

Why is Pronunciation so Important in Sanskrit?

It is important to spend a little time to learn the basics of Sanskrit pronunciation. Reading Sanskrit words with no diacritical marks and pronouncing them as an English word, always results in poor pronunciation, and means we are creating a completely different energy.

Here are some examples:

1. In Sanskrit "mala" means impurity, urine or sweat, while "mālā" means a necklace of beads, garland, rosary.
2. In Sanskrit "ananda" means unhappiness while "ānanda" means great inner happiness or bliss.
3. In Sanskrit "kāma" has to do with the fulfilment of desires in the world while "karma" is the law of action and reaction.

Rhythm is built into the Sanskrit language, each syllable being either short (one beat) or long (2 beats). For example, "guru" is made of "gu" and "ru", each a short syllable, so it is 2 beats long. The word "āsana" is made of a long "aa", short "sa" and short "na", so it is pronounced more like "aasana" and is 2+1+1=4 beats long.

In Sanskrit is important to have the correct diacritical marks above or below certain letters, otherwise there is no way to know how to pronounce them. Each sound in the Sanskrit alphabet is made in a specific place within the mouth or throat.

There are 5 mouth positions, including guttural (back of the throat as in "k" or "g"), palatal (top of the palate as in "ch" or "j"), cerebral (the smooth, round area of hard palate behind and above the teeth as in "t" or "d"), dental (touching the back of the teeth, as in "t" or "d" or "n"), and labial (lips, as in "p" or "b" or "m").

Chanting a mantra, especially a single-seed "bija" mantra (eg. "Shrim" - for auspiciousness, beauty and prosperity) creates this specific energy in our energy field.

The mantra "Shrim" or "Shreem" is the seed sound for the energy of abundance and it invokes the Goddess Lakshmi.

The more the sound, intention, meaning and visualisation align, the more powerful the desired effect will be.

Chanting divine names of gods and goddesses invokes the energies they represent. If the words are mispronounced we may be invoking a completely different energy.

If you would like to learn the Sanskrit Alphabet I have produced a Sanskrit Mantra CD which is available through my website -

<http://www.simonheather.co.uk/pages/cds.php>

References

http://1stholistic.com/prayer/Hindu/hol_Hindu-mantra-four-goddess-mantra.htm

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