CHAPTER IV

HONNEYAKAMBALI CHIEFS

The chiefs of Honneyakambali ruled over their principality which stretched above and below the Ghāts, from the twelfth century A.D. to the beginning of the seventeenth century. It seems that this principality had two capitals, one above the Ghāts, at Chenna Bednūru, and another, below the Ghāts at Hosangaḍi. This might have been due to the extension of the principality both above and below the Ghāts.

The earliest reference to the Honneyakambali chief is supposed to be found in a palm leaf grant dated in 1140 A.D. It says that one Venkanna Sāmanta the grandson of Śrīmat Bankiyarasa, alias Honneyakambali, undertook the reconstruction of the temple of Kollūru, out of granite
stone and made gift of charity to the Paramēśvara Adigalu for the conduct of worship. If this manuscript is genuine, this would be the earliest ruler of that family.²

For nearly three centuries from the date of this manuscript, we are not in a position to trace the political history of this principality, on account of the dearth of source material. But towards the end of the fifteenth century, we come across one Bemancha Sāmanta, alias Bankiyarasa Honneyakambali, in a stone epigraph of 1482 A.D. from Kollūru. The inscription records a gift of land by Honneyakambali chief (Bankiyarasa) for offerings to the temple of Mūkāmbikādevī at Kollūru.³ This is the earliest known genuine epigraph and it refers to the title of Bankidēvarasa ad Medīni Gandara Gōva. Besides, it mentions the name of Vijayanagara emperor Virūpāksha and his governor Paṇḍaridēva who was at Bārakūru. This indicates that the Honneyakambali chief was under the authority of Vijayanagara rulers.

A copper plate grant dated in 1522 A.D.⁴ from the same place brings to light another chief of this family, Paṇḍaridēva Honneyakambali. It was this chief who made grant to Kollūru Mūkāmbikā temple in that year.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the chiefs of Honneyakambali came under the influence of Keladi Sadāśivanāyaka. This has been substantiated by a few
inscriptions. One such inscription is found at Nagar Hobali and dated in 1545 A.D.⁵ It relates that Bankiyarasa Honneyakambaṭi along with Sankaradeviyamma was ruling over the regions of Bedrurū, Māngināḍu and Kabbunaḍu, (all above the Ghāts) and this chief was conducting the administration of these areas under the direction of Keḷadi Sadasivanāyaaka. The same fact is mentioned in another inscription from Nagar Taluk, dated in 1552 A.D.⁶ Thus on the eve of the commencement of our period, the Honneyakambaṭi chief acknowledged the authority of the Keḷadi Nayaka who owed allegiance to emperor Sadasivānāya of Vijayanagara.

In 1560 A.D. one Banki Arasu Honneyakambaṭi made grant of forty Muddis of Paddy field to Kolluru MUKāmbikā.⁷

In the middle of the sixteenth century this principality came to be noticed by the Portuguese historian Faria Y Sousa. Regarding the extent of this principality he says:⁸ "In the neighbourhood of Barcelore, (Basrūru) near the mouth of the Kundāpur river, there was another chief called by the Portuguese, king of Cambolim (Gangoḷū) subject to the Vijayanagara". On the statement of this historian, we may infer that the principality of Honneyakambaṭi extended up to the river north of Gangoḷū.⁹ (South Kanara).

The rule of Bankiyarasa II along with Ammideviamma over the regions of Mungināḍu, Kabbunaḍu and Bidrurū above
Further these epigraphs inform us that the Honneyakambali chief governed his principality under the direction of Immadi Sadasivarayanayaka of Keladi and his overlord was emperor Sadasivaraya of Vijayanagara.

Bankiyarasa is again mentioned in a stone inscription of 1570 A.D. found at Lōkanātha temple (South Kanara) in Haṭṭiyangadi. This epigraph records sarvamānya grant of Holamage sime to certain Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa of Basrūru by Bankiyarasa and Amidēviamma. Another inscription of the same place belonging to the year of 1574 A.D. refers to the grant made by the same chief to Lōkanātha temple. In addition to this, the same inscription states that the grant made by the chief was ratified by the residents of the whole Haranāḍu sime.

Another inscription of 1576 A.D. is worth noticing here as it informs us the following facts about the Honneyakambali chief. Firstly, it records the grant of Setṭis to Lōkanātha temple. Secondly, the grant made by the Setṭis should be executed by the Honneyakambali chief, Bankiyarasa along with Ammideviamma, the Tōlaha chief Chengeyarasa, and the chief of Ikkerī. Thus the epigraph suggests the nature of political contact that existed among these chiefs. The same Honneyakambali along with Ammideviamma figures in two inscriptions dated in 1590 A.D.
According to one of the Portuguese records of 1587 A.D. quoted by Heras, Sam Carnao Botto had a territory near the fort of Basrūru. It seems that Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa had been consolidating his hold near Basrūru and it was he who came into contact with the Portuguese on the one hand and the Adilshahi ruler on the other. Regarding his activities, we are indebted to poet Linganna. The poet says "One Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhatta, a minister of Honneyakambali, became powerful in such a way that he carved out his own principality which included Aranādu, Kabbunādu and Mungīnādu with the capital at Chenna Bedrūru and seceded from the Honneyakambali chief." 

According to Heras one of the chiefs who paid tribute to the Adilshahi forces in 1587 A.D. was Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. But in another context the same scholar identifies Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa with the chief minister of Mūdubidre.

In both the cases Heras made unreliable statement about the rebel minister. The fact is Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa who had served as an officer under the Honneyakambali chief at Basrūru, gradually became powerful in that area on account of brisk trade in that port. As mentioned above Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa paid tribute to the Adilshahi ruler in 1587 A.D., in order to become independent of the Honneyakambali chief. In his effort to become independent the rebel minister tried to secure the support of the Adilshahi ruler of Bijapur.
The collusion of the Adilshahi ruler, Ibfahim Adil Shaha II and the rebel minister alarmed the Portuguese who sensed the danger to their trade interest at Basrūru.

To counteract this, the king of Spain and the Portugal Philip II, sent the following instruction on 12th January 1591 A.D. to the Viceroy of Goa. It runs thus: "As regards the business of Sam Carnao Botto, which is of great importance, as is clear from the way it goes on, I recommend to be very careful, and to consent by no means that those fortress be handed over to Idaxa (Adilshaha) using every possible endeavour to this end." In the same letter the same viceroy informs the king of Portugal that "on account of entrusting the fortress to Idalxa (i.e. Adilshah) by Sam Carnao Botto the fortress of Barcelore (i.e. Basrūru) is in great distress."21

On the basis of this letter, it can be that Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhatta's defiant attitude to the Honneya-kambali began in the year 1591 A.D.

Poet Linganna narrates the consequence of the rebellion of Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhatta. The chief of Honneya-kambali principality sought the help of Keḷadi Venkaṭappa nāyaka in order to check the rebellion of his minister. In response to this request, Keḷadi Venkaṭappa sent huge force under Dalavēyi Linganḍa and it was this general who routed the forces of Sankaranārāyaṇa Bhatta and annexed to his
kingdom. After this the Keladi Nayaka descended the Ghats and forced the chief of Honneyakambali to pay the tribute. In this context a Portuguese record of 1629 A.D. enables us to know that Venkaṭappa annexed the land of the Honneyakambali territory worth of hundred thousand pagoḍas to his dominion. The same source further informs us of the rebellion of this chief in 1629 A.D. against Keladi Virabhadrā. But the Keladi ruler put down the rebellion of the chief. Subsequent to this incident, no further information about the Honneyakambali is noticed in the sources known to us so far. With the sources available to us, we infer that the chiefs of this principality ceased to be the rulers and their territory was merged in the Keladi kingdom.

THE EXTENT OF HONNEYAKAMBALI PRINCIPALITY

The territory over which the Honneyakambali chief exercised their power may be roughly as follows: Above the Ghats included the regions of Bidruru, Munginādu, Kabbunādu, and Horanādu. Hosangadi, Kadari Bagvyādi Hobali, and Kolluru were the regions below the Ghats. We have already observed about this principality extended up to the north on the bank of the river Gangōli (South Kanara). Thus the chiefs of Hosangadi ruled over the portions of Coondapur taluk of South Kanara district and the regions of Munginādu Arunādu, Kadri Kabbwanādu, Teduru, Patteguppa and Chimbabnūru of Shivamogga district.
RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHIEFS

The Portuguese sources of 1569 A.D. speak of cordial relation between the chiefs and those of Surala (Tolaha). This has been proved by the active help rendered by the Honneyakambali chief to the chief of Surala when the Portuguese attacked Basruuru which was on the border between these two chiefs. This took place in 1569 A.D. It is interesting to note that an epigraph found at Haṭṭiyangadi refers to the close contact between these two chiefs. With regard to the nature of political contact of the Honneyakambali chiefs with the Adilshahi, we gather some information from the accounts of Ferishta. He mentions the visit of the Rāni of Barcelore (the Honneyakambali chief) and others to the court of the Adilshahi to pay compliments to the latter. In return, she is said to have received a robe from the Adilshah as a token of honour, in 1575 A.D. This account indicates that the Honneyakambali chief owed allegiance to the Adilshahis of Bijapur. But there are other evidences to show that the chief owed allegiance to the Keladi Nāyakas and the Vijayanagara emperor during this period. The payment of tribute by this chief, if at all, is a fact, must have been a passing phase.

On the eve of the commencement of the period under study, the chiefs of Honneyakambali faced the predatory activities of the Portuguese. In 1569 A.D. the Portuguese
on the one hand, and the chiefs of Honneyakambali and Suraj on the other clashed at Basruru. The combined forces of these chiefs gave such a strong resistance to the Portuguese forces that the latter decided to abandon the fort. Seeing the advance of the Portuguese forces again, the same chiefs lost courage and sought peace. As a result of this peace treaty, both the chiefs had to pay higher tributes than before.31

From that year onwards, the Portuguese desired to maintain cordial relationship with the officer of Honneyakambali chief in that area. This is due to the availability of pepper of that region. This is revealed in a letter of the king of Portugal dated in 12th January 1591 A.D. In that letter it is stated that the Viceroy was trying to satisfy the kings of coast (Kanara) on account of the pepper, the majority of which comes from the land of Sam Canao Botto.32

The port of Cambolim (Gangolx, South Kanara), which was within the territory of these chiefs witnessed brisk trade activities and this contributed to the economic development of Kanara coast.33

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THE GENEALOGY OF THE CHIEFS OF HONNEYAKAMBALI

Venkata Sāmāṭha 1140 A.D.
I
Banki Arasu 1482 A.D.
I
Honneyakambali Pandaridēva 1522 A.D.
I
Banki Arasa Odeyar II of Honneyakambali and Sankaradēvi (1545–1560 A.D.)
I
Bukka Arasa of Honneyakambali, 1560 A.D.
I
Banki Amasa Odeyar III and Ammideviamma 1560–1609 A.D.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES


2. Gururaja Bhatt doubts the genuineness of this manuscript on the ground that the features of the temple structure indicates the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. (See Studies in Tuluva History & Culture p.106).


5. MAR. 1943, No.30, p.100.

6. EC, VIII, Nr.5.


8. Asia Portuguese, II, p.469, 474, Quoted by Heras in Aravidu Dynasty p.190.


10. EC, VII, Nr.1-4.

11. ARSIE. 1929-30, No.564.

12. Ibid. No.558.

13. Ibid. 562.


15. Heras, Aravidu Dynasty, p.416. According to one of the Portuguese source, Basrūru was situated on the border between the Honneyakambali and Talaha chiefs. Shastry B.S. The Portuguese in Kānara p.102. Actually the Honneyakambali chief had control over lower Basrūru (i.e. Coondapūr) and the Tolaha had upper Basrūru.

16. Linganna, Keladinripavijayam, Āsvāsa V, p.69 f.
18. Ibid. PIHRC. XI, p.111 See Chauta Chapter of Part-III of this work.
21. Ibid.
22. See Note. No.16.
23. PIHRC. XI, p.108.
24. MAR. 1943, No.30, EC. VII, Nr.1-5.
25. Supra Note No.16.
27. According to Livro Das Cidades E Fortalezas, "the Tōja and Gangolly (Honneyakambali) were declared themselves friends of friends and enemies of enemies. Quoted by Shastry B. S. Portuguese in Kanara, p.102.
28. Supra, Note No.15.
33. The latter of L D'Souza from Basrūru to the Viceroy of Goa notes the flourishing trade at Cambolim. It reports "It will be possible to take yearly load of 1500 Khandis of pepper at moderate price and all clashes with much