

Course Name: 'Introduction to Pāṇinian Grammar'
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Welcome. I welcome you all to this lecture, in the course 'Introduction to Pāṇinian grammar'. In this lecture, we shall study the linguistic background on which Pāṇini thrived, on which he constructed his own grammar. Let us take some information about Pāṇini himself. In this way, we shall be also studying the basics of the Pāṇinian grammar. What do we mean by Pāṇinian grammar, which is the part of the title of this course.

When we talk about Pāṇinian grammar, we obviously talk about the grammar of Sanskrit composed by Pāṇini. This grammar and its study develop into a long surviving tradition. This tradition continues to develop itself to evolve till today. New texts are getting composed, new thoughts are getting added, especially in the modern digital age that the advent of the digital technology also provides a very big platform for this particular tradition to take insight from and to develop itself and to evolve itself. So, this Pāṇinian tradition continues till today involving several scholars of high repute. These scholars have contributed in different ways, thereby they have enriched this grammar. All these phenomena, all these scholars, all the texts that have composed by these scholars in this particular tradition, all of them, they are referred to by the term Pāṇinian grammar. When we say, an introduction to Pāṇinian grammar, we are introducing such a distinguished system of thought which has evolved in the course of time for more than 2500 years at least by a conservative estimate.

Now let us look at Pāṇini's background. Let us study in brief the grammatical literature, that existed before Pāṇini. If we consider Pāṇini as a threshold, the grammatical literature of Sanskrit can be classified into following heads; the pre-Pāṇinian grammatical literature, the grammatical texts that were composed before Pāṇini, the grammatical thought that existed before Pāṇini, pre-Pāṇinian Sanskrit literature. This serves as a corpus for all those grammars that existed before Pāṇini and also for the Pāṇinian grammar itself.

This corpus can be considered as the classical stage of the development of Sanskrit language; obviously this has it is as its predecessors, the Vedic language which existed much before Pāṇini. Pāṇini knows at least ten grammarians who existed before him and who composed their texts. Pāṇini quotes ten grammarians in his 'Aṣṭādhyāyī'. Let us try to take note of those grammarians. Most of this literature does not survive. We do not have texts composed by most of these grammarians.

So, we have to rely on the references to them found in the 'Aṣṭādhyāyī' composed by Pāṇini. Then, we have the post Pāṇinian grammatical literature which is a very long tradition and as I said before, this post Pāṇinian grammatical literature and its tradition survives even till today and we see lots of new trends coming in new thoughts, new texts getting added to this particular long tradition.

This can be also divided into two parts; the post Pāṇinian grammatical tradition starting from 'Kātyāyana' onwards up to the 18th century and then from 18th century onwards, post Pāṇinian grammatical tradition. Apart from the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition, we also have non-Pāṇinian grammatical literature available to us which also helps us understand and study Sanskrit as a language through these different grammars. There are at least eleven known schools of non-Pāṇinian grammatical traditions.

In this lecture, we shall study the first three bullets presented on this particular slide; namely the pre-Pāṇinian grammatical literature, the pre-Pāṇinian Sanskrit literature or corpus and the linguistic thought that existed and also the grammarians known to Pāṇini. We will do the study of the post Pāṇinian grammatical literature and the non-Pāṇinian grammatical literature in the next lecture. Let us first try to understand who was Pāṇini.

Not much historical information is available about the person Pāṇini which is not so very surprising about the personalities in the Indian history. There are however some stories available in various forms. He is believed to have lived in a place called 'Śalātura'.

According to Belvalkar, this is believed to be modern Lahaur in the Yusufzai valley in the North-Western Frontier Province. Pāṇini is believed to have lived in an around an era that can be bracketed by these figures 350 BCE up to 600 BCE going backwards. The modern research has brought the date in advance to 350 BCE.

Pāṇini is also referred to as 'Dākṣīputra', the son of 'Dākṣī' in the 'Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣya' composed by the great 'Patañjali'. According to 'Kathāsaritsāgara', Pāṇini studied at the house of the teacher 'Upādhyāya Varṣa' together with 'Kātyāyana', 'Vyāḍi' and 'Indradatta'. A story in the 'Pañcatantra' records that Pāṇini was killed by a tiger when he composed his last sūtra 'a a'. This brings us to an important question namely; what is a 'sūtra'? Pāṇinian grammar is composed of approximately 4000 sūtras as we have seen before.

What is this 'sūtra'? 'Sūtra' literally means a thread; a thread in which for example, flowers are woven, material is woven; just as in the 'Bhagavadgīta', we find the reference, "mayi sarvamidam protaṁ sūtre maṅgaṇā iva". Similarly, a thread in which linguistic usage is woven thereby,

explained. So, what is a 'sūtra'? This is how 'sūtra' is defined, "svalpākṣaram asandigdham sāravad viśvatomukham, astobham anavadyam ca sūtram sūtravido viduḥ".

We shall study this definition later on, but right now in brief this definition can still be explained and it is like this, 'svalpākṣaram', a 'sūtra' should have minimum number of letters in it, should not be too lengthy; 'asandigdha', it should not have any ambiguity; 'sāravat' should be of essence; 'viśvatomukham' should have a universal application; 'astobham' should be clear and 'anavadyam' without any fault. All these are the qualities of a 'sūtra'. Pāṇinian grammar, the core of it 'Aṣṭādhyāyī' is composed of such 'sūtras'. Now, let us take a look at the pre-Pāṇinian Sanskrit literature. We have Vedic literature to begin with, four Vedas with four parts namely, 'Samhitā', 'Brāhmaṇa', 'Āraṇyaka', and 'Upaniṣad'.

Then there is epic literature; 'Rāmāyaṇa', 'Māhābhārata'. Then, there are various other kinds of literature related to the Vedas, related to the 'karmakāṇḍa' which is also prevalent. Apart from that there is classical literature which is almost lost to us in the course of time, but this is what existed before Pāṇini, out of which the classical literature that is almost lost seems to be the corpus on which the grammar of Pāṇini is composed. In addition, part of the Vedic literature also seems to form the corpus.

Some modern researchers have also been able to specify which is this part of the Vedic literature. The Sanskrit language found in the epics 'Rāmāyaṇa' and 'Māhābhārata' continues in the language that is described by Pāṇini in his grammar; however, there are certain differences which are not noted in the grammar of Pāṇini.

Generally, 'Rāmāyaṇa' and 'Māhābhārata', they are considered pre-Pāṇinian and the usages found in these two epics are considered, are described sometimes as 'ārṣa' not conforming to the grammatical rules mentioned in Pāṇini's grammar. In the pre-Pāṇinian grammatical literature, we do find thoughts about language, mainly in the Vedic literature to begin with.

There are thoughts about grammar; there are thoughts about grammatical categories; there are lexicon available in the form of 'Nighaṇṭus', an explanations of words in the 'Nighaṇṭus'. The semantic explanation which is provided in the celebrated text called 'Nirukta', which is also considered to be one of the six limbs of the Veda, 'Vedāṅg', the semantic explanation of words collected in 'Nighaṇṭus'.

Let us look at the thoughts about language found in the Vedas in brief. For example, R̥gveda 10.125 'Vāgambhṛṇī sūkta', this 'sūkta' praises speech, speech as goddess. This is also interpreted

as a primordial speech by some philosophical schools. This is an important reference. We also find the sentence, "tām mā devā vyadadhuḥ purutrā bhūristhātrām bhūryāveśayantīm" gods dispersed her at different places, so she became all pervading.

In another reference, Ṛigveda 10.71, appearance of speech is described. In Ṛigveda 8.100, we find the statement, "devīm vācam ajanayanta devāḥ", the gods created the goddess speech. Similarly, apart from such references to speech found in the 'Veda' itself, we also find thoughts about grammar. For example, in 'Taittirīya saṁhitā', we find this particular statement "tām indro madhyato'vākarot", part of the story where Indra is being asked by gods to cut the indivisible speech into parts for better understanding and communication obviously and Indra accepts this task and cuts the speech from the middle. Cutting the speech from the middle is considered to be the grammatical activity in essence.

So an 'avyākṛta' speech in divisible speech is explained, is cut 'vyākṛta', cut into parts. These parts are further segmented into some more parts. This is how we find the term 'vyākaraṇa' and its base as far as the Vedic literature is concerned, 'avyākṛta' and 'vyākṛta'. The term 'vyākaraṇa' is formed from the verbal root 'kṛ' together with the two preverbs, 'vi' and 'ā', primarily indicating the activity of segmenting and indivisible speech into parts.

We also find that there are references in the Vedic literature about the grammatical categories; for example, in the 'Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa' of the 'Atharvaveda', we find mentions like 'dhātu', 'pratyaya', 'prātipadika', 'vibhakti', etcetera. These technical terms which are used as core terms in describing the grammar of Sanskrit also by Pāṇini; we find reference to them in the 'Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa'. In the 'Muṇḍakopaniṣad', we also find mention of 'Śikṣā' the phonetics, 'Nirukt' the semantic explanation of words found in the 'Nighaṇṭus' primarily and 'vyākaraṇa' all these they are mentioned as 'aparāvidyā' as against the 'parāvidyā' which is the knowledge of the self.

An important mention must be made of 'padapāṭha', which is a very important activity in this direction of segmenting one indivisible speech into its constituents, into the components. 'Padapāṭha' renders the continuous utterance in the form of 'saṁhitā' into its components, in terms of words or 'pada'. What 'padapāṭha' does is that it dissolves the 'sandhi'. It dissolves the accent of the sentence and places the 'padas' into their own form.

So each 'pada' is separated from the sentential boundaries and as a result, the sentential effects are also removed. Similarly, the sentential accents are also removed and the 'pada' accents are shown in most of the cases. What this presupposes is quite a lot of grammatical knowledge without which this activity cannot come into being.

So 'padapāṭha' does require quite a lot of grammatical knowledge. 'Padapāṭha' also shows the segments within the 'padas'; for example, the compounds are shown with some mark indicating the components of the compound. Once again it can be said that 'padapāṭha' displays the existence of quite a lot of grammatical knowledge at its time.

Here is an example. This is the example of Ṛigveda 1.1.1, "agnimīle purohitam yajñasya devamṛtvijam, hotāram ratnadhātamam" and I have recited it for you without accent marks just to give you an idea as to what 'padapāṭha' would do.

Now on the left-hand side, you have the 'samhitāpāṭha' and on the right-hand side, you have the 'padapāṭha'. On the left-hand side, the letters which are marked in red color; they are treated separately as far as the 'padapāṭha' is concerned.

So, if we have 'agnimīle' join together written together, they will be separated, because there are two 'padas' over here. The first one is 'agnim'. 'Agnim' is written separately followed by a vertical bar indicating the boundary of the 'pada', 'agnim' after which comes the word 'īle', the 'pada', 'īle' and then appears another vertical bar indicating the boundary. So, 'agnimīle' is separated as 'agnim' and 'īle'. 'Agnimīle' is the sentential effect. This effect is removed; the boundaries are removed and 'padas' are separated as 'agnim' and 'īle'.

Similarly, 'purohitam' which is one word and if you notice that there is this dot on top of this letter 'ta' which is generally recognized as an 'anusvāra'. Now, this when written in the 'padapāṭha', this will be written considering this 'pada' as an independent unit with the boundary marked by the vertical bar after it. Therefore, this 'ta' is followed by 'm' also written like consonant 'm' in the written form in the 'padapāṭha'.

We also notice that the two components of this compounded word namely 'puraḥ' and 'hitam' are also separated by this particular symbol also known as 'avagraha' in the tradition. Similarly, 'devamṛtvijam', once again this sentential effect is removed and we have 'devam' and 'ṛtvijam' separated. Similarly, 'ratnadhātamam', this is also segmented and the constituents or the components are shown with an 'avagraha'. This is what the 'padapāṭha' does to the 'samhitā' available of the Veda. As you can see this is not possible without the grammatical knowledge.

Similarly, if the knowledge of accent is appended, we see that the accent marks that are shown over here differ in the 'padapāṭha'. This is also done with the knowledge of grammar. Therefore,

'padapāṭha', once again we can say that 'padapāṭha' does require, does assume quite a lot of grammatical knowledge and so Pāṇinian grammar pre-Pāṇinian grammar has 'padapāṭha' as a predecessor. There is a discussion in the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition about this fact, whether the 'padapāṭha' preceded Pāṇini or whether Pāṇini precedes the 'padapāṭha'.

It is generally accepted that it is the 'padapāṭha' which precedes the Pāṇinian grammar. This therefore, forms the background of Pāṇinian grammar. 'Padapāṭha' thus, can be considered as the first commentary on the Veda. Another important text called 'Nirukta' is supposed to have existed before Pāṇini whose date can be roughly stated as roughly 700 to 500 BCE.

As we said, this is a commentary on the 'Nighaṇṭu' which provides an explanation of the meanings of words. It is a semantic explanation. There are certain principles which are laid down for such an explanation and it is also stated that this explanation compliments the 'vyākaraṇa' or the grammatical activity. 'Nirukta' says "tadidaṁ vidyāsthānaṁ vyākaraṇasya kārtsnyam". The 'Nirukta' explanation complements the grammatical activity. 'Nirukta' therefore, can be also said to form the background of Pāṇinian grammar.

Now, let us also look at the ten grammarians mentioned by Pāṇini in his 'Aṣṭādhyāyī'. They survived, they existed before Pāṇini. However, their texts have not survived. This is a very sad state of affairs. One of the grammarians mentioned by Pāṇini is 'Śākalya' and here are the three instances where Pāṇini mentions 'Śākalya', 1.1.16 'saṁbudhau śākalasyetāvnārṣe', 8.3.19 'lopaḥ śākalyasya' and 8.4.51 'sarvatra śākalyasya'.

'Śākalya' is traditionally credited to be the author of the 'padapāṭha' of the 'Ṛigveda', 'Śākalya'. Then, we have 'Śākaṭāyana' mentioned by Pāṇini in these places, 3.4.111 'laṅḥ śākaṭāyanasyaiva', 8.3.18 'vyorlaghuprayatnataṛḥ śākaṭāyanasyaiva' and 8.4.50 'triprabhṛtiṣu śākaṭāyanasya'. Nothing more is known about 'Śākaṭāyana' except a few references also found in the text of 'Nirukta' where some derogatory remark is also passed against 'Śākaṭāyana' and it is believed that 'Śākaṭāyana' insists on deriving each and every noun from a verbal root, "sarvaṁ nāma dhātujam āha śakaṭasya ca tokam".

Then we also have reference to 'Senaka', 5.4.112 'gireśca senakasya'; also to Āpiśali, in the 'sūtra' 6.1.98 'vā supyāpiśaleḥ'. 'Sphoṭāyana' 6.1.123 'avaṅ sphoṭāyanasya'. This word 'Sphoṭāyana' is explained to be derived from the word 'Sphoṭa'. Some scholars argued, therefore that the 'Sphoṭa' theory which was developed by 'Bhartṛhari' was probably existent at the time of this scholar.

We can safely say that sphotayana is the name of a grammarian who has observed this particular phenomenon which is also observed by Pāṇini in 6.1.123 'avañ sphotāyanasya'. 'Cākṛavarmaṇa' is noted in the 'sūtra' 6.1.126 'Cākṛavarmaṇasya'. 'Gālava' whose name is mentioned in the following 'sūtras', 6.3.60 'iko hrasvo'nyo gālavasya', 7.1.74 'ṛṭīyādiṣu bhāṣitapuṃskam puṃvad gālavasya, 7.3.99 'aḍgārgyagālavayoḥ' and 8.4.66

'nodāttasvaritodayamagārgyakāśyapagālavānām'. Also, 'Gārgya' mentioned in 7.3.99 'aḍgārgyagālavayoḥ', 8.3.20 'oto gārgyasya' and 8.4.66 'nodāttasvaritodayamagārgyakāśyapagālavānām'.

'Bhāradvāja' is mentioned in 7.2.63 'ṛto bhāradvājasya' and 'Kāśyapa' mentioned in 8.4.66 'nodāttasvaritodayamagārgyakāśyapagālavānām'. In this way, we note the names of ten grammarians appearing in the text of 'Aṣṭādhyāyī' in which certain linguistic phenomena are explained by these different grammarians in a particular manner. We also note that the later Pāṇinian grammatical tradition interprets the mention of these grammarians as an option.

The later Pāṇinian grammatical tradition says that the fact that Pāṇini mentions the names of these grammarians indicates that he reserves his own independent opinion which does not match with that of these grammarians which results in the optional description. According to Pāṇini, one particular description is what is found in the linguistic usage and according to these grammarians, certain other kind of description finds its match in the actual usage. Thereby, there is variance in the usage which is noted down by the grammarians, Pāṇini and other grammarians.

To summarize, we can say that Pāṇini inherited a long tradition of grammatical activity. This was his background. This grammatical activity existed right from the Vedic period in which speech as a pre speech as pre-module deity (Refer Time: 35:42) was discussed, was mentioned. Also, was mentioned the grammatical activity and the principles of linguistic analysis that were laid down in some form before him. He thus inherited the grammatical activity as well as grammars of Sanskrit that preceded him and he mentions the ten grammarians.

Pāṇini is believed to have refined those grammars and those principles. We also observe that the grammarians who followed who followed him followed suit when they refine his own grammar. Now, in the next lecture we shall study the post-Pāṇinian grammatical literature.

Thank you for your patience.