**ParamaikAnti’s svastivAcanam**

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The explanation for the svastivācana mantrās can be written, without the details I am giving below. However, I am a devotee of Vedas. My devotion towards Vedas is not only because of the fact that Vedas are the holy books according to our tradition. It is not because Veda is a beautiful poem – it is a literature like āzhvārs’ poems that help in experiencing the holy attributes of the Lord. It is a book that is very scientific. One of the reasons for my devotion is because it works within a beautiful framework like computers. I need to mention at least a few things that show the glory of how Vedas follow a controlled framework without any deviation. Our younger generation should understand this. I am motivated to give few details here because of the above reasons. This is unavoidable considering the fact that this is getting translated for the English Edition of Pādukā and reaches many youngsters.

This will be useful even for the scholars who have learnt the Vedas completely, since this gives some profound facts. Even though, only few of them may give attention to this article and read, I will be greatly fortunate to get the blessings of those few. That also increases my enthusiasm.

Throughout the world, sentences are used to exchange information. Sentences are nothing but group of words, isn’t it? However, just a group of words cannot be used to exchange information. For example, consider a group of words “Rama who has bow in his hand”. This group forms an incomplete sentence. It is a common rule, that unless verbs like “came, ‘is going’ and ‘is waging war’ are joined with the above group of words, the sentence is incomplete. Hence, in Tamil grammar, these verbs are known as vinai muu (finite verb, verbs used for completing a sentence). In Sanskrit, these verbs are known as tiṅanta (तिङन्त) and nouns are known as subanta (सुबन्त).

‘ajaḥ’ is a noun. One of the various meanings it takes is goat. This word takes the form of ’ajānām’ to indicate the sixth case (Genitive case) plural term to mean ‘of multiple goats’. This is a ‘subanta’ word. ‘jānāmi’ is a verb. This means, I know. i.e. this indicates first person present tense. This will take the form ’ajānām’, when it comes in past tense as ‘I knew’. This is a ‘tiṅanta’ word.

When we hear the word ’ajānām’, how do we determine whether it is a ‘subanta’ word or ‘tiṅanta’ word? We determine based on the context and how it is combined with the other words in the sentence. However, in vedic literature, it is possible to determine whether it is ‘subanta’ word or ‘tiṅanta’ word, just by listening to the word alone, using its accent (svara). This is made possible by the consistent adherence to the proper accent.

In kṛṣṇa yajur veda, first anuvākā of first praśnā in the second kāṇḍā of taittirīya saṁhitā, there is an information on the nature of sacrifice to be performed by the person, who wishes to have progeny and attain the animals used for the household purposes such as ox, horse, sheep etc… The person who wishes so should offer a hornless goat as oblation to a deity named prajāpati. If the hornless goat offered in this way has features similar to moustache and beard, the pleased prajāpati will bless the person with male offspring who can sport moustache and beard at the appropriate age. Since hornless goat is offered, prajāpati will bless the person with horse which is devoid of horn. Since the hornless goat has teeth only in the lower jaw, prajāpati will bless the person with animals having similar features such as cows and bulls. Since the goat has hoofs which are normally a feature for she-goat, he will bless the person with she-goats having hoofs. Since the goat has features of a goat, he will bless with goats as well. Here the word ’ajānām’ is used to mean the goat.

Veda proclaims as ‘yadajastadajānām’ (यदजस्तदजानाम्). Here this is split into the following words: yat (यत्), ajaḥ (अजः), tat (तत्) and ajānām (अजानाम्). Here the word ajānām is a subanta word, isn’t it? Hence, Veda recites this as follows: the first letter ‘a’ is chanted at a lower accent (anudāttam). The next letter ‘jā’ is chanted with the elevated accent (udāttam). The letter ‘nām’ is chanted with the elongated upper accent (dīrgasvaritam). (अ॒जानाम्, a̱jānā̎m)

Let us now come to seventh anuvākā of sixth praśnā in fourth kāṇḍā. This anuvākā contains the first 13 mantrās of the 36 poetic (ṛk) mantrās that are used in aśvastomīya homam performed for the holy glory of the horse. In that the sixth mantrā is:

आत्मानन्ते मनसाऽऽरादजानामवोदिवा पतयन्तं पतङ्गम्।

शिरो अपश्यं पथिभिस्सुगेभिः अरेणुभिर्जेहमानं पतत्रि।।

ātmānante manasā''rādajānāmavodivā patayantaṁ pataṅgam |

śiro apaśyaṁ pathibhissugebhiḥ areṇubhirjehamānaṁ patatri ||

For this, śrī Sāyaṇācāryar gives the following meaning: “I came closer to your ‘self’ with my mind and I came to know the same due to the proximity. Since you can go fast, you protect the person waging the war sitting on you, in the battlefield. You run very fast jumping from place to place, as if you are not touching the earth with your feet, like a bird. Since you go like this, the dust particles from the earth do not settle on you. Your travel is unaffected by the stones and the thorns. When you travel like this, your upright face is visible from a distance. I had a good look at the same. That appears like another bird flying above you.” Here, I came to know owing to the proximity, is indicated by the phrase ‘ārādajānām’ in the veda mantrā. This splits into two words ārāt and ajānām. Here, look at the ‘tiṅanta’ word ajānām. Here, all the letters in this word are chanted in lower accent (anudāttam). (अ॒जा॒ना॒म् - a̱jā̱nā̱m) Hence, the doubt of whether a word is ‘subanta’ word or ‘tiṅanta’ word is cleared as soon as we hear the word.

In Vedas, there is a rule that all the letters in tiṅanta word should be chanted in lower accent. However this is a general rule. There are many exceptions to this general rule. However, I will cover only one of them here. If all the exceptions have to be written, that itself will become a book. Hence, I have to stop with just one.

Please see the sentence, ‘whichever Rama took the bow, that Rama came here’. This sentence has two verbs, ‘took’ and ‘came’. Though ‘took’ is also a verb the sentence does not get completed there, isn’t it? The sentence gets completed only by the verb ‘came’. Let us consider the verbs like ‘took’ as auxiliary finite verbs. The verb that conveys the complete information and helps the sentence to be complete can be considered as the main finite verb. In these places, Veda will chant only the main finite verb with all the letters in lower accent. For the auxiliary finite verb, it changes the accent in any one letter. Veda cautions the listener through the different accent, that this is an auxiliary finite verb and the main verb is elsewhere to complete the sentence.

I will show an example in the Veda for this.

Please consider the vedic verse, ‘अर्यम्णे चरुन्निर्वपेद्यः कामयेत दानकामामे प्रजास्स्युरिति - aryamṇe carunnirvapedyaḥ kāmayeta dānakāmāme prajāssyuriti‘, occurring in the first pañcāśat of kṛṣṇa yajur veda, taittirīya saṁhitā, second kāṇḍā, third praśnā and fourth anuvākā.

The meaning of this verse as per the bhāṣyas is, “who wishes that others should donate him, should perform yajñam by offering cooked rice to the deity named   
Aryama.” In this, there are three verbs in the original verse: nirvapet (perform the yajñam by offering cooked rice), kāmayeta – (if a person so wishes), syuḥ (should be). In this, the word nirvapet has the verb vapet which is qualified by the preposition (upasargam) niḥ, and comes in the meaning that one should perform the yajñam in which the cooked rice is offered. In the common literature, it is customary to consider preposition and the verb together as a single word. However, in vedas, in pada pāṭham, the tradition is to show the preposition as a separate word. To show that it is a preposition, it is customary to join ‘iti’ to the word and chant. Hence, here the tradition is to chant this word as ‘niriti’ and ‘vapet’. This tradition also has lot of exceptions. Let us see this in detail. Since I did not understand the reason for the exceptions previously, I had split the verb abhiśocati to have two words ‘abhīti’ and ‘śocati’, without verifying with the pada pāṭham. However, here the pada pāṭham is different. The pada pāṭham chants this as a single word with ‘veṣṭanai’ as ‘abhiśocatītyabhi-śocati’, contrary to the general rule. I am attempting to explain this, to show, how Pādukā devī has shown mercy to make me understand the glory of pada pāṭham and enjoy the same, by forcing me to send the article to print without cross checking with the pada pāṭham, so that I can understand the reason for the exception here to the common rule, which was not clear to me previously.

To understand the blessing of Pādukā devī, first we should clearly understand the background for the variations in the accents for the verbs. In the vedic phrase shown by me above, out of the three verbs vapet, kāmayeta and syuḥ, the verbs vapet and syuḥ follows the tradition of chanting all the letters with the lower accent. However, the kāmayeta verb follows a variation in which, ‘kā’ is chanted with lower accent, ‘ma’ with elevated accent, ‘ta’ with the significant higher accent. The reason is because the verb kāmayeta is an auxiliary finite verb rather than main finite verb. Hence this variation. Let us keep this in mind.

Now, let us come to the exception for the general rule where prepositions are shown as a separate word; exception that is applicable in cases like abhiśocati.

Similar to this instance where the above is not split like abhīti and śocati, there are various instances where preposition is not split. I had this doubt previously itself. However, I had stopped with the thought that this needs to be understood at some point of time.

In the year 2000, during Māsi Aviṭṭam, the śatamāna mahtsavam (Centenary celebrations) of śrimadubhayave Madhurāntakam Svāmi was celebrated in a grand manner. During the last day of that ceremony, the ‘veilai pākku gṣṭi’ was there (the assembly in which the betel leaves and nuts are distributed to scholars amidst the chanting of vedas). During that time, śrimadubhayave Agnihtram Rāmānujācārya Svāmi had adorned the assembly. The great vedic scholars such as śrimadubhayave Mahāmahimpādyāya Nāvalpākkam Varada Tātācārya Svāmi, Pazhavġeri śaṭhakpācārya Svāmi, and Tirumalai īccambādi Kastūri Svāmi had also adorned that assembly.

śrimadubhayave Agnihtram Svāmi chose the 23rd anuvākā of fifth praśnā in the seventh kāṇḍā for the krama pārāyaṇam (a method of recital of Veda saṁhitā mantrās, where adjacent two words are joined and recited. For e.g., assume the sequence of words represented by numbers 1 to 6, the chanting will be done by joining the adjacent words as in 1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5 and 5-6). In this anuvākā, ten prose mantrās which are used for performing sannati homam which is a part of aśvamedha yajñam. The veda mantrās that were chanted by that grand assembly still lingers in my ear. sannati homa mantrās are formed by sweet assembly of words. Mere listening of those mantrās when chanted in right manner, by a scholarly group itself is a blissful experience.

In that, the first mantrā is ‘agnaye samanamat pṛthivyai samanamadyathā'gniḥ pṛthivyā samanamadevaṁ mahyaṁ bhadrās sannatayas sannamantu’ – ‘अग्नये समनमत् पृथिव्यै समनमद्यथाऽग्निः पृथिव्या समनमदेवं मह्यं भद्रास् सन्नतयस् सन्नमन्तु’.

In that group, I also participated, like how blind cows make sound following the other cows which make sound on return to their sheds. Agnihtram Svāmi started the krama pārāyaṇam by chanting the first two words as ‘agnaye sam’. Immediately, the other group chanted the next two words ‘samanamat’, followed by the group of Agnihtram Svāmi chanting ‘anamat pṛthivyai’, thus following a majestic flow of krama pāṭham. In the word samanamat, sam is the preposition and anamat is the verb. As per the general rule, these were chanted as two separate words. This continued further for the next sequence as ‘pṛthivyai sam’, ‘samanamat’, ‘anamatyathā’, ‘yathāgniḥ’ and ‘agniḥ pṛthivyā’. In that flow, I wished to chant the next sequence as ‘pṛthivya sam’. However, the group chanted the same as ‘pṛthivyā samanamat’; reciting ‘samanamat’ as a single word. The krama pāṭham which had taken the preposition ‘sam’ as a separate word in the first two instances, in accordance with the pada pāṭham, chanted the samanamat as a single word in the third instance as in ‘pṛthivyā samanamat’. Hence, the assembly chanted the next sequence as ‘samanamadevam’, followed by the veṣṭanam as ‘samanamaditisam-anamat’, as per the krama pārāyaṇam tradition. Here in the first two instances of samanamat, the verb ‘anamat’ followed the tradition of chanting all the letters in lower accent meant for chanting tiṅanta word. However, in the third instance of samanamat, the letter ‘a’ and ‘mat’ in the word anamat is chanted in elevated accent and ‘na’ in the significantly elevated accent. From this, we can infer that the third samanamat is an auxiliary finite verb.

If we dwell into the meaning, we can easily understand that this is an auxiliary finite verb.

This mantrā is a prayer stating: “the person who performs yajñam, does service to agni. He does service to earth. In which way, the agni thus pleased along with the earth helps the performer of the yajñam, the same way the auspicious things should come to me”. The third samanamat is preceded by yathā; ‘how agni helps the person along with earth’. In this place, ‘helps’ does not complete the sentence. Hence it is an auxiliary finite verb. So, the veda recites it in a different accent than how the tiṅanta word is recited.

I understood till this point then itself. However, the question of why this should be chanted as a single word stopped with the thought.

Why should we go this far? In the first mantrā of mṛgārā anuvākā, the vedic phrase is “yaṁ pāñcajanyaṁ bahavassamindhate” – “यं पाञ्चजन्यं बहवस्समिन्धते”. There we do not have two words, samiti and indhate in the pada pāṭham. There it is chanted in veṣṭanai form as a single word - samindhata iti sam-indhate. When I was explaining the meaning of that, I copied the word from pada pāṭham blindly, without giving much thought about this.

In the same way, in the fourth mantrā, in the phrase ‘yaḥ puṣṭāni sasṛjati trayāṇi’ – ‘यः पुष्टानि ससृजति त्रयाणि‘ also, pada pāṭham does not split the word as samiti and sṛjati. It chants this place as a single word with veṣṭanai – sasṛjatīti sam-sṛjati. I did not try to analyze the reason while following the pada pāṭham.

Similarly, in the sixth mantrā, in the place “mithuścarantamupayāti dūṣayan” – ‘मिथुश्चरन्तमुपयाति दूषयन्‘, the word upayātiis not split into upeti and yāti. Instead, it is shown as a single word with veṣṭanai as upayātītyupa-yāti. I never went into the reasoning in those places.

Pādukā devī wanted to give a shock treatment after observing these, so that I will get a chance to analyze and understand this. Hence, she made me to send the article with the split of abhi and śocati to the print, without verifying with the pada pāṭham. She blessed me by pointing out this mistake through Bangalore Sudarsanan.

I was nagged by this question of why there is a variation at these places from the general rule of showing preposition as a separate word.

I contacted my friend Ghanapāṭhi śrīmadubhayave Govindācārya Svāmi to get the same clarified from śrīmadubhayave Salakṣaṇa Ghanapāṭhi Veda Bhāṣyamaṇi Vaduvūr Deśikācārya Svāmi. He could not get the answer immediately owing to the old age of śrī Svāmi.

I asked Brahmaśrī Maṇi Drāviḍ śāstri. He sweetly replied, “It looks like that there is no real reason here. We have to surrender the traditional teaching”. However, my curious mind did not allow me to rest in peace.

At that time only, I remembered that śrīmadubhayave Mahāmahimpādyāya Padma Vibhūṣaṇa Aṇṇaṅgarācārya Svāmi had explained about the accents of tiṅanta words under the title ‘upākur vicāram’ in his research book ‘vedādhyayana sarvasvam’. I read through that article. In that, Svāmi has explained about this as well.

In saṁhitā, wherever preposition comes before auxiliary finite verb, without any word in between, the Vedic tradition is to chant this word with a different accent other than the accent meant for tiṅanta word, to caution the readers that the particular word is an auxiliary finite verb. Not only that. It is customary to combine the preposition with the tiṅanta word and chanted with veṣṭanai.

I passed on this information to Brahmaśrī Maṇi Drāviḍ śāstri. He was surprised and asked for the copy of this book. I sent a photocopy of the book to him. This is the play enacted by Pādukā devī for me to understand this acutely.

I gained the confidence of identifying these places to know whether it is a single word or has two words from now on, through this event.

Who cannot praise the glory of Veda, which does not deviate from the controlled framework?

Now, let us see the meaning of the mantrā ‘anu no'dyānumatiḥ’.