

# An Introduction and Guide to Pāli Pronunciation and Grammar

from the Pāli course  
*Exploring the Sacred,  
Ancient Path in the  
Original Words of the Buddha*

a quick tool to look up  
syntax, declensions or  
conjugations

Klaus Nothnagel



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# An Introduction and Guide to Pāli Pronunciation and Grammar

by Klaus Nothnagel

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

*Jāge jāge dharama kī vā ī  
Mangala mūla mahā kalyānī  
Mangala mūla mahā kalyānī  
Jāge jāge dharama kī vā ī*

May the words of the Dhamma arise,  
Those roots of great happiness and well-being,  
Those roots of great happiness and well-being,  
May the words of the Dhamma arise!

—Hindi dohas by S. N. Goenka during his 10-day courses

## 1. PĀLI PRONUNCIATION

It seems not by pure chance that the words of the Buddha are maintained in the language of *Pāli*,<sup>1</sup> which in itself can be experienced as sweet and as deep as the Buddha's words. The attempt to learn this 'dead language' will never present itself as a dry task. An archaeologist translating primitive paintings in a forgotten hallway of an ancient pyramid may transcend the barriers of time and to him these paintings may come alive. A practitioner of the path, reading the original words of the Buddha may delve into the past and create kinship with those ancient times. He will feel the Buddha's words as if spoken to him and answers for long open questions. He may likewise appreciate that the beauty of this ancient language is enhanced by the profundity of contents:

- One discovers that the scientific placement and pronunciation of letters utilizes the various organs of the mouth (throat, tongue, lips) in their logical order to form soft and harmonious sound.<sup>2</sup>
- One understands that the rules of combining different letters and words (*sandhi*) follow the same principle of appealing pronunciation to avoid any harshness in their vowel and consonant sounds.<sup>3</sup>
- The discovery of roots in *Pāli* (an inflective language) will further help to derive stems and words easily by understanding terminations, suffixes, prefixes and certain changes in the root.

---

1. *Pāli* here is taken as *Pāli bhāsā* (the language of the texts). In this context it refers to the texts that are maintained in the *Pāli Tipitaka* and that present its value for the described intention of this collection. The question of the origin of the *Pāli* language — its development from the Indo-Aryan languages of Māgadhī and/or Prakrit and Sanskrit — is left aside.

2. The great lexicographer R.C. Childers quotes the ancient saying that any child left alone without hearing the human voice would instinctively speak Māgadhī (vernacular from which *Pāli* assumingly derived). He also quotes the stanza, which expresses the assertion that Māgadhī was the original language of ancient times and which Brahmas, Sambuddhas and those who had never heard any speech would utter: *Sā Māgadhī mūlabhāsa narā yāyādikappikā, Brahmāna ca assutālāpā sambuddhā cāpi bhāsare.*

3. R.C. Childers expresses his admiration towards the 'at once flowing and sonorous' sound of *Pāli* that is reached by 'most words ending in a vowel and the softening of harsh conjunctions by assimilation, elision or crasis.'

- One may even recognise familiar words that by shift of sound and meaning developed through the Indo-Arian family of languages into today's form.<sup>4</sup>

The rules of combination of letters (*sandhi*) play an important role in the construction of words and sentences. It should be noted here that the most important reason for these rules is that *Pāli* should never lose its typical melodious sound - harsh conjuncts are softened by assimilation, insertion, elision or substitution. Importance is given to the complete utterance rather than to individual words. The study of the language in the context of sentences rather than words is encouraged; in this manner the approximate meaning of the word will enfold its precise and specific sense.

When pronouncing *Pāli*, proper care has to be given to the use of throat, mouth, the movement and touch of the tongue and lips, in order to produce the melodious, sonorous euphony that *Pāli* requires. Special emphasis should be given to proper pronunciation and differentiation especially between retroflex and dentals, rather identical but different in sound.<sup>5</sup> An upright follower of the path, who undertakes to read and recite these suttas will meticulously perform this task if he uses proper and careful pronunciation, aspires to perfect understanding and remains deeply respectful and full of awareness within.<sup>6</sup>

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4. For example, the Pāli *namati* (to bow down, to pay respect) or *namo* (the reverence) is reflected in today's languages: nomen; der Name, nennen; the name, to name, noun; el nombre; le nom; il nome etc.

Here it may be noted that a shift of meaning occurred from the one being addressed with respect to the one being filled with identity. See footnote 42.

5. These are the main principles that were maintained through the ages. Although the same recitations of *Pāli* may sound different according to the national background and mother tongue of the person who recites the texts; with the spread and practice of *Pāli* through the world today the main emphasis should be given to preserve these principles for the times to come.

6. Ideally before meditators starts reciting, they should become fully concentrated, keeping the awareness within on the level of sensations and esteeming the spoken words as personal guidance.

## 2. PĀLI ALPHABET

It is said that *Pāli* was a vernacular<sup>7</sup> of northern India in the time of Gotama the Buddha. In India the alphabet has been preserved in the Devanāgarī script, various other countries developed different other characters to express the *Pāli* language. To make it transferable into Roman script the following set of diacritical marks has been established to indicate the proper pronunciation.

The alphabet consists of forty-one characters: eight vowels and thirty-three consonants.

### The Vowels

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| <i>a</i> | <i>ā</i> |
| <i>i</i> | <i>ī</i> |
| <i>u</i> | <i>ū</i> |
| <i>e</i> | <i>o</i> |

Vowels can be short and long; a line over a vowel — *ā, ī, ū* — indicates a long vowel that resonates for about twice the time period of a short vowel.<sup>8</sup> As far as similarity to English is concerned the following pronunciation aid may be helpful:<sup>9</sup>

*a* - as the “u” in cut

*ā* - as the “a” in art

7. Please refer to footnote 1.

8. The set of vowels can be further subdivided into the pure vowels (*a, ā*) sonant vowels (*i, ī, u, ū*) and diphthongs (*e, o*). This is of interest because the sonants remain vowels if followed by a consonant, but change into the semivowels *y* and *v* when followed by a vowel (*vi-anta - vyanta / su-āgato - svāgato*). Thus the diphthongs are derived from the union of the first two groups of vowels: *a + i, ā + ī = e; a + u, ā + ū = o*.

9. The “a” may be pronounced slightly differently according to the position amongst the combined syllables in a word, whether in the middle, at the end or following an aspirate or an unaspirated consonant. The pronunciation of letters should be understood as an exercise only to develop a feeling for the correct touch of the organs of the mouth; the correct pronunciation will develop when texts are read and proper awareness is given to this movement. Audio samples, indicated with the audio icon, can be found at <https://learning.pariyatti.org/mod/page/view.php?id=1874>.



*i* - as the “i” in mint

*ī* - as the “ee” in see

*u* - as the “u” in put

*ū* - as the “oo” in cool

*e* and *o* are pronounced:

- long at the end of a syllable: *de-va*, *lo-ka*, *do-so*;
- short when they occur before consonants and the syllable ends with a consonant: *met-tā*, *phoṭṭab-ba*.

### The Consonants ◀▶

Pāli uses twenty-five so called grouped consonants that add the vowel “a” to carry sound and are divided into groups according to their form of creation.

|           |           |            |           |            |           |
|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Gutturals | <i>ka</i> | <i>kha</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>gha</i> | <i>ṅa</i> |
| Palatals  | <i>ca</i> | <i>cha</i> | <i>ja</i> | <i>jha</i> | <i>ṅa</i> |
| Retroflex | <i>ṭa</i> | <i>ṭha</i> | <i>ḍa</i> | <i>ḍha</i> | <i>ṇa</i> |
| Dentals   | <i>ta</i> | <i>tha</i> | <i>da</i> | <i>dha</i> | <i>na</i> |
| Labials   | <i>pa</i> | <i>pha</i> | <i>ba</i> | <i>bha</i> | <i>ma</i> |

They get supplemented by:

*ya*, *ra*, *la*, *va*, *sa*, *ha*, *ḷa* and *aṃ*,  
of which *ra*, *la*, *ḷa* are liquids, *ya* and *va* semivowels, *sa* is a sibilant, *ha* an aspirate and *aṃ* is called a *niggahīta*. Further *ya* can be grouped with the palatals, *ra*, *la*, *ḷa* with the retroflex and *va* with the labials.

The consonants found in the first and third column are unaspirates, those in the second and fourth are aspirates, and those in the last column are called nasals.

- All aspirated consonants are pronounced with an audible expulsion of breath following the normal unaspirated sound.
- The guttural consonants *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *gha*, *ha* are produced from deep within the throat and hardly any movement of the tongue.
- The palatal consonants *ca*, *cha*, *ja*, *jha*, *ya* are pronounced with the front parts of the tongue slightly touching the upper-gum/palate.
- The retroflex or cerebral consonants *ṭa*, *ṭha*, *ḍa*, *ḍha*, *ra*, *la*, *ḷa* are pro-

nounced with the tip of the tongue turned back and touching the upper palate.<sup>10</sup>

- The dental consonants *ta, tha, da, dha, sa* are pronounced with the tongue touching the upper front teeth.
- The labial consonants *pa, pha, ba, bha, ma, va* are formed by movement of both the lips only.
- The nasal consonants *ṅa, ña, ṇa, na, ma* are uttered by ways of articulating them in the same way as the preceding consonants of the same group get produced, but with the sound resonating through the nose.<sup>11</sup>
- The niggahīta *aṃ* resonates like *ng*.

As above, the following similarity to English may serve as a pronunciation aid.

|              |                       |              |   |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|---|
| <i>ka</i> -  | as the “k” in king    | <i>ga</i> -  | as the “g” in get                       |
| <i>ca</i> -  | as the “ch” in church | <i>ja</i> -  | as the “j” in jail                      |
| <i>ta</i> -  | as the “t” in task    | <i>da</i> -  | as the “d” in day                       |
| <i>pa</i> -  | as the “p” in part    | <i>ba</i> -  | as the “b” in but                       |
| <i>tha</i> - | as in “th” Thai       | <i>pha</i> - | as “ph” in uphill <sup>12</sup>         |
| <i>na</i> -  | as “ng” in singer     | <i>ṅa</i> -  | as “n” in Spanish señor.                |
| <i>ṇa</i> -  | as “n” in kind, mind  | <i>na</i> -  | as “n” in noun                          |
| <i>ṃ</i> -   | as in hung, ring      | <i>v</i> -   | as a very soft “v” or “w” <sup>13</sup> |

10. *la, ḷa* often get swapped. When pronouncing *ḷa* the tongue moves from above the teeth to the lips to perform a trembling sound.

11. A general rule is that the nasal consonants can only be combined with consonants of the same group.

12. Here the analogy to the English pronunciation does not hold true because *tha* is never pronounced as in “the, this”, etc.; neither is *pha* pronounced as in “phonology, philosophy”. Here the unaspirated consonants *ta, da, pa, ba* are uttered stressed with effort and directly followed by an *h* sound to pronounce the aspirated consonants.

13. The semivowel consonant *va* is pronounced like “v” as in “vibrate” if preceded by a consonant (e.g., *svākkhāto* - well explained) but if preceded by a vowel it sounds like “w” as

Examples of the guttural consonants *ka* and *kha* in combination with vowels.

*ka*    *kā*    *ki*    *kī*    *ku*    *kū*    *ke*    *ko*  
*kha*   *khā*   *khi*   *khī*   *khu*   *khū*   *khe*   *kho*

Examples of the guttural consonant *ka* in combination with consonants.

*kka*, *kkha*, *kya*, *kri*, *kla*, *kva*, *khya*, *khva*, *ṅka*, *ṅkha*

### 3. WORD FORMATION

It is worthwhile to take a short look at the development of words in *Pāli* in order to help individual study. If we understand the derivation of the words from their roots,<sup>14</sup> their development by addition of prefixes, suffixes, case-, gender-, and tense-terminations and inflections as well as certain changes within the root by substituting or altering the carrying vowel, it becomes easy to grasp this ancient language.

Words are formed through the combination of syllables. According to the character of the syllable – which may be open if ending in a vowel, closed if ending in a consonant or with the *niggahīta*, light if ending in a short vowel and heavy if ending in a long vowel or consonant – and the period of time they resonate they undergo certain adjustments when combined.

A long syllable is equal to exactly two short syllables. (The total length of a long syllable being constant, a double consonant tends to compress and shorten a long vowel preceding it, and itself gets shortened by the long vowel.) Double consonants are very frequent in *Pāli* and must be strictly pronounced as long consonants, thus *nn* as well as *ss* are like the English *nn* and *ss* in ‘unnecessary’. Combinations of nonaspirate with aspirate consonants need a tender stop so the aspirates can be uttered a bit explosively: *pac-cud-dharati* / *ug-gac-chati*.

---

in “wind” (e.g., *sāvaka* - disciple).

14. A root is not a word in itself, but conveys the indefinite idea of what it plans to express.

These modifications, in order to keep the flow of harmonious sound without disrupting the movement of the organs of the mouth, led to various changes that are called *sandhi*.<sup>15</sup> In general they undergo:<sup>16</sup>

- Contraction: *bahu-upakaro: bahūpakaro* – great help; *mahā - odha: mahodha* – great flood
- Elision: *mahā-iddhiko: mahiddhiko* – having great strength; *brahma-loka-upago: brahmalokūpago:* – reaching the brahmin worlds
- Insertion: *idha-āhu: idhamāhu* – thus said; *ajja-aggo: ajjataggo* – from this day onwards
- Changes from sonant to semivowels: *anu-ā-gacchati: anvāgacchati* – follow; *anu-eti: anveti* – follow

and further phonetic changes in case of consonants. Here the joining consonants undergo modifications by way of:

- Assimilation:<sup>17</sup> creating similarity (*ud-gacchati: uggacchati* – rise; *iti-eva: icceva* – thus indeed, truly; *kud-kicca: kukkucca* – feeling of remorse)
- Adaption: a *niggahīta* changes into the respective group of the joining consonant (*taṇhaṃ- karo: taṇhaṅkaro* – with craving; *evaṃ-kho: evaṅk-ho* – thus then; *dhammaṃ-ca: dhammaṅca-* and the Dhamma)
- Metathesis:<sup>18</sup> two consonants undergo an interchange (*mahyaṃ: may-haṃ* – me, mine; *kayīrati: kariyati* – done)
- Epenthesis: insertion of a vowel (*brahm-no: brahmuno* – of Brahma; *klesa: kilesa* – impurity)
- Aspiration: (*as-ti: atthi* – is; *es-ti - eṭṭhi* – wish, desire; *is-ta- iṭṭha* – welcome, pleasing, agreeable)
- Simplification: reduction of consonants (*kar-ssāmi - kas-s-sāmi - kass-āmi - kāssāmi: kāhāmi*– I will do).

15. *sandhi* - union, junction. Lit. *saṃ* (together) + *dadhati* (to put, join).

16. For an excellent reference see V. Perniola's *Pāli Grammar* as well as *A Pāli Grammar* by W. Geiger, both published by the Pali Text Society (PTS).

17. Assimilation appears in many languages, as we find *octo* – *otto* and *god-sip* – *gossip*.

18. Well known: *Benares* changes into *Varanasi*, *Bombay* into *Mumbai*.

The example of word formation using the root *gam*<sup>19</sup> will give an introductory survey of how various words can be constructed.<sup>20</sup>

❏ 1. Examples of verbs by addition of various prefixes of the verb *gacchati*

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>āgacchati</i>        | to come to or towards, approach, go back, arrive        |
| <i>āgameti</i>          | to cause somebody to come to one, i.e., to wait (caus.) |
| <i>abbhugacchati</i>    | to go forth, go out, rise into                          |
| <i>abhigacchati</i>     | to go forward, to approach                              |
| <i>abhisamāgacchati</i> | to come to (understand) completely, to grasp fully      |
| <i>adhigacchati</i>     | to acquire, to attain, to find                          |
| <i>anugacchati</i>      | to follow   |
| <i>anvāgacchati</i>     | to follow, pursue                                       |
| <i>apagacchati</i>      | to go away, to leave                                    |
| <i>atigacchati</i>      | to overcome, to conquer                                 |
| <i>atthagacchati</i>    | to disappear, to go out of existence                    |
| <i>avagacchati</i>      | to come, to approach, visit                             |
| <i>gameti</i>           | to send out, to make go (caus.)                         |
| <i>niggacchati</i>      | to proceed from   |
| <i>ogacchati</i>        | to go down, to sink                                     |
| <i>paṭivigacchati</i>   | to go apart again, to go away or asunder                |
| <i>paccāgacchati</i>    | to go back to, to return                                |
| <i>paccuggacchati</i>   | to leave, to go out                                     |
| <i>samāgacchati</i>     | to meet together, to assemble, to associate with        |
| <i>samadhigacchati</i>  | to attain   |
| <i>samuggacchati</i>    | to arise  |
| <i>saṅgacchati</i>      | to meet, to come together                               |
| <i>udāgacchati</i>      | to come to completion                                   |

19. The root *gam* can be recognized in today's languages still carrying the same meaning: *gremium*; *der Gang, gehen*; *go, going, gone, come*; *el camino, chaminante, caminar, caminando*; *le chemin, cheminer, il cammino, camminare*.

20. *gacchati* is found in the well-known expression: *Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi* – lit. to surrender to the Buddha I go.

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>uggacchati</i>    | to rise, get up out of               |
| <i>upāgacchati</i>   | to come, to arrive at, reach, obtain |
| <i>upātigacchati</i> | to go out over, to surpass, overcome |
| <i>vigacchati</i>    | to depart, decrease                  |

❏) 2. Examples of derivations from the participle forms of the verb *gacchati*

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>āgantu</i>       | occasional, incidental                    |
| <i>āgata</i>        | come                                      |
| <i>abbhāgata</i>    | having arrived or come; a guest, stranger |
| <i>abbhuggata</i>   | gone forth, gone out, risen               |
| <i>abhigamanīya</i> | to be approached, accessible              |
| <i>adhigata</i>     | attained, in the possession of            |
| <i>amahaggata</i>   | not expanded, minor                       |
| <i>anāgata</i>      | not come yet, i.e., future                |
| <i>anugata</i>      | accompanied by                            |
| <i>anugāmika</i>    | accompanying, resulting from              |
| <i>anugāmin</i>     | following, attending to, going along with |
| <i>anvāgata</i>     | endowed with, having attained             |
| <i>atthagata</i>    | gone home                                 |
| <i>avagata</i>      | known, understood                         |
| <i>avāgata</i>      | are fallen from                           |
| <i>dukkhamagama</i> | not coming into connection with misery    |
| <i>duranugama</i>   | difficult to be                           |
| <i>dūrangama</i>    | going far                                 |
| <i>gamma</i>        | belonging to the village, low, inferior   |
| <i>gāmin</i>        | walking, going                            |
| <i>gāmeyya</i>      | belonging to a village                    |
| <i>khemangato</i>   | attained the state of security            |
| <i>mahaggata</i>    | gone great, expanded                      |
| <i>paccuggata</i>   | illustrious                               |
| <i>pāragu</i>       | gone beyond                               |
| <i>patthagu</i>     | being near, attending to                  |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>papamagama</i>   | not coming into connection with evil       |
| <i>parāgata</i>     | reached the other side                     |
| <i>samāgata</i>     | assembled                                  |
| <i>samānagatika</i> | identical                                  |
| <i>samannāgata</i>  | endowed with, possessed of                 |
| <i>sankhangata</i>  | is called                                  |
| <i>sugata</i>       | well gone                                  |
| <i>uddhagāmin</i>   | going upwards                              |
| <i>uggata</i>       | come out, risen, high, lofty, exalted      |
| <i>vedagu</i>       | established in the experience of sensation |
| <i>vigatāsava</i>   | free from depravity, a saint               |
| <i>vigata</i>       | ceased, free from                          |
| <i>vihangama</i>    | moving through the air, flying             |

▶) 3. Examples of nouns derived from the root *gam*

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <i>āgāmin</i>       | returning, one who returns                   |
| <i>āgama</i>        | coming, approach, result                     |
| <i>āgamana</i>      | oncoming, arrival, approach                  |
| <i>āgantar</i>      | one who is coming or going to come           |
| <i>āgantuka</i>     | coming, arriving, new comer, guest, stranger |
| <i>āgati</i>        | coming, coming back, return                  |
| <i>abbhāgamana</i>  | coming, arrival, approach                    |
| <i>abbhuggamana</i> | going out over, rising over                  |
| <i>adhigama</i>     | attainment, acquisition                      |
| <i>adhigatavant</i> | one who has found or attained                |
| <i>aggatā</i>       | superiority                                  |
| <i>anāgāmi</i>      | one who does not return, non-returner        |
| <i>anugatī</i>      | adherence to, dependence on                  |
| <i>anugāma</i>      | following after                              |
| <i>atthagamana</i>  | setting (of the sun)                         |
| <i>atthagatatta</i> | disappearance                                |
| <i>atthagama</i>    | annihilation, disappearance                  |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>avigatapaccayo</i> | non-disappearance condition                    |
| <i>avisaggatā</i>     | state of being undisturbed, harmony, balance   |
| <i>gamanīya</i>       | ought to go                                    |
| <i>gamana</i>         | movement, journey                              |
| <i>gamaṇa</i>         | rising   |
| <i>gamika</i>         | setting out for the journey, one who goes away |
| <i>gamina</i>         | going out                                      |
| <i>gāmaka</i>         | villager                                       |
| <i>gāmanī</i>         | village headman, chief                         |
| <i>gāmika</i>         | overseer of a village                          |
| <i>negama</i>         | belonging to a town                            |
| <i>nigama</i>         | a market town                                  |
| <i>nigamana</i>       | explanation                                    |
| <i>niggama/mana</i>   | departure, outcome                             |
| <i>paccuggamana</i>   | meeting, receiving                             |
| <i>sakādāgāmi</i>     | one returner                                   |
| <i>samāgama</i>       | meeting, meeting with, intercourse             |
| <i>sangama</i>        | meeting, intercourse, sexual intercourse       |
| <i>sangati</i>        | meeting, intercourse                           |
| <i>uggama</i>         | rising up                                      |
| <i>uggamana</i>       | going up, rising, rise (of sun)                |
| <i>vigama</i>         | disappearance                                  |
| <i>vigatapaccayo</i>  | disappearance condition                        |
| <i>vihanga/vihaga</i> | a bird   |

#### 4. Example of noun declension of the noun *gāmo* ending in *a*

The noun *gāmo* (a village, lit. a place where people go) is derived from the root *gam*.

While a more detailed survey of noun-declensions is given further on, a first glance here will introduce their declensions.



| Case                | Denotation   | Use of Preposition in Transl. | Termination Singular         | Termination Plural | Example Singular              | Example Plural     |
|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Nominative</b>   | subject of action  |                               | -o                           | -ā                 | gāmo                          | gāmā               |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | direct object of action  |                               | -ṃ                           | -e                 | gāmaṃ                         | gāme               |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | indicates instrument or cause                                  | by, through, with             | -ena                         | -ebhi,<br>-ehi     | gāmena                        | gāmebhi,<br>gāmehi |
| <b>Dative</b>       | certain verbs govern the dative (to give, to bear, to tell...) | to                            | -āya<br>-assa                | -ānaṃ              | gāmāya,<br>gāmassa            | gāmānaṃ            |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | place or object from which motion or separation takes place    | from                          | -ā,<br>-a,<br>-mhā,<br>-asmā | -ebhi,<br>-ehi     | gāmā,<br>gāmamhā,<br>gāmasmā  | gāmebhi,<br>gāmehi |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | expresses possession   | of                            | -āya,<br>-assa               | -ānaṃ              | gāmāya,<br>gāmassa            | gāmānaṃ            |
| <b>Locative</b>     | place or time of action  | in, at, on                    | -e,<br>-amhi,<br>-asmiṃ      | -esu               | gāme,<br>gāmamhi,<br>gāmasmiṃ | gāmesu             |
| <b>Vocative</b>     | form of address  |                               | -a,<br>-ā,<br>-e,<br>-o      | -ā                 | 21                            |                    |

### 5. Example of verbal conjugation of the verb *gacchati*

In the same way a further first glance at the verbal conjugation of the verb *gacchati* (to go<sup>22</sup>) introduces the present simple tense.

Here the verbal form is developed by the root:<sup>23</sup>

21. The vocative in general is used to address people, therefore the examples here (*gāma*, *gāmā*) wouldn't be suitable.

22. Dictionaries generally give Pāli verbs in the third person singular and not in the infinitive, while the translation refers to the infinitive.

23. The root *gam* here reduplicates the guttural consonant and changes it into the corresponding palatal *gac*. *gam* belongs to the first group of verbs that add “a” to the root

- *gam* changes by assimilation into *ga-c-cha*
- the insertion *a/ā* and
- the termination *-mi* for the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular:  
“I go” according to the following verbal conjugation.

►))

| Personal Pronoun                   |       | Termination | Word             |             |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> person<br>singular | sā\so | -ti         | <i>gacchati</i>  | she\he goes |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> person<br>plural   | te    | -nti        | <i>gacchanti</i> | they go     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> person<br>singular | tvaṃ  | -si         | <i>gacchasi</i>  | you go      |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> person<br>plural   | tumhe | -tha        | <i>gacchatha</i> | you go      |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> person<br>singular | ahaṃ  | -mi         | <i>gacchāmi</i>  | I go        |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> person<br>plural   | mayāṃ | -ma         | <i>gacchāma</i>  | we go       |

The suffixes *ti*, *nti*, *si*, *tha*, *mi*, *ma* relate to the termination of the related person in the present tense.

#### 4. SYNTAX: EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT OF SIMPLE SENTENCES

In Pāli the development of sentences follows in general the same syntax as in English, but the predicate always stands last. The object is preceded by the subject and followed by the predicate. Qualifying adverbs or adjectives further precede the verb, subject or object respectively. Time phrases or adverbs open the sentences whenever used. Pāli uses only indefinite articles; at times verbs (predicates) are not mentioned, but should be added in translations. Substantives, pronouns and adjectives often get combined, they agree in gender, number and case.

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before the personal suffixes. See under 1.7.

Experience of reading and working with the original texts will show that the apparently ambiguous complexity of the Pāli grammar becomes clear sooner rather than later and the development of understanding the meaning of sentences usually improves rapidly.<sup>24</sup> The preceding surveys of declension and conjunction illustrate a simple example of the following sentence construction.<sup>25</sup>

| Case                | Denotation   | Example in Singular Number  | Example in Plural Number  |
|---------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Nominative</b>   | subject of action  | <i>Buddho gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes   | <i>Paṇḍitā gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go   |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | direct object of action  | <i>Buddho vihāraṃ gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes to the monastery                                    | <i>Paṇḍitā vihāre gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go to the monasteries   |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | indicates instrument or cause                                  | <i>Buddho rathena sāvakena saha gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes by chariot together with the disciple | <i>Paṇḍitā rathebhi sāvakehi saddhiṃ gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go by chariots together with the disciples |
| <b>Dative</b>       | certain verbs govern the dative (to give, to bear, to tell...) | <i>Buddho samaṇāya mettaṃ dadāti</i><br>The Buddha gives metta to the monk                            | <i>Paṇḍitā samaṇānaṃ mettaṃ dadanti</i><br>The wise men give metta to the monks.                              |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | place or object from which motion or separation takes place    | <i>Buddho pāsādamhā gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes from the palace                                   | <i>Paṇḍitā pāsādehi gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go from the palaces   |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | expresses possession   | <i>Buddho bhūpālassa pāsādamhā gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes from the palace of the king            | <i>Paṇḍitā bhūpālānaṃ pāsādehi gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go from the palaces of the kings                 |
| <b>Locative</b>     | place or time of action  | <i>Buddho gāmasmiṃ vihāraṃ gacchati</i><br>The Buddha goes to the monastery in the village            | <i>Paṇḍitā gāmesu vihāre gacchanti</i><br>The wise men go to the monasteries in the villages                  |

24. A. K. Warder's *Introduction to Pali* (PTS) points out, "...ideally one should learn a language as children pick up their mother tongue, by learning a sufficiently large number of sentences ..."

25. The vocabulary used here is: *samaṇa* (monk), *vihāra* (monastery), *pāsāda* (palace), *paṇḍita* (wise man), *bhūpāla* (king), *ratha* (chariot), *dadāti* (to give), *saha*, *saddhiṃ* (together with).

|                 |                 |                                |                                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Vocative</b> | form of address | <i>Bho samaṇa!</i><br>Oh monk! | <i>Bho samaṇā!</i><br>Oh monks! |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|

◀) *Buddho rathena sāvakebhi saha bhūpālassa pāsādamhā gāmasmiṃ vihāraṃ gacchati, samaṇānaṃ mettaṃ dadāti: “Bho samaṇā! Bhavatu sabbe matigalaṃ.”*

The Buddha goes by chariot, together with the disciples, from the palace of the king to the monastery in the village and gives metta to the monks: “Oh monks! May all be happy!”

## 5. DECLENSION OF NOUNS (NĀMA)

In *Pāli* the nouns are grouped according to gender and ending. We find the nouns ending in: *a, ā, ī, ṛ, u, ū* prevailing as well as certain rare endings with individual declensions like: *bhagavant, rajo, pitar*, etc.

According to the three genders different inflections occur, but in general we find those inflections in common usages, that were presented in the declension of *gāma*.<sup>26</sup> The same applies to the eight cases, whose denotation remains somewhat the same<sup>27</sup> and whose usages can mainly be understood in the following connotation:

- *pathamā* – first or nominative case: expresses the agent of a sentence or the subject of the verb that is describing that action, both agree in number and gender.
- *dutiya* – second or accusative case: indicates the object of action, motion, the duration or space in which an action takes place, it is governed by transitive verbs.<sup>28</sup>
- *tatiya* – third or instrumental case: indicates the agent, means or instrument by whom or which an action is performed.

26. See previous section, Word Formation: 4. Example of noun declension of the noun *gāma* ending in *a*.

27. Someone interested in more details and excellent descriptions of various exceptions may refer to Lesson XXV in the *Elementary Pāli Course* by Nārada Thera and/or to Chapter XIX in *Pāli Grammar* by V. Perniola.

28. Verbs can be transitive, intransitive and both. A transitive verb takes an object: to drink, to eat; an intransitive verb does not take an object: to die, to go.

- *catutthī* – fourth or dative case: indicates the object to which an action is directed, or something is given. Some verbs govern the dative case.
- *pañcamī* – fifth or ablative case: indicates the place, object or person from where an action, separation or direction originates, it also points out the reason or motive.
- *chatthī* – sixth or genitive case: indicates possession, relationship, comparison and indirect object.
- *sattamī* – seventh or locative case: indicates the place, time or reason where, when or why an action, takes place.
- *atthamī* – eighth or vocative case: is used to address one or more persons.

The following tables present a survey for quick reference when working with the text.

### 1. Terminations with *a*-ending

Examples:

*gāmo* – a village: masculine<sup>29</sup> / *phala* – a fruit: neuter<sup>30</sup> / *vanitā* – a woman:<sup>31</sup> feminine

| Case         | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>a</i> -ending<br>masc. | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>a</i> -ending<br>masc. | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>a</i> -ending<br>neut. | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>a</i> -ending<br>neut. | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>ā</i> -ending<br>fem. | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>ā</i> -ending<br>fem. |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Nominative   | -o,<br>-e  | -ā,  | -aṃ,<br>-e   | -āni,<br>-ā  | -ā  | -ā,<br>-āyo                                       |
| Accusative   | -ṃ   | -e   | -aṃ  | -āni,<br>-e  | -aṃ   | -ā,<br>-āyo                                       |
| Instrumental | -ena,<br>-ā  | -ebhi,<br>-ehi                                     | -ena,<br>-ā  | -ebhi,<br>-ehi                                     | -āya,<br>-ā   | -ābhi,<br>-āhi                                    |

29. Detailed formations of *gāmo* can be seen in the previous table of section 4 about syntax.

30. Since the neuter declension is very close to the masculine, no example is given here.

31. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *vanitā* - *vanitaṃ* - *vanitāya* - *vanitāya* - *vanitāya* - *vanitāya* - *vanitāya* / *vanitāyaṃ* - *vanite* / *vanitā* and in the plural: *vanitā* / *vanitāyo* - *vanitā* / *vanitāyo* - *vanitāhi* / *vanitābhi* - *vanitānaṃ* - *vanitāhi* / *vanitābhi* - *vanitānaṃ* - *vanitāsu* - *vanitā* / *vanitāyo*.

|                 |                         |                |                         |                |                  |                |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Dative</b>   | -āya,<br>-assa          | -ānaṃ          | -āya,<br>-assa          | -ānaṃ          | -āya             | -ānaṃ          |
| <b>Ablative</b> | -ā,<br>-mhā,<br>-asmā   | -ebhi,<br>-ehi | -ā,<br>-mhā,<br>-asmā   | -ebhi,<br>-ehi | -āya,            | -ābhi,<br>-āhi |
| <b>Genitive</b> | -āya,<br>-assa          | -ānaṃ          | -āya,<br>-assa          | -ānaṃ          | -āya             | -ānaṃ          |
| <b>Locative</b> | -e,<br>-amhi,<br>-asmiṃ | -esu           | -e,<br>-amhi,<br>-asmiṃ | -esu           | -āya,<br>-āyaṃ   | -āsu           |
| <b>Vocative</b> | -a,<br>-ā,<br>-e,<br>-o | -ā             | -aṃ,<br>-a              | -āni,<br>-ā    | -e,<br>-ā,<br>-a | -ā,<br>-āyo    |

## 2. Terminations with *i*-ending

Examples: *aggi* – a fire: masculine<sup>32</sup> / *atthi* – a bone: neuter<sup>33</sup> / *bhūmi* – the earth: feminine<sup>34</sup> / *mahī* – the earth: feminine<sup>35</sup>

32. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *aggi* - *aggiṃ* - *agginā* - *aggino* / *aggissa* - *agginā* / *aggimhā* / *aggismā* - *aggino* / *aggissa* - *aggimhi* / *aggismim* - *aggi* and in the plural: *aggi* / *aggayo* - *aggi* / *aggayo* - *aggihi* / *aggiḅhi* - *aggiṃaṃ* - *aggihi* / *aggiḅhi* - *aggiṃaṃ* - *aggiḥsu* - *aggi* / *aggayo*.

33. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *aṭṭhi* - *aṭṭhiṃ* - *aṭṭhinā* - *aṭṭhino*, *aṭṭhissa* - *aṭṭhinā* - *aṭṭhino* / *aṭṭhissa* - *aṭṭhini* / *aṭṭhimhi* / *aṭṭhismiṃ* - *aṭṭhi* and in the plural: *aṭṭhi* / *aṭṭhini* - *aṭṭhi* / *aṭṭhini* - *aṭṭhihi* / *aṭṭhiḅhi* - *aṭṭhiṃaṃ* - *aṭṭhihi* / *aṭṭhiḅhi* - *aṭṭhiṃaṃ* - *aṭṭhiḥsu* - *aṭṭhi* / *aṭṭhini*.

34. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *bhūmi* - *bhūmiṃ* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmiyā* - *bhūmi* and in the plural: *bhūmi* / *bhūmiyo* - *bhūmi* / *bhūmiyo* - *bhūmihi* / *bhūmiḅhi* - *bhūmiṃaṃ* - *bhūmihi* / *bhūmiḅhi* - *bhūmiṃaṃ* - *bhūmiḥsu* - *bhūmi* / *bhūmiyo*.

35. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *mahī* - *mahiṃ* - *mahiya* / *mahyā* - *mahiya* / *mahyā* - *mahiya* / *mahyā* - *mahiya* / *mahyā* - *mahiya* / *mahyā* / *mahiyaṃ* - *mahī* and in the plural: *mahī* / *mahiyo* - *mahī* / *mahiyo* - *mahihi* / *mahiḅhi* - *mahiṃaṃ* - *mahihi* / *mahiḅhi* - *mahiṃaṃ* - *mahiḥsu* / *mahiyo* - *mahī* / *mahiyo*.

| Case                | Termination<br>Singular<br>i-ending masc. | Termination<br>Plural<br>i-ending masc. | Termination<br>Singular<br>i-ending neut. | Termination<br>Plural<br>i-ending neut. | Termination<br>Singular<br>i-ending masc. | Termination<br>Plural<br>i-ending masc. | Termination<br>Singular<br>i-ending fem. | Termination<br>Plural<br>i-ending fem. | Termination<br>Singular<br>i-ending fem. | Termination<br>Plural<br>i-ending fem. |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Nominative</b>   | -i  | -ī,<br>-iyo,<br>-ino,<br>-ayo           | -i,<br>-iṃ                                | -īni,<br>-ī                             | -ī,<br>-i                                 | -ī,<br>-ino,                            | -ī,<br>-i                                | -ī,<br>-yo,<br>-iyo,                   | -ī,<br>-i                                | -ī,<br>-īyo,<br>-iyo,<br>-yo,<br>-āyo  |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | -iṃ                                       | -ī,<br>-iyo,<br>-ayo                    | -iṃ,<br>-i                                | -īni,<br>-ī                             | -iṃ,<br>-inaṃ                             | -ī,<br>-ino                             | -iṃ                                      | -ī,<br>-yo,<br>-iyo                    | -iṃ,<br>-iyaṃ                            | -ī,<br>-īyo,<br>-iyo,<br>-yo,<br>-āyo  |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | -inā                                      | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -inā                                      | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -inā                                      | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īhi,<br>-ībhi                         | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īhi,<br>-ībhi                         |
| <b>Dative</b>       | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ                         | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ                         | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ                         | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īnaṃ                                  | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -iyānaṃ,<br>-īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ            |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | -inā,<br>-imhā,<br>-ismā                  | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -inā,<br>-imhā,<br>-ismā                  | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -inā,<br>-imhā,<br>-ismā                  | -īhi,<br>-ībhi,<br>-ihi,<br>-ibhi       | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īhi,<br>-ībhi                         | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īhi,<br>-ībhi                         |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ                                   | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ                                   | -ino,<br>-issa                            | -īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ                         | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -īnaṃ                                  | -iyā,<br>-yā                             | -iyānaṃ,<br>-īnaṃ,<br>-inaṃ            |
| <b>Locative</b>     | -ini,<br>-imhi,<br>-ismim                 | -īsu,<br>-isu                           | -ini,<br>-imhi,<br>-ismim                 | -īsu,<br>-isu                           | -imhi,<br>-ismim                          | -īsu,<br>-isu                           | -iyaṃ,<br>-yaṃ,<br>-āyaṃ                 | -īsu,<br>-isu                          | -iyā,<br>-yā,<br>-yaṃ<br>-iyaṃ           | -īsu,<br>-isu                          |
| <b>Vocative</b>     | -i,<br>-e                                 | -ī,<br>-iyo,<br>-ayo                    | -i,<br>-iṃ                                | -īni,<br>-ī                             | -ī,<br>-i                                 | -ī,<br>-ino                             | -ī,<br>-i                                | -ī,<br>-yo,<br>-iyo                    | -ī,<br>-i                                | -īyo,<br>-iyo,<br>-yo,<br>-āyo         |

### 3. Terminations with *u*-ending

Examples:

*bhikkhu* – a monk: masculine<sup>36</sup> / *cakkhu* – the eye: neuter / *dhātu* – element: feminine<sup>37</sup>

| Case                | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>u</i> -ending masc.  | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>u</i> -ending masc.                      | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>u</i> -ending neut.  | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>u</i> -ending neut.                      | Termination<br>Singular<br><i>u</i> -ending fem. | Termination<br>Plural<br><i>u</i> -ending fem. |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Nominative</b>   | - <i>u</i>   | - <i>ū</i> ,<br>- <i>avo</i> ,<br>- <i>uyo</i>                       | - <i>u</i> ,<br>- <i>uṃ</i>                        | - <i>ūni</i> ,<br>- <i>ū</i>   | - <i>u</i>                                       | - <i>ū</i> ,<br>- <i>uvo</i> ,<br>- <i>uyo</i> |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | - <i>uṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>unaṃ</i>                     | - <i>ū</i> ,<br>- <i>avo</i> ,<br>- <i>uyo</i>                       | - <i>uṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>u</i>                        | - <i>ūni</i> ,<br>- <i>ū</i>   | - <i>uṃ</i>                                      | - <i>ū</i> ,<br>- <i>uvo</i> ,<br>- <i>uyo</i> |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | - <i>unā</i>                                       | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i> ,<br>- <i>uhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ubhi</i> | - <i>unā</i>                                       | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i> ,<br>- <i>uhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ubhi</i> | - <i>uyā</i>                                     | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i>                |
| <b>Dative</b>       | - <i>uno</i> ,<br>- <i>ussa</i>                    | - <i>ūnaṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>unaṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>unnaṃ</i>                 | - <i>uno</i> ,<br>- <i>ussa</i>                    | - <i>ūnaṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>unaṃ</i> ,<br>- <i>unnaṃ</i>                 | - <i>uyā</i>                                     | - <i>ūnaṃ</i>                                  |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | - <i>unā</i> ,<br>- <i>umhā</i> ,<br>- <i>usmā</i> | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i> ,<br>- <i>uhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ubhi</i> | - <i>unā</i> ,<br>- <i>umhā</i> ,<br>- <i>usmā</i> | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i> ,<br>- <i>uhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ubhi</i> | - <i>uyā</i> ,                                   | - <i>ūbhi</i> ,<br>- <i>ūhi</i>                |

36. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *bhikkhu* - *bhikkhuṃ* - *bhikkhunā* - *bhikkhuno*/ *bhikkhussa* - *bhikkhunā* - *bhikkhuno*/ *bhikkhussa* - *bhikkhumhi*/ *bhikkhusmiṃ* - *bhikkhu* and in the plural: *bhikkhū* / *bhikkhavo* - *bhikkhū* / *bhikkhavo* - *bhikkhūhi* / *bhikkhūbhi* - *bhikkhūnaṃ* - *bhikkhūhi* / *bhikkhūbhi* - *bhikkhūnaṃ* - *bhikkhusu* / *bhikkhūsu* - *bhikkhū*, *bhikkhave*.

37. Thus we find the following formations in the singular: *dhātu* - *dhātuṃ* - *dhātuyā* - *dhātuyā* - *dhātuyā* - *dhātuyā* / *dhātuyā* - *dhātu* and in the plural: *dhātū* / *dhātuyo* - *dhātū* / *dhātuyo* - *dhātūhi* / *dhātūbhi* - *dhātūnaṃ* - *dhātūhi* / *dhātūbhi* - *dhātūnaṃ* - *dhātūsu* - *dhātū* / *dhātuyo*.



|                 |                  |                            |                  |                            |                |                      |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Genitive</b> | -uno,<br>-ussa   | -ūnaṃ,<br>-unaṃ,<br>-unnaṃ | -uno,<br>-ussa   | -ūnaṃ,<br>-unaṃ,<br>-unnaṃ | -uyā           | -ūnaṃ                |
| <b>Locative</b> | -umhi,<br>-usmiṃ | -usu,<br>-ūsu              | -umhi,<br>-usmiṃ | -usu,<br>-ūsu              | -uyā,<br>-uyam | -ūsu                 |
| <b>Vocative</b> | -u               | -ū,<br>-avo,<br>-ave       | -u               | -ūni,<br>-ū                | -u             | -ū,<br>-uvo,<br>-uyo |

The declensions of nouns that end in *ū* (male and female) follow somewhat the same declension as those ending in *u*.

There are some further declensions that develop their own individual declension such as *rājān* (king), *satthar* (teacher), *bhagavant* (Fortunate One), and *hattin* (elephant), which may be referred to in the grammar books.<sup>38</sup>

## 6. COMPOUNDS OF NOUNS (SAMĀSA)

When nouns join together with two or more words they are called nominal compounds or *samāsa*. The first member of a compound can be another noun, an adjective, an adverb, a pronoun, a verbal form, or a numeral. In general the last member of the compound gets inflected according to its declension while the other members keep their stem form. When joined the usual *sandhi*-formations of lengthening, shortening, elision etc. may need to be applied.

Nominal compounds take their name according to the procedure or the form they take and their function when combined. Thus two or more members instead of being connected with the particle *ca* are joined together and function as a copulative compound called a) *dvanda samāsa*. A combination where one member, usually the second, modifies the first and functions as a descriptive compound is called b) *kammadhāraya samāsa*. In cases where the first member depends on the second (dependent compounds) it is named c) *tappurisa samāsa*. In cases where nominal compounds convey an adjective sense its term is d) *bahubbīhi samāsa*. Compounds that function as adverbial compounds or

38. Bhikkhu Ñāṇatusita has prepared an excellent table for quick reference that presents most grammatical declinations and conjugations and is available in different sizes.

indeclinables — generally constructed from prefix + noun or indeclinable + noun — are called e) *avyayībhāva samāsa*. Here the first member predominates the second. One more group denoting a period of time with the first member being a numeral is called f) *digu samāsa*.<sup>39</sup>

Examples:

- a) ***dvanda samāsa***: *udayabbayaṃ; nāmarūpaṃ; ahivicchikā, punappunaṃ, hattapādā; samaṇabrāhmaṇā*
- b) ***kammadhāraya samāsa***: *tejodhatu; cakkaratanam; pañcakkhaṇḍa; viriyindriyaṃ; dīgharattaṃ; pubbajāti*
- c) ***tappurisa samāsa***: *lokavidū; silasampanno; bhikkhusaṅgho; dukkhasamu-dayo; kālaṃkato; sabbaññu*
- d) ***bahubbīhi samāsa***: *rukkho ucchinnamūlo; rukkhamūliko; micchādiṭṭhiko; pāpakammino; manopubbangamā dhammā manosetthā*
- e) ***avyayībhāva samāsa***: *ajjhattaṃ; anulomaṃ; paṭilomaṃ; yathābhūtaṃ; yāvajīvaṃ; paccattaṃ*
- f) ***digu samāsa***: *sattāhaṃ; saḷāyatanam; catuddisaṃ; sattavassāni; tīhaṃ; ticīvaraṃ*

## 7. CONJUGATION OF VERBS (ĀKHYĀTA)

Verbs in Pāli are divided into seven different groups or classes<sup>40</sup> according to the derivations and insertions their root undergoes when conjugated. The subsequent examples should suffice.<sup>41</sup>

- For example, the first group inserts *a* after the root and before the personal suffixes *ti, nti*, etc. Thus the example of the root *gam* is assimilated to *gac-ch-* and arranged under the first group, where *a* always gets inserted and added to the respective root: *gac-ch-a- ti: gacchati* (to go); *vas-a-ti: vasati* (to dwell); *har-a- ti: harati* (to carry); *jīv-a-ti: jīvati* (to live).

39. For detailed explanation of the groups of *samāsa* and classifications, see Perniola's *Pali Grammar*, Chapter IX.

40. Some groups are even subdivided into more than seven.

41. For detailed analyses of how the various classes of verbs are developed and subdivided, refer to Perniola's and Warder's *Pali Grammar*.

- Another class or group adds the suffix and then may use changes according to the rules of *sandhi*: *ya* to the root: *jā-ya-ti: jāyati* (to arise); *budh-ya-ti: bujjhati* (to know); *man-ya-ti: maññati* (to think, to imagine).
- Again another class inserts the *niggahita: ṃ* (which takes the form of the nasal sound according to the respective group) before the closing consonant of the root: *chi-ṃ-da-ti: chindati* (to cut); *mu-ṃ-ca-ti: muñcati* (to free); *li-ṃ-pa-ti: limpati* (to stain).

Pāli differentiates between the following tenses, which have individual conjugational endings and inflections and are classified as:

- three persons (third, second and first);<sup>42</sup>
- two numbers: singular and plural;
- six tenses: present (*gacchati*), imperfect,<sup>43</sup> aorist<sup>44</sup> (*agacchi*, altern: *agāma; agamī; agañchi*), perfect,<sup>45</sup> future (*gacchissati*), and conditional (*agacchissa*);
- causative (*gamete; gacchāpeti*);
- infinitive (*gantum; gamitum; gantave; gamanaye*) and gerund (*gantvā*);
- participles: present (*gacchant; gacchamāna*), past (*gata*) and future passive (*gantabba*);
- three moods: indicative (*gacchati*), imperative (*gaccha*, 2nd person) and optative (*gaccheyyum*);
- three voices: active, reflective and passive voice.

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42. This traditional order demonstrates the respect that is held towards the other person rather than that the first person precedes the others in its position. In Pāli the 3rd is called *pathama purisa* (first person), the 2nd is *majjhima purisa* (middle person), and the 1st is *uttama purisa* (last person). In modern languages 'I' precedes as first person.

43. Imperfect in Pāli expresses a definite past.

44. Aorist in Pāli expresses past action, the time that recently past; it is the true past in the text. Although the present tense is often used to open the text (historical present) describing the historical background (*viharati* – dwells: *ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā rājagahe viharati ... ānando ... nivāsetvā ... rājagahaṃ piṇḍāya pāvīsi.*), and then continues in the aorist (*pāvīsi* – went), both are generally translated in the past tense.

45. Perfect in Pāli expresses indefinite past and is rarely used.

## 1. The Persons

The three genders (masculine, neuter and feminine) carry their individual personal endings in both numbers. In the active voice the primary endings (*ti, si, mi, nti, tha, ma*) appear in the present indicative and the future tense. The so-called secondary endings (*t, s, aṃ, u/uṃ, tha, ma*) are used in the aorist and the conditional, the optative varies with both endings.

## 2. The Tenses

- The present tense describes an action that is taking place, an action that continues (equivalent to present progressive) or a fact. It is often used describing historical facts.
- The aorist, the historical or principal past is mostly used to denote the past tense. It always makes use of the secondary personal endings and is built in different ways. Different forms may be used such as:
  - a) the root-aorist always prefixes the augmented *a* to the root and uses the secondary personal ending: (*a-agāṃ-t: agā; a-gam-s: agā, a-gam-m: agā*);
  - b) the *a*-aorist inserts the suffix *a* before the personal endings and mostly prefixes the augmented *a* (*a-gam-aṃ: agamaṃ*);
  - c) the *s*-aorist inserts the suffix *s* before the personal secondary endings: *a-gama-s-i-ṃ: agamāsiṃ*;
  - d) the *is*-aorist inserts the suffix *is* before the personal secondary endings: *a-gam-is-ṃ: agamiṃ / gacch-is-aṃ: gacchiṃ/gañchiṃ*;
- The future tense expresses futurity and is formed by adding *ssa* to the root or verbal base with, or in some cases without, the connecting vowel *i*; the terminations are the same as those in the present tense: *gacch-i-ssa-mi: gacchissāmi*. The future tense can also express a command or condition;
- The conditional expresses a possibility or wish. It uses the secondary personal endings and adds the augmented *a* before the future forms: *gacch-iss-aṃ, a-gacch-iss-a*;
- The causative prompts something to happen and is formed by adding

either the suffix *aya* or *e* to the root, or alternatively inserts *paya* or *pe*: *gameti*, *gāmayati*, *gacchāpeti*, *gamāpeti*.

### 3. The Moods

- The indicative mood expresses an action; it describes an occasion or occurrence. The personal primary endings are added to the stem of the present tense.
- The optative expresses mainly probability and advice, wishes and ideas. It is formed by adding *eyya* to the verbal base before personal endings. When translated: if, might, would, etc. may be used to convey the sense of it.
- The imperative mood expresses commands, benedictions or wishes. It is mainly used in the active voice with the following personal endings: *tu*, *hi*, *ntu*, *tha* for the 3rd and 2nd. These are added to the stem.<sup>46</sup>

### 4. Infinitive, Gerund and Participles

- The infinitive can be used actively and passively and denotes purpose and intention. It gets built by adding the suffix *tum* to the respective roots: *gantum* (to go). Further, especially with verbs of frequent occurrence, the following suffixes are added as well: *itum*, *tave*, *tuye*.
- The gerund describes the completion of an action: *gantvā* (having gone). It also expresses the perpetuation of activity and thus connects different activities. The suffix *tvā* is added to the root of the verb or verbal base, with or sometimes without the connecting vowel *i*, to form the gerund.
- Present participles are formed by adding *nta*, *ntī* or *māna*, *mānā* to the verbal base.<sup>47</sup> They function as adjectives and agree in gender, number

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46. The personal forms in all the tenses force stems and roots at times to undergo certain changes according to the *sandhi* rules by assimilation, adaption, elision ... See section 3 Word Formation, page xxv.

47. The suffix *nta* is used in the active voice, *māna* in the reflective voice, but both are mainly translated in the same way.

and case with the nouns they qualify. They are declined like the respective nouns and may be translated with the help of 'while': *gacchanta*; *gacchant*: (while) going.

- Past participles can take an active meaning or a passive meaning. The active past participles add the suffixes *vant*, *vin* to the root. It can be translated as *vusitavant* (one who has lived). The passive perfect participles are formed by adding *ta*, *na* to the root, with or without the connecting vowel *i* and are translated like the English past perfect participles *gacchita*, *gata*, *gamita* (gone). Past participles have a passive meaning when they are formed from transitive verbs, but from intransitive verbs they have an active meaning.

For example, *gacchati*, *tiṭṭhati* are intransitive verbs. Therefore, *puriso gato* (the man has gone - active meaning), *vanitā thitā* (the woman has stood - active meaning), *pacati*, *dadāti* are transitive verbs), *odano pacito* (the rice is cooked - passive meaning), *mettā datā* (metta is given - passive meaning).

Future passive participles or potential future participles express something that has to be done or ideally should be done. The suffixes *tabba*, *anīya*, *ya* are added to the verbal root, with or without the connecting vowel *iy*. Thus the root *kar* (to do) can develop the following forms (should be done): *kar-tabba*: *kātabba/kattabba*; *kar-anīya*: *kaṇīya*; *kar-ya*: *kariya*: *kayira*; (Sanskrit: *kr̥tya*) (with insertion of *t*): *kicca*. Future passive participles carry more optative or imperative meaning and are declined along with the respective nouns *kammaṃ kattabbaṃ* (the work should be performed).

## 5. The Three Voices

- The active voice is the form that is of common occurrence. The word for the active voice in Pāli is *parassapada* (lit. word expressing action on others) and thus describes the result or consequence of an action that is produced on others by this very action. It is also called *kattukāraka*.

- The reflexive or middle voice is rarely used and mostly found in poetry. The word for the middle or reflexive voice in Pāli is *attanopada* (lit. word expressing action on oneself) and thus describes the result or consequence of an action that is produced on the agent himself by this very action. It is also called *kammakāraka*.<sup>48</sup> The primary endings of the reflexive voice are *te, se, e, nte, vhe, mhe*. The secondary endings are *tha, tho, m/aṃ, re/raṃ, vho, mhase*. Because of its rare occurrence the respective conjugations are neglected here.
- The passive voice adds the suffix *ya* to transitive verbs so they can adopt passive meaning: *gacchīyati* (to be gone to); *dīyati* (to be given).

In general the terminations of the verbs remain the same throughout the different groups and in the process of reading the suttas one becomes easily accustomed to these tenses. For the purpose of the collection as presented in *Exploring the Path*, while reading suttas and complete sentences it becomes easy to understand those usages without needing to know all the grammatical details. The subsequent tables should suffice for the purpose of this introduction.

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48. *kattukāraka*: the relation to the action as agent, being an agent; *kammakāraka*: the relation to the action as patient, being a patient.

### 6. Table Survey: present indicative, imperative, optative and future

|                       |       | <b>Indi-<br/>cative</b> |                  | <b>Imper-<br/>ative</b> |                  | <b>Optative</b> |                     | <b>Future</b> |                     |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. | sā\so | -ti                     | <i>gacchati</i>  | -tu                     | <i>gacchatu</i>  | -eyya           | <i>gaccheyya</i>    | -issati       | <i>gacchissati</i>  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing. | tvam  | -si                     | <i>gacchasi</i>  | -hi                     | <i>gacchahi</i>  | -eyyāsi         | <i>gaccheyyāsi</i>  | -issasi       | <i>gacchissasi</i>  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> sing. | ahaṃ  | -mi                     | <i>gacchāmi</i>  | -mi                     | <i>gacchāmi</i>  | -eyyaṃ          | <i>gaccheyyaṃ</i>   | -issāmi       | <i>gacchissāmi</i>  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.   | te    | -nti                    | <i>gacchanti</i> | -ntu                    | <i>gacchantu</i> | -eyyuṃ          | <i>gaccheyyuṃ</i>   | -issantī      | <i>gacchissantī</i> |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.   | tumhe | -tha                    | <i>gacchatha</i> | -tha                    | <i>gacchatha</i> | -eyyātha        | <i>gaccheyyātha</i> | -issatha      | <i>gacchissatha</i> |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> pl.   | mayam | -ma                     | <i>gacchāma</i>  | -ma                     | <i>gacchāma</i>  | -eyyāma         | <i>gaccheyyāma</i>  | -issāma       | <i>gacchissāma</i>  |

### 7. Table Survey: different forms of aorist

|                       |       | <b>Sec.<br/>End.</b> | <b>Form</b>   | <b>Root –<br/>Aorist</b>                   | <b>Form</b>                 | <b>a –<br/>Aorist</b> | <b>Form</b>                 | <b>s –<br/>Aorist</b> | <b>Form</b>                                 | <b>is –<br/>Aorist</b>            |
|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|---------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. | sā\so | -t                   |               | <i>agā</i>                                 |                             | <i>agama</i>          |                             | <i>agamāsi</i>        |   | <i>gacchi /<br/>agami</i>         |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing. | tvam  | -s                   |               | <i>agā</i>                                 |                             | <i>agama</i>          |                             | <i>agamāsi</i>        |   | <i>gacchi /<br/>agami</i>         |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> sing. | ahaṃ  | -aṃ                  | <i>a- gam</i> | <i>agam /<br/>agāṃ</i>                     | <i>a- gam-<br/>a-<br/>m</i> | <i>agamaṃ</i>         | <i>agamā-<br/>s-<br/>iṃ</i> | <i>agamāsiṃ</i>       | <i>agam-<br/>is-m /<br/>gacch-<br/>is-m</i> | <i>gacchiṃ /<br/>agamiṃ</i>       |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.   | te    | -u / uṃ              |               | <i>aguṃ /<br/>agāuṃ<br/>agu /<br/>agāu</i> |                             | <i>agamuṃ</i>         |                             | <i>agamamsu</i>       |   | <i>gacchisuṃ /<br/>agamisuṃ</i>   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.   | tumhe | -tha                 |               |  |                             | <i>agamatha</i>       |                             | <i>agamattha</i>      |   | <i>gacchittha /<br/>agamittha</i> |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> pl.   | mayam | -ma                  |               |  |                             | <i>agamāma</i>        |                             | <i>agamamha</i>       |   | <i>gacchimha /<br/>agamimha</i>   |



8. Table Survey:  
gerund, present participle, past participle, future passive participle

| Form | Gerund | Translat.      | Form  | Present Participle | Translat. | Form | Past Participle | Translat. | Form   | Future Passive Part. | Translat.   |
|------|--------|----------------|-------|--------------------|-----------|------|-----------------|-----------|--------|----------------------|-------------|
| -tvā | gantvā | having gone    | -nta  | gacchanta          | going     | -ta  | gata            | gone      | -tabba | gantabba             | to be gone  |
|      | datvā  | having given   |       | dadanta            | giving    |      | datta           | given     |        | dātabba              | t.b. given  |
|      | pacivā | having cooked  |       | pacanta            | cooking   | -ita | pacita          | cooked    |        | bhuñjitabba          | t.b.enjoyed |
| -ya  | āgamma | having come    | -māna | gacchamāna         | going     |      | gacchita        | gone      | -aniya | gamanīya             | to be gone  |
|      | ādāya  | having given   |       | pacamāna           | cooking   | -na  | dinna           | given     |        | dassanīya            | to be seen  |
|      | āruyha | having climbed |       | bhuñjamāna         | eating    |      | nisinna         | seated    | -ya    | bhuñjiya             | t.b.enjoyed |

9. Further examples of past participles

|                 |              |                         |              |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| <i>āmasati</i>  | to rub       | <i>āmasita, āmaṭṭha</i> | rubbed       |
| <i>ārabhati</i> | to start     | <i>āraddha</i>          | started      |
| <i>āsiñcati</i> | to sprinkle  | <i>āsitta</i>           | sprinkled    |
| <i>bhavati</i>  | to become    | <i>bhūta</i>            | become       |
| <i>bhuñjati</i> | to enjoy     | <i>bhuñjita, bhutta</i> | enjoyed      |
| <i>cavati</i>   | to fall away | <i>cuta</i>             | fell away    |
| <i>dadāti</i>   | to give      | <i>dinna</i>            | given        |
| <i>ḍasati</i>   | to bite      | <i>daṭṭha</i>           | bitten       |
| <i>dhovati</i>  | to wash      | <i>dhovita, dhota</i>   | washed       |
| <i>gaṇhāti</i>  | to seize     | <i>gahita</i>           | seized, held |
| <i>hanati</i>   | to kill      | <i>hata</i>             | killed       |
| <i>harati</i>   | to take away | <i>hata</i>             | took away    |
| <i>jānāti</i>   | to know      | <i>ñāta</i>             | known        |
| <i>karoti</i>   | to do        | <i>kata</i>             | done         |

|                   |                  |                         |                   |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>kasati</i>     | to plough        | <i>kasita, kaṭṭha</i>   | ploughed          |
| <i>khipati</i>    | to throw         | <i>khitta</i>           | thrown            |
| <i>kiṇāti</i>     | to buy           | <i>kīta</i>             | bought            |
| <i>kujjhati</i>   | to be angry      | <i>kuddha</i>           | was angry,        |
| <i>labhati</i>    | to gain          | <i>laddha, labhita</i>  | gained            |
| <i>mināti</i>     | to measure       | <i>mita</i>             | measured          |
| <i>muñcati</i>    | to deliver, emit | <i>mutta</i>            | delivered         |
| <i>nikkhamati</i> | to leave         | <i>nikkhanta</i>        | gone out, left    |
| <i>pāpuṇāti</i>   | to reach         | <i>patta</i>            | reached, attained |
| <i>pacati</i>     | to cook          | <i>pācita, pakka</i>    | cooked            |
| <i>pajahati</i>   | to abandon       | <i>pahīna</i>           | abandoned         |
| <i>pasīdati</i>   | to become bright | <i>pasanna</i>          | brightened        |
| <i>pavisati</i>   | to enter         | <i>paviṭṭha</i>         | entered           |
| <i>phusati</i>    | to touch         | <i>phuṭṭa</i>           | touched           |
| <i>pivati</i>     | to drink         | <i>pīta</i>             | drunk             |
| <i>pucchati</i>   | to ask           | <i>pucchita, puṭṭha</i> | asked             |
| <i>suṇāti</i>     | to hear          | <i>suta</i>             | heard             |
| <i>tiṭṭhati</i>   | to stand         | <i>thīta</i>            | stood             |
| <i>vapati</i>     | to sow           | <i>vutta</i>            | sown              |
| <i>vasati</i>     | to live          | <i>vuttha</i>           | lived, dwelled    |
| <i>vivarati</i>   | to uncover       | <i>vivata</i>           | uncovered, opened |

### 10. Table Survey: special conjugation: *atthi* – to be

|                       |       | <b>Indicative</b> | <b>Aorist</b>         | <b>Optative</b>     | <b>Imperative</b> | <b>Future</b>       |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. | sā\so | <i>atthi</i>      | <i>āsi</i>            | <i>assa, siyā</i>   | <i>atthu</i>      |                     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing. | tvam  | <i>asi</i>        | <i>āsi</i>            | <i>assa, siyā</i>   | <i>āhi</i>        | see: <i>bhavati</i> |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> sing. | ahaṃ  | <i>asmi, amhi</i> | <i>āsim</i>           | <i>assaṃ, siyaṃ</i> | <i>asmi, amhi</i> |                     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.   | te    | <i>santi</i>      | <i>āsuṃ, āsiṃsu</i>   | <i>assu, siyuṃ</i>  | <i>santu</i>      |                     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.   | tumhe | <i>attha</i>      | <i>āsittha</i>        | <i>assatha</i>      | <i>attha</i>      |                     |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> pl.   | mayam | <i>asma, amha</i> | <i>āsimha, āsimhā</i> | <i>assāma</i>       | <i>asma, amha</i> |                     |

11. Table Survey: special conjugation: *bhavati* – to be, to exist, to become

|                       |       | Indicative      | Aorist                   | Optative                   | Imperative                | Future             |
|-----------------------|-------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. | sā\so | <i>bhavati</i>  | <i>ahū, ahu, (bhavi)</i> | <i>bhaveyya, bhave</i>     | <i>bhavatu</i>            | <i>bhavissati</i>  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing. | tvam  | <i>bhavasi</i>  | <i>ahū, ahu</i>          | <i>bhaveyyāsi</i>          | <i>bhava, bhavāhi</i>     | <i>bhavissasi</i>  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> sing. | ahaṃ  | <i>bhavāmi</i>  | <i>ahum</i>              | <i>bhaveyyaṃ</i>           |                           | <i>bhavissāmi</i>  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.   | te    | <i>bhavanti</i> | <i>ahum</i>              | <i>bhaveyyuṃ</i>           | <i>bhavantu</i>           | <i>bhavissanti</i> |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.   | tumhe | <i>bhavatha</i> |                          | <i>bhavetha</i>            | <i>bhavatha, bhavātha</i> | <i>bhavissatha</i> |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> pl.   | mayam | <i>bhavāma</i>  | <i>ahumha</i>            | <i>bhaveyyāma, bhavema</i> |                           | <i>bhavissāma</i>  |

12. Table Survey: special conjugation: *hoti* – to be, to exist, to become  
(root *bhū* reduced to *hū*)

|                       |       | Indicative   | Aorist              | Optative          | Imperative   | Future                          |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> sing. | sā\so | <i>hoti</i>  | <i>ahosi, ahū</i>   | <i>huveyya</i>    | <i>hotu</i>  | <i>hohiti, hessati, hossati</i> |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing. | tvam  | <i>hosi</i>  | <i>ahosi</i>        | <i>huveyyāsi</i>  | <i>hohi</i>  | <i>hessasi, hohisi</i>          |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> sing. | ahaṃ  | <i>homi</i>  | <i>ahosiṃ, ahum</i> | <i>huveyyaṃ</i>   | <i>homi</i>  | <i>hohāmi, hessāmi, hessaṃ</i>  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.   | te    | <i>honti</i> | <i>ahesuṃ</i>       | <i>huveyyuṃ</i>   | <i>hontu</i> | <i>hessanti, hohinti</i>        |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.   | tumhe | <i>hotha</i> | <i>ahosittha</i>    | <i>huveyyātha</i> | <i>hotha</i> | <i>hessatha, hohitha</i>        |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> pl.   | mayam | <i>homa</i>  | <i>ahesuṃha</i>     | <i>huveyyāma</i>  | <i>homa</i>  | <i>hessāma, hohāma</i>          |

13. Table Survey: gerund, present participle, past participle, future passive participle, infinitive of *atthi* and *bhavati/hoti*

| Verbs          | Gerund                                    | Transl.          | Pres. p.                | Transl.       | Past p.                | Transl. | Fut. Pass. p.             | Transl.                | Infinitive      | Transl.                               |
|----------------|---|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>atthi</i>   | see:<br><i>bhavati</i><br>and <i>hoti</i> |                  | <i>santa, samāna</i>    | being         | see:<br><i>bhavati</i> |         |                           |                        |                 |                                       |
| <i>bhavati</i> | <i>bhavivā</i>                            | having<br>become | <i>bhavaṃ, bhavanta</i> | becom-<br>ing | <i>bhūta</i>           | become  | <i>bhavitabba, bhabba</i> | should be,<br>could be | <i>bhavituṃ</i> | to be-<br>come,<br>to exist,<br>to be |
| <i>hoti</i>    | <i>hutvā, hutvāna</i>                     | having<br>been   | <i>honta, hontī</i>     | being         | see:<br><i>bhavati</i> |         | <i>hotabba, bhuyya</i>    | should be,<br>could be | <i>hotuṃ</i>    | to be-<br>come,<br>to exist,<br>to be |

## 8. ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

Adjectives are declined according to the nouns they define. They can be grouped according to their suffixes which are similar to the nouns: *-a*, *-i*, *-u*, *-in*, *-ant*, *-mant*, *-vant*; taking all the three genders as the respective nouns do.

Adverbs relate to the respective verbs and adjust their meaning and application in the context of the sentence. They belong to the group of indeclinables and may be pure adverbs or derivative adverbs.

### 1. Declination of Adjectives

Although a few of the declination-endings of nouns are of rare occurrence, in general adjectives are declined in the same way as the nouns they describe. So the same adjective will be declined in the same case declinations with the respective endings in all the three genders and both numbers.

For a general outline one may refer to the declensions of nouns using the following example of suffix *a*: *bala* (strong) may suffice for the purpose of this introduction.

| ❧) Case      | a strong man              | a young girl            | a strong body            |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nominative   | <i>bālo puriso</i>        | <i>bālā kaññā</i>       | <i>bālaṃ rupaṃ</i>       |
| Accusative   | <i>bālaṃ purisaṃ</i>      | <i>bālaṃ kaññaṃ</i>     | <i>bālaṃ rupaṃ</i>       |
| Instrumental | <i>bālena purisena</i>    | <i>bālāya kaññāya</i>   | <i>bālena rupena</i>     |
| Dative       | <i>bālassa purisassa</i>  | <i>bālāya kaññāya</i>   | <i>bālassa rupassa</i>   |
| Ablative     | <i>bālasma purisasma</i>  | <i>bālāya kaññāya</i>   | <i>bālamhā rupamhā</i>   |
| Genitive     | <i>bālassa purisassa</i>  | <i>bālāya kaññāya</i>   | <i>bālassa rupassa</i>   |
| Locative     | <i>bālasmiṃ purisamiṃ</i> | <i>bālayaṃ kaññāyaṃ</i> | <i>bālasmiṃ rupasmiṃ</i> |

In addition to the endings *-a*, *-i*, *-u*, *-in*, *-ant*, *-mant*, *-vant*,

- the following suffixes are of common occurrence: *ka* (*garuka* – heavy), *ika* (*kāyika* – physical), and *aka* (*jiṇṇaka* – old; derived from p.p. *jiṇṇa*);
- possession is expressed with the suffixes *vā* (*guṇavā* – virtuous, with qualities) and *vī* (*medhāvī* – wise, with wisdom).

Adjectives denote comparisons by adding *tara* for the comparative and (in rare cases only) *tama* for the superlative.

- The comparative suffix *tara*: *piyatara* (more dear), *dūratara* (farther), *pāpatara* (more evil)
- The superlative suffix *tama*: *uttama* (the highest), *piyata* (the dearest), *dūratama* (the farthest)

Alternatively,

- *iya* is used for the comparative: *pāpiya* (more evil), *khippiya* (quicker), *sukhiya* (happier) and
- the superlative is expressed with the suffixes *issika* and *iṭṭha*: *khippissika* (quickest), *pāpiṭṭha* (most evil), *jetṭha* (the oldest), and *seṭṭha* (the best).

## 2. Declination of Adverbs

Adverbs derived from adjectives, pronouns or nouns are called derivative adverbs.

Those adverbs that cannot be derived and don't add any case endings are called pure adverbs.

Derivations occur from adjectives, pronouns or nouns.

- When derived from adjectives they get formed by adding the *niggahīta*-ending *aṃ* to the adjective as in *dukkha - dukkhaṃ* (painful), *dīgha - dīghaṃ* (long, far), *sīgha - sīghaṃ* (fast), *pāpa - pāpaṃ* (evil), *sukha - sukhaṃ* (happily), *cira - ciraṃ* (for a long time).
- Adverbs derived from pronouns add specific adverbial suffixes to the stem, such as:

*tra*: *tatra* (there; *aññatra* (elsewhere),

*tha*: *sabbatha* (everywhere), *ubhayattha* (in both places),

*to*: *tato* (thence, from there), *yato* (hence, from where),

*dā*: *tadā* (then), *yadā* (when),

*dhi*: *sabbadhi* (everywhere),

*rahi*: *carahi* (now, then, therefore), *tarahi* (then, at that time).

- Nouns (and some adjectives as well) change into adverbs by adding the specific case endings:
  - so*: *dīghaso* (in length), *divaso* (by day), *bahuso* (often), *yoniso* (thoroughly, orderly);
  - to*: *dakkhiṇato* (southern), *piṭṭhito* (from the back), *sabbato* (everywhere);
  - dhā*: *ekadhā* (one by one);
  - assa*: *cirassa* (at last), *kissa* (why?);
  - e*: *bahire* (outside), *dūre* (far), *santike* (nearby).

Pure adverbs may ideally be learned separately.

- Some of common occurrences are: *atho* (and, then), *anto* (before), *adho* (below), *idāni* (now), *kho* (then), *vata* (truly, indeed), *tiro* (across, beyond), *bahi* (outside), *paro* (beyond, further), *pure* (formerly), *hi* (certainly, because).

Some grammarians<sup>49</sup> divide adverbs into groups according to their meaning instead of their derivation, such as:

- adverbs of time: *yada* (when), *ajja* (today), *ratto* (by night);
- adverbs of place: *tatra* (there), *adho* (below), *idha* (here), *tiraṃ* (across);
- adverbs of manner: *sukhaṃ* (happily), *evaṃ* (thus), *tuṅhī* (silently);
- adverbs of quantity, degree and extent: *yāva* (how much), *mattaso* (moderately), *antamaso* (even);
- adverbs of reason or cause: *kasmā* (why), *yathā* (thus);
- adverbial particles such as: *api* (indeed), *iti* (thus), *nāma* (indeed), *kho* (then).

Adverbs can denote comparisons by adding the comparative suffix: *tara-pāpatara(ṃ)* (more evil). The superlative does not occur.

49. Vito Perniola (*Pāli Grammar*, PTS) presents a detailed survey of common adverbs grouped in this order.

## 9. PRONOUNS (NĀMA)

In Pāli the pronouns have individual declensions. These are different from the declensions of the nouns. But all pronouns — personal, demonstrative, relative and interrogative — follow a similar pattern.

The demonstrative pronouns are *so/sā/taṃ*, *eso/esā*, *etaṃ* and *ena/naṃ*; all follow the same declension.

*ayaṃ/idaṃ* refer to a person or thing in close vicinity while *asu/aduṃ* point to a person or thing farther away; they follow the declensions in the same manner as those listed below.

Pāli further uses possessive pronouns as in *mādīya*, *tādīya* but they are of rare occurrence and are substituted by the genitive of the personal pronoun for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person; the 3<sup>rd</sup> person uses the genitive of the demonstrative pronoun.

The indefinite pronouns formed with participles *ci/cid* and *api/pi* are often used and are listed below.

1. Personal Pronoun: 1<sup>st</sup> person: *ahaṃ* – I / *mayāṃ*, *amhe* – we

|             | <b>Singular</b>             | <b>Plural</b>                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Nom.</b> | <i>ahaṃ</i>                 | <i>mayāṃ</i> , <i>amhe</i>                |
| <b>Acc.</b> | <i>maṃ</i> , <i>mamaṃ</i>   | <i>amhe</i> , <i>amhākaṃ</i> , <i>no</i>  |
| <b>Ins.</b> | <i>mayā</i> , <i>me</i>     | <i>amhehi</i> , <i>no</i>                 |
| <b>Dat.</b> | <i>mama</i> , <i>mayhaṃ</i> | <i>amhaṃ</i> , <i>amhākaṃ</i> , <i>no</i> |
| <b>Abl.</b> | <i>mayā</i>                 | <i>amhehi</i>                             |
| <b>Gen.</b> | <i>mama</i> , <i>mayhaṃ</i> | <i>amhaṃ</i> , <i>amhākaṃ</i> , <i>no</i> |
| <b>Loc.</b> | <i>mayi</i>                 | <i>amhesu</i>                             |

2. 2<sup>nd</sup> person: *tvaṃ, tuvaṃ* – you / *tumhe* – you

|             | <b>Singular</b>          | <b>Plural</b>               |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Nom.</b> | <i>tvaṃ, tuvaṃ</i>       | <i>tumhe</i>                |
| <b>Acc.</b> | <i>taṃ, tavaṃ, tuvaṃ</i> | <i>tumhe, tumhākaṃ, vo</i>  |
| <b>Ins.</b> | <i>tvayā, tayā, te</i>   | <i>tumhehi, vo</i>          |
| <b>Dat.</b> | <i>tava, tuyhaṃ, te</i>  | <i>tumhaṃ, tumhākaṃ, vo</i> |
| <b>Abl.</b> | <i>tvayā, tayā</i>       | <i>tumhehi, vo</i>          |
| <b>Gen.</b> | <i>tava, tuyhaṃ, te</i>  | <i>tumhaṃ, tumhākaṃ, vo</i> |
| <b>Loc.</b> | <i>tvayi, tayi</i>       | <i>tumhesu</i>              |

The following tables show the declensions for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person in the respective order of demonstrative pronoun, relative pronoun and interrogative pronoun, in singular and plural.

3. Masculine, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular: *so* – he

| <b>Case</b>         | <b>Demonstrative Pronoun</b> | <b>Relative Pronoun</b> | <b>Interrogative Pronoun</b>        |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                     | he, that                     | he, who                 | who?                                |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>so</i>                    | <i>yo</i>               | <i>ko</i>                           |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>taṃ</i>                   | <i>yaṃ</i>              | <i>kaṃ</i>                          |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tena</i>                  | <i>yena</i>             | <i>kena</i>                         |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tassa</i>                 | <i>yassa</i>            | <i>kassa, kissa</i>                 |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tamhā, tasmā</i>          | <i>yamhā, yasmā</i>     | <i>kasmā, kismā</i>                 |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tassa</i>                 | <i>yassa</i>            | <i>kassa, kissa</i>                 |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tamhi, tasmim</i>         | <i>yamhi, yasmim</i>    | <i>kamhi, kasmim, kimhi, kismim</i> |



4. Neuter, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular: *yaṃ* – it, that

| Case                | Demonstrative Pronoun | Relative Pronoun     | Interrogative Pronoun               |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                     | it, that              | that, which          | which?                              |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>taṃ</i>            | <i>yaṃ</i>           | <i>kiṃ</i>                          |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>taṃ</i>            | <i>yaṃ</i>           | <i>kiṃ</i>                          |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tena</i>           | <i>yena</i>          | <i>kena</i>                         |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tassa</i>          | <i>yassa</i>         | <i>kassa, kissa</i>                 |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tamhā, tasmā</i>   | <i>yamhā, yasmā</i>  | <i>kasmā, kismā</i>                 |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tassa</i>          | <i>yassa</i>         | <i>kassa, kissa</i>                 |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tamhi, tasmiṃ</i>  | <i>yamhi, yasmīṃ</i> | <i>kamhi, kasmiṃ, kimhi, kismiṃ</i> |

5. Feminine, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular: *yā* – she, who

| Case                | Demonstrative Pronoun | Relative Pronoun     | Interrogative Pronoun |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | she, that             | she who              | who?                  |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>sā</i>             | <i>yā</i>            | <i>kā</i>             |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>taṃ</i>            | <i>yaṃ</i>           | <i>kaṃ</i>            |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tāya</i>           | <i>yāya</i>          | <i>kāya</i>           |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tassā, tāya</i>    | <i>yassā, yāya</i>   | <i>kassā, kāya</i>    |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tāya</i>           | <i>yāya</i>          | <i>kāya</i>           |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tassā, tāya</i>    | <i>yassā, yāya</i>   | <i>kassā, kāya</i>    |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tassaṃ, tāyaṃ</i>  | <i>yassaṃ, yāyaṃ</i> | <i>kassaṃ, kāyaṃ</i>  |

6. Masculine, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, plural: *ye* – they

| Case                | Demonstrative Pronoun | Relative Pronoun      | Interrogative Pronoun |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | they, those           | they, who             | who?                  |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>te</i>             | <i>ye</i>             | <i>ke</i>             |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>te</i>             | <i>ye</i>             | <i>ke</i>             |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tehi</i>           | <i>yehi</i>           | <i>kehi</i>           |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tesaṃ, tesānaṃ</i> | <i>yesaṃ, yesānaṃ</i> | <i>kesaṃ, kesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tehi</i>           | <i>yehi</i>           | <i>kehi</i>           |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tesaṃ, tesānaṃ</i> | <i>yesaṃ, yesānaṃ</i> | <i>kesaṃ, kesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tesu</i>           | <i>yesu</i>           | <i>kesu</i>           |

7. Neuter, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, plural: *yāni, ye* – those

| Case                | Demonstrative Pronoun | Relative Pronoun      | Interrogative Pronoun |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | they, those           | they, who             | who?                  |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>tāni, te</i>       | <i>yāni, ye</i>       | <i>kāni, ke</i>       |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>tāni, te</i>       | <i>yāni, ye</i>       | <i>kāni, ke</i>       |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tehi</i>           | <i>yehi</i>           | <i>kehi</i>           |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tesaṃ, tesānaṃ</i> | <i>yesaṃ, yesānaṃ</i> | <i>kesaṃ, kesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tehi</i>           | <i>yehi</i>           | <i>kehi</i>           |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tesaṃ, tesānaṃ</i> | <i>yesaṃ, yesānaṃ</i> | <i>kesaṃ, kesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tesu</i>           | <i>yesu</i>           | <i>kesu</i>           |

8. Feminine, 3rd person, plural: *tā, tāyo* – they, those

| Case                | Demonstrative Pronoun | Relative Pronoun      | Interrogative Pronoun |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | those                 | those                 | who?                  |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>tā, tāyo</i>       | <i>yā, yāyo</i>       | <i>kā, kāyo</i>       |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>tā, tāyo</i>       | <i>yā, yāyo</i>       | <i>kā, kāyo</i>       |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>tāhi</i>           | <i>yāhi</i>           | <i>kāhi</i>           |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>tāsaṃ, tāsānaṃ</i> | <i>yāsaṃ, yāsānaṃ</i> | <i>kāsaṃ, kāsānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>tāhi</i>           | <i>yāhi</i>           | <i>kāhi</i>           |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>tāsaṃ, tāsānaṃ</i> | <i>yāsaṃ, yāsānaṃ</i> | <i>kāsaṃ, kāsānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>tāsu</i>           | <i>yāsu</i>           | <i>kāsu</i>           |

9. Declension of: *ayaṃ, idaṃ* – this

| Case                | Masculine               | Feminine                                  | Neuter                  |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <b>Singular</b>     | this / he               | this / she                                | this / it               |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>ayaṃ</i>             | <i>ayaṃ</i>                               | <i>idaṃ</i>             |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>imaṃ</i>             | <i>imaṃ</i>                               | <i>idaṃ</i>             |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>iminā</i>            | <i>imāya</i>                              | <i>iminā / aminā</i>    |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>imassa / imissa</i>  | <i>imissā / imissāya</i>                  | <i>imissa</i>           |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>imasmā / imamhā</i>  | <i>imāya</i>                              | <i>imasmā / imamhā</i>  |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>imassa / imissa</i>  | <i>imissā / imissāya / imāya</i>          | <i>imissa</i>           |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>imasmiṃ / imamhi</i> | <i>imissāṃ / imissā / imāsaṃ / imāyaṃ</i> | <i>imasmiṃ / imamhi</i> |
| <b>Plural</b>       |                         |   |                         |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>ime</i>              | <i>imā / imāyo</i>                        | <i>imāni</i>            |

|                     |                 |                          |                          |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>ime</i>      | <i>imā / imāyo</i>       | <i>imāni</i>             |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>imehi</i>    | <i>imāhi</i>             | <i>imehi</i>             |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>imesaṃ /</i> | <i>imāsaṃ / imāsānaṃ</i> | <i>imesaṃ / imesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>imehi</i>    | <i>imāhi</i>             | <i>imehi</i>             |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>imesaṃ /</i> | <i>imāsaṃ / imāsānaṃ</i> | <i>imesaṃ / imesānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>imesu</i>    | <i>imāsu</i>             | <i>imesu</i>             |

10. Declension of: *asu, amu* – that

| Case                | Masculine                | Feminine                 | Neuter                   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Singular</b>     |                          |                          |                          |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>asu, amu</i>          | <i>asu</i>               | <i>aduṃ</i>              |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>amuṃ</i>              | <i>amuṃ</i>              | <i>amuṃ</i>              |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>amunā</i>             | <i>amuyā</i>             | <i>amunā</i>             |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>amussa</i>            | <i>amussā / amuyā</i>    | <i>amussa</i>            |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>amusmā/ amumhā</i>    | <i>amuyā</i>             | <i>amusmā/ amumhā</i>    |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>amussa</i>            | <i>amussā / amuyā</i>    | <i>amussa</i>            |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>amusmiṃ / amumhi</i>  | <i>amussaṃ / amuyaṃ</i>  | <i>amusmiṃ / amumhi</i>  |
| <b>Plural</b>       |                          |                          |                          |
| <b>Nominative</b>   | <i>amū</i>               | <i>amū / amūyo</i>       | <i>amū / amūni</i>       |
| <b>Accusative</b>   | <i>amū</i>               | <i>amū / amūyo</i>       | <i>amū</i>               |
| <b>Instrumental</b> | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    |
| <b>Dative</b>       | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Ablative</b>     | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    | <i>amūhi / amūbhi</i>    |
| <b>Genitive</b>     | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> | <i>amūsaṃ / amūsānaṃ</i> |
| <b>Locative</b>     | <i>amūsu</i>             | <i>amāsu</i>             | <i>amūsu</i>             |

## 11. The Indefinite Particle *ci*

The indefinite particles — *ci/cid* (*d* inserted before vocals) or *api/pi* — are appended to and declined as the case forms of the interrogative pronoun, expressing ideas such as ‘anyone, whichever, whoever’.

Examples are:

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Masc. | <i>koci puriso</i> – some man;<br><i>kenaci purisena</i> – by some man;<br><i>kassaci purissa</i> – of some man; etc.        |
| Neut. | <i>kiñci phalaṃ</i> – some fruit;<br><i>kenaci phalena</i> – by some fruit;<br><i>kassaci phalassa</i> – of some fruit; etc. |
| Fem.  | <i>kāci itthi</i> – some woman;<br><i>kāyaci itthiyā</i> – by some woman;<br><i>kassāci itthiyā</i> – of some woman; etc.    |

## 10. INDECLINABLES (NIPĀTA)

Indeclinables are words that carry their own meaning and are placed either before or behind the noun they refer to. They could be compared to adverbs, prepositions or conjunctions in other languages; often they are used adverbially. They occur frequently therefore knowing them will be useful.

|                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| ◀) <i>āma</i>    | yes                   |
| <i>adho</i>      | below                 |
| <i>adhunā</i>    | now, just now         |
| <i>aho</i>       | ah!                   |
| <i>ajja</i>      | today                 |
| <i>ajjhataṃ</i>  | internally            |
| <i>alaṃ</i>      | enough                |
| <i>anantaraṃ</i> | immediately following |
| <i>aññathā</i>   | otherwise             |

|                    |                              |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>aññatra</i>     | except for, apart from       |
| <i>antarā</i>      | within, between              |
| <i>anulomaṃ</i>    | in natural order             |
| <i>anupādā</i>     | without attachment           |
| <i>anupubbena</i>  | in due course, in succession |
| <i>aparaṃ</i>      | further, afterwards          |
| <i>api</i>         | also                         |
| <i>api ca</i>      | and also, nevertheless       |
| <i>ativilaṃ</i>    | too long                     |
| <i>ativiya</i>     | very much                    |
| <i>avidūre</i>     | near, not far                |
| <i>ayoniso</i>     | erratically, unmethodically  |
| <i>bhūtapubbaṃ</i> | formerly, once upon a time   |
| <i>bhiyyo</i>      | more                         |
| <i>ca</i>          | and                          |
| <i>ce</i>          | if                           |
| <i>ciraṃ</i>       | for a long time              |
| <i>dāni</i>        | now                          |
| <i>dīghaṃ</i>      | long                         |
| <i>dūrā</i>        | from far away                |
| <i>dūrato</i>      | in the distance              |
| <i>divā</i>        | by day                       |
| <i>ekantikena</i>  | finally                      |
| <i>ekato</i>       | on one side                  |
| <i>etarahi</i>     | now, at present              |
| <i>ettāvatā</i>    | to that extent               |
| <i>ettha</i>       | here, in this case           |
| <i>eva</i>         | only, just                   |
| <i>evaṃ</i>        | thus, so, yes                |
| <i>evameva</i>     | just so, likewise            |
| <i>ha</i>          | indeed, truly                |
| <i>hi</i>          | for, because, though         |

|                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>idha</i>         | here, in this connection |
| <i>iha</i>          | here, in this case       |
| <i>itthaṃ</i>       | in this way, thus        |
| <i>iva</i>          | like                     |
| <i>kacci</i>        | perhaps                  |
| <i>kadā</i>         | when                     |
| <i>kadā ci</i>      | at any time              |
| <i>kasmā</i>        | why? wherefore?          |
| <i>kathaṃ</i>       | how?                     |
| <i>kattha</i>       | where?                   |
| <i>khalu</i>        | indeed                   |
| <i>khippaṃ</i>      | quickly                  |
| <i>kho</i>          | indeed                   |
| <i>kiṃ</i>          | why?                     |
| <i>kuhiṃ</i>        | where to?                |
| <i>kuto</i>         | whence?                  |
| <i>mā</i>           | not                      |
| <i>majjhe</i>       | in the middle            |
| <i>micchā</i>       | wrongly                  |
| <i>nāma</i>         | by name, indeed          |
| <i>nānā</i>         | variously                |
| <i>na</i>           | not                      |
| <i>na cirasseva</i> | soon                     |
| <i>no</i>           | not (emphatic)           |
| <i>pāraṃ</i>        | thither, beyond          |
| <i>patilomaṃ</i>    | in reverse order         |
| <i>pacchā</i>       | afterwards               |
| <i>pana</i>         | but, however, now        |
| <i>paraṃ</i>        | after                    |

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>parimukhaṃ</i>  | in front           |
| <i>pe</i>          | and so on, etc.    |
| <i>pi</i>          | also               |
| <i>piṭṭhito</i>    | behind             |
| <i>pubbe</i>       | before             |
| <i>puna</i>        | again              |
| <i>punappunaṃ</i>  | again and again    |
| <i>purato</i>      | in front of        |
| <i>pure</i>        | before, in advance |
| <i>sādhu</i>       | well               |
| <i>sāyaṃ</i>       | in the evening     |
| <i>sabbadā</i>     | always             |
| <i>sabbathā</i>    | in all ways        |
| <i>sabbato</i>     | all around         |
| <i>sace</i>        | if                 |
| <i>sadā</i>        | always             |
| <i>saddhiṃ</i>     | with               |
| <i>saha</i>        | along with         |
| <i>sakideva</i>    | once               |
| <i>samaṃ</i>       | equally, like      |
| <i>samantā</i>     | on all sides       |
| <i>santike</i>     | near               |
| <i>sayāṃ</i>       | oneself, self      |
| <i>seyyathā</i>    | as, just like      |
| <i>seyyathidaṃ</i> | as follows         |
| <i>seyyo</i>       | better             |
| <i>tāva</i>        | so much, so long   |
| <i>tadā</i>        | then               |
| <i>tadagge</i>     | since then         |
| <i>taggha</i>      | certainly          |
| <i>tasmā</i>       | therefore          |
| <i>tathā</i>       | thus               |



|                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>tato</i>        | thence, then              |
| <i>tatra</i>       | there, in this connection |
| <i>tattha</i>      | there, in that connection |
| <i>tayidaṃ</i>     | with reference to this    |
| <i>tiriyaṃ</i>     | horizontally              |
| <i>tuṅhī</i>       | silent, silently          |
| <i>uddhaṃ</i>      | above                     |
| <i>upari</i>       | on top of                 |
| <i>uttari</i>      | beyond, further, more     |
| <i>vā</i>          | or, either                |
| <i>va</i>          | like                      |
| <i>vata</i>        | surely, indeed!           |
| <i>ve</i>          | surely (poetic)           |
| <i>viya</i>        | like                      |
| <i>yāva</i>        | as far as, up to, until   |
| <i>yāvatā</i>      | as far as                 |
| <i>yadā</i>        | when                      |
| <i>yadagge</i>     | since                     |
| <i>yadi</i>        | whether                   |
| <i>yadidaṃ</i>     | such as, as               |
| <i>yasmā</i>       | because, since            |
| <i>yathā</i>       | as, how                   |
| <i>yathābhūtaṃ</i> | as it really is           |
| <i>yato</i>        | because                   |
| <i>yatra</i>       | where                     |
| <i>yattha</i>      | where                     |
| <i>yoniso</i>      | methodically              |

## 11. PREFIXES (UPASAGGA)

The following survey presents some of the prefixes that commonly occur in Pāli. They are mostly added to verbs, but can be combined with nouns, derivatives and adjectives as well. Prefixes do not always alter the meaning of the word they are attached to, but rather intensify, modify or adjust it. They

may also express the opposite. Examples of prefixes with the verb *gacchati* were introduced in section 3.1.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <i>a-</i>            | not, non, un-                                  |
| <i>ā-</i>            | up to, until, as far as,                       |
| <i>abhi-</i>         | towards, about, against                        |
| <i>adhi-</i>         | above, upon, over                              |
| <i>antara-</i>       | within, across, beyond                         |
| <i>anu-</i>          | after, following, like, behind                 |
| <i>apa-</i>          | off, away, from                                |
| <i>ati-</i>          | beyond, over, across, more                     |
| <i>api-</i>          | over, near to, onto                            |
| <i>ava-</i>          | down, away, off: more poetic form of <i>o-</i> |
| <i>du- / du(r)-</i>  | ill, bad, hard, difficult                      |
| <i>nī- / ni(r)-</i>  | out, without, down                             |
| <i>o-</i>            | down, off                                      |
| <i>pa-</i>           | out, away                                      |
| <i>parā-</i>         | aside, opposed to, back                        |
| <i>pari-</i>         | round, around                                  |
| <i>pati- / pati-</i> | towards, back                                  |
| <i>pātu(r)-</i>      | manifest, evidently                            |
| <i>saṃ-</i>          | together, along with                           |
| <i>su-</i>           | well, good                                     |
| <i>tiro-</i>         | through, across, beyond                        |
| <i>u- / u(d)-</i>    | up, above, away                                |
| <i>upa-</i>          | up to, towards, next to                        |
| <i>vi-</i>           | apart, asunder, strongly, without              |

- Sometimes these prefixes may be combined to adapt their meaning: *upa + saṃ: upasaṃ; saṃ + ud: samud; anu + pari: anupari*.
- Some adverbs also take the position of prefixes and are used likewise: *attham* (setting), *āvi* (visible), *pura* (in front).

## 12. SUFFIXES

It has been shown in the previous sections that words in Pāli derive from a certain number of roots. From these roots words are developed by adding terminations, prefixes and suffixes. Terminations (suffixes) used for the conjugation of verbs and declension of nouns — pointing out gender, person, tenses, participles and cases — have been introduced in the previous sections.

Words can be developed directly from the root (primary derivatives) or from already developed words (secondary derivatives).

Staying with the example of the root *gam*, primary derivatives are formed.<sup>50</sup>

- |                               |          |  |
|-------------------------------|----------|--|
| • <i>gam + a: gama</i>        | 1.) adj. | going, able to go                                  |
|                               | 2.) noun | the act of going, course                           |
| • <i>gam + ana: gamana</i>    | 1.) adj. | conducive to, leading to                           |
|                               | 2.) noun | movement, walk, journey                            |
| • <i>gam + i + ka: gamika</i> | 1.) adj. | setting out for a journey                          |
|                               | 2.) noun | a village  |
| • <i>gām + a: gāma</i>        | 1.) adj. | belonging to the village,<br>low, inferior, common |
|                               | 2.) noun | a village  |

If prefixes or further suffixes are added to these primary derivatives, so called secondary derivatives develop.

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • <i>viha + ṃ + gama: vihangama</i>   | going in the air               |
| • <i>dur + anu + gama: duranugama</i> | difficult to be followed       |
| • <i>dūra + ṃ + gama: dūrangama</i>   | going a long way, far reaching |
| • <i>dūra + ṃ + gami: dūrangami</i>   | travelling, going far          |
| • <i>saṃ + gama: sangama</i>          | going together, assembly       |

50. Depending on the way these derivations combine with the suffixes, they undergo certain changes according to the rules of *sandhi* vowel gradation. The suffixes are added to the normal, the *guṇa* grade, where the vocalic element of the root remains unchanged. If this gets strengthened it is called *vuddhi* (*a* turns into *ā*; *i* into *e*...), if shortened or elided this is called *avuddhika* or weak, reduced grade.

- *gāma + anta: gāmanta* the neighbourhood of a village
- *gāma + aka: gāmaka* a little village
- *an + ā + gāmi + tā: anāgāmitā* the fact of not returning
- *gamana + bhāva: gamanabhāva* the state of going away
- *gamana + ā + gamana: gamanāgamana* going & coming, rising & setting

### 1. Suffixes of Special Importance

Suffixes expressing comparison:

- *pāpa + tara: pāpatara* more evil
- *pāpa + tama: pāpatama* most evil
- *pāpa + iya: pāpiya* more evil
- *pāpa + iyya: pāpiyya* more evil
- *pāpa + iṭṭha: pāpiṭṭha* most evil
- *pāpa + issika: pāpissika* most evil

Suffixes expressing abstractness:

- *eka + tta: ekatta* oneness
- *kata + tta: katatta* the fact of having done

Other suffixes expressing or forming nouns:

- *kār + ana: kāraṇa* deed, doing
- *vāha + ana: vāhana* carrying
- *vās + ant: vāsant* dwelling
- *cet + anā: cetanā* thought
- *sat + ya: sacca* truth
- *vid + yā: vijjā* knowledge

Suffixes expressing or forming agents:

- *para + gū: paragū* going to the other shore
- *kāla + jñū: kālaññū* knowing the proper time

Suffixes changing or forming nouns into verbs:<sup>51</sup>

- *taṇhā + āya + ti: taṇhāyati* to crave
- *mettā + āya + ti: mettāyati* to be compassionate, to love
- *sukha + āpe + ti: sukhāpeti* to make happy
- *dukkha + āpe + ti: dukkhāpeti* to make miserable

51. See also under causative verbs.

Suffixes forming reflexive participles:

- *paca + māna: pacamāna*                      cooking
- *dadā + māna: dadāmāna*                      giving

### 13. EPILOGUE

This simple introduction to Pāli grammar and pronunciation was created to present a quick reference guide while studying the suttas in the Pāli program, *Exploring the Path*, at Pariyatti ([learning.pariyatti.org](http://learning.pariyatti.org)).

A simple and basic understanding of grammar is helpful for the comprehension of the texts, but the main emphasis should remain with reading Pāli in context, where most grammatical patterns will become clear. In the same way as the pronunciation of letters may only prove useful in order to learn the correct movement of the organs of pronunciation, the rules of *sandhi* will only become obvious in the context of syllable and word combinations and the principles of grammar will become evident in the context of sentences.

May this introduction encourage more people to learn the Pāli language which provides us with irreplaceable values for our own lives and the lives of so many others. May reading and working with the Pāli suttas collected in this book, *Exploring the Sacred, Ancient Path in the Original Words of the Buddha*, support a better understanding of one's own practice of *paṭipatti*. May more and more people be inspired to walk the path of Dhamma. May the benevolent wish of my respected teacher be fulfilled!

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