

# A Vedic Word-Concordance

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[14 PARTS]

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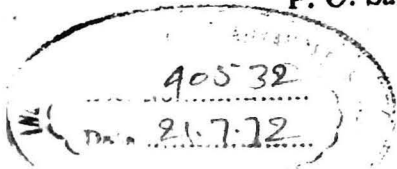
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# Formation of the Present Tense in the South Dravidian Languages

By

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The sign of present time in the South Dravidian languages is not alike throughout. Caldwell has drawn attention to the affinities in this respect between Kannaḍa (=Ka.) and Telugu (=Te.) on the one hand and Tamil (=Ta.) and Malayālam (=Ma.) on the other. Of the languages having a participle of the present probably based on a future, Caldwell mentions Tulu, (=Tu.), Tuda and Kōta; and he surmises that *v*, *b*, or *p* as the case may be, used in this connexion is identical with the Ta. Ma. Ka. future.<sup>1</sup> Caldwell's observation may be supplemented by including Coorg also under this group. The paper is an attempt to discuss the present forms in the various languages and to suggest, wherever possible, their origins. It may be noted that only the existing and popular forms in the different dialects have been considered below.

## 1. *Tamil*

The Present Tense in Ta. is formed by suffixing *kir* or *kind* to the verbal theme of which the former is in more common use. Caldwell has no doubt that these are identical in origin and that the one is either an euphonised or corrupted form of the other. The view that the nasal element has come for purposes of euphony cannot be acceptable to the modern philologists. Nor can a combination like *ñā* show a loss of the nasal according to Ta. ways of pronunciation. Hence we have to consider them as two different suffixes.

On a comparison of forms like Ta. *naḍakkindān* 'he walks', with Ma. *naḍakkunnu* and also Ta. *vaṇgiṇḍāṇ* 'he comes,' with Ma. *vaṇunnu*, Caldwell jumps, without any hesitation, to the conclusion that Ma. *-unn-* < *-inn-* is a softened and euphonised form of the Ta. participle. The colloquial Ta. form *pōrēn* instead of *pōgirēn* 'I go,' is pointed out by him in support of the discarding of the initial *k* of *kind*. With regard to the origin of *kir*, Caldwell holds the view that it is a corrupted form of *kind*.

The contention that the Ta. sign of the present time had an initial *k* to start with, is difficult to establish. It is likely that the original suffix was *-ir-*

1. Caldwell : *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian*, pp. 490-495.

or *-ind-*, the *k* being a later development. If the suffix had an initial *k*, forms like Ta. *āgiṇd'ān* 'he is', and *pōgiṇd'ān* 'he goes', should have actually become *ākkiṇd'ān* and *pōkkiṇd'ān*. For, we definitely know that the roots of the above verbs are *āk-* and *pōk-* respectively and not *ā-* and *pō-* as conjectured by grammarians. Ma. *āyi* and *pōyi*, and Ta. and Ma. *āgum* and *pōgum* go to prove that the root ended in *k*. It may be noted here that *āyi* is from earlier *āk-i*, *y* being a glide arising after the loss of occlusion of *k* in between vowels. This, together with the fact that Ma. shows invariably *-unn-* < *-inn-* in the present, perhaps favours the supposition that *k* in the Ta. present is a later addition through dissociation from roots ending in *k*. Sometimes *kiṇd'* will be found to be constituted of *k*, the final consonant of a verb-extension and *ind'* as in Ta. *ōdugiṇd'ān* 'he runs.'

It will be clear from the above that the basis of Ta. *giṇd'* and Ma. *inn-* is the same while *ir* found in Ta. *-kir-* is altogether a different suffix. With regard to the origin of Ta. *-ind'* and Ma. *-ind'*, I am inclined to think that it is derived from the past stem of a verbal root *il-* meaning 'to be or to exist'. The past stem *il-nd* which is a combination of *il-* and *nd*, an element denoting past sense appearing in certain classes of verbs (cf. Ta. *tirndān*, *cērndān* etc.) will show a development of *ind* in Ta. and *inn* in Ma. The more commonly used Ta. *-ir-* as in *āgirān* and *pōgirān* is perhaps the Ta. root *ir-* surviving in *irattal* 'to pass by, elapse as time'. As pointed out by Rāja Rāja Varma Ta. *irandadu* meaning 'that which has passed out', would justify the assumption of a root *ir-* or *ira-* in the sense of 'that which is passing out', that is to say, the present<sup>2</sup>. The long consonants occurring before *-ind-* or *-ir-* as in Ta. *naḍakkind'ān*, *naḍakkirān*, *eḍukkind'ān*, *eḍukkirān* will have to be explained as resulting from root-extensions.

## 2. Malayālam

Early Ma. poetry shows *-ind'* as the present sign. The alveolar pronunciation of *nd* in *ind'* is evidently a Tamilism that has crept into ancient Ma. literature. The spoken language must have had *-ind-* which with the nasal assimilation and the change of *i* to *u* has given rise to modern *-unn-*. Thus the modern spoken forms *vaṭunnu* and *pōgunnu* are derived from *var-inn-u* and *pōg-inn-u* < *var-ind-u* and *pōg-ind-u* respectively. It has already been pointed out that *-ind-* had originally a past significance in that it is a combination of *il-* 'to exist' and the past suffix *nd-*. The reason for the change of *i* to *u* may be either as suggested by L. V. Ramaswami Iyer<sup>3</sup>

2. *Keralapāṇiṭyam* p. 230.

3. *The Evolution of Malayalam Morphology*, p. 62.

the weak stress falling upon the syllable with *i* or as suggested by me<sup>4</sup> the influence of the final *u* developing in the place of personal terminations. How the personal terminations were discarded in Ma. and *u* came to be used instead has been discussed by me in my Presidential Address at the Linguistic Section of the All India Oriental Conference held in Lucknow<sup>5</sup>.

### 3. Kannada

Ka. has *utt* in the present form. See *māḍ-utt-enē* 'I make', *māḍ-utt-ī*, 'thou makest', and *māḍ-utt-ānē*, 'he makes' etc. The present and future relative participles are identical in Ka., their respective meaning being generally understood from context<sup>6</sup>. See *māḍuva* 'who does or who will do', *āḍuva* 'who plays or who will play'. In this respect Ka. agrees with Coorg and Tu. Kittel takes *utu* to be the primitive form and observes that *utu* is known to be another form of *ndu* the intermediate demonstrative pronoun neuter, from which *udu*, analogously to the formation of *attu* from *adu* and *ittu* from *idu*, *uttu* may be formed<sup>7</sup>. Kittel thinks that *tu* of *utu* has doubled for purposes of euphony. Kittel's view that *ttu* for *tu* is an euphonic development does not seem to be correct. When all intervocalic *t* has generally changed to *d* in Ka., why in this case alone there should be a doubling is not considered by him. The doubling of neuter demonstrative pronouns is seldom met with in the main Dravidian Languages.

Rare instances in Ta. are *eñṇattei* (acc.) 'what', and *eñṇattukku* (dat.) 'for what', from *eñṇadu*, 'what'. In all such instances we have to explain the doubling as having resulted from *d* combining with *t*. Likewise in the Ka. present *-utt-* also the lengthening of the stop must be due to a voiceless dental stop following. What this *t* signified is a matter to be investigated. Perhaps it may have indicated some general connexion and as such used in a possessive sense. For a similar apparent doubling of final *d* see Ta. *eluttw* from *eludw* 'to write', where we are sure that the combining element are *d* and *t*. Hence in Ka. *onduttā* 'joining', *māḍuattā* 'making' etc., it is necessary to infer that some assimilation is manifested. Where single voiceless stop is found as in *bāluta* 'living', it is obvious that *-t-* is a simplification from *-tt-*. It is a matter for consideration whether the Ka. present *utt* is formed in the way Kittel has suggested or whether it is the remnant of an auxiliary verb as in the case of Ta. and Ma. There is to be found in Ka. a root *uru* meaning 'to be, come about, arise' and its past participle is *utt*. It is not unlikely that

4. The Presidential Address, Indian Linguistic Section, All India Oriental Conference 16th Session, p. 32.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

6. Kittel : *A Grammar of the Kannaḍa Language*, p. 113.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Ka. developed the present sign on lines similar to that of Ta. Perhaps further researches may give us a definite clue on this point.

#### 4. Telugu

Arden in his *Telugu Grammar*, p. 97, says that in Te. the progressive present is formed by adding *unna*, the present relative participle of the primary verb *undu* 'to be' to the present verbal participle, while the habitual present and the future tense is formed by changing final *u* of the present verbal participle into *ā*. Thus we get *kottutunnānu* 'I am striking', *kottutānu* 'I strike or I shall strike'. Forms with *t* occur only in the colloquial dialect while the refined speech shows *c* as *kottucunnānu* against *kottutunnānu*.

Caldwell and Arden are inclined to think that forms with *t* are the original. The change of *t* to *c* is not explained by them; and it may be remarked here that such a change is normally impossible. The present form may, however, be analysed as either *kott-uc-unnānu* or *kott-ut-unnānu*. The origin of *-uc-* or *-ut-* is unknown. Whether this is a remnant of an auxiliary just as in Ta. and Ka. is a matter worth investigating.

#### 5. Tulu

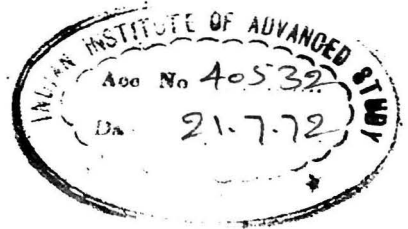
When we compare Tu. present forms like *parpe* 'I drink', *paṇpe* 'I say', *tūpe* 'I see', *kēṇuve* 'I hear', *būruve* 'I fall', it would be possible for us to know that *p* is the normal present sign. Where there is *-v-* to be found in its place, the present sign has obviously been added to an extended form of the root i.e., the root + *-u-*. Although Tu. distinguishes the present from the future as in *parpe* 'I drink', *paruve* 'I shall drink', *paṇpe* 'I say', *paṇuve* 'I shall say', the present and the future may be said to have taken more or less the same sign.

#### 6. Coorg

Coorg has the same form in the present and future. See *avā baṇṇa* 'he comes or he will come', *nānu kalippi* 'I play or I will play', and also *oḍuvānāyi* 'the dog which runs or which will run', *baṇṇa pūṇe* 'the cat which comes or the cat which will be coming'. The tense sign in these instances is definitely *-p-* which when in combination with a preceding consonant remains voiceless and when occurring in between vowels, changes to *-v-*. The same principle is manifested in Ta. future forms also.

Subramonia Sastry's view that it is the glide *-v-* that has given rise to *-p-* does not seem to be correct. He says that *-v-* of *po-(v)-ān* came to be regarded at a later stage as a tense affix and that this might have been introduced

between the roots ending in consonants and personal terminations. The reason for the change of *-v-* to *-p-* is, according to him, ease of pronunciation<sup>8</sup>. The truth is that *-p-* when added to the final consonant of a root or a root-extension is preserved as voiceless and that the same *-p-* when added to a root or root-extension ending in a vowel, changes to *-v-*. There is no case in pronunciation involved in the change of *-v-* to *-p-*.



8. *Comparative Grammar of Tamil Language*, p. 187.