

## Common Sanskrit Technical Terms

Source: <http://www.advaita.org.uk/sanskrit.htm>

In square brackets is ITRANS code  
(Note: the long vowels are capitalised)

[A more extended dictionary is available for download at  
<http://sanskritdocuments.org/dict/dictall.pdf>]

### A

- a [a] – as a prefix to another word, it changes it into the negative. e.g. vidya - knowledge, avidya - ignorance.
- abhasa [AbhAsa] – semblance, phantom, fallacious appearance. Shankara's teaching metaphor of the white crystal taking on the color of adjacent objects is called AbhAsa vAda - the argument of appearance.
- abhava [abhAva] – non-existence, absence. See anupalabdhi.
- abhimana [abhimAna] – self-conceit, pride; conception (esp. an erroneous one regarding one's self).
- abhivyakti [abhivyakti´] – manifestation; distinction. (abhivyakta - manifest, evident, distinct.)
- abhyasa [abhyAsa] – exercise, discipline; in Raja Yoga, this refers to "the (repeated) effort of the mind to remain in its unmodified condition of purity (sattva)." Ramana Maharshi sometimes refers to a spiritual aspirant as an abhyAsi - i.e. one who practices (uninterruptedly).
- acharya [AchArya] – a spiritual guide or teacher. See Shankaracharya.
- achintya [achintya] – inconceivable or beyond thought.
- adhama [adhama] – lowest, vilest, worst.
- adhara [AdhAra] – support, prop, sta, substratum.
- adheya [Adheya] – assigned, attributed, contained; the attributes in the AdhAra substratum.
- adhibhautika [adhibhautika] – (resulting) from such things as wars, disagreements, natural disasters. adhi means from, from the presence; bhautika means anything elemental or material.
- adhidaivika [adhidaivika] – (resulting) from the presence of divine or supernatural forces. adhi means from, from the presence; daivika is the adjective from deva (god) meaning coming from the gods, divine.
- adhikarana [adhikaraNa] – (in philosophy) a substratum; relationship of words in a sentence (e.g. adjective and substantive, subject and predicate).
- adhikari [adhikArin or adhikArI] – a seeker who is mentally prepared (see chatuShTaya sampatti) and therefore ready to receive the final teaching from the guru; literally "possessing authority, entitled to, fit for." adhikAra effectively means 'eligibility'.
- adhisthana [adhiShThAna] – substratum; literally basis, support, that upon which something rests.
- adhyaropa [adhyAropa] – erroneously attributing one thing to another.
- adhyaropa-apavada [adhyAropa apavAda] – One of the principal methods of teaching Advaita, whereby an attribute is applied to brahman initially (and erroneously - hence

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- adhyAropa) but is later taken back, once the point has been understood. apavAda means denial or contradiction. An example would be the teaching of the kosha-s.
- adhyasa [adhyAsa] – used to refer to the "mistake" that we make when we "superimpose" a false appearance upon the reality or mix up the real and the unreal. The classical example is when we see a snake instead of a rope, which is used as a metaphor for seeing the world of objects instead of the reality of the Self. This concept is fundamental to Advaita and Shankara devotes a separate section to it at the beginning of his commentary on the Brahmasutra.
- adhyatmika [adhyAtmika] – resulting from self, i.e. problems such as pain and mental suffering. adhi means from, from the presence; Atmika means relating to self.
- adhyaya [adhyAya] – lesson, lecture or chapter.
- adi [Adi] – beginning, commencement. Thus sa Adi = sAdi = with a beginning; a(n) Adi = anAdi = without any beginning, beginningless.
- adrishta [adRRiShTa] – unseen, imperceptible, unforeseen, invisible, unobserved, unknown.
- advaita [advaita] – not (a) two (dvaita); non-dual philosophy. (Adjective - advitlya - unique, without a second.)
- advaya [advaya] – not two, without a second, unique; identity (esp. of brahman and Atman or jagat); advayam is non-duality.
- agama [Agama] – acquisition of knowledge, science; traditional doctrine; anything handed down and fixed by tradition; also used as equivalent to shabda, the pramANA of the scriptures.
- agamin [AgAmin] – That type of sanskara which is generated in reaction to current situations and which will not bear fruit until sometime in the future. It literally means 'impending', 'approaching' or 'coming'. Also called kriyamANA, which means 'being done'. See prarabdha, sanchita, sanskara.
- agni [agni] – fire; the God of fire.
- agocara [agochara] – (literally) imperceptible by the senses but treated as anything that is unavailable to any pramANA other than shabda (i.e. scriptures).
- agrahana [agrahaNa] – non-comprehension or non-perception.
- agrahya [agrAhya] – inconceivable, inadmissible.
- aham [aham] – I.
- aham vritti [aham vRRitti] – the thought "I am" as opposed to thoughts about objects, feelings etc. - idam vritti. See vritti.
- ahankara [ahaMkAra] – the making, kara ( kAra), of the utterance "I," aham ( aham) - this is the equivalent of what we would call the "ego" but specifically refers to the identification or attachment of our true Self with something else, usually the body or mind but can be much more specific e.g. I am a teacher, I am a woman. It is one of the "organs" of the mind in classical Advaita - see antahkarana.
- ahimsa [ahiMsA] – not injuring anything (one of the yama-s).
- aikya [aikya] – unity, oneness; in Advaita specifically the identity of Atman and brahman.
- aishvarya [aishvarya] – the state of being a mighty lord, sovereignty, power; super-human power.
- ajati [ajAti] – no or not; jAti - creation; the principle that the world and everything in it,

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including these mind-body appearances were never created or 'brought into existence'. Most clearly stated by Gaudapada in his karika on the Mandukya Upanishad. jAta is the adjective, meaning born, brought into existence. The theory that there has never been any creation is called either ajAta vAda or ajAti vAda.

ajnana [aj~nAna] – (spiritual) ignorance. See jnana. An aj~nAnI is one who is not enlightened, i.e. still (spiritually) ignorant.

akandakara vritti [akhaNDaAkAra vRRitti] – the mental 'occurrence' which effectively causes enlightenment. This is the vRRitti (thought modification) in the form of (AkAra) the formless or undivided (akhaNDa).

akasha [AkAsha] – space, ether or sky; one of the five elements in the Upanishads, the subtle fluid supposed to pervade the universe. Associated with sound and hearing.

akrita [akRRitA] – not made or created, natural tendency; natural traits of some things or objects in creation, e.g. water flowing downwards.

akshara [akShara] – imperishable, unchangeable.

alatahanti [alAtashAnti] – the fourth topic in gauDapAda's kArikA on the mANDUkya upaniShad - "On the Quenching of the firebrand." alAta is a firebrand or coal; shAnti is "peace."

alpaprana [alpaprANa] – In the Sanskrit alphabet, describes a consonant that is sounded without any additional expelling of air. It means "with little breath." Specifically, it is used for those consonants on the 1 st and 3 rd rows of the main groups, namely k, ch, T, t, p and g, j, D, d, b.

amsha [aMsha] – part or portion.

amurta [amUrta] – unmanifest, formless, shapeless.

anadi [anAdi] – without any beginning, often used to refer to 'ignorance'.

ananda [Ananda] – "true" happiness; usually called "bliss" to differentiate it from the transient variety that always alternates with pain or misery. It is an aspect of our true nature and is often combined with the other elements of our real nature - sat and chit - into a single word, satchidananda. See sat, chit and satchidananda.

anandamayakosha [Anandamayakosha] – the sheath made of bliss (one of the "five Coverings" that surround our true essence).

ananta [ananta] – eternal, without end.

anatman [anAtman] – something other than spirit or soul (not Self or atman); perceptible world. See atman.

anichcha [anichChA] – without desire. See prArabdha.

anirvachaniya [anirvachanIya] – not able to be categorized; literally: unutterable, indescribable, not to be mentioned. Used to describe nature of reality etc.

anitya / anityatva [anitya / anityatva] – transient /transient or limited existence (mortality).

ankura [a~Nkura] – sprout, shoot. (As opposed to blja - seed. Seed is used as metaphor for cause; sprout for effect.)

annamayakosha [annamayakosha] – the sheath made of food, anna. (One of the "five Coverings" that surround our true essence).

anta [anta] – end, conclusion, death etc.

antahkarana [antaHkaraNa] – used to refer to the overall "organ" of mind; the seat of thought and feeling. It derives from antar - within, interior - and karaNa, which means

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- "instrument" or sense-organ (an alternative for indriya). It consists of a number of separate functions - see manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara.
- antaranga [antara~Nga] – essential to, internal, interior as opposed to bahira~Nga, external or worldly (in relation to spiritual disciplines).
- antaryAmin [antaryAmin] – the soul, "internal ruler."
- antahsta [antaHsthA ] – the Sanskrit term for the "semi-vowels": y, r, l, v. These are formed by combination of i, RRi, LLi and u, respectively with the vowel a. The word literally means "stand between."
- anubhava [anubhava] – perception, understanding, experience; knowledge derived from personal observation. Intuition as (opposed to reasoning - yukti).
- anubhuti [anubhUti] – knowledge gained by means of the pramANa-s.
- anugraha [anugraha] – grace; literally showing favor or kindness, conferring benefits.
- anumAna [anumAna] – inference (in logic); one of the 6 means of obtaining knowledge. See pramana.
- anunasika [anunAsika] – in the Sanskrit language: sounded through the nose, nasal.
- anupalabधि [anupalabधि] – non-perception, non-recognition; one of the 6 means of obtaining knowledge. See pramana.
- anusvara [anusvAra] – (Sanskrit language) This literally means "after sound." It is represented as aM but is not actually a letter and does not occur on its own. It changes the sound of a letter, causing the associated vowel to be sounded through the nose. In ITRANS, it is represented by M or .n and in Romanised transliteration by a dot, above or below the preceding consonant. The precise nature of the sound is determined by the consonant that follows. It will take on the sound of the anunAsika in the same group as this consonant. e.g. in saMdhi, the sound will be that of n while in shaMkara, it will be that of ~N.
- anvaya-vyatireka [anvaya vyatireka] – a method in logic for determining the truth of something. For example, is the clay or the pot real? anvaya establishes the logical connection that "when the pot is, the clay is." vyatireka establishes the logical discontinuity that "when the pot is not, the clay is." Therefore the clay is satya, the pot is mithyA. anvaya means "connection, association"; vyatireka means "distinction, separateness, exclusion."
- anyata [anyathA] – falsely, erroneously; otherwise.
- anyonya ashyraya [anyonya ashyraya] – mutual dependence in a "cause-effect" situation such as the chicken and egg example.
- ap [ap] – water - one of the five elements or pa~nchabhUta. Associated with taste.
- apana [apana] – one of the five "vital airs," relating to excretion. More generally refers to rejection of irrelevant material gained from perception etc. and to the formation of limited views.
- apara [apara] – 1) inferior, lower (opposite of para) but may also be 2) having nothing beyond or after; having no rival or superior. Context will hopefully clarify which meaning to use!
- aparigraha [aparigraha] – renouncing of all possessions. One of the five yama-s in Raja yoga.
- aparoksha [aparokSha] – immediate (relating to gaining of knowledge, i.e. does not require application of reason).

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- aparokshanubhuti [apArokShAnubhUti] – one of the works attributed to Shankara. The word means "knowledge acquired directly by one of the valid pramANa-s."
- apaurusheya [apauruSheya] – literally "not coming from men"; used to refer to the shruti - scriptural texts passed on verbatim from generation to generation since their original observation by realised sages. See shruti.
- apavada [apavAda] – denial, refutation, contradiction. See adhyAropa-apavAda for teaching method of advaita.
- aprimeya [aprimeya] – immeasurable, unlimited, unfathomable. (E.g. that 'I know that I exist' is aprimeya - I do not need any pramANa to tell me this.)
- apritak [apRRithak] – inseparable; together with, collectively.
- apta-vakya [Apta vAkya] – something reported by another in whom one has faith. Literally "a correct sentence." Apta means "respected, trustworthy"; vAkya means "statement, declaration."
- arambha [Arambha] – literally "beginning, commencement" but encountered in the context of a material cause in which the effect is clearly distinguishable from its cause but has not actually been transformed, e.g. cloth made from cotton as opposed to butter made from milk.
- arambha vada [Arambha vAda] – the theory that the world (i.e. universe) is the result of the coming together of atoms.
- arankyaka [AraNkyaka] – a class of religious or philosophical writings closely connected with the brahmaNa-s and so-called because they were written or studied in the forest.
- artha [artha] – acquisition of wealth. One of the four puruShArtha-s. See purushartha.
- arthapatti [arthApatti] – inference from circumstances, presumption ; one of the 6 means of obtaining knowledge. See pramana.
- asadarana [asAdhAraNa] – not common, special, specific; quite uncommon, extraordinary. An asAdhAraNa lakShaNa is an attribute that clearly differentiates one object from another.
- asana [Asana] – sitting in special (and peculiar) postures for long periods supposedly in order to gain spiritual benefit. One of the eight steps of Raja yoga.
- asanga [asa~Nga] – relationless. c.f. satsa~Nga.
- asat [asat] – non-existent. See sat.
- asatkarya vada [asatkArya vAda] – the doctrine which denies that the effect pre-exists in the cause (usually in reference to the creation).
- asha [AshA] – wish, desire, hope, expectation; aspiration.
- ashrama [Ashrama] – generic term for one of the four "stages" in the life of a Hindu brahmin, viz. brahmacharya, gRRihastha, saMnyAsa, vanaprastha.
- ashraya [Ashraya] – locus.
- ashtanga [aShTA~Nga] – consisting of eight parts, as in the aShTA~Nga yoga of Patanjali.
- asparsha [asparsha] – intangible, touchless; name given to the "contentless" yoga of Gaudapada in the Mandukya Upanishad.
- Astavakra [aShTAvakra] – the eponymous Sage of the Astavakra Gita (or Samhita). The word literally means "twisted" (vakra) in "eight" (aShTan) ways. Astavakra was so

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called because he was born severely deformed after being cursed in the womb by his father (because the unborn child had criticised him for making mistakes whilst reading the scriptures!). (Later in life, after he had secured his father's release through defeating the court philosopher in debate, his father blessed him and, after swimming in a sacred river, he was cured.) See gita, samhita.

asteya [asteya] – not stealing. One of the five yama-s in Raja yoga.

asti [asti] – existent, it exists.

astika [Astika] – literally "there is or exists"; used to refer to one who believes in the existence of God or, more specifically, one who defers to the authority of the Vedas. See nastika, veda.

asura [asura] – demon, spirit, opponent of the gods.

atah [ataH] – hence, therefore.

atha [atha] – now, then therefore; often used to express the sense of an auspicious beginning e.g. to reading a key verse of scripture.

atita [atIta] – beyond (e.g. time)

atma or atman [Atma or Atman] – the Self. Usually used to refer to one's true (individual) nature or consciousness but Advaita tells us that there is no such thing as an 'individual' and that this atman is the same as the universal Consciousness, Brahman. see also jiva.

atmabodha [Atmabodha] – knowledge of Self or supreme spirit; a book attributed to Shankara.

atmavichara [AtmavichAra] – vichAra in this context means reflection or examination upon the Atman, the Self. See atman.

atmavid] – Atmavid] – someone who knows the truth of Atman, as opposed to a mantravid, someone who just knows the 'magical formulae'.

avacheda-vada [avachCheda vAda] – theory that the Self is limited by ignorance in the forms of upAdhi-s. avachCheda literally means "cut-off." See upadhi.

avantara [avAntara] – intermediate.

avarana [AvaraNa] – the veiling power of mAyA. In the rope-snake metaphor, this power prevents us from seeing the reality of the rope. See maya, vikshepa.

avastha [avasthA] – state; literally "to stay, abide, exist, remain or continue doing (anything)." In Advaita, it is most frequently encountered as avasthA traya - the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

avidya [avidyA] – ignorance (in a spiritual sense) i.e. that which prevents us from realizing the Self. See also maya.

avinabhava [avinAbhAva] – a necessary connection of one thing with another; inherent and essential character.

avivada [avivAda] – agreed, not disputed; beyond all disputation.

avrita [AvRRita] – covered or concealed.

avyakta [avyakta] – unmanifest, imperceptible, invisible; the universal spirit (paramAtman).

avyapadeshya [avyapadeshya] – not to be defined, indescribable.

B

badha [bAdha] – sublation or subtration. This is the process by which an accepted point

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of view or understanding is superseded by a totally different one when some new information is received. An example is seeing a lake in the desert and then realising that it is only a mirage. The adjective is bAdhita, meaning negated, contradictory, absurd, false.

bahiranga [bahira~Nga] – exterior, external, worldly as opposed to inner (antara~Nga), (in relation to spiritual disciplines).

bala [bala [strength (of mind), power.

bandha / bandhana [bandha bandhana] – bondage, attachment to the world.

bhaga tyaga lakshana [bhAga tyAga lakShaNa] – technique used by scriptures to point to aspects that cannot be explained directly in words. The oneness that is pointed to (lakShaNa) is understood by "giving up" (tyAga) the contradictory parts (bhAga). An example would be in the apparent contradiction of the jIva being "created" while Ishvara is the "creator." Both are given up in order to recognize their identity as brahman.

Bhagavad [bhagavat] – generic term for one of the four "stages" in the life of a Hindu brahmin, viz. brahmacharya, gRRihastha, saMnyAsa, vanaprastha.

Bhagavad Gita [bhagavadgItA] – the scriptural text forming part of the Hindu epic, the mahAbhArata. It is a dialogue between Krishna, the charioteer/God, representing the Self and the warrior Arjuna, representing you and me, on the battlefield of Kurukshetra prior to the commencement of battle. The scripture is regarded as smRRiti. See Bhagavad, smriti.

bhaj [bhaj] – to pursue, practice, cultivate or seek. (As in the work attributed to Shankara - bhaja govindam, "Practice, Govinda.")

bhakta [bhakta] – one who practices bhakti yoga. See bhakti yoga.

bhakti [bhakti] – devotion or worship as a means to enlightenment. See also karma and jnana.

bhamiti [bhAmiti] – literally "lustrous"; name of one of the two schools of Advaita, also called the vAcaspati school, after the philosopher vAcaspati mishra. The other school is the vivaraNa school.

Bhartihari [bhartRRihari] – poet and grammarian in 7th century AD; composer of vAkyapadIya.

bhashya [bhAShya] – explanatory work, exposition or commentary on some other scriptural document. Thus Shankara, for example, has written bhAShya-s on a number of Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutra.

bhasyakara [bhASyakAra] – various commentators (on a philosophy).

bhati [bhAti] – evidence, perception, knowledge.

bhava [bhAva] – condition or state of body or mind.

bhavana [bhAvana] – reflection, contemplation.

bhavarupa [bhAvarUpa] – really existing, real, actual.

bhavat [bhavat] – being, present.

bhavishya [bhaviShya] – to be about to become or come to pass, future, imminent.

bheda [bedha] – separation, distinction, division, difference; change, modification. There are three types of difference: different family or species (vijAti), difference within the family (sajAti) and internal difference (svagata).

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- bhoga [bhoga] – enjoyment, experiencing, feeling.
- bhoktri [bhoktRRi] – one who enjoys (or eats), an experiencer or feeler.
- bhrama [bhrama] – confusion, perplexity, mistake (N.B. Not to be confused with brahma or brahman!).
- bhranti [bhrAnti] – perplexity, confusion, error, false opinion.
- Bhuma [bhUmA] – the supreme reality, Brahman (used in the Chandogya Upanishad); literally the aggregate of all existing things (plural). bhUman, the singular noun, means abundance, plenty, wealth.
- bhuta [bhUta] – (noun) element (e.g. fire or water). (adj.) past (something that actually happened).
- bija [bIja] – seed, germ, primary cause.
- bodha [bodha] – knowing, understanding, as in the classic work attributed to Shankara - 'Atmabodha', knowledge of Atman.
- Brahma [brahma] – God as the creator of the universe in Hindu mythology (the other key ones in the 'trinity' are Vishnu, viShNu, the preserver and Shiva, shiva, the destroyer). N.B. Not to be confused with Brahman!
- Brahma Sutra [brahmasUtra] – a book (in sutra form, which is terse verse!) by Vyasa. This book is the best known of the third accepted source of knowledge (nyaya prasthan). Effectively, it attempts to summarise the Upanishads. It has been extensively commented on by the three main philosophical branches of Indian thought, dvaita, advaita and vishishtadvaita, and the proponents of each claim that it substantiates their beliefs. Shankara has commented on it and provided extensive arguments against any interpretation other than that of Advaita. See bhashya, nyaya prasthan, sruti, smriti.
- brahmacharya [brahmacharya] – the first stage of the traditional Hindu spiritual path, in which the Brahman begins his life as an unmarried, religious and chaste student. (charya means 'due observance of all rites and customs'.) One of the five yama-s in Raja yoga. See also grihasta, sanyasa, vanaprastha.
- Brahman [brahman] – the universal Self, Absolute or God. There is only Brahman. It derives from the Sanskrit root bRRih, meaning to grow great or strong and could be thought of as the adjective 'big' made into a noun, implying that which is greater than anything. See also atman, Brahma, jiva, jivatman, paramatman.
- brahmana [brAhmaNa] – an aspirant; a member of the first of the traditional four castes in India (also called Brahmin); alternatively a portion of the Vedas, containing information relating to the use of mantras and hymns in sacrifices.
- brahmanishta [brahmaniShTha] – one who is absorbed in contemplating brahman and committed only to that purpose. niShTha means "devoted to."
- brahmavidya [brahmavidyA] – knowledge of the one Self. (Also brahmavitva, with someone with this knowledge being called a brahmavit.) See brahman.
- Brihadaranyaka [bRRihadAraNyaka] – one of the major Upanishads (and possibly the oldest). The word derives from bRRihat - great, large, wide, tall etc. and Aranyaka - produced in (or relating to) a forest. See Upanishad.
- buddhi [buddhi] – the organ of mind responsible for discrimination and judgement, perhaps nearest equated to the intellect in Western usage. See also, ahankara, antahkarana, manas and chitta.



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### C

chaitanya [chaitanya] – consciousness, universal soul or spirit.

chakra [chakra] – literally "circle" or "wheel"; one of the points in the spine through which energy is supposed to flow in kundalini yoga.

Chandogya [chhAndogya] – one of the major Upanishads. See Upanishad.

charvaka [chArvAka] – materialist philosopher, and the system named after him.

chaturta [chaturtha] – fourth.

chatuspad [chatuShpad] – four-step, four-part etc.

chatushtaya sampatti [chatuShTaya sampatti] – the fourfold pre-requisites specified by Shankara as needed by a seeker before he can achieve Self-realisation.

chatuShTaya means "fourfold"; sampatti means success or accomplishment. See sadhana, vairagya, viveka, mumukshutvam.

chetana [chetana] – consciousness, intelligence etc.

chidabhasa [chidAbhAsa] – false appearance or reflection (AbhAsa) of consciousness (chit) - i.e. the ego.

chintana [chintana] – thinking or reflecting upon; consideration.

chit [chit] – pure thought or Consciousness. See ananda, sat, satchidananda.

chitta [chitta] – the organ (part) of mind responsible for memory. See antahkarana, ahankara, buddhi, manas.

chodya [chodya] – goal motivated, impelled or incited.

### D

dakshina [dAkShiNa] – the offering that is made at a sacrifice or the collection of those offerings. guru dAkShiNa is the payment made by a student to his teacher on completion of his studies (not in money but usually as a task or special gift).

daksina [dakShiNa] – right (as opposed to left); south, southern; straightforward, candid, sincere. guru dakShiNa is the fee, present, gift or donation made to the guru from the disciple for teaching.

dama [dama] – self-restraint but understood as control over the senses; one of the six qualities that form part of Shankara's chatushtaya sampatti. See chatushtaya sampatti, shamAdi shhaTka sampatti.

darshana [darshana] – audience or meeting (with a guru); viewpoint; one of the six classical Indian philosophical systems (purvamimamsa, uttaramimamsa, nyaya, vaisheshika, samkhya, yoga).

deha [deha] – person, individual, outward form or appearance (body).

dehatmavada [dehAtmavAda] – materialism ("body is atma").

desha [desha] – space.

deshika [deshika] – a guide (someone familiar with a place); more specifically, a spiritual teacher or guru.

deva [deva] – (pl. noun) the gods; (adj.) heavenly, divine.

devadatta [devadatta] – fellow, common noun for "man" used in philosophy; literally "god-given."

Devanagari [devanAgarI] – the script used in Sanskrit representation. The word literally means "city of the Gods" (deva - gods; nAgara - belonging or relating to a town or

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city).

dharana [dhAraNA] – concentration of the mind. The sixth step of Raja yoga.

dharma [dharma] – customary practice, conduct, duty, justice and morality. One of the four puruShArtha-s. The favored meaning of most traditional teachers is, however, "nature, character, essential quality," which they often translate as "essence." Our own dharma (svadharmā) is what we ought to do with our lives in order to dissolve our accumulation of saMskAra. See sanskara, karma.

dharmaraja [dharmarAja] – a just or righteous king (dharma + rAja); any king or prince.

dhuma [dhUma] – smoke.

dhyana [dhyAna] – meditation, usually in the sense of the mechanical act using a mantra as opposed to nididhyAsana.

dipa [dIpa] – confusion, perplexity, mistake (N.B. Not to be confused with brahma or brahman!).

dirgha [dIrgHa] – a long vowel in Sanskrit (sounded for 2 mAtRA-s or measures); literally long, high, tall.

dosha [doSha] – defect, fault; offence, transgression; harm.

dravya [dravya] – substance.

drg-drsya-viveka [dRRigRRishya viveka] – "Discrimination between the Seer and the Seen" - a work attributed to Shankara. dRRik is the seer or perceiver and dRRishya that which is seen or which can be objectified.

drishtanta [dRRiShTAnta] – the end or aim of what is seen, example or instance.

drishti-srishti-vada [dRRiShTisRRiShTivAda] – the theory that our mistaken view of the world arises from a mental image (based on memory and sense data) superimposed upon the reality. dRRiShTi means "seeing"; sRRiShTi means "creation"; vAda means "thesis" or "doctrine." See also adhyasa, ajati, srishti-drishti-vada.

duhkha [duHkha] – pain, sorrow, trouble.

dvaita [dvaita] – duality, philosophy of dualism; belief that God and the atman are separate entities. Madhva is the scholar most often associated with this philosophy.

dvaya [dvaya] – two things; twofold nature; dualistic.

dvesha [dveSha] – hatred, dislike.

dvitiya [dvitIya] – second.

## E

eka [eka] – one, alone, single, solitary, the same, identical. As opposed to nAnA - differently, variously, distinctly, separately; or (used as an adjective) different, distinct from.

ekagra [ekAgra] – one-pointed, fixing one's attention on one point. ekAgratA - intentness in the pursuit of one object.

eva [eva] – just so, indeed, truly; most frequently used to strengthen the meaning of the associated word - exactly, same, even, only etc.

## G

gandha [gandha] – smell (one of the tanmAtRA-s or five subtle senses).

Gaudapada [gauDapAda] – The author of the commentary (kArikA) on the Mandukya Upanishad. He is said to have been the teacher of Shankara's teacher. See karika,

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

Mandukya, Upanishad.

ghana [ghana] – compact mass or substance.

gita [gItA] – a sacred song or poem but more usually refers to philosophical or religious doctrines in verse form (gItA means "sung"). The most famous are the Bhagavad Gita and Astavakra Gita. If the word is used on its own, it will be referring to the former. See Bhagavad, Astavakra.

gocara [gochara] – (literally) perceptible by the senses but also regarded as seen by the mind, inferred etc..

grahana [grahaNa] – literally seizing, catching etc; perceiving, understanding, comprehension; agrahaNa means non-comprehension or non-perception.

grantha [grantha] – tying, binding; knot -Ramana Maharshi referred to the 'knot' in the heart that must be 'untied' in order for realization to occur. It also refers to a verse composition or treatise.

grihasta [gRRihastha] – this is the second stage of the traditional Hindu spiritual path, called the period of the householder, in which the Brahman performs the duties of master of the house and father of a family. See also brahmacharya, grihasta, sanyasa, vanaprastha.

guna [guNa] – According to classical sAMkhya philosophy, creation is made up of three "qualities," sattva, rajas and tamas. Everything - matter, thoughts, feelings - is "made up of" these three in varying degrees and it is the relative proportions that determine the nature of the thing in question. See sattva, rajas and tamas for more details.

guru [guru] – literally "heavy"; used to refer to one's elders or a person of reverence but more commonly in the West to indicate one's spiritual teacher.

## H

halanta [halanta] – a consonant that is not sounded with a vowel after it. It is marked as such by the use of a virama. The term derives from the pratyAhara "hal," which refers to "any consonant," and anta, which means "end," since such consonants normally occur at the end of a word.

hani [hAni] – abandonment, relinquishment; damage, loss; insufficiency. E.g. an advaita hAni is a statement that is against the fundamental tenets of advaita and, if true, would mean that advaita was invalid.

hatha [haTha] – haTha yoga refers to the physical aspects of Raja yoga, i.e. Asana-s and prANayama. It literally means "violence, force or obstinacy," "absolute necessity" and stems from the idea of "forcing the mind" to withdraw from objects. Monier-Williams has the additional words: "performed with much self-torture , such as standing on one leg , holding up the arms , inhaling smoke with the head inverted etc.."

hetu [hetu] – cause or reason; the logical reason or argument in a syllogism.

hrasva [hrasva] – a short vowel in Sanskrit; literally, short, small, dwarfish, weak etc.

hridaya [hRRidaya] – heart, seat of feelings and sensations; heart or essence of something; true or divine knowledge.

## I

iccha [ichChA] – wish, desire, inclination.

idam vritti [idam vRRitti] – thoughts of objects, concepts, feelings etc., as opposed to aham vRRitti - the thought "I am." See vritti.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- iha [iha] – in this world; now. (iha loka as opposed to para loka, in the 'next world', i.e. after death).
- indriya [indriya] – the number five symbolizing the five senses. The five sense organs are called j~nAnendriya-s and the five "organs" of action are the karmendriya-s.
- Isha Upanishad [IshopaniShad] – also known as the Isavasya Upanishad, because its first verse begins: OM IshA vAsyamidam{\m+} sarvaM. IshAvAsya means "pervaded by the lord."
- ishta [iShTa] – wished, desired, liked, beloved.
- Isvara [Ishvara] – the Lord; creator of the phenomenal universe; wielder of the force of mAyA. See saguna Brahman.

## J

- jada [jaDa] – inert, lifeless.
- jagat [jagat] – the world (earth), mankind etc.
- jagrat [jAgrat] – the waking state of consciousness. The "waker ego" is called vishva. See also, sushupti, svapna, turiya.
- jalpa [jalpa] – talk, speech, discourse; disputation with 'overbearing and disputed rejoinder'; arguing for the sake of winning, irrespective of who is right. (Three types of disputation: jalpa, vitaNDa, vAda.)
- janana [janana] – jbirth.
- janma [janma] – birth.
- japa [japa] – the simple repetition of a mantra; usually associated with the initial stage of meditation. See mantra.
- jara [jarA] – old age.
- jati [jAti] – birth, the form of existence (as man, animal etc.); genus or species.
- jijnasa [jij~nAsA] – the desire to know (oneself). One who desires to know oneself; a seeker is called a jij~nAsu.
- jiva [jIva] – the identification of the Atman with a body and mind; sometimes spoken of as "the embodied Atman." See atman.
- jivanmukti [jIvanmukti] – (mukta is the adjective - liberated; mukti is the noun - liberation) the emotional benefits of Self-knowledge; the 'secondary' gain of enlightenment (dependent upon whether the seeker was fully qualifies according to sAdhana chatuShTaya sampatti. A jIvanmukta is one is both enlightened and who lives with these benefits, which manifest in outward love and compassion.
- jivatman [jIvAtman] – another word for Atman, to emphasise that we are referring to the Atman in this 'embodied state', as opposed to the paramAtman, the "supreme Self." See atman.
- jnana (yoga) (note that jnana is often written gyana) [j~nAna] – yoga based on the acquisition of true knowledge (j~nAna means "knowledge") i.e. knowledge of the Self as opposed to mere information about the world of appearances (vidyA). See also bhakti, karma.
- jnana kanda [j~nAna kANDa] – those sections of the Vedas concerned with knowledge, i.e. the Upanishads.
- jnana nishta [j~nAna niShThA] – the full and final knowledge that this Self is all that there is.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- jnanendriya [j~nAnendriya] – an organ of perception (eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin), plural j~nAnendryAni.
- jnani or jnanin [j~nAnI or j~nAnin] – literally, one who is endowed with knowledge or intelligence; a sage; often used to refer to one who is enlightened. (j~nAnin is the prAtipadika j~nAnI is the nominative singular pada.) See jnana (yoga).
- jnatri [j~nAtRRi] – one who knows or understands; also sometimes used interchangeably with sAkShin (witness).
- jneya [j~neya] – heart, seat of feelings and sensations; heart or essence of something; true or divine knowledge.
- jyotis [jyotis] – light (of sun, dawn, lightning etc.); fire; light as the divine principle of life, intelligence.

## K

- Kailasa [kailAsa] – fabled paradise of Shiva in the Himalayas.
- kaivalya [kaivalya] – absolute unity, detachment of the soul from further transmigration, leading to eternal happiness or emancipation.
- kala [kAla] – time
- Kali yuga [kali yuga] – the present and final age (Iron age) in a cycle of creation (followed by dissolution - pralaya -and start again). See kalpa.
- kalpa [kalpa] – one day in the life of Brahma, the Creator; equal to 994 cycles of ages and 4,320,000,000 years.
- kalpita [kalpita] – made, fabricated, artificial; invented; supposed; inferred.
- kama [kAma] – desire, longing; one of the four puruShArtha-s. Shankara differentiates this from rAga: rAga is attachment to something one already has whereas kAma is wanting something one doesn't have. (Not to be confused with karma.) See purushartha.
- kamya [kAmya] – desirable, agreeable; more usually encountered in the context of 'action' - kAmya karma means actions prompted by desire or the wish for personal benefit, as opposed to nitya karma, done out of a sense of duty.
- kanda [kANDa] – part or section, division of a work or book, especially relating to the Vedas
- kandana [khaNDana] – breaking, destroying, annihilating; refuting (of an opponent's philosophy).
- kara [kAra] – term used to designate a letter or sound or indeclinable word (as in OM kAra); or making, doing, working etc (as in ahaMkAra).
- karana [karaNa] – "instrument" in the context of karaNa kAraNa - instrumental cause. (The first "a" is hrasva.)
- karana [kAraNa] – cause (noun) as in nimitta kAraNa or causal (adj.) as in kAraNa sharIra. Literally "a cause (in philosophy i.e. that which is invariably antecedent to some product)." (The first "a" is dIrgha.)
- karika [kArikA] – (strictly speaking) a concise philosophical statement in verse. The most well known is that by Gaudapada on the Mandukya Upanishad. (Not to be confused with karika, which is an elephant!). See Gaudapada, Mandukya, Upanishad.
- karma [karma] – literally "action" but generally used to refer to the "law" whereby actions carried out now will have their lawful effects in the future (and this may be in future

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- lives). Note that karma yoga is something different - see below. See also sanskara.
- karma kanda [karma kANDa] – that portion of the Vedas relating to ceremonial acts, the rituals we should follow, sacrificial rites and so on.
- karma phala [karma phala] – the fruit (phala) of action; i.e. the result or consequence of our actions.
- karma yoga [karma yoga] – the practice of acting in such a way as not to incur karma, by carrying out "right" actions, not "good" or "bad" ones. See bhakti, karma, jnana.
- karmendriya [karmendriya] – an organ of action, plural karmendriyAni. These are hand, foot, larynx, organ of generation and organ of excretion.
- karta [kartA] – "doer", see kartri
- kartri [kartRRi] – one who makes, does or acts; the agent of an action.
- kartri tantra [kartRRi tantra] – the result of 'doing' (activity, desire and effort), as opposed to vastu-tantra, begotten of Atma).
- karya [kArya] – effect or result.
- kataka [kataka] – the "clearing nut" plant, used for precipitating dirt from drinking water.
- Katha Upanishad [kaThopaniShad] – one of the 108+ Upanishads and one of the 10 major ones. kaTha was a sage and founder of a branch of the Yajur Veda. See Upanishad.
- Kena Upanishad] – kenopaniShad] – one of the 108+ Upanishads and another one of the 10 major ones. kena means "whence?" ("how?," "why?" etc.) and is the first word of this Upanishad. See Upanishad.
- khalvidam] – khalvidam] – in the statement sarvam khalvidam brahma - all this is verily Brahman. khalu means "indeed, verily," idam is "this" (neutral pronoun).
- khyati [khyAti] – opinion, view, idea, assertion; perception, knowledge. akhyAti is misperception, as opposed to adhyAsa.
- kinchana [kiMchana] – something, somewhat; anything.
- koham [ko.aham] – who am I? (ka - who?; aham - I am).
- kosha [kosha] – literally "sheath" as in the scabbard of a sword; one of the five layers of identification that cover up our true nature.
- krama srishti [krama sRRiShTi] – step-by step creation of the creation myths from the Vedas.
- kriya [kriyA] – ikriyA yoga is a branch of rAja yoga (for the intermediate student); kriyA literally means "doing, performance."
- krodha [krodha] – anger, passion.
- kshara [kShara] – perishable (more normally seen as akShara referring to the imperishable Self).
- kshatriya [kShatriya] – a member of the second of the traditional four castes in India, the military caste.
- kshaya [kShaya] – destruction.
- kshetra [kShetra] – literally a "field" or "property"; used in the Bhagavad Gita to refer to the body-mind organism in which we find ourselves.
- kshetrajna [kShetraj~na] – that which knows the kShetra, i.e. the true Self.
- Kumarila Bhatta [kumArila bhaTTa] – founder of the school of pUrva mImAmsa

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

philosophy.

kundalini [kuNDalinI] – the yoga that relates to awakening the energy at the base of the spine and channeling this through 'chakras' to the head. This has nothing to do with advaita.

kutastha [kUTastha] – the immovable, unchanging spirit (literally "standing at the top.")

### L

lakshana [lakShaNa] – pointer; indicating or expressing indirectly; accurate description or definition.

lakshya [lakShya] – that which is to be characterized, defined, indicated or expressed.

lakshyartha [lakShyArtha] – implied or indirectly expressed meaning (as opposed to vAchyArtha).

laukika [laukika] – worldly, belonging to or occurring in ordinary life. laukika anumAna is inference by scientific reasoning, based on observation.

laya [laya] – literally "dissolution" (and the last stage in the cycle of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe). Also used to refer to the four-stage process for dissolving ignorance described in the aShTAvakra gItA. See Astavakra, Gita.

lesha [lesha] – trace, small part or portion.

lila [lIlA] – literally "play," "amusement" or "pastime"; the idea that the apparent creation is a diversion for a creator - a means for Him to enjoy Himself. He plays all the parts in such a way that they are ignorant of their real nature and believe themselves separate.

linga [li~Nga] – sign, mark or badge; evidence. Sometimes used as li~Nga sharIra to describe the subtle body.

loka [loka] – world, universe, sky or heaven etc. (adjective laukika).

### M

Madhva [madhva] – founder of the school of dvaita philosophy.

madhyama [madhyama] – middle, intermediate. madhyamA - mediating; the third stage in the production of sound; the "medium" in which something is expressed.

mahabhuta [mahAbhUta] – gross element (ether, air, fire, water, earth).

mahaprana [mahAprANa] – In Sanskrit, describes a consonant that is sounded with additional expelling of air. It means "with much breath." Specifically, it is used for those consonants on the 2nd and 4th rows of the main groups, namely kh, Ch, Th, th, ph and gh, jh, Dh, dh, bh.

mahashaya [mahAshaya] – respectable person, noble, magnanimous; 'Sir' as a form of address.

mahat [mahat] – great, important, distinguished.

mahatman [mahAtman] – high-minded, noble; exceedingly wise; distinguished; the supreme spirit, great soul of the universe.

mahavakya [mahAvAkya] – maha means "great"; vAkya means "speech, saying or statement." The four "great sayings" from the Vedas are: - "Consciousness is Brahman," "That thou art," "This Self is Brahman" and "I am Brahman."

maheshvara [maheshvara] – a great lord.

mamakara [mamaKara] – interesting oneself about anything; (more usually) the notion that 'this is mine', c.f. ahaMkAra.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- manana [manana] – the clearing of doubts by asking questions on what has been heard (shravaNa) from the guru. This is the second stage of the classical spiritual path. See also samshaya, shravana, nididhyasana.
- manas [manas] – the "organ" of mind acting as intermediary between the senses and the intellect (buddhi) on the way in and the intellect and the organs of action on the way out. These are its primary functions and "thinking" ought to consist only of the processing of data on behalf of the intellect. Unfortunately, it usually tries to take on the role of the intellect itself and this is when thinking becomes a problem. See ahankara, antahkarana, buddhi and chitta.
- Mandukya [mANDUkya] – One of the major Upanishads and possibly the single most important, when considered in conjunction with the kArikA written by gauDapAda. (In many versions of this Upanishad, there is no distinction made between the original and the additions made by gauDapAda and there is some argument over which is which.) See Gaudapada, karika, Upanishad.
- manisha [manIshA] – thought, reflection, consideration, wisdom, intelligence. (adj. manIshaya)
- manolaya [manolaya] – loss of consciousness; used to indicate an intense 'spiritual experience'.
- manomayakosha [manomayakosha] – the mental sheath (one of the "five Coverings" that surround our true essence).
- mantra [mantra] – a group of words (or sometimes only one or more syllables), traditionally having some mystical significance, being in many religions an actual 'name of God' or a short prayer. Often used in meditation (always in Transcendental Meditation). See japa.
- mantravid [mantravid] – someone who just knows 'about' Atman rather than knowing Atman directly (an Atmavid).
- marana [maraNa] – death.
- marga [mArga] – path, track, way. vichAra mArga is translated as "Direct Path," referring to the particular method of teaching Advaita.
- mata [mata] – belief (also thought, idea, opinion, sentiment, doctrine). Also used in the sense of a 'philosophy'.
- math or matha [maTha] – (religious) college or temple.
- matra [mAtrA] – a measure of any kind. In Sanskrit, the short vowel is said to be 1 mAtrA and the long vowel 2, i.e. sounded for twice the length.
- matrika [mAtRRikA] – In Sanskrit, refers to the 14 vowels, together with the anusvAra and visarga.
- mAyA [mAyA] – literally "magic" or "witchcraft," often personified in Hindu mythology. The "force" used to explain how it is that we come to be deceived into believing that there is a creation with separate objects and living creatures etc. See also avarana and vikshepa. mAyAvin - magician, possessing magical powers.
- mayakara [mAyAkAra] – a maker of magic i.e. a conjurer or magician. See maya.
- mimamsa (noun) mimamsaka (adj) [mlmAMsA mlmAMsaka] – profound thought, reflection, examination. See purvamimamsa, utteramimamsa.
- mithya [mithyA] – (adj.) dependently real; literally "incorrectly" or "improperly," used in the sense of "false, untrue." It is, however, more frequently used in the sense of



## Common Sanskrit technical terms

"depending upon something else for its existence." It is ascribed to objects etc., meaning that these are not altogether unreal but not strictly real either i.e. they are our imposition of name and form upon the undifferentiated Self. The noun, as with many Sanskrit adjectives, is formed by adding 'tva' - mithyAtva - dependent reality. See adhyasa.

- moha [moha] – delusion, bewilderment, infatuation, preventing the discernment of truth; "love" in its selfish form of love of another person, where something is desired for oneself, as opposed to prema, "pure unselfish love."
- moksha [mokSha] – liberation, enlightenment, Self-realization; one of the four puruShArtha-s. Remember that 'o' is pronounced as in 'grow', not as in 'top'.
- mudra [mudrA] – particular positions or inter-twinings of the fingers, commonly practiced in religious worship.
- mukha [mukha] – opening, mouth; chief, principal, best.
- mukti [mukti] – setting or becoming free, final liberation. (mukta is the adjective - liberated)
- mula [mUla] – literally a 'root'; basis, foundation, cause, origin, beginning.
- mulavidya [mUIAvidya] – original ignorance.
- mumukshu [mumukShu] – one for whom the desires to achieve enlightenment is the predominant goal in life; a seeker.
- mumukshutva [mumukShutva] – the desire to achieve enlightenment, to the exclusion of all other desires. See sadhana, chatushtaya sampatti.
- Mundaka Upanishad [muNDakopaniShad] – Another one of the 108+ Upanishads and also one of the 10 major ones - but not to be confused with the Mandukya. muNDa means "having a shaved head" and the Upanishad is so called because every one who comprehends its sacred doctrine is "shorn" of (i.e. liberated from) all error. See Upanishad.
- muni [muni] – sage, seer, saint, ascetic, monk etc.
- murta [mUrta] – manifest, material, embodied.

## N

- naimittika [naimittika] – occasional, special. naimittika karma are those occasional duties that we have to perform, such as helping a neighbor who has helped one in the past.
- naisarga, naisargika [naisarga naisargika] – innate, natural.
- Naiyayika [naiyAyika] – a follower of the nyAya philosophy.
- nama-rupa [nAmarUpa] – name and form.
- namas [namas] – bow, obeisance, reverential salutation. namaskAra - the exclamation 'namas'.
- nana [nAnA] – differently, variously, distinctly; (used as adj. various, different, distinct from)
- nanatva [nAnAtva] – difference, variety, manifoldness.
- naraka [naraka] – hell. (Also pAtAla.)
- nashita [nAshita] – destroyed, lost.
- nastika [nAstika] – atheist, unbeliever; usually refers to one who does not recognize the authority of the Vedas.

### Common Sanskrit technical terms

- neti [neti] – not this (na - not; iti - this). From the bRRihadAraNyaka upaniShad (2.3.6). Used by the intellect whenever it is thought that the Self might be some "thing" observed e.g. body, mind etc. The Self cannot be anything that is seen, thought or known. See Brihadaranyaka, Upanishad.
- nididhyasana [nididhyAsana] – meditating on what has been directly seen at the time of teaching until there is total conviction. The third stage of the classical spiritual path. See also shravana and manana. It is to be understood as "right apprehension" (vij~nAna); recapitulating or going over the teaching rather than simply mechanical japa, as with dhyAna.
- nidra [nidrA] – sleep.
- nimitta [nimitta] – literally the "instrumental or efficient cause" but normally used (nimitta kAraNa) as meaning the latter.
- nirguna [nirguNa] – "without qualities"; usually referring to Brahman and meaning that it is beyond any description or thought. Since there is only Brahman, any word would imply limitation or duality. See Brahman, saguna, Isvara.
- nirmukta [nirmukta] – free from every attachment.
- nirnaya [nirNaya] – (in logic) deduction, inference, conclusion; application of a conclusive argument; discussion, consideration.
- nirodha [nirodha] – restraint.
- nirupadhika [nirupAdhika] – without attributes or qualities. nirupAdhika adhyAsa is superimposition as of the snake on the rope, as opposed to sopAdhika adhyAsa e.g. the sunrise, which is still seen even when the mistake is realized
- nirveda [nirveda] – being indifferent towards or even having a loathing for worldly objects.
- nirvikalpa [nirvikalpa] – (referring to samAdhi) without doubts about one's identity with the one Self. See savikalpa, samadhi, vikalpa; also means 'free from differences or change', not having any alternative.
- nirvikalpaka [nirvikalpaka] – knowledge not depending upon or derived from the senses, indeterminate knowledge.
- nirvikara [nirvikAra] – unchanged, unchangeable, changeless, uniform.
- nirvishesha [nirvisheSha] – making or showing no difference. nirvisheShaNa - attributeless.
- nishchita [nishchita] – one who has come to a conclusion, formed a certain opinion; decided, positive; certainty; also used in sense of 'wise people'.
- nisheda [niShedha] – contradiction, negation, denial.
- nishkama [niShkAma] – desireless, disinterested. niShkAma karma is so-called "right action," performed in response to the need, neither selfishly nor unselfishly - it generates no saMskAra.
- nishtha [niShTha] – committed or devoted to; having a basis or grounding in. niShThA is the noun, meaning firmness, steadiness, devotion.
- nitya [nitya] – eternal. It also means "ordinary, usual, necessary, obligatory." It is used in this latter sense in connection with action. nitya karma are those daily duties that we have to perform, such as looking after one's children.
- nivritti [nivRRitti] – giving up, abstaining, renouncing (esp. of desires in the path to

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

enlightenment - nivRRitti mArga).

niyama [niyama] – restraining, controlling; any fixed rule or law; necessity. There are five niyama-s in rAja yoga.

nyaya [nyAya] – logical argument; literally, "that into which a thing goes back," a "standard" or "rule"; one of the 6 classical Indian philosophical systems, whose principal exponent was Gautama in the 3rd Century BC. So called because the system "goes into" all physical and metaphysical subjects in a very logical manner.

nyaya prasthana [nyAya prasthAna] – refers to logical and inferential material based upon the Vedas, of which the most well known is the brahma sUtra of Vyasa (nyAya can also mean method, axiom, logical argument etc.). See pramana, prasthana-traya, smriti, sruti.

## P

pada [pAda] – foot, part, quarter. The Mandukya Upanishad refers to the four pAda as the three states of consciousness plus turlyA. A better translation of pAda, here, is 'facet'. (Not to be confused with pada.)

pada [pada] – word (as opposed to padArtha - meaning or thing corresponding to the meaning); portion of a verse or line of a stanza; also trace, mark, sign etc.; also position, rank or status. (Not to be confuse with pAda - the 'fourth', 'quarter' or 'facet' e.g. MU)

padartha [padArtha] – the meaning of a word; the thing, material object or person that corresponds with that meaning.

Padmapada [padmapAda] – one of the four principal disciples of Shankara.

paksha [pakSha] – subject of the discussion, proposition to be proved.

panchabuta [pa~ncha bhUta] – the five elements, viz. earth - pRRithivi; water - ap; fire - tejas; air - vAyu; space or ether - AkAsha.

Panchadashi [pa~nchadashI] – literally means "fifteen" because it has this many chapters - a book written by Vidyaranya (vidyArANya), based upon the Upanishads. It discusses many Advaitic truths and uses some original metaphors to illustrate the concepts.

panchakosha [pa~ncha kosha] – the five sheaths.

Panchapadika [pa~nchapAdika] – a commentary by Padmapada on Shankara's commentary on the first part of the brahma sUtra.

pandita [paNDita] – literally "wise" as an adjective or "scholar, teacher, philosopher" as a noun and used in this way in the scriptures. However, it has come to mean someone who knows a lot of theory but does very little practice. We sometimes use the word "pundit" in our language - the word "sophist" would probably be a good synonym.

papa [pApa] – literally "bad" or "wicked" but used in the sense of the "sin" that accrues (according to the theory of karma) from performing "bad" actions, i.e. those done with a selfish motive. See also punya.

para [parA] – the first stage in the production of sound. Also means beyond, distant, remote, highest, supreme; could be translated as "transcendent."

parama [parama] – chief, highest, most prominent, best etc.

paramartha (noun); paramarthika (adj.) [paramArtha pAramArthika] – the highest truth or reality; the noumenal as opposed to the phenomenal world of appearances (vyavahAra). See pratibhasa and vyavahara.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- paramatman [paramAtman] – usually translated as the "supreme Self" as opposed to the Atman in the embodied state, the jIvAtman. Swami Dayananda insists that it actually means "limitless" in the sense of not limited by time or place and therefore changeless. See atman.
- parampara [paramparA] – literally "proceeding from one to another"; "guru paramparA" refers to the tradition of guru - disciple passing on wisdom through the ages. See also sampradaya.
- paratantra [paratantra] – dependent on or subject to another (opposite svatantra).
- parechcha [parechChA] – relating to the desires of others - see prarabdha.
- paribhasa [paribhAshA] – speech, discourse, words; an explanatory rule or general definition; a rule or maxim which teaches the proper interpretation or application of other rules. (e.g. vedAnta paribhAshA of dharmarAja adhvarindra).
- paricchinna [parichchinna] – cut-off, divided, detached, confined, limited, circumscribed.
- parinama [pariNAma] – literally "change, transformation into"; encountered in the context of a material cause in which the effect is a transformation from its cause as opposed to simply distinguishable from, e.g. butter made from milk as opposed to cloth made from cotton.
- parinama vada [pariNAma vAda] – the doctrine of evolution as proposed by sAMkhya philosophy.
- paripurna [paripUrNa] – completely filled or covered with; accomplished, perfect, whole, complete.
- paroksha [parokSha] – remote, mysterious, invisible, hidden (also pArokShya); opposite of pratyakSha.
- pashyanti [pashyantI] – seeing; the second of the four stages of sound production. Could be translated as "visualization," from the verb pash, meaning "to see."
- patala [pAtAla] – hell. (Also naraka.)
- Patanjali [pata~njali] – philosopher, author of the "Yoga Sutras" and responsible for aShTA~Nga or rAja yoga.
- phala [phala] – fruit; often used in the context of the consequences that necessarily follow as a result of action. See karma phala. It is also used in respect of the emotional benefits of self-knowledge - j~nAna phala or jIvanmukta.
- pluta [pluta] – a lengthened vowel in Sanskrit (sounded for 3 or more mAtrA-s or measures).
- Prabhakara [prabhAkara] – founder of an offshoot of the purva mImAmsa school of philosophy.
- pradhana [pradhAna] – most important or essential part of anything; primary matter or nature; supreme or universal soul; equals prakRRiti and is the cause of the universe according to sAMkyha.
- prajna [praj~nA] – (verb) to know or understand, find out, perceive or learn; (noun) wisdom, intelligence, knowledge. Not to be confused with prAj~na below.
- prajna [prAj~na] – the "deep sleep ego" in the deep sleep state of consciousness, suShupti. Literally, "wise, clever" (adj.) or "a wise man" or "intelligence dependent on individuality." See also visva, taijasa.
- prajnana [praj~nAna] – consciousness.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- prakarana [prakaraNa] – subject, topic, treatise etc. but especially opening chapter or prologue.
- prakarana grantha [prakaraNa grantha] – this is the term used to refer to authoritative commentaries on the scripture but which are not part of the prasthAna traya. It is frequently used in respect of the works attributed to Shankara such as upadesha sAhasri, vivekachUDAmAni etc. The word grantha literally means "tying or stringing together" though can itself mean composition or treatise.
- prakriti [prakRRiti] – literally the original or natural form or condition of anything; generally used to refer to what we would call "nature."
- prakriya [prakriyA] – a methodology of teaching; literally a chapter (esp. the introductory chapter of a work).
- pralaya [pralaya] – dissolution, destruction, annihilation, especially relating to the destruction of the universe at the end of a kalpa. See kalpa.
- prama [pramA] – true knowledge, basis or foundation.
- pramana [pramANa] – valid means for acquiring knowledge. There are 6 of these in Vedanta: - perception (pratyakSha), inference (anumAna), scriptural or verbal testimony (shabda or Agama shruti), analogy (upamAna), presumption (arthApatti) and non-apprehension (anupalabधि). The first three are the major ones referred to by Shankara.
- pramatri [pramAtRRi] – the subject of knowledge obtained via a pramANa; authority, one who has a correct notion or idea.
- prameya [prameya] – the object of knowledge obtained via a pramANa; also "thing to be proven" or "topic to be discussed."
- pramiti [pramiti] – correct notion, right conception, knowledge gained or established by pramANa.
- prana [prANa] – literally the "breath of life"; the vital force in the body with which we identify in the "vital sheath."
- pranamayakosha [prANamayakosha] – the sheath made of breath (one of the "five Coverings" that surround our true essence).
- pranava [praNava] – mystical or sacred symbol (OM); OM is usually called praNava shabda, though either word separately can also be use with the same meaning. praNu means "to make a humming or droning sound." It is also said that praNava means 'ideal name'. It is the 'ideal name' for brahman because it represents both the saguNa aspects (in the actual word OM) and the nirguNa aspects (in the silence that follows).
- pranayama [prANayAma] – usually understood to mean control of breathing in advanced yoga techniques or as a prelude to meditation. According to Swami Chinmayananda, however, it does not mean this but relates to the five "departments" of active life: prANayAma, pratyAhAra, nitya-anitya-viveka, japa and samAdhi.
- pranidhana [praNidhAna] – meditation on/contemplation of/devotion to Ishvara. One of the five niyama-s of rAja yoga.
- prapancha [prapa~ncha] – the visible world; appearance, diversity, phenomenon.
- prapta [prApta] – attained, acquired, accomplished. prAptasya prApta is gaining something which has already been gained (as oppose to aprAptasya prApta - gaining something that one does not have); the expression is used of mokSha,

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

enlightenment.

- prarabdha [prArabdhA] – This literally means "begun" or "undertaken." It is the fruit of all of our past action that is now having its effect. This is one of the three types of saMskAra (see agamin, sanchita, sanskara). Also, there are three types of prArabdhA karma - ichChA, anichChA and parechChA (personally desired, without desire and due to others' desire).
- prasada [prasAda] – refers to the food offered to a god (idol) or that left by a spiritual teacher which may now be eaten by the disciple as a token; (more generally) clearness, brightness, calmness, tranquility, serenity, graciousness.
- prasthana-traya [prasthAna traya] – prasthAna means "system" or "course" in the sense of a journey; traya just means "threefold." It refers to the three sources of knowledge of the Self (shabda), nyAya prasthAna, shruti and smRRiti. See nyaya prasthana, shabda, shruti, smriti.
- pratama [prathama] – first, foremost; earliest, primary, original, prior, former; intial, chief, principal.
- pratibandhaka [pratibandhaka] – impediment, obstacle (usuaually in relation to gaining j~nAna phalam).
- pratibhasa (noun)pratibhasika (adj.) [pratibhAsa prAtibhAsika] – appearing or occurring to the mind, existing only in appearance, an illusion. See paramartha, vyavahara.
- pratibimba [pratibimba] – a reflection. In logic, bimba is the object itself, with the pratibimba being the counterpart with which it is compared.
- pratibimba-vada [pratibimba vAda] – the theory that the jIva is a reflection of the atman, similar to a the reflection of an object in a mirror (bimba).
- pratijna [pratij~nA] – (in logic) an assertion or proposition to be proved.
- pratipadya - pratipadaka sambandha [pratipAdya pratipAdaka sambandha] – refers to that type of knowledge where the knowledge itself brings about the goal without the need for any action. pratipAdya means "that which is to be explained or revealed"; pratipAdaka means "that which reveals, explaining or demonstrating"; sambandha means "relationship."
- pratiyogin [pratiyogin] – any object dependent upon another and not existing without it.
- pratyabhijna [pratyabhij~nA] – recognition.
- pratyagatman [pratyagAtman] – the individual soul.
- pratyahara [pratyAhAra] – withdrawal of the senses from external objects.
- pratyaksha [pratyakSha] – "present before the eyes, clear, distinct etc." but particularly "direct perception or apprehension" as a valid source of knowledge. Opposite of pArokSha, hidden. See pramana.
- pratyaya [pratyaya] – belief, firm conviction, certainty; basis or cause of anything; experience or cognition e.g. Atmapratyaya - the 'I' experience.
- pravritti [pravRRitti] – active life, following one's desires (pravRRitti mArga as opposed to the path to enlightenment - nivRRitti mArga).
- prayaschitta [prAyashchitta] – atonement, expiation, amends, penance.
- prayojana [prayojana] – motive or purpose; utility.
- prema [prema] – love, in its pure, unselfish form (as opposed to moha).
- preyas [preyas] – the 'pleasant' as opposed to the 'good'; more agreeable, more desired.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

prithak [pRRithak] – apart, separately, differently.

prithivi [pRRithivi] – earth - one of the five elements or pa~nchabhUta. Associated with smell.

priya [priya] – love, kindness, pleasure.

puja [pUjA] – honor, worship, respect, reverence.

punarapi [punarapi] – ever again (punar - again, once more, repeatedly; api - further emphasis). As in punarapi jananam, punarapi maraNam to indicate saMsAra (janana = birth, maraNam = death).

punya [puNya] – literally "good" or "virtuous"; used to refer to the "reward" that accrues to us (according to the theory of karma) through the performing of unselfish actions. See also papa.

purna [pUrNa] – full, complete, satisfied, perfect.

purusha [puruSha] – person (usually male), spirit.

purushartha [puruShArtha] – The general meaning of this term is "any object of human pursuit" but it is used here in the sense of human (i.e. self) effort to overcome "fate," the fruit of one's past actions. The four classical pursuits are kAma, artha, dharma and mokSha. puruShArtha-labha is fulfillment of those pursuits. See karma, sanskara.

purusha-tantra [puruSha tantra] – subjective, the result of 'doing' (as opposed to vastu-tantra). See also kartRRi-tantra.

purva [pUrva] – former, preceding.

Purva mimamsa [pUrva mImAMsA] – the philosophical system based upon the first part of the Vedas and attributed to Jaimini. Mainly concerned with enquiring into the nature of dharma or right action. See mimamsa, uttaramimamsa.

purvapaksha [pUrvapakSha] – the first objection to an assertion in any discussion or, more generally, the "objector" in a debate.

## R

raga [rAga] – any feeling or passion but especially vehement desire; interest in, attachment. Shankara differentiates this from kAma: rAga is attachment to something one already has whereas kAma is wanting something one doesn't have. rAga-dveSha is love-hatred.

rahita [rahita] – deserted by, separated or free from, deprived of.

raja [rAja] – literally "king or sovereign," as in rAja yoga (or aShTA~Nga yoga) of Patanjali, where it is usually translated as "royal yoga."

rajas [rajas] – the second of the three guNa. Associated with animals and activity, emotions, desire, selfishness and passion. Adjective - rajassic (Eng.); rAjasa or rAjaska (Sansk.) See guna.

raju [rajju] – rope.

Ramanuja [rAmAnuja] – founder of the vishiShTAdvaita school of philosophy.

rasa [rasa] – taste (one of the tanmAtra-s or five subtle senses).

rina [RRiNa] – obligation, duty or debt, as in AchArya RRiNa - the obligation one has to one's teacher to pass on that knowledge to others.

rina [RRiNa] – anything due, obligation, duty, debt; a debt of money, money owed.

AchArya RRiNa is the obligation of a seeker to provide some financial assistance

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

for teaching from the guru, even though this is freely given. See also dakShiNa.

rishi [RRiShi] – author or singer of sacred Vedic hymns but now more generally used to refer to a saint or Sage.

rupa [rUpa] – form, outward appearance (one of the tanmAtra-s or five subtle senses).

### S

sada [sadA] – ever, always, continually, perpetually.

sadarana [sAdhAraNa] – generic, common to all, universal.

sadguru [sadguru] – the ultimate guru - one's own Self (sat = true, real). See guru.

sadhaka [sAdhaka] – a seeker or, more pedantically, a worshipper.

sadhana [sAdhanA] – refers to the spiritual disciplines followed as part of a "path" toward Self-realisation. See also chatushtaya sampatti.

sadharma [sadharma] – having the same nature or qualities; common features.

sadhu [sAdhu] – a sage, saint, holy man; literally leading straight to the goal, hitting the mark.

sadhya [sAdhya] – (in logic, that which is) to be concluded, proved or demonstrated.

sadrishya [sAdRRishya] – likeness, resemblance, similarity.

saguna [saguNa] – "with qualities." The term is usually used to refer to brahman personified as the creator, Ishvara, to symbolise the most spiritual aspect of the world of appearances. See Brahman, Isvara, nirguna.

sahaja [sahaja] – born or produced together (like the inborn faculties of certain living beings, e.g. the flying ability of a bird).

sahaja sthiti [sahaja sthiti] – Once Self-realization has been attained, there is full and lasting knowledge of the Self. "sahaja" means "state" but this stage of samAdhi is not a state - it is our true nature. It is permanent (sthiti meaning "steady" or "remaining"), unlike the earlier stages of samAdhi. See nirvikalpa, samadhi, savikalpa, vikalpa.

sajati [sajAti] – literally belonging to the same caste or tribe; similar or homogeneous.

sakshatkara [sAkShAtkAra] – evident or intuitive perception, realization.

sakshibhava [sAkShibhAva] – being or becoming (bhAva) a "witness" (sAkShin).

sakshin [sAkShin] – a witness, the ego or subject as opposed to the object (also sAkShi or sAkShi).

sakshya [sAkShya] – visible (to); testimony, evidence; that which is witnessed (by the witness). (Also sAkShyam.)

sama [sama] – same, equal, similar; neutral, indifferent; impartial.

samadhana [samAdhAna] – contemplation, profound meditation; more usually translated as concentration; one of the "six qualities" that form part of Shankara's chatuShTaya sampatti. See chatushtaya sampatti, shamadi shatka sampatti.

samadhi [samAdhi] – the state of total peace and stillness achieved during deep meditation. Several "stages" are defined - see vikalpa, savikalpa samadhi, nirvikalpa samadhi and sahaja sthiti.

samana [samAna] – one of the five "vital airs," concerned with the digestive system. More generally, relates to assimilation and integration of perceptions with existing knowledge.

samanvaya [samanvaya] – regular succession or order; connected sequence or



## Common Sanskrit technical terms

consequence; conjunction; reconciliation through proper interpretation (not to be confused with samavAya).

samanya [sAmAnyA] – general, universal, opposite of specific; genus as opposed to species.

samashti [samaShTi] – totality, as opposed to vyaShTi, the individual.

samavaya [samavAya] – (in philosophy) the constant and inseparable conjunction between an attribute and substance (e.g. blue and lotus) or between a whole and its parts (e.g. cloth and fibers). Literally, it means 'coming or meeting together' (not to be confused with samanvaya).

sambandha [sambandha] – relationship, literally "union, association, conjunction."

samhita [saMhitA] – a philosophical or religious text constructed according to certain rules of sound. There are many of these in the Vedas. The one most likely to be encountered is the aShTAvakra saMhitA or Gita. This book is not part of the Vedas. See Astavakra, gita.

samitpani [samitpANi] – (literally) holding fuel in the hands, i.e. having renounced all desire and approaching the deity to offer sacrifice.

samkhya [sAMkhya] – one of the three main divisions of Hindu philosophy and one of the six darshana-s; attributed to Kapila.

sampradaya [sampradAya] – the tradition or established doctrine of teaching from master to pupil through the ages. See also parampara.

samsara [saMsAra] – the continual cycle of death and rebirth, transmigration etc. to which we are supposedly subject in the phenomenal world until we become enlightened and escape. saMsArin - one who is bound to the cycle of birth and death.

samshaya [saMshaya] – uncertainty, irresolution, hesitation or doubt. See manana.

samsiddhika [saMsiddhika] – self-existent, existing by its own nature or essence, existing absolutely, absolute.

samsthana [saMsthAna] – literally 'standing together', resembling; having the same shape, form or appearance.

samyoga [saMyoga] – conjunction, combination, connection; in Sanskrit grammar, the term for a conjunct consonant, i.e. two or more consonants joined together without an intervening vowel sound. The word literally means 'joined together'.

sanatana [sanAtana] – literally "eternal" or "permanent"; in conjunction with dharma, this refers to our essential nature. The phrase "sanAtana dharma" is also used to refer to the traditional (also carrying the sense of "original" and "unadulterated") Hindu practices or as a synonym for "Hinduism." See dharma.

sanchita [saMchita] – one of the three types of saMskAra, literally meaning "collected" or "piled up." That saMskAra, which has been accumulated from past action but has still not manifest. See agamin, prarabdha, sanskara.

sandhi [saMdhi] – a comprehensive set of rules governing the way in which sounds combine in Sanskrit when they appear next to each other. These prevent, for example, the situation where one word ends in a vowel and the next word begins with one, by merging the two. There are three "classes" of saMdhi, vowel, consonant and visarga.

sanga [sa~Nga] – assembly, association, company. See satsanga.

sankalpa [saMkalpa] – conception, idea or notion formed in the mind (or heart); will,

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

volition, desire, purpose, intention.

sanskara [saMskAra] – Whenever an action is performed with the desire for a specific result (whether for oneself or another), saMskAra is created for that person. These accumulate and determine the situations with which we will be presented in the future and will influence the scope of future actions. There are three "types" - AgAmin, saMchita and prArabdha. The accumulation of saMskAra (saMchita) dictates the tendencies that we have to act in a particular way (vAsanA-s). This is all part of the mechanism of karma. See agamin, karma, prarabdha, sanchita and karma.

santosa [saMtoSha] – satisfaction, contentment with one's lot. One of the five niyama-s in rAja yoga.

sanyasa [saMnyAsa] – the final stage of the traditional Hindu spiritual path; involves complete renunciation. The word literally means "putting or throwing down, laying aside"; i.e. becoming a professional ascetic. One who does so is called a sanyasin (saMnyAsin). See also brahmacharya, grihasta, vanaprastha.

sara [sAra] – compendium, summary, epitome (as in upadesha sAra - summary of teaching of Ramana Maharshi).

sarpa [sarpa] – snake, serpent.

sarvabhuta [sarvabhUta] – being, everywhere; all beings; the maker or cause of all things; the supreme pervading spirit.

sarvajna [sarvaj~na] – omniscient; all knowing (of Ishvara).

sarva-vedanta-siddhanta-sarasangraha [sarva vedAnta siddhAnta sArasaMgrahaH] – book attributed to Shankara. sarva means "whole"; siddhAnta means "conclusion"; sAra means "epitome" or "summary"; saMgraha carries the sense of "complete summing-up." So, as a whole, it means something like "Everything you always wanted to know about Vedanta."

sarveshvara [sarveshvara] – omnipotent; the 'lord of all'.

sashtanga [sAShTA~Nga] – reverential prostration, performed with 'eight limbs' - feet, knees, breast, hands, forehead.

sat [sat] – existence, reality, truth (to mention a few). See also ananda, chit, satchitananda.

satchitananda [sat chit Ananda - sachchidAnanda] – the oft used word to describe our true nature, in so far as this can be put into words (which it can't). It translates as being-consciousness-bliss but see the separate bits for more detail.

satkarya vada [satkArya vAda] – the doctrine of the effect actually pre-existing in the cause (usually in reference to the creation).

satsanga [satsa~Nga] – association with the good; keeping "good company"; most commonly used now to refer to a group of people gathered together to discuss (Advaita) philosophy.

satta [sattA] – existence, being.

sattva [sattva] – the 'highest' of the three guna. Associated with stillness, peace, truth, wisdom, unselfishness and spirituality, representing the highest aspirations of man. Adjective - sattvic (Eng.), sAttvika (Sansk.). See guna.

sattvapati [sattvApati] – the (4th) stage on a spiritual path, after which there is no longer any need for effort to be made (so-called because there is now an abundance of sattva). Apatti means "entering into a state or condition."

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- satya [satya] – true, real; satyam - truth. Also one of the yama-s - truthfulness, sincerity.
- saucha [shaucha] – purity of mind, integrity. One of the five niyama-s in Raja yoga.
- savikalpa [savikalpa] – (referring to samadhi) still "with" doubts about one's identity with the one Self. See nirvikalpa, samadhi, vikalpa; also means 'differentiated', possessing variety or distinctions.
- savikalpaka [savikalpaka] – knowledge depending upon or derived from the senses; determinate knowledge.
- savikara [savikAra] – 'with change', as opposed to nirvikAra - used of anAtman as opposed to Atman.
- shabda [shabda] – scriptural or verbal testimony. See pramana, nyaya prasthanana, prasthanana-traya, sruti, smriti.
- shakha-chandra-nyaya [shAkhA chandra nyAya] – the rule of the moon on a bough. Relates to the situation where one thing (the moon) is effectively pointed out by its relationship to something else (the bough).
- shakti [shakti] – power, strength (especially in connection with a deity).
- shama [shama] – literally tranquility, absence of passion but more usually translated as mental discipline or self-control; one of the shamAdi ShaTka sampatti or "six qualities" that form part of Shankara's chatuShTaya sampatti. See chatushtaya sampatti, shamadi shatka sampatti.
- shamadi shatka sampatti [shamAdi ShaTka sampatti] – the six qualities that form part of Shankara's chatuShTaya sampatti. These are shama, dama, uparati, titikShA, samAdhAna and shraddhA.
- Shankara [shaMkara] – 8th Century Indian philosopher responsible for firmly establishing the principles of Advaita. Though he died at an early age (32?), he commented on a number of major Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahmasutras, as well as being attributed as the author of a number of famous works, such as Atmabodha, Bhaja Govindam and Vivekachudamani.
- Shankaracharya [shaMkarAchArya] – The title given to one of the four teachers (see acharya) following the tradition in India established by Shankara (see Shankara). He set up four positions, North, South, East and West, to be held by realized men, who would take on the role of teacher and could be consulted by anyone having problems or questions of a spiritual nature.
- shanti [shAnti] – peace, tranquility.
- sharana [sharaNa] – protection, refuge, asylum. Also used in the context of 'surrender'.
- sharira [sharIra] – one's body (divided into gross, subtle and causal aspects); literally "that which is easily destroyed or dissolved."
- shastra [shAstra] – order, teaching, instruction; any sacred book or composition that has divine authority.
- shastriya anumana [shAstrIya anumAna] – inference based upon the material contained in the scriptures.
- Shiva [shiva] – the 'auspicious one' - the third god of the Hindu trinity (Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver and Shiva, the destroyer). Happy, fortunate; liberation, final emancipation.
- shloka [shloka] – a stanza (verse), usually from the scriptures. Pedantically, it refers to a specific meter.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

- shraddha [shraddhA] – faith, trust or belief (in the absence of direct personal experience) - the student needs this initially in respect of what he is told by the guru or reads in the scriptures; one of the "six qualities" that form part of Shankara's chatuShTaya sampatti. See chatuShTaya sampatti, shamAdi shhaTka sampatti.
- shravana [shravaNa] – listening to the teachings (of such works as the Upanishads) unfolded by the guru; first of the three key stages in the classical spiritual path. See also manana, nididhyasana.
- shreyas [shreyas] – the 'good' as opposed to the 'pleasant'; most excellent, best, auspicious.
- shrotriya [shrotriya] – someone (usually a brAhmaNa) who is well-versed in the scriptures.
- shruti [shruti] – refers to the Vedas, incorporating the Upanishads. Literally means "hearing" and refers to the belief that the books contain orally transmitted, sacred wisdom from the dawn of time. See nyaya prasthana, pramana, smriti.
- shubhecha [shubhechChA] – good desire; the initial impulse that start us on a spiritual search. shubha means "auspicious," "good (in a moral sense)" and ichChA means "wish," "desire".
- shuddhi [shuddhi] – cleansing, purification as in chitta-shuddhi, purification of the mind.
- shudra [shUdra] – the fourth and lowest of the traditional four castes in India, their purpose said to be to serve the three higher castes.
- shunya [shunya] – empty, void as in the Buddhist belief of shunya vAda.
- siddhanta [siddhAnta] – final end or purpose; conclusion of an argument; fixed or established teaching on a particular topic, e.g. advaita siddhAnta is the strict teaching according to Shankara.
- sisya [shiShya] – pupil, scholar, disciple
- smriti [smRRiti] – refers to material "remembered" and subsequently written down. In practice, it refers to books of law (in the sense of guidance for living) which were written and based upon the knowledge in the Vedas, i.e. the so-called dharma-shAstras - Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parashara. In the context of nyaya prasthana, it is used to refer to just one of these books - the Bhagavad Gita. See pramana, nyaya prasthana, sruti.
- sopadhika [sopAdhika] – nirupAdhika adhyAsa is superimposition as of the snake on the rope, as opposed to sopAdhika adhyAsa e.g. the sunrise, which is still seen even when the mistake is realized.
- sparsha [sparsha] – touch
- sphota [sphoTa] – sound (conceived as eternal, indivisible and creative) - the theory that the universe was brought into existence as a result of sound (c.f. 'in the beginning was the word').
- sri [shrl] – used as a title, c.f. "reverend," to signify an eminent person. May also be used in a similar manner to refer to revered objects or works of scripture, for example.
- srimat [shrlmat] – beautiful, charming, lovely. shrlmatl is used as an honorific when addressing respected ladies in the same way as shrl above.
- srishTi [sRRiShTi] – creation.
- srishTi-drishTi-vada [sRRiShTi dRRiShTivAda] – the theory that the world is separate from ourselves, having been created (by God or big-bang) and evolving independently of

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

ourselves, i.e. the "common sense" view of things. See also adhyasa, ajati, drishti-srishti-vada.

sthitaprajna [meaning one "standing" (sthita) in "wisdom" (praj~na); a man of steadiness and calm, firm in judgment, contented. The name given by the Bhagavad Gita to one who is Self-realized.

sthula [sthula] – large, thick, coarse, dense. sthUla sharIra is the gross body.

sukha [sukha] – (adj) comfortable, happy, prosperous etc; (noun) comfort, pleasure, happiness.

sukshma [sUkShma] – subtle, as in the subtle body - sUkShma sharIra.

sushupti [suShupti] – the deep-sleep state of consciousness. The "sleeper ego" is called praj~na. See also, jagrat, svapna, turiya.

sva [sva] – one's own.

svabhava [svabhAva] – one's natural disposition. (adj. svAbhAvika - arising from its own nature; ; like the intrinsic properties of things. e.g. heat is the intrinsic nature of fire.

svadharma [svadharma] – one's own dharma. See dharma.

svadhyaya [svAdhyAya] – self-study or more specifically studying the scriptures, literally reciting the Vedas in a low voice to oneself. One of the five niyama-s in Raja yoga.

svagata [svagata] – belonging to oneself.

svapna [svapna] – the dream state of consciousness. The "dreamer ego" is called taijasa. See also, jagrat, sushupti, turiya.

svara [svara] – Sanskrit term for a vowel, literally meaning "sound"; sounded for 1 mAtrA or measure.

svarga [svarga] – heaven.

svarupa [svarUpa] – one's own character or nature (rUpa means 'form'); e.g., svarUpAnanda - one's own Ananda (limitless bliss).

svatantra [svatantra] – independent, self-willed, free. (Also svAtantrya - following one's own free will or choice). (Opposite - paratantra.)

svata-pramanya-vada [svataH prAmANyavAda] – the theory of the "self-validity of knowledge," i.e. accepting a given explanation, if reasonable, until something better comes along. (c.f. Occam's razor)

svayam [svayam] – of or by oneself.

svecha [svechChA] – free will.

swami [svAmin svAmi] – a spiritual preceptor Brahman or Pandit (used as a title at the end of names

## T

tadatmya [tAdAtmya] – sameness, identity of nature or character.

taijasa [taijasa] – the individual "dreamer ego" in the dream state of consciousness, svapna. See also visva, prajna.

Taittiriya [taittirIya] – one of the principal Upanishads. (taittirIya was one of the schools of the Yajur Veda.)

tamas [tamas] – the "lowest" of the three guna. Associated with matter and carrying characteristics such as inertia, laziness, heedlessness and death. It literally means "darkness" or "gloom." Adjective - tamasic (Eng.); tAmasa or tAmasika (Sansk.). See

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

guna.

- tanmatra [tanmAtra] – subtle element, of which there are five: shabda (sound, speech), sparsha (touch), rUpa (form), rasa (taste) and gandha (smell). (The gross elements are the mahAbhUta-s: ether, air, fire, water and earth.)
- tantra [tantra] – main or essential point. (Also doctrine or theory and the body of scriptures relating to attaining mystical union with the divine through meditation.)
- tapas [tapas] – austerity, living a simple life without comforts. One of the five niyama-s in Raja yoga.
- tarka [tarka] – reasoning, speculation, philosophical system or doctrine.
- tarkika [tArkika] – (adj. from tarka) related to or belonging to logic; (noun, less common) logician or philosopher.
- tarpana [tarpaNa] – satiating, refreshing, process of pleasing (esp. of gods via appropriate ceremony).
- tatastha [taTastha] – a property distinct from the nature of the body and yet that by which it is known. An example would be telling someone that the house they are referring to in the street ahead is the one with the crow on the chimney. The house is what the listener is interested in but the crow is a taTastha lakShaNa, i.e. that by which it is known.
- tatratatra [tatratatra] – everywhere (tatra on its own means 'there, in that place, thither, on that occasion).
- tejas [tejas] – fire (or light) - one of the five elements or pa~nchabhUta. Associated with sight.
- tikka [TIkA] – commentary, esp on another commentary, e.g. that by Anandagiri on Shankara's commentary on Gaudapada's kArikA.
- tikshna [tlkShNa] – sharp (of the intellect - buddhi).
- titiksha [titikShA] – forbearance or patience; one of the "six qualities" that form part of Shankara's chatuShTaya sampatti. See chatushtaya sampatti, shamadi shatka sampatti.
- trikala [trikAla] – the three times or tenses (past, present and future).
- trikalatita [trikAlAtIta] – that which transcends past, present and future (describing the Self).
- tripti [tRRipti] – contentment, satisfaction.
- triputi [tripuTI] – threefold (noun) used of knower-known-act of knowing, seer-seen-act of seeing etc; (tripuTa is the adjective)
- tritiya [tRRitIya] – third.
- tucha [tuchCha] – empty, vain, trifling, little; also used in the sense of 'totally unreal', c.f. prAtibhAsika.
- turiya [turIya] – literally the "fourth" [state of consciousness]. It refers to the non-dual reality, the background against which the other states (waking, dream and deep sleep) arise. It is our true nature. The other three states are mithyA. (If defined merely as the highest "state" then Ramana Maharshi calls our true nature 'turiyatita' but this word is not encountered in the scriptures.)
- tyaga [tyAga] – renunciation.

U

### Common Sanskrit technical terms

- ubhaya [ubhaya] – literally both, in both ways, of both kinds; having intermediary status.
- uchita [uchita] – sufficient, required. As in uchita desha kAla - (every object requires a certain amount of space and duration for it to be 'real' ).
- udaharana [udAharaNa] – example, instance, illustration.
- udana [udAna] – one of the five "vital airs," associated with the throat. More generally relates to the understanding that has been gained from past experience.
- upadana [upAdAna] – literally "the act of taking for oneself"; used to refer to the "material cause" in logic (upAdAna karaNa).
- upadesha [upadesha] – instruction or teaching.
- Upadesha Sahasri [upadesha sAhasri] – "A Thousand Teachings" - book attributed to Shankara (with more certainty than most). sAhasrika means "consisting of a thousand."
- upadhi [upAdhi] – literally, this means something that is put in place of another thing; a substitute, phantom or disguise. In Vedanta, it is commonly referred to as a "limitation" or "limiting adjunct" i.e. one of the "identifications" made by ahaMkAra that prevents us from realizing the Self.
- upahita [upahita] – depending upon; connected with.
- upamana [upamAna] – comparison, resemblance, analogy.
- upanishad [upaniShad] – one of the (108+) books forming part (usually the end) of one of the four Vedas. The parts of the word mean: to sit (Shad) near a master (upa) at his feet (ni), so that the idea is that we sit at the feet of a master to listen to his words. Monier-Williams (Ref. 5) states that, "according to native authorities, upanishad means "setting at rest ignorance by revealing the knowledge of the supreme spirit." See Vedanta.
- uparama or uparati [uparama or uparati] – desisting from sensual enjoyment; "revelling" in that which is "near" i.e. one's own Self; also translated as following one's dharma or duty; one of the "six qualities" that form part of Shankara's chatushtaya sampatti. See chatushtaya sampatti, shamadi shatka sampatti.
- upasaka [upAsaka] – worshipper, follower, seeker.
- upasana [upAsana] – worship, homage, waiting upon; literally the act of sitting or being near to; sometimes used in the sense of "meditation."
- upashama [upashama] – cessation, stopping, becoming quiet. [prapa~nchopashamam in the Ma. U.]
- upaya [upAya] – another term for "path" (see marga) - that by which one reaches one's aim, a means or expedient, way.
- ushman [UShman] – the Sanskrit term for the sibilants, sh, Sh and s, together with h. The word itself literally means "heat, steam or vapour."
- utkarsha [utkarSha] – superior, eminent.
- uttama [uttama] – uppermost, excellent, highest.
- Uttara Mimamsa [uttara mImAMsA] – the Vedanta philosophy, based on the latter (uttara) part of the Vedas rather than the earlier (pUrva). Its founder was Badarayana, who authored the Brahmasutras. There are three main schools within this - dvaita, advaita and vishiShTAdvaita. See Brahmasutras, mimamsa, purvamimamsa, veda.

## Common Sanskrit technical terms

### V

- vacharambhana or vagalambana [vAchArambhaNa or vAgAlambana] – depending on mere words or some merely verbal difference.
- Vachaspati [vAchaspati] – name of one of the two schools of Advaita, after the philosopher vAchaspati mishra. It is also called the bhAmatl school. The other school is the vivaraNa school.
- vachyartha [vAchyArtha] – the directly expressed meaning (literal description), as opposed to lakShyArtha.
- vada [vAda] – speech, proposition, discourse, argument, discussion, explanation or exposition (of scriptures etc.); dispute with the aim of reaching the right conclusion, irrespective of who 'wins'. (Three types of disputation: jalpa, vitaNDa, vAda).
- vaidarmya [vaidharmya] – difference, heterogeneity.
- vaidharmya [vaidharmya] – having different nature or qualities; heterogeneity.
- vaikhari [vaikharI] – speech; the fourth stage in the production of sound.
- vaikuntha [vaikuNTha] – heaven.
- vairagya [vairAgya] – detachment or dispassion; indifference to the pleasure that results from success or the disappointment that results from failure. Literally to be "deprived of" (vai) "passion or desire" (rAga). See sadhana, chatushtaya sampatti.
- vaisheshika [vaisheShika] – one of the six classical Indian Philosophies, a later development of nyAya by the theologian, Kanada; named after the nine "essentially different substances" believed to constitute matter. See darshana, vishesha.
- vaishvanara [vaishvAnara] – the gross physical condition, or waking state of man (more usually known as vishva, the waker). brahman "located in" the bodily form. Literally means "relating to or belonging to all men, universal." The word is also used for the macrocosmic level, virAj or virAT.
- vaishya [vaishya] – a working man, trader or farmer - the third of the traditional four castes in India.
- vaitathya [vaitathya] – falseness. Equivalent to mithyAtva. Used in second chapter of Gaudapada's kArIkA-s on Ma. U. to explain meaning of prapa~nchopashamam in 7th mAntra.
- vak [vAch] – speech, language sound; speech personified as the Goddess, wife of prajApati (lord of creatures).
- Vakyapadiya [vAkyapadIya] – book on Sanskrit grammar, written by bhartRRihari.
- valli [vallI] – relating to the sections of particular Upanishads.
- vanaprastha [vanaprastha] – the third stage of the traditional Hindu spiritual path, in which the Brahman retires from life and becomes a "forest dweller," living as a hermit. Traditionally speaking, "a properly initiated dvija or twice-born." See also brahmacharya, grihasta, sanyasa.
- vandya putra [vandhyA putra] – literally 'son of a barren woman'; used in general to refer to anything that is imaginary or impossible.
- vasana [vAsanA] – literally "desiring" or "wishing" - latent behavioral tendency in one's nature brought about through past action (karma) and the saMskAra that resulted from this. See karma, sanskara.
- Vasishta [vAsiShTha] – eponymous sage of the "Yoga Vasishta" one of the classical



## Common Sanskrit technical terms

works of Advaita.

vastava [vAstava] – substantial, real, true.

vastu [vastu] – a thing that exists, object, subject matter. Strictly speaking, there is only one vastu - Atman. Everything else is incidental - it comes and goes. Only Consciousness is always there, intrinsic.

vastu-tantra [vastu tantra] – objective, governed by reality (as opposed to kartRRi-tantra or puruSha-tantra, the result of 'doing').

vayu [vAyu] – air (or wind) - one of the five elements or pa~nchabhUta. Associated with touch.

veda [veda] – knowledge, but the word is normally only used to refer to one of the four Vedas (see Vedanta) and vidyA is used for knowledge per se. See vidya.

Vedanta [vedAnta] – literally "end" or "culmination" (anta) of knowledge (veda) but veda in this context refers to the four Vedas, the Hindu equivalents of the Christian bible (called Rig, RRig veda; Sama, sama veda; Atharva, atharva veda; Yajur, yajur veda). Traditionally, the last part of the vedas (i.e. "end") is devoted to the Upanishads. See upanishad.

Vedantasara [vedAntasAra] – literally "essence of Vedanta"; a treatise on Vedanta by Sadananda Yogindra.

vesha [veSha] – dress, apparel, exterior, assumed appearance etc.; used in the sense of the disguise or outward appearance that conceals one's true nature.

vibhu [vibhUti] – all-pervading, omnipresent, eternal; mighty, powerful; lord, ruler, sovereign (also applied to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).

vibhuti [vibhUti] – (Adj.) pervading, abundant, powerful. (Noun) plenty, abundance, superhuman power, splendor, glory, magnificence; the ashes of cow dung, smeared on the forehead. (In devotional ceremonies, a small ball of cow dung, together with a flower is used to represent the god gaNesha to protect the house. A new ball is used each day and these are collected and then burnt to produce the ash.)

vichara [vichAra] – consideration, reflection, deliberation, investigation. vichAra mArga is translated as "Direct Path".

videha [videha] – bodiless, incorporeal, dead; videha mukti is deliverance by release from the body (death).

vidhi [vidhi] – formula, injunction, rule, precept, law; any prescribed act, rite or ceremony; mode of conduct or behavior.

vidya [vidyA] – knowledge, science, learning, philosophy (as opposed to j~nAna, which rather refers to direct self-knowledge. Atma j~nAna). Atma-vidyA or brahma-vidyA is the objective knowledge of the Self taught by the scriptures and guru.

Vidyaranya [vidyAraNya] – author of the Panchadashi.

vijati [vijAti] – literally belonging to another caste or tribe; dissimilar or heterogeneous.

vijnana [vij~nAna] – discerning, understanding, comprehending; "right apprehension" in the case of nididhyAsana as opposed to dhyAna. vij~nAna vAda is the philosophical theory of Idealism.

vijnanamayakosha [vij~nAnamayakosha] – the intellectual sheath (one of the five "coverings" that surround our true essence).

vikalpa [vikalpa] – doubt, uncertainty or indecision.

### Common Sanskrit technical terms

- vikara [vikAra] – transformation, modification, change of form or nature. Also vikAratva - the state of change; and vikAravat - undergoing changes.
- vikarma [vikarma] – prohibited, unlawful - actions that must be avoided.
- vikshepa [vikShepa] – the "projecting" power of mAyA. In the rope-snake metaphor, this superimposes the image of the snake upon the rope. See avarana, maya.
- vilakshana [vilakShaNa] – different from; not admitting of exact definition.
- viparita [viparIta] – reversed, inverted, perverse, wrong; contrary; false, untrue. viparIta lakShaNa is using a word in the opposite sense, i.e sarcasm.
- viparyasa [viparyAsa] – imagining what is unreal or false to be real or true; error backed by ignorance; self-ignorance plus self-delusion.
- viparyaya [viparyaya] – error, misapprehension, mixing up the nature of one thing with another or mistaking something to be the opposite of what it actually is (literally reversed, inverted).
- viraj or virat [virAj or virAT] – gross, macrocosmic equivalent of vishva (vaishvAnara) at the level of creation.
- virama [virAma] – in Sanskrit, the diagonal mark underneath a consonant to indicate that it is not to be sounded with a vowel after it. The literal meaning is "cessation, termination or end." (All consonants are sounded with 'a' by default, unless indicated otherwise.) A consonant with such a mark is called a halanta consonant. (The term also refers to the single vertical mark to indicate the end of a sentence or single line of a verse of poetry.)
- virodha [virodha] – opposition hostility; a (logical) contradiction or inconsistency.
- visarga [visarga] – this literally means "sending out" or "emission." In Sanskrit, it is represented as aH but is not actually a letter and does not occur on its own. Its effect is to add a brief, breathing out sound after the vowel sound associated with a consonant; represented by two dots placed to the right of the associated letter.
- vishaya [viShaya] – object of sensory perception; any subject or topic; the subject of an argument. (not to be confused with vishaya, with a palatal 'sh', meaning 'doubt or uncertainty). Adjective - viShayika.
- vishesha (noun);visheshana (adj) [visheSha visheShaNa] – literally "distinction" or "difference between"; particular or specific. The Vaisheshika philosophy believes that the material universe is made up of nine substances, each of which is "essentially different" from any other. See Vaisheshika.adjective - distinguishing, specifying, qualifying.
- visheshya [visheShya] – (noun) that which is to be distinguished (from something else).
- vishishta [vishiShTa] – distinguished, particular, excellent (as in yoga vashiShTa).
- vishishtadvaita [vishiShTAdvaita] – qualified non-dualism; belief that God and the Atman are distinct but not separate. Ramanuja is the scholar most often associated with this philosophy. See advaita, dvaita.
- vishvarupa [vishvarUpa] – manifold, various.
- visva [vishva] – the "waker ego" in the waking state of consciousness, jagrat. Also sometimes referred to as vaishvAnara. See also taijasa, prajna.
- vitanda [vitaNDa] – cavil, fallacious controversy, perverse or frivolous argument, criticism; argument purely for the sake of winning the point (three types of disputation: jalpa, vitaNDa, vAda).

### Common Sanskrit technical terms

- vivarana [vivaraNa] – literally "explanation" or "interpretation"; name of one of the two schools of Advaita. The other school is the vAcaspati or bhAmati school.
- vivarta [vivarta] – an apparent or illusory form; unreality caused by avidyA.
- vivarta vada [vivarta vAda] – the theory that the world is only an apparent projection of Ishvara (i.e. an illusion).
- viveka [viveka] – discrimination; the function of buddhi, having the ability to differentiate between the unreal and the real. See sadhana, chatushtaya sampatti.
- Vivekachudamani [vivekachUDamaNi] – the title of a book attributed to Shankara. chUDamaNi is the name given to the jewel worn on top of the head. An English version of the book is called "The Crest Jewel of Discrimination."
- vritti [vRRitti] – in the context of Vedanta, this means a mental disposition. In general, it can mean a mode of conduct or behaviour, character or disposition, business or profession etc. See aham vritti and idam vritti.
- vyakhya [vyAkhyA] – (v) to explain in detail; (n) explanation, gloss, comment.
- vyakhyata [vyAkhyAta] – name given to the successors of Shankara, who commented on his interpretations and (often) gave other interpretations.
- vyakta [vyakta] – manifested, apparent, visible, perceptible to the senses as opposed to avyakta - transcendental.
- vyakti [vyakti] – visible appearance or manifestation; specific appearance, distinctness; an individual (as opposed to jAti, the genus).
- vyana [vyAna] – one of the five "vital airs," concerned with the circulatory system. More generally, alludes to the discriminatory faculties, evaluating and judging etc.
- vyanjana [vya~njana] – Sanskrit term for a consonant, meaning a "decoration" (of the basic vowel sound).
- vyapti [vyApti] – inseparable presence of one thing in another, invariable concomitance (as in e.g. no smoke without fire).
- vyashti [vyaShTi] – the individual or "individuality" as opposed to the totality, samaShTi.
- vyatireka [vyatireka] – distinction, difference, separateness, separation, exclusion; a separate or particular existence. Logical discontinuance (in 'anvaya vyatireka').
- vyatirikta [vyatirikta] – separate, different or distinct from.
- vyavahara (noun) vyavaharika (adj.) [vyavahAra vyAvahArika] – the relative, practical, or phenomenal world of appearances; the normal world in which we live and which we usually believe to be real; as opposed to pAramArthika (reality) and prAtibhAsika (illusory). See paramarthika and pratibhasika.

### Y

- yajna [yaj~na] – worship, devotion, sacrifice, offering.
- yama [yama] – restraint. literally, rein or bridle. There are five of these forming the first step of Raja yoga - ahiMsA, satyam, brahmacharya, asteya and aparigraha.
- yatrayatra [yatrayatra] – wherever (yatra on its own means 'where, wherein, to which place, whither').
- yoga [yoga] – literally "joining" or "attaching" (our word "yoke" derives from this). It is used generally to refer to any system whose aim is to "join" our "individual self" back to the "universal Self." The Yoga system pedantically refers to that specified by Patanjali. See bhakti, jnana, karma.

*Common Sanskrit technical terms*

yuga [yuga] – one of the four ages in the cycle of creation. See kalpa, kali yuga.

yugapat-srishti [yugapatsRRiShTi] – instantaneous creation, i.e. simultaneous with the perception of it. yugapad means "together, at the same time."

yukti [yukti] – reasoning, argument, induction, deduction (as opposed to intuition - anubhava).

yuta [yuta] – united, combined, joined; connected with, concerning, associated with.

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