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The Process of Translating and Editing of Pāli Texts in Sri Lanka from 19th Century to the Present

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It is to be emphasised here that the pivotal objective of compilation, translation and edition of Pāli texts was not only to enhance Theravāda tradition in its pristine purity in Sri Lanka but also to ensure its perpetual establishment making it immensely accessible to people in the world. The scrutiny of the history of Theravāda tradition in Sri Lanka exposes that the commentaries, sub-commentaries, annotations, glossaries and other related literature compiled on the Tripitaka - Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma were immensely conducive to produce eminent lay and ordained scholars. After the documentation of the Tripitaka in the 1st century in Sri Lanka, the recital of the Dhamma for its preservation continued and its oral tradition (Bhānakas) as Theravāda contributed to the establishment of the monastic education system spreading it throughout Sri Lanka. Thus, it is evident from the above factors that Theravāda tradition executed the process of translation and edition of Pāli texts from the inception. In the past century, there existed a prominent development in the above process due to the contribution of printing press during the colonial period. Hence, research paper will discuss the process of translating and editing of Pāli texts that contributed to enhancement of Theravāda tradition from 19th century to the present.

Key words: Pāli texts, Sri Lanka, Theravāda tradition, translating and editing