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A MONTHLY OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

ICDL-2016 & 44th AICDL

A BRIEF REPORT

(Continued from the last issue)

After tea-break, Shri. R. Balakrishnan, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha delivered Smt. Lachchmi Jessaram Gidwani Memorial Endowment lecture titled *Lexical Encoding of Direction Terms: A Proof for the Dravidian Paradigm of Indus Town Planning*. He opined that fresh excavations and multidisciplinary interpretations of information have thrown new lights on the emergence, growth and decline of Indus Civilization. He also maintained that the cultural prototypes of the Indus Civilization played an influential role

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45TH AICDL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

The 45th All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists will be organized as an International Conference in 2017 and will be hosted by the Department of Linguistics, University of Delhi.

in the process of lexical encoding and naming of cardinal direction terms in the language. The session concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr. Parameshwari.

Prof. Sonal Kulkarni-Joshi delivered Professor Nagamma Reddy Endowment Lecture on the second day of the conference. Prof. Panchanan Mohanty chaired the session. Her lecture titled *Language-Contact Speculations on the Dravidian Elements in Marathi: The Story So Far* focuses on the particular linguistic characteristics of Marathi which are commonly ascribed to Dravidian influence. The representative texts from Old Marathi, Proto-Marathi and Maharashtra Prakrit like *Leelacharitra* and *Dyaneshwari and Inscriptions* were examined in order to identify the morpho-syntactic features and lexical items

considered to be Dravidian in origin. Such studies also reflect on the *linguistic process(es)* by which Dravidian features may have entered Marathi. It also points to a possible alternative model which considers *borrowing* and not substratum effect as the process by which Dravidian features may have entered the Marathi language.

A series of plenary talks, spread over the three days, were delivered during the conference.

Prof. Ramakrishna Reddy's lecture on '*Endangerment of Lesser-Known Tribal Languages : with Focus on South and Central India*' deals with the tribal languages of Dravidian and Munda groups like Toda, Irula, Badaga, Gondi, Konda, Kui, Kuvi, Kharia, Juang, Savara (Sora), Gorum (Parengi), Gutob (Gadaba), Remo (Bondo) and Didei (Gta?). In his talk, Prof. B.R. Reddy reviews the South Indian situation of tribal languages as follows: despite the prevailing 105 communities only 33 languages are noticed as spoken by these communities either as home language or mother tongue or language for communication. Tribal bilingualism or even trilingualism is the norm. The status of tribal languages as non-literary, minor, undeveloped or under-developed and non-scheduled etc., *vis-à-vis* the major languages has also been discussed. Prof. Reddy proposes a number of measures to be taken up by the states for the revitalization of tribal languages.

Dr. Iravatham Mahadevan's paper on '*The Unicorn and the Sacred Filter*

Standard' cites linguistic evidences favouring Dravidian authorship of the Indus Civilisation in the form of the presence of Dravidian loanwords and loan translations in the RV. Linguistic features in Sanskrit and the Prakrits like the introduction of retroflex sounds, change-over from inflexion to post fixation, and near-identical syntactic structures are evidences to establish the movement of Indo-Aryan closer to Dravidian than to Indo-European languages. Computer analysis has shown that the Indus language had only suffixes (as in Dravidian) and no prefixes (as in Indo-Aryan) or infixes (as in Munda). The paper concludes with the note that the vestiges of Indus Civilisation must exist in the bilingual (Dravidian and Indo-Aryan) streams of the Indian historical tradition which has continued without interruption till the present.

Prof. G. Uma Maheshwar Rao in his paper titled '*Proofs of Evidence for the Genetic Relationship of Mongolic and Dravidian Languages*' attempts to provide primary evidence in the form of a modest number of cognates and correspondences of convincing quality between the two families while the secondary but crucial evidence is from the display of dissimilar phonological correspondences between the Mongolic and the Dravidian families of languages. Similarly, remarkable evidence of shared morphological

traits of several kinds along the lines advocated by Meillet (1967) has been shown as proof of the existence of genetic relationship between the two families. Aberrant morphological realizations, anomalous stem formations, parallel occurrences of peculiar morphological patterns are provided as evidence of the common inheritance of the two families, viz. Dravidian and Mongolic.

Dr. L. Ramamoorthy's paper entitled '*Missionaries' Perception on Tamil Grammar*' discusses the paradigm shift in the development of Tamil language during the 17th and 18th centuries and attributes this to European contact and the direct contribution of the Christian missionaries. Even though the European contact had been there since Cankam period, the major impact of it took place only from the 17th century. The role of Christian missionaries during 17th and 18th centuries is very important to study the paradigm shift. The comparative-historical linguistics, is yet another aspect of grammar paradigm that was introduced into India through Europeans.

Prof. K.V. Subba Rao's paper on '*Forward, Backward and Partial Copy Control in Telugu*', an exhaustive analysis of the syntactic analysis of Telugu language in the GB framework and Copy Control, is the topic of discussion. Prof. Subba Rao argues that the phenomenon of Backward

Control is quite robust in Telugu, and in some cases the *only* available option is Backward Control as Forward Control results in ungrammatical sentences. The analysis of the data from Telugu further shows that a question expression in the embedded subject position in the scope of an NPI commanded by a negative may be co-indexed with a universal quantifier or a distributive quantifier and only in such cases is Copy Control permitted in Telugu. He substantiates his claim by providing cross-linguistic data from Monsang, a Tibeto-Burman language.

Prof. Panchanan Mohanty delivered the plenary lecture entitled '*Dravidian Country and the Orissa Convergence Corridor*'.

On the last day of the conference, a Panel Discussion was held on the topic '*Medium of Instruction and Indian Languages: Teaching and Learning in Mother Tongues*' which was chaired by Prof. M.S. Hayatt. The panellists include Prof. G. Uma Maheshwar Rao, Prof. Panchanan Mohanty, Prof. G.K. Panikkar, Prof. Khaire, Sri. Samala Ramesh Babu and Dr. Varija representing Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Konkani, Tulu, Oriya and Punjabi languages. The panellists reviewed the state-of-affairs with regard to mother tongue education in their states. It was felt that even the major literary languages have started facing the

threat of endangerment and the situation demands serious efforts on the part of state governments to preserve and protect our languages. Globalization, the over imposing role of English in the Indian context, job opportunities only for English educated youth were identified as some of the reasons for the predicament faced by the Indian languages. The panellists unanimously agreed that it is only by language planning and educational reforms the situation can be remedied. The panel resolved that only by concerted efforts mother tongue education can be implemented and the discussion concluded with all the participants, the panellists as well as the audience expressing their genuine intentions to strive towards this goal.

The conference concluded on the third day with Dr. Parameswari proposing the vote of thanks.

K. Rajyarama

A REMINDER TO ALL LINGUISTS

As suggested by the Managing Committee of the Dravidian Linguistics Association at its meeting at CALTS, University of Hyderabad, we would like to give more emphasis to linguistics-related news items in the *DLA News*, a monthly publication of Dravidian Linguistics Association. It is really a mouthpiece for the young linguists to express their innovative ideas and to get inspired by the explorations of others. In order to attain our goal, we request the Heads of the Departments of Linguistics and related

disciplines and the interested researchers to send brief write-ups on their academic activities. As *DLA News* has reasonably wide circulation both in India and abroad, the ideas and research findings exposed through it will get popularized. We give information regarding seminars, workshops and conferences in linguistics and languages. Besides, vacancies of faculty members in linguistics in the universities and vacant positions of Research Fellows etc., are also published. The beneficiaries of the newsletter are students and young researchers. Hence we seek the attention of all concerned to co-operate with us by sending brief reports of their academic activities for publishing them in the *DLA News*.

AN ACTION TO BE APPRECIATED

P. Sreekumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Dravidian and Computational Linguistics, Dravidian University, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh sent e-mails to his friends in the field of Linguistics giving the website link within www.ijdl.org and requested them to become members of the Dravidian Linguistics Association. It is an action worthy of being emulated by all members of the DLA. If this pattern is taken up, it will enhance the circulation of the *DLA News* and the *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics*.

RAMESWARAM AND SRI LANKA

from

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

(Continued from the last issue)

Various dynasties of south India like Chalukyas, Pallavas, Pandyas, the legendary Cholas, Cheras and the Sinhala kings were at war from time to time but that did not affect the worship of their Gods or their beliefs in the epics like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharatha* or stories of Shiva. None of the temples of various faiths were

disturbed. On the other hand, they were rebuilt from time to time by the new conquerors. However, destruction of the temples took place with the advent of the Portuguese.

Sri Pada, better known as Adam's Peak

However, the greatest tribute to all religions is the 7360-foot high Adam's Peak. All religions of Sri Lanka regard it as a holy mountain. Buddhists call the mountain as Sri Pada – “The sacred footprint” of Gautama Buddha himself. To the Hindus, the peak is called *Shiva Adi Padam* ‘The creative dance of Shiva’, and the Muslims insist that it is the place where Adam first set foot on earth. Many Roman Catholics believe that the footprint impressed on the boulder at the summit is that of Saint Thomas, the early Christian apostle who preached in South India according to the tradition.

Adam's Peak, better known as Sri Pada, is unique as it is revered by all the major religions of the world. The peak itself looks like a giant Shiva Linga with a temple on top of it. During a sunny morning or evening, the shadow of the peak falls in the rain-forest, for a fleeting moment, looking like a Shiva Linga.

Sri Lanka has over 50 places spread out in the entire island which are closely associated with the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* epics and Indian heritage sites. These are fully known to the tourist development departments of both India and Sri Lanka.

Historical Background to the Origin and Development of Shaivism

Vedic religion was the precursor of Hinduism, the religion of Indo-Europeans who entered India in 1500 BC from the present-day Iran from a region called Arya. The *Rig Veda* is considered as the world's oldest religious scripture dating to 1200 BC and the *Upanishads* were in circulation from 1000 BC. The great epic *Ramayana* with Lord Rama being considered as the seventh incarnation of Vishnu was composed in Sanskrit by 300 BC. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* are the most important religious texts of Hindus. The sage Vyasa was traditionally named the author of *Mahabharatha* (5th century BC). The poem reached its present form in 400 AD.

COMMENTS ON V.I. SUBRAMONIAM COMMEMORATION VOLUMES

“Both volumes are now considered to be very important and unparalleled for young researchers who are pursuing the field of Dravidian and Indian Linguistics.”

S. Saravanan

However, the Indus Valley civilisation (2500 BC – 1700 BC) stretched from present-day Iran-Pakistan border on the side of the Arabian Sea to near Delhi, a distance of 800 km., and to the south and northeast, of 1,600 km. It was a literate civilization, and the language has been tentatively identified as Dravidian. Wheat and barley were grown; cattle and other animals were domesticated. Cotton was cultivated to make cloth and it was considered as the first export crop of the world to Muscat for which copper was obtained in exchange.

Antiquity of Shaivism

According to Iravatham Mahadevan's write-up in *The Hindu* (3rd May 2009): “There is archaeological and linguistic evidence that the Indus civilisation script is a writing system encoding the language of the region, most probably Dravidian ... the script may not have been deciphered, but that is no valid reason to deny its existence, ignoring the archaeological evidence” and goes on to say “The Indus civilisation is non-Aryan and pre-Aryan and there is substantial linguistic evidence favouring the Dravidian theory”, and “the survival of Brahui, a Dravidian language in the Indus region, the presence of loan words in the Rig Veda and the Indus civilisation was urban, while the Vedic was rural and pastoral needs to be noted”. The Indus seals depict many animals of the time, except the horse. The chariot with spoked wheels is also not depicted as these are the main features of the Aryan civilisation. The Indus religion as revealed in pictorial depictions on the seal includes the worship of the buffalo-horned male Gods, mother Goddesses, the peepal tree, the serpent and probably the phallic symbol. Such modes of worship are alien to the religion of Rig Veda. Significantly, the peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) has been worshipped from 2600 BC in the sub-continent, and that reverence has been taken forward by most religions to this day.

Sea Levels

20,000 years ago, when sea levels were 300 feet below the present level, both India and Sri Lanka were a great landmass. Still, the Gulf of Mannar had two submerged volcanoes and they were throwing out pumice stones. It gives credibility to the legend in

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Ramayana of Hanuman throwing stones that float in the water for Lord Rama to cross the Sethu to Sri Lanka.

According to the information gathered from the Internet, there are some 5,000 temples of Ganesh, Murugan, Skandan and Shiva in Sri Lanka. In the recent 200 years, with plantation workers established in the central provinces of Sri Lanka around the famous temples of the tooth of Gautama Buddha, located at Kandy, the faith in Shaivism in the form of building some 200 Murugan temples by the Hindu Tamil workers is a testimony to their faith. Tamil Nadu has over 38,000 temples, most of which are Shaivite temples. The evidence suggests that the Indus civilisation flourished during 2600-1900 BC and religious thoughts slowly and steadily developed into the worship of Shiva as the central figure for Shaivites symbolised by the Shiva Lingam all over the world. The blending of the Vedic and the ancient Shaivite thoughts to form the great religious belief of India that is Hinduism, is a step forward created by the right-thinking philosophers of the past thousand years.

[To be continued]

K.V.S. Krishna

R. MAHESH K. SINHA IS NO MORE

It is with a heavy heart that we heard the loss of a stalwart in NLP Dr. R.M.K. Sinha on 29th July 2016.



Dr. Sinha was Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at IIT Kanpur where he rendered his service for more than three decades. His major research concentration has been in the areas of language technology and applied artificial intelligence. In early 70s, he worked on Devanagari OCR and was the first person to work on this topic. In late 70s and early 80s, he worked on Indian script enabling and

their computer processing. He is the originator of the well known multilingual GIST technology / IDC, ISCII coding, INSCRIPT keyboarding and several other Indian language technologies. From the late 80s, he has been working on computer processing of Indian languages. He is the originator of AnglaBharati and AnuBharati technology for translation from English to Indian languages and vice versa. He is a member of TDIL working group, National Translation Mission Advisory, Technical Advisory Committee of CDAC, Associate UNESCO chair in Communication: ORBICOM, Quebec, Canada. He is a founding president of the Society for Machine Aids for Translation and Communication (SMATAC), Fellow IETE and Senior Member IEEE. He is an invited participant from India in the International Networking Programme on Human-Machine Interaction in Translation with Denmark and Brazil. He has been a visiting professor at several prominent universities of abroad.

The members of the DLA and ISDL express their heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

Reported by S.A. Shanavas

NEW ENROLMENT FOR LIFE-MEMBERSHIP

(July 2016)

1. **Dr. Anish Koshy** (Membership No. 1271/2016)
Asst. Professor, Department of Linguistics & Phonetics,
School of Distance Education, The English and Foreign
Language University, Hyderabad – 500 007, Telangana

DLA News Endowment Fund

22.07.16	Dr. Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan	Rs.	100.00
	TOTAL AS OF LAST MONTH	Rs.	1,91,156.00
	CURRENT TOTAL	Rs.	1,91,256.00