

शिखागोविश्वविद्यालये

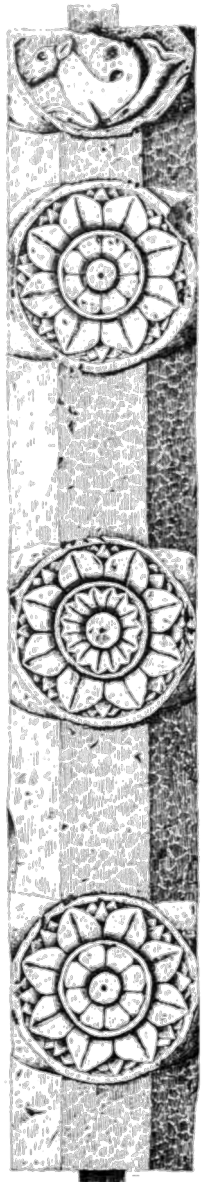
# प्रारम्भिकसंस्कृतम्

**FIRST-YEAR SANSKRIT**

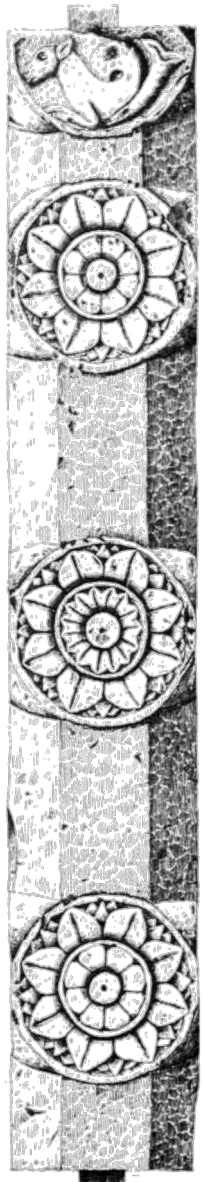
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**



अल्लटाचार्योद्भावितः पाठक्रमः  Designed by Andrew Ollett



# *dēvanāgarīlipiḥ* **THE DĒVANĀGARĪ SCRIPT**



Sanskrit has been written in a range of scripts, depending on time and place. For example:

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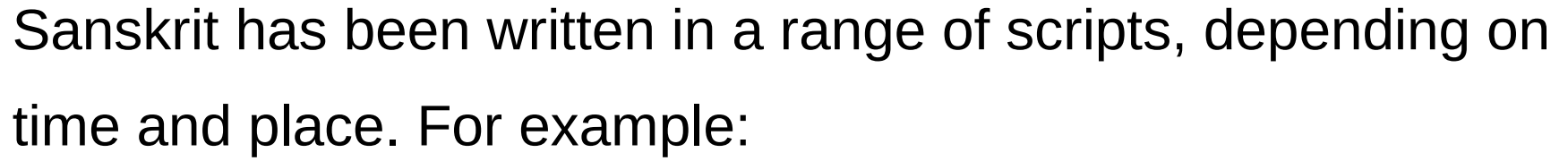
Sanskrit inscription in Southern Brāhmī script from Kanaganahalli, Northern Karnataka, ca. 100 CE.

Sanskrit has been written in a range of scripts, depending on time and place. For example:



Sanskrit inscription in Northern Brāhmī script from Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh, ca. 100 CE.





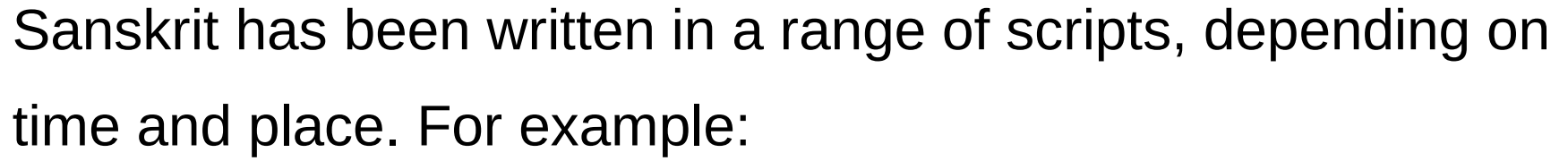
Sanskrit inscription in  
Gupta (Northern Brāhmī)  
script, 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE  
(Allahabad pillar  
inscription of  
Samudragupta)

Sanskrit has been written in a range of scripts, depending on time and place. For example:



Sanskrit inscription in  
“Pallava” script from  
West Java, 5<sup>th</sup> c. CE.



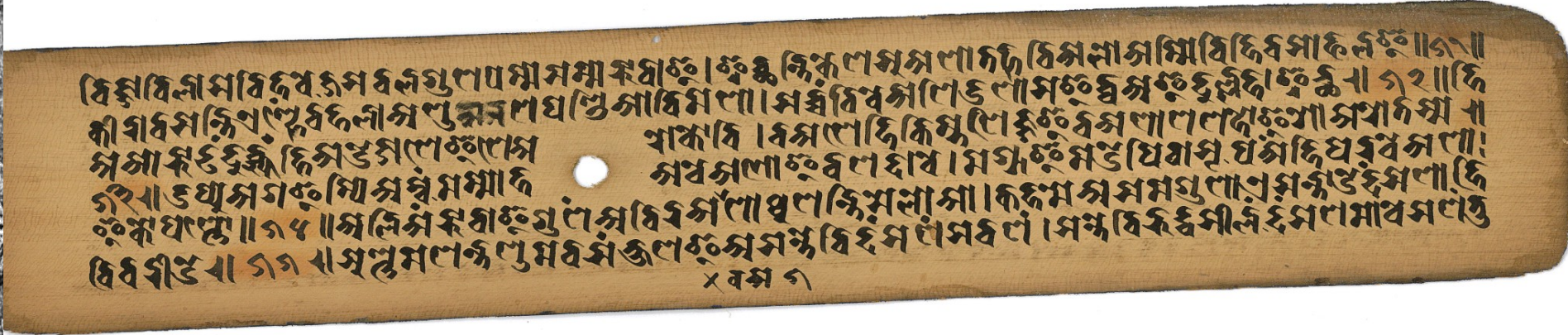


ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥  
 गुरुद्वयं कुरु शक्तिं ॥ तं वृत्तवः स्मरन् सातः कल्याणमनि शब्दतः ॥ क  
 ल्या तस्मात्पादमत्ति हृत्पिङ्गलाः ॥ परमरुद्राक्षरकमन्त्रा  
 जातिराज परमेश्वर श्रीसीयकदव पादानुधात परमरुद्राक्षरकम  
 न्त्राजातिराज परमेश्वर श्रीराक्षसि राजादव पादानुधात परमरु  
 द्राक्षरकमन्त्राजातिराज परमेश्वर श्रीसिंधु राजादव पादानुधात  
 परमरुद्राक्षरकमन्त्राजातिराज परमेश्वर श्रीद्रो जादवः कुरुष्वती ॥

Sanskrit inscription in Nāgarī script from Madhya Pradesh,  
11<sup>th</sup> c. CE.



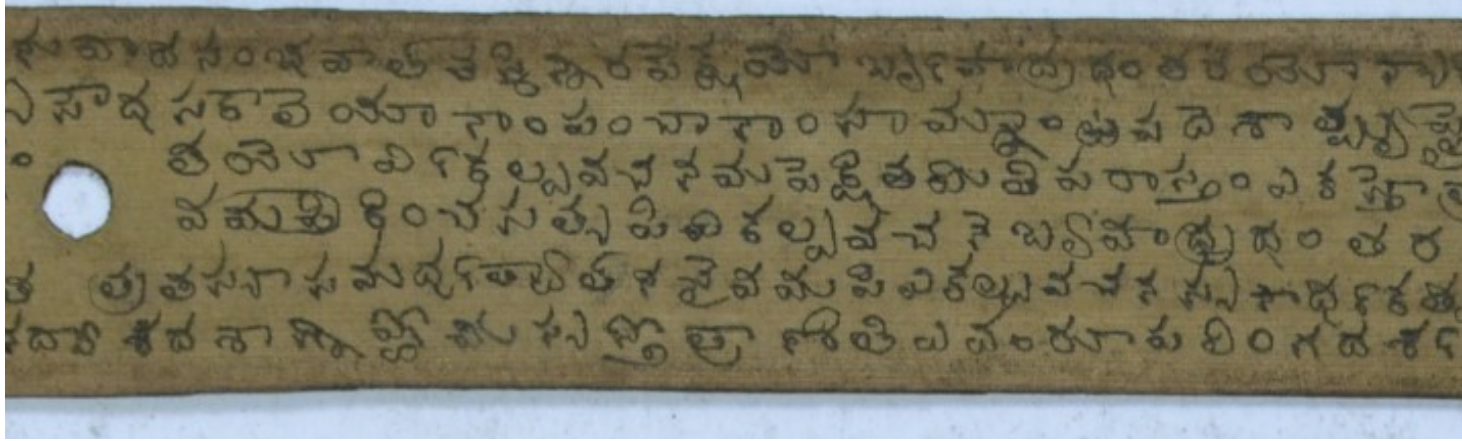
Sanskrit has been written in a range of scripts, depending on time and place. For example:



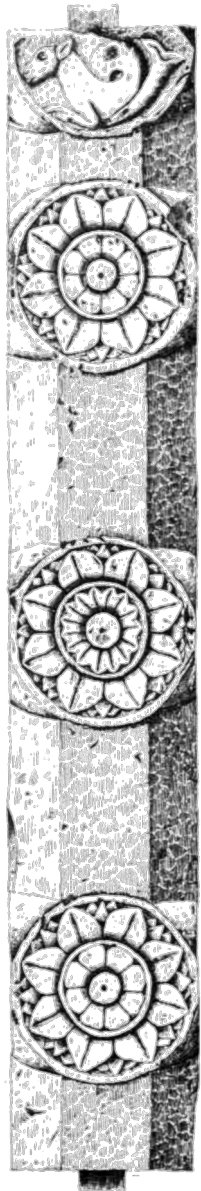
विष्णुविनायकविद्वज्जगन्महामुखाय नमः ॥ १ ॥  
कीर्तिमयविष्णुविद्वज्जगन्महामुखाय नमः ॥ २ ॥  
अथाहं विद्वज्जगन्महामुखाय नमः ॥ ३ ॥  
॥ ४ ॥ अथाहं विद्वज्जगन्महामुखाय नमः ॥ ५ ॥  
विष्णुविद्वज्जगन्महामुखाय नमः ॥ ६ ॥

Palm-leaf manuscript in Sanskrit in Newari script (14<sup>th</sup> c.?)

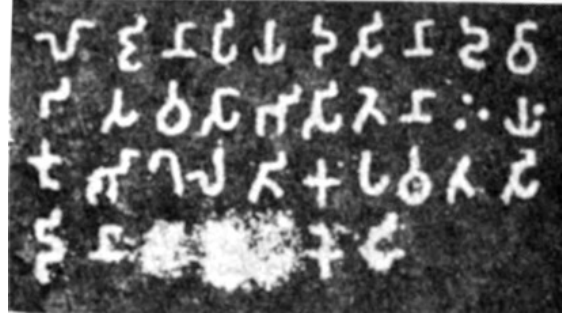
Sanskrit has been written in a range of scripts, depending on time and place. For example:



Palm-leaf manuscript in Sanskrit in Telugu script (probably 17<sup>th</sup> c.)

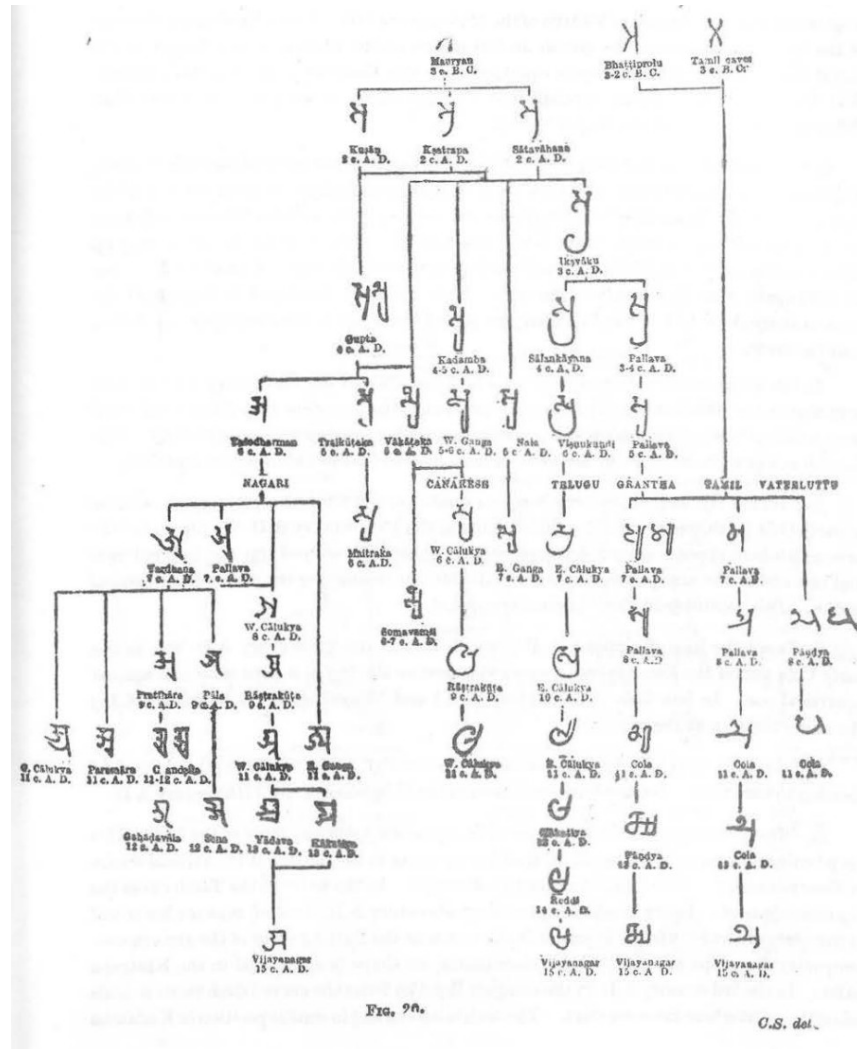


All\* of the scripts used for writing Sanskrit in South and Southeast Asia have developed from the **Brāhmī** script, which is first (securely) attested in Aśōka's inscriptions of the mid-3rd c. BCE:

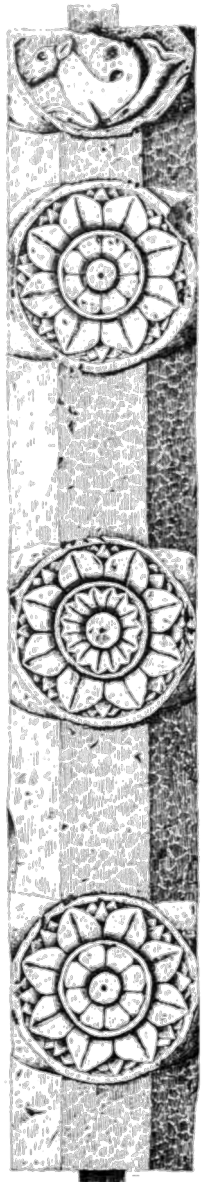


\* The Kharōṣṭhī script, derived from Aramaic, was occasionally used to write Sanskrit as well.



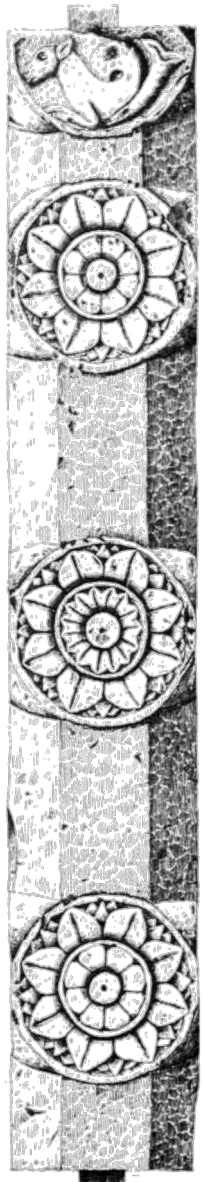


From C. Sivaramamurti,  
*Indian Epigraphy and  
South Indian Scripts*, 1948.



**Nāgarī** refers to the script that was common in Northern India (roughly from Gujarat to Uttar Pradesh) for writing Sanskrit and related languages (Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Gujarati, Hindi, etc.), roughly from the 8<sup>th</sup> c. CE up to today.

**Nāgarī** literally means “of or relating to towns” (*nagaram*), but why it is applied to the script is unclear. In recent centuries it has come to be called **Dēvanāgarī** (*dēva*-meaning “god”) for reasons unknown to me.



Like all Brāhmī-derived scripts, Nāgarī is an **abugida**. It does not treat vowels and consonants in the same way, like the Latin script, used for English.

Rather, the *syllable*, consisting of zero or more consonants followed by one vowel, is the basic unit of writing.

Vowels are generally written as “markers” attached to a consonant sign.





क ka

The basic sign for each consonant includes an “inherent vowel,” namely, *short a* [e].



का kā

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



कि ki

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.

(Note that the marker for *i* appears *before* the consonant!)





की kī

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



क ku

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.

रु ru



क kū

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.

रू rū





क kr

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



क कृ

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



क k!

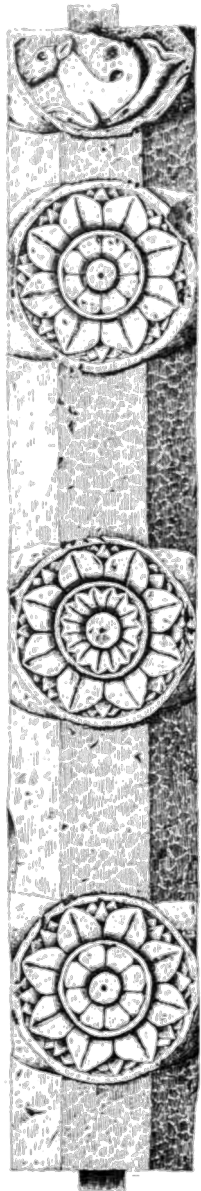
Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



के kē

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.





कै kai

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



को kō

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



कौ kau

Other vowels besides *a* are represented by different vowel-markers added to the consonant sign.



क k

If you want to write *only the consonant*, without the inherent vowel, it has to be “cancelled” with a mark called *virāmaḥ* (“pause”) or *halantaḥ* (“consonant-final”).





अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ लृ ए ओ ऐ औ  
a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ ḷ ē ō ai au

If you want to write *only the vowel*, then there are independent letters for each of the fourteen Sanskrit vowels.



कं kam कः kaḥ

The “dependent sounds” are also written as markers on main sign.



किं kim कैः kaih

The “dependent sounds” are also written as markers on main sign.

They can be combined with vowel markers.



क + व → क्  
ka va kva

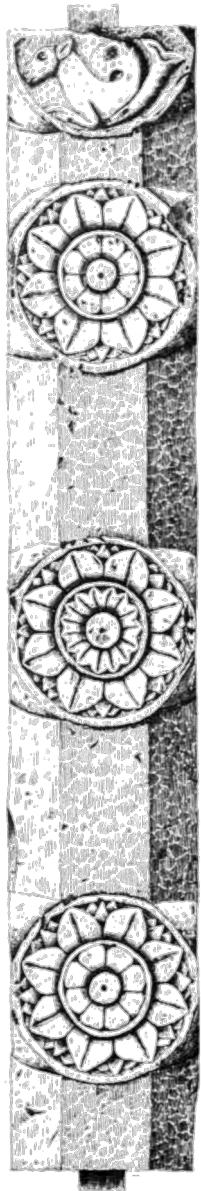
**Multiple consonants** in a row are written by combining the distinctive marks of each consonant into a single sign. These are called **conjunct characters** (*saṁyuktākṣarāṇi*).





भवत्योः  
bhavatyōḥ

Vowel markers and dependent consonant markers  
can, of course, be used with conjunct characters.



र + त + स + न + य → त्स्र्य  
ra ta sa na ya rtsnya

Conjuncts of three or more consonants also occur.



र + त + स + न + य → त्सर्न्य

ra ta sa na ya rtsnya

Conjuncts of three or more consonants also occur.

र + त + स + न + य → र्सन्य

ra ta sa na ya rtsnya

Conjuncts of three or more consonants also occur.



र + त + स + न + य → त्सन्य  
ra ta sa na ya rtsnya

Conjuncts of three or more consonants also occur.

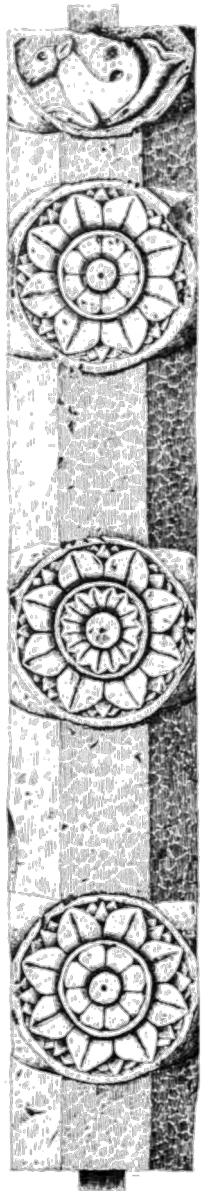
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र + त + स + न + य → त्स्र्य  
ra ta sa na ya rtsnya

Conjuncts of three or more consonants also occur.



ह + र → ह  
ha ra hra

There are various ways in which consants are joined to each other, and many simply have to be memorized.



Also take note of the special conjuncts for *jñ* and *kṣ*:

ज्ञ  
jñā

क्ष  
kṣa

