

Pali answer guide

- Structure of problem:
 - 6 sentences in Pali with their translations
 - Notice that some repeated words have different endings
- Challenge:
 - Work out which words correspond
 - and why the endings differ

Sets of similar words e.g. *mahāmatto*, *mahāmattam*, *mahāmattassa* all mean ‘minister’ but in different roles. Case endings and verbal agreement.

a. <i>rājo nisīdati</i>	The king sits down
b. <i>rājo gāmassa devo hoti</i>	The {village’s king king of the village} is (a) god
a. The minister asks the philosophers.	<i>mahāmatto samane pucchati</i>
b. The philosopher sits down.	<i>samano nisīdati</i>
c. They sit down.	<i>nisīdanti</i>
d. The minister asks the kings.	<i>mahāmatto rāje pucchati</i>
e. The disciple’s village.	<i>gāmo upāsakassa</i>
f. The meaning of the world is god.	<i>attho lokassa devo hoti</i>

This question is about case endings, typical of Indo-European languages. The nominative or subject case marker is -o, the accusative or object marker is -am, the dative or indirect object plural -e, and the genitive or possessive -asa. In addition, the verb agrees in number with the subject: -ti for singular, -nti for plural. Note also the word order: the verb comes at the end of the sentence, and the genitive follows the noun it applies to. So *rājo gāmassa* is ‘king of the village’, not ‘village of the king’.