

शिखागोविश्वविद्यालये

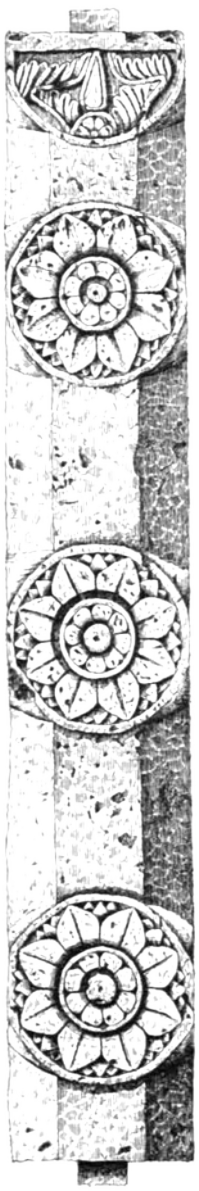
प्रारम्भिकसंस्कृतम्

FIRST-YEAR SANSKRIT

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



अल्लटाचार्योद्भावितः पाठक्रमः  Designed by Andrew Ollett



CONVERBS

Ktvā



त्वा

TERMINOLOGY

Sanskrit has a category of non-finite verb that, unlike the “infinitive,” does not correspond in function to anything in European languages. Hence European grammars have called it various names:

- ❁ gerund (Whitney, Müller, Macdonell, Deshpande, Goldmans, Maurer)
- ❁ absolutive (Shulman and Hart, Ruppel)
- ❁ continuative (Hart)
- ❁ indeclinable/adverbial/conjunctive participle (others)



TERMINOLOGY

This category is found across the “South Asian Linguistic Area,” and has a close functional parallel in the Dravidian languages in what Tamil grammarians call the *vinaiyecam*.

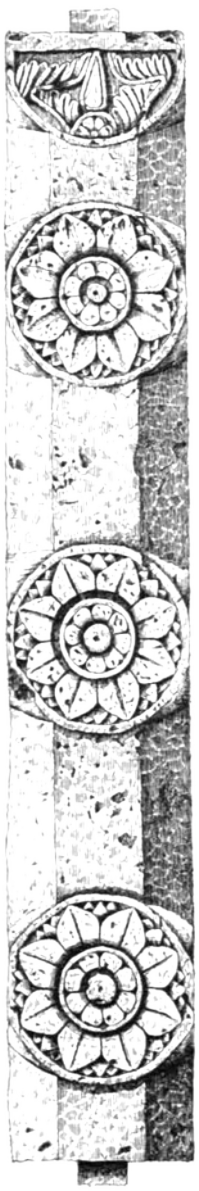
Following current usage in linguistics, and avoiding confusion with other categories (“absolute” constructions, participles, and gerunds/verbal nouns), **I will call such forms converbs.**



WHAT IS A CONVERB?

A converb is a non-finite and **indeclinable** verbal form that functions as an **adverbial modifier** of another verb.

Modifiers, like converbs, are not required to complete the meaning of the verb they modify. By contrast, infinitives are **complements**, and they serve to **complete** the sense of the verb with which they are used.



WHAT IS A CONVERB?

Just like infinitives, converbs obey the **same agent** requirement (the agent of the converb must be the same as the agent of the verb it modifies).

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

3.4.2 I

The basic meaning of the converb in Sanskrit is “having xed”: that is, it is used to express a verbal action that the agent has done **prior to** doing the action expressed by the main verb.

आपृच्छ्य ▪ गतः “Having taken his leave [*ā+√prach*], he went.”

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

3.4.2 I

The basic meaning of the converb in Sanskrit is “having xed”: that is, it is used to express a verbal action that the agent has done **prior to** doing the action expressed by the main verb.

मत्वा ▪ वक्ति

“Having thought [*√man*], he spoke.”

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

3.4.2 I

I suggest the translation “having x-ed” as a *first attempt* to render the converb, but you should feel free to try other translations, keeping in mind that it is an adverbial modifier:

- मत्वा ▪ वक्ति “After thinking [\sqrt{man}], he spoke.”
“After some thought [\sqrt{man}], he spoke.”
“Upon reflection [\sqrt{man}], he spoke.”
“He spoke thoughtfully [\sqrt{man}].”

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

Contrast:

लिखितुम् • आरभते

“She begins **to write** [\sqrt{likh}]” (infinitive)

लिखित्वा • आरभते

“**Having written** [\sqrt{likh}], she begins
(to do something else)” (converb)

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

Just like infinitives, converbs can take arguments and modifiers of their own (except, of course, those expressing the agent, which the converb gets from the main verb).

लेखम् • लिखित्वा • गता

“Having written [*√likh*] a letter, she left.”

WHAT IS A CONVERB?

Unlike infinitives, you can have as many converbs as you want in a sentence:

लेखम् ▪ लिखित्वा ▪ गुरुजनम् ▪ प्रति ▪ प्रेष्य ▪ गता

“Having written [*vlikh*] a letter, and having sent [*pra+viṣ*] (it) to her parents, she left.”

FORMATION OF CONVERBS

There are basically **two** types of converbs in Sanskrit:

- ❖ one formed with *-tvā́* and *-(t)ya*, which is the basic converb (“having x-ed)
- ❖ a much rarer formed with *-am*, which in Classical Sanskrit is usually reduplicated and has a continuous or repeated sense (this is however common in Vedic prose)

KTVĀ

The first converb is formed by adding *tvā* onto the verbal root, which goes into the zero grade (if it isn't in the zero grade already).

√कृ	→	कृत्वा	having done
√नी	→	नीत्वा	having lead
√जि	→	जित्वा	having conquered
√भू	→	भूत्वा	having become

KTVĀ

If the root ends in a consonant, **internal sandhi** will generally take place:

√भिद्	→	भित्त्वा	having split
√भुज्	→	भुक्त्वा	having eaten
√बुध्	→	बुद्ध्वा	having realized
√स्पृश्	→	स्पृष्ट्वा	having touched

KTVĀ

Verbal roots that are taught by Pāṇini with a semivowel followed by the vowel *a* (like √*vac*, √*vad*, √*svap*, √*prach*, √*yaj*) are actually in the full grade, and they need to be “stepped down” to reach the **zero grade**. This is a simple process that Sanskrit grammarians call *samprasāraṇam*.

Just remove the vowel *-a-* from the root, and convert the semivowel into the corresponding vowel.

KTVĀ

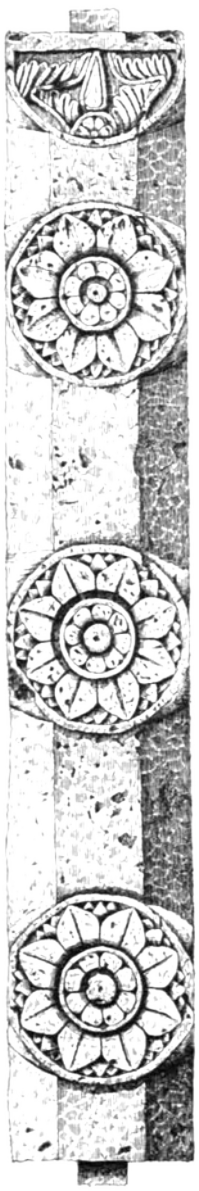
With *samprasāraṇaḥ*:

√स्वप्	→	सुप्त्वा	having slept
√यज्	→	इष्ट्वा	having sacrificed
√वच्	→	उक्त्वा	having spoken
√व्यध्	→	विद्ध्वा	having pierced

KTVĀ

Roots with *a* followed by a nasal are also full-grade and require modification. Some of them (like \sqrt{man} , \sqrt{gam} , $\sqrt{śams}$, and \sqrt{bandh}) simply drop the nasal:

$\sqrt{मन्}$	→	मत्वा	having thought
$\sqrt{गम्}$	→	गत्वा	having gone
$\sqrt{शंस्}$	→	शस्त्वा	having praised
$\sqrt{बन्ध्}$	→	बद्ध्वा	having bound



KTVĀ

Others (which originally ended in a laryngeal) lengthen the vowel before the nasal:

√शम्	→	शान्त्वा	having ceased
√क्रम्	→	क्रान्त्वा	having stepped

KTVĀ

Roots ending in long *-ā* or *-ai* generally take *-i* or *-ī* in the zero grade:

√स्था	→	स्थित्वा	having stood
√धा	→	हित्वा	having placed
√हा	→	हित्वा	having abandoned
√गै	→	गीत्वा	having sung
√दा	→	दत्त्वा	having given

KTVĀ

As with the infinitive, many verbs form the converb in *-tvā* by adding a vowel *-i-* between the root and the suffix.

More or less the same rules apply, although some roots that take *-i-* in the infinitive don't take it in the converb.

√भू → भूत्वा having become (contrast भवितुम्)

KTVĀ

One important point to bear in mind, however, is that *-i-* generally causes the verbal root to go into the full-grade (*guṇāḥ*) form, rather than the zero grade!

√पू → पवित्वा having purified

√शी → शयित्वा having laid down

√वृत् → वर्तित्वा having turned

KTVĀ

There are of course exceptions:

√विद्	→	विदित्वा	having known
√रुद्	→	रुदित्वा	having wept
√ग्रह्	→	गृहीत्वा	having grasped
√वस्	→	उषित्वा	having stayed
√वद्	→	उदित्वा	having spoken

KTVĀ

There are of course exceptions:

√विद् → विदित्वा having known

√रुद् → रुदित्वा having wept

√ग्रह् → गृहीत्वा having grasped

√वस् → उषित्वा having stayed

√वद् → उदित्वा having spoken

*note
samprasāraṇam!*

LYAP

Only verbs without verbal prefixes (*gátayaḥ*) take the suffix *-tvá*. Verbs with prefixes take the suffix *-ya*.

(The accent is on the syllable before the suffix).

√क्री → क्रीत्वा having bought

वि + √क्री → विक्रीय having sold

LYAP

If the verbal root on its own would make up a *light syllable* (i.e., it has a short vowel without a following consonant), then the suffix takes the form *-tya*:

अधि + √कृ → अधिकृत्य having authorized

आ + √श्रि → आश्रित्य having resorted to

LYAP

Verbal roots ending in a nasal can either retain the nasal and use *-ya*, or drop it and use *-tya*.

प्र + √नम् → प्रणम्य, प्रणत्य having bowed

आ + √गम् → आगम्य, आगत्य having come

LYAP

(This is only for verbs that drop the nasal before *-tvā*:
the other group just adds *-ya*.)

प्र + √क्रम् → प्रक्रम्य having advanced

LYAP

Verbs that end in a long $-ā$ or $-ai$ take $-ā$ rather than $-i$ or $-ī$ in this form:

वि + √ज्ञा → विज्ञाय

having discerned

आ + √दा → आदाय

having taken

LYAP

The augment *-i-* is **never** used with *-ya*.

नि + √वृत् → निवृत्य having turned back

प्र + √वस् → प्रोष्य having stayed

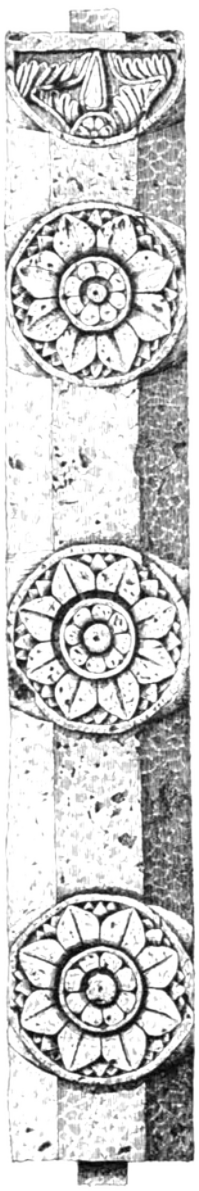
वि + √ग्रह् → विगृह्य having fought

ṄAMUL

7.2.115-116

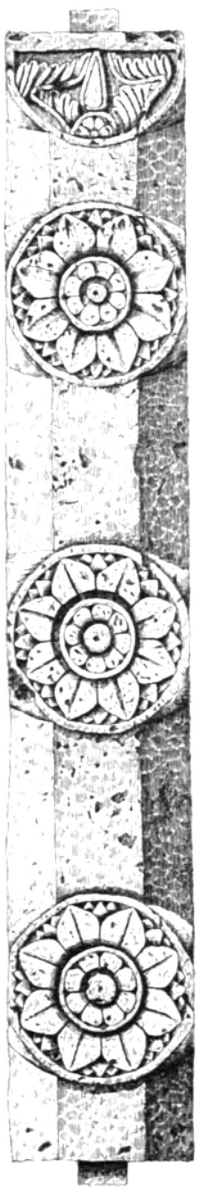
The *other* type of converb is formed by adding *-am* onto the verbal root, which takes a particular form of vowel gradation that I call *Ṅ-vṛddhiḥ* (because Pāṇini indicates it with the letter *Ṅ*).

- ❁ *vṛddhiḥ* if the root ends in a vowel ($\sqrt{kr} \rightarrow kār-$)
or the vowel *a* + a single consonant vowel ($\sqrt{yaj} \rightarrow yāj-$)
- ❁ *guṇaḥ* otherwise ($\sqrt{drś} \rightarrow darś-$)



ṄAMUL

This converb is often *repeated* in Classical Sanskrit to refer to action that takes place continuously or repeatedly.



ṆAMUL

नव-चूत-पल्लवानि • दर्शम् • दर्शम् •

मधुकराणाम् • क्वणितानि • श्रावम् • श्रावम् • परिवभ्राम •

“He wandered around,

looking [for a long time] at the fresh mango shoots,

and listening [for a long time] to the buzzing of the bees.”

[*Daśakumāracaritam* of Daṇḍin, cited in Whitney §995.]

NEGATION

All converbs are negated by the prefix *a-* (*an-* before vowels).

चोरम् • अदृष्ट्वा • “without having seen the thief”

विशेषम् • अविज्ञाय • “without having understood the difference”

