

Sanskrit Lesson

From the Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra

continued from last issue

अथ खलु सम्बहुता भिक्षवो येन
भगवांस्तेनोपसंक्रमन्पसंक्रम्य
भगवतः पादौ शिरोभिरभिवन्द्य
भगवन्तं त्रिषुप्रदक्षिणीकृत्यैकाने
न्यषीदन् ।

The sentence we are now considering was introduced in VBS issue #187, and since that time we have been examining the operation of rules of external sandhi. Now we begin to discuss the other aspects of the sentence. The indeclinables *atha* and *khalu* have appeared before (cf. VBS #181, 182). The adjective *sambahula*, "many," or "numerous," was already seen in the phrase *sambahulais-ca bodhisattvair mahāsattvaiḥ* (VBS #180). In VBS #179 there was a full discussion of the word *bhikṣu* in the phrase *mahatā bhikṣu-saṅghena śārdham*, and in VBS #180 *bhikṣu* was found again in *ardhatrayodaśabhir bhikṣuśataiḥ*. In those two phrases, *bhikṣu* appeared in the beginning of a compound, and so was not declined. Now, however, it is found as an independent word, and so it is declined. As the subject of the sentence, it is in the nominative plural, and it is a masculine noun by gender. The fundamental form is *bhikṣavas* for the nominative plural, but by the rules of external sandhi it becomes *bhikṣavo* before *yena*. (Cf. VBS #187, Rule Four.) It is modified by the adjective *sambahulās* which follows the declension for nouns with stems in short -a which we have discussed several times already. By the rules of external sandhi *sambahulās* becomes *sambahulā* before *bhikṣavo*. (Cf. VBS #187, Rule Six.)

CORRECTION to VBS #187, page 23

Rule Six should read:

The -s of -ās before a voiced sound disappears.

The masculine noun *bhikṣu* follows the declension for nouns with stems in -i and -u. The feminine nouns *bodhi* (introduced in VBS #180) and *smṛti* (VBS

#185, 186) follow the same declension.

DECLENSION OF NOUNS WITH STEMS IN -i AND -u

singular:

Nom.	<i>bhikṣus</i>	<i>bodhi</i>	<i>smṛti</i>
Acc.	<i>bhikṣum</i>	<i>bodhim</i>	<i>smṛtim</i>
Inst.	<i>bhikṣuṅā</i>	<i>bodhinā</i>	<i>smṛtinā</i>
Dat.	<i>bhikṣave</i>	<i>bodhaye</i>	<i>smṛtaye</i>
Abl./Gen.	<i>bhikṣos</i>	<i>bodhes</i>	<i>smṛtes</i>
Loc.	<i>bhikṣāu</i>	<i>bodhāu</i>	<i>smṛtāu</i>
Voc.	<i>bhikṣo</i>	<i>bodhe</i>	<i>smṛte</i>

dual:

N./A./V.	<i>bhikṣū</i>	<i>bodhī</i>	<i>smṛtī</i>
I./D./Ab.	<i>bhikṣubhyām</i>	<i>bodhibhyām</i>	<i>smṛtibhyām</i>
G./L.	<i>bhikṣvos</i>	<i>bodhyos</i>	<i>smṛtyos</i>

plural:

Nom./Voc.	<i>bhikṣavas</i>	<i>bodhayas</i>	<i>smṛtayas</i>
Acc.	<i>bhikṣūn</i>	<i>bodhīn</i>	<i>smṛtīn</i>
Inst.	<i>bhikṣubhis</i>	<i>bodhibhis</i>	<i>smṛtibhis</i>
Dat./Abl.	<i>bhikṣubhyas</i>	<i>bodhibhyas</i>	<i>smṛtibhyas</i>
Gen.	<i>bhikṣūnām</i>	<i>bodhīnām</i>	<i>smṛtīnām</i>
Loc.	<i>bhikṣuṣu</i>	<i>bodhiṣu</i>	<i>smṛtiṣu</i>

yena and *tena* are "correlatives," that is, words that are used together. They are indeclinables formed from the pronominal bases *ya-* and *ta-* respectively. Originally *yena* is the instrumental singular neuter form of the relative pronoun "who/which," meaning "by whom/by which," or "in which direction"--hence "where." *tena* is originally the instrumental singular neuter form of the demonstrative pronoun "that," meaning "by that," or "in that direction"--hence "there." If translated literally, the text would read: "Then many Bhikṣus where (*yena*) the Honored One (was) drew near there (*tena*)." But it is more idiomatic in English to say: "drew near to where the Honored One was." The two types of pronouns are declined in a similar fashion, and both have masculine, feminine, and neuter forms ranging throughout the singular, dual, and plural. However, whereas *ya-* remains the base of the relative pronoun in all cases, the demonstrative pronoun ("that" or "he/she/it") takes its forms from various bases.

— TO BE CONTINUED