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**LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS
OF IVAN P. MINAYEV: NEW EVIDENCES
ON HIS VOYAGE (1874) TO CEYLON**

ABSTRACT. The article draws upon the epistolary materials of Ivan Pavlovich Minayev, State Councilor, Professor of Oriental Faculty of the Imperial Saint Petersburg University. During the last quarter of the 19th century, this prominent Russian Orientalist, Indologist and Buddhologist established strong scientific, educational, cultural, pedagogical, organizational and personal relations with the representatives of the Ceylonese Buddhist Sangha as well as with broader circles of the Ceylonese society. I. P. Minayev's legacy is of perpetual interest in regard to his due to his valuable contribution to the formation of the Indological School in Russia. This remarkable scholar was primarily interested in studying southern Buddhism and Pali, the main language of the Buddhist canon in Ceylon. Contacts with local people were very important for Minayev in to organising his travel around the island, without their assistance, obtaining Pali manuscripts, studying religion in Ceylon or to be acquainted with the learned monks as it was impossible to do so without their assistance. He even initiated warm relations with some getting monks such as Sri Subhuthi thero. However, Minayev also encountered incomprehension and alienation from some other scientists; and even jealousy on the part of some West European colleagues. Nevertheless, Minayev initiated the tradition of direct contacts between Russia and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) which continued in the 20th century.

KEY WORDS: I. P. Minayev, Ceylon, correspondence, Sinhalese Buddhism

УДК 82-6:39(548.7)(091)

DOI 10.31250/2618-8600-2019-4(6)-161-171

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The legacy of the prominent Russian researcher, Orientalist, Indologist and Buddhologist Ivan Pavlovich Minayev (1840-1890) is of enduring interest. This is due to his brilliant and significant contribution to the development of Indology and Buddhology in the Russian Empire, despite his rather short life. The fact that Minayev is recognized as a world-famous expert in Pali and Sanskrit is foremost among his numerous merits. Also his arduous experience in field research and acquisition of a large amount of Buddhist

texts are duly acknowledged, along with his high-grade literary translations and publications.

In academic circles, Minayev's contribution to Buddhist studies in Russia was highly valued during his lifetime. This is evidenced in an obituary written by V. G. Vasilyevsky and Baron V. R. Rosen. It says that "St Petersburg University suffered <...> heavily the premature <...> loss; Russian science lost one of its prominent figures, a professor of comparative linguistics of St Petersburg University" (Vasilyevsky, Rosen 1890: 36). The master thesis of Minayev titled "Pratimoksha Sutra. Buddhist Service Book" (1869) was considered as a valuable contribution to the nascent Russian Buddhology. His doctoral thesis "An Essay on the Phonetics and Morphology of the Pali Language" (1872) was translated into French in 1875 and made I. P. Minayev an internationally recognized scientist. This book is considered to be the first in Europe to systematically describe the grammar of the sacred language of Buddhist dogma (Vasilyevsky, Rosen 1890: 37).

Academician S.F. Oldenburg paid attention to the pedagogical activity of his teacher, especially in the last years of his life. In an interesting way, he formulated the main task and the goal of Minayev's scientific life. Oldenburg believed that Buddhism allowed Minayev to find a response to the despondent and hopeless mood that went through his whole life". That was the reason why it was so important for him "to study the faith of people who proceeded from hopeless pessimism and managed to find the way that led them to reconciliation and calm [Oldenburg 1896: 3] The area of Minayev's scientific interests was amazingly broad as he engaged with a wide range of research areas, including geography, ethnography, history of literature and linguistics, comparative linguistics, Sanskritology, Pali and Newari languages, folklore studies, archeography, textology. Moreover, he developed several special branches in Oriental studies — Burmese, Nepalese, Ceylonese and Afghan studies (Kotovskiy 1967: 3). Minayev's scientific worldview is characterized by such distinctive features as the study of not only the past but also present of people of whom he studied. His general approach to Indology considered this branch of science as a complex discipline embracing a clear historicity of scientific views and assessments (ibid: 10).

I. P. Minayev was especially interested in the southern branch of Buddhism. Minayev paid special attention to the study of Ceylon as it was considered to be the closest to the original teachings of the Buddha, the Pali language which historically used to be the main language of the Buddhist canon on the island was of particular interest to Minayev. He began his first journey to South Asia from Ceylon. The detailed description of this voyage was successfully completed by the author and published in a book titled "Essays of Ceylon and India. From the travel notes of the Russian" (Minayev 1878).

I. P. Minayev's contribution to Ceylon studies still remains rather understated within the general framework of Indology and Ceylonese

(or Sri Lankan) studies. Some scientists have already addressed this subject. E. D. Talmud based her article heading “Towards the centenary of I. P. Minayev’s voyage to Sri Lanka” on rich archival materials (Talmud 1977: 3-15). She mainly focuses on the letters written to Minayev by his teachers, scholars and students during his trip to Ceylon. She also draw attention upon his correspondence with the Buddhist monks and used the data from his travel diaries and academic publications. The collection of Buddhist canonical texts was perused partially, with the letters of G. H. Perera and L. Zoysa only taken into account. E. D. Talmud emphasized that these correspondents acquired manuscripts and books for Minayev (Talmud 1977).

In her article titled “I. P. Minayev and the study of the ethnography of Sri Lanka in Russian ethnographic science”, N. G. Krasnodembskaya drew attention to the fact that although the trip of the Russian scholar was not planned as an ethnographic expedition, his travel journals were rich in ethnographic details (Krasnodembskaya 1977: 16-23). Her article describes and analyses Minayev’s observations on the various aspects of the life of the peoples of Ceylon, in particular of the autochthonous population — the Veddas. She also noted the importance of Minayev’s attention to Sinhalese rituals and cults, which are nowadays gradually fading away. Minayev’s scientific views predetermined the agendas and ideas of his Russian successors studying the ethnography of Ceylon and South Asia, such as the spouses A. M. and L. A. Meerwarth couple who went on a special ethnographic expedition to these regions in 1914–1918 under the patronage of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St Petersburg (Kotin, Krasnodembskaya, Soboleva 2018).

M. N. Zhdanova summed up the general story of the Russian scientists’ and entrepreneurs’ stay in Ceylon in her book. According to her, Minayev as a versatile scientist significantly contributed to the study of Ceylon (Zhdanova 2006: 64-69).

In this paper, I present out different aspects of I. P. Minayev’s relationships with the indigenous people in Ceylon drawing upon archival documents, both old ones already known and new ones just discovered, but insufficiently studied though. Several letters were discovered in the Archive of the Orientalist, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts RAS (AV IOM RAS), which allows us to shed light on the nature of these relationships and to reveal the results of these contacts.

The framework of our reflections is determined by the substantial limitations of the materials we have at our disposal. In this paper, we draw upon the letters written by various representatives of the Ceylonese society — the Buddhist monks, the officials of the British administration, local journalists, etc. Unfortunately, a significant number of Minayev’s replies to his Ceylon correspondents are not available for the time being as the originals are archived in various Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka and the copies (in the form of microfilms) are currently available at the Archive Department in Colombo,

Sri Lanka. Probably, a number of letters to individual addressees and organizations have been lost.

Minayev visited Ceylon only once, in 1874 (Kotovskiy 1967). He traveled extensively around the country studying Buddhist practices. He sought to learn them in details through communication with Buddhist monks and laity. His travel diaries were published in a book titled “Essays on Ceylon and India” (1878) during the author’s lifetime and were also partially published in Russian periodicals and magazines. These became his only published “memoirs” on Ceylon. These texts testify his routes, thoughts and considerations, sometimes critical, on Buddhism in Ceylon and contain observations of cultural and ethnographic character.

Inventories of the Minayev’s Fond in the Archive of the Orientalist (IOM RAS) reveal that during his trip to Ceylon the scientist established contacts with the representatives of the British: we find the names of J. Black, B. Guidwood, B. Hayard, A. Laynson in the list of his correspondents. Among his Ceylonese correspondents, most were mainly the Sinhalese, namely B. Gunasekara, S. Gunatilaka, C. Perera, G. H. Perera, E. Senarat, W. Subhuthi, H. Sumangala, H. Vijesinghe, L. Zoysa. W. Subhuthi and H. Sumangala were well-known Buddhist monks, distinguished by their deep knowledge of the Buddhist canon and literature in the Pali language, who were active and prominent public figures in Ceylon. It is somewhat difficult to identify the ethnic origin of C. Affu by surname without having studied his letters. It is quite possible that it was a wrong transliteration of the local epithet “Appu”. Even so these letters testify a wide range of public persons I. P. Minayev met in Ceylon: Buddhist monks from different sects, government officials, editors of newspapers, etc.

A. A. Vigin introduced the classification of letters received by I. P. Minayev and divided them into two groups — business notes and the letters from friends. He pointed out that “the letters to the scientist from almost two hundred correspondents are known; however, most of them are nothing more than business notes on receiving books, sending proof-reading, etc. The circle of persons with whom Ivan Pavlovich maintained friendly relations was rather narrow” (Vigin 2010: 41). We found out that AV IOM RAS stores papers from fourteen Ceylonese correspondents. Our task was to examine the letters sent to I. P. Minayev during his stay in Ceylon in 1874. To prevent further misunderstandings, it is worthwhile to make some clarifications with regard to the order of systematization in this archival case. The storage units at AV IOM RAS Fund № 39 are organized by personalities, with each correspondent being in a separate inventory file. But we found out that the letters of the same correspondent Waskaduwe Sri Subhuthi Terunnanse are separated into two inventories: “117-Subhuthi W.” and “121-Terunnanse W. S.” In fact, “Terunnanse” is

a reverent epithet of a Buddhist monk who achieved the status of *thero* / *thero*¹. Apparently, the first custodians of the archive recorded this epithet as the last name.

We also noticed that the already published letters from the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art were received by Minayev after his return from Ceylon. These were the letters received from the monks who prepared copies of some manuscripts upon the request of the Russian scholar (Zagorodnikova 2010: 58-59, 70-72). The first category of documents — business notes — include the papers that aimed at solving logistics issues. Several such letters from H. Wijesinghe clarify the process of organizing of Minayev's trip from Badulla to Ratnapura (both cities are located in mountainous areas, difficult to pass). These letters show that Minayev was accommodated at a guest house (Badulla Rest House) and sought help from the local British administration center Kachchery to obtain two carts for the journey (AV ION RAS. F. 39. I. 2. S.U. 44. P. 4). He managed to negotiate with Mr. Ismalums, apparently a Muslim from the company Messrs Glenny & Co., so that he was given two wagons at a more convenient price than fourteen pounds demanded by the owner of these cars vehicles (AV ION RAS. F. 39. I. 2. S.U. 4. P. 1).

There are the letters that can be attributed to the same first group but evince Minayev's personal attitudes. We argue that the letters to Minayev can be only loosely divided into two aforementioned categories. In fact, even in the business notes one can notice a certain kind of relationship between the Russian scientist and local people in the areas of scientific and pedagogical interests. For example, a Buddhist monk named Sumangala *thero* from Hikkaduwa wrote that he had sent the scholar the examination of the Pali grammar compiled by Mr. Batuvantaudawa (AV IOM RAS. F. 39. I. 2. S.U. 118. P. 1-2). The said scholar was an expert in Pali and Sanskrit, and together with the author of the letter they translated the full text of the ancient chronicle "Mahavamsa" from Pali into Sinhalese. This letter elucidates how much Minayev was interested in the system of training and control of the educational processes at the Buddhist college "Vidyodaya" (now it is a University), the only educational institution founded by the said monk at that time.

G.H. Perera worked for the local newspaper "Lakrivikirana" ("The Sunbeams of Ceylon") published in Sinhalese language. Minayev asked him to find a person who could make copies of the Pali manuscripts for him. In his letter dated August 15, 1874, Perera informed about the cost of such kind of work. However, this note would not be of great value if one did not pay attention to the reverse side of the sheet which says that the clerk working in the editorial office accompanied Minayev to the "Booksellers shop". This note

¹ This epithet is granted to the Buddhist monks who were dedicated to their higher ordination.

bears testimony that the locals tried to assist the Russian scientist in his activities, though not in services that seem to be important. This concern is also manifested in the same letter in which G. H. Perera informed Minayev of the rumors about putting up for sale a large number of manuscripts in Pali which had previously belonged to the late missionary of the Wesleyan Church, the Honorable David de Silva.

On the next day after meeting with Minayev at the “Oriental” Hotel², a certain S. Gunatilaka sent a letter informing Minayev of the possible acquisition of the same Pali library of the then late Honorable David de Silva from Colombo, “if it has not yet been sold out”. Gunatilaka also reported that the local Sinhalese Wesleyan priest Mr. David de Silva was a well-known expert in the Pali language. The author of this letter also pointed out the most important detail — that the majority of these Pali manuscripts actually were copies from the original manuscripts kept in the library of the famous Buddhist monk Bovala Unnance, who belonged to the famous Asgiriya temple in Kandy. This temple was considered to be one of the main temples of the Siamese Buddhist School in Ceylon. Further, the author mentioned the name of the place where the deceased Wesleyan priest lived and recommended possible ways of obtaining information about his library. He also expressed confidence that if after the acquisition of the de Silva’s library Minayev would lack some texts, he could have obtained them somewhere else in Ceylon to complete the collection of the Tripitaka Buddhist writings (AV IOM RAS. F. 39. I. 2. S.U. 9. P. 1).

The aforementioned documents bear witness to the fact that Minayev most likely learnt about David de Silva during his trip to Ceylon. Apparently, they did not communicate directly, but Minayev knew about de Silva from the letters of his local correspondents and from the Ceylon newspapers. David de Silva, a Sinhalese, was famous as the head Christian speaker in the debate between the Buddhists and the Christian missionaries that took place in Panadura (the coastal city located 10 km south of the capital, Colombo) in 1872. Minayev mentioned that issue in his travel diaries (Minayev 1878: 49-50). Representatives of different religions argue with each other over the correctness of their beliefs during such debates.

David de Silva was no longer alive by the time of Minayev’s arrival in Ceylon in 1874. There is no information whether Minayev was able to purchase his library. However, apparently this information did not leave the scientist indifferent. He was probably looking for these books, acquired every text he could find and brought them to his home university. It is known that “this unique book collection forms part of the library of the Oriental Faculty of the St Petersburg State University” (Vasilkov 2010: 65). Most likely, this Library comprises a part of Minayev’s Ceylon collection and another part replenished

² “New Oriental Hotel”, now “Amangalla” is located inside the Dutch fortress in Galle in the south of Sri Lanka.

by the State Public Library named after M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin (now the Russian National Library) in St Petersburg.

Letters by the Buddhist monks from Ceylon indicate their desire to establish a kind of scientific and literary exchange with Russia through the mediation of Minayev. The Buddhist monk Sulakhandha (Aluthgama Silakkhandha) sought to maintain a correspondence with the Russian scholar whom he met in his temple and whom he supplied with several Pali manuscripts (to be copied), hoping that he would get interested in the texts (Zagorodnikova 2010: 58). In another letter dated July 25, 1877, the same monk asked Minayev for his portrait and inquired about the kind of books on Buddhism and Pali grammar in Latin that Minayev had obtained. He also asked him which way would be better to make copies — on paper or on palm leaves (Zagorodnikova 2010: 58). In a letter dated March 19, 1878, this monk asked Minayev to provide him an opportunity to acquire two Pali books in Latin — “Rupasiddhi” and “Kachchayana” — and inquired where he could get a copy of the printed Sanskrit grammar edited by Panini (Zagorodnikova 2010: 70). On May 5, 1879, the monk repeated the same request. He complained that his letters remained unanswered, although Minayev sometimes wrote to him. Nevertheless, Silakkhandha prepared copies of four books on Pali grammar for Minayev (Zagorodnikova 2010: 71). Another monk, Dhammalankara (head of the Amarapura School), also complained that he did not receive any answers to his letters, although he knew that I. P. Minayev had sent a reply to him. The monks apparently linked these postal difficulties with the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878 but still continued to write, albeit with long intervals.

In November 1874, the monk Sri Subhuthi had arrived in Colombo specifically to meet with I. P. Minayev only to learn that the researcher had already gone to Kurunegala. In his letter, he expressed the hope that he would meet him later personally in order to familiarize himself with the Minayev’s new acquisition — a book titled “Chakkavaladipanitika”. It also became clear that Minayev had a much wider range of interests than just Buddhology. This was manifested in the fact that he wanted to obtain not only Buddhist texts but also secular ones. For example, he wanted to acquire several poems in the genre of “Sandesha” (“poem-message”, one of the characteristic types of Sinhalese secular literature) and some other texts. Sri Subhuthi tried to provide Minayev with the most accurate copies in terms of spelling (AV IOM RAS. F. 39. I. 2. S.U. 211. P. 1-2).

The correspondence between Minayev and Sri Subhuthi was published in Sri Lanka. The letters bear witness to their mutual sympathy that is manifested in the Minayev’s attention towards the monk. On November 19, 1875, Minayev, who was already on his way to St Petersburg, sent to Sri Subhuthi a letter and two packages from Bombay: a copy of the book “Vachaspatiyam” and a number of handkerchiefs. He asked Sri Subhuthi to keep in mind the names of the books he needed and to send copies to St Petersburg (Guruge 1984: 93). In a letter dated January 11, 1877, Minayev informed the monk that he had received his letter sent via Dr. R. Rost and expressed his great joy that Sri Subhuthi

still remembered him. At the same time, he regreted that he had not received the books he needed so badly. These were “Sasanavamsa” and “Mahavagga”. Minayev was waiting for news about these books. It is also clear from this letter that Minayev monitored the activities of Sri Subhuthi through newspapers and knew, for example, that the monk was preparing his book on Pali grammar for publication. Minayev expressed the hope that Western scholars would be able to learn much from his study of grammar. At the same time, he reported on his activities: he was preparing the travel journals on India for publication and promised that a copy of this book would be mailed to Sri Subhuthi at the end of the year (Guruge 1984: 93). These were “Essays of Ceylon and India” published in 1878. It is important that Minayev asked Sri Subhuthi to write him in the sacred language Pali, which would be a pleasure for him, and promised never to forget the kindness shown to him whilst in Ceylon (Guruge 1984: 94).

His next published letter to Sri Subhuthi dates back to February 21, 1888, i.e. 11 years later. But its contents clearly indicates that they maintained correspondence in between. Minayev announced his recently published book and asked Sri Subhuthi’s opinion, regardless of whether it was positive or negative (it might be a book edited by Minayev for the Pali Texts Society in Britain). However, his main concern was to get a good-quality copy of “Sasanavamsa” as soon as possible, since Minayev was preparing to publish it through the Pali Texts Society. But in the end Minayev obtained a good copy of this book in Burmese. Yet the scientist considered that this material was insufficient for such kind of research and needed a good copy in Sinhalese, being ready to pay any reasonable price for the manuscript. And already on October 14 of the same 1888, Minayev informed Sri Subhuthi that “Petawattu” came out and reminded again that he was eager to receive immediately the ordered copy of “Sasanavamsa”. The next letter from Minayev, dated March 24, 1889, confirmed that he had received a response from Sri Subhuthi as well as copy of the ordered book [Guruge 1984]. In this letter, Minayev expressed his deep regrets over the illness of Sri Subhuthi and wished him to get well soon. He also informed about sending a second copy of his book. In this case, it was probably the Minayev’s book “Buddhism. Studies and Materials”, published in 1887 (Minayev 1887). This book includes quotations from Sutta in Sanskrit and Gandhavamsa, as it is specified in the letter (Guruge 1984: 94). Minayev informed Sri Subhuthi that he had had an opportunity to conduct the archaeological excavations during his trip to India, but unfortunately, he did not find any Buddha relics. As usual, Minayev asked Sri Subhuthi to send him a list of Pali books published in Ceylon in recent times, assuring him that more copies of his books would be sent to him with pleasure, if needed [Guruge 1984: 95].

As for “Sasanavamsa”, it is clear from Sullakkhanda’s letter of March 19, 1878 that not only “Sasanavamsa” but also “Petawattu” and “Mahavagga” (the comments) were prepared for shipment to Russia in early 1878. However, Minayev did not ask for them, despite the fact that the books were written in

Paliand he received two more reminders on that — on June 17 and October 26, 1878. We do not know what was the meaning of the reminder written by Sullakkhanda on May 5, 1879, (Zagorodnikova 2010: 70-71). One can only guess that it resulted in preventing further cooperation between Minayev and Sullakkhanda. Minayev forged a similar type of relationship with a monk named Dhammalankara (Zagorodnikova 2010: 71). Perhaps, the two somehow did not find it interested and worthy to each other personally.

From time to time Western scholars and correspondents from Ceylon got certain information about Minayev: the places of his stay (Guruge 1984: 35), his assessments made by some Western Buddhologists and their exchange of Buddhist manuscripts with him [Guruge 1984: 13], his books (Guruge 1984: 18, 38) and new transactions (Guruge 1984: 73). Several Western Buddhologists were hostile to Minayev and spread false rumors about him (Guruge 1984: 13-15). Rumors had it that he was hostile to Buddhism and that he had claimed that the Buddhist scripture was not as ancient as it is commonly believed, etc. Ill-wishers gossiped that it was ridiculous to give away Buddhist books and manuscripts to Minayev free of charge as he was on a business trip and certainly should have had sufficient funds to purchase handwritten copies. With regard to his works, they claimed that Minayev's study of Pali grammar is full of mistakes. It seems that these malicious attacks and rumors came from the famous Western European Buddhologist R.T. Childers, who apparently considered himself to be the greatest Pali expert in Europe (Guruge 1984: 13-15). Perhaps these false testimonies affected the relationship between Minayev and a certain circle of monks in Ceylon. Then the rumors of his poor health began to spread around. In the beginning of 1890, it became known that Prof. Minayev got seriously ill, moved to the south of France, and it was unlikely that he would be able to return to Russia (Guruge 1984: 80) as it so happened. After Minayev passed away, the ties of Ceylon Buddhist monks with St Petersburg ceased to exist.

Nevertheless, these relationships played an important role in the history of contacts between Russia and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) since the 1870s. The principles laid down by I.P. Minayev were developed further by the participants of the first Russian ethnographic expedition to India and Ceylon in 1914-18 and later on, since the 1970s by N.G. Krasnodembskaya. Such contacts and exchanges were augmented after the establishment of diplomatic relationships between the USSR and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

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ЛОКАЛЬНЫЕ КОРРЕСПОНДЕНТЫ ИВАНА ПАВЛОВИЧА МИНАЕВА: НОВЫЕ СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВА ЕГО ПОЕЗДКИ НА ЦЕЙЛОН (1874)

АННОТАЦИЯ. В статье рассматриваются эпистолярные материалы Ивана Павловича Минаева, статского советника, профессора Восточного факультета Императорского Петербургского университета. Будучи известным российским востоковедом, индологом и буддологом, Минаев установил прочные научные, образовательные, культурные, организационные и личные связи с представителями буддийской сангхи на Цейлоне, а также был знаком с широкими кругами цейлонского общества в целом. Наследие И. П. Минаева представляет интерес благодаря его вкладу в создание школы индологии в России. Этот выдающийся ученый в первую очередь интересовался изучением южного буддизма и пали — языка, на котором был создан наиболее древний буддийский канон. Контакты с местным населением были очень важны для Минаева в целях организации

поездок вокруг острова, приобретения манускриптов на языке пали, изучения религии на Цейлоне или знакомства с образованными монахами. У него завязались теплые отношения с некоторыми из монахов, например с Шри Субхути теро. Однако Минаеву пришлось также столкнуться с непониманием и отчуждением со стороны некоторых ученых и даже завистью со стороны отдельных западно-европейских коллег. Несмотря на это, Минаев заложил традицию создания непосредственных контактов между Россией и Цейлоном (в настоящее время Шри Ланка) — традицию, продолжившуюся в 20 веке.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: И. П. Минаев, Цейлон, переписка, сингальский буддизм

СЕНАСИНГЕ Девамитра Раджана — аспирантка РУДН (Россия, Москва; Шри Ланка)