

14. Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?

Word Count: 950

The prompt I've chosen, "Does some knowledge belong only to a particular community of knowers?", refers to communities as groups of individuals who share relationships through knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, or opinions. These communities collaborate when applying knowledge. A knower shapes their knowledge through individual and social processes, experiences and beliefs, and community influenced inquiry. While some knowledge is tied to specific cultural or intellectual traditions, other knowledge is accessible to anyone.

Object #1: My History of Tamil Script

HISTORY OF TAMIL SCRIPT			
அறிவுரை	a ā i ī u ū e ē a i o ō	அறிவுரை	க ங் ச ஞ ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
Century	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	Century	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
BC 3 rd C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	BC 3 rd C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 2 nd C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 2 nd C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 3 rd C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 3 rd C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 4 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 4 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 5 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 5 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 6 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 6 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 7 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 7 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 8 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 8 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 9 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 9 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 10 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 10 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 11 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 11 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 12 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 12 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 13 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 13 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 14 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 14 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 15 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 15 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 16 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 16 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 17 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 17 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 18 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 18 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்
AD 19 th C	அ ஆ இ உ ஊ எ ஏ ஐ ஒ ஓ	AD 19 th C	க் கங் சஞ் ட் ண் த் த் ப் ம் ய் ர் ல் வ் ழ் ள் ற் ள்

This board shows the history of Tamil orthography over the past centuries. I encountered this when I learned to write Tamil. This image was the back of my compound chart intriguing me. I was astonished by the languages' development over thousands of years. Tamil is the oldest surviving language, and the script played a

significant role in preserving Tamil literature, culture, and heritage which I've seen develop as a native speaker. The history of the Tamil script highlights the importance of language and writing systems in preserving and conveying cultural heritage which I utilize in reading scriptures or texting my grandparents.

It responds to the prompt because it questions how much the specific cultural and social circumstances in which information is produced and transmitted affect that knowledge. This demonstrates how communities can be subdivided and how information may be filtered down while always being a part of communities of knowers.

This script is a valuable inclusion to this exhibition because the ability to read older versions of the script requires specific skills and knowledge not widely available outside the Tamil community. It defines what is acceptable as a community since people are from the same community on paper, but the era impacts the knowledge they exchange. I identify with the Tamil community because I've spoken the language since birth. However, I can't read the language depicted before this century. Though someone in the 13th century would also identify as being in the Tamil community, we wouldn't be part of the same community since we can't read each other's scripts. Essentially, the era circumscribes the criteria for a community.

Object #2: idli/இட்லி



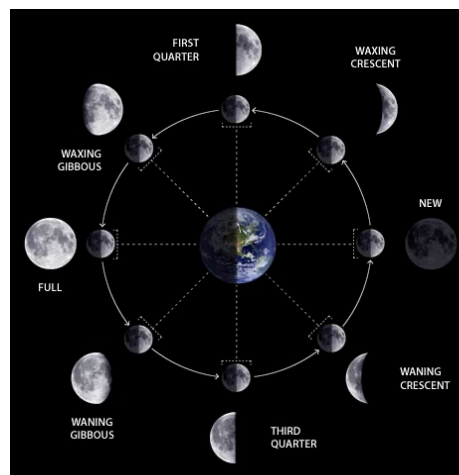
My second object is idli, a steamed South-Indian staple breakfast food made from soaked rice and lentils. As a South-Indian, I grew up eating varieties of idli. I have snuck out to eat idli at Indian roadside shops, so I have memories of eating idli. Having over 185 variations from generic and indigenous recipes, idli is the statewide dish of Tamilnadu.

Idli addresses the prompt by showing the intricate relationship between knowledge and communities. Through exposure to idli-making, individuals can gradually become part of the community of knowers. The widespread availability of idli in most South-Indian restaurants raises questions about the nature of knowledge itself: how it's acquired, developed, and shared. The diverse types of idlis, each accompanied with distinct chutneys and podis (powders), illuminate the multiplicity of methods and tools employed in its preparation. The intricate process of preparing idlis, involving the gradual addition and grinding of various kinds of rice and lentils over several days and steaming in an idli cooker, is a testament to the depth of knowledge inherent within the community. While certain recipes remain specific to indigenous societies where they use a manual idli-grinder and native rice and lentils, the advent of technology and online resources has facilitated the dissemination of basic idli recipes beyond community confines. This phenomenon highlights different perspectives on the same knowledge, influenced by the cultural and social backgrounds of various communities of knowers. While individuals outside the community can acquire generic knowledge of idli-making, it's important to recognize and respect the unique recipes and techniques that originate from indigenous societies. By exploring the nuances of idli-making, valuable insights are gained into the intricate relationship between knowledge, community, and cultural

heritage, affirming that some knowledge belongs exclusively to particular communities of knowers, but is acquired through exposure.

Idli is an interesting selection because it shows knowledge belongs to a community but can be acquired by others. Idli-making involves unique knowledge specific to the South-Indian community, passed down through generations with cultural significance and traditional practices. This knowledge belongs exclusively to the South-Indian community but can be inherited by those who don't belong to the community, bringing a different perspective.

Object #3: Moon Phases



My third object is a moon chart, displaying lunar phases from the dark, mysterious new moon to the radiant, illuminated full moon. This gift from my dad sparked my astronomical interests. I would reference it to see the corresponding phase outside. The lunar cycle impacts calendars, tides, and traditions, transcending cultures. An example is Ekadashi, a day of fasting in my culture celebrated on the 11th day after a new and

full moon. This chart symbolizes shared human experience, such as fasting in India. It exemplifies knowledge's universality.

Moon phases link the prompt and knowledge belonging to specific communities by showing knowledge is universal. While some knowledge is exclusive to particular groups, the universal experience of observing moon phases transcends all boundaries. By recognizing this as a collective experience, we challenge exclusive knowledge and emphasize shared understanding in shaping communities of knowers. Moon phases illuminate the interconnectedness of humanity, showcasing certain knowledge can belong to all, irrespective of cultural or intellectual traditions. Though technology improves the ability to witness phases, people can see the same moon irrespective of their location.

This was included in the exhibition since some knowledge doesn't belong to a particular community of knowers. Everyone shares the fundamental aspects of being human, even after death, and seeing the moon phases is something universally experienced, regardless of age, gender, race, location, knowledge, and era. It's a universal experience needing no prior knowledge but can develop future knowledge.