Introduction to Conjunct Consonants

For complete listing of conjunct Consonants please refer to


In words two or more consonants can come together before a vowel sound. In संक्षेपणम् as many as five consonants can come together in this way! This combination of two or more consonants is called a conjunct consonant. Although the phonetic integrity of the combined letter is always maintained, there structural integrity is not. The new form is usually – but not always – a combination of elements from the component letters. A certain amount of familiarity with the format of conjunct consonants is a must for anyone starting study of संक्षेपणम्: a mastery of all possible conjunct consonants, fortunately, can wait!

Some general principles are followed in forming the conjunct consonants.

**Type 1.** A fragment of the first consonant is retained and the second consonant is written in full. Often the vertical line (a characteristic of many letters of the alphabet) of the first member is dropped.

Examples: सख्य (friendship); मुरघ (fool); विचन (obstacle); गुछ (bunch); राजय (kingdom); मध्य (middle), संत (great people), अन्या (mother), चिन्ना (worry), शव्द (word), ताल्क्य (palatel), डाल्त्य (dental), स्वर (vowel), व्यज्ञ (consonant), सरस्वती, कल्पना, कृष्ण, राम: पश्यति (Rama sees).

**Type 2:** The second consonant is placed below the first consonant.

ग्र्दा, र्द्ध, अव्य (knowledge), पत्रा (प्र+अ+द्र+म+अ), पात्रा (प्र+अ+द्र+अ+ण+अ), उद्र (उ+द्र+अ+ब+अ)

**Type 3:** Conjunct consonants with श् as the first member have a special symbol for श् when the consonant that follows is ल, व, र, or च। If any other consonants follow, श् drops the vertical line, as in type 1 consonants.

Examples: विश्वषण (analysis), ईश्वर (God), अश्व (horse), भिन्न (mixed), पश्चिम (west).

**Type 4:** Conjunct consonants with (र्) are formed differently. The way they are formed depends on whether the (र्) is the first or the second member of the conjunct consonant. When (र्) is the first member of the conjunct consonant, the symbol for (र्) is placed above the second member. When (र्) is the second member of the conjunct consonant, it is represented by a slanted line attached to the side of the first member.

Examples: कर्म (क+अ+र+म+अ; duty); सर्व (स्+अ+र+व+अ; all); चल्वि (च्च+अ+र+च्च+अ; discussion). सर्व (स्+अ+र+प+अ; snake); दर् (द+अ+र+प+अ; mirror).

व्ह्र (व्ह+ज+र+अ; hard); च्रन (च्ह+क+र+अ; wheel); प्रीति (पू+र+ई+त्त+इ; affection); क्रम (क+र+अ+म+अ, system); क्रान्ति (क+र+अ+न+ल+इ; proceeding); क्रन्द (क+र+अ+न+द+अ; cry)
Type 5: Some special forms of commonly used conjunct consonants are given below:

Examples: जान (ञ + ज + आ + न +अ; knowledge); चित्र (च+ड+त+ऋ+अ; picture); क्रेन (क+ष+ए + त+ऋ +अ; field); चित्र (च+ड+त+ऋ +अ; mind); चिर (च+इ+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ), वृक्ष (प+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ), वृक्ष (व+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ+ऋ)

Guruvandanam

श्रुतिमृतिपुराणानाम् आलयं करुणालयम्। नमामि भगवत्तपादं श्रीर लोकश्रीरम्। ॥ १ ॥

śru-ti-smr-ti-pu-rā-ṇa-ṇa-m ā-la-ya-rā ka-ru-ṇa-la-ya-m,
na-mā-mi bha-ga-vā-t-pā-da-m śa-n-ka-ra-m lo-ka-sa-ṇ-ka-ra-m

श्रीरं श्रीराचार्य केशवं वादरायणम्। सूत्रभाष्यकृतां वन्दे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः। ॥ २ ॥

śa-n-ka-ra-rā śa-n-ka-rā-cā-r-ya-rā ke-śa-va-rā bā-da-rā-ya-ṇa-m, sū-ta-bhā-s-ya-kr-tau va-n-de bha-ga-va-n-tau pu-na-h pu-na-h

ईश्वरो गुरुरात्मेति मृतिभिवभागिने। व्योमवद्यापतिद्याय दुःखिणामूलवे नामः। ॥ ३ ॥

i-s-va-ro gu-ru-rā-t-me-ti mūr-ti-bhe-da-vi-bhā-gi-ne,
v-yo-ma-vā-d-v-yā-p-ta-de-hā-yā da-kśi-ṇa-mū-r-ta-yae na-ma-h

गुकारस्तन्यकारो वै रुकारस्तन्निविष्कर्तकः। अन्यपरानिरोधित्वादु गुरवित्यभिवधिते। ॥ ४ ॥

gu-kā-ra-s-t-vā-n-dha-kā-ro vai ru-kā-ra-s-ta-ni-va-r-ta-ka-h,
a-n-dha-kā-ra-ni-ro-dhi-t-vā-d gu-ru-ri-t-ya-bhi-dhī-ya-te

सदाशिशवसमाम्भों श्रीराचार्यसमथमयाम्। अस्तमदाचार्यपर्यत्नां वन्दे गुरुपरमपरम्। ॥ ५ ॥

sa-dā-sī-va-sa-mā-ra-m-bhā-m sa-n-ka-rā-cā-r-ya-ma-dh-ya-mā-m,
a-s-ma-dā-cā-r-ya-pa-r-ya-n-tā-m va-n-de gu-ru-pa-ra-m-pa-rā-m