Lesson 2

The sign says that the bus plies between Uttarahaḷḷi and the Keṃpēgauḍa Bus Stand

A note on punctuation marks – sandhi – how to ask questions – 'yes' and 'no' – the inclusive suffix ū *– expressions of comprehensive negation – the verb* iru *(to be) – social ritual*

Model sentences

ನೀವು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಯಾ?	*Nīvu vidyārthiyā?*	Are you a [male] student?
ನೀವು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿಯಾ?	*Nīvu vidyārthiniyā?*	Are you a [female] student?
ಹೌದು, ನಾನು ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿ.	*Haudu, nānu vidyārthini.*	Yes, I am a [female] student.
ಇದು ಮರವಾ?	*Idu maravā?*	Is this a tree?
ಹೌದು, ಇದು ಮರ.	*Haudu, idu mara.*	Yes, this is a tree.
ಅದು ಪುಸ್ತಕವಾ?	*Adu pustakavā?*	Is that a book?
ಹೌದು, ಪುಸ್ತಕ.	*Haudu, pustaka.*	Yes, a book.
ಅದೂ ಪುಸ್ತಕವಾ?	*Adū pustakavā?*	Is that a book too?
ಅಲ್ಲ, ಅದು ಪುಸ್ತಕವಲ್ಲ.	*Alla, adu pustakavalla.*	No, that is not a book.

A note on punctuation marks

Punctuation marks in Indian writing are a relatively recent import from Europe. Before the colonial period, the only such mark that was in regular use in Kannada was the ದಂಡ *daṃḍa* or 'stick', a vertical line: । This mark indicated a pause and could be used either as a European comma, colon, semi-colon, full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark. For a longer pause, it could be doubled: ॥, at the end of a longer section in a text.[1]

Nowadays all the punctuation marks that are used in modern European languages are also used in modern Kannada. However, because there is no old tradition of using these marks, and because no one has ever considered formulating rules for their use, Kannada writers and printers (just as writers and printers in other Indian languages) tend to use them in rather haphazard ways. This randomness is seen especially in the use of the comma and, still more so, of the hyphen. Only rarely do printers use a hyphen to indicate that a word at the end of a printed line continues on the next line. The learner is therefore advised *not* to assume that the end of a line also indicates the end of a word, but to immediately continue reading the next line: if that next line begins with a non-word, it will be clear that that should be added to the last word of the preceding line and both should be read together as one word.

Sandhi

The word 'sandhi' is taken from Sanskrit,[2] and its primary meaning is 'conjoining'. In linguistics, sandhi signifies certain changes that occur in pronunciation as well as in writing in the case of (a) certain combinations of words in a sentence or (b) certain combinations of word-building elements within a word.

Many Western languages have sandhi as well, albeit in clearly lesser degrees. We see sandhi in French when the words *la* and *école* occur after each other in a sentence and together are written *l'école* (instead of **la école*[3]). A Kannada grammarian would call this regular elision of the final *a* of *la* before a following vowel *lōpasaṃdhi* ('sandhi of loss'). Whereas French orthography uses an apostrophe to graphically indicate *lōpasaṃdhi* in writing,[4] other languages, such as Portuguese, do not: for instance, *de* and *o* ('of the [masculine]') in

Portuguese together become *do.* There is no graphic indication of *lō-pasaṃdhi* in Kannada either.

The rules of sandhi can be described as rules of euphonic combination: rules that govern changes that take place in order to make pronunciation easier. Because of the importance of sandhi in Kannada (just as in numerous other Indian languages), a separate appendix is devoted to it at the end of this book. It is advisable for the reader to go through this appendix at his earliest convenience, because sandhi occurs often, and the earlier one knows how to recognize it, the better. At the same time it is important to know that although sandhi is governed by rules, not every speaker or writer of modern Kannada feels rigidly bound by those rules. Often these rules are not applied, especially in writing. It is also evident that individual authors are not always consistent in the application of the rules of sandhi, sometimes even within one single sentence. In other words: the rules of sandhi in Kannada writing, which in earlier centuries were quite strictly applied, today have a rather optional character. Some occurrences of sandhi are very common, and these will be mentioned in the following lessons.

A few of the rules of Sanskrit sandhi apply within loan words that have been taken from Sanskrit; otherwise, Kannada knows only three types of sandhi: *lōpasaṃdhi* ('sandhi of loss': see the French example of *l'école,* given above), *āgamasaṃdhi* ('sandhi by coming': this occurs in French when the combination *a + il* becomes *a-t-il,* with a *t* coming in between the two vowels to facilitate pronunciation[5]), and *ādēśasaṃdhi* ('sandhi by substitution', which is less common in European languages; it occurs in Dutch when *pot + lepel* become *pollepel,* 'pot spoon', the type of wooden spoon that is used in cooking).

We will see some examples of Kannada sandhi in the course of this lesson.

How to ask questions

Questions in Kannada are almost always asked in one of two ways:[6]

— one uses an interrogative word (such as 'who', 'where', 'which', etc. in English), or
— one adds an **interrogative suffix** (also called a **question marker**) to a plain sentence.

Possibility 1.

ಅವರು ಯಾರು?	*avaru **yāru**?*	**who** is he / she / are they?
ಅವರು ಎಲ್ಲಿ?	*avaru **elli**?*	**where** is he / she / are they?
ಅದು ಯಾವ ಮನೆ?	*adu **yāva** mane?*	**which** house is that?
ಎಲ್ಲಿಂದ? ಅಲ್ಲಿಂದ!	***elliṃda**? alliṃda!*	from **where**? from there!
ಅದು ಏಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲಿದೆ?	*adu **ēke** illide [illi ide]?*	**why** is that here?

Possibility 2. In the fourth model sentence at the beginning of this lesson, the word *mara* means 'tree'. The English sentence 'This is a tree', in Kannada, would be *Idu mara.* To change this statement into a question, one simply adds the suffix *ā* to the final word. This creates a **neutral** question: the person who asks the question truly does not know what the answer will be, and he simply wants to know what the answer is, without any preference for an answer.[7]

The learner will notice that in Kannada, nearly all the interrogative words begin either with *yā, e* or *ē,* (the one notable exception is ಹೇಗೆ *hēge* 'how'). The word ಯಾರು *yāru* 'who' is grammatically plural (i.e., the polite epicene (see below) plural. This means that a Kannadiga will never ask 'who is there?' but always 'who are there?').[8]

Because the word *mara* ends in a short *a,* and because Kannada does not tolerate gaps in pronunciation between vowels (hiatus), the semi-vowel *v* (a so-called **hiatus filler**) is inserted to connect the final *a* of *mara* and the following question suffix *ā,* for ease of pronunciation. (This is an example of *āgamasaṃdhi,* which was explained above.) Thus the sentence *idu maravā?* meaning 'is this a tree?' is created. Such a question is pronounced with a **rising intonation on the interrogative suffix** (similar to the rising intonation of the Canadian English 'eh?', or the standard English 'isn't it?').

idu pustaka	this is a book	*idu pustaka-v-ā?*	is this a book?
adu kaṣṭa	that is difficult	*adu kaṣṭa-v-ā?*	is that difficult?
adu kaṭṭaḍa	that is a building	*adu kaṭṭaḍa-v-ā?*	is that a building?
idu patra	this is a letter	*idu patra-v-ā?*	is this a letter?

If, however, the noun denotes a male person (i.e., if the gender of the noun is masculine), the connecting consonant after a final short *a* is not *v,* but *n.*[9] The same applies for two nouns for family relationships that denote female persons, namely, ಅಮ್ಮ *amma* 'mother' and ಅಕ್ಕ *akka* 'elder sister'.

ivanu huḍuga	he is a boy	*ivanu huḍuga-n-ā?*	is he a boy?

If the final vowel of the preceding word is a so-called front vowel (*i, ī, e,* or *ai*), the connecting semi-vowel, which acts as the hiatus filler, is not *v,* but *y:*

idu mane	this is a house	*idu mane-y-ā?*	is this a house?
idu biḷi	this is white	*idu biḷi-y-ā?*	is this white?
adu huḍugi	that is a girl	*adu huḍugi-y-ā?*	is that a girl?
adu kai	that is a hand	*adu kai-y-ā?*	is that a hand?

If the final vowel of the preceding word is a short *u,* that *u* is replaced (elided: *lōpasaṃdhi*) by the question suffix:[10]

idu kappu	this is black	*idu kapp-ā?*	is this black?
adu toḍaku	that is a problem	*adu toḍak-ā?*	is that a problem?

It may help the beginning learner to re-think these questions in a form such as "this is black, eh?", or "that is a problem, isn't it?"[11]

The suffix *ā* is added to the very last word of a sentence in order to turn the sentence into a question.

'Yes' and 'no'

In the model sentences, we find two words that have been translated in English as 'yes' and 'no':

— ಹೌದು **haudu** is the common word expressing agreement, affirmation, or approval ('yes'),
— ಅಲ್ಲ **alla** is the word that denies identity ('no, *x* is not *y,* but something else').[12] This word is actually a form of a verb, of which only very few forms are still in use (a so-called *defective verb,* as is seen in the last model sentence at the beginning of this lesson).

The word *alla* for 'no' must be distinguished from another, very similar word, namely,

— ಇಲ್ಲ **illa.** This too means 'no', but it is a fundamentally different kind of negation: whereas *alla* negates identity, *illa* negates presence or existence ('no, it is not here', or 'no, such a thing does not exist').

The learner must understand that there is a basic difference between these **two kinds of negation.** The simple sentence ನಾನು ಅಲ್ಲ *nānu alla* (usually contracted, through regular sandhi, to ನಾನಲ್ಲ *nānalla*[13]) means 'it is not me' (but somebody else); ನಾನು ಇಲ್ಲ *nānu illa* (ನಾನಿಲ್ಲ *nānilla*) means 'I am not there' or 'I do not exist'.

  In writing and in print, the words *alla* and *illa,* when used as a verb at the end of a sentence, are usually combined with a preceding word according to the same rules of sandhi that have been given above for the interrogative suffix. This spelling convention reflects the actual pronunciation. (We will see that the same applies to other suffixes as well.)

ಇದು ಮರವಲ್ಲ	*idu mara-v-alla*	this is not a tree
ಅದು ತೊಡಕಲ್ಲ	*adu toḍak-alla*	that is not a problem
ಅದು ಹುಡುಗಿಯಲ್ಲ	*adu huḍugi-y-alla*	that is not a girl

ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಮರವಿಲ್ಲ	*alli mara-v-illa*	there is no tree there
ಅಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಕಿಲ್ಲ	*alli toḍak-illa*	there is no problem there
ಅಲ್ಲಿ ಹುಡುಗಿಯಿಲ್ಲ	*alli huḍugi-y-illa*	there is no girl there

Another possible word for expressing a different meaning of the English 'no' is the 'no' that expresses the denial of being wanted or being necessary: ಬೇಡ *bēḍa.* The corresponding positive expression ('is wanted or needed') is ಬೇಕು *bēku.* These two words, *bēku* and *bēḍa,* are extremely commonly used, occurring in practically each and every conversation or piece of writing, and therefore the learner must master their usage well. Both of these words are used as predicates of any kind of subject, irrespective of gender or number. Their use will be discussed in a later lesson.[14]

Apart from simple negations of existence and identity through the use of *illa* and *alla,* negation in Dravidian languages looks a bit odd for most learners who are not already familiar with a language from this family, even if native speakers feel that it comes quite naturally (simply because they have grown up with it). Instead of saying, for instance, 'I will not go to class', a Kannadiga will actually say something like 'my going to class does not exist'. This construction, which may appear difficult to understand for the average speaker of an Indo-European language, will be introduced in lesson 5. In order to fully understand this grammatical construction, the learner must first have learnt a few other aspects of Kannada grammar, therefore the detailed and full discussion of negation will be postponed till lesson 15.

The inclusive suffix *ū*

In the eighth of the model sentences at the beginning of this lesson, the reader will have noticed that the vowel of the word *adu* seems to have been lengthened to *adū:* actually, the final short *u* of *adu* is replaced in *lōpasaṃdhi* when *ū* is added.[15] Like the interrogative marker *ā,* the long *ū* can also be attached to a variety of words. The basic meaning of this suffix is **inclusion** or **addition.** In English it is usually translated by 'and', 'also', or 'too':

ಅದೂ ಪುಸ್ತಕವಾ?	*adū pustakavā?*	is that also a book?
ಹೌದು, ಅದೂ ಪುಸ್ತಕ	*haudu, adū pustaka*	yes, that too is a book
ಪುಸ್ತಕವೂ ಇದೆಯಾ?	*pustakavū ideyā?*[16]	is there also a book?
ಹೌದು, ಅದೂ ಇದೆ	*haudu, adū ide*	yes, that too is there
ಇಲ್ಲ, ಅದು ಇಲ್ಲ	*illa, adu illa*	no, that is not there

Enumerations: 'and'

There is a Kannada word that corresponds to the English 'and': ಮತ್ತು *mattu*. It can be used more or less anywhere where in English one would use 'and'.

| ಆಕಾಶ ಮತ್ತು ಬೆಕ್ಕು | *ākāśa mattu bekku* | The Sky and the Cat[17] |

The frequent use of *mattu* seems to be on the increase in the modern language, perhaps under the influence of English. The same meaning could be conveyed by ಆಕಾಶವೂ ಬೆಕ್ಕೂ *ākāśavū bekkū*.

Often an enumeration is expressed by listing the members of the enumeration one after the other and ending the list with a comprehensive personal pronoun:

| ಮೈಸೂರು ಮಂಗಳೂರು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಶಿವಮೊಗ್ಗ ಧಾರವಾಡ ಇವು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ನಗರಗಳು | *maisūru maṃgaḷūru beṃgaḷūru śivamogga dhāravāḍa ivu karnāṭakada nagaragaḷu* | Mysore, Mangalore, Bangalore, Shimoga, and Dharwad are cities in ('of') Karnataka |

Expressions of comprehensive negation

English and other Western languages have words of **comprehensive negation,** such as 'never', 'nothing', 'nobody', 'nowhere', etc. Kannada has no such simple expressions of comprehensive, total negation; instead, the speaker uses an interrogative word ('when', 'what', 'who' etc.), adds the inclusive suffix *ū,* and negates the combination ('also when', 'also what', 'also who', etc.) by means of *illa* 'is not'.

ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ ಇಲ್ಲ	*yāvāgalū illa*	never
ಏನೂ ಇಲ್ಲ	*ēnū illa*	nothing
ಯಾರೂ ಇಲ್ಲ	*yārū illa*	nobody
ಎಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಇಲ್ಲ	*elliyū illa*[18]	nowhere

Literally, these expressions mean 'also when is not there', 'also what is not there', etc.

The verb *iru* (to be)

Probably every living, natural language has exceptions to the rules of its grammar, such as irregular verbs. Fortunately for the foreign learner, there are hardly any very serious irregularities in the Kannada verb system. We will see that the verbs which most older grammar books call 'irregular' rather resemble the so-called 'strong' verbs of the Germanic languages.[19] (A list of Kannada strong verbs is included as an appendix in this book.)

Kannada verbs have three tenses (past, present, future: just as most Western languages) and are conjugated according to person (first, second, third), number (singular and plural), and, in the third person, according to gender, as we have already seen in our discussion of the pronouns in lesson 1: masculine, feminine and neuter (as in English) in the third person singular, but a combined masculine-feminine (**epicene** or **common**) gender and neuter in the third person plural.

Conjugation implies that the various persons are distinguished by personal endings. **It is extremely important for the learner to memorize these endings perfectly. If one cannot recognize these endings, then the meaning of many sentences cannot be understood.**

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Personal suffixes for the present tense

person	(gender)	singular	(gender)	plural
1		*ēne*		*ēve*
2		*īye / ī*[20]		*īri*
3	masc.	*āne*	epicene	*āre*
	fem.	*āḷe*		
	neuter	*ade*	neuter	*ave*

There is only one single verb in Kannada that is used very often and is irregular in the present tense (just as the corresponding verbs in many other languages throughout the world), namely ಇರು *iru* 'to be'. The root of the verb is *iru,* and the irregularly formed present stem is *idd,* after which the personal suffixes given in the table above (**except** for the third person neuter, both singular and plural) for the present tense are added:

Present tense of iru

1 ps. sg.	ಇದ್ದೇನೆ	*iddēne*	I am
2 ps. sg.	ಇದ್ದೀಯೆ	*iddīye*	you are
3 ps. sg. masc.	ಇದ್ದಾನೆ	*iddāne*	he is
3 ps. sg. fem.	ಇದ್ದಾಳೆ	*iddāḷe*	she is
3 ps. sg. nt.	ಇದೆ	*ide*	it is
1 ps. pl.	ಇದ್ದೇವೆ	*iddēve*	we are
2 ps. pl.	ಇದ್ದೀರಿ	*iddīri*	you are
3 ps. pl. epi.	ಇದ್ದಾರೆ	*iddāre*	they are (epicene)
3 ps. pl. nt.	ಇವೆ	*ive*	they are (neuter)

The learner must be aware that the past stem of *iru* is also *idd* – this is an odd irregularity of this **one particular verb *iru,*** and not of any other. Whether a finite form of *iru* is present or past cannot be seen by the stem, but **only** by the endings: present tense suffixes for the present, past tense suffixes for the past.

Personal suffixes for the past tense

person	(gender)	singular	(gender)	plural
1		enu / e		evu
2		i		iri
3	masc.	anu / a	epicene	aru
	fem.	aḷu		
	neuter	itu	neuter	uvu / avu[21]

Past tense of iru

1 ps. sg.	ಇದ್ದೆನು / ಇದ್ದೆ	*iddenu / idde*[22]	I was
2 ps. sg.	ಇದ್ದಿ	*iddi*	you were
3 ps. sg. masc.	ಇದ್ದನು / ಇದ್ದ	*iddanu / idda*[23]	he was
3 ps. sg. fem.	ಇದ್ದಳು	*iddaḷu*	she was
3 ps. sg. nt.	ಇತ್ತು / ಇದ್ದಿತು	*ittu / idditu*[24]	it was
1 ps. pl.	ಇದ್ದೆವು	*iddevu*	we were
2 ps. pl.	ಇದ್ದಿರಿ	*iddiri*	you were
3 ps. pl. epi.	ಇದ್ದರು	*iddaru*	they were
3 ps. pl. nt.	ಇದ್ದುವು / ಇದ್ದವು	*idduvu / iddavu*	they were

The forms of the future tense of *iru* are perfectly regular and will be discussed in a later lesson, along with other regular verb forms.

Exercise

Take the following nouns, ask whether 'that' is an *x,* and then affirm and deny it.

Example:

ಆದು ಪುಸ್ತಕವಾ ? Is that a book?

ಹೌದು, ಆದು ಪುಸ್ತಕ. Yes, that is a book.

ಅಲ್ಲ, ಆದು ಪುಸ್ತಕವಲ್ಲ. No, that is not a book.

Use the following words:

ಮರ	ಚಾವಿ
ಕುರ್ಚಿ	ಮನುಷ್ಯ
ಮೇಜು	ರಸ್ತೆ
ಹುಡುಗಿ	ಅಕ್ಕ
ಪುರೋಹಿತ	ಇಲಿ
ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿನಿ	ನೊಣ
ಹಕ್ಕಿ	ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ
ಹಸು	ಹೆಂಗಸು
ಮಹಿಳೆ	

This newer bus goes to the part of southern Bangalore called ಬನಶಂಕರಿ *Banaśaṃkari*

Social ritual

(The idiomatic expressions are explained below.)

ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.	*Namaskāra.*[a]	(formula for greeting)
ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.	*Namaskāra.*	(standard answer)
ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ ?	*Hēgiddīri?*[b]	How are you?
ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ.	*Cennāgiddēne.*[c]	I am fine.
ಏನು ಸಮಾಚಾರ ?	*Ēnu samācāra?*	What is the news?
ವಿಶೇಷವಿಲ್ಲ.	*Viśēṣavilla.*[d]	Nothing special ('there is no special thing').
ಏನೂ ಇಲ್ಲ.	*Ēnū illa.*	Nothing ('what-also is not').
ಊಟವಾಯಿತಾ ?	*Ūṭavāyitā?*[e]	How are you? [Did you have your meal?]

ಆಯಿತು.	*Āyitu.*[f]	I am fine. [(The meal) took place.]
ನೀವೂ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೀರಾ?	*Nīvū cennāgiddīrā?*	Are you fine too?
ಪರವಾ ಇಲ್ಲ.	*Paravā illa.*	All right ('there is no worry').
(ನಾನು) ಬರಲಾ?	*(Nānu) baralā?*	May I leave? ('Shall I come?')
ಬನ್ನಿ.	*Banni.*	Yes, you may go ('Please come').
ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.	*Namaskāra.*	(the same is said when parting)

Notes on idiomatic expressions found in social ritual

[a] The pan-Indian word ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ *namaskāra* literally means 'act of bowing'. It can always be used, when greeting someone or when taking leave.

[b] ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ *hēgiddīri?* = *hēge* + *iddīri,* 'how are you'. In the speech of less educated city dwellers, the expression *hēgiddīrā?* can be heard. This is plainly a grammatical error, because *hēge* in itself already indicates that a question is being asked, hence the question suffix *-ā* is superfluous.

[c] ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ *cennāgiddēne: cennāgi* 'fine' / 'nicely' / 'beautifully' + *iddēne* are contracted to *cennāgiddēne.* Similarly *cennāgi* + *iddīri* + *ā* become *cennāgiddīrā?* 'how are you?', 'are you fine?'

[d] ವಿಶೇಷವಿಲ್ಲ *viśēṣavilla* = *viśēṣa* + *v* + *illa* 'a special thing is not'.

[e] ಊಟವಾಯಿತಾ? *ūṭa* + *v* + *āyitā:* ಊಟ *ūṭa* means 'meal', ಆಯಿತಾ *āyitā* means 'did it happen?', in other words: 'did the meal take place?', 'have you had your meal?' This is an alternative, traditional way of inquiring after a person's well-being.

[f] ಆಯಿತು *āyitu* 'it happened', 'it took place'. This is the totally automatic response that is given in such exchanges (exactly as when, in English, one unthinkingly answers 'I'm fine' in response to the question 'how are you?', irrespective of how one's condition really is). One should not expect that if one says 'no, I did not have my meal', the interlocutor will offer a meal.

Cultural note on taking leave

When one is already present and wishes to leave, it is considered wrong to ask 'may I go?'. Similarly, it is considered highly impolite to tell somebody to 'go': the use of the simple verb *hōgu* is

felt to imply a definite, irreversible going, as if one is saying 'go away and never come back'. Expressions such as *Nānu baralā?* 'Shall I come?' and *Banni* 'Please come' are elliptic expressions for *Nānu hōgi baralā?* 'Shall I go and then come again?' and *Hōgi banni* 'Please go and come back' (more literally: 'After having gone, please come back'). The special verb forms *barali* (a first person singular hortative) and *hōgi* (a gerund) will be discussed in later lessons. The person who leaves will conclude the exchange of words with the expression *baruttēne* 'I come' (i.e., 'I will be coming', 'I will return', 'Till next time').

Conversation

Rāmappa

ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ, ಗುರುರಾಜರೇ.	*Namaskāra, Gururājarē.*	Greetings, Mr Gururaja.

Gururāja

ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ, ರಾಮಪ್ಪನವರೇ.	*Namaskāra, Rāmappanavarē.*	Greetings, Mr Rāmappa.

Rāmappa

ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ?	*Hēgiddīri?*	How are you?

Gururāja

ನಾನು ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ನೀವು?	*Nānu cennāgiddēne. Nīvu?*	I'm fine. And you?

Rāmappa

ನಾನೂ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಇವರು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯವರಾ?	*Nānū cennāgiddēne. Ivaru nimma maneyavarā?*	I'm fine too. Is this your wife?

Gururāja

ಹೌದು, ಇವರ ಹೆಸರು ಸೀತಮ್ಮ.

Haudu, ivara hesaru Sītamma.

Yes, her name is Sītamma.

Rāmappa

ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ, ಸೀತಮ್ಮನವರೇ.

Namaskāra, Sītammanavarē.

Greetings, Mrs Sītamma.

ನಾನು ಬರಲಾ?

Nānu baralā?

May I take leave?

Gururāja

ಸರಿ, ಬನ್ನಿ.

Sari, banni.

All right, good bye.

Rāmappa

ಬರುತ್ತೇನೆ, ಸೀತಮ್ಮನವರೇ. ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.

Baruttēne, Sītammanavarē. Namaskāra.

Till next time, Mrs Sītamma. Good bye.

Cultural note on names

Many Kannada names end in *appa, ayya* and *amma.* These three words literally mean 'father', 'lord' and 'mother'. The first two are used in male names, the third in female names. When calling persons of such names, it is customary to add the polite pronoun *avaru,* linked to the name by means of an *n,* and adding the vocative suffix *ē* (vocatives will be discussed in a later lesson). Thus *Sītammanavarē* means 'oh, Mrs Sītamma!'

Exercise

Read and translate the following dialogue:

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ, ಸ್ವಾಮಿ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ನೀವು ರಾಮಯ್ಯನವರಾ ?

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ಹೌದು, ನಾನು ರಾಮಯ್ಯ. ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ ?

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ನೀವು ?

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ನಾನೂ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ಇವರು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯವರಾ ?

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ಹೌದು, ಇವರು ನನ್ನ ಮನೆಯವರು. ಇವರ ಹೆಸರು ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ, ನಿಮ್ಮ ಹೆಸರು ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿಯಾ ?

ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮ: ಅಲ್ಲ, ನನ್ನ ಹೆಸರು ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ಓ, ಕ್ಷಮಿಸಿ, ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮನವರೇ. ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ ?

ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಮ್ಮ: ತುಂಬ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ನೀವು ಹೇಗಿದ್ದೀರಿ ?

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಇದು ನಿಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯಾ ?

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ಹೌದು, ಇದು ನಮ್ಮ ಮನೆ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ತುಂಬ ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿದೆ. ಕ್ಷಮಿಸಿ, ಅಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಬಸ್ಸು ಇದೆ. ನಾನು ಬರಲಾ ?

ರಾಮಯ್ಯ: ಬನ್ನಿ. ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ.

ಕೃಷ್ಣಪ್ಪ: ನಮಸ್ಕಾರ. ಬರುತ್ತೇನೆ.

Vocabulary

ಇದೆ	*ide*	is
ಇವರ	*ivara*	his / her (honorific)
ಇವರು	*ivaru*	he / she (honorific)
ಎಲ್ಲಿ	*elli*	where?
ಎಲ್ಲಿಂದ	*elliṃda*	from where?

ಏಕೆ	*ēke*	why?
ಏನು	*ēnu*	what?
ಕಪ್ಪು	*kappu*	black
ಕಷ್ಟ	*kaṣṭa*	difficult
ಕ್ಷಮಿಸಿ / ಕ್ಷಮಿಸಿರಿ	*kṣamisi / kṣamisiri*	excuse me, sorry (honorific)
ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ	*cennāgi*	nicely, finely
ತೊಡಕು	*toḍaku*	problem
ನನ್ನ	*nanna*	my
ನಮ್ಮ	*namma*	our
ನಿಮ್ಮ	*nimma*	your (honorific)
ಪತ್ರ	*patra*	letter
ಪರವಾ	*paravā*	worry[25]
ಪುರೋಹಿತ	*purōhita*	priest
ಬನ್ನಿ	*banni*	please come
ಬರಲಿ	*barali*	I should come
ಬರು	*baru*	to come
ಬಸ್ಸು	*bassu*	bus (vehicle)
ಬಿಳಿ	*biḷi*	white
ಬೇಕು	*bēku*	is wanted / required / needed
ಬೇಡ	*bēḍa*	is not wanted / not required
ಮನೆಯವರು	*maneyavaru*	spouse
ಯಾರು	*yāru*	who?
ಯಾವ	*yāva*	which?
ಯಾವಾಗ	*yāvāga*	when?
ರಸ್ತೆ	*raste*	road
ವಿಶೇಷ	*viśēṣa*	something special
ಸಮಾಚಾರ	*samācāra*	news

ಸರಿ	*sari*	okay, all right, correct
ಹೆಸರು	*hesaru*	name
ಹೇಗೆ	*hēge*	how?
ಹೌದು	*haudu*	yes

Notes

[1] The double *daṃḍa* is still used in Kannada writing and printing where in Europe it is customary to place a period after a title: ಪ್ರೊ‖ 'Prof.', ಡಾ‖ 'Dr.', etc.

[2] In the classical Sanskrit language, the rules of sandhi are many and complex. Because they are so striking in Sanskrit, this Sanskrit term has been adopted by linguists to describe the phenomenon in general, irrespective of the language which the linguists describe.

[3] It is customary in linguistic writings to use an asterisk (*) to indicate what would be considered a language error according to the grammatical rules of that language.

[4] In English, *lōpasaṃdhi* is not nearly so frequent as in French, but is also indicated by means of apostrophes: cf. *he's* for 'he is', *I'm* for 'I am', etc.

[5] This *t* is, strictly speaking, not an addition, but the return of a historical *t* that was lost when French developed out of its ancestral Latin; however, this *t* remained in the collective memory of the speakers of French and returns under certain circumstances: compare French *a-t-il* and Latin *habet ille.* An example in English is the return of the historically original *n* at the end of the indefinite article *a* before a word beginning with a vocalic sound: therefore we say and write *an example* and not **a example.*

[6] A third way is to pronounce an 'ordinary' sentence with a particular rising intonation: a device that is probably found in each and every language. In practice, this occurs rarely in colloquial Kannada, is extremely difficult for a beginning learner, and cannot be learnt from a book. A fourth way is to simply tag on the expression *allavā?* ('is it not so?') to a statement.

[7] There are three more such question suffixes, with slightly different meanings, that will be discussed in a later lesson. The *ā* suffix is by far the most commonly used and indicates a neutral question, i.e., the questioner does not expect any particular answer.

[8] In older literature one finds the singular ಯಾವನು *yāvanu* (masculine) and ಯಾವಳು *yāvaḷu* (feminine), but these forms have practically gone out of use in the modern language. This is understandable: if one does not know the

identity of a person, one will not know whether that person is male or female, nor whether the informal (and potentially rude) singular is appropriate or not.
[9] The reason for this is that in Old Kannada (i.e., the stage of development of the language before the twelfth century CE) such words did not end in *a* but in *an.* This historical *an* returns when a suffix that begins with a vowel is added to such words.
[10] In only very few and specific cases, a final *u* is not elided. This will be explained later.
[11] Once the learner has become accustomed to this construction, he will realize that this is much simpler than the European constructions with auxiliary verbs (such as the English 'to do': *you have time* > *do you have time?*) or inverted word order (such as German *du hast Zeit* > *hast du Zeit?* etc.).
[12] In the colloquial speech of less educated speakers, one can also sometimes hear *illa* (a tendency that appears to be much stronger in contemporary Tamil, a neighbouring Dravidian language, and the distinction also seems to be a bit blurred in northern Karnataka due to the influence of neighbouring Marathi, an Indo-European language). However, this is actually a different word (negating existence rather than identity: see below), and this usage is uneducated and confusing. The learner is advised to carefully distinguish *alla* and *illa,* also because of the meanings of other words that are derived from both of them.
[13] ನಾನಲ್ಲ *Nānalla* (1970) is also the title of a collection of short stories by the well-known author P. Lankesh (1935-2000).
[14] Historically, *bēku* and *bēḍa* are defective verb forms.
[15] For an explanation and details, see the appendix in this book on sandhi, the rules of euphonic combination.
[16] *ide* 'it is (present), it exists' (see below).
[17] ಆಕಾಶ ಮತ್ತು ಬೆಕ್ಕು *Ākāśa mattu bekku* is the title of a collection of short stories (2001), as well as of a short story contained in that collection, by the famous Kannada author U.R. Ananthamurthy (1932-2014).
[18] *ellū illa* is also possible.
[19] Such verbs are 'irregular' only in the formation of their past stem; in the present and future tense, they are perfectly regular.
[20] These two suffixes are freely exchangeable. It is a matter of personal style and preference whether one uses one or the other, although the longer one is more common.
[21] The suffix *avu* is found esp. in the northern part of the Kannada speech area (northern Karnataka and southern Maharashtra).
[22] The shorter form *idde* occurs esp. in colloquial speech.
[23] The shorter form *idda* occurs esp. in colloquial speech.
[24] The shorter form is by far more common than the longer one, which has a slightly 'literary' quality about it.
[25] Used only in the fixed idiomatic expression ಪರವಾ ಇಲ್ಲ *paravā illa* 'all right', 'there is no reason to worry'.