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MAKING HISTORY

Karnataka's People and their Past

Volume I
Stone Age to Mercantilism

SAKI, social activist

Vimukthi Prakashana
Bangalore
1998

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PREFACE

People are the motive force of history. This has been a viewpoint that revolutionaries have always held close to their hearts. This book is a modest appreciation of this fact. The motivation for writing on Karnataka's history is inspired by the very force that motivates its making.

My comrades and friends, near and dear, have all contributed to this book. From the time since work commenced on this project till its final execution, from the procurement of literature to reading the manuscript, from those innumerable questions that came up in the Karnataka History classes to discussions of the draft, from the arduous production tasks to the financing of this project; I have been helped and encouraged. This book has been the outcome of this collective effort. I express my deepest thanks to all these authors; this book having more than just one.

However, it is unfortunate that I cannot mention their names or their specific contribution since this seeks to be more than an academic piece. I would at the same time like to take the blame for whatever mistaken and wrong ideas that have been presented. I wish this book will not fault their endeavours or belie their hopes.

Saki
January 1998

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Publisher's Note

"The writing of Indian history is not possible as long as it lies buried in books, in the rooms of university libraries. For this it is inevitable that one should go among the people." This was DD Kosambi's opinion. *The people* are none other than those whose development has been stalled at different levels in the process of social advance, those that are compelled to lead a life against their will and those that are organising themselves to create a life that they would like to lead. These people are the warehouse of history. The pains and joys that have been witnessed, the betrayals and treacheries that have been experienced, the victories that have been won in the protracted course of history have imbued their life with a culture and tradition. When the written records of history are few, and even those have been chronicled by the powerful, it is impossible to create a people's history by basing on them alone. Hence it is necessary to go among the people and pick up the strands of history.

This work is the result of the dialectical combination of the experience of living with the oppressed and of wide study. This has been possible because the author has not only been a researcher of history but has devoted himself as an activist in the cause of changing the life of the people. He has been involved in building a revolutionary movement in Karnataka. It is because of this that the work can be of interest and use to those that bear an academic bent and at the same time for those activists that are toiling for social change.

History is not a chronicle of details from a beaten track. It is a guide to the path that has to be traversed. It is precisely those that seek to make history who devote themselves in a search of history. This is because history is the repository of the sufferings and sorrows, joys and achievements of life. This wealth of experience, in addition to providing us with lessons on social dynamics, ferrets out the basic reasons for our present position and describes the tradition of militant struggles and the immense power that rests coiled in us. History is therefore a beacon light of knowledge; it is at the same time a motive force.

Every society is rooted in history. Society has to grow on the nourishment provided by its roots. But popular history has been destroyed, distorted and the people rendered without a past. Most history that has so far been written has been penned from the viewpoint of the powerful classes if they have not been sponsored by them. That is why history writing bears a class, caste, racial, gender, religious...bias. The people are nowhere to be found even if one searched for them in such histories. Which king was defeated by whom? How many wives did a king have? Between what boundaries did his territory fall?--All this is not history. What was the state of life of the people at different periods of time? How did it change? What were the struggles that people waged in that process? What was their impact? This ought to be the essence of historical research.

History was not created by any one king or queen. People are the real makers of history. History cannot be history without the people. The purpose of this work is to reconstruct a people's history.

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There have been a few attempts at reconstructing the history of the people of Karnataka. *Making History* is a milestone in this regard. We take pride in placing this work before the people. We shall publish its Kannada translation as early as possible.

This work itself bears testimony to the efforts that the author has placed in the writing of it. We are indebted to Saki for his devotion in writing it and to all those who have, by providing information and support, contributed to it. We will always remember all those friends who have helped in bringing out this work.

Vimukthi Prakashana

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In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or--what is but a legal expression of the same thing--with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.

Karl Marx
A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under given circumstances encountered and inherited from the past. The tradition of all the generations of the dead weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.

Karl Marx
The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

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INTRODUCTION

Making History is both a narrative and an analytical presentation of Karnataka's past.

Beginning with a brief description of its geographical and ecological features, the book traces social development from the time of the first indications of the existence of human habitation in Karnataka.

This study of the past beginning from the old stone age adopts the method of Historical Materialism--a method which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels developed about 150 years ago; a method which has been put to effective use since then and a method which has helped society make brilliant achievements in not only its self-perception but in its transformation as well. We are indebted to the treasury of Marxism in this search into Karnataka's past.

Indian prehistory has been researched by very few Marxist historians. It is with history proper that Marxist historiography blooms in India. Karnataka's prehistory has so far not seen Marxist application and analysis. Despite this total absence, one should however say that all archaeologists and historians writing on prehistory tend to universally apply a crude Marxist perception in their research and analysis. This is one of the ironies of history and historiography. Even the staunchest of opponents of the Marxist theory of social development are compelled to rely on a few of its incontrovertible principles. This oddity, strange as it may seem, is a result of what Engels so well observed while making a presentation of prehistoric development and the transition of humankind to class society, when he wrote: *"The picture of the evolution of mankind through savagery and barbarism to the beginnings of civilization that I have here sketched after Morgan is already rich enough in new and* ***incontestable*** *features,* ***incontestable*** *because they are taken straight from production...."* [1]

The cornerstone of Marxism in the study of society is to begin from the labour process, from production--the most essential and the basis of all human activity. It is from the means that humankind uses to produce--the instruments of production--that his material life is determined. Improvements in the instruments of production improve the material life of society and innovative leaps in tools used only fills the human spirit and animates the leaps of social advance.

Prehistoric archaeology as a science is based on collecting and classifying such instruments of production. It is from the level of the instruments of production that the quality of the artifacts are gauged and it is from these two that the material and spiritual life of a people is reconstructed. Such a reconstruction is then categorised into palaeolithic, mesolithic and neolithic or the early, middle and new stone ages and then the copper, bronze and iron ages. Placed chronologically, this scheme becomes an unalterable fact of history, a self-evident theory of prehistoric social development. No archaeologist would be ridiculous to say that the metal age preceded the stone age or that the neolithic preceded the palaeolithic or that iron preceded copper. On the contrary, he or she will only swear by the above orderly and progressive succession. The study of society--its culture

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and values, norms and aesthetics--based on production and its instruments is nothing else but a materialistic interpretation of our past, Historical Materialism, at its least. Archaeology, depending on material remnants of the past--from pieces of stone to fragments of bone, from pot-shreds to paintings and from dolmens to ashmounds--is compelled to survive, without choice, on rocky, earthy, firm, materialist, and thus, *incontestable* foundations.

Idealism in an archaeologist born in class society is bound on all sides by the this-worldliness of his evidence, eliminating every recalcitrant figment and containing the flight of a spiritual mind. The progress of humankind across prehistoric time, the advance of one form of production over the other keeps pace with the advance of tools even for the most religious minded of archaeologists, for the most communalised and for those who have cultivated a diehard distaste for Marxist theory and thought.

Yet, with the tapering of the iron age to civilisation, the transition of primitive communism to history and cleavage of tribe into class, the same archaeologists, meticulous in their study of material evidence and always seeking an orderly historical arrangement of tools, most effortlessly forsake their rigorous methodology and forget to see the role of production or the plough, cease to observe the advance of the tribe to class and the transition of magic to religion. With the dawn of religion, particularly Vedanta; the rise of class society, particularly feudalism; the historian becomes an ideologist. Caste, class, religion and patriarchy begin to cloud perception.

Karnataka, which like India survives to this day with feudalism has on its part a battery of historians who are in one way or the other, to one degree or another, upholders of feudalism as it existed in the past or as it is found at present. A great deal of them have feudal roots which are not easily chopped, or if they have done so and become a petty bourgeoisie, they still drape their thought and analysis in a feudal idiom; often glorificatory and bombastic if not communal and reactionary. Born and living in a society fraught with feudalism and mowed down by imperialism social advancement and human progress cease to develop for them. Feudalism appears as an eternally perpetuated system, with the imperialist centre as the only other nadir of human achievement. All history and time come to a pause. The pattern of progress that was conceived in prehistory fails. All logic of development grinds to a halt. The shudra holding system, feudalism and capitalism as modes of production successive and progressing simply fail to register and the socialist alternative derived from Marxism's exhaustive analysis escapes cognition. The same archaeologists, brilliant in discerning the pattern of human advance, inadvertently compelled to a crude Marxist perception of prehistory, turn out to be poor and apologetic historians in their writings of the period after civilisation. This is the self-contradiction of class historiography--it fails to catch the imagination, the momentum of historical advance. It turns brittle, if not boring with at times stupid accounts of kings and dynasties in a cyclical and repetitive rise and fall.

It should not therefore be surprising that Indian Marxist historiography commences with the commencement of class society. It is class struggle, past and present, the rise of the new and elimination of the old, the continued progress of society into different and successive modes of production that has drawn the attention of Indian Marxist histo-

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riography. It chooses to analyse the past since it broke into an exploiting and exploited class, thereby undoing subjective perceptions of an objective process. Indian Marxist historiography enters the debate with all shades of idealist historiography--bourgeois or feudal--from that point of time when human society came to be divided into an exploited and an exploiting class and from that point of time when idealism and religion, caste and patriarchy came to the fore contributing yet distorting humankind's true measure of itself and the toilers' real strength in their making of history.

DD Kosambi and RS Sharma are two outstanding Indian historians on whose researches we have come to widely rely. There have been several more that have followed in their tradition. We must mention about the History faculty of Patna University where RS Sharma worked. While RS Sharma has specialised in early class society and the formation of Indian feudalism, a team of historians from Patna have done some wonderful work on Karnataka's formative years of feudalism up to the twelfth century. Of these scholars we ought to speak of RN Nandi whose writings on Karnataka in particular and peninsular India in general serve as a versatile foundation for knowing our past.

But Marxist historiography on Karnataka which commences with the rise of feudalism tends to generally cease with the passing of Karnataka into medieval times, with the exception of KS Shivanna of Mysore University who prefers Marxist concepts for his analysis. Like Shivanna there have been a few individual scholars from Mangalore, Karnatak, Kuvempu and Mysore Universities who have borrowed from Marxism in interpreting colonial and precolonial history.

Despite these attempts, some of which are rigorous, history writing on Karnataka is generally pervaded by non-Marxist schools of thought. We have also drawn extensively from such authors, some of whom have done painstaking and brilliant work and only placed their material in new light.

Within the dominant non-Marxist tradition a thin dividing line between the liberal and feudal schools may be witnessed. The liberal tradition has been rather shy in asserting its independence--doing so more when it is an academic from overseas. The liberal school more often than not rests on or liasons with the feudal construct. Such feudalised interpretation has its own special characteristics. From the time of the Satavahanas onward, and more particularly, that of the Kadambas and Gangas, it tends to express itself with a dose of Kannada chauvinism--a fair number of such historians also writing text books with a lot of imagination and little else. But with the arrival of Islam to India, this feudal legacy turns communal and the best of such creativity can be seen in the writings on Vijayanagara. From text books to gazetteers and from university research to popular articles in the media by such scholars, the communal canker bores through the heart of historiography.

With the fall of Vijayanagara, history writing goes into silent mourning for more than two centuries. The Brahmana *vrata* is broken by a Praxy Fernandes, a Sheik Ali, a CK Kareem, a Nikhiles Guha or an Asok Sen from Bengal, or by British colonial historians, writing as they do about the period of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. It was with the slaying of Tipu, the conquest of Mysore and the alliance that colonialism forged with feudalism, placing an effete prince on the throne, that a new genere of historians come

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alive. Awakened from their condolent slumber and compensating for their prolonged silence, these historians, sponsored and serving the Mysore court, produced volumes. These pages celebrating colonial-feudal rule have served as the foundation of modern Karnataka's historiography. This rendering of history from the Mysore palace leads us to the period of colonialism proper; a question, which we have chosen to consider in our next volume of Karnataka history.

All these historians have nevertheless been of great help to us. Their ground work, despite its colouration or shortsightedness has been an ample source on which we have relied. The specific circumstances under which this book has been written has however prevented us from directly considering epigraphical material, making our dependence on secondary sources inevitable. However, richness of detail in these secondary sources circumvents this shortcoming. Hence this does not handicap any of the conclusions that we have drawn.

Apart from archaeological and historical material, we have relied on anthropological surveys. Anthropological data provide flesh to the archaeological skeleton. DD Kosambi used this method competently and Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya made brilliant interpretations after culling contemporary anthropological material and carefully filling up the crevices of history.

While, as we have already said, there has been little Marxist history writing on Karnataka, this book is a scaffolding in the bridge across this gap. This long haul on Karnataka, heartland of the Kannada, Tuluva and Kodava nationalities also seeks at the same time to apply Marxist historiography to the study of what Joseph Stalin, in defining a nationality, called as *"an historically evolved stable community"*.[2] Focussing on the Kannada nationality in particular, the most numerous of the three evolved nationalities of Karnataka, we have attempted to draw attention not merely to a 'regional' variant from the spectrum of an Indian 'national' history but to the application of the Marxist historical methodology in bringing into full relief the political and historical significance of undertaking such investigation along nationality lines. Is it not true after all that the *historicity* and *stability* of the various nationalities of India predate by centuries and even by millennia the rise of an Indian statehood? Our comprehension of India can reap a rich harvest when Marxist historiography addresses, in addition to generalisations of a subcontinental nature, the specifics of the historical development of each of its nationalities. It is by addressing this *stable* feature of Indian society that Marxist historiography can in turn access new heights.

Applying the Marxist methodology to this rich fund of material we have tried to reconstruct our past, paying particular heed to the life of the people and their role in the shaping of history.

Karnataka history from the stone age to the period of colonial conquest is thus classified into three major modes of production:

1. Primitive communism (40,000 BP - 250 BC),
2. The shudra holding system (250 BC - 240 AD), and
3. Feudalism (fourth - eighteenth century AD).

Within each of these modes we have been able to discern distinct stages. Within

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Primitive communism there is the hunting-food gathering period of the old and middle stone ages; followed by the pastoral-primitive agricultural period of the new stone age and metal ages. In the metal age we also observe the rise of oligarchy which creates class elements within the order of primitive communism and leads to tribal overthrowal.

The society of shudra helotage that is thus inaugurated lasts for half a millennium till it is undercut by a deep crisis leading to the rise of feudalism from the fourth century AD onwards.

The feudal mode of production itself is divided into three distinct stages:

1. Early feudalism (fourth - twelfth centuries AD),
2. Middle feudalism (thirteenth - seventeenth centuries AD), and
3. Late feudalism (late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries).

If the feudal instruments and relations of production are dominant throughout the epoch of feudalism; the first stage is marked by a near total absence of commodity production; the second by its rise and the third by its further spread alongside the elimination of a layer of the feudal class due to the rise of a merchant class sharing state power with the feudal class. It was under such semifeudal rule that Karnataka displayed fierce resistance to colonial conquest.

These classificatory paradigms follow the general movement of history. In arguing out the characteristic features of each of these modes and their respective stages we have paid attention to drawing comparisons across the subcontinent and from across the world. This only marks out the universal trajectory of history. East or west, there is a symphonic crescendo. But for colonialism, Karnataka showed (just as India also did--we firmly believe) the desire to do away with feudalism, along the European or Japanese way and ensure the establishment of a bourgeois democracy. However, halted by the onslaught of colonialism, we are now compelled to merely speak of its possibility--of its historic inevitability then.

In the next volume we shall describe the colonial period. Yet, whichever way one would choose to view it; feudalism before colonialism, or feudalism with colonialism, the unmistakable truth of history lies in the fact that our society has, just as all others, rebelled against the rule of these classes. Popular struggle has been the motive force. Faced by oppression and with no room to turn, the masses will come of their own, and forging onward, they will make **their** history.

The purpose of this work will then be fulfilled. Cause would have met its culmination; historiography would have had its tryst with history.

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Chapter I

PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM AND KARNATAKA'S PREHISTORY (40,000 BP-240 BC)

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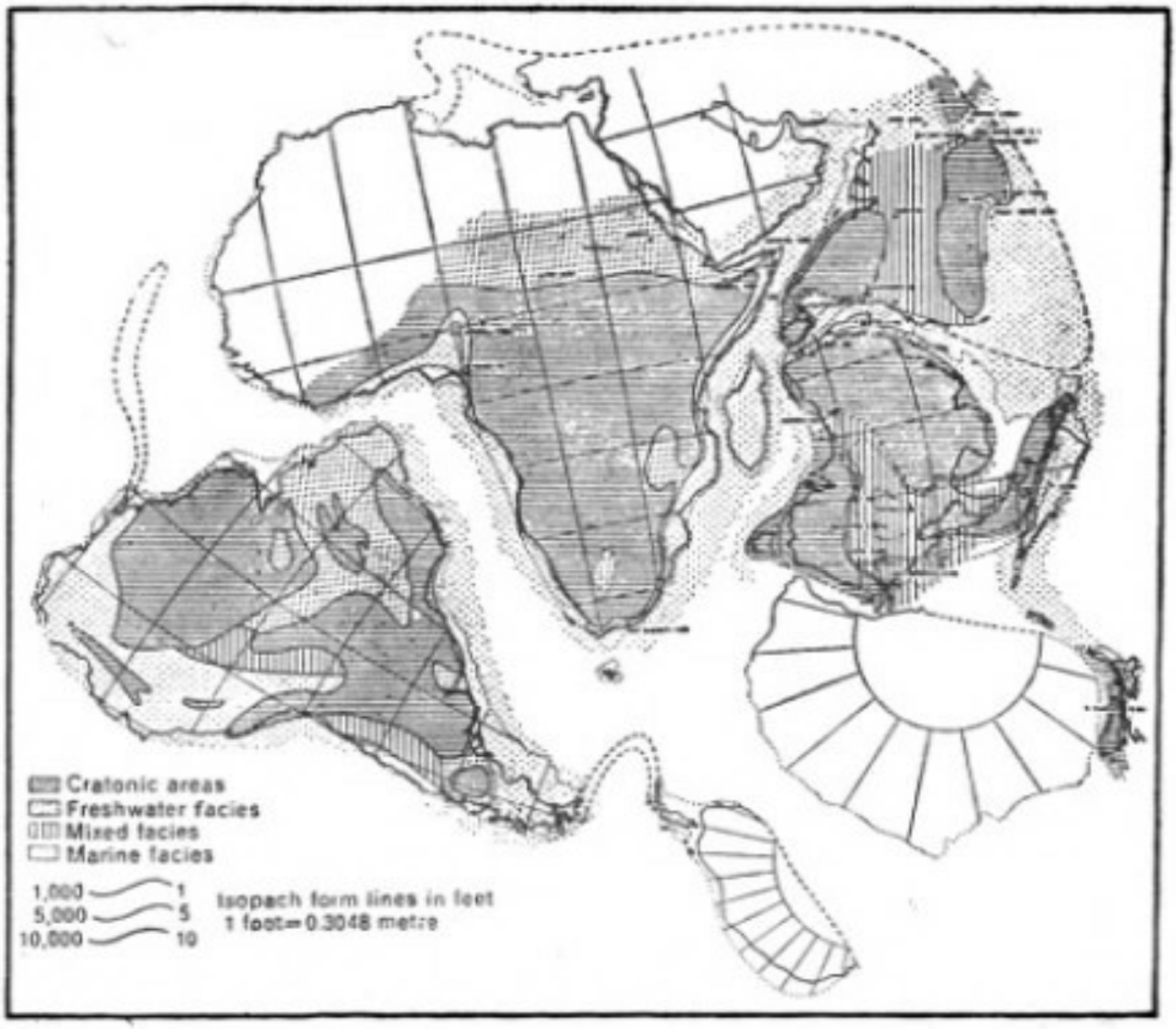
1. GEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FEATURES [1]

The earth, its continents, rivers, soil, climate, flora and fauna evolved long before humankind had. The Indian land mass which has its own separate story of evolution is divided along three distinct geological zones:

1. The peninsula of the Deccan to the south of the Vindhyas
2. The great mountain system of the north, the Himalayas
3. The Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain of northern India extending from Punjab in the west to Bengal in the east.

Of these three segments, the first immediately concerns us since it is to this that Karnataka belongs, which also happens to be the most ancient of land masses that has formed on earth. Peninsular India, made up of a solid stable block of the earth's crust, belongs to what is called the azoic era (1500 million years old) or the era before life even in its most elementary form had emerged. The rock that forms peninsular India is the oldest and thus called archaean or Dharwadian, devoid on account of its age, of fossils.



1. Palaeographic map of Gondwanaland in the middle and upper Cretaceous period.

During the mesozoic era (120-55 million years) which is further subdivided into the triassic, jurassic and cretaceous periods was also the age when reptiles evolved. Then peninsular India formed part of the land mass of Gondwanaland which was comprised of Africa, South America, Australia and Antarctica.

In the jurassic period, Gondwanaland split up commencing the process of what is called the continental drift. Peninsular India broke away from Africa and began to drift eastward along with Australia, the latter separating in the next period from the peninsular Indian land mass. This is borne out by the similarity of fauna of the Narmada valley with Arabia and Europe and the Indian east coast and Assam with that of Madagascar and South Africa, and the Savanna forests of the Deccan with that of the African east. In the words of Ramachandra Dikshitar, *"Geology accepts the Indo African land connection as a settled fact."*[2] Stupendous volcanic outbursts during the cretaceous period led to the formation of the crust of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. These ancient volcanoes may be seen in Bijapur, Belgaum and Bidar districts too of Karnataka in the form of what is called Deccan Traps (from *trap* meaning *stair* or *step* in Swedish). These long since extinct volcanoes, after pouring out lava in profuse quantity, have as a result of weathering formed into flat topped hills, Bidar city itself being situated on one such trap.

The Deccan plateau so formed tilted towards the east creating the breathtaking Western Ghats. The range visible only from the coast gradually integrates with the table land in the east; so much so that approaching the coast from the east, the Ghats seem to take on an abrupt and precipitous dip almost into the Arabian Sea. This tilt of the Deccan face was also responsible for the easterly flow of all the major peninsular rivers and created its riverine systems. Thus while all these rivers originate in the Western Ghats so close to the sea, yet they meander eastward, wash the vast Deccan table land and then join the distant bay of Bengal in the east.

By the time of the Kainozoic era (the last 55 million years), the topographical features of Karnataka were formed, and the age of flowering plans, birds and mammals had commenced.

Topographically speaking, Karnataka may be divided into three major zones, each running parallel to the others in a north-south direction. To the extreme west is a 300 km long coastal strip with its shores lapped by the Arabian Sea, also called as Kanara from Portuguese times and as the *Karavali* in Kannada, varying in width from 15 kms to 40 kms to which the districts of Uttara Kannada and Dakshina Kannada belong. The Karavali has an average elevation of from 30 metres to 60 metres above sea level.

Parallel to it is the Western Ghats, about 500 kms in length, having a broad seaward face and only gently sloping on its leeward side, also called as the *Malnad* or *Sahyadri* in Kannada, composed of deep valleys, cascading waterfalls and steep mountainous hills. The Malnad runs through nine districts which include Belgaum, Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Shimoga, Chickmagalur, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu (also called as Coorg by the British) and has its toes sticking into Mysore district.

Further east lies the broad expanse of plateau land also known as *Bayalusime* or *Mudalasime* in Kannada since ancient times and in more recent centuries as its *Maidan*. The Maidan itself may be divided on a geographical basis into a northern and a southern

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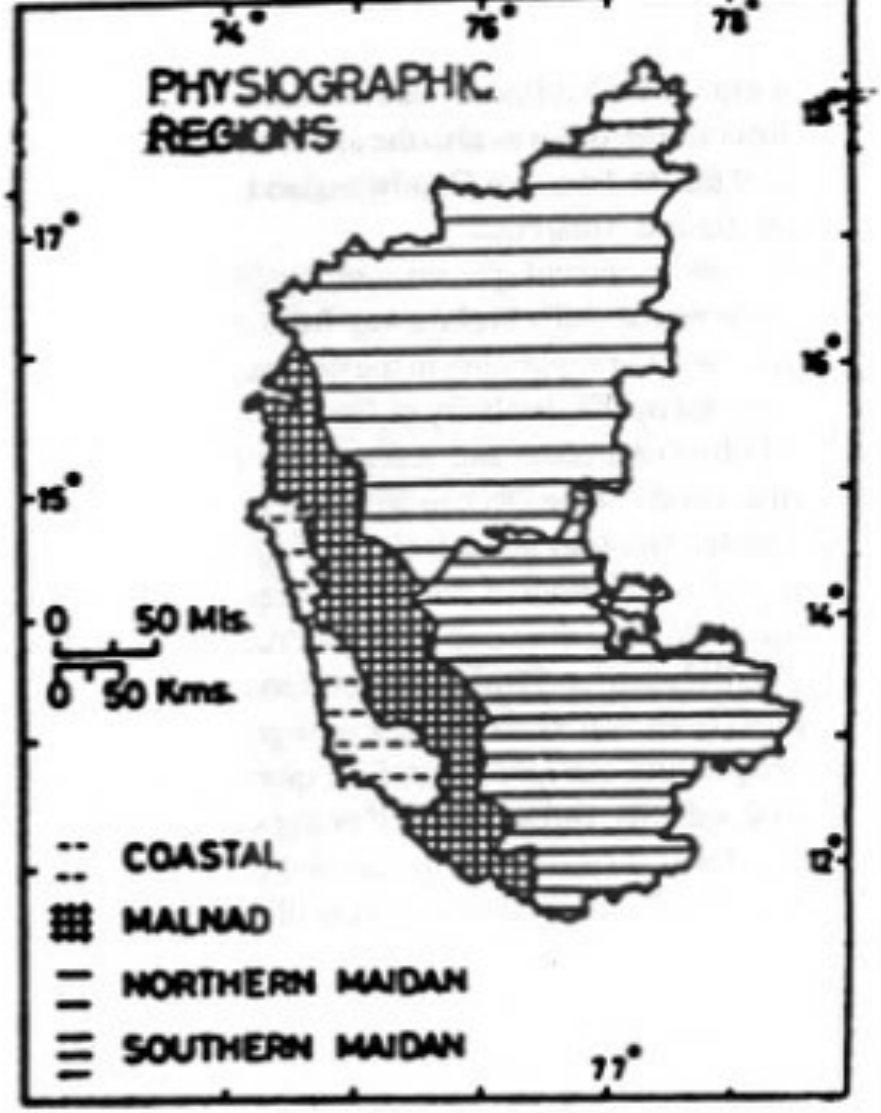

2. Karnataka: Physiographic Regions.

half, the Tungabhadra river being the general line of demarcation. The North Maidan has a much lower elevation at from 450 metres to 760 metres, than the South and its plateau tends to be flatter. To it belong most of Belgaum and Dharwad districts and the entire area of the districts of Bijapur, Bellary, Raichur, Gulbarga and Bidar. The South Maidan with an elevation of 900 metres to 1,200 metres is an undulating plateau interspersed with hilly outcrops. A good deal of territory of Shimoga, Chickmagalur, Hasssan, Mysore and the entire districts of Chitradurga, Tumkur, Bangalore, Mandya and Kolar belong to it.

Except for a few streams which originate in the wooded regions amid granitic outcrops in the Maidan, all rivers of Karnataka originate in the Western Ghats. The rivers themselves may be divided into east and west flowing ones with the Kali alone, a bit undecided about its course in it upper reaches, takes a route confused and circuitous, before making up its mind and then rushing to discard itself in the Arabian Sea. The east flowing rivers form the biggest basins of Karnataka. At the northern tip the Manjra and Karanja flow in Bidar district making them a part of the Godavari basin and constituting 2.3% of the total area of 1.92 lakh sq kms of Karnataka. To the south and covering 59.06% of the area of the State and thereby its widest territory, is the grand Krishna basin. Its major tributaries are the Bhima, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Tungabhadra and Vedavati.

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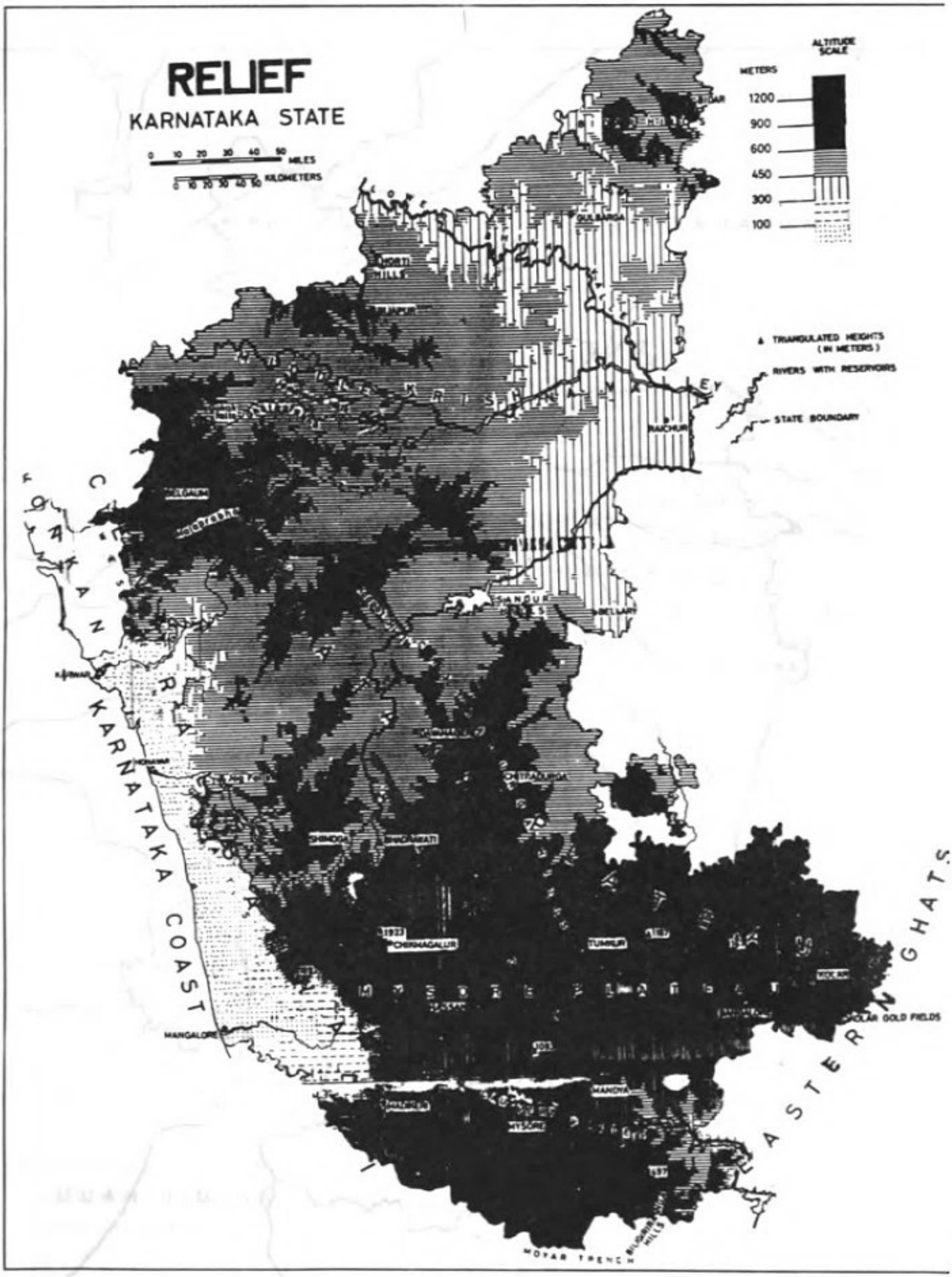

3. Karnataka: Relief.

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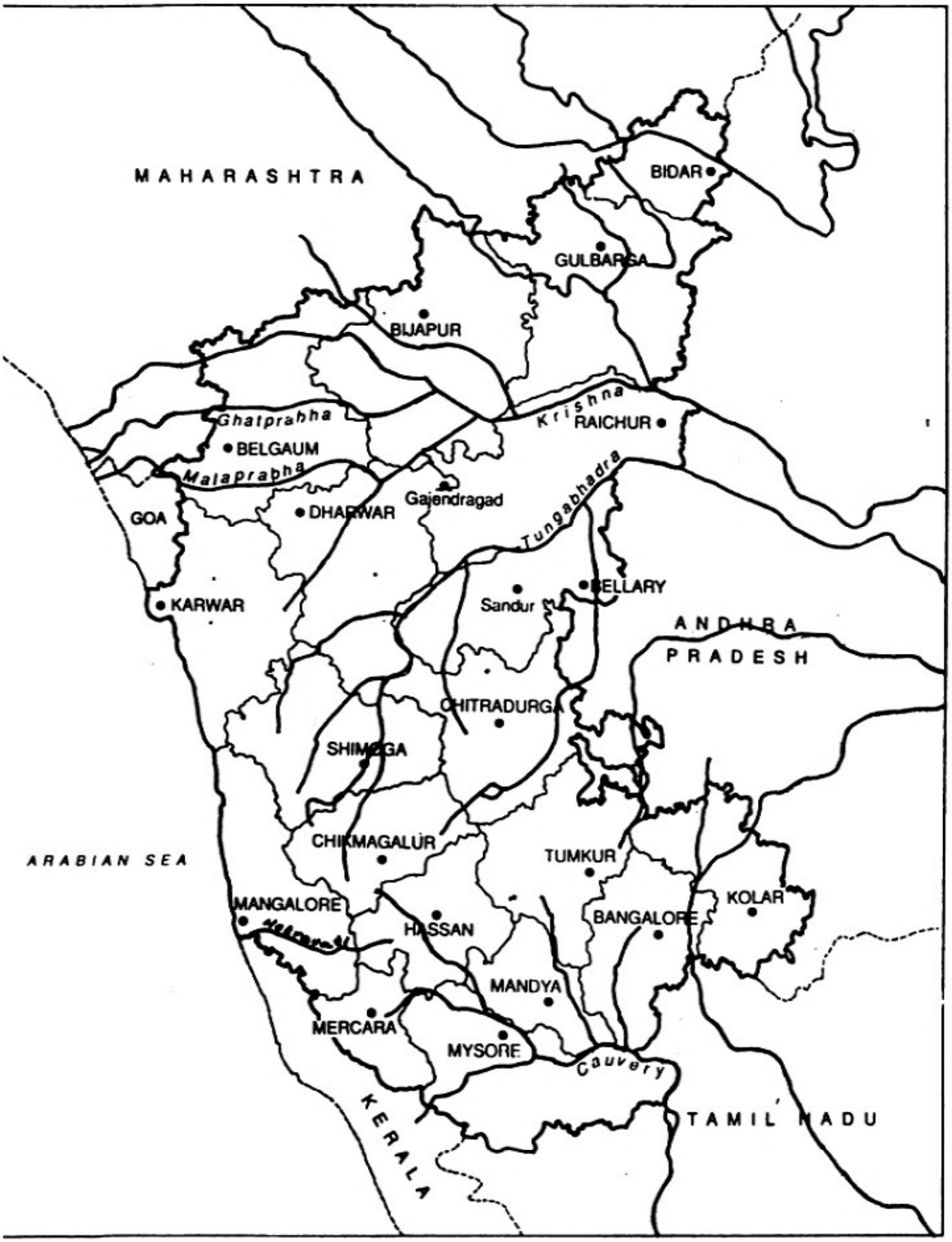

4. Major rivers of Karnataka.

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The Kaveri, moistening the southern part of the South Maidan, covers 17.87% of the State and includes the Yagachi, Hemavathi, Arkavathi, Shimsha and Kabini in its basin. The west flowing rivers, in contrast, have a short and swift course. They are always in a hurry to jump down from the Ghats and end up in the Arabian Sea, forming deltas and estuaries at the end of their journey. The Karavali, drained by these rivers, has a basin area of 13.8% of the State's total. The coast is innumerably sliced by these rivers, the more important of which are the Kali, Gangavali, Bedthi, Aghanashini, Sharavathi, Haladi, Sita, Chakra and Netravathi. Apart from these the North and South Pennar and Palar rivers drain 7.09% of Karnataka's area.

The Malnad receives the highest rainfall in Karnataka with an annual precipitation of from 4,000 mm to 8,000 mm. The Karavali comes next with an annual rainfall exceeding 3,000 mm. Confronted by the windward face of the Ghats, moisture laden winds blowing from the Arabian Sea are obstructed; and compelled to rise, they form a cloudy canopy over the coast, become heavy and cause cataclysmic showers. Hence the Malnad, and due to it, the coast, receive heavy rainfall making Agumbe in Shimoga district, India's southern Chirapunjee. Winds which have thus shed most of their moisture move eastwards to sprinkle the vast plains. The North and South Maidan thus form the rainshadow area. While the South Maidan receives from 2,000 mm to 460 mm of rainfall between its western and eastern extremities, the North Maidan depressed as it is in elevation and being the far from the diagonally running 'V' shaped coastline gets from 1,500 mm to 500 mm of rain in a year. If one rainy day is considered as having 2.5 mm or more rain in a 24 hour period, the Malnad and Karavali have a total of from 95 to 105 rainy days a year, and at the eastern extremes of the state along the Andhra Pradesh boundary, Bidar and Gulbarga have from 30 to 40 rainy days and Bellary and Chitradurga, in their eastern flanks, less than 20 rainy days in a year. While the Maidan generally displays semiarid conditions, the eastern strips of Bellary, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts display almost arid conditions, making them a part of the semidesert of neighbouring Anantapur, Kurnool and Cudappah districts of Andhra Pradesh, which is the core of the second desertified region in India after the Thar in Rajasthan.

Karnataka has four seasons. January-February being the cold months, the warm and hot months of summer spreading from March to May, the South West Monsoon also called the rainy season of the *Mungaru* covering the months from June to September and a second rainy season, the *Hingaru* caused by the North East Monsoon bringing clouds from the Bay of Bengal from October to December. During the rainy season the weather is generally warm or cool tending toward the latter especially in the months of the Hingaru.

The formation of soils is the result of the joint handiwork of geoclimatic and geobiological factors. While weathering breaks down rock masses into soil, physicochemical action of plants such as lichens, ferns, algae and mosses and animals such as worms and rodents enhances capillary action on the soil and helps its formation to maturity.

Of the four major types of Indian soils, the Indo-Gangetic alluvium is absent in Karnataka. It has red soil which is formed over the archaean basement and is the dominant type covering the South Maidan and parts of Dharward and Bellary districts. It is

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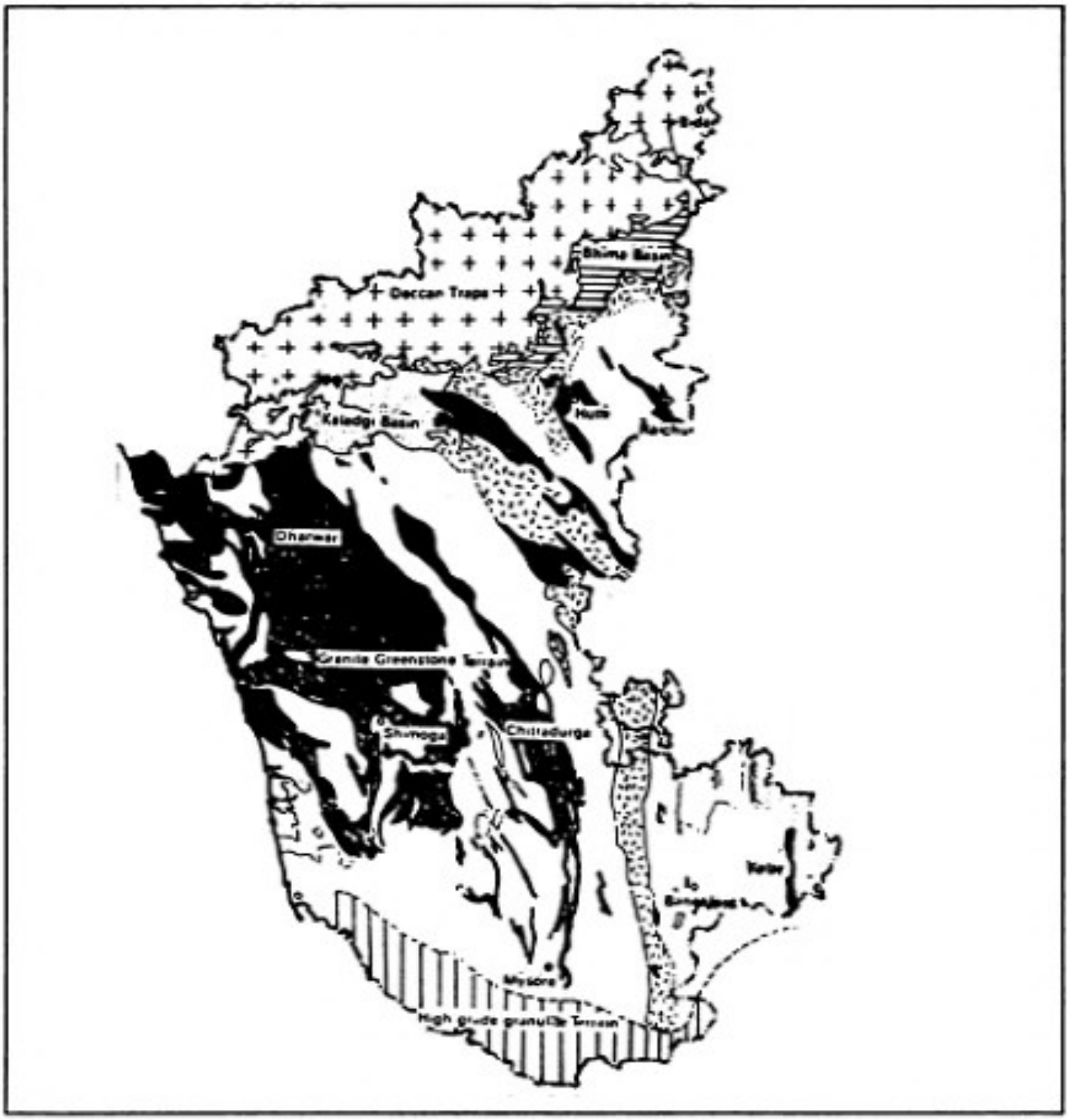

5. Karnataka: Geology.

rich in potash, iron and alumina and generally poor in nitrogen, posphorus and humus. Black cotton soil formed from lava that once issued out of the Deccan Traps is the second most important soil type and is a characteristic feature of the North Maidan except Bidar and a part of Dharwad and Bellary districts. Black soils are extremely tenacious to moisture and become sticky when wet. They have a high degree of fertility generally and have high proportions of lime, magnesia, alumina, salt and potash. They are poor in posphorus and nitrogen. The reddish laterites are a feature typical of a moist climate. They have a low lime content. Laterite soils along with coastal alluvium are found in the Karavali and even Bidar district is covered by it. Based on these soil and climatic factors each of the regions of Karnataka may be further subdivided into agroclimatic zones.

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All these factors contributed to the formation of the biosphere of Karnataka.

A narrow 5-10 km strip running at the edge of the Ghats emerged as an evergreen deciduous forest, a very rare kind of bioreserve. Sandwiching it from either side are two strips of semievergreen forests. Moist deciduous forests were formed at the fringe of the semievergreen forests and further eastwards, touching the Maidan are dry deciduous forests. In prehistoric times, the South Maidan could boast of dry deciduous forests and the North Maidan contained scrub and thorny forest laid with a profuse vegetation of grasses.

A number of wild animals roamed these forests; elephants keeping off evergreen forests and even quite a few species of ungulated animals finding it difficult to exist there due to the dense canopy. In fact the North Maidan with its scrub vegetation, occasional lakes and rolling grasslands characterised as the Savanna type (after East Africa) was the habitat on which hoofed animals such as deer, pig, oxen, buffalo, sheep and goat could thrive.

All these features then constituted the material environment of Karnataka. It is clear that the first evidence of humankind going back to 40,000 years in Karnataka depended on these ecological factors.

The North Maidan with its Savanna type of flora and fauna, had various fruit yielding trees and tubers. Its grassy plains were an attraction for the ungulates, reptiles and rodents. This was an invitation for carnivores feeding on them. The climate was warm and conducive. Quartzite was available.

Food was there. The raw material to procure them was also there. What more could the weary migrating hunter-gatherers have wished for? **In the North Maidan of Karnataka natural evolution had created an Eden for primitive humankind.**

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2. LOCATING KARNATAKA IN PREHISTORY

Eastern Africa is considered as the core region where humankind evolved. The region has demonstrated a striking continuity of fossil finds of the late primates otherwise called anthropoid apes, such as the orangutan, gorilla and chimpanzee and the first Hominids (Hominids are a family of primates evolved from apelike ancestors of modern man). Further there has been a remarkable continuity of anthropogenesis that has been established under the family *Hominidae* basing on evidence collected by and large from Africa.[3]

The following table provided by Alexeev locates the process across time and facilitates our grasp of this transition.

Table of the Relation and Absolute Dates of the Stages in the Evolution of Ancient Man's Morphology and Culture

Historical Stage	Archaeological Stage	Evolutionary Stage	Absolute Dates (Thousand Years)
Primitive proto horde	Early stages of Lower Palaeolithic	*Australo-pithecus*	4,000.000-about 2,000,000
Early primitive horde	Later Stages of Lower Palaeolithic	*Pithe-canthropus*	about 2,000,000 200,000
Developed primitive horde	Middle Palaeolithic	*Neanderthal* man	200,000-40,000
Primitive community	Upper Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Early Bronze	Modern man *(Homo Sapiens)*	40,000-5,000

Peninsular India, to which Karnataka belongs, is the oldest extant land mass of India displaying striking resemblance in animal and plant forms with Madagascar off Africa's east coast. This only further confirms the unity of peninsular India with the African landmass at an early geological period. Yet, the peninsula has so far

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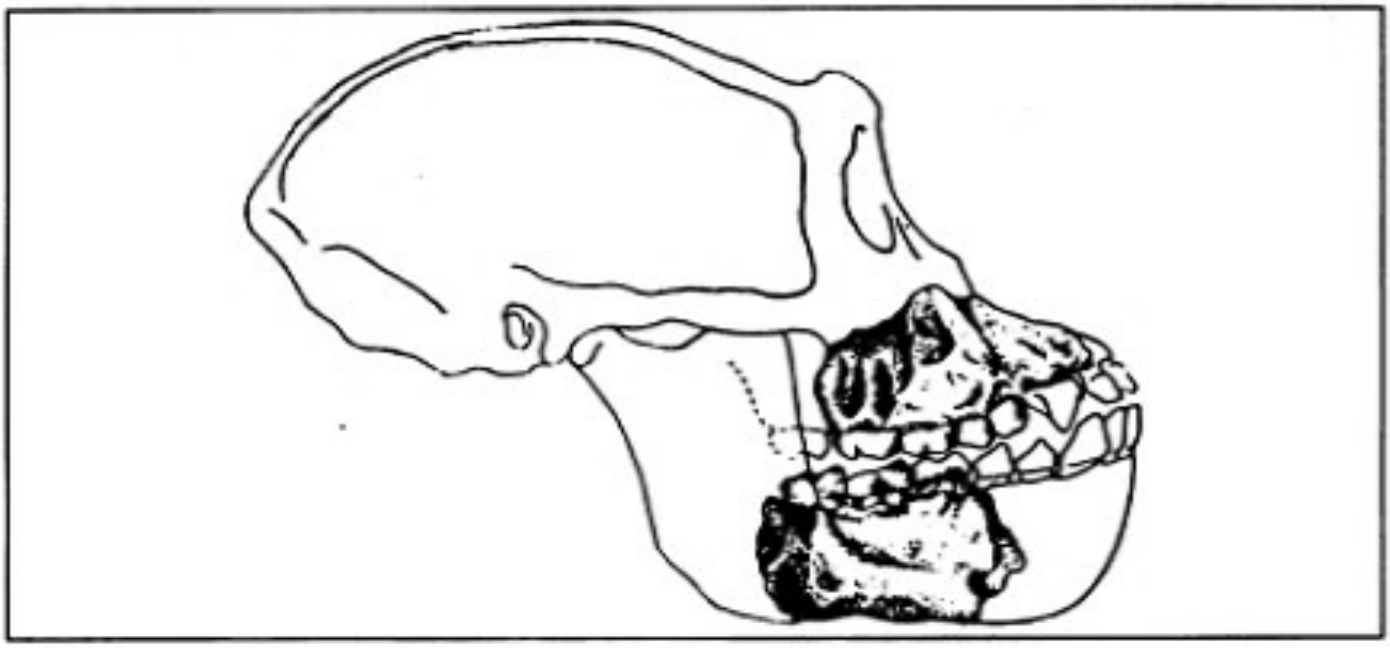

6. Reconstruction of the skull of a Ramapithecus ape.

displayed remnants only of the early tailed primates. Traces of the later non-tailed primates or anthropoid apes from which man evolved have so far not been found in peninsular India. However the Siwalik ranges falling in the Himalayan foothills and its adjoining plains from northwestern Uttar Pradesh to Peshawar in Pakistan has thrown up evidence of the existence of higher primates such as the *Sivapithecus indicus* from Chinji in Pakistan, *Dryopithecus punjabicus* from Haritalynagar near Bilaspur in Punjab and *Semnopithecus asnoti* from the Salt Range bordering Chinji. Apart from these the fragment of the skull of *Ramapithecus punjabicus* was discovered at Haritalynagar.[5]

The *Ramapithecus* was considered to be among the last of the apes. But Ardeas Skybreak in her book *Of Primeval Steps and Future Leaps* caps the question when she says:

"Morgan, writing in 1971, assumes that the hominids diverged from the ancestral tree-dwelling apes a good 10 or 12 million years ago. In the past few years, however, new information has come to light which has led most scientists to believe that the divergence from the apes actually happened much more recently--a mere 4 or 5 million years ago. A reexamination of fossil dental remains once thought to be hominid from 5.5 million years ago has led to their being reclassified as ape remains (Ramapithecus, for instance, is no longer generally considered to be on the hominid line), most crucially, a new technique for "molecular dating" has been developed which makes it possible to roughly estimate the time when related species alive today would likely have diverged from a common ancestor. This technique, based on assessing the degree of relative similarity in the amino acid sequencing of typical protein chains of two or more related species, provides convincing evidence that our ancestors diverged ***in the very recent past*** *from the ancestral ape stock which also gave rise to the chimpanzees and gorillas. There is a strikingly small difference--less than 1% in the amino acid sequencing of average human protein molecules and their counterparts in chimpan-*

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MA Edey, locating the significance of this find in the process of human evolution says: *"Leaky's Fort Ternan find locates* ***Ramapithecus*** *in East Africa at least two million years before it appeared in India--and, most important, in a country where Australopithecines [a man-like creature which appeared 4 to 5 million years ago and whose remains have been found in Ethiopia and East Africa and could make simple pebble tools] of great age are beginning to turn up. It seems most sensible to continue to argue the case for Africa as the breeding ground of man. Ramapithecus populations may well have radiated out from Africa--to India and perhaps to other places--over a period of several million years. But this is no guarantee that they went on to produce hominidal descendants in those places. Until fossil evidence confirms that they did, it seems more logical to assume that early hominid evolution was confined to the place where fossils are: Africa."* *

7. The east African home of humankind.

VP Alexeev also subscribes to a similar stand point. He says: *"The homeland of humankind is often put at where the most finds are made.... The rich discoveries in human palaentology made in Africa over the past 20 years, have given this region*

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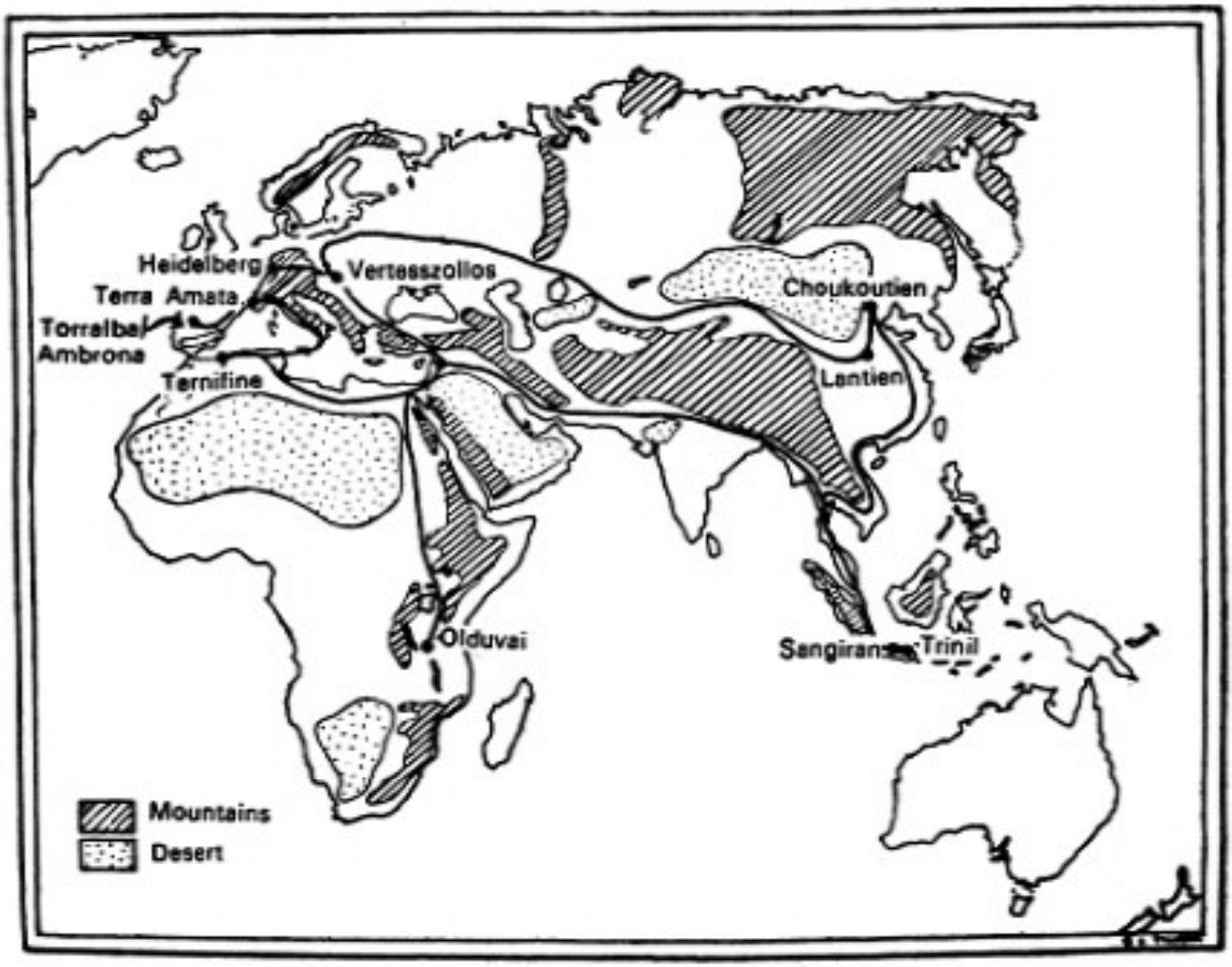
the main role. But the Siwalik Range in Northern India, known to palaentologists since the last century as the Eldorado of fossils, continues to yield finds of forms close to hominids, though not as in the same quantity as Africa. That has given the Asian hypothesis new life, and new supporters. I have expressed myself several times in the literature in support of the hypothesis of an African home of humankind, because of the exceptional nature of the African finds, which illustrate all the stages of human evolution, and the very great similarity of man precisely to the African anthropoid apes (an argument already put forward by Darwin for an African homeland)."[9]

We might from all angles therefore consider the thesis of an East African homeland for humankind as valid.

It is however the Siwaliks that again throws up earliest evidence of humankind in India. While no fossil remains have yet been traced, stone tools, choppers and crude



8. Major sites and migratory routes of Homo Erectus which became possible because of the discovery of fire. This must have caused, theoretically, the first inhabiting of India.

scrapers have been traced, the antiquity of which is dated from 5,00,000 years to 3,00,000 years Before Present (BP).

One lakh years after the Siwalik discoveries come the finds at Atirampakkam in Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu of double edged cutting tools which are dated as 2,00,000 years old.

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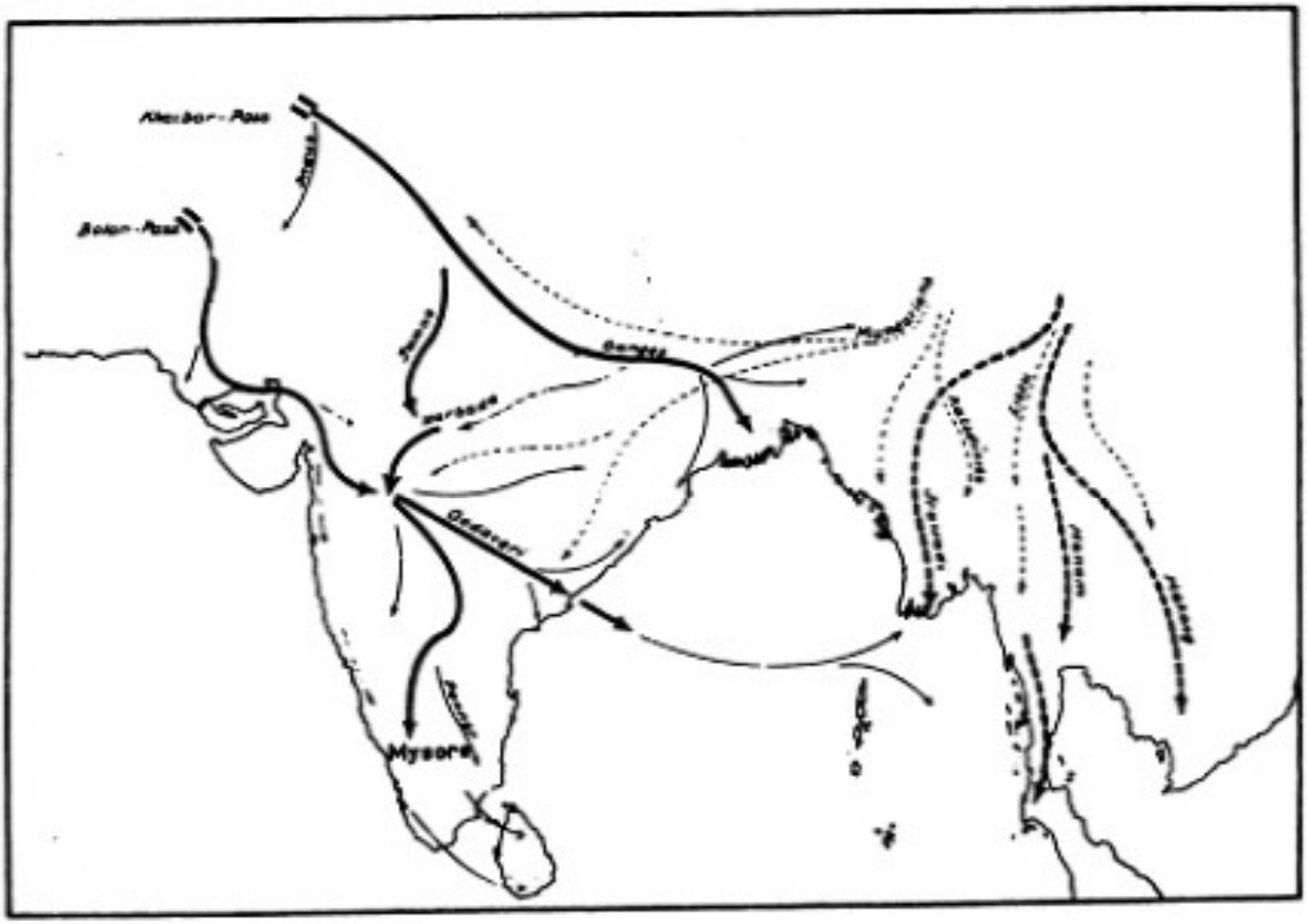
But after this there is a gap of 1.5 lakh years in peninsular India before any substantial discoveries of palaeolithic (belonging to the old stone age which is the earliest and longest period of human development) humankind are made. It is only from this period, starting about 40,000 years ago that a continuity of human *social evolution* is obtained in India in general and Karnataka in particular. Thus we may say that the prehistory of Karnataka commences with the period of palaeolithism.

But before we start off with our discussion of Karnataka prehistory, it would be useful to make some observations regarding human society of that time.

Indian and its peninsular prehistory is bound to be reinterpreted based on more meticulous excavations in the Siwalik hills and the habitation region around Atirampakkam. These finds will locate the role of the Indian land mass in the eastward movement of human life from the African homeland into the Melanesian, Polynesian and Australian regions at the time of the lower and middle palaeolithic stages itself when the species Homo Sapien was yet to evolve. It could, in the process demonstrate the contribution of the Indian subcontinent to the development of human culture during this stage of transition and movement eastwards from India. But until these substantive discoveries are made and the line of continuity established within the Indian land mass between not only the northern Siwalik finds and the southern Atirampakkam finds but also within these regions traversing the lower, middle and upper palaeolithic stages, our comprehension of our past will remain hampered and



9. Corridors of migration into India and Indochina.

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limited to what perceptive best we can make of the existing material starting from the lower palaeolithic period, that is, from about 40,000 years ago.

This starting point in the study of Karnataka's perhistory only establishes well the following facts:

- That Karnataka's (and India's too, for that matter) prehistory commences with the emergence of Homo Sapiens or modern man.
- Going by the enduring Engelsian classification this was the period of the middle stage of savagery. Savagery itself was described by Engels as: *"...the period in which the appropriation of natural products, ready for use, predominated; the things produced by man were, in the main, instruments that facilitated this appropriation."* [10]
- Engels' grasp of the large scale migration of the period, unprecedented in human prehistory till then, and the factors affecting it remain valid more than a century after he made them. He says that the middle stage of savagery *"begins with the utilization of fish (under which head we also include crabs, shellfish and other aquatic animals) for food and with the employment of fire. These two are complimentary, since fish food becomes fully available only with the use of fire. This new food, however, made man independent of climate and locality. By following the rivers and coasts man was able even in this savage state, to spread over the greater part of the earth's surface. The crude unpolished stone implements of the earlier Stone Age--the so called palaeolithic--which belong wholly, or predominantly, to this period, and are scattered over all the continents, are evidence of these migrations. The newly-occupied territories as well as the unceasingly active urge for discovery, linked with their command of the art of producing fire by friction, made available new food stuffs, such as farinaceous roots and tubers, baked in hot ashes or in baking pits (ground ovens), and game, which was occasionally added to the diet after the invention of the first weapons--the club and the spear."* [11]

Thus it was exactly at this point in the development of humans and the peopling of peninsular India by migratory movements of communities in the stage of palaeolithism or of food gathering-hunting that we arrive at evidences from Karnataka.

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3. FOOD GATHERING-HUNTING: PALAEOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC PERIODS (40,000 BP-2500 BC)

From continent to continent and from region to region within a continent the periodisation of prehistory undergoes distinct changes. Since all prehistoric (and for that matter historic) periodisation is undertaken on the qualitative level of the instruments of production, each stage of prehistoric development into palaeolithic (old stone age), mesolithic (middle stone age), neolithic (new stone age), copper, bronze and iron ages describes the level of development of the human social formation. A complex of environmental and social factors decide the transition from one stage of prehistory to the other; and they also at times cause an intermingling of stages. While submitting the culture region of South Indian prehistory to periodisation, we may identify the following stages:

Table Showing the Periodisation of South Indian Prehistory

Tool culture	Date	Mode of production in South India with particular reference to Karnataka
I Palaeolithic		
Early	2,00,000 BP-40,000 BP	Primitive communism with food gathering-hunting
Middle	40,000 BP-19,000 BP	--ditto--
Upper	19,000 BP-10,000 BP	--ditto--
II Mesolithic	10,000-BP-2500 BC	Primitive communism with food gathering-hunting
III Neolithic-Chalcolithic	2500 BC-1200 BC	Primitive communism with pastoralism-primitive agriculture
IV Iron age	1200 BC-240 BC	Primitive communism with pastoralism-primitive agriculture under tribal oligarchic rule

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In periodising Karnataka in particular one finds that the early palaeolithic period was characterised by tools made of quartzite, while the middle palaeolithic saw the use of agate, jasper and chalcedony.[13]

Marking the difference between the middle and upper palaeolithic stages, Bridget and Raymond Allchin say: *"The basic technological innovation of the Upper Palaeolithic is the method of producing parallel-sided blades from a carefully prepared core, a specialised development of the unidirectional type of Middle Palaeolithic. One good core of this kind, once prepared, can yield many parallel sided blades with little or no further preparation.... The technique of making parallel sided blades is an essential basic element of all Upper Palaeolithic industries of the subcontinent...."*[14]

It is therefore generally possible that it was the last stage of palaeolithism which consumed about 9,000 years before transforming into the mesolithic period, that the last stage of savagery, that is, of food gathering-hunting was inaugurated. After an exclusive mesolithic stage, the neolithic age commences. This in a short time witnesses the simultaneous transition to the copper age. Thus this period stretching from 2500 BC to 1200 BC is called the chalcolithic period (*chalcos* = copper, *lithic* = of stone) where there is a combination of new stone age tools with that of copper use. Karnataka also does not experience any exclusive bronze age. It moves from the chalcolithic age into the iron age and from there into the stage of history proper.

Thus while the overall pattern of prehistoric development is in keeping with the general pattern, the Karnataka land mass displays its own specificities in this regard.

In the absence of any archaeological evidence of man before 40,000 years in Karnataka, we presume that Karnataka was peopled as the result of a protracted migratory movement.

The evidence of palaeolithic sites in Karnataka falls along a pattern which describes South India as a whole. All palaeolithic sites discovered so far in South India are concentrated in the districts of Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur and Bellary of Karnataka; adjoining plains of Mahaboobnagar and Kurnool districts, the eastern Nallamala hills, Nalgonda, Chittur and Nellore districts of Andhra Pradesh and the adjoining northern districts of North Arcot and Chingleput of Tamil Nadu. While the Krishna and its tributaries are home for almost all the sites in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the Pennar basin is the culture region for Tamil Nadu.[15]

Within this region, there is again an epicentre falling along the Tungabhadra-Krishna rivers of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. More than 100 such sites have so far been identified in North Karnataka and 50 sites in Andhra Pradesh.

It was only after another several thousand years of the existence of these sites in this core region that one notices a gradual spread of palaeolithic sites to the South Maidan region of Karnataka in the districts of Shimoga, Chitradurga, Chickmagalur, Tumkur and Mysore.[16] Among these innumerable sites, systematic excavation has been undertaken in the Hunsgi-Baichbal valley of Gulbarga district.

Among the most important factors contributing to this settlement pattern are the availability of raw material for tool making, the proximity of perennial water source

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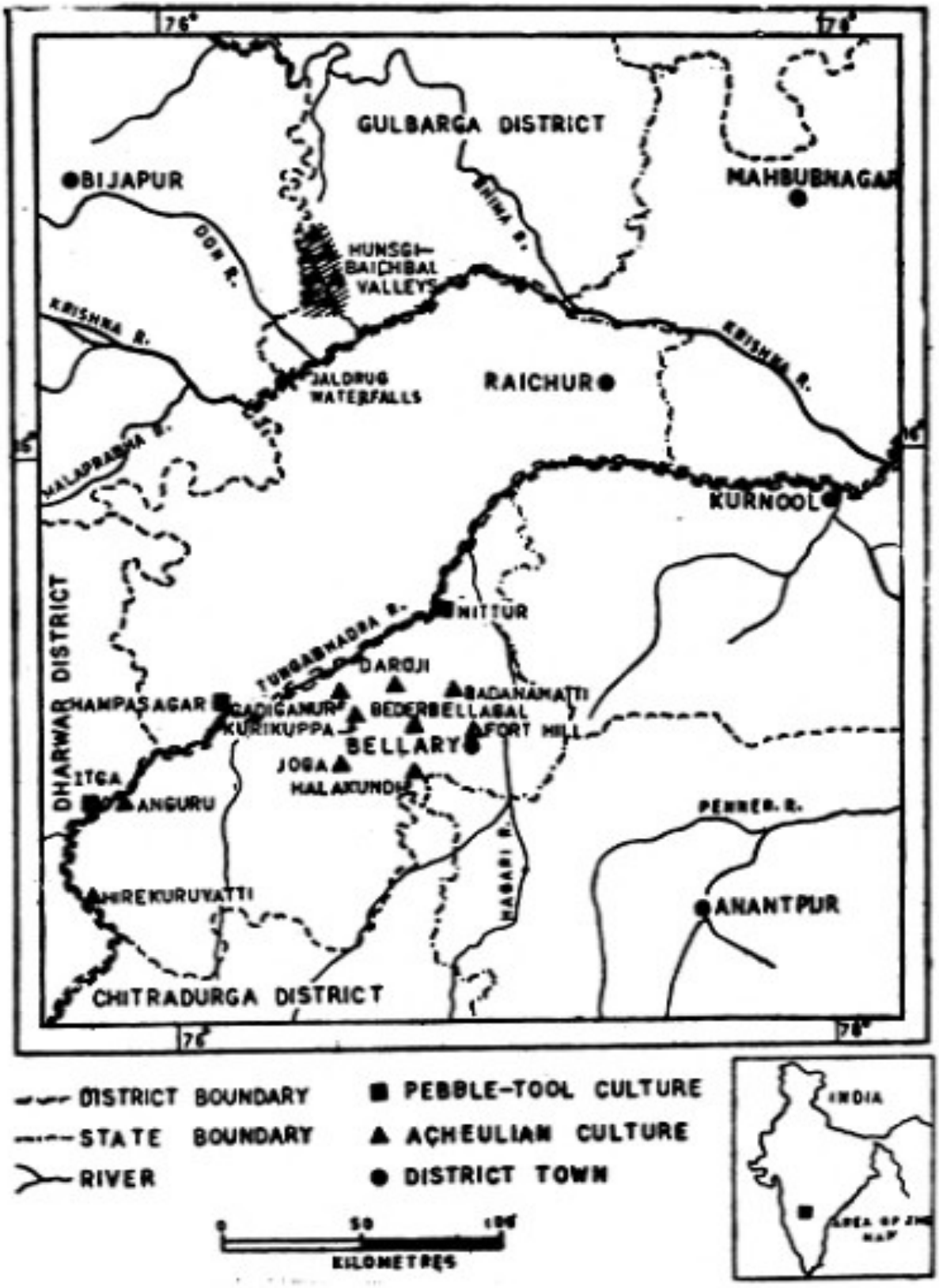

10. Map of the middle Krishna basin showing the distribution of early palaeolithic sites.

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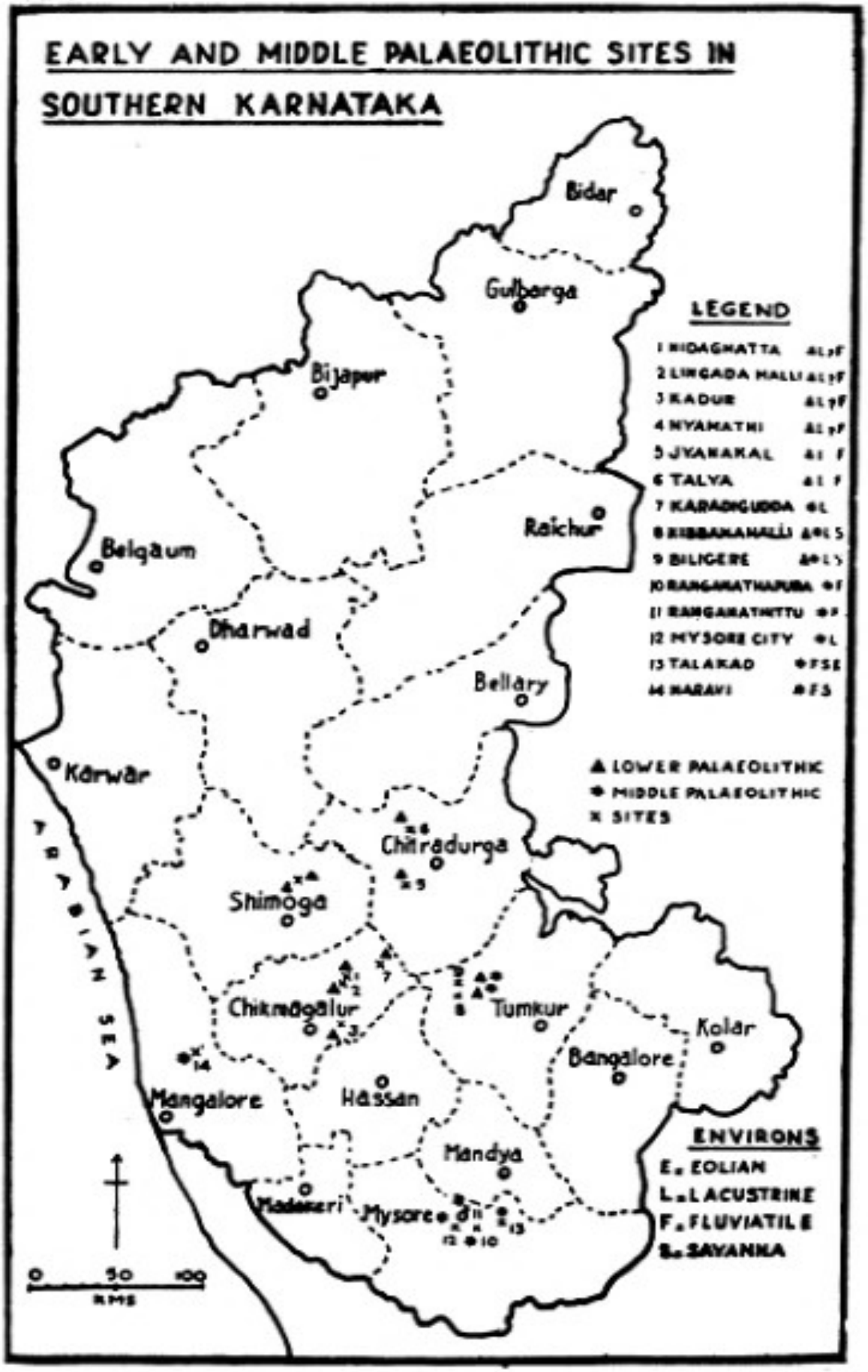

11. Early and middle palaeolithic sites in southern Karnataka.

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for drinking and fishing, the availability of animals, in particular, herbivores (animals that feed on grass and leaves) which make easier prey and the existence of a plant diversity which can yield food all round the year.

The availability of schists, haematite, quartzite, chert, jasper and dolerite have contributed to the making of tools.

Of the tools found are handaxes, cleavers, knives and bifacial points. With the further advancement of the upper palaeolithic period, scrapers form a dominant portion of the tools, followed by points, borers and combination tools. In this later stage 90% of the tools were made by the flaking technique. RV Joshi says that most tools during this period were *"difficult to haft for making arrows"*.[17] The tools of this period are generally classed as Acheulian, named after the stone age culture which existed in France from 2,30,000 to 2,00,000 years ago in St Acheul, France.

Although the level of palaeolithism has been the same in north India and the south, there is a distinction in the main type of tool that is found during this period between the two regions. While the chopper-type pebble tools are found in the north, the Acheulian hand axes dominate in the south. Archaeologists are of the opinion that both these tool types were used to serve the same end and hence this only goes to show the distinctness of the culture type that evolved in the south.[18]

Fossils of the ox, buffalo, pig, deer, antelope, rhinoceros, molluscan shells, antler, elephant and hippopotamus have been found in different sites of Karnataka. The neighbouring Kurnool caves revealed fossils of blackbuck, chinkara, sambar, chital, barking deer, mouse deer, wild boar, black naped hare, procupine, pangolin, monitor lizard and crocodile in addition to the animals found in the Karnataka sites.[19]

Apart from these animal remains, fossils of various berries, seeds, leafy greens, tubers, tamarind and ber fruit have also been found at these sites.

GL Badam who has made a study of the palaeontology of the upper Krishna valley which includes its tributaries such as the Malaprabha, Ghataprabha, Tungabhadra, Bhima, Ghod and Hunsgi rivers, dates all these floral and faunal remains to the period 30,000 to 39,000 years BP.[20]

Detailed investigations by K Paddayya at Hunsgi covering a seven year period led him to identify 65 sites in the valley. Further, another 40 sites were located in the Ghataprabha valley in Gokak of Belgaum district. RS Pappu, K Paddayya and TV Shivarudrappa conclude that the *"region was characterised by semi-arid monsoonal climate with suitable physiographic setting in the form of gentle plateau and broad pediments cut by shallow broad bed load streams and sparsely forested savanna type of vegetation in the lower reaches of the river valleys...."*[21]

KV Paddayya's work on the Hunsgi valley has its own special place in the understanding of palaeolithic Karnataka. Hunsgi is an oval shaped valley running 15 kms north-south and 10 kms east-west in Gulbarga district. It is surrounded by elevated plateaus. The Hunsgi stream with a few tributaries of its own in the form of hill torrents provides the main drainage for the valley before joining the Krishna river. These torrents normally retain water in the monsoon months of July-October; but the Hunsgi itself has a perennial flow. Of the 20 Acheulian localities that Paddayya

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mentions, three are factory sites, others are secondary spreads and habitational sites. Most sites are on the floor of the valley and generally close to the water courses. The sporadic occurrence of artefacts on the surrounding hill slopes and rock hollows only suggests that the Acheulian folk used to roam around in that area, occasionally taking shelter in the hollows. Three micro zones of vegetation were identified: a gallery forest along the stream courses, xerophytic vegetation (plants which have adapted to conditions of scanty rainfall and excess salts in the soil) typical of semi-arid tracts in the valley floor and the same type of xerophytic vegetation in the tableland. There were interspersed marshlands. The totality of this type may be identified with the Savannah type of East Africa, a region, let us be reminded had adjoined peninsular India in a bygone geological age.[22]

Paddayya's detailed investigations at Hunsgi have led him to observe a climatic pattern in the life of the palaeolithic peoples of the valley: *"...the annual activity-cycle of the Acheulian occupants of the area consisted of two principal seasonal strategies. In the dry season animal foods (especially large game hunting) were the main source of subsistence; the Acheulian population was probably forced to come together in the central part of the valley (the area around the present-day village of Hunsgi), as the spring-fed channel flowing the Hunsgi stream would be the only source of drinking water in the entire valley.... In the ensuing wet season the population aggregate would split itself into small groups and spread all over the valley, since now both plant foods and drinking water would be freely available everywhere."* [23]

From the tools used, the plant and animal remains found, it is evident that the palaeolithic people of Karnataka were at the stage of food gathering-hunting.

Stone tools could have been used for digging up tubers, edible roots and open burrows of rodents and other small animals. The stone tools appear to have been used more for flaying open the carcass of the hunted animals, perhaps the remains of the food of carnivores, and scraping out the meat. While the animal remains speak of a diverse faunal diet, it would be wrong to exaggerate the regularity of an animal diet in the life of these palaeolithic humans. Under a hot and humid climate which had a relatively moderate degree of precipitation a carcass would often decompose even before it could be completely used. As a result *"it was this impossibility of preserving meat that apparently led to a constant, purposive search for food and hunting practically every day, and at the same time encouraged an active mode of life."* [24] While foraging remained the mainstay in the food of these people, they took to scavenging and hunting to supplement a proteinaceous diet.[25]

Paddayya's reconstruction of the behaviour of the palaeolithic people of Hunsgi valley speaks a lot of the level of their culture and the formation of their knowledge base. The palaeolithic people of Hunsgi had obviously moved from the level of registering empirical/apparent knowledge.

Discussing about the logical in the sphere of human consciousness of primitive man, Alexeev says: *"There is still an immense field of extra-economic phenomena that the primitive man came up against, and on which he depended no less than on the state of food resources; that is the seasonal rhythms and climatic phenomena. It is*

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impossible to foresee natural calamities ... but it is possible to be clearly aware of the rhythm of seasonal processes and to adapt to them. After the dry season follows the rainy season, after day comes night--these are empirical observations, awareness of the inevitability of this succession, and of its strict recurrence, however, is obviously already a generalisation of empirical experience; the observation itself and its generalisation belong to the different spheres of consciousness.... In the cases of hunting and food gathering the generalisation promotes a more regular supply of food, in the case of observations and taking stock of the rhythm and character of natural processes, it makes it possible to select and prepare shelters from bad weather, to choose more convenient places for campsites and night halts, i.e., to realise the whole life cycle." [26]

There was a diversity in the sites of habitation of these palaeolithic peoples. Bridget and Raymond Allchin state that *"...regular living sites were established on the banks of rivers, in the open and in rock shelters...."* [27]

Thus it could be correct to expect several habitational sites in a given culture-complex zone as Paddayya has rightly done, and look for the seasonal alteration of these sites.

The production of tools was undertaken during this period by what S Nagaraju sums up as *"the stone-hammer, cylindrical-hammer, feather edge chippings and step flaking for trimming the edges."* [28]

The innumerable factory sites uncovered at Hunsgi, Gokak, Nittur in Bellary district, etc, draw up a picture which demonstrates its distribution across a wide population of the concerned tribe.[29]

The level of generalised knowledge, or in other words, abstract thought, and the degree of intra tribal coordination and patterned life only compels us to believe that the upper palaeoliths of Karnataka had already a developed language of their own. Without the adequate exchange of ideas, of which language is the means, this level of life would not have been possible.

It is important to note that we have very little knowledge of the art of these people. From the level of their consciousness it is to be presumed that they had developed forms of art generally true of communities in the late stage of food gathering-hunting.

It is significant to note that we are left with no skeletal remains whatsoever of these late palaeolithic people. Their mode of disposing the dead, (and we presume some such mode could have emerged by this stage given the development of a full fledged language and attendant to it, a sense of social belonging) could have worked as a hindrance in obtaining such remains. Such a method should have existed (perhaps they burnt the dead) since among the heaps of animal bones again there is no trace of human skeletal remains. We could have otherwise learned more of the racial composition of these fellow Homo Sapiens that peopled Karnataka.

The mesolithic or middle stone age commenced with the end of the palaeolithic. It spanned a period of about 6,000 years from 10,000 BP to 2500 BC.

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In this phase which was a continuation of the food gathering- hunting stage, or to put it in Engels' terms, encompassed the final stage of savagery, there was an advancement in the instruments of production.

It is important to note that there is a stratigraphic continuity in the sites of the mesolithic period from that of the palaeolithic. RV Pandit says, *"Whenever undisturbed river sections are available, as in the Krishna basin, particularly in the major tributaries of the Krishna, Ghataprabha and the Malaprabha, the deposits containing the Middle Stone Age overlie those containing Early Stone Age."* [30]

This overlapping of sites across the two stone age periods only indicates the continuity in the transformation of the earlier mode of existence. The start of the Holocene epoch (i.e., from the commencement of the end of the last major ice age 10,000 years ago) introduced several environmental changes and thus affected the ecology of the region. One could, with the decrease in rainfall expect a decrease in the marsh lands. The raw material used for the manufacture of stone tools changed as much as did the size and type of tools.[31] Significant among the changes was perhaps the development of the bow and arrow which must have further stabilised their intake of animal food.[32]

While extensive evidence of the mesolithic period is obtained in North Karnataka not much evidence is found from the southern region of the state.[33]

This only reveals to us that the old demographic pattern was repeated except for some finds in the Dakshina Kannada coastal tract of Karnataka for the first time.[34]

The mesolithic period in Karnataka remains unspectacular and serves as an important transition period to the next qualitatively higher neolithic-chalcolithic stage of pastoralism-primitive agriculture which Engels chooses to classify as the stage of barbarism.

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4. PASTORALISM-PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURE: NEOLITHIC, CHALCOLITHIC AND IRON AGES (2500 BC-240 BC)

A. Spread of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic

Over 150 neolithic-chalcolithic sites have been discovered in South India so far. Most of these occur in Karnataka with the rest in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The nuclear zone of the chalcolithic period overlaps that of the earlier palaeolithic-mesolithic periods. The continuity is striking in that the upper strata of palaeolithic sites have yielded neolithic-chalcolithic finds, that quite often archaeologists are placed in a maze of intertwining periods during their excavations. K Paddayya says that Gulbarga-Raichur-Bellary-Kurnool-Mahboobnagar region *"has not only the largest known concentration of Neolithic sites [in South India] but has given us the earliest known sites like Utnur, Piklihal and Kodekal so much so that most archaeologists have come to regard this zone as the nuclear area of south Indian Neolithic complex."*[35] In addition one finds several chalcolithic sites in the adjoining districts of Belgaum, Bijapur and Chitradurga districts, all principally part of the Bhima-Krishna-Tungabhadra doabs of Karnataka.

While this has been the area of concentration, there has also been a furter dispersal of human habitation during the chalcolithic period when compared to the earlier palaeolithic-mesolithic period of gathering-grubbing-scavenging-hunting. One notices a general upstream migratory movement deeper into the districts of Dharwad and Shimoga, evidence of habitation in Honnavara and Gokarna on the Uttara Kannada coast, and a general movement from the earlier palaeolithic T Narasipura sites in Mysore district in the Kaveri basin into neighbouring Bangalore and Kolar districts. The chalcolithic period, with the marked development of stone tools and the use of copper resulted in the increased peopling of Karnataka. Given the level of development of the instruments of production and the new mode of life that it ushered in, one observes a pattern in this dispersal whereby human habitation covered all the grassland, the undulating semi-deciduous plateau lands with patches of grass in between and the river beds which, in addition to affording these features in their neighbouring environs, also provided for favourable stretches of alluvial deposits. A nearly 200 km wide strip running north-south, of the Malnad, generally remained out of the reach of the neolithic peoples. The exception to this have been the finds of neolithic sites in Nilaskal, Hosanagara and Yedegudde in the thickly forested Malnad region of Shimoga district.[36]

Among the most important sites that have been excavated and have yielded promising evidence telling us of the story of this period have been Sanganakallu and Tekkalakota in Bellary, Maski and Piklihal in Raichur, Hallur in Dharwad, the Surpur-Shahpur doab in Gulbarga and Brahmagiri in Chitradurga.

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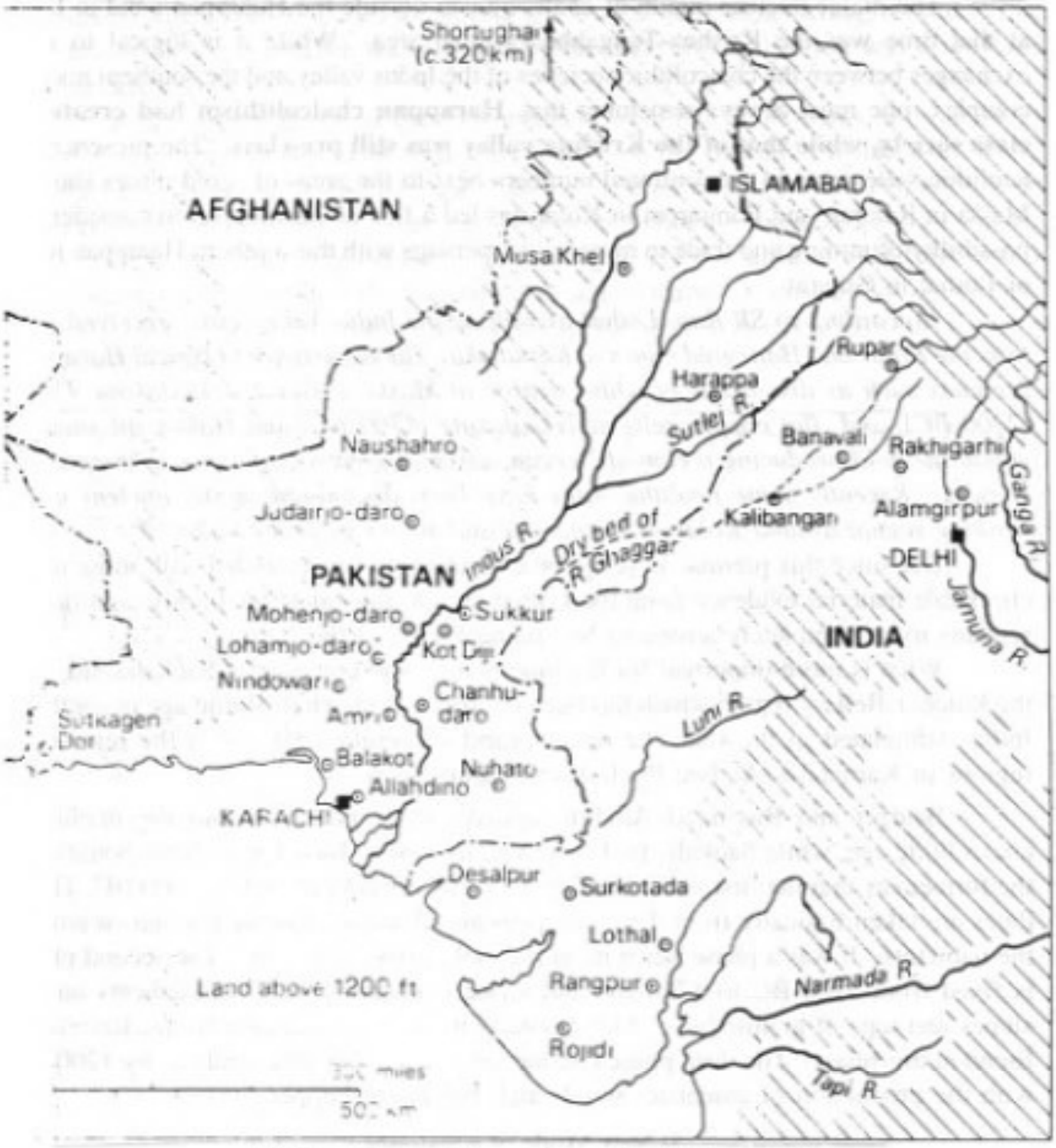

12. Some important towns of the mature Sindhu period.

The transition of Karnataka society to the age of neolithism-chalcolithism took place at the time of the rise of Harappan civilisation, i.e., in 2500 BC. Harappan civilisation itself, it must be recognised, with its innumerable towns such as Lothal, Surkotada, Allahdino, Mohenjodaro, Chanhudaro, Balakot and Harappa and more than 260 sites spread over Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Harayana and Jammu on the eastern flank of the Sindhu was a vast complex that had emerged on the basis of a copper-bronze culture. Asko Parpola's researches and those by other scholars have led to the now almost established fact that Harappan civilisation between 2500-1800 BC was not just pre-Aryan but also non-Aryan, in that its authors spoke a Protodravidian tongue.[37]

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The major nuclear region of chalcolithism outside the Harappan zone in India at that time was the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab area. While it is logical to seek exchanges between the chalcolithic societies of the Indus valley and the southern nuclear complex, one must always remember that **Harappan chalcolithism had created a class society, while that of the Krishna valley was still pre-class.** The presence of neolithic setlements in concentrated numbers next to the areas of gold mines such as Maski in Raichur and Bangarpet in Kolar has led a few archaeologists to consider the possibility of mining and trade in mined gold, perhaps with the southern Harappan town of Lothal in Gujarat.

"According to SR Rao, Lothal as well as the Indus Valley cities received gold from the Kolar and Hatti gold mines in Karnataka. The occurrence of typical Harappan products such as disc-beads of white stealite at Maski, Piklihal, Tekkalakota, Utnur (2300 BC), and flat copper celts at Tekkalakota (1700 BC) and Hallur, all situated within the gold-producing region of Deccan, assumes great significance in the present context. Recently some neolithic sites have been discovered in the ancient gold-working region around Kolar in Karnataka and Hosur in Tamil Nadu." [38]

But since this premise is yet to be convincingly substantiated with more cross checkable material evidence from the Lothal region, this question, highly significant, remains to be completely answered by archaeologists of the future.

What is more important for the time being, is to consider as Sankalia did, that the Raichur-Bellary region which has been the focus of the chalcolithic age in southern India stimulated in its wake the development of similar cultures in the remaining regions of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Bridget and Raymond Allchin perceive three phases within the neolithic-chalcolithic age, while Sankalia prefers to visualise two. Based on radiocarbon dating the former say that the first phase starting 3000 BC came to an end by 2000 BC. These dates are taken basically from the cattle pens and illustrate relative nomadism among the habitants. It was a phase when neolithic tools alone were used. The second phase is fixed from 2100 BC to 1700 BC and reflects relatively stable settlements on the slopes and tops of granite hills. Metal objects made of copper and bronze have been found in this phase. The third phase commencing from 1700 BC winds up by 1200 BC with the production of antennae swords and daggers of copper.[39]

i) New Mode of Existence

The entry of society to the period of neolithism-chalcolithism ushered in a change in the very mode of human existence differing in every sense drastically from the old. Basing on Morgan's classification Engels calls this as the period of barbarism. He writes: *"The characteristic feature of the period of barbarism is the domestication and breeding of animals and the cultivation of plants."* [40]

In other words, society advanced from the stage of food gathering-hunting to pastoralism-primitive agriculture. The chief lines on which this change was effected was by the transition of hunting to animal breeding and food gathering to agriculture. Based on the division of work that already existed in the palaeolithic period between

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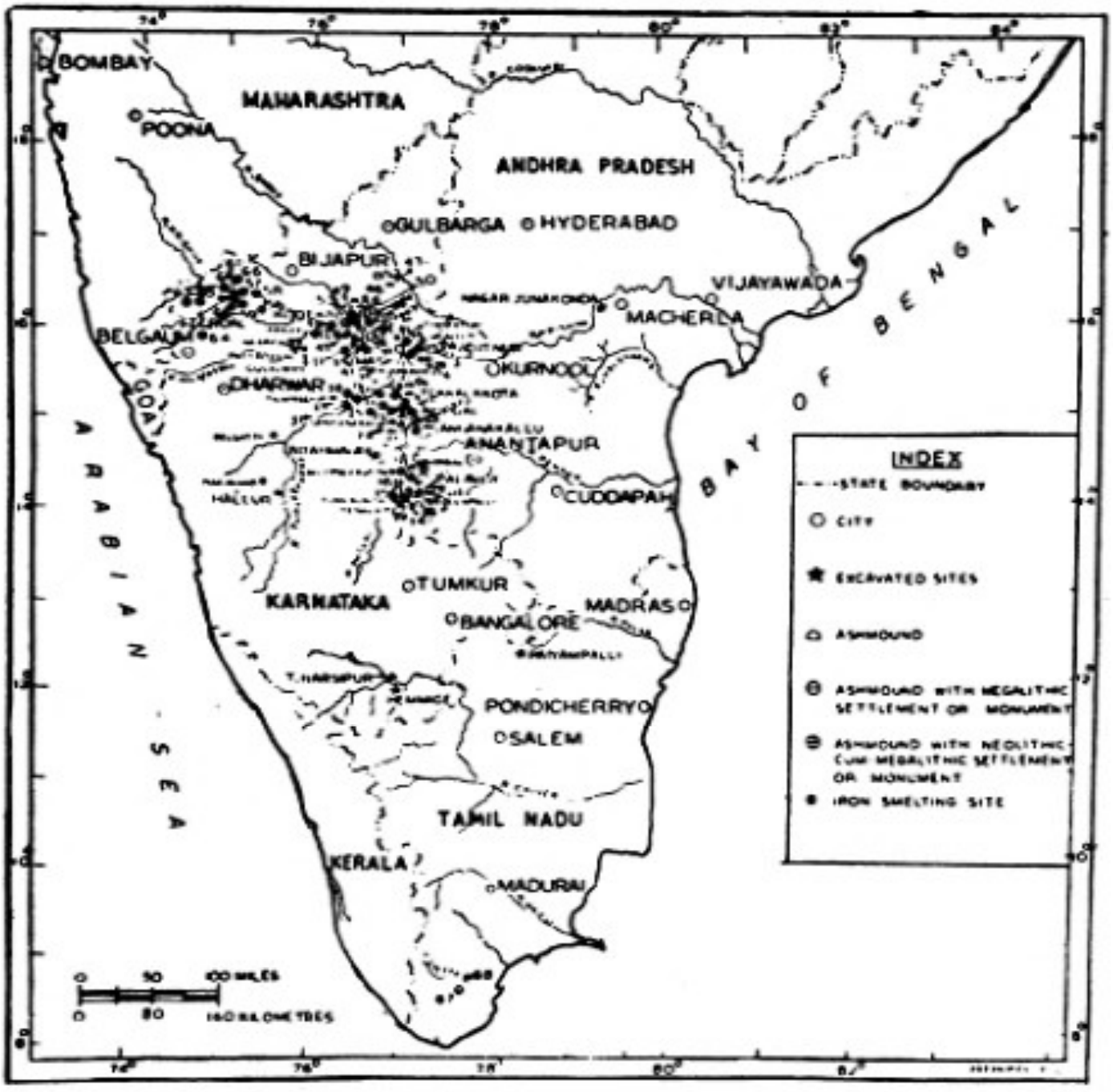
the sexes, whereby men tended to hunting and women to food gathering, it follows that the transition to pastoralism was effected by the male and agriculture was discovered by the female.

Radiocarbon dating of the first phase of neolithic settlements only confirms what Engels pointed out as an important feature of the transition in the East.[41] All radiocarbon dates tell us that the first phase of the chalcolithic period, i.e., neolithism proper, speak of a pastoral economy, while it is only with the onset of the second phase that evidence of agriculture begins. Thus it maybe said that **animal breeding, in our case ox rearing, preceded the transition to agriculture.** It must not be overlooked that this transition in the two realms was possible only after accumulation of a rich knowledge base in both the domains.



13. South India: Distribution of ashmounds in relation to neolithic and megalithic sites.

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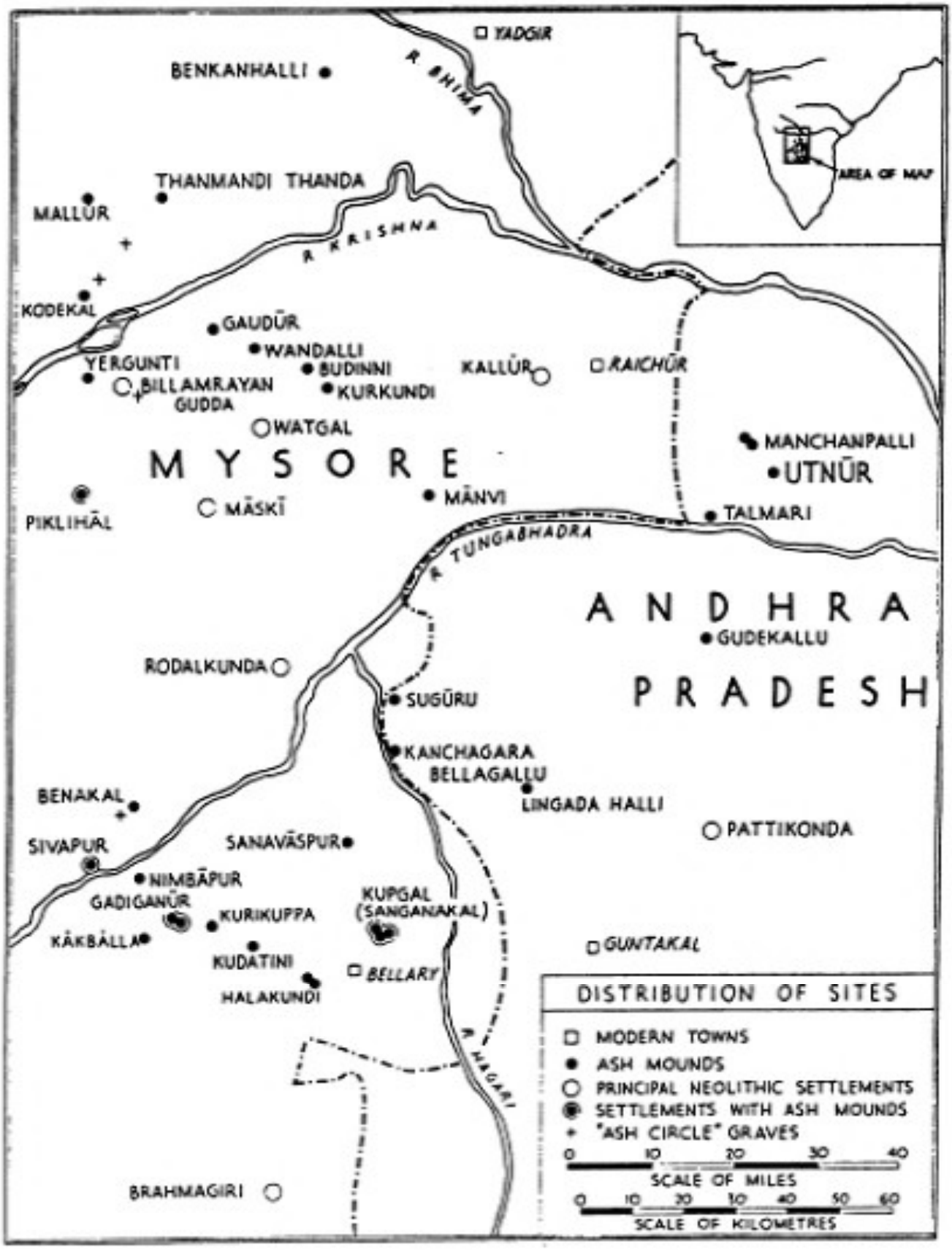
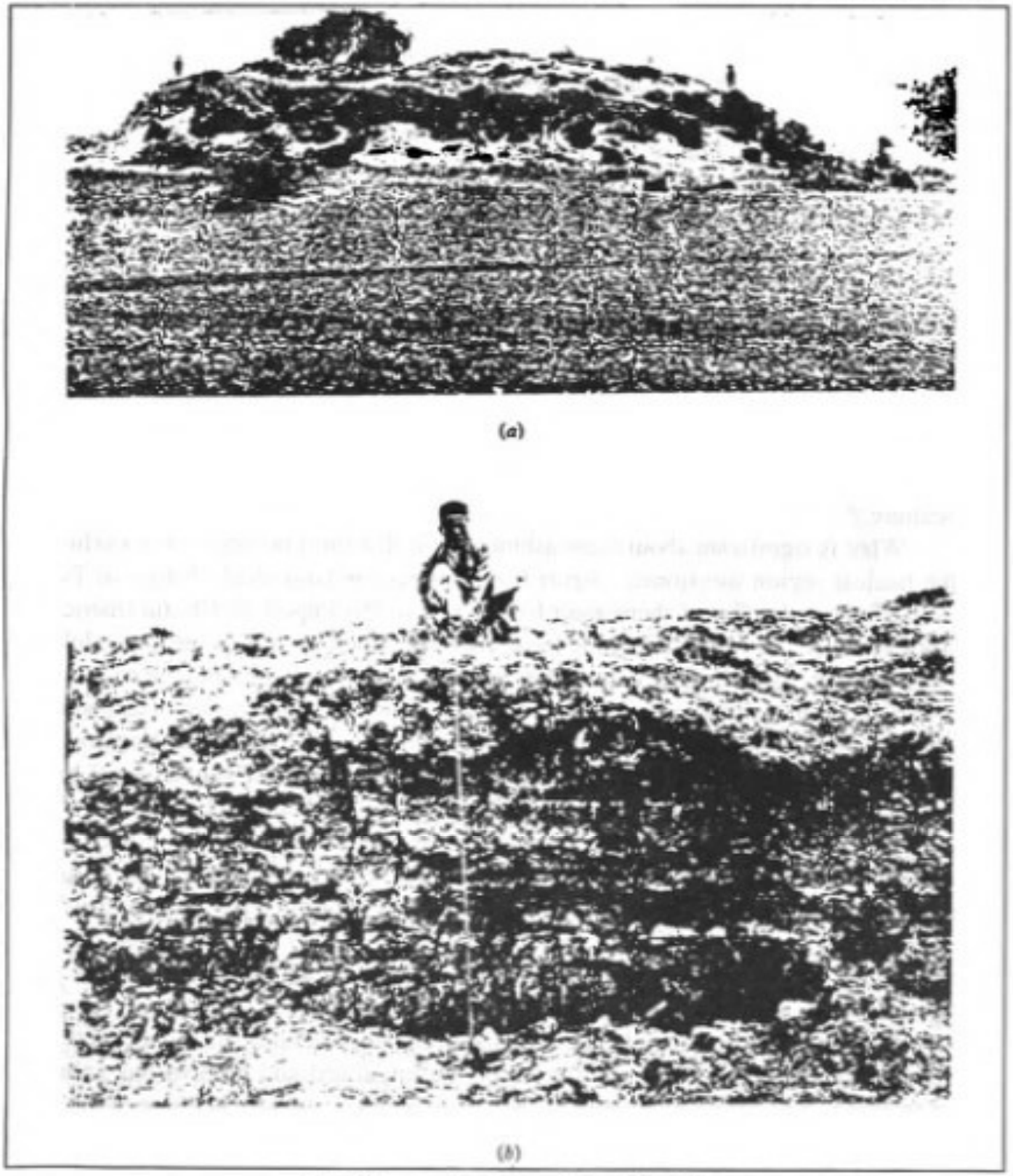


14. Distribution of ashmounds and main neolithic sites investigated by FR Allchin.

Though we have not got any direct evidence yet, we may safely presume that the domestication of cattle in the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab was preceded by the domestication of the dog. The Indian pariah-dog and particularly the one that the Kurubas of the area even today possess, was a local species of the wolf. Wolves often hung around human dwellings scavenging on bones and other leftovers. Generally mesolithic hunters had already domesticated the dog. This has led archaeologists to



(a)

(b)

15. a) Unexposed ashmound from Wandalli.
b) Exposed section of ashmound from Gaudur.

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conclude that it was not just the best friend of mankind but also the oldest. The domestication of the dog greatly enhanced humankind's capacity to hunt and it was possibly out of this abundance that calf of ox and/or the kid of sheep or goat came to be tended instead of being butchered outright.[42]

Raymond Allchin's *Neolithic Cattle-keepers of South India, A Study of the Deccan Ashmounds* is a comprehensive study of the subject of the pastoral past of this period. He has identified several dozen ash mounds which were nothing but mounds of burnt cowdung from cattle pens estimated to contain from 600 to 1,000 animals in the nuclear area of the Tungabhadra-Krishna doab. **Ashmounds stand out as a unique feature of the transition to pastoralism in the region.** Several dozen ashmounds dot the skyline in the districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bellary and Chitradurga of Karnataka in addition to those of adjoining Kurnool, Mahaboobnagar and Anantapur of Andhra Pradesh.[43] In Bellary he investigated 14 such ashmounds, in Raichur he studied 13 and in Gulbarga he researched on 8.

In the immediate environs of these ashmounds he uncovered neolithic tools. Pastoralism in the first phase of the neolithic period was *"at least partly nomadic"*, but with the start of the second phase, that of chalcolithism proper, the nomadic nature yielded to a by and large settled form and also at the same time human life displayed all manifestations of agriculture. Some of these sites such as Kupgal in Bellary or Piklihal in Raichur or Utnur in neighbouring Mahaboobnagar district where Allchin identified ashmounds have also yielded a rich store of atrefacts that speak of settled agriculture.[44]

What is significant about these ashmounds is that this phenomenon is **exclusive** to the nuclear region mentioned. Apart from this region Tirunalveli district of Tamil Nadu has reported a few of them apart from a few in Payampalli in Chittur district of Andhra Pradesh. A few ashmounds have also been spotted in T Narasipur taluk of Mysore district. But all these ashmounds outside the nuclear zone belong to a much later period, the megalithic period of the iron age.[45] Thus the phenomenon of ashmounds by being unique to this nuclear region only demonstrates that **the transition to pastoralism and thus neolithism took place on a pre-neolithic indigenous local base.**

Allchin is of the opinion that the domestication of the buffalo had not yet taken place at the time of the ashmounds. Further, we get evidence of the domestication of sheep, goats and pigs. MS Randhawa observes: *"It is the animals that live in herds that are more amenable to domestication. The herd is usually led by a leader whom the herd follows. If the leader is captured, the rest of the herd can easily be caught. Sheep, goats, cattle and pigs, which are the main domestic animals, come under this category and no wonder they were the first to be domesticated."* [46]

One may note that already in the period of upper palaeolithism and mesolithism humankind tended to rely more and more on the ungulated and herbivorous animals since tracking and hunting was easier as they lived in herds and also because of the fact that they were least liable to prove dangerous for the hunter.

With the start of the chalcolithic period we come across evidence of agriculture. Just as with the case of herd animals *"similar among plants, it is the grasses which tend to grow densely, and are most amenable to control by man. Most of our cereals,*

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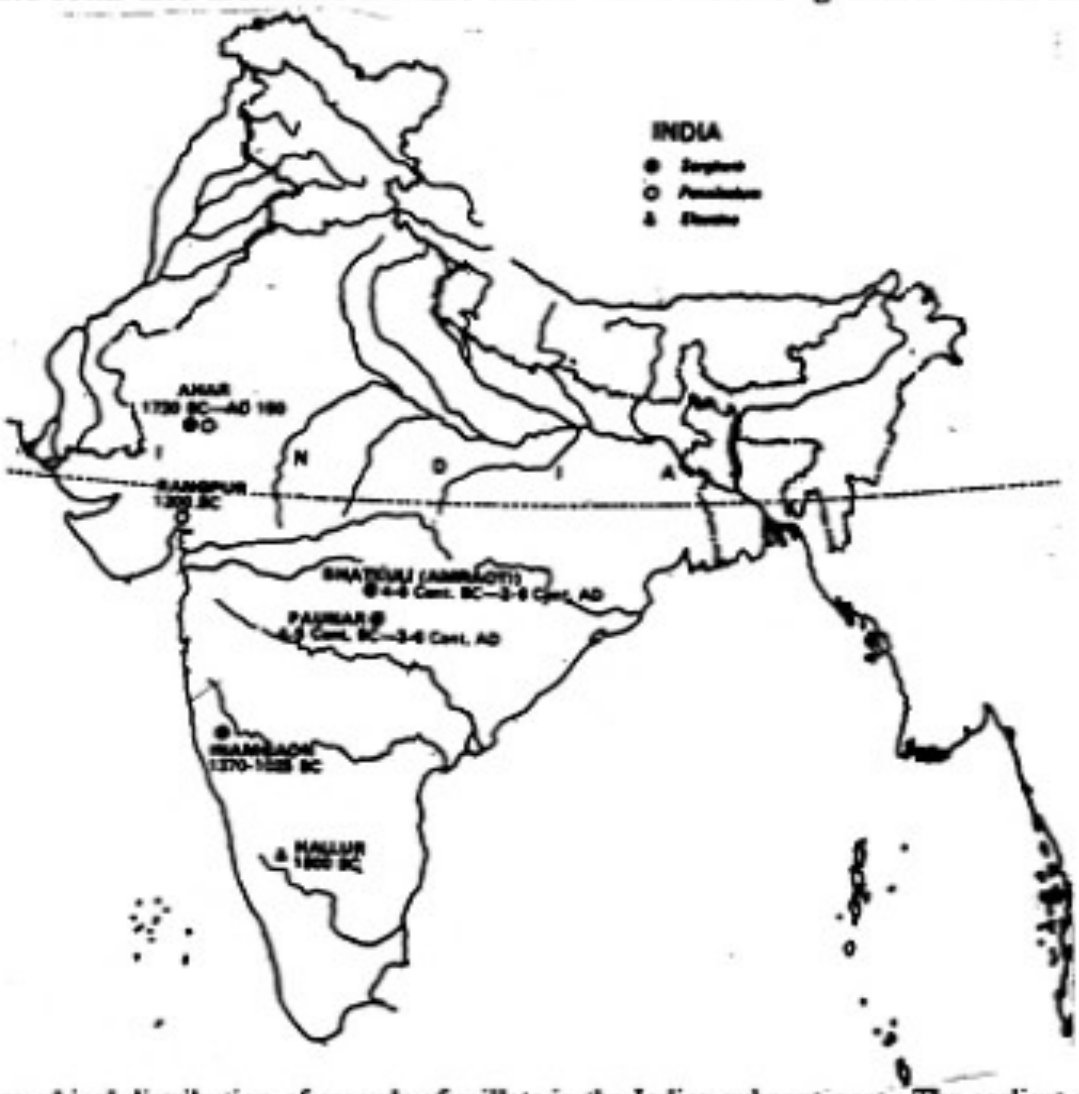
e.g., wheat, barley, oats and rice are grasses."[47] Of these cereals chalcolithic Karnataka provides us with several samples of rice. In addition we have been able to obtain a millet such as ragi. Millets is a group name for a number of cereals known as coarse grain. In other words millets, in their natural state are nothing but grasses which grow in arid and semi-arid areas and are also called *warm weather grasses*. Most millets are



16. Geographical distribution of records of millets in the Indian subcontinent. The earliest record of sorghum (jowar) is from Inamgaon, Maharashtra; that of finger millet or elusine (ragi) from Hallur, Karnataka and of pearl millet (bajra) from Ahar, Rajasthan.

of short duration from seeding to harvest and require low nutritional inputs to flourish.[48]

MS Nagaraja Rao's excavation in Hallur of Hirekerur taluk in the southern tip of Dharwad district led him to the discovery of ragi (*Elusine coracana*). It was dated by C14 method at 1800 BC. This, wrote Vishnu Mitre, a palaeobotanist, was *"...the first archaeological record so far known by the prehistoric people. It is all the more important that it has been discovered from the Indian neolithic thus making it one of the earliest crops cultivated by the Neolithic folk...."*[49]

Vishnu Mitre and Randhawa, both tell us that ragi is originally an African plant. *Elusine africana* and *Elusine coracana* are found side by side in Uganda, the former being the wild species from which the latter hybrid was cultivated.[50]

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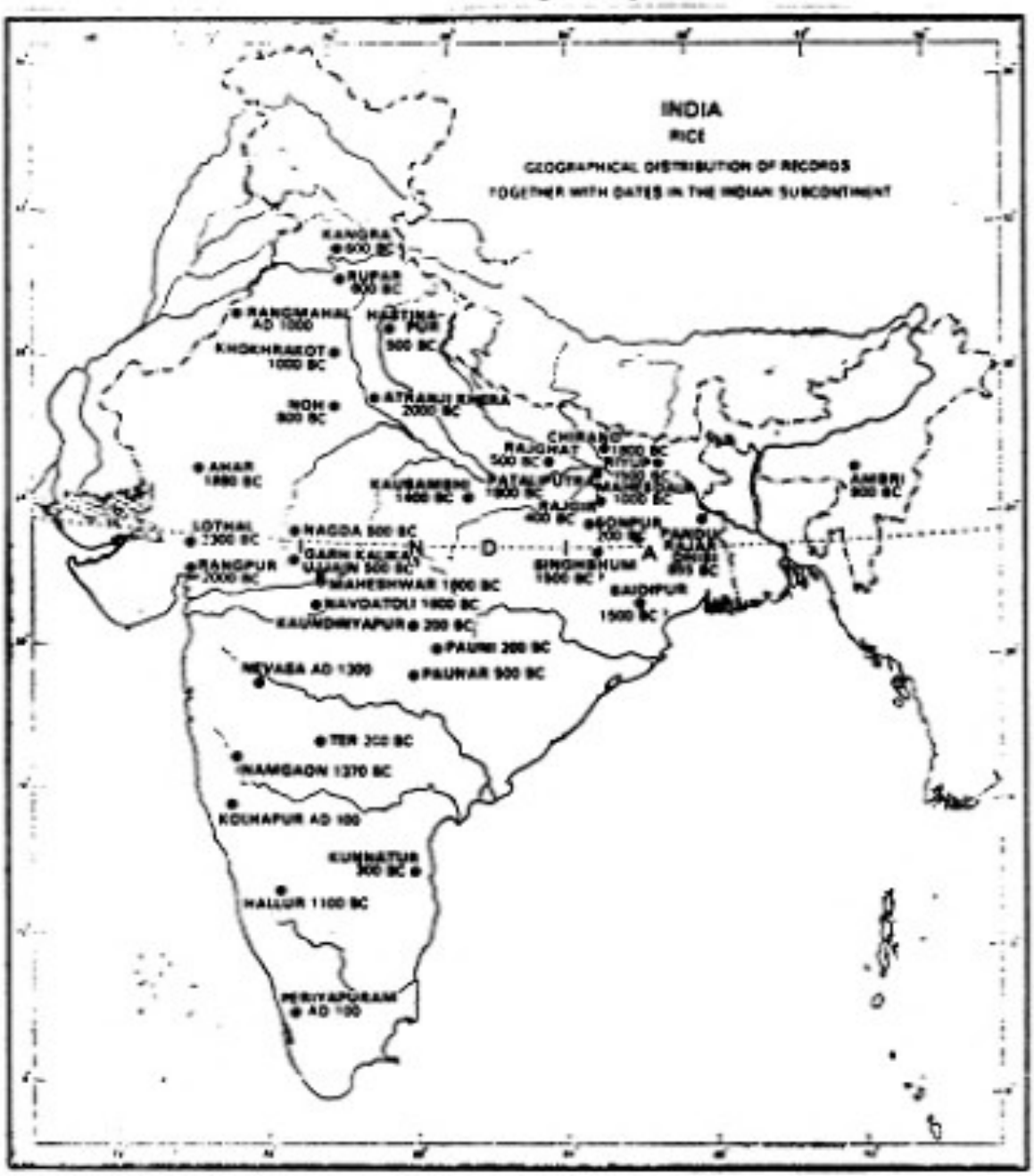

17. Geographical distribution of rice in the Indian subcontinent.

Thus it is clear that ragi could not have been cultivated originally in India from its wild state since wild ragi is not available in the country. Thus ragi which is grown primarily in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra and to an extent in the Himalayan foothills of western Uttar Pradesh and the Kulu valley of Himachal Pradesh has dispersed as a major food crop only after its journey from East Africa, perhaps Uganda.

This journey of ragi at such an early date, i.e., almost at the beginning of the agricultural age raises many important questions. Most important of all, it speaks of a link between East Africa and neolithism in Karnataka. That this link was apparently mediated through southern Harappan settlements of Gujarat is apparent; what with the discovery of ragi at Surkotada in the Kutch.[51]

The importance of ragi as one of the two principal food crops initiating (along with rice) Karnataka's transition to the chalcolithic is borne out better by the fact that

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samples of ragi have also been found from sites in the traditional non-ragi areas such as from Sanganakallu in Raichur and Tekkalakota in Bellary district.

Apart from ragi, rice was the other major crop that has been found in the chalcolithic sites of Karnataka although it might not have played as important a role in the diet of the people as ragi did at that time. It is generally felt that the cultivation of rice originated in India, Burma or Indochina. India has 4,000 varieties of rice. The earliest evidence of its cultivation is from Lothal in Gujarat dated at 2400 BC. On account of its heavy yields, rice could support a far denser population than any other cereal, and consequently population growth and density were much more significant in areas where it was grown.[52]

Rice discovered at Tekkalakota was dated at 1780 BC and that found at Hallur placed at 1100 BC.

The third important crop that was cultivated then was horsegram. Hallur excavations place horse gram at 1780 BC. i.e., just 20 years after the date of ragi. Horsegram has been found at Sanganakallu and Tekkalakota too. Horsegram recorded at Hallur makes it the **first** material evidence of the cultivation of this crop in India.

The fourth crop that has been found is greengram.

The major change in the stone tools of the chalcolithic people over that of their palaeolithic ancestors has been the **grinding** given to these tools. New materials such as basalt and chalcedony were used for fashioning tools. Microlithic tools have also been discovered from this period. But the **most important** of the new tools has been the stone sickle. It is with the sickle and perhaps the digging stick or hoe that agriculture was carried out by the people of this period.

Podu or shifting cultivation was generally practised, the common term in Protodravidian for primitive agriculture derived from *podu* which means *to put* as in Tamil; of which, *haku* in Kannada is only a modified equivalent. The low water requirement (except rice) and hardiness of these first crops capable of growing even under extremely low rainfall and poor soil makes them highly adaptable and suitable to the needs of these first agriculturists. Vishnu Mitre and Savithri Ravi do not rule out *"a primitive type of dry land farming apart from shifting cultivation."*[53]

Bridget and Raymond Allchin give us a good picture of rice cultivation of that time. *"...terracing of hills was an important feature of the settlements of the neolithic period, and it is probable that it was increasingly employed for making tiny fields for growing crops. Such terraces, behind a retaining wall, would incidentally help conserve both soil and moisture after the Monsoon."*[54]

The development of pastoralism and agriculture thus altered the very mode of existence. While ox, sheep, goats and pigs greatly enhanced the meat and thus protein intake, providing milk as well as wool; agriculture provided the diet with carbohydrates and proteins. The stalks of these crops served as good fodder for cattle. It is interesting to note that **the burning of cowdung collected in the cattlepens resulting in the ashmounds came to an end** with the commencement of the second phase of the chalcolithic period. It is quite probable that **the use of dung as a fertilising agent had already been discovered, thereby closing the gap between agriculture and cattle rearing** in the second phase of the chalcolithic period. But for this knowledge

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near permanent settlements could not have evolved on a primitive agricultural basis. Thus it is no coincidence that **the commencement of house construction and a regular settled life coincides with the fading away of the ashmounds.**

All these added up, the new mode of life proved to be far more life-sustaining. For the woman, in particular, the discovery of agriculture came as a blessing. Compelled to a life of nomadism and constantly on food gathering expeditions till then, by developing agriculture she could now relax to a settled life easing the burden of child rearing to a great extent.

ii) Artifacts of the New Mode

The new life of pastoralism-primitive agriculture enriched the material life of the people. New artifacts had to be created to match the requirements that the new mode of life had generated. Pottery was invented. Engels provides us with a picture of how this was achieved. He says that barbarism *"Dates from the introduction of pottery. This latter had its origin, demostrably in many cases and probably everywhere, in the coating of baskets or wooden vessels with clay in order to render them fire-proof; whereby it was soon discovered that moulded clay also served the purpose without the inner vessel."*[55] Pots were used not only as containers to cook, but the larger ones were used to store grain. The saddle quern emerged.[56] Mullers and pounders came into use. Thus cooking which till then was not a very important part in the life of the palaeolithic people now became a major time-consuming task. The time taken to eat was drastically reduced. *"Preparations, both dry and liquid--must have played a regular part"* says HD Sankalia.[57] This is reflected in the two types of standard vessels--the flat and cupped bowls found in all chalcolithic settlements.

Basket making, mat-weaving, spinning and weaving were also developed.

A prominent change during this period was in the settlement. C Krishnamurthy says *"...there were three phases of settlements of Neolithic people. In the earlier phase they inhabited the rock shelters and flat terraces on the hill tops which gave them enough protection and enabled them to command a larger area from the top of the hill as at Tekkalakota, Banahalli [in Kolar district].... In the second phase although they continued to live in rock shelters, they also came down to the foot of the hills and plains. While in the third they preferred the river banks as at Hallur, T Narasipura and Hemmige."*[58]

The construction of houses which were at this time basically circular shaped, the building of walls, the plastering of the floor and locating the hearth within the house are all innovations of this time.[59]

The new mode of pastoralism-primitive agriculture also created in its wake new modes of thought, generated new values, created a new culture, initiated a new sense of art and set in motion the first rudimentary beliefs which were to later on assume the forms of religion. About all these superstructural aspects, we shall deal in a later part of this chapter.

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B. Iron Age: Period of Protohistory and Tribal Oligarchy (1200 BC-240 BC)

i) The Spread

The iron age of Karnataka displays an unprecedented proliferation of human habitation. On the one hand the population in the existing nuclear area becomes dense when compared to the earlier chalcolithic period and on the other, there is an expansion of human habitation to such an extent that, but for Bidar district, where no remnants have so far been found of this period, it may be said that the entire state of Karnataka including its till then by and large untouched Malnad became home for human settlement. About 700 iron age sites have come to light so far. Of these 413 lay in the South Maidan region, 268 in the North Maidan region, 17 in the Malnad tract and nearly a dozen along the Karavali plain.[60]

Among the new areas of penetration have been Hassan, Kodagu, Mandya and Tumkur districts. The penetration of habitation into the heart of the Malnad such as, for instance, Somwarpet and Virajpet taluks in Kodagu and Sakleshpura taluk in Hassan speak of the role of iron in being able to transform the environment to suit the requirements of man.

As the figures of regional dispersal indicate, the proliferation and expansion is particularly marked in the South Maidan region. There is a density of sites in eastern Bangalore, Kolar and north eastern and eastern Mysore districts. For instance two taluks of Kolar, Malur and Bangarpet alone accounted for 81 settlements and in Mysore district, 47 were concentrated in Kollegal taluk alone.[61]

Ravi Moorti's analysis of this locational pattern reveals that these sites were situated at very close proximity to iron, copper and gold mines. He writes: *"As the large concentrations of sites are seen around Bellary, Hospet and Gangawati area (which are rich in iron ores) as well as Hatti and Kolar Gold Fields area (which are known for gold mines), it seems probable that these natural resources might have been exploited by the megalithic people."*[62] Even to this day Kollegal discloses gold, at the surface level too at times.

ii) The Significance

Reliable C14 dates of the start of the iron age in Karnataka place it at 1200 BC from the Komaranahalli site in Harihara taluk of Chitradurga district, 12 kms east of Hallur. Next, iron found in Hallur was dated at 1000 BC. Following this was iron taken from Tadakanahalli which was similarly dated. Later we have a continuity of evidences from across the different parts of Karnataka at regular intervals till they gradually usher us into the period of history per se.

It is significant from the Komaranahalli and Hallur excavations that **iron discovered in Karnataka predates all earlier discoveries of it in India.** Before we discuss the implications of this on our understanding of Indian prehistory and that of Karnataka's, let us take a look at the skill of the anonymous smiths that made iron implements and weapons in Komaranahalli and Tadakanahalli.

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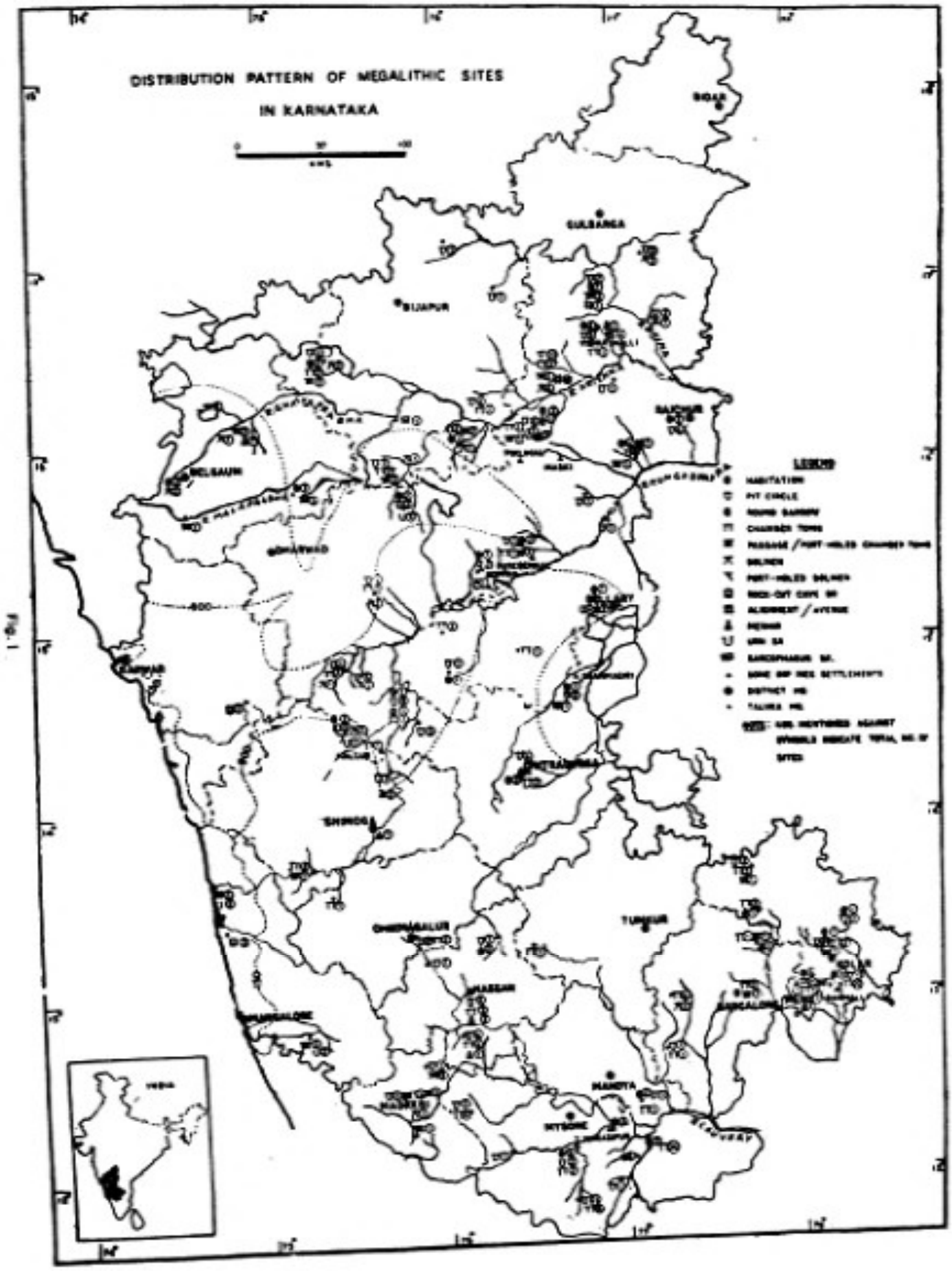

18. Distribution pattern of megalithic sites in Karnataka.

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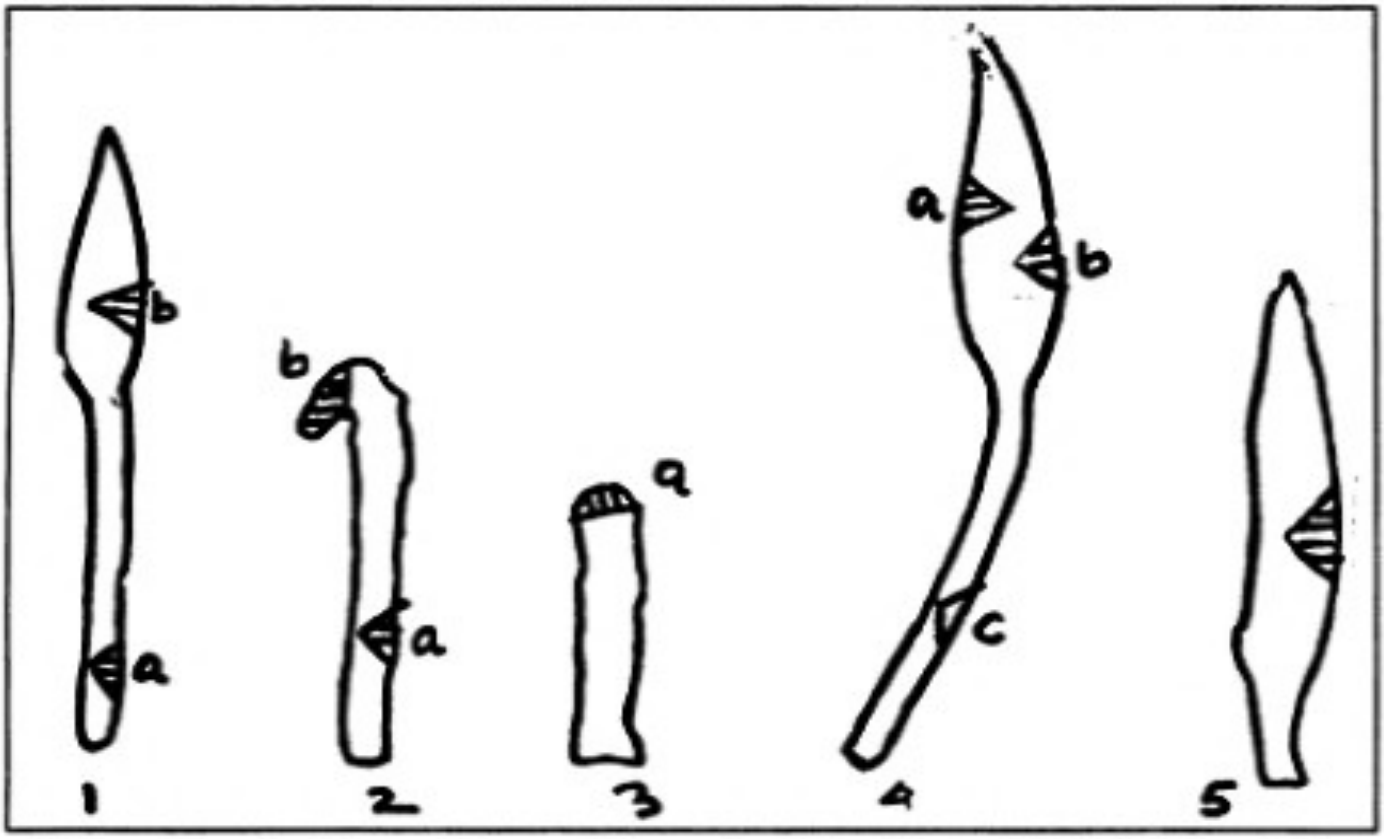
OP Agarwal, Hari Narain and GP Joshi submitted sectional samples of a spear, a rod with hook, an unidentifiable iron object, a dagger and a sword--all from Komaranahalli--to metallographic analysis and came up with astounding conclusions.[63] According to them: *"...the spear was fabricated by lamination technique, in which low carburized and high carburized sheets were piled up one above the other and forged together into the shape of a bar. The bar was later on given the shape of the spear by forging. The small grain size of relic carbide and elongated slag inclusions revealed that this spear was heavily worked and tempered at low temperature. The presence of less slag inclusions in the blade of the spear in comparison to the tang portion indicated that special attention was given for the fabrication of the blade."*[64]

About the bar, this has been their conclusion: *"...these megalithian smiths first prepared these small bars by following the lamination technique which were later on*



19. Iron objects (showing sampling zones with cross lines) from Komaranahalli, Chitradurga district. (1) Spear. (2) Rod with hook. (3) Rod. (4) Spear and (5) Sword.

used for the fabrication of spear, sword, dagger, other weapons and implements big in size."[65]

This was their conclusion about the sword: *"The presence of tolerably high amount of carbon made it sufficiently tough, wear resistant and sharp to cut harder things in just one stroke."*[66]

This has been the interpretation of these archaeometallurgists: *"...all these artifacts were prepared by following the lamination technique. Megalithian smiths of Komaranahalli used the metal, which was extracted from the iron ore by direct process. Pure iron was removed from the bloom by repeated forging. Metal pieces were later on carburized in the furnace as per the need of the artifacts. All these metal*

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pieces of carburized and highly carburized iron were placed together, forged and folded. The final folding of the pile was done in such a manner that high carbon layer must appear on the surface as well as inside the pile along with low carbon layers. These small piles were later on joined together and given the shape of the spear or the sword, etc.

Presence of high carbon imparts the toughness whereas low carburized iron imparts good flexibility to withstand the sudden blow. High carbon tempered structure which was prominently present in only the blade of the spear and the sword shows that the smith might have adopted this to impart extra toughness and sharpness. This technique imparts internal as well as external strength to the spear and the sword."[67]

It would not be wrong to mention at this juncture that the very name Komaranahalli may be a derivative from *Kammaranahalli* or *ironsmith's village* in Kannada.

The authors in the form of a general conclusion to their analysis say: *"...the megalithic people of peninsular India had* ***mastered the layering technique*** *for the fabrication of iron artifacts around 1100-1000 BC* ***whereas the smith in other parts of India were still in experimental stage.*** *The attainment of such a high technical skill is not a matter of few years.* ***This means that these smiths must be experimenting for centuries to reach this stage around 1000 BC."*** [68]

Thus the first dates of iron which has been fixed at 1200 BC is sure to be pushed further back till one can discern evidence of its infantility.

Till these early dates for iron were discovered, the general impression had been that iron had been introduced from the north and had reached Karnataka after 700 BC.

Iron age beginnings are datable to 1000 BC in Pakistan, 800 BC in north west India and 700 BC in eastern India.[69] These dates are in keeping with the Indo-Aryan line of progress and have on this additional count left a deep impress in the minds of historians. As Dilip K Chakrabarti says: *"A strong undercurrent of diffusionism has, in fact, been always very apparent in Indian archaeology and it is only recently that such hypothesis are being increasingly discarded in view of the new discoveries or being modified or challenged on theoretical grounds."* [70]

The Hallur discovery has led MS Nagaraja Rao to state *"...the suggestion that iron was 'ushered into South India later than in the Ganga plains' is no longer tenable".* [71]

A Sundara contributes to this debate by saying *"...the possibility of iron gradually moving from the North into the lower Deccan and South India subsequent to the first use...does not seem to have support."* [72]

DP Chakrabarti elsewhere concludes that *"early iron using centres in India could have developed in many places where iron ore was available.... It seems that while in North India iron technology diffused from Anatolia via Iran, in South India it may have been discovered independently."* [73]

OP Agarwal, Hari Narain and GP Joshi however state in no uncertain terms: *"It is difficult to say where and how iron was first of all discovered and smelted but this could very well be some place in South India. It could also be possible that after the discovery of iron in South India, it spread to other parts of India."* [74]

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In fact MK Dhavalikar is quite explicit about this. He says that before the first evidence of iron in Maharashtra obtained in 800 BC it *"must have taken about two centuries for iron to reach Maharashtra from Karnataka."*[75]

The Hallur and Komaranahalli excavations have thus led to the modification of several notions of Indian prehistory. On the one hand **with ragi, ashmounds and again with iron, peninsular India has been able to receive importance not just as a repository by diffusionists but also as a developer and broadcaster of social change and advancement.**

iii) Impact on Material Culture

The commencement of the iron age signalled the end of the stone age in the real sense. While the age of copper and bronze saw the introduction of these metals on a wide scale, due to the inherent softness of copper and its alloy, bronze; they proved to be weaker than the stone tools of basalt and chalcedony. Thus throughout the age of copper and bronze one observes the continuity of human dependence on stone tools, although the quality of stone tool production was far advanced over that of the mesolithic and palaeolithic past. But with the start of the iron age, one observes that iron *"dominates the tool technology"*[76] thereby displacing stone tools and thus locating the stone age in the museum of history. The break with the age of stone is indeed clinched with the onset of the age of iron. Engels says that the age of iron inaugurates the upper stage of barbarism and lands humankind on the laps of civilisation.[77]

Excavations from iron age sites in Karnataka have disclosed not only the conclusive end to the production of stone tools and their replacement by iron but also the production of several new tools such as, axes with ring fasteners, bill hooks, hoes, wedges, horse bits, tongs, coulters, chisels, spades, knives, tripods and hoes. One of the immediate impacts of these new tools was the expansion of human habitation and higher yields in agriculture due to deeper digging and improved harvesting. A whole new generation of crops were introduced, such as jowar (sorghum) and bajra both of which have come down from Africa.[78] In fact the first report of bajra is again from Hallur. Cotton cultivation must have, in all probability, commenced at this period. It appears that castor, which again is a plant first cultivated in Africa, was introduced to Karnataka during this time.

With the start of the iron age there is, in addition, the first attempt at irrigation by the construction of walled embankments to arrest surface flow of rain water.

Bridget and Raymond Allchin say: *"Terracing [of the chalcolithic period] would further provide a logical first step towards the earth or stone embankments, which, from the iron age at least, served as surface drainage tanks throughout the areas of impervious granite rocks."*[79]

These embankments or tanks were quite widespread and not confined to any particular part of Karnataka. KK Subbayya has this to say of such embankments built in Kodagu: *"The megalithic builders were an agricultural community. They constructed earthen bunds to store the flowing rainwater from the upper elevated regions, thus forming huge reservoirs. This stored water was utilized for the purpose of cultivation. This idea is clearly visible in one of the best megalithic sites in Coorg,*

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namely Moribetta. The dolmens are situated on the top of a granitic hill and to its south is a valley of vast cultivable land. And at the upper side of the valley, is a perennial water source, which could be used for the cultivation of the land in the valley. They grew paddy and ragi, the staple food of South India." [80]

There can be little doubt about the role of these embankments in increasing the productivity of agriculture. Although these embankments were originally relatively small, we can be hardly mistaken to say that these first irrigation structures of the iron age people were the forerunners of the thousands of tanks that would come up in future. It was the genius of arranging these stones and cementing them with earth that channeled the imagination of posterity to erect magnificent barrages even across the Tungabhadra and Kaveri. If the Brahui speaking Baluchis called the series of stone built dams 5000 years ago as *gabarbands*, the *kattes* of Karnataka which were beyond doubt the first imposing man made structures of this preliterate past personified *kattu*, which in Kannada means, *to build*.

iv) Pattern of Settlements

Already the later phase of the chalcolithic witnessed the transition of human life from nomadism to a settled mode. The dawn of the iron age only completed this transition and thereby laid the foundation for the growth of marked cultural differences between the people of one region and that of another.

This new mode of life began to develop a pattern of its own and **it was on this pattern that the village community of the future came to rest.**

It is unfortunate that not even in one of Karnataka's hundreds of iron age settlements has a horizontal excavation been undertaken. Thus archaeologists have left us a treasure trove of 'cross sections' and 'lateral sections' which are all nothing but the result of vertical digging; but there is no longitudinal section, or a panoramic aerial view of the excavation of an entire settlement complex. Such an attempt at a Tekkalakota or a Sanganakallu or a Brahmagiri is bound to prove useful. Such an endeavour may not lead us to unearthing a Harappa or a Mohenjodaro but they surely can help uncover the structure of the settlement capable of throwing light on the emerging complex and the composition of the new cities that were later to rise on its foundations. Therefore, in the absence of archaeological evidence on the structure of these setlements we would like to pose some probabilities and seek a pattern.

The major iron age settlements were already a complex. On the one hand was their sheer number. Surely the largest settlements could have had more than a thousand people. BK Gururaja Rao says that these settlements were inhabited by sizeable populations.[81] On the other, this population was increasingly divided into different professional groups from the peasant to the pastoralist, from the rearer of sheep to the keeper of cattle, from the iron smith to the gold smith, from the copper smith to the carpenter, from the glass maker to the weaver, from the tribal autarch to the horse-borne soldier and from the shaman to the sorceress. Iron age society was not only the outcome of the split and thus the development between agriculture and cattle rearing between the sexes, but its dawn led to the further division of tribes into different professions and to the division within tribes into various professions. All these

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professional groups, protoclasses, to be more precise, must have come together in the settlements since the increasing division within and between tribes only imposed on them the joint need to collaborate and cooperate. One must expect the end of barter and the beginning of trade during this period. The settlement was thus a welter. It was the forge of the iron age in which the layers of tribes were beat and carbonised by what blacksmiths of Komaranahalli used--the lamination technique--to yield an amalgam that would serve as the model for the evolution of what has continued into this day--the town and its muddied reflection, the village.

As George Thomson has said, in the iron age *"we find further progress in handicrafts, permanent settlements, inter-tribal barter and metallurgy. At this level the tribal structure of society inherited from the lower grades, is beginning to break up."* [82]

v) Making of the Superstructure

Discussion about culture in the pre-neolithic period was inevitably based on geological, geographical, floral, faunal and other ecological factors. The difference between one palaeolithic tribe and another was determined by these causative factors. As Alexeev says: *"All elements that arose during people's adaptation to their geographical environment, and as a response to and interconnection with it, were included in the concept."* [83]

But with the transformation from food gathering-hunting to pastoralism-primitive agriculture, the role of the environmental factor begins to gradually grow less important. The 'social factor' or rather the 'man made factor' begins to gain prominence and with the emergence of class society after its passage through the iron age, the social factor gains the ascendant and the environmental factor is pushed to the background. As Alexeev says *"...the more mankind's economic-cultural activity develops the more it breaks loose from the geographical environment."* [84]

This is how Marx and Engels stated it: *"The identity of nature and man appears in such a way that the restricted relation of men to nature determined their restricted relation to one another, and their restricted relation to one another determined their restricted relation to nature, just because nature is as yet hardly modified historically. On the other hand man's consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him is the beginning of the consciousness that he is living in society at all. This beginning is as animal as social life itself at this stage."* [84A]

In other words, the development of the productive forces leads also to the development of culture too. With the transition to pastoralism-primitive agriculture, society is on a firmer basis in sustaining and reproducing itself; it finds for itself occasions to wander into other spheres of human endeavour and thereby begins also to create as a result of its new material basis, novel avenues for thought. This enhanced activity only contributes to the growth of culture and brings in newer and newer elements and aspects into the superstructure of human life. The superstructural horizon is widened. Thus in discussing about the culture of the pastoral-primitive agricultural people we should not forget that **this new mode of existence also began to build the superstructure apart from bringing in new content and form to its old sectors.**

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Another important aspect of culture during the period of pastoralism-primitive agriculture is the commencement of inequality within society during the period of chalcolithism and the development of this during the iron age, to the point of breakdown and internal rupture. Sergei Tokarev says that: *"Inequality had already begun to develop within these communities, but class stratification did not yet."*[85] The reflection of this developing inequality and gradual breakdown as reflected in the superstructure is another of its important facets during the period. Values and tendencies emerged, new fields and vistas cropped up; that would mirror, reinforce and condition this process.

The culture of the pastoral-primitive agricultural stage also revealed as one of its significant traits, the man-woman division within society; their spheres of activity and perceptions. Prolonged periods of inactivity among males who carried on hunting in the palaeolithic period itself often afforded them greater opportunities than the woman to engage in nonproductive activity such as art.[86]

In pastoral-primitive agricultural society this was the broad division of labour among the sexes: agriculture, cooking (including pounding, grinding, collecting firewood and food gathering as a supplementary activity), child rearing, pottery, basket making, mat weaving and weaving belonged to the woman. Most industry was home industry and thus the woman came to develop them. Cattle grazing, smithying, mining, carpentry, construction (of irrigation embankments, dwellings, megaliths), trade, supplementary hunting, war and keeping slaves were male domains.

The development of art and social expression in culture carried with it features of this gender division.

Let us now look at all this in its vividity.

a) Megaliths for the Dead

The passage from hunting-food gathering led to the further development of human attachment, to human care other than maternal within society. The loss of an individual was bereaved and the memory of the dead was cherished.

As already mentioned, the palaeolithic period has not yielded any skeletal remains in India whatsoever. But with the advent of the chalcolithic, the study of skeletal remains becomes a major preoccupation for archaeologists. Karnataka has reported innumerable such burials from this age onward. Most of these during the chalcolithic age were urn burials. The attention paid to these burials, tell us a lot about the degree of human bonds that had developed among these people. There is little doubt that such burials were attended by ritual. More often than not, beside the urn a small pot of grain would be placed. Further these burials were made beneath the floor of the houses as if the dead continued to live among the living. Such burials of women, men and children have been uncovered.

However, it is the transformation to the iron age that really **announces** the cult of the dead. The construction of huge stone structures at the graves called megaliths (*mega* = big, *lithic* = of stone; not to be confused as a big type of stone tool) is what is striking about the age of iron in Karnataka. This culture although common to several

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other regions of the world, west and east of India, still is marked out in south India by the strength of numbers. About 45 types of megaliths, from 1,400 sites have so far come to light. Of these 1,116 have been located in peninsular India with Tamil Nadu contributing 388, Karnataka 300, Kerala 18, Andhra Pradesh 147, Maharashtra 90 and Pondicherry 3. Of these 239 have so far been excavated.[87] However, MS Nagaraja Rao mentions of the existence of 350 megalithic sites in Karnataka, writing much earlier than SB Deo.[88] In these, not a few but several thousand burials have so far been identified. In terms of concentration, the megaliths of South India stand first in the world. Subbayya's investigation at the Koppa site alone in Kodagu district led him to conclude that there were thousands of burials at the site that it became *"impossible to enumerate"*![89] The megaliths are an important source for understanding the iron age. The rich repertoire of funerary articles has told us a lot about the material life of the period. Particularly marked has been the amount and variety of iron implements and weapons found in these megalithic burials. In addition have been items of gold, copper and silver, a variety of grains, a panorama of pottery, items of beautification such as carnelian beads and necklaces and figurines of terracota and metal. This elaborate list of items that were placed in these graves speak all the more about the bonds that had emerged among the people of that time and how important was the notion that the dead had to be kept happy, which itself was an extension of the notion of happiness among those alive.

Some archaeologists basing on the typology of each megalith, the total of which runs to 45, have tried to identify similarities in design across regions and thus seek the source of external influence on the iron age of Karnataka--starting from the dolmens of England to those of immigrants from Central Asia, Iran and the Caucuses, to those from the Levant and Arabia to that of Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf and Yemen to those from Malaysia and Indonesia.[90] A Sundara who has made by far the most extensive study of megaliths in Karnataka says: *"Regarding the source of megalithism, very close similarities of the passage chamber tombs of North Karnataka with those of Western Europe; port holed chamber tombs and the rock cut tombs of the Western Ghat region with those in the North African region, in Palestine, Jordan valley, in the Persian Gulf and in Karachi areas; the occurrence of head-rest in the neolithic levels in the Kaveri valley and in Egypt; the discovery of burials with rubble packing and black-and-red ware at Tuma in Nubia closely analogous to those of Brahmagiri, and the linguistic similarities of certain words of South India and of the Mediterranean region alluded to by Cornelius and considerably small chronological gap between the megaliths of the two regions, may suggest that the East Mediterranean region might possibly be the source of South Indian megalithism."*[91] What is any how clear from this is that megalithism in South India was non-Aryan, the Indo-Aryans having little fancy for the construction of these structures which in any way was related to primitive agriculture, the Indo-Aryans being pastoralists. A lot of attempt has been made to show that it was under the influence of the Indo-Aryans that iron was introduced to the south despite evidence that makes this pretty unsure. But the fact that megalithism inaugurates iron use in Karnataka and the south is already an established point. And

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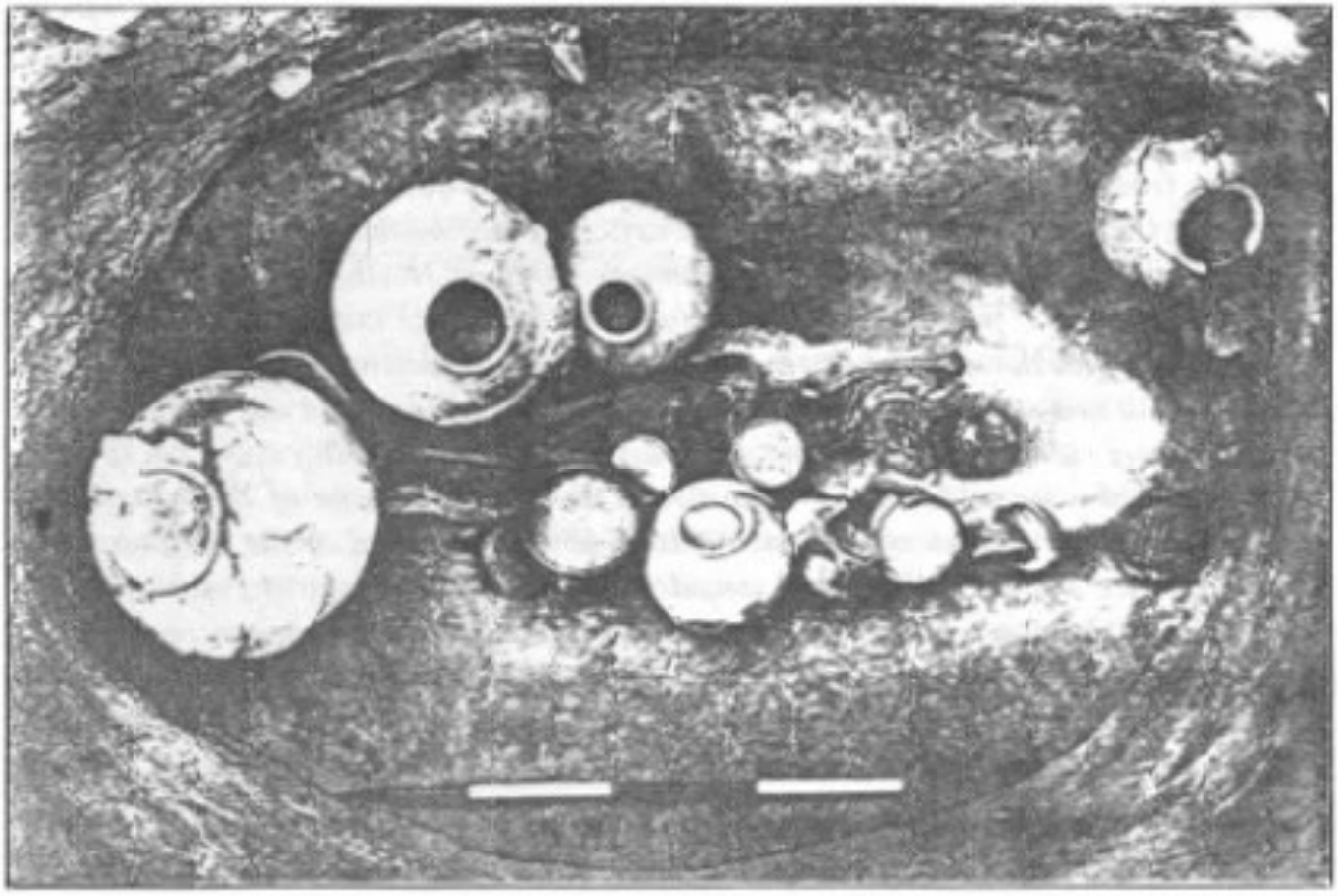
if this megalithism is non-Aryan then it can only mean that if at all the knowledge of iron was brought from outside, it could have been, as Sundara suggests, from the Mediterranean; opening thereby the contention by several archaeologists that the route to peninsular India was not that which the Aryans later traversed or the Harappan forerunners would take--that of the Khyber and Bolan passes--but a coastal route along land or by all means one along the sea close to the coast.

The greatest volume of research, writing and analysis of Karnataka's prehistory is perhaps on the question of megaliths and there are an umpteen number of theories to break one's head over. Quite often one is left with the feeling that these have been the archaeologists' liberal contribution to the modest variety of funerary offerings made at these graves.

Among the main types of megaliths have been: pit circles, burrows, chambers, port-hole or passage chambers, sarcophagi, urn burials, rock-cut chambers dolmens and menhirs. Of these one observes a spatial distribution. Not all the types of megaliths flourish in all regions of Karnataka. For instance chambers and urn burials dominate in the southern part of the state while pit circles are more prevalent in the northern part.

We observe that while in the chalcolithic period burials were made beneath dwellings, in the iron age the graves are situated away from the houses. We shall discuss further about the notional implications of these practices on the people of the iron age.



20. A megalithic pit-burial with grave goods and extended skeleton from Maski, Raichur district.

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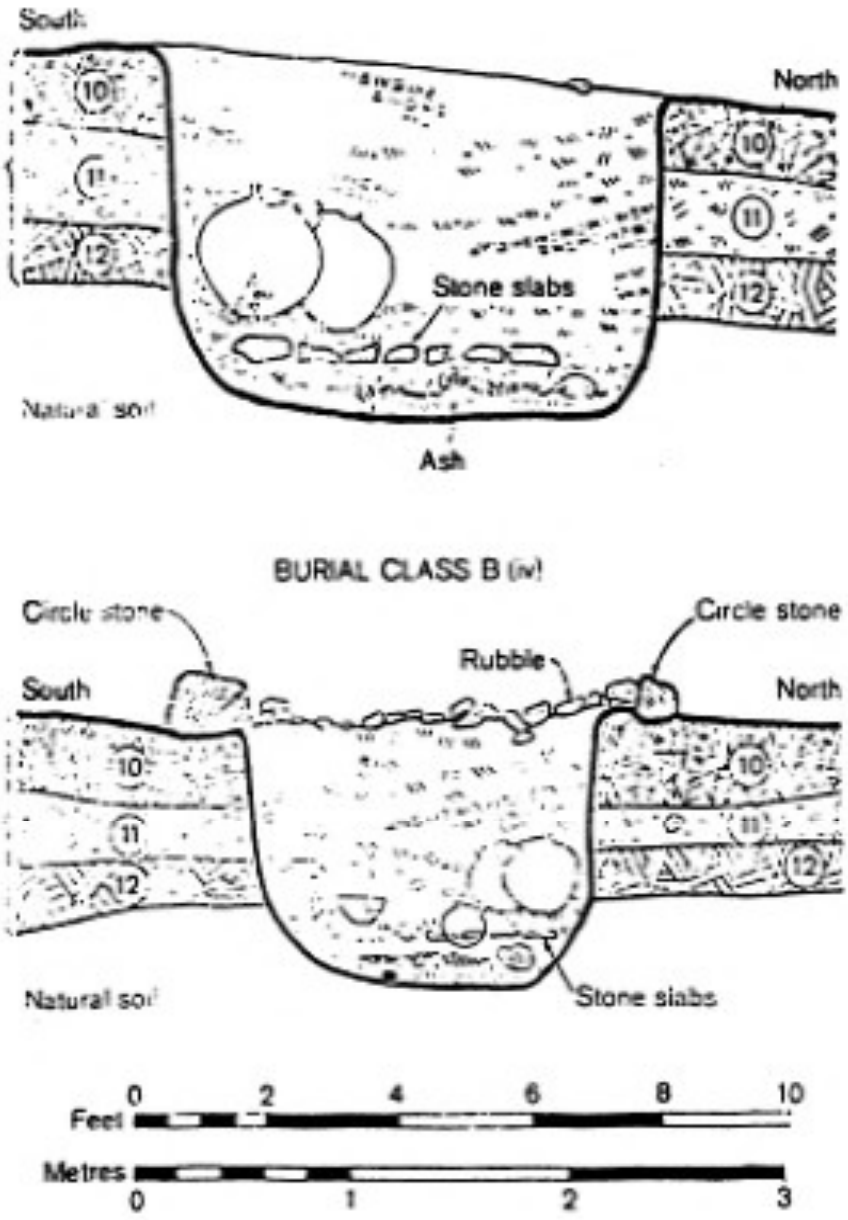
It may be wrong to rule out the role of external influence in the origin of the megalithic culture and perhaps even trace a few types to regions outside the country. **But the problem with such interpretation lies in its inability to come to terms with a measure for local contribution and development.** For instance we observe that the megalith itself has its firm roots in the urn burials of the earlier chalcolithic period. The rise in material life resulted in the emergence of inequalities within society. SB Deo tells us of this disparity: *"Apart from the variety and number of objects of metal, it is only the sociotechnic items which help us in gaining some insight into the concept of status prevalent among the people. Though on the face of it, the megalithic culture appears to be homogenous and identical, in reality it was not so. Binford defines the sociotechnic items as those artifacts which are related to the status or rank*



21. Vertical section of megalithic pit graves from Maski, Raichur district.

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of a person in a given social set up.... At Brahmagiri pit circles gave 47 objects of iron, whereas the same number of cists gave only 16 objects. It may not be wrong to say that those interred in pit circles were economically better off than those interred in cists. This is further supported by the fact that all the gold beads have come from a pit circle and none from a cist. The Maski evidence shows that of the 8 megaliths excavated, only one gave evidence of a gold bead and gold leaf, whereas the remaining seven were devoid of any such prestigious items."[92] It is therefore obvious that the status of those buried in the pit circles was superiorly unequal to those in the cists.

22. A megalithic cist-grave from Brahmagiri showing port-hole and grave-goods.

Sundara says that *"...it seems chamber tomb builders seem to be a separate community who primarily were associated with river valley environment."*[93]

Regarding this question of the emergence of social grades in society and their ultimate polarisation into distinct classes as reflected in the burials characterised by a modification and development of megalithism, Sergei Tokarev draws a god inference from Egypt. He writes: *"Burials in the pre-dynasty epoch in Egypt were similar to those of other countries. The dead were buried in small oval pits in a crouched position on their sides, and a few personal items were buried with them; sometimes the body was cut into pieces. But burial rituals changed considerably during the earliest dynasties, especially in the case of the pharaohs. Graves and tombs gradually became larger and more complex, rising above the ground, and taking the shape of a mastaba [or megalith], a tomb with a rectangular base and sloping sides; and from the third dynasty, the shape of a huge pyramid. The pharaoh's corpse was embalmed,*

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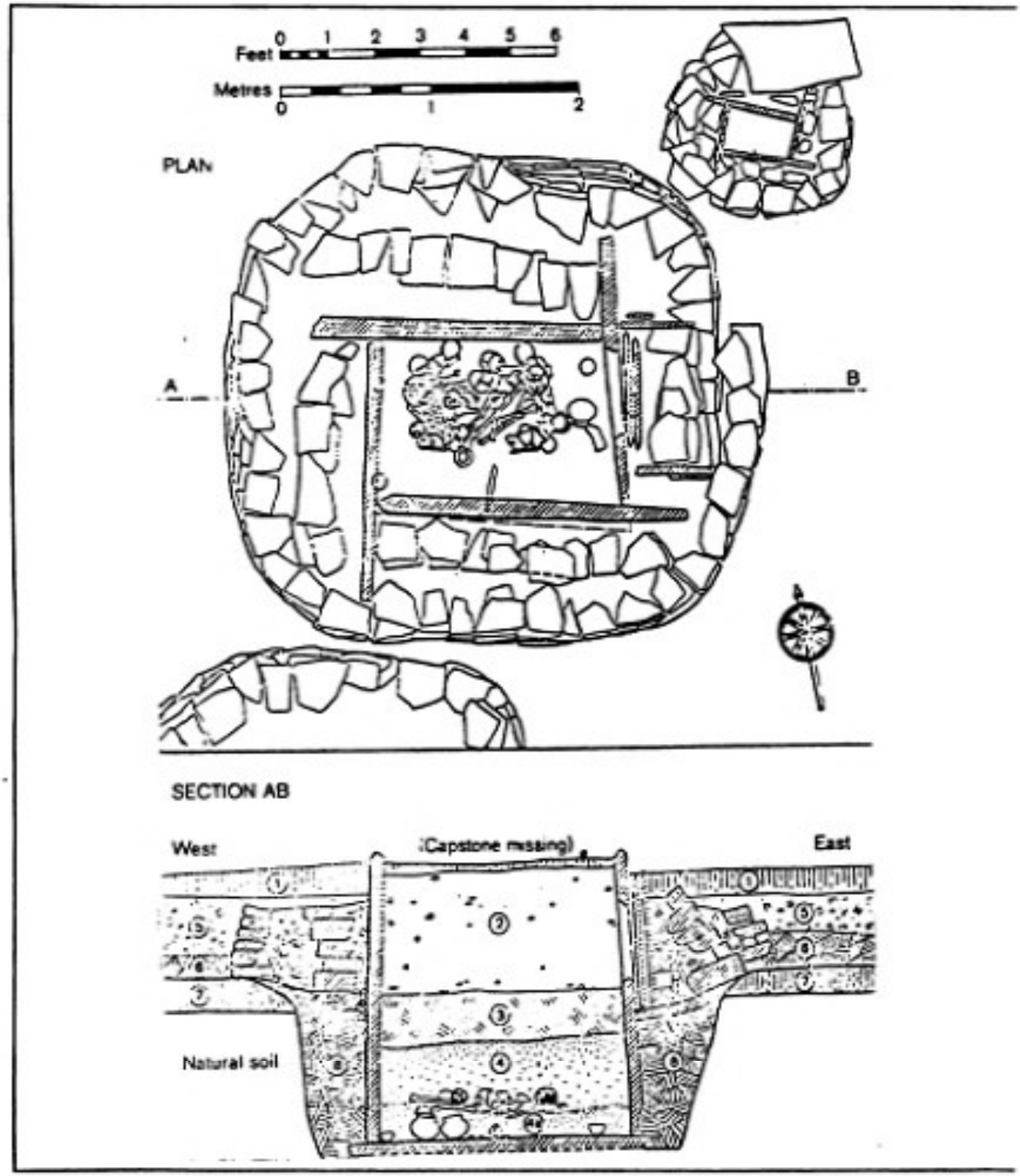

23. Plan, cross section and vertical section of a megalithic cist-grave. The plan also shows a capstone.

and turned into a mummy. Later the bodies of the pharaoh's close officials, and subsequently members of the middle class, were mummified too." [94]

Thus it is clear that the rise of the megaliths in place of the chalcolithic urn burials on the one hand marked the start of a new phase in culture. Burials became an indication of status and status as we know very well was marked along tribal lines. It is but evident from the host of megalithic burial practices recorded from people living

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in the stage of tribal autarchy, yet drawn from contemporary times, that **each type of megalithic burial was distinct for each different tribe.**

The Malai Arayans of Kerala, the Kurumbas, Todas and Irulas of the Nilgiri hills, the Gonds the Kols and the Kois of Madhya Pradesh erect miniature dolmens even today. KK Subbaya discovered pit burials in his excavation at Heggadehalli which was identical to the practice of the Kols.[95] Thimmareddy and S Krishna Rao from their study of contemporary megalithic practices among various tribes of Andhra Pradesh come to the following conclusion: *"...it can be interpreted that different types of megaliths are erected by different endogamous groups. In other words, the occurrence of different megalithic types may be viewed as representing the cultural dichotomy within the human groups inhabiting the same ecological zone."*[96]

Edgar Thurston records the continuation of megalith building practices of different castes and tribes of Karnataka. His *Ethnographic Notes* makes interesting reading: *"Writing concerning the Kurumbas, or shepherd caste of Kaladgi, a correspondent of the Indian Antiquary states that he came across the tomb of one only four years old. 'It was a complete miniature dolmen about 18 inches every way, composed of four stones, one at each side, one at the rear, and a capstone. The interior was occupied by two round stones about the size of a man's fist, painted red, the deceased man resting in his mother earth below."*[97]

It is important to note that all evidence concerning megaliths has continued only among the tribal peoples. The start of a megalithic culture while being coterminus with the iron age (since it is only with the use of iron that large pits could be dug and huge slabs of stone cut and boulders moved) passes away with the passing of the social order from tribal autarchy to class society. Thus it may be said that the **megaliths represent the period of tribal oligarchy** and fade away in history with the breakdown of the tribal order and the emergence of class divisions.

b) Art and its Social Content

So far no remnants of art from the palaeolithic period have been found. This absence does not in any way mean that human artistic activity had not developed at that time.

Yet it is true that the transformation of society to pastoralism-primitive agriculture led to a more developed material life. This enrichment was reflected in the development of art too. **The pursuit of art on a regular basis requires a mode of life that provides society with the means to remove itself from a preoccupation with production.** The superior mode of existence of the period of pastoralism-primitive agriculture ensured this leisure. This was the reason why we notice a sudden spate of paintings and rock embursings starting with the chalcolithic age. Their number only became more profuse with the advance of society into the iron age.

The emergence of pottery marked the transition of society to the stage of primitive agriculture. Cereals and millets that were cultivated could only be consumed by cooking. Women who discovered agriculture also developed the art of making pots. There were several types of pre-fired and fired pots. *"The rims and shoulders [of Maski fabric] of vases are usually painted. The designs are simple such*

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as sets of parallel, vertical or oblique lines, criss-cross as well as variedly complicated and others. The lines are generally thick, wavy and uneven and with sharp pointed ends. What these complicated designs are is difficult to surmise owing to their fragmentary condition. Some may be branches of plants. Occasionally, conventionalised twin fish are beautifully drawn. The complicated designs especially, have scarcely any comparisons from any other sites in India excepting those of Singanapalle....

The pottery [of Savalda fabric] is beautifully painted in a regularity, in violet black. The designs are varied, clear and simple, drawn on the rims and shoulders of pots and vases or in the interior of vases. They are sets of parallel, curved, oblique, horizontal criss-cross, zigzag lines, vertical lines, chains, dots and strokes, hatched diamonds and combinations of these into some curious geometrical designs. Besides, the other types of designs are arrows, realistic and conventionalised plant and fish motifs, and probably peacock and harpoons. The arrow, harpoon and fish motifs are more common." [98]

The making of pots and the symmetrical patterns that were painted or pinched on their necks and shoulders was the art of women. It is interesting to note that the patterns on the pots only rarely carry images from the faunal world of the male. These geometric patterns ceased with the arrival of the potter's wheel and the passing of pot making from a domestic woman-held preoccupation into that of a profession in the hands of the male. This is a development that came about with the onset of class divisions in society.

It is quite possible, that these patterns themselves being repetitive could have originated from weaving--the weaving of mats, cloth and the weave of basketry. Weaving itself involves questions of symmetry, arithmetic and geometry, which originated, as JD Bernal says, from basket making, *"leading to a greater understanding of form and number."* [99]

In his article on prehistoric art in Karnataka Sundara rightly discusses the building of houses during neolithic-iron age times under the heading of art. The structure of the huts of these neolithic people was circular at the base, had wattle and daub walls and a sloping roof of thatch held up by a central pole. The structure of the hut was only a modified extension of an inverted basket. The daub and wattle were at times plastered with mud, and this only displayed a parallel with the origin of the pot which initially, as Engels says, was a basket or wooden vessel with walls plastered by mud. These patterns in the building of houses has continued well into our times. In fact the development of *rangoli* with its intricate geometric patterns require a degree of abstract thinking, and the development of mathematics. It is no coincidence that *rangoli*, too which came into vogue at a later period, like the painted designs on the pots, was an art developed, perfected and excelled in by the woman.

Paintings and bruisings on rock have come down to us only from the neolithic age onwards. Karnataka posssesses the second largest concentration of rock art after Madhya Pradesh. In Karnataka 12 major rock art regions having about 30 important sites have been identified. Of these 20 sites are found in the Hire-Bankal region of Raichur district. Maski can boast of several thousand petroglyphs of cattle and rich

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pictographs too. Another important pocket, also called the Bhimbetka of Karnataka is in the caves of Badami. So far rock art has not been traced in southern Karnataka. The reason for this perhaps lies in the concentration of research activity in the south on excavating sites.

24. Isometric reconstruction by HD Sankalia of a chalcolithic village in Inamgaon, Pune district, Maharashtra. The houses were rounded and had straw roofs supported by wooden poles. The neolithic settlements of Karnataka could not have appeared very different.

The main themes in rock art derive from the main preoccupations of the people of this period. Agriculture, cattle tending and hunting are the main themes. Mathpal has identified at least 22 types of animals and birds from these paintings. This we feel is an incomplete list. But the most common among these are elegant drawings of humped oxen and cattle such as the ones found at Piklihal, Maski, Tekkalakota and Billamrayanagudda. This preoccupation with oxen, cows, sheep, goat and buffalos speak of the importance of pastoralism. Some pictures also depict scenes of cattle being grazed. Wild animals are at times depicted as being hunted, or there are pictures of a tiger attacking a herd of deer. There is also the picture of an animal which has been harpooned. The pictures are either outlines or silhouettes. The outline drawings often also carry patterns on the body of the animals.

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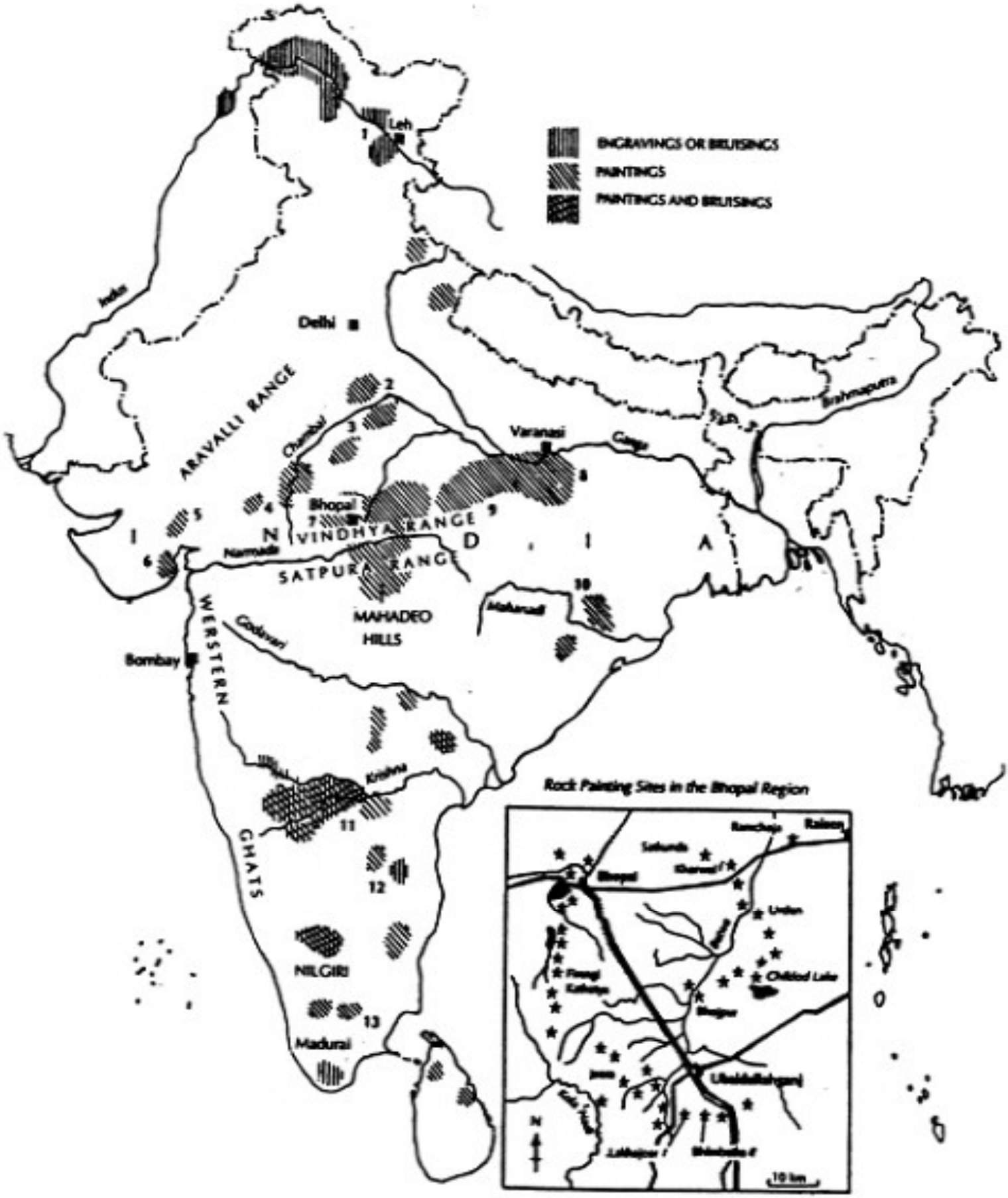

25. Dispersal of rock art sites in India. The southern nuclear region has the second largest concentration of rock art after Madhya Pradesh.

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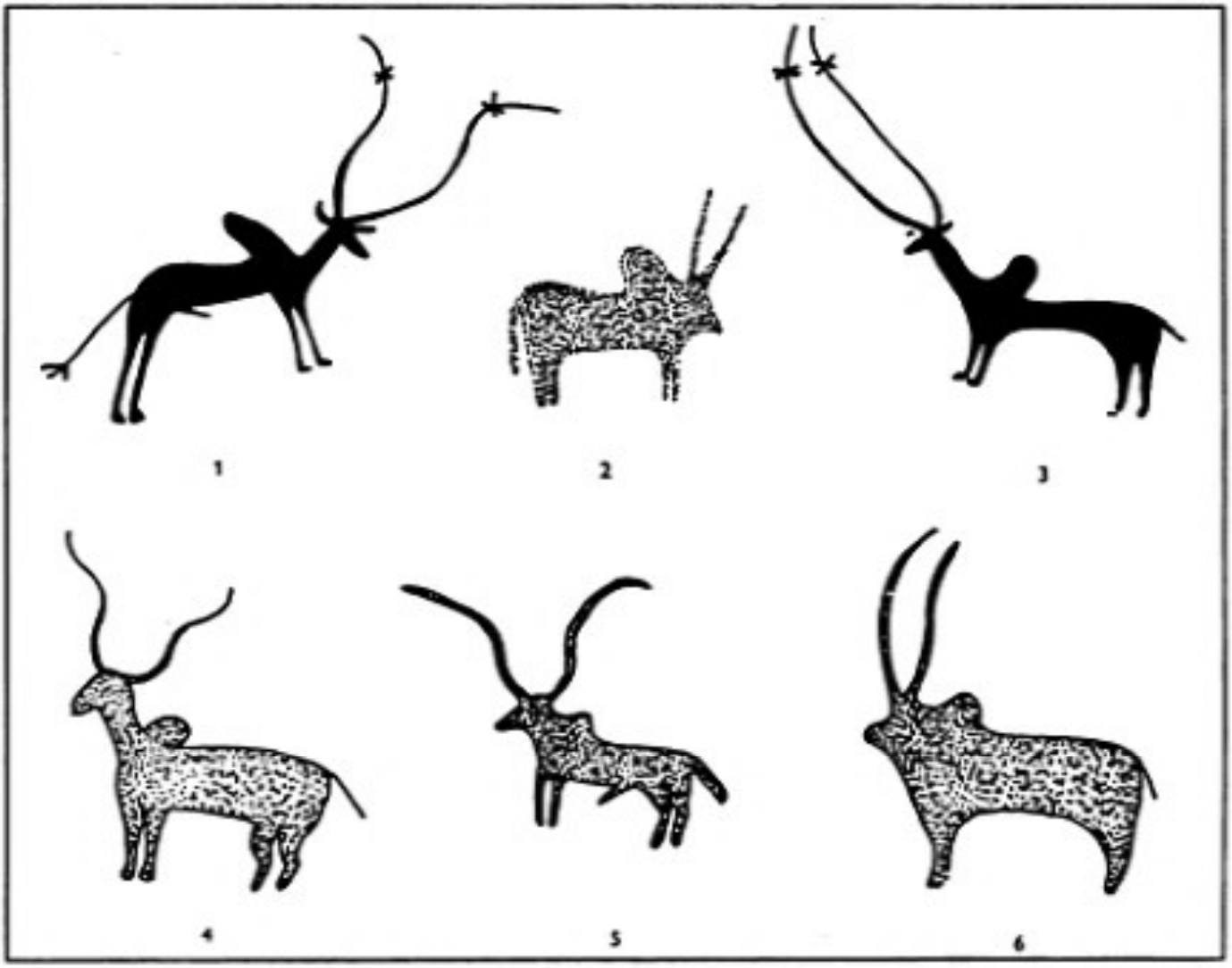
What is apparently absent in the paintings or bruisings is all reference to agriculture. There are no paintings of plants or crops. The woman's world is evidently absent. Any superficial analysis of these paintings can lead one to conclude that rock art was the domain of the male and the rock artists were exclusively men. But such patricentral conjectures only contradicts the level of development of society and makes it appear as though this society survived on a pastoral-hunting basis and that woman and agriculture were thoroughly neglected. But this need not be true.

A good deal of paintings of women are depictions with some significant characteristics. The woman is pregnant, she is dancing, her arms are stretched out before her and her fingers seem to be casting out something. There are also pictures of couples in coitus and the woman and men in most of these paintings have elaborate motifs painted on their bodies. In all these paintings women are more prominent than men.



26. Rock bruised and painted bulls from sites in Raichur district. Nos 1, 3 and 4 are from Piklihal; nos 2 and 5 from Maski; and no 6 from Billamrayana Gudda.

Sundara tells us that these paintings *"almost exclusively of women engaged in ritual dance [is] evidently connected with the fertility cult."*[100] Further in his comparative article of rock paintings in Bhimbetka of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, Mathpal says: *"Group dancers and men and women engaged in sex-acts are also the common motifs painted at Bhimbetka, Benakal, Hampi, Kupagallu and Maski."*[101]

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In the succeeding part of this chapter, we shall discuss about the relationship between the fertility cult, ritual sexual intercourse and primitive agriculture. For the present however, we would like to only make a statement; that, primitive agriculture is directly related and expressed through the fertility cult and ritual coitus. Thus the depiction of women in dance and their outstretched hands with open fingers at times, seem to express in ritual, the broadcasting of seeds as is characteristic of *podu* agriculture.

It is therefore clear that the rock art of this time completely expressed the mode of production of the period. The painting is typical of the combination of cattle rearing with primitive agriculture. In one such painting there are also two dogs that watch as onlookers.

Sundara tells us that the *"Gangavati-Hospet area relatively has the largest number of localities with rock paintings and appears to be the focal area of this art activity...it appears that this region is highly potential and what is known is just a small fragment of a very large number yet to be explored...."* [102]

Thus we hope that more of this exceptional art of these primitive people will be revealed to us by archaeologists so that we could have a deeper and richer understanding between the forms of art, its content, its relationship to production and the emergence from its graded abstraction, of the **first rudimentary pictographic symbols of writing. The rock paintings far from being mere representations of sense perceptions, were already patterened to communicate with the increasing use of abstractions.** The unity of art, science, dance, music, magic and ritual is evident in these rock art expressions. While the level of development of society provided the people of the pastoral-primitive agricultural age with the leisure to engage and express themselves through art, it must not be forgotten that the upper limit of this social development also imposed a direct and self-evident bond between all these different spheres of human endeavour with production. This only reminds us that it was from

27. Side view of rock bruising of a humped bull belonging to the megalithic period from Gavali, Kundapur taluk, Dakshina Kannada district.

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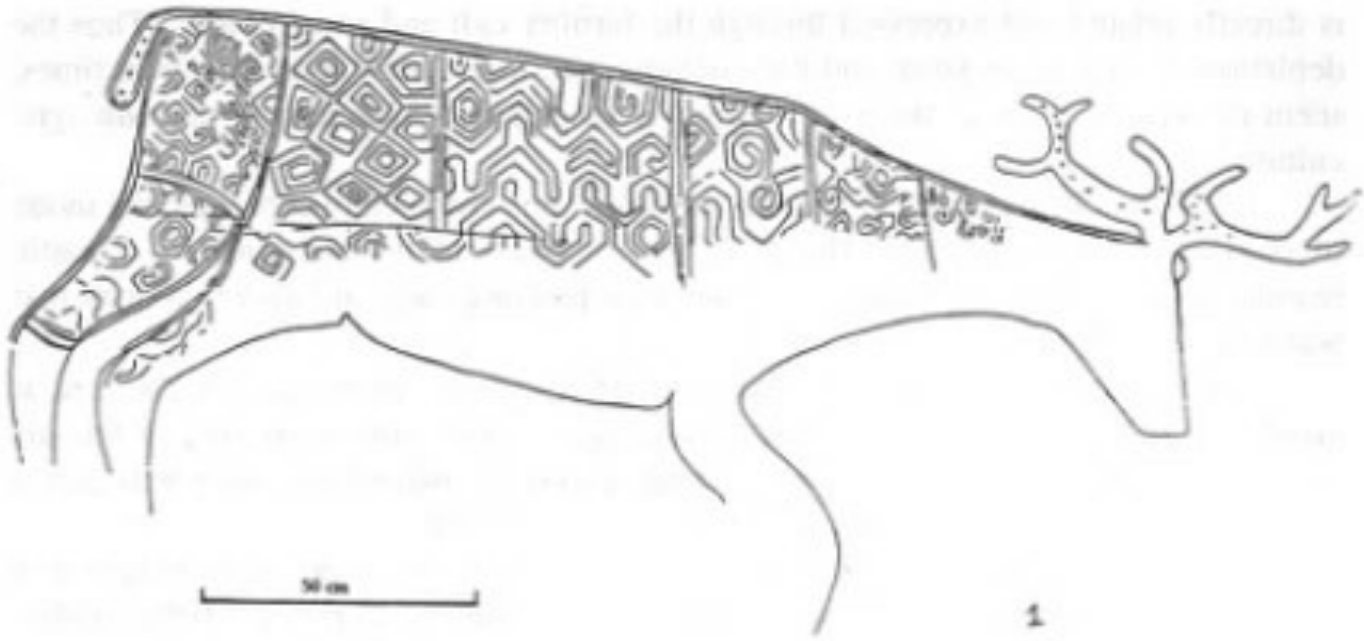

28. These rock paintings taken from three different places depict line patterns on the body of the object. (1) and (3) are from Chiklod and Urden in Madhya Pradesh and (2) is from Badami in Bijapur district.

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production, that is the base, and to serve production that the superstructure was born. The flight as a whole, of art and science, magic and ritual, dance and music from their direct signification of production and the mutual moving apart of these binaries from one another needed the advance of society from tribal oligarchy to class division.[103]

c) Ritual, Magic and Belief

The commencement of a pastoral-primitive agricultural mode of life creates in its wake a new world view. The fertility cult and the mother goddess dominate the

29. Rock painting of human and animal motifs from Aregudda.

early period of chalcolithism and towards the close of the iron age, shamans and ancestor worship begin to emerge. Religion as such is yet to come into being and the religious beliefs of the period continue to be confined within the parameters of magic and its ritual.

A significant development in the superstructure of the period is the change that agriculture brings about in the thought and culture of the people. This is brought out very well by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya in his *Lokayata*. He talks of a primitive proto-materialism and a pre-spiritualistic consciousness at this stage.[104]

Literature on the history of religion tells us that *"generally there was a female deity in the neolithic"* and that *"perhaps the worship of female deities was connected*

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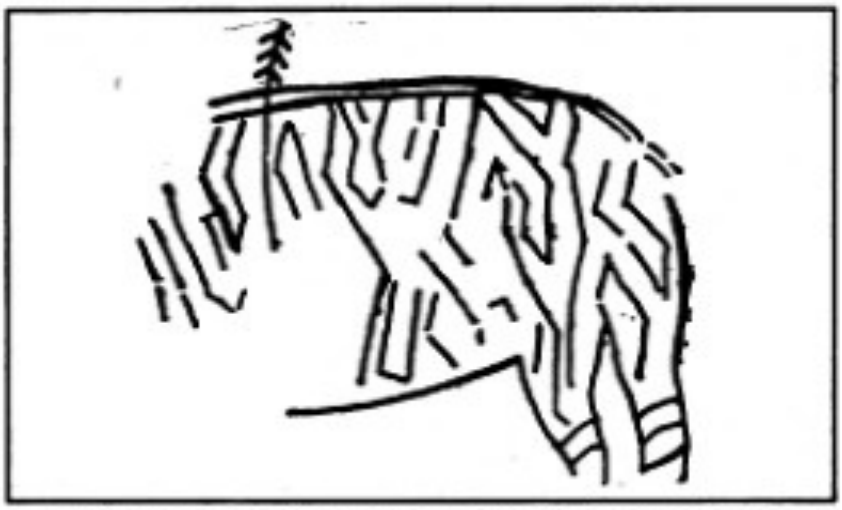
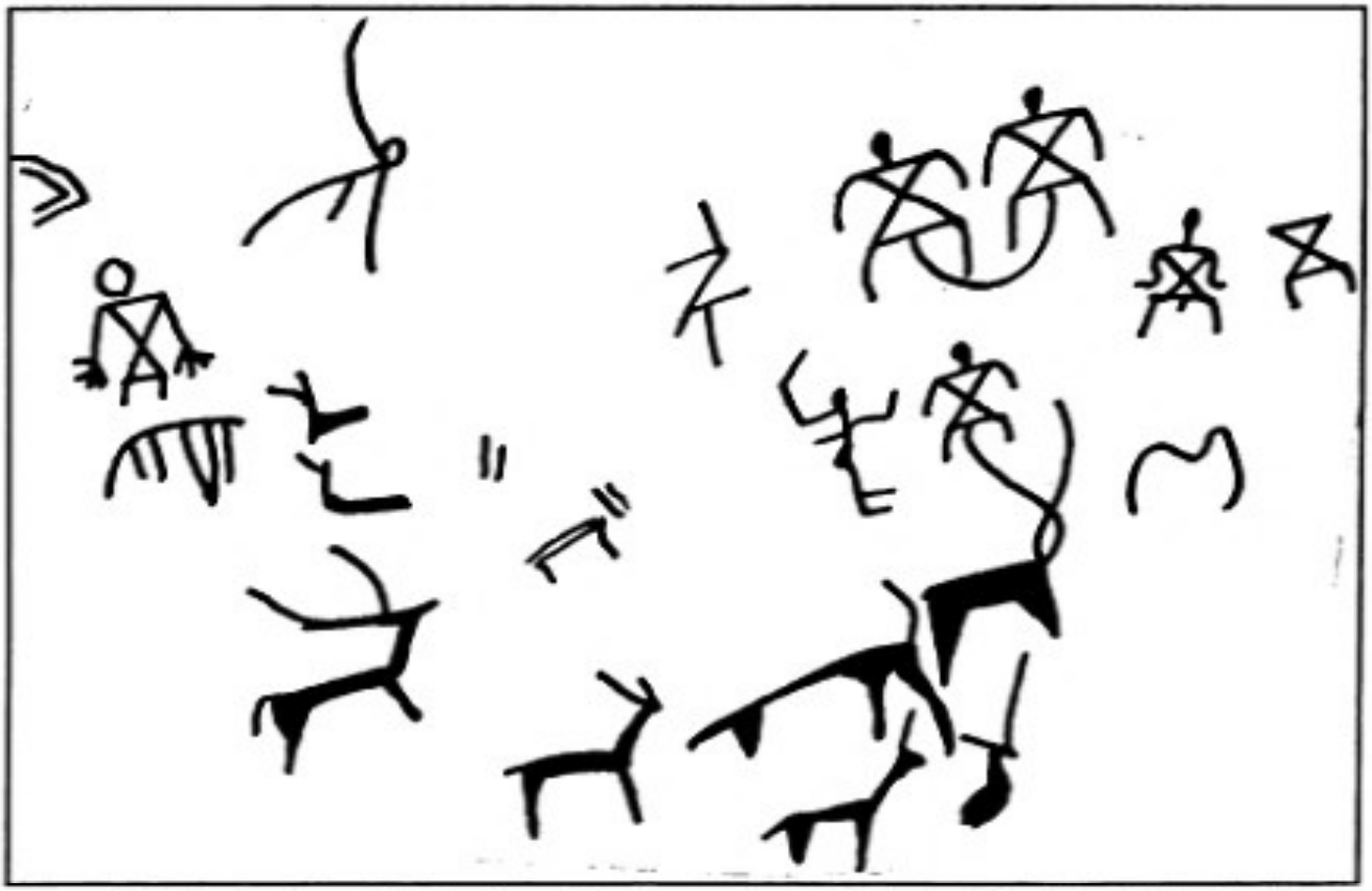
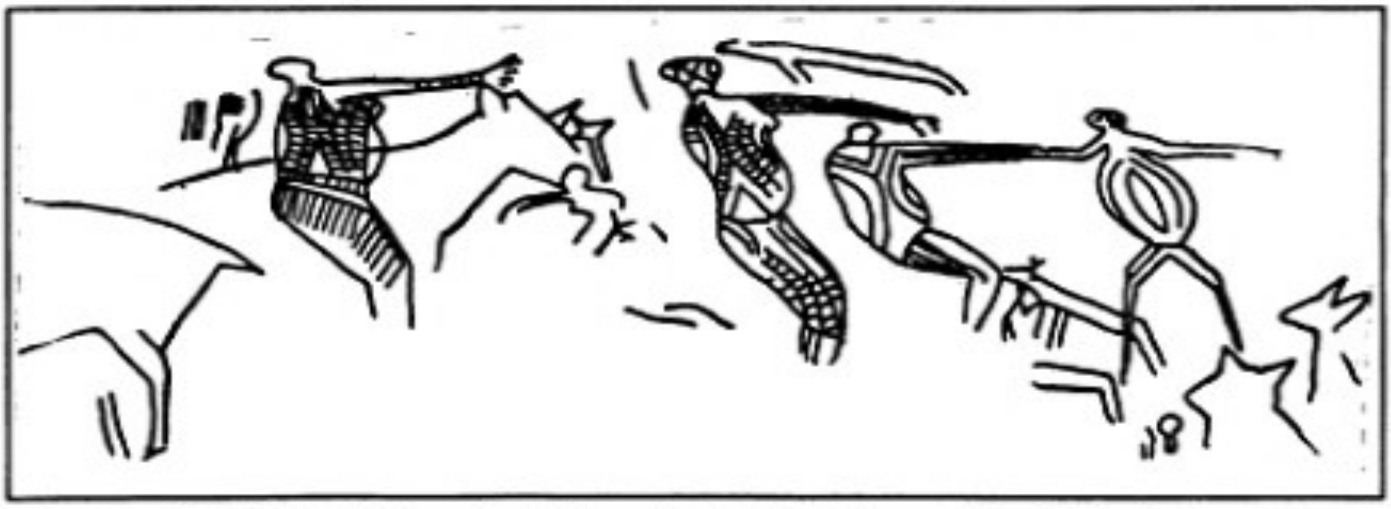


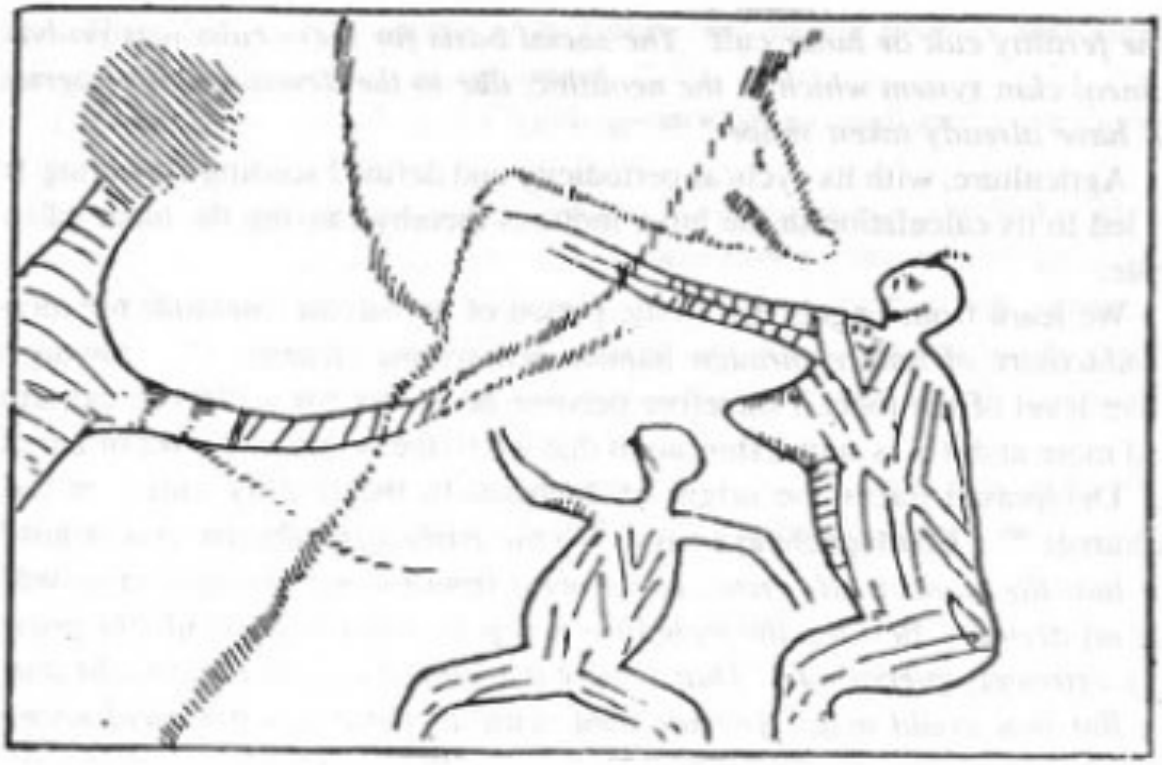
30. A harpooned animal: rock painting from Aregudda.



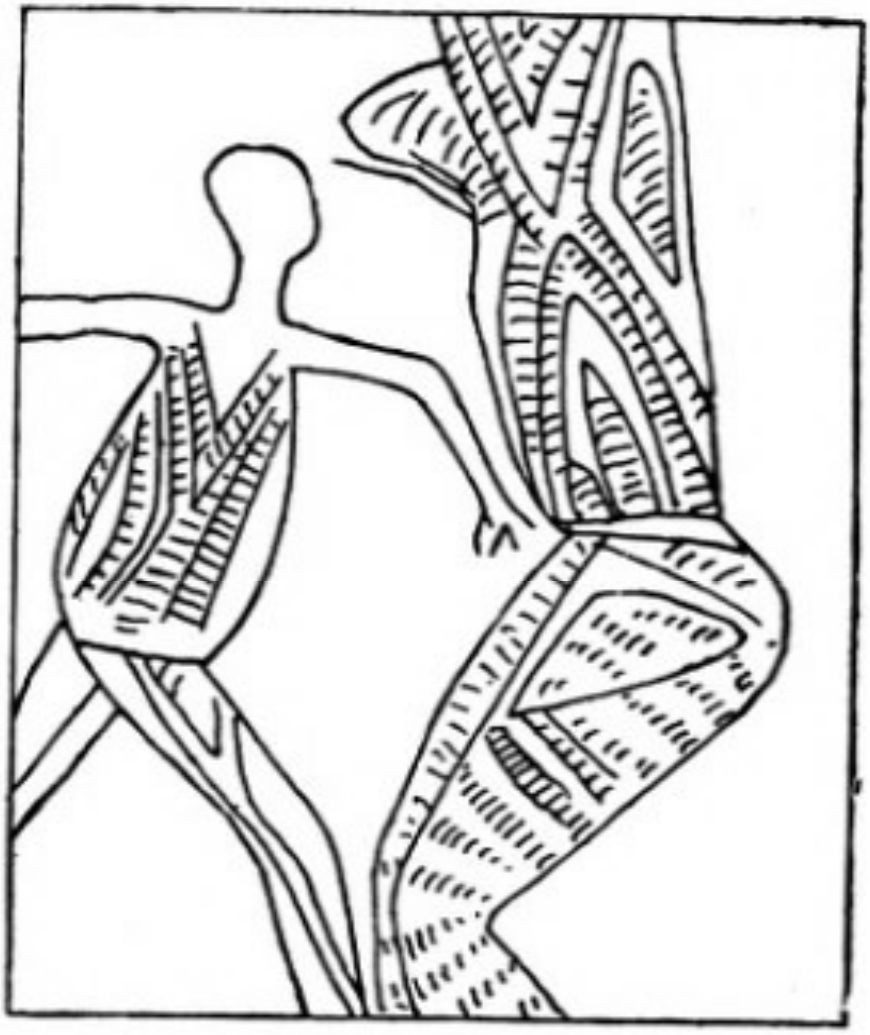
31. Grazing sheep. The herdsman's dog is conspicuous. Fertility coitus is also depicted.



32. Rock paintings of primitive agricultural ritual dance with onlooking dogs



33. Rock painting of primitive agricultural ritual from Mallapur, Gangavati taluk, Raichur district.



34. A woman and man in dance.

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with the fertility cult or lunar cult. The social basis for these cults was probably the matrilineal clan system which in the neolithic, due to the development of agriculture, should have already taken shape." [105]

Agriculture, with its cyclical periodicity and defined seeding-flowering-fruition cycles led to its calculation in the lunar motions thereby causing the lunar calendar to originate.

We learn from Engels that in the period of barbarism *"methods for increasing the productivity of nature through human activity was learnt."* [106] Owing to the primitive level of the tools it therefore become necessary for society to exhort nature to yield more and it was such exhortation that led to the origin of *Tantra* or agricultural magic. Debiprasad traces the origin of Tantrism to the fertility magic of the early agriculturists.[107] Chattopadhyaya says: *"To the early agriculturist, it was not known why or how the plants really grew. The process from sowing to reaping was with them greatly mysterious. Besides, the technique was poor and consequently the prospect of success extremely precarious. That is why it required patience, foresight and faith.*

But how could magic provide them with all these psychological necessities? Magic rests on the principle that by creating the illusion that we control reality, we can actually control it. But how could this illusion be created? By enacting it in fantasy. That could not obviously have any effect on the actual course of nature. But it did have an appreciable effect on the performers themselves. Inspired by the belief that the fulfillment of the desired reality is ensured by enacting it in fantasy, they were able to work harder for the purpose of actually fulfilling it.

Magic rests on ignorance. But it would be wrong to view it as mere ignorance. For it is also a guide to action, though a psychological one. At the initial stage of agriculture, at which this psychological guide is most needed, we naturally find a peculiar intensification of magical beliefs and practices." [108]

Chattopadhyaya traces the origin of Tantrism, as a philosophical system, to the period of Harappan civilisation. While as a philosophical system Tantrism could have been as late a development as this, the sources of its philosophical universe are clearly rooted in the primitive agriculture of the chalcolithic period.

Thus *vamachara* generally misconstrued as *the left-hand-path* has its origin in Tantra. *Achara* means ritual practice and *vama* means woman or the sexual urge (*kama*). *"Vamacara thus stands for the ritual practices of woman and sex."* [109]

This is how Chattopadhyaya seeks to explain the sex and fertility cult with that of primitive agriculture. He says: *"Being the invention of women, agricultural production was originally looked at as being vitally related to the female reproductive function.... It was because of the fact that the women were the first agriculturists, not only were they the original weilders of agricultural magic but, further, the essence of this magic consisted in linking up their fertility with that of the earth."* [110]

"In Tantrism, we find the greatest emphasis being placed on the ritual centering round the female genital organ. The basic feature of the rain making rite, as practised by the women-folk of our backward peasantry, is to take recourse to nudity. The idea is that the female reproductive organ, thus exposed, would enhance natural

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fertility. This idea is, as a matter of fact universal among peoples surviving at the backward stages of economic development...." [111]

Thus nudity cults such as at Chandragutti of Shimoga district have their origins in this period of prehistory.

Further, Chattopadhyaya says: *"What is the significance attached to the vermilion? We are going to argue that vermilion stands here for the menstrual blood. And since in primitive thought menstrual blood is viewed as the basis of human productivity, the act of smearing it on stone is designed to infuse the productive energy into the field. This alone can explain the tremendous significance attached in Tantrism to the menstrual blood or its substitutes."* [112]

It is from this smearing of menstrual blood that its replacement by the blood of animals, and thus animal sacrifice and the application of the vermilion spot on the forehead of women comes, but much later.

While we may be unable to speak of *vamachara* per se, we get a clear indication from the rock art of the period regarding the notions of magic practised by the chalcolithic and iron age people of Karnataka.

One outstanding feature of the rock paintings is that all significance has been removed from the faces of the women. They are the least defined. Quite often it is only the bulging milk laden breasts and the swollen stomachs indicating pregnancy that are brought out and it appears that they are mere torsos without heads. This itself demonstrates the emphasis behind this magic. **They are not representations of mere dance but of a ritual fertility dance and the faceless women are no more than an idea of the mother goddess. The women are an abstraction, just as magic is drawn from imagination and is only a fantastic reproduction of reality.**

Thus it appears all the more certain, that this prehistoric rock art, of which we have discussed in the preceding part is only the recreation of primitive agriculture, and the pictures of intercourse are an attempt by a primitive agricultural people to represent, through art, the attempt to infuse productivity to the crop bearing soil. The rock painting from Badami, unique in its style, is similar to the figurine from neolithic Thrace.

The urn burials of the chalcolithic period and then its continuation in the form of megaliths in the iron age are again drawn from notions of birth, life and death which only a people practicing primitive agriculture can generate.

The very notion of burial in place of disposing the dead by other means, is a trait which is common to all communities practising primitive agriculture. The urn burial in particular is important in that the urn in which the dead are placed (often in a crouched position) resembles the position of the foetus in the womb. All these associations have generally led to the attribution of the feminine gender to earth; always making it 'mother earth'.

George Thomson provides us with a brilliant analysis of these associations: *"It is important to observe that the magic of human fecundity attaches to the process, not to the result--to the lochial discharge, not to the child itself; and consequently all fluxes of blood, menstrual as well as lochial, are treated alike as manifestations of the*

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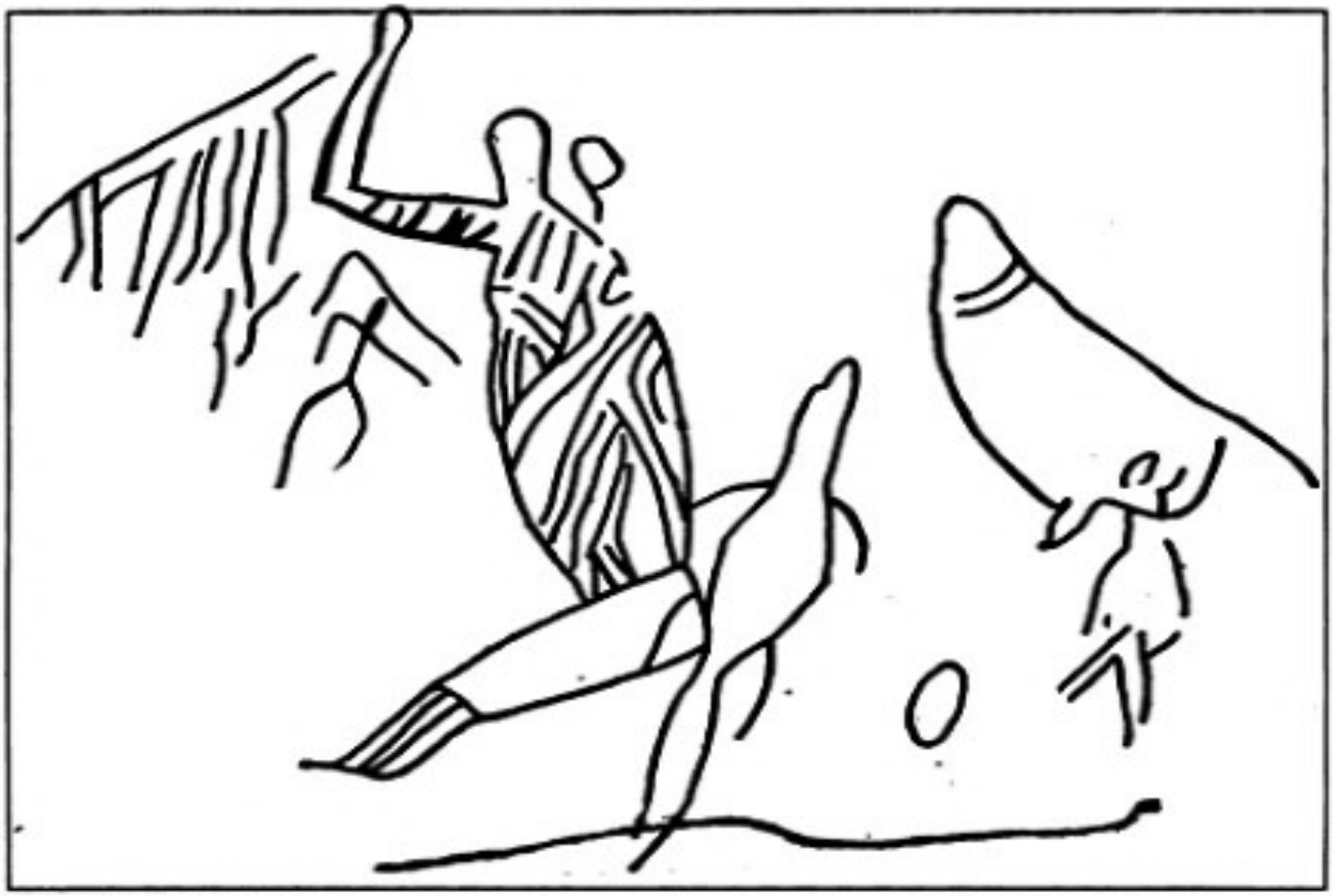

35. Rock paintings of the iron age from Hampi, Bellary district. Among others are a robed woman with clasped fist, a crocodile, eyes of an owl and part of a boat. All these could well be totems.

life-giving power inherent in the female sex. In primitive thought menstruation is regarded, quite correctly, as a process of the same nature as childbirth....

Red is renewal of life. That is why bones from upper palaeolithic and neolithic interments are painted red. The symbolism becomes quite clear when we find, as we commonly do, that the skeleton has been laid in the contracted or uterine posture. Smeared with the colour of life, curled up like a babe in the womb--what more could primitive man do to ensure that the soul of the departed would be born again?" [113]

Let us look at George Thomson's *Human Essence* this time, to see how he analyses the dialectical relationship between the base and the superstructure on the one hand and the diverse interrelationship within the superstructure on the other, of the time: *"Man differs from animals in being conscious of his life activity. He can disengage himself mentally from his activity in such a way as to form an idea of it as distinct from the reality. This is the key to the understanding of primitive ritual. Ritual is still practice, but practice separated from the labour-process.*

The nature of primitive ritual may be illustrated by examining one of its most widespread manifestations--the mimetic dance.

Mimesis or conscious invitation, is a characteristic which man has inherited from his semian ancestors. In him it has been cultivated as a pre-enactment or reenactment of the labour-process with the objective of improving his performance. Separated from the actual process, the vocal and bodily movements of collective labour are organised as an independent activity combining song and dance. Such

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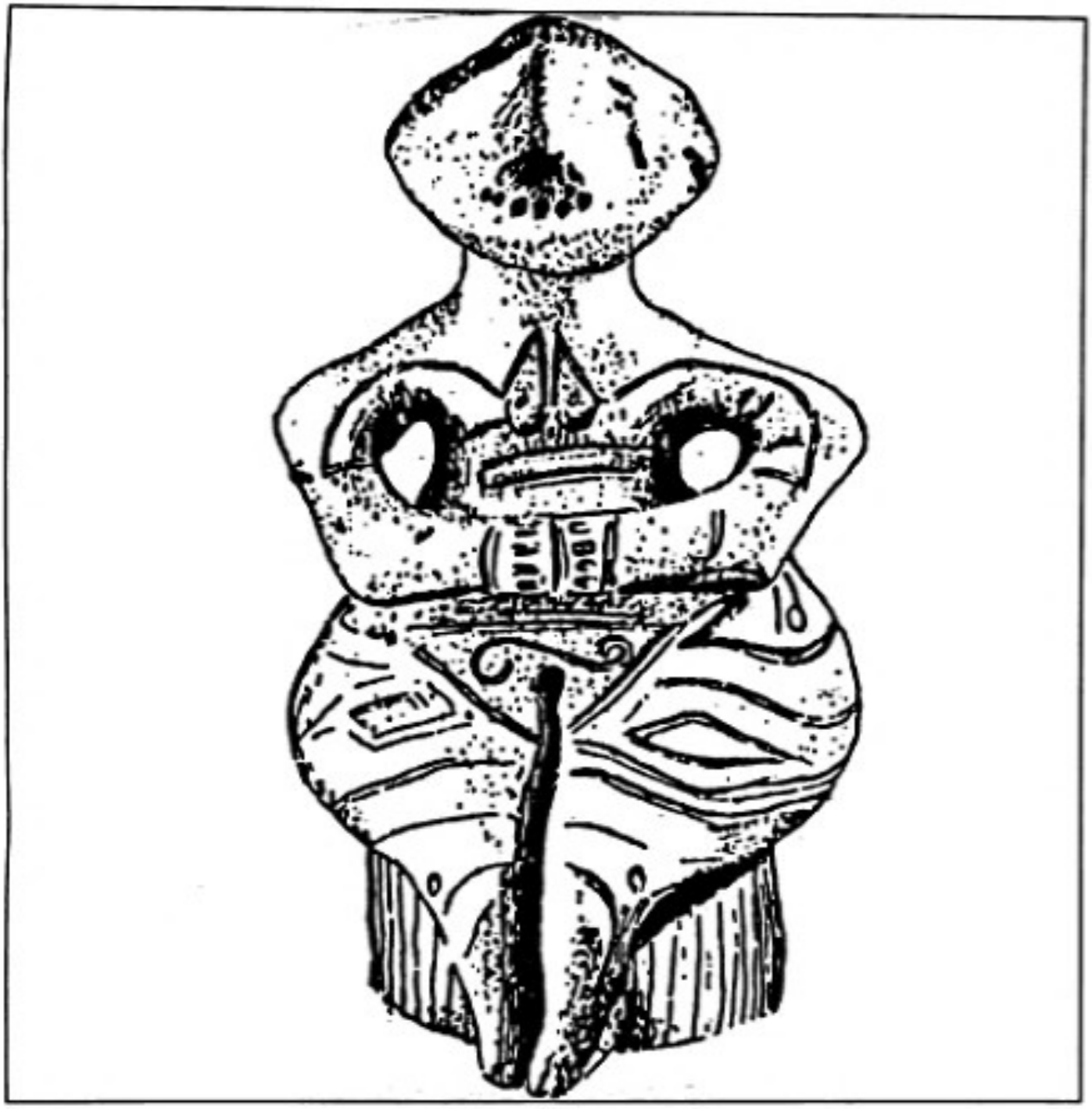

36. A mother goddess icon from neolithic Thrace.

activities are a universal feature of tribal life. They are designed to represent dramatically the growth and gathering of the totem species, if it is a plant, or, if an animal, its distinctive habits and in some cases the act of catching it and killing it. Later they assume the character of an appeal to the clan ancestors, who are impersonated in their totemic form and are called upon to give their help to the living members of their clan.... In the higher stages of tribalism we find mimetic dances associated with the whole range of natural phenomena--dances to make the crops grow, dances to bring in the summer, dances to avert natural disasters, dances to revive the waning moon.

A single example will serve to show the psychological principle on which mimetic ritual rests.

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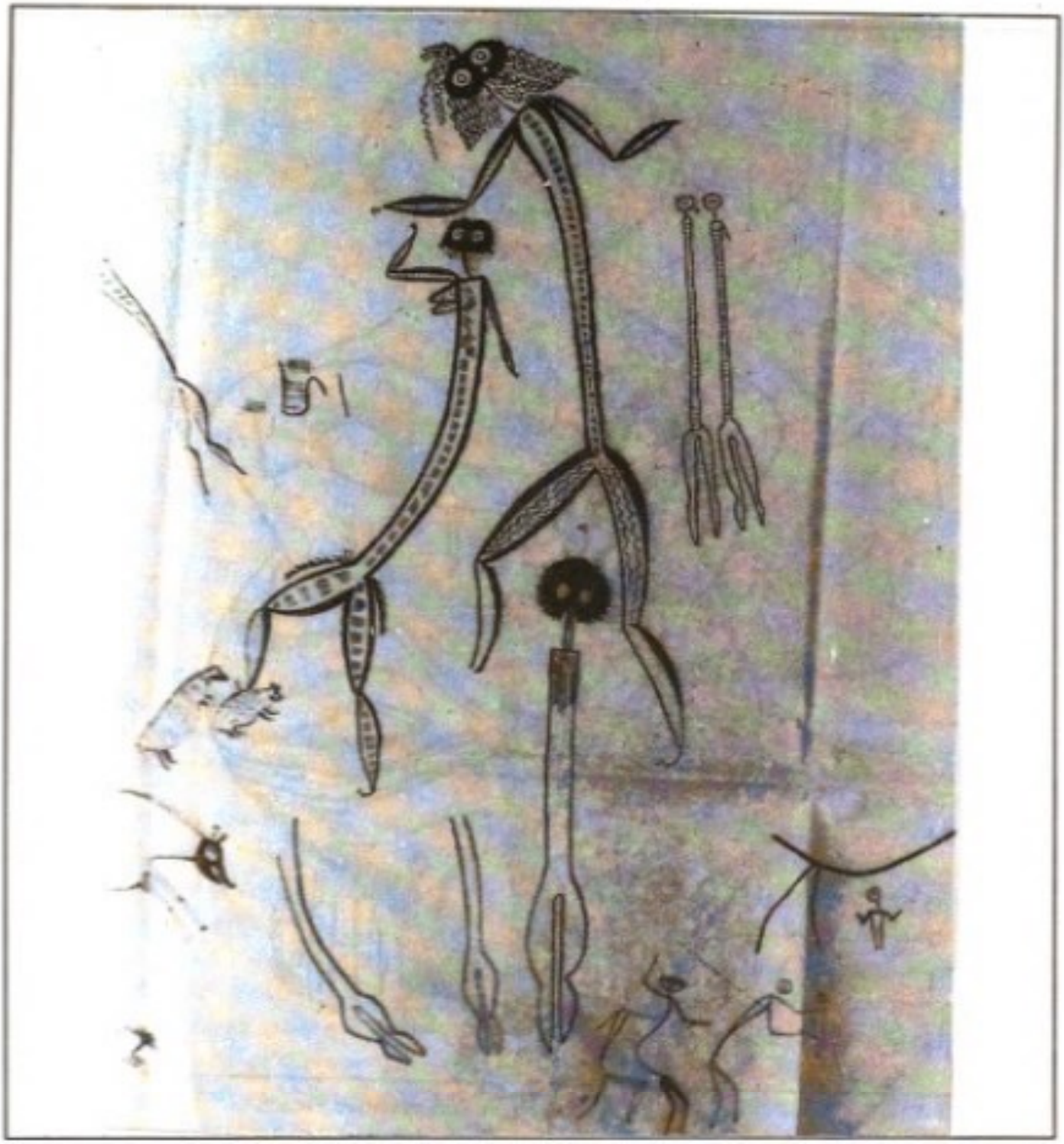

37. Man and woman in mimetic dance.

The Maoris of New Zealand had a potato dance. The young shoots were liable to be blasted by east winds. Accordingly, the women who cultivated the gardens performed a dance, in which they simulated the rush of the wind and rain and the sprouting and blossoming of the crop; and, as they danced, they sang, calling on the crop to follow their example.

These dancers believed that by dramatising the growth of the crop, they could compel it to grow. This is the basis of primitive magic, which is in origin nothing more than a simple act of mimesis. Being still at the stage of perceptual knowledge, the dancers were unaware that the external world was governed by objective laws, inde-

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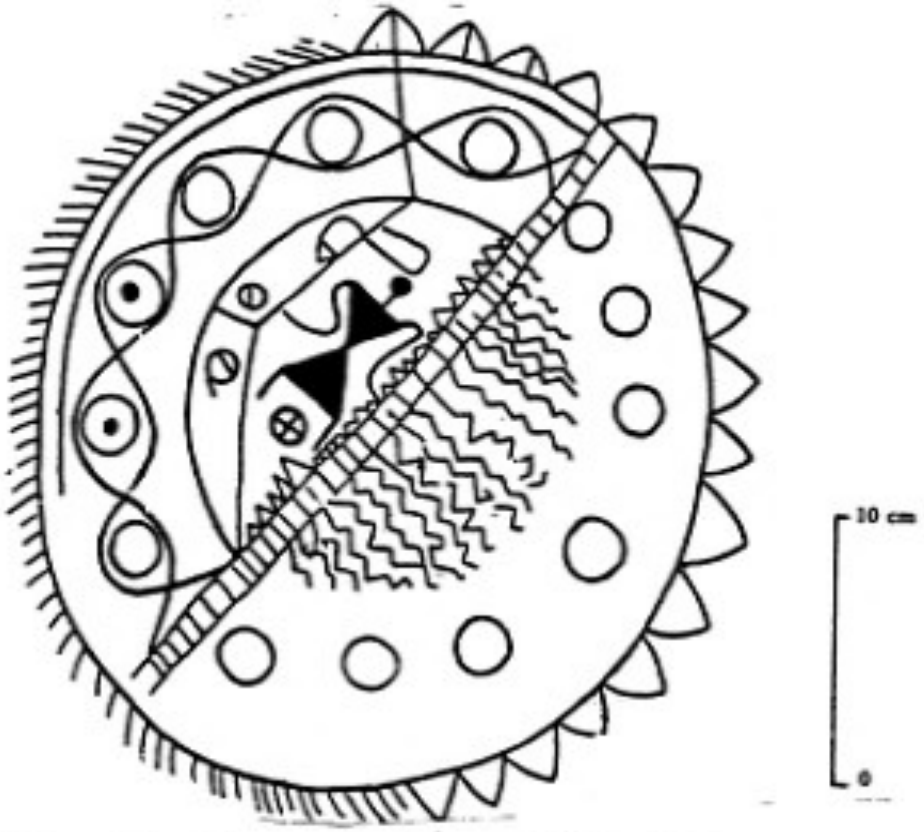

38. This rare piece of rock art from Rampura, Raichur district, depicts a burial with grave goods and possible port holes.

pendent of their will. Yet the performance was not wasted. Just as in the labour-process man forms a pre-conceived image of the desired result, so in the mimetic dance he pre-enacts in fantasy the fulfilment of the desired reality. Regarded from this point of view, the dance has a positive value, both subjective and objective.

Subjectively, it affects the dancer's attitude to the real task. Inspired by the dance in the belief that it will save the crop, they proceed to the task of tending it with greater confidence, and so with greater energy than before. It changes their subjective attitude to reality. Objectively, being connected with the labour process, it enables the labourers to withdraw from the immediate experience of that process and to objectify it. In this act of mental withdrawal we may recognise the starting point of the process which leads eventaully to the transition from perceptual to rational knowledge.

Detached from the labour-process, the ritual act is still regarded as necessary for success in the real task, but is no longer identified with it. It is directed by a chief or priest, who in return for his services is exempted from manual labour. This is the beginning of religion." [113A]

It is quite obvious that the commencement of a Tantra based belief system was moulded chiefly by the woman. It was among the first comprehensive and articulate systems' of belief and explanation of the motions of the sun and moon, the cycle of seasons, the coming into being and passing away of plant, animal and human life and most important of all, as a magical system, it was an exhaustive attempt to bring nature under human submission so that the weal of society could be achieved. In this the matriarchs of this period brought the knowledge of astronomy and logic, zoology and botany and mathematics and music to fullest play. All this should have created a

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sorceress or shameness for each clan; the clan itself taking descent from the woman matriarch. We couldn't be very wrong if we stated that **scenes of fertility rites which carried wild animals in isolation from hunting scenes were perhaps representative of totems.** For all these reasons then, the contribution of the woman of the chalcolithic period far outdid that of her male counterpart. She had discovered agriculture which she continued to practice, she provided cooked food, she wove cloth and made pots, she made baskets and provided fodder for the cattle, she brought human beings to life and suckled them, it was on the female principle that the dead were disposed, she developed a world view and created agricultural magic, she gave sanctity to music and dance, she provided identity to the totems and it was matrilineage that defined the clans. In short, the stamp of the woman outdid the prowess of man. It was therefore in this stage of tribal oligarchy that the innumerable woman goddesses that Karnataka and south Indian culture would later be familiar with, had evolved. At this stage of their evolution, however, **these mother goddesses were no more than matriarchs of specific clans** whose status was not equal but superior to that of the rest of the tribe. It was this magic woman or woman sorceress from whom the foetal notions of religion were derived.

The Allchins write: *"When man first started to cultivate crops and to herd his own domesticated animals, an increased interest in fertility and in magical means of promoting it appears to have become an almost universal aspect of culture. It may well be that this interest gave rise to some of the most important new concepts in the whole of religion, namely, belief in after life, in resurrection after death, and belief in the transmigration of souls and the cycle of rebirth. Throughout the length and breadth of India there are found today, at the folk level, rites and festivals which are intimately associated with the changing seasons, the sowing and harvesting of crops and the breeding of cattle and other livestock."* [114]

The burials and the elaborate list of funerary objects offered at these interments and the ritual that accompanies them, all speak of notions of rebirth, resurrection after death (the act of urn burial itself being a seeding) and the transmigration of the soul of the dead evidenced in the port holes of megaliths.

The same authors also make the following summing up: *"Our information concerning the religion of the peoples of the southern iron age is derived almost entirely from these graves. The many excavations show a baffling assortment of burial practices. In some instances simple inhumation was found; in others, the unburnt bones were collected after they had been excarnated and placed in an urn or in a stone cist; in others again only fragments of bone were deposited, and often fragments of many individuals are found in a single grave; cremated bones are encountered in rare cases. It may be remarked that in modern practice burial rites vary from caste to caste, and ethnographic reports from South India can show just as great a variety as the iron age graves. Through the whole series runs the idea, present in the earliest Tamil literature and in modern practice, of a dual ceremony. The initial funeral leading to the exposure, burial or cremation of the corpse, is followed by a second ceremony, perhaps taking place after many months, when the collected bones are*

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deposited in their final resting place. Another detail which links some of the graves with modern times is the use of lime in the infilling. The orientation of port-holes and entrances on the cist graves is frequently towards the south, although in some burial grounds it is toward another quarter, and the grounds themselves are most frequently found to be to the south of the settlements. This demands comparison with the later Indian tradition where south is the quarter of Yama. Among the grave goods, iron is almost universal, and the occasional iron spears and tridents suggest an association with Siva. The discovery in one grave of a trident with a wrought iron buffalo fixed to the shaft is likewise suggestive, for the buffalo is also associated with Yama; and the buffalo demon was slain by the goddess Durga, consort of Siva, with a trident.... The picture that we obtain from this evidence, slight as it is, is suggestive of some form of worship of Siva, but it is too early to say more." [115]

Before we discuss about tridents, Shiva worship, and thus enter the realm of religion proper: we would like to point out that this development, which only occurs at the later stage of the iron age, and even then only feebly should not, by its direct linkage to religion in the feudal period prevent us from drawing conclusions regarding the elaborateness and systematic nature of the burials that preceded or accompanied it. Most important of all generalisations is the fact that these rites had already been so well structured and formalised in the society of that period that it made the role of a sorceress and in later stages, of a priestess, almost inevitable. As Tokarev says: *"Shamanism...is a form of religion typical of the stage when the tribal system was decaying."* [116]

In discussing about the concept of *Mana* among Melanesians practicing primitive agriculture, Tokarev says: *"Agricultural magic is mainly imitative and contact oriented. For instance, when yams are planted the Melanesians dig rocks in the ground that are the shape of yams. The rocks are believed to have some special power (**Mana**), and are supposed to give the land magical powers, thus affecting the crop....*

***Mana** has an impersonal supernatural power that the Melanesians distinguish from natural power....*

The power is diverse in terms of its orientation and significance, and it can be harmful or useful....

From a materialist point of view, belief in Mana does not come from belief in spirits or the abstract notion of an impersonal power, but from specific social conditions. The fact that there are different strata within a community, people who are in one way or other privileged--chiefs, sorcerers, members of secret societies, excellent craftsmen, etc.--fosters the vague notion that these special people in the community possess a special power." [117]

Thus the matriarchs of Karnataka, during its period of tribal oligarchy, surely had the privileged status that we have seen among the sorcerers of the Melanesians, and thus in their personages they embodied magical powers. **The ritualisation in magic of fertility and death rites only led to the attribution of magical powers to the sorceress.** Thus it was on these foundations that the origin of religion later came to rest.

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The evidence of the *trishula* in the later phases of the iron age only draws importance to the commencement of Shiva worship, often in the form of a phallus. The female principle was being supplanted by the male, and the sorceresses were being replaced by the priest who in his new role, more often than not, donned the attire or displayed the characteristics of the former shamaness. But this is a question which leads us to the beginnings of patriarchy in society and ushers us through the threshold of history.

vi) Matrilineal Clans

From Engels's classification we are led to consider that with the transition to pastoralism-primitive agriculture the pairing family had come into existence.[118]

He says that *"The pairing family arose on the border line between savagery and barbarism, mainly at the upper stage of savagery, and here and there only at the lower stage of barbarism, It is the form of family characteristic of barbarism, in the same way as group marriage is characteristic of savagery and monogamy of civilization."*[119]

The origin of the gens or *gana* represents the inauguration of the Punauluan family wherein brothers and sisters were excluded from mutual sexual relations.[120] *"The gens"* says Engels *"was the foundation of the social order of most, if not all barbarian peoples of the world...."*[121]

Engels further says that once the *"proscription of sexual intercourse between all brothers and sisters, including even the most remote collateral relations on the mother's side, becomes established, the above group is transformed into a gens--that is, constitutes itself as a rigidly limited circle of blood relatives in the female line, who are not allowed to marry one another; from now on it increasingly consolidates itself by other common institutions of a social and religious character, and differentiates from the other gentes of the same tribe."*[122]

Thus matrilineal descent and as a result of it the formation of the gens or clans was in existence, we may presume, at the stage of the upper palaeolithic itself.

The commencement of pastoralism-primitive agriculture must have seen the advent of the pairing family. *"At this stage one man lives with one woman, yet in such manner that polygamy and occasional infidelity remain men's privileges, even though the former is seldom practised for economic reasons; at the same time the strictest fidelity is demanded of the woman during the period of cohabitation, adultery on her part being cruelly punished. The marriage tie can however be easily dissolved by either side, and the children belong solely to the mother as previously."*[123]

Further, Engels says: *"The communistic household, in which most of the women or even all the women belong to one and the same gens, while the men come from various other gentes is the material foundation of that predominancy of women which generally obtained in primitive times...."*[124]

The emergence of the pairing family is reflected in the commencement of house building for the first time in Karnataka's prehistory. The descent of man from caves and rock shelters and his shift to pastoralism-primitive agriculture marks the end of the punauluan family and the commencement of the pairing family. The larger structure

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of the dwellings, with a separate hearth for each one of them as seen in the iron age settlements marks the progress of the pairing family on a more stable basis.

We are also told that in the early phase of the chalcolithic period when the phenomena of ashmounds was witnessed, each cattlepen had a stock of from 600 to 1,000 cattle. This enormity in the size of the stock only signifies that the matrilineal clan structure was obviously at its basis, since, without the active involvement of an entire clan or *kula* such large herds could not have been managed.

Various studies by anthropologists give us a glimpse of the structure of gens or clans or kulas of the time. The exogamic kula identified by totems or *bali* were present within each endogamous tribe (or caste).

Syed Hassan's ethnographic studies from the Hyderabad Karnatak region speak of the Bedas being divided into 101 exogamous totemic clans.[125] Edgar Thurston and K Rangachari report of 13 balis among the Bunts of Dakshina Kannada,[126] 66 among the Kurubas,[127] 23 among the Madigas,[128] 12 among the Holeyas[129] and 50 among the Bakudas of Dakshina Kannada.[130]

The exogamic balis among the Holeyas are:

"Ane	=	*elephant*
Male	=	*garland*
Nerali	=	***Eugenia jumbolana***
Hutha	=	*ant hill*
Halu	=	*milk*
Kavane	=	*sling*
Hasubu	=	*pack sack*
Mallige	=	*jasmine*
Tene	=	***Setaria italica***
Chatri	=	*umbrella*
Mola	=	*hare*
Jenu	=	*honey."* [131]

It is evident that these balis kept dividing once after they were formed leading to the progressive addition of new balis into the tribe. From the exogamous balis of the Holeyas it maybe said that all of them, by the objects they signify, can easily be traced to the mode of hunting-food gathering. Again, most Madiga and Bunt balis refer to a similar culture-world. This only confirms Engels' periodisation for the start of the punauluan family.

All castes of Karnataka have reported their balis as being patrilineal in descent. But this in no way disputes the matrilineal origin of the bali since they have been recorded after the conversion of tribes into castes, and under the conditions of a patriarchal feudal order.

Yet, all the non-Brahmana castes of Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada districts of Karnataka, just as those of Kerala, recorded balis under matrilineal descent, called in Kannada as the *aliyakattu.* This special feature of society of the Konkan coast which despite being feudal and patriarchic but responding to descent along the mother's line, is, as Kosambi observes, **due to the late transition to feudalism in the region** and the persistence of a pre-feudal trait well into the feudal period.

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But despite the breaking up of the pairing family based on exogamous bali kulas within endogamous tribes of the period of pastoralism-primitive agriculture, and the creation of the patriarchal monogamous family, remnants of the ancient pairing family could be seen among a few oppressed castes of Karnataka.

Hassan writes that among the Bedas for instance, a *"widow is allowed to marry again, but not the brother of her deceased husband. She may however remarry the husband of her elder sister."* [132]

In this instance we get a glimpse into a fragment of the prehistoric past. While under normal conditions (of patriarchy and thus monogamy) the woman is married into the bali clan of her husband and thereby her's, she may, in case the condition of normality is upset by death of her husband, revert back to her original clan rejecting marriage with her husband's brother but accepting that of her sister's. There is, in this instance, in the form of a relic, a shred from the past, which is powerfully circumscribed by the parenthesis of patriarchy.

vii) From Protodravidian to Kannada

VP Alexeev says: *"I have distinguished three stages in the chronological dynamic of speech and language: (a) that of* ***Pithecanthropus****--words as designations of objects, passing only in separate cases into word-sentences, and dialogic speech; (b) that of Neanderthal man--modern or close to modern articulation, mastery of very simple grammar and syntax, development of monologic speech; (c) that of modern man--full mastery of modern articulation, further development of the structural categories of language, and a still on-going extension of vocabulary."* [133]

From Alexeev's scheme it is clear that by the time of the first evidence of human habitation in Karnataka, that is, of modern man, language had already developed.

But we can make only hazy conjectures about the languages that the palaeolithic and neolithic people spoke. Such an estimate would obviously have to rely on the nature of migratory movement, which, in the absence of any skeletal finds, itself remains speculative at present. We would like to however, rely on Stalin's categorisation in the development of language. At the stage of hunting-food gathering in Karnataka, there must have been not one but several languages on a clan basis or these having been replaced by a language for each different tribe.[134] It is however with the commencement of the neolithic period that we can make surer proposals on the question of language.

In India, the oldest phase of the neolithic period may be traced to the eighth millennium BC in the western regions of the Indus valley. From that period onward there is an unbroken sequence of development. The chalcolithic age commences about 5000 BC and lasts till 3600 BC. The early Harappan stage is fixed at between 3600 BC and 2600 BC and the mature Harappan at 2550 BC to 1800 BC. Thus it was from 2500 BC to 1800 BC that Indus civilisation flourished and it collapsed into regional cultures in the late Harappan stage starting from 1800 BC onwards.[135]

Based on the unbroken sequence starting from the neolithic period onwards well into the period of the mature Harappan, the existence in Baluchistan and adjoining areas in Iran and Afghanistan of the Northern Dravidian language--Brahui, and the absence of any reference to or archaeological remains of the horse which was intro-

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duced to India by the Aryans who started arriving from 1900 BC onwards, Asko Parpola concludes that **the Harappan was a non-Aryan civilisation whose people spoke a Dravidian tongue.**

Thus it appears that the development of a Dravidian language in the Indus valley commenced from around 7000 BC, and its script came into existence from around 2500 BC. The emergence of a Protodravidian language itself, we presume was the result of the fusion of different tribal languages.

The inauguration of the pastoral-primitive agricultural stage in south India by 2500 BC was obviously coincidental with the movement of Indus people at the stage of neolithism into the peninsular region. This influence could have resulted in the development of a southern neolithic phase of pastoralism-primitive agriculture. The onward movement of the Protodravidian language further south into Tamil Nadu and from then onwards the relatively higher insulation of Tamil Nadu to migratory physical and cultural influences from the north led to the preservation of Protodravidian to the greatest degree in the Tamil language among the southern branch of the Dravidian family of languages.

The contact of the Protodravidian language with the megalithic hunter-gatherers of the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab area of Karnataka must have led to the branched development of this Southern Dravidian variety in Karnataka. While it took at least 5,000 years for Protodravidian to evolve its script in the Harappan complex, the Tamil language which came to be written in 200 BC took 2,300 years, the Kannada language became literate in 430 AD taking nearly 3,000 years of development, Telugu which was first written in the seventh century AD took 3,500 years of development and Malayalam which assumed the written form in the twelfth century AD took 4,000 years to evolve.[136]

While it took 3,000 years of development before Kannada assumed a written form after its branching from Protodravidian it could surely have developed as a spoken language with an independent identity much earlier. Thus the period from the commencement of the neolithic or in other words, the stage of pastoralism-primitive agriculture, it may be fairly stated, was also the formative period of the origin of the Kannada language.

Kushalappa Gowda says: *"As a convenient explanatory formula, scholars reconstruct a hypothetical common parent for all the present Dravidian languages and call it Proto-dravidian. The various members of the Dravidian family are further subgrouped on the basis of certain linguistic features they exhibit. Thus, the Proto-Dravidian divides itself into three main branches, viz., (i) South, (ii) Central, and (iii) North Dravidian. The following are the list of the members of the Dravidian family:*

i) South Dravidian: 1. Tamil. 2. Malayalam. 3. Kota. 4. Kola. 5. Toda. 6. Kannada. 7. Tulu

ii) Central Dravidian: 8. Telugu. 9. Gondi. 10. Konda. 11. Peugo. 12. Manda. 13. Kui. 14. Kuwi. 15. Kolami. 16. Naiki. 17. Parji and 18. Gadbha.

iii) North Dravidian: 19. Kurukh. 20. Malto. 21. Brahui.

...Tulu is the first to branch off from the common group of South dravidian. Formerly it was believed that Tulu exhibited relationship with the Central Dravidian

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languages like Telugu rather than with South Dravidian and scholars were hesitant to group it under the latter. Next is Kannada to break off from proto-Tamil-Kannada stage and so on, the hierarchical splitting moves from right to left in each family in the above list." [137]

Let us see what Parpola has to say on this question: *"...a reconstruction of the proto-dravidian mother language is...to a large extent possible, especially as Tamil, protected against foreign influence by other Dravidian languages, has been well preserved and possesses a rich literary tradition which is over 2000 years old. Father Heras, indeed, attempted reconstruction of proto-Dravidian (1953) which must be recognised though he was not quite successful in putting his theory into practice....*

The Dravidian solution [to the Indus script] is undoubtedly the most likely one suggested by historical linguists, although eminent linguists do not want to exclude other possibilities, including a total disappearance of the Harappan language. (Emenean, 1954; Burrow 1969)

It is now widely accepted that already the Rgvedic hymns contain loan words and even phonological and syntactic features which are borrowed from a dravidian language spoken in the Punjab and the Madhyadesa in the second millennium BC...these Dravidian speakers have gradually started speaking Indo-Aryan and abandoned their original language, but in the process their mother tongue affected the way in which they spoke the new language.

...I have tried to demonstrate that the long held views of an one-to-one connection between the advent of a megalithic culture and the advent of the Dravidian speakers to South India are untenable, and that a systematic integration of the whole sub-continental evidence gives further support of the Dravidian identity of the Indus language." [138]

Thus Parpola is looking towards an earlier date than the iron age for the advent of dravidian speakers to South India.

This is how Bridget and Raymond Allchin deal with the question: *"It has been suggested that the place names of Maharashtra show a substratum of Dravidian elements, and these we may expect to relate to an earlier culture phase.... We may therefore postulate that the original population of agricultural settlers was Dravidian speaking, and that the changes associated with the Jorwe period coincided with the arrival in the area of immigrants from the north, speaking an Indo-Aryan language. This language must have been the ancestor of modern Marathi.*

What is striking about the culture of the earliest settlements of the southern Deccan is their apparently independent ancestry. There is an extra-ordinary continuity linking even the earliest settlements with the whole subsequent pattern of life. It is still not possible to decide whether this culture arose in response to some external stimulus, and if so from what direction it came. The indications are that there was a strongly indigenous flavour from the start.... The conservatism of material culture continues to exert itself over long periods....

It has been claimed, though on not very solid grounds, that the earliest speakers of these languages [Dravidian] brought with them into peninsular India both iron

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and the custom of making megalithic graves. In the light of archaeological evidence this appears to be extremely improbable. We know that for at least a millennium prior to the arrival of iron there were established settlements in Karnataka, and probably also in other parts of the peninsula, and these setlements show evidence of a remarkable continuity of culture. Many modern culture traits appear to derive from them, and a substantial part of the population shows physical affinities to the Neolithic people. In the light of all this it is difficult to believe that the Dravidian languages do not owe their origin to the same people who produced the Neolithic cultures there.

There need not be any doubt that the several regional cultures which developed along the southern corridor are all reasonably closely related, that they had throughout a degree of interaction and probably originally a common language family, Dravidian...it cannot be overemphasised that in Karnataka, Maharashtra and the Southern Nuclear Region the settlements of the third-second millennia appear to be ancestral to those which we encounter from the beginnings of history onwards." [139]

The Dravidian family of languages therefore may be called the language of pastoralists-primitive agriculturists. Its various branches have developed into independent languages on a neolithic pastoral-primitive agricultural base. **No language of the Dravidian family rests on a hunting-food gathering social foundation.** The change in the mode of production also at the same time witnessed a transformation in the languages that the upper palaeolithic-mesolithic people of Karnataka spoke. **The formative period of Kannada, we may conclude, belonged to the neolithic-chalcolithic periods and by the start of the iron age, surely Kannada must have branched off completely from the Southern Dravidian subfamily and come of its own.** In this development of primitive Kannada the various tribal mesolithic languages were gradually assimilated by the initial Protodravidian; and it is on the one hand as a result of this branching off from Protodravidian and the amalgamation of the various tribal languages into one that Kannada could emerge. Kannada, since the time of its primitive existence in the iron age had already become a language understood not by one tribe or a few but by several, **thereby marking the beginnings of the Kannada nationality.**[140]

The drawing of the southern Mauryan boundary by 237 BC short of Tamil Nadu paved the way for the independent articulation of the Tamil language though only by relying on the borrowed Brahmi script of the Mauryans. Without the Mauryan (322-237 BC) and Satavahana (240 BC-250 AD) conquest, it may be fairly stated, that Kannada could well have witnessed much earlier written evolution and thus in a way articulated--as much the written word as the spoken--the transformation of Karnataka to civilisation.

viii) Formation of the Dravidian Race

Closely related with the development of language and culture is the movement of peoples, or in other words, race movements. While race movements are related to the development of language and culture, it would be wrong to equate the two. The two are related, yet they followed their own independent courses of development.

Among the best pictures we get of the racial make up of India is from the writings of SK Chatterjee, who in his approach digs deep, combines physical with

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cultural anthropology, and prehistoric archaeology with linguistics to develop a pretty comprehensive account. Basing on GS Guha's work, Chatterjee talks of six main races with nine subtypes for India:

1. The Negrito
2. The Proto-Australoid
3. The Mongoloid, consisting of:
   - i)Palaeo-Mongoloids of a) long-headed and b) broad-headed types
   - ii) Tibeto-Mongoloids
4. The Mediterranean, comprising:
   - i) Palaeo-Mediterranean
   - ii) Mediterranean, and
   - iii) the so-called Oriental type
5. The Western Brachycephals [short-headed] consisting of:
   - i) The Alpinoid
   - ii) The Dinaric and
   - iii) The Armenoid
6. The Nordic.[141]

Of these six racial types it may be said that Karnataka was inhabited by the Negrito, the proto-Australoid and the Mediterranean in the period of prehistory; with traces of the Nordic at the threshold of the transformation to history.

Of these, *"the Negrito is all but extinct on the soil of India. A small group of Negritos is still surviving in the Andamans.... The Negritos appear to have been suppressed and absorbed by other races which followed them, particularly the Proto Australoids."*[142]

Traces of the Negrito race have been identified among a few marginalised tribal groups in South India. *"The original Negrito speech of India, whatever it was, seemingly survives in Andamanese, which as a language or dialect group stands isolated. Owing to their very primitive state, the Negritos did not appear to have contributed anything of importance to the civilisation of India."*[143] Even those tribal groups with traces of Negrito features in South India do not retain any cognisable elements of their original speech.

"The Proto-Australoids appear to have come from the West, and have become characterized in India. They survive in a good many aboriginal peoples of present-day India, although more or less mingled with other peoples. A branch of the Proto-Australoids passed on to Australia in very ancient times, and the 'Austronesian' peoples (Indonesians, Melanesians and Polynesians) have a good deal of the Proto-Australoid element in them."[144]

The Protoaustraloid racial type displays a small stature, dark skin approaching black, wavy or curly black hair, long head, broad flat nose and fleshy protruding lips.

While Chatterjee feels that the Protoaustraloid peoples were responsible for the introduction of primitive agriculture in India, analysis of skeletal remains from Tekkalakota, T Narasipura, Piklihal and Brahmagiri from the neolithic phase onwards

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itself only reveal that the strict Protoaustraloid features had already been compromised and deeply influenced by the third racial type, the Mediterranean.[145]

The Mediterranean type are a medium to tall people, with a complexion ranging from dark to light olive brown, a long head and face, a narrow and relatively pronounced nose, black hair, eyes ranging from black to brown and having a slender build.

This has been Sundara's opinion on the question: *"If the racial types known from a few sites are representative of the region, then, it may be said that by about 2000 BC in South India there was a thick population consisting chiefly of two racial types: the Mediterranean and the Autochthonous Proto-Australoid....*

...a Mediterranean Proto-Australoid complex is existing since more than 5000 years in the South, and these Dravidoid stock distributed in the Iranian plateau and even Central Asia in pre-Bronze times spread eastwards, according to anthropologists, into India and the South. This racial type has been recognised in considerable number, in Mohenjodaro...and...Harappa." [146]

Excavations from the Sindhu valley have revealed the existence of both Protoaustraloid and Mediterranean types. Further, common words have been found to exist between the West Asian Elamite and Sumerian languages of the Mediterranean region.

It is possible that the emergence of Protodravidian language in the Sindhu valley was a result of the combination of these Mediterranean languages over an Austric lingual substratum.

The Nordic Indo-Aryan speaking group entered India at the late Harappan phase, i.e., 1900 BC and seem to be *"characterised by features of the Eurasian Steppelands."* [147] The Kodavas are said to carry features of this Nordic type. Apart from them the Nordic feature has entered Karnataka in the final years of prehistory and there has been a greater scope for its entry in the historic period, but already in a compromised form and in relatively few numbers. Thus the Nordic element in the racial make up of South India in general and Karnataka in particular is quite subdued.

The location of this pattern of migratory movement in Karnataka starting around 40,000 years BP is fraught with certain gaps and challenges.

Firstly, the absence of any skeletal remains form the palaeolithic and mesolithic periods leaves us with merely speculative analysis of the Negroid element in the composition of the palaeolithic culture. Secondly we are not sure if the mesolithic period was not already mingled with a Protoaustraloid element.

Attempts to equate the Protoaustraloid element with the neolithic period of Karnataka as is done by SK Chatterjee is faced with contradictory evidence. The first skeletal remains of Karnataka coming as they do from the neolithic period, do not express Protoaustraloid features in an exclusive but rather in a combined state with the Mediterranean. Thus Malhotra who studied the remains form Tekkalakota concludes that the people belonged to a *"Mediterranean proto-Australoid complex."* [148]

Sundara sums up the evidence in the following manner: *"So far as the archaeological evidence is concerned, they suggest the appearance of a sudden full-fledged*

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neolithic economy in the South and that the Neolithic culture is not entirely locally evolved and developed. The Neolithic culture appears to be a product of the external stimulus and the influenced local Late stone Age people probably represented by the Dravidoid and the autochthonous proto-Australoid, respectively. In fact, in the recent explorations of the Krishna-Tungabhadra valleys by me, it was clearly evident that the neolithic culture had diffused along the Krishna valley, eastwards, from about 2200 BC.

It is noteworthy that the neolithic sites of the Southern Complex, more or less, cover the areas of the present Dravidian speaking peoples.

Thus linguistically, anthropologically and archaeologically, it is most probable that the neolithic people of South India were Dravidian speaking people who came from the North by land and probably by the West Coast as well as evidenced by the Neolithic sites in Nilaskal in the Western Ghat region." [149]

From this evidence we may conclude that the Protoaustraloid racial element was already existing in a combined form with the Negrito which had already been by and large absorbed on the eve of the neolithic. The Negrito element was perhaps subdued in this new racial complex due perhaps to its small number at the time of the Protoaustraloid arrival. With the commencement of the neolithic, the Mediterranean element intrudes into the already amalgamated Negrito-Protoaustraloid type. But the Mediterranean element itself, coming to the South after at least 3,000 years of combined existence with the Protoaustraloid in the Harappan valley was not in its pure form but already an amalgam. From 2500 BC, a fusion of the Negrito-Protoaustraloid with the Mediterranean-Protoaustraloid commences and yields by the time of the arrival of the Nordic element at the turn to the iron age to a new racial type called Dravidian or so as not to confuse it with the language that goes by the same name, Dravidoid. **Thus we may conclude that while the Harappan valley contributed to the creation of a Dravidian language identified by archaeolinguists as Protodravidian, peninsular India was the region for the emergence of a new race called Dravidian and identified by physical anthropologists as Dravidoid.**

The Dravidoid or Dravidian race thus came to possess the following features: long headed, short to medium stature, wavy to straight hair, black to brown eyes, flat to pointed nose and from dark to olive skin. In short the Dravidoid which later even absorbed some Nordic elements was the result of centuries of mutual intermixing, a literal hybrid.

12 skulls and an assortment of bones from Brahmagiri studied by Sarkar towards the end of the prehistoric period led him to conclude, in the words of BK Gururaja Rao, that: *"...there is enough evidence to indicate a case of hybridisation, slender and robust individuals being found in the same families...."* [150]

In fact skeletal and cranial remains of the people from the neolithic period onwards had already begun to reveal multiple features ranging from Protoaustraloid to Mediterranean from the same spots. In the iron age common burial pits revealed similar diversity of traits. Thus BK Gururaja Rao says: *"...by that time the hybridisation of the population was already far advanced and attempts at separating the individu-*

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alistic ethnic traits and identifying certain culture societies may not be very fruitful."[151]

Further, Kennedy has found *"a high degree of variability of cranial form...in megalithic populations."*[152]

Therefore it may be said that the Dravidian race, by relying on a Negroid-Protoaustraloid foundation and intermixing with the Mediterranean trait and much later with traces of the Nordic was evolved indigenously, the Protoaustraloid and Mediterranean aspects being the most important in the Dravidoid amalgam.

In Sundara's words: *"From the present meagre evidence from the two cultural levels: the Neolithic and the Megalithic, it appears provisionally that while the people of Australoid and Mediterranean which has been designated as 'Dravidoid' racial types were widespread in the Deccan and South India at least from the Neolithic times onwards, there was perhaps the intrusion of an alien people represented by brachycephals having affinity with the South-Indian stock known only from the megaliths, who probably introduced the practice of erecting tombs of huge rough stones in the lower Deccan."*[153]

Hence, we may say that **the Dravidoid type is characterised as a genre**, as a broad spectrum race possessing not one but a range of features for each part of the human physical structure. Within individual families each child carries a different combination of these features, quite often defying the traits of their parents. The Dravidoid indeed is a true hybrid. The development of an indigenous Dravidian race as distinct from the Dravidian family of languages is established by the fact that the north western Brahui speaking people resemble not the Dravidian race but their Central Asian cousins.

ix) Preconditions for the Rise of Classes and the State

The iron age is the ultimate period of prehistory. With the arrival of iron, ground is created for the transformation to civilisation says Engels.[154]

The knowledge of iron use introduces certain significant changes in the pastoral-primitive agricultural social formation which contributes to the cleavage of society into classes and the rise of the state.

The knowledge of iron, as we have seen, cut through the horizons of the chalcolithic society. All areas of Karnataka came to be settled with human habitation. In the words of Engels, this meant that there was a *"...clearance of forest and their transformation into arable and pasture land...which would have been impossible without the iron axe and the spade."*[155]

The spread of agriculture with the use of the iron hoe, the pick and the spade, and at the same time the construction of tanks for irrigating this land raised the material standards of society in general and gradually the wealth of a section in particular as seen in the inequalities in grave goods of particular megalithic burial sites. At Brahmagiri a coulter was also found, which only indicates that agriculture could slowly, before the plough as such had arrived, create a narrow surplus, thereby providing the material basis for social groups such as artisans, warriors, priests and traders to rise. In other words, there was a visible stratification that was taking place, a trend which countered

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the laws of existence of the clan based primitive communal society. After a clear analysis of the typology of iron tools between the northern and southern parts of India, it would not be wrong to conclude as Leshnik does of a trade in iron products; the southern enclave situated in the iron ore and gold yielding zone of Karnataka.[156]

In fact MK Dhavalikar in his monograph, goes to the extent of saying: *"The gold ornaments--spiralled like the latter day sarpakundalas--from Daimabad [in Maharashtra] and Tekkalakota are so identical that they were perhaps made by the same goldsmith."* [157]

On the basis of these three factors, exclusive to the iron age:

i) an increase in the material standards of society as a result of improved agriculture and the capacity to create a marginal surplus;

ii) the extensive production of iron implements; and

iii) the start of a widespread network of trade in iron, gold and related goods; one is led to rightly ponder by raising the following question: *"Did not this new iron-technology bring in changes in material culture with the introduction of more efficient modes of production and the consequent changes in social formation introducing stratification...?"* [158]

This growing stratification of the primitive communist order could not have and did not proceed smoothly. It was characterised by war. Let us look at a generalisation that Ardeas Skybreak makes in this regard before proceeding with war in iron age Karnataka.

She says: *"Less tied down by the young, the men would also range farther afield than the women and therefore have greater occasion to explore new areas and encounter other groups. Men therefore would likely have been the most common initiators of exchanges between groups; whether these exchanges would be friendly or not would depend on any number of circumstances. Any given encounter, of course, need not have been antagonistic, and friendly coexistence and cooperation must indeed have been commonplace. But there must have been many situations where, given the generally quite limited productive capacities and, on the other hand, the new found abilities to store and accumulate surpluses, discrepancies in material accumulation would have taken on more significance. Such* ***unevenness****, rather than some precise degree of accumulation, is likely to have been the most important factor spurring the early development of large-scale social divisions in human societies. While again, no given encounter need have been antagonistic, the point is that* ***now****, when antagonisms did flare up for whatever reasons (personal disagreements, or increasingly, conflicts rooted in uneven material accumulation or different concepts of "ownership") there* ***would*** *be something to plunder (and to defend!), and the material basis would exist for peoples actions to exacerbate even further the differences in material reserves between them--to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others."* [159]

In other words, war was clearly becoming a motivation for economic achievement. Excavations from the various sites confirm the growing preoccupation of iron age Karnataka with war.

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Bridget and Raymond Allchin's classification of the third phase of the chalcolithic age is based on evidence during this phase, i.e., 1700-1000 BC, of antennae swords and daggers of copper. These weapons were found at Maski and Kallur of Raichur, among others.[160]

It must be remembered that daggers and swords representative of the period of barbarism, unlike the bow and arrow representative of the period of savagery **were used not as hunting tools but as weapons of war.**

This tendency of making copper weapons that was noticed at the last phase of the chalcolithic period only picks up with accumulated vigour with the onset of the iron age. It would not be wrong to say that **the iron age was an epoch of war if the chalcolithic was an epoch of peace.**

The earliest site of the iron age, Komaranahalli, yielded swords and spear-heads.[161]

In all the megalithic sites that have been excavated in Karnataka one finds that **weapons predominate in variety and number over implements and other funerary articles** placed beside the dead. SB Deo's analysis of data from iron age sites tells us *"...that agricultural tools (hoes and sickles) are only 6 out of 44 [from Borgaon], whereas tools of offence like spikes, axes, trident and other objects account for nearly 77% of the total collection. At Maski, of the 32 objects of iron only one is a sickle blade and that too fragmentary. Excepting a bangle, a ferrule and a chisel, the rest are tools of offence."* [162]

Similarly a breakup of items excavated from Brahmagiri shows:

Tanged knives	13
Blades	6
Lances	2
Sword	1
Arrowheads	2
Spears	3
Chopper	1
Total	44

These 44 items constituted 63% of the total number excavated.[163]

This increasing tendency of society to be embroiled in warfare is revealed not only by the excessive number of weapons from sites, but is also described by the rock art of the time.

Of the rock paintings from Hire Bankal of Raichur district, there are scenes of men holding weapons as if proceeding for war.[164]

Marx says that piracy, trade and the plunder from colonies constituted important sources for the primitive accumulation of capital catalysing the transition to capitalism and heralding the rise of a bourgeois order. Similarly, **war waged by the iron using tribal oligarchs which laid claim to the meagre property of the vanquished tribes stimulated the rise of classes in prehistoric society and contributed to the formation of class society in Karnataka.**

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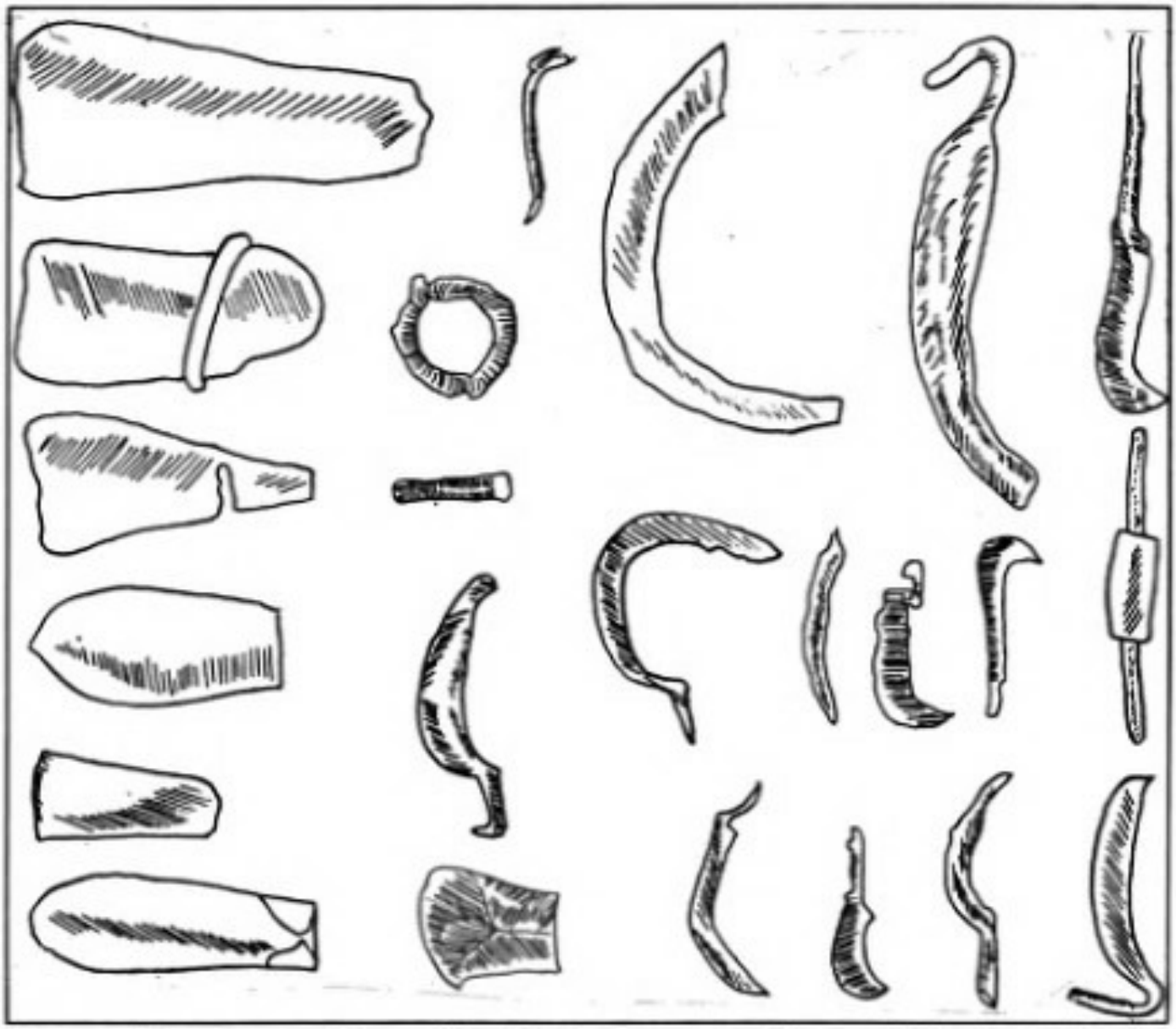

39. Domestic iron objects and iron agricultural implements excavated from megalithic sites in Karnataka.

In fact RS Sharma's detailed analysis of Aryan tribal institutions such as the Sabha and Samithi also demonstrates a parallel development taking place among the Indo-Aryans of the Western Ganga plains.[165] Talking of the importance of war, RS Sharma says: *"War was an important source of livelihood, and booty production was the only other important source of subsistence in addition to what they obtained from cattle rearing."*[166]

The only difference between South India of that time and the north is that while the Indo-Aryans have left us with their early Vedic verse, as a source to deconstruct their lives; the iron age warriors of the south have left behind thousands of megalithian sepulchres which chant a silent dirge to their war-like times.

This general direction towards militarisation and thus of tribal oligarchy obtained a territorial dimension with the growing use of horse from the iron age onwards.

First evidence of the horse in Karnataka comes merely 200 years after the late Harappan stage or in other words, with the collapse of Harappan civilisation from 1800 BC. *"According to Parpola the collapse was due to a combination of several factors,*

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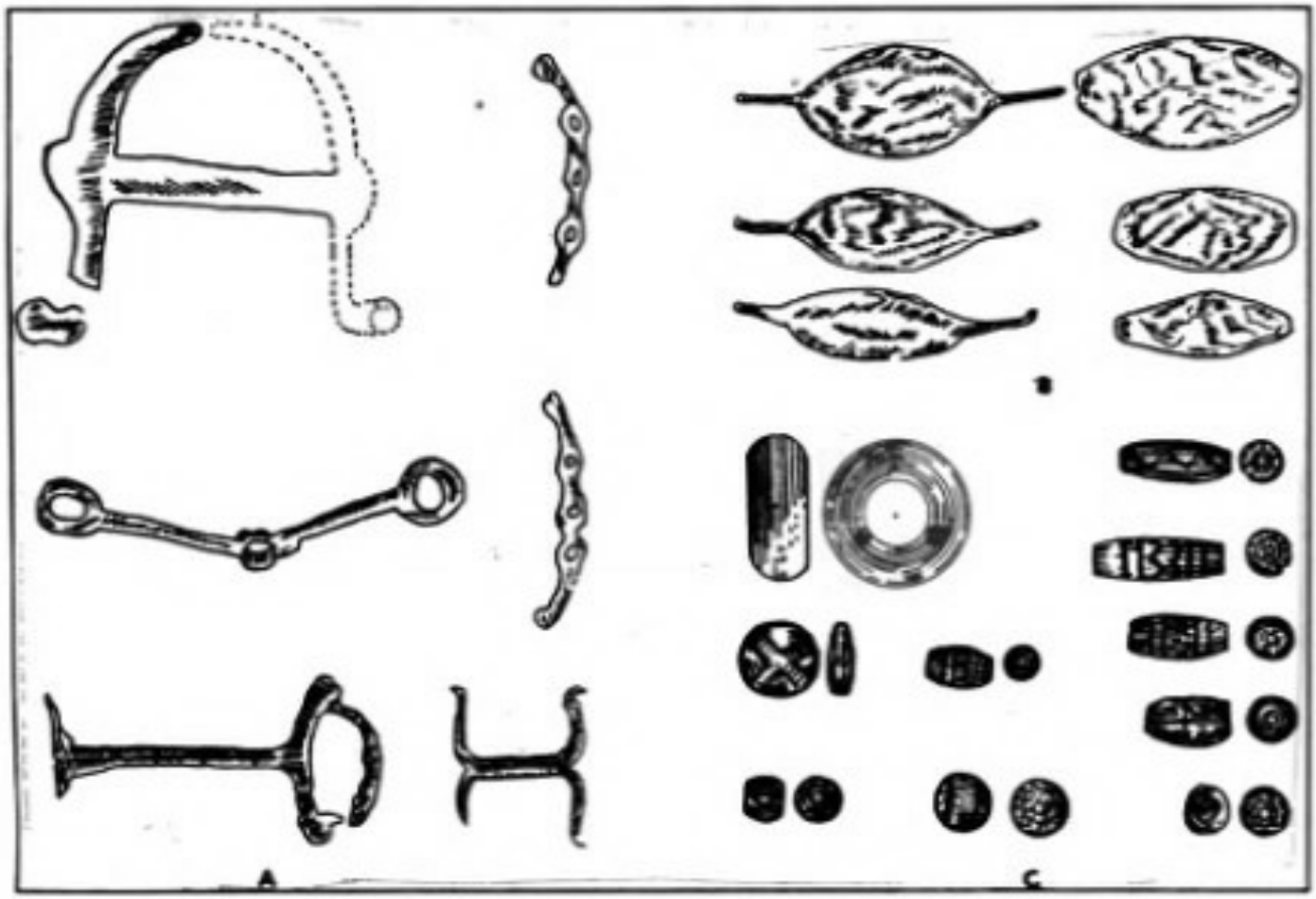

40. Objects excavated from megalithic sites in Karnataka. A. Iron objects: horseman's equipment. B. Gold diadems. C. Etched carnelian and terracotta beads.

such as the over-exploitation of the environment, drastic changes in river courses, series of floods, water logging and the increased salinity of irrigated lands. Finally weakened cities would have become easy victims of the raiders from Central Asia, whose arrival heralded a major cultural discontinuity in South Asia." [167]

We cannot rule out, in addition to these several factors, the role of internal rebellions in weakening the ruling classes of Harappa. It was only after the raiding Aryans crossed over the Sindhu valley that the horse had entered Indian frontiers for the first time in history.

It must be said, without the least hesitation, that the arrival of the horse opened up India. It was on its back that India's civilisation was carried and the Magadhan empire was built. Without the horse territorial conquest would have remained a dream.

Radiocarbon dates of horsebones and teeth tell us that by 1600 BC the horse had rode down to the southern tip of Karnataka, i.e., to Mysore district. Next, from the same district the horse was again traced to 1300 BC from another site.[168] From then on, the occurrence of the horse, coinciding with the period of megaliths and iron age becomes more and more frequent. Thus **the arrival of the horse to Karnataka coincides with the manufacture of the first new weapons of war** in the late chalcolithic phase itself, the copper dagger and antennae sword being examples.

Iron age rock paintings from Hirebankal area show us men on horseback charging with lances.[169] Another painting from Maski depicts horseriders with metal weapons.[170]

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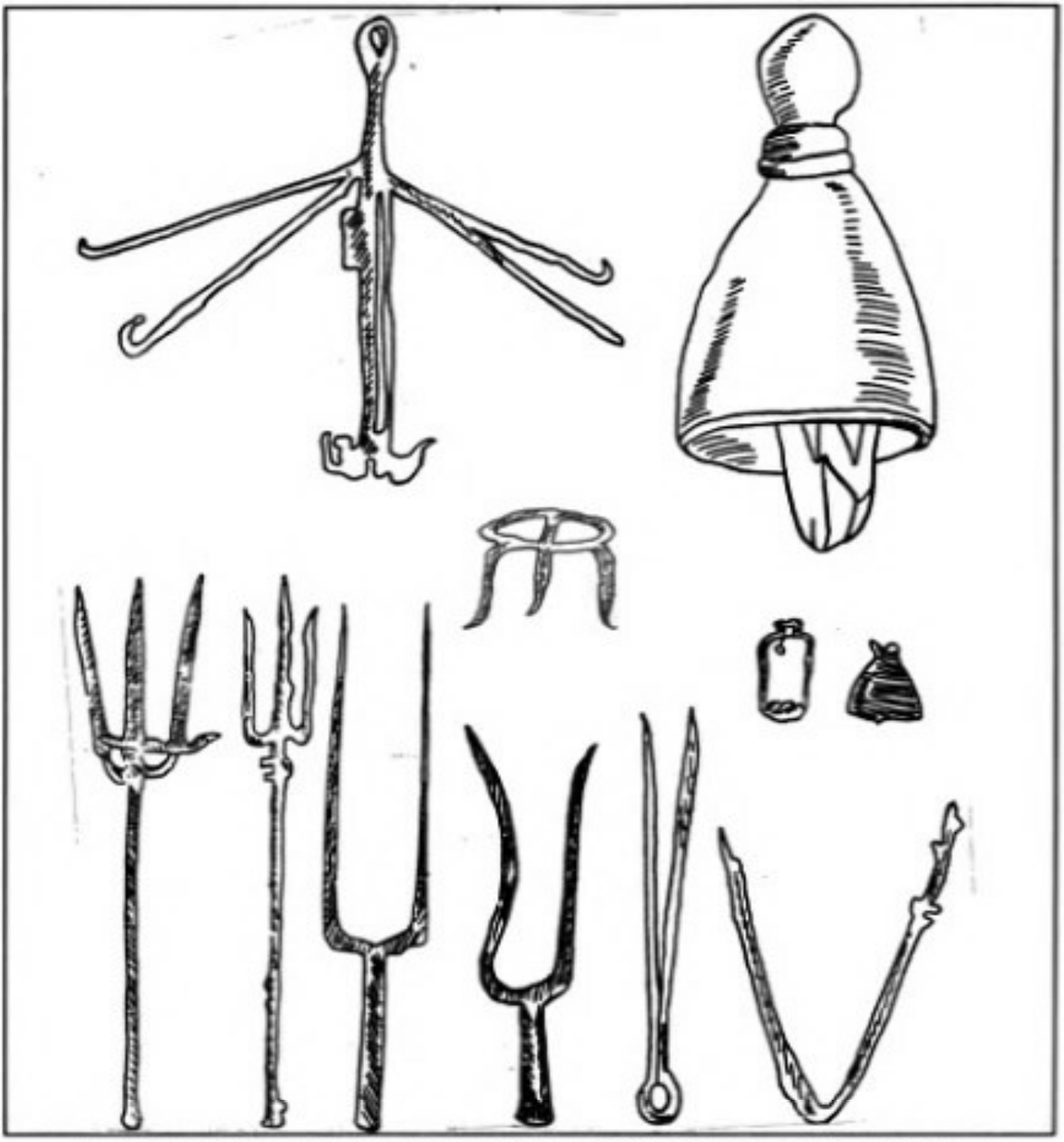

41. Iron objects of domestic use excavated from megalithic sites. Nos 4 and 5 are trishulas.

The increasing importance for war should obviously have created, towards the end of the iron age prehistoric period or by the third century BC, a new strata of military leaders and soldiers among the men of some of the dominant tribes that existed in Karnataka. It was ultimately on these three elements, iron weapons, war and horse that the state came to be founded by Satavahana times not only as an instrument for external conquest but also as an institution arising on the debris of primitive communism, pastoralism-primitive agriculture and tribal oligarchy and serving the rule of a class of exploiters.

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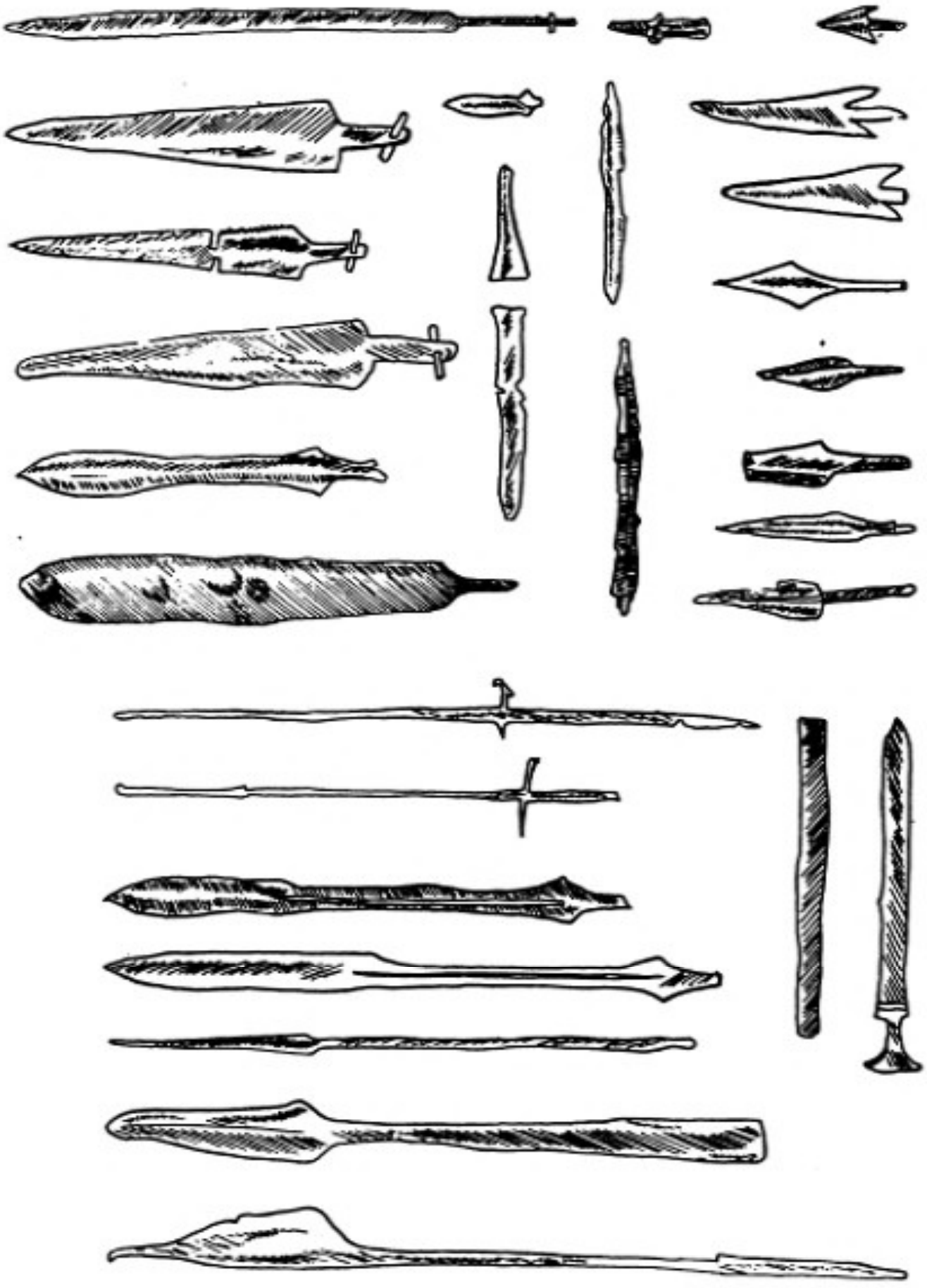

42. Iron weapons excavated from megalithic sites in Karnataka.

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43. Iron arrowheads and daggers from Komaranahalli, Chitradurga district.

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S Nagaraju's perceptive article analysing this transition from prehistory to history says: *"Some of the Megaliths which are datable to the pre-Mauryan period, yielding mostly iron weapons, are indicative of the existence of a class engaged in war or police functions. Anthropologists feel that war and police functions are the central activities of the state-machine. If so, is it possible that some type of political organisation--the tribal-state, or the early loosely-knit state had already begun in Karnataka in pre-Mauryan times?"* [171]

We would however like to clarify that pre-Satavahana Karnataka starting from 2500 BC onward based on pastoralism-primitive agriculture was particularly from the iron age phase starting 1200 BC, not yet a class divided society and thus did not yet possess a state. Yet this period, characterised as a tribal oligarchy and coming in the upper stage of barbarism already tended to display elements of the future society that it was to procreate such as stratification, the growing division between mental and manual labour, the rise of warrior ganapathis and patriarchy. The growing incidence of war by itself does not imply the existence of a state. The state can only be the result of the rise of a class of exploiters. Thus this period may be characterised as the period of tribal oligarchy. The society of this time through iron weapons, war and the horse based on an increasingly stratifying economy created the preconditions necessary for the rise of class society and its instrument of oppression, the state.

It was in this period of transition that patriarchal features arose. Patriarchy as a social institution not only represents the subjection of woman to oppression in its overt sense but in its covert and fuller sense therein, it is a means for the rise of a class of exploiters for the first time in society.

The rise in warfare had already stamped the iron age phase of pastoralism-primitive agriculture with all the features of a tribal oligarchy. The growing evidence of war created a counterpoint to the matriarch sorceress. A patriarch chieftain hailed for his military exploits and beginning to live by it emerged. In these wars between tribes (at different levels of social development) the iron users and horse riders proved to be victorious. With the progress of war it obviously became an economic activity and a source of wealth for the victorious tribes. But this new found wealth whether in the form of cattle and male and female slaves had to be divided. This new wealth became the property of the men and it was this new wealth of slaves by war which made wealth reproduce itself, that came to alter the privileged position of the chieftain of the tribe as an owner and keeper of slaves. Engels speaks of this process thus: *"But to whom did this new wealth belong? Originally undoubtedly to the gens. But private property in herds must have developed at a very early stage...on the threshold of authenticated history we find that everywhere the herds were already the separate property of the family chiefs, in exactly the same way as were the artistic products of barbarism, metal utensils, articles of luxury and finally human cattle--the slaves.*

For now slavery was also invented. The slave was useless to the barbarian of the lower stage.... The [captured] men were either killed or adopted as brothers by the tribe of the victors. The women were either taken in marriage or likewise just adopted along with their surviving children. Human labour power at this stage

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yielded no noticeable surplus as yet over the cost of its maintenance. With the introduction of cattle breeding, of the working up of metals, of weaving and finally, of field cultivation, this changed. Just as the once so easily obtainable wives had now acquired an exchange value and were bought, so it happened with labour power, especially after the herds had finally been converted into family possessions. The family did not increase as rapidly as the cattle. More people were required to tend them; the captives taken in war were useful for just this purpose and, furthermore, they could be bred like the cattle itself.

Such riches, once they had passed into the private possession of families and there rapidly multiplied, struck a powerful blow at a society founded on pairing marriage and mother-right gens. Pairing marriage had introduced a new element into the family. By the side of the natural mother it had placed the authenticated natural father.... According to the division of labour then prevailing in the family, the procuring of food and the implements necessary thereto, and therefore, also, the ownership of the latter, fell to the man; he took them with him in case of separation, just as the woman retained the household goods. ***Thus according to the custom of society at that time, the man was also the owner of the new sources of food stuffs--the cattle--and later, of the new instrument of labour--the slaves."***[172]

Therefore, as wealth increased, it, on the one hand, gave the man a more important status in the family than the woman, and, on the other hand, created a stimulus to utilise this strengthened position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favour of his children.[173]

Putting it in RS Sharma's words: *"Perpetual war and pastoralism brought the patriarchal element to the forefront and relegated women to a lower status."* [174]

Thus the rise of patriarchy and inherent in its institutionalisation, the change from matrilineage to patrilineage to serve the inheritance and growth of private property was already marked, we presume, in this period of tribal oligarchy. The origin of patriarchy in the iron age of Karnataka only strengthened the overthrowal of the primitive clan based communal pastoral-primitive agricultural system.

It was at a time when all the features for the making of class society were developing--stratification, and thus the development of class divisions; the state, and thus the power of the exploiters to exercise their exploitation and conquest; trade, and thus the quicker and more rapid fall of the natural economy of primitive communism and the emergence of classes; patriarchy, and thus the overthrow of mother right and the institutionalisation of private property through the monogamous family; territorial thrust or the formation of kingdoms through war and pillage; written language, and thus the means to administer a kingdom, manage a state pursue trade and create a philosophy for its justification; religious belief or the creation of a false consciousness, so that the ideological weapons for exploitation may be developed--that Karnataka came under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya. The period of nearly a century, starting from the rule of Chandragupta Maurya to that of his grandson Ashoka (325-232 BC) influenced the transformation of Karnataka to civilisation. Yet, **Magadhan rule, stopped short of undertaking the transformation of Karnataka society.** Karnataka was on

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its periphery and it was for iron ore and gold that the Mauryans came to Karnataka. Ashokan edicts decorated those centres that fell in the neighbourhood of the gold mines of Raichur. The Mauryans infused new elements hastening the transformation of Karnataka society and as a result of which, the development of several local institutions of class society came to receive a northern pigmentation. But as we said **all these hastened, but did not yet transform.** The transformation itself had to wait till the collapse of the Mauryan dynasty and the rise of the Satavahanas (240 BC-250 AD). **It was under the nearly 500 year rule of the Satavahanas that Karnataka underwent transformation into a class divided society and passed the threshold of history.** The choppers and hand axes, the blades and burins, the urns and megaliths, the sorceress and her magic--all became ashmounds of antiquity. Prehistory had ended. History had begun. Primitive communism had run out after a long innings to class division. The new society was cast by a new spell. Naked greed would hence onward become the moving spirit, the pursuit of wealth the grandest design. Slavery, bondage and wage labour would be yoked to the history of humankind.

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5. PROBING PREHISTORY

There is every possibility that south India may come up with further revealations of its prehistory, with the advance of a more rigorous and imaginative excavationary effort. These finds may push back the current 40,000 BP starting point in accounts of Karnataka history and bring it closer to the Adicahanallur finds of Tamil Nadu of 70,000 BP. The strength of such an hypothesis, in the absence of any real finds as yet, may be derived from the fact that the Indian land mass formed a bridge for the Protoaustraloid migration into South East Asia which finally ended course as the Australoids of Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Southern penetrations forming Indian Protoaustraloidal deviations from this north and central Indian highway may therefore be anticipated. Could this not also imply that the Negroids, forming the primeval inhabitants of India and who are generally known to have preceded the Protoaustraloids, left their own imprints; thereby predating the entire course of south Indian prehistory?

Yet, it is the discovery of real material that constitutes the practical starting point, all else serving as hypothesis in anticipation of such archaeological matter. Hence it is the palaeolithic period from 40,000 BP that an account of humankind in Karnataka is compelled to commence.

Measure it by any yardstick, the significance of such an account is stolen by the nuclear region of the south--the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab comprising about 10 districts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. This constitutes the prehistoric core of the south and it is from humankind's foothold here that there is a radiation across the peninsula. The ecological factors which created this stone age eden must always be emphasised, since, bereft of its conducive factors human society at its level of primitive existence could not have survived.

This stone age core demonstrates a resilience across several hundred millennia. There is a continuity of human habitation, a habitation which transforms from one level of material existence to another--from the palaeolithic into the mesolithic and neolithic; and then into the copper and iron ages; from hunting-food gathering to pastoralism-primitive agriculture. Towards the final centuries of prehistory this nuclear region came, it could be presumed, under Sindhu civilisational influences--either from its gold or for having provided residence later to the agricultural communities that migrated south after Sindhu's collapse as a civilisation from 1800 BC onwards.

The discovery and use of iron from as early as 1200 BC onwards which spells the significance of this core region in the development of tribal oligarchism, makes it parallel similar development among the Indo-Aryan tribes that were on an eastward course in the upper reaches of the Ganga valley. Thus while this nuclear zone matched the north in developing protoclass oligarchic features in the post-Harappan period, the transition to class society was delayed. If the north saw the rise of class society by the sixth century BC, Karnataka experienced this transition only in 250 BC--more than three centuries late. Not only was this transition to protofeudalism belated in Karnataka, but it was achieved by the mediation of a northern factor--the plough: society's first

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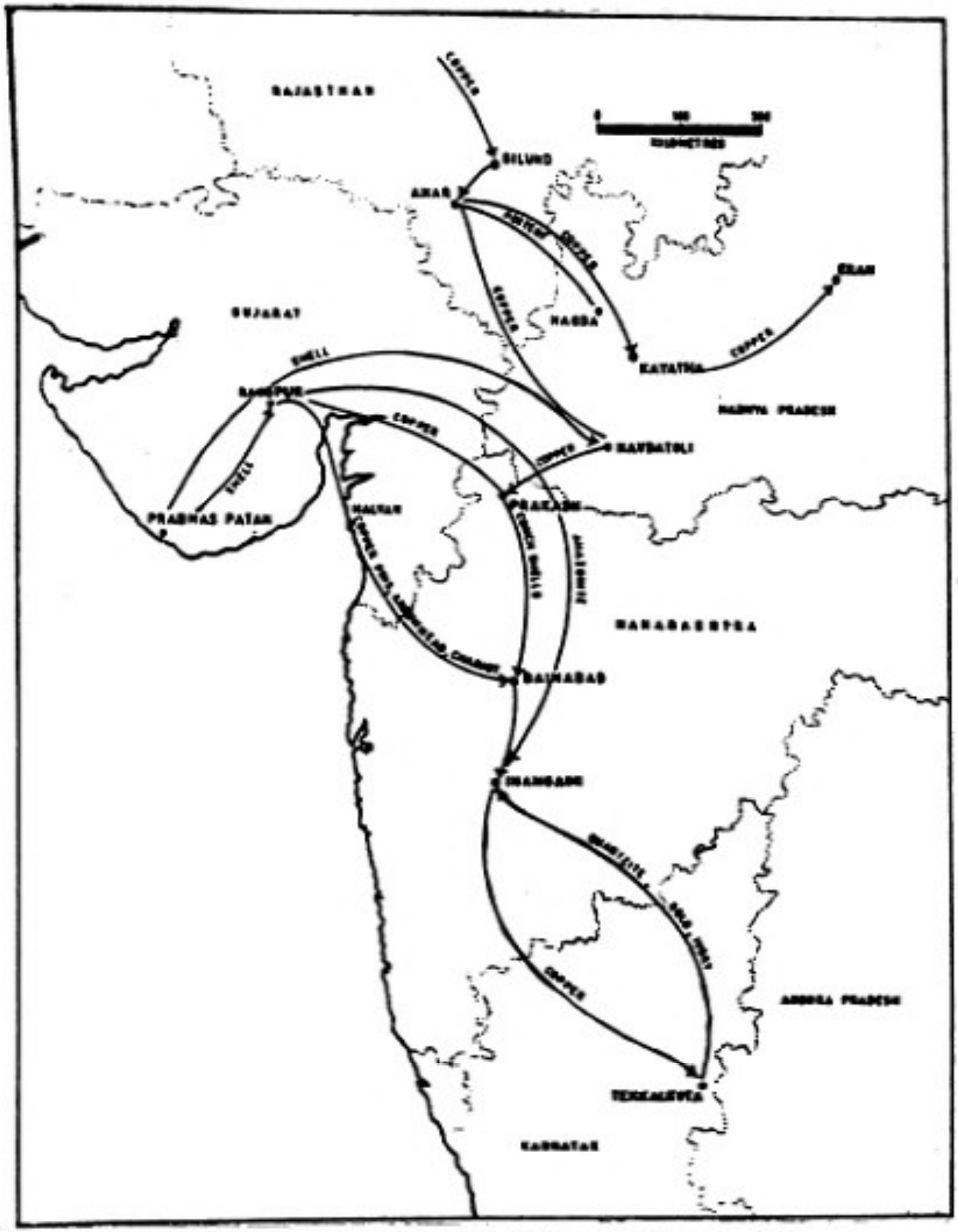

44. Exchange network in the chalcolithic period with western India.

sure means of surplus production; being brought rather than its being discovered here. The question which crops up therefore is: why did the southern nuclear zone lag behind? Tagged to it, one may further ask: what intrinsic factors delayed this transition? Why did a Karnataka which developed iron-based tribal oligarchy by 1200 itself, trail behind in social advancement over the central Ganga plain which experienced its tribal oligarchic phase much later than that of the former?

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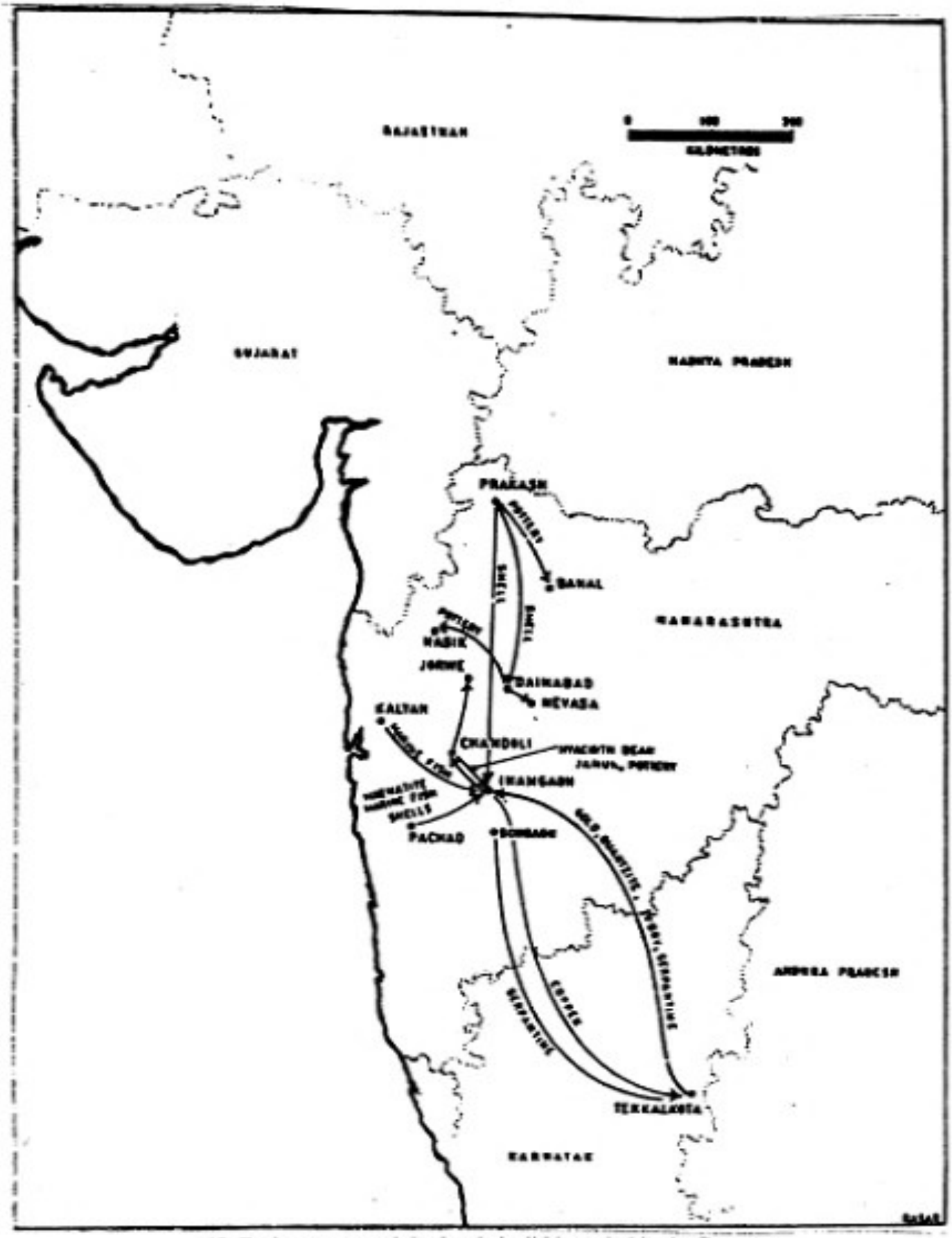

45. Exchange network in the chalcolithic period in the Deccan.

For a short answer to this many shaded question we may say: the motivation to transform was yet inadequate.

To make this short answer long we have to delve on the nature of the soil where agriculture was practised by Karnataka's iron-using folk. Black cotton soil,

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being fine and powdery when dry becomes a sticky dough when moist. With the passing of the monsoon the soil quickly looses its moisture and tends to crack up. These fissures run a few inches deep. This cracking tends to loosen and turn the top soil making artificial digging and furrowing with the hoe and pick quite unnecessary. Dhavalikar, speaking of the black cotton soil region of Maharashtra has made a valid observation in this regard: *"...it is doubtful if wooden ploughs would have been effective in ploughing the hard, compact black cotton soil in Maharashtra. The adage goes that the black cotton soil ploughs itself because it develops large wide fissures in summer; nature thus completes the job of the circulation of nitrogen. Even at present, the land where jowar is grown is ploughed only once in three years."* [175]

Therefore **it was this natural propensity of black soil to cultivate itself, that delayed the early use of the plough, making Karnataka's preplough iron age exceptionally prolonged and permitting the time for external mediation to effect Karnataka's transition to class rule.** This delayed transition is true of not just Karnataka but the entire black soil Deccan plateau to which Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh also belong. The Satavahana kingdom, it could therefore be said, was basically a black soil empire--introducing plough agriculture and class society to the Deccan plateau.

Despite the delay in this transition to civilisation, it must not be forgotten that this core region had an important role to play in the rise of the Satavahana empire. There still is some confusion on the background of the Satavahana kings. While some claim they are Telugus, Kosambi says they hailed from Bellary. Andhra or Karnataka, one thing is certain: they hailed from the same prehistoric nuclear region which was breaking up into classes under the oligarchic weight of iron.

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Chapter II

THE SHUDRA HOLDING SYSTEM

The Satavahanas (240 BC-250AD)

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1. NARROW HORIZON OF MAURYAN RULE

The Satavahana empire flourished with the collapse of the Mauryan empire following Ashoka (274-237 BC). There is a continuity which this new kingdom based in the Deccan had with the earlier Mauryan empire which administered its rule from Pataliputra in Bihar. The immediacy of Satavahana rule starting 240 BC which commenced without allowing for a gap with the Mauryan period only speaks of a continuity in terms of the nature of the ruling class, social relations, social institutions and the superstructure between the two dynasties. It is this aspect of continuity already established by the Mauryans that marks the period of Satavahanas and to which we must look into before discussing about the Satavahanas themselves.

After the collapse of Harappan civilisation from 1800 BC which was a class society that relied on the knowledge of copper and bronze, there was an eastward movement of the main body of the pastoral and by now *Indo-Aryan* and not *Aryan* tribes--since their intermingling with the local non-Aryan tribes had commenced--who were at an earlier stage of social development than the Harappans. By the time they reached the fertile plains of the Ganga and Jammuna in the eastern Uttar Pradesh-northern Bihar region in 600 BC, India was home to at least 16 known mahajanapadas or tribal oligarchies. The rise of these mahajanapadas already emphasised the developing class features in the non-Aryan society of that time. Among the most important of developments that took place in the central Ganga valley was the creation of the iron plough till then unknown to the Indian subcontinent. This was a new instrument of production that signalled the end to primitive agriculture. A highly productive and surplus yielding--over and above what the labour that used the plough required for its existence--agricultural phase was inaugurated. **It was on the basis of this new instrument of production that slavery assumed fullest meaning,** an exploiting class could live off an exploited class, society would see the cleavage between mental and manual labour, which was reflected in turn in the formation of the town and the country. The state was created and it gave birth, in its wake, to the era of the rule of kings. The first kingdoms were Khosala and Magadha. To serve the interests of the ruling classes--priest, warrior and trader--religion emerged.

Bimbisara (not to be confused with the Mauryan Bindusara) who ruled from 544-492 BC was among the first Magadhan kings. Gautama Buddha, born in 563 BC and Mahavira born in 540 BC, who created two of the three great religions of India, Buddhism and Jainism, were both contemporaries of Bimbisara. When Chandragupta Maurya of the Mauryan dynasty occupied the Magadhan throne of Pataliputra overthrowing the Nanda dynasty in 325 BC he vastly expanded his empire and as part of this expansion also brought most of Karnataka which fell in the Dakshinapatha under him. The Dakshinapatha was one of the several mahajanapadas and it contained vast deposits of gold, iron ore, copper and other precious stones. The Dakshinapatha was therefore an important source of minerals and it was for this that it came to be coveted as a piece of territory by the Mauryan empire.

So far, thirteen Ashokan (the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya) inscriptions have been found in Karnataka. Some of the find spots are Brahmagiri, Siddapura and

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46. Probable provincial groupings of the Mauryan empire with cities graded according to their size. The contours of a future Satavahana empire are already apparent.

Jatinga Rameshwara in Chitradurga district, Udegollam in Bellary and Nittur, Koppal and Maski in Raichur.

There has been a tendency among historians, on the basis of this inscriptional evidence, to identify Karnataka with Mauryan rule and presume that social transformation that had been introduced by the Mauryans in the central Ganga valley had, if not on an identical scale, also been initiated by them in Karnataka. But this is no more than one

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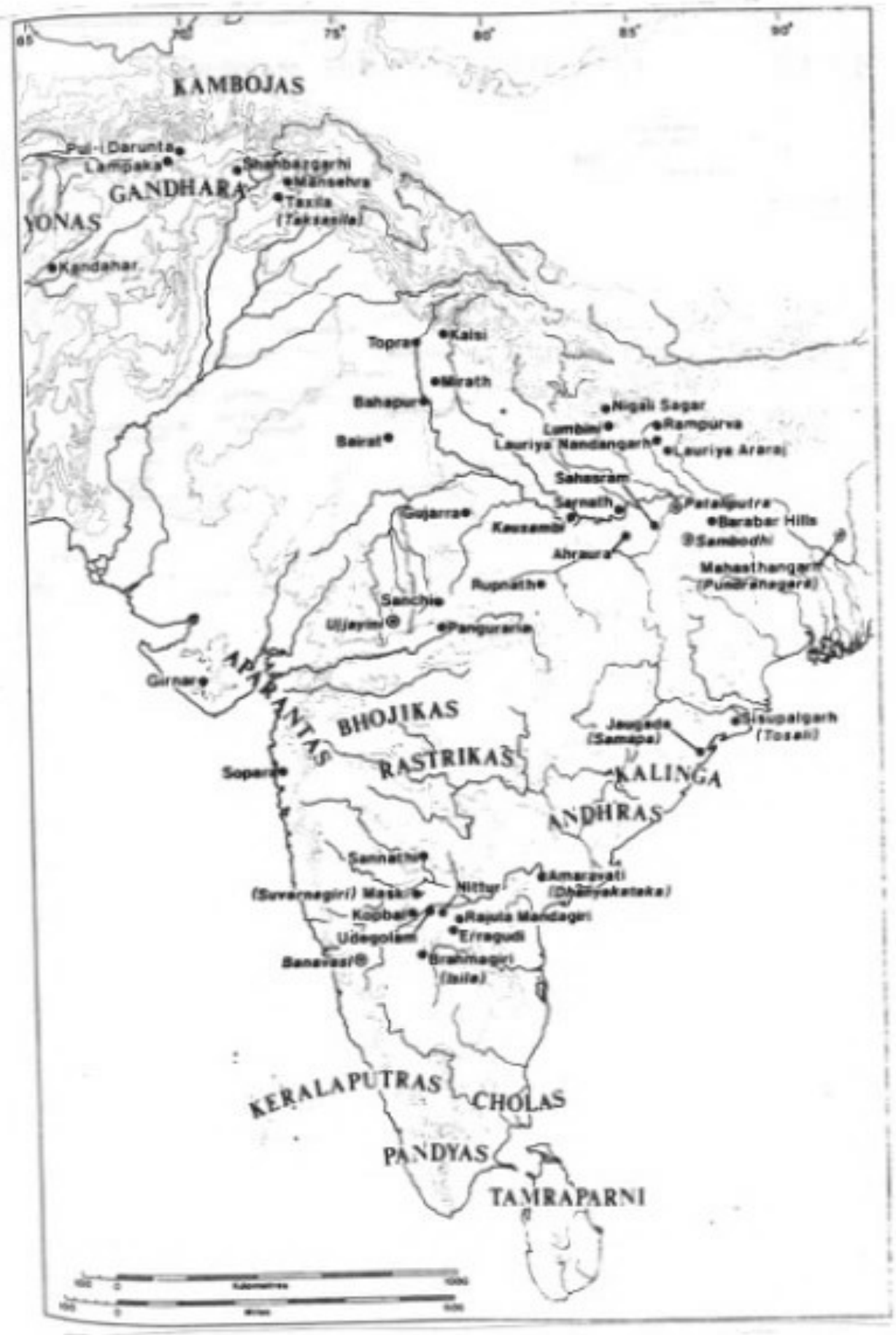

47. Findspots of Ashokan edicts, of place-names (in italics) and other tribal or regional names (in large type) occurring in Mauryan inscriptions.

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of the many popular historical myths that abound in Indian historiography. On the one hand this stems from a poor study of historical material and on the other from wrong notions of an Indian nationhood.

Mauryan rule contributed to but did not immediately cause the transformation of Karnataka society. The megalithic settlements were left untouched and undisturbed; the population continue dunder tribal oligarchy. The Mauryas were keen about Karnataka for its gold, iron and other precious stones. S Nagaraju says: *"The rich source of iron and technological know-how present here itself could be one of the causes for the rising Magadhan empire to set its eye on Southern India. Further, the concentration of Asokan inscriptions in a belt stretching from Koppal to Erragudi is again revealing: this also happens to be the auriferous geological belt, wherein gold mining was in vogue from much earlier times and this would also cover the rich diamond sources from the eastern part of this belt. These possibly explain two things: the reason for the rising Magadha to endeavour to include this territory within its empire, and also, possibly why it did not thrust beyond to Tamil Nadu. This is quite in accordance with the perception of Kautilya about the importance of the Dakshinapatha as a rich source of mineral wealth."*[1]

It is interesting to note that the Ashokan inscription at Maski was found on top of a gold field itself; and Erragudi was just 30 kms off Vajra Karur, a famous diamond mine which had signs of ancient workings.[2]

Attempts by archaeologists to trace the impact of these Ashokan centres where inscriptions were found on the settlements in their immediate neighbourhood have not yielded any change in the patterns of pots, tools, or other artefacts. There is no change to the old lines of continuity and no signs of a new intrusion; and while as Himanshu Prabha Ray says that *"Mauryan inscriptions and settlements show a close correspondence with Megalithic sites and this proximity itself would suggest some form of contact...."*, the nature of impact from such contact is not in any way borne out.[3]

It is as yet impossible to consider Brahmagiri or Maski as urban settlements, they continued to remain, even after the Ashokan inscriptions, the same old megalithic settlements that they formerly were.

Further, excvations reveal that the plough was still unknown to Karnataka even during the Ashokan period.

While it is unclear as to the nature of relationship that the Ashokan state (or was it traders) had with the gold and iron producers, and, furthermore, if any form of a class division had emerged among the producers of these metals, or if the state itself worked these mines with the help of slave labour as it normally did in its core region, we presume that any such measure must have needed a state apparatus and accompanying it, the creation of urban centres. But in the absence of such evidence, it is quite probable that gold production, just as production in agriculture, continued as under pre-Mauryan conditions. Even if, contrary to our expectations, slave labour was indeed used to extract minerals, its impact could have been but meagre on the mode of life of the prehistoric people living in the region of these mines. Furthermore, the techniques that the Mauryans used were not new.

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RS Sharma confirms this point elsewhere again when he says: *"Although the Mauryan empire extended practically over the whole of India except the far south and although Kautilya shows a wide geographical horizon, possibly the provisions laid down in the* ***Arthasastra*** *reflect conditions obtaining in Northern India. In so far as the* ***Arthasastra*** *measures were meant to serve the needs of the empire by overriding parochial and sectarian conditions, they may have been applied to the whole of it; but the detailed instructions regarding the control of economic activities or the policy of bringing virgin soil under the plough may have been limited to the areas near the heart of the empire."*[4]

Mauryan rule, then, did not do much to alter the mode of pastoralism-primitive agriculture. It channelised the mineral wealth that was perhaps already being traded from the chalcolithic period onwards and to achieve this it secured the routes which conducted such a trade. The Karnataka that came under the Dakshinapatha was, as the name suggests, no more than a path to the gold and iron rich *dakshina*. RS Sharma therefore rightly states that: *"The effective jurisdiction of the Maurya state may have been confined to the middle Ganga plains."*[5]

It was therefore surely neither a people nor a territory that the century of Mauryan rule came to dominate over. In Karnataka, it was a narrow horizon over which the Mauryan sun shone.

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2. CLASS SOCIETY CREATED UNDER THE SATAVAHANAS

But the same cannot be said of the Satavahanas. Their rule transformed the face of Karnataka. Before looking into the features of this transformation and the nature of the new social order that the Satavahanas introduced, let us consider a point or two about their origins and the state they had created.

A. The State

The Satavahanas were Deccan kings unlike the Mauryans who were from the north. There is still a debate about their precise origins. DD Kosambi is of the opinion that they could have hailed from Bellary. This is probable if we consider the fact that Bellary was at the centre of the prehistoric southern nuclear core. Otherwise they are also called as the kings of Andhradesha. The region which the Satavahanas ruled over included the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Gujarat. Here again there is a concentration of Satavahana settlements in the area of Vidarbha in Maharashtra, Telengana in Andhra Pradesh and Bombay and Hyderabad Karnataka. The Vidarbha region has shown the maximum number of megalithic sites in Maharashtra unlike its dispersed nature in Karnataka. The volume of copper and iron objects used for both war and agriculture, the evidence of a more extensive agriculture when compared to Karnataka and the rich evidence of horse bones and horseman's trappings from burials in Vidarbha made it, more than the Tungabhadra-Krishna doab of Karnataka, as a region suitable for the earlier development of class society.[6] Further, from excavations in Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Mahabubnagar of the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh we learn that Satavahana settlements were dispersed here in the highest concentration within the empire itself.[7]

Discussing a similar question from Africa, Basil Davidson says: *"If one probes a little further into this intriguing problem as to why states emerged in this or that part of Africa, one is constantly faced with the need to isolate and explain those crucial changes which call for a shift from older and much looser forms of community life to new and more structured forms. It was not the appearnce of 'divine kings', afterall, that led to the formation of states, but the formation of states that led to the appearance of such kings. Expressing this another way, the need for more centrally organised forms of rule arose not merely or mainly from the habits of dominant cultures that moved southward across Africa. Far more important in fixing the change to new forms of organization, were local changes in social and economic need. Behind the 'divine king', in short, lay the pressures of Iron Age transformation."*[8]

The Satavahanas were a non-Aryan people with matrilineal descent as evidenced in the names of its kings such as Gautamiputra Shatakarani. RS Sharma says: *"...the Satavahanas imposed themselves on fairly settled areas studded with lesser princes and chieftains."*[9]

The Satavahanas who rose to power in an area which was experiencing the last stages of tribal oligarchy relied on the war bred layer of tribal chieftains and elevated them

to positions of power within the state. It was on this social base that the state **relied upon and on this class that the power of the empire rested.** Among the chieftains from Karnataka who were raised by this to the status of local governors were the Chutukula Shatakaranis and the Maharathis. RS Sharma tells us, based on evidence from Amravathi in Andhra Pradesh that assimilation of such local chieftains was the pillar on which the new system of government rested.[10]

As Engels rightly says: *"The state is...by no means a power forced on society from without.... Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it becomes necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would alleviate the conflict, and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state."*[11]

Thus, not merely in terms of erecting a state but in furthering *"the split of society into classes [so that] the state became a necessity owing to that split"* Satavahana rule carried all those aspects and institutions of class society which the Mauryans had firmly established in the core areas of their rule--the Ganga valley and the Punjab.[12] Satavahana rule was therefore a replication in the Deccan of what the Mauryans had launched in the north. RS Sharma is led to conclude that: *"The Satavahanas, who ruled over the Deccan were equipped with all those material components which the Mauryans possessed in the earlier period in north India...."*[13]

What were the lines on which this replication took place and how identical was this product to what the Mauryan had created in comparison with this new Satavahana mould?

B. Introducing the Plough

The first references to the use of the plough in India comes from the sixth century BC from the central Ganga valley. All references to the plough from Karnataka come only from the Satavahana period onwards. DD Kosambi says: *"When the Mauryan empire fell apart, foreign invaders conquered and successfully ruled the northern sector (the two great river basins except Bengal) while the southern remained vastly subject to indigenous rule. The basic reason for this difference was that the plough using village dominated the economy of the part conquered by foreigners who mainly looted the surplus gathered under the preceding rulers. The South (approximately the region south of the Narmada) had still to be covered by such passive unresisting villages. It had prominent guilds, while trade with vigorous forest dwellers paid very well, **but agriculture in the Deccan seems post-Mauryan.**"*[14]

With the introduction of the plough, the rural economy began to expand. From the first century BC one comes across land grants being issued whereby villages were donated by the king to monasteries. Himanshu Prabha Ray says that *"...this constituted among the first attempts by the Satavahanas to exploit an agricultural base.... The*

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grants...may be seen against the backdrop of expanding rural economy at this time and the need of the state to monitor new settlements and their development."[15]

While we are not certain if the methods recommended in the *Arthashastra* were followed strictly for the extraction of an agricultural surplus by the Satavahana state, there certainly is every reason to presume that all those villages which were granted to monasteries had been done so in order to provide the Buddhist clergy with agricultural produce. And any extraction of agricultural surplus on a reliable and sustained basis meant the exploitation of an agricultural labourer who was to whip the oxen and wield the plough.[16]

In addition to such village clusters where the mode of production had been altered, there were several more that survived around and served the rising urban populations, inhabited as they were, by the functionaries of state; clergymen, artisans and traders. In such villages exploitative relations of production must have emerged, based on plough agriculture, often with the aid or under the supervision of the state.

While these changes had altered the mode of agriculture and the relations of production therein, requiring a form of agrarian slavery; it should be kept in mind that Satavahana rule, while transforming agriculture, did so only to the extent that was required. A large chunk of villages, as archaeological evidence would show, continued in the former state of megalithism till 100 AD. In these villages the transformation to plough based agriculture could have taken place not under external duress and under conditions of war and violence but more gradually under the impulse of the rising patriarchs among the pastoral-primitive agricultural communities.

C. *Chaturvarna* and the Relations of Production

The new class divided order of this early historical period rested on the institution of chaturvarna. The chaturvarna system was developed in the central Ganga plain with the development of an iron using plough-agriculture based class society. The limited evidence of the practice of chaturvarna in Satavahana Karnataka need not however lead us to conclude that the system was either poorly developed or unimportant for the early historical system of Karnataka. In fact the significance of chaturvarna is underscored by the importance Satavahana kings attached to it. RS Sharma says that: *"...the Satavahanas were one of the earliest Deccan dynasties to be Brahminised. As new converts they came forward as the zealous champions of the varna system...."*[17]

In another inscription Gautamiputra Shatakarani is called the sole Brahmana and is credited with the prevention of the fusion of the four varnas and with the task of disciplining the Shudras.[18]

RS Sharma in his *Sudras in Ancient India* discusses the origin of the four class varna division--the Shudra, Vaishya, Kshyatriya and Brahmana.

Starting with Rig Vedic society *"which was basically tribal in character"* there was a gradual break up of Aryan society into classes starting form 1100 BC in particular.[19] The taking of slaves obtained enhanced meaning with the completion of the transformation of Vedic society from pastoralism to agriculture by the beginning of the sixth century BC. In this process, starting from 1800 BC to 600 BC, there was a great intermixing of the Aryan people with the various Indian Dravidoid tribes.

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In the words of RS Sharma, *"In the first flush of the Aryan expansion the destruction of the settlements and the peoples such as the Dasyus seems to have been so complete that very few people in north-western India would remain to be absorbed in the new society.... While the majority of the survivors and especially the comparatively backward peoples would be reduced to helotage, the natural tendency would be for the vis of the Aryan society to mix with the lower orders and for the Vedic priests and warriors to mix with the higher classes of earlier societies."*[20]

Thus it would be altogether wrong to presume that all the people of 'black' colour were reduced to Shudra helotage, since there are several references to 'black' priests during this tansitory period.[21]

RS Sharma is of the opinion that priesthood, consolidated into Brahmanism in later times is a pre-Aryan institution which could have emerged after the mixing of Aryans with pre-Aryan tribes of India.[22] The Kshatriya was an Aryan institution, clearly manifested in the Aryan Indira of the Rig Veda. Shudra was the name originally of an Aryan tribe belonging to the Dasa Aryans who came to the north west of India a little before the Vedic Aryans did.[23] The Vis, from which Vaishya was later derived, were an independent peasantry, their name again, signifying the name of a tribe originally.

The first slaves were drawn from among the Dasa and Shudra tribes. With the expansion of the Vedic Aryans to the Ganga valley, they intermingled with the Dravidian tribes, developed the institution of chaturvarna and by the time of the rise of class society in the central Ganga plains by the sixth century BC, they had reduced a great number of local tribal peoples to bondage having commenced this process with the Aryan tribes initially. This vast mass of toilers were called Shudras and were inhibited from marrying among the other three varnas. Hence the varna system at once provided for the supply of a ready made labour force for expanding agriculture undertaken by the state, agriculture taken up by the Vis , and the need for domestic hands in the houses of the Kshatriyas, Brahmanas and traders. This it achieved by reducing the Shudras to a form of servile labour. *"It is difficult"* writes RS Sharma *"to define the position of the sudras in the Vedic period in terms of slavery or serfdom. Although the references found in very late Vedic texts give the impression of they being the labouring masses, generally they do not seem to have been slaves or serfs owned by individuals. Apparently just as the community exercised some sort of general control over land, so also it exercised similar control over the labouring population. And, in this sense, the sudras may be very roughly compared to the helots of Sparta, with the difference that they were not treated with the same amount of coercion and contempt."*[24]

Thus **the Shudras came to be collectively treated as helots of the rest of the varnas and the state.** The element of coercion was far more emphatic than under feudalism.

Classed among the Shudras, at this period were the *antyas* or *bahyas* or those residing outside villages and towns or the Untouchables. The Nishadas and Chandalas, both tribes initially, were among the first Untouchables of India.[25] *"Generally the untouchables lived at the end of villages or towns or in their own settlement. Their segregation"*, says RS Sharma, taking issue with BR Ambedkar, *"was not the result of any*

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deliberate policy of expulsion from old aryan settlements. It seems rather that the whole population of tribal villages were condemned to the position of untouchables by the brahmanas."[26]

One of the reasons for the origin of untouchability was the cultural lag of the aboriginal tribes, who were mainly hunters and fowlers, in contrast to the members of Brahmanical society, who possessed the knowledge of metals and agriculture and were developing urban life. We shall in the next chapter discuss at length about this question; but for the time being confine ourselves to the appearance of the institution of untouchability at this period and their being placed with the lot of the Shudras. It was the widespread nature of Shudra helotage which at that time diminished the scope for the rise of untouchability as an important social institution.

The institution of chaturvarna and thus the class society that it upheld stood essentially on the labour of the Shudras. **That Brahmanism upheld this and was its chief architect is beyond dispute. Yet the fact that Buddhism and Jainism, both of which contended with Brahmanism, did not challenge it in any way is significant and often goes unnoticed. The defence by Buddhism and Jainism, of Shudra helotry was cardinal for their rise as religions without which the merchants and Kshatriyas or the state could not have supported them. Thus the difference between Buddhism and Jainism on the one hand and with Brahmanism on the other did not lie on this question. Rather it was a division for the primacy of place among the upper three varnas and thus could be categorised as a contradiction within the ruling classes and not one between the rulers and the ruled.**

The Satavahana kings were dogged defenders of chaturvarna since the basis of their empire rested on it. They built up their polity on this division and thus may be credited with borrowing this institution from the Mauryas. As RS Sharma rightly observes: *"...there is no evidence that untouchability prevailed in the south among the dravidians before their brahminization."*[27] Hence even untouchability was, along with the rest of chaturvarna, a development under the Satavahanas.

D. Power of the Merchant

The change taking place in agriculture was not as easily evident as the rise of trade. The merchant class obviously announced its entry in history.

The system of barter that was well established during the phase of pastoralism-primitive agriculture was absorbed and outpaced. Trade broke up all apparent isolation. India was opened to Karnataka and the world was opened on India. The trader rose to riches and became the wealthiest of all classes in Satavahana society. Himanshu Prabha Ray explains: *"Literary references indicate a complexity in the range of commercial transactions from the intenerant trader hawking his goods at the bottom of the scale to the guilds at the top. Donations made to the monasteries by craftsmen, artisans, merchants and guilds are evidence of their wealth and prosperity. This prosperity was based not only on internal trade but also on commercial ventures by sea. Indian ships were not the only ones plying the Arabian Sea but had to compete with Arab, Greek and Roman carriers as well."*[28]

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A distinguishing feature of Satavahana rule was trade. RS Sharma is of the opinion that *"merchants did not participate in civic life in ancient India as they did in the Deccan during this period."*[29]

The merchants had set up *senis* and *nikayas* or guilds. These guilds proved to be elaborate networks conducting intra-peninsular and inter-continental trade. A Prakrit inscription in Brahmi script from Belvadgi village near Sannathi in Gulbarga district has the image of a bullock cart carved on its panel.[30] The bullock cart in the freize was obviously designed for freightage and thus represented a mercantile tradition. It was extensively used in the Harappan civilisation as a means of transport and is for the first time reported from Karnataka. There can be little doubt that a good volume of the peninsular trade was carried on in bullock drawn carts. Himanshu Prabha Ray tells us that an *"early looping trade impinging on the far south"* had originated drawing in Gujarat and Sindh. Conducted along the coast, this sea-borne looping trade may be presumed to have developed a network of routes with the hinterland. The location of Banavasi in Sirsi taluk of Uttara Kannada district in the Malnad is significant in that it tells us of the opening that the hinterland had through it to the western littoral. Himanshu Prabha ray is of the opinion that the location of Banavasi *"indicated a possible route from Bellary district down to the coast and from there to Sopora and Baruch [in Gujarat]."*[31] SR Rao's exploration's from Goa to Udupi along the coast led him to discover a few early historical settlements datable to the third century BC. Udyavara, probably identified as the *O'dura* seaport in Roman literature was located by him.[32] These discoveries, in no way exhaustive, only confirm the presence and role of a number of sea ports which were served by the looping trade of the west coast and brought the hinterland of the peninsula in touch with the Arabs, the Greeks and the Romans. Mangalore which is a place name derived during this time, must have emerged as a port of importance during the Satavahana period itself.

As an additional confirmation of the extensive trade are the hordes of punchmarked lead coins, similar to what the Mauryans minted. The Maharathis who ruled over areas of Uttara Kannada, Dharwad and Chitradurga with Banavasi as their headquarters have issued a number of coins. The Chutus who succeeded the Maharathis also struck punch marked coins.[33]

The Satavahana period has also thrown up a great deal of Roman coins. There are innumerable sites from peninsular India where Roman coins have been found. It is important to note that Roman coins have generally been found only in the ports and towns of the Satavahana empire.[34]

The coins have normally been dated from 29 BC of the Roman emperor Augustus to 51 AD belonging to the reign of Claudius. However more recent discoveries have revealed the existence of coins struck under the reign of Justinus which ended in 527 AD.[35]

Roman coins of gold and silver have been found at Vadgaon-Madhavpur in Belgaum, at Akki Alur in Hangal taluk of Dharwad district where a horde of 46 coins were uncovered, at Banavasi in Uttara Kannada, Maski in Raichur and Chandravalli and Brahmagiri in Chitradurga district. The Akki Alur pot of coins has brought contact with

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48. Distribution of Satavahana coinage findspots.

Rome into the Kadamba period. In addition, a horde of 163 coins at Yeshwantpura and another at the HAL airport were found in Bangalore.[36]

The appearance of these coins in hordes indicates that there was a general flow of bullion in the form of gold and silver as a result of trade with the Romans. The absence of a reverse flow of Satavahana coins to the Roman empire makes it unidirectional. Peninsular India was therefore selling goods and receiving payments in gold rather than the other way around. These coins would be kept aside only to be melted later, and thus indicated the stock of the merchants of the time.

From the volume of trade that was carried on and from the grants that merchants made to monasteries, it is clear that they were a pretty significant class. Their richness only reflected the use of a servile labour force of coolies and transporters.

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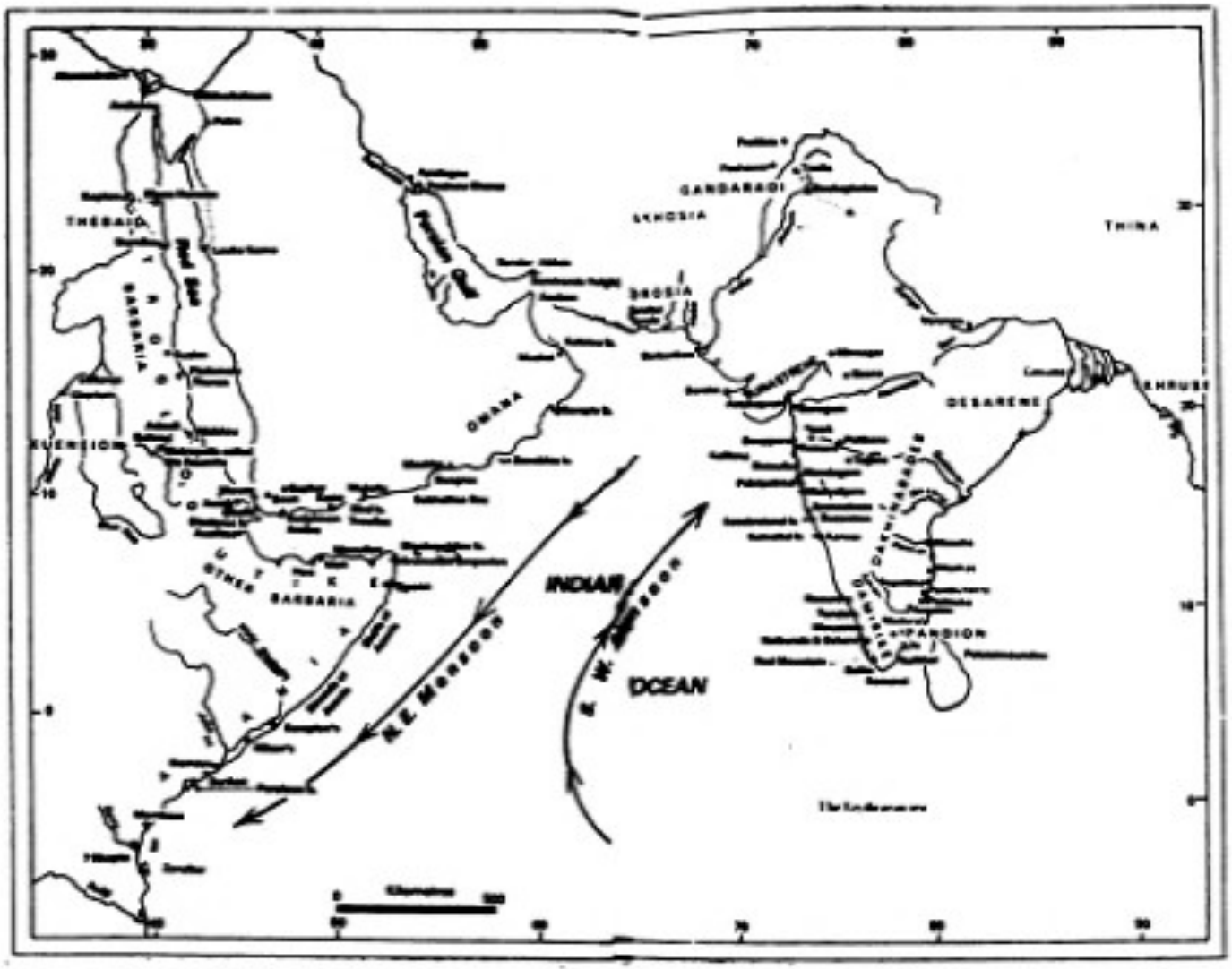

49. Trade winds and ports of the northern Indian Ocean during the Satavahana period derived from Roman sources.

The development of the money system must have *"penetrated like a corroding acid into the traditional life of the rural communities founded on natural economy. The gentile constitution was absolutely incompatible with the money system"* says Engels.[37] This was one of the larger impacts that Satavahana trade must have had over society. It tended, as a result of the new principle of production for a market, to tear up the kulas which were founded on communal property.

Engels further says that: *"Civilization strengthened and increased all the established divisions of labour [of the former tribal oligarchies], particularly by intensifying the contrast between town and country and added a third division of labour, peculiar to itself and of decisive importance: it created a class that took no part in production, but engaged exclusively in exchanging products--the* ***merchants****. All previous inchoative formations of classes were exclusively connected with production; they divided those engaged in production into managers and performers, or into producers on a large scale and producers on a small scale. Here a class appears for the first time which, without taking any part in production, captures the management of production as a whole and economically subjugates the producers to its rule; a class that makes itself the indispensable intermediary between any two producers and exploits them both."*[38]

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The setting up of towns, the elaborate structures that were built in them and the dependence of religion on these wealthy sponsors speak a lot of the power of the merchants. The riches of the Satavahana empire were wielded by the merchant.

E. The Urban Spectacle

The breaking up of society into classes and the inherent antagonism between the toilers and the owners of wealth was reflected in the origin of towns and their soiled contrast, the villages.

RS Sharma says: *"What needs emphasis is that perhaps at no other time in ancient history do epigraphic records and excavations reveal so many towns in the Deccan...as in the first two centuries of the Christian era."*[39]

Among the main cities in Karnataka were Chandravalli in Chitradurga district, Maski in Raichur district, Vadagaon-Madhavpur in Belgaum city, Banvasi in Uttara Kannada district and Sannathi in Gulbarga district. Apart from these there were several minor towns such as Malavalli in Shimoga district, Udyavara and perhaps Mangalore in Dakshina Kannada district, Karwar and perhaps Honnavara in Uttara Kannada and probably an as yet unidentified city near Bangalore lying on the highway to Kolar's gold. Apart from these at least 200 village settlements belonging to Satavahana times have been identified in Karnataka.[40]

In Vadagaon-Madhavpur, a suburb in Belgaum, a Satavahana city of 40 acres was excavated. A 270 metre long street was excavated with terracota tiles and brick structures lining it. Copper coins, beads of semi-precious stones and dice were found in large numbers. Pottery was scarce. Himanshu Prabha Ray therefore rightly asks: *"Can one thereby conclude that this street was used for commercial purposes?"*[41] In the northern part of the site residential buildings and wells were revealed. The wells had circular rings resembling the casing of Harappan wells. The buildings had square rooms, oblong halls and tiled roofs, the whole structure built on a raised foundation of pebble bedding overlain with a layer of rammed *murrum*. Mud plaster was used as the binding material and the walls had a coating of fine lime.[42]

Banavasi also known as Vaijayanti was another of the major cities. Banavasi bears the presence of a Mauryan stupa which speaks of the pre-Satavahana origins of the city. A brick fortification on a rubble foundation beside a moat skirts the city.[43]

Sannathi, located on the banks of the Bhima had a fort that ran for a length of more than 2 kms. It had several substantial structures and a huge citadel erected on an artificial mound. At least four stupas have been recovered from here. Residential buildings had some three to four rooms built around a central hall. Archaeologists such as Sheshadri of the ASI are of the opinion that Sannathi was not only the oldest but also the biggest of cities in Karnataka at that time. The identity of the architecture with that of Banavasi, particularly the Romanesque influence of winged animals is evident. The identification of at least four stupas in the neighbourhood of Sannathi only draws attention to the fact that Sannathi had an urban agglutination and rose as a complex.

At Chandravalli a covered brick drain was found and at Brahmagiri there was a metalled road.[44]

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S Nagaraju states that: *"Differences in the standard of life in these types of settlements can be noticed in the nature of material equipments seen in them. For example in pottery itself, several sites like Brahmagiri, Chandravalli, Maski, Banavasi, Vadagaon-Madhavpur and Sannathi have yielded dishes of Rouletted ware and Amphorae of Mediterranean origin, while these are generally absent in smaller 'village' sites (e.g., Hanmige). Beads of carnelian, jasper, lapis lazuli, crystal, chalcedony, amethyst, agate, garnet, coral, glass shell and paste, besides terracota, are to be seen profusely in these sites, thus revealing the greater wealth and preferences of the 'urban' populace. The distinction between the smaller settlements and cities is all the more glaring in architecture. While in smaller settlements thatched huts appear to have bee common (as evidenced by few post holes, as at Piklihal), somewhat larger towns could probably boast of substantial structures."*[45]

The towns were obviously grand and prosperous. And this prosperity, it can hardly be denied was dependent on trade. Was the town not the abode of the wealthy merchant afterall?

Little evidence has been forthcoming about the total population of each of these towns, on that basis, the different classes that resided in them and the numerical strength of each of these classes, traces of the nature of labour service in these cities and the specific articles that were produced in these urban centres by the artisans which were, as a few inscriptions reveal, organised on the basis of guilds and even rich enough to make occasional donations to the monasteries.

F. Prakrit, Brahmi and Early History

The first samples of written language in Karnataka are the thirteen Ashokan rock edicts. These rock edicts did not yet represent the transformation of Karnataka to civilisation. The script was Brahmi and the language Magadhi Prakrit. Who else were these edicts addressed to if not a trader-warrior-cleric that already knew how to read and hailed from the Magadhan core area or the central Ganga plains?

Following the passage of Karnataka from prehistory to civilisation under the Satavahanas, the use of the Brahmi script continued but with a change in the Prakrit employed. The Magadhi dialect was dropped. This new combination of Prakrit with a non-Magadhi style in Brahmi script continued till a little after the end of Satavahana rule. All Satavahana inscriptions starting from the one at Vadagaon-Madhavpur dated at the first century AD, Banavasi naga image inscription, Malavalli pillar inscription of the third century AD and the Sannathi and Chandravalli inscriptions are in Prakrit-Brahmi.

The choice of Prakrit was evident. It was the language which the ruling classes of the Satavahana empire spoke; perhaps an ancient form of language that was spoken around Paithan in central India.

On the antiquity and nature of the Brahmi script, Asko Parpola says: *"In spite of the possible faint reminiscences [between the Sindhu and Brahmi scripts]...it seems certain that the art of writing ceased with the Indus civilization, having lost its raison d'etre, the complex urban way of life. Moreover, Brahmi has convincingly been shown to be derived from the Semitic writing, though it has not yet been definitely established when exactly between the 9th and 3rd centuries BC this took place. The Semitic script ex-*

50. Remains of ASI excavations in Sannathi, Gulbarga district. A part of the fortress and a brick enclosure facing the Bhima river are exposed from the walled city's Ranamandala

pressed consonants only, partly because it was derived from the earlier and more complicated Egyptian writing [which was pictographic] having this same characteristic, and partly because the structure of the Semitic languages made it possible to manage somehow with such a script. Occasionally, however, even the vowels were marked by the Semitic script, and it was the systematization of this practice by the Greeks, when they adapted the Phonecian script, that meant the creation of the modern alphabet. The addition of diacritic marks for the expression of vowels in India was a parallel improve-

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ment. The Brahmi script thus represents a highly developed form of writing, practically speaking, the alphabetic stage. The history of writing shows that even the previous stage represented by the syllabic script is the result of a long development, which was reached in the Near East (where writing had been known since the late fourth millennium BC) only around 2000 BC. 'In reaching its ultimate development, writing, whatever its forerunners may be, must pass through the stages of logography, syllabography and alphabetography in this, and no other, order. Therefore, no writing can start with a syllabic or alphabetic stage unless it is borrowed directly or indirectly, from a system which has gone through all the previous stages' (Gleb). Since the Indus script was created around the middle of the third millennium BC when no syllabic, let alone alphabetic writing system existed, it cannot possibly represent such an advanced stage as the Brahmi script. This is definitely proved also by the different signs; an alphabetic script has about 15-40 different signs; purely syllabic systems specifying the vowels about 40-150; and word-syllabic systems up to about 700 signs."[46]

Thus Brahmi, which was a development over the Indus script which had about 400 different signs had already reached the highly evolved form of an alphabetic script. The Mauryan empire dispersed the Brahmi script across the frontiers of India. While the early Sangam Tamils borrowed this script to write Tamil in 200 BC, Satavahana Karnataka put out its inscriptions in Prakrit-Brahmi till the fifth century when the script was borrowed and articulated Kannada through the Halmidi inscription.

The use of Prakrit throughout the Satavahana period speaks of the nature of the ruling classes. Since Kannada as a nationality had already evolved it could be correct to speak of the continuation of a non-Kannadiga stratum in the ruling classes coexisting with a fair Kannadiga component. Even if the Kannadiga section were more important by number, due to the pervasive character of the superstructural institutions--a great number of which were derived from the Mauryan core area in the north, Prakrit continued to find use; what with its rich word stock achieved in the process of already 300 years of class rule more useful for administration, war, trade, religion, art, architecture and philosophy.

G. Religion: An Ideological Expression of Class Society

Religion is the ideological expression of a society which has been divided along class lines. The need to mystify the source of class exploitation is the most important impulse behind it. The separation of a stratum and therein the formation of a class which kept away from participating in production created the grounds for the separation of matter and spirit, the creation of a nether world or paradise as an alternative to this accursed world of suffering.

During Satavahana rule Jainism, Buddhism and Vedic religions were introduced to Karnataka. But among all these none were *popular* in the real sense of the word.

The local cults of the masses were the most popular and had the widest following. While the Buddhist stupas were imposing or Brahmanical yaga ritual conducted by the kings grandiose, the most common and numerous of all evidence describing the religion of the people are to be found in the terracota figurines of the time. In the big cities of Karnataka where Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism were most powerful there has also

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been the greatest stock of such figurines. Further, these figurines have been found from the lesser towns and villages too. VV Krishna Sastry, summing up this phenomenon writes: *"The figures are hand made by modelling the clay to the desired shape. The similarity of the shape and sex of these figures found in various excavations may indicate that they represent fertility cult. The heads are made flat, the hands and legs pinched like pointed masses and the conical breasts protrude.... The face is just a featureless mass with a halo like decoration. This type of figures have the largest distribution not only in Andhra-Karnataka area but in the whole of India."*[47]

These figurines were found in prolific numbers in all kinds of locales--villages, towns and cities. While traces of the established religions were found exclusively in the towns and cities only, these figurines are nothing but a reminder of the strength of the cult of the mother goddess already being elevated to the level of a religion by now. Identical in form to the faceless matriarchs of the paintings in the fertility cults, these figurines in clay were only a continuation of the fertility cult of the neolithic period. Magic, the fertility cult and their material basis were only modified under the new conditions created by the rule of the Satavahanas. Agriculture had continued but under modified circumstances. While **the continuation of an agrarian life was the basis for the continuity of the mother goddess figures, its conduct under the plough was the reason for its elevation from primitive magic to that of religion.** The use of the plough raised the status of agriculture and made it the sole means of sustenance for the dividing tribes, pastoralism was being transformed and cattle rearing now became a supplementary part of the economic activity of the rural masses. Agriculture passed into the hands of man from that of the woman. But agriculture had to depend, as it always did, even under the new mode of production, on the weather; and this was what made its outcome unpredictable, causing the retention of agricultural magic. But since it was now conducted principally by the man under patriarchal conditions and under a society that led to the break up of the clans and caused the exploitation of labour, magic meant to increase productivity was now converted into religion. The patriarch sorcerers assumed great importance and they now beckoned the spirits at the service of society. The sorceress became male priests and their magic had become religion. This transformation from primitive agricultural magic to religion itself must have passed through a phase of black magic, which on its part already begins to represent the contradictions within the social order, enemity among individuals, the rise and fall of fortunes, as the result of the vagaries of a class society. The priest began to collect his fees, modest in the beginning, but increasingly exploitative with the advance of the new social order. Road junctions, boundary stones, banyan, neem, tamarind and pepal trees became the objects and cult centres and the fixed abodes of the goddesses. Whitehead gives us a list of some of these goddesses. But we can easily say that his list is by any stretch of imagination exceedingly small. There are as many *ammas* as there are village clusters in Karnataka and south India.

Terracota figures from Sannathi also depict a different class of mother goddess. V Krishna Sastry describes them: *"The terracota figures cast out of double moulds include three types of female figures. The first one is modelled with outstretched hands and arms lifted. She wears a* ***makara*** *type head dress, and decorated with a necklace,*

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51. Two views of the same mound. Called Ane Dibba or elephant mound by the peasants, this rounded elevation 4 kms from Sannathi, Gulbarga district, is a Buddhist stupa that remains buried.

waist-band and kankanas, etc. The flowing hair is beautifully made into a back knot at the end. This is the commonest form in the Satavahana and Ikshvaku levels. The second type is made of kaolin which appears to have universal distribution among the early historical sites of South India. The left hand of the Goddess simply rests on the thigh while her right hand holds a bunch of fruit. The parrot perched on her right arm nudges her breast with its bill. She is profusely decorated and her genitals are also marked. Sometimes she wears an ***yajnopavitra*** *and a beaded necklace with leaf pendants."*[48]

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52. Five kilometres off Sannathi, Gulbarga district, and just a kilometre from Ane Dibba is Belavadi which is being excavated by the ASI. A magnificent Buddhist chaitya has been uncovered. Adjacent to these ruins is a neem tree sheltering the temple of Durgamma, the village goddess. The wall on the left of the temple (see arrow) has a sculpted block of limestone which has been recovered from the chaitya by the peasants some years ago.

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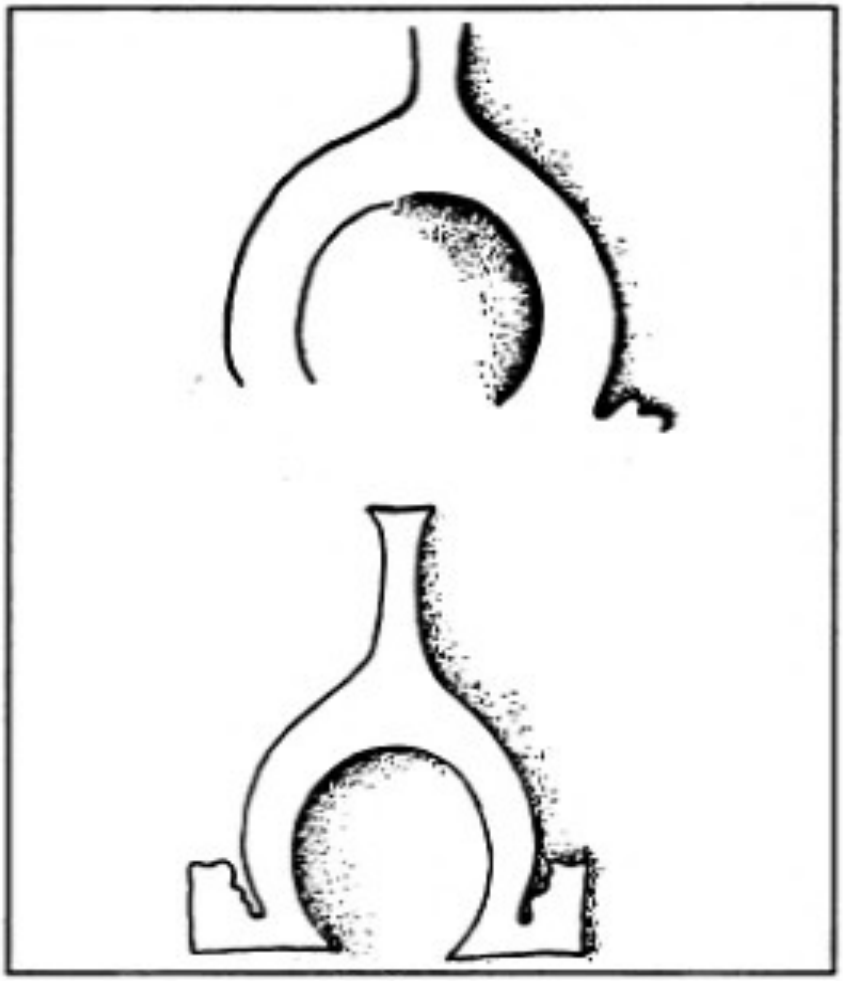

53. Similar chaitya motifs from Banavasi, Uttara Kannada district and Sannathi, Gulbarga district.

These are identical to the Yakshis that we come across in Sanchi at the same period. These Yakshis are none other than the mother goddesses of the masses which have been given a refinement. The conversion to Buddhism of a people practicing fertility cult magic, obviously resulted in their taking their goddesses, the Yakshis to the Buddhist stupas. This Yakshi cult found at Sannathi only underscores the compromise that religions like Buddhism made, out of inevitable reasons, with the religion of the Shudra and peasant masses.

A third type of religion emerging from tribal-peasant roots was animism. Animism itself came perhaps from the hunting magic of the hunter-gatherer tribes. But their conversion into clan totems and then the worship of these totems or balis with the rise and fall of such kulas or clans has led to the creation of what has come to be recognised in the feudal stage as the Hindu pantheon. The elevation of such totems to the level of gods is evident from sculptures of the five headed serpent and the freize of a buffalo and winged horse--a possibleRoman influence--from Banavasi and Sannathi.[49]

More often than not, history writing tends to either ignore or presume that these expressions of religion among the masses are a sign of Hinduism. But both these are wont to be wrong. **An ignoring of these popular forms of worship, particularly that of the village goddesses inevitably leads to wrong notions on the origin of religion. This obfuscates the fact that religion develops from the changed class reality as it affects the lives of one and all. Buddhism, Jainism and Vedic religions at this point**

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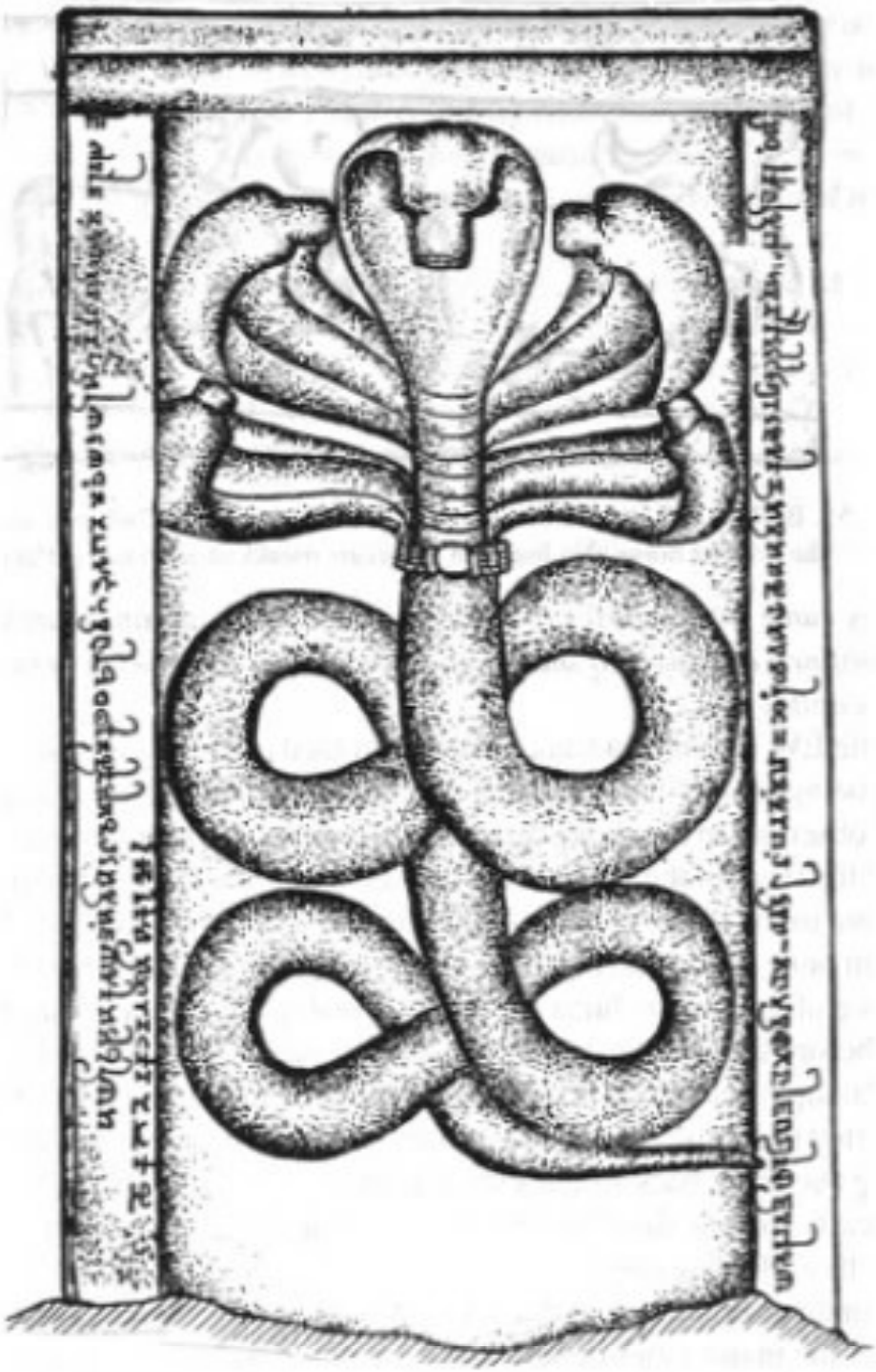

54. Five-headed naga with pendant and Brahmi-Prakrit inscriptions from Banavasi, Uttara Kannada district.

of time hardly touched upon or replaced the need for these rural cults embedded as they were in agriculture and its cycles which the vast majority of the people practised, or, hailed as they did from clan and tribal identities.

In this context, EW Thompson quite rightly observes: *"For my part I can never believe that it [Buddhism] was ever a religion of the people. Buddhism was the religion of a small but influential class of nobles and merchants. It was never accepted by the common people, who had their own ancient worships and continued to adhere to them.*

Similar remarks might be made about the Jains--with this distinction, that the Jains were certainly more numerous and powerful in the South than ever were the Bud-

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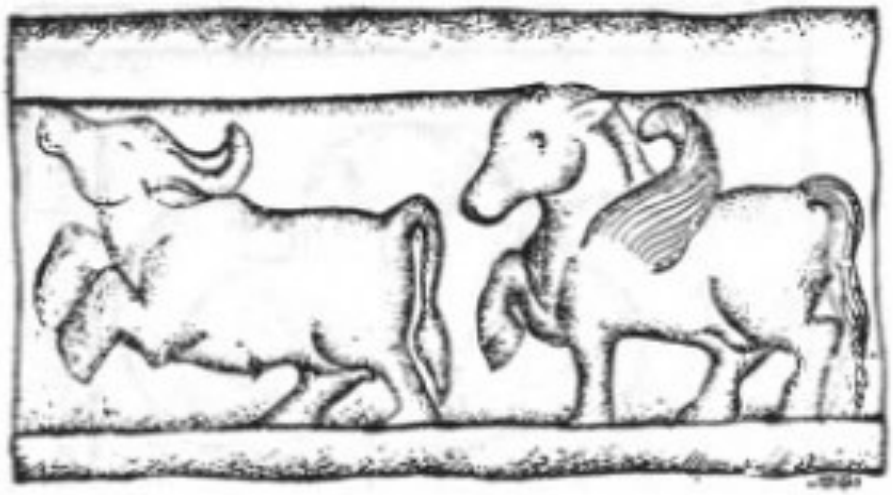

55. Buffalo and winged horse from a panel in Sannathi, Gulburga district. The winged horse also found in Banavasi speaks of a Roman influence.

dhists. They came for purposes of trade or government administration...but their religion was confined equally to a small and exclusive class. It never seems to have spread outside the capital cities."[50]

While EW Thompson has correctly summed up the class basis of Buddhism and Jainism as being that of the trader, administrator, military chief and artisan--all urban classes, his observation that Jainism was more popular than Buddhism in the South is not borne out at the stage of the social mode of production which we are at present discussing but is relevant to the phase of early feudalism from the fourth century AD onwards.

From none of the major cities and towns of the period of Satavahana rule do we find evidence of any major Jaina centres of worship. It appears that the Jains came to Karnataka before the Buddhists did. Chandragupta Maurya, in his last days, is said to have fled Pataliputra and reached Shravanabelagola in Hassan district where he apparently converted to Jainism and died by an act of Sillekhana, which was the Jaina method of rendering the body back to the elements of nature. References to the Jainas in the period of early history describes them as mendicants who lived in rock shelters and stayed alive by collecting alms.[51]

In contrast, Buddhism at this stage seems to have received far greater patronage. Every one of the major cities of Karnataka are described as having Buddhist stupas and chaityas of an imposing nature.[52] S Nagaraju says: *"The apsidal structures at Banavasi, Brahmagiri, Vadagaon-Madhavpur are generally considered to be Buddhist. An inscription from the former place refers to a Buddhist vihara. Sannathi has clear evidence of the presence of Buddhism in the stupas, sculptures and a number of inscriptions found there."*[53]

The Satavahanas were among the first kings of India to make grants of villages to Buddhist monasteries. In the initial stages such grants came from the king but in the later half of Satavahana rule such donations also came from wealthy merchant and artisan guilds. On the one hand this speaks of the support that Buddhism enjoyed from the ruling classes and a state which in the main represented the interests of the traders. On the other, such grants *"may be seen against the backdrop of expanding rural economy at this time and the need of the state to monitor new settlements and their development. Reli-*

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gious institutions--of which the monasteries were the most developed--were amply suited to consolidation and integration of agricultural settlements, on account of their ability to forge channels of communication. These channels could not only be used to popularize improved methods of agriculture and cropping patterns, but also to reinforce the authority of the state. It was perhaps for this purpose of supervising and maintaining control that the Satavahanas gifted villages to the Sangha."[54]

During the time of the Satavahanas, Buddhism had split into the Mahayana and Hinayana sects. The *Mahayana*, meaning *great path*, which came to dominate Buddhist belief in the country represented the interests of a clergy which openly partook in all kinds of commercial and monetary activities.

The spread of Buddhism in India is along the main routes of trade. In fact we have innumerable references to traders' caravans also including intenerant Buddhist clerics. At Buddhist stupas and viharas which normally fell in the trading junctions and chief commercial centres, the clergy began to directly undertake in trade or the Sangha emerged as the local moneylender.

DD Kosambi who was among the foremost of Indian historians to study these underlying material aspects of Buddhist religion tells us that in the initial stages these viharas served to extend and develop the new agrarian order, while in later times they transformed into centres of commerce and profit.[55]

Let us quote from Basil Davidson in order to draw a parallel for the Buddhist influence in India with that of Islam on West Africa: *"Historically, then, the influence of Islam in West Africa must be considered aside from its spiritual aspect, as having primary significance in two main fields: in the techniques of commerce and in those of the gorernment of cities, states and empires of growing power and importance. In both respects, moreover, Islam may be seen as having acted as effective solvent of traditional society, repeatedly blurring the lines of ethnic seperatism, displacing the old 'tribal' equalities with new hierarchical structures and servitudes and generally with an impact increasingly noticeable after the sixteenth century deepening the horizontal stratification of Western African society."*[56]

But the Satavahana kings although non-Aryan in origin were converts to Brahmanism. While Buddhism received maximum sponsorship from the ruling classes, Vedic religion which had already its ideology of chaturvarna was not without its importance. As RS Sharma explains: *"The Satavahanas supplemented the coercive methods of maintaining their authority in the countryside by grants to monks and priests. The Buddhist monks, who seem to have been one of the earliest landed beneficiaries according to inscriptions, must have preached peace and rules of good conduct, obviating the occasions for defiance of the royal authority and social order. A similar service may have been rendered by the brahmanas, who would be interested in enforcing the rules of the varna system. In an inscription Gautamiputra Satakarani is called the sole brahmana and credited with the prevention of the fusion of four varnas. The Satavahanas seemed to have been improvised brahmanas which accounts for their support of the brahmanical order. Perhaps all the four varnas mentioned in the Satavahana inscriptions were not equally well established in their dominions, and in actual practice the royal task may have been confined to the disciplining of the sudras...."*[57]

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Thus the Satavahana state took and utilised the best--the class best--of the two religions, Buddhism and the Vedic. Without allowing for any overt contradiction to develop between the two, it balanced the interests of creating a servile Shudra helotry on the one hand by upholding Vedic Brahmanism, in which direction Buddhism had little to contribute; and at the same time sponsored Buddhism as a means to trade and a channel to propagate the karma theory of predestination and thus the irrevocability of exploitation. It is important to observe that at this point of history none of the rural settlements of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh gave evidence of the practice of Vedic religion.[58]

Therefore, first, as in the case of Africa under early class rule where, as Basil Davidson says, there was a *"dichotomy between the Muslim towns and the non-Muslim or anti-Muslim countryside";*[59] and secondly, **in early historical Karnataka too there was a dichotomy between Buddhism, Jainism and Vedic Brahminism on the one hand, all of which were town based and patronised by those classes resident in the towns and mother-goddess cults, animism ancestor worship and other similar faiths which were rooted firmly in the hearts of those that lived in the villages.**

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3. CLASS SOCIETY IN KARNATAKA: EVOLUTION OR IMPOSITION?

The relationship between internal development and external influence is an important question which flows with the flow of history. At every point of transformation in Karnataka's prehistory it has stalked archaeologists. Was it diffusion that was principal for a certain change or was it indigenous development; was it an external influence that decided a certain complexion or autochthonous development that gave it the progressive twist? This question has confronted historiography at the crossroads of prehistory and history. It is not apparently illogical that such a problem should arise. As is evident from our discussion of the Satavahana period, there are ample grounds for it.

For anybody acquainting with the early historic period of Karnataka, i.e., the Satavahana period, the number of borrowed institutions is striking. They appear to engulf and overwhelm all possibility of indigenous evolution. Let us check this long and valid list:

1) The transformation of the agrarian system was dependent on the plough. Without the introduction of plough agriculture the extraction of a surplus and thus the dawn of civilisation and inherent to that, the rise of cities and their sustenance from the surplus of crops extracted from (and thus) the villages, could not have been conceived. The plough had been invented by the sixth century BC in the central Ganga plains.

2) To suit the new instrument of production and to allow the extraction of surplus from the villages, a class had to be created to slave and be yoked with the oxen to field agriculture. This labouring class in total servitude, surviving as social dregs could be construed and forged only because of the institution of chaturvarna. Chaturvarna, the four class division, was the level with which the new Brahmana-Kshatriya-Vis (the upper section of the last) ruling triumvirate dug open a servile Shudra from the tribal entrails of pastoralism-primitive agriculture. This pillaging genius of chaturvarna was adapted to the class society of Karnataka, the institution coming from the western and central Ganga plains.

3) The state, its attributes, its component parts, its role, its relationship to the king, kingship, its inherent contradictions and their mitigation, its relationship with chaturvarna with trade and with agriculture--the art of statecraft, or rather its scheme, was modelled. The *Arthashastra* written by Kautilya after 322 BC was the blueprint. The Mauryan state under Chandragupta had already made a colossal experiment, the results of which were bountiful. He built the first Indian empire. The Satavahana state was modelled on the by then divine precepts of the *Aarthashastra* and its was this state which prised open the tribal oligarchies of Karnataka through war and kept the Shudra turning the soil through the by now forceful habit of violence. The conception, the early demonstration and the composition of significant portions of the state came, again, from the civilisation of the central Ganga plain.

4) The language of the rock edicts--Prakrit in Brahmi--of Ashoka weathered nearly five centuries of Satavahana rule. It was the language which carried the ideas of civilisation to fruition. Whether for administration or for religion, commerce or for philosophy,

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Prakrit-Brahmi endured. The highly developed Brahmi sign system of alphabets and Prakrit, its flesh and blood, were taken by the Satavahanas and transplanted in Karnataka. Had Prakrit-Brahmi, again, not flowered in the fertile plains of the central Ganga basin?

5) Buddhism, Jainism and Vedic Brahmanism were well articulated major religious systems. Each had undergone rigorous struggle, and from this had developed their own substantiable world views. These were systems that took strength from logic and could carry thought along parameters of abstract dialectics. The mother goddess cult and animistic faiths had the power of numbers; but due to the power of argument and logic, of these religious systems to which the Satavahanas administered the power of the state and pelf, they dazzled. These religions with their fanatic functionaries swept Karnataka. The storm centre again, was the central Ganga valley.

In short, the language, the base and the superstructure, were taken from the Mauryan north. The Satavahanas were a replica of the Mauryans. And their half-millennium rule appeared to ditto the Ganga valley in the valleys of the Krishna, Tungabhadra and Kaveri. Look at it from any angle, it appeared that Karnataka, and why Karnataka alone, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh too were only a duplicate of the North.

There is thus a northern view of Indian and south Indian history which has grown from these 'facts' and 'self-evident truths'. This notion, unfortunately, has even afflicted a fair number of historians of the south.

For an answer to this problem we would like to begin from the Marxist standpoint of the dialectics of change as enunciated by Mao Tse-tung: *"According to materialist dialectics...changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society.... Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes become operative through internal causes."*[60]

The development of prehistoric Karnataka well into the iron age, the emergence of a tribal oligarchy based on this development, the tendency for stratification within society and the objective conditions for the emergence of a state, the developed word stock and grammar of spoken Kannada and the transformation of magic towards primitive religion were all developments, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, internal to Karnataka society. These developments were all symptomatic of the passage of Karnataka to civilisation. The old society of pastoralism-primitive agriculture was already displaying **developed** elements of the new order. If the Satavahanas had not ruled over Karnataka, then class society would have emerged on the strength of its internal contradictions perhaps after a slight delay. Tamil society of the time was an example. By 200 BC, neighbouring Tamil Nadu, which was at a level of development almost identical to that of Karnataka , graduated to civilisation without being doctored by external rule. Thus while the Satavahanas borrowed all the ready made institutions from the central Ganga plains owing to the structures of continuity they enjoyed with the earlier Mauryan state and society, they could not mechanically transplant all these institutions in Karnataka. **Each of these external institutions became operative on the strength of the internal factors.** The Satavahanas had not found the need to wage a bloody war like the Ashokan war with the Kalingas as the internal conditions facilitating slavery had matured to a far greater extent than what obtained among the neolithic Kalingas. It was the ripening of

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the elements of the new society in the womb of the old that streamlined the transformation.

Attacking such prejudices, RS Sharma, in his *Material Culture and Social Formations in Ancient India* said: *"It reflects a colonial attitude projected back into our past history. Similarities do not always mean imitations. Even borrowing presupposes a congenial climate for acceptance and adoption...."* [60A]

A few lines from Basil Davidson's *Africa in History* will not be out of place in this context. He says: *"African history suggests many examples of the closely interwoven process of conditions ripe-for-change and the fortunate arrival of immigrant groups who knew how to profit from the fact. Where such examples lie near to our times, and can be studied in some detail, they generally indicate that the immigrant influence was of secondary importance; and one may well think this of pre-dynastic Egypt as well."* [61]

The ready made institutions borrowed from outside found a ready made clientele within Karnataka. Thus **the passage of Karnataka from prehistory to history was not imposed from outside; it was native maturity that sought an external influence--it was a flesh and blood that was grafted on an indigenous skeletal infrastructure; it was a south that was willing and capable of receiving the north; and it was yet another case in history of an external cause becoming operative through an internal one.**

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4. MEANING OF THE SHUDRA MODE OF PRODUCTION

A general vagueness prevails even among Marxist historians about characterising the mode of production under the Satavahanas. For that matter, from the period of the emergence of class society in the Sindhu valley between 2500 BC and 1800 BC and then the reemergence of class rule on a solid foundation from the sixth century BC till 550 AD, or till the fall of the Guptas, have not been characterised in precise terms.

While it may take some more time before such a charecterisation of Sindhu civilisation is undertaken, the early historic period spanning nearly 1,000 years from the sixth century BC to the sixth century AD remains without a label. But except this question all other points concerning this period have received serious consideration by Marxist historians; thus it would be wrong to say that the period has been neglected. Satavahana rule which falls in this time span, also, on account of this silence, suffers from the same affliction.

However the period following the end of the Guptas has been very clearly described by DD Kosambi and then RS Sharma as the period of Indian feudalism. Eminent historians such as DN Jha and VK Thakur among others have deepened our understanding of Indian feudalism starting from the sixth century AD.

But why has **Indian Marxist historiography remained inconclusive about the early historical period?**

There are several reasons for this. One important reason concerns the question of slavery. India like China, like Rome and like Greece developed its 'first' class society under local influence. The state that emerged in India was the result of factors inherent to it, which was so well theorised by Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. But while such development in these countries led to the development of a slave mode of production, **India did not, it is clearly established by now, develop into a slave society.** Nor did it, like Germany for instance, directly pass into the feudal mode of production. Hence it may be said that **the slave mode was not a universal mode** since many societies changed from clan based primitive communism to feudalism directly or through an intermediary stage as in our case.

Now the second important factor comes up. India's transition did not lead it directly into feudalism. It would require at least a thousand years in the north of the country and at least 500 years in regions like Karnataka for the new class society to change to feudalism proper.

This period, from a half to one whole millennium of class society and social dynamics based on certain specific forms of development, was protracted and on this count, deeply rooted, resilient and self-perpetuating that it could simply not be dismissed as an aberration or a passing phenomenon. But instead of drawing attention and culling focussed debate, as for instance the polemics on the feudal mode of production has attracted, this era of Indian history has unfortunately remained a historiographical forte clouded by silence. **The problem has been uneasy--the society was not a slave formation, yet slavery in a general sense, and in the particular form of a Shudra helotage did exist as the chief condition of labour exploitation.**

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The chief features of a slave mode--slavery being the principal condition of labour, slaves being a major marketable item and slave masters being a major, if not the principal component of the ruling classes--were all absent. Thus **to categorise India of the early historical period as a slave society would be a misnomer.**

RS Sharma is quite right when he says: *"The attempt to place the ancient Indian economy in the straitjacket of the slave mode of production is misplaced.... Ancient Indian society can be called a slave owning society in the sense that people employed domestic slaves, but it cannot be characterised as a society based on the slave mode of production."*[62]

If it was not a slave mode of production how should one grasp and categorise Indian society for the millennium commencing from the sixth century BC and Karnataka for its half-millennium starting 240 BC? Let us consider some of its chief features with this task in mind.

1) **The first class societies assume the fiercest and most extreme forms of labour oppression. This results from the infancy of class society, in that the new productive instruments are still inadequately dispersed or developed, the various superstructural aspects of class rule are yet to be refined and resistance from the labouring classes just then reduced from primitive communism recurrently kindles an aspiration to be free.** In the Indian context this was achieved by the institution of chaturvarna. It condemned and consigned **the chief labouring population, the Shudras,** to helotage. Surplus extraction and the perpetuation of class rule could not have been possible without this degree of barbarism of the ruling Brahmana and Kshatriya classes. Thus **the commencement of civilisation ringing out the end of barbarism as an expression of the primitive communist mode of production only institutionalises the most barbaric forms of social behaviour unknown to humankind during the earlier phases of savagery and barbarism.** Ashokan rule on the one hand is glorified by a select set of historians. His change of heart after the bloody Kalinga war is eulogised and he is picturised as the emperor of peace. But the change of heart in Ashoka did not deter him from converting the 1,50,000 free tribals of Kalinga captured from the war into a Shudra helotage to work the *sita* lands of the Mauryan state in the central Ganga basin.[63]

Under Mauryan, and we strongly believe, Satavahana rule too, the state held extensive tracts of agricultural land called sita lands and it was in such tracts that the captives of war, considered as Shudras, were subjected to slavery. RS Sharma says: *"Although we have no statistics for the Mauryan empire, the state sector of agricultural production was certainly run by slaves and agricultural labourers, and in this sense dependent labour formed the back of the Mauryan state."*[64] Thus in this period of early history of the post-Harappan **period society thrived based on the exploitation chiefly of Shudra labour.** Almost all agricultural surplus came from the toil of theShudra helots, the mines operated on Shudra labour and a section of the labour of the urban centres was the contribution of the Shudras, the artisans who formed into guilds being generally free.

2) This brings us to the second question, the nature of the state in the period of early history.

The state was centralised and it was manned by paid soldiers, military officers and overseers. The state apparatus was pretty heavy and it was built on the model proposed

by the *Arthashastra*. A major portion--if not the most--of the population residing in the towns and cities was composed of state functionaries. The Mauryan army itself is said to have been from 4 lakh to 6 lakh strong constituting from 10% to 15% of the population of the western and central Ganga plains at that time. RS Sharma writes that: *"The distinctive feature of the Arthasastra polity is to exalt monarchical power over all other sources of authority, and it was to make it felt among the subjects through as many as nearly thirty departments. The general policy of the Mauryan empire is in the main borne out by the inscriptions of Ashoka, who acted as a promulgator of the dharma and who possessed a fairly well organised bureaucracy."*[65]

The strengthening of the state apparatus was motivated on two major counts. First was its role in war. The conquest of tribal oligarchies and the suppression of various mahajanapadas was the surest source for the internal stability of the ruling classes and thus the empire. The expansion of the new field agriculture was dependent on the supply of slaves and *"war was therefore possibly the single greatest factor that contributed to the growth of slavery."*[66]

The second reason for the strengthening of the state machinery arose from the fact that the Mauryan and Satavahana states also **directly owned** property, retained and **directly exploited** a vast labouring population through the economic activity that it undertook. The state was thus a precursor, a harbinger of the new economy of class society. RS Sharma tells us: *"The capital fact in the relations of production as known from the Arthasastra is a large degree of state control over all sectors of economy. The Kautilyan state does not only control trade, industry and mining, but the superintendents of agriculture, while working the state farms with the help of the dasas and karmakaras, mobilise the services of the blacksmiths, the carpenters, the diggers, etc., for the purpose.... We learn that great officers of the state not only superintended the rivers and looked after irrigation, but also measured the land and supervised occupations connected with land such as those of wood cutters, carpenters, blacksmiths and miners."*[67]

From this RS Sharma concludes: *"The Mauryan state therefore was a great employer of dasas and karmakaras, artisans and the aboriginal peoples, who apparently belonged to the sudra class. And in this respect the organization of agricultural production in this period resembles to some extend that which prevailed in Greece and Rome."*[68]

These features of the state--**its centralised nature, its enormity and its penchant for economic activity--are all special features over and above the normal features** that attend any state in the class society of that time..

3) **The ruling classes were composed of a triumvirate which included the merchant, the administrator-military official and the priest-clergy.** The Satavahana and Mauryan states represented the interests of these three classes. If the merchant was the richest owing to the continental proportions of the trade it engaged in, the administrator-military functionary was the most powerful owing also to the extended specific economic role of the state and the priest a kind of bedrock due to its creation of chaturvarna as a social and ideological system and the Buddhist and Jaina clergy as the ideological props of the rule of the merchant-administrator classes. These three major classes looted

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the surplus that the social formation of this period generated, and on the question of division of which, also fell into conflict with one another, a point which we shall soon consider in greater detail. It is important to observe at this juncture that all these classes were mostly resident in towns and urban locales--even landowners preferring the luxury of the town to the village; and thus, this period of early history was of **towns swamping the villages.**

4) This period of pre-feudal history was not a passing phenomenon. It survived for a full 1,000 years in north India. The latter half of the millennium described certain transitory features of the new feudal mode of production. In Karnataka it was alive for 500 years without the presence of any such transitory features on a social scale. **This long period of its existence makes it not an ephemeral social formation but an epochal mode of production. This long period of its existence only implies that it was not only exclusive but also self-perpetuating.** This self-perpetuating character in turn suggests that it was an **exclusive mode with certain laws inherent to it.**

Apart from these four main features, this period of early history also had some additional features, which one may argue although not determinative, endowed it with a complexion of exclusivity.

Buddhism and Jainism as religious systems are generally coterminus with this period of early history. The collapse of Buddhism is total and that of Jainism almost total, except perhaps for its survival in Karnataka, the reasons for which will be discussed in the next chapter which deals with early feudalism. The rise and flourishing of these two religions and at the same time their simultaneous collapse is only a wider reflection of their social base. These two religions catered essentially to the interests of the administrator-military official on the one hand and the merchant on the other, to the exclusion of the Brahmana priesthood. With the rise of these first two classes these two religions representing their joint interest also rose and with their fall these two religions also fell. In Europe, it would not be wrong to state, that the growth of Christianity and in West Asia and parts of the Maghreb, the rise of Islam were representative of the rise of feudalism and a replacement to the ancient religions of Egypt, Rome and Greece. In South East Asia, Japan, Korea and China it was however not Hinayana Buddhism which stuck to some of the pre-classs tenets of the Buddha but Mahayana Buddhism influenced by Nagarjuna, a Brahmin, which was better equipped to serve feudalism, that inaugurated the society of feudalism which followed the slave mode of production there.[69] It was only because of this nature of Mahayana Buddhism that it faded into oblivion, never catching the eye of the ruling classes.

In sum, the slave mode of production outside India was quite often, though not always, attended with an exclusive religious superstructure and the feudal mode with a different religious superstructure which was more adaptable and serviceable to the new classes in power. In India it may therefore be said that Buddhism and Jainism served the pre-feudal mode of production and were exclusive to it. This must however not be raised to the level of a principle as there were enough exceptions to it.

Under the Satavahanas, Karnataka had seen the greater popularisation of Buddhism rather than Jainism; Jainism itself catching up as the leading religion with the change in the mode of production and its entry to feudalism. However, Jainism remained an

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important religion only during the early and middle centuries of early feudalism yielding to Vedanta and its sects of Shaivism, Vaishnavism and later Virashaivism from the commencement of middle feudalism from the twelfth century onwards.

A second additional feature apart from religion giving the mode of production of the early historic period exclusive complexion was the use of language. Prakrit in Brahmi script dominated most written material of this period and the entry of India and Karnataka to feudalism saw a change in the language which the ruling classes used. The new feudal rulers now discarded Prakrit in Brahmi and instead adapted Sanskrit in Devanagiri. JV Stalin says that a language does not change with a change in the mode of production.[70] Hence we hesitate from considering the question of language as determining or characterising a mode of production and therefore, like religion, feel it is not a principle to be applied to a study of the dialectics of modes of production. Yet like religion, the language patronised by the ruling classes underwent a change. This change does not stem from a law but from the specific historical fact that a class--the Brahmana--speaking Sanskrit which was its mother tongue came to dominate society and state under early feudalism. Yet this change in religion, the relegation of Prakrit (in which Buddha and Mahavira preached) along with their religions, provides an added complexion to the mode of production that characterised the early historic period.

From these four specific features--chaturvarna and Shudra helotage as the principal form of labour exploitation; the type and role of the state; the nature of the ruling classes and the epochal character of the mode with its own self-perpetuating laws--and the two additional aspects of religion and language lending this epoch exclusive complexion: one may well conclude that the early historical period to which Maurya, Gupta and Satavahana belong represented a mode of production with individual standing and independent merit, although the Gupta period in particular possessed certain protofeudal features.

The dissimilarity of this mode of production with that of the slave holding mode was also evident. **The chief distinguishing feature was that in India of that time the state directly owned the main body of Shudras while in Rome and Greece slaves were owned principally by the slavemasters.** On this cardinal difference the other differences rested. In Rome and Greece, the slave masters emerged as the main component of the ruling class and the trade in slaves was the most profitable of all businesses. But in India the state principally owned the Shudras and thus it discouraged the rise of slave merchants on a social scale. This served to modify the composition of the ruling classes and gave the Kshatriya-bureaucratic class an otherwise important role. Furthermore, this provided the state with not only a political but also a direct role in the economy. The state in India of the time was the biggest agency in the economy. It controlled most surplus-producing agriculture and had a monopoly over mines. This made the purchase-sale of Shudras superfluous. The military and bureaucratic officials of state liasoned closely with the merchant and priestly classes and together this ruling triumvirate wore the tiara of the social system. On all these counts then, **the mode of production in India, though similar to the slave holding system, at the same time was different and distinct.** It is this distinctness that lends it exclusivity and argues on behalf of calling it with a new name, a name that could capture its distinguishing features.

If, then, the early historic period did represent an independent mode, the question any Marxist would ask is: which was the revolution that toppled it?

The scanty nature of literary evidence from the Satavahana period need not deflect us from making any conclusive statement about the factor of revolution leading to its overthrowal although we might initially hesitate in this regard. We might, on the basis of evidence derived from the Gupta period, however conclude that **there indeed was a deep seated crisis and a people's role as the motive force which brought down the prefeudal state and its ruling classes, thereby contributing to the commencement of a new mode, the feudal mode of production.** But this initial hesitation about Karnataka under the Satavahanas may be adequately discarded when one observes that **the collapse of the Satavahanas was sudden,** and after a mere gap of about a century the new dynasties representing the new mode of feudal production arose. As a result **feudalism commenced in Karnataka at a slightly earlier period than in the north.**

Let us thus look at the crisis which afflicted this mode of production constituting the period of its decay, common to all modes, before death.

The crisis had three significant components to it. First was the **revolts by the Shudras;** the second was the **contradiction among the ruling classes** between the Kshatriyas and the privileged Vis on the one hand and the Brahmanas on the other which was carried into the field of the religious superstructure too thereby weakening the ruling classes as a whole; and third was **conquest by dynasties foreign to the Indian subcontinent.**

RS Sharma writes: *"Around the third century AD the vaisya-sudra social formation was afflicted with a deep social crisis. The crisis is clearly reflected in the descriptions of the Kali age in those portions of the Puranas which belong to the third and fourth centuries AD. Emphasis on the importance of coercive mechanism (**danda**) in the **Santi-Parva** and description of anarchy (**arajakata**) in the epics possibly belong to the same age and point to the same crisis. The Kali age is characterised by **varanasamkara**, i.e., intermixture of varnas, or social orders, which implies that vaisyas and sudras, i.e., peasants, artisans and labourers either refused to stick to the producing functions assigned to them or else vaisya peasants declined to pay taxes and the sudras refused to make their labour available...collection of taxes by royal officers was made difficult...."*
[71]

The Dharmasutras generally emphasised the supremacy of the Brahmanas while the Buddhist and Jaina works emphasised the primacy of the Kshatriyas and only occasionally showed *"some lurking sympathy for the lower orders."*[72]

We further learn from RS Sharma that *"the Buddhists rarely questioned the fundamentals of the varna system, which identified the sudras with the serving class. Thus while refuting the brahmanical claims to superiority over the three other varnas, Gautama argues that as regards descent the ksatriyas are higher and brahmanas are lower. But he does not question the superiority of either the brahmanas or the ksatriyas over the vaisyas and the sudras."*[73]

In other words **the duel between Buddhism and Jainism on the one hand with Brahmanism on the other, was a duel between the Kshatriyas and the**

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Brahmanas. While the Kshatriyas had the upper hand in this conflict in the early half of this epoch, the period of decay signified a growing upper hand for Brahmanism. The Kshatriyas had to yield also on account of the fact that its numbers began to decline with the disruption of the cash economy and the resultant depopulation of cities. As VK Thakur says: *"The declining money economy not only cut down the cash income of the kings but also made a change of occupation necessary in the case of artisans and traders. This made the collection of taxes from the peasants as well as payments to officials and priests difficult."*[74]

The maintenance of a centralised bureaucracy, or in other words **the specific structure of the state was in jeopardy.**

The period of the end of the Guptas also saw conquests by foreign empires. The Greeks, Shakas and Kushanas, dubbed as Shudras in the epics and Puranas began to invade India's empires.

RS Sharma writes of the Kaliyuga which began at the end of the Mauryan and beginning of the Gupta period that: *"In an inscription of the first half of the fifth century AD the Pallava ruler Simhavarman is described as ever ready to save from the sins of the Kali age. This may suggest that the conception of the Kali age was not very old...the mention of the mlecchas and of the intermingling of various peoples in the description of the Kali age better suits conditions obtaining in the post-Mauryan period. The Puranic statements that the foreign rulers will kill the brahmanas and seize the wives and wealth of other is generally applied to this period and is in consonance with the spirit of similar allegations in the Yuga Purana.*

The descriptions of the Kali age, which are in the form of complaints and prophetic assertions made by the brahmanas, cannot be brushed aside as figments of imagination. They depict the pitiable plight of the brahmanas on account of the activities of the Greeks, Sakas and Kusanas. It is likely that their invasions caused an upheaval among the sudras, who were seething with discontent. Naturally they turned against the brahmanas, who were the authors of discriminatory provisions against them. How long and in which part of the country this social convulsion prevailed is difficult to determine for lack of data. But it seems that the intense hostility of the brahmanas towards the heretical 'sudra' kings was on account of the latter's fraternization with the sudras. The servile position of the sudras as slaves and hired labourers may have been undermined by the policy of the foreign rulers such as the Sakas and Kusanas, who were not committed to the ideology of varna-divided society."[75]

These were then the main aspects of the crisis. Often these aspects converged jeopardising the very existence of the system. Rebellions and 'indiscipline' among Shudras, the lack of money flows into state coffers and the dismal impact of this on trade led to the illegitimacy of the old state and its ruling classes. Already by Gupta times the possibility of acquiring slaves by war was undermined due to the shrinkage of the market and the paucity of coinage affected dealings in slaves. Therefore in order to maintain the stability of class rule, the state had to be restructured, and this itself was based on the emergence of a new class that was provided land grants by the king. To this intermediary class of landlords that began to emerge from the sixth century AD in the north and the fourth

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century AD in Karnataka, functions of the state were transferred thus leading to the crumbling of the old centralised edifice.

Therefore as VK Thakur quite ably sums up: *"...a deep seated social crisis affecting the mode of production was responsible for the origins of feudalism in India."*[76]

This crisis however did not have its Spartacus and spontaneously synchronised final revolution; yet all these aspects of the crisis rendered the old mode a decisive heave, creating a revolution of its own standing.

The ensuing revolutionary transformation of the mode of production was, owing to the spasmodic, intermittent and dispersed nature of the uprisings, undertaken in ruling class initiated measures 'from the top' finally landing society in a whole new mould--a mould which is familiar to us as the feudal mode of production, with its own exclusive laws of development.

For all these reasons then, we would like to take a step forward from DD Kosambi, RS Sharma, VK Thakur and other historians who have from their arduous research and analysis established how the early historical period of India was not a slave mode of production. But they have confined their theses at disclaiming a mechanical application of Marxism to the social reality by *"straightjacket"* categorisation of modes of production--on which count they have been correct--starting from primitive communism to slavery without in any way naming the mode of production that prevailed at that time. We would like to fill up this blank, the foundation for which has already been laid by Indian Marxist historiography. We would choose to call this as the **shudra holding mode of production**. **Resembling the slave holding mode of production in several respects, the shudra holding system however had its own distinct features. But despite all its distinct characteristics, the essential criterion leading to its nomenclation is derived from the condition of labour; that of Shudra helotage; a form exclusive to this period and which was discontinued with the rise of the next and new mode of production which in its wake released a contained productive force and caused a change of phenomenal and revolutionary proportions.**

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Chapter III

EARLY FEUDALISM

Kadambas to Hoysalas (Fourth Century to Twelfth Century AD)

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1. OUTLINE OF DYNASTIES AND THEIR RULE

As we proceed with this chapter the various aspects of the feudal mode of production as it obtained in Karnataka, will become more and more clear. Yet, to follow the argument better we would like to make a very brief resume of the conception of what feudalism is.

It is an independent mode of production which exists chiefly by the appropriation of surplus by a landlord class which is resident in the villages through direct forms of coercion. This makes villages into self-sufficient units of production and the surplus that is thus extracted is consumed by the exploitative hierarchy in a manner wherein the society may reproduce itself at the existing level of production.[1]

While the feudal mode of production spans across a very broad epoch--the broadest for Karnataka and India since our entry in the subcontinent to civilisation--its early phase, which we choose to call ***early feudalism*, existed for roughly eight centuries** since the time of its inception after the fall of the Satavahanas and with it, the end of the shudra mode of production.

Feudalism commenced with the commencement of the rule of two dynasties, almost parallel in time, in the north and south of Karnataka. The first of these was the rule of the Kadamba dynasty with Banavasi in Uttara Kannada district as its capital. Mayurasarma, its most heard of king was also its founder. He is claimed to be originally a Brahmana who later assumed the title of a Kshatriya after being insulted by the Brahmana's of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu. Yet this is suspect, or, if it were true it only reveals that in origin he was a Dravidian. Kadamba, the name of his dynasty, being the name of a plant which also was his bali and was naturally found in the forests of Uttara Kannada, only confirms this since Brahmanas do not have plants as their gotras. Starting with Mayurasarma in 325 AD, about 15 kings in all, concluding with Krishnavarma in 540 AD ruled for the Kadambas. This 200 odd years of reign covered as its nuclear area the districts of Belgaum, Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada, Shimoga, Chitradurga and Bellary.

With Kuvalalapura or Kolar as its capital, (which was changed afterwards to Talakadu on the banks of the Kaveri in Mysore district) the rule of the Gangas commenced in the middle of the fourth century AD. Dadiga or Kongunivarma and his brother Madhava I established the Ganga dynasty, with the former first assuming the throne. The Gangas trace their origins from Ahichchhatra (in Bareily district of Uttar Pradesh)--the importance of which we shall find occasion to describe later in this chapter--and it is claimed by later Ganga inscriptions that a Jain monk called Simhanandi under a boon from goddess Padmavathi chose the two brothers to establish the royalty. While there is not much contemporary evidence about Simhanandi, the Padmavathi inspiration is suspect since the incorporation of Padmavathi into the Jaina faith commences from a much later date and we may therefore consider these accounts of dynastic origins, which occur as regularly as the new dynasties themselves, as attempts at myth building, mystifying the, quite often, very mundane origins of preceptors of great dynasties so that they could become convenient objects of veneration and thus place the rulers on a pedestal. The

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56. Ganga and Kadamba kingdoms.

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57. Badami Chalukyan kingdom.

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Ganga dynasty continued till 999 AD, although it already was weak by the time of the reign of Rachamalla III (923-936 AD). The long haul of the Gangas lasting nearly six-and-a-half centuries makes it as the most stable of dynasties ever in Karnataka's history and perhaps among the longest that India herself has known. During this protracted period of its rule which saw the frequent shrinking and enlarging of its boundaries, it never however extended itself beyond the Tungabhadra and kept the region of Mysore, Mandya, Bangalore, Kolar and Hassan quite continuously under its rule having in the bargain to wage recurrent wars with the Pallavas and Pandyas of Tamil Nadu and the Rashtrakutas, Nolambas and Chalukyas of Karnataka. This gained the region of Mysore, Bangalore, Mandya, Kolar and Hassan the name of Gangavadi.

Just as the Kadamba dynasty showed signs of wilting, the Chalukyas of Badami (taking their name from Badami or Vatapi in Bijapur district which was their capital) could unite a large part of the Kannada territory under its 257 year rule. The Chalukyas were of Shudra origin, probably peasants, adept at using the *salki* meaning *crow bar*. Jayasimha, its forerunner was a feudatory under the Kadambas who asserted his independence in 500 AD but could not yet build an empire by the time of his death in 520 AD. It was Pulakeshi I (520-566 AD) who was the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty. Pulakeshi II (610-642 AD) who had defeated Harshavardhana on the banks of the Narmada and carried his kingdom's frontiers into Maharashtra and Gujarat was its most renowned ruler. Kirtivarma who ruled between 745-757 AD was the last Badami Chalukya king and faced defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakuta king Krishna I in 753 AD. But the line of the Badami Chalukyas did not end here. The dynasty continued for some more time, not as preeminent sovereigns but as vassals under the Rashtrakutas.

The Rashtrakutas were themselves vassals to the Chalukyas of Badami in Latur of Osmanabad district in Maharashtra. Dantidurga (735-756 AD), a feudal chieftain under the Chalukyas assumed titles of *Maharajadhiraja, Parameshwara* and *Paramabhattaraka* even during the time of his vassalage. His uncle Krishna I (756-773 AD) defeated the Chalukyas and set up the kingdom of the Rashtrakutas, with its capital at Manyakheta or the modern Malkhed in Gulbarga district. Under Govinda III (793-814 AD), the empire reached its zenith, to include, once again, within its frontiers, a large chunk of Karnataka and a fair part of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Taking advantage of these victories Amoghavarsha (821-878 AD) son of Govinda III to whom *Kavirajamarga*, the earliest extant Kannada work was till recently ascribed, kept all the leisure that was saved from war for his literary pursuits. Krishna III (939-967 AD) who defeated the Cholas was the last great ruler of the Rashtrakutas. In 973, after just a year of his rule, Karka II, by facing defeat at the hands of the Chalukyas of Kalyan was witness to the fall of the Rashtrakuta dynasty that ruled for slightly more than two centuries.

The Chalukyas of Kalyan were a branch of the Badami Chalukyas who continued as feudatories under the Rashtrakutas, but had made Kalyan in Bidar district their capital. Taila II (973-997 AD) was the new king of this line which was overthrown during the time of Taila III (1149-1162 AD) by the Kalachuri king Bijjala who ascended the throne at Kalyan in 1162 AD.

The Kalachuris belonged to the Katarchuri family of Madhya Pradesh, and this feudatory family ruled over parts of Bijapur under the Chalukyas of Kalyan. In 1167 AD

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58. Rashtrakuta kingdom.

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59. Kalyana Chalukyan kingdom.

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60. Hoysala and Seuna kingdoms.

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Bijjala was killed by representatives of the popular uprising in the city. Till 1184 AD his dynasty somehow managed to keep the throne of Kalyan intact but in that year Someshwara IV of the Kalyana Chalukyan dynasty who had fled the kingdom on the defeat of his father Taila III at the hands of Bijjala returned to take the kingdom from the Kalachuris. But in just two years after his ascension, Someshwara IV was forced to concede his capital and till his death in 1198 AD he remained a frustrated Chalukyan and never again a monarch.

This vacuum over Kalyana was soon filled by Singhana (1200-1247 AD) who was the most known of the Seuna dynasty of Devagiri. The Devagiri Seunas were Kurubas by caste (Sanskritised as Yadavas) and made the area of Dharwad-Bijapur as their core, extending the frontiers into Bidar and Gulbarga with the collapse of Someshwara IV.

All these developments, the rise and fall of dynasties, had consumed the north of Karnataka. In the south in 999 AD the Gangas had, after their long innings been reduced to modest vassalage.

The Hoysalas who hailed from Angadi in Chickmagalur district of whom Nripakama (1006-1045 AD) was the earliest known were formerly feudal chieftains under the Gangas. After a 31 year stint of Chola rule over Gangavadi from 987-1118 AD Vishnuvardhana (formerly Bittideva--1108-1152 AD) expanded the Hoysala kingdom. By 1149 he ruled over Gangavadi, Nolambavadi, Banavasi, Hangal and Huligere constituting a large part of Karnataka till the Seuna frontier in the north. In 1346 AD Virupaksha Ballala IV foresaked his kingdom and died before the transition of south Karnataka into the hands of the Vijayanagara empire in 1336 AD or into what we would choose to call the realm of *middle feudalism*.

This is then an outline of the dynasties that ruled Karnataka in the period of early feudalism. Genealogical details of each of these dynasties have been appended at the end of this volume.

A striking feature that emerges from this runthrough is that **the southern districts of Karnataka enjoyed relatively greater stability than the north** since only two dynasties--the Gangas and Hoysalas--shared the 800 year period between them save a brief stint of Chola rule. In north Karnataka, the picture was quite different. Six dynasties ruled over the region. Among these, the Kadambas, Badami Chalukyas and Seunas ruled from the north western region called otherwise as Bombay Karnataka; while the Rashtrakutas, Kalyan Chalukyas and Kalachuris ruled from the north eastern region, called from a much later point in history as the Hyderabad Karnataka region. But while there was a spatial pattern to this distribution of their capitals, their territories more often than not, tended to overlap, making it six dynasties for the northern region taken as a whole. This stability at one point and relative instability at the other itself depended on several factors which made up the specific features of the base and the superstructure in the two regions. About the reasons for this, and its implications affecting the dynamics of the stage of early feudalism itself, we shall discuss later.

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2. RISE OF A LANDED INTERMEDIARY CLASS

In the concluding part of our discussion on the shudra holding system we have noted how a crisis affected that mode of production. Engels says that *"Each new mode of production or form of exchange is at first obstructed not only by the old forms and their corresponding political institutions, but also by the old mode of distribution."*[2] It therefore became impossible for the ruling classes to continue with the old forms of exploitation and structures of society which corresponded to them. Salvaging from that crisis the ruling classes introduced a series of measures which brought about a sea change and inaugurated the commencement of a new mode of production--the feudal mode.

The chief measure at mitigating the crisis and assuring the stability of the system whose income and trade was being increasingly affected was the issuing of responsibilities of state management and revenue collection by making grants of whole villages to Brahmanas, wealthy merchants and administrators. Thus power was being decentralised and therein feudalised; with it, the economy; and in its trail society as a whole.

While DD Kosambi made a pioneering contribution by speaking of this process of development of feudalism following the Gupta period, it was RS Sharma who undertook to elucidate the process in a systematic manner starting with his work *Indian Feudalism*. RS Sharma's reconstruction of the process from a study of copper epigraphs over time, remains seminal to an understanding of Indian feudalism. In terms of evidence RS Sharma draws more from the region outside south India. Let us therefore first take a glance at this thesis and later, applying a similar methodology to seek out the process in Karnataka, view in this general background of an all-India nature, all its uniqueness and local specificities.

A. Process in the Subcontinent

RS Sharma says that starting from the Gupta period, and more particularly towards the end of the Guptas, land grants were made by royal authority to individuals, mostly Brahmanas, as a token of their service and as a new method for legitimising the rule of the state along its frontiers. Sharma says that *"the grants helped to create powerful intermediaries wielding considerable economic and political power. As the number of land owning brahmanas went on increasing, some of them gradually spread their priestly functions and turned their chief attention to the management of land; in their case secular functions became more important than religious functions. But above all as a result of land grants made to the brahmanas, the 'comprehensive competence based on centralised control', which was the hallmark of the Maurya state, gave way to decentralisation in the post-Maurya and Gupta periods. The functions of the collection of taxes, levy of forced labour, regulation of mines, agriculture, etc together with those of the maintenance of law and order, and defence which were hitherto performed by the state officials, were now step by step abandoned, first to the priestly class, and later to the warrior class."*[3]

Such distribution of land to the Brahmanas and temples commenced in the fifth century in north Bengal, in the sixth century in east Bengal and the seventh century in Orissa and Gujarat.[4]

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The issuing of such grants, starting from 300 AD ran its full course by 1200 AD. As a result of this process by the end of the twelfth century a landed intermediary class, mediating between the royal authority and the peasantry with its quarters firmly rooted in the villages emerged across the expanse of the Indian subcontinent. Due to this process the state forfeited ownership of land, in particular sita lands, and rendered all cultivated lands in the kingdom the property of a class of powerful intermediaries.

B. Process in Karnataka

An identical process took place in south India and in Karnataka also at that time. It is important to note that this process cut across dynasties and kingdoms. Starting almost simultaneously in the north and the south of the state under the Kadambas and Gangas respectively, the process of issuing land by making grants continued without any abatement into the Badami Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, Kalyan Chalukya, Kalachuri and Hoysala periods, tapering off from the thirteenth century, if not for any other reason, then out of the fact that the peasantry tended to openly resist such grants and due to the fact that most land had been exhausted and there was little cultivated ungranted land that was left and could be granted anymore. **The near completion of this process marks the period of early feudalism.** A study of the inscriptions granting such land to a feudal intermediary class speaks of certain trends. **While *brhamadeya* grants dominated the period from the fourth to seventh centuries, which were grants issued to individual Brahmanas, grants to temples spread out in the eighth and ninth centuries, while *agrahara*, *matha* and *ghatika* grants dominate the scene in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.** Apart from these which were cornered by the Brahmanas, a number of *umbalis* were made as payment for military service instead of the earlier payment in the form of cash, and were distributed across the entire period of early feudalism. Let us now look into some of these grants spanning across this period.

Radhakrishna Chaudhary says: *"The rise of feudalism in South India is traced back to the decline of the Satavahanas."*[5]

The Satavahanas controlled most of peninsular India. With their collapse however the empire came to be fragmented paving way for the rise of several local dynasties in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The sudden springing up of these innumerable dynasties (of which the Kadambas and Gangas hailed from Karnataka) and their mutual struggle for suzerainty remained elusive throughout this epoch and no kingdom could in this period really match the Satavahanas in terms of territory in peninsular India or similarly the Guptas and Mauryas in the north. The absence of an extensive empire during the entire period of early feudalism is, according to DD Kosambi, a characteristic feature resulting from the economic and political structure reflecting feudalism in this period. VK Thakur says that *"The administrative rights over land were given up for the first time in the grants made to the Buddhist monks by the Satavahana king Gautamiputra Satakarani in the second century AD."*[6]

It may be said in a strict sense that the Satavahanas were the first to make land grants in India. Yet it would be wrong to call their shudra mode of production as feudal on account of these instances since such examples were rare, and not reflective of any growing trend.

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Even the most superficial comparison of the Satavahana period with that of the Kadambas and Gangas reveals this contrast. KV Ramesh writes: *"It is even likely that as a part of his campaign to rejuvenate his ancient faith, Mayarasarma imported into his new found kingdom a number of* ***vaidika brahmana*** *families from the north (more precisely, if the legends are to be believed, from Ahichchhatra).... It is not surprising that many of the Sanskrit charters of the Kadambas, in contrast with the predominantly Buddhistic Prakrit inscriptions of the earlier epochs, record grants made to accomplished* ***vaidika brahmanas****. Even in the case of the Gangas who, if the later legends are to be believed, were put on the road to royalty by a Jaina monk, most of their genuine charters, issued during the period in question, pertain to the grant of* ***brahmadeyas*** *ie, lands meant for* ***vaidika brahmanas****."* [7]

BR Gopal's *Corpus of Kadamba Inscriptions, Volume I* presents to us a total of 51 Kadamba inscriptions. Almost every one of these inscriptions starting from the Malavalli inscription of Shikaripura taluk in Shimoga district made during the rule of Shivaskandavarma in which 13 villages are gifted to a Brahmana, record the granting of lands if not entire villages to the Brahmanas in the main while a few are made to military chiefs.[8]

The second epigraph cited from the Kadamba period by BR Gopal is the famous Halmidi inscription. The Halmidi grant remains the earliest record of written Kannada and thus has an important place in Karnataka history. Issued by Kakusthavarma on his victory over the Pallavas in 450 AD, the inscription apart from its significance to lingual history is only another milestone--written in Kannada of course--marking the journey of society towards feudalism. The use of Kannada itself is derived from the nature of the donees who are not Sanskrit speaking Brahmanas but are two military chieftains, obviously Kannada speaking Shudras. While this throws light on the language-caste equation of the time, we shall discuss this dimension in detail in a later part of this chapter. This is how the Halmidi inscription reads: *"Victorious is Achyuta, embraced by Sri but has the bow of Saranga bent and in a fire occurring at the end of the* ***Yugas*** *to the eyes of the demons, but looks pleasing (is a defensive discuss) to good people.*

Obeisance. While Kakustha-bhatara, the ruler of the Kadamba kingdom, devoted to making gifts, the enemy of Kalabhora was ruling, the Illustrious chiefs of Naridavile-nadu, named Mrigesa and Naga, who were terrible like the lord of beasts (the lion or siva) and the lord of serpents (Vasuki), gave, in the presence of heroic men of the two countries the Sendraka and the Bana, as ***balagalchu****, the villages Palmadi and Mulivalli, to Vija-arasa, the beloved son of Ella-bhatari (for having participated) in the raid of (the chief?) named Pasupati, a moon to the clear sky, the famous Batari family, Siva to the* ***ganas*** *of Alapa (ie, the chief of the Alapa group), who is filled with the action of giving away cows in hundreds of sacrifices and with valour in battle in the great* ***Dakshinapatha*** *and is eulogised as Pasupati in making gifts, Ala Kadamba of the Batari family. He who steals this is a great sinner (these) two and Vijayarasa of Salabanga (?) granted* ***kurumbidi*** *to Palmadi. He who destroys (incurs) great sin. Be it well."* [9]

BR Gopal adds immediately afterwards that: *"In the yield of this wet land one-tenth portion was granted to the Brahmanas free of taxes."* [10]

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This inscription already points to several aspects of the process of feudalisation. It makes the grant of land as the most prized manner of payment, substituting thereby payments in cash; it brings out the role of military chieftains as landed intermediaries in addition to that of the Brahmanas; it eulogises the king's gift-making role and most important, grants one-tenth of the produce of the wet-lands of these villages--perhaps paddy--as a tax to be paid to Brahmanas; thereby creating a hierarchy of feudal interests sharing the surplus of the toil of the peasantry of these villages.

By the time of the Halmidi grant there evolved an established pattern of writing out these inscriptions, which only speaks of the extent to which land grants were already being made by the Kadambas. Towards the end of the Halmidi epigraph are lines which warn anybody against infringing on this grant, condemning them as *"sinners"* and of *"committing a great sin"*. The Hiresakuna plate granting a village and some lands to a Brahmana by Mrigeshavarma even warns soldiers against *"entering"* these lands.[11] From BR Gopal's list of epigraphs we also observe that any infringement of the grants made to Brahmanas would have led such tresspassers to be *"cooked in hell for 60,000 years"*, be *"born as a worm in ordure for 60,000 years"*, become *"guilty of five great sins"* and be considered equivalent to *"killing 1000 Brahmanas of Ayodhya"*. All these were not mere curses inscribed by the Kadamba rulers, but outright warnings that any attempt by disobedient villagers or recalcitrant vassals terminating these grants would be dealt with by nothing short of death. Thus it was through the conviction of arms that large landed feudal property came to be established. That these inscriptions were made on copper or on stone only spoke of the desire by the kings to create a perpetual class of landed intermediaries.

Among the earliest grants made by the Gangas were one in 370 AD and another in 425 AD both of which registered the gifting of entire villages to the Mula Sangha Jain order in Malur taluk of Kolar district.[12]

B Sheik Ali, in his extensive study of the Gangas writes that there were *"...numerous inscriptions of lands granted to agraharas by Ganga kings. Durvinitha granted the village of Kolintur to 48 brahmins.... An inscription of Sivamara records the grant of land to an agrahara in Suradevapura near Devanahalli [in Bangalore district]."*[13] Sheik Ali also mentions of another grant of a cluster of villages by Butuga II known as Atkur 12 and also another village called Kadiyur to Brahmana landlords.[14]

After discussion the issue of these grants of land to Brahmanas, B Sheik Ali says *"From this its is obvious that the grant of a village entitled the donee to enjoy the benefit that was formerly accruing to the state...."*[15] Thus he was only confirming that the structure of the state and the economy was being feudalised without necessarily using the term as such. Further he writes: *"**We have hundreds of thousands of such grants** made by the king either to the temples, or Brahmins or generals or any charitable institution in which it was very clearly stated that any misuse of this land by alienating it was as sinful as the murder of a thousand brahmins of Varanasi."*[16] The issuing of *"hundreds of thousands of such grants"* as Sheik Ali says, although need not be taken literally, surely describe the strength of this process. The six-and-a-half centuries of Ganga rule were clearly possessed by the force of feudalism. The etched letters on copper and stone only testify to this as the spirit of the age.

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The Badami Chalukyas are credited with being among the first of Karnataka's feudal kings to have brought most of the Kannada speaking territory under their unified rule and to many glorifiers of Karnataka's feudal past, this period marks some kind of a culmination in social achievement. But as RS Sharma rightly says: *"...it was under the Calukyas that Brahmana settlements came to be distributed over the whole state in the 6th-8th centuries."*[17] It is therefore quite possible that this 'unification' of Karnataka also witnessed the greatest number of land grants under any dynasty, perhaps even exceeding that of the Gangas who ruled for nearly four centuries more than what the Badami Chalukyas did.

With the rise of the Badami Chalukyas certain distinct trends in the issue of land grants are also evident. Firstly, as we already mentioned, brahmadeya grants become less frequent only to be replaced by grants to brahmana temples, ghatikas and towards the fag end, a shift from ghatikas to their more developed version, the mathas. This change is itself reflective of a maturing of early feudalism. **From creating a landed intermediary class, the emphasis is now instead on building the religio-political institutions necessary to sustain the feudal mode of production.**

Secondly, **the issues on which land grants are made become very frivolous.** The smallest of rituals conducted at the palace by Brahmanas, the most commonplace of sacrifices conducted on behalf of the kings, the smallest of victories in war, the decision to embark on a military campaign--each one of these instances have heaped landed property on the Brahmanas. As KV Ramesh tells us: *"Chalukya Someswara III, in his **Champukavya** ... says that Polekesi I performed the sixteen **mahadanas** during every **sankranti** thereby keeping the Vedic brahmanas quite busy and contented."*[18] KV Ramesh offers us some more examples. He says, that after Pulakeshi II's victory over Harsha in 617-618 AD a charter was issued, the purpose of which was to *"register the perpetual grant, made by the Yuvaraja, of the holy village of Alandatirtha (Gulbarga district) to five brahmana brothers.... The recipients of the gifts were expected to perform, in return the five great **yagas**, bali (sacrificial offering of food), charu (oblationary offering of cooked food), **vaisvadeva**, **agnihotra** and **harana**...."*[19]

KV Ramesh narrates to us an instance which despite being an exaggeration, depicts to us the esteem with which grants made to Brahmanas were attached and the significance this trend had assumed under the Badami Chalukyas. Of course Ramesh himself is unable to contain his awe for the Brahmanas of the time. *"The Kalyana Chalukyas were wonderstruck with admiration whenever they recollected the fact that their illustrious ancestor had, on the momentous occasion of performing the horse-sacrifice, given away to the vedic preiests two thousand villages well endowed with horses and elephants. Chalukya Bhulokamalla Someswara III (AD 1126-1138) himself a historian of sorts, says in his Sanskrit Champu, **Vikramank Abhyudayam**, that when Polekesi I had performed the **asvamedha** sacrifice, his horse had triumphantly trodden the earth bound by the four seas and that he had granted thirteen thousand villages as dakshina to his priests."*[20]

Further Ramesh cites instances when Pulakeshi II set out on his second campaign he issued a village to a Brahmana in 630 AD[21] and again on his conquest of Andhra territories in 631 AD he issued a grant of 800 *nivartanas* of land to a Brahmana.[22]

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A third feature that emerged during the reign of the Badami Chalukyas **was the development of the process of subinfeudation.** RN Nandi identifies the commencement of this process from the eighth century AD onwards.[23] Subinfeudation was itself a pointer to the geometric progression in the creation of a feudal Karnataka. Feudal chieftains and vassals under the king who were themselves lords over extensive tracts of lands assumed the power to make grants of land from grants which were formerly made to them. As we shall see later, the virtue of making gifts, originally attributed to kings, now became a merit which every small fiefholder ascribed to himself. The process of subinfeudation which set in particularly from the time of the Badami Chalukyas reflected the absolute feudalisation of the political sphere which in turn created in its wake a class of landed intermediaries who would be thankful and loyal to the immediate chieftain given the uncertainties and frequently shifting loyalties of the vassalage. By the time of the Rashtrakutas Karnataka was precipitated with feudal enclaves and fiefdoms. Any new grant of land would in all probability have to signal the loss of it for some others. KS Shivanna writes: *"The Rashtrakuta monarchs, as a paramount power in a vast empire, felt it necessary to create new fiefs as rewards for military service to those who assisted them in their imperial adventures. In so doing, they were often forced to wipe out old feudal lords and take possession of their property. Thereafter they created livings for their dependants whose loyalty was necessary to keep the imperial structure intact."*[24]

KS Shivanna goes on to explain the feudalisation of Rashtrakuta polity thus bringing out some more aspects of subinfuedation: *"One of the means to assess the status of a feudal lord in the Rashtrakuta empire was the right of alienation of lands and villages situated within the fief with or without making reference to the paramount power. From the evidence gathered from inscriptions we may classify the ranks of feudal lords into three categories. Those who belonged to the first class enjoyed the right to alienate lands and villages without making reference to the paramount power. The feudal lords of this class also could create their own feudal chiefs in turn. For instance the Rattas of Saundatti....*

The second class of feudal lords...had no power to alienate villages located within their fiefs....

A third type, the monarchs alienated villages without consulting their feudatories."
[25]

RS Sharma corroborates this by saying: *"...whatever might be the difference between the bigger and smaller vassals, subinfeudation was practiced widely under the Rastrakutas."*[26]

Further Sharma says that among the Rashtrakutas payment to officials and vassals was made by gifting rent free lands to state officials.[27] *"...under the Rastrakutas military service was paid by land grants."*[28] Thus **land had become if not the sole then at least the principal form of payment for religious and military service rendered to the king or to the vassals.**

We also learn from very sizeable grants made during the period of the Rashtrakutas from RN Nandi. These grants must have been so substantial that it only signifies that the backing of the state was a precondition for the creation of such grants. *"The fragmentary record of a Rastrakuta king, issued in 930 refers to 60 families of Karnataka brahmanas*

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and 240 families of Karad brahmanas among the 1000 brahmanas who were residing in the town of Manyakheta, and for whose maintenance a village on the western boundary of Manyakheta was donated."[29]

Explaining the further continuation of this process under the Chalukyas of Kalyan, Y Gopala Reddy says: *"The practice of awarding plots of land, villages, fiscal and administrative rights to the Brahmanas and the temples by the kings, queens, feudal lords, private individuals, guilds and other institutions paved the way for the emergence of powerful landed intermediaries between the king and the people during the time of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani.... These landed magnates enjoyed certain privileges which were denied to the other feudal intermediaries. The Brahman donees were not expected to render any military service to their benefactors. The fiefs held by them were exempted from confiscation and it was very clearly indicated by the imprecatory verses appended at the end of the grants. They were also exempted from payment of taxes, imports, etc. They were entitled to sell, lease or mortgage land in the donated villages. They even had the right to confine the working population to the donated estate which practically reduced the socio-economic mobility of the peasants. These feudatories performed administrative functions not under the authority of the royal officials but almost independently.*

...All these elements point to the existence of feudal element in the Western Chalukyan polity."[30]

Thus Hsuen Tsang the Chinese traveller who visited the Badami Chalukyan kingdom during his sojourn in India from 629-643 AD observed that *"all officers, high and low, were remunerated by allotments of revenues of lands."*[31] This can only mean that government officials were paid by income derived from lands granted to them in lieu of their pay, thereby fully bearing out the role of land grants in the Karnataka and Indian economy of the time.

In the final centuries of the period of early feudalism encompassing the rule of the Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas, Kalyan Chalukyas, Kalachuris and Seunas there was a marked rise in granting agraharas to Brahmanas. (*Agra = first* and *hara = to take*). The agraharas situated normally on the frontiers with forest land were first created in Karnataka under the Kadamba king Mayurasarma, in the fourth century AD at Talgunda in Shimoga district.[32] But apart from a few agraharas that were created in the fourth century AD, it did not pick up as a trend till the onset of the ninth century, when according to Leela Shantakumari 5 agraharas were created, 13 in the tenth century, 43 in the eleventh century, 51 in the twelfth century and 20 in the thirteenth century.[33] While the real number of agraharas were surely much larger in number, these figures culled from Leela Shantakumari's book are only indicative of the trend.

The agrahara phenomenon thus comes as the climax of the process of feudalisation of Karnataka. Coming as it does at the end of the period of early feudalism it marks the unprecedented sway of the Brahmana in society--the golden age of Brahmanahood in Karnataka. But just like all golden ages of class society it came to represent the extreme forms of feudalism and carried with its rise, a crisis of no mean proportions, after the consummation of which, agraharas faced a historical crash, amplifying the end of the period of early feudalism and ushering in

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the next period, that of middle feudalism in Karnataka. The absolute sway of the agraharas during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries marked the high point of the feudalisation of Karnataka and carried in political, economic and cultural terms all those features which would characterise feudalism.

What was then the net effect of the issue of land grants for eight centuries from the time of the fourth to the twelfth centuries AD by kings and later their feudatories and vassals? In VK Thakur's words *"As a result of land grants, the independent and self-sufficient economic units"* which were the hallmark of medieval European feudalism, arose in Karnataka also. *"The several economic rights conferred upon the beneficiaries snapped the economic ties between the central authority and the original cultivators of the donated areas...."*[34]

The granting of land to a privileged class of Brahmanas, Jainas, administrators, rich merchants and military chiefs in the face of a **crisis of the shudra holding mode of production was principal to the creation of a feudal mode of production. It created a class of landlords, removed from production, enjoying the surplus produced by the peasantry over whom it ruled and it was out of such an intermediary class that the king came to depend for his taxes in kind and military service, representing also at the same time, as the head of the state the interests of the class of feudal lords.** The gradual collapse of the centralised shudra holding state machinery created a decentralisation of power to the hands of a powerful class of landlords who, as a result of the new mode of their existence, generated an economy characterised by its self-sufficiency which was only another indicator of the feudal mode of production.

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3. RURAL MOORINGS OF THE NEW MODE

One major impact of the land grants was the creation of villages as the new centres of power and as self-sufficient units of the economy affecting the existence of towns and cities and thereby causing their decline.

In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels wrote: *"If antiquity started out from the town and its small territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country."* [35]

Engels echoed this when he wrote: *"Civilization strengthened and increased all the established divisions of labour, particularly by intensifying the contrast between town and country (either the town exercising economic supremacy over the country, as in antiquity, or the country over the town, as in the Middle Ages)...."* [36]

Marx and Engels were emphasising two points about two successive modes of production. On the one hand the period of slavery according to them was one of the city dominating the village in the sense that the ruling classes were resident in the city and they extracted surplus from the rural areas through an apparatus of state which they regulated and operated from their urban locales. This characterised the slave mode of production or in our instance, the mode of the shudra holding system which bears close similarity with it. **With the transition to feudalism there was a perceptive change of locale of the ruling classes. They shifted their base to the villages, achieved in Karnataka and India by the issue of land grants, and carried their entourage with them to their rural forts and temple dwellings. The army itself,** as we shall see in greater detail later, **was portioned off and the soldiers existed on a military tenure as peasants. The stamp of the village was writ on society. The importance of the town had all but ceased. What urban settlements remained were, swamped by, and fell under the influence of the villages. The period of feudalism characterised by the decline in cities is one of its universal features** and let us see how, as a result of the new mode of production, this was achieved.

A. Collapse of Satavahana Cities

VK Thakur's study perhaps remains the most comprehensive account on the question of the decline of urban centres in the period of early feudalism of India. But Thakur concentrates his study on the Ganga basin. RN Nandi, however, who has focussed more on peninsular India and by far provides us with the most comprehensive analysis of early feudalism in Karnataka, says: *"In a great majority of urban sites in the peninsular region, the phase marked by a long period of decay is not very distinct and the towns which were in a prosperous state between 250 BC and AD 250 appear to have been deserted rather suddenly about the close of the third century AD. This can be seen from the findings of excavations at Brahmagiri, Chandravalli, Hemmige and Badagaon-Madhavpur in Karnataka...."* [37]

Therefore except for Banavasi which became the capital of the Kadambas all the urban centres that existed during the Satavahanas disappeared. **The suddenness of the disappearance of Satavahana towns in contrast to a more gradual process in north India only serves to etch out in clear relief the fault lines between the mode of the**

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shudra holding system on the one hand and feudalism on the other. The crisis faced by the shudra holding system in the Satavahana held region was in all probability sharper and the change to the new mode was drastic. An uprising, a revolution bringing down the shudra mode, with a devastating impact can be the only valid reason for the rapidity of the urban collapse. A symptom of this crisis was already expressed by the Satavahana grants of land to Buddhist viharas in the latter half of their rule. **It would not be wrong to presume on the basis of this suddenness that the transition from one mode of production to another in Karnataka was effected by a revolution.**

B. Emigration to Villages

The depopulation of urban centres only meant the populating of villages. **The transition from the shudra holding system to feudalism also encompassed, therefore, a migratory movement from town to village.** The suddenness of the collapse of Satavahana cities was offset by the issuing of land grants by the Kadamba and Ganga kings who had even by the time of the early years of their rule standardised the style of writing out these grants. **This early standardisation only speaks of its catering to a large migratory movement.** After an initial migratory wave that followed the sudden end of Satavahana rule and the setting up of new villages under the lordship of military chiefs, merchants and a priestly class or the rendering of existing villages as a source of survival for these classes, there should have been an end to this process of ruralisation in Karnataka. But this was not to be so. The urban centres of Karnataka under the Satavahanas were neither very populous nor very large when compared to those in north India. Hence after a sudden exodus of people who could have been easily accommodated in the granted villages or the new villages that were created, the process of issuing land grants must in fact have petered out. But on the contrary it continued and with renewed vigour with the passing of each new decade. The growth in population and the need to create new survivals for the ruling classes could be considered as one factor for the recurrence of land grants, but this by itself could not have accounted for most of them in the centuries that followed. From our study of the land grants one fact stands out. And, that is that most of them were issued to Brahmanas either as brahmadeya in the initial centuries or as institutional grants in the later centuries. But the Satavahana period itself described Buddhism and Jainism as the more numerous religions when compared to Brahmanism. It is therefore evident from all this that **the land grants that were issued in the centuries of early feudalism in Karnataka served only to a certain extent a local clientele while the biggest chunk of it went to service the interests of a Brahmana class that migrated from the north. The issuing of land grants in Karnataka to the Brahmanas was not a sudden phenomenon but a gradual process, a graduality which neatly fits with the gradual decline of the north Indian urban settlements and the migratory movement of Brahmanas from the vast Ganga valley** covering the region of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Nepal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal.

In addition to this movement of Brahmanas from the north into peninsular India one may also expect an accompanying movement of merchants and some ruling dynasties to have occurred although not to the same extent as that of the Brahmanas. We would

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like to consider the implications of this phenomenon on various aspects of the early feudal social formation of Karnataka in later portions of this chapter.

C. Fluid Towns, Floating Cities

Comparing the trend of deurbanisation of the post-Gupta period with that of the post-Harappa period, VK Thakur says: *"The urban centres of historical India, however, declined in a way which was quite different from the Harappan cities. While the decline of Harappan towns marked an end of town life for about a millennium, the urban centres did not completely disappear in the Gupta and post-Gupta times; some centres continued to thrive as towns or centres of political power on a temporary basis."* [38]

The fall of Harappan towns was to an extent also the handiwork of Aryan town-busters. Belonging to a more backward mode of production of pastoralism, the Aryans who swept across the Harappan towns in its last years in 1800 BC found little use of the well constructed cities and houses with their passage across the Sindhu valley marking the final demise of this civilisation, the Indo-Aryans continued with their pastoral mode till 600 BC. **For these 1,200 years after the fall of Sindhu civilisation there was not just the collapse of urban centres but a general and shattered state of flux: a rare but not altogether unknown fact of historical development; occurring when the previous mode of production is not rooted on the firm foundations of a plough using iron culture.** The new urbanisation that started in the sixth century BC in the central Ganga valley this time was based on iron and thus proved to be capable of developing a material culture that could sustain society without any pauses future relapses such as that experienced by the Harappan.

The deurbanisation that occurred in the post-Satavahana and post-Gupta periods in peninsular and north India, quite unlike what took place in the post-Harappan period, was, despite the decline in towns and cities, **not as a consequence a retreat but instead was an advance in the mode of production** from the shudra holding system to feudalism. It was a deurbanisation which did not, as VK Thakur correctly says, witness altogether the disappearance of cities and towns as such, but saw the continuity of urban centres in the political capitals of the various kingdoms but which did not house the principal ruling classes, the feudal class being ensconced firmly in its rural forts and temple and matha complexes. Thus the urban phenomenon was not emphasised, it was in a condition of being swamped by the villages and therefore despite the loss of scale and grandeur when compared to the earlier shudra holding mode, it carried on a lesser scale all those elements of continuity which had been greatly disrupted in the post-Harappan period. The new civilisation that emerged on the banks of the Ganga could not display any visible Harappan features. All such aspects had been either completely lost or neatly tucked into the social substratum, making them almost invisible. But **the new period of deurbanisation carried a pronounced continuity with the old shudra holding order making the links with the shudra mode of production visible all along.**

Following the disappearance of Satavahana urban centres in the third-fourth centuries AD, **it would not be until the last two hundred years of the phase of early feudalism, ie, till after the eleventh century, that a process of urban revival could be witnessed in Karnataka.**[39] Thus for nearly 800 years Karnataka did not witness the

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61. Relics of the Rashtrakuta capital Malkhed, Gulbarga district. The temple in the background appears to belong to the Rashtrakuta period, the structure in the foreground is from Adilshahi times. The Kaginala river meanders into the horizon.

revival of urban centres; the village or in other words, feudalism, had indeed swamped and suffocated the cities. During this long period of eight centuries there were only from nine to 15 urban centres for the whole of Karnataka.[40] If the self-sufficient village economy caused as a result of the land grants was a factor preventing the rise of urban centres, another factor militating against their development was the internecine feudal wars which saw the widespread destruction of towns owing to their pillage. It is important to observe that **each dynasty in Karnataka, except the Kalachuris who of course ruled for a very brief period of 17 years, had their own exclusive capital cities.** For the Kadambas if it was Banavasi, the Gangas had Kolar and later Talakad, the first Chalukyas had Badami, the Rashtrakutas had Malkhed, the later Chalukyas had Kalyan, the Seunas Devagiri and the Hoysalas, Halebidu. The establishment of each new dynasty saw also the establishment of a new city as their political headquarters, the capital of the earlier dynasty having been pillaged and, as a result, having fallen to absolute ruin.

VK Thakur explains of a similar situation in the post-Gupta feudal north. "*The frequent feudal wars of the Gupta and more so of the post-Gupta period were responsible for the destruction of cities. The sacking of cities seems to have been a common feature of the wars of this period.*"[41] In fact **unheard of villages proved to be far more resilient than capital cities themselves. Some survived war and natural calamities and lived on for more than a millennium. By contrast, except for Banavasi which as a result of its continuity with the five centuries of the shudra holding system, no capital city in early feudal Karnataka survived beyond 300 years.**

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4. FALL IN TRADE AND ITS REORGANISATION BY FEUDAL MERCHANT GUILDS

A. Indicators of the Fall

The decline in urban centres with **the commencement of the feudal mode of production;** itself a result of the emergence of self-sufficient economic village units due to the land grants and emergence of a feudal intermediary class only **spelt the fall in commerce**. The existence of the town was indivisibly connected with the existence of the merchant and vice versa. It is quite impossible to conjure of one without the other. The merchant being the agent of trade, all trade taking place only due to the existence of the merchant, a decline in urban centres which is where the merchant class dwelt could only spell the collapse of trade.

The period of early feudalism also saw the rise of social values created obviously by the landed Brahmana feudal class. Om Prakash Prasad says: *"One such baneful influence [for the decline of towns] was the unholiness of sea-faring. Perhaps the custodians of Hinduism, the* ***brahmanas*** *imposed this injunction to arrest the growing influence of the trading community in relation to their own position in the society."*[42]

Om Prakash Prasad's study of the urbanisation question in the early feudal period of Karnataka is quite revealing. In the seventh century Banavasi (Uttara Kannada district), Palasika (Halasige in Belgaum district), Pombuchcha (Hombuja in Shimoga district), Puligere (Lakshmeshwar in Dharwad district), Aihole (Bijapur district), Shravanabelagola (Hassan district), Kisurolala (Pattadakal, Bijapur district), Vatapi (Bijapur district) and Talakad (Mysore district) were the nine urban centres. Of these **all** were either religious or administrative centres or sometimes both. **None** of them were of a commercial nature.[43]

In the eighth century a total of eight towns were identified. They were Asandi (Belgaum district), Banavasi, Kuvalalapura (Kolar), Badami, Pombuchcha, Palasika, Talakad and Shravanabelagola. **None** among these were commercial centres.[44]

The nine urban centres in the ninth century included Kuvalalapura, Manyakheta (Malkhed in Gulbarga district), Annigere (Dharwad district), Banavasi, Mulgund (Gadag taluk, Dharwad district), Puligere, Bankapura (Dharwad district), Shravanabelagola and Talakad. **All** these were either capitals, administrative or religious centres.[45]

In the tenth century, the number of urban centres increases. They include: Kalyan (Bidar district), Atakur, Annigeri, Bankapur, Mangalore (Dakshina Kannada district), Uchchangi (Bellary district), Banavasi, Talakad, Manyakheta, Puligere, Mulgund, Soratavur (Dharwad district), Tanagunda (Talagunda, Shimoga district), Shravanabelagola and Kovalalapura. Of these **only** Mangalore, falling under the Hoysalas was of a commercial nature.[46]

Data from eleventh and twelfth centuries however describe a change. This we shall consider in a later part of this chapter. This information from Om Prakash Prasad only tells us that **the first eight centuries of the early feudal period was characterised by poor trade.**

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62. Urban centres in Karnataka during the early and middle phases of early feudalism.

Another indicator, and perhaps a more immediate one at that—of the ebb in trade—**was the paucity of coinage from these first eight centuries of the early feudal period.** This trend again was an all-India phenomenon. RS Sharma writes: *"It is therefore evident that coins in general became rarer from the time of Harshavardhana on-*

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wards, which leads us to the conclusion that trade suffered a decline and urban life began to disappear, a feature which can be compared to a similar development in Iran."[47]

Further, VK Thakur says: *"Inspite of occasional attempts to project selected inscriptional and literary references to coins in early medieval India, in contradistinction to the absence of actual finds the paucity of coinage and its bearing on contemporary exchange mechanism is almost universally realised and acknowledged. A systematic exploitation of contemporary literary texts and epigraphs indubitably tends to portray an economy with little or no use for coined money.... This new trend virtually tantamounts to a reversal, to an economic pattern devoid of any consequential monetary exchange in juxtaposition with a near self-sufficient, economic formation having a sparing scope for worthwhile urban survival."* [48]

As we have seen in the previous chapter on the shudra holding system under the Satavahanas, innumerable punchmarked coins of varying denominations, some issued by the Chutus and Maharathis were found across Karnataka. These and the hordes of Roman coins, a few of which also belonged to the first years of Karnataka's entry to feudalism but after which they simply ceased, only described an active mercantile economy and the widespread production of commodities. **With the entry of Karnataka into the epoch of feudalism there was a sudden and definite drop in coinage.** Some historians who fail to see the dialectical movement from the shudra holding system to feudalism attribute this drop to the poor luck of the archaeologist. But the point with this 'poor luck' theory is that it coincides with a specific period and a specific form of economy which had little use for coinage and currency.

AV Narasimha Murthy's study of Karnataka's numismatic history has led him to conclude: *"Though so much is known about the history and culture of the Gangas of Talakad, nothing is known about their coinage. **Not even a single coin** containing either the name of the dynasty or the names of the Ganga kings has so far been found."* [49] Let us not forget that the Gangas ruled for about 650 years. Similarly RS Sharma says: *"It is remarkable that not a single Rashtrakuta coin has been discovered so far although they ruled for over 200 years, although their kingdom touched the sea coast, and although the term **hiranya** is repeatedly mentioned in their land charters."* [50] Writing about the Chalukyas of Badami KV Ramesh says: *"...whatever money was in circulation appears to have had little or no influence on everyday life."* [51] Citing from Chattopadhyaya, Om Prakash Prasad writes: *"From the point of view of availability of coins, the numismatic history of Karnataka can be divided into two periods. The first phase covers a period of 400 years from the 6th century to the 10th century. In his work entitled Coins and Currency Systems in South India, Chattopadhyaya notes that there is a 'total absence' of indigenous coins during this period. He states that except one gold coin and a few electrum coins attributable to Vikramaditya I of the Chalukya house of Badami, no other coins can be assigned to any of the dynasties which ruled over Karnataka and its adjoining areas for a period of 400 years. Despite epigraphical references to coin-names, this 'total absence' of actual numismatic finds during a period of 400 years can only mean a lesser incidence of the use of coined money for commercial and other economic purposes."* [52] Om Prakash Prasad starts with a base year of 600 AD which we feel is too late

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for dating the origins of feudalism in Karnataka and may be pushed back by nearly three centuries to coincide with the rise of the Kadamba and Ganga dynasties. In case that is done we are left with almost no actual finds of coinage and only have to make do with certain epigraphical references of denominations, which, in the absence of any real production of currency could as well be a manner of expression to quantify property.

Writing of a similar situation about north India, VK Thakur says: *"It is noteworthy that it was only 350 years or so after the Guptas that gold coins appeared on the Indian scene. It seems to us that due to the rise of local units of production the practice of the day was local production for local consumption, implying thereby the unnecessity of internal exchange on any considerable scale, hence the absence of coins for common use."* [53]

Towards the end of the early feudal phase, ie, the turn to the second millennium of the Christian era, there was a revival of coinage. 13 Hoysala gold coins belonging to this period have so far been found. But again, during this period no copper coins have been found, marking thereby, the limited role that coinage played and thus of trade being circumscribed by the feudal economy of local production and local consumption.

Further, the appearance of gold coinage towards the end of the early feudal phase saw them being minted not by the state or by royal order but by localised mints located outside the capital city. In this context, GR Kuppuswamy says: *"The minting of coins was not a state monopoly but carried out in private establishments licensed by the state. They were allowed to mint and issue coins under the supervision of officers appointed by the state. There were thus minting establishments which were spread over various parts of Karnataka especially at Kurgodu, Lakkundi, Tumbula, Kottittone, Balligave, Malligenahalli, Sudi, Gobbur and other places."* [54] A few of these centres which minted coins were also at the same time mathas or administrative towns located at commercial crossroads. And therefore, the revival of coinage found during these late centuries of the early feudal phase witnessed, in a manner typical of feudalism, the granting of all authority to mint coins to mathas and centres of fiefdoms. This only speaks of the revival of coinage, yet a revival that is firmly bound by the feudal order of things. In the event, the mint, if and where it existed, also got feudalised.

A third indicator of the decline in trade in early feudal Karnataka is to be obtained by the decline and almost total elimination of Buddhism from Karnataka of that time. We have already seen how in the earlier period of the shudra holding system that Buddhism, among the established religions, had the most numerous following. Further we also saw how Buddhism was directly tied to and sponsored by mercantile interests. **With the decline of commerce and the fall from grace of the class of merchants, Buddhism too fell with an identical rapidity.** Just as currency, the trader's medium for accumulation, Buddhism, its religion too went out of circulation.

B. Aihole 500 and the Feudalisation of Trade

The decline of trade must however not be taken in an absolute sense. It would be fallacious to presume that there was, as a result of the self-sufficient village economy, no scope for trade whatsoever. The self-sufficient village economy indicated

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the existence of not hermetically sealed villages. Trade did exist, barter did take place, but trade and barter were on a low key; **they were in no way significant for the reproduction of the mode.** Further, what little trade did take place during this period did not in any way contradict the feudal order as it did, for instance, in the last two centuries of early feudalism in Karnataka. Thus **trade under feudalism only served to reproduce and perpetuate feudalism, it was trade feudalised, and therefore may be called feudal trade.** Writing in the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels expressed this aspect quite succinctly when they said: *"This feudal structure of land ownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organisation of trades."* [55] This may serve as a good reference in our study of the merchant guild called Aihole 500. This guild was, as Marx and Engels said, *"corporative"* in terms of its property and was a *"feudal organisation of trade"* reflecting therein, the *"feudal structure of land ownership"*.

The merchant guild of Aihole 500, a name that is derived from its proximity to the seat of Badami Chalukyan power, came into existence in the eighth century *"towards the close of the period of the Calukyas of Badami or in the opening years of Rastrakuta rule."* [56] The Aihole 500, commencing its existence from the eighth-ninth centuries already began to loose its esteemed position by the end of the twelfth century. The maximum inscriptional activity undertaken by this guild comes from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[57] The Aihole 500 guild was the biggest of merchant guilds of not just peninsular India but of India itself of that time. Its operations were concentrated *"more or less, to the territory of the present-day states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, as well as southern AP, particularly the Coromandel strip."* [58] Through the various ports, the Aihole 500 also carried on an overseas trade with Sri Lanka, China and the countries of south east Asia. The continental proportions of its trade has led certain historians to compare it with the Hanseatic League of Germany. But such a comparison is unhistorical and can only lead to muddling several vital questions. The Hanseatic League had its heyday in the mid-fourteenth century by which time the Aihole 500 was already scattered and had declined. **The Hanseatic League represented the maturing forces of commodity production and signalled the weakening of the feudal mode of production while the Aihole 500, on the contrary represented the feudal organisation of trade and the feudal mode of production at its zenith.**

In 1150 AD two important Brahamana Kalamukha priests met at Balligave in Shikaripura taluk of Shimoga district, and presided over a meeting of the Aihole 500, the proceedings of which have been thus recorded: *"...the earth as their sack; the eight regents at the points of the compass as the corner tassels; Vasuki as the girth; the serpent race as the cords; the betel pouch as the secret pocket; the horizon as their light; a sharp sword as their wood knife; the invaluable articles in their bags as their wealth; visiting the Chera, Cola, Pandya, Maleya, Magadha, Kausala, Saurashtra, Dhanushtra, Kurumbha, Khamboja [Cambodia], Gaulla [Sri Lanka], Lala [Marwar], Barvvara [Baruch or Basra], Parasa [Iran], Nepala, Ekapada, Lambakaranna, Stri-rajya [Kerala?], Gholamukha [China?] and many other countries...and by land routes and water routes penetrating into the region of the six continents; with superior elephants,*

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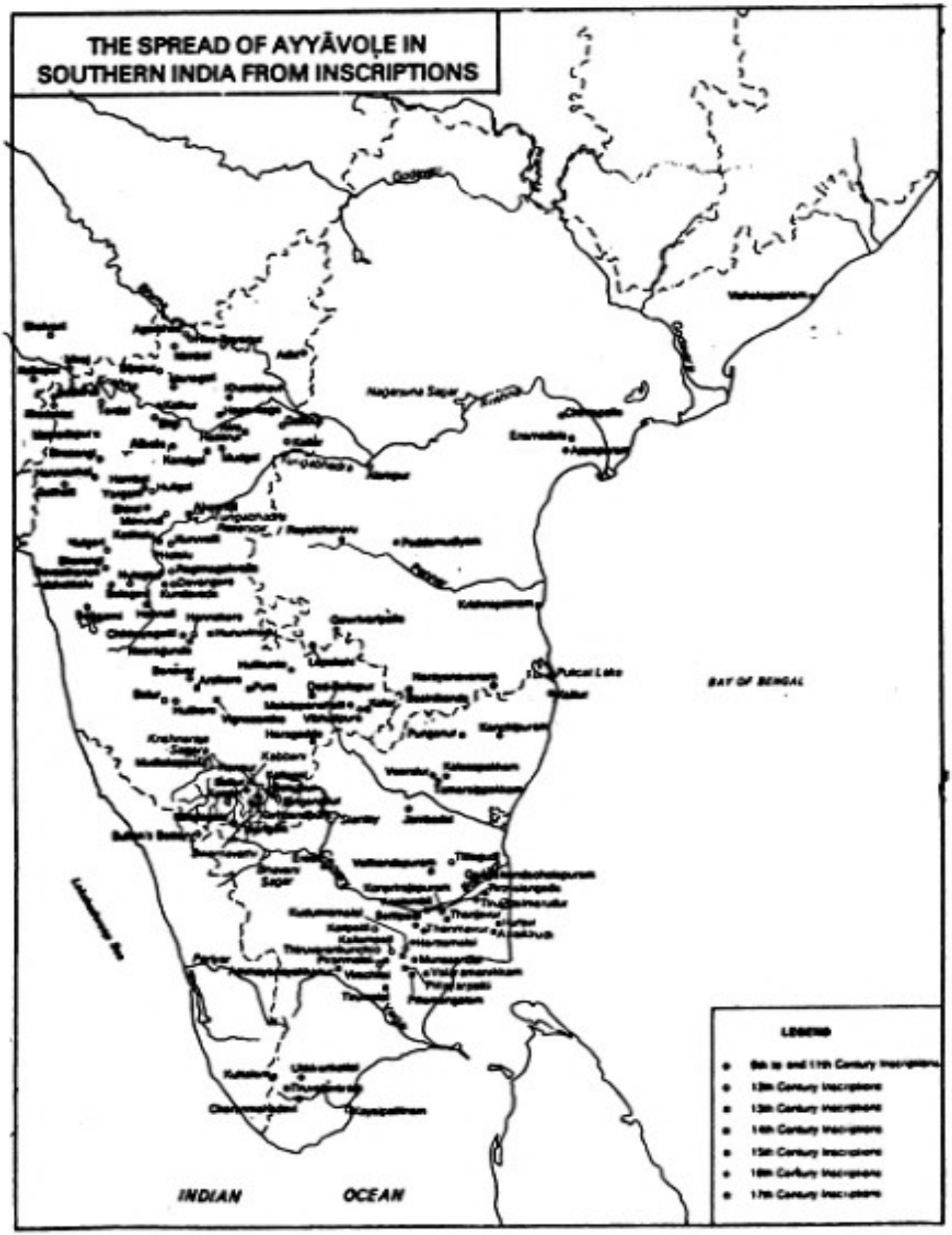

63. The spread of the Aihole 500 guild in south India from inscriptions.

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well bred horses, large sapphires, moonstones, pearls; rubies, diamonds, lapis lazuli, onyx, topaz, carbuncles, coral, emeralds...and various such articles; cardamoms, cloves, bollelium, sandal, camphor, musk, saffron...and other perfumes and drugs...." [59]

While the spread of this trading guild appears quite impressive, **the goods it traded in were by every count meant exclusively for kings, queens and noblemen.** Their clientele was the *creme de la cremes*. **The goods it traded in affected in no way the daily life of the feudal economy.**

The Aihole 500 being a *sreni* or guild accommodated various castes. But the prize of place belonged undoubtedly to the Brahmanas of Karnataka. As Meera Abraham who has made a wide study of this guild says: "*The tradition of emigrants from Achichatra who are Bramans is a recurring theme in Karnataka and the linking of Ayyavale with Achichatra in guild prasastis is therefore a possible indication of the presence of Bramans in...this guild.*" [60]

Furthermore she says, "*...the Ayyavole association in Kannada areas, from its inception in Aihole, till about the mid-12th century was closely associated with the agrahara and agrahara Bramans. Kannada Ayyavole settlements or markets were frequently located in agraharas and there is frequent evidence of the actual participation of Bramans in trading ventures. One concludes that the controlling interest in much of the trade handled by* **ainurruvar** *merchants in what is now modern Karnataka was drawn from Braman groups. These included elite members of the sedentary society which flourished in the rich* **doab** *close to the royal establishments of the Rashtrakutas and Chalukyas.*" [61]

Inscriptions of the Aihole 500 in the eighth and ninth centuries in Aihole, 1113 AD at Davangere, 1142 AD at Arsikere, 1167 at Huilgol in Dharwad, 1185 at Honnali, in the same year at Konnur in Bijapur, in 1203 at Koppal in Raichur, in 1218 at Mudnur in Gulbarga, in 1245 in Sorab have **all** been found in agraharas.[62] The one from Balligave in 1150 AD from which we quoted was again obtained from the matha. The Aihole 500 is itself known to have made land grants. **The Aihole 500 was therefore not just associated with but managed chiefly by the Kalamukha Brahmanas of Karnataka.**[63] And, could there be a better word than *feudal* to describe the Brahmanas of the time?

Y Gopala Reddy further describes the feudal features of this guild: "*The development of feudal relations between the state and the guilds which characterised the Rashtrakuta polity also continued to exist during the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. A large number of guilds are referred to in the inscriptions of Karnataka and some of them are the 500 Svamis of Ayyavole.... The titles and designations like Rajasresti (Royal Merchants), Vaddavyavahari (The Great Merchant), Samyachakravarti (President of the Meeting of the Guilds known as Mahanadu), Nadapergade (Head of the District), Pattanaswamy [lord of the city], etc, enjoyed by the prominent settis betray a feudal relationship between the state and guilds. It is likely that the royal merchants enjoyed the insignia of royalty such as the white umbrella, the great drum, the fly-whisk, etc. The guilds like the feudal lords might have supplied feudal militia to their sovereign. The titles assumed by these guilds would yield the impression that they were very brave and had mercenary troops of their own....*

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The guilds were allowed to maintain their own flags.... The guilds had the right to punish recalcitrant persons of the samaya. The epigraphical evidence shows that the merchant guilds had their own assemblies and enjoyed their full autonomy in the management of their own affairs. They made gifts to the temples and institutions of charity and also played a prominent part in the revenue and judicial administration. Thus it would appear that the merchant guilds emerged as powerful intermediaries monopolising the trade and commerce of the empire and also controlling the local civil, revenue and judicial, matters." [64]

The guild structure of the period helped the Aihole 500 to control all the affairs of the towns which they inhabited. And it is quite possible, as RS Sharma says, that artisans were attached to such guilds preventing their independent functioning in just *"the same manner as the peasants to their lords in the benefices. This meant lack of mobility which was an important feature of closed urban economy."* [65]

In all these senses then the Aihole 500 was a feudal guild in a feudal society. **It was a manifestation of the feudalisation of trade.**

The Aihole 500 was only one, though the largest, of the several guilds that dominated trade in the early feudal period. To quote B Sheik Ali: *"Apart from the five hundred Svamis of* ***Ayyavale****, there were other guilds called the* ***Nanadesis*** *or the* ***Nanadesavalas****. The head of the* ***Nanadesis*** *was called the* ***Mukhya****. At first they were Jains by religion but subsequently they became Veerasaivas or Vaishnavas.... The* ***manigaras*** *or traders in jewels formed a guild of their own. During the Hoysala period all* ***manigaras*** *of Belur, Halebid and Vishnusamudra formed one strong guild."* [66]

Thus it was not the Aihole 500 alone that was feudalised. **It was no exception but the rule that the guild structure of trade and commerce in the towns only adapted itself and matched very well with the caste structure in the villages which were nothing but guilds of an agrarian economy.** Were not Marx and Engels correct yet again?

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5. RESTRUCTURING OF THE STATE

A. Nature of Class Society and Form of State

The state, as Lenin tells us, emerges with the advent of class society and is *"a special group of men occupied solely with government, and who in order to rule need a special apparatus of coercion to subjugate the will of others by force—prisons, special contingents of men, armies, etc—then there appears the state."* [67]

The state was an instrument of suppression of one class by the other—of the ruled class by thAe ruling—remains intact throughout the existence of class society. **While the state therefore is given, is a condition of, and exists with the existence of class society, without its nature changing in any way all along; its form however alters with a change from one mode of production to the other and around a general prototype for each mode of production, it varies from one social formation to another across space and time.** As Lenin says *"The forms of state were extremely varied."* [68]

The more important factors from which the state derives its form are the nature of the economy, the composition of the classes in power and the manner in which it organises its politics. The state of the shudra holding system was centralised, its armed forces were based in the major towns and cities if they were not deployed for suppression or war. **The feudal state was however decentralised and it was structured on the basis of the natural economy that prevailed, its main body existing in the county.** This restructuring of the state was affected as a result of the effect of the land grants and the interests of the landed intermediary class which it now had to protect and serve. As RS Sharma has rightly said: *"From the post-Maurya period, and especially from Gupta times, certain political and administrative developments tended to feudalise the state apparatus. The most striking development was the practice of making land grants to the brahmanas."* [69]

B. Political Hierarchy of Feudalism and Structure of the State

In discussing the nature of the state under the Chalukyas of Kalyan, Krishna Murari presents a good picture of the political structure. He says: *"The administration was by no means centralised and the empire is best regarded as a loose confederation of numerous centres of power presided over by the emperor."* [70]

This pattern of the political structure was common to all the kingdoms of the period of early feudalism. The only difference that we notice in the political hierarchy apart from the change of names for particular positions of power from one dynasty to the other, is that **the tendency to fragment and therein further feudalise, was a feature which became more and more emphasised from the eighth century AD onwards.** Thus in drawing a picture of the political structure we would like, not to go into the intricate details of the polity of each individual dynasty, and avoiding being repetitive, present a general picture of the political structure applicable to all the dynasties which reigned in the period of early feudalism.

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At the apex of the state was the king, and around him his court consisting of the *yuvarajas* or princes and the circle of ministers, the most important among whom was the *dandanayaka* or *mahadandanayaka* or the commander of the army. This segment with its own contingent of soldiery was stationed in the capital.

Below this the territory of the kingdom was divided into provinces called *mandala* or *desha*. Such mandalas were either portioned off to princes of the royal house or kinsmen, who, with the passage of time, turned out to possess the mandala on a hereditary basis. These feudatory rulers came to be called *mahamandaleshwaras* or as *mahasamanthas* under the Rashtrakutas or as *mannayas* under the Kalyan Chalukyas and *mandalikas* under the Hoysalas. Each mandala was further divided into districts or *vishayas* entrusted to the *vishayapathis* who formed the third tier. Under the Chalukyas of Kalyan the vishayapathis were called *naiyyogika vallabhas* or as *samanthas* under the Hoysalas. Below the vishayas were the *nadus* under the hereditary chieftainship of the *nadagavunda* as under the Rashtrakutas or the *mahagramas* under the Kadambas also called *dashagramas* which had under them, a few dozen villages at least. Each village or *grama*, forming the last layer of the hierarchy was ruled by the *gramakuta* or village assembly. But within the gramakuta the pride of place belonged to the *gavunda* or simply gowda who was assisted by the accountant called variously as *senabhova* or *shanabhoga* or *karanika*. The *ooragowda* or village headman was as much a hereditary post as all the others posts mentioned in this hierarchy were. The political structure was thus five layered. At times when it had only four layers, the upper two and the last were always intact, the third and fourth tending to coalesce. **Each of these strata of the hierarchy possessed its own body of troops and was answerable to the order above it. The main tasks of this hierarchy was to collect revenue from the villages and move it upwards in kind, with each layer taking its percentage of the surplus till it accumulated at the top by fixed substractions.** By that time each individual quantity due to its layered deductions turned out to be pretty meagre, the whole, nevertheless, being significant. **To this job of revenue collection was the, at times more important, job of administration and war.** Thus when the king went to war he mobilised the mahamandaleshwaras, who in turn mobilised each lower layer till the gowdas fetched their own stock of peasant retainers and they arrayed themselves under the ultimate command of the mahadandanayaka and then to the call of the conch and clang of the cymbals they clashed with their arms.

This being the structure and functioning of the political set up, the state, let us now look into its several features which marked out its feudal moorings.

Each of these officials starting from the court downwards, and at times even including the king, were **paid** by the ownership of villages and land, in short, **by the grant of lands held on an independent tenure.** In describing the political system of the Kalyan Chalukyas Krishna Murari writes: *"The **mannayas** who are occasionally mentioned in the inscriptions, probably belonged to the class of provincial officials. These were appointed by the government to the office and placed in charge of districts to discharge the **mannaya** duties.... In lieu of salary, they were granted a few villages to enable them to discharge their duties.*

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Besides the territory that was directly under the jurisdiction of the royal officers, large tracts of country were held by the nobility as their hereditary estates. A considerable section of the Calukya nobility consisted of collateral branches of ruling houses.... The nobles seem to have exercised almost sovereign rights over their estates and paid tribute to the government." [71]

The mahamandaleshvara chieftains who formed the immediate rung of the hierarchical vassalage to the king, were, as we have already seen, a hereditary office unless overthrown and replaced with a new branch by the king. These hereditary houses, in the course of the development of the early feudal period, themselves grew familial lineages, **often outliving the ruling dynasty** of the king. It should not be surprising that they came to be classed by historians as 'minor dynasties' who, utilising a period of political crisis, rose up in rebellion and eliminating, subduing or driving out the former ruling dynasty usurped the throne and lofted themselves to power. A 'minor dynasty' in such a consequence became the chief dynasty under the aegis of which the kingdom came to be now identified and established. The rise of the Chalukyas of Badami, Kalachuris, Rashtrakutas, Seunas and Hoysalas are all examples of this. In fact **this pattern has tended to be not an exception but the rule. Every new ruling dynasty has invariably emerged from such vassal origins.** Under the Kadambas, a few such feudatory dynasties were the Alupas, Sendrakas and Bhataris.[72] BR Gopal's study introduces us to the Punnata chiefs of Mysore; the Chalukya chiefs of Kadambalige and Varuna; the Kadamba families all drawn from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of Hangal of Dharwad district, Goa, Bayalnad or Heggadadevana Kote in Mysore district, Nurumbada of Hirekerur taluk in Dharwad district, of Karadikallu in Lingasugur taluk of Raichur district, of Chandavara of Honnavara taluk in Uttara Kannada district; the Sinda families who continued to exist in the thirteenth century and were subordinate to the Kalyan Chalukyas, Seunas and Kalachuris such as those of Belagutti of Satara district in Maharashtra, of Bagadage, of Yelburga from Raichur district, of Ranjeru of Bidar district and of Kurugodu; the Silahara chieftains ruled over parts of Maharashtra and Konkan; the Kakatiyas who ruled over Warangal of Andhra Pradesh; the Rattas of Belgaum and the Guttas of Ranebennur taluk in Dharwad district, under the Badami Chalukyas.[73] Dinkar Desai's study traces the genealogy of several mahamandaleshwara dynasties under the Kalyan Chalukyas. Of them are the Sindas of Belagutti (967-1247 AD), Sindas of Yelburga (1061-1220 AD), Sindas of Kurugodu (1146-1218 AD), Sindas of Bagadage or Bagalkot (973-1076 AD), Sindas of Pratyandaka Four Thousand of Bijapur district and the Sindas of Chakrakota (1065 AD). The Rattas of Saundatti in Belgaum district said to belong to the former Rashtrakuta dynasty existed from 960-1233 AD. Under them in turn at the vishaya level and much lower, were another series of minor families all having branched out from the mahamandaleshwara Ratta family that ruled over them. They included the Yaduvamsa from Hagaratage, Prabhus of Kolara, chiefs of Banihatti, the family of Halleyaraus and the Nayaks of Nesarige from Belgaum district.[74]

The hereditary nature of the political tenure of each of these layers of feudatories was so deep rooted that Dinkar Desai could even identify the families of nayakas, who ruled below the visayas closer to that of the nadagowdas. In Dinkar Desai's words: *"The*

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difference between the ***Nayaka*** *and* ***Gauda*** *was that the latter was the headman of a single village and was subordinate to the former, while the* ***Nayaka*** *was the headman of a group of villages. In the case of the* ***Nayakas*** *of Nesarige, they were incharge of the Nesarige circle, and had under them six* ***Gaudas*** *as headmen of the six villages of which that circle was composed."* [75]

Similarly, under the Hoysalas AV Narasimha Murthy identifies the Chengalvas, Kongalvas, Kadambas of Hangal, Santaras of Humcha and Santaras of Hosagunda.[76]

The feudalisation of Karnataka polity was well consolidated by the end of the rule of Badami Chalukyas. The lineages of the feudatories become more apparent from this time onward and by the time of the Kalyan Chalukyas their mention becomes very frequent. This frequency starting from the eighth century onward is itself evidence of the rising power of these feudatory families and their growing political assertion, and by contrast the growing captivity of the independence of the king to the pressures applied, often in concert by the vassalage.

The subinfeudation of land which we have looked into in an earlier part of this chapter, **commenced with the rise of these feudatory families.** Their rise not just denoted their economic power but signified their political muscle. By the time of the Kalyana Chalukyas the feudatories, says, Krishna Murari, could even wage war without the consent of the king.[77]

By the time of the Rashtrakutas, the feudatories had become everything but independent kings. They held their own court and donned all kinds of titles, often taking on those of the king and thus flinging a challenge for war with the monarch such as, for instance the Rattas or Rashtrakutas of Latur did when Dantidurga (735-756 AD) assumed titles such as *maharajadhiraja, parameshwara* and *paramabhattaraka* all of which were titles of the Badami Chalukya kings.

Let us read an inscription taken from one of the mahamandaleshwara centres under the Kalyana Chalukyas to better understand the milieu. In fact the inscription itself was written by a Kannada poet in the court of the mahamandaleshwara. *"While the dancing girls of the harem, rising behind, came waving* ***cawris*** *on both sides, while white umbrellas, the* ***pali-ketana*** *banner, and the banners bearing the figures of a moon, a sun, a lion, a tiger, an aligator and a fish and other signs of royalty were flowing before; while the five great musical instruments and the unsuspicious drums were being sounded; and while the heralds, bards and beggars, and poor and helpless people, were being presented with gifts to their satisfaction, Vidyuccora proceeded to the Caityalaya adorned with a thousand summits, alighted from the state elephant, went thrice round a basadi, bowed to the god and spoke thus."* [78]

Unfortunately we do not have the speech of the feudatory. But the giving of alms to beggars sending them into raptures which they would remember with benediction at every piercing pang of hunger throughout the rest of their lives, are all typical of feudal attitudes—benefaction and benevolence being the natural attributes of the overriding lord and patriarch, the king. Only, the gift to the Brahmana is visible by its absence. Perhaps, this Shudra chief raising himself as a Kshatriya was satisfied with the bare god in the Jaina basadi, and the poet writing in Kannada was not much enamoured by the grandeur of the forehead marks of a Kalamukha priest.

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Describing the Kalyana Chalukya polity Gopala Reddy quotes from KAN Shastri who says: *"'Their (the feudatories of Western Chalukyas) rule is often described in nearly the same terms as that of the emperor himself: they too are said to be ruling from* ***nelevidus*** *or* ***rajadhanis****, to be suppressing the wicked and protecting others, and to be occupying their leisure in noble and pleasant social and intellectual pursuits; their courts also were minor replicas of the imperial establishment, and they had their own ministers and administrative staff quite distinct from the corps of residential officers of the emperor; in one instance no fewer than 5 ministers of a single feudatory are mentioned....'*

The emperor was the supreme bestower of honour but this prerogative was apparently delegated to the feudal lords enjoying the confidence of the emperor.... This clearly indicates the trend towards the feudalisation of the political functionaries during the period under consideration.

The feudal lords were expected to carry out royal orders in the fiefs held by them. They were free to increase the taxes or to impose fresh ones. They paid yearly tributes to the emperor. Some of the feudal lords went to the extent of contracting diplomatic matrimonial alliances with their overlord.... All these instances give us an idea to state that the feudal lords not only maintained very close links and relations with the emperor but also indicate the growth of feudal organisation of the state which ultimately reduced the strength of the centre." [79]

A further summing up could only be superfluous.

One other point of importance regarding the state is that unlike in the earlier protofeudal period when the army was garrisoned in the capital cities or frontier outposts and paid a regular salary in cash; the feudal army was maintained on an altogether different basis.

Characterised by the depopulating of cities, the feudal period had no garrisons so to speak. Soldiers in a ready state of duty and in livery were often not found. Instead, surviving on land grants of a military tenure, **they existed as retainers under the direct command of the gowda,** responding to the call to arms as and when it was issued. Thus RS Sharma says: *"Really the Rashtrakuta system did not provide for too many officers...."* [80] Sharma again reiterates this when he says: *"Officials were few, and were becoming feudalised. Local administration was mainly manned by the feudalised officials, vassals and their families...."* [81]

In other words, the feudalising of the state only implied that it cut back drastically on the military bureaucracy and civil officialdom. The former officers and administrators were moved out from the towns and cities granting them land as their wage and they in turn 'maintained' an army made up of retainers husbandmen. Thus the army was never really visible in times of peace. It was only during a rebellion or in the event of war that it came to life soon after the execution of which it returned to its feudal mode of existence, cloistered and in hibernation owing to the self-sufficiency of the village.

C. Tributary, Segmentary, Decentralised, Peasant or Feudal State?

Literature about the early feudal period is replete with a whole lot of terms trying to characterise the state. For some it is tributary from the tribute that the fiefholders pay; for others it is segmentary, from the innumerable independent individual segments that

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add up to form the whole thus putting forward a multinodal model; for some others it is a decentralised state since the king has taken on the task of devolving the powers of management and administration; while for yet many more it is a peasant state since this is a form characteristic of societies in history bearing a peasantry.

All these attempts at characterising the state of the early feudal period at best, are only **partially** true. They have drawn from some visible material aspect or the other of early feudal polity for their nomenclature. Yet all these classificatory labels may only serve to describe **one** particular aspect of the state and not characterise the state in its essential **entirety. The Marxist theory of state being the most comprehensive of what social analysis has so far produced, perceives the state as an instrument, an agency of class rule. And from this, it draws the characterisation. The state is characterised by the class it serves, which in itself is related directly to the mode of production or the specific form of society and life which the class that rules creates in its exclusive interest. The state derives its characterisation therefore from the class it serves and thus in the period of feudalism the state serves the feudal class in power and thus can only be a feudal state and nothing else.** Defending the Marxist thesis, RS Sharma rightly says: *"Although bonds of kinship were used in some cases to organise administration, the early medieval polity can neither be regarded kin-based nor segmentary."* [82] The fragmentation of power was never so complete as at the end of early feudal rule in peninsular India and on the eve of Turkish conquest in the north. Karnataka society was drawn in the vortex of war and rebellion in the last two, ie, the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the early feudal phase, and this was only on account of the crisis of a self-sufficient feudal economy which dictated the state to follow its own rule. It was a state feudal through and through.

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6. CLASSES AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS UNDER FEUDALISM

Feudalism, it may be said, **lives by the village. It is the village which is the principal realm of production; and agriculture its foundation.** Marx says: *"There is in every social formation a particular branch of production which determines the position and importance of all the others, and the relations obtaining in this branch accordingly determine the relations of all other branches as well. It is as though light of a particular hue were cast upon everything, tingeing all other colours and modifying their specific features; or as if a special ether determined the specific gravity of everything found in it."* [83] Therefore to get a grasp of the economy, its cell from where the hue radiates, the single village, has to be studied. To come to grips with the totality, this only has to be multiplied by the number of villages that falls in a kingdom, since each village can only be a replication of the other as each is a self-sufficient unit of the whole, as long as the regional variations and secondary data are not brought into the account. The towns of the early feudal period, being few and far between had only a miniscule of the whole population and its economy, though different from that of the village, were a refraction of what obtained in the village as far as the conditions of labour and the forms of exploitation went. The economy of the town was, despite all the inherent changes that the locale dictated, a crude mirror image of what obtained in the village. **The village was** thus **principal for the economy of the feudal town.**

Let us try to delineate the chief classes, study their relations of production, identify the material conditions of existence of each in their productive interconnection, seek the relations of exchange of the products that were thus produced, take a look at the nature of taxation by the state and arrive, on such a basis, at a picture of how life was breathed into this organism otherwise also answering to the name of natural economy.

A. Types of Tenure and the Landlord Class

Under feudalism position and wealth were derived from land, and every other form of wealth which wass not land obtained its importance only because of its relationship to land.

The landlord class, we already know by now, derived its position from the land grants made to it by the king and feudatories. The tenures under which this land was held were varied adding thereby different shades to this class.

Firstly, was the rent free land given to the gowda of the village who rendered services to the state. This was called *gaudike* or *gaudakodige*.[84]

The senabova who assisted the gowda and belonged to the ruling feudal stratum was also, just like him given rent free allotments for keeping an account of the produce and taxes paid by the village. These grants were substantial. The gaudakodige or *umbali* granted to these village level feudal functionaries led to the near division of the entire village between them in case other grants did not intrude.

Balagalachu or *amaram* grants were made to the kin of those two (since the time of the Rashtrakutas) died fighting for their lord and had hero stones or *viragals* erected in

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the villages in their memory. If the balagalachu was substantial, as for instance, like the one in the Halmidi epigraph, it created a landlord class; if it was not large enough it failed to achieve this.

Brahmadeya and *Sarvamanya* grants which included large pieces of land if not entire villages, were given to Brahmana priests on a rent free basis or without having to pay any of the assigned taxes to the government. In other words the produce that they obtained from such lands remained **entirely** at their disposal.

From the sixth century onwards or in other words from the time of the rise of the Badami Chalukyas, **temple construction** also **commenced.** From this time on we encounter *devabhoga* grants or grants made for the pleasure of the temple. Having to support an institution and the clientele of Brahmana hangers-on functionaries, devabhoga grants would necessarily have to be much larger than the brahmadeya and sarvamanya grants made to individual brahmana priests.

With the progress of the feudal epoch we notice a new type of grant being made. In RN Nandi's words *"It is...from the ninth century that monastic establishments surfaced as integral parts of temple institutions in different parts of south India."* [85] The unimposing temple now attracted around it multiple types of activity. **The temple was becoming a complex over which not an individual Brahmana family but a whole community of Brahmanas presided.** The agrahara or **corporate Brahmana enclosure** where they resided was attached to such temples whose grandeur invoked the faith of the mahamandaleshwaras and even the king. Such land meant to maintain this community of Brahmanas residing in the agrahara was considerable, requiring more than the labour of an entire village for their survival. Grants made to such agraharas were called *vrittis*. It was meant for a community of Brahmana professionals.

Very close on the heels and at times without any gap with the appearance of the agraharas was a new phenomenon, the *mathas*. **The mathas were by far the biggest of religious complexes which feudalism had created in Karnataka. Coming in the concluding centuries of early feudalism they remain to this day its most imposing and solid remnants commemorating to living memory of the power and authority of the Brahmanas of the past.** The mathas were a Brahmana township. **They encapsulated not one, but a host of temples,** had *ghatikas* or institutions to train the initiated in the ideology of brahminism, in the apparently intricate yet normally meaningless philosophic abstractions. **It was an elaborate complex having to sustain Brahmanas in hundreds and not just dozens. The sustenance of such numbers with their varied material requirements necessitated the granting of village clusters which spread over entire nadus and even vishayas. The needs of the management of the mathas led to the creation of their own institutions of administration** in the assembly of *mahajanas* which was independent and for whom no mortal but only the gods they had themselves lofted were kings.

For the sustenance of the political hierarchy above the village gowda were innumerable grants made at or close to the village of the residence of such peers. Such lands were called *manya*. The *"Nadagavunda whose position was hereditary...was the chief executive of the nad assembly.... It is known from inscriptions that his remuneration*

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consists of the income form the inam land, a fee from each one of the villages under his jurisdiction, toll on merchandise, from the fares collected within his nadu and house tax." [86]

Similarly **the mahamandaleshwaras and ultimately the king and his court also had their own lands,** the surplus from which they used, among other sources, to reproduce themselves.

All these sections which we have described constituted the feudal class. Even those sections which at times did not have a direct relationship on account of the ownership of land with the primary producers also need to be classed among the feudals. This power over wealth in the form of land buttressed their positions in the religious and political superstructure. And any newfound position in the superstructure was quickly consolidated by the acquisition of landed property; **the religious and non-religious ideas and politics that were thus generated during the period were inevitably the ideas and policies which not only served but flowed from a landed feudal class.**

Of all the land, we presume the largest chunk and the best of it belonged to the Brahmanas. The totality of land under the individual priests, the senabhovas, the individual temples, agraharas and mathas far surpassed all other land which was held by the Shudra feudal class serving the secular institutions of society. Of all the types of landlordism it was, therefore, Brahmana landlordism that dominated.

B. The Class of Tied Tenants

Tenancy was an institution created by the feudal mode of production. It was the **chief** means of agricultural surplus extraction, under its burdensome compass came the widest section of the peasantry and as a result **the tenants came to be the most numerous class in feudal society.** Tenants were tax paying agriculturists.[87] RN Nandi puts it well when he says *"The decline of the market economy marked a further stage in the development of productive forces and is characterised by the disappearance of slave labour from the productive sector and the extension of the share-cropping system."* [88]

It was this mass of tenants who toiled in the lands that belonged to the Brahmanas and their institutions and those that belonged to the feudal class of the political establishment for a share of what was produced. Tenants that cropped wet lands got 30% of the produce and in dry lands their share was 55%. GR Kuppuswamy says: *"The inscriptions throw light on the proportion of the produce to be shared between the landlord and tenant. In one case the landlords share was fixed at two-fifths of the wet and one-fourths of the dry crops. Governments share was one-fifth of the produce of forest land and of lands on which dry crops were raised and one-thirds of the produce of lands below the tanks in which paddy was grown."* [89] Hence if it was taxable land then the state took its share of the surplus or if it was rent free manya land, the part that should have belonged to state became the possession of the individual landlord or the feudal institution to which the land belonged. At no cost did the benefit of rent-free lands accrue to the tenants, the advantage always being carved up by the class of landlords leaving them in such instances with a total of 70% of the produce of wet lands and 45% of that of the dry.

Tenancy during the period of early feudalism was characterised by the attachment of tenants to land. They were **all,** as Francis Buchanan would write many

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centuries later of the tenants of the Malnad and Karavali,—*mulagenidararus*, or rooted tenants.[90]

The class of tenants were tied, attached or bound to the land of the landlords they tilled. If the kings and feudal lords came to possess kingdoms and titles over large tracts of agricultural land on account of heredity, this social right ascribed to a biological process and thereby making it appear as a natural phenomenon bestowed on the tenant the privilege of being bound to the same stretch of land from one generation to another under the grinding heel of the same lineage of masters. This bondage or attachment to a feudal family called *mane vokkalu* was the source from which the most numerous caste of tenants, the Vokkaligas, derived their name from. **This bondage lay at the heart of the self-sufficient village economy, without the insuring of which the feudal economy would have fallen apart.** Speaking of this phenomenon which was common to the Indian subcontinent and the importance that belonged to keeping the village economy intact and ticking; RS Sharma in a paper, penetrating for its analysis, says: *"The peasants were expected to stay in the village made over in gift can be inferred from the wording of the land charters which commonly enjoin the villagers to pay all dues to the beneficiaries and carry out their orders. From the 6th century AD onwards, in backward and mountainous areas such as Orissa, Deccan, etc, sharecroppers and peasants attached to the land are specifically instructed to stick to the soil. Once this practice was considered useful by the landowners it was also introduced into settled and agriculturally advanced areas. In northern India many land charters clearly transfer the peasants along with the soil to the beneficiaries, and the terms used for the purpose are* ***dhana-jana sahita, janata-samrddha*** *or* ***sa-prativasi-jana-sameta****. This was done obviously to eliminate all ambiguities in the relation of the peasants with the donees; but its chief result was to preserve the existing character of village economy."* [91]

Let there be no doubt that the grant of land and that of entire villages in Karnataka too **always** meant the transfer of the tenants attached to such land and the entire population of the villages. There could be no escape from this for the tenants or the other people that inhabited such villages since their choice in such a matter was foreclosed, their condition of existence derived from their conditions of labour which meant perpetual attachment to land, left them with little choice but to submit. It was only virgin soil that was granted in order to encourage the expansion of agriculture that did not witness the transfer of the population since there did not exist labour which was captive to it.

The main body of the feudal army was drawn from such tenants whose military service under the gowda of the village only described in this realm attitudes identical to that which bound them as tenants to their landlords. These armed retainers were attached by the conditions of military service to their immediate commander who was on nine counts out of ten also the landlord to whom their shares belonged. This military duty was paid by lessening certain taxes on such tenants which the government collected but did not, in all probability, give way to a new kind of tenure in this period of history yet. **In the stage of early feudalism, the material privileges of being a warrior came from the social status that was attached to it. The economic advantage was marginal. But being retainers and not having to perform constant service, occasions of war**

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always held the promise of pillage, which, for want of any other mode of economic payment, was a material incentive well institutionalised. It should therefore not surprise us that, as VK Thakur testifies, all civilisation that came under the feudal sword was cut up—towns were ravaged till they became floating entities and villages were plundered till they bled. It was an age when mercy could be expected from no quarter except from one's lord and master.

C. The Class of Bonded Labourers

The transition from the shudra holding system to feudalism brought about a change in the conditions of Shudra helotage which formerly prevailed.

RS Sharma says: *"There are some indications that from the Gupta period the number of slaves engaged in production declined, and the sudras became increasingly free from the obligation to serve as slaves."* [92]

But what did these former slaves convert into? Did they become freemen? RN Nandi answers this question. He says: *"The growth of a feudal economy...was marked by the appearance of field labour and new forms of land control."* [93] Further Nandi says *"The growing scope of forced labour reduced the pruchase and maintenance of slaves for working in the fields and on crafts uneconomic. Till the beginning of the Christian era, and till perhaps a little later, slaves supplied an important part of the agricultural and industrial labour force. But the growing scope of forced labour together with the corresponding degradation of essential sudra producers to the position of untouchables who could be readily subjected to such forced unpaid service precluded the necessity of purchasing and maintaining slaves."* [94]

In other words if **feudalism released the main body of Shudras and caused them to serve as bonded tenants, it did everything in its power to retain the advantages of helotage by transforming a fair body of the Shudra helots into bonded labourers.**

The bonded labourer *jitada aalu* had only a superficial similarity with the bonded tenant. The tenant had the privilege of keeping a portion of what he produced by the virtue of his being attached to land. The jitada aalu had no such land to which he was attached, he could after his toil not finally claim that a portion of it was his. He was attached to the landlord and thus his only claim could be that he was the servant of his master to whom belonged all the fruits of his toil and it was exclusively at his mercy that he could live. He was different from the slave of former times in that he could keep his wife and children with him. They were his only possessions. Family was unknown to the slaves. They had to breed like cattle. But the bonded labour had a wife to share his love and children who would later care for him. Such bonded labourers always at the beck and call of their masters would not have been more than a sixth of the population. **It was the most populous class next only to the teeming tenants tied down by and tethered to the yoke of feudalism.** Edgar Thurston and K Rangachari, describing conditions from the Malnad write: *"In most of the purely Malnad or hilly taluks each vargdar or proprietor of land estate owns a set of servants called **Huttalu** or **Huttu-Alu**...[who] is the hereditary survitor of the family, born in servitude and performing agricultural work for the landholder from father to son."* [95]

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From Dakshina Kannada we again have information from Francis Buchanan of the existence of bonded labourers called *Mulada Holeyas*.[96]

The bonded labourers staying in a quarter of the homestead of the landlord was also the domestic servant waking much before the sun rose and hitting the sack long after sunset.

The bonded labourers and bonded tenants together constituted the principal classes that partook in agricultural production. Together, they made up from anywhere between 80% to 85% of the population. It was therefore from the surplus extracted from them and thus on their backs that the entire edifice of feudalism rested. The smile on the visage of feudalism emanated solely because it rested on such a muscular frame.

D. Tied Artisans and a Servile Service Class

Early feudal society required a whole gamut of products and services which could not have directly come from agriculture. The independent artisan guilds that existed in the towns in the shudra holding epoch became unsustainable and artisans and service castes also migrated to the villages where the landed intermediaries had chosen to station themselves. Owing to the dispersed nature of production under feudalism such guilds quite often broke up and the independent guild members lost their collective strength and had to produce their goods and services under the new conditions of feudal servitude. Citing epigraphic records from Shikaripura taluk in Shimoga district, RS Sharma concludes: *"In the Deccan and South India we have several instances of artisans being made over to temples and monasteries."* [97]

The status of the service and artisan castes was similar to that of the bonded tenants. Yet the manner in which their products and services were appropriated was different.

If it was a village under the gowda, their products and services could be appropriated by the landlords of the village for which the tenants paid, in addition to the payments which they made for those they consumed.

If the artisan and service castes were attached to a temple or a matha, they lost all rights over what they produced; their goods and services being appropriated by the priesthood; and if products and services thus produced were over and above what the brahmanical institutions required it remained their prerogative to seek the appropriate means to dispose them off. If artisanal production was above what was required by the ruling classes, or as a part payment, the feudal class allotted to these artisan and service classes plots of land which they could cultivate as share-croppers. **The artisans and service classes were immobile.** They were bound. They had foresaken their freedom to change masters. Some were also soldiers. They were the mane vokkalu producing goods and services instead of crops from agriculture.

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E. Attached Even in the Towns

The urban economy was peripheral to the rural. Yet the town had its own economy important to and essential for the mode of feudal production. For most part of the period of early feudalism towns were either capitals, administrative or religious centres and at times a combination of two or more of these; but hardly ever commercial. It would on this basis be wrong to rule out commerce altogether; but the degree of commerce that was carried on was characterised by its limited reach. It normally did not find the need to transcend the frontiers of the town. The barricades and fortifications that defended the town from external attack were also impregnable walls checking the outflow of commerce. Commerce was by and large self-contained. Stasis was stamped on trade. In this sense the rural economy had circumscribed the urban.

The Aihole 500, serving the nobility carried on its own feudalised trade. So did the several other guilds of the period. **All these guilds employed the services of labour which was in a state of bondage, comparable with the bonded labourer of the village.** A few artisan guilds did exist. There were artisanal products and services which the court, the townsfolk and the stationed army needed. All these were obtained from individual artisans or the artisanal guilds which were bound to the state and quite often did not need the mediation of the merchant. Payments could have been made in kind, or what little of exchange through money circulation took place hardly ever climbed over the town's walls. Such artisans were in a relationship which brought them close to the tenants.

As far as the merchants were considered, they were feudalised. We have already seen how trade was feudalised by the merchant guilds. **The guild-masters either resembled the landlords of the villages or were landlords themselves, having in their possession extended landed wealth.**

In this sense again the rural economy had circumscribed the urban. The rustic encircled and subdued the urbane.

F. Gratuitous *Bitti Chakri* and *Dana*

Feudalism thrived on various forms of direct surplus extraction. *Bitti chakri* was one of them. Called *vetti* in other parts of India, **bitti chakri was nothing but free labour service rendered to the feudal lords.** Bitti chakri which had its counterpart in corvee in medieval Europe was an unpaid labour service which **every bonded labour, tenant or artisan had to perform.** Bitti chakri was extortionate and directly coerced, yet it was always to be rendered as gratuitous service. The rendering of bitti was to be self-redemptive.

RN Nandi says: *"...the villagers had to pay forced contribution of money or supplies to royal troops and officials halting or passing through their village. The villagers were subjected to all types of forced labour."* [98]

Bitti chakri was the norm on festive, religious or other auspicious occasions. Labour for the construction of tanks, roads and temples was always in the form of bitti service.

Competing with bitti was *dana* or gifts. Gift making was the mode through which the Brahmanas accumulated cattle for their yagas in the Mauryan period. **Thus dana**

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exclusive to Brahmanas and their institutions was similar yet different to bitti chakri. While bitti was a labour service dana was the fruit of labour that was gifted. Sheik Ali writes: *"...several...grants were made by which the temples received gifts of rice, ghee, coconut, sandal, garden, arecanut, betel leaf, oil mills, oil lamps, camphor, pepper, musk, incense, flowers and fruits...besides jewels...bullock carts and cattle were also generously donated."* [99] Sheik Ali therefore rightly says that it was *"the avarice of the brahmins"* that led to *"idealising the concepts of dana."* [100]

From bonded labourers to bonded tenants and tied artisans, dana was received. **Dana was raised to the level of a religious rite.** If bitti chakri was redemptory dana was purgatory.

All these were then the major classes and the major forms of exploitation in early feudal Karnataka. Evidently the different layers of feudal class dominated society. Based on the level of development of the instruments of production they created tenancy and bonded labour as the conditions by which labour was exploited. To this was added bitti chakri and dana. Through these forms the feudal class accumulated a surplus which was used to reproduce its own position in its defined relationship with that of the peasantry over and over again.

But this system of production created as an alternative and in the absence of money exchange and commodity distribution, a system of exchange altogether ingenious to it.

G. The *Ayagara* System of Exchange

In a society based on self-sufficient village units of production the meagre scope for money exchange had to be supplanted by an exchange mechanism which could not only allow for the distribution of goods across the division of labour on which the village rested but also at the same time answer the requirement of the self-perpetuation of the mode of production by a system of interlocking within the village which would continue to suffocate the growth of commodity production.

Such an elaborate system of distribution well-oiled and functioning within the confines of the natural economy, demarcating and defining what constitutes an economic unit and thereby tightly hemming in the unit so that the lines of demarcation should become the fortress preserving feudalism and lasting out in some pockets even into the twenty first century is the system of *ayagara* exchange or simply *aya*. In parts of north Karnataka close to Maharashtra the aya system is also called as the *barabaluti*. *Aya* itself may be a etymological metamorphosis of *jajamani* as it is known in the rest of India.

Of its origins, RS Sharma says, *"...it would appear that marketisation had reached a low ebb and local needs had to be satisfied on a local scale. Therefore it was in this period that there developed the **jajmani** system. Since artisans did not have much scope for the sale of their products in towns they moved to villages where they catered to the needs of the peasants who paid them at harvest time in kind. The **jajmani** system was reinforced by charters which insisted on peasants and artisans sticking to their villages. Some grants laid down that tax paying artisans and peasants cold not be introduced into a granted village from outside, the purpose of this being that grants should not disturb*

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the self-sufficient economy of the villages." [101]

RS Sharma therefore traces the origin of jajmani in the compulsions among the ordinary masses of peasants on the one hand and artisans on the other to satisfy their needs of exchange which arose out of the decline of the market and the movement of history into the throes of a natural economy.

While this was the pressure which arose from the quarters of the masses and should not be overlooked, in RN Nandi's explanation we come to know why this found approval among the ruling classes without which it could never have assumed the proportions of a **system** and what exact stake the feudal classes had in terms of their immediate class interests by perpetuating it.

Jajmani, the term itself, in the Mauryan period was synonymous with dana gift making to Brahmanas by clients, both of whom were then resident in towns. *"The support of the city-based householder-clients could, however, be available to brahmanas only as long as the towns continued to flourish as centres for the collection and distribution of social wealth. From the third-fourth centuries of the Christian era the towns ceased to play such a role, and with this, the urban locus of the* ***jajmani*** *system was also broken, forcing a large section of brahmanas to migrate in search of livelihood and compelling them to develop a new ritual basis for the* ***jajmani*** *system."* [102]

This then constitutes the other, the ruling class aspect of it. The institution commenced with the Vedic Brahmanas who in the new conditions that obtained in the village utilised not only an old institution that defined them but also adapted it in a manner that it should resolve the needs of a peasantry, and artisan and a service class that had to exchange their products and services in order to exist. It was an adaptation of an institution, the utilisation of an occasion and the creation of a new institution under the modified conditions of feudalism.

To get a picture of the aya system as it operated in early feudal Karnataka the closest we can get of a fullest description of it is from Francis Buchanan's survey at the turn of the nineteenth century. Buchanan describes the system from a village that he passed by on his way to Doddaballapura from Bangalore. *"This estimate is made on the supposition that the heap of grain contains at least 5* ***Candacas.*** *If it should contain 40* ***Candacas****, it pays no more; but if less than 5* ***Candadas****, there is a deduction made from the allowances that are given to different persons. Twenty* ***Candacas*** *may be considered as the average size of the heaps.*

	Seers
There is first set aside from the heap,	
For the gods; ie, for the priests at their temple	*5*
For charity, ie, for the ***Brahmans, Jangamas*** *and other mendicants*	*5*
For the astrologer, or ***Panchanga****; who, if no mendicant be present, take also the 5 seers*	*5*
For the poor Brahman of the village, whose office is hereditary	*5*
For the ***Nainda****, or barber*	*2*
For the ***Cumbhara****, or potmaker*	*2*
For the ***Vasaradara****, who is both a*	

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carpenter and blacksmith	*2*
*For the **Agasa**, or washerman*	*2*
*For the **Alitigara**, or measurer*	*4*
*For the **Tarugara**, or **Aduca**, a kind of beadle*	*7*
*For the **Gauda**, or chief of the village; who out of this is obliged to furnish the village sacrifices*	*8*
*For the **Shanaboga**, or accomptant*	*10*
*The heap is then measured; and for every **Candaca** that it contains, they are given the following perquisites:*	
*To the **Toti** and **Tallliari**, or watchmen, between them 1/2 seer; which, on a heap of 20 **Candacas** is*	*10*
To the accomptant, 2 1/2 seers	*45*
To the chief of the village, 2 1/2 seers	*45*
*The **Nirgunty**, or conductor of water, then takes the bottom of the heap, which is about one inch thick; but is mixed with the cowdung that, by way of purifying it, been spread on the ground; in a heap of 20 **Candacas**, this will be*	*20*
	169

*The accomptant also, for every **Candaca** of seed sown, and which ought to produce one heap of this size gets two men's loads of straw with the grain in it.*

*This on a heap of 20 **Candacas** of 160 seers amounts to 5 1/4 % of the gross produce. Of the reminder the government takes first 10% and then a half; so that it receives 45%. The reason for this difference is that formerly the country was managed by officers who, by the natives, were called **Daishmucs**, and by the **Mussalmans Zemindars**, and who were paid by receiving 10% from the heap before the division. When these officers were abolished by Hyder, he took the 10% and paid the salaries of the new officers appointed in their places."* [103]

This was the ayagara system modified though in the period of late feudalism by mercantilism, but intact in its basics.

The aya system was thus the system to exchange products within a village among tenants, artisans and the service classes; it was a system for extortion by the feudal classes based in the village and immediately above the village at the level of the nadagowda; it was a system of division of produce to be paid as tax to the state.

We must remember that the bonded labourer had nothing to bring forth to the ground where the measurement was made since he produced nothing he could claim was his own. Only the produce of the tenants came up for measurement and division after deducting the share that the tenant had to commit to the landlord. Thus it was out of what remained as the tenant's property that the various non-agrarian toiling village classes were paid. And in this again the Brahmanas and gowdas took their share. It is important

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to remember that at no instance did the produce that belonged to the feudal classes come to be divided as payment.

H. Nature of Feudal Property

In India did private property exist in land under feudalism?

This has been a question which even some Marxists have tended to confuse. The origin of the confusion however lies in the superficial studies and reports that the early British administrators made.

Ideas that property in land was communally held, that caste served as a unit of such communal holding, that the panchayat was one such institution have all been aired. Confusion abounds. Soviet historiography of Indian in particular, is the eye of this storm. Rostislav Ulyanovsky, for instance, writes: *"The basis for the socio-economic system in agrarian India ...was the land commune...."* [104]

Bipul Kumar Bhadra tries to clarify this issue, relying on Irfan Habib's reading of the time: *"The 'community' aspect refers to the corporate character 'as far as certain common affairs of the village are concerned, such as management of common lands and common services'. The concept of the village community does not mean that 'there was a village commune that owned the land on behalf of all its members. No evidence exists for communal ownership of land or even a periodic distribution and redistribution of land among peasants. The peasant's right to the land...was always his individual right'.*

Theoretically speaking, revenue was assessed separately from each individual peasant, and this assessment depended on the area of his holding and the amount of the crops raised. In this sense, the village community was bypassed. Empirically speaking, the whole village was the initial unit of assessment, apparently for administrative convenience. Since the village was made into a single assessee to pay the revenue collectively on behalf of all concerned, the communal aspect of the village became important in this specific sense. Otherwise, the description of the village as a community is somewhat misleading because it implies a much greater degree of common interests than usually existed." [105]

On the question of private property in land and the specific dynamics of property of the period under early feudalism, RS Sharma says that we get *"...a fair indication of growing individual rights in land. But those regarding mortgage, adverse occupation and sale seem to favour big landlords rather than ordinary peasant proprietors. In any case the steady growth of the idea of private land ownership in early medieval times may be taken as an important factor in feudal polity and economy, which was based on an unequal distribution of land among various strata of society."* [106]

What does our study from the development of feudalism in Karnataka tell us?

Starting from the very first inscriptions of the Kadambas in the third-fourth centuries made by Shivaskandavarma at Malavalli in Shikaripura taluk to a Brahmana or the Halmidi inscription granting balagalchu land to that of the end of our period of early feudalism in the twelfth century, we find thousands of grants—made in the name of specific individuals and warning against their infringement. **Private property was, beyond doubt, already deeply etched by the time feudal society began, and its private pro-**

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prietorship was held sacrosanct. All brahmadeya, gaudakodige, balagalchu, umbli and sarvamanya lands were in the form or inalienable private property.

But at the same time vrittis, devabhoga and matha grants were made not to any individual but to the institution as such. Sheik Ali writes that: *"These donees [of agraharas] could not cultivate the land themselves and hence such lands were also called* ***vrittis****. Hence the gifted land was held as joint property and the different Brahmins who received the grant were the share holders. They distributed the produce equally among themselves."* [107] These lands like the vriti were managed by corresponding bodies such as the mahajana or sabha assembly for the matha **on a corporate basis;** each family of Brahmanas assigned their portion of the surplus from the total produce while keeping aside another part of the surplus for the varied non-individual requirements of the institution. One might be tempted to consider this as evidence of the existence of communal property. But such communal management of institutional property becomes inevitable if the institution should survive and thrive. Any fragmentation of institutional property can only lead to its demise. Thus **the communal or corporative management of institutional property of the agraharas, temples and mathas should not be seen as being in a state of contradiction with private property of the time.** On the contrary such religious institutions which were a later development in Karnataka's feudal history were built up after centuries of the prior existence of private property among the Brahmanas. During the age of the agraharas, private Brahmana property of the shanbhoga or village priest continued to coexist with the so-called communal property of the Brahmana institutions. **This institutional property must be seen as the private property of the institution as a whole;** and the religious institutions which disseminated their ideology did so not to subvert but to consolidate private feudal property though the institution, out of the pragmatic requirements of management, might have resorted to a corporativist style.

By the time of the Badami Chalukyas we notice some further advances in the conditionalities that land grants carried. For instance under Kirttivarman, a Brahmana minister was issued a land grant. *"While stipulating conditions which governed the donation of the land, the charter in question mentions besides* ***sarva-jataka*** *(inclusive of all the produce),* ***maru-mannam,*** *an expression which needs elucidation. It is a Kannada word in which the second unit signifies 'ownership' and the first unit 'change'. Thus the donee was vested with the right to alienate the land donated to him by the king...."* [108] Ramesh adds that this specification was a rare addition not visible in the grants made till then. In other words, after more than two and odd centuries of issuing land grants under feudalism, the donees sought the right to also alienate their lands and to this effect got the king to enjoin it.

RS Sharma talks of a similar situation but at a much more advanced date by which time such special clauses even came to be the run-of-the-mill in the land grants that were made. *"By the 13th century when* ***Vyavaharanirnaya*** *of Varadaraja was compiled, the sale of land was recognised to be a well-established practice, for this text declares land, house and the like to be* ***panya****, saleable commodities—a term which is hardly applied to land in early times."* [109]

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We must be cautious not to read too much into the sale clause in the land grants of early feudal Karnataka. **Under a natural economy private property in land was the basic form of feudal property and the means for feudal appropriation. At a time when the sale of land could never have meant much, to equate private property with capitalist private property could be ahistorical. Feudal private property must be distinguished from capitalist private property. Capitalist private property anticipated and encouraged *expanded reproduction*; its laws compelled it to *accumulate* on an *expanding basis*. But feudal private property sought not expanded but *simple reproduction*. Its private property had enshrined a different law. Its law sought its reproduction on a by and large stagnant scale of *appropriation* and was therefore satisfied if its law of private property ensured the transfer of land on a permanent hereditary basis so that the interest of the feudal class was perpetuated** as the lord of the land, along the family line, for all time to come.

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7. CONSOLIDATION OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

A. A Peculiar Befuddler

Caste, an institution peculiar to India, for a long time remained a challenge to comprehension. How did caste originate? This stock question has received a fusillade of answers; a lot being ahistorical and moving off in a tangent.

It was since the pioneering work of DD Kosambi in the 1950s with his *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* and a whole deal of research that followed under its spell that the question has become much clearer today. Indian Marxist historiography has, after decades of debate and analysis, argument and research, now come up with an approximate picture of its origins. But the final words are yet to be said. It may take some more time before that is perhaps done. While the institution in its origin, in its functioning, in its transformation and adaptation have drawn attention, **the problem of its peculiarity to the Indian social formation needs to be answered** which can throw more light on the question and its origins.

On our part, we would like to pay to this phenomenon all the importance it deserves: to aspects concerning its origin, to its consolidation as an Indian social system, to its metamorphosis under changing social conditions and all along, to the factors contributing to its rigidity and dogged resilience. While we shall deal with aspects concerning its origin and consolidation in this part, the question will remain at the back of our mind in the forthcoming portions, at time being openly articulated and at other times lurking in the shadow of the narrative as is characteristic of its behaviour in social life.

B. In Endogamy Lies its Distinctive Feature

i) Periods of its Origin and Consolidation

The period of the **origin** of castes is related to the period of the **breakdown of a classless society belonging to the mode of primitive communism and its replacement by the shudra mode of class society.** The period of **consolidation** of caste as a social system belongs to the **first few centuries of the formation of the feudal mode of production, or in other words the early centuries of early feudalism.** We shall subsequently deal with the later part in detail. Yet the basic point, almost self-evident about the origin of castes is that **it is simultaneous with the development of classes in India,** and is **an one of the forms of expression of class emergence.** Thus the origin of castes may be placed from 600 BC and the period of its consolidation to from the fourth century AD.

In tracing the origins of caste to the origins of class division the question of Harappan civilisation which existed from 2500 BC to 1800 BC comes up. Was Sindhu society of the time divided on a caste basis or is caste a post-Harappan development? Any answer to this question can only remain conjectural for the immediate future. That is, unless we learn a lot more about Harappa, and perhaps really be able to decode its script, which will be able to shed light on its superstructure, any attempt to take sides and enter into a debate on this question can border on a vagueness which is becoming of hypotheses of such kinds. Hence it is advisable to discuss the question of origin of caste from the period of the shudra holding system onwards without necessarily coming to a

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conclusion about the period of India's first experience of class society during the Harappan age.

Irfan Habib in his *Caste in Indian History* writes: *"I think it is important to use the approach that Kosambi explicitly and consistently followed, the one that was introduced by Karl Marx. Caste should be viewed primarily in its role in different social formations that have arisen in a chain of sequence. A social formation, in so far as it is based on the form of the 'labour process', arises after the producers in society are able to produce a 'surplus'. It is vain to expect a social institution like caste to exist before this stage has arrived."* [110] Hence Kosambi says that *"caste is class on a primitive level of production."* [111]

The first reference to caste or *jati* comes from the time of the Buddha in the sixth century BC and thus coincides with the period of rise of classes. DD Kosambi further says: *"This phenomenon [of 'tribal elements being fused into a general society']...lies at the very foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely, caste."* [112] Summing up Kosambi's contribution in this regard Romila Thapar says: *"At a wider anthropological level he [Kosambi] maintained that one of the clues to understanding the Indian past was the basic factor of the transition from tribe to caste, from small localised groups to a generalised society. This transition was largely the result of the introduction of plough agriculture in various regions which changed the system of production, broke the structure of tribes and clans and made caste the alternative form of social organisation."* [113]

In other words we may say that **the spread of caste is related to the spread of plough based agriculture.** In this sense, if plough agriculture which was the chief instrument of production to break up the pre-class and thus pre-caste tribal social order, if plough agriculture had spread to certain pockets during the shudra holding period of the Mauryas, Guptas and Satavahanas resulting in the rise of castes in these pockets, the multiplication of castes and the consolidation of the **system** may be dated to the post-Gupta period in the north and the post-Satavahana period in the south, or otherwise the period of early feudalism when the plough proliferated across the Indian land mass and left very few pockets outside its influence, thus seeding and transplanting the caste system everywhere it went on the fertile ground of the earlier preclass tribal social mode.

ii) Aspects of Endogamy

a) Tribal Origins of Endogamy

Endogamy is a feature which lies at the foundation of caste. Without endogamy caste looses its identity and thereby its existence. Since the constitution of caste is based on ties of endogamous marriage, an investigation into the institution of endogamy is what can explain the origins of caste as such.

From our discussion in the earlier chapters it is by now clear that endogamy is a feature of all preclass societies. All societies under primitive communism, whether they be hunting-food gathering or pastoral-primitive agricultural, are organised along endogamous communities called tribes, and each tribe in turn has exogamous clans or ganas or gotras or as in Kannada, balis. The emergence of class society implies an internal rupture within tribes of slaves and slave holders, exploiters and exploited. The varna division had

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for instance taken place originally within the Indo-Aryans. Subsequently the other Dravidian tribes were brought under its sway. Thus the emergence of class society led to a vast churning which saw the break up of tribes and clans of the period of tribal oligarchy and the transformation of a society compartmentalised along tribal divisions into a class society where these divisions had been ruptured internally or where entire tribes became a part of the Shudra helotage or Vis. **While this rupture has in the case of most other societies meant the abolition and total elimination of endogamy as a feature characteristic of the previous tribal order and the simultaneous elimination from social memory of totemic gentile identity, in the Indian subcontinent, the transformation from tribe to class which proceeded along lines general to all tribal societies, only retained in this transformation the tribal remnant of endogamy.** We shall discuss the hows and whys of this select retention as we proceed with our discussion of caste concentrating for the present on the endogamic constitution of caste. Such a select survival of endogamy into the new social order of class divided society, also naturally carried with it clan exogamy in the form of balis and gotras which is even now referred to at times of marriage; marriage within a gotra being forbidden since all members of the clan are considered brothers and sisters. Thus **the emergence of classes in India which destroyed the primitive communist mode of production of tribal society did so by retaining endogamy which was a tribal social feature. In other words classes were deposited with endogamy, they became endogamous classes, or in other words to use the appropriate equivalent word—*castes*.**

To put it in Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya's words: *"...relics of such primitive or tribal society have always strongly characterised the social fabric of India—ancient, modern and medieval. It is, as I have called it, a case of incomplete detribalisation, a point which I have attempted to illustrate with the following: the ethnic composition, the village communities, the caste organisation and the customary laws."* [114]

This is how DD Kosambi summed up this phenomenon: *"The entire course of Indian history shows tribal elements being fused into a general society. This phenomenon...lies at the very foundation of the most striking Indian social feature, namely, caste."* [115]

In his discussion on caste, Irfan Habib responds to this explanation of Kosambi by saying: *"Can we suppose that as tribes entered the 'general society', they carried their endogamous customs into that society?"* [116]

We might therefore say, without the least doubt that **caste which is endogamous class, draws its distinguishing feature of endogamy from the tribal structure of the previous mode of production.** Closely related to endogamy and originating from it, we know that all tribes used excommunication from the tribe as one of the highest penalties upon an erring member and conversely also had initiation rites for taking member of other tribes into their own. In fact both these customs were carried intact along with clan exogamy—all of which rested on tribal endogamy—into the new social order.

To take an illustration from Syed Siraj Ul Hasan about the Bedas: *"A member of higher caste may gain admission into the Bedar community by paying a fine to the tribal panchayat and by providing a feast for members of the community. On the occasion the*

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proselyte is required to eat with them and subsequently have a betel-nut cut on the tip of his tongue. After the meals he is required to remove all the plates." [117] Among the Lambanis, in place of betel nut a bit of gold has to be cut, while among the Korachas it is turmeric.

While the source of endogamy is by now clear, there can also be no doubt that caste emerged with the breaking up of the previous mode of production, that is, in the shudra mode. Oligarchic tribes already drawn into a relationship with tribes not yet mature enough for internal class division, had, we may expect, already begun to display traces of caste in the manifestations of inter-tribal contradictions.

From all this we may conclude that endogamy, drawn from a tribal past, is the determining feature of caste. Bereft of endogamy caste looses its identity. With the loss of this identity it expresses itself as class, simple and straight. **Caste can therefore only and invariably exist as endogamous class.**

b) Why was Endogamy Institutionalised?

If endogamy was the key feature in the making of caste, it could not have enshrined itself in the emergence of the new classes unless it was willed by the ruling classes. Why did the ruling classes choose to institutionalise it, what advantages did they see in a system which created class along caste lines, and not the creation of a class system without the caste aspect?

Just as in the case of the rise of the ayagara system we feel that the continuation of endogamy in the new class context presented some immediate advantage to the tribes that were brought into helotage and those that converted into the Vis on the one hand and the ruling varnas composed of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas on the other.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* expresses the need to break up the solidarity of the existing tribes which challenged the expansion of the shudra holding state and its trading and agricultural interests on the one hand and to crush the rebellious attitude of the Shudras who tended to organise themselves along tribal lines even many years after their captivity. For this the *Arthashastra* recommended the distribution of such Shudras across distant territories. Thus it was evident that even under the new conditions of class rule a mass of Shudras tended to identify themselves along tribal lines and retain their tribal identity of endogamy as the only source of solidarity under the new conditions of class bondage. **Their tribal identity tended to be a last straw without which for them the oppression of the new order could not be withstood.**

We further feel that the purchase and sale of Shudras as was characteristic of slavery in Rome or Greece was not as frequent or practised to the same degree in India. Thus once after the captive Shudras were settled they might have not been frequently shifted across vast territory by purchase and sale, allowing thereby for some kind of stability and continuity of tribal identity down the line. In fact since it was the shudra holding state that was the major user of the helots, the question of sale was diminished.

For the ruling classes the continuation of a tribal endogamic feature (within the varna division) instituted an additional means, like for instance the monogamous family, for perpetuating private property and ensuring its continued monopoly. If kinship was used to consolidate class position, endogamy along tribal lines was only an extension of

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the territory of such kinship. Being born into a caste also at the same time meant being born with specific rights over property, the corollary signifying that being born in a certain caste also meant the loss of all such proprietary rights. **Thus surplus extraction was ensured and the ruling class could, on account of caste, perpetuate itself as permanent exploiters.** It was this new privilege that led to its institutionalisation. Endogamy was enshrined and it became endemic to class society in India. If endogamy was the determining feature, it was the will of the ruling classes to institutionalise it that led to the perpetuation of such endogamy, and thus caste, in India.

C. Expansion of Production Under Feudalism and the Multiplication of Castes

i) Variety and Unevenness in the Indian Subcontinent

A general remark which every conscientious historian or anthropologist has made is about the diversity that the Indian subcontinent displays. This diversity is itself multi-faceted.

This diversity is to be seen in the **geographical and environmental variety.** The subcontinent is home to a multitude of ecological niches each having its own forms of plant and animal life. This diversity of environment has contributed to an almost unparalleled richness in the forms of human adaptation at the stage of hunting-food gathering. In palaeolithic times itself there was under the general category of hunting-food gathering, a great variety of culture among the thriving tribes. This variety, and from it, an identity, was marked by the **multiplicity of tribal languages.**

With advances in the mode of production to neolithism and pastoralism-primitive agriculture and the continuous immigration of tribes till then foreign to India, this diversity assumed a new dimension. From that time on, ie, abut 10,000 years before now, this diversity was characterised also by the **degree of advancement**. Thus there came into existence advanced and backward tribes on the one hand and among the advanced a great deal of variety again based on the **principal crops each cultivated** or the **principal animals that each had domesticated.**

To this again we must add **the development of copper and iron which brought about further gradations** among the advanced tribes creating shades of the advanced and shades among the backward. From the time of the commencement of the neolithic period steady terms of barter and exchange had also emerged among the advanced and backward tribes and between the advanced, leading to the emergence of a complex. The nuclear complex of the Krishna-Tungabhadra doab, for instance described the coexistence and interrelationship of a host of tribes at different levels of production.

The commencement and progress of the iron age saw the advancement of tribal oligarchy and the breeding of divisions within and amongst tribes. A stratum within the advanced tribes and a division between this advanced proto-class stratum, and the tribes at a more backward level, displayed the emergence of a relationship between tribes owning slaves and tribes contributing such slaves. In other words by the time of the start of the shudra holding system and the commencement of Magadhan, Mauryan and Satavahana rule there was already a marked division that had emerged between the various tribes of

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the different nuclear regions of India. This was expressed in the elephant totem people already dominating those of the mouse totem or the slaying of the buffalo totem by the mother goddess Durga.

The beginning of class society proper and only its requirements of labour due to the invention and development of plough based field agriculture saw the conquest of tribes at the backward levels of production. Thus after the onset of the shudra holding epoch, the Indian land mass displayed a range and variety of culture and customs all hinging around the tribal identity. This tribal identity under areas that came under class rule manifested itself in the form of caste.

ii) Limited Perimeter of the Shudra Holding System

In the period of the shudra holding system the territories covered by the kingdoms of the Mauryas, Guptas or Satavahanas were vast and subcontinental or peninsular in proportions. But just as in the case of Karnataka under the Mauryas when the preclass social formation continued, similarly the shudra mode of production, it may be said, could, even by the end of its epoch, bring only a part of the population of their territory at that time under a class divided order. It would be no underestimation to say that **the majority of the population under the period of the shudra holding system remained outside the class divided order.**

In Karnataka under the Satavahanas this was even more so. When compared to the Gupta or Mauryan north, the degree of urbanisation or the scale of commerce was much lesser. For instance while we come across dozens of cities by the time of the Gupta age, Pataliputra alone being a metropolis having a population of several lakhs, in Karnataka at about the same period we come across only five cities and even these were not very populous when compared to those of north India. This can only mean that **the area brought under plough agriculture which was directly proportional to the size of the population residing in cities was far less in Karnataka.** Hence surplus extraction from distant villages could have been less probable in sustaining these urban settlements, and **most of the rural class division that had taken place must have occurred in the close vicinity of the urban settlements.** The landowning class of the Satavahana period must have been an urban class due to this proximity and must have differed quite vastly from the landlord class that was to follow in feudal times although the two were owners of landed property. Thus we may say that only a **minority** of the population of the time had been brought under the shudra mode of production as such; the vast body of the population existing **beyond** of its direct sphere of surplus extraction. This should at the same time not lead us to conclude that the shudra holding society had no influence at all on the rest of the tribal populations. On the one hand were the Vis who were independent peasants that undertook plough-based agriculture and took advantage of the rising urban centres to trade in their produce with the merchants. Secondly the innumerable tribal communities at the different levels of development traded with the merchants that frequented their domains and across the trading outposts set up along select points falling in regions covered by forest but through which the trade routes of the empire fell. Thus through economic ties of trade the advanced mode of shudra holding production knit a complex ensemblage of relationships with the preclass tribal communities which existed

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at different economic levels. This complex of economic ties, could only have had its counterpart in cultural relations and even of marriage. This web of relations—economic and noneconomic, and at times even of a military character—tended only to aggravate the class divisions within the tribes and paved way for the sweep of the feudal mode of production that followed suit.

In short, **the limited perimeter of the shudra mode of production, a boundary whose contours were all the more closely drawn in the case of Karnataka, had still left most of the people, in a tribal, preclass state of existence. Thus in the period of the shudra holding system while caste had emerged, it was consolidated and carried through as an institution with the expansion of class society and the incorporation of these various tribal peoples at different levels of economy as castes only with the onset of the new feudal mode of production. Hence the consolidation of caste belongs to the epoch of feudalism proper.**

iii) Spread of Feudalism and the Assimilation of Tribes

When compared to the shudra holding system, the spread of feudalism was **absolute**. The territory under a kingdom came at the same time to mean the near total domination of the feudal mode of production over all earlier ones. Except in certain thickly forested enclaves the early centuries of feudal expansion saw a thorough incorporation of most of the tribal peoples into the new mode of production. They became either the exploited or as in several cases a small section from them joined the ruling classes. Between being exploited and joining the exploiters there was no middle ground.

The significance of this vast conquest of peoples under early feudalism meant that for the vast majority of the tribes, the introduction to 'civilisation' came not through the shudra holding mode of varna divisions but through the feudal mode of caste division. Hence **if varna dominated the milieu of the shudra holding system jati dominated that of feudalism**. More of the varna-jati relationship later. But first let us take a look at how this processes of the spread of feudalism; the assimilation of tribes as castes into the feudal mode of production took place.

iv) Process of Expansion

As we have already seen in this chapter, the feudal mode of production came into existence by the issue of land grants to Brahmanas, civil and military officials and wealthy merchants who settled down in villages and became an intermediary landlord class exploiting a subject peasantry.

Such land grants either transferred already settled villages with an inbuilt class structure and which the state maintained or those that were constituted by the plough using agricultural tribes who were living as an independent Vis or peasantry and within the structure of which class division had already begun to emerge. Apart from these two types of rural settlements there was a third which was formed of independent tribal peoples who still belonged to modes of pastoralism-primitive agriculture or hunting-food gathering. Land grants were made at the periphery of such settlements and in time the feudal class came to dominate over the tribes in these settlements.

This was achieved through the use of violence. However, while feudalism applied violence to establish its mode of production it at the same time also incorporated gradual and subtle methods.

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The new settlements of landlords tended to first strike at the original economic resources of the tribe. Either they lost their agricultural land or they had to foresake their pasture lands and hunting grounds or foraging territories. The land-man ratio for pre-plough agricultural societies is highly disproportionate and even the slightest disturbance of it only begins to eat into their mode of life. This compelled the tribals to rely on the feudal economy for part of their sustenance, which brought them closer and closer to the settlements of the landlord. At the same time those tribes practising podu cultivation as a result of being elbowed by the feudal encroachers also came to change their own practice of agriculture. They came to rely on the Brahmanas in particular for undertaking plough based agriculture and thus themselves came to be transferred into a peasantry. Therefore by this process the independence characteristic of the tribal mode of existence was foresaked and **either by violence, loss of their sources of economic survival or simply dependence on the superior mode of economic production or often by a combination of all these factors, there was the systematic yet gradual assimilation that took place of the tribal peoples.** The mode proved itself abundantly capable of overthrowing the old tribal order and its methods of obtaining the dependence of the tribal masses was certainly far more advanced and sophisticated when compared to the more brazen, outspokenly violent and on that account crudeness of the shudra holding system.

RS Sharma makes some pertinent observations in this regard. He says: *"The conquest of the backward peoples living in the jungles, forests, etc, by brahmanised princes from agriculturally advanced areas enormously added to the number and variety of Shudra castes. The suppression of Sabaras, Bhillas, Pulindas, etc, is referred to in a medieval inscription from central India. For five hundred years from the 9th century almost all the Deccan powers fought against the Abhiras, who could not be easily assimilated into the brahmanical order. An inscription of AD 861 shows that the Prathihara prince Kakkuka destroyed and conquered a village of Abhiras near Jodhpur and settled it with brahmanas and vaisyas, who were promised safety and livelihood. A Kalacuri inscription of the 12th century speaks of the deliverance of the Rattanpur prince Jajjalladeva III from the clutches of a tribal people called Thirus or Tharus which was celebrated by his donation of a village to two brahmanas. It is not clear whether this village lay in the Thiru area, but priests were granted land in many subjugated territories, where they inducted the indigenous aboriginal tribal peoples into their cultural fold. This process may have been also peaceful, but peaceful or otherwise it succeeded because of the superior material culture of the brahmanas who not only taught new scripts, language and rituals to the preliterate people but also acquainted them with plough cultivation, new crops, seasons, calendar, preservation of cattle-wealth etc."* [118]

RN Nandi attests to this conclusion when he says, speaking of peninsular India: *"The decline of the market economy marked a further stage in the development of productive process.... The subsumption of Varna division by a complex hierarchy of superior and inferior Jatis also began about this time; with the number of inferior Jatis ever on the increase."* [119]

The role of ideology in this assimilatory process was of great importance. The spread of feudal ideas and religio-philosophical notions, the spread of ritual and the spread of the epics of Mahabharatha and Ramayana themselves written during the period of the

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Guptas could effectively shape the ideas of the subject tribal masses and thereby to that extent compensate the role of violence in this phenomenal transformation, making it a self-willing submission; an oblation of the old modes of existence at the feet of overwhelming feudalism.

v) Continuation of Tribal Forms Within the Parameters of a Feudal Mode and the Syncretic Structure of Feudalism

A feature marking out the diversity of Indian society is due essentially to its caste system. Caste has not only perpetuated tribal endogamy but it has also wrenched out from a prehistoric tribal past aspects belonging to the economic base, as much as those from the superstructure of yore. Hence **each caste and the entire system of castes carried remnants of prehistory** making India moving on its way into the twenty first century a kind of museum kicking off vague images of a hoary past. **These fragments of the economic and superstructural past have engendered life to endogamy,** making each caste an exclusive domain, "a nation in itself", as a few early British colonialists chose to call this plethora of diversity.

The expansion of feudalism created three main classes. One was the landlord class and the other two were the class of bonded tenants and that of the bonded labourer, subservient to the first. While feudalism always ensured what it wanted from these two classes and invariably moulded the various tribes into these major classes, it allowed within this framework of economic servitude for a pursuit of economic activity which belonged to their respective tribal pasts. Thus the hunting tribes were assimilated as tenants and retainers, fishing tribes served feudalism as fishermen, pastoral sheep rearers became tenants and shepherds, primitive agriculturists became toddy tapping tenants and so on.

In the cultural and religious spheres each caste brought with it its own forms of marriage, music and dance. It carried its totems, animistic gods and mothers goddesses thereby creating the Indian pantheon.

In the political superstructure each tribe tugged along its institutions of self-administration in the form of jati-panchayats in which only the members of each caste sat together to adjudicate matters exclusive to their caste.

These were then fragments that were drawn from the tribal past and imbedded into the new feudal society as a result of the institution of caste. Thus caste which distinguishes itself on saccount of endogamy came to signify due to this tribal characteristic, fragments or remnants of its other features from the bygone modes. Thus **caste contributed to the syncretisation of Indian feudalism.** DD Kosambi identified Hindu religion as a syncretic faith. This itself we feel was a superstructural manifestation of a feudalism which was structured along caste lines and thus itself bore a syncretic structure

This syncretism, it must be remembered did not signify any federal features or democratic inclinations. This was an out and out feudal hierarchical syncretism. The feudal ruling classes coped with, adjusted with, accomodated and fused with only those and those elements alone which did not disturb or contradict the task of sustaining and reproducing the feudal mode. On the contrary all those tribal elements which were preserved had been badly battered, reshaped and only fragments of the past were allowed to

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creep into the new mode of life. For instance endogamy was assimilated only because it surrendered to the dictates of the laws of feudal private property and the sanctity of the feudal estates; tribal religions and faiths were incorporated only after they bowed to the supremacy of the principal gods that decorated the thrones of the pantheon—Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma; all attempts at jati adjudication through jati panchayats were preserved only because they had bowed to the authority of the feudal village panchayat and vowed not to contradict it. Thus on every count the remnants had ceased to exhibit their earlier values that had lent them meaning—freedom, equality and republicanism of the mode of primitive communism. The syncretism that was achieved was under the absolute dictatorship of the feudal class. There was no compromise on this. The compromise in the process of fusion that had occurred was apparent and not real; it was a feature well incorporated into feudalism and not of tribalism any longer; **it was the continuation of old forms in the new milieu.** In short caste cast on Indian feudalism a syncretic structure which in turn was manifested in the different realms that went to make the feudal mode of production.

vi) Non-Tribal Sources of Caste Formation

While tribal endogamy was the surest source in the formation of castes, castes came into existence from non-tribal origins too. RS Sharma identifies two other such sources that went into the making of caste. He writes: *"Another significant process which led to the multiplication of sudra castes was the transformation of crafts into castes. As trade and commerce languished in post-Gupta times craft guilds tended to become stagnant, immobile, more and more hereditary, and more and more localised. Trades and guilds gradually constituted themselves into closed exclusive groups resembling castes for all practical purposes. Apararka quotes Brhaspati to show that heads of guilds may reprimand and condemn wrong-doers and may also excommunicate them. It seems that* ***napita, modaka, tamulika, svarnakara, malakara, sankhakara sutrakara, citrakara*** *etc., who, like aborigines, are all called mixed castes in medieval texts obviously emerged as castes out of various crafts."* [120]

This is how Sharma identifies the other source of caste formation. He writes: *"A factor which multiplied the number of castes among both the higher and lower orders of Hindu society, especially in the Deccan and south India, in medieval times was their religious affiliation. The parallel between the multiplication of sects and that of castes in medieval times is very close, and the former helped the latter. Saivism, Vaisnavism, Buddhism and Jainism—each one of these religions—proliferated into numerous sects not so much due to basic differences in doctrines as due to minor differences in rituals and even in food and dress, which all were sustained by regional practices."* [121]

Both these sources for the rise of castes were non-tribal in origin. One was drawn from the guild structure of shudra holding society, the other from the structure of sectarian religious movements. This non-tribal origin of castes should not lead us however to come to a similar conclusion of the origin of caste as an institution itself. Caste as an institution sprung only from tribal endogamic roots. But in the course of the development of society after caste was thus institutionalised, there were different factors, some economic, some others noneconomic, which led to the creation of closed communities. Although such closed communities did not draw their origins from

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an immediate tribal past their coming into existence in a social environment that was parcelled out into innumerable castes led to their taking on caste overtones and ultimately getting transformed into full-fledged castes themselves. In studying such processes of coming into being of caste, which have continued throughout the period after the initial centuries of early feudalism and caste consolidation, and which we will repeatedly refer to in the rest of this book, one has to be careful not to jump to ahistorical conclusions. It was only on foundations that were already laid by tribal endogamy that later additional contributions to castes took place. **It was endogamy rooted in the tribal past that determined the rest and set the trend.** The trunk of caste grew from the tap root of tribal endogamy. Just because later branches shot off from the stem can the vitality and determinate role of the root be denied?

vii) Aphorising Caste

There are various ways to arrive at a final understanding of caste. This could be expressed in aphorisms.

Romila Thapar says: *"...a tribe incorporated into peasant society could be converted into a caste."* [122]

On our part we have in the course of this discussion already made one or two such aphorisms. Yet we may add that **caste is tribe in a class setting.** Or else, we may say **tribes become castes under class rule.** Or to be more precise we could even say **caste is tribe under a feudal order.**

D. Growth of the Untouchables

Untouchable castes also, like the rest, greatly increased in numbers during the period of early feudalism. The spread of the Untouchable castes also called as the ati-Shudras was directly related to the spread of the feudal mode of production. DD Kosambi tells us of how food gatherers were reduced to the level of Untouchables.[123]

RS Sharma provides us with details of this process which Kosambi had identified. *"Most untouchable castes were backward tribes whose induction into the Hindu system was accomplished through brahmanisation and through the spread of Hinduised Buddhism. This can be inferred from Brahmanical texts as well as from Buddhist caryapadas. The latter refer to the doman, nisadas and their women-folk and to the Kapalikas, all of whom generally lived on mounds outside the villages and were untouchables for the Brahmanas. Apparently certain tribal people could not be fully absorbed in Hindu society because of their being very backward and hence had to be pushed to the position of untouchables; or possibly those who offered stiff resistance to the process of conquest and Hinduisation were dispossessed of their lands in the villages and forced to settle outside. Perhaps this happened to the Kaivartas who were finally overpowered by the Palas [an early feudal dynasty that ruled over Bengal] in the 11th century. This may also be true if the Domba tribe, who appear to be an important people in the Dombipadacarya. Since brahmanisation took place on a very large scale in early medieval times, the number of untouchable castes increased substantially. In early times certain varieties of hunters and artisans were rendered untouchables...."* [124]

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Elsewhere RS Sharma says: *"Since his [Manu's] list counts as many as 61 [Untouchable] castes, their consolidation in Chapter X [of the **Dharmashastra**] seems to have been the work of about the fifth century....*

The ...[Untouchable] castes were to be distinguished by their occupation. The candalas, svapakas and antyavasayins were engaged for executing criminals, and were given clothes, beds and ornaments. The nisadas lived by fishing, and the medas, andhras, madgus and cuncus were employed in hunting wild animals. Ksattrs, ugras and pukasas are described as engaged in catching and killing animals living in holes. Apparently all of these were backward aboriginal tribes who retained their occupations even when they were absorbed in brahmanical society." [125]

Continuing and further contributing to the discussion on the spread of the Untouchables as castes, Irfan Habib ventures to add: *"Since they [Untouchable castes] were excluded from taking to agriculture, and their own original or altered occupations were of minor or seasonal importance, they became a large reservoir of unfree, servile landless labour available for work at the lowest cost to peasants as well as superior landholders. It is difficult to avoid the view that the bitter hostility which the rest of the population has displayed for these menial **jatis** had derived from this fundamental conflict of interest. Concepts of 'purity' and 'pollution' were a rationalisation of this basic economic fact."* [126]

Irfan Habib was only reflecting on the lines that sharma had already drawn out regarding the question of purity and pollution. RS Sharma says: *"Against the background of a very low material culture of the aborigines, the increasing contempt for manual work, combined with primitive ideas of taboo and impurity associated with certain materials, produced the unique social phenomenon of untouchability."* [127]

We learn from this discussion that untouchability spread as a social institution during the period of rising and expanding feudalism. In Karnataka under the shudra holding system the population circumscribed by class society was small, much smaller than in Gangetic north India as we have already observed. This only allowed for the creation of Untouchables on a very small scale during the period and perhaps the tribes reduced to untouchability at that time were the small and peripheral ones. Thus **for all practical purposes the commencement of untouchability itself may be dated from the period of feudalism.**

RN Nandi is therefore correct when he observes: *"The growth of the feudal economy helped by these social developments of which high point was marked by the appearance of bonded field labour and new forms of land control. Just about this time, the **antyaja** or untouchable emerged as the fifth rung of the traditional four-varna hierarchy. The **antyaja** idea helped the growth of servile labour and was reinforced by the sanctification of forced labour by legal writers."* [128]

Tribes at the level of hunting and food gathering or palaeolithic and mesolithic levels and also those at neolithic levels of primitive agriculture but who did not yet use metals were the chunk of what the Untouchables were made of. Let us consider the case of the Madigas and Holeyas of Karnataka.

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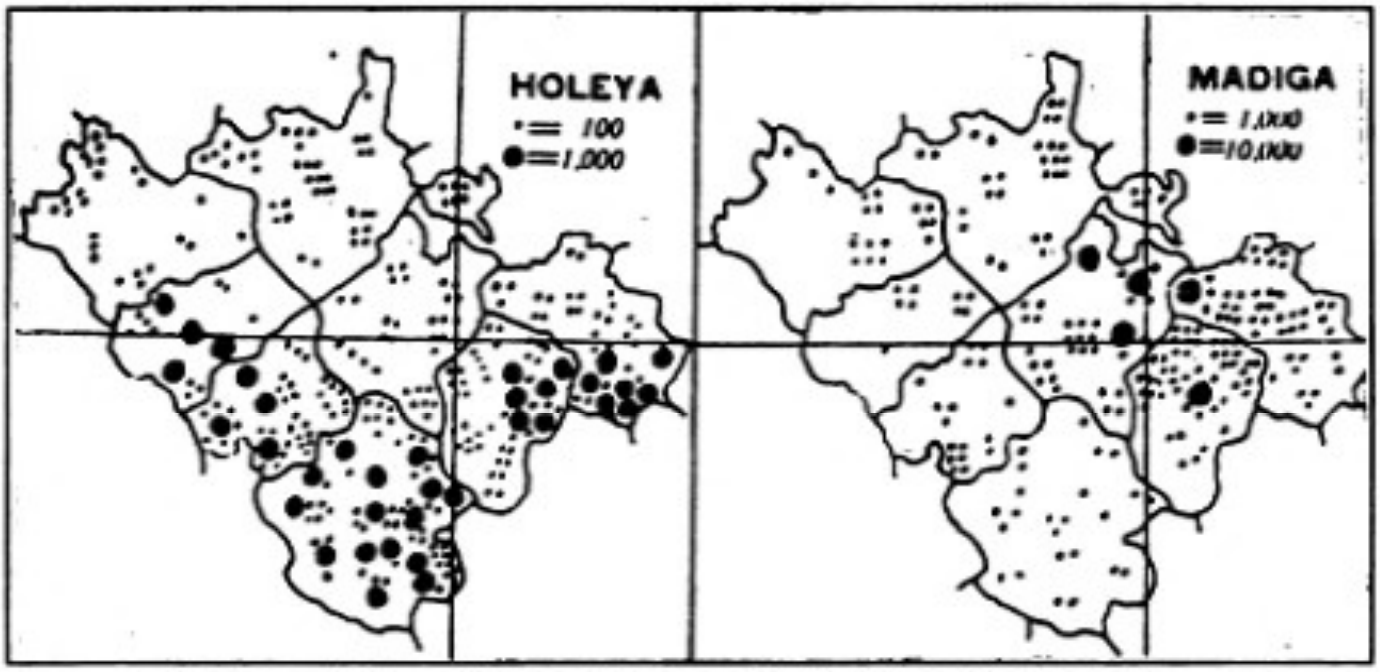
The Madigas are an Untouchable caste forming 4% of Karnataka's population today. They form the second largest Untouchable caste after the Holeyas. The concentration of the Madiga population is to be found in the districts of Karnataka bordering Andhra Pradesh excluding Kolar, with two powerful penetrations into Shimoga and Dharwad districts. There is a Telugu speaking Untouchable Madiga caste also, similar in status but first in number among the Telugu Untouchables of in Andhra Pradesh. The Telugu Madiga population is concentrated in the adjoining districts of Andhra Pradesh with perhaps some penetration into a coastal district or two in the Krishna and Godavari deltaic region.

This dispersal of its concentration only establishes beyond doubt that the Madigas were one of the significant tribes which inhabited the southern habitational core region of India. Also called Adi-Dravidas in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, an appellation which only speaks of their antiquity, we may say that the Madigas were already present in this southern nuclear area and in Bellary-Raichur districts among the districts of Karnataka in particular, forming the heart of the doab of the Krishna-Tungabhadra rivers. Syed Siraj Ul Hasan's study of the castes of the Nizam's dominions leads him to conclude that the Madigas *"correspond in every detail to the Mang caste of the Maratha districts."* [129] If this is true, the Madigas must have wandered in not just the southern nuclear region but also in the entire Deccan region itself as hunters-food gatherers from pre-neolithic times. *"The etymology of the name 'Madiga' is uncertain although attempts were made to derive it from the word 'Matangi', the name of an aboriginal tribe...."* [130] This only corresponds with the Madiga legend that they are the children of Matangi. It is quite



64. Dispersal and concentration of Holeya and Madiga populations in Old Mysore.

possible that Madiga, Mang and Matangi are commonly derived. While it may be difficult to identify the period of their arrival to the nuclear area, the fact that they are to be found in both Karnataka and Andhra areas only tells us that their presence clearly preceded the period of the formation of the Kannada nationality and its split with the Telugu.

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Madiga lore claims that they are the children of their female progenitress, Matangi. *"It is said that she gave protection to Renuka when the latter was pursued by her son Parshuram, who in wrath, cut off Matangi's nose which was immediately restored to her by Renuka. Since then, Renuka, in the form of Ellamma, has been revered as their patron deity by the caste."* [131]

"According to one [other legend] the head of Renuka, the wife of sage Bhrigu who was beheaded by her lord's orders, fell in a Madiga house, and grew into a Madiga woman." [132]

Yet another myth has it that Jamadagani who chopped off the heads of both Renuka and Matangi in his hermitage, rescinded his curse at the plea of Parshurama his son who in piecing back the head to the body mixed that of Renuka's and Matangi's.[133]

Further these same writers narrate a version of the Ellamma legend from the Asadis who sing in praise of Matangi. This is how the last lines run: *"She is supposed to be the daughter of Giriraja Muni and Javanikachari and the wife of Jamadagni rishi. Her son is Parasurama, carrying a plough."* [134]

All these legends, two taken from Hyderabad Karnataka, one from Shimoga and the last from Tumkur have a lot in common. While Matangi is the Madiga tribal ancestress her daughter Ellamma, Brahmanised as Renuka, has some part of her body grafted and as a result married to a Brahmana rishi. The son of this rishi is Parashurama who is invariably symbolised as the bearer of the plough. The assimilation through force by an expanding Brahmana plough-using society of what was an independent tribe are facts which can be derived from this myth.

These fated children of Ellamma that belonged to Mahisha Mandala, the region of Karnataka that they inhabited, were at this point reduced as bonded labourers into the expanding order of feudalism by the Brahmana Parashurama.

The Holeyas are the major Untouchable caste of Karnataka, forming 7% of the State's population. In the caste hierarchy the Holeyas are placed above the Madigas, which we feel only indicates that the Holeyas were at a more advanced level than the Madigas at the time of their integration into feudal society.

The territory of concentration of the Holeya population is clearly demarcated from that of the Madigas. The Holeyas inhabit the South Maidan, exclusively dominate in the Malnad, descend to the Karavali and a tract like thrust of Holeya habitation cuts across southern Bijapur, western Raichur and settles in Gulbarga.

If the Madigas have contiguity with the Telugu nationality, the Holeyas have an exclusive monopoly over the districts neighbouring the Tamil country. This only confirms the identity between the Kannada Holeya and the Tamil Paraya. This is borne out by the common linguistic root. 'Pa' in Tamil becomes 'ha' in Kannada and Paraya pronounced in Kannada would read as 'Haraya'. Further, 'ra' and 'la' tend to often metamorphose into the other making Paraya in Kannada 'Halaya', from which Holeya proper may be derived. The Tamil Pulaya Untouchables are a closer rendering of Holeya. It appears that the Mala of Telugu country, the Paraya and Pulaya of the Tamil nationality and the Chamar of Maharashtra are related and perhaps constituted a common tribe, like that of the Matangi for the Madigas during the mesolithic period.

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At this level of mesolithism, the Holeyas were hunter-food gatherers. But with the change to neolithism the Holeyas were quicker in adapting to agriculture than the Madigas. Perhaps the neolithic transformation was itself mediated by the Holeyas in the nonnuclear region, *hola* in Kannada and *polam* in Tamil meaning a strip of cultivated dry land. At the time of their integration into the caste system they continued to remain neolithic primitive agriculturists whose fortunes were on the decline due to the destruction of their water sources and usurpation of their lands. The spread of the Holeyas into the Malnad and then into the southern Karavali only speaks of their agricultural prowess which tapped the inhospitable yet highly humid and moisture laden soils of these regions to cultivate ragi and rice. The loss of Holeya agricultural tracts however need not have commenced in the early years of feudalism alone, and may have preceded it by several centuries. The Holeyas could have already begun to foresake their lands to iron using peoples and deserting such lands also begun to migrate further into the forested territories to the southern and western flanks of Karnataka; only hotly pursued by the iron users for the beautiful land they had cleared and cultivated; till they were again further elbowed to the interiors. The stamp of agriculture is what characterises the Holeyas and as Edgar Thurston and Rangachari write; their *"customs indicate that the Holeyas were once masters of the land."* [135]

The *Mysore Census Report of 1891* states: *"In the pre survey period, the Holeya or Madig Kulvadi, in the maidan or eastern division, was so closely identified with the soil that his oath, accompanied by certain formalities and awe-inspiring solemnities, was considered to give the* ***coup de grace*** *to long existing and vexatious boundary disputes. He had a potential voice in the internal economy of the village, and was often the* ***fidus Achates*** *of the Patel (village official)."* [136]

Further, burial customs have it that the Holeya's permission must be taken for the spot of land needed for the burial in a village; without which the rite cannot be consummated.

The other bit of evidence which speaks on behalf of the primitive agricultural level of the Holeyas is that they are priests or *tammadis* only to mother goddesses of which there are a bevy if not a host.

It was war that settled the issue with the Holeyas, a rout of their economy by direct usurpation of their lands and thus their economic subjection which had already been on for centuries had kept embers of hostility simmering. It was such purposive ruination that ultimately forced the Holeyas into a life of bondage if only to stay alive. Unlike several other tribes who escaped into the forest, the Holeyas had advanced from hunting-food gathering to primitive agriculture and it was this advancement which proved to become the hurdle, since it preempted their flight to freedom and regression into the jungles as foragers and hunters once again. The Holeyas were caught in a historic vice--between the devil of civilisation and the deep sea of savagery.

The legends of the time invariably make this point repeatedly. And there is striking absence of all elements of vagueness, itself a result of the gradualness dictated by the economic ruin as found among the lore of the Madigas. For the Holeyas, more conscious of their former freedom and therefore more assertive, it had to always be war and battle—

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the violence of expanding feudalism and its Brahmanas—before they were taken in completely. To cite from Thurston and Rangachari: *"All Tulu Brahmin chronicles agree in ascribing the creation of Malabar and Canara, or Kerala, Tuluva and Haiga to Parasu Rama, who reclaimed from the sea as much land as he could cover by hurling his battle-axe from the top of the Western Ghats. A modified form of the tradition states that Parasu Rama gave the newly reclaimed land to Naga and Miachi Brahmins, who were not true Brahmins, and were turned out or destroyed by fishermen and Holeyas, who held the country till the Tulu Brahmins were introduced by Mayur Varma (of the Kadamba dynasty). All traditions unite in attributing the introduction of the present day to Mayur Varma, but they vary in details connected with the manner in which they obtained a firm footing in the land. One account says that Habashika, chief of the Koragas, drove out Mayur Varma, but was in turn expelled by Mayur Varma's son, or son-in-law Lokaditya of Gokarnam, who brought Brahmins from Ahi-kshetra, and settled them in 32 villages. Another makes Mayur Varma himself the invader of the country, which till then had remained in the possession of the Holeyas and fishermen who had turned out Parasa Rama's Brahmins. Mayur Varma and the Brahmins whom he had brought from Ahi-kshetra were again driven out by Nanda, a Holeya chief, whose son Chandra Sayana had, however, learned respect for Brahmins from his mother who had been a dancing girl in the temples. His admiration for them became so great that he not only brought back the Brahmins, but actually made over all his authority to them, and reduced his people to the position of slaves. A third account makes Chandra Sayana, not a son of a Holeya king, but a descendant of Mayur Varma and the conqueror of the Holeya king."*[137]

This account of the bondage of the Holeyas is surprisingly precise for its historicity. It not only speaks of Parasurama the godhead of a forging feudalism but also of the Kadamba king, Mayurasharma. It is a story significant for its historicity and thus giving us an account, rare to come by, of the relationship between the Kadamba kings and the Brahmana settlers and the achievement of the feudal state in ultimately suppressing the Holeyas. There could not be a better account of the development of bonded labour and the consolidation of caste society.

The role of Chandra Sayana is of vital importance in this subjection. The legends themselves at one time speak of him as the son of Nanda the Holeya chief and at another as a king descended from Mayurasharma himself. This apparent contradiction in reality is in total agreement with the process.

DD Kosambi says: *"The chief, with the backing of a few nobles freed from tribal law, would become ruler over his former tribe while the ordinary tribesmen merged into a new peasantry."*[138] Kosambi was only describing a general process of the expansion of class society in India. Chandra Sayana was one such chieftain. First with the Holeyas and against the Kadamba Brahmanas, then with the Kadamba Brahmanas against the Holeyas. The two different legendary accounts were only talking of a Chandra Sayana of two different periods: first as the son of the Holeyas and then as the scion of the Kadambas.

This contradiction was therefore only one among the many that would grease the cart wheels of feudalism onward. Was the Kadamba king, Mayura Sharma himself not a convertee to Brahmanism drawn from a tribal clan which had the Kadamba tree as its totem?

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The ultimate denigration of these stone age level tribes could have been achieved with an optimum use of force. Their settlements outside the village indicates that they were final additions to the village. The Untouchable *bastis* and *keris* perhaps came to be incorporated into the geography of the village only after such tribes having been deprived of their sources of sustenance became increasingly dependent on the feudal village and came to live on its periphery; driven by deprivation they became and the target of the contempt of the village and its various castes, till they were finally assimilated as bonded labourers by the feudal sections. Thus while the class of landlords took advantage of their labour depressing its value on a social scale and incorporating it as a bonded work force in their fields and as domestic hands in their houses serving thereby as a good replacement for the chattel slaves that they formerly held; tenant Shudras and tied artisans, except for the contempt which they cast on the Untouchables and apart from being recipients of bitti chakri on a few ritual occasions which served to atone their contempt, did not really derive the material advantage of surplus extraction from the abdicated form of Untouchable labour. **Untouchability was therefore the climax of the caste system.** It was a paroxysm, pangs from Indian history. Condemned and damned, polluting and perpetually defiling, **the Untouchable was always the bonded labourer.** The Shudra tenant venting his venom on the Untouchable could not come to terms with the fact that he was jointly exploited by the feudal class. This feudal stake dividing the toilers was driven so deep into the body fabric that the wound festers to this day.

E. *Jati* and *Chaturvarna*

There is a great deal of confusion in understanding varna; varna in the period of the shudra holding system and varna in the period of feudalism and the relationship it has with jati. There is surely an intertwining between these two distinct institutions, but this overlapping and interpenetration has often led to flawed interpretations. This has been the case with bourgeois historiography whenever it has chosen to deal with this issue.

i) Endogamy in *Chaturvarna*

The division into four varnas was the result of developments internal to the Indo-Aryan tribes. It was an indication of the break up of the Aryan tribes. While Shudra and Dashyu were originally names of Aryan tribes themselves, perhaps the first wave of Aryan immigrants to the western Sindhu frontier, their conquest by the later Indo-Aryans again brings to the fore the stamp of tribal exclusivism in the making of varna; it would be wrong to come to such a hasty conclusion. The institution of the Brahmana as we have already mentioned was perhaps Dravidian in origin and could have emerged only as the result of the internal breaking of the Aryan tribes on the one hand and their fusion with elements from the Dravidian tribes; a process consequent to the collapse of Harappan civilisation. Thus the varna divisions saw the implosion of the Indo-Aryan tribes and an end to their exclusivism. Among the Brahmanas, Kshatriya, Vis and Shudra varnas were now elements belonging to both the Indo-Aryan and non-Aryan backgrounds. **These varna or class divisions were therefore mixtures, signifying the end of the tribal mode of primitive communism and came to represent, only on account of this fusion, the new mode of production and its social reality of classes.** Therefore varna

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division apparently militated against the preservation of tribal remnants and thus contradicted the existence of castes.

But while creating varna, the leading Brahmana and Kshatriya varnas included, out of the advantages it held for their self-preservation and perpetuation of private property, the aspect of immutability between the varnas or in other words, endogamy in a broad sense. Thus while endogamy was a tribal institution as such, its application to chaturvarna did not immediately perpetuate jati; on the contrary **it perpetuated the state of mixed tribes in the form of varna.** This notion of varna must have dominated the period from 1100 BC to 600 BC, that is, the period of migration from the basin area of the eastern tributaries of the Sindhu and upper reaches of the Ganga to the central Ganga plain.

With the rise of civilisation in the central Ganga plains from 600 BC onward the old process of fusion was inadequate. The forceful clearing of forests and the conquest of the tribal peoples that inhabited them to work on such cleared lands widened the ranks of the Vis and Shudras. The tribes that were now pressganged into helotage. They joined the ranks of the Shudras and came to be **almost exclusively** peopled by them. Thus endogamy that was originally introduced to the broad varna categories now actively reinforced endogamy practiced by the tribes which were forcefully reduced to slavery. Thus endogamy meant to preserve the varna divisions only gave a fillip in preserving jati exclusivity within the varnas, particularly among the Shudras and Vaishyas. The tribes that put up a dogged resistance and had to wage a sustained war at times for generations on end to prevent their conquest, on their final defeat and subjection stuck to all that they had—their tribal institutions—to the extent that the ruling classes compromised on this score, and they retained endogamy leading to the formations of castes which only now became a social reality. Yet, as this was the period of the shudra holding system and the broadest part of the population of tribes was yet not subjugated, this stage could only mark the origin of castes; the caste system itself coming much later, with the onset of feudalism.

With the transition to feudalism and the reordering of society certain changes took place within varnas and in the relationship among varnas, calling for a reinterpretation and on such grounds, a modified presentation of chaturvarna so as to continue to serve the period of the new mode of feudalism. Manu through his *Dharmashastra* written in the time bracket of 220 AD-400 AD as estimated by RS Sharma, achieved this reinterpresentation causing the survival of varna in a sea of jatis.[139]

ii) *Chaturvarna* Under Feudalism: *Varna* for Ritual, *Jati* as the Material

These changes affected the Shudra and Vaishya segments the most. As we already know, varna under the shudra holding system signified the status of an independent peasant for the Vaishya and of slavery for the Shudra who worked on the state owned sita lands or else was simply *chattel persona.*

RS Sharma says that *"in the traditional social hierarchy sudras were required to serve as slaves and hired labourers, the new sudras were either peasants or sharecroppers. Hence in Gupta and post-Gupta texts it became necessary to call them cultivators."* [140]

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This point is reiterated by Sharma in his *Indian Feudalism*. *"The view"* he writes, *"that the farmer population was largely composed of sudras, seems to be more true of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods than of earlier times. Thus from the point of view of the rise of feudalism the transformation of sudras from the position of slaves and hired labourers into that of agriculturists should be regarded as a factor of great significance."* [141]

And this is how Sharma explains these changes: *"The Gupta period witnessed momentous changes in the status of the sudras. Not only was there an increase in the rates of wages paid to hired labourers, artisans and pedlars, but slaves and hired labourers were gradually becoming sharecroppers and peasants. This change is broadly reflected in the politico-legal position of the sudras. The admonitions of the* **Santi Parva** *advocating the appointment of sudra ministers may not be taken seriously, but certainly the heads of guilds of artisans were associated with the work of the district government, and in times of emergency the sudras were conceded the right to bear arms. The rigours of the varna legislation were softened, and probably some of the harsh measures against the sudras were annulled. The religious rights of the sudras were considerably enlarged. Social degration undoubtedly took place in the case of the untouchables, who were regarded as sudras only theoretically, but for all practical purposes were marked out as a separate community. But it would be wrong to think that other sections of the sudras were socially degraded in the Gupta period. There is no evidence for this in regard to food and marriage practices. As regards education, the sudras were definitely conceded the right of hearing the epics and the Puranas, and sometimes even the Veda. Considered as a whole, the economic, politico-legal, social and religious changes in the position of the sudras during the Gupta period may be regarded as marking a transformation in the status of that community."* [142]

In short, the Vaishya or class of independent peasants split into two. One was converted into bonded tenants and the other became traders; the Shudras released themselves from helotage and became bonded tenants or tied artisans; the Brahmanas began to divide into many sectarian groupings, and the Kshatriya, as far as a large part of India including the south was concerned, only had individuals but not castes as such. Manu goes on to identify innumerable castes within each varna and as many as 61 Untouchable castes. The former tegument of chaturvarna was obviously wearing out.

With peninsular India in mind, RN Nandi comes to the following conclusion as to what was becoming of chaturvarna. *"The subsumption of varna division by a complex hierarchy of inferior and superior Jatis also began about this time; with the number of inferior Jatis ever on the increase. The Brahmanas became divided into high and low castes, while the Ksatriya was largely an imagined status appropriated by new ruling families and sanctified by dependent priests. As for the Vaisyas and Sudras, it is difficult to identify any functional group as Vaisyas or Sudra, though there is no dearth of Jatis with supposed Vaisya and Sudra parentage."* [143]

The change that chaturvarna was undergoing was self-evident. This is how the Central Committee of the CPI (ML) (People's War) has explained the new signification of varna: *"...varna ceased to be the endogamous group but instead became a category indicating the broad status of each caste...."* [144]

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Thus **varna had passed from indicating a specific category into one drawing attention to a broad and general category.**

In her *Interpreting Early India* Romila Thapar draws attention to this new found and general attribute of varna. She says: *"The valid distinction between varna as caste in the sense of ritual status, and jati as caste in the sense of actual status is again a help to the social historian."* [145]

In fact it is this representation of chaturvarna of broad class categories with an emphasis on ritual status of castes or jatis which have a real and material status derived from their fixed positions in the relations of feudal production that chaturvarna obtained a new relevance and assumed a new lease.

F. Caste-Based Feudalism

Indian feudalism cannot be construed without caste. The caste system is integral to feudalism in India. In fact it is caste that lends feudalism a very special character. It is, as we have already stated, in DD Kosambi's perception, its *"most striking feature"*. One such salient feature, is, as we have identified, the syncretic structure of Indian feudalism. The stamp of caste on feudalism is so deep that it impinges on the mode, on its every institution, casting its shadow from the most important to the most trivial and filling every nook and corner of its body politic. **There is a kind of pervasiveness about caste. Feudalism makes itself evident through caste.** This exhibition by caste has also played truant. A good part of well meaning progressives have been misled by it. They have seen caste, seen all its attire of pimples, warts, gashes, blemishes, wounds and scars, yet being unable to conceive of it in the context of feudalism which constitutes the unmistakable inner frame holding it intact. **Caste looses its *raison d'etre* bereft of feudalism.** While there is a need therefore to perceive caste in all its depth commencing from its external sheen to its inner workings, its multifaceted interaction with all the institutions of feudal society belonging to the superstructure as well as the base, to loose sight of the ground on which caste stands and derives its fullest meaning, can only lead to an unmistakable fall—a fall in comprehension and from that, a fall from transorming it in practice.

The Central Committee of the CPI (ML) (People's War) has tried to grasp this complex Indian reality in the right perspective, by its categorisation of India's feudalism as 'caste-based feudalism'. And, this is how it chooses to explain its understanding: *"The relation between class and caste was thus to a great extent established and consolidated during this period [of early feudalism]. The caste system being much more rigidified, there were strict laws preventing members of a particular caste entering into another profession or occupation not assigned to them. Thus one's caste and occupation; or in other words one's position in the production relations and therefore class, was decided by birth and remained unchanged till death. A particular class for example, the peasantry, could be composed of various castes, but a caste would always be fixed within a particular class, eg, village menial, agricultural labourer, artisan, peasantry, merchant, priest, landlord and feudal intermediary, administrator, etc.*

While this strict correlation between caste and class remained rigid particularly at the level of the self-sufficient village community, the only exception was among the

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ruling classes. The ruling classes were broadly the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, but many a time members of other castes or foreign invaders became part of the ruling classes through conquest. Some of these rulers accepted Kshatriya status (as in north India) but others maintained their previous status as Shudras or Muslims. They however did not make any major changes in the caste system as a whole. In fact, throughout the feudal period the ruling classes made full use of the caste system to facilitate and consolidate their exploitation and class rule." [146]

What compulsions of feudalism did caste respond to, what requirements of its base and superstructure did caste resolve so that it should come to be so deeply ingrained, shaping Indian feudalism itself, as a consequence into a caste based feudalism?

i) Satisfying the Needs of a Natural Economy

Irfan Habib writes: *"The caste system, in its classic form, could therefore function with as much ease in a natural economy as in a market-oriented one. In either case it helped essentially to maintain not a fabric of imagined purity (if it did, this was incidental), but a system of class exploitation as rigorous as any other."* [147]

Yet this only highlights the adaptability of caste to two different feudal environments, one with an amount of commodity production and the other without. This malleability of caste to the hammer blows of commodity production should however not lead one to conclude that caste, in the period of its institutionalisation, was geared to cope also with these altered conditions. Rather, caste was only extending itself from its feudal anchorage, to cope with the conditions that emerged from commodity production within the ambit of the feudal mode of production; which despite the growth in commodity production was not yet a society based on the laws of commodity production, ie, capitalism, but still a feudal society where exchange despite the degree of its development was only secondary in the satisfaction of the material requirements of a largely peasant-populated and thus society rooted in a natural economy. **Caste was therefore satisfying demands issuing from a closed and self-sufficient economy at the time of its institutionalisation or the inception of it as a social system.** Hence RS Sharma's reminder in the concluding lines of his essay is important. He says: *"The most spectacular development [of the early feudal period] was the proliferation of castes, which affected the brahmanas, the kayasthas, the ksatriyas or the Rajputs and above all the sudras. The number of the mixed castes rose by leaps and bounds, and the untouchable castes increased enormously. These social changes can be understood in terms of a strong sense of feudal localism fostered by closed economic units based on intense preoccupation with land...."* [148]

Hence **the consolidation of the caste system must be seen in the context of the coming into being of the closed self-sufficient economy of the feudal mode of production.**

This is how RS Sharma explains the closed nature of the economy: *"Since peasants, artisans and merchants were attached to their respective habitations, this fostered a closed economy and generated a sense of strong localism. Their masters—princes, priests and various kinds of beneficiaries—might change, but there would be no change in the position of labourer, artisans, cultivators, etc., who were attached to the soil who-*

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ever happened to be its master. Peasants and artisans found it difficult to go independently from one place to another. They stayed on at the same place unless they were compelled by intolerable oppression or removed for the benefit of the grantees under the terms of the grant, as in central and western India. The only mobility worth the name in medieval period is that of soldiers for fighting, of priests for acquiring new lands, and of pilgrims for visiting shrines. Although it was a period of wars, troop movements did not promote commerce. Part of the provisions meant for feeding the army was carried by the soldiers themselves, and the remainder was forcibly collected by them from the villages lying on their route, which were also compelled to supply forced labour for transport and other allied purposes. This system therefore did not generate the mobility of merchants....

The picture of immobile brahmanas in the medieval Dharmasastras is in keeping with the growth of closed economic units in post-Gupta times.... All this makes sense in the context of feudal localism, which ruled out economic and other types of connections between one region of the country and the other. It is significant that the earlier texts talk in terms of ***desadharma*** *or district customs, but several medieval works refer to* ***gramadharma****, or* ***gramyadharma*** *as it is mentioned in the* ***Abhidanacintamani*** *of Hemacandra (1088-1172), and some texts also mention* ***gramacara*** *and* ***sthanacara****. They reflect the growing importance of villages as self-sufficient economic and administrative units."* [149]

This immobility of the self-sufficient village units rendered a certain fixedness in property relations within the village. Each village was closed and every village was a universe unto itself. **Within this universe everything was fixed, with a rigidity that marked natural phenomena;** as fixed as the motions of the sun, the infinite recurrence of day and night, the cycle of seasons.... The landlord was the landlord for eternity and the very same tenants were attached to the soil of the same landlord and the line of the bonded labourer was attached to the same feudal family. There was a fixedness, a deep grounding, a rootedness and an iron immutability about these relations. Social relations themselves described, out of this deep freeze, the cyclical motions dictated by natural laws. It was only in answering this need of the natural economy that caste consolidated itself, rendering feudalism itself caste based. How did caste contribute to this fixedness of the closed economy?

Each caste had its kula-kasabu or jati-kasabu or caste-occupation which it was to live by. Each of these occupations were so arranged that each specific occupation came to be performed by a specific caste and this ensemble of castes came to be ordered in an hierarchy forming thereby the system. **Being born in a caste therefore only meant that one was born into a specific position or occupation in the economy. In other words membership of a certain caste which came as a factor of birth brought the individual into a specific relationship with property and such property relations defined the relations of production.** The bonded labourer was the preserve of the Untouchable and all Untouchables were bonded labourers without exclusion. The degree of mutual exclusion that caste created in the sphere of production was so perfected and refined. **The ayagara system which stood on such caste based relations of production therefore presented itself as relations of exchange among castes. The caste system operated from the depths of the economy, and it contributed to the closed**

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economy foreclosing in turn the immutability of every class and every shade of occupation. The overbearing importance of the caste system therefore grew from the fact that it came to govern the economy.

ii) Enshacklement and the Ideology of Caste

Deriving from such an economy and serving it, was the ideology of caste. **Caste pervaded every sphere of the superstructure.** The ritual status ascribed by chaturvarna drew the outlines of the hierarchy and the ideas of purity and pollution, sanctified by the gods, made any trespass of caste boundaries blasphemy. Each caste, owing to its specific material condition also came to possess a specific consciousness derived from its social existence due to the immobility of the economy which came to be equated as caste qualities. **The ideology of caste tended thereby to freeze the consciousness.** Laws regulating such consciousness were created and the various jati panchayats all under the governing village panchayat only fossilised for eternity what was already thus frozen. The domain of religion, which we shall see later look at in detail, drew up its own hierarchy of gods, the gods of the Untouchables always at the feet of the divinity that brahmindom had created. **The kingdom of heaven was a replica of the earthiness of caste.** Ritual that enjoined religion was again caste ordained, and the big religious occasions of the village in which the whole people participated found a role in ritual for each caste; at the fountainhead sat the Brahmana chanting his hymns and accumulating dana gifts in the forbidden sanctum sanctorum, and then at measured distances of proximity from the idol there was the assemblage of lay Shudra devotees; the Untouchable whose presence was defiling debarred from a frontal blessing and invariably kept from the precincts of the god. The principle of purity-pollution could be as rigorous as it was demeaning.

However the ideology that circumscribed untouchability was the spike embedded deepest of all. The ideology of untouchability raced far ahead of the economy, which, caught by the mundane web of the material would always possess an earthiness that defied the flight of the mind. In the economy the Untouchable was only a bonded labourer, the produce by his hands were supremely fit for consumption, and often times directly, without the slightest intervention of a purificatory rite. Even the gods in heaven glowed with elation from the bitti products that the Untouchable gifted. **Untouchability could only sound absurd if it was practised in the economy. It would only have deeply affected the processess of feudalism's existence in India.**

Yet ideologically untouchability was a weapon well forged. It ostracised the Untouchable, made his sight demeaning and depressed his social status to a position which fell outside the pale of society. **Untouchability was a negation of civilisation. Although society had passed from the stage of the shudra holding system and had released the old forces of production enshackled in the form of a Shudra helotage, the new feudal mode of production by institutionalising untouchability only sought to continue an old institution--Shudra helotage--in a new form--Untouchable bondage.**

In untouchability therefore lay an apparent contradiction between the base and superstructure. If the economy sought after the labour of the Untouchable the most, the ideology distanced the rest of society from him the most. On the one hand

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the most needed on the other and at the same time the most despised. This contradiction which articulated the life of the Untouchable was one of the many that class society in general and feudalism in particular would generate in its lifetime.

But this apparent contradiction had a purpose. It was not an aimless flight of the mind. The ideology of caste with untouchability at its heart traversed along a path fixed and determined. **Its task was to denigrate labour.** It was only such a social attitude that could depress and grind under its heel that the greatest economic gain could be created. The labour of the Untouchable, foul and filthy could only then be obtained for free. **If bitti chakri was a free labour service that all the oppressed in the village had to render on occasions, the Untouchable who was its fullest epitomisation had to live by it.** The bonded labourer received no wages, he was only fed like cattle in the farmstead. The creation of a class of Untouchables further helped in the task of safeguarding feudalism. **The unity of the peasantry was vitally divided and any effective combination against the feudal class was pre-empted.**

In conclusion we may therefore say that if caste satisfied the needs of the natural economy by welding immutably those production relations which characterise a closed self-sufficient economy, caste as an ideology caused their enshacklement. It sealed in consciousness even that rare chance of escape which the economy could by accident have allowed.

iii) Base Also or Only Superstructure?

That caste belongs to the superstructure is a foregone conclusion for all Marxists. But for the ones who tend to view matters mechanically, caste has no presence in the base. On the contrary we would like to take the position which the Central Committee of CPI (ML) (People's War) has taken. According to it: "*While caste has its superstructural aspects...we must recognise that caste is also an integral part of the production relations, ie, the base of society.*" [150]

The reason must by now be self-evident. Since caste fixes ones relation to property and these relations and occupations can in no way be altered throughout one's life, caste not only defines but comes to govern the economy.

It is this economic regime dictated by caste and buttressed by the self-sufficient natural economy that caste becomes all pervasive. It even governs thought and influences language. Caste is the fabric that feudalism weaves and wears. It is due to this additional presence of caste in the base that it derives its all pervasive appearance from, making Indian feudalism caste based feudalism and ascribing only on account of this, a structure syncretic.

iv) Nationality and Caste

The multiplicity of castes in India is also due to their duplication, quite often over adjacent territory along the lines of nationality. We have already seen that the Madigas of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and perhaps the Mangs of Maharashtra originally belonged to one common tribe. Similarly the Holeyas of Karnataka, Parayas of Tamil Nadu, Malas of Andhra Pradesh and perhaps Mahars of Maharashtra belonged to a common tribal past. The relationship between the former and later groups of castes in these states

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is also very closely similar. So is the case with the Bedas of Karnataka, the Boyas of Andhra Pradesh and the Ramoshis of Maharashtra.

Thus we note that the formation of nationalities, itself the result of a breakdown of tribe, in the conditions of perpetuated endogamy only converted into castes along nationality lines. This break up of tribe into caste and the formation of castes along lines of nationality was a major step in the process of detribalisation.

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8. ASCENT OF SANSKRIT AND ITS STRUGGLE WITH KANNADA

A. Shadow Over Prakrit, Sun Over Sanskrit

In the period of the shudra holding system, as we have already seen, Prakrit in Brahmi script was the only written language extant in Karnataka. It had foreclosed the rise of Kannada as a written language, although the largest section of the people spoke it. The demise of Prakrit was however as sudden as its rise. Its fall was immediate and only echoed the knee-jerk reaction which put an end to the Satavahana shudra mode of production. GS Gai is thus led to conclude: *"...the Prakrit inscriptions in Karnataka range from the 3rd century BC to 4th century AD. From the time of the Kadambas Sanskrit replaces Prakrit...."* [151]

The fall of Prakrit and rise of Sanskrit is related to a change in the composition of the ruling class. The rise of Sanskrit is directly related to the rise of the Brahmanas as the most significant part of the ruling classes. Their significance and direct bearing on language comes from the fact that they, as the chief ideologists were the only community near totally literate and enjoying a monopoly over the written word. C Veeranna writes: *"We come across Sanskrit in north Indian epigraphs from the first century BC. Step by step Sanskrit pushed aside Prakrit and by the third century AD established its monopoly over north India. But Sanskrit had to wait till after the fourth century AD before it got rooted in south India."* [152]

The rise of Sanskrit however had its own unique features. The development of Sanskrit allowed those who wielded it a privileged position. It was the window to feudal science and art. The knowledge of Sanskrit led to the rise of the laity to positions of power. And it was in order to deny this rise to the Shudras that the Brahmana caste imposed a selfish monopoly over those who spoke the language. It shut in the use of the language to the Brahmana caste and those that had risen to the level of the ruling class from among the non-Brahmana castes. As a result, **Sanskrit became a class language and more particularly, the language of a single caste.** While this ensured the Brahmana a monopoly over knowledge and helped them continue as **the principal ideologists of feudalism,** Sanskrit was often raised to the level of divinity, as the language which the gods conversed in. **On account of this sectarian monopoly, Sanskrit, confined to a slender minority, remained a language perpetually isolated from the masses and thus saw the eclipse of all potential for its spread.** Commenting about such languages, JV Stalin wrote: *"Language exists, language has been created precisely in order to serve society as a whole, as a means of intercourse between people, in order to be common to the members of society and constitute the single language of society, serving members of society equally, irrespective of their class status. A language has only to depart from this position of being a language common to the whole people, it has only to give preference and support to some one social group to the detriment of other social groups of the society, and it loses its virtue, ceases to be a means of intercourse between the people of the society, and becomes the jargon of some social group, degenerates and is doomed to disappear."* [153]

On account of the manner in which the Brahmana wielded Sanskrit--which achieved without parallel in India in the different realms of knowledge--the language became removed from the common masses, could not develop with the overall social development that was taking place among the producing castes and simply froze to ignominy and irrelevance with the concomitant rise of the national languages of India. Sanskrit could only become another antique, generating interest in a historian and of course revving the penchant of a Hindu revivalist. This process had already commenced in the period of early feudalism itself,

what with Kannada foreclouded by Prakrit and then by Sanskrit, knocking impatiently on the doors of the ruling classes for recognition.

B. Rise of Kannada and its Contradiction with Sanskrit

Soon after the replacement of Prakrit with Sanskrit, Kannada appeared as a written language in the early fifth century. The Halmidi inscription already shows the pervasive influence of Sanskrit on written Kannada. This, says Veeranna *"must have commenced much earlier. A Kannada composed of wholly Sanskrit words came into existence from the fifth century AD."* [154]

Written Kannada chose to use the Brahmi script as against the Nagari script that Sanskrit used. This only implies that written Kannada had emerged even before the rise of Sanskrit in Karnataka and that Kannada in Brahmi must have come into existence much before the Halmidi epigraph. However the Kadamba and Ganga periods saw little of epigraphical production in Kannada. By the time of the Chalukyas however, a noticeable change appeared. The public charters on stone were made in Kannada and Sanskrit got increasingly confined to the more personal channel of the copper inscriptions. Dinkar Desai writes: *"In the Chalukya [of Kalyan] period almost all inscriptions were written in Kannada instead of Sanskrit...."* [155]

This displacement of Sanskrit in the public charters itself was backed by the simultaneous rise of Kannada literature in the later centuries of the period of early feudalism. *Kavirajamarga* is the oldest Kannada work to be found. Dated during the period of the Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha (821-878 AD) and often ascribed to his authorship, the *Kavirajamarga*, it is by now agreed, says Veeranna, was written by Srivijaya who was sponsored by the court of Amoghavarsha.[156] *Kavirajamarga* is a work on Kannada grammar and poetics. **It is thus the theorisation of language and can, by being the first Kannada work to be discovered so far, only prove that a body of Kannada literature already preceded it—any theorisation always following a certain quantum of empirical fact.**

Pampa, born in 902 AD, was the next of Kannada writers. Ranked among the greatest of poets that Kannada has produced, Pampa's forefathers came to Karnataka from Vengi, the Eastern Chalukyan capital in Andhra Pradesh. His father was a Brahmana who converted to Jainism during his lifetime. He befriended the Chalukya prince Arikesari, then a feudatory to the Rashtrakutas. When Arikesari became king Pampa became his counsellor and military officer, a poet and warrior, a *kavi* and *kali* as he calls himself. *Adipurana* written in 941 AD was his first great work, *Vikramarjuna Vijaya* also called Pampa Bharata is the work for which he is known.[157]

Ponna, believed to be a close contemporary of Pampa belonged to the Rashtrakuta court of Krishna III (939-966 AD).

Ranna, a son of a bangle dealer was born in Mudhol in 949 AD and belonged to the Kalyan Chalukyan court of Taila II. As Ranna puts it, his career was one of slow but steady progress. Patronised by the feudatories in the beginning, later the Mandaleshwara and finally the king, Ranna through his *Sahasabhimavijayam* rose to prominence.

These first writers in Kannada shared certain common features. They came on the literary scene almost as contemporaries and belonged to the Rashtrakuta and Kalyan Chalukyan periods. All of them were well read in Sanskrit and as Veeranna says carried into Kannada several traditions already laid down in Sanskrit literature.[158] All these writers were court poets and were patronised by the kings. Their literature could only express the values of the feudal class. However, there is a wrong projection of these early writers as having an anti-feudal orientation. This 'antifeudal attitude' it must be said came from their Jaina religious background—all these writers being invariably Jains by faith. The Brahmanas, content with Sanskrit, found little

interest in Kannada literature. The rise of Kannada literature and the Jaina-Vedanta conflict only captured the Kshatriya-Brahmana contradiction and was, as we shall see later, a Kshatriya perception of the feudal order as opposed to the Brahmanic world view. Thus while it would be correct to say that **Kannada literature emerged out of a struggle with Brahminism, sponsored by a feudal class which rose from Shudra moorings and considered itself as redeemed Kshatriyas, the early Kannada literateurs were only putting forth a literature which espoused feudal values, of course, but from a Kshatriya viewpoint.**

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9. METAMORPHOSIS OF RELIGION

The period of early feudalism witnessed corresponding changes in the religious superstructure. The religious superstructure was only trying to keep pace with the drastic changes that were taking place in the base and repeatedly trying to idealistically resolve the social contradictions that emerged in society. A great deal of dynamism characterised the religious realm. The 800 year period of early feudalism, divided on the basis of these dynamics into an early, middle and a late phase, tended to display certain distinct trends in each of these phases leading ultimately to the Vachanakara upsurge in the twelfth century and contributing to the transition of early feudalism to middle feudalism. Let us in this part attempt to study the dynamics related to religion in its early and middle phases.

A. Eclipse of the Shudra Mode and Demise of Buddhism

One of the most apparent and immediate impacts of the passing of the shudra mode of production on the religious superstructure was the disappearance of Buddhism as a religion, totally in Karnataka and almost totally in the rest of the country. This one-to-one connection between the shudra mode and Buddhism can only be explained by the eclipse of the classes that backed it—a question which we have already dealt with in the chapter on the shudra holding system. VK Thakur writes: *"Emerging in a typical milieu, Buddhism was basically a religion in tune with the developing urban spirit and way of life.... A study of the pattern of the Buddha's life, the milieu from which he emerged, and the different aspects of his public life, shows that the setting of his life was typically urban. His was a life spent in great centres, centres which were essentially urban in nature. The appeal of his doctrines was primarily to men who were making adjustments in the new urban milieu."* [159]

With the collapse of the urban centres, Buddhism, supported by the classes that throve in such centres also reeled under the impact till it altogether disappeared.

The same was true of Jainism on a countrywide scale, except perhaps in Karnataka and a few other pockets. Jaininsm which disappeared in the rest of India, continued to thrive in Karnataka and **this Jaina revival, can only be explained,** as we shall see by and by, **due to the adjustment that Jainism made with the rising feudal mode of production.**

B. Rise of Bhakti Shaivism

If the depopulation of towns and an end to shudra holding society was a reason for the collapse of Buddhism, the very same reason was cause for the migration of the Brahmanas from such urban centres to villages and the rise of Vedanta as the alternate religion in the service of the new ruling classes of feudal society.

The Brahmanas who were not adequately consolidated in Karnataka during the shudra holding period and were also a very small part of the population then—most probably much smaller than the 4% that they are now—the emigration of Brahmanas from the northern towns and cities also saw their spread towards all directions of the subcontinent—particularly to the south, where their influence had been relatively weak till then. In addition to such migration the newly settled Brahmanas who were recipients of profuse land grants also drew select individuals into their fold or even converted certain local people such as for instance the Babbur Kammes into Brahmanas. Yet, whether by conversion or emigration, most Brahmanas of Karnataka at that time referred to themselves in inscriptions as having come down from Ahichchhatra. Ahichchhatra was located on the banks of the Ganga in Bareilly district of Uttara Pradesh and

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was one of the major cities which had a sizeable Brahmana population running into thousands, during shudra holding times. VK Thakur writes that Ahichchhatra *"...remained prosperous till the 4th century AD after which the process of decline set in and it started losing much of its earlier prosperity."* [160]

All Tuluva Brahmanas of the Karavali and Kannada Brahmanas of the Malnad refer to Ahichchhatra as their original home. **The commencement of the feudal mode of production under the aegis of the Kadambas in these two tracts coincides with the Brahmana desertion of Ahichchhatra.**

A second important town that the Brahmanas of Karnataka referred to was Ayodhya. Located east of Ahichchhatra on the Ganga again, Ayodhya began to depopulate a little after the emigration of Brahmanas from Ahichchhatra as the excavations show. VK Thakur writes: *"Ayodhya too seems to have started declining in importance during the post-Kusana phase...the account of Hsuan-Tsang may be taken to indicate a decline in Ayodhya's fortunes especially from the Gupta times."* [161] RN Nandi ultimately concludes by saying: *"...one would like to suggest that most of the migrations took place between the fifth and seventh centuries."* [162]

The choice of Ayodhya and Ahichchhatra as pilgrimage centres sprang from this loss and was an attempt by the Brahmanas to revive donations from the laity and the nobles of these towns even after they had migrated. Most migrations, writes Thakur took place within a distance of 100 kms from the towns; making such pilgrimages thereby a possibility. However, those Brahmanas that came down south had to forsake such *tirthayatres*, the distance being prohibitive. Yet the land grants they received and the dana relationship they evolved within a natural economy compensated for what they had lost from such pilgrimages. In due course, the Brahmanas of Karnataka picked out their rural centres as points to mobilise such tirthayatres.

It was after the end of Kadamba rule that the distinct trend of Shaivite Brahmanism began to take shape in Karnataka. During this period Tamil Nadu witnessed the rise of Nayanar Shaivism which concluded in the early eighth century with the death of Shankaracharya. In the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries Karnataka saw the rise of several heterodox schools of Bhakti Shaivism, of which the Kalamukha, Kapalika, Pashupata and Pancharatra schools were better known. Of these, Kalamukha Shaivism was however the most prominent, which, after an initial period of contradiction with Shankaracharya's Advaita Bhakti Shaivism, incorporated his precepts. The third phase in Karnataka was marked by the replacement of Kalamukha Shaivism by Veerashaivism from the eleventh century onwards. This transformation preceded the rise of Basavanna and his movement of the Vachanakaras by more than a century. This third phase and Basavanna together with the Vachanakara movement will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

The Nayanar movement came into existence in a milieu which had been dominated by Jainism. It therefore adapted certain forms which were till then characteristic of the Jainas. The 64 Nayanars or preceptors of the Shaiva sect was one instance. In this it was only competing with the 24 Tirthankaras which Jainism had institutionalised. From Vidya Dehejia's appendix we learn that of the 64 Nayanars 16 belonged to the sixth century AD, 10 to the seventh century, 23 are placed as belonging to both the seventh and eighth centuries, 14 to the eighth century and one to the ninth century.[163] It is evident by this that the Shaivite Bhakti Nayanar school was strongest in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries.

In a bid to broaden its social base, competing as it was, with Jainism, in this respect, the Nayanar movement attempted to give the impression that it was not confined to achieve merely the well-being of the Brahmanas. Thus of the 64 Nayanars there was a potter, a hunter, a cowherd, a washerman, a fisherman, a weaver, a bard minstrel, a physician, a toddy tapper and even

an Untouchable. Despite the presence of 11 such members of the low castes, the chunk of Nayanars was drawn from the ruling classes and castes; 18 of whom were Brahmanas, 7 were kings, 4 were feudatories, another 4 were military chiefs, 6 were Vaishyas and 13 were from the landlord Vellala caste. Castes of 4 of the Nayanars remains unstated while 3 were women.[164] This variety hardly speaks of a loosening of chaturvarna by this Bhakti Shaivite movement. **Chaturvarna always remained its bedrock.** The non-Brahmana elements only reflect the spread of Brahmana influence and the winning over to its fold of members particularly from the ruling classes; the fact remaining throughout the Nayanar movement that Bhakti Shaivism always upheld the superiority and sanctity of the Brahmana.

The spread of Bhakti Shaivsm to Karnataka starting from the seventh century onwards and more forcefully during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries is sometimes wrongly attributed to Shankaracharya's establishment of the four cardinal Shaivite mathas, Sringeri in Chickmagalur's Malnad being one among them. It is quite possible that Shankara's visit to Shringeri could have as well been a later concoction since there is no definite evidence contemporaneous of his time.[165]

The Kalamukhas, Pashupata, Kapalika and Pancharatra sects of shaivism were derived from esoteric Tantra that was practised by the Shudras. Kalamukha itself means the blackening of one's face with ash from burnt corpses and Kapalika signifies the skull inverted to serve as a drinking bowl. The adoption of such cults by Brahmanas could have been the result of the fall from grace of the urban Brahmanas, a period of crisis and unsure mode of life immediately after the fall of the shudra holding mode of production which brought them closer to the Shudra populace and their esoteric cults. In fact RN Nandi is of the opinion that it was during this interregnum that several non-Vedic and at times even anti-Vedic disciplines were also created by these heterodox Shaivite Brahmanas such as ayurveda (medicine), jotishya (astrology), bhashavaidya (philosophy), smritishastra (law) and hethushastra (logic).[166] Further, he says that the fallen state of the Brahmanas earned them the disreputed appellation of *Brahmanachandalas* by their relatively better off brethren of the towns, the Devalakas.[167] The Kalamukhas were followers of Lakulisa, a Gujarati Brahmana of the third and fourth centuries AD who had a special hatred for the Jainas and who systematised Pashupata doctrines.

The Kalamukha Shaivite phenomenon was temple centric, just as the Nayanar tradition was. **The commencement of temple centred religion began with the Kalamukhas.** RN Nandi says: *"The origin of the temple based cults of bramanical deities goes back to the early Christian centuries, it was only in the early middle ages that the temple emerges as an instrument of peasant subordination and surplus accumulation."* [168]

But how did the temples ensure access to peasant goods by the feudal ruling classes? In analysing this RN Nandi in all brilliance, draws upon the specific nature of Brahmana landlordism, the changes that it compelled in the sphere of production and the need as a result of these two factors for an ideology of temple-centred Bhakti Shaivism.

Nandi writes: *"In point of time the brahmana free holdings appeared on the rural scene much earlier than the fiefs. On epigraphic grounds, the earliest brahmana freeholding in Karnataka would go back to the middle of the 2nd century. But it was not before the 7th century by which time the chartered brahmana villages had infiltrated a larger area of peasant production and assumed the characteristics of the private domains of government jurisdiction that these units of advanced agriculture were able to exercise some influence on the modes of surplus production.*

The developments which characterised the growth of rural economy in and around the focal points of agricultural expansion can be summed up as (1) attempts to increase the produc-

*tion of food crops by reclaiming new lands, converting old dry land into wet rice field through consolidating of drainage facilities, (2) development of new modes of surplus collection by means of the free-feeding places (**satra**) and the sanctification of the villages as rural places of pilgrimage (**tirtha**), and (3) introduction of the Brahmanical temple institutions in a world which did not earlier know much of these establishments."* [169]

From the time of the Kadambas and Gangas onward the bulk of religious patronage was heaped on the Brahmanas.[170] The Kalamukhas, among them were the chief recipients of this. They transformed into landlords and their temple-centric cult added to their influence and power as a ruling class. In order to enhance surplus production in their lands, these Brahmanas made all attempts to build tanks and increase the area under irrigation and double cropping. But these measures by themselves were continuing to prove inadequate and this only brought forth the need for utilising a force of servile labour in their fields. **It was to ensure this servility of the tenants and bonded labourers so that an enhanced surplus could be extracted that the ideology of Bhakti answered. Bhakti was afterall nothing but a call for absolute surrender.**

In RN Nandi's words: *"The doctrine of total surrender was probably intended to prepare a 'moral' basis for the subjection of essential producer clients, and it refers to a social situation which called for such a subjection. The practice of creating free-holdings in favour of priestly beneficiaries who were entitled by executive sanction to exploit and enslave the rural producers, was part of a greater priestly effort to accumulate the social surplus in their domestic chapels and temple residences. By the seventh century the producers had led to the rise of a considerable class of landed priests who wanted to protect and perpetrate their vested rights. Not surprisingly, the formation of early Bhakti associations also took place at this time. The relevance of the doctrine of total surrender is further evident from the fact that the new landlords were not only unarmed but also strangers in the village or villages donated to them, and for that reason could only hope for a social control of the subjected producers. The participation of sudra members in Bhakti confessions was seldom voluntary: where it was so, the decision followed from a desire to limit the number of exploiters, and also associate with 'godly' men which might lead to some form of status-redemption."* [171]

Thus Bhakti was a powerful ideological weapon. Brahmanism of the feudal period in contrast to that of the shudra holding period was characterised by it. In such spiritual abdication before god, it was the feudal lord that derived all the advantage. Hence Bhakti, in its Shaivite and later, Vaishnavite form, was patronised by the ruling classes whether of Brahmana or Shudra origin.

While the philosophy of Advaita with its highly abstract and incomprehensive intricacies meant little for the non-Brahmana sections, they were drawn by the Nayanars and the Kalamukhas because of their preaching of Bhakti. **The direction of Bhakti spiritualism was clearly intended towards inducing the peasants, artisans and service castes to provide labour services and goods free of cost to the feudal classes. Some sources also suggest that the peasants and artisans had to provide the holy men even though they might themselves languish in utter poverty.[172] It was with the extension of the Bhakti idea to the realms of statecraft and war that the king and the feudatories could ensure the unstinting loyalty of their retainers and could enthrall the body of peasant soldiers with the preparedness of ensuring the sacrifice of not their labour and its products alone, but also of their very lives.**

In summation RN Nandi writes: *"In origin and nature, the Kalamukhas were closely related to the earlier Nayanars of Tamil Nadu. The two sects although widely separated by time and space, marked two distinct phases of the Saivite movement of South India. Both the sects*

were organised on the basis of Saivite temple worship and monastic preaching of Saivite doctrines; both were founded by groups of brahmanas, both showed their dislike for Smarta orthodoxy and Jain heterodoxy and both accepted ***Bhakti*** *as the ideological foundation of their particular systems. But whereas the chief appeal of the Nayanar* ***Bhakti*** *missions consisted in mobilising support for professional godmen who were trying to band up as monastic fraternities within the framework of caste organisation, the Kalamukhas and Pasupatas were the first to develop non-caste fraternal associations. The two Saivite sects were also far more effective in expanding monastic landholdings and in facilitating greater subordination of the essential surplus-producing classes."* [173]

C. Reorientation of Jainism

Jaininsm was the most important religion next only to Buddhism in Karnataka during the shudra holding period. It derived its sustenance and served to sustain the same classes as that which proferred and grew from Buddhism did. Yet it is a fact of history that while Buddhism should disappear from Karnataka altogether, Jainism could thrive. This apparent contradiction may only be explained by the changes that Jaininsm incorporated, reorienting itself completely to adjust to the new mode of production and continue to play an active part in its superstructure. Jainism was more amenable than Buddhism. This flexibility itself could result only because Jainism had not been lofted with the official stamp of the shudra holding system to the extent that Buddhism was, in India, making it impossible for it to change clothes as conveniently as Jainism did. It is therefore in this regard that Hayavadana Rao's remark that *"Jainism...was more tolerant of ritualism"* must be taken.[174] Jaininsm therefore submitted itself to a transformation, a change which was almost wholly contradictory between its two extremities of the shudra holding system on the one hand and feudalism on the other. Ram Bhushan Prasad Singh in his *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka* and RN Nandi have made a systematic analysis of this metamorphosis and contrast; explaining how Jainism was, in the course of this process always responding to the base, catching up as a religion with the needs of a rising feudal mode of production, competing with Brahmanism to win feudal patronage to its side and striving simultaneously to both fend off and absorb disgruntled Shudra awakening all along. In this process of its transformation throughout the early feudal period, Jainism was at times less innovative; at other times more innovative than Bhakti Shaivism, it tended to borrow from the Brahmanas and created some with its own exploitative genius, yet more often being a trailer instead of a leader till it finally lost the race shortly after the turn of the first millennium of the Christian era. Let us study all these dynamics, leaving out the ultimate part of its collapse for a succeeding portion in this chapter.

In the transformation of Jainism the seventh-eighth centuries seem to be a general turning point. Dinkar Desai is led to conclude therefore that: *"If Jainism ever had its golden age in the history of Karnataka, it was under the Gangas and the Rashtrakutas."* [175] Yet, as RN Nandi says the commencement of this transformation was already indicated with the rise of the Yapaniya sect among the Jainas (*Ya* meaning *expelled*). The Yapaniyas first appeared in western Karnataka, the area under Kadamba rule, about the fifth century and continued to flourish till the end of the Jaina innings in Karnataka. **The rise of the Yapaniyas coincides almost instantaneously with the break with the shudra holding system and the rise of the feudal mode of production.**[176]

Explaining the nature of early Jainism Ram Bhushan Prasad Singh writes that in the: *"...earliest phase of their history, the Jainas and Buddhists launched a systematic campaign against the cult of ritual and sacrifice as destructive of all morals, and laid great stress on the purification of soul for the attainment of* ***nirvana*** *or salvation. They denied the authority of god over human*

actions. Unlike the Hindus, they did not accept god as the creator and destroyer of the universe. Contrary to the popular view, they held that every soul possesses the virtues of ***paramatma*** *or god and attains this status as soon as it frees itself from worldly bondage.*

Naturally the early Jainas did not practice image worship, which finds no place in the Jaina canonical literature. The early Digambara texts from Karnataka do not furnish authentic information on this point, and the description of their ***mulgunas*** *and* ***uttaragunas*** *meant for lay worshippers do not refer to image worship."* [177]

The Jainas were earlier town based or ascetic wanderers; they travelled, just as and along with their former mentors, the merchants. But with the rise of feudalism, this mode of spiritual life came to an end. This is how Ram Bhushan chooses to explain it: *"The decay and desertion of towns forced a large section of the urban monastic community to settle down in the neighbouring countryside and mobilise direct access to peasant surpluses. The urban decline also restricted the mobility of individual monks and groups who earlier travelled long distances in quest of urban promoters. Inevitably, the monks also grew unwilling to subject themselves to the rigours and uncertainties of a wandering ascetic life."* [178]

In fact the representatives of the dissenting Yapaniya sect were the ones that readily led the Jaina moral code in a direction which adapted it to the changed conditions of social life.

This is how RN Nandi elaborates on the changes that took place once a settled life of landlordism took over the Jaina clergy. *"It needs to be remembered that the rise of a new religious community or the foundation of a new monastic group is seldom possible unless some political patronage is forthcoming. Judging in the context of the medieval society, it would be found that progressive disintegration of economic and administrative power had given rise to local leaders who needed the services of religious teachers to both sanctify their newly acquired status and preach loyalty to their administration among the subject population. In a sense, therefore, the practice of land grants by kings and feudatories had a corrupting influence on the Jain prebendary orders. Assured of a secure means of livelihood the Jain monks now showed their preference for the jobs of medicinemen and astrologers. The literature of the period shows that the ability of a religious preacher to recruit new converts depended much on his skill to use magic and curatives in an effective manner, although the monastic law strictly prohibited the monks to take to either. The* ***Jvalini Kalpa*** *and the* ***Bhairavi Padmavati Kalpa*** *suggest that some Jain monks of our period were good both as practicing physicians and occultists....*

In the new monastic set up, the leader of the church groups enjoyed considerable authority and respect. The pontiff could bring about changes in the monastic organisation, enforce discipline among monks and nuns, recruit new monks and dismiss unruly followers. Besides, he controlled the entire resources of the monastery with absolute right of disposal. His opinion was also decisive in matters relating to succession to the pontifical seat. In theory, the fellow monks could, by a consensus reject a candidate nominated by the retiring pontiff and elect a fresh candidate. But in practice the choice of the retiring chief proved irrevocable, with the dissenting members leaving the order in disgust.

Such wider powers enjoyed by the Jain ecclesiastical leader slowly elevated him to the position of the medieval ***guru*** *who demanded unquestioned and unswerving allegiance of his clan."* [179]

The Jinacharya had obviously become no less than a feudal lord.

In order to justify such a sedentary life, the Jaina orthodoxy came up with new texts such as the *Brihat Kalpa Bhashya* composed during the early middle ages, which reinterpreted the old Jaina tenets to serve the new mode of life.

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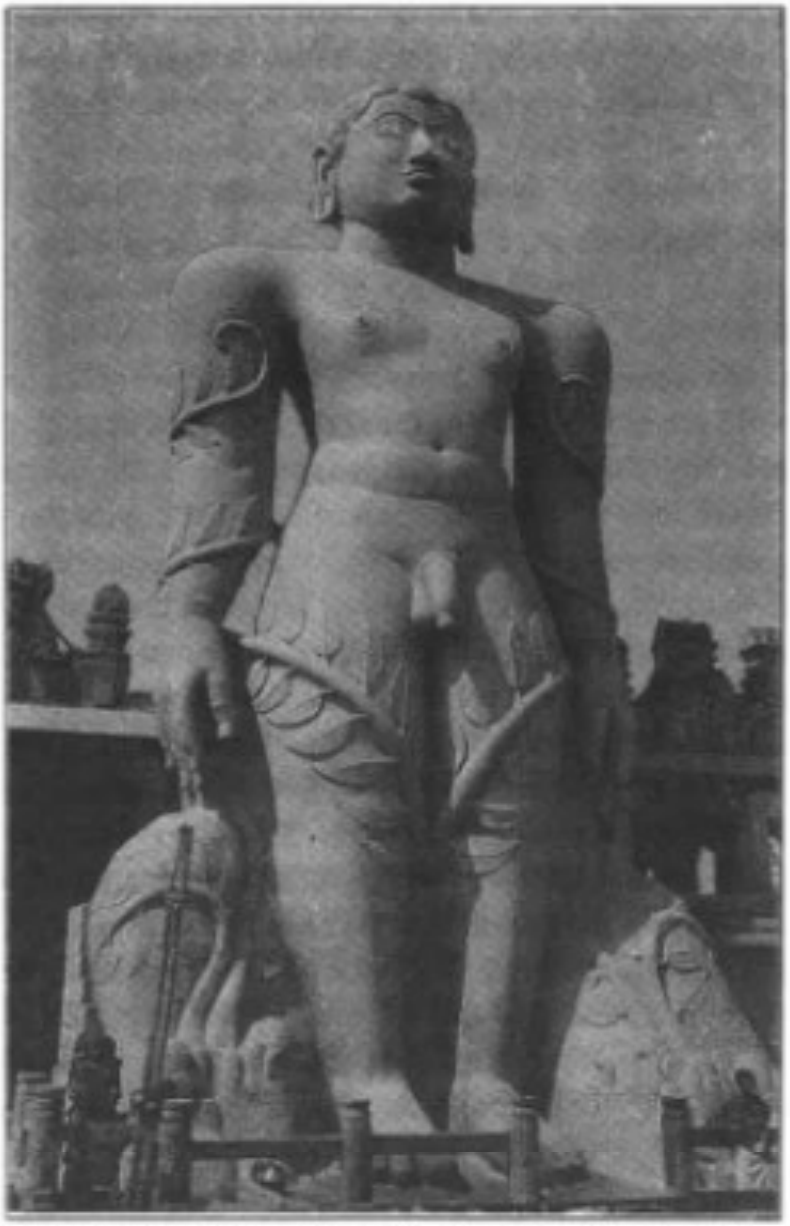
Responding to the rising influence of the temple centred Kalamukha effort and its attendant success, Jainism also ventured into a process of temple building activity. While Ram Bhushan says that the earliest attempts commenced in the fifth century AD itself, Sundara says, following his field work, that the oldest Jaina monument is from Megudi, Aihole, built in 634 AD during the rule of Pulakeshi II.[180] **Developing at a steady pace from the seventh century onwards, the peak of Jaina temple and matha building activity was reached in the tenth century in the Maidan, continuing till the seventeenth century in the Malnad and Karavali tracts.**[181]



65. The gigantic monolithic statue of Gommateshwara of Shravanabelagola, Hassan district.

With the start of temple building activity, the Jainas made the Gommateshvara statue of Bahubali a cult object, with the earliest Gommateshavara figures appearing from Badami in the eight century AD and spreading to the rest of Karnataka from the time of the Badami Chalukyas.[182]

However, **the culmination of Jaina temple building activity took place in the tenth century AD** when it reached its giddy heights in the time of the Ganga king Rachamalla IV (974-999 AD) under whose aegis his minister Chavundaraya supervised the construction of the massive statue of Gommateshvara in 983 AD, carved out of a single granite monolith and making it the second tallest single stone structure in the world, at Shravanabelagola in Chennarayapatna taluk of Hassan district. This is how Gururaja Rao explains this sculptural denouement: *"But from the 10th century onwards the scene of the proverance of Bahubali worship shifts to south*

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figures of normal human or near human size now yield place to really gigantic colossi, monolithic in character and become the cult objects, all other religious structures in the complex occupying a secondary position. Thirdly, now they are invariably placed in the most prominent position normally on the top of the highest hillock in the place, though around it and at the foot of the hill other basadis and other religious edifices are erected."[183] Shravanabelagola was, on account of the massive basadi complex endowed with the power and money to oversee the other Jaina pontificates in the whole of south India.[184]

A settled life of monasticism and basadi building led, however, not merely to the overwhelming rise of the cult of the Gommata alone, **it also introduced elaborate worship rituals and brought into the Jaina shrines many mother goddess cults.** It was Jainism which interacted more closely with the Shudras of Kshatriya status and as a religion which came to represent the interests of this class, **it took to the official deification of the mother goddess much earlier than the Brahmanas.** For instance, the *Padmapurana*, composed by Ravisena in the seventh century AD, exhorts the people to perform Jina worship and erect Jina images for the attainment of temporal as well as eternal blessings....

The reasons which impelled the Jaina teachers of Karnataka to encourage the laity to perform image worship are not difficult to find out. The practical idea of gaining popularity among the people and removing Brahmanical hatred against the Jainas made frequent provisions for the adoration of icon worship. In order to compete with the Brahmanas, it was felt necessary to rid Jainism of the dry asceticism. The economic considerations of the Jaina teachers also prompted them to propagate this practice. Through their advocacy of image worship, they acquired new means of livelihood in Jaina monasteries and temples, which were invariably endowed with rich gifts of land, village and customs dues in the early medieval period.[185]

With the accumulation of a regular and growing surplus in the hands of the Jaina clergy, there was the need to restructure the ecclesiastical order, so that not only could the new and varying rituals be adequately serviced but also so that a division and a monopoly could be ordered regarding the use and disposal of the monastery's wealth. The Jaina monastic order was divided into the *panchaparvameshthi* or *five exalted beings*. They were the *arhat*, one endowed with superhuman qualities; *siddha* one who has realised within himself the luminous presence of the infinite soul; the *acharya* or the teacher who regulates the social order according to the principles of Jainism; the *upadhyaya* or preceptor who has mastered the sacred lore and the *sadhu* or the ordinary monk who is bent on salvation and is to perform all the rigorous austerities.[186]

With the growing popularity of image worship **the role of the priests got enhanced** leading to a categorisation of them. The acharyas were classified into the *snapnacharya* who performed the bathing rite of the Jina, the *prathisthacharya* who installed the idol on the altar and made available the articles of worship in the Jaina temples and the *grihasthacharya* who performed domestic rites on behalf of the laity. The last, began to grow in prominence over and above the former two types of acharyas.[187]

Explaining the results of this Ram Bhushan says: *"The rise of hedonistic tendencies and slack practices and the lust for material gains among the Jaina monks would have forced them to encroach upon the rights of the priest class which prevailed in Karnataka during the 5th-6th centuries. Thus the distinction between Jaina monks and priests gradually disappeared from the 7th-8th centuries. The change in the usual practice of priesthood would have surely made them the sole masters of enormous wealth, acquired from endowments made by the Jaina devotees.*

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The above analysis of the nature of Jaina monks in Karnataka shows how far they departed from the precepts of their founder Mahavira, who denounced the infallible authority of the priest class...." [188]

The growing resort to priestdom, and the assumption of the role of spiritual mediators between man and god, only led to an accommodation of various non-Brahmana deities. If the Gommata, as we have seen was one such cult object, the Yakshinis, of whom we had already referred to while dealing with the period of the shudra holding system were mother goddesses elevated not as mere attendant deities but as independent cult objects of their own right in the Jaina basadis. Jvalamalini, Padmavathi, and Ambika were the most popular of mother goddesses in Karnataka.

Jvalamalini appears to be a copy of Mahishasuramardhini. She is projected as a fearsome deity with eight arms, clutching deadly weapons such as an arrow, a shield, a bow, a snake and trident. Her original abode seems to come from the Nilgiri hills and becomes prominent from the tenth century onward. Ambika or Kusumanandini acquires importance from the tenth century and Padmavathi, drawn from the Shimoga area grows into her ritual fullness from the eleventh century.[189]

Of this mode of mother goddess worship, Ram Bhushan says: *"Gradually tantric attributes and tantric rites were associated with these Yaksinis. They are said to have bestowed superhuman powers upon the devotees by which the latter could bring a person under control, win over the enemies on the battlefield and cause hostility between two persons."* [190]

Thus, **by the tenth-eleventh centuries, a fully grown Jaina Tantrism had been evolved in Karnataka.** In 939 AD, the *Jvalini Kalpa*, a Jaina text was composed in order to appeal to the Shudra laity by a Dravida monk of Manyakheta who was patronised by the Rashtrakuta king Krishna III and argued for the introduction of tantric cults across the Jaina horizon.[191] We shall discuss this question of tantrism in greater detail in the following portion of this chapter by looking at the context of its emergence and the impact it bore on religious metamorphosis.

Competing with the Brahmanas, the Jainas did not want to be outdone in its attitude to the caste system. **By the tenth century the Jaina community organised itself on the basis of chaturvarna; it adapted brahmanical gotra names and observed *panchamahayagna* rites.** The *Bhadrabahu Samhita* not only refers to the existence of Jain Brahmanas, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Shudras, but also spoke of *anuloma*. Like the brahmanical *Dharmashastras*, the *Samhita* also laid down rules of inheritance based on varna considerations.

RN Nandi writes: *"The growth of the caste system among the Jains was a result of social intercourse between the followers of Jainism on the one hand and members of the brahmanical society on the other. The development was inevitable in view of the fact that the converts to Jainism were invariably members of one or the other brahmanical castes. The converts of higher castes were naturally reluctant to forego their social privileges. In the insularity of medieval rural society it was more difficult to merge social distinctions since these justified access to social goods."* [192]

In his discussion of the Jaina attempt to legitimise and uphold the caste system, Ram Bhushan writes: *"Since the beginning of the 9th century there is evidence to show*

that the sudras are excluded from religious initiation.... Somadeva makes it more clear by saying that only three higher castes, ie, brahmana, ksatriya and vaisya are eligible for religious initiation. It is apparently a deviation from the original teachings of Jainism.... Jainism was now infected by the Hindu varna system and hence caste spirit soon reasserted its power within the Jaina religion in Karnataka in early medieval times.

...it is evident from a study of the ***Padmapurana*** *of Ravisena who gives the Jaina version of the creation of the varna organization and tells us how Rsabhadeva created the four varnas from different parts of his body.... Thus the Jainas became strong supporters of the caste system like their brahmanical counterparts....*

The sacred-thread rite among the Jainas of Karnataka is also based on the Brahmanical idea. According to ***Adipurana****, the performance of this rite signifies rebirth of the Jaina householders who are called* ***dvijas*** *or twice-born after initiation....*

The main line of Hinduization of the Jaina religion runs through Jinasena, who builds an ambitious fabric of jaina rites on the basis of the prescribed ***samskaras*** *in the 9th century.*

The process of Hinduization of the Jaina religion in Karnataka appeared to have set in before the 9th century. It was caused mainly by the entrance of non-Jainas into the Jaina monastic order. The Digambara texts from Karnataka which were composed during the 7th-8th centuries, witnessed the infiltration of Hindu elements in Jaina religious practices and gave it a place of importance to these religious rites. The ***Paumacarya*** *of Vimala Suri and the* ***Padmapurana*** *of Ravisena give us some hint about the sacred thread ceremony. They refer to the term* ***suttakantha****, meaning the thread hanging from the neck. Similarly, the Jaina texts are replete with references to the performance of Jaina rites of marriage, learning, etc. But it was Jinasena who gave it a final shape in his work* ***Adipurana****. He recognized them with a view to championing the cause of Jainism in the south."* [193]

Thus **it was a Brahmana mould that cast the Jaina. In thought and practice, precept and rite, appearance and action speech and dress, a Jaina pontiff was indistinguishable from a Brahmana. Yet despite this moulded reproduction, it would be wrong to conclude that the two were identical. They had a common policy in terms of serving feudalism, but their perceptions despite the identity were varied and often contradictory.** Of this we shall see later.

We must not forget that it was **at the point of complete transformation of Jainism into a religion of the feudal mode of production that the first Kannada literature, written exclusively by ruling class Jains appeared. Could such literature then, inspired by Jainism, despite its contradiction with the Sanskritic Brahmanas spur an anti-feudal tradition of progress?** C Veeranna says: *"Jains who had raised their voice against Hindu religion in the fifth-sixth centuries, by the time of* ***Kavirajamarga*** *compromised with Hindu religion and Sanskrit. Jaina poetry which should have registered a protest not only exhibited a compromising viewpoint but also became a legitimiser of knigship. The Jaina poets also propagated the conservative attitude that it was under the autocratic rule of aggressive kingly empires and by sacrificing all and sundry to the king that happiness could be found."* [194]

Had not feudalism totally reoriented the religion of an earlier social system? Could the religious superstructure, even if it continued to be Jaina escape its responsibilities towards the base or evade its material influence?

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10. EARLY FEUDALISM AND ITS CRISIS

A. Phases of Early Feudalism

The period of early feudalism spans eight centuries from the fourth till the twelfth AD. These eight centuries may be roughly divided into three phases. The formative period stretching from the fourth to the seventh centuries AD, the phase of consolidation from the eighth to the tenth century AD and the phase of its crisis during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In the first phase RN Nandi identifies low technology, mounting demands of new groups on surplus appropriation in fiefs, freeholdings and temple devadana holdings.

The second phase is identified with evidence of attempts to breakthrough with the technological level in agricultural production such as the introduction of tank construction techniques and the spread of new crops—all of which were innovations initiated by the feudal class itself in the interest of greater surplus extraction.

The third phase is reflected by the growth of a rural network of temples, the introduction of stone masonry from the close of the tenth century and the large scale establishment of agrahara and matha complexes. These changes intensified the urge for commodity production. The eleventh century *"had already given rise to new economic interests represented by a market economy of towns and helped mobilisation of the market bound peasant and artisanal groups besides new classes of traders. Ranged as these classes were, against the feudal chiefs, Brahmana freeholders and temple priests, they occasionally made common cause and combined in common action and shared ideology against the landowning and surplus appropriating class"* by the twelfth century.[195]

There were two fundamental contradictions apparently at work. One was that between the peasantry and feudalism and the new classes representing commodity production on the one hand and the feudal class on the other, and secondly the contradiction within sections of the feudal class. These two contradictions reached a bursting point by the end of the terminal phase of early feudalism and broke out in the form of a people's uprising called as the Vachanakara movement. Let us concentrate our attention in studying this last phase of early feudalism, understand the various dimensions of the crisis and their manifestation so that the real import of the Vachanakara movement led by Basavanna in the north and the Srivaishnava movement led by Ramanujacharya in the south may be grasped. Such an understanding of the significance of the crisis is essential to learn about the manner in which it was resolved, the reform that followed and the transition of Karnataka as a result of and through such a crisis into the period of middle feudalism.

B. Changes in the Political Economy of the Terminal Phase

i) Emergence of Agrahara and Matha Complexes

The process of creating agraharas and mathas by donating villages singly and in clusters, became very rapid in the last phase of early feudalism. From the select sample that Leela Santakumari provides us and to which we have now already referred to, this fact becomes evident. Her sample records the creation of 13 agraharas in the tenth century, its number rising to 43 in the eleventh century and reaching its peak at 51 in the twelfth century.[196]

Sister Liceria mentions about the existence of 135 Brahmana freeholds.[197] Certain kings are said to have made more grants than the number of months they have ruled. This rapid creation of agraharas and mathas was further concentrated in a few major areas. The north western

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66. Some agraharas during the period of early feudalism.

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region of Karnataka which included the districts of Shimoga, Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur had the maximum concentration of such agraharas. In the twelfth century, Sister Liceria says, of the 135 Brahmana freeholds, 78 were concentrated in these four districts. Her study further reveals that of the nearly 48 large temples which were in a flourishing condition in the beginning of the eleventh century, 35 were situated in the districts of Dharwad, Bijapur and Belgaum.[198] Leela Santakumari's select list of agraharas in Karnataka reveals a similar concentration. Dharwad had 28 agraharas, Bijapur 25, Shimoga 21, Bidar 12 and Belgaum 10.[199]

Further, the dispersal reveals that the Dharwad-Shimoga border region, out of the four north western districts were saturated with agraharas, mathas and temples. The Balligave matha falling in this region, for instance, had by then already acquired control over a host of other neighbouring mathas. **This control created the need for an apparatus which was necessarily centralised.** In order to manage the string of mathas and religious institutions below it and in order to manage the vast tracts of land that the mathas held across not a few but several villages, the need for a tendency to create an apparatus which could manage exploitation on such scale became expedient. This is how RS Sharma analysed this process. He writes: *"In the Rastrakuta kingdom far more villages were held by temples and brahmanas than in the Pala and Prathihara dominions taken together. Apart from grants of villages made singly, the Rastrakuta records speak of the regrant of 400 villages by one ruler, and the grant by another ruler of 1400 villages, 600 **agraharas** and 800 villages to temples (**devakulas**). Thus under the Rastrakutas priestly institutions rather than priests themselves seem to have emerged as important intermediaries in land, a feature not so characteristic of the Pala and Prathihara territories."*[200] Sharma later concludes by saying: *"The picture that emerges from our study is one of contrasts."*[201]

The growth of the management function, is thus explained by RN Nandi: *"The appearance of **sabha** assembly in the 8th century is probably the first indication of a sizeable brahmana population whose interests had become too complex and exclusive to be looked after by the common village assembly. We may also mention here that small sized sabha assemblies are a characteristic feature of the earlier period; but from the same areas larger bodies numbering 300, 500, 1000, 1300, 2000, 3000 and 12,000 are frequently reported in later inscriptions."*[202]

Thus **the process of feudalisation and sub-infeudation set in motion its opposite process of centralisation.** But the number of freeholding villages which came under the Balligave cluster is a matter on which no readymade evidence is available. Even the most pessimistic of estimates may well place several score villages under its hegemony. The need for the management of this small empire created the objective necessity to develop a centralised apparatus. Thus in a sea of decentralisation and subinfeudation there emerged islands of centralisation. Another such cluster took shape in the area around Managoli in Bijapur district. A third area cropped up in the hinterland of the Kalachuri capital Kalyan. A similar process must have repeated itself in Somnath in Gujarat. A succession of land grants to the Somnath temple is said to have brought several hundred villages under its direct control. One estimate puts it at 1,200 villages. It need not have surprised us if Ghazni Mohammed had endeavoured to loot Somnath for the eighteenth time if he had had the opportunity to do so, since the temple had amassed so much of wealth by successive years of pillage, that it mocked at Ghazni's campaigns.

ii) Urbanisation

The process of what is called **the second urbanisation of Karnataka had obviously commenced by the twelfth century.** The agraharas and mathas had a very special and significant role to play in this, unlike the Shudra feudal centres of residence. Meera Abraham explains this

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inherent quality of Brahmana residence of this period: *"Since religion, like administrative and commercial tasks presupposes some form of corporate activity particularly at certain levels of congregational religious practice, it can act as the causative factor of settlement which may or may not have an urban character.... Agraharas furnish much stronger historical proof of historical practice acting as a causative factor of urbanisation."* [203]

Further, mentioning the essential parts of an agrahara, GR Kuppuswamy writes that it contained a temple, shops, commercial establishments, industrial centres, charitable houses, warehouses, godowns, sheds, tanks, ponds, wetlands, gardens, forests, etc.[204]

The nature of Brahmana ritual and the conspicuous consumption they indulged in, of necessity, created teeming activity around it. The agraharas, once established and granted freeholding villages, attracted to their neighbourhood not just a peasantry which dealt in the varieties of agricultural produce which the agraharas needed, but also an assortment of trading, service and artisan castes. Tirthayatras which began to get increasingly popularised by the tenth century also generated an occasional market where artisans and traders plied their ware.

The network of agraharas that emerged also carried regular traffic between them. The mathas and agraharas, in addition to being places of worship, attracted a lot of pilgrims and maintained free feeding houses for select castes. The bigger mathas and temples also maintained their own devadasi concubines who needed to be fed, clothed and taken care of. Thus for all these reasons, most of which are unique to the nature of Brahmana landlordism, expressed through the emergence and formation of agraharas and mathas, **the process of urbanisation was activated at a quicker pace** than would have been the case if similar grants were made to a Shudra clientele.

Om Prakash Prasad in his study *Decay and Revival of Urban Centres in Medieval South India* has made a detailed list and elaborates on the process of urbanisation during this period. As we have already seen earlier, basing on data provided by him, that while there was no urbanisation in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, **the trend picked up, albeit very feebly, in the tenth century** when there were reported to have been 15 urban centres in Karnataka of which only **one** was of a commercial character. **The eleventh and twelfth centuries however showed a distinct trend towards urbanisation.** The number of such centres sprung up to 27, of which **six** were identified as having a commercial character in the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, this number shot up to 43 with at least **25** of these towns being commercial centres. **A great number of these towns, it is needless to add, were concentrated in the four major agrahara-matha clusters which we earlier identified with the Dharwad-Shimoga area alone possessing 14 towns.**[205]

The urban settlements were called by different names. *Pura* or *durga* meant a *fortified settlement, skandhavara* meant *a military encampment*, nagara and *mahanagara* were used to identify a *prosperous city, rajadhani* was the *place of royal residence, pattana* or *banajavattana* signified the *emerging commercial centres*.[206] In keeping with this nomenclature, Balligave which began as the headquarters of the mahamandaleswara chief in the beginning of the eleventh century and by the close of it, had been transformed into a great centre of trade and found its name being written in different ways in the inscriptions. From 'Balligave' in the beginning it changed to 'Balipura' and then 'Balinagara' by the twelfth century.[207]

The phenomenon of religious centres transforming into centres of trade and commerce increased. To quote Om Prakash Prasad then: *"The image of Gommata was installed in the last quarter of the tenth century by Chavundaraya (at Sravanabelagola), a high minister of the Western Chalukya king. It seems that after the erection of the colossus the place attained*

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67. Urban centres in Karnataka during the final phase of early feudalism. Inset graph describes the rise of urban centres in the final phase when compared to the early and middle phases of the early feudal period.

greater importance and attracted people including merchants from all directions. The ever increasing size of congregations at this place appears to have encouraged the traders to use Sravanabelagola as a profitable centre of commercial exchange. This might explain the fact that in the inscriptions datable from the twelfth century onwards interesting details concerning the mercantile activities of traders at this place are frequently met with. Such details of mercan-

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tile activity are not reported earlier in any of the numerous inscriptions which have come from the place.

The growing mercantile importance of the settlement can be seen from the presence of several groups of traders who not only carried on their trading activities from this place but even shared the responsibility of the proper administration of religious and economic affairs of the town and its surroundings....

It is worthwhile to repeat that such evidence of organised commercial activity, met for the first time in the inscriptions of the twelfth century and onwards clearly points towards the transformation of the settlement from a place of religious interest into a prosperous mercantile town. The development is in consonance with the fact that increased commercial activity from the eleventh century onwards transferred many old administrative religious centres into mercantile towns besides encouraging the foundation of new market towns in areas which were commercially viable." [208]

On the significance of the process of urbanisation and what underlying aspect of the production process it indeed reflected, is captured by Marx in the following words: *"The foundation of every division of labour is well developed and brought about by the town and country. It may be said, that the whole economic history of society is summed up in the movement of this antithesis."* [209]

iii) Birth of a Market

We have already seen how the feudal mode of production created a natural economy which reduced commodity production to the barest minimum, most trade of the time being in luxury items, and falling outside the scope of the vast section of the people. **But this situation underwent a change in this terminal stage of early feudalism with the awakening of a market.**

The emergence of the *santhe* or weekly village fair is a very strong indication of the rise of the market within the ambit of a rural economy. Inscriptions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries make exclusive and repeated references to the santhes.[210] The significance of this new phenomenon for the emergence of a market needs special emphasis. Santhes were the result of pressure from the peasant and artisan producers to sell their produce and intenerrant merchants to deal in them. It is the realisation of the desire from among the toiling sections of the people to raise their standard of life and a massive effort to escape from economic drudgery. Since the growing concentration of population in the agraharas and mathas and the diverse and very specialised material requirements it placed generated among the producers a ready response to satisfy this requirement; it became inevitable for the Brahmana lords and feudal chieftains that they recognised the santhe and even inaugurated the formation of santhes and allowed them to function; thereby **they were compelled to permit a new mode of existence for a section of peasants and artisans.**

RN Nandi writes: *"Clearly, a sizeable section of the peasant commodity-producers was taking upon itself the responsibility of marketing their products.... In some cases the constraint of an undeveloped market-system was overcome by inducing professional groups of merchants to settle down in villages with prospects for commodity exchange.... The necessity to develop a market system must have been a compelling one to judge from the instances of cooperation among peasants, merchants and chiefs in the establishment of markets and urban centres.... The instances of feudal lords promoting the growth of market towns are however far numerous than those relating to peasants. This is evident from tax concessions and the delegation of administrative authority by kings to both individual merchants and merchant*

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associations. The concessions came almost invariably in recognition of the merchants helping in the development of market places. The characterisation of chief merchants as town lords or ***pattanaswami*** *in all the records would also emphasise the new collaborative links between merchants and chieftains. The merchants on their part, tried to enrich the treasury by paying the tolls in both cash and kind."* [211]

Explaining a similar phenomena in Europe, Leo Huberman makes the following generalisation: *"...in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as we have seen, the means of transport were not so highly developed; nor was there a continuous steady demand for goods everywhere that would warrant all year-round shops selling every day. Most towns, therefore, could not have permanent trade. The periodic fairs in England, France, Belgium, Germany and Italy were a step towards permanent steady trade....*

But why should the lord of the town where the fair was held go through all the trouble of making these special arrangements? Simply because the fair brought wealth to his domain and to him personally. The merchants who did business at the fairs paid him for the privilege. There was a tax for entry and for departure, and for warehousing the goods; there was a sales tax and a booth tax." [212]

In addition to the santhe the *jatres* or annual fairs must also have emerged during this period. These jatres never overlapped and were distributed, round the year, normally falling in the post-harvest season and avoiding the period of the mungaru monsoon. **While the jatres served to spread the popularity of the reigning deity of a temple and thus the influence of the Brahmana feudal lords, they were also occasions for extensive congregations, with particular jatres specialising in a specific commodity of trade.**

The emergence of commodity production was also reflected in the revival of coinage. Money payments began to replace payment in kind. RN Nandi points out: *"The effects of wage payments in minted money on the mobility of artisanal labour were however much more pronounced than those on constructional labour or field labour.... Money payments for both labour services and goods produced by the peasants and artisans are too evident in the epigraphic records to need emphasising. Even such minor professional groups as matmakers, basket-weavers, flower-vendors and vendors of dairy products are seen functioning as large corporate bodies and paying specified amounts of money as tax. Service castes such as washermen were also earning enough cash profits to make outright money payments to the state."* [213]

This new mechanism of monetisation and collection of taxes in cash was a major step in promoting commodity production, without which it would have been impossible.

The circulation of money required the setting up of new mints. As we have seen earlier, the feudal environment, characterised by direct extraction of surplus from the producers without the intervention of a market witnessed the absence of minted money during the rule of the early feudal dynasties. However they now initiated a process of setting up mints. But these mints were the result of the effort of feudal chieftains and not a concerted policy of the king. Sister Liceria's study shows that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a total of nine mints were founded in Karnataka. Of these however, six were situated in Dharwad district alone, which, as we have already observed, was the region which led the process of urbanisation.[214]

Elaborating on the monetisation of the feudal economy of this period RN Nandi says: *"It has rightly been stressed that the coinage of this late period presents a sharp contrast with the currency situation of the sixth-ninth centuries. Of the several new trends the most striking is the consistent and regular use of coined money in all major areas of economic life. The increasing incidence of revenue payments in minted money, money-payments for constructional labour and*

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a flourishing credit market are all indications of growing relevance of money in diverse relations of exchange.

The beginnings of large scale commercial credit can be traced on the basis of inscriptional references to ***sabha*** *assembly of brahmana villages and the temple institutions which accepted gifts and gratuitous loan of principal amounts and earned handsome interests on these sums. Institution of credit funds by merchants and merchant companies are already noticeable in the tenth century. Significantly, the interests earned on principal sums of money were meant not merely to run charities of varying nature but even to pay wages to construction and garden labourers. This certainly is an indication of new uses to which money was being put and of the possession of some liquid capital by merchants. The interests earned by the* ***sabha*** *assemblies together with the* ***agrahara*** *land helped the brahmana landlords to accumulate substantial hard cash, the benefits of which began to surface in the eleventh century in the wake of market development. The most striking feature of the temples' participation in the credit market was the uninhibited manner in which loans were granted or interests collected. This is in contrast with the practice of the contemporary church establishments in Europe. In India however, the temple priests set aside the orthodox brahmanical abhorrence of usury and freely accepted gifts and gratuitous loans for earning interest. In fact the brahmanical temple did no more than to emulate the example of early Buddhist and Jain monasteries which never failed to appreciate the value of usury as a source of wealth."* [215]

This spurt in the monetisation of the economy and the decentralised nature of it often created a multiplicity of currencies in a common market. Thus the private money-changer who exchanged currencies for a commission became a key element in the conduct of commodity exchange and the first mention of such a profession is witnessed in an inscription made in the second half of the eleventh century.[216]

About such money changers in Europe, Leo Huberman writes: *"These money changers were so important a part of the fair that just as there were special days devoted to the sale of cloth and leather, so the closing days of the fair were set aside for dealings in money. The fairs were thus important not only because of trade but also because of the financial transactions conducted there. At the fair in the moneychangers' court, the many varieties of coins were weighed valued and exchanged; loans were negotiated, old debts paid, letters of credit honoured, the bills of credit circulated freely. Here were the bankers of the period carrying on financial dealings of tremendous scope."* [217]

Although we might not be too certain about the scale and diversity of the dealings of the money changers, yet from all these facts it is clear that **the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries formed a bridge in the transition of the feudal economy from a natural economy to one that encompassed a small yet rising degree of commodity production.**

Citing from Chattopadhyaya, Om Prakash Prasad sums up the change that had taken place in coinage: *"Chattopadhyaya also notes that from the middle of the tenth century certain new trends seem to characterise the currency system. One major trend, according to him, was that the use of coined money became 'consistent and regular'. The tables prepared by him show that almost every dynasty which ruled between the 10th and 13th centuries issued large number of coins, both of low value and high value. The study shows that there was a remarkable degree of discipline in the use of coined money which, in turn, would suggest large scale and widespread commercial transactions throughout the peninsular region."* [218]

RS Sharma's sixth chapter of *Indian Feudalism*, entitled *Climax and Cracks (c. AD 1000-1200)*, although not particularly speaking about Karnataka, puts across a generalisation for

such areas which had witnessed identical development as in the terminal stage of early feudalism in Karnataka: *"A striking feature of the monetary system of the period is the gradual change from gold to silver-gilt, silver, silver-bronze and finally copper, which is illustrated by the coinage of the Candellas and Kalachuris. Sometimes seen as a setback from gold to base-metal, the process has some deeper significance. Confined to heavy transactions, gold coins would be handled only by the wealthy few. But silver, silver-bronze and copper coins would command a wider circulation among the masses of the people. Therefore what appears as a process of degeneration from pure and costly metal to base and cheap metal should be really taken as a device to meet the day-to-day exchange requirements of the common folk."* [219]

Copper was obviously corroding into the altar of gold.

iv) Rise in Production, Services and Mercantile Activity

The boost to Brahmana power by the formation of agraharas and mathas, as we have already seen, took place by converting peasant-held villages into brahmana fiefdoms. Thus the rise of the Brahmanas as a significant component in the ruling classes took place by reducing the subsistence retained by the peasantry and at the same time the permanent waiver of tax to be paid to the state. Thus the agraharas had reached the point of maximum growth. The agrahara phenomenon kept multiplying over the years and began to transform into more elaborate establishments placing fresh demands on the economy, in the form of a greater volume of surplus appropriation of the regular produce and the supply of new types of agricultural produce.

Thus **the Brahmana ruling class, out of its own requirements, was compelled to encourage a change in the pattern and productivity of agriculture.** This was achieved by:

1) Extending the area under cultivation by reclaiming forest, marsh and grass lands.

2) Developing new techniques of irrigation.

3) Introducing new crops for cultivation.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed the introduction of these three changes in agriculture leading to attendant changes in this sector. Without these changes it would have been impossible to maintain the elaborate Brahmanical establishment of this era.

Although Ashok Shettar's study on agricultural expansion concentrates on southern Karnataka, it is representative of the all-Karnataka trend. He writes: *"...the most important change of all was the reclamation of vast stretches of uncultivated land for cultivation. This activity was so intense that by the turn of the twelfth century the once sparsely inhabited tracts were settled with scores of villages and hamlets."* [220]

If this expansion was so intense in the south, it must have been even more so in the northwestern region of Karnataka, which in fact was the cradle of commodity production in the State then.

The second major change was the development of irrigation. The ninth century, by when the Brahmanas had assumed control over a significant portion of the agricultural lands in the state which must have intensified the contradiction between backward technique and increased requirement should have led to inevitable innovations in technique, the most important of which was the encouragement to tank irrigation, which included a closer study of the topography and the creative development of appropriate drainage systems.

Ashok Shettar says: *"That nearly half the number of Hoysala records dated between AD 1060 - 1098 should allude to either the renovation of existing water works or construction of new ones suggests that a beginning was being made. The activity continued unabated throughout the twelfth century and stretched well into the 40s of the thirteenth century."* [221]

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Moreover, it is interesting to observe that in addition to the landlords, the merchants also began to evince a keen interest in the construction of tanks for irrigation.[222]

Thirdly, the extensive trade carried out by the Aihole 500 guild, tied as it was to the agraharas, brought it in touch with the agricultural produce of the different developing regions of India, West Asia and South and South East Asia. This must have provided a source for the selection and propagation of new agricultural crops and strains by the Brahmanas.

Apart from paddy cultivation which got a boost due to the new irrigation techniques, rice became the staple diet of the Brahmanas. In addition crops such as sugarcane, coconut, orange, betel leaves, and areca were popularised.[223]

The tendency to urbanise and the emergence of a resident urban population, concentrated in the temple townships, created the conditions for an increased supply of artisanal goods. The greatest demand was on cotton textiles, til oil, jaggery, crystal sugar, pots, baskets, leather goods and metal ware. RN Nandi explains the impact of this process thus: "*Large groups of weavers, oil pressers, tailors and smaller bodies of smiths and potters who dominate the emerging towns during the eleventh century invite comparison with single families of village artisans who figure as folk heroes in the viragal records of the eighth-tenth centuries. From grants of land to these people it would be clear that before the eleventh century the artisans combined domestic craftworking with family farming besides the eleventh century helped a progressive dissociation of the two and confined the artisans to commodity production of their goods.*"[224]

The general rise in commodity production and the particular requirements of the agraharas created the need for new types of services such as boatmen, sweepers, barbers, washermen, toddy vendors, shop moneylenders, garland makers, cooks, astrologers, masons, stone cutters, etc. Even prostitutes were added to this long list. This section of the economy grew with the rise of commodity production and came to compose a fair part of the urban population.[225]

The pivotal role in this process of commodity production which began to transform the dynamics of society was played by the mercantile class. It was by the efforts of the trader that a product assumed the nature of a commodity and came to be distributed.

The merchant was not a singularly unified class. There were different strata among them. At the top were the Aihole 500 whose fortunes began to gradually decline by the tenth century.

The class which the Aihole 500 catered to is absolutely clear from the nature of goods it dealt in. But with changing times, the very same feudal classes emerged as a market for a new variety of goods. The great volume of wealth it had amassed made it an attractive market for many trading guilds. The new commodities it asked for in the twelfth century included salt, wheat, other grains, groundnut, sesamum, jaggery sugar, pulses, cotton, cummia, coriander, mustard, ginger, turmeric, textiles, dyes, iron, steel and oils.

In addition to the market created by the feudal lords and Brahmanas, the emerging urban nerve-centres which housed artisan and service castes in significant numbers created a market in essential goods for their daily existence.

The demand thrown up by the prosperity of the Brahmanas and feudal classes on the one hand and the essential goods of the toilers initiated hectic trading activity. Among them were different classes of traders such as the *nanadesis* or Aihole 500, *ubhayananadesis, mummuridandas, settis, settiguttas, gatrigas, virbananjus, konekaras, and gandigas*.

The fact that the rising urban centres also fell along the major trade highways, provided greater scope for brisk trading activity.

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Another feature of mercantilism in twelfth century Karnataka was the growing international trade that it conducted. RN Nandi says: *"In the first few centuries of the Christian era and even later, when the Persians controlled the sea-borne trade between India and the West, commodity production was confined to select luxuries such as silk and spices involving limited categories of producers and distributors. The production of consumer goods in this period was insignificant and meant for local consumption. But from the tenth century, large-scale production of consumer goods widened the scope of export trade besides encouraging internal markets."* [226]

The result of this new found mercantile activity began to once again arouse the Vaishya with a revival of a status that was foresaked during the interregnum of rising feudalism. While the office of pattanaswami was one such example of the recognition and institutionalisation of this new found status, Om Prakash Prasad writes: *"...in a larger number of cases, particularly in respect of mercantile towns, the merchant guilds or even individual merchants are found to be sharing a large part of the municipal responsibility."* [227]

Further, he even refers to a village which was first settled by merchants, and after it slowly developed into a market town, its management was entrusted to the most important group of traders, the Balegaras, or bangle-merchants.[228]

With the change to commodity production the nature of the old artisan, service and merchant classes underwent transformation. Commodity production tended to detach these classes from the omnipotent and omnipresent influence of the feudal lord. The merchant was being split into two contradictory classes; one being the feudal merchant and the other new and rising merchant which had a contradiction with feudalism.

Explaining conditions in Europe, Engels identified this period of transition: *"In mediaeval society, especially in the earlier centuries production was essentially for the producer's own use. In the main it only satisfied the wants of the producer and his family. Where personal relations of dependence existed as in the countryside, it also contributed towards satisfying the wants of a feudal lord. No exchange was involved here, and consequently the products did not assume the character of commodities. The peasant family produced almost everything it required--utensils and clothing as well as food. It was only when it succeeded in producing a surplus beyond its own wants and the payments in kind due to the feudal lord--it was only at this stage that it also produced commodities; this surplus thrown into exchange and offered for sale became a commodity."* [229]

The rise in overall production in this terminal phase of early feudalism was therefore instrumental in inaugurating commodity production, albeit on a modest scale.

v) Specialisation of Labour and Emergence of New Castes

The development of the market economy had an attendant impact on the dynamics of caste.

Firstly, **the process of decentralisation pushed down the social ratings of certain castes.** The Vaishya for instance had become a caste of scorn and even got lumped with the Shudras. **The further development of feudalism which triggered off commodity production set in motion a process wherein the Brahmana could no more retain the former control over social dynamics. It inadvertently compelled the Brahmanas to yield and the result was the accumulation of money in the hands of the merchant communities. The economy, therefore, created conditions for the revival of the fallen status of the Vaishya.** More often than not different merchant castes emerged out of a specific commodity producing or peasant caste.

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The market set into motion another significant process. The demand for extensive production of certain commodities, like textiles and oil, or betel leaf and arecanut **compelled the as yet undivided peasantry to specialise in the production of a particular commodity. This resulted in the progressive dissociation from land of all those rural artisans on the one hand, and on the other, it caused the emergence of specialised labour application thereby creating whole new castes itself. Thus commodities which assumed a stable and uninterrupted market and at the same time required specialised skills to produce generated new castes of artisans, service castes or even merchants.** The oil pressers or Gottalis for instance is one such caste. The Ambiga or boatman is yet another. The Gavare or grain merchant, the Gandhiga or perfume seller, Balegara or bangle merchant and the Shroff or money-changer are examples.

Also related to this point of time and a question which we have earlier dealt, was **the coming into being of castes among the Brahmanas.** The objective social conditions, the rise of new social factors and the need for appropriate forms of ideology and religion led to the emergence of new sectarian movements which got locked as separate castes, no sooner than did they realise an independent existence.

vi) Alignment of Class Forces and Economic Basis of the Crisis

These various economic changes endowed a special tension to the alignment of class forces and constituted the economic basis of the crisis of early feudalism which was manifested openly by the twelfth century.

Let us take a brief look at the economic basis of this alignment of class forces.

First was the contradiction between the forces of feudalism represented by the Brahmana landlords, Shudra landlords and the feudal bureaucracy right up to the king on the one hand and the peasantry, artisans and bonded labourers on the other.

Second was the contradiction within the ruling classes. For instance between the Brahmanas and Jainas or the Shudra and Brahmana landlords.

These two contradictions were not new to the feudal mode of production and came into existence ever since the time of the origin of feudalism in Karnataka. However it is the sharpening of these two contradictions by the end of the period of early feudalism that marks the period as exceptional. The changes that took place in the political economy which we have described above were however instrumental in focussing these contradictions.

The interplay of the new factors in the economy upset certain old balances and stimulated the simmering fundamental contradictions to as feverish pitch.

This is how the rise in commodity production acted as a catalyst.

Firstly, **it created a peasant which began to produce for a market, the proceeds of which were encroached upon by the feudal classes.**

Secondly, it similarly **created artisans and services, castes that produced commodities and sold services but were again frustrated from enjoying these fruits due to usurpation by feudal interests.**

Thirdly, **commodity production and the market which allowed the rise of a merchant class and an urban locale as distinct from the feudal merchant and the rural locale, saw the creation of a class which for the first time in the era of feudalism which could live relatively independent of the landlord class.**

These changes also led to the rise of several religious sects, which created fresh contradictions among the ruling classes and bruised the old.

These were then the economic bases of the crisis, the feudal economy scuttling and suffocating, repressing and subjugating the further growth of these new tendencies, becoming thereby

an economic target as much as a political one by the classes and forces arrayed against it. Let us then see how its political features appeared.

C. Political Facets to the Crisis

i) *Viragals:* Acclaiming Feudal Martyrdom

Viragal, a composite word from *vira* meaning *hero* and *kal* meaning *stone* or *herostone* is a phenomenon peculiar to the territories of the Kannada kings. The viragal is simply a dedication commemorating the death of a man at the service of his feudal master.

MS Mate says: *"The commonest variety of* ***viragals*** *consists of a flat slab of stone divided into three rectangular panels. The lowest shows the scene of the battle in which the hero died. Cattle...are also represented hinting that the hero died...defending cattle.... In the middle panel, the hero is seen being carried to heaven by two bewitching* ***apsaras****. In the uppermost panel he is shown worshipping a Siva-linga. In very rare cases, representation of either Visnu, or Devi and Jina are found in the place of Siva-linga."* [230]

Strewn across villages, acclaiming the death of fallen heroes at the service of rapacious masters, the viragal is a common rural sight.

The erection of the greatest number of viragals took place in the terminal phase of early feudalism having commenced from the fifth century AD, ie, after more than two hundred years of feudal development. S Settar feels that while 2,650 inscribed viragals have so far been brought to light, the total may be placed at anywhere ranging from 6,000 to 7,500.[231] The uninscribed viragals could be far more plentiful. *"The practice appears to have reached its climax during the 10th-13th centuries particularly under the Hoysalas. Our survey reveals that not less than 1,100 inscribed tablets were erected during the 10th-13th centuries and of these, about 375 were erected in the Hoysala kingdom. We are aware of only one inscribed memorial of the early-Calukyas, but those of the Kadamba, Rastrakuta, Ganga and later-Calukyas are not less than 95, 35, 150 and 125 tablets respectively...in the forested hills of Shimoga (which not only form a boundary between the coast and plain but also the boundary between the Kadamba-Ganga, Calukya-Hoysala, Hoysala-Kalacurya, Hoysala-Seuna kingdoms) not less than 750 memorials are located. Next come the Hassan (470), Mandya-Mysore (325), Tumkur (240), Dharwad (180) and Chickmagalur (150) districts."* [232]

Explaining the regional spread of viragals, S Settar further tells us: *"It is interesting to note that the Tamil* ***viragals*** *are concentrated in the territory adjoining the southern border of Karnataka, indicating possible roots of this custom in the area. The results so far obtained are said to indicate its popularity in the Tondai-mandalam and Kongu-mandalam rather than in the former heartland of the Pandyas and Colas. Their presence in the North Arcot, Dharmapuri and Salem districts, adjoining which the ancient families of the Gangas and Nolambas ruled, is interesting....*

The Tamil Nadu memorial tablets, though not as large in number as in Karnataka (and probably Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra) roughly fall between about the 5th-6th and 12th century AD. The commemoration of the hero in this form appears to have declined after the 12th century." [233] Thus he says *"Karnataka can claim to be the heartland of hero-stones."* [234]

Why was this heartland so blood-stricken in the terminal phase of early feudalism? The entire phenomenon of viragals seems to have built up, starting from the commencement of the feudal epoch, into a crescendo which breaks reef at the turn of the twelfth century. There can be little doubt that Karnataka was rife with violence and war. But **the viragals proclaimed not a general but a specific type of martyrdom, thereby hailing a war and violence that had a special class connotation.**

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A

68. A and B. An assortment of viragals and mastigals from Shimoga, Chickmagalur and Dakshina Kannada districts.

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B

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Describing the different commemorative reasons for the erection of viragals, S Settar says they were for those that died in cattle raids (*turu-gol*), resisting the rape and molestation of women (*penbuyal*), in defence of the land and of the lord (*era-seva*), rescue of friends and relatives which really is the retaking of labourers captured by hostile raiders (*nentan-edar*), in defence of town or village (*ur-alivu*), the fight against brigands, wild animals and even memorials were erected for pets.[235]

Explaining about the nentan-edar viragal in particular and putting the viragal phenomenon itself in perspective RN Nandi writes: *"The constraint of reduced supply of field labour may have been overcome by captive labour. Judging from the descriptions of village raids which began to pour in from the 8th century, it would be noticed that earlier attacks were prompted by demands of farm cattle and food grains but the viragals of the 11th-12th centuries also mention the rising incidence of captive labour. The people who were captured in the course of these raids could find rehabilitation either in the form of bonded labour or on the estates of feudal militia."*[236]

Hence, while for historians like S Settar and MM Kalaburgi *"cattle raiding was a frequent and favourite sport of the ambitious and heroic"*, [237] for others such as RN Nandi it was warfare caused by mutually contradictory feudal interests.

The entire phenomenon of viragals can be correctly understood only if it is viewed in the context of the growth of a feudal mode of production. Particularly after the commencement of the process of subinfeudation and with the growing independence of the feudatories from the time after the Rashtrakutas onward, the tendency was for feudalism to get more and more militarised. This tendency was however in no way contradictory to the growth of the agrahara and matha complexes of the Brahmanas which tried to put up a spiritual front of serenity and tranqil peace. **These two tendencies were in fact two faces of the same feudal coin gaining momentum at the same point in history and without finding the need to be antithetical and contradictory, they proceeded along parallel lines.**

The viragals were symptomatic of warfare not at the level of royal dynasties or even the mahamandaleshvara feudatories but rather of ooragowdas and nadagowdas, embroiling at times a Hoysala ballala in the clash of arms. **It was warfare evidently at the primary levels of the feudal social structure.**

Viragals were erected normally for tenant-retainers and not for military chiefs of a king's court and rarely for the landlords themselves. It was therefore an admission of service by a feudal lord for the sacrifice of life in the performance of his duty as a bonded tenant-retainer. Even the exemptions meted out to the family of the dead were generally indicative of the class that constituted the chunk of those who faced feudal martyrdom. Even the honorific titles did not resound much beyond the boundary walls of the village. They were heros all right, but ones of the village whose bravado succumbed when the sky became the limit.[238]

The purposes for which viragals were erected again betray the purely local scale of the strife. It was for cattle, for the protection of the land and life of the lord or his women or for labour. In all these instances, the class interests of the landlord residing in the village may be noticed.

It was this motivation of the feudal lords who, in keeping with the times, asserted their independence due to the fact that they possessed a militia, a body of armed retainers which was answerable to none but them. **This force, was as captive and as servile as a bondsman labourer or a tenant was.** This was how it answered the call. It was no coincidence that the Shivalinga

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should adorn almost every viragal; Shaivaite Bhakti had its swell use and it carved out with its spirited sword, heads of cattle and hands of labour—important instruments of production under feudalism—so that the lord of the village could grow wealthy and prosperous. As thanksgiving for this service, the dead were brought alive on stone so that the memory of such martyrdom would continue to proselytise and motivate the living into renewed death defying action. We would therefore like to disagree with S Settar when he implicitly locates the viragal phenomenon as a result of clashes between dynasties. While it is true that Shimoga, falling on the borderland of several dynasties came to possess most of the viragals, this was not on account of royal dynastic wars but ones of a petty nature and for victories of a petty kind. The fact that Shimoga came for long periods along nether and contested territory, the feudal lords tended to enjoy relatively longer periods of independence creating the scope for much wider self-assertion and strife.

The viragals commemmorate that juncture of history when landlord lashed out against landlord from a deep rooted crisis in feudal appropriation. If the Kalamukha Brahmanas chose to increase productivity and used the religious means of Bhakti when it tapered to overcome a similar crisis; the Shudra landlord hemmed in by the holy Brahmana enclaves which he was forbidden from touching, chose to overcome his crisis by setting his eyes on the wealth of the Shudra landlord of the neighbouring village. Sword in hand, bondsmen-retainers at his command, he chose a political means to overcome a crisis of economic proportions. The viragals are a vivid, yet mute testimony to this.

ii) Dynasties in the Vortex of War

While the viragals indicated the growing outbreak of battles, taking on the features of wars between families of landlords at the village level, there was yet another level of warfare which engulfed Karnataka during the time. This was the wars waged by the ruling dynasties between one another and the wars that ambitious mahamandaleshwaras unleashed against a ruling dynasty and those that one mahamandaleshwara dynasty waged against another. **These wars were on a scale entirely different from what the viragals represented.** They locked kingdoms against one another, they fixed fiefdom against fiefdom. They were waged for state power, for territory, for fiefdoms, for kingdoms, for entire empires.

We have already discussed earlier in this chapter about the growing feudalisation of Karnataka polity from the time after the rule of the Badami Chalukyas, or in other words fromthe time of the onset of Rashtrakuta rule from the mid-eighth century onwards. From this time on the lineages of the feudatory families became increasingly focussed and came onstage as veritable dynasties of their own independent standing. They not only began to wage war or enter an armistice without the consent of the king, they also launched in concert with other similar vassals, blistering attacks against their own kings, capable of overturning the tables of power. Writing of such feudatories under the Kalyan Chalukyas, Krishna Murari says: *"The nobles seem to have experienced almost sovereign rights over these estates, and paid tribute to the government. They submitted to the royal authority only so long as the king was able to enforce his command, and defend him and his officers whenever they could do so with impunity. They established themselves in their estates and formed a source of permanent danger to the throne. The most noteworthy of these were the descendants of early Calukyas who allied themselves with the Rastrakutas the hereditary enemies of the family, and plunged the kingdom in a civil war lasting for over four generations."* [239]

If war had become the major preoccupation of the feudatories during the terminal phase of early feudalism their rivalries could not but have dragged entire dynasties to the battlefield.

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When the limbs of feudalism were itching for battle could the body relax in peace? **Instability came to characterise kingship and it was on the battlefield that the royal court came to reside.**

As we have already observed, in the early pages of this chapter, the results of war under such regularity increased the frequency of dynastic change. The Gangas, who ruled for 650 years had to forsake their kingdom to the Cholas at the turn of the millennium. But Chola rule itself could not survive beyond 31 years; and this brief rule must be attributed to reasons other than an awakened Kannada sentiment issuing against the Tamil invader. However **feudal instability was characteristic of the North Maidan.** It is here that we come across a real glimpse of the ferocity of the age. It was the heartland of a profusely bleeding heart.

One observes a shrinkage in the reign of each dynasty as one converged on the twelfth century. If the Rashtrakutas ruled for 217 years, the Kalyan Chalukyas could stay in power for 189 years. However, the Kalachuris reigned merely for 22 years and the Kalyan Chalukyan second innings lasted only for two paltry years.

The 217 years of Rashtrakuta rule saw the ascension of a total of 13 kings to the throne, displaying an average of 17 years for each sovereign. However, the last 95 years of the Rashtrakutas saw the rule of eight kings, with each monarch averaging just about 12 years in power. Similarly, the rule of the Kalyan Chalukyas, spread out for 189 years was witness to 11 kings, giving each an average life of about 17 years in power. However the 22 years of Kalachuri rule saw the ascension of four kings making the average span of one regent at about seven years. The reincarnation of the Kalyan Chalukyas lasted through one king who was toppled even before the gum on his throne could dry, after just two years in power.

We shall quote from RK Sharma which describes Bijjala's wartorn five years in power at Kalyana. It is evident that Bijjala became popular for no great achievement of his: he was only another feudatory in the long list of vassals that rode on an opportune moment amidst anarchy to become king. His name figures prominently only because he ruled at a time when the popular Vachanakara struggle overthrew his reign. Did the good fortune of being assassinated at the hands of the jangamas not preserve his memory for posterity? Heady with scores of battles, on ascension to power after overthrowing Taila III, the Kalyana Chalukyan king, Bijjala "*...assumed the titles* ***Tribhuvanamalla, Nissankamalla, Sanivarasiddhi*** *and* ***Giridurganamalla.*** *During the early years of his reign, he subdued the southern region, destroyed Tagarate in Shimoga district, defeated the Santara Jagadeva of Pombureha and laid siege to the fort of Gutti. Hoysala Narasimha I and Pandya chief Vijaya Pandya were defeated by him. Bijjala fought successfully with the Cheras of the Malabar coast, the Cola Rajaraja II, Rajendra Cola II of Andhra, Raghava of Kalinga and Chalukya of Kumarapala. He came in conflict with Kalachuri king Jayasimha of the Tripuri branch and is said to have defeated him.*"[240]

We are unsure of the exhaustiveness of this list. Yet the hostilities mentioned quite adequately serve our point. From the smallest of landlords summoning sculptors for viragals to the highest of monarchs scourging expanses of territory for the recalcitrant enemy, **Karnataka was pitched in the vortex of war and violence.**

Rashtrakuta times onward, Karnataka's early feudal period was moving in a spiral. The twist of each new decade and then each new year and finally even months, weeks and days brought history to a head. It was a countdown to Kalyan, 1167 AD. The urban uprising led by the Vachanakaras ripped through the culminating tensility and created the pause that history needed. Like the hangover at dawn after a night of alcoholic spin, the resounding of an echo after a full-lunged cry or the shudder of the skies after a flash of lightning, the political superstructure

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continued to witness the tremors of early feudalism in the rise and fall of four kings from two dynasties. Since the death of Bijjala in 1167 AD to the eclipse of Someshwara IV in 1186 AD, the last ruling for just two years till a political environment was created for the rise of dynasties, ordered on different lines and coping with the modified conditions of what we would choose to call middle feudalism.

iii) Ethos of Kannada's First Literature

Kannada's first literature was born in such a milieu. It was a child born of feudal war and true to its origins, it strove to further extol it. It commemorated in letter what the viragals committed by sculpture.

SS Settar and MM Kalburgi correctly state: *"Between the time of Nrpatunga (9th century) and of Basaveswara (late 12th century), an interesting and important body of literature was produced in Kannada language. This literature is marked by the* ***vira-rasa*** *(emotion of heroism)...."*[241] This felicity itself was achieved by the period on account of the fact that *"The majority of Kannada poets of the Heroic Period (9th-12th century AD) appear to have been as familiar with the art of writing as with the art of warfare, and some of them handled the sword and the quill with equal facility."*[242] Pampa, Ranna, Janna, Chavundaraya and Nagavarma were but some examples.

They were warriors that served feudatories or their kings. They were **all,** on account of this, invariably **poets that enthralled the feudal court.** Living in a period that was taut with intrafeudal war, these poets could praise a king by the only achievement that he would consider befitting the standing of a sovereign—victory in war and more such victorious war. Thus the Kshatriya poets of the terminal phase of early feudalism who were paid by munificent grants of land which made them among the landlords of the period, served their masters by recounting events from the Mahabharatha. They made innovative presentations drawing from the experience of partaking in battle and recreating the joy and suffering, the tenor and thunder of the age. In their aesthetic search, these poets brought alive in the court through their metered cadence, rhyme and rhythm the turbulence that transpired on and off the battlefield. Yet in the best of their outpourings the feudal perception was irreristibly present. Look at these lines from Pampa's *Vikramarjunavijayam*:

"He who cannot uproot enemy kings,
nor protect those who cling to his feet,
nor leave an imprint of charity by parting with
his gold, yet longs to live—oh Murantaka,
should he be called a human or a mean worm in the country fig!"[243]

Ranna in his *Ajitha-Tirthankara-Purana-Vijayam* praises *"...chivalry...from the level of an abstruct concept to that of an absorbing cult, while the 'knight-in-armour' who was first assured of an honourable place in society was also guaranteed a place in heaven....*

'I pray for the heroic death you are blessed with, o Abhimanyu', says Duryodhana envying the lad's end for such a death does not come to everybody."[244]

Such single-minded praise for intrafeudal war was only a self-contradiction—it could only lead to the weakening and collapse of the polity which brought forth such literature. In glorifying such death, in motivating intra-feudal war with the vigour of words, these poets were unconsciously ony bringing to an end the death of their literary prospect. The vira rasa and the literary genere of Pampa died shortly after it was born: consumed by those very flames it had fanned. Such feudal literature was only succeeded by a Vachanakara literature, contradicting it in every sense, in letter and in spirit.

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D. Religious Facets to the Crisis

In an earlier part of this chapter we have seen the reshaping of the religious superstructure in response to the changed base of the feudal mode of production. Now let us see the further upheavals in religion in the terminal centuries of the early feudal period in the context of being reflective of the conflicts that afflicted this phase.

i) Feudal Prestige, Temple Grandeur

The turn to class society in general and to feudalism in particular saw the rise of worship of gods in the image of man. Anthropomorphic worship particularly of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Surya, Ganesha and Kartikeya **began to replace earlier forms.**[245] The creation of gods in the image of man became a possibility under social conditions of class society and surplus accumulation, when men grew all powerful. Their power obviously outdid that of nature. **It was therefore in a society where the power of man over man became endowed with a pervasive omnipotence that the anthropomorphic representation of god caught on. The worship of god in the mould of man was a fact that directly reflected and reinforced feudal social life. It was as necessary for the feudal forces as it was becoming for the peasantry in bondage.**

By the time of the Badami Chalukyas, Karnataka's temple construction activity had commenced. Starting with cave temples and then the construction of sculpturally decorated exteriors for temples whose plastic icons were kept in the cave, to the total detachment of the temple from the cave-locale, god having got his own independent and fullfledged abode—this entire process which commenced with the rule of the Badami Chalukyas concluded by the time their reign ended, with Aihole, their capital coming to possess nearly 70 temples. Thus by the mid-eighth century when the Rashtrakutas rose to power, their geography was already being decorated with mushrooming temples.

It was by this time that the Kalamukha Bhakti tradition had been developed by the Shaivite Brahmanas of Karnataka. They took the initiative in developing the Bhakti tradition around temple centered worship. They created a devotional laity that began to worship the Shaivite icons in temples, a tradition which caught the imagination of the people. **As the Bhakti congregations grew more and more impressive the temple became the centre of religious expression and not only did the temples grow more and more prosperous, they began, by the tenth century which saw the end of Rashtrakuta rule, to dazzle and overwhelm by their imposing stature and intricate sculpture.**

Not to be left behind in this competition, *"From the latter part of the tenth century AD onwards the building activities of the followers of Jainism also tremendously increased"* says A Sundara.[246]

Explaining this entire process, RN Nandi writes: *"Though the origin of the temple-based cults of brahmanical deities goes back to the early Christian centuries, it was only in the early middle ages that the temple emerges as an instrument of peasant subordination and surplus accumulation. In the beginning, however, the temples remained generally confined to urban places of political importance such as Kanchipuram and Mahabalipuram in TN, and Pattadakal, Aihole and Badami in Karnataka all of which witnessed great development of temple architecture. From the 8th century the temples also began to invade the rural world which was till now dominated by folk deities and folk rituals unassociated with any permanent structures. The ruralization of the brahmanical temple institutions, which began on a low key during the 8th century but which took on the character of a widespread structural enterprise during the 10th and 11th centuries, seems to be related to the progressive feudalization of the state struc-*

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ture. As the domains of private governmental jurisdiction began to multiply, the temple's legitimising role became more and more relevant. The apportionment of ***agrahara*** *land to some brahmanical deity which is first noticed in the charters of the 8th century and the feudal patronage extended to temples by petty country lords from the 9th century in their villages appear to be convincing proofs of this development.... There is no dearth of evidence to show that between the 9th and 11th centuries, vassalization was a major incentive behind the patronage of temple institutions by feudatories of widely varying rank and power."* [247]

The institution of the temple after the tenth century undertook a further transformation. It began to get integrated into a Brahmana monastic complex, which the term matha came to signify. At another instance this is how RN Nandi described the rise or the mathas. *"It is also from the ninth century that monastic establishments surface as integral parts of temple institutions in different parts of south India....*

The monastic movement of the Saivites, spearheaded by the Kalamukhas in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh bears close relation to the changing political structure. The earlier monasteries were modest houses of mendicant groups which organised theological and sectarian classes, besides practicing various monastic virtues. But slowly the character of monastic foundations changed, and from the close of the tenth century, the institutions developed as degenerate private organisations dominated by certain families of priests on a permanent hereditary basis. These families were not only big owners of landed estates, but also exercised considerable influence over a vast cross-section of the subject population which owed spiritual allegiance to the Saivite priesthood. The social control wielded by these religions was appreciated by the great feudatory houses of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The sub-kings and feudatories found it politically expedient to promote the monastic organisations because the religious subordination of the masses helped the rulers to perpetuate their political authority. This explains the phenomenal rise in the number of monastic endowments in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In Mysore alone over a hundred donations were recorded between 1050 and 1230, the donors being all kings and feudatories. Out of these hundred nearly seventy gifts were made by feudal lords and high officers, which shows the special relation in which the feudal bureaucracy stood to the Saivite monastic order." [248]

The Jaina basadis at this time came into existence and entered into rigorous competition with the temples, and the culmination of which was Shravanabelagola, as we have already seen earlier on. Yet RN Nandi draws a distinction between these Jaina basadis and their Brahmana matha counterparts. *"Comparing the Brahmanical temples with Jain basadis which entered the rural world at a much earlier date it would appear that impact created by the former on the mechanism of surplus production was unmatched in the religious sector. For one thing the largest of the* ***basadis*** *were still much smaller than an average brahmanical temple of the medieval period. This is evidently because of the fact that the structural growth of the brahmanical temple was integrally related to an inflated ritual, a large pantheon and a wide functional base. The sanctum, the vestibule, the assembly hall, the dancing hall, the circumambulatory are all related to the ritual requirements of a deity in addition to numerous smaller shrines to house relatives and attendants of the principal deity. Wherever resources permitted the temple achieved this imposing stature. But given the resources, the Jaina* ***basadi*** *was unlikely to attain such grotesque proportions...."* [249]

By the time of the Rashtrakutas a new class of temple builders emerged. This class included royal officers, feudatories, nadagowdas, tradesmen and even village gowdas. As temple building activity grew they became massive and transformed into religious complexes and mathas.

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The mathas were, between the tenth and twelfth centuries given extensive non-taxable lands, gradually transforming the Brahmana community into not just a caste of ideologists serving feudalism, but the leading component within feudalism itself by virtue of the extensive land and labour over which it exercised control, over and above its monopoly on the mind and spirit of man.

The agrahara and mathas with such elaborate temples had clearly emerged as townships with some housing a Brahmana population of 12,000 souls.

Contributing to this discussion, VK Thakur writes: *"Construction of temples and forts, representing mutually variant ritual and temporal domains respectively, presents the two sides of the same coin. While the forts symbolised the perpetuation of feudal authority, the temple complexes were broader manifestations of the same mode of power. The sudden spurt in temple building activity, instead of being accidental, was firmly rooted in the contemporary milieu. Analysing the nature and functions of art in feudal society Devangana Desai formulates that: 'Art in society was to impress and dazzle the audience or the onlooker and to proclaim the glory, might and richness of opulent patrons. Though apparently in the service of religion, it was actually the means of gratifying their aspirations for fame and glory'. Consequently, while the ancient religious art of India was patronised predominantly by merchants, artisans and craft guilds, early medieval art drew its patronage primarily from kings of different principalities, feudatories, military chiefs, etc., who alone could donate land to religious institutions. The emergence of the new class of dominant patrons reflects a new tendency in the domain of artistic creativity—the element of glorification of the patron. This novel idea was considerably shaped and was in turn, given manifestation by the preclusion of meaningful trade in contemporary society and consequent non-investment of surplus wealth of feudatories and kings in commerce and production. The temple building activity, with growing emphasis on its size and massiveness, was only a facet of its dominant pattern of conspicuous consumption of the social surplus in a feudal milieu."* [250]

Writing of this tremendous temple building activity K Iswaran says that between 1150 AD and 1350 AD, that is, in a span of just 200 years the Shaivites constructed at least 450 temples while the Vaishnavas built 100 temples in Karnataka.[251] The Jainas on their part must have built at least 100 basadis. The Brahmanas and the chieftains had obviously entered into vulgar competition. Each was trying to build the most grandiose structures, drawing up highly elaborate plans, employing hundreds of engineers, stone workers and several thousand labourers, with some temples taking even two generations to complete. It may well be said that a good part of the social surplus was consumed by such feudal and priestly extravaganza.

While massiveness was one of the attributes such as the Bahubali at Shravanabelagola, which bare, and braving the winds and rain, nearly 60 feet in height, scanned the azure horizon for scores of kilometres in stoic and stony silence, turning a blind eye to the wealthy and worldly Jaina basadi that stripped it of its every belonging. If the temples were not as massive, they were striking by their complex structures starting from multi-starred foundations to the intricately poised shikharas. The minuteness of sculpture of a Belur, a Halebid or a Somanathpura are only the best of such examples, granite melting to sparks from the sculptors' chisel like wax. **In this combination of great genius and exacting labour the stone motifs that decorated the panels betrayed what they could not suppress—the repetitive pattern, blatant and often overdone ornamentation becoming only of a grandiose and feudal art.**

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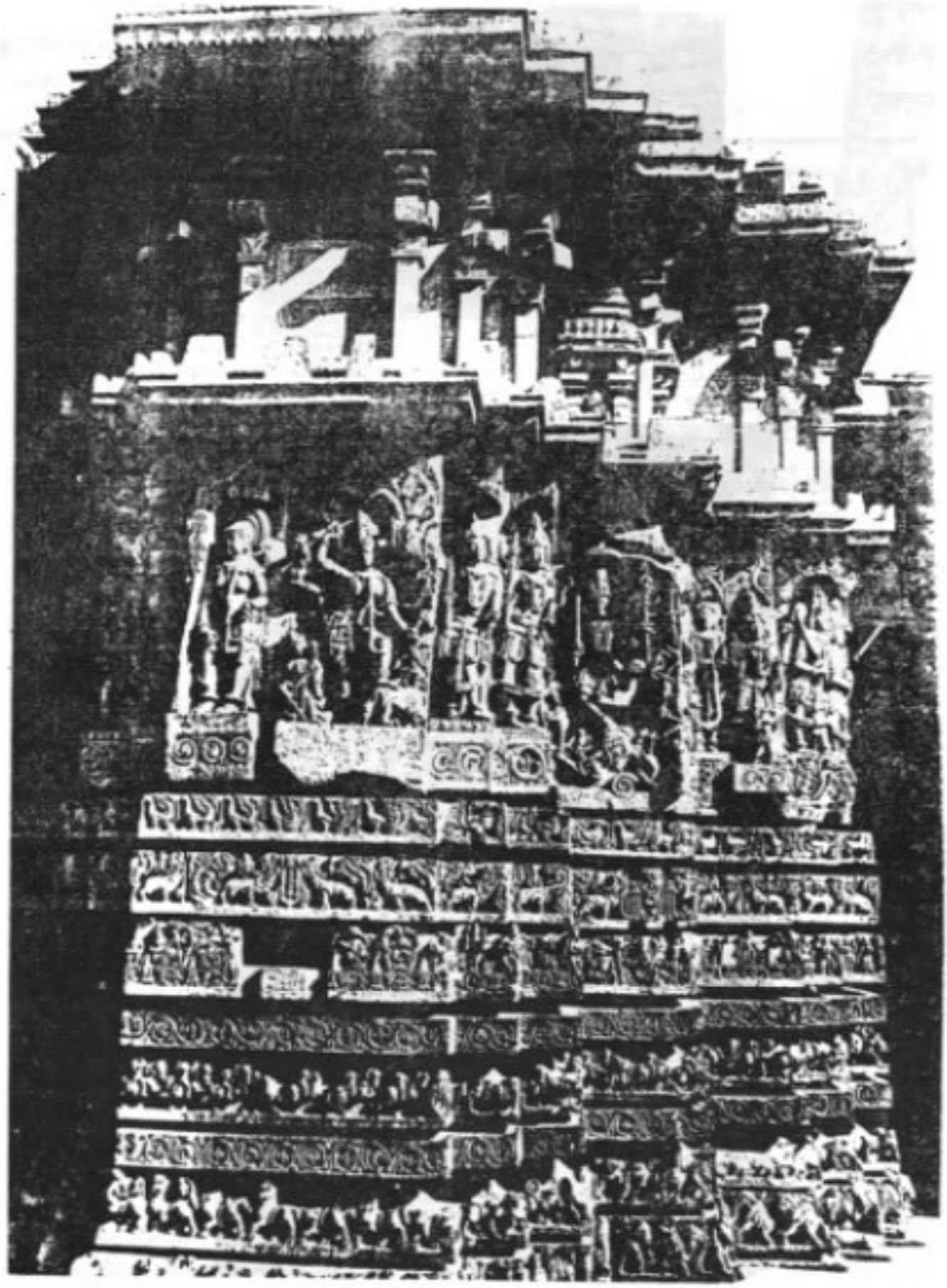

69. Outer wall of Hoysaleshwara temple, Hassan district.

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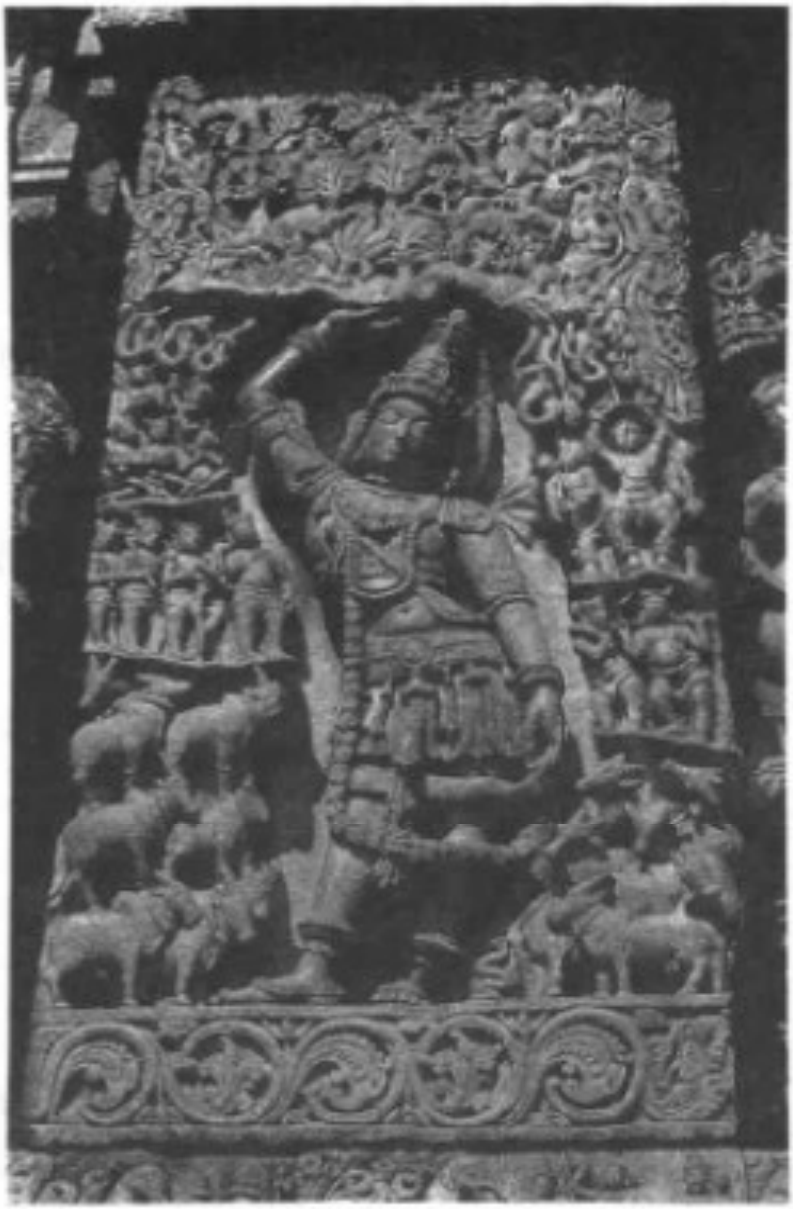

70. The Hoysala monogram in stone and Krishna holding up Govardhanagiri from Halebidu, Hassan district.

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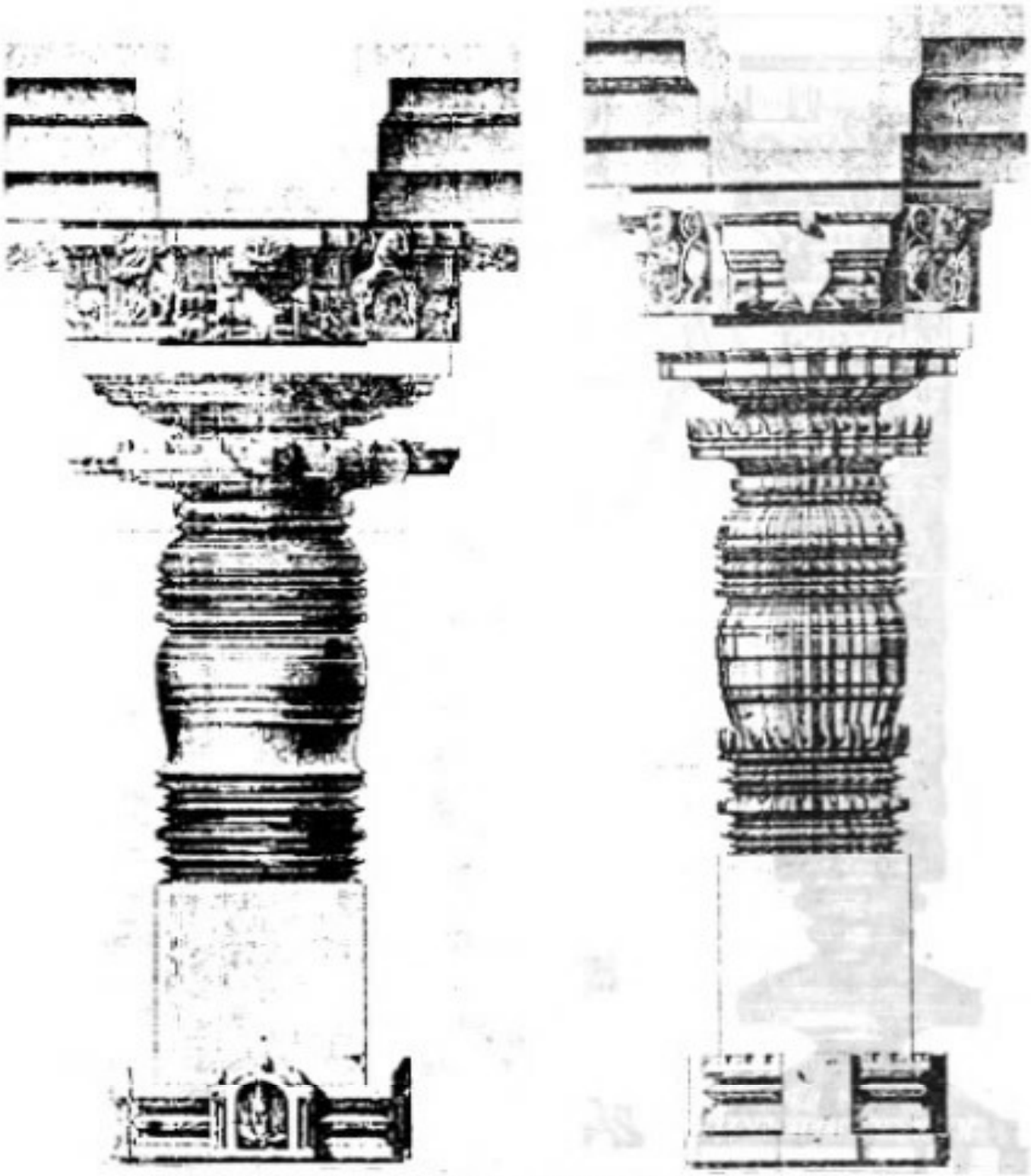
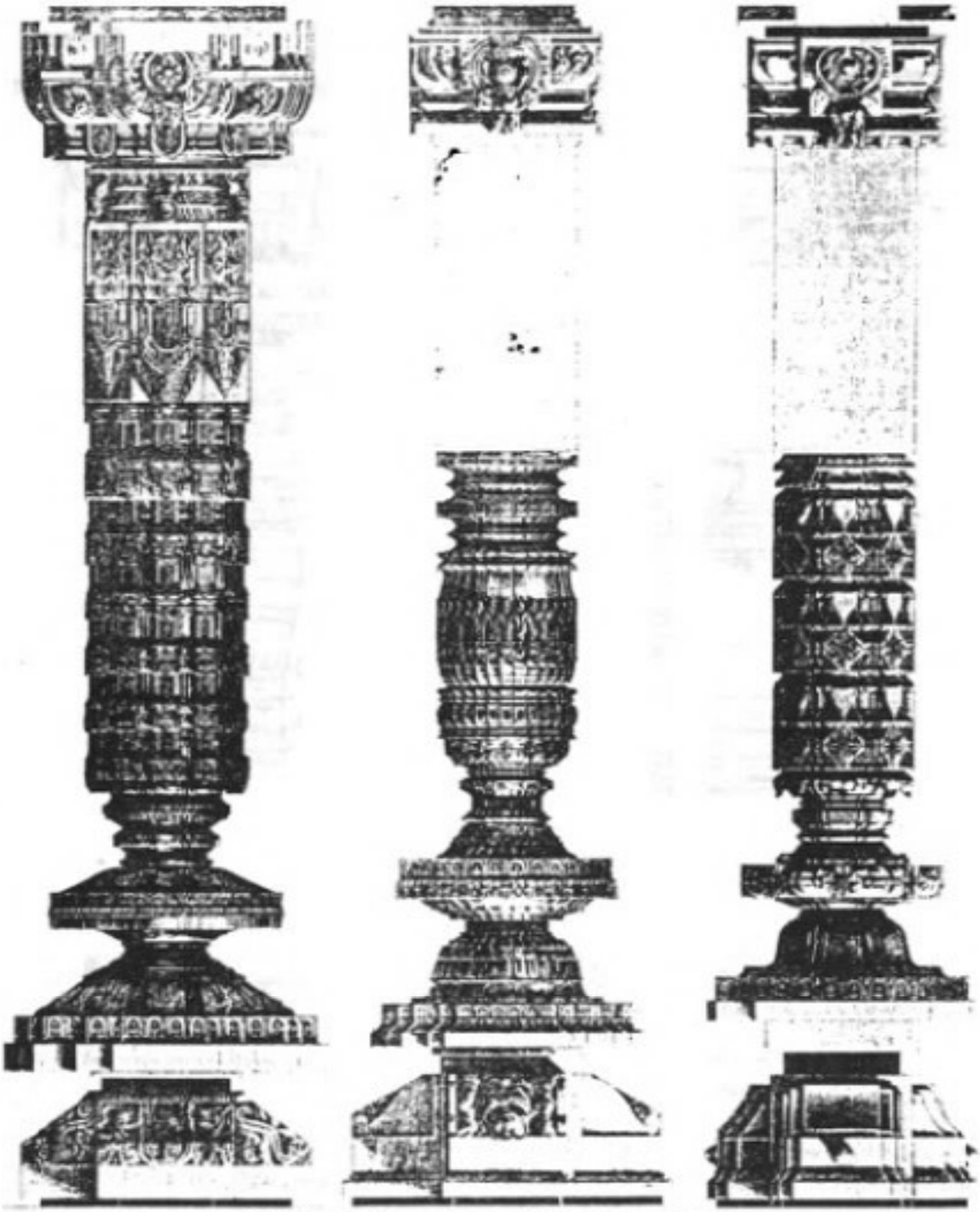


71. Multiangled and round bell-shaped pillars of Belur, Hassan district.

The competitive scramble had unleashed the sciences. Investigation and study, the drawing of principles and testing them in practice, theoretical knowledge; Geometry, Mathematics and Physics came together and they were so engineered that they pressed against the seams of science that the feudal tegument restricted and held together. Such science was married on stone and integrated with art.

Over centuries the structure of the temple underwent change. After more than a century of its initial stages of emergence and as it accumulated more and more lands, **temple architecture took on the contours of a fortress in which the harvested grain was stocked.** It was thus imperative that the Brahmanas insisted on keeping the Shudras outside its precincts. By the tenth



72. Pillars in the navaranga at Belur, Hassan district.

and eleventh centuries temple design underwent further changes. The Brahmanas who hardly soiled their hands and seldom partook in war, accumulated a lot of leisure time, which they chose to spend in style. **The temple was now transformed into an institution to engage the Brahmana and Shudra chieftains by serving as a theatre of aesthetic entertainment, with music and dance.** With this the sanctum sanctorum was pushed to an insignificant corner of the temple. The

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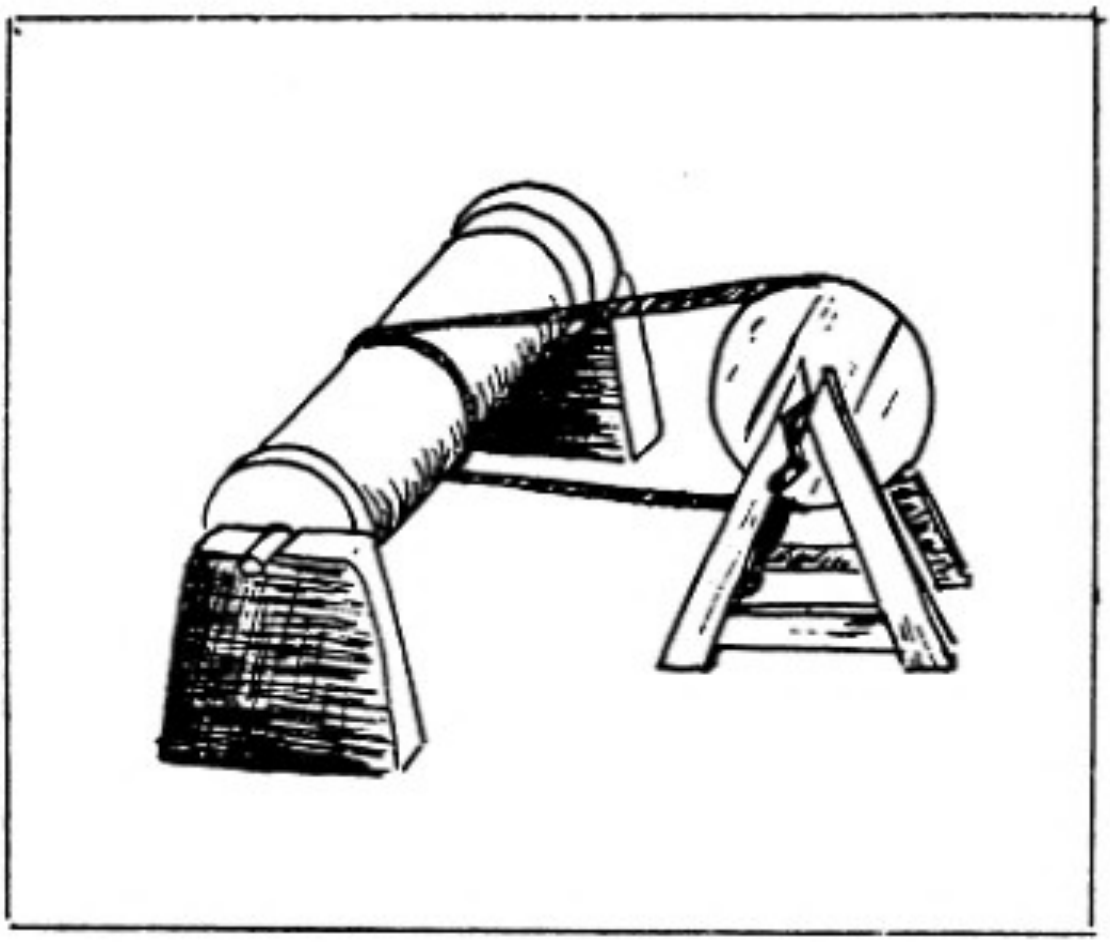

73. Reconstruction of a lathe used for making the turned columns of Belur.

intricate stone work or the entire edifice now centred round the gallery of the landlords and the dancing hall. Entombed by sculpture, massaged by music and witnessing the gyrations of dance; the temple turned into not just the representative but the repository of feudal art. If, as George Thompson says, during the preclass period, in primitive magic ritual lay the source of religion, science and art, if from it branched off rock art, music and dance; then in the period of early feudalism of Karnataka, the temple became the superstructural nucleus radiating feudal religion, science, and art; a feudal music, dance and rock art. Magic had become a rite at the feet of god.

ii) Branching of Bhakti to Virashaivism

Towards the end of the eleventh century, certain Kalamukha centres began to branch into what they called as Shaivism with a vira rasa or Virashaivism. In terms of ideology, Virashaivism had little difference with Kalamukha Bhakti Shaivism. Marking this change RN Nandi writes: *"The task of reorganising the Saivite priesthood and cult, undertaken by the nayanars and the Kalamukhas was continued by the Virasaivas who originated from the powerful priestly orders of the Kalamukhas operating in different districts of north western Karnataka, particularly Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwar and Shimoga. The emergence of Virasaivas [under the leadership of Ekanta Rama, a Kalamukha Brahmana, around 1160-1200 AD] marked the rise of Jangama priesthood which succeeded to the office and authority of the earlier Kalamukha priests and monks; it also coincided with the private worship of phallic emblems of Siva, which largely replaced widespread public worship of images in the Kalamukha temples."* [252]

While there was thus a change only in the forms of worship, the Kalamukha priesthood was getting impatient, catching the contagion of the time. It began to reinterpret itself on martial lines and was only preparing its order—the ecclesiastical and the laity—for a clash, an exhibition

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of the vira rasa. **Virashaivism was nothing but the expression of a militant Kalamukha Shaivism.** Whom it was preparing to target, we shall see shortly.

iii) Ramanuja and the Rise of Srivaishnavism

Just as Kalamukha Shaivism was a development that paralleled the Nayanars in Tamil Nadu, the Vaishnavite sectarian tradition came to develop in Karnataka alongside the Srivaishnavite tradition of the Alvar saints in Tamil Nadu. However, the Vaishnavite movement of Karnataka was not strong enough to develop its own body of philosophy having to wait till the advent of Madhvacharya in the thirteenth century. Thus it took place under the influence of the Tamil Srivaishnavite movement.

RN Nandi's analysis of the origin of Tamil Srivaishnavism in his *Social Roots of Religion in Ancient India* is made with exceptional merit.

The Alvars, were like the Nayanars, forerunners of the Srivaishnavite faith. *Alvar* in Tamil means *one that delves deep.* A total of 12 Alvars starting from the seventh to the ninth century were the main body of saints whose emotional songs were compiled to form the *Nalayira Prabandham* or *four thousand verses*, and is treated as the foundation of the Srivaishnavite hagiography.

The Alvars may themselves be classed into the first five or *Mudal Alvars* and later seven Alvars. There is a distinction that can be made in the hymns of the Mudal and later Alvars. RN Nandi says: *"The **mudal** alvars were influenced by the Vedantic concept of pure knowledge as the surest means to liberation."* [263]

The Mudal Alvars belonged to the seventh century. **The period of the later Alvars commencing from the eighth century also witnessed the rise of the temple-centred Brahmana landlordism and the concerns of the later Alvars are placed, quite contrary to their predecessors' preoccupation with pure knowledge, in Vaishnavite Bhakti.** The later phase of the Alvar movement was based in the Ranganatha temple at Srirangam, where a Sanskrit educated priesthood, supported by members of the ruling families, gradually took command and edited and produced the *Nalayira Prabandham*.

Of the 12 Alvars, eight were Brahmanas, 2 were Shudras, one was a Kshatriya and another an Untouchable. But like in the case of the Nayanars this diverse composition, despite the monopoly of the Brahmanas, did not mean any flexing of the caste system. To quote Nandi on this: *"The association of some sudras with the alvar confession does not however conceal the elitist motivation of the early bhakti missions. It appears that the association of sudras with the movement was peripheral, and did not amount to anything more than incorporating the ecstatic songs composed by sudra alvars in the much later **Nalayira Prabandham**. There was no common sharing of ritualistic or organizational privileges. The admission of sudras into the temples was never conceded. The sudra **Nammalvar** could not once get inside a Visnuite temple to have a full view of the deity. On his own admission, he had to content himself with the sight of the sect marks drawn on the person of Brahmana worshippers. The verses ascribed to nammalvar also make it clear that the prevailing Visnuite worship was in Sanskrit and sudras were carefully excluded from it. (Tirruppanalvar, the only other sudra member of the confession, appears to have been a little more fortunate. As the tradition has it, the brahmana ministrants of a Visnuite temple took the alvar on their shoulders to the temple under instructions from the deity. The alvar, who is stated to have been united with the god, did not obviously come out of the temple again).*

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*The **Prabandham** collection is emphatic in stating that the lowly sudras accepted all acts of social discrimination as divinely-ordained. At one place Nammalvar himself has been quoted as saying that none but a learned brahmana can approach the sanctum and touch the feet of the divine lord; at another place he describes the brahmanas as gods on the earth. It cannot be ignored that such passages, which depict lowly classes as speaking highly of the privileged ones, are a typical elitist stance aimed at legitimising the concentration of social and economic power in the upper rungs of the society.*

*The elitist motivation of the early Visnu-piety can scarcely be overlooked in view of the fact that the ecstatic experiences of the sudra songsters are as naively reproduced as the stories regarding their physical torture by brahmana leaders of the sect. Lives of the saints demonstrate that Brahmana leaders claimed the right to punish a sudra for no cognizable offence, and to exact at pleasure forced labour from manual workers in towns and villages. Very often such behaviour is sought to be defended on the ground of undemanding loyalty to the god and his brahmana ministrants. (The exactions of forced unpaid labour is also suggested by other contemporary Visnuite texts. The **Jayakhya Samhita** for example, recommends the enslavement of artisans by Visnuite temples).*

*Thus the **Prabandham** anthology, which was predominantly brahmanical in origin and inspiration did not give expression to voices of social protest. Instead the bhakti-mission of the alvars was aimed at the regimentation of a new relation of production which had emerged as a result of large-scale transfer of peasant-holdings and rural craft workers to different categories of landed priests."* [254]

To Bhakti, much later Ramanuja would add, as KT Ramaswamy says, in the true spirit of Bhakti adoration: *"Besides Bhakti, he [Ramanuja] emphasised prapti (self-surrender) to God resorting to Him as the sole refuge. It was the most effective means of release..... What one had to do was to follow the will of God, to believe that he will save, to seek help from Him and to yield up one's spirit to Him and to be meek."* [255]

Thus the Vaishnavite Bhakti tradition of the Alvars was no different in all its essentials from the Shaivaite Bhakti movement of the Nayanars of Tamil Nadu or the Kalamukha Bhakti sect of Karnataka. It was a multi-headed response of the Brahmana caste to identical necessities of the feudal mode of production arising at the same point of time in history.

But what launched the Vaishnavite Bhakti tradition in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka was the result of events that took place much later. **In Ramanujacharya** who lived for 120 years from 1017 AD to 1137 AD, who developed the Vishishtadvaita intricacy as a demarcation from Shankaracharya's Advaitha, **Vaishnavism found anchorage and received the widespread munificence of the ruling classes.**

Ramanujacharya, born at Siriperumbudur assumed the pontificatory seat of Srirangam in 1049 AD, after which he departed on a tour round the country visiting several Shaiva centres and winning wealthy sponsors for his cause. After his return, fearing a diminution of donors a Shaiva inspired attack was attempted; Kulothunga I, the Chola king although partially supportive of the Vaishnavites, ultimately preferred sides with the well established Shaivites. Ramanuja was forced to flee Tamil Nadu in 1096 and from then on till the death of Kulothunga I in 1120 AD when Ramanuja returned to Tamil Nadu, his association was achieved with the feudal ruling classes of Karnataka.

Ramanuja's flight to Karnataka overlaps with the period of Chola rule over the Gangavadi region between 987-1120 AD. Already by the time of the fall of the Ganga dynasty

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the influence of Vaishnavism had begun to pick up in Karnataka. KT Ramaswamy writes: *"The presence of Sri Vaishnavas in the Hoysala country may have been the reason for his [Ramanuja's] visit. That Vaishnavism was flourishing in the Hoysala country in pre-Ramanuja days, and as early as 1090 AD is attested by inscriptional evidence."* [256]

The role of the Chola conquest in spreading the Vaishnavite influence cannot be disregarded as the Cholas, though predominantly Shaivite at the same time partially propped up Vaishnavism. As G Kuppuram writes: *"Soon after the occupation of southern Karnataka the imperial Colas brought Tamilians along with them to carry on administrative duties as the Kannadigas were not much familiar with their conventions and practices. The migrants played a significant role in the growth and development of the administrative set up of the imperial Colas in Karnataka. The Cola inscriptions of Kolar, Bangalore and Mysore districts mention the immigration of various Tamil people into the area who held the appointment of officers and other dignitaries under the Cola government."* [257]

Thus, Ramanuja's choice of first Mirle, next Saligrama, then Tondanur and finally Melkote in the Mysore and Mandya districts as points of residence for his entourage of Srivaishnavite Brahmanas was only due to the fact that the area had already experienced the influences of Vaishnavism and the fact that a Tamil feudal class which though resident in these areas had long expressed its loyalty having made donations to the matha of Srirangam. In fact the Melkote temple had already been constructed and the Yoganarasimha temple at Tondanur had been built by a Tamil feudatory Chokkandai-Pergadi even before Ramanuja's arrival.[258] BR Gopal's book provides us with ample evidence of donations made by Tamil feudal bureaucrats at all these places to keep the Brahmanas that Ramanuja had brought along, in convenient straits.

While Chola rule had created conditions conducive for a reassured life for the immigrant Ramanujakuta, the reasons for the rise of Srivaishnavism was entirely due to the support that the Kannadiga feudal class had extended.

Bittideva the Hoysala mandalika came in touch with Ramanuja and converting from Jainism he changed his name to Vishnuvardhana, proclaiming thereby his new sectarian loyalty. By 1098 AD Vishnuvardhana had captured Talakad, Kongu and other territories. A few years from then, he crossed the Tungabhadra and conquered regions that belonged to the Kalyan Chalukyas. In 1108, Vishnuvardhana ascended the Hoysala throne and had already expanded his kingdom, ruling over Gangavadi, Nolambavadi, Banavasi, Hangal and Huligere. Vishnuvardhana's patronage for the Srivaishnavite Brahmanas only increased and Ramanuja was asked to shift quarters from Tondanur to the Melkote fortress, making it from then on the headquarters of the Srivaishnavite sect of Karnataka, lavished with land and labourers. By the time Ramanuja had left Karnataka for Srirangam in 1120 AD, he had already established a wide network of 124 Srivaishnavite mathas in the Gangavadi region and had thus consolidated Bhakti Vaishnavism, in Karnataka; the Vokkaliga landlords and merchants, in particular taking keen interest in its popularisation.[259]

iv) Brahmana-Jaina Conflict and Elimination of Jainism

The final years of the eleventh century and the early decades of the twelfth century were thus a witness to a simultaneous change that was taking place in the brahmanical Bhakti order. If the Kalamukha ranks, which clearly dominated Brahmana caste affiliation, was transforming to Virashaivism under the leadership of Ekanta Rama; in the Gangavadi area of the South Maidan Ramanuja led the rise of Srivaishnavism. **Originating at a common time in Karnataka history these two Brahmanical sects, despite their liturgical differences, were united in seeking the elimination of Jainism as a religion.**

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The Vedanta-Jaina conflict was however quite ancient—as old as the origin of the two religions themselves. The shudra holding period saw the unity of Jainism and Buddhism against Vedic sacrifice, its philosophy and the caste that embodied it.

In the period of feudalism the existence of a Jain religious order served to **sustain** a contradiction within the ruling classes. **Jainism came to represent a dissenting feudal interest.** As noticed in the case of the Kannada writers of the ninth-tenth centuries who were all Jains, **the religion came to gather the support of a small yet powerful group within the ruling classes that differed with the overbearing role of the Brahmanas.**

In Lakulisa, the Gujarati Brahmana preceptor of the Pashupata-Kalamukha doctrines one observes the continuation of a well nourished hatred for Jainism. This intolerance was so deep and well structured in the Brahmana mindset that in the Tamil Nayanar Sambandar's 400 surviving hymns we find that his standard practice was to set aside the tenth verse of each hymn for denouncing the Buddhists and the Jains.[260]

Madurai, Kanchipuram, Sringeri and other mathas were all converted to Shaivism during the life of Shankara only after the physical elimination of the Jainas that ran these mathas.

David Lorenzen writes: *"According to a South Indian legend, the famous Nayanar Nanasambandar once vanquished the Jains in debate and converted the Pandya king to Saivism. The king then executed 8000 Jains by impalement."*[261].

The crisis affecting the Brahmana landlords in the second phase of early feudalism leading to the attempt to raise productivity was inadequate to meet the growing requirements of this ever expanding class. **It therefore became inevitable by the terminal phase of early feudalism that they should wrest by force the lands of weaker religious sects, what with the peasantry of the newly gifted villages putting up stiff resistance at being made-off to the Brahmanas.** The sectarian jealousy that Ramanuja bore towards the Kalamukha Shaivites due to their monopoly over land and religious privilege is only revealed in his *Sri-bhashya* (ii) (2.35-37) which makes an attack of a Kapalika vow, typical of a sect trying to rival the other in order to find favour with the feudal ruling class. *"Likewise they [Kapalikas] state that even men belonging to lower castes can attain the status of Brahmana and the highest* **asrama** *by means of certain special rites. (For it is said): 'One instantly becomes a Brahmana merely by initiation. A man becomes a great ascetic by undertaking the Kapala vow'."*[262]

We have already seen how the attempt to win over a wider section of sponsors and emerge as a major sect found violent reaction from the Sahivites of Tamil Nadu leading to Ramanuja's flight. But once in Karnataka, and having obtained the support of not just the Tamil feudal bureaucrats but also that of Bittideva by 1098 AD, Ramanuja chose to eliminate the Jainas in order to consolidate his sect.

No sooner had Ramanuja set his feet at Tondanur, which *"had a large Jaina population"*, the attack, elimination and conversion must have commenced. AS BR Gopal writes: *"...one of the chief disciples of the Acarya, known as Vadugu-nambi, or Andhrapurna, embraced the faith in this place and became the most devout and intimate follower."*[263]

TA Gopinath Rao writes: *"The sthalapurana of Shravanabelagola says: 'In Saka year 1039, Durmukhi Bettavardhana [Bittideva], under the taunts of his favourite concubine and the arguments of Ramanujacarya, received* **Taptamudra** *(mark of religion) and thus became a convert to the Vaishnava religion. He then changed his name to Vishnuvardhana and with a bitter hatred against this [Jaina] religion, discontinued and abolished all the inam, destroyed 790 Basti temples, and set up Panca Narayanas, viz at Belur, Talakad, Gadugu and Haradanahhalli,*

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*transferring to them all the **swastiyas** or inams that had formerly been given to the Basti temples. He built a tank at Tondamire (Tondanur) from the stones of the destroyed Basti temples and called it Tirumalasagara. Having abolished different kinds of Jaina inams, he established below this tank Tirumalasagara chattra for the feeding of the Ramanuja Kuta. He gave the name of Melukote and Tirunarayanapuram to the village of Doddaguruganahalli, constructed several temples and places and caused steps to be erected to the hill of Melukote'."* [264]

But the easiest and most preferred of all ways was by vanquishing the foe with force. Such widespread elimination also brought the resistance of the Jainas to the fore. BR Gopal writes: *"This event resulted in the Jainas rising in revolt. Sri Ramanuja had taken his abode in the Narasimha temple at Tondanur and the Jainas went there to engage him in discussions on religion and philosophy. At the suggestion of Tirumala Nambi the saint retired into an antichamber in the temple and asking for a curtain to be hung between him and the group, argued with the Jaina disputants in a thousand ways, vanquishing them completely."* [265] **It was only by the elimination of the Jaina resistors that such large scale transfer of the property of the basadis was achieved making it possible for Ramanuja, in merely a 24 year span of his presence in Karnataka, to establish 124 mathas and settle his entourage, migrant and the new initiates, in comfort.**

The rise of Virashaivism particularly in the central and northern parts of Karnataka, led to the unleashing of the vira rasa and similar elimination of the Jainas of the region. David Lorenzen writes: *"In about AD 1160, a debate cum miracle contest between the Virasaiva leader Ekantada Ramayya and the Jains at Ablur in Dharwar district, Mysore, ended with the defeat of the latter. When the losers refused to abide by a previous agreement to set up a Siva idol in place of their Jina, Ekantada Ramayya marched on their temple, defeated its defenders and demolished all its buildings."* [266]

Thus the Virashaivas were different from the Srivaishnavaites in one respect. While the Virashaivas chose to lead the attacks directly, like the ones similar to the landlords that consecrated viragals, Ekantada Ramayya being their chief pillager; the Srivaishnavas were more discreet and refined in their zeal, the rising star of Vishnuvardhana setting the Jains on fire.

Thus, north or south, across the Maidan, Jainism, struggling to cope with the feudal mode of production and keep pace with the Brahmanas, at a time when they had become well settled landlords and seemed to be adjusting well with their laity, suddenly found themselves eliminated. **In the span of a few decades, the ferocity of the Brahmanas was unleashed on them** and among the few things that remained intact and weathered the fatal attack was the Gommata of Shravanabelagola. The stone colossus stood unmoved and gazed on without a grimace, without a wince.

v) Religion Practised by the Masses

Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism were all religions of the ruling classes. They directly represented and served the interest of the shudra holders or feudal classes that possessed state power. But just as we have seen that the span of Buddhism, Jainism and Vedanta was narrow in the shudra holding period due to the fact that the broadest section of the population remained outside class society, similarly under feudalism although the broadest sections of the population had been integrated into its class parameters, and thus the religions of Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism had a greater reach and wider appeal, **due to the specific nature of feudalism—that it was caste based and thus syncretic—the influence of these religions were only partial and not absolute. The masses constituted by the various castes retained forms of religion and**

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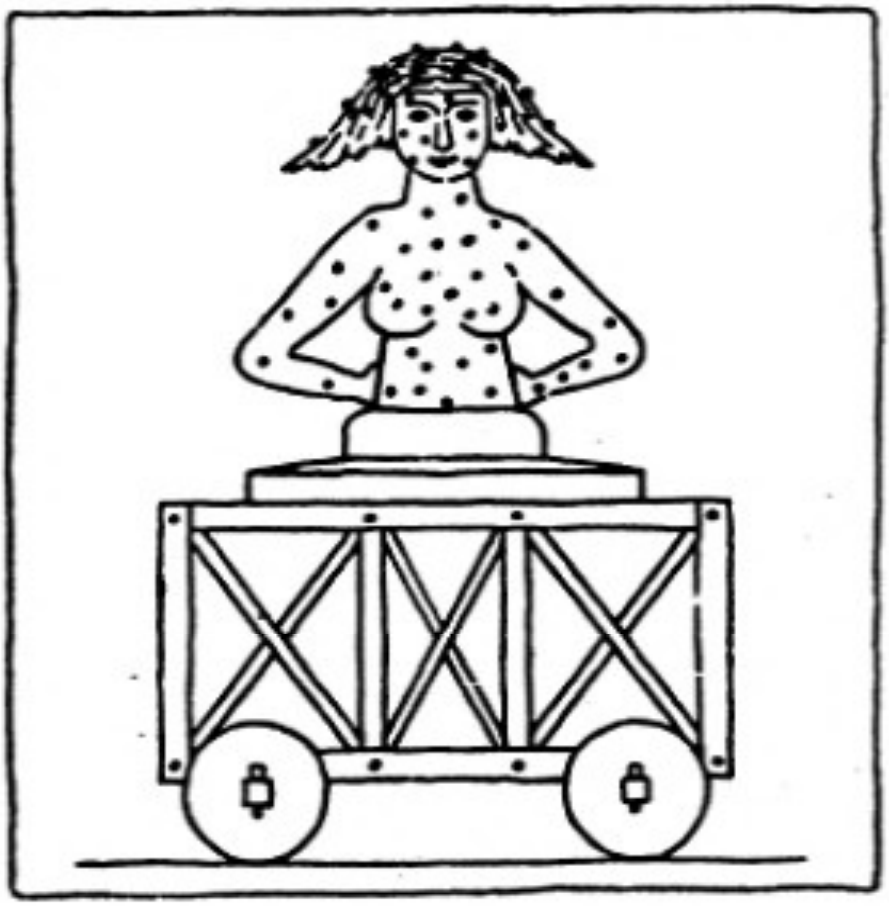
belief which were peculiar to them. In sum total, it could be said that **while the established feudal religions began to grow in influence; yet the religion of the broadest sections of the people were quite exclusive and distinct. The folk goddesses and gods, the folk forms of worship were the more popular of the two.** Let us try to look into these forms of worship and religion.

While one handicap with such an investigation is that there can be almost no historic record of it, being anathema to the Brahmana ruling classes, the only way is to study these forms as they are practised in our day by the people or the Shudra and Dalit castes, having been preserved by the continuation of feudal relations and the health of the caste system.

Henry Whitehead in his *The Village Gods of South India* brings out this world of marginalised religion into focus. He writes: "*Siva and Vishnu may be more dignified beings, but the village deity is regarded as a more present help in trouble, and is more intimately concerned with the happiness and prosperity of the villages....*

*The village deities and their worship [**ooru-devaru**] are widely different from the popular Hindu deities, Siva and Vishnu and the worship that centres in the great Hindu temples....*

Both these deities [Siva and Vishnu] and the system of religion connected with them are



74. Image of a mother goddess with nails driven into her body.

the outcome of philosophic reflection on the universe as a whole. But the village deities on the other hand, have no relation to the universe. ***They symbolize only the facts of village life.*** *They are related, not to great world forces, but to such simple facts as cholera, smallpox and cattle disease.*

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75. Kalamma, a mother goddess worshipped especially by the goldsmiths of Mysore district.

...village deities with very few exceptions, ***are female.***

...the village deities are almost universally ***worshipped with animal sacrifices.***

...the pujaris, ie, the ***priestly ministrants*** *the men who perform the* ***puja, ie, the worship, are not Brahmins,*** *but are drawn from all other castes."* [267]

These generalisations are very important in that **they define the religion of the non-Brahmana masses.**

There need be little hesitation on our part in tracing the origin of these village deities. **They are directly derived from the mother goddesses of the pre-class post neolithic period of our past.** Expressed first in rock paintings, then as terracota figurines in the shudra holding system; it was the feudal period that saw their names pass down to us. Whitehead's appendix lists 97 female goddesses. This list is only the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds more. As Whitehead admits: *"...often the deities worshipped in one village will be quite unknown in other villages five or six miles off."* And hence, he says, *"the names of village deities are a legion."* [268]

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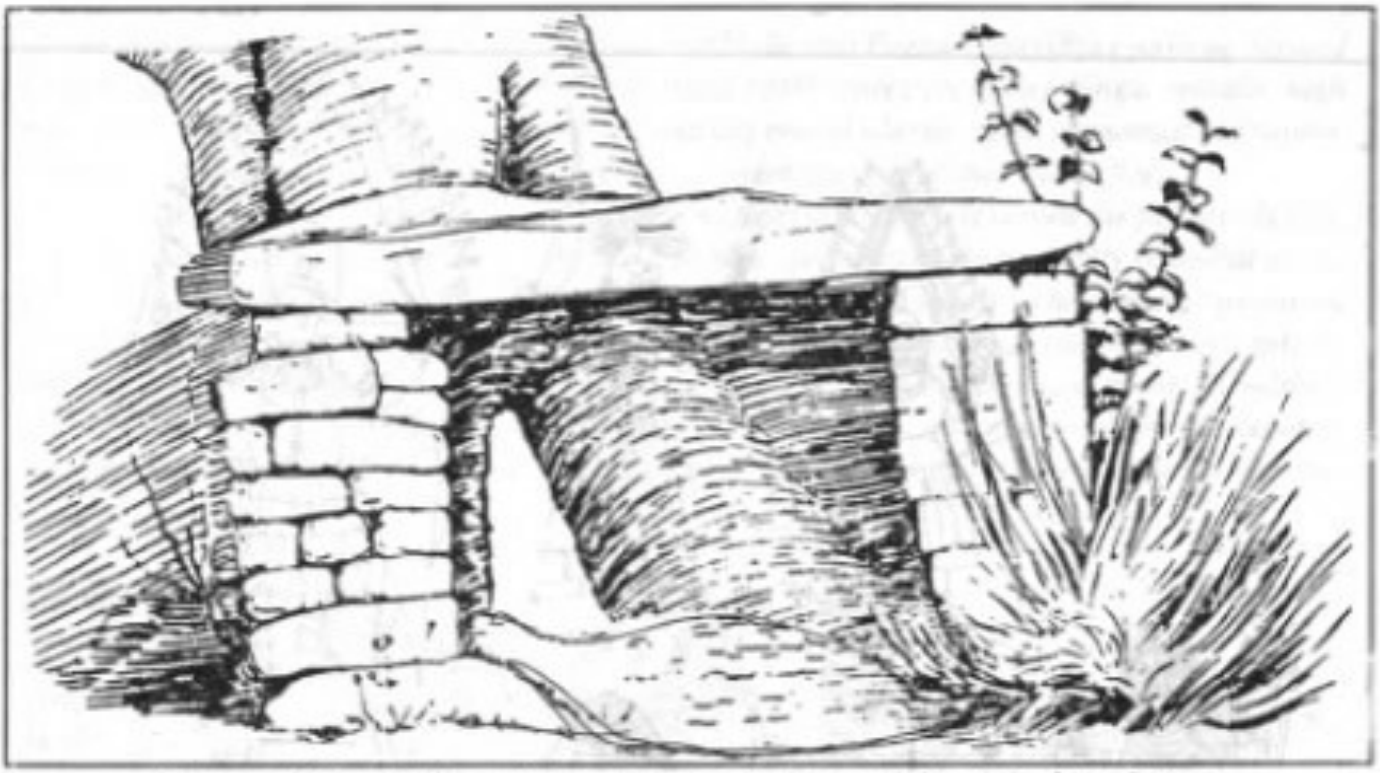

76. A modest temple for a village god--a non-Brahmana shrine at the foot of a tree.

The general practice in these religious rites is to propitiate the mother goddess spirit by making animal sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood. The religion of the masses of Tulunadu is however different from that of the Maidan. Here the mother goddess is replaced in frequency by the *Bhutas* which literally translate as *spirits*. In the district there are more than 500 Bhutas, with the Billavas generally performing as the pujaris of the Bhutasthanas.

Thurston and Rangachari say that the Bhutas are *"...malevolent spirits of deceased celebrities, who, in their lifetime, had acquired a more than usual local reputation whether for good or evil, or have met with a sudden and violent death."* [269]

The Bhuta phenomenon is ancestor worship, and an immortalisation of tribal chiefs who died in the struggle against rising feudalism. Their malevolence is a pronounced feature. *"In the larger [Bhuta] sthanas a sword is always kept near the Bhuta, to be held by the officiating priest when he stands possessed and trembling with excitement before the people assemble for worship."* [270]

Each Shudra caste, has its own Bhuta and ones such as Kumberlu of the Nalke Holeyas are not officiated at or recognised by the Touchables. The Bhutas, which possess the pujari, who gets into a trance then speaks to the people and like the mother goddesses of the Shudras of the Maidan, curses, cures, resolves and answers their problems.

RN Nandi in his *Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan* while elaborating on the mother goddess or tantric cults, writes: *"The choice of cult sites pinpoints the folk character of the tantric cults. According to the* ***Jvalini Kalpa****, the goddesses must be involved under a big tree, at the cremation ground, at the cross roads, at the centre of a village and on the outskirts of a town. Ritual altars beneath a tree, at the cremation-ground and at the cross-roads were among the sites where primitive cults were instituted and observed. The mention of these along with a village site indicates that tantric goddesses were primitive divinities supported by an aboriginal or semi-rural people. The economic basis of tantric ritualism was also consistent with the folk character of tantric cults. The tantric worship performed by a rural community involved lesser cost than the costly Vedic or Puranic rites. The tantric cults were observed by*

77. A few buthas of Tulunadu. (1) Kala-Bhairava. (2) Kallurti. (3) Todakinar. (4) Marlu-Jumadi. (5) Bobbarye. (6) Attavara-daiyongulu. (7) Panjurli. (8) Jumadi. (9) Hosa-bhuta. (10) Jumadi.

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one or two priests in favour of a congregation, but Vedic and Puranic sacrifices were performed by a large group of priests in favour of individual millionaires including kings, vassals, high ministers, rich merchants. The less well off and depressed classes, who supported the tantric system, could neither engage a host of priests nor meet the cost of these sacrifices.

The utilitarian character of the tantric practices is evident. It served the poorer classes, who could not engage a sophisticated ***brahmana*** *ritualist for performing costly remedial sacrifices, by providing cheaper remedies for physical and mental ailments. The occultist promised to cure snake-bites, insect-bites, mouse-bites as also lunacy and paralysis caused by evil spirits. He performed rites to placate malevolent planets, fertilise a sterile woman, cause friendship, destroy enemies, hyptonise hostile persons, bestow health, prosperity and peace on the devotee. In short the tantric ritualism assured the less affluent classes of all those benefits which the Vedic and Puranic rites promised the more affluent communities."* [23]

78. Buffalo sacrifice at the time of sowing by Madigas of Bellary. The head of the buffalo has its foot in its mouth and on its forehead is an earthen lamp.

Thus while the peasant masses came to the Brahmana with offerings to learn about the monsoons, about when to till and sow, and to that extent believed in the Brahmana godheads, they always went back and before the actual act of sowing or tilling, called out to their mother goddesses or Bhutas and propitiated them with their rites. Here is a vivid description that Whitehead provides us which involved the Madigas of Bellary in their worship of Uramma. *"When the preliminaries have been duly performed, the buffalo, which from the close of the last festival, has been dedicated to the goddess and reserved for sacrifice, is brought from the Outcaste quarters to the pandal in solemn procession, the Asadis, some 10 or 12 in number,*

dancing before it and singing songs in honour of the goddess. It has been kept the whole day without food or water and is garlanded with flowers and smeared with turmeric and red kumkuma. This buffalo is called ***Gauda-kona*** *or husbana buffalo.... When it arrives at the pandal, it is laid on its side upon the ground its head is cut off by one of the Madigas with the sacrificial chopper. Its neck is placed over a small pit, which has been dug to receive the blood, and the entrails are taken out and placed in the pit with the blood. The right leg is then cut off below the knee and put cross-wise in the mouth, some fat from the entrails is placed on the forehead and a small earth-enware lamp, about as large as a man's two hands, with a wick as thick as his thumb, is placed on the fat and kept there lighted, till the festival is over. Some of the blood and entrails are then mixed with some boiled rice and placed in a new basket, which a Madiga, stripped naked, places on his head and takes round the boundary of the village fields, accompanied by a washerman carrying a torch and followed by a few of the villagers. He sprinkles the rice, blood and entrails all round the boundary."* [272]

The roots of this rite in primitive agricultural magic is unimstakable, not by one but several references that have been ritualised in the propitiation of Uramma for a bountiful crop at the start of the agricultural season. But that apart **it has striking similarities with Brahamana forms of worship** which we shall refer to shortly.

Syed Siraj Ul Hassan, in writing about the Madigas of Hyderabad Karnataka as late as in 1920 comments: *"The Madigas are still animistic in their belief, and pay more reverence to the deities of diseases and ghosts and spirits of deceased persons, than the great gods of the Hindu pantheon"* [273]

For a score of reasons, for a multitude of goddesses, spirits and gods, there was worship in a variety of ways. **Feudal society, divided into an exploiting feudal and exploited peasant class in the main, carried in its superstructure what appeared to be two religious systems, one that was generated and mediated by the feudal class and another without any apparent feudal intervention generated by the masses of peasants, presented its own world of the spirit in a contrasting antithesis. Such a contradistinct cleavage in religion only defeated the *raison d'etre* of the feudal ideological effort, and could, at times of acute class struggle easily upset the hegemony of the Brahmana feudal class in power. The Brahmana ideological effort was therefore geared at capping the malevolent Shudra spirits, or else they could have spit fire and set ablaze the feudal firmament.**

vi) Shudra Assertion, Religious Syncretism and the Dravidian Contribution to a Brahmanical Religion

The Aryan gods, Indira, Varuna and Vayu to whom the Brahmanas clung, were aliens in a land of Dravidian gods and mother goddesses. Hence **the first attempt at exchanging gods took place with the fall of the shudra holding mode of production. Compelled to move closer to the rural Shudra populace with the depopulation of cities, the Brahmanas quickly adapted Shiva, a Dravidian god, and picked up esoteric Shudra sects such as Kalamukha, Kapalika or Pashupata cults. Discarding a good amount of traditional Shudra ritual which accompanied these cults, the Brahmanas modified the forms of worship and built up their Bhakti Shaivism on such foundations.**

But towards the terminal phase of early feudalism, as we have seen there was a great instability that began to characterise it. On the one hand there was intense intrafeudal conflict and on the other there was the isolation of the Brahmanas from the rest of the masses. The caste system, feigned Aryan origins, a cloistered Sanskrit, disregard for Kannada, a religion that shared

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little in common with the popular forms of folk religion and above all, a growing class disparity with the Brahmanas wallowing in luxury amidst temple dance and music were what characterised the Brahmanas. Despite the Bhakti ideology that brought a section of the masses to it, **the Brahmanas faced increasing isolation.** The anger of the oppressed masses was visible during the attacks on the Jaina institutions in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. For all the caste reassertion of the Srivaishnavite ideology, Ramanuja, while at Melkote had to concede certain ritual privileges to the Holeyas, permitting them to enter the temple up to a certain point. He also initiated Sanskritisation by calling them *Tirukulattar* which only means *Harijan*.[274] **These concessions, even though cosmetic, had become inevitable because there was a Holeya and Shudra uprising of sorts against the oppression of the feudal Jainas, who were too pleased to extend their solidarity to the Srivaishnavites when they chose to overthrow the Jains.** The anger of the masses against feudalism was also expressed in more direct ways, in attacks that were launched on the Brahmanas themselves, of which we shall see in detail a little later. Direct or indirect, **the Brahmanas were aware of a growing disenchantment and through religion, they sought to cement the social disparity and contradiction. It was this response to Shudra assertion which was already being felt with the end of Badami Chalukya rule that led the Brahmanas on a mission of hierarchically syncretic religious assimilation, the Bhakti endeavour only contributing to this reaching out. A Shiva or a Vishnu in his avataras were inadequate, the so far scorned mother goddesses had to be propitiated. This appropriation with hands folded in obeisance set in motion the Shaktist tendency within the Brahmanical tradition.**

RN Nandi writes: *"The cult of mother goddess had prevailed in the country from a much earlier time, but only in the sixth century it acquired an outstanding place in the literary traditions of the Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical sects. The goddesses were treated as* ***sakti*** *or energic female principles, and worshipped with the help of tantric fertility rites. The development is called* ***saktism****, which emerged as a determining religious factor in the 6th century and became a strong force in the 9th century. In the 8th century, the Mahayana Buddhists of Bengal wrote the* ***Hevajra Tantra****. In the first half of the 10th century, the Jainas of Mysore prepared their first ever* ***tantra*** *treatise, the* ***Jvalini Kalpa****. In the 10th and 11th centuries, brahmana authors brought out their* ***tantra*** *texts, the* ***Kalika Purana*** *and* ***Rudrayamala****. The increasing association of a developing esoteric,* ***tantric*** *(the word* ***tantra*** *is derived from the root* ***tan*** *which means to expand, proliferate. It will be seen that all the major rites were intended to deliver increasing quantities of material goods to the performers) ritualism with the mother cults explains the growth of tantrism in early medieval times. The number of goddesses multiplied and with it the tantric sects. By the close of the 10th century, the Buddhists, the Jainas, the Saivas and the Vaisnavas developed their tantric systems. Most of the goddesses belonging to these sects were recruits from semi-brahmanical and aboriginal circles. Women of tribal and untouchable communities also entered the tantric pantheon as sakti and received worship."* [275]

We have already seen how the Jainas of Karnataka had incorporated mother goddess elements in Jvalamalini, Padmavathi and Ambika by the time of the tenth-eleventh centuries. Sharada, Mahishasura Mardhini, Renuka, Yellamma, Kamalakshi, Meenakshi, Andal, Lakshmi, Parvathi, Saraswathi, etc, are all Shaivite and Vaishnavite examples. To this list we must also add Ganesha, Muruga and Ayyappa.

However, there was a method in such assimilation. **It was undertaken in a hierarchically syncretic manner.** DD Kosambi who was among the first to grasp this process explains its workings in this way: *"The brahmins had gradually penetrated whatever tribes and guild castes remained; a process that continues to this day. This meant that worship of new gods, including the*

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Krishna who had driven Indira worship out of the Punjab plains before Alexander's invasion. But the exclusive nature of tribal ritual and tribal cults was modified, the tribal deities being equated to standard brahmin gods or new brahmin scriptures written for making unassiminable gods respectable. With these new deities or fresh identifications came new ritual as well. New places of pilgrimage were also introduced to make them respectable.... The importance of the process, however should not be underestimated." [276]

Let us look at this deft achievement in the case of the Bhutas, which Thurston and Rangachari have been able to identify. *"The pujaris of all the bhutasthanas and garidis are Billavas. The bhuta temples and garidis belong to the Billavas...the Baiderkula (Koti and Chennayya) are believed to be fellow caste men of the Billavas, and Koti and Chenayya to be descended from an excommunicated Brahman girl and a Billava.... Brimmeru [a Bhuta] has been transformed, by Brahman ingenuity, into Brahma, and all the bhutas are converted into Ganas or attendants on Siva. In the pardhanas (devil songs) Brimmeru is represented as the principal bhuta, and the other bhutas are supposed to visit his sthana."* [276A]

The Bhutas being male spirits, they became attendants on Shiva. But in the case of the Maidan, the method that was adopted with the mother goddesses was to marry them off to Shiva or Vishnu. Just as Krishna came to possess 16,000 mother goddess wives, Shiva and Vishnu began to marry every assertive mother goddess. By such marriage, as we have seen in a similar case with Ranganathaswamy of BR Hills whom the Soligas call as their uncle, an integration is achieved in consciousness too.[277] The material integration into a feudal mode of production **at times preceded and at other times succeeded** the integration of Shudra goddesses and spirits into the Brahmana religious hierarchy. **Either by direct assimilation and worship or by marriage and kinship ties among the gods and goddesses the unification and assimilation into the consciousness of the feudal mode of production was achieved.** In all these ties, it must not be forgotten, Shiva and Vishnu always came out on top. They conceded only a little of their powers to the new members of the heavenly family and their relatives in the pantheon that had emerged. In this kingdom of the spirits the goddesses or gods of every caste came to be represented, while the patriarch was the Brahmana deity—a Shiva and or a Vishnu. **Thus here was a process at work creating the hierarchically syncretic structure of Brahmanical religion—imposing the worship of the Brahmana gods but in doing so not eliminating the specific Shudra divinities.**

Such assimilation and syncretisation of religion added what may be called a Dravidian component to Brahmanical religion. On the one hand Brahmanical religion had built its pantheon out of almost exclusively Dravidian divine personages. But this apart, it developed forms of worship which was taken from the Dravidian peoples.

RN Nandi is of the opinion that puja form of worship came into vogue from the eighth century onwards. However SK Chatterjee's article describes the question in detail. *"Hindu tradition is vaguely conscious of Hindu religious ideas and philosophy, practices and ritual falling under two great categories—**agama** and **nigama**. **Nigama** stands for the Vedic, ie, the pure Aryan world of ideas, centring round what has been called the Vedic **karmakanda**, the practical religion of Vedic inspiration in which the **homa** or fire-sacrifice to the gods of the Vedic world forms the most noteworthy thing. **Agama** indicates what may be described as the Tantric and Puranic domain of religion and ritual, and it includes **yoga** as a special form of mystico-religious ideology and practice. Pure **Nigama** religion is what we see in the great Vedic sacrifices which are still performed from time to time. Agamic religion and ritual is largely influenced by the Nigamic or Vedic, but it forms a world apart.*

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In ordinary Hindu usage, there is a good deal of compromise between the two. Take for example, the distinctive Hindu ritual of the ***puja****, by which we mean the worship of an image or a symbol of the divinity by treating the latter, after it has been consecrated, as a living personality, and bringing before it, as before a living being, cooked food, vestments, ornaments, and other offerings which are usable by a man, and showing grateful worship by offering to it flowers, the produce of the earth, and incense, and by waving lights in front of it and playing and singing before it. This is something which is quite different from the Vedic rite of the homa, in which a wood fire is lighted on an altar and certain offerings of food in the shape of meat and fat, butter and milk, cakes of barley, and* ***soma*** *or spirituous drink, are offered to the gods, who are not at all symbolised by an image, but are supposed to dwell in the sky and to receive these offerings through the fire.*

The characteristic offerings in the ***puja*** *rite, viz, flowers, leaves, fruits, water, etc, are not known to the* ***homa*** *rite, except in instances where it has been influenced by the* ***puja****. It has been suggested with good reason that* ***puja*** *is the pre-Aryan, in all likelihood the Dravidian, form of worship, while the* ***homa*** *is the Aryan: and throughout the entire early Vedic literature, the puja ritual with flowers etc offered to an image or symbol is unknown. The word* ***puja****, from a root* ***puj****, appears like the thing it connotes, to be of Dravidian origin also. This word or root is not found in any Aryan or Indo-European language outside India. Professor Mark Collins suggested that the Sanskrit word* ***puja*** *(from which the root* ***puj*** *was deduced later) was nothing but a Dravidian* ***pu*** *'flower' plus root* ***ge*** *'to do' (palatalized to* ***je****), which is found in Tamil as* ***chey****, in Kannada as* ***ge*** *and in Telugu as* ***che****:* ***puja*** *<* ***pu-ge****,* ***pu-che*** *was thus a 'flower ritual', a 'flower service', a* ***pushpa-karma****, just as* ***homa*** *described as* ***pasu-karma*** *or religious service entailing the slaughter of an animal. Jarl Charpentier of Sweden derived* ***puja*** *from a Dravidian root* ***pusu*** *meaning 'to smear', as the smearing of sandal paste or blood forms an important item in the* ***puja*** *ritual. But the use of blood, to be smeared over a piece of stone representing a god or spirit—the blood of a sacrificed animal being later replaced by red paint like the vermilion—would appear more to be an Austric or Proto-Australoid rite than Dravidian."*[278]

This description of the Dravidian roots of Brahmanical worship needs only to be compared to the worship of the Madigas which we cited in detail about only a few pages earlier. There can be no doubt that the Madiga practice of worship of smearing the buffalo with vermilion, the sprinkling of its blood, the offering of it with cooked rice, garlanding it, and the ecstatic singing and dancing before it are all nothing but practices which the Brahmanas took and modified. To avoid the actual animal sacrifice they symbolised the blood with vermilion paste and powder. But the Brahmanas of today may not be too willing in accepting this fact. Yet the identity and the roots are there, clear for anyone who may care to see.

Along SK Chatterjee's lines one may dig out many more forms of worship that are rooted in a preclass Dravidian culture such as the breaking of the coconut as symbolising human sacrifice or for instance tonsuring of the head also symbolising the same.

By this time of the end of the early feudal period, Brahmanical religion was moving towards greater sophistication, greater interaction and developing from local religio-cultural traditions. Shaivism and Vaishnavism from being two Brahmanical sects were attempting, by this assimilatory process, the creation of a unified all-pervasive ideology of religious control and mystification. Brahmanism, despite its caste barrier was absorbing and gradually converting itself into a more encompassing *Hindu* religion.

As a consequence, the popular religious cults, being idealist expressions at a primitive level of existence and inspiring faith in the people became mere adjuncts to Brahmanical

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religion. Once hierarchically syncretised they began to lose their independence and came to be bound by the ruling feudal ideology, just as the peasantry was bound to the feudal lord. A religious cult whether popular or Brahmanical operated from different class viewpoints but merged into a common idealistic ideology of a society that was divided by classes.

DD Kosambi wrote in this connection: *"India shows extraordinary continuity of culture. The violent breaks known to have occurred in the political and theological superstructure have not prevented long survival of observances that have no sanction in the official Brahmin works, hence can only have originated in the most primitive stages of human society, moreover, the Hindu scriptures and even more, the observances sanctified in practice by Brahminism, show adoption of non-Brahmin local rites. That is, the process of assimilation was mutual, a peculiar characteristic of India."* [279]

It was such a mutuality and this emergence of a common religion began to take shape by the terminal phase of the early feudal period. Just as caste appeared to present a divided and segmented society, each unto itself in a world exclusive to it while at the same time locked firmly into an unified and integrated hierarchy of castes; similarly, the religious practices of each caste appeared to be different and independent, each appealing to an exclusive spiritual world of one's own, yet forming a single religion of all the castes put together; the entirety, being integrated into an hierarchical structure. From caste, or in other words, syncretic feudalism, there arose in its superstructure a religion apparently segmentary but in reality—or should one say, in illusion—unitary and thus again hierarchycally syncretic. As the social crisis in the terminal phase of early feudalism became proximal and as it grew in intensity, the spiritual world woke up and reacted. The heavens became active. To bridge a growing gap in the material world the gods huddled together. As the contradictions on earth grew sharper and sharper the earth and the sky contradicted one another. **From such marriage in the firmament Hindu religion proper was born, yet another blessing early feudalism in crisis begot.**

vii) Degeneration and the Crisis of Religious Legitimacy

But the ethereal world of illusion could not eternally compensate for the real world of the material. The spirit, however possessive, could not provide matter. **In the last centuries of early feudalism, the Brahmana ruling classes suffered from a crisis of religious legitimacy. The elimination of Jainism was no solace for the masses when it was Brahmanism that pressed on them instead.** The gap between Brahmana precept and practice yawned. The arts and literature, aesthetics and sculpture grew out of feudal leisure and basked in it. Just about the time of a rebellious Kalyan this inscription describing the feudal splendour of the Kalamukha Balligave matha—ecstatic of its mahajana pontiff and royal counsellor, Vamashaktideva, reads: *"The glory of the penance of the priest of that temple, the rajaguru Vamashakti Deva—that great one possessed of all ascetic virtues...his being surrounded with disciples devoted to the astanga-yoga which be expounded to them; his lotus feet covered with clusters of bees and large sapphires set in the crowns of friendly kings bowing before him...(with) loved gifts of food, gold, virgins, cows, lands and gifts of freedom from fear, of medicine and all other benefactions...with those who, cheeks puffed out, play all manner of tunes on the flute, with singing women who give forth enchanting songs with clear modulation of the seven notes and with those who play sweet sounds on drums bound to their waist, is he the most skilled in the world in daily performing pleasant dances—Vamasakti Bharatindra."* [280]

The drenching in music and dance obviously meant the transformation of the temple into a sanctuary for pleasure-seeking and uninhibited sex. It was thus in this period that the

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treatises like Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* composed during the time of the shudra holding system, found a ready clientele in Karnataka. The agrahara Brahmanas of Karnataka were the foremost to patronise and practise these texts.

Chandrabhushana, inscriptions reveal, was a priest of the Kalamukha Trikoteshwara temple in Gadag who received royal patronage from the Hoysala king Ballala II, was well versed in Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* and a supporter of the system of Devadasis. An inscription of that time says that: *"...to the vicinity of god he brought a street of public women (vesya veedhi) which had been situated elsewhere (formerly)."* [281]

K Iswaran says that: *"In the Kalamukha scheme of gifts, food comes first, followed by land and girls...."* [282]

Speaking of ancient Egypt though, Basil Davidson wrote: *"Pharaonic art became, with one or two interludes of creative beauty, more and more vulgar and ostentatious as the centuries rolled by. This tendency towards steady artistic decline appears indeed to stand upon a general rule for all imperial systems. The exercise of power over other peoples is evidently fatal to metropolitan standards of taste, as to other standards as well."* [283] **The burden of feudal art, the glory of the temples and their architectural grandeur, the preoccupation with dance, music and sex, all these created a crisis of legitimacy. The gap between precept and practice of the divine Brahmanas was beyond what the heavens could bridge.**

- **E. Precipitation of a Crisis into which the Masses are Drawn**

The contradiction between feudalism and the rest of the masses remained fundamental throughout this period. To this was added the contradictions that raged among the feudal classes between landlord and landlord; mahamandaleshwara and mahamandaleshwara, fiefholders and emperors, kings and kings and between an armed and militant Shaivism and Vaishnavism against Jainism. **Conditions of increasing anarchy had begun to arise in the social life of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.**

Writing of the crisis ridden period of 1000 AD to 1200 AD, RS Sharma says: *"The administrative and economic consequences of these frequent wars amongst principalities, mostly similar in size to the modern administrative divisions of a state, can be better visualised if we bear in mind that each principality worth the name would maintain its army, its police system, its court, its revenue machinery, its judiciary, its feudatories, and its priests and temples. It is obvious that all this bore heavily on the peasantry, who would naturally have no interest in the preservation of such a state."* [284] There could be little doubt that, suppressed by centuries of feudalism, held back from participation in commodity production and utilising the weakening of the feudal structure and its state as a result of the all consuming feudal wars, the masses—the peasantry, the artisans and the merchants—rose in rebellion and expressed their *"disinterest in the preservation of a state"*. **The precipitation of a social and political crisis was already demonstrated by peasant outbreaks in the terminal centuries of the early feudal period.** The frequency of such insurrections could only have increased towards the close of the period, the intrafeudal struggles themselves from being carried on the strength of the anger of the masses to an isolation of feudal interests in such battles gradually became explicit assertions of peasant class interests.

RN Nandi says: *"There are recurrent passages in inscriptions relating to the confirmation and renewal of older grants. The fragmentary record of the Rastrakuta king Govinda IV, issued in AD 930, mentions that everyday the king was restoring hundreds of titles to freeholdings in favour of the brahmana donees."* [285]

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Further, citing an inscription from Hunsur of a slightly later period, RN Nandi writes: *"Records show that the original inhabitants of villages sometimes resisted attempts to transfer to the freeholders water courses, palmyra trees and other forms of communal property."* [286]

GR Kuppuswamy writes: *"The agraharas were created usually by converting the existing villages, some times individuals taking initiative in such a process. Villages were also established in this manner. Such creations either by conversion or fresh establishment were not always carried out peacefully, but were accompanied by bloodshed. An inscription of Hoysala Narasimha III dated 1230 AD refers to the wholesale plunder, molestation of women and slaughter of cattle of the village of Haluthore, perhaps for defying the orders of the king for making an agrahara.... The gavdas of the village, afraid of loosing the property to the Brahmanas chose to defy the royal orders and face the consequences."* [287]

G Kuppuram also mentions of this threat in another form, from a Brahmana inscription that belongs to this period warning the members of an agrahara that: *"If any among the shareholders mortgages or sells his share (of lands) to Sudras, he shall be put out of the Brahmin community and such shares shall not belong to this place."* [288]

RN Nandi sums up by saying: *"...during the opening centuries of the second milennium...the brahmana free-holdings were being subjected to forcible rent-collections, cattle-lifting and crop-looting, besides destruction of rural fortifications and wanton killing of brahmanas."* [289]

But were pillage and plunder not the mode of payment that feudalism had fed its armed retainers on? Could a peasantry habituated by such traditions of payment be polite when it came to targeting its oppressors who had feasted on its labours this long?

If this was the insurgent peasantry, a new dimension to the contradiction between the artisan and the landlord had emerged. As we already saw earlier, the artisan also, like the sharecropper, was a servile class. He had to supply free services and goods to the agraharas and landlords. A good deal of artisans also were sharecroppers. However, the development of a market and the increasing requirement of artisanal products left him with no time to attend to his piece of land. Further with the opening up of santhes the artisan began to sell his goods and they assumed the form of commodities. By the twelfth century there emerged a growing class of artisans who had dissociated completely from agriculture and made their living purely by the sale of commodities. Thus in economic terms the artisan was not serving the landlord anymore. But the landlords on their part imposed various conditions on the artisan, trying to subject him to the old forms of servile labour. **The market generated the desire for commodity production in the artisan. However, this freedom which commodity production ushered in, of its own volition in the artisan class, was obstructed by the landlords.**

This was then the political nature of the contradiction between the artisans and the service castes on the one hand with the orthodox Brahmana lords on the other. RN Nandi says: *"The effects of wage payments in minted money on the mobility of artisanal labour were however much more pronounced than those on constructional labour or field labour. This would perhaps explain the fact that despite increasing enslavement of agricultural artisanal labour by fief-holders, Brahmana fief holders and temple* ***devedana*** *holders, there were attempts to escape to emerging towns where wage payments in money had picked up from the close of the eleventh century....*

To a limited extent the emerging money market appears to have liberalised the conditions of bond-service or at least shattered the immobility of artisans.... Group migration of artisanal workers to nearby towns also seems to have started during the eleventh-twelfth cen-

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tury.... In some cases the temple institutions tried to prevent such migration and force the workers to render mandatory service to the temple concerned.... In a bid to prevent this movement the local authorities led by a Gauda chief (of a Channagiri village) confiscated the tools of the concerned worker and deposited these as security in a temple for whose services the artisans seem to have been detained." [290]

The contradiction between the merchants on the one hand and the agrahara landlords on the other was also ripening. **The accumulation of liquid capital in the hands of an increasingly vocal strata of the merchant class and the assertion of this new found status by their management of towns and markets threw a serious challenge to Brahmana landlords.** The landlords with whom power was vested imposed all kinds of taxes and tolls on this rising mercantile class.

From all this it is evident that **there was a seething discontent in the masses. They targeted feudalism as they were drawn into the crisis. The Vachanakara movement led by Basavanna was the result of this antifeudal groundswell, the rebellion of Kalyana being its victorious phyrrhic culmination.**

F. Basavanna and the Vachanakara Movement

I) Turning Points in Basavanna's Life[291]

Basavanna's father was the mahajana or *gramanimani* of the Bagewadi Kalamukha matha in Bijapur district. The mahajana was a hereditary post. To be the mahajana of a matha was to be like an uncrowned king—satrap of the property and wealth of the matha. In fact some mahajanas of the period were far wealthier than the kings of the time. Such mahajanas often served as *rajagurus* to the kings. The class of mahajanas thus represented the acme of feudalism during that period.

On his father's death, the post had, as was the custom, to come to Basavanna's elder brother, Devaraja. However, courtroom conspiracy, which was the established norm since the rise of class society and of which his father, Madarsa, had always been an exponent, this time made his son the victim. His son was denied the chance to become the mahajana. This led to the migration of what remained of the family. Being at an impressionable age, and knowing of the strong puritanism of Basavanna, this event is bound to have had a very serious impact on him and helped him reflect on the hypocrisy, chicanery, parasitism and the general moral degradation of the agrahara Brahmanas who always were the first to swear by the Vedas.

It was at the Kudala Sangama matha that he spent the next 12 years. Here Basavanna cultivated relations with two classes of people. On the one hand was Bijjala, the mahamandaleshwara of Mangalavede. Bijjala was to usurp power in 1162 AD and become the Kalachuri Chalukya king. Mangalavede was a rising mercantile centre with an elaborate matha complex. During his stay in Kudala Sangama Basavanna was appointed as Bijjala's treasurer, a job which associated Basavanna with the feudal state of the time.

On the other hand, Basavanna's anti-Brahmana views and empathy for the various oppressed castes developed here. Of great influence were Dasimaiah's vachanas. Among the various Vachanakaras Jedara Dasimaiah, Madivala Machaiah and Ambigara Chowdaiah who had forceful anti-Brahmana views expresed a strong influence on Basavanna. It was at Kudala Sangama which was a growing commercial centre attracting a regular stream of harassed artisans, service castes, merchants and disgruntled Brahmanas that provided Basavanna an opportunity to study their lives more closely and comprehend the widespread social resentment towards Brahmana orthodoxy. From Kudala Sangama Basavanna moved to Mangalavede, where his association with Bijjala grew extremely intimate. Then in 1162 after Bijjala took Kalyan and

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became the king of entire Chalukyan territory, Basavanna's political career, tied as it was to that of Bijjala's, also rose. He became the *bhandari* or treasurer of the entire kingdom. Basavanna's second marriage was with none other than the sister of the Jaina, Bijjala himself.

This then was the life that Basavanna led. On the one hand his background gave him links with an isolated and reactionary ruling class. His career made him one among the feudal exploiters, although he had foresaken Brahminism as a profession. On the other hand, there was the opposite side to this. His strong puritanical moorings urged him to support and share the woes of the oppressed peasantry, artisans, traders and dissenting Brahmana elements. Basavanna lived in a palace in Kalyan while at the same time he visited the hovel of the Untouchables. This was then the character of Basavanna. **He embodied the two antagonistic aspects of his age.** Perhaps he was the grossest historical self-contradiction that Karnataka has seen. Several of Basavanna's vachanas capture this sustained self-contradictory predicament of his, tossed as he was between the two clashing forces.

"Iron deadweight at my feet
Around my neck buoyant reed
The deadweight keeps me from floating
The reeds keep me from drowning
O Lord Kudalasangama, arbiter,
Across this tumultuous sea
Lead me." [292]

After the 1167 putsch of Kalyan, it is quite possible, as C Veeranna feels, that Basavanna committed suicide.[293] This could well be the logical end of a person pushed to the forefront of a battle he always abhorred.

ii) Anubhava Mantapa and Artisan Democracy

As we have already seen, the rise of commodity production under conditions of servile labour generated, in addition to a desire to participate in the production of commodities, a desire to achieve the political freedom to do so. This new consciousness was nothing but an antifeudal democratic consciousness. Kalyana was perhaps the single biggest town in Karnataka during this period. The presence of a garrison which was constantly growing in size was a factor in addition to the presence of agrahara institutions in and around this capital, which attracted the labour of the artisan and service castes. Of what little is revealed by a study of the background of the Vachanakaras, we learn that the artisans normally migrated to the rising urban centres also in order to escape from the shackles of feudalism. Since the process of urbanisation was just then picking up, most of the immigrant artisans and service castes had living memories of direct feudal bondage and servility. The Brahmanical ordering of castes which compelled them to maintain the old feudal ties of bondage, the excessive taxation by the agrahara landlords which often appeared punitive, as if condemning them once more to bondage, generated a powerful anti-caste, anti-Brahmana democratic consciousness. The Vachanakaras only articulated these class aspirations in their wonderful vachana poetry.

The main body of the Vachanakaras of which SC Nandimath identifies 213, were from the class of commodity producing artisans. The second biggest chunk constituted the service castes who evidently shared a status which brought them very close to the artisans. These two sections, together, constituted an absolute majority and dominated, numerically, in this epochal

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struggle against feudalism. Allamaprabhu, a labouring musician in the temple town of Balligave remained the foremost representative of this section. Apart from him, the other significant Vachanakaras were Ajaganna, whose memory has been totally erased by feudal interests, Ambigara Chowdaiah the boatman, Madivala Machaiah the washerman, Medara Kakkaiah the basket weaver, Ganada Kannappa an oil presser and others. Another significant section not because of its numbers but because of its background, were the Brahmana Vachanakaras such as Akkamahadevi (wife of Kaushika, a former feudal chieftain of Udatadi in Shikaripura taluk), Channabasava (Basavanna's nephew and feudal overlord of Ulavi), Siddarama (feudal lord of Sholapur), Harihara (son of the chief accountant), etc. All these Brahmanas came from feudal backgrounds. Then there was a third, yet weak representation of the merchant class.

Significant by their absence were the peasant commodity producers, whose tied existence in the villages prevented them from participating in the Anubhava Mantapa. The Dalit Vachanakaras included Madigara Chennaiah, Haralaiah, Madara Dhulaiah and Nagammaiah. Though Untouchable, it must be remembered that these Vachankaras were commodity producers. They produced leather goods or rendered service. Thus although they participated in the Vachanakara movement they represented the growing commodity producing and service rendering Untouchables. In no way should they be confused with directly representing the mass of the Dalit population who were based in the villages and were all bonded labourers. This body of Dalit masses needed several more centuries before their interests could be articulated distinctly in the literature of protest.

Thus the consciousness which the Vachanakara movement carried with it included several strains. Of these the consciousness of the rising artisan class was most pronounced.

In addition there was also the trend which sought minor reforms. This represents the class interests of the disgruntled Brahmanas. It is therefore necessary that a closer look be taken regarding the articulation of democratic consciousness from the artisan class.

RN Nandi mentions that the artisans and service castes could be *"seen functioning as large corporate bodies"*,[294] and that with the rise of the market *"the artisans have started banding together for organised commodity production"*.[295]

In describing the early transition of artisan production from its state in the natural economy, Lenin made an observation which finds validity in our case. In the period of feudalism before the rise of commodity production, Lenin says: *"It is natural...that artisan production is characterised by the same routine, fragmentation and narrowness as small patriarchal agriculture. The only element of development native to this form of industry is the migration of artisans to other areas in search of employment. Such migration was fairly widely developed, particularly in the old days, in our rural districts; usually it led to the organisation of independent artisan establishments in the areas of attraction."*[296]

During the period of rising feudalism when the artisans were attached to the village, they always led an individual life-style because one or two families of their caste could satisfy the requirements of the village. But this changed with the rise of commodity production. The urban centres attracted several such individual artisan families. As a result they not only constituted the major portion of the urban population but also utilised this to their economic advantage. C Veeranna in his book, *Hanneradane Shatamanadalli Kayakajeevigala Chalavali*, quoting inscriptions, provides us with interesting evidences. *"Exploited by the king, mathas, bureaucrats and merchants, these professionals formed their own groups. Inscriptions identify these groups as jedagotthali (weavers guild), kunchugaragotthali (brass workers guild), chippigagotthali*

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and ganavokkalu (oil pressers guild)."[297] These *gotthalis* or guilds or srenis were the institutions through which the artisan masses bargained with the traders and resisted all kinds of arbitrary and unjust tax incursions by the rulers.

The sreni therefore emerged as an institution protecting the economic interests of the artisans. It was the first organisation which the urban producers formed for themselves. In time, such guilds fraternised (as we shall see in our discussion on the emergence of the Right-Hand and Left-Hand caste fraternities in a later section of this chapter) **to form broad federations of the producing and mercantile castes.** The emergence of such caste alliances was what produced a general feeling of solidarity which breached the caste system and generated an anti-caste consciousness. Regarding the caste question there was quite a comprehensive and democratic understanding. Untouchability was questioned, Brahmanism was opposed and the division of society into castes was challenged. These democratic values were deeply ingrained, rooted as they were, in the artisan's desire for equality.

The material life of the artisans was that of simple commodity production, wherein they owned their instruments of production and also had to labour on them, combining therein the qualities of both master and worker, which was the firm economic basis—the fountain spring—of the democratic ideas of the Vachanakaras.

In contrast were the views of the Vachanakaras who hailed from a Brahmana background. Coming from the exploiting class and nourished by its class views, their reform was perforce halfhearted, inconsistent and compromising.

However, since they were all opposed to a common enemy, despite variation in the extent and nature of this opposition, they sailed together as one unified movement. The Anubhava Mantapa then, was the consolidated manifestation of all these simmering anti-feudal aspirations.

The *Anubhava Mantapa* or *forum for sharing experience* was formed in Mangalavede itself when Basavanna was there. Later, after he moved to Kalyana it was recommenced there. As the name suggests, the Anubhava Mantapa was a forum for discussion and debate. The discussions often centred around and in turn paved the way for *vachana* compositions, a form of oral poetry.

The Anubhava Mantapa gradually began to gather a host of participants and perhaps an audience also, with its number running to a few hundreds, what with 213 Vachanakaras having been identified thus far. The Anubhava Mantapa, the existence of which could not have been prolonged, naturally articulated very strong antifeudal views. As its popularity spread it became the epicentre for the diffusion of such values to the new and rising urban centres in the emerging urban clusters of northern Karnataka. **Just as the market became the symbol of and institution for the rise in commodity production generating thereby strong antifeudal economic currents, the Anubhava Mantapa emerged as its reflection in the sphere of culture carrying strong tides of thought and ideas which challenged the rule of the feudal lords.**

In a society steeped in feudal rule for several centuries on end, and for a feudal class as arrogant and oppressive as what had emerged in twelfth century Karnataka; the question as to how the Anubhava Mantapa was tolerated legitimately crops up. The feudal forces and the royal court definitely opposed the emergence of the Anubhava Mantapa and tried by every means to stop it. The sharp contradictions within the ruling classes and between the various social estates was an important factor for the sustenance of the Anubhava Mantapa.

With the increasing participation of the artisans in the proceedings of the Anubhava Mantapa, a situation which Basavanna had hardly anticipated (but had himself initiated) began to grow. The voice of artisan democracy gained vehemence, generating a struggle between the by-

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and-large consistent antifeudalism as represented by the artisans and the compromising forces represented by the minority Brahmana interests. While Allamaprabhu emerged as the ideologue of the lower castes and oppressed artisans, Basavanna became the spokesman of the property owning classes. With the change in the composition of the Anubhava Mantapa, Basavanna was replaced by Allamaprabhu as its leader. While we shall take a closer look at the philosophical basis of Allamaprabhu's views shortly, the following vachana of Allamaprabhu which stands out in striking contrast to that of Basavanna's or Channabasavanna's vachanas, carries with it a conviction and force which can be none else than the class conviction and class force of the oppressed yet defiant and historically asserting class of artisan producers.

"If the forest fire sparks, it strikes the jungle
If water breaks the embankments, it strikes the sea
If the guts burst asunder, it strikes the body
If the flames of history blaze, it strikes down the world
In the minds of the Shivasharanas if the flames of anger rise
All opponents will be struck
Guheshwara listen, if your maya lashes out
It sha'nt strike me." [298]

Class struggle within the Anubhava Mantapa, pointed as it was, against the forces of compromise, increasingly assumed the form of a criticism of Basavanna's relationship with the state and the king. C Veeranna refers to a host of such vachanas composed by the different Vachanakaras who hailed from oppressed backgrounds. This criticism was strong and sharp, and being the opinion of the majority of the Vachanakaras, Basavanna chose to resign his post as treasurer of the kingdom, and thus, despite his vaccillation placed his lot even at the moment of open and direct struggle, with the Vachanakaras and not with the feudal class or its state. Though inconsistent, Basavanna ultimately chose his placeamong the people.

iii) Putsch in Kalyana

A constant refrain which one finds in the vachanas of the oppressed Vachanakaras was an appeal and a caution to Basavanna to prepare for resisting an attack from the state. However, Basavanna refused to accept any of these entreaties. His dogged persistence disarmed the Vachanakaras. It stole their initiative. .It prevented the cultural movement from taking a leap and transforming itself into a political struggle, perhaps also mobilising the peasantry while doing so. As this debate progressed matters came to a head in Kalyana. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the artisans, Haralaiah a Dalit chose to marry a Brahmana woman. Basavanna and the Anubhava Mantapa supported the marriage. Not only that, he was reported to have been making occasional visits among others, to the houses of Dalits. Thus the first legitimate marriage defying caste and questioning the feudal order took place at Kalyana. This open assertion was earthshaking. Bijjala's religious advisers such as Narayana Bhatta, Narayana Kramitha and Peddi Krishna warned him that the situation was getting out of control. *"Basavanna's conduct is growing more and more anti-religious. He is gathering around him people of all the low castes and proclaiming them as Shiva followers. Even the Untouchables are Shiva followers for him. God alone can save us now! We have reports that Basavanna dined in the house of Untouchable Nagideva. He is now attending the court. The situation is getting out of hand. We find ourselves without any place in Kalyana."* [299]

In a punitive act of suppression of the new marital tie which broke all parameters of caste, Haralaiah and his father-in-law Madhuvarasa were seized, their eyes gouged out and then slain.[300]

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This act by the ruling classes had sufficiently provoked the Vachanakaras to rise up in rebellion. But Basavanna's refusal to counteract served as the first defeat. The crisis had by then snowballed and assumed all proportions of an urban insurrection. Close on the heels of the killing of Haralaiah and Madhuvarasa, an act which served as a prelude of what was to come, the Kalachuri army was mobilised in a campaign of slaughter and pillage of the Vachanakaras and the artisan masses. The very next day after the attack Bijjala was killed by the Vachanakaras making deft use of the rife contradictions among the ruling classes and those within the royal house.

Someshwara, one of the sons of Bijjala who donned the feudal mantle, used the opportunity to stage a palace coup which had been on his mind for long. This crisis within the ruling dynasty served as a breather. In a situation where their putsch had been preempted and the peasantry surrounding Kalyan although resentful of the agraharas but unorganised and therefore failing to serve as a pillar of support, the Vachanakaras had no go but to organise their dispersal from Kalyan. Collecting whatever armed forces they could, they formed four detachments with Allamaprabhu headed for Sholapur, Akkamahadevi to Srisaila, Basavanna to Mangalavede and Channabasavanna to Ulavi. Literally moving in four directions, they sought to break up the enemy forces and thus achieve their flight. Tracing the escape of Channabasavanna and his forces KR Basavaraju says that they had to give battle to Someshwara's forces at six places. At Muriya Madivala Machaiah, in charge of Channabasavanna's forces even captured Bijjala's son-in-law who was commanding the Kalachuri army.[301] Meanwhile on reaching Kudala Sangama on his way to Mangalavede, Basavanna who was torn between the two clashing forces, (in all probability) committed suicide. Very little is known of what happened to Allamaprabhu.

G. Distinct Features of the Vachanakara Movement

i) Artisan Leadership

The backbone of the Vachanakara movement was, as we have already seen, its artisan and service caste leadership. Not very late after the Vachanakara movement and not very far from Kalyana was Pandharpur in Maharashtra which was to set in motion an antifeudal reform movement not dissimilar in many respects to that of the Vachanakara movement.[302] In fact the twelfth century served as a turning point across the Indian subcontinent which gave birth to a host of Bhakti movements. The selfsame process of commodity production gathered momentum during this period in the various major nationalities of India. Bhakti was forced to carry with it a message of feudal reform. However, none of these reform movements which occurred in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the various parts of India articulated the message of antifeudalism in as distinct terms as the Vachanakaras did. The contradiction between the ruling classes, marking as it did, the final years of the early feudal phase, was extremely sharp. It was such war torn conditions and feudal instability which accounted for the longevity of the Vachanakara movement; thus bringing to the fore a sharp attack against feudalism, without parallel in those centuries elsewhere in India.

ii) Philosophical Basis of Antifeudalism

The Kalamukhas continued from where the Nayanars concluded. Shankaracharya's Advaita which crowned the Nayanar effort has few parallels in the history of world philosophy. It developed the philosophical view of Subjective Idealism by providing it with an apparently coherent system of logic and thought. **The theory of maya was the pinnacle of the Subjective Idealistic philosophy that Shankara worked out.** The Kalamukha sect carried and propagated this world view of Shankaracharaya which was indeed **the most versatile weapon any philosopher gave to the feudal classes of Karnataka. Virashaivism of the pre-Basavanna phase upheld**

Subjective Idealism. The standpoint of the Vachanakaras dealt a blow to Subjective Idealism. It was replaced by Objective Idealism as can be seen from the vachanas of Basavanna. Objective Idealism remained the philosophy of the feudal classes after the rise of commodity production in Karnataka. Class struggle within the Anubhava Mantapa which although not intense, pointed distinctly towards materialism. The basis for this philosophical struggle only stemmed from the varied and contradictory class origins of these lines of thought.

The peasantry unlike Protestant Germany remained conspicuous by its absence as an active participant in the movement, making the Vachanakaru movement basically an urban phenomenon. Allamaprabhu carried with him a viewpoint similar to that of the plebian Munzer. In the struggle that unfolded within the Anubhava Mantapa Allamaprabhu, as we have already seen, represented the oppressed artisans and service castes. Along with Allamaprabhu was Ajaganna, another important Vachanakara who might be expected to have carried a viewpoint quite close to materialism with a strength which perhaps even outdid Allama's.

Ramakrishna, Gayathri and Chattopadhyaya provide us with interesting evidence in this regard. They say: *"A Veerashaiva saint of the twelfth century, Ajaganna was among the prominent composers of vacanas.... Given to the understanding that he should not exhibit his religious marks and practices openly, he lived a life devoid of any observance of religious worship and devoted himself entirely to inner meditation. This led to the scandal that he was almost a heretic and he was accordingly harassed in many ways by his coreligionists and relatives. This however did not deter him from continuing in his chosen path."*

The authors then give us important evidence of the proximity in the viewpoint of Ajaganna with that of Allama's.

"Chennabasavanna...has paid tributes to Ajaganna for the concise yet powerful vacanas of his by comparing them with the compositions of Allamaprabhu." [303]

However the influence of feudalism within the Vachanakara movement and its might outside, just as in the case with Sankhya philosophy, was so keen in opposing Ajaganna's viewpoint that we are today left with no records whatsoever of the vachanas of Ajaganna. His memory has been so erased that even scholars who have specialised in Vachana literature have little to tell us about this Vachanakara.

The artisan bedrock provided Allamaprabhu's vachanas with unparalleled vehemence. Not just that, the same class roots, what with its bitter antagonism with feudalism, often helped Allamaprabhu to steer away from the influence of Objective Idealism and veered towards materialism. **It was Materialism with the occasional brilliant spark of dialectics too.** The following vachanas of Allama bring out his materialist world view.

"If I am not God, then is it you?
If you are God then why nurture me?
With care I offer a cup of water
When hungry I offer a morsel of rice
I am God, hey Guheshwara.

It's true that I am
It's true that you are
The earth is true
What exists above is true
It is true that all this is true
Guheshwara alone is false.

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It doesn't exist on earth
Neither does it in the sky
It doesn't exist in the four directions of the universe
Speak, how and what to comprehend of this!
Enough of those words of a bygone yuga
Guheshwara didn't exist then, nor does he now.

The past is the son of infinite time
Infinite space is the son of the past
The day is the son of infinite space
Air is the son of the sky
Fire is the son of air
The sun is the son of fire
The earth is the son of the sun
And Guheshwara,
From the earth all living beings sprang.

The God of fire
The God of embers
Goddess Mari
Goddess Masani
Like the mynah
Which now and then twitters
I worshipped you
And lost all my children
In the open field I fell and was wasted, Guheshwara.

Goddess Ganga became a widow
Goddess Gowri foresaked her earrings
Both the sun and the moon have sunk in the seas
God Vayu has climbed the bier
Lord Vasudeva was the first to light the pyre
The news since then is that Guheshwara has died." [304]

iii) Content of Antifeudalism

RN Nandi says *"In Karnataka the artisans' quest for occupational security and status-relief assumed the form of a powerful religious upsurge known as the Virasaiva movement, the chief supporters of which were traders, artisans and peasants led by few disaffected smartha brahmanas of Karnataka. The sect which originated in the northwest region of Karnataka about the twelfth century was the product of a social situation in which the revival of commodity production had considerably added to the importance of trading and artisan castes but whose profits and interests were constantly subjected to infringements by brahmanas and temples. Understandably, therefore there is no place in the virasaiva sect of traditional brahmana priesthood or temple-centric cults of brahmanical deities. The anti-brahmanical character of the sect is also evident from its opposition to the conventional ordering of the social structure on the basis of caste endogamy."* [305]

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The strong opposition to caste barriers created by Brahmanism is expressed in the following vachana of Basavanna:

"Vyasa is a fisherman's son,
Markandeya of an outcaste born,
Mandodari the daughter of a frog;
O look not for caste; in caste,
What were you in the past?
Indeed, Agastya was fowler,
Durvasya, maker of shoes,
Kashyapa, a blacksmith,
The sage, Kaundinya by name
Was, as the three worlds know,
A barber—mark ye all, the words
Of our Kudalasangama;
What matters if one is lowly born ?
Only a Shivabhakta is well born."[306]

Basavanna strongly opposed the karma theory.[307] He vehemently protested against the rituals prescribed in the Vedas. The worship of the Ishtalinga was a strong blow to the supremacy of the Brahmana. The Sharana tradition rejected categorically the concepts of heaven and hell. Allama's vachanas attacking Brahmanism reveals the strong anti-feudal content of the Vachanakaras.

"The Vedas are mere stuff in books
The shastras, grapevine in a santhe,
The puranas, an assembly for the rowdies
Logic, the fight between two rams
Devotion is for a handful of profit
Guheshwara is above all this."[308]

iv) A Robust Kannada Literature

Although Kannada diction and poetry were at least three centuries old by the time the Vachanakara movement began, yet it gave Kannada literature a new and forceful push launching it into the era of the anti-feudal democratic literary tradition. **Both in content and form vachana literature is a striking contrast to the feudal lore that preceded it.** As we have already seen its content had a clear cut class target. It had a well articulated class content. The *vachana* form, a name by which the movement itself is recognised, is highly flexible and comes easily even to pre-literate people. The remarkable feature of vachana literature is that **never in the history of Kannada literature have an oppressed people themselves created such a corpus of literary material. It was literature flowing directly from the toiler.** In this regard the vachana tradition is surely a red gemstone in Kannada literary history. It stands out as a shining example and a hotspring of inspiration for the revolutionary literary movement. The Vachanakaras were toilers doing their *kayaka*, they were fighters who shot the first salvoes at the enemies' hearts, and, they were oral poets, creative artists, above all.

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v) Women Vachanakaras

One estimate puts in place the number of women Vachanakaras as 54 out of a total of 213. In the article *Women in Veerasaiva Movement*, MM Kyadiggeri lists the names of 28 women Vachanakaras.[309] This ratio of women's participation is indeed quite high. The Brahmana women Vachanakaras such as Akkamahadevi, Akka Nagamma, Gangambike, Bontadevi, etc., were all form a feudal background. They were all literate. The other women Vachanakaras such as Ayadakki Lakkamma, Ramavve, Rathiramavve, Sathyakka, etc., were women who were involved in social production. While Lakkamma collected the rice grain sweepings after it was measured, Rathi Ramavve was a spinner, Sathyakka was a sweeper, Tonginamahadevi sounded the alarm bell in the morning. Thus while women like Akkamahadevi represent a fiercely independent nature most of the women Vachanakaras were those who participated not only because their husbands were involved in the movement (this was the case with most of the Brahmana women), most of them involved in social production and were victims of the feudal economic system just as much were the male Vachanakaras coming from artisan and service castes. This social composition of women Vachanakaras is a remarkable feature of the movement. **This social assertion must have played a significant role in bringing about a reform concerning women's issues.** For instance, the Sharanas rejected the Brahmana tradition of considering women having their menstrual periods as impure. They opposed the Brahmana custom of tonsuring widows and equally important was the fact that women were allowed to carry the Ishtalinga like their male counterparts.

H. Impact of Vachanakara Movement

i) Changes in Relations of Production

The Vachanakara movement had a significant impact on the peasantry, artisans and traders as much as it had on the agrahara Brahmanas and the feudal ruling classes. This led to important changes in the relations of production. While it is difficult to pinpoint these changes with precision, the paucity of material however needn't keep us from coming to certain generalisations regarding the direction of the trend.

Firstly, **a section of the artisans had won the freedom to participate in the market.** This freedom was however not absolute but relative and became operative within the confines of the feudal mode of production. Although artisans were taxed, just as all the sellers of commodities were, and though the taxes continued to remain heavy, **the mathas and landlords lost the privilege of keeping them in a servility.**

Secondly, **the tenants producing for the mathas were no more bonded.** The Kalamukha mathas converted to Virashaivism in the whole of the north and central parts of Karnataka. It was a massive movement of conversion the likes of which Karnataka had never seen. As a result tenants in the Virashaiva mathas who were formerly bonded now achieved the freedom of dissolving their agreement with the matha at any time they chose, subject to the fact that all their dues had been paid. **A class of free tenants came into existence as distinct from that of the bonded tenant.** The two however continued to coexist.

Thirdly, the most important reform concerning the peasantry however was with regard to the forcible alienation of their land, and their transformation into a servile force, compelled to toil under the oppressive feudal freeholder or agrahara. **All such forcible expropriation greatly decreased** as can be seen from the data of Leela Santakumari who records a fall in the formation of agraharas from 51 in the twelfth century to 20 in the thirteenth century. Further her data is extremely revealing, in that, almost all the agraharas formed in the thirteenth century were in

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south Karnataka in the districts of Hassan, Mandya and Mysore where the Virashaivite influence was marginal.[310]

The signal importance of the Virashaivite movement then was that it recognised the right of the peasantry to keep its land and thereby it signified a pause to the process of creating feudal intermediaries. A process which had had an 800 year history had begun to decline and this served as a check on rising feudalism, inaugurating a new stage in its existence. The blow that the Vachanakaras had delivered had punctuated a turning point. Rent-free holdings had decreased. The grants that were made now centred on a return for some material service.

About this, RN Nandi says: *"An important consequence of the expansion of private farming during the early middle ages was the growth of private property in land. In the context of the supposed absence of private property in land it may be pertinent to examine epigraphic data on the alienation of land through gifts and sale and also identify the parties involved in such transactions. One would notice the evidence of the sale of land in more positive during the eleventh-thirteenth centuries. Though this need not suggest the absence of such transactions in the earlier period, it certainly indicates a fair demand of cultivable land about this time. One would also observe that although communal holdings were freely transferred to brahmana free holders, military and other officers and temple devadana holders, individual holdings could not possibly be taken away with as much impunity or without a price being paid."*[311]

GR Kuppuswamy provides some interesting information regarding this. Conceding the existence of private property in land Kuppuswamy however devotes attention to the common forms of ownership. To quote him: *"Of the two forms of tenure (private and common) in Karnataka, it was the common ownership or tenure which constituted a unique form of ownership and in which three types can be distinguished namely (i) complete ownership in common, (ii) part-rotation and part-common ownership, and (iii) part severalty and part common ownership. It was in the first category that the degree of control by the community was complete. The individual was entitled to a share in the yield only, while in the second the community retained the right of the periodical redistribution. Common ownership in the last category extended to the pasture land only, the rest being held individually according to some agreement once made, for ever. The rights implied in common ownership extended to alienation, pre-emption and denial of admission to strangers."*[312]

GR Kuppuswamy provides evidence from the inscriptions on the privatisation of common lands among the Brahmanas wherein *"...there was a splitting up of all lands along a family basis and their separate and individual maintenance."*[313]

This marked tendency towards the privatisation and parcellisation of holdings which had risen in the eleventh-twelfth centuries among the feudal sections obviously continued and in places where agraharas remained, all collective control was transformed. This broke up the inner solidarity of the Brahmana community and initiated a process whereby Brahmana paupers could also emerge in Karnataka's history. Thus the significance of post-Vachanakara developments lay in creating a polarisation within caste and the former phenomenon wherein to belong to a caste also immediately implied belonging to a class—as we witnessed in the case of all the Brahmana Vachanakaras who inevitably came form a feudal background—was geting transformed by a process of class formation and polarisation within castes. All these changes, it must not be forgotten, were taking place within the ambit of the feudal mode of production and in a state of shared coexistence with the feudal economic and superstructural relations.

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ii) Changes in Instruments of Production and Boost to Commodity Production

The Vachanakara movement served as a kick-starter to the spread of commodity production. Coming as it did at the very beginning of this process under feudalism, and quickly faced with landlord obstruction to its development, it delivered that powerful blow at feudalism which energised the pace of this entire process. As we saw in the previous section, **it brought about important changes in production relations**—each one of which, it would be necessary to remember, served as reforms—so that **the social system as a whole, the producers and the traders, could increase their activity** of commodity production and its distribution.

While this was the seminal impact of all these reforms, it had a complementary effect on the techniques of production. **New instruments of production developed, instruments which had far greater productive capacity.** While a shortage of data prevents any detailed exposition of this aspect of the economy, the few examples available are all clear and telling pointers. The needle of history set by the Vachanakaras incontrovertibly pointed towards technical innovation and a development of the forces of production.

The concept of *kayakave kailasa* or *toil is heavenly bliss* which remained a central slogan of the Vachanakara movement had two aspects to it. It was a rendering of the concept of Bhakti which urged producers to bow their heads in toil. On the other hand, this slogan also had its energising effect in that it heightened their desire to produce commodities. **It increased their labour enthusiasm** and thereby served as a direct contributory factor in raising the quantum of commodities produced. Implicit in this slogan was the idea that those that did not toil were to forego their heavenly tryst.

On the new techniques that emerged in the sphere of agriculture RN Nandi writes: "*To the initiative shown by the brahmana free holders and the feudal patrons, we may add the instances of the lords and their vassals undertaking excavation of tanks of reclaiming forest land and establishing new villages. Such examples do not however surface before the close of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth.*

In the sphere of irrigation the most significant development was the large-scale introduction of animal powered ***araghatta*** *for deep well irrigation in northern and western India and of the sluice weir device in tank irrigation in the peninsular region roughly from the seventh-eighth centuries. Other devices which helped agricultural production during the period include substitution of the practices of rain-feeding of tanks by canal feeding from nearby rivers and the multiplication of the rainfed irrigation tanks for bringing fresh land under cultivation in virgin tracts, forests and waste patches and to convert dry-land in villages into rice-producing wet fields....*

The importance of sluice tanks in raising agricultural output can be evidenced from the description of tanks with four channels and multiple sluices.

Another hydraulic improvement relates to the construction of channels for feeding tanks from nearby rivers.... In Karnataka the earliest mention of a tank fed by river water is found in a Nanjangud taluk inscription of 904 which praises the enterprise of a brahmana freeholder of the Sthanagundur agrahara in excavating a massive tank which drew water from three rivulets emerging from a nearby forest. It needs no emphasis to state that the device reduced the dependence of the peasant folk on annual rainfall for filling their tanks." [314]

Temple construction however developed the science of masonry and stone work. It demanded a lot of scientific input and helped in developing the spheres of applied mathematics, geometry, civil engineering and physics. A part of this knowledge evidently drained into the tanks

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and must have combined will to contribute to the science of hydraulics, a precondition for their construction.

In the sphere of artisan production, RN Nandi explains: *"...some evidence is forthcoming to show that in certain fields there had been a welcome change in the method of production for instance in oil-pressing industry. The earlier technique, seems to have been to use manually operated mills which the inscriptions call hand-oil mills, for extracting oil from oil seeds. But the records of the eleventh-twelfth centuries make pointed reference to the use of bullock oil mills for oil-pressing. This certainly is the signal for the large-scale use of rotary motion in selected sectors of agro-industrial activity. While the hand oil-mill did not pass out of fashion as can be seen from joint references to bullock oil-mills and hand oil-mills, the frequency of oil mills worked by single bullock and double bullocks cannot highlight the widespread application of animal power to rotary motion. The appearance of double-bullock mills would suggest the appearance of heavier presses as indeed can be seen from the mention of stone oil-mills in the inscriptions of the eleventh-twelfth centuries. The heavy stone press which replaced hand operated wooden presses must have been developed for increasing the turnout of oil from single mills. The rise of oil miller sub-castes specialising in the operation of single-bullock mills, double-bullock mills and stone mills is further indication of the expansion of the craft and the professional expertise which characterised such expansion. Another craft which underwent considerable expansion and specialisation about this time was weaving. The earliest instance of the promotion of loom-working is furnished by a Challakere taluk inscription of the eleventh century which refers to the grant of a site for establishing a loom. In later times we come across a large variety of textiles and the weaver subcastes which specialised in their production."*[315]

Meera Abraham writes: *"Inscriptional references exist proving the use of the vertical loom in the twelfth century in Karnataka.... And most important, the draw loom possibly was in use in South India as early as the eleventh century. Certainly by the thirteenth century as inscriptional evidence suggests, the draw loom was well known."*[316]

The Aihole 500 guild which was run by Kalamukha Brahmanas was taken over by the Virashaiva merchant classes. This changing of hands provided a great impetus to the consolidation and closing of mercantile ranks which in turn provided the Virashaivas with **a new found monopoly and served as a motor for the development of commodity production in Karnataka.** Meera Abraham's account of the Mummuridanda describes them as a Jaina advance guard of the Aihole 500 guild who were given a part of the spinoffs by the Brahmana owners of Aihole 500. At a later stage, the Mummuridanda who have been found extensively in Belgaum, Dharwad, Bijapur and Gulbarga districts, took to independent trading and also dealt in diverse goods. Meanwhile, with the spread of Virashaivism, several of these Mummuridanda traders changed their sect, leading to a simultaneous rise in the assertion of Virabanajus who were Virshaiva traders with a strong Jaina composition who were later known as Banajiga and Linga Banajiga.

RN Nandi says: *"It is possible that the revival of trade in the region intensified commercial competition which in turn increased tension between the brahmanical and Jain traders, leading ultimately to the formation of a new sect..."*[317]

The Vachanakara movement enjoyed the support of the Virabanajus. With the spread of Virashaivism following the Kalyana outbreak, the Aihole 500 was dissolved in areas under Virashaivite influence, and passed into he hands of the Virabanajus who emerged as the strongest merchant community in all of Karnataka. The Aihole 500 however continued its fragmented existence. It pursued mercantile activities in the Kaveri-Kabini basin of south

Karnataka which remained under Hoysala rule with thirteenth century inscriptions referring to Hale Aluru near Talakad as the Southern Ayyavole, confirming that the real Aihole of the north was all but lost.[318]

Along with the rise in commodity production is the emergence of a new phenomenon not encountered in earlier history. The increasing reference to the Right Hand and Left Hand castes has remained a puzzle for most historians, who mention it but fail to make much meaning out of such a division. **In Europe this division was always disguised with the guilds playing this role.**

The the rise in commodity production was, as a whole, pointed against feudalism. There was however a contradiction between the producers of commodities and their distributors. In other words, **it was the contradiction between the artisans on the one hand and the trading class on the other.** Since the basis of the mercantile surplus as Marx said, lay in the difference obtained at the point of purchase and at the point of sale; the merchant class therefore always tries to suppress the price at the point of its purchase and inflate it at the point of sale. The nature of its material life lent an organisation almost instantaneously to the merchant. It is worthwhile to quote Huberman on this: *"They [the merchants] had learned the lesson that in union there is strength. When they travelled on the roads they joined together to protect themselves against brigands; when they travelled on the sea they joined together to protect themselves against pirates; when they traded at markets and fairs they joined together to make a better bargain with their increased resources. Now, faced with feudal restrictions that cramped their style they again joined together into associations called `guilds' or `hanses' to win for their towns the freedom necessary to their continued expansion."* [319]

The Right Hand then was a guild. It included the various trading castes and those service castes associated with trading. The Right Hand was therefore a supra-caste fraternity created out of the compulsions of rising commodity production. While it was principally formed to protect itself from feudal infringement, it was also used as a double-edged sword so that the maximum could be drained out from the artisan at the same time. The guild had strict norms for membership and a well established hierarchy. Of this we shall take a second look in a later chapter by which time the development of commodity production would give us ample material to explain the phenomenon at length. For the moment it would suffice to quote Huberman once again: *"The merchant guilds were so eager to obtain monopolistic privileges, and were so watchful of their rights they kept their own members in line by a whole series of regulations that each one had to obey. If you were a member of the guild you have certain advantages, but you could remain a member by carefully abiding by the rules of the association. These rules were many and strict: For breaking them you could be kicked out of the guild entirely or punished in other ways."* [320]

The Right Hand association did have certain specific norms for membership. However, more of this later.

The rising artisan producers who congregated in the new and developing urban centres had to battle with feudalism. In this they joined hands with the merchants who were by far the best organised and closely knit class. **But since the merchants began to wield their organisation also against the artisans, in a reflex action the artisans who constituted the other half of what was left of the market formed their own guild which went by the name of Left Hand. The Left Hand and Right Hand castes were in other words the world of the rising economy of commodity production, divided along the lines of production and distribution. While they normally united to fight against feudalism which was their common enemy, these guilds also fought one another.** The merchant was obviously on the historic offensive. The leading mer-

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chant castes normally headed the Right Hand caste association or in other words the Right Hand guild, while the most prosperous and thus leading artisan caste led the Left Hand guild. Hence the Virabanajigas led the Right Hand fraternity, the Akkasaligas or gold smiths invariably led the other. Since 18 Right Hand castes came together during the inception of the guild, the number 18 frequently repeated itself.

I. Crack in the Edifice

The period of middle feudalism covered an entire historical epoch running into several centuries. The rise of commodity production and with it, the creation of a monetised economy remained the feature characterising this period. This long process unraveled itself by many historic advances for the new classes representing the rise of commodity production. **It is only when one places the Vachanakara movement in this broad context that its real significance in inaugurating this period of transition can be grasped. This then is the political significance of the Vachanakara movement. It came to be the first crack in the edifice of feudalism.**

Soon after the preemption of the artisan uprising in Kalyana, **Virashaivism replaced Kalamukha Shaivism and became the ideological vehicle for feudal domination.** K Iswaran recounts this compromise: *"There are many cases of Lingayat Gurus going in search of royal patronage and gifts during the second half of the thirteenth century, certainly a deviation in the Linga as behove Linga devotees, they also worshipped the stationary Linga and indulged in temple building.... The fact that the jangamas of this period established mathas and acquired property through gifts is evidence that at least some of them had gone back to the behavioural norms of the pre-Basava Kalamukha traditions."* [321]

George Thompson makes a valid generalisation in his discussion about religion. He says: *"There are two trends in the history of religion, the official and the popular. The official cults, controlled by the state, provide a justification for class exploitation; the popular cults which spring up simultaneously among the masses provide a consolation for it and a protest against it. As the class struggle develops, the two trends interact. When a new class seizes power, the cult associated with it becomes official and loses its popular character. Both trends are essentially idealistic, but, whereas the official religion is metaphysical, the popular cults preserve in mystical form a naive sense of dialectics."* [322]

Despite the rapid transformation of the Vachanakara movement and its virashaivism into a religion that was wielded by the feudal ruling classes, the significance of the Vachanakara movement as the first concerted attack on feudalism cannot be lost.

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12. UNDERSTANDING THE FEUDAL MODE OF PRODUCTION AND THE PLACE OF EARLY FEUDALISM IN IT

A. What is a Feudal Mode of Production?

This is the question we began this chapter with and we return to this first question so as to conclude with it and locate a few generalisations in doing so.

This is how RS Sharma *"summed up certain broad features of feudalism...from the Gupta, and especially from the post-Gupta period onwards. These may be enumerated as the granting of both virgin and cultivated land, the transfer of peasants, the extension of forced labour, the restriction on the movements of the peasants, artisans and merchants, the paucity of coins, the retrogression of trade, the abandonment of fiscal and criminal administration to the religious beneficiaries, the beginnings of remuneration in revenues to officials, and the growth of the obligations of the samantas. The new society was marked by the appearance of a substantial class of landlords and a numerous class of servile peasantry."* [322]

VK Thakur in his polemical *Historiography of Indian Feudalism* proceeds from the question of eliciting common features and puts the question in a general theoretical framework when he says, quoting DN Jha: *"'...the school of Marxist historians has equated feudal phenomenon with a mode of production based on 'feudal rent' which subsumes the existence of a class of landlords (landed intermediaries), a basic class of producers (peasants) with a special connection with the land which, however, remains the property of the former, and of the overwhelmingly self-sufficient agrarian economy with little scope for the functioning of market system'. The study of feudalism within this frame of reference focuses attention not only on serfdom, various other forms of constraints on peasant freedom and the emergence of closed economic units but also provides a conceptual framework for a proper comprehension of the dynamics of change in the early-medieval Indian society."* [323]

DN Jha writes elsewhere: *"The economic essence of Indian feudalism, like that of European, it has been argued, lay in the rise of landed intermediaries leading to enserfment of peasantry through restrictions on peasant mobility and freedom, increasing obligation to perform forced labour (vishti), mounting tax burdens and the evils of subinfeudation. The crucial element in this chain of arguments is the premise that there took place around the middle of the first millennium AD a decline in urban commodity production and foreign trade resulting in the growth of a self-sufficient economy in which metallic currency became relatively scarce and hence payments (whether to priests or to the government officials) had to be made through assignments of land or state revenues therefrom....*

The concept of a self-sufficient economy cannot and should not be visualised in absolute terms. It is a relative concept and so is the rise of money economy and trade." [324]

Describing the specific component properties of the feudal mode of production in comparison with the capitalist mode of production, Bipul Kumar Bhadra identifies five main features characterising it:

*"1 **Unfree labour** rendered not necessarily in the form of labor services but taking a variety of possible forms. That would be contrasted with free labour in CMP [Capitalist Mode of Production], in a double sense (a) in that it has been separated (or 'freed') from possession of means of production (land) and (b) that it is free from feudal obligations to serve a lord; the direct producer is now free to sell his labour power—or starve.*

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*II **Extra-economic coercion in the extraction of the surplus** from the direct producer as against economic coercion as the basis of exploitation in CMP.*

*III **A fusion of economic and political power at the point of production and a localized structure of power**, as against separation of economic (class) power and political (state) power within the framework of a bourgeois state in CMP. The power of the exploiting class, the bourgeoisie over the exploited class, is then exercised indirectly, through the state apparatus and subject to the rule of (bourgeois) law, and not arbitrarily and directly as in FMP [Feudal Mode of Production].*

*IV **Self-Sufficient ('subsistence') economy of the village (or the manor), commodity production being secondary for the direct producer**; subject to the condition that he produces also a surplus that is appropriated by the exploiting class of which a significant proportion may enter into circulation as commodities. That contrasts with generalised commodity production in CMP where (a) production is primarily of commodities ie, to be sold for the value to be realised on the market and (b) labor power itself is a commodity.*

*V **Simple reproduction** where the surplus is largely consumed by the exploiting class which acquires it, instead of being accumulated, so that the economy and society merely reproduce themselves on the existing level of productive resources and technology, whereas in CMP we have expanded reproduction of capital, where the surplus is primarily deployed towards capital accumulation (though not without supporting rising consumption levels of the exploiting classes) and consequent expansion of the forces of production and technological advance."*[325]

All these features that these scholars pointed out were found in the social formation from 400 AD to 1200 AD in Karnataka. In fact **they characterised Karnataka society of the time only because Karnataka constituted a feudal mode of production.**

B. Universality of the Feudal Mode

VK Thakur's polemic raises an important question concerning Historical Materialism. He writes: *"...feudalism—in the Marxist meaning of the term—is in a certain sense a universal phenomenon. In one form or another it exists in all the societies which have emerged from the primitive stage. The slave system did not appear everywhere; this has been generally acknowledged by Marxist scholars...."* [326]

Further, he says: *"In fact in the writings of Karl Marx, feudalism unlike capitalism, is not viewed as a world system or a universal phenomenon. But there is little doubt that historical research over the years has showed it to be a widespread social formation, notwithstanding the considerable variation in its precise forms in different countries."* [327]

If feudalism is considered an universal mode of production, it leaves two implications for the process of historical development.

Firstly, as we have already seen, the slave mode of production was not an universal mode, in the sense that not all class society emerged from primitive communism by necessarily passing through this stage. *"Many peoples—the Germans, Slavs, Arabs—made the transition to the feudal system from the primitive communal system....*

The peoples of what had been the Roman Empire made the transition to the feudal system not from the primitive communal but from the slave-owning system." [328]

While India did not see the existence of a slave mode of production, it saw the transition from primitive communism to feudalism mediated by an exclusive mode of production which we have called as the shurdra holding system, which nevertheless bears similarities with slave society. Thus **the first conclusion should be that in tracing human historical development as a**

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whole, the universal modes must be marked. Hence one may say that primitive communism being the first is followed by feudalism, with or without an intervening slave or shudra or some other such (for instance Harappan, which we have not been able to classify yet. The Harappan system may be representative of another such intermediary mode) mode of production.

The second implication for feudal universality is that it becomes a precondition for the maturation of and rise of the next universal mode, that of capitalism. Capitalism can only grow out of an earlier feudal womb; feudalism is a precondition for the rise of capitalism; minus feudalism capitalism cannot be born. (We must avoid, at this point, confusing the generation of capitalism in pre-feudal or in those societies where feudalism was not overthrown, societies compelled to exist under conditions of colonialism and imperialism where capitalism was activated by an external agency).

It is by underscoring these two theoretical implications in an understanding of Historical Materialism that the *universality* of the feudal mode of production must be considered.

C. Indian Features to an Universal Mode

Mao Tse-tung says: *"The relationship between the universality and particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction."*[329] Mao was only presenting one of the aspects of Dialectical Materialist philosophy. We would like to keep this method in mind, ie, **the relationship between the particular and the universal,** for our discussion.

By calling feudalism as a universal mode and by characterising the Indian social formation of the period after the fourth century AD as feudal, we are drawing a relationship between the particularity and universality of a certain phenomenon. **Since feudalism is universal we must find underlying universal features as the essential operative features of the Indian social formation of the period. At the same time since it is the particularity of Indian feudalism taken from Karnataka that we are studying, we must be led to a summing up of the specific features of the particular phenomenon of Indian feudalism, as distinct, yet operating on the basis of the universal principles. In other words, the expressive forms of Indian feudalism have an universal content. To emphasise the one over the other—the particularity over the universality or the universality over and above the particularity—can only lead to distortions in grasping reality.** VK Thakur, for instance, despite speaking of the universality of the feudal mode of production tends, in the final analysis, to overemphasise the Indianess of Indian feudalism, discouraging comparison with feudalism in other countries, particularly with the European. DN Jha rightly criticises this in his *Indian Feudalism: The Early Phase*. Revisionist historians like Dange have tended to look at only the universal features making it a mechanical understanding of Indian feudalism.

We have already looked at what the feudal mode of production is. We had only in the process looked at a derivation of the universal features of feudalism drawn from the Indian context. But Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founders of the theory of Dialectical and Historical Materialism also spoke of such principles which they had derived from a particular study of west European feudalism. **Although they were not yet in a position, due to the paucity of information and its colonial sourcing, to look at it as an universal mode of production, the principles they derived from a study of European feudalism were nevertheless of a general and thus universal nature.** Let us therefore look at some of these universal features of feudalism derived from the European context and see how they confirm and vindicate similar principles drawn from

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India. We shall after ascertaining its universality then proceed to discuss the Indianness or the particular features of Indian feudalism.

In 1844, Marx wrote: "*...feudal landed property gives its name to its lord, as does a kingdom to its king. His family history, the history of his house, etc—all this individualises the estate for him and makes it literally his house, personifies it. Similarly those working on the estate have not the position of* **day labourers***; but they are in part themselves his property, as are serfs; and in part they are bound to him by ties of respect, allegiance and duty. His relation to them is therefore directly political, and has likewise a human,* **intimate** *side. Customs, character, etc, vary from one estate to another and seem to be one with the land to which they belong; whereas later, it is only his purse and not his character, his individuality which connects a man with an estate. Finally, the feudal lord does not try to extract the utmost advantage from his land. Rather, he consumes what is there and calmly leaves the worry of producing to the serfs and the tenants. Such is nobility's relationship to landed property....*" [330]

In this passage Marx was only emphasising the dynastic nature of the nobility, its exploitation of a labour force that was tied to his estate in the form of serfdom, and the feudal nature of the surplus in that it was simple and not expanded reproduction.

Some years later, Engels made a comprehensive presentation of feudalism as it occurred in the German middle ages and was only then tending, like in the terminal years of early feudalism of Karnataka, to commence production for the market. Answering Herr Duhring, Engels wrote: "*In mediaeval society, especially in the earlier centuries, production was essentially for the producers' own use. In the main it only satisfied the wants of the producer and his family. Where personal relations of dependence existed as in the countryside, it also contributed towards satisfying the wants of the feudal lord. No exchange was involved here, and consequently products did not assume the character of commodities. The peasant family produced almost everything it required—utensils and clothing as well as food. It was only when it succeeded in producing a surplus beyond its own wants and payments in kind due to the feudal lord—it was only at this stage that it also produced commodities; this surplus thrown into social exchange and offered for sale became a commodity. The town artisans, it is true, had to produce for exchange from the very beginning. But they too covered the greater part of their own wants themselves; they had gardens and small fields; they sent their cattle out into the communal woodland, which also provided them with timber and firewood; the women spun flax, wool, etc. Production for the purpose of exchange, the production of commodities, was only just coming into being. Hence, restricted exchange, restricted market, stable mode of production, local isolation from the outside world, and local unity within: the Mark in the countryside the guild in the town.*" [331]

Independent and self-sufficient units, serfdom as the condition of labour under the exploitation of the landlord and towns suffocated by such villages—who can deny the identity of feudalism, whether in India or in Europe? **Engels' description of German feudalism, with a slight change in detail, may well pass for a description of Karnataka from the eleventh century.**

Feudalism in the Slavic countries, feudalism in the Asian countries—west or east, and feudalism from the Maghreb, all carried an identity of features with the Indian and European. **This is precisely what constitutes its universality as a mode.**

Turning to the particularity of Indian feudalism, we find that it has several features which mark its distinctness. A feature or two being so unique that they have placed historians in a predicament.

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i) Caste and India's Syncretic Feudalism

The chief and outstanding peculiarity of Indian feudalism is its syncretic structure. This hierarchical syncretism is derived from its absorption and retention of fragments from earlier modes and levels of production. The property of tribal endogamy, one such prehistoric fragment, has been perpetuated and it is this that has converted classes in the feudal mode of production into castes. Thus caste, and caste ordered into a system of hierarchies, has been the manifestation of this syncretic structure of Indian feudalism. In its wake, this manifestation, derived from the retention of tribal endogamy has led to the retention of other preclass features. Caste therefore is not only the manifestation but is also the embodiment of these prehistoric fragments—in the economy, in culture, in religion. Indian feudalism therefore acquires the character of a caste-based feudalism, feudalism failing to become operative without caste. This is what contributes to the pervasiveness of caste, caste flooding both, the base and the superstructure. The climax of the caste system is untouchability, a demeaning meant to obtain labour services for free.

Though we have seen the process of caste development there is an important question that needs to be answered—**why was caste peculiar to the Indian social formation?** Why did class society in general and feudalism in particular not assume the syncretic structure—the caste expression—in other societies? **Only a satisfactory answer to this question can bring out the fullest understanding of the particularity of Indian feudalism.** Although we are not adequately equipped to answer this question, we would like to pose some hypothetical queries.

It would be wrong to altogether brush aside the continuation of tribal endogamy, ie, caste, in societies Asian, African and European. Sergei Tokarev's following sentences present to us of the existence of castes among the Polynesians. *"Polynesia is not only geographically close to Melanesia, but is also its cultural extension. Although its foundation of the Polynesian's economy (as that of the Melanesians) was primitive agriculture and fishing, the conditions of their material life differed from those of the Melanesians. On the small and austere islands of Polynesia people had to work much harder to survive. The production of crafts has reached a high level of perfection. However because the amount of farm land is limited, the tribal elite tried to gain control over it, and a propertied class developed. Therefore the general level of social development among the Polynesians was higher than among the Melanesians. Only the survivals of clan relations remained in Polynesia in the form of large patriarchal f. .ilies.*

Sharp social or caste stratification existed in nearly all the Polynesian islands.

The chiefs were the ruling caste. They were the hereditary aristocracy that held the reigns of power and thus represented a primitive form of organisation of the ruling class. Then came the caste of landed and clan elite. Still lower was the caste of semi-dependents and dependents, or semi-slaves. On some islands slaves were outcasts.

This sharp division into castes—an early form of class stratification—was reflected in the fact that marriages between members of different castes was practically banned."[332]

While in the Polynesian islands caste emerged at the point of transition to class society, and important for us, by the splitting up of a single tribe and not the conquest of tribe by tribe; in Japan caste emerged around 1600 AD in the later years of feudalism by the creation of outcastes or Burakus such as Chtori, Torischi and Tsurahara.[333] Created during the reconstruction and consolidation of the Tokugawa feudal empire, the Buraku (30 lakhs in number by 1986) were menials and placed at the lowest social rank. In the last years of the feudal era the Burakumin (*Buraku = community, min = people discriminated against*) resisted their segregation and three

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years after the Meiji restoration of 1871, an emancipation edict was promulgated against discrimination.[334] Nobukai Teraki says: *"It is completely mistaken, however, with blood kinship, that some fixed class of people have been discriminated against generation after generation from ancient times until today."* [335] In other words, the Buraku, created at a time of Japanese feudal expansion was an attempt to obtain free and cheap services and did not come into existence with the break up of tribe as in India or Polynesia and, but **coming at the point of the break up of feudalism itself, it was weak in its foundations and quickly collapsed as a caste.**

Apart from these two instances and some scanty information of the Osu outcastes in Nigeria, we are not too sure of the existence of caste in any other society. **Does caste then have the greater potential of coming into being when there is a complex, a multiplicity of tribes at various levels of existence?** Europe for instance was peopled by the splitting up of one major Germanic tribe, each of the clans moving in a different direction and ultimately undergoing internal division causing the rise of classes and the exclusive clan languages emerging as the languages of nationalities. The case of the Catalonians and Basques of Spain is interesting. Victor Kiernan says: *"Pre-Aryan languages, whatever they were, disappeared, apart from Basque and probably a substratum persisting in some of their successors...."* [336] Preceding the Aryans by several centuries and preserving their independence these two Mediterranean tribes developed into two independent nationalities in Spain. Can the Celtic and Gaelic features in the making of the Scottish and Welsh as constrasted with the Germanic in the making of the English be denied?[337] **Is it possible that nationalities that have come into being on the basis of one main tribe or those that have gone through the slave mode of production tend to forfeit tribal endogamy converting into nationalities?** All said and done, our cross cultural comparison will have to begin at the beginning. **We need to study the tribal complexion, the conditions under which their break up was achieved, the nature of the new mode of production and perhaps the attitude of the ruling classes and its religion towards the heterodox forms of worship among the people across a sample of some representative societies at least, before arriving at any definite conclusions.**

ii) Hindu Religion as a Hierarchically Syncretic System

While each of the feudal social formations have come under the domination of a religion highly structured and ecclesiastically ordered, bringing the widest sections of the people under its sway, and in this sense India fits into this universal pattern, **it is in the syncretic structure of religion in India in the feudal period** which from the close of the first millennium of the Christian era may be classed as Hinduism, **that its peculiarity lies. Assimilating and remoulding religious forms of the various oppressed castes, the Brahmanas came to unify religious ideology by developing a syncretic style. Just as the pervasiveness of caste has led many to be blinded to the feudal frame that keeps it intact; similarly, observing the diversity of religious practice across castes and the fact that the Dalits were denied entry into temples, there are a few who deny the existence of Hinduism as a religion. The syncretic structure of a social institution should not lead to a denial of the institution as such. Brahminism had achieved the integration of the Dalits into its religious fold, by securing the imposition of its gods over them. At the extremes of the caste hierarchy, which also encompasses a contradiction of classes at social extremities, discordance is to be expected. The diversity of Madiga religious practice with that of the Brahmanas can only be the most pronounced. But this discordance, it must be remembered is only what is permissible under a hierarchically syncretic structure of concordance, integration and unity.**

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iii) Division of the Peasantry into Tenants and Bonded Labourers Unlike their Unity Under Serfdom

If slavery was the form of labour under the slave mode of production, then serfdom was the form under feudalism **in Europe. Serfdom is a form of feudal exploitation of peasant labour,** the serfs living on the landlord's manorial estate undertaking free labour in the landlord's land and on this precondition paying ground rent for the plots of land given to them to cultivate.

While serfdom was the condition of the existence of peasant labour in Europe it would be wrong to equate serfdom with the universality of the feudal mode of production, and to deny, on such grounds, that India which neither had the manorial estate nor serfs was therefore not to be classed as feudal. Peasant labour was however split up into two independent and component branches of serfdom. The tied tenant had to pay ground rent while the bonded labourer paid labour service in the landlord's lands forsaking the entire produce. Thus in a general sense it would not be wrong to call the tied tenant (who was also compelled to pay vishti or bitti chakri services) or the bonded labourers as serfs since each of them performed in part the combined labour rent functions of the European serf.

Explaining this difference, DN Jha says: *"It is necessary to appreciate that the Indian Marxist historiography, opposed to the British view of Indian past, has used the west European model of feudalism to explain social change in India from the middle of the first millennium. However comparison of the post-Gupta economic scene with the European picture, though made difficult by the nature of the Indian source material, shows that a donated village or land cannot be equated with the European manor. In India the gift area does not seem to have been divided into anything like* ***mansus indomicatus*** *and small sized holdings to which serfs were attached. The type of relationship and interdependence between the large-sized farms and small or middle-sized plots of land emphasized in the west European context seems to be generally absent in our country. Here instead of the serf-occupied* ***manses****, peasant families themselves became units of production and seigniorial taxation and developed close economic ties of interdependence with the landlord."* [338]

We should say that **the condition of servility, bondage, of being attached to land is a feature common to the peasantry as a whole whether serf or tied tenant or bonded labour and it is this that must be considered as its universal characteristic. Hence if slaves are the principal toiling class under the slave mode of production, the peasantry are the chief toiling class under feudalism. Serfs, bonded labourers and tied tenants are perhaps a few of the different forms of existence of the peasantry under feudalism.**

iv) *Ayagara* or *Jajmani* Relations of Distribution and Exchange

The ayagara of Karnataka or jajmani as it is called elsewhere in India was a system that had developed exclusively in India. The ayagara system served the purpose of **exchanging products** between the producers in the village; a means for accounting and **surplus extraction** for the landlords and a procedure for **collecting taxes** payable to the state.

In fact features such as caste and jajmani contributed to the further rigidification of feudalism in India; acting as additional structural breaks in the development and spread of commodity production, and thus factors contributing to the relatively prolonged retention of the feudal mode of production.

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D. Early Feudalism and its Aspects in Karnataka

The period of early feudalism describes certain regional variations within Karnataka. These variations must always be kept in mind while discussing Karnataka as a whole. This distinctness is reflected along the four major regional divisions—the North Maidan, South Maidan, Malnad and Karavali.

The epicentre and **the pride of place of the early feudal period belongs to the North Maidan,** the region which threw up the most ancient traces of the existence of humankind in Karnataka and emerged as the nuclear zone of prehistoric culture in south India. The strength of prehistory, as we have already seen, carried the region into the shudra holding system first, and except for Banavasi it housed most other cities in its area. But the transition to feudalism, undertaken by the Kadamba and Ganga kingdoms saw a shift in focus towards the west and south of the southern nuclear zone. But this was temporary. With the end of Kadamba rule and the commencement of the rule of the Badami Chalukyas the dynasties are concentrated in the North Maidan. The best of early feudal Karnataka is from then on concentrated here. **The degree of Brahmana domination, the extent of sub-infeudation, the centre of feudal guilds, the rise of Kannada literature—its feudal and popular trends, the transformation to commodity production and Kalyan getting focussed as the centre for political developments in Karnataka and the outbreak of the Vachanakara movement setting the end of early feudalism and announcing the beginning of middle feudalism obviously make the North Maidan as the centre for all these developments.**

The South Maidan is characterised by a **gradualness** all along. The dynasties are more long drawn and changes have been more steady in the making. The independent role of the people in the transition to middle feudalism always remained a part of changes that the ruling classes initiated and could never express itself in as clear terms as the Vachanakara movement did. In terms of urbanisation, in terms of the sharpness of the political crisis, **the South Maidan normally followed a trend which the North had set.**

In the Malnad and Karavali characterised by dense forest **the spread of feudalism perhaps took more time.** We might expect that **in the shudra holding period as a whole the transformation of the Karavali and Malnad was very marginal and limited, these two regions marking their change to civilisation by almost directly entering the feudal mode of production.** The retention of Jainism while it had been eliminated in the Maidan areas of Karnataka was linked to the continuation of feudal self-sufficiency and very poor levels of commodity production. In fact the Jaina basadis and Gommatas were built well into the seventeenth century in the Karavali and the Malnad, only after which it ceased. Feudalism in Kodagu for instance commenced much later than in other parts of Karnataka and it could be said that **it was the last of Karnataka's nationalities to evolve, the first being the Kannada, the second the Tuluva and the third the Kodava.**

Furthermore, in the Malnad and the Karavali, owning perhaps to the terrain **the feudal estate resembled** the manor of Europe. Nuclear villages are uncommon in these two tracts and **the landlords' land was clearly marked out with four manses.** One was the pasture land, the second was the woods, the third was the land that the landlord rented to the mulagenidara or tied tenant and the fourth was land that he tilled through the bonded labourer. In a secure part of his estate the landlord's house was set up with his tenants and bonded labourers living at quarters marked at distances from his house. **Although this manorial structure was to be found in these two regions of Karnataka, it did not however create serfdom.** The division along castes remained the basis for the division into tenants and bonded labourers, the peasantry showing this

The commencement of feudalism proper in Karnataka precedes the development in north India which however showed the tendency to form self-sufficient villages much earlier. This precedence of Karnataka is due to the suddenness of the collapse of the shudra holding order in Karnataka, north India experiencing a more gradual transition.

There seems to be however a concordance of the end of the early feudal phase across India. The crisis of feudalism becomes explosive at almost the same point of time in history. DN Jha writes: *"It is striking that instances of both peaceful and violent resistance mentioned in the sources begin to multiply from the 11th century AD onwards. One may therefore imagine that in the first half of the second millennium the social contradiction between the landed aristocracy and the ordinary peasants, arising out of the increasing economic oppression of the latter as well as out of the scramble for control over agrarian resources tended to become sharp. This may also have led to important changes in the socio-economic system and may be viewed as the internal dynamic of feudal society, though in the Indian context the role of such a factor is yet to be adequately appreciated."* [339]

Irfan Habib makes a much briefer yet succinct observation when he says: *"In many ways the beginning of the thirteenth century marks a 'break' in Indian history."* [340]

In Karnataka this 'break' took place with the Vachanakara movement in the north and the Srivaishnavite conversion in the south. **These two religio-political events punctuated the transition and drew the fault lines of the break with the past.** The passage to the thirteenth century also inaugurated several new changes, the details of which we shall look into in the next chapter. However, we would like to make a point of conclusion or two in the context of this change from early to middle feudalism.

Indian feudalism is in general terms marked by two distinct periods, while Karnataka has three—an early, a middle and a late feudalism. In the proceeding pages we shall look into the basis for such a classification and the details enjoining it. However, it would be important for us to observe at this juncture that **each period, at its point of transition, was marked by popular uprisings. At times these revolts had an independent popular expression as in the case of the Vachanakaras; at other times it was couched under feudal leadership as with the case of the Srivaishnavite led popular upheaval against Jainism. In either case, the motive force for change came from below—from the toiling masses. It was their collective action that was making history.**

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Chapter IV

MIDDLE FEUDALISM

Vijayanagara, Bahmani, Adilshahi and Palegara Rule (Thirteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)

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1. VIJAYANAGARA, THE BAHMANIS AND ADILSHAHIS

One and a half centuries after the Vachanakara movement and shortly after the collapse of the Seuna and Hoysala dynasties, in a simultaneous development, two major kingdoms sprang up in Karnataka neatly dividing Virashaiva territory between them. Vijayanagara, with its capital at Hampi, absorbing all of former Hoysala territory and Bahmani rule with Gulbarga as its centre and containing most of Kalachuri territory emerged. In a short span, Bahmani rule was to eclipse and get subsumed under the more consolidated Adil Shahis who ruled from Bijapur until they were vanquished by the Mughals in 1684—a good century and more after the collapse of the Vijayanagara kingdom. **Bahmani and Adil Shahi rule on the one hand and Vijayanagara on the other coming at a common point of time in Karnataka's history only describe, despite all distortions of Hindu communal historians, a great degree of identity in their political economy. The religious discrepancy was no more than external colouration on a developing process of commodity production on a feudal base during the period of middle feudalism,** the commonness of which could be striking. However, while a lot has been sung about the pomp and glory of Vijayanagara by researchers in Karnataka, **Bahmani and Adil Shahi rule have been neglected and vandalised by Hindu communal historiography.** Their rule, falling as it is, over territory which had emerged since 1956 as Karnataka's desolate and sun-baked backyard; a silence nurtured by covert Brahmanism and Old Mysore chauvinism has left this northern people of Karnataka with remorse for having *"tolerated Muslim rulers"* during this period of their past. Endless panegyrics about Vijayanagara and on the other vicious academic silence on the Bahmani-Adil Shahis have created a situation where even the ardent student is left with little information about Bahmani-Adil Shahi rule and the nature of society under them. Yet from what little material is available it is evident that **the direction of social transformation in the Bahmani-Adil Shahi period essentially matches that of Vijayanagara.** Thus we have found it expedient to combine the rule of these three kingdoms; although, victimised by Hindu communalism, we suffer from a shortage of material about Karnataka society under *Muslim* rule during this period. Before entering the discussion *per se* it would be worthwhile to consider Kosambi's observation in this regard who said: *"Not only the empire of Delhi but the contemporary Muslim kingdom of Bijapur and the Hindu one of Vijayanagar had fundamentally equivalent systems of landholding and tax-collection."*[1]

A. Basis of Centralisation

One characteristic feature of this period has been the capacity to form enduring rule over extensive territories despite the fragmented nature of the economy which continued to base itself on feudal intermediaries.

One emergent factor was the rise in commodity production resulting in the growth of extensive trade. The merchant class which carried out trade across several fiefdoms must have served as an integrating factor. However, the limited volume of trade and the continued existence of the major body of the population—the peasantry and the mass of artisans—outside the ambit of rising commodity production and thus the limited

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79. Vijayanagara kingdom.

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80. Bahmani kingdom.

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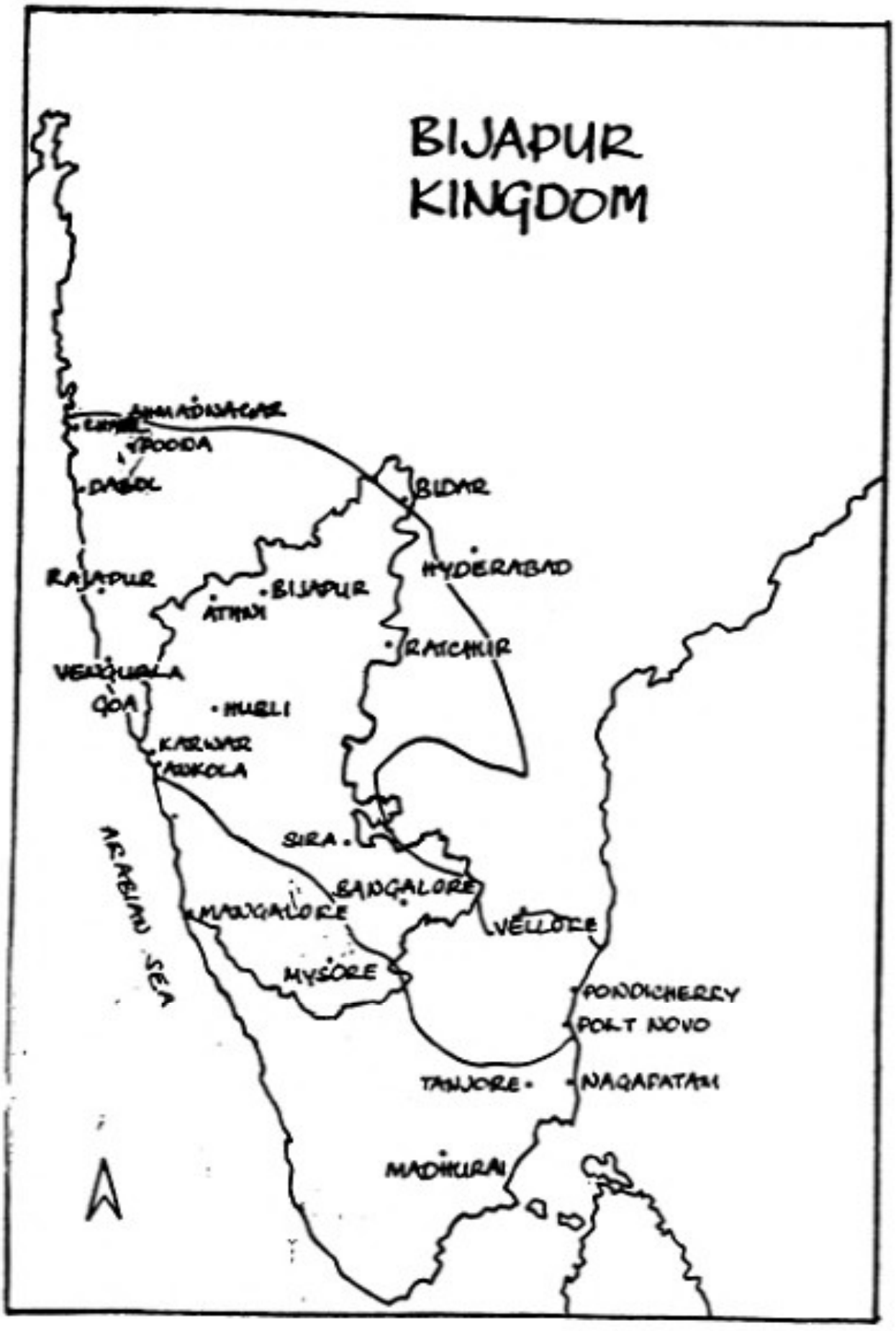

81. Adilshahi kingdom.

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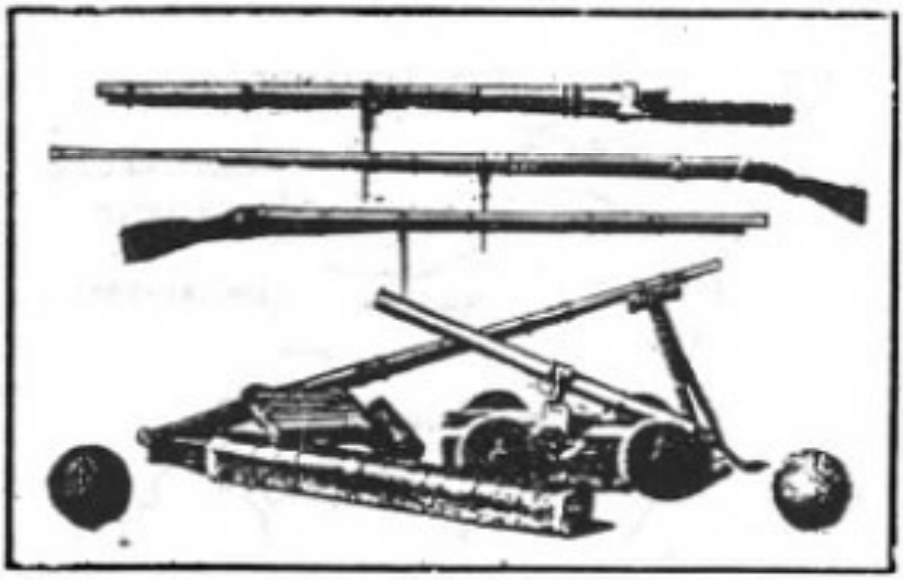
influence of the trading class does **not** make it the principal adhesive factor responsible for the rise of centralised kingdoms over a highly feudalised and fragmented social formation.

The welding together of the hundreds of militating feudatories was possible only by introducing a reform in the structure of the state by the Vijayanagara, Bahmani and Adil Shahi kings.

Regarding Vijayanagara Burton Stein writes: *"While not all scholars of Vijayanagara speak of 'feudalism', all give prominence to a feature of political organisation which, for those who do use the concept, is decisive. That is, the* ***nayankara*** *system. Whether seen as part of a feudal estate similar for some essential manner to those of medieval Europe or simply as a new political feature of South Indian history, the* ***nayaka*** *of Vijayanagara times is an important and discontinuous fact of the age."*[2]

The continuity that the feudal rulers of Vijayanagara established with their predecessors then was in the granting of fiefdoms. However this had a new element which distinguished it from the old practice. **Such intermediary fief-holders called *nayakas* who undertook all the former tasks of despatching a part of the surplus extracted from the peasantry in the form of tax to Hampi and in addition to maintaining an army and forming a militia with the help of the ooragowdas in the village, also had to maintain a detachment of the centralised Vijayanagara army. Thus the nayaka, under whom again there were innumerable feudal intermediaries, was the decisive centralising force. This modification of the form of the state was achieved by bringing about a transformation in the structure of the army, which formed the principal component of the state.**

The army could however play this key role in the formation of such enlarged kingdoms only because it had itself undergone a massive transformation. The end of Hoysala and Kalachuri rule and the rise of the Vijayanagara and Bahmani kingdoms marked



82. An assortment of monopod, bipod and wheeled Adilshahi guns.

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a qualitative change in weaponry and military strategy. Without these significant changes in the army an empire as Vijayanagara could not have emerged. **The kingdom could be kept in one piece not merely with the help of its nayakas but also because it assimilated these significant changes in weaponry and the mode of conducting warfare.**

Mughal rule in north and central India witnessed the introduction of gunpowder and firearms. *Muslim* campaigns to the south only dispersed this technology and accompanying it, the new modes of conducting warfare.

Burton Stein in his book *Peasant, Society and State in Medieval South India* writes: *"Reasons for the military success of Vijayanagara warriors against their Hindu and Muslim rivals are hardly considered in the existing literature on the Vijayanagara state. This is peculiar since all have differentiated the Vijayanagara state from others on the basis of its martial character and achievements. An unchanging dharmic ideology is presumed for the success of the several dynasties; yet, as is clear from the records of Vijayanagara, the major victims of Vijayanagara military power were not Muslims but Hindus, and a major factor in this success were Muslim soldiers in Vijayanagara armies. (AH Longhurst mentions that Devaraya II had 10,000 Musulman horsemen in his service, **Hampi Ruins**, p. 13)*

One that would appear to deserve serious consideration is that the success of Vijayanagara armies was a direct consequence of their experiences with and invitation of Muslim armies, their tactics and weapons. The founding brothers of the first dynasty had served in Muslim armies...." [3]

Further, Stein says: *"Nayaka power rested upon the substantially increased military capability afforded by firearms, fortifications and superior cavalry mounts. The ability to command these improved military means was limited to the rich and powerful of whom the Vijayanagara kings were the first. It was upon these new means of warfare that the spectacular military success of the Rayas was based, and their experience with the use of Muslim soldiers from the fifteenth century on made possible much of this superiority."* [4]

Thus **unlike what Hindu communal scholars would write, it was, in more than one sense, that *Muslim* rule in India and its progress to the south was what contributed to the rise could sustain the *glory* of Vijayanagara.**

Horses which were the single major item of import from the Portuguese serviced the Vijayanagara and Bahmani-Adil Shahi armies with a quick and efficient means to deploy one's centralised military might to any rebellious part of the kingdom.

Nuniz accounts for the existence of 200 odd nayakas during the 1535-37 period in Vijayanagara. They were the feudal chieftains and principal agency through which a kingdom as large as Vijayanagara could emerge and last for more than two long centuries.

The Adil Shahis developed the system of desais just like the nayakas in the case of Vijayanagara.

B. The Feudal Establishment

All the basic features of the feudal social structure were retained by the Vijayanagara kings without disturbing them. There was the king, his civil and mili-

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tary court and royal establishment which swelled to an unprecedented degree even with the nominal centralisation of the army and revenues. The growth of Hampi and the massive stone works speak of this bloated establishment weighing on the people.

Below this came the nayakas. This class of feudal intermediaries held most of the land in Vijayanagara. **The shift from Brahmana domination of land is already noticeable by the time of Vijayanagara.** Burton Stein estimates that nayakas held more than 75% of all agricultural land in Tamil Nadu. The situation in Karnataka could not have been different. KS Shivanna in his book *The Agrarian System of Karnataka (1336-1761)* says: *"The amaranayaka system of tenure was created by the Vijayanagara kings. Military commanders (who invariably were palegaras, zamindars and deshmukhs) were give entire tehsils and they acted as a kind of feudal bureaucracy, collecting revenue for the government and maintaining a standing army."*[5]

Then there was the class of Brahmana free-holders. Their agraharas or brahmadeyas continued to hold in no way an insignificant part of the land of the kingdom. The Vijayanagara kings continued to grant tax-free lands to the Brahmanas just as their predecessors. However, the extent of such grants showed a decline.

AV Venkata Ratnam says: *"Regarding the changes that happened from Hoysala to Vijayanagara times so far as the agraharas are concerned, under the Hoysalas there is abundant evidence of a large number and of their numerous activities. In the Vijayanagara empire, though there are references to the corporate activities of the people in the agraharas, yet the agraharas were not as numerous as under the Hoysalas."*[6]

KS Shivanna, explaining about the three types of tenures under which Brahmanas controlled land says that under the Brahmadeya holding: *"The Brahmans virtually became landlords. On many occasions they were exempted from taxes, including land revenue. The state expected hardly any service from them except religious teaching which was not designed in the interest of the general public as a whole. On the other hand the state lost much revenue as a result of the creation of this tenure which would otherwise have accrued to the state. In the case of transfer of state rights to the Brahmanas the cultivators lost direct link with the state and therefore depended on the Brahmana landlords. Occasionally the state specified the condition of paying quit-rent from the Brahmana donees."*[7]

The second type of tenure wherein the Brahmanas held lands by proxy was the *devadaya* tenure. Shivanna says: *"These were lands held by temples. Temples acted as mortgage banks, wherein cultivators mortgaged their land to the temple for loans. People also pledged lands to temples for raising money from the temple treasury for marriage and other purposes. In this way temples acquired huge landed property through donations, endowments and mortgages. In a way they were like big landlords. Temple lands were exempted from land revenue and other taxes."*[8]

A third type of rent-free holding which the Brahmanas enjoyed were matha lands under the *mathapura* tenure. It must be added that the Lingayats who had taken charge of most Brahmana and Jaina mathas of Karnataka's central and northern districts were bigger beneficiaries in this regard, serving and sailing with the feudal interests of state.

Burton Stein speaks of a new phenomenon which emerged during the Vijayanagara period. Brahmanas took on a new role. They were posted as governors in the forts of the

nayakas. He writes: *"It appears to have been a deliberate policy of the Rayas—certainly it was a policy of Krishnaraya who was perhaps the greatest of all—that Brahmans had been given major political roles. In his time, and to some extent before, Brahmans were the commandants of major fortresses and were considered territorial 'governors' by contemporaries, both Indian as well as foreign. Apart from the maintenance of royal forts in all parts of the macro region there appears to have been only one governing task for which Brahmans were responsible: that is, checking the fissiparous designs of the nayakas."* [9]

This new Brahmana officialdom also constituted an important section of the feudal ruling classes.

Then, thirdly, there was the feudal intermediary section composed of heggades, ballalas and nadagowdas all of whom maintained their armed retainers mediating between nayakas and the peasantry. Vijayanagara had a few hundred such elements.

Lastly, there was the landlord constituted in the main by the gowda of the village and the senabova who were the first link between the peasantry and the feudal hierarchy. Explaining about the nature of this class KS Shivanna writes: *"The common practice of granting lands or a portion of revenue from land, instead of money in lieu of military, economic, social and religious services rendered to the state by individuals and by institutions in various capacities had led to the feudal exploitation of land which was the dominant feature of the land system of medieval Karnataka.*

By feudal exploitation we mean that land owners like temples, maths, Brahmanas, Agraharas, officials (like nayakas) and scores of others who held lands and different tenures did not own any means of agricultural production except land. Since these land owners did not belong to the class of primary producers or the actual cultivators they may be classified under non-agrarian class. The non-agrarian class which own extensive land by virtue of land grants did not generally supply implements and raw materials for agricultural production such as plough, cattle and seeds. The cultivating class supplied these as well as labour needed for agricultural production.

The non-agrarian class though did not bear the cost of production, extracted from the peasant producer a share which was no doubt unrelated to the exchange of village crops produced or profits of agriculture. This class was able to extract the share of the produce, without directly involving themselves in raising crops from the peasants by virtue of their social privileges or necessities and ideas of the state.

In this process of feudalisation of land system the state played a predominant role. The Vijayanagar rulers and their successors in Karnataka in form of land-grants or assignments of land-revenue created a class of intermediaries between itself and peasants or primary producers and these intermediaries by virtue of land monopoly exploited the surplus produce from the producers leaving them at a mere subsistence level.

Without the exploitation of surplus produce from peasants or primary producers the glory of Vijayanagara or the luxurious living standards of their contemporaries and successors would not have been possible." [10]

It was this feudal crust then which gloriously weighed down on the people of Vijayanagara.

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C. Advance of the Market

Despite this heavy yoke on the people of Vijayanagara and a similar burden on the people of the Bahmani and Adil Shahi sultanates, the market continued to forge ahead. **All those trends which expressed themselves in twelfth century Karnataka got strengthened and pushed forward.**

i) Urbanisation, Trade and Commodity Production

The pace of urbanisation continued unabated. For the first time in the history of Karnataka did cities as large as Bijapur and Hampi emerge.

Richard Maxwell Eaton in his book *Sufis of Bijapur* mentions: *"Bijapur had become, by the early seventeenth century, one of the most flourishing urban centres of India.... The early seventeenth century also saw the peak growth of the city's population, estimates of which range from five lakh to 10 lakh persons."* [11]

The Adil Shahis whose empire was built in an area which showed a striking tendency towards urbanisation in the twelfth century obviously made the maximum of this process and chose their capital at a site which demonstrated a high degree of commodity production and urban formation. The enormity of Bijapur can be gauged if one observes that Bijapur of the seventeenth century was at least three times bigger than what it is in the 1990s. In addition, Gulbarga and Bidar developed into major urban centres. Thus these three major cities which sprung up during the rule of the Sultans exhibited a great degree of resilience, continuing to remain as urban centres even into the modern age.

Hampi at its peak is estimated to have had from three lakh to five lakh people. Watered by the Tungabhadra, this region of Bellary and Raichur doab had already begun to pick up as urban centres dotted it by the end of Kalachuri rule. In addition to this, the perennial supply of water, the border land of the Kannada and Telugu speaking nationalities which constituted the biggest chunks of the empire, ready availability of construction material and proximity to the open iron ore mines must have served as important factors in choosing Hampi as the location. The fact that both the capitals fell in the North Maidan of Karnataka speaks of the continued importance of the northern region in comparison with the South.

Apart from this, Burton Stein says: *"Inscriptions and literary works of the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries refer to over 80 major trade centres in the macro region."* [12]

Barkur, Karwar and Ankola had emerged as the major ports of the kingdom. Apart from these, Mirjan, Honnavar, Bhatkal, Basrur and Mangalore were the ports carrying out maritime trade.[13] KV Ramesh in his book *A History of South Kanara* says: *"Internal and international trade in South Kanara received a fillip during the Vijayanagara period.... In particular, trade guilds in important townships such Barkuru, Basruru, Mangaluru, Mudabidre and Venuru, rose in importance and their activities and jurisdiction came to govern many aspects of the citizens' lives.*

Barkuru was not only a busy trading centre but was also the headquarters of the Governor of Barkuru-rajya and was therefore the largest city of South Kanara during the Vijayanagara period." [14]

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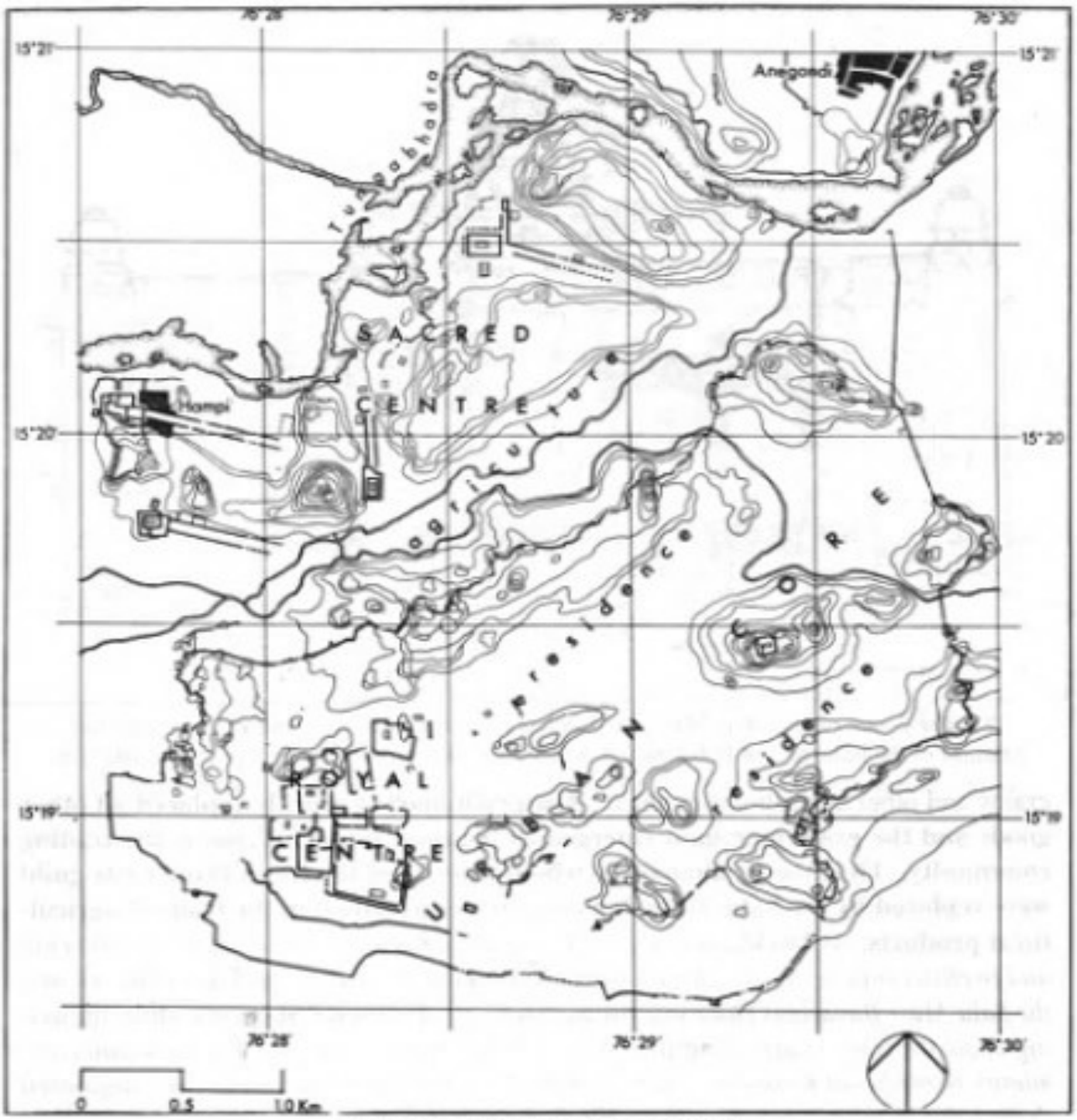

83. Site map of Hampi, Bellary district.

B Muddachari provides us with a list of several other towns in Karnataka which had emerged as centres of trade.[15] By a fair estimate then, one may say that there were about 40 trading centres, almost **twice** the estimate of Om Prakash Prasad for the twelfth century, in all of Karnataka, with Bijapur alone perhaps possessing more than what an entire urban Karnataka contained at the end of the twelfth century.

With this extent of urbanisation, trade naturally found a big incentive. In addition to a hike in the quantitative aspects of trade, **the internal trade of Karnataka underwent certain structural changes also.** Firstly, the increase in urbanisation witnessed a growth in the size of the trader. The merchant class emerged more powerful with each passing day. Secondly, the rise in the urban population created a massive market for food

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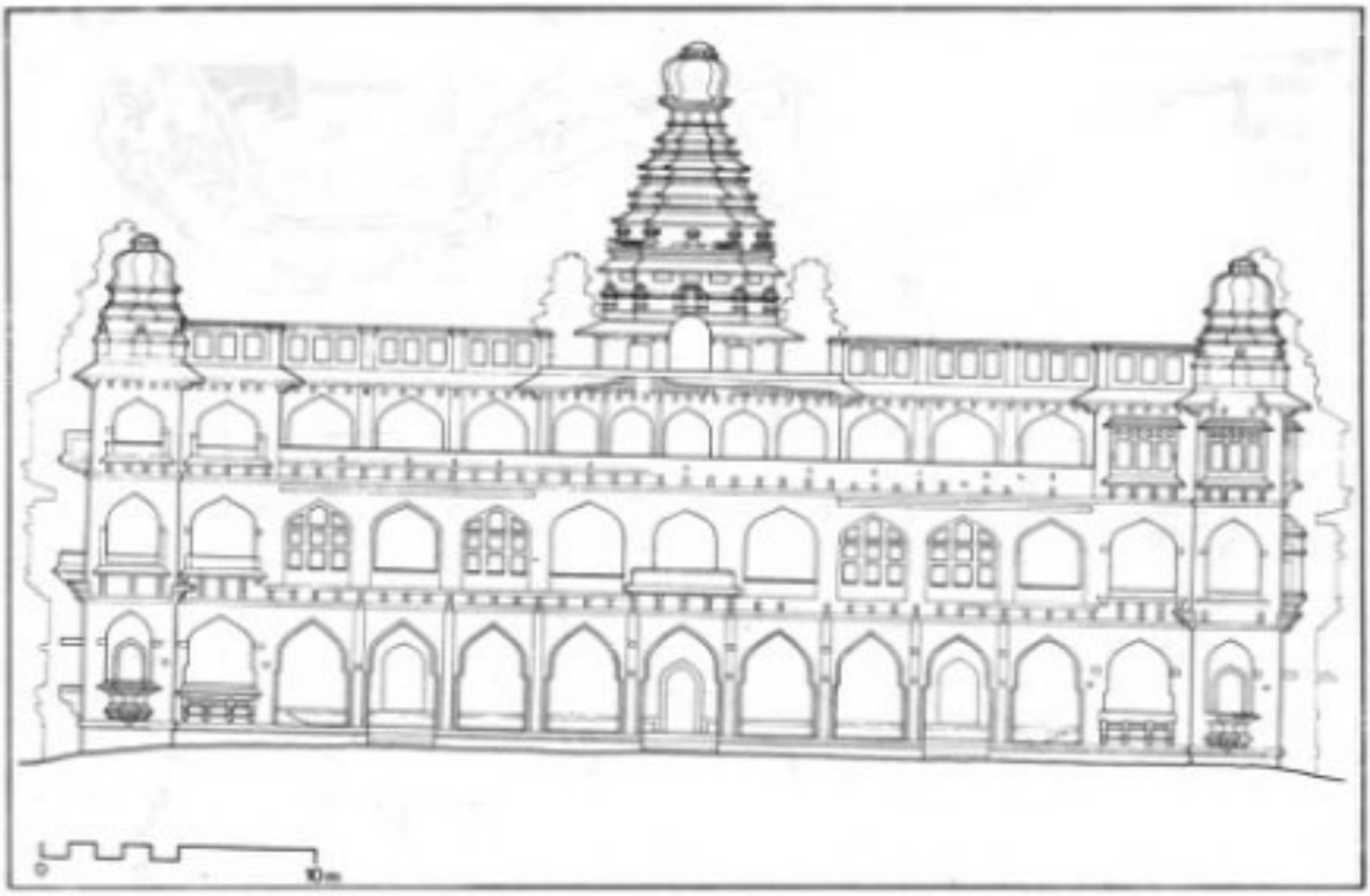

84. The double storied Raja Mahal at Chandragiri in Hampi, Bellary district, is an exquisite example of the influence of Bahmani and Adilshahi art and architecture on a post- Hoysala style.

grains and other agricultural produce. **The grain market quickly replaced all other goods and the grain merchant emerged as the most powerful among the trading community. Thus the Virabanajigas who formerly led the Right Hand caste guild were replaced by the Salu-Mule Banajigas who specialised in the trade of agricultural products.** B Muddachari says: *"Veerabanajigas were dominant in the eleventh and twelfth centuries especially in North Karnataka. But after the fourteenth century, the Salu-Mule Banajigas came into prominence."*[16] To this KS Shivanna while discussing about the trade in agricultural produce in Vijayanagara, writes: *"The merchant community of medieval Karnataka, namely Salu Mule Banajigas were very well organised during the Vijayanagara period.... We find the entire trading business of Karnataka organised and largely self-controlled during this period. The fact that Banajiga merchants from 26 trading centres had formed an organisation to protect their interests and for the purpose of dealing with the government of Vijayanagara reminds us of the existence of the Hansiatic League in Germany for more or less the same objective during the middle ages in Europe."*[17]

In contrast Vijaya Ramaswamy says: *"Textiles however were not a monopolistic item of trade of a specialised merchant organisation, they quite frequently formed a part of the general trade."*[18] Thus it is clear that the second most important item of trade after agricultural produce was yet to find a monopoly trader and thus the Salu Mule Banajigas prevailed.

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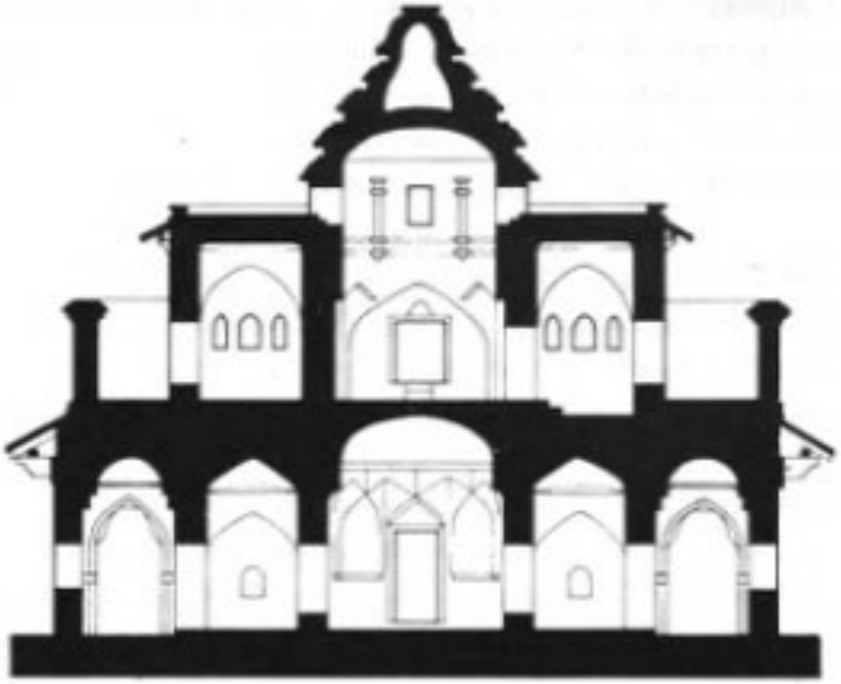

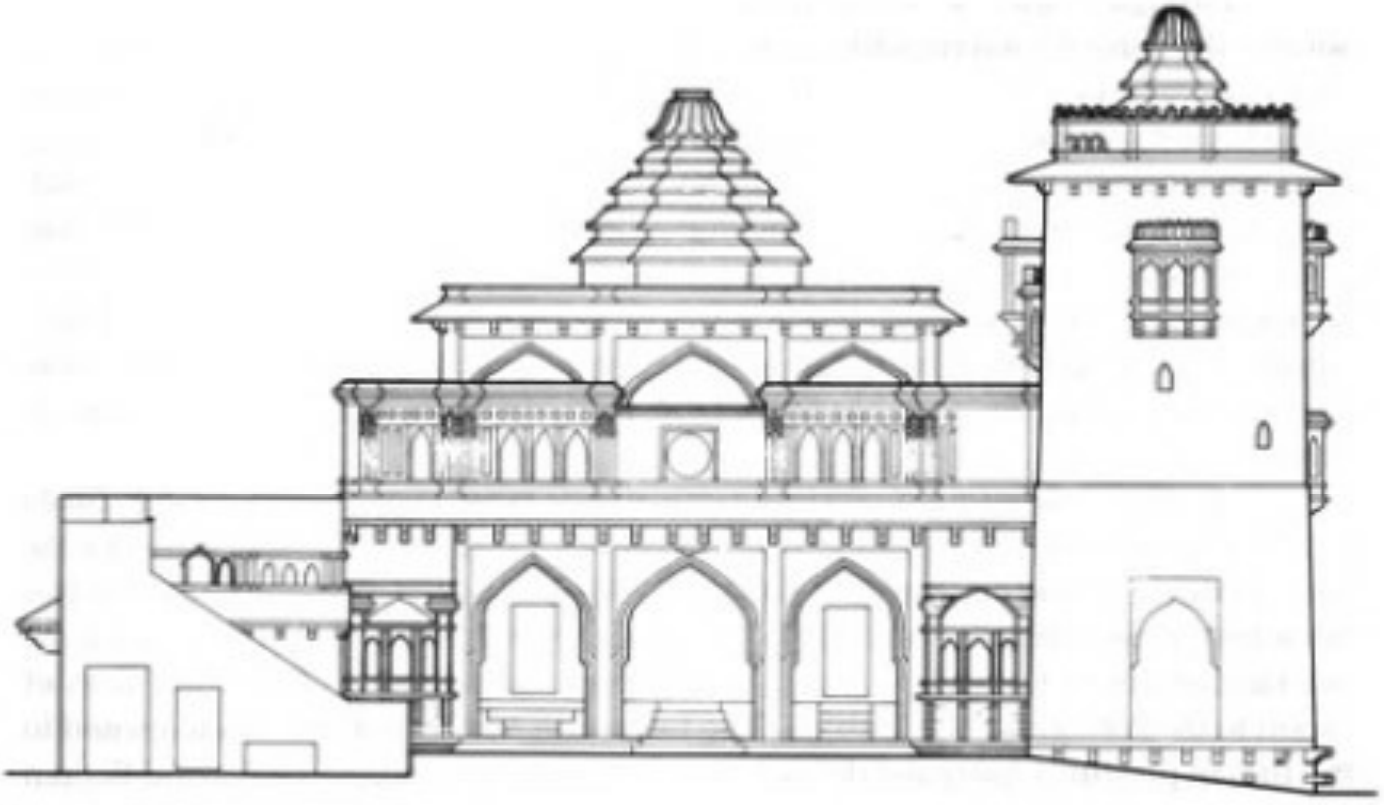

85. Elevation and section of Gagan Mahal, Hampi, Bellary district: another example of a blend in styles.

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By taking the initiative to establish santhes, the Salu Mule Banajigas easily got appointed as the Pattanaswamis, thereby coming to enjoy a position of privilege and great strategic advantage to boost their fortunes. Muddachari writes: *"Salu-Mule Banajiga merchants, a leading merchant community which mainly dealt with trade of agricultural products, had established santhes or fairs in 26 towns in the Vijayanagar empire."* [19]

The operations of the Salu Mule Banajiga extended to the commercial centres of AP and TN also.

Another new factor emerged with the rise of the Vijayanagara empire. Just as the Telugu Brahmanas migrated to Karnataka and TN and settled down as overseers to the nayakas, the Telugu merchants moved from the Andhra region and fanned out in the states of Karnataka and TN. Among them were the Komti Shettis and Balijas. The Komtis were the more prosperous among the two and came to dominate not only the mercantile activity of Andhra Pradesh, but in a way also spread out in the southern part of the subcontinent. About the Komti Shettis, Burton Stein says: *"In place of these older, prestigious associations of intenerrant and local merchant groups, the new trade context, based upon more direct economic control, contributed to the rise of local merchants—a notable example of which were the Komti merchants of modern Andhra who rose from modest local merchant status to powerful regional merchants under the protection of Telugu warriors whom the Komtis followed to all parts of the southern portions of the peninsula."* [20]

Foreign trade had assumed special importance, and constituted a major source of accumulation of gold and silver, what with a permanent surplus in value of exports to value of imports with the Portuguese. What Irfan Habib mentions with respect to the import of silver as a result of the surplus in overseas trade by the Mughals must have been the case both with the Adil Shahis and the Vijayanagara kings, both of which carried out an extensive trade with the Portuguese. *"We have already referred to the close correspondence between the import of American treasure into Spain and the silver currency output of the Mughal empire, a fact suggesting that the expansion of currency supply was largely based on the increase in silver imports. Almost the entire silver imported was turned into coin, as is established from general statements of contemporaries...."* [21]

Another significant advantage of external trade to the Vijayanagara and Adil Shahi kingdoms was the regular supply of horses and firearms from the Portuguese. Since the very existence and advancement of these two kingdoms lay in their horsemen, the two often competed to obtain a monopoly over trade with Portugal and contested for the coastal districts of Karnataka. Apart from pepper and rice, one other major item of export to the Portuguese was textiles. **The European textile market which opened to the Indian producer hastened the process of urbanisation and created a middleman trader who accumulated vast fortunes.**

In her book *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India,* Vijaya Ramaswamy writes: *"The development of certain factors during the period of Vijayanagar and Bahmani kingdoms leads to the inference that domestic demand for cloth, especially fine cotton, must have gone up. The process of urbanisation and growth of the professional and artisan classes under state and central patronage, which had slowed down with the de-*

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cline of the Cholas in the thirteenth century now began to revive. This combined with the creation of a new bureaucracy and must have led to an increase in the demand for cloth. Of the lower classes it has been repeatedly stated by travellers that they wore very scanty clothing because of the climate.... The emergence of a new bureaucracy, the Nayaks and paligars or palayakkar...must have also increased the consumption of fine cloth. The increase in the domestic use of fine cloth can however only be surmised and cannot be stated in terms of the actual volume. Since there were no technological improvements, the demand on the home front as well as for the export market must have been met by an utilisation of the idle capacity of the looms, or by setting up of new looms." [22]

In another article the same author says: *"A study of the inscriptions suggests that while some of the artisans—such as the potter, the tanner and to some extent the blacksmith—remained largely a part of the subsistence economy, the weavers, oilmen and even the masons and carpenters participated in the process of urbanisation...."* [23]

It would take a few more centuries for these other artisans to achieve their progressive independence from the hold of the feudal economy. Further, based on inscriptional evidence, she provides us with a list of 33 centres in Karnataka which undertook weaving As per her data TN had recorded 73 such centres while AP showed 24.

Vijaya Ramaswamy lists four major castes which undertook weaving in Karnataka. Of them were the Devanga, Padmasale (*Salika*, in Sanskrit meaning *weaver*), Jeda and Senigara. She also says, *"Dyeing had gradually emerged as an independent profession and reference to a tax on dyers is to be found in several inscriptions."* [24] However she does not provide us with any specific information on the existence of a dyer's caste. In all probability the emergence of dyeing as a stable and *independent* profession must have brought about the concomitant emergence of an exclusive caste of dyers about which we have references in a later period of history.

Vijaya tells us that during the Vijayanagara period several castes of weavers made contributions to the temples. Although these contributions were by and large modest **they nevertheless reflect the rise of the artisans in social standing.** However, it must be remembered as Vijaya says, *"Like weavers and smiths the artisans seemed to have come within the middle strata of society as distinct from the rural poor or low caste artisans like potters and leather workers."* [25] The artisans had not amassed any significant amount of liquid capital.

All artisanal donations to temples could become considerable amounts only because they were donated, not by individual weavers, but by **entire** guilds. Thus the artisans were basically an oppressed group, already falling behind in the race with the trading classes who constituted the Right Hand fraternity. However, Vijaya mentions of the emergence of a merchant section in TN from a weaver background. We may broadly assume that **this polarisation within the weavers was yet to accomplish itself in any significant way in Karnataka.**

She also provides us with interesting material on the role of weavers in the Left Hand guild: *"In fact whenever weavers felt that taxes were unduly high they protested through their organisations and compelled the state to bring these down. That economic*

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protest was a very effective instrument is proved by several instances.... As a result there were repeated strikes and enmasse desertions by the weavers. The Valangai and Edangai organisation also united in the face of oppressive taxation and determined the tax rate."[26]

The increase in commodity production was reflected in the circulation and minting of coins. Making a break with the past **the Vijayanagara administration created a central mint.** At the same time it allowed *"important feudatories and certain individuals the privilege of minting coins."*[27] Thus in the case of Vijayanagara, reflecting very precisely its political structure, a situation emerged where the centralisation of coinage coexisted with its decentralised feudal polity. Further, AV Narasimha Murthy gives us information which confirms the rise in commodity production which is reflected by the minting of eight types of gold coins, one type of silver coin and three types of copper coins. **The introduction of copper coins signifies the participation of the poorer sections in the relations created by the market.**

The Bahmani Sultans minted coins in gold, silver and copper just as the Vijayanagara Rayas did. However one significant difference is the assortment of copper coins which the former minted. In all there were 12 denominations of copper coins signifying therein the reach of the commodity economy.

The rise in commodity economy **introduced a new component in the revenue administration of Vijayanagara which distinguished it from the early feudal period. The tax base had undergone a noticeable shift. Revenue collections from non-agricultural and mercantile activity displayed an upswing.** Vijaya Ramaswamy says: *"Since most of the professionals paid their taxes in cash it is clear that the flow of money was not low, although the peasantry paid their tax more often in kind than in cash."*[28] Further, Syed Abdul Bari's study entitled *Non-Agrarian Taxation in Karnataka Under Vijayanagar* confirms this change to commodity production within a predominantly self-sufficient village economy.

As we have already seen since agricultural produce and grain in the main became the principal commodity of trade, commodity production in agriculture must have received a significant boost. This rise in commodity production in agricultural goods was possible only because of the development of irrigation under the Rayas and Sultans. KS Shivanna states: *"State promoted the cultivation of wet crops particularly cash crops like paddy, sugarcane, cotton and spices which fetched increased amount of revenue through the construction of irrigation works like canals, tanks and wells and through reclamation of wastelands. Temples, village assemblies and private individuals did not lag behind in this task.... Such a policy helped peasants to increase yield and the state received increased amount of land revenue because the principle was that wet lands should pay more than dry lands.*

Moreover, the cultivation of paddy, sugarcane, coconut, arecanut, betel leaves, pepper and cardamom on arable lands like gadde, tota, nirarambha and the production of two crops a year, namely karthika and vaishaka, were possible only with the help of extensive irrigation facilities."[29]

Thus state sponsorship and feudal sponsorship of irrigational activity was undertaken because, on the one hand it fetched them extensive revenues and on the other it

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satisfied their own consumption requirements. However an important development in this regard was that **the merchant class,** particularly the Salu Mule Banajiga, **took a keen interest in undertaking irrigational activity.** As a result of this widespread interest by the ruling classes and rising merchants, **most tanks that came to be constructed in Karnataka belong to the Vijayanagara period.**[30]

The spread of tank construction led to a classification of these tanks into the *kere* (big tank) and *katte* (small tank). The undulating landscape of Karnataka is very fine topography for tank construction. However, as one moves eastwards from the Western Ghats the undulation gradually decreases and transforms into plain territory in the North Maidan. While it is comparatively easy to construct tanks in the area adjacent to the Malnad or in the South Maidan, the northern plains pose a challenge. Tank construction in this area inevitably entails extensive masonry and large structures. This challenge was taken up by Vijayanagara. Irfan Habib describes the construction of one such kere or reservoir. *"Tanks or reservoirs played an important role as sources of land revenue in central India, the Deccan and southern India. Archaeological remains attest to the massiveness of dams and the ingenious arrangement of sluices for letting out water. The description of the remains of the Madag lake created by the Vijayanagar emperors during the fifteenth or sixteenth century furnishes us with a valuable glimpse of traditional civil engineering at its best.*

'The maker of the lake intended to close the gap in the hills through which the Kumudvathi feeder of the Tungabhadra flows into Kod.... This was accomplished by throwing up an earthen embankment, now about 800 feet thick at the base and 100 feet high faced towards the lake with huge stone blocks descending in regular steps from the crest of the embankment to the water's edge. Two similar embankments were also thrown across other gaps in the hills to the right and left of Kumudvathi valley to prevent the pent-up waters escaping from them, and a channel was cut along the hills for the overflow of the lake when it had risen into the intended height. When full this lake must have been 10 to 15 miles long and must have supplied water for the irrigation of a very large area.... Each of the three embankments was provided with sluices built of huge slabs of hewn stones for the irrigation of the plains below, and two of these remains perfect as when they were built. These sluices were built on the same principle as other old Hindu local sluices, a rectangular masonry channel through the dam closed with a perforated stone fitted with a wooden stopper. But, as the sluices had to be in proportion to the size of the lake, instead of the small stone pillars, which in ordinary works carried the platform of the stopper, the supports were formed of single stones weighing about 20 tonnes each'. (Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency) The Madag lake was not an exception...."[31]

The amount of civil engineering and hydraulic engineering required for this feat speaks of the importance the ruling class attached to this sphere of productive activity.

CTM Kotraiah's *Irrigation Systems Under Vijayanagara Empire* brings to focus the irrigation marvels under Vijayanagara, and the genius of men like Mudda, initially a cowherd, who out of his civil engineering feats ultimately was honoured as Mudda-Dandanayaka. Particularly during the time of Krishnadevaraya who ruled from 1509 to

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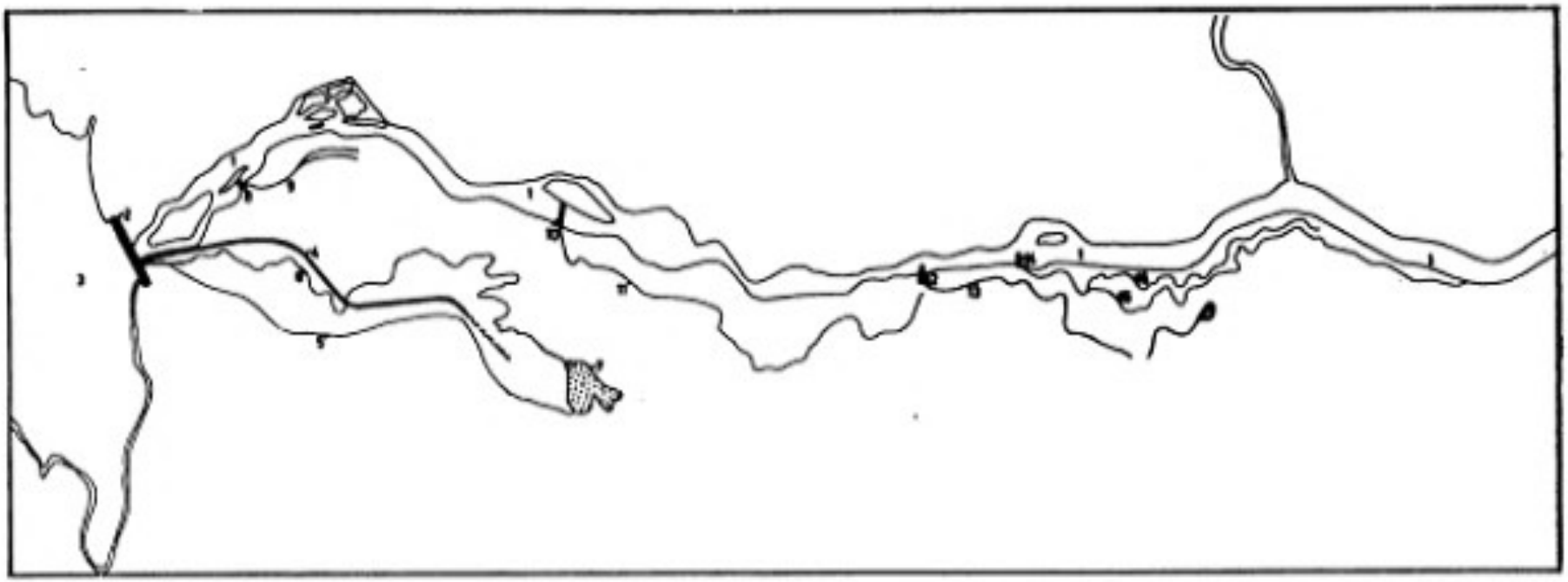

86. Vijayanagara anecuts and their canals in Bellary district.
(1) Tungabhadra river.
(2) Modern Tungabhadra dam.
(3) Modern Tungabhadra reservoir (Pampa Sagar).
(4) Modern canal from modern Tungabhadra reservoir.
(5) Basavannacanal (originally from Vallabhapur anecut).
(6) Raya canal (originally from Ramanna/Kurudagadda anecut).
(7) Kamalapura tank.
(8) Hosur/Bella anecut.
(9) Bella canal.
(10) Turthu anecut.
(11) Turthu canal (originally called Hiriya Kaluve).
(12) Ramasagara anecut.
(13) Ramasagara canal.
(14) Kampli anecut.
(15) Kampli canal and Delugoduballa canal.

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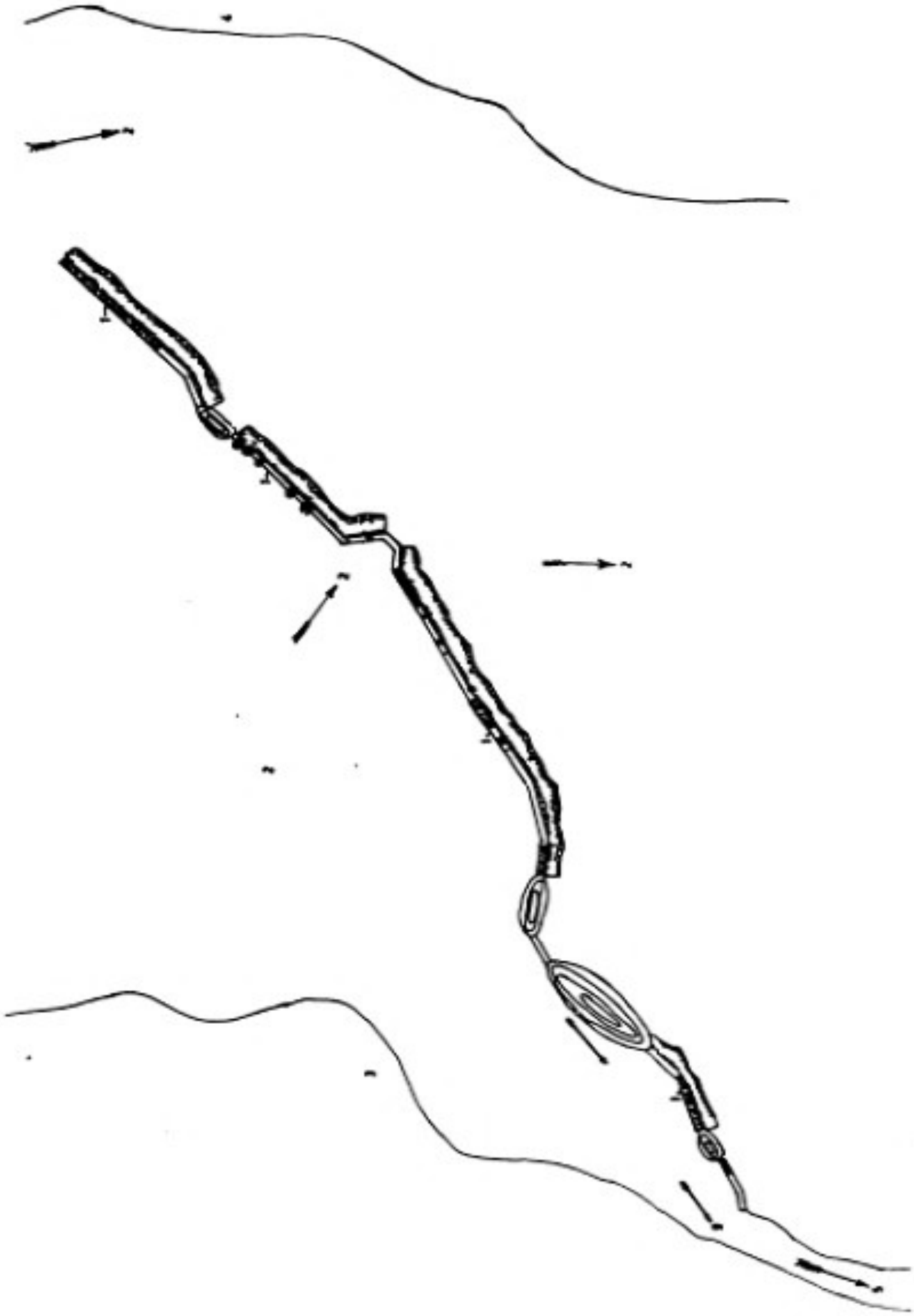

87. Ramasagara anecut details. (1) Anecut. (2) Tungabhadra river flow. (3) Right bank. (4) Left bank. (5) Ramasagara canal flow.

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1529 eighteen anicuts alone were constructed across the Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers in the three districts of Bellary, Raichur and Kurnool. Eye witness accounts explain that there were from 15,000 to 20,000 people at work at the Rayara Kere near Hospet.[32]

Providing details of the construction of anicuts, CTM Kotraiah writes: *"Invariably, the anicuts were all built of large, massive stones, granite ones, quite often cut ones. At times uncut ones, big boulders were also used along with the cut ones, wherever necessary. The cut granite members resembled heavy and long beams each weighing several tons, like the ones generally seen in the Vijayanagara buildings and forts walls. Their sizes are of such dimensions and weight, one is wonder struck at the way they might have been handled, transported and placed in required positions at the sites of the anicuts, particularly when they did not have the mechanical devices of the modern days. Those huge stones were piled one over the other, heavier and bigger ones forming the lower courses and the lighter ones forming the upper courses of the anicut-walls. The arrangement of the stones was in such a way, that only their sectional faces braved the current and not the long arm or the body of them. That was an important point of engineering technology, adopted in the construction of river-anicuts, by builders of the Vijayanagara period. That arrangement enabled those members to stand firmly and breast the velocity of the current. As a rule, no lime-mortar was used to fill up the gaps between the joints of those big stones, though use of it was very well known. The edges of the stones were so perfectly cut and dressed, that they could accommodate other stone or stones quite perfectly leaving least space at the joints and there used to be no room for binding materials. Those features can easily be seen in the still existing fort-walls of the period. Of course lime-mortar or lime-concrete was used by them where it was absolutely necessary; the lime-mortar or the lime-concrete of those days was of such good quality, that even now it is effectively serving the purpose originally intended to and their remnants are seen here and there, even now.*

The river anicuts did not have deep foundations, since they had selected such sites where natural sheet-rock was available in the bed of the river. Grooves of required sizes were cut into the sheet-rock and then massive stones of the lowest course were fixed into them. Use of iron or stone clamps to keep the members in strong position, was also known, as can be made out from the remains seen at places. At some places, square holes were cut into the bed of the rock behind anicut-walls into which were fixed cut stone, iron or wooden pegs which were to offer additional strength to the stone members of the anicut-walls and protect them from getting dislodged by the thrust of the water, particularly during the time of heavy floods and rains. The size and weight of the stones were the other factors which made them survive to this day.

The lay-out of the anicut-wall was rarely straight, while going across the width of the river. Quite often, the anicuts were constructed in parts, in between the big boulders, rocks, hillocks, river-islands and so on to make them complete.... And naturally it was in so many curves and turns. At times the anicuts ran diagonally across the river for easy diversion of water into the canal. There were instances when the anicut walls did not run up to the other bank; they stopped half-way, at points where required quantity of the water could be diverted through the canals for the required purposes; at the same time

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by not attempting to block the whole flow of water, the safety of the anicut-structures was ensured. The very fact that they are serving the needs of the agriculturists of that region, even after the lapse of more than five hundred years since their original construction, is affirmative of the highly developed irrigation technology of the period. They are feats of major accomplishments....

Non-use of lime-mortar, as a binding media, has been referred above. That factor also offered certain technical advantages in the functioning and maintaining of those structures. The joints were not water-tight. Some quantity of water escaped through those joints. With that arrangement the silt that came along with the water, particularly with the freshes during monsoons, was allowed to escape through those joints along with the water and all along the structure throughout the year. That was besides the silt passing over the not too high wall, during the monsoons along with flood-water, over-flowing. On account of all those factors, the Vijayanagara anicuts never got silted up fully. At the same time, those anicuts could retain the water up to the desired height behind the structures and divert that water through the canals dug on the banks, to the cultivated lands."[33]

Similar in grandeur was the Adil Shahi engineering marvel by which they fetched water to their capital Bijapur. Henry Cousens gives us a graphic explanation of this: "*We find the provision for (the storage) of water was not neglected; and the plentiful distribution of tanks or reservoirs, wells and water towers, together with a great ramification of water pipes and aqueducts, shows how keenly alive the Adil Shahis were to the due provision for these needs. The immense population crowded into Bijapur during the reigns of Ibrahim II, Muhammad and Ali II required a great deal of water....*

88. The inscription on water tower no. 67 a little north to the tomb of Ali I in Bijapur.

Fortunately, Bijapur has water near the surface, and wells were sunk everywhere. These may have sufficed for the ordinary needs of the people. The only way to get water in larger quantities was to bring it from great reservoirs located upon higher ground without the city. Some of these exist to the present day, though their connections are either completely mined or sadly out of repair. Nevertheless, some of the pipes are still working. One of these large reservoirs was the Begum Talao to the south of the town,

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from which water was brought through earthen pipes. These were in short lengths, made with a flange at one end and imbedded firmly in concrete. In some cases the pipes have a narrow neck at one end to fit into the next. At intervals along the lengths of piping were built lofty square water towers, intended as traps to intercept silt and prevent the pipes being choked, as well as to relieve the pressure in the pipes. The inlet pipe enters the tower at a comparatively low level, whereas the take off pipe leaves it at a much higher level, carrying off the clearer water from which the silt has subsided. The towers, no doubt, were periodically cleared out. Some of the larger towers in the town are distributing centres; and from one of these alone, that on the one side of the Mecca Masjid, upwards of 70 pipes lead away in different directions amongst the buildings in the citadel.

From the Surang Bauri, near Torweh, water was brought towards the city by a great subterranean tunnel. At the Bauri, near the Khan Sarovar at Afzal Khan's wife's tomb, it may be seen how down in the north side of the well was a masonry tunnel with an arched top, curving rapidly round to the eastward. It then makes a beeline for the Moti Darga, where it deflects more to the east, and passes beneath the gardens of the Ibrahim Rauza enclosure. To this point its direction is easily traced by the manholes, or air shafts, placed at frequent intervals along its course. For the greater part of its length, it is roughly cut through the murum, or disintegrated rock, the water being in some parts over 60 feet below the surface. A curious thing at first sight, about this tunnel, is that it is built up with masonry upon one side only. The reason for this is that the strata of rock and murum through which it passes, dip from south to north, so that the water percolating down through the strata is interrupted and falls into the tunnel where it is diverted towards the city, the opposite side of the tunnel being concreted to prevent its escape. It is thus a catchment tunnel, for the small well the Surang Bauri from which it starts—could not, of course, supply any quantity of water. As far as can at present be gathered, the tunnel appears to have entered the city by the Mecca Gate, and then to have branched off in different directions, one branch steering westward through the old palace of Khawass Khan, thence under the road in front of the Taj Bauri, being probably connected with it by pipes (in the north east corner of the Bauri nearest the tunnel is a perennial flow of water into the tank which probably comes from the tunnel), on to the garden at Khawass Khan's tombs (the Jod Gumbaz), and thence along the road on the south side of the tomb towards a spot on the south side of the road near the citadel gateway. Another branch seems to have started off in a northerly direction, possibly supplying water to the water towers between the unfinished tomb of Ali II and Fath Khan's palace.

Three of these water towers have inscriptions upon them. Upon that numbered 67, a little to the north of the tomb of Ali I, is a slab bearing the following effusion: 'Let it be manifest to the intellects of those that belong to the noble profession of constructors of wonderful works and rare edifices in the picture gallery of the world that...the thirsty lipped people of the world may drink to their hearts content of this water, and that having become contend, they may always keep their tongues moistened with prayers for the ever enduring Sultanate of the Padshah, who is the assylum of the universe....AD 1651-52'."[34]

In a few hundred years since the commencement of tank construction, civil engineering fetes had surely traversed a long way.

ii) Haridasa and Sufi Movements

The Haridasa movement in Vijayanagara and the Sufi movement in the Bahmani-Adil Shahi kingdoms occurred at a common point of time in the history of Karnataka, had a common content and served a common purpose. Their forms however were different. What then were the objective conditions which threw up these movements. Let us concern ourselves with the Haridasas first.

a) Shuffling of Status

The rise and continuity of the Vijayanagara kingdom created several changes in social hierarchy. **Members of several non-Brahmana castes belonging to different professional groups rose to prominence.**

The nayakas who were the key link in state formation and revenue collection were composed of an entirely new section by the time the Vijayanagara kingdom emerged. After the Virashaiva movement one notices a distinct transition in the caste composition of the ruling classes. On the one hand there was an easing in the pace of the creation of agraharas. This slowing down proportionately reduced, even if it did not restrict, the rise of the Brahmanas and their percentage in the ruling classes. Secondly, the continuing process of granting fiefdoms during the feudal period which were basically military tenures, generated a continuous process of inter-feudal clashes. Particularly after the collapse of the Kalachuri and Hoysala kingdoms this spate of internicine hostility was spawned. The military element came to dominate the social scene and the ablest of the martial castes rose to prominence. The rise of the Bedas and Kurubas, two very significant castes of Karnataka, took place during this period. The Bedas were a hunting tribe and in a short time after their coming under the feudal mode, they must have emerged as a decisive element in the feudal armies and militias in several parts of Karnataka. While Kuruba chieftains had sheep for wealth, **both castes belonged to the non-landed groups and as such had little stake in the traditional feudal hierarchy governing the village.** The Kurubas had already made their presence felt by forming the Seuna kingdom which preceded Vijayanagara. The rise of the Bedas to power by the beginning of Vijayanagara rule was mediated by war in which they proved their valour. Hakka and Bukka, the very founding brothers of the Vijayanagara empire were Bedas who achieved their political aims by dint of their military prowess. Thus, by the time Vijayanagara was established the Kurubas and the Bedas in particular rose to the level of local lords possessing their own armed retainers and sharing military power with the Vokkaligas and Lingayat Gowdas who till then were the leading non-Brahmana component in the feudal ruling classes. Particularly in the districts of Dharwad, Chitradurga, Bellary and Raichur, all of which are districts flanking Hampi, this tendency was more pronnounced. These new recruits then constituted a significant chunk of the nayakas and the lower level feudal intermediaries such as the ballalas although the village gowda was a position which clung to the Lingayats or Vokkaligas. The importance of this new section which however could not use this power to monopolise land must not be underestimated. **They exercised a very strong influence on the polity** since they were an important link in the state structure without whose active participation, Vijayanagara would well have collapsed; since, as we have

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already seen, the army under the nayaka system was the basis for the formation of Vijayanagara.

The next significant group, knocking at the doors of state power was the merchant class. The Salu Mule Banajigas had well established themselves as pattanaswamis in several towns of the empire. Close on their heels were the Veerabanajigas who although displaced from leadership of the Right Hand guild, continued to have an important say in mercantile matters. Then there were the Komtis and Balijas of AP. In Dakshina Kannada, a wave of mercantile activity was initiated following Vijayanagara rule. The Gowda Saraswats, who were Brahmana refugees from Goa and the local Bunts, a section of which began to increasingly isolate itself from agriculture and enter into the looping coastal and overseas rice trade taking on the nomenclature of *Shetty*, arose. **All these merchants had grown into an extremely powerful class, what with the increase in commodity production. They began to already exercise tremendous influence in the urban commercial centres. This by and large non-Brahmana group was a powerful entrant among the wealth-owning classes of Vijayanagara, whose interests the feudal ruling classes could not anymore afford to dismiss.**

The Panchacharis and weavers were the third significant group to emerge in Vijayanagara. The Panchacharis included the goldsmith, silversmith, blacksmith, coppersmith and carpenter. Of the artisans, we have already seen how they began to assert themselves by making donations to temples. These artisans, in the main, constituted a significant chunk of the rising urban population, and even by sheer number their presence was increasingly felt in the cities.

The fourth group was a new class of commodity producers emerging from the landed peasant castes, the Vokkaligas and Lingayats. With agricultural products becoming an important commodity in the market, the rising role of these commodity producers must be grasped. A new commodity producing section with close ties with the feudal landlords began to emerge from among the Lingayats and Vokkaligas.

In addition, there was a fifth factor, that of the Right Hand-Left Hand castes. The rise in commodity production further accentuated this conflict. Vijayanagara is replete with inscriptions of their mutual struggles. The increasing importance of this conflict even led to intervention of the nayakas to settle disputes between them.[36]

The emergence of these supra-caste guilds provided for a rise in status of all those castes associated with these guilds. Even Holeyas, associated with the Right Hand guild, find recognition of their new found status in inscriptions of that period.[37]

Thus we have a situation where **new elements from the Shudra castes entered the ruling feudal nobility and contested Brahmana monopoly. On the other hand there was a situation of an awakening among the Shudra masses in which weavers were numerically the largest component.** Kosambi summed up this contradiction when he said: *"The real struggle was between the great feudal nobility and the new small landowners, say essentially between feudalism from above and that from below. The latter won eventually."*[38]

Thus there was a growing contradiction within the ruling classes and between the masses and the ruling classes. **The Haridasa movement was a result of this conflict. It**

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was a movement initiated by the rising feudal nobility which wanted its stake in the affairs of the state and could do so only by basing on the strength of the new non-Brahmana awakening in of the urban and rural masses.

b) Haridasa Culture

The Haridasa movement which is said to have had about 200 *dasas* **was basically a Smartha Brahmana movement.[39] Except Kanaka, all the other Haridasas were Brahmanas. Most of the Haridasas hailed from the region surrounding Hampi which was also the very area which threw up most of the Shudra elements of the new feudal nobility.[40] Another feature of these Brahmanas who initiated the Haridasa movement was that many of them came from a background which experienced ruination. A few others also came from poor backgrounds. This factor is important in that after a long gap of several centuries in Karnataka, one section among the Brahmanas had come to experience poverty although it was numerically quite minute.**

Vyasaraya (1447-1539) was the founder of the Haridasa movement. He lived during the peak of the Vijayanagara empire and is a contemporary of Krishnadevaraya. Vyasaraya was the *"Kuladevata of the royal family and he founded many agraharas and was closely associated with the rulers in their conquests and administration...."*[41] and is said to have ruled Vijayanagara kingdom for 12 years.[42] Thus Vyasaraya was also the defacto ruler of Vijayanagara. Vyasaraya was the disciple of Madhvacharya.

Madhvacharya, born in 1317, was the next important feudal philosopher after Shankara and Ramanuja. Madhva was born in Dakshina Kannada, **at a time when Tuluva society was undergoing an important transition.** Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada districts forming the coastal belt of Karnataka is a region receiving high rainfall, has a topography which is highly uneven, has a land mass which is deeply serrated by fast-flowing rivers and has lush forest vegetation. All these factors combined to make these coastal districts the last to enter the stage of feudalism in Karnataka. Willie R de Silva says: *"...religious systems did not appear in Kanara till about the eighth century."*[43] Again he says, *"From the seventh and early eighth century onwards we have inscriptional evidence of Brahmanas being made grants in Kanara."*[44] Thus while commodity production had commenced by the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the other parts of Karnataka, the coast was confined to the stage of rising feudalism. It was only after the fourteenth century, after Vijayanagara occupied Dakshina Kannada and medieval Alupa rule declined that Dakshina Kannada began to see a rise in commodity production, thus creating a gap of about three centuries between this region and the rest of Karnataka. It was for these very reasons again that Jainism which was by and large assimilated by the rising Shaiva and Vaishnava faiths in the rest of Karnataka continued to prosper in the coast and the thickly forested Malnad. **In a bid to push out the Jaina feudal interests who represented the old ruling classes and autarchic feudalism, Madhva presented the genre of Dvaita which was in fact a compromise between Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Vyasaraya, a disciple of Madhva who wanted to effect a compromise between the old feudal nobility which upheld Shaivism and the rising feudal nobility which upheld Vaishnavism, chose the compromise of Dvaita in a bid to bring**

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about a rapproachment between these two sections of the ruling classes and thus consolidate the empire of Vijayanagara. After Madhva's death, Vyasaraya is said to have assumed the pontifical throne his guru left vacant.

It was the influence of Vyasaraya then which drew the various Haridasas including Kanaka and Purandara to Hampi. And, it was basically the initiative of Vyasaraya which set the Haridasa movement rolling.

Vyasaraya initiated the propagation of the religious ideology of the new feudal classes. It was achieved through the instrument of the Vyasakuta which confined its appeal basically to the **Brahmanas** and used **Sanskrit** as its medium of ideological propaganda. Its votaries among others included Vyasaraya, Sripadaraya (born in a poor Brahmana family in Mulbagal but who later went on to acquire extensive jagirs); Vadiraja (1550-1614) who was born in Huvinakera in today's Kundapur taluk, a Tuluva Brahmana who launched a major attack against Jainism in the coast and adjoining Malnad, and later went on to establish the Sode matha near Sirsi, whose rise must be seen in the background of the rise of Basrur as a city, what with Vadiraja having made extensive compositions in Tulu and having converted the gold smith caste of Uttara and Dakshina Kannada districts; and Raghavendra (who draws his lineage from the court of Vijayanagara and later united the two kutas).

Linked to the Vyasakuta but still distinct from it was the Dasakuta which undertook to propagate the bhakti ideology in **Kannada.** These included, apart from Purandara and Kanaka; Vijayadasa (from Manvi taluk who is said to have experienced poverty in his early life) and Jagannathadasa (also of Manvi taluk). **There were no doctrinal differences between the Dasakuta and Vyasakuta.** TK Indubai tells us that: "*Vyasaraya was the pillar on which both the Dasakuta and Vyasakuta rested. The aim of both the kutas was identical—to explain the Vedas through Dwaita philosophy. While the disciples of Vyasa explained the texts to the learned Sanskrit pandits, Purandara's followers explained these tenets in the form of kirtahanas in Kannada. The members of Dasakoota obtained motivation and were nurtured by the Vyasakuta. Members of the Vyasakuta participated in the realisation of the objectives of the Dasakuta. Thus there was no fundamental philosophical difference between these two kutas. 'Both say the same. They are branches of a common source. Their spirit is the same, only their languages are different, that is all.*"[45]

Thus it is clear that the Haridasa movement with its two kutas did not reflect any ideological division. On the contrary they were so divided as to carry the same ideology to different clienteles, as a result of which the forms of communication and the medium of instruction, changed.

Along with the rise of Madhvacharya and his compromise philosophy of Dvaita which was popular in western and central Karnataka there was at the same time, in southern Karnataka a broad revival of Srivaishnavism during the period, which gave a boost to the Haridasa movement—the philosophical basis of both, Dvaita and Vishistadvaita being Objective Idealism. This revival was represented in the rise of Tirupati which came under the control of the Srivaishnavites, as a cult centre for the people of the territories which Vijayanagara occupied and the symbol of legitimacy for the new non-Brahmana elements

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who were increasingly getting accommodated as a ruling class. **In other words it was a religious and ideological expression of the process of *feudalism from below*.**

Konduri Sarojini Devi in her book *Religion in Vijayanagar Empire* explains a noticeable change that took place in the ruling family by the later half of the fifteenth century: *"The early kings of the Vijayanagara were Saivas guided by the Advaita and Kalamukha schools.... However in the later half of the fifteenth century, Vaisnavism superseded the other religions and came to occupy the place of Saivism as the religion of the ruling house....*

The accession of Saluva Narasimha, a descendant of Saluva Mangu, the famous Sri Vaisnava general of Kumara Kampana, to the Vijayanagar throne in AD 1492, marked the triumph of Vaisnavism and its emergence as the religion of the Royal House.

His devotion to Visnu is expressed through the large benefactions made to the Vaisnava temples. Among them the Venkateswara temple at Tirumala received the larger share of the royal bounty." [46]

Just as Dvaita was a response of Brahmanism to the changing structure of the ruling class with new Shudra elements making their marked entry; similarly the Vaishnavite church which got a fillip, experienced internal division in trying to accommodate to the changing class structure, the rise of feudalism from below, and the struggles of the masses against feudalism in general.

Vaishnavism was split into the Vadagalai (Northern) and Tengalai (Southern) schools. *"The Vadagalais are so called because they favoured Sanskrit philosophical literature and the Tengalais are so called because they followed the Divyaprabandha of the Alvars."* [47] Thus there was a tendency within Vaishnavism which compared well with the Vyasakuta and Dasakuta division that took place among the Dvaitins.

Although the Dasakuta and Vyasakuta had no differences in terms of their religious philosophy, there was however a striking contrast in their audience—one appealing to the Brahmanical and Brahmanised ruling classes, the other catering to the rising Shudra feudal section while at the same time speaking of the poison of the caste system as it affected the masses.

Sarojini Devi's information is quite interesting in this regard. *"They [the Vadagalais and Tengalais] differed regarding the caste system also. The Vadagalai believed that the Varnashrama Dharma was essential for Bhakti Yoga whereas the Tengalais contended that Prapti transcends all caste and creed barriers. Even a man of the fourth caste is entitled to the Grace of God through Bhakti. Consequently the Tengalais who denied the institution of caste were more liberal in their outlook and practices and this had a greater appeal to the masses than the Vadagalai doctrine which adhered to the caste system."* [48]

The Dvaitins on the one hand converted castes, as we have seen, such as the gold smiths of the Karnataka coast. Sarojini Devi says that Vadiraja admitted *"to his fold many classes of people who approached him for spiritual uplift"*. The Mattu and Kota Brahmanas of the Karavali were originally Shudras who were converted by Vadiraja.[49]

Sarojini Devi provides evidence about the conversion of Shudras into Brahmanas when she says, *"special privileges and honours were granted to the Satada [Uncovered] Sri Vaisnavas in the time of Saluva Narasimha.... The Satada Sri Vaisnavas were non-Brahmanas belonging to the Tengalai sect of the Sri Vaisnavas."* [50]

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Further she adds: *Some Vaisnava families like Tatacaryas, the Tallapakams, the Bhattars and the Kandadais propagated the Vaisnava faith in the Vijayanagara Empire and were responsible for admitting into its fold the non-Brahmana communities like the Satada Sri Vaisnavas."* [51]

These newly converted Brahmana sections, the Tathacharyas in particular, as we learn from late eighteenth century Mysore that Francis Buchanan so elaborately described, had already commenced a movement of Brahmanising the rising Shudra castes and groups by conferring them with the cross-thread, vowing against meat eating and the creation of a *jati purana* for such castes. Thus there was a sanctification of the rising Shudra castes and the creation of the Sat Shudra—who although not Brahmana, were Brahmanised Shudras—new entrants into the ruling structure.

The Haridasa movement was therefore a response to these changes in the class structure. On the one hand was the contradiction between the masses and feudalism. This was the basis, particularly for the two leading exponents of the Dasakuta Haridasa movement—Purandara and Kanaka. On the other hand was the contradiction between the rising elements into the feudal structure or as Kosambi said, *feudalism from below* and the old Brahmana dominated landlords. It was this second contradiction, that is, **the new feudal elements which had the leadership of the reformist Haridasa cultural movement.**

The two outstanding representatives of the Haridasa movement were Purandara and Kanaka. Born in a Brahmana family, Purandara's father was a money lender and businessman. However Purandara and his family lost their fortunes, ravished by war. Kanaka who hailed from a Kuruba family of Dharwad was the son of a Dandanayaka or military chieftain under whom there were said to be 75 villages. At a very young age Kanaka was instructed in the Vedas and Puranas and achieved mastery over Sanskrit, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Alankara, Kavyamimamsa, Shastras and Grammar. He came under the sectarian indoctrination of the Tengalai Vaishnavite sect, his parents making pilgrimages to Tirupati often. However, war led to the eclipse of his power and a series of other personal losses moved him, as in the case of Purandara, towards Bhakti solutions.

The message of Bhakti which the Haridasas propagated had a dual nature to it. On the one hand it served the interests of the feudal classes, since Bhakti meant surrender and thus opposed struggle. It provided idealist solutions to real and material problems. For instance, *"The Haridasas believed that the soul has to pass through the Dark Night of Samsara engulfed with passion and worldly strife to reach the goal that is eternal and infinite."* [52] The Vyasakuta Haridasa movement always took care not to embarrass the superiority of the Brahmanas. **Purandara and Kanaka never accepted material support from the state, quite unlike the various other Haridasas who in a very short time emerged as landlords. The twosome mingled among the different sections of the people and thus tended to generate a good amount of criticism of the feudal order, which often took the viewpoint of the oppressed.** It is important to note that despite all talk of egalitarianism, Kanaka was denied entry into the very temple which Madhva and Vyasaraya had established at Udupi.

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There was on the other hand, as a result of this integration withthe common toiling masses a progressive aspect to the Haridasa Bhakti mission. In this kirthana of Kanaka for instance, there is a brilliant levelling that takes place. Priest or peasant, saint or soldier, king or scoundrel--the social pedestal is upturned only to discover that it is for the stomach that everybody lives.

"For the Sake of the Stomach Everybody Lives
For the sake of the stomach, for a yard of cloth, for a handful of gruel everybody lives.

Versed in the vedas, shastras and the panchanga
They sermonise; for the sake of their stomachs, for a yard of cloth.

The brave soldier grips the sword in his hand
And cuts to pieces; for the sake of his stomach, for a yard of cloth.

Hoarding in the shops they utter sweet words
And reap from such efforts; for the sake of their stomach, for a yard of cloth.

Iron share fixed to the plough they furrow hard soil
Ploughing, they grow, for the sake of their stomach, for a yard of cloth.

With sugary words they steal our senses
Reeling out stories they gorge; for the sake of their stomach, for a yard of cloth.

Crushing areca and gathering firewood
From such toil they eat; for the sake of their stomach, for a yard of cloth.

To the rythm and the tune of the thamburi
The prostitute dances; for the sake of her stomach, for a yard of cloth.

Sanyasi, jangama, fakir and diehard ascetic
Are only different garbs to fill; the stomach, for a yard of cloth.

The king climbs the palanquin and on the strength of its bearers
Gratifies himself with pomp; for the sake of his stomach, for a yard of cloth.

Condescending before the lofted Keshava of Kaginele
One worships from the conscience; for emancipation and for bliss."[53]

Kanaka's criticism could be unsparing. It even took to task the gods. The rise of Tirupati as the cult centre of the time and the special reverence that Kanaka had for Tirupati Thimmappa only led--him on discovering that the Brahmanas, and the merchants had fattened themselves at the cost of the lay bhaktas--to make a pungent attack on this deity. The effect of the jibe is captured by his creative imagination when he describes the

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deity of Tirupathi not as Govinda pure and simple but as Govindasetti. This kirthana is also an indication of the universal rise of commodity-money relations and its permeation of the sphere of religion; what with Govindasetti like a true shylock was engrossed on *"earning interest on every pie"*. **From being cast in the image of the feudal lord, god was beginning to assume the image of a miser, a money lender and a merchant.**

"We Have Come, O Govindasetti
We have come, O Govindasetti
To seek your prasada and blessings.

With sweet appas cooked in ghee
Soaked in sugar and cardamom
The rare hoard of kajjaya savouries
Setti, you sold away to chappan country.

In a potshred you ground nama to paste
For a price you gave everything away
You filled your belly and the food that remained, you sold,
Selfish setti, to procure ornaments of gold.

Residing in the shesha mount abode
With a fame spreading across countries, Setti,
Earning interest on every pie
You are Keshava Narayana Thimma Setti."[54]

Firstly, **the Haridasa movement recognised that any person, whatever be his caste, could seek god.** Inherent in this was an element not found in Shaivism. Of the 1,000 available compositions of Purandara who is said to have created more than 32,000, the following kirtana points to his negation of caste.

"What if, of any caste?
Let him be anybody,
if he has realised the existence of God inside.
If a sugarcane is bent, is its juice also bent?"[55]

Kanaka's criticism of the caste system however was more sharp, more consistent and more frequent than that of Purandara's. His *Kula Kulavendu*, and *Ramadhanya Charite* are only some brilliant examples.

Secondly, **the Haridasas' emphasis on the character of the individual rather than birth is a big change from what existed till then.** This content of reform particularly in Kanaka and Purandara who composed their kirtanas in Kannada has generated a rich progressive continuity for Kannada literature.

The emergence of the Dasakuta reflected the growing need for feudalism to undertake organised propaganda for the masses. The process of the entry of new sections into the feudal ruling classes took place in a context of a general historic tendency by the peasant and artisan masses against feudalism. **If this aspect was absent, the emergence of the Dasakuta would have been precluded and the need for feudalism to reach out to the masses would have been quite unnecessary.**

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The Dasakuta was therefore also representative of the antifeudal struggle of the masses. However this attempt of the Dasakuta was utilised by the rising feudal section which while attacking unaccommodative narrow Brahmanism on the one hand, at the same time sought to channelise the antifeudal sentiments of the masses by articulating only what was useful to them along the path of Bhakti, which offered nothing but surrender as the panacea for all social suffering.

The growth of commodity production and the gradual assertion of the peasantry and artisans compelled the ruling classes to adopt to forms of communication altogether new to them so that their influence could be brought to bear on the people. Thus we note that **with the Bhakti movement of the Haridasas of Karnataka mass communication in Karnataka also commenced.**

Willie R de Silva tells us of how the Yakshagana was appropriated from the peasantry and came to be wielded by the Haridasa movement. To quote him at length: *"Greater...was the success achieved in the cultural field in transforming the field drama [bayalata] into a religious one. The field drama celebrating the exploits of heroes and heroines and a number of other historical persons such as that of Queen Abakka of Ullal from the seventeenth century) was successfully changed, but as a subsidiary affair, to stage the 10 avatar of Vishnu. The name of the Drama itself came to be identified with not ata or byalata, but dasavatarata, the field drama of the 10 avatar. Its attachment to the cult of Visnu in Kanara and its predominance over the cult of Siva in festivity is remarkable and it is the secret of success behind the matha reform in Udipi under Madhvacarya and his successor Vadirajacarya.*

The first manuscripts of such adoption are recorded from 1565 AD onwards. These themes transformed the field drama in content from around the thirteenth and fourteenth century onwards, if we are generous in dating this influence, and the temples that arose around this time to prominence became financial supporters of these ventures. This supports my idea of the time when the Brahman transformation would become effective and supports my hypothesis of non-Brahman origin of the field drama itself and its thematic. It has been used to spread the message of Vaisnavism much like missionary groups use mass media of communication, not of their making, in the spreading of their religious message....

In most of the cases the ancient themes continued side by side with the new ones and the co-existence of both elements gave an amalgamated form to the title yakshagana bayalata: yakshagana, Sanskrit and byalata Kannada, Tulu and Konkani. In recent years the Hindu attitude attempts to interpret the total fact in a Hindu or, as they could usefully say, classical terms, but the local address of ata or bayalata has remained to reveal its origin and continuity."[56]

The Yakshagana which had its choreographic roots in the *Bhoota* ritual dance of the lower castes, passed into the hands of the feudal classes in the Karavali and Malnad. On the other hand, in the plains, the kirthana was the form which was adopted for disseminating the Bhakti ideology of an accomodative feudalism.

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c) *Changes Under Adilshahi Rule*

The Sufi movement in Karnataka started soon after the establishment of Bahmini rule. Yet, it was feeble and picked up only in the seventeenth century under the Adil Shahis. This is not without objective reasons, since Adil Shahi rule (1490-1684) introduced certain specific changes in the composition of the Adil Shahi ruling feudal classes.

The Bahmanis and Adil Shahis were originally governors under the Mughals of Delhi and Hyderabad. They formed into separate kingdoms by asserting their independence from Delhi rule. However by the time of Ibrahim I (1534-1558) the Adil Shahi king, this regionalism underwent a second transformation with the Sultan's increasing anti-foreigner stance. Richard Maxwell Eaton writes: *"Whenever the Deccanis had the political opportunity, as they did under Ibrahim I, they deliberately employed Marathas and Maratha Brahmins as a check against the power of the foreigner class, especially the Iranians. Under Ibrahim II, the kingdom's next anti-foreigner Sultan, the pattern was repeated and an even greater number of Maharashtrian Brahmins were permitted to replace the Iranian revenue officials then being phased out....*

The reign of Ibrahim II saw significant changes in the social composition of the kingdom's ruling class. The emergence of the Deccanis as the dominant ruling group can be traced to 1583 when Ibrahim's fourth regent, Dilawar Khan Habashi replaced Shiism with orthodox Sunnism as the state religion. Thereafter, enlistment of foreigners was discontinued.... The effect was to give the Sultanate a more indegenous character than ever before, as its ruling class was now composed of Dakhni-speaking Muslims who had been living for generations among the Kannadiga and Maharashtrian peoples. And as the Deccanis replaced the foreigners in the Muslim nobility, Bijapur's civil and military bureaucracies became increasingly staffed by Marathas, who formed the large and dominant warrior caste among the Maharashtrian people. The power of those Maratha families that entered the Bijapur royal service was based on their status as hereditary desais or district revenue officials in the north-western Marathi-speaking sector of the kingdom. Maharashtrian Brahmins first appeared in Bijapur's civil bureaucracy, specifically the revenue department during the reign of Ibrahim I .... "[57]

Further it is said that **Ibrahim II, the foremost of Adil Shahi kings, did not know Persian. He instead used Dakhni, worshipped Hindu deities and also developed an understanding of *Din-i-Ilahi* started by his contemporary, Akbar.**[58]

Nurul Hasan confirmed this process when he said: *"The establishment of Turkish rule created a new situation. The whole of northern India was brought under the political sway of one central government. The political fragmentation of the country disappeared and at least politically, large areas came into close contact with each other.*

The Muslims, at this stage, however, were still a distinct unit. Their political economic organisation and, their traditions were different from the rest of Hindustan. In order to maintain their rule in an alien land they maintained their separate existence.

At a time when the means of communication were not developed it was difficult for a central government to keep its grip over a country of such vast distances, split up by so many natural barriers. The empire was therefore parcelled out to a number of subedars or jagirdars, who soon began to enjoy virtual autonomy.

89. Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580-1627). Foremost of the Bijapur kings who used Dakhni and did not know Persian.

These governors realised that in order to strengthen their own position against the central government it was necessary for them to develop close political and cultural affinities with the local elements. This became all the more necessary because these provincial rulers had to face a dual conflict—conflict not only with the central authority but also with those local elements who wanted to win back political power.... Thus we notice fairly close relations were developing between Hindu upper classes and the provincial rulers." [39]

While these were changes that took place among the ruling classes, Eaton provides us with a list of 13 castes which converted to Islam from among the Kannada speaking **artisan and service castes.** Among them weavers were the most numerous and included the Padma Salis, an important weaver caste to be called as Momiuns and the Pattegaras or silk weavers.

Thus not very much unlike the situation in Vijayanagara, Muslim rule in Karnataka had obviously created a split within the Muslim ruling classes. There was the feudal-bureaucratic old guard which emphasised the need to maintain for-

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eign hegemony in the administration, and then there was that rising section among the Muslims who opposed this and vehemently upheld the need to open the doors of power to the Hindu feudal elements as well. This contradiction at the level of politics was to reflect itself in the language question as the issue of the legitimacy of Dakhni, just as it found an echo in the realm of religion by the growing contention for the legitimacy for Sufist Islam. The rise and spread of Sufism thus reflected the political consolidation of the new section of the feudal nobility.

d) Sufi Ideology

Sayid Muhammad Husaini Bandanawaz Gisudaraz, born 1321 AD, the best known Sufi of the time, belonged to the Bahmini court. He initially upheld the Chishti tradition of Sufism which originated in Delhi. The doctrine opposed the *ulama* or Islamic orthodoxy which said that nothing existed but God, with the argument that all reality was a borrowed fragment from the being of God, quite similar to the Vaishnavism that Ramanuja put forward or the Dvaitha of Madhva. However, Bandanawaz's compromise with the court made his positions highly orthodox. The Qadiri and Shattari Sufi sects taking on from their origins in Ajmer and the Arab world failed to sustain their independence from the court and by the fifteenth century reverted to positions put forward by orthodox Islam, thus paling out.

By the time of the rule of Ibrahim II (1580-1627), the various Sufi sects revived. Of these the Qadiri and Shattari sects moved to Bijapur and tried to reform the royal court of its so-called un-Islamic practices. **The Chishti Sufis, however, like the Dasakuta, moved out of the financial patronage of the court and took the movement among the urban and rural masses, Muslim as well as non-Muslim. It must be remembered that the Chishtis were composed basically of Deccani Muslims while the Shattari and Qadiri sects retained the Ajmeri and Arab lineages.**

If Shah Miranji Shams al-'Ushaq revived the Chishti order, Shah Burhan al-Din Janam and Shaikh Mahmud Khush Dahan were its major propounders.

"The essence of the doctrine taught by Bijapur's Chishti Sufis", writes Eaton, *"was that there exists between Man and God a hidden spiritual path (rah) along which the seeker (talib) or traveller (salik) journey's on his life's quest to reach the divine. Two conditions were required of the prospective traveller: one was that he be a Muslim or become a Muslim, and the other that he entrust himself to the guidance of a learned pir (guru) who would lead him from one stage to the next....*

The relationship achieved in the final stage, God as lover or friend, finds a parallel in the Bhakti ideal of a personal deity actively concerned with his devotees, characteristic of both the Lingayat and Vithoba traditions of the Deccan. On occasion, Bijapuri Chistis drew directly from the Bhakti tradition to illustrate their doctrines....

While Burhan al-Din went far in incorporating aspects of Hindu cosmology and nomenclature into his theosophy, and while many parallels can be found between Sufi devotionalism and Bhakti thought, it would be dangerous from this to generalise about the relations between Sufis and Hindu bhaktas, and much less between Sufis and Hindus as a whole. For one thing, the central ideas expressed by these Sufis remained thoroughly within the framework of the Islamic mystical tradition...."[60]

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90. Saiyid Muhammad Husaini Bandanawaz Gisudraz (d 1422) whose darga is in Gulbarga. The annual urus at this shrine by far, draws the largest congregation in Karnataka.

While the Sufis were influenced by the Haridasa movement, the similarity in world view between the two need not be a result of Haridasa influence, but a result of the common underlying social processes. These two sects expressed themselves at a common stage of historic development.

Devotion to God and respect for one's *pir* are the common themes of the Sufis. Just as the kirtanas of the Haridasas and the vachanas of the Vachanakaras, the Sufis adopted forms common among the peasantry in which they composed their songs. The *chakki-nama* (sung while turning the grindstone), *charka-nama* (sung while spinning

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thread), *lori-nama* (lullaby) and suhagan nama (wedding song) were the forms in which they made their compositions and which were carried to and repeated by the masses, especially the women.

The *dargas* which were tombs built for the dead Sufis **became an important institution through which the idea of Islamic reform was put forward before the people,** thereby opening the doors of Islam even to non-Muslims. The dargas were built by the feudal state or by wealthy nobles or murids (the followers of the Sufi). **Muslim women, particularly of the lower caste converts who were kept away from the mosque increasingly participated in the darga. With lay customers drawn from particularly among the women of the Dalit and backward castes, the darga gradually assumed the shape of a tantric cult institution where the *pirzadas*** (descendants of the pir) **took on the role of the tantric priest. They became centres where women congregated offering prayers for fertility. This popularisation of Islam which conflicted with orthodox Islam, just as the conflict between orthodox Brahmanism and the reformed tradition propagated by Purandara and Kanaka, was supported by the new feudal nobility since it increased the influence of the ruling classes over the masses.**

A significant contribution of the Sufi movement lay in the popularisation of Dakhni which had emerged as a language of the Muslim ruling classes of Deccan. Richard Eaton writes: *"Another aspect of the linguistic syncretism in this period was the spread and rise to literary status of Dakhni, the vernacular tongue of Bijapur's Deccani class. Dakhni developed in a similar way its close relative, North Indian Urdu. It is generally agreed that the early Muslim invasions of the Punjab (from 1027 AD) fused Persian with its heavy Arabic content with Old Punjabi and that this 'Lahore Urdu' then fused with the Delhi dialect, Khari Boli, when Muslim armies eventually settled in Delhi (from 1193). While the product of this second fusion, early Delhi Urdu, then continued to develop into modern Urdu, in the North under the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire, its earlier form, which had been brought to the Deccan by the northern invaders and settlers who founded the Bahmani kingdom, developed separately. Cut off from North India under the Bahmani and successor sultanates, this early Delhi Urdu developed its own regional peculiarities to the same extent that its speakers, the Deccanis, came to acquire a regional identity distinct from that of North Indian Muslims.*

Althougn the syntax of Dakhni remained the same as that of North Indian Urdu, and though Dakhni was also written in the Perso-Arabic script, its content differed from Urdu in at least three respects. First, it retained much of the Old Punjabi that diminished in the later Urdu of North India, causing one writer to remark that it is easier today for a Punjabi speaker than for an Urdu speaker to read and scan Dakhni poetry. Second, Dakhni more than North Indian Urdu absorbed a large Sanskrit vocabulary, probably brought in with loan words from Telugu and Kannada, both of which have large amounts of Sanskrit. Third, Dakhni tended to use much less Arabic and Persian vocabulary than North Indian Urdu, and the spelling of those Persian or Arabic words it did retain was often distorted to match local pronunciation patterns. In short, Dakhni speakers paid scant regard in their speech to the paramount language of Islam (Arabic) or the

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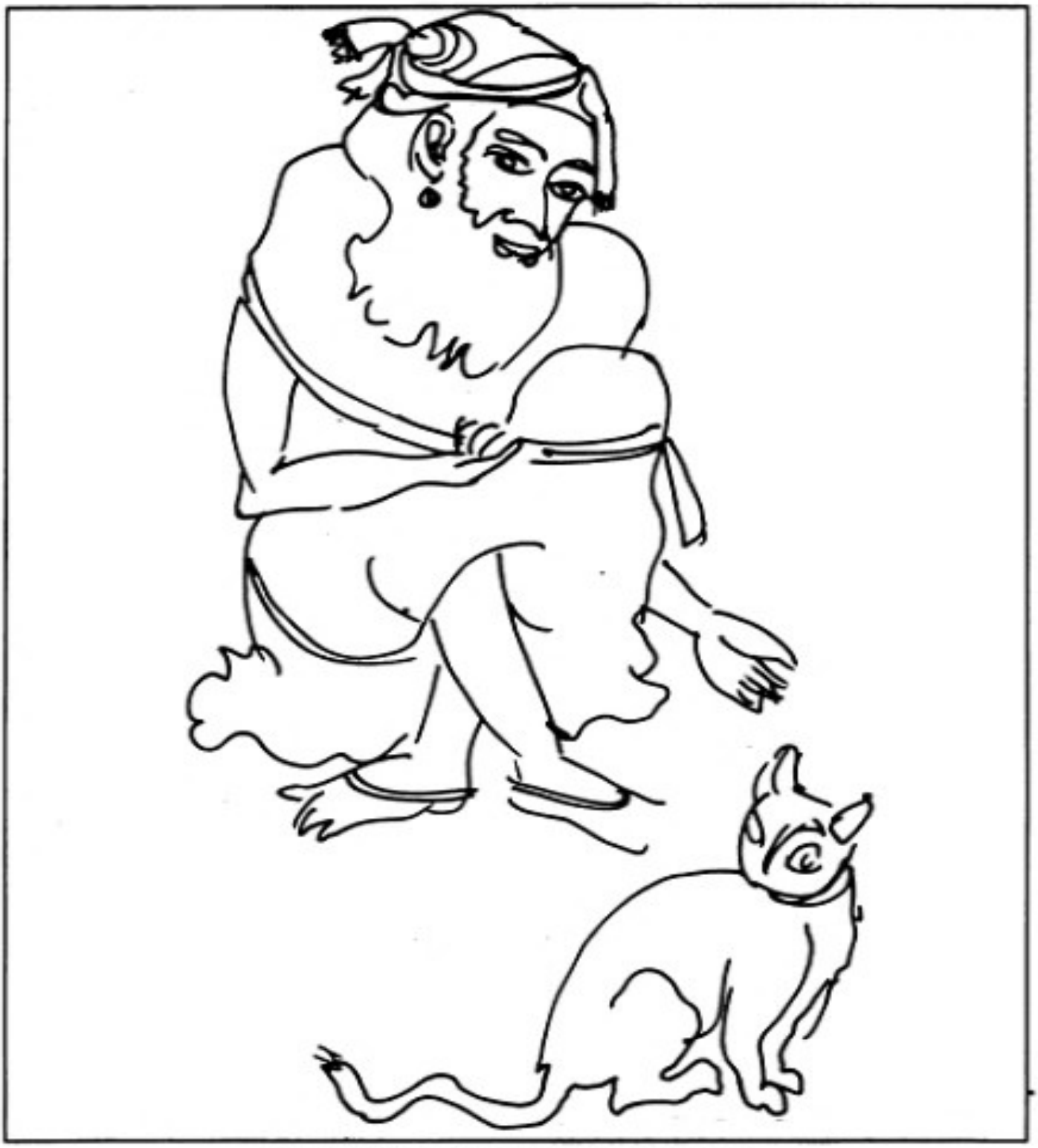

91. A majzub of Bijapur, seventeenth century AD.

language of Bijapur's foreigner class (Persian). The very name of the language indicates its ties with the region.

Unlike Persian Dakhni was not exclusively an elitist language in Bijapur, even though it was, of the language of the Deccanis, the language of the ruling class since the time of Ibrahim. But the Deccani class included both elite and non-elite groups: descendants of the Turkish settlers, of Arab traders, of Abyssinians, and converts to Islam. The last group usually emerging from among the lower castes, probably acquired increasing amounts of Dakhni as part of the process of their Islamic acculturation. In all probabil-

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ity, Dakhni was also known to those indegenous elements that had not already become Muslim in any formal sense but were urban or had regular contact with the cities and were thereby integrated with Bijapur's Deccani dominated markets or armies. The process perhaps paralleled the North Indian case, in which widening groups of Hindus had, since the eleventh century, become absorbed in the Muslim 'camp'—in the armies and markets—and thereby acquired a great deal of foreigners' tongue. In sum, Dakhni was the only vernacular language in the Sultanate spoken by Hindus and Muslims alike, though its area of influence seems to have been confined to urban centres, particularly the capital." [61]

The Sufis not only developed a Dakhni grammar and produced a literature in Dakhni for the ruling classes, the Chishti Sufis went one step further and by composing songs in Dakhni which relied on a great deal of Kannada words, popularised the new language of the ruling classes among the masses, thereby helping it to consolidate its rule.

The Sufi movement came to a sudden halt with the collapse of the Adil Shahis following Aurangzeb's conquest of the Deccan in 1684 and the defeat of the Adil Shahis at their hands. The Chishti Sufis once harassed and driven from Delhi in the fourteenth century because of their opposition to the ruling classes there, were once again attacked by the Delhi Sultans. The Sufis called the Mughals as *ghair-mulkis* with contempt. Their disgust with orthodox Islam and the old and foreign rule of Delhi is revealed in a chakki-nama composed in 1688 by a Sufi *majzub* which also throws light on the class roots of the Sufi movement.

"The 12th century (AH) has arrived and
Aurangzeb is king;

We have seen the sign
of the day of Judgement.

The orthodox leaders explain that
Aurangzeb's rule is just—

Outwardly there is benevolence,
but in hearts there is spite.

The regulations of Aurangzeb are
with the officials themselves.

They give us envelopes
and keep the letters themselves.

Low people and money-lenders
have become courtiers,

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And in the house of nobles
are only simple soldiers.

Under Aurangzeb's rule bribery
is everywhere;

Mean people have become governors,
and the qazi himself is called a thief.

Young pirzadas have lost their
social standing and respect;
Pawns have leaped to become queens.
Those who used to be nobles now
have to serve these mean people.

Khayasts, Khatris and Brahmins of
the army have gained much;
And dhoti-wearers, by virtue of
their iron weapons,
have become an estranged retinue.

North Indian leather-workers, Tanners, and
Untouchables,
Washermen, oil sellers and
Gardners—
all have become rulers.

May God damn the tyrant!
In this world he is an infidel;
In the next he shall be in hell."[62]

This chakki-nama brings out one other important dimension of the Sufi movement and Bahmani-Adilshahi rule. Muslim rule in the Deccan, covering parts of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, took place in a period of the ascendence of commodity production. By severing its connections with the Delhi Sultanate, the Muslim rulers identified with the local feudal nobility. This was a result of political expediency by the Deccani Sultanate. However, this nevertheless brought the Muslim ruling classes close to the Hindu ruling classes, leading to the emergence of a new composite kind of ruling class; a composite language, Dakhni; and a composite religion, Sufi Islam. The Muslim conquest coming at a time of growing market relations helped it identify with the big merchant classes of the Deccan region also, contributing to its growing commodity ties with the region. All these developments for which the Kannada territory was the centre, had initiated a process which could have eventually led to the emergence of a strong Dakhni identity.

However, **Aurangzeb saw to it that all rebellious Sufis were repressed. Those who remained sought inams from the feudal rulers and in a short while the dargas came to acquire extensive landed property and the pirzadas transformed into feudal lords.**

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2. AGE OF THE PALEGARA WARLORDS (1556 - 1673)

A. Rise of the Palegaras

After the defeat of Rama Raya the Vijayanagara king in 1556 at the hands of the Adil Shahis, the region to the north of the Tungabhadra came under the rule of the Bijapur Sultanate, while the region to the south of it remained by and large unconsolidated despite one or two major southern campaigns by the Sultans. While the northern part remained under the rule of the Bijapur Sultanate till 1684 when Aurangzeb conquered the region, we would here prefer to confine ourselves to discussing the nature of social development in southern and coastal Karnataka during this period.

i) Collapse of Vijayanagara

The sole cause for the fall of Vijayanagara has so far been attributed by a Hindu communal perception of history to the war with the Adil Shahis alone without looking at the other factors that contributed in fair measure at weakening the rule of the empire.

Firstly, **there were several peasant insurrections against feudal rule.** K Vishwanath provides evidence of more than 50 peasant uprisings which weakened Vijayanagara.[63] These were largely due to the heavy taxation and feudal oppression under the nayakas. Kanakadasa's kirtanes reflect this simmering discontent of the peasantry. In some places the nayakas joined hands with the peasants in fighting against Hampi rule.

The second internal reason for the collapse of Vijayanagara lay in **the feudal roots of its political structure which obviously militated against centralisation.** Burton Stein writes: *"Dissemination of this assemblage of militarily superior means not only made nayakas the most powerful local and supra local chiefs South India had known, but almost assured conflict between them and the Raya overlords of the macro region. Such conflict was an early feature of Vijayanagara rule in South India and is ultimately responsible for the decline of the state in the early part of the seventeenth century when civil wars rent the southern peninsula. Conflict between the Vijayanagara kings and the powerful nayakas is another element of discontinuity which is significant."*[64]

Thus the basis for the emergence of Vijayanagara, that is, the nayaka system itself ultimately turned into the very basis for the collapse of the kingdom and the fragmentation of the once centralised empire. The reason for this was that the forces of centralisation created by the Vijayanagara state was nominal and unenduring as it was based on a primarily feudal structure of fiefholders.

The nayakas, strengthened by the body of the kings troops under their command, artillery, cavalry and modern techniques of warfare, became an insurmountable force and a common source of dissolution for the Vijayanagara kingdom. **The defeat at Talikote coincided with simultaneous uprisings by the nayakas,** thereby paralysing and ulti-

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mately contributing to its break up. Further, the nayakas themselves had to contend with several such similar rebellions by the feudal vassals who governed below them, thereby further reducing them to the position of petty chieftains. Every other vassal assumed the title of nayaka and thus the entire southern and coastal regions of Karnataka were consigned to internicine warfare and feudal anarchy. Thus the rule of the palegaras came to stay. **With Hampi depopulated and no particular centre discernible, the next century and more consisted of this state of conflict and warlordism.**

ii) Palegara Rule and Realignment

The feudal layer which mediated between the nayakas and the village Gowdas emerged with their proclamation of independence as *the palegaras* of southern Karnataka. Each of these palegaras controlled anything from 10 to 50 villages. They maintained an armed body of horsemen and retainers. They imposed a levy on the peasantry, artisans and merchants in their principalities. They normally built small hill fortresses or *durgas* which preserved and protected them from attacks by neighbouring palegaras or in some instances from the people themselves. The dispersal of these forts was so widespread that a survey for Chitradurga district alone listed a total of 120 such forts.[65]

The civil strife which was introduced by the rise of rapacious warlordism gradually began to acquire a sense of direction. Vanquished palegaras were made to bow to the victors and were compelled to cough up tributes to them. Gradually at different points across the vast terrain of south and coastal Karnataka certain centres emerged. One such centre was carved out by the Wodeyars of Mysore. Shepherds by origin, while some others say potters, the Wodeyars assumed control over 16 villages in Mysore's Nanjangud taluk about the time before the Vijayanagara empire could be established. This brought them recognition as fiefholders. They based themselves in the village of Hadinaru, their original capital (*Hadinaru*, meaning *sixteen*). The Wodeyar vassals kept a portion of the tax they collected from the peasantry for themselves and despatched the rest to the nayaka who was firmly established not far away, in the island fort of Srirangapatna. Ruling over a region watered by the Kabini river, the Wodeyars put their resources to best use and in a series of offensive and defensive wars, after the collapse of Vijayanagara, took Srirangapatna in 1610 by ousting the effete nayaka who resided there. In 1630 they defeated Jagadevaraya, the warlord who controlled the territories of Channapatna, Kankanahally and Nagamangala, absorbing them into the Mysore state.[66]

Thus **by 1625, various such centres sprung up across the region.** Lewis Rice provides us information about the extent to which this process of realignment had reached by 1625 AD. 14 such stable centres had emerged. Among them the Lingayat Nayakas of Ikkeri had at least 40 palegaras below them paying tribute,[67] the Beda Nayakas of Chitradurga and the Yadava Wodeyars of Mysore were the biggest.[68]

B. Disruption of the Economy

The rise of the palegara state and polity only meant a thoroughgoing and reckless process of feudalisation. **The palegaras who now assumed absolute power became utterly despotic. This indeed was a period of feudalism at its rapacious worst.** The palegaras who

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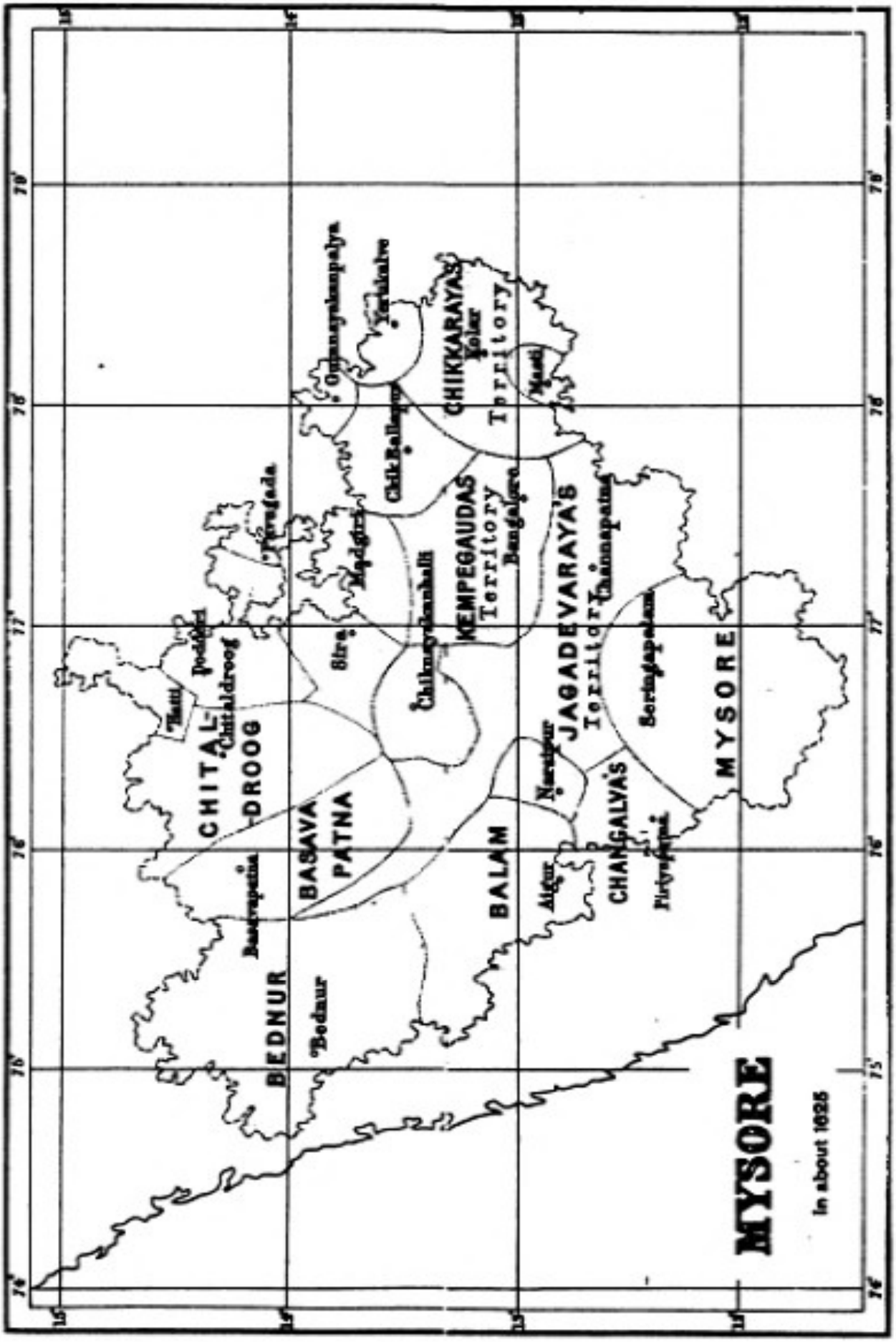

92. Territories of the major palegaras of Old Mysore in 1625 AD.

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broke into war intermittently and possessed with a very fragile and restricted resource base earned a good part of their wealth from pillage. While they did their best not to plunder the villages under their rule, they made it a point to loot the villages and towns which fell under the palegaras whom they defeated. Thus what meagre surplus was extracted was easily consumed by war. **It was military feudalism at its worst and it was the most serious crisis to affect the feudal system, incessant war weakening the feudal order.**

The targeting of people resident in the towns and villages of the neighbourhood led to a transformation of the landscape. Every village and town built a fortress around itself for which the common inhabitants contributed their labour and the gateway to the village was always a narrow low-lying entrance so as to check the marauding horseman. At the centre of each village a tower was set up resembling the ramparts of a fort from which the peasantry launched their volley of fire and issued stones with the help of sling-shots.

Reckless warlordism had a severe impact on the economy. The collapse of Vijayanagara and its replacement by unhindered palegara anarchism was a severe blow to the growth of commodity production.

Firstly, taxation increasingly assumed the form of physical extortions from the artisans and merchants who often had no recourse but to yield. **The accumulation of merchant capital was greatly hampered by this.**

The second significant impact was **the paralysis of long distance trade.** The Salu Mule Banajigas who had built up an extensive network experienced disruption and thus a severe setback and a fall in its fortunes. A similar fate must have befallen the various other traders too.

The impact on foreign trade was pronounced. Sanjay Subrahmanyam explains this very well: *"In character, Bhatkal in the early-sixteenth century was a fairly cosmopolitan port, dominated by Mapilla merchants where the seaborne trade was concerned, but also containing a large Hindu trading community and a sizeable group of Jain traders as well....*

The decline of Bhatkal can be traced to the late 1560s and must be seen in the context of internal events in Vijayanagar. The abandoning of that city by the court in favour of the hill fort of Penugonda after the resounding defeat received by the Vijayanagar forces in 1565, signalled a decline in the fortunes of Bhatkal. The port, as we have already stressed, was an important point of access to the sea for the large inland consumption that was Vijayanagar, and closely identified with the court of Vijayanagar, even if the coastal regions of Kanara, including Bhatkal, had some degree of autonomy from imperial authority. By 1580s, barely two decades after the decline of the imperial city [of Hampi], Bhatkal had been reduced in status to a mere rice trading port.... Even the Portuguese had by 1590 moved their factor out of Bhatkal and no longer collected their tribute there."[69]

The other major factor apart from the loss of a market, which affected long distance trade was **the precarious transit for the merchant.** The unsettled conditions created by rapacious warlordism disrupted mercantile interests by affecting the flow of goods and was pushing the merchant who was increasingly extricating himself from the clutches of the feudal forces back into the arms of feudalism.

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The blow to trade had a regressive effect on the production of commodities, by the peasantry as well as the artisans. AI Chicherov in his significant study entitled *India: Economic Development in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* says: *"The arbitrary rule of the feudal lords extended to many spheres of the artisans' economic and political life. The rulers could resettle large groups of artisans to newly built towns, suburbs, etc."* [70]

One source of constant irritation for artisan production must have been the unstable political conditions of the time. Victorious palegaras must have compelled artisans of the vanquished towns to resettle in their domains.

While palegara rule adversely affected burgeoning commodity-money relations, it however had a positive spin-off by serving as a discouragement to the process of agrahara formation. Perennially short of resources and confined to small territorial enclaves, the palegaras must have lost the enthusiasm and the strength to gift away rent-free holdings to the Brahmanas. However, they must have continued to pamper the Brahmanas with tiny gifts including minor land grants as a means to ensure their legitimacy as the sovereigns of their principalities. With the rise of several Sat-Shudra castes to the status of palegaras, this desire to seek Brahmana patronage must have egged them on to make donations, however not of the magnitude which Vijayanagara society had seen. Thus **if the trend of granting agraharas declined after the twelfth century and with the rise of Vijayanagara, it must have come to a near halt during the reign of the palegaras.**

Accosted by conditions of constant civil strife and repressive military feudalism the artisans, peasants and merchants fought back in various ways. Chicherov provides us with innumerable instances of resistance by these classes against feudal plunder. One *"passive yet widespread form of class struggle"* was the outmigration of these classes from the towns and territories which cost their fortunes to decline as a result of feudal oppression.[71]

Another form of class struggle which however was overt took the shape of united resistance by the Left and Right Hand castes against feudal tyranny. Summing up the class struggle of this period in which the merchants, artisans and commodity producing peasants had an articulate role, AI Chicherov has this to say: *"As can be seen the inscriptions speak of joint resistance put up by the caste unions of the Idangai and Valangai, which were made up mainly of community artisans and farmers, against various exploiters of the feudal exploiting class, notably, the Brahman tax collectors. The source materials thus contain evidence of a specific class struggle of village community artisans and peasants against feudal tax exploitation. This struggle was waged partly under the cloak of caste organisation, which was used to defend the interests of the working masses. It is quite clear that the village community artisans and peasants regarded this organisation as a social fabric able to fight the power of the feudal lords and support the rights and just demands of the exploited."* [72]

It was under such turbulent conditions of unhindered warlordism and resistance by the toiling masses that Sarvagna the popular bard, whose name has come to mean the *knowledgeable one* to the Kannada masses, was born.

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C. Sarvagna the Peasant Poet

While there is a debate on the exact period of Sarvagna's life and his year of birth, his *tripadis* clearly point out his age and class stand. RVS Sundaram's estimate of his year of birth is quite a fair one. He places it at 1575.[73]

Sarvagna was born in Masur which lies close to the Shimoga border of Dharwad district. His caste background remains unclear. While his poems tell that his mother was a Kuruba and father a Brahmana, his Virashaivite leanings make it appear as though he were a Lingayat. Sarvagna moved from village to village and inspired the people with his *tripadis*. His wandering brought him in touch with the peasants and other toiling masses of Ikkeri territory and he must have been a witness to the spate of palegara and peasant rebellions against Veerabhadra Nayaka the Ikkeri palegara, in the early seventeenth century.[74]

If the Vachanakaras were the poets of the artisan and service classes, the Haridasas and Sufis of a new feudal nobility, then Sarvagna was the poet of the peasantry. He often spoke of the travails of the peasant and attacked the feudal lords that hailed from Brahmana and Lingayat backgrounds. His poetry was a sure inspiration for the awakened peasant and by attacking feudalism he already drew up clear targets for the struggles of the peasants. One noteworthy feature of Sarvagna's tripadis was his frequent reference to the Dalits. He raised the banner against untouchability.

He opposed all forms of idol worship. However, he recommended the worship of what he called the *"God within oneself"*. This concept of god took from where the Bhakti and Sufi monist tradition ended and developed and refined it further by calling for a total break with all temple-centred, idol-centred and institutionalised worship. **Sarvagna was a clear departure from Bhakti.** He reflected the Bhakti tradition, a tradition which, despite its reforms extolled the toilers to serve their feudal masters. It would be relevant to remember that Purandara said:

"He is an outcast who
while being a servant
defies his master"[75]

Sarvagna comes clean of all such feudal hangups.[7]

The rejection of Bhakti was a clear sweep from the past and an appeal to the peasantry to do away with all forms of corvee. Sarvagna was an Objective Idealist. However, **Idealism in him was always subdued and his Materialism was always highly expressive.** Most important in Sarvagna was his style. He adopted satire. It was a vehicle with which he launched pungent attacks on the feudal forces. Ridicule was used as an effective instrument to pooh-pooh the Brahmana, the Lingayat and the feudal nobility, thus initiating an effective political attack on the unquestioned authority of the landlords. Ridicule of the enemy was a good starting point in the politics of protest and Sarvagna's satire was its popular literary reflection.

Sarvagna may be compared to the Reddy poet Vemana of Andhra Pradesh who was his contemporary. Both used satire as powerful literary weapons. However, Vemana was a peasant rationalist, who like Allama often attacked Idealism itself.

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Here is a diverse sample of his tripadis.[76]

This tripadi is indicative of the materialism that his world view tended to uphold.

"Where does the spirit wander after death?
To say the nether world
Is a mad man's rant, Sarvagna."

The following tripadis ridicule the Brahmana and the Jangama.

"If an ass rolls in ash is it Bhakti?
To apply ash without grasping the essence of the text
Is to become an ass, Sarvagna.
If dipping in water each day can lead to heaven
Why should the frog born in water and always dipping in it
Not go to heaven, Sarvagna."

This tripadi draws out his ideological standpoint. Here he is rendering the rich and their perception of the world as fictitious. He was in reality turning the world topsy turvy, or as Marx would say, making it stand on its feet again. The source of truth for Sarvagna, was the poor man's word.

"Truth in the poor man's speech is taken as a lie
But if a rich man garbles lies
The world believes that to be true, Sarvagna."

The following tripadi is one of his innumerable ones targetting untouchability. He always shows the Untouchables not just as equals but as being far better human beings than the upper castes.

"Between the Savarnas and the Madigas there is no difference
A Madiga eats what is dead
An upper caste eats the host who offers an invitation to dine, Sarvagna."

In the following tripadi Sarvagna targets all his anger at the Shanabhoga-Karanika.

"One who learned the accounts learned to eat the peasant
The karanika who wrote accounts
Only writes his way to hell, Sarvagna."

D. The Special and the Ordinary of Middle Feudalism

Spanning across half a millennium from the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries, the period of middle feudalism encapsulates the rule of the Sangama, Saluva, Aaravidu, Tuluva, Bahmini and Adil Shahi dynasties of which the first four ruled over Vijayanagara.

The significance of the period of middle feudalism lies in that it sustained all those new economic features that showed up in the last phase of early feudalism. The growth of commodity production, the spread of money relations, their impinging on agriculture, the growth and concentration of artisanal production, urbanisation, the growth of the productive forces, etc. **A new economic feature was the spurt in coasting trade and the rise in production in order to meet the demands of an awakening European market.**

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Within the ambit of the feudal social formation one could clearly witness in its economy, in its politics and in its culture; the growth of all those features that would come to finally contradict it. This growing self-contradiction within the feudal mode during the period of middle feudalism had its characteristic features when compared with the period of early feudalism.

The rise of the new economic features in the ultimate centuries of early feudalism, as we have already seen, assumed robust cultural dimensions and caused the outbreak of a political crisis and a groundswell of popular revolutionary movement. The new features born within and yet contradicting the feudal mode of production shocked feudalism out of its wits and sent a staggering jolt through its spine.

The period of middle feudalism however was less eventful. There were no focussed outbreaks of the Vachanakara type. Yet it would be wrong, just on this count alone to overrate the significance of the early feudal period and downscale the antifeudal tendency in the period of middle feudalism.

The period of middle feudalism was inaugurated by the crisis of early feudalism, the Vachanakara uprising forming a threshold. Responding to this antifeudal attack, the feudal system opened itself to partial reform and learned to accommodate all those antifeudal tendencies which arose in the base and the superstructure. The new dynasties that came to power and the new kingdoms they set up were compelled to address these symptoms. **It was this accommodation that provided an opportunity for these new tendencies to spread out and become a recognised and valid part of social life** on the one hand and on the other, it denied any opportunity for it to boil up and cause an outburst of widespread political proportions. If the last phase of early feudalism witnessed a **coagulation** and a **crisis ridden groundswell,** it may be said that the period of middle feudalism had a **sustained crisis,** the friction between the opposing forces was **continuous and lingering,** with feudalism **constantly engaging its sword with the disenchanted masses. This rubbing of forces became, so to say, a fact and a feature of social life;** a fact and a feature that came to be recognised by the Brahmanas and the feudal ruling classes themselves. Movements of the Haridasas, the Sufis and Sarvagna were spread out evenly. In contrast to the period of early feudalism when the self-sufficient villages knew no intenerrant merchant; in the period of middle feudalism such merchants travelling from village to village and linking the growing towns with villages became a common and regular sight. **Similar to this easing of taut feudalism and the spread of commodity-money relations was the spread and sanction of reformist ideas issuing from the lips of intenerrant bards. These wandering minstrels became as normal a feature of social life as the trader had become a common sight.**

It is in this sustained development, in the lingering and daily contradiction, in the quantitative increase of the new aspects of economic, social, religious, philosophical and political life that the significance of the period of middle feudalism lies. The special had become ordinary.

The collapse of Vijayanagara and the rise of feudal rapacity through its warlords in southern Karnataka **created the necessary political conditions for the termination of the stage of middle feudalism.** The objective strengthening of the antifeudal aspects

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in all spheres of society stood as a solid stock against warlordism and feudal anarchy. It was through the further resolution of these specific stumbling blocks that the period of late feudalism was inaugurated; a period which in the strictest sense of the term laid the foundations for Karnataka's bourgeois democratic revolution and the final elimination of feudalism as a social system.

Chapter V

PORTUGUESE ONSLAUGHT: KARNATAKA'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH COLONIALISM

(Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)

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1. COASTING TRADE

A. Trade and Topography

We have already discussed the geography of coastal Karnataka. A closer look is essential to understand the nature of its sea-borne trade. The highly rugged topography, thick jungle and heavy rains were a great impediment to the development of transport and thus commodity production. However, **this was offset by the innumerable rivers which flowed down from the Ghats.** These rivers flowing from East to West intersected the coastal strip at short distances, and most of them were navigable up to the foot of the Ghats. The rivers which opened into the sea and were sufficiently deep and wide thus formed an ideal means of transport. The Kalinadi for instance, was navigable for 35 kms as far as Kadra, the Gangavalli for 24 kms as far as Uppinapatna and the Sharavati for 30 kms as far as Gersoppa. Thus with the rise of commodity production a series of inland ports came into existence and the feudal chieftains always tried to exercise control over them. Further the mouths of these rivers served as ideal natural harbours. The rivers formed four estuaries along the coast. These emerged as fitting locale for the establishment of the ports. Mirjan, Honnavar, Basrur and Mangalore ports were set up in these estuaries. These ports serviced the upstream ports and in turn connected the 13 major ports along the sea board and also opened the hinterland of Karnataka to international trade.

"In the early sixteenth century", Sanjay Subrahmanyam writes, *"on the arrival of the Portuguese on the West Coast of India, the trade of the Kanara coast was largely centred around the port of Bhatkal, north of Basrur. This port was connected to the imperial capital of Vijayanagar...by a direct road passing through a gap in the Ghats. This was the road that most foreign travellers took to approach that city.... To the north and south of Bhatkal were numerous ports such as Ankola, Mirjan, Honnavar, Baindur, Basrur, Barkur, Mangalore and Kumbla. These ports were largely ports of call, in the coasting trade which dealt in rice and coconuts, coir, pepper and other products that were carried in open craft along the length of the western coast of India. Rice was the most important commodity carried in this coastal trade, at least in terms of volume; and the types of rice differed depending on the port of export. The hinterland of the ports north of Honnavar produced very little rice, and exported only marginal quantities. The central Kanara ports such as Bhatkal, Basrur and Barkur were exporters of fine white rice, while the more southerly ports—such as Mangalore and Kumbla—largely exported coarse red and black, as well as broken rice.*

Rice was carried both to the south (to those parts of Malabar south of Kannanore) as well as to the north Konkan, and to the Persian Gulf and even the Red Sea ports. Most of these Kanara ports were really engaged in the short distance and coasting trades, and it would appear that the longer distance oceanic trade was relatively centralised and carried on from Bhatkal."[1]

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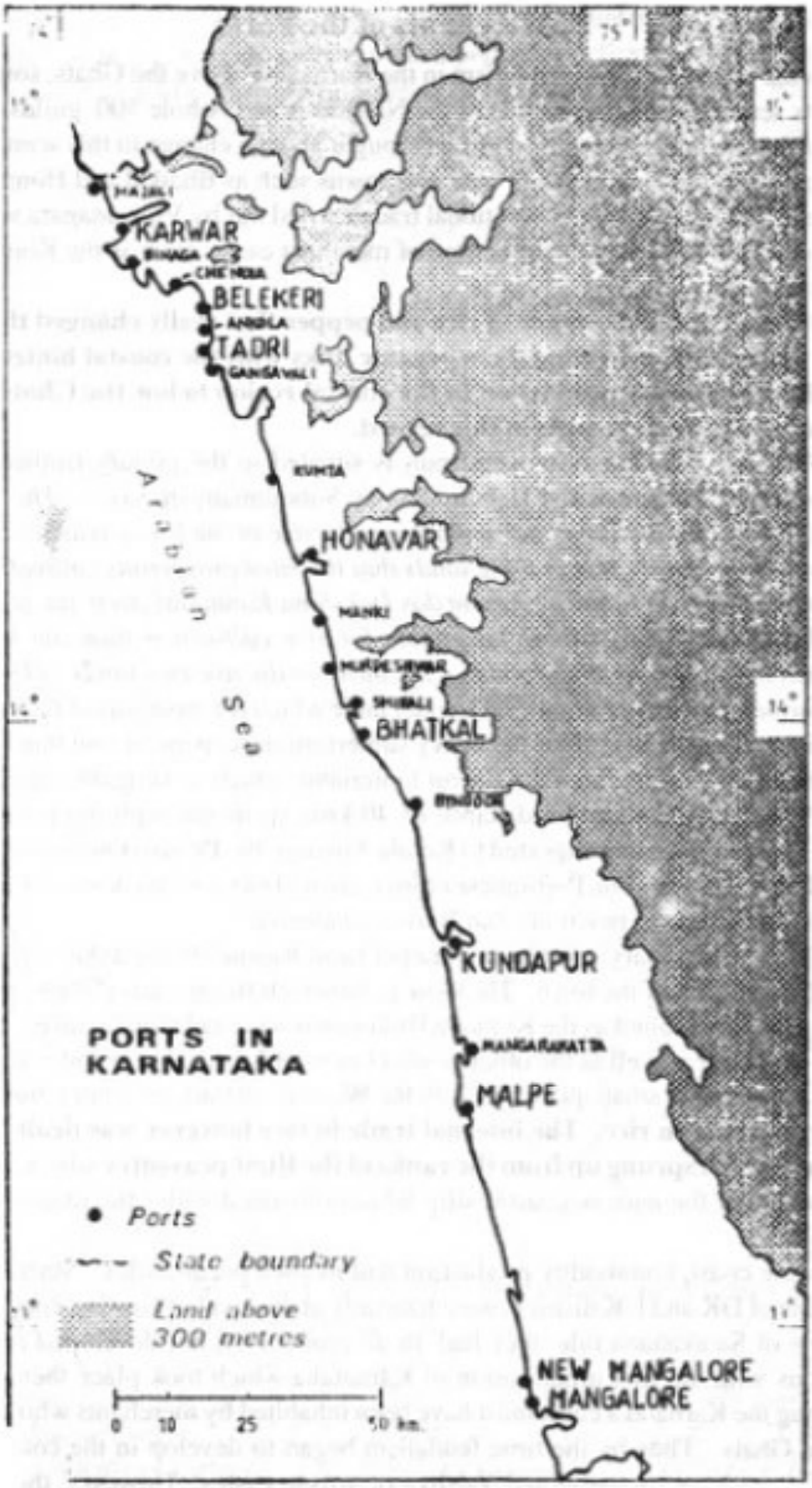

93. Some important ports of Karnataka.

B. Merchants of the Ports

In the period of rising feudalism in the Karnataka above the Ghats, some of these ports served the overseas trade of the Nanadesis and Aihole 500 guilds. However, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought about a change in this scenario. On the one hand was the emergence of new port towns such as Bhatkal and Honnavar which grew in relation to the international trade carried out by Vijayanagara with the Portuguese. This trade saw the migration of merchant castes such as the Komtis and Navayats to these ports.

However, **it was the trade in rice and pepper that really changed the composition of these ports, providing them organic links with the coastal hinterland and stimulating commodity production in the coastal region below the Ghats. Basrur stands out as an ideal example in this regard.**

The port of Basrur near Kundapur, is situated in the estuary formed by three rivers; Kolluru, Chakranadi and Haladi. Sanjay Subrahmanyam says: *"The cultivable land, which is a rich laterite is particularly productive in the lower reaches of the valleys, closer to the coast. It is in these lands that the most prosperous cultivation of rice is to be found. In South Kanara [present day Dakshina Kannada] itself, the region north of the Chandragiri river is more hospitable for rice cultivation than the south of it. Basrur thus lies in the middle of some of the most productive rice lands of India."*.[2]

Further, the heavy rainfall and a water table which for most part of the year is very close to the surface as a result of the heavy subterranean seepage of rain that falls to the west of the Ghats has provided the Basrur hinterland, which is navigable and approachable by the three rivers up to a distance of 40 kms upstream, with three paddy crops annually. Basrur's rice was exported to Kerala, Gujarat, the Persian Gulf and even Egypt and the Horn of Africa. The Portuguese colonisation of Goa and its demand for rice only increased the volume of rice trade that Basrur conducted.

This extraordinary spurt in rice traded from Basrur changed the complexion of the merchant classes of the town. The Gowda Sarswath Brahmanas (GSBs for short) of Goa otherwise also called as the Konkani Brahmanas who had already taken up trading, migrated to Basrur as well as the other coastal towns of Karnataka, and along with a few Mapillas who dealt in small quantities with the West Asian trade in pepper, **monopolised the external trade in rice. The internal trade in rice however was dealt by a merchant class which sprung up from the ranks of the Bunt peasantry** who also were the landlords east of the narrow coastal strip which remained under the monopoly of the Brahmanas.

In the coast, commodity production had its own peculiarities. Since the native populations of DK and UK districts were basically at the level of hunting-food gathering at the time of Satavahana rule, they had, in all probability, not developed any organic connections with the first urbanisation of Karnataka which took place then. The port towns along the Karnataka coast must have been inhabited by merchants who came from above the Ghats. Thus by the time feudalism began to develop in the coast Karavali society did not have its traditional Vaishya or artisan castes. However, the growth of commodity production in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries in the coastal region compelled

it to throw up its own mercantile class. **Since the nature of commodity trading was in agricultural produce such as rice, coconut and pepper, the first commodity producers of Dakshina Kannada hailed from a peasant background.** Thus the Bunts, who controlled most upland agriculture and constituted the land owning peasant mass, threw up a section which progressively dissociated from agriculture and took to trading in agricultural produce, of which rice was the principal product. To suit their new profession they assumed the title *Shetty* meaning *trader*. The Shettys then supplied the GSBs and Mapillas with agricultural commodities, thereby exercising control over the retail trade; while the former as we have already seen monopolised the wholesale seaborne trade.

KV Ramesh, in his, *A History of South Kanara* identifies several merchant guilds during this period of rising commodity production and trade. He writes: *"Populous trade centres like Barkuru, Basruru and Mudabidre had their trade or merchant guilds called nakhara (or nagara, nakara, samasta nakhara, nagara samuha, etc), settikara and hanjamana, also referred to as nakhara hanjamana.*

Though the exact differences which marked the two groups of nakhara and settikara are not known...while settikara was the association of native merchants who dealt in indigenous commodities, the nakhara was the guild of native merchants who were concerned with overseas trade."[3]

However, it may be said that while the Nakhara was the guild of the GSBs, the Settikaras were none other than the Sat-Shudra Shettys of the Bunt caste.

KV Ramesh provides further evidence when he says that: *"We learn from inscriptions that these guilds as such and also their members as individuals owned lands. While the nakhara guilds generally owed allegiance to Saivism, built a number of temples dedicated to Nakhareswara and made numerous grants for their maintenance, the settikara guilds generally belonged to the Jaina faith, built or renovated many of the Jaina basadis and made grants for their maintenance."*[4] That GSBs were Shaivites and the Bunts, Jainas, is an undisputed fact. With the growth in commodity production and the rise of the Shettys and commodity producing Bunt peasantry, the popularity of the Jaina church must have exhausted itself. As we have seen in the earlier chapter, Madhvacharya had already commenced his tirade against the Jaina religious establishment. This was followed by the occupation by the Ikkeri palegaras of Dakshina Kannada. Virshaivites by religion, Ikkeri rule over Dakshina Kannada saw the culmination of the Jaina phase and witnessed its final overthrowal. The external push by Ikkeri coincided with the internal development of the market, leading to the collapse of Jainism. With this Jainism had served its role and was confined as a religion of a bygone age in the history of Karnataka.

The merchant guilds which emerged in the various port towns along the coast began to undertake their own administration. However, none could compare with Basrur where the power of the merchant was supreme, reflecting therein the significance of Basrur as a centre of commerce. About this Sanjay writes: *"The merchants of the port [of Basrur] are referred to by the Portuguese collectively as the `Chatins de Barcelor' [or, Shettis of Basrur]. The chronicler Conto states specifically that unlike other regions along he coast, the settlers of Basrur `governed themselves like a Repub-*

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lic, and paid some tributes to the Raya' [ie, Vijayanagara]. The power of the city is described as being in the hands of 'governadores' or 'regadores'....

This version of the administration of the port is confirmed by a Portuguese description from 1850, which states that the port was 'terra franca governed like a Republic, without having any other subjection nor recognising any form of overlordship save for a small tribute that it paid to the kings of Narasinga'. Thus not only was this port unlike some of the other ports along the coast...not perceived by the Portuguese as being in the hands of the 'Moors', it also apparently had certain peculiarities in its form of administration, in contrast to other ports such as Honnavar, Bhatkal or Mangalore, which were controlled by petty principalities under the aegis of Vijayanagar."[5]

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2. MONOPOLY OF THE PORTUGUESE MERCANTILE BOURGEOISIE

On 14 May 1498, Vasco da Gama, representing the mercantile state of Portugal, reached Kapukad a few kilometres north of Kozhikode in Kerala, after setting sail from Portugal with four ships and 170 men. After anchoring at Kapukad, *"Vasco da Gama told the sailors to buy up spices. But the Arab merchants who controlled trade with India induced the rajah—the ruler of Calicut—to arrest the Portuguese who had gone ashore. Vasco da Gama responded by detaining several Indian noblemen who were inspecting his ships. The rajah had to release the arrested sailors; he then sent boats for the Indians, but Vasco da Gama met the boats with cannon fire and refused to return the captives. Thus canon salvos heralded the arrival of the first Europeans to India.*

After loading their ships with spices, the Portuguese embarked on their homeward journey. By the end of the expedition, which lasted two years, over half of the sailors had died. But the spices they brought back fetched 60 times as much as was initially spent to equip the expedition."[6]

The pepper trade was highly lucrative and the Portuguese wanted to have sole monopoly over it so that they could reap fortunes. In this the Portuguese had to fight and push out the Muslims who had developed a monopoly over the spice trade with India and had directly linked up with the Arabs of the Middle East who then carried it by land to Europe via Istanbul.

Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515) returned very soon, and chose to put the Portuguese mercantile bourgeoisie's plan to action. He captured the island of Goa from Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1510, and then by treaty took Marmagao and Salsete from the Bijapur Sultanate; making Goa the head quarters of the Portuguese empire in the East. In occupying Goa from the Adil Shahis, de Albuquerque took the assistance of Thimmaiah, commander of the Vijayanagara fleet and Malli Raya, chief of Gersoppa and feudatory of Vijayanagara whose daughter was married to Thimmaiah. *"It is evident that Albuqurque depended upon Thimmayya to a considerable extent. He was very much in need of the information that the latter could collect and supply concerning the enemy, of the provisions he could provide, of the soldiers he could give for fighting in Goa and of his diplomacy.... He [Thimmaiah] hoped that he would be made its [Goa's] governor if the Portuguese succeeded in capturing Goa with his aid."*[7] However, Thimmaiah was given Mirjan, and later *"removed from office when Malli Raya of Gersoppa offered his services to the Portuguese."*[8] Thus the interfeudal conflict between Hampi and Bijapur was capitalised by the Portuguese to get a foot hold on Indian territory and in this they obtained the loyalty of feudal chieftains such as Thimmaiah and Malli Raya.

Soon afterwards the Portuguese pillaged Goa. Alfonso de Albuquerque set about eliminating his rivals from Goa. MN Pearson writes: *"A general massacre of Muslim men occurred after the Portuguese took Goa for the second time in 1510 and they [Muslims] seem never to have returned to Goa thereafter."*[9]

3. PORTUGUESE HEGEMONY OVER KARNATAKA'S EXTERNAL TRADE

With a firm foothold in Goa, the Portuguese launched their campaign of monopolisation of the sea trade. They obviously targeted the Muslim Mapillas who were their first enemies since they controlled the spice trade of the Indian ocean and thus of Karnataka too. However, **not always were the Muslims alone targeted, and not just the spice trade was the aim of aggressive Portuguese mercantilism. They used their superior power to subdue the entire coasting trade of the western seaboard and thereby exercise its hegemony over it.**

In this, *"the Portuguese kings [who represented aggressive Portuguese colonialism] sent one flotilla after another to the Indian Ocean for the purpose of conquering and plundering the newly discovered countries. The military equipment of the Portuguese was far superior to that of the Indian principalities: their vessels were faster and stronger, and their small well disciplined detachments had artillery and firearms."* [10] And among other things, the Portuguese army, it must never be forgotten, was often manned by Indians who served them for spoils and pay.

Being a small country with a population of just about 1.5 lakhs in the early sixteenth century, it was impossible for Portugal to turn into a conqueror of extensive territories. Thus they confined themselves to pillage, plunder and piracy attempting thereby to subdue and thus obtain a hegemony over trade instead of taking territories unlike the later colonial powers such as the French or the British, who conquered territory.

Vasco da Gama onwards, the Portuguese launched brutal seaborne attacks on the port towns of Karnataka. They attacked Honnavar in 1502, 1505, 1538 and 1569; Bhatkal in 1502, 1513, 1528-29, 1542 and 1547; Basrur in 1569; blockaded Mangalore in 1513 and 1525 while attacking the town in 1530, 1538, 1555, 1558 and 1568.

BS Shastry writes: *"In 1502, the attacker was Vasco da Gama...da gama wreaked his vengeance on the local ships and the town [of Honnavar] which was looted and set on fire."* [11]

Further, describing the attack on Bhatkal in 1542, Shastry says: *"The damages in the hostility of 1542 were inhuman. The town was looted for a couple of days; many residents were killed in cold blood irrespective of age and sex, houses were set ablaze, palm trees were cut down and farms were destroyed."* [12]

However the devastation of Mangalore spoke best of the white man's plunder. Shastry says: *"The port town [Mangalore] suffered most at the hands of the Portuguese. Not only was its freedom of trade hindered, but it was also attacked and damaged several times. In 1513 its trade was hindered until some ships from Calicut which had anchored at the port were made over to the Portuguese. In 1525 the port was blockaded and some ships from Malabar were chased up the river and destroyed. In 1530 the Portuguese caused great destruction to Mangalore. That year they learnt that a rich Hindu merchant of Mangalore, a Shetty, had clandestine commercial dealings with the Zamorin of Calicut, an enemy of the Portuguese, which caused considerable damage to the Portuguese trade interests.... The Zamorin finding it impossible to export his spices from his*

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ports to the Strait of the Red Sea on account of the Portuguese vigilance, sent the spices to Mangalore, probably by land with an understanding between himself and the Shetty. From Mangalore those spices were exported to the Red Sea strait on board the ships of the Muslim merchants of Mecca who were allowed by the Portuguese to load at Mangalore, the port of a friend. The merchants paid the zamorin for the spices. The Portuguese were not aware that the spices actually belonged to the Zamorin, until they discovered the fact in 1530. The Zamorin had such great profits that he aided the Shetty to fortify Mangalore, supplied him with artillery, and at his own cost maintained a garrison to defend the city and the fort. Nuno da Cunha, the Portuguese Viceroy, decided to punish the Shetty for his league with the zamorin and sent his fleet against him. The Shetty was forewarned of the attack. He could therefore prepare himself well. However he was no match to the Portuguese. His soldiers were killed; and the fortification was partly pulled down and partly burnt. 70 guns, a lot of copper, coral, mercury, grains, velvet and many other articles of trade from Mecca, quantities of explosives and sacks of provisions fell into Portuguese hands. A major part of these spoils was burnt as they did not have sufficient space in their ships to carry all the spoils. The city was also burnt. 13 ships which were anchored at the port, were sunk. The gardens were ruined and reduced to ashes. All these were done in such a manner that it appeared there was never a habitation in Mangalore. A temple and a mosque were also destroyed.

The attack of 1538 ended by killing many residents and burning some of their ships because they held some Calicut vessels to defend against the Portuguese at the Port.

Mangalore experienced another devastating fury of the Portuguese in 1555. The town was burnt and many residents were killed. A rich temple with its idols was also destroyed.

Again in 1558, the Portuguese exhibited their brutality to the people of Mangalore. The Portuguese learnt that a ship belonging to the Muslims of Cannanore was anchored at Mangalore. While they attempted to capture the ship, it was aided by some local people. Furious, the Portuguese entered the town and put to sword all those whom they confronted, without discriminating between men and women, old and young. In all these proceedings they were akin to blood thirsty hounds and they thought that these atrocities were necessary to terrorise the enemies. The town was set on fire. Those who tried to escape from being burnt were put to sword. A grand and beautiful temple was also burnt. The brass and copper that covered the roof and the tower of the temple, and fine works of gold that were inside were embarked by the Portuguese." [13]

Explaining the brutality of the Portuguese, MN Pearson provides an instance from Portuguese records: *"On one particular bloody occasion in 1534, a Portuguese captain returned with his fleet to the city of Goa having captured some Malabari ships. The Portuguese fleet sailed in `flying as flags in their masts and spars many hanging Moors, in order to terrorise the enemy and delight the city; and in order that the Kanarese sailors of this fleet might share in their glory, they took the heads of 30 dead Malabaris and 12 Moors who still lived. They were handed over to the fury of the lads of Goa, who stoned them to death'."* [14]

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The economic motive behind all this barbarism of the European colonialist was evident. **The Portuguese wanted to oust the Muslims, subdue the trader of Karnataka and realise their unparalleled suzerainty over the sea trade.**

This was explicit in the treaties and conditionalities which the Portuguese enforced soon after they concluded these military expeditions and ravaged the towns.

Firstly, the clear target of the attacks was to exhaust the resources of the local merchants, thus reducing their financial strength. They always saw to it that ships were sunk during their raids. These ships, Pearson says, were owned by the local merchants although the merchants normally did not sail in them. Thus, the destruction of these ships led to the inevitable weakening of the local merchants. Therefore **the mercantile nature of the raids was writ large.**

Secondly, the Portuguese made it a point to collect regular tributes from the merchants of the vanquished ports of Karnataka. Following its first attack in 1502 which was led by da Gama on the ports of Honnavar and Bhatkal, the Portuguese enforced agreements so that it enriched its coffers on a regular basis. **By 1553, 16 ports in Karnataka, or in other words, the entire coast of Karnataka, was paying regular tribute to the Portuguese.**

Thirdly, the Portuguese set up their factories. This was nothing but redoubled Portuguese mercantile loot. Soon after the attack of 1542 on Bhatkal it set up a factory there. Then again after its devastation of Mangalore in 1568 it set up a factory there. Similarly it established factories at Basrur and Honnavar in 1569 following attacks on these two towns. The Basrur factory was reestablished at Gangolli at the point where the estuary opened to the sea, in 1630. **These factories were garrisoned fortresses keeping a constant vigil over the incoming and outgoing trade of these ports. These factories also contained customs houses whereby incoming and outgoing vessels had to pay a toll to the Portuguese and submit themselves to inspection by the colonial marauders. These customs houses were centres of fraud and often harassed local merchants.** Shastry provides us as does Sanjay, with instances of such chicanery by the customs houses. Quite often this precipitated conflicts with the Portuguese colonialists.

Fourthly, the customs houses became points for the issue of *cartazes* or passports for ships to sail. **The Portuguese flotilla which policed the waters of the western coast seized and sunk many vessels which did not show up cartazes issued by the colonialists.** The task of policing the Arabian Sea was not too difficult for the Portuguese because it was a coasting trade that the local merchants carried on. All ships travelled north and south without at any time losing sight of land.

By the mid sixteenth century the Portuguese established a firm hold on the entire coastal trade of India. However, with the growing expansion of trade and the shortage of manpower due also to the overstretching of their influence, they introduced a new method for controlling trade and policing the fleets. They began to organise convoys of ships, often escorted by Portuguese naval vessels. From Basrur alone convoys of up to 200 merchant ships owned by the local traders set sail at a time. Each year Basrur is said to have despatched a few such convoys of this size. The system of cartazes and convoys continued till early eighteenth century and we have instances where even the

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Ikkeri palegaras had also to secure cartazes. BS Shastry writes: *"In the treaties of 1633, 1671, 1678 and 1714 between the Portuguese and the Nayaks of Ikkeri there were provisions imposing upon the latter the obligation to secure cartazes for their merchant ships. Even the royal ships of the Nayaks were subject to this obligation. Ships sailing without cartazes were liable to confiscation by the Portuguese. And there were several occasions when such confiscations took place."* [15]

Ye Agibalova and G Donskoy have summed up the Portuguese striving for monopoly thus: *"The founder of permanent Portuguese possessions in Asia was the Viceroy Alfonso de Albuquerque, who possessed a vast amount of energy and more than his share of brutality. In India, Arabia and East Africa he seized the more important ports along the Indian Ocean coast, exterminated their population and built fortresses. In India, people said that it was fortunate that the Portuguese were as few as tigers and lions, otherwise they would have exterminated the whole human race."* [16]

AI Chicherov has this to say about the aggressive Portuguese mercantile bourgeoisie: *"In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries European merchants began to penetrate into India, and this marked the beginning of the military and economic expansion of the colonial powers. The Portuguese were the first to establish military and trade bases in India.*

Striving to establish a trade monopoly in Indian and South East Asian commodities, notably in spices which were in great demand in Europe, and yielded fabulous profits, Portugal attempted throughout the sixteenth century to establish control over the trade routes to Europe. Portuguese expeditions were equipped not by private merchants, but by the Crown. Making full use of its navy, often resorting to violence vis-a-vis the local population, looting and destruction of the ships of Arab, Indian and other merchants, capitalising on the strifes of local feudal rulers, the Portuguese set up a whole network of fortresses on the main sea routes: in the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, in the Gulf of Aden and Singapore Strait, and seized key positions in the Indian Ocean. Later they set up bases on the Sunda Islands, landed on the South Coast of China and began to trade with Japan.

The Portuguese did not attempt to penetrate the interior of India. They set up fortresses and trading factories on the West Coast of India (Calicut, Goa, Diu, Daman, etc) on the East (Coromandel) Coast (Nagapatnam, Tranquebar, etc) and in Bengal (Hoogly, Dacca, Chittagong, etc). The Portuguese possessions were strongly fortified settlements accessible only by way of the sea. To hold her possessions, Portugal exercised unbridled terror and committed acts of violence against the local population. The inquisition was introduced in Portugal's Indian possessions in 1560. Temples and mosques were destroyed, and 'heathens' were subject to persecution. This inflamed the hatred not only of the people but also of the local feudal authorities. As a result the feudal lords too were drawn into opposition to the Portuguese.

In the chronicle ***Mumtakhabu-l-Lubab*** *Mohammed Hasim Khafi Khan tells of the persecution the Indian population suffered from the Portuguese.... The author further speaks about the Portuguese selling into bondage the children of the local inhabitants. Similar information is contained in the* ***Badshah Nama*** *of Abdulameed Lahori.*

The crimes perpetrated by the Portuguese in Goa have been vividly described by Hamilton." [17]

On the one hand the Portuguese thus achieved a monopoly on trade, and on the other, by adopting extremely repressive methods they compelled local merchants to sell their produce at prices dictated by them. All this fetched the Portuguese super profits. Chicherov says that the spice trade alone netted the Portuguese a fabulous profit margin of from 800% to 1,000% on the capital invested.[18]

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4. RESISTANCE TO THE PORTUGUESE

The devastation caused by aggressive Portuguese mercantilism was a new and bitter experience to the people of Karnataka. Merchants were naturally opposed to the Portuguese hegemony as it affected their profits and economic freedom. **During the period of palegara rule we witness an outburst of struggles against the colonialists led by feudatory chiefs such as the Queen of Gersoppa and the Rani of Ullal whose economies were closely tied with the prosperity of the seaborne trade conducted through ports in their principalities. Further there was bitter hatred for the Portuguese among the townspeople of the coast who suffered not one but several rapacious armed attacks in a lifetime.** There also was the resistance put up by the Ikkeri Nayakas in the seventeenth century. However Shivappa Nayaka's campaign when he took the Portuguese forts of Kundapur, Gangolli, Mangalore and Honnavar between 1652 and 1654 was a coordinated assault **achieved in concert** with the Dutch colonialists. However, he soon returned the forts and later even **granted a tribute** to the Portuguese.

All these struggles ended in defeat owing to the feudal class leadership. The limited interest that the palegaras found in mercantile trade remained the basic reason for their token resistence and then compromise with the Portuguese. The merchant class on its part found itself too weak to influence and mobilise the feudal state to serve its needs. Thus even the largest of merchants soon resigned to bow their heads to the European barbarians.

However, **since the Zamorin's interest was organically tied with the Mapillas and through them the Arab monopoly on pepper trade, he was not only the first to face the colonial shock but also remained the most consistent fighter against the Portuguese and the last to yield. This demonstrated that mercantilism was a weapon, unknown to the feudal interests, for long drawn resistance to colonialism.** MN Pearson provides us with an interesting account of the resistance organised and led by the Mapilla merchant class. There can be no doubt that till the total submission of Mangalore was achieved in 1658, when Abakka was killed after putting up heroic resistance to the invaders, that merchants and seamen of Karnataka did actively participate and support the Mapilla resistance movement.

Pearson says: *"The route, by sea to Gujarat, was considerably more risky. It was navigated in small, light, oared craft called paroes, which could escape up the numerous rivers of the western coast if they were seen by the Portuguese. The Portuguese ships were usually too large to follow them, and it was not always possible to land a party to pursue them or carry out reprisals on their helpers. These traders in fact in the 1520s felt themselves so secure that they would sail north to Gujarat and on the way take mocking potshots at the Portuguese coastal forts.*

They even sailed tantalisingly close to the cumbersome warships of the dreaded Vasco da Gama, when he was back in India as Viceroy in 1524, keeping just out of range and showing complete contempt for his armada. Da Gama, who had a tendency to choler at any time, and was certainly more used to massacring Malabaris than to being laughed at by them, was 'scandalised at such disrespect'....

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Others called 'cossarios' by the Portuguese were really guerilla auxiliaries of the zamorins of Calicut. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century these guerillas often worked hand in glove with the Calicut merchants whom the Portuguese were trying to displace. The merchants financed their ships in return for protection for the merchants' trade ships. Battles between Portuguese ships and those commanded by members of the Kunjali Marakkar family were frequent in the sixteenth century and this conflict surely was war, not piracy, for the Kunjalis usually worked closely with the zamorins....

In the later sixteenth century all Portuguese ships and native ships trading within their system, sailed in convoys protected by warships....

Given the large and rather clumsy ships the Portuguese used in the first half of the century, the type of warfare adopted by the Zamorin's sailors was very suitable. In 1538 a Portuguese captain told the king how well armed the Malabari paroes were and how '150 of them leave from one port and do all the damage they can, and I go after them, and as many again leave from another port and go somewhere else, and do us much damage also, and a man does not know which way to turn'. The paroes usually returned to shore each night and they maintained close contact with the people ashore. They posted observers on hills who lit fires when a Portuguese fleet was sighted, so warning the paroes at sea. The paroes then lowered their masts and rowed up a river until the Portuguese had passed. Later in the century the Portuguese finally built lighter ships called **sanguiceis.** *This measure improved the effectiveness of Portuguese patrolling. Yet they were at times outwitted still."* [19]

This was the brave resistance that was raised against the Portuguese. They put to best use the support of the people, knowledge of the terrain and full blooded hatred for the colonialists. The Portuguese created a monopoly indeed, but the struggle of the people killed their confidence in their capacity to retain it.

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5. PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM AND THE BIRTH OF KARNATAKA'S COMPRADOR MERCHANTS

The most significant impact of Portuguese monopoly over Karnataka's seaborne trade was that it initiated the integration of Karnataka's economy with that of the colonial metropolis. It inaugurated the colonial phase of Karnataka's history. It is important to remember that it happened at a time of rising commodity production along the coast.

By the late sixteenth century a distinct division had emerged in the trade of commodities in the west coast of India. If the Malabar was the domain of pepper, Karnataka's principal product was rice and that of Gujarat, textiles. A fair amount of rice that was grown in the Karnataka coast did go to Goa which was a rice deficit zone and the military outpost of the Portuguese in India. The total value of rice exported from Basrur between 1611-1616 averaged 19.75 lakh kgs. Between 1623-1628 it averaged 27.50 lakh kgs. In 1628-29 at least 35 lakh kgs of rice was being exported from that port alone.[20] **The value of rice traded from Kanara was close to 1 crore kgs by 1630.**[21]

The Goan market was indeed an important factor that transformed coastal Karnataka rapidly into a region experiencing commodity production. The coastal region, as we already noted, lagged behind the rest of the State in its development. However, the seaborne rice trade helped the coast in bridging this gap although it still lagged behind in artisan production.

The principal impact of Karnataka's encounter with the Portuguese merchant bourgeoisie was that it **initiated the process of integrating Karnataka within the structure of colonialism. Portuguese trade with Karnataka was extortionate. It curbed the free advancement of Karnataka's merchant classes. The sale of produce at prices dictated at gunpoint effected the drain of an enormous surplus to Portugal in particular and Europe in general.** This predatory nature of Portuguese mercantilism helped what Marx called "*primitive capital accumulation*" in Europe which was to energise and hasten the emergence of capitalism.

This extraction of surplus from Karnataka went on for nearly three full centuries. This was achieved not by the Portuguese colonialists alone. The Portuguese were assisted in this task by the already existing feudal forces and a new class which it created. This new class was subservient to Portuguese colonial rule. It made its profits and quickly outpaced all the other merchants. It profited by serving the Portuguese drain of Karnataka's economy. This was a new class in Karnataka's history; a class created by colonialism and a class which was meant to serve and profit from colonial plunder. This was none other than what Mao called as the *comprador bourgeoisie*—a term which in fact was Portuguese in origin.

Chicherov spotted this development which resulted from a marriage, between colonialism and feudalism. He says: *"The trading activities of the Portuguese had a contradictory influence on economic development. On the one hand, the Portuguese ousted by force of arms local and other Asian merchants from their monopoly positions*

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in the foreign marine trade. The profits were reaped by the Portuguese and this weakened the independent positions of the local merchants in socioeconomic life and strengthened compradore tendencies and elements." [22]

The Portuguese colonialists created two important compradors along India's West Coast. **In Gujarat it was the Banias and in Karnataka and Goa it carved out a comprador class from the GSBs.**

MN Pearson has made some interesting observations in this regard: *"The Portuguese simply lacked the numbers or the metropolitan financial backing to achieve dominance in their colonies....*

The Portuguese did have about 50 forts in Asia and at least 100 warships. But they had no large areas except turbulent Ceylon.... All too often precious money and lives were wasted on defending them, when on a cost-effective basis more emphasis should have been given to the armadas.

At sea the Portuguese were not after 1509 seriously challenged by any hostile fleet in Western Indian waters until the arrival of the Dutch and English early in the 17th century...it was logistically quite impossible for an imperial power with a home population of 1,50,000 people with no more than 10,000 able bodied European and Eurasian soldiers and sailors in all Asia, and with a hundred warships, to control all Asian waters, and run the empire's economy without reference to native people. Like other, later, colonial powers, the Portuguese had no choice but to use, cooperate with, and conciliate economically important native groups." [23]

Pearson again makes the point when he says: *"In very many areas the Portuguese were dependent on Asian manpower and expertise. Most of their pepper exports came from Malabar; this pepper was grown and transported to the coast by Indians. Goa's food arrived in Indian ships, and came from an Indian ruled area. Gujarati merchants [Banias] provided loans to the Portuguese state in the parlous days of the early 17th century. The vast bulk of Goa's official revenues were collected by Hindu tax farmers. The whole Portuguese system ostensibly so coercive and ethnocentric, based entirely on the ideas from the metropole, was in fact dependent in acquiescence and cooperation of various groups of Indians."* [24]

The GSBs were a significant group of such Indians. The relations which the Portuguese colonial class developed with them were long standing and durable despite one aberration: the inquisition. The forced conversions of the upper class Hindu population of Goa to Christianity was a crude attempt to carve out a comprador class. The Portuguese discovered after the flight of the Hindus (the Muslims had by then been completely driven out of Goa) that without them Portuguese business could not thrive and thus coaxed them to return.

Pearson writes that during the first half of the seventeenth century: *"Most sources of government revenue in Portuguese India were farmed out by the crown to the highest bidder, and were called collectively* ***rendas****.... The usual term was three years....*

There is no case of a Muslim holding a renda. Of the total number of rendas, Sarswath Brahmins held 50%, other Hindus 30% [of which the Gujarati Banias formed an important chunk], and all Christians both Portuguese and local converts, 20%." [25]

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It should be remembered that such *rendas* were given not only for collecting land rent but also all other taxes including those on trade and manufacture.

The GSBs, the foremost feudal class, thus enlisted their loyalty to the Portuguese. It was out of this act of loyalty that the comprador bourgeoisie was formed which naturally had organic ties with feudalism.

It was this coercive agrarian and commercial policy of the Portuguese that transformed Goa into a net importer of rice. The highly parasitic nature of colonial rule which tied up closely with the comprador and feudal classes is revealed in the following account which describes the crisis of production that was generated, as a result of the gross disruption of local agriculture. *"We have records of food convoys coming from Kanara, south of Goa, from early 1560s. In the 1570s and 1580s three or even four food convoys came each year from Kanara to Goa. This points to very large food imports from Kanara. Yet in 1570 the well informed chronicler Conto claimed that most of Goa's food came overland from the area of Bijapur between Goa and the Ghats. He described how `the bulk of this food for this city comes from the lands of Bijapur whence come everyday like trails of ants vessels loaded with rice, wheat, grains' and various vegetables. In the 1630s the value of rice trade from Kanara alone was put at Rs. 4,50,000 with rice worth around Rs. 12 a candil (500 Portuguese Pounds). This makes a total import of 1,80,00,000 regular pounds from Kanara for a total population of the Old conquests of about 2,70,000 people. Thus we have 66 pounds (30 kgs) per head per year being imported from this area alone. The average consumption in India today is 200 kgs per head per year. Given that Kanara apparently supplied only a fairly minor part of total food imports, it is clear that Goa imported most of its food."* [26]

It was this market then, a market created by the crisis of a colonial enclave of predatory mercantilism then which was a strong additional factor generating commodity production and stimulating the rice trade of Karnataka.

The GSBs of Goa supplied the Portuguese with comprador and feudal manpower so as to sustain its highly destructive rule.

In Karnataka, however, the nature of Portuguese colonial exploitation was of a different type. It did not conquer territory as it did in the case of Goa. Here it confined itself to merely exercising its absolute sway over trade. To this end the Portuguese took the assistance of cooperative feudal kings such as those of Vijayanagara, the Adil Shahi Sultanate and feudatories such as Malli Raya of Gersoppa. While the Portuguese befriended the feudal chiefs, it did so with the intention of neutralising them, and where possible, dictating various types of concessions from them. Once it sought and established an environment of peace by striking a deal with the feudal lords, **it initially attacked and then cajoled the GSB merchants resident in the port towns of Karnataka into submission. The ties that the Portuguese had established in Goa with the GSBs was used to its fullest advantage in cultivating these merchants who monopolised Karnataka's overseas trade and thus developed permanent ties, which were comprador in character, with the Portuguese colonialists.**

Thimmaiah, of whom we have seen, the commander of the Vijayanagara fleet, is a case in point. Till 1502, the Portuguese tried to attack him for his obstructive role in their

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trade. In fact the loot of Honnavar in 1502 was on account of their futile chase of Thimmaiah who retreated up the Sharavati river. When Thimmaiah, whose feudal roots were tied with the ruling feudatory of Gersoppa, found it difficult to resist the Portuguese, he surrendered to them and became their active agent without whose role the colonialists would not have captured Goa, at least not as easily as they did in 1510. Thimmaiah's sole ambition, motivated by a trading mentality which emerged from strong feudal class roots was to become the Governor of Goa and thereby serve the colonialist as their loyal middleman or comprador administrator. Although the Portuguese denied him this privilege, they treated him to a good part of their loot by granting Mirjan and retaining him in their service till 1512. Thimmaiah was then the first comprador which Karnataka offered. Born of feudalism, he died while still a feudatory and a middleman tax farmer to the foreigner.

With the stabilisation of Karnataka-Portuguese trade since the mid-sixteenth century, the phase of chastising the truant merchant by resorting to violence was increasingly replaced by a peaceful cultivation of him. The Portuguese selected a layer of middlemen merchants in the port towns where they traded, principally from among the GSBs, and offered them special contracts such as that of the *procurator* and consolidated this comprador tendency over the years by building firm bridges cemented by the sweat and toil of the peasant producers and small traders who always worked as subcontractors to this class of compradors.

BS Shastry provides an instance or two which reveals this process. Initially the *"...Portuguese sailed into the Kanarese ports from time to time, sold their goods there or purchased whatever they needed.... In course of time they found it inconvenient to go themselves to the interior and negotiate business transactions with local dealers. They therefore evolved the practice of appointing Goan or Kanarese merchants as their procurators in Kanara. Thus by a viceregal order of 15 Nov 1595, Santopa [Shantappa] and Mango Sinai [Shenoy, a GSB], two merchants of Goa, were appointed to procure and supply 3,000 khandis of pepper from Kanara. The commodity was to be delivered to the Portuguese at their Kanarese fortresses. Sundardas Vishnudas [a Bania or perhaps a Marwadi] a resident of Mangalore and owner of four barques was the Portuguese procurator in Kanara in the 1720s and 1730s."* [27]

MN Pearson provides us with more information of this nature: *"The pepper from this area [Kanara] was taken to Goa, and from there exported to Europe. This Kanara-Goa trade was for a period of at least 30 years, handled by one Hindu family. This was a large business. In 1617 the Portuguese treasury owed them Rs1,80,000, in 1618, Rs 1,72,500 as payment for a pepper contract, and Rs 7,500 for a loan which had been given to help outfit a Portuguese armada. I have been unable to identify the caste of this family although we have the names of three of them: Babaji, Govinda and Phondia. Their importance to the Portuguese was shown when the king, Phillip II of Portugal pointed out, `it is necessary that both these particular Hindus, and the others living in Goa and the other towns of Portuguese India who are beneficial to my revenues, be favoured so that they will be encouraged to serving me'."* [28]

The fortunes of this comprador family can be understood if one observes that the amount of money the Portuguese owed him in 1617 was more than one-third of the total value of rice trade conducted by the entire Karnataka coast in 1630. Further, the loan provided to fund the Portuguese armada indicated the political nature of the comprador class which always did everything in its power to continuously arm the master so that he could consolidate and expand his colonial conquests and keep the anticolonial rebellions raised by the people of Karnataka in check by strengthening the Portuguese state.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam provides interesting evidence which speaks a lot more on the nature of the comprador class which had emerged from among the GSBs. *"In early 1635, for the provisioning of the [Portuguese] state's armadas which were outward bound from Goa to various destinations in Asian waters, a large order was placed for rice with the Kanarese merchant Rama Kini, who apparently procured the rice in part from Mangalore, his domicile, and in part from Basrur. In spite of this service that he rendered, the unfortunate Kini and his brother were both sentenced to death by the Portuguese authorities in 1638, and goods confiscated, for the crime of trading with the Dutch."*[29]

While this instance speaks of the brutality of Portuguese colonialism which did not spare even its own loyal compradors if they happened to do anything to disturb the monopoly of the Portuguese in the sea trade which was a by then well known fact of their domination over the Indian coast; **a lesser known aspect, yet highly important in grasping the nature of the comprador class and its relationship with colonialism in general is revealed by this.**

The rise of the Dutch in Europe was the single major challenge to more than a century of uncontested Portuguese global maritime supremacy. Thus **the Dutch were among the most bitter enemies of the Portuguese since they challenged them with not just a possession or two but with absorption of the entire empire, its resources, the infrastructure of compradorism and thus the unbridled trade monopoly that they had established.** However, the rise of the Dutch could not be stopped and the Portuguese were defeated by them since they were strengthened by the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution in 1609 while Portugal was still a mercantile and semi-feudal nation.

As the battle for global maritime supremacy commenced, the compradors, invariably began to develop ties with the rising colonial powers so that in the event of the defeat of the old master, the middleman status of the comprador was not affected; so that they could continue to be perennially at the service of colonialism which became the precondition for their own prosperity and wealth. Rama Kini was one GSB comprador who only tried to navigate a few of his vessels by catching in his sails a little of the strong and rising breeze of Dutch colonial monopoly. He was no patriot but a comprador till the marrow of his bones. It is worth quoting Chicherov's observation in this regard: *"...there emerged compradores, local merchants whose economic welfare depended on the trade of the Europeans, on their purchase of local goods. Later the Dutch, English and French relied on the support of these merchants in their colonial 'development' of India."*[30]

This was then the real impact of Portuguese colonialism on Karnataka. **It had created a comprador merchant class which would owe allegiance not just to the Portuguese ruling classes but to every other colonial power that would set its feet on the soil of Karnataka.**

Of serious consequence was the fact that the Portuguese penetrated the Karnataka coast which was just then waking up from feudal slumber and placing yet unsteady footsteps towards the market, and drew it into the lecherous ambit of colonialism. And, **when the merchant bourgeoisie was still in its infancy having just then emerged from the cloisterdom of feudalism, a class of compradors was beaten out of it.**

On the one hand were the feudal Rayas of Vijayanagara, the Nayakas of Ikkeri; feudatories and their chieftains—the Malli Rayas of Gersoppa and the Bunts of Bangavadi, who rolled out the red carpet to the Portuguese which was coloured with the blood of the people, and gifted them land to set up their customs houses, garrisons and godowns. On the other hand were the compradors hailing from Bania and GSB families. They escorted the colonial armadas and merchant fleets to the warm waters of Karnatka and dropped anchor for them. An anchor, so heavy and so deep that the turbulent waters failed to sink these colonial ships of war and pillage for five full centuries thereafter.

Chapter VI

LATE FEUDALISM: RISE OF THE MODERN STATE AND CONSOLIDATION OF MERCHANT CAPITAL

Mysore Under Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1673-1704)

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1. PERIOD OF ACUTE CLASS STRUGGLES

When Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1645-1704) took power over the principality of Mysore in 1673 the political situation was highly volatile. **It was a period when class struggles were sharp and raging and feudalism was in decay.**

Firstly, **there was the struggle by the peasantry against oppressive feudal extortion and the brigandish ways of the palegaras.** The mood of the peasantry is reflected not only in Saravagna's vachanas but also in the peasant insurrection of Hadinaru in 1684 and the outbreaks of peasant struggles in the Keladi kingdom during the first half of the seventeenth century.

Secondly, **there was the life and death struggle of the merchants and artisans against the palegara class.** Incessant battles, coercive levies and dacoity of goods in transit must have harassed these classes beyond a point of tolerance leading to their fortification of towns and active resistance against marauding palegara forces.

Thirdly, **there was the incessant and unabating struggle between the warlords.** Internecine feudal warfare was so acute and raged with such great regularity that **it became a significant factor in weakening and exhausting the palegara class and thus of feudalism in general.**

All these factors created a pitched political crisis. Entire society was in ferment; surplus was drained away for war, incentive for commodity production was jeopardised, state sponsored irrigation was at stake, and as a result, famines such as the one which struck in the late seventeenth century devastated the already impoverished countryside.

Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar was obviously under tremendous pressure when he assumed power. He confirmed his priorities by sending three of his ministers as emissaries to the Mughal Court in Delhi, who after their initial courtroom formalities, stayed on for six months to study the Mughal administration and discover the secret behind the success of Mughal rule, which with a territory at least a hundred times bigger did not apparently suffer from the problem of instability and anarchy which Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar's Mysore did.

On the return of his ambassadors, Chikkadevaraja made a historic choice of the classes he would rally with and implemented a series of measures which changed the very structure of the state, consolidated the monarchy and set into motion a process which spelt the dawn of the modern age of Karnataka.

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2. ELIMINATION OF THE PALEGARA CLASS AND THE BUILDING OF A CENTRALISED STATE

The situation which Chikkadevaraja faced was similar to that of France between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries when its territory was fragmented, the king powerless and internecine feudal warfare and class struggles by the masses rocked the country. Leo Huberman says: *"The strife between warring overlords frequently meant disaster to the local population, no matter which side won. It was the presence of different overlords in different places along the highways of business that made trade so difficult. What was needed was a central authority, a national state. A supreme power that would be able to bring order out of feudal chaos. The old overlords could no longer fulfil their social function. Their day was done. The time was ripe for a strong central power."*[1]

And this was the logical essence of what Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar perceived from his study of Mughal India. **He embarked on a campaign of eliminating the palegaras *as a class*.** He made new conquests, disarmed the palegaras and disbanded their armies. Regarding the palegaras who existed within his former territories: *"...the Raja brought these powerful chieftains to Seringapatam and gave them various dignified appointments in his household and converted them from powerful chieftains to humble courtiers."*[2] Those who continued to wag their tails were indiscreetly eliminated.

Thus **Chikkadevaraja became the foremost among monarchs in Karnataka to initiate a process of eliminating a layer of the parasitic feudal intermediaries. He did this by wiping out the class itself from the face of history.**

Just as he went about in achieving this goal, **Chikkadevaraja transformed the structure of the state.** The old feudal state, as we have seen, was fragmented and highly decentralised; each palegara and his retainers constituting its nucleus and its basic unit. The king was just as powerful or rather as powerless as any other palegara was. By introducing the nayaka system, Vijayanagara did attempt to integrate the state. However, this was partial and superficial since the nayakas were basically feudal chieftains who in addition to their own cavalry and artillery maintained the army of the king. However, **with the elimination of this intermediary class of palegaras which was a decisive advance over Vijayanagara, which amounted to a restructuring of the polity, the state was also remoulded accordingly. In place of the fragmented warlord state, Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar set up a centralised state apparatus.** After defeating the palegaras by either absorbing them into his civil administration or simply eliminating the die hards, he disbanded their armies, incorporated into his own the best of their fighters. With this, **for the first time a Karnataka monarch created regular army.**

Hayawadana Rao says that by 1675 Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar had a regular army of 12,000 horse and 1,00,000 foot.[3] This regular army was the backbone of the new state. Writing about a similar development in Europe, Huberman says: *"He [the king] could hire and pay for a trained army always at his service, not dependent on the loyalty of a lord. It would be a better army, too, because its only business would be to fight. Feudal troops had no training, no regular organisation which enabled them to work together*

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smoothly. An army paid for fighting, well trained and well disciplined, and always on hand when needed, was a great improvement.

Moreover, technical improvements in military weapons also called for a new kind of army. Gunpowder and cannon were coming in and effective use of these arms required trained co-operation. And while a feudal warrior could bring his own armour, he couldn't easily bring cannon and powder."[4]

B Puttaiya writes: *"His numerous conquests and the subjugation of a large number of local polegars created the necessity of enlarging his army and the strengthening of the forts with cannons and guns. He therefore increased the strength of his army...fully equipped with all weapons of offence and defence and mounts, such as horses, camels, elephants and remounts, such as oxen, carts, tents, etc."*[5]

Within a year of the return of his emissaries from Delhi, Chikkadevaraja achieved all this. While he absorbed the best fighters of the palegara armies into his own regular army, **he set up the *kandachara* or local militia with a fair body of the rest of the fighters.** Each hobli had a kandachara of 100 to 400 armed men under the command of a hoblidara. *"Their duty was to keep in readiness weapons of offence and defence including gunpowder shot and to be prepared to fight when necessary."*[6] Hayawadana Rao explains the other functions of the militia: *"Ordinarily it was the duty of the staff of the militia to patrol the unit [territorial unit] and safeguard the local treasury...in times of war they were required to be ready with arms and ammunition. The militia seems thus to have occupied an important place in the civil and military governance of the country, useful alike in times of war and peace...."*[7]

Thus while a modern regular army constituted the backbone of the state, it was assisted locally by a militia which in addition, undertook the task of a local police.

The results of this structural change in the state showed in the consolidation and territorial expansion of the Mysore principality. With the regular army as its nucleus, the principality of a palegara transformed into a modern kingdom with a consolidated monarchy in command and at its head.

In the series of military campaigns that he waged he achieved stunning victories. In 1682 he is said to have routed the alliance of Keladi Nayakas, Sambaji (Shivaji's son) and the Golconda armies at Banavara. An achievement of no small measure for what was a mere principality a decade before.[8] By 1704 his kingdom included the districts of present day Mysore, Bangalore, Mandya, Kolar, Tumkur, Hassan and the fringe of Chickmagalur in Karnataka, and Salem, Erode and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Thus Hayawadana Rao is not wrong when he concludes: *"Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar had become not only firm in his position as the sovereign of Mysore but also an imperial authority in the South."*[9]

While the regular army constituted the axis, Chikkadevaraja organised a bureaucratic apparatus modelled apparently on the Mughal administration but making its own select and progressive innovations which constituted the second major component and thus completed the formation of the modern state.

Around him he formed a five-member ministerial council led by a prime minister. Then he set up the *Attara Kacheri* (*Eighteen Offices*) which was the headquarters of the civil bureaucracy and appointed officials for each department. He created a big revenue

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collection and land assessment apparatus. He amalgamated the smaller slices of his kingdom and created 84 divisions within the Mysore state. He also created *hoblis* within each division having from 8 to 16 villages. At the head of each hobli he placed a subadar, under him an assistant, three scroll writers, six accountants called variously as *parpathegaras*, *dafedars* and *sheristedars*. Then with the help of this bureaucracy he set about the task of classifying the lands, making an assessment, regularising tenures, fixing and collecting the various revenues. He codified the various taxes, 24 in all, and sought their prompt collection. He created the first postal system which was combined with the task of despatching intelligence. With these measures, Chikkadevaraja established a modern administrative apparatus; an apparatus which was to soon prove its efficacy. Not even the most loyal of palegaras paying regular tribute could have helped in the accumulation and centralisation of such a vast financial fund as the bureaucracy was to create for Chikkadevaraja.

Mark Wilks records that: *"It is certain that the revenues were realised with great regularity and precision, and this raja is stated to have established a separate treasury to provide for extraordinary and unexpected disbursements, of which he himself assumed the direct custody. It was his fixed practice, after the performance of his morning ablutions, and marking his forehead with the upright insignia of the Vishnoo, to deposit two bags (thousands) of Pagodas in his treasury from the cash despatched from the districts, before he proceeded to break his fast.... By course of rigid economy and order, and by a widely extended and well organised system of securing for himself the great mass of plunder obtained by his conquests he had accumulated a treasure, for which he obtained the designation of Nou Kotte Narain, or the Lord of nine crores (of pagodas and a territory producing a revenue calculated on the estimate of the schedules...of 13,23,371 Canterai Pagodas; a sum which is no further remarkable than in its near coincidence with the value of the territory assigned to the revived state of Mysore after the lapse of another century in 1799...."* [10]

The elimination of the palegaras and the centralisation and regularisation of revenue collection in the form of a tax instead of a tribute surely provided rich dividends to the monarch. Most important of all, **it placed at his disposal abundant resources making him extraordinarily powerful and an active and effective agent in deciding and guiding the direction of the economy.**

The revival of large scale irrigation projects, such as for instance, the drawing of irrigation canals from the Kaveri at Srirangapatna irrigating hundreds of acres of land, is an example of the impact of centralisation on the agrarian economy without which this would not have been possible. The importance attached to irrigation was so great that the king had created a department for the purpose in his Attara Kacheri and systematised the regulation of water by appointing a Nirgunti or water distributor (normally of a Holeya caste) and overlooked by the Shanbhoga.

3. RISE OF THE OWNER-PEASANT

In addition to providing the Mysore region of feudal Karnataka with a modern state Chikkadevaraja was instrumental in introducing certain significant changes in property ownership among the peasantry. The new state did consolidate the dictatorship of the feudal lords beyond doubt. However, it did so under changed conditions. Mark Wilks has made an apt observation in this regard: *"[The] chief feature of the interior administration of Chikka Deva Raya [was the] remarkable change he brought in the actual condition of the landholders of Mysoor."*[11] **This *remarkable change* lay in the rise of the class of the owner-peasant.**

As a means to increase its revenues the king undertook to expand the area under cultivation. As an incentive he granted revenue concessions for a fixed number of years. In the case of superior land the remission granted two-thirds of the full assessment for a period of five years and in the case of land of medium quality it was one-fourth.[12] This not only brought increasing lands under the plough, but it also began the process of fixing a particular peasant for a particular piece of land.

The increase in peasant private property in land, contradistinct from feudal private property was however most evident among those that served this army. Soldiers and kandacharas were granted lands over which they could claim hereditary rights and they were exempt from making tax payments to the king. Even the 20 types of agrarian taxes, levied on the peasantry were otherwise waived for those rendering military service.

Such holdings which were enjoyed by the soldiers and militiamen was a strong factor in eroding feudal authority in the village. It encouraged the emergence of the owner-peasant. The fact that these were hereditary holdings prevented them from getting pushed back into the tyranny of bondage. Such holdings encouraged the various Shudra castes to raise their economic and thus social status in the countryside and participate more actively in commodity production. Chief among these castes were the Vokkaligas, Lingayats, Kurubas, Bedas, Raja Parivaras and Idigas.[13]

Under Chikkadevaraja a sizeable proportion of agrarian revenue was collected in the form of cash, and the state encouraged this method since it reduced its burdens and simplified its transactions. The collection of land revenue in cash affected the peasantry by initiating its stratification.

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4. THE NANJANGUD PEASANT UPRISING

The Nanjangud peasant uprising of 1684, also called the Hadinaru peasant rebellion was a widespread peasant movement against the state which found its epicentre in Mysore district's Nanjangud taluk took place as a result of the exorbitant annual tax and various other levies imposed on the peasantry. Hadinaru moreover was the original seat of the Wodeyar dynasty. As a mark of protest the peasantry hung ploughs upside down on peepal trees at village squares. The king, in an apparent move of holding talks with its leaders, several of whom were Lingayat Jangamas, is said to have killed all those who participated; with estimates ranging from 400 to 1,000 as having been eliminated. Soon afterwards he is said to have deployed his loyal cavalry and other troops on the peasantry who had gathered to protest. The clampdown was most brutal and the resistance succumbed to Chikkadevaraja's offensive.

Fed up with palegara extortions, the peasantry had already begun to combine, by the end of the period of middle feudalism, against this class of warlords. But although vexatious palegara extortions had ended with Chikkadevaraja's elimination of this class, and thus won him their support, he used his newfound monopoly to fleece the peasantry which reminded them of the severity of the former palegaras. Angered by this, with a living memory of successful anti-palegara uprisings, and having gained the support of former palegaras pensioned off in Srirangapatna and that of the Virashaiva priesthood which was compelled to pay a religious tax, the peasantry broke out in rebellion.

It is important to note that it was widespread, covering the central part of the kingdom. It signified a new development, in that it expressed the ability of the peasantry to coordinate and launch an uprising covering extensive territory.

The anger of the peasantry reverberated throughout the Mysore kingdom long after the movement was suppressed, by the assassination of Chikkadevaraja's prime minister, Vishalaksha Pandit, who had earned the wrath of the peasant masses and the Jangama priesthood for his role in the campaign to annihilate the movement.[14]

Irfan Habib said of a similar movement launched in Mughal India: *"Heavy taxation ...greatly affected agriculture; but, conversely, a decline in agriculture caused a corresponding fall in land revenue. It was therefore, an inevitable paradox that Muhammad Tughluq, who provoked an agrarian rebellion of unprecedented intensity by increasing taxation, should be the very first ruler to formulate a systematic policy of promoting agriculture."*[15]

This is something that Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar must have surely realised. Even his successors learnt from this and sought to reform agriculture, with fresh vigour and intensity.

5. ALLIANCE BETWEEN MERCHANT AND KING

The coming to power of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar and the creation of a modern state, albeit eliminating the palegara layer of feudalism only, led to the consolidation of the landlord class at the village level. However, the changes that the monarch introduced were not of advantage to the local landlord class alone. **Almost every new measure which Chikkadevaraja introduced not only earned the support of the merchant classes, but in fact, he drew up these measures with their backing and their benefit in mind.**

A. Fallout of Palegara Elimination

The hope for further development of the merchant class was frustrated by the rise of the palegaras. The merchants and artisans with the help of their Left and Right Hand associations waged a sustained battle against the hurdle created by the palegara class. They were definitely looking forward to the elimination of the palegaras and must have extended their fullest support to Chikkadevaraja in his campaign against them. The end to social chaos was a great relief to the merchant class since trade once again revived.

B. A *Santhe* for Each Hobli

The hobli which was formed for every eight to 16 villages was not merely an administrative division or a unit for revenue collection. The hobli was both of these only because of the economic ties it had developed with those 8 to 16 villages. **The santhe had created these ties out of which the hobli emerged as a suitable unit.** The proliferation of commodity production in Chikkadevaraja's time saw the existence of a few hundred santhes at least. **The collection of the entire state tax in cash,** which was a new development over that of Vijayanagara, stood testimony to this. The spread of the santhe across the countryside and its proximity to a rising class of owner-peasants not only spoke of the continued integration of the peasant but also a multiplication in the fortunes of the trader.

The big traders must have participated in these santhes through smaller middlemen thus drawing together the farthest villages with the cities.

C. Standardisation of Weights, Measures and Coins

B Puttaiya writes: *"Finding that weights and measures were not uniform but were much abused, he fixed the standard of each and caused the monogram of his name, the letter `de' [for Devaraja in Kannada] to be impressed on each and ordered that all weightments and measurements should be made in these approved weights and measures as a safeguard against fraud. Similarly he caused seals bearing the monogram `de' to be kept in the custody of local officials to be used whenever necessary for sealing purposes."* [16]

Although Chikkadevaraja did not introduce any new coins, it was he who popularised the Kantheraya Pagoda.

By standardising weights, measures and coinage Chikkadevaraja was only replacing a feudal set of measures with a system which favoured a mercantile economy. The

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need to maintain innumerable records of transactions and conversions was a hurdle to the big merchant class which was linked up with producers and customers in localities having differing systems of weights, measures and coinage. Thus the standardisation, whereby common measures were introduced, greatly helped the rising business class, more than any other.

D. Territorial Expansion and Expansion of the Market

The new conquests and the territorial expansion of the kingdom was to the advantage of the merchant class. In fact the fragmentation of the market since the collapse of Vijayanagara and then the fall of the Adil Shahis delivered a big blow to the rising merchant class. The new expansion of the Kingdom of Mysore under the Wodeyar revived the hope of once again expanding the prospects of an extended market for the mercantile class. It would not have been surprising if the merchants had funded these expansionist campaigns capable of fetching them a consolidated market.

E. Purchase of Bangalore

In what was an act without parallel, Chikkadevaraja purchased Bangalore from Khasim Khan, an officer under Aurangzeb, for three lakh Pagodas, which would not have been possible except for a king at the charge of a centralised state who had at his disposal the entire revenues that his kingdom coughed up. After its purchase, Puttaiyya says: *"The Raja thereupon improved the place, built a fort and a shop street, imported a large industrial population, such as the weavers, arranged for the safety of the town and made it a big cloth centre for the export of cotton goods to all parts of the territories."* [17]

The merchant class dealing in textiles, the Pancham Banajiga, was clearly on the rise. It had by now perhaps replaced the Salu Mule Banajiga and had encouraged Chikkadevaraja with the prospects that Bangalore held for the cotton textile industry. In developing Bangalore, it is clear as to which class the Wodeyar was acting in concert with.

F. Creation of New Urban Centres

While the santhes were weekly rural markets, Chikkadevaraja also set up many urban ones. While Bangalore was one, there were several others too. *"It was in Chikkadevaraja's time that the building of towns with divisions and shop centres was taken up on an extensive scale to deal with merchandise and to provide with settlements for the industrial population. He strengthened the fortresses he had won from the poligars, built towns round them and constructed high streets and shop centres therein and arranged for the weighing and selling of goods in these centres before they were transported to the interior for being sold in retail. It is interesting to note that Bangalore, Gubbi and Turuvekere were among the first towns so organised by him. As a result of the establishment of these centres, trade developed and the raja found an opportunity to tap fresh sources of revenue and forthwith introduced the octroi system of collecting revenue on all marketable articles, such as cloth, drugs, tobacco and similar articles and entertained an establishment for collection work."* [18]

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The new urban centres that Chikkadevaraja built were manned by the artisans who continued to increasingly dissociate themselves from agriculture in growing numbers with each passing day.

That, in constructing these urban centres, the king had laid special emphasis in catering to the needs of the merchant class first, is evident from the quotation above.

G. The Sat-Shudra Srivaishnavite

The Mysore Wodeyars converted to Srivaishnavism from Shaivism while they still were feudatories paying a tribute to the Vijayanagara nayaka at Srirangapatna. Theirs was a classic case of *feudalism from below.*

Between 1687-1690 Chikkadevaraja wrote *Sachchudraachara Nirnaya* in Kannada. In this work he levels the differences between the Brahmanas and Shudras by elaborating on the concept of *Sat Shudras.*

Apart from these influences, which are important to us because they describe the world-view of the king, who, changing with the times, carried with him strong concepts favouring a reform of the caste system by elaborating on such notions as Sat-Shudra and a reform of feudalism by upholding Tengalai Srivaishnavism which, although feudal basically, increasingly rallied with the merchant and artisan castes in an attempt to accommodate them. These changed cultural norms had a strong effect in putting an end to sati. There are many gory instances described by the various foreign travellers to Keladi and Hampi who were eyewitness to the very performance of sati by women of the property owning classes. However, Chikkkadevaraja was the first in the Wodeyar dynasty who convinced his wives not to bury themselves in his grave on his death. And, these instructions were followed. The king's tastes, ideas and cultural values were indeed loosing rigid feudal contours and accommodating those of a merchant class.

H. Focus Shifts to the South

In the twelfth century, with the rise in commodity production, it was the Dharwad-Shimoga-Bijapur belt, with Bidar emerging towards the end, that served as the trend setter, determining the political, economic and cultural direction of Karnataka. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, while Shimoga and Dharwad lost out, Bijapur held on with Bellary, Bidar and Gulburga as the new centres providing the general direction of historical development for Karnataka. With the defeat and devastation of Bijapur and after the palegara relapse, the rise of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar shifted the focus to the Srirangapatna-Bangalore axis, as **it contained the most forward looking orientation, since the interests of the modern state and the mercantile class had fused. It was this region which forged the progressive alliance between the king and the merchant, transforming the feudal king into a patron of mercantilism at the same time.**

On the other hand, during the same period, on the coast of Karnataka, a different alliance was being beaten out; an alliance of reaction between colonialism, feudalism and comprador merchant capital. In the century that remained after Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar's death, these two tendencies; one led by colonialism and the other by mercantile nationalism were to draw swords in a saga of valour which the masses and leaders of Karnataka were to display.

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Chapter VII

SEMIFEUDALISM AND MERCHANT PIONEERS OF ANTICOLONIALISM

The Mysore Kingdom of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan (1761-1799)

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1. UNIFICATION OF KARNATAKA

Following the brief relapse of about half a century since the death of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar in 1704, Mysore threw up two new rulers—**Haidar Ali and his son Tipu Sultan who reinforced and developed all the modernising trends set in motion by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar,** during their rule between 1761 and 1799.

The anti-palegara campaign initiated by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar which remained the principal condition for the emergence of a modern state **was intensified by Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan.**

Between them, **Haidar and Tipu either eliminated or suppressed up to 200 palegaras, thereby causing the eclipse of this parasitic class over a very extensive territory of Karnataka and South India.** While Chikkadevaraja had eliminated the palegara class in the districts of Mandya, Mysore and a part of Bangalore, Haidar and Tipu extended this campaign to cover the districts of Hassan, Shimoga, Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Chitradurga, Raichur, Bellary, Dharwad, Tumkur and Kolar in Karnataka. While most of these palegaras controlled petty fiefdoms, their most significant victories were against Madakari Nayaka of Chitradurga and Rani Channamma of Ikkeri, both of whom controlled extensive dominions and received royalty from the lesser palegaras who ruled below them, and the palegaras who paid up to the southern Maratha outpost at Sira.

Bristow mentions that in 1781 Haidar Ali brought with him about 50 palegara prisoners to Srirangapatna.[1] During his conquest of Kerala, Haidar had vanquished or eliminated **all** the 42 palegaras that ruled over northern Malabar.[2] Further there are innumerable references from original sources such as Nallappa Setti, Francis Buchanan, Wilks and others on the eliminating, imprisonment or flight of palegaras. Gururaja Bhat provides us with several instances from Dakshina Kannada.

Writing about this anti-warlord campaign of Tipu Sultan, Thomas Munro who was Collector of Canara then and later became the Governor of Madras Presidency said: *"The effects of this violent regulation was to hasten the extinction of the class of ancient proprietors or landlords...."* [3]

Again, as Principal Collector of the Ceded Tracts, Munro wrote in 1802: *"All native governments are little more than an assemblage of poligarships under a superior chief, who though he has a general control over the whole, possesses very little authority in the internal management. Hyder Ali was the only Indian sovereign we know of who ever subdued all his petty feudal chiefs and was really master of the country."* [4]

Francis Buchanan's investigation of the region in 1800-01 led him to conclude that *"the feudal system was broken"*, as a result of the anti-palegara campaign of the Mysore rulers.[5]

Asok Sen in his article on Tipu Sultan's Mysore writes: *"Haidar Ali took firm measures to destroy the dangerous influence and power of the poligars, but after subjugating them, he reinstated several of them on condition of paying an annual tribute; and he followed generally the regulations formerly established, and the peculiar customs and laws of the different provinces.*

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94. The Keladi kingdom and the Mysore Kingdom under Tipu Sultan.

95. Peninsular India illustrating the history of Mysore.

Tipu went further in the subjugation of Poligars. In the early part of his reign, 'the poligars were generally expelled and the revenues of their lands were either rented out to individuals by the officers of the government, or retained under their own immediate management.' A new system was introduced throughout his dominions.

...Thus, an entirely new system of management through government functionaries was introduced in place of delegation to an intermediate strata of poligars and other petty rajas. The old landlords were robbed by Tipu of all their power and influence. Their estates were annexed by the Government and the latter's direct relationship with the peasantry was the hallmark of the new system." [6]

Unlike conquests by kings during the feudal period which hardly left any indelible change on the social relations; the territorial expansion of these two Mysore rulers invariably brought about a progressive transformation of society under their subjection since they always ensured the elimination of the parasitic warlord class which led to the easing of a severe burden on all the classes involved in the production and distribution of material goods—the peasantry, the artisan and the merchant. Thus, while Chalukya and Vijayanagara rule did unify extensive tracts of the Kannada nationality, **the unification of Karnataka achieved by Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan** excluding parts of Belgaum and Bijapur and the whole of Bidar and Gulbarga **was not only extensive and comprehensive since most of Karnataka came under one**

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common rule; further, the impact of this unification was salutary since it contributed in what was rightly characterised as the *"breaking of the feudal system"* across the land. The unification of Karnataka achieved under Mysore rule thus had a new and progressive content to it although it did not last beyond four decades. **It unified the people by breaking the disunity that feudalism had created.**

The Bangalore-Srirangapatna axis around which this unification was achieved clearly emerged as its stable pulsating centre since it was situated in the heart of the region which had already witnessed the elimination of palegara rule for nearly a century by then. This centre had already achieved the political means to eliminate the palegara class and had witnessed a century of economic accumulation which ensued as a result of this elimination and which in turn only redoubled the political will of its rulers—Haidar and Tipu—to carry this change to the remaining parts of Karnataka.

The 38 year rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan was one of incessant warfare and quite often boundaries were redrawn. The Uttara Kannada, Dharwad, Bellary and Raichur districts of Karnataka constituting the border districts with the Marathas had frequently changing boundaries. The palegaras of these districts always tried to flee on defeat and reclaimed their former rights when events were in their favour. **This region was thus an unconsolidated belt of the Haidar-Tipu Kingdom and the palegara class here survived the rule of Mysore.** In order to maintain the stability of these borders Haidar Ali signed a treaty with about 40 palegaras of these outlying districts, in a bid to purchase their loyalty.[7] Thus **this palegara ruled tract of the Mysore Kingdom emerged as a buffer zone where the antifeudal reform was compelled to remain poor and weak.**

The territory of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan covered 2,00,000 sq kms.[8] It included the region south of the Krishna river and comprised, in addition to most of Karnataka, the Rayalaseema tract of AP, five districts of TN north of Dindigul and northern Malabar of Kerala. The Mysore Kingdom of that time **was bigger than British India** of that period and **was the biggest, after the Maratha kingdom, in India.**

A fair estimate of the population of Karnataka in the last decades of the eighteenth century must have been not more than 45 lakhs.[9] Of this nearly 35 lakhs lived in the territory ruled over by Haidar and Tipu and another 25 lakh must have comprised the regions of AP, TN and Kerala under Mysore rule.[10] The annual income of the Mysore Kingdom before the assumption of power by Haidar Ali which was 1.29 crore Rupees was a widespread peasant movement against the state which found its epicentre in Mysore district's Nanjangud taluk rose to touch 3.30 crore rupees by the time of his reign.

In short, the rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan not only led to the progressive unification of Karnataka, but taken along with the other extensive territories, it was peopled by a vast population fetching a massive annual revenue and with a sea board from Sadashivgad to Kozhikode running a length of more than 600 kms. **All these attributes, the most significant of which was its progressive antifeudal orientation, contributed to its emergence as a major power in India at that time and made it a formidable challenge to the aspirations of the British colonialists.**

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2. ENLIGHTENED ABSOLUTISM AND THE MODERN STATE

In the previous chapter we discussed as to how the modern state was wrought by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar. As more and more territory came under the rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan **the modern state continued to be built even more vigourously and had emerged not only as the first social institution to be modernised but also as the sole instrument to effect and protect the modernisation of Karnataka society at large.**

The two major pillars of the modern state—the military and civil bureaucracy—were built with great care and speed, details of which we shall discuss in a succeeding part of this chapter. The elimination of the warlords and the unification of Karnataka based on a centralised state created unfettered political room for manouvre thereby rendering **unprecedented power** at the hands of these two rulers. The centralisation of all revenues channelised through the instrument of the civil bureaucracy made Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan **unchallenged masters** over the economy. The civil bureaucracy further lent them **direct administrative control** of their subject population. **This immense power and capacity to intervene and regulate every aspect of social intercourse, unforeseen in Karnataka's history, laid the basis for the emergence of a new kind of politics; the rule of an enlightened absolutism.** This absolutism was characterised by its feudal-mercantilist content. At the end of this chapter we shall study this question in more detail. The fact that Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan were Muslims and had **almost no organic ties** with the feudal classes of Karnataka, provided them with an air of independence in pursuing their politics of enlightened absolutist rule. As the Court of Directors of the East India Company in a despatch on Haidar put it: *"Grown to formidable height of power, with a genius so aspiring, reasons so various, his authority throughout every part of his dominions so completely established, he became an object of first importance in the political system of India."* [11]

The forward looking ideas of Haidar and Tipu were **easily translated to practice only because of the building up of the modern state and the absolute power they wielded as individuals over this powerful apparatus.** Thus unlike in the earlier period of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, when the modern state was put in order, during the rule of Haidar and Tipu we find the state intervening and attempting to shape every major sphere of social production and exchange. In agriculture, manufacture, trade, communication and even culture there were major changes initiated and backed by the state. Of great importance however was the wielding of the modern centralised state in the long drawn out war against colonialism; **performing as the bulwark against the British.** Let us then first look into the military aspect and the uncompromising struggle which the fledgling modern state waged under the leadership of Haidar and Tipu against colonialism in an attempt to stave off the greatest scourge to have afflicted Karnataka in the centuries of its emergence and existence.

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3. WAR AGAINST BRITISH COLONIALISM

A. Motivation and Sources of Military Development

War consumed most of the 38 years of rule by Haidar and Tipu. They fought against warlords as part of their conquests and resisted British attempt at occupation and subjugation. At other times they waged war with the Marathas and were engaged in a protracted battle with the Nayars of Malabar and the people of Kodagu. Thus **there was never a year that passed without these rulers mounting their horses and taking to the field.** Of all these, the four wars which they fought with the British were the most important in terms of scale and significance. In all, these four Anticolonial Wars consumed nine full years of their rule and at other times, if they were not really fighting the British, then they obviously were meditating upon and preparing for their clash with them. Thus the conduct and preparation for war with the British was the central preoccupation of these rulers. **They viewed the British aggressors as their principal enemy** and their every major move, whether in the realm of military theory or tactics, whether in the field of arms manufacture or their use, whether in the area of recruitment of soldiers or their deployment, or whether in the sphere of revenue collection and its use--all these actions **were stamped with the unmistakable imprint of defeating the British colonialists and dislodging them from our country.** Thus the development of the modern army which these rulers so efficiently effected can only be appreciated in the light of their fierce and single-minded resistance to British colonial domination and in their endeavour to be ahead of them. Unlike in the period of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar when the state was modernised as part of the growing contradiction with feudalism; the process of modernisation which Haidar and Tipu introduced, in addition to being motivated by the antifeudal anti-palegara thrust, also **at the same time was spurred on by its contradiction with British colonialism,** and in the context of the bourgeois revolutions and the struggle between the contending colonial powers of Europe.

Haidar Ali's battles in Tiruchinapalli as an officer of the Mysore army in 1754 brought him in touch with the European mode of warfare. During the 10 months that he spent there **he put all efforts in cultivating three major aspects from the Europeans--tactics, technology and organisation.** Even as he was daily engaged in war during this period, he utilised the time to train up his army. NK Sinha says: he raised 500 sepoys and 200 horse and *"began to drill his recruits with the aid of few French sepoy deserters."* [12] Further, he learnt the **art of night attacks from the French** during this period.[13] Sinha writes: *"Orme describes Hyder Ali as the best officer at Tiruchinopoly, Dupleix sent Hyder a present in appreciation of his astuteness and zeal at Tiruchinopoly."* [14] On his appointment as the Foujdar of Dindigul, *"he is said to have obtained skillful French engineers to organise his regular artillery, arsenal and laboratory...."* [15]

Both Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan employed an exclusive contingent of French cavaliers under Lally, the French commander in charge of the French troops under Mysore and also employed a company of Portuguese soldiers.

Thus **it was during the siege of Tiruchinapalli in 1754 that Haidar identified the British colonialist as the principal enemy** and as Praxy Fernandes rightly sums up

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in his book *Storm Over Seringapatam, "studied the British and French army organisations, their hardy discipline and training. He realised that a small well organised force could easily overthrow a large and unwieldy one."* [16]

Thus by the time Haidar Ali assumed power over Mysore in 1761 he already had under him such a nucleus.

The next major innovation that Haidar Ali made to his army was drawn from the Marathas. **He learnt and developed the art of mobile warfare by relying on cavalry.** The fast pace of the Maratha conquests and their quick dispositions were an advantage which the army created by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar could not contend with. During the decades of the 1750s and 1760s Haidar Ali learnt and mastered the technique of mobility in warfare, the art of springing rallies and retreating great distances before the enemy could brace up. **By the 1770s Haidar Ali had built up an efficient cavalry of several thousand horsemen which remained the mainstay of his offensive and defensive tactics, the spear head of the Mysore army.** There were other strategic concerns for building up the cavalry as the centerpiece of his military establishment in his war with the British. MMDLT, alias Lally, a French officer in the service of the Mysore army in his book Hyder Ali and the Revolution in India, described this advantage the best. In the context of the First Anticolonial War which the British lost, he writes: *".... it was impossible for the English to secure themselves from loss in this war, their former successes in India arose from their wars being carried on near the sea-coast or on the banks of the Ganges, which gave them a facility of conveying stores and ammunition by sea, and receiving other assistance from their vessels; whereas in their contest with Haidar, they would be deprived of those advantages the war being carried on in a country remote from the sea, without one navigable river; where every advantage would depend upon cavalry, of which the English were entirely destitute...."* [17]

On Haidar Ali's mastery of cavalry warfare for which he put the terrain to maximum use, MMDLT writes, *"Hyder has a particular talent in climbing places where his camp can be in security.... The continual wars of Hyder with the Marathas, who were far superior to him in cavalry, had no doubt obliged him to make a particular study of the art of encamping in advantageous positions, which are without number in his dominions; all the country being intersected by mountains and valleys, and covered with towns, fortresses, ponds and woods."* [18]

In a letter to his father written in 1795, Thomas Munro had this to say about the Mysore Cavalry: *"While our army is composed only of infantry, our power here will always be in the most critical situation in the time of war; for one defeat may ruin us; therefore against an enemy strong in horse, defeat and extirpation are the same. He may loose many battles without much injury to his affairs, therefore we cannot pursue; but by one victory he annihilates our army. It was on this principle that Hyder fought us so often in 1781.... Four or five thousand horse might just now lay waste the Carnatic and Tipu, by following rapidly with the main body, might make it a very difficult and tedious business for us to collect our scattered army to oppose him."* [19]

From his war with the Palegaras Haidar Ali picked up precious experience and developed their method of retreating from fortresses to the forests and from

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there launching guerilla strikes as defensive tactics of attrition. These tactics of attrition yielded Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan victories in several battles capable at times in changing the course of the war. Describing the battle with the Marathas led by Gopal Rao in 1759, NK Sinha illustrates it thus: *"Hyder concentrated his force. Gopal Rao had to raise the siege of Bangalore and marched against Hyder who fortified his camp. Hyder occupied a difficult mountain terrain where horsemen could not penetrate. He never ventured out at daytime and contented himself with making night attacks in which he was incessantly active. This continued for more than two months. Hyder could not expect to defeat the Marathas in the open. But if he just succeeded in remaining on the defensive it might wear them out and induce them to withdraw."* [20]

Elaborating on the same battle, Shama Rao adds that: *"This kind of irregular warfare went on for about three months and the food supplies of the Marattas began to fail. Gopal Hari became weary of this unprofitable conquest opened negotiations with Hyder and concluded an agreement abandoning all claims on Mysore...."* [21]

These were then the three important sources of military development. **Learning from his opponents and taking the aid of the French to good advantage Haidar laid the foundations of a modern and versatile army.**

B. From Practice to Military Theory: *The Fathul Mujahidin*

Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan started their military careers when still in their teens. Haidar had no prior formal training in military matters; Tipu had the advantage of martial tutelage. These two rulers led whole armies to battle very early in their lives. Both of them breathed their last in the course of war and on the battle field.

Haidar Ali was 70 when he died and Tipu was 47. It may be said without overstating the fact that Haidar spent more of his time on horseback than on the throne.

Tipu's initiation to military matters started at a very young age and he partook in the planning, execution and review of battles when he was still a lad. Charles Stewart tells us: *"The Princes and sons of gentlemen in the East, are from an early age initiated into the martial exercise of riding, shooting, fencing, etc. In addition to these, Tippu, as he advanced in years, was instructed in the science of tactics, and attended his father at all military reviews, in order to acquire a knowledge of the discipline and art of war, more especially as practised by Europeans. His first essay in a military capacity was during the year 1767 and 1768, when Hyder Ali invaded and overran the Carnatic."* [22]

This spirit in Tipu, seeded at an early age, continued till his very last. In the Fourth Anticolonial War, on the eve of his death, Tipu's engrossment with war was as impeccable as when he began with his initiation. Munro writes: *"He seldom went to his palace during the siege, but spent most of his time sitting behind a cavalier or visiting the ramparts."* [23]

At times when Haidar and Tipu conducted campaigns they went through battle after battle for a year on end before returning to Srirangapatna, their capital. Between father and son they partook and personally led a few hundred battles, most of which they won, conducted several military campaigns in all of which they proved victorious and went through four major wars consuming nearly a decade against the British alliance; two

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of which they won and two others they lost. **In short, these two rulers were endowed with an extremely rich and variegated military experience. No other individual in India or perhaps few across the seas accumulated such rich experience as these two rulers did at that time.**

This mine of experience accumulated first by Haidar through his battles and their systematic reviews and then passed on to his son provided the profound material basis from which their innovative spirit sprung. It would be appropriate to quote Alexander Beatson to illustrate this desire to learn and master the science of war: *"During the siege, Habeeb Oollah was present at a Durbar when Tipu observed to Budrul Zeman Khan (who defended Dharwad so gallantly in the last war). 'In the course of my life, I have been present at many actions, but never at the defence of a fort, I have no idea of the proper method of defending this fort; after the present siege, by God's favour, I will make myself of this part of the art of war'."* [24] *Learning war by waging war*, as Mao said, they could in a short time assimilate any new experience, undertake extensive experimentation drink up from the military resources of their enemy, and make extremely successful innovations in terms of tactics and strategy, arms and arsenal. ***The Fathul Mujahidin* or *The Triumph of the Warrior* authored by Tipu Sultan in 1783 was the result of this rich experience. It was the summing up of the practice of the Mysore army and was a seminal theoretical contribution which Tipu Sultan made to the science of war. For their rich experience, their innovation and theorisation in the science of warfare Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan stand out as among the greatest of warriors that Karnataka has produced.**

***The Fathul Mujahidin* was produced in the context of the anticolonial struggle and as such its immediate objective was to serve as a weapon in the war of resistance against British colonialism.** It was military theory which was created by a fiercely independent merchant class which had just shaken itself free from the oppression of the feudal palegaras and ventured to safeguard an awakening nation from becoming a colony by introducing the tactics and strategy of warfare of the age of capital which the British so powerfully wielded to suppress and enshackle the masses of India groaning under the weight of feudalism. It was an attempt to learn from a superior enemy in order to defeat him by wielding his own weapon in one's hands. *The Fathul Mujahidin* was thus an anticolonial military manifesto of a rising patriotic mercantile class that sought the liberation of India.

Mir Mahmood Hussaine has this to say about *the Fathul Mujahidin*: *"... it is a masterpiece produced in the court of Tipu Sultan in simple Persian, a creation of his revolutionary mind, based on his own military experience and observation of warfare. It is a brief but comprehensive treatise on military science and the art of warfare. It is a unique work of excellence and it had very few parallels at the time of its production. By his royal command a number of copies of the book were made and distributed among the military officers under his signature. Some of the copies were also illustrated. His army was guided by this work all through his reign. By virtue of this his army became so well organised and his strategies so perfect that everyone dreaded him...."* [25]

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As a piece of internal evidence the translation of the opening passages of the book are presented here which are self explanatory.

"The Timurid Sultanat had become so weak and disturbed in 1757 AD mainly on account of the treachery of the employees of the house, that the English merchants living on the sea coasts of India, under the pretext of trade and commerce were always looking for opportunities. They made use of some unworthy persons who traded their faith for worldly gains for the purpose of colonisation and usurpation and took possession of the whole of Bengal, a part of Carnatic in the Deccan and the port of Surat and ***brought ruin and destruction to the lives, properties and the faith*** of the people. *In these circumstances Tipu Sultan has appeared on the scene like the sun in darkness who is defending the country and the faith.*

As the fighting of the English people is based on guns and muskets and the Indians are inexperienced in that matter, the Sultan framed new rules and methods for the artillery, arrangement of the army and attacking the enemy, for the individual as well as for the whole in detail to face the enemy on equal terms. Hence in the year 1783 AD this courtier received the order to compile them so that this noble science which is not found in India may gain currency and by its help the Sultan's armies may defeat the enemies."[26]

William Kirkpatrick in his *Select Letters of Tipoo Sultan to Various Public Functionaries* describes with spite about the anticolonial content of *The Fathul Mujahidin* thus: *".... next comes a long and bitter invective, apparently levelled at Europeans in general, but evidently intended to apply more immediately to the English, whose various possessions in the Carnatic, in Bengal, and on the west side of the peninsula, are particularly noted and stigmatised as the* ***acquisitions either of fraud or of violence.***

The author then passes to some slight observations on the military tactics of the Europeans; mentioning more especially, their early superiority in point of artillery, together with their dexterity in the use of small arms; and contrasting these acquirements with the extreme ignorance of the natives of India in those essential branches of war.

But whatever advantages the Christians, might, at first, have possessed in these respects, they could, it is observed, be no longer boasted of; at least by those among whom were opposed by Tipoo Sultan: since the latter is stated to have improved so greatly on the European tactics, as to have left his masters in the art at an infinite distance behind him. But, it was most of all, in the ordnance department, that he is pretended to have surpassed his rivals...." [27]

Elaborating on the contents of the book Mir Mahmood Husine says: *"**The Fathul Mujahidin** begins with a long and elaborate introduction and has eight chapters which are further divided into sections. The main theme of the I chapter is the necessity, importance and value of war against the invaders and oppressors. Besides, some other important subjects are also discussed such as, offence and defence, treatment of the conquered people and places, loyalty and treachery, treason and conspiracy, prohibition and evils of intoxicants and tobacco, fornication, lying and cheating, value of liberty and independence, evils of slavery and submission to foreign rule etc. Martyrdom has been declared to be higher than sainthood....*

*The II chapter carries a **Fal-Nama** or bibliomancy followed by the new names of the regularised weights and measures.*

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The III chapter is the most important and valuable part of this work.... It is a comprehensive discourse on military strategy and methods of warfare and comprises 21 sections. Appropriate methods to be adopted as circumstance required, such as surprise attacks, topography of the battlefield, taking advantage of hills, rivers, streams and trees, laying siege, use of various weapons, guerilla warfare, local conditions, etc, have been discussed at length in the beginning. The rules and regulations are explained for the army under 21 topics like terms of command for various occasions, parade, methods of attack and defence, open battles, fighting cavalry, responsibilities of commanders, officers and leaders etc.

The IV chapter begins with an impressive and long discourse on the importance of faithfulness and loyalty which is the soul and spirit of the army and enumerates the evils of disloyalty and treachery....

In the V chapter, conditions for military service and rules of appointments and promotions are recorded in the beginning. Then the weights and measures of guns, cartridges, muskets, matchlocks, pistols, etc, are prescribed....

The VI chapter deals with the troop of Rocketeers and the Naval Forces....

In the VII chapter methods of various exercises and parades have been prescribed for the cavalry, ...

The VIII chapter deals with the exercises and parades prescribed for the infantry under the 18 heads .... in the end very useful and easy medical prescriptions have been written down...."[28]

It is unfortunate that we still do not possess a translation of this work. However it is clear form what little is evident that *The Fathul Mujahidin* was a theoretical work and a practical manual for action. It exhibited the attempt by Tipu Sultan to prepare and mobilise his army to resist the onslaught of British colonialism.

Tipu's own words demonstrate the relationship between this army of national resistance and the people: *"Looting a conquered enemy enriches a few, impoverishes the nation and dishonours the entire army. Wars must be linked only to battlefields. Do not carry it to innocent civilians. Honour the women, respect their religion and protect their children and infirm."* [29]

His priorities and perceptions of war were extremely clear. **The target of war was to drive out the British and prevent the emasculation of the nation so that liberation could conserve and build up the energies, resources and products of people.**

Under the rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan war acquired a new meaning. It decisively broke away from feudal warfare which invariably served the purpose of pillage and plunder.

C. The Anticolonial War Machine

Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan built up a very formidable war machine. There are different estimates of the Mysore army at different periods of time.

On the eve of Haidar Ali's death in 1782 the strength of the regular army stood at 1,80,000 men.[30]

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Two years after the victorious conclusion of the Second Anticolonial War in 1786, Tipu Sultan's regular army had a total of 1,44,000 men. They included:

Cavalry	19,000 men
Artillery	10,000 men
Infantry	70,000 men
Rocket men	5,000 men
Irregular Infantry	40,000 men[31]

In 1790, during the Third Anticolonial War, Tipu's forces totalled 1,43,000 men. They included:

Regular Infantry	69,000 men
Artillery	10,000 men
Irregular Infantry	45,000 men
Regular Cavalry	7,000 men
Irregular Cavalry	12,000 men[32]

The general ratio showed that in Tipu Sultan's Mysore before the outbreak of the Third Anticolonial War there was one soldier in the regular army for every 40 people in the population.

Tipu evinced great personal interest in recruiting and building his army. He is credited with personally interviewing every new recruit before their appointment. Explaining daily routine while at Srirangapatna, Alexander Beatson writes: *"It was his custom to review, every morning, the new levies and recruits and to enquire into their caste, country and extent of their religious knowledge. If he was satisfied with their examination, they were in consequence, entertained with a higher rate of pay.... These examinations often lasted for several hours."* [33]

Based on *The Fathul Mujahidin*, the army was organised into companies, brigades and battalions. *"From the regular infantry, 5000 men being selected, they were named a* ***Kushoon****, and the officer commanding that body was called a* ***Sipahdar****. In each* ***Kushoon*** *were four* ***Risaldars*** *or colonels of infantry and under the orders of each* ***Risaldar*** *or colonel were 10* ***Jowkidars*** *or captains, and on that scale or proportion 100 men being a* ***Jowk****, the chief of them was called a* ***Jowkidar****, and every* ***Jowk*** *or company included two* ***Sur Kheil****, 10* ***Jamadars*** *and 10* ***Duffadars****. In the regiments of troops or regular horse, which were formed and appointed after the manner of Europeans, the* ***Teepdar*** *and* ***Subadar****, called Major and Adjutant in the French and English languages, were styled* ***Youzdar*** *and* ***Nakib.****"* [34]

The hierarchy created room for the smooth flow of commands and a clear system of assigning responsibility. The supreme commander of the entire defence forces invariably was Tipu Sultan himself.

To give an indication of the regularity with which the modern Mysore army was built, the following quotations from Lally who was not only a witness but also an officer in it, serves as an interesting illustration: *"The* ***Batis*** *[Patti] are small writings or warrants. Every person in the military service has one, from the general to the drummer. This writing contains the name of the person, and of his father and grandfather; a description of his person, and that of his horse (if he be a horseman) the day he entered the service; his station, and his pay; and as often as he is paid the sum is entered on the*

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same: those of the officers contain simply the name, the station or degree, and the sums received. The Batis are triple, and in three different languages, Persian, Maratha and Canarin; and as there are three chancellors, they are preserved in greatest order. Haider signs the state of accounts every month as well as a particular statement for every troop; for no payment is made without the signature of Haider, or, in his absence, of the general commandant." [35]

In the early days of Haidar Ali's rule, salaries were paid once in 40 days. However, in the later days of his rule prompt monthly payments were made with sepoys receiving Rs. 8 a month and grenadiers Rs 10.[35] **Not even the British army could boast of a system as punctual and as streamlined as this.**

On the rigour and upkeep of the army, Lally notes: *"From the time of their first establishment, they were exercised every morning in handling their arms, by their own officers; and every afternoon from three till six, five battalions by turns, were exercised in their evolutions by the French commandant; after which they were made to march from six to eight, marching out at the ordinary pace and returning home with a quick step.*

All the officers, without exception, were obliged to do this exercise as well as the common soldiers.... It was thus that this sovereign formed a body of troops, to whose rapid movements the English afterwards attributed all his success." [36]

Alexander Beatson adds that while at Srirangapatna Tipu regularly superintended the exercises and participated in the mock battles of his troops. *"In the evening, he commonly went out on horseback to superintend the discipline of his troops.... He generally stood upon the outwork, before the Bangalore, or eastern gate; and from there directed their exercises and manouvres."* [37]

Tipu abolished all forms of physical punishment within the army except treachery which was encountered with court martial and death. Such minor reforms were innumerable. **Some of them were introduced for the first time not only on Indian soil but also were unknown to the British army in Europe itself.**

The army created by Haidar and Tipu was modern not only in terms of its organisation and upkeep but also in terms of its munitions and arms. In the initial period of their rule it remained a challenge to procure and produce modern arms which the British used which after all were the result of bourgeois manufacture and capitalist industry. However, Tipu's remarks in 1783 in *The Fathul Mujahidin* makes it amply clear that technological backwardness or inadequate supply of weapons was a concern of the past. **Thus by the time of Haidar's death, it may be clearly said, the state-run laboratories and factories had achieved and even surpassed what the industrial revolution fetched the colonialists in the sphere of war.** A more detailed exposition of this may be had in a later part of this chapter.

A look at the quality and quantities of military hardware and paraphernalia rendered Mysore India's fist of steel against colonialism which often bewildered the British occupationists themselves; prompting reactions ranging from panic to extreme hatred. Lally writes that Tipu's inventory in 1786 showed 3,00,000 firelocks, 3,00,000 matchlocks, 2,00,000 swords, 22,000 pieces of cannon of different calibres, 700 elephants, 6,000 camels and 11,000 horses.[38]

Writing about the stores the British found in 1799 at Maddur, a minor fort, Shama Rao says: *"An idea of the military stores generally contained in the forts may be obtained from what was found in this fort. This fort contained 373 guns, 60 mortars and 11 howitzers of brass, 466 guns, 12 mortars and 7 guns unfinished of iron; in all 929 pieces of ordnance, of which 287 were mounted on the fortification. 4,24,400 rounds of shot, 5,20,000 pounds of powder, 99,000 muskets, carbines, etc, of which 30,000 stand of French and 7,000 of the Company's arms. There were also powder magazines, 2 buildings for boring guns and muskets, 5 large arsenals and 17 other buildings filled with swords, accoutrements, rockets and a variety of small stores."* [39]

Thus it was that Maddur also got its name, which meant *gunpowder town*. Further, Shama Rao gives us the following account of arms and arsenal found in Srirangapatna when it fell to the British in 1799: *"Nearly 1,000 pieces of brass and iron ordnance were found in the fort and island of Srirangapatna. The number of iron shots, viz, round, grape and of other descriptions amounted to more than five lakhs, besides about 12,000 shells, grenades and cases filled with grape. About 60,000 stand of small arms were found to be in an effective state. The number and quantity of other descriptions of arms, ammunition and military stores were in proportion and included between four and five thousand draught bullocks. In the stables were found only a few fine stallions and brood mares, Tippu's cavalry being in the field. A great number of the iron ordnance and nearly all the brass six pounders numbering 51 were of English manufacture and the other were in general cast in Tippu's own foundry."* [40]

The armament factories of Haidar and Tipu produced, in addition to these weapons, pistols of single and double barrels, a product of such fine quality which France was yet to produce at that time.

However, **an outstanding contribution made by Haidar and Tipu was the invention and manufacture of the first missiles in the history of the world.** Kenneth Macksey, in his book, *The Guiness History of Land Warfare* writes: *"The first practical rocket missiles were used by Hyder Ali of Mysore against the British in 1780. As a result an Englishman, William Congreve, produced rockets in 1805 which were used in the naval bombardment of Boulogne in 1806."* [41]

These missiles travelled up to 1.4 kms. The British had no knowledge of the technology involved in its production for 37 years since it took to the field against Mysore. It was only after the fall of Srirangapatna in 1799 that this technology and the principles involved in it were copied by William Congreve who in producing it made no innovation but only replicated what was stolen from the forges, foundries and factories of Mysore.

Kenneth Macksey is inaccurate in dating the Mysore missiles. MMDLT records that it was already in use by 1767. He gives us a graphic description of these rockets which were mounted on camel back and were also operated by ground troops: ***"There were likewise some troops, around with arms...unknown...at present in Europe.***

The same number of men [3,000] carried rockets of iron, in the form of fuses, and attached to direction rods: they are of various sizes, some containing more than one pound of powder or consumption, and fly to the distance of 1,000 yards. Many of these rockets are charged to burst; others are sharpened at the end; and others are pierced at

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the foremost end, being charged so that the wind acts strongly on the flame and sets fire to the matters it may strike in its course...they have been sometimes productive of dreadful effects by setting fire to ammunition waggons. These rockets are very well adapted for setting fire to towns and villages in which the enemy have magazines. A body of cavalry, not used to this kind of instrument, would be quickly thrown into disorder by it; for the rockets falling at the feet of the horses, emit a flame resembling that of a forge furnace, which frightens them; and when they burst, they do considerable mischief. It is no small advantage, that they describe a curved line, and may therefore be thrown by people that are covered by a line of infantry." [42]

Nikhiles Guha describes the rocket in the following way: *"The third class of infantry was made of the Juzail-burdars or rocketmen, no command being complete without them. The rocket was a massive weapon, having a stalk of thick bamboo, eight to ten feet long, with an iron tube weighing between six to twelve pounds, containing the fuse and the powder, fixed to its end. In wet weather or on marshy grounds, however, they pointed horizontally and were bound in a very uncertain direction, often creating great damage particularly among the cavalry and ammunition tumbrils of the enemy."* [43]

These rockets proved extremely versatile, capable of halting and troubling the advance of any large body of enemy troops. They also played a vital part in the wars against the British colonialists, what with the Mysore army having a contingent of 5,000 rocketmen, contributing in a major way towards effortless victories in a few important battles.

In addition to building up an army as part of its regular armed forces, **the government of Haidar and Tipu made three serious attempts to equip Mysore with a navy.** Although the state was possessed with an assortment of naval vessels, ever since their occupation of the Karnataka coast, each major effort at trying to build up a formidable navy was repeatedly frustrated. **The attempt by these rulers to arm themselves with a navy stemmed from their sea-borne mercantile aspirations.** Linked with their taking of the Konkan seaboard so that they could aspire for maritime subcontinental and overseas trade, was the need to defend the sea-borne merchandise of the Kingdom. The rise of seafaring Europe and particularly England, demonstrated the importance of sea-borne trade backed by the armadas which cleared the seas of enemies and seized entire colonies. **The Mysore navy was an attempt to challenge British power in the Arabian Sea and to drown or drive away the vessels of colonial loot.**

This projection of state power to the seas marked out Mysore as a pioneer in India. Although the rise of Mysore's maritime state power, did not immediately pose a challenge as its well developed army did to the British colonialists; nevertheless, it caused consternation among the British colonial bourgeoisie, since it potentially pitted the state of a rising nation against what had been the bedrock and trump card of British colonial legacy. Thus, the British took special care to use every occasion they got in their wars with Mysore to destroy its fledgling naval fleet.

DS Achuta Rao in his article *Mysore Navy in the Eighteenth Century* says that in 1763, a small fighting navy was built.[44]

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NK Sinha says that by 1775: *"Having got possession of Honnavar, Mangalore, Bhatkal and also Sadasivgad, Haidar could now think of having a navy of his own....*

Peixoto thus describes the fleet: 'It consisted of 80 vessels, 13 topsail vessels, several manchoos of war, besides a great many skybars and small craft for the transport of war materials and provisions for the passage of the army across the rivers. The Dutch account differs from the Portuguese. According to the former, the fleet had 2 ships, 7 smaller vessels and 40 gallivats, besides more than 50 other vessels laden with provisions'." [45]

There were two *Mir-e-Yams* or chief admirals; below whom were the admirals or *Amirul Bahr.* Since none from his kingdom was versed in naval matters, Haidar employed a British Mir-e-Yam who was however given command over navigational matters only while Latif Ali Beg directed every thing else on board.

NK Sinha goes on: *"The Moplahs were great navigators and they formed an excellent crew to man the ships that Hyder built. But the difficulty was about the command. In 1768, when the Bombay government sent a squadron of ships with 400 European troops and large number of sepoys to attack Haidar's sea ports on the Malabar coast, Hyder's naval power completely collapsed."* [46]

Sinha says that this was because of the inexperience of Latif Ali Beg in maritime warfare and the desertion of the British Admiral to the side of the enemy. Sinha adds: *"Undaunted by his first failure Haidar attempted to build and equip a new fleet in his sea ports...in 1775...at Onore [Honnavar] Haidar's craftsmen were working as speedily as possible. The ship building programme there included the following.*

One grab [ghurab]-		*103 1/2' keel*
One grab	-	*56 1/4' keel*
One grab	-	*54' keel*
One grab	-	*98' keel*
One grab	-	*72' keel*
One grab	-	*52' keel."* [47]

DS Achuta Rao writes: *"A contemporary Portuguese letter dated 28 December 1788...throws considerable light on the increasing naval building activities of Hyder Ali. It informs us that he was engaged in the construction by a number of men-of-war and a Dutchman was appointed to convert the harbour of Bhatkal into a great naval arsenal and dockyard. The letter went as follows: `I should particularly inform you that the Nawab Hyder Ali to make himself as respectable on sea as he is formidable on land has ordered the construction of many sailing ships in all the places of the south coast (which are) big enough for his great work. He has hither to in the sea or in stocks three masted ships which carry 28 to 40 pieces of artillery and a similar number of `palas' also in the sea or in stocks of lesser tonnage. For making greater progress in the work and to provide with necessary accommodation for building and preserving the most powerful fleet in Asia, he began this month to build a stockade above the waterline of the gulf of Batcal which is situated above Onore on the firmland to the south and is very near the island of Angediva with the intention of constructing a huge mole which will enclose a port where at the full tide it is said, a large fleet can anchor. The projected work also includes fortification for the defence of the ports'."* [48]

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Quoting Innes Munro, Nikhiles Guha writes: *"Yet inspite of the failure of his naval schemes, the earnestness with which he tried to put them into practice earned admiration even from enemy ranks: 'No art has been left untried to entice into his [Haidar's] pay our ship-carpenters and dock-yardmen from Bombay and other places; and in this attempt the French and the other European powers have been induced to assist them, so that the progress which he had already made in constructing docks and equipping a naval force is almost incredible'."*[49] Although the Mysore forces triumphed in both the First and Second Anticolonial Wars, it is however, important to note that Mysore lost its entire naval fleet on both occasions.

After assuming power Tipu Sultan ordered the construction of a naval fleet to include 40 vessels of which 20 were battleships and the same number were frigates.[50] This third and ultimate effort was far more elaborate than the earlier attempts. However, the eclipse of his power in 1799, dashed all hopes drowning the Mysore fleet in the deep seas.

Citing William Kirkpatrick, Nikhiles Guha says: *"Had Tipu the time to carry out his ambition of raising a navy, it might have been a threat to the English. As Kirkpatrick says: 'In proportion as the Sultan might have been able to realise his alarming plan of a marine establishment, we should as a measure of necessary precaution, have been compelled to augment at a heavy expense, our naval force in India, for the purpose of duly watching his armaments, and of keeping them in constant check. This evil at least, was averted by the issue of the war of 1799'."* [51]

D. Support Structures for a Regular Army

Not only did Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan excel in providing the Kingdom with a modern army armed with the latest weaponry, but **they also paid great attention in building up detailed logistic and other support structures which backed up and allowed the army to perform with an efficiency and resilience which stupefied the enemy and led to its own imbibing and cultivation of these methods, a few of which however remained beyond the enemy's prowess and reach.**

Haidar and Tipu always maintained a militia which was nothing but a continuation of the kandachara system which Chikkadevarja Wodeyar introduced. In Haidar's days they numbered 1,10,000.[52] In 1786, the Mysore army was reportedly served with a militia consisting of 1,80,000 men.[53] The strength of the militia exceeded the strength of the standing army by 36,000 men at that time. The militia also served as a fighting reserve in times of an exigency.

About the militia, NK Sinha writes: *"These irregular troops were variously armed but generally with matchlocks and pikes. They were originally cultivators of the soil embarking on military enterprises during the idle months. Hyder employed them in large number in his garrisons and in his armies."* [54]

Wilks says: *"The Candacher peons, when at the respective houses, receive a small pay, partly in wasteland, partly in money from 2 to 3 rupees per month. When called out for service within Mysore they receive an addition of one pagoda [3 rupees] and on foreign service the same batta as the regular pay."* [55]

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NK Sinha adds: *"On return from service they received rewards in the shape of Khilats, pecuniary presents or reimbursements for losses. Many of these peons accompanied Haidar's field armies. They cleared roads, made batteries, garrisoned captured towns and did such other very essential army service leaving the regular army free for field operations."* [56]

After assuming power Tipu undertook to expand his infantry by recruiting several thousand men. **The kandachara militia served him as the recruiting base** since it was from them that he enlisted the new men. **The militia was obviously the crutch on which the regular army moved and rested.**

Haidar and Tipu developed a punctual and advanced system of communications. For this they developed the system of *harcaras* or *couriers.*

In his book *Pre-British State System In South India*, Nikhiles Guha writes: *"Tipu dispensed with the services of the Brahmin* ***harkaras****, but required the* ***daroghas*** *to prepare with their own hand news of the daily occurrences in three separate Persian reports. The Naiks, or police officers, were to furnish the Sultan with an equal number of Kanarese statements of local happenings....*

The speed with which the news passed through the courier system surprised Abraham Parsons; an English private merchant who visited the west coast of India during the years 1772-78. This description is detailed: 'There are few countries where paper belonging to the state are dispatched with such celerity as in the dominions of Hyder Ali. From the capital to every part of the sea coast they receive letters in 30 or 44 hours, which is at the rate of 10 or 12 miles in an hour, as the nearest part of the coast is more than 300 miles fromthe capital. The mode of conveyance is the following: At the distance of every 10 or 12 miles (according to the situation) is built a watchtower of stone, in which are placed 5 or 6 men, 2 or 3 of whom are remarkable for running very fast. The first man who sets off as a courier, as soon as he gets in sight of the first tower, displays a white handkerchief at the end of his stick, if by day, if by night, fires off a pistol: when immediately another man is made ready which is done by oiling his joints with coconut oil, as he is naked (except a cloth around his waist). This man takes the packet from the first and thus it is handed on in succession at each stage. They run from stage to stage within the hour'." [57]

Although Parsons' estimates of distances in Mysore are flawed, the picture is none the less revealing in terms of its regularity and performance as a well defined system.

On the question of its systematisation, Tipu Sultan's letter, *To the Seven Superintendents of the Post at the Seven Capital Cities of the Sultanate*, of 16 December 1785 is instructive. He wrote: *"We have fixed the coss at 6,000 Guz [or yard], which distance must be travelled by the postmen in a* ***ghurry****-and-a-half (or 33 minutes and 45 seconds).... You are, moreover to denote the hour, the day of the month and the day of the week, on the superscription of all your dispatches. This order is to be strictly attended to."* [58]

Commenting on this William Kirkpatrick wrote: *"...taking half the coss will amount to 15,000 feet or better than 2 miles and three quarters; making the rate of proceeding appointed for the postmen rather more than 5 miles an hour. This though certainly very*

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practicable, when the relays of ***Hurkarehs****, or postmen, are placed at short distances,* ***considerably exceeds****, I believe, the ordinary rate of the mail in British India."* [59]

MMDLT mentions: *"To the packet [of the courier] is joined a paper, denoting the hour he was sent off; and at every station the time of its arrival is marked...these posts...have been since imitated by the English."* [60] But as Kirkpatrick confirms the British failed in this.

This system of couriers which employed close to one lakh men served to transmit civil as well as military information. It was precisely because of such a rapid communication system, that the centralisation which Haidar and Tipu created could be sustained. With the network spread out across his territory, Haidar and Tipu created for themselves a situation wherein they could stay months together outside their capital, and immersed in warfare along the borders of their domain, could still exercise their authority and stamp their decisions simultaneously on remote battlefields and all civil matters of consequence.

The efficiency and importance of this system is brought to us in a vivid description that MMDLT provides us about Haidar's court, in which he says: *"Couriers arrive almost every instant."* [61]

The couriers in combination with the militia performed very well in disrupting, tapping and rechannelling enemy communication. An incident from the battlefield during the third War against the British alliance in 1791 provided by Thomas Munro illustrates this: *"They [Parsuram Bhau and Hari Pant] had marched above 300 miles in 4 weeks; and though they had despatched near 100 hircarras to give us notice of their approach, the roads were so well watched by Tipu's irregulars, that not one of them had ever reached us."* [62] In fact it was not until the Maratha and British forces *"had approached within sight and were ready to form a junction"* that the message sent one month in advance was really communicated.[63]

Haidar and Tipu developed a good transportation network, without which it would have been impossible to carry all the weaponry and march the army from one corner of the Kingdom to another in a matter of days.

Tipu Sultan is estimated to have possessed 4,00,000 bullocks and cows in 1786.[64] All these bullocks were of the sturdy and long legged Hallikar breed, yoked exclusively for transportation. It was by the efforts of Haidar early during his reign that separate *kavals* or meadows were maintained by the state at innumerable points in his Kingdom to serve as breeding stations for the Hallikar oxen, so that their numbers proliferated by 1786 and laid the foundation for an efficient and rapid system of transporting weapons, ammunition and grain for the army in the field. NK Sinha writes that the system was so perfected that: *"It was impossible for the British to intercept him [Haidar], for his excellent bullocks marched at the rate of two feet to one of the British."* [65]

Lewis Rice says: *"Principal breeds of horned cattle in Mysore are Amrit Mahal, Madesvaram Betta and Kankanhalli.*

The Amrit Mahal, literally Milk Department, is an establishment for the breeding of a race of cattle peculiar to the country of Mysore and famous for its utility for military purposes. The establishment was founded at some time during the Hindu gov-

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ernment with special privileges as regards grazing, but its maintenance for the special purpose of supplying draught cattle for artillery is due to Hydar Ali. He is reported to have introduced a breed of cattle from Trichinapoly country, by a cross between which and the indigenous breed of Mysore was produced the Hallikar breed, which is considered the best in the whole establishment.

It was an establishment, wrote Sir Mark Cubbon, 'which enabled Hyder Ali to march 100 miles in two days and a half to the relief of Chidambaram, and after every defeat to draw off his guns in the face of his enemies; which enabled Tipu Sultan to cross the peninsula in one month for the recovery of Bednur, and to march 63 miles in two days before General Meadows....'" [66]

Forts which had acquired great importance during the period of feudalisın, and the hill forts or *durgas* which became prominent during the palegara interregnum for having served the feudal ruling classes, took on a new role in the changed semifeudal conditions of modernisation, unification and centralisation. Under the new conditions of warfare initiated by an enemy, forts could by themselves not guarantee safety. The new means of war already began to render a supportive role for forts. The tactics of keeping a fort intact gradually changed, and its precincts were used as a temporary base from where to issue forth sallies or launch a counter attack. The tactics shifted to arriving at an armed resolution outside the fort and one sought to utilise the tactics of starving the encircling the enemy rather than vice-versa which was the classic pattern employed in taking it.

Haidar and Tipu thus retained the forts which they took from the warlords only to renovate and strengthen their defences. Almost every old fort which they seized including the impregnable Chitradurga was reinforced and strengthened. This was among the first tasks they addressed themselves to on capturing a fortress. Apart from this both father and son were great builders of forts. They are credited with the construction of altogether new forts such as the solid Manjarabad fort of Sakleshpur taluk. With Tipu's army a body of masons and brick layers were always on the move whose exclusive task was to undertake repair, renovation and construction of forts.

Nikhiles Guha says that *"More than a thousand forts of different magnitudes defended Mysore."* [67] The Srirangapatna fort was the biggest of them all.

We have already seen in an earlier part of this chapter as to the extent of arms and ammunition that was preserved in the Srirangapatna and Maddur forts. In 1799 it was reported that: *"There were twenty granaries and seven godowns containing immense quantities of paddy, ragi, salt, pepper and horse-gram. The oldest paddy is recorded to be of 11 years duration and in a good state of preservation."* [68]

In a letter to his father Thomas Munro wrote in 1799: *"...we marched and got to Seringapatam on the 11th where we found everything in the greatest abundance, for the bazars were not only full, but the granaries contained nearly two lakhs of bullock-loads of paddy."* [69]

Charles Stewart says that Tipu *"...ordered that provisions, sufficient for the consumption of 1,00,000 men for one year, should be collected and deposited in the granaries of Seringapatam. He also directed similar provision to be made for all his other forts, according to their respective strength and importance."* [70]

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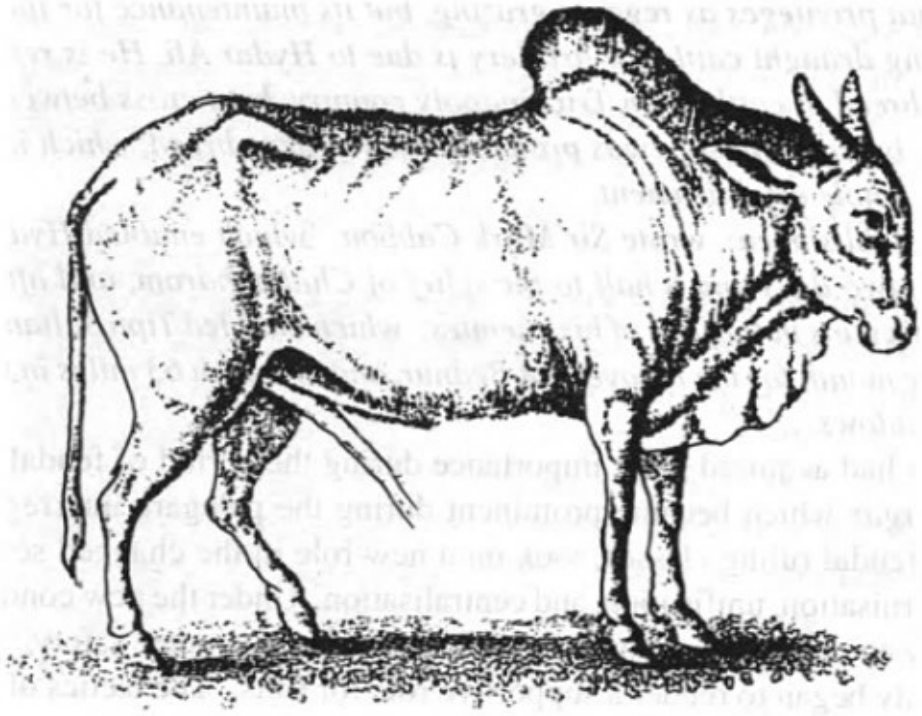

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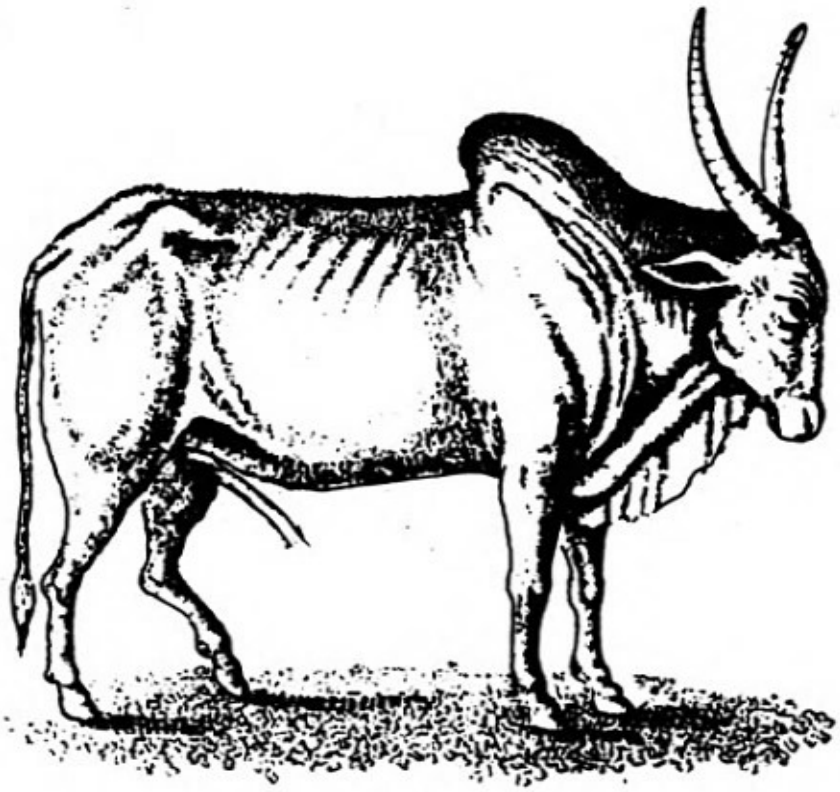

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96. Hallikar (1) bull and (2) ox from the herd of Tipu Sultan.

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Thus the forts served a very important role in preserving the army and its arsenal.

In addition to fighting the colonial marauders by mobilising the army and militia, Haidar and Tipu also sought the cooperation of the peasant masses in this. While the degree of involvement of the people was low, it nevertheless played an important part in their scheme of warfare without which it would have been impossible to deliver reverses upon the enemy. MMDLT illustrates the nature of such cooperation that was solicited and the response of the peasant masses to such calls at a time when Haider anticipated an attack on Srirangapatna.

"The genius of Hyder, vast and fertile in resources, seems to have been formed to shine in critical and embarrassing situations of this nature. He immediately determined on a plan of action: he divided all his army into small parties, and dispersed them over all the country with orders to all the chiefs to command and oblige all the inhabitants, as well as of the country, as of the cities, towns, villages and fortresses to abandon their dwellings and retire to Seringapatam bringing with them all their property of any kind whatsoever. The troops were ordered, at the same time, to lay the whole country waste, without sparing anything but the trees; and to burn all forages, even the straw that covered the houses. To facilitate the devastation, and the transport of goods, all the sutlers, valets and other dependents on the army were permitted to share the universal pillage; and they went forth on this expedition, attended by every beast of burthen belonging to the army or the city.

It is scarcely possible to form an idea of the promptitude with which this extraordinary order was carried into execution; and in how short a time one of the finest and most beautiful countries in the world was changed into a desert for 30 leagues [1 league=4.4 Kms] round Srirangapatna. It is difficult to determine who were the readiest to show their obedience, the inhabitants, or the army: the former abandoned their houses, leaving nothing they could carry away, and they were succeeded by the troops, one party after another, who finished, by leaving absolutely nothing and soldiers were continually arriving at Seringapatam, carrying corn, rice, maize and even wooden beds and earthen pots, no one choosing to return empty handed; and what may seem still more surprising, all the inhabitants arrived cheerful and contented, some carrying their children, others their sick and infirm; the number of whom, in this happy climate, is always very small. As soon as any troop of people arrived, they were paid immediately the value of their effects, at so advantageous a price, that no dispute ever arose on the subject; and afterwards they were despatched to an allotted part of the neighbouring mountains, where they were allowed a sufficient quantity of rice and other necessaries, at a price much below that which was given for what they sold at Seringapatam." [71]

All these were then the support structures that the modern army of Mysore relied on. All this ultimately rested on the will of the people. Lally's description only tells us of how they cooperated. Haidar's attitude towards the people was developed further by Tipu Sultan.

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E. Arrowhead of Anticolonialism: Political Assessment and Military Strategy

With the sharing of state power by the mercantile class and the state being strengthened at a very rapid pace, **Mysore emerged as a growing bastion of uncompromising anticolonialism.**

Following a series of antifeudal reforms, the process and pace of modernisation introduced by its enlightened rulers, served to focus the contradiction between Indian independence and colonial slavery around Mysore during the last four decades of the eighteenth century. It was by the resolution of this contradiction, by the suppression of the new and aspiring state that the future prospects of British colonialism rested in India. Conversely, every independent action of Mysore was increasingly impinged upon by rising British colonialism, that it became inevitable for this state and the merchant class that weilded it to vigorously defend its independence and lash out at the British conquerors. **Of all the contradictions at this point of time in India's history that with British colonialism had emerged as the principal one. It was the political wisdom of Haidar Ali who perceived this contradiction very early in his career that brought about a shift in the priorities of his government although it was only a short time that the Battle of Plassey (1757) had been concluded and the fight among the European colonialists for enslaving India had shifted decisively in favour of the British.** Even as Haidar assumed power in 1761, he had been able to distinguish the significance of the contradiction with British colonialism.

In contrast to his initial attempt to maintain friendly ties with the British before fighting at Tiruchinapalli in 1754, Haidar's anti-British stand crystallised soon after the results of Plassey. NK Sinha writes: *"....the anti-Maratha phase of his career had ended. War with the British being more or less inevitable after this, the main preoccupation of his life, as that of his son later on, was to crush the British. Hyder became convinced that he must make a supreme effort in this direction in alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam if possible, without them if necessary. As he told a British ambassador later, he decided to expunge the British name from the Carnatic. (Forrest,* ***Selections*** *Vol II, Proceedings, 26 Aug. 1982). It became the dominant motive of his life henceforth and determined every military venture, every diplomatic move."* [72]

Haidar Ali's political analysis was profound. He not only identified the principal enemy with precision but went on to approach the other contradictions—with the French and various Indian feudal kings—in relation to that with the principal enemy. While opposed to colonialism in general, he befriended the French colonialists only in order to extirpate the principal enemy first, and was vividly conscious not to surrender his independence to the French and thus become a pawn in intercolonial rivalry, as most feudal Indian princes were wont to do.

A few hours before his death in 1782, Haidar Ali dictated a letter to his son, who was fighting a few hundred kilometres away from him, in case death should consume him before the two could meet. This letter is important in that it contained the last words of advice of a departing ruler to his son and thus possessed essential political lessons of his reign. It ran thus: *"My son, I leave you an empire which I have not received from my*

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ancestors. A sceptre acquired by violence is always fragile. Meanwhile, you will not find any obstacles in this family; you have no rivals among the chiefs of the army. I do not leave you any enemies among my subjects. You have nothing to fear as regards the internal affairs of your state, but is necessary to carry your vision very far. India, since the death of Aurangzeb, has lost her rank among the empires of Asia. This fair land is parcelled out into provinces which make war against the other; the people divided into a multitude of sects, have lost their love of the country. The Hindus, softened by their pacific maxims, are little able to defend their country, which has become the prey of strangers. The Mussulmans are more united and more enterprising than the feeble Hindus. It is to them that should belong the glory of saving Hindustan. My son, combine all your efforts to make the Koran triumph. If God helps this noble endeavor, the day is not far, perhaps, when the sword of Mahommet will place you on the throne of Timurlane. The greatest obstacle you have to conquer is the jealousy of the Europeans. The English are today all powerful in India. It is necessary to weaken them by war. The resources of Hindustan do not suffice to expel them from the lands they have invaded. Put the nations of Europe one against the other. It is by the aid of the French that you could conquer the British armies, which are better trained than the Indian. The Europeans have surer tactics, always use against them their own weapons. If God had allowed me a longer career, you need only have enjoyed the success of my enterprises. But I leave you for achieving them rich provinces, a population of 12 million souls, troops, treasuries and immense resources. I need not awaken your courage. I have seen you often fight my side, and you shall be the inheritor of my glory; remember above all that valour can elevate us to a throne but it sufficeth not to preserve an empire. While we may seize a crown owing to the timidity of people, it can escape us if we do not make haste to entrust it to their love."[73]

This was Haidar Ali's political vision. It aspired for nothing less than the total independence of India and not just the safety of the Mysore Kingdom. In his scheme of things Mysore was to serve as the arrowhead of India in piercing the armour of the British colonialist. These profound words will need a lot of chewing by the Hindu communalist before they can be digested.

Haidar Ali always viewed his contradiction with the British on an entirely different scale from the contradiction with his belligerent neighbours—the Marathas and the Nizam. The evidence provided by Krishna Rao and Halappa stand testimony to this. They write: *"The British solicited Hyder's help against the Nizam, with whom their relations were strained about the Northern Circars, but Hyder refused to assist them"*,[74] as his policy was not to join with the colonialists to wage war with an Indian power. Tipu Sultan held firmly to the political analysis of his father and the changes he made to this perception only further refined it.

He held steadfast in viewing the British as the principal danger to India even in the most trying of circumstances. Soon after defeat in the Third Anticolonial War in 1792 and the loss of territory and payment of indemnity not only to the British but also to the Marathas who joined hands with the British against Mysore, Tipu Sultan rode out of the Srirangapatna fort and as Praxy Fernandes narrates: *"Before the Maratha armies were*

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evacuated Tipu Sultan, it appears, paid a visit to Haripant Phadke; during the course of which he upbraided him for the role which the Marathas had played and with a true historic vision said to him: 'You must realise I am not at all your enemy. Your real enemy is the English of whom you must be aware'—words uttered 22 years before the Battle of Kirkee and the collapse if the great Maratha nation before the new imperial grants." [75]

What Tipu anticipated was not just an alliance against British colonialism in India, but a solidarity of all the international forces fighting British colonialism. He is reported to have said: *"Every blow that was struck in the cause of American liberty throughout the world, in France, India and elsewhere and so long as a single insolent and savage tyrant remains, the struggle shall continue."* [76]

Apart from being a major hurdle for the expansion of British power in India, on account of its military strength, Mysore, in the perception of the colonialist was the principal danger, since it was the only kingdom in the country whose rulers possessed a profound political analysis which fathomed and laid bare its ugly imperial designs capable of awakening and uniting the entire subcontinent against the aggressor. It was the consistent anticolonial perception of these rulers who aspired not for a fiefdom or two; enlightened absolutists who while fighting for the frontiers of their Kingdom also envisaged the rout of the enemy across the length and breadth of the entire country's territory, that really challenged the British and prompted it to focus its diplomatic and military efforts so that this early vanguard of patriotism could be smashed.

A cross section of British colonial opinion which we present here testifies to the fact that they perceived the Mysore of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan as a strategic political and military threat.

Victory at Plassey cleared a major impediment for the British coat of arms in their conquest of India, and at the time of Haidar's accession to power the British empire in India was as big as, if not smaller than the territory covered by the Mysore Kingdom. Two consecutive defeats in their war with Mysore despite their having forged an alliance with other Indian powers was a humiliation which compelled them to quickly reassess the new enemy which they were up against. Thomas Munro who later became the Governor of Madras Presidency and was among the most foresighted of colonialists that ruled India, but was still an officer in the British army at that time, was among the first to wake up to the concrete situation, grasp the essence of these stunning defeats and consistently lobby for a change in British political assessment and its strategic perceptions in India.

Alexander Arbuthnot who has edited Munro's writings says: *"In opposition to the opinion which, at that time, generally found favour with authorities, both in England and in India, he [Munro] recognised the paramount importance of subverting the powerful and dangerous empire which Haidar Ali had founded in Mysore."* [77]

He then excerpts what Munro wrote in 1790 at length: *"It has long been admitted as an axiom in politics by the directors of our affairs both at home and in this country, that Tippu ought to be preserved as a barrier between us and the Marathas. This notion seems to have been first adopted without much knowledge of the subject, and to have*

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been followed without consideration. It is to support a powerful and ambitious enemy to defend us from a weak one. From the neighbourhood of the one we have everything to apprehend, from that of the other nothing. This will be clearly understood by reflecting for a moment on the conditions of the two governments. The one, the most simple and despotic monarchy in the world, in which every department, civil and military possesses the regularity and system communicated to it by the genius of Hyder, and in which all pretension derived from high birth being discouraged, all independent chiefs and Zamindars subjected or extirpated, justice severely and impartially administered to every class of people, a numerous and well disciplined army kept up, and almost every employment of trust or consequence conferred on men raised from obscurity gives to the government a vigour hitherto unexampled in India. The other, composed of a confederacy of independent chiefs, possessing independent dominions and numerous armies, now acting in concert, now jealous of each other and acting only for their own advantage, and at all times liable to be detached from the public cause by the most distant prospect of private gain, can never be a very dangerous enemy to the English.

The first is a government of conquest; the last merely of plunder and depredation. The character of vigour has been so strongly impressed on the Mysore government by the abilities of its founders, that it may retain it even under the reign of a weak prince or a minor. But the strength of the supreme Maratha government is continually varying according to the disposition of its different members, who sometimes strengthen it by union and sometimes weaken it by defection or by dividing their territories among their children.

The nation likewise maintains no standing army, adopts none of the European modes of discipline, and is impelled by no religious tenets to attempt the extirpation of men of a different belief. But Tippoo supports an army of 1,10,000 men, a large body of which is composed by slaves, called chelas, trained on the plan of the Turkish Janizaries, and follows with the greatest eagerness every principle of European tactics. He has even gone so far as to publish a book for the use of his officers, a copy of which is now in my possession, containing, besides the evolutions and manouveres usually practised in Europe, some of his own invention, together with directions for marching, encamping and fighting; and he is, with all his extraordinary talents...." [78]

Commenting on the Treaty of Srirangapatna after the Third Anticolonial War in 1792, which Tipu Sultan lost and had to concede almost half of his Kingdom among other reparations; Munro said: "*If peace is so desirable an object, it would be wiser to have retained the power of preserving it in our own hands, than to have left it to the caprice of Tippu, who though, he has lost half his revenue, has by no means lost half his power. He requires no combination, like us, of an able military governor, peace in Europe, and allies in this country to enable him to prosecute war successfully. He only wants to attack them singly, when he will be more than a match for any of them; and it will be strange if he does not find an opportunity when the confederates might not find it convenient to support the general cause.*" [79]

In the same year Munro again argued: "*By applying European maxims to India, we have formed the chimerical project of maintaining the balance of power by joining*

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sometimes one party of Mahrathas and sometimes another, but chiefly by supporting Tippu and the Nizam as a barrier between ourselves and the whole nation. We take it for granted that, if this fence were ever removed, they [the Marathas] would instantly break in upon us, overrun the whole country, and drive us into the sea. I am so far of a different opinion, that I am convinced that the annihilation of both these powers would rather strengthen than weaken the security of our possessions. Experience has shown that augmentation of territory does not augment the force of the Marathas: it only serves to render the different chiefs more independent of the Poona Government, and to lessen the union of the confederacy. With more territory, they are not half so formidable as they were 50 years ago; but Tippu is, what none of them are, complete master of his army and his country. Every additional acre of land and rupee of revenue increases his force in the same manner as among European nations. He introduces modern tactics and all the improvements of artillery into his army.... He [The Nizam] and Tippu with regular armies would be far more dangerous neighbours than the Mahrathas. Ours ought to, therefore be to let the Marathas strip the Nizam as much of his dominions as they please, and to join them on the first favourable occasion to reduce Tippu entirely: When this is effected, it may be said they [Marathas] would turn their whole force against us; but the interests of their leaders are so various, that we should never find much difficulty in creating a division among them; and admitting the worst, that we did not succeed, their united force will be able to make no impression on us. I have seen enough of their warfare to know that they could do little in action, and that their mode of laying waste the country would be more destructive to themselves than to us, and would never effectually stop our operations. It would not hinder us from making ourselves the masters of the Malabar Coast, nor from re-establishing the Rajahs of Udaipur and Jaipur, and many other princes who are impatient to recover their independence. They would soon get tired of the war, make peace with us, and resume their old disputes about the Peshwa and his minister. Their government, which was long conducted by a Peshawa, or minister, in the name of the Raja, has for more than 20 years been held by the ministers of his minister and they are now going to decide by the sword whether minister the first or minister the second shall usurp the sovereign power. From a government whose members are scarcely ever united—where there is a perpetual struggle for the supreme authority—which forms no French alliances—and whose armies are constituted in the same way that they were in the last century, we have surely much less to apprehend than from such an enemy as Tippoo. By our scheme of politics, he is to save us from Mahratha invasions, but is not to extend his dominions; but as he is always contriving means to do it, we are, at every alarm to be at the expense of taking the field, or going to war to keep him within the bounds which we have prescribed to him; but we are never to go so far as to overturn him entirely. The consequence of all these whimsical projects will be that we shall at last make the native powers so war like, that in order to enable us to oppose them, we shall be obliged to sink the whole of our revenue in augmenting our armies. Anyone who compares our present military establishment, King's and Company's with what it was 20 years ago, will see how fast we are advancing to this point. The Company may flatter themselves that by their late arrangements they have set limits to their ex-

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penses on this head; but they must go on increasing, while the cause which produces them exists—a prince to meet us with regular armies in the field." [80]

Writing about Tipu in 1792 Major Dirom said: *"So formidable was he also to the British Government in India, that the revenues of two of their Presidencies, Madras and Bombay, were inadequate to support forces equal to their defence."* [81]

The Court of Directors of the East India Company wrote thus in one of their dispatches: *"Grown to a formidable height of power, with a genius so aspiring, reasons so various, his authority throughout every part of his dominions so completely established, he became an object of first importance in the political system of India."* [82]

Munro in another instance wanted the English to crush Tipu. He said: *"....it is only the presence of such an enemy that can render any combination of other states formidable, because they require some ally more regular and more vigorous than themselves, to hold them together and give spirit to their proceedings."* [83]

After the conclusion of the Second War with the British G.B.Malleson, in his book *Seringapatam, the Capital of Tippu,* wrote: *"....it was the ruler of Mysore alone who had shown himself at all equal to the English on the field of battle."* [84]

In 1795, Thomas Munro again articulated British fears when he wrote: *"It is of greatest importance to have a well appointed army, not only to carry us successfully through a war, but also to deter the army of our neighbours from attacking us; because whether beaten or not, they still receive some new instruction in the military art. Though they are averse to innovations, yet the force of example will at least operate on them as well as on other people. Their improved mode of carrying on war is a sufficient proof of this; and if they continue to make such advances as they have done under Hyder, Scindhiah and Tippu they will in 30 or 40 years, be too powerful for any force that we can oppose them."* [85]

Again, in 1798, Munro in a letter to his father wrote: *"I have always thought that it was essentially necessary to our own security that no such power as his [Tipu's] should exist."* [86]

Let us now turn to the assessment of the political situation by Marquess Wellesley, India's Governor General at that time. In 1798 he wrote: *"In reviewing our political situation in India, particularly with regard to our comparative power of curbing the attempts of Tippu, I ought not to omit the consideration of the relative strength of that prince as it exists in the present moment, and as it stood at the conclusion of the peace at Seringapatam [ie, the Treaty of 1792].*

Since that period of time he has enjoyed perfect internal tranquility: while our allies all around him have been distracted and exhausted by domestic rebellions, successive revolutions and mutual wars, he has been employed in recruiting the sources of his strength, improving his revenues, and invigorating the discipline of his armies.... He has been very active for some time past in his applications to the courts of native powers, endeavouring to stir them up against us.... But the most remarkable step that Tippoo has lately taken, is his communication with Zemaun Shah.... If an invasion of Hindostan should ever seriously be attempted by Zemaun Shah, the diversion of our force, which would be occasioned by such an event, would offer the most favourable opportunity to

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an attack from Tippu on our possessions in the peninsula. No mode of carrying on war with us could be more vexatious or more distressing to our resources than a combined attack from the Oude and the Carnatic....

If the facts be true which I have stated on both sides of this enumeration of the comparative circumstances of our situation in India, and of those which effect the situation of Tippu, it must be admitted that he has rather gained than lost weight in the period of time described, and that the consistency, unity and efficiency of our side of the balance has suffered no inconsiderable degree of diminution.... ***The balance of power in India no longer exists upon the same footing on which it was placed by the peace of Seringapatam. The question therefore must arise, how it may best be brought back again to that state, in which you have directed me to maintain it."*** [87]

From the above political analysis Wellesley came to the following conclusion about Tipu: *"Of course I fear him greatly. He is not like other rulers of India that we have known. I fear also the example he sets to other rulers. Fortunately all of them are far too pusillanimous to follow his example, but in the long run such an example can have a disruptive influence on the empire."* [88]

These were then some of the debates that ensued among the top echelons of the colonial administration. **All these centred on an assessment of the political and military strengths of the various forces in India. Munro campaigned most consistently for a reversal of British colonial assessment of the contending powers. He in particular drove home the point that Tipu's Mysore was the strategic enemy of the British. Munro's analysis looked into several aspects--the economy, the political structure, the state, diplomacy and military matters. He could see the dynamism of Mysore and that was what he feared. In a sense it was Munro's victory in this debate that contributed in no small measure to the victory of the British over Mysore. It was on the basis of the above political assessment that the British colonialists had decided on the destruction of Tipu's Mysore as its foremost political task of the period.** To realise this aim they drew up their military strategies; drowning Karnataka, its masses and patriot heroes, in a sea of blood.

F. Karnataka's Foremost Wars of Independence

The army of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan fought three types of wars. The first was the anticolonial war for national defence. The second was its offensive military campaigns against the decadent feudal palegaras. The third was its counter-insurgency war against the guerilla war of the people of Kodagu and the Malabar. Let us now preoccupy ourselves with the first of these—Karnataka's first wars of independence .

In all, the Mysore army fought four wars against the British alliance. In these it found no reliable ally and had to defend itself on its own exclusive strength. All the four were wars for self-preservation and defence against British colonial conquest. All these wars broke out due to the provocations of the British colonialists. For these reasons, they assumed a just and progressive character **becoming thereby among the first anticolonial salvos delivered by the Indian people.**

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In the first Anticolonial war (1767-1769) Haidar's forces had the initiative from the very beginning. Smith wrote: *"They [Mysore forces] have a knack of retreating with so great celerity (neither mountains nor anything else can stop them) that we could not get one piece of cannon from them."* [89]

Smith who commanded the British troops, explains the mettle of the Mysore army while taking the fort of Krishnagiri thus: *"It did not surrender until 2nd May.... Even then the quiladar was allowed to march out—this being one of the conditions of surrender—with troops, arms, colours etc, and one field piece, the first demand of the kind made by an Indian officer which we must attribute to that military spirit which Hyder took every opportunity of instilling into his troops...."* [90]

NK Sinha has this to say about this war: *"Indian armies, inspite of great numerical superiority were no match for the European whose spirit, temper, discipline, fire control, swiftness and superiority of technique took the former by surprise. Against this, mere personal bravery was helpless. But the element of surprise was by now over. The other Indian powers saw that the Indian sepoys trained by the Europeans were gaining resounding victories for their masters. Naturally chieftains like Hyder Ali started employing Europeans to train their armies. Capt Mathews writes about the battle of Mulbagal; 'I never saw black troops behave so bravely as Hyder's.... He had so much advantage over the British that he could make ravages, cut off the convoys, paralyse the British intelligence service, secure his own retreat and defeat, and prevent Smith from taking advantage of his victories. Next to beating the enemy, pursuit is the most important thing in war; and in pursuit, the British army was literally paralysed'. Hyder Ali told Srinivas Rao the vakil of Sir Eyre Coote in 1782 'You will march four coss in a day, more you cannot for your lives and so keep trotting after me all around the country. My business in the meantime I shall take care to despatch'. The lack of mobility was a factor which contributed to British failure in 1769. Smith was so weak in cavalry that he had to reduce the theatre of operations as much as possible to the mountainous country. Hyder's army, so superior in cavalry, had much greater mobility and was more daring than the British. Hyder made full use of this superiority especially in the later stage of the war; marching, fatigue and exertions were his special weapons."* [91]

Thus **the victory in the First Anticolonial War of Mysore was also the first defeat at the hands of an Indian power for the British.**

The Second Anticolonial War against the British (1780-1784) saw the mobilisation of a total of 90,000 soldiers by Haidar Ali. The victory achieved by Haidar and Tipu in the battle and the capture of British officers of Palur turned the course of the war and sent shock waves down the British spine. Sinha writes: *"This victory revealed Haidar's best qualities as a general—his accurate intelligence of the enemy, his correct estimate of the mental qualities of the enemy, his readiness to run a considerable risk to win a great success. The defeat of a British army was a rare achievement in Indian wars and a French officer of Haidar Ali wrote: `There is not in India an example of a similar defeat'."* [92] After the ceasefire in 1784, Tipu Sultan released, as part of the treaty, more than 4,000 British officers and men, a good 10% of the British forces deployed against Mysore, **making this the single instance in Indian history of the capture of such a huge number of British forces.**[93]

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With resounding victories in two successive wars with the British colonialists, enemy assessment of Tipu's forces changed as we have already explained and they began to see the formidability of the task they had undertaken. Arthur Wellesley, in a letter wrote: *"His [Tipu Sultan's] light cavalry and others are the best of the kind in the world."*[94]

In 1787, Campbell wrote to Cornwallis, the Governor General: *"Tippu Sultan is an active, ambitious and enterprising prince whose troops are in a higher order than the forces of any Asiatic state we are acquainted with."*[95] Another observation by a British officer was that *"Tippu Sultan's artillery was superior to that of even the Europeans."*[96]

Thus before encountering the Mysore Army for the third time, the British colonialists were more cautious than on the earlier two occasions. Firstly, they forged a grand reactionary alliance with all the forces that had a contradiction with Tipu. This alliance was to include the Marathas, the Hyderabad Nizam, the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin and a spectrum of palegaras who had escaped from the Mysore frontiers and taken refuge with the British or their protectorates. Secondly, in terms of number, it surpassed all previous efforts. *"Lord Cornwallis's army consisted of about 22,300 combatants and the number of camp followers was about 6 followers to 1 fighting man. The number of transport was about 80,000 and in addition there were also a number of camels and ponies. There were also 100 elephants, each elephant having 2 keepers."*[97]

There were 32,000 fighting men with the Marathas and the number of camp followers to each fighting man was 12 to 1.[98] The Nizam's contingent included 40,000 fighting men. In addition the Palegaras of Kangundi Palya, Chickballapur, Punganur, Madanapalli, Anekal, etc. had among them anything up to 50,000 men. Thus **the total fighting force concentrated on Tipu Sultan exceeded the strength of the Mysore army. If one were to include the retinue, the number comes to the stupendous figure of 10 lakhs or about one fourth of the entire population of Karnataka then. Thirdly, it was for the first time that the Governor General himself assumed command over the British forces.**

After taking Bangalore, Thomas Munro had this to say about the conduct of the war: *"Tippu had not more than 3,000 horse in the field: he himself showed much judgement and decision in taking up his positions. This was to be expected from his character; but the conduct of his infantry excited much surprise. They stood the fire of musketry, often till our troops were within a few yards of them; they defended every post; they rallied wherever the ground was favourable; and at last driven from the field, they retreated without confusion."*[100]

Major Rennell speaks of a similar instance in his memoir: *"Impressed with the...sentiments that Tipoo was in his own country detested....[I] doubted not that the defection of his whole army would be the immediate consequence of the approach of the confederate forces: but, in the very reverse, have been seen of his army, such instances of attachment and fidelity as excite our admiration, and perhaps can scarcely be equalled. Without attempting to draw a comparison...let it be asked what troops, under such highly disadvantageous circumstances, would have shown an attachment superior to those of Tippoo's...? We have seen their fidelity unshaken, and their courage unbroken.... When we see troops, after being continually beaten for two years, fight as well at the end as at*

the beginning of the war, we must purely allow it to proceed from something superior than to a blind obedience to commands, without admitting loyalty and attachment to the commander, to have any share in stimulating them to their duty.... His troops did oppose the British with a perseverance deserving the tribute of applause." [101]

Having encircled Srirangapatna but unable to take it due to heavy losses the British army had faced in the two years of battle and due to the unbearable influence of the scorched earth policy, were the armies of the British, Marathas and the Nizam, 10 lakhs in all, were left without food and forage. The British had to sue for a compromise. Munro said that the British had gained no advantage out of the Third War except *"the liberty of looking at the island"* of Srirangapatna.[102]

The spoils were divided thus among the victors: the Marathas got the northern Karnataka districts between the Krishna and Tungabhadra and Bijapur. The Nizam was allotted the eastern districts of Kurnool, Cuddapah and Gandikot—the lower reaches of the Tungabhadra valley. The areas which went to the British were the provinces of Baramahal and Dindigul including Salem and Krishnagiri and the rich coastal belt of Malabar with its prosperous sea ports of Kozhikode and Kannur. The Rajas of Kodagu and Kochi who were restored to power accepted British suzerainty and reconciled themselves to the lot of the Nawab of Carnatic.[103]

Thus a half of the territories were forsaked. Apart from that 3,30,00,000 rupees were to be paid as indemnity and all prisoners with Tipu Sultan released.

In this war Mysore lost 70 fortresses, 800 pieces of cannon, 3,30,00,000 rupees and 50,000 of its brave sons were maimed or killed.[104]

Despite these losses the economy was rebuilt and the army and defences strengthened with redoubled vigour which amazed the colonialists. By the end of the decade Wellesley's assessment was that Tipu Sultan had not only recovered and rebuilt, but had advanced to the extent of leaving the British in a disadvantageous situation when compared to that of 1792. The decision to destroy Mysore had perforce to be taken.

Contemplating an attack on Mysore Wellesley wrote in 1798: *"...the movement of our troops and military preparations could not escape the vigilance of Tippu: his resources are always more prompt than our own; and as a great part of his army is said to be in a state of field equipment, our attempt to strike a blow at him is likely to produce an invasion of the Carnatic before we are in a situation to resist him.... A comparison between his own and his father's wars, with the late experience of his own misfortunes, has taught him that our strength depends upon our supplies."* [105]

This fear of attacking him and in the process being counter attacked even more severely, daunted Wellesley for the next few months.

Again noting certain changes that Tipu had made, Wellesley observed: *"The superiority of Tippu in cavalry, and the greater rapidity with which he moves, would render it impracticable to proceed to the attack of Seringapatam without establishing a systematic chain of posts for depots of stores and provisions. That he has endeavoured to frustrate this is evident from his policy in the destruction of Ossore [Hosur] and Bangalore, and in making Seringapatam his only or principal fortification. By the former*

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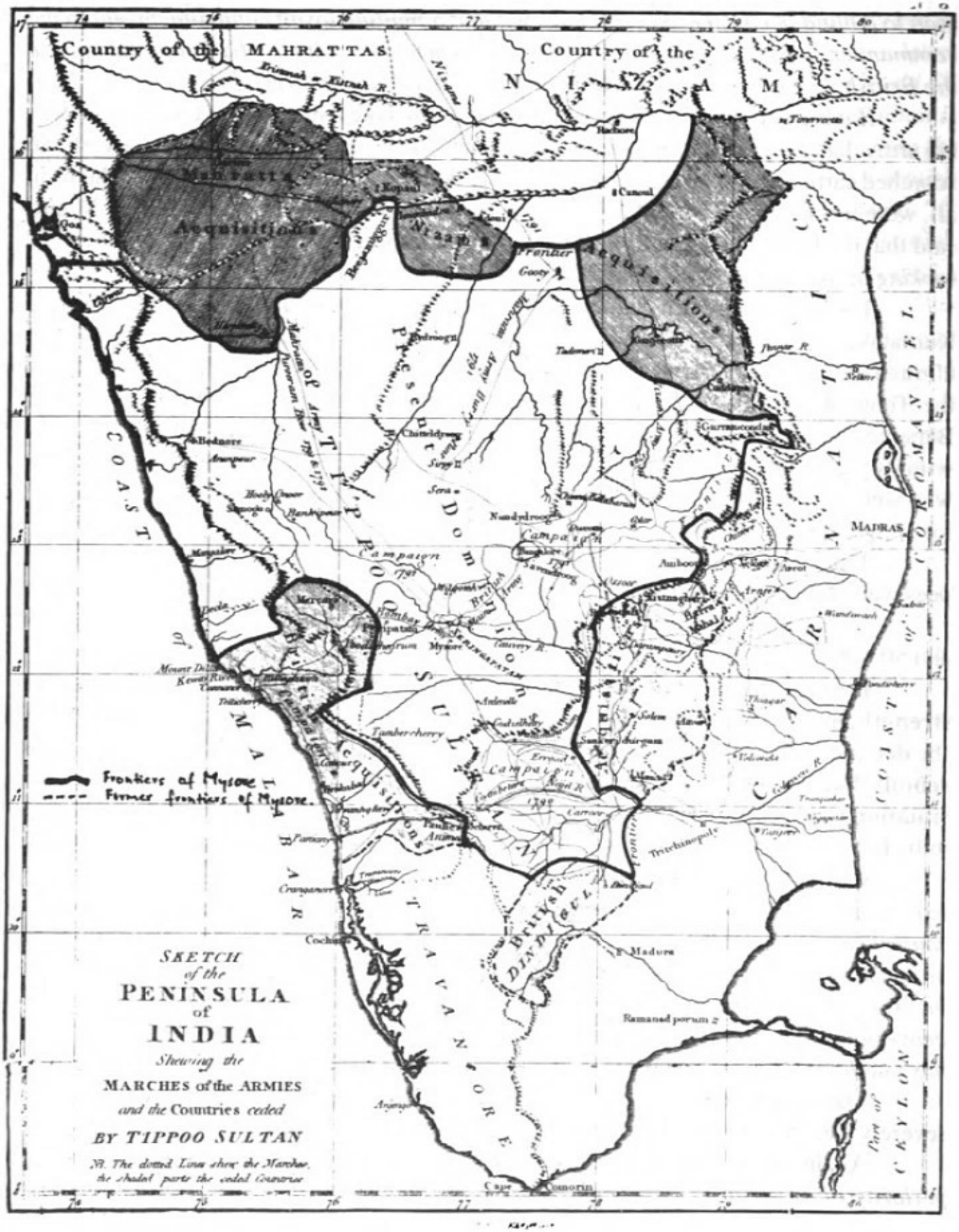

97. This map prepared after the victory of the British Alliance in the Third Anticolonial War of Mysore shows the boundaries of the Kingdom before and after 1792. The shaded portions were territories ceded to the British, the Marathas and the Nizam.

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*it is his intention to increase the difficulty of our approach by lengthening the time of our operation, and by the latter to oppose such impediments to make the capture of Seringapatam impracticable in the course of one camspaign...**nothing therefore short of the capture of Seringapatam can justly be considered as striking an effectual blow against Tippu, the achievement of any immediate success appears to me utterly impracticable.**"* [106]

Thus while the political decision to smash Tipu had been taken some years ago and the general military preparations had been underway at great cost for several years, the specific military plan continued to flounder and in drawing one Wellesley continued to drag his feet. However, by February 1799 in a letter to the Select Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Wellesley had clearly embarked on formulating such a plan. In it he said: *"...I have already received intimations from various parts of his [Tipu's] dominions and from some of his principal ministers and officers, which promise considerable advantage in the prosecution of hostilities against him."* [108]

The British had used and exhausted the gifts of the industrial revolution upon Tipu Sultan, who excelled them in every weapon and manouvre. To defeat him with these very same weapons was futile. Furthermore it could boomerang and lash out at the foundations of the empire itself. Thus the British colonialist decided to use a different weapon, a weapon forged in the pithless heart of the capitalist, the weapon of a colonialist—perfidy, treachery, treason.

With Mir Sadak and Purniah purchased, and sabotage assured, it was only a matter of time before British victory was ensured. With its provisions not expected to last beyond 20 May; the British army commenced its march on meagre rations yet with immense repose and unparalleled reassurance.

In a brief period of slightly over two months since the British forces left their barracks they had reached the island of Srirangapatna. Despite sabotage at the highest levels, the display by Tipu's forces even in the last Anticolonial War was remarkable. The Governor General, Wellesley, himself opined: *"I understand that the Sultan's horse appeared in larger bodies, and manifested more discipline, as well as boldness, in this war than in the last; that his infantry appeared to be less numerous but to be greatly improved in efficiency for service, and that it both attacked and resisted our European troops on several occasions with great vigour, firmness and resolution."* [109]

Yet along the line of their march fortress after fortress surrendered without firing a shot, and before Tipu could sense the sabotage or realise the extent of damage, the enemy by his side threw open the gates of the capital on 4 May and beckoned the British in. Tiger Tipu was slain. More than 11,000 heroic resisters were massacred on that single day. It was indeed a brilliant victory for British arms. As a bleeding Srirangapatna washed its deep wounds in the sweet waters of the Kaveri the ship of British colonialism, for the first ever time in history, sailed so far upstream in this unfordable river and anchored on her bloodstained banks for trade.

G. Military Campaigns Against the Decadent Palegaras

While the wars against British colonialism were what preoccupied Haidar, Tipu and the Mysore army; their military campaigns against the decadent palegara class came next in significance. As we have already seen, more than 200 palegaras were either eliminated4 or vanquished during their brief rule. While some surrendered without giving battle, most others fought a suicidal war. This decadent feudal class and its mode of warfare proved ineffective in the face of the might and methods of the modern Mysore army. Their manner of warfare evidently crumbled with them. Fortifying themselves in their petty strongholds they tried to keep the Mysore army at bay. While this could have worked in earlier times since one warlord's force was never bigger than another's, in conditions when feudalism and its mode of warfare was changing, this method only allowed the palegara to be encircled, by a force far greater in number and far more advanced in mettle and fire power than his own motley army of retainers. While the palegara's forces were restrained from venturing out of the forts on this account, they could however at the same time not continue for long within since the big guns of the Mysore army bombarded the ramparts and made short work of their defences, leading to the easy capture and defeat of the warlords.

The decay of the palegaras as a class must not be lost sight of while viewing at Mysore's easy victories. The fact that they had become a burden on the people more often than not, won popular neutrality for the Mysore forces. At other instances even the armed retainers along with the people who lived in the villages, welcomed and rallied with the Mysore forces. Of how much the palegaras had become a burden on the peasantry, Buchanan's description of Venkatagiri in Kolar is an example: *"The country is exceedingly bare, and the population scarce. All the houses are collected in villages; and the smallest village, of five or six houses, is fortified. The defence of such a village consists of a round stone wall, perhaps 40 feet in diameter and 6 feet high. On the top of this is a parapet of mud, with a door in it, to which the only access is by a ladder. In case of a plundering party coming near a village, the people ascend into this tower, with their families, and most valuable effects, and having drawn up the ladder defend themselves with stones, which even the women throw with great force and dexterity. Larger villages have square forts, with round towers at the angles. In those still larger, or in towns, the defences are more numerous, and the fort serves as a citadel; while the village or Pettah is surrounded by a weaker defence of mud. The inhabitants consider fortifications as necessary for their existence, and bear the whole expense of building, and at the risk of defending them. The country, indeed, has for long series of years been in a constant state of warfare; and the poor inhabitants have suffered too much from all parties...."* [110]

Thus the several campaigns that Haidar and Tipu led against the palegaras yielded quick result and fort after fort was taken in a short time and with ease.

It was only Madakari Nayaka of Chitradurga, being a major palegara himself and the wonderful fortifications he had built around him who offered sustained resistance before succumbing. Even Ikkeri was taken in a matter of days. However, the most stupendous of victories against the palegaras was Haidar's Malabar campaign where he

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covered a length of more than 300 kms in a country covered by thick forest and no roads suppressing 42 palegaras in a matter of just four months.[111] NK Sinha says: *"In the Malabar campaign, the fleet of Haidar rendered the greatest assistance. It accompanied the army up to Calicut, conveying the necessaries. Thence the greater part of the fleet returned to Mangalore, the smaller craft remaining to facilitate the passage across the rivers.*

The conquest of Malabar was perhaps Haidar's most arduous feat of arms." [112]

H. Peasant Guerilla Warfare and Counterinsurgency

While the taking of Malabar was indeed a feat of arms, within just 25 days of the completion of the campaign the rebellion of the Nayars broke out against Mysore reign and continued as a long drawn out affair making the Malabar an unconsolidated region of Mysore rule. Thus **Malabar was *lost* more quickly than it was taken,** thereby surpassing Haidar Ali's achievement.

Similarly, Kodagu, which was taken by Haidar in 1765, displayed a resistance which paralleled that of the Malabar and caused utter discomfiture to the modern Mysore army, dreaded so much by the British. **This military defeat of an army which compared with the best of Europe's was a phenomenal achievement in the annals of Karnataka's war history. It demonstrated the strengths of peasant guerilla war.** Let us thus take a closer look at Kodagu and this achievement of its people.

The Kodagu region of Karnataka bordering the present Mysore district was ruled by the Virashaiva Haleri palegara family. Encompassing most of the present Kodagu district, the fiefdom was covered entirely by forest. About a third of the population of the region was composed of the Kodavas, a caste which had begun its transformation to caste much later than the plains of Karnataka had experienced it and thus retained several distinct features of its tribal past. **Class division was yet to sharply emerge within the Kodava caste** although the process of polarisation had already commenced, that layer which maintained ties with the Haleris initiating this differentiation.

The tribal remnants were sustained in their form of holding land and the accompanying labour operations, which displayed strong cooperativist tendencies.

An important type of tenure called the *jamma* had emerged in Kodagu which described the relationship between the Haleri household and the peasantry subject to its rule. The jamma tenure included the Kodava, Amma-Kodava, Heggade, Eimbokala, Airi, Koyava, Mapilla and Are-Gowda castes.[113]

Describing the jamma tenure B Richter wrote in 1870: *"The light assessment of Rs. 5 per 100 butties [100 butties = 8000 seers of paddy] of wet land with its accompanying Bane [pasture land] or Barike was made originally on condition of military and general service to the State. The Jamma-ryots are still liable to be called out to repel outward aggression or quell internal disturbances, and to furnish all police—and treasure—guards, escorts, etc, in time of peace."* [114]

Richter's calculation at that time showed that nearly 70% of those holding the jamma tenure were Kodavas and the next biggest were the Are-Gowdas with nearly 17%. Further, as per Richter's calculations in 1870, of a total Kodava population of 24,585 then, it was estimated that 4,910, apart from the boys and old men, held the jamma

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tenure.[115] Thus almost every Kodava family, it may be clearly estimated, had been a jamma holder. In other words **the Kodavas as a caste were the armed retainers of the Haleris of Kodagu holding lands which were for all practical purposes, rent-free.**

Describing the military organisation under the Haleris, which was in reality the military organisations of the Kodavas and the Are-Gowdas, Richter wrote: *"The Jamma-Coorgs holding their land by a military tenure in return for the immunities which they enjoyed, all able-bodied men of this active and war-like peasantry constituted the Rajah's military force, which, though irregular in its organisation, was kept in constant practice of its duties. These personal services of the Choudigaras or Coorg soldiers as guards for a period of 15 days at a time, enjoined by the Rajahs and admitted by the ryots, were rendered with cheerful obedience.*

Under the chief command by the Rajah, the force, numbering at times from 6,000 to 10,000 Coorgs was subdivided into bodies of varying strength, the smallest numbering from 10 to 100 men under a Jemindar, any larger and more indefinite number was commanded by the Kariagara who again acted under a Sarva-Kariagara or General."[115A]

As the Coorg force was not a standing army, *"...it received no pay. Whilst on active duty as guards or during warfare, the soldiers were maintained at the public expense, and being remarkable for their predatory habits, they largely shared with the Rajahs in the spoil."* [116]

From Richter's observations it is clear that the Haleri army was structured on a simple three-tier basis. The basic unit of 10-100 men was obviously organised on a neighbourhood basis, given the fact that it was not a regular army. Thus **for all practical purposes it was this unit of 10-100 armed retainers which emerged as the regular functional unit of the army, coming into formation on the local initiative of the Jemindar. Further, it is also evident, on account of the fact that the Haleri army was not a regular army, since every retainer was also at the same time a peasant.** Given the fact that the Kodavas continued to display relatively strong tribal characteristics the feudal army of the Haleri palegara was sustained by an internal bond of caste solidarity. **These specific features emerging from the concrete historic background of the time greatly influenced the functioning and performance of this army against that of Mysore's.**

After taking Kodagu in 1765, it was not till 1774 that its palegara was toppled and certain changes were introduced in the economy, the army and the political structure of Kodagu. Haidar, *"erected the fort of Mercara in the most central situation, and confirmed the landholders in their possessions at a moderately increased revenue...."* [117] Hayawadana Rao writes: *"Compared with the revenue raised in the Mysorean territories that which had been arranged for Coorg was extremely low; but their standard of comparison was not what had been levied from others, but what they themselves had formerly paid. The very highest rate of assessment in Coorg had been a tenth of the produce. In general, it was much lower, and a considerable proportion of the landholders, exclusively of the military service, paid an acknowledgment to the Raja which was merely nominal. Hyder deemed his own moderation to be excessive in requiring not much more that the old Hindu assessment of one sixth."* [118]

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The dismantling of palegara rule immediately also meant the scrapping of the army. By itself this would not have been irksome. However the imposition of a new revenue was what inflamed the jamma holders in particular and the peasantry at large into rebellion. Lingaraja, the palegara, utilised this contradiction to his own advantage. He and his son Viraraja came to lead an armed insurrection of a protracted and guerilla nature in which the peasantry of Kodagu and the peasant retainers partook most actively.

The Kodavas who had most to loose by the hike in revenues were also the most vigorous in the struggle against the army of Haidar and Tipu. Thus most of the battles took place in south and central Kodagu; places where the Kodavas were concentrated.

■ 1765. Fazul Ulla Khan in charge of the Mysore army is defeated. Lingaraja attacks and completely routs his forces.

■ March 1774. Haidar Ali occupies Kodagu after being repulsed at Yadavanad. Haidar implements fresh taxes on the peasantry. Orders a fortress to be built at Madikeri. Appoints a Foujdar for Kodagu with an army housed in the fort.

■ 1775. Widespread peasant uprising. *"They [the guerillas] destroyed all the minor establishments which had been spread over the country for the collection of revenue, and surrounded the new capital of Mercara for the purpose of reducing it by famine. The insurrection in short was universal."* [119]

■ 1775. Haidar moves quickly with a massive force to quell the uprising. *"The great mass of the army was at the capital, at a distance of only 30 miles from the frontier of Coorg, and he [Haidar] moved the whole infantry in several columns to penetrate at once into every portion of the territory with a view to suppress the rebellion at a single blow. The operation was successful, and as his intelligence was always excellent, he was enabled among his prisoners to distinguish the leaders. Every man suspected as being above the class of an ordinary soldier was hanged; and for the purpose of overawing the populace, a series of block houses was erected, pervading every part of the country, and connected with each other, and with the nearest posts in Mysore. These arrangements being completed, Haidar returned to give his army a short repose at Seringapatam, about the beginning of the year 1775."* [120] But the victory was shortlived.

■ 1780. Guerillas on the offensive. Launch attacks on Madikeri fort. Fort falls to the hands of guerillas. Remnants of Mysore army driven away.

■ 1782. Viraraja and Lingaraja captured.

■ 1782. Second Anticolonial War of Mysore in progress. Tipu Sultan marches on Kodagu. Madikeri taken with minimal resistance. *"When Tippu entered it [Kodagu] with his whole army advancing from Periapatam in two divisions by different roads and in two days, the inhabitants yielded, as usual, to necessity, and apparent quiet was restored...marching further, Tippu took possession of the fort of Mercara which the populace had demolished. Orders were issued for the rebuilding of the fort, while Zain-Ul-Labidin Mehdvi...was left as Foujdar of the district, with full powers to displace, imprison and punish all the rebellious and seditious people thereof. Tippu said `....from the period of my father's conquest of the country, you have rebelled 7 times, and caused the death of thousands of our troops."* [121] Soon Tipu returns to Srirangapatna.

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■ 1782. No sooner did Tipu return the Mysore army stationed at Madikeri found its writ running every where except outside the fort.

■ 1784. Second Anticolonial War of Mysore concludes. Haidar Ali Beg despatched at the head of the Mysore army to regain Kodagu. His forces are defeated before he reaches Madikeri.

■ 1784. Mysore army under the command of Raja Kankeri despatched to quell the uprising. He faces defeat before reaching Madikeri.

■ 1785. Tipu marches on Kodagu. Takes Madikeri without encountering any resistance. Tipu returns to Srirangapatna.

■ 1785. Kodagu once more in the hands of the guerillas. Madikeri overrun by them.

■ September 1785. Zain-Ul-Labidin Shoostri, Sipahdar of a kushoon despatched with an *"abundance of stores and 2000 irregular foot, sent in advance, with instructions to proceed by forced marches to the fort of Zuferabad [Madikeri], made a general attack on the rebels and chastised them in conjunction with the Foujdar. The Sipahdar, marching quickly, arrived at the ghat leading to Coorg, only to find himself attacked on all sides by the rebels with their arrows and muskets....he soon retired in despair on the plea of ague and fever to the pass of Sidapur, despite the remonstrances of his followers. Also he wrote to the head quarters that nothing but Tippu's own presence with the main army would terminate the war."* [122]

Richter says that the Mysore army contained a total of 15,000 men on this occasion. They were defeated by a guerilla force of 4,000 at Ulagalli in Mudugerinad.

■ October 1785. Tipu undertakes a seven-month long campaign in Kodagu. *"Late in October he moved thither at the head of 20,000 regular infantry, 12,000 irregular foot, 10,000 horse and 21 field-pieces. Entering Coorg in two columns, he arrived and encamped near the stockade on bound hedge of the districts, leaving all his horse at the pass of Sidapur, Periapatam and Munzirabad. Then with his irregular foot, kushoons and artillery, crossing the pass, he began burning and destroying the patches of open country.*

Entering the woods of Coorg by the route of the Turkul Ghaut, he encamped on this side of the gate of the stockade, called Mundul. The next day, he gave orders to his Sipahdars with their Kushoons to assault the stockade gates before which the inhabitants had dug a deep ditch wall on each flank, from where they completely blocked up the road with their arrows and matchlocks." [123]

After winning the above battle Tipu again encountered the guerillas at Kushalnagar. From there he proceeded to Madikeri and seized the fort without any resistance. *"Thereupon, the Coorgs, no longer able to oppose the forces of Tippu, were dispersed and compelled to take refuge in the inaccessible woods and mountains where they, as usual, refrained from any decisive operations.*

On this, Tipu despatched his officers with large bodies of troops to punish these people and reduce the whole country to subjection. Accordingly Mons. Lally proceeded to the Cardamon Ghats; Zain-Ul-Labidin Shoostri with his Kushoon and another under the command of Hussain Ali Khan Bakshi marched in the direction of Kurumbanad,

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while the rest of the Sipahdars marched to Talakaveri and Kushalpur and Tippu himself remained encamped on the same ground. Every thing being ready along the whole circumference, these troops began to contract the circle...." [124]

After this Tipu returns to Srirangapatna.

- Dec 1788. Viraraja escapes from captivity.
- 1789. Viraraja carries out plunder expeditions on Mysore territory and carries away large stocks of cattle and grain to Kodagu.
- 1789. Tipu despatches a large force under Ghulam Ali. Viraraja succumbs to his superior strength. But on his march to Mangalore Ghulam Ali is fiercely attacked at Kodanthur pass and suffers severe losses.
- 1789. Tipu sends considerable reinforcements under four captains. *"Viraraja lay in wait for them at Heggala pass. The Mysoreans left 800 men dead on the ground and 400 wounded. Their baggage and stores fell into the hands of the hill-men, the whole force might have been destroyed, had not the Coorgs preferred plundering."* [125]
- 1789. *"Tipu was alarmed, and despatched in 1789 Buran-U-din, his own brother-in-law, with a strong army and large supplies to secure Coorg by strengthening the four forts of Kushalnagar, Mercara, Beppunad and Bhagamandala. On his way to Mercara he was attacked and beaten by Viraraja, but escaped thither with the loss of one half of his military stores."* [126]
- Burhanuddin returns to Srirangapatna for greater forces.
- June 1789. Viraraja uses this opportunity to attack all four forts. In June 1789 leading 1,500 partisans he takes Kushalnagar killing 500 of the 700 Mysore troops.
- August 1789. Beppunad fort attacked by guerillas. Fort capitulates.
- 1789. Burhanuddin makes a fresh march on Kodagu. *"By dint of extraordinary exertions Buran-U-din, dividing his army into three columns, succeeded in throwing supplies into the fort of Bhagamandala, but was repeatedly attacked and beaten on the march and had to fall back on Seringapatam."* [127]
- 1790. Guerillas capture Bhagamandala fort. Madikeri still remains with Mysore. But it is encircled and isolated from the main body of Mysore forces.
- 1790. Madikeri capitulates to the guerillas.
- 1790. Mysore's Third Anticolonial War breaks out. British colonialists sign a treaty with Viraraja. Kodagu slips out of Mysore Kingdom formally in 1792.
- This was then the manner in which the Mysore army's battle with the peasant guerillas of Kodagu unfolded. **This war, which strictly speaking, spread over a period of 16 years before achieving victory, provides profound instruction in guerilla warfare.**
- **A war of the peasant masses**: The causes of the war contributed to participation of the broad masses of the peasantry and obtained their support. Due to its broad nature it could draw from amidst the peasantry, an endless supply of fighters. This organic link between the peasantry and the elements who composed the guerilla army was what made it a war of the peasantry.
- **A small and weak force fighting a big and strong enemy:** While the entire armed strength of the guerillas was around 5,000 men the Mysore army of nearly

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1.5 lakh men deployed at its peak, a force of 42,000 troops. Despite the 1:6 ratio this weak and small force could sustain its struggle against a big and strong force.

- **A protracted war of attrition:** Since the peasant army was small and that of its enemy big it would obviously have taken a prolonged period of incessant warfare before subduing the enemy. Thus protractedness became its hallmark. In the course of this protracted war the peasantry of Kodagu engaged the Mysore forces in a war of attrition which gradually frustrated, exhausted and ultimately began to wear down the enemy. The protracted nature of the war also lent it a seesaw character of victory-defeat-victory.

- **Avoiding decisive conflicts and fighting only when victory was ensured:** The guerillas always chose the time and place of the attack. They launched successful ambushes in the passes. They attacked Madikeri only after ensuring its isolation from the rest of the Mysore army ie, only after its thorough encirclement. At the same time they were extremely cautious not to give battle when a superior force marched on the fort, and allowed it to fall into the hands of the enemy without seeking a head-on decisive conflict. Again they never directly attacked Haidar Ali's or Tipu Sultan's forces who always came with a huge body of troops. No sooner had Haidar and Tipu departed for Srirangapatna presuming their campaign had ensured tranquility, they launched their attacks against the Foujdars' forces. In certain battles, when they challenged the advance of the Mysore army under Haidar and Tipu, they invariably encountered defeat.

- **Putting one's weapons to best use and drawing from the enemy's supplies:** The guerillas possessed only muskets. However, they used bows to good effect, thereby putting to best use all the weapons they had. Further they developed stockade and trench-warfare as powerful techniques against the Mysore army. About these war trenches and stockades, Richter writes: *"These Cadangas stretch over hills, woods and comparatively flat countries for miles and miles, at some places branching off in various directions or encircling hill tops...in their conflicts with Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, the Coorg Rajas strengthened these works, established Ukadas or guard houses wherever a road or pathway intersected them...."* [128]

These were very effective improvisations based on and evolving from the specific conditions of terrain and transportation network that obtained in Kodagu.

They conducted exclusive raids on the enemy's supply lines to procure grain and arms for themselves. As soon as Viraraja escaped, he resorted to raids to provision himself and the guerilla army in order to pursue the war.

- **Utilising the countryside to surround the towns:** The partisans based their operations in the broad countryside and they used their base in villages to encircle and attack towns such as Madikeri which were the centres of enemy power.

- **Harassing the enemy's supply and communications:** This method was often resorted to and indeed to great effect. This starved the fortresses of their assured supplies and often led to the capitulation of the forts into their hands. They utilised such methods of starving the enemy to capture forts.

- **Concentrating for attack and dispersing afterwards**: The nearly 5,000 strong guerilla army was concentrated for specific battles. Otherwise when they were not fighting they were dispersed.

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- **Fighting a mobile war:** The peasant guerillas are characterised by their great mobility. They never retained any fixed location as their head quarters and were constantly on the move.
- **Utilising terrain to the fullest extent:** The Kodagu guerillas used the hilly and forest terrain to the greatest advantage making their tactic of dispersal and hit-and-run extremely effective. It was the conducive terrain which served as a factor in counter balancing their territorial spread, which in terms of area was quite narrow and constricted.
- **Attacking the enemy before it settled:** The guerillas displayed tremendous initiative being the first to launch an attack. This first victory gave them an immense advantage and demoralised the enemy greatly. Further, they launched several successful attacks on the Mysore forces as they were heading towards Madikeri. In almost all these instances the Mysore army turned back without proceeding any further.

The method that the Mysore army utilised to suppress the rebellion was characteristic of those methods used by all modern armies caught in a similar situation.

Haidar Ali constructed block houses, Tipu cleared and burnt entire tracts of forest and conducted combing operations on two occasions at least. In addition father and son resorted to terrorising the peasantry and relocating the population, so that the prop of the partisans could be chopped. However, all these measures failed to yield result.

It is interesting to note that firstly, Kodagu was not too distant from Srirangapatna so as to hinder the conduct of the war for the Mysore army. Yet the guerillas could not be contained. Secondly, even Tipu's seven-month long campaign with a force of 42,000 men far surpassed the population of Kodavas at that time and the strength of the army was perhaps half the population of entire Kodagu then. Haidar, it must be remembered, had defeated the British army in the First Anticolonial War with an army no bigger and less experienced than this. Yet the guerillas could not be vanquished. Thirdly, the geographical spread of the rebellion was not more than one hundredth part of the Mysore Kingdom which existed then. While the armies of Haidar and Tipu marched and overran the most extensive of territories and waged war across its vast expanses simultaneously on several fronts; yet it could not suppress the guerillas of tiny Kodagu.

On the contrary, the peasant guerillas of Kodagu achieved what the mighty British army failed against Haidar and Tipu. By Tipu's own admission, the war with Kodagu had cost him the lives of thousands of soldiers. Very similarly, the Nayars of Malabar had killed, *"in the course of the last 25 years...nearly 1,00,000 of Sirkar's soldiers and repeatedly committed excesses"* according to Tipu's own admission.[129] Taken together, then, **the guerilla wars of Kodagu and the Malabar had done more damage to the army of Mysore than what the Mysore army could inflict on the British.** Conversely, not even the British coat of arms with its Sirs and Lords, or as Haidar often said 'Bailies and Braithwaites' could cause as much damage militarily in equal time.

Tipu saw the futility of continuing the war against the people of Kodagu in 1791. It was gross political miscalculation on Tipu's part. Though belated he realised this and consequently he issued a *Parwana* (*order*) to the Patels of Coorg asking for a compro-

mise and conceding their victory. *"It is well known to me that you have for a long time experienced much trouble in your country and under this consideration I forgive everything for what has happened—You may now fulfil your several duties as subjects and observe all the customs of your religion agreeably to ancient practices, and whatever you formerly paid to your own Rajas, the same, I repeat, you will now pay to this* ***Circar****."*[130]

But Tipu's olive branch came very late and it could not prevent the British from forming an alliance with the Haleri king, **and utilise the anger of the people against Tipu in the pursuit of their own colonial domination.**

The people of Kodagu had demonstrated to the masses of Karnataka, at a time of colonial conquest and fierce anticolonial warfare by the Mysore state was conducted without actively mobilising the people; that a guerilla war which relied on and mobilised the peasantry into action, could inflict deep damage on the enemy and check its line of expansion. It could, when its political power was eclipsed and the towns were lost, reign supreme; on account of the simple historical fact that its bowstrings were tied by the energies of the masses and its matchlocks were fired with the peoples' will.

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5. THE ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS

The second arm of the modern state—the civil bureaucracy— was built up as meticulously and as extensively as the principal arm, the army, was. **Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, Mysore possessed a bureaucracy numbering anywhere around one lakh employees and an equal number who were maintained partly by the state. It was this extensive apparatus which knitted the Kingdom together and contributed to its unification and consolidation.**

Thomas Munro observed that Tipu Sultan: *"....divided his country into 37 provinces, under Dewans or Asophs, Foujdars as he called them; and subdivided these again into 1,025 inferior districts, having each a Tisheldar [Amildar] with an expensive establishment of revenue servants."* [131]

Each taluk was further divided into several divisions known as hoblis, each of which was under the supervision of a Parputti attended by two clerks called Sheristedars and from five to seven manual workers, peons and errandsmen. The whole of the hobli establishment was paid by monthly wages.[132]

In 1792 Tipu Sultan prepared and distributed his *Land Revenue Regulations*, which served to regularise the civil administration. These regulations, issued to all the Asophs, and relevant fragments of which were distributed lower down the bureaucracy, served both as an instruction manual and a guide for the upkeep of the administrative apparatus. It dealt with the specifics from the official timings of the Sheristedar's office and his various innumerable functions to such generalities as the need for civil servants to strictly keep away from purchasing land and accumulating property apart from what they would have possessed at the time of their recruitment. The following quotation of a clause from the regulations speaks of such keenness for detail and exactitude:

*"29. An account shall be taken of all the houses of the **Ryots, & c** of all castes throughout your district, specifying the names of the villages, the number of ploughs, the quantity of seed sown, and of land tilled; the number of workers, their families and children; with their various castes and occupations. In forming these accounts great precaution is to be observed, to prevent its creating any alarm amongst the **Ryots**. Every year the increase or diminution of agriculture and population is to be observed in the manner following; the **Shamboges** of the village are to prepare and transmit the accounts to the Simpt, and the **Shamboges** of the **Simpt** are to from the complete account, and transmit it to the Amil of the district, who is to prepare one general statement, giving a full view of the population and cultivation of the country, and deposit it in his Cutchery, from whence it is to be forwarded to the Huzoor, and as the month if **Zeehuje** is appointed for the inspection of the these accounts at the Huzoor, they must be deposited in the Cutchery in the month of **Ramzan**."* [133]

Asok Sen makes the following observation about Tipu Sultan's civil administration: *"...Tipu made much of administering to his revenue officers an oath of fair treatment of ryots. All important provincial and district revenue officers (including the Asofs)...were obliged to make a particular oath.... Among other things the oath required*

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that the officers would not `allow the poor or the peasantry to be oppressed in word or deed'. Indeed during Tipu's reign there were many instances of punishment and removal of officers, tax farmers, and ***jagirdars*** *for their alleged oppression and tyranny over the people of certain parts of the country."* [134]

This motivation on the one hand and strict enforcement of discipline on the other coupled with the growing anticolonial aspirations which easily pervaded the bureaucracy was reflected by Roderick Mackenzie when he wrote: *"Although parsimonious in a high degree, members of his confidential Hindu servants, who during the war fell into our hands, acknowledged him [Tipu] a lenient and indulgent master; nor have we to boast of many instances where his people were induced by our flattering prospects of success to throw off his yoke and shelter themselves under the benign influence of Christian Rulers."* [135]

Writing about the administration higher up the order, Praxy Fernandes says: *"Tippu was of course an absolute monarch.... Yet his government was not a disorganised chain of personal whims and caprices. The Mysore records found after the fall of Seringapatam indicate the well organised mechanism of Tippu's central government. Its division into departments under responsible heads and with defined jurisdictions will seem familiar to the administrator of today. Each department called a 'Kutcheri' worked under a departmental chief who had the status and rank of a minister and was staffed by competent and specialised civil servants. Tippu introduced the system of Boards in each 'Kutcheri' where officers discussed problems, recorded their views and maintained minutes of the meetings. Decisions were generally taken by a majority of votes. Tippu kept a personal and vigilant eye over these proceedings.... On matters of common concern, the departmental chiefs would have conferences before advising the Sultan. The entire atmosphere which emerges from the dusty records of Seringapatam was one which would make a secretariat official in modern India completely at home."* [136]

In this context, it would be interesting to go through Clause 8 of Tipu's *Commercial Regulations: "In all cases of difficulty or of particular importance, the heads of the department (excluding the* ***Mutsuddies*** *and others) were to sit and deliberate together on the problem: each person writing down, in a book provided for the purpose, his opinion on the point under consideration and subscribing his name thereto. The book, containing these minutes or consultations, was to be deposited in a box, which was to remain under the seal of the office, till there might be occasion to refer to it, for justifications or explanations of the proceedings, or resolutions of the meeting; which in case of any difference of opinion were to be determined by the majority of voices."* [137]

Fernandes goes on to describe the various 'Kutcheris' in the following manner:

*"**1. The Mir Asaf Kutcheri (The Revenue and Finance Department):** This Department was then, as it still is today, the corner-stone of the administration. It maintained the accounts of revenue and expenditure and dealt with taxation. Consequently, the head of this Department, the Diwan or Mir Asaf, was one of the senior most ministers.... The accounts were maintained in three languages, Persian, Kanarese and Marathi by a number of `Shirestedars' and `Mutsadis'.*

*2. **The Mir Miran Kutcheri (Military Accounts and Supply Department):** In view of the constant state of warfare, this was a vital Department...*

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*3. **Mir Sadr Kutcheri (The Admirality):** The acquisition of coasts of Kanara and Malabar had stepped up the trade and commerce of Mysore. The management of the ports, the merchant shipping and the small Mysore Navy was with this Department. For administrative convenience, the head quarters of the Mir Yam was fixed at Mangalore.*

*5. **The Mir Kazain Kutcheri (Treasury and Coinage Department):** This Department working under a Board controlled both the Toshekhana (Treasury) and the state Mint. In the Toshekhana, valuable State documents were deposited, also bullion and ready money, State jewels and wardrobes. There were several mints established by Tippu each under a 'daroga'.*

*6. **The postal and intelligence Department:** This was a key department working under Tippu's direct control....*

*7. **Malik-ut-Tijjar Kutcheri (Department of Trade and Commerce):** With Tippu's ambitious schemes of economic development, this department...grew in importance. It controlled the foreign consulates, the regulations over internal trade, State Trading and promotion of industries.*

Apart from these major departments, there were subsidiary departments like the Department of Public Works, the Temple Department and the 'Amrit Mahal' Department. The last named Department was the Department of Animal Husbandry." [138]

Describing the functioning of these kutcheris, A Beatson writes: *"When the Sultan had any business of importance to transact, or any letters to despatch that required deliberation, he always devoted one day to his own reflections, before he took the opinion of any of his counsellors. After having sufficiently considered the subject in question he assembled the principal officers [all those Departmental heads mentioned by Fernandes] of the Departments of the state, and writing in his own hand the nature of the subject to be referred to their consideration, he required from each person, an answer in writing."* [139]

Thus Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan vastly improved upon the Attara Kutcheri system introduced nearly a century before they assumed power. They made all fully paid bureaucratic posts transferable thereby breaking the age old norms of feudal bureaucracy. Tipu Sultan made it compulsory for every civil employee to take an oath of service. Dodwell says that Tipu: *"....was the first Indian Sovereign to seek to apply western methods to his administration."* [140] The conduct of board meetings, the drawing up of an agenda before such deliberations, the maintenance of minutes and the democratic method of taking decisions by a majority vote—all these and more were drawn from European experience, and put to innovative use.

We have seen in the previous chapter how the setting up of a centralised administrative apparatus led to Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar's accumulating crores of rupees and gaining the appellation of 'Nava Koti Narayana'. To get a measure of the results of centralisation during the period of Haidar, Nallappa Shetti's statement is revealing. The annual revenue of Haidar in 1780-82 was nine crore rupees, and it outdid Chikkadevaraja's lifetime achievement in just one financial year.[141]

The bureaucracy was the instrument on which the enlightened absolutism of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan rested upon. It also remained the only vehicle by

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which they sought to implement all their antifeudal reforms and anticolonial measures. It remained the conduit for channelising all the energies of scientific invention, the popularisation of select innovations and the multiplication of the productive forces in agriculture and industry. All this made it as pervasive as it was powerful.

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6. REFORM OF AGRICULTURE

Thirty eight years of rule by Haidar and Tipu witnessed several changes in agriculture which may be studied under various heads.

A. Land Reform

Land reforms under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan brought about progressive changes in class relations in the countryside and enhanced agricultural productivity.

The most significant of these changes was, as we have already seen, **the elimination of the palegara class.** Quite often the palegaras also owned land which was leased out to tenants as evidence from Dakshina Kannada and Kerala show. The abolition of palegara rule is coupled with the simultaneous granting of these lands by the Mysore government to the tenants of the palegaras in these areas. As CK Kareem observes: *"It was with the husbandman and not with the landlords that the settlement was made."* [142] Thus, **the elimination of palegara rule saw the simultaneous liquidation of the vast bygone feudal estates.** Gururaja Bhat provides us with interesting information on the outbreak of a new contradiction between former palegara swho returned after the British conquest of Dakshina Kannada and staked their former claims on land and clashed with the new land owners who were formerly in the service of these palegaras. Kabir Kausar writes: *"Tipu Sultan is found to be striving for the abolition of the **jagirdari** and **zamindari** system in his kingdom. He proclaimed that the land would be owned by only those who cultivate or till it irrespective of their caste, creed or religion."* [143]

RD Choksey, in his study on Uttara Kannada tells us: *"The increase in assessment by Hyder and Tipu had in some places, annihilated the old proprietors. The landlords who once chiefly lived on rents had now hardly any rent at all."* [144]

While the abolition of palegara rule was a major aspect of Haidar's and Tipu's agrarian policy, they also put an end to one characteristic habit of all feudal rulers till then: **The granting of jagirs which had dropped to a trickle under Haidar's rule and was entirely done away with during Tipu's reign.** In his lifetime Tipu gifted only two villages as jagirs. Earlier, kings were accustomed to gifting away entire tracts of villages and at times even taluks and districts, thereby triggering off a process of sub-infeudation and nurturing the basis for the continuation and growth of a feudal intermediary class which wallowed in the wealth extorted from the peasantry. Haidar and Tipu made a decisive break from all former rulers of Karnataka by placing a determined full stop to the feudal practice of granting rent-free lands to the Brahmanas. This clipped the wings of this caste.

Praxy Fernandes tells us of the curtailment of the rights of the Deshmukhs in the districts of Dharwad and Bijapur which came under Mysore rule. *"The Deshmukhs fared particularly bad in the Southern Maratha country, where in several areas Tippu Sultan confiscated all their rights to independent watans."* [145]

Again HJ Stokes says: *"During the three years which elapsed [1787-1790], Tippu's Lieutenant Badr ul Zaman Khan, took the management of the Jaghir lands into his own hands, and merely allotted to the Desays enough for their support depriving them of all the power."* [146]

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Haidar and Tipu went a step further; Tipu moved faster than his father on this count. **He began to chop off free-holding rights of the Brahmana mathas and in some instances even went ahead with the seizure and allotment of matha and temple lands in favour of the Shudra peasantry.** Francis Buchanan provides us with several instances of this axing away from the trunk of feudal parasitism. This measure, unheard of in the annals of Indian history, was significant since it inaugurated in all its dimensions the honest discarding of feudal deadweight.

Clause 63 of *Tipu's Land Revenue Regulations* made his policy explicit: *"The **Devasthanam** lands are all to be resumed throughout your district; and after ascertaining to what **Simpts** they formerly appertained you shall reannexe them and include them in the **Jumabundy** [assessment] of those **Simpts.**"* [147]

Just a few months after the fall of Tipu Sultan, Buchanan who conducted extensive investigations across the Mysore territory visited Mandya and had this to say: *"It was formerly an **agaram** or village bestowed in charity on the **Brahmans**. They were deprived of it by Tippoo; when he annexed to the **Circar** or public, all the property of that kind."* [148]

About Melkote which was the centre of the Sri Vaishnava Brahmanas, Buchanan wrote: *"Hyder indeed allowed to the **Brahmans** the full enjoyment of their revenues but his son first reduced their land to 60 thousand **Pagodas** a year; then to four; then to two; and at length to 1000; finally, he entirely took away their land and gave them an annual pension of 1000 **Pagodas.**"* [149]

About the villages in and around Periyapatna, Buchanan said: *"These formerly had many villages entirely belonging to them [Brahmanas], which were reassumed by **Tippoo** and have not yet been given back. The same is the case with the lands that formerly belonged to the temples."* [150] Buchanan says that in every village there were rent-free lands to the annual value of 70-80 Pagodas which formerly belonged to the Panchangas or village astrologers.[151]

About Nanjangud, Buchanan writes, that during the rule of the Wodeyars; *"The **Brahmans** of **Nunjinagodu** occupied 300 houses and they possessed lands which gave an annual revenue of 14,000 **Pagodas**.... The houses of the **Sudras** amounted to 700. The town was fortified by **Nundiraya** who dispersed the **Sudras** into the neighbouring villages, and permitted none to remain in the holy place, but the **Brahmans** and the servants who belonged to the temple. **Tippoo Sultan** gradually deprived the **Brahmans** of the whole of their lands and gave them a monthly pension of 100 Pagodas."* [152]

In another instance relating to Dakshina Kannada Buchanan adds: *"Although all the **Enams** or charity lands, were ordered by Tippoo to be resumed yet some belongings to temples have been concealed as is acknowledged both by the Thasildhar and by the Hindu landlords."*[153]

Brahmindom has often tried to project these far-reaching reforms as zealotry on the part of Tipu. However this was no Brahmana baiting campaign as such. **Tipu Sultan acted with prudence. He classified Brahmanas into Vaidika and Lokika types. The latter were those who contributed their labour for the advance of society. The former were those who lived off the toil of the peasantry and were parasitic**

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in nature. It was this parasitic group which rightly became the target of his agrarian reform whereby they were either compelled to cough up taxes to the government and/or experience the expropriation of their feudal privileges in land.

At Mudabidre, we observe a similar reform instituted by Tipu, however this time targeted against the Jaina clergy. Basadi lands which yielded 360 Pagodas annually were *"entirely resumed"* by him, and in its place, he put these parasites on a pension of 90 Pagodas a year.[154]

Another reform introduced by Tipu Sultan which also finds mention in his *Land Revenue Regulations* concerned the sizing down of the hereditary Patel and Shanboga of the village who held the job of making the assessment and collecting the land revenue payable to the state. Clauses 11 and 12 of the *Land Revenue Regulations* make this reform explicit.

*"11. A **Patel** has been attached to every village from times of old; wherever it happens that the person holding this office is unfit for it, another who is capable shall be chosen from amongst the **Ryots** and be appointed to it; and the former **Patel** shall be reduced to the condition of a **Ryot** and be made to work at the plough; and the business of the office of **Patel** shall be made over to the new ones.*

*12. The **Shamboges** of the **Atthavanam** [Royal household] and **Ahashaum** [low marshy tracts] shall not be employed in the direction of affairs, nor shall farm of villages be given to them, but they shall only be employed in keeping accounts."* [155]

Buchanan confirms this change when he observes: *"The office of the **Gauda** was originally hereditary; but now these persons are appointed by the **Amildar**, and continue in place so long as they keep up the collections to their supposed value, or until some other man undertakes, by bringing a greater number of farmers, to make the revenue more productive."* [156] Further, Buchanan tells us that the hereditary Patel had a portion of land for which he traditionally paid only half rent. However, *"the full tax was imposed on these lands by Tippoo...."* [157]

Clauses 5 of Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* make this measure explicit.

*"5. The **Patels, Taajkaurs** (Revenue Officers) and others have for a long time avoided paying the full revenue of Government lands: this is to be enquired into, and the lands are to be measured and they are to be assessed like other **Ryots**. The **Ryots** are not to plough the lands of the **Patels**; but the **Patels** shall themselves plough them. If any **Patel**, & c. shall in future employ ryots to till his ground, the whole of the produce shall be taken by Government. His lands which have been cultivated for a length of time by the **Shamboges**, shall be refused, and be delivered over to other **Ryots** to cultivate; and if such **Shamboges** shall desire to have other land given to them in lieu of their wages, land which is lying waste shall be given to them; if they do not ask for land, they shall receive their wages in money, according to the established rate."* [158]

A similar reform was enforced on the Bunt overlords of Dakshina Kannada. Buchanan writes: *"The tradition here is, that the petty **Jain Rajas** existed long before the time of **Sivappa Nayaka** and were entirely independent of each other. Under the **Ikkeri Rajas** they paid no tax of any kind for their **Umbilica** lands [Umbali] or private estates. For at least a portion of these **Hyder** continued to allow an exemption of taxes; but the **Sultaun** taxed their whole lands at the same rate as the rest of the province...."* [159]

Another important reform, which was a continuation of the policy of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, however on a much larger scale, was the allotment of land to all families of the soldiers of the Mysore army. In all, **more than three lakh regular soldiers and kandachara militiamen were granted lands, making such grants a major aspect of the agrarian order of the period.**

NK Sinha tells us that the *"Candechar peons, when at the respective houses, receive a small pay, partly in waste land partly in money...."* [160]

Further MH Gopal, citing Malcolm says that, *"the system of assigning lands to the army was a great change in the Mysore Revenue system lately introduced."* [161]

This policy permitted the vise of castes such as the Bedas, Kurubas, Idigas, Vokkaligas and Lingayats all of whom found gainful employment in the army.

On the grant of lands to the Bedas who were a significant caste in Tipu's army, Buchanan writes: *"Throughout these hills [of Savandurga] which extended northward from **Capaladurga**, are many cultivated spots, in which during **Tippoo's** government, were settled many **Baydaru**, or hunters, who received 12 **Pagodas** a year, and served as irregular troops whenever required."* [162]

In addition to the above reform measures **these two rulers undertook the general expansion of the area under agriculture and brought hundreds of acres of cultivable waste lands under the plough.** Entire taluks such as Kanakapura were settled with migrant populations and encouraged to cultivate. One incentive for the state was the hike in revenue which every additional plough would bring. Buchanan speaks of one such instance. *"The **Punchum Bundum**, are by far the most hardy and laborious people of the country, but the greater part of them are slaves. So sensible of their value was **Hyder**, that in his incursions [to north Tamil country] it was these chiefly, whom he endeavoured to carry away. He settled them in many districts as farmers.... The **Punchum Bundum** consist of four tribes: the **Parriar** the **Baluan**, the **Shecliar** and the **Toti.**"* [163]

Nikhiles Guha writes: *"Tipu also envisaged a number of measures for the promotion of agriculture in his kingdom. Lands which had been fallow for 10 years were to be delivered to ryots for cultivation under Cowle. They were to be tax-free the first year and assessed at half the usual rate in the second. Similarly, land lying barren, mountainous and rocky was to be given to the ryots for free cultivation in the first year. In the second and third years, they were assessed at one-fourth and one-half of their value respectively. But from the fourth year assessment was to be at the usual rate."* [164]

Further, the Nirgunty who was the official regulator of water to fields from the tank of the village was, in addition to receiving a payment from the peasantry for this service, **allotted land which the tank had irrigated**. The Nirgunty was drawn from among the Holeyas.

Although commenting about the situation at a later date, Edgar Thurston's observations may be traced to the reform initiated by Haidar and Tipu of granting land to soldiers. *"Unlike the land tenures said to prevail in Chingleput or Madras, the Mysore system fully permits the Holeyas and Madigs to hold land in their own right, and as subtenants they are to be found almost everywhere. The highest amount of land assessment paid by a single Holeya is Rs 279 in the Bangalore district, and the lowest six pies in the*

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Kolar and Mysore districts. The quota paid by the outcastes towards the land revenue of the country aggregates no less than 3 lakhs of rupees, more than two-thirds being paid by the Holeyas, and the remainder by the Madigs." [165]

These measures had a significant impact even on the quality of agriculture that was carried out and led Wilks to remark: *"The farmers of Mysore guard against the exhaustion of the soil, preserve and manage their manure, and conduct most of the operations of husbandry in a better manner than I have had the opportunity of observing in any other part of India."* [166]

All these aspects then—**the attitude towards the palegaras the cessation of issuing jaghirs, the assumption of matha lands, the end to rent-free lands enjoyed by the Vaidika Brahmanas, the modification of hereditary tenures of the Patels, curtains on the enjoyment of concessions in the payment of rent by the Patels and Shanbhogas, the granting of lands to soldiers and militiamen in his army and the encouragement given to the oppressed peasantry to emigrate and partake in the independent cultivation of land--constituted the chief elements of the antifeudal land reform policy of Haidar and Tipu, laying the foundations for the sound growth and expansion of agriculture and the ever increasing replenishment of state revenues drawn from this sector.**

B. Further Expansion of Irrigation

Irrigation was a major input contributing to the advance of agriculture. However the period under the rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan witnessed its **maximum** expansion and the systematic construction and upkeep of its hydraulic systems. The Mysore Government opened an exclusive department of irrigation which concerned itself with this question. The annual expenditure of the Mysore Kingdom witnessed the issuing of a few lakhs of rupees for the purpose of irrigation. Irrigation sources were divided into three types under Haidar and Tipu. The biggest sources which included dams across rivers and the construction and upkeep of the large tanks was the exclusive domain of the government. Medium scale irrigation tanks involved joint maintenance by the government and the peasantry. The smaller irrigation tanks were however left to the peasantry to construct and maintain.

Let us look at the descriptions of the river-based irrigation schemes, a novelty for Europe, constructed and maintained by the Government of Haidar and Tipu.

About the Patna Ashtagram taluk which housed Srirangapatna, Wilks writes: *"The wet cultivation which depends on the embankments of the Caveri, and other rivers which have their source in the western hills is of a different description; and is usually considered the most certain of all crops....*

The water courses in magnitude alter resembling navigable canals, while issuing from these embankments are conducted with amicable skill, along the slope of hills, and occasionally across ravines, with a fall barely sufficient for the flow of the water; and fertilize the whole of the intermediate space between their course and the river." [167]

Buchanan describes the extensive irrigation of Patna Ashtagram in these words: *"The country rises gradually on both sides of the river, is naturally fertile and for some*

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distance from the town is finely watered by noble canals; which, having been taken from the river, follow the windings of the hills, and as they advance horizontally to the eastwards, send off branches to water the intermediate space. The water is forced into the sources of these canals by ***Anacuts****, or dams, which have been thrown across the river, and formed of large blocks of granite of a prodigious strength, and at a great expense."*[168]

In a later part of his book Buchanan describes the river-based irrigation system across the Lakshmanathirtha, a tributary of the Kaveri, which he came across in Hunsur Taluk adjoining Ashtagram. *"At a short distance west from* ***Sicany Pura*** *is a fine little river called* ***Lakshmanathirta****, which comes from the South West, and rises among the hills of the country which we call* ***Coorg****. At all times it contains a stream of water, and in the rainy season is not fordable. It supplies six canals to water the country. The* ***Anas****, or dams, that force the water into these canals, are fine works, and produce beautiful cascades. One of them is broken down, but the other five are in good repair; and, in fact, one of them that I saw supplied more water than was wanted; for a quantity sufficient to turn a mill was allowed to run back into the river through a sluice.... It is said, that the whole land formerly watered by the canals of the* ***Lakshmana*** *amounted to 7,000* ***candacas*** *sowing; but the* ***candacas*** *are small and contain only from, 100 to 140* ***seers*** *each. If the seed be sown here as thick as in Seringapatam, the 7,000 Candacas would amount to about 18,000 acres."* [169]

Again, describing the irrigation system achieved by building dams across the Kaveri at Mulluru, Buchanan wrote: *"On this river there are here* ***Anecuts****, or dams, watering as much land as those of the districts called* ***Ashtagrams*** *do."* [170]

All these anecuts laid across the Kaveri and its tributaries made this a very richly irrigated basin with the canals drawn from either side of the embankments watering the entire valley on both sides of the river for several kilometres at length. The picture that emerges from these irrigation works is that **the region around Srirangapatna and upstream till Kudligi in Kodagu had blossomed as a vast irrigation complex inundated by water-borne canals which made the entire belt a densely cultivated paddy and sugarcane producing tract.**

Even going by the figures which Buchanan provides us, the achievement appears astounding. For instance, the Patna Ashtagram taluk, possessed 8,487 acres of irrigated lands and 22,172 acres of dry lands. Thus the total irrigated area was 38% of the total cultivated area.[171]

Similarly, the Mulluru area contained another 8,000 odd acres of irrigated lands. And, as cited earlier the Hunsur-KR Nagara region possessed nearly 18,000 acres of irrigated lands watered by the five canals across the Lakshmanatirtha.

In all, we hear of the existence of 35 channels during Tipu's period as having been drawn from the Kaveri and its tributaries, which in other words would mean at least half the number of irrigation dams across their beds.[172] Lewis Rice however says that there were in all 28 such anecuts across the Kaveri and its tributaries such as the Hemavathi, Shimsha, Suvarnavathi, Lakshmanatirtha and Nugu.[173]

To cap it all, Tipu laid the foundation stone for a massive irrigation project across the Kaveri river near Sagarkatte, a few kilometres upstream from the site of the present

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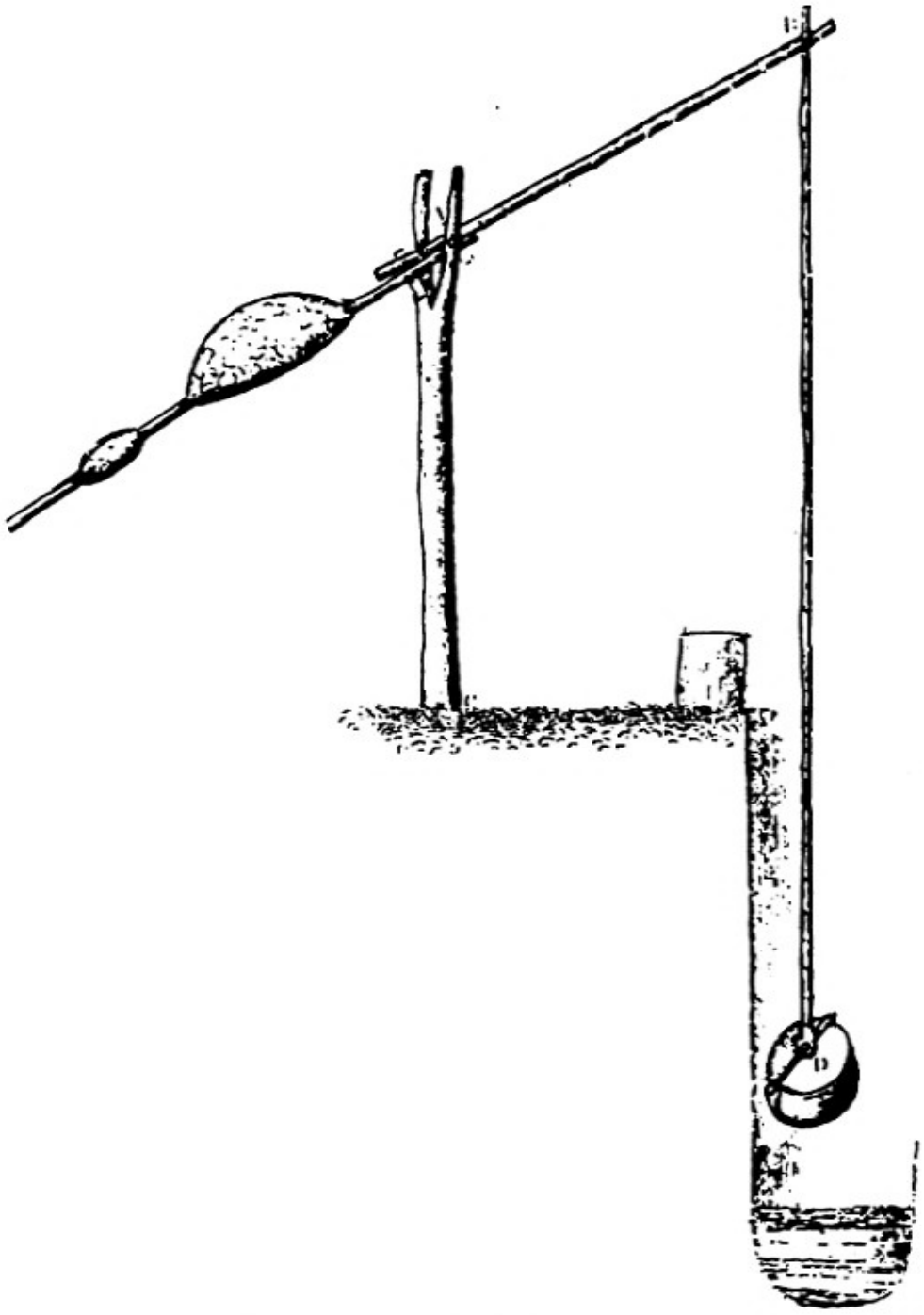

98. A yeta off Bangalore. A modest means of irrigation.

KRS dam. CK Kareem writes: *"There is an inscription...showing that the foundation stone was laid by Tipu Sultan for the construction of a major dam."* [174]

Nikhiles Guha says: *"An inscription from a tank bund near Mysore at Anandur dated 1797 shows that the Sultan had constructed the tank at great expense to the state. A 70 feet high embankment had been raised at that place across the river Kaveri to the west of Seringapatam."* [175]

Again we find Marquess Wellesley attesting to the importance that Tipu paid for the construction and maintenance of these massive irrigation works. He writes in a letter, that in 1798: *"The Sultan went with his escort to a place on the banks of the Kaveri, 25 miles from Seringapatam, to superintend the repair of a dam across the river...."* [176]

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However it is not clear if he was referring to the construction of this grand new irrigation project which on completion must have surely been an engineering marvel without parallel, a literal large-scale irrigation project going by present day standards, what with an embankment reaching 70 feet into the sky.

The completion of this reservoir would have rendered thousands of acres in and around the Ashtagram region irrigable making it a wet tract and perhaps the rice granary of Karnataka.

Apart from these massive irrigation schemes across the rivers, Buchanan's description of the irrigation created by the various small, medium and large tanks are very interesting.

About the region between Mandya and Srirangapatna he says: *"Of the country in this day's route perhaps seven tenths are arable and of these a fifth at least produces wet crops."* [177]

About the Kolar region he says, *"...rice forms a very large portion of the crop, and equals in quantity the **Ragi**."* [178]

Describing agriculture in Kollegal, he writes: *"In fact, near **Mulur** and **Collegala** the cultivation is equal to any that I have seen in India, and consists chiefly of rice fields watered by means of several large reservoirs."* He farther adds that even here the amount of rice raised equalled that of ragi.[179]

Of the Chennarayapatna region, Buchanan says: *"Near the road are several fine tanks; and the quantity of rice which this district produces almost equals that of ragi. These tanks also supply water to several palm gardens; and a considerable quantity of sugarcane is raised on the land that they water."* [180]

In taluks such as Yelandur, the total irrigated area surpassed that of the area under rainfed dry cultivation. Lewis Rice quantifies the irrigation facilities during the period: *"The water course taken from rivers and mountain torrents were rated as 1,832 in number. The tanks great and small at 19,817 and wells at 16,371. The whole extent cultivated in Mysore appears to have been in the proportion of three-eighths wet to five-eights of dry cultivation."* [181]

Major Sankey, a British engineer in Mysore, said: *"...to such an extent has the principle of storage been followed that it would not require some ingenuity to discover a site within this great area suitable for a new tank. While restorations are of course feasible, any absolutely new work of this description would, within this area be almost certainly found to cut off the supply of another lower down the same basin and interfere in fact with vested interest."* [182] In all, the British, without constructing any new tank, estimated the existence of 39,000 tanks in Old Mysore alone, giving the region the first place in this regard in India.

It is no wonder that Deakin Alfred said in 1893 that if an estimate was made of the embankments of tanks in the Madras Presidency its length if added together *"would make a wall of earth, six feet high, one and a half times round the globe."* [183] The fact, however, is that Old Mysore had more tanks than that of the Madras Presidency. In such a case how much lengthier would this girdle of earth and masonry have been around the globe?

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Shortly after the capture of Mysore by the British Wilks estimated that out of a total of 30,12,397 acres of cultivated lands, 8,13,491 was irrigated in 1803-04.[184]

Accounting for the shortfall in irrigated land as compared to 1799 which Wilks himself corroborates, **it would be a fair estimate to say that more than 35% of the total cultivated area was irrigated during the rule of Tipu Sultan.** This colossal achievement can be admired when one compares this figure with the realities of present day Karnataka which has not yet been able to irrigate a similar proportion of the total area under cultivation.

C. Non-Usurious Loans

The state provided agricultural loans or takavi for the peasantry which was interest-free and thus non-usurious. These loans, provided in the form of material inputs were repayable in installments, some within a two year period and others within a four year period. These loans were granted to the peasantry which intended to bring under the plough virgin lands, the peasants affected and pauperised by the ravages of war and those who intended to undertake the cultivation of lands which had remained fallow for several years on end.

Nikhiles Guha, writing about this, says: *"At the beginning of a year, the Amil was to give a cowl (security) to all the ryots and respectable inhabitants of the district and encourage them to cultivate their lands. The more affluent among them were to be made to increase their ploughs. To enable poorer ryots to purchase ploughs and cultivate the lands, the Amil was to give them taqavi at the rate of three or four pagodas for every plough after taking security for repayment. The money thus lent was recovered in one or two years.... Should the revenue fall short, the amil could try to realise the deficit bringing in new ryots, whom he could grant taqavi and new ploughs to complete the cultivation."* [185]

Clause 10 of Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* makes the issue of non-usurious loans more explicit. This measure *"had the object of genuinely linking up revenue accrual with surplus from agricultural production."* [186]

Takavi loans issued annually amounted to at least a few lakh rupees. Several thousand ryots were its beneficiaries each year. Considered in the context of the land reform measures, these takavi loans stood by the peasant in good stead and ensured that he continued to cultivate the land that he had lately come to possess.

D. Popualarisation of New Plant Varieties

The period of Haidar-Tipu's rule witnessed the proliferation of a number of plant varieties which included pulses, grams, oil seeds, fruits, vegetables, timber, medicinal plants and species which were used as raw material for an assortment of industrial and commercial purposes.

Describing what he saw in the Patna Ashtagram Taluk, Buchanan lists 15 types of fruit bearing trees and 34 varieties of vegetables which were grown in the gardens near Srirangapatna.[187]

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Benjamin Heyne, in his *Report Relative to the Mysore Survey, 1802,* lists 29 types of vegetables, 31 types of greens, 6 types of roots and 26 types of fruits, that were raised by the peasants in the gardens and orchards near Bangalore.[188]

We come across several references about these plant species. Benjamin Heyene says about a few of these: *"Among the trees and shrubs introduced by Tippoo in the Annotto I have found a great number of plants in the Bangalore gardens and in Suvendroog Hill—at the former place I have collected the seed with a view to send them to England by the first opportunity as I recollect a considerable premium has been offered some years ago for the first 10 lbs of the valuable dye from the East Indies....*

Carthamers Trinctorius, Safflor, is chiefly cultivated by the natives to dye their Kolajdays, Turbands and other cloths of a beautiful red." [189]

Francis Buchanan writes about the varieties of sugarcane: *"The **Puttaputti** was introduced from **Arcot** by **Mustaph 'Aly Khan**, who in the reign of Hyder was **Tosha Khany**, or Paymaster General. The cultivation of **Restali** has ever since been gradually declining."* [190]

Elsewhere Buchanan says: *"The wheat (Triticum monococcum) in this climate is very liable to be blighted; and even when it succeeds, its produce in not more than one half of that of **paddy** but as one half of this last is husk, the consumable produce of wheat and rice is not very different. **Tippoo** was at great pains to increase this kind of cultivation; and as an encouragement, sent seed to be distributed in different places."* [191]

Benjamin Heyene, in his *Tracts Historical and Statistical* records: *"Of plantains the variety is not great, nor were any of the better kinds cultivated till very lately: the delhi rajah, red and other plantains are now introduced....*

Coffee, some of which indeed is already cultivated and sold in the bazars of Bangalore and Seringapatam." [192]

Thus, coffee, it appears, was already catching up as a commercial crop even before colonial efforts in this direction.

Seven separate Clauses in Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* provide us with a good idea of the approach that this ruler had towards the cultivation of new floral varieties.

*"22. The whole of the Resin, Aloeswood, Lac, Wax and Dammer, produced in the district is to be preserved with great care, and no improper consumption of these articles is to be allowed of; but carriers are to be employed to transport the whole of it to **Agram Puttun** [Srirangapatna] and in future, throughout the district, proper spots of ground are to be chosen in every village and 2000 pine and **sal** trees are to be planted and taken the utmost care of; and if there are any trees of these descriptions within the tenements of the **Ryots**, a price is to be fixed upon the produce of them, which is to be purchased, and the price so fixed is either to be set off against the **Ryots** rent or to be paid to them in ready money....*

*23. Trees of Teak-wood and Acacia, the wood of which is required by Government for making the wheels of gun-carriage, & C and are not to be felled, when they are wanted for the service of government, an order from **Huzoor** is to be obtained, upon which they are to be cut down. Wherever the seed of the teak trees is to be met with, it*

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must be obtained and during the rainy season it must be sown on the banks of rivers, and at the bottom of hills, so that the quantity of these timbers may increase.

24. Throughout the district, wherever there are sandal trees which have come to perfection, they are to be cut down, and the stems, roots, and branches of them, are to be collected together and an account having been taken of them specifying their weights, they are to be transported to ***Agram Puttun****. It is also ordered that sandal wood shall be planted in great quantities, wherever good ground is met with, watered by running streams, rivers and rivulets; and no person shall be permitted to cut down a single sandal tree without the order of the* ***Huzoor****, and if one should by stealth do so, he shall be fined in the sum of 500 rupees.*

25. You are to collect all the tamarind and ***Khiar Dishtee****, that is to say,* ***Shikekayi****, in your district, whether on plantations or in the woods, excepting what may be produced within the tenements of the* ***Ryots*** *which you are not to touch.*

26. ***Ryots*** *who shall make new plantations of betel-leaf, shall only be subjected to pay half the usual tax during the first three years but from the fourth year they shall be put upon the same footing as other planters.*

27. ***Ryots*** *who shall make new plantations of betel-nut trees shall be exempt from the payment of any tax during the first five years; from the sixth year they shall be assessed at half the established rate, until the trees bear fruit, from which time they shall pay the full established tax, or share the produce, as may be the custom.*

28. Whoever makes new plantations of cocoanut trees shall be exempt from the payment of any tax for the first four years; the fifth year he shall pay one half of the established tax; and the sixth year the whole, or a share of the produce, as may be the custom; and during four years, whatever quantity of ***turcaree*** *[vegetables] is produced in these plantations shall be given up to the* ***Ryots.***" [193]

A letter that Tipu wrote to Mir Kasim Mysore's Daroga at Muscat on 6 May 1786 runs this way: *"We are anxious to procure some seed of the saffron plant, silk worms, young date trees, almonds and pistachio plants...."* [194]

All these above quotations establish clearly the interest Haidar and Tipu evinced in the procurement and popularisation, cultivation and conservation of different plant species. It must be noted that it was only due to the efforts of these rulers and their state apparatus that several crops and plants unknown or unpopular before they came to power became so popular that they were found dispersed in the fields and orchards across the length and breadth of the Kingdom even before their brief rule came to an end.

This rapid proliferation was achieved by a concerted effort which involved the bureaucracy and the peasantry. We learn of several instances when the peasantry of Ashtagram were encouraged to undertake the cultivation of certain species for the sake of procuring a sufficient quantity of seed before they could be dispersed by the civil administration across the Kingdom. The peasantry cooperated willingly in these efforts since they were always assured of a reliable purchase price after the harvest.

However, the most concerted effort in this direction was the setting up of state managed botanical gardens in Bangalore and Ganjam, on the island of Srirangapatna, in order to maintain the seeds of rare strains and undertake experimentation. The Lalbagh of

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Bangalore was developed with this objective in mind. Praxy Fernandes writes: *"...Lalbagh was not merely a pleasure garden. It was a horticultural experiment centre. Trees from all over the world were grown there, Oaks from England, Pines from Cape of Good Hope, Avocados from Mexico, luscious fruit bearing trees, mangoes, oranges, mulberries, guavas; there were experimental plots of cotton and indigo."* [195]

Buchanan mentions that the trials that Tipu conducted in cultivating mulberry were so impressive that his *"gardens"* showed how well the plant grew in Mysore territory.[196]

E. Rapid Commercialisation of Agriculture

The period of Haidar-Tipu rule is marked by the rapid commercialisation of agriculture, the reaching out of the mercantile economy to the countryside, the further internal loosening of the economic bonds of feudalism over the peasantry and a growth in its possession of private property.

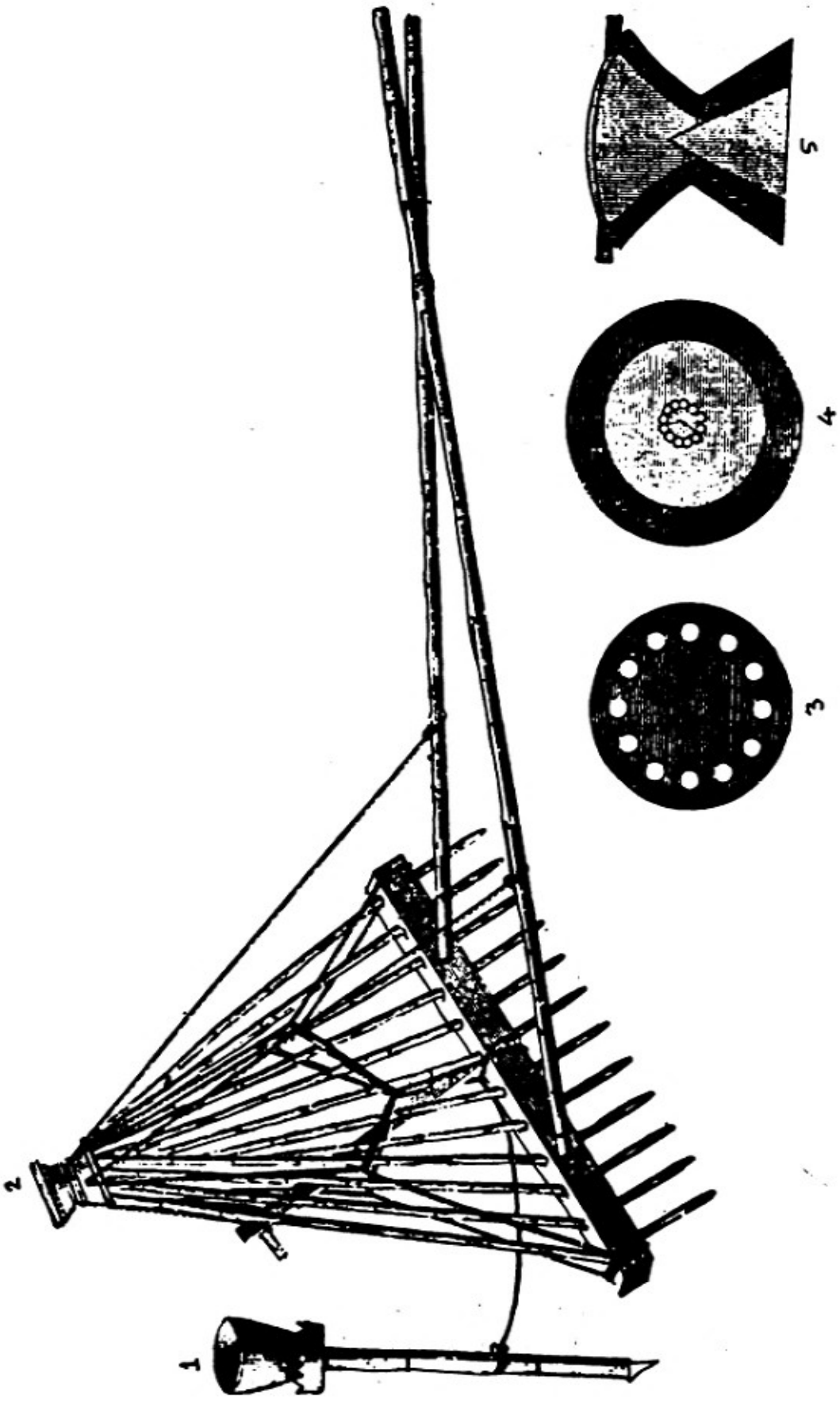
All literary sources of the period are unanimous in stating that **the entire land revenue collected was in cash.** Buchanan says that even *"the rent of the dry field is paid in money."* [197] Thus **the monetisation of land revenue was complete.** Even in Dakshina Kannada where feudal influence was greater than in other parts of the Mysore Kingdom, Buchanan said at the turn of the century, that after a process of part-cash and part-kind payments; *"All the land-tax was now paid in money...."* [198]

The land revenue collected by the state was one sixth of the produce. This would mean, in other words, that at least one-sixth of the total value of agricultural produce of that time had assumed the form of a commodity and had come under the influence of the market.[199]

A measure of the commercialisation of agriculture is obtained by the emergence of the santhes or weekly rural markets in the Mysore Kingdom. Buchanan describes it thus: *"At different convenient places in every taluk there are weekly markets, in good parts of the country may be about 2 or 3 miles from each other. To these the farmers carry their produce, and sell it, partly to consumers by retail, and partly by wholesale to traders.... At all these markets business is carried on by sale; no barter is customary, except among few poor people who exchange grains for the produce of the kitchen garden."* [200]

There was a rapid increase in terms of area and types of commercial crops during this period; making it a major factor in the overall commercialisation of agriculture. The major cash crops grown were sugarcane, arecanut, coconut, betel leaves, til, mulberry, tobacco, indigo, mango, turmeric, cotton and pepper. Apart from this there were kitchen gardens which grew vegetables in villages close to the towns and cities. Buchanan describes one such village close to Bangalore where the division of labour was complete. He says: *"A gardener is here a separate profession from a farmer and is considered as inferior in rank."* [201]

This division evident in Bangalore was far more pronounced in the Ashtagram. *"In the **Ashtagram** there are four kinds of **Tota** or gardens cultivated. I **Tarkari Tota** or kitchen garden: II **Tayngan Tota** or orchard, literally **coconut** gardens; but many other*



99. A bullock drawn seeder. (1) Coorigi. (2) Sudiki. (3) Bottom of the coorigi. (4) Top of the coorigi. (5) Vertical section of the coorigi.

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kinds of fruit trees are planted in them. III ***Yelley Tota*** *or betel leaf gardens; IV* ***Hoovina Tota*** *or flower gardens.*

Near Seringapatam the first two kinds of gardens are always cultivated by the farmers: the ***Yellay Tota*** *by a class distinct of men; and the flower gardens of* ***Satany****; or those who make garlands."* [202]

Buchanan further adds: *"Many farmers have small* ***Tarkari*** *gardens for the family use and for supplying the city with vegetables. The same piece of ground is generally preserved for the garden and is not changed into rice fields."* [203]

Writing about the commercialisation of agriculture along the coast, Vasantha Madhava says: *"During the reign of Haider and Ṭippu, the hinterland of the ports witnessed the cultivation of commercial crops such as betelnut, cashew nut, tobacco and different varieties of rice."* [204]

Buchanan offers us an interesting description of the extent of commercialisation in parts of Chickmagalur and Hassan districts. *"In the neighbouring districts of* ***Garuda-Giri, Banawara, Caduru, Haranahally, Honnawully*** *and* ***Chin-raya-patna*** *the cultivation of tobacco is very considerable. It is exported in large quantities in all the countries toward the north and the west."* [205]

The fact that about 35% of the cultivated area was irrigated was a big boost to the commercialisation of agriculture. In taluks such as the Ashtagram, a significant portion of the crop must have assumed the form of a commodity; and such commodities enhanced because of double cropping.

While cash crops contributed to the development of capitalist relations in agriculture it would be wrong to assume that the production of grain reflected feudal autarchy. The needs of a growing urban market made rice and ragi important items which were traded in the market. We have already seen the amount of purchases which the government made of grain to stockade its forts. Thus it may be assumed that a fair portion of the rice was grown to satisfy the market.

The rapid growth of commercial agriculture brought the peasantry in close and regular touch with the agents of the market—the merchant. The influence of the merchant over the peasantry is thus illustrated by Buchanan who describes the situation in the villages around Bangalore: *"Having assembled the village officers and principal farmers, they informed me, that the merchants of Bangalore frequently advance them money to pay their rents, and are afterwards contented to take one half of the crop for the advance and for interest. These advances are sometimes made six month's before the crop is reaped."* [206]

A similar situation must have prevailed in the Ashtagram and other regions where the peasantry had developed close relations with the market on a scale far greater than that near Bangalore.

The impact of all these influences of the market undermined feudal forms of exploitation and laid the basis for the birth of capitalist forms in agriculture.

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F. Property Ownership and Class Relations Under Semifeudalism

The reform of agriculture, the spread of irrigation, the popularisation of new species, the penetration of commercial agriculture and the granting of takavi loans had a deep impact on property ownership and class relations in the countryside.

In the chapter on early feudalism we have discussed about the nature of feudal private property. Land was monopolised by the landlord class and it was as a result of this monopoly that the class of tenants and bonded labourers were exploited, perpetuating in the process the feudal mode of production. **Absolute land monopoly by the feudal class was therefore the principal characteristic feature of feudalism.**

The period of late feudalism began to wear out this monopoly and particularly under Haidar and Tipu, there emerged **two** new forms of property ownership by the peasantry. One of these forms was **transitory** and the other was the **full and complete expression** of the direction of this transition. These two forms were **best** manifested in the Maidan, **partially** manifested in the Malnad and **not** manifested at all in the Karavali. A regional pattern was visible in which the Karavali and the Maidan formed the two extremeties. In looking at the change in property relations from this angle one should **not** at any cost reach the conclusion that feudal property ownership had ceased in the Maidan. The point that we are making is that **the monopoly over land of the feudal class, essential to the feudal mode of production, was experiencing erosion.** Let us therefore, look at the nature of feudal property ownership in these three regions, then take a look at the transitory form of ownership and ultimately consider the new forms of property ownership during this period.

Buchanan's investigations have provided us with information of property ownership drawn from 14 different villages from these regions. We have based our discussion on this fair and representative sample.

Buchanan says that anybody considered to have more than five ploughs which was capable of tilling 65 acres was in *"easy circumstances"*. This might then be the line demarcating the class of landlords. In Harihara the landlord class owned a maximum of 6 ploughs, in the Ashtagram it was 7, in Madhugiri, Periyapatna and Sira it was 10. Each plough needed one male and one female bonded labourer. Thus a landlord with 10 ploughs kept 20 bonded labourers. Apart from this, during times of sowing and harvest, each plough needed two hired labourers.

Buchanan states on a few occasions that **the biggest of landlords also happened to be the Gowdas or Patels of the village and together with the Shanbhoga, drawn from the Vokkaliga, Lingayat and Brahmana castes in the main—were the principal props which sustained the feudal order of the village.** At the same time they mediated in the collection of revenue on behalf of the state, which made them all the more powerful.

In the period of late feudalism under the impact of mercantile rule feudal private property began to display a transition capable of serving the new mode of capitalism that was yet to gain ascendancy. In the early and middle feudal periods private property that existed in land was the exclusive monopoly of the feudal class derived from royal grants. This was used to exploit the tenants and bonded labourers. **Despite the relaxation of**

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tenancy bondage during the period of middle feudalism, the nature of feudal private property remained unaltered.

But the progress of society to the stage of late feudalism saw the gradual undermining of feudal private property and the rise in rural areas, of a transition to capitalist private property. **The agrarian reform in particular contributed to the rise of a class of proprietor peasants--small and middle in size--who held lands not under the will of the feudal classes of the village but under their own right sanctioned directly by the state.**

The Patel and the Shanbhogas played a key role in the collection of state revenues from the peasantry. Although the state made an agreement on the extent of the year's tax to be paid based on the amount of seed sown, directly with the peasantry; the task of making an evaluation of the quantity and type of seed was invariably the job of the Patel and Shanbhoga. Further, on harvest and after threshing and winnowing it was in the presence of the Patel and the Shanbhoga that the peasants measured out the produce and paid up that portion which belonged to the state as per the original cowl that was agreed upon. The Patel then handed out the revenues of the village to the *Parputti* or hobli level administrator. In all these transactions, the Shanbhoga's task was confined to that of keeping the accounts.

For this role in thus extracting a part of the peasant surplus on behalf of the state the Patel and Shanbhoga were paid, not in the modern capitalist sense a wage by the state, but in the former feudal manner of direct extraction of the fruits of peasant labour. Thus the state allowed these two intermediaries, very much a part of the traditional village order, to continue with an economic privilege which was in every sense of the term feudal.

Buchanan supplies us with several accounts drawn from particular villages across the plains of the Mysore Kingdom all of which clearly point to this parasitic method of appropriation. These two feudal sections appropriated from 17% to 25% of the entire produce of the peasantry. Apart from this, the peasantry was also compelled to forsake from 5% to 15% of their produce towards the other feudal sections such as the Brahmana who kept the *Panchanga* (*Hindu Almanac*) and the traditional Gowda of the village.

If this extraction is added with the 17% that the state took away, then the peasant was left with just about 50% of the produce with which he had to defray the expenses to the various castes who rendered him one form of service or the other, or supplied him with his material necessities. **The grain that remained after all these deductions on harvest was what he was left with. With this he and his family had to tide over for the year. Thus it is evident that the life of the peasant under these conditions of feudalism was indeed precarious.** An observation of this situation led Benjamin Heyne to rightly conclude: *"....the circar share or revenue derived from the lands is by no means exorbitant, but the innumerable smaller shares to the village and circar servants [Patel and Shanbhoga] must strike everybody as the most destructive bane to agriculture."* [207]

Thomas Munro had this to say on the antiquity of private property in Dakshina Kannada: *"...in Canara where almost all land is private property, derived from gift or purchase or descent from an antiquity too remote to be traced, where there are more title*

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deeds, and where the validity of these deeds has probably stood more trials than all the estates in England." [208] **All** agricultural land was the property of the landlords or proprietors known as *balikies*. The state made an agreement with these balikies, most of whom were Bunts or Brahmanas. They had leased out their land and collected ground rent at the rate of 12.5% of the total produce they yielded, from tenants called *aduvacara*.

The aduvacara, most of whom were Bunts, were middlemen-tenants to the landlords and they in turn let out the lands to cultivating-tenants, who were composed of the Billava and Bunt castes, on a fifty-fifty basis. Thus the cultivating tenant of the coast had a status similar to that of the tenant of the plains, having to forego nearly 50% of the produce to the state and the hierarchy of landlords--the balkies and their aduvacaras--who weighed down on him. In addition to leasing out land, the landlords also had their own lands, the cultivation of which they oversaw directly. In the region close to Mangalore, the landlords had up to 25 ploughs, while in Udupi they possessed up to 20 ploughs. These ploughs were worked upon by farm servants called 'coolialu', most of whom were Billavas, paid by the year and an equal number of bonded labourers or purchased men called *muladalu* who did not receive any payment but were only maintained by the landlord. Buchanan says that the slaves belonged to the *"Corawar, Bacadaru, and Baladaru"* castes. Buchanan describes their lives in the following manner: *"At the end of the year, the hired servant may change his service, if he be free from debt; but that is seldom the case. When he gets deeply involved, his master may sell his sister's children to discharge the amount [since Dakshina Kannada society was by and large matrilineal], and his services may be transferred to any other man who chooses to take him and pay his debts to his master. In fact he differs little from a slave, only his allowance is larger, but then the master is not obliged to provide for him in sickness nor in old age.*

A male slave is allowed three-fourth's of the allowance of a hired servant.... When a slave wishes to marry, he receives 5 ***Pagodas*** *to defray the expense. The wife works with the husband's master. On the husband's death, if the wife was a slave, all the children belong to her husband's master. A good slave sells for 10* ***Pagodas****.... If he has a wife who was formerly free, and two or three children, the value is doubled. The slave may be hired out; and the renter both extracts his labour, and finds him in subsistence. Slaves are also mortgaged; but the mortgage is not obliged to supply the place of a slave that dies; and in case of accidents, the debt becomes extinguished; which is an excellent regulation. Free men of low cast, if they are in debt or trouble, sometimes sell their sister's children, who are their heirs."* [209]

Thus a landlord of the coast sub-infeuded a few hundred acres of land to middlemen-tenants who in turn leased them to cultivating-tenants. The landlords also directly oversaw the cultivation of a few hundred acres by exploiting bonded labourers and free tenants. 17% of this surplus they passed on to the state.

Apart from the feudal class of patels, shanbhogas, balkies and aduvacaras, there was yet another stratum in the class of landlords whose power seemed boundless. **Maidan, Malnad or Karavali, this class dominated and towered over the regular class of landlords that lived in the village. Constituted chiefly of the Brahmana and Lingayat castes this class lived off extensive temple, matha and agrahara property. Owning**

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land that spread over thousands of acres and across a string of villages, at times the big mathas subleasing to smaller mathas under their domain, these lands which propped up the religious establishment of feudal society of the time sustained the creamy layer of the class of feudal lords whose power derived from the toil of the peasants and whose authority, sanctified by religion, gripped over their minds.

Throughout the region of Karnataka, then under the rule of Haidar and Tipu, one observes the collusion of the state with the feudal forces at the village level. In fact the feudal props of the village were regarded as employees of the state, melting the difference between landlord and bureaucrat in the village. **This integration with the forces of feudalism at the level of the village was what constituted the reactionary basis of the mercantile state.**

A visible feature in the Maidan and the Malnad was **the contractual agreement that the state entered into with the peasantry.** Apart from the class of tenants that cultivated the lands of the landlords, there was a significant class of peasants who were considered as tenants of the state. Ownership of land ultimately rested with the state and this class of peasants entered, at the start of each agricultural season into a contract with the state (cowl) of the rent it would pay in the form of the agrarian tax on harvest. The Patel and Shanbhoga were endowed with the task of making this assessment and achieving the implementation of this contract, rendering them as the lowest functionaries of the state.

However, it is important to note that the peasantry which paid revenue to the state tended to cultivate the same patch of land during its lifetime and thus while in theory the state was the ultimate owner of the land, in practice, in everyday life, it was the peasant who was the proprietor. There was thus a growing identification of the peasant with the stretch of land that he cultivated; an identification that tended to mark it out as his private property. This was what imbued it with a transitory character.

Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* confirmed this defacto ownership wherein Clause 15 provided a peasant up to 10 years time to reclaim the land he had left fallow, failing which it could be assigned to another peasant.[210]

Buchanan reports of a situation in Shimoga's Nagara wherein: *"The fields here are called the property of the government; but the government cannot legally dispossess any farmer of his lands as long as he pays the rent, which is also considered as fixed. The* ***Gudday,*** *or rice ground is taxed; and each farmer has annexed to this a portion of* ***mackey,*** *or dry-field.... The farmer can either sell his land, or let it on mortgage. If he be not able to pay his rent, he goes away; but if either he or his descendants recover stock enough, they may return, and claim their heritage, and any new occupant would be obliged to relinquish the property."*[211]

In fact the state went one step ahead in encouraging the peasant to continue to **till the very piece of land that he had enjoyed all the while,** which was one of the effects of the Takavi loan. Of this, Buchanan observes: *"A man indeed cannot lawfully leave his farm without permission from the* ***Amildar,*** *or chief of the district; but when a man complains that from poverty he is not able to cultivate his land, the* ***Amildar*** *must either abate his rent, allow him to go away, or make him advances to purchase stock. This is called giving* ***Tacavy."*** [212]

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Describing the conditions in Nagara, he writes: *"The plantations of Areca, can be sold or mortgaged; on which account they are looked upon as more the property of the cultivators, that the rice fields are; but this is a fallacy; for a rice field is in fact the cultivator's inalienably. If a cultivator gets into debt, he must sell his garden to satisfy his creditors, but he may relinquish his rice land for a time and, whenever his creditors cease from molesting him, he may again obtain possession. The mortgage here is exactly similar to the wadset of Scotland; the lender of the money taking the use of the estate for the interest of his money."* [213]

Buchanan reports from the villages of Ashtagram that: *"The Ryots or farmers, have no property in the ground; but it is not usual to turn any man away, so long as he pays the customary rent."* And what is significant, he adds, *"Even in the reign of Tippoo, such an act would have been looked upon as an astonishing grievance."* [214]

Another instance of an **intermediary state in the transition to absolute private property in land** may be discovered in the following account of Buchanan near Chennapatna. *"Although the soil is considered as the property of the Government, yet when a man plants a palm garden, the trees are considered as his property, and he may at pleasure sell them. He pays one half of the produce to the Government, as ground-rent; but pays nothing for the fruit trees that are intermixed, nor for the vegetables or grains that are cultivated under them."* [215]

We also have several instances of land being leased in by commercial farmers who pay a rent **not** to the government but **to** the original tenant of the land. This form again is a recognition of ownership rights over land, albeit in an indirect way, reflecting the existence of private property in land.

Tipu acknowledged this transition no better than in 1797 when he planned to erect the massive irrigation scheme along the Kaveri. In a bid to attract the peasantry to cultivate the thousands of acres of arable waste lands once after the project fed these lands with water in an inscription on the foundation stone of the project Tipu declared in no uncertain terms: *"The newly cultivated land shall belong to the cultivator and his descendants...and no one shall dispossess him."* [216]

The Maidan illustrated the form which this transition was to take. It sought culmination by the creation of a class of owner-peasants.

Ever since the time of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar who enlisted soldiers into his cnetralised army, the mercantile state adopted a policy of enticing the loyalty of the soldiers by granting them title deeds to land in lieu of part payment to them. In the Mysore army of the late eighteenth century there were nearly three lakh soldiers and kandachara peons at any given point of time. There were close to two lakh soldiers that died during service and whose lands became the property of their kinsmen and was not recovered by the state. In addition, there were close to 40,000 tanks in the Old Mysore region and the Nirguntys were granted property in the land irrigated by the tanks, whose number must have run into several thousands. Thus **peasant households, from a conservative estimate of three lakhs to a realistic estimate of five lakhs owned private property in land. They held property in their name; property which was inalienable and yet transferable of their free will; property from which they could not, as Tipu said, be dispossesed by anyone.**

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This last form of peasant private property in land was to throw the most serious challenge in the village to the political and economic monopoly of the landlord class. This form of property marked a clear break from feudal private property. Peasant private property was a precondition for the growth of capitalism in the countryside. It was this form of property over which the owner exercised ultimate juridical rights that could pave the way for capitalist accumulation. Peasant private property belonged to the age of capital. As a form of property it bore a striking contradiction with feudal private property. It marked the transition of agriculture from feudalism to semifeudalism.

The new forms of property ownership changed the relations of production in agriculture. It transformed the forms of exploitation and it caused the rise of classes which were altogether new to the feudal mode of production.

In certain rural pockets near Srirangapatna and Harihara, the habit of employing agricultural labour on a **daily** basis with payments made **purely** in cash was evident. In these areas wages were also calculated on a weekly basis, with part grain payments witnessed in the villages in the neighbourhood of Srirangapatna. **This mode of payment on a daily or weekly basis signifies the emergence of the free labourer, called in Kannada as *chenguli*, untrammeled by feudalism.**

Further, it is interesting to note that the wages of bonded labourers otherwise called farm servants, was calculated on a **monthly** basis instead of an annual basis in the villages around Srirangapatna. In villages of the plains it was normal for bonded labourers to be paid an annual **cash** wage in addition to the wage paid in kind. In contrast, the farm servants of Honnavara and Udupi were paid no cash wages at all; a feature characteristic of the coast. In places where capitalist penetration was weak such as the Karavali and moderate such as in the Malnad, one observes the prevalence of slavery or permanent bondage akin to the period of early feudalism, and is not to be confused with the farm servants who were always free to quit upon clearing their debts. **Thus the conditions of bonded labour had also begun to undergo change.**

Regarding these changes in the form of labour from a feudal to a capitalist type, Lenin summed up: *".... the growth of commodity economy conflicts with the labour service system [feudal form of course], since the latter is based on natural economy, on unchanging technique, on inseparable ties between the landlord and peasant. That is why this system is totally impracticable in its complete form, and every advance in the development of commodity economy and commercial agriculture undermines the conditions of its practicability."* [217]

At another point, Lenin says: *"The development of purely capitalist wage-labour saps the very roots of the labour service system.*

It is supremely important to note that this insuperable connection between the differentiation of the peasantry and the elimination of labour-service by capitalism or—a connection so obvious in theory—has long been noted by agricultural writers who have observed the various methods of farming on the landlord estates." [218]

The intensity with which labour was exploited and the form of labour organisation had changed from feudal times. While commodity production in agriculture formed a firm basis for the growth of capitalist forms of organisation and exploitation in that realm, as

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we shall later observe in the part under industry, **the extent of commercialisation provided the foundation necessary for the entry of capitalist manufacture to the village which only further intensified the pace of the reorganisation of agriculture on capitalist lines.**

The formative centuries of feudalism, which we have chosen to call as the period of early feudalism saw the rise of three main classes in agriculture--the landlord, the tied tenant and the bonded labourer. **The entry of society to middle feudalism lasting for nearly five centuries provided for the rise of the free tenant--though quite often the freedom of the tenant was redrawn into servitude. The free tenant in fact coexisted with the tied tenant.**

The entry of Karnataka to late feudalism from the end of the seventeenth century lasting for about 130 years saw the rise of new classes in the village in contradistinction to the old feudal threefold division. The growth and development of commodity production, the rise to state power of the merchant class resulting in enlightened absolutist rule and the coming of mercantilist policies into operation leading to the growth of peasant private property and contributed to changes in class relations.

What then were these changes and what was their historical gradient?

First, there was the rise of **contractual bonded labour.** Bonded labour could be contracted from one month to a year, at the end of which a bonded labourer could quit his master and seek another on paying up his loans.

Second, there was the rise of chenguli or **rural wage labour.** Paid by the day or by the week, a class of **free** agricultural labourers emerged.

Third, the class of tied tenants decreased in number and **free tenancy** tended to become more and more numerous, particularly in the South Maidan.

Fourth, a voluminous body of **owner-peasants,** about five lakhs in number, or constituting under 15% of the total population of the Kingdom arose. **This class of free peasants effected a break in the feudal monopoly over landed property. Within this body there could be discerned; a rich and middle-poor class of peasantry. The rich peasantry used capitalist methods, relied on agricultural labour and produced almost exclusively for the market. It inhabited the villages surrounding the major cities of Srirangapatna and Bangalore.**

These were the most important changes of the time in the sphere of agrarian relations. Clearly, **feudal production relations and the classes that arose in feudal society were being undermined or transformed. The class of agricultural labourer, the class of a middle and that of a rich peasantry had come into existence and the overall social dynamics encouraged their hasty growth. There was a breaking up and a new stratification that was discretely unraveling itself in the agrarian sphere.**

And what was the historical gradient? It was obviously downhill; being obtuse at the beginning and growing acute as it gained momentum. Were these not classes that belonged to the order of the bourgeoisie?

Indian Marxists have considered Indian society as having been feudal despite the growth of commodity production in the period prior to British conquest. From the time of British rule Indian society has been classified as a semifeudal society. This change is

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attributed to the fact that British colonialism introduced private property in Indian agriculture and thus modified Indian feudalism to that extent. It was only consequent to the creation of private property in agriculture that the new classes--the landless labourer, the poor, middle and rich peasant classes came into existence, it is argued.

We have no dispute with this argument. **We would only like to place an exception clause to this generalisation. We feel that this theorisation though generally true should not allow one to be blinded to the development of semifeudalism in agriculture even before British conquest in certain regions in India. The Mysore Kingdom was one such exception. Private property in the form which belonged to the epoch of capital had already come into existence.** A class of owner-peasants, almost five lakhs strong or 15% of the total population of the Kingdom then, which was undergoing stratification and a class of landless agricultural labourers whose numbers we are not able to estimate, had come into being. This category of owner-peasants were more numerous than the class of landlords. **Available in almost every village of the South Maidan, with the prestige that their professions lent them and the assertion that their ownership of land provided them, they were an important factor in undermining the economic and political sway of the landlord. It is among others, this category of peasants that invested meaning to the concept of semifeudalism. Semifeudalism had obviously commenced in Karnataka without the British.**

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7. MARCH OF THE MERCHANT

A. The Question of Protectionism

To understand the class-roots of Haidar and Tipu's anticolonialism it would do good to digress and visit England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and study how at the core of the theory of 'free trade' which the British colonialists put out as their slogan, lay the firm foundations of protectionism, its exact opposite. PJ Thomas' book *Mercantilism and the East India Trade* documents how the British who suffered from Indian competition resorted to fierce protectionism, before turning the tide of history against us. Without such aggressive protectionism which the British bourgeoisie resorted to, it would not have been able to rescue its home market from Indian inundation and thus safeguard its industry and commerce. To appreciate Tipu's stringent measures against British goods and his protectionist economic war which lay at the roots of his political war against colonialism, the English case against India in the days after the bourgeois revolution can be instructive.

Two policies lay at the basis of seventeenth century English trade. Firstly, England sought to export more than it imported so that the balance of trade remained in its favour, and secondly, it sought to export manufactured goods rather than import them since this would serve the class interests of the rising bourgeoisie.[219]

However, *"Of all lines of foreign trade the East Indian was one which caused the most acrimonious discussion in the seventeenth century. First, more commodities were imported from India than were exported to that country from England, and this caused that most dreaded of consequences—an unfavourable balance of trade. Secondly, the imports from India were increasingly of the nature of manufactured products which sooner or later were bound to displace home products and discourage home industry."* [220]

Further, *"Indian trade had always been valued by foreign nations, but their appreciation of it was necessarily mingled with some apprehension about its baneful results. This was due to the peculiar character of Indian export and import trade. India always offered to the foreign trader valuable muslin and choice spices, but in return she took very few consumable commodities, and the result was that she had to be paid in gold or silver. It was thus that India came to be called the `sink of precious metals'.... The danger of a drain of treasure into India has been a perpetual nightmare to most of India's customers for the last two thousand years. The decay of the Roman Empire is imputed, at any rate partly, to this drain to the East."* [221]

Thus we find that India became a country which possessed the maximum gold surviving the raids of Ghazni and the pillage of the imperialists. India which has no silver in its natural state, also thereby came to possess great quantities of it through such a movement of bullion.

In 1696 a popular British ditty captured the English craze for India's textiles.

"Our ladyes all were set a gadding,
After these toys they ran a madding;
And nothing then would please their fancies,
Nor dolls, nor joans nor wanton nancies,

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Unless it be of Indian making." [222]

In 1700 the *English Almanac* wrote of the effect of the trade with India:

"Whilst they promote what Indian's make.
The employ they from the English take,
Than how shall tenants pay their rent
When trade and coin to India sent?
How shall folks live and taxes pay
When poor want work and go away?" [223]

Thus a situation, all too familiar for present day India, was what England herself suffered from in the early years of her trading experience with India. While the East India Company, as a middleman with a monopoly on Indian trade made super profits, this only tended to displace British artisanal production in these same goods.

PJ Thomas tells us: *"The extent of the use of Indian goods may be more or less estimated from contemporary writings. Cary, Defoe and other writers give us a vivid idea of the changes. Men used shirts, neckloths, cuffs and romals made of calico, and women had head dresses, night rails, hoods, sleeves, aprons, gowns and petticoats made of Indian cloth.*

Both sexes wore Indian stockings. Dressing gowns came to be generally made of calico [which takes its name from Calicut]. The list of stolen goods mentioned in documents of the day include Kincob gowns, Allejah petticoats, yellow chintz gowns and petticoats, muslin lace night cloths and other Indian names. In 1698, according to George Chalmers, every lady was all the morning in muslin night-rails and made and received visits in that dress. Ruffles both of gentlemen and ladies were of muslin. Men wore large neckloths of muslin. We read of a 'cluster of high class ladies appearing like an embassy of Indian Queens'. And it was a wonder at that time, since the Queen and the ladies of the court appeared in muslin and calico.

The chief Indian cotton goods popular at the time were muslins, chintz, calicoes, diapers, dimities and so forth. Most of the numerous varieties mentioned in the Company's records figure also in contemporary literature and correspondence. Ashton mentions also, among others, Baft, Beteele, Izaree, Palempore, Salempoory, Romal, Nillae, Mooree, Anjengo calico. All these were well known to the fashionable people of those days.

Indian calicoes were used for beds, screens, hangings and for covering cabinets and other furniture. In fact it was from these that they were later on promoted to the bodies of men and women. As Defoe satirically put it, 'the chintz was advanced from lying upon their floors to their backs, from the footcloth to the petticoat'. The extensive use of calico on furniture is well brought out by the same writer. 'It crept into our houses, our closets and bed-cambers; curtains, cushions, chairs and at last beds themselves were nothing but callicoes or Indian stuffs'.

'In short', he concludes, 'almost everything that used to be made of wool or silk, relating either to dress of the women or the furniture of our houses, was supplied by the Indian trade'.

Nor was England the only country in Europe where Indian cotton and silk goods were used. They were introduced and were increasingly worn all over the continent. In

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France, their use spread like wild fire, and the local silk and linen industries were greatly harmed by this change.... These Indian goods were commonly used also in Germany, Spain and Italy." [224]

Thus *"Indian control of cotton and cotton goods amounted almost to a monopoly from very early times right down to the nineteenth century. As the* ***Atlas Martimous*** *(1727) pointed out, India and china were able to clothe the whole world with their manufactures."* [225]

This importation destabilised the life of the artisans as capitalist production in England was more in wool and was yet to catch up in cotton.

Wide scale protests in the seventeenth century began to rock England against the import of goods from India. *"In September [1721] a serious riot broke out. The rabble cut down calico gowns into pieces from women's backs, entered shops in search of calico and assaulted the constables who came to stop them in Norfolk."* [226]

Many ballads were composed in order to rouse the country against the use of calicoes:

"Now our trade is so bad,
That the weavers run mad
Thr'o the want of both work and provisions,
That some hungry poor rogues
Feed on grains like hogs.
They were reduced to such wretched conditions,
Then well may they teare
What our ladies weare
And foes to their country upbraid them,
Till none shall be thought
A more scandalous slut
Than a tawdry Calico-Madam." [227]

England's *Almanac* wrote in 1700:

"The loom, the comb and the spinning wheel
Do all support the nation's weal.
If you'll wear your silks and woolens
You'll keep your coin, your men, your bullion." [228]

Thus the struggle of the artisans led the British Parliament to change its policy of importing Indian manufactured goods and began to resort to protectionist measures which was backed by the rising bourgeoise that produced woolen goods.

Thus PJ Thomas says: *"Mercantilism entered a new and more remarkable phase towards the last quarter of the century [seventeenth]; and this phase continued in vigour during the greater part of the eighteenth century as well. The keynote of this policy was the fostering of national industries, and all the energies of the state were concentrated upon this main object. Indeed foreign trade continued to be as important as before, but it was valued, not so much for its own sake or the treasure brought by it, as for its effect upon home industries. The state came to regard it as its principal concern to regulate trade in such a way as to further industrial development. In the hands of a patriotic*

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parliament, this policy assumed the form of a vigorous protection of what were regarded as national industries against unfair competition from foreign countries.

The foreigner was vigorously ousted either by absolutely prohibiting his imports into England or by the milder methods of protective tariffs. This phase of Mercantilism (which we might very well call protectionism) was initiated in the interest of home industries...." [229]

With the ban on cotton imports, the British capitalist class partook in the cotton industry and reversed the position of England from a nation which imported cottons into one that exported it. The profound changes that protectionism resulted in is thus explained by Thomas. *"As Dr Lilian Knowles points out the prohibition of foreign cotton cloth gave a strong impulse to the invention of spinning machinery in England.... Barely twelve years after the prohibition, John Key invented the Fly-shuttle for weaving, and within thirty years of that Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton made their epoch making inventions by which spinning was incredibly facilitated and cheapened. And what was even more important, yarn strong enough to serve for warp was made for the first time in England, and thereby it was made possible for genuine cotton cloth to be made in vast quantities in that country. This decided that Lancashire was henceforth to be the world's cotton factory.... Thus inspite...of the nation's steadfast devotion to wool, cotton became the staple industry of England and ousted wool from its premier place. By the middle of the nineteenth century cotton became what wool once was—palladium of national prosperity. And Sydney smith was bold enough to write as early as 1845: 'The great object for which the Anglo-Saxon race appears to have been created is the making of Calico'."* [230]

In Tipu's fight, against colonialism and his economic blockade of British goods which we shall look into in detail, protectionism, and how it vitally emanated from and reinforced the growth of the home market of Karnataka must not be lost sight of.

B. Mercantile Roots of Anticolonialism

The uncompromising and death defying fight against colonialism put up by both Haidar and Tipu has been a rare event among the rulers of India, all of whom during this period encountered British and French colonialism. It would be unwise to trace the origin of this anti-colonialism to any other source except the hot springs from where it issues forth—its concrete class roots.

At the outset, the difference in feudal and mercantile perceptions of colonialism ought to be appreciated. The feudal viewpoint, related as it is with land and the yoking of the peasant to it is satisfied if its privileges are maintained in the face of a powerful conqueror. Its economic status include the privilege to permit itself to a recurring annual share of the surplus produced by the peasantry. As long as this is unharmed, the feudal lord rests content with foreign domination; habituated as he has been for centuries in Indian history to enjoying such privileges for some military service or payment of a part of the surplus extracted to the imperial crown. Any concern beyond the confines of this narrow self-seeking is immaterial to the feudal mind-set. Thus **most kings in India at the time of European conquest of our country,**

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representing predominantly feudal interests, utterly failed to perceive the nature of colonialism, or wallowing in the self-indulgence of the feudal class, were just too bored to be provoked by such concerns.

It hardly mattered whether they signed up with the British or the French as long as they received an assurance protecting their petty principalities and ensuring the perpetuity of their parasitism. The feudal class could thus, historically, never hope to resist colonialism and it always sought out the quickest means to compromise and collaborate. Thus **colonialism, in turn, always looked out for winning the friendship of the feudal class as its first and foremost ally in the colony, so that it could serve as a convenient and ready made basis on which to found its imperial depredation and plunder.**

The perception of the merchant aroused by a loosening of feudalism and its holding of state power was however vastly different. Its enrichment depended upon the market and its ever growing expansion. It depended on the cycles of purchase and sale, each new cycle permitting an increase in income for which the limit was infinity. The merchant, once awakened, always sought political control over its market and thus aspired for its protection from rival merchants. To this effect it awakened patriotism in the masses to nudge out competitors. To compromise its market with a powerful adversary at a time when it had the best advantage of an internal monopoly could have only spelt the collapse of the merchant class. Thus it had to fight tooth and nail against colonialism in order to ensure its own existence.

The growth in commodity production at a slow pace during the phase of middle feudalism and its more rapid strides since the advent of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar ensured the opening up of the market for the merchant, what with the removal of the palegara hurdle for trade. The merchant class of Karnataka, had begun to see the enormous potential of the market and had in a short span of time brought even the peasant masses under its sway. **Haidar and Tipu who assumed power during this onward march of the merchant class, rallied with it and drew their vigour from it.** They clearly perceived the vast market and out of this class perception they drew up their stand point with the British. The class interests that Tipu and Haidar represented led them to clash with British colonialism as rivals and equals, laying their claim to their 'national' market and initiating not just Karnataka's but India's anticolonial patriotic war of resistance.

Citing Wilks, the British colonialist, Asok Sen wrote *"...we know on Wilks' testimony of Tipu's understanding that English power rested on commercial prosperity and the 'Sultan desired an extensive plan for a similar increase of power'."* [231]

However, it was Thomas Munro, himself born of a merchant family and the most perceptive of the British colonialists in India of the time, who was the first among the invaders to come to a correct assessment about several aspects of Mysore, consequently arrived at a correct assessment of the source of this uncompromising anticolonial motivation in father and son. Summing up this analysis of Munro's, Burton Stein writes: *"Tipu Sultan's Mysore state was seen by the young soldier Munro as a profound threat to the mere survival of the Company in the south.... The chief reason for this was Munro's perception that Mysore's mercantilist regime under Tippu Sultan was the same*

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in form and purpose as the Company's regime, hence Mysore must be considered a dangerous enemy." [232]

To put it in Munro's words: *"It is our political power, acquired by the Company's arms that has made the trade to India what it is: without that power it would have been kept within narrow bounds by the jealousy and exactions of the Native Princes, and by some, such as Tippu, would have been prohibited altogether."* [232A]

These, then, were the roots of the anticolonial consciousness in Haidar and Tipu.

However, this class background was stirred up to defy British colonialism because of two important favourable factors. The first was **the smashing of palegara rule** which helped the merchant class surmount a major internal political obstacle. The second, not unrelated to the first, was **the development of a modern centralised state.**

Although individual merchants with statewide transactions did begin to appear on the economic scene of the period, they were yet to make their presence felt as a class. The merchants still had a regional character and at best the same merchant transacted between two regions. Yet, the availability of a modern state at their disposal served to politically consolidate this class even during its economic infancy and take British colonialism in a solid awe-inspiring head-on collision.

Of the attitude that Haidar bore towards the Europeans, Nikhiles Guha says: *"In his relation with the Europeans, Haidar never failed to assert his superiority. Both the French and Portuguese had experience of this. French appeals to spare the Zamorin, who had sought shelter with them were turned down by Haidar in 1774. On another occasion their request to spare the territory of Kunjan Nair, long their dependent at Mahe, was not only evaded by Haider, he annexed the area in question and exacted from the French a sum of Rs 1 lakh as punishment for opposing his move. The Portuguese were compelled to cede a portion of the territory north of Goa to Haider. Mysore rule was extended for the first time over the territories of several Indian chiefs who had paid tribute to the Portuguese till that time. For being in alliance with the British the Portuguese flag was brought down from the factory at Mangalore in 1776. All the Portuguese factors and merchant ships found at the place were seized at the same time and the artillery removed from the garrison there. With these instances before him, Adrian Moens reached the conclusion that Haider `would not allow himself to be made to do anything except what would be in his own and not to our interests'."* [233]

PJ Thomas' observations in regard to this in the British context though, is not without relevance: *"The core of mercantilism is the strengthening of the State in material resources; it is the economic side of nationalism....*

Mercantilism was the dominant phase of England's policy, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was the central government that wielded it and local privilege was put down with a firm hand. The whole nation looked to the state, not only for protection against foreign competition, but also for the regulation of conflicting commercial and industrial interests at home. Accordingly government actively interfered in the details of economic life. The outflow of bullion was carefully regulated. Home industries encouraged by providing for the importation of raw materials

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and by restraining the importation of finished products. The State also laid down from time to time the conditions of labour and employment in the various industries of the country. Nor were the interests of foreign trade neglected. Trading companies were incorporated under royal charter, and such companies received various privileges, including the monopoly of trade with distant territories. Trade was also fostered by navigation laws calculated to increase shipping, by the discouragement of 'harmful' trades and by a series of minute regulations in which the paternal state expressed itself.

For a long time the king kept the strings of economic policy in his own hands, but his authority was generally exercised under the advise of committees of experts set up from time to time." [234]

Side by side with the political battles that Haidar and Tipu fought, **they waged an acute and determined economic war against British colonialism.** This economic war which was their second front in combating the enemy, was waged by using the weapons of trade boycott and protectionism, in a move to strike at the enemy's trading interests so that it would hurt him most; while at the same time stimulate the internal trade of the Kingdom. In Tipu's own words this war was to be so conducted that *"not even one atom of the articles of Mysore should fall into the hands of the enemy."*[235]

However, there was also a profound angle to this patriotic boycott. It consisted of taking the greatest precaution against allowing the penetration of colonial goods into the Mysore market and thus the gradual integration of the two economies. In an attempt to preempt this, Tipu attacked every measure aimed at such penetration by striking a blow at the development of every comprador tendency that emerged among the merchants of Mysore since colonialism operated only on the support extended by the comprador traders. The fight against compradorism was as fierce as his fight against British colonialism as we shall see later in this chapter.

Clause 99 of Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* set the pace for the boycott of British trade. It stated: *"Heretofore merchants and traders under this Government have been accustomed to go to the dependencies of* ***Chennapatan*** *[Madras] to purchase salt and other articles. All intercourse with that province is now forbid: and you are to notify to the merchants, that salt abounds in* ***Kushalpur, Koorial, Honnavar, Mirjan, Ankola,*** *and other places at the foot of the* ***Ghats*** *dependent on* ***Nagar,*** *and in the dependencies of* ***Calicut;*** *and direct them to go to whichever of these places is nearest to that of their residence, for the purchase of salt, and not to go to the dependencies of* ***Chennapatan.***

If any merchant, in disobedience of this order, shall privately go to ***Chennapatan*** *province, for the purchase of salt & c, you shall, after enquiry, seize his* ***Zindigee*** *with his cattle, and also the salt, for Government; and moreover fine the offender and threaten him so as to deter him from the like offence in future.*

If merchants belonging to ***Chennapatan*** *province shall come into the dependencies of this Government, for the purchase or sale of goods, salt & c., you shall make them prisoners and seize their cattle and goods for Government; and you shall report the given."* [236]

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On the wisdom of this measure Narendar Pani et al write: *"All commercial transaction with Chennapatna [Madras] was banned on penalty for disobedience, when Tipu found that merchants were finding it far more profitable to trade with the foreign goods which made their entry from the Madras shores. The closure of Madras to trade also impeded the textile manufactory in Bangalore, as competition from Salem was removed. Production of earth salt was encouraged, and trade was only with the dependencies of Calicut in the case of salt."* [237]

In a letter written to Urshad Baig Khan, Foujdar of Calicut in 1787, Tipu says: *"You must give the most strict orders to all the merchants, and other inhabitants of that place (Calicut), neither to buy any goods of the English factor who is come thither, nor sell grain, or any other articles whatsoever, to him. How long will the above named remain? He will, in the end, despair of making either sales or purchases and depart from thence."* [238]

As a result of the successful implementation of these measures, British trade felt quite harassed. The proceedings of the Council of the Board of Directors of the East India Company recorded the colonial response to this blockade: *"Tippu seems determined to persevere with the prohibiting of the exportation of the coast productions...the Company can device little or no benefit from the trade at Tellichery...."* [239]

This frustration on the part of the entourage of British traders was what led British colonialism to work towards the elimination of Mysore rule. Nikhiles Guha says : *"War had been advocated by the private English merchants, engaged in country trade, since the time that Tipu had enforced his blockade against them. Through a series of letters the had convinced Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control [of the East India Company], of the necessity of fighting out of the restrictions in order to increase the volume of China trade, but Cornwallis did not subscribe to their views till the very outbreak of the Third Anglo-Mysore War."* [240]

The economic war which these Mysore rulers waged was so robust that **despite his defeat in the Third Anticolonial War Tipu did not yield to British pressure to allow a trade monopoly over Mysore.** He would rather concede territory than concede the market. CK Kareem says: *"Never in the reigns of Hyder Ali and his son could the European traders succeed in inserting a favourable provision of trade monopoly in any treaty engagements even though they exerted their utmost influence to this effect."* [241]

The traders who came from the Madras Presidency, the GSB, the Kanara Christians, the Marwadis or the Gujarati Banias were all part of the comprador community which Chicherov described. They were the result of the continuation, by British merchants, of an economic interlinkage between the colonial centre and the colony. These were the very same intermediaries whom the Portuguese and Dutch had already spawned out of their transactions. The English merchants, he says, *"...founded `Companies' of local merchants and made contracts on the delivery of commodities by them according to which every participant undertook to procure a quantity of goods in accordance with his share. The `chief' merchants of such `companies' were made responsible for the fulfillment of the obligations assumed by ordinary members. The contacts enumerated the obligations of the merchants, ie, the date by which the stipulated goods were to be*

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delivered, laid down the indemnity they would have to pay if the terms of the contract were not fulfilled, mentioned that the English Company was ready to advance money to the merchants on a loan basis, at a certain interest, and that it would inform the merchants in good time of the particulars of the orders of the current year." [242]

Explaining the mechanism of the textile trade, PM Joshi provides us with a picture of how comprador features gradually emerged in Bijapur in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. *"It seems probable that it [cotton weaving] was financed by the middlemen or the Bania who kept in close touch with the market and the requirements of the exporters. The English went to the Mart towns for the purchase of pepper, cotton goods, etc. and usually entered into negotiations with a local merchant whom they appointed as their broker. A prominent figure in the Mart towns of Bijapur was Beni Das the broker employed by the British. Bimal Das and Vithal Gomti were two other brokers who did business for the English factors. The brokers were financed by the foreign traders, and the produces of pepper and the cotton weavers were in their turn financed by the brokers. The English factors found that the calicoes manufactured by the weavers are of short dimensions only and if they wanted large sized cloth, the only alternative before them was to finance the weavers with the cost of altering their looms in order to make the cloth broader."* [243]

It is evident from this account that Banias from Gujarat acted as compradors for the British in the textile trade of Bijapur.

As part of his patriotic mercantile predilection, Tipu undertook to ruin the business of the comprador merchants and those that struck a trading alliance with British colonialism from the early days of his father's rule. Nikhiles Guha Says: *"In the case of Tipu, there is no doubt evidence to prove that during the 1770's he made the Jewish merchants of Calicut disgorge a large share of their wealth; but we must not forget that they had largely built their fortunes as agents of those very European Companies whom the Sultan has chosen to attack."* [244]

Praxy Fernandes, himself a Konkani Christian, who undertook to investigate accounts of Tipu's 'beastiality' and 'bigotry' towards the Konkani Christians of Karnataka's harbour towns ultimately concluded that it was an attempt by Tipu to preserve Mysore's economy from all influences of compradorism, although Fernandes did not use the term 'comprador' as such.

A section of the Kanara Christian community were formerly Gowda Saràswath Brahmanas resident in Goa. The GSB's were the principal compradors of the Portuguese in Karnataka as we saw in an earlier chapter. A section of the GSBs converted to Christianity and continued to maintain their links with the Portuguese colonial economy after migrating to the Portuguese ports of call in the Karnataka coast. With the onset of British colonialism in India, they developed links with the British East India Company, at Tellichery. As a result their political role was always to side with their colonial masters. *"In 1768 when Hyder was engaged in the Carnatic during the First Mysore war, the Kanara Christians aided the Company's armies...to occupy Mangalore. Once again, 15 years later, during the Second Mysore War in 1783...the British with the active cooperation of the Kanara Christians occupied Mangalore, Honavar, Kumta and other ports in Kanara.*

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Col. Campbell at Mangalore and British commanders in other port-towns were given by the Kanara Christians food supplies, provisions, groceries, meat, fish and loans of cash. During the 12 months of Campbell's defence of Mangalore...it was the Kanara Christians who supported the British defenders materially and morally." [245] Tipu undertook to resettle the entire population and dispersed them in the hinter land; thus clearing the coast of part of the compradors.

All these economic measures against British colonialism were however by themselves inadequate. At a time when the merchant class of Karnataka was yet to consolidate itself economically the only measure for Haidar and Tipu to protect and at the same time promote trade was by relying upon their political instrument—the state—and mustering support for mercantile activity by resorting to state trading.

C. State as Merchant

i) Reasons for the Rise of State Trade

The decision to undertake state trade was the result of the commercial contradiction that emerged with British colonialism. After the decline of Portuguese maritime power, and the unsuccessful attempts by the Dutch to develop commercial outposts in Karnataka, it was the British who cultivated the compradors along the Konkan coast and undertook an extensive trade even as Haidar Ali assumed power in Srirangapatna. Tracing the rise of British colonial trade with the west coast, Nikhiles Guha writes: *"From 1670 the annual export of pepper from Malabar to England was 400 to 500 tons. In 1736 the Directors of the Dutch Company noted that the English imported as much pepper to Europe as Batavia annually received from all its pepper districts in the Indonesian archipelago. In trying to further their interests, the English like other European traders followed a policy of diplomacy and force.... In June 1761, John Stracey, the Resident at Honavar, tried to conclude a treaty with the Queen of Bidnur for a grant of a monopoly in the pepper trade within her dominions. In January 1765 the Bombay Government, taking advantage of the fight between Mysore and the Marathas, had even tried to seize Honavar with its adjoining areas but failed. Hyder Ali, however, as Sheikh Ali points, `knew that Bombay needed the products of his dominions, and that they could not afford to break with him'. Clear indications of this was a statement by Crommlin, the chief of the English factory at Bombay in 1766: `In short the Hon'ble Company and individuals must be injured to the last degree if deprived of the Malabar Trade'. Haidar sold to the English all his sandalwood. The quantity then brought annually to Honawar was from two to three hundred candies of 600 lb. All the betelnut exported from Honawar was the produce of the country between Bhatkal and Mirzee [Mirjan] and amounted annually to 100 candies of 560 lb worth 10,000 Pagodas. Of this the Company took a considerable quantity, both raw and boiled; and, for whatever they wanted, they had always a preference."* [246]

Since the assumption of state power, Tipu changed the former policy of the government which permitted trade with Britain. **Tipu advocated a total ban on all trade with the British** and since most of British trade in the south was with the Konkan coast,

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about 600 kms of which was under Mysore rule, **this had serious repercussions on the fortunes of British merchants, leading as we have seen, to cries of blood and war.**

Nikhiles Guha says: *"The vigorous imposition of the blockade hit the English hard. The largest billets of sandal wood were sent to China and the middle-sized ones were used in India. The chips and fragments with the smallest assortment of billets, from which the essential oil was distilled, answered best the Arabian market. Cardamoms are in great demand at the Dutch breweries and distilleries, while on the Arab Coast their demand always exceeded supply. But the chief concern was with the embargo on pepper. The article enjoyed not only a large and lucrative market in Europe, but in China also its export by the British obviated the necessity of having to send bullion to purchase tea. Thus, the pepper trade was vital for the East India Company's interest in the eighteenth century. The effect of Tipu's embargo was aggravated by the fact that the alternative source of supply of the article in Fort Marlborough, the British headquarters in West Sumatra, showed a declining yield inspite of exhortations from the Directors for 'extending as much as possible your pepper investment, which although at all' times desirous, is more essentially so at the present as the price of the article on the Malabar coast is so high as to leave no profits thereon, either at the English or China markets'. The embargo placed by Tipu on the products of his dominion had the effect of raising prices all along the coast-line."* [247]

Thus, the embargo that Tipu enforced was in the export of pepper, sandalwood and cardamoms—precisely those items in which British colonial trade with Karnataka prospered.

It was after the victorious conclusion of the Second Anticolonial War that Tipu who embarked with the boycott of all trade with the British in the same breath also initiated Mysore's state trade. The two policies thus served the singular purpose of waging Mysore's commercial battle against the colonial aggressors.

More than two centuries of colonial trade with Karnataka's coast had developed strong comprador tendencies along this tract which only contributed to the inability to throw up a mercantile class capable of undertaking independent trade in its own right and that too in the realm of overseas commerce.

Of the accumulating flabbiness of Karnataka's coastal merchant class which became increasingly inept, Chicherov explains: *".... during the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the English together with the Dutch controlled the key positions in India's maritime trade with Asian and African countries. They made considerable profits from the trade and used them to expand their exports to Europe. Capitalising on the trade privileges they had been granted by the feudal rulers, European merchants limited the sphere of action of local Indian merchant's capital, thus weakening its economic and political positions in the country.*

The trade activities of European companies, mainly Dutch and English, which relying on the supremacy of their navy and their trade privileges, seized key positions in India's maritime trade, put an end to the monopoly position formerly held by Indian and other Asian merchants. A large part of local merchant's capital began to move from the sphere of independent commercial activity to catering for the investments of European trading companies." [248]

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The merchant class of inland Karnataka which had not as yet developed comprador tendencies was economically still a weak force. This was the other reason for the weakness of merchant capital, as we have already seen earlier.

This weakness as a class was reflected in its ignorance of overseas markets and trade prospects, in its weak capital base, in its almost nonexistent infrastructure in terms of possession of ships, almost no skilled manpower to man the sea-borne vessels and convey the merchandise, and the inability to project its state power across its frontiers in order to safeguard it from colonial piracy.

Thus it could by itself not undertake to replace the British traders overnight. **There was a vacuum which the mercantile class of Karnataka was on its own incapable of filling. Thus it utilised the state, which was the only agency capable of fulfilling although on a limited scale, all those requirements.** And, afterall it was a state which the merchant class had grown accustomed to wield since the antifeudal reform campaign during Chikkadevaraja's's reign.

State mercantilism which Tipu resorted to was not intended to monopolise all internal trading activity and thus snuff out the growth of the merchant class. On the contrary, the state had intervened only on behalf of the adolescent merchant class which was unable to combat the onrush of colonial trade; it intervened not to obstruct but only to construct, only to lead and facilitate the full-fledged growth of merchant capital in Karnataka.

ii) Fountainhead of the Merchant Class

There were certain additional attributes to the state apparatus of the Mysore Kingdom which made it specially capable of venturing into the realm of state mercantilism. First related to the composition of the top section of the bureaucracy. The civil and military officials were two important segments of the elite circle, although at certain times expediency compelled a combining of the offices. From the information provided by Hayawadana Rao[249] it is evident that Purniah, Salabat Khan, Sanmuka Venkata Setti, Shroff Srinivasaiah, Mohammed Ghouse, Ananda Setti, Mustafa Ali Khan, Narasa Setti and Nallappa Setti—all important functionaries in Haidar Ali's civil administration were drawn from a background associated with trade or had been merchants. The change in the character of the state also simultaneously expressed a real change in the weight of the merchant class vis-a-vis the segment representing the feudal class and this also in the wielding of the new state apparatus. For lack of adequate information, one may well assume that this tendency gained further momentum during the reign of Tipu; enhancing thereby mercantile control and regulation of the state.

The step towards state mercantilism which came about most distinctly after 1784 witnessed further changes in the organisation and composition of the top bureaucracy. The formation of an exclusive board of officers or the *Mulikat Tujar*, literally meaning *Prince of Merchants* brought about a further separation and thereby specialisation within the civil bureaucracy since the administrative tasks were now bifurcated from the mercantile. **This change could thus only have accentuated a process which had already set in motion—increase the influence of the merchant class over the state, and as a corollary, the state increasingly viewed its performance and functioning in the light**

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of more clearly defined mercantile class interests. This coalescence of purpose and motive between merchant interests and the upper echelon of the bureaucracy clearly chiselled it out as the fountainhead of merchant capital.

It would be amiss to ignore Tipu's commercial enterprise which served as an active agent in providing direction to this historical process.

Although not formally exposed to a background of mercantilism, Tipu could concentrate in his personage not just astute knowledge of political economy but also had all the makings of a market manipulator, so very much a part of the consciousness of a monopoly trader. A glance at his letters shows that apart from administrative matters, the next greatest number of his letters concerned themselves with economic affairs.

The following letter he wrote to Mir Khasim, the Mysore Daroga or Commercial Consul at Muscat on 25 November. 1785: *"You have still on hand, of former importation, both sandalwood and black pepper. You will now receive more of each. This stock you must not immediately expose for sale but give out that you have received our order to discontinue the sale thereof at Muscat and despatch it to Jeddah and that you are in consequence about to do so. Having circulated this report, you must keep the goods by you, till the price of them advances 25 or 30 Pagodas per candy when you will sell them without further delay."* [250]

Another letter he wrote to Mohammed Ushuruf, Daroga of the 'Dewany Kuchurry' of Gooty, dated 3 March 1785 reads: *"Your letter has been received and its contents have been duly understood. You write, 'that the **Bazaar** price of **Kurg Pagodas** was 13 **Fanams** and three quarters, but that you had advanced the same one **Fanam** and four **annas**, and issued them, at this rate, to the Radehs of the Ehsham' it is known. You will fix the value of the **Pagoda** at one **Fanam** above the market price, or exchange and, issue it at that rate, to the servants of the State. There is no necessity for raising the exchange higher than this standard; and accordingly, this has been heretofore repeatedly signified to you."* [251]

Several letters written by Tipu to his merchant officers concerning economic matters recommended opportune moments for selling high and purchasing low, issue guidance on fixing and altering standards, and various such other modes of intervening in the market which any shrewd and aspiring merchant would have quite naturally resorted to.

In 1793-94 Tipu issued his *Commercial Regulations*. Another manual from his pen which was to prepare his merchant bureaucrats to accomplish the anticolonial task of state mercantilism competently. His commercial Regulations articulate very clearly his perceptions of state mercantilism. In this he announces among other things, the formation of the Mulikat Tujar, the construction of 31 three masted and two masted vessels for the purpose of overseas commerce and the grant of a sum of 3,20,000 state Pagodas or 1,28,000 Sterling for setting as working capital necessary for the transactions of purchase, transit and sale. Further he established 28 commercial depots in his Kingdom, to undertake the purchase and sale of the necessary commodities and 18 commercial establishments in foreign countries, ie, all those places outside the Mysore Kingdom. Of these the commercial establishment at Muscat, Karachi and Baluchistan were the ones he set up outside India.

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These were efforts which no merchant or association of merchants could at that time have achieved. Tipu resorted to state mercantilism as the only ready answer for the challenge thrown by predatory British colonialism.

The upper rungs of the bureaucracy did indeed articulate the class interests of the merchant, thus becoming its fountainhead. However, at the same time, Tipu, who stood in the forefront of this enterprise saw above the shoulders of the yet juvenile merchant class. He articulated its class interests most clearly and could project it beyond the frontiers of his kingdom, across the seven seas and well into the future, making him without a speck of doubt, acme of the fountainhead.

D. Kingdom of the Trader

The rule of Haidar and Tipu witnessed the most rapid expansion of the market. In the earlier chapter we have seen how the smashing of palegara rule was the most important factor in allowing the further growth of the market. The expansion of commodity production was signified by various factors The weekly santhes became extremely popular and the country side was almost saturated with them. Buchanan remarks that there was a santhe in the Mysore Kingdom for every three miles. Thus commodity production which had commenced in the cities spread out and took roots in the place where feudalism was anchored—the village. We have already seen the degree of commercialisation of agriculture, and the outlet for this commercial agro produce, in the past, was the santhe. In addition there were small urban centres such as Gubbi and Harihara whose santhes came to play a major role in not only the trade of its immediate neighbourhood, but that of the entire Kingdom. Gubbi which them contained only 360 houses was said to have *"One of the greatest weekly fairs of the country."* [252]

It was thus not surprising that there should have been 156 shops, which was more than half the number of houses, for what was but a minuscule town.

There was a rapid rise in the non-agricultural population reflected by the quick growth of towns and cities; inhabited by the artisan and service castes, civil and military bureaucracy. The population of these non-agrarian professions numbered a few lakhs and thus emerged as the principal market not only for the peasant's produce but for the manufactures of the artisans of the various urban centres too.

i) Spurt in Volume

The volume and items of merchandise were obviously multiplied, of which there are a few estimates. The list of items that were bought and sold by the merchant was exhaustive and even a rough estimate form Buchanan's *Journey* leads us to identify more than a hundred items of substantive trade.

On his visit to Bangalore, the economic hub of the Mysore Kingdom, one year after its fall to the British, Buchanan had this to say: *"The trade of the country not having been yet opened a year since the inhabitants had deserted the place, no proper estimate can be formed of the quantity of exports, and imports but it is on the increase every month, and is now about one fourth of the quantity that was exported and imported in the most flourishing time of Hyder's Government. The son of the person who had then charge*

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of the custom house states the following particulars of the trade at that period. In one year there were imported 1500 bullock loads of cotton wool; 50 bullock loads of cotton thread; 230 bullock loads of raw silk ; 7000 bullock loads of salt; foreign goods from Madras 300 bullock loads. At the same time were exported of betelnut 4,000 bullock loads and of pepper 400 bullock loads." [253] Going by Buchanan's own estimate a multiplication of these figures by 4 would give us an estimate of the volume of Bangalore's trade during its peak under Haidar's rule. But Buchanan does not provide us with estimates of the trade during Tipu's period, when it should have indeed been far more voluminous.

In another instance he writes: *"I am told that in the* **Coduga,** *[cultivation of paddy]; accordingly great quantities of rice are raised there, and much of it is exported, partly towards* **Chatrakal,** *[Chitradurga] and partly towards Seringapatam. Every day, on an average, 70 oxen loaded with this grain pass* **Cotaglae.**" This makes an annual passage of 25,200 grain laden bullocks![254]

However, a more reliable estimate of the passage of rice to Srirangapatna from Kodagu is provided to us from the custom-house at Periyapatna. *"The quantity of rice that passes the custom house at* **Periya-pattana** *annually from* **Coorg,** *is between 5 and 6,000 ox-loads, each containing from 7 to 8 maunds or about 182 lbs."* [255]

Lally provides another interesting account of Mysore trade in the late 1770s. *"It is estimated, that 30,000 oxen loaded with tobacco, annually pass through Coimbatore; this assertion is rendered very probable by the numerous magazines of that commodity at Pondiagheri."* [256]

To carry out such extensive trade, **merchants who maintained bullocks exclusively for hire also came in vogue.** The major towns which had emerged as centres of trade had developed, on a professional basis, **for the first time in Karnataka's history, a system of commercial transportation of merchandise.**

About this system in Bangalore, Buchanan writes: *"Goods of all kinds are transported by cattle in back loads. The best cattle are used in the cotton trade, and belong to the* **Pancham Banijigaru***...the bullocks employed in this trade are very fine animals; and each bring from 12 to 15 maunds of cotton, or from 327 1/2 lb to 409 3/4. They travel daily at the rate of three computed* **cosses,** *which may be about 12 British miles; and in three hours they perform this journey....*

Many **Banijigaru** *follow the profession of carriers, and keep oxen for the purpose. The rate of hire is always fixed on the average load of 8 Maunds, and never according to time, but always by distance.... The carriers are not answerable for any accident that my happen to the goods; the merchant therefore must send with them some trusty person, who is generally a younger branch of the family."* [257]

ii) Arteries of Trade

The transportation of merchandise on a regular and such a voluminous scale obviously needed the construction and maintenance of a well developed network of roads. Let us see how this task, which fell on the state, was fulfilled.

CK Kareem, in his book *Kerala Under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* provides us with a detailed account of this engineering feat. He writes: *"Perhaps by far the most*

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*notable legacy of Mysore rule in Kerala that has stood the ravages of time, is the network of roads furnished by them in Malabar. The inland communications were carried out through waterways till the advent of the Mysoreans. Since the country was comparted into petty feudal fiefs which were in perpetual feud and the mode of warfare in vogue in this part of the country was such that `a force on the march went in single file and unencumbered by artillery' (Logan, **Malabar Manual Vol.I,** p.62), the necessity of roads was never felt by the rulers. Further, the innumerable rivers running from West to East that divided the country into small pieces made road making impossible. It was only because of the absence of roads that the foreigners who were constantly in the coast for more that 200 years (before the advent of the Mysoreans) could not influence or enter into the interior part of the country. In the minutes written by Col Dow **On The State of Roads in Malabar** after its cession to the English, he comments, `the necessity of spacious and broad roads was not probably felt until the Mohammedan conquest'. (Foreign (Miscellaneous) p. 1021). Corroborating Col Dow, W Logan sums up: `It was only after the Mysore invasion, that the necessity of roads capable of carrying heavy guns began to be felt'. (Logan, **Malabar Manual, Vol I,** p. 62)*

*The author of **Cochin State Manual** enumerating the achievements of the first half of the nineteenth century, says ' all the great roads in the state...were constructed during this short period....' (C. Achuta Menon, **Cochin State Manual, p. 165**). This shows that till the nineteenth century, there were no roads in any part of Cochin. This can safely be accepted as a general rule regarding the whole of Kerala.*

*Another aspect closely connected with the means of transport that should be taken into account, is that before the Mysore invasion, wheeled traffic was unknown to Kerala. Ibn Battuta writing in the fourteenth century, made his observation thus: 'No one travels in these parts upon beasts of burden...when however any merchant has to buy or sell goods, they are carried up on the backs of men who are either slaves or coolies hired for this purpose. Big merchants may have hundred or more of these men to transmit their goods from one place to another' (Ibn Battuta, **Travel**, (Malayalam Translation, p. 27) Buchanan who inspected this country between 1800-1801 testifies: ' In Malabar even cattle are little used for transportation of goods which are generally carried by porters'. (Vol II, p. 434). He goes on to say that in this country, ' There are no carriages '. (Ibid) Innes who wrote his Malabar Gazetteer in 1908 made the following observation: 'Before his (Tipu's time) wheeled traffic was unknown and even pack bullocks were not used until comparatively recent times'. (CA Innes, **Malabar Gazetteer,** p. 238). Therefore the state of affairs that prevailed in the latter half of the eighteenth century can well be imagined. In this connection, an instance mentioned by the author of **Cochin State Manual** is worth reproducing to throw some light on the situation. He writes: 'Wheeled traffic was established between Coimbatore and Trichur for the first time in 1844. When one fine morning 12 bullock carts laden with goods from Coimbatore arrived at Trichur, where most people had not seen such conveyance before, there was by all accounts more excitement in the place than when the first train passed through it 58 years later" (Achuta Menon, **Cochin State Manual,** p. 165) It was against this background that the Mysorean rulers undertook the tremendous task of knitting their vast*

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kingdom by a network of roads, some of which are still in use even after the lapse of two centuries.

*When Haidar Ali descended from Mysore for the invasion of Malabar, he found no road for the passage of his cavalry. It was with much difficulty through 'the roads or passages scarcely admitting more that three men abreast, (**History of Haider Shah** etc p. 76) that he came with his army when he knew of the revolt in the province after a few weeks of its invasion. We have seen that the small Mysore garrison in the block house failed even to communicate the attack of rebels on these military posts to the contingents cantoned in Ponnani and Calicut, because of the want of an inland system of communication. Therefore, Haidar Ali. after the suppression of the revolt, resorted to the easier means of water transport and required his commandant the Aly Raja of Cannanore to construct an artificial canal connecting the Mount Deli river and the backwater of Tali Paramba and Vallarpatnam rivers which was done in 1766. This canal made the delivery of goods quicker and means of transport easier. It is called even now as 'The Sultan's Canal' and is one of the important canals of today that serves as a speedy and shorter route in the whole of transport machinery in Kerala. Another major work carried out in this direction under Haider Ali was the setting of a number of outposts at reasonable distances to facilitate the inland communications. The mighty Palghat Fort that stands intact to the present day conveyed communications between Malabar and Seringapatam. As Haider Ali did not get much time to spend in Malabar, and as he was engaged in bloody wars with the English and Marathas, he could not claim the credit of being the pioneer of road makers in Kerala.*

*This great task was enthusiastically carried out by his famous son Tipu Sultan. 'Tipu projected and in a greater part finished an extensive chain of roads 'observes Col. Dow in his **Minutes on the Affairs of Roads in Malabar** 'that connected all principal places in Malabar, and pervaded (even) the wildest part of the country' (Foreign, Miscellaneous, Voucher No xix). In this context the observation found in the **Salem District Gazetteer** is also noteworthy. It declared 'the Britishers are not the first road makers of India. Tipu's road engineering was of no mean order' (**Salem District Gazetteer,** Vol 1, Part II, p .xix). In the South, Tipu Sultan is, therefore, considered to have been the greatest of road-builders in the eighteenth century. (B K Sarkar, **Inland Transport and Communications in Medieval India,** p.32). Considering the extensive and pervading network of roads and also considering the total lack of any such contribution by the English in this part of the country, we may legitimately claim that Tipu is by far the only ruler to take up the task of improving communication in Kerala. Needless to elaborate the point as it is evident that Tipu was 'the pioneer of its (Malabar's) roads'. (Innes, op. cit .p. 268)*

The whole of Malabar was connected with a chain of roads. As it is said that all roads of the Roman Empire led to Rome, 'the grand termination of inter-communications was Seringapatam and as the route necessarily led over the Ghats neither labour nor expense was spared in rendering it practicable for artillery.' (Foreign (Miscellaneous) voucher no. xix) 239

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*It cannot escape our notice that the English, even after ruling the country for 150 years, could not do what Tipu did during these 6 years in Kerala. He employed thousands of labourers for the construction of this work. In 1800, Buchanan saw in Tirthala and other places inns established by Tipu Sultan for the use of the travellers as well as the labourers employed by him. (op. cited, p. 427) He testifies that Tipu had to bring down Brahmins from Mysore to run the inns as the local Hindus considered the work as a menial and shameful job. In 1807, Thackeray, felt justified in reporting to the Board that 'Malabar was intercepted by better roads perhaps than any other province in India'. (Thackeray, **A Report on the Revenue Administration of Malabar and Canara,** 1807, p. 4). 'His (Tipu's routes are in general well chosen' wrote Col. Dow, 'and led through almost every part of the province'. (Foreign, (Miscellaneous) voucher no: xix). Tipu's gun roads are said to have been a prominent feature in his reign. The road making in Malabar was only a part of his work of the same nature which was undertaken in all parts of his Empire."* [258]

Of all parts, the Karnataka coast consisting of the Dakshina and Uttara Kannada districts and the entire Malnad were in a situation quite identical to what CK Kareem has described about Kerala although it has not been possible to come across similar literature describing the transportation network of these regions of Karnataka before they became a part of the Mysore Kingdom. Thus it may be very fairly said that the credit for building the major roads in these two regions of Karnataka undoubtedly fell on Haidar and Tipu. NK Sinha however mentions that: *"In Bidnur and Sunda Haider paved some of the passes with laterite and granite and cleared footpaths through forests. These Haideri paths can be seen near the Bingi and Kadra Hills and at Kadvad, Sadasivgad and Mirjan."* [259]

In fact even today in the region between Aversa and Baithcol of Uttara Kannada, the peasants identify a major unused road as the Haidari road. In all probability, the road linking Mangalore and Sadasivgad running from south to north and connecting all the ports on the Karavali sea board parallel to the present day NH 17, was built by these two rulers.

Of the Karavali Shyam Bhat tells us of the existence of only few roads, most of which we presume, were built during this period: *"In the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was one main road which connected one end of the province with the other. It started from Cavai river in the south and ran northwards on the coast of the Arabian Sea up to Sadashivgad, the northern most taluk of the province of Kanara and Sunda. The length of this road was 205.5 miles. But this road was interrupted by a large number of rivers, which never had bridges and had to be crossed only with the help of ferry boats. There was another road called the Calicut-Pune-Mangalore road which connected these two places, traversing through Bekal (Kasargod) taluk; Hosadurg and Vital. A third road started from Mangalore, Udipi, Kerala and the Agumbe Ghats. Another road called the Kodkal Ghat road passed through Charmadi, Beltangady, and Buntwal to Mangalore."* [260]

Apart from the system of roads which they built in the Karavali and Malnad regions, one Major task they undertook was the construction of highways linking these two

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regions with the plains region. Among the new roads they constructed was the Srirangapatna-Madikeri-Kannur road; Srirangapatna-Mysore-Manuinthawadi-Sultan Battery-Kozhikode road; Srirangapatna Mysore-Tambarachei-Kozhikode road; Srirangapatna-Chamarajanagar-Sathyamangalam-Coimbatore road; Srirangapatna-Kollegal-Salem road; Sakrayapatna-Mangalore road via the Charmadi Ghat; Bangalore-Manjarabad (Sakaleshpur)-Mangalore road; Dodmane Ghat road linking Biligi and Kumta; the Hulikal ghat road linking Nagar with Bhatkal; and several others. These roads which brought the coast close to the plains were what made Tipu's overseas mercantile pursuits conceivable.

Buchanan goes on to mention some very innovative attempts of Haidar in linking the Malnad with the Maidan. He attempted to develop an inland waterway linking Shimoga with Harihar along the Tunga river. *"From **Mangalore** Hyder brought to **Shiva-mogay** many carpenters, and built a number of lighters of about 8 tons berthen. They are strong and flat-bottomed.... The only object that could strike him [Haidar] was the immense advantage of carrying down the river the timber, and bulky produce of this country; from whence even the **Betelnut** and the pepper require many cattle to go loaded.... I have no doubt of its being practicable to carry down floats; and on these perhaps many bulky articles of commerce might be transported."* [261]

However, the most complex web woven was in the plains around the Srirangapatna-Bangalore axis—the political and the commercial capital of the Kingdom, where the terrain was more conducive for road building. From the map that Home provides of the Mysore Kingdom drawn in 1791, which evidently lacks in detail, one still gets a view of the growing complexion of the emerging communication network. His map shows us six major highways converging on Srirangapatna, coming from Kozhikode, Kannur, Bidnur, Tumkur, Bangalore and Hosur. His map described seven major roads closing in on Bangalore connecting it with Srirangapatna, Chitradurga, Pennukonda, Tadimeri, Kolar, Malur and Hosur.[262]

These roads have stood the test of time and to this day remain the chief routes linking these centres with the rest of the peninsula.

These were then some of the major arteries of commerce that conveyed the bullocks of the merchants so that trade grew by knitting together one market from the four directions.

From the various accounts available, it appears that the transportation of merhandise was carried out on pack bullocks and there are not many references to the use of the bullock cart. However it must not be forgotten that wheeled gun carriages drawn by pair-oxen was what freighted these heavy weapons. The inadequacy of bridges must have been a major factor hampering the development of this mode of transport on a substantial scale.

However the Lambanis and Voddas, merchants of the army bazaar had already set the precedent in this direction, harnessing hardy bullock carts for conveying freight.

iii) Minting on a Mass Scale

Another important index for the growth of trade during this period was the proliferation of coins. This took place in two directions. Firstly there were the coins of the

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various different parts of India and those from the overseas market which flooded centres like Bangalore of which Buchanan says, *"almost very coin in India is current."* [263]

This demonstrates the growing importance of Bangalore and the Mysore Kingdom in the context of the overall growth of commodity relations across the Indian subcontinent. During this period the innumerable markets could not make do without the shroff—the money changer, in the absence of whom all trade would have collapsed. Owing to the increasing prosperity of the shroffs and the manipulation of prices that they often resorted to, Tipu scrapped their business and undertook to stabilise the market by invoking the state to assume this role. Indicating the extent of the monetisation of the economy during the period and, most important in that, the mass use of coinage is the following observation by JR Henderson in his book *The Coins of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan* made about a century and quarter after the collapse of the mercantile state of Mysore: *"Many of them [coins] are still met with in considerable numbers, not only in the bazars of nearly every Mysore village, but also over a considerable part of Southern India ...."* [264]

AV Narasimha Murthy in his book *The Coins of Karnataka* says: *"The rule of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan forms a brilliant chapter in the history of Karnataka. This is more so in the case of numismatic history of Karnataka for particularly the rule of Tipu saw new innovations in the history of coinage. The variety of the coins of Tipu bewilders even a modern numismatist. Perhaps no individual king in India bestowed as much careful thought on minting coins as Tipu did."* [265]

In all Tipu issued 16 denominations of coins. Four in gold ranging from the 4 Pagoda to the Gold Fanam; seven in silver ranging from the Double Rupee to the One thirty Secondth Rupee, and; five denominations of copper coins extending from the Double Paisa to the one Eighth Paisa.[266]

These coins were struck simultaneously in 12 mints in different parts of his kingdom. They were located in Srirangapatna, Nagar, Mysore, Bangalore, Chitradurga, Dharwad, Gooty, Dindugal, Gurramkonda, Satyamangalam, Kozhikode and Holehonnur.

Of these 12 mints the major ones were at Srirangapatna, Nagar, Dharwad, Dindigal and Kozhikode. These five mints produced coins in gold, silver and copper. The other seven were confined to minting copper coins alone. This distribution is indicative not only of the regional weights of the market but also instructs us of the difference in the volume of trade that was carried on from one centre to another. Above all, it is clear that from these centres coins rolled out on a mass scale and several hundred tonnes of minted metal poured like an avalanche into the market.

iv) Growing up in the Umbrage of State Trade

The protectionist measure of state takeover of certain sectors of the economy, was, as we have seen, a response to the challenge thrown by British Colonialism. Now we may see how these measures sheltered local private trade and allowed its gradual maturation.

While Tipu declared an embargo on British trade, he on the other hand, simultaneously invited the private merchants of other European countries, those from the Persian Gulf, China and traders from the various parts and kingdoms of India including those from the Mysore Kingdom to trade with the state. His commercial regulations went so far

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as to instruct his officials on the need to serve the traders with biriyani and pan and even offered naval escort to ships from the Chinese quarter who feared piracy in the midseas on account of which they hesitated to venture as far as the Karnataka coast. Tipu imposed a duty of up to 8% on the various merchants of the different nations, the merchants of Mysore were charged only 4%—this being the least of the levies that he laid.[267]

In the letter of a contemporary Portuguese, Jose Pedro de Carrera which describes Haidar's attempts at building a naval infrastructure at Bhatkal, which we have earlier quoted from, also talks about the incentives he offered to draw the merchants to his shores. *"It [the fortification at the port] will leave an enclosure big enough for a large borough for the residence of numerous merchants of all nationalities who are expected to be attached by the gift of convenient plots of neighbouring lands and loan of capital which will ensure their establishment in that place where large warehouses for storing goods, articles and ammunition for an arsenal have been so well planned."* [268]

The measure to ban all dealings by the shroffs and the assumption of charge by the state itself of changing coins at a far lesser commission relieved the merchants of an unnecessary burden and encouraged them to visit the markets of Mysore on the one hand, and on the other, motivated the Mysore merchants to deal with the merchants of the other kingdoms without this encumbrance.

CK Kareem, citing William Kirkpatrick, talks of a novel measure that Tipu launched. *"Another commendable reform introduced by Tipu in his kingdom was the State Trading Corporation. This was set up with a view of making the people participate in the commercial and trade activities. Shares were sold to his subjects, the value of which ranged from Rs 5 to 5,000. Share-holders of Rs 5 to Rs 500 were given at the end of the year a profit of 50%, depositors of Rs 500 to Rs 5,000 received a profit of 25%, and those of Rs 5,000 and above got only 12%. If a share-holder wanted to sell his shares, he could do so without any difficulty. He would receive the share value and profit due to him."* [269]

This spirit of capitalist innovation compells admiration, and the measure had a profound impact. **The endeavour mopped up dispersed private capital, for the consolidation of state enterprise. It was an attempt to mobilise the bureaucrat and the businessman—the small and medium merchants at that—to obtain a stake in all the anticolonial state mercantilist ventures but also allow the positive organic integration of merchant capital with that of the state. The political fallout of such a measure, in terms of releasing a torrent of patriotic aspiration cannot be lost sight of.**

Another measure was the insurance that the state provided. If foreign trade was undertaken on Mysore freights the state offered an insurance on the merchandise till it reached the port of delivery. However Buchanan also speaks of a similar insurance for the internal trade of Mysore. *"Far from considering the customs exacted at different places on the road a burthen, the traders here consider them as advantageous; for the customs house is bound to pay for all goods that may be stolen, or seized by robbers, within their respective districts."* [270]

As Buchanan himself admits, this indeed was an *"excellent regulation"* and highly reassuring. It erased what nominal disinclination the merchant might have demonstrated to double his trade. Thus, under the umbrage of protectionism and state mercantilism

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these various measures provided pleasant and conducive conditions for the maturation of merchant capital and the consolidation of the Mysore merchant as a class.

v) The Banajiga: Karnataka's National Merchant[271]

Although the merchant class was yet to consolidate itself as a class, its first representatives had already emerged and was in the process of furthering its economic advancement. It emerged from the warp and woof of the textile trade.

The textile trade of Bangalore involved four exclusive trading castes: The Banajigaru (who were Virashaivas and Kannadigas. They were also called as Linga Banajiga Shetti). The Balijas of Telugu descent (whom Buchanan calls Telinga Banajigaru), Komatis (of Telugu origin), and the Nagaraths (of Tamil origin). The Nagarath's dealt in the retail sale of manufactured cloth. For the Komatis, textiles were only an additional item of commerce. The Balija's procured cotton yarn and cotton wool from the Banajiga and advanced them to the weavers for manufacture. The Banajigas however had the lion's share of this trade, into which we may take a closer look.

Among the Banajigas there were apparently four exclusive and specialised fields of activity. The first were the ones who procured the raw material for the manufacture of textiles and also must have been the ones to sell them; both of which they did on a wholesale basis. The second were the ones who purchased these raw materials from the first, and in turn, advanced them to the weavers, and perhaps resold to the first type of Banajigas. The third group consisted, as we have already seen of, *"the profession of carriers"* and were the transporters, lending out bullocks for conveying textile freight. And the fourth, called the Gandhaki, dealt in the trade of natural dye stuffs for the textile industry. The source of cotton wool and yarn was from the Banajiga merchants headquartered in Bellary, Adoni, 'Aggady', Dharwad, Hubli, Nargund, Navalgund, Gutti, Savanur and Gajendragad—all of which belonged to the chief cotton producing area of Karnataka. The bullocks used for transport were so sturdy when compared to what the poorer merchants of Mysore used in that they carried more than 400 lbs or twice the burden of the ordinary oxen.

The finished goods were then carted to altogether different markets, the chief among which, apart from Bangalore, were Srirangapatna, Gubbi, Nagara, Chitradurga, Chennapatna, Mangalore, Bhatkal, Honnavar, Karwar and Kozhikode.

Thus the Banajiga's developed a fabric which stretched from one corner of Karnataka to another, and from one end of the Mysore Kingdom to the other, weaving in the process, the textile trade of the State.

Buchanan mentions that the trade surplus in the textile trade accrued at Bangalore and when the Banajigas who returned after their tour of the southern plains, the Malnad and the coast; they brought home bullion and not merchandise.

This accumulation of merchant capital which took place with each circuit in the trade—starting from the procurement of the raw materials to their processing and sale only enhanced their grip over the different spheres of the textile economy. Even a section of the peasantry and the artisan came to depend increasingly on them, which gradually changed to control and regulation of their material life.

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Describing the agrarian economy of Harihara which was one such important cotton growing region of the Kingdom, and also home of the Banajiga merchant, Buchanan writes: *"From this part of the country, cotton and thread are the principal exports. Two months before crop season, the merchants advance money to the poor cultivators, and charge for interest half a* ***Fanam*** *on each* ***Pagoda,*** *or about 23 1/2% per annum."* [272]

The Banajiga merchant utilised the cash returns that he had obtained form trade for lending to the peasantry on an extensive scale in the entire tract of the northern plains of Karnataka, a region endowed with black cotton soil. Thus the peasantry of the region came under the increasing influence of the market and Banajiga merchant capital.

Later Buchanan writes: *"In this neighbourhood [of Harihara] much cotton thread is spun. The women of the cultivators spin part of the produce of their husbands' farms; and others receive the cotton wool from the merchants and spin it for hire.... The merchant always purchases the cotton with the seed and employs people to clean it."* [273]

The raw cotton and thread (in addition to raw silk) was transported to Bangalore. Here it was contracted out to the Pattegara, the Telugu and Kannada Devangas, the Katri, the 'Shaynegaru', Padmasali and Samesali—all weaver castes; by advancing the money for its manufacture. The conditions of contract stipulated that the weavers should not undertake any other job till the contract was fulfilled and in case of delay, an interest had to be paid on the capital advanced.

Thus the conditions of procurement and production of raw cotton, cotton yarn and cotton or silk fabric owed itself to regulation by the Banajiga merchant or the financial control he exercised, making it none other than the putting out system, a characteristic precapitalist feature.

It would be interesting in the background of the above description of the trading activity of the Banajigas to pay attention to Lenin's analysis of the evolution of merchant capital. He says: *"The principal economic operation of the buyer-up is to buy goods (finished products or raw materials) in order to resell them. In other words, the buyer-up is a representative of merchant capital. The starting point of all capital—both industrial and merchant's--is the accumulation of free money in the hands of individuals.*

By free money we mean that money which is not needed for personal consumption etc. How this property differentiation takes place in our rural districts has been shown in detail above by the data on the differentiation of the agricultural and industrial peasantry. These data reveal one of the conditions giving rise to the appearance of the buyer-up, namely: the producer's nature, the isolation of small production, the existence of economic conflict and strife among them. Another condition relates to the character of the functions performed by merchants' capital, that is, the marketing of wares and the purchase of raw materials. Where the development of commodity production is slight, the small producer limits himself to disposing off his wares in the small local market, sometimes even to disposing off them directly to the consumer. This is the lowest stage of the development of commodity production, hardly to be distinguished form artisan production. As the market expands, this petty, scattered marketing (which fully conforms to petty, scattered production) becomes impossible. In the big market, selling must be on a big, on a mass scale. And so the petty character of production proves to be in irreconcil-

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able contradiction with the need for big wholesale marketing. Under the existing social and economic conditions, with the isolation of the small producers and their differentiation, this contradiction could only be resolved by the well to do minority taking charge of marketing, concentrating it in their hands. By buying up goods (or raw materials) on a large scale, the buyers-up thus cheapened marketing costs and transformed marketing from a petty, casual and irregular operation into a large and regular one; and this purely economic advantage of large scale marketing inevitably led to the small producer finding himself cut off from the market and defenseless in face of the power of merchant's capital. Thus under commodity economy, the small producer inevitably falls into dependence upon merchant capital by virtue of the purely economic superiority of large mass scale marketing over scattered, petty marketing." [274]

This domineering position which the Banajiga achieved as a result of his control over the market associated with wholesale textile trade, fetched him a new status in the urban life of the period. In Bangalore the Pattana Shetti or 'Pedda Chitti' was a Banajiga. *"He was exempted from house rent and one half of the customs on his goods."* [275]

As Mayor of the city, the state had to implement the decisions of his council. Huberman summed up a similar situation in Europe in lines apt in the context. *"On the land the aristocracy of birth formed the ruling class; in the towns the aristocracy of money reigned supreme."* [276]

Thus the Banajiga, the aristocracy that emerged on account of its money, became a part of the ruling class; but not just of Bangalore city alone.

Writing the *Manual of the North Arcot District* early in the twentieth century, HS Stewart gives us a more vivid picture of this new mercantile element which had risen to power in the Mysore Kingdom. *"Almost all the Linga Balija's [ie Banajigas of Virashaiva stock, as Edgar Thurston clarifies] of N. Arcot are traders, who speak Canarese and are immigrants from Mysore....*

At one time they enjoyed much importance in this district, particularly in its large trading towns. Headsmen among them, styled Chettis, were by the Arcot Nawabs, assigned districts, in which they possessed both magisterial and civil authority, and levied taxes from other merchants for their own personal use.

They carried on very extensive trade with Mysore and the Ceded districts [The districts ceded to the British by Tipu as a result of his defeat in the Third Anti-Colonial War] and are said to have had enormous warehouses, which they enclosed and fortified. Breaches of the peace are also described as not infrequent, resulting from the interference of one Linga Balija Chetti with matters relating to the district of another. Their authority has long since disappeared, and is only a matter of tradition." [277]

On his journey to Moodabidri Buchanan wrote: *"The principal merchant is **Murtur Sngaia, a Banijigar,** who lives at **Hara-punyahalli** [Harapnalli] but has factories [warehouses] in every part of the peninsula."* [278]

Thus in the period of Haidar-Tipu rule, a new merchant class did begin to emerge. In the history of the emergence of the Banajiga as Karnataka's leading merchant, we observe three distinct stages. The first was the period of the Aihole 500 merchants covering the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This was a typical case of a feudal merchant community, trading in items as gems, ivory, jewels and such other commodities

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which only a feudal clientele desired, and used gold, instead of coins, in its transactions. **The Aihole 500 were merchants representing the period of early feudalism.**

The rise of Vijayanagara witnessed the fall of the Aihole 500 and finds its replacement by the Salu Mule Banajiga who led the merchant class in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They were principally grain merchants and came to dominate the cities with their representatives becoming the mayors of the time.[279] Thus **the Salu Mule Banajigas were representative of the merchant class in the period of middle feudalism.**

The third period of late feudalism, encompassing the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, witnessed another mutation; the replacement of the Salu Mule Banajigas by the Banajiga Shettis, the class under discussion. **The Banajigas were traders who rose with the rise of the textile sector and became the leading merchants of the time, just as the sphere of textiles became the leading sphere of the commodity economy of the time.** Vijaya Ramaswamy's following observation makes it clear that in the time of Vijayanagara the Banajiga was yet to display any significant degree of development. *"Textiles, however, were not a monopolistic item of trade of a specialised merchant organisation; they quite frequently formed a part of the general trade."* [280]

Thus unlike the Aihole 500 or the Salu Mule Banajigas of the early and middle feudal periods, the Banajiga Shettis dealt in a commodity which drew an organic relationship between agriculture and manufacture; town and country. It based its fortunes on the cotton route and intervened at every process in its evolution--from its cultivation to its carding, from the extraction of its yarn to its carting and from the production of the fabric to its sale. The Banajigas had attached themselves to a sphere which was the most important of all the rising sectors of the economy of India and Karnataka of the period. Thus their rise obtained a progressive direction since it was linked with the rise of the textile economy as such. It had from its ranks not only thrown up an umpteen umber of mayors but had also sent its representatives such as Nallappa Shetti and others to the highest echelons of the Mysore bureaucracy and even began to produce a new genre of literature which had severed itself from feudal trappings such as the *Haidar Nama.*

The Banajigas, traders in textile, surely were among the first robust representatives of a new mercantile class. They rose with a sector which was the lifeline of commodity production of Karnataka and it was this very artery that the British colonialists on their part first chose to damage and despoil. The contradiction which they had with British colonialism was immediate and direct. Haidar and Tipu, the true representatives of this class which was yet struggling to stamp its impress on Karnataka's national market, could grasp very precisely its dynamics and destiny. They clashed with British colonialism as other rulers of India seldom did since it was after all the lifeline of not just the Banajigas that was at stake but the very life of the entire masses whom they took on to represent. Did the fall of Tipu also not lead to the instantaneous collapse of traders such as Murtur Sangaia and as Stuart said with a tinge of scorn, long since caused the 'disappearance' of a class so impressive in its rising stature? How closer, in history, could a political superstructure have been enmeshed with its economic base?

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8. ONRUSH OF MANUFACTURE AND THE ORIGINS OF INDUSTRY

A. Cradles of Manufacture

During the reign of Haidar and Tipu we have seen that urbanisation was hastened. Let us look at that process in greater detail and study it in the light of the growth of manufacture.

i) The New Demand

The standing army of nearly 1.5 lakhs, the militia of around 1.5 lakhs, a civil bureaucracy which relied on monthly salaries numbering around one lakh and a population consisting of artisans and traders resident in the towns and cities numbering from two to three lakhs, the growing rural market for artisanal manufacture and the gradually widening all-India and international demand, was, taken as a whole, the market for Mysore's manufacture. In all, within the Mysore Kingdom itself, of a total estimated population of 35 lakhs (that falling within the boundaries of modern Karnataka), nearly seven lakh people or 17.5% of the population depended on manufactured commodities for realising one or the other of their material needs.

The urbanisation that took place not only housed this population but also served it by supplying them with their material necessities. The urban centres which sprung up in every nook and corner of Karnataka were thus new structures in its demographic ordering that served as units producing commodities for this growing market.

ii) Spread of Towns and Growth of Cities

We have seen in the part on agriculture about the proliferation of santhes across the countryside. However, it would be correct to classify them as 'rural' due to the transient nature of their existence. At the same time, however, we must not loose sight of the fact that these santhes constituted the embryos of the future towns and thus marked the first step in the transition of the demography and therein the division of labour and differentiation of the peasantry; from a rural to an urban setting. That apart, the urban economy which sprung up was of two distinct types—the towns and the cities.

A glance at the sketchy information is quite adequate to describe the spread of towns in the Mysore Kingdom. Home's map of Mysore in 1791 lists nearly 90 towns in the Kingdom excluding those in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.[281]

Colin Mackenzie's *Extracts* lists about 180 towns in the Mysore Kingdom. Excluding those from the Tamil Nadu and Andhra regions, the number would be about 150. Of these nearly 100 were located in the central and southern plains region of Karnataka, and the rest were divided among the Malnad and the coast.[282] Wilks says there were 108 towns in Old Mysore.[283]

The towns were characterised by the distinctness of their economic activity when compared to the village. When nearly half or more of the population partakes in non-agrarian economic activity, chief among which are those associated with artisanal commodity production or trade, such a demographic cluster may be classified as a town. The

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following example of Belgaum of which we have a detailed break up of the population may serve to illustrate our definition of a town. *"The social composition of the small town of Belgaum...from the close of the eighteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, is of great interest in this context. Its more than 7600 inhabitants lived in 1309 houses, ie, a family averaged six people. The first group was made up of Khooshbash those living on their own means `without the necessity of labour—mainly Brahmans, Inamdars (apparently landholders) etc. There were 1,600 such inhabitants or 21%. The next group were the beoparee-merchants, shopkeepers, money-lenders, etc, of whom there were 1,000 or 13%. Next came Kusubdar, those 'exercising professions' (about 2100), accounting for 27% of the population of whom more than half were weavers. There were 2,000 (26% kool—cultivators) on their lands, and, finally, the mazdoor labourers, of whom there were over 900 or 12%. The last named tilled the estates of the landowners. The urban artisans were generally divided into two large groups the wealthy ones who had their own instruments of labour...and the poor labourers."* [284] Thus 40% of the population was composed of either merchants or artisans.

In the towns of the period there were two distinct types that we come across. First were those which were principally trading centres and secondly were those which were principally related to production. While a fair portion of the towns of the Maidan region were associated with manufacture, almost all the towns of the Malnad and Karavali were dominated by trade.

Of the trading towns we have in the previous part discussed about Gubbi, where more than 50% of the residents were merchants. Similarly we have in the previous chapter also cited Vasantha Madhava who speaks of the trading towns of the coast which served the hinterland of Mangalore. Buchanan says: *"In the fort was placed a **Khiladar,** or commandant with a garrison of 400 men. In the town there were more than 1000 houses, and it enjoyed a considerable trade."* [285]

About Bidnur, Buchanan says: *"At his [Tipu's] death the town contained between fourteen and fifteen hundred houses, besides huts; 150 new houses have been since built and merchants are resorting to it from all quarters. It cannot be expected, however, to arrive at its former greatness, as it is neither the seat of a court, nor of any public works. It possesses no manufactures; so that its chief support will be its trade, as being a convenient thoroughfare."* [286]

About Davangere, Buchanan wrote, that it contained 500 houses. *"**Davangiri** is a place of considerable trade, and is the residence of many merchants, who keep oxen, and send goods to distant places.... The trade of **Davangiri** chiefly consists in exchanging the produce of one neighbouring country, for those of another. The only articles of export produced in the neighbourhood are **cumlies, jagory and callay**"*[287]

Thus towns such as Mangalore, Gubbi, Bidnur and Davangere were trading towns, either on account of their location on the thoroughfares of trade or by virtue of being a passage from land to sea ways or being centres of collection of agricultural produce or collection points for products from the rural artisans.

On the other hand were towns such as Malavalli, Chennapatna, Madhugiri, Benkipura and Kikkeri for instance, which were all production centres and the population's

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of which were basically formed of artisans. It appears that about half the total number of towns were trading centres and the other half, centres of manufacture, needing the further progress of merchant capital and the advance of commodity production.

Whether being centres of manufacture or trade, the proliferation of towns and their spread at a short distance from one another, about 30 Kms on an average, and in certain pockets even 20 kms from one another, made them vital links in the chain of commodity production and ganglion attracting or disseminating commodities of manufacture. Most of these towns which took shape in the late eighteenth century were highly resilient. They sustained the shock of colonialism and reemerged as urban centres by the beginning of the twentieth century, thereby providing for a stability and continuity even though under changed conditions of imperialism.

In addition to the innumerable towns were the cities. Srirangapatna with a population of 1.5 lakhs,[288] Nagar with a population of 1 lakh,[289] Bangalore with a population of 1 lakh,[290] Sir aa with a population of 60,000,[291] and Bellary with a population of about 30,000[292] were the five major cities in the Kannada heartland area of the Mysore Kingdom. To this list Chitradurga may be added, however information about the place is deficient. Dharwad was close on the heels of the cities or perhaps had already become one, being Tipu's northern capital.

Elphinstone said, though at a later date: *"There are no large towns in this part of the country [Bombay Karnataka]. Hubli is, I believe, the largest, and I have heard it estimated at 15,000 souls. In towns of Belgaum and Sahpur, which, though nearly contiguous, belong one to government, and one to Chintaman rule, may amount together to 13,000 or 14,000 inhabitants. I have not heard of any other town in this district that contains more than 5,000 inhabitants."* [293]

Srirangapatna, the political capital was also the biggest of the cities. Buchanan says : *"Perhaps we may safely admit the former population of the island to have amounted to 1,50,000 persons; who were entirely supported by the court and army, scarcely any manufactures being established."* [294]

We also learn that during Tipu's reign, *"A new trading centre was established on the island of Srirangapatna and named Shahr Ganjam."* [295]

Montgomery Martin says: *"The Sehr Ganjam, a suburb detached from the fortified town, was demolished by Tipu on the investment of the place [by the British]. but was afterwards built with considerable regularity. Population of the island during his reign, estimated at 1,50,000; in 1800 it was only 31,895 exclusive of the garrison."* [296]

We might roughly say that about a third of the population was composed of the army based on the various military estimates provided. While a significant portion of the population was associated with trade, it would however be wrong to dismiss Srirangaptna as completely devoid of manufacture. While its artisan population was indeed insignificant, it possessed the largest state industry, turning out arms, ammunition, and other paraphernalia for its military machine, thereby acquiring an unique place in the realm of manufacture.

Bangalore had a civilian population of 60,000.[297] With its garrison it totalled 1 lakh. *"A flourishing weaving industry had grown under the patronage of the Mysore*

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Sultans and Bangalore Silks had begun to acquire the fame which they still possess. Merchants and traders flocked to the city." [298]

Bangalore evidently was the pulsating and vibrant commercial capital of the Kingdom. The manufacture and sale of textiles was at its core. The Bangalore fort was also a leading centre of production, next only to Srirangapatna, in terms of state industry for military hardware. The importance of Bangalore however lay in infecting its contagion for manufacture from 10 to 15 kms in its neighbourhood. The following illustration from Buchanan immediately after his departure from Bangalore is revealing: *"I went three* ***cosses*** *to* ***Sirja-pura,*** *one of the manufacturing towns dependent on* ***Bangalore.*** *The weavers of* ***Sirjapura*** *are of the casts called* ***Devangas, Shalay*** *and* ***Togataru.*** *The cloths were...made of a very fine quality.... The merchants here act merely as brokers and the weavers frequently carry their own goods for sale to* ***Bangalore.*** *Purchases are made here of traders from* ***Seringapatam, Sira, Chatrakal, Codeal*** *[Mangalore]* ***Savanuru, Gubi, Bangaluru, Colar, Malavagal*** *[Mulabagal],* ***Caugundy, Hosso-cotay, Balapura*** *[Chikballapur],* ***Tumcuru, Magadi*** *and* ***Krishna-giri.*** *The merchants of this place bring their cotton from* ***Bangaluru, Hosso-Cotay*** *and* ***Colar.***

I went four ***cosses*** *to* ***Walur,*** *and by the way passed through a manufacturing town maned* ***Lacor*** *. It is not quite so large as* ***Walur;*** *but is a well built mud fort, strengthened by a fine hedge. The weavers of Walur are of the casts called* ***Devangas, Padmashalays, Shayanagas, Togotas*** *and* ***Coiculru*** *, who are a* ***Tigul*** *tribe, as the people here say; for in* ***Karnata*** *proper, all the tribes that speak the* ***Tamul*** *language are called* ***Tigulru.*** *The cloths made by the* ***Coiculru*** *have red borders, like those made by* ***Togataru;*** *but they are of thinner fabric.*

For sale the weavers carry part of their goods to the neighbouring towns at their weekly markets and partly sell them to merchants who come from ***Hosso-Cotay, Colar, Masty, Lacor, Sirja Pura, Bangaluru and Krishnagiri.*** *They procure all their cotton from* ***Hosso-cotay."*** [299]

Vallur which contained 500 houses and a population of roughly 3,000 is also described by Buchanan as *"by far the richest and best built that I have yet seen above the* ***Ghats"*** [300]

The case of Sarjapura, Lakkur and Vallur are important because all these were towns and not villages. Their manufacture was related to a considerable degree on Bangalore. Apart from the textile towns that encircled Bangalore there were quite a few oil towns which pressed oil and sold it for the dyeing industry of Bangalore. This apart, on the road to Magadi were the forges which fulfilled Bangalore's requirements of iron. In short, there were quite a few towns that do not receive mention in either Mackenzie's or Home's lists. Yet **these were thriving centres, and were a spill-over of urban Bangalore. They were its satellite towns and formed part of the Bangalore agglomeration hiking thereby, the real population of the city by several thousand, perhaps making Bangalore in the process among the biggest of cities in India then.**

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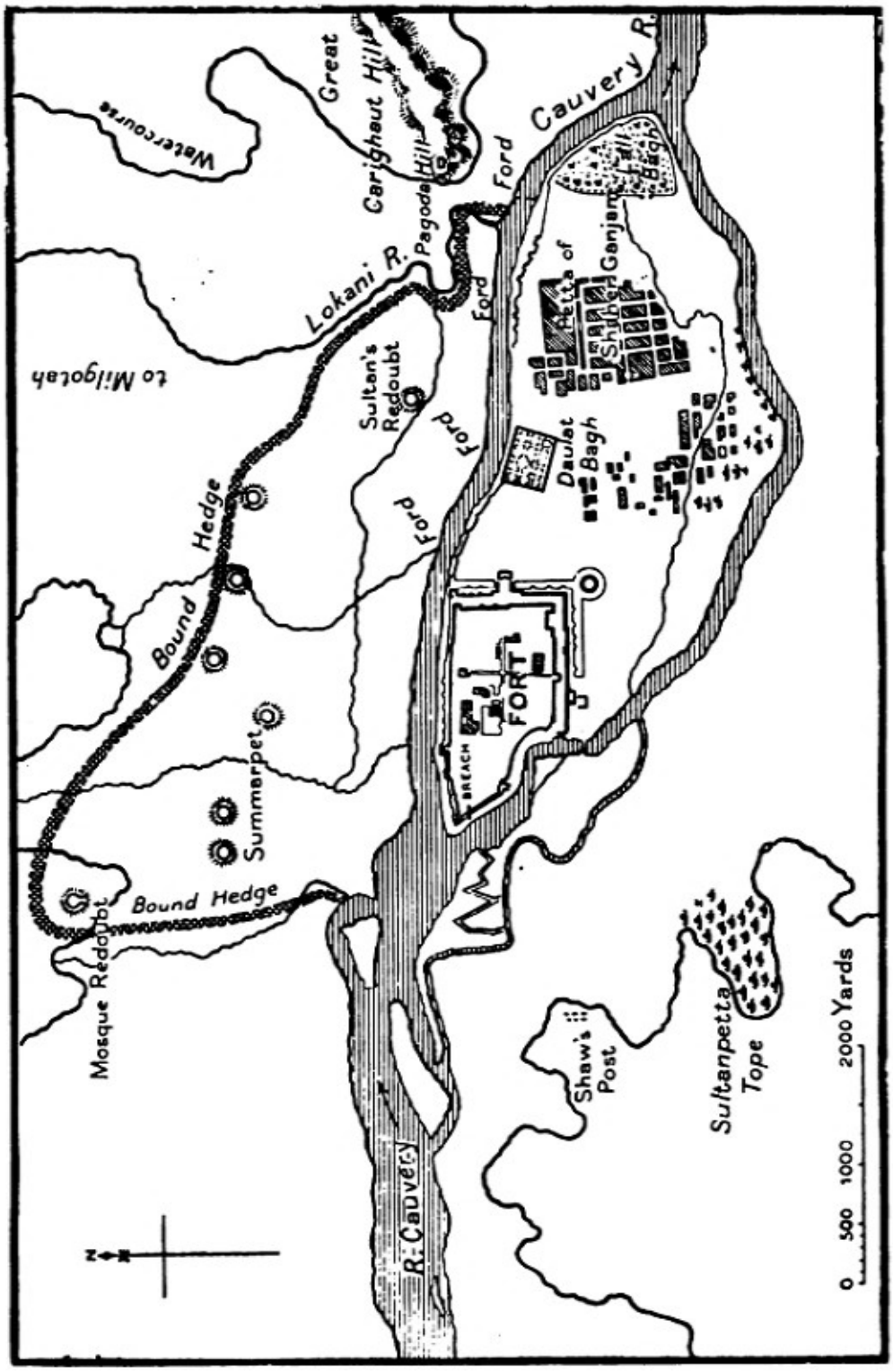

100. The island of Srirangapatna. Shehar Ganjam is as big as the fortress itself. Apart from a Lal Bagh there was a Daulat Bagh too.

Chicherov's observation that *"large commercial and industrial towns became local marketing centres which* ***united*** *economically not only rural areas but also many smaller towns"* is well borne out in this regard.[301]

Thus while Bangalore exhibited a great degree of such unification as a result of the concentration of merchant capital capable of already commencing to unify the entire Kingdom, the other major towns and cities served as regional centres of unification and must have had similar interlinkages with the lesser emerging urban centres which surrounded them.

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The third major city was Nagara formerly known as Bidnur. Hayawadana Rao says: *"Being in the direct course of trade by the Hosangadi-Ghat, it rapidly increased in size and importance until there was a prospect of the houses reaching the number of a lakh, which would entitle it to be called a* ***Nagara*** *or city. The city was eight miles in circumference.... In pursuance of the intention to make it [Bidnur] a* ***Nagara****, Hyder gave it, it is said, the name of* ***Hyder-Nagar****, and greatly increased its trade.*

He built a palatial residence outside the fort, established in the town its principal arsenals, which employed many hands in the manufacture of arms and ammunition, and continued the old mint of the ***Keladi*** *chiefs and struck coins in his own name--****Hyderi Pagodas****. He gave great encouragement to merchants...."* [302]

What did this growth of towns and cities signify? Chicherov sums up well. *"The growth and development of towns in India during the period under review was one of the most important results of the deepening social division of labour, the separation of the crafts from agriculture, and the expansion of commodity money relations.*

The development of domestic and especially of foreign trade, exerted an enormous influence on the growth of towns, on the transformation of villages into large commercial and industrial centres." [303]

Marx and Engels say it this way: *"The separation of town and country can also be understood as the separation of capital and landed property, as the beginning of the existence and development of capital independent of landed property--the beginning of property having its basis only in labour and exchange."* [304]

iii) Patronage and Pace

The objective conditions created by the rise of commodity production provided the basis for the process of urbanisation. But that in itself would have been inadequate given the rapidity of the process. State patronage was the timely catalyst.

Haidar and Tipu were great town and city builders. As we have already seen, Haidar played a key role in the building of Nagar and it was Tipu's effort that went to the making of Shehar Ganjam.

Praxy Fernandes writes of another such concerted effort on the part of Tipu: *"On the banks of the Beypur river, Tipu laid the foundation stone of his new capital of Malabar, which he called Farokabad or Farookhia. This was a new settlement."*[305] Regarding the origins of Davangere Buchanan writes: *"****Davangiri*** *contains about 500 houses and a new* ***bazar*** *is now building.... In the centre of the town is a small mud fort. Some years ago, it was a poor village; and its rise is owing to the encouragement given to settlers by* ***Apojee Rama*** *a* ***Maratha*** *chief, who having entered into the service of Hyder, obtained the place as a* ***Jaghire****. He died without heirs, but* ***Tippoo*** *continued to give encouragement to settlers, and ever since it has been gradually increasing. It is the first place in the* ***Chatrakal*** *[Chitradurga] principality (Rayada) towards the west; and the* ***Amildar*** *of the district [Taluk] usually resides at it, although, properly it is not the* ***Kasba*** *or chief town."* [306] Thus the importance of Davangere, in so short a time changed that the Amildar shifted his quarters to this budding town.

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Buchanan says that Tipu *"frequently founded new bazars, or market towns".*[307] They must have set up several dozens of towns during their rule. A closer look at the local histories of towns is sure to yield positive information in this regarded.

Just as true merchants, Haidar and Tipu were constantly scouting for the wayward artisan who had freed himself from feudal clutches. Feudalism continued to grind under its heel, a good deal of the artisan population of the Kingdom.

Another source which hastened the process of urbanisation was sponsored immigration. During their forays into British territory, Haidar and Tipu brought back with them these producers of wealth and settled them in the various towns and cities of their Kingdom. This was one source for enriching their industry and trade.

Viscount Valentia wrote in 1804: *"Haidar indeed carried off from the Carnatic above 60,000 families...."* [308]

However, a significant factor causing immigration to the towns and cities of the Mysore Kingdom was British colonialism itself.

The Black Town outside Fort William in Madras was already a backyard of social dregs, with its artisans staving off impoverishment. The impact of British colonial rule gradually radiated from Madras along the trail of the white trader, and in various degrees affected the artisans and merchants of lesser towns which they inhabited. In a bid to fight off the oppression of the white man, the artisans and merchants used what was a time-tested form of protest against feudal compulsion--migration. They sought the safe havens of the Mysore Kingdom which was active in protecting itself from the colonial scourge.

A diehard colonialist like Viscount Valentia, who was filled with rage and spite for the rule of Tipu, by his denial of such immigration was on the contrary only confirming the truth. He wrote in his *Voyages and Travels*: *"To the assertion that many had quitted our provinces to live under the milder government of Tipu, it is impossible to give any other reply than a positive denial of its truth, and I am at a loss to conjecture on what authority it is stated."* [309]

After the conceding of Tamil speaking territories to the British following his defeat in the Third Anticolonial War in 1792, the impact of colonialism was soon felt by the people of the Ceded Districts. Citing various records, Nikhiles Guha writes: *"When the Company's administration soon replaced that of the Mysore rulers, the condition of the people did not improve immediately. The residents of the Muthupaliyam village in Velur Taluk of Salem district expressed their hardships due to increase of land rents in a petition to the president of the Board of Revenue. (Edward Sanders, President of Revenue Board, Baramahal Records, Sec vi, p 70). Three or four thousand ryots from the taluks of Omalur and Tharamangalam in the central division of the territories ceded by Tippu to the English returned back to the Sultan's dominions to escape persecution by the local amildar. (Enclosure to letter from Read to Munro, 22 Feb 1796, ibid, p 22) Complaints were heard from the weavers at Nangapalli that they were being made to work for the Company. A similar representation was made by fifteen weaver families at Erode. Munro as Assistant Collector of the Baramahal warned his superior, Alexander Read, that an exacting policy to the cultivators would prevent many of them from returning to Company territories from Tipu's dominions, where they had sought shelter. (Munro to Read,*

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23 Nov 1792, ibid, Sec VIII, p 16). His apprehensions were expressed shortly after the British assumed the revenue responsibilities of the area.

'...I am convinced we should lose most of our weavers.

'Do something for your weavers. Either let the price of cloth be raised or let them be left at liberty to work for whom they please.

' The Company will lose greatly in the end by distressing them. Were they at liberty to work where they could get most profit, the country would soon be full of them. Nothing was ever more ill judged than sending a detachment of black and white dubashes to press them into the service immediately at the close of war in which so many of them had been ruined; it would have been much wiser to have done something in it for a year or two till the weavers had recovered themselves a little and acquired confidence in our government'." [310]

Official British records state that in 1783 while the price of rice in Mysore sold at 10 seers a rupee, it cost three times more in the Madras Presidency which had come under British rule. At the same time, the source adds that in Madras: *"There is no scarcity of grains here, rather plenty. But the sirdars with an eye to their own private advantage, monopolise it...."* [311]

All these were powerful factors contributing to the rapid pattern of demographic change in Mysore.

For an inkling of the pace of such change, Bangalore is a case in point. 100 years before Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan when Bangalore was purchased by Chikkadevaraja it had a population several hundred strong. By the time it was granted as a jaghir to Haidar in 1746-47, about 50 years later, its entire population stood at 20,000.[312]

By the close of the century its population excluding the agglomeration, had increased by at least five times, or at an average of 16,000 per decade or at an average decadinal growth of 16%--a figure which must have far outpaced the rate of population growth for the entire Kingdom as such.

Some simple computation may help us visualise the pace of urbanisation and its quickly changing proportion vis-a-vis the rural population.

The population of Karnataka under Haidar-Tipu rule during the period has been estimated at 35 lakhs. The big cities including Dharwad, Bellary and Chitradurga must have contained a population of about 5 lakhs. Considering the average that the Mysore government of the time used in its statistical computations, of five people per household[313] and at a modest estimate placing the average size of the town to be 200 houses, we arrive at a figure of 1,000 as the size of the population for the average town. Considering 25% or 250 of the total 1,025 kasbas or taluk towns, the total population residing in the towns was 2.5 lakhs. The total urban population then was 7.5 lakhs. This estimate was not far removed from what we arrived at in the first section of this chapter which was computed on a profession-wise break up of the population that fell outside the gamut of the feudal economy. In fact the figure of 7 lakhs we thus arrived at only corroborates that the 7.5 lakh figure for the urban population is a realistic estimate. Thus the total urban population in the late eighteenth century was about 21% of the total population of what constituted that part of Karnataka that came under the rule of Haidar and Tipu.

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If one considers the 1803-04 census of the Mysore Government, it placed the population of Princely Mysore at 21,71,754[314] or roughly at 22 lakhs. If one excluded Bellary and Dharwad which did not belong to Princely Mysore, then the population of the big cities of Princely Mysore may be estimated to have been 4.5 lakhs.

Considering Colin Mackenzie's schedule as our index, we can identify about 130 towns or 72% as falling in the domain of Princely Mysore. Thus 72% of the total town population of the time would be 1.8 lakhs. Hence the total urban population of those districts of Old Mysore while under tipu's reign was 6.3 lakhs or 28%.

These figures of 21% urban population for the whole of the Mysore Kingdom falling within the territory of Karnataka during the reign of Tipu sultan and 28% for the Old Mysore region indicate a high degree of urbanisation and it surely was much ahead of the all-India averages of the time. Irfan Habib's estimate of the urban population at the end of Mughal rule of 15% compares favourably with our estimates describing the period immediately after the fall of the Mughals.[315] Not just that, it is ahead of certain States of today's India and what is more, the 28% urbanisation of the Princely Mysore of Tipu's dominions is only slightly less than the average level of urbanisation in today's Karnataka.

Let us now turn our attention to the role that this exuberant mosaic of urban centres played in the mercantile economy and how they emerged as the cradles of capitalism in Karnataka.

B. Handicrafts Industry and the Putting-Out System

In the final parts of the chapter on early feudalism we have seen about the birth of simple commodity production by the artisan. This was the first essential stage in the growth of capitalism within the womb of the feudal economy.

In the Karnataka of the late eighteenth century we witness the multiplication of this process on such a wide scale that no village remained untouched by it, constituting an important factor for the development of capitalism. This scattered nature of commodity production was undertaken under conditions wherein the artisan or peasant purchased or produced all the raw material and themselves sold the finished goods at the santhe or the urban markets.

Among all, the textile industry of this period relied on simple commodity production. Spinning was undertaken by this process. Buchanan writes that near Bangalore: *"At the weekly markets cotton wool is bought up in small quantities by the poor women of all casts, except the **Brahmanas**; for these never spin....*

The women of all other casts spin, and at the weekly markets sell to the weavers the thread that is not wanted for family use."[316]

A good portion of the spinning industry, particularly in the cotton growing districts of Dharwad, Belgaum, Bijapur, Raichur and Bellary was formed on such a basis. Chicherov says: *"Thus in Mysore at the end of the eighteenth century spinning was one of the main occupations of peasant women."*[317]

Apart from yarn, the production of coarse textiles which was the linen for the poor folk, was carried out on a similar basis. Of this Buchanan says: *"The coarse cloths made in the neighbourhood by the **Devangas, Togatars** and **Whalliaru** [Holeyas], sell from 2 to 6 **Fanams** for each piece called **shiray**."*[318]

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This scattered nature of simple commodity production had undergone a change. And by the time of the rule of Vijayanagara and Adilshahis, or that of middle feudalism, had clearly evolved into the next stage of development--**the *buyers-up* or *putting-out* phase.** A very significant portion of commodity production during the late eighteenth century was undertaken under this mode, wherein a merchant or few intervened between the commodity producer and its user, with the former putting-out ware based on the material or monetary advance made by the merchant. Asok Sen writes that an *"...important feature of industrial production in Tipu Sultan's Mysore is found in the widespread prevalence of the 'putting out' system which used to keep the direct producers under the domination of merchants."* [319]

Dealing with the question in his book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin says: *"...let us confine ourselves to indicating the main forms assumed by merchants capital in the small industries. The first and simplest form is the purchase of wares by the merchant from the small commodity producers. Where buying up is poorly developed or where there are numerous competing buyers-up, the sale of goods, to the merchant may not differ from any other sale, but in the vast majority of cases the local buyer-up is the only person to whom the peasant can regularly dispose off his wares, and then the buyer takes advantage of his monopoly position to force the price he pays to the producer down to rock bottom. The second form of merchants capital consists in its combination with usury: the peasant who is constantly in need of money, borrows it from the buyer up and repays the debt with his goods. The sale of his goods in this case (which is very widespread) always takes place at artificially reduced prices, which often do not leave the handicraftsman as much as a wage-worker could get. Moreover, the relations of the creditor to the debtor inevitably led to the personal dependence of the latter, to bondage, to the creditor taking advantage of specific occasions of the debtor's need, etc. The third form of merchants capital is payment of wares with goods, a common practice among village buyers up. The specific feature of this form is that it is typical not only of the small industries but of absolutely all underdeveloped stages of commodity production and capitalism."* [320]

All these different forms of merchant capital in relation to the commodity producer was widespread during the rule of Haidar and Tipu.

The case of Vallur is an example. Buchanan says: *"The chief manufacture of **Walluru** is cotton cloth, and the weavers work both for country use and for exportation.... The finer kinds they either weave on their own account selling them to traders at the same places; or they receive advances from merchants to enable them to purchase thread."* [321]

Chicherov provides us with two instances of how the putting out system worked. *"The state of affairs that developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the town of Belgaum...is highly illustrative. As T Marshall reports, the cloth woven here is all of a very close texture and all made on account for the merchants of Shahpoor who advance money 'to the weaver for the purchase of thread and for his subsistence whilst the work is in hand four or five months'."* [322]

In another instance Chicherov describes that: *"...there were silk weavers' settlements 25 to 30 miles off the town of Bagalkot. Bagalkot merchants advanced money to*

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the weavers and also 'sold' raw silk to them, which they brought from the town. Many of the weavers owed money to the merchants and later bought up 'nearly the whole product of the weaving establishments', this selling of raw silk often turning into the distribution of raw materials to the weavers.

T Marshall, in describing the conditions in South Maharashtra [Bombay Karnataka], mentions that the merchants from Bagalkot were 'supplying part of the materials and purchasing and selling nearly the whole product of the weaving establishments in small towns within a circle of 25 miles, nearly the whole of this being calculated for exportation'." [323]

Earlier in this chapter we have cited a few instances from Buchanan which describe the prevalence of the putting-out system as it obtained in agriculture.

Another process contributing to the development of the putting out system was, as Lenin rightly observed, that *"buyers up have emerged and continue to emerge"* from the very midst of the *"scattered state of small commodity producers and their utter differentiation."*[324] He cites the instances of the lace-making industry in Moscow gubernia; a process which found parallel in the case of the blanket industry of Karnataka.[325]

In an account of blanket production, Buchanan says: *"The staple product of* ***Chatrakal*** *[Chitradurga] principality consists of* ***Cumlies****, or a kind of blankets which in their fabric generally resemble English camblets. They are 4 cubits broad, by 12 long and form a piece of dress which the natives of* ***Karnata*** *almost universally wear. They are not dyed but are the natural colour of the wool, which in the finer ones is almost always a good black. The best are made at* ***Harapunya-hally*** *in the territory lately ceded to the Company, and at* ***Dhavanagiri****. Each of the blankets made of the wool from the first shearing of the sheep sells from 2 to 12* ***Pagodas****.... Those at 4* ***Pagodas*** *are the finest made for common sale; and these, with all of an inferior value, are brought to weekly markets, and purchased by the merchant for ready money. If any of a higher valued are wanted, advances must be made. The great excellence of these blankets is their power of turning rain; and the finer they are, the better they do this. Some have been made, that were valued so high as from two to three hundred* ***Rupees****, and that were considered to be impenetrable by water."* [326]

This item of *"universal"* use was the chief commodity produced in the districts of Chitradurga and Bellary. The conversion of blankets into a commodity brought the otherwise isolated Kuruba and Golla populations, castes constituting more than 7% of the total population of Karnataka today, under the influence of the market.

Buchanan, in describing the commerce of Bangalore says: *"Black blankets or* ***Cumlies****, are here a considerable article of commerce; and some merchants of the* ***Curubaru*** *caste trade in nothing else. They are brought chiefly from* ***Gori Bidnuru*** *in the* ***Madhugiri Taluc****, and also from* ***Sira, Chatrakal*** *and* ***Balahari****. The last are by much the best; next to them are those from* ***Chatrakal****."* [327]

Thus we may conclude from these accounts of Buchanan that the putting-out system which emerged in the blanket industry threw up a merchant class which rose from among the ranks of the Kuruba weavers, sheep rearers themselves; but by the late eighteenth century, this section completely dissociated itself from production and concentrat-

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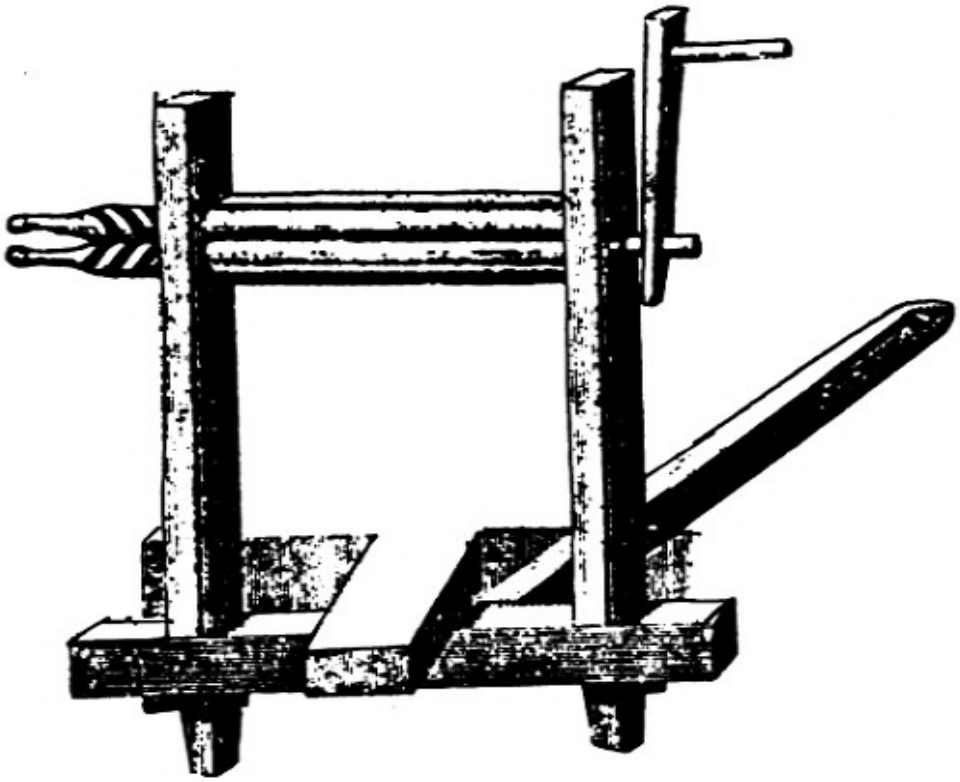

101. A small mill for cleaning cotton from Harihara which was an important centre for cotton trade and yarn production.

ing on trade, thereby also concentrating dispersed trade in these commodities, it emerged as a new class buying-up, if need be, by paying an advance to the weavers.

The impact of the putting out system gradually led to its next higher form. Continuing his observations on the putting out system as it prevailed in the textile industry of Belgaum, Chicherov says: *"The weavers sank so deeply in debt to these merchants that everything they produced belonged to the latter since it was made at their orders and with their money."* [328]

Lenin sums up this transition thus: *"The fourth form of merchants's capital is payment by the merchant with the particular kinds of goods that are needed by the 'handicraftsmen' for production (raw or ancillary materials, etc). The sale of materials of production to the small industrialist may also be an independent operation of merchants capital, quite analogous to the operation of buying-up finished goods. When, however, the buyer-up of finished goods begins to pay for them with the raw materials needed by the 'handicraftsmen', this marks a very big step in the development of capitalist relations. Having cut off the small industrialist from the finished-goods market, the buyer-up now cuts him off from the raw materials market, and thereby brings him completely under his sway. It is only one step from this form to that higher form of merchant's capital under which the buyer-up directly hands out materials to the 'handicraftsmen' to be worked up for a definite payment. The handicraftsman becomes* ***defacto*** *a wage-worker, working at home for the capitalist; the merchant's capital of the buyer-up is here transformed into industrial capital. Capitalist domestic industry arises. In the small industries it is met with more or less sporadically; its introduction on a mass scale, however, relates to the next and higher stage of capitalist development."* [329]

This new stage involved the subjection of the commodity producers under the control of merchant capital and their relocation under one roof. This stage which took

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root in the Karnataka of the late eighteenth century was none other than capitalist manufacture. But before arriving at capitalist manufacture per se, there was a transitory form of capitalist cooperation which also existed in Mysore.

C. Capitalist Cooperation

By far the best exposition of capitalist cooperation is found in Karl Marx's *Capital*. Let us loook at his analysis regarding this form of production before seeing how it was manifested in the Mysore of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan.

Explaining the economic advantage of this form and thus the transition of the mode of existence of capital, Marx says: *"Even without an alteration in the system of working, the simultaneous employment of a large number of labourers effects a revolution in the material conditions of the labour-process.*

The buildings in which they work, the store houses for the raw material, the implements and utensils used simultaneously or in turns by the workmen; in short a portion of the means of production, are now consumed in common. On the one hand, the exchange value of these means of production is not increased; for the exchange value of a commodity is not raised by its use-value being consumed more thoroughly and to greater advantage. On the other hand, they are used in common, and therefore on a larger scale than before. A room where twenty weavers work at twenty looms must be larger than the room of a single weaver with two assistants. But it costs less labour to build one workshop for twenty persons than to build ten to accommodate two weavers each; thus the value of the means of production that are concentrated for use in common on a large scale does not increase in direct proportion to the expansion and to the increased useful effect of those means. When consumed in common, they give up a smaller part of their value to each single product; partly because the total value they part with is spread over a greater quantity of products, and partly because their value, though absolutely greater is, having regard to their sphere of action in the process, relatively less than the value of isolated means of production. Owing to this, the value of a part of the constant capital falls, and in proportion to the magnitude of the fall, the total value of the commodity also falls. The effect is the same as if the means of production had cost less. The economy in their application is entirely owing to their being consumed in common by a large number of workmen. Moreover, this character of being necessary conditions of social labour, a character that distinguishes them from the dispersed and relatively more costly means of production of isolated, independent labourers, or small masters, is acquired even when the numerous workmen assembled together do not assist one another, but merely work side by side. A portion of the instruments of labour acquires this social character before the labour process itself does so." [330]

On the significance and peculiarities of capitalist cooperation in the transfer of the technique of production from feudalism to capitalism, Marx says: *"...capitalist cooperation does not manifest itself as a particular historical form of cooperation, but cooperation itself appears to be a historical form peculiar to, and specifically distinguishing the capitalist process of production.... It is the first change experienced by the actual labour process, when subjected to capital. This change takes place spontaneously. The simul-*

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taneous employment of a large number of wage-labourers, in one and the same process, which is a necessary condition of this change also forms the starting-point of capitalist production. This point coincides with the birth of capital itself....

In the elementary form, under which we have hitherto viewed it, cooperation is a necessary concomitant of all production on a large scale, but it does not, in itself, represent a fixed form characteristic of a particular epoch in the development of the capitalist mode of production. At the most it appears to do so, and that only approximately, in the handicraft-like beginnings of manufacture, and in that kind of agriculture on a large scale, which corresponds to the epoch of manufacture, and is distinguished from peasant agriculture, mainly by the number of the labourers simultaneously employed, and by the mass of the means of production concentrated for their use. Simple cooperation is always the prevailing form in those branches of production in which capital operates on a large scale, and division of labour and machinery play but a subordinate part.

Cooperation ever constitutes the fundamental form of the capitalist mode of production, nevertheless the elementary form of cooperation continues to subsist as a particular form of capitalist production side by side with the more developed forms of that mode of production." [331]

Thus capitalist cooperation reorganised production in such a manner that the principal means of production continued to rest with those that laboured. However, the artisan was in perpetual debt. Let us see how capitalist cooperation was reflected in the industry of the time, particularly--as Marx observed--in the handicrafts sector.

Capitalist cooperation had developed in the Mysore Kingdom on a wide scale and particularly since the period of Chikkadevaraja's antifeudal reform.

"Cooperation involving a definite division of labour could be observed...in the organisation of production of coloured glassware in Mysore at the end of the eighteenth century" says Chicherov.[332]

He was obviously referring to the process of production in Chennapatna that Buchanan had reported. Chicherov adds: *"Mention should also be made of the developing cooperation of labour in oil pressing, where rich oil manufacturers had up to 5 presses in their workshops, using oil seed they received from the peasants through a system of money advances."* [333]

In Bangalore we may observe three distinct classes of weavers. The first included the Pattegara and Katri. The second was composed of the Shenagara, Padmasali, Samesali, Kannada Devanga and Telugu Devanga. The third included the Togata and Holeya castes.

From this second group of weavers emerged capitalist cooperation. To cite Buchanan: *"Among the **Padmashalay** there are few servants employed, but all the males of a family live together, and work in the same house, very seldom engaging themselves to work out for hire. The **Samayshalay** keep more servants. The people of these two classes live better than those employed in agriculture. A man at fine work can gain a Fanam a day...."* [334]

The above instance captures the transition of capitalist cooperation into capitalist manufacture. The element of cooperation is predominant. Thus here we have an instance wherein the transformation to capitalist cooperation is achieved not by merchant capital

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but by the master weaver. On the role of family labour in such capitalist enterprise Lenin tells us: *" 'Family co-operation' is thus the basis of capitalist co-operation. It goes without saying, of course, that this 'law' applies only to the smallest commodity-producers, only to the rudiments of capitalism; this law proves that the tendency of the peasantry is to turn into a petty bourgeoisie. As soon as workshops with a fairly large number of wage-workers arise, the significance of 'family co-operation' must inevitably decline...to the extent that the 'handicraft' industries are so small that 'family co-operation' predominates in them, thus family co-operation is the surest guarantee of the development of capitalist co-operation. Here consequently, stand out in full relief the dialectics of commodity production, which transform 'working with our own hands' into 'working with others' hands', into exploitation."* [335]

Basing on the information provided by Buchanan, Chicherov comes to the following conclusion about capitalist cooperation in agriculture.

"In the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century cooperation of labour developed also in agricultural production and in the processing of its products; notably in the production of sugar from sugar-cane. Here too, we observe the familiar pattern: the development of small commodity production, carried on by individual artisans or farmers by way of the cooperation of their labour in artels....

F Buchanan, for example, describes the cooperation of the peasants in Mysore at the end of the eighteenth century who, combining their 'human' and 'productive' resources (bullocks, carts, etc) jointly harvested sugarcane. Buchanan says: 'When the works and machinery have been prepared for making jagory, all the proprietors of sugarcane in the village assemble, and work together a day at each man's field, in rotation until the whole is finished'. After that they split up into groups to process the sugarcane into gur. A number of peasants were engaged in bringing the cane to the place of processing, where one man cut it and took the pieces into the boiling house. Another man handed the cane to the third who fed the mill extracting the juice from the cane. Still another man drove the bullocks turning the mill. The cane juice was carried by a special workman to the boiler. The mill went day and night, the jagory being tapped three times a day. The gur was then collected in special pots and weighed." [336]

The jaggery was then divided up among the producers, part of which they sold, retaining the rest for domestic consumption.

In this instance, again, we notice the gradual transition of capitalist cooperation into capitalist a manufacture with the partial employment of free labour.

In our earlier discussion on agriculture of the period we have seen how an independent peasantry emerged as a class. It was such independent peasants--the much better off among them--that resorted to capitalist agricultural processing in the form of cooperation. It should not be forgotten that **the existence of such an independent class of peasants is a precondition for the rise or capitalist cooperation in agriculture.**

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D. Capitalist Manufacture

There are two specific preconditions for the development of manufacture in a given society. On the one hand Marx says: *"Since the production and circulation of commodities are the general prerequisites of the capitalist mode of production, division of labour in manufacture demands, that division of labour in society at large should previously have attained a certain degree of development."* [337]

The growth of urban centres, and among them the rise of big cities are an example of this *"certain degree of development"* in the Mysore Kingdom, with the villages throwing up free labourers who already began to converge upon the cities in numbers which increased yearly.

The second feature was what Lenin specified as the adequate concentration of merchant capital. *"The organisation of production on a larger scale and the simultaneous employment of many workers require the accumulation of fairly large capital, which is often formed, not in the sphere of production, but in the sphere of trade, etc. The size of this capital determines the form in which the proprietor himself takes part in the enterprise--whether he himself is a worker, if his capital is still very small, or whether he gives up working himself and specialises in commercial entrepreneurial functions."* [338]

We have noted earlier that castes such as the Banajigas and perhaps the Komatis and Balijas too, to a certain extent, had been successful in accomplishing this accumulation necessary for this transition of capital from mercantile to industrial activity. The phenomenon that obtained in Mysore was, as Lenin said in the case of Russia, *"forcing capital out of trade and directing it towards industry."* [339]

What are the features of capitalist manufacture and how was this stage to be distinguished from capitalist cooperation? *"By capitalist manufacture is meant, as we know, cooperation based on division of labour. In origin, manufacture belongs directly to the above described 'first stages of capitalism in industry'. On the one hand, workshops with a more or less considerable number of workers gradually introduce division of labour, and in this way capitalist simple cooperation grows into capitalist manufacture.*

...merchant's capital in the small industries, upon reaching its highest stage of development, reduces the producer to the position of a wage-worker processing the raw material of others for payment by the piece." [340]

The inner motive leading to the transformation of the form of capitalist cooperation into manufacture is thus explained by Marx: *"...it is in the first place, clear that a labourer who all his life performs one and the same simple operation, converts his whole body into the automatic, specialised instrument of that operation. Consequently, he takes less time in doing it, than the artificer who performs a whole series of operations in succession. But the collective labourer, who constitutes the living mechanism of manufacture, is made up solely of such detail labourers. Hence in comparison with independent handicraft, more is produced in a given time, or the productive power of labour is increased."* [341]

Thus **in the stage of capitalist manufacture one observes the absolute pauperisation of the petty owners of the means of production and their surrender of**

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it to the master craftsman or the merchant. It is only on the basis of this precondition of proletarianisation that merchant capital transforms into industrial capital. It is from this point of time onwards that different forms of property yield to and undergo transformation into capitalist private property. Private property forms the heart of capitalist matter and its juridical enshrinement effecting a division of labour among former owner-producers becomes a prerequisite for the further advancement of capitalist industry.

Mysore of the late eighteenth century had not one but several instances of capitalist manufacture in not one or two but several fields of commodity production. As a form of production it must have emerged around the turn of the **second half of the eighteenth century** and grown with the growth of the power of Haidar and Tipu.

Bangalore, which was the most advanced of production centres in the Kingdom then, and the textile industry which was the leading sphere in the city then, had developed capitalist manufacture and was quickly tending to its greater concentration in the hands of merchant capital.

The first class of weavers consisting of the Pattegaras and Katri were capitalists of manufacture. About them Buchanan writes: *"The **Puttuegars** or silk-weavers, make cloth of very rich strong fabric. The patterns for the first five kinds of dresses are similar to each other; but are very much varied by the different colours employed, and the different figures woven in the cloth; for they rarely consist of plain work. Each pattern has an appropriate name, and, for the common sale, is wrought of three different degrees of fineness. If any person chooses to commission them, whatever parts of the pattern he likes may be wrought in gold thread; but as this greatly enhances the value, such cloths are never wrought, except when commissioned. The fabric of the sixth kind of dress is also strong and rich: but the figures resemble those in the shawls of **Cashemire.***

The turbans are made of a thin fabric of cotton and silk.

*The **Puttuegars** make also in a variety of figured patterns, the first three kinds of dresses of silk and cotton.*

*They also made **Sada Putaynshina**, or thin white muslins with silk borders. These are either plain, or dotted in the loom with silk or cotton thread; and are frequently ornamented with gold and silver. This is an elegant manufacture, and is fitted for the first five kinds of dresses.*

*Plain green muslin with silk borders for the first three kinds of dresses, is also made by the **Puttuegars**; but not of so fine a quality as that made by the **Devangas**....*

*The same may be said of the coloured striped muslin with silk borders, called **Dutari Huvina**, which is used also entirely for female dresses, and is wrought of various patterns.*

*The **Puttuegars** dye much of their own silk; and they gave me the following of their processes."* [342]

Now let us look at the account of how these fabulous textiles were actually produced.

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*"The **Puttuegars** give their yellow silk to the **Niligaru**, who dye it with indigo. It is then washed by the **Puttuegars** in the infusion of tamarinds, and afterwards is of a fine green colour which, if it be dried in the shade, is tolerably well fixed.... Some weavers called **Cuttery**...manufacture exactly the same kinds of goods as the **Puttuegars**....*

When the goods are in much demand, it is customary for the merchants to advance one half, or even the whole, of the price of the goods which he commissions; but when the demand is small, the manufacturers borrow money from the bankers at 2% a month and make goods, which they sell to merchants of the place....

*The master weavers keep from two to five servants, who are paid by the piece. Workmen that are employed on cotton cloths with silk borders make daily about a **Fanam**. It is not usual for weavers of any kind in this country, except those of the **Whalliaru** cast to employ part of their time in agriculture.*

*The **Cuttery** are more affluent than the **Puttuegars**, and these again are more wealthy than any other kind of weavers."* [343]

The Pattegaras and Katris had transformed from master weavers to capitalists. They pursued production with the aid of wage labour, which speaks of the capitalist nature of the enterprise. However, the small number of workers they exploited must have compelled the owners to themselves partake in labour activities to a certain extent. It is interesting to note the relationship the Pattegaras and Katris bore with merchant capital of the Banajigas. Their entire enterprise had on occasions, when the order was placed, come under the influence of merchant capital. This however was not continuous and did not yet push the Pattegara and Katri owners of such enterprises to ruin. Thus one may note the growing integration of merchant capital with industrial capital, the culmination of which would have led to the reorganisation of production on a bigger scale. On his part, Lenin observed that *"**the closest and most inseparable tie between merchant's and industrial capital** is one of the most characteristic features of manufacture."* [344]

The Pattegaras advanced raw material to the Niliga dyers and obtained dyed silk from them. This brought the Pattegaras into a relation of what buyers-up had with producers. Buchanan tells us that the Niligas were a poor adjunct to the rich Pattegaras. This also was a source of profit for the 'wealthy' Pattegara or Katri. In this regard Lenin says: *"...if the small master gets materials and delivers wares in payment of debt, the big manufactory owner obtains a high level of profit on his capital such as he could never obtain from wage workers."* [345]

Explaining, in the Russian context, the linkage between the innumerable establishments housed side by side, Lenin says: *"...a **typical** feature of capitalist manufacture is precisely the small number of relatively large establishments side by side with a considerable number of small establishments. Is there any connection between the one and the other?*

The connection between them is of the closest, that it is out of the small establishments that the large ones grow, that the small establishments are sometimes merely outside departments of the manufactories...." [346]

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Further, Lenin makes the following significant observation in this regard: *"In all the industries organised on the lines of manufacture.... The vast mass of the workers are not independent, are subordinate to capital, and receive only wages, owning neither raw material nor finished product. At the bottom, the overwhelming majority of the workers in these 'industries' are* ***wage-workers*** *although this relationship never achieves in manufacture the completeness and purity characteristic of the factory. In manufacture, merchant's capital is combined with industrial capital, is inter-woven with it in the most diverse ways, and the dependence of the operative on the capitalist assumes a host of forms and shades from work for hire in another person's workshop, to work at home for a 'master' and finally to dependence in the purchase of raw materials or in the sale of the product. Under manufacture, side by side with the mass of dependent workers, there always remains a more or less considerable number of quasi-dependent producers. But all this diversity of forms of dependence merely covers up the main feature of manufacture, the fact that the split between the representatives of labour and of capital is already manifested in full force."* [347]

Let us then pass on to view this split between capital and labour in the iron and steel industry, a major sector, activated to undertake commodity production not merely on account of the expansion of agriculture and other professions which had the use of iron and steel but of the army, which was the single biggest consumer of it. **As a result, the iron and steel industry rose to prominence only next to the textile and blanket trade; in the process allowing for the accumulation of capital and its transformation into capitalist manufacture. In fact of all the industries it was this which had the greatest concentration of wage labour.**

Buchanan on his way to Magadi *"examined some iron forges, of which there were many in this hilly tract of country; and from a man who employs 12 labourers I procured the following account of the operations performed on the ore. The iron is made partly from the black sand which is found in the rainy season in the channels of all the torrents in the country; and partly from an ore which is found at* ***Ghettipura,*** *two cosses from* ***Magadi.*** *During the 4 months of heavy rains, 4 men are able to collect as much sand as a furnace can smelt in the remainder of the year. In order to separate the earth and the sand, which are always mixed with it in the channel of the torrent, it requires to be washed. These men get 10* ***Fanams*** *a month, and the nature of their service is similar to that of farmer's servants, being bound by occasional advances of money to continue in the employment of the master. During the remaining 8 months of the year they work at the forge....*

The expense that attends the working of one of these forges is as follows:

	Fanams
To 4 men for collecting iron and sand, at 10 ***Fanams*** *each for 4 months*	*160*
To 6 men to make charcoal, 4 for the smelting house, and 2 for the forge, during 8 months, at 8 ***Fanams*** *monthly for each*	*304*
To 4 labourers at the smelting house, for 8 months at 10 ***Fanams*** *each*	*320*

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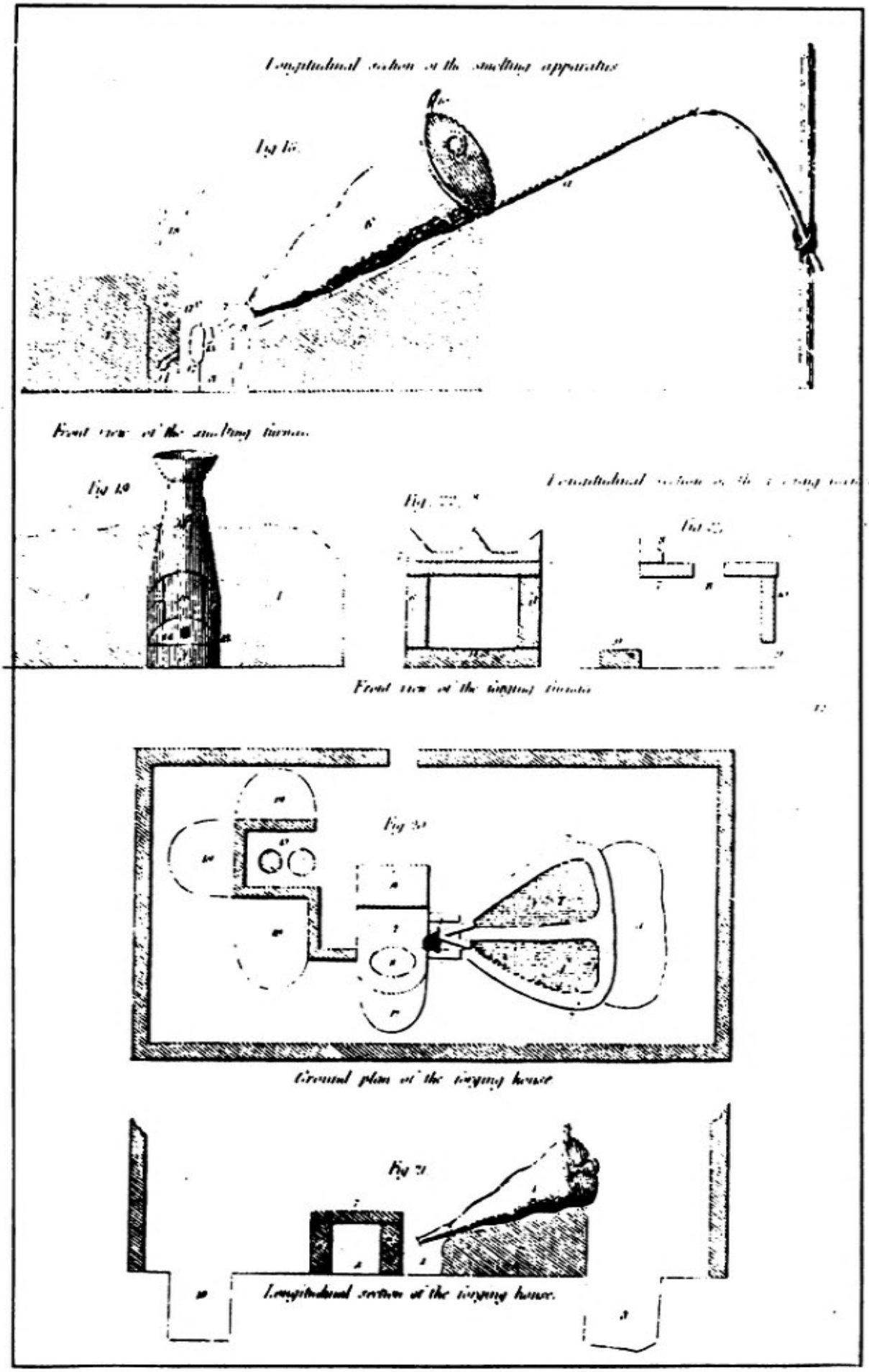

102. Figures of a forge from Ghettipura, Magadi taluk, Bangalore district.

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*To 6 labourers in the forging house, of whom 1 has **Fanams**, the other 6 **Fanams** a month, for 8 months*	*336*
*To the government paid yearly; for making charcoal 60 **Fanams**, for ground rent for furnace 20 **Fanams**, for ditto for servants houses 20 **Fanams***	*100*
Fanams	*1,300*

*The smelting house burns thrice a day, for about 8 months of 32 days each, without any allowance for holidays, and at each time produces as much iron as, when forged, sells from two to three **Fanams**.*

	Fanams
*At 2 **Fanams** the returns are*	*1,536*
Cost	*1,300*
Net Profit	*236*
*At 3 **Fanams** gross produce*	*2,304*
Cost	*1,300*
Net Profit	*1, 004"*[348]

The division of labour, the ownership of the means of production, the use of wage labour and the accumulation of surplus value by the *"employer"* or *"master"* who has no role in the process of production, establish this forge as belonging to the genre of capitalist manufacture. At the rate of 3 Fanams the capitalist makes a net profit equal to that of the wages he pay to all his workers.

Let us again look at the following description by Buchanan of iron manufacture and discern its capitalist form of organisation basing on the relations of production.

At Chennarayana Durga *"The manner of smelting iron ore and rendering it fit for the use of the blacksmith, is the same here as near **Magadi**....*

*In the forging house are required 3 hammer men, one man to manage the forceps, 2 bellows men, and 4 men to supply charcoal, which for this purpose is always made of the **Bamboo**. Everyday 3 furnaces are smelted, and 33 wedges forged. The workmen are always paid by a division of the produce of their labour, and every fourth day or when 132 pieces have been prepared, the division is made as follows:*

	Pieces
To the proprietor	*35*
*To the **Panchala**, who is the foreman of the forge*	*10*
To the foreman at the smelting house	*8*
To one of the bellows men, who removes the ashes and dross	*5*
To two of the women, who wash the sand, at 5 each	*10*
To the remaining 16 persons at 4 each	*64 pieces*
	132

*The **Panchala** or blacksmith out of his wages, is bound to find all the iron instruments such as the anvil, the hammers and the forceps. The proprietor defrays all other expenses, and these are:*

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	Fanams
To the keeper of the forest, for permission to make charcoal	*100*
*To the **Gauda**, or chief of the village, for leave to gather iron and sand*	*40*
*To the **Sunca** or collector of customs*	*30*
To a pair of bellows for the smelting house	*42*
To ditto for the forge	*24*
To sacrifices	*15*
*To charity for the **Brahmans***	*10*
Fanams	*276*

The buildings are so mean that they go for northing; and at the beginning of the season are put up by the workmen in the course of a day....

The stone iron sells at 6 pieces for the Fanam; and the people who work it are paid by daily wages....

It must be evident, that in this account the headman, wishing to conceal his profit, deceived us."[349]

Benjamin Heyne in his *Tracts Historical* describes the iron forges that he saw at Ramanakapetta in the following manner: *"The iron mines lie on the north, a mile from the village, and half a mile from the hills. The ore is brought in baskets to the furnaces which are close to the village. The smelters here are a distinct set of people from the mines; neither do they prepare their own charcoal. They purchase both articles; the ore in baskets from the mines; the charcoal from labourers, who bring it from the hills....*

Every furnace at present requires 9 men, who are chiefly employed in working the bellows." [350]

As evident, the production and supply of raw materials was separated from the production of iron. Ramanakapetta was obviously the most advanced centre of iron and steel production in Mysore at that time and not only did it display the greatest advancement in production organisation but it also domonstrated on that count, the most advanced division or specialisation that the production process involved.

The impact of wage slavery and the severity of capitalist exploitation was quick to reveal itself, and may be likened to what Lenin categorised as *"occupational diseases"* which only capitalism could create. Benjamin Heyne says: *"The people engaged in this work are of an emaciated sickly appearance, forming a striking contrast with the other inhabitants of this part of the country. This I have observed at all other iron works on the coast, but am not able to account for the circumstance."* [351]

Chicherov summed up the system of production at the iron forges in the following way: *"Thus at the end of the eighteenth century there were workshops in Mysore the proprietors of which carried on activities which acquired the nature of capitalist enterprise....*

The proprietor did not participate in the production process, but used his capital to organise production, which was conducted with the aim of receiving exchange value, and ensuring the self-expansion of capital (through the exploitation of free wage labour and the appropriation of the surplus value produced by the labourers in the process of

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production). The profits of these proprietors exceeded the earnings of the wage-workers many-fold.

There were also workshops in which the master was not the owner of the capital but only the production organiser. Therefore his income did not exceed that of the other workers. In these cases the actual proprietor of the workshop was the merchant who advanced the money for production, received the iron and sold it on the market. The existence of workshops of this type can be regarded as an indication of the commencement of a process of transition from the simple cooperation of handicraft labour, which was developing extensively in feudal society, to the capitalist expansion of production. Capitalist features are clearly discernible in the activity of the merchants, who advanced money for production processes.

Summing up, it can be said that the enterprises possessing a number of features typical of capitalist manufacture developed in Mysore's iron industry in the second half of the eighteenth century. But typical of these manufactures, and of the iron industry as a whole, was a very low technical level, the output of the individual workshops was small, and in many of them work was seasonal. The master of the workshop often did not own all the instruments of labour. In some workshops the division of labour was poorly developed and the labourers continued to be linked with agriculture." [352]

The transition of merchant capital into industrial capital is witnessed in the case of the iron and steel industry. The Banajigas who were, as we have already seen, the leading merchants of Karnataka actively involved in bringing the textile trade under their control. Another instance from Chennapatna demonstrates this transition among the Banajigas from being merchants to that of becoming the owners of industrial capital. *"At **Chinapatam** a family of the **Linga Banajigaru** have the art of making very fine white sugar."* [353]

Although we have little information on the process of glass manufacture, Heyne's statement was that *"there are commonly 20 men at work"* in making it, cannot but lead us to the conclusion that it must have reached the stage of a capitalist manufactory.[354]

In the earlier section we saw the development of capitalist cooperation in the manufacture of jaggery. Chicherov provides us with instances in agriculture where capitalist manufacture was the mode of processing commercial agricultural produce and transforming them into its commodities either for consumption or for industrial use.

"Extremely relevant is also the fact that at the end of the eighteenth century enterprising 'manufacturers' established sugar making enterprises in the Bangalore and Kolar districts and at the same time rented land for the cultivation of sugarcane. English civil servants reported that 'manufacturers' hired workers to cultivate the sugarcane on plots they rented. One of the reports contains an entry of the income and expenditure of an enterprise having a 'plantation' of one hectare. First, the proprietor hired people to till the soil, then he engaged 5 day labourers who planted the cane, one carried the basket with the seedlings, two planted them, another two fixed the seedlings in the soil, etc. After that, workers were hired to water the 'plantation' (one, if the water was next to the plot, and more if there was no water in the immediate vicinity--generally four people) and to introduce fertilisers. Four workers were hired for a short period (of up to

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10 days) to tend the seedlings, loosen the soil, etc. Finally, 20 people were hired to gather the harvest who, depending on the sort of cane, worked for a period from 19 to 40 days.

The 'manufacturer' generally resorted to the assistance of the village carpenter and blacksmith to erect the mill for extracting the cane juice. The carpenter made wooden cylinders and other parts of the mill, the trough or cooler for the gur, etc. The blacksmith forged axes, nails and other articles for the carpenter. The blacksmith also produced iron scrapers needed for the production process, the bill for cutting up the cane, etc. The production of iron boilers exceeded 'the ability of the village smiths', such boilers were provided by blacksmiths' artels or iron making manufactures, and were bought on the market for 10 Pagodas each.

The 'manufacturer' also enlisted the assistance of the village potter, who made the various pots needed for the production of gur. The 'manufacturer' paid the blacksmith, the carpenter and the potter partly in cash and partly in sugar (jaggery). The clay walls of the mill were generally erected by workmen who received money wages for the job.

Three more workers were hired to do work of all kinds at the mill, and one to drive the bullocks turning the mill. The bullocks were hired by the shop proprietor. A master ('overseer') was engaged to take charge of production.

About 20 workers in the charge of the master engaged directly in production and received daily wages. The master received the highest payment, in cash or in kind. The mill worked around the clock, and the workers were given only 3 hours of rest. This went on until all the cane was processed which took from 19 to 47 days, depending on the quality of the cane. In the interests of the entrepreneur, the harvesting started off an uninterrupted process of production. Cut sugarcane that was not processed immediately dried, losing some of its juice; besides the workers were paid by the day, and all this naturally made the entrepreneur interested in getting the job done as quickly as possible, and in 'sweating' out his workers and equipment: a maximum of work in a minimum of time.

It should be emphasised that during the most intensive period (while the cane was harvested and processed into gur) the 'manufacturers' employed as many as 40 hired workers (in the field, at the mill and at the boiler). The work involved a considerable division of labour both in the agricultural and 'industrial' stages.

After the sugar had been sold and expenditure in production deducted, the net profit made by a 'manufacturer' owning a 'plantation' of one hectare amounted to about 18-27 Pagodas, depending on the quality of sugar. The larger the leased area the higher were the profits. It is therefore only natural that the European civil servants who made thorough computations and a detailed analysis of the activity of local 'manufacturers'--the nascent sugar industrialists insistently recommended the British to set up in these parts similar enterprises, which, it would seem, yielded their owners no little profit. It is particularly important that they recommended to expand these 'plantations' form one to three hectares increasing all the expenditure correspondingly. The computations convinced them that this expenditure would pay many times over.

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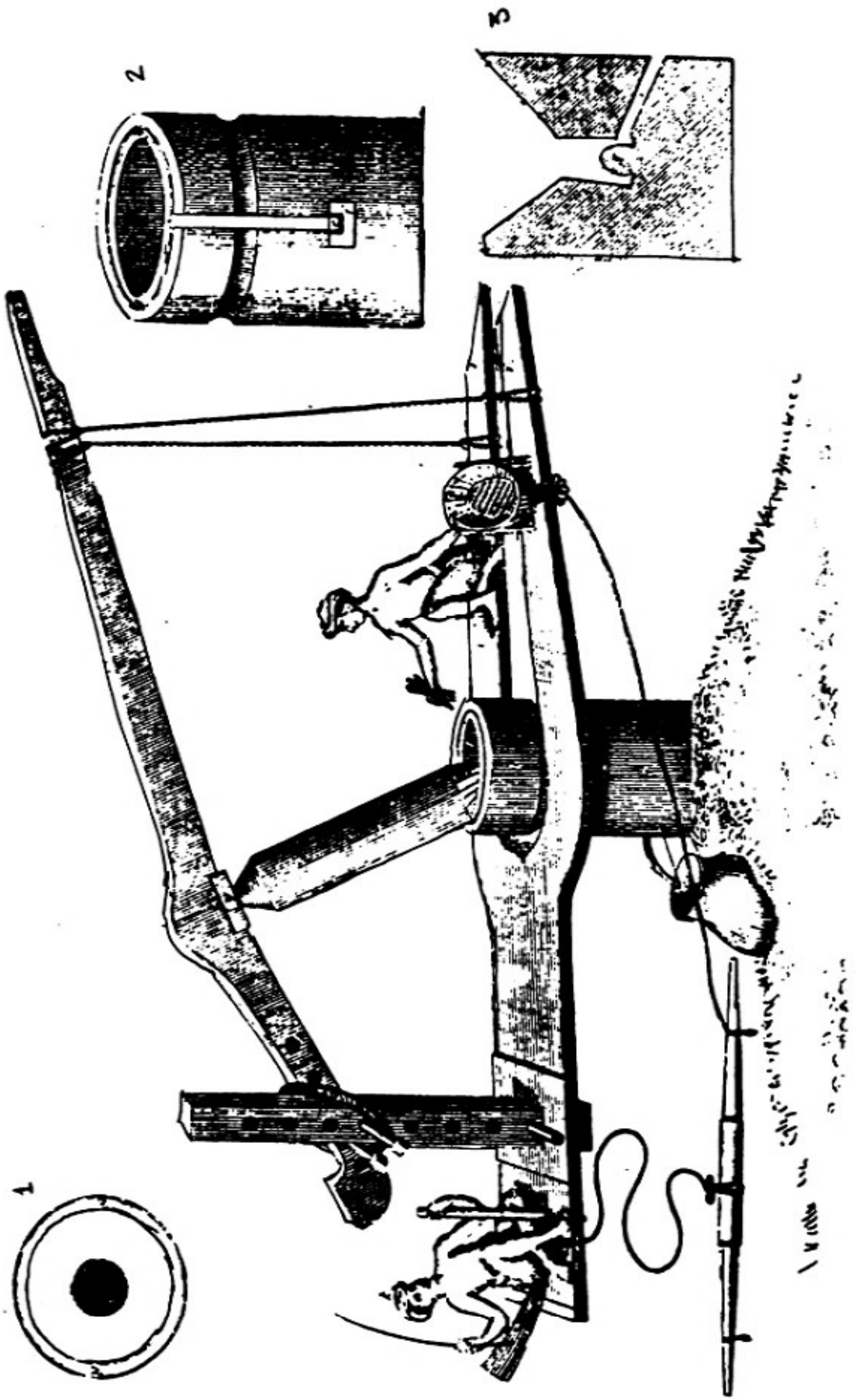

103. Sugar mill at Chennapatna, Bangalore district. (1) Plan of the upper end of the mortar. (2) View of the mortar. (3) Vertical section of the mortar.

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This was another vivid example testifying to the development of local capitalist manufacture in India at the end of the eighteenth century. It is highly significant that the owners of the manufactures conducted intensive capitalist commodity production on leased lands, which indicates the development of new, capitalist relations in agriculture.

It should be added that local entrepreneurs invested money into the organisation also of purely capitalist agricultural production, renting land and using hired labour to grow cotton for the market....

The activities of rich peasants show that they were gradually becoming capitalist entrepreneurs-manufacturers." [355]

Features of developing capitalist manufacture were evident in the processing of indigo, an agricultural produce and into dyestuff for the textile industry. Several manufactories had emerged in the taluks of Bangalore, Kolar and Hoskote, all at a proximal distance from the textile centre of Bangalore.

The organisation of production at an enterprise belonging to a resident of the Mysore Kingdom has been described as follows: *"The entrepreneur rented a 10 acre plot of land, bullocks and ploughs. He then hired workers to plough his land (five times) and cultivate it. These workers also introduced fertiliser, planted the purchased seeds, watered and weeded the 'plantation'. Five harvests were gathered a year. Over 20 labourers employed during the harvest season on a day-to-day basis received wages in cash. 30 barrels, 94 vats for boiling the solution, other instruments of labour and fuel were purchased. Four hired labourers were boiling the solution. They were engaged until harvesting was in progress. (The first harvest, was collected for 9 days, the second for 16, the third for 23 and the fourth for 8 days). Thus about 25 people were simultaneously engaged for almost two months in bringing in the harvest and boiling the solution. The yearly profit of the owner of such an indigo manufacture was 54 Pagodas, or Rs. 160."*[356]

All these may serve as illustrations drawn not from one sector of industry but from several, not from industry alone but from agriculture too, of the rise of a proletariat and a capitalist in the Mysore Kingdom. Capitalist manufacture had come into vogue as a form of commodity production.

The crisis of early feudalism and the inauguration of the period of middle feudalism from the thirteenth century onwards only set into motion a process that we have described as the 'rise in commodity production' within the confines of a feudal natural economy. But his gradual rise and spread of commodity production was itself, since the time of its unleashing, experiencing a continuous transformation in its production organisation and production process. The production process that commodity production entailed may be divided into three general stages before the establishment of capitalist production proper, or that of industrial or machine based mass production of commodities. These three stages are:

1. Simple commodity production.
2. Putting-out or buyers-up production.
3. Capitalist manufacture.

Capitalist cooperation, although not forming a necessary or exclusive stage, is visible more generally in the transitory stage between putting-out and capitalist manufac-

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ture, particularly in the handicrafts industry; and does not, as Marx says, assume the form of an exclusive stage in this historic run up of commodity production.

The coming into existence of the newer forms of commodity production is only the result of the maturation of the earlier forms. The newer and more developed forms can come into existence only on the strength of the earlier and less developed. The new forms coexisted with the earlier.

We may say that if in early feudalism commodity production was scanty, then under middle feudalism its presence was marked. It was during the later centuries of middle feudalism that the putting-out system came into existence and spread out, and it was after the commencement of late feudalism, that is, during the later half of its existence or that of semifeudalism, that capitalist manufacture was born.

The development of capitalist manufacture, was, as we have seen, not only a result of the strength and ripening of the earlier forms of commodity production; but was also dependent on all those economic features that tended to erode the economy which characterised feudalism. Thus growing urbanisation, the spread of a transportation network, the rise in money circulation, the payment of taxes in cash rather than in kind, the elimination of the palegara stratum, the rise of the modern state, differentiation of the peasantry, etc, were all **supportive of and directly contributory** to the early rise of capitalist manufacture. It was due to this complex of features which Karnataka society of that time harboured that the rise of capitalist manufacture could become possible. In other words, **capitalist manufacture can come into existence only if a complex of economic factors are already in existence.** Capitalist manufacture, as a form of commodity production, can therefore arise only in a given economic context.

The production of commodities based on a division between the owner of capital and the sellers of labour power, it must be remembered, though clearly manifest in industry as well as in agriculture, could not have been a widespread phenomenon. **Capitalist manufacture must have struck deep roots in the big cities, larger towns and select rural enclaves.** Capitalist manufacture had come into existence, as we have already observed, only lately having enjoyed not more than half-a-century of existence; perhaps even less, but surely not more.

E. The Quantity and Quality of Industrial Products

A great variety of industrial products were produced by artisans, cooperatives and manufactories of Mysore.

Benjamin Heyne identified the following types of products which came to the market for sale in Bangalore alone.

"Women's cloth of different musters and
-Cholies or women's jackets of different musters
-Silk women's cloth of different sorts
-Silk shawls/handkerchiefs
-Shawls
-Silk cholies

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-Silk cloth of five sorts
-Women's dressing cloth of eight sorts
-Turbands
-Broad types of cotton
-Gunnys
-Muslins
-Coarse cotton cloth
-Flowered cloth, silk and cotton
-Combalies
-Tippoo's Tiger or spotted cloth
-Coarse chintz
-Cotton carpets." [357]

The above 18 types of textiles had several varieties each, bringing to at least a few dozen the number of textile varieties that Bangalore alone produced.

Buchanan had this to say about the Bangalore weavers: *"The weavers of **Bangalore** seem to be a very ingenious class of men, and with encouragement to be capable of making very rich, fine, elegant cloth, of any kind that may be in demand...."* [358]

At Chennapatna Buchanan identified the manufacture of bottles, bangles and other glass ware. *"Another manufacture, for which **Chinapatan** is celebrated, is steel wire for strings of musical instruments, which are in great esteem, and are sent to remote parts of India."* [359]

On the glass works at Mathod, Heyne said: *"From these few materials [soda, quartz or compact iron stone, compact peculiar iron stone and copper] the following kinds of glass are made: 1. Biza or mother glass. It is a soft, imperfect; porous glass and is used only as a substratum or basis in the other kinds of glass made here. 2. Red glass. 3. Black glass."* [360]

The following was Buchanan's impression of sugar candy that was manufactured at Sidlaghatta: *"The sugar-candy made here is equal to the Chinese and clayed sugar is very white and fine."* [361]

On the wootz or Indian steel which Heyne collected near Malavalli, he gave the following account: *"Since my arrival in England I have endeavoured to obtain information of what is known here as Indian steel, and of the result of experiments which have been made with it; and I am happy in being permitted to lay before my readers a letter from Mr Stodart, an eminent instrument-maker....*

'Agreeable to your request, I herewith transmit to you a few remarks on the wootz, or India steel. I give them as the results of my own practice and experience.

Wootz in the state in which it is brought from India, is, in my opinion, not perfectly adopted for the purpose of fine cutlery. The mass of metal; is unequal, and the cause of inequality is evidently, imperfect fusion: hence the necessity of repeating this operation by a second and very complete fusion. I have succeeded in equalising wootz, and I now have it in a very pure and perfect state, and in the shape of bars like our English cast steel. If one of these is broke by a blow of a hammer it will exhibit a fracture that indicates steel of a superior quality and high value, and is excellently adapted for

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the purpose of fine cutlery, and particularly for all edge instruments used for surgical purposes.

A very considerable degree of care and attention is required on the part of the workman employed on wootz: The metal must on no account be over heated, either in forging or hardening; the fire ought to be charcoal or good coke....

Upon the whole, the wootz of India promises to be of importance to the manufactures of this country. It is admitted, by the almost universal consent of intelligent workmen, that our English steel is worse in quality than it (Wootz) was some 30 or 40 years ago. This is certainly not what one would expect in the present improved state of chemical science; but so it actually is. The trouble and expense of submitting wootz to a second fusion will, I fear militate against its more general introduction. If the steel makers of India were made acquainted with a more perfect method of fusing the metal, and taught to form it into bars by the tilt hammers, it might then be delivered here at a price not much exceeding that of cast steel. Whether this is worth the consideration of the Honourable Court of Directors of the Company is not for me to judge. I am of the opinion it would prove a source of considerable revenue to the country. I have at this time a liberal supply of wootz, and I intend to use it for many purposes. If a better steel is offered me, I will gladly attend to it; but the steel of India is decidedly the best I have yet met with'." [362]

Heyne in fact went on to suggest that the East India Company could set up an iron and steel plant at Malavalli at great profit.[363]

The constant impression among British colonialists was that India did not know how to produce cast steel. France on its part had still not discovered the process. However, on his visit to a forge at Chitradurga, Heyne changed this opinion. He said: *"I must observe here that this is real cast steel the process of making which has been thought to be known only in England. The French chemists have been lately much engaged in discovering the secret or rather the principles on which the properties of the cast steel depend, but according to their own acknowledgment have only partly succeeded."* [364]

As a result of the growing use of paper which had by then found use even in villages, its production had emerged as an important industry. The details of it are not available; yet we are left with the information that there was one such industry on the banks of the Kabini at Nanjangud.

The rise of the textile industry in Bangalore contributed to the growth of the oil industry in and around the city which was used as the principal medium for the dyeing industry. Several types of oil were pressed by pressers managing single-ox and double-ox run presses. Buchanan says: *"The oil makers of **Bangalore** are a very considerable class of people, and are a kind that use two bullocks in their mill.... The mortar is a block of granite. This class of people are called **Jotiphanada** or **Jyotinagarada Ganagaru**. They express the following kinds of oil: **Wull-Ellu, Huts-Ellu, Kavalu, Cobri, Ipay** and **Hoingay**."* [365]

The rise in commodity production and the qualitative changes in the organisation of it initiated a good amount of mining activity, the chief among which, as we have already seen was iron ore. Buchanan provides us with instances of mining and the process-

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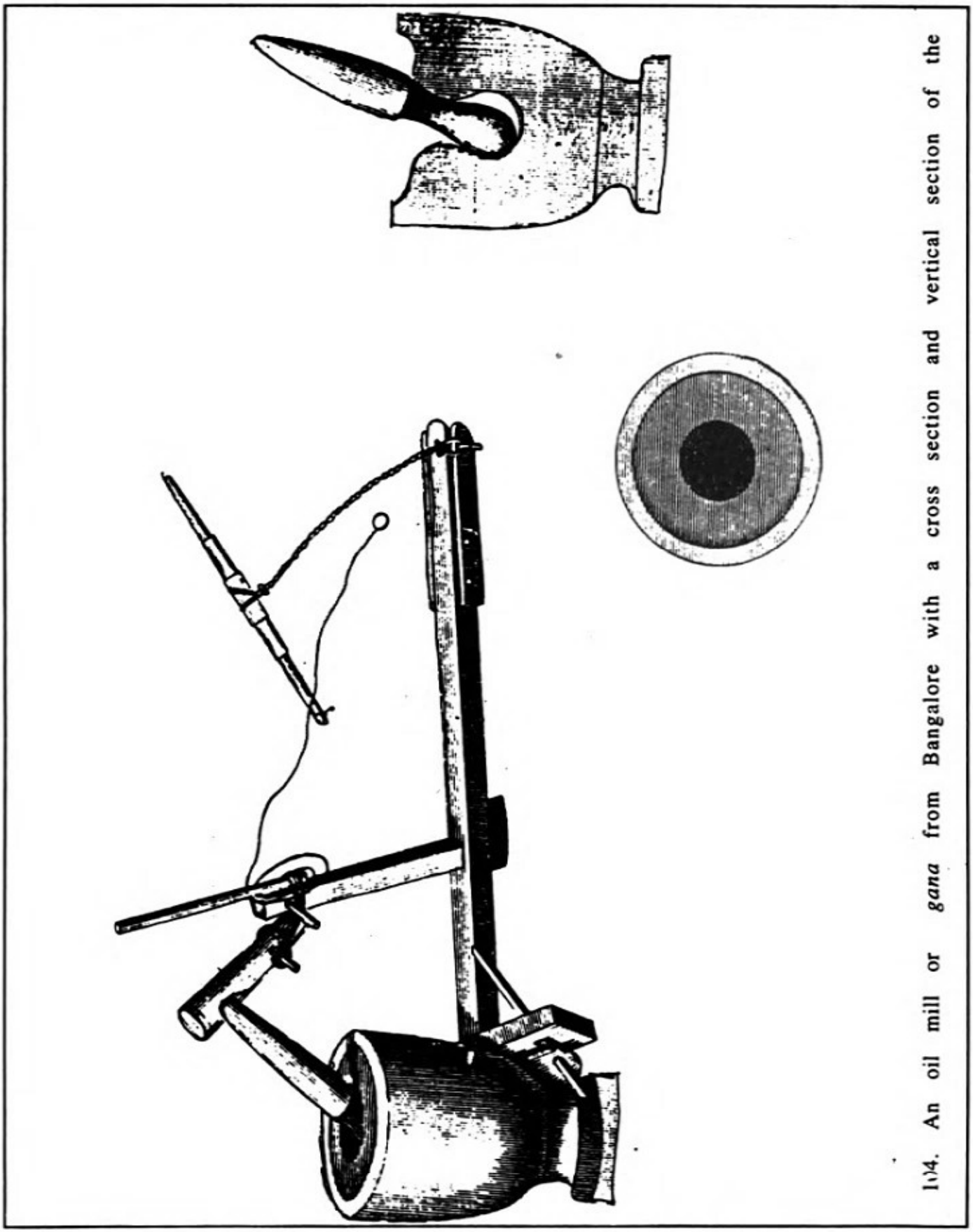

1\4. An oil mill or *gana* from Bangalore with a cross section and vertical section of the

ing of mined material, which however were not big establishments and were conducted by the lower castes.

He describes the processing of limestone by the Malas of Venkatagiri,[366] and the preparation of inland salt by the Voddas.[367]

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Benjamin Heyne tells us: *"Carbonate of Soda is likewise found in the Mysore. The greatest quantity of it is manufactured among the hills of the Chitledroog country. It is mixed with a good deal of salt.... It is sold in all the bazars under the name of soboo. It is manufactured by the washermen, and chiefly used by them. It is employed likewise in bleaching."*[368]

Though we do not have adequate data of the quantitative aspects of commodity production during the period, we may, with available statistics, not be denied a glimpse of it.

In terms of the ordering of industry, the most numerous was undoubtedly the textile sector, followed by the production of blankets, iron and steel, sugar or jaggery, and lastly oil. These five were the leading industries of the period, not only in terms of the volume of commodities they produced and the populations they involved but also by the advancement of the form of production, which in turn only substantiates the phenomenal rise in commodity production that these sectors were associated with.

Benjamin Heyne accounts for the existence of 5,000 looms in Bangalore city alone.[369]

Wilks' Report on the Interior Administration which provides data on Princely Mysore of 1803-1804, states of the existence of 10,180 families of cotton weavers in the province and 318 families of silk manufacturers and a total of 30,942 looms.[370]

Thus it is evident that weaving was an industry which had easily spread beyond the confines of the weaver castes. As a rising industry it drew within its orbit a great deal of families and workers from the various toiling castes. From the above figures we may conclude that while Bangalore which had about 16% of the urban population of Princely Mysore in the late eighteenth century also possessed about 16% of the looms of the region during that period. In other words, Bangalore city alone contributed to the production of about one-sixth of the entire textile output of the State during the period.

The Kuruba population who were the only ones that partook in the production of blankets were said to contain 34,800 families by Wilks.[371]

Accounts of Buchanan and Benjamin Heyne give us an idea of the dispersal and density of the iron and steel forges of the period.

Buchanan came across most of the iron forges in three major pockets. One was the area of Magadi, Madhugiri, Chennarayana Durga, Hagalwadi and Devarayana Durga, forming a near contiguous belt. At Chennarayana Durga and Madhugiri alone Buchanan cites the existence of 19 forges.[372] The second was the pocket around Chitradurga, in which district there were 16 places of its manufacture according to Heyne. The third pocket was around Malavalli. Of this place which was a complex[373] of the metallurgical industry, Heyne writes: *"...there were 40 smelting furnaces in the place, besides a great number of silversmiths and coppersmiths, all in a state of affluence."*[374] **Malavalli surely was a complex run by capitalists.**

As a result of the rise in the production of iron and steel, certain villages came up with names such as Ghettipura or *strong town* and Benkipura or *fire city* (the present Bhadravathi), and mining centres such as Bangarpet or *gold city* and Kemmangundi or

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red-mud-pit a source of iron ore. All these names compel us to look into their demographic composition, which for all practical purposes must be placed under an 'urban' instead of a 'rural' classification.

Wilks' figures talk of the existence of 10,982 families of *"workers in brass, gold and silver smiths, carpenters, smiths, stone cutters and other artificers"* and of a total of 853 forges of iron.[375]

Buchanan's calculations led him to conclude that the 19 forges of Chennarayana Durga and Madhugiri produced a total of 100 tonnes of iron annually,[376] averaging thereby for one forge at 5.2 tonnes per annum. Going by this average then, the 853 forges of the Old Mysore region alone must have produced a total of nearly 4,436 tonnes of iron a year. This was no insignificant achievement since it amounted to an average annual consumption of 9.2 kgs of iron per family during the period. This figure which was indeed quite high must be considered in the light of purchases of iron from the forges by the state, which was perhaps the single biggest market for this product. Such massive iron production, apart from serving the military requirements must have been possible only by fnding fresh avenues created by the expansion of agriculture and the replacement by iron of wood in the manufacture of various means of production.

Wilks' statistics also tells us that there were a total of 2,991 oil mills.[377]

The industrial products of the Mysore Kingdom of the late eighteenth century were then as variegated as they were voluminous. Not just in terms of their production and production organisation, but also in terms of their splendorous quality and sheer quantity they compared well with most European nations of the time, drastically reducing the gap that has been consciously exaggerated by the colonial mind and hungrily swallowed by the collaborating feudal morass, of the distance that separated us from Europe in terms of development--material, intellectual and historical. Yet, of all the bridges, it was that built by state capitalism which reached farthest in historical time delivering us into the epoch of factory production and the yet unaccomplished rule of capital proper.

F. State Capitalism and Birth of the Modern Factory

i) State Encouragement for Capitalist Development

Just as Haidar and Tipu served the interests of merchant capital, they also backed the emergence of industrial capital with a series direct and indirect measures. Most significant was the attitude of the rulers towards encouraging the formation of capitalist manufacture in Bangalore, reflected in their taxation policy. Buchanan makes the issue quite explicit when he says: *"There is a small duty levied here on every loom; and it is judiciously diminished to those who keep many, in order to encourage men of wealth to employ their capital that way. A man who has one loom, pays annually 3 3/4* ***Fanam;*** *2 looms, pay 5* ***Fanams;*** *and a man who keeps more than 2 looms pays one for each 2* ***Fanams.***" [378]

This light taxation may be contrasted with the heavy burdens that Chikkadeveraja Wodeyar imposed, demonstrating therein the profound change in perception towards commodity production in these rulers of Mysore.

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Buchanan, prejudiced as he deeply was against Tipu, just as much as all his contemporary colonialists were, was pretty quizzed to find the smelters of iron having opinions which contradicted his bias.

He writes: *"The late **Sultan** indeed is said to have harassed his subjects exceedingly by making them work at quarries, and also to have been very severe on the smelters of iron; and the people may have suspected, that my inquiries might lead to similar oppression; but according to the iron smelters' own account, the **Sultan** gave them a high price for their iron, and by this great demand afforded them constant employment...."*[379]

The state—which was the pricipal market for iron production, behaved like a benign capitalist customer and did not exercise feudal extortion in its procurement. Clause 78 of Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* bring out this aspect of encouragement to manufacture.

*"If there are ten iorn foundries in your district, you are, by encouragement, to increase them to double the number; and according to the indents and musters sent from the **Huzoor**, you are to have iorn **Dubas** [shells] and steel **kuhuties** [a sort of cutlass or sword] made and forwarded."* [380]

In a speech that Tipu made at a meeting where he had called for an assembly of the leading manufacturers and artisans, he is reported to have said: *"Our economic and commerical policies must be based on growth and dynamism. It is not enough to merely improve our methods of production of the traditional items. We must diversify into new fields of activty suited to the richness of our soil and the genius of our people."* [381]

ii) Tipu's Capitalist Traits

Responding to the changes in the economic base and himself being in the van of such changes, Tipu came to exemplify certain traits which went beyond mercantilism and were infused with the spirit of the industrial capitalist.

Most outstanding in this regard was Tipu's deep interest in science and technology. Charles Stewart in his work, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the Late Tippoo Sultan of Mysore,* writes: *"His father, sensible of the disadvantages under which he himself laboured from want of education, procured for his son the most able masters in all the scienecs...."* [382] As a result Tipu's grounding in science started during his childhood itself, an interest which was to grow with his age and the progress his society made and which he in turn led.

In Tipu's library, Stewart writes, was the *" **Resaleh Rung va Buy**, treatise on the art of dyeing cloths, and of composing perfumes; being a collection of Receipts on these subjects made by order of Tippoo Sultan....*

***Muferredat Der Ilmi Tibb**, a treatise on Botany, Natural History, translated from French and English books; with good etchings of plants, & c."* [383] The above two books were ordered to be translated by Tipu Sultan himself.

Also in his library were *"Hindu"* treatises on Mathematics and Geometry and a translation of Euclid's Geometry was also available. He possessed three books in Persian and four in Arabic concerning the study of Mathematics and Geometry.[384]

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He had 12 books in Persian on Astronomy, of which one included the making and handling of the astrolable.[385]

Tipu had several books on Physics, Medicine and Health. Among them were books on Surgery, Anatomy, a Dictionary of Medicine listed in alphabetical order or the *Bihr al Munafi*. Also there was a book dedicated to Tipu Sultan on midwifery and child care. *Tohfer Mohammedy* was another such book dedicated to him which was a general treatise on Medicine arranged alphabetically, made under his express orders, of the *Complete London Dispensatory*. The translator says in his preface that that the work was the result of the united efforts of all the learned physicians of Europe.

The *Terejumeh Ketabi Angriz* and *Terejumeh Ketabi Freng* were translations committed on the order of Tipu. The first was a translation of an English treatise on electrical and medical experiments; the other a translation of Dr Cockburne's *Treatise on the Twist of the Intestines*.[386] In all, 47 Persian and 14 Arabic books related to the field of Physics and Medicine.

Whenever at Srirangapatna it was the daily habit of Tipu to stay awake till very late in the night in his library. For an idea of how Tipu put some of his knowledge to practice, the following two letters written by him may suffice: "*To Chishty Yar khan and Zainul Abideen (24 May 1786). Your letter of the 17th May was received this day and has informed us of Dowlat Khan's being ill of the stone in the bladder: we have in consequence, sent by post an emetic (to be taken the first day), together with (other proper) medicines for the seven subsequent days. These are all seperately made up in cloth and sealed.*

The way of taking on emetic is this: dissolving the powder in about 4 ***tolah*** *weight of hot water, let him swallow it. After this, whenever he feels inclined to vomit he must drink 8* ***tolah*** *weight of warm water. When he has vomited 5 or 6 times, let him, after an interval of 6 hours have more broth mixed with rice. In the evening, before he eats his dinner, make half a* ***tolah*** *weight of seed of flea-wort, softened with some oil of almonds. By the favour of God, in one or two vomitings the stranguary, or obstruction of urine, will be removed...."*[387]

His second letter addressed to Muhmmad Darvaish and others proceeding to France, dated 3 December 1786, asks for bringing on their return a *"skilful French Physician; a pharmacologist, thoroughly acquainted with and capable of preparing every kind of medicine known in Europe; and lastly an able surgeon."* [388]

Medicine was a science which Tipu was quite adept in experimenting. He effected a careful combination of Yunani, Ayurveda and Allopathy and above all, demonstrated great keenness for surgery. In the Bangalore fort the British found among others, a hospital that he had constructed. However it is not clear as to what facilities it provided.

To Monsieur Cosigny, Tipu wrote on 29 December 1786: *"There is a book which comes from Europe and which treats of the thermometer...get this book translated into Persian and send it to the presence."* [389]

Lally provides us with an interesting account of 1768, when Tipu was still 18 years and the Black Town off Fort St George at Madras was taken by the Mysore army:

"On the appearance of Hyder's cavalry [led by Tipu] seen from the Mount, the servants of Mr Debbonaire [an English merchant] made their escape with his children,

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leaving all the moveables and effects to the Mercy of the enemy. The situation of the house was agreeable to Chaki Shah [a close commandant of Haidar], who chose it for his residence during the time of Tippoo Sultan remained in the environs of Madras. On his [Tipu's] entering the house, he told the gardners that he was a man of peace and that his presence would secure the house from insult. He forbade his people either to take or spoil the smallest thing; and having assured himself that his orders were not infringed, he enquired the name of the proprietor and sent one of his gardners accompanied by one of his own people, to carry him his children's clothes, with fruits and herbs; assuring him that nothing in his house, should be either damaged or stolen, but that he himself would overlook the gardeners and see that they did their duty; and would take care to send him the necessary produce of his garden every day, which he punctually performed. The young prince in a visit to the grand almoner, was desirous of taking a microscope; but the nobleman would not consent, but wrote to Mr Debbonaire to set a price upon the instrument; and it was not till he had received the merchant's second letter, that he consented to offer it as a persent, on his part to the Prince." [390]

Nikhiles Guha says, *"There is enough evidence to show that he [Tipu] was always aware of the need to harness improved methods of technolgy to existing institutions. That he had a scientific bent of mind may be seen from the fact that early in his reign he requsted the Governor of Pondicherry to provide him with thermometers, one telescope and two barometers."* [391]

A Beatson said of Tipu's insatiable thirst: *"He was passionately fond of new inventions, on which he lavished immense sums...."* [392]

Shama Rao tells us that in Tipu's quarters were found a *"....telescope and optical glasses of every size and sight...."* [393]

Tipu's library thus came to be a rerpository for all such technical contrivances and an assortment of manufactures which he painstakingly procured. British descriptions make it a unique combination of a storehouse, a museum, a workshop and a laboratory. Buchanan's description was very apt. He said: *"The private apartments of Tippoo formed a square, in one side of which were the rooms that he himself used. The three sides of the square were occupied by warehouses in which he had deposited a vast variety of goods; for he acted not only as a prince, but also as a merchant."*[394]

It was, above all, Mysore's window to the burgeoning world of science and technology.

Tipu's one constant preoccupation was to scout for and purchase industrial talent from any part of the globe. His attitude was of importing into his dominions the technique of production and consequently, he undertook to popularise it by relying on his bureaucracy. Such importation of technique assumed the form of paying a highly attractive wage to the technicians and industrialists so that they found it worthwhile to settle down in his Kingdom. He was meticulous in learning of the scientific processes by despatching men equipped for the purpose and even with the help of books, encyclopaedias and manuals, he achieved ultimate perfection through experimentation.

Of the latter, the case of sericulture, which Tipu took great pains to study, acquire and popularise is an interesting example.

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In the midst of battle Tipu found time to write the following letter to Syed Mahommed, Killadar of Srirangapatna, on 27 September 1786. *"Burhandeen and Kustury Runga, who were sent to **Bengal**, for the purpose of securing silk worms, are now on their return (to Seringapatam) by way of Sedhout. On their arrival, you must ascertain from them the proper situation in which to keep the aforesaid worms, and provide accordingly. You must, moreover supply for their food (leaves of) the wood or wild mulberry trees, which were formerly ordered to be planted (for this purpose). The number of silk worms from **Bengal** must likewise be distinctly reported to us. We desire, also, to know, in what kind of place it is reccomended to keep them, and what means are to be pursued for multiplying them.*

*There is a vacant spot of ground behind the old palace, lately used as a **Tosheh-Khaneh**, or store house, which was purchased sometime ago with a view to building upon it. Prepare a place somewhere near that situation, for the (temporary) reception of the worms."* [395]

William Kirkpatrick who swore aganist Tipu in his battles with the Mysore army and who later edited Tipu's letters makes the following observation beneath this letter: *"When the peculiar circumstances under which the foregoing letter was written, are adverted to, it will, no doubt, be allowed to furnish a striking proof, both of the coolness and activity of the **Sultan's** mind. He was at the date of it, not only deliberating on the measure to be pursued with respect to Shanoor [Savanur] in planning the future operations of the war on which he was engaged; and in providing for the safety of Burhanudeen's army; but he was in fact, on the eve of a general engagement with the Mahrattahs. Yet all these important and urgent considerations united, were not capable of diverting his attention from any of the minor objects of his interest. Thus in the bustle of the camp, and in the face of an enemy, he could find liesure, and was sufficiently composed, to meditate on the rearing of silk worms."* [396]

Coming from the pen of the enemy, these observations acquire an importance of their own.

Soon after the acquisition of the worms Tipu established 21 silk worm breeding and reeling stations.

At Palahalli and Srirangapatna, Tipu introduced the technique of manufacturing sugar candy which Buchanan described as being *"very fine"*.[397]

In all probability, the importance of this technique which was a result of capitalist manufature, also implied the transplanting of a capitalist process of its production.

Nikhiles Guha writes: *"Care should also be taken to bear in mind the measures that Tipu took for the introduction of advanced technology in his kingdom. Shortly after his accession, he sent an envoy to Constantinople to persuade the Caliph, among other things, to send technicians to Mysore who would be able to make muskets, guns, glass, chinaware and other utilities. In return, Tipu was ready to send out such workmen as were required in the Ottoman Empire."* [398]

A good example of his attempt at encouraging the industrial process of Mysore was the purpose of the despatch of his delegation of ministers and officials to France in 1786. Besides the political import that the mission carried, it had its own econonic significance. This was the first and perhaps only such mission attempted by any Indian ruler of

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the time, achieved by putting the embassy to the French court on sail in vessels constructed in the dockyards of Mysore.

The diaries maintanied and later submitted on return to Tipu, indicate the priorities that Tipu had earmarked for the sea farers. **If the visit, nearly a century before, to the Mughal court by the emissaries of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar led to the consolidation of the merchant class and to the consequent smashing of warlordism which created favourable conditions for the spread of commerce and commodity production; this ambassadorial mission sent a hundred years later to a greater distance and with a loftier objective was pregnant with all the desires of seeding Mysore with factory production and thus creating grounds for the rise of industrial capital, so that its consolidation should have pressed forward with a more thoroughgoing antifeudal programme.**

AM Tabard, in his article *Tipu Sultan's Embassy to the French Court in 1788* , provides us with extracts from the diaries of French contemporaries. We have no access to the detailed reports these ambassadors filed to the Mysore government. The excerpts offer us only a key hole view, yet they disclose that **the needle of Tipu's endeavours were undoubtedly fixed in the direction of capitalism.**

The three ambassadors and their retinue of 45 reached Toulon, France, on 10 June 1788.

*" **Thursday, June 12**: At 5 pm two of the ambassadors with their two children and some persons of their retinue got into their coaches to go and see the Royal Foundry.... On entering the foundry, the ambassadors were saluted by a discharge of 21 guns. They were present at the casting of 6 howitzers at the canonade. After having been shown round the foundry, their Excellencies were taken to the arsenal....*

They also visited the park of artillery where they expressed their surprise at the number of guns; also the warehouse, the workshops, the fencing school and the corderie which impressed them by its length.... They seem, writes Malonet, 'to take interest in all they see and their questions denote men anxious to learn....'

***Friday, June 13**: Today their Excellencies visited all the factories and also the port in all its details.*

***Friday June 20**: Their Excellencies visited the arsenal and the docks."* [399]

Among others, the ambassadors brought back with then to Mysore a physician, a surgeon, a smelter, a carpenter, a weaver, a blacksmith, a locksmith, a cutler, a watchmaker, a dyer and two of the king's own gardners.[400]

In the second mission that he sent to France in 1797, Tipu *"instructed his representatives to the French government to recruit workmen to the following strength: `Ten cannon founders; ten ship builders, ten manufacturers of chinaware, ten glass and mirror makers, ten makers of ship blocks (literally wheels) and wheels (or engines) for raising water, and other kinds of wheel-work, and workmen versed in fine gold plating, are required in Khodad Sircar'."* [401]

Of all, this last mission was imbued with the greatest potential. **It sought the steam engine for Mysore,** locomotive of the industrial revolution; from the power of the piston shafts of which the wheels of centuries of capitalism had turned changing the face of not only Europe but the whole world so that it would never again appear the same as old.

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A trait of paramount importance in a capitalist has historically always been the campaign for freeing labour from its extra-economic feudal bonds. The chief slogan of the rising capitalist against feudalism has always remained his struggle for free-labour without which the capitalist edifice could never have hoped to rise. Tipu was an active propagandist and adherent of this capitalist standpoint, so much so, that **it inspired him to glorify free-labour and he hailed the creation of the wage worker making it an indivisible component part of his culture.**

Tipu was firmly against unpaid labour or corvee, and in all his transactions we find him strictly adhering to the principle of making wage payments whenever the state utilised the labour services of the toilers. In fact he even repeatedly warned and censured his officers for any unpaid exactions they made.

In the earlier sections of this chapter we have seen how Tipu was very prompt in paying the salaries of his soldiers and bureaucracy. There was a punctuality and system about it which often mocked the British colonialists at their recourse to pre-capitalist forms. In his business transactions with the merchants of his Kingdom or outside, he was always punctual in his payments. In the purchase of iron from the forges, his promptness, as we have seen, surprised even a colonialist as knowledgeable as Buchanan.

Clause 35 of the *Land Revenue Regulations* informs us about the use of the labour services by the state in the construction and repair of irrigation tanks in the village: *"A detailed account of the measurement of repair works by established standards was to be kept in the office of the **Mutsuddies** and **Shambogues** of the village. Workers were to recieve wages against receipts of the same."* [402]

Clause 40 says: *"**Hircarrahs,** [most of whom were Brahmanas] who are employed to press workmen, frequently use them ill and extort money from them—this must be enquired into, and forbid...."* [403]

Clause 43 says: *"The **Ryots** of villages are accustomed to expend their money upon travellers... they are now forbid to spend their money upon travellers...."* [404]

Clause 44 reads: *"You are to see that the people belonging to the **Atthavanam** [revenue servants of the taluk] are regularly mustered, and are to pay them their wages into their own hands, according to the establishment."* [405]

Clause 48 states: *"**Amils, serishtadars, shamboges** & c. when they visit the villages, have been accustomed to take **Aloosa** [diet money] from the **Ryots.** There is no need to do this in future; and whoever shall transgress in this respect shall fall under the displeasure of the government."* [406]

Clause 91 reads: *"The **sair** horsemen must also take straw from the **ryots** by equitable purchase, and not by violence, the observance of this rule is enjoined to them in their Regulations.*

*If any person takes straw by force, you are to seize him and send him to the **Huzoor;** and if you cannot seize him, you are to ascertain his name, and the name of his **Risaldar** and **Jemadar** and report them to the **Huzoor** that he may be sent for and punished."* [407]

Clause 4 of Tipu's *Commercial Regulations* states: *"The workmen of every description (employed on this service) must be paid with the utmost regularity...."* [408]

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All these above excerpts from the official regulations of Tipu stick to and repeat the common theme that **all forms of unpaid labour are not to be tolerated and upholds the principle of paid or wage-labour.**

In the hundreds of thousands of workers that the state employed in the innumerable construction and industrial projects, wage-payment was strictly adhered to, and in one instance Tipu's knowledge of the failure to pay such labour during a road construction projcet led him to punish the Amildar involved after paying up all the arrears that were due to the workers.

Tipu, as we have seen was very keen on attracting merchants to trade with his dominions and to this effect, his government bestowed upon them various incentives and concessions. But even with them Tipu never compromised on the question of making wage payments to the workers as the following letter written to Yakub and other Armenian merchants of 11 January 1787 indicates: *"The duties upon goods (as you may import into our dominions) are without exception remitted. Bring therefore, with entire confidence to our ports, and into our kingdom, either by sea or land, your silk stuffs (and other) merchandise, and there freely buy and sell. Where ever you may bring your goods, there a place shall be assigned for your residence: and if you should, at any time, be in want of workmen and labourers, the same shall be furnished you on hire, by our* ***Talukdars.***" [409]

Tipu's essay on free-labour, although exaggerated, nevertheless remains an admirable attempt. It carries with it a clear notion of the nation that he intended to build, seeking substantiation from history as no philosopher or historian did till at least 100 years after his demise. It was the manifesto of a capitalist in the making. A capitalist who was atonce also a phiolsopher and historian, delivering himself and his people to the Age of Reason.

"The Pharaohs built the pyramids with the labour of their slaves. The entire route of the Great Wall of China is littered with the blood and bones of men and women forced to work under the whip and the lash of the slave drivers. Countless millions were enslaved and chained, and thousands upon thousands bled and died to make it possible that the magnificient structures of Imperial Rome, Babylon, Greece and Carthage should be built. To my mind, every great work of art and architecture—be it in countries to the East of India or in the west—is a monument not so such to the memory of the men who ordered them to be built but to the agony and toil, blood and tears of those unfortunates who were driven to death in the effort to build it.

What does such a monument, standing impassive, in brick or stone, commemorate? What is its message to all wayfarers who pass it? I belive its message is that here around it the ruin of the empire, founded on tyranny and anguish of people driven from their homes, chained and enslaved so that a vain and haughty emperor might harbour illusions of his glory." [410]

iii) *Karkhane* and Industrial Capital

The state of Mysore employed hundreds of workers, some on a regular basis and others on a job to job basis. The state, as we have already seen undertook extensive civil projcets in different parts of the Kingdom, whether it be the construction of irrigation

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works, the building of roads or inland waterways, or the construction of forts. These three kinds of civil activity went on simultaneously at several places at any given point of time, allowing for the constant employment of a few thousand workers. Wellesley said that *"On the fortification of Seringapatam...six thousand men have been at work for nearly six years...."* [411] All these workers, it must be remembered were wage-workers, thereby generating capitalist relations between the workers and the state.

CK Kareem tells us of the use of labour for road work in Kerala: *"Another point that would be reckoned with is the humam labour utilised for the purpose of this major scheme. The labourers and peasants of Kerala were employed in large numbers.*

Thus perhaps for the first time in the history of Kerala, labourers on a massive scale were employed by the state for the public undertakings. As no one accuses Tipu of adminstering forced labour we can safely presume that the employed were paid for their labour which was again an unknown usage in the Kerala society, where the slaves and tenants were forced to undertake the work allotted to them." [412]

The dockyards of Bhatkal and Mangalore also had a great number of workers. The Mangalore dock is supposed to have employed a thousand labourers, carpenters, smiths and foremen during the peak of ship building activity.

Regarding the industires which Tipu established, our information is very sketchy. An investigation of source material in this regard is sure to produce a fund of data, providing us with very essential material capable of linking the period with the age of capitalist industrial production. Till then we have to make-do with the meagre material we have and found our conclusions on them.

At the outset, we must remind ourselves that state capital had ventured into a very distinct area. It did not produce for the market. Rather, state capital was concentrated only in the sphere of state requirements, principally of defence and allied needs. This characteristic feature of the nature of industrial production need not in anyway obviate the fact that definite relations of production had emerged between capital and wage-labour and the process of production contained a defined form of production organisation. They bore out quite distinctly, all the features that Marx described regarding capitalist production: *"Capitalist production only then really begins, as we have already seen, when each individual capital employs simultaneously a comparatively large number of workers; when consequently the labour process is carried on an extensive scale and yileds relatively large quantities of products. A greater number of labourers working together, at the same time, in one place (or, if you will, in the same field of labour), in order to produce the same sort of commodity under the mastership of one capitalist, constitutes, both historically and logically, the starting point of capitalist production."* [413]

State capital under enlightened absolutist political rule fulfilled all these conditions, which Marx described, satisfactorily. Over and above them, some sectors of state capital also utilised machinery, which Marx relates as a condition and the hallmark for the emergence of the modern factory, crystallising the division and causing the socialisation of labour within the production organization and giving birth not just to the modern proletariat but also to industrial capital per se which began to find the express need from then on to tap the service of science and thereby cause its advancement both in terms of

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theory and as it found particular application in the form of technology. Tipu's curiosity for the new, penchant for experiment, an eye for invention, search for science and thirst for technology ought to be understood in this background if the yearning—of the man and the era is at all to be properly grasped.

State capital exploited the labour power of the workers particularly at the four regional centres of the Kingdom: Sriangapatna, Bangalore, Nagar, Chitradurga and Mangalore. The manufactories established by the state were called Taramandal,[414] and in Bangalore city, a part of the area is known to this day us Taramandalpet. MH Gopal states of the existence of a *"big government iron manufactory"* at Mangalore.[415]

It must be rememberd that till then Mangalore had not witnessed the production of iron on a significant scale and this must have been, perhaps the very first of the manufactories of the coast. How exactly salt production was undertaken—an item of flourishing commodity production, remains unclear.

Kirmani says: *"He instituted manufactories for the fabrication or imitation of the cloths of all countries, such as shawls, velvet, Kimkhub (cloth of gold), broad cloth (European) and he expended thousands of pounds in these undertakings."*

Herein we find an instance of state capital gearing up for production to cater to the market. Machine-made European cloth was broader than what was woven on the handlooms of India then.[416] Thus one sees an attempt by Tipu Sultan to produce and in all probability compete with British textiles which had already begun to ravage the ecomomies of the areas under British colonial rule but also had, as a consequence of its pentration into the Mysore market, began to cause destabilisation here as well.

A host of references provide us with knowledge of large scale manufacture of guns, two and there barreled muskets, pen knives, cloths, daggers called *sufdura*, and a kind of shield woven and formed so as to resist a musket ball.[417]

At Bangalore, were found *"a mint, a gunpowder factory, a foundry for casting brass cannons, an equipment factory, a unit for the manufacture of French carbines...."*[418]

Praxy Fernandes says *"The bewildering variety of manufacturing enterprises he set up within the space of a few years was truly astonishing—factories for the manufacture of watches, cutlery, hour glasses, scissors, scientific instruments, factories for production of war weapons, guns, musket, carbines and rockets, foundries for casting cannon, a gunpowder factory, a paper mill and glass-ware units. Hundreds of foreign techinicians were brought in, Frenchmen, Germans, Turkss, Arabs, Chinese; craftsmen, gunsmiths, watch makers, cutlers bringing with them their technical knowhow and the vision of a modern world. No other sovereign in Indian history had given such an impetus to industrial production."* [419]

Of this exhaustive list of manufactures, we may pay attention to a few select items that were produced. Guha tells us that the *"mill"* set up at Srirangapatna to manufacture paper was *"big"*, which, in all probability means that machinery was employed for the purpose.[420]

In an earlier part of this chapter we have, in discerning the exhaustive spread of commodity production, seen how it was attended to by the state, by its establishment of a dozen mints throughout the kingdom and the mass production of coins. Some of Henderson's observations on the coinage of the time can help us make fruitful deductions. He says: *"It may be doubted if any coin more attractive in this respect [decorative*

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value] than Tipu's double rupee has ever been struck in India." [421] Again, he says, *"Nowhere else is Tipu's love for innovation better seen than in his coinage."* And elsewhere, he adds, *"....many of his gold and silver coins exhibit a highly peculiar and characteristic milling...."* [423]

We have information on the existence of a machine for the minting of coins in the Ikkeri Kingdom, pre-dating the period of Haidar and Tipu by a century at least. This was the precedent. And what was its development? An aesthetic beauty derived from standardisation in mass production. Can the role of machinery yet be ruled out?

In the case of the production of guns, the stamp of the machine was more explicit.

Beatson, who was among the colonial officers to storm Bangalore in the course of the Third Anticolonial War thus accounts for what he saw: *"Within the fort there were....11 armouries for making and finishing small arms; two foundries of cannon; 3 buildings with machines for boring guns and musquets...."* [424]

Home, another participant in the war, had this to say about the machines in Bangalore: *"They [Haidar and Tipu] established here...a foundry for brass cannon, a machine for boring them, another for Musket barrels, which will bore a hundred and thirty at once...."* [425]

On the energy source required to operate such heavy machinery, Shama Rao writes: *"A great number of iron ordnance....were in general cast in Tippu's own foundry where a degree of perfection, it is stated, had been attained in every stage of the process. And even what was then the recent invention of boring guns perpendicularly had been introduced, the machinery being kept in motion by water."* [426]

As we have earlier stated, in 1786 itself, Tipu's inventory spoke of the existence of 6 lakh guns and muskets and 22,000 cannon. In 1792, the Bangalore fort alone had stocked itself with nearly a lakh muskets. **Without introducing machinery; production on this scale would have been unimaginable.**

Guha says that *"The ammunition factory at Bednore produced 20,000 guns and muskets annually."* [427] This amounts to an average production of 58 guns and muskets a day. If Bidnur (Nagar) alone had such advanced capacity, the Taramandals at Bangalore and Srirangapatna must surely have, with a greater degree of mechanisation, produced more.

What conclusions do these facts lead us to?

First and foremost, they drive home the point that **modern capitalist production was in existence for the last few decades of eighteenth century Mysore.**

The modern factories set up in the Taramandals which were literally **industrial complexes** or organised under the aegis of state capital, were known as *karkhana*, a word etymologically Persian, which has entered into the Kannada lexicion as *karkhane* and signifies, not petty artisan industry or a manufactory, but the unmistakable machine-based factory system always. Thus it is important to remind ourselves that Kannada had already acquired words which signified the new economic realites which its land had given birth to.

All state capitalist industrial production either assumed the form of a manufactory or that of a modern factory or karkhane. The lower order of commodity production did not atract state investment. **This is a characteristic feature of state**

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capital of the time, (and perhaps even after), that owing to its capacity to centralise extensive resources, its investment quickly assumes advanced forms. Concentration, a distinguishing feature of state capital, carries with it the capacity to atonce concentrate capital in the form of heavy machinery, without having to pass through the various lower stages of production organisation. Thus state capital in Karnataka paved way not only for the qualitative change from the manufactory to the modern factory, but also leapt through several gradations of the modern factory to achieve a stage which was then current in industrial Europe. Hence it would be desireable to see the several manufactories of the Taramandals also as **anxillaries**, or as Lenin said, *"outside departments"* of the central establishment. **What emerges as a result, is not isolated Karkhanes in a puddle of manufactories, but rather an industrial complex, most advanced and integrated with the less advanced, like a battleship cruising with a flotilla of small vessels.** Tipu could not have missed the political significance of state industrial capital just as he waas aware of the role of the state as a merchant. When at Srirangapatna, Tipu is said to have received daily reports on *"the work done in the arsenals, manufactories etc."* [428]

The advantage was that for a Kingdom where capitalist relations had not yet matured, but found itself encircled by colonialism which issued forth from an advanced industrial base, state capital was an insurance and a reliable foundation to temporarily protect one's market while at the same time steer and catch up by a proces of nationalist industrialisation initiated by the leverage of its concentrated resources.

The concentration of capital could lead not only to consolidated efforts at inovation; missile technology, double barrel pistols, mints, broad cloth and hydraulic boring machines which are a few examples, but also the outright purchase and accomodation of advanced technology such as the steam engine.

The discovery of an *"equipment factory"* in one of the Taramandal's is of great import. As Marx said, the assumption by capital, in the process of its growth, of the production of the means of production always constitutes a turning point in its progress.[429]

Thus state capital of mercantile Mysore carried with it an advanced component which served two simultaneous purposes at one and the same time. It resembled the elegant double barrel pistol which the karkhanes of Srirangapatna produced. From one barrel it intended to fire at the stumbling block which obstructed the development of the home market for factory production. From the other it planned to strike at colonialism by accommodating modern means of production such as reaching out for the steam engine.

But, unfortunately, this was not to be.

In a flourish, colonialism severed the hand from the torso even as the palm was yet to firmly clasp the pistol. State capital was bled to death.

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9. GLIMPSES OF THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF HAIDAR AND TIPU

A. Thoroughgoing Anticolonialism

In earlier sections of this chapter we have looked into a few aspects of Haidar and Tipu's anticolonialism, its social source and their economic and military endeavour to contend with colonialism. Let us here look into some more facets of this preoccupation of their lives, the pursuit of which consumed most of their energies.

i) Influence of Industrial Capital

The mercantile roots of the Mysore state's anticolonialism is by now clear to us. However, **another dimension to the consistent opposition to British colonialism stemmed from the changing nature of the industrial base of the social formation and the State of Mysore. Although one ought not to exaggerate the spread of capitalist cooperation, manufacture and the factory, as semi-feudal relations continued to predominate and stamp its impress on most of society, it would at the same time not do to loose sight of the significance of industrial capital, however limited it was. Mysore was, as we have seen, experiencing the early phases of the transition of merchant capital into industrial capital both in the private and state sectors of the economy. The contest with colonialism served as an external (negative) impulse in hastening this transformation especially since state power was already partly shared by the merchant class.** As leaders of the enlightened absolutist state—Haidar and Tipu—were quick to perceive this underlying transformation and already began to respond most positively to the metamorphosis of the economic base.

Industrial capital which was assuming its maturation generated in the consciousness of Haidar and Tipu the earliest manifestation of the class interests of the national bourgeoisie. The self-respect and patriotism which capital generates acquired varied forms. One such was its reflection in the gifts that these rulers made to the French King. Whitehill, the Madras Governor, wrote to Warren Hastings in 1778, about what should otherwise have been a trifling matter if it had not reflected the direction state capital was assuming in Mysore. *"A few days ago Hyder sent a letter and some presents to the King of France...accompanied by the following presents, a pair of pistols, a pair of three chambered rifles, a pen knife the handle of which is studded by diamonds and several pieces of broad cloth and velvet."* [430]

Again, like his father, Tipu, who on the voyage of his emissaries to the French King, sent among other gifts, one which he valued above all. It was a double barrel pistol packed in an ornamental box, a feat of technology which the French had not yet achieved.

These gifts that the Mysore rulers sent were quite unique in that they were the products of industrial manufacture. **It was in the nature of merchant capital to grasp the advantage of industrial capital since any development of industry only meant a greater volume of business for the merchant.** This intertwining of interests always made the over lapping of mercantile and industrial capital rather difficult to distinguish since in consciousness they reinforced one another.

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This dovetailing, the ultimate result of which was to strengthen the patriotism of these rulers was seen when the offer of the British colonialists on the eve of the storming of Srirangapatna to make up with them and sign the Subsidiary Alliance, just as a host of meek Indian princes and warlords had done, was rejected by Tipu with the least vacillation.[431]

Beatson wrote of Tipu that: *"In the morning of the 4th [the day when the fort was stormed and Tipu slain], however on examining the works [breach in the fort] himself, his natural perception discovered to him the danger of his situation, but he never seems to have had an idea of yielding up his capital, even in the last extremity."* [432]

ii) A Prolific Pen

Haidar was illiterate. Yet Tipu, a man of letters, compensated for his father's illiteracy. Tipu penned several major works. They included the *Fathul Mujahidin* of which we have seen earlier in this chapter. His *Land Revenue Regulations* and *Commercial Regulations* are documents which we have also been able to look into. The fourth was the *Register of Tipu's Dreams*. *"Tipu had a special interest in the art of Calligraphy and he himself wrote a book on the rules of Calligraphy called* ***Risaladar Khatt-i Tarzi-Muhammadi.*** *He was also reputed to have written a book on Astrology called Zafarabad."* [433] We also find mention of another book entitled *Tarikhi -Khodadady* or *Annals of the Mysore Government* which is an incomplete book written by Tipu on the history of his government.[434] There is no definite account of the precise number of books that Tipu wrote. These seven works apart, Charles Stewart discovered eleven books which related to Tipu's correspondence in his library.[435]

There were also three memorandum books of Tipu which were later shipped to Britain.[436] Apart from these there have been various speeches and minutes of Tipu during his meetings and observations on the various reports that his civil and military officers sent him which have been lost to us, either buried in archives overseas or destroyed.

Of Tipu's diligent paper work Munro wrote in a letter to his father: *"He had an active mind which never suffered him to be idle.... He wrote many hours every day, either a journal of orders issued by himself, and of reports received by spies, vakeels, or commanders of detachments; or memorandums respecting intended promotions, embassies, repairs of forts, marriages of his principal officers.... Besides this much of his time was consumed in signing papers for he not only signed all public acts, but likewise the innumerable letters and orders which were continually passing from the different officers to all parts of the empire."* [437]

The following quotation from Beatson tells us more of Tipu's intellectual pursuits: *"He generally passed the evening with his three eldest sons, one or two of the principal officers of each of the departments of state, a Cauzy and Moonshy Hubbeeb Oolah [his Secretary]. All these usually sat down to supper with him; and Hubbeeb Oollah asserts, that his conversation was remarkably lively, entertaining and instructive. During this meal, he was fond of reciting passages from the most admired historians and poets; sometimes he amused himself with sarcasms upon the* ***Caufer*** *(or infidels) and enemies of the Circar and often discoursed upon learned and religious subjects with the Cauzy and Moonshy. Having dismissed his company, which he always did immediately after*

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the repast, he was accustomed to walk about by himself or exercise; and when tired, to lie down on his couch and read a book, either upon the subject of religion or history until he fell asleep." [438]

Of all these works we have the full translations of only his *Commercial Regulations* and *Land Revenue Regulations*. About all his other works we remain in the dark, and it may be said that unless one delves through all of them any measure of the man and the period is bound to remain incomplete.

Yet, from what little we know of his works, **one constant theme which preoccupies them is the desire to drive out the colonialist.** Of this passion which haunted this patriot par-excellence, Sheik Ali says that the *Register of Tipu Sultan's Dreams* were *"written by Tipu's own hand and they are 38 in number. They are valuable for knowing the inner working of Tipu's mind towards the English...dreams...help us to know the psychology of the man.... His passion to defeat the English haunted him as much in sleep as when he was awake. Most of his dreams relates his success over the English."* [439]

In Sigmund Freud's words, this then would have been his life's cherished *"wish fulfillment"*. Sheik Ali was only echoing Beatson who said of Tipu's book of dreams: *"Of some of them [his dreams] it appears, that (war) and conquest and the destruction of Caufirs [meaning the English] were subjects of a sleeping (no less than) that of his waking thoughts."* [440]

iii) Epithets, Utterances and of Aesthetic Taste

After his victory in the first Anticolonial War, Haidar ordered a cartoon to be made while he was still at Madras. After signing a treaty with the defeated British he ordered the picture to be hung at the entrance of Fort Saint George, the British headquarters in the south, of which Lally provides us with a vivid description: *"There was fixed to the gate of Fort St George, called the Royal Gate, a design, in which was seen Hyder Ali Khan seated under a canopy, upon a pile of cannon; Mr Dupre [deputed by the East India Company, London, to negotiate peace with Haidar] and the other ambassador [Boschier] being on their knees before him. Hyder held in his right hand the nose (This gentleman is dignified with the nose of an enormous magnitude) of Mr Dupre, drawn in the form of an elephant's trunk which he shook for the purpose of making him vomit Guineas and Pagodas that were seen issuing from the mouth of this plenipotentiary. In the background appeared Fort St George; and on one of the bastions, the Governor and Council were drawn on their knees, holding out their hands to the Nabob. On one side of the Council, was a large mastiff growling at Hyder, the letters JC (for John Call) being marked on his collar; and behind the mastiff stood a little fur dog, busily employed licking his posteriors. This last animal was adorned with a star, such as the Chevalier de Christ, Colonel Call's confidant, wore. At a distance were seen the English camp, and general Smith holding the treaty of peace in his hand, and breaking his sword."* [441]

How splendorous a beginning for the genre of the cartoon and political satire in India.

The tiger became the monogram of the Mysore government associated with Tipu's valour in fighting the British.

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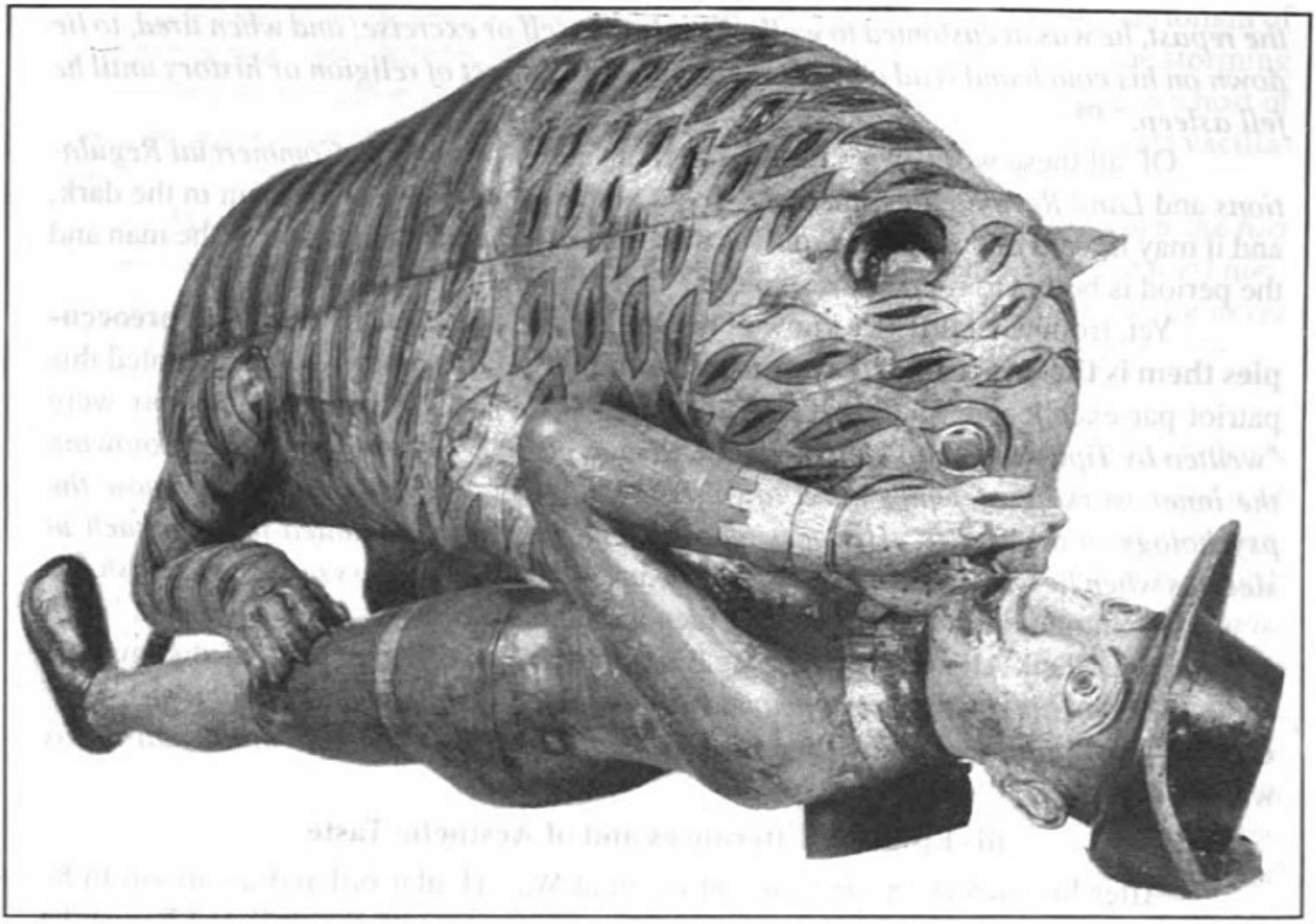

105. A life sized wooden tiger, the monogram of Tipu's Mysore, mauling a British soldier. A key operated the cords in the tiger replicating its growls and the shrieks of the soldier. This toy, kept in Tipu's palace, was an object of amusement for his guests. It was stolen by the British and now decorates the Albert Museum, London.

James Forbes wrote, *"Most of the cannon cast during the reign of Tippu were ornamented with the representation of a tiger devouring a European.... He adopted as the emblem of his state...the figure of the royal tiger, whose head and stripes constituted the chief ornaments of his throne and of almost every article which belonged to him."* [442]

Modern technology was put to good use in making a toy which adorned the durbar of Tipu. On the fall of Srirangapatna the Musical Tiger, just as all the other riches, was shipped to London. It today adorns the Albert Memorial Hall and is one of the many gems that the British imperialists have in their possession, stolen from their colonies, and with no intention of returning any of these treasures gained by plunder.

The following is a British account of it: *"It was a toy of this great Sultan, representing a tiger preying on the body of an English officer, and so constructed that by turning a handle, the animal's growl mingled with the shrieks of his dying victim."* [443]

Describing the contrivance, Shama Rao says: *"In a room was found a curious piece of mechanism made of wood representing a royal tiger in life in the act of devouring a prostrate man and within the body of the animal was a row of keys of natural notes acted upon by the rotation of certain barrels in the manner of a hand organ and which produced sounds intended to resemble the cries of a person in distress, intermixed with the roar of the tiger."* [444]

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106. Haidar Ali as a young man.

Haidar and Tipu were fond of using certain epithets when it came to referring to the British colonialists. The more popular ones have trickled down, recorded by the British sense of decency and gentlemanliness obviously shocked to their wits end by uncouth rustics who rose to become kings.

Tipu's letters talk of the colonialists as *"white dogs"*.[445]

This must have been an appellation his father must have enjoyed using since that was exactly how the British colonialist was described in the cartoon which adorned the Royal Gate of Fort St George.

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107. Haidar Ali a few years before his death.

In a letter to his father in 1797, Munro wrote of Tipu: *"After the reverse...of 1792, the rage of novelty, instead of abating, increased, he issued more regulations, not only to the principal officers of state, but to those in the most subordinate situations--to the persons who had the charge of his gardens, of his buildings, of feeding his bullocks and his elephants & c.... Most of them contain an exordium by himself, setting forth the excellence of loyalty and the true faith, and endeavouring to inspire his subjects with a detestation of caffers, or infidels, that is to say Europeans in general, but particularly Englishmen, by lavishing curses and execretions upon them. Happening on a day to pick up his instruction to the Superintendent of his Bullocks, the first line I read was, 'a caffer--a dog--a hog, are all three brothers in the same family'."* [446]

Tipu made it a point to make anti-British engravings on the guns and weapons and even ammunition that his karkhanes produced. *"On most of the furzees and blunder-busses found in the palace of Tippu, the following inscription in Persian was seen. 'This incomparable piece, belonging to the Sultan of the East, which has no equal but in the most vivid lightning, will annihilate the enemy that it strikes, although fate should otherwise have ordained him to live....'*

The following is a translation of an inscription on the stone found at Seringapatam which was to have been set up in a conspicuous place in the fort: 'Oh Almighty God! dispose the whole body of infidels! scatter their tribe, cause their feet to stagger! Overthrow their councils! change their state! destroy their every root! cause death to be near them, cut off from them the means of sustenance! shorten their days! be their bodies the constant object of their cares (ie, infest them with diseases), deprive their eyes of sight, make black their faces (ie, bring shame and disgrace on them) destroy in them the organs of speech! slay them as Shedaud (ie, the prince who presumptuously aimed at establishing a paradise for himself and was slain by command of God), down them as

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Pharoah was downed, and visit them with severity by thy wrath. Oh Avenger! Oh Universal Father! I am depressed and overpowered, grant me thy assistance'.

This inscription should have been engraved after the conclusion of the Cornwallis Treaty. It shows Tipu's inveterate rancour and determined enemity to the English...." [447]

Haidar and Tipu, the son more than the father, have made very profound and truly inspiring statements regarding their clash with colonialism. Some have been authenticated and some others have been attributed to them.

In his letter to Zeman Shah, Munro cites Tipu as having written: *"Please God, the English shall become food for the unrelenting swords of the pious warriors."* [448]

A Beatson writes: *"His thoughts were constantly bent on war and military preparations. He has been frequently heard to say, that in this world he would rather live two days like a tiger, than 200 years like a sheep."* [449]

Beatson adds *"The British government, in particular, was the object of his irreconcilable hatred; which he often expressed in public, and especially, on occasion in his Durbar, when he declared 'that a nice sense of honour should be the predominant feature in the character of a king; and that one who had suffered misfortunes from the superiority of his enemies, should never be appeased until he had obtained ample revenge. That, for his part, he should every day seek the most likely means of effecting the ruin of his enemies, and that his mind was principally occupied in the contemplation of his object'. 'The means I have taken'; he added, 'to keep in remembrance the misfortunes I experienced six years ago (alluding to the conquest of Marquis Cornwallis) from the malice of my enemies, are to discontinue sleeping in a cotton bed, and to make use of a cotton one: when I am victorious, I shall resume the bed of cotton'."* [450]

Beatson again informs us of Tipu's attitude during the time Srirangapatna was stormed during the Fourth Anticolonial War. *"It appeared from some of his expressions, that he had resolved on defending the fort to the last extremity. He had often been heard to say; that as a man could only die once it was of little consequence when the period of his existence might terminate."* [451]

Tipu burned with anticolonial fire and that was what he breathed into the heart of the British.

iv) Student of Global Politics

Tipu was a keen student of global politics. **He not only grasped the importance of international events, but sought to build the solidarity of the nations oppressed by British colonialism and utilise the friendship of those having a contradiction with it out of their own imperial interests. Haidar had set in motion his interest in the need to study international political developments.**

The presence of a number of foreigners from Europe, the Middle East and China pursuing various professions from being factory hands and technicians to soldiers or commanders and mere travellers or clergymen--were a rich source of discourse for Tipu. His British prisoners too were a means to enlarge his fund of political knowledge so that the British colonialist could be more sharply discerned and the broadest political strategy laid for his defeat. Tipu presents a picture of vivid contrast in this respect to the lot of the feudal princes of India who fattened on ignorance and epitomised a crass vegetable exist-

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ence. Even the princely sires that later made it to England proved they were no more than bloated country bumpkins.

Tipu's interest and grasp of international politics grew from his voracious reading of French newspapers and the philosophers of the French revolution.

Fernandes writes: *"He spoke several languages--Persian, Hindustani, Kannada and a little Marathi. Michaud records that Tippu Sultan was well versed in several European languages. It is not clear what these languages were, for the Sultan certainly used interpreters when dealing with the English. However, Tippu Sultan was fluent in the French language. He had studied Islamic theology on the one side and modern sciences on the other. In close companionship from his youth with French officers, young Tippu was not only conversant with world politics but had also smelt the fresh breezes of nationalistic thought and philosophy which were sweeping away the cobwebs of old Europe. He was aware of the new European age of reason, the age of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot and the Encyclopaedists."* [452] Fernandes also claims that Tipu had read all of them.[453]

Tipu ruled Mysore during the course of the French bourgeois revolution. Quite against the interests of the French Governor at Pondicherry he had *"sheltered a number of Frenchmen who were driven out of Pondicherry. The agents of the French revolutionaries were entertained in his court and they publicly preached French revolutionary doctrines in Mysore."* [454]

While this was the enthusiasm he displayed before the revolution of 1789, once after its success, he evinced a greater interest in it.

Tipu encouraged the organisation of the Jacobin club among the Frenchmen of Srirangapatna. Thus he cast his lot not with the constitutional monarchist bourgeoisie of the French revolution, but, with the more determined, radical and thoroughgoing force of the French revolution--the Jacobins. Tipu also became an honourary member of the Jacobin Club and donned the red beret of the French revolutionists.[455]

Although in his typically caustic colonialist style, Wilks nevertheless provides us with a picture of the celebration in Srirangapatna following the victory of the revolution in France and of Tipu's role in it; an event which was later reported in the French press of the time. *"...after [they]...organised a Jacobin Club, on the most approved Parisian models, under the sanction of the Sultaun, whom they distinguished under the fraternal designation of* ***Citizen Tippoo****; the tree of liberty was planted, surmounted by the cap of equality; the citizens assembled in primary assembly, instructed each other in the enforcement of their new rights and the abandonment of their old duties; a council of discipline was formed to subvert discipline by superseding the military authority of the commandant: all emblems of royalty were publicly burned and the national colours of the* ***sister republic*** *were consecrated by* ***Citizen Tippoo on the public parade****, under a salute of 2,300 pieces of cannon all was concluded by the characteristic oath of hatred to royalty and fidelity to a tyrant, and followed, according to the admission of their own recorded journals by scenes of the most scandalous disorder and insubordination."* [456]

Till his fall, the French Revolution was commemorated each year with a 21 gun salute.

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Tipu's deep interest in world politics was again well borne out in his meeting with Captain Doveton in 1794, at Devanahalli. After the conclusion of the Third Anticolonial War his two sons were taken hostage till the time Tipu paid the entire indemnity of three crores and thirty lakh rupees. Having paid the sum in full, Doveton escorted his sons to Devanahalli. Basing on Doveton's account Wilks said of the event: *"On entering their father's tent of audience...accompanied by Captain Doveton, the princes approached with every demonstration of awe and when close to the seat of their father they placed their hands on his feet, Tippu perfectly silent touched their necks with his hands. They arose and he pointed to their seats. On receiving Captain Doveton's obeisance, he accorded to him a courteous reception and entered into a free conversation with him on some of the topics of the day such as Lord Macarteny's visit to China, the french Revolution in Europe and some other topics."* [457]

After the lengthy discussion they had, Doveton expressed amazement at Tipu's profound knowledge of international developments.[458]

In his lifetime Tipu was also witness to the success of the American War of Independence from the clutches of British colonialism. Benjamin Franklin, a leader of the American struggle for liberation who was traditionally drawn from France, in his campaign to mobilise financial support for the struggle, issued advertisements in French newspapers on his visit to that country. MV Kamath says that Tipu who read one such advertisement sent his contributions from the 'Kingdom of Mysore' with a letter to the American leaders hailing them of success in their mission against British colonialism. In this letter he is reported to have stated: *"Every blow that is struck in the cause of American liberty throughout the world, in France, India and elsewhere and so long as a single insolent savage tyrant remains the struggle shall continue."* [459]

Tipu also maintained correspondence with the kingdoms of Afghanistan, Pegu, Muscat and Turkey among others, in an attempt to win international friends in the task of Kingdom's liberation.

Indian history has at times shown up anti-British attitudes by certain kings. This has, in several instances been the result of a rivalry among the French and the British for India, the French puppets speaking for the French against the British and vice versa. Historians writing on Tipu have tried to cast Haidar's and Tipu's anticolonialism in one such mould. But the facts have hardly been so. Tipu's emissaries to the French, his association with them was always undertaken with the greatest degree of self-preservation, ingenuity and independence; and was a living contrast from the approach of the puppet monarchs of India. His request to Napoleon for the despatch of French troops very clearly stated that Mysore commanders would head such dispositions and that the French army would have to function under the overall command of the Mysore army. Haidar and Tipu always sought to utilise the contradiction among the Europeans and were at all times alert not to forsake even an iota of their independence. **To derive such anticolonialism from a French undercurrent is only a reflection of the poverty of history writing; of its ideological submission to the time-instilled compradorism of the Indian ruling classes.**

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B. Some Bourgeois Attributes

Apart from the anticolonial political culture which they epitomised, Haidar and Tipu also had several attributes which may only be likened with the bourgeoisie.

i) Shunning Feudal Extravaganza

Unlike feudal princes who revelled in pomp and splendour, Haidar and Tipu who had at their disposal sums of money which no other ruler formerly enjoyed in Karnataka, continued to exercise pragmatic diligence and thrift on their purse. They shunned lavishness and feudal waste. On his visit to Haidar's durbar at Srirangapatna, Schwartz said: *"Here reigns no pomp, but utmost regularity and dispatch."* [460]

This frugality was well demonstrated in the construction that Haidar and Tipu undertook. While they did not restrain themselves from spending on the massive civil works, they however displayed extreme modesty in constructing their palaces. Tipu's palace in Srirangapatna remained the most unextravagant of structures that he chose to build.

ii) Origins of a Literate Society

Tipu's library is said to have contained about 2,000 volumes of books.[461] They covered diverse topics and were in several languages. He is personally credited with ordering the translation of not less than 45 books--mostly from European languages in Persian[462].

The library which was systematically catalogued had books under the following subjects: History, Indian History, Ecclesiastical History, Sufism, Ethics, Poetry, Fables, Letters, Arts and Sciences (which dealt with Astronomy, Geography, Physics, Music, Theology, War, Agriculture, Horticulture, Chemistry, Magnetism, Rearing and Treatment of Horses, Natural History of Animals, etc), Arithmetic and Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine and Health, Philosophy, Lexicography, Theology, Jurisprudence, Hadis, Koran, Commentaries on the Koran and Prayers.[463]

Among his various books were two catalogues, one from England and another from France providing a detailed list of the books published in those countries.

It is interesting to note that several books were written by writers who belonged to his Kingdom and were dedicated to him.

Except those on Sufism (which in itself expresses his preference for reformed Islam) **all the other books that Tipu had ordered to be translated related to the sciences and were to find immediate practical use.**

With the progress of his rule, Tipu found it increasingly necessary to write books so as to explain to his bureaucrats and give them the proper orientation concerning military, economic and social matters. Thus he made several copies of his circulars and the new laws that were passed. From his bureaucrats too he expected written reports and from the villages, written accounts and returns were furnished. His increasing reliance on the written word, and the knowledge of which became inevitable for the very existence of his army and administration, motivated him to start schools in Srirangapatna where it was compulsory for his officials and their children to learn to read and write. This system of education was however yet to be systematised. Changes in the economic base and changes

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in the nature of the state made literacy an inevitable prerequisite for its existence and advancement. Thus **the old Brahmanical system of education which belonged to the age of the rise of feudalism and which had continued right down the centuries ultimately began to grow irrelevant for the new ruling classes which began to discard it.**

iii) Realism

In the realm of painting and writing the schools of bourgeois realism had replaced all earlier feudal forms. This replacement was complete in the court. A look at the paintings of the period makes this aspect amply clear. Even in writing, the style of direct reportage as noticed in the books that Tipu himself wrote, or like those that Nallappa Setti wrote, bidding farewell to the earlier forms which were too involved, relied on exaggeration and respected feudal prototypes and emotional cliches. The style that Nallappa Setti represented was brief, direct, businesslike and at times, unabashedly critical, even of the king.

iv) Awakening the Nation from Sloth and Stupor

An important reform that Haidar and Tipu implemented was their consistent campaign against alcoholism. The consumption of all kinds of alcoholic beverages had become a burden on the peasantry in particular. It sapped the enthusiasm of the people.

In a memorandum that Tipu sent to Mir Sadaq in 1787 he wrote: *"This is a matter in which we must be undeterred and undaunted by financial consideration. Total prohibition is very near my heart. It is not a question of religion alone. We must think of the economic well-being and moral height of our people and the need to build the character of our youth. I appreciate your concern for immediate financial loss but should we not look ahead? Is the gain to our treasury to be rated higher than the health and morality of our people...?"* [465]

The only exception to this ban was permission for a shop selling wine in Srirangapatna for his European establishment.

Clause 102 of the *Land Revenue Regulations*, meant for his Amildars stated: *"In the villages of your district there are **Fakeer's** booths, many of these **Fakeers** share a practice of administering intoxicating liquors and herbs to the inhabitants and passengers; you are to lay strict injunction upon such **Fakeers** as have already got fixed booths, to refrain from this mischievous practice; and whoever shall notwithstanding persevere therein is to be expelled from the country; you are also not to suffer any more **Fakeer's** booths to be erected in the villages in future."* [466]

Haidar and Tipu passed orders to see that all toddy palms if grown, were to be fined. The *Land Rvenue Regulations* were equally strict with the cultivation of hemp.

Clause 19 read: *"It is forbidden throughout the dependencies of this government to plant **Bhang**; and the **Ryots** must be informed, that whoever shall plant this shrub is to be fined. If any **Bhang** should be remaining of last year's growth, or shall have been brought in from other countries by traders, a duty shall be levied upon it of double the fixed rate; and whoever shall by stealth plant **Bhang** behind their houses or in their gardens, shall be fined."* [467]

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However, seeing that the laying of fines were inadequate, Haidar and Tipu ordered the chopping of date palms. Buchanan confirms this measure: *"The wasteland [near Maddur] is occupied by brushwood, and many places are covered with the **Phoenix Farinifera Roxb** among which are some trees of wild date.*

*It is reported that, this tree was formerly very common; but **Tippoo**, observing that his subjects frequently intoxicated themselves with the **Tari** ordered the whole to be cut down...."* [468]

Even Wilks, the pompous colonialist, went on to remark: *"But in the midst of our disgust of his [Tipu's] vices and follies, one improvement occurs not undeserving the modified consideration of western statesmen, who value the health or morals of the people. He began, at an early period, to restrict the numbers and regulate the conduct of the shops, for the sale of spirituous liquors, and finally and effectively abolished the whole, together with the sale of all intoxicating substances and the destruction as far as he could effect it, of the white poppy and the hemp plant, even in private gardens."* [469]

All these were important aspects that contributed to the making of the political culture of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. If we notice these traits sprouting in Haidar, in Tipu we observe them in full bloom. All these progressive tendencies became manifestly strong and it was from such strength that the force of character of these rulers came to be stamped.

Talking of such strength and wholesomeness of character from the period of the Renaissance of Europe that had arisen in the latter half of the fifteenth century, much before the dawn of the bourgeois revolution itself, Engels in his Introduction to his *Dialectics of Nature* explained the subjective and objective factors at work that produced the great personalities of the epoch.

"It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind had so far experienced, a time which called for giants--giants in power of thought, passion and character, in universality and learning. The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations. On the contrary, the adventurous character of the time inspired them to a greater or lesser degree. There was hardly any man of importance then living who had not travelled extensively, who did not speak four or five languages, who did not shine in a number of fields. Leonardo da Vinci was not only a great painter but also a great mathematician, mechanician and engineer, to whom the most diverse branches of physics are indebted for important discoveries. Albrecht Durer was painter, engraver, sculptor and architect, and in addition invented a system of fortification. Machiavelli was statesman, historian, poet and at the same time the first notable military author of modern times. Luther not only cleaned the Augean stable of the Church but also that of the German language; he created modern German prose and composed the text and melody of that triumphal hymn imbued with confidence in victory which became the Marseillaise of the sixteenth century. The heroes of that time were not yet in thrall to the division of labour, the restricting effects of which, with its production of one-sidedness, we so often notice in their successors. But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all live and pursue their activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight,

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108. *Prince Tipu.* The Sultan a few years before his death.

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one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character that makes them complete men." [470]

Tipu Sultan was one such complete man. He spoke, he wrote and he fought. Which field of human endeavour did he not cast his keen eye on or not embrace with his heart? Economics or politics, poetry or history, medicine or mechanics, religion or linguistics, war in its theory and practice--all this he combined with an insight becoming only of a revolutionary. He was the first and unfortunately the last that the rising bourgeois order had produced. He was a shining example from Karnataka's past that invoked the spirit of the European renaissance. He was unique in that he remained a revolutionary even as a ruler.

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10. METAMORPHOSIS OF CASTE

Caste emerged with the breakdown of tribal societies, and, as an institution, came into existence along with the coming into existence of the feudal order of our country. The form and purpose of the institution was therefore to serve the feudal mode of production; and in turn feudalism always protected and strengthened the institution of caste.

The rise of commodity production starting from the twelfth century laid the foundations for the transition to capitalism; albeit, within the basic structure of the feudal formation. In the 600 years of the growth of commodity production till the period of the late eighteenth century, new relations of production materialised. The new capitalist relations **coexisted** with the old feudal relations while at the same time **contradicting** it. **This negation of feudalism, which was necessarily partial due to the infancy of the new relations, at the same time also challenged the institution of caste. This challenge too was again partial and inexhaustive, due to the weakness of the forces representing the relations of capitalism. Thus it expressed itself both in terms of unity and in terms of struggle, that is, by coexisting with it and also opposing it, leaving the impression for the perceiver of the superfluous, of an unchanging continuity and the dogged resilience of the caste system.** The contradiction the new social relations had with caste was manifested in a variety of forms. In certain instances the clash was explicit and open. In other instances, it introduced reforms within each caste and in the relations governing the different castes. At other times it utilised the old forms of caste to serve an altogether new purpose, though temporary. Again a perception of only this last manifestation often led to misconceptions about the caste system as a whole. In the chapter on early feudalism we have seen this working of the process, some of which were manifest then and some of which were yet hidden. However, six centuries later, these features of the metamorphosing caste system and the gradual undermining of it became more explicit. Let us look at these changes in this feudal institution caused by the impact of changes in the economy and the general erosion within the confines of the system, of feudalism.

A. Impact of Rising Commodity Production

We have in earlier chapters looked into the role of commodity production in bringing about certain changes in caste.

The result of a growth in commodity production created the separation of all other types of labour in the commodity producer to the exclusion of a single form of labour which produced the particular commodity. In other words, there was the separation of each particular craft from the other, and above all, the commodity producing artisan freed himself from all types of peasant activity and survived by the labour of his single craft alone. This economic separation or progressive division of labour from the feudal base, created the objective grounds for his migration to the towns and thus freed him from having to pay all kinds of feudal taxes which he was compelled to do as long as he stayed in the estate of the landlord. In addition, simple commodity production placed demands on new kinds of products, leading to a new specialisation of labour in place of the old.

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Commodity production thus initiated two interrelated and yet distinct processes. The first was the division or break up of castes. The second was the unification or amalgamation into one of the members of different castes, and in its more advanced stages, the amalgamation into one of whole castes as such.

i) Breaking Up of the Old

Thurston tells us of the emergence of Gejjegara, a *"sub-caste"* which had risen from its former Panchala origins and specialised in the production of small round bells.[471]

Buchanan tells us of the emergence of the Niligas who specialised in dyeing fabrics with just one exclusive colour--blue. *"The potmakers and dyers form one caste and are properly called* ***Cumbharu****; but those who dye are, on account of their trade called* ***Niligaru****. The two trades are followed indifferently by persons of the same family...."*[472] The profession of dyeing thus had not developed enough so as to bring about a vertical differentiation among the families and the resultant formation of separate castes as silk weaving and the dyeing of its fabric was an industry, which had commenced lately.

The Goniga was another caste whose profession, Buchanan says, was to lease in land, grow the *janupa* plant and process and weave the fibre into sack cloth for use as *goni* or gunny bags.[473] The increase in trade which required the production of gunny bags led to the emergence of the Gonigas who were originally of Tigula or Tamil stock. The gonigas were also to be found in Shimoga where it actively served the areca trade.

The Chitrakaras, literally *painters*, are also to be found in Bangalore. Their profession included the *"making of charts, trunks, scrutories, bed and palankeens, paint houses, draw pictures of the gods and of women, gild, act as tailors, make gold thread and sword scabbards, turn wood and bind books."*[474] Buchanan mentions that they were of Kshatriya origin.

This breaking up was also well expressed among the castes lower in the feudal hierarchy; leading to a rich diversity, each of which could have developed with the steady development of commodity production. The case of the Holeyas and Voddas illustrates this.

The Holeyas were basically a bonded agrestic population. Buchanan tells us that Holeyas constituted 70% of the bonded labourers of landlords in the Ashtagram. With the rise in commodity production and its penetration of the villages, a modest number of Holeyas got transformed into wage-labourers in agriculture, and more important, branched off into a multitude of trades. Due to their precarious existence, the regularity with which they pursued these trades may be doubted. However, in this context we ought to look into the impact of this diversification on the traditional status of the Holeyas. Buchanan tells us that the Malas of *Nayakan Eray* smelted iron ore;[475] in Venkatagiri, they *"gained a subsistence by collecting the limestone, by burning it in kilns, and selling the* ***chunam*** *or quick-lime, for chewing with betel";*[476] that in Chennapatna *"the husks of the green coconuts are sold to the* ***Whalliaru*** *for making ropes;"*[477] that the offices of the Thoti and Nirgunty were always the preserve of a Holeya;[478] and they played an important part in the textile manufacture, weaving and selling coarse cotton fabrics which the rural poor wore.[479]

Similar is the case with the Voddas. Buchanan writes: *"The Wodas or Woddaru...dig canals, wells and tanks; build dams and reservoirs, make roads; and trade in salt and grain...."*[480]

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These are some examples which explain how the rise in commodity production dictated the breaking up of the old feudal castes. The rise of new professions which was the result of the process of development of commodity production, are often defined by very nebulous terminology such as *sub-caste, trade* or *caste*, however forgetting all the time that these professions emerged on a large scale only by breaking the caste rigidity or the jati kasabu of the old.

ii) Amalgamation into the New

What new forms did the separation from the old castes assume? The break up of the old led to three specific kinds of new forms. Firstly, such as in the case of the Gonigas or Niligas, the separation from the former caste-profession and the assumption of the new as a transition effected by members, all of whom hailed from one particular caste. Although this type did disturb the former caste-profession typology, it was done within the confines of their former caste boundaries.

The second type included the splitting away from different castes, all of whom ultimately assumed one single profession. The weaving industry under the simple commodity and putting-out systems describes this best. The textile industry was, as we have already seen, the most widespread and rapidly growing industry. The demand in the market, drew people from non-weaver castes to partake in weaving activity.

As a result in 1803-04 out of a total of 30,942 looms, 20,742 or two thirds nearly were operated by those from non-weaving castes. The textile sector thus remained among the most dynamic and progressive of sectors during the period drawing into its fold and causing the amalgamation of the various different castes.

Chicherov says: *"...the development of the productive forces in the crafts, the deepening of the social division of labour, market demand and other factors undermined and destroyed these caste limitations. We have already given examples of different castes engaged in spinning, the printing of fabrics etc, creating traditions to suit customers' demands.*

Owing to the substantial growth of the production of fabrics in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries, members of different castes gave up their traditional occupations and took up weaving. Weaving was also taken up by farmers who moved to the weavers' settlements."[481]

It was no surprise therefore that the antifeudal cultural movement always found firm support among the weavers of Karnataka and India. The nature of this textile amalgam must however not be one-sidedly viewed since simple commodity production which always relied on backward means of production, or the means of production which still reflected the feudal age instead of the capitalist epoch, prevented the socialisation of the profession, thus retaining, despite the change, several features of the caste system of feudal society.

The third form which this amalgamation took contained strong elements of caste weakening, and appears to belong to the relatively more advanced stages of commodity production. It involved the dissolution of caste barriers. The information Buchanan provides us in the case of the Panchalas illustrates this: *"The Panchalas or Panchaeru, a name corrupted by the Musalmans into Panschal, are a cast that follow five different*

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trades, goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths, masons and coppersmiths. These occupations do not occasion any difference of cast; the son of a man of any one of the trades may, if he pleases, follow any other, and all of them can eat together and intermarry. Each trade, it is true, has a headman; but the whole are subject to one hereditary chief...." [482] With the diversification of commodity production 'sub-castes' such as the Gejjegara or silversmiths, that Heyne referred to, branched out from the Panchala caste-group, thereby further loosening caste remnants within the Panchalas.

B. Impact of Capitalist forms of Production

The emergence of capitalist cooperation and capitalist manufacture and the growing unity of merchant and industrial capital, brought about several changes in the structure of caste; the inadequacy of data about which compels us to only draw the outlines of the dislocation of the caste system which these processes of production must have caused.

In the towns and cities of the late eighteenth century, the decline of the power and prestige of the Brahmanas is very clearly observed. Except for their role in religious ritual--which as we shall later see also underwent striking changes--they had evidently lost their former authority and power. The urban centres which represented the new relations of production replaced the Brahmana who was a representative of feudal relations and its system of castes. Similarly, the Vokkaligas and Sadr Lingayats who represented landlordism in the villages had no say in matters concerning the towns. The uprooting of the palegara who till then united the town with the village under feudal leadership reflected this change in the political relations between castes. **The Banajigas of merchant capital ruled the towns**. In cities like Bangalore where the new stages of capitalist production had already become a reality, artisan castes such as the Pattegara and Katri or the Devanga, Padmasali and Samesali were close behind the Banajiga. In addition to the owners of capital there were the *"affluent"* blacksmiths, coppersmiths and silversmiths of places like Malavalli who also were owners of capital. **These new owners rising from about twenty Shudra castes in all, holding capital in spheres such as textiles, iron and steel, oil, glass and sugar manufacture and representing the new relations of capitalist production along with that of the merchant castes whose capital had already begun to enmesh with that of the artisan castes, caused the power of the Brahmana to be undermined and placed it in the penumbra of eclipse.** Benjamin Heyne's account of the *"manufacture"* of *"soboo"* by a caste such as the Agasas, marking a turn in its material activity from one of washing clothes under conditions of feudalism to that of manufacturing and selling soap under conditions of augmenting capitalist relations, must be seen as reflective of a deep rooted and profound assertion against what may be classified as the *feudal castes* or those castes which ruled in the feudal order. **The further spread and the development of the processes of capitalism would, alongside the maturation of capitalism, have also simultaneously led to the maturation of the social forces opposed to the caste system.** For instance, Buchanan's accounts of iron production tell that the new capitalists were compelled to shell out money to the Gowda and the Brahmana of the villages for no part of theirs in the process of production. Buchanan also provides us with a host of such instances where castes involved in the

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rising web of commodity production and capitalist relations had to cough-up money in the form of feudal levies to the Gowdas and Brahmanas of the villages. These privileges on account of birth were becoming a drag on the advancement of the capitalist features of society and added a new dimension to the already pent up anger against the oppression of the caste system.

Another important aspect of the growth of capitalist cooperation and manufacture on caste was the contradiction that it created within each caste, as a result of the growing polarisation and ultimately, the surrender of all the means of production by the artisans to owners who belonged to their own caste. Or, to rephrase Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, capitalist relations were only completing the process of detribalisation.

The contradiction that emerged between members of the same caste assumed different intermediary forms till it ultimately concluded in expropriation. Of one such intermediary stage we have the case of the Ganigas of Bangalore. Information from Buchanan and VN Narasimmiyengar reveal to us a growing differentiation and contradiction among the Ganiga oil pressers of Bangalore between the Hegganigas and the Kiriganigas.[483]

One might expect a similar movement of contradiction within the Pattegara, Katri, Panchala and other castes involved in capitalist manufacture with the growth of the division of labour in handicrafts production.

The impact of capitalist manufacture on the caste system thus worked in two ways. On the one hand **it led to the rise of several Shudra castes contributing to assertion against Brahmanism and the feudal hierarchical arrangement of each of the various castes.** This was, in short, the first indication of the commencement of a social order which based itself, as Huberman said *"on the aristocracy of money instead of the aristocracy of birth"*. To perceive only this single process--growing Shudra assertion--would be inadequate in explaining the role of rising capitalist relations in the destruction of the caste system, since this often led to the Sanskritisation of the Shudra castes and the replacing of Brahmana superiority with the authority of a different Shudra caste. The second process initiated by the emergence of capitalist forms of commodity production is also equally vital in undermining this institution. The second process stems from the very process of the emergence of capital itself and the changes in the ownership of the means of production and thus also the relations of production which are preconditions for the emergence of capital. **The appropriation of the means of production by the capitalist, who was none other than a same caste fellow, created the objective conditions for the loss of caste oneness within each caste and thus faith in the system of castes as such. However, the first process may be said to predominate the period of rising capitalist relations before the culmination of the bourgeois revolution.** Since it is only after the overthrow of feudal power by the rising bourgeoisie that capitalism can really transform society, create the conditions of the replacement of not only the caste system but also destroy the solidarity to one's caste due to class contradictions that arise within it, **the period before the bourgeois democratic revolution could only have created the conditions for an opposition to the caste system and not its replacement.**

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C. Trade and Caste

As a result of the rise in commodity production mercantile activity stemming from the pettiest kind to that of the Banajigas who traversed a large part of the peninsula undertaking trade on a large scale, was initiated.

Among the Banajigas, as we have already seen, a great degree of specialisation of the trades had emerged. Buchanan accounts for four types among them which included the big merchants who dealt in the wholesale of raw cotton, cotton yarn and finished textiles; the retailers; the *Gandhakis* who procured the various natural dyeing materials from lesser traders of the rural markets and the class of professional transporters called *Badigaru.*

Apart from these internal cleavages that the rise in trade brought about within the Banajigas; a host of professional traders from even among the lowest of castes were born. There were the Muslim *Ladaru*, the *Pacanat Jogalu*, the *Erligaru* and Lambanis.[484] Of the trading activity of the Voddas, Buchanan writes: *"...the vigorous youth of both sexes travel about in caravans with oxen and asses in pursuit of trade.... They follow armies to supply them with grain, and in the time of peace take to the lower* ***Carnatic*** *grain,* ***Jagory*** *and tamarinds and bring up salt...."*[485] Buchanan also mentions that the Koravas were active petty traders in grain and salt.

However, the change that was wrought among the Kurubas was very significant. The blankets which they wove was a major item of trade and formed one of the chief industries of Karnataka of the period. Moreover, the Kurubas were a comparatively large Shudra caste, and changes in their caste structure had serious implications on the overall caste question.

Buchanan tells us that while the Kambli Kurubaru made blankets,[486] they sold them to merchants who bought up from them. These merchants also hailed from among the Kurubas themselves. *"Black blankets or* ***Cumlies****, are here [Bangalore] a considerable article of commerce; and some merchants of the* ***Curubaru*** *cast, trade in nothing else."*[487] Thus the cleavage or division of labour within the Kurubas had already become distinct. The tenders of sheep had turned into capitalists of trade.

The rise in commodity production and trade while causing to undermine Brahmana power on the one hand, at the same time also provided avenues for a breaking up within the Brahmanas as well. Buchanan and CK Kareem, both tell us that one section of them had begun to branch off into the management of inns and choultries.[488]

D. Industrial Capital, Wage-Labour and Caste

The strongest factor in the destruction of caste lay in the development of industrial capital. Though we do not have any information on the various aspects concerning industrial production in Mysore and thus are unable to cite how, in reality, the impact was caused, we may nevertheless draw some generalisations given our understanding of the changes that the different stages of commodity production had wrought on this institution, and, given our understanding of the processes of industrial capital.

Industrial capital could have influenced caste in four major ways.

Firstly, **the exploitation of free labour made caste irrelevant for capital. Capital sought labour power pure and simple.**

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Secondly, the proletariat was a melting pot. It consisted of uprooted labour from different villages and towns, from different castes and from different lingual descent. This caused members of 'high' and 'low' castes to work on par although in the initial stage of capitalist development the working class would necessarily have been composed of the different Shudra and Dalit castes rather than the Brahmana or other upper castes. Yet this does not contradict the fact that **the proletariat was a welter of elements from different castes. Thus capital, in creating the proletariat, served as a historical equaliser and leveller, setting to naught all conceptions of discriminatory birth.**

Thirdly, industrial capital, as we have seen, tended to not only concentrate, but also break up labour into minute functions which led to its **socialisation.** Labour lost its individual character and got socialised. The emergence of social labour was another major deterrent to caste, since it left the indelible impression that unless all the workers cooperated they could not produce. This relegated caste into an irrelevant remnant, the presence of which only interrupted, discouraged and hindered the realisation of capital on an extended scale.

Fourthly, one already observes under capitalist manufacture that the owners of capital were drawn from diverse caste backgrounds. There was therefore not necessarily, the feudal caste continuum between the caste of the owner of capital and the caste nature of the industry he had invested his capital in. **This undermined the jati kasabu notion enshrined in the caste-based feudal system and tended to loosen notions of caste rigidity, not just among the exploited, but among the owners of capital; the new and rising bourgeoisie.**

All these points which we have so far discussed relate to the caste question in terms of its transformation due to the impact of changes in the base. Contemporary sources on the superstructural transformation of caste have been hard to come by. They could have helped us piece together a more wholesome picture of caste under semifeudalism.

E. No Less than the Brahmana

The urban centres were witness to the continuation of a phenomenon initiated by the Bhakti tradition. The popularity of Vaishnavism over Shaivism was discernible in cities such as Bangalore. Vaishnavism had either already found support, or was in the process of doing so among the various commodity producing trading castes except those which hailed from a Virashaiva background.

The spread of Vaishnavism was however under the terms and conditions not of the Brahmana, but of the particular urban Shudra caste. In every respect, except that of being priests, these various non-Brahmana castes assumed not only the symbols but also cultural norms which had till recently been the exclusive privilege of the Brahmana alone. This raising of status was undertaken in the following ways.

The rising Shudra castes took it upon them to change their former caste names. Thus names such as Jeda or Ganiga, were doffed and Sanskritised names such as Devanga or Jotipana were presumed. The assumption of Jotipana by the Ganigas was a development which had a history of only a few decades.

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A writing of the *jati puranas* was undertaken in which new myths brought these non-Brahmana castes on par with the *jati puranas* of the Brahmanas. Devanga history even claimed that they were themselves Brahmanas. They recited the following sloka as a credential for their being Devanga Brahmans:

"Manu is born in the Brahman caste,
He was surely a Brahman in the womb.
There is no Sudraism in this caste,
Devanga had the form of Brahma." [489]

Thee various rising shudra castes adopted vegetarianism. They wore the caste-thread of the Brahmana, applied all the identification marks that the Brahmana's forehead till then had borne. Buchanan tells us of the grant of *chakrantikam* or the investing of the seal of Srivaishnava mathas which had till then decorated only the shoulders of the Brahmanas to that of these different Shudra castes.

We also observe that several of these shudra castes had become literate. Although not all, a few members of most of these castes were literate. Even castes such as the Voddas begun to pick up reading and writing skills.[490]

It was in the nature of all these Shudra castes to possess, what Buchanan describes, their own sacred books. Of the Kannada Devangas he says: *"The sect have a book called **Devanga Purana**, which everyone may read. It was written by Devanga Muni the common ancestor of the race."* [491] Similar was the case with the Kannada Shenegas, another weaver caste.[492]

These were a few of the forms that the rise of commodity production assumed in changing the status of the Shudra castes associated with the market. It must be remembered that for all these changes the growth in their material wealth and their rising political status in the towns and cities were important factors, for which they obtained Brahmana sanction, particularly from the Srivaishnavas. At the same time the impact of these changes, by creating sharp divisions among the various sections and interest groups among the Brahmanas, contributed to the further instability and hastened the internal rupture of the Brahmana as a caste.

F. Clash Among the Guilds of the Right and Left Hand Castes

i) Basis for Intensification of Rivalries

In the chapter on early feudalism, we have seen how the emergence of the phenomenon of the Right and Left Hand castes was nothing but the emergence of guilds which arose with the commencement of commodity production after the push given to history by the social movements of the twelfth century. The formation of the Right and Left Hand alliances was a result of the division between commodity production and its distribution and the mutual contradiction between these two spheres of the economy which was contained therein. The division between the Right and Left Hand caste guilds came up at a time when the master weaver was yet to emerge. However, with the general growth of commodity production in the succeeding centuries, and a transformation of the processes of production on the one hand and the emergence of large scale trade on the other, the conflict between the two sectors further sharpened. **In the period of the late eighteenth century the contradiction between these**

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two sections became exceedingly acute and assumed ferocious proportions. The reason for this intensification of the struggle between the sectors of production and distribution was sharpened owing to changes which emerged within the production process on the one hand and the structure of trade on the other; and as a consequence, because of a change in the relations between the Right Hand and Left Hand castes--a situation not obtaining in the early phases of the emergence of commodity production. In other words, the rise of the master weaver, the transition of production to the stage of manufacture on the one hand; and the development of the putting-out system and the gradual conversion of merchant capital into industrial capital which in fact was nothing but the displacement of the leading Left Hand castes by the leaders of the Right; lent the period of the late eighteenth century which was characterised by these precise stages in the economic transition, an explosive quality.

We shall return to the conflict per se a little later. The Mysore Kingdom of the time carried the most advanced relations of production in India as a whole. Nationalities such as the Bengali, Tamil, Gujarati, Konkani and Marathi had, under various degrees, come to face the shattering influence of British colonialism thus eliminating the possibility of the further intensification of the contradiction between production and distribution in these nationalities. In Tamil Nadu which threw up the Left Hand-Right Hand phenomenon, the establishment of British rule signed the death warrant of not only the development of local trade and production but also did its best to suppress all attempts by the Left Hand and Right Hand fraternities to resist the British monopoly. It is in this light that Buchanan's following observation must be taken: *"In this country [ie, Mysore country], the division of the people into what are called the left and right hand sides, or **Eddagai** and **Ballagai** is productive of more considerable effects than at any that I have seen in India, although among the **Hindus** it is generally known."* [493]

Of importance for us in this context is to perceive the changes these supra-caste associations meant in terms of destabilising the institution of caste caused by the compulsions of commodity production.

ii) Composition of the Guilds

Buchanan provides us with a list of the Left Hand and Right Hand constituents from Srirangapatna. It runs thus:

*"The tribes, or casts, comprehended in the **Eddagai** or left hand side are nine.*

1. ***Panchala**, comprehending,*
    1. *The **Cubbinadava**, or blacksmiths*
    2. *The **Badiga**, carpenters*
    3. ***Cunsuguru**, coppersmiths*
    4. ***Cul' badiga**, masons*
    5. ***Axala**, gold and silver smiths.*
2. ***Bheri Chitty**, merchants who pretend to be of **Vysya** cast.*
3. ***Devanga**, a class of weavers.*
4. ***Heganigaru**, oil makers, who use two oxen in their mills.*
5. ***Gollur** or **Golwanlu**, who transport money.*

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*6. **Paliwanlu** } two tribes of cultivators, who are not of Karnata*
*7. **Palawanlu**} origin. [These two are apparently the same, and seems to be a repetition on part of Buchanan]*
*8. **Baydaru**, hunters.*
*9. **Madigaru**, tanners or shoe-makers. The **Panchala** command the whole party.... The casts forming the **Ballagai** or right hand side, are eighteen in number.*
*1. **Banijigaru**, who are of many trades, as well as many religions. The two most conspicuous divisions are:*
*1. **Panchum Banijigaru**, who are traders and wear the **Linga.***
*2. **Teliga Banajigaru**, who worship **Vishnu.***
*2. **Wocligaru**, cultivators of the **Sudra** cast and of **Karnata** extraction.*
*3. **Jotiphana**, oil makers who use one bullock in the mill.*
*4. **Rungaru**, calico printer and tailors.*
*5. **Ladaru**, a kind of Musulman traders, who are followed by all the artifices of the same religion.*
*6. **Gujerati**, merchants of **Guzerat.***
*7. **Camatigaru**, persons who are really of the **Vysya** cast.*
*8. **Jainaru**, worshippers of the **Jain**.*
*9. **Curubaru**, shepherds, blanket weavers and cultivators.*
*10. **Cumbaru**, potters.*
*11. **Agasaru**, washermen.*
*12. **Besta**, **Palankeen** bearers.*
*13. **Padma Shalayvaru**, a kind of weavers.*
*14. **Naindaru**, barbers.*
*15. **Uparu**, persons who dig tanks and build rough walls.*
*16. **Chitragaru**, painters.*
*17. **Gollaru**, keepers of cows and buffaloes.*
*18. **Whalliaru**, the people called **Parriars** at Madras.... The **Panchum Banijigaru** are the leaders of this division."* [494]

The division between production and distribution is quite evident from the above list. On the face of it the leaders of both sides, without doubt confront one another on the basis of the domains of production and distribution. Yet as one movers lower down the guild order there is an intermixing which has often been confusing. This in fact led Wilks to conclude that the Right Hand-Left Hand phenomenon and their mutual conflicts defied all reason and remained one of the unfathomable of mysteries of the mystic east. For instance, the Gollas find a place on both sides. Writers such as Buchanan, perplexed by this, have dismissed it with an air of superfluity, such as: *"The different casts of which each division is composed, are not united by any common tie of religion, occupation or kindred: it seems therefore to be merely a struggle for certain honourary distinctions."* It would be a great folly to reduce the struggle between classes in society to a struggle for *"certain honorary distinctions"*.[495]

Despite the apparent contradictoriness of the list, let us see, from information culled from Buchanan and other sources how the guilds were indeed firmly established on

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the basis of the division of the spheres of commodity producers and their sellers. Yet, due to a paucity of information it becomes difficult for us to place the exact reasons for the presence of castes such as the Bheri Chitty in the Left Hand guild or the Chitragaras in the Right. **It is possible that certain master weavers had transformed into merchants assuming a change in appellation;** which is quite probable seeing Buchanan's description of them being *"merchants who pretend to be Vysya castes"*. Vijaya Ramaswamy's information on the question of such changes is interesting.[496]

It would be difficult to appreciate our point if one stuck to fixed notions about the immutability of caste. One has to start with the basic premise that caste too, like all else that has been petrified under feudalism, is characterised by change, by birth and by death.

Secondly, one has to be able to perceive the changes that have been wrought in it as a result of the changes in the material base and the social relations. Since the twelfth century, caste tended to retain its old shell, however, some of its members began to get increasingly differentiated and by the time of Haidar and Tipu, pursued occupations which had no apparent relationship whatsoever with the caste appellation attached to them. Thus it became a misnomer to use their caste names which at best only indicated their roots but utterly failed to describe what they had grown into. This constituted the internal breaking up of caste as a result of the development of commodity production. Thus **the emergence of the Right and Left Hand guilds based on the broad lines of production and distribution was not a continuation of the caste system, but rather indicated its fracture and signified the transition to its collapse.** The organisation of guilds at certain times occasioned the mobilisation of a all the caste members to one side such as in the case of the Banajigas or the Devangas; but at other instances it tended to cut up existing castes and draw into their respective fraternities those members who had branched off into either commodity production or its trade. Thus we find that the Ganigas and Gollas are equally split on both sides and only one section from the Vokkaligas or Bedas partook in the guilds, the majority of their caste brethren still exempt from guild membership. Hence Buchanan's list can be misleading if the caste-profession which follows the name of the caste is taken both in letter and in spirit. Thus we have a situation wherein Gollas around Srirangapatna who milked their cows and buffaloes only to carry it for sale to the city came under the ambit of the Right Hand. The Agasas also must have, as we have seen, traded in the soap they produced, becoming merchants in the process. Just as the Holeyas who sold their own cloth journeying from house to house and touring village after village; the Bestas who bore the palanquin must have easily carried on, on account of this mobility, an active trade. The reason for the division of the Madigas and Holeyas among the Left and Right Hand alliances may be explained by the fact that the Madigas produced footwear. Apart from that, Thurston's information, although from Bellary may also be indicative of the reason for this division. He tells us that the Holeyas of the place *"are considered to be the servants of the Banajigas for whom they do certain services and act as caste messengers (chalavathi) on the occasion of marriages and funerals."*[497]

Thus it is clear that as labourers, while the Holeyas were linked to the Banajigas, the Madigas, apart from what little commodity production they partook in, must have been similarly drawn to the leaders of the Left Hand guild. Significant for us is the rise of

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the Vokkaligas to the second place in the Right Hand fraternity. We already have seen from Buchanan's accounts of the extent of commercialisation that the Ashtagram pocket had undergone and it need not be a surprise at all to find one section of this peasant caste--particularly from that which was giving birth to a rich peasantry--partake actively in the grain, jaggery and sugar trade of Srirangapatna, which by all means was the biggest city of the Kingdom at the time and had a ruler who was very desirous of stocking his fort with paddy and ragi. It must have been quite possible that these Vokkaliga merchants should have advanced loans to their own caste peasantry for their produce; and in time we may have witnessed Vokkaliga caste-men finding membership in the Left Hand fraternity too. Of a similar transition on a large scale we have already seen the case of what the Portuguese called the **Chetins** of Basrur in the chapter on Portuguese colonialism. These were none other than members of the peasant Bunt caste who had become Shettis owing to their participation in the grain trade; so much so that the name *Bunt* was cast off for *Shetti* in time.

From one town to another, the composition of the guilds differed. While in the account of Buchanan we find mention of the Vokkaligas, drawn as it was from Srirangapatna; in an account from Bangalore we find the Vokkaligas missing. Buchanan says: *"I must observe, that these lists differ in some respects, from a valuable account of the right and left hand sides, which Colonel Close was so obliging as to communicate. The difference, I suppose, arises partly from his having taken them at* ***Bangalore****. Mine I received at* ***Seringapatam*** *by means of an interpreter from the* ***Karnataca*** *language; and have found that in different places though at no great distance, there are considerable variations in the customs of the tribes...."* [498] However despite these locational variations, the leadership of the guilds remained by and large in the hands of the Akkasaligas and Banajigas, while the bottom section was invariably composed of the Madigas and Holeyas.

Membership to the guilds involved a strict code of dos and don'ts, exclusive guild symbols and important supra-caste structures for adjudication. The demarcation between the guilds was so deep that the Right and Left Hand guilds possessed Devadasis who did not frequent the houses of the other guild-members.[499] At the same time, the conflict rested on the monopolisation of certain symbols which each guild claimed as belonging to it, and use by the other was sufficient provocation for the outbreak of a clash. Buchanan says *"The right hand side pretend that they have exclusive privilege to using 12 pillars in the pandal, or shed, under which their marriage ceremonies are performed; and that their adversaries, in their possessions, have no right to ride on horseback, nor to carry a flag painted with the figure of* ***Hanumanta****. The left hand side pretend, that all these privileges are confined to them by grant of* ***Kali*** *on the copper plate; and that they are of the highest rank, having been placed by the goddess on her left hand, which in India is the place of honour."* [500]

Wilks informs us that there were 18 customs of rules for guild membership of which 7 were mutually conflicting.[501] But we have no details of what these 18 rules were.

We have already seen how, by breaking up the traditional functions of each caste, the new economic activity and the forms of commodity production and distribution began to undermine the feudal caste system. The formation of guilds which was the first con-

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solidated attempt at supra-caste organisation which consciously kept out the feudal leadership of the Brahmanas and landlords , developed stable supra-caste activity. Membership of these fraternities which called for collaboration and coordination (for the purposes of conflict) across caste lines in order to cope with the new economic conditions, amounted to a contradiction between caste loyalty and class interest, in which the latter had been able to establish a sustainable precedence over the former.

The process of adjudication between the castes within each guild is indicative of fissures in the traditional caste structure. Buchanan describes this process thus: *"In every part of India with which I am acquainted, wherever there is a considerable number of any one caste or tribe, it is usual to have a headman, whose office is generally hereditary. His powers are various in different sects and places; but he is commonly intrusted with the authority of punishing all transgressions against the rules of the cast...."* After this general introduction, he goes on to describe the interconnection between the castes and their guilds in Mysore. *"These hereditary chiefs also, assisted by their council, frequently decide civil causes, or disputes among their tribe; and when the business is too intricate or difficult, it is generally referred to the hereditary chief of the ruling tribe or the side or division [ie, guild] to which the parties belong. In this case, he assembles the most respectable men of the division, and settles the dispute; and the advice of these persons is commonly sufficient to make both parties acquiesce in the decision; for everyone would shun a man who could be so unreasonable as to refuse compliance. These courts have no legal jurisdiction; but their influence is great, and many of the ablest* ***Amildars*** *support their decisions by the authority of government."* [502]

iii) Inter-Guild Struggle and Dalit Assertion

In the clash between guilds, the most active combatants on both sides were the Dalits. Of the Madigas who belonged to the Left Hand, Buchanan says *"...the* ***Madigas*** *in all disputes, form the most active combatants...."* Similar was the case with the Holeyas who belonged to the Right Hand.[503]

In times of conflict, the targets of attack on either side were the guild leaders, whose property was looted by the chief combatants, the Dalits. Buchanan says of these clashes: *"Frequent disputes arise...and on such occasions, not only mutual abuse is common, but also the heads of the divisions occasionally stir up the lowest and most ignorant of their followers to have recourse to violence, and encourage them by holding out the houses and shops of their adversaries as proper objects of plunder."* He then goes on to provide an example of a clash that had happened just before the time of his visit to Srirangapatna, and says that *"...the* ***Whalliaru*** *were let loose to plunder: nor could they be repressed without an exertion of military force, by which several people were killed."*[504]

Reporting what he saw in Bangalore, Buchanan wrote, that for the Akkasaligas, *"...the* ***Pancham Banijigas****...are their most bitter enemies."* [505]

This division and conflict between the guilds often led to the partitioning of cities and towns on a guild basis. Describing Bangalore, Buchanan wrote: *"He [the Akkasaliga] is the leader of the left hand side; and at present the dispute between him and the chief of the* ***Banijigas*** *runs so high, that government has been obliged to part the town into divisions. In the one of these, the right hand side is not allowed to perform any ceremo-*

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nies, nor to go in procession; and the other division is kept equally sacred from the intrusions of their adversaries." [506]

Wilks says: *"The loss of lives in the contest arising from their public processions, and the contempt of all authority, in forcibly shutting up the bazars, and arresting the progress of all business, until the contested flags or distinctions be put down by their opponents, are familiar occurrences...."* [507]

Apart from this clash between the guilds, there was another conflict, that within each guild, though less frequent, which again assumed violent forms. This contradiction hinged on the question of leadership of the guild; and thus was a reflection of whose capital reigned supreme. Buchanan refers to this conflict in two instances. At Srirangapatna, he says, *"Pride is the occasion of another violent dispute for precedency between two castes, the* ***Panchum Banijigaru****, and the* ***Comatigaru****, although they are both the same side. The former allege, that they are the hereditary chiefs of the division, and the* ***Comatigas*** *declare, that they are of a higher cast, as being* ***Vaisya****, while the other are only* ***Sudras****. The dispute at present runs very high, and has occasioned some trouble to government."* [508]

Again at Gubbi, the conflict between the Komtis and Banajigas was so rife that it had led to a violent outburst as a result of which, he says, the town was *"in danger of destruction."* [509]

In all these clashes, which principally served the interests of the guild masters; the storm troopers were the Dalits, the immediate benefit for them being the spoils of loot. However, the active role of these two major Dalit castes in the struggle and thus the success of the guilds, had other implications in terms of their political role in the urban life of the period, and their caste status, both of which directly impinged on the caste system; untouchability, in particular.

In the early period of the formation of the Right and Left Hand guilds the Dalit castes might not have had an active role to play. But over the years with changes in the economy and a resultant sharpening of the contradiction between the two spheres, a violent resolution of conflict became increasingly inevitable, leading as we have seen, to the explosive situation that obtained in the Mysore Kingdom. The growing reliance on violence brought the Madigas and Holeyas to the forefront of this struggle, and without whose participation the guilds would have obviously collapsed. Wilks goes to the extent of even saying, on this account, that: *"The active leaders of each association belong to the* ***Outcastes****; the* ***Pariahs*** *being the champions of the right...."* [510]

Tipu passed regulations in an attempt to contain the violence. Of the seven regulations that he decreed, the sixth and seven describe the weapons that were used: *"Military weapons are prohibited, from the dagger to the firelock. The possession of any instrument besides the small cutting knife, the awl and the sickle...."* were banned. *"The pike with the tinkling circular ornament, is specially forbidden...."* [511]

From the weapons that were used, it is evident that the struggle assumed the character of a sporadic and checkered civil war.

The Dalits of Karnataka have since the time of their yoking to the feudal system been denied the right, as a caste, to bear arms. All other castes could enjoy this privilege

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except the Dalits. Not even during the time of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan were the Dalits permitted to serve as kandachara militiamen. The reasons for this denial are obvious.

The emergence of the guilds and the growing contradiction between them created conditions which changed this age-old feudal norm by investing and encouraging the Holeyas and Madigas with arms. This martial character of the urban Dalit masses thus became an important pillar of the guild system and compelled the guild-leaders to condescend and confer a new status on them.

We get an idea of this change in status when Buchanan says of the Madigas: *"...the **Madigas**, in all disputes, form the most active combatants; on which account, as their own name is reproachful, they are commonly called **Eddagai** cast, as if they were the only persons belonging to it."* [512] Similarly, of the Holeyas, he says: *"**Whalliaru**...who form the active part of the right hand side, and are commonly called **Ballagai**, their own name being disgraceful."* [513]

Thus, as a result of the economic changes that took place and in the wake of which guilds emerged, a process was set in motion which ultimately laid modern arms in the hands of the most oppressed castes of Karnataka--the Holeyas and Madigas. The larger transition of the economy to manufacture and capitalist industry from the putting-out stage which continued to preponderate the economy, would have brought the demise of these guilds as a result of the internal contradiction between capital and labour, as we witnessed, for instance, in the case of Europe.

After having borne arms and frequently used it in a civil war of an intermittent and sporadic nature, the new conditions obtaining after the collapse of guilds where the contradiction between the town as a whole against feudalism would have become more pronounced, held prospects for the liberation of the armed Holeyas and Madigas from the feudal curse of slavery and untouchability which was not a matter of any mean consequence for the destruction of feudalism on the one hand and also at the same instant, the destruction of the pernicious caste system on the other.

iv) Absence of Right and Left Hand Guilds in Malnad and Karavali

The phenomenon of the guilds was conspicuous by its absence in the Malnad and Karavali areas which did see the rise of commodity production on an increasing scale, although its maturation was belated when compared to the Maidan region. The reason for the absence of the Right and Left Hand guilds is not difficult to trace; the answer to which also at the same time bears out our hypothesis which constitutes the premise of our argument that these guilds emerged only as a result of the contradiction between the spheres of production and distribution.

The Malnad and Karavali were characterised by a low degree of development of industry, and thus of the artisan population as such. Further, commodity production in these two regions of Karnataka commenced and confined itself more or less to the realm of agriculture. While these were factors contributing to the absence of industry, the lack of artisans also had other implications on the social development and the culture of these two regions, which we shall consider in the next section of this chapter.

Munro and Buchanan attest to the absence of industry in the Malnad and the Karavali. Of the Kanara province, Munro wrote in 1799: *"There are no manufactures. The inhabitants are all either farmers, fishermen or bazarmen."* [514]

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Buchanan wrote: *"No iron is made in the province of the Canara."* [515]

At Honnavar, he wrote: *"There never were in this country, any manufactures."* [516]

About Nagara, Buchanan said: *"It never was the seat of private manufacture."* [517]

Describing the situation after his sojourn through the Malnad, Buchanan wrote, on his arrival at Shimoga: *"In this neighbourhood the manufacture of cotton cloth begins; for none is made to the westward."* [518]

G. The Modern State, Islam and Negation of Caste

The changes resulting from the growth of the modern state during the rule of Haidar and Tipu, the reforms these two rulers implemented, and the influence of Islam were additional factors of the time which contributed to the weakening of the caste system.

The Mysore army and militia were composed basically of recruits from the Beda, Kuruba, Idiga, Vokkaliga and Lingayat castes. The Voddas, Bovis and Lambanis were among the other castes who found recruitment in the army (of the Muslim component in it, we shall see later). The granting of land, to all members of the kandachara militia, and the modernising influence that the army disseminated among its recruits are bound to have had a progressive influence on the social standing of these castes.

Among the various antifeudal measures that Tipu implemented, two in particular had a positive impact on the caste system. Earlier in this chapter we have already looked into the matter in detail. They concern a flat reduction of the feudal privilege of the Brahmana mathas, which did much to bring down their prestige among the masses and the negation of hereditary authority to the village Gowda and Shanbhoga. These measures were important in that they also served as steps of rural caste reform.

An important factor of the period, consideration of which is generally lost under the cloud of Hindu communal historiography, was the impact of Islam, the religion of Mysore's rulers, on the caste system. **Islam of this time, had a positive impact in weakening this feudal institution.**

At the outset, the fact that Muslims had for the first time become the rulers of this part of Karnataka proved to be advantageous in the tirade against the palegaras or the modernisation of the army and the bureaucracy or the antifeudal reforms which we have referred to above. The fact that Islam was a new religious entrant to these parts of Karnataka, the rulers had not yet developed any 'natural' organic ties with the feudal ruling classes of the region, making it perhaps among the more important of noneconomic factors in encouraging the uncompromising implementation of these reforms. As a consequence, Islam which took roots here tied up **not** with the landlords. Thus it could remain **relatively free** of the cultural institutions of local feudalism. Instead, Muslims developed economic and cultural ties with the state, which was quickly modernising and economic activity that made it an integral part of the gamut of the rising commodity relations. This fact is borne out by the largely cosmopolitan character of the Muslim population of southern Karnataka even today. Unlike in areas where Islam took root at an earlier time in history, for instance in the Hyderabad Karnataka region or for that matter in states like Uttar Pradesh and became a recipient of land grants and various

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accompanying feudal privileges, in the Mysore Kingdom Muslims remained, by and large, an urban population. Despite its own feudal origins which ought not to be overlooked, and is true of most other extant religions; Islam in Mysore as a result of its near total isolation and separation from the system and institutions of local feudalism, tended to contain a certain amount of antifeudal potential. The loss of such a view of Islam in the Kingdom of Mysore can only lead to a forfeiture of an historical perspective.

A second feature of Islam which is of importance to our point of discussion on caste is the inherent ideological negation of caste that it contains; a feature it gathered at the point of its origin itself. This provides, as we have seen in the case of Adilshahi and Bahmani rule in the chapter on middle feudalism, with a liberating theology from caste oppression, attracting to its fold in particular, elements from the low castes of the *Hindu* feudal order. Although our information of the time is poor on this aspect, there can be little doubt that Islam chiefly attracted castes such as the Bedas, Voddas, Bestas, Madigas, Holeyas, Bovis, Upparas, Naindas and Lambanis; the life of the people of which either hinged around direct military service or in activity which associated with providing an array of services for the army. Thus while Islam on the one hand tended to retain the class features of these castes, yet on the other, it served as a powerful cultural instrument of the time in tearing up the tegument of caste.

From Charles Stewart's list of books in Tipu's library, it is evident that Tipu was under the influence of Sufi Islam, rather than its earlier orthodox form. Haidar Ali's lineage ran from the pirzada of a darga of Hyderabad Karnataka and Tipu's name itself, unorthodox among the Muslims, is taken from the pirzada of a Kolar darga, Tipu Olaliah. Tipu had deep interest, among others, of Bandanawaz's teachings, thereby making him a vehicle of the views of a reformed Islam.

As a result of all these influences which reflected in the rulers of Mysore of the time, they tended to negate the system of castes. Wilks said of Haidar that he was *"half a Hindoo".*[519] Schwartz, a Christian clergyman said: *"What religion people profess, or whether they profess any at all, that is perfectly indifferent to him. He has none himself, and leaves everyone to his choice."*[520] Haidar's anti-caste views are best explained by the following narration of Buchanan. Of the *Punchum Bundum* who were Untouchables and bonded labourers in Arcot, we have seen how Haidar shifted them to his Kingdom and encouraged them to cultivate lands. But while doing so, Buchanan reports: *"He settled them in many districts as farmers, and would not suffer them to be called by their proper name, which is considered approbrius; but ordered that they should be called cultivators."*[521] Thus one notices, on the part of Haidar, a conscious attempt to discourage the scourge of untouchability.

Tipu's attitude to the Untouchables was only more refined and culturally, encompassing. Wilks, writing of Tipu's response to the Left and Right Hand conflicts, explained that: *"...on one of these occasions, the Sultan applied his profound research and experience to trace the origin of these sects, and to devise the means of preventing future riots.*

To the Parias [Holeyas] he had already given the new name ***Sameree****, Samaritans, because as he affirmed, they and the ancient Samaritans, were equally distinguished by skill in magic. The Chucklers [Madigas] were* ***Chermdoz****, the common Persian des-*

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ignation of their chief employment. 'In the language of this country', he [Tipu] adds, 'they are called ***Yere Kai*** *and* ***Bul Kai****, that is right and left hand, because these men being the grooms and foragers of the horsemen of Islam, may be considered as their right and left hands, with reference to the important services which they perform....' "* [522]

This was nothing but a Sufist interpretation and theology for the unshackling of the Untouchable.

Despite these ascendant features of caste negation in the new rulers and the state they had created, features which were further strengthened by the antifeudal reform they had initiated; one must not forget that the modern Mysore state drew its sustenance from sections of the feudal class within the village and objectively stood to also serve their interests. The state was feudal-mercantile in character and disposition; although it was the latter element that always kept the initiative in guiding state policy. Thus despite the progressive anti-caste features that the state bore, and although Islam in Old Mysore had not achieved the effective integration with the landlord class as such; the state rested on the support of the (upper caste) feudal class of the village and thus its negation of caste could never have been overt. It was still a state in the service of feudalism and the fact that Sufist Islam itself struck a compromise with feudalism despite its progressive disposition gave the caste-negating element within the state apparatus and in Tipu-Haidar a measure of compromise. Thus one must realise that this anti-caste Islamicist tendency struck a compromise. Objective conditions were not yet ripe enough for a covert caste-negating assertion. Thus despite all the anti-caste tendencies one must be reminded that all its manifest forms took expression in a caste-based semifeudal society.

Tipu however has been the target of abuse by what is in Karnataka and India, a not inconsiderable tribe of historians. They have heaped him with zealous Islamic ambitions, to forced conversions and the run of the mill communal historiography charge him of Muslim bigotry. We refrain from going into argument on this question since Praxy Fernandes and Sebastian Joseph have done the job quite competently. However, it is necessary to point at the class roots of such chagrin which is not merely an offshoot of history writing of the universities but may be traced to the social forces that Tipu and Haidar clashed with in their time. As we have already seen, the Brahmanas of the mathas and the feudal bureaucracy fell from grace vexing them and invoking their curses leading to what has rent the air in the form of a Mlechcha usurpation of Hinduism. The British colonialists were however the more effective of distorters. Their animosity for Tipu must have been well grasped by our readers by now. Tipu, in defending Karnataka against colonialism was shrewd enough to prevent the spread of Christian missionary activity since the British after all came, as N'Gugi wa Thiongo has said, 'with the sword in one hand and the Bible in the other'. The church had always sought to create, through culture, a clientele for colonialism. And since British colonialism befriended the landlords and tottering Brahmanas, the two found common cause and the one egged on the rancourous outpourings of the other. The British set the trend of written history by being the first to commit to letter the most perfidious of distortions which later became the sacrosanct 'written word', otherwise reckoned as 'source material' for the jaundiced academics of our universities.

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Tipu was religious, just as all other rulers of Karnataka have been. In being pious he did encourage the conversion of Hindus to Islam. However, since Islam and Tipu naturally sought and found people in readiness among the lower castes in particular, conversions of this time carried a progressive alternative to the oppressed Dalits and disdained Shudras. Confined to the structures of the state--the army and the civil bureaucracy--was a rapid and intensifying motion which had upset all notions of caste privilege. This internal mobility was achieved at such a quick pace that it had already developed clear features which pointed to the composition of a future bourgeois state as distinct from that of the feudal state. The forces of modernisation within the state apparatus in terms of its composition were already as evident as its external modernising functions, and, it must be said that without this internal displacement of upper caste domination, Mysore would have collapsed like a heap of straw at the very gathering of the clouds of British conquest. Munro was perceptive enough to see this change and grasp the consequence of it in Tipu's war of resistance to colonialism. Of the fresh blood in the Mysore state, he observed: *"...the most simple and despotic monarchy in the world, in which every department, civil and military possesses the regularity and system communicated to it by the genius of Hyder, and in which all pretensions derived from high birth being discouraged, all independent chiefs and Zamindars subjected or extirpated, justice severely and impartially administered to every class of the people, a numerous and well disciplined army kept up, and almost every employment of trust or consequence conferred on men raised from obscurity, gives to the Government a vigour hitherto unexampled in India."*[523]

Tipu's army was by and large a Muslim force, absolute at the top and relative at the bottom. And for the first time in Karnataka's and perhaps India's history, the Amildars who were the elite upper crust of the civil bureaucracy were composed of Muslims with Brahmana monopoly of it totally displaced.

The lower orders of the civil bureaucracy however continued to be the forte of the Brahmanas since this grew more from the feudal agrarian order of the village, without changing which, this could not drastically be changed. In short, the state was quickly getting 'Islamised'. However, this transformation was brought about not by the conversion of the former state, but by a revolutionary displacement and, the Muslims, who manned the new state were by and large first generation convertees from the Shudra and perhaps Dalit castes. Thus, under the banner of Islam, the transformation of the composition of the state assumed a dynamic and progressive disposition; it took on strong antifeudal features and enjoined qualities, powerful for the time, of caste negation. Proselytisation by Tipu and the change of character of the state as well as its composition was the most important of his contributions in the destruction of caste.

While these conversions were voluntary there were others which were coerced. However, this aspect of coercion must be properly grasped since it included people whom Tipu considered as the property of the state. This list included prisoners, prostitutes, beggars and children destitute or orphaned. On conversion these elements found employment in the army such as the Chela battalion that he formed which was one of his best trained and most loyal of troops and was composed exclusively of orphans; or in the industries managed by the state. Despite the element of compulsion attached to this, can anyone deny the alternative it provided and its wholesome rejection of the caste malaise?

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11. EMERGENCE OF A HOME MARKET AND AWAKENING OF THE KANNADA NATION

The period of the late eighteenth century, characterised by the spread of commodity production and changes in production organisation introduced in their wake a regional division of labour in both agriculture and industry, bringing a new economic unity within the Kingdom and laying the foundation, as the result of the development of this home market, for the emergence of the Kannada nation. Let us see how exactly this took place.

A. Specialisation of Agriculture

Although Lenin spoke of a historically more advanced stage in his book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* when compared to the Mysore of Haidar and Tipu, the direction of the process had a universal characteristic. Lenin said: *"...the growth of commercial agriculture manifests itself in the specialisation of agriculture."* [524]

The convergence of agricultural production with that of commodity production marks the starting point of capitalist relations in agriculture and inaugurates also its specialisation. All previous agriculture which belonged to the period of feudalism proper and yet described a regional diversity, was, owing to geo-climatic factors. The picture of specialisation that emerges from Buchanan's *Journey* district wise is:

Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada: Pepper, paddy, coconut, cashew, arecanut.
Kodagu: Paddy and cardamom.
Chickmagalur and Shimoga: Paddy and arecanut.
Hassan: Coconut and tobacco.
Kolar: Tamarind and oil seeds.
Bangalore: Oil seeds, coconut, vegetables, indigo, janupa and fruits.
Mysore and Mandya: Sugarcane, paddy, vegetables and fruits.
Tumkur: Coconut, arecanut, turmeric and tamarind.
Chitradurga: Tamarind.
Bellary, Dharwad and Raichur: Cotton and tamarind.

Ragi and jowar which covered a significant part of the cropping area remained, by and large, outside the market.

B. Specialisation of Industry

"The predominance of hand production, the existence of a mass of small establishments, the preservation of the workers' connection with the land, the tying of the craftsmen to a given trade,--all this inevitably gives rise to the seclusion of the different industrial districts of manufacture; sometimes this local seclusion amounts to complete isolation from the rest of the world...." [525]

This situation described by Lenin characterised the early phase of commodity production in Karnataka. Such seclusion manifested, for instance, in the salt production of the coast. However, with the gradual spread of commodity production and the emergence of capitalist forms of production organisation this isolation was broken up and

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replaced by a territorial division of labour. Lenin writes: *"Directly connected with the division of labour in general is, as has been noted, territorial division of labour--the specialisation of certain districts in the production of some one product, of one sort of product, and even of a certain part of a product."* [526]

However since the division of labour in the Mysore Kingdom was only just catching up, it failed to demonstrate a division of labour as penetrating as what Lenin describes. Yet, the specialisation of particular districts for particular products, which was its hallmark and punctuated the turning point, had evidently commenced.

"The territorial division of labour, which confines branches of production to special districts of a country, acquires fresh stimulus from the manufacturing system."[527] Lenin only confirmed Marx's generalisation that: *"Territorial division of labour is not a characteristic feature of our industry, but of manufacture (both in Russia and in other countries)...."* [528]

The scenario of the district-wise division of labour we obtain of industry of the Mysore Kingdom is:

Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada: Salt and ship building.

Mysore: Iron and steel.

Mandya: Armaments, rope making, sugar and jaggery.

Bangalore: Armaments, weaving, dyeing, oil pressing, indigo, sack weaving, iron and steel and drugs.

Tumkur: Iron and steel.

Chitradurga: Blankets, iron and steel, and soaps.

Bellary, Dharwad, Raichur and Bijapur: Blankets and cotton spinning.[529]

C. Organic Interconnection Between Agriculture and Industry

A component of the specialisation of agriculture and industry and the territorial division of labour, was the agriculture-industry linkage which was gradually getting established.

In the textile sector the cultivation of cotton was linked and increasingly encouraged by the spinning and weaving industries. The growth of oil seeds and coconut was expanding due to the requirements of the dyeing industry. Sugarcane received stimulus from the sugar and jaggery manufactories and the planting of tamarind found good support from the blanket industry. However, the reverse flow of industrial products to agriculture was only commencing as has been characteristic of the development of capitalist relations in agriculture. Agriculture is always second in creating a market for industry. While consumer goods finds a market for itself in the villages first; it is only after the development of industrial capital in the towns and cities, and only after the industry for producing the means of production emerges, that capital finds itself capable of penetrating the agrarian sector with its machinery, thereby hastening the division of labour and the creation of a proletariat and a capitalist per se in agriculture.

Yet, the reverse, industry-agriculture link up was being realised in the Karnataka of the late eighteenth century as a result of the increasing monetisation of the economy and the commercialisation of agriculture which began to leave a surplus in the hands of a new rich peasant class creating therein, a market for the textile, jaggery and iron industries.

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The entire process then traverses two stages, which on the face of it appears as a self-contradiction. The first stage of commodity production, well into the putting-out stage described the growing separation of labour or the isolation of agriculture from industry. The next stage, however described its reverse, it sought the integration or unity of agriculture with industry. While the former encompassed the entire period, till after the first 50 years of late feudalism, the second traverses the culminating half century; being a unity achieved on a new basis, the basis of capitalist production instead of precapitalist.

D. Birth of a Home Market

The emerging territorial division of labour and organic unity between agriculture and industry constituted the basis for the emergence of a home market, a precondition for the advance of capital.

From Colin Mackenzie's account of the exports of the Mysore Kingdom, it is evident that almost all the industrial products continued to find a market within the dominions of the Kingdom and only items such as pepper, areca and cardamom constituted the principal items of export.[530]

Benjamin Heyne says: *"A great deal of cloth is manufactured in different parts of the country particularly about Bangalore--but little of it is exported."*[531]

A significant part of even these raw materials, it must be remembered, came from parts of Karnataka such as Belgaum and Bijapur, only hastening the development of the all Karnataka market. Thus **the home market,** it might be said, **had already begun to develop,** the further expansion of which would inevitably drive rising capitalism to overthrow feudalism, without which the economic need for such historic action is not felt by capital.

Haidar Ali's and Tipu Sultan's patriotism may thus be linked ultimately to the question of the home market. It was the protection and promotion of the domestic market that constituted the bedrock of their patriotism. Lewis Rice rightly observers: *"In the time of Tippu all importation was forbidden with the view of stimulating home production."*[532]

E. First Stirrings of the Kannada Nation and of Karnataka

On the question of the home market and role of exchange in achieving its realisation Marx says: *"Exchange does not create the differences between the spheres of production, but brings what are already different into relation, and thus converts them into more or less inter-dependent branches of the collective production of an enlarged society."*[533]

Thus, the role of merchant capital in bringing about the integration of the various spheres of production which had already begun to demonstrate a fair measure of specialisation laid the firm basis for the rise of the Kannada nation and the dawn of Karnataka. **From now it would no more be possible for the separate existence of any single part of Karnataka, unless at the cost of reversing the historical process of development by a few centuries. Protectionism under conditions of colonial encirclement only further hastened this process making the realisation of the home market a matter of political expediency.**

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Although Tipu's Mysore did not trace the boundaries of today's Karnataka in exactitude, yet it did cover most of modern Karnataka, securing for itself, the most important of all parts, the region of Bangalore which remained its pulsating centre. **The fact that it had placed its political centre, Srirangapatna, in the proximity of Bangalore, the rising industrial heart of Karnataka, contributed to a stability that went a long way in the development of the home market, the emergence of the Kannada nation and Karnataka.** As we have already said, the Mysore Kingdom of the late eighteenth century could for all practical purposes, be equated with modern Karnataka due to the integration of the outflanking districts of even Belgaum and Bijapur which were part of Maratha territory within the economic system that Bangalore had come to represent. It was only the districts of Gulbarga and Bidar which, so to say, remained cut off from the evolving all-Karnataka market.

Thus, in practical terms although the Mysore Kingdom did not include within its political contours the entire territory of present day Karnataka, and on the other hand brought under its rule parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh; yet, in economic terms, it may be said that there was a great degree of congruence with the Karnataka of today.

Chicherov has in this regard said: *"In this way prerequisites were created for the formation of a domestic market within individual states or large administrative regions, which to some degree coincided with the territories in which lived one or two of the subcontinent's basic nationalities."* Stating that this process was far advanced in regions like Mysore, he continues: *"Among other things, these processes promoted the formation of nations in India."* [534]

But Chicherov was only echoing what Frederick Engels had said much earlier about the fifteenth century European context. In his *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels wrote: *"Royalty, with the support of the burghers of the towns, broke the power of the feudal nobility and established the great monarchies, based essentially on nationality, within which the modern European nations and modern bourgeois society came to development."* [535] Again, Engels in his article *The Decline of Feudalism and the Rise of the Bourgeoisie* stated: *"Although throughout the Middle Ages linguistic boundaries and state boundaries were by no means identical, nevertheless each nationality, perhaps with the exception of Italy, was represented in Europe by one particular state and the tendency to set up national states--a tendency which became increasingly conspicuous and purposeful--is one of the principal progressive factors of the Middle Ages."* [536]

The achievement of this integration without the interlocation of the palegara class provided the most stable condition for the evolution of the Kannada nation. It must be remembered that in the India of the late seventeenth-eighteenth centuries the development of the nationalities proceeded apace in those which had a coastline allowing, in the main, for sea-borne trade. However, the Kannada nationality was basically landlocked with only Uttara Kannada district providing this nationality with access to the sea; the principal port, Mangalore, was located in Tulunadu. Access to the sea however was hindered by the intervening Malnad which stood like a massive wall denying the Kannada hinterland nationality with recourse to the blue waters. Despite this handicap, the Kannada

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nation could achieve a fair degree of commodity production and gradually lay the foundations for the dawn of its nationality due principally to the anti-palegara reform movement which paved the way by stimulating the internal market and awakening the nation to life.

F. Variations in Nationality Development: The Kannada, Tuluva and Kodava Nationalities

Within the Karnataka of the time, there however, were distinct variations on nationality lines and regional variations within the Kannada nationality. While the roots of this diversity may be traced back to the prehistoric period and to geographical factors, **the specific form of the feudal system that each of these regions or nationalities propped up also contributed in fair measure to their diversity.** The forms of feudalism in the Malnad, in Kodagu and in Tulunadu (Dakshina Kannada) all densely forested regions--varied from that found in the Maidan that fell to their east, and housed the largest part of the Kannada nationality.

We have seen in the chapter on early feudalism of the role of the artisans who had just then freed themselves from the bondage of the feudal economy as a result of the separation of the agrarian functions to the exclusion of the artisanal, which made possible their relocation in the growing urban centres of the twelfth century. The artisans contributed in good measure to the emergence of the first antifeudal movement, ie, the Vachanakara struggle of Karnataka. Again, the Haridasa and Sufi movements which took place in the Maidan region during the pre-modern era of middle feudalism relied, among others, upon the towns and the artisans; finding a belated echo in Tulunadu through the person of Madhvacharya. **The comparative weakness in the Malnad or the Karavali to produce strong antifeudal movements, contributing to the relatively strengthened influence of feudalism was due to the absence of an artisan population or the class producing commodities. This subsequently meant a low degree of urbanisation, and what little of it emerged depended more or less on trade and not on manufacture.**

This led Thomas Munro to remark: *"Canara will probably never be a manufacturing country, because it produces none of the raw materials necessary to render it such, and because the heavy rains, which last so great a part of the year, are an insurmountable obstacle to all operations which require to be carried on under a clear sky and in the open air; but the same rains which deny it manufactures, give it a succession of never failing crops of rice, which place its revenue and its future prosperity on the firmest foundation; for there can be no danger that the existing demand for its surplus produce will ever diminish."* [537]

This aspect left a deep impress on the emergence of the Kodava and Tuluva nationalities in particular, and despite the immediacy of the seaboard, prevented the Tuluva nationality from making the best mercantile use of it due to its ill equipped industrial base; **all commodity production having to emerge from agriculture and also agriculture itself having to generate its merchant class.** The Gowda Saraswats were Brahmanas who had taken to trade and the Shettis were former landlords. Similar was the case with the Malnad where the Heggade or Havyaka Brahmana landlords themselves resorted to trade in arecanut and pepper.

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Explaining the process of movement of agricultural produce from the producer to the trader, Buchanan makes the following interesting observation about trade in the Malnad of the Nagar area where: *"...the Hegdes acting as representatives of the big merchants went around the houses and collected the required produce"* which in turn was picked up by the big wholesaler from outside. Buchanan says that *"Fairs or markets are not in use."*[538]

Thus **mercantilism of the coast and the Malnad grew from the feudal crust and maintained ties, not with the commodity producing artisans or the non-feudal segment of society, but with the feudal.** Thus its slide to compradorism was also achieved with ease. What role these specific features had on the evolution of the Kodava and Tulu languages, just as was the case of Konkani, none of which developed scripts, has to be studied in greater detail.

In contrast, the Kannada homeland of the plains, and the southern plains at that, concentrated industrial production, developed a remarkable degree of urbanisation, threw up antifeudal cultural movements with regularity, and often sought and ruled over the Malnad and the Karavali. Munro says: *"One of the chief obstacles of any progress is the difficulty of procuring men qualified to act in the revenue line: few of the natives of Canara are fit, because they have had no experience, having scarcely ever been employed either by Hyder or Tippu: all business therefore has been carried on by people from Mysore."* [539]

Although the Tuluva nationality had emerged by the Kadamba period in about 400 AD, **there were certain aspects internal to its economy which caused the delayed rise of commodity production and the loosening of feudalism.** Further, another factor contributing to the delayed assertion of the Tuluva nationality was **its inability to throw up its own kings, always coming under the rule of the Kannada nationality.** Thus the Tuluva ruling feudal class which emerged at the village level and at the level of the territories above it could not further consolidate itself by bringing the entire Tuluva speaking territory under the rule of one king, from one centre, or under one dynasty. These two factors taken together contributed to the delayed development of the Tuluva nationality, expressed for instance, in its inability to develop and adequately use the Tulu language for administration and literature, etc. Thus the seaboard could not be taken complete advantage of. KV Ramesh's opinions of Malayalam country lying adjacent to the Tuluva nationality is of interest to us. He writes: *"The Kerala country never, in the course of its long history, asserted itself as a dominant southern political power chiefly because of its isolated location...."* [540] Thus one finds a common pattern among all the three nationalities that inhabited the coast west of the Western Ghats--the Malayali, Tuluva and Konkani.

The Kodava nationality when compared to that of the Tuluva displayed **even more delayed development.** Let us try to look into the reasons for this.

Kodagu, it must be remembered fell at the crossroads of four important nationalities. On the eastern flank was the Kannada nationality with Somwarpet taluk of Kodagu district having come under its control From below the Ghats in a south westerly direction was the Malayali nationality inching its way into Kodagu and to the west that re-

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mained, the Tuluvas were climbing up the Ghats of Sulya. The Tamil nationality in a south easterly direction fell beyond the Gopalswamy, Satyamangalam and Biligiri Hill ranges which served as hilly upperarms of the Nilgiris also called Udhagamandala, twisted by the British to Ootacamund or Ooty for short. Kodagu did not bear any direct border with the Tamil nationality. **It was only after the evolution of these various nationalities did the Kodava nationality take shape, a few centuries after the start of the early feudal period of the Kannada nationality.** In the territory to the south of the rising Kodava nationality encompassing the region which constituted the southward extension of the Western Ghats till its junction with the Eastern Ghats in the Nilgiris was a kind of prehistoric preserve. Pressed by the expanding peoples of these major nationalities and the newly forming Kodava nationality, the tribes at levels of palaeolithic and mesolithic existence, living by hunting-food gathering retreated deeper and deeper into the forest till they were rescued by its hilly terrain. This imposed natural hurdles on the further easy expansion of these nationalities. **It is due to this reason that this vast hilly tract stretching from the Biligiri outcrop and Satyamangalam foothills into the Nilgiris and from there into Wynad and Kodagu became an archaeo-preserve, a kind of living museum of innumerable hunting-food gathering tribes** such as the Kurumban, Mullu Kurumban, Paniya, Soliga, Jenu Kuruba, Betta Kuruba, Yerava, Chola Nayakan, Koraga, etc. well into modern times.

The Kodava nationality, having risen after all its neighbouring nationalities had evolved was allowed scope for expansion only towards the south which was inhabited by these tribal peoples. But **the difficult terrain, and the small numbers of the Kodava nationality itself were impediments to this. Thus the Kodava nationality was confined to this small pocket of the Malnad.**

Having an isolated existence, bordering peoples at very early levels of development, being numerically small, having developed lately, locked in the valleys of the Malnad which discouraged easy communication and trade; the Kodava nationality could not project its rule. On the other hand, all these factors which held back its more rapid advancement, taken together, were enough cause for being brought under the rule of the Kannada kings. The Chengalva and Haleri dynasties that ruled over Kodagu territory were non-Kodava by nationality; and these kings were themselves fiefholders to the larger Kannada dynasties that ruled during the feudal period. These historical factors taken together impeded the rapid advancement of the Kodava nationality and as a language, while it shares a similar status with Tulu in that it too does not possess a script, it must not be forgotten that despite this common feature, Tulu as a language is far more developed than Kodava; its word-stock being immeasurably more. In fact all these factors have contributed to the retention of far greater pre-class features among the Kodavas when compared to the other more developed nationalities such as the Kannadigas and Tuluvas.

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12. FEUDAL MODE OF PRODUCTION AND PROSPECTS FOR ITS TRANSITION THROUGH A BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

A. The Mode of Production Under Semifeudalism

Ever since the culmination of early feudalism through a crisis and its transition to the period of middle feudalism inaugurating the gradual rise of commodity production, elements favourable to the rise of capitalism began to appear within the feudal mode of production. This manifestation of features acquired a more distinguishable capitalist face with the entry of Karnataka society to the period of late feudalism. And in its final decades the development of capitalist features caused the commencement of semifeudalism. Thus at the end of the eighteenth century there was an intermixture of rising capitalist and decadent feudal features in not only the economic sphere but also in the sphere of the social superstructure.

Semifeudalism indicated a new stratification among the peasantry along capitalist lines in what was predominantly a feudal mode of production. Feudalism had been weakened as a result of the anti-palegara campaign. Yet the landlords remained a powerful social class. They directly exploited nearly 75% of the population composed of peasants, share croppers, bonded labourers and the artisan and service castes who were tied to the feudal yoke. In addition, the landlords extracted surplus from the small traders and manufactories based in the villages and in the newly rising towns.

About one fourth of the entire wealth of the Kingdom was appropriated by the landlords who may be said to include the Gowda of the village, the Patel and other big landlords, the Shanbhoga, the Panchanga Brahmana and the Brahmanas and Lingayats of the mathas. The existence of the landlord class was already acting as a barrier for the further advance of the developing aspirations of the bourgeoisie, peasantry and the artisans.

B. Strength of Capitalist Relations Under Semifeudalism

We have already illustrated the transitory features leading Karnataka towards capitalism in the preceding pages. Capitalist and precapitalist relations could be seen in both, the sphere of agriculture as well as in industry.

i) In Agriculture

In agriculture the empire of feudalism was shrinking. With each passing day, artisans, bonded labourers and tenants were passing out of feudal service. Either they migrated to the growing towns, joined military service, became a part of the kandachara militia, gained ownership over matha or darkhast lands, or, obtained land in lieu of payment for regulating water from tanks. Military or quasi military service fetched them ownership rights and a newly won freedom from feudal exploitation. What was in evidence was the rise of self-managed small plots of land. Although this by itself was not capitalism in agriculture, Marx points out that it was *"the basis for the development of*

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personal independence. It is a necessary transitional stage for the development of agriculture itself."[540A] Apart from these features there was a class of rising rural rich peasants who partook in commercial agricultural production, capitalist cooperation and contract farming. The penetration of commercial factors into the rural economy also began to encourage stratification within the village along a capitalist direction into a rich, middle and landless peasantry. Further the growth of capitalist manufactures in the extractive and processing industries began to further erode the strength of the feudal economy and its relations of production and distribution. All these developments, it must not be forgotten, were possible only because of the strength of the antifeudal reform of palegara elimination. For the first time since the feudal mode of production had commenced, a powerful stratum of the feudal class was eliminated. **This bore out, in very clear terms, the antagonistic nature of the contradiction between the rising and decadent aspects of social life.** Late feudalism was inaugurated by this antifeudal reform and it was on the strength of this that the further rapid development of the new features could take place, and consequently, penetrate and begin to modify feudalism in the villages.

ii) In Industry

Mysore still depicted the transition of the putting-out system into the manufactory or the transition of merchant capital into (the first stage of) industrial capital. The disintegration of the peasantry was spreading and this was reflected in the main by the rising urban population. Keeping aside the army and bureaucracy, the urban population could still represent 15% of the entire population of the Kingdom. However, manufactories were yet to proliferate in the towns and cities, putting-out numerically dominating the form of rising capitalist relations and bringing within its fold a big chunk of the urban population, and a considerable number of rural commodity producers; thus substantiating the sway of merchant capital. Mysore indicated this maturation of merchant capital and described the direction it was to assume by throwing up the first manufactories. This then was the stage of development of capitalist relations and forms of production. Chicherov's summing up was quite right when he said: *"We thus come to the conclusion that at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries India was apparently approaching the beginning of the manufactory stage in the development of capitalism within the framework of her general feudal economy."*[541]

It is the emergence of industrial capital in the womb of feudal society which brings into sharp focus the contradiction between rising capitalism and the hurdle of feudalism, leading capital to push forward with feudal overthrowal. The reason is that industrial capital finds the need rather than earlier forms of commodity production for wage-labour and has to thus decisively smash feudalism and partake in the liberation of the peasantry so that it can complete its differentiation and thus enslave the pauperised peasantry under the mode of capital. But Karnataka had only just begun this transition of merchant capital into industrial capital and would have required some more time before capital could have achieved this.

Another factor obstructing this transition was the resistance put up by the Left Hand castes. It would be in the interest of merchant capital to smash the Left Hand guild which, despite the transition to manufacture of elements of its upper section, represented the putting-out stage. How exactly this defeat of the commodity producing artisan would

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have been effected is unclear. Yet it is evident that one section of the Left Hand guild which had commenced its transition as owners of capitalist manufacture would collaborate with merchant capital of the Right Hand which also was transforming into industrial capital. And, together they would, as owners of capital, assume the task of invoking violent attacks on the commodity producing artisans till their organised resistance was broken. Features of this new found collaboration was evident in Mysore. On the one hand we witnessed the response of the state--the instrument of merchant capital--using violence to suppress Left Hand-Right Hand conflagrations. Tipu's seven point formula was a move to bring about a rapprochement between the two contending sides. Apart from the role of the mercantile state, was the growth of a real tilt in the balance between the Left Hand and Right Hand fraternities. Buchanan tells us of an instance in Srirangapatna town where: *"30 families of the weavers [practising capitalist cooperation, in all probability], belonging to the left hand side, joined themselves to the **Telega Banajigaru**, and were encouraged by them to use all the honourary distinctions claimed by the right hand side."* [542]

This fact is further borne out by Vijaya Ramaswamy who explained about the transition of master weavers into merchants. *"The weavers have themselves been given the title 'Chetti' in some records. The title 'Chetti' affixed to the names of weavers shows they must gradually have risen to the rank of merchants.*

The rise of individual weavers to the status of merchants is indicative of a very significant development--a growing differentiation in the rank of the weavers...master weavers had emerged employing artisans under them." [543]

The historic defeat of the artisans and thus the elimination of the right Hand-Left Hand phenomenon would have inaugurated the transition from the putting-out system of merchant capital to that of industrial capital; or the conversion of artisanal labour into wage-labour.

It is the fulfillment of this condition, whereby merchant capital transformed into industrial capital and thus obtained an undisputed sway over the urban population, that elevated the political leadership of the bourgeoisie and prepared its unchallenged presence in mobilising the peasantry and taking feudalism head on.

C. Late Feudalism and the Emergence of Certain Conducive Political Features Favouring a Bourgeois Revolution

i) Growing Antifeudal Consciousness Among the Masses

Ever since the Vachanakara movement broke out, the oppressed masses of Karnataka developed an antifeudal cultural tradition. Carried forward by the Haridasa, Sufi and Sarvagna traditions, a popular antifeudal folk culture began to develop legitimacy.

The various puritanical faiths in England during the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries had a similar effect as of this Bhakti tradition. In MA Barg's words: *"The preaching of Calvinism, modified to correspond to the interests of the broad masses, awoke in them a sense of the dignity and social importance of each individual, regardless of his social status, and also awareness of the fact that the existing social structure was without divine sanction."* [544]

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In the period of late feudalism one does not witness any verbose cultural movement. Yet, from Buchanan's accounts it is evident that **the Dasa tradition became all the more forceful and** that **it proliferated.** It became so popular that dasas drawn particularly from among the lower castes took up the style of wandering minstrels and certain families dedicated one among their male children to the Dasa pantha.

Further, in Bangalore, Kolar, Mysore and Tumkur districts Buchanan mentions of the popularity of the Srivaishnavite Tatacharya. His activities seemed to be gaining support in the cities and towns and **he had obviously descended from his high pedestal investing the rising Shudra castes with new religious status and legitimacy.**

Among the peasantry, however, was **the growth of a heterodox tradition.** Becoming particularly vehement and vocal since the period just before or during that of late feudalism, were innumerable local religious cults that began to take shape and draw the peasant masses to its ideological influence. Adopting music and vibrant folk forms, these cults such as Manteswamy, Mahadeshwara, Ayyappa, etc, like the Nathapantha tradition of Uttar Pradesh, began to take defiant postures against various feudal (Brahmanical and Virashaivite) values and assumptions. These cults, could have, in all probability, gained the support of the various Shudra priests of the village gods and goddesses and posed as a nuisance to the ideological hegemony of the feudal class. It is unfortunate that the full significance of these heterodox cults has not been adequately realised by academic research. **They were the continuation into the period of late feudalism of the centuries-old antifeudal cultural tradition. And, what is more, this could well have been the main cultural force characterising the antifeudal tendency of the period of late feudalism.**

Did not England of the fifteenth century have the Muncerian, Apostolian, Separatist, Chatharist, Silents, Enthusiast, Libertinea, Adamite, Hutite, Augustinian, Melchiorit, Georgian, Menonist, Bucheldian, Hemerobaptist, Calvinist, Presbyterian and other cults?[545] In fact, **the proliferation of these local cults in late feudal Karnataka contributed to breaking the ideological monopoly of the priesthood that served feudalism.** This very form itself was a powerful blow on feudalism, even if one temporarily kept aside the delivery of its antifeudal content.

Together, these popular cultural traditions acted as a force in freeing the mind of the masses and preparing them to question, to disobey and thus to rebel against the authority of feudalism.

This freeing of the mind, particularly of the peasantry, is a precondition for the onset of the revolution. Let us see to what extent this had taken place.

The palegara reform movement undertaken by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar was later followed up by Haidar and Tipu with greater vehemence. These later rulers added an anti-matha reform dimension to the anti-palegara reform. However, if palegaras were mercilessly eliminated the mathas were allowed a reformed lease.

The question that comes up is where did these rulers derive the force for this reform from? How did they embolden to undertake a reform of such serious proportions? **A Chikkadevaraja, a Haidar or a Tipu were only executing to their political advantage the will of their times--what was already being expressed by the mer-**

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chants, artisans and peasantry. In fact the period of palegara warlordism, constituting the crisis of middle feudalism, allowed the passage of Karnataka, through a resolution of this contradiction, into the period of late feudalism. There was bitter anger among the masses against the rapacious palegaras and their uprisings were used as a plank by these shrewd rulers to eliminate this stratum of feudalism. Thus before the full outbreak of a popular fight against the palegara class, the state intervened and made short work of what would otherwise have been a long and bloody war.

In fact when Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar attempted to fleece the peasantry with a severity that reminded them of palegara rapacity the peasants were led into an uprising against Chikkadevaraja's rule. The ousted palegaras, lucky to be alive and breathing under state pensions in Srirangapatna, tried to utilise this sudden outbreak to recover their lost positions. But the cruel suppression of the Nanjangud uprising, near total elimination of its leadership, followed by placatory concessions were what caused the flames to recede. This insurgent situation only speaks of the rage that was borne by the peasantry and the general explosive situation that prevailed in the period of palegara extermination.

Yet observations by colonialists of the time give us a vivid picture of equanimity and low volatility among the masses. Let us sample a few of these opinions.

During the journey that took him across several hundred kilometres of Mysore territory and lasted a few months, Buchanan came across hundreds of people whom he interviewed. Of their opinion about Haidar he said: *"Every native that I have conversed with...speaks in terms of the highest subject."* [546]

On another occasion, Buchanan wrote: *"...indeed most of **Hyder**'s operations in finance seem to have been highly judicious, and reasonable; and on account of his justice, wisdom and moderation, his memory is greatly respected by the natives of all descriptions."* [547]

Of Tipu and his rule, James Mill said: *"As a domestic ruler he sustained an advantageous comparison with the greatest princes of the East. He bestowed a keen attention upon the conduct of his government from which he allowed himself to be directed neither by pleasure nor by sloth. He made a methodical distribution of his time for business with which he was laborious and exact.... He had the discernment to perceive what is so generally hid from the eyes of the rulers in a more enlightened state of society; that it is the prosperity of those who labour with their hands which constitutes the principle and cause of the prosperity of States; he therefore made it his business to protect them against the intermediate order or the community, by whom, it is so difficult to prevent them from being oppressed. His country was accordingly, at least during the first and better part of his reign the best cultivated, and his population the most flourishing in India, while under the English and their dependents, the population of the Carnatic and Oude hastening to the state of deserts, was the most-wretched upon the face of the earth."* [548]

Not at variance was Major Dirom's opinion who commanded British troops against Mysore: *"Whether from the operation of the system established by Hyder; from the principles which Tipoo had adopted for his own conduct; or from his dominions having suffered little by invasion for many years; or from the effect of these several causes united; his country was found everywhere full of inhabitants, and apparently cultivated*

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to the utmost extent of which the soil was capable; while the discipline and fidelity of his troops in the field, until their last overthrow, were testimonies equally strong of the excellent regulations which existed in his army. His government, though strict and arbitrary, was the despotism of a polite and able sovereign who nourishes not oppresses, the subjects who are to be the means of his future aggrandisement; and his cruelties were, in general, inflicted only on those whom he considered as his enemies." [549]

Another colonial mercenary, Major Rennel wrote: *"We will now consider Tippoo not as a general or statesman, but as a guardian to his people. When a person travelling through a strange country finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious inhabitants, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns increasing and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness, he will naturally conclude it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tippoo's country and our conclusion respecting its government.... We have reason to suppose Tippoo's subjects to be as happy as those of any other sovereign; for we do not recollect to have heard any complaints or murmurings among them, although had causes existed, no time could have been more favourable for their utterance, because the enemies of Tippoo were in power and would have been gratified by any aspersion to his character. The inhabitants of the conquered countries submitted with apparent resignation to the direction of their conqueror, but by no means as if relieved from an oppressive yoke in their former government: on the contrary, no sooner did an opportunity offer than they scouted their new masters and gladly returned to their royalty again."* [550]

We get a picture of infinite equanimity of the peasantry under Haidar and Tipu from the reports of the British. This fact neither contradicts our reading of the time nor does it amount to a one-sided presentation by British colonialists, which could only have been the last thing expected of them on a matter as vital as this.

There are two important reasons for low peasant volatility of the period. Firstly, the antifeudal reforms that Haidar and Tipu initiated were a matter of great advantage to the peasantry winning its support for their rule, except in places like Kodagu and Kerala. In fact, as Major Rennel wrote, the reinstatement of palegaras with British help was so greatly disliked by the masses that they took the first opportunity to drive them away and rejoin the Mysore state. The second was the extremely cautious stand that Haidar and Tipu took towards the peasantry in particular and the people in general. The two rulers were extremely careful not to instigate the peasantry into rebellion. They had a bad rub with the Kodavas; and one Kodagu was more than what they had bargained for. Haidar, in particular, must have witnessed peasant rebellions in his early days while he served in the Mysore army. Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* is very sensitive to the issue and there are several clauses which attempt to refrain bureaucratic or feudal forces from making undue exactions from the peasantry. Tipu and Haidar, on several occasions have had their officials publicly flogged on such counts. They got their administrative officials to swear that they would in no way cause harm to the interests of the peasantry at the time of their recruitment.

In Tipu's *Land Revenue Regulations* we also see the partial eclipse of the powers of the Gowda, the Patel, the Shanbhoga and the mathas. State incursion into these feudal privileges would not have been possible without the peasantry's desire, and desire mani-

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fest in the form of struggle against these feudal forces. Thus **the bureaucratic reform measures implemented by Haidar and Tipu were not executed on the strength of their exclusive motivation, rather these steps were nothing but the response of a mercantile state to the struggles and manifest aspirations of the peasant masses at large.**

These were the two main reasons which placated the peasantry and rendered it temperate during their rule. This ebb of militancy may thus be traced to their earlier volatility and served only as a temporary reprieve after a tide.

It may therefore be said that although the peasantry had undertaken struggles against feudalism and won concessions, it was **yet** to show **all** the symptoms of engaging itself in a revolutionary war for the overthrowal of feudalism. That would have needed some more years. In fact the relative **slumber of the peasantry caused by the prevalence of the feudal mindset was an important reason for the defeat of Mysore and the victory of British colonialism.**

ii) Enlightened Absolutism as a Preparatory Stage

Late feudalism in Karnataka is marked by the rise of a modern state and enlightened absolutist rule in the political superstructure.

What is the special significance of enlightened absolutism for the bourgeois democratic revolution?

Enlightened absolutism is not a political phenomenon peculiar to Karnataka history. In fact **in a good number of countries enlightened absolutist rule paved the way for the bourgeois revolution and constituted the last passage from feudalism to capitalism.**

Enlightened absolutism is the response of the political superstructure to changes in the base. It marks, in class terms, the rise of the merchant class to state power and its accommodation with feudalism. Feudalism, already impregnated with capitalist features responds to these social and economic pressures and creates enlightened absolutism in the political sphere. Enlightened absolutism, therefore, though **not** marking a necessary and universal phase in the dialectical development to the bourgeois revolution, yet by capturing and accommodating the changes taking place in feudal society makes this as a widely prevalent preparation, allowing the fundamental contradiction to boil up and creates ultimate grounds for the overthrow of feudal rule. Though not a universal feature, its wide prevalence calls to attention the importance of this phase in ushering in the bourgeois revolution. **Enlightened absolutism has always escorted feudalism to the labour ward before the birth of the bourgeois revolution.**

Let us identify the various features of enlightened absolutism. Albert Soboul in his Understanding the French Revolution has devoted a good deal of attention to the question. He writes: *"...enlightened absolutism is inscribed in the line of the monarchic absolutism of the preceding [the seventeenth century in case of France]: reinforcement of the State in a national territorial framework; economic expansion under the protection of the State itself which thus found the means of developing its administrative structure and its military power; development of commercial capitalism in the hands of a bourgeoisie who in turn furnished administrators and financiers to the monarchic authority."* [551]

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Further he says: *"The enlightened monarchs thus endeavoured to set up a centralised administration and an effective bureaucracy, they practiced a strict mercantilism, they hastened the formation of modern armies. They reached their goal: fill their treasuries, reinforce their military power, acquire territories....*

Doubtless the policy of enlightened absolutism favoured in a certain sense the growth of the bourgeoisie by the protection accorded to nascent capitalism, as by the creation of frameworks necessary for the administration of the State...." [552]

Yet, Soboul clarifies that the *"compromise with the aristocracy was for enlightened absolutism the very condition of its existence"* [553] and thus draws its ultimate class character into focus.

In France, in England, in Denmark, in Spain, in Russia, in Germany we saw the special role of enlightened absolutism.

The case of Egypt as presented to us by Martin Bernal in his book *Black Athena* and the close parallel that it has with Karnataka may serve as an insight to this preparatory period of the bourgeois revolution. *"Egypt had been part of the Turkish empire since the sixteenth century. However, the Turks continued to rule through the previous rulers, the Mamelukes, a corps of slaves largely from the Caucusus, who made up the most formidable section of the army and had controlled Egypt since the thirteenth century. Mameluke history is extremely bloody, and power at the top shifted frequently. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, commercial agricultural production, trade and manufacture had reached a level that made Egypt wealthy by world standards.*

Mameluke rule and Turkish suzerainty were then severely weakened by Napoleon's conquests in 1798, which had largely been carried out by manipulating class, religious and ethnic divisions in Egyptian society. By 1808--after great confusion following the French withdrawal and British intervention--the British had been driven out and power had been seized by Mohamed Ali, the Albanian general of the Turkish forces. Some years later he had the Mamelukes massacred and became viceroy, virtually independent of the Turks.

Mohamed Ali began a state-led modernisation of the Egyptian economy and society and can be compared only to those of Peter the Great in Russia and the Meiji Emperor in Japan. The land of the Mamelukes and tax farmers was seized and distributed directly to peasants, who now paid a combination of rent and tax to the state, huge irrigation projects were set up, and the commercial cropping of cotton and sugar was established on a large scale. Further more, with the help of foreign experts modern factories were built to process these crops, as in Russia and Japan, the industrial centerpieces were the arsenal established to supply the modern army and to make it independent of any foreign weapons.... By the 1830s Egypt was second only to England in its modern industrial capacity." [554]

The modern state in Mysore had rulers who described traits which brought them close to the bourgeoisie with each passing day and made Tipu seem like a scion of the Meiji after its restoration in 1868, or like a Mohamed Ali from Egypt or like any royal branch from Europe before the onset of the bourgeois revolution.

There is a distinction that must however be drawn between the enlightened absolutism of Haidar and Tipu and that of European nations. While the enlightened absolutist

state generally tended to **oppose** the bourgeois revolution by rallying on behalf of the feudal classes, it could be **wrong to perceive that the enlightened absolutism of Tipu Sultan must have inevitably followed this same general course. The encirclement by colonialism was an important factor that could lend a different twist to Mysore's enlightened absolutism altogether; a twist that could also render it revolutionary.**

iii) Awakening of the Kannada Nation

The bourgeois revolution has always chosen a national frontier. The awakening of a nation and its consolidation through the nation-state has been achieved through the bourgeois revolution.

In quite a few countries such as in Holland, America and Japan bourgeois revolutions were achieved also by targeting foreign domination. Japan is a classic case of the antifeudal revolution rolling into an anticolonial struggle at the same time. In Japan, while the Tokugawa Shogun had compromised with colonialism, the people fought on bitterly. By contrast, in Karnataka while the state offered ferocious resistance it could not mobilise the people to combat the colonial invader. This was because of the inadequacy of popular awakening due to the continuation of feudal political domination.

Yet the rise of a home market and thus the stirring of the Kannada nation to life were again a positive indication of the proximity of the bourgeois democratic revolution. There has to be a political explanation for the unprecedented, unparalleled and uncompromising resistance of the soldiers of the Mysore army. They hardly surrendered in battle; and whenever they did, did so with dignity and bore their arms; and desertions, to British bewilderment, were unheard of. What was this deep seated consciousness that awakened them? Had the stirrings of the Kannada nation not in any way cast its spell on their spirits? The national question has always been the jacket which the bourgeoisie going to final battle with feudalism has worn.

iv) Colonial Encirclement of a Modern State

A fifth factor, that of colonial encirclement of a modern state, acted as a spur in the maturing of the bourgeois revolution. Mysore was encircled by colonialism at a time when the Kingdom had developed a home market. **The defence of the domestic market led to economic measures of protectionism, the commencement of state trade and the birth of state industry.** These measures enhanced the process of capitalist growth and facilitated the transition of merchant capital into industrial capital, albeit under forms specific to Karnataka and at variance from the particular historical pattern of a Holland or an England. The political reflection of these economic measures which went to safeguard and boost the domestic market was the modernisation of the state machine much beyond what would have otherwise been normal levels. It was from this springboard that the wars against colonialism were launched which could have had the objective effect of seeding the people with a sense of patriotism and in turn gone a long a way in the early consolidation of the nation state.

The four decades of battle with British colonialism, if they had continued, would have led to further changes in the economy on the one hand and the consciousness of the people on the other, concluding in a coalescence of the war against feudalism with that

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against colonialism, since colonialism always relied on the decadent landlords and took the advantage of a peasantry in slumber for their loot of the colonies.

Colonial encirlement also contributed to a transformation of the character of enlightened absolutism, endowing what was reactionary in an European context immense revolutionary potential in a colony.

v) Late Feudalism and the Pace of Historic Decline and Ascendancy

There has also been a historical pace which has been helpful in describing the direction of social development.

If early feudalism lasted eight centuries and middle feudalism close to five, late feudalism lasted for just a century and more. It is true that late feudalism could not wear out and allow the culmination of the bourgeois revolution. But despite this abortion does this length of each of the periods within the roughly 1,400 years of feudalism tell us anything?

Though the history of feudalism in all countries that have undergone bourgeois revolutions cannot be subjected to this three-tier classification, it is evident that **the formative years of the feudal mode of production have been more prolonged. But the decline has always been more rapid than its consolidation.** Given the fact that the Mysore Kingdom of the late eighteenth century displayed at least similar socioeconomic tendencies at that time as Japan or several nations of central and east Europe did, then, it would be difficult not to come to the opinion that the period of late feudalism could not have lasted beyond the period of their democratic revolutions a century later. Or, even if this could be called as wishful, late feudalism could not have, unless under certain extraneous conditions, come anywhere close to the length of the middle feudal period. **The pace of development within Karnataka and the general historical process, taken together, could not have provided late feudalism a long run.**

In fact it is with this interpretation in mind--that late feudalism should have been the last period of feudalism's existence--(had not colonialism intervened), that the three tier classification of feudalism in Karnataka also rests.

Towards the end of our discussion on early feudalism we said that **the transition from one period to another within the feudal mode of production was caused by a crisis. Although the fundamental contradiction with feudalism lay at the root of these crises, they had not yet assumed the nature of falling beyond resolution by reform within the framework of the feudal system.** Thus the crisis afflicting early feudalism in its final centuries led to the accommodation of commodity production within the feudal system, and the crisis in the final decades of the period of middle feudalism and its wars, to take a phrase from Marx, *"devoured the old feudal nobility"* of palegaras.[555] It was this devouring that inaugurated late feudalism. It was a great reform in that feudalism lost a powerful stratum and was weakened as a consequence. But what about the crisis afflicting the period of late feudalism? **In our opinion this anticipated crisis would have been unresolvable under the aegis of feudalism and would have led the bourgeoisie to make its revolution with the support of the masses. Late feudalism which had already encompassed a semifeudal order, thus, should have been the last; its crisis inaugurating not a fresh reform but a new social system altogether; that of capitalism.**

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It is with this theoretical conception that our classificatory schema for feudalism in the precolonial period has been drawn. Late feudalism, to borrow from Lenin, should have been the eve of the bourgeois revolution.

D. In the Twilight of a Bourgeois Revolution

As the starting point for this discussion we may consider Mao's reading of precolonial China when her capitalist features were at a more embryonic stage than what obtained in Karnataka. He said in his treatise *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*: *"As China's feudal society developed its commodity economy and thus carried within itself the embryo of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even if there had been no influence of foreign capitalism."* [556]

Did this then not hold good for a Karnataka of the late eighteenth century which bore stronger features than a China before colonial intervention?

Though in an all-India context, Suniti Kumar Ghosh in his book *The Indian Big Bourgeoisie* discusses this question: *"...the main elements of the pre-colonial Indian society that were undermining the old mode of production were: an unmistakable trend towards the growth of private property in land; the employment of hired labour in agriculture though on a limited scale; the growing stratification of the peasantry, high degree of monetisation of the economy (though natural economy mostly prevailed in the village); the evast expansion of simple commodity production and the emergence of manufactories in some areas; the appearance though sporadic, of direct producers as industrial capitalists; the expansion of internal trade and external commerce; the organisation of commercial credit, insurance, etc. The fierce struggle for rent or income from land towards the end of the Mughal period, the political, social and ideological movements such as the resistance and revolts of the peasantry and artisans; the Bhakti movement and Sikhism; the flowering of several national languages and the beginnings of the formation of nations in the subcontinent were causing the decay of the feudal system. The incessant feudal wars in the second half of the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries were weakening feudalism though the final overthrow might take a long time, as it did in England. The transition from feudalism to capitalism is quite a long and by no means uniform process, as Eric Hobsbawm said, in England, changes in the economic structure began as early as the fourteenth century, but the bourgeois revolution took place in the mid-seventeenth century."* [557]

The bourgeois democratic revolutions starting from the Dutch revolution of 1568 have traversed a long and winding course. The French revolution of 1789 alone was undertaken in a *"truly revolutionary manner"* as the founders of Marxism said. Since after that, all other bourgeois revolutions that took place having endowed the bourgeoisie with state power, proceeded along the path of striking an alliance with the feudal forces and then transforming the mode of production through a series of reforms. The fear of the working class and its alliance with the peasantry were what drove the bourgeoisie to undertake its revolutions of the nineteenth century along such lines of compromise. Writing to the *New York Daily Tribune* of the German revolution of 1848, this is how Engels described the compromise of the German bourgeoisie: *"...after three months' emancipa-*

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tion, after bloody struggles and military executions, particularly in Silesia, feudalism was restored by the hands of the, until yesterday, anti-feudal bourgeoisie. There is not a more damning fact to be brought against them than this. Similar treason against its best allies, against itself, never was committed by any party in history, and whatever humiliation and chastisement may be in store for this middle-class party, it has deserved by this one act every morsel of it." [558]

The Austrian, Japanese, or the February Revolution of Russia were again parodies of a bourgeois revolution. **Yet the bourgeoisie always won its state power. Thus it was this central question and no more the means through which it was achieved that remained the cornerstone of the bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century.**

This discussion of the manner in which the bourgeois revolutions were conducted is important for us in understanding the fullest scope for it.

The loosening of feudalism, the elimination of a powerful layer of the feudal class, the onset of semifeudalism, the development of capitalist features in agriculture and industry taken along with the five political features of the time of late feudalism which we have just described only compels us to conclude that in the late eighteenth century it was Tipu's Mysore that was closest to the bourgeois revolution than any other part of India. The leading centres of commodity production of India had by the seventeenth century, already been targeted by British colonialism. The establishment of their control in Surat, Mumbai, Cochin, Madras, Vishakapatnam and Bengal were located in nationalities or regions which had displayed the **highest** levels of commodity production. This was but 'natural' since it contributed to a more profitable British trade. The further development of these, as a result of British colonial conquest was shattered. Thus, among the unconquered territories it was the Mysore Kingdom and the Kannada nationality, which, by remaining a guarded enclave outside the destructive influence of colonialism, bore, in the late eighteenth century, the brightest prospects for achieving its bourgeios revolution when compared to the other regions or nationalities of India..

All that was needed was time for the further maturation of conditions. And that was what Haidar and Tipu were--objectively--fighting for. Already we notice a marked development from Haidar to Tipu. With each passing day internal developments and colonial encirclement had been pushing Tipu, in the strict sense, a merchant king, closer and closer to the bourgeoisie. His traits and perception amply showed that his heart had already begun to warm for the industrial bourgeoisie. He appeared more and more like a scion of the Japanese Meiji after its restoration in 1868 where capital was married to a predominantly feudal base.

Given more time, and if within that period, conditions had adequately matured, and if Tipu were still alive, what role would he have had in the further shaping of our history? In the midst of all these ifs, given the general trajectory of the bourgeois revolutions and of Tipu Sultan's individual traits, would history have been inconsiderate to him? While this question stands suspended before us, just as so many other such hypothetical questions, to find an answer could well belong to one's fancy. Yet let us not forget that as

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a man he hated the British from the marrow of his bones; he died a hero facing martyrdom to meek surrender. *Citizen* Tipu's forceful words, etched in the Daria Daulat at Ganjam, continues to awaken the faith of posterity. He said: *"To quarrel with our subjects is to war with ourself. They are our shield and buckler; and it is they who furnish us with all things; preserve the hostile strength of our empire, exclusively for its foreign enemies."* [559] Was he already not cast in the mould of a revolutionary?

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13. IMPLICATIONS OF TIPU'S DEFEAT

The defeat of the Mysore army and the death of Tipu on 4 May 1799 reverberated with one central implication. All the prospects that Karnataka enshrined were extinguished. Karnataka and India were chained by colonialism. And, the shackles have been so heavy they have stained our ankles and wrists for two agonising centuries.

Let us first see how the British colonialists viewed this defeat.

A. Perceptions of British Colonialists

The final defeat of the Mysore army was highly significant for the British. Let us see what the short term and long term implications were for the British empire ranging from the opinion of officers who were catspaw, to the Governor General who goaded the white man's chariot of conquest in India.

Beatson called it: *"An achievement no less important than decisive; and which has never been surpassed in splendour, by any event recorded in the history of military transactions of the British nation in India. The fall of this capital placed the whole kingdom of Mysore, with all its resources, at the disposal of the British Government, and extinguished the only power in India which was deemed formidable."*[560]

He again wrote: *"...the augmentation of our commercial and military resources, arising from the conquest of Mysore, would also be taken into consideration.*

Formerly all traffic between the subjects and dependents of the Company, and those of the late Sultan, was nearly prohibited by the restraint to which his hatred to the British nation, or his ignorance and prejudice, had subjected the communication with his possessions. These restraints being removed and every proper encouragement to commercial intercourse being substituted, it may reasonably be expected that the neighbouring, and now united countries of the Carnatic and Mysore will mutually consume a considerable portion of their respective products and manufactures; and that even a portion of British commodities will soon find a market in Mysore. Our information with regard to the articles produced, manufactured or consumed in the countries acquired by the Company and the Rajah of Mysore, is at present too imperfect to form any accurate calculation of the possible increase of the imports from the coast of Malabar to Europe; but it appears probable, that the Company's investment in the articles of pepper, may soon be augmented, to any extent which may be deemed advisable.

Our military resources may be considered to have received a great augmentation, not only from the additional supplies of grain, provisions and cattle, which our connection with Mysore places at our disposal, but from the new channels which it opens for recruiting the native force, both of the Presidencies of Fort St George and Bombay."[562]

This is where Francis Buchanan precisely came into the picture. Serving the Bengal administration in Bihar, combining in him diverse fields of knowledge, the Board of Directors of the East India Company assigned to this uncanny colonialist the task of undertaking an extensive survey of the natural, industrial, and agricultural resources and products of Tipu's Mysore. The British had till then, as Beatson acknowledges, not been able to set foot on the Mysore Kingdom--save the brief march to Srirangapatna in 1792-

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- and it was this investigation of Buchanan's chronicled in his *A Journey* that patiently opened the account for the systematic pillage of Karnataka.

Clive wrote to Henry Dundas on 11 May 1799, from Madras: *"No event so important has occurred since the Battle of Plassey in this country, that laid the foundation of our greatness in India, and this last glorious success will, I trust, confirm that greatness and place in our power the means of a durable, advantageous and honourable peace."*[563]

Munro, the most perceptive of the lot was extremely brief. Yet he expressed the essence of things: *"The gradual conquest of India might have been considered as certain when Bangalore was taken; for when the Mysore power was broken, there was no other that would resist us."*[564]

On 23 February 1799, Wellesley, the Governor General, wrote a letter to General Harris who commanded the British troops, on the eve of the March on Mysore: *"My dear General,--I take my leave of you (I trust for a very short period of time) in the firm conviction that within a few weeks I shall have the satisfaction of congratulating you on the prosperous issue of a service combining more solid advantages and more brilliant distinctions than the favour of fortune, season and circumstances ever placed within the reach of any British subject in India from the earliest success of our arms up to the present day."*[565]

The defeat of Tipu was obviously a foregone conclusion, since palms were greased and betrayers beckoned the enemy's unhindered passage. Praxy Fernandes wrote of the speed: *"The advance of Harris had been extremely rapid...towns and fortresses fell, disposed palegaras and disgruntled elements supported the British advance and thus within a few weeks as Wellesley had so accurately assessed, the British army lay encamped at Malvalli within a few miles of striking distance of Seringapatam."*[566]

On receiving the news of British victory, the Governor General who was camping at Madras issued the following toast: *"The events of the fourth May, while they have surpassed even the sanguine expectations of the Governor General in council, have raised the reputation of British arms in India, to a degree of splendour and glory, unrivalled in the military history of this quarter of the globe, and seldom approached in any part of the world.*

The lusture of this victory can be equalled only by the substantial advantages which it promises to establish, by restoring the peace and safety of the British possessions in India on a foundation of genuine security."[567]

On 7 June 1799, in a letter to Henry Dundas, chief among the Directors of the East India Company, Wellesley wrote: *"By the success of your arms in the short period of the late campaign not surely excluded the French from Mysore, provided an ample indemnity to you and your allies for the charges of the war, destroyed the hostile power of Tippu Sultan, and effectually precluded its revival, but has transferred the sword of your implacable enemy into your own hands, and turned to your use the mainsprings of his wealth and strength."*[568]

Let us in the next volume of *Making History*, which in fact was its unmaking, see, as to how this sword in the hands of the British was put to use and how it turned the *"mainsprings"* of Karnataka's *"wealth and strength"* into a fountain for colonial

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aggrandisement. But, for the present, let us see how this victory of British arms was celebrated and the revelry and merriment that the occasion marked for the invader at Srirangapatna.

B. The Civilisation of Colonialism

Here is a keyhole view of the pillage of Srirangapatna on its fall which went on for three full days as narrated by its participants. The greed of the Empire and the civilisation that colonialism would come to represent on the soil of Karnataka in the succeeding decades stood naked. The immaculate British gentleman derobed at centre stage so that the world could witness his role in the orgy.

"Many of the troops after the storming left their ranks and the followers of the camp under pretext of taking refreshment to their masters also poured into the town and the whole of the night was occupied by them in plunder. Many persons were beaten and threatened with death in order to force them to disclose their property. The women collected in the streets and stood there all night in large groups with a view of preventing any insults to them by their exposed situation. The soldiers and sepoys possessed themselves in a few hours after entering the town, of very valuable effects in gold and jewels, the houses of the chief sirdars and shops being completely pillaged. Though guards were placed in charge of Tipu's treasury where an immense amount of treasure and jewels existed, several of the troops managed to break into this treasury by an unguarded entrance and the officers [obviously British] themselves were found, while running about and shouting to their men to stop looting, filling their own pockets with valuables."[569]

Citing British sources, Shama Rao writes: *"By the unrestricted plunder of the town of Seringapatam and its neighbourhood, several of the men of the army became, it is stated, rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Colonel Arthur Wellesley in a letter to his brother Lord Mornington [ie, Governor General Marquess Wellesly] informed him that nothing exceeded what was done on the night of the 4th May that scarcely a house in the town was left unplundered and that in the camp bazars jewels of the greatest value, bars of gold and numerous other articles of value were offered for sale by soldiers, sepoys and followers of the army at indiscriminate prices or exchanged for articles of nominal value. Single pearls of great value are said to have been in offer for exchange for a bottle of liquor. An army doctor was able to purchase from a soldier two bracelets set with diamonds and the less costly one is said to have been valued by a jeweller at 30,000 Sterling. The other bracelet the jeweller is said to have declared, was of such superlative valued that he could not fix a price. Inspite of these enormous gains, the officers and men were further eager for a distribution among them of all the properties captured in the palace and Arthur Wellesley warned his brother that every one in the army beginning from General Harris himself was eager for an immediate distribution of these spoils and that none were so inflammable as a successful army which had no work to busy itself with."*[570]

As a result, Harris is reported to have formed a 'prize committee' consisting of select British officers to oversee the division and auction of the spoils.

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The Governor General later stated that property worth from 8 to 10 crore rupees was collected in the auction divided among the army which took Srirangapatna, its real value being far far more.[571]

For an indication of the loot which the sharks shared: *"A diamond star, some ornaments and another sword of Tippu were presented to Lord Mornington [the Governor General] on behalf of the British army. Tippu's war turban, one of his swords, and a sword of Morari Rao were sent as presents to Marquiss Cornwallis [the previous Governor General]. General Harris the Commander in Chief received Pounds 1,42,902 or one eighth of the total amount of prize money. A portion of Tippu's throne, which, as already stated, was broken up and sold in separate pieces was purchased by an army officer for Pounds 2,500 and when he subsequently sold the same is said to have realised for the gold and silver portion alone a very much larger price than he paid."* [572]

On the other hand Praxy Fernandes laments that while all this was going on: *"Over 11,000 bodies were found floating in the moats, hidden under debris and charred beyond recognition in the ashes of burnt houses."* [573]

All this and a lot more, the British achieved, within hours of setting foot on Srirangapatna. And in the four decades of Anticolonial War, Mysore lost about two lakh soldiers alone. Can one then auger what must have been their plunder in the 150 years that followed?

C. Sword Against Colonialism

Mir Sadak, Tipu's chief military officer had developed contact with the British while parleying with Cornwallis as Tipu's emissary during the Third Anticolonial War in 1792. It was his support which Wellesley banked upon in allowing the British army to reach the gates of Srirangapatna in a matter of days without a shot being fired and later breaching the fort at Srirangapatna to complete the enemy's advance. Confidence in a lightning victory on the part of Wellesley arose from Mir Sadak's collaborative overtures. Once after Srirangapatna was stormed, and Tipu killed, Mir Sadak was found in the company of General Baird conducting him across the fort; till which time his treachery remained unknown.

"Mir Sadak, according to Kirmani, wishing to quit the fort about the time Tippu and his horse were wounded near the sallyport or the gateway arrived at the Ganjam Gate, where he was attacked by a man who abusing him in foul language for all his misdemeanours cut off his head with his sword and threw his body into a heap of filth close by. Here every passer by who noticed it, it is stated, spat at it and that some also loaded it with shoes." [574]

Beatson, in his account of the war confirms this: *"The inhabitants of the Sultan's dominions universally detested Meera Sadduck and ascribed to him every act that was tyrannical. He was even suspected of treason by all but his master; and after the fall of Seringapatam, it was almost impossible to persuade any man that he did not invite the English into the country."* [576]

Fearing this could snowball into an outburst against the British, the body was, with the use of force to disperse the people, removed and disposed at an unknown grave.[577]

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Every year since then, right up to this day, when the people assemble at Tipu's tomb to pay homage to the fallen martyr, a procession winds its way to the place where the unknown patriot's sword had beheaded Mir Sadak and by the time the procession crosses the spot, it is left in a pool of spittle.

In Kannada, the name Sadak has become a word, and in the form of *samaya sadaka* has come to signify time-seeker or opportunist.

So deep burns the fire.

On the very day that Tipu fell, the sword that he had brandished against colonialism was picked up and Mir Sadak, the despised underling of the British was chopped in a sweep.

This was the other implication announcing Tipu's defeat. By his death he became the sword against colonialism which the masses of Karnataka were to so expertly wield in their glorious feat that was to follow.

The following song rendered to English by Wycliffe Bernard entitled: *The Mussalman's Lament Over the Body of Tippoo Sultan Written on the Spot where he Fell*, says a lot on how his death was received by the people.

"1

Light of my faith! thy flame is quenched
In this deep night of blood;
The sceptre from the race is wrenched, And of the brave who stood,
Around the Musnud strong and true,
When this day's sun beams on the brow
Of yonder mountains glanced, how few
Are left to weep thee now!

CHORUS: Allah! 'tis better thus to die,
with war clouds hanging redly o'er us,
Than to live a life of infamy
with years of grief and shame before us.

2

Star of thy battle! thou art set;
But thou dids't not go down,
As others who could fame forget
Before the tempest's frown,--
As others who could stoop to crave
Pardon and peace from their haughty foes;
Better to perish with the brave
Than to live and reign with those.

CHORUS

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3

No! thou hast, to thy warrior bed,
Sunk like that burning sun
Whose brightest, fiercest rays are shed
When his race is nearest done,
Where death-fires flash'd and sabres rang,
And quickest spread the parting breath,
Thou from a life of empire sprang
To meet a soldier's death.

CHORUS

4

Thy mighty father joyfully
Look'd from his throne on high,
He mark'd his spirit live in thee;
He smiled to see thee die,--
To see thy sabre's last faint sweep
Tinged with a foeman's gore,
To see thee go to the hero's sleep
With the red wounds all before.

CHORUS

5

The faithful in their emerald bowers
The Tooba tree beneath,
Have 'twin'd thee, of unfading flowers,
The martyr's glorious wreath;
The dark-eyed girls of paradise
Their jewell'd kerchiefs wave,
And welcome to their crystal skies
The Sultan of the brave.

CHORUS" [578]

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Chapter VIII

KARNATAKA: CONQUEST AND BREAK UP

From the Loss of Bellary to the Fall of the Marathas (1792-1818)

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In the earlier chapter we saw how it took nearly four decades and four major wars for the British before they could colonise Mysore, the centerpiece of their conquest. Let us see now the process of their colonisation of the rest of Karnataka. The entire event spread over a period of 26 years starting from 1792.

The first parts of Karnataka to fall into British hands were Kodagu and Bellary. In the previous chapter we saw about the contradiction between the Mysore Government and Kodagu. Two years after the Haleri prince Virarajendra's escape from Tipu's prison, he signed in 1790 an agreement with the British, accepting to transfer Kodagu as its protectorate and of mutual support in war against Mysore. On the conclusion of the Third Anticolonial War in 1792 Kodagu was, much against the will of Tipu, granted away. In the very next year, the *"Coorg Rajah agreed to pay Rs 24,000 as a mark of friendship and protection"*[1] to the British and allowed them all opportunity for trading in his kingdom. **Despite its so called independence, Kodagu remained a vassal state, compelled to act on the behest of the British.** In 1834 on the death of its king, Kodagu transpired completely to British hands and came under the direct rule of the Madras Governor through the instrument of the Commissioner resident at Madikeri; what remained of the royal family shifted to England for good.

The possession of Bellary, however, was less circuitous. The British Government considered it a part of the Madras Presidency after it was ceded by Tipu in 1792.

In 1798, the Nizam of Hyderabad signed a Subsidiary Treaty with the British, and became its puppet. With that, the districts of Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur which were under the rule of the Nizam at the point of signing, came under covert, nevertheless, colonial control.

In 1799, the British took over the districts of Mysore, Mandya (then considered a part of Mysore district), Hassan, Bangalore, Kolar, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Shimoga, Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada. While the last two were adjoined to the Madras Presidency, in 1862 Uttara Kannada, called North Kanara then, was transferred to the Bombay Presidency. The rest of the districts became a part of British territorial possessions through the rule of their puppet Wodeyar kings.

Then in 1818, in a matter of months, in what has been one of the **smoothest of British conquests,** the Maratha territory comprising the districts of Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur came under British rule.

The Marathas ruled over these parts of Karnataka through a hierarchy of feudal intermediaries called Desais. The well known Kittur fiefdom came under the rule of one such Desai called Mallasarja who again had a hierarchy of feudal lords below him. Elphinstone addressed a letter to the Kittur Desai in 1817: *"There is no quarrel between the English and you. The Peshwa will not be able to fight for long. You don't participate in the war. Remain at home. Recall your troops from the Peshwa. I have to add that if you adopt the course proposed in this letter you may be assured that you will retain your possessions on the same footing on which they were, and that you shall suffer in no way under any settlement of the government that may be made."*[2]

The internal wrangling and weakness of the Marathas and their encirclement by the British led to the shifting of loyalties by most of the intermediaries at the time of the

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British offensive in 1818. **A second feature of the effortless takeover of the forts of these Deasis was due to the neutrality of the retainers and the opposition of the peasantry to Maratha rule.** Thomas Munro who led the campaign from the south, in his letters to Elphinstone who led from the north, provides us with an account of the walk over.

"I have frequent communication with the Dessay of Kittoor, and have little doubt, both from the local situation of his country, and other causes, that he is sincere in his propositions [of becoming a British vassal, from so far being one to the Marathas]. I shall, however, put his sincerity to the proof in a few days, by calling upon him to aid us in expelling a party of the enemy from a small place in this neighbourhood. I have already got possession of a considerable number of places in this district entirely by the assistance of the inhabitants of whom 9/10ths at least are in our favour.

In my letter of the 14th instant I mentioned the Purusghur [Parasgad] had set the example, and that all that the inhabitants had requested was that they should not be transferred to any Jageerdars." [3]

Again, Munro wrote from Dharwad, *"I shall probably obtain some trifling secret cooperation from the Kittoor Dessay; from the other Jagheerdars I expect noting more than that they shall not take any very active part in opposing me....*

The greater part of the country of which I am now in possession, I owe to the exertions of the inhabitants who joined the Amildars I sent to them and expelled the enemy." [4]

Again, a few days later, Munro wrote of his landslide victories: *"We are now in possession of every village belonging to Gocklah South of the Kisnah and all the districts of the Peshwah South of that river, and East of this place [Bagalkot]. The small force with which we undertook the siege of Badami, the strength of the place, and the garrison, amounting to 800 or 1000 men, and its capture by storm, have given us the command of the Southern states [ie, Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur]."* [5]

HJ Stokes in his *Historical Account of Belgaum District*, writes of this effortless victory: *"Munro's regular force was only 500. He raised irregulars during the campaign and took all the southern fortresses. He took Gadag, Dammal, Huballi, Misrikota, Badami, Bagalkot, Gokak, Padshapur, Belgaum, Solapur."* [6]

Thus the Maratha empire collapsed of its own accord, just as palegara rule could be easily demolished owing to the contradiction it had with the people in south Karnataka. While the people's anger at palegara rule led to the overthrow of the class in south Karnataka and its replacement with a modern enlightened absolutist state, the armies of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, Haidar and Tipu basing their military expeditions on the aroused popular anger of the peasantry; in an identical situation in north Karnataka, history became a lame witness to the use of such a situation by the British colonial army which intended not to eliminate but only reinstate the feudal class.

While in some cases the British signed Subsidiary Treaties with the Desais, in other cases it pensioned them off, keeping territory for its direct rule from Bombay. Thus **by the summer of 1818, the British take over of Karnataka was completely achieved.**

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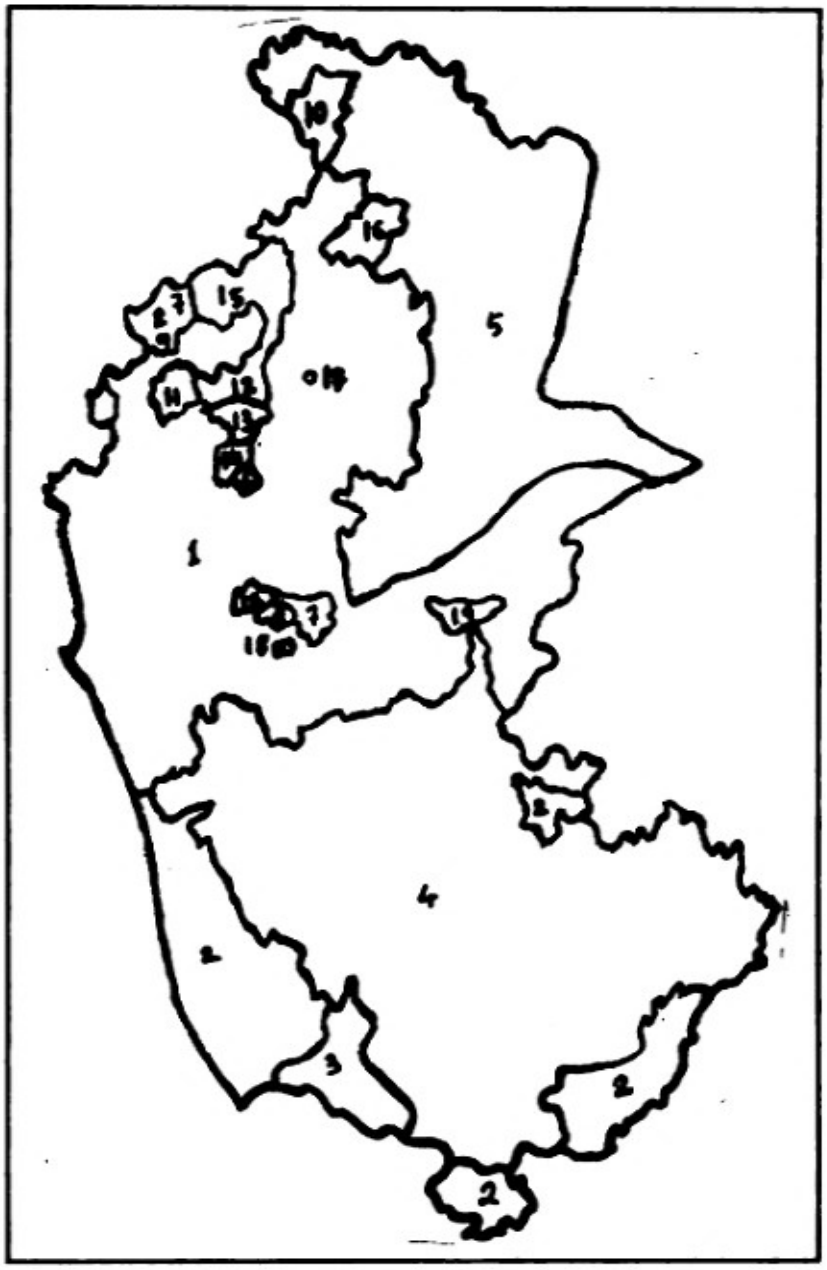
It is important to remind ourselves that the only real resistance that was offered in the conquest of Karnataka was by Haidar and Tipu. All the other regions under petty feudal lords surrendered to the British; the takeover of Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur was achieved in just six months, in a war fought entirely by proxy wherein Munro's forces, numbering merely 500, never really had to clash with those of the Desai warlords. The Maratha empire crumbled without sound or fury.



109. A fragmented Karnataka. (1) Bombay Presidency. (2) Madras Presidency. (3) Kodagu. (4) Mysore. (5) Hyderabad (6) Kollapur. (7) Sangli. (8) Mirji-Senior. (9) Mirji-Junior. (10) Kurundwad Senior (11) Kurundwad-Junior. (12) Jamkhandi. (13) Mudhol. (14) Ramadurga. (15) Jatt. (16) Akkalakote. (17) Aundh (Gunadal). (18) Savanur. (19) Sandur.

Having thus achieved the conquest the British carved up Karnataka into nearly 50 pieces, dislocating and splintering it beyond recognition. With the assumption of direct British rule over several principalities such as Kittur, Surpur, Nippani, etc, for various political reasons (by 1956) Karnataka was left splintered into 20 different fragments. These pieces included, as Suryanath Kamath says:

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1. Princely Mysore: Mysore, Bangalore, Mandya, Kolar, Tumkur, Hassan, Chickmagalur, Chitradurga and Shimoga districts.

2. Madras Presidency: Dakshina Kannada and Bellary districts and Kollegal taluk.

3. Bombay Presidency: Uttara Kannada, Belgaum, Dharwad and Bijapur districts and the taluk of Mangalaveda.

4. Hyderabad State: Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur districts.

5. Kodagu.

6. Raibag, Kathol, Torgal and other Kannada territories in the Kolhapur state.

7. Possessions of the Sangli state such as Shahpur, Shirathi, Terdal, etc.

8. State of Miraj with taluks like Lakshmeshwar.

9. State of Junior Miraj (Budhgaon) and its territories such as Gudageri.

10. Kurundwad Senior.

11. Kurundwad Junior or Vadgaon (near Belgaum).

12. State of Jamkhandi with Kundagol taluk.

13. State of Mudhol.

14. State of Jatt.

15. State of Akkalakot.

16. Gundal (near Bijapur) belonging to Audh state.

17. State of Ramdurg.

18. State of Sandur.

19. State of Savanur, and

20. Cantonments of Belgaum, Bangalore and Bellary under the British government.

About this zeal of colonialism to split up the nationalities so unrecognisably, Suniti Kumar Ghosh says: *"Colonial rule also subverted the historical process of the formation of nations in this sub-continent. Provinces of 'British India' and 'native states' were so formed as to split up nations into fragments tagged to different provinces and 'states'. For instance, the territory of the Telugu-speaking people was divided, one part attached to the Madras Presidency (where apart from the Telugus, Tamils, Kannadas and Malayalam speaking people were brought together) and another part the Hyderabad state where lived Kannadas and Marathis, besides Telugu. The Gujaratis were distributed among more than 200 native states, most of them extremely small, and the Bombay Presidency, which included with it a large part of the Maratha territory. Every nation, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Kannada, etc was thus carved up and fragments artificially joined with others. There was a method in this madness and that method was political."*[7]

The political effect was to smash the unity of the nationality which would assert itself by arousing each nationality against the British. This was how they chose to rule India.

Thus the emerging Kannada nation was most cruelly shredded and it was to remain so for the next century-and-a-half, reversing the process of historical development, **unmaking history** with the use of colonial force.

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Notes

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

AS and KGB: A Sundara and KG Bhatsoori.
ASI: Archaeological Survey of India.
AVNM: AV Narasimha Murthy.

LIST OF FIGURES

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63. Meera Abraham.
64. LKA Iyer.
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66. Leela Santakumari.
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INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER I
PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM AND KARNATAKA'S PREHISTORY

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3. VP Alexeev provides us with the general systematics of this family as follows:
   "Family Hominidae
   1st Sub-Family Australopithecinae
   1. Genus: Australopithecus
   2. Genus: Paranthropus

   2nd Sub-Family Hominidae
   1. Genus: Pithecanthrop
   1) Species: Pithecanthropus erectus
   2) Species: Pithecanthropus pekinensis
   3) Species: Pithecanthropus soloensis
   2. Genus: Homo
   1) Species Homo neanderthalensis
   2) Species Homo sapiens"
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26. VP Alexeev, Pp 235-236.
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541. Al Chicherov, Pp 230-237.
542. Francis Buchanan, I, Pp 52-55.
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562. Alexander Beatson, Pp 257-258.
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566. Praxy Fernandes, p 184.
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576. ibid, p 158.
577. MMDLT,

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1. G Richter, Pp, 258-259.
2. MV Krishna Rao, Pp 110-111.
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7. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Pp 139-140.

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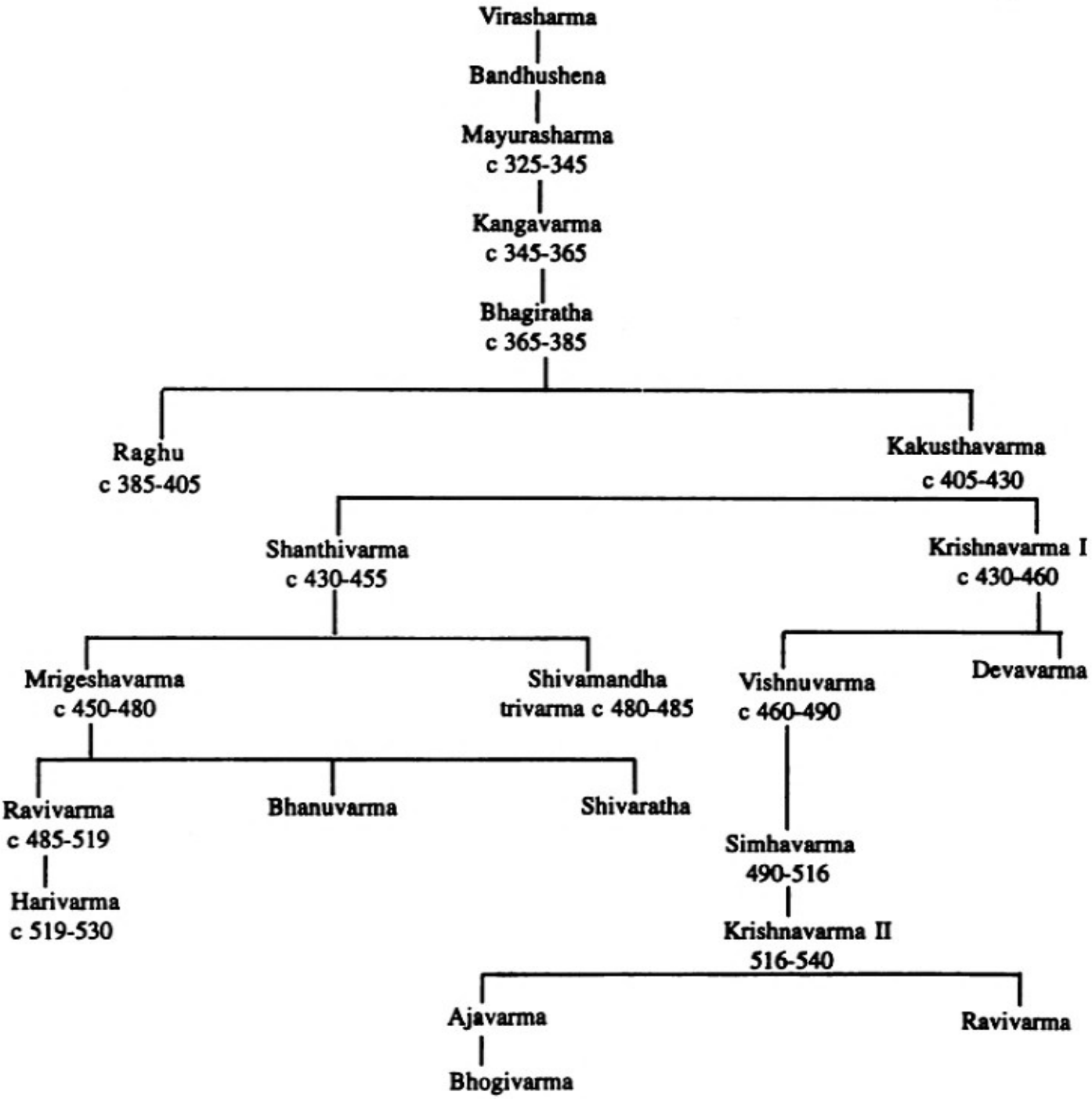
Appendix

Genealogies of Some Important Dynasties that Ruled Over Karnataka.

Genealogy of the Kadambas



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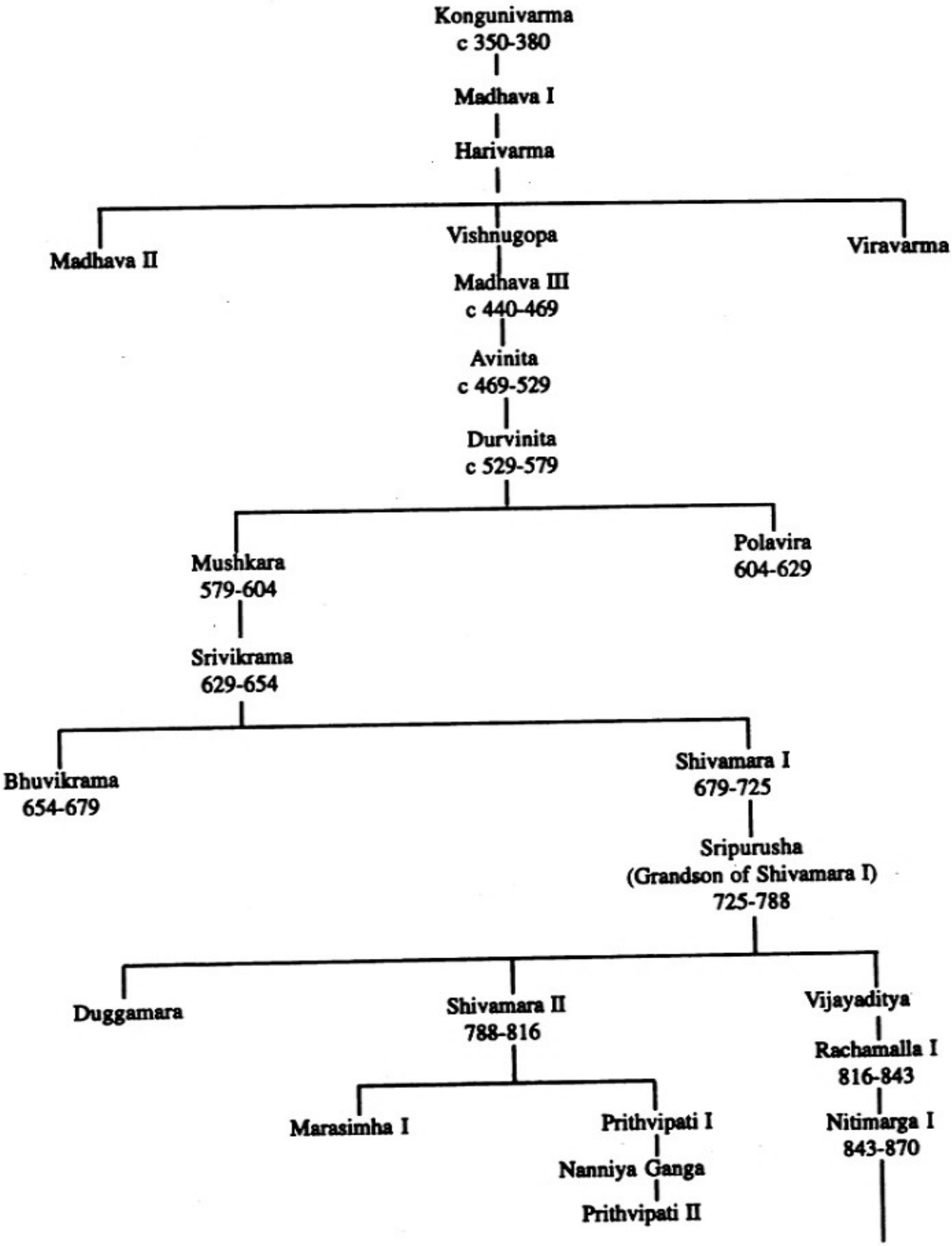

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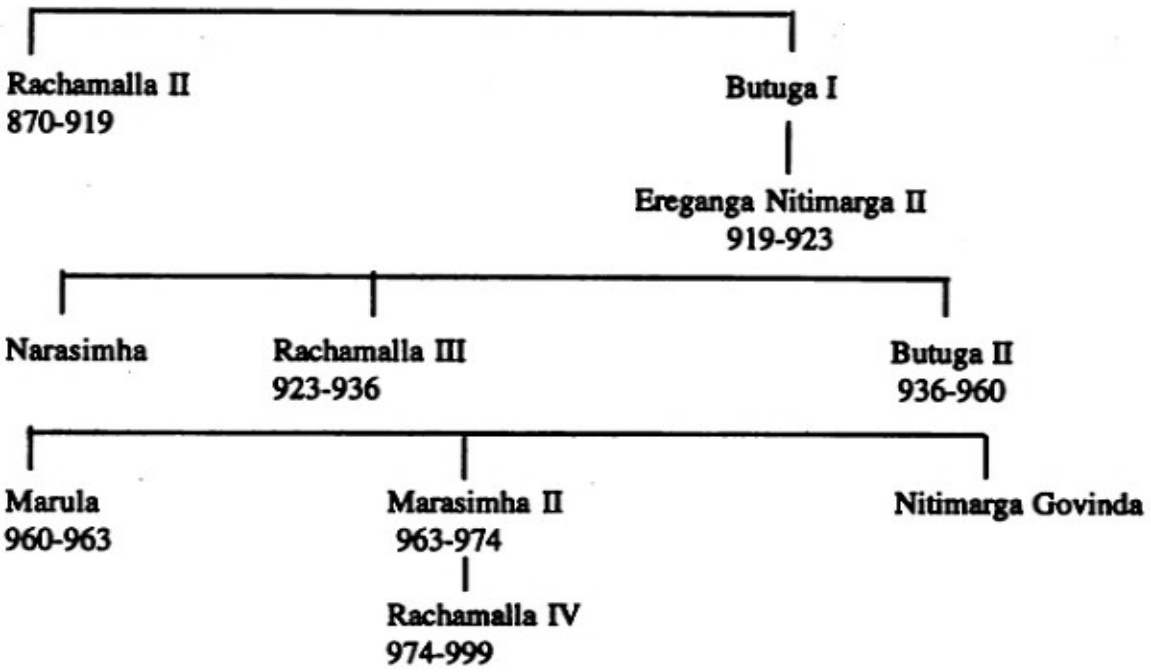

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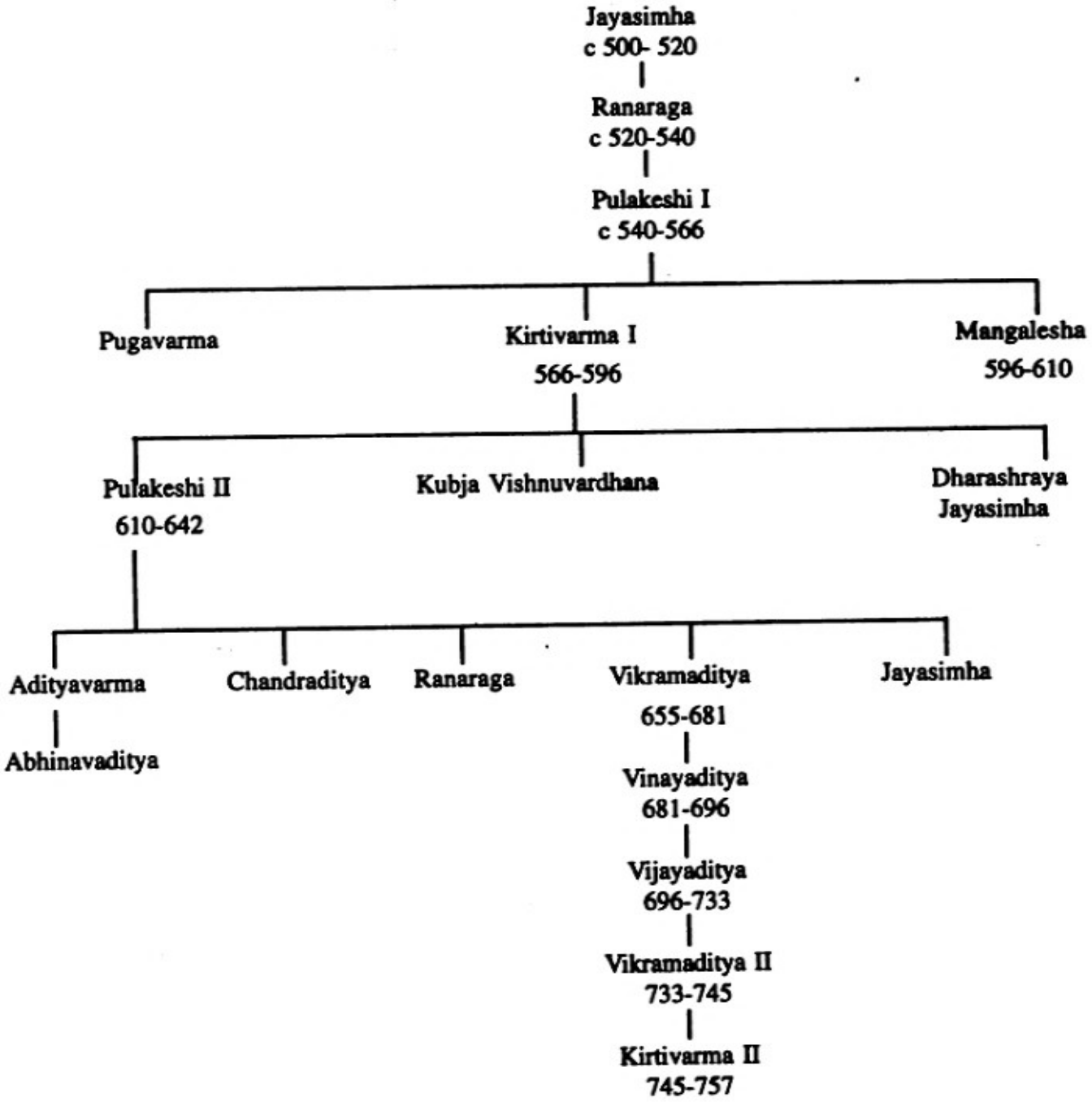

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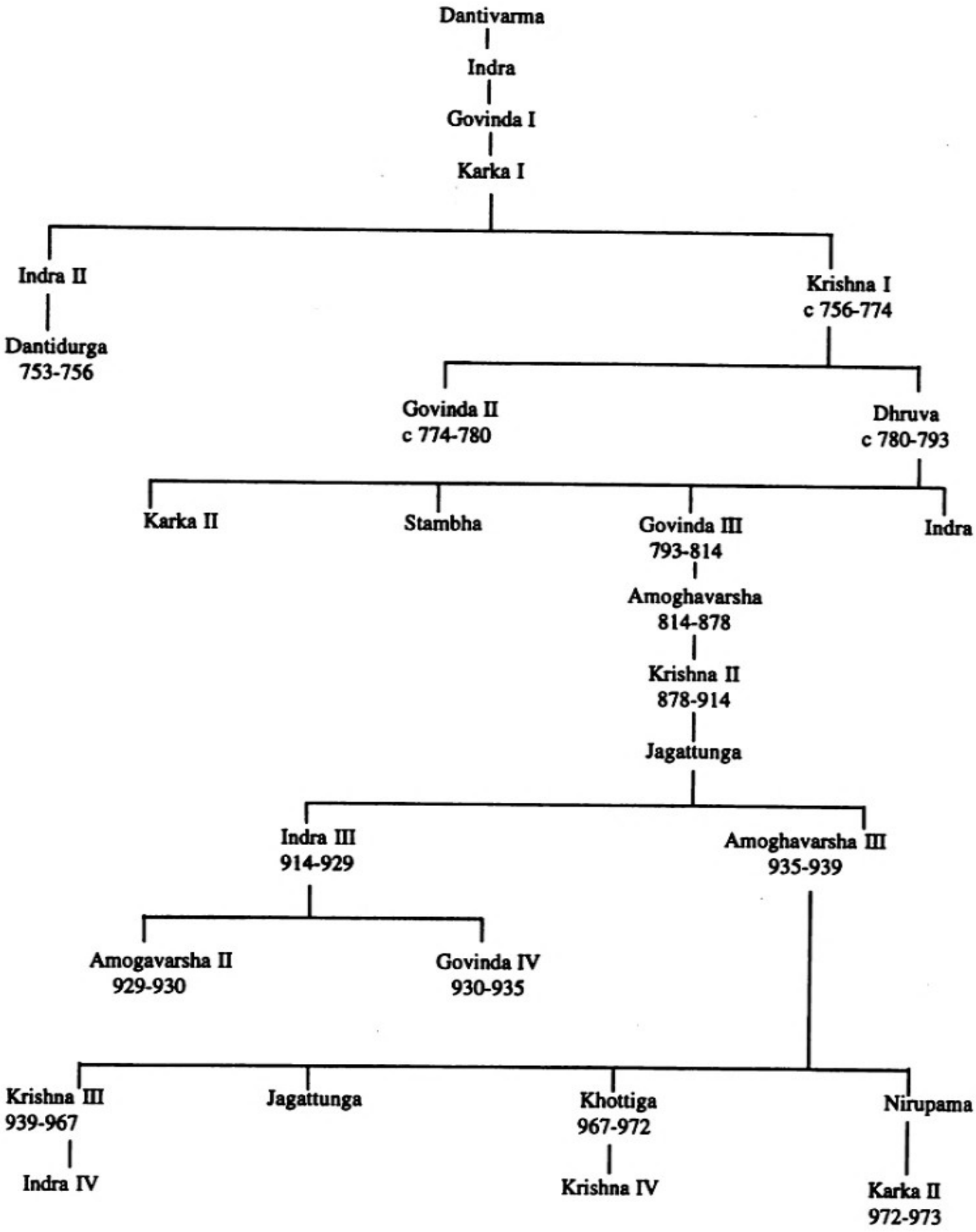
Genealogy of the Rashtrakutas



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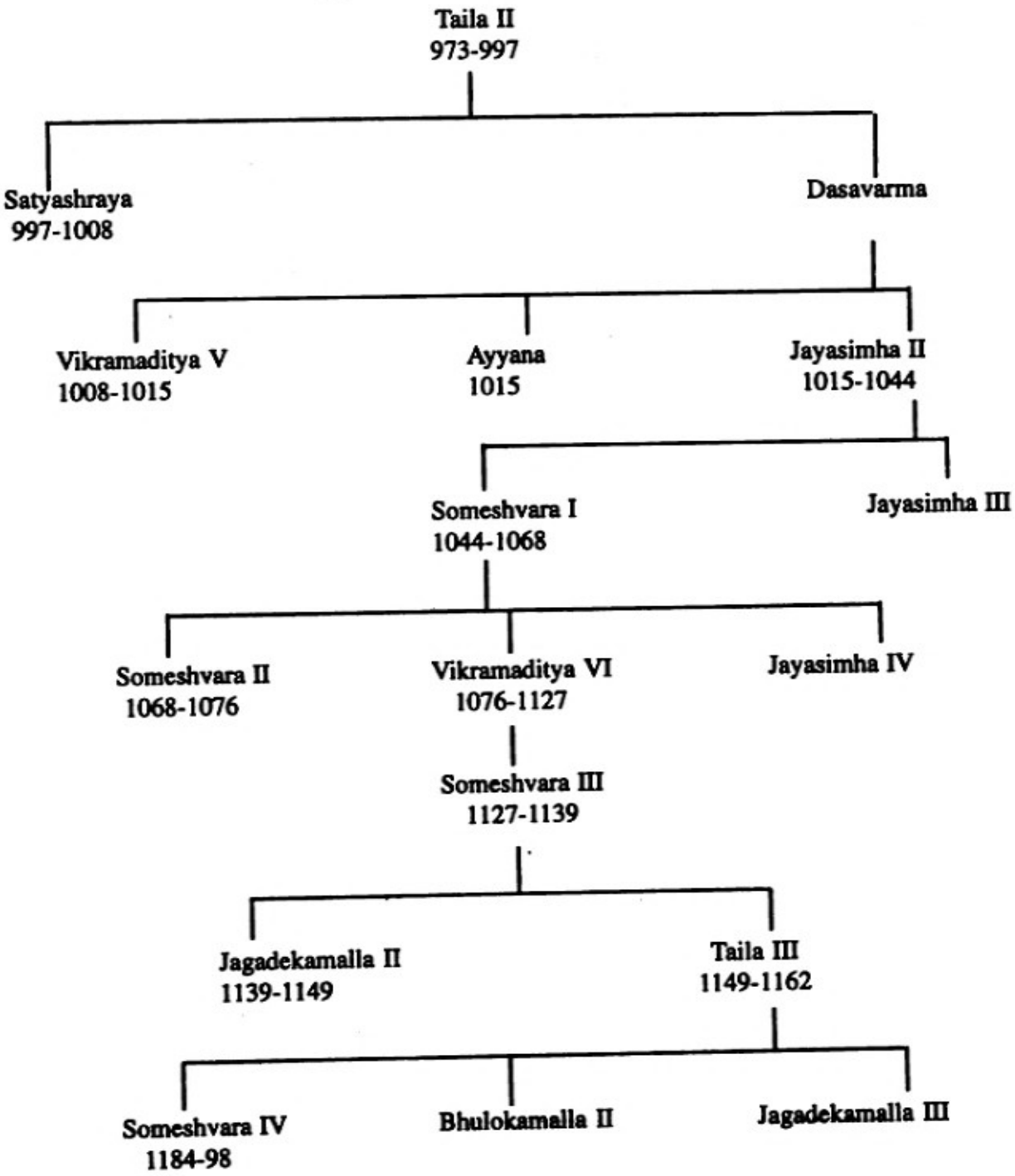
Genealogy of the Chalukyas of Kalyana



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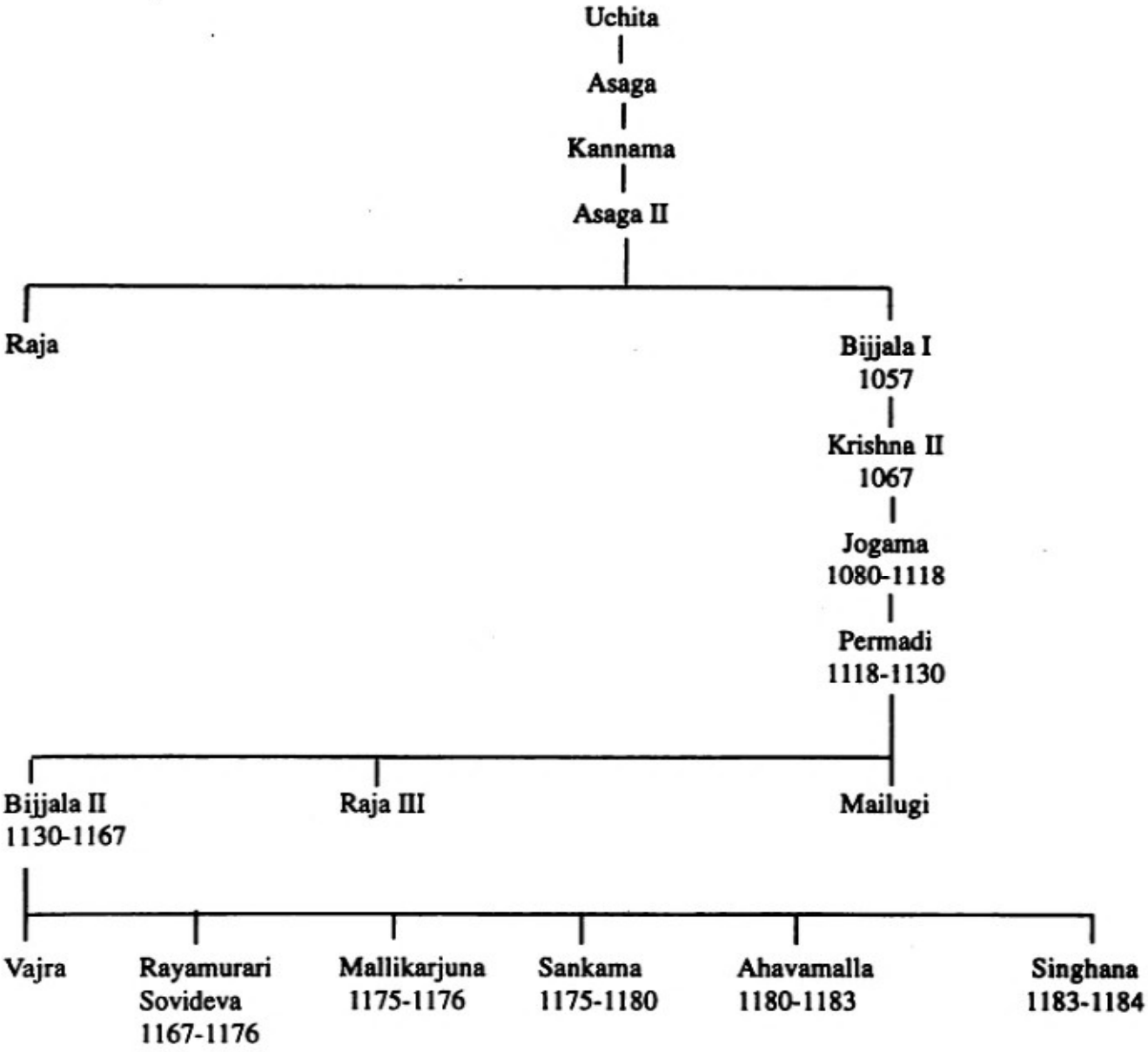

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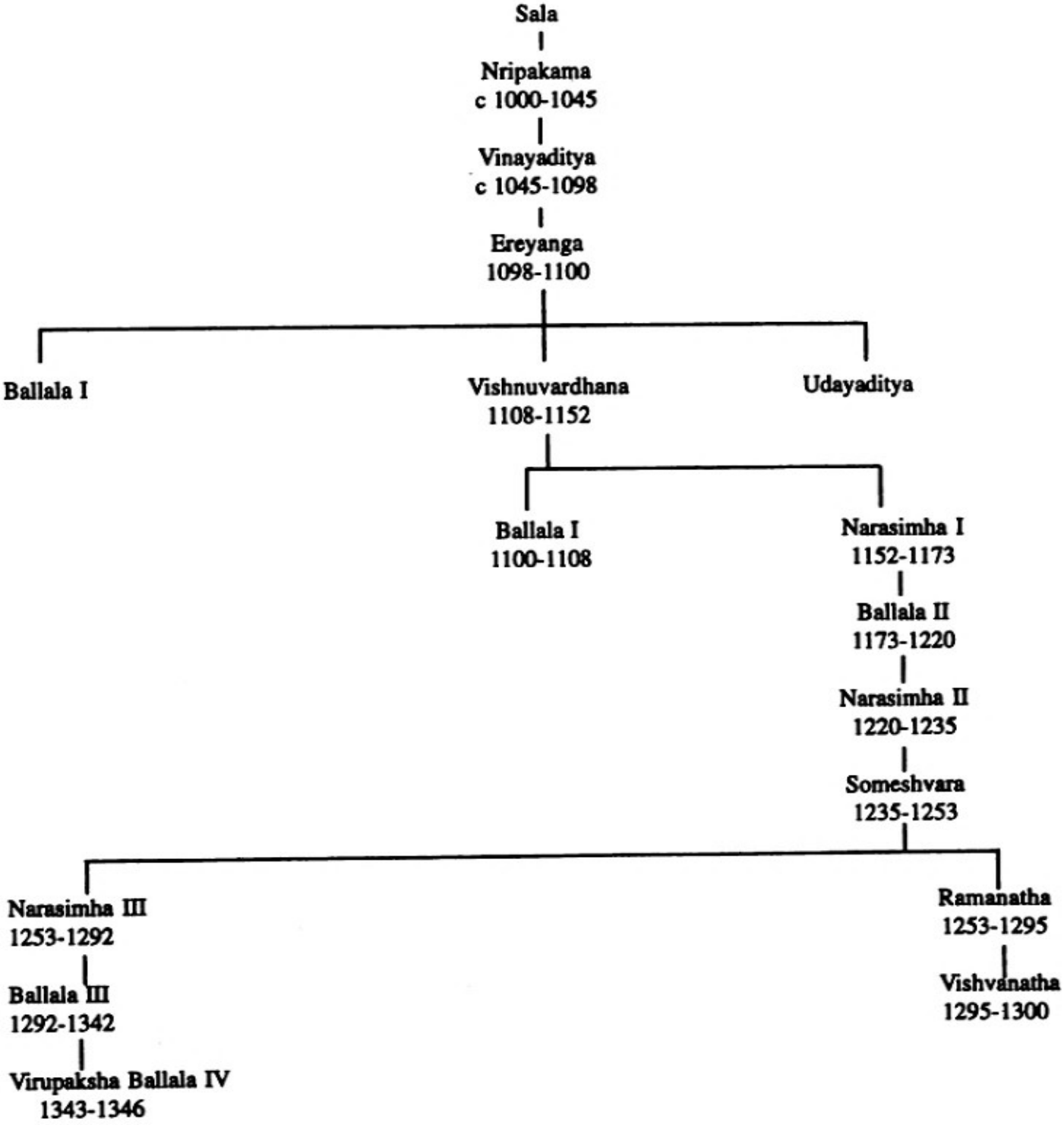

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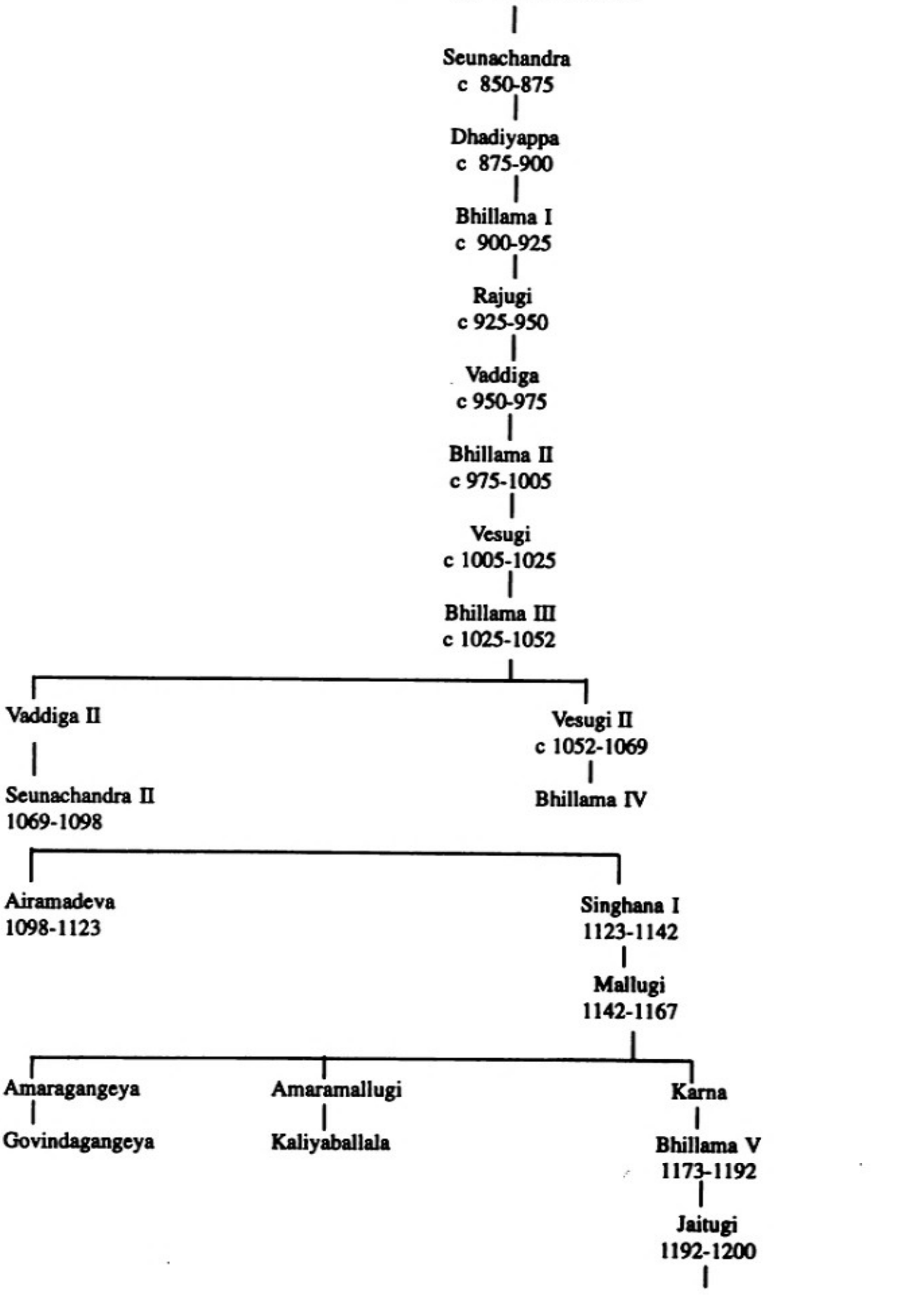

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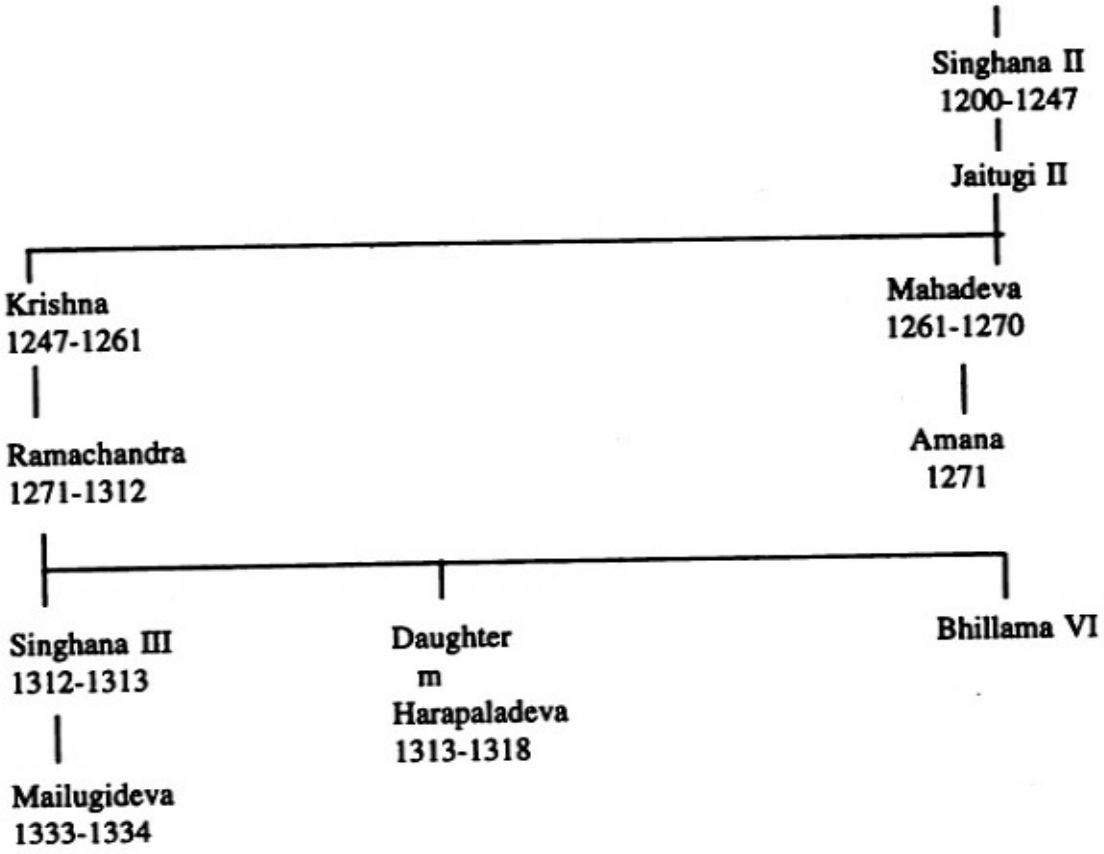

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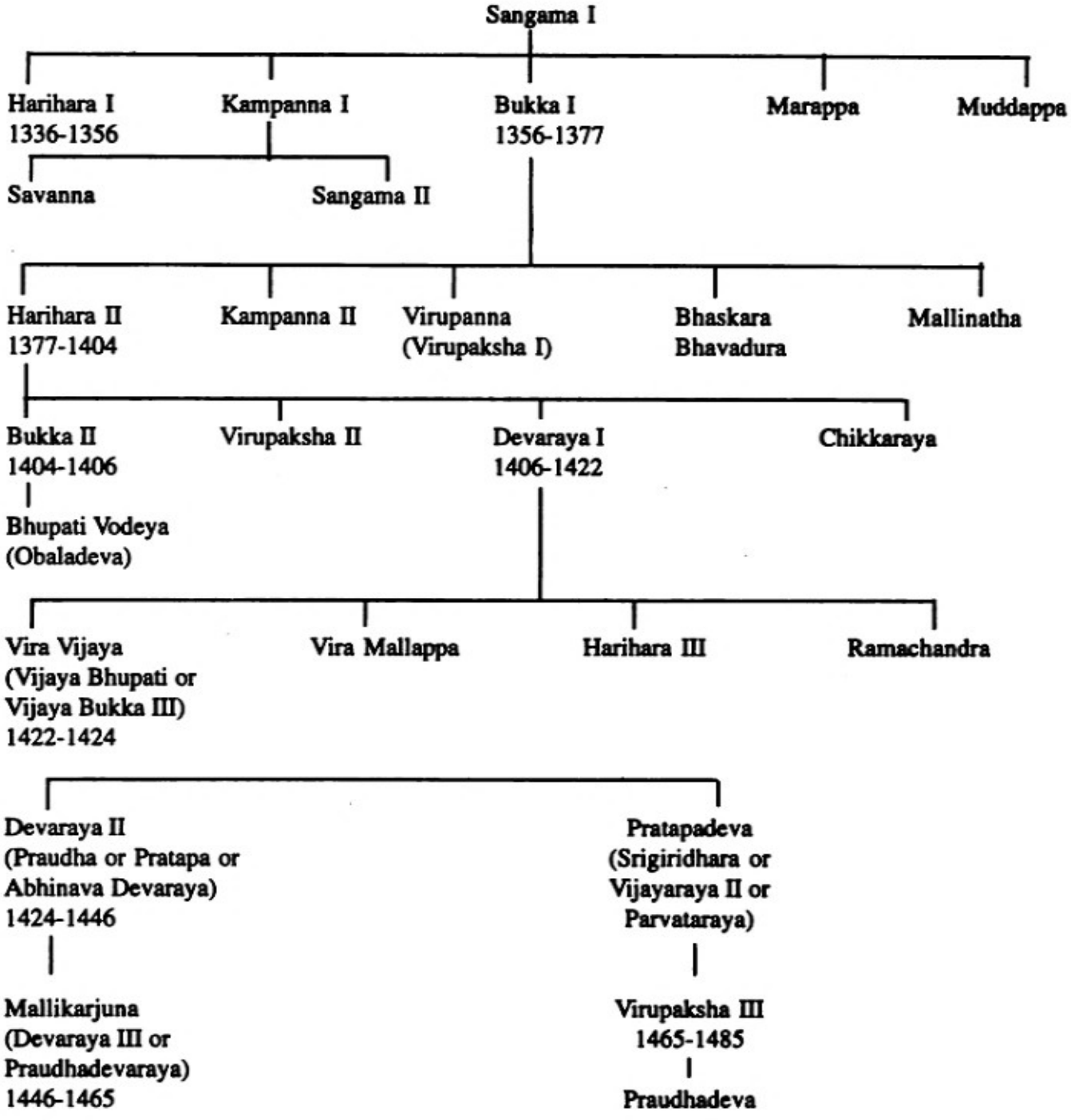
Genealogy of the Vijayanagara Empire

1. SANGAMA DYNASTY



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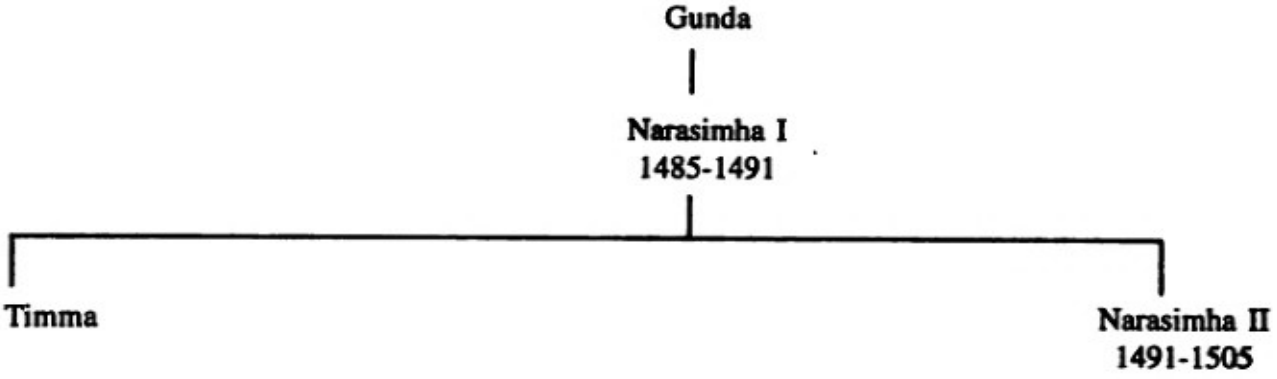

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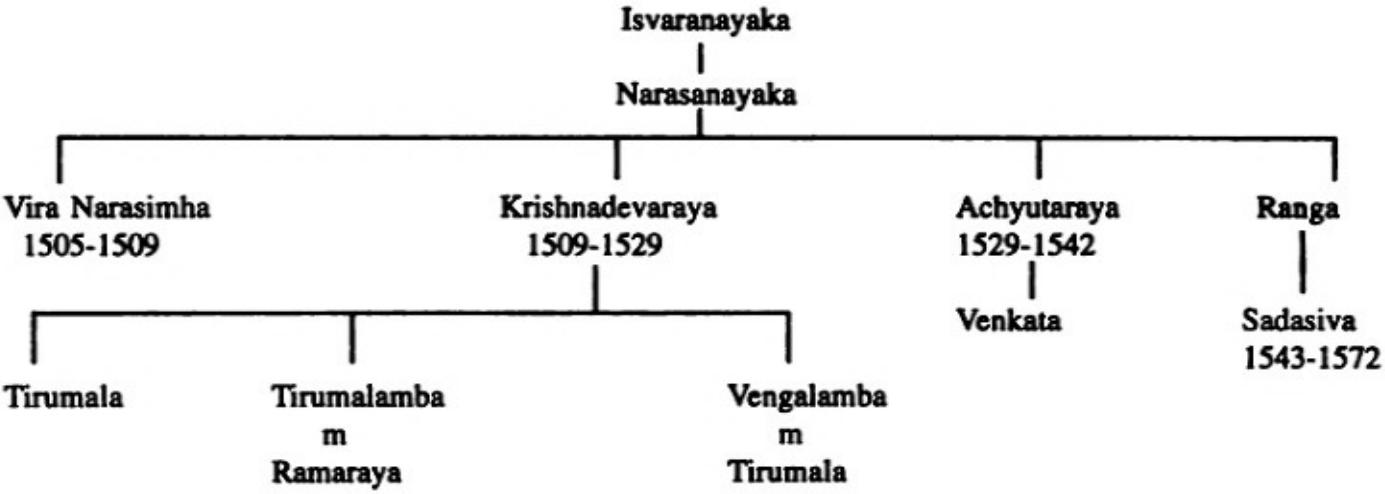

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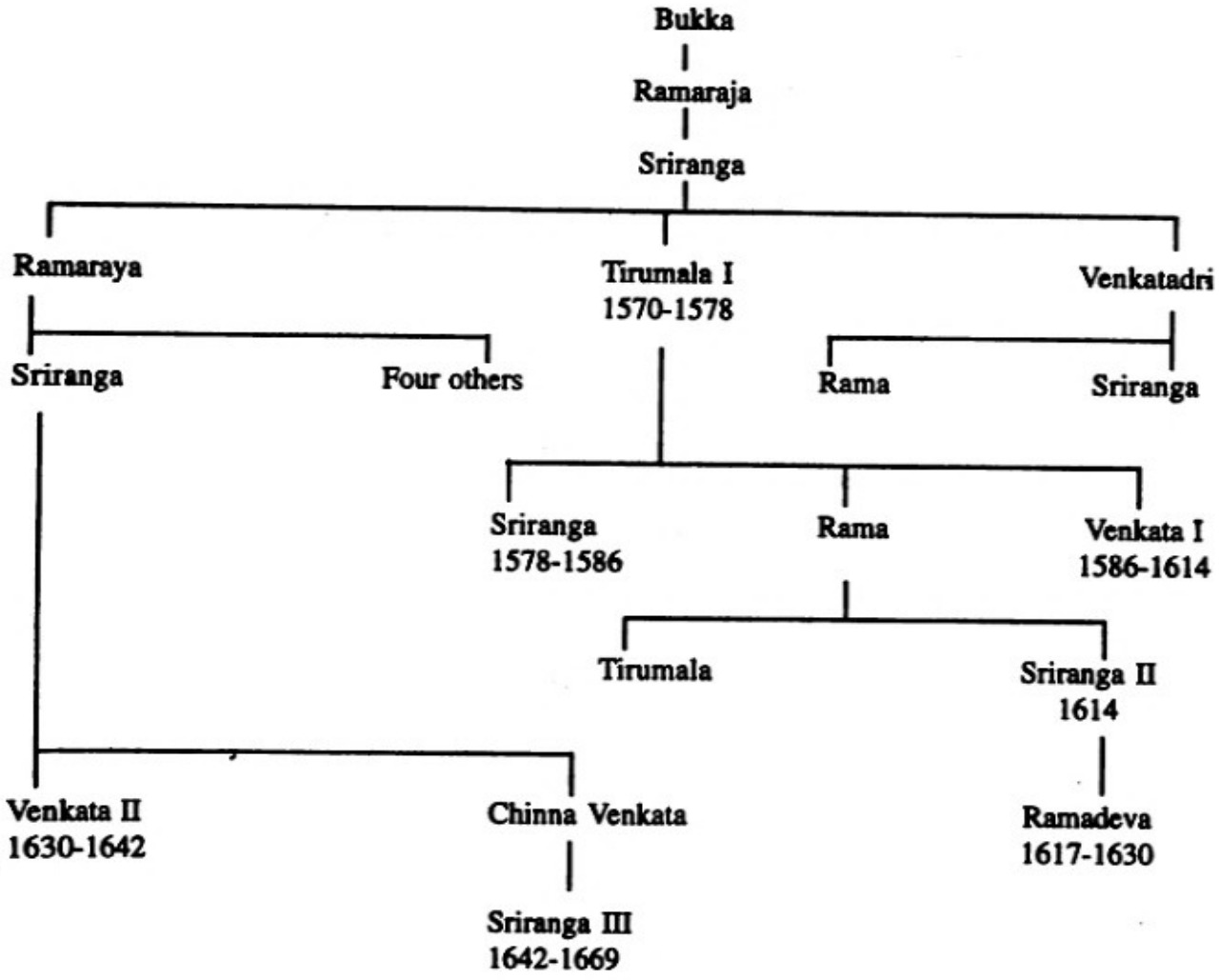
ARAVIDU DYNASTY



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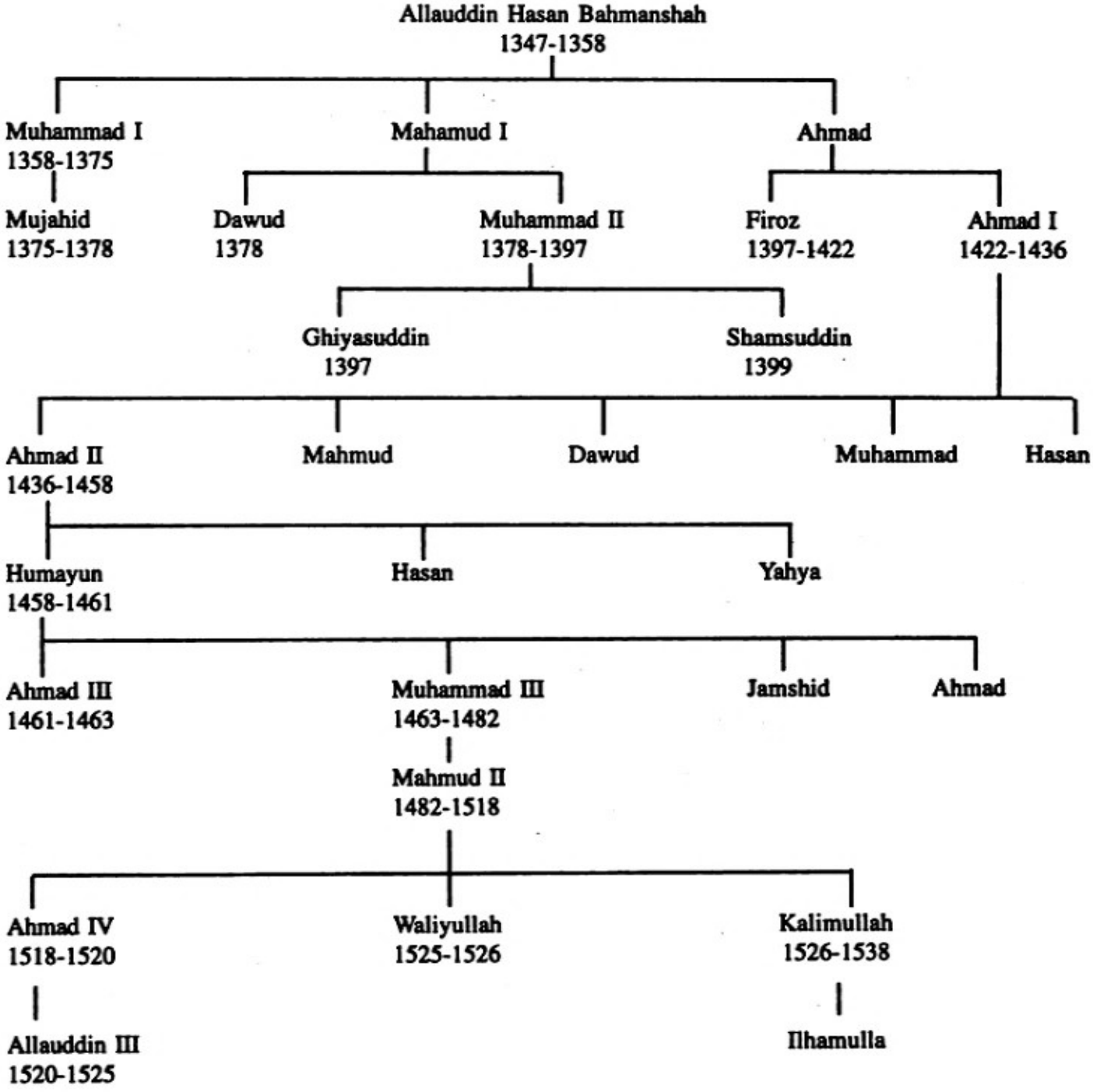

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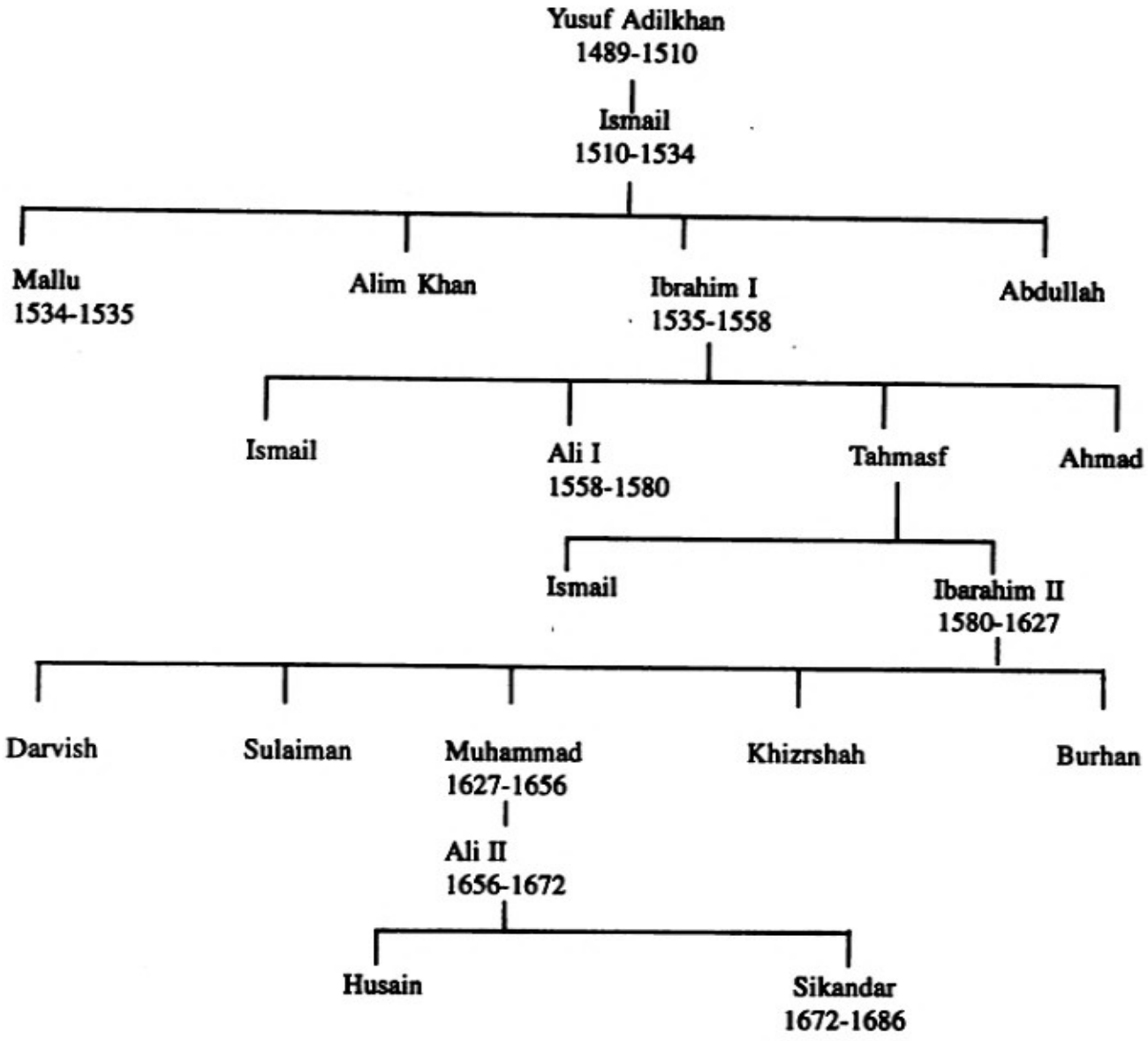

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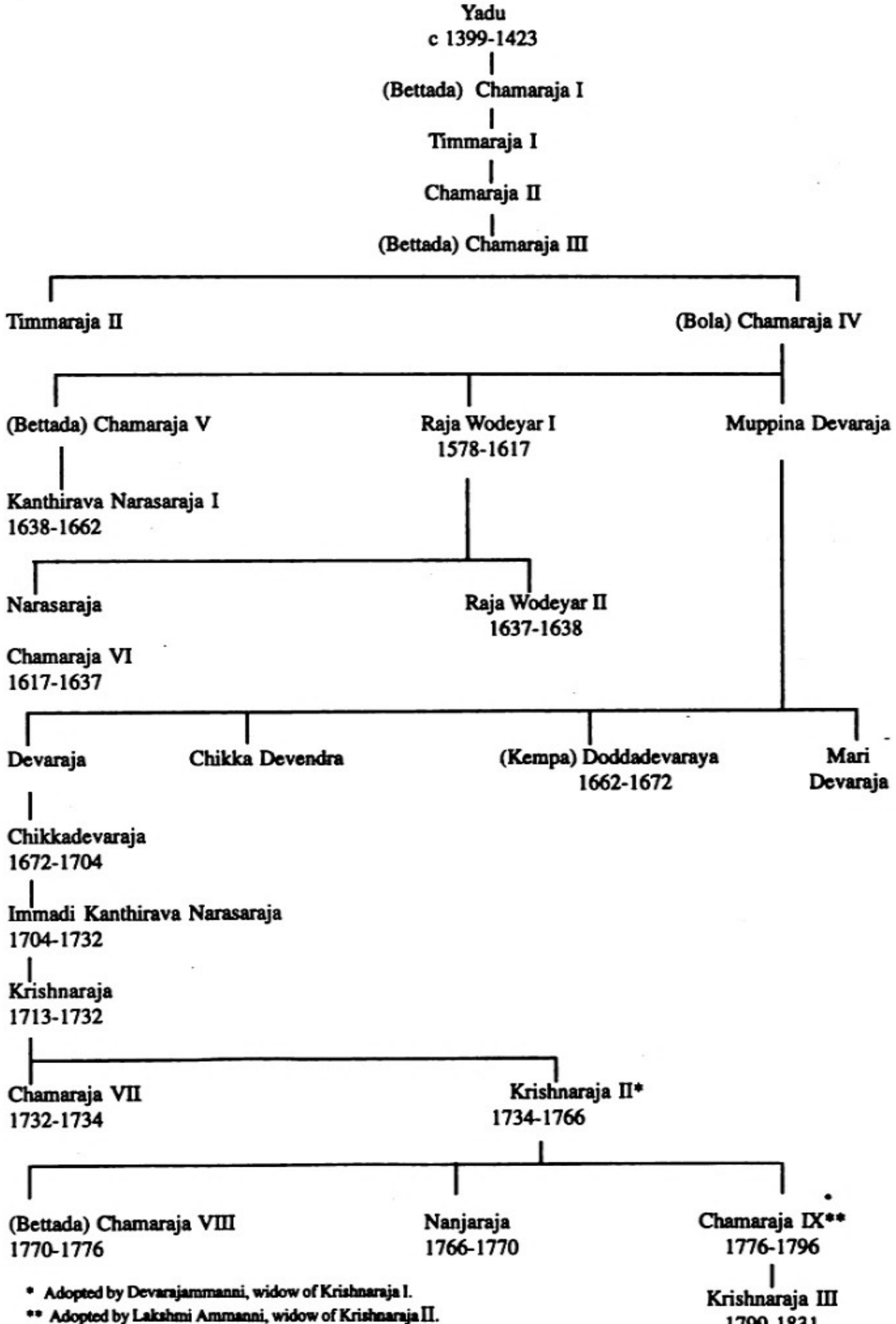
Genealogy of the MysoreWodeyars (1399 to 1831)



* Adopted by Devarajammanni, widow of Krishnaraja I.

** Adopted by Lakshmi Ammanni, widow of Krishnaraja II.

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EPW: Economic and Political Weekly.

IESHR: Indian Social and Economic History Review.

QJMS: Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society.

IA: Indian Anthropologist.

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