

Lesson 8. Insights into विभक्तिस

Have a look at these two sentences...

- The cat drinks milk.
- Milk drinks the cat.

In most languages, the minute the words are shifted around, the meaning of the sentence changes.

Sanskrit is musical. It is rhythmic. Almost everything that we have in our shastras , our scriptures, our texts, are all set to a particular metre in the form of poetry. We needed the freedom to be able to put words in any order in a sentence, without any changes to the meaning of what had to be conveyed.

The only way to ensure that was to convert a preposition into a suffix, a प्रत्यय, and then add that to the noun. The noun plus the preposition-turned- into- suffix became a completely new word whose meaning became crystal clear. (A preposition is a word in a sentence that shows the relationship between two or more nouns/pronouns. For example.. She sat under a tree. Krishna spoke to Raghava. They played with bats and balls. What we essentially do in Sanskrit is write the word "under tree" as "treeunder", "to Raghava " as "Raghavato" and "with bats and balls" as "batsballswith" The subject's word form, as in the one performing the action, remains unchanged. The changes occur with the other noun or pronoun in the sentence with whom the subject seeks to establish a relationship. Clarity any clearer??!!)

It was a long time ago. The early morning was vibrant in the silence of meditation. The Rishi Budhakaushik had disappeared within himself. The Lord Shiva, in His infinite grace, gave to the Rishi the Ramaraksha stotra. In it, is a beautiful verse...

रामः (रामो) राजमणिः सदा विजयते रामं रमेशं भजे ।
रामेण अभिहता निशाचरचमूः रामाय तस्मै नमः ॥
रामात् नास्ति परायणं परतरं रामस्य दासोऽस्म्यहम् ।
रामे चित्तलयः सदा भवतु मे हे राम माम् उद्धर ॥

Notice how the word राम appears in many different forms in the verse. Each of them convey a different meaning. Let's go through each one of them in sequence.

रामः is the subject form. रामं becomes the object form. रामेण means 'by or with Rama.' रामाय signifies 'for Rama.' रामात् is 'from Rama.' रामस्य conveys the meaning 'Rama's.' रामे is 'in Rama.' And राम by itself, is the form the word takes when calling out to someone named Rama.

Let us put it in the form of a table to make it easier to refer to.

राम अकारान्त पुलिङ्ग

विभक्ति	एकवचन singular	द्विवचन dual	बहुवचन plural
प्रथमा subject	रामः		
द्वितीया object	रामं		
तृतीया by, with	रामेण		
चतुर्थी for	रामाय		
पञ्चमी from	रामात्		
षष्ठी (denotes possession)	रामस्य		
सप्तमी in, on	रामे		
सम्बोधन (used when calling out to..)	(हे) राम		

Now, रामः is an अकारान्त पुलिङ्ग word. That means that it ends in the sound , and is a masculine word. If you remember, म = म् + अ

There are lots of masculine words that end in अ. For example, बालक (boy), वृक्ष (tree), ग्रन्थ (book), कर्ण (ear), छात्र (student) besides so many names like शिव, महेश, अमर etc.

Since Sanskrit is so musical, all I have to do is make sure that my words rhyme. For example if I have to say "from the book," I look at the word for "from Rama" It says, रामात्। So therefore, "from the book" JUST HAS to be ग्रन्थात्। Simple. I can see eyebrows raised over the blank spaces for the dual and plurals. Are they

needed? You can betcha bottom dollar that they are! What in the world would you say for " I hear with my two ears?" Or for that matter , " All my students fell asleep while reading my lesson? "

Therefore, here now is the entire table.

राम अकारान्त पुलिङ्ग (Just to look at my dears, don't get flustered!)

विभक्ति	एकवचन	द्विवचन	बहुवचन
प्रथमा subject	रामः	रामौ	रामाः
द्वितीया object	रामम्	रामौ	रामान्
तृतीया by, with	रामेण	रामाभ्याम्	रामैः
चतुर्थी for	रामाय	रामाभ्याम्	रामेभ्यः
पञ्चमी from	रामात्	रामाभ्याम्	रामेभ्यः
षष्ठी shows possession	रामस्य	रामयोः	रामाणाम्
सप्तमी in, on	रामे	रामयोः	रामेषु
सम्बोधन (used when addressing)	(हे) राम	(हे) रामौ	(हे) रामाः

I have tried to show you that certain words are repeated in the table by clubbing them together in the same colour. They are used not too often , that is why the need to create new words did not present itself. Thank God for small mercies ...there is so much less to memorize.

New Concepts taught in this lesson

- You can arrange the words in any manner in a Sanskrit sentence.

Let me give you some concrete examples..

रामः शिवं नमति । नमति रामः शिवम् । शिवं नमति रामः । नमति शिवं रामः ।
शिवं रामः नमति । रामः नमति शिवम् । All these sentences mean exactly the same thing, Rama does Namaskaar to Shiva. Since Rama does the action, the Rama is picked from the प्रथमा विभक्ति । Since Shiva is the object to whom the namaskaar is done, you use the द्वितीया विभक्ति form which is शिवम् ।

- A word + a preposition is used in Sanskrit...a word is NEVER used by itself.
If I use the word राम, you may safely assume that I am calling out to Ram.

If I intend using Ram as the object of my adoration , I MUST use the word रामम् । If Ram is the person performing the action, I must use the word रामः ।

Hope these two concepts have been dealt with clearly in this lesson.

In a lighter vein...

Here is a little limerick that might amuse you.
The study of Sanskrit should not make one tense.
For, look at the sentence, "the birds sat on the fence."
If you mix up the words,
In the end, put the birds,
In Sanskrit, it will still make sense!
