

## AN INVESTIGATION OF W.F. GUNAWARDHANA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SINHALA GRAMMAR

Ven. K. Sugunadhamma<sup>1\*</sup>, K.M.N. Madhupani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

\*sinhalasuguna@gmail.com

Most people know W.F. Gunawardhana as the scholar who took a firm position in the classification of the origin of Sinhalese and putting forth the idea that Sinhala has a Dravidian-based origin. However, he is also a dedicated scholar (late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century) who has contributed to the field of education through his in-depth understanding of Language, Grammar, Linguistics, Literature, Literary Criticism, Classical Editing and History in both oriental and occidental knowledge. This research investigates the contribution of W. F. Gunawardhana to Sinhala Grammar. Thus, the research problem was what Gunawardhana's contributions to Sinhala Grammar are. Qualitative method and Data analysis focused library sources are used as method and methodology. Through his criticism of the oldest grammar book written in Sinhala, the *Sidath Sangara*, Gunawardhana increased his knowledge of grammar. He created new Sinhala grammatical rules and usages in the *Siddhanta Pareekshanaya* that he developed from the *Sidath Sangara* as well as in his edited texts and commendations. Although *Guththila Kavya Warnana*, *Subhashitha Warnana*, *Kokila Sandesha Warnana* and so on are included into the genre of commendatory poem, he did not confine them into that generic intramarginal but disclosed hidden Sinhala grammatical elements by textual editing. Conspicuous among his contributions to Sinhala grammar are his disclosure of the influence of Dravidian grammar on the Sinhala language; he revealed that the suffix 'u' was used in making feminine words in Sinhala and he pointed out that there was no verb in the language to indicate the future. He made out that the verb of collective meaning singular subject is plural, verb is plural in conjectural meaning and even when the subject is plural, the verb is singular in inanimate meaning. His new approach regarding the *Sidath Sangara* is noticeable. Criticizing the analysis of *Sandhi* (combinations), Gunawardhana discovered its incompleteness and suggested fifteen new types of *Sandhi* and divided them into two categories; *Bahira* (external) and *Abhyanthara* (internal). In *Sandhi Nirdesha*, he disclosed the special grammatical element; the usage of *Uwahal Wana* (helping letters) in Sinhala. Moreover, he revealed the Dravidian light in some grammatical features of Sinhala. Gunawardhana has done a pioneer contribution to Sinhala Grammar. This research reveals that conceptions of Gunawardhana on Sinhala Grammar can be placed several decades ahead from the relevant era, and investigating his contribution to Sinhala Grammar meets the need of the present.

**Keywords:** Sinhala Grammar, W.F. Gunawardhana, Linguistics

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