

Sanskrit Revolution



Holistic Yoga
Teacher Training

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**Please note that this version of the manual is from 2011 and has been updated through multiple editions for Marcy's current Sanskrit Revolution trainings. However, as pre-reading and to gain some familiarity with Sanskrit we do recommend reviewing this manual before attending a workshop or immersion if you have the time. As such this old manual is being made available. Marcy will provide updated manuals to all participants in her trainings at the time of the event.

Immersion ~ Sanskrit

Sanskrit (संस्कृतम् *samskr̥tam* [s̄s̄kr̥t̄m], originally संस्कृता वाक् *samskr̥tā vāk*, "refined speech"), is a historical Indo-Aryan language and the primary liturgical language of Hinduism and Buddhism. Today, it is listed as one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and is an official language of the state of Uttarakhand.

Entering The Heart Of Scripture

A Week's Immersion in the Isvarapratyabhijnakarika

By Marcy Braverman, Ph.D.

With several years of Sanskrit study behind me, including training at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and in India with Dr. B.N. Pandit, the esteemed scholar of Kashmir Shaivism, I arrived at Shree Muktananda Ashram last summer for Muktabodha's first week-long Sanskrit scriptural study course. Upon my arrival, I had only a mere inkling of the treat that awaited me. The topic of study was Utpaladeva's illustrious text *Isvarapratyabhijnakarika* (Verses on the Recognition of God), soon to be published by the Muktabodha Institute.

Along with eleven other scholars from universities in the United States and Canada, I embarked upon one of the most intensive, challenging, and rewarding learning experiences of my graduate school career. The skill and joy with which Professors Douglas Brooks and Paul Muller-Ortega guided us through the philosophical and linguistic complexities of the material truly provided a very special learning environment.

Given that Utpaladeva's writing is just about as rigorous and profound as a text can be, my prior Sanskrit training served me well. This course also satisfied a yearning that had been frustrated for several years: I longed for the opportunity to live and breathe a Sanskrit philosophical text. For eight days straight, Utpaladeva's text was our world. Not since I studied for final exams in my first and second year Sanskrit courses had I immersed myself so wholeheartedly in the world of Sanskrit scriptural philosophy.

Our daily schedule was a flow of sustained study. Every morning, our group met to translate a number of the verses (*karikas*). Some afternoons after lunch, we went straight to the library to review what we had learned. Other days provided an alternate learning experience, for it happened that our course coincided with a series of "Bhakti Satsangs" in the ashram. These were informal gatherings after lunch where the ashram community came together to share its wisdom in open discussions of pertinent topics. At the final Bhakti Satsang, we had the opportunity to share with the whole ashram the gems of what we had discovered during the week. Standing up in this gathering to give back to the community some of what I had learned was a priceless moment. These satsangs were a wonderful complement to the intensive textual study we did together mornings and evenings, too, for, perhaps unbeknownst to our professors, we often worked into the late hours of the night, diligently burying ourselves in Sanskrit dictionaries. We worked well together in small groups to nurture each other's wisdom and help stave off potential exhaustion.

During our morning sessions, each person had the opportunity to read a verse and offer his or her translation and explanation. Lively discussions were the norm, as several of us would inevitably chime in to share insights about the meaning of these seemingly esoteric verses. We fed off each other's enthusiasm, and the professors contributed their guidance and wisdom. What we learned is the foundation of the philosophical tenets of Kashmir Shaivism. We delved into the Shaiva view of the power of the Self, as divine Consciousness, to recognize itself. We discovered the core thesis of the text: What seems to be external to divine Consciousness is really internal; if it wasn't, these objects would not be able

to appear at all. In other words, when we look out into the world and think that we are separate from it, we are mistaken. Everything is necessarily part of Consciousness, or else it could not exist at all. Our perceptions can exist only because our Consciousness makes them possible. This means that we each have the power to create our seemingly external realities because they are really just internal to our own Consciousness. Similarly, our internal Consciousness is not independently creating the external world, but is, rather, itself an aspect of Consciousness creating itself.

In one section, we worked through the minutiae of Utpaladeva's presentation of a Buddhist critique of the notion of a permanent Self. And then we assiduously studied the Shaiva refutation of the Buddhist critique. By the end of the week, we had barely gotten through the first of the four sections of this exceptional text!

Upon completing this study of the *Isvarapratyabhijnakarika*, I knew that I had been treated to something very special: rigorous study of a most challenging philosophical text, with the best professors in the field, in the company of highly motivated fellow graduate students, amidst the wonderful ashram community. The atmosphere of the ashram nurtured both the mind and the heart, inspiring a most rewarding learning experience.

Upon leaving, I knew exactly the extent of the treat I had received.

Source: Muktabodha Indological Research Institute®

<http://www.muktabodha.org/newsletters/Newsletter2001/HeartofScripture.htm>

A Sacred Debate: A Graduate Student Recounts His Recent Study Experience in India

The Muktabodha Indological Research Institute sponsors Western graduate students to study in India under the guidance of internationally recognized senior scholars. The experience is invaluable, for they are given the opportunity to study the great theological and philosophical texts of India in a traditional Indian educational setting. This is one of the most effective ways to learn about Indian religious thought in depth.

In such a context, a pandita (an advanced and learned teacher) works closely on a daily basis with just a few particularly dedicated and disciplined students. In the following journal entry by one such student, John Nemeck, we get the sense of the vitality, intensity, and commitment with which a scholar affiliated with the Muktabodha Indological Research Institute guides his charges, and the amount of appreciation and respect the younger students feel for him.

I arrived in India with Jeff Lidke and Marcy Braverman for a six month research and study program with Dr. B. N. Pandit, the esteemed scholar of Kashmir Shaivism. I had already completed two years of Sanskrit, and Jeff and Marcy each had been working on Sanskrit a year or two longer than I. We were apparently ready for the likes of Utpaladeva's *Isvarapratyabhijnakarika*, with Panditji's translation and commentary. Yet some weeks into our study, a confusing debate arose between Jeff, Marcy, myself, and Dr. Pandit.

The debate was always brief, somewhat repetitive, and always with laughter, a little perplexity, and generally good feeling -- but with a difference of opinion. Sometimes immediately before or immediately following our morning lesson, sometimes over a mid-morning cup of chai or after one of our lunchtime question and answer sessions concerning Indian politics, Panditji would say to us, "But you do not yet know Sanskrit." It was a simple thing to say, though somewhat humbling. We objected, each in our own way, and, despite the fact we "didn't know Sanskrit," the lessons continued. In the course of a few months, we read across a spectrum of Indian Darshana texts and worked on Utpaladeva's aforementioned philosophical justification for Kashmiri Shaivite theology.

When Panditji took a ten day sabbatical, we had the further opportunity to read Sanskrit with Dr. Sen Sharma, a Calcuttan scholar who recently retired from his Department Chairmanship at Kuruksetra University and subsequently joined Muktabodha's faculty in India. He taught us Vedanta (Vedantasara) and the Sadtrinsattattvasandoha, a Shaivaite enumeration of the thirty-six tattvas.

All of these texts were in Sanskrit, some of them quite difficult -- surely we knew the language relatively well! Even after additional weeks of lessons, Panditji was still telling us, "You don't know Sanskrit!"

On a long walk near Lodi Gardens in South Delhi, about a month and a half into our stay, I realized what he meant. A subsequent diary entry under the headline, "A Theory on Why I Don't Know Sanskrit," reads as follows:

I can translate anything, given the opportunity to look up words. I think that this (combined with a sophisticated conception of grammar) constitutes "knowing" Sanskrit. Panditji, who is in the habit of writing letters to friends in Shloka metre, cannot imagine not speaking as well as reading the language. He composes in Sanskrit. Those who do not read and write in the language simply do not know Sanskrit. He thinks knowing Sanskrit is the same as knowing a living language. I behave as if "knowing Sanskrit" means having the ability to translate with a dictionary. I treat it like a dead language; he does not.

Thomas Coulson, the Scottish Sanskritist and author of Teach Yourself Sanskrit (itself a daunting task), has suggested that Sanskrit is not at all a "dead" language: pandits and religious figures continue to compose in the language; Sanskrit mantras are recited in virtually every type of religious ceremony in India, including weddings, funerals, and ancestor rites, and rites relating to birthing and raising a child. Sanskrit has even found its way into pop culture, both in India and America!

Unlike Latin, that other "dead" language, we know with relative certainty how the language must have sounded centuries ago, as pronunciation has been preserved absolutely meticulously. This is because in Indian religions the sound of Sanskrit, properly pronounced, is powerful, and useful. Sanskrit, according to Coulson, is not a dead language; rather, it is an acquired language: one must learn it. And while few master it, many people use it. Though Sanskrit does not survive as the mother tongue for any particular group of people (if it ever was such a language), it is a language that continues to change and grow.

Much new material is composed in the context of the guru-disciple relationship -- a teacher writing a text, the student a commentary. Via our little debate with Dr. Pandit, I came to understand the difference between studying Sanskrit with a pandit and studying Sanskrit with a western-style teacher. It is not a matter of fluency or talent, for many in the West have perfected Sanskrit; nor is it a matter of passion or admiration for the language or the culture and religions for which it is the key -- many in India and the West are religious about their language studies, as they often work with materials that pertain to their personal religious beliefs and traditions.

The difference between the scholar and the pandit is, simply, that the pandit inherits a tradition from his or her teacher, and continues that tradition with further works, commentaries, and so forth, while a western scholar does not. Panditji did eventually retract his little statement -- we began to be people who did know Sanskrit -- but not before it became clear to us that he considered us his students. What we do with his teaching remains to be seen, though we have all carried with us so much from those six months in Delhi. Regardless, one thing remains certain: whatever the motives of the Sanskrit student -- exegesis, translation, or carrying the life of a tradition through another generation -- one thing remains certain about the language: it is beautiful and complex, and it must be learned.

John Nemecek has a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies from the University of California at Santa Barbara and a Master of Philosophy degree in Classical Indian Religions from Oxford University. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Religion at the University of Pennsylvania.

Source: Muktabodha Indological Research Institute®

<http://www.muktabodha.org/newsletters/Newsletter2000/MuktabodhaASacredDebate.htm>

American Sanskrit Institute

Vowels

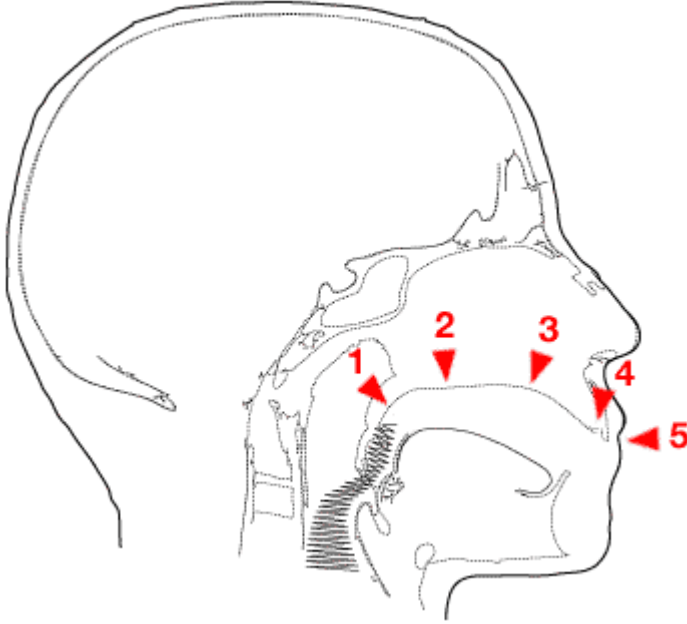
अ a आ ā इ i ई ī उ u ऊ ū ऋ ṛ ॠ ṛī
 लृ ḷ ए e ऐ ai ओ o औ au

ṁ (anusvāra) ḥ (visarga)

Consonants

Gutturals:	क ka	ख kha	ग ga	घ gha	ङ ṅa
Palatals:	च ca	छ cha	ज ja	झ jha	ञ ña
Cerebrals:	ट ṭa	ठ ṭha	ड ḍa	ढ ḍha	ण ṇa
Dentals:	त ta	थ tha	द da	ध dha	न na
Labials:	प pa	फ pha	ब ba	भ bha	म ma
Semivowels:	य ya	र ra	ल la	व va	
Sibilants:	श śa	ष ṣa	स sa		
Aspirate:	ह ha				s = ' (avagraha) - the apostrophe

Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide



- 1 GUTTERAL – the back of the tongue
- 2 PALATAL – the flat of the tongue
- 3 CEREBRAL – the tip of the tongue
- 4 DENTAL – the tip of the tongue
- 5 LABIAL – lips

- k g c j t d d p b (all consonants) are pronounced with minimal breath, much less than is used in the release in English.
- the 'h' which follows the same consonants (kh, gh, etc.) designates additional breath released simultaneous to the consonant.
- t th d dh n are cerebral, pronounced by turning the tip of the tongue up towards the very front of the upper roof of the mouth (not on the slope down to the teeth as in English).
- t th d dh n are dental, pronounced with the tongue at the back of the upper teeth.
- r and r are cerebral and n are created by lightly touching the tip of the tongue, rather than by shaping the mouth as in the English 'r'.
- s is palatal, pronounced as 'shh' with the tongue at the same position as y; s is cerebral like 'sh' with the tongue the same as in r.
- m can be pronounced simply as 'm'. The dot placed under indicates the option of pronouncing an 'n' blended with the first letter of the following word (ex: nilam kamalam could optionally be nilankamalam).

Source: <http://www.americansanskrit.com/tools/positions.php>

Pronunciation Guide

Vowels

Simple vowels

a – short ‘a’ pronounced like the ‘u’ in “but” and the ‘a’ in “amṛta”

ā – long ‘ā’ pronounced like the ‘o’ in “mom” and the ‘ā’ in “āsana”

i – short ‘i’ pronounced like the ‘i’ in “bit” and “citta”

ī – long ‘ī’ pronounced like the ‘ee’ in “beet” and the ‘ī’ in “vīra”

u – short ‘u’ pronounced like the ‘u’ in “full” and “guru”

ū – long ‘ū’ pronounced like the ‘oo’ in “pool” and the ‘ū’ in “mūlabandha”

ṛ – rolled ‘r’ with short ‘i’ pronounced like the ‘ri’ in “rig” and the ‘ṛ’ in “kṛṣṇa, vṛtti”

ṛī – rolled ‘r’ with long ‘ī’ held twice as long as short ‘ṛ’ (very rare)

ṛl – short ‘l’ with a rolled ‘r’ pronounced like the ‘lry’ in “revelry” (very rare, / kṛp)

Diphthong vowels

e – pronounced like the ‘a’ in “gate” and the “e” in “ekapāda”

ai – pronounced like the ‘i’ in “high” and the ‘ai’ in “vaikharī”

o – pronounced like the ‘o’ in “hope” and “yoga”

au – pronounced like the ‘ou’ in “loud” and the ‘au’ in “draupadī”

nasalization -- ṅ or ṁ – pronounced like the ‘n’ in “sink” and ‘m’ in “ahaṁkāra”

aspiration -- ḥ – pronounced as an echo of the previous vowel sound, i.e. “śāntiḥ” as “śāntihī” and “nirodhaḥ” as “nirodhaha”

Consonants

Gutterals

k – ‘k’ as in “kitten” and “karma”

kh – pronounced like the ‘kh’ in “steakhouse” and “sukha”

g – ‘g’ as in “get” and “guru”

gh – pronounced like the ‘gh’ in “log-hut” and “laghu”

ṅ – pronounced like the ‘n’ in “sing” and “aṣṭāṅga”

Palatals

c – pronounced like the ‘ch’ in “chain” and the ‘c’ in “candra, citta, cakra”

ch – pronounced like the ‘ch + h’ in “catch him” and the ‘ch’ in “chāya”

j – ‘j’ as in “jump” and “japa”

jh – pronounced like the ‘dgeh’ in “hedgehog” and the ‘jh’ in “jhara”

ñ – pronounced like the ‘ny’ in “canyon” and the ‘ñ’ in “Patañjali”

Linguals

ṭ – pronounce ‘t’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “true” and “aṣṭāṅga”

ṭh – pronounce ‘th’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “anthill” and “haṭha”

ḍ – pronounce ‘d’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “drum” and “kuṇḍalinī”

ḍh – pronounce ‘dh’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “red hair” and “ḍhāla” (rare)

ṇ – pronounce ‘n’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “none” and “praṇa”

Dentals

t – ‘t’ as in “time” and “tamas”

th – pronounced like the ‘t + h’ in “light_house” and ‘th’ in “kathā”

d – ‘d’ as in “dog” and “deva”

dh – pronounced like the ‘dh’ in “godhead” and “dharma, samādhi, nirodha”

n – ‘n’ as in “nut” and “neti neti”

Labials

p – ‘p’ as in “paint” and “Purāṇa”

ph – pronounced like the ‘ph’ in “upheaval” and “phala”

b – ‘b’ as in “boy” and “Buddha”

bh – pronounced like the ‘bh’ in “abhor” and “bhakti”

m – ‘m’ as in “measure” and “mantra, Mahābhārata”

Semi-vowels

y – ‘y’ as in “yoke” and “yama”

r – ‘r’ as in “drama” and “rāja”

l – ‘l’ as in ‘long’ and “līlā”

v – ‘v’ produced with slight contact between the upper teeth and lower lip; more than like ‘w’ but less than like ‘v’ as in “voice” and “vilāsa”

Sibilants

ś – pronounced like the ‘sh’ in “sheep” and “śava, śiva, śakti, śrī”

ṣ – pronounce ‘sh’ with tongue curled up to roof of mouth as in “shore” and “Upaniṣad”

s – ‘s’ as in ‘seven’ and “samasthiti”

Aspirate

h – ‘h’ as in “hello” and “hasta”

Conjunct Consonants

kṣ – pronounced like ‘ksh’ as in “makeshift” and “mokṣa, Kṣemarāja, kṣetra”

jñ – pronounced like the ‘g_ + y’ in “egg_yolk” and “jñāna”

Sanskrit ~ Pronunciation of Vowels and Consonants

Table A. The Sanskrit Alphabet											
	25 Consonants, 4 Semi-Vowels, 4 Sibilants							13 Vowels			
	Unvoiced			Voiced				Voiced			
	Un aspirate	Aspirate	Sibilant (aspirate)	Un aspirate	Aspirate	Nasal	Semi-vowel	Simple		Diphthong	
								Short	Long	Long	
1. Velar	ka	kha	ha	ga	gha	ṅa		a	ā	a+i	ā+i
2. Palatal	ca	cha	śa	ja	jha	ña	ya	i	ī	=e	=āi
3. Cerebral	ṭa	ṭha	ṣa	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ra	ṛ	ṝ		
4. Dental	ta	tha	sa	da	dha	na	la	l		a+u	ā+u
5. Labial	pa	pha		ba	bha	ma	va	u	ū	=o	=au
Anusvāra						m̐					
Visarga			ḥ								

Note:

1. The sounds of the twenty-five consonants are formed by complete contact of the tongue with the palate.
2. The four semi-vowels are voiced and unaspirated, and their sounds are formed by slight contact.
3. Three of the four sibilants (excepting ha) are unvoiced and aspirated, and their sounds are formed by half contact. Note that ha is a voiced velar sound but classified as a sibilant.
4. Unvoiced consonants are crisp and sharp; voiced are low and soft. To feel the difference between a voiced and unvoiced sound, hold the front of your throat with your hand and pronounce a syllable. It is a voiced sound if your hand detects a vibration in your throat, an unvoiced sound if no vibration. To know the difference between an aspirated and an unaspirated sound, place your palm in front of your mouth and pronounce a syllable. It is an aspirated sound if your breath hits your palm, an unaspirated sound if there is no hit. Native English speakers may find it difficult to pronounce the five unvoiced, unaspirated syllables in column one. This difficulty can be overcome once you understand the difference.
5. In Table A, each non-vowel letter is followed by the short vowel a to facilitate pronunciation. To learn the Sanskrit alphabet, follow the pronunciation guideline in Table B and Table C. Recite the thirteen vowels in Table B row by row. Recite the thirty-three consonants in the first column of Table C, also adding the short vowel a to each. Unlike the consonants, the sounds of anusvāra and visarga in the last two rows of Table A or Table C depend on the vowel preceding them. Textbooks include them with the vowels.
6. To follow an audio, you can access Table B or Table C and minimize the Media Player window to see the text. The recording will continue to play if you have set the Media Player at the Repeat mode.

Counting in Sanskrit ~ from Ashtanga Yoga Manual

SURYA NAMASCARA A (Repeat 5 Times)

1 ekam inhale	6 sat exhale
2 dve exhale	7 sapta inhale
3 trini inhale	8 astau exhale
4 catvari exhale	9 nava inhale
5 pance inhale	Samasthitih

SURYA NAMASCARA B (Repeat 5 Times)

1 ekam inhale	10 dasa exhale
2 dve exhale	11 ekadasa inhale
3 trini inhale	12 dvadasa exhale
4 catvari exhale	13 trayodasa inhale
5 panca inhale	14 caturdasa exhale
6 sat exhale	15 pancadasa inhale
7 sapta inhale	16 sodasa exhale
8 astau exhale	17 saptadasa inhale
9 nava inhale	Samasthitih

Flowing with Breath

SURYA NAMASCARA A (Repeat 5 Times)

1 Tadasana or Arms to the Sky (inhale)	6 Adho Mukha Svanasana or Downdog (exhale)
2 Uttanasana or Forward Fold (exhale)	7 Jump forward to Half Lift (inhale)
3 Ardha Uttanasana or Halfway Lift (inhale)	8 Uttanasana or Forward Fold (exhale)
4 Chaturanga Dandasana / Low Plank (exhale)	9 Tadasana, Arms to Sky (inhale)
5 Urdhva Mukha Svanasana or Updog (inhale)	Samasthitih (exhale)

SURYA NAMASCARA B (Repeat 5 Times)

1 Utkatasana or Chair (inhale)	10 Mukha Svanasana or Downdog (exhale)
2 Uttanasana or Forward Fold (exhale)	11 Virabhadrasana I or Warrior I Lt Side (inhale)
3 Ardha Uttanasana or Halfway Lift (inhale)	12 Chaturanga Dandasana / Low Plank (exhale)
4 Chaturanga Dandasana / Low Plank (exhale)	13 Urdhva Mukha Svanasana or Updog (inhale)
5 Urdhva Mukha Svanasana or Updog (inhale)	14 Adho Mukha Svanasana or Downdog (exhale)
6 Adho Mukha Svanasana or Downdog (exhale)	15 Ardha Uttanasana or Halfway Lift (inhale)
7 Virabhadrasana I or Warrior I Rt Side (inhale)	16 Uttanasana or Forward Fold (exhale)
8 Chaturanga Dandasana / Low Plank (exhale)	17 Utkatasana or Chair (inhale)
9 Urdhva Mukha Svanasana or Updog (inhale)	Samasthitih