

Sanskrit Lesson

REVIEW

by Bhikshuni Heng Hsien

In Sanskrit each vowel counts for one syllable, and the surrounding consonants 'adorn' that vowel. The letter s is given as the syllable स sa. If you want to write just s alone, you must add another mark: स्. The , after any consonant tells you not to say the a vowel you would normally pronounce. To write sa or ka or any consonant plus a, you just write the letter and don't need to write in the vowel a, because the vowel a is a natural part of the pronunciation of each consonant. But if the vowel is other than a, you add a small sign which represents that vowel.

In the alphabet, the fourteen Sanskrit vowels are written as full letters. Those large forms are only used when you write the letters by themselves, or when you write a word which begins with a vowel. Otherwise, after any consonant, you use the shortened forms shown below:

(under- stood)	<u>a</u>		<u>ā</u>		<u>e</u>		<u>ai</u>
	<u>i</u>		<u>ī</u>		<u>o</u>		<u>au</u>
	<u>u</u>		<u>ū</u>				
	<u>r</u>		<u>ṛ</u>				
	<u>l</u>		<u>ḷ</u>				

(e, ai, o, au, are all long sounds.)

, shows no vowel follows.

Here is how you write the letter क ka with these various signs:

क	<u>ka</u>	का	<u>kā</u>	के	<u>ke</u>	कै	<u>kai</u>
कि	<u>ki</u>	की	<u>kī</u>	को	<u>ko</u>	कौ	<u>kau</u>
कु	<u>ku</u>	कु	<u>kū</u>				
कृ	<u>kr</u>	कै	<u>kṛ</u>				
क्	<u>kl</u>	कु	<u>kḷ</u>				

Note that ए is e but के is kai.
ऐ is ai but कै is kai.

क k

The same signs are added to any Sanskrit consonant.

to be continued