A.R. RAJARAJA VARMA: THE PROTECTOR OF MALAYALABHASA

CONTENTS

A.R. Rajaraja Varma (1863-1918), popularly known as Keralapanini as well as A.R., was a versatile genius. He wrote 22 Sanskrit and 21 Malayalam works. In Sanskrit, his famous grammatical work is *Leghupaniniiyam* (2 parts), an independent abridgement of *Astadhyayi* and *Angalasamrajyam*, a long poem on the British empire. Among his Malayalam works, *Keralapaniniiyam* stands first. It is the only grammar in Dravidian languages which incorporated the western linguistic approach in the description of the language historically and scientifically (1916 edition). Along with this, there are translations from Sanskrit, independent essays and poems to his credit. His *Malayavilasom*, a lyrical poem, is considered as the harbinger of romanticism in Malayalam literature. Ultimately, A.R. Rajaraja Varma was a great scholar with modern ideas and extended immense service to Malayalam language and literature.

Keralapaniniiyam, the magnum opus of A.R. Rajaraja Varma, is a classic in Malayalam grammar. There were no compeers to A.R. in Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu. Though he was aware of the antiquity and individuality of Malayalam, he maintained a balanced view. One-third of the Sangam literature belongs to Cheras, and many poets were from Kerala, otherwise called Malainadu. Sangam literature is a common property of Tamil and Malayalam.

A.R. Rajaraja Varma was well-versed in *Astadhyayi*. Even then, Rajaraja Varma maintained an exceptional capacity for self-criticism and thoroughness. He studied the Tamil grammars *Tolkappiyam* and *Nannul* for writing a scientific grammar for Malayalam. Though he was proud of the Indian grammatical tradition, he respected the modern concept on language provided by linguistics.

For the composition of *Keralapaniniiyam*, A.R. made use of traditional grammars like *Nannul*, *Andrasabdhacintamani Sulabha Vyakaran*, *Lilatilakam* and *Malayalabhasa Vyakaran* by Gundert. He also utilised the findings of Dr. Caldwell.

A.R. started his career as Inspector of the Sanskrit School in 1890. He restructured Sanskrit syllabus and teaching by incorporating European educational systems with appropriate changes. In 1894, he was appointed as the Principal of Government Sanskrit College. In 1899, he became the Superintendent of Vernacular Studies in Maharaja's College, Thiruvananthapuram. In 1912, University of Madras promoted him as Professor of Malayalam. A.R. Rajaraja Varma was the first Indian to become the Principal of a college in British India.

Throughout his service in Travancore Government, he fought against the negligence of Malayalam language. When he approached the Government authorities to elevate Malayalam language as first language in schools and as an optional subject in degree and postgraduate courses, they rejected the claim with a remark that there is no authentic grammatical or rhetoric works in Malayalam to learn or teach. A.R. Rajaraja Varma took up this challenge seriously and he himself wrote a series of grammatical and rhetoric works in Malayalam such as *Keralapaniniiyam*, *Sabdhasodhini*, *Bhasabhusan*, *Vrttamanjari* and *Sahithyasahyam*. His contributions to Malayalam are mainly in the fields of grammar, rhetorics, metrical studies, prose compositions, translations of Sanskrit classics and original poetry. He did everything for the uplift of Malayalam language. His ambition for M.A. course in Malayalam flowered in 1936. In one

of his essays on Malayalam language, he highlighted the need of a centre for the co-ordination of studies on language and culture of Kerala. This has come into operation by the formation of Thunchathu Ezhuttachan Malayalam University in November 2012. The acquisition of classical status by Malayalam, we can expect, will fulfil the language developments envisaged by *Keraḷapaṇini*. May his soul rest in peace.

Naduvattom Gopalakrishnan

WAR OF WORDS

Around the world today, some 7,000 distinct languages are spoken. That is 7,000 different ways of saying 'good morning' or 'it looks like rain' - more languages in one species of mammal than there are mammalian species. What is more, these 7,000 languages probably make up just a fraction of those ever spoken in our history.

The Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel tells of how humans developed the conceit that they could use their shared language to cooperate in the building of a tower that would take them to heaven. God, angered at this attempt to usurp his power, destroyed the tower and to ensure it would not be rebuilt he scattered the people and confused them by giving them different languages. The myth leads to the amusing irony that our separate languages exist to prevent us from communicating. The surprise is that this might not be far from the truth.

Indisputable evidence that this speech was conveying complex ideas comes only with the cultural sophistication and symbolism associated with modern humans. They emerged in Africa perhaps 2,00,000 to 1,60,000 years ago and by 60,000 years ago had migrated out of the continent - eventually to occupy nearly every region of the world. We should expect new languages to arise as people spread out and occupy new lands because as soon as groups become isolated from one another, their languages begin to drift apart and adapt to local needs (*New Scientist*, 10 December 2011, p. 34). But the real puzzle is that the greatest diversity of human societies and languages arises not where people are most spread out but where they are most closely packed together.

Papua New Guinea is a classic case. That relatively small land mass - only slightly larger than California - is home to between 800 and 1,000 distinct languages, or around 15 per cent of all languages spoken on the planet. This linguistic diversity is not the result of migration and physical isolation of different populations. Instead, people living in close quarters seem to have chosen to separate into many distinct societies.

Human history has been characterised by continual battles. Ever since our ancestors walked out of Africa, beginning around 90,000 years ago, people have been in conflict over territory and resources. In my book *Wired for Culture* (Norton/Penguin, 2012), I describe how, as a consequence, we have acquired a suite of traits that help our own particular group to outcompete the others. Two traits that stand out are groupishness affiliating with people with whom you share a distinct identity and xenophobia demonising those outside your group and holding parochial views towards them. In this context, languages act as powerful social anchors of our tribal identity. How we speak is a continual auditory reminder of who we are and, equally as important, who we are not. Anyone who can speak your particular dialect is a walking, talking advertisement for the values and cultural history you share. What is more, where different groups live in close proximity, distinct languages are an effective way to prevent eavesdropping or the loss of important information to a competitor.

In support of this idea, I have found anthropological accounts of tribes deciding to change their language, with immediate effect, for no other reason than to distinguish themselves from neighbouring groups. For example, a group of Selepet speakers in Papua New Guinea changed its word for no from *bia* to *bune* to be distinct from other Selepet speakers in a nearby village.

What of the future? The world we live in today is very different from the one our ancestors inhabited. For most of our history, people would have encountered only their own cultural group and immediate neighbours. Globalisation and electronic communication mean we have become far more connected and culturally homogenised, making the benefits of being understood more apparent. The result is a mass extinction of languages to rival the great biological extinctions in the Earth's past.

Already a mere 15 of the Earth's 7,000 languages account for about 40 per cent of the world's speakers and most languages have very few speakers.

In the long run, though, it seems virtually inevitable that a single language will replace all others. In evolutionary terms, when otherwise equally good solutions to a problem compete, one of them tends to win out. We see this in the near worldwide standardisation of ways of telling time, measuring weights and distance, CD

and DVD formats, railway gauges and the voltages and frequencies of electricity supplies. It may take a very long time, but languages seem destined to go the same way - all are equally good vehicles of communication, so one will eventually replace the others. Which one will it be?

Today, around 1.2 billion people about 1 in 6 of us speak Mandarin. Next comes Spanish and English with about 400 million speakers each, and Bengali and Hindi follow close behind. On these counts, Mandarin might look like the favourite in the race to be the world's language. However, vastly more people learn English as a second language than any other.

I suspect a monolinguistic future may not be as bad as doomsayers have suggested. There is a widely held belief that the language you speak determines the way you think, so that a loss of linguistic diversity is also a loss of unique styles of thought. I do not believe that. Our languages determine the words we use but they do not limit the concepts we can understand and perceive. Besides, we might draw another, more positive, moral from the story of Babel: with everyone speaking the same language, humanity can more easily cooperate to achieve something monumental. Indeed, in today's world it is the countries with the least linguistic diversity that have achieved the most popularity.

[Courtesy: *New Scientist*, 8 December 2012.]

P. Ramanathan

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR AT ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

Aligarh Muslim University is going to conduct a three-day international seminar on *Pragmatics of Cross-Cultural Communication in Multilingual Setting* from 14th to 16th September 2013. Those who are interested may please contact Prof. K.S. Mustafa, Chairman, Department of Linguistics or Sri. Masood Ali Beg, Coordinator, PCCMS, Department of Linguistics, Aligarh Muslim University.
[khateebsyedmustafa@gmail.com; masoodb2012@gmail.com].

VOWELS IN BENGALI AND MALAYALAM: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY
(Continued from last issue)

Malayalam /o/ and /o:/ are also absent in Bengali. Instead of these, Bengali has a sound /ô/ which is in between Malayalam /o/ and /o:/ in length.

Bengali native [æ] is absent in Malayalam as a separate phoneme.

According to the portion of the tongue raised and the height of the tongue, two phonetic tables for Bengali and Malayalam vowels are shown below:

BENGALI

Height of tongue ↓ \ Portion of tongue raised →	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
High–Mid	ê		ô
Low-Mid	æ		ɔ
Low		â	

MALAYALAM

Height of tongue ↓ \ Portion of tongue raised →	Front	Central	Back
High	i, ii		u, u:, ʉ
Mid	e, e:		o, o:
Low		a, a:	

According to the shape of the lips and the shape of the oral cavity / mouth, two separate phonetic tables for Bengali and Malayalam vowels are shown below in IPA transcription:

BENGALI

Shape of Oral cavity / Mouth ↓ \ Shape of lips →	Spread / Un-rounded	Middle	Rounded
Close	i		u
Half-Close	ê		ô
Half-Open	æ		ɔ
Open		â	

MALAYALAM

Shape of Oral cavity / Mouth ↓ \ Shape of lips →	Spread / Un-rounded	Middle	Rounded
Close	i, i:, ʉ		u, u:
Mid / Half-Open	e, e:		o, o:
Open		a, a:	

If we merge these two tables for Bengali vowels into a single table, then we get the first table on the next page

We cannot explain the Malayalam vowels in the same chart, as it has an un-rounded but close vowel /ʉ/. If we exclude that very short /ʉ/, then the other vowels can be represented in the same form of chart as in Bengali.

← Portion of Tongue Raised →

Height of tongue ↓		Front	Central	Back		Shape of Oral cavity / Mouth ←
High		i		u	Close	
High – Mid		ê		ô	Half-Close	
Low-Mid		æ		ɔ	Half-Open	
Low			â		Open	
		Spread / Un-rounded	Middle	Rounded		

← Shape of lips →

← Portion of Tongue Raised →

Height of tongue ↑		Front	Central	Back		Shape of Oral cavity / Mouth ↑
High		i i:		u u:	Close	
Mid		e e:		o o:	Half-Open	
Low			a a:		Open	
		Spread / Un-rounded	Middle	Rounded		

← Shape of lips →

Nasal Vowels

Apart from the seven pure basic vowels, the phonemic inventory of Bengali consists of seven more nasal vowels. According to IPA, those nasal sounds are represented by the following symbols: $[\tilde{ɔ}]$ $[\tilde{a}]$ $[\tilde{i}]$ $[\tilde{u}]$ $[\tilde{e}]$ $[\tilde{o}]$ and $[\tilde{æ}]$.

There is no long vowel as such in Bengali according to Bengali linguists. All the seven vowels are short in length. Some Malayalam linguists recognise some Bengali vowels as long vowels but Bengali linguists do not agree with that as those vowels are much shorter than Malayalam long vowels though there are graphemes for long.

To produce these sounds, the speech organs are in the same position as they are in the corresponding non-nasalised vowels but the nasal passage is open so that the air-stream can pass through both the oral and nasal passages.

Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji approved these seven nasal sounds as separate phonemes and counted the total number of vowels as fourteen (basic seven + nasal seven). Most of the modern linguists also agree with him though there is an opinion that nasalisation is only one unit which is added to all the seven vowels. However, in Bengali, this explanation is wrong because always a vowel and its corresponding nasal vowel have a phonemic difference without any exception. For this reason, Rabindranath Tagore also agreed with Suniti Kumar Chatterji and approved seven nasal phonemes as separate phonemes.

If we see the examples, we can understand that the nasalisation of a vowel is phonemic in Bengali. E.g. kãdâ ('mud') and kãdâ ('crying'); bidhi ('rules') and biddhi ('inject', 1st person); kuYi ('twenty') and kuri ('buds') (Chatterji, Suniti Kumar 1939:36).

In spoken Malayalam, there is very much presence of nasalisation. Many vowels are pronounced as nasalised but there is no such separate nasal vowel in Malayalam and nasalisation is not at all phonemic in Malayalam.

Diphthongs

Several vowel combinations can be considered as monosyllabic diphthongs, which is to be made of the main vowel (i.e. the nucleus vowel) and the trailing vowel (the off-glide vowel). This combination must be monosyllabic. The diphthongs are usually pronounced about one and a half times in length of the short vowels. Within a diphthong, the first vowel is of full length and the second one half-length. In Malayalam, there are two diphthong sounds, /ai/ and /au/. In Malayalam, some other vowel combinations can be found but those recent combinations are under the research process.

Bengali (like other EIA languages) is well known for its wide variety of diphthongs or combinations of vowels occurring within a same syllable. According to Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, in chaste and colloquial Bengali, there are 25 vowel combinations which are called diphthongs when pronounced fast and, if they are pronounced slowly, they will be two separate complete vowels (Chatterji, Suniti Kumar 1939:34). Some of those more recent combinations are under the consideration process. According to recent linguistic research, in colloquial/current Bengali language, we can find 24 possible vowel combinations of which twenty can be defined as diphthongs and out of which seventeen are frequently used. These seventeen are as follows: /ii/, /iu/, /ui/, /êi/, /êu/, /oi/, /ou/, /ôê/, /ôô/, /âi/, /âu/, /æô/, /æê/, /ãe/, /âô/, /ɔê/, /ɔô/. Out of these seventeen diphthongs, the most frequently used combinations are /âi/, /âô/, /ãe/, and the least frequently used is /æô/ (Sarkar, Pabitra 2006:57).

Some Uses of Diphthongs: E.g. for *[âi]* - *bhâi* ('brother'), *jâi* ('I go'). In these two words, *[â]* is of full length and *[i]* is half of *[â]*. Thus, the total length of *[âi]* is one and a half times that of Bengali short vowels in length. E.g. for *[âô]* - *jâo* ('you go' {imperative}), *gâô* ('you sing' {imperative}). E.g. for *[âẽ]* - *jâẽ* ('he goes' {present indefinite}), *pâẽ* ('he gets' {present indefinite}), etc.

Conclusion

Finally, we can conclude that many sounds are common in Bengali and Malayalam. The common sounds do not create any problem to the non-native speakers. E.g. *[i]*, *[u]* sounds of both the languages. Some sounds may not be exactly the same or the length is not the same but the difference might be ignored by the speakers of both the languages. E.g. *[e]*, *[o]* sounds of Malayalam and corresponding *[ê]*, *[ô]* sounds of Bengali. However, some sounds are totally different. E.g. *[a]* of Malayalam and corresponding *[ɔ]* of Bengali. Such sounds have been explained here and it is stated how such sounds will be pronounced by the non-native speakers.

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Dhrubajyoti Das

BUDDHA STATUES - THANJAVUR DISTRICT

After registering for my M.Phil. in Madurai Kamaraj University during 1993, I decided to visit the Buddha statues exhibited in museums. After seeing the Buddha statues of the Chola country in Thanjavur Art Gallery, Tamil University Museum, Chennai Government Museum and State Archaeology of Government of Tamil Nadu, I was in search of the Buddha statues which were identified by other scholars. During field study, I came to know that some of the statues were missing. During such a field work, I got information about two new granite Buddhas and one Nagapattinam bronze Buddha.

After registering for my research, I started searching for the Nagapattinam Buddha bronze statue. Since 1856, more than 350 Buddha bronze statues were found in Nagapattinam. They are exhibited in various museums in and outside India. Though I searched for such a bronze Buddha since 1993, I was able to identify one Buddha only in 1999, with the help of Mr. Ayyampet Selvaraj. During the field study carried out with him, I had the chance of seeing one Nagapattinam Buddha bronze statue at Ayyampet in Thanjavur district. The Buddha was worshipped as Munisvaran. It was found in *bhumisparsa mudra*. In my collections, I have one such photograph of Nagapattinam Buddha bronze statue from National Museum, Kolkata.

Gopinathaperumalkovil (February 2002)

Though I came to know that there were Buddha statues in and around Pattiswaram, Pazhayarai, Tiruvalanjuzhi, Cholanmaaligai and Muzhaiyur, it took some time to reach out to those Buddhas. For this, I had to undertake many field trips either individually or with my friends or with other scholars. During one such trip, I found a Buddha in a coconut grove. It was found without head in a place called Gopinathaperumalkovil at a distance of 2 km. from Pattiswaram in Pattiswaram-Tiruvalanjuzhi road in Kumbakonam taluk of Thanjavur district. The statue was found in sitting *dhyana* posture. On the right palm, *dharmachakra mudra* was found. With broad shoulders, it was very beautiful to look at. It had all the regular iconographic features of the Chola Buddhas.

Gopinathaperumalkovil (June 2002)

After four months, when I had been there once again to see the Buddha, I was surprised to see a stone upside down. Later, I came to know that it was also a Buddha statue. The resting legs on the pedestal proved it was Buddha. This Buddha also had *dharmachakra mudra*.

This Buddha was also without head. Never in my field study, have I found two Buddhas like this within a short distance.

After more than a decade, in August 2011, I wanted to see those Buddhas and went there. To my shock, I saw in the coconut groves so many banana trees. The Buddha statues were not there. I searched in and around that place but in vain. When I enquired about those Buddhas, I learnt that they were missing since 2006 or 2007. The remnants of history had now become a thing of the past, for which I felt much.

In toto, during my field study in Thanjavur district, I got information about one Nagapattinam Buddha bronze statue and 17 granite Buddhas. In the Chola country - Thanjauvur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Pudukottai, Trichy, Karur, Perambalur and Ariyalur, only Thanjavur district had a lot of Buddha statues.

— *B. Jambulingam*

TULU PLACE NAME, FOLKLORE AND LITERATURE

Apart from Tamil Pattathalamangila Inscriptional reference about Tulunaadu and Tuluvas in Dakshina Kannada (SK) in Karnataka, there are many inscriptions written in Kannada or in Sanskrit which speak of Tulu. In the premises of Udupi Sreekrishna temple, there is an inscription written in Tulu script. These are the other earlier evidences on the survival of Tulu.

The place names are another strong evidence for the earlier survival of Tulunaadu. South Kanara in Karnataka and Kasaragod in Kerala provide some insights into the existence of Tulu language and its traditions. Among the various place names, the natural names are very old ones.

There are a good number of natural names which agree with Tulu tongues. Since Kannada is the dominant language in Tulunaadu from the beginning of its history,

its influence on Tulu language and place names is highly noticeable. Tulunaadu preserves a good number of original place names.

Three types of place names are available in Tulunaadu: 1. Tulu origin; 2. Common to Tulu and Kannada and 3. Equivalents to Tulu, Kannada and other languages

1. Original in Tulu: *mittuuru, kannaati paade, Jappu, urduru, kortipaade baarepuni*

2. Common to Tulu and Kannada: *Udupi, Kundapura, Karkala, Kolluru, Sulya, Baayaar, Chipaar*

3. Equivalents to Kannada, Tulu and other languages:

Mangaluuru	Kannada
Kudla	Tulu
Maikalam	Byari language
Muligadde	Kannada
Mulikando	Tulu
Muliyando	Muslim Malayalam
Pilikuñje	Tulu
Pilikuñja	Kannada
Pulikunnw	Malayalam

Kotikulam, Tuluvanam, Elimale are some of the place names found South of Chandragiri river.

Place name after person - Maduuru after Madaru (Harijan lady), Aduuru after Adru (A Harijan male member).

These are the place names and personal names are evidences of pre-existence of Tulu language and Tulunaadu. [To be continued]