters, the different consonants mainly the sibilance and the nasal sounds. so how do we know which of the sibilants are used with their combined consonant with the consonant that is coming with them. so you have the three sibilance which are śa, the palatal śa tālavya śa; śa, ṣa, sa, the dental one and then I have to I want to combine it with the ṭa, for example, how do I know which of these will come together with the ṭa? so the rule is very simple. You have to look at the phonetic group of the following letter which is the ṭa in this case and then you have to take the sibilant corresponding to that group. So in this case this is a cerebral or mūrdhā, mūrdhanya sound, mūrdhanya sound and therefore you take that which is from that same group and this is also a cerebral. So the options, we have were whether you will do, whether you will take, so will it be the śa, will it be the ṣa or will it be the sa. which of these three will combine with the ṭa? And so like I said, you have to see the same group so this is not there this is not there because that is the cerebral that is what will come along ṣṭa okay, and you have the word aṣṭa. Similarly we have the option for let's say if you have the sure the śa, ṣa, sa and you want to combine it you want to combine it with the ta so that was a ṭa there and this is ta here. Which one of them will come? The rule is simple. You look at it this is a, this is a palatal, this is a cerebral, this is the dental this letter is dental and sorry, is a dental and therefore neither this nor that and that's the only one. So you will get it like that sta okay, and therefore you have the word asti. You see sa ta and i combining there so that's the sta and that's the asti over there okay. Now the other question that we have is for the nasal sounds which one combines with the following consonant. So we have five groups of nasals. So we have the ṇa, I will without that so we have them the ṇa before that we have, so we have, I'll do it again. so we have the ṇa, the ṇa, so that's the guttural, that's the palatal, that's the cerebral, that's the dental, and that's the labial okay. So we have them there and I want to combine it with the let's say the ga and here I will make them into short now which one do I know will combine with the ga so which group does the ga belong to the ga is guttural therefore automatically this combination becomes the natural one. So you have gaṅgā. See ah, now I'm supposing I have the other one that I used earlier was the ṭa okay I want to combine it with the ṭa. Now which one is the ṭa, the ṭa is the cerebral and therefore which is the cerebral it is this one so these two will combine together and then you have ghaṅṭā, is that clear now? so this is a very important understanding especially when you're trying to write out the language astu. So I think with this what we'll do next is we'll do some practice for these and what I thought I will make it

interesting for you so we thought of doing this practice using certain nyāyaḥ. So the nyāyaḥ means the maxims of life and there are some that you will recognize maybe from the English language and there'll be some that'll be new tarhi idānīm ahaṁ kiñcit saṁskṛte sambhāṣaṇamapi kariṣyāmi| tatra idānīm saṁyuktākṣaraṇām prayogaṁ bhinna-nyāyeṣu drakṣyāmaḥ| tatra pratham asti andhapaṅgunyāyaḥ| so the first one is andhapaṅgunyāyaḥ, andha-blind paṅgu- lame nyāya is how these two combined together so it's the maximum of the blind man and the lame that you already know. So in the andhapaṅgunyāya, the blind man does the walking putting the lame man on the shoulder the lame man does the seeing so together they make a good pair that is able to live life naturally. dvayoḥ militvā andhaḥ draṣṭuṁ na śaknoti paṅguḥ calituṁ na śaknoti| ataḥ andhaḥ calati paṅguḥ tasya skandhe upaviśya militvā ekasārthaṁ jīvanam kurvanti| tarhi it shows the importance of living doing things in harmony with each other combining each other's strengths and weakness. So you can see andha paṅgu, but here I just wanted a point out, in the paṅgu here you have this combination given but that's also a choice of the script but you could also write it like that paṅgu, andhapaṅgunyāyaḥ. The next one is the, is this one, I'll take this one which is naṣṭāśvadagdharathanyāyaḥ so naṣṭa means lost aśva is the horse dagdha is lost, burnt ratha chariot nyāyaḥ is the maximum. So what is the thing it's the maximum of the destroyed carriage and horse in fact the other way around the destroyed horse and the carriage so the story goes that there are two people one both of them going in two carriages one suddenly loses the horse and the other ones carriage gets burnt down so they combine the two and then they use one carriage the good carriage with a good horse that is there, again Maxim to talk about the importance of working together. atra api militvā sahakāryasya ekam udāharaṇam asti| yatraḥ janadvayaṁ rathadvaye gacchataḥ| ekasya aśvaḥ naṣṭaḥ anyasya rathaḥ dagdhaḥ| janadvayaṁ kiṁ karoti? ekasya rathaṁ nayati| anyasya aśvaṁ nayati| militvā agre gacchanti|okay so that is the advantage there. The next one is the andhaparamparānyāyaḥ. something that you're familiar with, andha- blind; paramparā- tradition nyāyaḥ- the maxim of the blind following the blind. In this case, we see that the blind person this is the law of the blind. So the blind following the blind is something that you're familiar with already so andhaparamparānyāyaḥ and andhaḥ andhasya eva anusaraṁ karoti ataḥ| so this is you're familiar with. Then this is an interesting one so kukkuṭadhvaninyāyaḥ kukkuṭa is the cock; dhvani is sound; nyāyaḥ- Maxim. So it's a maxim of the crowing of the cock which says that the cock doesn't start crowing loudly in the first go. It first does it slowly then a little more than a little louder and then a little louder. So similarly good things and work also starts slowly but then picks up momentum. tarhi kukkuṭasya dhvaniḥ ārambhe ucaiḥ na bhavati mandam bhavati| agre gatvā mandam ucaiḥ bhavati| ataḥ kāryamapi tathā mandam mandam ārabhya agre tat adhikam bhavati| the next one which is bahucchidraghatanyāyaḥ. So I want you to notice the combinations there chi and dra; the ra which has come below that the da so bahucchidraghatanyāyaḥ, in this one, you have the chip bahu- a lot; chidra- holes ghaṭa- a pot nyāya- the law. So the it's saying that if you try and put some water into a pot that has many holes it is useless so not to waste one's efforts where the recipient is not or is very holy let's say holy with the sense of the holes so it's atra vartate yat ghaṭe yathā bahuchidram asti atra jalam sthāpayitvā athavā jalasthāpanakāryam vyartham asti| yataḥ yathā jīvane api yatra pātram chidrapūrṇam bhavati tatra adhikaprayatnasya phalam vṛthā bhavati| The next one matsyakaṇṭakanyāyaḥ, matsya you see there are three letters consonants combining their kaṇṭakanyāyaḥ, matsya- fish, kaṇṭaka- the bone and nyāyaḥ is the law. it's a maximum of the fish and it's bone so when eating the fish although the bone plays an important role it is not consumed so you just take the essence and you leave the rest, like we need to do in life. tathaiva yathā matsyam yadā bhakṣate, tadā kaṇṭakaḥ yadyapi mukhyaḥ bhāgaḥ asti| tasya bhakṣaṇam na bhavati|ataḥ kevalam yasya sārāḥ sārābhūtam asti tasya eva svīkāraḥ athavā grahaṇam āvaśyakam bhavati|jīvane api tathaiva mukhyasya svīkaraṇam āvaśyakam| yad anāvaśyakam tasya tyāgaḥ yogyaḥ asti| astu| So I hope you will use this to mainly focus on how the letters are combining and then to wrap the session up ślokaḥ that i will do is the varṇacitra, this particular varṇacitra special because it has put all the alphabet, the entire varṇamalā in its natural sequence using different vowels. So let's try doing that kaḥ khagaughānacicchaujā jhāñjñō'tauṭhīdaḍaḍḍhaṇaḥ| tathodadhīn papharbābhīrmayo'rilvāśīṣām sahaḥ|| and the meaning Who is he, the lover of birds, pure in intelligence, expert in stealing the strength of others, leader among the destroyers of the enemies, the steadfast, the fearless, the one who filled the ocean? He is the king Maya, the repository of the blessings that can destroy the foes. Interesting, isn't it? to be able to try and think of doing this in the English language where you will put the alphabets in that order and make a composition it's impossible. So these are some special features that the Sanskrit language and all the Indian languages since they're derived from Sanskrit have similar possibilities. this is some references so this verse is there from the wonder that is Sanskrit and the *nyayaavalih* is the site from which I had picked up the different nyāyas so to close another quote by dr. Manmohan Singh where he says Sanskrit has not only some of the greatest classics of world

literature, but has also a treasure of knowledge in mathematics, medicine, botany, chemistry, arts and humanities. If we provide the missing links and establish the required inter-disciplinary approaches, the wisdom of Sanskrit has the potential of enriching the present-day knowledge systems and Indian languages immensely. So this was a tip he gave and I think it is something that we could really benefit by if we applied it in our understanding of the different subjects and study of different subjects so with this I will say dhanyavādaḥ and now you can also notice the combination of the letters of dhanyavādaḥ. Please do practice because it's only practice that will make it perfect. dhanyavādaḥ.