

SIVALLI BRAHMANAS : A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THEIR ORIGINS

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The myth of the origins of the Sivalli brahmins is given in the Grama Paddhati, a Tulu manuscript which has various recensions in the South Canara district. In essentials it states that the western coast was reclaimed from the sea by Parasurama who threw his axe from the top of the Western Ghats and got the portion thus covered for settlement. Since there were no brahmanas in the new land he is said to have torn up the fishermen's nets and invested fishermen as brahmanas. He then left to meditate asking the brahmanas to call him if they faced any difficulty. When these brahmanas called upon him merely to test his veracity, he cursed them and stripped them of their brahmanahood and they reverted to sudra status. Thereafter there were no brahmanas in the region until Mayuravarman Kadamba brought in genuine brahmanas from Ahiksetra.¹ Another tradition which is mentioned by Buchanan and quoted by Sturrock on the same authority, states that Parasurama gave the reclaimed land to certain brahmanas called Nayar and Matchy (?) who were not true brahmanas. They were however, dispossessed by fishermen and pariahs who controlled the land before the advent of true brahmanas brought in by Mayuravarma Kadamba.²

1. J. Sturrock, Madras District Mannuals, I, South Canara, (1894), p. 144.

2. Ibid, p. 145, quoting Buchanan, 'A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Vol. III, p. 163.

Traditions in Kerala similarly credit Parasurama with the creation of the western coast which he reclaimed from the sea at the request of Rsis. Thereafter, noting the lack of brahmanas among the settlers of the new land, he is said to have brought in sixty-four families of brahmanas from Aryabhumi who were the Nambudiris. He is said to have divided Kerala into the following divisions: (i) Haiga from Gokarna to Sitanadi, (ii) Tularajya from the Sitanadi to the Payasvini river, (iii) Kularajya from the Payasvini river to Pudupattana, (iv) the Kerala rajya from Pudupattana to Kanneli and, (v) Musika rajya from Kanneli to Kanyakumari. In the Tularajya, the brahmanas are said according to the Kerala traditions to have been settled in Kolluru, Komala, Bellare, Vengadu, Sankaranarayana, Venkata, Kota, Maira, Kotesvara, Sivalli, Udupu, Vitla, Panja, Majesvara, Kumaramangala and Anantapura.³ In both traditions we see a tendency among the brahmanas to claim legitimacy by connecting with North India which is viewed as the repository of true brahmana culture and populations. While in the Kerala tradition, we find the import of brahmanas from Aryabhumi credited to Parasurama himself, in the Tulu traditions, the final credit is given to Mayuravarma Kadamba.

Mayuravarman, in the *Mayuravarmana caritra* of the Tulu brahmanas is enjoined by the sage Kasyapa (and in another version by the sage Markandeya) to bring worthy brahmanas from Ahiksetra to sanctify the land by their *yajnas*. Accordingly, he goes to Ahiksetra, which is described as being situated to the south of the Meru mountain and brings back thirty-two families. These families are settled in Kandarpakanana (three families), Gokarna (four families), on the banks of the Suktimati in Kotesvara (two families), on the banks of the Sitanadi, at Ajapuri and Gajapuri (two families), at Udupi's Rajatapitha (ten families) and on the northern banks of the Netravati (nine families).⁴ According to the

3. M. Ganapathi Rao Aigal, 'Dakshina Kannada Jilleya Pracina Itihasa' (in Kannada), (Mangalore, 1923), p. 11.

4. Ibid, p. 19.

Mangalore version of the *Grama Paddhati*, Mayuravarman had himself placed at the disposal of the Ahichhatra brahmanas the services of the Nayar people from the Malabar while the Puttige version avers that the servants were from Gorastra.⁵ But after the death of Mayuravarman, these families returned to Ahiksetra and compelled his son, Candrangada, to recall them. He granted land to these thirty-two families and assigned them tenants to till the land.

Sister Liceria in her article on the migration of brahmanas to Karnataka believes that the traditions quoted above point to the fact that brahmanical influence in South-western Karnataka dates from the eighth century when Mayura varman introduced them here.⁶ While the eighth century date for brahmana influence in South Canara might be fairly accurate in that the earliest records from this area date only from that period,⁷ it is doubtful whether Mayuravarma Kadamba should be credited with the introduction of brahmanas here. In the first place, the historical Mayuravarma is to be dated to the close of the third century and the Talagunda pillar inscription shows that he chose affiliation with the brahmana *varna* rather than the ksatriya⁸. It is only after the establishment of the kingdom by him that he might have settled for the varna suffix

5. B. A. Saletore, *Ancient Karnataka, Vol. I, History of Tuluva*, (Poona, 1936), pp. 299-300

6. M. Liceria A.C. "The Migration of Brahmanas to Karnataka", in K.M. Shrimali (ed) *Essays in Indian Art, Religion and Society (Indian History Congress Golden Jubilee Year Publications, Vol. I)*, (Delhi, 1987), p. 122.

7. The earliest inscription from South Canara comes from Vaddarse in Udupi taluk and is dated by K.V. Ramesh to the mid-seventh century. It records a grant made for feeding brahmanas-a common and enduring act of piety in this district throughout the early and later middle ages, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 313-316.

8. *Epigraphia Carnatica* (henceforth *EC*), vol VII, Shikaripur 176, v. 7.

9. *EC*, Vol. VIII, Sorab 33, *EC*, Vol. VII, Sagar 29.

and even then the caste affiliation claimed by the early Kadambas is more accurately brahmaksatriya rather than puerly ksatriya. The early Kadambas claimed to belong to the Manavya gotra and to be Haritiputras.⁹ In the various versions of the Tulu *Grama Paddhati*, however, Mayuravarma is said to have belonged to the Surya vamsa and to have been the son of Hemangada and Susila while the Puttur version states that Vasu, the father of Susila, was the son of Kadamba, who is said to have been the son of Paramesvara and Parvati. This version of the Kadamba dynasty's foundation became current only in the eleventh and twelfth century A.D. Several later Kadamba records state that Mayuravarma was the son of Rudra and was born under the Kadamba tree which gave the dynasty its name¹⁰ while the name of Mayuravarman was derived from the crown of peacock feathers bound on his head.¹¹ In similar fashion while the Kadambas' early contemporaries, the Gangas had earlier claimed merely to be Kanvayanas,¹² their cognatic descendants in the twelfth century set forward the legend of a solar descent and migration from the north.¹³ Interestingly, the founder princes of the Ganga dynasty are said to have migrated south in the company of forty-eight barhmanas in the twelfth century versions—a detail which A.R. Baji¹⁴ connects with the Tuluva traditions of Mayuravarma inviting brahmanas from Ahicchatra to settle in the south. Thus between the fourth and twelfth centuries, the emphasis

10. *EC*, Vol. XI, Davanagere 35.

11. *EC*, Vol. XI, Davanagere 35.

12. All the inscriptions of the Western Gangas compiled by K.V. Ramesh in his *Inscriptions of the Western Gangas* (New Delhi, 1984) - a representative collection bears out the contention that between the fourth and the tenth only affiliation to the Kanvayana Gotra was claimed.

13. *EC*, Vol. VII, Shimoga 4, 10, 64; *EC*, Vol. VIII, Nagar 35.

14. A.R. Baji, "Origins of the Western Gangas", in the *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XXX, (1952), pp. 181-191.

of the dynastic claims had changed from affiliation to a brahmanical *gotra* to exalted descent from either the *surya* or *candra vamsa*, or from an eponymous ancestor who was of divine descent. The choice of the latter version in the *Grama paddhati* would date it -in all its versions indubitably to the post-twelfth century. The detail in the Ganga origin myth might indicate that the tradition of brahmana migration from the north was already current in the twelfth century.

An earlier inscription of Nitimarga Ereyappa Ganga II of AD 904 records that a colony of brahmanas from the northern *agrahara* of Ahichhatra had settled at the Sthanagundur in Banavasi *viaya* whence a brahmana, Sivaryya seems to have settled in the Ganga kingdom as a vassal of the Ganga King.¹⁵ In this record, we have no evidence to connect the brahmana migration from Ahichhatra to Karnataka with Mayuravarman. However, in a record of AD 1092 from Tanagundur the brahmanas there are again said to have come from Ahichhatra and numbered 32,000 and they were settled in 144 villages acquired as gifts in the eighteen horse sacrifices of Mayuravarma.¹⁶ This gives us a clue as to how the migration of brahmanas from the northern *agrahara* came to be connected with Mayuravarman and the significance of the number thirty-two. The fact that Sthanagundur *agrahara* was situated in Banavasi *visaya* and was the site of the historic Pillar inscription which gives us the first clues as to the origins of the Kadambas makes the association of Mayuravarman with this legend particularly apposite. But it is still not clear as to why this account should have been incorporated in the Tulu *Grama Paddhati* when there is no appreciable evidence as to Kadamba influence in South Canara. This is not to say that the Kadamba chiefs did not have any presence in this district. The Bantra inscription (Mangalore taluk) of the mid-ninth century refers to a chief whose name is not given who is said to have

15. *EC* (new ed), Vol. III, Nanjangud 402. Also vide *EC* (new ed), Vol. IV, Chamrajnagar 354 for the role of Sivarya as a military vassal.

16. *EC* Vol. VII, Shikaripur 178.

belonged to the Katamba *kula* who is placed on an equal standing with Nrpamallaraja of Alupa lineage. These two kings together with several other minor chiefs such as Racamallan, Dugaraja, and Narasingam Dugaraja entered into a peace agreement with each other was witnessed by the Vaidya of Sadanur, the priests of the temple (*degula*) of that *ur* several other brahmanas.¹⁷ Evidently, some Kadamba chiefs did have a foothold in South Canara, which is not surprising considering that their original stronghold was in the North Canara and Shimoga districts adjoining South Canara. The Alupa hold over Patti Pombuchhapura in the Shimoga district¹⁸ also contributed to the contacts with the Kadambas. But the tradition of Mayuravarman Kadamba having invited brahmanas from Ahichhatra to settle in this area possibly owes its origins to the fact of some brahmanas from the major *agraharas* of the Shimoga district, such as Sthanagundur, Kuppatturu *agrahara* and Gauja *agrahara* migrating to South Canara district in the course of time. Gururaja Bhat had in fact suggested that the migration of brahmanas from these major *agraharas* in the Shimoga district to the South Canara district took place as a result of the Cola invasions in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which entailed a large scale destruction of life and property even in *agraharas* in Karnataka.¹⁹ In his later work, the *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture* (1973), however, he dates this migration from Sthanagundur and Kuppatturu to about the sixth or the seventh centuries on the basis of the fact that brahmanas are mentioned as early as the seventh centuries, that

17. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 23-26.

18. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, pp. 20-21 of the beginning of the ninth century. However,, P.N. Narasimhamurthy identifies Patti Pombucchapura with Hattiyangadi in the Kundapura taluk in his *Ulluru Sri Kartikeya Subrahmanya Devasthanana, Kandavara: Ksetradhyayana mattu Paricaya*, (Kandavara, 1996.

19. P. Gururaja Bhat, *Tulunadu: Samajika Caritreyalli ondu Samshodhanatmaka Vivecana*, (Udupi, 1963), pp. 93-94.

the earliest references to Sivalli agrahara date from the eighth century and the Udupi Anantesvara temple and the Narasimha image worshipped by the Kota brahmanas might on stylistic grounds be ascribed to the seventh or eighth centuries.²⁰ On the face of it the theory of migration from Sthanagundur and Kuppattur is plausible, particularly when we recollect that Sivarya, the brahmana mentioned in the Gattavadi plates of Nitimarga Ereyanga II had migrated to Gangavadi from Sthanagundur. Similar migrations by other brahmanas to greener pastures at the invitation of other regional rulers is very likely to have taken place. The date of such a migration if one can be fixed has to be determined.

Yet another controversy is around the location of Ahichhatra or Ahiksetra. The Puranic Ahichhatra was the capital of North Pancala and is to be identified with Ramnagar in Bareilly district where a fortress is to be found. It was also called Chatravati in the Mahabharata.²¹ According to Gururaja Bhat, Ahichhatra and Ahiksetra are the same, Francis Buchanan in his *Journey* locates Ahichhatra in Telingana and states that the Haiga and Tuluva brahmanas were brought in by Mayuravarma from there.²² But according to the Kota Brahmanas' Koota Mahajagattu, Ahiksetra was located on the banks of the Godavari river whence Mayuravarman brought brahmanas to settle along the western coast. This view had earlier been given in the Madras District Manual of South Canara by Sturrock as well. He however, questions this on the basis of the fact that the Kadambas of Banavasi had no known connection with the banks of Godavari. He goes on to commend the view of the North Canara Gazetteer

20. P. Gururaja Bhat, *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, Udupi, 1973, pp. 238-241.

21. P. Gururaja Bhat, *Tulunadu: Samajika Caritreyalli ondu Samshodhanatmaka vivecane* (in Kannada), p. 228.

22. F. Buchanan, *Journey From Madras Through Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, Vol. III.

which suggests that Ahiksetra was merely the Sanskritized form of Haiga, or the land of the snakes. The tradition speaks of brahmanas having been brought from Gokarnam which is in the northernmost part of Haiga by Lokaditya. The local history of the Honnali *matha* in Sunda in North Canara district also speaks of Gokarnam as being in Ahikestra. Gokarnam is believed to have been a brahmana settlement in very early times.²³ But migration from Gokarna is hardly likely to bestow much legitimacy on the brahmana immigrants as the migration from Aryavarta would. Another tradition recorded in the North Canara Gazetteer speaks of the Havika brahmanas as having come from Valabhipur. This ties in with the arrival of the brahmanas at Gokarnam prior to their distribution throughout Tuluva as suggested by the Gazetteer which adds that the destruction of Valabhi in Kathiawar by the Arabs in the seventh or eighth century might have resulted in the migration of brahmanas from there along the western coast to Kamataka.²⁴ The *Mayuravarman Carita* in the Mackenzie Collection in fact, states that Mayuravarman himself hailed from Valabhi and brought brahmanas from there to the west coast and Banavasi.²⁵ We certainly have several chiefs in Karnataka in the early medieval period who claimed to be lords of Valabhipura²⁶ although I have not hitherto come across references to brahmanas claiming to have migrated from there.

EPIGRAPHIC REFERENCES TO BRAHMANAS IN SOUTH CANARA:

References to brahmanas in inscriptions from South Canara come from the seventh century onwards even from the earliest inscription found here. The Vaddarse inscription is

23. J. Sturrock, *Madras District Manuals, South Canara*, Vol. I, p. 146.

24. *North Canara Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 117.

25. Quoted by Sister Liceria, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

26. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, pp. 167-174 refers to a chief of Butuga who belonged to the Sagara lineage and claimed to be lord of Valabhipura.

palaeographically dated to the seventh century AD and records that in the reign of Aluvarasar, when Gundanna, the retainer (*pramanyal*) of Kandavarmarasar was ruling the *nad* (*Nattumudime*), Sattigari was ruling Banna (Bannadi?) and Adakappa held the tenancy (Varkeye?) of Vaddarse, Ciriyanna and Gundanna gifted money for feeding seventeen brahmanas. This money was apparently invested in purchasing bronze vessels and land which was perhaps exempted from payment of *pattondi* tax.²⁷ Benefactions for feeding of brahmanas was a popular expression of piety throughout the history of South Canara. In all cases, the sub-caste of the brahmanas who were to enjoy the benefaction is not specified at all.

By the middle of the eighth century, however, we have clear evidence that Sivalli was an established *agrahara* which enjoyed great prestige in the region around Udupi. A copper plate inscription from Belmannu (Karkala taluk) assignable to the mid-eighth century records that the privileges of Sivavalli were extended to the *Sabha* of Belmannu with all exemption that those who destroyed the grant were to be charged with the sin of destroying Varanasi and Sivavalli. This classing together of Sivalli with the holy Varanasi indicates the high prestige enjoyed by the *agrahara* of Sivalli in this period.²⁸ Similarly, an inscription of the close of the eighth century from the Sambhukallu Bhairava temple at Udiyavara (Udupi taluk) which records the assignment of tolls on several commodities levied by the *nagara* of Udayapura for the deity of Sambhukallu ends with the imprecation that if anyone other than the deity takes the tolls he would be guilty of destroying the *Brahmapuri* of Sivalli and would be relegated to the *Avici mahanaraka*.²⁹ This continued in the ninth century, since two other inscriptions from the Udiyavara temple also contain

27. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 313-316.

28. K. V. Ramesh and M. J. Sharma (eds.), *Tulunadina Sasanagal*, Vol. I, (Mysore, 1978), No. 3.

29. *South Indian Inscriptions* (henceforth, *S.I.I.*), Vol. VII, No. 284.

similar imprecations. The first, belonging to the reign of Prithuvisagara Alupendra and during the *Nattumudime* of Boygavarman, also sets aside half the tolls levied on goods entering the *nagara* of Udayapura and Pattinagara by land and water probably for the deity of Sambhukallu Bhairava temple though it is not clearly specified. Those destroying the grant would be charged with the sin of destroying Varanasi and Sivalli.³⁰ Similarly, Vijayaditya Alupendra and the *nagara* of Udayapura remitted half the *sunka* of Ponvulea *nagara* in favour of Saruvi Gosasi of Muttavur, and several other *okkal* (cultivating tenants) in the middle of the ninth century. Again the imprecation classes Varanasi and Sivalli together.³¹ A similar grant by Vijayaditya Marammalvarasar in the second half of the ninth century and received by Suvarna Gosasi, Adiyappa Setti and Nagakumaran again states that those destroying the grant would be guilty of destroying Varanasi and Sivavalli.³² However, the Bantra inscription which has been referred to earlier (footnote 17), does not contain such an imprecation. Apparently, the influence of the *agrahara* of Sivalli extended only in the neighbourhood of Udupi and did not go as far as Mangalore. The Kadandale inscription of Kundapur taluk) of the first half of the ninth century also does not refer to the Sivalli *agrahara* although the imprecation is missing in the record.³³ After the tenth century, such references are significantly absent in all Alupa inscriptions which mention Varanasi alone in the imprecation. The reason for this omission is not quite clear but one factor might have been the decline of the town of Udiyavara after the tenth century. Under the later Alupas, Barakur and Mangalore emerge as the major royal centres. Since it was chiefly the Udiyavara epigraphs which mentioned Sivalli, the

30. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, pp. 20-21

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

33. K.V. Ramesh and M.J. Sharma (eds), *Tulunadina Sasanagalu*, Vol. I, No. 20.

absence of documentary evidence from there meant an absence of allusion to Sivalli as well.

References to Sivalli were not limited to the imprecation, however. An Udiyavara inscription from the middle of the eighth century, registers the grant of Devageri in Valavatte and Nalkuru as *sarva pariya* by the Thousand of Sivalli and the *Bantas* of Cokkapadi to the deity of Sambhukallu and it was entrusted to the *Goravas* by the Lord of Patti, Srimat Aluvarasar.³⁴ This, together with the Belmannu copper plates show that the *agrahara* of Sivalli was well-established by the eighth century and had a clear corporate identity. It clearly indicates that they enjoyed lands or the means to purchase them far beyond their geographical limits.

After this Sivalli *agrahara* surfaces only in the fourteenth century. We do have allusions to several brahmanas in inscriptions between the tenth and the fourteenth centuries. The Bantra inscription itself mentions several brahmanas in the list of witnesses. These were Vaidya of Sadanur, the courtiers (*degulada volagada paliyarum*) of the temple where the agreement took place, (namely?) Sridhara Bhatta and Medhavi Bhatta, Visva of Kukke. Other witnesses whose caste identity cannot be clearly determined were Pureya Kittararu, Pajjiyanaru, the *Odeya* of Sadanur, Jayarama Navayigaru, Altiyaru of Kotivalli, and the *Pergades* (superintendents) such as Sri Vikrama Voyigaru, Vallada Uttama Voygarum, Narasinga Vogarum and others. Other than their place of residence the sectarian affiliation of these brahmanas cannot be determined.³⁵

Kundavarma's Kadire inscription of AD 968 which records the establishment of the image of Lokesvara in the vihara of Kadarika states that he had set up several *agraharas* for brahmanas (*dvijanam=agraharebhyas=caru-carita-salinam*) but the inscription does not mention any brahmanas as such. The only individual

34. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 279.

35. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVII, pp. 23-26.

representing the sacred realm is Balacandra Sikhamani who appears to have been a Saiva monk given that Kadarika is described as a *vihara* (monastery).³⁶ While he might have been a brahmana, his caste identity is not stressed. Similarly, the Basrur inscription of Kavi Alupendra of AD 1154 records a grant of a *Pandya Gadyana* (a gold coin) by a Saiva monk of the *naivedya* of the deity of Nakharesvara temple at Basrur.³⁷ Here again the caste identity of the monk and even the sectarian affiliation is not given.

But it is the Canara High School inscription at Mangalore which gives us the most detailed information about brahmanas - in this case the duties of priests associated with temples. This epigraph dated in AD 1204 records the stipulations made by Vira Kulasekhara Alupendra and his nephew (*aliya*) Bankideva for the temple Bankesvara set up probably by the latter. It enjoins the *Tantri* of the *sthana* to perform all the rituals associated with the *avarbharta snana* on Sankranti days, the *Padamuladavar* (temple attendants) to prepare the requisite amount of rice for the deity's *naivedya* and not lessen the quantity. The temple's superintendent (*adhyaksha*) is asked to ensure that the daily Kathamala (narration of stories) in the temple is carried out; the official (*adhikari*) in charge of shops (*angadi*) is required to see that oil is supplied for the perpetual lamps, and for the lamps on *Sivaratri* and *Asranna* is directed to see that the lamps of the temple are not extinguished.³⁸ Here then we have references to a number of temple functionaries - the *Tantri* appears to have been the main priest who actually performed the worship given that he is asked to keep himself in ritual purity before the worship performed on special occasions such as *sankranti*. In one version of the *Grama Paddhati*, the *Tantris* are vested with the responsibility of managing temples, *kestras* of

36. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No.191.

37. S.I.I., Vol. IX, Part I, No.393.

38. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No.185.

39. Cited by Nagendra E. Rao, "The Historical Tradition of South Kanara and the Brahmanical Groups", in *Indica*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (March 1998).

Nagas and Brahma-bhutas, with decisions regarding *agama*, *mantra-sastra*, *kala-sastra* and fairs and festivals.³⁹ This implies that they were regarded as experts in ritual. This expertise in the conduct of rituals is also brought out by an inscription of the early nineteenth century from Kantavara which states that Yicala Rayanarayana Tantri conducted the *Brahmakalasa* ceremony for the renovated *sikhara* of the Kantesvara temple.⁴⁰ On the other hand the *Padamula* attendants were apparently vested with the responsibility of getting the *naivedya* ready while Asranna (the name of an individual?) is asked to ensure that the lamps are kept burning. The others apparently are essentially administrative officials.

Fresh details about brahmanas begin to emerge from the period of Vijayanagar rule in South Canara. We begin to find the names of several families mentioned in the *Grama Paddhati* in inscriptions as landowners and local magnates whose consent was essential for validation of the grants. Many names occur in the details of the boundaries of the lands that were granted. It is noteworthy that the majority of such references occur in the records of Udupi, Barakur and Basarur in the northern part of the district and rather fewer references are available from the southern parts. The reasons for this might have been the economic vitality of Barakur and Basarur which resulted in a large number of pious donations made for feeding brahmanas at the numerous temples and *mathas* there and the important place assigned to the temple of Krsna established at Udupi by Madhvacarya in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. The other major group of inscriptions is found at Mudabidire but these being Jaina benefactions, contain very few references to brahmanas.

A series of inscriptions from Mangalore yield some information. A record from Kodialbail for instance registers the grant of land by Hadapada Madarasaru who was ruling the Mangaluru *rajya* under Vira Pratapa Harihara Maharaya in Saka

1318 (AD 1396) for the feeding of barhamanas at the Krsna temple at Udupi. The lands for this purpose were purchased from Padambali Nandi Barammana Setti and from Hegade Muppe Setti's children and probably entrusted to the *matha* though this is not clearly mentioned. While the inscription does not name any brahamanas specifically, it does point to the existence of the Krsna *matha* though its institutional features such as the *paryaya* of eight saynasins are not mentioned.⁴¹ It also brings out the prestige attached to the *matha* in the southern parts of the district which were now part of the Mangalore *rajya* as against Udupi which was included in the Barakuru *rajya* in the Vijayanagara dispensation and often under different governors. Another epigraph from Boluru refers to a *Puranika* (reciter or knower of *Puranas*?) to whom a grant was made in Saka 1311 by Madarasa. The inscription is fragmentary however, and the details of the land granted and the place of residence of the *Puranika* is not now available.⁴² A record from Kadri Manjunatheswara temple of the same year registers a grant of land for the feeding of twelve brahmanas daily. The donor is not clearly specified. As with other benefactions for the feeding brahmanas, this grant does not mention the sub-caste of the donees.⁴³

Two inscriptions at the Jogi matha at Kadri of Saka 1345 (AD 1423) records that during the reign of Vijaya Bhupatiraya Maharaya states that his *Mahapradhana* Baica Dandanayaka who was ruling the Mangaluru *rajya* through Naganna Odeya arranged for two brahmanas to recite the *Durga Paramesvari japa* at the temple of Timiresvara for the longevity of the sovereign.⁴⁴ The other record registers the grant of land to Madanna Joyis of Vasistha gotra at whose instance a *Mrtyunjaya homa* was

41. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 183.

42. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 186.

43. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 190.

44. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 192.

45. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 195.

performed for the sovereign at the Tmiriesvara temple.⁴⁵ This inscription tells us of the area of expertise and the *gotra* of the donee brahmana but we cannot deduce the sub-caste to which he belonged. We can also surmise that some brahmanas were temple-based and performed religious rites for the laity. In this case, the emperor for whom the rites were performed, gave land to the brahmana(s). We can thus see the process whereby even temple-based *purohitas* began acquiring land, though the top rank undoubtedly went to the Vedic brahmanas who were given land in *agraharas*. This was the case, for instance with an inscription in Buntwal, dated Saka 1287 (AD 1364) of the reign of Vira Bukkanna Odeya which records that Madarasa of Mangaluru granted Pudu *grama* to certain brahmanas free of taxes who were to pass it on to their children and grandchildren. The names of some of these beneficiaries has survived. These were Devayya, Rangappayya's children, Mayanna, Visnu, Brahmadeva Bhatta's children, Ballanna, and Kandappa Kramitar.⁴⁶ Interestingly, the list of the eastern *gramas* in the *Grama Paddhati* includes Pude *grama*. Though the families mentioned therein are not identifiable from this inscription, it is possible that this inscription marks the setting up of this village as a *brahmadeya* particularly since the *Grama Paddhati* can itself be dated to the fifteenth century on the basis of the inclusion of the reference to Vira Bhupati, a Vijayanagara Prince who ruled around AD 1386.⁴⁷ The plural suffixes to the names of the donees in the Buntwal inscription indicates the high rank and prestige attached to them although the inscription being fragmentary does not clearly specify whether they were brahmanas specialising in Vedic studies but their association with temple service is certainly not brought out either.

In the late fourteenth century record from Kantavara which refers itself to the reign of Vira Hariyappa Odeya, the *Sthanikas* of

46. S.I.I., Vol. IX, Part II, No. 408

47. B.A. Saletore, *Ancient Karnataka*, Vol. I, *History of Tuluva*, (Poona, 1936), pp. 346-347.

the temple of Kantesvara were present during the grant of land to temple by some individuals for feeding of brahmanas and offerings to the deity. The duties of the *sthanikas* and the status enjoyed by them is not quite clear from this epigraph.⁴⁸ But in an early fifteenth century inscription at Caulikeri, Barakur, three *Sthanika families of Barakur made a grant of fiftygadyanas* (a gold coin) for the Patra Bhoga of the deity Narana deva. Here, the association with a temple is far from clear.⁴⁹

A late fifteenth century inscription from the Jogi *matha* at Kadri in Mangalore certainly refers to temple-associated brahmanas. This record dated Saka 1397 (AD 1475) of the reign of Virupaksha Maharaya and the rule of Vittarasa Odeya over Mangaluru and Barakuru *rajyas* states that the *Sthanikas* of Kadire, Ravalapaliya and Ganapannaluvanu together with the Rayara Senabova and Gomma Senabova (accountants) gave some garden lands (*tota*) for the Jogimatha from which Mangalanatha Odeya, the pontiff of Jogi *matha* arranged for Goraksanatha's *naivedya* and lamp and a lamp and *naivedya* to be offered to his own preceptor, Candranatha Odeya.⁵⁰ This inscription too, which clearly refers to the *Sthanikas* brings out the fall in the status of this class of brahmanas since the plural suffixes are conspicuously absent in their case as against the Buntwal epigraph. *Sthanikas* appear to have been associated with temples perhaps in a managerial capacity since the Kantavara epigraph records their presence while the grant was being made. They also appear to have enjoyed land and resources to enable them to gift lands and money to temples. But their status appears to be on the decline.

Another category of brahmanas were the *Muligas* or *Padamuligas*. We have seen that in the Kanara High School inscription of the early thirteenth century, they were merely held

48. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 231.

49. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 349.

50. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 194.

responsible for the preparation of the offerings to the deity. A record from Buntwal dated Saka 1299 (AD 1377) of the reign of Hariyappa Odeya, son of Vira Bukkanna Odeya registers the grant of some plots of land at Pudu grama among other places by certain Settis producing a yield of a hundred *mudes* (a measure of capacity) of paddy for the deity Timiresvara. However, the grant was not tax-free. The *Muligas* of the temple were to ensure the payment of *taru*, *siddhaya* and other taxes due to the state out of these hundred *mudes*.⁵¹ Here, the *Muligas* emerge as essentially administrative officers of the temple and seem to enjoy greater respect than the *sthanikas* although the latter were also essentially temple servants. Another reference to the *Padamuligas* comes from the Yermal inscription⁵² of Saka 1324 (AD 1402) of the reign of Vira Harihararaya and the rule of Basavanna Odeya over the Barakuru *rajya*. It registers the grant of some land for the deity, Janardana of Yermal by Ganapanna of Kalalige in the presence of Maramma Heggade and the Twenty-four *Praje Jananis* of Yermal and all the *Padamuligas* of the temple after he purchased some land from Visnu Nelli, Narana Nelli and Kesava Nelli, who were the *Padamuligas* of Janardana. The land thus purchased and endowed was adjacent to that of Visnu Aggi (Ahitagni?), Gangadhara Aggi, Harihara Pande (Temple superintendent?) and Krsna Pande -all of whom appear to have been brahmanas. The two former at least appear to have been orthodox Vedic brahmanas. Nelli could be short for Nellithaya, a common Sivalli name (inscriptions rarely give the *taya* suffixes as we shall see shortly). This might mean that the *Padamuligas* belonged to the Sivalli group and were differentiated from the *Sthanikas* mentioned in the Kadri inscription discussed above. In the *Sahyadri Khanda*, the *Sthanikas* are numbered among the fallen brahmanas as Patalis.⁵³ The *Muligas* are mentioned in another record from the Gauri

51. S.I.I., Vol. IX, Part II, No. 416.

52. S.I.I., Vol. IX, Part II, No. 426.

53. Nagendra E. Rao, op.cit., p. 11.

temple at a quarter of Mudabidure dated Saka 1318 (AD 1396) which refers to itself to the reign of Pandya Maharajadhiraja Vira Pandya Devar of the Alupa lineage as the reigning king. It registers the grant of twenty-four gadyanas by Kondi Setti and others which was invested in land whose yields are specified. The *Muligas* are mentioned in lines 22-23 of the record wherein they are apparently warned against appropriating the paddy from the lands granted for the temple for their own use. This would imply that the *Muligas* were vested with the responsibility of managing the estates of the temple. The names of the individuals are not given. The inscription also refers to the brahmanas of Eradu Bettu who along with the *Nagara* of Mudabidure were entrusted with the cash gift.⁵⁴ An earlier inscription from Pranta of Saka 1127 (AD 1205) of the reign of Kulasekhara Alupendra and his nephew registers the grant of money for the Durgadevi temple of Bidire and out of the interest on the amount six *mudes* were to be given by the *Muligas* to Durgadevi. In sum, it would appear that the *Muligas* were temple managers who controlled the income from the lands given to the temple. The Kanara High School record stipulates a minor ritual role for them- that of preparing the offerings to the deity. This might have been an offshoot of their managerial role since the control over the yields of the lands given to the temple would make them responsible for earmarking the rice for the offerings. In at least one case where their names are given we find that they were probably of the Sivalli group but it is not possible to determine their affiliation in other instances. How these *Padamuls* or *Muligas* were differentiated from the *Sthanikas* is difficult to say but they appear to have enjoyed a higher status at least by the fifteenth century and in some cases held land which they could dispose of freely. Were they usurping the managerial role formerly held by the *sthanikas*?

References to brahmanas from the vicinity of the predominantly Jaina centre of Mudabidure are scarce. However, a

54. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 221.

record from Mudabidire of Saka 1312 (AD 1390) mentions a Tantri whose lands were purchased by Kesava Setti's son and given to the deity Candogra Parsvadevar as *devasva*.⁵⁵ Likewise, a fifteenth century epigraph from Kantavara's Kantesvara temple of the reign of Virapratapa Devaraya registers a grant for the temple and refers in passing to Asrama who was entitled to some of the yields of the granted land.⁵⁶ Both Tantri and Asranna are names that occur in the Kanara High School record of AD 1204. In that inscription too, Asranna was associated with a temple as in this case. His duties in the present instance are not specified. A final reference to Asranna comes from a Barakur inscription of Saka 1302 (AD 1380) which records grants for the Gopalakrsna and Somanatha temple for feeding brahmanas and for conducting worship. Asranna was to receive three *hane* (a measure of capacity) of rice and a flower garden and appears to have been responsible for the maintenance of the temple structure of the Gopinatha temple.⁵⁷

Another example of a brahmana mentioned in passing in a Jaina record comes from a fifteenth century record from the Male Basadi at Paduva Panambur⁵⁸ which registers grants of land for the Anantanatha Basadi by Kundoli Narana Setti. The land thus gifted was adjacent to that of a Bayiri- a name which features in the list of households given in the *Grama Paddhati* as Bayiritaya. Several other Bayiris figure as landholders in the Udiyavara inscription of Saka 1351 (AD 1429) as the tenants of the temple of Bhairava who were entrusted with the lands gifted to the temple. The rents to be paid by them and their Nayar bonded labourers (*muladal*) are specified in the record.⁵⁹

55. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 229.

56. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 233.

57. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 325, 326.

58. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 264.

59. S.I.I., Vol. VII, No. 288.

Inscriptions from Udupi itself are more informative with regard to brahmana landlords in the vicinity. A noteworthy feature is the correspondence between the information provided by the epigraphic record and the *Grama Paddhati's* list of brahmana households in Udupi and the regions further to the north. An inscription of Saka 1395 (AD 1437) from the Krsna Matha at udupi records that a raid on Sivalli *grama* by the Governor of Barakur, Annappa Odeya led to the grant of land to the temple by the ruler at the request of the Ten Keris of Barakur to pacify the people of Sivaali. Accordingly, Singarasa made a grant of land within the Sagari *adhivasa* (locality?) of Sivalli which was purchased from Nodiyarama Kunjatava.⁶⁰ This is probably identical with Kunjataya, one of the first ten households of Sivalli under Sagari *adhivasa* in the *Grama Paddhati*.⁶¹ Kunjatava and Nadvanti of Sagari are mentioned in another fifteenth century record from Udupi as witnesses to a grant of land together with Mudila Nidamburu grama, Banninja *adhivasa's* Jannis, the Jannis of Kodaura *adhivasa* and the deity Sankaranarayana (of Kodaur?)⁶² Nadvanti is probably the same as Nadvantillaya another prominent household of the Sagari *adhivasa*. Sankaranarayana Naduvantillaya is mentioned in yet another Udupi Krsna epigraph of AD 1395 in the course of the boundary details of the lands granted.⁶³ The same record also mentions the Nidambur family, the Hebbars of Banninje *adhivasa*, Rama and Janardana Kangina(ya?) of Kotha and Kannarana (Kannaraya?) of Belikala *adhivasa*. Kanginaya figures among the last seventy households of Sivalli while Kannaraya appears in the list of the middle forty households of Sivalli in the *Grama Paddhati*. Finally a record which only refers itself to the Durmukhi samvatsara records grants to the Virupaksa

60. S.I.I, Vol. VII, No. 296.

61. B.A. Saletore, op.cit., p. 606.

62. S.I.I, Vol. VII, No. 298.

63. S.I.I, Vol. VII, No. 299.

64. Ibid, No. 303.

deva and to Krsna mentions Kalukatatava (Kallyattitaya?) of Kodaura *adhivasa*.⁶⁴ This correspondence between the details given in the inscriptions and the *Grama Paddhati* would confirm the fifteenth century date posited by Saletore for the latter and indicates that the families mentioned therein were firmly in control of land in the various villages said to have been granted for them. They emerge as landlords and not as ritual specialists associated with a temple.

This is further brought out by the large number of Barakur inscriptions. Not only were brahmanas entrenched in villages such as Brahmavara, Kota and Kandavara but lands were held by prominent families belonging to these places in the other villages as well. A Mudakeri inscription of AD 1379 for instance records that land was purchased from Visnu Holla and Narana Holla at Heggadeya bettu for the provision of lamps at the temple of Saumya devaru of Mudakeri. The Hollas were a prominent family of Kota. While the location of Heggadeya Bettu is not quite clear from the record it seems to have been far removed from Kota itself.⁶⁵ Another Mudakeri inscription of AD 1365 of the reign of Mahamandalesvara Vira Bukkanna Odeyar and of Mahapradhana Malleya Dandanayaka over the Barakuru rajya records that Bala Setti made a grant for feeding 14 brahmanas daily at the *matha* in front of the Tambula Keri before Mudakeri's Somaya devar. Lands were purchased at Koni, Karkada, Hadahina Balu and Nayaramula Kodu. At the last named place we have reference to Rama Karanta's children who were given this land after taking it from a Senabova (accountant) of Nayaramula Kodu by Tunga Dannayakaru.⁶⁶ Both Karanta and Tunga are families listed as belonging to Kota in the *Grama Paddhati*.

A Caulikeri (Barakur) inscription of AD 1392 in the reign of Harihara Maharaya records the construction of a *matha* for the

65. Ibid, No. 316.

66. Ibid, No. 332.

feeding of six brahmanas therein by a Karanika Singanna of Jambukhandi. Lands were granted for this purpose at Balakuduru (river isle) near Saligrama. Among the details of the boundaries we find references to Isvara Bahiri (Bayiri?), Kesava Madikudalaya (Madikulaya?) and Kesava Kedila (Kedilaya?), Narana Upadhya(ya?), Visnu Bhatta and Siva Madikudala (Madikulaya?)⁶⁷ Madikulaya is a family listed as resident of Srimanturu grama, while Kedilaya belonged to Sagari in Sivalli grama. Bayiritaya is listed as an Agnihotri in the *Grama Paddhati*.⁶⁸ This would show that there was a great deal of migration within South Canara by the brahmana families. They frequently made their way to new areas where they could establish themselves as landowners. This also brought out by an inscription from Basarur near Kundapur dated AD 1436 which records the grants of land for a *matha* at Paduvakeri in Basarur by Balabijjana Bemmasetti-Narana Setti of the Balegara community. This included among others lands at Herikuduru near Kundapur where Siva Manja (Manjataya), Mittanta (Mittantaya?) and Narana Mogara (Mogeraya?) also held lands.⁶⁹ Manjataya, Mogeraya and Mittantaya are all families categorised as Bhattas and the two last listed as residents of Tenakala grama in the *Grama Paddhati*. Similarly, some families of Kota are seen to be holding land at Ayiradi in an epigraph of AD 1394 from the Manigarakeri of Barakur. The individuals mentioned are Kesava Navuda, Visnu Navuda, Urala, Govinda Karanta, Narana Karanta and Krsna Alase.⁷⁰ Of these Navuda and Karanta are listed in the *Grama Paddhati*. An inscription of AD 1468 from Manigarakeri (Barakur) recording a grant for a Jaina shrine at Manigarakeri relates to land

67. 343.

68. Cited in B.A. Saletore, op.cit., pp. 598-615.

69. *S.I.I.*, Vol. IX, Part II, No. 446.

70. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 355.

71. *Ibid.*, No. 371.

at Ayiradi which was given in tenancy to Sambhu Manja (Manjitaya)'s children who were to give 12 *mudes* of rice to the basadi (Jaina shrine) to defray expenses.⁷¹ Likewise, a Manigarakeri record of AD 1420 registers grants of land for feeding thirty-two brahmanas at the matha near the Somanatha temple at Manigarakeri. The lands were situated probably at Pandesvara and the boundaries mention the lands of Sankara Herala and Karanta as adjoining the gifted land.⁷²

In the vicinity of Kota we have a reference in two records of AD 1477 to Handettu which was apparently a settlement of the Hande family for the epigraphs mention their family deity's temple as *Hande devalayada sthana*. The first inscription records the grant of land of sowing capacity of thirteen *mudes* on his own account and four on account of his niece/daughter-in-law (*sose*) by Sankara Hande, the son of Demana Hande of Handettu out of his own *baddha brahmadaya* lands to the temple of Somanatha at Manigarakeri and the *Hande devalaya sthana*.⁷³ The other inscription records a grant for Somanatha by Prapancada Sovakka for feeding six brahmanas daily and the land gifted was situated at Handettu. The boundary details mention Madanna Hande, Aksara Hande, Mani Hande, Anna Herala and Uralas.⁷⁴ Thus, while Handettu emerges predominantly as the settlement of the Hande family, other brahmanas of Kota also appear to have held lands there.

A record of AD 1437 mentions several brahmana landowners at Mana-ur (near Kota). The epigraph which records the purchase and endowment of land for the deity Somanatha at Manigarakeri by Purusanna Setti of Pattana bali states that it was purchased from Madhava Mayya's children Krsna and Narayana with the consent of Krsna Mayya's son Vasudeva and Koyakura Vasudeva

72. Ibid, No. 365.

73. Ibid, No. 359.

74. Ibid, No. 360.

Mayya's son for the sale of the Mayyakkala (Mayya family?) land to the Setti. Several other Mayyas together with Upadhyayas, Handes, Karantas, Madhyasthas and Bayiris held land at Mana-ur.⁷⁵ Another record dated AD 1475 from Caulikeri again gives us further details about brahmana landowners at Mana-ur. We find reference to the *balu* (living, holding) of Bacana Basiri's brahmani and that of Govinda Basiri (l. 37-38), to the Handes and to Siva Bhatta apart from the Mayyas who had a strong presence here.⁷⁶

At Yedevettu, a record of AD 1467 informs us that the Heralas, the Mayyas, the Karanikas and Vira Karanta held land. These details emerge in the course of the description of the boundaries of the land gifted to Somanatha of Manigarakeri by Amma Setti of Heggade *bali* (matrilineal descent group).⁷⁷ At Badaga Kaipadi a Caulikeri (Barakur) inscription of AD 1502 tells us that Visnu Bahiri held land while Viranna and Narana Holla gave some lands adjacent to the holdings of Japada Sankara Karanta and Krsna Karanta's pledged land (*hone visvasada balu*)⁷⁸ At Gundume (near Saligrama) a fifteenth century record dated only in the cyclic year of *Citrabhanu savatsara* states that Vasudeva Navuda's son Govinda Navuda held lands. At Ayiradi the same epigraph registers the grant of some land adjacent to the lands of Kesava Karanta and Krsna Hebbara, while Kota's *gramani* (headman?) Anna Karanta gave some land at Manaur for the deity Gopinatha of the *matha* established by Timmayya Setti at Barakur.⁷⁹ Land was also purchased by Timmayya Setti at Parampalli from Narayana Holla and the boundaries refer to the lands of Narayana Herala and Narayana Holla himself. Finally, an inscription from Manigarakeri at Barakur dated AD 1580

75. Ibid, No. 372.

76. Ibid, No. 346.

77. Ibid, No. 373.

78. 345.

79. 390.

registering lands gifted for a *matha* at Manigarakeri for feeding six brahmanas daily gives us the information that several Kota families held land at Alanjiyavur. These were the Hunuseadi Uralas, Kesava Hebbara, Madhava Hande, Vasudeva Hebbara, Madanna Vasudeva Holla, the Hatvaras of the Paduvamane and Ammana Hatvara in addition to a Joyisa (astrologer) and a temple priest (Govinda Adiga).⁸⁰

Brahmana families of Brahmavara also figure in the Barakuru inscriptions. Thus, a fragmentary Mudakeri record of AD 1469 of the reign of Virupaksaraya Maharaya refers to several brahmana landowners in the eastern part of the Brahmavara *grama*. These were Mahadeva Ungurupalli, Duggata Ungurapalli, Manjatana (Manjitaya?), Rama Kannampalli and Isvara Ungurapalli.⁸¹ Ungurapalli is listed in the *Grاما Paddhati* as a prominent family of Brahmavara while Kannampalli was possibly identical with Kairamballi of the *Grاما Paddhati*. An epigraph of AD 1471 from Manigarakeri mentions the Ungurapallis holding at Handodi (location unclear). It refers to Kecana Ungurapalli, Kesavanatha Ungurapalli, and Narana Ungurapalli in the boundary details.⁸² The Oramballi family of Brahmavara figure in a Manigarakeri inscription of AD 1564 recording a grant by Kuncada Sarasu of Manigarakeri and her daughter Sankamma for feeding six brahmanas daily at the temple of Somanatha at Manigarakeri. The land for this purpose was purchased at Brahmavara and originally belonged to the Madappa Manya *bali*. It lay adjacent to the lands of Anna Oramballi, Tippa Oramballi, Kiriyantha Visnu Oramballi and Sivappa Oramballi.⁸³

Another village listed in the *Grاما Paddhati* whose details are borne out by epigraphic evidence is Kandavara. The *Grاما*

80. Ibid, No. 375.

81. Ibid, No. 334.

82. Ibid, No. 355.

83. Ibid, No. 366.

Paddhati gives us the names of Udupa and Hebbara as the chief families of this place and this is substantially borne out by inscriptions. An inscription at the temple of Karttikeya in that village dated AD 1443 of the reign of Viraprtapa Devaraya lists the presence of the following individuals at the time of making a grant for the deity's *Amrtapadi*, *anga* and *rangabhoga* as follows: Anna Udupa, Acyuta Hebbaruva, Vasudeva Upadhya, Hebbaruva of Kurumballi, Icanna Udupa, Anna Udiya, Kerekare Udupa, Raghu Udupa, Udupas of Mudakere, Kalikada Anna Udiyar, Devara Visnu Udupa, Heggoda Hireнна Udiya, Ugola Kunyanna Hebbaruva, Mallna Hebbaruva and Bidakada Sankara Hebbaruva. They were apparently included in the Sixteen of the *grama* which had two *adhivasas* (localities?) Kurumballi and Badakere.⁸⁴ The details of the lands granted to the temple mention these individuals as landowners in passing. An inscription in the *prakara* of the Mahalingesvara temple at Basrur of AD 1400 of the reign of Harihararaya Maharaya registers the gift of land by a Setti of Basarur to Singanna Ayya, the son of Cakravarti Upadhya, a *vidvan* of the Sringeri *Srimatha*. The lands were situated in the two *ahivasas* of Kandavur *grama*. Out of the income received from the granted lands, Singanna Ayya was to give nine *mudes* of rice annually to the deity Nandiesvara in front of the Nakharesvara at Basarur and one *honnu* (a gold coin) for Ullura deva as *Kattindere* (a tax). This inscription was written by Kandaaur's Udupa Bhattaru and witnessed by Ayicanna Udupa of Sataur, Govinda Hebbaruva and the Hebbaruva of Mudakere.⁸⁵ It brings out the close relations between the *matha* of Sringeri and the northern part of South Canara district. But the inclusion of a few lines in the Tulu-Malayalam script in one of the Kandavara inscriptions⁸⁶

84. P.N. Narasimhamurthy, *Ulluru Sri Kartikeya Subrahmanya Devasthanana, Kandavara: Ksetradhyayana mattu Paricaya*, (Kandavara, 1993), p. 100.

85. *S.I.I.*, Vol. IX, Part II, No. 423.

86. P.N. Narasimhamurthy, *op.cit.*, p. 97, Inscription No. 2.

establishes its links with the southern parts of the South Canara district as well. Indeed, the religious books of all the brahmanas of South Canara- Sivalli, Kota, Havika and Kandavara are in the Tulu Malayalam script although the last three speak Kannada and not Tulu.⁸⁷ The brahmanas of Kandavara form a distinct group today but since they all belong to the Visvamitra *gotra*, they are precluded from marrying within the sub-caste. Perforce, marriage alliances are entered into with the other sub-castes of Sivalli and Kota. Sturrock states that they are descended from a Sivalli brahmana who settled in Kandavara in the thirteenth century.⁸⁸

The main *agraharas* in the northern part of South Canara- Kota, Brahmavara and Niruvara are invoked as witnesses in an inscription of AD 1425 at Kotekeri, Barakur which records grants for feeding twelve brahmanas at the *matha* constructed in the vicinity of the Markandesvara temple of Kotekeri.⁸⁹ Kundapura is also included in this list of the prominent villages. But it is significant that Kotesvara which according to the *Grama Paddhati* was condemned due to a falsehood in a boundary dispute with Kota in the reign of Vasu (Vibudhavasus of the Alupa dynasty?) is not included in this list although its temple received several benefactions in the Vijayanagara period.⁹⁰ The temple appears to have maintained a large establishment inclusive of *devadasis* and a *matha* for feeding brahmanas. The *Katiya habba* (annual festival) of the temple is already mentioned in AD 1372. But brahmanas of Kotesvara are not mentioned in either the inscriptions or in the *Grama Paddhati*. They seem to have been condemned to a low position by the late fourteenth century.

We have seen that brahmanas with expertise in the Vedas and holding land appear to have enjoyed greater prestige than those

87. J. Sturrock, *South Canara Manual*, Vol. I, p. 157.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *S.I.I.*, Vol. VII, No. 385.

90. *S.I.I.*, Vol. IX, Part II, No. 345 of AD 1372, and No. 417 of AD 1377

officiating in temples. This is not peculiar to South Canara. In the *Manusmṛti*, brahmanas who made a livelihood by accepting gifts and performing sacrifices for ordinary folk or sudras were degraded⁹¹ as opposed to those holding high administrative or military posts traditionally meant for ksatriyas and open to brahmanas only in times of distress.⁹² The latter group was able to live off rents received from lands granted to them which obviated the necessity of peddling ritual services to the common people. Such land grants were also made for srotriya brahmanas as a reward for their learning and they were also placed above temple priests.

However, the two groups were not mutually exclusive. We find srotriya brahmanas involved in temple ritual. This is the case, for instance with the Kotekeri inscription of AD 1439 which grants land yielding a hundred and twenty *mudes* of rice to Mayanna Upadhya's son, Devanna who belonged to the Harita gotra and Yajus sakha. He performed the *Rudrabhiseka* at the *Pancalingesvara* temple of Kotekeri.⁹³ The emphasis on the Vedic branch balances the reference to temple service.

We also have references to temple priests holding lands. We have already considered the *Padamuligas* and the *Sthanikas*. In the northern parts of the district the term *Adiga* seems to denote a temple priest as opposed to the *Padamuliga*. The import seems to be identical- 'Adi' like 'Pada' means a foot and *Adiga* like *Padamuliga* would imply an individual dependent on the foot of the deity for grace. One of the earliest references to an *Adiga* comes from a Mudakeri inscription of AD 1402 which registers the gift of land for a chatra (feeding house) by Narasimha Thakura. The boundary details contain a reference to Kombanada Adigal who

91. *Manusmṛti* III. 151-152.

92. *Ibid*, VII. 58, VIII. 9.

93. *S.II*, Vol. VII, No. 382.

94. *Ibid*, No. 323.

held some *devasva* land.⁹⁴ The plural suffix to the name would indicate high status while the holding of the *devasva* land confirms our conjecture about their association with the temple. Another epigraph mentioning an *Adiga* is from Caulikeri (Barakur) and is dated AD 1372.⁹⁵ It records arrangements made for feeding thirteen brahmanas in a matha by Isanya Bhatta's son Ayyappa. For this purpose, a living (*balu*) was purchased at Pandesvara from Damodara and Visnu Adigal. Here, we have no evidence of their association with temple priesthood. Thus, the line between landholding and temple service was not rigid. Temple priests often held land hereditarily while individuals belonging to families rewarded with land for their Vedic expertise were often drawn into temple service.

Immigration from the north was probably a major factor in the differentiation of status among brahmanas. In the case of the *Sthanikas*, hereditary association with temples was compounded by the fact that the other brahmana sub-castes of Sivalli, Kota and Kandavara claimed to have come from Ahicchatra and thus a higher rank. This phenomenon is not limited to South Canara. In Madhya Pradesh too, the numerically dominant sub-caste apparently of indigenous origin held a lower position in terms of power and wealth as compared to smaller groups of immigrant brahmanas.⁹⁶ While it is not quite clear whether the *Sthanikas* were indigenous brahmanas,⁹⁷ their subordination was complete by the fifteenth century when as we have seen, plural suffixes, the

95. Ibid, No. 387.

96. S. Jaiswal, "Studies in Early Indian social History: Trends and Possibilities", in *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. VI, Nos. 1-2, (1979-80).

97. P. Gururaj Bhat was of the opinion that they were the earliest immigrant group to enter South Canara, *Tulunadu: Samajika Caritreyalli ondu samsodhanatmaka vivecane*, p. 111. The basis of this belief is not quite clear except that Kautilya's Arthasastra mentions a class of officials by that name.

usual markers of respectability were denied to them unlike the *Padamuligas* and *Adigas* who seem to have usurped even the temple managerial role from them over time. The *Sahyadri Khanda* which claims to be part of the *Skanda Purana* counts them among the fallen brahmanas as *Patalis*. The accent of the *Sahyadri Khanda* is on the establishment of hierarchy among the various brahmana groups and the dominance of the brahmanas claiming to come from *Ahiksetra* (*Ahichhatra*) over later groups coming from *Gauda desa*, *Anga*, *Vanga*, *Kalinga*, *Kasmira* etc.⁹⁸ This attempt by the *Ahicchatra* brahmanas to establish their supremacy over the *Sthanikas* appears to have succeeded so much so that by the early nineteenth century Buchanan in his *Journey* records that *Sthanikas* were the sons of brahmana widows who abandoned the rigid life of celibacy and became temple servants.⁹⁹ He is factually incorrect moreover, in that he equates the *Sthanikas* with the *Moilys*. But it is a measure of their fall in status over time from that of temple managers to menial servants stripped of legitimacy by the other brahmana sub-castes.

The *Grama Paddhati* does not distinguish among the Sivalli, Kota and Kandavara brahmanas but enumerates them equally. All these groups claimed to have come from *Ahicchatra*. It is possible that they came to North and South Canara (known in early medieval times as *Haiga* and *Alvekheda*) from Shimoga where the *Talagunda agrahara* was in existence as early as the third century AD and which from about the tenth century is stated to have been populated by *Ahicchatra* brahmanas. Sivalli *agrahara* existed as early as the eighth century and enjoyed tremendous prestige and power. The families mentioned in the *Grama Paddhati* however, receive epigraphic corroboration only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Two possibilities emerge. Either the families mentioned in the *Grama Paddhati* existed already in the eighth

98. Nagendra E. Rao, op.cit., p. 11.

99. F. Buchanan, *A Journey Through Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, Vol. III, p. 65.

century and gradually spread all over the district over time. Alternatively, later groups of brahmanas migrating from Shimoga with its traditions of northern origins chose to affiliate themselves with the already established *agrahara* of Sivalli. It is also possible that brahmana migration from the Mysore region was a continuous process extending from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries. The migrating brahmanas brought in their traditions which were then incorporated into the *Grama Paddhati* and the *Sahyadri Khanda* as the authentic history of the Sivalli and Kota brahmanas. This third possibility is supported by inscriptions of AD 1418 from Pavanja and Paduva Panambur which register grants of land to Hariyana, the son of Goyinda deva of Atreya *gotra* who originally hailed from Kolattur *grama* in the vicinity of Belugula in the Hoyisana *rajya*.¹⁰⁰ A Manigarakeri record of AD 1499 registers the grant of Citrapayi uru near Kota to Narana deva, the son of Vasudhare Somanna of Asvalayana *sutra* and Visvamitragotra.¹⁰¹ The place of origin of this brahmana is not stated but he does not seem to belong to any of the established Kota families listed in the *Grama Paddhati*. Another Barakur inscription from Mudakeri of AD 1431 mentions two Hayve brahmanas receiving Anavali *grama* from Devaraya Maharaya out of which they gave certain lands for sundry rites at the Somanatha temple of Mudakeri.¹⁰² We have already examined several instances of brahmanas of established families moving into new areas. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that while the earliest groups to Sivalli *agrahara* migrated in the ninth century, movements from Shimoga and other parts of Mysore might have continued over time. One major migration possibly followed the Cola attacks on Northern Mysore in the eleventh century which devastated the *agraharas* of Talagunda and Kuppagadde. This wave might have brought in the tradition of Mayuravarman inviting the brahmanas from Ahicchatra which

100. *S.I.I*, Vol. VII, No. 261, 265.

102. *Ibid*, No. 311.

101. *Ibid*, No. 364.

had developed by the twelfth century in the Talagunda *agrahara*. It enabled the brahmanas of Sivalli to claim a higher status than other competing groups of brahmanas, particularly the *Sthanikas* who by virtue of their management of temples commanded considerable resources. In course of time, the Sivallis usurped the management of temples in their capacity as *Padamulis* or *Adigas* and the *Sthanikas* were relegated to menial tasks.

The history of Kota is more obscure. While their patron deity Narasimha has been iconographically dated to the eighth century,¹⁰³ the earliest epigraphic references to Kota and its inhabitants come from the Vijayanagara period. The distinctions between the two seem to have come about as a result of sectarian differences over time with the Kotas worshipping their patron deity of Narasimha while the Sivallis particularly after the thirteenth century adopting the Dvaita tenets of Madhvacharya. In Kundapur taluk, however, the Sivallis remain Smartas affiliated to the Sringeri *matha* as is the case with the Kandavara brahmanas. The emergence of the Sivallis and the Kotas as two separate sub-castes comes into view only in the British documents of the early nineteenth century.

103. P. Gururaj Bhat, *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture*, loc.cit., p. 241.