

(Preliminary Issue.)

The
Ethnographical Survey of Mysore.

VIII.

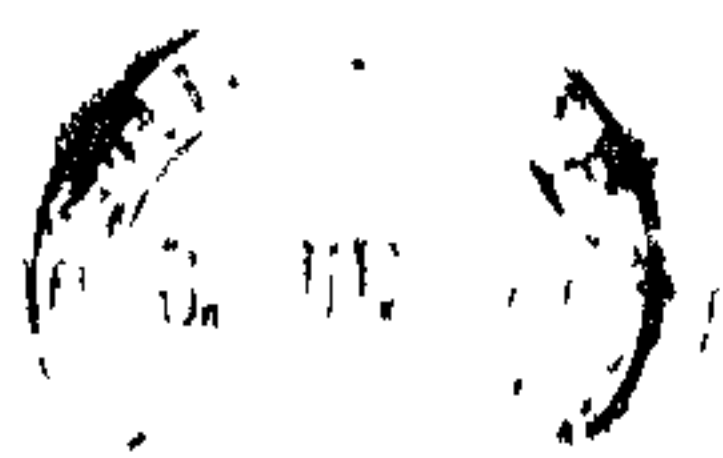
BILI MAGGA CASTE.

BY

H. V. NANJUNDAYYA, M.A., M.L.

BANGALORE
PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT PRESS.
1906.

Price 4 Annas.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Name	1
Origin	1
Language	1
Divisions	1
Personal names	2
Marriage	2—5
Puberty	5
Widow marriage	5
Adultery and divorce	6
Death	6
Social status	6
Religion	7
Occupation	7
Appendix (List of Gótras or exogamous divisions)	8—10

BILI MAGGA.

A sub-division of the weaver caste is known as those of Bili Magga (ಬಿಲಿಮಗ್ಗ white loom) from the white muslin and other cloth they generally produce. The term is considered by the caste as one of reproach and they call themselves Kuruvina Setti or Kuruvina Barajiga the meaning of which is not clear. Name.

Setti is the surname of the caste and is appended to the personal name at the end.

No information is available about their origin. These belong to the Kannada country, and profess to be the direct offspring of Isvara and Parvati. Origin

They form a population numbering about 10,000. They speak Kannada, but it is said that there are some in South Kanara who use the local language, Tulu. Language.

The caste contains two endogamous divisions, those that are Lingayats and those that are not Lingayats. There is no intermarriages between them, but the non-Lingayat Bili Magga men eat in the houses of those that have embraced the Lingayat religion, but not *vice versa*. In some places the Lingayat portion of the caste is called Dodda (or big) Kuruvinavaru and the non-Lingayat section Chikka (or little) Kuruvinavaru. Divisions.

The caste is divided into sixty-six exogamous divisions* divided into two groups respectively known as the Siva and the Parvati group or the male and the female group, each group containing thirty-three gotras, with the usual prohibition against the intermarriage between those bearing the same family name. Most of these names are taken from plants, animals, implements, etc., but it is difficult to trace any totemistic superstitions among them. They seem to think that it is a sin to injure these articles.

* Names of Exogamous divisions are to be found in the Appendix.

They have no hypogamous divisions.

Personal
names.

The personal names are the different names by which Īswara and Pārvati are known. They say that they have no superstition in the naming of children. The name-giving ceremony takes place on the eleventh day or so after the birth of a child. It is named after the names of its grandfather or grandmother. If the first born children are dead, the succeeding child is generally given an opprobrious name, such as Kāḍa (jungle), Guṇḍa (round stone) or Sudugāḍa (burial ground).

The following may be taken as typical names :—

Males.	Females.
Basappa (ಬಸಪ್ಪ).	Basamma (ಬಸಮ್ಮ).
Kaḷappa (ಕಾಳಪ್ಪ).	Kalamma (ಕಾಳಮ್ಮ).
Siddappa (ಸಿದ್ಧಪ್ಪ).	Siddamma (ಸಿದ್ಧಮ್ಮ).
Révanna (ರೇವಣ್ಣ).	Ḍangamma (ಗಂಗೆಮ್ಮ).

Adoption is recognized in the caste, but the boy adopted may marry, it is stated, in the house he is adopted to. A daughter's son may be adopted.

Marriage.

There is no age restriction for eligibility to marry in either sex. Marriages of girls of ten or twelve are more common than those after puberty, as it is considered not honorable to take a girl that has driven cattle at her father's house. They say that their girls need not remain without marriage for a long time since husbands are easily available.

A man may marry his elder or younger sister's daughter or paternal aunt's or maternal uncle's daughter. One may marry two sisters at different times, and two brothers also may marry two sisters. Exchange of daughters is also allowed.

Differences in social status or in locality have no theoretical value in matters of marriage; nor occupation either, except such as entails loss of caste, as for example, removing night-soil or mending shoes.

As regards marriage ceremonies both the divisions observe the same, but while the non-Lingayat Kuruvina-¹vara invite Brahmans to officiate at their marriages, the Lingayat portion prefer a Jangama, in whose absence a Brahman will be called.

They have a preliminary engagement called *Vilyada Sástra* (ವಿಲ್ಯದಾಸಾಸ್ತ್ರ) some days before the marriage. The bridegroom and his party go to the bride's house carrying the auspicious articles such as betel-leaves, areca-nuts, flowers, jaggory, parched Bengal gram and fruits, with a new *sádi*. The elders of the caste meet there on the occasion when the promise is made and the day of marriage and other details are settled. The castomen are invited to a dinner.

The marriage takes place in the bride's house and continues for seven days. The essential portion of the ceremony is known as the pouring of the *dhare*.

The first day is the worshipping of their family god *Nílakanthésvara*. This is in other castes known as *Dévarúta*. The bride and the bridegroom are smeared with turmeric in their own houses. This is known *Moda-larsina* (ಮೋದಲರಸಿನ) or *Madavaniga Sástra* (ಮದವಣಿಗಾಸ್ತ್ರ).

The second day is known as *Nadu Madavaniga Sástra* (ನಡುಮದವಣಿಗಾಸ್ತ್ರ) that is the second smearing of turmeric to bride and the bridegroom.

The third day is the *Pandal erecting ceremony* (or *ಚಪ್ಪರ*). A pandal is raised in front of the marriage house and is supported by twelve posts and roofed with the stalks of sugar-cane. A platform is erected for the sitting of bride and bridegroom in marriage. The roof overhanging the platform is generally canopied with a white cloth. The bride and bridegroom are anointed and bathed and smeared with saffron and the bride is dressed in a cloth dyed yellow, with turmeric powder, and the bridegroom dresses himself in a white suit of clothes.

Then the brother of the bride goes in state to an Indian fig tree (*ಅತ್ತಿವಾರ*) and after doing the usual *púja* to it cuts a branch and bringing it in procession to the marriage pandal, ties it to the central pillar on the marriage platform. This is considered as the *Hálu* **Kambha* (ಹಾಲುಕಂಬ) or the *milk post*. To it a *kankana* and a bundle of nine kinds of grain (ನವಧಾನ್ಯ) are tied and worshipped. Then married women go to the potter's house and bring twelve earthen pots or *Arivénis* (ಆರಿವೇಣಿಗಳ). These are again carried by the married women (ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯರು) to a well where they fill them with water and bring them to

* It is said that the father of the bride may not touch either the *milk post* or the *Bhúshinga*.

the marriage house. These pots are kept in a separate room and worshipped during the marriage period.

On the third day, *dhara* takes place. Early in the morning five married women carry five new earthen pots to a tank to bring sacred water (ಕಪ್ಪೆಪನೀರು) for the marriage. After they return in procession accompanied with the beating of drums and the sounding of cymbals, the bride and the bridegroom are seated in the marriage pandal within the square formed by placing four vessels at each corner of it, the fifth pot being placed at the *milk post* on the marriage dias. In each of these pots betel-leaves, turmeric and kunkuma are thrown and they are connected with one another by means of a cotton thread passing three times round their necks. Then the bride and the bridegroom are bathed in this square and are given fresh clothes. This ceremony is called *Surgi* and corresponds to *malaniru* (ಮಲನೀರು) in other castes.

The bridegroom is led into a temple or to a relative's house where he takes his seat on a blanket. The party of the bride go there with a *Kalasa*, smear the bridegroom with turmeric and bring him to the bride's house. Then the bridegroom comes seated on a bull with a dagger in his hands. He is led on to the marriage dias and made to stand facing the bride with a screen between. As the *Puróhit* repeats the appropriate *mantras*, the bride pours the milk over the hands of the bridegroom. The boy is made to tie the *táti* round the neck of the girl and the guests assembled throw *akshata* (ಅಕ್ಷತೆ) or colored rice over their heads by way of blessing. An *arati* is performed to the couple by married women and *támbúla* distributed to the assembly. The pair now rise holding each other with their fingers and having the horns of their garments tied together and go round the *milk post* three times, offering *namaskára* to it. Then they retire to the room in which the pots are placed and offer *púja* to them. Then the pair and five married couple on either side sit to eat *bhúma* (ಭೂಮ). Cooked rice, ghee, and sweet cakes (ಕಪ್ಪೆಯ) are mixed and served in two eating dishes (ತಣಿಗೆಗಳು). At one of them the bridegroom and five married couple of his party, at the other the bride and five married couple of her party sit and eat the food so served.

The next day is known as *Nāgavali* (ನಾಗವಲಿ). The ceremonies observed are the same as in other castes, such as bringing ant-hill earth and worshipping the pillars of the

Pandal (ಸ್ತಂಭಪೂಜೆ). The succeeding two days are spent by the bridal pair going to the bridegroom's house and returning to the bride's house.

The expenses of the marriage to be borne by the bridegroom vary from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 and the bride price is Rs. 25.

Marriages are arranged by the parents or other elders as among other castes.

They seem to have no traditions about the capture of wives from other tribes.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is kept outside the house in a small room for three days. On the fourth day she is bathed but her pollution remains for ten days to come. During this period the girl is not allowed to enter the kitchen and touch water used for the preparation of food and for drinking purposes. On the eleventh day the house is washed and cleaned and *mantras* are recited by Jangamas or Brahmans. If she is already married, her nuptials will be celebrated within sixteen days after her attaining puberty. Puberty.

The custom of mock marriages to trees and such other objects for lack of real husbands does not prevail in the caste.

Even if a marriage is celebrated during infancy, the girl will not be sent to live with her husband but is allowed to remain in her parents' house till she attains puberty and her marriage is consummated. In case of marriage after puberty, a separate ceremony is performed on a subsequent day determined as auspicious by an astrologer, when the husband and wife begin to live together. When a girl is sent to her husband, new cloths, jewels, household utensils, cows and such other things according to the means of the parents, are presented to her.

Re-marriage of widows is permitted. But such re-married women are prohibited from taking part in auspicious ceremonies. A widow is not allowed to marry her husband's brothers. She can marry in any other division than the one in which she was born. The form of marriage ceremony consists merely in the husband tying the *lāli* on an evening to the neck of his wife and giving a dinner to the caste men. Regularly married women do not attend such marriages. Widow marriage.

Such marriages are not regarded favorably by the caste, and the offspring are considered to be somewhat inferior in status to others, at any rate for a generation or two, after which such origin is forgotten. Of course children of one husband do not inherit from the other.

Adultery
and divorce.

Sexual license before marriage is not connived at and if a girl is found to be pregnant before marriage, she is put out of caste.

Adultery on the part of the women is the only recognized ground of divorce. When with a man of the same caste it is compounded sometimes, but with an outsider it always brings on degradation and excommunication.

Death.

They invariably bury the dead. They turn the head of the dead body towards the South. Their 'srituka' for the dead lasts twelve days except for children under one year, when it is three days. During this period of pollution they do not enter the inner apartments of the house. The funeral ceremonial is the same as for the Lingayats generally.

They say they perform Shradda for the propitiation of a dead person which consists in giving raw provisions to Brahmans or Jangamas. This ceremony is not performed for those who died childless or for maternal ancestors. Full obsequial ceremonies are not observed for those who met with a violent death.

If the first wife has died, the second wife propitiates her by observing a feast in her honor one day in the year and feeding married women and giving them presents of bodice, cloths, fruits and flowers. They do not bury with the dead any articles except ashes.

Social status.

In social matters such as contact with Brahmans entry into temples, personal service by washermen, etc. they have the status of the higher Sudra classes.

Those that wear the Linga do not eat the flesh of animals or drink liquor, but those that do not wear a Linga eat mutton and the flesh of fowls and drink liquor on festive days. Those who do not wear the Linga eat only in the houses of Brahmans.

The habit of the caste is settled. They do not admit outsiders into the caste.

They follow the Hindu Law in the matter of inheritance. They have no hereditary chiefs but infringement of the rules of the caste is punished by Jangamas who are bound to follow the advice of the elders of the tribe. Should the fault be of such magnitude as to require excommunication, an assembly of the heads of families settles the question.

They are Hindus by religion and belong to the Lingayat sect by faith. There are some who wear the Linga, and some others who do not wear it, but all the same all of them profess to belong to one of the tribes of pure Banajigas and to be capable of being appointed to priesthood. Religion.

Their chief objects of worship are Linga and the Bull,* the emblems of Iswara. They also worship Níla-antòsvara and Narasimhaswami. Their women worship all the village gods except those particularly belonging to the Holéyas. Fruits and flowers are offered to Máramma and other minor deities during times of epidemics. Worship of these goddesses and Saktis is confined to women. They have no faith in the virtue of Iragáranu, that is, persons who died bachelors.

Their Gurus are the same as those of the Panthama Banajigas. Their five chief mathas are called the Simhāsanas of Paryata at Hampi, Virúpaksha near Tungachadra, Ujjini, Balóhalli and Chitradurg. These can be initiated into the sacred orders of the caste.

Sangamòsvara is their patron God. He is supposed to be present in bazaars and is worshipped in the opening of fairs. Those that do not wear the Linga and a few of those who wear the Linga employ Brahmans for religious and ceremonial purposes. An astrologer is generally consulted for the fixing of proper days for marriages and for commencing to build houses.

Their original and present prevailing occupation is weaving. Some are engaged in mercantile pursuits. Occupation.

All of them work on the old kind of simple loom set up in each house. They are not in a flourishing condition. There are few agriculturists and no fishermen among them. The Lingayat portion of the caste are vegetarians but the non-Lingayats are flesh eaters and drink liquor.

* One peculiar custom among them is that they never gold bulls.

APPENDIX.

List of Gótras* or exogamous divisions.

<i>Agari</i>	(ಅಗರಿ)	A kind of grass
<i>Anchu</i>	(ಅಂಚು)	Border
<i>Ancho</i>	(ಅಂಚೆ)	
<i>Arasina</i>	(ಅರಸಿನ)	Turmeric
<i>A're</i>	(ಆರೆ)	Pestle
<i>A'rya</i>	(ಆರ್ಯ)	
<i>Bahini</i>	(ಬಹಿನಿ)	
<i>Banaja</i>	(ಬಣಜ)	
<i>Basavi</i>	(ಬಸವಿ)	
<i>Banni</i>	(ಬನ್ನಿ)	Banni tree
<i>Bandi</i>	(ಬಂಡಿ)	Cart
<i>Benne</i>	(ಬೆಣ್ಣೆ)	Butter
<i>Bhógi</i>	(ಭೋಗಿ)	
<i>Bi o</i>	(ಬಿಳಿ)	White
<i>Déra</i>	(ದೇವ)	
<i>Dharma</i>	(ಧರ್ಮ)	
<i>Durga</i>	(ದುರ್ಗ)	
<i>Gadige</i>	(ಗಡಿಗೆ)	Pot
<i>Garuda</i>	(ಗರುಡ)	Brahman kite
<i>Gopasu</i>	(ಗೊಪು)	
<i>Gikkili</i>	(ಗಿಕ್ಕಿಲಿ)	
<i>Gadduge</i>	(ಗದ್ದುಗೆ)	
<i>Gauda</i>	(ಗೌಡ)	Headman
<i>Gúdu</i>	(ಗೊಡು)	Nest
<i>Gariga</i>	(ಗರಿಗೆ)	An earthen vessel
<i>Gudlu</i>	(ಗುಡ್ಡು)	A shed
<i>Gundu</i>	(ಗುಂಡು)	Boulder
<i>Halige</i>	(ಹಲಿಗೆ)	A plank

* There are said to be only sixty-six of these divisions in the caste. But this list contains more than this number. Some of them may be house names.

<i>Hālu</i>	(ಹಾಲು)	Milk
<i>Heggōtra</i>	(ಹೆಗ್ಗೋತ್ರ)	
<i>Hittu</i>	(ಹಿಟ್ಟು)	Flour
<i>Hola</i>	(ಹೊಲ)	Field
<i>Honge</i>	(ಹೊಂಗೆ)	A tree (Pongamia glabra)
<i>Hullu</i>	(ಹುಲ್ಲು)	Grass
<i>Hingu</i>	(ಹಿಂಗು)	Asafotida
<i>Inachi</i>	(ಇಣಚಿ)	A squirrel
<i>Iraṇi</i>	(ಐರಣಿ)	A pot
<i>Jāli</i>	(ಜಾಲಿ)	Kind of tree
<i>Jirige</i>	(ಜೀರಿಗೆ)	Cumin seed
<i>Junja</i>	(ಜಂಜ)	
<i>Kadle</i>	(ಕಡ್ಲೆ)	Bengal gram
<i>Kakhe</i>	(ಕಕ್ಕೆ)	Kind of plant
<i>Katte</i>	(ಕಟ್ಟೆ)	Boundary
<i>Kādu</i>	(ಕಾಡು)	Forest
<i>Kaṇṇi</i>	(ಕಣ್ಣಿ)	A rope
<i>Kara</i>	(ಕರ)	
<i>Kédage</i>	(ಕೇದಗೆ)	The pandanus flower
<i>Kamadi</i>	(ಕಮಡಿ)	
<i>Kenga</i>	(ಕೆಂಗ)	
<i>Kenja</i>	(ಕೆಂಜ)	
<i>Késari</i>	(ಕೇಸರಿ)	Saffron
<i>Kinkila</i>	(ಕಿಂಕಿಲ)	
<i>Kudure</i>	(ಕುದುರೆ)	Horse
<i>Kuruve</i>	(ಕುರುವೆ)	Sparrow
<i>Kunte</i>	(ಕುಂಟೆ)	Tank
<i>Maraku</i>	(ಮರಳು)	Sand
<i>Mallige</i>	(ಮಲ್ಲಿಗೆ)	Jasmin
<i>Menasu</i>	(ಮೆಣಸು)	Pepper
<i>Midichi</i>	(ಮಿಡಿಚಿ)	
<i>Mini</i>	(ಮಿನಿ)	A rope
<i>Mulku</i>	(ಮುಳ್ಳು)	Thorn
<i>Muddu</i>	(ಮುದ್ದು)	
<i>Nara</i>	(ನರ)	
<i>Nada</i>	(ನಡ)	

<i>Nellu</i>	(ನೆಲ್ಲು)	Paddy
<i>Nuchohu</i>	(ನುಚ್ಚು)	Broken corn
<i>Nàga</i>	(ನಾಗ)	Serpent
<i>Parama</i>	(ಪರಮ)	
<i>Raksha</i>	(ರಕ್ಷ)	
<i>Rikki</i>	(ರಿಕ್ಕಿ)	
<i>Sarabha</i>	(ಶರಭ)	A fabulous animal.
<i>Sampige</i>	(ಸಂಪಿಗೆ)	Name of a flower
<i>Samsàra</i>	(ಸಂಸಾರ)	
<i>Soppu</i>	(ಸೊಪ್ಪು)	Vegetable greens
<i>Súrya</i>	(ಸೂರ್ಯ)	The Sun
<i>Sindhu</i>	(ಸಿಂಧು)	
<i>Salige</i>	(ಸಲಿಗೆ)	
<i>Ultama</i>	(ಉತ್ತಮ)	
<i>Vriksha</i>	(ವೃಕ್ಷ)	Tree
<i>Vrishabha</i>	(ವೃಷಭ)	Bull
<i>Vanki</i>	(ವಂಕಿ)	
<i>Yemme</i>	(ಯಮ್ಮ)	Buffalo

