

## HARPANAHALLI TALUK.

HARPANAHALLI is the southernmost of the four "western taluks." It runs up towards the Mysore plateau and thus lies at a greater elevation than any other in the district. It is traversed by the Mallappanbetta and Kallahalligudda hills and is everywhere diversified by picturesque undulations with pleasant valleys lying among them. Its eastern half drains eastwards into the Chikka Hagari and the remainder slopes southwards towards the Tungabhadra. In the Chikka Hagari basin patches of black cotton-soil, aggregating about one-eighth of the area of the taluk, are to be found, but practically the whole of the rest of it is covered with mixed soils.

Statistics on many points regarding the taluk will be found in the separate Appendix. It contains an unusual proportion of the few Jains who are found in the district. Canarese is the prevailing vernacular. The blanket-weaving industry of the Kurubas within it is referred to in Chapter VI. Like Hadagalli (see the account of that taluk above), it possesses several of the beautiful Chálukyan temples characteristic of this corner of the district.

Cholam and korra are, as usual throughout Bellary, the staple food-grains. Castor is exported in considerable quantities, and a characteristic crop is the yellow-flowered niger seed (*Guizotia abyssinica*) which is grown for the oil it produces and flourishes amazingly on the most barren-looking of soils. It is generally sown along with ragi. The only irrigation is that under tanks and wells, there being no single channel in the whole of the taluk.

Some of the more interesting places within it are those noted below:—

**Bágali:** Some four miles due north of Harpanahalli, measured in a direct line. Population 1,707. A track leads to it from near the fourth milestone on the road between Hadagalli and Harpanahalli. It is known for the potstone Chálukyan temple to Kallésvara which stands close under the bank of its tank. This is on the list of buildings specially conserved by Government and is illustrated and described in detail in Mr. Rea's *Chálukyan Architecture* already several times referred to. The most striking parts of it are the two doorways into the shrine, the central ceiling in the mantapam into which the shrine opens, and the extraordinary diversity in the design of the pillars which support this mantapam. There are 59 of these piers and nearly

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every one of them differs from all the others, if not in general design, at least in detail. Much of this variety is attained by the form of the plan of the pillars. In some cases one plan is continued from the base to the capital, while in others the square, circle, octagon and polygon are successively combined. The polygonal plans are again varied by the use of different forms of fluting. There are no less than 36 inscribed stones in this temple and five others occur in other shrines in the village. Some of these have already been referred to in Chapter II and in the account of Kógali on p. 242 above. The earliest mention of the Kallésvara (then called Kálidévasvámin) temple is in a grant of 1018 A.D., but as this makes no reference to its foundation it must have been built some time before. There are no less than twelve inscriptions of the Western Chálukya king Vikramáditya VI, dated from the fourth to the fifty-first years of the era which he started in the year of his accession (1076 A.D.) in supersession of the Saka era. One of them refers to the Jain temple of Brahma-Jinálaya in the village. The village was anciently called Bálguli and is shown in a grant of the Hoysala king Vira-Ballála II, dated 1193-94, to have been one of his capitals. Reference is made in one of the records to the 50 *Mahájanas* who looked after its affairs.

**Chigatéri:** Seven miles in a direct line east-north-east of Harpanahalli. Population 2,912. The gold-washing done here has been referred to in the account of the geology of the district in Chapter I above. Mr. Bruce Foote says<sup>1</sup> that short but good-looking quartz reefs which deserve deep prospecting are pretty numerous in the southern and south-eastern flanks of the Jájkal-gudda hill near here and are doubtless the source of the gold which is obtained, as this is coarse and has been but little rolled. The gold washed in his presence was—

“ Sufficiently large in grain to show that some of the parent rocks must have contained very distinctly visible inclusions of it . . .  
 “. . . The streams which are washed for gold are: (i) the upper part of the Chigatéri nullah, at a place called Chengulu; (ii) a small stream north-west by west of Chigatéri village; (iii) a stream known as the Bevihalli nullah, really the head-waters of the Maithur nullah; and (iv) the stream which flows on the north-east slope of Jájkalgudda and is known as the Konganahosur nullah. Of these the last is much the richest and the first the second best. Bevihalli nullah is exceedingly poor in gold . . . . The Konganahosur gold is almost coarse enough for some of the larger particles to deserve the appellation of ‘pepitas’ (cucumber or melon seeds), and the colour in all cases was very good.”

<sup>1</sup> *Mem. Geol. Surv. India*, xxv, 89, 196.

The place has very recently been subjected to an examination, under European supervision, extending over several months, but no actual mining has yet been begun there.

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**Halavágalu:** Two miles from the Tungabhadra and 13 miles west by south of Harpanahalli; police-station; population 2,598. Contains another of the Chálukyan temples made of black steatite already referred to. It is the plainest of the whole series, there being hardly any carved work whatever in it, though the rough blocks at the doors were evidently intended to have been ultimately sculptured. A few drawings of it will be found in Mr. Rea's book already mentioned.

**Harivi:** On the Tungabhadra, four miles in a direct line south of Kuruvatti. Population 1,213. A few families make rough matting, gunny bags, etc., out of sunn hemp which is grown and prepared for use locally.

**Harpanahalli:** Head-quarters of the taluk; union; sub-registrar's office; police-station; travellers' bungalow; upper secondary school. Population 9,320. The town lies in a hollow surrounded by low lines of hills, the most noticeable height in which is the Gósain-gudda, so called from the Gósain's tomb on its top, which stands at the back of the travellers' bungalow. Except for the guinea-worm which infests some of its wells, it seems a healthy place. Between 1868 and 1882 it was the head-quarters of the Deputy Collector who was then in charge of the three western taluks.

Harpanahalli was the seat of one of the most powerful of all the old poligar families of the district and has a long history.<sup>1</sup> The first of its chiefs was a Bédar named Dádayya who belonged to Khánanahalli, now a hamlet of Mádlagiri, seven miles north-west of Harpanahalli. After the overthrow of the Vijayanagar dynasty at the battle of Talikóta in 1565, Dádayya collected some followers and made himself master of Bágali and Nilagunda and the country attached to them. Shortly afterwards, a relation of his, Jakkanna Náyak, the poligar of Chitaldrug in Mysore, being besieged in his fort by his neighbour Kenganna Náyak of Basavapatnam, applied to Dádayya for help. Dádayya attacked and defeated Kenganna Náyak and raised the siege, and as his reward

<sup>1</sup> Munro's letter of 12th July 1801 to Government and his report on the poligars of the district, dated 20th March 1802, both give short abstracts of this, and a private manuscript account now in Harpanahalli, which from internal evidence appears to have been written about 1800 and which wherever it can be checked is historically accurate, fills in the details. The following narrative combines the information given in these three papers, and also utilises the references to the poligars which occur in Duff and Wilks.

was given Jakkanna's daughter, Honnai Náyaki, in marriage, and, as her dower, certain portions of the Chitaldrug country.

Not long afterwards he was also given the hill fort of Uchchangidurgam, which then likewise belonged to the Chitaldrug poligar. The story runs that one evening the goddess of the hill, Uchchangi-amma, appeared to him and told him to ask his father-in-law for the fort as a gift, saying that if he obtained it she would always favour and assist him. Asked for a sign, she said that as he turned away from her temple the tamarind in front of it would fall to the ground. The tree fell as she had foretold, and Dádayya asked for Uchchangidurgam and obtained it.

About this time he founded Harpanahalli and called it after Siva (the name is properly Harapura-halli, or 'Siva's town') who had helped him to prosperity. The usual story is told of his having selected the site because one day a hare, instead of running away, turned upon his dogs there.

Later, Dádayya and his father-in-law fell out and the latter attacked Uchchangidurgam, but was beaten off. Dádayya's wife Honnai seems to have sided with her father rather than her husband, and one day the latter threw her off the top of the steep side of the hill into a tank at the bottom. The cliff and tank are still called after her Honnai-gere and Honnai-honda, respectively, and ballads are even now sung about her. Dádayya afterwards married Jampá Nágathi, the daughter of the poligar of Jaramali in Kúdligi taluk; Barma Nágathi, daughter of the neighbouring Gudékóta poligar; and Hanuma Nágathi, daughter of the chief of Bilichódu in the Chitaldrug district. He died in 1592.

He cannot be said to have been an independent ruler, as, in common with most of the petty chiefs who came into prominence at the time, he was forced to submit to the Sultan of Bijápur, pay him tribute, and render him military service. On the decline of the power of Bijápur, Dádayya's successors extended their possessions until these included the whole of the country afterwards comprised under the name of Harpanahalli. This consisted of 460 villages, which brought in a revenue of over eight lakhs of rupees. In 1680, on the confirmation of the Marátha conquests in the south by Bijápur, the then poligar acknowledged the Marátha supremacy and paid the customary tribute. Dádayya's successors were as follows:—Ranga Náyak, his son by Jampá Nágathi, 1592 to 1616; Barmanna Náyak, the son of the foregoing, 1616 to 1650; Óbanna Náyak, son of Barmanna, 1650 to 1655; Vira Mummadi Náyak, son of his predecessor, 1655 to 1667; Mummadi Náyak, his son, 1667 to 1687; and Basavanta Náyak, brother of Mummadi, 1687 to 1705.

Basavanta turned Lingáyat and took the name of Kotrappa Náyak. He was followed by his son Mari Kotrappa (1705 to 1715), who was in turn succeeded by his son, another Basavanta, who ruled from 1715 to 1721. This Basavanta had no children and direct descent from the original Dádayya thus ceased. A collateral named Gónappa was accordingly adopted, converted to the Lingáyat faith, and made poligar under the name of Mudi Basappa Náyak. He ruled until 1741, and was succeeded by Vira Basappa Náyak, the eldest of his four sons, who died in the next year.

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Sómasékbara Náyak, son of the foregoing, followed, and ruled for 24 years until 1766, when he died without issue. He was a chief of considerable note. In 1748, with the poligar of Rayadrug, he joined the forces of the poligar of Bednúr in an attack against Chitaldrug. At the battle of Máyakonda (in the present Chitaldrug district) he engaged in single combat on elephants with the Chitaldrug poligar and slew him.<sup>1</sup> Haidar Ali marched against him in 1762 and he seems to have submitted quietly to Haidar's authority and even to have been of much service to him later. His name is still remembered throughout the western taluks and during his time Harpanahalli reached the height of its prosperity. Munro states that he is said to have paid a peshkash of 12,000 pagodas to the Nizam, 6,000 to Morári Rao of Gooty, and from two to three lakhs of rupees to the Peshwa.

On his death, his widow, Somámáji, adopted Adavi Bommanna, a collateral of her husband's, who lived in Vadachinahálu, now a hamlet of Musumanakallihalli. He espoused the Lingáyat creed and took the name of Vira Basappa Náyak. He died in 1768 and Sómasékbara's widow then adopted another collateral from the same village. This man was the son of one Chinna Giriappa and, like his predecessors, he was converted to the Lingáyat faith and ruled under a new name, calling himself Basappa Náyak.

In 1775, after taking the fort at Bellary, Haidar marched against Harpanahalli for the second time, compelled the poligar to acknowledge his authority and exacted from him a tribute of over two lakhs of rupees. In 1787 Tipu treacherously seized Basappa Náyak, who was with him in his camp as he was marching through this part of the country, and at the same time took Harpanahalli, against which he had secretly despatched a brigade. This wanton crushing of a chief who had always been loyal to his house was an act which even Tipu's most active apologists could never adequately justify.

<sup>1</sup> Rice's *Mysore*, ii, 503.

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Basappa Náyak was sent with his three wives to Seringapatam, where he died without issue. Many of his relations and followers were also imprisoned and among these were the wife and young son of one Ayyappa of Vadachinahálu, who is said to have been a brother of Basappa Náyak's. They were confined at Chitaldrug. The son's name was Sómasékhara Náyak.

In 1792, at the close of the second Mysore War, Sómasékhara and his mother joined Parasuram Bhao, the Marátha general, who was then on his march back to his own country. The hereditary Diwán of Harpanahalli, Hampasayya, presented the lad to the general as the poligar of Harpanahalli. Encouraged, apparently, by Parasuram Bhao, the Diwán took Harpanahalli, but he was almost immediately expelled by a detachment of Tipu's. He however retook the place and held it until peace was made with Tipu in the same year.

On the fall of Seringapatam and the death of Tipu in 1799, the Diwán brought Sómasékhara back from the Marátha country and again captured Harpanahalli, which had been left defenceless. When Seringapatam fell and Tipu was killed, General Harris, the Commander-in-Chief, in May of the same year, marched northwards to reduce that part of the country which had not yet acknowledged British supremacy. The Diwán, who was the real master of Harpanahalli (Sómasékhara being only sixteen years of age), made overtures to him and went with Sómasékhara to his camp at Harihar, where an agreement was concluded by which a jaghir of Rs. 60,000 in the district of Bellary was granted to the poligar and his principal servants on condition that they quietly disbanded their troops and resided at Mysore.<sup>1</sup> This agreement was confirmed by the Governor-General, Lord Mornington, and Harpanahalli thus surrendered without bloodshed.

Sómasékhara, however, subsequently conceived the greatest hatred of the Diwán and not only refused to give him any share in the jaghir, but tried to murder him. The Diwán managed to escape and in 1806, on Munro's recommendation<sup>1</sup> and in consideration of the signal service he had rendered the Company in bringing about the surrender of Harpanahalli, he was given for his separate enjoyment a portion<sup>2</sup> of the jaghir worth, according to Tipu's assessment of 1788-89, about Rs. 4,000.

Sómasékhara Náyak was the last of the Harpanahalli poligars. He had four wives, namely, Basammaji and Nilammaji of Gudékóta and Hire Basammaji and Sómamaji of two other villages in

<sup>1</sup> Munro's letter of 29th March 1806 to Government.

<sup>2</sup> The villages of Hosakóta, Benakanagudi, Kallahalli, and Nandibanda, all in Hospet taluk.

the Kúdligi taluk. He died in 1825 leaving three widows, two of whom, Sómamaji and Basammaji, put in claims to his estate. Government held, however, that the widows had no rights in the property and resumed the estate,<sup>1</sup> making allowances for the maintenance of the claimants and the other immediate relatives and dependents of the poligar. The family has now died out.

Hampasayya was succeeded in his estate by his adopted son Virúpákshappa, who died in 1833 without issue. The estate was then resumed, a pension being conferred on three of the ladies of his family. One of these lived until April 1902.

The old fort still stands in Harpanahalli, though in ruins. It differs from most of the well-known strongholds in the district in being built on the low ground instead of on a hill and it depended chiefly for its strength on the two tanks which flank the whole of two of its sides. It had a double line of fortifications built on the usual plan with circular stone bastions connected by curtains and faced by a ditch and rough glacis. A few families still live within it, and in two temples inside it—one dedicated to Hanumán and the other a Jain shrine—worship is still carried on. In the former, and also in several other places in the village, some of the old stone cannon-balls which were used in the days gone by are much revered as representations of Brahma. The Jain temple, noticeable by its graceful stone *dhvaja-stambha*, is commonly known as the 'Bógára basti' and is kept up by a small colony of members of the faith who reside in the town. It contains a number of images of the Tirthankaras arranged in rows one above the other.

A mile south-east of the village along the Arsikere road is the temple of Venkataramanasvámi. It is said to have been built by Dádayya and Ranga Náyak, the first two poligars, and inside the enclosure are shrines containing figures of them and their wives. Kannu-kottappa, who is represented by a stone inscribed with a chank, chakram and námam in a mantapam just north of the main shrine of the temple, is reputed to have much power in curing affections of the eyes. The gópuram over the east entrance to the temple was built by Kandi Séshagiri Rao, a former amildar (tahsildar) of Harpanahalli. Most of the Basavis of the town are dedicated in this temple.

But the deity to whom the real reverence of the villagers is paid is the Úru-dévati ('village goddess') whose shrine is the mean-looking little building just to the north of the Arsikere road. The daily worship in this is done by a woman, a Bédar by caste. It may be known by the extraordinary collection of snake stones in front

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear what villages were included in it. The manuscript above referred to names only Néráyanadévarakeri, Hospet and Hósúru.

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of it. There are more than 150 of these, of all sizes and designs. Within it hang painted gourds suspended *ex voto* by ryots to whom the goddess has granted good crops, bells dedicated by those whom she has delivered from sickness, and little toy-cradles given by childless women whom she has blessed with progeny. One of these, it is whispered, was hung there by a Bráhma woman.

At irregular intervals of some ten or twelve years a subscription list is opened and a great car-festival is held in the goddess' honour. Space does not permit of a description of the whole ceremonial, but the essential part of it is the sacrifice of two buffaloes which have been for some years previously dedicated to the goddess, the mingling of their blood with a large quantity of cooked cholam meal and the scattering of the mixture by certain Málas all round the ruins of the old fort. The heads of the buffaloes are buried in front of the goddess' temple. The pújári on these occasions is a Badagi (carpenter) by caste, the office being hereditary in his family.

An annual festival takes place at the temple of Mailár Lingappa, in the north-west corner of the village, which closely resembles that at Mailár in Hadagalli taluk already described above. There is the same *káranikam*, or prophecy, the same driving of a peg through a man's leg and the same breaking of a chain.<sup>1</sup>

Harpanahalli contains an unusually large number of Bráhmans and a settlement of Vyábári (trading) Korachas who have now been there for several years. The rest of the people are nearly all agriculturists or traders. Trade is conducted chiefly with Dávanagere in Mysore and not with Chittavádigi or other places to the northwards.

The only industry in the village is the weaving of coarse cloths and blankets on a small scale. Brass work and toy-making are mentioned as considerable industries in the old accounts of the place, but at present the former art is confined to two immigrant Marátha families who are chiefly engaged in making the extraordinary brass anklets, bracelets and rings in which the Lambádi women delight, and the latter to three other families which make *kóláttam* sticks, etc., lacquered on a lathe, and coloured images of popular deities. Brass vessels are no longer made, but are imported from Hubli.

<sup>1</sup> In Fergusson's *Architecture in Dharwar and Mysore*, p. 45, occurs a description of a temple of Nepalese style which is said to exist at Harpanahalli. Lest it should be supposed that this has escaped notice in the present account of the town, it should be explained that Mr. Fergusson subsequently [see note on p. 271 of his *Indian Architecture* (1876)] found that this temple belongs, not to Harpanahalli, but to Múdabidri in the South Canara district.



**Kúlahalli:** Five miles north-north-west of Harpanahalli. Population 1,072. Contains a temple to Góni Basappa built in a style which is quite unusual. Góni Basappa was a sanyási, and such, says tradition, was his sanctity that as he walked through the cocoanut topes the trees of their own accord bent down their heads to offer him the young nuts which grew upon them.

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**Kuruvatti:** On the Tungabhadra in the extreme west of the taluk and nearly due west of Harpanahalli. Population 1,149. Famous for its temple and its cattle fair. The latter takes place at the car-festival in February or March and is the chief institution of the kind in the district. Most of the cattle sold at it are of the Mysore breed or allied varieties. It has of late years been frequently prohibited on account of plague and is therefore now mainly held on the other side of the river, in the Bombay Presidency.

The temple to Mallikárjuna in this village is another of the specimens of Chálukyan architecture in elaborately carved black stone which have already been referred to. Its chief beauties are two of its doorways, the east door to the shrine being an especially fine example of the style. In the mantapam in front of the doorway leading into the shrine is an elaborately carved tóran, the only one found in any of the Chálukyan temples in this part of the country. The building is described and illustrated in detail in Mr. Rea's book already mentioned, and is one of those which are conserved by Government.

**Nilagunda:** Eight miles south-west of Harpanahalli. Population 1,286. Contains another of the beautiful little Chálukyan temples found in this part of the district. It is dedicated to Bhímésvara, and seems never to have been completed, the tower over the west shrine being unfinished and some of the blocks along the base being left uncarved. It is fully illustrated and described in Mr. Rea's book and is on the list of buildings conserved by Government. Two of its chief beauties are the carvings on the ceiling of the central compartment of the mantapam into which its three shrines open and on the doorway to the central shrine. The images in the shrines of Anantasayana and Lakshminárayana-svámi in this village are also fine examples of Chálukyan work. The steatite of which all these are made was doubtless quarried in the hill in this village, which contains the most important source of this stone in the district.

**Uchchangidurgam:** A hill-fortress in the south-east corner of the taluk. The village has a population of 3,028. As has been mentioned in Chapter II above, the place is perhaps the

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Uchchásringi which inscriptions show to have once been one of the chief towns of the Kadamba dynasty in the 4th century A.D. and later on the capital of the Pallava province called "the Nolambavádi thirty-two thousand." It was taken from the Nolambas by the Ganga king Márasimha (A.D. 963-974). Inscriptions in the village show <sup>1</sup> that in 1064 it was governed by a Chálukyan ruler named Trailókyamalla and that in 1165 it was ruled by a Pándyan named Vijayapándava-déva. Records at Bágali also mention three other Pándyan rulers named Nigalanhamalla-Pándya, Tribhuvanamalla-Pándya and Vira-Pándya as governing it between the years 1079 and 1160 in the reigns of Vikramáditya VI and his two successors. An inscription of the Hoysala king Vira-Ballála II, who reigned from 1191 to 1212, says <sup>2</sup> that he took the place from a Pándyan but eventually restored it to him. How it subsequently was given by the Chitaldrug poligar to his son-in-law the first poligar of Harpanahalli, and how this latter threw his wife off its summit has already been noticed in the account of Harpanahalli above.

The hill consists of a very bare, steep, rocky ridge, about a mile in length from north to south, which forms the easternmost and highest point of a considerable group of wild, rocky hills which extend southwards almost up to the Mysore frontier. On the north and west its sides are almost perpendicular and it has been likened to the fortress at Gwalior. The fort gates, some ruined walls, and a big well or two are practically all that now remains of the older buildings, but a small modern village stands at the foot of the rock. On the top of it, in addition to the houses of a few people who seem to think that this elevated site is worth the daily climb it involves, is the well-known temple to Uchchangi-amma, 'Our Lady of Uchchangi', which is held in much reverence in the country round about. The Dasara festival at this, in which worship of the *vanni* tree (*prosopis spicigera*) takes a prominent position, is largely attended.

**Yaraballi** : Hamlet of Tavudúru, about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles in a direct line south-south-east of Harpanahalli. There is an insignificant industry here in the manufacture of little basavannas, or sacred bulls, from the potstone which occurs in the neighbouring hill at Arasapur. The images are neither artistically nor carefully executed. The same industry is also carried on at Kenchápuram, three miles south-south-east of Uchchangidurgam.

<sup>1</sup> Inscriptions Nos. 136, 138 and 139 in the Government Epigraphist's report in G.O., No. 922, Public, dated 19th August 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Fleet, in *Bomb. Gaz.*, i, pt. 2, 505.