

## Compounds (samāsa)

### I. Kammadhāraya compounds

#### (a) Adjective + noun

dukkhā vedanā → dukkhavedanā: painful feeling

taruṇo puriso → taruṇapuriso: a young man

kusalā dhammā → kusalahammā: wholesome qualities

seta + chatta → setacchatta: a white umbrella

caṇḍahatthin → a violent elephant

mahāpurisa → a great man

piyā + vācā → piyavācā: pleasing speech

Note that compounds can occur in any case, for example: kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ →

kusaladhammānaṃ = of wholesome qualities

#### (b) Noun + noun, where both nouns signify the same thing:

tejodhātu (← tejo + dhātu) = the fire element (tejo and dhātu are both nouns referring to the same entity)

paññindriya ← paññā + indriya = the wisdom faculty

rāgaggi ← rāga + aggi = the fire of lust, lust which is a fire

### II. Numerical compounds

#### (a) collective singular

tayo lokā → tilokaṃ = three worlds

cattāri saccāni → catusaccaṃ = four truths

cha + āyatanāni → saḷāyatanāṃ = six sense bases

catu + khattvaṃ → catukkhattvaṃ = four times

#### (b) plural

pañca khandhā → pañcakkhandhā

dasa disā → dasadisā

### III. Case compounds; tappurisa compounds

English parallels:

tabletop → the top of a table

bookcase → case for books

notebook → a book for notes

riverside → the side of a river

### Pāli

kāmesu taṇhā → kāmataṇhā = craving for sensual pleasures

rūpesu rāga → rūparāga = lust for forms

<Note that in Pāli, words for desire take their object in the locative case: craving in regard to sensual pleasures, lust in relation to forms.>

arahattāya magga → arahattamagga = path to arahantship

satiyā upatthāna → satipatthāna = sati'patthāna

indriyānaṃ + saṃvara → indriyasamvara = restraint of sense faculties

mettāya bhāvanā → mettābhāvanā = development of loving-kindness

cetaso vimutti → cetovimutti = liberation of mind

paññāya vimutti → paññāvimutti = liberation by wisdom

tathāgatena + desita → tathāgatadesita = taught by the Thus-Gone one

buddhassa dhamma → buddhadhamma = the Dhamma of the Buddha

bhikkhūnaṃ saṅgho → bhikkhusaṅgha = the Order of monk

Note that occasionally the first member of the compound retains its case ending. For example:

manasikāra = “activity in the mind,” attention ← manasi (loc. “in mind”) + kāra (“activity”)

majjhekalyāṇaṃ = “good in the middle” ← majjhe + kalyāṇaṃ

#### **IV. Dvanda compounds (copulative compounds)**

##### **(a) Joined into a singular:**

dhammavinayo → doctrine + discipline = “doctrine and discipline”

nāmagottaṃ → nāmaṃ + gottaṃ = personal name and clan

udayabbayaṃ → udayaṃ + vayaṃ = arising and vanishing

ajelakaṃ → ajā + elakā = goats and rams

kukkuṭasūkaraṃ → chickens and pigs

##### **(b) Joined as a plural**

candimasuriyā → candimā + suriya = moon and sun

naranāriyo → narā + nāriyo = men and women

bhikkhubhikkhuniyo → bhikkhū + bhikkhuniyo = monks and nuns

#### **V. Bahubbīhi Samāsa (Nārada: Attributive Compound)**

Perniola: “A bahubbīhi samāsa is a noun compound turned into an adjective.”

(English parallels: a redhead; a laptop (computer); a two-car garage)

##### **(a) Bahubbīhis based on kammadhāraya compound**

Perniola: “Hence the kammadhāraya compounds that end in a noun can be turned into adjectives to qualify a noun.”

pāpicchā = an evil desire; pāpiccho bhikkhu = a monk with evil desires.

bahubaṇḍu = many things; bahubaṇḍu bhikkhu = a monk who has many things.

kalyāṇamitta = a good friend; kalyāṇamittā bhikkhunī = a nun who has good friends.

odātālaṅkāra = white ornaments; odātālaṅkāra kumārā = the youths [who wear] white ornaments, white-ornamented youths.

dīghāyu = a long life-span; dīghāyukā manussā = people with long life-spans

### **(b) Bahubbīhis based on tappurisa compound**

rukkhamūla = the root of a tree; rukkhamūlika = [one who dwells] at the root of a tree  
piṇḍapāta = food gathered on alms round; piṇḍapātika = one who gathers food on alms round  
maraṇadhamma = the nature of death (subject to death); maraṇadhammā sattā = beings who have the nature of death, beings who are subject to death  
daṇḍapāṇi = hand with a stick; daṇḍapāṇi puriso = the man who has a stick in his hand  
ālayarāma = delight in attachment; ālayarāmā pajā = people who delight in attachment.

## **VI. Avyayībhāva Samāsa**

### **(Nārada: “Adverbial Compound”; Perniola: “Governing Compound”)**

Nārada: “That which has as its first member a prefix (upasagga) or an indeclinable (nipāta), not used in an adjectival sense, but used in determining the sense of the final member. Adverbial compounds generally take the neuter gender and are indeclinable. They are treated like the nominative singular of neuter substantives.”

Perniola: “One in which the first member governs the second, not in case, but in meaning. The first member of a governing compound is a preposition or a prepositional adverb. The whole compound is turned into an adjective like a bahubbīhi and is used either as an adjective or as an adverb.”

### **(a) With prefix**

anupubbaṃ (anu + pubba) = gradually, in due course, in regular succession  
anuvassaṃ = annually, every year  
paṭilomaṃ = against the grain; paṭisota = against the stream  
upanagaraṃ = near a city  
ajjhattaṃ (adhī + attan) = within oneself  
paccattaṃ (paṭi + attan) = by oneself, for oneself  
pacceka (paṭi + eka) = individually, privately

### **(b) With indeclinable**

yathābhūtaṃ = in accordance with what is, in accordance with fact  
yathāvuddhaṃ = in accordance with seniority, in accordance with age  
yathābalaṃ = according to one’s ability  
yāvajīvaṃ = as long as life lasts, all one’s life  
yatoniḍānaṃ = in accordance with its origin  
bahidvāre = outside the door  
uddhaṃsota = one who goes upstream

For details, see Duroiselle, Pali Grammar, pp. 129–140; Perniola, Pali Grammar, pp. 157–174.