Lesson-10
General introduction to the tenses.

In Sanskrit, verbs are associated with ten different forms of usage. Of these six relate to the tenses and four relate to moods. We shall examine the usages now.

Six tenses are identified as follows. The tenses directly relate to the time associated with the activity specified in the verb, i.e., whether the activity referred to in the verb is taking place now or has it happened already or if it will happen or going to happen etc.

Present tense: वर्तमान कालः
There is only one form for the present tense.

Past tense: पूर्व कालः
Past tense has three forms associated with it.

1. Expressing something that had happened sometime in the recent past, typically last few days.

2. Expressing something that might have just happened, typically in the earlier part of the day.

3. Expressing something that had happened in the distant past about which we may not have much or any knowledge.

Future tense: भविष्यत् कालः
Future tense has two forms associated with it.

1. Expressing something that is certainly going to happen.

2. Expressing something that is likely to happen.

------Verb forms not associated with time.

There are four forms of the verb which do not relate to any time. These forms are called "moods" in the English language. English grammar specifies three
moods which are, Indicative mood, Imperative mood and the Subjunctive mood. In Sanskrit primers one sees a reference to four moods with a slightly different nomenclature. These are, Imperative mood, potential mood, conditional mood and benedictive mood. Since the nomenclature differs we will have to see what the moods in Sanskrit actually refer to.

The ten forms of usage of the verb are each given a name in Sanskrit and all the names start with the akshara ल. Hence the forms are called the ten "lakaras" (Even though two of the forms do not strictly start with ल, the term लकार: applies)

1. त्र Present tense
2. ह्र Past tense - imperfect
3. ह्र Past tense - aorist
4. ह्र Past tense - perfect
5. ह्र Future tense - likely
6. ह्र Future tense - certain
7. ह्र Conditional mood
8. विपिनिद्र Potential mood
9. आश्रितिद्र Benedective mood
10. ह्र Imperative mood

It may be noted that five of the lakaras end in त्र and the remaining five in ह्र. One more Lakara is known to be seen in Vedic texts. It is known as ह्र.

It must also be remembered that verbs in Sanskrit belong to two categories depending on whether the activity specified in the verb applies to the person himself or whether it applies to someone other than the subject of the verb.

Verbs referring to the activity for the self are said to be "Atmanepada" आत्मनेपद verbs.
Verbs referring to the activity for others are said to be "Parasmaipada" परस्माईपद verbs.
Verbs which can take both forms are known as "Ubhayapada" उभयपद verbs.
Each verb in Sanskrit can be traced to a root which we may refer to as the root form of the verb. There are many instances of verbs being derived from two different forms of a root. The form of the root used in deriving the verb will depend on the tense.

Forms of the verb for the different tenses and moods are obtained by adding suffixes or prefixes or both to the root form and adding an infix as well. So we may say that the general form of any "lakara" is

(prefix) + root form + infix + suffix

The parenthesis indicates that the prefix is not present in all the forms.

The infix is generally referred to as the conjugational sign. The form of the infix is dependent on the root form as well as person. In Sanskrit, the aksharas in the infix are termed as विकरणप्रत्ययः and those in the suffix are called तिलक्प्रत्ययः. The root form is known as धातु.

The suffix is referred to as the verbal termination sign. The form of the suffix depends on the lakara and we can apply some rules to arrive at the suffixes. For each of the lakaras, nine suffixes will have to be remembered. Three persons and three numbers for each person make up the nine.

It may be borne in mind that the verbal termination signs also depend on the type of the verb, i.e., "Atmanepada" or "Parasmaipada".

We have seen in lesson 3 the conjugations of the verb in the present tense. Later in this lesson we shall study the conjugations for the other tenses and moods. These will be covered in independent sections.

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Lesson10

Past tense (simple past tense):
The form considered here is लष्क्र
As seen in the introduction, the formation of the verb may be specified through a formula.

(prefix) + verb root + infix + suffix

The infix is based on the root and the person while the suffix, referred to as the verb termination, depends on the tense or the mood.

For the simple past tense, आ is the prefix.
The terminations are as follows. These apply for verbs in "parasmaipada".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per.</th>
<th>Sing.</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>तू</td>
<td>तां</td>
<td>अनू</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>सू</td>
<td>तं</td>
<td>त</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>अं</td>
<td>व</td>
<td>म</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying the formula the forms of a verb will be obtained as

- III Sing.  
  आ + vr + आ + तू
- III Dual  
  आ + vr + आ + तां
- III Pl.    
  आ + vr + आ + अनू
- II Sing.   
  आ + vr + आ + सू
- II Dual    
  आ + vr + आ + तां
- II Pl.     
  आ + vr + आ + त
- I Sing.    
  आ + vr + आ + अं
- I Dual     
  आ + vr + आ + व
- I Pl.      
  आ + vr + आ + म

Now for the forms (past tense) of the verb गच्छति.
The root form for the verb is गच्छ.
The infix corresponding to the root गच्छ is also आ for second and third person but आ for first person.
The discerning reader would want to know why in the case of the second person singular, there is no conformity with the indicated termination सू or why differences are seen in applying Sandhi rules?

It must be remembered that there are specific grammar rules in respect of how sounds are modified when suffixes are added. Typically, the suffix सू , when added to a noun or verb root, becomes a visarg. We will not dwell on this much, as this is beyond the scope of our current lessons.

Successive verbs- भविष्यत्कालः:

As seen in the introduction, Future Tense may express something that is certainly going to happen (व्य) or express something that may happen (व्य). Of these two, व्य is seen in frequent use.

The infix for future tense is व्य. This infix changes its form to व्य when applied to some roots. In some cases it may become व्य. There is no direct rule or formula which we can remember in respect of this infix. It will be necessary to commit to memory the forms for different verbs.

For many verbs, two root forms may be seen. For example, गम्, गच्छ are the two root forms given for गच्छति.
Likewise, पा, पिया for पियांिि and रस्त्या, तिद्वय for तिद्विति.

The form of the verb for future tense will be based on the first root where two roots are specified.

As seen earlier, the second form of the root will be used in generating the verb in present tense, past tense and imperative mood.

Let us look at the terminations for future tense.

The infix and the tense terminations are combined together and shown here.

The table applies to verbs in "parasmaipada"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per.</th>
<th>Sing.</th>
<th>Dual</th>
<th>Pl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>द्य्विति</td>
<td>द्यत:</td>
<td>द्यनिति</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>द्य्विसि</td>
<td>द्यथ:</td>
<td>द्यवथ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>द्याविम</td>
<td>द्याव:</td>
<td>द्यावम:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now for the forms of the verb गम्ब्विति in future tense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III</th>
<th>गमिष्यिति</th>
<th>गमिष्यितः:</th>
<th>गमिष्यिति:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He will go</td>
<td>They two will go</td>
<td>They will go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>गमिष्यिसि</td>
<td>गमिष्यिथः:</td>
<td>गमिष्यिथ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You will go</td>
<td>You two will go</td>
<td>You will go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>गमिष्यिमि</td>
<td>गमिष्यिमः:</td>
<td>गमिष्यिमः:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will go</td>
<td>We two will go</td>
<td>We will go</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forms for पियांिि. Please note that the form of the root that is taken is पा.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III</th>
<th>पास्यिति</th>
<th>पास्यितः:</th>
<th>पास्यिति:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He will drink</td>
<td>They two will drink</td>
<td>They will drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>पास्यिसि</td>
<td>पास्यिथः:</td>
<td>पास्यिथ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You will drink</td>
<td>You (two) will drink</td>
<td>You will drink</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The student would have observed by now that he/she will have to remember the root forms for many verbs to be able to correctly form the verbs. Panini, the foremost among Grammarians, had listed about 1950 root forms for Sanskrit. Surprisingly, knowledge of just about 300 of the root forms will be adequate for understanding Sanskrit texts.

If you are curious as to what these 300 are, you may have to wait for advanced lessons to be put up in these pages! This is a big task and we would like to know if you are interested. Send us a note.

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Lesson 10

Summary of root terminations and verbal terminations for different tenses and moods.

The tables given below may be used as a basic reference for determining the forms of the verbs in different tenses. The student is reminded that the table is given only as a reference and the terminations cannot be blindly applied to a root form. It will be necessary to remember the root forms for many verbs.

Terminations for the present Tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>प्रत्ययिकं</th>
<th>आत्मेनेपदं</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>ति  तः  अन्ति</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>सि  थः  थ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>मि  वः  मः</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Terminations for the Past (imperfect) tense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>प्रत्ययिकं</th>
<th>आत्मेनेपदं</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>तू  तमू  अनू</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>सू  तमू  त</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In case of the Future Tense, we have already seen that the general termination is य. In some verbs, य changes to य and also takes इ in the beginning of the termination. The form shown above may be interpreted in the light of this observation.

Terminations for the Imperative Mood

In case of the Potential Mood,

Terminations for the Potential Mood

Terminations for the Future Tense

Terminations for the Imperative Mood

Terminations for the Potential Mood