

Nomenclative Expressions of Thought

Place Names and Other Names Related to Artisans and Their Work in Karnataka

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KEY WORDS Indigenous Knowledge. Names. Artisans.

ABSTRACT In this paper I am concerned with place names, sub-caste names and personal names related to the crafts and craftsmen of the Visvakarma caste of Karnataka (South India). Having observed that the Visvakarmas or their crafts do not appear as place names, I argue that this absence among place names follows logically from their cultural ideology. The paper examines first the place names of Karnataka and then place names in Visvakarma oral tradition. The discussion then focuses on the principal raw materials used by the craftsmen as they appear in names as well as sub-caste and personal names. Throughout due weight is given to the regional dimension of name-giving. Finally the analysis of names is placed in the context of the Visvakarma cultural ideology. This comparison makes it clear that the choice of names is not arbitrary but a nomenclative expression of thought.

INTRODUCTION

Even a cursory examination of the place names of Karnataka reveals that the names of the Visvakarma artisan caste, sub-castes and their crafts do not figure as place names. Among the place names of Karnataka, there are many names of castes, including artisan castes, names referring to principal raw materials for artisans and those referring to occupations and persons. The absence of names directly referring to or cognate to the Visvakarma crafts, persons and sub-castes draws our attention. Not only are most villages inhabited by Visvakarma artisans, particularly blacksmiths, carpenters and goldsmiths, but there are many villages where they are numerically the dominant caste. So, why do the Visvakarmas or their crafts not appear as place names?¹

In this paper I argue that the reason for the absence of Visvakarma names is neither an oversight on purpose nor an anomaly, but a choice which follows logically from the Visvakarma cultural ideology.

The primary source for this study is the Visvakarmas' oral tradition. The origin myths and settlement stories are particularly useful. In ad-

dition data collected during field work in Karnataka have been used.²

In the first section, I shall discuss some of the earlier studies of place names, with particular reference to the approach to the data. Among them the "List of villages in Mysore State" (published in 1969) provide a near exhaustive list of all village names in the State. Here it can be seen that the names fall under only three categories in which one would expect the Visvakarma names too.

The following two sections analyze the place names in text. The first discusses a place name and its story; the second analyses the settlement story of a Visvakarma dominated village.

In section five the place names are discussed with reference to the principal raw materials used by the craftsmen. In this section, as well as in section six on sub-caste and personal names, the regional dimension of naming is giving due weight.

EARLIER STUDIES OF PLACE NAMES

Only a few (place) name studies were available to me, viz. Hockings(1980); Singh (1986); Reddi(1988); and mentioned in Singh, 1986; Karve (1968). As reported by Singh, Karve's study of place names of Maharashtra resulted in identification of sub-regions, different languages as origin of names and an analysis of the sociological significance of some of the place names, and the social structure of society (organisation of space). I regret not to have seen this study, but it seems important enough to mention it once again. Another sociological aspect was taken up by Hockings (1980) who classifies a specific set of place names from the cultural ecological perspective in a particular eco-zone.

Furthermore, there are various insight providing, linguistic studies of place names such as those by Goswami (1943); Sankalia (1949);

Chatterjee (n.d.); Murthy (1985); and Reddi (1988).

Although all these studies are extremely useful for our understanding of place names, and more specifically, for the social anthropologist, they seem all to be preoccupied with the search for origin (either linguistically, anthropologically, sociologically or historically). The need for an analytical scheme is obvious and Singh (1986) presents a proposal. He rightly criticises isolated approaches and advocates an interdisciplinary approach. However, his scheme is not so holistic as he himself probably wants it to be. For his analysis remains restricted to the level of actual situation and in passing he presents as fixed categories such fluid groupings as "caste" and "tribe". A true holistic approach not only covers the level of actual situation - environment in the widest sense and both historically and contemporary, but also the level of world-view, including ideologies (in the cultural sense) of group. It seems that Singh did not take up his new starting-point (1986: 17-18) when observing change in tribal names (1986: 31). Such changes indicate that names are expressions of world-view as well. I support his view that "place names [...] reflect the settlers' perception of their environment and their relationship with it. The gamut of belief, rituals and other practices is linked with personal names, the changing patterns of which also reveals the process of social change" (1986: 46). However, this represents only half the picture. The settlers' perception articulated in many fields among which names, is brought about by a process of abstraction of the settlers' ideals and their interpretation of the environment.

From the "List of Villages in Mysore State (1969) we learn that the names of all villages fall into three broad categories: (i) being a reference to the natural environment; (ii) being related to human beings; and (iii) being cultural. In the first category come such names as those of (i) ANIMALS (e.g. Gokare, Huligundi, Hulikunte, Kolipure, Koliwad, Kothipura Yemmedoddi); (ii) FLOWERS (e.g. Hesaragh-atta, Kamlapur, Sampigehalli); (iii) FOREST (e.g. Bettadasanapura, Bettahalli, Girinathahalli); (iv) MINERALS (e.g. Kabbinaadukoppa, Kabbinahalli; Kabbinaakere; Kanchanahalli; Kanchipur; Chinnakote, Chinnapur, Honnali, Honnekoppa); (v) SOIL (e.g. Kemmanagundi);

(vi) STONES (e.g. Kallapur, Sujikallu, Vajranahalli); (vii) TREES (e.g. Aralalasaandra, Attibele, Attahalli, Bannikuppa, Bannimukkodi, Honnemahalli, Mattikere, Yelachihalli); (ix) WATER (e.g. Jalapur, Jaladihalli).

In the second category we find such names as those of (i) CASTE (e.g. Agasarahalli, Dombarahalli, Gejjarahalli, Gollarahalli, Gowdapur, Ittegegud, Kammanahalli, Kumbara halli, Kuurubahalli, Morasuhalli, Nagartha nahalli, Sannyasihalli, Shettihalli, Upparahalli, Voddarahalli); (ii) DEITIES (e.g. Basavanapur, Gowripur, Hanumanapalya, Harihar, Harisandra, Ramanaathapur, Rampur, Shivapur); (iii) FAMOUS PERSONS (e.g. Boppegowdanapura, Chowdappahalli, Kunanakoppal, Tammanaya-kanahalli, Timmanayakanahalli); (iv) KINSHIP TERMS (e.g. Akkitammarahalli, Ammanapura, Annahalli, Tammadahalli); (v) VICTORY (e.g. Vijayapura, Virapur).

In the third category we see such abstract names as (i) BIG (e.g. Doddaganahalli, Doddanahalli); (ii) COLOUR (e.g. Bilihalli, Hasarubani, Kempapuri, Nilasandra); (iii) MARKET DAYS (e.g. Managalavarpur, Somvarpur); (iv) NEW (e.g. Hosahalli, Hosur); (v) OCCUPATION (e.g. Kamnagarahalli; Kanchugarahalli); (vi) OLD (e.g. Halenahalli, Hire Amanakere, Hiretotlukere); (vii) PRODUCT (e.g. Bagalkot, Bagaluru, Kamblipure); (viii) SMALL (e.g. Chikkakoliga, Chikkanahalli).

Apparently, consciously or unconsciously, a choice has been made from the entire arsenal of names, as all the existing village names fall into the aforementioned three categories only. Therefore, I would like to argue in favour of the search for meaning rather than origin.³

The choice of categorical combinations, as well as the choice of names and suffixes for "village" will be of heuristic interest. A first look at the suffixes provides us with the following (Kannada) equivalents: (1) bed (vad, wad); (2) bidi (beedi); (3) gaddi; (4) gat; (5) gere (kere); (6) ghatta; (7) gi; (8) gud; (9) guti; (10) gund (gundi; hund; hundi); (11) guppa; (12) halli (hal; palli, palya); (13) hantha; (14) hatti (hatta); (15) holi; (16) honda; (17) koppal (kop; koppa); (18) kote; (19) kuti; (20) kunda (21) kunte; (22) kuppe; (23) mangala; (24) matti; (25) nagar; (26) pady; (27) patna; (28) pete; (29) pura; (30) sagar;

(31) samudra; (32) sandra; (33) ur(oor); (34) vara (war; var).

These suffixes have various meanings both objective and relative. Some refer to a settlement in the wilds, to a bazaar or to a fortified settlement, the settlement of a temple, or to a single caste or a multi-caste settlement. It goes beyond the scope of this paper analyzes all the possible meanings, but the immediate meaning of the word gains significance only as seen in relation to its combination with the category of the name and those of places within the same "kingdom" or "chieftainship".

For getting more acquainted with place names in Karnataka, two other sources are also available to me: various maps such as those of Mackenzie (1800), the Karnataka District and Taluk maps and historical maps. Secondly, my own observations made during more than three lakhs kilometres of travelling for the past ten years in rural Karnataka as part of field work.

I have particularly been looking for place names mentioning crafts and principal raw materials used by the craftsmen in general and the Visvakarmas in particular.

In central and southern Karnataka, i.e. in the regions between the Tungabhadra River and the Tamil border (but excluding South Kanara and Coorg Districts), I found the following names of (Visvakarma) crafts as place names: a) Kanchugarahalli; b) Kammaraghatta; c) Kammarakote; d) Kammaravasipalli; e) Kammarahalli.

In the same regions, there are quite a few villages which carry the initial 'K' before the actual place name: 1) K.Hosahatti; 2) K. Gollarahalli (both in the Bellary District), and 3) K. Hosahatti (Shimoga District). According to the inhabitants, the "K" stands for kulume, which means "furnace", particularly the blacksmith's furnace. In all those places the majority caste is Visvakarma, or more precisely, one of their sub-castes of blacksmiths called Muddekammara. It is interesting to note that the use of the initial is not a matter of economy of writing, but a social matter. The Muddekammara smiths, although a majority, enjoy a low status and were earlier engaged in iron-mining and smelting, as well as smithy. Today, they are blacksmiths as there are other Visvakarma blacksmiths, notably of the Doddmane sub-caste which status they now claim.⁴

The official "List of Villages..." (1969), however, gives us more such names: (a) K. Gollarahalli (Chikmagalur Dt); (b) K. Kamanaghatta (Hassan Dt); (c) K. Chandumanahalli (Kolar Dt); (d) K. Gowdakere (Mandya Dt); (e) K. Mookhalli (Mysore Dt); (f) K. Hemmanahalli (Mysore Dt); (g) K. Ganadakatte (Shimoga Dt); (h) K. Basavanahalli (Shimoga Dt) (i) K. Honnekoppa (Shimoga Dt); (j) Hampapura (Tumkur Dt) and (k) K. Honnamachanahalli (Tumkur Dt). I regret that I have not been able to check whether in all these (eleven) place names, the "K" also stands for kulume. But all these places are located in the old surface iron-mining belt (where mining activities stopped around 1900 AD).

PLACE NAMES AND CRAFTSMEN IN TEXT

There are a few villages in Karnataka which names are a reference to the Visvakarma artisans. These places are (1) Ojenahalli (Bangalore Dt); (ii) Ojakunte (Tumkur Dt); and (iii) Vojanahalli (Tumkur Dt.) The inhabitants of these villages remember their place name as a reference to the Visvakarma artisans who were once in majority there. The settlement story of Ojarapalya in Huliurdurga Taluk (Tumkur Dt) is linked with the Kali Temple of the nearby Dipambudi Tank and a jewel in the oral tradition of the Visvakarmas. The settlement story of Ojarapalya is actually the sthalapurana of the Kali Temple at the Dipambudi Tank. Various versions of this myth are well-known among all Visvakarmas of this region and are practically identical. The following version I recorded in a nearby village:

"One day a python got entangled in the sluice that regulates the water level of the Dipambudi tank so that the water flow-out stopped. Soon the tank was full with water. Then the king 'tom-tommed': 'The man who frees the water passage from the snake will get everything he wants'. After hearing this announcement the entire village - all people of all castes - gathered. Every man of each caste came forward, looked into the water and shook his head negatively: will it do to say no? The tank was already full and the water level kept rising. It could overflow at any moment and flood village. There are two villages by the side of the tank.

A man from our Visvakarma caste came forward: 'I will release the water passage'. Said the king: 'You will release the passage but you will not come back alive. What do you want from us?' The Visvakarma replied: 'I may die, yet I will remove the blockage. If I succeed will you grant me land as far as my blood flows, measured from here'. The king agreed as he had no option.

The man dived into the water. As soon as he released the python from the device he got entangled in it himself. Immediately one after the other his head and limbs came out at other end, followed by a gushing flow of water.

Thus, thousands of lives in this land were saved. The king kept his word and measured the land up to the place where the saviour's blood flowed. All that land was given to his descendants who settled there. It is called Ojarapalya and the men of his family eat the rice grown there.

In those days the temple was situated in the jungle and tigers used to come near it. Then Kali would come out of her shrine. Sitting on the tiger she would go round in procession. Later Satyanarayanavamiji of Bangalore, who is also a Visvakarma, came there and improved the temple.

One day, the priest who was engaged in performing the daily worship (puja), did not find this place convenient enough to stay. In the evening he considered leaving the place the following day. That night a cobra approached the sleeping priest, bit him and died beside him. The priest was well prepared for his departure from this place thinking the work was enough for him. He was right. The Goddess did not like his going away. She felt sorry for him and took him to her foot".

In the first half of the myth it is the Visvakarma himself who wants to sacrifice. It is stressed that the king could not do anything. Everybody is called to offer help, but it is only the Visvakarma who has not only the courage but also the will to solve the problem. He knows that he will succeed in opening the sluice, but at the cost of his own life. It is a destructive self-sacrifice which results in landownership. The Visvakarma is thus the locus tenens of the king for he does the work of the king, viz. prevents the village from being flooded, thus preventing disaster.

The Visvakarma in the second half of the myth is entirely different. Here the Visvakarma is

clearly presented as a brahmin who wants to withdraw from his priestly task, but forcibly prevented from doing so by Kali who sends the cobra.

In the beginning of the myth, the Visvakarma is identified with the king, for he does the work of the king, viz. the violent removal of obstruction. He occupies the royal position as the saviour of the land. In the second half, by contrast, he is identified with the brahmin, beloved of the deity, but who wants to escape the priestly function. Thus, first through sacrificing himself, the Visvakarma solves a problem, and second, the Visvakarma is sacrificed, e.g. stays on in supernatural form (against his will).

In my view, the myth is clearly a Sivachar story.⁵ Firstly, the village of Ojarapalya is an exclusive Sivachar settlement (or rather was till very recently) and the descendants of the hero of the story are known by all. Secondly, the Sivachars do not like temples. They consider temple ownership, priesthood and even visits to temples polluting activities. Thirdly, the vegetarian Sivachars are pure enough to fulfil an impure duty. As such, they do not have brahminical pretensions but solve the problem. On the other hand, they always strongly emphasize that they are brahmins, who should not even visit temples. The priest in the myth creates a problem rather than that he solves one. The problem is solved through a supernatural intervention.

The myth thus presents the Sivachar formulation of the central Visvakarma ideology.⁶ They want both to solve problems of conflict and violence, and to escape from them. The emancipation of the Visvakarma (Sivachar) is formulated in terms of an opposition between king and brahmin. On the one hand, there is the starting-point where the Visvakarma is characterized as the ideal king, who solves the problem by self-sacrifice. In passing he settles the land, brings water, deforests it and cultivates it. On the other hand, there is the end of the myth. Now the Visvakarma wants to escape from involvement in the world, but is forcibly kept there.

PLACE NAMES AND PERSONAL NAMES IN TEXT

The Visvakarmas' rich oral tradition provides numerous narratives, myths, temple myths,

settlement stories, etc., in which real or fictitious place names appear. To illustrate my main argument, I have selected the settlement story of the Visvakarma sculptors of the Sivachar sub-caste in Shivarapatna (Kolar Dt). In this story we do not only find place names, but also personal names which meaning is of interest here. Let us consider the story of the idol makers themselves:

"The early settlers, by name Basavacharya and Kolavacharya, were from Hospet (Bangalore District). Their occupation was blacksmithy and oil-seed crushing. Kolavacharya was a very pious vedantai and a great tapasvi. His son, as a result of his penance, became a great sculptor (silpi). His name was Gnanacharya. He left Hospet and began to work as a blacksmith in Yelachihalli. He was making pickaxes and tried once of his young wife, she ridiculed him. At once the father and the son collected their beds and went away towards the east. It was the father's dream, that his son should become a great sculptor.

They went to Channapuri (Kanchipuram) where Dravidian kings were building great temples such as the Vishnukanchi and Sivakanchi. The great sculptors of Karvetinagar by name Virabhadra Sthapathi and Visvanatha Sthapathi and about thirty to forty relatives were working on those great temples. During their journey, Basavalingachar and his son only took food if they found it and sometimes they simply fasted. They never took to bad habits. When they met the sculptors of Kanchi they performed pradaksina namaskara.

The guru was pleased with the devotion and sincerity of Gnanachar. But his two sons Ganesa Sthapathi and Manjunatha Sthapathi were jealous of their father's love for Gnanacharya. They conspired to kill him, but his guru came to know it. Therefore he asked: "What is your household god (manedevuru)? 'And then he gave him a stone (saligrama), as well as a three inch idol of Bairavesvara and told him to worship these. He also taught him how to classify and select stone and how to analyze the omkara sound. The idol is still in one of the houses here. He told him to go in search of a place where he could get good food, water stones suitable for carving and good patronage. The following morning, Gnanachar and his father bade farewell to their guru and left

Karveti (Kanchi). Their search ended in Shivarapatna where a Visvabrahmin was the village magistrate. He gave him shelter and, after verifying his antecedents he arranged his marriage (Gnanachar's) with a girl from a Saiva family.

In those days, a Muslim king (Nawab) was ruling this place and our ancestor went to him and asked for his patronage. The Nawab said: 'If you are a good craftsman, show it to me'. Then our ancestor replied: 'I am not so good but I will try'. Then the Nawab gave him twenty minutes to prove his skill and added: 'If I am satisfied with you work, I will support you'. Then on the wall our ancestor drew a picture of the Nawab in sitting posture. The Nawab was pleased and said: 'You are a real craftsman. You have a divine element in you'. Then he gave patronage to him which included land grants of ten acres of dry land, five acres of wet land and a very large house.

Later, our ancestor got an assignment for the carving of an idol of Parvati for the temple at Murugumane near Chintamani. The poligar promised a payment of five hundred varaha and all the items necessary for the worship and the installation ceremony on the condition that our acharya completed the assignment within two years.

Our acharya did a great work, but he could not complete the carving even within two and a half years. The poligar began to rebuke him: 'In olden days the people kept their word. They had that zeal. But now you are' The acharya could not say anything. He pleaded with the king that he would complete the carving within six months. But the poligar was not satisfied. He scolded him with harsh words that hurt his feelings and when he returned home, he found his wife possessed. She used the same words with which the poligar had scolded him. She cried and wept. She could not bear the fire inside herself. Then the poligar ran back to our acharya and asked: 'why did you do so?' The acharya replied: 'I did not do anything. Everything is with god'. Then all was set right and the poligar requested our acharya to finish the carving as soon as possible. He fulfilled the request".

The above story was told to me by two leading sculptors of Shivarapatana in answer to my question about their settlement in the place. It provides their explanation for it. The settlement

theme, however, is but one theme of the myth as a whole, which still has to be explained in terms of different dimensions.

The Visvakarmas of the story travel extensively. They are actually seen as migrants: from Hospet they move to Yelachihalli, then to Kanchi and finally to Shivarapatna. This in itself shows that their link with the soil is less strong than that of the peasants. In the beginning of the story, the early Visvakarma settlers were blacksmiths and oil seed crushers. At first this seems to be an odd combination, but oil seed crushing, I feel, is a reference to the peasantry, for oil-makers in this area belong to the Right Hand castes among which we find the landlords.⁷ Thus the Visvakarmas are here presented as having a low, if not violent (crushing of seeds), link with the soil. By the end of the myth, the Visvakarmas are no longer blacksmiths, but sculptors and are no longer engaged in oil seeds crushing, but have become landlords. In other words, in the beginning, as well as at the end of the story, the Visvakarmas have a link with the soil. However, at the end, this link is of a different quality (on a higher level).

The story begins with two brothers, who are blacksmiths in Hosakote - an important place since the fifteenth century - in Kolar District. For a long period in the history of the region, Hospet was part of the dominions of the rulers of Kolar. Against this background, the names of the two blacksmiths gain significance. The name of the early settler, Basavachar, refers to Basava, the founder of the Virasaiva sect, while the name, Kolarachar, is a reference to the name of the territory. The latter is a vedanti and tapasvi, which means 'a person who is gaining knowledge (of the Veda) through meditation'. The myth shows that his son Gnanachar is more successful, for the name is gnana which means 'knowing'. While the father is a blacksmith, the son is a sculptor. Both father, Gnanachar, and son move to Kanchi to work for a guru. The latter is presented as a sculptor of great fame. He has a reputation which neither Gnanachar nor his son have. In the story, the father is associated with such unassuming attributes which express world renouncing, whereas the son is depicted as an expert. However, as a sculptor, he operates in an environment associated with renouncing.

The transformation of the blacksmith into a sculptor takes place at Yelachihalli. The name of the village seems to be a reference to a place in the forest, for Yelachi (*Zizyphus jujulo*) is a typical forest tree. It is hard and exudes gum. It is here that, through penance (a form of renouncing), the son becomes a sculptor. The father works to train his son as a sculptor.

The myth thus shows two parallel developments: from blacksmith to sculptor and from link with the soil, on a low level, to one on a higher level. Moreover, among the early names, the references are more universal.

It seems useful to have a closer look at the female figures in the story. The sculptor Gnanachar marries three times. His first marriage is one of fertility, but his first wife dies when she delivers a son. Although both the second and third wives leave Gnanachar without issue, they give him something else. The second wife ridicules her step-son. Both father and son take this as a sign that they should go in search for the power (*sakti*) to complete the image of Parvati, which he is making on order of the ruler. It cannot be coincidence that the ruler ordered an image of the Goddess. The king needs her temporal aspect and time is important. As soon as the image is ready, the king achieves a relationship with her. But the sculptor is slow. He has first to internalize the image. Then the Goddess uses the king, as well as the sculptor's wife, to announce her coming (the king and Gnanachar's wife utter the same words). This gives the Visvakarma the power (*sakti*) to complete the image. The myth thus shows the relationship between the Sivachars (Visvakarmas) and the Goddess.

The myth suggests that the coming of the Goddess is not unannounced. The journey of the Visvakarma can also be seen as a journey from a low manifestation to a high manifestation of the Goddess. It may be recalled here that the ideal Visvakarma is the husband of the Goddess (see: Brouwer, 1995). The three wives of the sculptor can be seen as three announcements, for without them Gnanachar could not, in the end, complete the image of Parvati. But even earlier, a reference to the Goddess could be detected. The Yelachi tree, being a hard wood exuding gum, is, as such, classified as female - probably a natural manifestation of the Goddess.

PLACE NAMES AND RAW MATERIALS

Principal raw materials of crafts in which the Visvakarmas are engaged also feature in names in southern Karnataka: (i) Vajrahalli (gem); (ii) Kanchanahalli (copper); (iii) Kallahalli (stone); (iv) Sujikallu (loadstone); (v) Honnemoroli (gold); (vi) Kabbinakere (iron); (vii) Kabbinahalli (iron) (viii) Bangarahalli (gold) (ix) Chinnakote (gold) (x) Chinnapalli (gold); (xi) Chinnapur (gold); (xii) Honnali (gold). In these places the reference is to the principal raw materials found in the vicinity of erstwhile mines. They need not necessarily be inhabited by Visvakarmas - at least not today. The name Kalluhalli etc., does not necessarily refer to Visvakarmas as the stones are also used by Voddars (Wadder) or stone cutters (not to be confused with sculptors), but lodestone is the raw material par excellence for the low-blast ovens (kulume) which the early Visvakarma blacksmiths used. It may be mentioned here that this stone plays a major role in the main origin myth of the Visvakarmas. Although Kanchugaras are Visvakarmas in this region, in Kanchugarahalli (Magadi Taluk, Bangalore Dt), the present blacksmiths of the place remember their ancestors to be engaged in copper mining and smithy. They showed me the sites of their ancestor's activities (where slags can still be found).

In northern Karnataka, i.e. to the north of the Tunga-bhadra River up to the Marathi border (but excluding North Kanara and Bidar Districts), the situation is different. In this region I did not find occupational place names except two villages in Gulbarga District and one in Dharwad District. All these three villages are called Kanchugarahalli, but the Kanchugaras of this region are not recognized and do not consider themselves as Visvakarmas. As far as I know, place names which refer to principal raw materials used by the Visvakarmas are absent in this region.

It seems to me that we have to consider the following variables in the analysis of the aforementioned place names: the occurrence of mining (iron, copper, gold); the type of ruler (Muslim, Hindu); and the naming system of the Visvakarmas themselves.

In northern Karnataka, in contrast to southern Karnataka, there has not been much mining ac-

tivity (with perhaps the exception of Raichur District). The region was for most of its part and for most of the time ruled by Muslim rulers while the dominant "caste" were (are) the Lingayats (Virasaiva sect). Here the Visvakarma craftsmen follow mostly the surname system, i.e. the male members inherited their father's name which indicates their occupation such as Kammara (blacksmith), Badiga (carpenter), Akkasaliga (goldsmith).

In contrast to the northern region, there was abundant mining activity in central and southern Karnataka. This region was ruled by Hindu rulers while the most influential caste was the brahmin caste. Here the Visvakarmas suffix their personal name with the title achari (acharya) and did so with oja (oji) during the Hoysala and Vijayanagara periods. I shall return to the problem of personal names below.

In sum, in the northern region, we find an occupational surname system and no occupational place names, while in the southern regions we find occupational place names and title suffixes to personal names.

SUB-CASTE AND PERSONAL NAMES

In the Southern Region

The Visvakarma caste (jati) of this region consists of two categories named Kulachar and Sivachar. 'Sivachar' and 'Kulachar' are also the names of two sub-castes. There are also the Matachar and Uttaradi sub-castes.

Local hierarchical thinking is not unanimous about the ranking of the sub-castes. According to the Kulachars, the Uttaradis are the purest, followed by themselves. They do not acknowledge that the Matachars and the Sivachars are different Visvakarmas. They frequently called the latter Lingayatachar and added that "they are not Visvakarmas at all". By contrast, the Sivachars consider themselves purest, followed by the Uttaradis and lastly, in their opinion, the Kulachar, which sub-caste includes the Matachar. The Uttaradis have no doubt as to the ranking. They rank highest because they are the purest. They do see difference in purity between themselves and the Sivachars, while they consider the Kulachars (including the Matachars) below them. According to the Matachars, they themselves

rank equal to the Kulachar below the Uttaradi, while they do not acknowledge the Sivachar.

Let us now consider the names of these sub-castes. The name Sivachar is composed of two words: Siva and achar. It literally means "teachers who follow Lord Siva". The members of this sub-caste worship Siva as the supreme deity. In the rooms used for worship (devarumane) in their houses, one can rarely find a representation of Vishnu, and if so, he is represented by a stone (salagrama) or by a conch-shell (sankha). The Goddess Kali is said to be represented by the Sri-Chakra. Among the Sivachars, there are blacksmith-cum-carpenters, founders-cum-sculptors, and goldsmiths. The Sivachars can easily be recognized as the male members not only wear the sacred thread (janivara), like all Visvakarmas, but also a thread carrying a silver box in which is the phallic image of Siva (linga). They state that "the real Visvakarmas must carry both the sacred thread which is Gayatri and the linga which is Siva. Lacking one of the two means incompleteness".

The name Kulachar means "a practice peculiar to the kula" (hereditary, ancestral, ancient and noble descent). It stands for the pure indigenous stock. One of the Visvakarma scholars added that: "They held an important part in the performance of the Vedic sacrifices. They had to build altars according to geometrical proportions following Sulba Sutras enunciated by them. They prepared the utensils, ladles etc. used at the sacrifices. They were also the adepts in the performances of sacrifices. Tvashtri, their ancestor, was the one who created fire for the first time. Every performer of the sacrifice has to invoke the blessing of Tvashtri, in the kindling of the sacrificial fire". The Kulachars may be blacksmiths, carpenters or goldsmiths. They worship Kali and Siva as well as Vishnu.

The name Matachar, from mata and achar, literally means "the peculiar customs of a sect". Mata is a "thought", an "idea", an "opinion", a "creed", and/or "sect". The majority of Matachars are founders and few are blacksmiths. They worship Kali and Siva, as well as Vishnu.

The name Uttaradi means "coming from the north", as well as "latecomer".⁸ The north is not only an auspicious direction, but also thought of as a brahminical direction from which "culture

especially the Vedas and other learned writings of the ancients originated" (Beck, 1976:216). All members of this sub-caste are goldsmiths. They all claim to have migrated from Anegundi near Hampi, at the time of the collapse of the Vijayanagara Empire. They have a complicated system of exogamous lineages (vamsas) of which only one carries the name Hampi, places en route to Holenarsipur, notably Ranibennur and Davanagere where the Tungabhadra River was fordable, and three names of places in the area around the town of Holenarsipur. They worship Kali, Siva and Vishnu.

In the origin myth of the Visvakarmas, the so-called Story of the Magnetic Fort, the Sivachars are depicted as pure and the original Visvakarmas of the hill.⁹ Like the originals, the Sivachars are vegetarian and nothing is said about their manner of procreation. This last point could imply that it is their purity which does not allow them to talk about it. In addition, the Visvakarmas were the rulers of the hill and they live outside the political patronage of king Kalinga. Like good kings themselves, they contemplate revenge and employ violence to attain their goal; which is to become rulers once again - the tunnel they dug as a means of escape, led to the palace. Bearing in mind the purport of the settlement story of the Sivachar sculptors (see section four), the final 'kingly' position of the Sivachars, is a matter of consistency.

In contrast of the Sivachars, who were paid with land, the Kulachars were paid with food from the houses where they performed. This type of remuneration for services reminds us of the aya system, in which the Kulachar blacksmiths and carpenters participate.

With this information, the story also gives us the Sivachar view of the hierarchical position, which exists between the emerged sub-castes. The Sivachars are placed on a "kingly" level, while the Kulachars are put on a "servant" level. The latter mixed with local, non-vegetarian women, and their off-spring claimed to be Visvakarmas. Thus the story describes the origin of the Kulachars. But the myth relates that the Visvakarmas "never took these women with them when they moved from place to place". Furthermore, it may be recalled here, that the word kula means 'birth', and Kulachar is a custom peculiar

to the stock, however rude and rough it may be", according to a Visvakarma scholar. The other name of the Kulachars - pholimakkalu or 'children of a widow' thus becomes clear.

The emergence of the Kulachars, was not the first thing that destroyed the unity of the Visvakarmas. Earlier in the Fort Story, the Visvakarma who united sexually with the daughter of the king had off-spring. Empirically, the Siva-chars negate the existence of the Matachar Visvakarmas and here, in their version of the Visvakarma origin myth, they also appear to deny their existence. Or, rather, empirically they are clubbed together with the Kulachars. They appear to be presented in the story as the descendants of the Visvakarma and the king's daughter.

As we have seen mata means "mediated thought, idea, opinion". It was the king's daughter, wife of a Visvakarma and "mother" of those who had thought out the plan for discovering the hill's secret.

Moreover, empirically, there are four Visvakarma sub-castes, namely, Sivachar, Kulachar, Matachar and Uttaradi. The name Uttaradi means "latecomers" or "coming from the north". The Uttaradis claim to have migrated from the north and do not know the Fort Story. Anyhow, their name itself suggests they came too late to be included in the Sivachar's story. The other names for the Kulachar and Matachar sub-castes, namely pholimakkalu ("children of a widow") and kalimakkalu ("kali's children") now gain perspective.

The Sivachars are Saivas. For the ideal Visvakarma is also a manifestation of Siva. The Sivachar rulers (kings) lived on the hill. After examining the etymology, the name of the hill can be seen as a manifestation of the Goddess. The original situation, then, may be seen as a form of union, though a cold and not incited one, for there was no issue from the union between Siva (Visvakarma) and Durga. As soon as such a union becomes hot, it leads to disaster. When Siva (Visvakarma) marries the king's daughter (Kali) there are issues; kalimakkalu or the Matachars. The third union which resembles the first one, however, leads to death. When the king takes the place of the Visvakarma (Siva) and captures the hill (durga) accompanied by fire (heat), it ultimately leads to his own death.

The story reminds us of the myth of Bhrgu's curse where Siva and Durga unite, for which act Siva is cursed and takes (or is given) the form of a lingam (O'Flaherty, 1976:306). The Sivachars who claim to be the original Visvakarmas, wear the lingam with which they identify themselves. Beside the linga, they wear the sacred thread, which they say, is Gayathri, their sakti. The Sivachar can thus be seen as "the children of the linga", who exist without having been procreated in the sub-caste hierarchy. Whether the others are Kali's children or the children of a widow does not now matter: their origin is comparatively impure.

In the Central Region

The Visvakarma names of sub-castes described above are found in the southern region of Karnataka. Between the Vedavati River and the Tungabhadra River lies the territory which I have called the central region. Thus, both central and south-ern regions lie to the south of the Tungabhadra River and were for a long time in history under Vijayanagara supremacy. In many ways, the relationships between the various Visvakarma sub-castes of the central region resemble those of the southern region - for example, in their relationships with the Goddess Kali, and their priesthood of the village deities. The members of a vegetarian and comprehensive sub-caste, which has the monopoly of sculpture combined with foundry, enjoy these priestly rights in both regions. However, in some respects, the situation in this region resembles that in northern region. The sub-castes of the central region, which show the same variation as those of the southern region, will be introduced here in more detail.

In the central region, the Doddamane group has the custom of widow remarriage (udike) whereas the Chikkamane group is strongly opposed to such a practice. Dodda means 'big' and Chikka means 'small', while mane means 'house'. In order to throw more light on these names, I will briefly paraphrase one version of the origin myth of the sub-castes of this region:

"There were two brothers. They had a dispute, so it was decided (by Siva) that the elder, who married 'the wrong girl'; should live in the big house on the right side of the road. The younger,

who married properly, should live on the left side of the road."

In this myth, it is demonstrated that the two groups need each other or rather, belong together. This is expressed in the brotherhood. The elder and the younger brother should not, however, have contact with each other because of a difference in purity.

According to the Visvakarmas of this region, the Chikkamane Visvakarmas are the purest and the Doddamanes are less pure. The Chikkamanes may be blacksmith-cum-carpenters, braziers, founder-cum-sculptors, or goldsmiths. There are, however, two other sub-castes in this region, which also belong to the Visvakarma caste. The members of the Chikkamane and Doddamane sub-castes at first deny the existence of the other two sub-castes, but ultimately acknowledge their existence.

Firstly, there is the Muddekammara sub-caste: Mudde has three meanings: "lump of iron", "ragi (Eleusine corocana) ball", or "ball" and kammara means "blacksmith". The name "ball-blacksmith" is a reference to the fact that they specialize in smelting iron and the iron extracted from the ore had the shape of a ball. Nowadays, they are no longer engaged in iron-smelting, but do ordinary blacksmith work and some of them are carpenters. However, those among them who have a priestly function, are engaged in goldsmithy.

Secondly, there is the Bayala Akkasaliga sub-caste whose members are all goldsmiths. Bayala means "field" and akkasaliga "goldsmith". The name of the sub-caste is a reference to their original position as migrating goldsmiths, who travelled from village to village in search of gold- and silversmithy work. For the past fifteen years, they have been gradually settling in the larger market places.

The Chikkamane and Doddamane sub-castes each claim to be the purest in this region. The Chikkamanes' claim, vis-a-vis the Doddamanes is based on their rejection of widow remarriage. As for the Doddamanes' claim, the participants refer to the brotherhood of the sub-castes. Each sub-caste has its own view about their caste's internal hierarchy.

Both the Muddekammara and Bayala Akkasaliga sub-castes, consider the Chikkamane, as well as the Doddamane sub-castes as purer than them-

selves. The Muddekammaras consider themselves purer than the Bayala Akkasaligas, because they are settled people, while the Bayala Akkasaligas consider themselves purer, because they are goldsmiths and not blacksmiths.

In the Northern Region

Travelling north, and crossing the Tunga bhadra River, we reach northern Karnataka, the territories of the erstwhile Sultanates of Bijapur and Gulburga. The two categories of Visvakarmas found here are called Smarta and Vaishnava. On the empirical level the Smarta Visvakarmas are divided into three endogamous sub-castes, while the Vaishnava Visvakarmas are basically composed of two groups.

Local hierarchical thinking ranks the Smarta sub-castes as follows: the purest is the Madipattar, less pure the Konnurpanta and the least pure is the Niligundapanta sub-caste. Madi means "pure", and pattar is "goldsmith". The meaning of the name of this sub-caste is thus "pure goldsmith". Indeed, goldsmithy is the only craft in which the members of this sub-caste are engaged. Konnur is the name of a small town near the southern bank of the Malaprabha River, on the Hubli-Bijapur State Highway in Nargund Taluk, Gadag District. Panta, according to the informants, means "descent line". Thus, Konnurpanta means "those whose descent line originates in Konnur". The craftsmen of this sub-caste may be blacksmith-cum-carpenters, braziers, sculptors, or goldsmiths. Nili means "dark-blue" or "iron", gunda connotes "hill". The members of this sub-caste are blacksmiths and carpenters. However, the Niligundapanta carpenters also have the rights in stone quarries. These quarries may be privately or government owned, but the contracting rights invariably belong to these carpenters. The sculptors of the region obtain their stones from them. For the Smarta Visvakarmas, Kali and Siva are the main deities, but their Saiva faith is not exclusive as it is for the Virasaivas (Lingayats).

DISCUSSION

Reconsidering the names of the sub-castes, they reflect the Visvakarma ideal on two different levels on the one hand, and the categorical duality on the other.

In each region, the caste is consciously seen as composed of two categories which are named as Kulachar/Sivachar (in the south), Doddamane/Chikkamane (in the centre), and Vishnava/Smarta (in the north). In each case, different attributes are used to mark the two categories which fundamentally express different sets of interactions. Attributes can be changed according to circumstances, but it is more difficult to escape from (socio-economic) patterns of interdependence. Although the participants do not doubt the duality of caste, there is concurrently the expression of unity.

The northern distinction - in doctrinal terms - is said to have originated about 400 years ago when some Smartas converted to Vaishnavas. In the other two regions, the different sets of generative terms also expressing an underlying unity, viz. the "elder and younger brother". The caste is thus seen as a complementary opposition of two categories (Smarta, Chikkamane younger brother, Sivachar, Uttaradi) and one less pure (Vaishnava, Doddamane, elder brother, Kulachar, Matachar).

On the level of sub-caste (groups and not categories) a similar divide is seen in the names. In each region, the names of two sub-castes refer directly to the concept of land-cum-people. In the northern region through the use of place names (Konnur, Niligunda); in the central region through the use of agriculturally linked names (bayala "field", mudde "ball" (ragi ball)); and in the southern region through the use of social names (kula "births" and mata "custom"). The names of the other sub-castes do not show a connection with land and people.

As for personal names, the Visvakarma craftsmen suffix their names with "appa" in the northern region. Here the dominant caste is the Lingayat, while the number of brahmins is relatively low. Furthermore it may be recalled here, that this region has been ruled by Muslims on various levels of administration for many centuries. In this region, I have also found the following surnames or family names, which are inherited in the male line: Arkacharya, Arkasali, Badiger, Daivanga, Dixita, Kambhara, Kammara, Kanchugara, Panchal, Panchanana, Pandita, Pottadar, Pattar, Purchita, Rao, Sastri, Sharma, Shilpi, Tankasala, Vedapatka and Visvakarma.

These are either occupational names or those referring to prescribed upanama as given in handbills which circulate among members of the caste, particularly during the time of the great yatra of their holiest men. (see: Brouwer, 1978). However, a few names notably Pandits, Purchita, Rao, Sastri and Sharma are clearly brahminical references.

In contrast to the northern region, the central and southern regions have been ruled, for most of the time, by Hindu kings or overlords and their brahmin advisers or chief ministers (Hoysala, Vijayanagara, Wodiyar). Much in contrast to their ideology, the Visvakarmas, for reasons of patronage, have always directed themselves to the dominant or influential caste of the region. Here the Visvakarmas suffix their names with achari or acharya. Sometimes older suffixes such as oje or vaja can still be found. Both are said to be colloquial corruptions of the word upadhyaya which, in this context carries the same meaning and bears the same reference as acharya.

CONCLUSIONS

We may now return to our initial question of what determines the choice of names used by the Visvakarmas. The essence of their ideology may be called autonomy (one is all in one) and literary independent: the ideal Visvakarma is one who does all the (five) crafts alone, without help or violence); detachment (he has no link with (the lords of) the soil: he does not socially depend on patrons, whether landlords or others); and disconnection (the five crafts are separated categorical occupations).

As for place names, those Visvakarma crafts which are traditionally more market-oriented and viewed as exclusive engagements such as foundry, sculpture and goldsmithy, we do not find mentioned in place names. Among the more 'dependent' crafts such as blacksmithy, carpentry and brazieri, we make similar observations, but one that needs to be qualified. There are indeed place names referring to blacksmithy and brazieri but the former reference is somewhat hidden. As for the latter, the references only occur in situations where others than Visvakarmas are engaged in the crafts.

Place names and personal names in narratives similarly reflect the impact of the Visvakarma

ideology. And so do the suffixes to personal names. By taking the name of the craft and suffixing it with "appa", the Visvakarmas of northern Karnataka disconnect the five crafts from each other. This disconnection corresponds to their ideal expressed in the picturised image of the ideal Visvakarma. By preferring brahminical names with the brahminical suffix *achari*, the reference is clearly to an ideal which supersedes distinctions - the reference to the ideal of autonomy.

Thus, in various fields where names are used, the impact of both the participant's ideology and their actual situation is seen. The choice of names for persons, sub-castes, places does not seem to be arbitrary. They are never selected at random, but are metaphors expressing ideals or perceptions.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank the late Dr S.P. Tewari and Dr K.V. Ramesh for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. The data presented in this paper form part of a larger corpus of data collected in Karnataka since 1978.
3. Perhaps the choice is a logic one and an expression of an element in the structure representing a local formulation of cosmologic ideas. To such a search three different types of sources would be available, viz., names of villages, settlement stories, and recorded history (both archival and epigraphical). Such study should focus on a selected historical period, e.g. the 17th/18th century and on selected regions, e.g. southern Karnataka (the era between 1565 AD and 1730 AD and the area sometimes called as the *poligar* Karnataka between the Thungabhadra River and the Tamil border). In each chieftainship, the symbolic representation of the cosmos is probably also expressed in the names within it. The longer the chieftainship lasted, the more complete such expression would be. Each eco-zone offers its own possibilities, as much as each total environmental (economic, political, administrative, etc) vis-a-vis the ideology and actual situation have an impact on the (unconscious) selection of place names.
4. The oldest known situation is that of the *Muddekammaras* as miners: smiths who made their own principal raw materials. Later, when mining stopped (around 1910 AD) they became blacksmiths like the others. Simultaneously, they claimed a new status, that of the *Doddamane* sub-caste. (see: Brouwer, 1990).
5. In this region, the Visvakarma caste is divided into two categories called *Sivachar* and *Kulachar*. The same names also refer to two sub-castes. The vegetarian *Sivachar* is a comprehensive sub-caste of blacksmiths/carpenters, coppersmiths/ sculptors, and goldsmiths.
6. The Visvakarma caste can be defined as a recognition of and attempts at completeness in oneself, autonomy and non-violence. These ideals form a frame of reference for the artisans' real life which, of course, never completely coincides with it. The ideals can be summarized as individuality, unity of opposites, unilaterality, universalism, absence of relationships; and the unity of the caste is thus presented as an idea at par with an ideal brahminical order. This idea is known to us in both a mythological and iconographical form.
7. Till the mid 19th century all non-brahmin castes of the central and southern region of Karnataka belonged either to the Right Hand or Left Hand categories of caste. The Visvakarmas were invariably the leaders of the Left Hand category, while the *Banajigas* were leaders of the Right Hand category (see: Brouwer, 1995)
8. For an ethno-history of the *Uttaradi* sub-caste, see Brouwer 1992.
9. In the Fort Story, all Visvakarmas, pure and united, lived in a solid, magnetic fort, which could not be destroyed by anything. However, the fort is besieged resulting in a mixed marriage, a fire and escapes and the origin of endogamous sub-castes (different and new descent lines). For an extensive analysis of this story, see Brouwer 1995.

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