

## Lesson 23: Causative verbs

BB: In English we express the idea of causation by using an auxiliary verb with the main verb, for instance, “to get X to do Y,” “to have X do Y,” “to make X do Y.” In Pāli the idea of causation is conveyed by a change in the verb itself.

Causative verbs are formed by adding -e / -aya / -āpe / -āpaya to the root or verbal base. Sometimes the vowel in the root is strengthened when the suffixes are added.

BB: “Strengthening the vowel”: this means that an ‘a’ in the ordinary verb turns into ‘ā’ in the causative. Example: pacati, to cook → pāceti, to make cook; karoti, to do → kāreti, to make do, to get to do. Strengthening of ‘i’ can yield ‘e’, strengthening of ‘u’ can yield ‘o’. Example: bhuñjati, one eats → bhojeti, to cause to eat, to feed. But the change of ‘i’ to ‘e’ and ‘u’ to ‘o’ is not common.

With the causative, usually -e and -āpe will be used with the simple verb: kāreti, kārāpeti.

The forms ‘-aya’ and ‘-āpaya’ are more likely to be found in the present participle: pācayanto, pācāpayanto, etc.

As to the difference between the forms e/aya/ and āpe/āpaya, I don’t know a rule that covers the difference, and often they will be the same. But there are some clear differences. Here are two examples:

1. (i) marati = to die, (ii) māreti = to cause to die, to kill (one kills someone by oneself); (iii) mārāpeti = to cause someone to kill (one instructs another person to kill).
2. (i) ramati = to enjoy; (ii) rāmeti = to give enjoyment, to delight (another person); (iii) rāmāpeti = to cause to give enjoyment (the king might instruct the dancing girls to give delight to the prince to keep him from thinking of renunciation)

Verbal bases ending in -e / -aya invariably take the suffixes -āpe / -āpaya to form the causative.

Ex: deseti, one teaches → desāpeti, one makes teach; desāpayanto, one who is making teach.

pacati paceti / pācayati / pācāpeti / pācāpayati

bhuñjati bhojeti / bhojāpeti

coreti corāpeti / corāpayati

kinati kiṇāpeti / kiṇāpayati

karoti kāreti / karāpayati

dadati / deti dāpeti / dāpayati

In sentences with causative verbs the agent carrying out the action is expressed by the accusative or the instrumental case.

BB: This is a little misleading. The point is that the agent who causes the action to be done is expressed by the nominative (the subject), but the person who carries out the action on behalf of the agent is expressed by the accusative or instrumental case. See my notes to the examples below.

## 2. Examples in sentence formation

Ammā bhaginiṃ bhattaṃ pacāpeti.

Mother gets the sister to cook rice.

**BB:** Here 'ammā' (mother) is the agent who causes the action to be done, who gives the directions; ammā is nominative. But the person, who is caused to do the action, who follows the directions, is bhaginiṃ (sister), which is the accusative. The sister is the object of the actual causative verb (caused to cook), but the agent of the action (cooking) enjoined by the causative verb.

Bhūpālo samaṇe ca yācake ca bhojāpesi.

The king fed the recluses and beggars.

Coro mittena kakacaṃ corāpetvā vanaṃ dhāvi.

The thief ran having got a friend to steal a saw.

Vejjo gāme khīraṃ kiṇāpesi.

The doctor had milk bought in the village.

**Better:** The doctor had milk bought from the market by his son.

**BB:** Here 'vejjo' (doctor) is the agent who causes the action to be done, who gives the directions; vejjo is nominative.

Upāsakā amaccena samaṇānaṃ vihāraṃ karāpesuṃ.

Lay devotees got the minister to build a monastery for the monks.

Yuvati bhaginiyā ācariyassa mulaṃ dāpetvā sippaṃ uggaṇhi.

The maiden got the sister to give money to the teacher and learnt an art.

Brāhmaṇo coraṃ saccaṃ bhasāpetuṃ vāyāmi.

The brahmin tried to make the thief speak the truth.