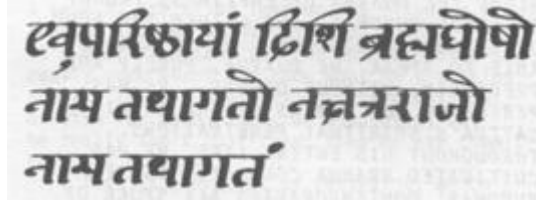


# Sanskrit Lesson

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## AMITABHA SUTRA



*EVAM-UPARIṢṬHĀYĀM DIŚI BRAHMAGHOṢO NĀMA TĀTHAGATO NAKṢATRARĀJO NĀMA TATHĀGATA* "In the same way, in the direction above there is the Thus Come One named Brahma Sound, the Thus Come One named Constellation King..."

This lesson introduced the *dik* "direction" which is *upariṣṭha* "above" (literally: *upari* "above" + *stha* "standing," with sound change of *stha* to *ṣṭha* after *i*). Sometimes Sanskrit uses *ūrdhva* for "above" and *adha* for "below" instead. The first representative *tathāgata* "Thus Come One" is the Buddha *nāma* "named" *brahma* "Brahma/pure" *ghoṣa* "(vocal) sound." There is also the *tathāgata* "Thus Come One" *nama* "named" *nakṣatra* "Constellation" *rājā* "King." Issues #141 and #146 discussed grammar and phrasing.

The neuter noun *nakṣatra* "constellation" or "lunar mansion" refers to the ancient system of astronomy used in India. It existed before Shakyamuni Buddha's time and the Buddha and the Buddha's disciples continued to use it in establishing the Buddhist calendar. According to this system, based on India's climate as well, the year falls into three main periods: Cool, Hot, Rainy. The twelve months of the year by the lunar calendar therefore form groups of four months each. There are also six seasons (*ṛtu*), each of about two months. A month by the lunar calendar is made up of twenty-seven solar days and seven and three quarters hours, so twenty-seven divisions, each corresponding to a *nakṣatra*, were made. A twenty-eighth intercalary *nakṣatra* must be added periodically because the solar month is slightly longer than the lunar month. The same thing happens with the lunar months because the twelve lunar months make only about 354 days but twelve solar months are about 365 days. So every thirty months an intercalary (*dvitiya* "second") month is added to the year, repeating either the month *āṣāḍha* or the month *śrāvaṇa*. Thus every second or third year contains thirteen months, and is some twenty-nine days longer than other years. Knowing this Indian system helps us to understand references to times of day, months, and seasons in the Tripitaka.

(See chart on the following page).

# Chart of the Twenty-Eight Constellations & the Divisions into Seasons and Months

These time divisions formed the basis for the Sangha's Karmavachana Proceedings and other events during the Buddha's Life in India, and the procedures continue up until today to be followed.

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1. Āśvinī	2. Bharanī	3. Kṛttikā	4. Rohiṇī	5. Mṛgaśīrā	6. Ārdrā	7. Punarvasū
8. Puṣyā	9. Āśleṣā	10. Maghā	11. Pūrvaphal- gunī	12. Uttara- phalgunī	13. Hastā	14. Citrā
15. Svātī	16. Viśākhā	17. Anurādhā	18. Jyēṣṭhā	19. mūlā	20. Pūrvāṣādhā	21. Uttarāṣādhā
22. Śravaṇā	23. Dhaniṣṭhā	24. Śatabhiṣā	25. Pūrvā- bhādrapadā	26. Uttara- bhādrapadā	27. Revatī	28. Abhijit

HOT SEASON		RAINY SEASON		COOL SEASON	
MARCH-MAY Vasanta	MAY-JULY Grīṣma	JULY-SEPT. Varṣā	SEPT.-NOV. Śarad	NOV.-JAN. Hemanta	JAN.-MARCH Śiśira
March-April Caitra(Skt.) Citta (Pali) Māthū (anc- ient Skt.)	May-June Jyāiṣṭha(Skt.) Jēṭṭha (Pali) Sukra (ancient)	July-August Śrāvaṇa(Skt.) Sāvāna (Pali) Nabhas(ancient)	Sept.-Oct. Āśvina or Āśvayuja(Skt.) Assayuja(Pali) Iṣa (ancient)	Nov.-Dec. Mārgaśīrṣa(Skt.) Āgrahāyana(Pali) Māgasīra Sahas(ancient)	Jan.-Feb. Māgha (Skt.) Māgha (Pali) Tapas (ancient)
April-May Vaiśākha(Skt.) Vesākha(Pali) Mādhava(anc)	June-July Āṣāḍa (Skt.) Āṣāḍhā (Pali) Suci (ancient)	Aug.-Sept. Bhādrapada or Pauṣṭhapada(S) Pōṭṭhapada or Bhāddapada (P) Nabhasya (anc)	Oct.-Nov. Kārttika(Skt.) Kattika (Pali) Urja (anc)	Dec.-Jan. Pauṣa or Taiṣa (Skt.) Phussa (Pali) Sahasya (anc)	Feb.-March Phālguna (Skt.) Phagguṇa (Pali) Tapasyā (anc)

The twentieth intercalary Nakṣatra named Abhijit, is placed between the twenty-first, Uttarāṣādhā, and the twenty-second, Śravaṇā. That makes lists vary.  
The month Āśvina (or Āśvayuja) is sometimes called Prathama-Kārttika "The First Kārttika" (Pali: Pathama-kattika) for the second month in the Śarad (autumn/Sept.-Nov.) season is called Kārttika and they form a pair.

Note: Last issue's lesson was continued on page 13, lower half of column on right.

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