

## **Evolutionary History of the Telugu Language**

*by Potluri Rao In Seattle ©2018 (CC BY 4.0)*

Was the Telugu language of South India born in Telangana or Coastal Andhra? People argued on both sides during the Telangana Movement.

What follows is a testable hypothesis to show that Telugu was born in rich plains of the East Coast (Kalinga) as Teli. Around 2000 BCE, it was expelled from Kalinga by migrant Agni people.

The migrant Agni people spoke Sanskrit. What is currently known as Telugu is actually literary Andhra. Andhra is a hybrid of Teli and Sanskrit. Teli was the original Telugu before Sanskrit was introduced in Kalinga. Teli did not contain any Sanskrit words. Teli was virgin Telugu.

The word Telugu was coined by CP Brown (1853). Before that, Telugu was known as Teli, Gentoo, Telogoo, and so on.

There are more than a dozen documented spoken dialects of Teli that do not contain any Sanskrit words. Teli of Telangana (Telingana) is one of many dialects of virgin Telugu. The Koya language spoken in the northern part of Telangana is also a dialect of Teli.

### **Background**

West Indus (Persia) and East Indus (India) were separated by the Indus river, a natural barrier. Originally, West Indus had three groups of people: Agni, Asura, and Deva.

Around 3000 BCE, the Agni group migrated to India, to the present-day Punjab area. Around 2000 BCE, they migrated to Kalinga in South India, along the north bank of the Narmada river called Janastan. They lost all contact with Persia. The Asura and Deva people lived in Persia. The Agni in Kalinga had nothing to do with them.

Agni people were farmers who tilled the soil. They were hard-working people who moved to Kalinga in search of fertile lands to cultivate. They formed an alliance with mercenaries called Indra, for protection. Indra were skilled warriors who provided protection along the migration path and in settlements. They were paid thugs on Agni payroll. They cleared the area of local people to make room for the Agni.

Indra and Agni of Kalinga confiscated prime lands in the rich plains and expelled natives to marginal lands of high-ground. Agni transformed local languages in occupied areas.

The Agni migrated along the north bank of the Narmada river to the Mahanadi river area, Amarkantak. From there, they moved to the Godavari delta, at a later date. They never crossed the Krishna river. The Agni people settled in Kalinga region. They were intellectuals. They invented logic. They composed the Rig Veda and the original Valmiki Ramayana.

The language of South India, before the Agni, was ancient Tamil called Kui.

### **Hypothesis:**

**The longer Agni occupied an area in the Kalinga plains, the higher the elevation to which the native languages were pushed.**

It is a testable hypothesis. It is falsifiable by valid empirical evidence.

### **Empirical test 1**

Before the Agni, the South Indian language, called Dravidian, had three different flavors: to the north of the Mahanadi river (Janastan) it was Kui; above the Krishna river it was Telugu (Teli in Dravidian); and below the Krishna river it was Tamil (Aravam in Dravidian).

Teli was a dialect of Kui. Kui was the language of plains in Orissa (Odisha) before the Agni. Today, only less than one million hill people in Eastern Ghats speak Kui. A variation of Kui called Kuvi is also spoken among these people. Even today, many words have the same meaning in Kuvi and Telugu; for example, talli=mother, aalu=wife, illu=house, paalu=milk, kannu=eye, mranu=tree, pallu=tooth, tala=head, donga=thief, aku=leaf, and karuvu= famine.

In Telugu, the word Konda (Ko in Dravidian) means hill. People who were expelled to hills by the Agni, were called Konda (Konda Reddi, Konda Kapu, Konda Dora, Koya).

Teli people, who were expelled to high-ground by the Agni, were called Teli-nga (Teli-nga-na). In Kui and Kuvi, -nga is plural termination, like -s and -es of English; for example, A-nga (foreign people, Bihar), Va-nga (faraway people, Bengal), Kali-nga (plains people), Koi-nga (hill people), Kui-nga, Kuvi-nga, and Teli-nga. Kui -> Kuvi -> Teli was evolutionary progression of the language.

All spoken dialects of South India and many of North India trace their origin to the Kui language. Literary versions of languages are artificial, only spoken dialects reveal their ancestry.

The Agni never crossed the Krishna river. Tamil has no Sanskrit words. Tamil is spoken today in rich plains of the East Coast.

Dravidian languages Kui, Teli (Telugu), and Aravam (Tamil) that were originally spoken in rich plains of the East Coast, are now spoken respectively in hill, high-ground, and plains as predicted by the hypothesis. The Agni occupied the Kui land the longest. They did not occupy the Aravam land. The evidence is in favor of the hypothesis.

The first published Telugu grammar, in English, Carey (1814), was titled Telinga. The first published Telugu dictionary, William Brown (1818), was titled Gentoo. In Madras Presidency, British administrators called it Telinga, Portuguese called it Gentoo, and missionaries called it Teloogoo. Telinga, Gentoo, and Teloogoo were (non-literary) spoken dialects of ordinary people. CP Brown (1853) popularized literary Andhra as Telugu; British followed suit. Nizam of Hyderabad retained the original name Telinga. Linguistic Survey of India (1906) volume 4 documented one dozen distinctive spoken Telugu (Teli) dialects. None of them have any Sanskrit words. They were virgin Telugu, untouched by Agni.

The language of Orissa, Oriya (Odia), is a hybrid of Kui and the Prakrit of Agni people.

The language of Kalinga, Andhra, is a hybrid of Teli and the Sanskrit of Agni people.

Prakrit and Sanskrit were spoken by early and latter-day Agni settlers.

The languages Oriya derived from Prakrit and Andhra derived from Sanskrit were spoken in Agni settlements. Tamil was untouched by Agni and was not impacted by Sanskrit. The Agni never crossed the Krishna river.

Hill people of the Eastern Ghats were misunderstood. Koya, Kuvi, and Konda were original Dravidians who used to live in the rich plains of East. They spoke ancient Dravidian. They were expelled by Agni to marginal highlands.

Andhra is the language of the Agni occupied region. Contour maps of proportion of Sanskrit words used by rural population in casual conversations would establish the area and duration of Agni settlements in Kalinga.

## **Empirical test 2**

Agni migrated from North to South, from Mahanadi to Krishna. The hypothesis predicts that among the hill people we should observe dialects from North to South in the order of evolution Kui -> Kuvi -> Konda -> Koya -> Teli of Telangana.

Census data on density of languages spoken by hill people of Eastern Ghats is in favor of the hypothesis.

## **Empirical test 3**

Agni never crossed the Krishna river. Annamayya, Kshetrayya, and Vemana lived below the Krishna and their work was meant for common folk. The hypothesis predicts that we should observe high concentration of Teli (Virgin Telugu) words in their work. The evidence is in favor of the hypothesis.

## **Empirical test 4**

The hypothesis predicts that from Rajahmundry to Hyderabad, East to West, one should observe that proportion of Teli (Virgin Telugu) words in casual conversations among native rural population should increase with distance traveled. Urban population, transplanted Andhra, and literary work should be excluded.

During the Telangana debate, people who argued in favor of a separate Telangana State produced many examples in favor of the hypothesis.

## **Maintained Hypothesis**

The evidence is consistent with the hypothesis. The hypothesis is verified. Since we are unable to reject the stated testable hypothesis, it stands as a maintained (Not False) hypothesis. It is necessary but not sufficient. It could be shown to be false by future evidence.

## **Dasyu people in the Rig Veda**

The evidence suggests that the extant Rig Veda was finalized in Kalinga; most likely around 1500 BCE.

Agni and Indra were inseparable in Kalinga. Indra provided protection along the migration path and also to the settlements. Agni tilled the soil. They paid Indra for protection.

Exploits of Indra and their addiction to intoxicants were glorified in the Rig Veda.

Indra were mercenaries, on Agni payroll. They were rented like equipment, each worth ten milch cows.

**[04.024.10] 10 Who for ten milch-kine purchaseth from me this Indra who is mine? When he hath slain the Vrtras let the buyer give him back to me.**

The following slokas from the Rig Veda are in favor of the hypothesis that Dasyu were the Kui people who were expelled by Indra, alone (1.33.4), westward (7.6.3), to die on mountain (8.59.11), and their property was given to Agni (1.176.4).

**[01.033.4] 4 Thou slewest with thy bolt the wealthy Dasyu, alone, yet going with thy helpers, Indra! Far from the floor of heaven in all directions, the ancient riteless ones fled to destruction.**

**[07.006.3] 3 The foolish, faithless, rudely-speaking niggards, without belief or sacrifice or worship,- Far far sway hath Agni chased those Dasyus, and, in the east, hath turned the godless westward.**

**[08.059.11] 11 The man who brings no sacrifice, inhuman, godless, infidel, Him let his friend the mountain cast to rapid death, the mountain cast the Dasyu down.**

**[01.176.4] 4 Slay everyone who pours no gift, who, hard to reach, delights thee not. Bestow on us what wealth he hath: this even the worshiper awaits.**

[Reading material](#)

[Home](#)