

From

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To

Dr. Lisa Moore,  
Unicode Technical Committee

Dear Dr. Moore,

Sub: Inclusion of Grantha Characters in Tamil writings –Necessity –Regarding.

I wish to bring to your notice that I have been the first Director of the Department of Archaeology in the State of Tamil Nadu during the years 1965 to 1988 and established a separate wing under the department for the study of epigraphy and paleography to read and interpret ancient scripts. We have copied several thousand inscriptions in Tamil, during my tenure from various parts of Tamilnadu. I have also published many books on scripts and epigraphs for college and University students and also I have established and institute of epigraphy under the department training post graduate students in the study of scripts. I am considered a leading authority on Tamil and Sanskrit language and scripts and am at present South Indian Epigraphy professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

I have read and approve the Govt. of India proposal to encode Grantha script in its entirety for use in the web and computers.

Tamilnadu is very very rich in inscriptions engraved on stone, copper plates and other material that have been copied almost from 1780's. There are more than thirty thousand Tamil inscriptions copied for the past 200 years and more. They range from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to modern times and these inscriptions are studied by students and researchers all over the world. All these inscriptions of several thousands carry Grantha characters in between Tamil words invariably from very early to recent times. They were used to write Sanskrit words which were used in Tamil inscriptions as administrative, judiciary and scientific words for precise meaning and to avoid any ambiguity. The study of inscriptions in Tamil is absolutely essential for reconstructing history in every field of human activity and the Grantha characters are absolutely essential for this purpose to be introduced in the UNICODE system.

I may also add that there are other important fields in Tamil, like, Astronomy, Music, Dance, Medicine and such other fields that have enormous amount of Sanskrit words embedded in the Tamil Language and the use of Grantha characters in all these fields are found through the centuries for the past 2000 years. There are musical notes called PaN with classical Tamil names for them. The mode of rendering these special notes in singing which are mainly considered Tamil are written in seventh century Grantha script inscriptions at Kudumiyamalai and Tirumeyyam during King Gunasena's reign in old Pudukottah state.

I also would like to mention that the Grantha characters evolved only in Tamilnadu and evolved from the same Brahmi script which has been adopted for writing Tamil script. Neither scientific expressions nor historical evolution, nor the so called northern character justifies the exclusion of Grantha characters from the UNICODE system.

I have worked with Dr. Jean Filliozat in the past when he wrote about Tiruvempavai and Tiruppavai hymns being celebrated in Thailand royal festivals, and the tradition of writing Tamil texts in Grantha script exists. Hence, I recommend including all the Tamil Grantha letters presented in the Govt. of India proposal for encoding in UNICODE for use in the internet and computers.

Sincerely,

Signed  
[R.Nagaswamy]