

Village History Notes

B. Devadanam: Sept 16, 1965

They tell stories of the Doralu who once ruled these villages and built the old walls. They could command at will and people had to obey. No salary was paid to the people, but food was usually provided. Thus they got the walls built and work done.

They say that any beautiful woman was taken by the Dora. If he took a fancy to one, though she was married, when he sent, she had to go or the man or father was killed.

The low caste people could not come close to the fort without showing much humility. The Harijans had to go in a loin cloth. They could not wear a pancha or shoes. They came bowing down and trembling. They tied a big palm branch behind them, dragging it on the ground to wipe out their foot prints which were defiling.

With the first Dora came two Madigas from the Chinthalolu and Bapatinna Gotras.; They were his servants. They divided the rights over the village equally and considered themselves as brothers, so their descendants do not intermarry. From there came two large clans. Later, as the village started, other castes came.

There are Yellamma, Doras and Penmilla now. In those days the harijans could not hand anything to the Dora or high caste people. Nor would high caste people give them anything. It was set down on the ground and then the others could pick it up.

Informant: Ross, Sept. 20, 1965

The original people of the country here were Vishva Brahmins or Dravidulu. There were a number of brothers, the sons of Jambhu, the Great Rishi. The story goes that one day at a

festival, these brothers were preparing a buffalo meat curry when one piece of meat fell out on the ground. The Madiga, who was the oldest of the brothers, picked it up and threw it back in the pot. The others were offended at this and refused to eat the meal and considered the oldest brother defiled. They branded him unclean. The word Madiga is from Sanskrit, and means 'defiled one.' Even to this day the other brothers, which became the Panchama castes, do not joke or ridicule the Madiga, but try to help if needed.

The Vishva Brahma section is made up of the Panchama or Panchala castes, and the Madigas and Dakali and the Bart Raj are known colloquially as the Enalalu and Hatkara. The Panchama castes are the Ausali [Goldsmiths], Kamsali, Vadla or Vadrangi, Kammari [Carpenters], Kansari [Brass Workers], and Kasha [Rock Carvers]. To these all were given originally the janjam or thread of the twice born, and the gyatri or 'dawn mantra' which the Brahmins later stole. The South, these all tie the janjam but in Telengana they somehow stopped doing so, at least the Madigas.

Later the Aryan section came which were Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudras. The Panchala castes tried to join in their section, but were never accepted by the Brahmins. The Panchala have their own priests and Brahmins don't serve them. The Bart Raj entered the Aryan section, and though they used to be a very low group, now have a fairly high status. The Mallas are the offspring of Madigas prostituted by the Aryans.

The mythical history of the Mallas is that once Parvati, in her menses, passed blood clots in the bathroom. From these clots there sprang a boy who was called Malla [Dirty]. It was probably a cross between Aryan and Dravidian races.

The Malla are divided into two sections, which did not use to intermarry, but today they occasionally do so. One is called Tirumandla, and they wear a red thread in their head dress. The Tirumandala are Vaishnavites and burn a spot on the tongue with a gold stick at an early age, usually before six. They use the bottu [dot on the forehead]. The Vibuti use ashes are worship Siva.

The Panchala and Madigas worship Tantrika==goddesses such as Adishastri [First Power], Kalika or Durga--which are community goddesses. The Madigas also worship these Tantraka. There is one sect of Brahmins near Bezwada called Vishva Bramharna Brahmins who worship Kalika and don't mingle with other Brahmins.

There are different Brahmin sects: The Madhava use a single dot on the forehead. The Smarthas use horizontal lines or a U shaped figure with dots in the middle. They are Karnams. The Vaishnavaitlu use three vertical lines and are pujaris. The Ayyars are from the South.

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Discussion with several villagers: April 9, 1964.

Kuruva: The Kuruva are Kanada speaking people who moved here several generations. One informant said that when he visited relatives in Mysore, he noticed that the language had changed with a large mixture of Telugu words, but the two languages are still mutually intelligible. For the last generation, the Kuruva here have been endogamous. they are located in Venkeshvaram and have about 300 houses, and at Trimulapuram where they have 200 houses.

Laxmapuram: This village is located about ½ mile from the Lambadi Tanda, and consists of 2 Golla, 1 Tsakali, 1 Kammari, 2 Komarti [new], 5 Madiga, 45 Malla, 4 Turk, 1 Vadda and 1 Arukali houses.

Tanda: The Lambardi tanda has 60 houses and 3 Chenchu also live there by the *vagu*.

Lambardi girls wear only a head cloth until about 6 years of age. the girls above this wear skirts. the small boys have only a *molthardu* or G string around the waist until 5-6 years old. Girls over six wear the heavy earrings and bangles, and older girls the nose rings with a string on the forehead.

Fishing: The Mallas tried to catch fish at Laxmapur. the *vagu* is low and not flowing. The men built small dams across the *vagu* near one end of the pool, enclosing a reed patch and blocking off the exits. They then spent 2 hours dipping out the water with a bucket with rope handles swung

by two men. Others dipped the water with hands and pans. some added to the dam. About 8 adults shared in the task, plus some children. When the reed pool was about drained, the younger ones felt around in the mud for the fish left stranded. Many were caught, most of them small ones. The fishermen constantly referred to the Lambardi and their nets. They were fishing down stream. They noted the ease and fruitfulness of this method. When I asked why they too do not practice the use of nets, they said they had not nets. When I asked why they didn't buy nets, they said they didn't know how to wade around the water up to their shoulders, and how to dry in the nets. They continued their heavy work thought the rewards were small.