MASTER SANSKRIT EASILY
(Sa, śkāta Sarala Prabodha)

By

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About more than a decade and a half back, when I was heading the Maharshi Veda Vijnana Academy, Ahmedabad, as its Director, I wrote a book in Gujarati with the title ‘Sa’skarta Saraða Prabodha’ at the instance of Shri Ishwarbhai Patel, the former Vice Chancellor of the Sardar Patel University, Vallabhidyanagar, of the Gujarat University, Ahmedabad and of the Gujarat Agricultural University, Dantiwada, and the then Chairman of the Trust managing the institution.

Shri Ishwarbhai wanted me to prepare a postal course for laymen to learn Sanskrit. I planned a course of twenty-eight lessons for the purpose, and later on the lessons were published in the form of the book with the title mentioned as above.

Since it was meant for laymen, the only equipment expected of those among them really interested in learning Sanskrit was a bare acquaintance with the Hindi script, and a sound knowledge of the mother tongue, Gujarati.

At the same time, I had planned the course in such a way that while providing the essentials of the structure of the Sanskrit language in a practical manner, rather than adopting a grammatical approach, all the necessary terminological background of the informal grammar, as also of the formal PÂînian, was provided in a simple way so that after completing the course successfully, if the reader wished to dive deep into the literature and the formal grammar, he will feel quite at ease and joyfully enthusiastic, rather getting bored. And, I was informed by a friend of mine working as a professor in a Teachers’ Training College somewhere in Gujarat that he was using my book as a source work for teaching the content part to the students studying for a B.Ed. degree with Sanskrit Method as their special subject. He further added that while the choice of the Sanskrit Method as a special subject helped the graduates, irrespective of their belonging to Arts, Science or Commerce faculty, they knew Sanskrit to the extent of a compulsory, and hence a boring though good scoring, subject through their study during their
schooling in the eighth and the ninth standards, and generally lacked the sound knowledge of the Sanskrit. To bridge this knowledge gap between the expectation and actuality on the part of the students choosing the Sanskrit Method, he had found my book more useful, in the place of the then prevalent one by some Akruwala. He also requested me to render it in English to enable the schoolteachers of English medium schools to help them get a sound footing in the language as also the content part of their syllabus they were expected to teach.

Now, after about a decade and a half, when I am free from most of my other academic commitments, I have taken up the happy task of revising the course in an endeavor to prepare a fresh book in English in view of my added experience during the intervening period of time, since then, although the basic outlook of the keeping a practical approach and also acquainting the readers with the essential formal P¹ªinian terminological background has been carefully retained, so as to help the more interested and serious students for further studies.

Since the book is addressed to the English speaking reader, the Sanskrit is given in transliteration in the Roman script with the help of the standard current diacritical marks prevalent among the Sanskrit scholars in India and abroad, while the bare acquaintance of the Devan¹gar» script of original Sanskrit language has been given in the Introduction to the book.

It is hoped that the book will satisfy the academic needs of the Sanskrit teachers and students in India and abroad.

Germantown
Maryland, USA
25/10/2003

Dr. N. M. KANSARA

CONTENTS

Introduction vii
Lesson 1 : Sounds and Pronunciation; Nouns; Verbs;
          Sentence; First, Second and Third Persons 1
Lesson 2 : Singular, Dual, Plural Numbers; Pronouns;
          Analysis of Verbal Forms; Ten Classes and their
          Adjuncts; Parasmai-pada, , tmane-pada,
          Ubhaya-pada; Verbal Roots; Cases - Nominative,
          Vocative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative,
          Ablative, Genitive, Locative; aj-anta, hal-anta,
          Gender 9
Lesson 3 : A-k¹r¹nta masculine noun R¹ma,
          explanation of the verses R¹mo r¹ja-maªiå,
          etc.; Coalescences –
          internal and External; Case Terminations; Present
          Tense; Terminations of Parasmai-pada and , tmane-
          pada 18
Lesson 4 : Oral Places of Utterance, Efforts; Classification of
          the Sounds; Internal and External Efforts; Modification of Sounds; Coalescence and Compound .. 27
Lesson 5 : Declension of hal-anta Noun - çarad and di¶;
          Declension of Neuter Nouns; Guªa, VÅddhi .. .. .. .. 37
Lesson 6 : Declension of asmad and yu-mad; Ya³-sandhi,
          Ay³-di- Sandhi, Pørva-rØpa-sandhi, PragÅhya-sandhi,
          Three Tenses and their Sub-types; Conjugation of the
          Verbal Roots bhØ and bh¹ – in Imperfect Tense .. 48
Lesson 7 : Prefixes; Participles – satÅ and ¶¹nac Terminations;
          Declension of marut and bhavat 57
Lesson 8 : ¹-k¹nta noun Ram¹; Conjugation of as, Conjugation of bhØ in Imperative Lesson 8 : Future Tense
          and Future Participle; Declension of Mood;
          Conjugation of nÅt and yudh in Imperfect
          Past Tense ......................................................... 72
Lesson 9 : Active and Passive Voice; Verb Usage in Passive
          Voice; Past Passive Participle 82
Lesson 10: Present Active Participle, Its declension, Use of Various Cases in Sentence ................................. 93
Lesson 11: Declension of i-k¹r¹tana Masculine Nouns muni, pati; Declension of i-k¹r¹tana Neuter Nouns v³ ri, dadhi; Declension of u-k¹r¹tana Neuter Nouns guru, madhu; Comparison; Potential Participle .......... 103
Lesson 12: Potential Participle (contd.); Concordance of Noun and Adjective; Gender of Nouns; Feminine Nouns, Declension of »k¹r¹nta and Ø-k¹r¹nta Nouns; Declension of Åk¹r¹nta Masculine and Feminine Nouns ................................................................. 113
Lesson 13: Infinitive Participle; Indeclinable; Gerund ......................... 123
Lesson 14: Taddhita Terminations, its Varieties; Sentences for Gentlemanly Conversation; Conjugation of verbal roots in Conditional Mood; Numerical Adjectives ...... 134
Lesson 15: Declension of Numerical Adjectives; Ordinal Numerals; Coalescence of visarga ........................................ 143
Lesson 16: Verbal Roots of 1st Class; List of its Chief Forms; Declension of Pronouns idam (M. and F.), adas (M. and F.), idam and adas (N.); vik¹r¹rthaka Classes of Verbal Roots ........................................... 154
Lesson 17: Terminations of vik¹r¹rthaka Classes; List of Verbal Roots ................................................................. 164
Lesson 18: Specimen Conjugation of All the Ten Classes of Verbal Roots in Parasmai-pada and tmane-pada in the Present Tense; Causal Form of Verbal Roots, Verbal Roots Governing Two Objects ........................................ 174
Lesson 19: Rules of Consonantal Coalescence; Question-Answers, Past Perfect Tense, Rules of Reduplication .. 184
Lesson 20: Past Perfect forms with the t³m Termination, Past Passive Perfect Tense; Conjugation of Verbal Roots of 3rd and 7th Classes, Declension of Nouns ending in -sa, candranmas, payas, manas, tejas, vidvas, and other consonants; Past Perfect Participle ........................................... 193
Lesson 21: Common Future Tense; Taddhita terminations - apaty³rtha, matvarthya, bh³v³rtha, karm³rtha, samø³h³rtha, sambandhi³rtha and vik¹r¹rtha ..... 202
Lesson 22: Conjugation of Verbal Roots in Desiderative; Types of Compound - dvandva-sam¹sa .................................. 212
Lesson 23: Syntax and Usage of Cases – Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative; ayyayøh³va-sam¹sa; Dative ........ 222
Lesson 24: Bahuvrihi-sam¹sa; Genitive Case; Conjugation of Verbs derived from Nouns ........................................... 234
Lesson 25: Tatpuru-a-sam¹sa; Karmadh¹raya-sam¹sa; Dvigu-sam¹sa; other sub-types of Tatpuru-a-sam¹sa ........ 242
Lesson 26: Other sub-types of Tatpuru-a-sam¹sa (contd.); Other Types of Compounds ........................................... 254
Lesson 27: First Four Varieties Aorist Past Tense; Taddhita Terminations - parim¹ª¹rthaka and sa; khy³rtha, kriy¹- vi-eø¹rthaka ................................................................. 265
Lesson 28: Taddhita Terminations – prak»rªaka; Aorist Past Tense Fifth, sixth and Seventh Varieties: Use of Aorist in Passive Voice; Benedictive Mood; Reduplicative or Intensive Mood; Uª¹di Terminations ........................................... 275
Supplementary Study .............................................................................. 288
Epilogue ..................................................................................................... 301
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different limbs, and their mutual relationships.

The Cultural Treasure In Sanskrit

A glimpse of the vast richness of Sanskrit literature, in the form
dramas, prose romances, stories, fables, epics, poems, lyrics, dramas,
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commentary works on all these forms of literature can be obtained
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like and M. Krishnamachariar, M. Winternitz, De and Dasgupta, Krishna
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Sanskrit is thus a window to the vast panorama of Indian life, philosophy,
literature and culture. Anybody who aspires to become a well educated
and a considerably cultured person would miss a great deal in life if
this treasure were totally unavailable for him.

The present endeavour of introducing a reader to the basics of
the structure of the Sanskrit language is practice-oriented and not just
grammatical. The objective is to gradually help the reader gain a
considerable mastery over the language structure proper, so that he
can have considerable confidence in reading, understanding, writing
and possibly speaking Sanskrit, so as to enter into the vast literature
gradually and almost unaided by a teacher. It is necessary to follow
meticulously the instructions given in the book for its study to obtain
expected proficiency, comparable to a Sanskrit graduate. of any Indian
university.

Method of Study

It is recommended hereby that one should study just two lessons
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Language and Grammar

Language is but a speech. Human beings express their thoughts
and feelings through their speech, which is a system of the sounds
uttered through the throat. These sounds combine into words and
sentences. Initially, since right from its infancy a child learns to utter
sounds and to speak by imitating its mother, and then its father and
other relatives, the speech it learns is its mother tongue and it does not
need grammar for it. Although ever since the last so many millenia
to this day the Sanskrit language has been an invariable medium of
instruction in the traditional P¹­ha¶¹¹¹’s all over India, and although
there is in Karnataka State a town, named Chikmanglore, where all its
residents speak Sanskrit and carry on their day-to-day communications
with one another in Sanskrit, currently the language is not in common
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INTRODUCTION

Sanskrit and Culture

Sanskrit language is an important link binding together the
varieties of Indian culture into a variegated fabric. The Sanskrit works
have preserved since times immemorial our treasure of knowledge.
Scholars of India and all other counties the world over wishing to know
thoroughly about the Indian culture take recourse to Sanskrit as the
original source. Due to the naturally scientific and fixed unitary system
of sounds and their utterance as vocables, this language has been
recognized to be most suitable in this computer age. All the Indian
scholars and others have almost universally accepted that even for the
sound knowledge of all other Indian languages, both medieval and
modern, the equipment of Sanskrit proves to be most helpful. This being
the situation, it will be highly conducive to our cultural welfare if we
take interest and learn, understand, read, write and if possible speak
Sanskrit. It will surely afford us a vital key to the Indian cultural treasure
for our family, and us too through us. And, on becoming well versed in
Sanskrit we may also feel a sense of fulfillment in our life.

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Thursday should be read twice on that day, both in the
morning and evening, and in the same way on the next two days; consequently the same lesson would be repeatedly six times, thus precluding the necessity of cramming it, and it would enable the reader to inculcate it thoroughly. In this way the whole book consisting of twenty-eight lessons would be covered and fully learnt in about fourteen weeks, i.e., about three and a half months or so.

(2) While repeating the lesson on the same day and the following ones, one should try to recollect it so that it gets installed in his subconscious.

(3) As to the portion of the lesson under the instruction of speaking out loudly, one should try to read it aloud rhythmically in case of prose portion, and sing it melodiously in the case of the metrical one. This is meant to help the reader realize the auditory beauty of the language, as also to facilitate correct pronunciation and inculcate a habit of speaking the language on his part.

(4) The purpose behind the advice of singing rhythmically the metrical verses in the lessons is that they can be memorized easily. These verses are selected in such a way that while illustrating the relevant grammatical forms of the Sanskrit words, like nouns, verbs, participles, and etc., they incorporate the cultural values and wise sayings very useful in day-to-day life. If they get ingrained in the memory, they would occur immediately to the reader at appropriate relevant occasion, and would add to his oratorical personality.

(5) The rest of the portion of a lesson is meant to be understood, mentally grasped, thoroughly mastered, and visualized mentally.

(6) The reader who observes these instructions and carries them out carefully will surely gain the proficiency in Sanskrit language comparable to the graduation level, within the time duration of just one collegiate term of the Indian universities.

Sanskrit Devanāgarī Alphabet and its Transliteration

Since this book is meant for the English readers, we have used the Roman script with appropriate diacritical marks to indicate the equivalent Sanskrit sounds. But normally Sanskrit language is presented through the devanāgarī symbols. A comparative list of the symbols is given below to facilitate the interested readers, who may like to read the original Sanskrit works in future.

**Vowels:**

- a = , ¹ = , ¹ = , i = , u = , Ø = , Å = , δ = , e = , ai = , o = , au = , a = , aå = .

**Consonants:**

- Guttural: ka = , kha = , ga = , gha = , j a = , ha = ;
- Palatal: ca = , cha = , ja = , jha = , ña = ;
- Retroflex: -a = , -ha = , © = , ©ha = , ©a = ;
- Dental: ta = , tha = , da = , dha = , na = ;
- Labial: pa= , pha= , ba = , bha= , ma = .

**Semivowels:** (Palata) ya= , (Retroflex) ra= , (Dental) la = , (Labial) va = .

**Sibilants:** (Palatal) ¶a = , (Retroflex) ¬a = , (Dental) sa = , (Rolled) ða = .

**Anusvāra:** A single dot on the Devanāgarī letter, like a dot in the Roman letter i.

**Visarga:** like a colon sign after a Devanāgarī letter.

**Syllabic Style of Devanāgarī Characters:**

- Ka = , k¹ = , ki = k» = , ku = , kØ = , kÅ , kδ= , ke = , kai = , Ko = , kau = , ka = , kaå = . End of a word or a sentence is indicated by a single vertical stroke (/), and that of a verse by such double strokes (///). In the ligature of one or more consonants followed by a vowel, also called the conjunct consonant, the Devanāgarī signs for the consonants are combined together, as for instance, in kta = , k¬a = , dbha = , dma= , mna = , tsna = .

With this much introductory information about the Devanāgarī script and its roman equivalents, the reader can proceed further with simple Sanskrit sentences, and progress easily.