शिकागोविश्वविद्यालये

प्रारम्भिकसंस्कृतम्

FIRST-YEAR SANSKRIT

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

अल्लटाचार्योद्द्रावितः पाठक्रमः ✺ *Designed by Andrew Ollett*

ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTIONS

bhāvalakṣaṇam   ❧   भावलक्षणम्

EMBEDDING CONSTRUCTIONS

So far we have learned of a few ways in which you can **embed** a description of one action in a description of another.

EMBEDDING CONSTRUCTIONS

❧ **Converbs** (*-tvā*, *-ya*, *-am*): indeclinable forms that express an action **antecedent** to the action expressed by the main verb. The agent of the converb is understood to be the agent of the main verb.

❧ **Participles** (*-tá-*, *-távat-*, *-at-*, *-(m)āna-*): declinable adjectives that describe something in the main sentence as the **agent** or **patient** of another verbal action.

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EMBEDDING CONSTRUCTIONS

Both converbs and participles generally require a "link" to the action expressed by the main verb. In other words, the **agent** (or **patient**) of the converb/participle needs to **already be present** in the main sentence.

EMBEDDING CONSTRUCTIONS

The noun that has a role in both the main clause and the converb/participle clause is sometimes called a **pivot**. You've encountered plenty of these already.

EMBEDDING CONSTRUCTIONS

✓ रुदन्तं रामं पश्यति   "He sees Rāma **weeping**."

    PIVOT: रामम् (patient of पश्यति = agent of रुदन्तम्)

✓ चिन्तयतस्तस्य शिरसि पतितं फलम्

    "A fruit fell on his head **as he was thinking.**"

     PIVOT: तस्य (adnominal complement of शिरसि = agent of चिन्तयतः)

✓ खङ्गमादाय समरं गतः   "He took his sword and went to battle."

    PIVOT: (implicit agent of गतः = agent of आदाय)

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ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTIONS

Sanskrit has a few **absolute** constructions, too, which are simply **strategies of embedding one description of a verbal action within another without a pivot**.

In these constructions we use **participial phrases** in the locative case.

ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTIONS

English (and most European languages) use absolute participial constructions too, though now mostly in fixed phrases:

🍂 "**That being said**, I would be willing to be on the committee."

🍂 "**The Capitol building having been breached**, the lawmakers fled to a secret location."

ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTIONS

Pāṇini mentions that the locative (*saptamī*) can be used for "that which, by its verbal action (*bhāvēna*), there is a characterization of another verbal action (*bhāvalakṣaṇam*)."

Hence the locative is used for the **head** of a participial phrase (and therefore also the participle itself) that acts as an **adverbial modifier** of the main sentence.

ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTIONS

This **locative absolute** is widely known as the *sati-saptamī*, because it often (although not always) involves the form *sati* (the locative masculine/neuter singular of the present participle of √*as*).

USAGE

As with other participial phrases, you have to decide what kind of relationship the participial phrase has to the main sentence (temporal, causal, concessive, conditional), and thus what the most appropriate translation into English will be.

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USAGE

अस्मिन् सति तदानुमानिकं नास्ति

Śābarabhāṣyaḥ

"This being present, that is not inferential."

CONDITIONAL

"If this is present, then that is not inferential."

USAGE

अस्मिन् · सति · तत् · आनुमानिकम् · न · अस्ति   *Śābarabhāṣyaḥ*

"This being present, that is not inferential."

CONDITIONAL

"If this is present, then that is not inferential."

USAGE

एवं सति चत्वारि पदान्युपलभेमहि   *Śābarabhāṣyaḥ*

"This being so, we would encounter four words."

CONDITIONAL

"If this were so, then we would encounter four words."

USAGE

एवम् · सति · चत्वारि · पदानि · उपलभेमहि ·   *Śābarabhāṣyaḥ*

"This being so, we would encounter four words."

CONDITIONAL

"If this were so, then we would encounter four words."

USAGE

भिन्ने जुहोति

"[Something's] having been broken, he makes an offering."

TEMPORAL

"He makes an offering when something is broken."

USAGE

अश्वमानयेत्युक्ते ऽश्वानयनं प्रतीयते   *Śābarabhāṣyaḥ*

"'Bring a horse' having been said, the bringing of a horse is understood."

TEMPORAL

"When 'bring a horse' is said, what is understood is the bringing of a horse."

USAGE

Śābarabhāṣyaḥ

अश्वम् · आनय · इति · उक्ते · अश्व-आनयनम् · प्रतीयते

"'Bring a cow' having been said, the bringing of a cow is understood."

TEMPORAL

"When 'bring a cow' is said, what is understood is the bringing of a cow."

USAGE

अन्तर्हिते ऽपि शब्दे स्मरणादर्थप्रत्ययः

Śābarabhāṣyaḥ

"The word having disappeared, there is an awareness of [its] meaning on the basis of memory."

CONCESSIVE

"Although (or even though) the word has disappeared, there is [nevertheless] an awareness of [its] meaning on the basis of memory."

* The concessive sense is almost always marked with *api*. It is usually the **second** word in its respective phrase.

USAGE

अन्तर्हिते · अपि · शब्दे · स्मरणात् · अर्थ-प्रत्ययः · *Śābarabhāṣyaḥ*

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USAGE

As these examples show, the action in the absolute phrase can be expressed by any participle (present and past — as well as future and perfect, which we haven't learned yet) in either the active or the passive voice.

USAGE

Remember that if there is a possible **pivot** in the main sentence, you won't use an absolute construction, but a regular participial phrase:

रामस्य · अयोध्याम् · पुनः · आगतस्य · माता · अतुष्यत् ·

"When Rāma came back to Ayōdhyā, **his** mother was pleased."

[*rāmasya* is a genitive modifying *mātā* in the main sentence.]

USAGE

Note idiomatic expressions like *ēvaṁ sati*, *tathā sati* = "this being the case," where the subject of the verb √*as* is not made explicit.

GENITIVE ABSOLUTE

Finally, although it is relatively rare, we can mention a **genitive absolute**, which is used in the same contexts as the locative absolute, but when there is an additional sense of **disregard** (*anādarē*), which can be more or less pronounced.

Ferdinand de Saussure wrote his PhD dissertation on "L'emploi du génitif absolu en sanscrit" (1881).

नन्दाः पशव इव हताः पश्यतो राक्षसस्य

"The Nandas were slaughtered like beasts while Rākṣasa looked on."

[i.e., whoever slaughtered the Nandas — presumably Candragupta — did it right before Nanda's eyes, in complete disregard for him.]

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