An introduction to Kachchayana's grammar of the Pali language

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KACHCHAYANA'S
PÅLI
GRAMMAR.
AN

INTRODUCTION

to

KACHCHÂYANA'S GRAMMAR

of the

PÂLI LANGUAGE;

with

AN INTRODUCTION, APPENDIX, NOTES, &c.

BY

JAMES D'ALWIS,

MEMBER OF THE CEYLON BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY; THE
AUTHOR OF AN INTRODUCTION TO SINHALÉSE GRAMMAR, THE
SIDATSANGARÁ, CONTRIBUTIONS TO ORIENTAL LITERATURE,
THE AITANAGALYANSA, ETC., ETC.

COLOMBO,

1863.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE, 14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.
To Sir Charles Justin MacCarthy, Kt.
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.
&c., &c., &c.,

Sir,

The practice of inscribing a literary work to the Ruler of the land is very ancient, and very general. In the East it has been almost universal; and in Ceylon, while the Poets and Historians of old sought the patronage of the King, the translators and compilers of recent times have dedicated the result of their labours to the British Governor.

In inscribing, however, the present work to you, I do not merely follow a time-honored rule, nor seek to do homage to a Power which stands in no need of any evidence of our loyalty and attachment. But, remembering that it was your kind patronage which chiefly enabled me to publish a previous work; and knowing that to you, who are familiar with many of the questions discussed in the following pages, they will possess an interest which they do not possess to the general reader; I take the liberty of dedicating this work, as a token not only of my gratitude, but also of the high esteem which, in common with my countrymen, I entertain for your abilities as a Governor, and your attainments as a Scholar.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your Excellency’s
Most obedient and humble Servant,

James Alwis.

Ilandula, 28th August, 1852.
INTRODUCTION.

There is hardly a country on the face of the Globe which presents greater facilities for acquiring a knowledge of the Pali, than Ceylon; and, perhaps, no nation possesses greater advantages for its study than the Sinhalese. Pali, like the Sanskrit and the Sinhalese, forms a necessary part of the course of education pursued by the natives.* Our Alphabet is common to these several languages,† and the affinity which the Pali bears to the Sinhalese, both verbally and grammatically, renders its study far more easy to the people of this country than even to the Burmese.

Although the Sinhalese, as a language, has been latterly neglected; the Pali, from its being the dialect in which the Buddhist scriptures are recorded, has always been the principal study of the largest portion of the Ceylonese, who are followers of Buddha. From the period when it became the sacred language of the land, kings and princes have encouraged its study; nobles and statesmen have vied with each other to excel in its composition; and in it laymen and priests have produced some of our most elegant works. The names of Batuvantudève, Hikkaduve, Lankagoda, Dodanpahala, Valana, Bentota, Kahave, and Sumangala, amongst a host of others, are familiar to Pali scholars, as those of the learned who are even now able to produce compositions‡ by no means inferior to those of a Buddhagosa or a Parakrama, though, like the modern Sanskrit, certainly more artificial than some of the more ancient writings.

* See my Sidatsangarā, p. 222.
† Ib. p. xi., et seq.
‡ For a specimen, see Appendix.
The number of books, too, in the Pali language, is greater than in the Sinhalese; and, though those on Religion far exceed those upon other subjects, it is, nevertheless, a fact, that the Pali literature of the Sinhalese is not deficient in works upon other branches of Oriental Science. It presents indeed a prond array of extensive volumes on Prosody, Rhetoric, Medicine, and History. On Grammar alone there are no less than forty Pali works;* whilst in the Sinhalese there is but one, the solitary Siddatt-Sangara. From the constant study of Pali in the Buddhist monasteries of this island, the books in that language are found to be comparatively free from errors: and it is a well known fact, that the Buddhist priests, unlike the Brahmans, are willing to give Pali scholars, whether Buddhist or Christian, free access to their libraries.

Advantages like these, combined with others, enabled the Hon’ble George Turnour, late Colonial Secretary of Ceylon, to attract the attention of Orientalists to the high claims of the Pali language as existing in Ceylon. In the prosecution of his labours with such a praiseworthy object, he drew attention, in his elaborate Introduction to the Mahavansa, to some of the Pali works formerly extant in Ceylon, and, amongst them, to Kachchhâyana’s Grammar, which he then regarded as extinct. This, in the very outset of my Pali studies, after many years’ devotion to Sinhalese literature, I ascertained to be a mistake;† having added it to my library, in a purchase

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* "The high state of cultivation to which the Pali language was carried, and the great attention that has been paid to it in Ceylon, may be inferred from the fact that a list of works in the possession of the Sinhalese, that I found during my residence in that Island, includes thirty-five works on Pali Grammar, some of them being of considerable extent."—Rev. S. Hardy’s *Eastern Monachism*, pp. 191-2.

† I find that this is also extant in Burmah. The Rev. F. Mason of the Baptist Union says:—"The grammar reputed to have been written by Kachchhâyana, still exists. I had a copy made from the palm-leaf, on small quarto paper, and the Pali text occupies between two and three hundred pages, while the Burmese interpretation covers more than two thousand."