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Date.....

## Letter regarding Grantha vowelless consonants

Dr T Ganesan  
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For the attention of the Unicode Technical Committee:

I am a researcher in the Department of Indology of the French Institute of Pondicherry. A major part of my work involves collection, cataloguing and editing of manuscripts written in many indic scripts.

On 6, September 2010, by invitation of the Department of Information Technology, Government of India, I attended a meeting in New Delhi on encoding the Grantha script in Unicode. In the course of this meeting I came to know that there is a certain problem surrounding the Grantha encoding as to the various vowelless consonant forms of Grantha. This topic was discussed and finalized at the meeting and I am sure the Indian Government will be submitting its own official statement on the results of the meeting. In the meanwhile I thought it would also be useful if I clearly voiced my own views on the matter. These are fully in agreement with the consensus of the meeting.

There are indeed different ways of writing the same consonant in vowelless form in Grantha. However, Grantha is used for the writing of Sanskrit only. Sanskrit does not depend on the written forms for its meanings, having been written for thousands of years starting from the oldest scripts like Brahmi and Kharoshthi till the modern Indian/South Asian scripts of today. So it is evident that in Grantha which is used only

for Sanskrit all these different written forms of vowelless consonants are

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semantically equal. Thus in the Grantha encoding they should be treated uniformly. To achieve the various written forms it is possible to use different fonts to cater to the different styles of writing.

I heard that somebody has argued that Grantha is used for writing Malayalam. However, in the process of handling many hundreds of manuscripts in various scripts in the course of my work all these years, I have not come across any manuscript in which the Grantha script has been used for writing the Malayalam language.

Obviously the Grantha and Malayalam scripts are related. An earlier form of the Malayalam script has also been called Malayalam Grantha. But that does not mean that they are one and the same. It is universally accepted by all learned scholars that the Grantha script is used for Sanskrit and the Malayalam script is used for Malayalam. These are two clearly different scripts. So the semantics and characteristics of the Malayalam script should not be mixed up with those of the Grantha script.

To enable manuscript scholars like me as well as other scholars to process the Grantha script properly in computers using Unicode, I request the Unicode Technical Committee to ensure that the various vowelless consonant forms of Grantha are treated equally.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

T Ganesan