6 Sainthood in Transition and the Crisis of Alienation

The Marāṭha warlord Śivāji died in the year 1680. He, more than anyone else, had mastered the art of political conceit in the seventeenth century, and perfected strategies of guerilla warfare developed earlier in the century by Malik Āmbar.494 His was by far the greatest threat to the Mughals before the invasion of Nādir Śāh from Iran, as it involved guerilla strategies they had hitherto not confronted. Guerilla warfare consisted of avoiding direct encounters, but cutting off supply lines, and resorting to multiple attacks at vulnerable locations away from the battlefield.495 Śivāji had deployed these tactics against the Ādil Śāhis with a remarkable measure of success. This had enabled him to make strong inroads into northern and northwestern Karnataka, especially after he treacherously killed the Ādil Śāhi general Afzal Khān on 10 November 1659. By the time of Śivāji’s death, the Marāṭhas were in control of many strategic locations in coastal Karnataka, the Western Ghats, and the adjoining regions to the east. Efforts were afoot to consolidate these gains by deploying functionaries to collect revenue. These portfolios called for a class of literate personnel faithful to the Marāṭha cause. The avenues for employment thus generated were to attract the Citpāvan and Karāḍ brāhmaṇas, who migrated from the Koṅkaṇa region to various parts of Marāṭhavāḍā.496 They also moved in considerable numbers into northern and northwestern Karnataka. Sarasvata and Dēśasta brāhmaṇas also found employment under the Marāṭhas.497 A credit network centering on Pūnā emerged, with brāhmaṇa bankers controlling it.498 By the mid decades of the eighteenth century, neo-brāhmaṇical landlordism evolved powerfully in many parts of northern and northwestern Karnataka. Marāṭhi brāhmaṇas were the major stakeholders in this enterprise.

In 1686, six years after the death of Śivāji, the Ādil Śāhi state of Vijayapura collapsed following a protracted struggle with the Mughals. Auranţzēb annexed the Ādil Śāhi territories to the Mughal state, and formed the new suba of Karnataka out of some parts of the annexed territories. As a token of gratitude for the services rendered to the Mughals by the late Abdul Karīm Khān, Auranţzēb rewarded the deceased’s son Abdul Raūf Khān with a mansabdāri rank of 6000,499 conferred the title Dilēr

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494 On Malik Amber and his innovation of guerilla warfare, see Gordon 1998: 42-45.
495 Ibid., 45.
496 Ibid., 194.
497 Ibid., 144.
498 Ibid.
499 Mansabdāri was a system of revenue and military tenure created by the Mughal ruler Akbar (r. 1556-1605). See Richards 1993: 63-68.
Khān upon him, and placed him in charge of the new suba.\textsuperscript{500} Raūf Khān established the city of Savaṇūru, twenty kilometres to the south of Lakṣmēśvara, and made it his headquarters. Vijayapura was deserted within a few decades. The revenue, which the Ādil Śāhis had commanded, was now distributed among the successor chiefs in different parts of the region. In northern Karnataka, claims were made on the Ādil Śāhi revenue by the Gōlkoṇḍa rulers, and later, by the Nizāms of Haidarābād from the east, and the Marāṭhas from the north and northwest. The Surapura chiefs, whose line began with Hanuma Nāyaka upon whom Koḍēkallu Basava had conferred ‘kingship’, was an important pretender to a share of this revenue. Raūf Khān of Savaṇūru was another claimant, and by far, the most successful. His suba yielded Rupees 20,040,000 every year, a little over a fourth of the Rupees 78,400,000 that the Ādil Śāhi state collected as revenue during the reign of Muhammad Ādil Šāh (r. 1626-1656).\textsuperscript{501}

Increased cultivation of commercial crops from the seventeenth century, and their trade through the routes along the Western Ghats, made the ghats and the areas near them gain in importance. The early Marāṭhas seem to have understood the significance of this emerging phenomenon. Land revenue from the commercial crop orchards, and the income they yielded through proceeds and transit tolls, were too sizeable to be ignored. The Marāṭhas directed great energies towards the control of this region. It was, in all likelihood, for the same reason that Raūf Khān moved from Vijayapura to Savaṇūru.

If the areas adjoining the ghats offered rich markets for political entrepreneurship, literate brāhmaṇas, and mercantile and military labour, there is no reason why it should not have attracted a similar market for renunciation, more so when many renouncers in northern Karnataka were also military entrepreneurs. Tinthiṇi Mōnappa seems to have been aware of this possibility. He moved from Tinthiṇi in the Śōrāpura dōāb, to Varavi, near Lakṣmēśvara. His friend Cannavīra left Vijayapura, wandered extensively, and eventually settled down at Śirahaṭṭi, three kilometres away from Varavi, where he attained renown as Śirahaṭṭi Fakīrappa. From the village of Śāvaḷagi near Kalaburagi, the saint Śivaliṅga moved closer to the ghats, and settled down in a hamlet on the banks of the Ghaṭaprabha, twenty kilometres northwest of Gōkāk. The hamlet eventually came to be known as Śāvaḷagi after the village from where Śivaliṅga came.

The lives of these saints resembled those of the earlier siddhas in several respects. Like Ārūḍha Saṅgamanātha, Koḍēkallu Basava, Maṇṭēsvāmi, and others, they travelled widely. They performed miracles, encountered kings and brought them into submission, excavated tanks, caused rain. But there were three notable additions to their portfolio: they organized feeding in their monasteries, they blessed barren

\textsuperscript{500} Devadevan 2010a.

\textsuperscript{501} Ibid.
couples with children, and they forged real (and not imagined) relationships with saints of other tradition, including the Sūfis.

Representative of this new sainthood is the life of Śirahaṭṭi Fakirappa (ca. 1650-1725), a saint whose life is suffused with stories of miracles. Fakirappa was born in Vijayapura. It is said, after a trope concerning the birth of the siddhas that was well established by the seventeenth century, that his parents Śivayya and Gauramma had no children for a long time. Upon the suggestion of a friend, Gauramma approached the great Chisti saint of Vijayapura, Khvājā Amin-ud-din Alā (1597-1675). The Khvājā blessed her with a child and instructed her to hand over the child to his hospice, whereupon she would be blessed with another child whom the family could own for itself. Thus was born the prodigious Cannavīra. But the couple failed to keep their word, and refused to give away the child to Amin-ud-din. As a result, Cannavīra died. Realizing their lapse, Śivayya and Gauramma prayed for mercy. Amin forgave them, and brought Cannavīra back to life. The child was handed over to the hospice, and the couple blessed with another child. Cannavīra grew up to become the preeminent disciple of Amin-ud-din. He evolved into a great miracle-worker at a young age. The Ādil Śāhi Sultān of Vijayapura learnt of his supernatural powers, and decided to test the young prodigy.502 At his bidding, Amin ordered Cannavīra to offer namāz sitting on water. To the shock of the Sultān, Cannavīra took his mat, walked on the waters of the nearby lake, and offered namāz sitting on the waters.503 The Sultān realized that Cannavīra was a boy with divine powers. He became a follower of the boy instantly. This was the commencement of a great career in miracle-working. Cannavīra soon came to be revered as Fakirappa.504

As with the other saints whose lives we have examined so far, a long voyage occupied the next leg of Śirahaṭṭi Fakirappa’s life. He left Vijayapura after the demise of Amin, who assured him that he would meet him again in the next birth, when he will be born at Gōnāḷa as Mōnappa in a family of oil pressers.505

502 The reference is perhaps to Ali II (r. 1656-1672).
503 In other accounts, this miracle is said to have been performed by Amin-ud-din himself. See Hanif 2000: 36-41 for a brief account of Amin. Also see Eaton 1978.
504 Fakirappa (from Fakir) is a common name among the Vīraśaivas in the region even to this day. Other Islamic names adopted by the Vīraśaivas include Pīraṇṇa (from Pīr) and Husēnavva (from Husain).
505 The reference is to Tinthiṇi Mōnappa. On this saint, see the rather mediocre Padasetti 1992, which is the only existing study on him. While hagiography places the birth of Mōnappa after the demise of Amin (insofar as he is treated as a reincarnation of the latter), the available historical evidence shows that the two saints were contemporaries. Tinthiṇi is on the river Kṛṣṇa, and lies twenty-five kilometres to the east of Koḍēkallu. It does not take more than five hours to travel from Tinthiṇi to Koḍēkallu by foot. It took me three hours and forty minutes to cover this distance in 2002. In 2013, when I was older by eleven years and heavier by nineteen kilograms, I walked in the opposite direction from Koḍēkallu to Tinthiṇi in four hours and twenty-five minutes.
In the course of this great voyage, Fakīrappa performed a number of miracles. When he reached the village of Baṇḍeppanaḥḷḷi, a communal dispute among the villagers had begun to take the form of a riot. Fakīrappa intervened, and restored peace. This was apparently done with the help of a miracle. He lit a lamp with water instead of oil, and asked Baṇḍeppa (seemingly the founder of the village) to place it at an assigned location for three days. The lamp continued to burn even after three days. The feuding villagers were convinced of Fakīrappa’s divinity, and on his advice, built a monastery in the village.

The next miracle happened at Kauḍīmaṭṭi. Here, Fakīrappa chanced upon a young girl Kamala, who was about to commit suicide by throwing herself into a well. She had taken the decision following long years of torture by her mother-in-law, Kāḍamma. Fakīrappa persuaded her to return home. No sooner did Kamala reach home than news arrived that Kāḍamma’s daughter Gauramma had committed suicide by jumping into a well. The news came as a rude shock to Kāḍamma. Even as she was trying to come to terms with it, Fakīrappa arrived on the scene. He informed Kāḍamma that her daughter was tortured by her in-laws, which forced her into suicide. It was a kārmic reaction to Kāḍamma’s cruel behaviour towards her own daughter-in-law. Kāḍamma realized what the siddha was hinting at, and pleaded with him to absolve her of the sins committed and bring her daughter back to life. Fakīrappa acquiesced, and the deceased Gauramma sprang back to life.

We find karma invoked again in the next miracle. This story is about Sundaramma, a woman from an affluent family who showed no devotion towards god, had scant regard for elders, and constantly insulted the devout. The result was that she had no children. Sundaramma learnt of Fakīrappa’s powers, and approached him with request for granting a child. Under the siddha’s magical influence, she abandoned vanity, became a deep believer in god, and was blessed with a son.

The journey of the miracle-worker continued. In Muddēbihāḷa the pontiff of the Hirēmaṭha insulted Fakīrappa and, in consequence, contracted chronic stomachache. He prayed to Fakīrappa for mercy, and was cured of the illness. In gratitude, the pontiff became a devotee of Fakīrappa, and renamed his monastery as Śivayōgi maṭha. Fakīrappa also helped a couple from the Śivayōgi maṭha to overcome their poverty by gifting them a cow, which brought forth two bullocks and helped them in agriculture. The couple prospered, and their wealthy descendants continue to pay tributes to Fakīrappa to this day. In Śirōḷa, our hero met a young widow, Girijamma, whose child had died of snakebite. Fakīrappa brought the child back to life. He was then approached by a childless woman Gaṅγamma with prayers to bless her with a son. Gaṅγamma’s prayers were also answered favourably.

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506 We have seen in chapter 5 that Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅga is also credited with lighting a lamp with water.
Fakirappa's next destination was Citradurga, where he stayed for a long time at the Murugharajendra matha. When he approached the gates of the matha, he was denied entry, as he was not wearing a liṅga. Like Manṭēsvāmi before him, Fakirappa tried to force himself into the matha, and like Kaṭugara Saṅgayya before them, the gatekeepers pushed him out forcibly. Impulsive that he was on the one hand, and a miracle-worker on the other, Fakirappa made the liṅgas worn by the gatekeepers disappear, to their great dread. He then vanished from the scene, and miraculously appeared in front of the pontiff inside the monastery. The liṅgas of the gatekeepers were restored after they begged for forgiveness.

The pontiff accorded Fakirappa a warm welcome. Fakirappa took up the responsibility of maintaining the cattle pen in the matha, and seems to have put in place an arrangement for surplus production of milk, leading to additional revenues to the matha. He might also have deployed the bullocks effectively in the agricultural fields held by the monastery.

Anecdotes of several miracles are told about Fakirappa during his Citradurga days. These supernatural acts were performed in front of the boys with whom Fakirappa took the cattle out to graze. In one such story, he is said to have picked up a cobra that bowed down to him, and dropped it in an anthill. On another occasion, a tiger arrived on the scene when he was grazing his herd with the boys. The herd and the boys fled, but Fakirappa remained where he was, with a smile on his face. The tiger came to him, and bowed down to his feet. The saint sat on the tiger and rode around for a while, making a display of his prowess. In a third story, Fakirappa distributed sweetmeats and food of their choice to the boys from a bag he was carrying. According to this story, the cowherds carried lunch packets every day when they went out to graze the cattle. On one day, one of the boys came without his packet, as his mother was busy preparing sweetmeats and other delicacies to throw a feast at noon. The boy decided to go home for lunch. Fakirappa and the other boys urged him to stay, and share the food they had brought. The boy refused, saying that he ate roṭṭi (bread of wheat or millet flour) everyday and was sick of it, and that he didn't want to miss a feast. As the boy left, Fakirappa asked the other cowherds what their choice dishes were, and miraculously produced them one after the other from his bag. The friends now called out to the boy who had left for home, and told him what was happening. The boy returned, shyly. Fakirappa produced a feast for him from his bag, and gave out a message: there is always happiness in sharing food with others and eating together. This, however, is not the message that the historian draws from the anecdote, as we shall see later in this chapter.

After a long stay at the Murugharajendra matha, time came for Fakirappa to depart. He left for Haidarabad, to have an audience with the Nizām. Once again, he was denied entry, and once again, Fakirappa miraculously entered the palace, this time ending up in the queen's apartment. The news of an infiltrator in the queen's apartment spread throughout the palace, and the Nizām rushed to the spot with a dagger in his hand, and a convoy of troops behind him. To his surprise, it was not
a grown up man that he saw there, but an infant in the queen’s lap. The queen was found breast-feeding the baby. What miracle, the Nizām wondered: a baby in his barren queen’s lap, and she suckling it. When he asked for an explanation, the queen said that she had no cue of what was happening, and told him that a Fakīr appeared in her apartment, fell into her lap, metamorphosed into a baby and made her suckle. The Nizām stood dumbfounded. Now, Fakirappa resumed his original form. The Nizām fell to his feet, pleaded for forgiveness, and offered him half his kingdom. Fakirappa refused to take the kingdom, and instead, urged him to maintain law and order in his realm, and restore harmony between the communities that were engaged in conflict and violence. He also asked for the dagger the Nizām had brought to kill him. The Nizām offered Fakirappa the dagger. There is preserved in the Śirahaṭṭī maṭha a dagger that is carried by the pontiff every year during the annual fair. This is believed to be the one presented by the Nizām. In all likelihood, the dagger was given by Raūf Khān, the Navāb of the nearby Savaṇūru, or by the head of the Jummā Masjid in Lakṣmēśvara with which Fakirappa seems to have maintained healthy relations.

From Haidarābād, the miracle-worker went to Dilli where he met the Mughal ruler Akbar. He assumed the form of a five-coloured parakeet and flew into the hall where Akbar was holding court. The king was surprised to see the bird, and asked his renowned courtier Bīrbal what omen it signified. A parakeet is always a great omen, Bīrbal replied. Now, Fakirappa turned back to his original form. He asked Akbar to bring him the sacred stone and pendant that his guru Cannabasava had left in the palace. Your guru Cannabasava left a stone and a pendant in my palace? Akbar asked in disbelief. Yes, Fakirappa replied; it is kept in a casket in the basement of the fourth room in the northern quarter. The king and his entourage rushed to the basement of the said room, and discovered a casket there. In the casket were a sacred stone and a pendant. Akbar agreed to give it to Fakirappa if he performed one more miracle. Here we go, Fakirappa said; the royal elephant of yours has fallen dead in the stable. The king rushed to the stable and found that Fakirappa’s words had indeed come true. He appealed to him to restore the mammoth back to life. Fakirappa stroked the animal, and it rose from the ground as if it was waking up from a long sleep. Pleased with the līlā, Akbar bowed to the saint, gave him the stone and the pendant, and presented him with a battle shield.

507 The first full-length hagiography of Fakirappa, composed in the traditional ṣatpadi metres, was completed by Dyāmpurada Canna as late as 1945. This period of widespread communal hatred unfurling against the backdrop of the impending partition of India is likely to have influenced the poet. It is under this historical circumstance that Fakirappa’s relationship with Amin-ud-dīn came to be interpreted as exemplifying, and intended to send out the message of, harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims.

508 Note that we are reproducing a hagiography for purposes of historical analysis; Akbar died in 1605, at least half a century before Fakirappa was born.
The Nizāṃ of Haidarābād gave him a dagger, and the Mughal king of Dilli, a shield. Whether or not these events, or something remotely resembling it, really occurred, is a question that need not deter us here, as the story is certainly not misplaced or devoid of meaning. For, isn’t it figuring in an account of a warrior-saint’s life? Daggers, swords, and shields are powerful symbols in the political imagination of a warrior-saint tradition, and the story of acquiring them through defiance is meant to be a political statement in its own right.

From Dilli, Fakīrappa returned to the countryside of northern Karnataka. There lived in the village of Sagarakāṇūṭa a widow called Avvalīṅgavva. She belonged to a family of peasants, and had two sons, Bharamagāduḍa and Sōmanagauḍa. Following the demise of her husband, she lost her access to property, and was regularly ill treated by her brothers-in-law and their wives. A friend of hers advised her to approach Fakīrappa for help. Avvalīṅgavva prayed to Fakīrappa in her mind, and began to look out for the wandering saint. One night, Fakīrappa appeared to her in a dream, and advised her to move to Māgaḍi. Avvalīṅgavva obliged. Fakīrappa met with Avvalīṅgavva in Māgaḍi, and asked her to find work, as this would enable her to tide over her current state of poverty. He then went to Kadaḍi, where the village headman had passed away some days ago without leaving an heir behind. The villagers gathered around Fakīrappa, and requested him to find a suitable headman for their village. Fakīrappa informed them of Bharamagāduḍa, Avvalīṅgavva’s son, who he said would make an ideal and efficient village headman. The villagers agreed to the seer’s proposal, and Bharamagauḍa was appointed the headman of Kadaḍi.

The next destination in Fakīrappa’s tour was Dundūru, a village that faced acute water scarcity. Like a master water-diviner, he identified a place that would throw up sweet water, and caused a well to be excavated on the spot. He built a monastery in the village and planted a jasmine vine. The half-acre garden of jasmine found today at Dundūru is believed to have developed from the vine planted by Fakīrappa.

Āṅkuś Khān was the ruler of Lakṣmēśvara at this time. One night, he was playing chess with his wife when the lamp began to run out of oil. As it was late in the night, there were few servants in the palace, and the ones on duty were unable to find oil. Āṅkuś Khān asked the guard to spread news in the town through tom-tom that whoever prevents the lamp from getting extinguished will be given a reward of their choice. Fakīrappa arrived at the palace in the company of Avvalīṅgavva and Sōmanagauḍa, and replayed the miracle he had performed earlier at Baṇḍeppanahāḷḷi. He asked Sōmanagauḍa to pour water from his jar into the lamp. No sooner was it done than the wick sprang back to life. Āṅkuś Khān was pleased. When he asked
Sōmanagauḍa what reward he wanted, he received the most unexpected reply. The instruction Sōmanagauḍa had received from Fakīrappa was to ask for the Khān’s kingdom. “Give me your kingdom”, Sōmanagauḍa said. Ankuś Khān was now in a dilemma. Fakīrappa decided to intervene. “You have no children. Your wife is barren. Who do you think will succeed to your kingdom after your death? Hand over the kingdom to Sōmanagauḍa and accept him as your son.” Ankuś Khān agreed to the proposal on the condition that Sōmanagauḍa and his family adopt the title of Khān, and administer the kingdom by wearing a green headgear and an Islamic necklace. Sōmanagauḍa agreed to these terms, and became a ruler. To this day, his ‘Hindu’ descendants bear the title, Khān.

Continuing his journey across the villages and towns of the region, Fakīrappa reached Ḍaṃbaḷa. Here, a merchant’s wife refused him alms, and as a result, the liṅgas worn by members of the family disappeared. Predictably enough, the liṅgas were restored after the people expressed remorse and begged for mercy. In a mosque in Ḍaṃbaḷa, Fakīrappa freed a group of saints from their addiction to poppy leaves.

During his stay at Ḍaṃbaḷa, an arrogant saint called Bhārati arrived there and challenged the chief, Veṅkappa Dēsāyi, to organize a debate with him. The chief was helpless. He knew of no scholars in his territory that had the genius to take on Bhārati. A debate was certain to be humiliating, and so it eventually turned out. Everyone who dared to confront Bhārati was defeated. It so happened that an imbecile brāhmaṇa boy was serving Fakīrappa with great devotion at this time. He was the butt of ridicule, not only for his limited intellect, but also for serving a wandering saint against the advice of fellow brāhmaṇas. Now, Fakīrappa decided to send the boy to debate with Bhārati, much to the consternation of the townsmen. The boy arrived at the venue, declared that he had no knowledge of Vēdas, Śāstras, Purāṇas, or any of the other such great sciences as grammar, logic, rhetoric, metrics etc., but was endowed with the blessings of the guru. With this solemn declaration, he began debate. And what a prodigy the boy turned out to be! He defeated Bhārati with hardly any effort.

At the end of his great journeys, Fakīrappa decided to settle down at Śirahaṭṭi. Here, he dug a little well to the north of the village, built a hermitage, made it his abode, and resumed his life of performing miracles. The hermitage eventually became a monastery. As in Ḍaṃbaḷa, he caused liṅgas of a merchant’s family and his guests vanish when the merchant refused him alms. And again as in Ḍaṃbaḷa, the liṅgas were given back to them when the merchant fell at his feet in remorse.

Sometime after Fakīrappa had settled down at Śirahaṭṭi, an eminent peer of his reached Varavi, three kilometres from Śirahaṭṭi. His name was Tinthiṇi Mōnappa. He had set out on a journey from the village of Tinthiṇi near Koḍēkallu, where he had lived for many years. At Varavi, he founded another maṭha, and gained renown as Varavi Mōnappa. One day, he came to Śirahaṭṭi. Fakīrappa immediately identified his guru, for wasn’t Mōnappa an incarnation of his guru Khvājā Amīn-ud-dīn? Mōnappa took Fakīrappa to Lakṣmēśvara to perform another miracle. An old woman called Piḍḍavve had died without repaying a loan she had incurred. Mōnappa and Fakīrappa
approached the dead body and said, “You can't go away without repaying the loan. We bid you return and pay the money”. What next? The dead body started breathing again. Piḍḍavve repaid the loan, and Mōnappa and Fakirappa blessed her to live for some more years.

By this time, Fakirappa had acquired a group of faithful devotees. He travelled to Kōlivāḍa with some of them, and built a monastery there. It is said that when he reached the village, nobody came to welcome him or pay respects to him. Dyāmavva, the deity of the village, was upset by this, and prevailed upon the villagers to become devotees of Fakirappa. She also performed a miracle and compelled a trader from Hubbalī to donate land for the monastery.

Few siddha accounts speak of a devotee blessed by a saint overstepping his advice. The story of Fakirappa provides one such instance. Avvaliṅgavva was in a state of destitution. With the blessings of Fakirappa, her first son Bharamagauḍa had become the headman of a village, and her second son Sōmanagauḍa, a ruler. Avvaliṅgavva was now on the verge of death. She desired to have a sprawling tomb built in her honour, and sought Fakirappa's consent for the same. Fakirappa tried to dissuade her from this misadventure. He predicted that her tomb would remain unkempt, deserted, and neglected by everyone. But Avvaliṅgavva decided not to oblige. She spent a fortune on building a tomb for herself. After her death, she was buried there. But eventually, Fakirappa's prophecy came true. The tomb survives in Śirahaṭṭi to this day in a state of utter neglect.

Fakirappa had lived a long life. He had performed countless līlās. It was now time for him to depart. One day, a band of street performers came to Śirahaṭṭi. Fakirappa invited them to his monastery and asked them to perform. A fifteen-year old boy was the cynosure of the performance. Fakirappa realized the boy's potentials and asked the bandleader to offer him to the monastery. The bandleader refused, as the boy was the most sought-after performer of the band. The band left Śirahaṭṭi, but made no progress, as no village appeared in sight even after walking on and on for many hours. The bandleader realized what had gone wrong. He returned to Śirahaṭṭi, begged Fakirappa for forgiveness, and offered the boy to the monastery.

The following day, Fakirappa summoned the elders of the village, and announced that the boy would be the next pontiff of the Śirahaṭṭi maṭha. The elders were hesitant, as they regarded a boy from a caste of performers unfit for the lofty position of a pontiff. “You are right”, Fakirappa said with sarcasm, “the boy is from an impure caste. Let us purify him in fire, as there is no greater purifier than fire”. Accordingly, a bonfire was made, and, the boy put in the blaze to the dread of the elders. The next day, Fakirappa summoned the elders again, and cleared the ash from the bonfire in their presence. And what did the elders see there? The boy, hale and healthy, unburnt, and unaffected by the fire! "The boy has been purified in fire. He is not of low origins anymore. He will be our successor", Fakirappa announced. He then outlined the rituals, fairs, and ceremonies that should be performed in the monastery after his
demise. He also ordained that the pontiffs would be known, in the consecutive order of succession, as Fakīra Siddharāma, Fakīra Śivayōgi, and Fakīra Cannavīra.510

Shortly after these arrangements were made, Fakirappa assumed the form of a serpent, and disappeared into an anthill. His tomb is believed to be built over this anthill.

Fakirappa was the paradigmatic miracle-worker of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. He was among the three greatest saints renowned for supernatural powers that northern Karnataka had ever seen (the other two being Sāvaḷagi Śivalīṅga and Kalaburagi Śaraṇabasava). It was for this reason that he became widely influential in the subsequent times, and monasteries in his honour built extensively during the late eighteenth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth centuries. Today, there are forty-eight known maṭhas of Śirahaṭṭi Fakirappa in Karnataka. At least four of them were apparently built during his lifetime, viz. the maṭhas at Śirahaṭṭi, Baṇḍeppanahalli, Dundūru, and Kōljvāḍa. Table 12 gives a list of the known monasteries of Fakirappa.

Śirahaṭṭi Fakirappa’s story is similar to the hagiography of the earlier saint, Koḍēkallu Basava, in several respects. The saint composed no poetry. Neither did he promote trade or develop a distinct darśana of his own. Yet, he was a warrior-saint, carried out public works extensively, shared a relationship with the rulers that was far from cordial, and actively engaged with the peasantry. However, the context of his initiatives, and their impacts, were markedly different. Fakirappa was functioning in an age of rural scarcity and large-scale dispossession of the peasantry and other classes from their traditional access to land. Acts like excavating wells, causing rain, finding employment for his dependents, and helping them tide over poverty resonated very differently with the rural illiterate masses. In this connection, it must be stressed that the stories of Avvaliṅgavva and the couple from the Śivayōgi maṭha in Muddēbihāḷa do not seem to be adequately emblematic. For, Fakirappa was a warrior-saint, and is likely to have recruited a large number of dispossessed peasants into his militia. Such instances are not recorded in the extant hagiography, presumably because the hagiography was compiled in the twentieth century, when the image of the saint-as-warrior with a band of troops was long-forgotten and patently unfamiliar to an institution that had chosen to preach peace between Hindus and Muslims. Yet, vestiges of the warrior past have survived. The pontiff of the Śirahaṭṭi maṭha meets his devotees once in a year on horseback, carrying the dagger in his hand. The pontiff at Sāvaḷagi also continues to this day to ride a horse with a sword in his hand during

510 The Śirahaṭṭi maṭha has had thirteen successors so far, conveniently named as Fakira Siddharāma Svāmi I, Fakira Śivayōgi Svāmi I, Fakira Cannivara Svāmi I, Fakira Siddharāma Svāmi II, Fakira Śivayōgi Svāmi II, Fakira Cannivara Svāmi II, Fakira Siddharāma Svāmi III, Fakira Śivayōgi Svāmi III, Fakira Cannivara Svāmi III, Fakira Siddharāma Svāmi IV, Fakira Śivayōgi Svāmi IV, Fakira Cannivara Svāmi IV and Fakira Siddharāma Svāmi V.
festivals. In contrast to the Pāḷegāras of the south who also had militias with peasant recruits in them, Śirahaṭṭi Fākirappa, Sāvalagi Śivaliṅga, and the other warrior-saints of the north presented a compelling personality: a holy man, making the dispossessed peasant fight, literally, to earn a living. This new saint was, therefore, simultaneously an embodiment of clairvoyance, credibility, and contingency.

The era beginning with the mid seventeenth century was typified by widespread dispossession of the peasantry from their traditional access to land in the dryland belts of the Deccan. It threw up thousands of Avvaliṅgavvas, Bharamagauḍas, and Sōmanagauḍas across the region. This resulted from a decline in labour demand caused by a growing preference for commercial crops that were less labour intensive. Its inevitable corollary was that in the precarious labour market generated by the

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511 Source: Siddharama Swami 2002: 228-229. Table 12 updates the information and rectifies the errors contained in the source.
commercial crop plantations, the peasantry had to remain glued to the paddy-producing wetlands, or the dryland belts where other grains like jowar (white millet) and ragi (finger millet) grew. This opened up a new chapter in reinforcing forced or bonded agrestic labour and strengthening the forces of exploitation. That this was accompanied by the rising acquisition of landed wealth by brāhmaṇa, Vīraśaiva, and other ritual and literary elites brought in the dimension of caste on a scale hitherto unknown in the history of the region.

This development also affected the prospects of sainthood. The new siddhas like Śirahaṭṭi Fakīrappa, Sāvaḷagi Śivaliṅga, and Tinthiṇi Mōnappa had to engage with this emerging situation. Mōnappa more than anyone else decried the institution of caste in his vacanas. In one of his vacana, Mōnappa says:

The pearl is born in a shell,
The diamond is born in a stone,
Once the great śaraṇa are born in fire / in the low caste
Can one say, Basavaṇṇa, that my line or his line is great?512

Here, like many other siddha poets, Mōnappa plays on the word hole. The word signifies the fireplace. But it is used, through a corruption of the word, to indicate the holeya caste. The holeya was an agrestic labourer or slave who worked in the fields, hola. Mōnappa uses it to create a double entendre that is at once sharp and moving. Elsewhere, he says:

The word does not vanish, the hole does not fill.
Those who violate the norms and decrees
Are pure holeyas by caste, Basavaṇṇa.513

Further,

Caste customs exist when there is cooked rice,
Vows and daily rituals, when there is water.
When cooked rice and water deplete,
What if the poor live in a palace?514

Mōnappa has more such vacanas, which criticize caste prejudices. One of them ridicules those who refuse cooked rice but consume with great relish the milk and the ghee (that a dirty animal yields).515 What an irony that the milk from the flesh (of the cow) and sweet that the insect (i.e., the honeybee) yields are never disregarded,

512 Araganji 2001: 142.
513 Ibid., 144.
514 Ibid., 143.
515 Ibid., 144.
but the śaraṇas born of fire are looked down upon as low caste.\footnote{Ibid., 143.} Here, Mōnappa is echoing Kanakadāsa, who in the sixteenth century had sung: don’t they offer the lotus, born in filth, to the flower-navalled one; don’t the brāhmaṇas on earth drink the milk produced in the cow’s flesh?\footnote{No. 120, Kavyapremi 1995.}

These were simple words, without much reasoning or intellectual content behind them. Yet, they had a profound appeal in the illiterate world of the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, when raids, plunder, protracted warfare, recurring droughts, and scarcities, and the entrenchment of the neo-brāhmaṇical and Vīraśaiva landlordism led to large-scale dispossession on the one hand, and the reinforcement of caste prejudices on the other. One way, through which the dispossession of the peasantry was mediated, was by generating employment in the mercenary militias of the monasteries. It was a potentially lucrative employment, as it carried with it the prospects of securing wealth through loot and plunder. Another mode through which monasteries addressed the crisis of dispossession and scarcity was feeding (dāsōha or annadāna). Saints carried out regular begging tours, variously called haṇḍī bhikṣā, tala bhikṣā, etc., in the company of disciples and followers to gather resources for feeding. At times, they received endowments of land. Fakīrappa seems to have organized feeding in his monastery at Śirahaṭṭi. Feeding has been known in the monastery for much of its recorded history. What is unique about the dāsōha held in the Śirahaṭṭi monastery is that devotees had—and continue to have—the privilege of entering the kitchen, cooking their own food, and offering them to their kin and other followers. Sāvaḷagi Śivaliṅga was also involved in feeding. The Sāvaḷagi Śrīśivalingēśvarapurāṇa says that he protected people during a severe drought.\footnote{Sāvaḷagi Śrīśivalingēśvarapurāṇa, 12.20-23.} Arrangements were made, among other things, for a granary when the maṭha at Sāvaḷagi was constructed.\footnote{Ibid., 14.51.} The maṭha continued the tradition of feeding, and one of its pontiffs, the tenth seer from the village of Karīkaṭṭi, who assumed charge in 1885 and passed away in 1901, was known by the name, Annadāna Svāmi. The temple of Siddhaliṅga at Yeḍiyūru also held regular feeding for its devotees. It is in this context that the story of Fakīrappa producing choice food for his friends from him bag becomes meaningful. Feeding in times of distress was indeed the logic behind the miracle of rainmaking and the establishment of maṭhas by Fakīrappa and Sāvaḷagi Śivaliṅga at a number of locations throughout their journey.

Kalaburagi Śaraṇabasava (1746-1823) was as renowned for feeding as for the miracles he performed. Known for his powers of conferring children on barren women, he charged an exorbitant fee for the service, and raised it to the status of an industry. The rich were expected to pay one thousand rupees towards dāsōha for
being rewarded with a child.\textsuperscript{520} Diggāvi Gurubasava and his wife from the village of Harasūru were among the couples that availed of this service.\textsuperscript{521} Those unable to pay this huge amount had other choices open to them. Offering one thousand rottis (breads made of millet flour) for dāsōha was one of them. Presenting one thousand pieces of firewood for the dāsōha kitchen was another. The poorest of devotees had the choice of presenting one thousand flowers for pūja, or making one thousand circumambulations around the monastery, or chanting the name of Śiva one thousand times as fee for being blessed with a child.\textsuperscript{522}

At least since the sixteenth century, annadāna had begun to figure as a dominant aspect of the political economy of munificence. This is confirmed by inscriptive as well as literary references. For instance, as early as 1556, a Keḷadi Nāyaka inscription recorded a grant made for feeding of brāhmaṇas. The grant was made, when Keḷadi Sadāśiva Nāyaka was chief, by a certain Cikkadānayya to the feeding-house (annatsatra) of the agrahāra (brāhmaṇa settlement) of Tyāgarti to feed three brāhmaṇas everyday.\textsuperscript{523} Instances increased in number in the subsequent period. Thirteen years later, in 1569, when Saṅkaṇṇa Nāyaka was the Keḷadi chief, a merchant called Timmaseṭṭi endowed land to the Sōmēśvara temple of Hosakēri for the daily feeding of six brāhmaṇas.\textsuperscript{524} Another eleven years later, in 1580, the merchant Īśvaraseṭṭi, son of Gaṇapaseṭṭi, and (his wife?) Saṅkamaseṭṭiti, gave a grant to the newly built maṭha to the southwest of the Sōmanātha temple in Maṇigārakēri for feeding six people everyday.\textsuperscript{525} Such instances multiplied in the seventeenth century. Feeding appeared as a prominent ideal in literary sources too. Hagiographies regularly spoke of Basava as an incarnate saint who organized feeding in Kalyāṇa. Here is how Śāntaliṅgadēśikan introduces Basava to his readers:

In Kalyāṇa, when Basavēśvara Dēva was offering the desired food to ninety-six thousand over one lakh Caramūrtis and making arrangements to offer the desired food to the Viṭa-Jaṅgamas sporting with twelve-thousand sacred girls....\textsuperscript{526}

We have noticed in chapter 5 how in the legend of Maṇṭēsvāmi, Basava was identified as a great benefactor of the Jaṅgamas, organizing annadāna for them regularly, and how Maṇṭēsvāmi intervened to rid Ādi Kalyāṇa free of the false Jaṅgamas.\textsuperscript{527} This

\textsuperscript{520} Hiremath 1991: 177. The work under reference seems to be based on Hiremath’s PhD dissertation, entitled Šaraṇabasavēśvararu Hägū Avara Parisarada Sāhitya (in Kannada). I have not had access to this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{521} Ibid., 161.

\textsuperscript{522} Ibid., 177.

\textsuperscript{523} No. 8, Jois 1991.

\textsuperscript{524} No. 26, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{525} No. 30, Ibid.

\textsuperscript{526} Bhairavēśvara Kāvyada Kathāmaṇisūtra Ratnākara, 394.

\textsuperscript{527} Maṇṭēsvāmi, 2 (‘Kalyanada Salu’).
story emphasizes in so many words that the undeserving ones are not to be allowed to partake of the food offered during an \textit{annadāna}. With lesser recalcitrance and drama, and with a greater measure of venomous resolve, Ādayya’s wife Padmāvati makes the same point in the \textit{Bhairavēśvara Kāvyada Kathāmanaśītra Ratnākara}. She was, as we have seen in chapter 2, a Jaina who fell in love with Ādayya and married him after converting to Śaivism. Once, her father Pārisaseṭṭi was hosting a group of Jaina saints. As there was a shortage of food, Pārisaseṭṭi and his wife took the saints to Padmāvati, who was preparing food to be offered to Śiva. She ignored the requests for food made by her parents. When they persisted, she said, “I cannot feed dogs with the food meant for the Lord”. Finally, Pārisaseṭṭi held her back with force while his wife carried the food to the saints.\textsuperscript{528}

Adrīśa, in his \textit{Prauḍharāyana Kāvya}, tells us the story of a certain Viśvanātha who refused food to a sage, Bhīmamuni, and incurred his wrath to be born as a man-eater. Viśvanātha was then born as a brahmarākṣasa in the garden of king Candraśēkhara of Mahadadhipura in Kashmir. After many twists and turns, he attained release from the curse, and offered \textit{annadāna}. This part of the story also speaks of the greatness of \textit{jaladāna} (offering water) and \textit{kanyādāna} (offering a virgin in marriage).\textsuperscript{529} The story of Viśvanātha is followed by another anecdote, which underlines the greatness of offering food.\textsuperscript{530} An account of a chief, strikingly named Annadānēśvara, is given in Siddhanañjēśa’s \textit{Gururājacāritra}.\textsuperscript{531}

The institution of feeding was advantageous in the larger politics of munificence, as the regular and recurring act of performance involved in it carried greater resonance than making one-time endowments in the form of land, or capital in the form of cash and gold. It constantly invoked the donor and underlined his piety and benevolence. The results were therefore immediately gratifying for the donor, and in a manner of speaking, for the one who partook of the food as well. And in a land of endemic poverty, it was never difficult to find people who were in need of food.

Feeding was not a new phenomenon in the region. It had a long history, and we learn from inscriptions that it was widely practiced for several centuries. But the prominence it attained as a value in and after the sixteenth century was certainly unprecedented. This was by no means restricted to the Deccan region. In their influential study of the Nāyaka court-life of Tamilnadu, Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanynam found \textit{annadāna} pervasive enough to recognize it as a ‘newly prominent institution’.\textsuperscript{532}

\textsuperscript{528} \textit{Bhairavēśvara Kāvyada Kathāmanaśītra Ratnākara}, 283.
\textsuperscript{529} \textit{Prauḍharāyana Kāvya}, 8.
\textsuperscript{530} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{531} \textit{Gururājacāritra}, 1.9.
\textsuperscript{532} Narayana Rao, Shulman and Subrahmanynam 1992: 203.
In the Deccan region, *annadāna* was also coeval with, and constitutive of, a series of crucial developments in the realm of the political economy. As monetization came to be deeply entrenched even in rural areas, demands for revenue from land was increasingly made. After the collapse of the Ādil Šāhi state in the late seventeenth century, military entrepreneurship expanded by leaps and bounds. Military labour, drawn from a peasantry rapidly undergoing dispossession and in need of alternate sources of livelihood, was mostly deployed in raids of plunder that often culminated in wide spread devastation of the countryside. These raids were primarily aimed at extracting tributes from local chiefs and military entrepreneurs. The Marāṭhas excelled in this business due to their superior use of guerilla manoeuvres.

As early as the late seventeenth century, agricultural production in the region had to encounter a new situation when the struggle between the Mughals, the Ādil Šāhi, the Kutb Šāhis, and the Marāṭhas had thrown up a large presence of military deputations. The need to ensure constant supply of grains to the military camps was putting greater strain on the peasantry. A series of drought and epidemics in the late seventeenth century also had a severe toll on agricultural production. Writes Eaton:

Firstly, a devastating cholera epidemic, which was said to have killed 150,000 people of the Bijapur plateau, commenced the year following Aurangzeb’s conquest and lasted for three years. Then in 1696 the Bhima River flooded, drowning many and ruinind a year’s harvest in one of the Bijapur plateau’s most productive regions. Worse still was the terrible famine that scoured the western Deccan in 1717 and plunged the economy of the area into severe instability. As a result of these calamities both the city and much of the Bijapur plateau suffered widespread death and desertion. A census taken by Aurangzeb after the fury of the cholera epidemic had abated (around 1690) showed that the city of Bijapur had lost over half of its former population in just the several years following the Mughal conquest.533

It was in this context that the feeding initiated in the *siddha* monasteries produced lasting images of the *siddhas* as humane, benevolent, gift giving, and life saving.

Although production slumped, monetization and rising prices ensured a steady flow of revenue.534 As the eighteenth century progressed and military entrepreneurship increased, military supply lines also expanded exponentially. A partial estimate for the year 1786, based on very limited sources, has shown that 500,000 soldiers were stationed in Karnataka in that year.535 This, in all likelihood, is only half the actual figure, as estimates for the number of soldiers with the Pāḷegāras of the south, the chiefs in the Western Ghats and coastal Karnataka, and the warrior-saints of the north, are not easily forthcoming. Very few forts yield information concerning the number of garrison soldiers. Considering these facts, an estimate of one million soldiers

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533 Eaton 1978: 270.
534 Devadevan 2010a.
535 Devadevan 2010b.
in Karnataka at any given time in the late eighteenth century can by no means be
overdrawn. Military evolved to become the greatest labour market after agriculture,
and left deep marks of devastation in its trail.

And then came the inevitable, almost abruptly. As the eighteenth century came
to a close and the nineteenth century commenced, the great militaries began to be
disbanded everywhere in the region. Military entrepreneurship came to an end,
almost with a whimper. This was occasioned by Lord Wellesley’s policy of Subsidiary
Alliance, one of the wisest policies to have come from the English East India Company.
The Company forced the Nizām of Haidarābād into submission, and defeated and
killed the Maisūru ruler Tipū Sultān in the Fourth Battle of Maisūru in 1799. Both
states were made to sign the treaty of Subsidiary Alliance, under the terms of which
the rulers had to disband their armies, and host cantonments of the Company’s army
at their own cost. Article II of the treaty, concluded with Maisūru on 8 July 1799, said:

The Honourable East-India Company Behaudur agrees to maintain, and his Highness Maha
Rajah Mysore Kistna Rajah Oodiaver Behauder agrees to receive a military force for the defence
and security of his Highness’s dominions; in consideration of which protection, his Highness
engages to pay the annual sum of seven lacs of Star Pagodas to the said East-India Company,
the said sum to be paid in twelve equal monthly instalments, commencing from the 1st July,
A.D. 1799. And his Highness further agrees, that the disposal of the said sum, together with the
arrangement and employment of the troops to be maintained by it, shall be entirely left to the
Company.536

This was a humiliating arrangement for the Indian rulers, but a farsighted one
indeed. With Subsidiary Alliance, the reign of endemic warfare of the eighteenth
century was over. Its effects on the dispossessed peasantry were enormously harsh,
though. The prospect of gaining wealth through organized campaigns of plunder had
suddenly become a thing of the past. One million soldiers, supporting families whose
cumulative population was at least five million by the lowest possible reckoning,
were out of work in Karnataka. At the same time, access to land had become a more
distant hope than before. Never in the bygone days was the angst of dispossession
and alienation felt as chillingly in times of peace. Things changed very quickly in the
coming decades, and soon, an unfamiliar world, the kind of which was never once
imagined in the premodern history of the subcontinent, was beginning to take shape.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the British, and the Indian
rulers, such as the Nizām of Haidarābād and the Divān of Maisūru, initiated a series
of public works, like building roads, bridges, and reservoirs. They also brought
into existence a police force and a bureaucracy, in which the terms of employment
were not based on hereditary rights. As newer projects like the establishment of

536 Treaties and Engagements with Native Princes and States in India, Concluded for the Most Part in
the Years 1817 and 1818, ii.
schools, hospitals, printing presses, telegraph lines, and railway lines commenced, and the governments established offices, departments, and commissions to take care of a wide range of activities like health, public instructions, commerce, and communication, a new labour force emerged that had few things in common with the erstwhile forms of labour. A secular labour market had made its arrival. Work in this new labour market was not governed by principles of inheritance and succession. It was based on a process of recruitment that was, in principle, impersonal and bureaucratic. In other words, the labour in the secular labour market was abstract labour. The centuries-old equation between inheritance of profession, and the inheritance of land by way of service tenures and other personalized arrangements, began to wither away rapidly. This was the thin wedge of the political economy that eventually led to the liquidation of the old world, and ushered in the new.

The praxis of sainthood was not insulated from these developments. It began to go through a crucial phase of transition after the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Miracle-workers continued to thrive and, like their sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth century predecessors, built influential monasteries in different parts of the region. At the same time, a new class of stand-alone saints appeared. Most of them did not associate themselves with leading saints, lineages, or monasteries. Few among them built monasteries of their own. A handful of others were fortunate to have maṭhas built in their name after their demise. These saints may be called the tatvapadakāras for want of a better name, as a number of them composed short songs in a genre called the tatvapada.

Śiśunāḷa Śarīf is the best known among the tatvapadakāra saints. Born ten miles to the south of Hubbaḷḷi in the village of Śiśunāḷa on 7 March 1819, Muhammad Śarīf was the son of Hajjūmā and Hazrat Imām Sāhēb. As with many siddhas, the story goes that the couple had no children for many years. They appealed to the saint Khādar Śah Vali of Hulagūru, who conferred upon them a son. Śarīf had his early education at the Kūli maṭha in the village, and passed the Mulki (matriculation) examination. He also spent many hours with manuscripts of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, the Dēvīpurāṇaṃ (of Cidānanda Avadhūta), and the Prabhuliṅgalīle. He was also attracted towards popular performance genres like bayalāṭa, and took active part in them. He is said to have read the works of Sarvajña and Sarpabhūṣaṇa Śivayōgi with great enthusiasm and devotion.

Śarīf might have been proficient in the Persian language, but he also learnt the Mōdi script, used extensively by the Marāṭha chiefs in their revenue and other records. Śarīf was obviously seeking employment with the new bureaucracy. He found a job as a Primary School teacher, and is said to have worked for some years in the schools

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537 Gubbannavara 1999: xxx.
of Maṇḍiganāḷa, Kyālakoṇḍa, Pāṇigaṭṭi, Eribūdihāḷa, and Guñjaḷa. It was around this time that he met the Smārtha brāhmaṇa, Gōvindabhaṭṭa, of the village of Kaḷasa. Impressed by his vast learning and reclusive bent of mind, Śarīf became his disciple.

Śarīf’s conjugal life was short-lived. His wife Fātimā died a few months after delivering a baby girl. Now, Śarīf became fully absorbed in reading and meditation under Gōvindabhaṭṭa’s tutelage. A widely popular anecdote is told about the brāhmaṇa guru and his Muslim disciple in which the people objected to Gōvindabhaṭṭa imparting religious training to a man without a sacred thread. An angry Gōvindabhaṭṭa carried out the investiture of Śarīf with due rites. It was on this occasion that Śarīf sang his popular song, hākida janivārava, sadgurunātha..., i.e. the great lord guru put the sacred thread on me.

After Gōvindabhaṭṭa’s death, Śarīf settled down at Śiśunāḷa, and began to wander sporadically. But unlike the great saints of the preceding centuries, he did not travel widely across the subcontinent from Kāśi and Badari in the north to Kanyākumāri and Dhanuṣkōṭi in the south. His destinations were the towns and villages in parts of the old Dhāravāḍa district. He went to Yalavigi, where he composed a tatvapada in praise of an orchard raised by a certain Rāmajōgi. He travelled to Śirahaṭṭi where he met the (eighth?) pontiff of the monastery of Fakīrappa, and sang a tatvapada in his honour. Thus were spent his days, in wandering, composing and singing songs, begging. The last decades of his life were plagued by severe poverty and threats from moneylenders who had given him loans on various occasions. Śarīf died on 7 March 1889, on his seventieth birthday.

The tatvapadas of Śarīf offer a glimpse of his world in particular and the world of the tatvapadakāra saints in general. It was a world becoming increasingly obscure and unintelligible. For several centuries, the inheritance of access to land and profession had in its reified manifestation enabled a self-understanding in which the self and the world, the soul and the body, and the sacred and the profane, were meaningfully intertwined into each other in a manner that nurtured a consciousness based on plenitude, with a great measure of cognitive if not ontological flexibility between the self and the other. The profane world with the strange bigotries of its men and women was not only open to contempt, criticism, reassessment, and reform, but carried within it potentials to provide similes and metaphors for the sacred. As in a number of vacanas attributed to Allama and Akkamahādēvi, the world could participate dialogically in the explorations concerning the divineness for the self. The new world was different. It had lost, to a substantial extent, its power of becoming similes and metaphors of the sacred. Unlike Koḍēkallu Basava or Maṇṭēsvāmi or

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538 These may not have been the places where Śarīf actually worked. At a time when institutions imparting modern education did not exist in several leading towns and commercial centres of the region, it is unlikely that remote and thinly populated villages such as Maṇḍiganāḷa, Kyālakoṇḍa, Pāṇigaṭṭi, Eribūdihāḷa and Guñjaḷa were endowed with Primary Schools.

539 The old Dhāravāḍa districts were divided into the Dhāravāḍa, the Gadaga, and the Hāvēri districts by the Government of Karnataka in 1994.
Sāvalagi Śivaliṅga or Śīrahaṭṭi Fakīrappa, the tatvapadakāras were generally not seen travelling widely, performing miracles or composing literatures that tried to explore the self or the sacred and its relationship with the rest of the world. Rather, they already knew perfectly well what the self was, and where its sources and sacredness lie. Unlike the early hagiographies of Basava, Allama Prabhu, Akkamahādēvi, and Siddharāma, composed by Harihara, Rāghavāṅka, and Pālkurike Sōmanātha, where the saints are seen going through critical stages of conflict in their mind, or the later hagiographies by Cāmarasa and his successors, where the saints are in full control of the world around them which they change through their miracles, the tatvapadakāra saints are in a strange predicament. They already know what they are; they have access to the farthest corners of the sacred. The sacred is a given that they are endowed with, and the crises and conflicts in their lives contribute precious little to an understanding of the sacred, or to greater levels of self-awareness. What they do not really know are the mysteries of the mundane world with its burden of day-to-day engagements that are filled with uncertainty. Thus, the activities and relationships of the mundane world cease to serve as similes and metaphors of the self or the sacred. The tatvapadakāras explored many a possibility of transforming the world around them into similes and metaphors, but the results are far from reassuring. Here, for instance, is one song by Śarīf where Rāmajōgi’s orchard is deployed as a metaphor.

Look at the garden, my friends!
Look at the play of the great guru!

[The garden] of dharma that became a wonder
with its true knowledge of Brahman,
To destroy a million karmas.

Having become the field in a field / having become void in the void
And with branchless roots,
When the fruits weighing down
sways in the breeze,
[Look at the garden] of those who make it rise up one by one!

[Look at the garden] Rāmajōgi of the great village on earth,
With Yalavigi as its name,
Raised with love,
And where, in the tender forest,
Rāma dwells!

Areca nut, the coconut fruit,
The grace of the banana shoots that sway,
[Look at the garden] of the dark and beautiful song,
with its metre, class, and rhyme,
That our Lord of Śiśunāḷa built in the end!\footnote{No. 123, Gubbannavara 1999.}
An attempt is made in the third stanza to present the orchard as a metaphor for the six yogic cakras that rise one after the other, but without much success. And an attempt is made in the last stanza to present the orchard as a song with the prescribed requirements of prosody, again with little success. Here is another popular song of Śarīf’s in which the act of swallowing is placed in relief as a metaphor.

The hen swallowed the monkey,
Look, little sister?

The goat swallowed the elephant,
The wall swallowed the lime,
The percussion swallowed the actress that came to play....

The cavern swallowed the hill,
The ant swallowed the cavern,
The soul swallowed the feet of Gurugōvinda.541

Contrast these poor metaphors drawn from the world around him with Śarīf’s firm and majestic expression of the knowledge of the self: “I am not what they call ‘I,’” he says. “I am not the human life. I am not the stuff that declares you to be Nārāyaṇa, Brahma, and Sadāśiva. I am not this human body, nor old age and death, not the pleasure of boon and glory, nor am I the curse of forgetting. I am not the mother, the father, or the son, I am not the Lord of the world. I am not caste and lineages, nor am I the pollution of love. I am not the learning or the Vēdas, I am not the one that is merely debating. I am not the one that dwelt in the self-awareness of nāda, bindu, kaḷā, bhēda, and vastu. I am not the difference between you and I, I am not the different forms. (Lord) Śiśunāḷa will not manifest unless I am wiped out, but I am not the stuff you can wipe out.”542 The late eighteenth-century saint Sōmekāṭe Cannavīra, who was not a stand-alone saint but had a monastery to identify with, would not have agreed more with these words of Śarīf’s. Here is what Cannavīra had to say in one of his songs about the self: “You are Śiva, my dear, do you have an Other? Find out for yourself the difference between You and I. Learn for yourself, with your own reflection. Stay forever, by knowing the difference between knowing and forgetting. Find the abode of the supreme, and learn for yourself, my dear. Mingle in the essence of the world, and know it for yourself. You are the path for nāda, bindu, and kaḷā. Know the beginning and the end, and you will realize that you are the soul; the Ōṃkāra of the beginning is subjected to your consciousness, my dear. Look at what stands on top of the Tripuṭagiri hill, and dance, my dear. You will find it shining,
like the rays from a prism. You, yes my dear, You are Cannabasava, the teacher on your forehead.\textsuperscript{543}

Śarīf’s understanding of the self is echoed in a song of one of his contemporaries, Niralakere Basavaliṅga, who was also not a stand-alone saint.

I am Brahman, I am the world.
There is nothing other than me, it’s true.\textsuperscript{544}
Who else, without me?
I am non-dual, it’s true.

I am the one that was knowledge, it’s true,
I am the one that was forgetfulness, it’s true.
I am beyond \textit{turīya},
transcending knowledge and forgetfulness, it’s true.

I am the one that was \textit{aṅga},\textsuperscript{545} it’s true.
I am the one that was \textit{liṅga}, it’s true.
I am the one that was \textit{saṅga}\textsuperscript{546} between \textit{aṅga} and \textit{liṅga}, it’s true.

I am the one that was the eye, it’s true.
I am the one that was the scene, it’s true.
I am the one that was the vision
between the eye and the scene, it’s true.

I am the one who was the teacher, it’s true.
I am the one who was the holy disciple, it’s true.

I am the one who was the secret
between the teacher and the student, it’s true.

I am the one that became I, it’s true.
I am the one that became you, it’s true.
Niralakerevāsa, bright as a million suns,
I am the one without a sign, it’s true.\textsuperscript{547}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{543} Sōmekaṭṭe Cannavīra Svāmigaḷa Kṛtigaḷu, 23.94. The word \textit{niṭila}, forehead, in the last line appears to have been used to fulfill the requirements of the second-syllable rhyme (which rule, however, is violated in the first line of the last stanza). What Cannavīra perhaps intended was \textit{nikhila}, universal.
\item \textsuperscript{544} ‘\textit{nija}’, one’s own. This is among the earliest instances in Kannada where the word is used to mean ‘truth’.
\item \textsuperscript{545} ‘\textit{aṅga}’, body.
\item \textsuperscript{546} ‘\textit{saṅga}’, union.
\item \textsuperscript{547} No. 94, Niralakere Basavaliṅga Śivayōgigaḷa Svaravacanagaḷu.
\end{itemize}
The stand-alone *tatvapadakāras* had appeared at a time when dispossession from traditional access to land and profession was rife. Existing identities, based on caste or religion, were centered mostly on the logic of inheriting access to land and profession. This logic was now undergoing disintegration. But caste was yet to undergo its great modern transformation, and Hinduism was still in an incipient form. Under these circumstances, the only identity that was immediately accessible to people of the Deccan region was the places to which they belonged. In the context of dispossession, the longing for a place might have been all the more tantalizing. The *siddha* saints had explored this possibility for nearly four centuries by appending place-names like Vaḍabāḷa, Dīggi, Koḍēkallu, Tintihinī, Śirahāṭṭi, Sāvalagi, and so on, as prefixes to their names. This became a generalized practice among the *siddhas* in the nineteenth century. Saint after saint came to attach place-name prefixes to their names: Śiśunāḷa Śarīf, Nālatvāḍada Vīrēśa Śaraṇa, Garagada Maḍivāḷappa, Hosāḷḷi Būdisvāmi, Nāgarahāḷḷi Śaraṇabasava, Naraṇagundada Ṭirappajja, Navalagundada Nāgaliṅga, and so on. Table 13 gives a list of nineteenth and twentieth-century *tatvapadakāras* from the Haidarābād Karnataka region.\(^{548}\) Note how place-names figure invariably as prefix in all cases.

The disintegrating identities of caste and religion, derived from the inheritance of access to land, affected the *dāsa* saints too. As it turned out, they were also to adopt place-name prefixes in considerable numbers in their attempt to explore alternate sources of identity. Unlike Kanakadāsa, Purandaradāsa, Vādirāja, and Śrīpādarāya in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Karnataka now had *dāsa* poets named Maisūru Veṅkaṭaramaṇadāsa, Bāgēpalli Subrahmaṇyadāsa, Harapanahāḷḷi Rāmācārya, and Kūḍligi Madhvācārya. Table 14 gives a list of these *dāsa* poets.

While the new order with hereditary access to land and profession on the decline produced a number of stand-alone saints, the monasteries also became deeply rooted in landedness and expanded their influence over the peasantry by bringing them under their grip as followers in increasing numbers. It was possible to deploy the surplus labour released by the armies disbanded after the Subsidiary Alliance towards this end. Many monasteries developed a hierarchy of followers. The monasteries also won over large sections of the population as devotees by extending the networks of feeding among the disposessed. We have seen how a saint like Kalaburagi Śaraṇabasava mobilized resources for this purpose.

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\(^{548}\) The districts of Bīdara, Kalaburagi, Yadagiri, Rāyacūru and Koppaḷa, which were earlier under the Nizām of Haidarābād, are together known as Haidarābād Karnataka.
Table 13. Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Tatvapadakāras from the Haidarābād Karnataka Region\textsuperscript{549}–\textsuperscript{550}

| Sl. No. | Name of the Tatvapadakāra | Sl. No. | Name of the Tatvapadakāra |
|---------|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1.      | Marakundi Basavaṇṇappa    | 33.     | Könāpurada Rāmappa        |
| 2.      | Niṣuvaṇci Bhadrappa       | 34.     | Kvānaḷḷi Honnappa         |
| 3.      | Dhummanasūra Siddhaprabhu | 35.     | Mahagāvi Ērīsāb           |
| 4.      | Kohinūra Ṫussanasāb       | 36.     | Niṃbolī Tippanṇa          |
| 5.      | Bhūtāle Śillappa          | 37.     | Kalkaṃbada Rukm-ud-dīn Sāb|
| 6.      | Bōrgi Ṫehamānsāb         | 38.     | Dēvāṅgada Amērāya         |
| 7.      | Keṅcā Maḍīvājaśeṭṭi      | 39.     | Dēvāṅgada Ānandārāya      |
| 8.      | Huḍugiyā Gurupādappa     | 40.     | Kūḍalūru Basavaliṅga      |
| 9.      | Maṅgalagi Nannādsāb      | 41.     | Gūgallu Parappayya        |
| 10.     | Aṣṭūru Narasappa Māstar  | 42.     | Gabbūra Ḣaṃpanṇa          |
| 11.     | Muddinavāḍi Aziz Paṭēl   | 43.     | Niralakere Basavaliṅga    |
| 12.     | Rāmapurada Bakkappa      | 44.     | Santēkallūru Ghanamaṭhada Nagabhuṣaṇa |
| 13.     | Bidanūru Gaṅgamma        | 45.     | Arvali Bijali Vastādi (i.e. Ustād) |
| 14.     | Harasūru Aqavirappa      | 46.     | Gabbūra Ayappajja         |
| 15.     | Kaḍakōḷada Maḍivāḷappa   | 47.     | Dēvavardgada Cannamalla   |
| 16.     | Cennūra Jalālsāb         | 48.     | Veṅkaṭapurada Khēmaṇṇa   |
| 17.     | Khainūra Kṛṣṇappa        | 49.     | Hosapētya Ayappa Panthōji  |
| 18.     | Ainole Karivasavayya      | 50.     | Tāḷapalḷi Veṅkaṭya       |
| 19.     | Telugabāḷa Rēvaṇṇa       | 51.     | Bāḷagāṇūra Marīsvāmi     |
| 20.     | Kaḍlēvāḍada Siddhappa    | 52.     | Dēvavardgada Ādi Amāteppa |
| 21.     | Mōṭanaḷḷi Hassansāb      | 53.     | Gabbūra Mārtāṇḍappa      |
| 22.     | Bēnūru Khāki Pir         | 54.     | Gōnuvaṇa Baṭēsāb          |
| 23.     | Dēvāṅgada Guṇdappa\textsuperscript{550} | 55.     | Rāmadurgada Sheǐk Abdul Bābā |
| 24.     | Rastāpurada Bhīma        | 56.     | Rāyaċūru Hanumantavva     |
| 25.     | Kāḷāgi Maṣāksāb         | 57.     | Rāyaċūru Yaramāreppa      |
| 26.     | Jāvalagi Gurovaṇēna Śaraṇa | 58.     | Maṇjarāḷa Khādarsāb      |
| 27.     | Mādana Hipparagā Siddharāma | 59.     | Jahīrābādina Tippanṇatātātā |
| 28.     | Rājōḷada Murugharājēndra | 60.     | Hosūru Tippanṇa          |
| 29.     | Sirāgpurada Baṇḍeppa     | 61.     | Kalmalāda Tāyaṇṇa        |
| 30.     | Kauḷūru Siddharāma       | 62.     | Hērūru Virupanṇa          |
| 31.     | Jambagi Śaraṇappa        | 63.     | Vaḍāki Tāṭayya           |
| 32.     | Sāvāḷagi Muhammadsāb     | 64.     | Tāḷakēri Basavaraṇa      |

\textsuperscript{549} Source: Sabarad 2000.
\textsuperscript{550} Dēvāṅga is the name of a village in the Ālānde tālūk of Kalaburagi district, and should not be mistaken for the weaver caste, also called Dēvāṅga.
Table 14. Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Dāsa poets with place-name prefixes\textsuperscript{551}

| Sl. No. | Name of the dāsa poet       | Sl. No. | Name of the dāsa poet       |
|---------|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| 1.      | Ėri Nārāyaṇācārya            | 35.     | Bāgēpalli Subrahmaṇyaṇadāsa |
| 2.      | Karajagi Dāsappa             | 36.     | Mānvi Guṇḍācārya             |
| 3.      | Līṅgasugūru Yōṅgindrāya      | 37.     | Gōkāvi Bhīmācārya            |
| 4.      | Modalakallu Śēṣadāsa         | 38.     | Citradurgada Rāmacandrāya    |
| 5.      | Kōṣīgi Svāmīrāyācārya        | 39.     | Heḷavanakaṭṭe Gīrīyamma      |
| 6.      | Tirupati Pāṇḍuraṅgi Huccācārya | 40.     | Harapanahalli Bhīmavva      |
| 7.      | Harapanahalli Kṛṣṇācārya     | 41.     | Mūdnuṟu Hanneraṅgadāsa      |
| 8.      | Cikkōḍi Ācārya               | 42.     | Askihaḷa Gōvindadāsa        |
| 9.      | Maisūru Venkaṭaramanadāsa    | 43.     | Kallūra Subbaṇṇācārya       |
| 10.     | Kuṅcūru Hanumantācārya       | 44.     | Gadvālada Subbaṇṇadāsa      |
| 11.     | Būrlī Hanumantarāṅgarāya     | 45.     | Santēbennūru Rāmadāsa       |
| 12.     | Surapuruda Pṛemadāsa         | 46.     | Mānā Madurai Dāsa           |
| 13.     | Savadi Rāmacandrappā         | 47.     | Līṅgasugūru Svāmīrāyācārya  |
| 14.     | Kinnāḷada Śrīnivāsadāsa      | 48.     | Gōrābāḷa Hanumantarāya      |
| 15.     | Kākhaṇḍaki Rāmācārya         | 49.     | Citradurga Śrīnivāsarāya     |
| 16.     | Varavaṇi Rāmarāya            | 50.     | Doḍḍajavāḷāpurada Rāghavēndradāsa |
| 17.     | Surapuruda Anandadāsa        | 51.     | Bāgēpalli Śēṣadāsa           |
| 18.     | Maḍakaśirāda Bhīmādāsaru     | 52.     | Hoḷēnaṛasipurada Bhīmārāya  |
| 19.     | Bennūru Rāmācārya            | 53.     | Saragūru Venkaṭavāradācārya |
| 20.     | Harapanahalli Rāmācārya      | 54.     | Galagali Avva                |
| 21.     | Harapanahalli Śrīpatidāsa    | 55.     | Narēgalla Rāmaṇṇa           |
| 22.     | Surapuruda Bhīmācārya        | 56.     | Kamaladāni Nārāyaṇarāya     |
| 23.     | Puṇe Rāghavācārya            | 57.     | Aihoḷe Bhīmarāya             |
| 24.     | Mēḷnāṭi Lakṣmaṇārya          | 58.     | Huyilagōḷa Nārāyaṇarāya     |
| 25.     | Surapuruda Gōpati Viṭhaladāsa | 59.     | Savaṇūru Dūrappadāsa        |
| 26.     | Kēṁbāvī Dāsācārya            | 60.     | Nīḍaguraki Jīvūbāyi         |
| 27.     | Aḍakalagunḍa Bhīmācārya      | 61.     | Gadvāḷa Satyācārya          |
| 28.     | Hōḷi Śēṇagirīrāya            | 62.     | Harapanahalli Venkaṭadāsa   |
| 29.     | Sagara Kṛṣṇācārya            | 63.     | Karajagi Tirthappa           |
| 30.     | Surapuruda Hējīb Kṛṣṇārāya   | 64.     | Honnāḷi Dāsa                |
| 31.     | Kēṁbāvī Surēndrārāvu Kulakaraṇī | 65.     | Küḍligi Madhvācārya        |
| 32.     | Śaṅkhāvaram Venkaṭarāṛaghavācārya | 66.     | Savaṇūru Bādarāyaṇadāsa    |
| 33.     | Bīranūru Kṛṣṇācārya Jōṣi     | 67.     | Santēkēḷūru Varadēsādāsa   |
| 34.     | Huṇasihōḷi Bhīmarāvu Kulakaraṇī | 68.     | Ciṭṭūru Śrīnivāsarāya      |

\textsuperscript{551} Source: Parthasarathy 2013: 1856-1859.
Śaraṇabasava also practiced agriculture, and encouraged devotees to take to the farm. During his visit to Parvatābād, he found the area affected by draught and scarcity of food. A famine was looming large over the horizon. The saint made an appeal for donation of grains and other foodstuffs, set out on begging tours, and launched feeding, which is said to have averted the famine. Śaraṇabasava also encouraged several other saints and landlords to practice dāsōha on a large scale. One such saint who initiated feeding was Daṇḍarāya Śaraṇa of Avarādi. Others include Mallikārjunappa Gauḍa of Bidanūru, and Balavanta Śaraṇa of Nāganūru. Balavanta Śaraṇa was the son of Dhūḷavva and Śaraṇappa, a child conferred upon the couple by Śaraṇabasava with the bidding that the boy will grow up to become a leading practitioner of dāsōha.

Śaraṇabasava is said to have incurred debts while generating resources for feeding. Not always did he succeed in repaying the loan. Among the moneylenders who failed to recover their loans was a certain Kallappa of Moraṭagi. After many appeals and threats, he employed a goon of Marāṭha origins, Rāmji Dāda, for recovering the loan. What followed is understandably banal. Rāmji reached Śaraṇabasava’s monastery with a group of gangsters, was overwhelmed by Śaraṇabasava’s charisma and the piety he practiced, and was persuaded by the saint to give up his rowdy life and commence feeding. In the meantime, Kallappa’s loan had been repaid, quite predictably, through a miracle.

The practice of feeding instituted by the monasteries, whether by design to create a huge following, or by a genuine concern for the suffering masses, was of no mean historical consequence. It shielded the region from the devastations of famine that turned out to be so frequent in the nineteenth century. Not that famines were unknown in South Asia before the nineteenth century or that they never resulted in widespread devastation. However, the emerging world of dispossession from hereditary access to land and profession is sure to have made the situation graver than before. Millions died in the great famines of the nineteenth century in Bengal, Odisha, and Andhra. The famine of 1866 wiped out a third of Odisha’s population. Not one case of famine was reported from Karnataka for much of the nineteenth century, except from the Baḷḷāri region, contiguous with the famine-prone Rāyalasīma district of Andhra, and Mysūru in the south.

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552 Hiremath 1991: 176.
553 Ibid., 93.
554 Ibid., 97-99.
555 Ibid., 99-101.
556 Ibid., 102-104.
557 Ibid., 92.
558 Ibid., 102-103.
559 On the demographic and economic consequences of this famine, see Mohanty 1993. Mohanty estimates that death toll in the 1866 famine was “higher than one million”, Ibid., 57.
In its report submitted in 1880, the Indian Famine Commission of 1878 recorded that the Deccan region was subjected to a severe famine in 1792, and again in 1803. Whether this region included Karnataka is not made clear. However, no other case of famine was reported until 1878 (when the report terminates) for the Karnataka region. One instance of scarcity is reported for the Deccan in 1845, again without clearly indicating if Karnataka was part of it. The scarcity was occasioned by scanty rainfall in 1844. In contrast, scarcity was reported in northern Deccan in 1825 and 1834. Besides, in the Baḷḷāri region, which was more arid and infertile than many other parts of Karnataka and where fewer monasteries existed, a famine was reported in 1854, and another in 1866. It is also worthy of note that although Karnataka is known for its droughts, which in some places like Citradurga occurs every alternate year, the Famine Commission noticed ‘principal droughts’ in the Deccan only in 1802 and 1876. The first of these led to a famine in 1803, but the drought of 1876 had no such implications in northern Karnataka. In Maisūru, though, the 1876 drought led to a famine in 1877. Note that few monasteries existed in the Maisūru region, and fewer practiced feeding. In sharp contrast to the situation in Karnataka, the Madras Presidency, including coastal Andhra, witnessed famines in 1783, 1792, 1807, 1813, 1824, 1833, 1866 and 1877. Scarcity affected Haidarābād in 1833 and 1854, and famine visited the region in 1792, 1803, 1866 and 1877.560

At a time when large parts of South Asia were reeling under famine and scarcity, the drought-prone regions of northern Karnataka present us with a situation that can only be regarded a miracle. And why not? The great miracle-workers of the region had performed the humble miracle of organizing feeding in times of plenty as well as in times of distress. As a result, the droughts and scarcities are only likely to have taken away hundreds of lives, not millions as in the Bengal and Madras presidencies.

It was in the world of famines and scarcities in the Madras presidency that Christian missionaries were most active. Here, they arranged for feeding, of course on a far lesser scale than the siddha monasteries of northern Karnataka. They also established schools, hospitals, and churches, and carried out missionary work under their banner. Thousands of people were converted to Christianity. At about the time of the 1866 famine, a certain Mahimā Gōsāyī was active in Odisha, redefining the practice of sainthood, and more significantly, mobilizing resources to feed people in the tuṅgis he set up at different places for the purpose. The following that he won over in the course of this work were to eventually congeal into a new faith called Mahimā Dharma, which now has over half a million followers in Odisha.561

Northern Karnataka did not witness the emergence of any new religious faith such as the Mahimā Dharma. Nor did Christian missionaries succeed in winning

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560 Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1880, Part – 1, p. 21-22. Also see Digby 1878.
561 For an introduction to the Mahimā Dharma, see Eschmann 1978 and Bahinipati 2009. For advanced discussions, Banerjee-Dube 2001 and Banerjee-Dube and Beltz 2011.
over converts in this region. The presence of Christianity continues to be feeble here. Attempts to carry out missionary work were of course not unknown. Between 1837 and 1851, five missions of the London Missionary Society were established in the Dhāravāḍa region, one each in Dhāravāḍa (1837), Hubbaḷḷi (1839), Betagēri (1841), Malasandra (1841), and Guḷēdaguḍḍa (1851).562 “The native population”, observed the missionary, Joseph Mullens, “...have a...hold upon the Hindu religion and the law of the caste. It was long therefore before the gospel began to tell upon them, and drew its converts”.563 And it was a group of goldsmiths and coppersmiths that they succeeded in converting.564 Among the ‘Nudi Lingaits’, Mullens noticed the German Missionaries of Dhāravāḍa and the London Missionaries of Beḷagāvi ‘making the most rapid progress’.565 Here is his description of the extent of progress made:

On one occasion, a Lingait priest, with two hundred of his followers came to visit Mr. Albrecht at Dharwar. The visit occurred on a Sunday morning, and the whole company attended public worship, behaving in the most proper and orderly manner. They brought with them a number of Christian books which they had previously received and assured the missionary not only that they constantly studied them, but were convinced that they were true, while their own books were false. They even asserted also their full belief in the Lord Jesus and called themselves his disciples. A year or two later Mr. Würth of Hoobly, travelling through the country, came upon another band of these disciples with their guru. They had never seen a missionary but had received a large number of Canarese tracts, one or two theological treatises, and a Canarese New Testament. They also professed their faith in the Lord’s divinity and quoted passages to prove it.

And then comes the anti-climax.

Many of the Lingaits continued to visit the missionaries; and at length in the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, four were baptized. One of these was a priest and from the influence he possessed proved very zealous and useful in bringing his former disciples and companions to the missionary. In the same year, three young men, Lingaits, two of whom were priests, came in to Dharwar from a village a hundred miles distant. They had received some tracts at second-hand and were greatly struck with their contents. A young christian [sic] came into their village, read over the books with them, and induced them to go with him into a temple at some distance that they might worship God together in secret. By degrees as they continued to study these books, they obtained a clear knowledge of the gospel and seemed thoroughly to be converted men. They were soon after baptized. Similar baptisms of Lingaits have also taken place in Belgaum.566

This, then, was the ‘rapid progress’ made: success in converting four people at one mission, three at another, and so on. Northern Karnataka was not in need of

562 Mullens 1854: 41.
563 Ibid.
564 Ibid.
565 Ibid., 42.
566 Ibid., 43-44.
the Christian missionaries. They had their own miracle-working saints and their monasteries that offered them food in times of distress, and eminently addressed their spiritual needs.

We have now come to the end of what we have chosen to call a prehistory of Hinduism. This prehistory commenced with the emergence of religious identities in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, passed through many a vicissitude from knowledge, travel, and warfare, to penance, miracles, and feeding, and in the end reached a strange world of alienations and dispossessions. It was this new world that gave birth to Hinduism. The manner in which it happened is very important in the light of the prehistory we have traced. We must therefore end this study with a prolegomenon that point to signposts of this process, and opens up fresh avenues for understanding what Hinduism is.