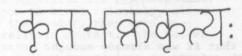
From the Vajra Prajna Paramita Sutra

continued from issue #182



...KRTABHAKTAKRTYAH (KRTA-BHAKTA-KRTYAH)

"...when he had taken care of the business of eating, ... "

The previous lesson's sentence is continued in this lesson. It began: atha khalu bhagavān srāvastīm mahānagarīm piņdāya caritvā... That is now followed by krta-bhakta-krtyah "when he had taken care of the business of eating." Root /kn- "do/make/take care of" is at the base of two words forming this three-word compound: knta and kntya. knta is the past passive participle, the first example of that form in this Sutra.

The Past Passive Participle

The past passive participle, also called a "verbal adjective," is a widely used part of speech in Sanskrit. It is formed by adding the suffix (ending) -ta directly to the root in its weakest form. Examples:

root past passive participle Vkr- "do" krta "done"

Jshu- "hear" shuta "heard"

In a small number of verbs, the suffix added is -na. Any regular sound changes required by internal sandhi take place after the addition of -ta or -na. Examples:

Jchid "sever" chinna "severed"

√budh- "awaken" buddha "awakened"

Sometimes an auxiliary vowel -i- is added before the suffix -ta. Examples:

patita "fallen" Jpat- "fall"

Jear- "move" carita "moved"

There are some irregularities as well. If the verb is intransitive, then this participle doesn't have passive meaning but just refers to the indefinite past. Examples:

gata "gone" Jaa- "go"

Jbhu- "be" bhuta "been" or "become"

The word krtya is a feminine noun formed from the root /kt-. It means "what is/was to be done," that is, "deed," "action," "business," "matter," and so forth. bhakta is a neuter noun meaning "food" or "a meal." It began as the past passive participle from root /bhaj-"divide/distribute/share." /bhaj- + -ta by internal sandhi gives bhakta. bhakta "divided/distributed/shared" by extension is used as a noun meaning "food" or "a meal."

We have remarked that Sanskrit likes to put one, two or more words together to make one long compound word. Here the compound krta-bhakta-krtya is a special type of compound known as a "possessive adjective compound."

Possessive Adjective Compounds

The long word formed from the combination of two or more words is used an an adjective to modify a noun or other part of speech, saying the noun "possesses" the things or situation described by the words making up the compound. As a noun by itself, the compound, like all compounds in Sanskrit, takes its gender from its "final member" (last word in the compound). Since the final member of the compound krta-bhakta-krtya is krtya, a feminine word, the entire compound by itself would be feminine. But when it is used as a possessive adjective compound as here, modifying $bhaga-v\bar{a}n$ "Honored One," it is masculine singular nominative and appears as kntabhakta-krtyah. It means literally that the Honored One "possesses the business of a meal done/taken care of." "When he had taken care of the business of eating" is a free, non-literal translation, for English does not have any exact equivalent of the Sanskrit construction.

The possessive adjective compound, therefore, is a very compact and handy way of expressing what would ordinarily require an entire subordinate clause. This method allows one to avoid having to use a complex finite verb form with subject, object, and so forth. For that reason it is often employed, as here, in describing a series of actions completed prior to the action expressed by the fin-ite verb which is the main focus of

attention in the sentence.

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