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MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN MYSORE

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

IN MYSORE

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BOMBAY
NEW BOOK CO.
188-90, HORNBY ROAD
1942

First Published April 1942

Printed and Published by P. Dinshaw at the
New Book Co., 188-90, Hornby Road, Bombay.

IN MEMORY OF

MY FATHER

FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in commending this work of my young friend, Mr. M. N. Srinivas, to the attention of the public. Works on Indian Sociology based on a careful field study are not very common yet, and the present work may be commended as much for the great industry and care displayed by the author as for the importance of the subject treated. The institution of marriage is at the root of human society, and variations in the practices relating to it, whether in space or in time, are matters of great importance as well as of scientific interest. Mr. Srinivas has made a careful and detailed study of the institution of marriage as it prevails among one large group in the State of Mysore, and I have no doubt that the material he has gathered and the conclusions he has drawn will commend themselves to scientific students of Indian Sociology.

UNIVERSITY
MYSORE

N. S. SUBBA RAO
Vice-Chancellor

PREFACE

THIS book was originally written as a thesis for the M.A. degree of the Bombay University. It was written under great limitations of time and material, and I would be the last to claim either that the material I have collected is exhaustive, or that the conclusions I have reached are final.

Kannada Culture is now waking up from its sleep of centuries. Concomitant with it, a new interest is developing in its art, literature, history and social institutions. Such a study is an essential condition of further growth. Any study of any aspects of Kannada Culture, however imperfect, is welcome because it promotes further research, and indirectly causes the birth of a better book.

It is only this hope which has been responsible for the publication of this essay on Kannada social institutions. The purpose of the book will be served if Kannada savants, infinitely better equipped for the task than I, turn their attention to the study of Kannada social institutions.

My first thanks are due to my guru, Dr. G. S. Ghurye, Ph.D. (Cantab.) under whose guidance the book was prepared. If the book has any virtues, they must be attributed to his guidance.

I must also thank Rajakaryapraveena N. S. Subba Rao, M.A., (Cantab.), Bar-at-Law, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore, for his kind foreword.

Dr. M. H. Krishna, M.A., D.Litt.(Lond.) was good enough to make some suggestions and I benefited from them. I must thank my friend Mr. A. N. Subramanya, B.A., for the index.

Last but not least, I must acknowledge my indebtedness to the University of Bombay for the substantial financial help it has granted towards the cost of publication of this book.

BOMBAY
April 1942

M. N. SRINIVAS

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ABBREVIATIONS

M.T. & C.	.. .. ..	**Mysore Tribes and Castes** (By L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer)
M.G.	.. .. ..	**Mysore Gazetteer** (By C. Hayavadana Rao)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IN the following chapters I have considered those rites and beliefs of the Kannada castes in the Mysore State that pertain to marriage and family life.

Mysore lies in the south of the Indian Peninsula closed in on almost all the sides by the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, while Coorg, a Chief Commissioner's Province, closes it on the south-west.

"The State is bounded, except partly on the west and the north, by the Madras Presidency. The Madras districts on the north are Bellary and Anantpur; on the east, Chittor and Salem; on the south, Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Malabar; and on the west, South Canara. Between South Canara and Malabar comes Coorg. The Bombay districts, North Canara and Dharwar on the north-west and north respectively complete the circle."[1]

"Its greatest length north and south is about 230 miles, and east and west about 290 miles. It has an area of 29,326 sq. miles."[2]

I have confined myself to the Kannada-speaking castes[3] —that is to say, those castes which have Kannada for their

---

[1] *Census of Mysore*, 1931, Vol. I, p.1.
[2] *Ibid.*

[3] I have reproduced here the table found in the *Census of Mysore*, 1931. Vol. I, P. 283, showing the number of persons speaking the various languages in the State.

No.	Vernacular	Number in thousands.	Proportion per mile.
1.	Kannada	4,579	698
2.	Telugu	1,031	157
3.	Tamil	314	48
4.	Hindustani	383	59
5.	Marathi	91	14

The above are the chief languages, though Tulu, Konkani, Malayali, Gujerathi, Lambani and English are spoken by small groups of people.

mother-tongue. But I have referred to Tamil and Telugu castes wherever such a reference helped the interpretation of a custom found among the Kannada castes. Kannada society is fenced in by the Mahratta, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Tulu cultures, and a complete understanding of Kannada culture would necessarily involve a study of the boundary-cultures. Culture-currents have flowed in and from Kannada culture to the outlying cultures, and a thorough understanding of the origin and nature of Kannada customs would imply a knowledge of these outlying cultures.

It need not be said here that a study of the Samskritic culture is also very necessary, for it has vitally influenced Kannada society, both the Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, the former to a greater extent than the latter.

A study of only the Hindu castes[1] is made in this book. I have omitted from consideration the Muslims, Christians, Jains, and even the Lingayats. The last mentioned are no doubt Hindus, but they are a composite unit recruited from almost all the Non-Brahman castes. And Lingayatism, like Jainism, is a religion with its own distinctive set of doctrines which its followers, drawn from almost all the Kannada castes, believe in. These complicating factors made me omit studying the Lingayats in detail.

But I have referred to the so-called "Animists", occasionally, for the elucidation of the meaning of customs found to be common to them and the Non-Brahman castes. In fact, it is hard to understand why the 'tribes' are labelled Animists and shown separately from the Hindus. There is a certain amount of cultural affinity between the "lower" Non-Brahman castes (why, worship of certain deities like Maramma, the goddess of small-pox, is common to the entire Kannada society, Brahman, Non-Brahman and Ani-

[1]Proportion of the population of the various religions in every unit of 10,000 of the population.

Total	10,000
Hindu	9,174
Muslim	608
Christian	133

Jain 45, Tribal 36 and Minor 4.
Census of Mysore, 1931, Vol. I, p. 297.

mists!) and the "Animists", and the mere fact that the latter live in the recesses of jungles should not put them outside the pale of Hinduism. The important factor here is cultural affinity and not geographical isolation.

A word or two about the classification of castes in the Census Reports will not be out of place here. The Census Officer himself has devoted a page to point out the inadequacies of classification of castes in the Census Reports.[1]

"..The caste shown as Kshatriya includes diverse communities like Arasu, Kodaga and Raju coming of different stocks, speaking different languages, having different ways of social life, and not inter-dining or inter-marrying with one another, while in the case of the Brahmans the sub-groups differ on account of the school of philosophy followed, the difference in these cases is, from one point of view, more vital and fundamental. On the other hand, some groups which are not more distinguished from one another than these groups are treated as different castes. An example of it is the caste shown as Kunchatiga. In earlier Censuses the Kunchatiga seems to have been shown as separate from Vakkaliga. Progressive movements among the Vakkaliga community however included these people and the Kunchatigas came to be merged in the caste Vakkaliga in some Censuses. Sometime before the Census of 1921 the Kunchatigas desired to be treated as a separate caste and this was permitted. In a petition addressed to Government on this occasion the leaders of the Kunchatiga community stated that there were 38 sub-divisions among Vakkaligas. One of the sub-divisions mentioned was Kunchatiga. It would thus appear as if the very persons who desired separate enumeration for their caste believe their caste to be a sub-caste and not a separate caste."[2]

The two anomalies mentioned in the above quotation are: (1) clubbing together heterogeneous castes under one label; and (2) castes or sub-castes included under one head in a previous Census changing their allegiance in a subsequent Census, or becoming independent castes. There is also a third anomaly. With the growth of caste-consciousness in the State, various castes wish to change their existing names.

[1] *Census of Mysore*, 1931, Vol. I, p.319.
[2] *Ibid*, pp. 319-320.

From one point of view this is certainly desirable. A certain nausea attaches to the old name and the nausea disappears if a new name is taken. From another point of view this is undesirable. For instance, the Holeyas of Mysore are the "right-hand" untouchables, and the Madigas "left-hand" untouchables. There are many differences in the customs each observe. But the two are branded together in the 1931 Census as Adikarnatakas.

The following six castes have taken over new names in the 1931 Census:—

1921	1931
1. Holeya and Madiga	1. Adi-Karnataka
2. Lambani	2. Banjara
3. Bestha	3. Gangekula
4. Panchala	4. Viswakarma
5. Golla	5. Yadava
6. Komati	6. Vaisya

Some new names are apt to confuse the future ethnographer. For instance, the Bedas (hunters) have adopted the name, Valmiki Brahmanas.

I have given at the end of the book a list of the main castes of Mysore, along with their occupation and mother-tongue.

Before closing the chapter, I would like to express my indebtedness to the late Mr. L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer's "Mysore Tribes and Castes". A good part of this thesis is devoted to interpreting and criticising the material so assiduously collected by him. I also owe a debt of gratitude to E. Thurston's seven volumes on the "Castes and Tribes of South India."

With due deference to these pioneers in the field, it must be said that their work is unsatisfactory from the point of view of modern sociology. They do not approach the customs with a desire to interpret them. And only when we approach the customs with a desire to understand them, do we collect them properly. Details become significant and often, the meaning of a custom depends on (say) such a "trifle" as whether black or white thread is used. For a proper collection of data, there should be the desire to understand the customs. And then only will the significance of details be grasped.

In addition to the material found in the works of the authors mentioned above, the present writer personally questioned many caste leaders on their beliefs and rites, obtained, as he thinks, much interesting and useful data.

Finally, the writer has also gone to folklore and modern Kannada fiction for purposes of this thesis. Both these virgin fields have given him some interesting data.

CHAPTER II

BRIDE-PRICE

ALMOST all the castes in Mysore have the custom of paying for the bride. The Arasus (at any rate such of them as are residing in the Tumkur district), the putative Rajputs of Mysore, pay for the bride[1]. The trading castes of Nagartha and Komati, however, do not have this practice. And the note at the end of this chapter points to the former existence of bride-price among Mysore Brahmans.

The Kannada equivalent of bride-price is *tera* and henceforward I shall use this short term to denote bride-price.

Tera may be described as the customary amount that is paid for the bride at marriage. This amount varies from one sub-caste to another, and often, members of the same sub-caste living in different villages pay different sums of money. For instance, the Gangadikar Okkaligas of Arakere pay twenty rupees and four annas, while those living in Koppa (a village near Mandya) pay nineteen rupees and twelve annas. But the amount is never left to individual caprice[2]. The sub-caste living in a particular place settles the amount for its members. Higgling is allowed only with respect to the jewels to be presented by the bridegroom's party to the bride.

The *tera* amount should be in coins. It is tied up in a bit of yellow cloth. Even this bit of yellow cloth is paid for. The Gangadikara Okkaliga of Arakere pays an extra four annas for this cloth. The Bestha in Mysore pays twelve rupees if the bride's party supplies the yellow cloth, or only Rs. 11-12-0 if he himself supplies the said cloth.

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[1]Questionnaire issued by me.

[2]I learn in Mr. K. V. Puttappa's five-volume novel, *'Kanur Subbamma Heggadathi'*, that in the Malnad (the hilly Western districts of Mysore) an old man is charged an enormous amount of money as bride-price. And it appears as though in these instances the amount is fixed by the bride's party on such considerations as the wealth of the bridegroom, and the availability of other girls.

In a marriage I witnessed at Arakere the *tera* amount was paid after the ceremony of *dhare* or *kanyadana.* All the castemen were sitting in the hall, with the bride and bridegroom facing them. The father of the bridegroom lifted up the money and poured it down in a noisy stream to a brass vessel kept below. This was to ensure that everybody heard the jingle of coin. The bride's father is not given a chance to say "you did not pay."

Tera can be paid in instalments. The poor ryot cannot well afford to pay it in a lump.

Usually it is in two instalments, both the instalments being paid before the marriage is completed. But among the Korachas (a tribe speaking the language of the country it inhabits) the instalments are spread over a lifetime. The *tera* is high, being about seventy rupees. "On account of the general poverty of the caste, the payment is spread over a large number of years, and it is reported to be not uncommon for a man to be indebted to the family of his father-in-law during his whole life...In some cases, when the bride-price is not paid, her father can take the girl away and give her to another for a higher price."[1]

Marriage by service exists as an alternative to *tera* among the wandering section of the Telugu-speaking Dombar tribe. "...The wandering Dombars are very strict in enforcing the payment (of *tera*). If the bridegroom is too poor to pay he has to work for his wife's parents till he discharges the debt. If he evades payment, his wife is not sent to his house at all, and is sometimes married to another man who may be able to pay the amount."[2]

But Marriage by Service as an alternative to *tera* is not practised except by a few tribes. But Marriage by Exchange is observed as an alternative to the ruinous *tera.* But society looks down upon Marriage by Exchange. Among the Kannada-speaking tribe of Kadu Gollas (jungle Gollas) exchange of daughters prevails. But it is condemned as one of the two girls thus exchanged is supposed not to thrive. Among the Telugu-speaking Uru (town) Gollas, the poor are allowed to exchange daughters, while a rich person resorting to this device is considered very mean. Perhaps

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p. 596.
[2] *Ibid*, p.148.

the very belief that one of the girls of this exchange-marriage will not thrive is intended to prevent persons escaping the paying of *tera*. A long-standing custom must be good and any institution encouraging its non-observance is frowned upon by society. But whatever may be the origin of this censorious attitude towards Marriage by Exchange, it is clear that this puts a limit on cross-cousin marriage.[1]

It is significant to note that in some castes the *tera* paid for a widow is half that paid for a virgin.

It is interesting to note that this difference between the price paid for a virgin and for a widow exists in Fez. "At Fez people who are not considered well off pay seventy to a hundred dollars for a virgin and thirty to forty for a widow or a divorced woman..."[2]

Some of the castes like the Agasa, Nayinda, Madiga and Gangadikara Okkaliga have gone further in evaluating a woman according to her sexual utility. Theoretically, the Nayinda widow is allowed to marry as many times as she outlives her husbands, but her price decreases at every successive marriage. The Nayindas have even settled the amount by which the price is to be reduced at every successive marriage. A virgin gets twelve rupees, she gets six if she outlives her husband and marries another, and three for the third marriage and so on.

I learned of a further distinction at Arakere. A widow who has not borne any children by her first husband gets the full *tera*, while one who has borne a child gets only

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[1]It is interesting to refer here to Rivers's remarks regarding Marriage by Exchange among the Todas (*The Todas*, p. 522). In some communities this custom of exchange is definitely associated with bride-price, which may be so large as almost to compel a man to give his sister in exchange for the wife he takes from another clan. In the case of the Todas the bride-price is so inconsiderable that it is unlikely that it would form a motive for exchange and I think it improbable that in such marriages as those cited above, the idea of exchange is even definitely formulated, but that the combination of marriages comes about for such obvious reasons as may occur in any community. The marriage of *matchuni*, if widely practised, would obviously lead to an appearance of exchange, and it may be that among the Todas this is the chief cause of its occurrence.

[2]A Short History of Marriage, E. Westermarck, p.165.

half the *tera*. The same is true of the Gangadikar Okkaligas living in Koppa, a village near Mandya.

Among Hallikar Okkaligas a widow gets no *tera* at all.

Usually a widower who wishes to marry has to present his bride with one or all the jewels of his first wife. This is called Sowti Bangara or Sowti Honnu, that is to say, the "first wife's gold". But it may not always be an ornament. It may be money. Thus among the Holeyas, "a widower marrying a virgin bride has to pay an additional amount varying between Rs. 1-8-0 and Rs. 6-0-0 styled Sowti Hana." [1] Similarly among the Dasari the widower has to pay twice the *tera*.

Among the Kadu Gollas the widower-bridegroom has to pay only one of the jewels of his first wife.[2] Ananthakrishna Iyer's statement that among the Korachas and the Parivara no additional payment is made by the widower is to be taken with a grain of salt. A peasant who denies any 'additional payment' being made by the widower will only too readily admit the existence of 'Sowti Bangara.'

The Besthas of Mysore told me that a widower gives all the ornaments of his first wife to the second if the latter is a virgin, but only silver wristlets (Kadaga) if she is a widow. The widow is 'shopsoiled' and fetches always less.

Summarising the account given above, it may be said that a virgin fetches full price, a widow half the price, and a widower has to pay more than the full price. The price, it may be seen, is symmetrically arranged.

Who takes the *tera*? is our next question. Among the Morasu Okkaligas the *tera* goes to the virgin's father, but he generally uses it for some jewel to be presented to the girl. Among the Kurubas the *tera* of a widow or a divorcee is paid to her first husband's family, or in their default, to the woman's father.

Thus we see that a woman prior to her marriage is 'owned' by her father and after marriage by her husband.

In certain castes the *tera* amount was once higher than what it is to-day. Among the Koramas it has been reduced from Rs. 200 to Rs. 50. Among the Hallikar Vokkaligas it was as high as 101 *varahas*.[3] But none was

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p. 2.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 227.
[3] A *varaha* is roughly valued at three rupees eight annas.

rich enough to pay the sum, and many women were condemned to spinsterhood. It was reduced to Rs. 15 later.

Tera is changing in other respects also. Advanced opinion in certain castes has perceived that *tera* is the undisguised sale of woman, and, therefore, has begun the wholesome task of putting an end to it. Nowadays, it may be said, that the poor take *tera*, while the rich, as a rule, eschew it. But there is a belief that the marriage will not be permanent if *tera* is not taken and this belief is preventing the total rejection of the degrading *tera*.[1] Some people have compromised with *tera* in a peculiar fashion. To the *tera* taken from the bridegroom, the parents add some money and this is either lent at usurious rates of interest in the girl's name, or converted into a gold ornament, which the bride will wear. Thus, as Dr. Westermarck has pointed out, bride-price becomes dowry.

A few years ago a marriage was celebrated in Arakere by an educated Gangadikar Okkaliga in the lagnapatrika of which it was mentioned that *tera* and *muyyi* would not be taken. A bold step forward.

In view of these facts it is surprising to hear Dr. Marett say "In some of those more developed societies of primitive pattern, in which people have come to differ considerably in wealth, we sometimes find the poor man obliged to live with the wife's folk, at least for a time, while the rich man takes his wife home with him at once. The former method is, in fact, a way of acquiring the right to marry by service instead of by goods paid down. One usually hears the term 'wife-purchase' applied to such arrangements, but that is not the savage idea at all. What is bought or earned is the right to own the children. Sometimes, for instance, the children born while the man is, so to speak, serving in the house of Laban belong to the family of Laban. As soon, however, as the man has worked off his debt by seven years' labour, or whatever the customary term may be, the children are his, and the wife, too, is more fully his, since henceforth she must follow his fortunes."[2] The very facts that Dr. Marett mention yield conclusions which

[1]Perhaps the belief a teraless marriage will not be permanent has its origin in the fear that a girl who is not bought cannot be coerced to stay with her husband.

[2]*Man in the Making*, pp. 56-7.

he tries to dispute. The rich man buys the woman and takes her home while the poor partly pays, and serves the other part out. He does not serve in his father-in-law's house to gain ownership over the children that are not yet born.

Among the Idigas there are two *teras*, big and small. If the bridegroom pays the big *tera* of thirty rupees the bride will be sent with him at once irrecovably, while, if he paid fifteen rupees, she had to be sent to her father's place whenever the latter want her.

The other instance which Dr. Marett mentions does not prove his theory at all. The husband's children remain in his father-in-law's house because the former is not living in his house. And as soon as he pays for his wife with his work, the wife is free to leave her father and they all go, bag and baggage, to the new place.

It may be asked, 'why does the father-in-law maintain his daughter's children in his house if he did own them?' The reply is that children in primitive societies are economically useful, being able to work in the fields. They pay for their maintenance with their work. Apart from this, I think that I am not entirely wrong in presuming that even primitive people have affection for their grandsons and granddaughters.

Further, Dr. Marett's theory stands opposed to the incontrovertible evidence which has already been presented. The persons who practice *tera* are themselves conscious of the fact that *tera* is wife-purchase. If *tera* is purchase of the right to own one's own children, how does Dr. Marett explain the fact that a virgin is paid twice the amount of a widow?

I have heard a peasant rebuke his disobedient wife "Did I pay twenty rupees for you to receive this reply?"[1]

[1]I find that Mr. J. H. Driberg, author of that fascinating book, *At home with the Savage*, agreeing with Dr. Marett in the latter's view of bride-price. "This is the institution fallaciously known as 'dowry' or 'bride-price'. The term is fallacious because it gives the impression that a woman is purchased, a conception foreign to every primitive community." (p. 120). Perhaps Mr. Driberg and Dr. Marett are generalising from African and other data, while the material we have collected gives the opposite conclusion. This clearly shows the danger arising from applying the conclusions of one area to another, and also warns us against the glib use of terms whose content vary from place to place.

Tera reduces marriage to a bargain and equates woman to a chattel. It is an insult to womanhood. The retort that the women do not feel it an insult does not alter the fact that a human being is sold. Progressive opinion is in favour of *tera* being abolished. Leaders should organise movements against *tera* and agitate for its removal. The community should be educated before demanding legislation from the Government.

Before I pass to the next topic I should like to point out an anamoly which, singularly enough, seems to have escaped ethnologists. Many of the castes which practice *tera* also include in their marriage ceremonies the *dhare* or *kanyadana* (gift of the virgin) ceremony. Dhare or *kanyadana* is a Samskritic ceremony symbolising a twice-born father giving away, for his spiritual benefit, his daughter to a bridegroom well versed in the Vedas. He does not sell her for pecuniary gain but gives her away for his spiritual benefit. The two ideas of *tera* and *dhare* are incompatible. But caring little for the meaning of the rites they so meticulously observe, the Non-Brahman castes include both these rites in their marriage ceremonies.

It is easy to conclude from above that at some point of history the Samskritic culture met the indigenous culture, and, as it inevitably happens when two cultures meet, exchanged customs. The indigenous culture borrowed *dhare* as it borrowed other customs, but was too conservative to give up its original practice of *tera*. Probably it did not understand the meaning of *dhare*, but only borrowed the symbol out of a sense of inferiority to the conquerors.

A NOTE TO CHAPTER II

Evidence is available to prove that bride-price (or the Asura form of marriage) once prevailed in every caste and region of Dravidian India. Even the Brahmans were guilty of it, and occasionally we come across very old Brahman women who were paid the bride-price. (My mother tells me that some fifty years ago girls were frequently sold among the Brahmans. The lowest amount was about Rs. 300). I quote here an edict which gives us conclusive proof of the existence of bride-price among the Brahmans

of South India.[1] "This inscription is dated during the reign of Virapratapa Devaraya Maharaj (of Vijayanagara) and in the Visvavasu year, which was current after the expiration of the Saka year 1347. It refers to a question of sacred law (dharma) of the Brahmans, which was settled by the Brahmans of the Kingdom of Padaividu, among whom *Karnata*[2], Tamil, Telugu and Lata Brahmans are mentioned. Their representatives signed an agreement to the effect that henceforth marriages among their families had only to be concluded in *kanyadana*, i.e., that the father had to give his daughter to the bridegroom gratuitously. Both the father who accepted money and the bridegroom who paid money for the bride should be subject to punishment by the king and excommunication from their caste. This practice was evidently adopted from the authority of the canonical works on sacred law, which condemn in strong terms the payment of money for the bride, and use the term Asura-vivaha for a marriage thus concluded. The four forms of marriage permitted to Brahmans are mere varieties of the marriage by *kanyadana*."[3]

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[1]*South Indian Inscriptions*, Edited and translated by E. Hultzsch, Ph.D., Vol. I, 1890, pp.82-83.
I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr. G. S. Ghurye.

[2]Italics are mine.

[3]Inscriptions at and near Vrinchipuram. No. 56 inside the front Gopura of the Vrinchipuram temple, second inscription to the right.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE RESTRICTIONS

Section (1): Endogamy, Brahman and Non-Brahman.

MARRIAGE restrictions are of three kinds viz., endogamous, exogamous, and others for which a specific name cannot be given. Under the last head we shall discuss, among others, rules regarding the prohibition of certain relatives for marriage and the prescription of certain others.

We shall consider endogamous restrictions first.

Caste is the basis of endogamy. By caste I do not mean the Vedic caste, but the sub-caste which is the real unit of endogamy. The division of society into five castes is an over simplification of the problem. There are more than five castes, and as far as the average man is concerned, the real caste is his sub-caste occupying some recognised position in the heirarchy of sub-caste. The customs of one sub-caste varies from another, and in matters of marriage, birth and death, the sub-caste is the real entity to the individual. It is very rarely that a man marries outside his immediate sub-caste. It is hard to believe the following statement made in the Census of Mysore, 1901: "The rule of endogamy within the sub-caste, has of late years been relaxed to some extent by inter-marriages, whose difference is purely conventional or territorial without any substantial basis in religious or social observances." (p. 491, Part I). I am not denying the fact that once in a way a boy (say) of the Hebbar group of Sri Vaishnava Brahmans marries a girl of the Mandyam group of Sri Vaishnuvas. That is to say, very rarely, two people of different sub-sub-castes marry. This barrier-crossing is due to the desire to get a bridegroom before the girl passes the conventional marriage-age, or to prevent the excessive bridegroom-price that has to be paid otherwise. But the fact remains that these marriages are very rare exceptions occuring only in the most advanced sections of society. The Non-Brahman sub-castes are innocent of any attempt to violate their endogamous rules.

The question which has now to be asked is, what considerations make up an endogamous group? Are they based on lingual, geographical or occupational considerations, or two or more of these criteria taken together? It is better to consider briefly a few representative sub-castes before answering the question.

We shall first consider the Okkaligas, the great agricultural sub-caste of Mysore.

The Census Report for Mysore, 1911, includes under the head Okkaliga the following sub-divisions: Gangadikara, Morasu, Nonaba, Reddi and Hallikara. This classification omits the Kunchatigas, Kare Okkalu, and Namadhari Okkalu, while it not very justifiably includes the Nonabas, Hallikara and Reddi under the Okkaliga sub-caste.

The Nonabas are Okkaligas (their customs are similar to the Gangadikaras) living in the northern parts of the present Mysore State and deriving their name from the Nonaba dynasty which ruled over the northern parts of Mysore. To-day they are all Lingayats[1]. The Hallikara Okkaligas are Okkaligas in nothing except name. They are related to the Gollas, Kadu Gollas and Kurubas with whom they perhaps had marital relations formerly.

It is doubtful how far the Reddis can be called Okkaligas. The Census reports have classed them under the Okkaligas. Following Census reports, Ananthakrishna Iyer also classes them with the Okkaligas. But Ananthakrishna Iyer fully recognises the fact that their claim to be called Okkaligas rests solely on their occupation viz., agriculture. They speak Telugu, and not Kannada which is the language of the Okkaligas. The Reddi sub-caste itself contains fourteen endogamous groups. Finally, history depicts the Reddis to be a militant Dravidian people. In fact, the term Reddi is derived from 'Rat' which means king.

But a fact which appears to give support to the Reddi being classified under Okkaligas is that the Morasu Okkaligas contain endogamous groups one of which is the Reddi. But it is doubtful whether the classification of the endogamous, Telugu-speaking Reddi and Palyadasime under Morasu Okkaligas is proper at all. Secondly, the Morasus

[1]*Census of Mysore*, Part I, 1901, p.547.

themselves are not indigenous to the State, having migrated from the country near Kanchi (Conjeevaram) which is apparently the tract known as Morasunad.[1]

Perhaps this confusion is due to treating the Kannada-speaking, endogamous Morasu Okkaligas and the Telugu-speaking endogamous divisions of Reddi, Musuku and Palyadasime groups as different branches of the Morasu Okkaligas. There will be much clearing of confusion if the last three are admitted to be distinct sub-castes with agriculture as their occupation.

We shall now analyse in some detail a few of the fourteen endogamous divisions of the Okkaligas.

Gangadikara Okkaligas:

Gangadikara is a contraction of Gangavadikara, i.e., a man belonging to the country ruled by the Ganga Kings[2] a dynasty which ruled over the central and southern parts of the present Mysore State, from early in the christian era to the 8th century A.D. The Gangadikaras speak Kannada. They denote a territorial area with a corresponding language.[2]

They are divided into two endogamous groups, viz., those who carry the marriage articles to the bride's house in a box and those who use a covered basket for the same purpose. This division appears to be based on a peculiarity of custom. This peculiarity discloses a divergence—not a fundamental one, but enough to give one section the notion that it is different.

The "box" people omit certain important marriage rites such as the consecration of the *Ariveni* pots, the erection of the milk-post and the tying of the *bhashinga.* The "basket" people spend more money in performing elaborate ceremonies, including the Samskritic *dhare.* The "basket" people feel that they are superior to the "box" people because their rites are more elaborate. And this feeling of superiority is at the basis of endogamy. Very rarely do these groups intermarry.

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[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.227.

[2]I have relied on the latest edition of the *Mysore Gazetteer* (1927, Bangalore) for the historical and linguistic material.

Morasu Okkaligas:

The Morasu Okkalu are at present found in the eastern parts of Mysore, and the adjoining British Territory. According to the latest edition of the *Mysore Gazetteer*, they are immigrants from Conjeevaram, apparently the Morasunad which gives them their name. They have four endogamous groups, Musuku, Reddi, Palyadasime[1] and Morasu. The first and fourth speak Kannada, while the second and third speak Telugu.

Musuku means a veil, and the division is so called, because the bride covers herself with a veil. This is probably due to the influence of the once-military Reddis. To the Musuku group belonged several Palyegar chiefs.

The Palyegars were chieftans who ruled small parts of the present Mysore State, and probably with a desire to be classed as Rajputs or Kshatriyas, or under Moslem influence, began the practice of the purdah. And their humble descendants are now an endogamous sub-caste.

The Morasu sub-division is further split into the following endogamous groups: Kanu Salu, Nerlegattada Salu and Kuhera Salu. The middle Salu (lineage) seems to indicate a certain locality.

There once existed among the Morasu Okkaligas an endogamous group of people who observed the custom of cutting off two fingers for their deity. They were called the 'Beralu Koduvavaru'. (Probably the injury of distinction placed them above the other groups and this feeling of superiority resulted in endogamy).

Kunchatigas:

They speak Kannada and are agriculturists. According to tradition current in the caste, they appear to be a section of immigrant Kurubas who have become Vokkaligas by taking to agriculture. They illustrate only too well the psychology of sub-caste-formation and endogamy. Formerly, they were a homogeneous sub-caste. Some of them were converted into Lingayatism. And Lingayatism enjoins vegetarianism. The new converts to Lingayatism

[1]Palyadasime are immigrants into Bangalore from the neighbouring Gummanayakana Palya.

felt a sense of superiority which had its foundation not merely in their new diet and cleaner habits but also in the belief that they were followers of a superior religion. Even now the Lingayat Kunchatigas take daughters from the Non-Lingayat section. But on marriage the girls cease their relationship with the parental family. The Lingayat Kunchatigas never give their daughters to Non-Lingayats. Women can marry up, but never down.

Another section of the Kunchatigas have become Vaishnavas. These have also eschewed meat.

Some Kunchatigas migrated to the Malnad.[1] There they adopted the profession of selling Maidan buffaloes, and in good time, they became an endogamous group with the distinctive name of Maroru or sellers.

Kare Okkalu:

They are an agricultural sub-caste of the Okkaligas living in the north-western part of Mysore. They form one endogamous group.

The Reddi:

The Reddis live in the eastern and northern parts of the State and have numerous sub-divisions. 'To some extent they seem to be of Telugu origin and have been supposed to represent the subjects of the ancient Rattavadi or Kingdom of the Rattas."[2]

They are divided into fourteen endogamous groups. Some of these fourteen groups are homogeneous, while the others are further divided into still more narrow endogamous circles. We shall consider one or two instances of the latter. The Pedakante Reddis are divided into "big" and "small" groups. One of the Pedakante men committed the unforgivable sin of marrying a woman under "kudike",[3] and so his descendants lost status and became the "small" group.

Often the wearing of what appears to us an insignificant ornament determines the group into which a person can

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[1]*Malnad* refers to the hilly western districts of Mysore, while *Maidan* refers to the eastern plains.

[2]*Mysore*, L. Rice, Vol. I, p.230.

[3]Kudike is the less respectable form of marriage prescribed for a widow, or for a woman guilty of pre-marital licence.

marry. The Yellamma Kapu Reddis are divided into the "superior" group which wears toe-rings and the "inferior" which does not. Is this peculiarity only the symbol of any fundamental difference between the groups, or does the difference lie solely in the right to wear, or not wear toe-rings?

The above illustration is typical of the large number of sub-castes which are divided into endogamous circles on some seemingly trivial difference in custom.

The Madigas of Mysore are divided into Telugu and Kannada Madigas. Each of these lingual groups has three endogamous groups based on the "plate" on which the bridal pair eat the common meal: those who eat on brass plates, those who eat on winnows (who are further sub-divided into those who use one winnow, and those who use two), and those who keep the food in baskets.

The Telugu-speaking Jambavas who are the gurus of the Madigas take girls from the latter but do not marry their girls to Madiga men.

"Endogamous groups of the 'functional' or 'occupational' type are found in a few castes like Sanyasi and Bestha. Among Besthas there will be no inter-marriage between families engaged in different occupations, viz., agriculture, fishing and palanquin-bearing.[1]"

We shall briefly consider the endogamous groups of the Smartha Brahmans before closing this section. (The Smartha Brahmans are followers of Sankara, the Sri-Vaishnuvas of Ramanuja and the Madhvas of Madhva-charya).

"The Brahmans are arranged under 95 sub-castes, of which 51 are more numerous, while the remaining sections are less numerously represented.[2]" We are here considering only one sub-caste of the Brahmans, viz., the Smarthas. According to Ananthakrishna Iyer they have twenty main groups. Mr. Hayavadana Rao mentions nearly 50 divisions.[3]

The Smartha endogamous sects also include Madhvas and even to-day marriages between certain divisions of the Smar-

[1] *Census of Mysore*, 1911, Part I, p.100.
[2] *Ibid* 1891, Part I. p.231.
[3] *M.G.* Vol. I, p.221.

thas and Madhvas are not uncommon. A hundred per cent Smartha sect was split up when a part of it swung over to Madhvaism. But blood is thicker than doctrine, and even now the Madhvas and Smarthas having the same sect-name occasionally inter-marry.

There are Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi and Tulu Smartha Brahmans in the State. Each of these lingual groups represent the country to which the people belong. Thus the lingual group denotes a territorial unit, though often the same language is spoken over such a wide territory that groups speaking it may have no relationship between each other.

Each of the following lingual groups has many endogamous divisions. We shall consider lingual groups one by one.

The Kannada group contains the Badaganadu, Srinadu, Hoysala and Haleya Karnataka, and Kamme endogamous divisions.

(1) The Badaganadus come from the northern parts of the State. They contain both Smarthas and Madhvas. I could not find out whether the Badaganadus inter-marry with the Madhvas.

(2) The Hoyasala Karnatakas derive their name from the old Hoysala kingdom.

(3) The Haleya Karnatakas live mostly in the Mysore District. They have for some unknown reason fallen off the social heights and are not treated as Brahmans. They are mostly Smarthas, a few being Vaishnavas. They have two endogamous groups named after two villages in Mysore, Mugur and Sosale.

(4) The Srinad Brahmans come from Sira in Tumkur, and have two divisions, the "old" and "new", the former being Smarthas, and the latter, recent converts to Madhvaism.

(5) The Kamme has four endogamous divisions. The Kamme country seems to have been to the east of the Kolar District. The Babburkamme are all Smarthas. The Kannada and Ulcha Kamme are both Smarthas and Madhvas. Much is not known about the Vijapura Kamme, the fourth group. All the four speak Kannada and a few

speak also Telugu. Intermarriages among the various divisions of the Kamme take place these days.

Telugu Smarthas:

(1) Murikinad indicates that they came from the Ceded Districts of the Madras Presidency.

(2) Velnad is the name of another tract of the Telugu country.

(3) Vengipuram also stands for a place. "These are purely Smarthas who followed Fozdar Nallappa to Tumkur."[1]

The following are Smartha castes which speak both Kannada and Telugu. Most probably they are Telugu immigrants to the State who have forgotten their old language.

(1) The Prathama Sakha derive their name from their following the first fifteen Sakhas of the white Yajus. They contain both Smarthas and Madhvas, speaking both Telugu and Kannada. For an unknown reason they are looked down upon by the other Brahmans.

(2) The Nanda Vaidikas come from the Telugu country, and include both Smarthas and Madhvas. They speak both Kannada and Telugu.

(3) The Aruvelu (lit: the six thousand) are both Smarthas and Madhvas, and speak both Kannada and Telugu. The Aruvattu Vokkalu (lit: sixty households) formerly were part of either the Aruvelu or the Kamme. Now most of the Aruvattu Vokkalu are converted into Madhvaism.

In accordance with the general principles of caste psychology that people following a calling regarded as low, become low, the Sivanambis are now considered as inferior Brahmans. They are menials in Saivite Temples with whom the other Brahmans neither dine nor marry.

Tamil Smarthas:

(1) The Dravida, Vadama and Brihatacharana all come from the Tamil country.

(2) The Sankethis speak a hybrid of Kannada and Tamil, and are immigrants from the South. They have

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.317.

four endogamous groups:—(a) The Kaushika,[1] (b) Bettadapura, these two being the places where they first settled down; and (c) Malnad, and (d) Hariyanagala, these names being derived from the territories in which they live to-day.

There is a fifth Sankethi group called the "London Party", formed of the descendants of those who dared to cross the sea. They were boycotted at first, but because the "London Party" was rich and influential, the boycott ended. Incidentally this "London Party" seems to have once been a common party in all the sub-castes paying the price for its daring. But this distinction obliterated in time. Nowadays, an England-returned bridegroom is sought after, highly bid for, and the girl who bags him is considered lucky.

Marathi Brahmans:

(1) The Deshasthas consist of both Madhvas and Smarthas, between whom intermarriage takes place.

(2) The Chitpavans are pure Smarthas. The Saraswats are immigrants from Konkan.

(3) The Konkanaṣthas are from the Konkan, and are Smarthas. The Karadis are from Karad in the Maharashtra (Deccan), and the two sects do not intermarry.

Tulu Brahmans:

(1) The Havik, are immigrants from Haiga or Ahikshetra, the ancient name of North Canara. They are Smarthas and live mostly in the Malnad.

(2) The Kandavara, come from a village of that name in South Canara. Since all these persons belong to one gotra, they marry with, (3) the Sivalli Brahmans who are Madhva immigrants from South Canara.

Conclusion:

Thus we see that the endogamous groups are based on considerations of language which has its corresponding territory, or on religion, or on occupation, or on some peculiarity of custom which may or may not be the symbol of more fundamental differences, or on two or more of these considerations taken together. The lingual limit covers too

[1]It is said that the Koushikas the first comers to the State take girls from the Bettadapura. In such a case the girl severs her ties with her parental family for good.

wide an area and hence is modified by geographical propinquity. It is not merely the feeling of superiority that is the cause of endogamy. It is also a sense of 'ours', of identity between the individual and his group, sharply contrasted with a feeling of 'separateness' from other groups. Perhaps this is the reason why usually a person selects a bride of his sub-caste living in his own village.

Section II: Exogamy, Brahman and Non-Brahman

EXOGAMY in Mysore may be discussed under two heads viz., (1) Kula exogamy, and (2) Gotra exogamy. Bedagu and Bali are synonyms for Kula.

Kula exogamy prevails in almost all the Non-Brahman castes including the Komatis (Vaisyas), but seems to be totally absent among the Brahmans.

A Kula consists of a group of persons, all of whom believe themselves to be related, owning some relation to an object animate or inanimate, and exhibiting the taboo-behaviour towards it. Usually, if not universally, the Kula is an exogamous unit.

There does not appear to be any larger organisation comprising the various Kulas. A feeling of reverence, awe and mystery towards the Kula object is also not apparent. But the restrictions towards the object still prevail. Kula may be identified with the totemic process.

I shall now cite the names of some Kula objects. It is important to note that certain Kula objects are common to a good many sub-castes, as for instance, turmeric, sun and gold. One of the sub-castes has "darkness" as one of its Kula objects.

Kula Objects Of Certain Castes.

Bestha (fisherman): Horse-gram, Sun, Gold, Cloud, Pearl, Musk, Jasmine etc.

Devanga (Weaver): Gruel, Bamboo, Big-head, Cart, Wheat, Two-Pice piece, Turmeric etc.

Holeya ("Untouchable"): Fig tree (ficus glomerata), Elephant, Earth, Bag, Bitter Gourd, Lightning etc.

Kumbara (Potter): Musk, Cobra, Chrysanthemum etc.

Madiga (Untouchable): A thin variety of rice, Turmeric, Cobra, Jackal etc.

Vodda (worker in stone or earth): Turmeric, Flower, Gold, etc.

Among the Kurubas (shepherds) of Mysore there is a story current as to the origin of their Kula groups. "It is said that Ravana, the original ancestor of this caste, split it (the caste) up into as many divisions as there are grains in four seers of paddy and that he could not find plants or animals enough after which to name them all and was obliged to adopt the names of meaner objects. These names, if totemistic at all, may be so in only a few cases while a large number seem to be adopted without any inward significance. In some instances, however, it is well ascertained that the objects which give the name to the group are not used for eating or otherwise even now."[1] This "explanation" like many others is a rationalisation, and is of no use to us in accounting for the origin of Kuruba Kulas. The "explanation" only tells us that the institution is very old.

The Kula-objects are not used by the members of the groups. The taboo-relationship is the rule between the object and the member of the group. Such a relation exists among the Bedas, Kurubas, Sadas, Okkaligas, Ganigas, Holeyas, Madigas etc. "If the name denotes an edible plant, grain etc., those bearing it (the totem) refrain from eating the article. If it is a tree, they show their reverence by not burning or felling it. It is even reported that when a man of the Naggaligaru division is pierced by a thorn of that plant, he is prohibited from extracting the thorn himself. One, not of that division, should help him out of the difficulty."[2]

Among the Holeyas of Mysore, those belonging to the Lotus Kula, can neither eat on the lotus leaf, nor can they stick the lotus flower in their hair. Those of the Silver Kula do not use silver toe-rings.

We shall now consider the relation between Kula and exogamy in Mysore. Even today the members of Kulas which are exogamic units feel that they are all brothers and sisters. Ananthakrishna Iyer tells us that such a feeling exists among the Holeya and Madiga Kulas. But the Holeyas of Mysore told me that sameness of Kula was no bar to marriage and neither did they admit that members

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.34.
[2] *Ibid*, Vol. III, p.330.

of one Kula regarded each other fraternally. Pernaps the Mysore Holeyas once did have the Kula as an exogamous unit and for reasons unknown, gave it up. Along with Kula exogamy, its psychological counterpart, a feeling of close kinship and the consequent sense of incest in relation to the members of the Kula, disappeared.

There is evidence to the fact that the violation of the exogamous rule was once treated as a very serious offence. Indeed, I have found a few myths similar to the one quoted below.

"Monda Bedas[1] are said to be the descendants of a man of the Mandala exogamous clan, who through ignorance married a girl of the same clan. This was discovered too late, and the couple were expelled from the village, and were made to live outside eking out their livelihood by beggary. Even at the present day, persons of this division never enter the houses of the other Bedas, and they are not allowed to beg from the people of the Mandala section."[2]

But the Kula is not universally the exogamous unit. For instance, the Kunchatigas of Mysore have forty-eight Kulas which are divided into sixteen exogamous groups. The Hallikara Okkaligas who have 101 Kulas are divided into two exogamous groups of 50 and 51 Kulas each.

The Medaru (workers with bamboo) are divided into three endogamous groups viz. Gavariga, Bandikara (name derived from Bandi or cart—they use a cart to carry their deity in procession), and Palli (Tamil word for village). The first two Kannada groups are organised dually, while the Tamil group is not.

The Gavariga endogamous group has two exogamous Kulas, Silver and Cobra, while the Bandikara is divided into two exogamous groups, members of each of which feel that they are brothers and sisters. Each of these two Bandikara exogamous groups is further divided into two sub-groups: Group A (ref: Chart) into Nayakana Bidu and

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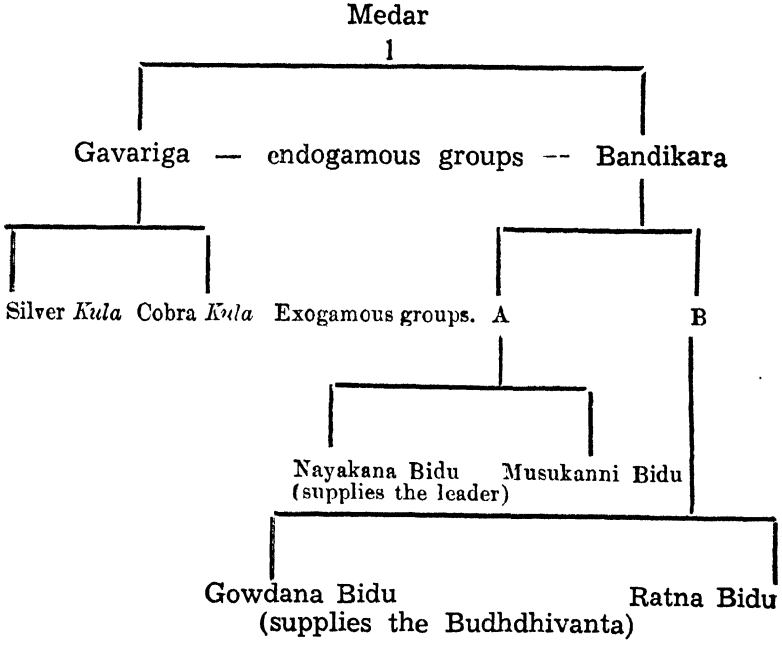
[1]The begging section of the Bedas. About the Bedas Mr. Iyer says "The caste is divided into a number of exogamous clans and their integrity is kept up with the utmost scrupulousness." *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.207.

[2]*Ibid*, p.206.

Musukanni Bidu, while Group B into Gowdana Bidu and Ratna Bidu. To the Nayakana Bidu (lit: the leader's house) of Group A belongs the leader of the Bandikaras, while his assistant the Buddhivanta (lit: the intelligent man) comes from the Group B.

The Gavarigas are divided into Kulas while the Bandikaras into Bidus (houses). (See chart).

Chart Of The Medar Marriage Organisation.



These two sub-castes are the only cases where dual organisation is obvious. Almost every sub-caste (Non-Brahman) has Kulas, but dual organisation of the Kulas is not apparent.

Now we come to another aspect of exogamy viz., gotra exogamy. Even today persons of the same gotra are not allowed to marry each other. The Brahmans especially, observe the gotra very rigidly. (It is surprising to observe

that social reformers have paid little attention to removing this stupid restriction).

In the desire to elevate their social status many Non-Brahman castes have recently acquired gotras. The Non-Brahman gotras are a jumble composed of names of imaginary Rishis, of mythical ancestors of the group, and often enough, of former Kulas now raised to the hallowed status of gotras.[1]

The turmeric Kula, for instance, becomes the turmeric gotra, carrying with it the old taboos. Again, gotra Rishis of the Brahmans may be borrowed by a Non-Brahman caste. The Besthas have two Samskritic gotras. But the incorporation of the "alien" gotra has not driven out the original Kulas of the Besthas. Similarly, the Kumbaras who have borrowed Lingayat gotras also continue to possess exogamous Kulas.

The Mallavas who are now Lingayats, have the five Lingayat gotras, along with exogamous divisions based on the god worshipped by each division. The gods are Basava, Gudda, Gutthi, Iswara, Mailar, Nandi and Togarsi Mallappa.

The newly incorporated gotras may or may not operate as exogamous units.

Thirdly, a reformist religion or even a self-conscious caste which rises in revolt against Brahman tyranny might set up its own gotras. Thus the Lingayats have set up their own gotras: Renuka, Daruka, Gajakarna, Ghantakarna and Vishwakarma. Similarly, the Panchala caste, which asserted its equality with the Brahman nearly three centuries ago, has the following exogamous gotras: Sanaga, Sanathana, Abhuvanasa, Prathnasa and Suparnasa. Each of these gotras is divided into sub-gotras.[2]

Finally, mythical names which are not included in the Brahmanical list of gotras, might be adopted as gotras, for instance, the Madigas have Jambava Rishi, Maricha and Matangi as their gotras.

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[1]This shows that a decadent institution may acquire a new prestige through it being made the symbol of a new superiority.

[2]The Panchalas have also gotras named after the five faces of Siva and after some Brahman Rishis, and the Lingayat Panchalas retain the Lingayat gotras.

As to Sapinda exogamy, the usual practice of marrying the maternal uncle's daughter disregards the Sapinda rule as far as the cognates are concerned. But Sapinda exogamy is respected with regard to agnates as is shown by the absence of sagotra marriage. Even among Non-Brahmans, Sapinda exogamy is operative where agnates are concerned, the concept of Kula serving the function of gotra.

Before closing the section on exogamy mention must be made of the Mallava exogamy which prevents the marriage of persons worshipping the same deity.[1] Another fact deserving attention is that among the Gangadikara Okkaligas of Arakere, persons belonging to the houses worshipping the identical goddess are tabooed from marrying each other, while worshippers of identical gods are not barred from marrying each other. Mr. B. Rangaswamy tells us in his "Huttidahalli-Halliyahadu" that the Okkaligas of Hemagiri (a village in the Mysore District) also observe the above-mentioned rule. This rule is significant in that it gives more importance to the mother than the father.

[1]Refer p.36 for Mallava exogamy.

Section III: Other Restrictions

WE shall now consider the third kind of marriage restrictions. It is impossible to fully account for all the restrictions that prevail today. We have not enough data, and our attempt at explaining the restrictions can be regarded as nothing more than tentative hypotheses.

Both the Brahmans and the Non-Brahmans agree in prohibiting the marriage of parallel cousins and in prescribing—nowadays, the prescription is ever so slight among the educated classes—the marriage of cross-cousins.

We can understand the prohibition of the marriage of a person with his father's brother's daughter—all the sons and daughters of brothers live in one house and the development of a sense of incest among them may be regarded as natural.[1] But even now when brothers do not necessarily live together, people condemn marriage with one's father's brother's daughter—a survival from a period when the agnatic joint family was probably the rule. But it is not as easy to understand the taboo against the mother's sister's daughter because the mother's sister lives in a family different from the mother's. Rivers suggests that such a prohibition is only natural in a society that is dually organised. That is to say, a society divided into exogamous moieties. In such a society the mother's sister would belong to the same group as the mother.

But we have no positive evidence to say that dual organisation was once the universal feature of Kannada society. Until such positive evidence is forthcoming the "explanation" of dual organisation remains only a hypothesis. Perhaps a very valuable hypothesis. In the meanwhile, the other hypothesis which suggest themselves are: (1) that the restriction which prevails with respect to the father's brother's daughter has been analogously extended to the

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[1]Ref. Chapter IV—*A short history of marriage.*

mother's sister's daughter; or, (2) the latter restriction is a social fossil that has survived a prior stage of matrilineal society. The second hypothesis, I am aware, is likely to be dismissed as impossible. But if we turn our attention to the important role played by the maternal uncle in many ceremonies, often to the point of obliterating the poor father, and to the fact that the Kannadigas are fenced on the south by the matrilineal Nayar and by the matrilineally-biassed Tulu on the east, the suggestion will not seem absurd.

Among the Brahman, Okkaliga, Holeya, Madiga, Medar, Arasu, Agasa, and many others, long before marriage, a person is considered the potential spouse of his maternal uncle's daughter. The Komati "menarikam" which forces a person to marry his maternal uncle's daughter is proverbial.

Even in these days marrying a sister's daughter or a maternal uncle's daughter is very common. Among the Non-Brahman castes a ceremony is observed in marriage (to which detailed reference shall be made in the section on marriage rites) in which the sister of the bridegroom extracts a promise from the latter that he will give his daughter in marriage to her son. From this ceremony, and from the Kannada terminology of kinship,[1] it is obvious that once marriage with the maternal uncle's daughter was very common, if not the rule.

This kind of marriage might have its origin in the dual organisation of society (for which there is no evidence outside kinship terminology), or in the desire to see property descend to one's own children. In the matrilineal society a man's sister's children inherit his property, and cross-cousin marriage may have arisen to make room for parental feelings. But this thesis does not appear very helpful to us for the simple reason that in Mysore only one form of cross-cousin marriage viz. marriage with the mother's brother's daughter, is encouraged, while marriage with the father's sister's daughter is looked askance at. My daughters only will be able to have the benefit of my earnings, while my sons will be as helpless as before. But if society is dually organised, the father's sister's hus-

[1]A brief reference to this will be made later on.

band is also the mother's brother, and the father's sister's daughter is also the mother's brother's daughter. Thus the prohibition against the father's sister's daughter works out to be of no effect. But all this happens only on the assumption of dual organisation. And in suggesting that cross-cousin marriage might have arisen out of a desire to make room for parental feelings, we are conscious of making the assumption that Kannada society was once matrilineal.

Another rule which prevails among the Non-Brahman castes like the Agasa, Morasu Okkaliga, and Kuruba is that persons related either actually or by analogy as parent and child, or as brother and sister, are not permitted to marry each other. This rule is better explained by an illustration. I am related as son to my father's maternal uncle's daughter, as the latter is my father's bride by right, even though the actual marriage might not have taken place. Similarly, a person cannot marry the daughter of his father's maternal uncle's daughter as it will mean marriage with one's own sister. The Besthas whom I questioned in Mysore said that they did not allow the marriage of persons so related. This restriction is in force even today in many of the castes.

This exaggerated (as it appears to us) sense of incest finds expression in a rule of the Korachas: "..but in the case of the paternal aunt's daughter, if the bridegroom's father or paternal uncle (younger or elder) has already a married daughter of hers, the other may not be married by the nephew."[1]

But among the Brahmans there is a rule which permits a person to marry one who is related to him as either daughter or daughter-in-law by right. I may marry my sister's daughter who is my daughter-in-law by right. I may also marry my maternal uncle's daughter's daughter who is my daughter by right, as my maternal uncle's daughter is my wife by right.

A fact which is worth mentioning here is that a person's sister's daughter can be his wife, or if he is married and has a son, she can be latter's wife. Thus a person may marry one who might have been his father's wife.

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[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.590.

Marriage with the elder sister's daughter is very common among the Kuruba, Holeya, Medar, Madiga, Gangadikara Okkaliga, Arasu and Beda. It is theoretically taboo among the Brahman and the Komati. But in practice, some Brahmans, especially the Madhvas, favour marrying the elder sister's daughter.

While there is unanimous preference for the elder sister's daughter, there is no less unanimous a censure for the younger sister's daughter. While the Kurubas in Kolar seem to favour such a union, the others advocate it only when no other girl can be found. As, for instance, when a widower does not get a bride anywhere. We have already mentioned that the Brahman and the Komati taboo marriage with a sister's daughter. They also condemn marriage with the father's sister's daughter on the same ground. The ground is that either of these marriages allows "the creeper to return". The illustrations below help us to understand this rule.

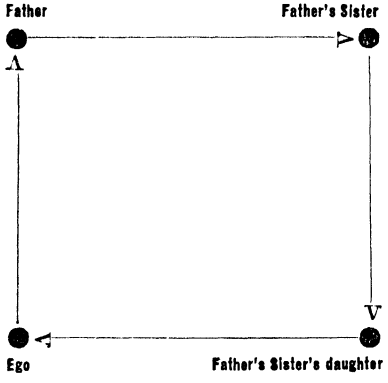


Fig. I.

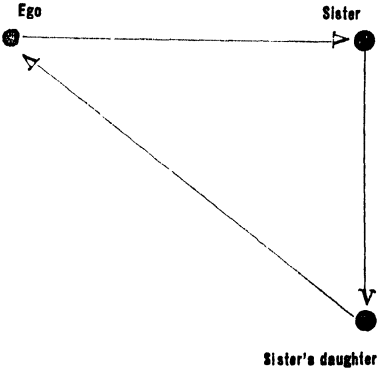


Fig. II.

This concept belongs to a patrilocal society in which the daughter of the family lives with her husband. The daughter goes out of the parental family—the creeper goes out. The daughter's daughter, part of the creeper, should not marry one of the descendants of her maternal grandparents. The creeper should not return. The question may be asked, is not her son part of the creeper and if so, why should he be allowed, if not coerced, to marrying his maternal uncle's daughter? But the son does not 'return' to

his maternal grandfather's family. Instead the girl goes to her husband's house. The analogy is used in the physical sense, on the daughter's going out of her parental house to her husband.

The rule that "the creeper should not return" is a dead letter in practice. It is only used to avoid an unwelcome bride. What is usually done is that the sister's daughter, or the paternal aunt's daughter is married, but the sin is expiated by a gold *bandhi*, (an ornament worn round the neck) being presented to the Brahman priest.

The Komati who is the only Non-Brahman caste to strictly prohibit this relation, has probably done so out of a desire to imitate the Brahman. The Komati is known for his eagerness to rise to the top-rung of the social ladder.

Exchanging daughters[1] is also looked at with disfavour. The Komati forbids it absolutely, while the Kuruba, Kumbara, Gangadikar Okkaliga, and Ganiga, allow it grudgingly. The result is that exchange of daughters is not uncommon.

The Brahman attitude towards this restriction is not known. But such an exchange is very rare.

But with the Holeyas and Madigas this restriction does not find much favour. With the latter, exchange of daughters is "not only practised but is most commonly in vogue, the reason being the saving of the bride-price by both the parties."[2]

Why is exchange of daughters forbidden? The Kurubas tell us that it is forbidden because one of the two daughters exchanged will not thrive.[3] But the "explanation" begs the question. Why does not one of the two girls thrive?

Probably, the reason is to be found in the fact that exchange of daughters is only resorted to when the parties wish to avoid *tera* or bride-price. Tera is a long-standing custom, the setting aside of which is bound to result in harm to the violators. That is the effect which a time-

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[1]By exchange of daughters is meant the marriage of a brother and sister of one family with the sister and brother respectively of another family. Two brothers thus exchange their sisters.

[2]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.138.

[3]*Ibid*, p.36.

honoured custom has on the people's mind. And since exchange of daughters is resorted to for the sole purpose of evading *tera*, it has come to be looked down upon.

But the case of the Komati presents difficulties. The Komatis do not take *tera* and how is it that they totally prohibit exchange of daughters?

The answer is not far to seek. We have already said that among the Komatis a man is bound to marry his maternal uncle's daughter. Exchange implies that his sister has to marry his maternal uncle's son—imply the creeper returning to its home. It is to be pointed out here that if the Komatis had been dually organised once, this restriction against exchange of sisters would probably have not existed.

The Holeya and Medaru allow a man to marry two sisters one after the other though the former believe that one of the two sisters does not thrive. The Kuruba, Agasa, Beda, Bestha and Koracha do not object to a man taking two sisters, though not at the same time. It is not clearly known whether the Madiga, Gangadikara Okkaliga and Ganiga who allow a man to marry two sisters, do also allow him to marry them simultaneously or otherwise. The Brahman who does not allow marrying two sisters, usually prefers the deceased wife's sister if he wants to wed again. This is done in the belief that the new wife being the sister of the first, will not maltreat the latter's children.

The custom of allowing a man to marry two sisters simultaneously or otherwise, is perhaps due to the economic value of woman. Also, one of the problems of polygamy viz., harmony among the wives, will not assume such serious proportions if the wives are sisters.

Another reason why a man is allowed to marry two sisters at the same time is the desire to save the expenses of two marriages. But nowadays such marriages are very rare.

The majority of the Non-Brahman castes allow two brothers to marry two sisters, the elder brother taking the elder sister and the younger brother taking the younger sister. The Brahman frowns upon such a custom. Among the Korachas the maternal uncle has a right to the first two nieces, either for himself or for his sons.

Perhaps the rationale of this custom lies in the fact that it mitigates the disharmony natural to a joint family. If the brothers' wives are sisters (it is expected) the quarrels will be less. But why then does the Brahman prohibit it? Can this be due to the influence of the Samskritic culture?

A rule which is prevalent among the Kunchatigas and the Gangadikara Okkaligas (and probably in a few others) is that when two different families contract marriages with a third family the resultant alliance between the first two, prevents them from intermarrying.

If two women of one family but of different generations are given in marriage to another family, then, a cow is presented on the occasion of a third girl being married to the latter family. The cow becomes the third wife and the girl becomes the fourth, thus averting the disaster that may overtake the girl. This superstition surrounding the fearful number three is common to both Brahmans and Non-Brahmans.

In many of the castes the widow is prohibited from marrying the deceased husband's brother. In Kurubas and Medar, she is even asked to avoid his Kula. The Holeya widow avoids the brother but is allowed to marry a cousin of the deceased. But among the Bestha, she may marry a brother of the deceased.

The question does not arise among the Brahman as the Brahman widow cannot remarry.

CHAPTER IV

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY WITH REFERENCE TO MARRIAGE RESTRICTIONS

THE terminology of Kannada kinship is "classificatory" as distinct from the "descriptive". It is a particular variety of the "classificatory" terminology. It is distinct from the Hawaiian kind which clubs together all members of a particular generation under one term. The male members of the father's generation, under the Hawaiian variety, are all fathers, and the female members are all mothers. Similarly, the male members of one's own generation are all brothers, and the female members are all sisters. Kannada terminology is not as simple as the Hawaiian. It classifies certain male members of the father's generation into fathers (even here a distinction is observed between "Big" and "Small" fathers) and certain others into "fathers-in-law". Similarly, some female members of the previous generation are mothers, and others, "mothers-in-law". Similarly, members of one's own generation are distinguished into brothers and sisters on the one hand, and potential mates on the other. Of course, they are not directly termed husband and wife, but 'husband's brother', 'husband's sister', 'wife's brother' and 'wife's sister'. My cross-cousin I call my wife's sister.[1]

It is evident that this kinship terminology is largely determined by cross-cousin marriage as W. H. R. Rivers has shown in his book "Kinship and Social Organisation."

We will not go here into the probable causes of cross-cousin marriage, as we have dealt with them at sufficient length in a previous chapter. We shall only deal here with the salient features of Kannada Kinship Terminology.

The father is called Appa. The father's elder brothers and the respective husbands of mother's elder sisters are Dodda-Appas, or "big fathers". The father's younger brothers and the respective husbands of the mother's younger sisters are Chikka-Appas, or "small fathers".

[1]We shall deal with this in greater detail later on.

The mother is called Amma, and her elder sisters and the respective wives of the father's elder brothers are all Dodda-Ammas, or "big mothers". The mother's younger sisters and the wives of the father's younger brothers are "Chikka-Ammas", or "small mothers".

A very simple, and yet very effective method of producing a sense of incest towards a particular relative is to club him or her with another towards whom a strong feeling of incest prevails.

The father's sister's husband and the mother's brother are both Sahodara-Mava, potential fathers-in-law, and their wives Sahodara-Aththey, potential mothers in-law. Hence it is surprising to find the following error in Rivers's "Kinship and Social Organisation", (p. 47). "In Canarese the mother's brother and the father-in-law are both called Mava, but the father's sister's husband fails to fall into line and is classed with the father's brother." This is totally wrong. The father's sister's husband is classed with Mava. But Rivers took this error from Morgan as the footnote to page 47 explains: "I take my data from the lists compiled for Morgan by the Rev. E. C. Scudder and the Rev. B. Rice, Morgan's 'Systems...pp. 537-566'."

All parallel cousins are either brothers or sisters, and all cross-cousins potential mates.

Brother includes in addition to the relatives included under the term in a descriptive terminology, the sons of father's brothers and mother's sisters.[1]

We shall now deal with cross-cousins.

Father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter, wife's younger sister, husband's younger sister and younger brother's wife are called Nadini. Elder brother's wife, husband's elder sister and wife's elder sister are all called Aththige. In the case of wife's sisters and husband's sisters, wife's elder sister is called Aththige, and wife's younger sister, Nadini. Similarly, elder brother's wife is Aththige, and younger brother's wife, Nadini.

The mother's brothers' daughters and the father's sisters' daughters are Nadini if they are younger than the person speaking, and Aththige if they are senior.

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[1]Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the speaker's sex is not taken into account while addressing a relative. For instance, an elder brother is Anna to both brother and sister.

The wife's brother (irrespective of the fact whether he is the elder or younger brother of the wife), husband's younger brother, younger sister's husband, father's sister son (younger than the speaker) are Bhava Maida (or Maida simply), whereas the husband's elder brother, elder sister's husband, father's sister's son (older than the speaker) and mother's brother's son (older than the speaker) are all Bhava.

The distinction between Bhava and Maida is analogous to the distinction between Aththige and Nadini.

Having described the Kannada kinship terminology, we will now discuss one or two points that arise therein.

The father-in-law is called merely Mava, while the mother's brother and the father's sister's husband are both called Sahodara Mava (popularly called Sodara Mava).

The prefix Sahodara is a Samskritic one, meaning 'born of the same womb'. The maternal uncle is born of the same womb as the mother, and the father's sister of the same womb as the father. The prefix is attached to her husband through her, just as the mother's brother's wife gets the prefix through her husband.

Similarly, nephews and nieces are distinguished from sons and daughters-in-law by means of the prefix 'Sahodara" which attaches to the former. The real son-in-law is plain Aliya while the sister's son (brother speaking) and the brother's son (sister speaking) are Sodara-Aliya. The real daughter-in-law is Sose, while the brother's daughter (sister speaking) and the sister's daughter (brother speaking) are Sodara-Sose.

The particular prefix seems to have its origin in an effort to distinguish relatives, in fact from potential relatives.

Perhaps, originally this distinction between Sodara-Mava and Mava did not exist. The father-in-law was universally the mother's brother (as it is even today among the Komatis of Mysore). But cross-cousin marriage fell into disuse somehow (or, better, ceased to be universal) and society was forced to distinguish between the real and potential parents-in-law.

Such a situation must have arisen after Kannada society was in contact with Samskritic culture, for the term borrowed to express the distinction is a Samskritic word.

In the Kannada language a generic word meaning brother is lacking, though there are separate terms for the younger and elder brother. Similarly separate terms exist for younger and elder sisters, though not one word meaning sister, younger or elder.

Hence an alien word had to be borrowed.

Another fact to be remembered is that Sahodara is used to denote both the mother's brother and the father's sister. In its strict sense, Sahodara should be used to denote only a brother.

We may also mention here that this prefix is absent in the allied Dravidian languages, Telugu and Tamil.[1] Hence we may conclude that originally cross-cousin marriage prevailed universally in Kannada Society.

In the chapter on "Marriage Restrictions" we noted that among the Brahmans and Komatis, marriage with the father's sister's daughter was taboo as it meant the creeper's return. Kinship terminology, however, classes the father's sister's daughter with the mother's brother's daughter and both with the wife's sister. If this taboo was original or indigenous, then the father's sister's daughter would have been classed with the sister and an effective taboo would have been established. On the other hand the father's sister's daughter has been classed with the mother's brother's daughter, with one's wife-by-right!

This taboo too reflects the influence of preponderatingly patrilineal character of the Samskritic culture, its superficiality being shown in its not being adopted into kinship terminology. As I have previously remarked, people are not very strict in obeying it either. In fact the Non-Brahman castes (with the exception of the Komatis) are entirely ignorant of this rule, while the Brahmans profess only a theoretical loyalty to it. Even the latter frequently violate the rule.

According to kinship terminology, the sister's daughter is not a potential mate, but only a daughter-in-law by right. But marriage with an elder sister's daughter is common. (In the chapter on "Marriage Restrictions" we have pointed

[1]In Tamil the father-in-law is called 'Mamanar' while the mother's brother is mere "Mama". In Telugu the father-in-law is "Mavagar" while the mother's brother is "Myana Mama".

out the rule that permits such a union). In a matrilineal society such a union is impossible, as both the mates belong to the same family. It is only possible in a patrilocal society where the daughter goes out of the parental family to her husband's.

Another fact which may be mentioned here is that husbands of sisters call each other Shaddaga, while wives of brothers call each other Varagiththi. This may suggest that originally, prior to marriage, no relationship prevailed between either the husbands of sisters or wives of brothers.

It may be better put thus: even if they were related to each other, the relationship was not universally in one fixed form. The two may be brothers, or there may have been only an exchange of sisters, or the two might be strangers to each other.

Finally, there is no distinction in terminology between the maternal grandmother and the paternal grandmother. Both are called Ajji. In a dually organised society the maternal grandmother belongs to one's own group while the paternal belongs to the other—that is if we assign each to the group of her birth. Only two castes, the Kuruba and the Komati (the latter, a Telugu caste) do avoid the maternal grandmother's group in selecting one's mate. The rest have no such prohibition. Beyond cross-cousin marriage, we have no positive evidence in favour of the dual organisation of society. But we do find that each sub-caste (at least among the Non-Brahmans) contains a number of exogamous units called *kulas*.

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF THE MATERNAL UNCLE IN CEREMONIES

WE have noticed from our survey of kinship terminology that the maternal uncle is addressed with more or less the same term as the father-in-law. A brief digression on the role the maternal uncle plays in ceremonies and rites may not be out of place here.

The most important function which the Non-Brahman maternal uncle performs, in marriage, is bringing the 'mohurta kambha', or the 'milk post'. A full description of the milk post and the ceremonies which surround it will be given in detail in the section on marriage ceremonies. Here it need only be said that the maternal uncle ceremonially cuts a branch of the *kalli* tree (*euphorbia tirukalli*) and brings it to the marriage pandal. The milk-post is worshipped in order that the family may reproduce prolifically, that the bridal pair may have many children, grandchildren and great grand-children. Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao has grasped the significance of the milk-post: "It is this post which ensures, it is said, the continuity of the line."[1] Ananthakrishna Iyer also recognises its relation to procreation. But neither seems to have realised the tremendous importance that was once attached to the milk-post by the people that worshipped it. I say "worshipped" deliberately because the Non-Brahman castes that worship the milk-post to-day do so out of habit without knowing, or caring to know, what the milk-post connotes. Among the Kurubas, Devangas, Dombas, Gollas, Holeyas, Agasas, Helavas, Sillekyatas, Tigalas and many others, the maternal uncle cuts the *kalli* branch after worshiping it. It is this *kalli* branch that becomes the milk-post or "halu kamba" and occupies the centre of the pandal. Among the Bilimagga and the Besthas it is the brother of the bride that cuts the *kalli*. Only among the Kunchatigas does some unrelated person bring the kalli branch.

[1] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.183.

The question may be asked, how is it that the maternal uncle and not the father is entrusted with this very important task of seeing to the continuation of the family? The people who invented this rite must have believed honestly that the continuance of the family depended on the establishing and worshipping of this post. And the importance the continuation of the line had for them can hardly be exaggerated.

The Morasu Okkalu maternal uncle ties the *bhashinga* to the bride's and the bridegroom's foreheads, and among the Kumbara and Uppara, the maternal uncle removes the *bhashinga*. This is also an important function—though so far no ethnologist seems to have recognised it to be such. About the Bhasinga (a photo of which appears on p. 73) more will be said later on. For the present, it is enough if we realise that it is a phallic emblem, and has something to do with the propagation of the family.

Is it not significant that this task should also be assigned to the maternal uncle? But it might be replied that the maternal uncle tying or removing the *bhashinga* is only confined to very few castes. My belief in the matter is that a thorough inquiry into the customs of various castes will reveal that the maternal uncle ties and unties the *bhashinga* in a large number of castes. But pending such an inquiry, we must suspend our judgment.

A branch of the *nerale* (*eugenia jambolina*) is severed from the tree and brought home by the maternal uncle to be tied to the milk-post. The *nerale* branch is called *yelevara*. I questioned many caste-headmen and elders as to the meaning of the *yelevara*. They racked their brains and replied "what do we know? It is Shastra and therefore we practice it." My suggestion—nothing more than a suggestion—is that the *yelevara* is tied to the milk-post in order to symbolise the marriage union. The *yelevara* may be the female to the male *kalli*.

We shall pass on to the ceremony called "serebidisuvudu" (lit: releasing from prison) in which the maternal uncle plays the chief part. Two different ceremonies both called "serebidisuvudu" are noted. We shall quote the ceremonies first and then attempt an interpretation of them.

"A barber pares the toe-nails of the bridegroom after which he is seated within a square formed by placing four

vessels to represent its corners. The bridegroom is bathed in Maleniru (water from the hill-stream). While yet in wet clothes, his maternal uncle lifts him and carries him bodily, and depositing him at a distance in a wicker basket, kicks away the vessels and walks backwards. This is styled the ceremony of freeing from bondage. The bride is likewise bathed in Maleniru and is also freed from bondage."[1]

The other ceremony is mentioned by Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao.[2]

"Among the Madigas, the bride and the bridegroom are lifted up by the maternal uncle, who circles round three times with the burden and each bows towards the sun and upsets a jug of water (kept close by) by kicking it. The couple are then carried inside the house and deposited on the marriage dais. The maternal uncles are each presented with a turban, twelve betel leaves, twelve areca nuts, one cube of jaggery and four pies."

What do these ceremonies indicate? What is the prison from which the nephew and niece are released? Is it the prison of the uncle's authority (which is characteristic of matrilineal society) or is it the prison of celibacy from which marriage releases the pair? Assuming for a while that it is the prison of celibacy, why should the maternal uncle, and not the father release the boy from the prison?

The maternal uncle often claims the *tera* paid to his niece. He receives a portion of the *tera* from the father of the Kadu Golla bride. The Hasalar maternal uncle is not so charitable but takes the entire *tera*. The Koracha maternal uncle has a right to the first two daughters of his sister, to be married either by himself or by his son. In case either of them does not marry the girl, the maternal uncle has a right to two-thirds of the *tera* paid for his nieces.

Among the Kare Okkalu the brother of the bride gets the *tera* and not the maternal uncle. But the brother in a matrilineal society is one day going to be the head of his sister's family.

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.206.
[2] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.184.

In some Telugu castes a sum of about four annas is paid to the bride's mother as "suckling wages". Mr. Hayavadana Rao says that a share of the suckling wages goes to the maternal uncle and "the wages originally went wholly apparently to the mother's brother"—the authority for the statement in inverted commas is not evident.

Among the Sanyasis (religious mendicants), the maternal uncle has to be consulted in the marriage of his sister's children, and frequently, he makes all the arrangements necessary in connection with their marriages.

Often, a maternal uncle who marries his niece is excused either the entire *tera*, or a portion of it.

Among the Medar, the maternal uncle gives the bride away to the bridegroom in the "Thumbe Dhare". Among the Besthas of Mysore, the maternal uncle gives away the bride while the parents passively sit on the marriage-seat. But the bridegroom's maternal uncle is not present at the *dhare*.

Among the Smartha Brahmans of Mysore, after the *dhare* ceremony is performed, the bride and bridegroom are held by their respective maternal uncles while the relatives throw sesamum seeds on the pair.

Among the Morasu Okkalu, Bestha, Holeya, Medar, Mondaru, Toreya and many others, the maternal uncle erects the hut in which the girl resides till she gets rid of the impurity occasioned by puberty. It is he that pulls down the hut after she quits it.

Among the Gangadikara Okkaligas, the maternal uncle, or his son (who is in the natural run of events her husband), has to put up the puberty-hut. Among the Mondarus the maternal uncle, or in his absence, a man who is in marriageable relation to the girl has to do the job.

After the fourth or fifth day of her attaining puberty, the girl is bathed and dressed in the costliest clothes her parents can afford, and exhibited to a company of women. The exhibition goes on till the sixteenth day of the girl's attaining puberty when, after bathing, the girl becomes cent percent pure. If the girl is married, the exhibition charges are borne by the husband, and if unmarried, the burden falls on the parents (who may later on recover it from the husband). But the cost of one day's exhibition

is to be borne by the maternal uncle in case the girl is unmarried. This is the rule among the Gangadikara Okkaliga, Golla, Holeya, Medar, Morasu Okkaliga and Toreya. Among the Gangadikaras the girl's friends are fed at the expense of the father's sister when the girl reaches puberty but the maternal uncle has to make a present to the girl.

The question that arises is, in what capacity does the maternal uncle bear one day's exhibition expenses of an unmarried girl and puts up her puberty-hut? Is it as her potential husband? or as her guardian? or as the father of the girl's potential husband? The evidence at our disposal does not permit a decisive answer. But relying on kinship terminology one might rule out the first hypothesis. The second and the third alternatives are more probable. But we must not forget to mention that kinship terminology may be very conservative refusing to take cognisance of new social processes. Among the Holeyas the maternal uncle ties the *tali* to the bride. Also among the Nattuvan (prostitute caste) the maternal uncle ties the *tali* to his niece, and with the tying of the *tali* her life as a dancing-girl and prostitute begins. To the Holeya Basavi (religious prostitute) the maternal uncle ties the *tali*, while to the Beda Basavi the maternal uncle's son does it. In view of these facts it is dogmatic to say that the maternal uncle does not erect the puberty-hut as the potential husband of his niece.

Among the Beda, Domba, Holeya and many others, the maternal uncle pares the bridegroom's nails. The bride is brought to the marriage pandal by the maternal uncle among the Kumbara, Helava and Gangadikara. Among the Morasu Okkalu the fringes of the bride and bridegroom's clothes are tied together by the maternal uncle. Among the Holeyas, the bridegroom's uncle carries the box called "Vastugara pettige" in which all the ornaments that are to be given to the bride are contained. Among the Madiga, "when the relatives of the bridal pair come out of the room where they have partaken of the *buvva* repast, the maternal uncles of the bride and the bridegroom intercept them at the threshold, and beat them with whips of twisted clothes."[1]

[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.144.

In considering the role of the maternal uncle we must take cognisance of the position of the brother in the ceremonies. For the brother is the prospective head of the matrilineal house and a would-be maternal uncle. The brother is entrusted with the task of familiarising his sister and his brother-in-law. Among the Mysore Besthas he spreads the mat on which the bridal pair have to sit. Among the Brahman Sri-Vaishnuvas, he gives *pan supari* to the bridegroom for which he receives some remuneration. He serves *pan supari* again to his brother-in-law on the occasion of the consummation ceremony. Thurston records that among the Toreyas (from Mysore) in Coimbatore "husband and wife then feed each other with a small quantity of rice. Their hands are then cleaned and the bride's brother puts a gold ring on the finger of the bridegroom."[1]

Among the Besthas of Mysore the brother carries the news of his sister attaining puberty to his brother-in-law. The same holds good with respect to the Kumbara and Holeya. When the bridegroom goes to his father-in-law's house on the information of the bride's brother, he is feasted, and the bride's brothers splash *okali*[2] on him. The same happens among the Smartha Brahmans.

I learnt from the Besthas of Mysore that when the bridegroom goes out on the pretended *kasiyatra*,[3] the bride's brothers (and not the bride's father as among the Brahmans) stop the bridegroom's pilgrimage with the promise of their sister.

During marriage almost all the Non-Brahman castes observe a ceremony in which five consecrated pots are kept in a room and worshipped. One of these is styled as the "fraternal pot" or Odahuttina gadige. Why should one of the pots which are worshipped be called after the brothers?

Among the Toreyas, it is the brother who holds up his widowed sister's arms in order that her bangles may be broken on the grave of her deceased husband.

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[1]*Castes and Tribes of South India*, by E. Thurston, Vol. VII, p.180.

[2]Okali is the name for water reddened with turmeric & chunam.

[3]This has no doubt been borrowed from the Brahmans.

Among the Brahmans, though the maternal uncle is not as dominant a figure as among the Non-Brahmans, still he is not to be ignored. We have referred occasionally to his 'duties'. We shall here cite a few more. During marriage he holds up the bride to the bridegroom's level in order that she may have his 'mukha-darshana'. Among the Smarthas a procession of the bridal pair is arranged at the expense of the maternal uncle.

On reaching puberty the girl's friends are feted at the expense of the father's sister, and the maternal uncle makes a present of some cloth to the girl.

Among the Brahmans it is the maternal uncle who removes the *chowla* hair. More thorough research is bound to reveal many more ceremonies in which he performs some important function or other. At present we have to rest content with this scanty list.

In a matrilineal society, the maternal uncle is first and foremost a guardian of his sister's children. He becomes the father-in-law, or, the preferential mate of his niece when, perhaps, the matrilineal society is changing into the patrilineal.

CHAPTER VI

CHOICE OF BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

IN this chapter as in others, we have to distinguish between the Brahman and Non-Brahman practices.

The Brahmans, as has already been mentioned, go in search of bridegrooms, while the Non-Brahmans, with the exception of the Komatis, go in search of brides. In other words, bridegrooms are in demand among the Brahmans and Komatis, while brides are in demand among the Non-Brahmans.

This difference between the Brahmans and the Non-Brahmans is not due to any large preponderance of women over men in the Brahmans and Komatis, and the reverse in other castes.

The Non-Brahman demand for brides is associated with bride-price that prevails in them, and the Brahman demand for bridegrooms is associated these days with bridegroom-price. Brahman marriage is the gift of the virgin and as usual, *dakshina* accompanies the gift. But with the spread of English education—especially, in the second decade of this century—began the habit of paying huge sums of money to the bridegroom. University degrees fetched good jobs, and the demand for the degree-holding bachelor expressed itself monetarily.

Bridegroom-price varies with the academic qualifications, wealth, age and looks of the bridegroom. An England-returned bridegroom demands almost as much as Rs. 5000.[1] In determining the amount of the Varadakshina (bridegroom-price) the sole criteria are education and wealth of the bridegroom.

Apart from the amount paid in cash to the bridegroom, an equally large amount has to be given to the girl by her parents (which will go to swell the bridegroom's property) in the shape of jewels, silver and brass utensils for every-

[1] I learn that in certain parts of South India the bridegroom price has been standardised, the amount increasing according to the academic qualifications of the boy.

day use. I would like to quote here a list of the demands forwarded by someone known to me. The bridegroom belongs to the lower middle-class, is good-looking, and has failed in the Intermediate Examination. The bride is dark and upper-middle class.

(1) The bridegroom should be paid three hundred rupees in cash.

(2) The bride's people should buy for the bride a pair of diamond ear-rings, a diamond nose-screw, a diamond ring, a gold chain and two pairs of gold bangles. (This later on becomes the *stridhana* of the girl.)

(3) Brass and silver vessels valued at about two hundred and fifty rupees should be given to the bride. (This will be used to set up a family.)

(4) Clothes up to two hundred rupees should be presented to the boy.

(5) The bridegroom should be paid the expenses of his future education up to the B.E. (The B.E. is a costly course.)

The bridegroom is aged eighteen and the bride thirteen. Needless to say that the bridegroom had no say in the choice of the bride. His elder brother promised the bride's father that he would see his brother married the girl, and the elder brother was a man of his word.

I met a weather-beaten middle-aged gentleman who went about from house to house inspecting his would-be sons-in-law. He had a list of candidates, against each of whom he had marked a tick or a cross according as he appeared eligible or not. He confided in me that he had braved public opinion or 'done nothing' (to put it in his words) till his daughter was fifteen. But now the womenfolk at home would not let him a moment of peace...and so on, the same old story.

The demand for bridegrooms and the humiliation of the bride's party are seen clearly if one visits a Brahman marriage. The bride's party, in addition to bearing the expenses of the marriage, will be submissive and eager to please the bridegroom's relatives. The bridegroom's relatives, on the other hand, will always be insisting on their rights, ever on the look out for grievances, real or imagi-

nary, to complain about. The women of the bridegroom's party, especially, will definitely be on the warpath. The entire atmosphere of the marriage is strained, reminding one of anything other than two groups of relatives coming together for the rest of their lives.

We shall now devote a little attention to the institution of bridegroom-price. It has reduced many people to bankruptcy, cast them into the clutches of the money-lender, equated marriage to a bargain and, worst of all, has subjected innocent girls to daily insults in their parents' home. Needless to say that Varadakshina has no place in an ideal scheme of things. Still, the institution has, in the existing society, been the cause of some good, although unconsciously. It has provided many poor students with the necessary money to complete their education, which otherwise would have been impossible. It has also indirectly helped to raise the age of marriage. The middle-class and the poor have to wait till someone comes along with a low-enough price, and till they can pool enough money to set forth confidently in search of that rare game, the bridegroom. Also a high bridegroom-price has often forced people to seek bridegrooms in a different sub-caste. In Mr. P. T. Narasimhachar's book of good short stories, *Ramachariya Nenapu* we get the following picture of a society desperately hunting for bridegrooms.[1]

"True, Murthy's sister (younger) had come of marriageable age. Why, she might attain puberty any day! Her parents were distressed at the sight of her. They had tried their utmost to get a suitable bridegroom. But they had not succeeded. So they sought to escape public censure by marrying their daughter to me, belonging to a different (sub) caste." The plight of such parents provokes the broad-hearted, though not very wise, college students in Mr. Srinivasa's bright social play Manjula to say: "How many times have we not felt for the poor parents moving heaven and earth to secure suitable bridegrooms! And you were often saying that we should set an example to society by marrying these girls." In the same play, Sitaramaiah, an old gentleman, who has for

[1] I have translated the passage from the Kannada original and in spite of my efforts, a word-to-word transliteration has been impossible.

four years thoroughly combed the country for bridegrooms, is finally driven to consent to give his daughter in marriage to an obedient nimcoompoop, who has given up his first wife for no better reason than his mother's whim. But Mr. Sitaramaiah's school-going daughter loves somebody else and has even travelled the length of presenting her autographed photo to her lover! (This last incident is uncommon even among the educated middle classes.)

It is needless to quote from the fiery speeches of impatient reformers, or from melodramatic stories and plays that culminate in the horrible spectacle of two or three suicides. It is enough to say that there is a desperate demand for bridegrooms among the Brahmans, and hence a high bridegroom-price.

But university degrees are no longer economically reproductive. So Varadakshine is on the wane. Educated youths are chary of getting married, knowing as they do the difficulty of securing employment. Also a few idealist youths are refusing to accept Varadakshine, and a few families are braving public opinion by sending their girls to schools, and not bothering about their marriage at all.

The evil of bridegroom-price is however confined to the Brahmans and the Komatis. The Non-Brahman father of the bride is, on the other hand, sought after, and if he is poor, he tries to make a profit of the wedding. But a man of dignity and means would never agree to the bridegroom's parent bearing all the expenses. He would share the cost with the bridegroom's father.

But usually in a Non-Brahman marriage the bridegroom's people spend more than the bride's people.

There is a custom among the Non-Brahmans by which the bridegroom's parents, at the time when the marriage is agreed upon, put one of their jewels on a particularly desirable bride, as a symbol of their claim to her. If, after this event, the bride's people give her away to another bridegroom, they have to pay a heavy fine. Such reservation of brides is a very usual occurrence, and proves the great demand for brides in Non-Brahman society.

We may here be allowed to digress a little on the cost of marriage, though it is not strictly within the scope of this section. The expense involved is enormous, ranging from

a thousand rupees to five thousand. This problem is common to both the Brahmans and the Non-Brahmans, though the party spending in each case is different. Though everybody knows that marriage is excessively costly, yet no organised group-effort has been forthcoming to tackle the problem.

The chief obstacles to cutting down the expenses are vanity, a tendency not to depart from tradition, and among the Brahmans, the rapacity of the bridegroom's party. Persons stinting expense everyday on the barest necessities of life, will let themselves go financially at marriages and funerals. The most frequent excuse for asking loans of cooperative societies is "son's or daughter's marriage!" We may mention here that the Non-Brahmans have evolved an interesting social institution called "muyyi", which literally means "revenge". It consists in this that every caste-man invited to the marriage shall contribute as much as he can (usually a rupee or two) to a fund raised for the benefit of the parents of the bridal pair. The fund thus raised amounts to nearly a hundred rupees and goes some way in meeting the expenses. A minute account of the contributions is kept, and the amount received from a particular individual has to be returned on a similar occasion in his house. Otherwise, you will be talked about!

In order to escape the excessive cost, more and more people are resorting to one-day marriages. Even among the Non-Brahmans who are more conservative than the Brahmans, the poor resort to one-day marriage. Another way of escaping the fleecing is to run away to distant hill-tops or sacred places and perform the marriage peacefully, far away from friends and relatives. A third way out is to perform two or three marriages together.

Non-religious or Civil Marriages are not yet introduced in the State, though the few who want it get married in the Civil and Military Station, Bangalore. This form of marriage is the least costly, though it is the other pole of public opinion.

As it is impractical to expect the mass of the people to be immediately converted to Civil Marriages, the better solution would be to reduce the ceremonies to the barest minimum required by law. If, along with this, there is a cessation of bridegroom-price, marriages would not be

economically ruinous. But even for the latter reform the conservative elements and vested interests are violently opposed.

As age is one of the factors influencing choice of bride and bridegroom, we shall now have to consider it. In this connection it would be interesting to quote the remarks of the Census Officer for the Mysore Census, 1901[1] "With reference to the marriage of this sex, the population may be divided into 3 groups; (1) castes in which a nubile spinster will be subjected to social ostracism and ex-communication; (2) castes in which the nubile spinster may not be a disgrace or degradation to the family, but still be the subject of ugly talk; and (3) castes where post puberty marriages are the rule.

"In the first of these groups girls are married generally between ages of 8 and 12. There are also exceptional cases on either side—infant marriages before the age of 8 and *late*[2] marriages *after the age of 12*[2]—but all marriages are over before the girls attain their fifteenth year of age.

"Almost all the other (than the Brahmans and Komatis) Hindu castes belong to the second group and among them, females are married generally between the ages of 10 and 20. Marriages before the age of 10 are also common, but very few remain unmarried after the age of 20.

"To the third group belong other religionists,[3] and their females generally marry after their fifteenth year; but very few remain unmarried after the thirtieth year except among the animistic Lambanis and Iraligas, among whom more than 10% and 15% respectively of the brides were above 30. Early marriages are (also) common among these classes."

This statement though made in 1901 applies to the conditions existing today. With this difference, that the age of Brahman girls at marriage has increased owing to the prevalence of bridegroom-price, the scarcity and a sense of responsibility, of bridegrooms and the spread of education. Infant marriages have also decreased. But conditions are worse with the Non-Brahman castes. Affected

[1] *Census of Mysore*, 1901, Part I, p.228.
[2] Italics mine.
[3] Muslims, Christians and Animists.

as they are with a sense of inferiority, they find that the only way they can raise their social status is to imitate the Brahmans. The tendency is widespread, and a problem that looms larger with the advance of years. Unless the Non-Brahman castes rid themselves of this sense of inferiority they will soon have imported into their lives the many harmful customs of the Brahmans. I am aware, deeply aware, of the fact that this is easier said than done.

The Brahmans rigidly insist on virginity in brides, and chastity in wives. These two proceed from one source—the masculine desire to possess the female. Virginity in brides and chastity in wives are secure if girls are married early. Hence the threat that the girl's *pitris* will drink of her menstrual fluid if the girl is not married before puberty.

A decade or two ago, when caste organisation was much stronger than in these days, exercising quasi-judical functions, the powerful weapon of ex-communication was used against the Brahman who dared to keep a "grown-up" daughter at home, unmarried. Mr. T. P. Kailasam in his play "Bahishkara" paints a harrowing picture of a family on which the righteous wrath of the priests has fallen. There is total boycott of the family by the caste, and the father and grandmother of the girl accuse the girl as the cause of all their misery. The girl commits suicide unable to bear the accusation.

The Non-Brahmans are not obsessed with the idea of pre-nubile marriage. Marriages, early as well as late, take place among them. But they are fast imitating the Brahmans. Ananthakrishna Iyer tells us that even the primitive Iruliga, and the Sholiga, among whom brides are sometimes as old as even 30 years, are now taking to early marriage. As to the age of bridegrooms there is not much difference between the Brahmans and Non-Brahmans. They are usually between 18 and 25, though marriages of boys less than 18 are not very rare.

Regarding the difference of age between the husband and wife, the remarks of the Census Officer for the 1901 census still hold good.[1] "The difference in age varies from 6 months to 20 years, and even more in extreme cases of

[1] *Census of Mysore*, Part I, p.226.

late marriages and the average for all classes taken together, may be put down to 10 years. In fact, according to the special statistics compiled for the province, the mean age of marriage of the male is 9 years more than that of the female."

Before completing the subject of age, reference must be made to the prevalence of extreme infant marriage. This is practically unknown these days as it is forbidden by law. V. N. Narasimha Iyengar refers to it in the Census Report for 1891:[1] "Child-widows from the first to the fourth year are shown among the 'other Hindus' due, it is said, to a custom prevailing among certain sub-divisions of the Okkaliga class, by which children of near relations are betrothed to one another within a few months of their birth and the tali, emblematical of the marriage bond, is tied to the cradle of the infant girl. Casualties amongst boys so bound, are not infrequent and are fruitful of infant widows who may, however, amongst certain communities espouse a second husband in subsequent years."

"The most extreme form of infant marriage under the age of five is a practice based entirely on worldly motives, altogether unconnected with any religious beliefs inculcated by the Sastras, such as promptly to secure a very eligible match which may otherwise be lost, to enable aged parents or relations to witness marriage settlements, which if put off they might not be spared to see, and to combine two or more marriage ceremonies and thus save the unavoidable expense, which their separate celebrations would entail, and so forth."[2] This is a very badly constructed sentence which expresses much truth.

Marriages are arranged entirely by parents, though, these days among the more advanced classes of society, the parties' opinion is also taken into consideration. An Okkaliga parent told me that in his village, an educated boy's wishes were consulted.

Parents arranging the marriage of their children is inevitable in a society where the young of opposite sexes have no opportunity to come together and choose their partners. Even in the colleges where girls and boys study

[1]Quoted, *Census of Mysore*, 1901, p.230.
[2]*Ibid*, p.229.

together, there is not much chance of their coming together.

If self-determination is to come in marriage, there should be scope for the young of both sexes to know each other. "Real coeducation should be introduced", as Mr. K. T. Merchant advocates in his book "Changing Views on marriage and family in India". This will also solve the caste problem, as sexual attraction knows no caste.

But this remedy, even if it comes about, affects only the school-going classes of society. It does not touch the uneducated millions.

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE RITES: BRAHMAN[1]

"MARRIAGE rites are frequent in the savage world but nowhere more profuse than among peoples who have reached a higher degree of culture, and tribes that have been in close contact with them; and the large bulk of these rites have originated in magical ideas."[2] This statement of Dr. Westermarck is completely true of the Kannada castes in Mysore. The primitive tribes of Mysore, both those inhabiting the deep recesses of the jungles, and the nomadic ones that roam from one part of the country to another, have, strictly speaking, no marriage rites at all. The Sholiga bridegroom elopes with his fiancee, and comes back to the *pod* (cluster of huts) two or three days later. A goat is killed in honour of the "marriage", and a feast is given. The bridegroom ties the inevitable *tali*, or marriage bond, to the bride. (But recently the Sholigas are complicating their marriage by engrafting upon it the elaborate marriage rites of the Okkaligas). The Kadu (jungle) Kurubas celebrate marriage by exchanging betel leaves. But the Telugu Dombas and the Kadu (jungle) Gollas, though primitive tribes, have developed elaborate rites, probably, if not certainly, in imitation of the higher castes. But the majority of Non-Brahman castes, certainly at a higher level of culture than the above tribes, have engulfed every incident of the marriage in a medley of rites. In some castes, marriages last up to a fortnight. These rites are mostly indigenous, sprinkled occasionally with the Samskritic rites that are common to the Dwijas all over India.

The Brahman marriage rites are a mixture of both indigenous and Samskritic rites—the latter more than the former. The indigenous rites form the women's portion of

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[1] I have drawn freely from Ananthakrishna Iyer for the Samskritic rites.

[2] *Early beliefs and their social influence* by E. Westermarck, p.131.

the rites, at which no mantrams are recited, and in which men have very little to do.

There is a difference in the order of the marriage rites among the different sub-castes of the Brahmans. This is because of the difference in the Vedas followed. "...The ritual of the Sama Vedic priests makes the gift of the damsel precede the tying of the knot, and inconsistently enough, directs the mantles to be tied before the bridegroom has clothed the bride."[1] "The marriage ceremonies thus far described are in accordance with the Apasthamba Grihya Sutras of the Black Yajur Veda; but the Brahmans of Mysore who follow the Sama Veda perform their domestic ceremonies as prescribed by Drahyayana Grihya Sutras, which so far as marriage rites are concerned, differ only in some particulars of secondary importance."[2] Thus the Yugachchidra ceremony which requests Indra to purify the girl for marriage is not observed by the Sama Vedins, but only by the Yajur Vedins.

The woman's rites vary from one sub-caste of the Brahmans to another. But usually these differences are on very minute points. A complete record of the various differences in rites is outside the scope of this thesis. Mention is made only when the difference is on a major point.

Further, I have deliberately refrained from an elaborate description of the Samskritic rites as they have been described in full detail by more competent men. But I have tried to describe in as detailed a manner as I can, the indigenous rites, for these have not been paid much attention to by ethnologists. Edgar Thurston and Ananthakrishna Iyer have no doubt done pioneer research in this field, but they leave much to be desired in their collection of material. Both Ananthakrishna Iyer and Thurston have omitted many significant details. This is said not in disparagement of the work of Thurston and Ananthakrishna Iyer, but in the hope that a recognition of the limitations of these pioneers might induce an ethnic resurvey of South India, and particularly of Mysore, in the light of our more advanced knowledge and technique.

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. I, p.344.

[2] *Ibid*, p.343.

After the priest has pronounced that the *Jatakas*[1] (horoscopes) of the boy and girl are not inimical to each other, the monetary terms of the marriage are discussed. Once the monetary terms are settled, the *lagna patrika* or, the invitation card, fixing up the date, time and place of the mariage are drawn up by the purohit.

All over South India, with the exception of Malabar, marriage is celebrated in the bride's house. Though this rule is relaxed in the instance of some Non-Brahman subcastes, it is strictly adhered to by the Brahmans. "The bride's party should look to the comfort and convenience of everyone of the bridegroom's party during the four or five days of the marriage ceremony during which time they are their guests. Morning breakfast, midday meal, tiffin and night meal should be provided on a decent scale to the bridegroom's party by the bride's party."[2]

Two weeks prior to the marriage the bride's party begin feverishly preparing for the marriage.

A few days prior to the marriage, or on the day previous, two women go at an "auspicious" hour to the market to buy vermillion and turmeric—the hallowed symbols of the supreme good of Kannada woman: to have her husband alive.[3] Turmeric, vermillion, parched bengal gram, jaggery cubes, copra and plantains, are all brought from the market, and placed in a tray before the gods.

A large ball of black-gram flour to be used for making *happalas* for the marriage feast is placed before Ganesha, represented by a few blades of grass stuck in dung. Five *sumangalis* then roll the first five *happalas* out (note the

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[1]Often, boys and girls otherwise perfectly matched, are prevented from marrying each other on the ground that their *jatakas* are inimical. Now, whatever the influence of stars and planets on human life, and the predictability of such influence by a knowledge of the horoscopes of the parties, this fact complicates still further the question of the choice of a partner. And it also comes in the way of self-choice in marriage. Thirdly, it makes for exploitation by an unscrupulous priestcraft.

[2]*South Indian Customs* by P. V. Jagadisha Iyer, p.46.

[3]Henceforward I will use that convenient word *sumangali* to denote a woman who has her husband alive.

odd number). Thereafter anybody may lend a helping hand, even a widow.

Similarly, the long wooden pestle (called *onake*) is worshipped before being put to use. It is decorated with turmeric, vermillion, and an yellow bag containing the nine kinds of grain[1] is tied to it. Before thumping profane objects, it has first to reduce a small quantity of turmeric to powder.

Either on the morning of the God's Feast (the day previous to kanyadana) if the time is auspicious, or on some previous day, the marriage pandal is erected. To one of the pillars is tied an yellow bag containing rice yellowed with turmeric powder. A silver coin is also put into the bag. Vermillion and turmeric are smeared over all the bamboo pillars. Twigs of mango and plantain stems with plantain-bunches in tact are tied to the pillars.

It is regarded as very harmful for the bridal pair if the pandal comes down during the marriage. Elaborate rites are prescribed when such an accident occurs.

On the day of the God's Feast the bride and bridegroom are bathed in their respective residence. Thereafter the house is purified for the marriage. Then comes the Nandi ceremony which invites the ancestors of the bride to the marriage. The ancestors stay till the last day of the marriage, after which they go back to wherever they came from.

"The Madhva Brahmans commence the marriage ceremony by asking the ancestors of the bridal couple to bless them, and be present throughout the performance of the (marriage) rites. To represent these ancestors, a *ravika* (bodice) and *dhoti* are tied to a stick which is placed near the box containing the *salagrama* stone and the household gods. In consequence of these ancestors being represented, orthodox Vaidiki Brahmans refuse to take food in the marriage house."[2]

After the Nandi, the Nine Planets are worshipped with Homa and the nine kinds of grain are given to the Brahmans.

In the evening the Vara Puja or Bridegroom-worship

[1]The Navadhanyas are greengram, horse gram, black gram, bengal gram, dal, avare, (*dolicos lablob*), paddy, gingelly and wheat.

[2]*Castes and Tribes of South India*, E. Thurston, Vol. I, p.369.

takes place. The bridegroom arrives in state to the bride's house or to a temple—the latter preferably, as the Smritis say that it is auspicious for the meeting of relatives after a long separation, or strangers meeting for the first time, to meet at the temple. The parents of the bride offer flowers, clothes etc. to the bridegroom. Then the parties exchange greetings, fruit and betel leaves. The bridegroom's party is invited to dine at the bride's place. Ananthakrishna Iyer says that they may not accept the invitation as "it is considered more auspicious to do everything at marriage." Among the Smarthas, however, it is usual for the bridegroom's people to dine at the bride's place soon after 'vara puja'. But the bride's people do not dine at the bridegroom's place till after the marriage ceremonies are completely over. My Sri Vaishnuva informants have assured me that the marriage will not be celebrated if the bride's people dine at the bridegroom's place before the marriage is completely celebrated. But there is no rule prohibiting the bridegroom's people from dining with the bride's people from the day the *lagna patrika* is drawn up. Perhaps this apparently strange rule has its origin in the very long-standing custom of celebrating the marriage at the bride's house, and hence the necessity of taking food there. As the marriage is celebrated at the bride's city or village, the bridegroom's party stay a few houses off the bride's.

Then comes the ceremony of *samavartanam*, or the termination of the period of Brahmacharya. For the first time in his life the boy is allowed to stick flowers into his hair, use a comb, black his eyes with an eye-beautifier, apply sandal to his body, look at a mirror, wear sandals, and hold an umbrella over his head.[1]

On the day of the *kanyadana* the bridal pair get up early in the morning. The bridegroom is shaved, has his nails pared, and takes an oil bath. The bride also has an oil bath.

Bringing the Gods:

Then five *sumangalis* go to the tank or river to bring five vessels of water. These vessels[2] are kept by the side

[1]Of course, this ceremony, like many others, is without meaning these days.

[2]Among the Brahmans bronze vessels are used, while the Non-Brahmans use earthen pots.

of the idols in the house. The pails are emptied into a tank or river after the *nagavali* ceremony.

Similarly water is brought ceremonially from a river or tank for the marriage kitchen.

Worship of the House-Deity:

It is customary for each family to patronise a deity like Narasimha, Venkataramana of Tirupathi, or Srikanteswara of Nanjangud. Each of these deities has his own favourite tree. A branch of this tree is brought and set up in the house, and a bodice, a *tali*, and a sari are tied to the branch. The sari is usually of the kind that it is worn by a widow; but if there are no widows in the bride's family, the sari is one that is worn by a *sumangali*. The House-Deity takes his seat by the vessel-gods. After the *nagavali*, the sari and bodice are presented to a widow.

Malnir or water from the hill-stream:

Five vessels containing *okali* are arranged in the form of a square (four at the corners and one at the centre), and cotton thread yellowed with turmeric runs round the necks of the vessels. Into each vessel a three-pie bit is put. The bridegroom sits inside the "prison", his mother bending over him. A similar ceremony takes place in the bride's house. Relatives splash *okali* over the bride and bridegroom.

After Malnir, the bride attired in a white sari, worships Gowri (or Parvati), the ideal of *sumangalis*. A jaggery cube is placed on a stone which is used for rubbing sandal-wood on. Gowri sits in the jaggery cube. The bride prays to her for children, wealth, and for prolonging the life of her would-be lord.

The bride is to be given away to the bridegroom in the same white sari in which she worships Gowri.

The bridegroom stands in front of the bride's house facing either north or east. The bride's mother brings water, milk and a few balls of coloured rice. She walks round the bridegroom spilling the liquid, thus enclosing him in a "safety-circle"—a circle which the billion evil spirits inhabiting this planet shall not enter. The light is waved before the bridegroom and the balls are thrown in all eight directions—all to ward off the evil eye. The

mother of the bride washes his feet with milk and water, and rubs them dry with a towel. Arati is waved round him and he is led to the *mantap* or pandal.[1]

Mukha-Darshanam: The bridegroom has terminated his studies and is anxious to go to Benares. Staff in hand he leaves his house. The bride's parents meet him on the way, and the girl's father persuades the bridegroom to give up the journey. In token of his promise to give his daughter in marriage the bride's father gives the bridegroom coconut and betel. The bridegroom's party is then led to the pandal.

At the *mantap*, the bride stands hid by a curtain with the bridegroom on the other side of the curtain. The maternal uncle of the girl leads her to the *mantap*. At the auspicious time—it is imperative that the first meeting has to be at the auspicious hour, for otherwise, it may mean ruin—the curtain is dropped and the pair throw rice on each other. The maternal uncle of the bride lifts her up to the level of the bridegroom. Then the pair exchange garlands thrice.

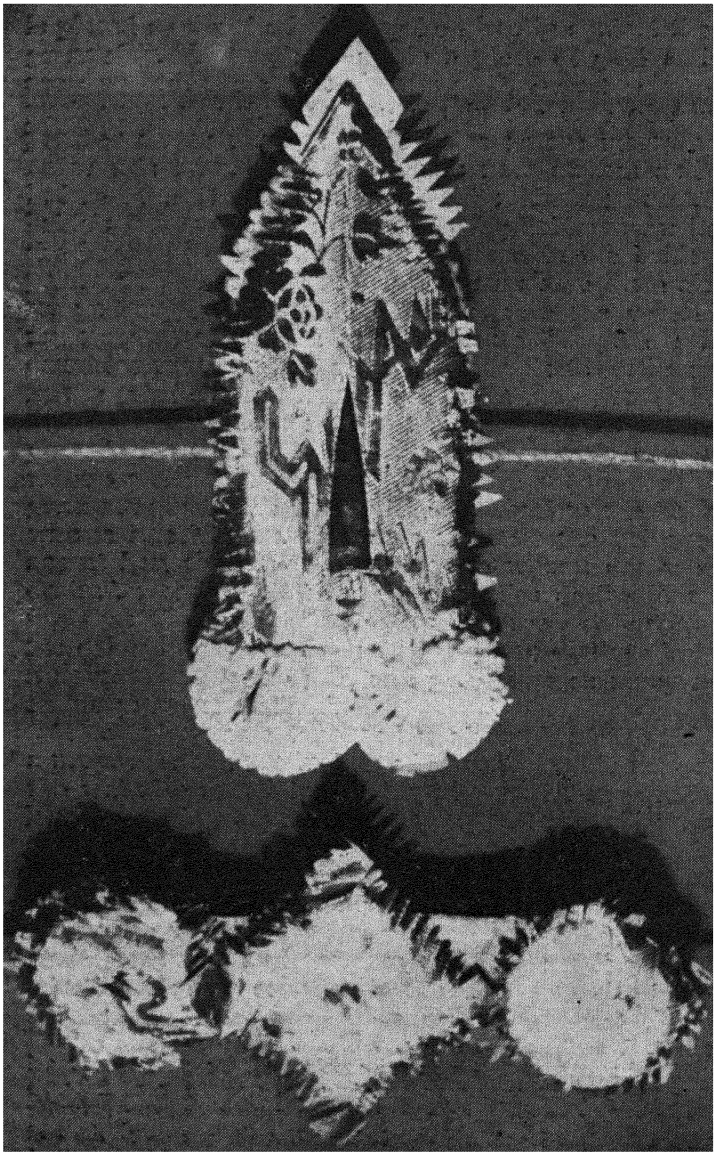
Madhuparkha: The bridegroom is seated in the *mantap* facing east, and his party is seated by his side. The bride's father washes his feet, and the bride's mother dries them with the tip of her cloth, and they sprinkle the washed water on their own persons as holy, because he (the bridegroom) is regarded as the representative of Vishnu and as a guest. Two vessels of water are placed before him, one for *achamana* and the other for *arghya* (for sipping water, and washing the hands). He sips three times and washes his hands. The bride's father places one spoonful of Madhuparka in his hand which he takes, and two more are given. Then he sips water, and washes his hands.

The *madhuparka* is a signal honour, the very highest in fact, which is only done to the king, bridegroom and a few others equally distinguished. The *madhuparka* is a mixture of honey, plantain and curds.

Kanyavarana:

Ananthakrishna Iyer says that this ceremony is performed either before or after the Kasiyatre. More usually, it is after the Kasiyatre. The ceremony consists in the priests announcing that such and such a girl is to be given

[1]This ceremony prevails only among the Sri-Vaishnuva Brahmans of Mysore.



Male and Female Bhashinga

(See page 73)

in marriage to such and such a boy, and the ratification of the statement by the bride's father. The names, gotras of the parties are mentioned along with the names of the paternal ancestors up to the third generation.

Kankana Dharana:

Then the couple assume the *kankana* to symbolise their entry into the "marriage state". Two strands, one woollen and the other cotton, are entwined together. A piece of turmeric, which has an odd number of branches, is tied to the string. And the string is tied to wrists of the pair. My informant, Mr. Nanjunda Sastry, told me that this *kankana* protects the pair from the evil eye. And Abbe Dubois mentions in his book "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies" (p.222): "Prayers are offered to all the gods collectively, who are implored to come and place themselves on the *kankana* and to remain there till the five days of the marriage ceremony have been accomplished." The *kankana* is untied after the *nagavali* ceremony.

We may here mention an important emblem worn on the forehead by the bridal pair just before the bridegroom starts for the Kasiyatre. The emblem is called *bhashinga*. (A photo of the *bhashinga*, male and female, may be seen on the opposite page). The *bhashinga* at the top is worn by the bridegroom. It has two marble-sized balls (made from the white, dry pith of jowari) at the bottom, crowned by a tapering bit of cardboard which is covered by a thin sheet of gold-coloured paper. At the centre of the cardboard is a red streak of paper, tapering towards the top. The male *bhashinga* looks like the penis, inverted.

The female *bhashinga* is a square standing on one of its angles, and with two discs flanking it. To the centre of the square is pasted a round bit of red paper, perhaps representing the vermillion mark worn by the woman on the forehead; or it may represent the clitoris. The *bhashinga* is an indigenous phallic emblem.

Yugachhidra:

Ananthakrishna Iyer places this ceremony just before the *kanyadana*, while my infromant, Mr. Nanjunda Sastry, told me that it is often performed after the *kanyadana* and before the tying of the *tali*. On the head of the girl is placed a ring of matted *durva* grass on which a (real) yoke

is placed so that its hole may be directly against the *durva* grass ring. Through this hole a piece of gold and water are dropped, the priest chanting "O, Indra! cleanse and purify this fire, just as you did in the case of Abala by pouring water through three holes before marrying her." After this bath, the bride wears new clothes and stands before the bridegrom who sits facing east. The bride's father presents clothes to the bridegroom; he takes the hands of the girl and places them in the bridegroom's palms, while her mother pours water above them all which falls through three pairs of hands into the vessel placed underneath, while the father chants "I give away my daughter fully decked with gold jewels to Vishnu who is in the form of the bridegroom that I may get Brahmaloka and that my manes may get a passage into their proper place." He then mentions the bridegroom's name, of his three ancestors, and his gotra. He also announces that he is giving his daughter who is like Lakshmi to the bridegroom who is like Vishnu. He then requests the bridegroom to accept her, chanting "who gives to whom; desire gives to desire", meaning that both the parties desire it, and saying that the bridegroom takes her for getting issue and for doing household duties. The giver of the virgin gives a *dakshina* with the gift, and gives him as many presents as his purse can afford.

"The bridegroom touches the stomach of the bride with a prayer for the production of issue. The pair then sprinkle the wet rice remaining in their hands on each other, each loudly reciting a prayer for prosperity, sacrifices, renown and righteousness. The pair then exchange flower garlands. The bride then presents turmeric, *tambula* and fruits to auspicious women (*sumangalis*)."[1]

Tying the Tali:[2]

The Smartha and Madhva *tali* is a small plate of gold with a dome-like eruption in the middle crowned by a ruby.

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, pp.333-4.

[2] In all, three *talis* are tied to the bride. The first one is tied by the bride's mother, sister or any old *sumangali*. The girl is dressed in a white sari, and she worships Gowri. She then distributes gifts to young unmarried girls. After which the first *tali* is tied. The second *tali* is tied after *dhare* by the husband. This is the most important *tali*. The girl is dressed for it in a white sari presented by the bridegroom. The last *tali* is tied at the *nagavali* either by the husband or mother-in-law.

My informant Mr. Nanjunda Sastry told me that it represents the breast. The *tali* is tied by the bridegroom to the bride's neck.

Among the Brahmans it is the woman of the prostitute caste that threads the *tali*. Among the Non-Brahmans it is either a Basavi, or a professional prostitute. While a woman regularly and properly married is in, danger of becoming a widow, the prostitute is not, and therefore, she is auspicious. In fact the prostitute is often jocularly called *nitya-sumangali* (one who never becomes a widow).

"The *kanyadana* for instance, typifies the handing over of the girl by the father to the son-in-law and the renunciation of parental authority over her. The son-in-law for his part fastens the *tali* round his wife's neck to show that he accepts the gift and that from henceforth she is his property. The sacrifice of the *homam*, and the thrice repeated circuit of the newly married couple round the fire, are a mutual ratification of the contract they have just made with one another, for there is no more solemn engagement than that entered into the presence of fire, which Hindus look upon as the purest of their gods, and which for this reason they always prefer to any other when they wish to make an oath specially binding."[1]

The *tali* is considered to prolong the husband's life thus ensuring that the woman will be a *sumangali*. The mother of the bride and other relatives (*sumangalis*) all contribute their good wishes and blessings in the shape of knots to the *tali* string. It must be noted here that the *tali* is looked upon with great veneration by the Kannada woman. The higher the caste, the greater the veneration. The *tali*, like turmeric and vermillion, is the symbol of the happiest condition of a woman, and its absence indicates the untold misery of widowhood. Consequently, religious feelings are evoked by the *tali*. If the *tali* snaps by accident its owner will be miserable for weeks—for it spells danger to the husband

Dubois, good observer that he was, says: "Then (at the time of *tali*) ensues a tremendous din. The women sing, the musicians play, bells are rung, cymbals are clashed, and anything and everything within reach from which

[1]*Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies, Dubois*, p.226.

sound can be extracted is seized on, each one striving to outdo the other in creating noise. In the midst of this hubub the husband advances towards his young wife, who is facing the east, and while reciting *mantrams*, he fastens the *tali* round her neck, securing it with three knots."[1]

To this the editor of the book, Mr. H. K. Beauchamp, adds in a foot-note: "The noise is intended to drown any sounds of weeping, sneezing, quarrelling which are considered to be bad omens." I think that Mr. Beauchamp's statement is only a part of the truth and not the whole. For, apart from the fact that the noise might have been intended to drown all inauspicious sounds, it has a great effect on the psychology of the bridal pair, keying up their emotions to a height, and thus stressing on them the supreme importance of the new stage they are entering into. Perhaps those who invented this ceremony had also this in view.

Vivaha Homa:

A Homa which the husband and wife jointly perform to request the Gods Varuna, Agni, Vayu etc. for good, long-living sons, and for happiness and wealth. The bride-groom says to the wife: "By virtue of my sacrifices to the gods and liberality to Brahmans, I kill the *pisachas* and deaths that haunt you, and bestow on you long life and sons of long life."

Panigrahana:

A handful of *durva* grass is placed tip northwards, and another handful to the west of it. The husband sits on the eastern one facing the west; the wife sits on the western one facing the east. The husband with his right hand turned down catches hold of the right hand of the wife turned upwards, and chants "I accept thy hand for our happiness (for having good issue, according to another reading); by this mayst thou become old with me as thy husband. The Gods Bhaga, Aryaman, Savita and Purandhi gave thee to me for my householdership." They stand up holding hands, and turn round and change their places, and he chants the following six *mantrams*:—"Look gently at me; do not kill thy husband, be good to cattle; be cheer-

[1] *Ibid*, p.224.

ing Hume to have been explicitly aware that he was giving two different analyses at various places in his work. There are three possible interpretations on this point:

(1) The double account is unintentional and Hume is simply inconsistent.

(2) The double account is intentional and is intended to apply as a whole to every moral statement.

(3) The double account is not intended to apply to every moral statement, but there is no inconsistency since Hume intends one analysis to apply to some statements and the other to other statements.

Of these possibilities I think the second can be ruled out. There is doubtless some truth in the first interpretation; Hume

in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous.' (*Treatise*, p. 471.)

'The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain, which results from the view of any sentiment, or character; and as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows, that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character, as every one places in it, and that 'tis impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken.' (*Treatise*, pp. 546–7.)

He connects this view with the objective analysis by a note on the word 'follows' in the last quotation:

'This proposition must hold strictly true, with regard to every quality, that is determin'd merely by sentiment. In what sense we can talk either of a *right* or a *wrong* taste in morals, eloquence, or beauty, shall be consider'd afterwards. In the mean time, it may be observ'd, that there is such an uniformity in the *general* sentiments of mankind, as to render such questions of but small importance.'

That is, aesthetic and moral statements are either subjective or objective in the same way as statements about secondary qualities may be either subjective or objective; they depend on our constitution, but since most of us are constituted alike we can use the words denoting such sensations as public symbols. Compare two passages laying stress on the analogy with secondary qualities:

'Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind.' (*Treatise*, p. 46.)

Moral and aesthetic taste 'has a productive faculty, and gilding and staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation'. (*Enquiry*, p. 294.)

We are forced to the objective sense of all words originally denoting subjective sensations, thinks Hume, by the necessities of language, which must be public to be of any use.

I need not give quotations for the second analysis, the one usually attributed to Hume. The combination of the two analyses, with the account of the transition from the one to the other, produces what is obviously a very ingenious theory, and even if it is false we can learn much from it.

stancy of Arundhati, wife of Vashistha, the sage. He requested Saraswati, the wife of Brahma, to convert his (Narada's) Veena into a fruit-laden mango tree so that he might satisfy his sudden and irrepressible craving for mangoes. Saraswati confessed her inability to work the miracle. So did Parvati, the wife of Siva, and Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu. But Arundhati, the mortal, was able to work the miracle of transforming a dead stump of wood to a live tree burdened with fruits—a miracle rendered possible by her great chastity, and husband-devotion. The Goddesses were pleased with Arundhati. Arundhati and her husband were elevated to the status of stars in the sky.

It is a popular belief that Arundhati is not seen by those who are about to die. Hence the bridal pair, whether they see that star, or not, say they see it.

On the evening of the *kanyadana* day the bridegroom points out the Arundhati star to his wife. She looks at the star and says (for the first time breaking her silence): "May I get children with my husband living".

Pravesha Homa:

This ceremony is different from the one in which the bride on the fifth day of the marriage enters the father-in-law's house. The latter is a "woman's rite" while Pravesha Homa is a Samskritic one, the object of which is to convert the fire of the marriage Homa into the household fire. The wife enters the house to the reciting of *mantrams* by the husband. The mantrams are prayers addressed to the various deities, for issue, for marital harmony, and for wealth. He also says "O wife win the goodwill and the rewards of thy father-in-law and mother-in-law, of thy husband's brothers and sisters, and rule over them in peace." This ceremony is performed in the evening on the *kanyadana* day.

Sthalipaka:

This is done after the Pravesha Homa. Rice is cooked on the Homagni and offered along with ghee to Agni.

Aupasana and Sesha Homa:

The Aupasana begun soon after Sthalipaka should be performed twice a day, morning and evening, to the end of a man's life. When the man dies, it is this fire that

should be used to light the funeral pyre. The pair vow to perform Aupasana everyday of their lives. Then follow verses describing and praising Agni. The bridal pair prostrate before Agni.

As Westermarck repeatedly urges in his books "Early beliefs and their social influence", and "A short history of marriage", the bridal pair are believed to be in a critical state of their lives, not merely attracting the "evil eye" and ghosts, but also as capable of themselves spreading evil. Such a belief arises from the nature of marriage, easily the most important ritual in a man's life. "...The wedding is, to use a phrase coined by M. Van Gennep, a *rite de passage*, and to pass into a new condition or to do a thing for the first time is not only in this, but in many other cases considered to be attended with danger."[1] The transition to a stage of life which permits sexual union has been regarded with great mystery and terror. "Being in a dangerous state or a source of danger to others, they must observe the utmost caution in all their doings and do as little as possible. ...There are taboos prohibiting them from eating or drinking in public, from eating much, from eating certain victuals or from eating at all...And very frequently continence has to be observed for a shorter or longer time after marriage."[2] The ancient Aryan pair also observed—observe even these days—these taboos. "The pair observe for three days *satvika* diet, and strict Brahmacharya, avoiding music, dance, sports, games, and secret talk to each other, or thinking of sexual matters. They should sleep on the bare ground together, but separated by a staff (of peepul) indicating that they should not move closer."[3]

The peepul staff is removed in the early hours of fifth day of the marriage, thus permitting the pair to unite. But in these days (owing to the habit of early marriage) the pair do not unite on the fifth day of the marriage, but on a different occasion soon after the girl has attained puberty. But the *mantrams* are still blindly recited.

The object of the Sesha Homa is to purify, with the ghee left over after each offering to the gods, the bride for

[1] *Early beliefs and their social influence*, E. Wesetrmarck, p.152
[2] *Ibid*, p.143.
[3] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, pp. 340-1.

sexual contact. She has to be purified because she has been enjoyed serially by Vishnu, Soma, etc.

The pair then have a bath and exchange betel leaves.

Strangely enough, Ananthakrishna Iyer says at the end of his description of Sesha Homa: "This ceremony is called *nagavali*, as the gods are finally propitiated and sent to their abodes."[1]

It is wrong to identify the *nagavali* and Sesha Homa, as the two are different rites, women predominating in the former. Edgar Thurston does not identify the two. Nor do my informants who all agree in treating *nagavali* as a distinct rite. A full description of the latter will be given later on.

On the morning of the day after the *kanyadana* day the bride's mother and other women relatives carry hot water, tooth powder, turmeric etc., to the bridegroom's mother and other relatives. This occasion is utilized by those who invented these rites for bringing the two groups of relatives together. The two parties cut practical jokes at each other's expense.

The bride's relatives, in addition to carrying hot water etc., also carry a "mirror" represented by five chunam spots on a *happala*, a wooden *happala*-roller which is the "comb", and a garland of parched paddy.

The bridegroom's relatives are equal to the occasion. They return all these, and even give something in addition.

The bride's mother and the bridegroom's mother, sitting on wooden seats, a carpet intervening between them, roll coconuts, or flower-balls at each other to the singing of songs. These songs are abusive, and often, not in good taste. But no one present may complain that he or she was insulted. This is the time to give and take abuse—no, not only give and take, but enjoy taking it. And they do enjoy it. There is no doubt that the relatives feel nearer to each other after these songs have been sung.

These Rabelaisian songs are not ancient compositions but are quite recent. But they are modelled on the old songs. The spirit is the same though the form is different. That

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.342.

the songs that are recited these days are modern is beyond question. For, in one song we read that the gluttonous mother of the bridegroom who is suffering from stomach-ache is drinking "soda-water". (This is the term actually used). And in another we find that she demands money from the bride's people shamelessly in the presence of all relatives. A strange fact worth mention is that the bride's mother and the bridegroom's mother address each other as "Aththige" and "Nadini" and not by the usual form of address between them "Beegiththi". (For the relatives that are addressed by the term Aththige and Nadini please see appendix II.)

The songs sung by the bride's and bridegroom's parties indicate their respective functions in marriage. We get the idea that in Brahman marriages the bride's party try to serve and please, while the bridegroom's party is never pleased, but is always complaining. Thus the bridegroom's party speak of the stinginess of the bride's party in the marriage dinners, and now they failed to do this and that. The bride's party, on the other hand, comment on the gluttony of the bridegroom's people. Here is a sample of the songs sung by the bridegroom's people:—

(1) You serve ten *holiges* to twenty guests;
a seer of ghee among a hundred guests;
and the buttermilk is reeking with the smell of cowdung.

(2) Did you bring to our door, singing,
hot water in the morning?
Did you spread plantain leaves for dinner?
Were we satisfied with your feast—
Alas! you deceived us.

Bride's Party.

(1) You quickly gobble everything off the plantain leaves;
You finish the rice before the soup is served;
And the *holige* before the milk;
Two of you need a seer of ghee, and two dozen *holiges*;
You eat, belch and complain—just like you!

(2) How long are you eating, O, Aththige!
You gorge a dozen *holiges*;
You have eaten for one full hour;
Your stomach has grown big,
With the feasts given by others.

There is another variety of songs in which all sorts of insults are hurled by the bridegroom's mother at the bride's mother and *vice versa* As said before, they call each other **Aththige** and Nadini.

The pearl merchant is asking for you.
Go to him and he will give you a rope of pearls.
The mortar-worker is come, he is ready to present
a big necklace for a mere look at you.
You quarrelsome Nadini, you had a rendezvous
with Shankaraiya;
You camphor-coloured woman,
You went to Appabhatta's house.

There are a good many songs in which the "Aththige" is accused of deserting her husband for her lover, of drunkenness, debauchery, amazonishness, vulgarity and thieving.

The following songs might apply either to the bride's father or to the bridegroom's father. And neither can feel proud of them:—

Is he our *beega*?[1] this dark pot-belly,
This camel-faced man, who is the enemy of his relatives?
This fault-finding glutton?
Oil-tongued villain! fox-like, merciless,
Scandal-mongering, and impolite hypocrite,
Who, while talking about the other world
Has an eye on the neighbour's money.

This social institution serves only one purpose; it enhances the fun of the marriage for the womenfolk, and brings them together. There are ethnologists who suggest that such mutual abuses in marriage might be a survival from a state of marriage by capture. (We shall deal with this argument later on).

The Aupasana on the second and third days of the marriage provides some fun. The bride and bridegroom are made to know each other and so also the two groups of

[1]*Beega* is used to denote the father of the bride or bridegroom. *Beegiththi* is the feminine term, while *Beegaru* denotes relatives of either of the bridal parties.

relatives. The Vara Puja day and the *kanyadana* day do not leave much time for fun. But the other days are jolly ones. The bride is brought to her husband for Aupasana. The bridal pair roll flower-balls between them. And they are asked to utter each other's name. Meanwhile the crowd of relatives laugh noisily at the shyness of the bride and bridegroom. The girl is asked to invite her husband for Aupasana, and to sing before him. The outburst of Rabelaisian humour continues, girls tying together the edges of the garments of the bridal pair. Flour paste, squeezed plantains and other sticky things are thrown at them. The pair exchange betel leaves and rub sandal on each other. Arati is waved at last, and the crowd is treated to a sumptuous breakfast. In the evening there is the same fun, with a bigger crowd waiting to pull the leg of the bridal pair.

Haribuvva:

The bridal pair eat together from the same leaf on the fourth night. This is called Haribuvva. Five plantain leaves, four at the angles of a square and the fifth in the centre. On these are laid sixty kinds of dishes, proof of the culinary genius of our women. Two huge brass lamps by the hooks of which dangle sweets, stand at either side of the square. The bride pours milk into the cupped hands of the bridegroom for aposhana. The bridegroom takes a bite of a sweet preparation, and gives the rest to the bride. The bride in turn hands him a sweet which she has tasted. As the bride's mother brings the vessels to serve the dinner for the pair, the bridegroom seizes the vessels from her. These vessels become his property. As these are intended to be seized by the bridegroom, they are very small. (Often, strong comments are made by the bridegroom's party at the size of the vessels kept for seizure). The bridegroom crowns the evening's misbehaviour by stealing the brass lamps, a coir rope, and a silver vessel. He sleeps in his house that night and returns the next morning.

Nagavali:

There are slight differences between the account of the rites I have gathered, and the one presented in Thurston's "Castes and Tribes of South India." I will cite both the versions.

The priest is present at the ceremony. Five vessels full to the brim with *okali* are kept, four at the angles of a square and the fifth in the middle. Cotton thread, yellow with turmeric, run round their necks. Five leaves are placed before the vessels. Varuna, Yama, Indra etc., are invoked into these vessels. Sumangalis bring various dishes to these deities, and place them on the leaves.

A *rangoli* design is drawn on the floor in coloured rice. On either side of the design an elephant is drawn, one in salt and the other in rice. (Rice and salt, as everyone knows, are the two indispensable culinary articles). The bride and bridegroom sit opposite each other. And the latter says "give me your rice elephant for my salt one." And the two change seats.

Then the five *sumangalis* go round the drawings five times. Each of them receives a bodice cloth for the service.

The bride then worships another *tali*, betel leaves and Gowri. And the bridegroom ties her this Tali.

Here is Thurston's account: "The Telugu and Carnataka Brahmans, instead of the Pachchai Kalyanam, perform a ceremony called the *nagavali* on the 4th or 5th day. 32 lights and 2 vessels representing Siva and Parvati, are arranged in the form of a square. Unbleached thread, soaked in turmeric paste is passed round the square, and tied to the pandal. The bridal couple sit in front of the square and after doing puja, cut the thread and take their seats within the square. The bridegroom ties a *tali* of black glass beads on the bride's neck, in the presence of 33 crores of gods, represented by a number of small pots arranged round the square. Close to the pots are the figures of two elephants designed in rice grains and salt respectively. After going round the pots, the couple separate and the bridegroom stands by the salt elephant and the bride by the other. They then talk of the money value of the two animals and an altercation takes place during which they again go round the pots and the bridegroom stands near the salt elephant and the bride near the rice one. The bargaining as to the price of the animals is renewed and the couple go round the pots once more."[1]

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[1]*Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. I, pp.291-2.

Bride-receiving:

This is the last of the rites we have to deal with in connection with Brahman marriage.

The bride is taken in procession to the bridegroom's house. At the threshold of the latter's house is a measureful of rice. The measure also contains a coral bead, and a bit of gold—all these stand for wealth. The bride steps in, right foot first, and kicks the measure scattering plenty and wealth on the floor. Her coming into the house is synonymous with the coming in of plenty.

The bride and her mother-in-law stand in a huge winnow or basket. Here the bride's mother formally hands over her daughter to her new relative. The bride's mother rubs a little butter and milk on the navel of the mother-in-law —symbolical of wishing the latter well. The mother-in-law is requested to take good care of her daughter-in-law. The ceremony is repeated with reference to all the female elders of the bridegroom's household—persons whom the bride has to please, and work for, in a joint family.

Thus the girl passes away from the parental home to her husband's. Soon after she enters the house, a ring and a ball of butter are dropped in a vessel-full of water. The pair dip their hands into it and take out the ring and butter-ball. Perhaps this is a ceremony which indicates who will dominate in future wedded life. It indicates who will be the master, and not as Westermarck wrongly believes it to be, helps one to gain mastery over the other.

In the end the bride throws the butter-ball overhead to the wall behind her—that is, wishes her new house prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE RITES: NON-BRAHMAN.

THE word Non-Brahman denotes a heterogeneous variety of castes ranging from the Arasu (Kshatriya) to the simple, nomadic Korachas and the hill-dwelling, primitive Sholigas. The Arasu, Komati and Nagartha have all adopted Samskritic rites and retain very few indigenous rites, and the Sholiga's wedding is nothing but ratified elopement. Between the extremes lie the vast majority of Non-Brahman castes whose marriage contains a greater or less percentage of Samskritic rites.

Marriage ceremonies last from one to thirteen days. (Remember, it should not last an even number of days). The number of days not merely vary among the Non-Brahmans, but also, individually, according to purse.

Finally, the order in which the various rites are performed also varies. The Simhasana Puja is observed among some, on the day of the Vilyada Sastra and among others, on the fourth day of the marriage. One caste performs the Kankana Dharana after the Kanyadana.

The method here adopted is that the rites which are common to the Kannada castes (excluding the primitive tribes) are described in the order that is usually followed. But care has been taken to mention a unique custom, or an altered version of a common custom, which is peculiar to a particular caste.

Another fact may be noted before passing on to the rites themselves. Neither Brahman nor Non-Brahman marriage can be understood without an imaginative understanding of the mental setting of the originators of these rites. To the savage mind marriage is an event of profound importance and mystery. It means the granting of sex intercourse (which is looked upon with fear) between two persons, it means the entry of a stranger into the house and a woman at that —and the possible gratification, in the birth of sons and daughters, of that consuming desire for personal immortality which every man has.

Marriage, thus, is a crisis in the life of the individual. The bridal pair are, spiritually speaking, in a delicate state. They are liable to the attacks of spirits. Omission of the slightest detail might spell harm to the pair. The pair wear *kankanas* for protection against the million unseen spirits. The bridegroom is shaved, his nails are pared, and he is subject to what is known as the "oil-bath". Similarly, the bride is also purified for marriage. Turmeric is another purifying agent. Turmeric powder is rubbed vigorously over the bridal pair on the day of the *dhare* or *kanyadana*, and this state of holy jaundice lasts till the last day of the marriage when it is washed off. The bridal pair wear the phallic emblem *bhashinga* on their foreheads, and they worship the milk-post for the continuation of the line.

The bridal pair also wear on their foreheads what is called *patta*, which literally means enthronement. This only signifies the entry of the pair into the marriage state. It is cast off along with the *bhashinga* and *kankana*.

Every act of the marriage ceremony is coated thick with ritual. Ritualism is the natural reaction of the primitive mind to a crisis. This ritualism has a twofold purpose: (1) Negative and prophylactic, to protect the pair from the evil spirits around and (2) positive, to bring about plenty, happiness and children.

It has been previously mentioned that among the Non-Brahmans, the bridegroom's parents go in search of the bride.

Before setting out of the house to have a look at the girl, the bridegroom's parents light an oil lamp in their house and pray to their favourite god or goddess to put out the light before they return home if the girl brings ill-luck; and to keep it going, if the girl brings them good luck. If the light goes off before they return, then the poor girl is rejected.

Arrived at the bride's house, the women relations of the bridegroom begin their dissection of the girl. Excessive ugliness or pronounced deformity of some important limb will usually put an end to the proceedings. But if she is only of average ugliness, she is subjected to other tests.

Does she come from a good family? Have her sisters got on well with their husbands? Have her female relatives

left a trail of dead husbands or are they *sumangalis*? Is she born of wedlock proper, or is she the daughter of a widow remarried? And so on.

The bridegroom's relatives would like to know if there are any evil *sulis* (the spirals of hair found on the head are divided into good and bad according to their position). They request that they may be allowed to comb the girl's hair—a trick easily understood by the bride's relatives.

Does the girl walk alright or is she lame or bandy-legged? "Will you get me a tumbler of water, dear?" says the bridegroom's mother. The girl brings the tumbler of water, and as she is coming they all turn their critical eyes at her style of walking.

Is the girl thrifty? They ask her to get some chunam for the betel—a test which the girl will easily pass because it has been dinned into her ever since she was born to supply as little of chunam as possible to those persons who might one day come to test her. If she brings more chunam, it is inferred, she will be a spendthrift housewife.

These people also believe in that classification of women into *padmini*, *chittini* etc., classes, elaborated in Indian books on sex. If the imprint of the feet on the ground is full, the girl belongs to the *padmini* class, and therefore desirable. If the imprint is not full but only in patches, then the girl belongs to the *chittini* class, very undesirable.

More private defects are found out by giving the girl an oil-bath. The girl's teeth are openly examined. The girl is asked to thread a needle. This test will reveal whether the girl has a squint.

If the girl comes out of these tests successfully, the astrologer is consulted. Do the stars presiding over the first letters of the names of the pair agree or not? The astrologer may be consulted even before having a look at the girl. Usually the Non-Brahman castes, excepting the Komati and the Kshatriya, do not have horoscopes.

The stars agreeing, the bridegroom's people "reserve" the girl for themselves. A gold ornament belonging to the bridegroom's people is put on the person of the bride, as a symbol of their reservation. If the bride's people want to refuse, they must do so before the ornament is put on. If, however, they do give the girl away in marriage to an-

other after receiving the ornament, they will have to compensate the injured party by paying a fairly heavy fine. But such an incident is rare.

The Holeyas believe that a girl whose little toe runs over its neighbour will run away from her husband.

Another method frequently used for finding out whether the girl brings luck to her new family or not, is to spring on her a surprise visit. If she is found combing her hair, or applying vermillion to her forehead—that is, if she is doing something auspicious, they "reserve" her in the manner described above. But, if she is sweeping the floor, or emptying the dirt into the pit, she is thought to bring bad luck with her.

The question, why should the girl alone be subject to the tests? naturally arises. The answer is not far to seek. The bride is going to be a permanent member of the bridegroom's household. Hence great care should be exercised in choosing her. Moreover, boy's virtues and vices somehow come to the open, whereas those of a girl are kept secret.

It is very common to attribute all the losses in the bridegroom's house to the new wife. "Such a beautiful cow, yielding two seers of milk a day, died only three months after she (the bride) came, and two months later, remember, for the first time in twenty years of our occupying the house, we were robbed of a thousand rupees. Her husband has not yet got a job"—such remarks are frequent.

Mr. B. Rangaswamy in his book "Huttida—Halli, Halliya —Hadu" tells us that there is a custom prevalent among the Gangadikara Okkaligas of Hemagiri according to which the bridal parties are required to have a look at each other's house before agreeing to the marriage. The size and appearance of a man's house is the index to his wealth. Hence the habit of house-gazing.

Oppu Vilya: The Oppu Vilya ceremony signifies the consent of the bride's father to giving his daughter in marriage to the particular bridegroom.

Among the Agasas the bridegroom's father goes to the house of the bride's father and says "I have come to eat rice and ghee in your house." The terms of the marriage are talked over and if an agreement is arrived at, the bride's

father accepts the betel leaves brought, thus consenting to the alliance. A variant of this custom is found among the Besthas in Mysore city. Five *sumangalis* go on an auspicious day and at an auspicious hour, carrying betel and arecanut on a plate, to the bride's house. They leave the plate in the hall and return. The bride's relatives accept the offer by accepting the betel, or reject it by not accepting the betel.

The bridegroom's relatives are not allowed to eat in the bride's house on the day of the Oppu Vilya.

The Gangadikara Okkaligas have, curiously enough, a rite similar to Oppu Vilya but which comes after the *dhare* or *kanyadana*. "Then two persons of the same name, one from the bridegroom's side and the other from the bride's, are made to sit near the plate, and are subjected to much fun, by having turmeric, vermillion, and *vibhuti* smeared over their bodies, and cakes broken on their heads. Then the man representing the bride's party asks the bridegroom's representative why he came there, to which he replies he came there to eat rice and *dal*. The bride's man says he will give it and asks what else he wants. The latter says 'we want the girl.' The other man says 'we give the girl' and gets a reply 'we take her'. Then an announcement is made thrice that such (and such) a girl is given in marriage to such (and such) a man."[1]

The difference between Oppu Vilya and the next ceremony, Vilyada Sastra or Hasaru Vilya (Betel Sastra) is that while the former is only a promise made by the bride's father to the Bridegroom's father, the latter is a *social ratification of the promise*. Further, the details of the marriage, such as the date on which the *lagnapatrika* or the invitation card is to be drawn up, and the day on which the marriage ceremonies should begin, are settled during the Vilyada Sastra.

The *sumangalis* of the bride's party, along with the bride's father, go on an auspicious day to the bride's house. Betel, turmeric, vermillion, coconuts, a sari and a bodice-cloth are carried on trays. The caste headman is requested to attend the ceremony. He brings with him all the castemen.

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.179.

The bridegroom's father places the articles the *sumangalis* have brought before the bride's father. The casteman asks the bride's father whether he agrees to the proposal and, if he does, to accept the betel. He accepts the betel before all, rendering the promise irrevocable.

Meanwhile, the girl is decked with the things brought her by her father-in-law. She sits before the castemen for a while, who depart taking *tambula.*

In the evening a dinner is held at the bride's house to which the castemen are invited.

The long wooden pestle, a household necessity, is worshipped with turmeric, vermillion and flowers. Five *sumangalis* thump ten or twelve seers of paddy to rice, and this rice is spread under the pots which represent the gods; it is thrown on the bridegroom's party coming for *kasi yatre*; and it is placed on the *simhasana* or seat of authority before worshipping the latter.

The day of the God's Feast.

Putting up the marriage pandal and the Milk-Post: The booth is constructed on twelve posts arranged in three rows, and thatched with green leaves. Out of these twelve posts "three must be of green wood, one of *kalli*, one of *muttaga* or bastard teak, and one of *nerale*, that of Kalli being styled the 'milk-post' said to be for ensuring the continuity of line."[1]

It may be noted here that the number of posts for the pandal is even and not odd. Also, that the twelve-pillared pandal is erected at the house where the marriage is performed (either the bride's or bridegroom's), and not at both the places.

Within the pandal a small platform is built into which the milk-post is fixed. In some castes the three *kalli* posts stand on the platform, one of them being the milk-post.

Among the Telugu-speaking Voddas, the wooden pestle (onake) acts as the milk-post. It is covered with a turban dipped in turmeric solution, and its head is hid by leaves of the *nerale* tree.

The *kalli* branch should have an odd number of twigs. A twigless stem is never chosen. For twigs indicate the

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.39.

growth and spreading of the family—and the milk-post is worshipped for the continuation of the line.

The milk-post is usually of the *kalli*, or the Indian fig—both of which, if scratched, exude milk. Hence the post is called the milk-post. Milk suggests breastmilk and thus children. One or two sub-castes, however, use peepul for the milk-post. But peepul does not ooze milk if scratched, but a red, viscous fluid.

That the milk-post is closely connected with issue may be gathered from the following taboos:—(1) pregnant women are not allowed to touch it, and (2) among the Madiga, the pregnant woman even avoids seeing a milk-post being carried to the pandal. Among the Bilimagga, the father of the bride is not allowed to touch either the milk-post, or that assuredly phallic emblem, the *bhashinga*.

The importance of the milk-post to the people who invented the rite may be gathered from the worship done to it. Coral, ruby, gold etc., are offered to it. The question is bound to arise, why is it so elaborately worshipped if its worship was not thought to produce results worthwhile? The belief that worship of the milk-post leads to the continuation of the line easily explains the great importance of the milk-post in the marriage ritual.

"The milk-post must be cut by the maternal uncle of the bridegroom or a man similarly related. He goes to a tree with a coconut, incense and other ingredients of worship, does puja to the tree and cuts off a branch which he brings and places at the temple."[1] The maternal uncle is paid some money for his labour. "Then a procession headed by a *kalasa*, carried by a married woman with band goes to the temple under a canopy of cloth called *chale*. Puja is made to the milk-post and it is brought to the marriage pandal. The post is set up on the marriage dais in the central portion of the booth, a small quantity of milk, curds, a little ghee, a pearl, a coral and a bit of gold being first usually thrown into the pit. The village washerman ties round the post a cloth painted with red coloured stripes. To the post is also tied a *kankana* and a small bundle containing the nine kinds of grain. Married women take hold of the post and set it up, singing songs."[1]

[1] *Ethnographical Survey of Mysore*, H. V. Nanjundiah, Parts LXVI, p.10.

Either the maternal uncle, or the brother of the bride, goes in state to the *nerale* tree and lops off a twig after worshipping the tree. The *nerale* twig is "married" to the *kalli* twig. The *nerale* twig[1] is called *yelevara*. I questioned a good many caste elders as to the significance of the *yelevara*. No one knew why it was tied to the milk-post. When I suggested them my explanation that it symbolised "marriage" and hence continuation of the line—they did not consider it improbable.[2]

The bridal pair go round the milk-post thrice after the ceremony of *kanyadana*.

A few days after the marriage is over the milk-post is ceremonially removed. Among the Holeyas it is pulled down after a few fowls have been sacrificed to it. It is usually cast away into a tank or stream. The Bestha bridal pair jointly float the milk-post and *nerale* twig down the stream. So much for the milk-post.

"The first day is named *devaruta* or god's feast and is set apart for the worship of the ancestors. The bride and the bridegroom celebrate this separately in their homes. They bathe, and fast till the evening. Then a *kalasa*[3] is set up in their houses; the clothes brought for the marriage are all kept near it, incense is burnt and offerings of cooked food and broken coconuts are placed before it. The bride and bridegroom respectively offer prayers and a dinner is given to the castemen at night."[4]

Several castes propitiate the departed spirits (whether one's own kinsmen or local ghosts, it is hard to say) in an additional way. "At about midnight (the hour of ghosts), the bridegroom is dressed in new clothes and is taken in procession with music to a place where four roads meet,[5] the

[1]An injured *nerale* yields a red-coloured juice.

[2]It is noteworthy that the male fluid represented by the *Kalli* should be white and the female one represented by the *nerale* should be red.

[3]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.37.

"A *kalasa* is meant to denote some deity. A small metal drinking vessel, sometimes a new earthen pot, is filled with water or some grains and fruit; the mouth is sometimes covered over with mango or betel leaves and a coconut, the vessel is on the outside beautified with chunam or red colour drawings and placed in a consecrated spot, and puja or worship is made to it."

[4]*Ibid*, pp.37-38.

[5]A place where three or four roads meet is the favourite haunt of ghosts, according to local belief.

head of the family carrying a dagger or a sword. A plantain leaf is placed on a spot washed with cowdung, and cooked food of various kinds is heaped on it. After offering puja to the heap, the man with the dagger goes round it three times and the party return home in silence (without looking back), leaving behind the musicians, who return to the marriage house by a different way."[1]

Among the Besthas of Mysore and a few other Non-Brahman castes, a *kalasa* representing Lakshmi is installed on the day of the God's Feast and remains up to the end of the marriage. The *kalasa* is kept on a brass plate along with a mirror (an auspicious sign), and is carried by a *sumangali* in front of the many processions to and from the bride's house.

The bridegroom arrives in state in the evening.[2]

The ceremony of "bringing the gods" to the marriage house takes place, usually, on the evening before the day of the *kanyadana.* The Madigas call this Ganga Puja.

A number of women (of course *sumangalis*) belonging to the bride's party, and an equal number belonging to the bridegroom's, go to the potter. The potter will have a few pots ready for them. The women paint the pots with vermillion and rice flour and then worship them. The pots are then taken home, the women singing on the way. The potter is paid a few annas, and a dhoti for his service.

One of the pots is called 'Odahuttina Gadige', or 'the brother's pot', and is carried by the bridegroom's sister. On the day these gods are sent back the same sister has to carry the 'brother's pot' and empty it on a peepul tree.

Sumangalis carry the pots in state to a tank or river. (The number of pots varies according to sub-caste). The tank or river is worshipped and the pots are filled with water. Coconut flower is thrust into the mouths of these pots.

The pots are carried back to the house and are seated on a sheet of thinly-spread manure into which the nine kinds

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.407.

[2] Amongst a few Non-Brahman castes like the Besthas, marriage is performed in the bridegroom's house. In such castes, the bride arrives in state in the evening. She is sent soapnut powder, turmeric and other articles of toilet, just as the bridegroom's party is sent these things among the Brahmans.

of grain have been sown. A light is kept in the room, and it has to burn throughout the marriage.

The Madigas sacrifice a sheep or fowl to these gods before seating them, and a hand dipped in the blood of the sacrificed goat or sheep is impressed on the walls of the god's room to scare away the evil eye.

The Kurubas invoke Bire Devaru, their deity, into one of the pots, and that pot has to be carried by a man.

This rite gives us the picture of a mode of life in which agriculture is the mainstay of the people. The nine kinds of grain are sown into the manure-bed and potfuls of water lie on the bed. All the three are essential for the growth of plant life, and plant life, in turn, is indispensable to human life. Perhaps this rite symbolises a wish for the growth of the family represented by the phenomenal growth of the grains sown in the manure-bed—or it might magically make for, or cause, the growth of the family.

Second Day:

This is the day of *dhare* or *kanyadana*. This is easily the most important of the marriage rites. The bride and the bridegroom get ready for this rite only after being purified for it. The bridegroom is shaved, and his nails are pared. The bride's nails are also pared. In most castes this is done by the barber, but in a few, the maternal uncle does the job and is paid a small fee for it.

The Turmeric State:

On the morning of the *dhare* day (among a few on the previous day alone) the bride and bridegroom sit in their respective homes on wooden planks. *Sumangalis* rub turmeric on their persons. The bride has her lap filled with fruits after the ceremony.

The "pure" state of turmeric lasts five days. The bridal pair become normal again on the sixth day after having washed away their yellow state. Ganga that is brought from the tank is added to the hot water in the house. (Thus the profane water at home is made holy). The bride bathes the bridegroom in this water and vice versa. And then *sumangalis* bathe the pair with the same water. After the second wash the pair get rid of their yellow state.

After being smeared with turmeric, the pair severally undergo the ceremony of *malnir*, already described under Brahman marriage rites.

Water is then brought from the tank ceremonially for the marriage kitchen. This is called *sastrada-niru*.

Then the Hattaramanushya (the man that is near the caste-head, that is to say, his assistant) carries the ornament-box (called *vastugara pettige*) to the bride from the bridegroom. In order to ensure that the bridegroom's people send the twelve articles in the *vastugara pettige* as required by custom, the box is shown to ten castemen. After obtaining their approval, the caste-assistant carries the box to the bride. Some of the twelve articles presented to the bride are: a sari, a bodice-cloth, ear-rings (a pair being counted as one), a silver belt (called *dabu*), flowers, comb, mirror, black beads to be worn in a necklace, and palm-rolls that are worn in place of ear-rings.

Then the *kankana*—same as in the Brahmans, plus an iron ring which is tied to the *kankana* thread for prophylactic purposes—is tied round the wrists of the pair. The phallic *bhasihnga* and the *patta*, the latter denoting the special state the pair is in, are tied to the foreheads of the bride and bridegroom.

Binakana Sastra or Madalinga Sastra:

Prior to the *kasiyatre*, among the Gangadikara Okkaligas, the Besthas and a few others, what is called Binakana (lit: Vigneswara) Sastra takes place. This rite gives a picture of the life at the times the rites were instituted. The exact significance of the Binakana Sastra is not known. Perhaps it is nothing more than a scene from domestic life, quite devoid of any magical intentions. The bride and bridegroom go through the ceremony separately.

The bridegroom sits on a plank holding with both hands a churn which ends in a paddy-measure. To his right is kept a currystone. Twelve bits of ragi cake called Binakana Rotti (Vinayaka's *roti*) are placed on the person of the bridegroom. Five *sumangalis* appear and one of them holds a plantain leaf and a brass dining-plate against his face. Each one of them washes his feet, puts the *ragi* cake bits on his body, holds the leaf and plate in front of the bridegroom for the space of a second and then departs.

The churn, it need not be told is an article of daily use, indicates milk and butter, the food and wealth of the peasant. So does the measure. And there can be no kitchen without the currystone. *Ragi* is the staple food of the peasant and hence the crumbs of ragi *roti*.

The plantain leaf and the brass plate, both probably representatives of different phases of culture of the people, are retained in the ceremony. Originally the people ate on the plantain leaf, but substituted it by the brass plate when the latter came into existence. It is characteristic of the people's conservatism that they have also retained the defunct leaf. And the brass plate, to be elevated to take its place in the ceremony, must have come into existence long back—long enough to be sastra.

Then the bridegroom sets out on the *kasiyatra*. Attired in the most gaudy clothes, dagger in hand, he goes to his bride. The dagger is covered with a red cloth in many castes, while in a Gangadikara Okkaliga marriage which I witnessed at Mandya, the dagger was wrapped up in white. Dr. Westermarck believes that the dagger is one of the many prophylactic devices to keep the bridegroom safe from the evil eye. And iron is believed to be a very good prophylactic.

There are two arguments against this contention: (i) If the purpose of the dagger is prophylactic, why is the bridegroom alone in need of it? (ii) Secondly, why is the dagger wrapped up in a cloth—and that too red cloth? The explanation that it is a relic of a state of marriage by capture involves a big assumption.

Another explanation may be put forth. At the time when these rites were invented, martial valour in the youth was probably highly valued. The dagger and the red cloth exhibit the bridegroom's courage and strength—a person who is an asset to the caste.

The Madigas have no *kasiyatre* while the Holeyas, the right-hand untouchable caste, have it. But in the Holeya version of the rite it is the bride's *brothers and not her father* that promises the bride to the bridegroom.

Among the Madigas half-pounded rice is vigorously hurled at the bridegroom's party as the latter enter the marriage pandal for the *dhare* ceremony.

Next comes the ceremony of *mukhadarshana* or "face-seeing." The bride and the bridegroom see each other for the first time. The bride (and in castes among which the marriage takes place in the bridegroom's house, the bridegroom) stands behind a screen. The bridegroom goes round the bride thrice, and at the auspicious moment, the curtain is let down and the pair throw gingelly and cumin seeds at each other.

The Kurubas do not observe the *mukhadarshana.*

Much importance is attached to the first meeting of the bride and bridegroom and it is imperative that it should occur at an auspicious moment, for otherwise, the bride might flood her husband's house with ill-luck.

After the *mukhadarshana* the pair garland each other.

The *dhare* rite comes next. It is imperative that the bride should be given away attired in a sari presented by her parents and not by the parents-in-law. There are two points of difference between the Brahman and Non-Brahman *dhare*: (1) Among the former only the parents of the girl perform the ceremony, while among the Non-Brahmans after the parents, the maternal uncle of the bride, then the caste-head, and then all the other members of the caste have to give away the girl. (2) Secondly, the Brahmans pour water into the joined hands of the pair, while the Non-Brahmans use milk for the purpose. The milk thus poured is caught in a tray and emptied into a well, or on a *bilva* (aegle marmelos) tree, or a jasmine bush.

The Besthas of Mysore, like many other castes, present the bridegroom with a gold ring as *dakshina* along with the girl, who is the subject of the gift. We have already pointed out in the section on bride-price, the mutual incompatibility of *dhare* and *tera.*

Soon after the *dhare* "the married couple sit together and receive *sase*, which consists of married women throwing rice and sesamum on them, (which act is) expressive of a wish for plenty in the new household to be set up."[1]

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.273.

Thumbe Dhare:

This is a second *dhare* performed on the day after the first *dhare*. No Brahman is present on this occasion—perhaps indicating a Pre-Samskritic culture. The *thumbe dhare* consists in the maternal uncle giving away the bride to the bridegroom. The groom sits on a horse, and the bride on a bull, and both go to the peepul tree in state. And there the maternal uncle gives away his niece.

After the *sase* ceremony, the bridegroom ties the *tali* (similar in shape to the Smartha Brahman *tali* described previously) to the bride. The *tali* is placed on a jaggery cube that rests on a rice-heap and every casteman touches it in approval of the marriage, and symbolical of his good wishes for the pair. The bride's father then asks "does everyone consent to this marriage?" They say "yes". And the *tali* is tied.

Among the Madigas two *talis* are tied to the bride, one by her maternal uncle and the other by her husband. The bridal pair then go round the milk-post thrice.

The Besthas of Mysore next have a ceremony in which the bride's brother (younger preferred) spreads a mat on which a wooden plank is kept. The pair sit on the plank. The bride's brother is paid a sheep, or an ox, or at least a *hana* for this service. Tera is then paid by the bridegroom, and the castemen pay the *muyyi* (described in the section on *tera*). The caste is served *tambula*, and invited to dinner.

Arundhati, the model of conjugal (better, wifely) constancy is then seen by the pair.

Buvva or eating together of the bride's and bride-groom's parties: "The bride and bridegroom's partaking of food in common was a means of sealing the union by one of the most prominent features of married life, the husband's sharing of food with his wife,"[1] observes Westermarck. The ceremony of eating together of the bridal pair is common both to the Brahmans and the Non-Brahmans. But with this difference. Among the Brahmans the pair eat from one leaf, while two sets of relatives participate of the Non-Brahman Buvva. Non-Brahman Buvva tries not merely

[1]*Early beliefs and their social influence*, Westermarck, p.133.

to cement the union of the pairs, but also two groups of relatives. In some cases like the Holeyas, the bride eats with her mother-in-law and the bridegroom with his father-in-law thus stressing more the social character of marriage. But among the Medars and a few other castes, the bridal pair eat out of the same leaf.

"Near the *arivenis* (the Pot-Gods) takes place the important ceremony of Buvvadapuje or Domati Puja. On a spot cleaned with cowdung and water, a plantain leaf is spread, and on it is consecrated an eating dish, a basket or a winnow, according to the section the parties belong to. Married women observing fast, cook in new earthern vessels four to eight seers of rice mixed with jaggery, holding a cloth to their noses to prevent the rice being contaminated by their smelling it. It is then placed in a dish, winnow or basket and mixed with four or five seers of ghee, plantains and sweet cakes, made into balls. Then the bridal pair, and the three married women who have observed a half-fast (eating only once a day) for the previous three days, worship this Buvva. Some balls are then distributed to all castemen as *prasada*, and the rest are divided equally and put into two dishes, baskets or winnows, as the case may be. The bride and her relations take one portion and the bridegroom and his party the other, and they consume the whole of it at one sitting, without leaving a single morsel. It is said that they should carry the food to their mouth only with two fingers. The 'dish' and the 'winnow' sections perform the ceremony in the god's room (*ariveni* room), while the 'basket' section do it in the pandal which is closed by a screen. The bridal pair alone remain inside to eat the rice, and their relatives receive their balls and go outside to eat them. Whatever remains unserved must as a matter of right, go to the bride's relatives."[1] Among the Bilimagga, "the pair and five married couples on either side sit to eat *bhuma* or cooked rice, ghee and sweet cakes mixed and served in two dishes. At one of them the bridegroom and the five married couples of his party, and at the other the bride and similar five married couples of her party sit and take the food so served."[2]

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, pp.142-3.
[2] *Ibid*, Vol. II, p.82.

Marriage is an occasion when two families come together and not only two individuals belonging to the families. It is important to note in this connection that the Buvva rice should only be eaten by a relative and not by an outsider.

"Among some (Madigas) of the winnow section, an extraordinary custom prevails in eating the Buvva. With the cooked rice that is served in the winnow a human form is made and worshipped by the bride and bridegroom and the parents of the latter. Then the bridegroom and his party sit near the head, the bride and her party sitting near the legs, and both parties eat up the whole figure. Any part that may remain uneaten is distributed among the claimants thereto. All those that are not connected with the families of their party are scrupulously excluded. The marriage ceremonies among this section take place at night, and are finished before morning. It is apparently thought that this improvisation may be taken to represent what perhaps used to take place in grim earnest, and its observance is not generally admitted."[1]

The romantic possibilities of the hypothesis of a cannibalistic stage in the social evolution of the Madigas should not deter us from considering the theory in the cold light of science. The mere fact that the Buvva is in the human shape and that marriage ceremonies take place in the night do not prove that the custom is a cannibalistic survival.

Usually, the purpose of the Buvva is to symbolise the union of the two parties. It is in this light that this particular custom also must be viewed. The human form may either represent an ancestor, or merely, the two families becoming one. It is also proper that the Buvva should be jealously claimed by only the near kin.

Further, if the form is meant to represent a corpse, why should it be worshipped before being eaten? Such a difficulty does not arise where the form represents an ancestor, or when it is a symbol of unity of the two families.

That a few of the marriage ceremonies are nothing other than a rehearsal of married life is illustrated by the fol-

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.143.

lowing custom: A sheet of cloth dipped in turmeric is slung from the ceiling. A currystone with the face of a baby painted on it is rocked in the cradle. The wife lifts the "baby" up from the cradle and hands it over to her husband saying "I have got to prepare the dinner, you mind the baby." The husband replies "I can't do it. I have to go to the fields." Nowadays educated husbands are made to say "I have got to attend the office."

Two other ceremonies are performed on the *dhare* day. The Besthas perform it just before the previous (cradle) ceremony. The bridegroom lifts the bride up and carries her to his house. At the door is his sister who intercepts him saying "Do you promise to give your son (or daughter) in mariage to my daughter (or son)?" The bridegroom is let in only after he says "yes, I promise." Among the other castes, the bridegroom's sister stands at the door that leads to the room where the Pot-Gods are seated. The bridegroom, promises to give his daughter to her son and then enters the room to worship the Gods.

The Gangadikara Okkaligas of Arakere perform another ceremony after the *dhare*—a ceremony which has many versions though the underlying idea is the same. The bridegroom goes to the god's room in the bride's house. The husband and wife sit before the Pot-Gods. The bridegroom places his *kankana* on the god and says "let my father-in-law's house overflow with wealth as boiling milk overflows the brim." The bride places her *kankana* on the pot and says "let my father's house overflow with wealth as boiling milk overflows the brim."

A brass plate is leaned against the wall and the pair throw rice on it repeating what they said previously. The brass plate is the dining plate and rice symbolises both food and wealth. The bridal pair wish prosperity for the house which the bride is leaving.

The same ceremony is repeated in the bridegroom's house with appropriate changes in the formula.

The Holeyas of Mysore bring ant-hill-mud to be used for the *nagavali* on the *dhare* evening alone.

On the morning of the third or fourth day *simhasana* (lit: 'lion-seat', but usually understood to mean the throne on which the king sits) puja takes place. On a cowdung-

cleaned patch of ground near the marriage seat, a native woollen blanket, folded four times over, is spread. Rice is spread in a thin sheet over the blanket. Drawings of the various implements in use (saw, awl etc.) are done on the rice. A *kalasa*, full to the brim with jaggery-solution, is kept on the rice. The four corners of the blanket are marked with lumps of *vibhuti*. In front of the *kalasa* betel and arecanut are heaped. The bridal pair along with the caste headman worship the *kalasa*. After the worship, *tambula* is distributed to all those assembled. The first twentyfour *tambulas* are for the God, King, Brahmans, Guru, Bhumi Reddi (head of the entire caste), Kattemane (to the head of the caste living in that village) and others. Often ancestors of the caste, real or mythical, take one of the first four or five places in the twentyfour *tambulas*. The assembled castemen then get the *tambulas* in order of their seniority. If the recognised heirarchy is disturbed in the distribution of *tambulas* the person injured kicks up a terrific row. My experience tells me that such disputes over the distribution of *tambula* are fairly common.

Simhasana puja represents the worship of the Social Authority. That is why the caste-head worships the *kalasa* along with the pair. The twentyfour *tambulas* are given to twentyfour persons who control the conduct of the individual. Too much importance cannot be attached to this worship in a stage of social evolution where custom is king, where the stability of society is more important than the growth of the individual.

The *nagavali* ceremony takes place on the fourth day. There is no similarity between the Brahman and Non-Brahman *nagavali*. The former is worship of the deities in the heavens, whereas the latter is worshipping the pandal posts with anthill mud. "The *nagabali*[1] (corrupted into *nagavali* i.e. sacrifice to snakes) ceremony is observed ...The bride and the bridegroom go in state to an anthill and, after doing puja to it, the bridegroom digs some earth out of it, which the bride carries on her head in a basket. This earth is euphemistically styled Hutta Bangara or gold of the anthill...The couple sit in front of the milk-post

[1]Mr. Nanjunda Sastry rendered the Brahman *nagavali* into *naka bali*. Naka means *svarga* (the deities in *svarga*) and *bali* means offering.

and get their nails pared by a barber who receives a special fee for this service. After they have bathed, the bridegroom makes twelve balls of the mud from the ant-hill and gets seventeen balls of cooked rice. Plantain leaves are placed near each of the twelve pillars of the marriage pandal, on each of which the bride places one ball of earth and one ball of rice which her husband gives her. The remaining five balls of rice are placed before the *nerale* twig newly planted (alongside the milk-post), and on all these leaves are placed some sweets also. Puja is made to all these posts, coconuts are broken as offering, and lighted camphor is waved before them. The milk-post is then worshipped, and the couple sitting down near it remove each other's *kankana* from the wrist."[1]

The Morasu Okkalu have a ceremony at *nagavali* which is practised with slight modifications by all the castes. Two vessels are kept before the bridal pair. Into one of these vessels full to the brim with *okali* is dropped a lime, fruit, and a ring is dropped into the other. The pair (who are not allowed to see the lime and jewel dropped into the vessels) dip their hands into the vessels and whoever takes out the lime will have ascendancy over the other in married life.

Married life implies the dominance of one of the partners over the other. This dominance is dependent on the inherent traits of the parties, conditioned, of course, by the social environment. That is why even extremely patriarchal societies have often produced henpecked husbands. Inspite of the theoretical inferiority of women, inspite of drilling into young feminine heads through all possible ways that they ought to obey their husbands, society has failed to totally efface the domineering woman.

The ceremony only indicates who is going to dominate in married life, and not help any one of the partners to gain ascendancy over the other.

"Then on a new hearth they (the Mailaris, a beggar caste) place a new pot and boil milk in it till it overflows. If it does overflow profusely, the married couple will be happy."[2]

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.43.
[2] *Ibid*, p.183.

On the evening of the fourth day the bridal pair go in state to the temple. The *kankana*, *patta* and *bhashinga* are got rid of ceremonially. The Besthas of Mysore tie them up in a leaf and the packet is tied to the top of a pillar in the house.

Next day the pot-gods are emptied on a peepul tree, and the pots are distributed among the nearest kinsmen of the bridal pair. The 'yellow state' is washed off and the pandal is pulled down. The milk-post is also untied a couple of days later. Every item of the paraphernalia is worshipped before being thrown out.

The Bestha bride worships the bridegroom after this ceremony. She washes his feet, smears them with turmeric and places flowers on them. She takes one of the flowers lying on his feet and tucks it in her hair. The bridegroom pays her a rupee for the service. Arati is then waved round the pair.

This completes the rites observed in Non-Brahman marriages.

Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao has advanced the view that marriage by capture originally prevailed in Mysore. Ananthakrishna Iyer was also fond of this thesis.

We shall now take Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao's arguments one by one and deal with them. We shall first dispose of those which are obviously fantastic.

"One or two curious customs prevail among certain castes which might probably be relics of marriage by capture. Thus among some of the Holeyas, men from the bridegroom's party go to the bride's house and tie the *tali* round the neck of the bride and return to the village where the bridegroom is kept waiting all alone in a room outside the house known as *devara mane* (god's house). The bride comes on horseback, alights near the *devara mane* and goes into the room occupied by the bridegroom. A cloth separates the girl and garlands are mutually exchanged. The men and the women present then throw rice on the heads of the pair. Have we here a simulation of the capture of a bridegroom by the bride?"[1]

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[1]*M.G.*, Vol. I, p.203.

Apart from the fact that the hypothesis of a stage in human evolution when women captured men has not been put forth by any anthropologist, there is not a shred of evidence in the above passage to show the slightest trace of capture. What we have here is, instead of a simulation of capture, only marriage being held in the bridegroom's house. If the marriage were held in the bride's house the bridegroom would have gone to the bride's house on horseback.

"Among the Madigas, as the bridal pair come out of a room after the customary dinner, the maternal uncles of the bride and bridegroom intercept them at the threshold and beat them with whips of twisted cloths."[1]

If there was nothing in the previous "argument" to support the theory of marriage by capture, here is less than nothing. The maternal uncles of the bridal pair do not beat each other. They beat their nephew or niece as the case may be. Perhaps the reason was that society was changing from the state of matrilineality to patrilineality. This meant the loss of the uncle's power over his nephews and nieces and the beating might be a survival from that period. I put this forward as nothing more than a suggestion.

"Among the Banjaras when the couple are led to the marriage booth, the bride shows considerable resistance and is forcibly led to the place by an elderly woman. The couple then go round the milk-posts three times, the bride all the while weeping and howling. In the same manner the couple pass round the second post three times, after which the elderly woman retires. The husband once again passes round the post with the bride. Her resistance is now redoubled and he has almost to drag her by force. It is this which constitutes the binding or the essential part of the ceremony in the caste."[2]

Other explanations than a pristine stage of capture may be given for this custom. (1) This may exaggeratedly symbolise the bride's reluctance to leave her parents' home for her husband's. (2) There is a belief that weeping violently at marriage prevents misery in later life. (3) The tearful resistance might only stand for the sexual

[1] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.203.
[2] *Ibid*, p.204.

frigidity of the woman, the woman whose sex desires manifest themselves in overt expressions being considered reprehensible. Finally, the Banjaras are a tribe who immigrated into Mysore from North India some centuries ago, and even if they are proved to have had an original state of capture, we cannot conclude therefrom that such a state originally prevailed in Mysore.

"Thus among the Bedars, Agasas, Nayindas, Idigas and Handi Jogis, a mimic fight between the bridegroom's father and the bride's father, in which the indiscriminate throwing of half pounded rice is prominent, is a regular feature of the usual ceremony. It is the bride that is sought to be captured, the fight customarily taking place at or near the bride's house. On these occasions, the bridegroom usually carries a dagger in his hands and is accompanied by his party who are met by the bride's party, and the mimic fight ensues immediately the meeting takes place."

"Among the Handi Jogis, as the bridegroom and his party approach the bride's place, they are stopped by a party of the bride's relatives who hold a rope across the path."[1]

The above two arguments are on a different plane from the rest, and they merit serious consideration.

(1) It is not certain that the throwing of half-pounded rice indicates resistance to the demands of the bridegroom's party. It may just be a device for bringing the relatives together.

(2) There is no actual capturing of the bride in any one of these ceremonies. If the Kannada castes have really passed through a condition of society in which capture was the recognised mode of obtaining brides, there is no reason why the resistance portion of the capture should be simulated and why the actual capture should not be.

I do not want to dogmatically negate the possibility of a historical state of marriage by capture. I am only urging here against the tendency to romanticism in science. The desire to jump to far-reaching conclusions without the support of necessary evidence is a disease against

[1]*M.G.*, Vol. I, pp.202-3.

which every scientist ought to take precautions. We have to admit here that we have not evidence enough to conclusively assert the existence of a prior state of capture. We are here only a few customs which are not inconsistent with a prior state of capture.

Third Marriage.

We shall deal with widow and widower marriage in the section on widows. Before finishing the section on marriage rites, we may briefly mention the beliefs current regarding the marriage of a man marrying for the third time. W. H. R. Rivers says quite wrongly: "Thus to counteract the belief that a second marriage is unlucky, a widower may marry an inanimate object in order that his succeeding union with a woman shall be his third marriage."[1] It is not the second marriage that is unlucky, but the third. "It is believed that a third marriage is inauspicious and the bride will become a widow. Therefore the individual marries the *arka* plant before marrying the girl."[2] It is a well-known fact that number three is feared and respected by the Hindus. The probable origin of this reaction to this particular number is perhaps phallic. Perhaps it has another origin. But we may positively assert that a reaction of fear and mystery is prevalent towards number three. Hence a third marriage is feared.

"In India mock marriages with animals (like a sheep) or trees or things (like a sword) are often resorted to for the purpose of averting some dreaded evil from the bride or bridegroom or both. Tree marriages, in particular, prevail widely throughout Northern India, and, as Dr. Crooke observes, the idea that the tree itself is supposed to die soon after the ceremony seems to point to the fact that the marriage may be intended to divert to the tree some evil influence which would otherwise attach to the wedded pair."[3]

I learn authoritatively that it is the third wife and not the husband who is threatened with death. Usually, the

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[1] *Marriage, Introductory and Primitive*, W. H. R. Rivers, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 8, p.430.

[2] *M.T.* & C., Vol. II, p.334.

[3] *Early beliefs and their social influence*, E. Westermarck, p.143.

"bridegroom" is married to a plantain tree, and the tree cut down soon after the marriage. Obsequies are observed for the tree that is cut down and the fourth marriage takes place after the period of defilement.

CHAPTER IX

WIDOW MARRIAGE

THE Brahmans,[1] Arasus (Kshatriyas), Komatis (Vaisyas), Nagarthas, Gonigas and Panchalas prohibit widow remarriage. A few sub-divisions of the Nayinda and Kumbara do not allow it. The Bilimagga, Dasari, Madiga, Holeya, Sholiga, Okkaliga, Vodda and many others allow it, all the while looking upon it as inferior to the marriage of a virgin with a bachelor.

Reading the following report of the Census Officer in the "Census of Mysore" Vol. I 1901 (pp. 230-231) may give one the idea that the union of a widow with a man is not "marriage". "...Among (the) lower classes in Mysore, among whom there is a form of union in vogue by which cast off or widowed females attach themselves to paramours, with legitimate wives, under the designation of *kudavali* which is nothing better than licensed concubinage."

The *kudavali* (or *kudike*) union is not only confined to widows and divorcees but also to unmarried girls who have become pregnant. The persons widows marry may or may not have legitimate wives.

It is wrong to deny that *kudavali* is marriage. *Kudavali* is recognised by law; the permission of the caste headman and the relatives of the dead husband (after an amount of money has been paid them for "releasing" the woman) has to be sought for the union; and Kudavali is distinct from a woman being kept by a man. Of course, it may often be the fact that *kudavali* marriage is preced-

[1]Among the many customs that show a deep dread of widowhood may be mentioned the following which I came upon quite recently. A *sumangali* never forgets to take her night-meal on any festive day. Among Brahmans, widows are known for taking only one meal every day, and the *sumangali* fears to do something which is done only by widows.

ed by a *de facto* union. Such a *de facto* union is given social recognition—perhaps, primarily in the interests of the children that might be born of the union—by Kudavali.

There is no doubt that the Kudavali is an inferior kind of marriage either to the form of marriage by the bridal pair exchanging garlands,[1] or to the marriage of a virgin with a bachelor. Still it *is marriage.*

That this is so, is recognised by the later Reports: "The marriage of widows is prohibited only among the Brahmins and in a very few other castes. Among the rest such marriages are allowed. In a few castes like Besta and Uppara, a fine has to be paid for the benefit of the caste people if a man marries a widow."[2]

The situation is correctly summed up in the 1931 Report: "Widow marriage is strictly prohibited in only a few of the castes but is in disfavour in all the castes."[3] We need not belabour an obvious point any more. The elaborate restrictions regarding the person the widow can marry, and an account of the marriage rites themselves, and the fact that the married widow wears the *tali,* bangles, vermillion and turmeric prove beyond doubt that Kudavali is marriage.

Samskritic culture had a patrilineal bias and it prohibited widow marriage on the ground of sexual jealousy of the male, and the consequent property concept of woman. How could a *kanya* who is gifted away to someone, be given away again to someone else?

The other castes originally seem to have had no objection to widow remarriage. But the impact of the Samskritic civilization on theirs was fatal to the widows. The Non-Brahman desire to rise in the social scale by imitating the Brahman customs and ceremonies has been frequently remarked upon in the preceding pages. Both the good and bad customs of the Brahmans come this way to reside among the Non-Brahmans.[4]

[1]This form of marriage is only for unmarried girls becoming pregnant.

[2]*Census of Mysore,* 1911, Vol. I, p.100. [3]*Ibid,* p.46.

[4]Even simple tribes like the Sholigas, the Korachas and the Dombas present their desire to climb the higher social rungs. But their ambitions do not soar high enough to induce them to imitate Brahman customs. They are at present only borrowing the customs of the Okkaligas.

Thus, widow marriage originally prevailed among the Devangas, but now they prohibit it. The Nayindas are now strongly condemning widow marriage and it seems as though the sterner moralists among them might succeed in putting an end to it.

It often happens that only one section of a caste is self-conscious and ambitious, while the others are content to go in the rut. The ambitious section is converted all of a sudden, giving up meat, drink, widow remarriage, and takes to performing the Sraddhas after the Brahman fashion. This section ceases intercourse with its former castemen. The Sajjana (lit: good people) Kumbaras exemplify the above statement:—"Widow marriage is generally allowed, but it is not popular with some groups, especially with the Sajjana Kumbaras, though some of them seem anxious to reintroduce the practice."[1] The other Non-Brahman castes, except the lowest and the primitive tribes, while allowing a widow to marry, look down upon her. Widow marriage is bad, they say, but is inevitable. It is better to marry than to burn.[2]

That the sexual jealousy of the male is one of the causes, if not the sole, of prohibition of widow remarriage is illustrated by the following belief: "(Among the Gangadikara Okkaligas) the ghost of a husband who dies young is believed to haunt his wife, and even her parents are afraid of extending any support to her, lest the spirit should attack them. It is not considered safe to remarry her, or otherwise help her, until the spirit has been completely exorcized."[3] The Kadu Golla widow is not allowed to remarry, but she automatically becomes the wife of the tutelary deity—that is to say, a religious prostitute. She is allowed to continue wearing the *tali*, bangles and other symbols of a *sumangali*. Strictly speaking, the lucky women of the Kadu Golla tribe know no widowhood. Perhaps, the ghost of the husband which is

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[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.11.

[2]In passing, we may mention here, that no sociologist has recognised this dynamic feature of Kannada social life. There has been movement all along, only sociologists have failed to recognise its existence, or appreciate its significance.

[3]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.184.

capable of harming men is impotent against the tutelary deity. Or, what is equally probable, leaders of society have used the prevalent prejudice against widow marriage to exploit the widow in the name of the tutelary deity.

Persons whom the Widow can Marry.

The Bedas, Okkaligas, Holeyas, Madigas, Voddas, Nayindas, Mondas, Dasari, Bilimagga, Uppara and many other castes do not permit the marriage of the widow with the deceased husband's brother. The Bedas, Madigas, Bilimagga, Sanyasi and Uppara extend the rules to include all the members of the husband's *kula*. The Bilimagga, Sanyasi and Vodda limit her choice of bridegrooms to a still narrower field, prohibiting, as they do, the members of the widow's father's *kula* also.

Traces of levirate however, exist among the Banjaras, among whom the younger brother of the deceased husband is regarded as the most suitable husband for the widow. But the Banjaras are a North Indian tribe who have emigrated to Mysore in historical times. Now even these are giving up levirate under the influence of Kannada castes, and nowadays, they prefer a stranger to the husband's younger brother. The habit of extending the prohibition to the *kula* of the husband is an artificial stretching of the incest-sense. All the members of the *kula* are supposed to have originated from a common ancestor and hence all are brothers.

Some castes also require the widow to marry outside her (that is to say, her father's) *kula*. This is only natural, following as it does from the rule enunciated in the above paragraph. It may then be asked, if this rule is only natural, how is it that many castes do not strictly obey it? The answer is simple. As the choice of bridegrooms is not made from a very wide field, the cutting out of two *kulas* (the husband and the father's) still further limits the field. Add to this rule, a widow can only marry a widower in many castes. The circle gets so narrow that observance of all the restrictions is clearly not possible.

It is usual for a widow to marry a widower. The widower, it might be remembered in this connexion has to pay a higher amount for a virgin than for a widow.

At first sight it looks as though this was a device to compel the widower to marry a widow, but we should not forget the fact that a certain sum of money has to be paid to the representatives of the widow's deceased husband to 'release' her for remarriage. If we were sure of the fact the sum paid for the 'release' was always a *hana* (four annas eight pies) we could have been sure of the fact that society had consciously deviced this institution of widow-widower marriage.

The permission of the caste leaders (except in the case of the Bedas, where the parties' consent is the only criterion), and of the first husband's relatives are preliminary to the widow's marriage. In case the first husband's relative agree, the widow has to return them all the ornaments her first husband had given her, and she has also to give up her right to the children by him.

A bachelor who wants to marry a widow is first married to an *arka* plant. Such marriage to an *arka* plant renders him a widower in the eyes of society. This custom proves that formerly the rule that a widower should marry a widow was more rigorously enforced than now.

Widow Marriage "Rites".

The widow's marriage takes place in the dark fortnight of the month. It is never held in the morning, but only after sundown. It is performed in a temple or in an unoccupied house. The Upparas require it to be performed in a village different from the one in which the first husband, and the widow's father live. Only twice married women and widows attend the function.

The woman wears a new sari and bodice given by the new husband. The two are seated on a wooden plank and the caste-head gives the bridegroom permission to tie the *tali*. There is no band in a widow's marriage. Among the Madigas the *tali* is first tied to a *kalasa* into which is invoked Aralappa, a tribal hero. The pair are seated before the *kalasa* and a widow unties the *tali* from the *kalasa* and hands it over to the bridegroom, who ties it to the bride.

A caste dinner is given, and the marriage is concluded. Among the Medars living in Shimoga, and among the Uppara, the pair go away to a neighbouring village on the

night of the marriage and return after a couple of days. They are then allowed to live together as man and wife.

The person who marries a widow has to pay a fine either to the caste *guru* or to the leader. The *tera* he pays for the widow is taken by the relatives of the first husband, or in their default, by her father.

The remarried widow should not be seen by the *sumangalis* till three days after her marriage. She is not allowed to take any part in the marriage of any virgin—why, she is not even allowed to enter the marriage pandal!

The Sadaru widow's remarriage is picturesque and symbolical of the place of a wife in a man's life. "She is conducted to the man's house, which is kept dark and vacant. The man goes into it and sits in a corner. The woman enters it and when the man asks her why she has come there, she replies, 'I have come to light a lamp in your dark house."[1] Then a lamp is lit, and the castemen are served a dinner.

According to Mr. B. Rangaswamy, author of "Huttidahalli-Halliyahadu", widow remarriage is much simpler among the Gangadikara Okkaligas living in Hemgiri. The husband does not tie the *tali* in the presence of the castemen. He gives a dinner to the castemen, and on the way back to his village, he ties the tali to his wife.

The Widow's Children.

The Bilimagga, Agasa, a section of the Madiga, some groups of the Uppara, Kuruba and many other castes cast into an inferior status the widow's children (by the second marriage). These may only marry other widows' children and not those born of a first marriage. The odium of the status lasts a generation or two and then they are lifted up into the higher fold.

The Kunchatiga and Reddy are harder on the widow's children. They are irrevocably pushed into a lower status, and for ever they and their children have to live down the ignominy of a female ancestor marrying a second time.

The Malla widow's children suffer a worse fate. They are clubbed together with the illegitimate children in the

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.531.

caste. "The Bandi or Gaudi Santin Mallavas are the offspring of Mallava widows and women who have gone astray. This division thus corresponds to the Kadu or bastard division of the other castes."[1] Some castes do not thus distinguish between the widow's line and the first-marriage line.

Those sub-divisions of the Lingayats which connive at widow remarriage do not allow the widow to wear the vermillion mark on her forehead. The *tali* and toe-rings are also denied her. Only sex gratification is allowed her, and that, grudgingly. They feel that allotting her a man in a form of marriage is better than letting her loose on the whole caste. But, in their opinion, it would have been infinitely more honourable for her not to have married. Srinivasa, the well-known Kannada writer, mentions an interesting custom in his book "Nalku Sanna Kathegalu". During the Holi festival, a widow who consents to have the ash of the Holi fire poured on her head, and have boys go round her beating their mouths and crying "ayyo" the while,[2] will marry the same husband in her next life, and, what is more important, predecease him in that lucky *janma*. The widow in Mr. Srinivasa's story, who has gone through the above-mentioned ritual, cheerfully says: "I am as good as dead when my husband is dead. I will be sending him to hell if I do not shave my head." She performs all kinds of *vratas* to enable her to marry and serve the same person in her next life.

Abbe Dubois mentions the commonest and the most widespread of beliefs in the following para: "The happiest death for a woman is that which overtakes her while she is still in a wedded state. Such a death is looked upon as the reward of goodness extending back for many generations; on the other hand, the greatest misfortune that can befall a wife is to survive her husband."[3]

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[1]Quoted, *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.189, from R. E. Enthoven's *Bombay Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, pp.374-5.

[2]The mouth-beating and ash-pouring symbolise the death of the widow.

[3]*Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Dubois, p.350. I would like to mention here that the Brahman desire to die a *sumangali* is infinitely greater than the Non-Brahman.

Enough has been said here to indicate the status of the widow. The privileges that are granted her, her marriage ceremonies, and the status of her children, all unmistakably point to a society which emphasises the value of the married state for the woman, and also the degradation involved in her remarriage as compared with her remaining true to the memory of her first husband. Living and dying a *sumangali* is the sole ambition of a woman. The accompaniments of *sumangalihood*, turmeric, vermillion, bangles and tali have become objects of worship. Sentiments of reverence have enveloped them. A piece of turmeric comes to stand for her happiness here and her blessedness hereafter. It is not surprising if turmeric evokes in her emotions of reverence and love. She is also afraid to show any signs of disrespect and indifference to it for fear such an attitude may make her a widow. Who says that a piece of turmeric is only a piece of turmeric!

The worst word of abuse in the Kannada vocabulary is to call a woman, married or unmarried, a widow (*munde*).

Even the death ceremonies performed for a widow (which will be described later on) indicate the low esteem in which she is held.

Finally, the plight of the widow is a favourite theme with Kannada authors. Novels, short stories, plays and poems by the gross have been written about her, pleading for the amelioration of her condition. But her condition remains much the same. Among the Brahmans, we hear stray cases of the surreptitious remarriage of young, virgin widows, and nothing more. Among Non-Brahmans widow marriages are getting less common.

Let me close the section on widows with a not very accurate (neither very effective, I fear!) rendering of a Kannada poem about the widow sung by the Non-Brahmans.

I haven't fondled a child of my own,
I cannot walk the streets with the
swagger of the *sumangali.*
The good fortune of a husband is denied me.
O, Lord Siva, why didst thou make me a widow!

CHAPTER X

DIVORCE AND SEX ETHICS.

Section I—Divorce.

IN the majority of the Non-Brahman castes that are said to practice divorce the wife cannot divorce the husband while the husband can divorce the wife. Messrs. Hayavadana Rao and Ananthakrishna Iyer prefer to call this one-sided giving up of the wife by the husband, divorce. But divorce, properly understood, means not merely the husband's right to give up the wife, but also a wife's right to give up the husband. But as things stand the wife cannot divorce an unfaithful husband, while the husband may divorce an adultress. Some castes allow the divorced woman to marry.

There is no divorce among the Brahmans, Arasus, Komatis and Hasalars. The adulterous wife is simply given up. The Hasalar husband gives up his wife by tearing the end of her sari, and performing her obsequies (called *gata shraddha*). She is henceforth as good as dead. The Panchala, Goniga, Gare Uppara, Devanga and Nagartha not merely give up the adulterous wife, but throw her out of the caste.

The other castes do not excommunicate the adultress, but only allow her husband to divorce her. Only the Handijogi, Vodda, Nayinda, a section of the Holeya, and the Parivara, living in Talkad, do permit the wife to divorce the husband. Among the Dombars, the tribe of wandering acrobats, the martial tie is flimsy and snaps at the slightest pretext. The Dombar wife may divorce her husband.

From the brief foregoing account of divorce, it appears that adultery is the only reason for divorce, which is almost the truth. Only a couple of castes (or tribes) permit divorce for incompatibility of temperament. It is very rarely that a sexually faithful wife is divorced by the husband. The Koracha husband does not divorce a wife even for adultery. Women are such useful creatures that

they simply cannot be divorced. The Koracha charity in not divorcing unfaithful wives is economically determined.

The ceremony of divorce consists in the wife returning the *tali* in the presence of the assembled castemen, or the husband removing the *tali* from her neck. In the "higher" castes, obsequies are performed for the unfaithful wife.

The castes which permit the remarriage of a divorced woman require the second husband (who is, usually, the adulterer) to pay the injured husband the marriage expenses, including the *tera* amount, and also a fine to the caste which will be used for a general dinner. The divorced woman has to return all the jewels her first husband gave her and she has no claim on the children she has borne him.

The Morasu Okkaligas, the Morasu Holeyas and the Gangadi Holeyas do not allow a divorced woman to remarry. She is, however, not grudged a lover.

Among the Parivara of Talkad, the husband who wishes to divorce his wife has to pay her a sum of fifty-five rupees while the wife who wishes to divorce hers has to pay him a hundred and ten rupees.

While divorce is not in vogue among the higher castes and their imitators, the majority of castes permit a husband to give up an unfaithful wife. Such a woman may remarry, provided her second husband pays the marriage expenses of the injured husband and the woman herself returns all the jewels her first husband gave her. Only in a few castes can the wife also give up the husband, and most of the tribes in the State allow the latter right to the wife.[1]

Section II—Extra- and Pre-Marital Sex.

We see in a good many Non-Brahman castes, the adulterer has not merely to pay the injured husband the marriage expenses, but also a fine to the caste. The former hints at a conception of marriage as contract, by

[1]It is interesting to contrast the summary of facts presented in *re* divorce with the statements made by our reformers that divorce is unknown in Hindu society, and that the indissolubility of marriage proceeds logically from the Hindu view of marriage as a sacrament.

which the parties commit themselves to a common life, which implies a husband who earns and a wife who cooks and looks after the children; and also, sexual fidelity of the one partner to the other—rather, the sexual fidelity of the wife to her husband. Once the wife is unfaithful, the husband might divorce her and she has no right to be supported by her husband, no right to his jewels, no right to the children borne by her, and finally, the person who is intimate with her must give back the injured husband his marriage expenses. This indicates a society which elevates the sexual jealousy and sense of possession of the male mate to an ethical rule—a generalisation which more or less holds good for the entire Kannada society. The injured party in adultery is the husband, and he not only has the right to give up the wife who is in the wrong, but has a right to be compensated by the injuring paramour. The wife, on the other hand, has no right to feel injured by the husband's peccadilloes.

As has already been mentioned, the "higher" castes look upon the unfaithful woman with horror, and excommunicate her. But nowadays, except in remote villages, excommunication is almost defunct.

Mr. T. N. Srikantiah, M.A., tells me that in Pampa, the Kannada poet of the tenth century, there is a reference to a kind of punishment inflicted on the adulterer and the adultress (*Pampa Ramayana*, chap. 4, poem 84). The former was sentenced to death and the latter's nose was chopped off. A favourite form of abusing a woman in those days was to call her "torn-nosed" which meant that she was an adultress.

As to the attitude of the tribes towards adultery, no generalisation can safely be made. We have at one extreme, the Koracha (a criminal tribe) husband, who acknowledges all the children that were born to his wife even while he was in jail, as his own. At the other we come across the Kadu Gollas who do not allow the adultress to remarry, and who even regard it as inauspicious for the *sumangalis* to see an adultress.

The adulterous wife may be claimed back by the Handi Jogi husband. The Nayinda husband and wife may be asked by the caste-head to remain together in spite of the fact that the latter has been unfaithful. The adulterous

wife of the Dasari can reunite with her husband if she pays a fine to the caste known as *laghudharma.* (Among the Voddas and the Dasari, the husband who wishes to divorce an unfaithful wife has to pay a fine—it shows how divorce itself is an offence against the caste.) The Banjara husband may condone his errant wife. The Vodda method of condoning includes both corporal punishment and a fine: "Adultery is not abhorred, and may be condoned by (the) payment of a small fine to the caste and the infliction of corporal punishment on the guilty party. If a charge of adultery is made good against a man, he is made to crawl round the settlement on all fours, carrying one or two persons on his back. A woman similarly convicted has to force herself into a basket, and tumble about with weights in another basket placed on her head. Sometimes she is laid on a bed of thorns, thinly spread on the ground, with weights loaded on her. These modes of punishment, formerly in vogue, have probably almost gone out of practice now."[1]

We might now devote some space to point out how the psychology of caste radically affects the way of looking at extra- and pre-marital sex relations. The Madigas, who have a good deal or rivalry with the Holeyas (the right-hand caste, putative superiors), while condoning a married woman who commits adultery with a man of the same caste, excommunicate one who commits adultery with a Holeya man. (It is interesting to note here that a Madiga *man* committing adultery with a Holeya woman is not excommunicated.) The Kurubas are similar: "For a woman cohabiting with a man of a different caste, generally lower, the following punishment is prescribed, namely, compelling her to live in Madiga quarters and throwing cattle-horn and bones and margosa leaves onto her house. Unfortunately, they say, (the) times have deteriorated and this punishment is not now resorted to." This insult is the worst a woman can suffer.

Mr. B. Rangaswamy, in his little-known but valuable record of folk-lore "Huttidahalli, Halliyahadu", gives us a good idea of the sex-ethics of the Gangadikara Okkaligas in Hemgiri: "A widow interested in a member of the

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, pp.667-8.

'higher' caste is given the alternative of either marrying him or being sent out of the caste. If she chooses the former alternative, then Brahman purohits are called in, and asked to purify her. Panchagavya is sprinkled on her and she also drinks it. With five hot needles of different metals, her tongue is singed thrice latitudinally and thrice longitudinally. Her face is also singed thrice. She then cooks for the castemen. She reaches complete purity by bowing to the assembled castemen.

"The widow who has a lover belonging to a 'lower' caste is simply excommunicated."

Another instance of hypergamous mentality may be cited: "Malerus are a unique community existing in the Malnad taluks of the Western Division. Debrahmanised women of the sacerdotal class and their progeny are attached by the name of Maleru to the Siva temples in the hilly taluks of the Western Division. Brahman women, outcasted for conjugal infidelity, and other communal offences, became recruits to the ranks of Maleru, the boundary line of the caste being crossed by eating the sacrificial food cast in the Balipitha or altar of Siva temples. It is also said that prurient women and termagent wives escape from lawful restraints by partaking of the aforesaid forbidden food, whereupon they become courtesans. They, however, conform to the diet, religion and social customs of the Brahmans, and perform menial service in temples, but do not dance. A further downward step constitutes the Male woman into Gaudia. When the former cohabit with Non-Brahmans, the issue degenerates into Gaudias who are attached to the Malnad temples in which they perform menial service."[1] The ethical steps are clear —to commit adultery is to go one step down, viz., to lose your caste; and the second, to cohabit with the Non-Brahmans and become Gaudias.

Among the 'higher' castes, pre-marital license is unknown. Excommunication, where possible, is put into use. Where it is not possible, the girl's fate is not any the better. None will marry her, and her sex desires must have surreptitious outlets, unless, of course, she dares to live openly with her lover(s).

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.185.

The 'higher' caste cruelty is now coming into fashion among the lower castes. For instance, "Among Morasu Vokkaligas even child widows cannot remarry. Premarital licence is falling into disfavour. It is not tolerated among Gangadikara and Morasu Holeyas. Among them, if a girl becomes pregnant before marriage, she is put out of caste. The odium lasts even after death and to ensure a proper burial of her body she sets apart a sum of money, about twelve rupees during her lifetime."[1]

A study of the ethics of a certain section of the Holeyas gives us three interesting conclusions, viz.: (1) Premarital virginity is the most desirable condition; (2) if this is not possible, the premarital license should not lead to pregnancy; and (3) once the girl is pregnant, the caste takes the greatest care to legitimize the children born of the marriage. It is this last consideration (recognised by L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer) that is supreme in the minds of the caste-leaders.

The Holeya girl who has a relation with a member of the caste is not subject to any punishment, as long as she avoids pregnancy. But if she becomes pregnant, she has to pay a fine to the caste. The seducer may be fined, and will certainly be asked to marry the girl at the risk of excommunication. If he braves the latter, he will have to compensate the girl by paying her twentyfive rupees and a suit of clothes. The girl is also bound to point out her lover. If she refuses to point him out, the punishment of excommunication is ready for her.

Similarly the Dasari lover will have to pay a fine called kanyadharma (girl's virtue) and then marry the girl, or else, quit the caste. The girl should also pay a fine called laghudharma (laghu means light). The unmarried but errant Bestha girl and her lover, have to pay a fine to the caste, and then marry. The high honour of the elaborate ceremonies of a virgin's marriage is denied them and the marriage is performed in a temple by the simple exchange of garlands.

In certain castes, the system of fining the pair does not seem to exist. Thus the Madiga girl may simply marry her seducer or anyone else in the *kudike* form of mar-

[1] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.190.

riage. Similarly, the Nayinda. The Sholiga girl has to point out her lover, who must marry her if he wishes to escape being thrown out of the tribe.

The Voddas fine the girl, only when the lover belongs to a different (higher) caste, or when he comes within the prohibited degrees. In such a case, she will have to marry another person from the caste.

The Handi Jogi do not ostracize either of the errant pair. The girl is married to her lover, who, if he refuses to marry, will be fined twenty-four *varahas*. The girl is then purified of the taint of a pre-marital sex relation, and given away to another in marriage.

The Handi Jogis levy a fine up to six *varahas* for one who commits adultery with a married woman, while seduction of an unmarried girl is looked upon as a graver offence, (perhaps, the girl being too young to understand the implications of her conduct, the responsibility for her downfall falls on the man).

An unmarried Holeya girl, who entertains casual visitors at her father's house, is allowed to form a permanent relation with any one of her visitors. The *tera* for such a marriage is twelve rupees, the issue (including those born before the marriage) being perfectly legitimate. But a man who elopes with an unmarried girl has to pay a fine of five rupees to the caste and fifty as *tera* to the girl's parents or brothers. In the latter instance, the elopement is assumed to be against the wishes of those in whose power the girl is, while in the former, their consent is taken for granted.

Before closing the section on sex ethics, we might mention here the institution of Pundugara Chavadi prevalent among the Kadu Gollas of the State. The Kadu Gollas are a branch of the Gollas (cowherds), living in small groups outside villages. They are supposed to have originally come from Delhi, though they speak Kannada. Lewis Rice records in his "Mysore" (Vol. I, p.213): "The Kadu or wild Kurubas of Mysore are divided into Betta or Hill Kurubas, a small and active race capable of enduring great fatigue, who are expert woodmen, and the Jenu or Honey Kurubas, said to be a darker and inferior race, who employ themselves in collecting honey and bees'

wax. Their village or clusters of huts are called *hadi*. Among their peculiar customs, a separate hut or chavadi is set apart in which the unmarried females of the hadi sleep at night, and another at the other extremity of the hadi for the unmarried males, both being under the supervision of the headman of the tribe."

The literal meaning of Pundugura Chavadi is "the mischief makers' quarters." The bachelors who are the mischief-mongers are segregated and watched upon. Society does not approve of pre-marital promiscuity—the reasons for this may be many, e.g. idea of woman as property may have stolen in; or it may be to prevent the rape of unmarried girls; or because of magical ideas about sex. Anyway society has come to place value on pre-marital abstinence.

Section III—The Status of the Married

We shall close this section by mentioning the fact that society places a high value on the married state. The unmarried Golla girl may not touch the bridal pair, or carry the *kalasa* in a marriage procession. The Medar woman may remain unmarried if her sex life is pure. But she is not allowed to take part in marriage ceremonies. Similarly the unmarried Parivara woman cannot take part in marriage ceremonies, and when she dies all the obsequial rites which are a *sumangali's* due are not allowed her. "For instance, among the Bedars and some other castes, a woman dying without marriage (before being married) is carried by men without a bier and is interred like tender babies—in this respect with the face downwards, no funeral ceremonies being observed. To avoid treatment of this kind, among some castes (notably the Holeyas), a girl who cannot get married from (owing to) the absence of suitors, is married to trees such as *honge* (pongamia glabra), *arka* or the margosa or other inanimate object and dedicated to shrines."[1] Similarly, unmarried girls of many other castes are married to trees, swords and kindred objects.

Perhaps the glorification of the married state is the fruit of the realisation of the necessity of the family, and (or) because the unmarried are a danger to the moral code of the society.

[1] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.192.

The unmarried males are not as much despised as the unmarried females.

Enough has been said to indicate the importance which society attaches to the married state; to the desirability of virginity in brides and chastity in wives; about the extreme fear of widowhood by women and the tendency to discourage—if not positively to abolish—widow remarriage; and the fact of the wife's adultery putting an end to the marriage. The rigour with which society insists on the norms of conduct varies from caste to caste. In fact, as we go down the caste-ladder we find less respect being paid to these ideals of conduct. We may even go so far as to say that the farther removed a caste is from the Samskritic influence the less respect does it pay to these ideals. But imitation of the higher castes has set in, and soon Kannada society as a whole (with the exception of the highest castes among whom the old ideals are cracking up) will be swinging in the direction of these ideals.

CHAPTER XI

PUBERTY RITES AND THE CEREMONY OF CONSUMMATION

Section I: Puberty Rites

A girl attaining puberty is completely impure for three days. Thereafter she is only partially pure. She attains hundred per cent purity on the sixteenth day. She takes an early bath on that day, changes her bangles, the necklace of black beads and her clothes.

The period of defilement for monthly menses is only three days.

Carrying with them on a tray coconuts, betel, arecanut and sugar (sugar is sweet and so is the news to be conveyed), the near kin of the girl go to her husband's house to announce the girl's coming of age. The newsbearers are feasted and presented with money.

The girl is then dressed in red, and dabs the vermillion mark on her forehead. (This is Ananthakrishna Iyer's version. According to another version, the girl is dressed in white. Perhaps different colours are sported by different sub-castes). Perhaps the red sari represents the process of menstruation. The girl sits on a grass mat beneath which is spread paddy. A lighted lamp, a vessel full of water and another of rice, are all waved before the girl—perhaps to protect her against the evil eye, to which she is specially subject when she attains puberty.

The girl's friends keep her company during these days. They are all fed at the expense of the girl's father's sister. They sing obscene songs, and in the good old days even danced around her.

The girl, among the Smartha Brahmans, is dressed in white, and sits on a white cloth on which are impressed the handprints of five *sumangalis*. A doll is kept at her side and a girl relieves the doll on the fourth day. (The doll is there because *arati* is never waved before only one girl. It is also not waved before three girls).

The girl stamps the walls of her room with her hand-prints. Five women, after worshipping the wooden pestle, begin pounding gingelly with it. Gingelly and jaggery[1] are beaten into balls, and the girl and those friends and relatives of her who come to visit her are given these balls.

On the fourth day the girl has an oil bath. She is then allowed to enter the kitchen, though she may not touch the vessels. Every evening the girl is exhibited to women, dressed up as a mythological hero or heroine. The invitees are given sweets to eat, and songs are sung. Arati is waved before the girl. A bath on the sixteenth day completes the rites.

On the morning of the fourth day, the girl and her friends rub gingelly oil into their heads, and take a bath in a neighbouring tank or river. The girl drinks a little milk and eats a few pieces of plantain fruit before plunging in water. She throws the vessel containing the milk and fruit overhead into the water. And the vessel is taken by one of the virgins. The girl then wears one of her festive saris and returns home in a victoria or car. There is noisy music and the invitees are treated to a dinner.[2]

During this period certain taboos are observed. The woman is considered unclean, impure, untouchable. She should not sleep in the cattle-shed. She should not touch a tree in flower or in fruitage.

Certain other taboos are the product of a fear of intercourse with the woman in menses. The woman in menstrual defilement (not during puberty) is not allowed to adorn herself.

Mr. P. V. Jagadisha Iyer mentions in his "South Indian Customs" the prevalence of a belief in the Tamil-speaking parts of South India, a belief which is also held by the Mysore Brahmans. The woman in menstrual defilement is not allowed to see a child immediately after she bathes on the fourth day. She can only see it after she has tasted a little rice and salt—that is after she has eaten some food. It is believed that the child will die if the woman in menstrual defilement sees it before eating anything. The woman seeing a child under such circumstances will

[1]This is supposed to be very nutritious. The girl is fed on a very nutritious diet during this period.

[2]*M.T. & C., Vol.* II, p.363.

become pregnant, and with the development of the foetus in the womb the child progressively weakens in health. And the child will die before the woman delivers.

The husband too will die if he is sighted by his wife soon after her bath on the fourth day before she lessens the sensitiveness of her stomach with some food. He is certain to die if she becomes pregnant.

As an indicator of the popular attitude towards menstruation we may describe the Rishipanchami *vrata*. The *vrata* reveals a mind which has a great fear of the menstrual process, and this fear is rationalised in a myth.

Like the usual puranic story, the tale contains within its orbit many other stories, and I have tried my utmost to simplify it. King Shvethashva prays to Brahma to recommend him a good *vrata*. Brahma asks him to perform the Rishipanchami *vrata*, and in order to illustrate the virtue of the *vrata*, tells him the following story:— Once upon a time there lived a Brahman named Udanka, in a country whose name does not matter. Udanka had two children, a son and a daughter. The latter became a widow soon after her marriage. The aged and sorrowing Udanka went away with wife and daughter to a village lying on the banks of the Ganges, to spend his last days. He was a learned Brahman and was teaching a good many students. One night a student discovered to his horror that the sleeping body of his *guru's* daughter was a mass of germs writhing with life. The news reached the prescient Udanka, who nodded his wise head and cited two reasons as to why his daughter was transferred into a mass of germs at night: (1) Seven lives ago, the girl incurred great sin by touching the vessels in the kitchen while still in her menstrual defilement.[1]

Why is the menstrual flow supposed to defile the woman? It is because the menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahman-killing in liquid form. For, when Indra prayed Brahma to cleanse him of the sin he had incurred by killing Vatrasura, a giant, Brahma divided the sin into four

[1]The degree of defilement varies from day to day. On the first day she will be a fifth-caste woman, second a Brahman-killer, third a washerwoman, and only on the fourth after a bath, will she be fit to serve her husband in all ways.

parts and dissolved one part in Agni (fire), the second in rivers in flood, the third in trees and mountains, and finally, the fourth in menstruating women. It is because of this that the menstruating woman defiles everything she touches.

(2) Secondly, the girl did not show the respect due to the Rishipanchami *vrata*. Her present plight was due to her indifference to the *vrata* while the good luck of seeing a Rishipanchami *vrata* being performed caused her to be born a Brahman.

Udanka then proceeds to illustrate the merits of the Rishipanchami *vrata*. In the *krita yuga* lived an agriculturist-Brahman Sumitra with his husband-worshipping wife Jayashri. So devoted was she that she did most of the work on the fields in addition to the drudgery of the kitchen. Devotion got the better of reason, and she worked in the kitchen even on the days of menstrual defilement. The sin was responsible for her being transformed into a bitch in her next life; and her husband became an ox. Both served the same master, their son Sumati to wit. Sumati, a model of filial devotion, observed the *sraddhas* of his parents punctiliously. On one such occasion when his wife had used all her genius to prepare the dishes, a cobra which was being carried by brahmani-kite hissed poison from above into one of the vessels. The bitch, kindly soul that it was, wanted to prevent the death of those that ate the contents of that vessel. The bitch defiled the vessel by touching it in return for which service the woman poked a firebrand into the bitch's ribs and drove it out of the house.

The bitch met the ox in the night and complained about the treatment. The ox replied that he had received no better treatment that day. Why, owing to the great sin committed in the previous life, the *pinda* that was their (the parents') right could not be assimilated by them!

Sumati overheard the conversation. He fed both his parents sumptuously the next morning, after which he went out into the forest to consult the *saptarishis* regarding his domestic problem, and the *saptarishis* prescribed the Rishipanchami *vrita*.

The dutiful Sumati performed the Rishipanchami for seven years and he gifted away the merit of his *vrata* to his parents. The parents ascended the heavens and, needless to say, lived happily ever after.

The Rishipanchami is a very popular *vrata* and Brahman women perform it religiously after their menopause. I may mention here that I once heard a Brahman lady telling her friend about a third person: "How lucky she is! She is hardly forty and she is already free from menses. She must have been a very good woman in her previous janma."

We shall now deal with the Non-Brahman customs. The habit of putting up a separate hut for the girl to live in during the period has now died out. But even now a few castes retain the old custom. The hut is made of the twigs of the Indian fig (*athi*) and jack fruit. Among the Kadu Gollas the period of pollution lasts twentyone days and the girl moves into a new hut everyday.

The hut, in the case of a married girl, is erected by the husband. In the absence of the husband, the girl's maternal uncle puts up the hut. The Madiga maternal uncle must bring the materials for the shed and pull it down on the tenth day soon after the girl bathes. The Bestha husband brings a piece of copra, and a coconut branch to his father-in-law's house, and the coconut branch forms the nucleus of the hut.

The maternal uncle putting up the hut in the absence of the husband is significant. The problem is, whether he erects it as the girl's potential husband, or father-in-law, or has the right descended to him from a prior matrilineal society? Maternal uncle-niece marriage is common enough, but so is cross-cousin marriage; and the third explanation involves the big assumption of a prior matrilineality. Thus the question hangs fire till we have more data at our disposal.

The Holeya and Bestha throw away the materials of the hut after the girl quits it. The Kuruba and Parivara burn down the materials of the hut.

The period of pollution is maximum among the Sholiga and Kadu Golla, with thirty days each. The other castes

vary from a minimum of three days to a maximum of eleven days.

Here it is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of defilement, the first one extending to any period from three to ten days in which the girl remains outside the house, in her hut. After this, she is admitted inside the house, but may not be allowed to enter the kitchen, and cook. On the sixteenth day after the attainment of puberty, the girl becomes totally pure after a bath.

In passing, we may remark that it is significant that the tribes have the maximum period of defilement. They seem to fear the girl who has attained puberty more than the groups above them, and in fact the severity of the restrictions imposed on the girl decline as we go up the caste-ladder. Nowadays, the higher castes are increasingly indifferent in observing these restrictions.

Among the Besthas of Mysore the brother of the bride carries the news of his sister's coming of age to his brother-in-law. The brother-in-law, in return for receiving this happy news, presents him with a pair of sheep, a dhoti, and rice soaked in milk. The husband accompanies his brother-in-law to the latter's home. The husband on his arrival at his wife's place is splashed with *okali* by the girl's brothers.

"If the (Kuruba) girl is already married, information of her attaining age is sent to her husband's parents by the village washerman, who is treated to a feast by the girl's husband for being the carrier of good news, and is generally presented with a cow."[1]

The husband's relatives, on receipt of the news, go to the girl's house in state carrying with them half-pounded paddy, one jaggery cube, betel leaves and arecanut. The girl's relatives give them *tambula* and treat them to a dinner.

The bridegroom goes again to the girl on the sixteenth day for the consummation of this marriage. Sixteen kinds of dishes are carried by the bridegroom to the bride.

Sometimes the consummation takes place on a day later than the sixteenth, as when the girl attains puberty

[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.44.

at an inauspicious hour, or the sixteenth day is inauspicious. In that event the consummation will take place soon after the girl's next menstruation.

Sometime, the consummation of the marriage takes place three months after the marriage. Two reasons are given for such a custom. The first one is the widespread belief that a third head should not appear in the family in the first year of the marriage.

The second reason is that this custom may have been a device to find out whether the girl did pass off another's child as the husband's. In support of this interpretation we may cite a custom prevalent among the Banajigas and many other Non-Brahman castes: A girl who attains puberty after marriage has it consummated on the sixteenth day of her attaining puberty. But if a girl has attained puberty long before marriage, the marriage is consummated only three months after marriage. It is only in latter case that the danger of pre-marital licence exists.

During this period of defilement the girl is kept awake at nights and is allowed to sleep only by day, for fear that the evil spirits which prowl about in the dark might possess her. A broom, an old winnow, an old shoe and a branch of the *arka* are kept at the entrance to ward off evil spirits, to whose attacks the girl is believed to be specially vulnerable during this period. An aged woman sleeps with the girl.

The girl is exhibited to the castewomen in the evenings after the bath on the fourth day. She is seated on a plank flamboyantly dressed. The women invitees are given a mixture of gingelly and jaggery.

If the girl is married, the expenses of one day's exhibition (*osage*) are borne by the husband. If she is a maiden, the maternal uncle bears the charges. The Sholiga maternal uncle has to present his niece who has attained age with a new bodice-cloth. Among the Parivara "the pots used by her are broken into small pieces, as there is a belief that if rain water collects in any of them, the girl will be childless."[1]

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[1]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.472.

The sari worn by an Agasa (washerwoman) girl when she attains puberty should be given to a woman of another family who supplies her with washed clothes everyday of the period.[1]

Section II: The Ceremony of Consummation.

Brahmans or Dwijas: The ceremony is performed on the sixteenth day or night from the day on which the girl attained puberty, or on the sixteenth day beginning from the fifth day of puberty. The star which predominated at the time the girl attained puberty vitally determines her fate. For instance, a girl who attains puberty under the domination of Punarvasu will be a prostitute. Rites are performed on the sixteenth day to counteract the effects of a girl coming of age at an inauspicious moment.

Originally the *garbhadana* ceremony was included in the marriage rites alone. Now that marriage is usually a pre-puberty affair, the *garbhadana* is performed separately, soon after the girl attains puberty.

On the morning of the *garbhadana* day, the pair have an oil bath, and perform purificatory rite of *punyaha* before *aupasana*. Friends and relatives are feasted in the afternoon, or during the night.

In the evening the pair worship the fruits (usually coconuts). Then the husband pours all kinds of fruits into the lap of the wife—fruits suggest fruitfulness or productivity.

The husband presents her with a sari called the *garbhadana* sari. He gives her sandal and flowers and other articles of feminine toilette.

The bedroom is decorated with flowers, real and artificial. Large trays contain flowers, sandal, betel, and sweets of all kinds twice or thrice their usual size. Coconuts are again worshipped in this room (Phalapuja) and the girl's lap is filled with fruits once again. The girl bows to her elders. She gives the invited *sumangalis* flowers, sandal, betel and coconuts.

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[1]The Non-Brahmans in the Malnad believe that a woman walking into a garden during her monthly defilement period will anger Mother Earth, or the devil in the garden. *Kanur Subbamma Heggadathi*, Vol. III, p.274.

Everybody retires but the priest who asks the husband to touch his wife's navel and say: "Let (the) all-pervading Vishnu prepare thy womb, let the creator shape its forms; let Prajapati be the impregnator; let the creator give the embryo which the two Asvins produce with their golden sticks, that embryo we call into the womb, that thou mayest give birth to it after ten months. As the earth is pregnant with Agni, as the Heaven is with Indra, as Vayu dwells in the womb of the regions, thus I place an embryo in thy womb. May he be born valiant of his kin. May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver. May he be born here, as thy son after ten months; I do with thee the work that is sacred to Prajapati. May a child be born without defects, with all its limbs, not lame, not blind, not sucked out by the Pishachas."[1] The priest then leaves the room.

Among the Non-Brahmans:

If the girl has attained puberty before her marriage then no distinct consummation ceremony is held. When the bridegroom comes in state to the *dhare* ceremony, he drops into the lap of the bride, over the curtain, fruits and copra. He does this before seeing her.

This dropping of fruit is a substitute for the consummation rite.

It is important that he should drop the fruits before seeing her. Perhaps seeing her before dropping the fruits spells disaster to him.

The actual consummation might then take place on any day, but usually, it takes place on some day three months after the marriage.

If the girl attains puberty after marriage, then the consummation rite takes place on the sixteenth day. The ceremony include the *shanti* rites, if the girl has come of age at an inauspicious hour, and fruit-worshipping, and lap-filling. A caste-dinner is given. Among the Holeya, the pair are seated on a plank and their foreheads are dotted with the blood of sheep—perhaps, symbolical of the rupture of the hymen.

Among some Non-Brahmans, the husband returns home in the early hours of the morning after the consummation without talking to anybody in his wife's house.

[1]Quoted by L. K. A. Iyer, *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.367.

CHAPTER XII

PREGNANCY, DELIVERY, NAMING AND OTHER RITES

Section I.—Pregnancy Rites and Taboos.

THE husband ceases shaving his face after the wife has entered the sixth month of her pregnancy. He is not allowed to carry a corpse, or climb a mountain, or cross a river. (Nowadays the educated classes do not observe these restrictions).

The two principal rites are Pumsavana and Simantha, These two are nowadays performed by some Non-Brahmans also. But many Brahmans are giving them up.

Pumsavana: The purpose of this rite performed in the third month of pregnancy is to ensure that the child will be a male. A banyan twig with two fruits flanking it (it looks like the penis) is brought home. A virgin pounds the twig and fruits to powder uttering the word "child" at every stroke. The powder is mixed with water and placed in a corner of a sari, and its juice is squeezed into the wife's right nostril. As the husband is squeezing the juice, he says "thou art a male child." The husband touches her heart with his right hand saying, "I touch thee with my ten fingers so that thou may give birth to a male child after ten months. Mitra and Varuna are males, the two Asvins are males, so are Agni and Vayu, and so also is the child in thy womb."

Some sub-castes require the wife to swallow two grains of black gram and one wheat grain (this again resembling the penis) mixed with curd.

Simantham: The purpose of this rite is to cleanse the soil, and to ward off the dangers which may affect the seed and the womb. The preliminaries of *punyaha*, worship of Vigneswara, and offering of ghee in the Homagni to the deities, precede the real ceremony.

A porcupine quill, on which run three black lines, is

taken along with a twig of *athi* or three shoots of *durva* grass, roots intact. The husband traces a vertical line with the twig and quill, beginning from the wife's navel upwards over the head to the occiput. He parts his wife's hair with the quill and twig and throws them both behind her. He repeats this thrice, chanting, "May Raka (the full moon) listen to my prayers, may she help me to carry out this ceremony without any defect or omission, and bless with a male child endowed with praiseworthy qualities, with valour and generosity. May she (Raka) approach us with the same grace as she shows to the sacrificer, and with goodwill and promise of protection in future." Music is then played on the *vina* because the foetus is sensitive to sound. In the evening, *arati* is waved before the pregnant woman. Relatives are feasted.

Both among the Brahmans and Non-Brahmans, the pregnant woman is supposed to be specially liable to attacks of the evil spirits. Certain castes do not permit her to go alone in the evening. The shadow of the birds flying about in the night should not fall on her. She is not allowed to come out during the eclipse. If she comes out during the eclipse, the child will be born deformed.

In many Non-Brahman castes the pregnant woman is not allowed to touch the milk-post of the marriage pandal.

The husband is not allowed, during the wife's pregnancy, to put up a roof to the house and not allowed to fill up cracks in the wall. Perhaps such closing of openings would make for a difficult labour.

The husband is not allowed to shave his hair probably because growing the hair is supposed to have a magical relation with the growth of the foetus in the womb. Another explanation, which appears to be popular, is that the beard prevents the man from seeking sex elsewhere. The habit of some castes to cease shaving only after the wife is well-advanced in pregnancy lends support to this view. Beard-growing seems to begin with the ceasing of physical intimacy with the wife.

The restrictions about the husband not carrying a corpse, or killing game, exist because of the desire to avoid doing anything inauspicious at that time. Certain Non-Brahman castes require the husband to refrain from touching the milk-posts.

A definite instance of couvade is available in Mysore. "Mr. Rice, in the *Mysore Gazetteer*, says 'that among the Koramas when a woman is confined, her husband takes medicine for her. At the instance of the British Resident, I made enquiries and learned that the Kukke (basket) Koramas living at Gopala village, near Shimoga, had this custom among them. The husband learns from his wife, the probable time for her confinement and keeps at home awaiting the delivery. As soon as she is confined he goes to bed for three days and takes medicine consisting of chicken and mutton broth spiced with ginger, pepper, onions, garlic etc. He drinks arrack and eats as good a food as he can afford, while his wife is given boiled rice with a very small quantity of salt for fear that a very large quantity may induce thirst. There is generally a Korama midwife to help the wife, and the husband eats, drinks and sleeps, but does nothing. One of the men examined by me, who was more intelligent than the rest, explained that the man's life was more valuable than that of the wife and that the husband, being a more important factor in the birth of the child than the wife deserves to be better looked after'."[1]

The explanation of the "intelligent" man is more original than correct. And it is wrong to seek for the rationale of a custom from an average, illiterate member of a tribe which observes the custom. The Koramas provide us with a definite instance of couvade. Couvade tells us that the savage wants to emphasise the father's role in the birth of a child. Perhaps the savage comes suddenly to discover the role played by the male in the birth of a child, and savage fashion, gives an exaggerated demonstration of his sudden enlightenment.

Section II.—Delivery, Naming etc.

In this section, we shall briefly mention the Samskritic rites, and devote more attention to the Non-Samskritic, for the simple reason, which we have mentioned time and again, that while Samskritic culture has been studied by competent scholars, the Non-Samskritic has been comparatively neglected.

While the Samskritic sites are observed by the Brahmans and the other "high castes", the Non-Samskritic are com-

[1]Quoted by L. K. A., *M. T. & C.*, Vol. I, p.236.

mon to the entire Kannada society including the Brahmans. Hence it is not to be understood that the Non-Samskritic rites mentioned along with Brahmans are exclusively Brahman, and those mentioned with the Non-Brahmans are exclusively Non-Brahman.

The first delivery (or even the first few deliveries) is at the mother's house. The woman leaves her husband's house when she is well advanced in pregnancy. She stays at her mother's for a few months after delivery, and then rejoins her husband. (The periodic visits of the daughter to her mother's house and the consequent expense is one of the main causes of quarrel in the joint family). One daughter or other will be pregnant every year and she will have to be nursed through her confinement. Though the scheme has its advantages in this that it gives to every woman the benefit of the experience and love of a mother on an occasion when she is in greatest need of it, yet it entails great monetary burden on someone who was not responsible for the children.

The period of impurity incidental to a birth is eleven days. But the mother of the child becomes pure only on the twentysecond day. Even then she is not fully pure, for she can enter the kitchen only after the fortieth day—perhaps the latter is a health measure disguising itself as a religious injunction.

The woman is supposed to be in a delicate state subject to the attacks of all sorts of devils. Difficult labour, for instance, is the work of devils. Magical remedies are sought for. It is believed that if woman has stepped across a tether binding a horse, the pains will be great. To alleviate the pains, a bundle of hay or grass is sent to a horse.

A common magical remedy in case of difficult delivery may be mentioned here. A coconut is waved before the woman and is placed on rice-filled seer (measure). A lime is kept by the side of the measure after the mantram 'Onamo Narayana' is uttered a hundred and one times. The coconut is then broken. Among Non-Brahmans eggs are broken in difficult cases.

There is a knife in the Mysore Palace called the 'Delivery Knife' (*herige kaththi*), and this knife is worshipped in difficult cases.

The child, soon after its birth, is placed in a winnow or in a grain-sifter which is placed on a heap of cowdung ash. Into the winnow are put a turmeric root and a few annas.

The birth of a male child is accompanied by beating a gong, while the birth of a girl does not provoke her kin to disturb the quiet. Ananthakrishna Iyer says—and this is a popular belief—that while the sex of a girl scares away devils, gong-beating should come to the rescue of the boy This naturally raises the question, why is it that a girl is supposed to be strong enough to scare away spirits while a boy is helpless before them? May it not be derived from a belief that spirits attack only things of value and ignore useless ones?

I was told, however, that the gong is beaten at the birth of a boy because of joy, while the birth of a girl is not an occasion for such a noisy demonstration.

A peculiar explanation of this gong-beating was furnished me by the Besthas of Mysore. They told me that gong-beating as soon as a child is born will accustom it in later life to loud and sudden explosions of sound. If the gong is not beaten at birth, the child will be startled greatly at any explosion it may hear later in life. The 'explanation' appears to be too 'subtle' in the first place, and in the second, it explains only indiscriminate beating of gong, and not its being beaten only for boys.

There is a belief that a child which comes out with the placenta thrown over its shoulders will kill its maternal uncle. This belief is deduced from the story of Krishna, who was born with his placenta thrown over his shoulders, killing Kamsa, his maternal uncle.

Until the placenta is removed, everyone should keep quiet, for any kind of noise will induce the placenta to go back into the womb.

The doors and windows of the confinement room are closed, and a lamp burns there throughout the day. This is due to the belief in spirits which seem to like a confinement room very much. Old shoes, brooms etc. are tied at the door to prevent the coming-in of spirits.

Among the Smartha Brahmans of Mysore, as soon as the news of the birth of a son has been conveyed to the father, he makes for a tank. He jumps from a height into the un-

ruffled water (that is, if he can swim) sending up the spray into the air. The belief is that the spray will inform the manes in heaven that their line has been continued by the birth of a son. The father thus pays his debt to the *pitris.*

Jatakarma: This ceremony is performed on the eleventh day along with Namkarna even though it has theoretically to be performed soon after a child is born. The Jatakarma is performed to purify the child from impurity incidental to lying in the womb; to make him healthy, and enable him to live healthily for a hundred years; for the growth of his intelligence; and for driving away the evil spirits that may attack him. One of the *mantras* expresses the instinctive gratification of the parent at the birth of a son; of the expression of a profound joy at the prospect of biological immortality:—"From limb after limb thou are produced from me, thou are born from my very heart. Thou art myself with the name son. Being such, mayst thou live for a hundred years."

The Namkarna ceremony is performed on the eleventh day of birth. Two names are given, one esoteric and known only to the parents, and the other public. More will be said regarding the naming ceremony in the section on Non-Brahmans.

The child's ears are pierced when it is two or three months old. This is also a purificatory rite.

The ceremony of Annaprasana or the first feeding of the child is performed in the sixth month or any other even month if the child is a girl. To a boy, on the other hand, the first feeding takes place only in an odd month. The child is fed with honey, curds and ghee.

Aksharabhyasa[1] or teaching the alphabet to the child is observed when the boy is five years old. Chaula or the tonsure ceremony is done before Upanayanam. The latter itself is performed before the boy is sixteen. Nowadays, amongst the educated classes, this ceremony is performed even later, or not at all.

Thus we see that every event in the life of the infant—naming, putting it into a cradle, feeding, its crossing a threshold unaided, its ear and nose being pierced, its tonsure, and the beginning of its education—is overlaid with

[1]This *aksharabhyasa* is usually done only for boys.

ritual. In all these we find concern for the safety of the child from spirits and devils and for its well-being and longevity. A very widespread belief is that a child is specially liable to the attacks of spirits. The spirits which attack children are female. These female spirits begin attacking the foetus itself. The attacks continue long after the child has come out of the womb. In fact the last spirit to attack the child is Shankhini, when the "child" is aged exactly sixteen years, sixteen months and sixteen days. I shall now describe a specimen attack by a spirit called Kinkini, who gets at the two-month-old foetus. The symptom is a continuous pain in the mother's stomach. The prescription is two-fold, one magical and the other medicinal.

The magical remedy: Beat clay into the form of a doll (female) and clothe it with a red sari. Offer red (cooked) rice, red (uncooked) rice, red flower and sandal to the idol representing Kinkini at a spot where four roads meet. (It appears that spirtis, like traffic constables, abound in circles where many roads meet). A chit mentioning that the offering is to the 'Dharmadevata' Kinkini should be kept on the rice.

Medicinal remedy: Red and blue lotus should be beaten into a paste in a mortar. The paste should be dissolved in the milk got from a black cow and then gulped down the throat.

The spirits have a love of symmetry. For instance, Kapali possesses the child when it is aged one year, one month and one day, Sunandini when the child is two years two months and two days, and so on up to the sixteenth year. The prescriptions are all fantastic in the same degree.

The above list of "diseases" to which the child is subject reveals a primitive mind. The numerous diseases to which a child is prey are attributed to malicious spirits, and the human mind craving as it does for some kind of order, subjects the creatures of its invention to a certain regularity. The explanation of the diseases, the order in which the spirits appear, and above all, the appeasability of these semi-divine spirits are all necessary. They help man to live in a world which is, in fact, not very partial to him, and the worship of these ridiculous deities was once not without its value.

Non-Brahman Rites.

As among the Brahmans, the first delivery takes place in the girl's mother's house. The pregnant woman leaves her husband's house in the seventh or ninth month of her pregnancy. Among the Agasas of Mysore either the girl's maternal uncle, or her brother takes her to her parental home. Her husband presents her with the necessaries of *accouchement*—a sari, rice, a cow and articles of a nutritious diet like dates, jaggery and garlic. The Besthas of Mysore informed me of a peculiar custom prevailing among them—a custom which clearly points out how it is regarded as binding on the girl's parents to bear the burden of the daughter's first *accouchement*. As soon as the husband's relatives hear that the child is born they set out with copra, rice, oil and other articles to the girl's house. If the poor parents accept these things, the girl severs her relation with them entirely. She goes right out of her parental home. She cannot dine in her parents' house any more, nor is she allowed to go there when a death has taken place.

But if her parents, poor and proud, reject the things, then the girl not merely may dine with her parents, and enter the parental home while the parents are under a death-defilement, but she herself is subject to this defilement. She still belongs to the family in which she was born.

The delivery takes place in a light-shunning room with the barber's wife acting as the midwife.[1] Of course, old ladies bring the wealth of their experience to the aid of the midwife and the delivering woman. The child and the mother and all the other women in the confinement room bathe in warm water. But this bath does not free the mother and child and the near relatives from the defilement. The child is kept on a new winnow soon after it comes out.

The mother is then fed on a mixture of molasses, copra, dried ginger, and pepper and a decoction of dates. The mother is fed on a special, nutritious diet for a month or two after she has delivered. She is, in some castes,

[1]Nowadays, the municipal midwife is in demand, and some even go to maternity hospitals.

massaged with butter, and then bathed in warm water every day for a few days after childbirth. Cowdung cakes are burnt in a pot and this pot is kept beneath the cot on which the mother lies.

The Madiga preference of a son to a daughter is shown in the custom that while the midwife gets a winnowful of grain and a *hana* when a son is born, she is given only half a *hana* and a winnowful of grain for a daughter.

The period of defilement concomitant on the birth of a child varies from caste to caste, from four days among a certain sub-division of the Agasas, to three months among the Kadu Gollas. (The Kadu Gollas have also the maximum period of puberty-defilement.) Sometimes the period varies among the sub-divisions of one caste—for instance, the different sub-divisions of the Agasa caste have different periods of 4, 6, 8 and 10 days. The following quotation from Ananthakrishna Iyer makes interesting reading:[1]—"Child-birth is looked upon by Kadu Gollas with great fear as some impending evil, and is extremely detested, owing to the anxious days which the woman in child-bed has to spend. When labour pains come on, the woman goes out, furlongs off the hamlet, to a part of the jungle where a shed of leaves and grass has been newly erected for the purpose....The mother is considered impure for three months after accouchement, the impurity diminishing in degree day by day. If any person touches her during this interval, he will catch the contagion, and will have to remain outside for a similar period; and on the occurrence of such a contingency, the mother and her child are not allowed to enter the house until they obtain the special permission of their deity (whose will is interpreted by the caste head).

"On the fourth day (after the delivery), after having had a bath, the woman removes herself to a new hut towards the village. On the ninth, fifteenth and thirtieth days she similarly moves to new huts, and again, one in each of the following two months. At the close of the period of three months, the mother of the child bathes, and dressing herself in new washed clothes, goes to the village temple, where the pujari (priest) touches their

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, pp.228-9.

(the mother's and the baby's) mouths with the drops of milk of the dedicated sheep (*jenige kuri*). Then the mother washes her hands seven times with cow's urine, contained in a pit newly scooped out for the purpose."

On the day on which the woman is to be freed from impurity, the members of the caste bring potfuls of hot water, turmeric, vermillion and soapnut powder.

The following purificatory ceremony of the Madiga may be regarded as typical, and the pit ceremony which forms a part of it, is common to all the castes, from the Smartha Brahman to the Holeya. The meat and drink which are so abundantly used by the Madigas, are of course, absent among the "higher" castes. "On the third day, the mother and the child are bathed in water in which the tender leaves of certain plants, *gajjaga* (molucca bean), *ankole* (alangium lamarckii) and lime tree, are boiled. A small pit is consecrated with puja in front of the house, and the mother sits on it with the child in her lap. Each of the neighbours contributes a potful of water for the bath.

"An elderly woman goes round and collects a morsel of food from each house, and gives it along with toddy to the confined woman. Similarly old rags are collected for the child's cradle. In the evening four pots are placed at the corners of the pit made for the bath and the midwife makes puja to them, placing before them an offering of meat and rice cooked together on leaves of the *arka* plant....The castemen are treated to a feast in the evening...This purifying ceremony is known as Muttu Devaru (pollution god), or Gundi Devaru (pit god)."[1]

The purifying pit god is worshipped first—ghee and milk are poured into it, and sweets and gram are placed at four corners of the pit. A plank bridges the pit and on the plank sit the mother and child.

Rites for bringing about a safe and easy delivery are very common. And the most common being breaking small pots, coconuts and eggs. In a few Non-Brahman castes, preparations are made for a safe delivery even at the early stages of pregnancy. Woman's relatives dig up the roots of the *arka* plant on a Sunday which also hap-

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.472.

pens to be a new-moon day. The root is waved round the suffering woman and kept on a coconut. The coconut is then broken. Sometimes difficulty of delivery is supposed to be due to the black magic practised by some evil-intentioned relative. In such a case appropriate rites are performed to counteract the effects of the magic.

Among the Handi Jogi "when the woman is gone seven months in pregnancy, she has to offer puja to the goddess Ankamma. On a Tuesday or a Friday selected for the worship, the pregnant woman bathes in the morning and fasts till the evening. In front of her hut, four stakes are driven to the ground at the corners of a rectangle. A cloth is stretched on the pillars of the rectangle so as to form a cradle. A pot of toddy with a coloured thread tied to its rim is placed near it and worshipped with *kumkuma* powder, and a pig is sacrificed. An egg is rocked in the cradle and the goddess (Ankamma) is invoked to bring about a safe delivery."[1]

The Madigas bury the navel-cord and the after-birth right below the eaves of the house. A little milk is poured on the spot on the third day. Among the Holeyas, the navel-cord along with the after-birth is kept in an earthen jug and buried in the yard of the house. A branch of the *arka* plant and another of the *kalli* are fixed at the place. Cooked food is offered to the pot and then distributed to children.

Some castes eagerly preserve the navel-cord. Sometimes, it is tied to the child's cradle as a charm. The Nayinda, Reddi, Gangadikara, all value the navel cord highly as an infallible cure for barrenness. A hole is made in a plantain and the navel cord is introduced into the hole. The plantain is then devoured. Sometimes, it is hid in a ball of sweetened flour and gulped down the throat.

At Arakere I heard of a peculiar belief prevailing among the Kannadigas. If a child, navel cord and placenta intact, is placed soon after birth in the lap of a barren woman, then her barrenness will disappear. But no mother will willingly place her child in another's lap. For, such a baby will gradually wither away as the foetus

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, pp.494-5.

in the barren woman's womb grows. Finally it will die. A relative of mine told me of an instance that occurred in which the barren woman conceived and the child died.

The rite of naming takes place on the day the mother and child are purified, or the day after purification. The castemen meet in the house. The mother and child sit on a plank before them. Among the Agasas, the mother and child sit before an inverted winnow which is placed on a part of the floor cleaned with cowdung, and across which are drawn three lines with a solution of red earth. Worship is made to the winnow, and the eldest male present is asked to suggest a name. Among the Telugu Reddis, it is the maternal uncle who has the right of naming the child. After the elder names the child, it is handed over to the eldest *sumangali*, who puts it, for the first time, in a cradle, thus terminating its winnow-existence. The cradle is first worshipped and a curry-stone (implying that the child should be as strong as a curry-stone) is rocked prior to the child being put in there.

In the evening a feast is given to the caste.

The Medar belief that a person of a certain family will be reborn in that family alone, is common to almost all the castes in the State. The soul transmigrates only within the family circle. Hence children are named after their grandparents. Another reason why ancestors' names are chosen for the descendants is to perpetuate the memory of the former.

The Gangadikara Okkaligas in Arakere informed me that though naming the children after their grandparents was the rule among them, nobody named the children after the parents.

Very frequently children are named after the patron deity of the family. At least one son is named after the deity. For instance, a family whose patron deity is Narasimha will have one child at least named after Him.

When too many daughters are born in a family, the mother names the latest arrival Sakamma (lit. enough) or Savitri to inform Him Who grants children that she has had enough of daughters.

What's in a name? Plenty. For instance, a name has the power to make you ill. When a boy or girl is suffer-

ing from any illness, his or her name is changed to something else.

Children are often named after some object known for strength and permanence. For instance, Gunda is a frequent name and it means a round stone used to reduce grain into paste. The parents fondly hope that the child will be as strong as, and live as long as a round stone.

Ananthakrishna Iyer mentions that among the Madigas "The practice of giving opprobrious is common. When such a name is given, the child is put into a winnow and drawn on a manure-pit and a paternal aunt kicks the winnow with the child in it with her left foot, to deceive the fate into a belief that the child's parents are so indifferent to its value that the child is hardly worth taking away from them."[1]

The above custom shows that the primitive mind has no very high notions—I was about to say illusions—about divine intelligence. It thinks that God is as gullible as man. The deceit one can practice on one's fellows can also be played on God. The absolutely primitive mind has not the intelligence to think that God can be more intelligent. The concept of an omniscient God, who knows more than all the human beings put together, is an invention of a higher intelligence.

The child being drawn on the manure heap is an ostensible proof of its worth (or worthlessness). Another explanation was suggested to me by an Okkaliga elder. He told me that the child is drawn on the manure so that it may grow like dirt, and dirt, as everybody knows, grows phenomenally in our villages.

Another custom that is observed when all the children born in a family die prematurely, is to borrow a nose-ring (made either of gold or of *panchaloha*—five metals) from a relative when the woman is advanced seven months in pregnancy. The nose-ring is kept under the threshold. It is taken out from its place of rest as soon as the labour pains begin. A hole is bored in the child's nose as soon as the child comes out, and the nose-ring is thrust in the hole. This is supposed to prevent the child from an early death.

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.151.

Why is this supposed to prevent premature death? Ananthakrishna Iyer believes that this is due to the belief that the gods will be led to believe that the child is a girl, and hence spare it from death. Perhaps the jealous gods are keen only on taking away a valuable son and not a useless daughter. Jealous as they are, they do not find any pleasure in ridding a man of a useless possession.

But this theory does not convince one when it is found that even female-infants undergo the ceremony occasionally.

I received a more intricate and less unsatisfying explanation at Mandya. I was told that the nose-ring renders a child different. It destroys the child's identity. The child becomes something wholly different, entirely new.

Now, it happens that the gods intend certain persons to die in the first few years or months of their birth. These persons and only these, suffer or enjoy the fate of an early death. Supposing these persons change their identity. They can then escape their fate. Nose-boring makes them different. We shall see in our section on death ceremonies that this theory of a person changing his identity receives additional support from a custom prevalent among the Non-Brahman castes.

The following case makes interesting reading. In a certain Brahman family, four children died in the first few months of their birth. The fifth was a girl and she was named Gundamma (lit. currystone). As soon as the child was born, she was placed in the lap of her present mother-in-law and the mother said "henceforth the child is yours". The child is now a full-fledged woman with three or four children to her credit.

The idea underlying this custom is that all the children that one has treated as one's have perished. The latest born might survive if it is not treated as belonging to oneself. Here two ideas may be involved: (1) An attempt to pass off one's child as another's and thus cheat the gods; and (2) the philosophic principle that anything to which one is excessively attached will be taken away from one —a principle which again postulates the jealous god.

CHAPTER XIII

DEATH CEREMONIES

WE shall now briefly deal with Brahman and Non-Brahman death ceremonies.

Brahman.

Certain days are regarded as auspicious for dying, while certain others, inauspicious. Tuesday and Saturday are very bad days. A death occurring on Saturday forebodes another death in the household, whereas Tuesday is even worse, for the dead one is certain to take away two other lives before the year is out. Dubois mentions that a ram or a cock is offered as a substitute to appease the dead man's spirit. But Brahmans are averse to offering animals, so they carry a nail or grinding-stone-peg from the deadman's house and throw it on the pyre. A priest may be consulted and he suggests rites to appease the dead man's spirit. Ekadasi is an auspicious day for dying, and so is Friday for a *sumangali*. Amavasya is bad for anyone. Uttarayana is an auspicious period while the Dakshinayana is inauspicious, the gates of heaven being closed then.

The star under which a person dies is also significant. When a person dies under an evil star, the house will have to be vacated for a couple of months.

The purpose of the death ceremonies is well understood by that pioneer orientalist, Monier-Williams:[1] "The object of such *sarddhas* is twofold viz:—first, the reembodying of the soul of the deceased in some kind of form after the cremation of the corpse, or simply the release of the subtle body which is to convey the soul away. Secondly, the raising him from the regions of the atmosphere, where he would have otherwise to roam for an indefinite period among demons and evil spirits to a particular heaven or region of bliss. There he is eventually half-deified among the shades of departed kinsmen (Pitriloka). Manu, how-

[1]Quoted by Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Ceremonies and Customs*, p.486.

ever, is not clear as to the precise effect of the *sraddha*. He merely states that its performance by a son or the nearest male kinsman is necessary to deliver a father from a kind of a hell called 'Put,' and that the spirits of the departed (Pitris) feed on the offered food."

Dubois, that shrewd though not very sympathetic, critic of Hinduism, writes: "From the fourth to the ninth day inclusive, these foolish ceremonies are repeated daily. The objects are (1) to prevent the deceased suffering from hunger, thirst and nakedness; (2) to enable him to divest himself as quickly as possible of his hideous and ghastly carcase and to assume a beautiful form, so that in a new birth, he may be neither deaf, nor blind, nor dumb, nor lame, nor afflicted with any (other) bodily infirmity."[1]

The ultimate aim of all these ceremonies is to help the deceased soul to join his *pitris* in the Pitriloka and this is symbolised by the ceremony of *sapindikarana*. From his place in the heavens, he comes along with his ancestors once a year as a crow or kite to taste of the food offered him. If the food is eagerly finished off by an early swarm of crows and kites it is a sign that the ancestors are pleased. If, however, the crows are very late it shows that the ancestors are not pleased. A technical flaw has occurred somewhere.

Death should not take place inside the house. The soul of the dead man may not easily find its way out if he dies inside the house. As a man is about to die he is carried to the outer verandah of the house, opening on the street. As he is about to die, *tulasi* leaves and Ganges-water are poured into his mouth. Fire is kindled in front of the house to indicate that a death has occurred in the family. (The neighbours cannot begin cooking their food till the corpse is carried away). The corpse is given a bath, the sacred thread is changed, a clean piece of cloth covers the loins, and the caste-mark is put on the forehead. The corpse is tied firmly to a bamboo bier which resembles a ladder lying flat on the ground.

Sapindas carry the corpse to the cemetery accompanied by the dead man's other relatives and friends. The procession is headed by the heir of the dead one, the performer

[1] *Hindu Manners, Ceremonies and Customs*, Dubois, p.496.

of the obsequies. He carries in his hand a pot smouldering with the embers taken from the fire in front of the house.

The corpse is rested on the ground at three different places on the way. A belief is current that persons who are believed to be dead have often come to life at the cemetery. The servants of Yama, though not human beings, are liable to err and they might discover that they have 'arrested' the wrong person very late. When the mistake occurs, the wrong person is sent back. This belief might look bottomlessly absurd, but when someone dear is dead, people have a lurking hope that the dead one may come back to life somehow.

If the corpse comes to life at the burial ground, then it augurs ill for the State. It is a calamity of communal dimensions. Hence, the corpse is given every chance to recover on the road.

At the burial-ground a *samkalpa* is made for offering sacrifice to the fathers. Ghee is offered to them in fire. Ghee is also poured into the nine orifices of the corpse. The corpse is placed on the pyre, and rice is put into its mouth by all the relatives. The chief mourner goes round the pyre thrice, sprinkling ghee on the corpse the while. The fire carried in the pot is then placed on the chest. Fuel is heaped on the corpse, and camphor is lighted at many places on the pyre. The chief mourner carries a pot full of water with a hole at the bottom, thrice round the corpse. At the end of the third round he shatters the pot on the ground—perhaps this symbolises a man's life which gradually oozes out before it finally crashes to smithereens.[1]

After the corpse is consumed by the flames, the chief mourner and his brothers get themselves shaved and then go home. The bath is called the *mritika-snana*, and is taken on behalf of the deceased. It is believed that this bath of the mourners will vicariously refresh the deceased's soul after the fiery ordeal. To provide the disembodied spirit with a body, water, rice, clothes, lamp and *dakshina* are given to a Brahman. Two stones, representing the deceased, are placed, one at home and the other at the edge of a river or tank. Offerings of water and gingelly are made to the stones. Pinda is also offered them.

[1]In Vol. II of the *Cochin Tribes and Castes* Iyer interprets this as giving the corpse a bath with Ganga water.

On the second day the mourners visit the burial-ground again. The bones of the dead man are all collected to be cast into a river. A figure representing the dead man is drawn on the ashes. Rice (cooked at the burial-ground), water, and sometimes, the dishes and fruits which the dead man liked most, are offered to the figure. The mourners bathe and then come back home.

The departed spirit is very hungry on the tenth day and a mountainous mass of rice is piled up before the stone set up in the house. The relatives shed tears, and the stone along with the offering is taken to the tank and left in the water. The relatives shave and bathe and perform the *ananda-homa* to become "pure".

On the eleventh day the relatives bathe and the house in which the death has occurred is purified with holy water—even clothes, vessels etc. have to be freed from the defilement death has cast on them. A bull-calf is branded and let loose on the world. The bull-calf will free the soul from being a ghost.

The bull-calf, with the protective singeing about him, goes about the village unafraid. No one ties him up. None dare beat him. It may graze anywhere. None may harness it to the plough.

Then a poor Brahman, who is supposed to represent the *preta* is fed sumptuously. No one willingly takes up this job, for it is believed to be dangerous. A high fee is paid for the living representative of the *preta*, and in addition to the fee, all the vessels with which food for him is cooked are his. And after eating he slinks away by the back door without talking to anyone.

It is on the eleventh day that the deceased person's wife is made to shave her head, break her bangles, wipe off her turmeric and vermillion and remove her *tali*. All the emblems of *sumangalihood* are denied her henceforth. The widow should observe mourning for a year, not leaving her house. She should lead a life of renunciation, mourning for her dead lord—she should live according to the rules dictated by a male jealousy and desire for possession carried to absurd and tragic lengths.

On the twelfth day gifts of a cow, an umbrella, a bed, a pair of slippers etc. are made to Brahmans. The depart-

ed soul crosses that river of fire, Vaitarani, clinging to the cow's tail. The other articles gifted away will also be of use to the departed soul in its next life.

Then comes the ceremony of *sapindikarana*, or the union of the departed soul with the rest of the *pitris*. The union is symbolised by mixing the *arghya* water of the *preta* with that of the *pitris*, of beating into one large ball of rice the separate *pindas*.

The house and the members thereof then regain their original purity.

On the thirteenth day, a feast is given to relatives and friends. This feast is called Vaikuntha Samaradhana. That night Samskrit stanzas composed in honour of the dead man are sung.

Sraddha has to be performed every month during the first year for the dead man. On new moon days, and on the first days of the solar months, the heir offers gingelly and water to the *pitris*. He also observes a partial fast on these days.

At the obsequies celebrated in the first half of Asvini, on the day entitled Mahalaya Amavasya, funeral cakes are separately offered to every deceased friend and near relation; thus, immediately after offering the oblations to ancestors, a cake is presented to a deceased wife, then to a son or daughter, to a brother or sister, to an uncle or aunt, to a father-in-law, to a preceptor, and lastly to a friend. Gingelly and water are offered to *pitris* soon after solar or lunar eclipse. *Pinda* is offered to the *pitris* when the heir is at a sacred, pilgrim-centre like Gaya. It is even said that if *pinda* is once offered to the *pitris* at Gaya, it need not be offered again during the heir's life.

The Sraddha is performed for a *pitri* or a beatified father. Ananthakrishna Iyer tells us that the difference between the *sraddha* and the funeral ceremonies lies in this, that in the latter offerings of rice and water are made to embody and to feed the naked spirit, while in the former they are offered as a homage to the *pitri*, the apotheosised, disembodied spirit of the dead man.

There is also an appeal to the selfishness of man in the *sraddha* mantras. His happiness and well-being in this life depends to an extent on his pleasing his ancestors by a scrupulous performance of *sraddha*.

The Visvedevas who are invoked at the *sraddha* defend the funeral sacrifice. Agni is worshipped because he summons the ancestors to taste the mortal's offerings. "May our progenitors who eat the moon-plant, who are sanctified by holy fire, come by paths which the gods travel. Satisfied with the ancestral food at this solemn sacrifice, may they applaud and guard us."

Three balls of *pinda* are offered to the paternal ancestors and three more to the maternal. And the sacrificer wipes his hands with *kusa* grass in honour of remoter ancestors, who thus become partakers of the oblations.

A cotton thread—representing clothes—is placed on each *pinda*. Water and perfumes are also offered to the sensuous *pitris*.

The manes are sent back to their celestial abode. "Fathers!...Quaff the sweet essence of it (the food offered by us), be cheerful, and depart contented by the paths which gods travel." Lastly the son walks round the spot, and leaves it saying "May the benefit of this oblation accrue to me repeatedly; may the gods of the earth and the goddesses of the sky whose form is the universe visit me with present and future happiness. Father and mother, re-visit me when I again celebrate the obsequies. Soma, king of the manes, visit me again for the sake of conferring immortality."

Cremation of a pregnant woman:

A pregnant woman is not cremated with the foetus intact. The belief is that the foetus will be alive, and that burning the pregnant woman without removing the foetus will also mean burning alive another. This is a great sin: in fact, it is one of the very few sins which may result in a national calamity. Hence the woman's stomach is cut open by a barber and then both the foetus and the woman are burnt separately.

Everyone excepting a child that has not yet teethed should be cremated. Infants are buried.

Other Brahman customs regarding death and funeral ceremonies will be referred to when dealing with the Non-Brahman death ceremonies.

Non-Brahman rites:

The most fundamental difference between the Brahman and Non-Brahman funeral ceremonies is that the latter

bury the dead while the former burn them. The Kadu Kurubas are the exception to the rule for, they, like the Brahmans, burn adults, and bury infants. The Arasus (Kshatriyas) and the Komatis (Vaisyas) also burn their dead. But the poorer Arasus living in the country bury their dead.

The oft-mentioned Non-Brahman desire to imitate the Brahman works here also. For instance, the Besthas who usually bury the dead reserve the greater honour of cremation for one who is extremely old, or one who is otherwise held in great esteem. Similarly the Morasu Okkalus now cremate the corpse irrespective of age. The richer classes of many Non-Brahman castes are beginning to observe annual Sraddhas after the Brahman fashion.

Another difference between the Brahman and Non-Brahman is the latter's habit of installing a *kalasa* in the name of the dead man. The Non-Brahman castes keep a *kalasa* both on the eleventh day of death, and on the Mahalaya Amavasya (Bhadrapada Amavasya) when food is offered collectively to all the ancestors.

There is some slight difference in the way the corpse is carried. The Brahman corpse lies on the bier on its back, while the Non-Brahman is usually seated cross-legged in a *mantap*. The Non-Brahman corpse is dressed in its best, and the bier is adorned with flowers, plantain stems etc., and the funeral procession is led by a band.

Among the Non-Brahmans themselves there are slight variations in the obsequies for persons of different status. For instance, among the Besthas, the married man and the *sumangali* are seated in the *mantap* replete with an elaborate, and often costly, toilette and dress, while the widow's corpse lies on its back on the ladder-like bier (this is not insisted upon); and the unmarried boy or girl is denied even this honour, and is carried in a cloth sling by only two persons (usually four persons carry the corpse to the burial-ground). Lepers and persons meeting with a violent death are treated specially by all the castes. The special mode of burying them will be described later. Infants (those who have not yet tasted rice) are dropped into anthills.

Certain taboos are observed by the relatives of the deceased during (and even after) the period of defilement.

Among the Kurubas the relatives keep away from the plough and eat their evening meal before crows get back to their nests. Temples may not be visited, the family deities have to go without puja, flesh and milk should not be eaten, and so on.

Among the Brahmans sweet dishes are not eaten and milk is not drunk (the two indicate pleasure, happiness), and women do not wear flowers in their hair. Among the Sri Vaishnavas the son does not shave for a year. Among all sub-divisions of the Brahmans one whole year is observed as the period of mourning for the eldest member in the joint family. No festivals may take place in the house.

The period of pollution is eleven days. But among some castes complete purity is attained only much later. Among the Madigas complete purity is attained a month after the death, after the caste is given a dinner by the mourners. The Kuruba mourners do not reach purity until three months have passed since the man's death. On this occasion the chief mourner is feasted at his maternal uncle's house and presented with a new turban. That marks the return to normal cleanliness.

The belief that dying on certain days portends death for a surviving relative also prevails among the majority of the Non-Brahman castes. The only difference is with respect to the days of the week. The Non-Brahmans (some of them, at any rate) believe that a man dying on a Thursday or a Sunday will take away two other lives with him, while the Brahmans attribute the killing powers to Tuesday and Saturday. A chicken, and a red pumpkin (sweet) into which a nail is driven,—substitutes for a person—are buried along with the dead person.

In common with the Brahmans, the Non-Brahmans hold that death should not occur inside the house. The Besthas vacate the house for three months if death occurs inside the house. The dying man is usually removed to the *pial* looking on the street.

As soon as a man dies, a fire is prepared in front of the house to indicate everyone that death has occurred in the house. In addition to this, the caste headman is informed of the fact and he broadcasts the news to the entire caste.

The fire in front of the house is used for getting a hot bath ready for the corpse; and rice is cooked on it to be used later. The fire in front of the house is probably taken over from the Brahmans. Among the latter, however, this fire is theoretically the continuation of the daily *aupasana* fire. That only the superficial custom of preparing a fire in front of the house should be borrowed and not the entire custom of cremating the dead is quite worthy of note. A clash of culture means usually the borrowal of customs that touch only the surface. But borrowal of fundamental customs like the ways of disposing of the dead is extremely rare. Tradition and conservatism prove superior to the strong tendency to imitate which is born out of a sense of inferiority.

The bier or *mantap* is decorated with flowers etc. A band plays a plaintive note announcing the sad news to the entire community.

The corpse is bathed and dressed in its best. Near relatives pour in a few grains of rice to the corpse's mouth as a mark of their regard to the dead one. Crushed betel leaves and nuts are put into the dead man's mouth. The widow exchanges betel with her dead lord as a sign of farewell.

The corpse is seated in the *mantap* and an earthen pot is smashed on the spot before the *mantap* is lifted off the ground. In villages, in addition to the band which heads the funeral procession, conches and horns are blown and guns are fired, presumably with a desire to scare away the ghost from the village. Betel and parched paddy are thrown on the corpse all along the route. The corpse must be with its head towards the village. If it has its legs towards the village, it means bringing in a corpse to the village, and this reverse position will mean some great calamity to the village.

The bier is rested on the ground for a few minutes on the way to the burial-ground. The chief mourner goes round the corpse thrice with the pot of boiled rice in his hands. (It is curds and rice pudding in the case of the Besthas). At the end of the third round, and near the corpse's head, the pot is smashed on the ground. This ceremony is called *talekoolu* (lit: head-food), and the heir offers the *talekoolu* to the dead man.

The corpse-bearers then change their positions, the front men going to the back and *vice versa.*

The corpse is placed in the grave with its head towards the south. (South is the abode of Yama). The chief mourner and the near relatives shave their heads before burial. The corpse is usually wrapped up in a new piece of cloth. In one corner of the shroud a few annas are tied up. A copper pie is stuck in the nose. The waist string is cut off and thrown out. Among the Agasas, Morasu Okkalus and a few others, a portion of the shroud is torn off and thrown aside.

The chief mourner takes a clod of earth in his cupped hands and throws it on the body. The other relatives follow suit. And then the grave-digger fills up the grave. Over the grave are planted *tumbe* or *tulasi* trees. The Morasu Okkalu place thorny twigs over the grave in order to prevent jackals from digging it up. They also place a stone slab over the grave with the same purpose in view.

The Holeyas place rice, jaggery and a few annas over the grave. These are taken by the Dasayyas (Vaishnavite mendicants) who declare that the dead man has gone to heaven.

Then the ceremony of going round the grave with a potful of water in hand is performed. (This has been described in the section on Brahmans). A variant of this custom is found among the Morasu Okkalus. "The son goes round the grave three times, with an earthen pot filled with water on his shoulder and a fire-brand in his hand. At the end of every turn (round), someone makes a hole in the pot with a stone. The *halemaga* (caste servant) goes with a cowdung cake in his hand and holds it at the head and the four corners of the grave, while the son applies his fire-brand to it in each place. At the end of the third turn (round), the son throws away the upper half of the pot and keeps the lower half with the water in it near the head, and puts out the fire in the faggot by plunging it in the water. The *halemaga* keeps the cowdung cake there, on which a three-pie piece is thrown as his fee."[1] I think that this variant of the custom is a departure from its "pure" stage described in the

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. IV, p.255.

section on Brahman funeral ceremonies. Perhaps, there is here a simulation of cremation in addition to the original custom. And it has already been remarked that the Morasu Okkalus are recently taking to cremating their dead instead of burying them.

After the pot crashes on the ground, the chief mourner and the others go to a tank or river, taking care not to look back at the grave. The chief mourner and his brothers, if any, bathe, while the other relatives wash their face, hands and legs. The Morasu Okkalu mourner dips in the tank with his clothes on and then trudges his way home without wringing the clothes dry of water. Whenever a person is wearing drenched clothes he is asked to wring them out dry, owing to a very natural association of ideas. All that is done during the funeral, including the slightest detail of a custom, is taboo in ordinary life. It is not merely because death is terrible, but because of an underlying unconscious fear that these inauspicious things will bring about death itself.

The mourners all return home and salute a light kept at the spot where the dead man expired. Each one of them throws three handfuls of rice over the roof requesting the spirit of the dead man to cause them no grief, but to give them joy. And then such of the mourners as do not belong to the dead man's family go to their homes.

Among some castes, no cooking is done in the dead man's house for quite ten days. The relations cook the food for them and it is called the 'rice of sorrow'.

At night a thin sheet of *ragi* grain or sand is spread over the spot where the man breathed his last. On the grain-bed is kept a vessel full of water. A lamp is also kept burning. The next morning relatives scrutinise the spot for the ghost's foot-prints. The vessel is examined to find out if the water is less. If foot-prints are found and the water has lessened, then it is believed that the man died before his time. Hence he is dissatisfied and will not ascend to heaven. A *shanti* rite is performed to send the man up to heaven.

The Milk and Rice Ceremony:

This ceremony is performed on the third day of death. The mourners go to the grave in the morning. Those

relatives who did not attend on the first day turn up on the third. Dishes that the dead man liked most are placed on the grave. The Madigas draw a figure of the dead man over the grave, and sacrifice a sheep to him in addition to the usual food-offering. If the crows come soon and finish off the food, the dead man is considered to have been satisfied. Else he is not. The relatives take an oath to fulfil the dead man's wishes which they attempt to guess. If no crows come, the food is either thrown into water, or a cow is led to the food.

Among some castes the widow breaks her bangles and removes her other emblems of *sumangalihood* over the grave. No *sumangali* assists her in this task, but only widows.

The relatives return home, and then the corpse-bearers undergo a certain rite. The long wooden pestle (*onake*) is kept in the armpit, and a plate is kept over the shoulder. Milk and ghee are rubbed over the shoulders to relieve the pain of having carried the corpse, and also to express the relatives' gratitude.

On the eleventh day the house is cleaned with cowdung and the walls are whitewashed. The mud-pots in the kitchen are thrown out and new ones are brought. The male relatives shave their heads. Everyone wears clean clothes supplied by the dhobi.

A *kalasa* representing the dead man is kept in the hall. On the *kalasa* are placed the dead one's clothes. Even his tools, like a sickle, or net (if a fisherman), and his betel-bag and snuff-box are kept before the *kalasa*. Vaishnuvaite castes keep a symbol of Vishnu by the *kalasa*, and the Shaivite keep a trident. Either cooked food or raw grains are kept in two trays (one for the deceased and the other for the God) before the *kalasa*. The Agasas address the dead man: "You are no longer on earth, but have joined your ancestors in the *svarga* (heaven). We look up to you for the protection of ourselves and our family." The Bestha prayer is even more selfish: "Don't worry us in our dreams. Please go and join your ancestors. Don't come back to this earth."

The chief mourner accompanied by the relatives then goes to a temple. He stands with his back to the temple-door and throws over his head at the door a butter-ball,

saying "I will reply with the butter-balls those who hit me with stones. Please open the doors of *svarga* for him who is no more." He then throws a turmeric-ball and then a soapnut-powder-ball repeating his wish. The temple priest opens the door from inside. The chief mourner worships the God, and then pays the priest in kind and coin. The party then returns home.

Among the Gangadikara Okkaligas of Hemgiri, the returning party stands at the door of the house and requests the deceased man's spirit which is busy with the food to go away. The food kept before the *kalasa* is then eaten by the surviving agnates.

Among the Holeyas toddy is liberally supplied to the relatives on the eleventh day.

The Sholigas have a curious custom on the twelfth day. "After this, the son proceeds to the burial-ground carrying a stone followed by men from each of the exogamous clans, arrive near a water spot (the grave) where they sit down, while the son places the stone on the ground. They then lift (the stone) in succession and the last man while doing so is said to fall in a trance. On his recovery, leaves (plantain, teak, etc.) corresponding to the number of exogamous septs (in the Sholiga tribe) are arranged round the stone, and on each leaf different kinds of food are placed. The men partake of the food, each from the leaf allotted to his sept, after which the son holds the stone in his hands, while his companions pour *ragi* (grain) over it, and then carries it away to the *gopamane* (burial ground) of his clan, and sets it up there."[1]

Disposal of Pregnant Women:

The belief that the usual method of burial, if adopted for a pregnant woman, means the killing (or murder) of another life has profoundly influenced the disposal of the pregnant woman's corpse. We may mention here that two or three modes of disposal may concurrently prevail in the same caste, or a particular sub-caste may stick to a particular mode of disposal.

The foetus may be removed from the womb by the barber and then buried along with the corpse, or the two may be cremated together.

[1]*M.T. & C., Vol.* IV, p.598.

A simpler, though more grotesque, mode is to place the corpse in the forest edging the village and leave it there, a forked branch supporting its neck. Usually a pail of water is placed by the side of the corpse. Vultures and jackals may gorge themselves with it and then drink the water in the pail.

The husband of the woman has to wander about seven villages to expiate the sin of killing the live foetus. Nowadays seven huts are substituted for seven villages, the penitent man staying in each "village" for a day. He bathes on the eighth day and performs Ganga *puja* (worship of the Ganges) to become pure.

Among the Kadu Gollas "If a pregnant woman dies in a house when husband is away from home, the corpse is cremated, and the house is pulled down and re-erected in another place. The husband should not enter the village for three months."[1]

The third mode of disposal of the pregnant woman's corpse is called *kallu seve* (the stone treatment). Corpses of lepers and of men who die a violent death (such as being struck dead by lightning) are also disposed of in this way. Stones are heaped on the corpse and a few days later only the skeleton remains, the cadevorous flesh having been consumed by vultures.

The *kallu seve* is not performed at the burial-ground, but only outside the villages, preferably in forests and on hilltops. The reason for such a disposal of the leper is to be found in the widely-held belief that burying a leper's corpse is injuring Mother Earth. The angry Goddess will not send the rains if she is defiled by a leper's corpse. There is also a belief that unless a bag of salt is heaped on such a corpse's head, its nails and hair begin to grow!

Death of a Bachelor:

Mr. B. Rangaswamy in his book 'Huttidahalli-Halliyahadu" mentions the prevalence of a custom which seems to be fairly widespread among the many Non-Brahman castes in the State. Bachelors who die are supposed to become dissatisfied ghosts. The "Ira" (that is what the bachelor's spirit is called) may trouble the cows with

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.235.

disease. Hence the ghost of the bachelor is married to someone and this marriage takes place along with some other real wedding in the house.

When an unmarried boy or girl dies in the house it is decided that a particular bull or cow should represent the dead person in his or her posthumous marriage. A cow (or bull, as the case may be) is brought from a family from which a bride could have been selected for the boy. The bull and cow are decorated and then taken to the Iragallu on the outskirts of the village. A new Iragallu is planted there. The bull and cow are married there, and sweets are distributed to those present. Tambula, a dakshina of four annas and eight pies, and the golden chaplet called *patta* which is tied on the forehead of the bridegroom are presented to the bride's family. No one would willingly part with the bull or cow which took part in such a marriage. The Iragallus are worshipped during the Mokhe (August-September) season.[1]

Disposal of an Infant:

A child which has not yet tasted rice is buried without ceremony. But before it is buried, its nose is bored with a *gobbili* (acacia farneciana) thorn. The child is dropped into an anthill. And then a winnow is first laid on the anthill and a heavy slab is placed on the winnow. Thorny branches are placed on top of the slab. These measures are intended to keep away inquisitive jackals.

The reason for boring the child's nose with a thorn has been mentioned before. It is believed that such boring prevents the next child from suffering a similar fate. By boring a hole in the nose the child becomes "different". Its identity changes. There is an implied belief that the dead child will be reborn in the family and an explicit hope that it will survive long. Logic may ask how is it that the nose-boring of a dead infant will result in altering its fate in its next life? It may even ask how nose-boring changes the identity of the child. The belief exists and as far as those that hold it are concerned, the logical difficulties do not matter. It is truer to say that the logical difficulties do not occur at all.

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[1]The *Iragallu* or *Viragallu* are stones erected in memory of men who died in battle, according to some authorities.

An anthill is known for its phenomenal growth. The child is dropped into it in order that it may grow like the anthill in its next life, and of course, there is the implied belief that it will be born in the family again.

Sraddha

Sraddha for either parent on the day corresponding to the parent's death is unknown—or was till recently unknown among the Non-Brahman castes. But all the ancestors are collectively fed on a certain day of the year. Such food is offered during the Dipavali, and the most favourite day of all, the new moon in Bhadrapada (Mahalaya Amavasya). A *kalasa* is set up in the name of all the ancestors and food is offered to them. A Dasayya (Vaishnavite Non-Brahman mendicant) or a Jangama (Shaivite Non-Brahman mendicant) is fed and presented a few annas as *dakshina*.

The Gollas (and a few other castes) go in the evening to the burial-ground. Sandal is applied to the family graves, frankincense is burnt, coconuts are broken and the ancestors are requested to keep the family safe and prosperous.

Among the Kadu Gollas, "on the fourth day, a sum of six *hanas* is paid to the temple priest, who, once in ten or twelve years uses all the money so collected for feeding the castemen in order to propitiate the deceased ancestors. In the name of the deceased, a memorial stone, about a cubit in height is set up at a spot close to the hamlet. During the Mahalaya, relatives of the deceased place over a plantain leaf a *yede* (food-offering) of rice, ghee and jaggery and a new cloth is also placed there."[1]

Sraddha (?) for Women

It is doubtful how far *huvilya* (lit: flower and betel) may be called *sraddha* for a dead woman. In the first place, the Brahmans among whom the *huvilya* exists, offer food to the she-ancestors in their *sraddhas*. Secondly, while the woman who receives the *pindas* might have been a widow in her life, *huvilya* is only for *sumangalis*. Thirdly, *huvilya* is performed only by *sumangalis* and not by men or widows. The *huvilya* is performed on a Friday or a Tuesday, or prior to any marriage that may be celebrated

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.235.

in the house, in memory of any old *sumangali*, or even a first wife who died a *sumangali*. Five Sumangalis are invited to the house and they are presented with bodice-cloths, some dishes, turmeric, vermillion and betel. An young *sumangali* usually performs the *huvilya* for an old relative who died a *sumangali*, before she (the former) wears a new sari.

The difference between the Brahmans and the Non-Brahmans is that the latter instal a *kalasa* in the name of the deceased, while the former do not.

Only the Bilimagga *huvilya* approaches a *sraddha*, it being observed on a certain day (though not the day on which the *sumangali* died) of the year and on no other.

The *huvilya* appears to have originally performed to propitiate the jealous ghost of the first wife. The latter is jealous of the happiness of the second wife and ever intent on doing her some evil. Ghosts are much like human beings, with this difference that they are more powerful.

The Agasas believe that the deceased wife often torments her successor. She makes her rival ill, hysterical etc. The Dombars believe that the remedy for any illness, or any other evil attributable to the deceased wife, lies in the living one wearing a *tali* consecrated in the former's name. The Kurubas believe that often the envy of the first (deceased) wife is the cause of the second one's misery.

Huvilya[1] originated to propitiate the jealous wife. But it also came to be performed in honour of any dead *sumangali* in one's family.

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[1]Information which has reached me subsequently points to the observance of a separate "*Sumangali's* day" among certain sections of the Kannada-speaking Smartha and Madhva Brahmans. Like the *sraddha* for males, the "*Sumangalis'* day" must be performed on the day the *sumangali* died. But the dishes which are obligatory in a *sraddha* are not so here. In fact, a dish which the dead woman liked most is prepared. *Sumangalis* are invited to the occasion. They are given an oil-bath, feasted and then presented with a bodice-cloth.

CHAPTER XIV

A SHORT NOTE ON VRATAS, FESTIVALS, AND RELIGIOUS LIFE IN GENERAL

WE shall very briefly consider the *vratas* here, for they give us an idea of the ideals and hopes of Kannada Brahman women. Incidentally, we shall say a few words about the festivals observed by the people, and festivals drag us inevitably into the religious life of the Kannadigas. A full consideration of the *vratas*, festivals, and religious life of the people is outside the scope of this book, and what is mentioned here may be taken as nothing more than the barest minimum.

Vratas are observed by *dwijas*, especially Brahmans. They are clearly samskritic, and their observance by the Brahmans has influenced the rest, thanks to the latter's desire to imitate the former. These *vratas* are performed by Kannada, Tamil and Telugu Brahmans, barring the Sri Vaishnavas, the followers of Ramanujacharya. Ramanujacharya condemned the observance of these *vratas* as they all clamoured for gifts from the gods.

It is interesting to know what these mortals clamoured for from the gods. We shall first consider the *vratas* exclusively performed by women. The following *vratas* are exclusively performed by them: The *Varamahalakshmi*, *Mangala Gauri*, *Swarna Gauri*, and *Gaja Gauri*, *Bhimeswara Amavasya*, *Somawara Amavasya*, *Vaikunta Chaturdasi*, and *Rishipanchami*, The worship of Gauri is very popular among Kannada Brahman women, and Gauri is very popular because she confers *sumangalihood* on the devotee. The highest ambition of a Kannada Brahman woman is to be a *sumangali*. All the ornaments and marks of a *sumangali* have become the hallowed symbols of a happy life. Turmeric, vermillion, palm-rolls (worn for ear-rings by the very poor), black beads, bangles and *tali* have acquired a religious aura around them, and a woman's emotions towards these is a compound of awe and reverence. They are worshipped on all occasions. A

woman loses her husband because of some sin committed by her in some previous life. A woman's actions, as far as she can help it, are concerned with retaining her *sumangalihood* in this life, and insuring it in her next. Many of the *vratas* promise these to a woman (especially the *Gauri vratas*). The *Bhimeswara Amavasya* is also known as the *Pati sanjeevini vrata* as it prolongs the husband's life. It also stands for the worship of the husband. Some *vratas* promise a good husband. The *Gopadma Vrata* (one of the *Chaturmasya vratas)* ensures longevity, children and *sumangalihood.*

The *Rishipanchami* and *Nirashanarka vratas* however, stand in a different class. The *Rishipanchami* is performed only by a woman who has attained menopause. It shows a great fear of menses, and of the consequences of accidentally touching kitchen vessels etc., while still in her monthly menstrual defilement. The *Nirashanarka* is performed by the husband and wife together to purify themselves of the great sin of cohabiting while the woman was still not free from her monthly menstrual defilement.

The *vratas* performed by men are frequently indistinguishable from festivals. The *Ananthapadmanabha Vrata* in addition to being the worship of this form of Vishnu, is, I think, calculated to procure children as two snakes (one male and another female) are worshipped. The *Shivarathri* is very sacred to the Smarthas, while the Gokulashtami is sacred to the *Madhvas.* The *Rishipanchami* indicates the worship of the sun who is well on his northerly course in the heavens. The sun is credited with powers of burning away evil and sin. The *Ramanavami* celebrates the birthday of Rama, and the worship of Ganesha, who is very popular with the Smarthas, is both a festival and *vrata.* Ganesha is celebrated as the remover of difficulties and the ensurer of success.

The Navarathri is known for the worship of *Shakti* in her various forms: Saraswati, Durga, Chamundi etc. It also expresses loyalty to the ruler, and dolls are exhibited in the house. Women are invited every night of the *Navarathri,* and *arati* is waved before the dolls. The *Navarathri* is also an auspicious period for reading the *Ramayana.*

The Amavasya which precedes the Navarathri is famous among the Brahmans for feeding the *pitris.* The Maha-

navmi (or the ninth day of *Navarathri* is particularly known for the worship of all the ancestors, collectively, among the Non-Brahmans.

Many strands enter into the tangled skein of *Dipavali*, Worship of Lakshmi, of Bali, the commemoration of the death of Narakasura, and the beginning of *Karthika*, the month of lights. In addition to the above, the son-in-law goes for the first time to his wife's house during the *Dipavali*. Husband and wife come together for the first time, and many gifts are given to the son-in-law.

Children know the *Dipavali* as the festival of crackers.

The *Makara Sankranthi* marks the entry of the sun into Capricorn. Oblations of gingelly and water are offered to the *pitris*. The *Makara Sankranthi* is also a kind of harvest festival in which the newly-harvested rice is cooked into a dish called the *huggi* or *pongal*. It also expresses man's gratitude to the cattle which are responsible for his prosperity. Cattle are fed with *huggi*, washed, painted, led out into the grazing fields, and are made to jump over fire. Wishes are expressed for the increase of the herd. This portion of the festival is stressed by the Non-Brahmans, especially by such of them as are connected with agriculture.

There is another aspect to the *Makara Sankranthi*. Women distribute a mixture of copra bits, gingelly, sugar, parched bengal gram and small pebbles of sugar, and bits of sugarcane, halves of copras, and toys among friends and relatives. The well-to-do distribute even small silver vessels if a *son* has been born in the family that year.

The *Kamana Habba* or Holi lets in the summer. The death of Kama is celebrated. Of the Non-Brahmans, the Kunchigas, observe the festival with great pomp. New shirts are worn, and it is obligatory to have *okali* squirted on them. A bonfire is made of old wooden things, and into this bonfire are thrust live cocks and hens. Men beat their mouths and breasts in sorrow for Kama.

The *Ugadi* or New Year is celebrated by the entire Kannada people. New clothes are worn, and men and women indulge in gambling. In the villages, land is tilled ceremoniously, and games are played, and men and women listen to the *panchanga* being read by the priest.

Both the Brahmans and Non-Brahmans worship *Mari* during summer. The latter are greatly afraid of her and supply cocks, hens, and ram to propitiate the blood-thirsty goddess. There is a *Mari* (or some equivalent goddess) temple in every village, and summer is her season. Propitiating her is called 'cooling' her. Bloody ordeals are undergone for her, fire-walking, hook-swinging being some of them. The goddess is said to 'come upon' some persons.

Along with Mari, a number of devils are worshipped. The Brahmans, except the educated classes, also share these beliefs. Belief in magic (including black magic) is widespread. Serpent-images, which are planted on the platform built for peepul trees, are worshipped.

In addition to these, people undertake to go to deities like Biligiri Ranga, Tirupathi Venkataramana, Madeswara, and Nanjangud Srikanteswara on certain specified days in the year to pay homage. It is usual for people to vow to visit one of these places if they are cured of some disease, or if they beget a son. Some of these abovementioned deities are supposed to be family-gods for many people, and the families over which they are reputed to rule pray to them whenever in trouble.

We may now indulge in a generalisation about the religious life of the people. The religious picture is crowded with beliefs in all kinds of deities from Mari, devils, and she-spirits who attack children, to belief in a benevolent god like Vishnu, or Siva. The Non-Brahman religious life stresses the worship of Mari, of devils, and of some local god or goddess over and above worship of Vishnu or Siva. The Brahmans also share the belief in devils and Mari, but worship of Siva or Vishnu is more prominent among them. Consequently the two grow up in different spiritual climates, inspite of the common element of the worship of crude and terrible deities, of belief in black magic, and devil-possession.

CHAPTER XV

DESIRE FOR CHILDREN

THE desire for children is there in every human heart But society might come to place an exaggerated value on sons on the one hand, and belittle daughters on the other. Such a perverted and unnatural evaluation, which might have its origin in particular social habits and beliefs, might often result in tears instead of joy at a girl's birth.

Even extreme poverty rarely kills the deep-rooted desire for children.

> I do not mind poverty,
> So let me have many children,
> And let the Lord's kindness be on me,
> And I know He will take care of my children.

Along with this excessive though natural desire for children runs its psychological counterpart, a fear of barrenness. A Kannada woman's fear of barrenness is bottomless. She does not utter the word *baje* (meaning the root of a particular plant) at night, but substitutes for it the phrase "mother of children". This devious manner of expression has its origin in the fact that *baje* sounds very much like *banje*, the Kannada word for barrenness. It is worthy of note that substitute for a word akin phonetically to barrenness should be "mother of children"! And is it not very natural that the substitute name for *baje* viz.—"mother of children" expresses fear of barrenness and love of children?

This custom may seem trivial. It is not so. A powerful obsession is more likely than a comparatively weak obsession to manifest itself in every trivial detail of life. When something eats its way to the roots of our being, it is likely to colour all our activities and influence every petty incident of our lives.

Brahman beggars who are supposed to be very orthodox do not take alms from the childless, though nowadays beggars are not so fastidious.

There is a popular poem in Kannada folklore[1] which points out, though exaggeratedly, the social attitude towards a barren woman and the deep sorrow of her life. Honnamma, a sterile woman, invites her relatives to a feast. They all come to the feast, but refuse to touch the food because it has been prepared by a barren woman. Not only do her husband's relatives refuse the food, but her own parents and other near relatives. The birds of the forest do not accept the food. The sea-goddess tells Honnamma that she is not keen on eating the dinner as she fears she will become barren. In the end the magnificent repast is emptied into a waterless well.

Honnamma then tearfully prays God Shiva to grant her a son. The callous Shiva advises her to adopt a child. But Honnamma is averse to it. She wants a child that is her own, built within her womb. She curses Shiva, and Shiva, the God, takes revenge by asking men to throw stones at her.

What prevents the relatives, the sea and the birds from eating the dinner is the fear that they will be infected with barrenness if they eat a dinner prepared by the barren woman.

There are a good many poems expressing the pathetic longing of the sterile for children. Here I will quote only a couple.

1

Better be mud than a barren woman
For on the mud will sprout a tree
Offering men shelter from the sun.

2

I wait for long at Vithala's temple
My forehead's vermillion is sticky with sweat
Grant me a son, O Vithala!

Women frenziedly try all sorts of medicines to get rid of sterility. They gulp the navel cord down their throats;[2] swallow a particular insect buried in a slice of plantain;

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[1]Quoted by Mr. M. Venkatesha Iyengar in his article on *Karnataka Janapada Sahitya* in the *Prabuddha Karnataka*, issue No. I 1936, p.19.

[2]In the section on 'delivery rites' I have given a few practices observed by women for getting children.

go on arduous *jatras* (fairs) held at distant places, and perform rigorous *vratas*. All not merely because of the profound maternal instinct, but also because society looks down upon the childless, and treats her as an outcaste.

We shall now return to the preference for sons. This preference for sons seems to be a feature of the patriarchal societies. Many reasons are given for such a preference, and we may here adduce two more.

First, the girl's life bristles with dangers. Her husband may ill-treat her. Her mother-in-law may torture her. Living as she does in her husband's joint family, she might be subjected to insults by her husband's brothers and their wives. They might look down on her if she is dark, and be suspicious of her if she is fair. Worse, she might be barren. Any scandal about her is a slur on all her relatives.

Further, for her parents there is the pain of separation from her at her marriage. There is a poem in *Garatiya Hadu*, a collection of folk-songs, in which the mother, on sending away her daughter, covers her tear-stained face with the end of her sari, and says that she wants no more daughters. Another poem in the book is equally poignant. It advises the woman: "Don't give birth to a daughter. For, if you do, you will have to give her away to someone, weep at her departure, and angrily curse Shiva for causing you this pain."

Patrilocal residence is to an extent responsible for looking down upon the daughter. A daughter goes away some day, whereas a son remains in the parental home till his death. He is the solace of his parents in old age. He will look after them after he is grown up, whereas the daughter runs away to her husband. The tale of Garuda (Vishnu's *vahana*, the Brahmani-Kite) freeing his mother from her bondage to the snakes typifies the social attitude towards the son.

Further, among the higher castes, the capacity of the son to perform the parents' *sraddha* and thus free them from hell has contributed greatly to exaggerating the son's importance. Of course, the question may be asked why did the Samskritic culture come to believe that a son alone was capable of freeing the parents from 'put' and not a daughter?

Observing certain customs and *vratas* is supposed to cure barrenness. Thus among the Jains of Mysore "the funeral of a man is carried on with the greatest pomp, and during it (the funeral) childless women strive to tear a piece from the head of the *sadvi's* dress in the belief that it will ensure their having children."[1]

A favourite remedy for barrenness is Ashvatta-pradakshina or going round the peepul tree a certain number of times everyday early in the morning after a bath. It is a very usual sight, women circling round the huge gnarled trunks in the grey dawn. There is a proverb about a woman who after her first trip round the giant tree hopefully felt her belly!

Another prescription for barrenness is performing the marriage of a peepul and a margosa tree. The husband and the wife together perform the marriage of the two trees, in which the peepul is supposed to be the bride, the *tali* being bound round its trunk. One frequently comes across such a botanical couple, the huge partners happily standing there by the roadside, their trunks intertwined harmoniously.

Worship of the Naga, performing the obsequies of a dead cobra are supposed to make a woman fertile. How did the worship of snakes come to be associated with fertility is a very natural question under the circumstances. Is it because snakes are believed to be very prolific breeders. Or is it because of any other reason? Apart from the worship of the Naga, setting up a stone on which a cobra (or cobras) is carved under a peepul tree is supposed to cure barrenness. Large sums of money are spent on such a rite.

Mr. Lewis Rice describes[2] in detail the worship of cobras in Mysore. "There is scarcely a village in Mysore which has not effigies of the serpent, carved on stone, erected on a raised platform near the entrance, for the adoration of the public." He continues in a footnote on this sentence: "The orthodox arrangement consists of 3 slabs, set up side by side. The first bears the figure of a male cobra, with one or more heads of an odd number

[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.461.
[2] *Mysore, L. Rice.* Vol. I, p.454.

up to 7, the middle slab exhibits the female serpent, the upper half of human form, generally crowned with a tiara, and sometimes holding a young serpent under each arm; the third slab has two serpents interturned in congress, after the manner of the Aesculapian rod or the Caduceus of Mercury, with sometimes a linga engraved between them."

Pilgrimages to the patron deities of one's family are frequently undertaken in order that the curse of sterility may be removed. Holy places like Tirupati (in the Madras Presidency) and Nanjangud in Mysore are visited with the same end in view. Vidurashwattha in Kolar District is visited with the same end in view. It is said that couples sleep under the huge peepul in the night and expect the union to be fruitful.

In one of the inner walls of the temple of Sri Ranganathaswamy at Seringapatam is carved a small nude image of Balakrishna, right foot in mouth. Ladies (especially Srivaishnuva ladies) smear the warty and stony idol with butter. The butter is scooped up with the fingers and then swallowed. This sacred butter is supposed to render the woman fecund.

Woman visit the temples carrying coconuts and plantains for the God. The priest breaks the coconuts before the God and hands over the broken halves to the devotees, If the broken half resembles a cradle, then it is supposed to herald the news of the birth of a child.

The following quotations from Dubois directly bear on the subject:

"At Nanjangud, a village situated about ten leagues South of Seringapatam, there is a temple famous throughout Mysore. Among the numerous votaries who flock to it are many women, who go to implore the help of the idol in curing their sterility. Offerings and prayers are not the only ceremonies which have to be gone through. On leaving the temple the woman, accompanied by her husband, has to go to a place where all the piligrims are accustomed to resort to answer the calls of nature. There the husband and the wife collect with their hands a certain quantity of ordure and form it into a small pyramid, which they are careful to mark with a sign that will enable them to recognise it. Then they go to the neigh-

bouring tank and mix in the hollow of their hands the filth which has soiled their fingers. (But I will spare my readers the rest.[1]) After having performed their ablutions they retire. Two or three days later they visit their pyramid, turn the filthy mass over and examine it as carefully and seriously as Roman augurs scrutinising the entrails of sacrificed animals, in order to see if any insects have been engendered in it. In this case it would be a very good omen, showing that the woman would soon be pregnant."[2]

There are temples in certain isolated places, too, where the most disgusting debauchery is the only service agreeable to the presiding deity. There children are promised to women who, laying aside all shame, grant their favours to all persons indiscriminately. At such places a feast is celebrated every year in the month of January, at which both sexes, the scum of the countryside, meet. Barren women, in the hope that they will cease to be so, visit them after binding themselves by a vow to grant their favours to a fixed number of libertines."[3]

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[1]The couple proceed to drink three handfuls of water, their hands soiled with human dirt.

[2]*Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies,* Dubois, p.594-5. The editor Mr. Beauchamp remarks against this "that no such disgusting practice exists nowadays." But I am told that such practices still exist.

[3]*Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies,* Dubois, p.596.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BASAVIS (RELIGIOUS PROSTITUTES) OF MYSORE

THE Basavis are Non-Brahman women dedicated to the gods. The word Basavi is the feminine of Basava, the bull of Siva.

Basavis are attached both to Shiva and Vishnu temples. "The women who are thus consecrated to Vishnu are called Garuda-Basavis (wives of Garuda) and have the image of this bird (the brahmani-kite) tattooed on their breasts[1] as the distinctive rank of their status. The priestesses of Siva are called Linga-Basavis or women of the Lingam and bear this sign tattooed on their thighs."[2] Apart from this, there are a good many Basavis attached to the village temples, the presiding gods and goddesses of which belong neither to the Shaivite nor to the Vaishnavite group.

Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao favours another interpretation of the word Basavi—an interpretation clearly motivated by a desire to ride his favourite hobbyhorse of a prior matriarchate in Mysore. "The term literally meaning "she-bull" carries with it the import of 'procreator'. This name has been given because she raises progeny for the family."[3] The Basavi like any fertile daughter continues the line. That is not her distinctive characteristic. She differs from her sisters in this that she is allowed a free sexual life. She may cohabit with anyone belonging to her own caste, or to a superior caste. This freedom of sex is also the distinctive trait of the bull.

I have often heard old women chide their self-willed daughters "do you want to be left free like a Basavi?"

We shall now briefly survey the motives which prompt people to dedicate girls as Basavis.

A person desiring male issue may dedicate one of his

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[1] I learn that only the right breast is branded.
[2] *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Dubois, p.133.
[3] *M.G.*, Vol. I, p.187.

daughters to the local god. Any means may be adopted if the end is begetting a son.

"It is not unusual for pregnant women, with the object of obtaining a safe delivery, to make a vow with the consent of their husbands to devote the children they carry in their womb, if it should turn out a girl, to the temple service."[1]

A girl suffering from a serious illness is promised to be dedicated to the god if she recovers. The god is quick to see a benefit and saves her.

"In a few (Holeya) families it is the custom to have always one of their daughters so dedicated; and a council of allied families see to it that there is one such at least among them every year."[2] Similarly some Madiga families dedicate their eldest daughters to the local deities.

Sometimes a girl becomes a Basavi because she is unable to get a bridegroom on account of her excessive ugliness, or some deformity of limb. Thus "if an adult (Vodda) girl cannot get anyone to marry, she may be dedicated to Yellamma, the patron deity."[3]

Often, Basavism is the result of the reluctance to adopt a stranger as a son. After all adoption is an artificial social invention. Inspite of society's over-valuation of a son, a person might be content to have his line continued through a daughter. Especially is this so with the Non-Brahman castes which have not been too deeply imbued with the Samskritic notion that only a son will release the ancestors from hell.

The continuation of the line through the daughter is the origin of the Kannada institution of "Manevalathana" (lit: growth of the house) and the Telugu institution of "Illatum"[4] (lit: acting as the son of the family). In such a case the son-in-law resided with his wife, if the Basavi daughter married a man in conventional style. If she did not so marry she stayed with her father and received her paramours. All her children were legitimate and shared

[1] *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Dubois, p.585.
[2] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. III, p.339.
[3] *Census of Mysore*, 1911, Vol. I, p.100.
[4] In the Illatam and Manevalathana the girl leads a monogamous life with her husband.

their grandfather's property. It is significant that in such a case on the Basavi herself descended the honour of performing her father's obsequial ceremony.

The age at which girls are dedicated or married to the gods or goddesses varies. Among the Madigas dedication invariably takes place when the girl attains puberty. Among the other castes, it is usually as soon as the girl attains puberty, though cases are not rare of a girl being dedicated prior to reaching puberty.[1]

Again, the marriage ceremonies may be either simple or complex. They may also vary with the individual's purse.

"Near Kurubatti Mailari temple, it is said, the Basavis are dedicated in a large number on the day of the god's marriage. The ceremony is very simple. The girls are brought to the temple after bathing, and in front of it *kankanas* and *talis* are tied to them. They have to sleep that night in the temple."[2]

But the ceremony is more complex among other sections of the Bedas.

The marriage pandal is erected on twelve pillars and a procession goes to the temple. To the girl's right wrist a *kankana* is tied, the difference between the ordinary *kankana* and the Basavi's being that a betel is tied to the latter. The girl sits by the side of a dagger. She then rises and pours rice over the dagger in token of her having been wedded to it. Then either the priest of the temple or an old Basavi touches the *tali* which is afterwards tied to the girl's neck. Among the Bedas of Mysore, it is either the priest or the girl's maternal uncle or his son that ties the *tali*.[3]

The girl carries the dagger inside the temple and leaves it there. Then the priest hands over to her a cane and an alms-pouch. The purpose of this practice is made clear by the following observation of Penzer in the "Ocean of Story."[4]

[1]In such a case, it is important to note, a second ceremony of dedication is necessary when the girl comes of age.

[2]*M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.213, g.n.

[3]It may be noted here that either the maternal uncle or his son is a potential husband of the girl. Perhaps one of the three, the maternal uncle, his son or the temple priest, had the honour of deflowering the Basavi. This last is only a suggestion.

[4]Edited by N. M. Penzer, Vol. I, p.257.

"For the next five weeks (after her marriage) she is required to beg in the village, carrying her insignia and shouting 'Ram! Ram!' 'Govind!' as she approaches each house."

If the dedication takes place in a Vaishnuvaite temple the girl is branded first on her shoulders with a *shanka* and *chakra*, the two symbols of Vishnu. And then, if the girl is virgin, a *chakra* (the wheel of Vishnu) mark is also branded on her breast.

If the girl is dedicated in a Shaivite temple, she is branded on the thighs with the linga.

"Some Bedar women whose house deities are goddesses instead of gods, are not branded but a string with white bone beads strung on it and a gold disc with two feet (Vishnupad) impressed on it, is tied round their neck by a Kuruba woman called Pattantha Ellamma (priestess to Uligamma)."[1] Such women are called *hennu Basavis*, or female Basavis.

The girl has to spend the night of her marriage in the temple. It is not known whether she is deflowered that night. In fact, evidence can be had for the opposite view. "A feast is given to the castemen and after three days (after the marriage of the Bedar girl) the girl is free to mate with any man who is not of a lower caste than her own."[2]

The question arises whether the initiation of a Basavi amounts to a marriage with the temple deity, or merely a dedication? If it signifies marriage, then we will be unable to explain instances when the deity is a female. Those who observe the custom have themselves been conscious of the absurdity of 'marrying' the Basavi to a goddess. We have already mentioned that breast-branding is omitted when the deity is a female. The plausible explanation seems to be that either the Basavis were originally confined to temples where the presiding deities were males, or that originally Basavism meant only dedication to a god or goddess and not marriage. Either hypothesis leads us to the conclusion of later human intervention, of tampering with the original institution.

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[1] *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Thurston, Vol. I, p.194.
[2] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.214.

Another question crops up: Is the Basavi married to the idol or to the dagger? In answering this question we may seek light from practices that obtain elsewhere. R. V. Russell says in "The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India":[1] "A feast is given to the caste and the girl is married to a dagger, walking seven times round the sacred post with it."

The religious prostitute (called various names all over India) is married to the idol also. 'The initiation ceremonies of a *bogam sani* include the marriage of the idol of Krishna, and those of a *bogam jan* to a dagger. In the former case a marriage-booth of 16 pillars is put up at the girl's house, whither the idol is brought on an auspicious day."[2] There is no doubt from this quotation that the Telugu-speaking Hindu religious prostitute is married to the idol, while her Muslim sister to the dagger. Why this difference? In Mysore also we have seen that a dagger is kept by the side of the girl. Sometimes, the dagger representing the husband lies by the side of the girl, while a *tali* hanging from the idol is tied to the girl. If the dagger was the husband, why should the *tali* hang down from the idol? It could as well be placed on the dagger and then tied to the girl. If the dagger was the husband, why should the girl be branded with the symbols of Shiva or Vishnu? Why should the priest tie the *tali*? Why should the marriage take place in a temple?

Perhaps the dagger is only the substitute for the deity and the Basavi who is said to be married to the dagger is in reality married to the God that it represents. This explanation becomes more plausible when we learn that among the Non-Brahman castes of Mysore the bridegroom carries a dagger in his right hand, and the Basavi institution is only prevalent among the Non-Brahman castes of Mysore.

As to the sex life of a Basavi, no safe generalisation can be made. It may vary from casual unions with respectable visitors to the temple, to a fairly permanent union with a man of the caste. She is not bound to a rigid monogamy all her life. But neither is she a prostitute selling

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[1]Quoted by N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p.242.
[2]*Ibid*, Vol. I, p.244.

her sex indiscriminately to anyone who has the money to buy it. We learn in Mr. A. Sitaram's short story about the Basavi, "Na Kondha Hudugi" (The girl I killed), that discrimination and the absence of monetary considerations are the two things that separate a Basavi from a prostitute. Apart from this, the Basavi perhaps believes that she is attaining *svarga* through her service, while the prostitute perhaps thinks she is going to hell.

Ananthakrishna Iyer tells us of the Bedar Basavi that "the first man who receives her favours has generally to pay her father the expenses incurred by him for making her a Basavi."[1] N. M. Penzer confirms this piece of information.[2]

The girl may remain in her father's house and receive casual strangers. But she should take care that the persons she unites with are men of her own caste, or belong to a superior caste. The Basavi does not escape the law of hypergamy.

Often "a Basavi lives faithfully with one man, who allows a fixed sum weekly for her maintenance and a fixed quantity of raiment annually, and she works for her family as hard as any other woman. Basavis are outwardly indistinguishable from other women and are for the most part poor coolies. In some places there is a custom by which they are considered free to change their protectors once a year at the village car festival or some similar anniversary, and they usually seize this opportunity of putting their partners' affection to the test by suggesting that a new cloth (sari) and a bodice would be welcome presents. So poor, as a rule, are the husbands that the police aver, that these anniversaries are preceded by an annual crop of paltry thefts and burglaries committed by them in their efforts to provide their customary gifts."[3]

Thus a Basavi's sex life may vary from successive periods with her lovers, or casual unions with visitors to a fairly permanent monogamy. Local custom, her economic position, and her temperament are the factors which determine the pattern of her sex life.

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.264.
[2] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p.257.
[3] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.215.

The distinction between a Basavi and a Devadasi seems to lie in the former's ignorance of music and dancing. Her duties are confined to keeping the temple clean and she has to be present on any occasion on which the deity is worshipped with pomp. She leads the temple processions, torch in hand.

The Basavi seems to have enjoyed an enviable position in society. She was considered the living representative of the goddess to whom she was dedicated. Her presence at a marriage is welcome. If she is present, the honour of threading the tali would invariably be hers. This was because the Basavi was believed to be always a *sumangali*. Whether the perpetual *sumangalihood* of the Basavi was due to her having married a god (or goddess!), or because she had no dearth of husbands, I cannot say. N. M. Penzer however believes that it was because she was married to a god.[1] But I cannot be so positive; for the presence of an ordinary prostitute is regarded as auspicious, because the latter is for ever a *sumangali*, never lacking a husband. Prostitutes are jocularly referred to as Nityasumangalis or eternal *sumangalis*.

The Basavi's children are legitimate. They may marry girls born of the highest kind of marriage, viz: that of a virgin with a bachelor. They are socially higher than the children born to a widow, or a divorcee, or children born outside wedlock.

The Basavi is distinct from the "Kulam-Biddalu" (Telugu word meaning child of the caste.)

While the Basavi is generally a virgin, a Kulam Bidda might be a divorcee, or a widow, or an adultress. She might even have children by her first relation. The woman pays a fine to the caste and seeks the permission of the castemen to lead an unrestrained sexual life. The castemen willingly permit it. They get a good dinner and she is permitted to cohabit only with members of her own caste, or of a superior one. But there appears to be no marriage ceremony at all. Also, while the children of the Kulam Bidda are legitimate, they are relegated to the second social shelf, that is the Kudike Salu.

The Kulam Bidda cannot attend auspicious occasions like mariage. The distinction between a Kulam Bidda and

[1] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p.266.

a Basavi is analogous to a remarried widow and a *sumangali*. But the Kannada counterpart of the Kulam Bidda i.e. the "Kulam Maga" (child of the caste) seems to be fundamentally different.

Among the Holeyas of Mysore 'If a girl remains unmarried from the absence of suitors, she is married to a tree as the *honge*, margosa, *arka*, and dedicated to shrines like those of Biligiriranga and Siddappaji. She may then live with any man of the caste without loss of status. She is known as *kula maga*, 'son' of the family', inherits the rights and privileges of a son and discharges the son's duties by performing the funeral ceremonies and attending to obsequies in respect of her parents. Her children belong to her and are legitimate."[1]

The Kula Maga differs from the Kulam Bidda in many ways: (1) She is not a divorcee or a widow; (2) she is married to a tree, while no such ceremony takes place in the case of the Kulam Bidda; and (3) the children of the Kula Maga do not suffer in status.

Now we may ask whether the Kula Maga and Kulam Bidda are analogous institutions, or are fundamentally distinct from each other? Whether the identity ceases with the name?[1] We might even ask, whether owing to a mistake on the part of the ethnographer a different institution has been unjustifiably labelled as Kula Maga? We can have no such doubts regarding the Kulam Bidda, because it occurs more than half a dozen times in the "Mysore Tribes and Castes" always referring to the same phenomenon Even Thurston mentions it.[2]

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[1]Even that identity is disputable.

[2]Incidentally, we may mention here that the initiation of secular prostitute takes place in a temple. The initiation is styled *gejje-puje* (lit: worship of the *gejjes* or small bells used in dancing) and a Brahman priest officiates at the ceremony. Then the girl is auctioned, and someone hires her for a particular period. It is said that originally the priest had the right of deflowering her.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FAMILY IN FOLKLORE

KANNADA folklore gives us an insight into the life led by the "lower" castes of Mysore. And folklore is fairly trustworthy evidence of the life led by the common people.

The first thing that we notice in folklore is that tender sentiments hover round the mother. The daughter who is living in her husband's house is always thinking about her mother. She contrasts her present hardships with her past happiness, the memory of the million kindnesses of her mother surge up within her making her nostalgic for home. So, the mother is like Benares to the girl. "Five streets away is my Benares" says she.

As it is the mother that makes the parental home worth being homesick for a motherless home is like a waterless tank and the girl is "like the calf that goes to quench its thirst in the waterless tank." But it is not proper for the girl to stay in her parental home after marriage. Home is home only as long as mother is alive. But once mother is dead, the knot is severed. Mother would have fought for her daughter's rights and privileges (some of them exist only to the mother!) as a tigress for her cubs. Her efforts to shower gifts on her daughters must succeed. All opposition, however fair, is crushed under the wheels of her love-juggernaut. The maternal instinct must be satisfied, no matter how much pain, cruelty and self-sacrifice is involved in satisfying it.

Once mother is dead, the parental home ceases to become a temporary refuge from the sadism of the mother-in-law. The brother's wife is now the mistress of the parental house and she pounces on every opportunity of insulting her husband's sister. She goads her husband to insult his sister. What right has she to come to my husband's house? she asks. Why should we allow ourselves to be fleeced by her? Hence the daughter likes to live in her husband's house even if she gets rice-gruel for food, and even if she has to "sweep the floor strewn with her husband's shaven hair"? Comfort and ease do not outweigh humiliation

and insult.

The girl may have a very affectionate brother. But the brother is helpless before the real ruler of the house, his wife.

The woman, even though she has been ill-treated by her sister-in-law, wishes to marry her son to her brother's daughter.[1] (An instance of the prevalence of cross cousin marriage). She goes to her brother's house and asks him if he approves of the match. The brother is about to consent when he sees his wife's wink in the mirror facing him. The sister also sees the wink. Infuriated, she says that she does not want the girl, and that she will get a hundred times more beautiful girl for her son. And then she will visit her brother along with her lovely daughter-in-law.

The brother may be unkind to his sister. In Mr. Venkatesa Iyengar's article a poem which illustrates the brother is cited. The brother returns from the fair with jasmine flowers. His sister asks him, "Brother, have you brought any jasmine flowers for me?" He replies 'no'. But when his wife asks him, he gives her the flowers.

The sister cries out that she will live under crushing poverty at her husband's home in preference to a comfortable life at her brother's. For, the brother's wife has a tongue that insults.[2]

The sister knows what harm the unrestrained sister-in-law can do, and so she jealously advises her brother "do not be lenient with your wife, brother. For, then, you will not be obeyed."[3]

The sister's attitude towards her brother's wife is not always hostile; for instance, there is a prayer for her prosperity in the "Garatiya Hadu." "Let her be fertile; let her own buffaloes, and let the plantaintree in her backyard grow. And let her daughter call me mother-in-law."[4]

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[1] *Prabuddha Karnataka,* issue 1, 1936, p.21. This instance is taken from Mr. Srinivasa's article on folklore.

[2] & [3] *Garatiya Hadu.*

[4] This does not necessarily mean that the brother's daughter will marry the sister's son. The father's sister is synonymous with the mother-in-law in Kannada, the suffix "sodara" that has to be used in the case of the former being often ignored.

The psychology of the sister is a mixture of opposites. She has hatred towards her sister-in-law who is ousting her from her parental home. But there is also the prospect of marriage of her son with her sister-in-law's daughter, and this desire produces a liking for the sister-in-law. The sister hovers between these two emotions.

There are many poems expressing the mutual devotion of husband and wife. A loving husband, and the wife refuses to leave him even for a temporary stay at her mother's. Whatever his status in life, to her "he is like gold to a poor man." Her great love makes her jealous. This jealousy is in some cases well-founded. The husband is interested in other women, but the wife has patience and she brings her husband round in the end.

Absence of compatibility is also mentioned. You may know that your wife is extremely good and all that, still you may not like her because your temperament clashes with hers. Here is an instance of a sister complaining to her brother about her husband: "The shawl is no doubt beautiful, brother, but it has no border; he is no doubt very good, but we can't get on together."

A great disparity of age between the partners produces profound marital disharmony. Mr. Srinivasa mentions a folksong[1] which is of interest in this context: "Oh, old man, I can't live with you" she cries out. "You girl, I have no patience with your coquetry" the old man replies. How can weary senility put up with the love-play of the young?

There is a poem on the good-for-nothing, idle husband: "Did you know her husband, that pot-bellied fool? He did nothing but eat and roam, eat and roam. He died in the last famine."

In the story by Srinivasa, "Mosarina Mangamma", there are a few words on the art of retaining one's husband: "You should occasionally give him things he likes to eat. You should dress well and put a smile on your face, no matter what your worries are. Do not be asking him always money, for something or other. Lend him out of your savings a rupee or two when he asks for a loan. If

[1]Vimarshe, Part I, Essay entitled *Kannadanadina lavani sangathyagalu*, p.79.

the wife does this, the husband will be faithful to her like a dog, else he will stray away."

There are many poems on the subject of the conduct of the girl. Clearly enough, the fear of, and respect for, others are the most desirable qualities in her. "Do not do anything to displease your husband, parents-in-law and neighbours. Act in fear of their censure. Then you will be called a good girl by everyone."

"Do not answer back your mother-in-law even when showers abuse on you."

"I do not want a bride from the West Coast. She stretches her legs on the ground even when men are present. Do you think she will live respectably in fear of her neighbours?"

The housewife has her hands full always. In the morning she sweeps the house-front with cow-dung, and draws *rangoli* designs on it, grinds the corn, cooks, brings water from the tank and looks after the children. She carries the midday food to her husband working in the fields, helps him in his work, and so on. Many poems relate to these various activities of hers.

A woman does not like to marry a man whose first wife is alive. But a worse state of affairs is when the first wife has children of her own. "I would not marry a man with his first wife alive even if he pays me a thousand rupees; and one with children by the first wife, no, not even for a thousand and five hundred rupees."

Then there is the poem about the brother who is anxious —if that does in any way give an inkling of his state of mind—for the hand of his sister's daughter. (Marrying one's sister's daughter is very common.)[1] "He does not want vermicelli. He does not want white sugar. He does not stop asking for my daughter's hand. O brother! she's yours, and now, eat your dinner in peace."

There are a good many love poems dealing with marital, extra-marital and pre-marital love.[2] The following is ad-

[1] *Karnataka Janapada Sahitya*, Part II., *Prabuddha Karnataka* II, 1936.

[2] All the love poems are taken from the *Bailuhalli Survey*, Gorur Ramaswamy Iyengar.

dressed to the paternal aunt's or maternal uncle's daughter: "O, you who wear a golden ring and live in a seven-walled house, my dear, you signal for me and I will come to you." To which she replies "How can I signal, how can I open the door, when my husband is sleeping by my side? You assume the shape of jasmine, and come to rest in my hair-knot."

"Bucksome wench, you come to my green garden, and I will pluck for you juicy betel and make you smile a winsome smile."

"You, with your body full as a well-grown lime! I have fallen for you, maiden! Shall I give up my Mysore job and come here to live with you?"

"You with the dark eyes twinkling under the arched brows! You who are filling your vessels with the tank-water, the cuckoos have forgotten to feed, gazing at you."

"You blue-ringed one, you who are going to the tank, you small-voiced flirt, cast aside your coquetry and tell me the *tera*."

"I will come for you to the dark-stoned valley and the green ravine. I will come for you as soon I hear your signal."

"You who are selling flowers by the roadside, tell me the price of your flowers. Also, tell me your *tera*."

"Who will not gape with desire for the fair girl, for the champak flower, and for the tender tamarind leaves high up on the tree, above one's reach?"

Here are two poems which express the girl's love for the boy—or for the jewels he gives her, as in the first poem.

"One must marry, if at all one does marry, a *Kuppalli*[1] boy. He will make his horse rear and jump, and load his wife with jewels."

"The road to the *santhe*[2] is lined with trees, and at the *santhe* I left my boy and the trees wept away their flowers with grief."

There are also poems expressing the conventional moral judgment.

"Where did the whoremonger end? He became a wild dog, a monkey and at last, the fool, he became the slippers on the whore's feet."

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[1]A village.

[2]Weekly market held in the rural parts.

"The *jumboo* fruit tastes well, but, brother! the *jumboo* tree's branches are slippery. Similarly, the man who flirts with the whore on yonder street will have to pay the price with his head."

Here is advice to one who is having an affair with a married woman. "Don't go to her, for though her body is desirable, you will never win her over." Meaning thereby, that she is too much attached to her husband.

Here is a poem about a randy widow: "This widow visits the *santhe* every week, oils and combs her hair, she is the ruin of our good boys."

There is also a warning uttered to a young bachelor who is being wooed by a divorcee. The divorcee is usually an adultress and a bachelor is told not to go to her as he is too good for her. Throwing pearl to swine!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW — DAUGHTER-IN-LAW CONFLICT IN KANNADA FOLKLORE AND FICTION

REFERENCES to mother-in-law — daughter-in-law conflict are to be found in Kannada folklore, references that apprehend the cause of the conflict with a directness that is surprising. References to this all-important problem of the Hindu joint family are also to be found in a few realistic Kannada novels.

We come across many instances of the mother-in-law driving away the daughter-in-law. She coerces her son to give up his wife. There is, for instance, the story of Uttare whose mother-in-law persuades her son to drive his wife away. Tearful Uttare leaves her husband with difficulty and goes to her parental house along with her three tender children. On her way home many men try to seduce her, but in vain. Her parents and brothers refuse to offer her shelter. It is a shame on their family that Uttare should run away from her husband. This tendency of Uttare is atavistic. Her grand-mother is living down in a tiny hut, far from the town, the sin of running away from her husband. This grandmother is pained at the plight of the girl and advises her to end her misery by "jumping into the river by Hampe."

In another instance, the son replies the mother who is bullying him to give up his wife thus: "what do you think she is, a cow or a calf to be turned loose on the streets at a moment's notice? Is it prudent to give up one for whom you have paid thirtyfive rupees?"

The mother: "I will sell the yarn which I have spun and make good the *tera* you lose. You give her up."

The financial barrier removed, the obedient son has no objection to send his wife out.

In Mr. K. Revappa's collection of folk-songs "Mallige Dhande", we find an instance of the mother-in-law—daughter-in-law fight which lasts for ten years. The mother

repeatedly tells her son to give up his wife. But the son resists, unusually enough. "How can I untie the knot which I have tied with the assent and in the presence of so many ryots?"

The following folksongs summarise the conflict between the mother and the daughter-in-law pithily.

"Joy at the prospect of her coming
But when from you your son she's stealing
Gape your dismayed mouth at the heavens!"

"Why pride at the birth of a son?
You'll repent later, woman.
For one day he'll be his wife's creature."

There is an equally clear apprehension of the nature of the conflict in a few modern Kannada writers. But I single out Mr. Srinivasa from the rest, for his cut and dried statements regarding it. He has touched the problem in his novel "Subbanna", and more fully dealt with it in a short story entitled "Mosarina Mangamma". In "Subbanna" the mother says: "We bring them into this world and we tend them in order that someone else may rule over them one day."[1] "Some woman will come to rule over him after he grows up. He now cries 'mother, mother' at every turn. But when his wife comes, he will not care whether his mother is well or ill."[2]

"The son is the mother's only till his marriage."[3]

The conflict may be due also to the struggle for power. The mother-in-law wants to boss over everything. The house is her kingdom and she must be the absolute sovereign there. In the short story "Mosarina Mangamma", the mother-in-law does not allow her daughter-in-law the freedom to chastise her (the latter's) child. As the author himself says "she wants her son, daughter-in-law and grandson. But everyone must respect her as the mistress of the house."[4]

"The mother never believes that her son is capable of anything evil. Someone must have prodded him. Who could it possibly be? Who else but his wife? It is because mothers want a scapegoat for their sons' sins they

[1] p.85.
[2] *Sannakathegalu*, Srinivasa, p.2.
[3] *Ibid*, p.3.
[4] *Ibid*, p.2.

welcome the daughter-in-law" says Srinivasa in his "Subbanna" (p.13). Why is it that the wife is supposed to be the cause of the evil in her husband? Is this an honest conviction with the mother, or just the rationalisation of her hatred towards the son-stealer?

Persons lose their reasonableness when in the grip of an obsession. The threat of baulked possession makes the mother see her daughter-in-law's hand where it is not. The daughter-in-law becomes an evil genius spiriting away her most valued treasure, her son.

This struggle and pain could have been lessened, if not avoided, if what is called the individual family was the unit of society instead of the joint family. In the joint family there is abundant scope for the clash of wills. In the individual family the couple live away from their parents and thus the tug-of-war between the daughter and the mother-in-law will be lessened, if not totally destroyed.

The husband's sister is at once a cause of the conflict and an active helper of her mother. In "Subbanna" (p.87) we find that the daughter being treated in a way different from the daughter-in-law is a cause of the friction. The daughter gets the best of everything, while the daughter-in-law is insulted at every opportunity.

Apart from this, the psychology of the daughter is such that it is bound to lead to strife. She feels that a stranger is ousting her out of her position at home. She is naturally hostile to the newcomer. She does her utmost to make the newcomer's position uncomfortable.

It does not strike her that soon she herself is going to oust her husband's sisters from some of their freedom and privileges. Why, this hostility does not leave her even after many years' stay in her husband's house! Trouble brews when she returns home for her periodical confinements. This is clearly seen in Srinivasa's "Subbamma".

There is a Kannada proverb which says that the sister-in-law is the stumbling block in the girl's path.

The husband's brothers' wives are also the girl's enemies. They carry tales to the mother-in-law, and complain to their husbands about imaginary insults. The result, not a very infrequent one, is that the joint family splits, each discordant wife becoming the centre of a new house-

hold. A Kannada proverb tells us that a thousand moustaches can live together, but not four breasts.

In Kannada folklore there is a story of one Kempamma who performed *sati*. Just before getting up on the pyre she tells her husband's brothers' wives that all strife is ended on that day. There is no need for them to do any more mischief. They may now live in peace.

To come back to the main theme: A passage in Mr. K. Revappa's collection of folksongs deserves to be translated here: "The girl has no harmonious relations with her husband's sisters. Mother-in-law — daughter-in-law conflict is, of course, a matter of common knowledge. Her sisters-in-law take sides with their mother and wage a ruthless war against her. The only persons to support her are her husband and her father-in-law. The latter likes his son's wife very much. For she is the means of the continuation of his line. And the husband's affection is only natural. The males support her and the women are against her. But the men will be absent from home most of the day. And the women will always be there ever ready to get at her. Hence many daughters-in-law have jumped into tanks to end their lives."[1]

The husband's support obviously does not—or shall we say did not?—count for much, as we learn in that very realistic Kannada novel "Madiddunno Maharaya" by the late Mr. M. S. Puttanna (p.142). The son is too shy to speak about his wife to his elders. Again, speaking about the ill-treatment given to his wife to the head of the family may smack of indiscipline. It amounts to a comment on the existing Head.

Finally, social opinion is against the son who breaks up the joint family. He will be talked about as one who forsook his parents for his wife. And there is also this point to be considered: Are not his brothers keeping quiet even though their wives are suffering the same?

A question which may be legitimately asked here is, how is it that we do not hear of father-in-law — daughter-in-law conflict? Does not the father feel that his son is snatched away from him? Is he not as much attached to the son as the mother? Or, does his greater knowledge

[1] *Mallige Dhande*, p.140. The author's comment on several folksongs dealing with the daughter's-in-law life.

of the world prevent him from this strife? The latter seems extremely improbable for human reason is not powerful enough to fight the obsessions that have gripped the unconscious.

A code of conduct is devised for the daughter-in-law by society. It is the mother's duty to train her daughter up to be an absolutely docile daughter-in-law. The *summum bonum* of a girl's life is to please her parents-in-law and her husband. If she does not 'get on' with her mother-in-law, she will be a disgrace to her family, and casts a blot on the fair name of her mother. The Kannada mother dins into her daughter's ears certain ideals which make for harmony (at the expense of her sacrificing her will) in her later life. There is no denying that this early training is very effective in reducing the conflict to the minimum.

I shall now quote two passages from well-known Kannada novels, passages which describe the ideal daughter-in-law, and the girl is educated with the ideal always in view.

"We shall briefly describe here Seethamma's conduct at her mother-in-law's house. She never got angry at anything said by her parents-in-law and by her husband. She never answered them smilingly. (A smile may indicate lack of respect!) She never laughed while talking to anyone. She avoided all talk with men. When she had to speak to a man, she turned her face away from him. She believed that her husband was her God. She did her work well and spent her leisure in listening to the sacred myths. She avoided bad people. She never talked much with the servant-maids. She never complained that she did not possess a grand sari, or a costly bodice. She never dressed gaudily. She fully covered her breasts with the end of her sari. She did not allow the sari-end to drop down her back so that she may show off her neck-ornaments. She did not like to load herself with jewels. She was always remembering to herself the great *pativratas* of Hindu mythology. She had one quality, however, which displeased her neighbours. She never went to them even if invited. She always remained home doing something or other."[1]

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[1] *Madidhunno Maharaya*, M. S. Puttanna, pp.108-9.

it is a consequential quality necessitated by the constitutive qualities of the thing to which it is attributed.

But the answers to both these questions are more matters for the logic and metaphysics of ethics than for its epistemology.

One topic, however, I have omitted which is of importance for my subject, namely the question of how we choose between conflicting obligations. In one sense this is a question for psychology, not for epistemology, but in another respect it is clearly an epistemological question. I do not know on what principles I choose between conflicting obligations; but I think there may be some slight analogy to the principles on which we reach what Professor Price calls perceptual assurance, or rather, on which we would reach perceptual assurance if the perceptible world and our relation to it were rather different from what they are. I think the nature of the reasoning process in each case may be the same, but since the conditions in which these processes take place are so different in each sphere, it would be unjustifiable to call the process in the case of morals 'moral assurance'. The name of moral acceptance for the other process described earlier is justified since the process takes place in sufficiently similar conditions to those in which perceptual acceptance occurs. Instead of 'moral assurance' I propose to use the name 'moral decision'. My use of the word 'decision' here must not be confused with that sense of 'moral decision' in which the decision is an act of will, a decision to do something or other. I am using the word in a cognitive, not a volitional, sense; the decision is a decision *that* something is the case, not a decision *to* act in a certain way. The word 'decision' is of course used very commonly in this cognitive sense; for example, after weighing the evidence for alternative hypotheses, we decide that the balance of evidence is in favour of one, i.e. we decide that this one is the more probable; a moral decision, in this cognitive sense, is taken after weighing the claims of alternative responsibilities, and the decision is a decision that one of them is the stronger and therefore one's duty. A moral decision in the volitional sense would be a decision to do some action, e.g.

on herself, but also on the mother-in-law. The latter's son may not get another wife for his mother's reputation for cruelty will have spread far and wide. Society insists on a minimum cruelty. But it censures when the minimum is passed.

The son who supports his wife against his mother comes in for much criticism. Here too society is on the mother's side. Society identifies itself with the mother and looks at the affair with her eyes.

Finally, severance from the joint family might economically cripple the individual. The economic position is one of the many links in the chain that binds the daughter-in-law.

One might, on the wohle, say that the daughter-in-law has a hard time of it. Folk-lore is fully conscious that the entry of the girl into her mother-in-law's house is the beginning of the trial of her life. There is a pathetic song in the *mallige dhande* which describes the feelings of the girl's parents as they hand over the girl to her parents-in-law. Marriage, to the girl's parents, then appears as nothing other than washing their hands of the girl. The mother laments that she is giving away one whom she brought into the world after so much suffering and brought up with so much care and love. "My daughter lights up the house with her smiles and we give her away to you as the melon is given away to the scythe." Her brothers wish she were a boy. For then she could have remained with them and taken her share of the ancestral property. The parents are very bitter at the parting. They say they will never have a girl again, if they can help it.

Many poems express the agony of the daughter-in-law. "I had a sinner for my husband and an ogress for my mother-in-law. I ate the food of sorrow and insult at the ogress's house. O, Shiva ! Let the fire of a woman's anger eat up the *banni* tree ; and let it swallow the *kanne* door yonder."[1]

It is said that the conflict lessens soon after the daughter-in-law gives birth to a baby—especially a son.[2] Perhaps

[1] *Huttida-Halli Halliya-Hadu*, B. Rangaswamy, p.86.

[2] An year ago a girl committed suicide at Mysore by jumping into a well because her mother-in-law always accused her of bearing only daughters.

it does. The three persons now get a common object of interest and love. The mother-in-law's instinct for immortality is satisfied in the birth of a grandson. The intensity of her ardour for her son might lessen. Similarly, the daughter-in-law herself now gets another object of love. Her attention is not now exclusively devoted to her husband.

But in some cases the struggle goes on, ending only with either separation of the pair from the joint family, or death of one of the fighters. Sometimes the mother-in-law might succeed in having the daughter-in-law driven out of the family.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

FROM the customs, beliefs, vratas and extracts from folklore and fiction given in the preceding chapters, a fairly accurate idea of the position of women in society may be gathered. We will here only put together in one place what has been scattered in the preceding chapters.

In dealing with this important topic of the position of women in society, we have to stress the danger of generalising for the entire Kannada society. Kannada society consists of many cultural layers viz., the tribes, the lower and the higher castes. Again there is the cross section of the educated classes. A generalisation which might hold good for one cultural layer might not hold good for another.

The Brahman and the Non-Brahman castes are patriarchically biassed. But the Brahmans (and to a slightly less extent, the Kshatriyas and Komatis) are influenced to a greater degree than the Non-Brahmans by the Samskritic culture. As to the Kannada tribes in Mysore, there is not enough evidence to safely generalise upon.

In the patriarchically-biassed Kannada society, woman on the whole, occupies a lower position than man. But this is not to say that either woman feels the oppression, or that she is totally without influence in directing of the affairs of the family.

Woman herself does not feel the oppression thanks to a psychological process by which woman has come to believe that the ideals society has created for her are her own. She now believes in, and entirely upholds, the ideals which man once made for her. (Note: A similar phenomenon is visible in some Non-Brahman castes living in the rural parts. Especially so, the old and middle-aged men of the caste. They acquiesce in, and take for granted, the alleged Brahman superiority and condemn their youngsters for not showing the due deference to Brahmans), Mr. Bendre in his play *Nageya Hoge* (The Smoke of Scorn) points out that woman herself is the cause of much per-

secution attendant on a woman who disobeys the man-made ideals.

Secondly, these may be a wide gap between a theoretical conception of woman's position held by society and her actual position. Another important factor to be reckoned with here is the individual. No patriarchal society has completely succeeded in effacing the domineering woman out of existence. "Apart from theory, primitive woman by force of her personality is probably as often the ruling spirit of her home as with us."[1]

If the social organisation had succeeded in subjecting woman to man, where would be any sense in the "dominance tests" indulged during marriage? The purpose of the "dominance test", we have pointed out, is to find out which of the two partners will dominate in married life. The existence of this test is a confession of the defeat of the social law at the hands of individual heredity. If the argument is tried to be rebutted by saying that the "dominance tests" are survivals from a matrilineal organisation, then we have to point out that the very wide prevalence of this test in different parts of the world renders the assumption very questionable. Further, the existence of the "test" in a matrilineal society itself proves our thesis : that, in spite of a hostile social organisation, individual men assert themselves in their marital lives.

As a matter of fact, women, especially old women, wield a large influence in the management of household affairs.

Again, the greater education of woman is helping to raise her position. The greater education, the increasing opportunities for women to take part in public life, etc., are fast contributing to bring about at least a theoretical equality of status.

We have already remarked on the general preference for the male child. Here is a custom which illustrates this prejudice further. Among the Banjaras "the mother of a male child is given a silver *tali* to be worn round her neck on a Thursday after the purificatory bath. This is styled the Devi *tali* and has a flower engraved on it, if it is for the first son, and two flowers if there are two or more sons. The birth of a daughter does not count and no figure is added to the *tali*."[2]

[1] *Primitive Society*, R. H. Lowie, p.202.
[2] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. II, p.363.

I also learn that while *shanti* rites are performed for the son born under cruel stars, such rites are often omitted for daughters.

"A young daughter-in-law is regarded as immoral and unmannerly, if she should happen to enter the outer or male compartment of the house. No married female is permitted to leave the house without the permission of the male or female head of the house. Women take their meals after the men and the choicest part of the food is given first to the males and the residue for the females."[1]

These remarks are made by the late Ananthakrishna Iyer in connection with the Brahmans of Mysore. Even with respect to the Brahmans, I do not know how far the second sentence in the para holds good. To say that women take the permission of men whenever they wish to leave the house is exaggerated.

Among the very orthodox Brahmans, and especially among those living in the villages, women eat on the leaves on which their men have taken their food.

Looking up to the husband as one's God and the desire to predecease him are still extant ideals. I do not know how far the educated (in the sense of school-going) girls of to-day have escaped the influence of these ideals.

There is a passage in Mr. M. S. Puttanna's "Madidhunno Maharya" (pp. 152-153) which makes interesting reading: "She washed her husband's feet and sipped of this *thirtha*. She did not take her meal prior to drinking that *thirtha*. When her husband was away from the village, however, she drank from a tumbler in which this water was collected."

A similar attitude is displayed by a present-day girl in Mr. Srinivasa's social play "Manjula". The girl is hurt when her elder sister calls her husband what he is, an imbecile. "Even if he is an imbecile, he is my God and you do not say anything against him" she replies. (In the same play we learn that formerly it was considered improper for husband and wife to see each other before the consummation ceremony was officially celebrated. This rule perhaps came into being to prevent birth of a child before the consummation ceremony was celebrated).

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[1] *M.T. & C.*, Vol. I, p.396.

Of course, new tendencies are seen to-day with the education of men and women. The educated classes, it need not be reminded here, are but a very small fraction of the society. Society is far away, very far away, from a condition in which the personality of woman, her right to develop herself and to live her life, are recognised.

The educated wives are loathe to serve under their mother-in-law. The ideological gap is so wide that the attempt to keep the two under one roof seems to be sheer folly. Educated young men, in spite of the whole force of social heritage against them, are furtively wishing for the individual family.

In the rural, uneduiated parts women are the despair of the joint family. But even now both the types of family, joint and individual, exist in the rural and urban areas.

Whether the individualistic strain visible in the educated classes is for better or worse, one cannot say. Both systems of family have their advantages and disadvantages. But the modern youth believes that the individual family is better. He agrees with the sentiment of Aldous Huxley: "The banyan is like the Hinu family. Its scions remain, even in maturity, attached to the parent tree. The national tree of England is the oak, and English families—once, no doubt, as banyan-like as the Indian—are coming to resemble handfuls of scattered acorns that grow up at a distance from the tree of their origin. Those who have had in India or on the continent of Europe, any experience of the really united banyan family, can only feel thankful at the turn our social botany is taking."[1]

[1]A. Huxley, *The Jesting Pilate*, p.124.

APPENDIX (A)

A LIST OF THE MAIN KANNADA CASTES

(These castes themselves contain a number of sub-divisions)

1.	Agasa	.. Washerman
2.	Arasu	.. Kshatriya. The aristocracy. The Arasus living in villages are, however, landlords and cultivators.
3.	Bakkaru	.. Untouchable. Also called Bagga Holeyas. Manual labourers.
4.	Banajigas (Kannada Section)	.. Traders. Many of them are Lingayats by religion.
5.	Beda	.. Hunter.
6.	Bestha	Fisherman.
7.	Bilimagga	.. Weaver.
8.	Brahmans	.. Priests, government servants and landlords.
9.	Devangas (Kanna Section)	.. Weavers. ..
10.	Ganiga (Kannada Section)	.. Oil-presser.
11.	Goniga	.. Gunny-bag maker.
12.	Holeya	.. Untouchable workers in fields, betel-sellers etc.
13.	Kumbara	.. Potters.
14.	Kurubas	.. Shepherds. They also include a tribe called "Kadu Kurubas" living in the jungles. Jenu Kurubas are a wild people who collect honey.
15.	Madiga	.. Untouchable labourer.
16.	Medar	.. Basket-maker.
17.	Nagartha	.. Trader.
18.	Okkaliga	.. Cultivator
19.	Panchala	.. Artisan.
20.	Sadaru	.. Agriculturists and traders.
21.	Sholiga	.. Wild tribe living in the Biligiri hills, Mysore.
22.	Toreya	.. Fisherman.
23.	Uppara	.. Worker in salt-pans.

OTHER NON-KANNADA CASTES

1.	Banajiga (Telugu Section)	Trader.
2.	Banjara	A tribe speaking a dialect akin to Hindi. Carriers and drivers of pack bullocks.
3.	Dasari	A caste of religious mendicants speaking either Telugu or Kannada. A composite caste.
4.	Darzi	Tailor. Usually Mahrattas.
5.	Gollas	Mahratta and Telugu cowherds.
6.	Handi Jogi	.. Vagrant mendicants, speaking Telugu. Recruited from many castes.
7.	Jettis	.. Professional wrestlers. Telugu-speaking.
8.	Idiga	.. Toddy-drawer. Telugu speaking.
9.	Iruliga	.... Tribe speaking a mixture of Tamil and Kannada.
10.	Komati	.. Merchants, Telugu.
11.	Koracha	.. Tribe of carriers, wandering criminals, and fortune tellers, speaking the language of the place they live in.
12.	Mudaliyar	.. Tamil agriculturists, and government servants.
13.	Nayinda	.. Telugu barber.
14.	Reddi	.... Agriculturist, Telugu.
15.	Tigala	.. Tamil caste of kitchen and flower gardeners.
16.	Vodda	.. Telugu earth-and-stone-workers.

APPENDIX (B)

TERMINOLOGY OF KINSHIP

(1) *Father Group.*

Father	.. .. Appa (or Thande)[1]
Mother's elder sister's husband Father's elder brother(s)	Doddappa (lit: 'Big Father'.)
Father's younger brother(s) Mother's younger sister's husband	.. Chikkappa (lit: 'Small father'.)

(2) *Mother Group.*

Mother	Amma (or Thayi)[1]
Mother's elder sister(s), Father's elder brother's wife	.. Doddamma (lit: 'Big mother'.)
Mother's younger sister(s), Father's younger brother's wife	.. Chikkamma (lit: 'Small mother'.)

(3) *Brother.*

Brother (elder to the person speaking)	.. Anna
Brother (younger to the person speaking)	.. Thamma
Father's brotheris sons (elder to the person speaking)	
Father's brother's sons (younger to the speaker)	
Mother's sister's sons (elder to the speaker)	.. Anna
Mother's sister's sons (younger to the speaker)	.. Thamma

(4) *Sister.*

Elder sister	.. Akka
Younger sister	.. Thangi
Father's brothers' daughters (elder to the speaker)	.. Akka
Mother's sisters' daughters (elder to the speaker)	
Father's brothers' daughters (younger to the speaker)	
Mother's sisters' daughters (younger to the speaker)	.. Thangi

No distinction is made as to the sex of the speaker.

(5) *Son Group.*

Son	.. Maga
Brothers' sons (M.S.)[1]	.. „
Husband's brother's sons	.. „
Sisters' sons (W.S.)[2]	.. „
Wife's sister's sons	.. „
First son	.. Hiriya Maga
Youngest son	.. Kiriya Maga

The others are distinguished by calling them second son, third son and so on.

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[1]Appa and Amma are vocative terms while Thande and Thayi are denotative terms.

(6) *Daughter Group*

Daughter	..	Magalu
Brother's daughter (M.S.)	..	,,
Sister's daughter (W.S.)	..	,,
Husband's brothers' daughters	..	,,
Wife's sisters' daughters	..	,,

(7) *Grandson Group*

Grandson	..	Mommaga
Son's sons	..	,,
Brothers' sons' sons (M.S.)	..	,,
Brothers' daughters' sons (M.S.)	..	,,
Sisters' daughters' sons (W.S.)	..	,,
Sisters' sons' sons (W.S.)	..	,,
Wife's sisters' sons' sons, or wife's sister's daughters' sons	..	,,
Husband's brothers' sons' sons, or husband's brothers' daughters' sons	..	,,

(8) *Grand-daughter Group*

Grand daughter	..	Mommagalu
Sons' daughters	..	,,
Daughters' daughter	..	,,
Brothers' sons' daughters, or brothers' daughters' daughters (M.S.)	..	,,
Sisters' daughters' daughters or sisters' sons' daughters (W.S.)	..	,,
Wife's sisters' sons' daughters, or wife's sisters' daughters' daughters	..	,,
Husband's brothers' sons' daughters, or husband's brothers' daughters' daughters	..	,,
(9) Husband	..	Ganda
Wife	..	Hendati
(10) Grand father	..	Tata or Ajja
Mother's father		,, ,,
Father's father		,, ,,
(11) Grand mother	..	Ajji
Mother's mother	..	,,
Father's mother	..	,,

[1]M.S.: Man speaking.
[2]W.S.: Woman speaking.

(12)	Great Grand father	..	Mutthata or Mutthajja
	Great Grand mother	..	Mutthajji
(13)	Grandson	..	Mommaga
	Grand-daughter	..	Mommagalu
(14)	Great Grandson	..	Mummaga or Marimaga
	Great Grand-daughter	..	Mummagalu or Marimagalu
(15)	Son-in-law	..	Aliya

A man's sister's son is called Sodara-Aliya. Sodara is derived from the Samskritic Sahodara (from the same womb) applied to the man with reference to whose sister's son the term Sodara-Ailya is spoken.

	A woman's brother's sons	..	Sodara Aliya
	Also husband's sisters' sons and wife's brothers' sons	..	„ „
(14)	Daughter-in-law	..	Sose
	Son's wife	..	„
	Brother's daughter (W.S.)	..	Sodara Sose
	Sister's son (M.S.)		
	Husband's sisters' daughters	..	„ „
	Wife's brothers' daughters		
(15)	Father-in-law	..	Mava
	Wife's father	..	„
	Husband's father	..	„
	Also wife's father's brothers	..	„
	Husband's father's brothers	..	„
	Father's sister's husband Mother's brothers	..	Sodara Mava
(16)	Mother-in-law	..	Aththey
	Wife's mother		„ „
	Husband's mother		„ „
	Also wife's mother's sisters		„ „
	and husband's mother's sisters		„ „
	Father's sisters	..	Sodara Aththey
	Mother's brother's wife		„ „

The two families which come together by marriage call each other Beegaru. And Beegaru are known for formality.

Wife's sister's husband	..	Shaddaga
Husband's brother's wife	..	Varagitti

(17) *Nadini and Aththige relationships.*

Father's sister's daughter	..	Nadini
Mother's brother's daughter	..	„
Wife's sister—younger	..	„
Wife's sister—elder	..	Aththige
Husband's sister—elder	..	Aththige
Husband's sister—younger	..	Nadini
Younger brother's wife	..	Nadini
Elder brother's wife	..	Aththige

(18) *Bhava and Bhavamaida relationship.*

Wife's brother, elder	..	Bhavamaida
Wife's brother, younger		„ „

(In some parts of the Karnatak the wife's brother is also called Bhava).

Husband's brother, elder	..	Bhava
Susband's brother, younger	..	Bhavamaida or simply maida.
Sister's husband, elder	..	Bhava
Sister's husband, younger	..	Bhavamaida
Father's sister's son (younger than speaker)	..	Bhavamaida
Mother's brother's son (younger than speaker)	..	Bhavamaida
Father's sister's son (older than speaker)	..	Bhava
Mother's brother's son (older than speaker)		„ „

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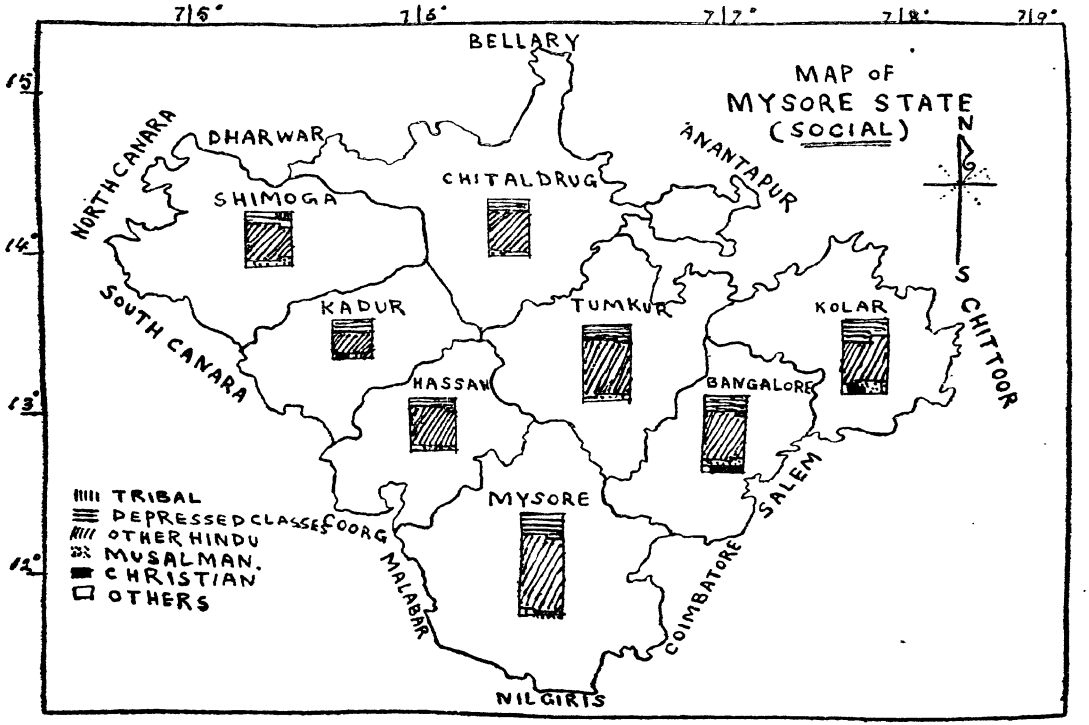
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Map of Mysore showing distribution of population by religion.

Taken from the Census of Mysore, 1931—Vol. I)