

"The Mādigas," Mr. H. A. Stuart informs us,\* "will not take food or water from Pariahs, nor the latter from the former, a prejudice which is taken advantage of in the Kālahasti Rāja's stables to prevent theft of gram by the Pariah horse-keepers, the raw gram being sprinkled with water by Mādigas in the sight of the Pariahs."

There are Telugu proverbs to the effect that "under the magili system of cultivation, even a Mādiga will grow good crops," and "not even a Mādiga will sow before Malapunnama."

Writing concerning the Madigas,† the Rev. H. Huizinga states that "they live in hamlets at a respectable distance from the villages of the caste people, by whom they are greatly despised. Their habits are squalid in the extreme, and the odour of a Mādiga hamlet is revolting. They perform all the lowest kinds of service for the caste people, especially bearing burdens and working in leather. They take charge of the ox or buffalo as soon as it dies. They remove the skin and tan it, and eat the loathsome carcase, which makes them specially despised, and renders their touch polluting. Some of the skins are used for covering the rude drums that are so largely used in Hindu festivals, and beaten in honour of the village deities. The caste men impress the Mādigas into their service, not only to make the drums, but also to beat them at their feasts. It may be mentioned that nearly ten per cent. of the Mādigas are nominal Christians, and, in some parts of the Nellore district, the Christians form over half of the Mādiga population. This changes their habits of life

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\* Manual of the North Arcot district.

† A. Chatterton, *Monograph of tanning and working in Leather*, Madras, 1904.

and also their social position. Eating of carrion is now forbidden, as well as beating of drums at Hindu festivals, and their refusal in this particular often leads to bitter persecution at the hands of the caste people. The main duty of the Mādigas is the curing and tanning of hides, and the manufacture of rude leather articles, especially sandals, trappings for bullocks, and large well-buckets used for irrigation. The process of tanning with lime and tangēdu (*Cassia auriculata*) bark is rough and simple. [Tangēdu is said \* to be cut only by the Mādigas, as other classes think it beneath their dignity to do it.] As did their forefathers, so the Mādigas do to-day. The quality of the skins they turn out is fair, and the state of the development of the native leather trade compares very favourably with that of other trades such as blacksmithy and carpentry. The Mādiga's sandals are strong, comfortable, and sometimes highly ornamental. His manner of working, and his tools are as simple as his life. He often gets paid in kind, a little fodder for his buffalo, so many measures of some cheap grain, perhaps a few vegetables, etc. In the northern districts, the Mādigas are attached to one or more families of ryots, and are entitled to the dead animals of their houses. Like the Vettiyan in the south, the Mādiga is paid in kind, and he has to supply sandals for the ryots, belts for the bulls, and all the necessaries of agriculture; and for these he has to find the requisite leather himself; but for the larger articles, such as water-buckets, the master must find the leather. Of late years there is a tendency observable among Mādigas to poach on each other's monopoly of certain houses, and among the ryots themselves to dispense with

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\* Manual of the Kurnool district.

the services of family Mādigas, and resort to the open market for their necessities. In such cases, the ryots demand payment from the Mādigas for the skins of their dead animals. The hides and skins, which remain after local demands have been satisfied, are sold to merchants from the Tamiī districts, and there is generally a central agent, to whom the various sub-agents send their collections, and by him they are dried and salted and sent to Madras for tanning. In the Kistna district, children have little leather strings hanging from the left shoulder, like the sacred cord of the Brāhman, from which is suspended a bag containing something put in it by a Mādiga, to charm away all forms of disease from the infant wearer."

In some places bones are collected by the Mādigas for the Labbais (Muhammadans), by whom they are exported to Bombay.

The god of the temple at Tirupati appears annually to four persons in different directions, east, west, north and south, and informs them that he requires a shoe from each of them. They whitewash their houses, worship the god, and spread rice-flour thickly on the floor of a room, which is locked for the night. Next morning the mark of a huge foot is found on the floor, and for this a shoe has to be made to fit. When ready, it is taken in procession through the streets of the village, and conveyed to Tirupati, where it is presented at the temple. Though the makers of the shoes have worked in ignorance of each other's work, the shoes brought from the north and south, and those from the east and west, are believed to match, and make a pair. Though the worship of these shoes is chiefly meant for the Pariahs, who are prohibited from ascending the Tirupati hill, as a matter of fact all, without distinction of caste,

worship them. The shoes are placed in front of the image of the god near the foot of the hill, and are said to gradually wear out by the end of the year.

At a pseudo-hook-swinging ceremony in the Bellary district, as carried out at the present day, a Bēdar is suspended by a cloth passed under his arms. The Mādigas always swing him, and have to provide the hide ropes, which are used.\*

In an exceedingly interesting account of the festival of the village goddess Ūramma, at Kudligi in the Bellary district, Mr. F. Fawcett writes as follows. "The Mādiga Basivis (dedicated prostitutes) are given alms, and join in the procession. A quantity of rice and rāgi flour is poured into a basket, over which one of the village servants cuts the throat of a small black ram. The carcase is laid on the bloody flour, and the whole covered with old cloths, and placed on the head of a Mādiga, who stands for some time in front of the goddess. The goddess is then carried a few yards, the Mādiga walking in front, while a hole is dug close to her, and the basket of bloody flour and the ram's carcase are buried. After some dancing by the Mādiga Basivis to the music of the tom-tom, the Mādigas bring five new pots, and worship them. A buffalo, devoted to the goddess after the last festival, is then driven or dragged through the village with shouting and tom-toming, walked round the temple, and beheaded by the Mādiga in front of the goddess. The head is placed in front of her with the right foreleg in the mouth, and a lamp, lighted eight days previously, is placed on top. All then start in procession round the village, a Mādiga, naked but for a few margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) leaves,

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\* Manual of the Bellary district.



and held by two others, leading the way. Behind him are all the other Mādigas, carrying six hundred seers of chōlum (*Sorghum*: millet), which they scatter; and, following them, all the other villagers. It is daybreak, and the Mādiga who led the way, the pūjari (priest), and the women who followed him, who have been fasting for more than twenty-four hours, now eat. The Mādiga is fed. This Mādiga is said to be in mortal terror while leading the procession, for the spirit or influence of the goddess comes over him. He swoons before the procession is completed. At noon the people collect again at Ūramma's temple, where a purchased buffalo is sacrificed. The head is placed in front of the goddess as before, and removed at once for food. Then those of the lower Sūdra castes, and Mādigas who are under vows, come dressed in margosa leaves, with lamps on their heads, and sacrifice buffaloes, sheep and goats to the goddess." A further account of the festival of the village goddess Udisalamma, at Bandri in the Bellary district, is given by Mr. Fawcett. "A Mādiga," he writes, "naked but for a few leaves round his waist, leads the procession, and, following him, are Mādigas with baskets. Fear of the goddess comes on the Mādiga. He swoons, and is carried to the temple, and flung on the ground in front of the goddess. After a while he is revived, bathed, and given new clothing. This man is one of a family, in which this curious office is hereditary. He must be the son of a married woman, not of a Basivi, and he must not be married. He fasts from the beginning of the festival till he has done what is required of him. A young ram—the sacrifice sheep—is taken up by one of the Pōturāzus, as if it were a child, its hind legs at either side of his waist and its forelegs over his shoulders, and he bites its throat open and



BUFFALO SACRIFICE. HEAD WITH FOOT IN THE MOUTH.

shows his bloody mouth to the people. He throws it down, and the Mādigas remove it."

In an account of a festival, during times of epidemic, at Masulipatam, Bishop Whitehead writes as follows.\*

"On the last day, a male buffalo, called *Dēvara potu* (he who is devoted to the goddess), is brought before the image, and its head cut off by the head Mādiga of the town. The blood is caught in a vessel, and sprinkled over some boiled rice, and then the head, with the right foreleg in the mouth, is placed before the shrine on a flat wicker basket, with the rice and blood on another basket just below it. A lighted lamp is placed on the head, and then another Mādiga carries it on his own head round the village, with a new cloth dipped in the blood of the victim tied round its neck. This is regarded here and elsewhere as a very inauspicious and dangerous office, and the headman of the village has to offer considerable inducements to persuade a Mādiga to undertake it. Ropes are tied round his body and arms, and held fast by men walking behind him, to prevent his being carried off by evil spirits, and limes are cut in half and thrown into the air, so that the demons may catch at them instead of at the man. It is believed that gigantic demons sit on the tops of tall trees ready to swoop down and carry him away, in order to get the rice and the buffalo's head. The idea of carrying the head and rice round a village, so the people said, is to draw a kind of cordon on every side of it, and prevent the entrance of the evil spirits. Should any one in the town refuse to subscribe for the festival, his house is omitted from the procession, and left to the tender mercies of the devils. This procession is called *Bali-haranam*, and in this

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\* Madras Museum Bull. V. 3, 1907.

(Kistna) district inams (lands rent free) are held from Government by certain families of Mādigas for performing it. Besides the buffalo, large numbers of sheep and goats, and fowls are sacrificed, each householder giving at least one animal. The head Mādiga, who kills the animals, takes the carcase, and distributes the flesh among the members of his family. Often cases come into the Courts to decide who has the right to kill them. As the sacrifice cannot wait for the tedious processes of the law, the elders of the village settle the question at once, pending an appeal to the Court. But, in the town of Masulipatam, a Mādiga is specially licensed by the Municipality for the purpose, and all disputes are avoided."

× In some localities, during epidemics of small-pox or cholera, the Mādigas celebrate a festival in honour of Māriamma, for the expenses of which a general subscription is raised, to which all castes contribute. A booth is erected in a grove, or beneath a margosa or *Strychnos Nux-vomica* tree, within which a decorated pot (kara-gam) is placed on a platform. The pot is usually filled with water, and its mouth closed by a cocoanut. In front of the pot a screen is set up, and covered with a white cloth, on which rice, plantains, and cakes are placed, with a mass of flour, in which a cavity is scooped out to hold a lighted wick fed with ghī (clarified butter), or gingelly oil. A goat is sacrificed, and its head, with a flour-light on it, placed close to the pot. The food, which has been offered to the goddess, is distributed. On the last day of the festival, the pot is carried in procession through the village, and goats are sacrificed at the four cardinal points of the compass. The pot is deposited at a spot where three roads meet, and a goat, pumpkins, limes, flowers, etc., are

offered to it. Everything, except the pot, is left on the spot.

The Mādigas sometimes call themselves Jāmbavas, and claim to be descended from Jāmbu or Adi Jāmbuvadu, who is perhaps the Jāmbuvan of the Rāmayana. Some Mādigas, called Sindhuvalu, go about acting scenes from the Mahābaratha and Rāmayana, or the story of Ankalamma. They also assert that they fell to their present low position as the result of a curse, and tell the following story. Kāmadhenu, the sacred cow of the Purāṇas, was yielding plenty of milk, which the Dēvas alone used. Vellamānu, a Mādiga boy, was anxious to taste the milk, but was advised by Adi Jāmbuvadu to abstain from it. He, however, secured some by stealth, and thought that the flesh would be sweeter still. Learning this, Kāmadhenu died. The Dēvas cut its carcase into four parts, of which they gave one to Adi Jāmbuvadu. But they wanted the cow brought back to life, and each brought his share of it for the purpose of reconstruction. But Vellamānu had cut a bit of the flesh, boiled it, and breathed on it, so that, when the animal was recalled to life, its chin sank, as the flesh thereof had been defiled. This led to the sinking of the Mādigas in the social scale. The following variant of this legend is given in the Mysore Census Report, 1891. "At a remote period, Jāmbava Rishi, a sage, was one day questioned by Isvara (Siva) why the former was habitually late at the Divine Court. The rishi replied that he had personally to attend to the wants of his children every day, which consequently made his attendance late : whereupon Isvara, pitying the children, gave the rishi a cow (Kāmadhenu), which instantaneously supplied their every want. Once upon a time, while Jāmbava was absent at Isvara's Court,



another rishi, named Sāṅkya, visited Jāmbava's hermitage, where he was hospitably entertained by his son Yugamuni. While taking his meals, the cream that had been served was so savoury that the guest tried to induce Jāmbava's son Yugamuni, to kill the cow and eat her flesh ; and, in spite of the latter's refusal, Sāṅkya killed the animal, and prevailed upon the others to partake of the meat. On his return from Isvara's Court, Jāmbava found the inmates of his hermitage eating the sacred cow's beef ; and took both Sāṅkya and Yugamuni over to Isvara's Court for judgment. Instead of entering, the two offenders remained outside, Sāṅkya rishi standing on the right side and Yugamuni on the left of the doorway. Isvara seems to have cursed them to become Chandalas or outcasts. Hence, Sāṅkya's descendants are, from his having stood on the right side, designated right-hand caste or Holayas ; whilst those who sprang from Yugamuni and his wife Mātangi are called left-hand caste or Mādigas." The occupation of the latter is said also to be founded on the belief that, by making shoes for people, the sin their ancestors had committed by cow-killing would be expiated. This mode of vicariously atoning for deliberate sin has passed into a facetious proverb, ' So and so has killed the cow in order to make shoes from the skin,' indicating the utter worthlessness and insufficiency of the reparation.

The Mādigas claim to be the children of Mātangi. " There was," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes, \* " formerly a Mātanga dynasty in the Canarese country, and the Mādigas are believed by some to be descendants of people who were once a ruling race. Mātangi is a

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\* Madras Census Report, 1891.

Sanskrit name for Kālī, and it is possible that the Mādigas once played an important part in the worship of the god. The employment of Chakkiliyans and Mādiga women in Shakti worship gives some colour to this supposition." According to Fleet \* "the Mātangas and the Katachchuris are mentioned in connection with Mangalisa, who was the younger brother and successor of Kirttivarma I, and whose reign commenced in Saka 489 (A.D. 567-8), and terminated in Saka 532 (A.D. 610-11). Of the Mātangas nothing is known, except the mention of them. But Mātanga means 'a Chāndala, a man of the lowest caste, an outcast, a kirāta mountaineer, a barbarian'; and the Mādigas, *i.e.*, the Mahāngs of this part of the country, usually call themselves Mātangimakkalu, *i.e.*, the children of Mātangi or Durgā, who is their goddess. It is probable, therefore, that the Mātangas of this inscription were some aboriginal family of but little power, and not of sufficient importance to have left any record of themselves." There are allusions to Mātangas in the Rāmāyana, and in Kadambari, a Sanskrit work, the chieftain of the Cabaras is styled Mātanga. The tutelary deity of the Mādigas is Mathamma or Mātangi, who is said to be worshipped by the Kōmatis under the name of Kanyakāparamēswari. The relations between the Mādigas and Kōmatis are dealt with in the note on the latter caste. There is a legend to the effect that Mātangi was defeated by Parasu Rāma, and concealed herself from him under the tanning-pot in a Mādiga's house. At the feast of Pongal, the Mādigas worship their tanning pots, as representing the goddess, with offerings of fowls and liquor. In addition to Mātangi, the Mādigas

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\* Dynasties of the Kanarese Districts of the Bombay Presidency, 1882.

worship Kattamma, Kattappa, Dandumāri, Munēswara, and other deities. Some of their children are named after these deities, while others receive Muhammadan names in fulfilment of vows made to Masthan and other Pīrs.

When asked concerning their caste, the Mādigas always reply "Memu pedda inti vallamu," *i.e.*, we are of the big house. The following legend is current in the Cuddapah district concerning a pool in the Rayachoti taluk called Akkadēvatalakolam, or the pool of the holy sisters. "A thousand years ago, there lived near the pool a king, who ruled over all this part of the country. The king had as his commander-in-chief a Mādiga. This Mādiga made himself powerful and independent, and built himself a residence on a hill still called Mādiga Vanidoorgam. At last he revolted, and defeated the king. On entering the king's palace, he found seven beautiful virgins, the king's daughters, to all of whom he at once made overtures of marriage. They declined the honour, and, when the Mādiga wished to use force, they all jumped into this pool, and delivered their lives to the universal lord." \*

The following are some of the more important endogamous sub-divisions among the Mādigas :—

Gampa dhompti, basket offering.

Ginna or thēl dhompti, tray or cup offering.

Bhūmi do. earth offering.

Chātla do. winnowing basket offering.

Sibbi do. brass vessel offering.

Chadarapa do. square space on the ground offering.

These sub-divisions are based on the way in which the members thereof offer food, etc., to their gods during

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\* Manual of the Cuddapah district.

marriages, *e.g.*, a Gampa dhompti places it in a basket, a Bhūmi dhompti on the floor. Each sub-division possesses many exogamous septs, of which the following are examples :—

Belli, silver.	Kaththi, knife.
Chinthala, tamarind.	Kudumala, cake.
Chātla, winnowing basket.	Kuncham, tassel.
Dārāla, thread.	Midathala, locust.
Emme, buffalo.	Mallela, or malli, jasmine.
Gavala, cowry shells.	Nannūru, four hundred.
Golkonda, a town.	Pothula, buffalo.
Jālam, slowness.	Pasula, cow.
Kambha, post.	Rāgi, <i>Eleusine Coracana</i> .
Kappala, frog.	Sikili, broom.
Kālahasti, a town.	Thēla, scorpion.
Kaththe, donkey.	

There seems to be some connection between the Mādigas, the Mutrāchas, and Gollas. For, at times of marriage, the Mādiga sets aside one thambūlam (betel leaf and areca nut) for the Mutrācha, and, in some places, extends the honour to the Golla also. At the marriage ceremonies of the Pūni Gollas, an elaborate and costly form of Ganga worship is performed, in connection with which it is the Mādiga musicians, called Mādiga Pambala vandlu, who draw the designs in colour-powders on the floor.

The Mādigas observe the panchāyat or tribal council system for the adjustment of disputes, and settlement of various questions at issue among members of the community. The headman is called Pedda (big) Mādiga, whose office is hereditary; and he is assisted by two elected officers called Dharmakartha and Kulambantrothu.

Widow remarriage (udike) is freely permitted, and the woman and her children are received in Mādiga

society. But care is taken that no one but the contracting parties and widows shall witness the marriage ceremony, and no one but a widower is allowed to avail himself of the form.\* A man may get a divorce from his wife by payment to her of a few rupees. But no money is given to her, if she has been guilty of adultery. The bride's price varies in amount, being higher if she has to cross a river. The elaborate marriage ceremonial conforms to the Telugu type, but some of the details may be recorded. On the *muhūrtham* (wedding) day, a ceremony called *pradhānam* (chief thing) is performed. A sheep is sacrificed to the marriage (*araveni*) pots. The sacrificer dips his hands in the blood of the animal, and impresses the blood on his palms on the wall near the door leading to the room in which the pots are kept. The bridegroom's party bring betel nuts, limes, a golden bead, a *bonthu* (unbleached cotton thread), rice, and turmeric paste. The maternal uncle of the bride gives five betel leaves and areca nuts to the *Pedda Mādiga*, and, putting the *bonthu* round the bride's neck, ties the golden bead thereon. The ceremony concludes with the distribution of *pān-supāri* in the following order: ancestors, *Mutrāchas*, *Gollas*, *Mādigas*, the *Pedda Mādiga*, and the assembled guests. The *Pedda Mādiga* has to lift, at one try, a tray containing cocoanuts and betel with his right hand. In his hand he holds a knife, of which the blade is passed over the forefinger, beneath the middle and fourth fingers, and over the little finger. This ceremony is called *thonuku thambūlam*, or betel and nuts likely to be spilt on the floor. The bridegroom, after a bath, proceeds to the temple, where cloths, the *bāshingam*, *bottu* (marriage badge), etc., are placed in

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\* Manual of the Bellary district.





MADIGA BRIDAL PAIR.

front of the god, and then taken to a jammi tree (*Prosopis spicijera*), which is worshipped. The bottu is usually a disc of gold, but, if the family is hard-up, or in cases of widow remarriage, a bit of turmeric or folded mango leaf serves as a substitute for it. On the third day, the wrist threads (kankanam) are removed, and dhomptis, or offerings of food to the gods, are made, with variations according to the dhompti to which the celebrants belong. An illustration may be taken from the Gampa dhompti. The contracting parties procure a quantity of rice, jaggery (crude sugar), and ghī (clarified butter), which are cooked, and moulded into an elongated mass, and placed in a new bamboo basket (gampa). In the middle of the mass, which is determined with a string, a twig, with a wick at one end, is set up, and two similar twigs are stuck into the ends of the mass. Pūja (worship) is performed, and the mass is distributed among the daughters of the house and other near relations, but not among members of other dhomptis. The bride and bridegroom take a small portion from the mass, which is called dhonga muddha, or the mass that is stolen. The bottu is said\* to be "usually tied by the Mādiga priest known as the Thavatiga, or drummer. This office is hereditary, but each successor to it has to be regularly ordained by a Kuruba guru at the local Mādiga shrine, the chief item in the ceremony being tying round the neck of the candidate a thread bearing a representation of the goddess, and on either side of this five white beads. Henceforth the Thavatiga is on no account to engage in the caste profession of leather-work, but lives on fees collected at weddings, and by begging. He goes round

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to the houses of the caste with a little drum slung over his shoulder, and collects contributions."

The Mādiga marriages are said to be conducted with much brawling and noise, owing to the quantity of liquor consumed on such occasions. Among the Mādigas, as among the Kammas, Gangimakkulu, and Mālas, marriage is said not to be consummated until three months after its celebration. This is apparently because it is considered unlucky to have three heads of a household within a year of marriage. By the delay, the birth of the child should take place only in the second year, so that, during the first year, there will be only two heads, husband and wife.

At the first menstrual period a girl is under pollution for ten days, when she bathes. Betel leaves and nuts, and a rupee are placed in front of the Pedda Mādiga, who takes a portion thereof for himself, and distributes what remains among those who have assembled. Sometimes, just before the return of the girl to the house, a sheep is killed in front of the door, and a mark made on her face with the blood.

The Mādigas dispose of their dead both by burial and cremation. The body is said to be "buried naked, except for a few leaves. Children are interred face downwards. Pregnant women are burnt. The bier is usually made of the milk-hedge (*Euphorbia Tirucalli*) plant."\* The grave is dug by a Māla Vettivādu. The chinna-dhinam ceremony is performed on the third day. On the grave a mass of mud is shaped into the form of an idol, to which are offered rice, cocoanuts, and jaggery (crude sugar) placed on leaves, one of which is set apart for the crows. Three stones are arranged in the form

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\* Manual of the Bellary district.

of a triangle, and on them is set a pot filled with water, which trickles out of holes made in the bottom of the pot. The peddadhnam is performed, from preference on a Wednesday or Sunday, towards the close of the third week after death. The son, or other celebrant of the rites, sets three stones on the grave, and offers food thereto. Food is also offered to the crows by the relations of the deceased, and thrown into a river or tank (pond), if the crows do not eat it. They all go to a tank, and make on the bank thereof an effigy, if the dead person was a female. To married women, winnows and glass bangles are offered. The bangles of a widow, and waist-thread of a widower, are removed within an enclosure on the bank. At night stories of Ankamma and Mātangi are recited by Bainēdus or Pambalas, and if a Mātangi is available, homage is done to her.

In some places, Mādigas have their own washermen and barbers. But, in the northern districts, the caste washerman does their washing, the cloths being steeped in water, and left for the washerman to take. "The Mādigas," Mr. Francis writes,\* "may not use the wells of the better classes, though, when water is scarce, they get over this last prohibition by employing some one in the higher ranks to draw water for them from such wells, and pour it into their chatties. In other districts they have to act as their own barbers and washermen, but in Anantapūr this disability is somewhat relaxed, as the barbers make no objection to let them (and other low castes such as the Mālas) use their razors for a consideration, and the dhōbis will wash their clothes, as long as they themselves first unroll them, and dip them

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\* Gazetteer of the Anantapur district.

into the water. This act is held to remove the pollution, which would otherwise attach to them."

Like many castes, the Mādigas have beggar classes attached to their community, who are called Dakkali and Māstiga. The Dakkalis may not enter the Mādiga settlement. They sing songs in praise of the Mādigas, who willingly remunerate them, as their curses are believed to be very effective. The Māstigas may enter the settlement, but not the huts. It is said to be a good omen to a Lingāyat, if he sees a Mādiga coming in front.

Gōsangi is often used as a synonym for Mādiga. Another synonym is Puravābatta, which is said to mean people older than the world by six months. At the Madras census, 1901, Chakara, Chundi, and Pavini or Vayani were returned as sub-castes, and Māyikkan was taken as the Malabar equivalent for Mādiga.

Concerning the Mādigas of Mysore, Mr. T. Ananda Row writes as follows.\* "The Mādigas are by religion Vaishnavites, Saivites, and Sakteyas, and have five different gurus belonging to mutts at Kadave, Kodihalli, Kongarli, Nelamangala, and Konkallu. The tribe is sometimes called Jambava or Mātanga. It is divided into two independent sub-divisions, the Desabhaga and the others, between whom there is no intermarriage. The former, though under the above named mutts, acknowledge Srivaishnava Brāhmins as their gurus, to whom they pay homage on all ceremonial occasions. The Desabhaga division has six sub-classes, viz.: Billoru (bowmen); Malloru (mallu = fight?); Amarāvatiyavaru (after a town); Mūnigalu (Mūni or rishi); Yēnamaloru (buffalo); Morabuvvadavaru (those who place food in a winnow). The Mādigas are mostly field

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\* Mysore Census Report, 1901.



labourers, but some of them till land, either leased or their own. In urban localities, on account of the value in the rise of skins, they have attained to considerable affluence, both on account of the hides supplied by them, and their work as tanners, shoe-makers, etc. Only 355 persons returned gōtras, such as Mātangi, Mareecha, and Jambava-rishi." At the Mysore census, 1891, some Mādigas actually returned themselves as Mātanga Brāhmans, producing for the occasion a certain so-called Purāna as their charter.

**Madivāla.**—See Agasa.

**Mādukkāran.**—See Gangeddu.

**Madurai.**—The name of a sub-division of Shānān, apparently meaning sweet liquor, and not the town of Madura.

**Magadha Kani.**—Recorded, at times of census, as a sub-division of Bhatrāzu.

**Maggam.**—Maggam, Magga, and Maggada, meaning loom, have been recorded as exogamous septs of Kurubas, Mālas, and Holeyas, some of whom are weavers.

**Māghadulu.**—A sub-division of Bhatrāzu, named after one Māghade, who is said to have been herald at the marriage of Siva.

**Magili** (*Pandanus fascicularis*).—A gōtra of Tsākalas and Panta Reddis, by whom the products of the tree may not be touched. The Panta Reddi women of this gōtra will not, like those of other castes, use the flower-bracts for the purpose of adorning themselves. There is a belief, in Southern India, that the fragrant male inflorescence harbours a tiny snake, which is more deadly than the cobra, and that incautious smelling thereof may lead to death.

**Māgura.**—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as a small caste of Oriya leaf-plate makers and

shikāris (huntsmen). The name is said to be derived from māgora, meaning one who traces foot-paths and tracks.

**Mahādev.**—A synonym of Daira Muhammadan.

**Mahankudo.**—A title of Gaudo and Gudiya. The headman of the latter caste goes by this name.

**Mahant.**—The Mahant is the secular head and trustee of the temple at Tirumala (Upper Tirupati) in the North Arcot district, and looks after the worldly affairs of the swāmi (god). "Tirupati," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,\* "unlike most other temples, has no dancing-girls attached to it, and not to be strictly continent upon the sacred hill is a deadly sin. Of late years, however, even celibate Bairāgis and priests take their paramours up with them, and the pilgrims follow suit. Everything is held to betoken the approaching downfall of the temple's greatness. The irregular life of the Mahant Balarām Dās sixty years ago caused a great ferment, though similar conduct now would probably hardly attract notice. He was ejected from his office by the unanimous voice of his disciples, and one Gōvardhan Dās, whose life was consistent with the holy office, was elected, and installed in the math (monastery) near the temple. Balarām Dās, however, collected a body of disbanded peons from the pālaiyams, and, arming them, made an attack upon the building. The walls were scaled, and the new Mahant with his disciples shut themselves up in an inner apartment. In an attempt at rescue, one man was killed, and three were seriously wounded. A police force was sent to co-operate with the Tirupati poligars (feudal chiefs), but could effect nothing till the insurgent peons were threatened with the

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\* Manual of the North Arcot district.

loss of all their lands. This broke up the band, and Balarām Dās' followers deserted him. When the gates were broken open, it was found that he and a few staunch followers had committed suicide. But perhaps the greatest scandal which has occurred in the history of the math was that which ended in the conviction of the present Mahant's predecessor, Bhagavān Dās. He was charged with having misappropriated a number of gold coins of considerable value, which were supposed to have been buried beneath the great flagstaff. A search warrant was granted, and it was discovered that the buried vessels only contained copper coins. The Mahant was convicted of the misappropriation of the gold, and was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment, but this was reduced to one year by the High Court. On being released from jail, he made an effort to oust his successor, and acquire possession of the math by force. For this he was again sent to jail, for six months, and required to furnish security to be of good behaviour."

It is recorded by Sir M. E. Grant Duff,\* formerly Governor of Madras, that "while the municipal address was being read to me, a huge elephant, belonging to the Zemindar of Kalahastri, a great temporal chief, charged a smaller elephant belonging to the Mahant or High Priest of Tripaty, thus disestablishing the church much more rapidly, alas! than we did in Ireland."

**Mahanti.**—Mahanti is, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, defined as "a caste akin to the Koronos or Karnams (writers and accountants). The name is sometimes taken by persons excommunicated from other castes." The word means great, or prestige. According to a note submitted to me, the Mahantis gradually

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\* Notes from a Diary, 1881—1886.

became Karnams, with the title of Patnaik, but there is no intermarriage between them and the higher classes of Karnams. The Mahantis of Orissa are said to still maintain their respectability, whereas in Ganjam they have as a class degenerated, so much so that the term Mahanti is now held up to ridicule.

**Mahāpātro.**—Said to be a title sold by the caste council to Khōduras. Also a title of Badhōyis, and other Oriya castes.

**Maharāna.**—A title of Badhōyi.

**Mahēswara** (Siva).—A synonym of Jangams (priests of the Lingāyats). The Jangams of the Silavants, for example, are known by this name.

**Mailāri.**—The Mailāris are a class of beggars, who are said\* to “call themselves a sub-division of the Balijas, and beg from Kōmatis only. Their ancestors were servants of Kannyakammavāru (or Kannikā Amma, the virgin goddess of the Kōmatis), who burnt herself to avoid falling into the hands of Rāja Vishnu Vardhana. On this account, they have the privilege of collecting certain fees from all the Kōmatis. The fee, in the Kurnool district, is eight annas per house. When he demands the fee, a Mailāri appears in full dress (kāsi), which consists of brass human heads tied to his loins, and brass cups to his head; a looking-glass on the abdomen; a bell ringing from his girdle; a bangle on his forearm; and wooden shoes on his feet. In this dress he walks, holding an umbrella, through the streets, and demands his fee. If the fee is not paid, he again appears, in a more frightful form called Bhūthakāsi. He shaves his whiskers, and, almost naked, proceeds to the burning-ground, where he makes rati, or different

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\* Manual of the Kurnool district.

kinds of coloured rice, and, going to the Kōmatis, extorts his fee." I am informed that the Mailāris travel about with an image of Kannyakamma, which they exhibit, while they sing in Telugu the story of her life.

The Mailāris are stated, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, to be also called Bāla Jangam. Mailāri (washerman) is also an exogamous sept of the Mālas.

**Majji.**—Recorded as a title of Bagatas, Doluvas, and Kurumos, and as a sept of Nagarālus. In the Madras Census Report, 1901, it is described as a title given to the head peons of Bissōyis in the Māliahs.

**Majjiga** (butter-milk).—An exogamous sept of Bōya.

**Majjula.**—A sub-division of Korono.

**Majjulu.**—Recorded, in the Madras Census Report, 1901, as "cultivators in Vizagapatam, and shikāris (hunters) and fishermen in Ganjam. They have two endogamous divisions, the Majjulus and the Rācha Majjulus, the members of the latter of which wear the sacred thread, and will not eat with the former. In their customs they closely resemble the Kāpus, of which caste they are perhaps a sub-division. For their ceremonies they employ Oriya Brāhmans, and Telugu Nambis. Widow marriage is allowed. They burn their dead, and are said to perform srāddhas (memorial services). They worship all the village gods and goddesses, and eat meat. They have no titles."

**Mākado** (monkey).—An exogamous sept of Bottada.

**Makkathāyam.**—The name, in the Malayālam country, for the law of inheritance from father to son. The Canarese equivalent thereof is makkalsanthānam.

**Māla.**—"The Mālas," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,\* "are the Pariahs of the Telugu country. Dr. Oppert

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\* Madras Census Report, 1891.



derives the word from a Dravidian root meaning a mountain, which is represented by the Tamil *malai*, Telugu *māla*, etc., so that *Māla* is the equivalent of *Paraiyan*, and also of *Mar* or *Mhar* and the *Māl* of Western and Central Bengal. I cannot say whether there is sufficient ground for the assumption that the vowel of a Dravidian root can be lengthened in this way. I know of no other derivation of *Māla*. [In C. P. Brown's Telugu Dictionary it is derived from *maila*, dirty.] The *Mālas* are almost equally inferior in position to the *Mādigas*. They eat beef and drink heavily, and are debarred entrance to the temples and the use of the ordinary village wells, and have to serve as their own barbers and washermen. They are the musicians of the community, and many of them (for example in the villages near Jammalamadugu in the Cuddapah district) weave the coarse white cotton fabrics usually worn by men."

The *Mālas* will not take water from the same well as the *Mādigas*, whom they despise for eating carrion, though they eat beef themselves.

Both *Mālas* and Tamil *Paraiyans* belong to the right-hand section. In the Bellary district the *Mālas* are considered to be the servants of the *Banajigas* (traders), for whom they do certain services, and act as caste messengers (*chalavāthi*) on the occasion of marriages and funerals. At marriages, six *Mālas* selected from certain families, lead the procession, carrying flags, etc., and sit in the *pial* (*verandah*) of the marriage house. At funerals, a *Māla* carries the brass ladle bearing the insignia of the right-hand section, which is the emblem of the authority of the *Dēsai* or headman of the section.

The *Mālas* have their own dancing girls (*Basavis*), barbers, and musicians (*Bainēdus*), *Dāsaris* or priests,

and beggars and bards called Māstigas and Pambalas (drum people), who earn their living by reciting stories of Ankamma, etc., during the funeral ceremonies of some Telugu castes, acting as musicians at marriages and festivals to the deities, begging, and telling fortunes. Other beggars are called Nityula (Nitiyadāsu, immortal). In some places, Tsākalas (washerman caste) will wash for the Mālas, but the clothes must be steeped in water, and left till the Tsākala comes for them. The Mālas will not eat food prepared or touched by Kamsalas, Mēdaras, Mādigas, Bēri Chettis, Bōyas, or Bhatrāzus. The condition of the Mālas has, in recent times, been ameliorated by their reception into mission schools.

In a case, which came before the High Court of Madras on appeal a few years ago, a Māla, who was a convert to Christianity, was sentenced to confinement in the stocks for using abusive language. The Judge, in summing up, stated that "the test seems to be not what is the offender's creed, whether Muhammadan, Christian, or Hindu, but what is his caste. If he belongs to one of the lower castes, a change of creed would not of itself, in my judgment, make any difference, provided he continues to belong to the caste. If he continues to accept the rules of the caste in social and moral matters, acknowledges the authority of the headmen, takes part in caste meetings and ceremonies, and, in fact, generally continues to belong to the castes, then, in my judgment, he would be within the purview of the regulation. If, on the other hand, he adopts the moral standards of Christianity instead of those in his caste, if he accepts the authority of his pastors and teachers in place of that of the headman of the caste, if he no longer takes part in the distinctive meetings and

ceremonies of the caste . . . . then he can no longer be said to belong to one of the lower castes of the people, and his punishment by confinement in the stocks is no longer legal."

Between the Mālas and Mādigas there is no love lost, and the latter never allow the former, on the occasion of a festival, to go in palanquins or ride on horseback. Quite recently, in the Nellore district, a horse was being led at the head of a Mādiga marriage procession, and the Mālas followed, to see whether the bridegroom would mount it. To the disgust of the Mādigas, the young man refused to get on it, from fear lest he should fall off.

The Mālas will not touch leather shoes, and, if they are slippered with them, a fine is inflicted, and the money spent on drink.

Of the share which the Mālas take in a village festival in the Cuddapah district, an excellent account is given by Bishop Whitehead.\* "The village officials and leading ryots," he writes, "collect money for the festival, and buy, among other things, a barren sheep and two lambs. Peddamma and Chinnamma are represented by clay images of female form made for the occasion, and placed in a temporary shrine of cloth stretched over four poles. On the appointed evening, rice is brought, and poured out in front of the idol by the potter, and rice, ghī (clarified butter), and curds are poured on the top of it. The victims are then brought, and their heads cut off by a washerman. The heads are placed on the ground before the idol. The people then pour water on the heads, and say 'speak' (paluku). If the mouth opens, it is regarded as a sign that the goddess is

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\* Madras Diocesan Record, 1905.

propitious. Next, a large pot of boiled cholam (millet) is brought, and poured in a heap before the image, a little further away than the rice. Two buffaloes are then brought by the Mālas and Mādigas. One of the Mālas, called the Asādi, chants the praises of the goddess during the ceremony. The animals are killed by a Mādiga, by cutting their throats with a knife, one being offered to Peddamma, and the other to Chinnamma. Some of the cholam is then taken in baskets, and put under the throat of the buffaloes till it is soaked with blood, and then put aside. A Mādiga then cuts off the heads of the buffaloes with a sword, and places them before the idol. He also cuts off one of the forelegs of each, and puts it crosswise in the mouth. Some of the cholam is then put on the two heads, and two small earthen saucers are put upon it. The abdomens are then cut open, and some of the fat taken out, melted, and put in each saucer with a lighted wick. A layer of fat is spread over the eyes and mouths of the two heads, some of the refuse of the stomach is mixed with the cholam soaked in blood, and a quantity of margosa (*Melia Azadirachta*) leaves put over the cholam. The Asādi then takes some of this mixture, and sprinkles it round the shrine, saying 'Ko, bali,' *i.e.*, accept the sacrifice. Then the basket is given to another Māla, who asks permission from the village officials and ryots to sprinkle the cholam. He also asks that a lamb may be killed. The lamb is killed by a washerman, and the blood allowed to flow into the cholam in the basket. The bowels of the lamb are taken out, and tied round the wrist of the Māla who holds the basket, and puts it round his neck. He then goes and sprinkles the cholam mixed with blood, etc., in some cases round the village, and in others before each house, shouting 'Ko, bali' as he goes. The people go in

procession with him, carrying swords and clubs to drive away evil spirits. During the procession, limes are cut in half, and thrown into the air to propitiate evil spirits. Other lambs are killed at intervals during the course of the procession. In the afternoon, the carcasses of the two buffaloes offered the night before are taken away by the Mālas and Mādigas. One is cut open, and some of the flesh cooked near the shrine. Part of it, with some of the cholam offered before the images, is given to five Māla children, called Siddhulu, *i.e.*, holy or sinless, who, in some cases, are covered with a cloth during the meal. The rest is eaten by Mālas. The remainder of the carcasses is divided among the Mālas and Mādigas, who take it to their own homes for a feast. The carcasses of the lambs belong to the Mālas and washermen. The carcase of the barren sheep is the perquisite of the village officials, though the Kurnam, being a Brāhmin, gives his portion away."

At a festival to the village goddess which is held at Dowlaishweram in the Godāvāri district once every three years, a buffalo is sacrificed. "Votive offerings of pots of buttermilk are presented to the goddess, who is taken outside the village, and the pots are emptied there. The head of the buffalo and a pot of its blood are carried round the village by a Māla, and a pig is sacrificed in an unusual and cruel manner. It is buried up to its neck, and cattle are driven over it until it is trampled to death. This is supposed to ensure the health of men and cattle in the ensuing year."\*

In connection with a village festival in the Godāvāri district, Bishop Whitehead writes as follows.† "At Ellore, which is a town of considerable size and

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\* Gazetteer of the Godāvāri district.

† Madras Museum Bull. V. 3, 1907.



importance, I was told that in the annual festival of Mahālakṣhmi about ten thousand animals are killed in one day, rich people sending as many as twenty or thirty. The blood then flows down into the fields behind the place of sacrifice in a regular flood, and carts full of sand are brought to cover up what remains on the spot. The heads are piled up in a heap about fifteen feet high in front of the shrine, and a large earthen basin, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter, is then filled with gingelly oil and put on the top of the heap, a thick cotton wick being placed in the basin and lighted. The animals are all worshipped with the usual namaskaram (folded hands raised to the forehead) before they are killed. This slaughter of victims goes on all day, and at midnight about twenty or twenty-five buffaloes are sacrificed, their heads being cut off by a Mādiga pūjāri (priest), and, together with the carcasses, thrown upon the large heaps of rice, which have been presented to the goddess, till the rice is soaked with blood. The rice is collected in about ten or fifteen large baskets, and is carried on a large cart drawn by buffaloes or bullocks, with the Mādiga pūjāri seated on it. Mādigas sprinkle the rice along the streets and on the walls of the houses, as the cart goes along, shouting *poli, poli* (food). A large body of men of different castes, Pariahs and Sudras, go with the procession, but only the Mādigas and Mālas (the two sections of the Pariahs) shout *poli*, the rest following in silence. They have only two or three torches to show them the way, and no tom-toms or music. Apparently the idea is that, if they make a noise or display a blaze of lights, they will attract the evil spirits, who will swoop down on them and do them some injury, though in other villages it is supposed that a great deal of noise and flourishing of sticks will keep the evil spirits at bay.

Before the procession starts, the heads of the buffaloes are put in front of the shrine, with the right forelegs in their mouths, and the fat from the entrails smeared about half an inch thick over the whole face, and a large earthen lamp on the top of each head. The Pambalas play tom-toms, and chant a long story about Gangamma till daybreak, and about 8 A.M. they put the buffalo heads into separate baskets with the lighted lamps upon them, and these are carried in procession through the town to the sound of tom-toms. All castes follow, shouting and singing. In former times, I was told, there was a good deal of fighting and disturbance during this procession, but now the police maintain order. When the procession arrives at the municipal limits, the heads are thrown over the boundary, and left there. The people then all bathe in the canal, and return home. On the last day of the festival, which, I may remark, lasts for about three months, a small cart is made of margosa wood, and a stake fixed at each of the four corners, and a pig and a fowl are tied to each stake, while a fruit, called dubakaya, is impaled on it instead of the animal. A yellow cloth, sprinkled with the blood of the buffaloes, is tied round the sides of the cart, and some margosa leaves are tied round the cloth. A Pambala sits on the cart, to which are fastened two large ropes, each about 200 yards long. Then men of all castes, without distinction, lay hold of the ropes, and drag the cart round the town to the sound of tom-toms and music. Finally it is brought outside the municipal limits and left there, the Pariahs taking away the animals and fruits."

The following detailed account of the Peddamma or Sunkulamma jātra (festival) in the Kurnool district, is given in the Manual. "This is a ceremony strictly

local, in which the entire community of a village takes part, and which all outsiders are excluded from participating in. It is performed whenever a series of crops successively fail or cattle die in large numbers of murrain, and is peculiarly adapted, by the horrible nature of the attendant rites and the midnight hour chosen for the exhibition of its most ghastly scenes, to impress the minds of an ignorant people with a belief in its efficacy. When the celebration of the jātra is resolved on, a dark Tuesday night is selected for it, and subscriptions are collected and deposited with the Reddi (headman) or some respectable man in the village. Messengers are sent off to give intimation of the day fixed for the jātra to the Bynēnivādu, Bbutabaligādu, and Poturāju, three of the principal actors in the ceremony. At the same time a buffalo is purchased, and, after having its horns painted with saffron (turmeric) and adorned with margosa leaves, is taken round the village in procession with tom-toms beating, and specially devoted to the sacrifice of the goddess Peddamma or Sunkulamma on the morning of the Tuesday on which the ceremony is to take place. The village potter and carpenter are sent for, and ordered to have ready by that evening two images of the goddess, one of clay and the other of juvi wood, and a new cloth and a quantity of rice and dholl (peas: *Cajanus indicus*) are given to each of them. When the images are made, they are dressed with the new cloths, and the rice and dholl are cooked and offered as naivēdyam to the images. In some villages only one image, of clay, is made. Meanwhile the villagers are busy erecting a pandal (booth) in front of the village chāvidi (caste meeting-house), underneath which a small temple is erected of cholam straw. The Bynēnivādu takes a handful of earth, and places it inside this little temple, and

the village washerman builds a small pyal (dais) with it, and decorates it with rati (streaks of different coloured powders). New pots are distributed by the potter to the villagers, who, according to their respective capabilities, have a large or small quantity of rice cooked in them, to be offered as kumbham at the proper time. After dark, when these preparations are over, the entire village community, including the twelve classes of village servants, turn out in a body, and, preceded by the Bynēnivādu and Asādivandlu, proceed in procession with music playing to the house of the village potter. There the image of the goddess is duly worshipped, and a quantity of raw rice is tied round it with a cloth. A ram is sacrificed on the spot, and several limes are cut and thrown away. Borne on the shoulders of the potter, the image is then taken through the streets of the village, Bynēnivādu and Asādivandlu dancing and capering all the way, and the streets being drenched with the blood of several rams sacrificed at every turning of the road, and strewed with hundreds of limes cut and thrown away. The image is then finally deposited in the temple of straw already referred to, and another sheep is sacrificed as soon as this is done. The wooden image, made by the carpenter, is also brought in with the same formalities, and placed by the side of the image of clay. A pot of toddy is similarly brought in from the house of the Īdigavādu (toddy-drawer), and set before the images. Now the dēvarapōtu, or buffalo specially devoted to the sacrifice of the goddess, is led in from the Reddi's house in procession, together with a sheep and a large pot of cooked rice. The rice in the pot is emptied in front of the images and formed into a heap, which is called the kumbham, and to it are added the contents of many new pots, which the villagers have ready filled with cooked

rice. The sheep is then sacrificed, and its blood shed on the heap. Next comes the turn of the *dēvarapōru*, the blood of which also, after it has been killed, is poured over the rice heap. This is followed by the slaughter of many more buffaloes and sheep by individuals of the community, who might have taken vows to offer sacrifices to the goddess on this occasion. While the carnage is going on, a strict watch is kept on all sides, to see that no outsider enters the village, or steals away any portion of the blood of the slaughtered animals, as it is believed that all the benefit which the villagers hope to reap from the performance of the *jātra* will be lost to them if an outsider should succeed in taking away a little of the blood to his village. The sacrifice being over, the head and leg of one of the slaughtered buffaloes are severed from its body, and placed before the goddess with the leg inserted into the mouth of the head. Over this head is placed a lighted lamp, which is fed with oil and buffalo's fat. Now starts a fresh procession to go round the village streets. A portion of the *kumbham* or blood-stained rice heaped up before the image is gathered into two or three baskets, and carried with the procession by washermen or *Mādigas*. The *Bhutabaligādu* now steps forward in a state of perfect nudity, with his body clean shaven from top to toe, and smeared all over with gore, and, taking up handfuls of rice (called *poli*) from the baskets, scatters them broadcast over the streets. As the procession passes on, *bhutams* or supernatural beings are supposed to become visible at short distances to the carriers of the rice baskets, who pretend to fall into trances, and, complaining of thirst, call for more blood to quench it. Every time this happens, a fresh sheep is sacrificed, and sometimes limes are cut and thrown in their way. The main streets being thus



sprinkled over with poli or blood-stained rice, the lanes or gulleys are attended to by the washermen of the village, who give them their share of the poli. By this time generally the day dawns, and the goddess is brought back to her straw temple, where she again receives offerings of cooked rice from all classes of people in the village, Brāhmins downwards. All the while, the Asādivandlu keep singing and dancing before the goddess. As the day advances, a pig is half buried at the entrance of the village, and all the village cattle are driven over it. The cattle are sprinkled over with poli as they pass over the pig. The Poturāju then bathes and purifies himself, and goes to the temple of Lingamayya or Siva with tom-toms and music, and sacrifices a sheep there. The jātra ends with another grand procession, in which the images of the goddess, borne on the heads of the village potter and carpenter, are carried to the outskirts of the village, where they are left. As the villagers return home, they pull to pieces the straw temple constructed in front of the chāvidi, and each man takes home a straw, which he preserves as a sacred relic. From the day the ceremony is commenced in the village till its close, no man would go to a neighbouring village, or, if he does on pressing business, he would return to sleep in his own village. It is believed that the performance of this jātra will ensure prosperity and health to the villagers and their cattle.

The origin of this Sunkulamma jātra is based on the following legend, which is sung by the Bynēni and Asādivandlu when they dance before the images. Sunkulamma was the only daughter of a learned Brāhmin pandit, who occasionally took pupils, and instructed them in the Hindu shastras gratuitously. One day, a handsome youth of sixteen years came to the pandit,

and, announcing himself as the son of a Brāhmin of Benares come in quest of knowledge, requested that he might be enlisted as a pupil of the pandit. The pandit, not doubting the statement of the youth that he was a Brāhmin, took him as a pupil, and lodged him in his own house. The lad soon displayed marks of intelligence, and, by close application to his studies, made such rapid progress that he became the principal favourite of his master, who was so much pleased with him that, at the close of his studies, he married him to his daughter Sunkulamma. The unknown youth stayed with his father-in-law till he became father of some children, when he requested permission to return to his native place with his wife and children, which was granted, and he accordingly started on his homeward journey. On the way he met a party of Māla people, who, recognising him at once as a man of their own caste and a relation, accosted him, and began to talk to him familiarly. Finding it impossible to conceal the truth from his wife any longer, the husband of Sunkulamma confessed to her that he was a Māla by caste, and, being moved by a strong desire to learn the Hindu shastras, which he was forbidden to read, he disguised himself as a Brāhmin youth, and introduced himself to her father and compassed his object ; and, as what had been done in respect to her could not be undone, the best thing she could do was to stay with him with her children. Sunkulamma, however, was not to be so persuaded. Indignant at the treachery practiced on her and her parent, she spurned both her husband and children, and returning to her village, sent for her parent, whose house she would not pollute by going in, and asked him what he would do with a pot defiled by the touch of a dog. The father replied that he would commit it to the flames

to purify it. Taking the hint, she caused a funeral pile to be erected, and committed suicide by throwing herself into the flames. But, before doing so, she cursed the treacherous Māla who had polluted her that he might become a buffalo, and his children turn into sheep, and vowed she would revive as an evil spirit, and have him and his children sacrificed to her, and get his leg put into his mouth, and a light placed on his head fed with his own fat."

The following additional information in connection with the jātra may be recorded. In some places, on a Tuesday fifteen days before the festival, some Mālas go in procession through the main streets of the village without any noise or music. This is called *mūgi chātu* (dumb announcement). On the following Tuesday, the Mālas go through the streets, beating tom-toms, and proclaiming the forthcoming ceremony. This is called *chātu* (announcement). In some villages, metal idols are used. The image is usually in the custody of a *Tsākala* (washerman). On the jātra day, he brings it fully decorated, and sets it up on the *Gangamma mitta* (Gangamma's dais). In some places, this is a permanent structure, and in others put up for the jātra at a fixed spot. *Āsādis*, *Pambalas*, and *Bainēdus*, and *Mādiga Kommula vāndlu* (horn-blowers) dance and sing until the goddess is lifted up from the dais, when a number of burning torches are collected together, and some resinous material is thrown into the flames. At the same time, a cock is killed, and waved in front of the goddess by the *Tsākala*. A mark is made with the blood on the forehead of the idol, which is removed to a hut constructed by Mālas with twigs of *margosa* (*Melia Azadirachta*), *Eugenia Jambolana* and *Vitex Negundo*. In some villages, when the goddess is brought in

procession to the outskirts of the village, a stick is thrown down in front of her. The Āsādis then sing songs, firstly of a most obscene character, and afterwards in praise of the goddess.

The following account of "the only Māla ascetic in Bharatavarsha" (India) is given by Mr. M. N. Vincent.\* The ascetic was living on a hill in Bezwāda, at the foot of which lay the hamlets of the Mālas. The man, Govindoo by name, "was a groom in the employ of a Muhammadan Inspector of Police, and he was commissioned on one occasion to take a horse to a certain town. He was executing his commission, when, on the way, and not far from his destination, the animal shied and fell into the Krishna river, and was swept along the current, and poor Govindoo could not help it. But, knowing the choleric temper of his employer, and in order to avoid a scolding, he roamed at large, and eventually fell in with a company of Sādhus, one of whose disciples he became, and practiced austerities, though not for the full term, and settled eventually on the hill where we saw him occupying the old cave dwelling of a former Sādhu. It appears that there was something earthly in the man, Sādhu though he was, as was evidenced from his relations with a woman votary or disciple, and it was probably because of this phase of his character that some people regarded him as a cheat and a rogue. But this unfavourable impression was soon removed, and, since the time he slept on a bed of sharp thorns, as it were in vindication of his character, faulty though it had been, he has been honoured. A good trait in the man should be mentioned, namely, that he wrote to his parents to give his wife in

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\* East and West, 6th May 1907.

marriage to some one else, as he had renounced his worldly ties."

At Vānavōlu, in the Hindupūr tāluk of the Anantapur district, there is a temple to Rangaswāmi, at which the pūjari (priest) is a Māla. People of the upper castes frequent it, but do their own pūja, the Māla standing aside for the time.\*

It is noted, in the Madras Census Report, 1891, that the chief object of worship by the Baliyas is Gauri, their caste deity. "It is said that the Mālas are the hereditary custodians of the idol of Gauri and her jewels, which the Baliyas get from them whenever they want to worship her. The following story is told to account for this. The Kāpus and the Baliyas, molested by the Muhammadan invaders on the north of the river Pennār, migrated to the south when the Pennār was in full flood. Being unable to cross the river, they invoked their deity to make a passage for them, for which it demanded the sacrifice of a first-born child. While they stood at a loss what to do, the Mālas, who followed them, boldly offered one of their children to the goddess. Immediately the river divided before them, and the Kāpus and the Baliyas crossed it, and were saved from the tyranny of the Muhammadans. Ever since that time, the Mālas have been respected by the Kāpus and Baliyas, and the latter even deposited the images of Gauri, the bull and Ganēsa, which they worshipped in the house of a Māla. I am credibly informed that the practice of leaving these images in the custody of Mālas is even now observed in some parts of Cuddapah district and elsewhere."

An expert Māla medicine-man has been known to prescribe for a Brāhman tahsildar (revenue officer),

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\* Gazetteer of the Anantapur district.



though the consultation was conducted at a most respectful distance on the part of the honoured physician.

Māla weavers are known as *Netpanivandlu* (*Nethapani*, weaving work). According to the Census Report, 1891, the sub-divisions of the Mālas, which are numerically strongest, are Arava, Kanta, Murikinādu, Pākanāti, and Reddi Bhūmi. To these may be added Sarindla, Sāvu, Sāindla, and Dāindla. Concerning some of these divisions, the following legend is current. A Māla married eighteen wives, one from each kulam or tribal division. The god Poleramma, objecting to the sacrifice of sheep and goats, wanted him to offer up a woman and child in substitution for the animals, and the Māla broke the news to his wives, one of whom eloped with a Reddi, and gave origin to the Reddi Bhūmis (*bhūmi*, earth). Another ran away, and gave rise to the Pākanātis (eastern country). A third hid herself, and escaped by hiding. Hence her descendants are called Dāindla vāndlu, concerning whom there is a proverb “*Dagipoyina vāndlu Dāindla vāndlu*” or “Those who escaped by hiding are Dāindlas.” One of the wives, who fled to the forest, found her way out by clearing the jungle, and her descendants are called Sarindla (straight). The wife who consented to be sacrificed with her child was restored to life by Poleramma, and gave rise to the Sāvu (death) or Sāindla (belonging to a death house) section. The Dāindlas are said to be Tamil Paraiyans, who settled down in the Telugu country, and adopted the manners and customs of the Mālas. Some call themselves Arava (Tamil) Mālas. They are employed as servants in European houses, horse-keepers, etc.

In connection with the origin of the Mālas, the Rev. S. Nicholson writes as follows. “Originally the Mālas belonged to the *kudi paita* section of the community,

*i.e.*, their women wore the cloth over the right shoulder, but now there are both right and left paita sections; and this must be taken as the principal division. The right-hand (right paita) section is again divided into (a) Reddi Bhūmalavarū, (b) Pōkunātivarū. The left-hand (left paita) section are Murikinātivarū. The following legend professes to account for the existence of the three divisions. When Virābahuvu went to the rescue of Harischandra, he promised Kālī that, if she granted him success, he would sacrifice to her his wives, of whom he had three. Accordingly, after his conquest of Vishvamithrudu, he returned, and called his wives that he might take them to the temple in order to fulfil his vow. The wives got some inkling of what was in store for them, and one of them took refuge in the house of a Reddi Bhūmala, another ran away to the eastern country (Pōkunāti), while the third, though recently confined, and still in her dirty (*muriki*) cloth, determined to abide by the wish of her lord. She was, therefore, sacrificed to Kālī, but the goddess, seeing her devotion, restored her to life, and promised to remain for ever her helper. The reason given for the change in the method of wearing the cloth is that, after the incident described above took place, the women of the Murikināti section, in order to express their disapproval of the two unfaithful wives, began to wear their cloths on the opposite, *viz.*, the left, shoulder. In marriages, however, whatever the paita of the bride, she must wear the cloth over the right shoulder.

“The Reddi Bhūmalu and Pōkunātivarū say that the reason they wear the cloth over the right shoulder is that they are descendants of the gods. According to a legend, the goddess Parvatī, whilst on a journey with her lord Paramēshvarudu, discarded one of her unclean

(maila) cloths, from which was born a little boy. This boy was engaged as a cattle-herd in the house of Paramēshvarudu. Parvati received strict injunctions from her lord that she should on no account allow the little Māla to taste cream. One day, however, the boy discovered some cream which had been scraped from the inside of the pot sticking to a wall. He tasted it, and found it good. Indeed, so good was it that he came to the conclusion that the udder from which it came must be even better still. So one day, in order to test his theory, he killed the cow. Then came Paramēshvarudu in great anger, and asked him what he had done, and, to his credit be it said, the boy told the truth. Then Paramēshvarudu cursed the lad and all his descendants, and said that from henceforth cattle should be the meat of the Mālas—the unclean."

The Mālas have, in their various sub-divisions, many exogamous septs, of which the following are examples :—

(a) REDDI BHŪMI.

Avuka, marsh.	Kātika, collyrium.
Bandi, cart.	Naththalu, snails.
Bommala, dolls.	Paida, money or gold.
Bejjam, holes.	Pilli, cat.
Dakku, fear.	Rāyi, stone.
Dhidla, platform or back-door.	Samūdrala, ocean.
Dhōma, gnat or mosquito.	Sīlam, good conduct.
Gēra, street.	Thanda, bottom of a ship.
Kaila, measuring grain in threshing-floor.	

(b) PŌKUNĀTL.

Allam, ginger.	Mailāri, washerman.
Dara, stream of water.	Parvatha, mountain.
Gādi, cart.	Pindi, flour-powder.
Gōne, sack.	Pasala, cow.
Gurram, horse.	Thummala, sneezing.
Maggam, loom.	

## (c) SARINDLA.

Boori, a kind of cake.	Mudi, knot.
Ballem, spear.	Maddili, drum.
Bomidi, a fish.	Malle, jasmine.
Challa, butter milk.	Putta, ant-hill.
Chinthala, tamarind.	Pamula, snake.
Duddu, money.	Pidigi, handful.
Gāli, wind.	Semmati, hammer.
Karna, ear.	Uyyala, see-saw.
Kāki, crow.	

## (d) DĀINDLA.

Dāsari, priest.	Marri, <i>Ficus bengalensis</i> .
Doddi, court or backyard.	Pala, milk.
Gonji, <i>Glycosmis pentaphylla</i> .	Powāku, tobacco.
Kommala, horn.	Thumma, <i>Acacia arabica</i> .

Concerning the home of the Mālas, Mr. Nicholson writes that "the houses (with mud or stone walls, roofed with thatch or palmyra palm leaves) are almost invariably placed quite apart from the village proper. Gradually, as the caste system and fear of defilement become less, so gradually the distance of their houses from the village is becoming less. In the Ceded Districts, where from early times every village was surrounded by a wall and moat, the aloofness of the houses is very apparent. Gradually, however, the walls are decaying, and the moats are being filled, and the physical separation of the outcaste classes is becoming less apparent."

Mr. Nicholson writes further that "according to their own traditions, as told still by the old people and the religious mendicants, in former times the Mālas were a tribe of free lances, who, 'like the tiger, slept during the day, and worked at night.' They were evidently the paid mercenaries of the Poligars (feudal chiefs), and carried out raids and committed robberies for the lord

under whose protection they were. That this tradition has some foundation may be gathered from the fact that many of the house-names of the Mālas refer to weapons of war, *e.g.*, spear, drum, etc. If reports are true, the old instinct is not quite dead, and even to-day a cattle-stealing expedition comes not amiss to some. The Mālas belong to the subjugated race, and have been made into the servants of the community. Very probably, in former days, their services had to be rendered for nothing, but later certain inām (rent-free) lands were granted, the produce of which was counted as remuneration for service rendered. Originally, these lands were held quite free of taxation, but, since the advent of the British Rāj, the village servants have all been paid a certain sum per month, and, whilst still allowed the enjoyment of their inām lands, they have now been assessed, and half the actual tax has to be paid to Government. The services rendered by the Mālas are temple service, jātra or festival service, and village service. The village service consists of sweeping, scavenging, carrying burdens, and grave-digging, the last having been their perquisite for long ages. According to them, the right was granted to them by King Harischandra himself. The burial-grounds are supposed to belong to the Mālas, and the site of a grave must be paid for, the price varying according to the position and wealth of the deceased, but I hear that, in our part of the country, the price does not often exceed two pence. Though the Brāhmans do not bury, yet they must pay a fee of one rupee for the privilege of burning, besides the fee for carrying the body to the ghāt. There is very little respect shown by the Mālas at the burning-ghāt, and the fuel is thrown on with jokes and laughter. The Mālas dig graves for all castes which bury, except



Muhammadans, Oddēs, and Mādigas. Not only on the day of burial, but afterwards on the two occasions of the ceremonies for the dead, the grave-diggers must be given food and drink. The Mālas are also used as death messengers to relatives by all the Sūdra castes. When on this work, the messenger must not on any account go to the houses of his relatives though they live in the village to which he has been sent.

“The chief occupations of the Mālas are weaving, and working as farm labourers for Sūdras; a few cultivate their own land. Though formerly their inām lands were extensive, they have been, in the majority of cases, mortgaged away. The Mālas of the western part of the Telugu country are of a superior type to those of the east, and they have largely retained their lands, and, in some cases, are well-to-do cultivators. In the east, weaving is the staple industry, and it is still carried on with the most primitive instruments. In one corner of a room stands the loom, with a hole in the mud floor to receive the treadles, and a little window in the wall, level with the floor, lights the web. The loom itself is slung from the rafters, and the whole can be folded up and put away in a corner. As a rule, weaving lasts for eight months of the year, the remainder of the year being occupied in reaping and stacking crops, etc. Each weaver has his own customers, and very often one family of Mālas will have weaved for one family of Sūdras for generations. Before starting to weave, the weaver worships his loom, and rubs his shuttle on his nose, which is supposed to make it smooth. Those who cannot weave subsist by day labour. As a rule, they stick to one master, and are engaged in cultivation all the year round. Many, having borrowed money from

some Sūdra, are bound to work for him for a mere pittance, and that in grain, not cash."

In a note on a visit to Jammalamadugu in the Cuddapah district, Bishop Whitehead writes as follows.\* "Lately Mr. Macnair has made an effort to improve the methods of weaving, and he showed us some looms that he had set up in his compound to teach the people the use of a cheap kind of fly-shuttle to take the place of the hand-shuttle which is universally used by the people. The difficulties he has met with are characteristic of many attempts to improve on the customs and methods of India. At present the thread used for the hand-shuttle is spun by the Māla women from the ordinary cotton produced in the district. The Māla weavers do not provide their own cotton for the clothes they weave, but the Kāpus give them the cotton from their own fields, pay the women a few annas for spinning it, and then pay the men a regular wage for weaving it into cloth. But the cotton spun in the district is not strong enough for the fly-shuttle, which can only be profitably worked with mill-made thread. The result is that, if the fly-shuttle were generally adopted, it would leave no market for the native cotton, throw the women out of work, upset the whole system on which the weavers work, and, in fact, produce widespread misery and confusion!"

The following detailed account of the ceremonies in connection with marriage, many of which are copied from the higher Telugu castes, is given by Mr. Nicholson. "Chippa Tāmbūlam (little betel) is the name given to the earliest arrangements for a future wedding. The parents of the boy about to be married enquire of a

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\* Madras and Tinnevely Dioces. Mag., June, 1908.

Brāhman to which quarter they should go in search of a bride. He, after receiving his pay, consults the boy's horoscope, and then tells them that in a certain quarter there is loss, in another quarter there is death, but that in another quarter there is gain or good. If in the quarter which the Brāhman has intimated as good there are relations, so much the better; the bride will be sought amongst them. If not, the parents of the youth, along with an elder of the caste, set out in search of a bride amongst new people. On reaching the village, they do not make their object known, but let it appear that they are on ordinary business. Having discovered a house in which there is a marriageable girl, after the ordinary salutations, they, in a round-about way, make enquiries as to whether the warasa or marriage line is right or not. If it is all right, and if at that particular time the girl's people are in a prosperous condition, the object of the search is made known. If, on the other hand, the girl's people are in distress or grief, the young man's party go away without making their intention known. Everything being satisfactory, betel nut and leaves are offered, and, if the girl's people are willing to contract, they accept it; if not, and they refuse, the search has to be resumed. We will take it for granted that the betel is accepted. The girl's parents then say 'If it is God's will, so let it be; return in eight or nine days, and we will give you our answer.' If, within that time, there should be death or trouble of any sort in either of the houses, all arrangements are abandoned. If, when going to pay the second visit, on the journey any of the party should drop on the way either staff or bundle of food, it is regarded as a bad omen, and further progress is stopped for that day. After reaching the house of the prospective bride on the second occasion,

the party wait outside. Should the parents of the girl bring out water for them to drink and to wash their faces, it is a sign that matters may be proceeded with. Betel is again distributed. In the evening, the four parents and the elders talk matters over, and, if all is so far satisfactory, they promise to come to the house of the future bridegroom on a certain date. The boy's parents, after again distributing betel, this time to every house of the caste, take their departure. When the party of the bride arrive at the boy's village, they are treated to toddy and a good feed, after which they give their final promise. Then, having made arrangements for the Pedda Tāmbūlam (big betel), they take their departure. This ends the first part of the negotiations. Chinna Tāmbūlam is not binding. The second part of the negotiations, which is called Pedda Tāmbūlam, takes place at the home of the future bride. Before departing for the ceremony, the party of the bridegroom, which must be an odd number but not seven, and some of the elders of the village, take part in a feast. The members of the party put on their religious marks, daub their necks and faces with sandal paste and akshinthulu (coloured rice), and are sent off with the good wishes of the villagers. After the party has gone some few miles, it is customary for them to fortify themselves with toddy, and to distribute betel. The father of the groom takes with him as a present for the bride a bodice, fried dal (pea: *Cajanus indicus*), cocoanut, rice, jaggery, turmeric, dates, ghī, etc. On arrival at the house, the party wait outside, until water is brought for their faces and feet. After the stains of travel have been washed off, the presents are given, and the whole assembly proceeds to the toddy shop. On their return, the Chalavādhī (caste servant) tells

them to which households betel must be presented, after which the real business commences. The party of the bridegroom, the people of the bride, the elders of the caste, and one person from each house in the caste quarter, are present. A blanket is spread on the floor, and grains of rice are arranged on it according to a certain pattern. This is the bridal throne. After bathing, the girl is arrayed in an old cloth, and seated on a weaver's beam placed upon the blanket, with her face towards the east. Before seating herself, however, she must worship towards the setting sun. In her open hands betel is placed, along with the dowry (usually about sixteen rupees) brought by her future father-in-law. As the bride sits thus upon the throne, the respective parents question one another, the bride's parents as to the groom, what work he does, what jewels he will give, etc. Whatever other jewels are given or not, the groom is supposed to give a necklace of silver and beads, and a gold nose jewel. As these things are being talked over, some one winds 101 strands of thread, without twisting it, into a circle about the size of a necklace, and then ties on it a peculiar knot. After smearing with turmeric, it is given into the hands of the girl's maternal uncle, who, while holding his hands full of betel, asks first the girl's parents, and then the whole community if there is any objection to the match. If all agree, he must then worship the bridal throne, and, without letting any of the betel in his hands fall, place the necklace round the bride's neck. Should any of the betel fall, it is looked upon as a very bad omen, and the man is fined. After this part of the performance is over, and after teasing the bride, the uncle raises her to her feet, and, taking from her hands the dowry, etc., sends her off. After distributing betel to every one in the

village, even unborn babies being counted, the ceremony ends, and, after the usual feast has been partaken of, the people all depart to their various homes.

"The wedding, contrary to the previous ceremonies, takes place at the home of the bridegroom. A Brāhman is asked to tell a day on which the omens are favourable, for which telling he receives a small fee. A few days before the date foretold, the house is cleaned, the floor cow-dunged, and the walls are whitewashed. In order that the evil eye may be warded off, two marks are made, one on each side of the door, with oil and charcoal mixed. Then the clothes of the bride and bridegroom are made ready. These, as a rule, are yellow and white, but on no account must there be any indigo in them, as that would be a sign of death. The grain and betel required for the feast, a toe-ring for the bridegroom, and a tāli (marriage badge) for the bride, are then purchased. The toe-ring is worn on the second toe of the right foot, and the tāli, which is usually about the size of a sixpence, is worn round the woman's neck. The goldsmith is paid for these not only in coin, but also in grain and betel, after receiving which he blesses the jewels he has made, and presents them to the people. Meanwhile, messengers have been sent, with the usual presents, to the bride's people and friends, to inform them that the auspicious day has been fixed, and bidding them to the ceremony. In all probability, before the preparations mentioned above are complete, all the money the bridegroom's people have saved will be expended. But there is seldom any difficulty in obtaining a loan. It is considered an act of great merit to advance money for a wedding, and people of other and richer castes are quite ready to lend the amount required. In former days, it was customary to give these loans free of interest,