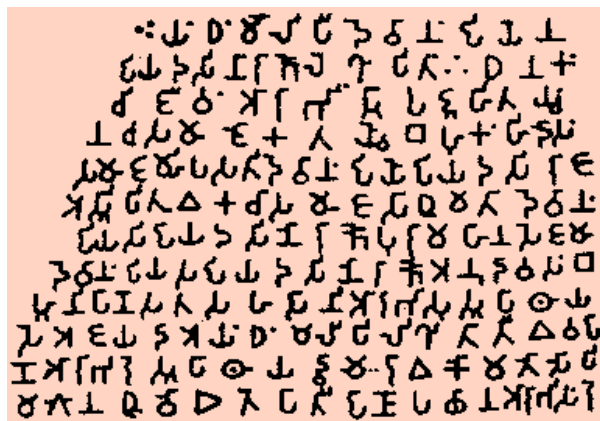


Contributions of the Tamils to the Writing Systems of Some South-East Asian Countries

Dr. N. Nadaraja Pillai

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The Tamilnadu of the period 500 – 1300 AD was ruled by the two great dynasties, namely, the Pallavas of Kanchi from 500 – 900 AD and the Later mighty Chozhas (spelled Cholas also) of Thanjavur from 900 – 1300 AD. These two dynasties have contributed a lot to the art, architecture, religion, language and literature of Tamilnadu, which are unparalleled. The Tamil Brahmi, a separate branch of Brahmi script has developed with the ‘vaTTezhuttu’, an indigenous script mostly used in the Pandiya kingdom of Tamilnadu. Further, it is also a fact that the Tamil Brahmi was in use even earlier to 400 BC attested in the maakkodai silver coin of the Chera kings of Tamilnadu (Nagasamy, 1981). Though it is not the theme of the paper, a context is set, here, to discuss about the Brahmi script of Emperor Ashoka, which is considered as the earliest script (238 BC) and has contributed to the development of Indian scripts. Here is a picture of the inscription of Ashoka (238 BCE), in Brahmi⁽¹⁾ (*Nikam and McKeon, 1959*).



Ashoka's First Rock inscription at Girnar

The Poruntal archaeological discovery has proved it beyond any judicious doubt that the inscriptions found on the pot shreds have been dated 5th century B.C. The Adichanallur burial urn inscription has already been deciphered and the language is Tamil. The estimate based on the

preliminary thermo-luminiscence testing is 500 B.C. and the upper limit is 1500 B.C. The carbon dating of the same would have taken the period of the script still far back. These findings show that the ‘Tamizhi script’ is at least two centuries older than the Brahmi of Emperor Ashoka’s edicts. This would mean that the Tamizhi script has contributed to the development of the so-called Brahmi script used in Emperor Ashoka’s Prakrit edict, which itself is a misnomer.



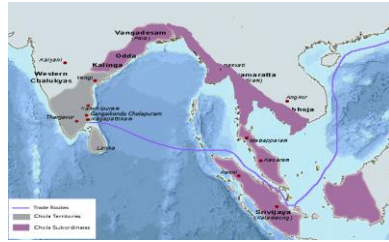
Furthermore, the development of South Indian scripts, Sinhala scripts, and the scripts of many of the South East Asian languages as well, depended on the Pallavas ‘Grantha scripts’ directly and not on the Brahmi script, which is often claimed. This has to be, thoroughly, discussed by scholars seriously working in the field.

The Grantha Script

Nevertheless, to our point of discussion, the Tamil script has undergone many changes during the Pallavas and the Chozhas. A distinct script called ‘Grantha Script’ was developed during this period to write, Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit.

The Pallavas developed a very beautiful and influential writing script called ‘Grantha Script’, the primary writing system of south East Asia. The main characteristics of the newer script are they are syllabic writings, the vowel diacritic marks form the vowelised-consonants, clusters to be joined in vertical stacks and are more decorative. In addition, long swirling tails and nice sense of space and layout are distinctive in both South Indian and Southeast Asian examples.

It was Rajaraja Chola (985-1014) followed by his son Rajendra Chola (1012- 1144) who have brought a uniform writing system in Tamilnadu, including the features of ‘vaTTezhuttu’. Under them, the dynasty became a military, economic and cultural power in Asia. During the period 910–1200 AD, the Chozha territories stretched from the islands of the Maldives in the south to as far north as Orissa and West Bengal. Rajaraja Chola conquered peninsular South India, annexed Sri Lanka (Devare, 2009). He also successfully raided the kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago.



The Chola Empire during the period 985-1050

Focus of This Paper

This paper tries to establish the contributions of the traders (Mukund, 1999 & 2012) and Tamil kings in developing scripts of some languages in the countries under their rule. Though there are many languages which have got their script developed from the ‘Grantha Scripts’⁽²⁾, which were in vogue during the period, here, in this paper the development of scripts in Balinese, Sinhala and Burmese languages and Malayalam are discussed. There are also genealogical connection between the Tamilnadu Pallavas and the Cambodian Pallavas.⁽³⁾

Literacy

Writing provides a way of extending human memory by imprinting information in the human brain as quickly as possible. In past centuries, scientists had used writing as one of the ‘markers’ of civilization. It is true that writing systems appear to develop in agricultural and urban cultures, but by no means is it a requirement for civilization.

When we analyse the script of a language, it may be necessary to equate it with some other system to make it a family. Here ‘family’ denotes a group of writing systems that either have evolved from a common ancestor or have similar ‘style’ or appearance. Keeping these in view, the scripts of those languages are analysed.

The Tamils had sea trades with Rome, Greek and Egypt in the west and with Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia (called Sri Vijayam in early days), Burma, China, Cambodia, etc., in the east, in addition to Sri Lanka. These trades and some of the invasions in the East Asian countries have made lot of changes in the languages of the region (Wheatley, 1982). It was during the Pallavas, largely and the Chozhas, to a greater extent, the contributions to the development of scripts were made which has, in turn, contributed to the development of literacy of some of these countries. The contributions were made earlier by the Tamil merchants followed by the invasions. To substantiate

this stand, the Tamil traders have taken Hinduism along with them (even before that period) in the 7th Century AD to Cambodia and other countries of the region and thus the worshiping of Karaikal Ammaiyar, a 5-6th century AD Shiva devotee of Tamilnadu, was particularly famous in those countries. Two pediments in truly ruined form were found in Battambang Provincial Museum of Cambodia shows the influence of the Tamils.



Devi, Shiva's consort, sits on a lotus near his right foot. Her outstretched arm reaches toward Shiva's leg. An emaciated Karaikkal Ammaiyar with pendulous breasts sits on another lotus flower at Shiva's left foot.

In Khmer Iconography, an emaciated Karaikkalammaiyar is often seen crouched at the feet of dancing Shiva called 'aadalvallaan' in Tamil, marking the rhythm of his dance with a pair of cymbals. 'Suriyavarman I' built four of the six temples of Karaikkal Ammaiyar in Cambodia, during the first half of 11th Century AD. These show the traders have taken the religious factors along with the language Tamil and the script. It means that giving script to a language is equal to giving knowledge to the people (Nilakanta Sastri, 1967). The arrival of the kings of Tamilnadu in many parts of Indonesia is attested by its architectural, religious and linguistic developments.

Balinese

With this short introduction to the Tamils connection with the South East Asian countries, we go to the Bali island of Indonesia.⁽⁴⁾ The arrival of the Tamils by ship has made the Balinese language to use the word 'kappal' which means 'ship' even today in Indonesia, which can be substantiated by the 'Kappal Museum' in Bali Island. The architectural monuments of Buddhism in 'Boropudur', Ijo temples of Shiva lingam in Jawa Island and Perumbanan temple of Siva, Brahma and Vishnu in Yogyakarta of Central Jawa show the influence on architecture, Hindu culture and the Tamil language.

The following rock cut pictures of Boropudur show the arrival of the Tamils by ship and their meeting with the king of Sri Vijayam (the present Indonesia- Jawa and Bali islands)



The arrival of the Tamils in Indonesian islands had resulted in giving scripts to the Balinese language and the principles of Hinduism and culture to the society. The modified script of ‘Grantha’ is a decorated one. A comparison of the scripts is given below which explains itself the similarities among them.

Balinese Vowels

අ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ
a kara	a karatedong	i kara	i karatedong	u kara	u karatedong	e kara	airsania	o kara	o karatedong
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	e	ai	o	au
[a]	[a:]	[i]	[i:]	[u]	[u:]	[e]	[aj]	[o]	[aw]

Tamil and Balinese vowels

Tamil vowels									
அ	ஆ	இ	ஈ	உ	ஊ	எ	ஐ	ஔ	ஔ
අ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ	ඞ

For easy comparison the present day Tamil vowels are given. In fact, the Grantha vowels are to be shown. The vowel systems of both the languages can be compared. The hand movements and the shapes of them give us the clue to understand the formation. It is also noticed that the long

vowels /-ee-/ and /-oo-/ are not present in Bali language as in Indo-Aryan. It remains the same when we compare the vowel-consonant systems also.

The vowel-consonant letters are very important to compare which involves the secondary symbols of the vowels, that is allographs or ‘tuNaiyeshuttukaL’ or ‘maatras’. A cursory look at the secondary symbols of the vowels of the two languages show many similarities, especially, the secondary symbols of the following vowels: / aa, i, ii, e, ai, o, au /. Unlike many of the Indo-Aryan languages where the /e / maatraa is written above the letter, Tamil and Balinese languages (for this matter the other three languages as well, which are mentioned above, also follow the same) write this before the main letter as in Tamil / கெ, கே/. This may be noticed with consonants and the vowel /-o-/ also as in /கொ, கோ/. Among the Indo Aryan languages, Bengali, Assamese, Manipuri and Oriya languages use the same system of writing /e/ matra before the main consonant and /o/ matra before and after the main consonant as in Tamil, the reason for which is yet to be studied. Since there is no long vowels of /e and o/ the equivalent vowel-consonant combinations are also not available.

Tamil					
க	கா	கி	கீ	கு, து	பூ, கூ
கா	கா	கி	கீ	கூ	கூ
கெ	கே	கை	கொ	கோ	கொள
கா	கா	கா	கா	கா	கா

Vowel Diacritics

Balinese

கா	கா	கி	கீ	கூ	கூ
-	tedong	ulu	ulu-sari	suku	suku-ilut
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū
கா	கா	கா	கா	கா	கா
taleng	taleng-repa	taleng tedong	teleng-repa tedong	pepet	pepet tedong
ke	kai	ko	kau	kě	kō

(The last two of the Balinese vowel-consonant combinations are not used in Tamil and they are language specific.)

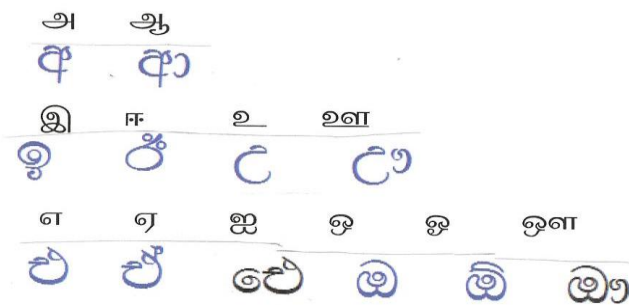
Note that there are three markers which represent the vowels /u and uu/ in Tamil. However, one can see the similarities among these in both the languages.

Consonants + short vowels	Consonants + long vowels
ங், க், ட், ய், வ்	ங், க், ட், ய், வ்
கு, டுரு., மு., ழு., ளு.	கூ, டீ, ரூ, மூ. ழூ, ளூ
து, ணு நு, னு, லு, று, னு,	தூ, ணூ, நூ, னூ, லூ, றூ, னூ,

The Balinese alphabet or ‘Carakan’, as they call, descended from the Grantha - Tamil script with modifications of the Old Kawi scripts.⁵ The oldest known inscriptions in the Balinese alphabet date from the 11th century AD, but they are thought to be reproductions of texts originally written on palm leaves at an earlier date. The Balinese alphabet is still used to this day, although very few people are familiar with it and it is mainly used for religious works.

Sinhala

The Tamil connection with Sri Lanka begins as early as fourth century BC. Though Sinhala language belongs to the Indo Aryan family of languages, many linguistic features of the language and the script system are given by the Tamils. This is also true that the Pandiya kings through the vaTTezhuttu gave the early script and later the Grantha of the Pallavas helped the development of the other letters.



It is to be noted that the shapes of the letters and the hand movements of writing the letters are strikingly similar in the formation. Unlike the Indo-Aryan languages, the development of long /-ee/ and long /-oo/ in the vowels and in the consonant +vowel series in Sinhala were necessitated by the influence of Tamil. A comparison of the two systems with the secondary markers would make it clear and the influence of Tamil seen.

Sinhala Alphabet: Vowels

a	ā	æ	ǣ	i	ī	u	ū
[a/ə]	[a:/a]	[æ]	[æ:]	[i]	[i:]	[u]	[u:]
ri	rī	e	ē	ai	o	ō	au
[ri/ru]	[ri:/ru:]	[e]	[e:]	[aj]	[o]	[o:]	[aw]

The development of / æ, ǣ / is an independent one and language specific creation.

The consonant system is on the basis of the Grantha script developed in Tamilnadu to accommodate the sound system of Pali and Prakrit mainly and Sanskrit to some degree; on the other hand, the aspirated and voiced stop sounds are absent in Tamil. However, there are similarities among themselves, which were used in the MaNipravāLa style which was a combination of Tamil and Sanskrit written in the Grantha script. The basic sentence structure was Tamil and the vocabulary used in it was abundantly Sanskrit. This MaNipravāLa style was used to develop the Malayalam language.

Sinhala Consonants

Since the language belongs to Indo-Aryan, it had to develop more letters for aspiration, voiced, fricatives, etc based on the Grantha scripts. However, it is to be noted that the scripts are similar in shape and the clockwise and anticlockwise hand movements are similar to that of Tamil.

ක	ඛ	ග	ඝ	ඛ	ඟ	ච	ඡ	ජ	ඣ	ඤ	
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa	ṅga	ca	cha	ja	jha	ṅa	
[ka]	[ka]	[ga]	[ga]	[ŋa]	[ŋga]	[tʃa]	[tʃa]	[dʒa]	[dʒa]	[ŋa]	
ට	ඨ	ඳ	ඳ්	ඛ	ඛ්	ත	ඨ	ද	ඳ	න	ඳ්
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	ṇḍa	ta	ṭha	da	dha	na	ṇḍa
[ṭa]	[ṭa]	[ḍa]	[ḍa]	[na]	[ṇḍa]	[ta]	[ṭa]	[da]	[da]	[na]	[ṇḍa]
ප	ඵ	බ	භ	ම	ඹ	ය	ර	ල	ව	ඬ	
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma	m̐ba	ya	ra	la	va	ḷa	
[pa]	[pa]	[ba]	[ba]	[ma]	[m̐ba]	[ja]	[ra]	[la]	[va]	[la]	
ශ	ෂ	ස	ඪ	හ	ආ						
śa	ṣa	sa	ḍa	ha	fa						
[śa]	[ṣa]	sa	[ḍa]	[ha]	[fa]						

Like the Tamil script, a Sinhala letter has an inherent vowel of /a/. To change this vowel to another, secondary symbols called maatraas are added to the basic letter, as in the following examples.

Comparison of Tamil and Sinhala Vowel-Consonant Letters

The similarity in the formation of vowel consonants is also striking.

Tamil						
க	கா	கி	கீ	கஉ	கூ	கூ
ක	කා	කි	කී	කඊ	කූ	කූ
கெ	கே	கை	கொ	கோ	கௌ	
කෙ	කේ	කෛ	කො	කෝ	කෞ	

The Sinhala alphabet, a descendent of the Tamil script and the language have changed considerably during the course of time. As discussed earlier, the occurrence of the secondary symbols of /e-/, /ee-/, /ai-/, /o-/, /oo-/ and /au-/ are similar to those of the Tamil. The system is not derived from the Brahmi letters, but from the Grantha letters for its development due to the fact that the Sri Lanka was under the rule of Tamil Kings for quite a long time. The earliest surviving literature in Sinhala dates from the 9th century AD.

Burmese

The Burmese or Myanmar script developed from the Mon script, which was adapted from the Tamil script during the Chola period, especially, during the great Rajendra Chola. The Burmese name for the script is *ca-lonh* meaning 'round script'.

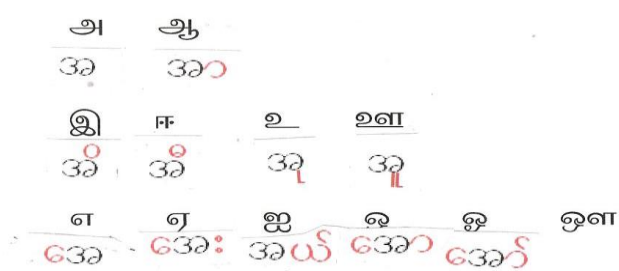
The earliest known inscriptions in the Burmese script date from the 11th century. As discussed earlier the consonants and the vowel-consonant systems of Tamil and Burmese resemble very much. Further, as mentioned above Burmese has also developed scripts for the aspirated and voiced stops to represent Pali and Sanskrit texts.

The rounding of the letters in all these languages is a result of the use of palm leaves as the traditional writing material. Straight lines would have torn the leaves.

Burmese is a tonal language with three main tones (high, low and creaky) and two other tones (stopped and reduced). The tones are indicated in writing using diacritics or special letters.

Vowels and Vowel Diacritics

As discussed earlier, in Burmese scripts also the secondary symbols of the vowels / i ,ii, e, ee, o, oo/ are similar in shape. There is yet another inherent script formation in Burmese. The vowel /a/ becomes the basic script for the other vowel formations. It may also be compared with Manipuri script, which has the similar formation rules with the vowel /a/ as the base for other vowels. Additional vowels scripts are formed to suit the sound system of the language.



Burmese Vowels

	Initial	Diacritic		Initial	Diacritic		Initial	Diacritic	
creaky			i [i]		—	a [á]			u [ú]
low			ī [i]			ā [a]			ū [u]
high			i: [i]			a: [à]			u: [ù]
low			e [e]						ui [o]
high			e: [è]						ui: [ò]
creaky			ē [é]						uj [ó]
low			ay [ε]						ō [ɔ]
high			ai [è]						o [ɔ̄]
creaky			aj [é̄]						ō [ɔ̄̄]

Tamil and Burmese Consonants Compared

The consonants also show a lot of similarity in their forms and hand movements. The development of the retroflex lateral is an added point for the argument that the scripts were by the Tamils.

The similarities with the following consonants exemplify the theory proposed.

/ ka, Ta, Na, ta, na, pa, ma, ya, ra, la, La, sa and ha /



Burmese Consonants

ക	k [k]	ഖ	kh [kʰ]	ഗ	g [g]	ഘ	gh [g]	ങ	ṅ [ŋ]
ച	c [s]	ഛ	ch [sʰ]	ജ	j [z]	ഝ	jh [z]	ഞ	ɲ [ɲ]
ട	t [t]	ഠ	th [tʰ]	ദ	d [d]	ഢ	dh [d]	ന	n [n]
ത	t [t]	ഠ	th [tʰ]	ദ	d [d]	ഢ	dh [d]	ന	n [n]
പ	p [p]	ഫ	ph [pʰ]	ബ	b [b]	ഭ	bh [b]	മ	m [m]
യ	y [j]	ര	r [r]	ല	l [l]	വ	w [w]	ശ	s [ʃ]
ഹ	h [h]	ഃ	! [!]	ഔ	ø [ʔ]				

Malayalam

Malayalam was first written with the VaTTezhuttu alphabet, which means 'round writing' and used in the Pandiya Kingdom of the Tamilnadu. A version of the 'Grantha scripts developed and used in the Pallava and Chola kingdoms was brought to the CheranaDu 'the Chera land' in the 8th or 9th century and was adapted to write the Malayalam language. By the early 13th century, it was systemized and the Malayalam alphabet had emerged.

'MaNipravaaLam style' of language variety written in Grantha script, followed and used in Tamilnadu during the period of Pallava and the Chola kings became the substratum for Malayalam. The Manipravalam style of writing was used in the commentaries of 'Nalayira Divyaprabhandam' the holy book of the Vaishnavites of Tamilnadu. At present only six of the grantha letters are used in Tamil for writing foreign words, especially, Sanskrit words.

Many changes were made to suit the language in MaNipravaaLa style, like cluster letters, nasal+consonant, etc. Malayalam had undergone some changes for uniformity and simplification processes in the recent times also.

Malayalam Vowels

അ	ആ	ഇ	ഈ	ഉ	ഊ	ഋ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ
[a]	[a:]	[i]	[i:]	[u]	[u:]	[ri]
എ	ഈ	ഈ	ഒ	ഓ	ഔ	
e	ē	ai	o	ō	au	
[e]	[e:]	[ai]	[o]	[o:]	[au]	
ഋ	ൺ	ൺ				
ṛ	ḷ	ḷ				
[ri:]	[li]	[li:]				

The contrast between the vowels /e, ee, ai, o, oo, au/ is well maintained as in Tamil and other Dravidian languages. The secondary symbols for /e-, ee-, ai-, o-, and oo-/ are the same as in Tamil and the positioning of the symbols is also same. This formation is special to Tamil, whereas in Kannada and Telugu, the formation and positioning are different.

ക	കാ	കി	കീ	കു/കൂ	കൂ/കു
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū
കൃ/കൃ	കെ	കേ	കൈ	കൊ	കോ
kr	ke	kē	kai	ko	kō
കൗ	കം	കഃ	ക്ക/ക്		
kau	kam	kah	k		
കൃ	കൃ	കൃ			
kṛ	kṛ	kṛ			

The Consonants

When a comparison is made in the consonant systems of Sinhala and Malayalam one can easily identify similarities in some consonants. This is true of the Grantha script also, which is the mother of these scripts discussed and not Brahmi as such. On the other hand, Tamil has undergone changes in the shapes of the letters in terms of

ക ഖ ഗ ഘ ങ ച ഛ ജ ഝ ഞ

ka kha ga gha ṅa ca cha ja jha ṅa
[ka] [k^ha] [ga] [g^ha] [ŋa] [tʃa] [tʃ^ha] [dʒa] [dʒ^ha] [ɲa]

ട റ ഡ ഢ ണ ത ഡ ഡ ണ

ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na
[ṭa] [ṭ^ha] [ḍa] [ḍ^ha] [ṇa] [ta] [t^ha] [da] [d^ha] [na/ṇa]

പ ഫ ബ ഭ മ യ ര ല വ

pa pha ba bha ma ya ra la va
[pa] [p^ha] [ba] [b^ha] [ma] [ja] [ra] [la] [va]

ശ ഷ സ ഹ ള ഴ റ റ ഴ

śa śa sa ha ḷa ḷa ṛa/ṛa ṛa ṛa
[ʃa] [ʃa] [sa] [ɦa] [l̪a] [l̪a] [r̪a/ta] [na] [ta]

Chillus / cillakṣaram (ചില്ലക്ഷരം)

ൺ ൹ റ ൽ ശ ക്ക

ṅ n r ḷ ḷ k
[ṅ] [n] [r] [l̪] [l̪] [k]

The chillaksharam to represent the pure consonant is similar to that of Tamil where a dot is placed on the consonant. The formation is the same, only the writing style has changed with the hand movement.

Conclusion

The earliest known Tamil inscriptions date back to at least 500 BC. The Tamil alphabet is thought to have evolved from the Brahmi script as Tamil Brahmi and vaTTezhuttu, an indigenous one. Nevertheless, this is refuted in the present paper, which needs further studies. The evolution of Grantha script during the Pallava – Chozha dynasties for writing Sankrit, Prakrit and Pali languages has become the origin for the development of scripts, including the aspirated and voiced consonants, etc., in many of the South Indian languages and tones, the South East Asian languages as well. It was when the Tamils had business with the South East Asian countries or invaded them, they had helped in developing scripts for Balinese, Burmese, Sinhala and Malayalam languages and changes as per the requirement of these languages were carried out indigenously. In all the cases, the

languages of the South East Asian Countries, which use neither Roman alphabet nor Chinese logograms use writing systems deriving from the Pallava Grantha scripts.

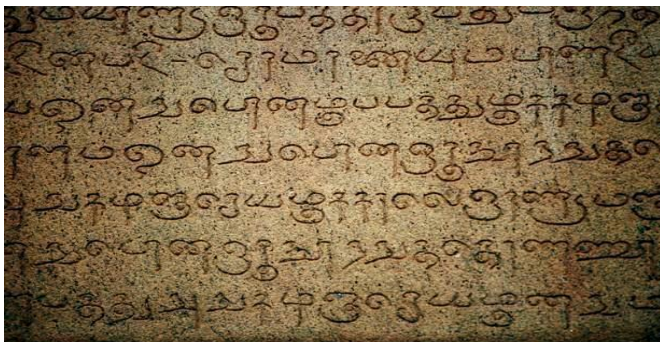
The language policy of the Cholas is to be highly appreciated in this context. Since their dynasty had, in addition to Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Prakrit, Pali, Oriya, Sinhala, Bali, Burmese, Thai, etc. language speaking areas, they had perhaps proposed Sanskrit as the ‘lingua franca’. The whole credit of developing scripts in the language under consideration goes to the traders, Pallava and Chozha kings of Tamilnadu. However, many of the points raised in this article may need further studies.

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Footnote 1

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, has caused this Dhamma edict to be written.(1) Here (in my domain) no living beings are to be slaughtered or offered in sacrifice. Nor should festivals be held, for Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, sees much to object to in such festivals, although there are some festivals that Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does approve of.

Footnote 2 Grantha Inscriptions



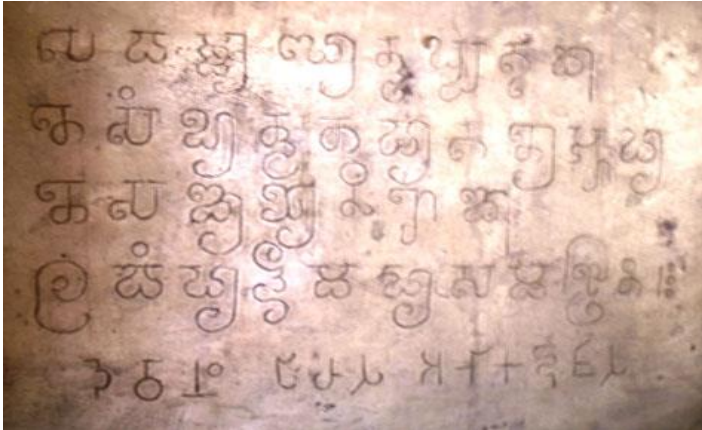
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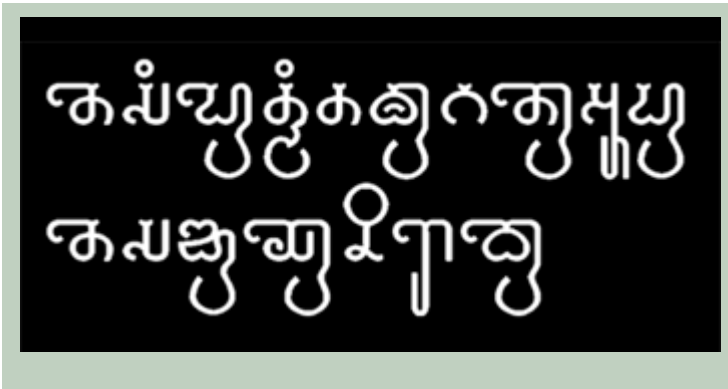
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... va tsa re - ā tma nō - rā jya - va rṣē - ca - va rdda - mā nē - tra ...
 ... siṃ hē na - ma hā ma llē na - vi dvi ṣā m - vā tā pi ra ti mā ...
 ... ri ṣṇu ra tu laṅ - gō traṅ - gu ṇai rā tma nō ...

The Grantha inscription of Fang in North Thailand, estimated late 7th century AD, showing a quote in Brahmi below the Pallava.



Nakhorn Pathom in central Thailand, 7th century AD (reproduced)



te saṃ - he tuṃ - ta thā ga tō - ā ha -
 te sa ṇca - yō - ni rō dhō /

An inscription provides detailed account of Suryavarman II studying sacred rituals, celebrating religious festivals and making gifts, including white parasols, golden bowls and elephants, to his spiritual advisor.

According to the inscription, Divakarapandita took interest in the temple and donated to it a golden statue of dancing Shiva known as Nataraja.

The worship of Shiva or Nataraja in Cambodia dates back to early 7th century AD. The Isanapura inscriptions of Isanavarman I, who ruled around 616-628 AD in Sambor Prei Kuk mentions the installation of silver image of Nataraja.



Footnote 3

One such historical fact might be the travel of a Prince Pallavamalla from Kambhujadesa, that is the present day Cambodia to Kanchipuram, the capital city of the Pallava Empire in Tamilnadu. Much has been talked about the Indian, especially, the South Indian connection in South East Asia, but here is a Cambodian connection in Tamilnadu. Pallavamalla, a Prince from the kingdom of Kambhujadesa travelled to Kanchipuram in Tamilnadu, to continue the legacy of the Pallavas. Following the death of Pallava King Parameswaravarman II (730 AD) without a progeny, representatives from different arenas travelled to Kambhujadesa. Kambhujadesa was then ruled by King Kadavesa Harivarman, who rooted from Pallava lineage. He was the descendent of Bhimavarman, brother of Simhavishnu (550 AD)

Footnote 4

During my visit to Indonesia and Cambodia for a study on the topic the ‘forgotten Tamils’ for documentation, I was astonished to see not only the beautiful temples structured on the south Indian pattern, particularly, the similarities of the temples of Tamilnadu, but also the script, especially, in Bali island. This only made me to venture into this study.

But already many features which identify the Pallava script were visible in the writing systems of earlier and nearby dynasties. In particular, the Chalukya Empire of Karnataka and Central India (to the west and northwest) and the more local Kadamba dynasty (Canarese) within that, centered at Banavasi; and the Vengi region to the north, at the time of the Andhra Ikshvakus. Regions to the south and southwest of Pallava territory appear to have taken the Brahmi design in a slightly different direction: the Chola, Pandya and Chera dynasties of what is now Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

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