PALI LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE. *Pāli* was applied to the text of the Hīnayā-na Buddhist scripture preserved in Ceylon. Used now for the language in which those texts were written, it usually includes the language of the subsequent commentaries and other writings. By some its meaning has been extended to cover all the cognate Middle Indian dialects found in the inscriptions and other documents.

The present article will be confined to the language of the Pali canon and its commentary.

Origin. The Aryan or Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European family of languages was introduced into India by invading tribes during probably the latter half of the 2nd millennium B.C. The oldest document, the Ṛgveda, was handed down by an oral, though exceedingly exact, tradition. The first contemporary documents, the Inscriptions of Asoka (*q.v.*), are written in a dialect or dialects which, although clearly later forms of that of the Vedic texts, already show marked dialectical differences according to the districts in which they were set up. Although these date only from the middle of the 3rd century B.C., it is certain that even by the later half of the 6th century B.C. (the probable period of the Buddha's preaching) the Aryan language had spread by conquest and infiltration over very considerable areas of northern India. [146] There were at this period two considerable kingdoms in the north and east of the Gangetic plain, one Kosala (corresponding roughly to modern Oudh), the other Magadha (corresponding to the districts of Patna and part of Gaya). Magadha later swallowed up Kosala. The Buddha himself, a native of Kosala, passed much of his ministry in Magadha; and it has been held that the language of the Pali texts was based upon the contemporary dialect either of Kosala or of Magadha, the latter view being in particular supported by the use of the term Māgadhī or language of Magadha applied to Pali. But even if original collections of the Buddha's sayings were handed down in the current dialect of Kosala or Magadha, they may have been subsequently re-edited or re-written in some other dialect. Others see the origin of the language of the existing texts in the dialect of some later centre of Buddhist learning, such as Takṣaśilā in the north-west or Ujjenī (modern Ujjain), capital of Avanti in the west, the influence of which has been considered by others as predominant in the formation of the language.

Pali, in its earliest texts, is a language of mixed dialectical forms, some common to both north-western and eastern dialects; others peculiarly eastern. These may be due to the influence of an original recension in an eastern dialect or to the general influence of the eastern vernaculars on the other Indo-Aryan languages, especially during the predominance of the Mauryan empire with its eastern capital. Its main characteristics are those of a western dialect. Tradition has it that the Buddhist scriptures were brought to Ceylon by Asoka's son, Mahinda, who had spent his childhood in Ujjenī. In Ceylon the

study and the use of Pali, which died out in India, was prosecuted by the Buddhists and carried thence to Burma and Siam, where it still remains to some extent the language of literature or at least of religion.

Sounds. Pali possessed the following sounds: Vowels: *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o*. Consonants: stops and nasals: gutturals: *k, kh, g, gh, ṅ;* palatals: *c, ch, j, jh, ñ;* cerebrals: *ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ;* dentals: *t, th, d, dh, n;* labials: *p, ph, b, bh, m*. Liquids: *r, l, ḷ*. Semivowels: *y, v*. Sibilant: *s*. Aspirate: *h*. Undefined nasal: *ṃ*. This system derived with certain modifications from that of Vedic Sanskrit. Among the vowels Skt. *ai, au* became *e, o,* thus confused with original *e, o*. Skt. *ṛ* became *a* (and in same words *i* or *u*). Thus the three members of the characteristic vowel-alternations of Sanskrit were reduced to two: *i : e, u : o*; while that of *ṛ : ar : ār* was upset altogether. This system was further confused by the shortening of all Sanskrit long vowels in closed syllables, which caused, for example, the loss of all distinction between such pairs as Skt. *candráḥ* "moon" and *cāndraḥ* "lunar", since both became *cando*.

The Sanskrit consonants, as single sounds, remained in principle unchanged, except that all sibilants: *ś, ṣ, s* were confused under one form, *s*. On the other hand consonants in contact with each other were liable to change, a stop being assimilated to a following stop (*e.g., satta, duddhaṃ* from Skt. *saptá, dugdhám*) and a continuant to a following or preceding stop (*e.g., akko, aggi* from Skt. *arkáḥ, agníḥ*). If the assimilated consonant was a sibilant, the resultant group was aspirated (*e.g., atthi, vaccho, acchi* from Skt. *ásti, vatsáḥ, ákṣi*). Lastly, all final consonants had disappeared (*e.g., vijju* from Skt. *vidyút*).

Nouns. Its grammatical forms are clearly derived from Vedic Sanskrit. But the process of simplification and normalization has proceeded much further. In the declension of the noun the dual has disappeared, leaving only two numbers, singular and plural. Among the cases the dative has almost lost its separate existence, its place being taken by the genitive; and in general, chiefly through the action of sound-change, the number of cases with separate terminations has been greatly reduced. The declension in the singular of a feminine stem in -*ā* illustrates this:

	Sanskrit	Pali		Sanskrit	Pali
nom.	*kanyā̀*	*kaññā*	abl.	*kanyā̀yāḥ*	*kaññāya*
acc.	*kanyā̀m*	*kaññaṃ*	gen.	*kanyā̀yāḥ*	*kaññāya*
inst.	*kanyā̀yā*	*kaññāya*	loc.	*kanyā̀yām*	*kaññāya* or -*aṃ*
dat.	*kanyā̀yai*	*kaññāya*	voc.	*kánye*	*kaññe.*

Verbs. The changes in the verbal system are still greater. The athematic stems of Vedic

(in which the termination is added directly to the root) have been mostly replaced by thematic stems, in which the insertion of the vowel *a* preserves the individuality of both root and termination (*e.g., leḍhi, lihánti* have been replaced by *leh-a-ti, leh-a-nti*). The middle voice is in process of disappearance. Among the moods, traces are still found in the oldest stratum of the subjunctive, but like the imperative and optative it is confined to the present stem. Of the tenses, the perfect has ceased to play any part in regular conjugation, while the imperfect and aorist have combined into one tense. The use of participial phrases in place of finite verbal forms is increasing.

Numerals. In general the numeral system is that of Sanskrit, alterations in form being due to sound-change, rather than to the introduction of any new principle.

Gender. Gender is grammatical and is divided into three categories: masculine, feminine and neuter – following the system of Sanskrit. But there is already some disturbance of the system. The neuter of the numerals for "two" and "three" is used sometimes with masculine and feminine nouns. A growing confusion between masculine and neuter stems presages the loss in most of the modern languages of all distinction between these genders.

Vocabulary. The vocabulary, though based primarily on that of Vedic Sanskrit, shows changes and developments of meaning and the admission of new words. Some words of the modern languages make their first recorded appearance in Pali, *e.g., kaḍḍhati*, "drags" (replacing Skt. *kárṣati*) appears to-day in Panjabi *kaḍḍhe,* Hindi *kāṛhe,* etc. Later the growing influence of literary Sanskrit caused the inclusion of numerous new words of that language disguised under a Pali form.

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