PREFACE

This thesis is a study of the language of Asoka's Kathākālam which is taken as a representative work of Kathākālam. The aim of the analysis is to throw light on the evolution of the standard Malayalam.

In the first part the Aryan influence on life, arts, language and literature of Kerala has been traced and the nature of the hybrid literary dialect known as Manipravālam is analysed. Among the various arts influenced by the Aryans, the arts of Kūttu and Kūtiyāttam have been selected here for investigation because of their special relevance to the topic. The main approaches regarding the evolution of Malayalam also are examined. The reasons for accepting the theory of the existence of regional dialectal variations at a period when documental language pointed to a different situation, are elucidated in the beginning of the first part. Since the evolution of Manipravālam can be explained only in the context of the Aryan influence on the various branches of knowledge and arts,
the chapter on Kūttū and Kūṭiyāṭṭam precedes that on Manipravālam. The two types of Manipravālam are differentiated, (1) the dominating or restricted Manipravālam, (2) absorptive or liberal Manipravālam; the former containing pure Sanskrit words with the Sanskrit way of declension and conjugation, and the latter without the same. The languages of the Āṭtaprakārarams and other prose-works are affiliated to the latter type. The characteristics of early Malayalam prose also are described in the final chapter of the first part.

In the second part, the phonology, morphology and syntactic structure of the language of the text are studied in detail. These features are compared and contrasted with those of early prose in the chapter on base-dialect. The nature of the structural analysis is conventional. Historical evolution of certain significant morphological features is traced, though, generally the descriptive method is adopted. Such morphological features that throw light on the evolution of the language are studied historically and the rest are explained descriptively. For instance, the evolution of the present-tense-form 'ānu' has been traced in this thesis for the first time. Similarly the various opinions regarding the morpheme 'am'
considered as the neuter-marker at present, and another morpheme 'ān', the purposive infinitive marker, are discussed at length and the plausible conclusions have been pointed out. The study of the base-dialect and the study of the syntactic structure are new attempts. The reasons for affiliating the base-dialect to that of central Kerala have been discussed in the chapter on the same. The principles adopted in the Phrase-structure-grammar are to some extent accepted in the study of syntactic patterns seen in the text. But all the principles applicable to English syntactic structure are not equally applicable to Dravidian syntactic structure and therefore whatever is relevant and applicable is adopted and new methods are formulated whenever it is found necessary. The various rewriting patterns with regards to the surface structure of the sentence are illustrated in order to prove the positional flexibility of the constituents of a sentence in Malayalam. It is hoped that the modest attempt on the study of the syntactic patterns seen in the text, might give inducement for further research on the same lines. In the third part, indices of words (general and classified) and the sentences are given.
But for the incessant inspiring guidance and encouragement I got from my supervising teacher, Professor C.L. Antony, I would not have been able to finish the work within the prescribed period. His never-failing tireless readiness to go into the minutest detail has been of immense help to me. I wish to express my profound feelings of gratitude to him.

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