

## **GUṆA-VRDDHI CORRESPONDENCES: VOWEL GRADATION, APOPHONY or ABLAUT**

Apophony, i.e., marking different functions of a word by varying the vowel sound appears in many languages in one of two ways: **qualitative** (the sound is modified), and **quantitative** (the sound is omitted, shortened, or lengthened). In Sanskrit, there are two grades of lengthening: *guṇa-* (the secondary gradation of a vowel) and *vr̥ddhi-* (the strengthening or further gradation). According to Pāṇini, *guṇa-* and *vr̥ddhi-* represented replacements for the vowels *i*, *u*, *ṛ*, and *ḷ* (1.1.3); *guṇa-* specifically denoting *a*, *e*, *o* (1.1.2), and *vr̥ddhi-* denoting *ā*, *ai*, *au* (1.1.1).

The sequence is as follows:

Basic vowels:	a	ā	i/ī	u/ū	ṛ/(ṝ)	ḷ
<i>guṇa-</i> :	a	(ā)	e	o	ar	al
<i>vr̥ddhi-</i> :	ā	ā	ai	au	ār	(āl)

NOTE: *a* is its own *guṇa-*. The process of *guṇa-* occurs with the addition of an *a* to the basic vowel; *vr̥ddhi-* adds an additional *a* to the *guṇa-* (ex. *a* + *i/ī* → *e*).

## **SAMPRASĀRAṆAM**

A reverse process also occurs in Sanskrit. Pāṇini notes (1.1.45) that *samprasāraṇam* (best rendered as *vocalization*) occurs when the *antaḥsthāḥ* are replaced by *svarāḥ*. Thus, *y*, *v*, *r*, *l* are replaced by *i*, *u*, *ṛ*, *ḷ* respectively:

ya/yā	va/vā	ra/rā	la
i	u	ṛ	ḷ

These processes are very important in internal sandhi and conjugational processes: *vadati* [“(s)he is speaking”] → *udyate* [“...is spoken”]; *\*kṛ-* → *karoti* “(s)he is making.”