

**THE INFLUENCE OF JAINISM ON EARLY KANNADA LITERATURE
SHELDON POLLOCK'S WORK LANGUAGE OF GODS**

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Preamble

Kannada, a Dravidian language, is one of the ancient and important literary languages in India. It has a script of its own and has a population of about sixty million. It had branched off from the Proto-Dravidian Family of languages in around sixth century BC, and had become a written language by the beginning of current era.

The history of Kannada language and literature is very vast, varied and encompasses a variety of genres. Regrettably, its salient features were not properly and systematically introduced outside the Kannada world. Such an objective account remained a desideratum for a long time. To address the issue some attempts were made by Ferdinand Kittel (1832-1903), E.P. Rice (1849-1936) and B.L. Rice (1837-1927). B.L. Rice (1898) was the first to edit the epic *Vikramārjunavijaya* of poet Pampa (901-950), and write an article in English about the epic, as early as in 1882. His brother, E.P. Rice (1921) wrote *The Kanarese Literature*, the earliest book in English on the Kannada Literature. He wrote in the concluding paragraphs:

“I am afraid it must be confessed that Kanarese writers, highly skilful though they are in the manipulation of their language, and very pleasing to listen to in the original, have as yet contributed extremely little to the stock of the world's knowledge and inspiration [...]. There is little of original and imperishable thought on the question of perennial interest to man [...]. Hence a lack of that which stimulates hope and inspires to great enterprises” (E.P. Rice 1921: 108).

E.P. Rice failed to grasp the sap and soul of Kannada literary tradition and mislead non-Kannada readers into ignoring or misunderstanding or underestimating the mastery, originality and genius of Kannada literature. Despite being adaptations from Sanskrit, some of those early nectarous classics are truly excellent transcreations. Later R. Narasimhachar (1861-1936), R.S. Mugali (1906-1992), V. Sītārāmayya (1899-1983), T.R.S. Sarma, H. Nagarajaiah, and recently B.A. Vivek Rai and C.N. Ramachandran, and others, contributed in filling the void to a great extent.

Sheldon Pollock's Book *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*

Albeit, the credit of establishing Kannada as one of the foremost literary languages of far greater significance and dimension goes to Sheldon Pollock (SP). In his recently published book, *Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (2006), he has remarkably narrated the history and described the core characteristics of Kannada literature, and successfully accomplished the task that was long due. Glory and singularity of Kannada world - language, literature, culture, polity, religion, geography, royal dynasties, land and people in brief - was never presented and projected in this manner and on such a big canvas.

The overall prominence and nexus of poetry, poetics and polity is well highlighted. For instance, the insightful discussion and extensive critique of the *Kavirājāmārga*, "Way of the King of Poets", is the first of its kind (pp. 338-342).

The book *Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, has a vast canvas. Its macro and micro study covers a wide spectrum of South East Asia, and focuses the beginning period of second millennium. About 50 pages in the Chapter Nine, "Creating a Regional world: The Case of Kannada" (pp. 330-79), and some pages in chapter 10, are devoted to trace historical development of Kannada. References to the antiquity, density, historicity, sociology, literary production and other accomplishments are noteworthy. In brief, SP has tried to shed a floodlight, and do justice to Kannada and Karnataka by chronologically and methodically presenting an authentic picture of medieval period.

However, some of the grave mistakes in the book are glaring. In some places SP indulges in prolonged argument and comes to unacceptable conclusions.

His statements that "Jainism has little or nothing to do with Early Kannada Literature" (p. 426), and "there is nothing to show that vernacularization was driven principally by Jain" (p. 425) are completely unjustified, erroneous and sends a wrong message to the readers. He is unaware of Śrīvijaya's (850) *Candraprabhapurāṇa* (lost) and *Raghuvamśamahāpurāṇa* (lost), Nāgavarma's (C. 900) *Vatsarājacarita*, and Nāgadeva's (C. 900) *Sulocanacarita*. The vast corpus of literature produced by Jaina poets, patriarchs and pontiffs is ignored. The famous scholiasts of the early medieval period nowhere figure in the book, and absence of their reference is a serious lapse. Tumbalurācārya (6th-7th century) wrote a voluminous scholium called the *Cuḍāmaṇi* (lost), "The Head Jewel", consisting of 84,000 verses in Kannada language, a great feat of an author who achieved it in Kannada language. Bhaṭṭākalaṅka (1604), a Kannada grammarian, has considered it as the greatest work in Kannada (Nagarajaiah 2014: 182). Śrīvardhadeva (7th century), a poet par excellence, wrote the *Cūlāmaṇi* (*Cuḍāmaṇi*) in Sanskrit. The classic was so well received by his contemporary authors that Daṇḍin (700 CE) wrote "Śrīvardhadeva, crest-jewel of poets and the author of *Cūlāmaṇi*, a worthy poem, alone possessed sufficient merit to acquire fame. Śiva bore Jahnu's daughter (Gaṅgā) on the top of

his matted hair; O Śrīvardhadeva, you bear Sarasvatī on the tip of your tongue” (based on EC II, Rev. Ed., p. 26, No. 67 (54), C.E. 1129). Śāmakuṇḍa (C. 650) wrote a *grantha pramāṇa* commentary in *paddhati* style, a style in which words of Kannada, Prakrit and Sanskrit were used freely (same as *maṇipravāla*) (Nagarajaiah 2014: 183). These details would have enhanced the list of special features of the Kannada literary world, and confirmed the magnitude of Jain writers’ contribution.

The *Vaḍḍārādhane* (C. 800), the first extant work of Kannada literature, does not figure in the book. This major work stands out for its (socio-cultural) poetic prose, profundity, and for many other reasons. SP missed to comprehend its scope and importance. Similarly, some more literary works of greater consequence are not noticed.

The book *Language of the Gods* has diluted the prominence of Regius poet Ravikīrti (634) and his role in the history of Bādāmī Cālukyas. SP states “Kṛṣṇa (934) commemorated the event with a praśasti, the first of that genre in Kannada” (334). SP is correct, but he mentions Ravikīrti’s great Sanskrit praśasti, possibly the best praśasti, praise poetry, written three hundred years earlier to Kṛṣṇa, in casual way. The mention of Kālidāsa in Bhaṭṭi’s (6th century) poem in Jāva, Cambodian inscription (7th century) and the mention of Bhāravi and Mayūra in an inscription of Yaśovarman etc., figure in the book (162-163), but there also Ravikīrti’s mention of Kālidāsa and Bhāravi is missing:

“*Yenayo jina veśmashiraṃ arttha vidhau vivekinā Jinaveśma sa vijayatāṃ
Ravikīrttiḥ kavitaśrita Kālidāsa Bhāravi kīrttiḥ*”.

“May that Ravikīrti be victorious, who full of discernment has used the abode of Jina, firmly built of stone for a new treatment of his theme, and who thus his poetic skill has attained to the fame of Kālidāsa and Bhāravi” (Nagarajaiah 2005: 249, 254).

Incidentally, Ravikīrti was the first poet to commission a *jinendrabhavana*, in 634 AD, which exists in Aihole. One more major poet to build a Jaina temple was Nāgacandra (1100). Two of Karnataka’s magnificent Jaina temples, the Koḷanūru (mod. Koṅṅūr) and Lakkuṇḍi temples were awarded the *cakravartī datti*, unique endowment of historical significance, by Amoghavarṣa, Nṛpatuṅga (850) and Satyāśraya Irvabeḍaṅga (1005) respectively.

The Yāpanīya-saṃgha, a prominent Jaina sect that enjoyed royal donations, does not even figure for its namesake. Inscriptions galore from the fifth century to the twelfth century and proffer invaluable information about socio-cultural and religious environment in the first millennium (Nagarajaiah 1999-B). Poet Jinavallabha, younger brother of epic poet Pampa, proficient in Kannada, Sanskrit and Telugu, is nothing more than a footnote in page no. 356.

Similar costly lapses have blurred the achievements of the book. Therefore the above shortcomings need to be addressed and things are to be set right.

This paper is mainly a critique of Sheldon Pollock's book with special reference to Kannada and to Chapters 9 and 10 in particular, which awaits serious analysis and an extensive debate.

Halmiḍi Inscription¹

“The very first Kannada inscription, the Halmiḍi record, which begins with a benedictory verse addressed to Viṣṇu and commemorates a man famed for his munificence in bestowing ritual victims for many sacrifices - hardly the product of a Jain cultural environment” (Pollock 2006: 428).

The shortcomings in this statement are glaring. Two of the five dynasties mentioned in the inscription are the Sendrakas and Kellas. The roots of the Sendrakas, one of the ancient *Kṣatriya* dynasties and feudatories of Banavāsi Kadam̄bas, are far deeper and go back to the third century. The Gokāk Plates of Dejjā Mahārāja (533-550), king of Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānpura house, establish that the Sendrakas were Jains from the beginning (Nagarajaiah 2014: 97-102). Dejjā Mahārāja, homonymous with Devarāja, belonged to the Āguptāyika line of kings. Not much is known about the Āguptāyika kings except that they come from the spiritual lineage of Vardhamāna (Mahāvīra), the 24th Tīrthaṅkara. Incidentally, the Sendrakas also belong to the Vardhamāna lineage. The Āguptāyika Royal house had initiated an era of their own and named after them as the Āguptāyika era:

“The Āguptāyika era may have been commenced in the fourth century BC and it could very well have been started by Chandragupta Maurya, and he (Dejjā Mahārāja) must have been eliminated by Polekeśi I before AD 543” (Ramesh 1984: 85f.).

The Jaina tradition has given a clue for its reckoning. The *Kalpasūtra* of Bhadrabāhu has recorded in unmistakable terms that the Maurya emperor Candragupta ascended the throne and commenced his reign in 312-13 BCE. From then on started the Āguptāyika era. The *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* of Punnāta Jinasena (793) mentions that the Guptas ruled for 231 years. Its source comes from the *Tiloyapaṇṇatti (Trilokaprajñapti)* of Jādī Usaha (Yati Vṛṣabha, 550 CE)” (Nagarajaiah 2000/2014: 8). Polekesin II (610-42), king of the Cālukyās of Bādāmī, was

¹ See Appendix.

son of a Sendraka princess, and king Kīrtivarman I (566-97) had married a sister of Śrīvallabha Senānanda, chief of Sendraka *vaṃśa* (Nagarajaiah 2005: 56-60). Vija Arasa, to whom the honour was bestowed, was son of Sarakella of Kella family (Nagarajaiah 1997).

Historian P.N. Narasimha Murthy has affirmed: “The Kellas were Jains and they figure first in the Halmiḍi inscription of Kadamba Kākusthavarma (430-450)” (*infra*), and they originally belonged to the “village named Kella Puttige, giving due recognition to that meritorious family of Jain rulers” (Narasimhamurthy 1985: 32ff.). He also discovered an inscription, which clearly established that Jainism and Jaina monks had rooted in the South Kanara coastal region before fifth century CE. Scholar and epigraphist, M.B. Neginahala, analysing the Halmiḍi inscription, has convincingly established that Vija Arasa, son of Sarakella, belonged to the ancient Kella family (Neginahāḷa 1999). Nagarajaiah’s (2014: 92-96) comprehensive discussion has shed more light on the subject.

The period of Cuṭus (C. 3rd century) has yielded some coins suggesting Jaina affiliation. The famous erudite ascetic Dharasenācārya’s pupil Puṣpadanta, who compiled the *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, “The Scripture in Six Parts”, started the Vanavāsī *gaccha* (lineage of Jaina monks from Banavāsī) in modern Banavāsī, in the third century and laid a formidable infrastructure for Jainism. From then on the *Nirgrantha* creed bloomed to become the state religion in the Banavāsī Kadamba kingdom. The fifth century charter of Banavāsī rulers proclaimed in unequivocal terms - *yasmin jinendrapūjā pravartate tatra tatra deśa parivruddhihi, nagaraṇām nirbhayatā tad deśa svāminā corjā* (wherever Jinendra is worshipped those countries prosper, cities become free from fear, the chief of that country becomes energetic) which has broader implications (Gopal 1985). They commissioned *Padmāvatyālayam*, the earliest temple dedicated to the Jaina goddess Padmāvātīdevī, in the fifth century, near the royal residence (Nagarajaiah 2005).

The Kadambas patronized and endowed all the Jaina sects. Mṛgeśavarma (455-80), in his eighth regnal year (462), built a Jinālaya at Palāśika (modern Halsi) for the merit of his father - *kārayitvā Jinālayam śrīvijaya Palāśikāyām*, commissioned a “Jaina temple in the victorious capital Palāśikā” and donated 33 *nivartana* (standard measurement of) land to all sects of Jainism, i.e., the Yāpanīyas, Nirgranthas, Śvetapaṭas and the Kūrcakas (Gopal 1985). The donees were Dāmakīrti and Jayanta. This affirms that these sub-sects of Jainism were popular and earned higher status to receive royal endowments. The Hosakoṭe inscription of king Avinīta (495-555) states that king Siṃhavarma’s mother built a *jina-mandira* for the welfare of her husband and for the worship of the Yāpanīyas. On the counsel of his Jaina teacher Vijayakīrti, king Avinīta endowed the temple (Nagarajaiah 1999-B).

“Senāpati” Śrutakīrti, a Jaina votary, saved the life of Kākusthavarma (435-455), the Kadamba king. During the period Jainism flourished as state religion and Jain literates wrote many inscriptions. Successive ruling dynasties - the Gaṅgas, the Bādāmī (Vātāpi) Cālukyas

(500-750), the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas, the Hoysaḷas and the Vijayanagara empire - continued to protect and promote Jainism which had developed deep roots, thanks to the Kadāmbas of Banavāsī.

These details unequivocally confirm that the Halmiḍi record is clearly the product of a Jaina cultural environment, even though the inscription is purely donative and has nothing to do with any religion, let alone Jainism. What prompted SP to state that the Halmiḍi inscription is “hardly the product of a Jaina cultural environment” remains unclear. Scholars have written that the imprints of Jainism in Karnataka are found from the very beginning. SP refuses to subscribe to this view. He wants to establish that there was no Jaina cultural environment from the period of the very first/ earliest extant lithic record.

Scenario

The transformation of written language into expressive discourse in Kannada literature was achieved by Jain writers trained in Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. Key components of literary textuality like grammar, lexicon, metrics and theme were suitably appropriated from Prakrit and localized. This process virtually accelerated literary-cultural transformation and revolution. The learned began experimenting fresh genres. The lost but known commentaries of early Jain saint-scholars constitute most momentous event in the literary-cultural-political power in Karnataka.

Not surprisingly, for Kannada-Tamil-Telugu, the three major Dravidian south-Indian languages, the earliest known writers were Jains. The earliest Tamil epic *Cilppadikāram* was written by Iḷaṅgo Aḍigaḷ (C. 4th century), a Jaina poet. Among 89 earliest extant Tamil inscriptions from 3rd century BC to sixth century CE, 85 are Jain records, and speak of Jain monks and nuns who were familiar with Kannada language (Mahadevan 2003).

The vernacularization process was initiated and promoted by the champions of religious movement. This, in course of time became a model for *deśa-bhāṣā*, “language of the country”, and *jana-bhāṣā āndolan*, “a movement seeking priority for the language of the people”. Jains and Buddhists resisted Sanskrit’s dominance and opted to local languages. Śrīvijaya (810-880), Nayasena (1112), Āṇḍayya (1235), pleaded for Kannada and opposed Sanskrit’s sway (Ramachandran 2015). Early Tamil inscriptional details go to establish the hectic activities of Jaina elites who had started writing in the vernacular from third and second century BC. In Kerala and Andhra also, early records belong to Jaina order. An early Marāṭhī inscription, datable to 981 CE, is found at the feet Bāhubali colossus on the bigger hill at Śravaṇabelagoḷa. We cannot afford to be blind to a chain of instances supporting the early literary activities lead by Jaina literates.

Worldly compositions of Jaina writers were not restricted to praise the deeds of royals or patrons. It documented the salient features of place and regional culture. They played a major role in the cosmopolitan - vernacular transformation of Kannada literature. In the process, they also wrote both religious and nonreligious works of greater consequence. The so-called strictly religious works also added salt and pepper, and enhanced Kannada literary horizon. They raised Kannada to become an excellent literary language on par with Prakrit and Sanskrit, and empowered Kannada language.

Translation of ecclesiastical and philosophical texts paved way for literary texts and wrought vigour and lustre to the local language and culture. Kannada *nāḍu* (land), *nuḍi* (language) and *saṃskṛti* (culture) were lurking in the background as *gupta-gāmini*, “under-current”, waiting for an opportunity to occupy its legitimate seat in polity and literary culture. Jain writers donned the mantle of real custodians and made Kannada as the language of Gods (people), analogous with Sanskrit and Prakrit. Going a step further, they made locals realize that the people and rulers of the place were similar to the epic heroes of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Bhārata*.

The Śaivas, the Brāhmaṇas, and the Jains were all well-known scholars in Sanskrit. Jains and Buddhists, in addition to Sanskrit, were proficient in Pāli, Apabhraṃśa and Prakrit languages. Anybody could have snatched the good chance to opt for vernacular language and filled the vacuum. Jains were early birds to respond and become the darling of the rulers and the ruled. Opportunity demands responsibility. Jains seized the opportunity and owned responsibility. Obviously, they earned confidence of place and people. Inscriptions extol that Karnataka was truly an abode of Jainism (B.L. Rice 1904, EC VIII Sorab Taluq, pp. 40f., No. 261, 1408 CE).

Thus, history of the first millennium is verily the history of Jains. Jaina writers were pioneers to herald Kannada literature. They inaugurated Kannada literary texts in all genres - from poetry to poetics, from grammar to prosody. Jains were earliest to promote and popularize manuscriptology. They were champions in copying and recopying on palm leaves and preserving carefully. They were the masters in maintaining the *śruta-bhaṇḍaras*, or libraries. Again, they were known for painting on palm leaves. The *Dhavalā*, *Jayadhavalā* and *Mahādhavalā* palm leaf manuscripts are extraordinary.

The eulogy of past poets, poetical works and preceptors had virtually become compulsory convention. Such praise-poems abound in Jain literature. Pampa has praised some spiritual preceptors but not poets. His list of eulogy of teachers is an imitation of Jinasenācārya’s list except for Koṇḍakunda, Devendramuni and Jayaṇandi.

Kannada Cosmopolis

The statement “early Kannada literature often has little or nothing to do with Jainism” (LG 426) is completely incorrect and unsupported. SP has not established how “early Kannada literature” has “little” or “nothing to do with Jainism”. Now it is left for us to prove how the statement is not sustainable. Let us examine “early Kannada literature”, and learn how it has much to do with Jainism.

Jainism found its second homeland in Karnataka: “Jainism was the state-creed” (Ghosh 1973: 303).

It is well known that Jaina works constitute the corpus of early Kannada literature “the earliest cultivators of Kannada language were Jains. The oldest works of any extent and value that have come down to us are all from the pen of Jains. The period of Jains” predominance in the literary field may justly be called the “Augustan Age of Kannada literature” (R. Narasimhachar 1969). The *Kavirājamārga* (KRM) mentions names of some important prose and verse writers.

SP has missed the fresh information recorded by Nāgavarma II (1042) who has shed floodlight on the early phase of (Jaina) Kannada literature. The following details were not known from any other source:-

i. “The erudite Nāgavarma, a distinguished person of impeccable character, wrote the *Vatsarājacarita*, ‘Deeds of Vatsarāja’. It was, both in its prose and verse a beauty indeed”. (*Vardhamānapurāṇa*, ed. Saṅṅaiyah 1974: 1). The well-known literary anthologist Cidānanda Mallikārjuna (1237), father of Keśirāja (1260), the greatest Kannada Grammarian, has quoted a *vṛtta* verse from the (lost) *campū* poem, the *Vatsarājacarita* (*Sūktisudhārṇava* of Mallikārjuna, ed. Anantaragācār 1947: 96, v. 22).

ii. “Nāgadeva was *kavīndra*, “a prominent poet”, and a pleasant literary scholar of repute. He wrote the magnanimous poem *Sulocanacarita*, “Deeds of Sulocana”, and embellished it with metaphors, mellifluous words and tender situations” (*Vardhamānapurāṇa*, 1-8). Poets Mahāsenā (C. 8th century) and Devasenā (1075) have written poems on the same theme of *Sulocana* in Prakrit. Poet Dhavalā (C. 10th century) has mentioned the *Sulocanacarita* of poet Mahāsenā in his Apabhraṃśa poem the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa*, “History of the Hari dynasty”. Brahmaśiva (1175), Kannada poet, has mentioned (Nāgadeva’s) *Sulocanacarite* in his poem *Samayaparīkṣe*, “An Examination of Religions” (Kulkarni 1958, Ch. 1, v. 11).

Whether this Nāgavarma is different from Nāgavarma, author of *Kāvyaavalōkana* (ed. Narasimhachar 1967) who had the title of “*Kavitāguṇodaya*” (Source of Literary Excellence),

and was also author of the *Śabdasmṛti* (Tradition of Words), *Karṇāṭakabhāṣabhūṣaṇa* (Ornament of the Kannada Language), *Vardhamānāpurāṇa*, etc., is debatable.²

Śrīvijaya (810-880) and Ādiguṇavarma heralded a binary genre of *laukika* and *āgamika*. Pampa and others enlarged the scope of double narrative classics. SP is not aware of the other two Jaina classics of Śrīvijaya, the *Candraprabha Purāṇa* (lost) on the Deeds of Candranātha Tīrthaṅkara, and the *Raghuvamśapurāṇa* or *Pāṇḍava Purāṇa* (lost), the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the Jaina tradition. There is no ambiguity about Śrīvijaya's authorship, because the titles and authors of these two early works are mentioned by later poets. Śrīvijaya's contemporary poet Asaga (850) had written the *Karṇāṭakumārasaṃbhava* (lost), a *laukika kāvya* in Kannada, and the *Sanmaticarita* (*Vardhamānapurāṇa*), a *dhārmika kāvya* (Religious poem), in Sanskrit. Ādiguṇavarma (C. 900), author of the (lost) *Harivamśa* and (lost) *Śūdraka* (lost), bequeathed a literary tradition. All the three earliest works on the Rāmāyaṇa in Kannada were written by Jain poets. The concept of focusing on the virtues of *prati-nāyakas*, anti-heroes, like Rāvaṇa, Duryodhana and Karṇa, is a special feature of Jain works. The VAV (*Pampabhārata*), a *laukika-kāvya*, contains substantial Jaina elements.³

The worship and cult of *jinaśāsana-devas* and *-devīs* (Protectors of Jina's Teachings) became more popular by the end of the fifth century. The extant splendid sculptures of Ambikā, Padmāvatī, Jvālāmālinī, Dharaṇa and Śyāma belong to the period of the Banavāsi Kadam̄bas (345-540) and Bādāmī Cālukyas (540-750) (Nagarajaiah 2005).

Jaina writers were pioneers in poetry, poetics, metrics, lexicography, grammar, philosophy, commentaries and anthologies. Expertise in grammar and literary crafts was strong forte of Jain scholars. Nāgavarma (1042) heralded the tradition of writing about Kannada grammar in Sanskrit. After many centuries, Bhaṭṭākalaṅka (1604) followed it brilliantly. The *Śabdamaṇidarpaṇa*'s (1235) (Jewel Mirror of Language) influence on Tamil grammar *Nannūl* and the *Karṇāṭakabhāṣabhūṣaṇa*'s (Ornament of the Kannada Language) influence on the *Āndhraśabdacintāmaṇi* (Jewel of the Andhra Language) is evident (This Telugu work was attributed to Nannayabhaṭṭa, but now it is convincingly proved as a work of the late 17th century). Jain writers ameliorated the Kannada language to assume an innovative and autonomous role in literary and political expression.

Unfortunately, many of the well-known facts have escaped SP's attention. Kannada literature and Karnataka were an abode of Jainism as testified by epigraphic evidences. The Kupaṭūru Inscription vouches for Jainism's opulence in the State. Prominent historian B.A. Saletore's (1938) famous book *Mediaeval Jainism* figures in the bibliography but its information relevant to SP's discussions is not availed. Astonishingly, easily accessible and

² Cf. Klatt 2016: 541.

³ See *infra*.

known facts in favour of Jainism's imprints in the first millennium are marginalized. The details in pages between 423 and 428 are an unnecessary elaboration and give an impression that the author is vehemently arguing to marginalize Jaina achievements. I would like to show some more instances where important facts are missing.

Inscriptions with invocation to the Jina or Jainism emerge from 5th and 6th century. These important hymns provide deep and direct insight into the religious experiences of Jains:

“Jaina inscriptions have certain special characteristics which distinguish them from others. These inscriptions and the invocatory verses have, in their own way, enriched Kannada language and literature, and they are the forerunners of later such writings” (Nagarajaiah 2003: 4).

“Such poems tell us more about the general devotional ethos of medieval Digambara Jainism than the more Philosophical texts upon which scholarship has tended to concentrate” (P. Dundas, *ibid.*, blurb), “there is also much to be learned from studying them as examples of that most ubiquitous of Jaina genres” J.E. Cort (*ibid.*, intro.), Kelting (2001) and Yocum (1977: 5) have shown that it is important to study hymns in all languages in India.

The key role of Jainism in the transition from oral to written culture, and from spoken dialect to standard literary tradition needs no exaggeration. The specific historical moments of breakthrough for the literary vernacular occurred in fourth and fifth century. Kannada was lurking in the background as *suptagāminī*, dormant. Local literary genres of *ovanige*, *onakevāḍu*, *cattāṇa*, *bedaṇḍe*, and *pagaraṇa* bear the memory of orality. Though preliterate oral composition was popular, it is difficult to draw a sharp line between orality and literacy. Mere oral literature is not enough to lift the language. The leap to literary culture requires favourable circumstances. It needs to be underlined that mere existence of a language is not sufficient cause to blossom and flourish as a language of literary culture. More and more political and elite class patronization is required. Expressive texts, translations and commentaries written by Jain authors boosted Kannada language to bloom into political courtly literary language.

Usually new converts become bigots and ferocious fanatics and close eyes toward positive aspects of other faiths. But converts to Jainism were liberal. Even otherwise, Jains were cordial and accommodative. Jaina *śruta-bhaṇḍāras* (libraries) were safe custodians of both Jaina and non-Jain philosophical works. Jains were equally facile and possessed sound knowledge of *śaḍ-darśanas*, the six traditional systems of Indian philosophy (i.e., Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Vedānta and Pūrva Mīmāṃsā).

The *campū*, a mixed prose-verse narrative / literary form, was favourite of medieval poets. It looks like an invention of local Jaina poets, but its inspiration is from Prakrit poetry.

A more convincing reason for this genre affiliation derives from the fact that Jaina writers were equally at ease and familiar with Prakrit language and literature. Jaina writers, particularly commentators, introduced a new style called the *maṇi-pravālam*, or “crystal-coral”. It is an intermixture of words from two different languages like Kannada and Prakrit or Kannada and Sanskrit. These compound expressions are not treated as words of *arisamāsa*, “compound of hostiles”. “Jaina cultivators of Kannada language considered that a facile fusing of Sanskrit and Kannada, Prakrit and Kannada will sound pleasing. Hence, they coined, to denote such a happy blending of the foreign and native words, a new term called *maṇi-pravāla-śāili*, ‘crystal-coral’ style”. This was to designate such a style of combining Sanskrit words including idioms and phrases with both free and bound morphemes of the local / indigenous language. Adept Svāmī Vīrasena (816) of the Pañcastūpa *anvaya* (lineage of Jaina friars) coined the term *maṇipravāla* as a designator of stylistics in his magnum opus, the *Jayadhavalā*, “Victoriously Luminous”, a commentary on the *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, “The Scripture in Six Parts”:

*prāyaḥ Prākṛtabhāṣāyāṃ kvacit Saṃskṛta-miśraya-
maṇipravāla-nyāyena prokto 'yaṃ grantha-vistarahaḥ*

Ācārya Abhinavagupta (c. 11th century) of Kāśmīra, famous *śāstrakāra* and *lākṣaṇika*, erudite in Indian poetics, recognised the *maṇipravāla* style pioneered by Vīrasena. Abhinavagupta states in his scholium *Abhinavabhāratī* on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (Treatise on Theatre) of Bharata Muni:

*trivarga-prasiddham padamadhya saṃskṛtam madhya deśabhāṣādi-yuktam tad eva kāryam
dakṣiṇāpathe maṇipravālam iti prasiddham*
(Nāṭyaśāstra, vol. IV (Baroda Edition), 1964: 379).

The *maṇipravāla* concept came as so handy to (Jain) writers that it helped them to freely mix Prakrit and Sanskrit with languages of place (Nagarajiah 2014: 286f.).

Jain authors introduced a new theme, altogether different from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Bhārata*. They spontaneously and willingly shouldered responsibility of disciplining Kannada to become the language of literature and science. They never hesitated to seek corrections from experts in the field. They learned more from the more learned. Some writers have acknowledged the names of experts who wetted their works. Rulers were trained and versed in three R's. They successfully experimented in a variety of genres. The scholar-poet Nāgavarma (1042) wrote on metrics, poetics, poetry and lexicon. Mastery and supreme achievement of Jain authors was highly commendable. They laid the required foundation for creativity to blossom, and scholarship to flourish, thus setting models to be emulated.

This paper has extensively shown how the entire spectrum of medieval Karnataka polity and Kannada literature (grammar, lexicography, metrics, poetics and poetry) is infused with Jaina elements. Jaina litterateurs laid the foundation for the vernacular cultural renaissance and literary reformation, and prepared the required infrastructure.

I cite two examples to show how the Jaina provincial rulers enjoyed greatest confidence of their overlords and socio-political status in an unprecedented manner:

- (i) Būtuga II (936-961), the Gaṅga king and subordinate shared a single throne with Kṛṣṇa III (936-967), the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor. Similarly, Tribhuvanamalla Vikramāditya VI (1076-1126), the Cālukya emperor, came half the way walking to receive his vassal Nanni Sāntara (1076), governor of Sāntalinge-Thousand province, offered seat by his side and shared a single throne (Nagarajaiah 2014: 83).
- (ii) The practice of Royal Houses donating gifts and tax-concessions to the temples of all religions was common. But the *cakravarti-datti*, “emperor’s endowment”, was very rare. Amoghavarṣa Nṛpatuṅga (814-77) sanctioned *cakravarti-datti* on 03-10-860 to the Jinālaya at Kolanūr (modern Koṅṅūr, Gadag District, Naragund Taluk), commissioned by Baṃkarāja alias Baṃkeśa) (*supra*, pp. 355f.).

The socio-political concept of the *Paṭṭa-Jinālaya* is notable. Jaina temples were also the sacred site for coronation ritual. The auspicious ceremony of fixing the turban of Royal insignia on the head of the chosen prince in the presence of family deity and the palace retinue used to take place in *Paṭṭa-Jinālaya*, Jaina temple. Analogous with this, similar examples of *Paṭṭa-Śivālaya* or *Paṭṭa-Viṣṇugruha* are not known. This suggests the special status that Jaina houses of prayer enjoyed.

Jaina temples and monasteries were houses of scholars and nest of singing birds. *Jina-mandiras* were of the people, by the people, and for the people. They were both educational institutes and cultural centres. Jaina householders, both men and women, were well read. Poets recited their poems not only in the royal courts, but also in meetings of poets organised by the elite patron’s residence or in Jaina temples.

The Sātavāhanas had planted the seeds of the Nirgrantha creed and the Early Kadam̄bas had spun the power of Jaina faith. The two other coeval dynasties of the Gaṅgas on the southern region, and the Cālukyas on the northern (Karnataka) region, simultaneously enlarged and intensified it with fantastic speed to create a most congenial atmosphere. The Banavāsi Kadam̄bas (345- 540) and the Bādāmī Cālukyas (540- 750) prepared a fertile ground for the smooth sailing of *anekānta-mata* (Jainism) without let. Jainism spread and grew from strength

to strength. It was in close to both royalty and the common masses. This gave it a resilience to sustain and survive all vicissitudes. By maintaining its influential status, Jainism integrated into its contemporary society and kept cordial coexistence with non-Jain sects. The Alampur *praśasti* (praise) (732) declared: “The king protected the followers of the different religious faiths viz., Vaiṣṇavism, Buddhism and Jainism and thus through his pious acts rendered the earth holy and satiated” (Nagarajaiah 2005: 63).

The actual role of Jain elites and litterateurs in moulding Kannada literary culture during the medieval period needs no exaggeration. Sadly, SP has failed to take note of some important facts, which could have changed his stand on the issue.

Another observation of SP, “Pampa makes it clear that he was writing for erudite readers, the learned (*paṇḍitar*)” (426), is subject to correction. True, “the learned” requested Pampa to write, but not for the learned only. In the *phala-śruti* (rewards of reading) verse, Pampa has listed the beneficiaries of his poem:

“a. My poem educates and helps the king. b. Those who read my poem will derive happiness and success in their love and affection. c. the princess will be more generous. d. the soldiers will be more valiant, and finally e. the courtesan’s dexterity gets sharpened” (VAV, 14-63).

Readers decoded the intention of the poem and enshrined the values of the classics. In other words, the poem was for a larger audience, if not for one and all. Palace-patronised works were not confined to the leaned pundits, but were also welcomed by the common people. Explaining pragmatically rather than ontologically or literally, medieval works were understood by their contemporary readers, as the modern readers understand modern Kannada works. Pampa concludes each chapter in this non-religious epic that he is a worshipper of the Jina’s feet. Thus, even works dedicated to non-Jaina themes had their seeds on the Jaina creed.

The Oral and Written binary is well known in literature. The very concept of binary genre of the *laukika* (this worldly/ political) and *āgamika* (scriptural / religious), being complimentary to each other, is singular to Kannada and world literature. The very concept is singular to Kannada literature. For over four centuries a dichotomy of producing poems in the two complimentary genres of *laukika* or “this worldly” (political) and *āgamika* or “scriptural” (on a Jaina theme) dominated Kannada literature. The unique way of creating a double narrative by identifying the historic person and patron with a mythological character seems to have been pioneered by Ravikīrti (Nagarajaiah 2005: 205-7). Corroborative evidences establish that it was Śrīvijaya who heralded the literary genre. He was followed by Ādiguṇavarma, Pampa, Ponna and Ranna. Ponna and Ranna achieved greater feat by identifying their patrons with the characters of the Purāṇas, also in the *āgamika kāvya* (scriptural Jaina poem). Apart from royal

patrons, Kannada poets enjoyed patronage of affluent families and officials. Influential citizens like Attimabbe and her son (Aṅṅigadeva) and her father (Mallapayya) were eager to host writers (K. Hampana 1995).

It is true that “it was the convention for poets of Jain heritage to compose in both genres from the very beginning of the literary tradition as we know it” (p. 426). To identify with the mainstream of the locality is a praiseworthy convention followed by Jains, who were loyal to their faith and at the same time faithful to the State. It is a plus-point in favour of their non-fanatic approach taking a leap beyond boundaries of caste and creed. They did not create separate islands of their own. Instead, they moved as part of the mainstream. They rendered cosmopolitan and national works into local language and promoted refined literary taste.

Chronologically, the triumvirate *kavi-cakravartins*, “emperor-poets”, were Ponna, at the court of Kṛṣṇa III (939-67), the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, Ranna, at the court of Tailapa (973-997) and his son Satyāśraya (997-1008), the Cālukya kings, and Janna, at the court of Ballāḷa (1173-1220), the Hoysaḷa king. And Brahmaśiva (1175 CE), another Jaina poet, was also a *kavi-cakravartin* at the court of Jagadekamalla IV (1168-83), king of the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇa (Nagarajaiah 2014: 259).

The production of so many prose and versified inscriptions from Śravaṇabelagoḷa, securely datable to the early seventh century, need more consideration. Even a cursory glance at them discloses features of Jaina culture and deeds of saints. Let alone the list of lost commentaries of early phase, this apolitical inscriptional poetry clearly suggests the crystallization of a literary tradition. The smaller hill Candragiri had become an ideal ground for dynamic literary experiments for writing verses in different meters. The oldest Kannada poems come from these inscriptions. In brief, Jaina literati had not only inaugurated but also experimented and consolidated a wider regional literary culture.

Early Jaina inscriptions from Tamilnāḍu confirm that literization of Kannada had emerged before the fourth century. Prakrit was predominant and Kannada was playing second fiddle. From the fifth century onwards, Sanskrit made a dramatic entry to supersede Prakrit influence. The earliest extant lithic records proclaim the emergence of a new literary style and aesthetics with Śravaṇabelagoḷa being the epicentre. Notably, *Karṇāṭeśvara kathā* (Story of the Lord of Karṇāṭaka), a precursor poem to later *laukika kāvya*, plausibly authored by the court poet Ravikīrti of the celebrated *praśasti śāsana*, inscriptional royal panegyric, of Polekeśin, king of Bādāmī Cālukyas, had appeared as early as 634 CE (Nagarajaiah 2005). The *Vaḍḍārādhane* (Worship of the Highest) and the *Kavirājamārga* flag-off the arrival of a new era of classics. These two works together marked the commencement of the Kannada cosmopolis and the uninterrupted flow of classical literature that included a galaxy of celebrated works.

In Karnataka Jaina inscriptions are extant from fifth century and literary works from early ninth century. Tumbalūrācārya (C. 650) had written the *Cūḍāmaṇi* (lost), a voluminous scholium in Kannada. In Tamilnāḍu Jaina inscriptions begin from third century BC, and bear Kannada imprints. During this period, Malayāḷam had not yet branched off from Tamil. Jinavallabha's (950) Jaina inscription of poetic excellence written in three languages (Kannada, Telugu, Sanskrit), is the earliest in Telugu country. All the earliest known and extant works in Kannada are by the Jaina order. Because some early Jain writers wrote in Sanskrit, SP asks: "Why did they (the Jains) not write in vernacular languages?" Not that the question is invalid, but the tone and tenor is not in good taste, and the conclusions are erroneous.

Moreover, this question is as meaningless as asking – "Why did not Brahmins write in vernacular before Jains?"; "Why did not Brahmins write in Sanskrit earlier to Jains?"

The Jains wrote earlier and became forerunners. After a silence of some centuries, Brahmins also started writing in the local language. The Brahmanas were silent till Jain writers had prepared the ground for literary models. Sanskrit was also employed by Jains. Śankarācārya (788-820), Rāmānujācārya (1017-1137) and Madhvācārya (1238-1317) wrote famous commentaries. But by the time they started writing commentaries, Koṇḍakunda, Tumbalūra, Akalaṃka, Pūjyapāda, Śāmakunda, Vīrasena, Jinasena, and a galaxy of other Jaina *ācāryas* had already composed commentaries in Sanskrit.

For the sake of counter-argument, let us analyse the situation. If the Jains did not inaugurate Kannada literature, then who did it? This should be clearly established. Even if Jain writers did not inaugurate Kannada literature, does it not warrant an argument of this nature? Why did others not write even in Sanskrit, let alone Kannada, before the Jains? Does it mean they were illiterate, or did they not exist in Karnataka? How to interpret their long silence? If not from Jain literati, from where do we trace literary beginnings?

SP has missed many details of the Jaina socio-cultural, religious and literary impact. Paṭṭa-Jinālaya Gosāsa, the Yāpanīya, Jinavallabha's charter, and the text *Lokavibhāga* (Division of the Universe). The Yāpanīya (Jaina) sect, a golden link between the Digambara and Śvetāmbara, which played a prominent role from fifth century to twelfth and enjoyed the patronage of the palace and public, is also not mentioned.

The importance of Jinavallabha's (910-70) unique inscription is missing. Jinavallabha, younger brother of Pampa, was the earliest Telugu poet of merit, who wrote hundred years before Nannayabhaṭṭa (1040). He was adept in Kannada, adroit in Telugu and skilled in Sanskrit. He brilliantly scripted the famous Kurkyāla inscription in three languages. It records poet Pampa's genealogy and achievements. Its linguistic, literary and historical rarities in the entire corpus of Telugu, Sanskrit and Kannada inscriptions, needs to be underlined. It was the first and foremost brilliantly written record, which flows like beautiful *khaṇḍa-kāvya*, minor poetical composition (Nagarajaiah 2014: 254-7).

One more important Prakrit text, the *Lokavibhāga*, a Nirgrantha surrogate canonical text on cosmology by the ascetic Sarvanandi, has escaped SP's notice. It was completed on 25 August 458 CE, in the 22nd regnal year of the Pallava king Siṃhanandin I (436-60), at Pātalika (Tirupattirippuliyūr) in the North Arcot District of Tamilnāḍu. This rare Prakrit work contains 1536 verses. It was later translated into Sanskrit by Siṃhasūri (c. 12th century).

SP rightly observed how the percentage of Sanskrit in inscriptions diminished drastically during the Rāṣṭrakūṭa epoch, giving room for Kannada. It is Nagarajaiah (1999: 54f.) who first established the fact based on all the extant Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions:

“[T]he influence of the Gaṅgas on their superior, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, was in the field of religion and language, in other words Jainism and Kannada. Many of the emperors of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa royal house faithfully followed Jaina church because of the impact of the Gaṅgas. Kannada became the official language and was adopted as their mother tongue, thanks to the Gaṅgas. Following is the statistics and distribution of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa inscriptions, as I have worked out: out of 516 charters of the period, 340 are in Kannada, 90 are in Sanskrit, 104 are in Tamil, 7 are in Telugu and only one in Marāṭhi, and out of 90 Sanskrit epigraphs, 19 are bilingual of which 17 are in Sanskrit and Kannada. This predominance of Kannada was due to the power exerted by the Gaṅgas”.

The author's work *Rāṣṭrakūṭa: Re-Revisited* (2000/2014) deals extensively with the status of Sanskrit, Kannada and Prakrit literature during the epoch that witnessed brilliant moments of unprecedented transformation in literature, culture and political power. This important information also has escaped SP's eagle eye!

Jain Brahmin

Swayed by the literal meaning of the word “Jain Brahmin”, SP concludes they were Brahmins. The phrase “Jain Brahmin”, is a synonym of other words for Jain priests whose main profession is temple worship:

“*Paṇḍita* is an epithet denoting a priest and occasionally connoting *nāṭi-vaidya*, ‘a native doctor’, practicing the system of Indian Medicine (Āyurveda). In Tuḷunāḍu (South Kanara), the Jaina priest is called *Indra*, in North Karnāṭaka he is referred as *Paṇḍita* or *Upādhye*. But in common parlance *arcaka*, *purohita*, *pūjāri* - are the words used more frequently for the priest” (Nagarajaiah 2009: 2).

The word denotes priesthood and has nothing to do with Hindu Brahmanas:

“It is of historical significance that the system of Gosāsa, gifting a herd of cows to the priests of Jaina church was initiated by the Senavāras. Mārakke (760), a Jaina Duchy of Banavāsī *viśaya* (State), endowed Gosāsa to the Jaina clerics Devesena Paṇḍita and Ādityasena Paṇḍita” (Nagarajaiah 2005: 68).

SP states that “Brāhmaṇas produced *kāvya* in Prakrit and Apabhramsha. For another, Brāhmaṇas were as prominent in the vernacular revolution as non-Brāhmaṇas [...]; indeed they often helped initiate it (Mādhava Kandali in fourteenth-century Assam and Viṣṇudās in fifteenth century Gwalior are two in a very long list)” (p. 424). True, “Brāhmaṇas produced *kāvya*s in Prakrit and Apabhramśa during 14th and 15th centuries”. But, long before that, Jains (Buddhists) had produced a number of works in different genres and set models. Pālitta (Sk. Pādalipta, 1st-2nd century) had authored the magnificent classic, the *Taraṅgavatī* (Ollett 2017, 2018). Later Caturmukha (C. 800), Svayaṃbhudeva (850-900), Puṣpadanta (925-975) and other Jaina writers produced brilliant literature.

Once again, this statement is out of context, because pleading for Brāhmaṇas writing later was unnecessary. Moreover, in the context of Kannada literature and Karnataka history, this statement is erroneous. Brāhmaṇa writers entry was only at a far later stage, and have gracefully acknowledged that they derived inspiration from Jains classics. Jaina ascetic and scholar-poet Vādirāja (C. 990-1000), who had the sobriquet of *rāja-guru*, “royal-teacher”, was respected by one and all. Jagadekamalla Jayasiṃha (1018-1042), king of the Kalyāṇa Cālukyas, poets Nāgavarma II (1042) and Śāntinātha (1062) were his disciples. Brāhmaṇa poet Durgasiṃha (1031) was also Vādirāja’s *śiṣya* and got his poem the *Pañcatantra* corrected by Vādirāja. Durgasiṃha has remembered a galaxy of Jain poets - Śrīvijaya, Asaga, Pampa, Ponna, Kannamayya and Manasija. Rudrabhaṭṭa (1175), another Brāhmaṇa poet, also mentions many Jaina poets who were his predecessors - Pampa, Ponna, Gajāṃkuśa, Kaṇṇapa, Śaṃkhavarma, Śāṃtivarma, Guṇavarma and Manasija, and cherishes for their poetic qualities to adorn his poem. Thus, Brāhmaṇa writers were aware of the glory and contribution of Jaina literatures. Nāraṇappa alias Kumāravayāsa (1419-1446) wrote the epic *Bhārata Kathāmañjari* (*Gadugina Bhārata*) in *Bhāminī Śatpadi* metre, decoding what Pampa and Ranna wrote in *campū* style. Thus, the clinching evidences from the contemporary literary fraternity are self-explanatory and confirm Jaina imprints.

Despite being aware of the fact that the relationship between language, literature and religion is superficial, it is surprising why SP stumbled on this irrelevant topic of Brahmin and non-Brahmin, which dilutes the cordial atmosphere that prevailed during the period under discussion. The entire argument on this subject does not lead us anywhere.

SP speaks of Brāhmaṇa or Vaidika writers and their influence, and at the same time forgets of Jaina influence on the former. Scholars have noted that the *Pañcatantra* of Durgasiṃha (1031) is based on the work of the Jaina Vasubhāga's tradition (Venketasubbiah 1934). The Brahmin poet Durgasiṃha has acknowledged that he was a pupil of a Jaina teacher and highly influenced by Jaina writers. SP is very much aware of such omissions: "the author cannot possibly be an authority in every area of literary culture examined, and he must to some degree rely on the learning of his colleagues" (Pollock 2006: xii). This statement also applies to the author of this critique. But the wrong statements tend to send wrong messages and mislead the readers.

SP depends, and very frequently refers to only one particular source. If he were to come in contact with a larger array of scholars in the field like M. Chidanandamurti, M.M. Kalburgi, S. Settar, H. Nagarajaiah and B.A. Viveka Rai, no doubt both he and his readers would have been still more benefited.

Despite commissions and omissions, it should be placed on record that SP has done a commendable service to Kannada language and literature. His devotion and command over Kannada literature and political history is transparent. He quotes from local classics and gives English translations, and the readers experience a taste of Kannada. There may be excellent books or monographs on the language, literature, culture and polity of each state and country, either in English or in local languages. Albeit, a comprehensive work of this magnitude, covering entire Southern Asia, is very rare.

Appendix

Transliteration of Halmiḍi Inscription (C. 450)

1. jayati śrī pariṣvāṅga śārṅga vyānatir-acyutāḥ dānavākṣṇor yugānt-āgniḥ śiṣṭānāntu sudarśanaḥ
2. namaḥ śrīmat kadaṃbapan tyāga-saṃpannan kalabhōranā ari ka-
3. kustha-bhaṭṭōran āḷe naridāviḷe nāḍuḷ mṛgēśa nā
4. gēndr-ābhīḷar bhbhaṭahar-appor śrī mṛgēśa nāgāhvaya
5. rirvarā baṭari-kul-āmala vyōma tārādhi-nāthann aḷapa
6. gaṇa paśupatiyā dakṣiṇāpatha bahu śata havanā
7. havaduḷ paśu pradāna śauryyōdyama bharitōn dāna pa-
8. śupatiyendu pogaleppottaṇa paśupati
9. nāmadhēyanā sarakkella bhaṭariyā prēmālaya
10. sutange sēndraka bāṇōbhaya dēśadā vīra-puruṣa samakṣa-
11. de kēkaya pallavaraṃ kāderidu petta jayanā vija

12. arasange bālgaḷcu palmaḍium mūlivaḷum ko-
13. ṭṭār baṭāri kuladōn aḷa kadambaṅ kaḷadōn mahāpātakan
14. irvvaruṅ saḷbaṅadar vijārasaruṅ palmaḍige kuṟu
15. mbiḍi viṭṭār adān aḷivornge mahāpātakam svasti
16. bhaṭṭargāḷde oḍḍali ā pattondi viṭṭār akara

Epitome

Acyuta (the Perfect One, Viṣṇu), who is embraced by Lakṣmī; who, to the demons, is like the fire of *Praḷaya* (universal destruction) and who, to the virtuous, is like *Sudarśana* (the wheel of protection); and who holds the bow called *Śārṅga*, bent, triumphs.

Prostrations. During the rule of the Kadamba king Kakustha Bhaṭṭāra, who was a very generous and who was the enemy of Kalabhora, there were two officers by name Mṛgeśa and Nāga, who were a threat to their foe, in the region called Naridāviḷe. Paśupati, who was like the Moon to the sky of Baṭāri lineage, who was like Śiva a great leader of the Aḷapa clan, who was famous in the entire *Dakṣiṅāpatha* (Southern India) for his brave acts like sacrificing innumerable cows (killing enemies) in *yajnyas* (wars), was praised by all as the “generous *Paśupati*”. On his invitation, Vija Arasa, the loving son of Kella Bhaṭāri, along with the brave warriors of Sendraka and Bāṅa provinces, won against and killed the Pallavas and Kekayas, in war. (In recognition of such bravery) the officers Mṛgeśa and Nāga gifted the two villages Palmaḍi and Mūlivaḷli to Vija Arasa as *bālgaḷchchu* (“washing the sword”). Aḷakadamba of Bhaṭāri lineage. Whoever steals this (gift) will be committing a great sin.

Both these Mṛgeśa and Nāga from Saḷbanga and Vija Arasa have exempted tax regarding Palmaḍi. Whoever destroys this (inscription) will be committing a great sin. Benediction for all.

Of the total yield of the fields (in the two villages), one tenth is gifted to Brahmins free from taxes.

ABBREVIATIONS

EC	Epigraphia Carnatica
EI	Epigraphia Indica
KRM	Kavirājamārga
LG	Language of the Gods
SB	Śravaṇabelagoḷa
SP	Sheldon Pollock
VAV	Vikramārjunavijaya (Pampabhārata)

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