

Sanskrit Lesson
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REVIEW OF VOWEL SOUNDS

स्वराः Sanskrit Vowel Sounds

अ	a	आ	ā	} uniform sounds
इ	i	ई	ī	
उ	u	ऊ	ū	} composite sounds
अ	r	अ	rī	
अ	!	अ	!	
ए	e	ऐ	ai	
ओ	o	औ	au	

अ is the first letter of the alphabet, pronounced like the 'a' at the end of Buddha. This 'a' sound is considered the basic one from which the others come, and in fact, when people make a 'neutral' sound with no special meaning and no special muscular effort, they end up saying

'a'. Any consonant in Sanskrit is understood to be pronounced with a following 'a' unless some other mark is added. For example, 'ka'; this is a syllable. You find a vowel appears, and consonants are just of that vowel. A syllable in Sanskrit is called an akṣaram, an 'imperishable', something that does not decay. "Ah!" you say, "because it's 'put together' from these akṣara is another reason it's called

क

संस्कृतम्²

Notes:

¹vyākṛjana 'consonant' is the same word used for the Buddha's 80 minor characteristics.

²Sanskrtam, which is Sanskrit for 'Sanskrit'. See lesson #1, VBS #21. It also means 'perfect' or 'complete'.

Test your wisdom (and attention to this lesson) on the Sanskrit sentence written in two alphabets here below:

॥ संस्कृतानि बुद्धस्वरव्यञ्जनानि ॥

Saṃskṛtāni Buddhaśvaravyañjanāni