

JOURNAL
OF THE
BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

JANUARY 1865.

ART. I.—*Preliminary observations on a Document giving an Account of the Establishment of a New Village named Murúda, in Southern Konkaṇa.* By RA'Ō SA'HEB VISHVANA'TH NA'RA'YA'N MANDLIK.

Read at a Meeting of the B. B. R. Asiatic Society on the 9th February, 1865.

I PRESENT the Society this day with a Translation of a Maráthí document, which gives an account of the establishment of a new village in Southern Konkaṇa, named Murúda. The original of the copy, which I also present, is in the possession of a Bráhmaṇa family surnamed Vais'ampáyana, who are the Dharmádhiakáris,* or the chief moral and religious censors of the place. After this was obtained, I succeeded in getting a second copy of the same narrative, with a few unimportant variations.

The language of this document is somewhat different from the

* *Dharmádhiakári* is the person discharging the duties of *Dharmádhiakaraṇa*, which is "the office of watching over morals and manners, of enforcing observance of the ordinances of religion," &c. This office is higher than that of *Upádhyáya* or the priest whose duty it is to conduct all the sacrifices and ceremonies. Both offices are, however, sometimes combined in one and the same person.

modern Maráthí. It is written in the Mođí or cursive character used in official papers and in ordinary business. It approaches in style the oldest Bakharas or Maráthá chronicles, a large number of which deserves to be perpetuated, as furnishing important materials for the future historian of Maháráshtra. Though no date is affixed, yet judging from the characters and the paper, it would appear to be above two hundred years old. The name of the author is also unfortunately wanting. It purports to give an account of the founding of the village of Murúđa by a person from Upper India, named Gangáđharabhaṭṭa, and reputed as a Kanojá* Bráhmaṇa. Throughout the paper, he is described as a Siddhapurusha or perfect man; by this name he is still known in the village. His annual funeral obsequies are still performed by his disciples, the Vais'ampáyana, of whom there are about six families. The paper further goes on to detail the various social and religious festivals to be observed in the village throughout the year. Many of these still obtain. Some have become obsolete, while others have undergone a change. The principal observances, however, are still regulated according to the order laid down in this paper. The document itself, illustrating as it does, the manners and customs, rites and festivals, &c., of the inhabitants of a portion of this Presidency, I thought would come within the scope of the Society's labors, and was worthy of being preserved as a record of institutions gradually passing away.

Murúđa is a small village on the western coast of India, in the Ratnágiri District of the Presidency of Bombay. It is situated at a distance of 90 miles to the south of Bombay, on 17°42' N. Latitude, and 73° 8' E. Longitude. It has 305 houses, and a population of about 1358 persons. The inhabitants may be divided into the following

* *Bráhmaṇas* are ordinarily divided into two classes, viz. the *Gauđas* and the *Dráviđas*. Each class consists of five sub-divisions. Thus, the five *Gauđas* are—(1) the *Gauđas* properly so called, and after whom the whole division is named, (2) *Kanojá* or *Kányakuhjá*, (3) the *Maithilas*, (4) the *Mis'ras*, and (5) the *Gurjjaras*. The five *Dráviđas* are—(1) the *Dráviđas*, from whom the whole class is so named, (2) *Tailangas*, (3) *Kárñatakas*, (4) *Maháráshṭras*, and (5) *Kaúnkaṇas*. Steele, in his summary of *Hindu* castes and customs (p. 85) puts the *Sáraswatás* and the *Utkalás* instead of the *Mis'ras* and *Gurjjaras* amongst the *Gauđas*, and substitutes the *Gurjjaras* for the *Kaúnkaṇas* amongst the *Dráviđas*. I prefer the division as I have above given.

castes:—Chittapávana * Bráhmaṇa; Káraḍa † Bráhmaṇa; Sonárs [or Goldsmiths]; Kánsárs [literally workers in bell-metal, but now they work in almost all kinds of metals except iron and gold]; Bhandáris [or toddy-drawers]; Kuṇabís [cultivators or peasants]; Lingáyata-guravas [worshippers of S'iva, carrying a silver Lingam hung round their necks]; Sutáras [carpenters]; Nhávis [barbers]; Parítas, [washermen]; Chámbárs [workers in leather]; and Mussulmans.

All the castes still follow their ancestral occupations, such as their names imply. But the principal employment of all, including the Bráhmaṇas, is agriculture and horticulture. The nearest port to which the inhabitants resort is Harṇai [popularly termed Hurnee], about 12 miles to the south-west of Fort Victoria. Betelnut is the chief article exported to Bombay, whence the inhabitants import all that they require. Except a small bit of about 8 miles between Hurnee and the Dápúlí Sanatorium there are no good roads in the neighbourhood. Some have been planned and begun during the last two years.

The civil heads of this village are called the Kárabhárís or administrators, sometimes also called the Vartakas or leaders of the community. They are Bráhmaṇas of the Chittapávana section, and are surnamed Bálás (बाळ) and Bágúlas (बागूळ). There is no Pátíl or S'údra head-man in the village. His place is supplied by these Bráhmaṇa Kárabhárís. Of the village establishment of 27 officers, mentioned by Captain Grant Duff, ‡ the following persons are not to be found at Murúda:—viz. the blacksmith; the Mhára, or watchman; the Mángá, or basket-maker and executioner; the Gavandí, or

* This word is revilingly or jocosely derived from *Chitá* (चिन्ता), the pyre, and *Pávana* (पावन) or pure. The two together signifying 'pure from the pyre.' This rendering is based on a *Puranic* legend which relates that *Paras'uráma*, the sixth incarnation of *Vishṇu*, recovered miraculously from the sea the strip of land now forming the *Konkan*, the *Sávantvádí* territory, *Goa*, *Kánará*, and *Malabar*, and made it over to *Bráhmaṇas*, converted into that state from corpses placed on the pyre. Others would resolve the word into चिन्त and पावन, the pure of heart. Both of these may be true, but the first has a historical value, as it seems to me to indicate that the first ancestors of this tribe have probably come by ships either from some other port in India, or from the opposite coast of Africa. This is a section of the *Kaúnkuna* sub-division of the *Dráviḍa* class.

† This tribe also belongs to a section of the *Dráviḍa* class.

‡ *J. Grant Duff's History of the Maráthás*, vol. I., pp. 23—26.

potter; the Bháta, or bard; the tailor; the Kolí, or water-carrier; the Tural or Yeskar; the porter; the gardener; the "Dowrí-Gosáí," a sort of religious ascetic; the Ghads'í, or pipet; the Rámúsí, or Bhila; the Támbolí or betel-leaf-seller; and the Gondhalí, or kettle-drum beater.* Instead of the Muhammadan Mulláná for killing sheep, there is a Kází, who has charge of the village mosque.

The exact period when this village was founded it is at present impracticable to ascertain. The Vais'ampáyanas pretend that the colonization of the place and the creation of their hereditary office took place nineteen hundred years ago. But they have no data to prove this. All that I have been able to gather tends to fix the period somewhere in the 13th or the 14th century of the Christian era. The age of the document, the existence of several old temples and other monuments, and various local traditions, prove the establishment of the village to be at least four hundred years old.

The narrative states that Murúda was a jungle, and served as Rudrabhúmi,† or burning and burying ground, of the neighbouring village of A'súda. Two persons, named Gangádharabháta and Padmákara-bháta, with a third companion, named Vais'ampáyana, came to A'súda: the last is described as the disciple of Gangádharabháta, who looked upon him as his son. They formed a plan of founding a new village. With the permission of the people of A'súda, the jungle was cleared. The "perfect man" or sage applied to a neighbouring king of the S'ekara dynasty, then reigning at Jálágama, a town about 8 miles to the south-east of Murúda, and named Jálándara. From him a grant of land from the adjoining villages was obtained. The different parts of the village were assigned to the first families of settlers. Thirteen families of Chittapáyana Bráhmaṇas are enumerated as those to whom the sage gave lands and offices in the village.‡ The duties of the several village officers were laid down, chiefly in social and religious matters. The boundaries of the several properties were marked off, by stones called Gaḍaḍús [*i.e.* stones fixed in the soil],

* Duff's History of the Maráthás, vol. I., pp. 23—26, Note.

† From *Rudra*, the last of the Hindu triad or the destroying principle, and *Bhúmi*, earth.

‡ They were, (1) *Vais'ampáyanas*, (2) *Dátúras*, (3) *Bhávcs*, (4) *Nenes*, (5) *Bálas*, (6) *Parájapes*, (7) *Jos'is*, (8) *Sutúras*, (9) *Gokhalás*, (10) *Karandikaras*, (11) *Koparakaras*, (12) *Goḍaboles*, and (13) *Dhúrapas*.

and were likewise guarded by Kshetrapálas, or tutelary deities. Several inferior shrines were also set up for the more ignorant classes. The principal temple of the village was built, and an image of the Deví in one of her milder forms, as Durgá,* was installed.

A certain quarter of the village was set apart for the Yavanás. Regarding this, the narrator states, "now the sage saw in his mind that hereafter the kingdom of the Yavanás would come; therefore to the north of the village, and beyond the boundary-stone, a S'únyálaya†

* She is represented as a beautiful woman with eight arms, riding on a tiger, and in a menacing attitude, as if advancing to destroy one of the giants, for whose annihilation her incarnations were assumed. In Bengal and other provinces she is worshipped in more hideous forms as *Káli* or the destroyer. Human sacrifices were formerly offered there. [Elphinstone's India, Book II., chap. IV. pp. 90 and 91.] And even now sheep and goats are sacrificed daily. Such is not the case at *Murúda*, nor indeed in this part of the country generally. It is only to the *Gramá-devatás* or the low deities that animals are now sacrificed.

At the temple of *Mahálamí* at Breach Candy, in the Island of Bombay, animals were sacrificed. Since the ascendancy of *Jainism*, however, animals are not permitted to be killed. A sepoy of the committee of Pinjarapole [or the Asylum for Animals] is now always stationed at the temple, and when any animals are offered, they are taken by him in charge and sent to the Asylum, the priest contenting himself with the pecuniary and other offerings which always accompany such sacrifices.

† *S'únyálaya* [or the abode of nothing] is no doubt here employed to designate a mosque. *S'únya* means nothing, and *álaya*, *sthána* or place, and as there are no images in mosques, the term must have been contemptuously applied to them. It is curious, however, to note how contracted the writer's knowledge and views must have been. For one of the most celebrated Hindu temples in Southern India is actually a *S'únyálaya*, or a temple without an idol. I allude to the renowned Pagodas of *Chillambaram*, as they are called by European writers, or *Sidhambaram*, as they are called by the natives of Southern India. The *Chillambaram* Pagodas are situated on the sea coast of the *Karnatic*, a little to the south of *Porto Novo*, 120 miles S.S.W. from Madras. Lat. 11° 27' N., Long. 79° 52' E. Hamilton [vide his East India Gazeteer, published in 1815, p. 275] describes it as a place of great sanctity, and so does Viscount Valentia in the account of his *Voyages and Travels* [vide Vol. I., pp. 370 and 371]. Both of them, however, being probably unable to gain access to the principal shrine, describe the Pagodas as containing images.

A Hindu friend who saw the place writes to me that—"It is a fact worthy of notice that there exists in Southern India, at a place called 'Chillambaram' (properly *Sidhambra*), near Porto Novo, a S'aiva temple of great renown, where the object of worship is [*S'únya* or] *vacuum* itself. True, there are numerous images of gods and goddesses to be found in its subsidiary shrines; but THE shrine of the temple is devoted to only empty space. It is enclosed by a superb structure of sandal-

[i.e. the abode of nothing] was built. To the east of the 'abode of nothing,' and beyond the boundary-stone, on the west side, a spot was preserved for the Yavana." This statement, although written in a prophetic style, is clearly indicative of the fact, that the settlement of the place was planned and carried out after Alláuddín Khilji's invasion of the Dekkan *, and probably about the time the Bahámaní† kingdom was founded.

After the account of the allotment of the different quarters of the new settlement, there follows a detailed description of the different social and religious festivals to be celebrated at the place. The year commences with the first of Chaitra [March and April], which is the Varshapratípadá, or the new year's day of the S'aka year. On this day, all the inhabitants assemble in a small temple of Deví, near the large temple dedicated to the same goddess. The head village officers, before repairing to this temple, proceed, in company with some other inhabitants, to pay visits of condolence to persons who have lost their relatives during the last year, and conduct them to the great temple, with the flutes playing, and the drums beating. They are thence led to the small shrine in the vicinity above alluded to, where other inhabitants have already assembled, and where the Josí or village astrologer reads the horoscope of the year, and foretells the events or fortunes of the year, as calculated and determined astrologically. The ceremony

wood work, and profusely decorated with gold and silver plates. A thick curtain screens the interior from all human sight, save that of the high priest, who is permitted to enter it but once in every year. The analogy which might be traced between the ceremonial worship of the ancient Jews, and that of the Hindus would appear to receive a fresh support from the clear resemblance which the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of their tabernacle bears to this ancient sanctuary of the *Hindus*. The worship here is very solemn: no dancing is permitted as in other temples: and it is also curious to note, that *Sidambra* is scarcely ever resorted to by pilgrims, who have for their object worldly gain or gifts. Tired of the world and its vanities, the southern Hindu seeks this place, to spend his days in the service of his god, in acts of charity, or in meditation and prayers that might best fit him for the final absorption with the unseen spirit, which is the object of adoration at *Sidambra*."

I think *Sidambara* is a corrupt form of *Chidambara*, from *chit*, intelligence, and *ambara*, atmosphere: the compound signifying the atmosphere or region of intelligence. *Ambara* also means a garment, but that signification does not appear to me to be adapted to this place.

* In A.C. 1292, A.H. 693; see Elphinstone's India, p. 334.

† A.C. 1347. Grant Duff's History of the Maráthás, vol. I., page 33.

begins with the usual prayer to Gaṇapati [or the god of the people], and ends with the customary benediction to the audience. The leaves of the Nímba (*Melia Azadirachta*) are afterwards distributed, and chewed by the people, who also partake of them generally at their houses after their morning prayers or breakfast, as preventives of disease, and promoters of life and wealth.*

For nine days the image of Deví in the principal temple is decorated with flowers, &c., and at the end of the ninth day, a small silver masque of the goddess is placed in an artificial temple or car called *Ratha*,† which is carried through the streets of the village on men's shoulders, all the householders performing worship as it goes round to their houses. All the details mentioned in the accompanying translation with regard to this festival are still observed. But the zeal of the people has considerably abated.

The ceremonies during the next three months are rather unimportant. The festivals during the 5th month, *i.e.* S'rávana [July and August], are still kept up. People are invited on the 8th day of the first half of the month for prayer, but only a very small portion actually goes to the temple. On the 15th of the same month, the village priest still performs the S'ravani [or the annual ceremony of changing the sacred

* This custom is founded upon the authority of the following verse from *Jyotir-nibandha* (or an Essay on the Stars):—

ओतिर्निबन्धयः—तैलाभ्यंगं स्नानमादौ च कृत्वा पीयूषोत्थं पारिभद्रस्य पत्रं ॥
मक्षुत्सौख्यं मानवोद्याधिनाशं विद्यायुः श्रोत्रोभ्यते वर्षकृत्ते ॥१॥

“At the beginning of the year, after rubbing the body with oil, and bathing, man should eat the leaf of the pleasure-giving, wholesome tree of *Nimba*, which has been produced from nectar, whereby learning, health [or long life], and wealth are obtained.”

† *Ratha* signifies a car. Most of the *Vaishnava* temples throughout India have large wooden cars, in which an image of *Vishnu* is placed, and drawn by large crowds of devotees at certain festivals, the car of *Jagannátha* being the most celebrated. The practice in all likelihood commenced with the *Buddhists*, who are described by the Chinese travellers, *Fahian* and *Hiuen Tshang*, as on various occasions leading the images of *Sáhyasingha* in cars. Perhaps the want of roads and the impracticability of moving any cars, led to the substitution of small wooden temples, which however, in the present case, is called a *Ratha*. Many temples have *palanquins* instead of cars wherein the image is placed and carried about.

thread] * for the entire community, in the village temples where it used to be performed—perhaps two hundred years ago. Population having increased, many of the villagers now have this ceremony done at their own houses. It is curious that the *Dípávalí* or the festival of lamps is not provided for in this narrative ; but that is also duly celebrated, and is one of the best of native festivals. There is nothing worthy of particular mention until we come to the 11th of the first half of the month of *Kártika*. On this day the ceremony of *Madherún* [or the little corpse] was formerly performed. A bier was constructed and a living man was placed thereon and carried round the whole village in commemoration of the first sacrifice which the village-devils are said to have exacted from the sage. Whatever the reason, it is clear to me, that this custom points to a very remote period, when human sacrifices prevailed. Happily there is no such custom now at this village, but it still obtains amongst the lower classes in the town and island of Bombay, and other towns in this Presidency, and is observed chiefly during the *Holí* festival.

After *Kártika*, there is nothing remarkable till the month of *Phálguna*, when the *Holí* festival is celebrated. This Hindu saturnalia has lost much of its prestige. The grosser rights connected with it are now performed only by the more ignorant people, and I am happy to say that it is gradually losing its hold on the popular mind.

It would be tedious to dwell in this abstract on the minutiae of the festivals and ceremonies, for which I must refer to the accompanying

* The alterations which this ceremony has undergone illustrate the vast change that has overcome *Hindu* society. *S'rávani* has, properly speaking, very little to do with the changing of the sacred thread. It is a sacrifice performed to atone for the neglect of the study of the *Vedas*. The ceremony consists of two parts, viz., *Utsarjana* [or abandoning the study of the *Vedas*], and *Upákarma* or *Upákarana* [i.e. the resumption of Vedic studies.] The first should, strictly speaking, be performed in the month of *Mágha* [February and March], and the second in *S'rávana* [July and August]. When people really studied the *Vedas* for their own sake, these ceremonies had a meaning. At present, the relation of *S'rávani* with *Vedic* studies is not generally understood ; and the whole ritual has become an empty farce. The eating of the *Panchagavya* [or the five products of the cow] at the time of the *S'rávani* is also an innovation not sanctioned by the old authorities, but engrafted on the original by ignorant people, who fancy that this ceremony consists in eating that, and in changing the sacred thread.

paper and translation. The presentation of Gandha [or perfumes], Vidás [or packets of betel-leaves, betel-nut, &c.], and either fruit or clothes is regulated according to the rank of the recipient, and the orders on this subject, as well as the places where the inhabitants and their guests are to sit, are laid down in detail. Certain public dinners are provided for. An interchange of oblations offered to the Simádeví [or boundary goddess] is directed on one occasion; and although it is laid down that the Bráhmaṇas should receive oblations offered by other Bráhmaṇas, the distributor and the director of the ceremony is the Sonára or goldsmith of the place, who comes in for a large share of various other village honors. Agricultural communities are more or less conservative, but the above circumstance and several other points in the narrative incline me to the opinion that there was not so much squeamishness about eating and not eating with particular persons, provided their status was equal, and their habits of life the same or similar.

Besides religious festivals and public social gatherings, the narrative gives no account of the inner life or civil administration of the place. In a former part of this paper I have stated the number of inhabitants, their castes, and occupations. The only circumstance that is yet to be noticed is the free intermixture of the Karádá and Chittapávana Bráhmaṇas at Murúda. Such relationships, though condemned by the more aristocratic families, are now contracted without scruple, and they involve no pains and forfeitures, either social or religious. The Karádá families are now only distinguishable by their Gotra.* This might perhaps serve as an example to other communities which rejoice in hundreds of sub-sections of the same section or caste.

* The author of the *Dharmasindhu* states that:—[विश्वामित्रो जामदग्निरर्षे रक्षा-
जोषगौतमः अत्रिर्वशिष्ठः कश्यप इत्येते सप्तर्षयः॥ सप्तानामृषीणामग्रत्याह्वयानां यद-
यत्वं तद्गोत्रमित्याचक्षते॥] the descendants of the following eight *Rishis* are called
Gotras, viz: (1) *Viśvámitra*, (2) *Jamadagni*, (3) *Bharadvāja*, (4) *Gautama*,
(5) *Atri*, (6) *Kaśyapa*, (7) *Vasiṣṭha*, and (8) *Agastī*. *Gotra*, therefore means a
clan. The *Chittapavana Bráhmaṇas* are descended from the following 14 *Gotras*:—

वत्स, भारद्वाज, जाम्ये, कषि, अत्रि, कौशिक, काश्यप, शंखिल्य, वासिष्ठ, कौण्डिन्य,
बाभ्रव्य, नित्युदन, विष्णुवधेन, and जामदग्न्य.

A person who does not belong to one of these 14 *Gotras* is not a *Chittapávana*