

are ornamented with peacock's feathers and cowry shells, and generally a small mirror on the forehead. The bullocks of the Brinjāris (Boiparis) are described by the Rev. G. Gloyer \* as having their horns, foreheads, and necks decorated with richly embroidered cloth, and carrying on their horns, plumes of peacock's feathers and tinkling bells. When on the march, the men always have their mouths covered, to avoid the awful dust which the hundreds of cattle kick up. Their huts are very temporary structures made of wattle. The whole village is moved about a furlong or so every two or three years—as early a stage of the change from nomadic to a settled life as can be found.” The Lambādi tents, or pāls, are said by Mr. Mullaly to be “made of stout coarse cloth fastened with ropes. In moving camp, these habitations are carried with their goods and chattels on pack bullocks.” Concerning the Lambādis of the Bellary district Mr. S. P. Rice writes to me as follows. “They are wood-cutters, carriers, and coolies, but some of them settle down and become cultivators. A Lambādi hut generally consists of only one small room, with no aperture except the doorway. Here are huddled together the men, women, and children, the same room doing duty as kitchen, dining and bedroom. The cattle are generally tied up outside in any available spot of the village site, so that the whole village is a sort of cattle pen interspersed with huts, in whatsoever places may have seemed convenient to the particular individual. Dotted here and there are a few shrines of a modest description, where I was told that fires are lighted every night in honour of the deity. The roofs are generally sloping and made of thatch, unlike the majority of houses

---

\* Jeypur. Breklum, 1901.

in the Deccan, which are almost always terraced or flat roofed. I have been into one or two houses rather larger than those described, where I found a buffalo or two, after the usual Canarese fashion. There is an air of encampment about the village, which suggests a gipsy life."

The present day costume and personal adornments of the Lambādi females have been variously described by different writers. By one, the women are said to remind one of the Zingari of Wallachia and the Gitani of Spain. "Married women," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,\* "are distinguished from the unmarried in that they wear their bangles between the elbow and shoulder, while the unmarried have them between the elbow and wrist. Unmarried girls may wear black bead necklets, which are taken off at marriage, at which time they first assume the ravikkai or jacket. Matrons also use an earring called guriki to distinguish them from widows or unmarried girls." In the Mysore Census Report, 1901, it is noted that "the women wear a peculiar dress, consisting of a lunga or gown of stout coarse print, a tartan petticoat, and a mantle often elaborately embroidered, which also covers the head and upper part of the body. The hair is worn in ringlets or plaits hanging down each side of the face, and decorated with shells, and terminating in tassels. The arms are profusely covered with trinkets and rings made of bones, brass and other rude materials. The men's dress consists of a white or red turband, and a pair of white breeches or knicker-bockers, reaching a little below the knee, with a string of red silk tassels hanging by the right side from the waistband." "The men," Mr. F. S. Mullaly writes,

---

\* Manual of the North Arcot district.

“are fine muscular fellows, capable of enduring long and fatiguing marches. Their ordinary dress is the dhoty with short trousers, and frequently gaudy turbans and caps, in which they indulge on festive occasions. They also affect a considerable amount of jewellery. The women are, as a rule, comely, and above the average height of women of the country. Their costume is the laigna (langa) or gown of Karwar cloth, red or green, with a quantity of embroidery. The chola (choli) or bodice, with embroidery in the front and on the shoulders, covers the bosom, and is tied by variegated cords at the back, the ends of the cords being ornamented with cowries and beads. A covering cloth of Karwar cloth, with embroidery, is fastened in at the waist, and hangs at the side with a quantity of tassels and strings of cowries. Their jewels are very numerous, and include strings of beads of ten or twenty rows with a cowry as a pendant, called the cheed, threaded on horse-hair, and a silver hasali (necklace), a sign of marriage equivalent to the tāli. Brass or horn bracelets, ten to twelve in number, extending to the elbow on either arm, with a guzera or piece of embroidered silk, one inch wide, tied to the right wrist. Anklets of ivory (or bone) or horn are only worn by married women. They are removed on the death of the husband. Pachala or silk embroidery adorned with tassels and cowries is also worn as an anklet by women. Their other jewels are mukaram or nose ornament, a silver kania or pendant from the upper part of the ear attached to a silver chain which hangs to the shoulder, and a profusion of silver, brass, and lead rings. Their hair is, in the case of unmarried women, unadorned, brought up and tied in a knot at the top of the head. With married women it is fastened, in like manner,

with a cowry or a brass button, and heavy pendants or gujuris are fastened at the temples. This latter is an essential sign of marriage, and its absence is a sign of widowhood. Lambādi women, when carrying water, are fastidious in the adornment of the pad, called gala, which is placed on their heads. They cover it with cowries, and attach to it an embroidered cloth, called phūlia, ornamented with tassels and cowries." I gather that Lambādi women of the Lavidia and Kimavath septs do not wear bracelets (chudo), because the man who went to bring them for the marriage of a remote ancestor died. In describing the dress of the Lambādi women, the Rev. G. N. Thomssen writes that "the sārī is thrown over the head as a hood, with a frontlet of coins dangling over the forehead. This frontlet is removed in the case of widows. At the ends of the tufts of hair at the ears, heavy ornaments are tied or braided. Married women have a gold and silver coin at the ends of these tufts, while widows remove them. But the dearest possession of the women are large broad bracelets, made, some of wood, and the large number of bone or ivory. Almost the whole arm is covered with these ornaments. In case of the husband's death, the bracelets on the upper arm are removed. They are kept in place by a cotton bracelet, gorgeously made, the strings of which are ornamented with the inevitable cowries. On the wrist broad heavy brass bracelets with bells are worn, these being presents from the mother to her daughter."

Each thanda, Mr. Natesa Sastri writes, has "a headman called the Nāyaka, whose word is law, and whose office is hereditary. Each settlement has also a priest, whose office is likewise hereditary." According to Mr. H. A. Stuart, the thanda is named after the



headman, and he adds, "the head of the gang appears to be regarded with great reverence, and credited with supernatural powers. He is believed to rule the gang most rigorously, and to have the power of life and death over its members."

Concerning the marriage ceremonies of the Sugālis of North Arcot, Mr. Stuart informs us that these "last for three days. On the first an intoxicating beverage compounded of bhang (*Cannabis indica*) leaves, jaggery (crude sugar), and other things, is mixed and drunk. When all are merry, the bridegroom's parents bring Rs. 35 and four bullocks to those of the bride, and, after presenting them, the bridegroom is allowed to tie a square silver bottu or tāli (marriage badge) to the bride's neck, and the marriage is complete; but the next two days must be spent in drinking and feasting. At the conclusion of the third day, the bride is arrayed in gay new clothes, and goes to the bridegroom's house, driving a bullock before her. Upon the birth of the first male child, a second silver bottu is tied to the mother's neck, and a third when a second son is born. When a third is added to the family, the three bottus are welded together, after which no additions are made." Of the Lambādi marriage ceremony in the Bellary district, the following detailed account is given by Mr. Francis. "As acted before me by a number of both sexes of the caste, it runs as follows. The bridegroom arrives at night at the bride's house with a cloth covering his head, and an elaborately embroidered bag containing betel and nut slung from his shoulder. Outside the house, at the four corners of a square, are arranged four piles of earthen pots—five pots in each. Within this square two grain-pounding pestles are stuck upright in the ground. The bride is decked with the

cloth peculiar to married women, and taken outside the house to meet the bridegroom. Both stand within the square of pots, and round their shoulders is tied a cloth, in which the officiating Brāhman knots a rupee. This Brāhman, it may be at once noted, has little more to do with the ceremony beyond ejaculating at intervals 'Shōbhana! Shōbhana!' or 'May it prosper!' Then the right hands of the couple are joined, and they walk seven times round each of the upright pestles, while the women chant the following song, one line being sung for each journey round the pestle :

To yourself and myself marriage has taken place.  
 Together we will walk round the marriage pole.  
 Walk the third time ; marriage has taken place.  
 You are mine by marriage.  
 Walk the fifth time ; marriage has taken place.  
 Walk the sixth time ; marriage has taken place.  
 Walk the seventh time ; marriage has taken place.  
 We have walked seven times ; I am yours.  
 Walk the seventh time ; you are mine.

"The couple then sit on a blanket on the ground near one of the pestles, and are completely covered with a cloth. The bride gives the groom seven little balls compounded of rice, ghee (clarified butter) and sugar, which he eats. He then gives her seven others, which she in turn eats. The process is repeated near the other pestle. The women keep on chanting all the while. Then the pair go into the house, and the cloth into which the rupee was knotted is untied, and the ceremonies for that night are over. Next day the couple are bathed separately, and feasting takes place. That evening the girl's mother or near female relations tie to the locks on each side of her temples the curious badges, called gugri, which distinguish a married from an

unmarried woman, fasten a bunch of tassels to her back hair, and girdle her with a tasselled waistband, from which is suspended a little bag, into which the bridegroom puts five rupees. These last two are donned thereafter on great occasions, but are not worn every day. The next day the girl is taken home by her new husband." It is noted in the Mysore Census Report, 1891, that "one unique custom, distinguishing the Lambāni marriage ceremonial, is that the officiating Brāhman priest is the only individual of the masculine persuasion who is permitted to be present. Immediately after the betrothal, the females surround and pinch the priest on all sides, repeating all the time songs in their mixed Kutnī dialect. The vicarious punishment to which the solitary male Brāhman is thus subjected is said to be apt retribution for the cruel conduct, according to a mythological legend, of a Brāhman parent who heartlessly abandoned his two daughters in the jungle, as they had attained puberty before marriage. The pinching episode is notoriously a painful reality. It is said, however, that the Brāhman, willingly undergoes the operation in consideration of the fees paid for the rite." The treatment of the Brāhman as acted before me by Lambādi women at Nandyāl, included an attempt to strip him stark naked. In the Census Report, it is stated that, at Lambādi weddings, the women "weep and cry aloud, and the bride and bridegroom pour milk into an ant-hill, and offer the snake which lives therein cocoanuts, flowers, and so on. Brāhmans are sometimes engaged to celebrate weddings, and, failing a Brāhman, a youth of the tribe will put on the thread, and perform the ceremony."

The following variant of the marriage ceremonies was acted before me at Kadūr in Mysore. A pandal

(booth) is erected, and beneath it two pestles or rice-pounders are set up. At the four corners, a row of five pots is placed, and the pots are covered with leafy twigs of *Calotropis procera*, which are tied with *Calotropis* fibre or cotton thread. Sometimes a pestle is set up near each row of pots. The bridal couple seat themselves near the pestles, and the ends of their cloths, with a silver coin in them, are tied together. They are then smeared with turmeric, and, after a wave-offering to ward off the evil eye, they go seven times round the pestles, while the women sing :—

Oh ! girl, walk along, walk.

You boasted that you would not marry.

Now you are married.

Walk, girl, walk on.

There is no good in your boasting.

You have eaten the pudding.

Walk, girl, walk.

Leave off boasting.

You sat on the plank with the bridegroom's thigh on yours.

The bride and bridegroom take their seats on a plank, and the former throws a string round the neck of the latter, and ties seven knots in it. The bridegroom then does the same to the bride. The knots are untied. Cloths are then placed over the backs of the couple, and a swastika mark (卐) is drawn on them with turmeric paste. A Brāhman purōhit is then brought to the pandal, and seats himself on a plank. A clean white cloth is placed on his head, and fastened tightly with string. Into this improvised turban, leafy twigs of mango and *Cassia auriculata* are stuck. Some of the Lambādi women present, while chanting a tune, throw sticks of *Ficus glomerata*, *Artocarpus integrifolia*, and mango in front of the Brāhman, pour gingelly (*Sesamum*) oil over them, and set them on fire. The Brāhman is

made a bridegroom, and he must give out the name of his bride. He is then slapped on the cheeks by the women, thrown down, and his clothing stripped off. The Brāhman ceremonial concluded, a woman puts the badges of marriage on the bride. On the following day, she is dressed up, and made to stand on a bullock, and keep on crooning a mournful song, which makes her cry eventually. As she repeats the song, she waves her arms, and folds them over her head. The words of the song, the reproduction of which in my phonograph invariably made the women weep, are somewhat as follows :—

Oh ! father, you brought me up so carefully by spending much  
[money.

All this was to no purpose.

Oh ! mother, the time has come when I have to leave you.

Is it to send me away that you nourished me ?

Oh ! how can I live away from you,

My brothers and sisters ?

Among the Lambādis of Mysore, widow remarriage and polygamy are said \* to freely prevail, "and it is customary for divorced women to marry again during the lifetime of the husband under the *sīrē udikē* (tying of a new cloth) form of remarriage, which also obtains among the Vakkaligas and others. In such cases, the second husband, under the award of the caste arbitration, is made to pay a certain sum (*tera*) as amends to the first husband, accompanied by a caste dinner. The woman is then readmitted into society. But certain disabilities are attached to widow remarriage. Widows remarried are forbidden entry into a regular marriage party, whilst their offspring are disabled from legal marriage for three generations, although allowed to take

---

\* Mysore Census Report, 1901.



wives from families similarly circumstanced." According to Mr. Stuart, the Sugālis of the North Arcot district "do not allow the marriage of widows, but on payment of Rs. 15 and three buffaloes to her family, who take charge of her children, a widow may be taken by any man as a concubine, and her children are considered legitimate. Even during her husband's life, a woman may desert him for any one else, the latter paying the husband the cost of the original marriage ceremony. The Sugālis burn the married, but bury all others, and have no ceremonies after death for the rest of the soul of the deceased." If the head of a burning corpse falls off the pyre, the Lambādīs pluck some grass or leaves, which they put in their mouths "like goats," and run home.

A custom called Valli Sukkeri is recorded by the Rev. G. N. Thomssen, according to which "if an elder brother marries and dies without offspring, the younger brother must marry the widow, and raise up children, such children being regarded as those of the deceased elder brother. If, however, the elder brother dies leaving offspring, and the younger brother wishes to marry the widow, he must give fifteen rupees and three oxen to his brother's children. Then he may marry the widow." The custom here referred to is said to be practiced because the Lambādi's ancestor Sugrīva married his elder brother Vali's widow.

I am informed by Mr. F. A. Hamilton that, among the Lambādīs of Kollegal in the Coimbatore district, "if a widower remarries, he may go through the ordinary marriage ceremony, or the kuttuvali rite, in which all that is necessary is to declare his selection of a bride to four or five castemen, whom he feeds. A widow may remarry according to the same rite, her new husband

paying the expenses of the feast. Married people are burnt. Unmarried, and those who have been married by the kuttuvali rite, are buried. When cremation is resorted to, the eldest son sets fire to the funeral pyre. On the third day he makes a heap of the ashes, on which he sprinkles milk. He and his relations then return home, and hold a feast. When a corpse is buried, no such ceremonies are performed. Both males and females are addicted to heavy drinking. Arrack is their favourite beverage, and a Lambādi's boast is that he spent so much on drink on such and such an occasion. The women dance and sing songs in eulogy of their goddess. At bed-time they strip off all their clothes, and use them as a pillow."

The Lambādis are said to purchase children from other castes, and bring them up as their own. Such children are not allowed to marry into the superior Lambādi section called Thanda. The adopted children are classified as Koris, and a Kori may only marry a Lambādi after several generations.

Concerning the religion of the Lambādis, it is noted in the Mysore Census Report, 1891, that they are "Vishnuvaits, and their principal object of worship is Krishna. Bana Sankari, the goddess of forests, is also worshipped, and they pay homage to Basava on grounds dissimilar to those professed by the Lingayets. Basava is revered by the Lambādis because Krishna had tended cattle in his incarnation. The writer interviewed the chief Lambāni priests domiciled in the Holalkerē taluk. The priests belong to the same race, but are much less disreputable than the generality of their compatriots. It is said that they periodically offer sacrificial oblations in the agni or fire, at which a mantram is repeated, which may be paraphrased thus :—

I adore Bharmā (Brahmā) in the roots ;  
 Vishnu who is the trunk ;  
 Rudra (Mahadēv) pervading the branches ;  
 And the Dēvās in every leaf.

“The likening of the Creator’s omnipotence to a tree among a people so far impervious to the traditions of Sanskrit lore may not appear very strange to those who will call to mind the Scandinavian tree of Igdrasil so graphically described by Carlyle, and the all-pervading Asvat’tha (pīpal) tree of the Bhagavatgīta.” It is added in the Mysore Census Report, 1901, that “the Lambānis own the Gosayis (Goswāmi) as their priests or gurus. These are the genealogists of the Lambānis, as the Helavas are of the Sīvachars.” Of the Sugālis of Punganūr and Palmanēr in the North Arcot district Mr. Stuart writes that “all worship the Tirupati Swāmi, and also two Saktis called Kōsa Sakti and Māni Sakti. Some three hundred years ago, they say that there was a feud between the Bukia and Mūdu Sugālis, and in a combat many were killed on both sides ; but the widows of only two of the men who died were willing to perform sāti, in consequence of which they have been deified, and are now worshipped as saktis by all the divisions.” It is said \* that, near Rolla in the Anantapur district, there is a small community of priests to the Lambādis who call themselves Muhammadans, but cannot intermarry with others of the faith, and that in the south-west of Madakasīra taluk there is another sub-division, called the Mondu Tulukar (who are usually stone-cutters and live in hamlets by themselves), who similarly cannot marry with other Musalmans. It is noted by the Rev. J. Cain † that in some places the Lambādis “fasten small rags torn from

\* Gazetteer of the Anantapur district, ]

† Ind. Ant., VIII., 1879.

some old garment to a bush in honour of Kampalamma (kampa, a thicket). On the side of one of the roads from Bastar are several large heaps of stones, which they have piled up in honour of the goddess Guttalamma. Every Lambādi who passes the heaps is bound to place one stone on the heap, and to make a salaam to it." The goddess of the Lambādis of Kollegal is, according to Mr. Hamilton, Satthi. A silver image of a female, seated tailor-fashion, is kept by the head of the family, and is an heirloom. At times of festival it is set up and worshipped. Cooked food is placed before it, and a feast, with much arrack drinking, singing, beating of tom-tom, and dancing through the small hours of the night, is held. Examples of the Lambādi songs relating to incidents in the Rāmāyana, in honour of the goddesses Durga and Bhavāni, etc., have been published by Mr. F. Fawcett.\*

The Brinjāris are described by the Rev. G. Gloyer as carrying their principal goddess "Bonjairini Mata," on the horns of their cattle (leitochsen).

It is noted by the Rev. G. N. Thomssen that the Lambādis "worship the Supreme Being in a very pathetic manner. A stake, either a carved stick, or a peg, or a knife, is planted on the ground, and men and women form a circle round this, and a wild, weird chant is sung, while all bend very low to the earth. They all keep on circling about the stake, swinging their arms in despair, clasping them in prayer, and at last raising them in the air. Their whole cry is symbolic of the child crying in the night, the child crying for the light. If there are very many gathered together for worship, the men form one circle, and the women another. Another

peculiar custom is their sacrifice of a goat or a chicken in case of removal from one part of the jungle to another, when sickness has come. They hope to escape death by leaving one camping ground for another. Half-way between the old and new grounds, a chicken or goat is buried alive, the head being allowed to be above ground. Then all the cattle are driven over the buried creature, and the whole camp walk over the buried victim." In former days, the Lambādis are reputed to have offered up human sacrifices. "When," the Abbé Dubois writes, "they wish to perform this horrible act, it is said, they secretly carry off the first person they meet. Having conducted the victim to some lonely spot, they dig a hole, in which they bury him up to the neck. While he is still alive, they make a sort of lump of dough made of flour, which they place on his head. This they fill with oil, and light four wicks in it. Having done this, the men and women join hands, and, forming a circle, dance round their victim, singing and making a great noise, till he expires." The interesting fact is recorded by Mr. Mullaly "that, before the Lambādis proceed on a predatory excursion, a token, usually a leaf, is secreted in some hidden place before proceeding to invoke Durga. The Durgamma pūjāri (priest), one of their own class, who wears the sacred thread, and is invested with his sacred office by reason of his powers of divination, lights a fire, and, calling on the goddess for aid, treads the fire out, and names the token hidden by the party. His word is considered an oracle, and the pūjāri points out the direction the party is to take."

From a further note on the religion of the Lambādis, I gather that they worship the following :—

(1) Balaji, whose temple is at Tirupati. Offerings of money are made to this deity for the bestowal of



children, etc. When their prayers are answered, the Lambādis walk all the way to Tirupati, and will not travel thither by railway.

(2) Hanumān, the monkey god.

(3) Poleramma. To ward off devils and evil spirits.

(4) Mallamma. To confer freedom to their cattle from attacks of tigers and other wild beasts.

(5) Ankamma. To protect them from epidemic disease.

(6) Peddamma.

(7) Maremma.

The Lambādis observe the Holi festival, for the celebration of which money is collected in towns and villages. On the Holi day, the headman and his wife fast, and worship two images of mud, representing Kama (the Indian cupid) and his wife Rati. On the following morning, cooked food is offered to the images, which are then burnt. Men and women sing and dance, in separate groups, round the burning fire. On the third day, they again sing and dance, and dress themselves in gala attire. The men snatch the food which has been prepared by the women, and run away amid protests from the women, who sometimes chastise them.

It is narrated by Moor \* that "he passed a tree, on which were hanging several hundred bells. This was a superstitious sacrifice by the Bandjanahs, who, passing this tree, are in the habit of hanging a bell or bells upon it, which they take from the necks of their sick cattle, expecting to leave behind them the complaint also. Our servants particularly cautioned us against touching these diabolical bells; but, as a few were taken for our own

---

\* Narrative of Little's Detachment, 1784.

cattle, several accidents that happened were imputed to the anger of the deity, to whom these offerings were made, who, they say, inflicts the same disorder on the unhappy bullock who carries a bell from this tree as he relieved the donor from."

There is a legend in connection with the matsya gundam (fish pool) close under the Yendrika hill in the Vizagapatam district. The fish therein are very tame, and are protected by the Mādgole Zamindars. "Once, goes the story, a Brinjāri caught one and turned it into curry, whereon the king of the fish solemnly cursed him, and he and all his pack-bullocks were turned into rocks, which may be seen there to this day." \*

Lambādi women often have elaborate tattooed patterns on the backs of the hands, and a tattooed dot on the left side of the nose may be accepted as a distinguishing character of the tribe in some parts. My assistant once pointed out that, in a group of Lambādis, some of the girls did not look like members of the tribe. This roused the anger of an old woman, who said "You can see the tattoo marks on the nose, so they must be Lambādis."

Lambādi women will not drink water from running streams or big tanks.

In the Mysore Province, there is a class of people called Thambūri, who dress like Lambādis, but do not intermarry with them. They are Muhammadans, and their children are circumcised. Their marriages are carried out according to the Muhammadan nikka rite, but they also go through the Lambādi form of marriage, except that marriage pots are not placed in the pandal

---

\* Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam district.

(wedding booth). The Lambādis apparently pay some respect to them, and give them money at marriages or on other occasions. They seem to be bards and panegyrists of the Lambādis, in the same way that other classes have their Nōkkans, Vīramushtis, Bhatrāzus, etc. It is noted by Mr. Stuart\* that the Lambādis have priests called Bhats, to whom it is probable that the Thambūris correspond in Mysore.

The methods of the criminal Lambādis are dealt with at length by Mr. Mullaly. And it must suffice for the present purpose to note that they commit dacoities and have their receivers of stolen property, and that the Naik or headman of the gang takes an active share in the commission of crime.

**Lampata.**—A name, signifying a gallant, returned by some Sānis at times of census.

**Landa.**—A synonym of Mondī.

**Lanka** (island).—An exogamous sept of Bōya and Kamma.

**Lattikar.**—Recorded, at the census, 1901, as a sub-division of Vakkaliga (Okkiliyan) in the Salem district. Latti means a reckless woman, and latvi, an unchaste woman, and the name possibly refers to Vakkaligas who are not true-bred.

**Lēkāvali.**—A division of Marāthas in the Sandūr State. Many of them are servants in the Rāja's palace. They are stated, in the Gazetteer of the Bellary district, to be the offspring of irregular unions among other Marāthas.

**Lekkala** (accounts).—An exogamous sept of Kamma.

**Linga Baliya.**—The Linga Baliyas (traders) are summed up, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a

---

\* Madras Census Report, 1891.

Lingāyat sub-caste of Balija. In a note on Lingāyats, Mr. R. C. C. Carr records that the Linga Banjigs or Banajigas are essentially traders, though many are now cultivators, and that Telugu Lingāyats often call themselves Linga Balijas.

The following legendary account of the origin of the "Linga Bhojunnalawaru" is given in the Baramahal Records.\* "Para Brahma or the great god Brahma created the god Pralayakala Rudra or the terrific at the day of destruction, a character of the god Siva, and he created the Chatur Acharyulu or four sages named Panditarāju, Yekcoramalu, Murralaradulu, and Somaluraradulu, and taught them mantras or prayers, and made them his deputies. On a time, the Asuras and Devatas, or the giants and the gods, made war on each other, and the god Pralayakala Rudra produced from his nose a being whom he named Muchari Rudra, and he had five sons, with whom he went to the assistance of the devatas or gods, and enabled them to defeat the giants, and for his service the gods conferred upon him and his sons the following honorary distinctions :—

A flag with the figure of an alligator (crocodile) portrayed on it.

A flag with the figure of a fish portrayed on it.

A flag with the figure of a bullock.

A flag with the figure of an eagle.

A flag with the figure of a bell.

A bell.

A modee ganta, or iron for marking cattle.

The use of burning lamps and flambeaus in their public processions during the day.

The use of tents.

---

\* Section III, Inhabitants, Madras Government Press, 1907.

“On a time, when the god Pralayakala Rudra and Mochari Rudra and his five sons, with other celestial attendants, were assembled on the Kailāsa parvata or mountain of Paradise, the god directed the latter to descend into the Bhuloka or earthly world, and increase and multiply these species. They humbly prayed to know how they were again to reach the divine presence. He answered ‘I shall manifest myself in the Bhuloka under the form of the Lingam or Priapus; do you worship me under that form, and you will again be permitted to approach me.’ They accordingly descended into the earthly regions, and from them the present castes of Baljavaras deduce their origin.”

✕ In a note on the Linga Balijs of the North Arcot district, Mr. H. A. Stuart writes\* that “Linga Balija appears rather to be the name of the followers of a religious faith than of a distinct caste, for the Linga Balijs state that their caste contains eleven sub-divisions, each with a separate occupation, viz., Jangam (priests), Reddi (cultivators), Gāndla (oil-mongers), and the like. Almost all the Linga Balijs of North Arcot are traders, who speak Canarese and are immigrants from Mysore, in which their gurus (religious preceptors) live, and whither they still refer their caste disputes. At one time they enjoyed much importance in this district, particularly in its large trading towns. Headmen among them, styled Chettis, were by the Arcot Nawābs assigned districts, in which they possessed both magisterial and civil authority, and levied taxes from other merchants for their own personal use. They carried on very extensive trade with Mysore and the Ceded districts, and are said to have had enormous warehouses,

---

\* Manual of the North Arcot district.



which they enclosed and fortified. Breaches of the peace are also described as not infrequent, resulting from the interference of one Linga Baliya Chetti with matters relating to the district of another. Their authority has long since disappeared, and is only a matter of tradition. Every Linga Baliya wears a Siva lingam, usually encased in a silver casket (or gold casket set with precious stones), and suspended from the neck, but the very poor place theirs in a cloth, and sometimes tie it to their arm. It is a strict rule that one should be tied to a child's neck on the tenth day of its birth, otherwise it is not entitled to be classed as a Linga Baliya. The Siva lingam worn by these people differs from the Būta or Prēta lingams used by Pandārams, Kaikōlaṅs, or others who profess the Lingāyat faith. They acknowledge two purāṇams, called respectively the Siva and Basava purāṇams, and differ in very many respects from other Hindus. They bury and do not burn their dead, and do not recognise the five kinds of pollution resulting from a birth, death, spittle, etc., and they do not therefore bathe in order to remove such pollution. Widow remarriage is allowed even where the widow has children, but these are handed over to the relatives of her first husband. To widow remarriages no women who are not widows are admitted, and, similarly, when a maiden is married, all widows are excluded. Unlike most Hindus, Linga Baliyas shave off the whole of the hair of their heads, without leaving the usual lock at the back. They deny metempsychosis, and believe that after death the soul is united with the divine spirit. They are particular in some of their customs, disallowing liquor and flesh-eating, and invariably eating privately, where none can see them. They decline even to eat in the house of a Brāhman."

A Linga Banajiga (Canarese trader), whom I interviewed at Sandūr, was smeared with white marks on the forehead, upper extremities, chest, and abdomen in imitation of a Hubli priest. Some orthodox Lingāyat traders remove their lingam during the transaction of the day's work, on the ground, as given to me, that it is necessary to tell little falsehoods in the course of business.

**Lingadāri.**—A general term, meaning one who wears a lingam, for Lingāyat.

**Lingakatti.**—A name applied to Lingāyat Badagas of the Nīlgiri hills.

**Lingam.**—A title of Jangams and Silavants.

**Lingāyat.**—For the following note I am mainly indebted to Mr. R. C. C. Carr, who took great interest in its preparation when he was Collector of Bellary. Some additional information was supplied by Mr. R. E. Enthoven, Superintendent of the Ethnographic Survey, Bombay. The word Lingāyat is the anglicised form of Lingavant, which is the vernacular term commonly used for any member of the community. The Lingāyats have been aptly described as a peaceable race of Hindu Puritans. Their religion is a simple one. They acknowledge only one God, Siva, and reject the other two persons of the Hindu Triad. They reverence the Vēdas, but disregard the later commentaries on which the Brāhmans rely. Their faith purports to be the primitive Hindu faith, cleared of all priestly mysticism. They deny the supremacy of Brāhmans, and pretend to be free from caste distinctions, though at the present day caste is in fact observed amongst them. They declare that there is no need for sacrifices, penances, pilgrimages or fasts. The cardinal principle of the faith is an unquestioning belief in the efficacy of the lingam, the image which has always been regarded as symbolical

of the God Siva. This image, which is called the jangama lingam or moveable lingam, to distinguish it from the sthavara or fixed lingam of Hindu temples, is always carried on some part of the body, usually the neck or the left arm, and is placed in the left hand of the deceased when the body is committed to the grave. Men and women, old and young, rich and poor, all alike wear this symbol of their faith, and its loss is regarded as spiritual death, though in practice the loser can, after a few ceremonies, be invested with a new one. They are strict disciplinarians in the matter of food and drink, and no true Lingāyat is permitted to touch meat in any form, or to partake of any kind of liquor. This Puritan simplicity raises them in the social scale, and has resulted in producing a steady law-abiding race, who are conservative of the customs of their forefathers, and have hitherto opposed a fairly unbroken front to the advancing tide of foreign ideas. To this tendency is due the very slow spread of modern education amongst them, while, on the other hand, their isolation from outside influence has without doubt assisted largely in preserving intact their beautiful, highly polished, and powerful language, Canarese.

It is matter of debate whether the Lingāyat religion is an innovation or a revival of the most ancient Sai-vaite faith, but the story of the so-called founder of the sect, Basava, may with some limitations be accepted as history. The events therein narrated occurred in the latter half of the twelfth century at Kalyān, a city which was then the capital of the Western Chālukyas, and is now included in the province of Bidar in the Nizām's Dominions. It lies about a hundred miles to the west of Hyderabad. The Chālukyas came originally from the north of India, but appeared to the south of the

Nerbudda as early as the fourth century. They separated into two branches during the seventh century, and the western line was still represented at Kalyān 500 years later. The southern portion of Hindustan had for centuries been split up between rival kingdoms, and had been the theatre of the long struggle between the Buddhists, the Jains, and the Hindus. At the time of Basava's appearance, a Jain king, Bijjala by name, was in power at Kalyān. He was a representative of the Kalachuryas, a race which had been conquered by the Chālukyas, and occupied the position of feudatories. Bijjala appears to have been the Commander-in-chief of the Chālukyan forces, and to have usurped the throne, ousting his royal master, Taila III. The date of the usurpation was 1156 A.D., though, according to some accounts, Bijjala did not assume the full titles till some years later. He was succeeded by his sons, but the Chālukyan claimant recovered his throne in 1182, only to lose it again some seven years afterwards, when the kingdom itself was divided between the neighbouring powers. The final downfall of the Chālukyan Deccan kingdom was probably due to the rise of the Lingāyat religion. The Hindus ousted the Jains, but the tenets inculcated by Basava had caused a serious split in the ranks of the former. The house divided against itself could not stand, and the Chālukyas were absorbed into the kingdoms of their younger neighbours, the Hoysala Ballalas from Mysore in the south, and the Yādavas from Dēvagiri (now identified with Daulatabad) in the north.

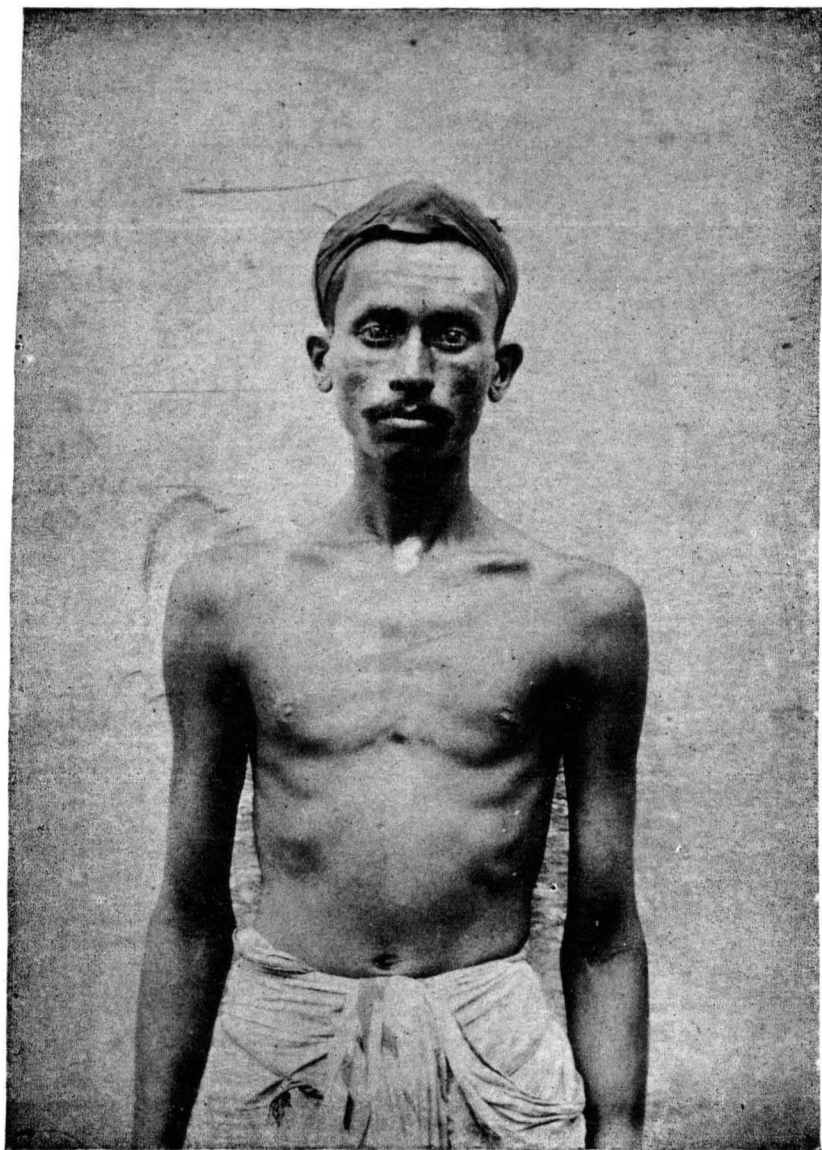
At about this time there appears to have been a great revival of the worship of Siva in the Deccan and in Southern India. A large number of important Saivaite temples are known to have been built during

the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and inscriptions speak of many learned and holy men who were devoted to this worship. The movement was probably accentuated by the opposition of the Jains, who seem to have been very powerful in the Western Deccan, and in Mysore. An inscription which will be more fully noticed later on tells of the God Siva specially creating a man in order to "put a stop to the hostile observances of the Jains and Buddhists." This was written about the year 1200 A.D., and it may be gathered that Buddhism was still recognised in the Deccan as a religious power. Mr. Rice tells us that the labours of the Saivaite Brāhman, Sankarāchārya, had in the eighth century dealt a deathblow to Buddhism, and raised the Saiva faith to the first place.\* Its position was, however, challenged by the Jains, and, even as late as the twelfth century, it was still battling with them. The Vaishnavait reformer, Rāmānujāchārya, appeared at about this time, and, according to Mr. Rice, was mainly instrumental in ousting Jainism; but the followers of Vishnu built many of their big temples in the thirteenth century, two hundred years later than their Saivaite brethren, so it may be presumed that the latter faith was in the ascendancy prior to that time. Chaitanya, the Vaishnavait counterpart of Basava, appeared at a much later date (1485 A.D.). It is interesting to note that the thirteenth century is regarded as the culminating period of the middle ages in Italy, when religious fervour also displayed itself in the building of great cathedrals.†

The actual date of Basava's birth is uncertain, but is given by some authorities as 1106 A.D. The story of



his career is told in the sacred writings of the Lingāyats, of which the principal books are known as the Basava Purāna and the Channabasava Purāna. The former was apparently finished during the fourteenth century, and the latter was not written till 1585. The accounts are, therefore, entirely traditionary, and, as might have been expected, are full of miraculous occurrences, which mar their historical value. The Jain version of the story is given in the Bijjalarāyacharitra, and differs in many particulars. The main facts accepted by Lingāyat tradition are given by Dr. Fleet in the *Epigraphia Indica* [Vol. V, p. 239] from which the following account is extracted. To a certain Madiraja and his wife Madalāmbika, pious Saivas of the Brāhman caste, and residents of a place called Bagevādi, which is usually supposed to be the sub-divisional town of that name in the Bijapur district, there was born a son who, being an incarnation of Siva's bull, Nandi, sent to earth to revive the declining Saiva rites, was named Basava. This word is the Canarese equivalent for a bull, an animal sacred to Siva. When the usual time of investiture arrived, Basava, then eight years of age, having meanwhile acquired much knowledge of the Siva scriptures, refused to be invested with the sacred Brāhmanical thread, declaring himself a special worshipper of Siva, and stating that he had come to destroy the distinctions of caste. This refusal, coupled with his singular wisdom and piety, attracted the notice of his uncle Baladēva, prime minister of the Kalachurya king Bijjala, who had come to be present at the ceremony; and Baladēva gave him his daughter, Gangādevi or Gangāmba, in marriage. The Brāhmins, however, began to persecute Basava on account of the novel practices propounded by him, and he consequently left his native town and went to a



LINGA BANAJIGA WITH LINGAM ON HEAD.

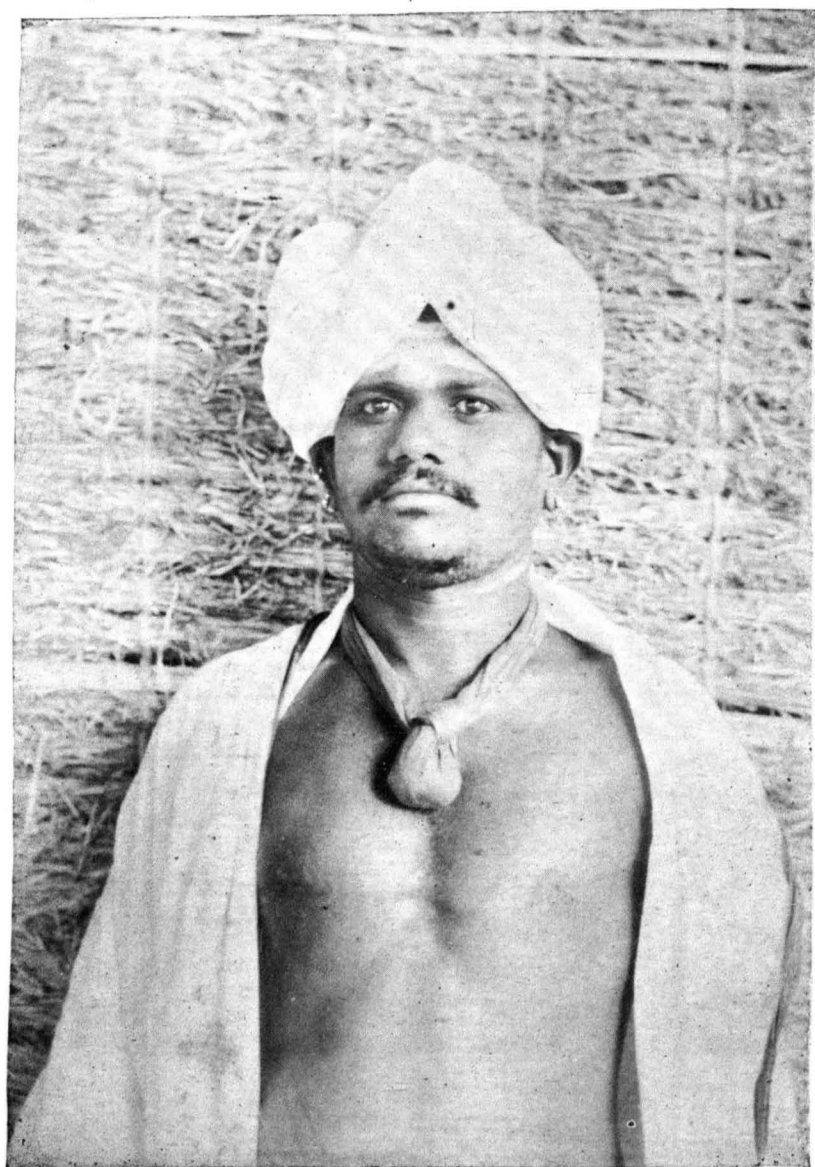
village named Kappadi, where he spent his early years, receiving instruction from the God Siva. Meanwhile his uncle Baladēva died, and Bijjala resolved to secure the services of Basava, whose ability and virtues had now become publicly known. After some demur Basava accepted the post, in the hope that the influence attached to it would help him in propagating his peculiar tenets. And, accompanied by his elder sister, Nāgalāmbika, he proceeded to Kalyāna, where he was welcomed with deference by the king and installed as prime minister, commander-in-chief and treasurer, second in power to the king himself; and the king, in order to bind him as closely as possible to himself, gave him his younger sister Nilalochana to wife. Somewhere about this time, from Basava's unmarried sister Nāgalāmbika there was born, by the working of the spirit of Siva, a son who was an incarnation of Siva's son Shanmukha, the god of war. The story says that Basava was worshipping in the holy mountain and was praying for some gift, when he saw an ant emerge from the ground with a small seed in its mouth. Basava took this seed home, and his sister without Basava's knowledge swallowed it, and became pregnant. The child was called Channabasava, or the beautiful Basava, and assisted his uncle in spreading the new doctrines. Indeed, he is depicted as playing a more important part than even Basava himself.

The two Purānas are occupied for the most part with doctrinal expositions, recitals of mythology, praises of previous Siva saints, and accounts of miracles worked by Basava. They assert, however, that uncle and nephew were very energetic promoters of the faith, and that they preached the persecution and extermination of all persons (especially the Jains), whose creed differed from that of the Lingāyats. Coupled with the lavish

expenditure incurred by Basava from the public coffers in support of Jangams or Lingāyat priests, these proceedings aroused in Bijjala, himself a Jain, feelings of distrust, which were fanned by a rival minister, Manchanna, although the latter was himself a Vira Saiva, and at length an event occurred which ended in the assassination of Bijjala and the death of Basava.

At Kalyāna there were two specially pious Lingāyats, whom Bijjala in mere wantonness caused to be blinded. Thereupon Basava left Kalyāna, and deputed one of his followers Jagaddeva to slay the king. Jagaddeva, with two others, succeeded in forcing his way into the palace, where he stabbed the king in the midst of his court. Basava meanwhile reached Kudali-Sangameshvara, and was there absorbed into the lingam, while Channabasava fled to Ulvi in North Canara, where he found refuge in a cave.

The above story is taken mainly from the Basava Purāna. The account given in the Channabasava Purāna differs in various details, and declares that Bijjala was assassinated under the orders of Channabasava, who had succeeded his uncle in office. The Jain account states that Basava's influence with the king was due to Basava's sister, whom Bijjala took as a concubine. The death of Bijjala was caused by poisoned fruit sent by Basava, who, to escape the vengeance of Bijjala's son, threw himself into a well and died. The version of Basava's story, which is found in most books of reference, makes him appear at Kalyān as a youth flying from the persecution of his father. His uncle, Baladēva, sheltered him and eventually gave him his daughter; and, when Baladēva died, Basava succeeded to his office. This seems to have been copied from the account given by Mr. C. P. Brown, but later translations of the Purāna show that it is



LINGA BANAJIGA WITH LINGAM ON CHEST.



erroneous. When Basava came to Kalyān, Bijjala was in power, and his arrival must therefore have been subsequent to 1156 A.D. If the date of birth be accepted as 1106, Basava would have been a man of fifty years of age or more when summoned to office by Bijjala. The latter resigned in favour of his son in 1167, and may have been assassinated shortly afterwards. On the other hand, Baladēva could not have been Bijjala's minister when he came to Basava's upanāyanam ceremony, for this event occurred in 1114, long before the commencement of Bijjala's reign. There is no reason, however, for crediting the Purāna with any great historical accuracy, and, in fact, the evidence now coming to light from inscriptions, which the industry of archæologists is giving to the world, throws great doubt upon the traditional narrative.

An inscription on stone tablets which have now been built into the wall of a modern temple at Managoli, a village in the Bijāpur district of the Bombay Presidency about eleven miles to the north-west of Bāgevādi, the supposed birth place of Basava, contains a record of the time of the Kalachuri king, Bijjala. Two dates are given in the inscription, and from one of them it is calculated with certainty that Bijjala's reign began in 1156 A.D. The record gives a certain date as "the sixth of the years of the glorious Kalachurya Bijjaladēva, an emperor by the strength of his arm, the sole hero of the three worlds." The corresponding English date is Tuesday, 12th September, 1161 A.D., so that Bijjala must have come into power, by the strength of his arm, in 1156. But a still more important piece of information is furnished by the mention of a certain Basava or Basavarasayya as the builder of the temple, in which the inscription was first placed, and of one Madirāja, who held the post of

Mahaprabhu of the village when the grants in support of the temple were made. The record runs as follows.\* "Among the five hundred of Manigavalli there sprang up a certain Govardhana, the moon of the ocean that was the Kasyappa gotra, an excellent member of the race of the Vajins. His son was Revadāsa. The latter had four sons . . . . The youngest of these became the greatest, and, under the name of Chandramas, made his reputation reach even as far as the Himalaya mountains. To that lord there was born a son, Basava. There were none who were like him in devotion to the feet of (the God) Maheshvara (Siva); and this Basava attained the fame of being esteemed the sun that caused to bloom the water-lily that was the affection of the five hundred Brāhmans of Manigavalli. This Basavarasayya came to be considered the father of the world, since the whole world, putting their hands to their foreheads, saluted him with the words 'our virtuous father'; and thus he brought greatness to the famous Manigavalli, manifesting the height of graciousness in saying this is the abode of the essence of the three Vēdas; this is the accomplishment of that which has no end and no beginning; this is the lustrous divine linga."

Dr. Fleet suggests that we have at last met with an epigraphic mention of the Lingāyat founder, Basava. This is eminently satisfactory, but is somewhat upsetting, for the inscription makes Basava a member of the Kasyapa gōtra, while Madirāja is placed in an entirely different family. As regards the latter, the record says; (l. 20) "in the lineage of that lord (Taila II, the leader of the Chalukyas) there was a certain Madhava, the

---

\* J. F. Fleet, *Epigraphia Indica*. V, 1898-99.

Prabhu of the town of Manigavalli, the very Vishnu of the renowned Harita gōtra ;" and later on the same person is spoken of as the Mahaprabhu Madirāja. If Basava and Madirāja, herein mentioned, are really the heroes of the Lingāyats, it is clear that they were not father and son, as stated in the Lingāyat writings. But it must be borne in mind that this is the only inscription yet deciphered which contains any allusion whatever to Basava, and the statement that "he caused to bloom the water-lily that was the affection of the five hundred Brāhmans of Manigavalli," is directly opposed to the theory that he broke away from the Brāhman fold, and set up a religion, of which one of the main features is a disregard of Brāhman supremacy. The fact that the inscription was found so near to Basava's birthplace is, however, strong evidence in favour of the presumption that it refers to the Basava of Lingāyat tradition, and the wording itself is very suggestive of the same idea. The record gives a long pedigree to introduce the Basava whom it proceeds to extol, and puts into his mouth the noteworthy utterance, which ascribes godly qualities to the "lustrous divine linga." The date of this record is contemporary with the events and persons named therein, and it must therefore be far more reliable than the traditionary stories given in the Purānas, which, as already indicated, are not at all in accordance with each other. Dr. Fleet is of opinion that the Purāna versions are little better than legends. This is perhaps going too far, but there can be no doubt that later research will in this, as in the case of all traditionary history, bring to knowledge facts which will require a considerable rearrangement of the long accepted picture.

Another inscription, discovered at Ablūr in the Dharwar district of the Bombay Presidency, is of great

importance in this connection. It is dated about A.D. 1200, and mentions the Western Chalukya king Somesvara IV, and his predecessor the Kalachurya prince Bijjala. It narrates the doings of a certain Ekāntada Rāmayya, so called because he was an ardent and exclusive worshipper of Siva. This individual got into controversy with the Jains, who were apparently very powerful at Ablūr, and the latter agreed to destroy their Jina and to set up Siva instead, if Rāmayya would cut off his own head before his god, and have it restored to his body after seven days without a scar. Rāmayya appears to have won his wager, but the Jains refused to perform their part of the contract. The dispute was then referred to king Bijjala, himself a Jain, and Rāmayya was given a jayapatra, or certificate of success. This king and his Chalukyan successor also presented Rāmayya with lands in support of certain Siva temples. It is noteworthy that the story is told also in the Channabasava Purāna, but the controversy is narrated as having occurred at Kalyān, where Rāmayya had gone to see king Bijjala. The same passage makes Rāmayya quote an instance of a previous saint, Mahālāka, having performed the same feat at a village named Jambar, which may conceivably be the Ablūr of the inscription. But the interest and importance of the inscription centre in the fact that it discloses the name of another devout and exclusive worshipper of Siva, who, it is said, caused this man to be born into the world with the express object of "putting a stop to the hostile observances of the Jains and the Buddhists who had become furious" or aggressive. Dr. Fleet considers that, making allowance for the supernatural agency introduced into the story, the narrative is reasonable and plain, and has the ring of truth in it; and, in his opinion, it shows us the real person to whom the



LINGĀYAT.



revival of the ancient Saivaite faith was due. The exploits of Rāmayya are placed shortly before A.D. 1162, in which year Bijjala is said to have completed his usurpation of the sovereignty by assuming the paramount titles. Rāmayya was thus a contemporary of Basava, but the Ablūr inscription makes no mention of the latter.

This fresh evidence does not appear to run counter to the commonly accepted story of the origin of the Lingāyats. It confirms the theory that the religion of Siva received a great impetus at this period, but there is nothing in the inscription ascribing to Rāmayya the position of a reformer of Saivaite doctrines. He appears as the champion of Siva against the rival creeds, not as the Saivaite Luther who is attacking the priestly mysticism of the Saivaite divines; and, as Dr. Fleet points out, there is nothing improbable in the mention of several persons as helping on the same movement. Both Rāmayya and Basava are, however, represented in these inscriptions as being the chief of Saivaite Brāhmans, and there is no mention of any schism such as the Protestant revolt which is associated with the name of Luther. It is possible, therefore, that the establishment of the Lingāyat sect may have been brought about by the followers of these two great men—a fact that is hinted at in Lingāyat tradition by the very name of Channabasava, which means Basava the beautiful, because, according to the Channabasava Purāna, he was more beautiful in many respects than Basava, who is represented as receiving instruction from his superior nephew in important points connected with their faith. The two inscriptions and numerous others, which have been deciphered by the same authority, are of the greatest value from a historical point of view, and paint in bold

colours the chief actors in the drama. The closing years of the Western Chalukyan kingdom are given to us by the hand of an actor who was on the same stage, and, if the birth of the Lingāyat creed is still obscured in the mist of the past, the figures of those who witnessed it stand out with surprising clearness.

It has been already stated that one of the principles of the religion is a disregard of caste distinctions. The prevailing races were Dravidian, and it is an accepted fact that the theory of caste as propounded by Manu is altogether foreign to Dravidian ideas. Historians cannot tell us how long the process of grafting the caste system on to the Dravidian tree lasted, but it is clear that, when Basava appeared, the united growth was well established. Brāhmins were acknowledged as the leaders in religious matters, and, as the secular is closely interwoven with the religious in all eastern countries, the priestly class was gradually usurping to itself a position of general control. But, as was the case in Europe during the sixteenth century, a movement was on foot to replace the authority of the priests by something more in accordance with the growing intelligence of the laity. And, as in Europe, the reformers were found amongst the priests themselves. Luther and Erasmus were monks, who had been trained to support the very system of priestcraft, which they afterwards demolished. Basava and Rāmāyā, as already stated, were Saivaite Brāhmins, from whom has sprung a race of free thinkers, who affect the disregard of caste and many of the ceremonial observances created by the Brāhman priesthood. The comparison may even be carried further. Luther was an iconoclast, who worked upon men's passions, while Erasmus was a philosopher, who addressed himself to their intellects. Basava, according to the traditionary

account, was the counterpart of Luther. Rāmayya may be fairly called the Indian Erasmus.

This freedom from the narrowing influence of caste was doubtless a great incentive to the spread of the reformed religion. The lingam was to be regarded as the universal leveller, rendering all its wearers equal in the eye of the Deity. High and low were to be brought together by its influence, and all caste distinctions were to be swept away. According to Basava's teaching, all men are holy in proportion as they are temples of the great spirit; by birth all are equal; men are not superior to women, and the gentle sex must be treated with all respect and delicacy; marriage in childhood is wrong, and the contracting parties are to be allowed a voice in the matter of their union; and widows are to be allowed to remarry. All the iron fetters of Brāhmanical tyranny are, in fact, torn asunder, and the Lingāyat is to be allowed that freedom of individual action, which is found amongst the more advanced Christian communities. Even the lowest castes are to be raised to the level of all others by the investiture of the lingam, and all Lingadhāris, or wearers of the divine symbol, are to eat together, to intermarry, and to live at unity.

But social distinctions inevitably asserted themselves later. As the Lingāyats, or Panchamsālis as they styled themselves, increased in importance, number and wealth, elaborate forms of worship and ceremony were introduced, rules of conduct were framed, and a religious system was devised, on which the influence of the rival Brāhman aristocracy can be freely traced. Thus, in course of time, the Panchamsālis became a closed caste, new converts were placed on a lower social footing, the priests alone continuing as a privileged class to dine freely with

them. This development is alleged to have occurred about the close of the seventeenth century.

Among the many ceremonies introduced in the course of the changes just described, one known as the ashtavarna or eight-fold protection is of special importance.

These rites consist of—

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Guru.      | 5. Mantra.  |
| 2. Linga.     | 6. Jangam.  |
| 3. Vibhūti.   | 7. Tirtha.  |
| 4. Rudrāksha. | 8. Prasāda. |

Among the greater number of Lingāyats, after the birth of a child, the parents send for the guru or spiritual adviser of the family, who is the representative of one of the five Achāryas from whom the father claims descent, or in his absence of his local agent. The guru binds the linga on the child, besmears it with vibhūti (ashes), places a garland of rudrāksha (fruits of *Elaeocarpus Ganitrus*) round its neck, and teaches it the mystic mantra of "Namah Shivaya." The child being incapable of acquiring the knowledge of the sacred text at this early stage of its existence, the mantra is merely recited in its ear by the guru. The child has then to be presented to the god Siva in the person of a Jangam, or Lingāyat priest, who is summoned for the purpose; on his arrival, the parents wash his feet. The water in which the feet are washed is described as the tirtha or charana tirtha of Siva. This tirtha is next poured over the linga attached to the infant. The Jangam is fed, and a portion of the cooked food from the dish is placed in the child's mouth. This final ceremony is known as prasāda. (I am informed that it would be considered by Tamil Lingāyats sacrilege to wash the lingam with the tirtha.) Occasionally the double character of guru and Jangam are combined in one person.



LINGA BANAJIGA.



According to some accounts, the rites described above form the basis of the present social organization of the Lingāyat community. They are divided into those entitled to ashtavarna, and those who are not. The first of these divisions is again sub-divided into several groups, which may for convenience be designated Panchamsālis who are descendants of the original converts, and non-Panchamsālis or later converts.

This explanation will throw some light on the scheme of classification adopted in the Bombay Gazetteer (*see* volumes Bijapur and Dharwar) where the smaller groups are shown as—

1. Pure Lingāyats.
2. Affiliated Lingāyats.
3. Half Lingāyats.

These divisions, of which the full significance is not clearly conveyed by the titles, may perhaps be expanded with advantage by the addition to each of the alternatives already explained, viz., Panchamsālis, non-Panchamsālis with ashtavarna rites, and others, including the unclean castes attached to the Lingāyat community by reason of performing its menial services, *e.g.*, Dhors, Chelvādis, etc. It is the modern practice to deny to these low castes the right to style themselves Lingāyats at all. It must be further explained that there are seven divisions of Panchamsālis, and that these stand to each other in the relation of hypergamous groups, that is to say, members of the higher orders may wed the daughters of those beneath them, which suggests the probable former existence of free intermarriage. Members of the lower orders among these Panchamsālis may rise to the higher by performing certain religious ceremonies, constituting a form of initiation. In the second and third divisions, *i.e.*, non-Panchamsālis and

"others," the sub-castes are functional groups and are endogamous, *i.e.*, intermarriage is prohibited. It seems probable that the members of these divisions became converts to Lingāyatism some time after the initiation of the reforms, to which it gave birth, when the crusade against caste distinctions had lost much of its pristine vigour, and ceased to be a living part of the fundamental doctrine of the sect.

At the present day, marriage is both infant and adult, and the parties to the contract have practically no choice. Widows are indeed allowed to remarry, but such marriages are regarded with disfavour by the stricter members of the sect. A Pariah or a Māla cannot be invested with the lingam, and, if he pretends to be a Lingāyat, the Jangam does not acknowledge him. The strict rules regarding meat and drink are maintained, and Lingāyats are still free from many of the ceremonies and religious performances required of other Hindus. But the tendency of to-day is to follow the lead of the Brāhman; and, while no Lingāyat will admit the superiority of that caste, they practically acknowledge it by imitating many Brāhmanical practices. Much of the good effected by the founder has thus been counteracted, and the Lingāyat is gradually becoming more and more like his orthodox Hindu brother. In proof of this tendency it may be noted that, at the time of the census of 1891, there were numerous representations from Lingāyats claiming the right to be described as Virasaiva Brāhmins. Further, on the occasion of the census of 1901, a complete scheme was supplied to the census authorities professing to show all Lingāyat sub-divisions in four groups, *viz.*, Brāhman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sūdra. It is noted, in the Mysore Census Report, 1891, that the Lingāyats interviewed the



LINGA BANAJIGA.

Maharāja, and begged that their registration as Virasaiva Brāhmans might be directed. "The crisis was removed by His Highness the Maharāja's Government passing orders to the effect that the Lingāyats should not be classed as Sūdras any more than any other non-Brāhmans, but should be separately designated by their own name, and that, while they were at liberty to call themselves Virasaiva Brāhmans, they should specify the name of the particular and well-known sub-division to which each censused unit belonged. It is noteworthy that, as soon as the clamour of the Lingāyats was set at rest, some of their leaders seem to have become ashamed of their own previous vehemence, while the movement seemed to have lost the spring imparted by sincerity. Their feelings were brought to the test when the question of permitting the wonted periodical procession of their religious flagstaff, the nandī-dhvaja, came on for consideration by the Police department. The Lingāyats' application for a license was opposed by the other castes on the ground that, since they had become Brāhmans, and had ceased to belong to the right-hand faction, they had no right to parade the nandī-dhvaja. The Lingāyats then showed themselves glad to regain their *status quo ante*."

In connection with the name Virasaiva, it may be noted *en passant* that the first session of the Shreemat Veerashaiva Mahasabha\* was held at Dharwar in the Bombay Presidency in 1904. Thereat various suggestions were made concerning religious instruction, education, marriage, the settlement of disputes by arbitration, and other matters affecting the material welfare of the Lingāyat community as a whole.

---

\* The Proceedings, partly in Canarese and partly in English, were published at the Star Press, Mysore, in 1905.

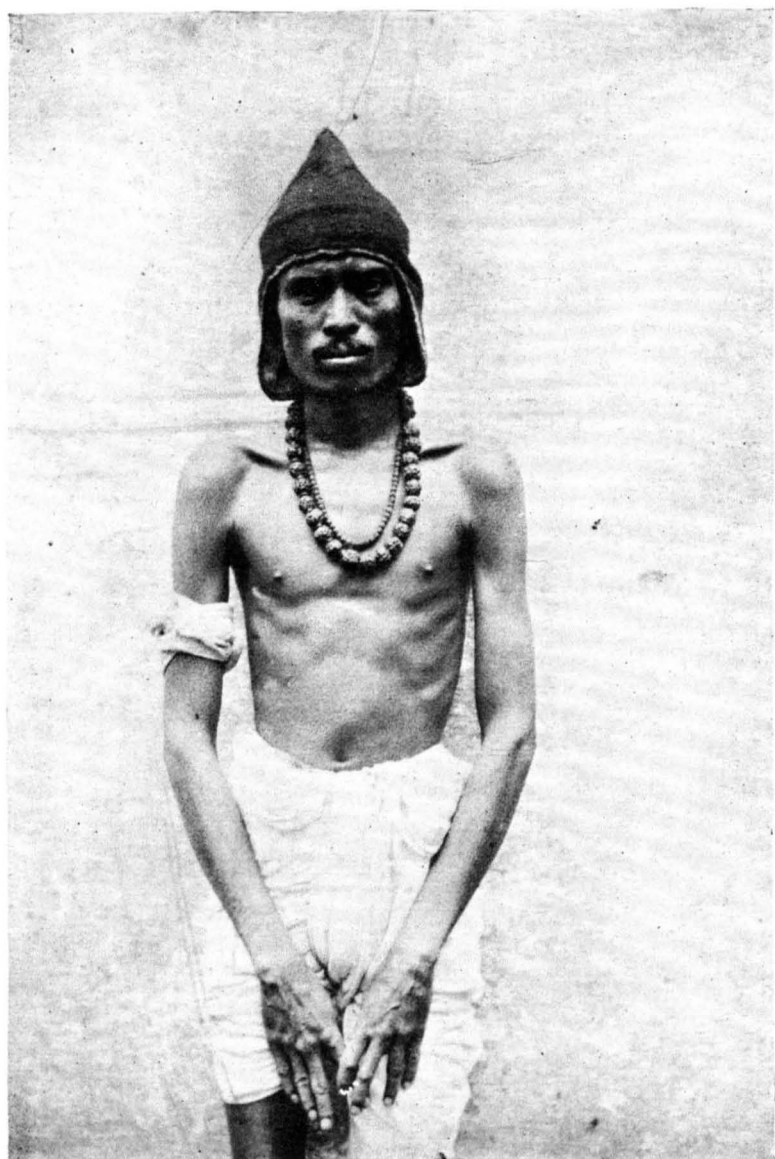
It is worthy of note that, according to some writers, Basava is supposed to have come within the influence of the Syrian Christians. The idea was started by Mr. C. P. Brown, whose essay on the Jangams\* is the classic on this subject. Mr. A. C. Burnell quotes the remarkable fact from *Cosmos* that, in the sixth century, there was a Persian Bishop at Kalliāna near Udupi. And it is presumed by Surgeon-Major W. R. Cornish, the writer of the Madras Census Report, 1871, that Kalliāna is identical with Kalyān, where Basava was prime minister six centuries later. This is clearly wrong, for Udupi is on the west coast 30 miles north of Mangalore, whereas Kalyān, the Chalukyan capital, is in the heart of the Deccan, 350 miles away over the western ghauts. There was another Calyaun or Kaliāna close to Udupi on the coast, as shown by some of the older maps. But it is well known that Western India was at this time tenanted by large settlements of Persians or Manichæans, and recent discoveries tend to show that these people were Christians. It seems, therefore, to be quite possible that the discussions, which preceded Basava's revolt, were tinged with some Christian colouring, derived from the followers of the Syrian school. Mr. Burnell even thinks that all the modern philosophical schools of India owe much to the same source.

The Lingāyat faith appears to have spread very rapidly after Basava's death, which may be placed in the year 1168, and Rice says that, according to tradition, within sixty years of the founder's death it was embraced from Ulavi near Goa to Sholāpur, and from Balehalli to Sivaganga. The disappearance of the Chalukyan dynasty is in itself evidence of the rising power of the

---

\* Madras Journal of Literature and Science, XI, 1840.





JANGAM.

Lingāyats. But no real estimate can be made of its progress at first. More than a hundred years later, the Muhammadan invaders took possession of the Deccan, and other religions were driven southwards. The Empire of Vijayanagar, which is said to have covered the whole country from the Kistna to Cape Comorin, rose out of the ruins of the Hindu kingdoms, and as Mr. Sewell says,\* the fighting Kings of Vijayanagar became the saviours of the south for two and a half centuries. The early members of this dynasty were Saivaites in faith, but there is no record of the workings of the reformed religion, which had spread southwards before Vijayanagar became a power.

The followers of this religion are easily distinguished from other Hindus by the fact that the lingam is worn on a conspicuous part of the body. The bulk of the cultivators enclose it in a red silk scarf tied round their necks, with a knot in front. This scarf is tied on the left arm above the elbow when the wearer is at work, and is sometimes placed round the head when bathing. Some of the traders, who are the richer class, carry it in a small silver box hung round the neck with a thread called *sivadhāra*, or in a gold box studded with precious stones. The women do not wear it outside the dress, and generally keep it on a neck-string. No one is allowed to put it down even for a moment. Recently a Lingāyat merchant in Madras removed his silver lingam casket from his neck, wrapped it up in a cloth, put it under his head, and went to sleep on a street pial (platform). While he was slumbering, the casket was stolen by a cart driver. The lingam itself, which is regarded as the home of the deity, is generally made of grey

---

\* R. Sewell. *A Forgotten Empire, Vijayanagar*, 1900.

soapstone brought from Parvatgiri (Srisaila) in the Kurnool district. It is brought by a class of people called Kambi Jangams, because, besides the linga stone, they bring on a *kāvadi* or shoulder-bamboo the holy water of the *Pātālganga*, a pool on Parvatgiri, whose water Lingāyats hold as sacred as Brāhmans the water of the Ganges.

The following description of the lingam is taken from the Bombay Gazetteer for Bijapur. "It consists of two discs, the lower one circular about one-eighth of an inch thick, the upper slightly elongated. Each disc is about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and is separated by a deep groove about an eighth of an inch broad. From the centre of the upper disc, which is slightly rounded, rises a pea-like knob about a quarter of an inch long and three-quarters of an inch round, giving the stone lingam a total height of nearly three-quarters of an inch. This knob is called the *bān* or arrow. The upper disc is called *jalhāri*, that is the water carrier, because this part of a full-sized lingam is grooved to carry off the water which is poured over the central knob. It is also called *pīta*, that is the seat, and *pīthak* the little seat. Over the lingam, to keep it from harm, is plastered a black mixture of clay, cowdung ashes, and marking-nut juice. This coating, which is called *kauthi* or the cover, entirely hides the shape of the enclosed lingam. It forms a smooth black slightly truncated cone, not unlike a dark betel nut, about three-quarters of an inch high, and narrowing from three-quarters of an inch at the base to half an inch across the top."

The Jangam cannot as a rule be distinguished from other Lingāyats. All male members of the community have a clean-shaved head, without the top-knot common to the Brāhmans. All, male as well as female, daub



JANGAM.

their foreheads with vibhūti or sacred ashes every morning. There is thus no distinctive mark for the Jangam. But certain ascetics of the priestly class sometimes put on a red robe peculiar to them, and others cover themselves with vibhūti and many quaint ornaments. [A Jangam whom I interviewed at a village in Mysore, was named Virabhadra Kayaka, and was also known as Kāsi Lingada Vīra. He was going about the village, shouting, dancing, and repeating the Virabhadra khadga or praise of Virabhadra, Siva's son. On his head he had a lingam stuck in his head-cloth, with a five-headed snake forming a canopy over it, and the sacred bull Basava in front. Tied to the forehead, and passing round the head, was a string holding thirty-two lingams. At the back of the head was a mane of white false hair. His face was painted bright red. Round the neck he had four garlands of rudrāksha beads, and suspended from the neck, and resting on the chest, was a silver casket containing a lingam. Round the waist was a waist-band made of brass squares ornamented with a variety of figures, among which were the heads of Daksha Brahma and Virabhadra. Suspended from the neck was a breast-plate, with a representation of Virabhadra and the figures of Daksha Brahma and his wife engraved in copper. From the waist a piece of tiger skin was suspended, to which were attached two heads of Daksha Brahma with a lion's head between. Hanging lower down was a figure of Basava. Tied to the ankles were hollow brass cylinders with loose bits of brass inside. Strings of round brass bells were tied to the knees. In his right hand he carried a long sword, and tied to the left forearm was a gauntlet-handled scimitar. To the handle were attached pieces of brass, which made a noise when the arm was



shaken. Finally, round the forearm were tied pieces of bear-skin.]

No account of the Lingāyat community as it exists at the present day would be complete without some reference to the grounds on which the modern representatives of Lingāyatism claim for their religion an origin as ancient as that of Brāhministic Hinduism, and a social structure similar to that which is described in the Code of Manu.

Mr. Karibasava Shāstri, Professor of Sanskrit and Canarese in the State College of Mysore, writes that the Shaiv sect of Hindus has always been divided into two groups, the one comprising the wearers of the linga, and the other those who do not wear it. The former he designates Vīrshaiv, and declares that the Vīrshaivs consist of Brāhman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sūdra. Quoting from the 17th chapter of the Parameshvar Āgma, he declares that the Vīrshaiv Brāhmins are also known as Shudha Vīrshaivs, Vīrshaiv Kings are Marga Vīrshaiv, Vīrshaiv Vaishya are Mishra Vīrshaiva, and the Sūdras of the community are Anter Vīrshaiv. In his opinion the duties and penances imposed on the first of these classes are—

- (1) The ashtavarna.
- (2) Penances and bodily emaciation.
- (3) The worship of Siva without sacrifice.
- (4) The recital of the Vēdas.

The Professor asserts that the Hindu ashrams of Brāhmacharya, Grahasta and Sanyāsi are binding on Vīrshaivs, and quotes from various Sanskrit works texts in support of this view. He also furnishes a mythical account of the origin of the Lingāyats at the time of the creation of the world.

A committee of gentlemen appointed in the Belgaum district to consider the question of the origin of