

## CHAPTER II.

### PRE-WODEYAR DYNASTIES IN MYSORE.

Beginnings of history—Features of Vijayanagar provincial administration—*First Phase*: 1336-1530—Political geography of Southern Karnataka, 14th century—Administration of Southern Karnataka—*Second Phase*: 1530-1565—*Third Phase*: 1565-1610.

**F**ROM time immemorial the area now covered by the State of Mysore has had an individuality and importance of its own. Traces of palæolithic and neolithic settlements in different parts of the country point to its pre-history. During the Vedic and Epic periods it would appear to have formed part and parcel of the non-Aryan belt of territory in the south and the scene of contact between Aryan and non-Aryan races in it. The Mauryas ruled over a portion of the country during the last centuries before Christ leaving their memorial edicts. Recent excavations—at Chandravalli in the present Chitaldrug district—go to show that the Śātavāhanas held their sway over it in the early centuries of the Christian era, with a fairly advanced civilisation. The Kadambas, the Gangas, the Chālukyas, the Chōlas, the Hoysaḷas and the Vijayanagar Emperors, among others, successively governed the country or parts of it leaving vestiges of their rule. Geographically the country during these epochs formed, as it does now, part of the Karnāṭak (*Kar-nāḍu*, *Karnāṭa*, *Kannaḍa*), being apparently a division of, or coterminous with, the extensive tract variously referred to in inscriptions and other sources as *Kuntaḷa-dēśa*, *Erumai-nāḍu*, *Mahishamandala*, etc.

The rise of Vijayanagar (1336-1530) following closely on the decadence of the empire of the Hoysaḷas, was an important landmark in the political and cultural evolution of the Karnāṭak, particularly the central and southern parts of what at present constitutes the district of Mysore. Indeed Vijayanagar was the heir and successor of the Hoysaḷas. The Hoysaḷas gradually disappeared from the arena of history but left lasting relics of their government in the tracts over which they had exercised their control. The division of administrative units into *nāḍu* and *sīme* and the system of provincial administration under members of the ruling family as imperial representatives, were among the most significant legacies of their rule transmitted to their illustrious successors. Consequently the feudatories in various parts of the Hoysaḷa dominions had to transfer their allegiance from their erstwhile supreme but declining masters to the progressive and steadily advancing sovereigns of Vijayanagar. The imperial policy of the latter towards them was generally centripetal, the objective being the maintenance of the *status quo* on the one hand and stemming the ever-growing tide of Muhammadan advance on the south on the other. The task of welding together the heterogenous elements of the body-politic scattered over the remote corners of the empire, from the Tungabhadra in the north up to the Tāmraparṇi and Rāmēśvaram in the far south, proved, therefore, of more than ordinary importance to the energetic and far-sighted monarchs of the period. The dynasties of old feudatories, while reconciling themselves to the new situation, evinced their loyalty to their new masters, exceptions apart. In certain cases, the tracts formerly under the Hoysaḷas, had to be reconquered at the point of the sword and a new line or lines of chiefs, loyal to the imperial cause, set over them as local rulers.

Features of Vijayanagar provincial administration.

First phase: 1336-1530.

The more remote the local administrative unit was from the imperial capital, the more frequent was the need for the adoption of a policy of this type. Another method of exercising effective sway over such territories was, it would seem, the extending of encouragement to enterprising members of ruling dynasties of repute who sought imperial patronage and protection, to settle there under imperial authority and to carry on the administration as feudatories, generally subordinate to the empire through their immediate superior, a Viceroy (*Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*).

During the period of which we are writing (1336-1530), the political geography of Southern Karnāṭaka—which occasioned the rise of the town of Mysore, from which the kingdom and the State derive their name—was as follows: On the north, it was bounded by parts of the modern Bangalore and Tumkur districts then going by the name of *Morasa-nāḍu*, ruled over by the Kannāḍa speaking chieftains of the Morasu-Vokkaliga community; to the south lay the territory of the Tamilians (*Kongu-nāḍu*, *Chōla-maṇḍala*, *Pāṇḍya-dēśa*); in the east and the north-east was the kingdom of the Telugu chieftains with Muḷbāgal (*Muḷuvoy*) as the seat of their authority; and in the west and the north-west flourished the Changāḷvas and the *Male-rājya* (kingdom of the hilly tract)—all these territories and powers being under the control of the imperial house of Vijayanagar. The Southern Karnāṭak itself, comprising mostly parts of central and southern taluks of the present district of Mysore (*i.e.*, Nāgamangala, Seringapatam, Mysore, Nanjangūḍ, Heggāḍḍēvankōṭe, Guṇḍlupet, Chāmarājyanagar, T.-Narasipur and Maḷavallī), generally appears to have been known by the name of *Hosana-nāḍu*—after the Hoysaḷas—with such divisions as Kuruvanka-nāḍu, Uḍuvanka-nāḍu, Muḍuvanka-nāḍu, etc., the portion of the country immediately surrounding Seringapatam and

Political geography  
of Southern Karnā-  
ṭaka, 14th century.

the units (*sīme*) in its neighbourhood, in particular, forming part of the Kuruvanka-nāḍu. The whole of this area was divided into a congeries of principalities ruled over by feudal chieftains, of varying degrees of status, under the designation of *Woḍeyar*,<sup>1</sup> a colloquial word meaning generally "lord," "master."

Terakaṇāmbi, Seringapatam (*Śrīrangapattana*), Ummattūr and Śivasamudram were among the places which loom large in the history of the period under the Vijayanagar rulers. Inscriptions reveal, to some extent, the connection of these places with the imperial dynasty. Chikka-Kampanṇa Woḍeyar, a son of Bukka I (1356-1376), was the governor of the Terakaṇāmbi province. Under Harihara II (1376-1404), Achanna Woḍeyar was in charge of the Hoysala country. Chikka-Dēvappa, under Dēva-Rāya I (1406-1422), was governing the Ummattūr territory. Harihara-Rāya III, a son of Dēva-Rāya I, was also the governor of the Terakaṇāmbi kingdom. Under Bukka III (1422-1424), Vīra-Pārvati-Rāya Woḍeyar, a son of his, was ruling the same province as a *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*. Nanja-Rāja Woḍeyar and Depaṇṇa Woḍeyar, two of the sons of Mallikārjuna (1446-1487), ruled over different parts of the same tract, also under the designation of *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*, while Timmaṇṇa-Daṇṇāyaka, a general of note, appears to have held the charge of the Seringapatam province. Narasa Nāyaka, under Sāluva-Narasimha I (1486-1497), was connected with the administration of the southern part of Seringapatam as his *Mahāpradhāna* (chief minister). He even claims to have conquered the latter place. During the same period Parvataiya, another son of Mallikārjuna, was in charge of the Terakaṇāmbi country. Narasa Nāyaka himself, on his accession as the Vijayanagar ruler (1497-1503), put a stop to the

1. For the derivation, etc., of this word, *vide* Appendix I—(1).

inroads of Nanjarāja Woḍeyar, chief of Ummattūr, and reduced that place to order (1499). Under Vīra-Narasimha II (1504-1509), Mallarāja, son of the *Mahā-maṇḍalēśvara* of Ummattūr, appears as bearing the royal title *Chikka-Rāya* (Crown-prince or Yuvarāja). *Mahā-maṇḍalēśvara* Gōvaṇṇa Woḍeyar, a governor in the south, showed a spirit of defiance of imperial authority. Vīra-Narasimha seems to have been unequal to the task of putting these local rulers down. The first act of Krishṇadēva-Rāya (1509-1530), after his coronation, was, therefore, intimately connected with curbing the local chiefs and governors ill-disposed towards the Empire. Early in his reign (c. 1510-1512), he proceeded by way of Seringapatam and reduced Chikka-Rāya (? Ganga-Rāya) who probably fell during the investment of his stronghold of Śivasamudram. The latter's son, Vīrappa Woḍeyar, was evidently allowed by Krishṇadēva-Rāya to rule over the Seringapatam country as the chief of Seringapatam. Domingos Paes, writing in 1520, refers to him as "Cumarvirya" (Kumāra-Vīraiya), father-in-law of Krishṇadēva-Rāya, and as the king of Seringapatam and all the territory bordering on Malabar. He also refers to him as having been held in high esteem by Krishṇadēva-Rāya. The province of Terakaṇāmbi taken from the Ummattūr chiefs, was placed under Sāḷuva-Gōvinda-Rāya, brother of Sāḷuva-Timma, the distinguished minister of Krishṇadēva-Rāya.<sup>2</sup>

During the latter part of the heyday of the Vijayanagar Empire (1530-1565), the connection of the rulers with the southern part of their vast dominions, became more and more pronounced. According to the *Achyutarāyābhūdayam*, Achyuta (1530-1542) is said to have paid a visit

*Second Phase:*  
1530-1565.

2. See *Mys. Gaz.*, II. iii. 1482, 1523-1539-1553-1555-1558, 1612-1644-1698, 1719-1745-1754-1761-1772-1789-1790, 1956-1957-1994-1997, 2107-2108; also Paes's *Narrative* in Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire*, pp. 236-290, at page 269.

to Seringapatam on his way back from Śrīrangam. Here he received the local governors who made, it is said, large presents of money. From the description that Nuniz gives of the administration of Achyuta, we cannot but draw the broad inference that, though there was some discontent on the part of the feudatories, there was no serious falling off in its efficiency. The Government continued as before in the hands of the king assisted by his minister and the provinces were under local governors, while the feudatories ruled the tracts under them, maintaining their quota of troops and paying the annual tribute to their overlord. Under Sadāśiva (1542-1570), the government was carried on by Aḷiya Rāma-Rāja with the aid of Tirumala as prime minister and Venkaṭādri as commander-in-chief. Of these two younger brothers of Rāma-Rāja, Tirumala appears to have wielded, according to inscriptions, considerable independent powers. He was known as *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Rāma-Rāja-Tirumala, Yara-Timma (Hiriya-Timma, Timma, the elder), Timmayadēva-Mahā-Arasu, etc.

At this point, we may pause and take stock of the general conditions of provincial administration of Vijayanagar after the memorable battle of *Raksas-Tagḍi*, near Tālikōṭa (1565). The general political effects of that battle were of a far-reaching character. These may be thus summed up: It broke up the Hindu power in the south, though the Empire held fast for nearly another century under the next (The *Āravīḍu*) dynasty of kings. Slowly and surely, it eventually opened the way for Muhammadan incursions into almost every part of the country followed by Mahratta inroads. Later, with the disappearance of an organised central government, centrifugal tendencies began gradually to manifest themselves and Southern India came to be dotted over

*Third Phase:*  
1565-1610.

with chieftainships exercising more or less local authority. The power of resistance against a formidable aggressor was thus gone for ever. Disunion spread in the land, with the result that South India became the happy hunting ground for ambitious rival Nawābs, aided by groups of foreign merchant-settlers and military adventurers like Muhammad Yusuf and Haidar Ali.

Imperial power was, however, for the time being, still secure in the south. The writ of the Emperor still ran throughout the land. The whole country was divided between Tirumala and his brother and nephews. Tirumala—afterwards Tirumala I—brother of Aḷiya Rāma-Rāja, practically managed to hold together the greater part of the south under the nominal suzerainty of Sadāśiva. One of his objects in fixing upon Penukoṇḍa was possibly to save as much of the Empire in the south as possible and in this objective he appears to have been generally successful. From the social point of view, it is significant that within the half century that followed Rāma-Rāja's death, Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism had become the prevailing creed in the south of India among most classes.

Sadāśiva was at Penukoṇḍa, the new capital, probably from about 1567. There is epigraphical evidence to show that, despite the great reverse the Empire had sustained in 1565, he was still respected by his southern feudatories, and that the Empire did not wholly break-up as the result of the defeat at *Raksas-Tagḍi*. Sadāśiva's later records come from, among other places, Seringapatam and Maṇḍya.

The assassination of Sadāśiva in or about 1570 was followed by the accession to the throne of Tirumala I (1570-1574), the first *de jure* sovereign of the fourth or the Āravīḍu dynasty of Vijayanagar. Tirumala, it would appear, continued the time-honoured custom of appointing princes of the Royal House as Viceroys of the provinces. Of his four sons, according to inscriptions and literary

sources, Śrī-Ranga—afterwards Śrī-Ranga II—became the Viceroy of the Telugu or home province of Penukoṇḍa; Venkaṭa—afterwards Venkaṭa I—governed from Chandragiri the Tamil country comprising the Tuṇḍīra, Chōla and Pāṇḍya kingdoms, corresponding, respectively, to Gingee, Tanjore and Madura; and Rāma or Rāma-Rājaiya-dēva (Rāma III) was Viceroy of the Karnāṭa or the Seringapatam country. The *Vasucharitramu* mentions that Rāma's rule extended over the territory between the Cauvery and the Arabian Sea, with his capital at Seringapatam. Several records of his attest to his rule at Seringapatam, the earliest available being dated in 1569, in which he is styled *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*. His records in the Seringapatam country, during Tirumala's rule, range from 1569 to 1573, and from 1576 to 1581, under Śrī-Ranga II (1574-1586).<sup>3</sup>

Rāma-Rājaiya appears to have associated with himself one Daḷavāi Rēmaṭi-Venkaṭaiya, in the administration of the Seringapatam Viceroyalty. He predeceased his brothers, Śrī-Ranga II and Venkaṭa I, leaving behind him two sons, Tirumala II and Ranga III. These were brought up at Penukoṇḍa under their uncle, Venkaṭa I. During their minority, the administration of the Viceroyalty, according to the *Chikkadēvarāya-Vamsāvali* (c. 1678-1680), was conducted by Rēmaṭi-Venkaṭaiya as agent of Tirumala II, the heir-designate of Rāma-Rājaiya, down to 1584.

In or about 1585 Tirumala II succeeded to the charge of the Viceroyalty and ruled it till 1610, partly during the reign of Śrī-Ranga II and throughout a considerable part of the reign of Venkaṭa I (1586-1614). Tirumala's records extend from 1585 to 1610, the latest available being dated in 1626. He appears to have been associated with himself in the administration of the Viceroyalty, one

3. *Mys. Gaz.*, II. iii. 2087-2088, 2101-2102, 2107-2109, 2112-2118, 2124-2125, 2127, 2143-2145; also *C. Vam.*, 1-2.



Rāmānujaiya, Pradhāni and Daḷavāi, the successor, probably, of Rēmaṭi-Venkaṭaiya. Tirumala's records further indicate that he ruled more or less independently in his province, though holding only a subordinate position (as a *Mahāmaṇḍalēśvara*) under his uncle, Venkaṭa I.

The *Chikkadēvarāya-Vamśāvali* presents an overwrought picture of Tirumala's government in Seringapatam, by way of indicating that it was loose, corrupt and weak. Other sources, however, seem to convey a different impression. Father Coutinho, one of the Jesuit missionaries of the time, writing of Tirumala in 1600, states that he was "liked by more as well as more powerful chieftains than his brother Ranga." The extent of Tirumala's jurisdiction as Viceroy is, perhaps, indicated by the circumstance that he could command levies from the chieftains of Hadinād, Yelandūr, Piriyaṭaṇa, Talakād, Kereyūr, Narasimhapura (Hoḷe-Narasipur), Bēlūr, Nuggēhalli, Kōlāla, Ballāpur, Punganūr, Bangalore, Māgaḍi, Ammachavāḍi, Heggaddēvankōṭe, Chiknāyakanahalli, Bāṇāvār, Basavāṭaṇa and Sirya, etc.,—places situated in different parts of the Karnāṭaka country. Tirumala's own inscriptional records show that his rule was accepted without demur from Manjarābād to Mysore. There is thus enough data at hand to hold that he was popular in his province and that his administration was attended with a fair measure of success, although it was not free from defects at one period or another during his long regime of twenty-five years.

There is a regular succession in Tirumala's records between 1585-1592 indicating his actual rule in the Viceroyalty during that period. There is a gap in them between 1592-1595; they continue after 1596, leaving a gap again between 1607-1610.

It was probably during the period covered by the first gap (1592-1595) that Tirumala, according to the

*Chikkadēvarāya-Vamśāvali*, proceeded with his uncle, Venkaṭa I, against Virappa Nāyaka of Madura (1572-1595)—who appears to have shown signs of disloyalty—accepted a bribe from the latter and retired to Seringapatam. This attitude on the part of Tirumala was, it would seem, due to Venkaṭa's early predilection for Ranga, younger brother of Tirumala, as the heir intended to succeed him, and Tirumala's disappointment at his being superseded by Venkaṭa. At any rate, Tirumala, by his treacherous conduct at Madura, we are told, incurred the displeasure of his uncle. From this time onward a change is naturally perceptible in the attitude adopted by Venkaṭa I towards Tirumala—an attitude of indifference, if not open hostility. Almost simultaneously Tirumala, as we shall see, began to feel the rising power of the Ruling House of Mysore. Towards the latter part of his rule, covered by the second gap in his records (1607-1610), Tirumala even experienced a serious falling off from allegiance on the part of some of his feudatories. All these, as we shall relate, contributed to the overthrow of his power and his retreat from Seringapatam (in 1610), ushering in a new landmark in the history of Mysore.<sup>4</sup>

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4. For the general references on Tirumala's rule, see *Mys. Gaz.*, II. iii. 2196-2197, 2200-2209; *C. Vam.*, 2-6, 14; *K.N.V.*, III, 22-30; also see and compare Rev. H. Heras, *Araviḍu Dynasty*, I. 342-343, 412-414, etc. For further details about Tirumala, *vide* Ch. V of this work.