

Lesson 7 B. Sanskritofying English!!!

Something happened a few days ago...something that filled my heart with deep appreciation, pride and hope... **Nimish Ubhayakar**, a fifteen year old, born and brought up in the U.K., wrote to us. Deeply interested in India and Her culture, he learnt the Devanagiri script to be able to learn Sanskrit. With young people like him, we can be assured that the future of Sanskrit lies in good and caring hands.

Lesson 7. seems to need further explanations. So here goes...

First let's get a few concepts absolutely clear...

Lesson 6. dealt with the introduction of a root word called a धातु |

A धातु is the most flexible thing in the universe. It is the basic form of a verb and can be converted into a noun or an adjective etc. by the addition of prefixes and suffixes. Let us just concentrate on the verb aspect first. The others will be introduced by and by.

In English we have a singular and a plural.... Boy. Boys. A boy goes. Boys go. Sanskrit has an additional "dual " besides a singular and a plural. So we have...a boy goes, two boys go and many boys go.

Just as in English where the verb has to match the subject ("Boys goes" is an absolute howler.) in Sanskrit too, the verbs HAVE to match the subject . Now that Sanskrit has an additional dual, we need separate verb forms to distinguish the duals from the singulars and the plurals.

To understand grammar better, Sanskrit verbs are always shown in a tabular form. Vertically they denote "Number" and horizontally the "person." Let's take a peek at the table again .

The present tense गम् (to go) लट् लकार (लट् लकार are Sanskrit words that mean the Present Tense.)

पुरुष Person	एकवचन Singular	द्विवचन Dual	बहुवचन Plural
प्रथम	गच्छति	गच्छतः	गच्छन्ति
मध्यम	गच्छसि	गच्छथः	गच्छथ
उत्तम	गच्छामि	गच्छावः	गच्छामः

Keep the गम् table that has earlier been given in Lesson 7. alongside this one and begin to compare the two.

These concepts should come through clearly...

१. Every noun and pronoun in the dictionary fall into the प्रथम ...whether cat ,dog, museums, two cobs of corn , many fish, one bird, two rats. These verbs will therefore be used for the third person... Use गच्छति with singular forms of ANY noun. Use गच्छतः with dual forms of ANY noun. Use गच्छन्ति with plural forms of ANY noun. For example...One cat गच्छति . Two cats गच्छतः . Three or more cats गच्छन्ति । Yes, the noun form "cat" is written differently for one cat, two cats and three or more cats...but that will be explained in Lesson 8. For the moment, combine English and Sanskrit to "remember" which verb form goes with which subject form. Similarly...one tadpole तरति, two tadpoles तरतः and three or more tadpoles तरन्ति । तृ (to swim) being the धातु ।
2. You, two of you, three or more of you ...these fall into the मध्यम । The subject is so specific here that just by looking at the word खादसि (the suffix सि is the indicator) i know that it is you who are eating and nobody else. If i say वदथः, the suffix थः indicates "two of you".
३. Therefore since both मध्यम and उत्तम have predetermined subjects, i needn't add the subject at all in my sentences. If i say "sing" it is unclear as to who is singing...i? you? we?...but if i say गायामि, the मि tells me that "I am singing."
4. To identify the verb forms, you must look at its tail end. Catch a hold of the suffix... is it ति, तः, न्ति, सि, थः, थ, मि, वः, मः ...and then figure out who the subject is. Now let's tease the brain teaser in Lesson 7. into giving us a solution...

गुरुमूर्ते त्वां नमामि सततं
आत्मकाम संवर्धनि अम्ब ।

नमामि tells you that the one who is performing the namaskaar is none but "I." Simple.

Use these verb suffixes with their matching subjects to form Sanskrit/English sentences...until our vocabulary grows. अहं singामि , त्वं meditateसि , two elephants trumpetतः, Mother cookति, Father snoreति । ...sentences like that , till the verb suffixes- subject combinations have more or less been memorized. Go on to the next lesson. Once you have finished reading Lesson 8 and Lesson 8 A, come back to Lesson 7, things will begin to make sense then. If you are still in a soup, write to the chef (yours truly). Let's see if i can tease my brain into coming up with better explanations! Looking forward to your feedback.
