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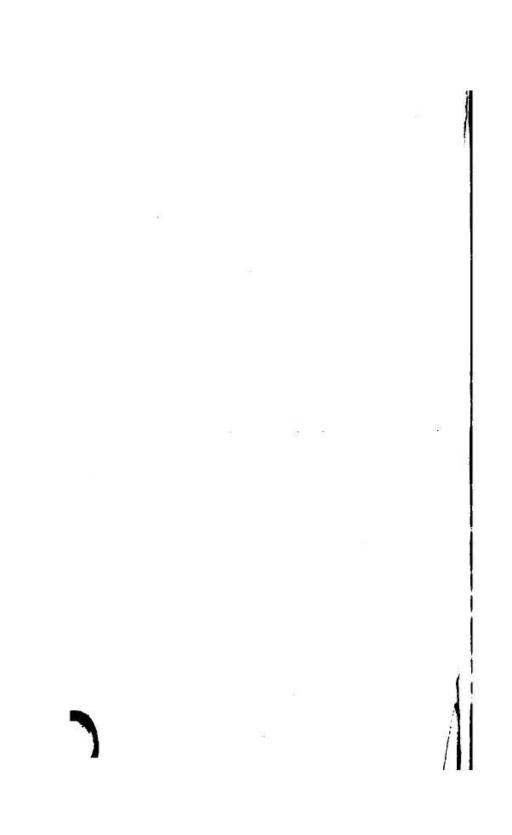
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T. W. RHYS DAVIDS

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Journal

OF THE

PALI TEXT SOCIETY.

1885.

EDITED BY

T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, PH.D., LL.D.

OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

PROPESSOR OF PALL AND BUDDHIST LITERATURE IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

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(With power to add workers to their number.)

This Society has been started in order to render accessible to students the rich stores of the earliest Buddhist literature now lying unedited and practically unused in the various MSS, scattered throughout the University and other Public Libraries of Europe.

The historical importance of these Texts can scarcely be exaggerated, either in respect of their value for the history of folk-lore, or of religion, or of language. It is already certain that they were all put into their present form within a very limited period, probably extending to less than a century and a half (about B.c. 400-250). For that period they have preserved for us a record, quite uncontaminated by filtration through any European mind, of the every-day beliefs and customs of a people nearly related to ourselves, just as they were passing through the first stages of civiliza-They are our best authorities for the early history of that interesting system of religion so nearly allied to some of the latest speculations among ourselves, and which has influenced so powerfully, and for so long a time, so great a portion of the human race—the system of religion which we now call Buddhism. The sacred books of the early Buddhists have preserved to us the sole record of the only religious movement in the world's history which bears any close resemblance to early Christianity. In the history of speech they contain unimpeachable evidence of a stage