

## KÚDLIGI TALUK.

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KÚDLIGI, one of the four "western taluks," is perhaps the most picturesque portion of the district. Extensive date-palm groves fringe its streams, especially in the Hanishi and Hosahalli firkas; it is famous for its tamarinds, which are particularly fine round about Chóranúru and Gudékóta; and the hilly country north of these same two places is the wildest and most rugged in Bellary. Round Kottúru there is a little black cotton-soil, but two-thirds of the taluk consist of red land and a fifth is covered with mixed soils. The red land is far inferior in quality to that in Adóni, Bellary and Hospet. To the east the taluk slopes towards the Chinna Hagari while its western half drains into the Chikka Hagari. Several places in it have a bad name for malaria.

Statistics regarding Kúdligi will be found in the separate Appendix. It is more sparsely peopled than any other taluk in the district. It also contains the smallest proportion of Musal-mans. Canarese is its prevailing vernacular, but this gives way to Telugu along the eastern side of the taluk. Its blanket-weaving industry is referred to in Chapter VI. It supplies Bellary, Sandur State, and even parts of Alúr, with toddy from its date-palms and exports considerable quantities of tamarind.

It is the poorest taluk in the district. Its land is the worst in quality, the dry land paying an average assessment of only 5 annas per acre and much of it being rated at as little as 2 annas; the land revenue derived from it, and the incidence of this per head of the population, is less than anywhere else; the percentage of the holdings which pay less than Rs. 10 is higher than in any other taluk; and nearly ten per cent. of the pattas are for one rupee and less. Only three-fifths of the taluk are arable (the forest area being larger than in any other taluk in the district) and of this one-third is waste. One reason for this large proportion is that much of the waste land is thickly covered with trees and the ryots hesitate to pay the considerable sums which under the ordinary rules would be due for the value of this growth. Recently, therefore, a system has been sanctioned<sup>1</sup> under which special pattas are issued under Board's Standing Order No. 5, paragraph 8, permitting the pattadar to pay the usual tree-tax on the trees until the total value of them has been discharged instead of the whole

<sup>1</sup> B.P., Mis. No. 283 (L.R.), dated 28th January 1901.

value at once in one sum. So far the system has been a success. The forest area in the taluk has also been recently added to<sup>1</sup>, which will again reduce the proportion of waste. Even the land in the taluk which is cultivable is often too poor to stand continuous cropping and the area cultivated consequently fluctuates considerably and much of it is only grown with horse-gram, a crop which will flourish with little rain on almost any soil.

Kúḍḷigi has, however, a larger area under tanks than any other taluk—the two most noteworthy chains of reservoirs being those which end, respectively, in the tanks at Hanishi and Kottúru—and also a greater extent under wells. Thus, although it possesses no channels at all, some four per cent. of it, quite a high figure for a Bellary taluk, is protected in all seasons. Moreover its cattle have ample grazing ground in its numerous forests. Cholan and korra are, as usual, the staple food-grains and a larger acreage is sown with castor than in any other taluk.

The more noteworthy places in it are the following:—

**Ambali:** Six miles north-west of Kottúru and near the junction of the three taluks of Hadagalli, Harpanahalli and Kúḍḷigi. Population 1,425. Contains a black stone Chálukyan temple dedicated to Kallésvara which has hitherto attracted no notice and is not included in Mr. Rea's account<sup>2</sup> of the examples of this style which occur in this corner of the district. The building consists of a single shrine opening onto a mantapam of cruciform plan which is supported on pillars and is somewhat similar to that at the Kallésvara temple at Bágali. The towers above the shrine and the parapet over the mantapam cornice (which latter is of the common double-curved variety) are both of them almost shapeless masses of white-washed masonry which look as though they must have been added at a recent 'restoration,' but the remainder of the building is constructed throughout in the usual Chálukyan style. It is all made of black stone. On the outer walls of the shrine the lower courses of carving consist almost exclusively of the lions and crocodiles' heads so frequently found in the other Chálukyan temples in this part of the district, and in the centre of each of these three walls is one of the elaborately carved bays so characteristic of the style. The doorway to the shrine is, as usual, delicately sculptured and is flanked on either side by the customary perforated stone windows. The contours of the pillars of the mantapam are of three main varieties, those on the extreme outer edge of it following one

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<sup>1</sup> G.O., No. 760, Rev., dated 27th August 1901.

<sup>2</sup> *Chálukyan Architecture*, Vol. XXI of the Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India.

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general design, and those next inside them another, while the four central pillars are larger than the others, and, as is common in this style, stand on carved pedestals. All these pillars are circular in plan, but they are so thickly covered with whitewash that it is scarcely possible to follow the details in their contours or decide how far these differ in different pillars. The ceilings of the mantapam are not remarkable for their carving, none of them bearing anything more elaborate than a lotus. There are two inscriptions in the temple which are dated 1081-82 and 1105-06 A.D. respectively, in the sixth and the thirtieth years of the Western Chálukya king Vikramáditya VI. The earlier of the two records gifts to the temple and thus shows that it is at least 822 years old. In the Hanumán temple in this village is a third inscription of the Western Chálukya dynasty which is dated A.D. 1143-44 in the reign of Jagadékamalla II.

**Gudékóta:** Eighteen miles by road east of Kúdligi; police-station; population 1,287. The camping place is among a specially fine group of the tamarind trees for which the neighbourhood is famous. The village is now an insignificant place, but was formerly the residence of a well-known poligar. West of the present habitations, in what is known as the *hálu-áru*, or "old village," may still be seen several temples, a portion of a ruined building which is called "Poligar mahál," or "Poligars' hall," and the débris of many dwellings. In front of the temple to Virabhadra here is a slab on which are a male and a female figure, with a few lines of some inscription. Other curiosities are the sculptures, apparently commemorating some victory, which are cut on a boulder immediately south of the path running between the present village and the rocky hill just south of it, and the collection of unusually large snake-stones and snake goddesses by the tamarind tree near the eastern end of the tank which lies west of the "old village." Several of these latter are six feet high. The tank, which has a high revetted embankment, is known as Bommalinganakeri, after a poligar who is said to have built it. The date when he lived is not known. Some of the descendants of the old chiefs still reside in the village, but the family papers in their possession contain only legendary and conflicting accounts of the fortunes of their forebears and are not worth citing.

The ruins of the old fort stand just north of the village, on a boulder-strewn hill remarkable for the enormous size of the blocks into which its granite has weathered. Mr. Bruce Foote thought them about the largest he had seen in any part of South India. The goats and goat-herds use several rough routes over the boulders

to the top of the hill, but behind the Poligar mahál, leading past one of the old granaries, is an easy path up a set of dilapidated steps. There are two curious wells on the top. One, from its unusually narrow, oblong shape, is called "the cradle well." The other is a stone-lined construction, about 35 feet square, which is excavated under a strange natural arch formed of many huge boulders heaped one above the other. The whole pile is upheld by a single great stone, which forms, as it were, the keystone of the arch and a slight displacement of which would bring it, and all the boulders above it, crashing down into the well. East of this is a granary with brick arches inside, from the top of the little circular bastion close by which a good view is obtained of the village below, the big boulders on which the fort walls are built and the many neighbouring granite hills. A far better outlook is that from the two little watch towers on the extreme summit of the hill! The way to these, which is not easily discovered without a guide, lies over and among the confused heaps of boulders on which the buildings are perched. Rough notches have been cut in the more slippery parts of the rock to afford a foothold.

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When anything especially calamitous threatens the village a festival is held in honour of the village goddess, Durgamma, which in many respects resembles that celebrated at Kúdligi and described below. But the great expense involved prevents its frequent occurrence and it is said that the last feast of the kind took place some fifty years back.

**Gunáságaram:** Eight miles in a straight line due south of Kúdligi. The image in the temple here is held in much repute for the excellence of its workmanship.

**Jaramali:** Village and hill nine miles in a direct line south-west of Kúdligi. Population 896. The hill is 2,742 feet above the sea and some 800 feet above the surrounding country, and is a most conspicuous landmark for miles round. The fort on the top of it, now in ruins, was formerly the residence of a well-known poligar who owned much of the country round, including Sandur State. This latter (see p. 310 below) was taken from him by Siddoji Rao Ghórpade in 1728.

The founder of the family was one Pennappa Náyak.<sup>1</sup> For services in seizing a rebellious chief he was rewarded by king Achyuta Ráya of Vijayanagar with a personal jaghir valued at 15,300 Muhammad Shahi pagodas and another estate valued at 35,150 pagodas on condition of his providing, when called upon, 500 horse

<sup>1</sup> This history is taken from Munro's report of 20th March 1802 to Government.

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and 3,000 foot. After the fall of Vijayanagar, the Bijápur kings resumed much of this country and in return for what they left him required the poligar to pay a peshkash of Rs. 20,000 and provide 300 horse and 2,000 foot. Aurangzeb reduced the troops to be maintained to 1,000 foot and raised the peshkash to Rs. 50,000. In 1742 the chiefs of Chitaldrug and Harpanahalli stripped the poligar of all his possessions except a few villages round the fort, and ten years later the former of them reduced the poligar to a position of entire dependency, requiring him to supply 500 peons when called upon.

When Haidar Ali took Chitaldrug in 1767, the Jaramali poligar complained to him of the way in which the Chitaldrug chief had treated him. Whereupon the latter put him to death. His son fled to Sholápur, but in 1777 he rendered some service to Haidar at the siege of Chitaldrug and was in return re-instated by that ruler in Jaramali and required to pay him a peshkash of 1,500 Madras pagodas and a nazar of another 500 pagodas. He accompanied Haidar on his expedition to the Carnatic in 1780 with 1,000 foot and 100 horse. In 1787 Haidar's son Tipu resumed the jaghir and carried off the poligar to Seringapatam, where he gave him a small appointment. But the poligar heard rumours that Tipu meant to circumscribe him and fled to Sholápur. During the second Mysore war he regained Jaramali, and paid the Maráthas a peshkash of Rs. 20,000, but after the peace of 1792 with Tipu he was again expelled.

When Jaramali was made over to the Nizam by the Partition Treaty of 1799 the poligar was allowed to rent the villages round it at their full value. But he fell into arrears with his payments and when Bellary was ceded to the Company in 1800 he took refuge in Mysore lest he should be apprehended and forced to pay. Three members of the family are still paid small allowances by Government.

**Kottúru:** A rising town twelve miles west-south-west of Kúdligi. Union; travellers' bungalow; police-station; population 6,996.

The place is a great centre of the Lingáyats, who form a very large proportion of the population. It is sanctified in their eyes by the exploits there of a guru of their sect, named Basappa Lingasvámi, who lived, taught, and eventually died within it at some date which is not accurately known. There is a long purána in Canarese all about him, but it is legendary rather than historical and is of no value to the searcher after facts. His tomb is in a large rectangular stone building on the eastern side of the town. It is enclosed all round with granite walls, parts of which are carved

(the carving being sometimes also coloured, which is unusual in these parts), and is supported by granite pillars, some of which are well sculptured. West of its main entrance stands an almost shapeless image, said to represent Gajalakshmi, which when removed from its upright position and laid upon the ground is reputed to have great efficacy in cases of difficulties in child-birth. Basappa Lingasvámi, or Kotra (Kottúru) Basappa as he is generally called, is worshipped in the big temple in the middle of the town, which is known as Kotra Basappa's temple. Kotra and its allied forms Kotri, Kotravva, Kotrappa, etc., is still the most popular name in the village for boys, and girls are similarly called Kotramma, Kotri Basamma, etc. The shrine used apparently to be dedicated to Vírabhadra, and it is said that the image of this god still stands within it behind the Lingáyat emblem. The Lingáyats among the poligars of Harpanahalli are said to have added to the temple, and one of them gave it a palanquin decorated with ivory, which is still preserved in it.

Basappa, says the story, came to Kottúru at the time that it was a stronghold of the Jains, vanquished them in controversy, converted them to the Lingáyat faith and set up a lingam in their principal temple. This temple is what is now known as the *Múru-kallu-matha*, or "three-stone-math," each side of each of its three shrines being built of three large blocks of stone. It is an unusually good specimen of an undoubtedly Jain temple, and has three separate shrines, facing respectively north, east and south, and all opening onto a central chamber in which the image now stands. The towers over these three shrines are square in form, are built throughout of stone, taper in steps towards the top, and thus resemble those of the Jain temples which stand on the rock above the Pampápati temple at Hampi. Close to the entrance to the central chamber is an inscription on a stone half buried in the earth. Three other inscriptions, it may be here noted, are built into the outer wall of the house of Chúdámáni Sástri in "the fort." The fort only survives in name, the walls having been thrown down, apparently as a relief-work in some former famine, into the ditch which surrounded them.

The village goddess *Úr-ava* ("village grandmother") is treated, when calamities impend, to a festival which resembles in some of its ceremonial the feast to the goddess at Kúdligi described below. The pújári is a Badagi (carpenter) by caste and on these occasions, as at Kúdligi, he first renovates the image of the goddess and then places it in a pandal. That night a dedicated he-buffalo is sacrificed to her by Málas, who afterwards dance before her; grain is cooked and scattered round the village; and

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 KÚDLIGI. finally taken outside the village in procession, preceded, as at  
 Kúdligi, by the head of the sacrificed buffalo.

The only industry in the town worth mention is the weaving of common cotton cloths, most of which is in the hands of the Lingáyats. But the place is a considerable centre of commerce and its importance will doubtless receive a great impetus when the railway to it from Hospet is completed. At present the trade is mainly with Dávanagere in Mysore and with Hospet, but the plague which has lately affected the former of these places has driven some of its business to Kottúru, which has thus profited considerably by the visitation. The chief exports seem (no statistics, as usual, are available) to be castor seed, gingelly and chillies, and the imports saffron, dried cocoanut kernels, dates and sugar. The weekly market on Thursdays, which is the best attended in the taluk, provides a great opportunity for traders of all kinds.

**Kúdligi:** Head-quarters of the taluk and the centre from which all its main roads radiate; Union; sub-registrar's office; police-station; population 3,663. The village is an unlovely collection of squalid buildings intersected by narrow, ill-made lanes, and lies very low among wet cultivation. Until very recently it had a bad name for fever and was in consequence most unpopular with native officials, but of late years its reputation in this respect has improved.

The population consists largely of Bédars and there are an unusual number (some hundreds) of Basavis in the village. The place supports no industries, even the blanket-weaving which used to be done in it having died out. A few Mádigas make the usual coarse white cloths. Such trade as there is is conducted chiefly either with Hospet or Kottúru.

A mile and a half east of the village, on the Chóranúru road, is the finest banyan tree in the district. The prominent temple to Siddhésvara on the rock about a mile south-west of the village is now in the hands of the Lingáyats. When the rains fail the Lingáyat population cook food in their houses and take it and place it on the rock, where it is first presented with due ceremonial to the god and then divided up between the presenters, the pújáris and the poor.

The festival to the village goddess (Úr-amma) has several striking points about it and, being typical of other barbarous feasts in other neighbouring places, deserves mention. As will be seen immediately, it is a very expensive ceremony and it therefore only takes place when some calamity threatens the village and the

goddess requires to be propitiated. It occupies three days. On the first day the goddess' image is taken to the house of the hereditary pújári, who is a Badagi by caste, is given a new coat of paint and is placed in a pandal. A small pot is next taken from the priest's house to a well at the northern end of the village where, while Bráhmans recite mantrams, the priest washes it in water and in the sacred mixture of curds, ghee, etc., known as *panchámritam*. It is then filled with water and brought and placed in the pandal before the goddess. Meanwhile Mádigas bring there a he-buffalo which was dedicated to the goddess at the time of the last festival and in the small hours of the morning, before the large crowd which has assembled, one of them cuts off its head at one blow with a sort of sword. It is most essential that it should make no sound when being thus sacrificed. Its head is placed before the goddess and on it are put parts of its viscera and a lighted lamp. This lamp is kept burning for the rest of the festival. Two Ránigárus with their faces daubed with pigments, turmeric and ashes, then dance before the image. Some 500 seers of cholam have meanwhile been cooked and a basketful of this is mixed with some of the buffalo's viscera and carried off by a Mádiga, who must be stark naked from top to toe. He is followed by a crowd with a lamb, and at the place where he drops the basket the lamb is sacrificed. Others of the people take the rest of the cholam and scatter it about the outskirts of the village.

On the second day a dedicated buffalo is offered up by a Barike to another of the village goddesses called Udachamma and at about noon another, which is called the *Hagalu-kóna* or day-buffalo, is sacrificed in front of the Úr-amma's pandal. Then a Bédar, known as the Póthurázu, takes a lamb in his arms and holding its lower jaw in his teeth jerks back its upper jaw sharply with one of his hands in such a way as to kill it instantly, apparently by breaking its neck. Póthurázus are a special class who are only to be found in certain villages and at some similar festivals they are said to kill the lamb by biting its throat with their teeth. They get a rupee or two for performing this revolting ceremony. The death of the lamb is the signal for a general sacrifice of sheep, and the number killed runs into hundreds.

On the afternoon of the third day the goddess is placed on a car and taken in procession to a banyan tree east of the village, being preceded by a Ránigáru carrying on his head the buffalo's head with the light still burning on it. The head is put down before the goddess and left there all night. Next day the goddess is brought back and the car, except the wheels, is then broken up and thrown away.

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Subsequently a fresh buffalo is dedicated to the goddess to take the place of the one which was sacrificed. Until this is done the goddess is said to be a widow. The ceremony consists in daubing the beast with saffron and kunkumam before the goddess and hanging margosa leaves round its neck. The dedicated animal is known as the Gouda-kóna, or 'husband-buffalo.'

**Nimbalagiri**: Near the southern frontier of the taluk, almost due south of Kúdligi. Population 1,230. A few years back, the village used to be known for the specially fine blankets which were woven in it. These are no longer made, but the place still shares with Hosahalli and Sóvenahalli the greater part of the trade in the coarser kinds of blankets. Nimbalagiri is, in addition, noted for the areca-nut it produces.

**Shidé gallu**: Seven miles in a direct line nearly due east of Jaramali. Population 428. Ten or fifteen years ago an active iron-smelting industry was carried on in this village, the ore being brought on pack-bullocks from the Adar-gani mine near the famous Kumárasvámi pagoda in the Sandur State. But the industry is now dead.

**Sómalápúram**: On the road from Sandur to Kúdligi, close to the southern boundary of the Sandur State. Population only 57. Contains three varieties of potstone occurring in beds close to the base of the Dharwar rocks. The stone used to be cut into vessels on a considerable scale, but at present the industry only survives in one house.

**Ujjini**: Near the southern frontier of the taluk some ten miles south-south-west of Kottúru; police station; population 2,975. The place is held in great reverence by Lingáyats, as it is the seat of one of the five Simhásanasvámis, or religious heads of the sect. The *math* of this guru is the most notable building in the village, and contains within its walls a temple to Siddhésvarasvámi. A carved lotus on the ceiling of one of the compartments of the mantapam in front of the shrine in this temple is famous in this part of the country. The tower over the shrine itself is so blackened with the many oily oblations which have been poured over it that the ornament on it is almost obliterated.

**Viranadurgam**: A boldly picturesque granite hill four miles south of Kúdligi, impregnable on all sides but the north, where a cluster of houses is built close under it. The fort on the top of it is said<sup>1</sup> to have been unsuccessfully attacked by Tipu.

<sup>1</sup> On p. 22 of the original edition of this Gazetteer. The reference cannot be traced in the history books.