

## Absolutives (Gerunds): क्तवा

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What passes for an absolute or gerund is in reality a *past indeclinable participle* that generally refers to the earlier of two actions performed by the same subject (P. 3.4.21). From the Pāṇinian perspective (1.1.37, 40), an absolute is considered an indeclinable (अव्यय-पद-) that includes क्तवा, a कृत् suffix that generates *absolutives*.

[“Absolutives” pertain to forms that stand out of the usual syntactical construction or grammatical relation with other words in a sentence, i.e., they have no relation with the other words in a sentence. An example in English is the following:

“*No further discussion arising*, the meeting was brought to a close.” (The absolute construction is in italics.)

“*Lunch finished*, the guests retired to the lounge.”

The absolute may appear in the following constructions:

*tac chrutvā nṛpatir bhīmo damayantī-sakhīgaṇāt/  
cintayāmāsa tat kāryaṃ sumahat svāṃ sutāṃ prati//*  
[‘*Having heard* that (news) from Damayanti’s friends, King Bhīma turned his attention to that very grave matter concerning his own daughter.’]

In this *śloka*, the absolute or past indeclinable *srutvā* (> *chrutvā* due to an assimilative sandhi rule) is connected to the subject or agent of the main clause: King Bhīma. In terms of English construction, the use may resemble a dependent (adverbial) clause: “When (King Bhīma) heard the news from Damayanti’s friends, ...

### Formation of the Gerund

Gerunds are formed by affixing *-tvā* to the simple root or *-ya* to the root that has an उपसर्ग- or ‘prefix.’ The forms *-itvā* and *-tya* also occur.

*-tvā*

For the *-tvā* affix, the root is usually weak or weakened, and so shares the form with passive participles (भूते कृदन्त) identifiable with the -त्- affix. The weakening of a root follows the past participle formation:

1. A penultimate nasal is *often* dropped (*baddhvā* from *bandh* ‘bind’; *dhvastvā* or *dhvasya* from *dhvaṃs* ‘scatter’; *aktvā* and *-ajya* from *√añj* ‘anoint’;

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2. *samprasāraṇa* of *va-* or *ya-* sometimes occurs: *uptvā* or *-upya* from *vap* ‘strew’; *uktvā* or *-ucya* from *vac* ‘speak’; *iṣtvā* or *-ijya* from *yaj* ‘sacrifice’. Sometimes this occurs with *ra-* as in *prṣtvā* from  $\sqrt{\text{prach}}$  ‘ask’;

3. Final *ā* (आ) is sometimes weakened to *ī* (ई) or *i* (इ): *pītvā* from *pā* ‘drink’; *(d)hitvā* from *dhā* ‘put’; *sthitvā* from *sthā* ‘stand’;

4. Final *m* is sometimes lost after *a*: *gatvā* from *gam* ‘go’; *natvā* from *nam* ‘bow’; *yatvā* from *yam* ‘reach’ or ‘give’;

Final *n* is sometimes lost after *a*: *hatvā* from *han* ‘kill’; *matvā* from *man* ‘think’ (also *manītvā*); *tatvā* from *tan* ‘stretch’ (also *tanītvā*).

5. The form *-itvā*, that is, the insertion of *-i-* before the *-tvā*, occurs when there is difficulty in combining the final form of the root with the following *-t-*: *paṭhitvā* from *paṭh* ‘read’;

<i>dhātu-</i>	<i>gaṇa-</i>	<i>ktvā</i>	translation
bhū	1	bhūtvā	‘having become’
paś	1	drṣtvā	‘having seen’
śru	5	śrutvā	‘having heard’
yā	2	yātvā*	‘having gone’
dīv	4	dyūtvā‡	‘having played’
yuj	7	yuktvā	‘having joined’
kṛ	8	kṛtvā	‘having made’
tud	6	tutvā	‘having stretched’
jñā	9	jñātvā	‘having known’
hu	3	hutvā	‘having offered’
likh	6	lekhītvā** ; likhitvā	‘having written’
nī	1	nītvā	‘having led’
śās	2	śīṣtvā; śāsītvā	‘having instructed’
kath	10	kathayītvā	‘having told’

\*For *yā*, the *-ā-* is retained.

‡ Certain roots in the fourth class ending in *-īv* take *-yū* forms: *sīv* ‘sew’, *sīv* ‘fail’, and *ṣṭhīv* ‘spew’.

\*\*Some forms of the gerund are formed not on a weak or weakened stem but on a strong or strengthened stem: *lekh-* from *likh*; *chay-* from *chā*: *chayītvā*.

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#### -ya

The affix -ya will appear if the उपसर्ग- is attached to the root: *upagamya* ‘having approached’; *samudya* ‘having thoroughly moistened’; *nipīḍya* ‘having squeezed’; *upadhāya* ‘having placed’; *nidhāya* ‘having placed in.’ Here is an example of its occurrence in a *śloka*:

*evam uktas tato haṃsam utsasarja mahīpatiḥ/  
te tu haṃsāḥ samutpatya vidarbhān agamaṃs tataḥ//*  
[Thus addressed, the king thereupon released the goose, and those geese, *having flown up together*, then went to the Vidarbans.]

#### -itvā

See number 5 above. Other examples are *uditvā* (< *vad* ‘speak’) and *charditvā* ( *chrd* ‘to eject.’)

#### -tya

If a root ends in a short vowel -tya is used instead of -ya: *vijitya* ( *ji* ‘conquer’) ‘having excelled’; *pratītya* (*prati* + *√i*) ‘having gone back.’