# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SANSKRIT GRAMMAR

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## ABSTRACT

Sanskrit and Pāli languages are regarded to the primary sources of Buddhist studies. A study of language is so called linguistics in a branch of social science, which involves an analysis of language form, meaning, and context. The study of language meaning deals with how languages encode relations between entities, properties, the world to convey, process, and assign meaning, as well as mange and resolve ambiguity. On the other hand, the study of semantics concerns itself with truth conditions, pragmatics deals with how situational context influences the production of meaning. Grammar is a system of rules which contain the production of pronunciation and use of utterances in a particular language. Linguistics concerns with the social, cultural, historical and political factors, and even on the religious studies that influence language. It involves the study of written, signed, or spoken through varying speech communities. The sub-branches of historical and evolutionary linguistics focus on how language change and grow in an extended period of time. Traditionally, linguistics focuses on the studying the nature of human language by observing and interplays between sound and meaning.

The aim of this small paper is to give an introduction to the origin of Sanskrit language, how it becomes develop into modern period, and the Sanskrit grammarian schools.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is much more than a mere vehicle for communication of thought. Before a single sound can be uttered or heard, both physiology and physics are involved. The interaction of the highly complicated mechanism of the organs of speech, from the glottis to the oral and nasal cavities and hearing, the ear demand a general acquaintance with the anatomy of these areas. Physics is involved by the fact that the sounds of a living being's voice, like all other sounds, produce vibrations which impinge on the ear of the auditor.[1] These aspects of scientific language method are similar to Theravāda Buddhist perspective of explanation. There are two kinds of sounds or voice in accordance with Theravāda Abhidhamma philosophy: A sound from mental and sound from natural.[2]

Originally, linguistic study is stimulated by the correct description of classical liturgical language. It owes to the earliest grammar in India is the Aṣṭādhāyi of Pāṇinī grammar which appeared approximately 5th or 4th century B.C. On the other hand, it was motivated by the development of logic and rhetoric in ancient Greece, leading to a grammatical tradition in Hellenism[3]. Modern linguistics began to develop in the 18th century, reaching the "golden age of philology" in the 19th century. The first half of the 20th century was marked by the structuralism school, based on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure[4] in Europe and Edward Sapir[5] and Leonard Bloomfield[6] in the United States. The 1960s saw the rise of many new fields in linguistics, such as Noam Chomsky's generative grammar, William Labov's sociolinguistics, Michael Halliday's systemic

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[1]Louis H. Gray, **Foundations of Language**, (New York: The Macmillan Company press, 1939), pp. 3-5.

[2]Saddhammasirī Mahathera, **Saddattha bhedacintā**, (Burmese Script), (Yangon: Icchāsaya Press, 1955), p. 1. ( **Saddo hi dubbhido citta, jokārādotujodare. Saddā dyattho pakārattā, cittajovidha gahyate**.)

[3]The Hellenistic period covers the period of ancient Greek (Hellenic) history and Mediterranean history between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the emergence of the Roman Empire as signified by the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.

[4]Ferdinand Mongin de Saussure (26 November 1857 – 22 February 1913) was a Swiss linguist and semiotician.

[5]Edward Sapir (January 26, 1884 – February 4, 1939) was an American anthropologist-linguist, who is widely considered to be one of the most important figures in the early development of the discipline of linguistics.

[6]Leonard Bloomfield (April 1, 1887 – April 18, 1949) was an American linguist who led the development of structural linguistics in the United States during the 1930s and the 1940s.

functional linguistics and also modern psycholinguistics.

The tradition of studying grammar is venerable: the ancient Indians, the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the medieval Chinese, Arabs and Jews all did important grammatical work on their favorite languages, and the Port-Royal grammarians in seventeenth century France were already contemplating grammar from a universalist point of view. But the rise of modern linguistics in the early twentieth century gave new impetus to the study of grammar; by the 1930s and 1940s the American Leonard Bloomfield and his successors were doing important work in morphology, and in the 1950s Noam Chomsky made the study of syntax one of the most prominent of all areas of linguistics, by introducing the new approach called generative grammar and by reviving the search for universal grammar.[7]

Sanskrit is the name of the language that was spoken by the seers of ancient India who have expressed their knowledge, wisdom and thoughts in that language. It is believed to be the language of the Gods revealed to and spoken by the sages-"*Samskrutham nāma devi vak anvakhyāthā maharshibhih*".  It is called Sanskrit-refined because it was regulated by the strict rules of grammar and was used in that refined form by the learned and highly cultured people from very early times. It was in this language the great religious and secular literature of India (*Bharathavarsha*) was recorded from the pre-historic times up to about 1100 A.D. From about 400 B.C, *Prākruta bhāsha* which was spoken by a large section of the people become a literary language and many works were written in that language, mostly by Buddhist and Jains scholars. Sanskrit is a member of the Indo-Iranian sub-family of the Indo-European family of languages. Its closest ancient relatives are the Iranian languages Aveṣtan and Old Persian.[8]

The oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar is Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī (Eight-Chapter Grammar). It is essentially a prescriptive grammar, i.e., an authority that defines Sanskrit, although it contains descriptive parts, mostly to account for some Vedic forms that had become rare in Pāṇini's time. Classical Sanskrit became fixed with the grammar of Pāṇini (roughly 500 BCE), and remains in use as a learned language through the present day.[9]

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[7]R. L. Trask, *Language and Linguistics: The Key Concepts*, New York, Routledge Press, 1999, pp. 105-106.

[8]Edwin Francis Bryant; Laurie L. Patton. *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History.* (London: Routledge Press, 2005), p. 208.

[9]Henry Frowde, M.A (ed.), *Imperial Gazetter of Indian*, Vols. II., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), p. 263.

## ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SANSKRIT GRAMMAR

Language is a form of expression of life. The largest language family is Indo-European family. The original age of Indo-European cannot identify. The know Indo-European dialects may be conveniently divided into following groups: (1) Indian (the most ancient Indian language of the Indo-European family being Sanskrit), (2) Iranian, (3) Armenaian, (4) Albanian, (5) Slavic, (6) Baltic, (7) Greek, (8) Italic, (9)Celtic, (10) Germanic, (11) Tocharian and (12) Hittite. All these languages are recognized by certain common characteristics which distinguish them from the other language of the world.[10] Sanskrit has the origin of Indo-European. It is unmistakable and the essential feature of Sanskrit.

The earliest monument of the Sanskrit language is the Ṛgveda, which cannot be fixed the date certainty. The language of the Ṛgveda is so much akin to that of the Gāthās of Avesta that they may be considered to belong to approximately the same age, and as the language of the Gāthās is by no means very far removed from that of the Old Persian inscriptions of the sixth century B.C., the Ṛgvedic language may be roughly dated about 1000 B.C.

Sir William Jones indicated that in his famous address to the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1786, in broad outlines the significance of the new discovery:

'The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed that no philologer could examine then at all without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and the Celtick, though blende with a different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the Old Persian might be added to the same family.'[11]

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[10] Batakrishna Ghosh, *Linguistic Introduction to Sanskrit*, (Calcutta: The Indian Research Instistute, 1937), p. 2.

[11] T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited Press, 1973), P.6.

In brief, it can get a comprehensive knowledge on Sanskrit language that the origin of it is approximately around 1000 B.C. And it is no less than Avestan and Old Persian language. The etymology system of Sanskrit is related to the primitive Indo-European language. It is closely related to Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan language family as well.

## PRE-PĀṆINĪ TRADITION

Language and religion are interrelated each other in ancient period. Hence, the most ancient religion Hinduism is preserved its doctrine in Sanskrit. Buddhism is preserved in Pāli and Sanskrit. Christianity is recorded its bible in Hebrew of Greek. Islamism is mainly recorded its Quran in Arabic language.

The term 'Sanskrit' is derived from the conjoining of the prefix 'Saṃ' meaning 'samyak' which indicates 'entirely' and 'kṛit' that indicates 'done'. Thus, the name indicates perfectly or entirely done in terms of communication, reading, hearing, and the use of vocabulary to transcend and express an emotion. An extraordinarily complex language with a vast vocabulary, it is still widely used today in the reading of sacred texts and hymns. Sanskrit in terms of its literary association is classified into two different periods, the Vedic and Classical. Vedic Sanskrit is found in the Vedas sacred texts, especially the Rig Veda, the Puranas, and the Upanishads, where the most original form of the language was used. The composition of the Vedas is traced to the period of 1000 to 500 BCE, until when Sanskrit had a vigorous tradition of being used consistently through oral communication. This early Sanskrit is rich in vocabulary, phonology, grammar, and syntax, which remains undiluted in its purity to this day.

The historical background of Sanskrit grammar can be divided into two main periods: Vedic and Classical Sanskrit. Grammar is so called Vyākaraṇa in Sanskrit, which means analysis. It is regarded by the Indians as the first and most important of the sciences of language because it is the foundation of all of them. The Sanskrit grammarians of India were the first to analyses word-forms, to recognize the difference between root and suffix, to determine the functions of suffixes, and on the whole elaborate a grammatical system as accurate and complete as to be unparalleled in any other country. Grammatical study began with the linguistic investation of the Vedic hymna. Śākalya's Pada text of the Ṛgveda, in which not only the words of the sentence but the parts of compounds and even of certain inflected word-forms are separated, presupposes grammatical analysis.

For instance, the following lines of the Ṛigveda as it appears in the Saṃhitā text, *gomātaro yāc chubhāyante añjibhis*, become *go-mātaraḥ, yāt, śubhāyante, añji-bhiḥ*, in the Pada text. The phonetic works called Prātiśākhyas and Śikshās may be regarded as grammatical treatise. Technical grammartical terms occur in the Brāhmaṇa, the Āraṇyakas, and the Upanishas, and Yāska's Niruka shows that a considerable grammatical development had taken place by his time; but no actual grammar has come down to us from the Vedic period.[12]

The distinctions between Vedic and Classical periods are changing in the language and subject matter. The researcher would like to agree with the idea of M. Krishnamacharya. He gave the elucidation of these distinctions as follows:

First, as regard language:

1. The special characteristic in the second period are so significant that is appropriately furnishes the names for the period, whereas the Vedic period receives its designation from the works composing it.

2. Among the various dialects of the different Indo-aryan tribes, a greater unity had been established after emigration into India, as the natural result of their intermingling in their new home. The grammatical study of the Vedas fixed the frame of the language so that the generally recognized Bhasha had arisen. The estrangement of the civic language from that of the mass accelerated by the assimilation of the aboriginal races resulted in the formation of the popular dialects, the Prakrits-proceeding from the original Bhasha by the assimilation of consonants and by the curtailment or loss of termination.

3. The phone condition of Sanskrit remains almost exactly the same as that of the earliest Vedic. In the matter of grammatical forms, the language shows itself almost stationary. Hardly any new formation or inflextions make their appearance yet. The most notable of these grammatical changes were the disappearance of the subjunctive mood and the reduction of dozen infinitives to a single one. In declension the change consisted chiefly in the dropping of a number of synonymous forms.

4. The vocabulary of the language has undergone the greatest modifications. It has been extended by derivation and composition according to recognized types. Numerous words though old seem to be new, because they happene by accident not to occur in the

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[12] A. A. Macdonell, *India's Past*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 136.

Vedic literature. Many new words have come in through continental borrowings from a lower stratum of language, while already existing words have undergone great changes of meaning.

Secondly, as regards the subject matter:

1. The Vedic literature handles its various subjects only in their details and almost solely in their relation to sacrifice, whereas the classical discusses them in their general relations.

2. In the former a simple and compact prose had gradually been developed, but in the latter his form is abandoned and rhythmic one adopted in its stead, which is employed exclusively even for strictly scientific exposition.[13]

To summed up: those of two periods, Vedic period is the beginning of a Sanskrit, and all are focus on the religious ritual and record as a sacred texts and product time of the liturgical texts. The later period, Classical period is development time for Sanskrit literature and language.

## PĀṆINĪ'S TRADITION

In this modern era, all most all of linguistics scholar agrees that the Pāṇini's Aṣṭhadyāyi is earlier grammar than the other in the present time. The date of Pāṇinī is still a matter of unsettled dispute.

Weber and after him Max Muller stated Pāṇiṇi was appeared about 350 B.C. Drs. Goldstucker and Bhandarkar who have succeeded in proving that Pāṇinī cannot have flourished later than B. C. 500. The work of Pāṇinī gets the name Aṣṭādyāyī. It is consisted of nearly four thousand Sūtras have been divided into eight Adhyāyas of four pādas each. The real amounts of the rules are 3959.

The full name of Pāṇinī was Dākṣiputra Pāṇinī in the common style which added a metronymic to the name itself. Another name sometime applied hims is Śālanki. In the Kathāsaritsāgara, a modern collection of popular tales, Pāṇinī said to have been the pupil of Varsha, a teacher at Pātaliputra, under the reign of Nanda the father of Changragupta

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[13] M. Krishnamacharya, *A History of the Classical Sanskrit Literature*, (Madras: The Vaijayanti Press, 1906), p. 6.

Maurya (315-291 BC). However, the real date of the great grammarian is still a matter of uncertainty.[14]

His native town was Śalātura in ancient Gandhāra, modern Lāhur in the angle where the Kabul River and the Indus meet, about 20 miles northwest strategic Attock Bridge. Outside Lāhur, there are now some high mounds which likely contain ancient sites. The Chinese monk Hsūan-tsang visited the city in the 7th century A.D. "To the north-west of U-to-kia-han-c'ha(i.e Attock), 20 li or so, we come to the town of So-lo-tu-lo (Śalātulra). This is the place where the Ṛṣi Pāṇinī, who compose the Ching-ming-lun (*Vyākaraṇa*), was born." He retold also a Buddhist legend in which a Brahmin claims that there was even a statue of Pāṇinī in existence. Pāṇini's origin in the extreme Northwest explains several peculiarities of his grammar. He describes in minute detail features of the area as e.g. the different accents in the names of wells north and south of the river Vipāś, while he limits himself to the larger geographical features of other parts of India. Furthermore, he shows great familiarity with the Vedic texts found in the North and West, but never quotes forms from the White Yajurveda belonging to the East.[15]

His famous work of treatise is Aṣṭādyāyi. The goal of Aṣṭādyāyī is to descript the formulation and process of the complex forms of Sanskrit language out of simple elements such as prakṛti, pratyaya, etc. This goal can be attained by means of six kinds of aphoristic statements: (1) saṃjñā-sūtras (definitions/technical rules), (2) paribhāṣā-sūtra (rules of interpretation or application), (3) vidhi-sūtras (operational rules), (4) niyama-sūtras (restriction rules), (5) atideśa-sūtra (extension rules), (6)adhikāra-sūtras (heading rules).

In addition to these rules, there are other rules such as niṣedha sutras (negation rules), nipāta sutra (ad hoc rules) and vibhāṣā sutra (optional rules).[16]

All these rules can be grouped into two types: operational and applicational. These two groups of rules in turn can be subcategorized into utsara (general) and upavāda (exception) rules.[17]

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[14] Śrīśa Chandra Vasu (tr.), *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇinī*, Vol. i, (Uttar Pradesh: Allahabad University Indian Press, 1981), p. vi.

[15] Jan Gonda(ed.), *History of Indian Literature*: Grammatical Literature by Hartmut Scharfe, (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 88-89.

[16] R.N. Sharma, *The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Pāṇinī*, Vol. I, (New Delhi: 2002), p. 118.

[17] C. Rajentra (ed.), *Aspects of Pāninian Semantics*: Metarules of Pāṇinī by J. P. Mimri, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002), p. 55.

Arthur A. Macdonell comments in his work of "A History of Sanskrit Literature" thus the next is the Vārttikas or "Note" of Kātyāyana on 1245 of Pāṇini's rules, and, somewhat later, numerous grammatical Kārikās or comments in metrical form: all this critical work was collected by Patañjalī in his Mahābhāshya or "Great Commentary," with supplementary comments of his own. Patañjalī deals with 1713 rules of Pāṇinī.[18]

In order to sum up about this, Pāṇinī, Kātyāyana, and Patañli are traditionally known as the "three sages," muni-trayam, who gave the law to the science of grammar.

## AFTER-PĀṆINĪ TRADITION

After having mentioned pre-pāṇinī tradition and pāṇinī tradition, it is time to present about after pāṇinī tradition. The age of Patañjalī is around 150 B. C to the 1st A.D. Later of Pāṇinī traditiona, there are many non-pāṇinī grammar school appeared around India. Among them, here in, it will be explored about some prominence grammarian schools: such as Kātantra school, Chandragomin School, Jainendra School, Sakṭyāna School, and Hemachandra School.

First and foremost, Kātantra grammar is written by Śarvarman is the oldest one on the non-pāṇinī grammar. The Kātantra is otherwise known as Kaumāra or Kālāpa, and the traditional explanation of the genesis of these two names is as follows: there once live in the Deccan a king called Śātavāhana who, while one day having jala-keli with his queen, was requested by her "Pray, do not sprinkle any more water on me". Thereupon the ignorant king offered her some sweets. Subsequently, discovering his error and being much ashamed of his ignorance of Sanskrit, he requested his Pandit named Śaravarman to devise a speedy method of learning grammar. The pandit in his difficult besought God Śiva who ordered his son Kārtti Kumāra revealed the sutras of the Kaumāra grammar.[19]

The next prominence grammar school is Chandragomin's grammar. Shripad Krishna Belvalkar stated that Chandragomin must have lived at least some time before the authors of the Kāśikā, which has borrowed, always without acknowledgement, such sutras of Chandra as have no parallel either in Pāṇinī or in Kātyānayana. H. Scharfe mentioned

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[18] Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, (New York: D. Appleton And Company, 1900), p. 431.

[19] Shripad Krishna Belvalkar, *An Account of the Different Existing System of Sanskrit Grammar*, (Poona: University of Bombay, 1915), p. 83

the date of Candragomin probably A.C 450 and Cāndra-vyākaraṇa is a Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit grammar.

The other non-pāṇinī grammar school is Jainendra-vyākaraṇ of Devanandin. It is also called Pūjayapāda.

## IMPACT OF SANSKRIT GRAMMAR ONTO PĀLI GRAMMAR

Pāli is a dead language, like Latin. It was a literary language related to Sanskrit, the ancestor of modern languages spoken in Northern India, such as Hindi. Pāli was first written down around 100 BCE in Sri Lanka by Buddhist monks to preserve the teachings of the Buddha. Pāli used to be written in the Brāmī script, but it is also written in the Roman alphabet (which we'll be used here). Pāli is still used by Buddhist monks and scholars (just as Latin is still used in the Vatican by Catholic priests and theologians).

Pāli grammars are later composed texts than Sanskrit grammars. Henceforth, Sanskrit grammars have impact less or much on the Pāli grammarians. There can be found some traced of it in the Kaccāyana grammar and Moggallāna grammar.

Among various Sanskrit grammars, especially Pāṇinī, Kātantra, and Candragomin grammars are more relevant and related to Pāli grammarian. Herein, the researcher would like to take an example from the Sanskrit and Pāli scholar, Mahesh A. Deoka, in his 'Technical terms and technique of the Pāli and Sanskrit Grammars'[20]. He stated some impact of Sanskrit grammar onto Pāli grammar in terms of Kāraka, as follows:

| Aṣṭādhyāyī | Kaccāyana/Kātantra | Saddanīti |
|---|---|---|
| Apādāna | Apādāna | Kattā |
| Sampradāna | Sampadāna | Hetukattā |
| Karaṇa | Adhikaraṇa | Kamma |
| Adhikaraṇa | Karaṇa | Karaṇa |
| Karma | Kamma | Sampadāna |
| Kartā | Kattā | Apādāna |
| Hetukartā | Hetukattā | Adhikaraṇa |

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[20] Mahesh A. Deokar, *Technical Terms and Technique Of Pāli and Sanskrit Grammars*, (Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 2008), p. 58.

It is an example of impact on Pāli grammar by Sanskrit in somehow. There can see many technical terms used in Pāli grammar which come from the Sanskrit grammar tradition. Thought it is a little bit different arrangement of categories, all most all are the same identical usage of technical terms.

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, learning Pāli language and grammar is to get the benefit to preserve the Buddha teaching and to be last long the Buddhism. There are the two things that lead to the decline and disappearance of the good Dhamma. "Bhikkhus, there are these two things that lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the good Dhamma. What two? Well-set down words, phrases and well-interpreted meaning. When the words and phrases are well set down, the meaning is well interpreted. These are the two things that lead to the continuation, non-decline, and non-disappearance of the good Dhamma." The researcher, therefore, would like to express the original and development of Sanskrit grammarians in this small paper. In order to be a Buddhist scholar, learning Sanskrit and Pāli is a primary source to lead one to get correct meaning of the Buddha's teaching.

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