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RESEARCH REPORT

**BUNT COMMUNITY OF
TULUNADU**

THE BUNT COMMUNITY OF TULU NADU

Analytical report submitted to Discover India Program committee, FLAME for
partial fulfilment of Discover India Program six-credit course.

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This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report entitled “The Bunts Community of Tulu Nadu”, submitted by the undersigned research team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

The Bunt community is a prominent community of the district of Dakshina Kannada. The community is mostly made up of wealthy landowners with a rich history and tradition. This triumphant community has an aura of uniqueness through their belief in Bhutas or Spirits.

The Bhuta worship is an important folk ritualistic theatre with its roots cemented in religious soil. It is conducted in order to appease the spirit and ask for its protection. It is conducted post the harvest season. Bhutas are either in a human or animal form.

The Bhuta Worship or Bhuta Kola has captured attention because of its religious association and also primarily due to the close relation with the history and society of the Bunt community. This can be discussed at a political, judicial and social level. It has ventured beyond the boundaries of a religion and has manifested itself into a political and administrative power and a collective voice of the society.

The Bhuta Kola has manifested into the cultural sports. Kori Katta, or Rooster Fight and Kambala, Buffalo Race are linked to the main festival for the purpose of pleasing the spirit. The community is primarily an agrarian community and hence looks to the Bhuta to bless their fields. The Guttus (Bunt households) are standing emblems that catch the essence of the intricacy. Every Bunt Guttu has shrines dedicated for the spirits. Guttus define a Bunt's identity, social as well as economic status, and this is pronounced through the household's involvement in the cultural sports.

The fervour of the Bhuta Kola has continued till date despite an undercurrent of modernity and commercialization, which is bound to happen in today's world. Fear of these Bhutas has become the driving force for this form of worship.

Through our research we aim to bring this illusory world out of the shadows by documenting the performance, its evolution and its deep connection with the Bunt community and how it materializes its functions in the world of reality.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Niru pattu niwalla! Peru pattu jajalla! Babipula-nallere kallana! Malpinchitti pali kenla! Mangaluru saralu panpi pari kinla! Mulki ormbamagane panpi pari kenla! Banteru sara sime panpi pari kenla! Manelu hobali panpi pari konla jewadye! Mugeru munnudalu panpi pari kenla ye!

Take away the Bhuta in the water, O god! Offer milk! Help thy servants! Hear advice! Hear the advice of a thousand people of Mangalur. Hear the advice of the people of nine Magnes at Mulki. Hear the advice of a thousand people of the Bants. Hear the advice of the people of Manel. Hear the advice of three hundred inhabitants of Muger.

- Kalkuda Pardanna¹

The protean character of the word culture is what seems to draw everyone's attention. It's an intricate mesh of a way of life, religious practices, language and dialect, gender role, festivals, etc; It seems like only yesterday we were sitting in a room, brainstorming for a topic that forms a peek-hole into the expansive culture of India. The book "Bunts in History and Culture" was just the break we needed.

The complexity of the Bunt culture astounded us as we hungrily explored the contours of this book. The community had such rich history and folklore but more than that, we came across a festival that was so unique and so engaging that it became the main pursuit of our discovery. The festival is the Bhuta worship or spirit worship.

¹A.C Burnell. "The Song of Kalkuda." *The Devil Worship Of the Tuluvas*. Mangalore: Karnataka Tulu Sahitya

Academy, n.d. N. page 201. Print.

Our Research Question:

To study the extent of influence of the Bhuta Kola, a form of spirit worship and its manifestations on the Bunt community?

1.1 Their Belief System:

When one hears the words ‘Bhuta Kola’, the first thought that comes into mind is ‘Devil worship’. However, this is not true. In the land of Tulu Nadu, the meaning of these two words ‘Spirit worship’ is known as ‘Daivya’ in Kannada.

To trace the history behind the purpose of the spiritual worship is difficult. “It is considered as a mixture of various beliefs, rituals, literature, music and theatrical elements.”² It is done to narrate, to the Bhuta, the problems of the community and ask it for advice. This is done with the promise of conducting the ritual every year. If it is not conducted, it is considered a bad omen for the community.

“Bhuta Kola is a very unique form of Traditional, ritualistic folk spiritual dance of Karnataka’s coastal Districts of Udupi and South Canara.”³ This tradition has continued for over 400 years. It is a performance that lasts an entire night for three consecutive days by dancers belonging to the Pambadas. Within these three days, an impersonator dons the costume and mask (or applies face paint) to represent the Bhuta and gets possessed for a short period of time. The Bhuta then addresses the concerns of the community and blesses them. It has a strong tradition due to the close relationship it has established with the Bunt community.

Many times it has occurred that practices and beliefs, like the Bhuta Kola are practiced and followed by a community without knowing the root reason behind it. Hence we were driven to make sense of how this belief has flourished.

² Airody, Prasad. "Bhuta Kola a South Indian Ritual for Worshiping Guardian Spirits." Prasad Airody, n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

³ Airody, Prasad. "Bhuta Kola a South Indian Ritual for Worshiping Guardian Spirits." Prasad Airody, n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

The Bhuta Worship has served a political as well as a social purpose for the community in the course of its evolution. The Bhuta has a great administrative power over the community, as the decision made by the Bhuta is the final decision. It has also brought out various social issues such as oppression and inequality through the oral epics recited in the performance. This form of worship has also manifested itself into the cultural sports Kori Katta (Rooster Fight) and Kambala (Buffalo Race) as a manner of pleasing the spirit.

The Bhuta Kola has been a focus of interest by many scholars in the past. Two prominent ones being Chinnapa Gowda, who has documented the performances of various Bhutas and brought out various deep messages enwrapped within these codes and B. Surendra Rao, who has done an extensive research on the Bunt Culture and History.

1.2 Our Aim and Objectives:¹

Significant knowledge gaps exist regarding the concept of this popular folk religion, its nature, its functions and its close relationship with the Bunt community. We thus aimed to produce a thick documentation of the Bhuta Kola and its manifestations into the Kori Katta and Kambala and link them with the Bunt community the manner in which it guides their way of living within the contours of the Guttus (their households).

In this manner it would shed light on some pressing questions in our research:

1) Why though the Bunt society though governed by a matrilineal law of inheritance is still an entirely male dominated society 2) How do cultural sports such as Kori Katta and Kambala greatly define their association with the Bhuta Kola? 3) How does the Bhuta belief system provide remedies for the social and judicial system within the community 4) Is Fear the main driving force for the fervor of the Bhuta Kola?

In order to form an effective documentation of the intricate web woven by the Bhuta Worship, we began our research with a historical background of the Bunt community and the Bhuta Worship, through historical inscriptions and foreign accounts by Basel Missionaries. This would thus provide in depth understanding of the community as well as provide an answer as to how this worship began and how the Bhutas came to be. This would thus make it easier to form the connection. We have then analyzed the Bhuta Worship through a political, administrative and social lens and how in the process it forms the collective voice of the Bunt community. The spirit worship has invited new arenas for its performance. It has incorporated two cultural sports, the Kambala (Buffalo race) and the Kori Katta (Rooster-fight). The cultural sports are not only conducted to appease the spirit but also to bring pride and honour to the Guttu (the Bunt Household). Hence we have analysed the two cultural sports and their connection to the Bhuta Worship and the power of the Guttu. In every Bunt Guttu, a Bhuta shrine can be found. The ornaments that are worn by the Bhuta on the auspicious day are placed in these shrines. They remain under the eternal protection of these spirits. Hence we have also included our analysis on the manner in which these shrines have been positioned and built, in the process appreciating the unique and intricate woodwork of these Guttus.

In the end we learnt that the richness of the Bunt community pours out of the study of the Bhuta worship. There is more to the Bhuta worship, and it is this intricacy that astounded us. Considering how the world has become more commercialized and ridden with injustice and exploitation, it is comforting to know that there is voice in an illusory world that reminds us everyday of an exploited society in need equality, harmony and justice.

1.3 Limitation

Bhuta Aradhane can be simply defined as Spirit Worship. Bhuta Kola is a sub section of Bhuta Aradhane. It is a performance held for the entire village in public. We had the opportunity of watching the Bhuta Kola alone and hence will not be focusing on the Bhuta Nema or Bandi, which are the other two types of worship that come under Bhuta Aradhane. A limitation that we faced was the language problem and hence the process of interviewing was more cumbersome.

1.4 Geographical Location and Its Significance



Image 1: The map of Mangalore⁴

Our First Thoughts

2nd January 2014

This was the day when it all began. After getting a taste of our topic through research and hard work, we were facing the greatest challenge!!! How are we going to accomplish our goals on the field trip to Mangalore? It was 7 Pm. The time had arrived when our group more like a family left the campus by a mini bus to Panvel station on a happy frame of mind. The scene of Red Shirt Coolies, some push carriages moving hurriedly, vendors selling Bread Pakoras, biscuits and varied packaged food at the station made us all to excited. Finally the train steamed in at 11:50 PM and we all boarded. After a little tussle and rush to get into the train we managed to settle down in

⁴ Hebbar, Dr. Neria H. "Tulu Nadu: The Land and Its People." N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

The location is Mangalore, a port on the Arabian Sea, in the district Dakshina Kannada. It consists of a colourful mosaic of religions and cultures. The Hindus consisting of the Billavas, Mogavirs, Bunts, Brahmins, Goud Saraswats co-exist with Christians, Jains, and Muslims. The smooth blend of the various cultures and religions was a good starting point to help us understand what we wanted to explore. The historically rich Mangalore is in the district of Dakshina Kannada found in the region Tulu Nadu. Within Mangalore, at Moodbidri we witnessed the Bhuta Kola performance of Koti-Cennaya. We had also travelled to Udupi, within Tulu Nadu to visited Mahatma Gandhi Memorial College to collect more source material for our project.

1.5 A Few Facts about the Bunt Community:

The Bunt community (Tulu:ಬಂಟರ, Kannada:ಬಂತವರ, Malayalam:ബന്റ്) is a Hindu community that speaks the language of Tulu. The language Tulu is one of the most unique and one of the first five Dravidian languages. The script is the oldest amongst the other primary languages used in the South India and infact the Malayalam script has evolved from Tulu.

They can be found in the area spanning from Udupi, districts of Mangalore and Kasargod as well as in some areas of Kerala. The Bunts attained their greatest glory during the Vijayanagara Empire from the 14th to 17th century. The main occupation of the Bunt community was agriculture after the fall of this empire. A majority of the Bunt community today is made up of struggling middle classes however they had a prominent presence in history and were at the top of the social hierarchy of Tulu Nadu. Bunts were infact leaders of the locality as inferred by two copper plates that were unpublished dated A.D 1594 and A.D 1610. They were landowners and because of this had a lot of power concentrated in their hands.

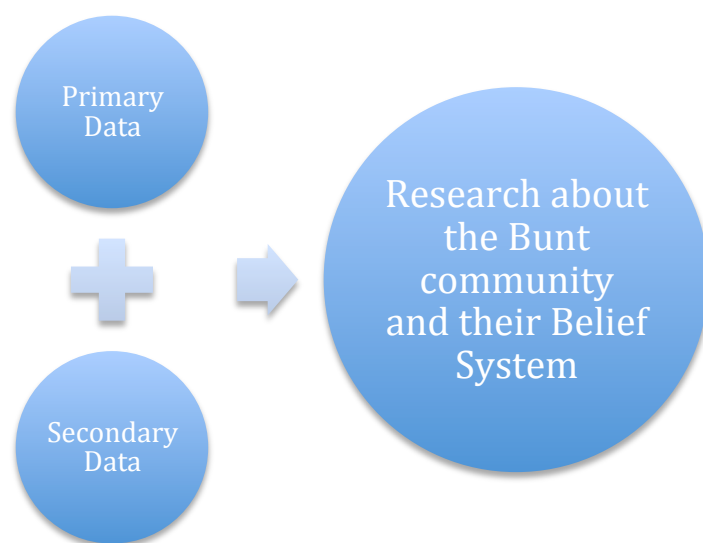
There have been various sensitive questions discussing the similarities between the Bunts, the Jains and the Nairs of Kerala. This arose from the fact that all three communities believe in the Bhuta Aradhane. The Bhuta Aradhane in Kerala is known as Theyyam. Another similarities being that; the household architecture (Guttus) is very similar in design.

According to B. Surendra Rao, there was speculation that the Bunts were once Jains. If so, the immediate question of “why would they chose to convert back to their original caste?”

There have been some suggestions of Bunts not being able to suffer the deprivation of chicken and hence converted back to Bunts. According to Mrs. Shilpa Shetty, the similarities have arisen due to the fact that the three communities have descended from the same Kshatriya clan.

1.6 Research Methodology

Our research topic’s main focus is on the Bhuta Kola and how it is has formed an identifier of the Bunt community. In order to truly analyse the connection we needed a thorough understanding of the community itself. Hence we conducted a qualitative as well as a quantitative evaluation.



Representation 1: Our Research Methodology

Our Primary Data included:

- Interviews
- Observations of the community, their practices and beliefs

We segregated our Secondary Data into:

- Qualitative
- Quantitative

Our Qualitative Analysis was conducted using:

- Books
- Interviews
- Observations of the community, their practices and beliefs

Our Quantitative Analysis was conducted using:

- Survey
- Bar Graph
- Pie Chart

Primary Data

Interviews

The list of people we conducted interviews are:

- **Academics**
 - a) Sirish Kumar MK
 - b) Chinnapa Gowda
 - c) B. Surendra Rao
 - d) Mrs Shilpa Shetty
- **Community Members**
 - a) Dancers
 - b) Priest
 - c) Mr Kadamba
 - d) Kambala Rider
 - e) Guttu Residents

The interviews conducted were of the academics of the community such as K. Chinnapa Gowda, a scholar who has studied the social context of Tulu folklore and practices and gave us detailed description about the connection between Bhuta Kola and the connections with the cultural sports. We interviewed Mr. Sirish Kumar, who has collected a great amount of information regarding the Bhuta Kola and B. Surendra Rao who gave us an idea about the female inheritance law and its status today. He is a distinguished historian and wrote the book Bunts in History and Culture, which was one of our principal sources. During our prefield investigation we interviewed Mrs Shilpa Shetty, who is currently doing her PHD on the Bhuta worship of Tulu Nadu. She gave us an idea about how the Bhuta worship, the Bunt community and their evolution over time. We also had an informal interview on Mrs Navanita Shetty who talked about the belief system of the Bhutas today.



Image 2: Group's Interaction with B. Surendra Rao

We conducted interviews of the priests as well as the dancers to get an insider's view of the important worship. In this manner we conducted an interview on the Guttu residents in order to understand their lifestyles and how they worshipped the spirit within their households. The Kambala rider helped us understand the connection between this sport and Bhuta Kola. Mr Kadamba gave us an idea about the dynamics of this cultural sport.

Participant Observation:

We have analysed the costumes of the performers as they have a symbolic representation, thus allowing us to have a comprehensive understanding of the performance and the Bhutas. We have also analysed the manner of the competitive spirit of the Kori Katta and Kambala and how they represent the power of the Guttu. We have also paid attention to the Pardanas, being a motif of social conflicts. They would give us an idea of the Bhuta Kola's close association with social hierarchy.

Secondary Data:

Qualitative Analysis

Books

The Research Centres we visited on field are:

MGM College Library, Udupi
Karnataka Tulu Academy

We also aimed at achieving a historical reconstruction of the lives of the community. We thus carried an on-field research at MGM college library in Udupi, Karnataka Theological College, and Karnataka Tulu Academy, which have documentation of ancient Tulu scriptures and Paddanas (documented by foreigners). The book "The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas" at MGM College Library, written by A.C. Burnell in the second half of the nineteenth century helped us understand how well foreigners could relate to a culture other than their own.

We collected the following books:

- The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas
- The Bunts in History and Culture
- The Mask and the Message

During our preliminary research, we had access to only “The Bunts in History and Culture” by B. Surendra Rao, which gave us a detailed insight into the lifestyle of the Bunts and their belief system. It exposed us to the fact that Bunts had a deep belief in spirits and that members of the community, despite the changing trends do still attend the Bhuta Kola out of fear of the deities. We will be analysing the judicial and political intricacy through the help K. Chinnapa Gowda’s book “The Mask and the Message.”

We also had access to Mr Sagar Shetty’s thesis report on the Traditional Bunt houses of Dakshina Kannada. Sagar Shetty is a well-known architect in Mangalore.

Quantitative Analysis

During our pre-field research, we had conducted an interview on Mrs Navanita Shetty who made us realize that slowly the belief that the community members have on the Bhutas is dissipating. She mentioned that now, the community members who worship the Bhutas do this out of fear. Hence we decided to conduct a survey, while we were in Mangalore to truly find out whether the worship is done out of fear and superstition or true belief. Hence the survey was of a yes or no format and we have created a graphical representation (bar and pie chart) of the percentage of the population of the community that do believe or otherwise.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

To write a commissioned history of a prominent caste/community in this day and age is a highly tricky venture. First, in a social and political milieu where caste identity is entrenched and often militant in its claims for recognition, such an endeavour could serve an agenda-building and myth-creating role, thereby producing false history. On the other hand, it could also come as a let-down, injuring the self-image of the leading lights of the community, particularly those who commissioned the work.

B. Surendra Rao, a distinguished historian and author of *Bunts in History and Culture*, scrupulously avoids the pitfalls of commissioned history. (Indeed, he has said that the book under review is “sponsored” rather than “commissioned.”) “History should neither reduce itself to a panegyric, nor should it become a site of impeachment,” he notes in his Preface to the book. Writing a scientific and methodologically sound history of a community is no easy task. It involves piecing together and interpreting disparate historical evidence that is available about the internally differentiated social group as it evolved across time and space, while keeping the larger context of history and historical change in the frame. A zoom-lens focus on the community would not do, nor would the broad sweep of a wide-angled view that could dilute the specificity of the subject. And Rao has succeeded in avoiding both distortions, thanks to his clear understanding of history and its craft.

RICH FOLKLORE

Rao's “Bunts in History and Culture” helped in the reconstruction of the social history of the Bunts, a successful and visible community of Dakshina Kannada, range from inscriptions and the rich folklore of the Tulu Nadu region for the early and medieval periods, to newspapers, public documents, colonial tracts, and contemporary writing for the colonial and modern periods.

The Bunts emerged as landlords and later, as a prominent trading class (although “not an undifferentiated community in terms of wealth, power or influence to merit a single generalisation,” the author qualifies) that struck a rapport with the rulers of the region and often provided the fighting force for their armies.

A distinguishing and enduring aspect of the Bunt culture has been its indissoluble link with the non-Vedic religious cults of Bhutas, Daivas and their places of worship.

By the beginning of the 17th century, according to the Portuguese and other documents, the Bunts had become a powerful trading community, with the big players amongst them competing with the Portuguese and the Nayaka rulers of the region.

MALE-DOMINATED

Rao has traced in some detail the centrality of the guttu — loosely translated as the feudal manor house and its world — to the political and economic status of the Bunts. The Guttus linked the Bunts to the larger power structure of the region, but they were also the citadels of local power that controlled a network of relations amongst other castes in the locality. They also dispensed justice, with their authority to do so deriving strength from their ritual connection to the Daiva and Bhuta shrines.

And, although the Bunt society was governed, not unlike the Nairs of Kerala, by a matrilineal law of inheritance, its head was the Yajamana (master) and its control-system entirely male-dominated.

With the British takeover of the region in 1799, the old social and political structures of control established by the Bunts rapidly dissipate under the pressure of new land revenue demands, causing the peasantry to revolt.

The Koot rebellion (1930) is led by the Brahmin and Bunt elite, with peasants joining in large numbers. The British respond with force, but alongside seek to buy the support of these influential groups by co-opting them as functionaries of the state.

Rao says the enterprising Bunts seized the opportunities thrown up by coastal urbanisation and soon came to dominate the regional grain trade, a “half-way house between landlordism and business.” They also controlled the transport sector, started the famous Mangalore tile factories, and even pioneered horticultural ventures.

Clearly, if there were historically one social surge that cut through entrenched community and caste consciousness it was the national movement, as the example of the Bunts would show. The author describes how the Bunts were drawn into different

streams and ideologies within the freedom movement, both in the Congress and the Left.

The book is a valuable document recording the trajectory of an essentially agrarian community that emerged as a clan of successful entrepreneurs and professionals. It also provides an insight into how communities transform over time, swiftly adapting themselves to changing social and economic conditions.

“Bhuta is a complex ideology. It is a mystery. But there is a message behind masks of Bhutas,” says K. Chinnappa Gowda, author of the book “The mask and the message” and a senior researcher on Tulu folklore, who obtained doctorate for his research on Bhuta worship, from Mangalore University.

Prof. Gowda, Registrar (Administration) of Mangalore University, says that Bhuta worship signifies the fight against injustice and exploitation in society. It is a fight against denial of social justice by upper class to the suppressed class of society. The different actions of the Bhuta impersonator in the performance-situation like exaggerated shouts, swallowing fire, wounding himself with sword, walking on a heap of embers signify impatience against injustice and exploitation, he says.

Bhutas can be classified into five categories.

They are those who have Totemistic (animal) origin (like Panjurli, Pili Bhuta, Mysandaya); Puranic deities such as Vishnumurti, Jataadhaari; those in the form of ganas of Shiva or the Mother Goddess (like Ullaalti, Jumaadi, Lakkesiri); and the heroes who met with tragic death for some noble cause and became Bhutas to be worshipped afterwards (like Kooti Chennaya, Kalkuda, Kallurti, Bobbarya, Koodabbu). The fifth categories are Bhutas of diverse origin (like Koraga Taniya, Tannimaaniga). These are human beings who met with tragic death because of social injustice and became Bhutas later.

In Tulu culture and tradition, there is no such classification as Bhutas are secondary to God or God is supreme. Upper class people have mooted such a concept, Prof. Gowda says.

“Tuluvas worship Bhutas with first priority. That is why in every prayer they say Daiva Devarugalige. The first word used is Daiva and not deva,” he says.

Another book that we referred to is “The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas” which is a collaboration of the papers of Late A.C. Burnell who was a judge in Mangalore in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The book has been written with the purpose of studying the Tuluvas Bhuta worship. The book gives us an idea of how foreigners could relate to a culture other than their own. It also gave us an access to the Pardanas and their translation, a great source of immense knowledge and pride of the Bunt community.

Chapter 3. HISTORY

“God cannot alter the past; that is why he is obliged to connive at the existence of historians.”-Samuel Butler.

Culture is alluring because of its protean character. It can be veritable to include a whole gamut of life- religious faiths and practices. Hence there is an attempt to narrow it down and use the term ‘culture’ within the framework of histories as it goes into the making of the community. Sources are not meant to address the historian; it is the historian who addresses them. The only way one could research is when the project has been in the framework of the matter that is available to them or whatever has been scavenged from the past. Given the fact that the historical facts are very few and limited, the Bunt community and their origin is a frustrating business and remains to be a mystery.

History helps us understand who we are, why we are and the way we are. Keeping this in mind we wanted to understand:

- Who the Bunts are? In order for us to do this, we made a heroic attempt to try and piece the various fragments of previous research regarding the origin of the community.
- Why did Bunts begin to believe in the Bhuta Aradhane or Spirit Worship? Hence we looked into their belief system that is revered strongly in the present, and looked into how Bhuta Aradhane originated and was performed earlier through foreign accounts.
- The Bunt community like the Jain community seem to have various similarities such as; the design of the Guttus are similar, both the communities perform the Bhuta Kola as they both believe in protective spirits and both have descended from the Kshatriya caste. The only difference between the two communities is that the Bunts are non-vegetarian while the Jains are strictly not. Hence we wanted to blend the Bunt community with the cultural

background of the Jain Community due to the striking similarities and historical links made and thus understand how the segregation between the two communities happened. This would thus help us understand more about the rise of the Bunt community.

We were very intrigued in discovering whether a community as important as the Bunts had a strong presence in history. The archaeological and anthropological evidence pertaining to this community has not been taken seriously, hence the existing theories on the Bunt community's origin is not certain. We wanted to piece together how the Bunt community came to be and try collecting as much relevant data that were clues to their origin.

3.1 Origin

The chokipali inscriptions that were written in the 9th century are the first scriptures to talk about the Bunts, wherein the Bunts were described parallel to the Shivalli Brahmins. The Bunts spoke the language of Tulu or Kannada. They belong to the region of Tulu Nadu, which includes the districts of Udupi and Mangalore, which is in the state of Karnataka.

The Varna system tells us that the Bunts belong to the Serpent Lineage, of the Kshatriyas. Bunt originates from the Sanskrit word “Bhata” which means a soldier or a powerful man, whereas the word Bunt in Tulu means a protector. ‘Nayaka’, ‘Shetray’ and ‘Nadava’ are also referred to the bunts. The meaning of these three words is that they are a leader, noble and a landlord respectively in Tulu.

“Historian Edgar Thurston in his book “Caste and tribes of south India” described the Bunts as follows “Men and women of the Bunt community belong to a beautiful race of Asia. Men have a broad forehead and a parrot nose.

Mostly they are of fair complexion. Even today they are of independent nature, short tempered, self respecting and have a muscular body, which tells about the history of belonging to warrior families”.”⁵

The three main time periods of rich history of Tulu Nadu⁶:

1. The Alupa (Aluva) period
2. The Rayas of Vijayanagara Period
3. The British Period

The Alupas were the longest reigning dynasty of the area. They ruled for over thousand years thus making them one of the most prominent dynasties. The main political centre of this kingdom was Mangalore. They ruled until the Vijayanagara kings took over from the 14th to 17th century.

The Vijayanagara Kingdom helped the region of Tulu Nadu prosper. The Bunts attained their glory during the rule of the Vijayanagara Empire, the chieftain at that time being Tuluva Narasa Nayaka. Even after the fall of the empire, the Bunts continued to concentrate themselves in Tulu Nadu, where they took a large-scale agricultural land that they still possessed, but also served as the administrators and warriors in the various kingdoms of the Hindus and Jains. Their service again depended from time to time and region to region. Traces of the Vijayanagara presence can be seen in some of the Bunt Guttus, though swords and other utensils.

By the end of the 18th century, the control went into the hands of the Sultans of Mysore. A prominent sultan was Tippu Sultan. A prominent battle had occurred in Tulu Nadu and a huge change accompanied it. This was the battle between Tippu Sultan and the Britishers. Tippu Sultan lost the Battle in 1799 and Tulu Nadu was under the complete control of the Britishers in 1801.

⁵ "ಕಛೇಳಿನರ್‌ನ ಮನದನರ್‌ನೇ.." : History of Bunts. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Dec. 2013.

⁶ Hebbar, Dr. Neria H. "Tulu Nadu: The Land and Its People." N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2014.

There are various theories that we collected that give us fragments to the puzzle of the community's origin and they are as follows:

1. "It is said that the Bunts are not the original inhabitants of the west coast of India."⁷ The reason being, their complexion isn't the same as the Dravidians, who are the original inhabitants of Indians. Instead, they have the physical features and skeletal features of the Mediterranean's.
2. They are not of the Aryan origin as well as their social and religious lifestyle is completely different from the Aryans. The Bunts from the very beginning enjoyed high social status during the prehistoric times, although they are said to be non-Brahmins.
3. It is said that Bunts are known to be warriors or soldiers, but this again isn't true. They were known to have commanded the soldiers giving them social status that was much more higher than that of a soldier.
4. The Alupas were also known to be the Bunts. The Alupas are those who ruled during the 2nd century A.D and were ruling Tulu Nadu.
5. According to Prof S. Shivaram Shetty's, the bunts originated from a tribe called 'Kosars', which were a group of people who strolled into Tulu Nadu after the Aryan Invasion. The origin of the Kadamba Kings is another mystery, but there are beliefs that they were connected to the Bunts, due to an inscription, which said the Kadambas belong to the Serpent lineage, and the Bunts also belonged to the same family.

⁷ Hegde, Krishnananda. "Bunts of India History and Cultural Anthropology of the Bunt Community." N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Dec. 2013.

We did stumble upon a heroic attempt that traced the roots of the community to the Indus Valley Civilization as well as various claimants to the association to the Harappan Civilization. Connecting the Bunt name to the Harappan Civilization is a bold move made which thus caught our attention. However it again hasn't been supported by enough information or research, which clearly showed a lack of understanding of the historical method.

The link made arose from the visual similarities between the "famous "humped bull" in the Harappan seal and the prehistoric portrait of a bull etched in the Gavali cave near Kundapur"⁸, as noticed by A.Sundara who carefully studied the Gavalli bull and the humped bull. This link however again lacks in substantial evidence and hence arises as another unflattering possibility.

Tracing the origin was a frustrating business as there were so many possibilities. One can never say what the actual truth of the past is as it is presented in different ways. It is a question that shouldn't be overlooked however the search for a definite answer carries a burden of demand.

A river is never what it is as it appears at the source." This can be looked at in the perspective of the Bunt community whose presence in history and their journey made them what they are. Hence we traced their identity in the Middle Ages through early inscriptions that have been discovered.

During the medieval period the Bunts started making their appearance in inscriptions. It was during this time they started getting an idea of the social, economic and political scenario of Tulu Nadu. When they started realizing and getting the idea of the social scenario in Tulu Nadu, the Bunts enjoyed the status next to Brahmins only. They acquired land and made an impact on the Tulu Society, which gave the Bunts a higher status, next to the Brahmins.

⁸ Surendra, Rao B."An Excursion to the Indus Valley." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 19. Print.

Jainism is another prominent religion that ruled Tulu Nadu during the 12th century. History has proven the similarities that arise between these two communities. Comparing these similarities will not only help in securing their roots but also would help in tracing their significant conquests in the past.

The Jains represented a religious sect recognized as a social caste while the Bunts represented a caste category by itself. The Alupas, Santaras, Hoysalas and various other rulers of Vijayanagara had promoted Jainism to a great extent and as a consequence most of their intermediary agents were Jains. The Jains left a stamp in Tulu Nadu, an impression that would last a long time through their monuments. When the Jains had come to Tulu Nadu they had the advantages of the trading opportunities they offered.

The Bunts had a great amount of political influence on the Jains, which transferred the power and land control from the Jains to the Bunts, at the village level. “Bante Sorkunda Ballale” is a saying in Tulu, which meant that under the control of the Bunts the household’s prominence was enhanced. The Jains were not numerically strong anymore or prominent as they once were.

Due to the social and economic power that was concentrated in the hands of the Bunts, all the rituals performed were confined. The Jains and the Bunts thus indeed had separate identities at this stage. The presence of Jains now constricts only to certain areas of Tulu Nadu, some of which are “Belthangadi, Dharmasthala, Moodbidri, Karkala, Venur,” whereas the Bunts have become more prominent in Tulu Nadu, and seem to be present predominantly around that region.

The Bunts were also known to be the protectors. Bhuta Ganas are referred to as the soldiers of Lord Shiva and their main motive is to protect Dharma and so a divine power is vested in them. The individual who performs this ritual has various ornaments that he’s made to wear, certain kind of attire, and special make up. They dance to a musical tune, which is very significant and unique.

The primary idea behind this form of worship is the protection of the environment and the worship of nature. The spirits are considered to be the guardians of the village, the protectors who protect the villagers and their livestock. It is said that most of these spirits could be followers of Lord Shiva or ganas.

We have attempted to retrieve every voice, whisper and moan from the left behind accounts and works of the Basel Missionaries as they have researched about the Bunt community's beliefs. We however did run into limitations of these foreign accounts due to their difficulty to comprehend a culture apart from their own.

3.2 Foreign Documentation

The Foreign Documentation was looked at in order to have a better understanding of how Bhuta Worship was conducted in earlier times. When looking at the records of the Basel Missionaries, we found them quite biased. Their translation of Bhuta Worship into "Devil Worship" had been intentionally done. We discovered that they were trying to make the society of Tulu Nadu understand the difference between the devil and God, and they considered the Bhutas to be evil spirits. As quoted by them "It was pity that brought us to you, because we saw you led away by the craft and subtlety of the devil". The sacrifices offered to the Bhuta, was infact considered a major sin. They brought out counter arguments such as God versus the calling of the 'demons', a religion with a book versus sacrifices and other practices. The purpose of these opposing binaries was extremely clear, as they wanted to persuade the natives to accept the Gospel. These missionaries considered converting a Bhuta priest a great triumph against the devil. Despite the great amount of effort by them, the number of festivals, the number of sacrifices increased. It showed that even during those days, the Bunt community had an undiluted reverence to the Bhuta that could not be emitted by any external opinion or force. In the process of the effort they put into documenting all the practices and retrieving as much information to form counter arguments against them, it produced a body of knowledge for researchers today. The articles by Robert Caldwell ("Demonology of South India"), journal of A.C Burnell, M.J. Wallhouse ("Devil and Ghost Worship in Western India") are some important documentation by the Missionaries and formed the earliest records on this belief.

A.C BURNELL

The most important documentation is of A.C Burnell who was a judge during the second half of the nineteenth century. He, along with documenting the procession of the Bhuta worship, recorded every epic of every Bhuta and provided a translation. An expedition of this level has not been executed till date.

His observations of a Bhuta worship on March 23rd 1872 provide a detailed understanding of how exactly the procession was conducted earlier. The festival began at around 7 to 8 pm with the recitation of the stories of the Bhuta. There were 5 Bhutas that were to be invoked that night. They were, Kantanetri Jumadi, Sara Jumadi, Panjurli, Jarandaya and Marlu Jumadi. The names of the Bhutas were given according to a small plank, or a stone of any shape that is fixed into a wall and placed on the ground. There were two castes that take part in this worship, which are: the Billavas and the Pombada. Fruits and a chiefly fowl are offered to the impersonator. The priest kills this fowl and then gives them to the Pombada, who takes a bite and shares it with his fellow people. While watching the performance, he also observed that fruits, flowers, rice, huakki are thrown on the Pombada, which symbolizes the transfer of Bhuta from one person to another. The dancers don't recite the Pardanas, a chant that is being recited during the performance. Either a male or a female recites it. The female is usually the wife of Pombada, who represents the Bhuta. The dancers then begin to work themselves into frenzy as the beats of the music rapidly increase and the performance lasts the entire night.

Rev. R. Caldwell

Who ever called it “Spirit worship”, had termed it wrong according to Rev. R. Caldwell. The name “Bhuta Aradhane” meant “Devil worship”. The word “Devil”, rings a bell in ones head as something or someone that could be dangerous and hence, one should be cautious. This wasn’t only thought of in Tinnevely, but also in Southern India. Christianity, the one religion the Europeans wanted to make sure every individual had converted them to. Tinnevely was known as the home of demon-worship, until the craze of Christianity hit them.

“ As quoted in the book, The Devil Worship of the Tuluvas,
This is what has been said.”

Researchers yet struggle to find an exact trace of the origin of Bhuta Aradhane, was it during the Dravidian time? The Aryan time? Or the Vedic period? A question that has no answer to.”⁹

According to Rev. R. Caldwell, “The universal prevalence of the worship of tutelary deities, among the great mass of the population of India, is the result of the perpetual read of evil demons- a dread which haunts Hindus of all ranks and stations, from the highest to the lowest, wit the exception of those fortunate persons, whom a European education has delivered from the dominion of superstitious ideas.”

“It appears to me, that this is an element of demonism, which ready to receive further development.”

These malicious mortals hold various degrees of rank, power, and wickedness, and amongst these mortals, there are a few that aim at destroying the world, and threatening the dominion of the gods themselves.

⁹ A.C Burnell. "Appendix 1,2." *The Devil Worship Of the Tuluvas*. Mangalore: Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, n.d. N. pag. Print.

Revd. Caldwell referred to these spirits as demons or devils. All these powerful, nasty and intrusive demons, desired blood sacrifices and uptight dances.

According to his findings, a majority of these demons dwell in a tree, or come around to and fro, go up and down, in areas that is inhabited, a few of them inhabit in old wells, some of which also reside in shady havens.

It is believed that a sickness could be cured by the demon. This process is seen more as a superstition than a belief. In order for the sickness to be cured a sacrifice needs to be made. Whereas, a prolonged disease or a manifestation of symptoms, which don't hold any records, are told to be the magic of the possession.

A story that left a mark on us regarding the power of a Bhuta reads as follows:

Long time ago, an individual acquired a land, a land where the Bhuta resided in the middle; he didn't like the location and ended up moving it to the side. He didn't believe in worshipping, and never cared or paid attention to the spirit. The spirit didn't accept this and to make him realize his mistake, he punished the individual by taking away his vision. The individual didn't know how this had happened. He went to doctors, in India, but they couldn't help, which left him no option but to go abroad and get himself checked. While going through this journey, he had thoughts running in his head. The doctors told him nothing had happened to his sight, instead it was perfectly fine.

His return seemed to have something good, which he realized at the end. He went around talking to people, who told him, the reason of this to have happened could be due to some religious or sacred factor. Knowing this seemed to have been a blessing in disguise to him. Thus, he went back to his land, and started worshipping the spirit that resided there.

The next morning when he woke up, his vision was given back to him.

Showing all the demons at once wasn't preferred. Various ways, such as playing music, get a devil dance, or lastly call the demon to prophesy was awaited. This usually happened when, some member of the family had been sick for a long time, and they were anxious to know the reason behind the sickness, and what could be the outcome of the sickness, which made them wish and await the visit of the demon.

“As quoted in the book, this is what has been said.”¹⁰

“He tells them he is such and such a devil, whom they have tells them he is such and such a devil, whom they have neglected over so long, and he wants and offering; or he calls himself by the name of some deceased relative, who, as they now for the first time learn, has become a demon.”¹

Hence in short, these spirits did more of evil by causing terror and asking for sacrifices. They were hence were considered demons as they cause terror and ask for sacrifices

M.J Wallhouse

According to M.J Wallhouse’s findings,

“Charms and amulets against the evil influence of Bhutas are: wearing the tooth or nail of a tiger on the neck or near the lion, or an iron ring set with pearls on the finger. A lime in the turban, or a figure of Hanuman, the monkey God, engraved on any ornament, are also efficacious, especially on Sundays and Tuesdays. But the most powerful remedy must have been when, in the days of the Rajahs of Coorag, a principality bordering on Canara, it was customary for the Amaldars, or native heads of division to issues notices and orders to the Bhutas, in the name of the Rajah, not to molest any particular individual to quit any tree they haunted which was required to be fellwed, and to desist from any particular act or annoyance. It is stated that these behests of the government were never disobeyed, which, indeed, is not unlikely, as the last Coorg Rajah was not a man who understood being killed with, either by man or demon.”¹¹

¹⁰ A.C Burnell. "Appendix 1,2." *The Devil Worship Of the Tuluvas*. Mangalore: Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, n.d. N. pag. Print.

¹¹ A.C Burnell. "Appendix 1,2." *The Devil Worship Of the Tuluvas*. Mangalore: Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, n.d. N. pag. Print.

3.3 The Origin of the Bhutas

Our thirst for knowledge on the history and culture of the Bunt community was quenched however the mystery of the origin of the Bhutas still dangled in the air.

How did these Bhutas come to being?

The story is as follows:

“In the beginning, when the god Narayana created the earth, Isvara sat on his right and Brahma on his left side. They both spoke to Narayana, questioning him as follows: “ Lo! On the earth thou hast created eighty-four lakhs of living creature, from man down to birds reptiles, ants, etc., and hast also given them proper food. For thy (world) earth thou gavest eight kings for the eight points of compass. Their names are : Indre, Agni, Yame, Neireitye, Varune, Vayavye, Kubere, Isanye. Such eight kings thou hast made and didst give them the rule over the points of the compass.

That there may be night and day, thou putttest in the sky two bodies, the sun and the moon. Besides this, thou didst make six months rainy season and six months hot season! Such thou didst and for all this we rejoice!”

When he had said thus, Narayana said to Isvara as follows: “Lo! Thou and I and Brahma, we three together have to govern earth and heaven: yea, the twice seven worlds. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesvare; these three names let us have! I will do the work of creation Brahma that of preservation, and Mahesvare that of destruction.”

Thus having resolved to such respective functions, they made Vaikuntha into the abode of Narayana. Keilasa into the residence of Isvara, and Satyaloka into the abode of Brahma. Thus the world of gods was made, and three Karors of Rishis, Gandharvas, Apsarasas, etc., were created, and over and all these Devendra was put as their king and ruler.

While thou protecting the fourteen worlds, Isvara was sitting on his throne at Keilasa in the midst of his thousand and one male Ganas, and thousand and one Bhutas, and other principal Ganas including even Virabhadra.

Then his wife Parvati joyously addressed her husband as follows:

“O Isvara, why are some of the people living on earth sinners and some meritorious? Tell me this in detail.”

When they thus begged I commanded them, saying as follows: ‘Lo! Go you on earth and give the sinners there trouble and obtain your food from their hands! (but) do not trouble those who believe in me!’

“ Having heard this, these Bhutas asked: ‘O god! We rejoice at what you have commanded us, but we cannot distinguish those who are sinners on earth; therefore, please direct us how to know them.’

“ When the Bhutas so prayed, I commanded saying: ‘Lo! I shall beforehand charge the sinners on earth with some disease, with sickness and all kinds of trouble; you can then discover and seize such persons, and by doing so you can get food.’

“When so commanded, the Bhutas questioned me, saying: ‘O! God! How shall such men as affected with disease know that we have seized them? What is the sign of it?’”

“ When so questioned, I commanded and spoke to them thus:

‘Lo! In the world I have created soothsayers, astrologers and those that prepare charms. Through them they will learn to know that you do it, and then they will give you food. This must be now enough for you. Speak no more.’

“ Thus I discharged them.”

But afterwards the Bhutas came again to Isvara and questioned his as follows:

“ O God! Thou has t commanded us to descend to the earth, but where shall we go(when we get) there? And where shall we stay? Please tell us.”

When they so begged of Isvara he answered them saying: “ I will allot you separate names, such as Bobbarye, Kadgarvane, Pathikondaye. As such go you to the Southern countries and kingdoms and settle there. Besides this, I shall send some Bhutas to join you and also the Mahisasuras shall be with you, in the Northern country, Also in future times, I will send some Bhutas and demons to join you. Besides this, I shall send Mallaraya, Annappe and Jattige, Bhutas, to stay from the Western Part of the country to the Eastern part.”

When the Bhutas were thus dismissed, Mahakali, Virabhadra and the mischievous Mari rose, and with reddened eyes, addressed Isvara saying: “O god Isvara! Thou hast commanded food for the Bhutas and sent them away, Hast thou not forgotten us? Though thou hast forgotten, we have not, therefore, now shew us too, away!”

When they thus begged, Isvara said:

“Lo, the Bhutas Dhumavathi is on earth in Mudabidri in the Tulu Nadu and has settled in a place, place belonging to the Beilapari, Billalu of the Chantar’s Country. From that place to the Western sea shew your prowess in that region, and amongst your pleasures receive Kolas and offerings. Thus take your food and be happy.”

After these Bhutas had been sent away, the remaining also were commanded to their respective places. “

The main deity this community prayed to was Lord Shiva, long before Vaishnavism spread during the 8th century in Tulu nadu. During this period, the temples built were made out of wood and were kept intact for a long period of time. Chalukyas and Pallavas were the first to have introduced stone temples in the south, which have still survived.

The unique feature of the Bunt community is the respect and the way they worship the various spirits apart from the Hindu gods.

They say, “If a black cat crosses you, you either wait for sometime and then continue or choose another path.” Can one term this as superstition or a belief? Commonly known as beliefs, something that is told to a person and is not only followed but also passed on generations.

Bhuta Kola, that which is practiced for 400 years now, a tradition a belief a ritual, all this associated to a spirit who protects and helps them. The Tulu society from early times have always grown in a surrounding wherein beliefs and rituals were sayings that were governed in their day to day activities. Hindu customs talk about a child or the younger ones in a family have to seek the blessings of their elders as well as their gods, before doing anything important. This usually would be the Head of the family member or known as “yajamana”, who were the closest they thought was god, and never went against their decisions.

The bunts apart from praying and worshipping puranic gods, they also worshiped the “Bhutas”, who were considered lower in the hierarchy. It is believed that the overall protection of the cattle, crops, prosperity and the wealth of the family is controlled by the Bhutas. In return they would expect them to be loyal, devoted and pay their respects by offering something, failing which they would be punished.

3.4 The Various Categories of the Bhuta Aradhane:

The type of worship we were privileged to witness was the Bhuta Kola. The Bhuta Kola is a subcategory under the Bhuta Aradhane and it is the focus of our research. The Bhuta Aradhane can be performed in three different ways. They are:

➤ **Kola**

Kola is offered to the Bhuta in the Sthanas by the entire village. It is held in public and the cost is shared amongst the families of the village.

➤ **Bandi**

Bandi is also a kola and is conducted by dragging a car with the priest, or Pombada is seated, which represents the Bhuta.

➤ **Nema**

Nema unlike the Kola is more of a private ceremony. The cost is borne by the owner of the household who is hosting the Nema. He is obliged to feed the people assembled. The things representing the Bhuta are brought to the sacred area, where the ceremony is being conducted.

The hustle and bustle of the crowd, the intoxicating smell of the flowers and the hypnotic movements of the dancers took us into a world, which we never knew existed.

Chapter 4. OVERVIEW OF BHUTA WORSHIP

4.1 Classification of Bhutas

Colours and lights danced around us with the music complementing the aura of the sacred area. The performers carried out their routine applying the rich yellow turmeric to their faces. The shrines comprised of long well sculpted idols of the brothers Kooti and Cennaya and their sister gracefully poised adjacent to the wall, the spirits that were to be invoked that night. Offerings of coconut, palm and mango leaves and areca flowers dressed the feet of these idols and the priest lit the lamps, the fumes enveloping these figures. The immediate question struck us why were these Bhutas worshipped and how many Bhutas exist?



Image 3: Idols of Koti-Cennaya and Deyi Baideti

There are over 350 Bhutas worshipped by the Bunt community and they distinguish themselves according to their name, symbol, sex, their functions and the offerings made to them. Each family has worshipped the same Bhuta for generations, and these Bhutas treat them as their own children promising to form a safeguard from evil forces. They characterize themselves according to their span of influence. The degree of importance can be local, regional and even district wide. Hence it is important to be

aware of the different categories of Bhutas and the degree of influence they can exert on the Bunt community.

The categories of Bhutas are¹²:

1. Totemistic Origin (Bhutas such as Pilccandi, Panjurli, and Nandigoone)
2. Puranic Deities (Bhutas such as Vishnumuurti, Jataadhaari, Vaidyanaatha)
3. They are in the form of the ganas of Shiva or the Mother Goddess (Bhutas such as Jumaadi, Lakkesiri, Ullaalti)
4. Heroes who met a tragic death for a noble cause and transformed into Bhutas (Bhutas such as Kalkuda, Kallurti, Kooti Cennaya, Koodabbu)
5. Bhutas of diverse origin, Human beings who met a tragic death due to some Social injustice and transformed into Bhutas (Bhutas such as Koraga Taniya, Tannimaaniga)

Reading the documentation of the Bhutas by various Christian missionaries stood as rich informative sources piecing together the manner in which the Bhutas were revered and the types of Bhutas they witness. One particular Christian Missionary, Rev. A. Manner wrote a book listing the different kinds of Bhutas he saw during second half of the nineteenth century.

¹² Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". *The Mask and the Message*. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 19-20. Print.

His classification of Bhutas as follows¹³:

1. Bhutas created by God
2. Bhutas who move in the air
3. Bhutas who belong to human category
4. Bhutas who reside at home
5. Bhutas who reside in the grove or garden
6. Family Bhutas
7. Village Bhutas
8. Bhutas worshipped in the form of bull, horse, pig, etc;
9. Bhutas related to temples
10. Bhutas who reside in stones
11. Bhutas who reside in shrines
12. Bhutas who reside in forests
13. Bhutas worshipped by sudra patris
14. Bhutas worshipped by Brahmin priests
15. Bhutas worshipped by low caste people

Local scholars such as B.A Viveka Rai, P. Gururaja Bhat to name a few have used Rev. A Manner's criteria and classified Bhutas as¹⁴:

1. A category of Bhutas where animals were transformed into Bhutas
2. Bhutas which include heroes that met a tragic death (an unnatural, untimely death)
3. Bhutas that include human beings that had some association with Bhutas when alive and got themselves transformed into Bhutas after death.

¹³ Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". *The Mask and the Message*. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 19-20. Print.

¹⁴ Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". *The Mask and the Message*. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 19-20. Print.

Bhutas do indeed wield powers in the judicial system, and have been classified according to their regional powers¹⁵:

1. Bhutas of Siime or Naadu
2. Bhutas of Maagane
3. Bhutas of Graama
4. Bhutas of Uuru (Village)
5. Bhutas of Guttu
6. Bhutas of Kutumba (Family)

The Bhutas of Siime are the Royal Bhutas or the Arasu Bhutas. The other Bhutas are subordinate to the Royal Bhutas and the power of administration descends as we go down the levels. The Royal Bhutas command the respect of the Bhutas at the lower levels. The power of the Bhutas has geographical limitations according to their ranking. The Bhutas of the higher order do not take demand animal sacrifice. They are honoured with gold plated masks, royal ornaments, gold plated sword and a golden halo or prabhaavali.

¹⁵ Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". *The Mask and the Message*. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 19-20. Print.

4.2 The Dancers



Image 4: Dancers impersonating Koti Cennaya

The dancers seemed to have been in an intoxicated state. Their dances seem to have been well rehearsed and when we questioned them, they mentioned that they had learnt it by observing their fathers. At the time that they get possessed, they begin to violently shake and their eyeballs roll out of control. When they become more composed they seem to invoke a sudden sense of authority in their body language. They speak to the community with a heavy voice while providing solutions to the problems. They use hand gestures to convey that they are thankful to the community for pleasing them through the Kori Katta and Kambala as well as for conducting Bhuta Kola and that they will always take care of them. The Dancers main source of income comes from the performance of the Bhuta Kola. In fact the Dancer mentions that he is not allowed to do any work.

This can be seen in the quote below:

“We are the ones who do the main important roles. We are called the keepers of the ‘MUDI”. The keepers of the ‘Mudi” are not supposed to do any other work. We cannot do labour, cannot carry firewood etc. we have to bath & apply sandal paste & then only eat. We have to follow the rules & guidelines strictly. And during the season of the Nema when the Bhuta Kola takes place we have to take on the roles. When we are called to perform, we have to wear the sacred thread or apply the sacred ash etc. We do this with the blessings of our elders.”

4.3 The Pardanas

The lamp burned in the backdrop, the smell of areca flowers intoxicating the night. The performer appeared, covered with the coco leaf skirts and a thickly painted face. He wore a heavy anklet, which echoed as he began to shake his leg, inviting the spirit. He began to recite an incantation of Kooti Cennaya in Tulu as follows: -

*Nikula Noolu padi beramaner anda genda tare padmakatte
undu; vokkatere mandi anda paadina pani dompa undu;
jativarnada mande anda seri padolid soonkanada ujjal undu.*

- Kooti Cennaya Paddana¹⁶

The incantation was recited breathlessly and flowed harmoniously with the chime of the anklets. The flowers were thrown on the performer as he finishes reciting. He slowly lifts his head revealing his bloodshot eyes and the night began.

We were drawn by the plaintive songs and conducted an intensive search for them in MGM college library in Udupi, Karnataka Theological College, Library of Germans,

¹⁶ Surendra, Rao B. "Making of the Guttu Lore." Bunts in History and Culture. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 94. Print.

and Karnataka Tulu Academy. Only when retrieving the translation did we realize that it added a new dimension to this spiritual worship.

The translation reads as follows:

*If you are a Brahmin with the holy thread you can be seated
on the auspicious platform around the gendali coconut tree;
if you are a Bunt you may go to a specially prepare pandal;
if you are a caste-brother you have the swaying swing at the
chavadi to sit on.*

- *Kooti Cennaya Paddana*¹⁷

We realized the performance, after reading the translation, had a close connection to the social structure of Tulu Nadu. What truly adds to the uniqueness of the Bhuta Kola is how the worship seems to echo the voices of the suppressed and draw attention to class conflict and injustice. The performance and its therapeutic function have manifested in other genres such as folktales, legends, and in an oral form known as Pardanas. The Pardanas stand as the pillar of the Bhuta worship. It was the main motif of social conflicts and invoked the feelings of agony and exploitation that were felt by the unsung tragic heroes (Bhutas). The main objective of this oral epic, when recited during the performance is to expose the violence and cruelty of history and highlight the rippling effect.

It is one of the areas of knowledge and a source of deep pride and delight. Pardanas cannot be treated as history in itself but project different portraits of Bunts and their collective ethos. These are portraits either self created or formed by others. They always tend to reflect on either the sponsors or the victims of social tensions. Being produced by a society to which the Bunts form a part, these Pardanas are to be treated as an invaluable tool for reconstructing the community's history.

¹⁷ Surendra, Rao B. "Making of the Guttu Lore." Bunts in History and Culture. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 94. Print.

The ritual performance, the detailing, the manner in which it is conducted all deserves our utmost attention. The reason being that every ornament, the dresses, the masks and the proceedings have their own message.

For the ritual performance of the Bhuta, a temporary time-specific realm is created. When witnessing the worship, we summed up the proceedings as follows:

1. The procession's paraphernalia is brought to the sacred area of the performance
2. The household's treasure or Bhandaara is placed on a sacred seat
3. Reciting the Pardanas and receiving betel nuts and oil or Osayo Sandi
4. The impersonator wears the pure cloths and applies the facial make up that consist of only natural products like turmeric. The costume also uses natural products like the fringes of cocoa leaves form the skirt.
5. The impersonator calls out to the Bhuta by shaking his leg and dancing. He also holds a burning torch.
6. A halo like structured or ani is attached to the back of the Bhuta and he dances with it. It is heavily decorated with flowers, beautifully coloured ornamentation.
7. The Impersonator wears the mask and wields a sword in his hand.
8. Rice and flowers are thrown to invoke the Bhuta.
9. The impersonator now possessed dances around the shrines.
10. Sacrificial food is offered to the Bhuta. If it is a Non vegetarian Bhuta a fowl is offered, if it is a vegetarian Bhuta coconut is offered.
11. The community ask the Bhuta solutions to problems faced by the community or the family hosting the ceremony. The Bhuta replies with a solution and a promise to always take care of them.
12. Prasaada is distributed in the form of sandal paste.
13. The treasure is taken back to the shrine in the Guttu.

4.4 The Costumes and Masks of the Impersonators.



Image 5: Personal Sketch of Panjurli

A bridge is constructed between the epic world of the Bhutas and the performance. The performance is designed to re-enact the tragedy of the Bhuta or its epic. It is an outlet for the unburdening of the frustration, anger of the spirit. The impersonator demonstrated the frustrations, emotions not only through their performance but also through the facial make-up, ornaments, weapons, costumes, and musical accompaniments.



Image 6: Personal Sketch of Cennaya

According to Mrs Shilpa Shetty:

“This mask is worn, there is a colourful attire, and they wear something like an *Ari*, a kind of a Halo which is already created, which is made of bamboos or colourful flowers and the entire body is painted according to the particular *Bhuta*, and they have to wear a *Kaggara*, a type of an anklet made of heavy silver. Once you wear that, the attire is complete and the person who gets impersonated is the one wearing it.” If a mask isn’t used, then facial make up tends to conform to the profession and their characters as per the epics.

An example of analysing the facial make up of Kalkuda and Kallurti has a black base colour with white dots. The black colour represents the colour of the stone they used to work on, as they were sculptors while human. The black also represents the skin colour of the community they belong to. The white dots represent the dents that a chisel makes on stone. The elaborate facial make up also represents the anguish and anger of the Bhutas as they died as tragically as a consequence of oppression. The ani or the halo is used to produce the presence of a supernatural force. The ornaments and costume are used for the same. The five-forked torch, held by two men through the entire night, creates the weird supernatural atmosphere. The Bhuta performance produces a theatrical effect through the violent dance, screams and prideful address to the crowd gathered.

4.5 The Bhuta Kola's Connection to the Society of Tulu Nadu

The Bhuta worship is closely related to Bunt's social traditions and human life in general. The Bhuta Worship is a product of the political and social system of Tulu Nadu to which it owes its complexity. The caste system has left a great impression on the society of the region. In fact the cultural identity varies according to the caste. The community identities and the inter-community distinction are defined by the concepts of "Pure" and "Impure". The higher castes appear as "Pure", to which the Bunts belong to and the lowest are looked down upon as "Impure". The Bhuta worship is weaved around this concept as it is, at its core, based upon the concepts inferiority and superiority. The Bhuta worship looks down at a society ridden with exploitation, crime and class-conflicts. Today it is a festival that is not monopolized by any single community giving it its social significance.

The actions of the Bhuta such as his violent dancing, swallowing fire, his thunderous shouts, walking on a heap of embers are not only to create theatrical effects but are expressions of the Bhuta's protest against social oppression and its various manifestations. This is the principal reason as to why the Bhuta worship has been called "the collective voice of the society"¹⁸ The Pardanas, which are recited during the performance stand as motif of social conflicts. They are recited to talk about the origin of the Bhuta and the agony it faced due to exploitation and social conflicts.

They express the pain and struggles of the suppressed classes in this caste based society. The elements they include are "class-conflict, crime, the humiliation from exploitation, injustice and repression and the exposure of the cruelty and violence of history"¹⁹.

What is truly interesting is how this brief world of illusion temporarily reverses the social equations between the oppressed and the oppressor legitimized by the participation of the members of the upper castes. As K. Chinnappa Gowda rightfully stated in his book "The untouchable in real life plays the master in impersonation and

18 Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 26. Print

19 Gowda, K. Chinappa. "Bhuta Worship". The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 24. Print

the hunger of the day is satiated during the night.”²⁰ The Bhuta worship will continue to flourish and retain its close connection with the society with the persistence of the forms of inequality. Even if the caste system disappeared, the Bhuta worship would still flourish due to its therapeutic and judicial functions. It has indeed displayed a dynamism that is self-sustaining.

4.6 The Bhuta Kola as an Administrative and Political System

Through historical studies conducted by researchers, it had been proved that this ritualistic performance had been carried out as an integral element of the political system. Geographically the whole of Tulu Nadu had come under a central administrative system during the Vijayanagara rule. According to the inscriptions of ancient Tulu Nadu, the names of the political administrative units were “Deesa, Raajya, Naadu, Siime, Maagane, Graama, Uuru, Caavadi, Guttu”. The structure of the administrative units arranged in ascending order is: “Family (okkalu), Uuru (Village), Graama, Maagane, Siime (Naadu), Raajya (Deesa, Mandala).²¹”

The large units comprised of the Siime, Naadu and Raajya and Maagane formed a part of the Siime or Naadu. Each village comprised of minimum four and maximum eight Guttus. The officers of the Siime, for the purpose of administration would meet at a place called a Caavadi.

The hierarchy of the Bhutas structured based upon the regional powers wielded have many similarities with the administrative system of the Vijayanagara Empire.

20 Gowda, K. Chinappa. “Bhuta Worship”. The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 26. Print

21 Gowda, K. Chinappa. “Bhuta Worship”. The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 28. Print

As mentioned earlier in the report, the classification is as follows (according to the their jurisdictions and their power which is geographically limited)²²:

1. Bhutas of Siime or Naadu
2. Bhutas of Maagane
3. Bhutas of Graama
4. Bhutas of Uuru (Village)
5. Bhutas of Guttu
6. Bhutas of Kutumba (Family)

The Bhutas of the Siime are the Royal Bhutas or Arasu Bhutas and its jurisdiction extends over the entire Siime. The king of the Vijayanagara Empire “was also known as Innuuraala Arasu (the king of two hundred men).²³” The Bhutas subordinate to the Royal Bhutas have to obey the Bhutas of royal rank. The royal seat of the king was called “Saaviraala patta (the royal seat of three thousand men).²⁴” These terms have been applied referring to the Bhuta. The royal jurisdiction of the Bhuta has also been called Patta. The word Pattada is used as a reference of the Bhuta to a status that is equal to a king. Hence the system of Bhuta worship is a manifestation of the administrative and political structure of Tulu Nadu under the Vijayanagara reign. What seems to stand out is how the Bhuta worship moulds its jurisdiction over the people according to the changes in society without its traditional framework dissipating. It never clashes with legal institutions such as land tribunals, people’s courts, courts of justice, police stations, etc;

In case the Bhuta is presented with a dispute between a tenant and a landlord, the Bhuta would advise that the matter should be resolved at a land tribunal and will not offer his judgement. Thus the Bhuta worship has retained dynamism by absorbing the developments in society.

22 Gowda, K. Chinappa. “Bhuta Worship”. The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 20. Print

23 Gowda, K. Chinappa. “Bhuta Worship”. The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 30. Print

24 Gowda, K. Chinappa. “Bhuta Worship”. The Mask and the Message. Mangalagangothri: Madipu Prakashana, 2005. 31. Print

CHAPTER 5: THE CULTURAL SPORTS

5.1 Kambala

A Kambala is a buffalo race wherein a pair of Buffalos is picked to compete in a field outside the Guttu. A runner holds the rope or the plough attached to the buffaloes. On an average they cover 100 metres in 8.07 seconds. Each pair of buffalos represents a particular Guttu. A maximum of 130 buffaloes are chosen to compete. The Kambala seems to have an image of a mere entertainment sport, however when analysing the sport, it seems to be an expression of the social and political power of the Guttu.



Image 7: Kambala Race

The Pair of Buffaloes that won would show the superiority of that particular Guttu. These Buffaloes are race buffaloes that are treated with a great amount of care (feeding them regularly and providing special massages). The nurturing of these Buffaloes tends to be quite expensive and demanding, thus owning a Race Buffalo is an source of pride. They are male and are seen as warriors similar to how the Bunts are perceived. They are often worshipped just before the race begins.

The Kambala seems to be centuries old, as indicated by a fifteenth century copper plate inscription mentioning the Kambala Gadde or Kambala field. It was always hosted by landlords, which showed how great the socio-political power was in the hands of a landowner.

The Kambala tends to carry a significant symbolism with the planting of a pillar, known as the Pookare Kamba. It represents the authority of man. The field of the Kambala itself is considered very auspicious and inviolable. In fact some fields are so sacred that women are not allowed to step on them, as women are considered impure. These prohibitions were raised to maintain the sanctity of the field. It takes place on the field (usually a paddy field) outside the Guttu so as to please the spirit and increase the fertility of the field. It is usually 145 metres long and has a thick layer of mud in it.

The Traditional Kambala always takes place once a year right before the Bhuta Kola. However in recent times the Kambala seems to be conducted quite often for the purpose of entertainment and to stress on the power of the Guttus. It has become more commercialized as now prize money is offered.

5.2 Kori Katta (Rooster Fight)

Rooster fight is a famous folk sport in the region of undivided South Canara, covering present Mangalore, Udupi and Kundapura. It's called Kori Katta in Tulu and Koli Pade in Kundapura Kannada. People usually grow different breeds of roosters just for the purpose of this folk sport, and many are very passionate about the game. The varieties of breeds include, Kembera, Kadla etc.



Image 8: Kori Katta

Normally it's for the entertainment purpose usually held after some special events such as the on Diwali night or after the Kambala and the Bhuta Kola etc. Jathre Katta is observed during town fairs and nithya katta takes place near arrack outlets on a full moon or Amavasye. Under the third type, "Sodthi katta", a dual between two individuals is settled through the rooster fight. The venue of the rooster fight is called "kala". People gather in, with their fighter roosters when the sun is about to start going down in the west side of the sky.

Some people do come there with out a fighter rooster, and they bet money on the roosters. This is normally not the tradition of rooster fight, but people have added this to make money and mainly for entertainment purposes. Police often ride such places where gambling happens on these rooster fights, but it still persists.

So without gambling the traditional rooster fight in the rural South Canara goes like this. People bring their own roosters and they tie a tiny knife called "baal" to their legs, and are then allowed to fight with each other. Process of selecting the pair for fight called as the actual fight "Kori Muttunu" follows "Jodi Naadunu".

The fight, which does not exceed more than three rounds, is decided, when one of the roosters runs away or is injured. The winning rooster's owner will get both the roosters in Onti Katta, which will be considered as victory for that evening, and its called as "Anka". There is a special type of Knock Out fight where they are allowed to fight till one dies. People are so passionate about this folk game is that the venue and dates are decided by a dedicated panchanga for this called as "Almane KukKate Panchanga".

5.3 Connection between Bhuta Kola and the Cultural Sports

The cultural sports i.e. the Kambala and the Kori Katta play a significant role in the Bhuta Kola festival. The Kambala is conducted in the beginning of the festival before the spirit worship takes place. The bunt community is an agrarian society and thus their main focus during any of their festivals is agriculture. The Bhuta Kola is performed to please the spirit to keep the fields fertile. Thus, the Kambala takes place

after the harvest season i.e. after the crops are cultivated and thus it marks the beginning of the Bhuta Kola festival. The Kambala festival is conducted to please the spirit or the “Bhuta” which is worshipped during the Bhuta Kola. Kambala is also considered to be the symbol of fertility in the Bunt community. According to them, the Kambala race increases the fertility of the fields, which pleases the Bhuta and also gives higher yields to the farmers. According to B Surendra Rao, “Kambala itself is an expression of the political power, or social power which the guttu represents, because it is the guttu house which sponsors the Kambala.” Apart from this, right before the Bhuta Kola starts, a person from the Guttu which is hosting the festival, goes to the houses in the village and calls everyone to attend the Kambala event. Also according to Vijaya Kumar, “The relation of Bhuta Kola and Kambala is that since the land holdings were large and man power was inadequate to guard the Guttu, the Bhuta was invoked through a Kambala to safe guard the crop and the land. Hence it is called as Bhuta Kambala and a person dresses as Karaga Bhuta and goes around the villages to invite for the Kambala event.” After the Kambala event is over, the Kori Katta takes place. The Kori Katta is held before the main ceremony begins as it is considered that the blood that is shed during the fight makes the field more fertile and it pleases the Bhuta or the spirit. The same Rooster that is dead during the Kori Katta is sacrificed during the Bhuta Kola. Apart from this, the Guttus or the ancestral homes of the bunt community have a separate room which is known as the shrine wherein all the ornaments and the masks required for the Bhuta kola along with the deities are kept. When we visited the Guttus during our trip, we noticed that there were idols of a Rooster along with a man racing two buffaloes kept in the shrine. Thus, with the question of why those idols were kept there, we got the opportunity to speak with K.Chinnappa Gowda, an expert on our research topic and we asked him about the same. He in his interview told us that those idols were kept there as they symbolize fertility and also because they are a significant part of the Bhuta Kola festival. According to the head of the Tulu Academy (interview), in the earlier times, one of the motifs behind performing the Bhuta Kola was to resolve problems of the local villagers. The villagers in order to get the solutions to their problems from the Bhuta had to first please the spirit. Thus, this gave rise to the cultural sports of Kambala and Kori Katta. These sports started taking place before the Bhuta Kola to please the spirit by racing the buffaloes through the holy field, which symbolizes fertility and by the blood shed and sacrificing of the Roosters. Thus through this process, the villagers

would get solutions to their problems. Hence, the connection between the Bhuta Kola, Kori Katta and Kambala was established.

Chapter 6. THE GUTTUS

6.1 The Intricacy and Architecture

Sources, books, articles are indeed kinder to a historian, shedding light onto the rich history of any community. However in our case, the lofty Guttus were our very own time portals of ancient Tulu Nadu, the Bunt lifestyle with the inherited pride and glory.

When our group went to conduct a classified study on the Guttus, in order to understand how it is one of the many manifestations of the spirit worship – *Bhuta Aradhane*, we found out several links that depicted the primitiveness and the architecturally rich woodwork of the Guttus. Guttus are the revelation of social existence, pride and culture of the Bunts community. Translating the word Guttu is definitely difficult given the numerous cultural connotations. It is sometimes translated as a manor house, but today it depicts a prominent Bunt family with land owning power. The British rulers, in earlier times were riddled by the concept, and awestruck by the wood – work in the pillars, eccentrically carved doorways and verandas. The British governors themselves were residing in these Guttus, as it was a sign of richness and class during that time. Common people couldn't afford to reside in them because most of the money spent was on cultivation, farming, etc. Hence only the rich became owners of Guttus.

The Guttus draw attention not only because of the beautiful intricacies but also because they stand as emblems of the economic and social power and as identifiers of a household. More than its architecture a house needs to be appreciated by the manner in which it envelops the thoughts, the living standards, the religious faiths, beliefs and the attitudes of its residents.

These Guttus are standing monuments and reminders of the past. We realized how important it was to first understand that “Guttu is history congealed and re-lived. It is both a fact and an idea. It is an experienced reality as much as a retrieved experience²⁵”. Their establishment has indeed decreased to a very high extent, in the present generation but some of these monuments and buildings still thrive with flawless beauty. The history of the Guttu is traced back till the *Vijayanagara* rule and most of them were built in medieval period (1206-1596). When we visited *Ambodi Guttu*, we were informed that the Guttu was approximately 700 years old, and had neither been reconstructed nor renovated in the near past. This Guttu consisted of 18 rooms and comprised of an attic that had a special provision for preservation of antiques such as swords, daggers and armours retrieved from the *Vijayanagara* rule. The antiquity of the Guttu continued to amaze us as we discovered more objects and elements that were preserved such as antiques, chains, anklets and rusty medium sized idols of the faces of a buffalo, an oxen, a tiger, etc.

Not only do Guttus claim attention due to their considerable antiquity but also due to the fact that paying attention to the architecture of the Guttu can unfold details about the lifestyle of a bunt community and the inter caste relation. “Architecture is a social artefact that can be studied in the context of its functional aspect, social milieu, physical dimensions and product of its culture”²⁶. The more elaborate a Guttu is the more it reflects its power and eminence. The dignity of the Guttu can be executed by placing it against a backdrop of dense foliage and tall trees.

The architect of a Guttu always ensures that it is constructed that strikes a balance with the landscape and nature. There is no violence done to the landscape thus showing a respect to the nature. This drew our own personal observation to how the Bunt community has heavy respect for nature as their form of worship Bhuta Aradhane is also a form of nature worship where only natural products are used.

²⁵ Surendra, Rao B.”Contours of the Guttu Universe.” *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 69. Print.

²⁶ Surendra, Rao B.”Contours of the Guttu Universe.” *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 85. Print.

After visiting three Guttus, Ambodi, Badila and Nandalike, we observed that they are constructed in such a way, that they will be facing north mostly (which would protect the house from strong monsoon south-west winds), and occasionally they faced east (this would allow the morning sun to light up the front yard). The house is built on an elevation, overlooking the paddy fields and likely to have a backdrop of tall trees. The kitchen would be placed mostly in the Northeast or Southeast direction, and considering the direction of the wind, this would prevent the smoke from coming inside the other areas of the house.



Image 9: Nandalike Guttu

Almost all the Guttus had a brown coloured thatched roof above it. We noticed that Badila and Nandalike Guttus had an enormous courtyard coloured a lush green. All three had well maintained trees and shrubs at the fringes of the house. We noticed that there was a *Tulsi* plant in every Guttu we visited bestowing a sanctity to the house. During our on – field notations, we were informed that they have preserved a *Naga* God, and they have 3 such worshipping spots in the house. When questioned about the reason of worship, the owner of the house clarified us that they have to worship the *snake God* because it protects them from all evil.

A feature known as mogasale, or an elaborate entry that extends the size of the hall in the Guttu, is a major feature that reflects the grandeur of a Bunt's guttu. If the Bunt family had a high status then there would be three levels added to the Mogasale and the height and width would increase.

The entrance plinth would have a height of only 5 feet, so that one has to bow down the head while entering it. The owner of the house explained that the height of entrances is kept low so as to make a person entering the door bow down marking a sign of respect.

Next was the reception column for the visitors, who used to come for trade purposes. To the left of this, there would be a room which functions as a jail, where the person accused of some crime is detained (Such Guttus don't exist in this generation.) Guttus had exotically decorated columns and ceilings on the upper floor. The traditionally decorated and carved pillars in the house depicted the valour and stands for the hefty strength of the Guttu Royalty.

The upper floor is designed in such a way that it remains in semi – darkness, and hence the person entering the house could not see the person sitting up there, usually the leader of the Bunt community or the Yajaman, who on the other hand can easily see the face of visitor, and even the land. This was done in order to clarify the equation between the authority and the locals. The Yajaman was considered next to God for the locals and his wishes were always obeyed.

6.2 The Connection between the Guttus and Bhuta Kola



Image 10: Idols in the Bhutha Shrine

The Shrines

The Bhutas are accorded a special place in the house and enshrined outside in the surrounding known as *Bhuta Sthaana*. There are shrines located for the Bhuta in each household.

The family might perform the festival of Bhuta Kola once a year, once in five, or once in ten years. The royal spirits, few of the many spirits worshipped by Bunt household are connected with the land owning power of the Bunt community. During the Bhuta Kola festival, the jewellery is kept in the Bhuta Sthaana and is worn by the impersonator. Because it is considered sacred by this community, a separate shrine protects those ornaments of the Bhuta. These shrines are found in almost all Bunts households and are built either on the Northeast, East, Southeast or West. The Bhuta shrines have been under the control on the Bunts. The ornaments and parts of headgears, which are kept in these shrines, are supposed to be guarded till the next spirit worship is performed. One more striking fact about these shrines is that if in case the house is robbed, no one would even dare to rob the ornaments from fear of enraging the Bhutas. Masks of various animals such as a pig (Panjurli) for instance were kept in these shrines as well, and were to be worn during the Bhuta Kola. The owners briefed us that the positions of these ornaments cannot be changed under any circumstances, as it would anger the Bhutas.

Hence the fear of these *Bhutas* is deeply engraved in people's heart in ancient times and even today. There are beliefs and customs that are stringently followed such as; Teenage girls and ladies who have menstrual cycles are not allowed to enter the prayer room, if in any house any death have taken place the people of that house cannot enter the Naga God Temple, if a crow was standing on the veranda of the house crows it's was considered very inauspicious.

The Guttus had a strong association with Bhuta Kola. The Bhutas have their own jurisdiction, and this also combines, jurisdiction required for a Guttu. Though not constitutionally legalized these decisions and traditional customs are accepted by all.

Indeed the Bhuta worship is organized by the landlord at his Guttu, so over here the Guttu becomes the centre of attraction apart from the Bhuta, because here people come with their problems related to crops, harvest, family issues, etc. Normally the village Bhutas would prefer the Bunt household (an owner of a Guttu) to speak to the Bhuta as the village's collective voice. This is because the Guttu stood for managerial power and Bunt leadership. This would thus mean that the power structure of the village has been established and endorsed traditionally.

It can be interpreted in a way where the Bhutas themselves were adding to the eminence of the Guttu power in the making.

Guttus were considered the Panchayats of the village and sometimes they actually were. The Yajamana had an undiluted belief in the judgement of the Daivas who could see the past, present and future from which would not allow any sinner an escape route. "The presence of the Dharmada chavadi or righteous court at the Guttu house, to which was linked the power of the all-knowing, benign and yet punishing divinity of the Daivas, made the traditional Bunt household the first, and often the only destination of justice²⁷". The chavadi had to be elevated in order to express its importance and strength. It had a halo of awe and sanctity to it. The symbols of the chavadi were direct references to the Bhuta.

Petty issues were supposed to be solved by the Guttu owner only, but when it came to some considerable or larger problem, at that time the Bhuta interfered. Thus one can understand how the architecture of a Bunt's household reflects the political authority. The punishments and rewards of Bhutas also were comparatively higher.

Their judicial power of the Bhutas is dominating, and their decisions respected by all, because they are the order of God. The fear of the spirits refrained the community from conducting any misdeeds.

6.3 Guttus and the Connection with the Caste System in the Medieval Ages

The household's architecture does also define the limits of various castes of Tulu Nadu. There are zones with considerations to status and purity. The ritually superior classes were not allowed admittance into areas where the lower castes were allowed unless warranted by certain rituals. The zones of admittance were adhered to with stern efficacy.

²⁷ Surendra, Rao B." Contours of the Guttu Universe." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. Print.

The Yajaman had admittance into all parts of the house. A Pardanna of Koti-Chennaya is a metaphor for the zones of admittance based on caste status. It reads as follows:

*Nikula Noolu padi beramaner anda genda tare padmakatte
undu; vokkatere mandi anda paadina pani dompa undu;
jativarnada mande anda seri padolid soonkanada ujjal undu.*

*If you are a Brahmin with the holy thread you can be seated
on the auspicious platform around the gendali coconut tree;
if you are a Bunt you may go to a specially prepare pandal;
if you are a caste-brother you have the swaying swing at the
chavadi to sit on.*

- Koti Chennaya Paddana²⁸

Tulu Nadu was a fusion of different castes and religions. The Medieval Guttus did connect the other castes in the village through the vocations they practiced in these households. There were landless labourers who performed various menial jobs for the Guttus. They belonged to the untouchable class. The system had oppression embellished into it. The Guttus had liaison with the Brahmins.

A major part of the Yajamana's earnings were invested into the temples that were jointly under the administration of the Brahmins. "If this enlarged the scope of their honour beyond what money and muscle would procure, they also sought the services and cooperation of those castes and groups who occupied lower rungs in social hierarchy"²⁹.

²⁸ Surendra, Rao B. "Making of the Guttu Lore." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 94. Print.

²⁹ Surendra, Rao B. "Making of the Guttu Lore." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 74. Print

6.4 Guttus and their Connection with the Cultural Sports

The Yajamanas of Guttus used to have active contributions in various cultural sports such as Kori Katta and Kambala. A great portion of the earnings was invested into the sports. The cultural sport of Kambala and Kori Katta are not only revered due to their religious associations, but also due to the pride and honour they bring to Guttus.

The tradition of Kambala in certain villages and houses is known to preserve the political status, once enjoyed by the owner of Guttus. During our field trip, when we arrived at Moodbidri village near Mangalore to see the Kambala race, we saw that before the commencement of the race, the owners of the Guttus or the politically able people of the village performed a small ritual before beginning the race, considering the field to be sacred. Kambala, which was once a month long celebration, is still celebrated for a day or two with great fanfare. Agriculture was never looked upon as just a vocation, or as a matter of earning profit. It was a part of people's life. It had its own hopes, assurances and fears. The Guttu world was an important part of this universe. The planning of a Guttu house layout had to accommodate several constituents that met the agrarian needs and practices: cowsheds for feed and keep cows and oxen, arrangements for keeping buffaloes used for ploughing purpose or the race – buffaloes. There was special provision for collecting cow dung. The house also had large paddy fields situated near the house.

The Kori Katta or Rooster Fight likewise represented the family as well as personal prestige. The Kori Katta however due to the present laws has now been banned and can only be performed before the Bhuta Kola. However due to the participation of local leaders, who participate to emphasise on their power, the Kori Katta is still a great fanfare.

Guttu is considered to be the pride, honour, identity and prestige of the owner. And therefore during the Kambala the name of the Guttus is given higher privilege and entitlement. When we witnessed the celebration in Mangalore, the name of the buffalo along with the name of the owner of the Guttu was taken during the introductory announcement as well as during the announcement of the winner.

6.5 Guttus and the Matrilineal Law of Inheritance

A very interesting feature that did stand out was that the law of inheritance was matrilineal. When we did hear about this we assumed that this asserted the woman's rights and power in the Bunt society. However we observed otherwise as we noticed that women were always pushed into a private space, into the background.

We realized that although the Bunt society had followed a matrilineal society, it does not necessarily mean that women are empowered. However there have been historical evidences, according to B. Surendra Rao's book, that there were exception Bunt women who were landowners, who donated land to the temples. It has been indicated in many epigraphs, one being of Deku Shettithi who was quite a risk taker in business. However the reality today is that the Guttu universe is greatly male centred. When we had visited the Guttus, we were under the impression that the Guttus still followed the matrilineal law of inheritance.

However meeting B. Surendra Rao changed our impression all together:

““Aliya-Santana” has been abolished, because there was a demand from the bunts itself, that it should be abolished, so its abolished today. In the Bunt households this was a problem, the inheritance was by female line, but the management of the guttu was by male. Infact, the “Yejamanye,” was infact the boss. Whatever he acquired finally, the idea of seeing those sisters get it and not his own sons, see was totally incompressible; And there was a demand that it should be abolished.”

In fact the cultural sports, Kori Katta and Kambala concentrated on increasing the male enterprise and hauteur. Women seem to be repeatedly consigned to the domestic level. The Daiva, Siri, has indeed targeted the issue. “Siri is often quoted as an instance of a progressive feminist defiance against male domination”³⁰.

³⁰ Surendra, Rao B.” Contours of the Guttu Universe." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 85. Print.

6.6 The Siri Cult³¹

The lengthy narratives of Siri and Koti-Chennaya are considered to be the two prominent oral epics or Pardanna of Tulu Nadu by many scholars. The different available Pardanna form a vast mythological and poetic corpus, constituting a chief element of the cultural identity of the region. These orally transmitted narrative corpuses also traverse from the mythic tradition to the different ritual contexts mentioned in the above section on bhūtārādhane.

The legends of Koti-Cennaya issuing in the traditional garaḍis (martial arts cum worship centres), and the legendary twin-brothers have also been included in the pantheon of the spirits/semi-deities creating the cult of Koti-Cennaya.

The Siri Pardanna sung primarily by women in the fields during paddy transplantation is considered to be a major epic in Tulu. It is the story of three generations of women – Siri, her daughter Sonne, and twin granddaughters Abbaga and Daraga, and the tragedies that befall them. Like the epic of Koti-Cennaya, what is prominent is the translation of Siri text from the mythical to the ritual context of Siri jātre or Siri ālaḍe, and the deification of these women as spirits or semi-deities. For the matrilineal society of Tuluvas, Siri occupies a very special position as she is regarded as their founder from whom the matrilineal descent is traced. A synopsis of the major episodes bringing out the most relevant themes to account for the distinctiveness of the Siri cult and its ‘religious’ activities are provided in the Appendix.

During these rituals, thousands of women gather in the temple premises, sing the Siri epic, get possessed by different spirits of the Siri category, and thus get transferred into the mythical world of Siri as spirits. These Apotheosized humans are said to be seven in number – Siri, Sonne, Ginde, Abbaga, Daraga, Daarū and Kumara (referential script for this is the Siri myth outlined in the Appendix 2). The ritual performance is regarded as curative healing the women of ‘abnormal’ behaviours like speaking inappropriately or not speaking at all, shivering, sickness, delayed puberty, lack of appetite, etc.

Such behaviour is diagnosed to be the ‘trouble’ of Siri spirits and the relatives are advised to take her to the next Siri rituals so as to resolve by their promise to serve

³¹ Refer to Appendix 2

Siri spirits as possession vehicles in subsequent years. While singing the story of the Siri, they get possessed and get individually transformed into the characters of the story they sing. The 'healed' women vow their allegiance to the cult by ensuring their participation in the rituals in subsequent years, not as novice but as adepts. In short, "recitation of myth and ritual action are brought together in a dramatic model through which the individual is reintegrated into a moral order" to use the words of Claus.

It could be relevant to observe that the Siri rituals serve as a space where women make an attempt to reclaim their self or forge new identities by identifying with the characters in the Siri myth. The inextricably linked worlds of myth and present-day serve as a platform for the 'afflicted' women to construct their new self-identities. The tragic dimensions of the Siri story lends multiple models – of quarrels and jealousies between husband and wife, between co-wives, and between sisters; the tragic plights that could befall a woman; the economic deprivations that a woman may face under the Aliya Santana kaṭ of Tuluva community; etc – for the women to identify with and find solace in thereby lending them a cathartic effect. Women's identification with tragic proportions of the Siri myth may bring about a realization that misfortune was a part of life and that a blessed and divine woman like Siri could also not escape from it. The women-centred narrative structures of Siri thus re-enact and dramatize women's struggles and her search for identity.

Table 1: Distinguishing the Bhuta Kola and Siri Festival

Bhuta Kola	Siri Festival
Only male dancers perform this act of spirit worship.	Women perform the spirit worship and are guided by one male priest who acts as the Kumara ¹ .
Only the male spirits are worshipped during the Bhuta Kola.	Only the female spirits in the Siri category are worshipped during this festival.
In the Bhuta Kola performance, local villagers acknowledge their problems like bad harvest, improper rainfall, etc. After this the Bhuta suggests the solutions to them regarding the same.	This ritual performance is regarded as curative healing the women of 'abnormal' behaviours like speaking inappropriately or not speaking at all, shivering, sickness, delayed puberty, lack of appetite,

Folklore has thus narrated instances of such exceptional women defying the subordination by men, however they failed in altering the situation for women. There are various restrictions on women within the household as well. This is because, as mentioned by Chinnapa Gowda, in many cases men are considered pure while women are considered impure, especially during the menstruation period.

For instance, the chavadi was commanded only the presence of a man as the Daivas resented the women's inquisitive presented around them. The women had her territory, which included a supervisory power over domestic hospitality, the kitchen, and affairs regarding the welfare of family members, cattle and servants. The only instances where a woman can play the role of a man is in an aristocratic Bunt household.

Menstruating women had even more restriction imposed on them as, "the menstruating women were looked upon as a huge reason for polluting the world of

men and God and hence for three days, they are allotted the corner room”³² According to B. Surendra Rao’s findings, The defiling powers of menstruating women have been noted in all ages and societies by authors like Leviticus, Bacon, Pliny”³³. It seemed to us that it is a tactic that could have been used to suppress women.

Guttus are truly the gems of Bunts in Tulu Nadu. They are the standing symbols of Bunt leadership, power and authority. The richness of the Bunt culture is indeed not exhausted by the Guttu universe, however is projected passionately by it.

³² Surendra, Rao B.” Contours of the Guttu Universe." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 95. Print.

³³ Surendra, Rao B.” Contours of the Guttu Universe." *Bunts in History and Culture*. Udupi: Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, 2010. 95. Print.

Chapter 7. Data Analysis:

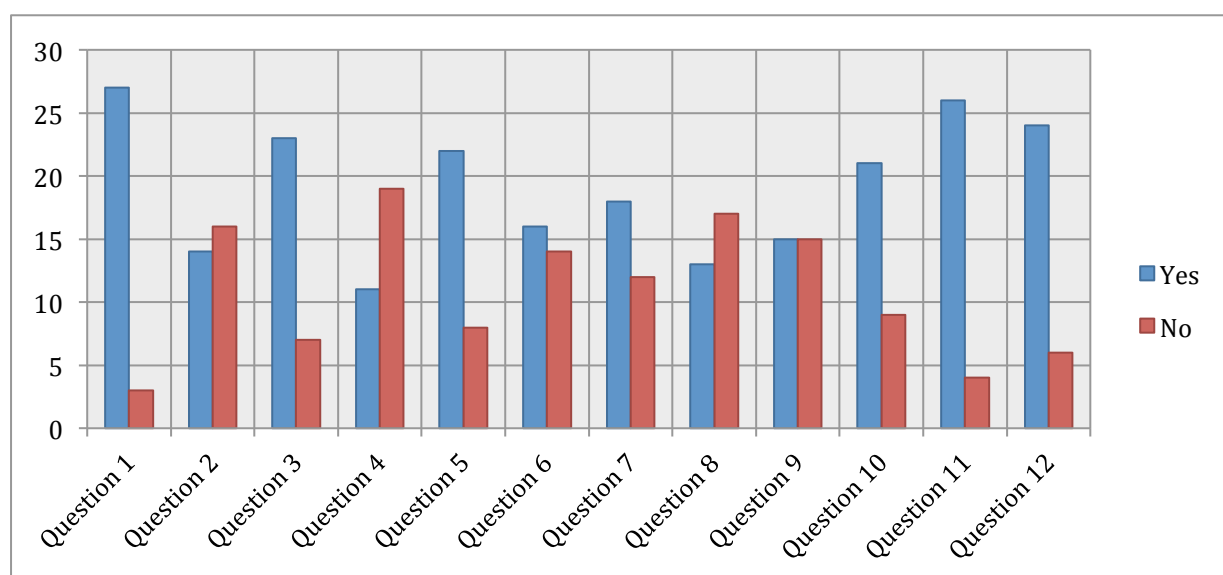
Aim of the survey

To analyse how social external environment has affected the cultural festivals of Bunt community in Tulu Nadu.

Table 2: Regarding the Answers to the Questionnaire in Appendix 1

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
Question 1	27	3
Question 2	14	16
Question 3	23	7
Question 4	11	19
Question 5	22	8
Question 6	16	14
Question 7	18	12
Question 8	13	17
Question 9	15	15
Question 10	21	9
Question 11	26	4
Question 12	24	6

Graph 1: Representing the Answers to the Survey Conducted



Analysis:

We conducted a survey with 30 people to understand the significance of the cultural sports as well as the Bhuta Kola within the Bunt community. One of our main aims behind conducting this survey was to identify how the changed sociocultural environment has affected the cultural sports and the Bhuta Kola.

From the survey, we found out that many people perform the Bhuta Kola festival out of fear and not belief. We also figured that the cultural sports i.e. Kambala and Kori Katta, which have such a significant connection with the Bhuta kola, are conducted for entertainment purposes and Kori Katta especially is used as a medium of betting. It was also evident that the whole essence of the Bhuta Kola is deteriorating and the purpose of this festival is getting lost as the time is passing by.

Thus, the Bhuta Kola and the cultural sports have evolved due to the external paraphernalia and have commercialized and modernised which has resulted into the loss of the whole essence and purpose of the festival. Thus, according to the survey, the external environment has affected the festival of Bhuta Kola along with the cultural sports.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

We tried understanding the Bunt community within the parameters of its belief in the spirits. However we realized that there is more to it than what meets the eye. Hence we looked into the political and social connection thus getting an idea of the deep connection it has with the Bunt society.

We focused on a main festival, the Bhuta Kola's, a form of nature worship influence and impact on the Bunt community. Cultural sports such as the Kori Katta and Kambala are linked to the main festival i.e. the Bhuta Kola in a manner of pleasing the spirit along with the various symbolisms, which give it a deep connection with the historical aspects of the Bunt community. The rich history tied to the cultural sports i.e. the Kambala and the Kori Katta have helped us create a historical reconstruction of the community. The Pardanas, an area of knowledge that is a source of true delight, helped us to connect the oral stories, which form the mythological, historical and social basis for the Bhuta Kola and the cultural sports.

We also explored the manner in which the Guttu defines a Bunt's identity, i.e. owning a Guttu symbolizes the power that the family has over the society along with a higher position in the social strata. We also found that the shrines dedicated for the Bhutas in the Guttu have a specific structure and position, which is done by using the directions of the Vastu.

We identified that the Guttu house forms the basis of the connection between the Bhuta Kola festival and the cultural sports. The shrine in the Guttu has the sacred ornaments, which are used for the Bhuta kola along with the idols, which represent the Kambala and the Kori Katta. Also the Kambala field along with the Kori Katta field is a part of the architecture of the Guttu, which has made it even more evident that the Guttu is the basis for the connection of the Bhuta kola and the cultural sports.

We analysed that many people perform the Bhuta Kola festival out of fear and not belief. We also figured that the cultural sports i.e. Kambala and Kori Katta, which have such a significant connection with the Bhuta Kola, are conducted for entertainment purposes and Kori Katta especially is used as a medium of betting.

It was also evident that the whole essence of the Bhuta Kola is deteriorating and the purpose of this festival is getting lost as the time is passing by.

Thus, the Bhuta Kola and the cultural sports have evolved due to the external paraphernalia and have commercialized and modernised which has resulted into the loss of the whole essence and purpose of the festival. The cultural sports are becoming more commercialized, as there are now money prizes. They seem to be not more of a source of entertainment rather than being conducted for the Bhuta. They seem to be conducted to emphasize on the power and stature of the Guttu and its owner. Thus, according to the survey, the external environment has affected the festival of Bhuta Kola along with the cultural sports making it more commercialized and materialistic in nature.

According to the number of people we interviewed, many community members have lost true belief in the Bhutas. We observed that this belief is turning into fear as well as taking the form of a much more materialistic nature. The dancers have also been migrating from the Tulu Nadu, which is making the future of this form of worship a question mark. The younger generations of performers now has access to education and are choosing to deviate from their community business and the dancers are now becoming money minded and this is resulting in the loss of essence of the whole festival of Bhuta Kola.

Thus, fear may be the only driving force for this belief system and is the only reason which is still keeping this system intact. The element of fear of the spirits has shaped the way in which these performances and events would take place in the future.

As a whole, through this research we learnt that the Bhuta Kola, Kambala and Kori Katta along with the Guttus have a strong bond with the Bunt community and significantly reflects upon the lifestyle choices and major decisions of the society as well. We also learnt that this strong bond has helped shape the economic, social and the historical belief systems in this community, which forms the foundation of the Bunt community as a whole.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The Survey

1. Do you believe in Bhuta worship?
2. Do you know why this festival has been followed for centuries?
3. Do you find any change in the Bhuta worship over the years?
4. Do you think the charm and charisma of Bhuta Kola is same as what it was two decades ago?
5. Do you think that FEAR has taken over belief in terms of devotion in spirit worship?
6. Are the Bhuta dances focused more on the commercial aspects in recent years?
7. Do you believe that there is a significant decrease in faith and devotion in these Bhuta dances because of commercialization being involved in this festival?
8. Is the 'money' factor given more emphasis by the dancers in recent years?
9. Do you think that in near future, the idea of Bhuta worship will lose its actual meaning in totality?
10. Do you think that there is a chance of younger generation worsening the actual idea behind the spirit worship?
11. Do you watch Kori Katta (rooster fight) for entertainment purpose?
12. Do you attend Kambala race for entertainment purpose?

Appendix 2: Siri Story

An old wealthy man named Berma Alva or 'Ajjeru' (grandfather) as he was fondly called, living in the palace of Satyanapura, was beset with grief, as he had no issue. Lamenting his state, he had vowed that he would give his wealth as alms to beggars if he could have a child. He prayed to the lord Naga Berma who shortly afterwards came to his door disguised as a beggar. Berma Alva, following his word but not aware of the beggar's real identity, ordered his maidservant Daru to give alms generously. The beggar, however, refused to accept alms from the maid but insisted that the master of the house personally give him alms. When Berma Alva appeared, the beggar asked him the reasons for his grief and suggested Ajjeru to renovate the family's ancestral home and the shrines, the ruin of which was the reason for him having no issues. Ajjeru complied with the Brahmin's suggestion and performed regular worship at the shrine.

In the large ceremony performed for the family god, Bermeru and all of the family Bhutas, Ajjeru offered the lord a flower pod from the areca nut palm (pingara) containing a ball of sandalwood paste, begging to be forgiven for his neglect. At that moment the pod opened, revealing a baby girl. Pleased Ajjeru named her as 'Siri.' Siri grew up at a phenomenal rate and at the age of five she was married to Kanta Punja of Kadengadi and a huge sum of gold and land, all of Berma Alva's wealth was given to Kanta Punja as Siri's dowry. However, Siri's beauty and faithful devotion could not dissuade Punja from favouring a prostitute Siddu on whom he squandered all of Siri's wealth and property. When Siri became pregnant Punja refused to perform the customary bayake ceremony, which honours the wife as she departs to her natal home. Ajjeru visited her and insisted Kanta Punja to perform the bayake, and even provided money for Kantha Alva to buy a saree for Siri. On his way back from the town bringing saree and jewels for Siri, Kanta Punja visits his prostitute Siddu who wears the garment of Siri. Siri refuses to wear the polluted saree and returns to Ajjeru's house dishonoured. Siri gave birth to a son named 'Kumara' in Ajjeru's house. Her wish to meet her husband and mother-in-law Sankaru Punjedi in the ninth month of pregnancy went

unfulfilled. Also, the father refused to come and acknowledge the child. Infuriated Siri cursed her husband's family, lands and estate to go barren (and so, it is said, they are today). On the birth of the child, an astrologer forbade the grandfather from seeing the child as that would cause his death. One day, when Siri had left Kumara alone while bathing him, the grandfather enters and takes the child in his arms. He collapsed immediately and was found dead on the floor with the baby still in his arms when Siri returned. He breathed his last telling Siri not to lose her freedom come what may. Siri 140 Ritualistic World of Tuluva: a study of Tuluva Women and the Siri Possession Cult sent message to her husband and her in-laws who didn't respond to it. Thus Siri and Daaruu were made to arrange the last rites of Ajjeru.

Annu Shetty of Sulura Guttu convened a village court and claimed stake over the Palace as per the Aliya Santana Kattu of Tuluva Community. Although Siri made an attempt to resist this, she failed to succeed. She refused to submit and cursed the palace to be reduced to cinders. Overcome with grief, Siri wandered aimlessly with the child Kumara and maidservant Daaruu. She had renounced her husband, lost her only kinsman and her wealth had been squandered on her husband's mistress and by the kinsmen. In her wanderings, Siri comes across many people and the story also narrates the use of her magical powers at times. At a place called Booladapavadu, after Siri fed Kumara with milk, he started talking and predicted his mother's second marriage and said that he would not be there for the ceremony. At his request, Siri disappeared him and Daaruu was also sent to the invisible world.

As she wandered southward, she met two warriors (Kshatriyas) of Boolamallige palace who both desired her greatly, but recognized her as a virtuous woman. She begged their help and asked them to regard her as their sister. She was taken to their palace. A man called Kodsara Alva of Kotrapadi sought to marry her in a special ceremony called kaipptawuni ('taking-the-hand') as both of them were already married. No dowry, no Brahman, no feast, no relative's consent would be necessary for this ceremony.

Saamu Alvedi, the wife of Kodsara Alva resisted the second marriage of her husband and left the palace devising a curse that if Siri were to look into a certain oil lamp she would go blind in the palace.

While accompanying Kodsara Alva to his palace, Siri intuited that Kodsara Alva had another wife and that she was angered. She refused to enter the palace unless Saamu Alvedi welcomed her. When Alvedi realizes the honesty and forthrightness of Siri,

and how pitiable her plight was, she welcomed Siri into the household as a co-wife. At Kodsara Alva's house Siri became pregnant with a second child. Just before her time of delivery, Siri went to an areca nut grove at the edge of the jungle where she made a bed of betel leaves. There at dusk she had her baby, a daughter, whom she named Sunne (white lime). Kumara came in the disguise and helped his mother in the delivery. He blesses the child, put her on an areca leaves and floated it on a stream. He also made his mother disappear (mayi) who is still said to be guarding the land. The child Sonne was found by Kaanebottu Ajjeru who brought her up. At the same time, he also found Gindye, the daughter of Paddantaya and Ginde Giliramu in the forest and brought her up too along with Sonne. Sonne was married to Gurumarla of Uruklotu palace. On Gindye attaining puberty, a ritual was arranged. Sonne was ridiculed in the ceremony as she had not yet attained puberty. At the end of the ritual Sonne made Gindye disappear who later joined the divine circle of Kumara. On both Sonne and her husband's prayer and vow to god that they would make him a big offering, Sonne attained puberty and became pregnant. She gave birth to twin girls, Abbaga and Daraga. Caught up in the joys of family life, they neglected their vow to Bermeru. Bermeru appeared to Sonne and Gurumarla disguised as a fortune teller. He foretold that they would suffer most deeply if they neglected their vow to him. All that the god had given them would be taken back. Guru Marla was angered by the fortune teller and told him to leave.

One day when Sonne and Gurumarla went away to invite the Kaanebottu ajjeru for the twin's marriage, Bermeru appeared in the palace disguised as a Brahmin. Although Gurumarla had locked the girls' favourite game Cenne Mane as they often quarrelled over it, Bermeru enticed the girls to play the game again. As expected, the game took a violent shape where the girls started fighting with each other. Abbaga hit her sister on the head and killed her. Shocked at the heinous crime she had committed, Abbaga also jumped into the well. When the parents returned, they were met by the sage who warned them that should never neglect a promise made to a god, for all that they were, all that they had was a god's gift. What was given by a god was taken away. The twins were later sent to the divine circle of the deities. The story of the three-generation women of a matrilineal family thus ends on a tragic note.

Glossary³⁴

- **Aliyasantana:** Matriliny.
- **Bhuta:** Also known as Daiva. Any of the many folk-deities in Tulu Nadu. Wrongly or mischievously translated as ‘devil’.
- **Bhuta Sthaana:** The shrine where the Bhuta is worshipped.
- **Guttu:** The house of a Bunt aristocrat, with its adjuncts of land-power and delegated administrative functions. In feudal terms, a manor house.
- **Kambala:** Buffalo race.
- **Kola:** Also called Nema.
- **Kori katta:** Rooster fight.
- **Pardanna:** Folk epics or narrative poems of Tulu Nadu, recounting the tales of heroism, tragedy and miracles of the Bhutas while they are ritually and dramatically propitiated in Nema or the Kolas.

³⁴ B. Surendra Rao, Bunts in History and Culture.

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