

**A GRAMMAR OF
THE KUI
LANGUAGE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649739004

A Grammar of the Kui Language by J. E. Friend-Pereira

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FIRST EDITION.



Calcutta:
BENGAL SECRETARIAT BOOK DEPÔT.
1909.

[Price—Indian, Rs. 2-12 ; English, .]

PL 4695
F75

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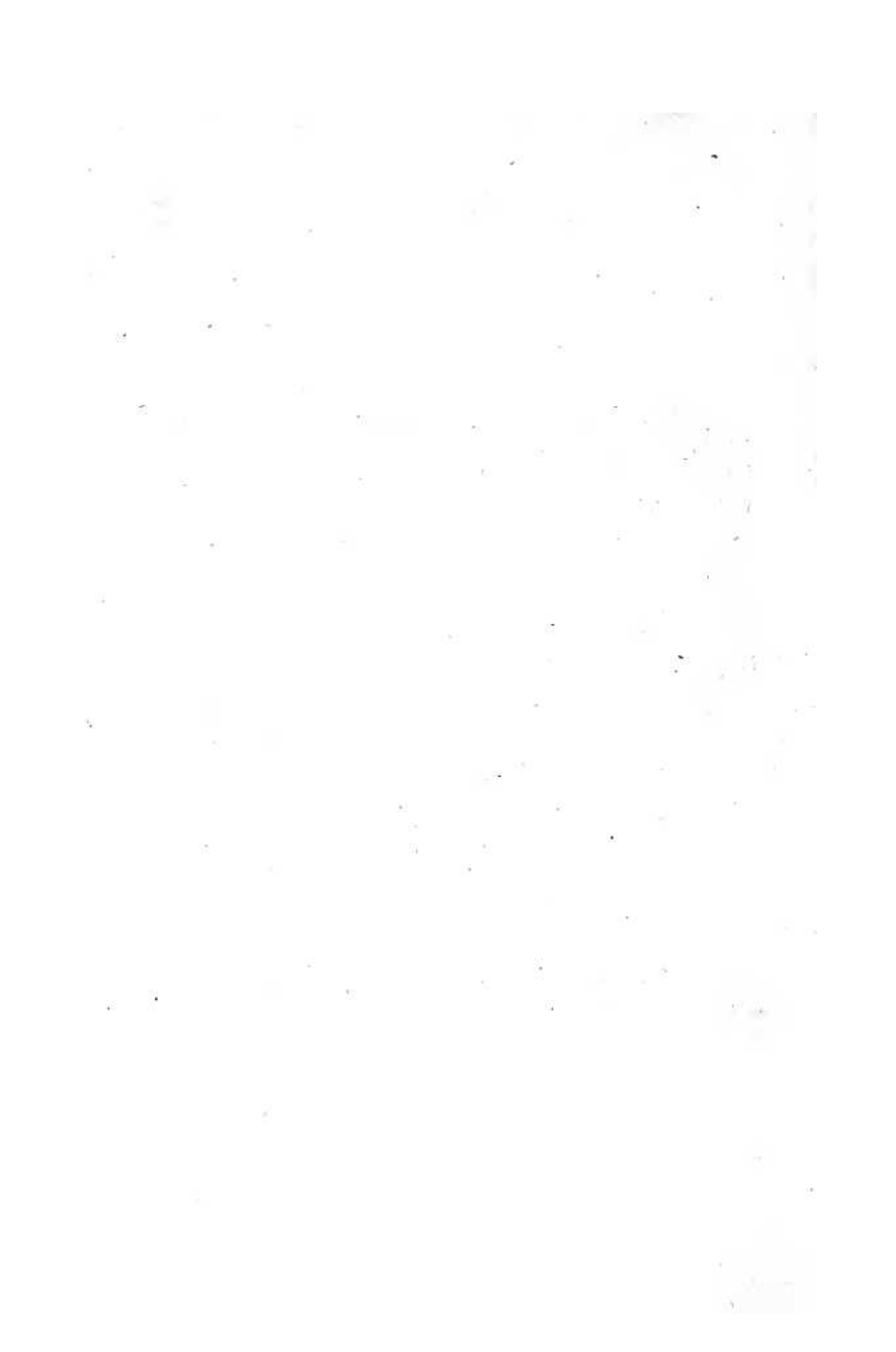
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PREFACE.

No one is more conscious of the imperfection of this work than the author. It was compiled during the scanty intervals of leisure of a busy official life; and it was unfortunately not completed before the author left the Kandh country for good. However, he has a hope that some one with better opportunities than he has had will one day bring out a revised edition of the book in which all errors will be corrected and not a few omissions supplied.

If this Grammar of a little known archaic Dravidian dialect be found to be of use to students in throwing some light on the early history of the growth of the modern literary Dravidian languages the author will be amply repaid for his labour.

The author takes the opportunity of expressing his deep obligations and grateful thanks to Dr. Grierson, C.I.E., PH.D., D. LITT., I.C.S. (retired), for his invaluable advice and suggestions at all times, and for his kindness in seeing the proof sheets through the press.



INTRODUCTION.

KANDH or, as it is called by the people themselves, Kūi is one of the uncultivated aboriginal dialects of the Dravidian group of languages.

The Dravidian languages belong to what is known as the class of Agglutinative languages. In the Agglutinative languages bare roots may be complete words in themselves. But when it becomes necessary to join together or agglutinate two or more roots in order to express the complex ideas that are involved in the grammatical relation of words in a proposition—such, for instance, as the cases of the noun, or the gender, number, person, and the tenses of the verb—the primary root exercises a certain amount of attraction on the secondary roots and converts them into prefixes or suffixes, but does not blend with them into a new organic whole as in the class of Organic languages.

The agglutinative languages differ widely from each other in their method of development; but they all retain a common feature in that they preserve the form of their primary roots however much the secondary roots may have become altered under the influence of varying forces. In some agglutinative languages the secondary roots are added in the form of prefixes to the primary roots, in others they take the shape of postpositions or suffixes; in some the alteration in the form of the secondary roots is very marked, in others it is hardly noticeable; in some, again, the order of the words in a sentence is according to a certain fixed arrangement, in others it follows a different method; in some languages the secondary root has become a permanent prefix

or suffix, and has converted the compound word into a part of speech, in others the agglutination is so slight that the exact function and the particular meaning of the compound word has to be determined from the context.

The Dravidian languages have proceeded along a line of development that approximates towards the organic form of speech for they possess a declension for the noun and a conjugation for the verb that are not unlike those of the Indo-Aryan languages. The compounded words have, in fact, become real parts of speech.

In all languages roots may be divided into two classes : *first*, predicative roots that signify living beings, inanimate objects, qualities, states, and actions ; and *secondly*, demonstrative roots that mark the relation of words in a proposition. The first class may be further subdivided into nominal roots and verbal roots accordingly as they denote living beings, inanimate objects and qualities, and states and actions respectively.

In some agglutinative languages, as for instance the Munda family group, predicative roots, and even demonstrative roots in some cases, are used with considerable elasticity both as nouns and as verbs, and of necessity with a corresponding vagueness in meaning, *e.g.*, the nominal root *sim*, in Sonthali, signifies—a fowl ; as a verb *sim-keṭ'-ko-a-le* means literally—we *fowled* them. The usual meaning of the agglutination is—we *have obtained fowls*. But it may also mean—we *have had fowls to eat*. The exact signification of the word can only be determined from the context. In the Dravidian languages—unlike the Munda languages—many of the nominal roots cannot be used as verbal themes, but every verbal root in its participial form may be converted into a noun of agency.

It will be seen from the example taken from Sonthali that the greater the functional elasticity of a word the

vaguer is its meaning. Dr. Caldwell remarks—"It would appear that originally there was no difference in any instance between the nominal and the verbal form of the root in any Dravidian dialect. Gradually, however, as the dialects became more cultivated, and as logical distinction was felt to be desirable, a separation commenced to take place. This separation was effected by modifying the theme by some formative addition, when it was desired to restrict it to one purpose alone, and prevent its being used for others also. In many instances the theme is still used in poetry, in accordance with ancient usages, indifferently either as a verb or as a noun; but in prose more commonly as a noun only or as a verb only."

Dr. Caldwell is of opinion, furthermore, that Dravidian roots were originally monosyllabic. He divides the formative elements that came to be attached gradually to the monosyllabic roots into two classes, and calls them *the formative addition* and *the particle of specialisation*. He observes—"Formative suffixes are appended to the crude bases of nouns as well as to those of verbs. They are added not only to verbal derivatives, but to nouns which appear to be primitive; but they are most frequently appended to verbs properly so called, of the inflexional basis of which they form the last syllable, generally the third. These particles seem originally to have been the formatives of verbal nouns, and the verbs to which they are suffixed seem originally to have had the force of secondary verbs; but whatever may have been the origin of these particles, they now serve to distinguish transitive verbs from intransitives, and the adjectival form of nouns from that which stands in an isolated position and is used as a nominative." In regard to the particle of specialisation he says—"The verbs and nouns belonging to the class of bases which are now under consideration, consist of a monosyllabic root or stem, containing the generic signification, and a second syllable