PART II

KANARA UNDER VIJAYANAGARA AND KELADI RULERS
CHAPTER I

VIJAYANAGARA RULE IN KANARA
(1565-1614 A.D.)

INTRODUCTION

Vijayanagara held its sway over practically the whole of South India for nearly two centuries. Kanara flourished during these two centuries in all respects. Bahmanis on the northern border of the empire were indeed a serious danger to the safety of the kingdom. Even the disintegration of this Bahmani kingdom did not reduce the gravity of the situation, so far as Vijayanagara was concerned. The Adilshahis and their allies were losing no opportunity to raid the Vijayanagara territory. The culmination was the battle of Rakkasa-Tangadi in 1565 A.D.

The battle brought a doom to the empire and it never recovered fully after that, though the members of
the family continued to rule in different areas. So far as Kanara was concerned its central portion (Bārakūru rājya) continued to be under Vijayanagara rule as indicated by the inscriptions. For example, we get in this area inscriptions ranging from 1565 to 1614 A.D. belonging to such kings as Sadasiva, Tirumalarāya, Rangarāya, Tirumaladēva and Venkaṭa. It is, however, to be noted that the authority of these rulers on Kanara was almost nominal. The chiefs like the Nayakas of Kēḷadi, the Queen of Gerasoppe and the Chiefs of Kalṣa-Karkala were already busy consolidating their power and trying to become independent. There was hardly any central authority to control them. The Nayakas of Kēḷadi, who were more prominent among these, tried to control others in the name of Vijayanagara. But their success was limited. The area north of the river Gangaivali went into the hands of Adilshahis after 1614 A.D.

The political condition of Kanara after this historic battle did lead to the total disintegration and chaos as has been imagined by Caesar Frederick and Ferishta. The former says: "The journey was full of trouble. Every day they were taken by reason of great dissension in the kingdom, and every morning they had to pay ransom before they were allowed to leave". The latter adds that since the battle of Kakkasa-Tangadi the country had been seized
by the tributary chieftains each of whom had assumed independent power in his own district. Further Ferishta gives an impression that the supremacy of Bijapur was acknowledged along the west coast from Goa to Bārakalūr (i.e. Bānkur in South Kanara).

The observations of these authors are, however, not accurate. No doubt, the local chiefs were growing in power but Kejādi which had already gained prominence, could control the situation fairly well as seen from contemporary inscriptions. Ferishta's statement that the Adilshahis of Bijapur had extended their control from Goa to Bārakalūr is far from truth. A number of inscriptions found in this area and nearby do not make any reference to the Adilshahis. Instead, they refer to the authority of the Vijayanagara rulers and their subordinates, the Nāyakas of Kejādi. Caesar Frederick, who visited Kanara two years after the battle, tells us that the local governors owed allegiance to Vijayanagara. Fr. Jarrick who came to Kanara in 1585 A.D. says that Honnāvar, Bhaṭkala, etc. acknowledged the authority of that emperor.

Thus the Adilshahi expansion upto Bārakalūr cannot be regarded as historical. If at all any credence is to be given to Ferishta, it may be said that the Adilshahis led sporadic raids in some regions and exacted tributes from local chiefs. Even this, however, is not corroborated
by any other source. In view of this, the statement of Sewell that the whole country was in a state of anarchy following the battle of Rakkaś-Tangadi need not be taken seriously. Similarly the statement of Mackenzie in relation to Kanara can also be easily dismissed as imaginary.

Inscriptions give a fairly clear picture of the situation. They hold that the rulers of Vijayanagara continued to exercise their authority in the region of Bārakūrū in South Kanara and the Ghāṭ region of North Kanara. A record found at Yadatādi (Udupi Taluk) dated 1565 A.D. refers to Sadāśiva Mahārāya as the overlord of this region. Further it informs us that under his order Keḻadi Sadāśiva Māyaka was governing Bārakūrū Rājya. In the next year i.e. 1566 A.D. we are told of the reign of the same emperor with all his regal titles ruling from Vijayanagara, and of the recognition of his authority by Keḻadi. Immaḍi Sadāśiva Māyaka, who was governing Araga and the rule of Honneyakambaḷi chief over the region of Mungināḍu, Kabbunāḍu and Chennabedrūrū. The last one conducted the administration of his territory under the order of Immaḍi Sadāśiva Māyaka. It is interesting to note that Dālavāyi Lingarasa Ṫḍeya, the Governor of Bārakūrū rājya in 1568 A.D. governed it in the name of the Vijayanagara emperor Sadāśivarāya. This fact is known
from an inscription found at Panchalingēśvara temple at Barakūru. The mention of Sadāśivarāya and the absence of the name of the Keḻadi chief in the epigraph cited above proves the supremacy of Vijayanagara. From another epigraph of the same place dated in 1569 A.D., we are informed that when Rājadhīrāja Rājaparamēśvara Vīra Pratāpa Sadāśiva Mahārāya was at Vijayanagara with all prosperity, Keḻadi Sankaṇṇa Nāyaka was governing Bārakūru rājya under the order of the former. Similarly, Immaḍi Arasappa of Svādī (Sōde) recognised the authority of emperor Sadāśiva in 1571 A.D. The last record of Sadāśivarāya found in this region is that of 1571 A.D. This record refers to Rāmakrishna Oḍeyar as a governor of Bārakūru rājya under the order of Keḻadi Rāmarāja Nāyaka, whose overlord was Sadāśivarāya. Thus these records prove that Sadāśivarāya continued to exercise his authority over the region after the battle of Rakkasā-Tangaḍi. In this context the statement of Sturrock that after the battle of Rakkasā-Tangaḍi the connection of Kanara with Vijayanagara came to an end is to be discarded.

Father Heras and Shastri H.K. observe that the whole of the west-coast rose in rebellion against the empire in 1572 A.D. after the death of Sadāśivarāya. But on the one hand, these scholars do not mention the name
of the chiefs who rose in rebellion. On the other, the epigraphical evidence is clear to the effect that the succeeding Vijayanagara rulers did continue to be recognised as suzerains in the region. The chiefs of Bilige and Svādi mention Rāgarāja and Venkaṭapati as their over lords.22

The Nāyakas of Keladi also recognised the authority of Vijayanagara. An inscription of 1572 A.D. found in the Sorab Taluk informs us that Tirumalarāya of Vijayanagara was ruling from his capital at Penugonda and his subordinate was Keladi Rāmarāja Nāyaka. It was he who made grants to the Krishna temple at Uḍupi.23 A copperplate inscription of 1574 A.D. states that Rāmarāja Nāyaka ruled over Araga, Guttī, Bārakūru and Mangalūru rājyas as a subordinate of Rājadhirāja Rājaprameśvara Vira Pratāpa Śrī Rāgarāja.24 Further Tirumaladēva is mentioned as emperor in an epigraph found at Haṭṭiyangada in 1576 A.D.25

An inscription from Sōmanātha temple at Bārakūru dated 1580 A.D.26 mentions Śrīrangarāya with all his regal titles. It further tells us that Keladi Sankaṇna Nāyaka was governing Bārakūru rājya. Under his orders Achkappa Oḍeya was administering this region.

Two records dated in 1585 and 1586 A.D.27 found at the same place speak of Sadāśivarāya as the emperor of
Vijayanagara. These two records refer to the administration of this region under Keśadi Rāmarāja and Keścharāsa Odeya respectively. Both of them recognised the authority of Vijayanagara. The inscriptions wrongly mentioned Sādāśivarāya, because we know that the latter's rule ended in 1571-72 A.D. and that Tirumalā succeeded in 1572 A.D. The ruler of Vijayanagara in that year was Venkaṭapatīrāya. Barring this discrepancy the inscriptions reveal the allegiance of the ruler of this region to the Vijayanagara authority as late as this date.

The Vijayanagara authority is also noticed in a record dated in 1608 A.D. hailing from Basrūru. It refers to the rule of Venkaṭapati. The latest Vijayanagara record to be found in this region is dated in 1614 A.D. It was found in the Krishna temple at Udupi. It informs us that Viraprātāpa Venkaṭapatiṇīya was ruling over his empire from his capital at Penugonda and under his direction the Tulu and Maleya Kājyas were ruled over by Keśadi Venkaṭappa Nāyaka.

Thus these epigraphs indicate that the Vijayanagara rule did not come to an abrupt end in Kanara following the battle of Rakkas-Tangadi. Instead, their rule was recognised even as late as 1614 A.D. It is, however, to be noted that the chiefs like those of Kalasa Kārkala, Gerasoppe
and the chiefs in Mangalūru rājya tried to ignore their authority. But the Nāyakas of Keḷadi, who were becoming powerful especially in the Bāракūru region subdued some of these chiefs and forced them to acknowledge the Vija-
yanagara authority.

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REFERENCES AND NOTES


2. EC. VIII, Sorab 55.

3. Ibid. VII, Ti. No.5. SII. VII, No.375. ARSIE. (S.C) 1901, No.170.


5. SII. VII, No.297. Ibid. IX, Pt. II, No.694. EC. Mg.63.

6. The recognition of the Vijayanagara authority by the Kalasa Karkala chief in 1573 and in 1608 was the result of their crushing defeat by the Keladi Nayakas. For details, See Kamath S.U. Tuluvas in Vijayanagara Times (Unpublished thesis submitted to the Bombay University, 1965) p.66.


10. See note No.7.


13. Mackenzie Says that from the year 1569 the country was in state of great confusion for five years. Quoted by Heras Op.Cit., p.267.

15. EC. VIII, Nr. 2. It is interesting to note that the chiefs of Honneyakambali had jurisdiction over the region of Hosangadi, Kadri, Bagwadi and Kolluru below the Ghats in South Kanara. (For detail see Rangacharya, Topographical Lists (1919, Madras) II, No. 56. Linganana Kavi, Keladinripavijayam, (Ed. R. Shama Shastri, 1973, Mysore), p. 69 ff.

16. SII. VII, No. 386.

17. Ibid. No. 389.

18. ARSIE. 1935-36, B.K.No.121. SII.XX, No.241.

19. Ibid. 1930, No.574.


23. EC. VIII, Sorab. 55.

24. Ibid. T1.5.


26. SII. VII, No.375.

27. Ibid. No.321, 331.

28. See note No.1Q.XX.


30. SII. IX, Pt.II, No.694.


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