KEY TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Vowels

The line on top of a vowel indicates that it is long.

a (short) as the u in but

\( \bar{a} \) (long) as the a in far

i (short) as the i in sit

\( \bar{i} \) (long) as the ee in sweet

u (short) as the u in put

\( \bar{u} \) as the oo in cool

e is a long vowel like a in mate

ai as the i in pile

o as the ow in owl

The final ‘i’ in feminine nouns are long in the nominative case but short in the vocative case; eg., Vegavā\( \bar{i} \) and Vegavati (when she is addressed by name).

Consonants

k, b and p are the same as in English

kh, bh and ph are aspirated

g as in goat

gh is aspirated

c as in cello

ch is aspirated
j as in jewel

ṭ and ḍ are hard when dotted below as in talk and dot

t undotted as the th in thermal

ṭh is the aspirated sound

ḍh is aspirated

v is the w sound in English

ṅ is a dental; the tongue has to curl back to touch the palate

ṅ as in king

ṅ as in singe

There are three sibilants in Sanskrit: s as in song, ṣ as in shove and ś as in Śiva.

Note

Some scholars prefer not to use diacritic marks and there are some variations in spelling also. Hence the quotations taken from such works are represented in their original form.