

Sanskrit Lesson

From the Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra

अथ खड्गायुष्मान्सुप्तिरुत्थायासनाद्
एकांसमुत्तरासङ्गं कृत्वा दक्षिणं जानु-
मशुलं पृथिव्यां प्रतिष्ठाप्य येन
भगवांस्तेनाञ्जलिं प्रणम्य भगवन्तम्
एतद्वीचत्

ATHA KHALV ĀYUṢMĀN SUBHŪTIR UTHĀYĀSANĀD
EKĀMSAM UTTARĀSĀNGAṂ KṚTVĀ DAKṢINAM JĀNU-
MAṆDALAM PṚTHIVYĀM PRATIṢṬHĀPYA YENA
BHAGAVĀMS TENĀÑJALIM PRANAMYA BHAGAVANTAM
ETAD AVOCAT.

Then the Elder Subhuti, having arisen from his seat, having bared one shoulder of his upper garment, having placed his right knee on the ground, and having placed his palms together before the Honored One, said this to the Honored One:

Recent issues, discussing the word *ekāmsam* "one-shouldered" in the text, have focused on the cardinal numbers in Sanskrit. Now we will go on to explain the compound *ekāmsam* and how it is used in the phrase *ekāmsam uttarāsaṅgam kṛtvā* "having bared one shoulder of his upper garment."

ekāmsam in the context of its phrase is accusative singular masculine, and modifies *uttarāsaṅgam* "upper (outer) garment." It is composed of *eka* "one" plus *amsa*, the masculine noun meaning "shoulder." Hence the literal translation is "one-shouldered." By external *sandhi* rule 7 (see VBS issue #203, page 11), final *-a* of *eka* combines with initial *a* of *amsa* to become one long *-ā-*. Therefore, *eka + amsa* results in *ekāmsa*. The final *-m* of *ekāmsam* in the text is the accusative singular masculine ending.

This type of compound in Sanskrit grammar is called a Descriptive Determinative Compound. The Sanskrit name for it is *karmadhāraya-samāsa*. In it, the first member of the compound, *eka*, describes the second member *amsa*. Instead of being declined separately, they are joined into one word, which in turn functions as an adjective to describe another noun: *uttarāsaṅga*.

uttarāsaṅga itself is another example of the same type of compounding. *uttara* "upper" is an adjective which describes the masculine noun *saṅga* "garment." Again, the final *-m* of *uttarāsaṅgam* in the text is the sign of the accusative singular masculine, for *uttarāsaṅgam* is the direct object of *kṛtvā* "having made."

to be continued