

The change in meaning of Pali and Sanskrit words used in Thai

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Pali(Pl.) and Sanskrit(Sk.) are classified as Indo-European languages. They were disseminated from the Near East where the Aryan people lived to the Northern part of India. These two languages have been developed into the Ancient Indo-Aryan, the Middle and the Modern Indo-Aryan languages.

Sanskrit is considered to have evolved into the Ancient Indo-Aryan language. This is exhibited in The Veda Scriptures in Brahmanism or Hinduism. Pali, on the other hand, is viewed as the Middle Indo-Aryan. This is evidenced by the Tripitaka Scriptures of The Hinayana School in Buddhism. Sanskrit has served as a tool to write Brahmanism Scriptures and the scriptures belonging to the Mahayana School in Buddhism. Pali is used to write The scriptures of The Hinayana School in Buddhism.

The dissemination of Sanskrit occurred in Thailand prior to that of Pali. Pali was spread to Suvannabhumi (the present Thailand), having Nakhon Pathom as the capital after the Third Buddhist Council in 308 B.C. (B.E. 235). When King Sri-Indraditya declared Sukhothai as an independent country in 1257 A.D. (B.E.1800), Sanskrit already had an influence on that country. When The Ramkhamhaeng Inscription was created by King Ramkhamhaeng the Great in 1283 A.D. (B.E.1826), Pali and Sanskrit were already used in that Inscription.

Pali and Sanskrit words are derived from their roots. Each root has its own meaning, but it is not ready to be used. Each root must have inflection of nouns and verbs before it can be used for communication. Unlike Pali and Sanskrit, Thai(Th.) is categorised as an isolating language. Each morpheme has its own self-contained meaning and it can be used in that form. This attribute makes Thai

distinguishable from Pali and Sanskrit. The impact of Pali and Sanskrit words on Thai are the most significant, taking other foreign languages, namely, English, French, Chinese, etc. into account. You may ask why Thai is so significantly influenced by Pali and Sanskrit despite the fact that Pali and Sanskrit and Thai belong to different language families. This is because Brahmanism and Buddhism which utilized these languages are credited with having such a great impact on Thai people and Thai culture.

Pali and Sanskrit words are widely used in both spoken and written Thai. Thai people of all walks of life use Pali and Sanskrit in their own language. Pali and Sanskrit words used in Thai range from words used in daily life, words used on formal occasions, special terminology of certain disciplines, and royal language. Thais use Pali and Sanskrit words so much that there is a saying: "If one deletes Pali and Sanskrit words from Thai, a crisis will arise" The vocabulary of the Thai language may not be adequate on its own.

Pali and Sanskrit have been integrated into Thai in many ways. The two most obvious ways are the sound alteration and the change in meaning. This paper will mainly focus on the latter. Each morpheme of Pali and Sanskrit carries meaning. One morpheme may impart one or several meanings. When Pali and Sanskrit words are used in Thai, they are partially or fully adopted.

First, there is the restriction of meaning. That is, the meaning of words from Pali and Sanskrit have become more specific in Thai than in the original language. They impart either bad or good connotation. Second, there is the extension of meaning. This phenomenon has resulted in the fact that words with specific meanings have been extended to have general meanings. In some cases, new meanings have been attached.

Third, there is the complete change in meaning. That is, some Pali and Sanskrit words used in Thai carry meanings totally different from the ones they originally conveyed. Finally, there is the change of the original sound in Thai from that of Pali and Sanskrit words. This sound alteration thereby represents a change in meaning.

The following are the illustrations of these four categories and their sub-categories.

1. The restriction of meaning: This is evidenced by the fact that Pali and Sanskrit words originally conveyed a general meaning, but in Thai the meaning becomes specific. This aspect of change in meaning can be sub-categorized as follows:

1.1 Entailing good/bad connotation and specific meaning

1.1.1 Entailing good connotation: This means that some of Pali and Sanskrit words with general meaning have been replaced by the ones with only positive connotation.

Pali/Sanskrit and Thai transcription	Meaning in Pali and Sanskrit	Meaning in Thai
Th. kīriyaa Pl. kīriyā Sk. kīriyā	act, deed, performance	good manner, good behavior
Th. wāatsānāa Pl. vāsanā Sk. vāsanā	former impression, recollection of the past	good fortune, fame and wealth
Th. lāap Pl. lābh Sk. lābh	gain, receiving, acquisition	godsend, windfall
Th. khāṭi Pl. gati Sk. gati	going, career, course, passing onto another existence, destiny, behavior	a proverb, a saying for practice
Th. sākun Pl. kula cultivated Sk. kula	family; clan; caste	good, noble, or family

1.1.2 Entailing bad connotation: As opposed to 1.1.1 the meanings of some Pali and Sanskrit words with

general meaning have been restricted to convey negative connotation.

Pali/Sanskrit and Thai transcription	Meaning in Pali and Sanskrit	Meaning in Thai
Th. kam Pl. kamma Sk. karma	a volitional action, action, deed, good and bad volition	bad fortune, bad destiny
Th. wibâak Pl. vipāka Sk. vipāka	result, fruition, consequence of one's actions	misery, misfortune, suffering
Th. khró Pl. gaha Sk. graha	carrying, holding, catching, taking, seizing, a planet, a house	bad luck, misfortune
Th. càrit Pl. carita pretentious Sk. carita	behavior, character, life	being affected and (showing disapproval)
Th. sãndaan Pl. santāna Sk. santāna	1 continuity, succession, 2 offspring, 3 a cobweb	bad habits inherited from one's past continuity. (showing disapproval)

1.1.3 Entailing specific meaning: In this case, the general meanings of some Pali and Sanskrit words have been specific without showing good or bad connotation as in 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 above. For example:

Th. nímon Pl. nimanta Sk. nimantra	invitation	invitation for a monk
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