Twitter Thread by ■■■■■■ ■ pvaal

■■■■■■ ■ pvaal
@pvaal2

■■■■■■■■■ - Dead or Alive?

Came across a discussion on BVP that linked to a few leading western Indologists opining on the Sanskrit Revival movement & the spoken Sanskrit movement

https://t.co/KXFQU9exUx

Quite instructive!

Spoken sanskrit movement fills Sheldon Bollocks with nausea 118 views Subscribe

विश्वासो वासुकेयः Jun 14, 2021, 9:13:39 AM

to bhAratIya-vidvat-pariShad भारतीय-विद्वत्परिषद्

Per his words in this video snippet: https://twitter.com/pvaal2/status/1301890398407856128

Also interesting are his views at https://twitter.com/pvaal2/status/1301913079563812866 : "Inheritors of a past that they did not create themselves have an obligation to share it ... "

The premise is wrong, of course. I find it very striking that one does not see oneself as an extension of one's forefathers (sagely or otherwise). Perhaps this comes from not feeling gratitude towards and revering them (via tarpaNa type rituals). Quite ahistorical an attitude for one so obsessed with it.

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Vishvas /विश्वासः

Nagaraj Paturi Jun 14, 2021, 9:59:35 AM

to Bharatiya Vidvat parishad

Regarding the words of Prof. Pollock in the first video clip:

1. Spoken Sanskrit movement is not happening in the place of or to replace the creative use of Sanskrit. We have been showing to the world how the creativity in Sanskrit did not stop from 1800 as observed by him in his Death of Sanskrit piece. We have been showing how creativity in Sanskrit continued during the from 1800 as before if not in more ways than before, till date. Spoken Sanskrit movement did not and does not obstruct that incessant continuation. It can , if at all , add to it, by bringing more people with more variegated contemporary and modern backgrounds into Sanskrit creativity. That is showing up today.

One of his arguments in his Death of Sanskrit piece is that modernity did not get articulated through Sanskrit. Ordering Chai in Sanskrit on Bengaluru street is part of articulation of an entire contemporary Indian life through Sanskrit. He must have the scholarly ability to understand the change that language of his focus is undergoing through such a colossal movement. How it results in new literary artefacts for him to study is what he has to look for and apply his scholarship to.

Regarding his words in the second video clip:

2. What a ridiculous argument !

'which you did not create' is the most hurting part of it, hurting not only to Indians but all the global communities participating in the preservation and continuance of the cultural and knowledge heritage whether in the form of oral, written and other forms of texts or in the form of memory, inherited from their ancestors.

Even from a common legal understanding, did we all create the properties that we inherit from our ancestors and own with all the rights ?

Apart from a community cultural heritage as a right of the inheritor, do the libraries that restrict access to their collections and holdings only to those having membership on the basis of certain criteria also are wrong in doing so ?

The starting point - the famous chai video of Pollock (Padma Shri 2010)

Efforts to revive or ‘speak’ ■■■■■■■■■ as exemplified by unwashed Hindoos trying to order ■■■■■■■■■■ in Sanscreet memorably filled Prof. Pollock with ‘nwosayae’ ■ https://t.co/HMEfonAsnw

As a background, worthwhile to hear what Prof. Pollock wants to see happen for \u0938\u0902\u0938\u094d\u0915\u0943\u0924\u092e\u094d\u0964

Don\u2019t you dare order Chai in \u0938\u0902\u0938\u094d\u0915\u0943\u0924\u092e\u094d\u0964 \U0001f602

> And while you are at it, check out the \u0909\u091a\u094d\u091a\u093e\u0930\u0923\u092e\u094d\u0964\U0001f60e pic.twitter.com/S1nlE1DQdh
>
> — \u092a\u094d\u0935\u093e\u0932\u0903 \u0964 pvaal (@pvaal2) September 4, 2020

The evocatively titled Death of Sanskrit by Sheldon Pollock had crystallized the Indological view that Sanskrit is dead & its best left dead!

He also shared a horror of Hindoos, ‘Inheritors of a past that they did not create themselves’ actually daring to bring it back to life https://t.co/lnunp8639E

> For a second snort of this exquisite high colonial discourse!
>
> Brilliant exemplar of the \u2018white man\u2019s burden\u2019 and cultural appropriation
>
> How dare some desert dweller deny me photographing his rare Sanscrit manuscripts? I offered him a FREE digital CD ROM in return \U0001f602\U0001f601\U0001f923 pic.twitter.com/oEA5odNzCb
>
> — \u092a\u094d\u0935\u093e\u0932\u0903 \u0964 pvaal (@pvaal2) September 4, 2020

Now most ■■■■■■■■■ learners will find it most perplexing !

Why should an Indologist, a lifelong Sanskritist have such a horror of ■■■■■■■■■ springing back to life?

■■■■■■■ ■■■?

To help ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ understand their PoV, an instructive thread is attached

Prof. Stella Sandahl, an Emeritus Professor at Dept. of East Asian Studies has this opening remark

‘How can we rescue Sanskrit from these vandals’?

She claims that speaking Sanskrit is correlated with demolishing temples & violating nuns!

This is a Professor & a Sanskritist!

Stella Sandahl ssandahl at SYMPATICO.CA
Wed Aug 13 03:49:54 EDT 2008

- Previous message: Electronic version of Mani's Puranic Encyclopaedia
- Next message: AW: Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

In the current debate about "spoken Sanskrit" I believe we are talking about two different things. It is one thing when for example a Bengali pandit speaks to Telugu pandit in Sanskrit in order to debate finer points in a text, or a philosophical issue, a literary allusion and so forth. Sanskrit is then their common language, a language of learning, of elegance and wit. And this is quite wonderful.

It is an entirely different matter to try to revive and 'modernize' Sanskrit. Lying on a table in our university library I found a typical example of the latter. There were new-fangled "Sanskrit" words for money order, check-out counter, bus station, bank draft - as if one finds these things in classical Sanskrit texts! These manuals are quite ridiculous: I found a sentence like ahaM sevaphalAni khAdAmi which was supposed to mean 'I eat apples'. First, as far as I know there were no apples in classical India (weren't they brought in by Babur?), second the word seva is obviously modeled on Hindi seb 'apple' from the Persian sib with the same meaning. This is exactly in line with the examples given by Professor Nair: "adya kati iddali bhakshitam?" "adya chayam piitam kim?", equally ridiculous. My niece in Delhi once asked to help her with her Sanskrit homework. She had to translate the sentence "Kings live in palaces" into Sanskrit. The word given by the teacher for palace was 'mahala' !!! I tried to convince the little girl that there was no such word in Sanskrit. In vain. The girl said :"teacher says it is mahala", and that was what it had to be.

It is very sad to se how the ignorant Hindutva forces demean and make the wonderful classical language into something trivial and ridiculous. How do we stop them?
How can we rescue Sanskrit from these vandals? I doubt that the sevaphalAni-eating student in his mahala can read and understand even one line by Kalidasa or Bana or Jayadeva.
But he can cut the throat of those who cannot speak his so called Sanskrit. When he is not busy demolishing mosques and raping nuns.

Stella Sandahl

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A raft of Indian compradors & native informants support this view

For e.g an Indian ‘Professor of Sanskrit’ is echoing the pernicious nature of spoken [redacted]

So, [redacted]? may be the Hindoo revivalist equivalent of the infamous East Pakistani lungi test[redacted]

Maheswaran Nair swantam at ASIANETINDIA.COM
Thu Aug 14 11:00:55 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit
- Next message (by thread): Arches
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

Dear list,
I agree that Sanskrit teachers and students should surely learn to fluently communicate in Sanskrit. The present state (especialyy in Kerala)is deplorable.
Objection is against utilising Sanskrit for "other" purposes. Hindutvavadins have specific agenda behind popularising Sanskrit. They have brought out many books among which a small one entitled "Samskrtam vada aadhuniko bhava"(published from Aluva, Kerala) contains their sectarian approach.**They consider Sanskrit only as the cultural language of India which is far from truth. They paste everywhere a poster which reads "Samskrtam bharatasya samskrtikabhasha".** What about other Indian languages? **Making use of Sanskrit in place of Ramakshetra for demolishing Babrimasjid is objectionable.**
You know what happened in Gujarat. First the poster containing AUM was pasted in front of houses of Hindus as a distinguishing mark for the convenience of Hindu rioteers before "action". **My humble doubt and fear is that Sanskrit will be used as a "marker" in the coming years.Let it not happen.**
Regards
K.Maheswaran Nair

Maheswaran Nair swantam at ASIANETINDIA.COM
Wed Aug 13 06:42:17 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit
- Next message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

Hello,

In Malayalam, my native tongue, 60 to 70 percent words of the language of an educated Malayalee are Sanskrit. In many Indian languages the state of this affair will slightly change. Such people need not make Sanskrit their spoken language. **There is hidden agenda behind popularising spoken Sanskrit. Hindu revivalists and communalists are popularising it. They have organizations for the same. At times of mass murders of people belonging to other religions there is need to distinguish them. "Interested parties" have plans to make Sanskrit the national language of India. A time may come when during purposely created communal riots, the question will be put "bhavaan samskrtam janaati kim?" Those who reply in the affirmative in Sanskrit will be spared and others will be butchered.**
I am also fluent in Sanskrit and have evolved an easy method for teaching Spoken Sanskrit, not the spoken Sanskrit popularised by the revivalists which is like "adya kati iddali bhakshitam?" "adya chayam piitam kim?".
Regards
K.Maheswaran Nair
Professor of Sanskrit
University of Kerala
India

HH Hock, a leading Indologist, takes a more nuanced , but still negative view

Spoken ■■■■■■■■■■■■ is a pidgin & creates a false, manufactured sense of Identity!

hhhock hhhock at EXPRESS.CITES.UIUC.EDU
Wed Aug 13 15:31:11 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- Next message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

The thread on spoken Sanskrit has been very interesting, and some points strike me as quite a propos. First, I don't see any problems with neologisms. Even if we ignore the sometimes controversial examples of supposed Dravidian borrowing in early Vedic and the much less controversial ones in later Vedic and post-Vedic (such as niira-), or the late borrowings from North Indian languages in late Sanskrit texts, there is evidence for borrowing at many other stages, and in many different spheres (consider e.g. (tri-)koNa, horaa and the like, from Greek). Moreover, if Sanskrit is to be used in a modern context, not only to discuss fine points of philosophy or grammar, it has to be modernized to make it possible to talk about trains, apples, and the like (and hybrids like relayaana strike me as much more felicitous than words such as agniratha(...)yaana). There is a problem, however, as far as the lexicon goes, namely the whole-scale importation of Sanskrit-derived Hindi, Marathi, etc. words into Sanskrit, with their modern meanings, rather than the use of established Sanskrit words (consider the use of aarambha instead of utsava in the Hindi-speaking area). While Sanskrit needs to be modernized, it does not need to be intellectualized, thank you; it always has been perfectly capable to deal with intellectual issues.

Second, I agree that the kind of spoken Sanskrit that is being propagated by Hindutva organizations is grammatically, lexically, and intellectually without merit, not far removed from a pidgin form of the language. The fact that it does not provide a useful entry to the full form of the language, as found in the philosophical, religious, and literary tradition of India (not to speak of the vast range of technical literature), supports the view that the motivation for this enterprise is not to connect modern Indians with their traditions but to give Hindus (or better: Hindutvavaadins) a false, manufactured sense of identity. (I should add that the founders of this movement, such as Krishna Shastri, had a much fuller grasp of the language and spoke it very well.)

Best wishes,

Hans

George Hart, a Sanskritist & Tamizh Indologist & a Padma Shri (2015) has this to say

The trouble with spoken Sanskrit is that its dumbed down! It creates a sense of arrogance & ‘superiority’! Doesn’t make you rap like Kalidasa!

George Hart glhart at BERKELEY.EDU
Wed Aug 13 14:27:43 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- Next message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

Years ago, the late highly learned Sanskrit scholar Dr. Janaki stayed at our house. She showed me a column she had written in Sanskrit about the McEnroe - Borg tennis competition. Her command of the language was awesome -- she was capable to expressing just about anything, using the full resources of the language. I still remember getting up one morning about 6:00 and encountering a bright-eyed Janaki chattering away in fluent (and extremely rapid) Sanskrit, and struggling with little success to process what she said in my still numbed state. The problem, I feel, with the kind of spoken Sanskrit we're talking about is not that it borrows Hindi words or Tamil syntax. As Adheesh says, Sanskrit has been borrowing or innovating since the beginning (many of its most common words are Dravidian). The problem is that spoken "Sanskrit" is incapable of expressing a complex thought -- "How many Idlis did you eat today" is not exactly a profound idea. Real languages are highly complex because they need to be used to express complex ideas. Sanskrit is no exception. As Prof. Nair notes, languages such as Malayalam can make use of the entire Sanskrit vocabulary to express thoughts that are extremely complicated (one might also remark that Malayalam, which was a dialect of Tamil 1000 years ago, also retains a huge inherited Dravidian vocabulary). If one goes to a village and encounters the (rare) illiterate Malayali, one would discover that while that person might not know all the Sanskrit words used in a scholarly essay, he or she can still use the language for expressing quite complicated ideas. **Sadly, neo-Sanskrit seems incapable of being used this way. It is a consciously dumbed-down language that eschews its own grand tradition. If people enjoy learning it in a rudimentary way to express simple things, obviously there's nothing wrong with that. The problem as I see it lies in the fact that these "Sanskrit" speakers often think that just because they use the language in a rudimentary way, they are somehow connecting with the great intellectual tradition that the language contains. Or, worse, that they are embodiments of some "Hindu-ness" that is inherent in the language. Their rudimentary use of the language fosters a kind of arrogance and sense of superiority that is unwarranted.** I remember reading the Rasagangadhara with Pandit Seshadrinathan and remarking on the breathtaking boldness of the beginning verses. When I suggested that Jagannatha seemed a bit arrogant and overbearing, Seshadrinathan remarked "sthaane." Yes, if someone knows Sanskrit 5% as well as Jagannatha, then he or she is entitled to be proud. **Saying "How many idlis did you eat today?" in neo-Sanskrit may be fun, but it's hardly grounds for the sort of overweening pride that such speakers often seem to project.**

George Hart

There are of course, sane views also

Heres one

Philipp Maas phmaas at ARCOR.DE
Wed Aug 13 09:03:31 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- Next message (by thread): Spoken Sanskrit and Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

Dear Prof. Sandahl,

I think that we should be careful not to be discriminatory against those who use Sanskrit in a creative, modernist fashion. The use of Sanskrit as a spoken language, whether as standard Sanskrit or as a vulgarized idiom, is not per se a political statement and it does not per se reveal a tendency to approve of or even to commit political violence. In spite of everything that Sanskrit may symbolize, it remains a language that serves the purpose of expressing thoughts. And the freedom of thought includes, of course, the freedom to choose one's language.

With best regards,

Philipp Maas

Probably panicking at the thought of having stepped on a land-mine, Professor Sandahl asks plaintively

‘Why can’t we let it be, a beautiful dead language’?■

Apparently Panini assassinated Sanscreet!■

Stella Sandahl ssandahl at SYMPATICO.CA
Tue Aug 19 15:05:04 UTC 2008

- Previous message (by thread): Kadamba
- Next message (by thread): Clarification about Spoken Sanskrit
- **Messages sorted by:** [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

Dear all,
I seem to have stepped on many tender toes by making fun of a certain type of Spoken Sanskrit. My main objection is entirely practical. Over the years I have noticed that those who have been taught spoken Sanskrit seem to have real difficulties reading even simple classical Sanskrit such as the Kathasaritsagara and the Hitopadesa, not to speak about the epics. It is important that there still are a few students who wish to learn the language of Kalidasa et alii - and it is a real pity that alamkarashastra is not given much attention among scholars of comparative literature to give just one example.

Spoken Sanskrit can be quite an intellectually stimulating pass-time. Like playing chess. But trying to revive a dead language by creating words for nuclear submarines, supermarkets, tennis tournaments etc. is in my view a rather useless enterprise. Mass Sanskrit is of little interest for the large Indian population trying to eke out a meagre living to get one meal a day. Languages are living organism that constantly change - bhasha calti nadi. Sanskrit has a normative unchangeable grammar since around 400 B.C. So can't we let it be what it is, a beautiful dead language?
Nobody has tried to revive Latin in Italy since the days of Mussolini. However, Latin is still used in Western universities to harangue recipients of honorary doctorates and such things.
And it is of course used by the Vatican. There is no reason not to use Sanskrit in a similar way to inaugurate dams, swearing in cabinets, taking ministerial oaths, and of course in solemn rites of passage. But trying to take a bus in Bombay/Mumbai or disputing the taxi fare in Sanskrit is probably not going to have much effect except amusing the drivers and the ever-present surrounding crowd.

However, I do believe it is important that students do regular exercises translating into Sanskrit, not just the other way around. At the Sorbonne we did "themes et versions" on alternating weeks (the "themes" were Sanskrit texts translated into an often bizarre French which we translated back into Sanskrit), and that was very useful. More useful than chatting in Sanskrit about tea and iddlis.

Best to all
Stella Sandahl

P.S. I do know how to transliterate - I just do not like the e-mail transliteration. And in the few cases above all members of the list can surely supply them.
P.P.S. Does anyone have the full text of Sacchidanandan's wonderful poem about the dinosaurs who "died out because they spoke Sanskrit"?
--
Professor Stella Sandahl
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130 St. George St. room 14087
Toronto, ON M5S 3H1

This topic is relevant given a recent tweet on ‘scholars’ & twitter folks who rubbish them

These above screenshots shows the nature of politics/views connected with Indology scholarship

Staggering hypocrisy!

No wonder hotheads on either side quickly escalate to ■■■■■■■■

elisa freschi (evidences & reasoning, not claims)
@elisa_freschi

Among the things I would suggest giving up:
Insulting a woman scholar by calling her "whore", "slut" etc.
Would you do the same to a man scholar? If not, think twice & attack her BASED ON HER SCHOLARSHIP instead (Where was she wrong?Why do her methods/conclusions miss the point?)

1:09 PM · 7/8/22 · Twitter Web App

1 Retweet **2** Quote Tweets **28** Likes

अग्निमान् @agnimaan · 1d
Replying to @elisa_freschi
Is this about ms awrangzeb? If so, I can understand since she's more activist than
"scholar".

1

elisa freschi (evidences & reasoning, not claims) @elisa_freschi · 1d
OK, let me rephrase my point, then: What about attacking women scholars AND activists based on what they do wrong, and not on their alleged sexual customs?

1 3

अग्निमान् @agnimaan · 1d
If they are anti-hindu activists, all bets are off. We know that they use ALL means ranging from their professional authority and connections (not just academic but political, media, activist, spy agency, terrorist etc..) to malign and destroy us.

1 1

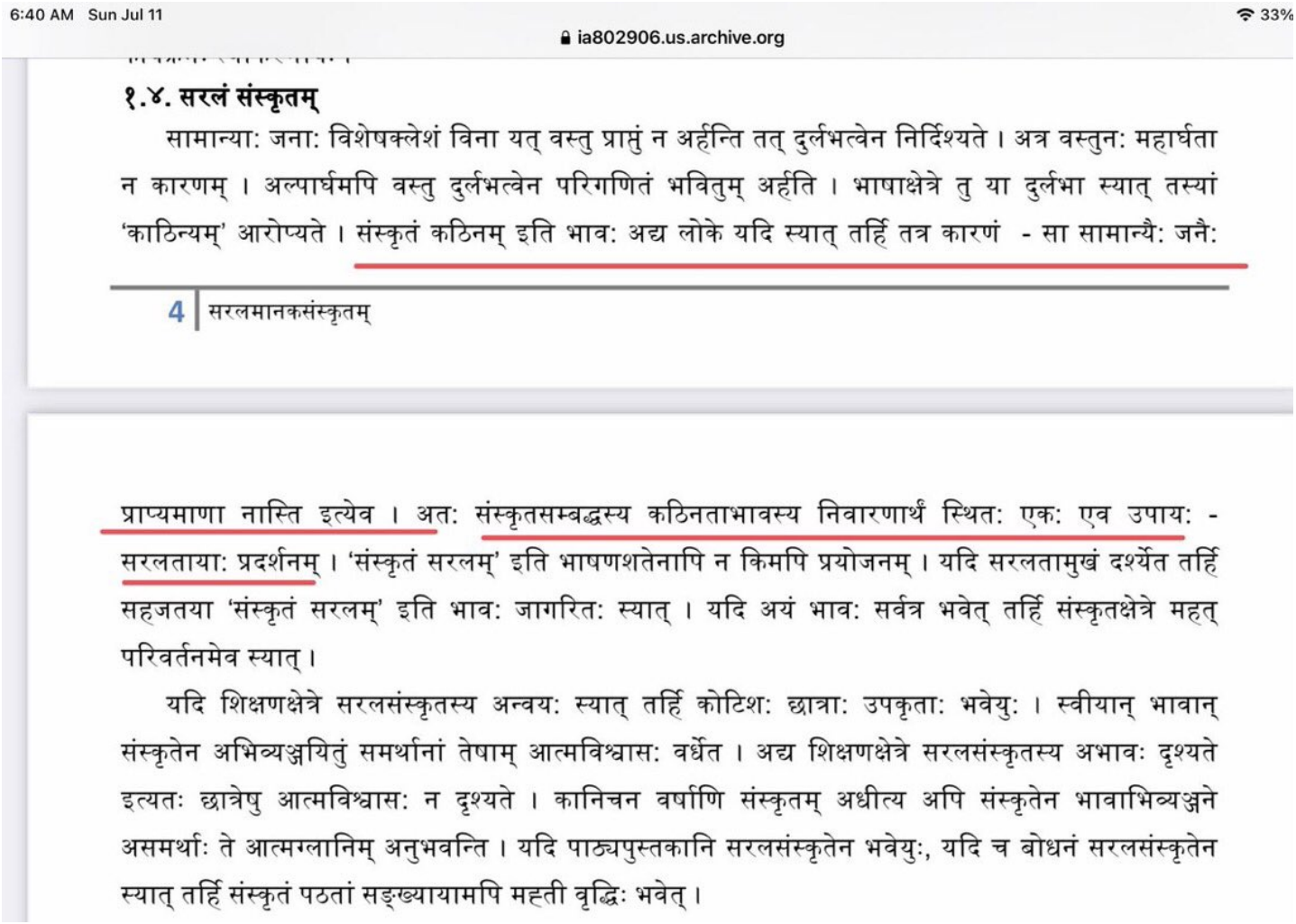
elisa freschi (evidences & reasoning, not claims) @elisa_freschi · 1d
I see. This risks to be the politics of "we" vs "them". The people on the other side are so evil, that they are worthy of every insult. The problem

And to conclude by following the sane advice ‘do they even read a line’ of what they discussed, here is what Sarala Samskritam sets out to do! https://t.co/ucYH5y5BuY

> #\u0969\u096f What is Sarala Samskritam?
>
> Is it \u2018real\u2019 \u0938\u0902\u0938\u094d\u0915\u0943\u0924\u092e\u094d ?
>
> Why is it needed?
>
> What are the potential benefits & flaws ? https://t.co/5jitzeyG4H
>
> — \u092a\u094d\u0935\u093e\u0932\u0903 \u0964 pvaal (@pvaal2) May 18, 2022

A few screenshots of the stated purpose & design of the ■■■■■■■■■■■■■ movement

Quite clear that it’s designed as a ‘gateway program’ & tries to be fully compliant with the Paninian framework



Coda

A whole bunch of privileged Indologists are fearful of unwashed masses learning ■■■■■■■■■, becoming aware & ‘horror of horrors’, ‘debating’ with them!

They fear [redacted] will engender civilizational confidence

They fear a living [redacted]

[redacted]