This paper is based on a set of two basic assumptions:

(0.1) Pāṇini's Āṣṭādhyāyī (abbreviated: A) is a set of rules capable of formally deriving an infinite number of correct Sanskrit utterances together with their semantic interpretations.

(0.2) In this grammar, Pāṇini makes use of an elegant system of abbreviations. Further, the placement of rules in this work is such that it requires one to explore devices whereby individual rules are interpreted and the relations which obtain within networks of rules are understood. I think that for the purpose of retrieving information necessary to the proper application of rules, Pāṇini made use of one such device, which I shall call reference. This device involves the following:

(a) computing the indices of terms and symbols or,
(b) reconstructing diverse antecedents in the case of variables.

I shall discuss this device with an emphasis on its indices insofar as they are crucial for selection of a domain and interpretation or application of rules contained in it. This requires a brief account of domains and recurrence, which I think, are essential for understanding the points at issue.

(0.3) Domains and Recurrence

The entire grammar may be visualized as consisting of various domains. Each domain contains one or more interior domains. The domain(s) may likewise contain one or more interior domains. The first rule of a domain is called its governing rule. These rules assist one in scanning. Given an input string, one scans rules to determine which paths should be followed within domains.

* This research was undertaken while I was a University of Rochester Summer Fellowship grantee in 1972. An earlier version of this paper was read at the Third All-India Conference of Linguists, held in January, 1973, at Hyderabad (India).

1 For a fuller account of this aspect of the A, see Rogers (1969) and Sharma (1971).

2 I have used the term 'domain' in the sense of sets or blocks of rules which are contextually or even otherwise related.
These paths are marked by interior domains, each one headed by a rule that specifies operational constraints and offers selection in accordance with the intent. Where choices are varied in operation and there are numerous items to select from, an interior domain is further responsible for sub-branching in the path, resulting in its division into interior domains.

The notion of domains is crucial to the Pāṇinian system of rule placement. This is obvious from the fact that more than three quarters of the entire grammar is covered by four domains. For ease of reference in our subsequent observations, we will refer to these as follows:

(0.3.1) **Controlling domain**: First book of the grammar which contains definitional and interpretational rules in general.

(0.3.2) **Obligatory domain**: Rules contained in the third through fifth books which must be scanned through by every string recognized as base-input (see (0.4.1) below) to the grammar.

(0.3.3) **Aṅga domain**: Headed by rule 6.4.1: aṅgasya and running through the seventh book.

(0.3.4) **Pada domain**: Covering the first three chapters of the eighth book.

The device of recurrence (anuvṛtti) involves presupposition of previous rule(s) or some of their element(s) in the interpretation of successive rules. The idea of domains and interior domains establishes the fact that each rule in a given interior domain requires the recurrence of both domain and interior domain governing rules. Besides this, a given rule in a given interior domain may or may not require the recurrence of a previous rule or elements thereof. Thus recurrence involves a chain of reference to the governing rules or explanatory terms. The lower level rules anticipate the higher level rules in a given domain. The following twofold functions are served by this device of recurrence:

(i) it facilitates interpreting the sense of the rules in question, and

(ii) it imposes a constant check on the direction of a particular generation.

This implies that elements higher up in the chain of recurrence play an important role in deciding what derivative options may or may not be open to a particular input string.

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3 'Intent' is rather a poor choice. But in the absence of a better term I will use it in the sense of what one wants the grammar to do for him or, to put it differently, 'intent' is a set of quasi-semantic notions related to what we know about what we say before we speak. It is in this sense that I consider 'intent' to be on a par with the Sanskrit term vivakṣā.