

200 Years Later

Retracing Francis Buchanan's Journey of 1800-01
through Erstwhile Mysore and Canara

SHIVA MANJUNATHA

with a foreword by
Sashi Sivramkrishna

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- The FAIR Team**
- Sashi Sivramkrishna | Chairman
 - Preeta Nath | Vice-Chairman
 - Shiva M. | Field Researcher
 - Sreedhar S. | Field Investigator
 - Jijeesh T. | Design & Implementation
 - Mahadeva T.M. | Project Conveyance

Designed at

 **KALANISHKRITI**
Udupi | Karnataka
kalanishkriti@gmail.com

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Foreword

While working on my documentary film, *The Curse of Talakad*, I first encountered Francis Buchanan's journey—or rather, his meticulous survey of parts of southern India. His records proved invaluable in helping me piece together the mystery behind the Curse of Talakad, offering insights that stretched far beyond the legend itself. Yet, what struck me most was not just his observations on landscapes and monuments but his detailed accounts of the day-to-day lives and livelihoods of the people he met—a perspective often overlooked in traditional historical studies. It was this intimate and comprehensive documentation that inspired me to retrace his journey, to walk in his footsteps and witness firsthand the transformations time had wrought.

Retracing Buchanan's journey was never intended to be a solitary endeavor. I was fortunate to be joined by my colleagues at FAIR—Mahadev Nayak and Sreedhar S.—as well as my friends Amalendu Jyotishi, Lingaraj Jayaprakash, Venkatesh Parthasarathy, and others, who accompanied me on various expeditions. Each journey enriched my understanding, unveiling intricate connections between history, economy, and culture—elements Buchanan had meticulously documented centuries ago.

While Shiva's approach to the journey was broader in scope, I chose to immerse myself in specific subjects such as coarse blanket weaving and iron smelting, industries that continue to sustain livelihoods today. Buchanan's detailed records also sparked my interest in larger historical debates, including the Great Divergence and agricultural productivity in southern India. These inquiries led to a diverse body of work—academic publications, documentary films, and even a graphic novel—all contributing to an expanding repository of knowledge surrounding Buchanan's legacy.

Yet, despite these achievements, there remained a lingering regret. I had always wished to complete Buchanan's journey in its entirety—to visit every village, every town that he had meticulously documented, to compare the past with the present, and to see for myself how industries, traditions, and livelihoods had evolved over time. Time, however, is an elusive

companion, and I found myself constrained by other responsibilities and commitments. That feeling of incompleteness remained until I heard from Shiva.

When Shiva reached out to me, I was intrigued but had no idea that he would be so determined to retrace Buchanan’s entire expedition. His enthusiasm, meticulous planning, and tireless dedication to covering every place Buchanan had visited were inspiring. A true explorer in every sense of the word, Shiva brings not only a keen sense of history but also a deep appreciation for the cultures and traditions that shaped the southern Indian landscape over centuries. His journey is not merely about following Buchanan’s footsteps but about breathing new life into the records, understanding their significance in the present, and presenting them in a way that resonates with contemporary audiences.

FAIR has been a steadfast pillar of support throughout this endeavor. Its mission—working with informal sectors of the economy—aligned seamlessly with Buchanan’s observations of industries and livelihoods that continue to persist even today. To FAIR, much like to Buchanan, this journey was never just about travel; it was about studying the patterns of development, resilience, and survival that weave together the fabric of history. It was about understanding how skills, trades, and traditions have endured despite the sweeping forces of modernization. It was about recognizing the continuity of knowledge passed down through generations, and how even today, elements of Buchanan’s records remain relevant.

As we present this work, we do so with deep reverence for Buchanan’s observations, while also bringing forth new narratives that enrich our understanding of history. This journey, spanning centuries, is not just a rediscovery—it is a tribute to the spirit of exploration, inquiry, and appreciation for the everyday lives of people who shape the course of time. Through this book, we hope to illuminate Buchanan’s legacy, offering readers not just a glimpse into the past but a bridge to the present.

Sashi Sivramkrishna

Bangalore, 2025

Preface

This book began as a personal pursuit—an attempt to trace the roots of my own ancestry. However, what unfolded was an unexpected journey into the rich historical and cultural landscapes of southern India, as documented over 225 years ago by Dr. Francis Buchanan.

His journey across the then Mysore and Canara regions (1800–1801) revealed a detailed and structured view of local life—its people, professions, topography, agriculture, and belief systems. Though I approached this exploration as an individual effort, I was fortunate to find guidance and collaboration through Sashi Sivramkrishna and the FAIR team, whose work laid a foundation for retracing Buchanan’s footsteps.

This book is not intended to be an academic reproduction of Buchanan’s survey, nor does it aim to offer exhaustive commentary. Instead, it is a visual and narrative field record—an attempt to photograph, document, and interpret the sites Buchanan once visited, compare them with the present, and offer contextual insights gathered through conversations with local communities, descendants of erstwhile royal houses, and custodians of oral histories.

This preface is also a note of gratitude—to the FAIR team, to the many individuals I met along the way, and to Buchanan himself, whose meticulous curiosity inspires this work. It is my hope that this book will serve not only as a reference but also as a starting point for others to explore the layered past of southern India with the same sense of wonder and respect.

Introduction

In an era where digital archives and online search tools have become gateways to forgotten histories, the rediscovery of Francis Buchanan’s legendary journey through southern India (1800–1801) remains a powerful reminder of the richness of local knowledge, landscapes, and livelihoods.

In 2021, while researching my family ancestry in the Paughur region (present-day Pavagada), I came across the name of Francis Buchanan, a Scottish physician and surveyor who undertook a detailed journey across southern India between April 1800 and July 1801. Unfortunately, Buchanan did not visit Pavagada during his expedition; he only paid a visit to Midigeshi. However, his extensive documentation on the social, agricultural, economic, and geographic conditions of the time immediately drew my attention. What began as a personal search into the past soon evolved into a larger historical exploration.

Buchanan’s journals, commissioned by the British East India Company, provide rare insights into life in the early 19th century—covering subjects such as caste and professions, local industries, revenue systems, mineral resources, and topography. His observations, recorded with remarkable precision, form one of the earliest and most valuable surveys of southern India.

While conducting my research, I discovered the “Retracing Buchanan’s Journey” initiative, spearheaded by Sashi Sivramkrishna and his team as part of a project of the Foundation to Aid Industrial Recovery (FAIR). Their focused fieldwork across the erstwhile Mysore State was both inspiring and rigorous. I contacted Sashi to express my interest, especially after discovering that Buchanan had documented a wandering religious mendicant named Karibasappa, who is believed to be connected to my lineage. I soon joined the FAIR team, resolving to expand the retracing effort into additional regions mentioned in Buchanan’s journals—particularly the Canara region and surrounding districts.

Unlike Buchanan’s continuous journey by palanquin, supported by an entourage of porters, oxen, and horses, my travels were conducted intermittently. I began in June 2024 and concluded in April 2025, visiting the locations Buchanan once described. My aim was to engage with local communities and document the changes—both visible and intangible—that have unfolded over 225 years.

This book does not attempt to replicate Buchanan’s exhaustive study of agriculture, dyeing, or other unorganised manufacturing processes. Instead, it offers a photographic narrative with detailed captions, highlighting the transformation of landscapes, occupations, settlements, and cultural identities over time. The work is grounded in field visits and interviews with local residents, elders, temple caretakers, and descendants of royal families, adding a deeply human dimension to the historical narrative.

Through this work, I aim to create a visual and contextual record that connects Buchanan’s era with the present. It is intended as a resource for students, researchers, historians, and heritage enthusiasts alike. More than anything, this book is both a tribute to Buchanan’s legacy and an invitation to rediscover the layered histories of our regions—before they fade into obscurity.

Shiva Manjunatha (Shiva M)
Bangalore, 2025

Retracing Buchanan's Journey



Chapter I

Madras to
Srirangapatna (Only
Karnataka Region)

Chapter II

Srirangapatna
and Vicinity

Chapter III

Srirangapatna to
Bangalore

Chapter IV

Bangalore

Chapter V

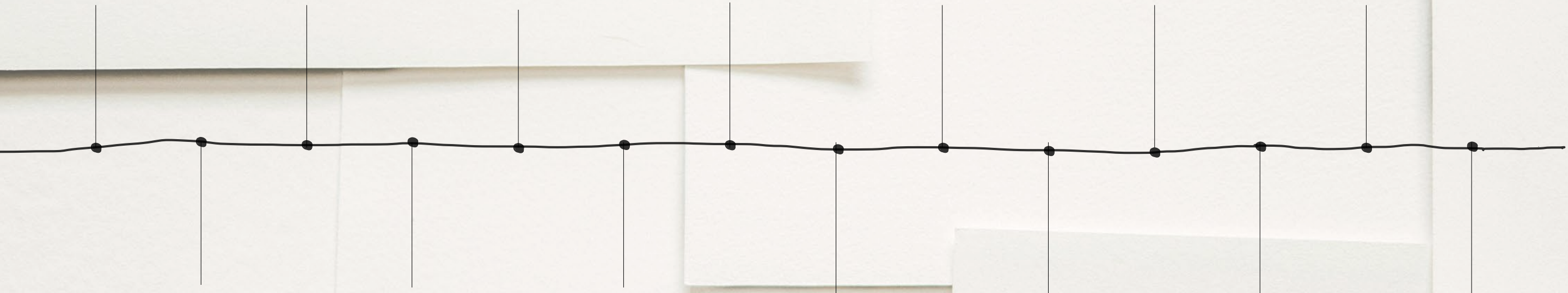
Bangalore to
Doddaballapura

Chapter VI

Doddaballapur
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Chapter VII

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Chapter VIII

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Mangalore to
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Chapter XVII

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Chapter XVIII

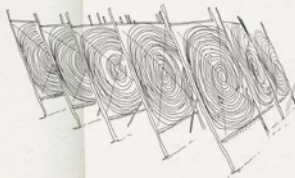
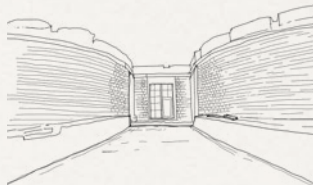
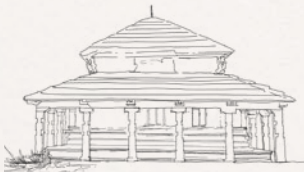
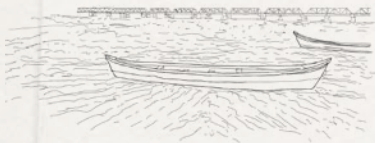
Hyder Nagara to
Hiriyur

Chapter XIX

Hiriyur to
Srirangapatna

Chapter XX

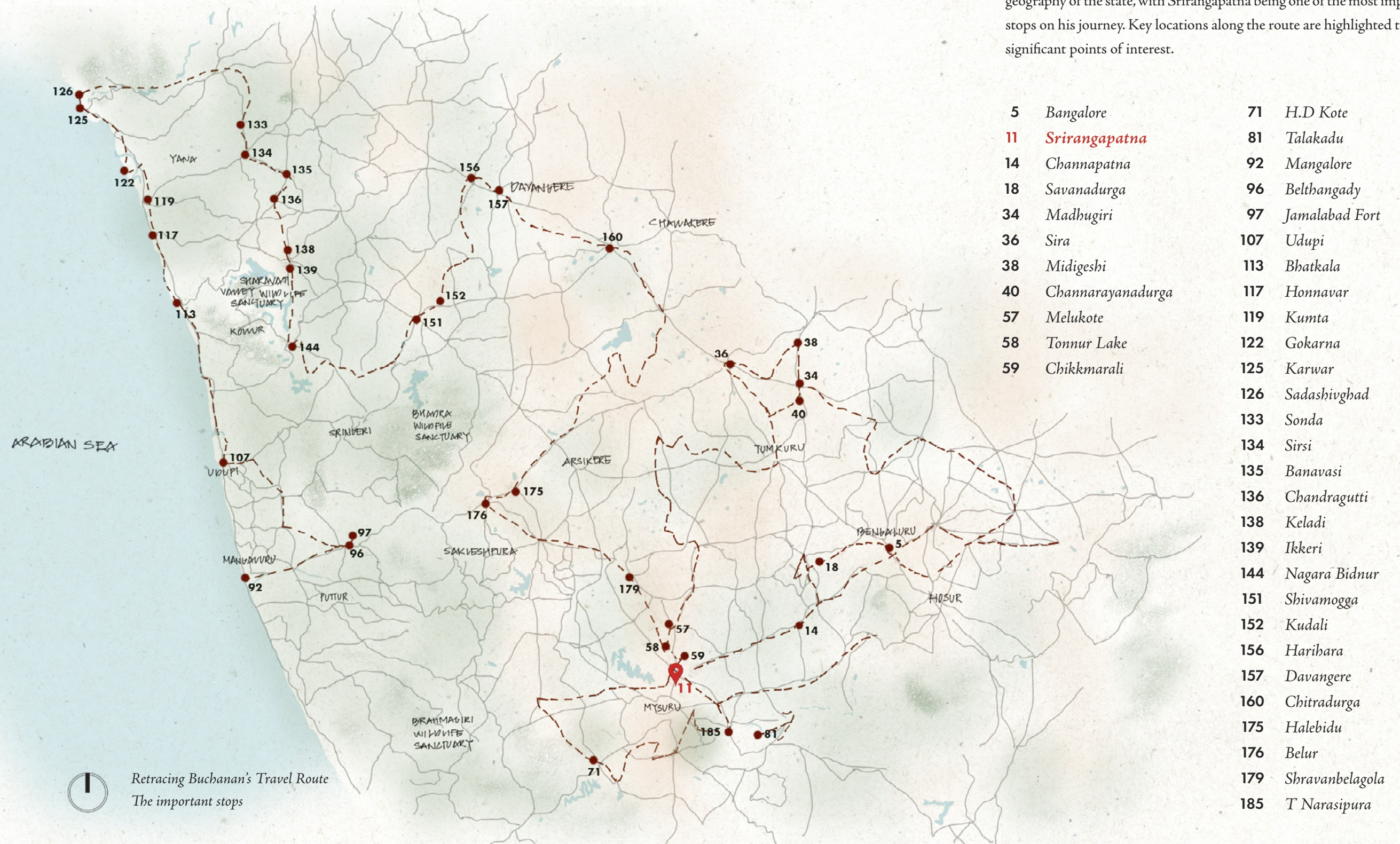
Srirangapatna
to Madras (Only
Karnataka Region)

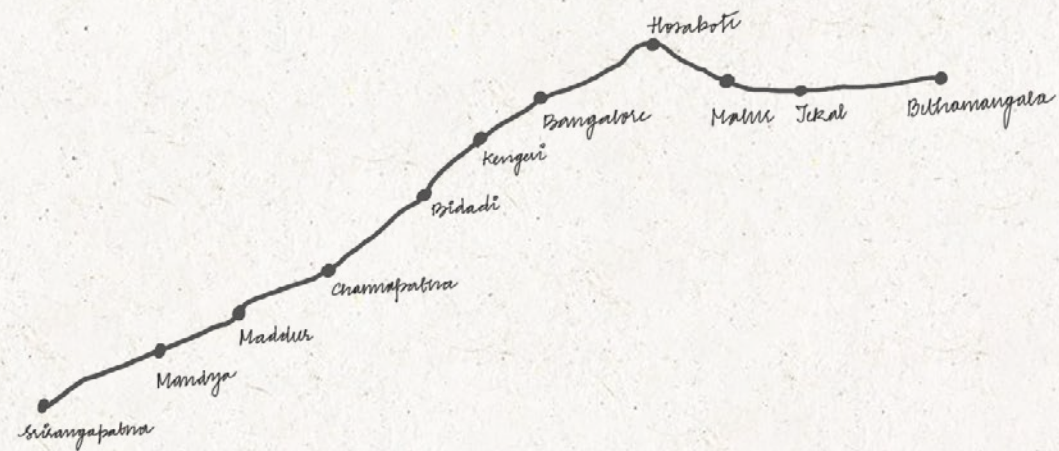


After 200 years...

The important places

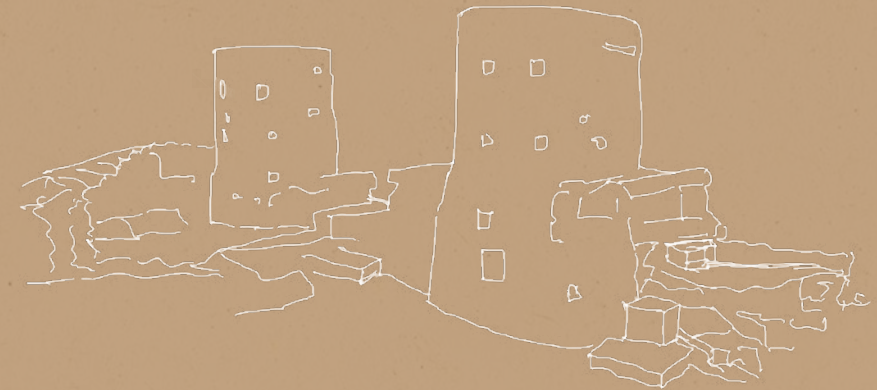
This map presents an overlay of Francis Buchanan's original travel route from 1800–01 (covering only the Karnataka region) onto the present-day geography of the state, with Srirangapatna being one of the most important stops on his journey. Key locations along the route are highlighted to mark significant points of interest.





Chapter I

Journey from Madras to Seringapatam (Srirangapatna)



In 1800-1801, Scottish physician and botanist Francis Buchanan undertook a meticulous survey of South India, documenting its agriculture, trade, industries, natural resources, and inhabitants. His journey provides one of the earliest comprehensive accounts of Karnataka's socio-economic and cultural landscape during the early colonial period.

This chapter follows Francis Buchanan's 1800-1801 journey through Karnataka, beginning at Bethamangala near the Andhra Pradesh border and covering key locations like Tekal, Malur, Hoskote, Bangalore, Channarayana, Mandya, and Srirangapatna. Buchanan meticulously documented the region's agriculture, trade, industries, natural resources, and local communities, offering a rare glimpse into Karnataka's early 19th-century landscape.

Retracing his route today reveals a striking contrast—ancient reservoirs, traditional industries, and rural settlements have given way to modern cities, industrial corridors, and expanding infrastructure. Despite rapid urbanization, remnants of the past endure in historical sites, agricultural practices, and cultural traditions. This journey bridges Buchanan's observations with Karnataka's present-day reality, offering a compelling perspective on two centuries of transformation.



- 1 Bethamangala (Baydamungulum)
- 2 Tekal (Tayculum)
- 3 Malur (Waluru)
- 4 Hoskote (Catcolli)
- 5 Bangalore
- 6 Kengeri (Kingara)
- 7 Bidadi (Wiridy or Biridy)
- 8 Channapatna (Chinapatana)
- 9 Maddur (Muduru)
- 10 Mandya (Mundium)
- 11 Srirangapatna (Seripatnam)

 Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Madras to Seringapatam

In 1800-1801, the Scottish physician and botanist Francis Buchanan embarked on a comprehensive survey of South India, meticulously documenting its agriculture, trade, natural resources, industries, and inhabitants. His journey provides one of the earliest detailed accounts of Karnataka's socio-economic and cultural landscape during the early colonial period.

Since I am focusing solely on the Karnataka region, this chapter begins at the Karnataka-Andhra Pradesh border from Bethamangala and spans across the entire state, covering both the Canara and Mysore regions. My journey follows Buchanan's original route, revisiting the places he documented while capturing insights into the past and present landscape.

Key Themes Explored in the Journey

- Cattle and their role in agriculture and trade
- Agriculture, with a focus on traditional and evolving practices
- Commodities like pepper, cardamom, and other produce
- Mines & quarries, revealing the region's rich geological history
- Manufacturing, tracing the industries Buchanan observed
- Inhabitants, their livelihoods, and cultural transformations
- Forests and their economic and ecological significance
- Marine-related activities, including fishing and coastal trade

By examining these aspects, I aim to bridge Buchanan's historical observations with the modern landscape, providing a comparative study of Karnataka's transformation over two centuries.

Bethamangala (anglicized: Baydamungulum)

On 16th March 2025, I visited Bethamangala, a town near the Andhra Pradesh border, located 26 km from Kolar and 11 km from Kolar Gold Fields. This place holds historical significance, primarily due to the Bethamangala Kere, an ancient and vast reservoir. The Palar River flows into this reservoir, with a masonry dam built to regulate its waters.

According to the Gazetteer, this large tank was initially constructed during the Nolamba period in 890 A.D., as confirmed by inscriptions. Historically, Bethamangala was also referred to as

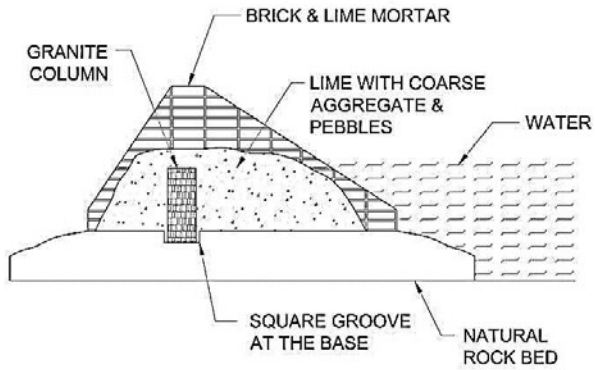


Bethamangala Kere

Vijayadithyamangala and Polaramangala, based on ancient records.

You can still witness the ancient masonry work remains, though it has been partially modified with newer structures.

Nearby stands the old Kolar Gold Field Water Works, built by the British and inaugurated by the erstwhile Maharaja of Mysore, Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV.



From the left: 1. Remnants of ancient masonry work, partially modified with newer structures; 2. Sketch depicting masonry techniques from ancient times



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Remnants of ancient masonry work; 2 & 3. Goat herds near Bethamangala Lake; 4. Wild palm grove at the lake's edge, though no toddy tapping is practiced here



From the left: 1. Wild palm groves; 2. Bethamangala Kere



Bethamangala Water Works

This unit was commissioned under the leadership of Major A.J. Lotbiniere, with Chief Engineer W.M. Hutchin and Engineer J.J. Whitelee providing technical expertise. The foundation stone, still visible today, bears their names.

This unit was established to supply drinking water to Bethamangala and the mining town of KGF. However, the Palar River downstream from Bethamangala Dam is now in a deteriorated state, filled with trash and garbage, and in urgent need of maintenance.

The soil in this region is deep red, locally known as “Kemmanu” in Kannada, making it highly suitable for cultivating vegetables and fruits, particularly pomegranates and citrus varieties. In



A traditional well with outer walls built using locally available granite stones is now equipped with an electric pump for water extraction



A Vegetable Farm in the surrounding area

earlier days, Yethas (manually) were used to draw water from open wells, but now electric pumps have replaced traditional methods for lifting water. During my visit to the local village, I observed wells filled with fresh water, surrounded by lush vegetable farms, indicating the continued agricultural significance of the region.

I continued my journey towards Tekal, which Buchanan referred to as Taylculum. After crossing Bethamangala, I came across the newly constructed Bangalore-Chennai Expressway (NE7), designed to connect industrial zones, with construction progressing rapidly.

Tekal is a village in Malur taluk, surrounded by rocky hills with striking stone boulders that attract passersby. To the east, large-scale quarrying operations are in full swing, shaping the landscape.

Further, I proceeded towards Malur, which Buchanan documented as Waluru. Today, Malur is an emerging industrial hub, hosting numerous MNCs and Indian companies that have established manufacturing units and warehouses due to its strategic proximity to Bangalore and excellent connectivity.

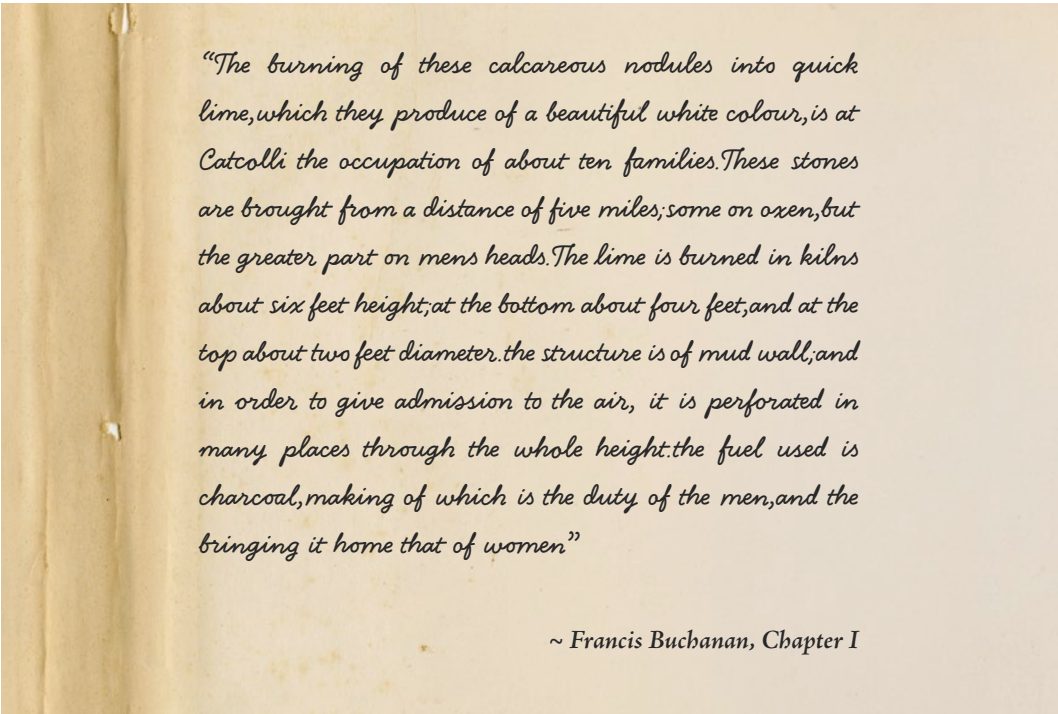
Buchanan documented his visit to a country rum distillery, likely referring to the traditional “Naatu Sara” (country liquor/arrack). He described the distilled spirit being prepared using the bark of *Mimosa leucophlea* (known as ‘Kari Jali’ in Kannada and ‘Nalla Thumma’ in Telugu), along with black jaggery and other substances. However, the preparation of country liquor is now completely banned in Karnataka.

Buchanan also sketched the liquor-making process, which closely resembles the methods still practiced in Andhra Pradesh, though with variations in ingredients and equipment. Traveling through Hoskote, which Buchanan referred to as Catcolli—possibly derived from the Telugu term ‘Kotta’, akin to ‘Hosa’ (meaning “new” in Kannada)—he continued towards Bangalore.



From the left: 1. Bangalore-Chennai Expressway (NE7); 2. A sketch of liquor-making process

Today, Hoskote has transformed into a suburban industrial town of Bangalore, witnessing rapid urbanization. The population density has increased significantly, and like other eastern parts of Bangalore, the roads remain congested, likely due to the growth of software parks, industries, and commercial establishments.



From the left: 1. A laborer cutting large raw limestone into small pieces for kiln charging; 2. Charcoal is prepared nearby as fuel for the kiln. Limestone kilns are still in operation for quicklime production, used for domestic and agricultural purposes. These images were captured at Dodderi near Chalakere as a representation.

Buchanan documented the preparation of quicklime in Hoskote, but this traditional practice has now faded due to urbanization and the community's adaptation to city life. The same lime preparation process he described can still be seen in Dodderi, near Chalakere.

The Upparu caste, historically involved in lime production, continues to practice this trade using traditional methods and facilities. However, the future of this craft remains uncertain, as the younger generation is showing little interest in continuing this ancestral occupation.

The further expedition from Bangalore to Srirangapatna is documented in Chapters II, III, and IV, covering various landscapes, settlements, and historical observations made by Buchanan. This journey provides valuable insights into the agricultural, economic, and social conditions of the early 19th century, offering a comprehensive glimpse into the transformation of the region over time.



From the left: 1. Limestone kilns; 2. A charging kiln from a top view

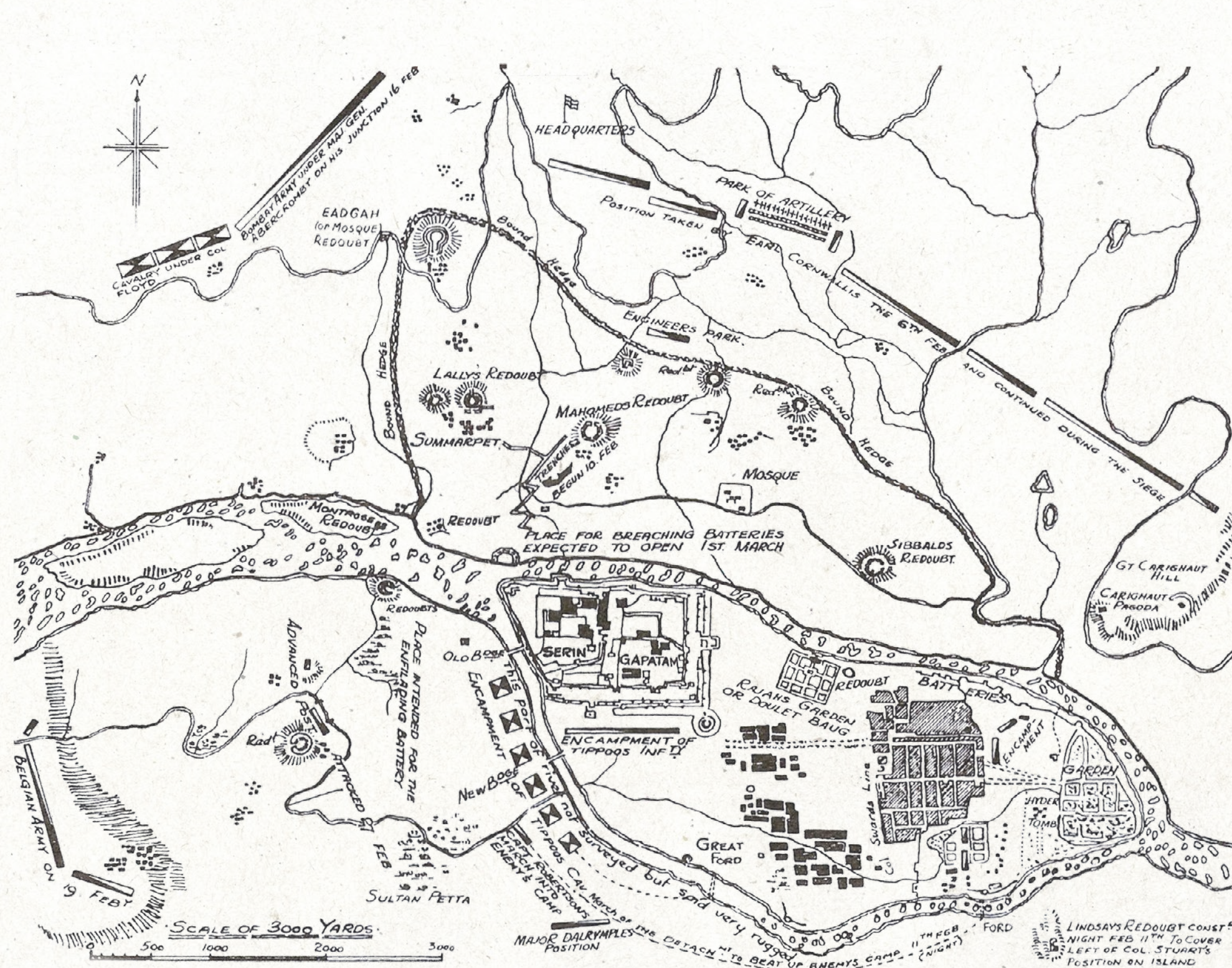


Chapter II

Srirangapatna and its Vicinity



Francis Buchanan provided a detailed account of the srirangapatna town's rich history, the administration of Tipu Sultan, and significant monuments. His journey also delves into the agricultural practices of the region, with a particular focus on rice harvesting, preservation methods, and techniques for preparing rice for consumption. Through Buchanan's observations, we gain valuable insights into the cultural and economic landscape of Srirangapatna during this pivotal period.



SERINGAPATAM, 1792.

From a Plan drawn by Capt. Kyd, Surveyor General with the Army.



Srirangapatna Map from 1792
 Source: Reprinted in Sandes, E.W.C. (1935)
 The Military Engineer in India. Volume I.
 Institution of Royal Engineers, Chatham;
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Srirangapatna (Anglicized Seringapatam)

Buchanan first visited Srirangapatna on May 19, 1800, where he met Krishnamacharya Purnaiah, the Diwan of Mysore. Purnaiah was a military strategist and administrator who served as the first Dewan of Mysore. He played a key role in restoring the rule of the Kingdom of Mysore to the Wadiyar dynasty. After Tipu Sultan’s death, he continued to advise Lakshmi Devi, the queen regent, and the newly installed monarch, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. Previously, he had served in the inner cabinet of Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali.

Buchanan mentioned that the town of Srirangapatna was very poor. He noted that the streets were narrower and more disorganized than in any place he had seen since leaving Bengal.

Srirangapatna is situated at the western or upper end of an island surrounded by the River Cauvery, stretching about 4.8 km from west to east and about 1.6 km in breadth. The eastern end of the island is occupied by the suburb of Ganjam. Srirangapatna is the headquarters of a taluk, located between the Mysore-Bangalore highway and the railway line. The town derives its name from the presiding deity of the Sri Ranganatha Temple.



Geographical Overview of Srirangapatna

The original town was built during the Hoysala period and was later ruled by the Vijayanagar feudatory kings. It was eventually administered in the name of the Vijayanagara sovereigns by a viceroy known as Sri Ranga Raya. Tirumala Raya, the last viceroy, was a relative of the royal family. In 1610, when Raja Wodeyar of Mysore took possession of Srirangapatna, it became the capital of the Rajas of Mysore and continued to be the seat of government under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan until its capture by the British in 1799.

Wellesley Bridge

This bridge was constructed following Buchanan’s visit in 1804. Built of stone, the bridge spans 512 feet and features square stone pillars and corbels. Its foundation is securely anchored in solid rock, with each row of stones topped by a long stone laid level over the others. Additional stones are placed longitudinally on top, forming a continuous structure along the length of the bridge. The road surface is covered with gravel and mud, while the sides are finished with lime plaster.

Until the construction of a new bridge downstream in 1967, this bridge served as the primary route for vehicular traffic between Bengaluru and the Mysuru region. The bridge, dedicated to Marquis Wellesley, the Governor-General of British India and brother of Arthur Wellesley, who participated in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, remains a historical landmark.



From the left: 1. Wellesley Bridge; 2. Ranganatha Swamy Temple

Ranganatha Swamy Temple

This majestic temple was constructed in three stages: the innermost part was built during the Hoysala period, followed by additions in the Vijayanagar era, and later by the Mysore kings.

Dungeons

There are two dungeons in Srirangapatna

a. Colonel Bailey’s Dungeon

This dungeon was used by Tipu Sultan to imprison British officers. It is located near Tipu’s



Colonel Bailey’s Dungeon

memorial. Colonel Bailey was the only British officer who died in this dungeon, unable to survive the harsh conditions, and it was later named after him. Another version suggests that Colonel Baillie, the commanding officer of the British forces at the Battle of Pollilur (1780), was imprisoned here after his troops were defeated in the First Mysore War.

b. Thomas Inman’s Dungeon

Located in the north-eastern corner of the fort, this dungeon was discovered in 1885 by Thomas Inman, an engineer, and was named after him. It was used to imprison Dondia Wagh, a Maratha warrior, along with other Indian prisoners.

Jumma Masjid

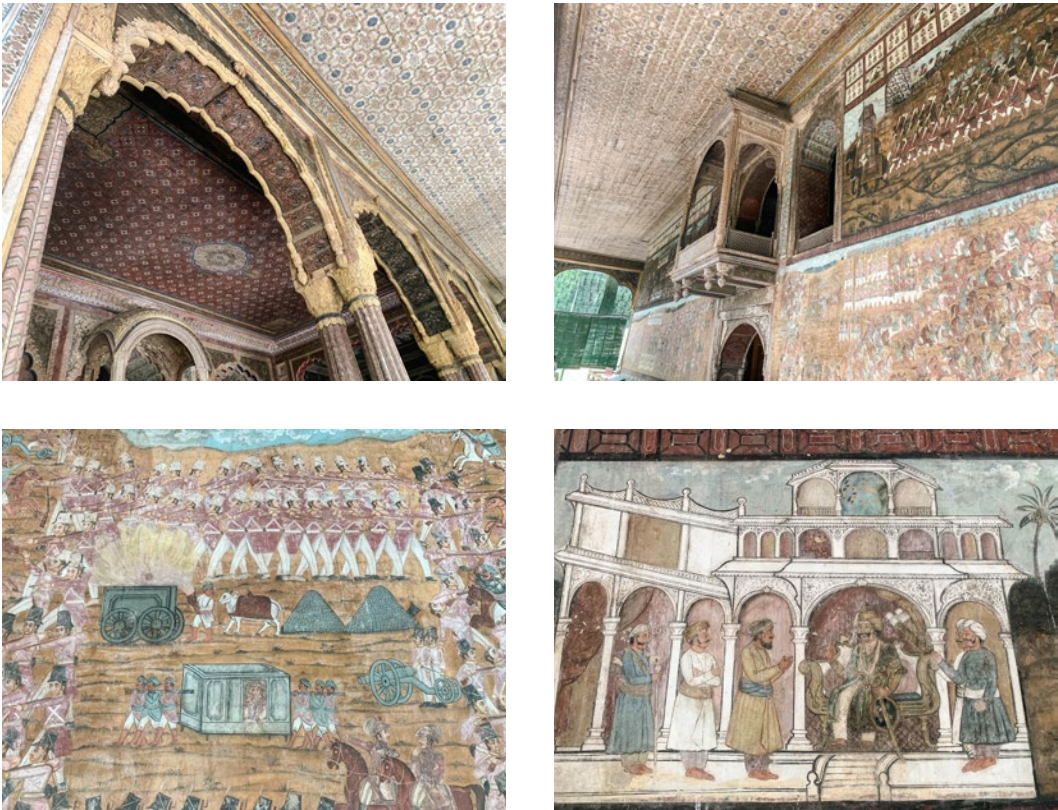
It is a grand structure with two lofty minarets, noted for their majesty and grace. It was constructed by Tipu Sultan on top of the Anjaneya Temple (source: Mandya 1967 Gazetteer) after filling in the original ground floor.

Darya Daulat Bagh

On the south bank of the River Cauvery, Tipu Sultan built a large garden, which he called Darya Daulat Bagh, or the Garden of the Wealth of the Sea. In its centre, he constructed a summer palace in 1784, which served as his favourite retreat from business. The graceful proportions and the arabesque work in rich colours with which it is adorned render the palace highly attractive.



From the left: 1. Jumma Masjid; 2. Darya Daulat Bagh



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Wooden pillars with trefoil arches, adorned with intricate wall paintings; 2 & 3. The west wall featuring a large-scale battle scene depicting Colonel Bailey's defeat at the Battle of Pollilur; 4. The east wall illustrating scenes from the courts of various Rajas & Palegars.

The building, which is a fine specimen of Saracenic architecture, stands on a square platform about five feet high. It features wooden pillars with trefoil arches. The first floor has a small hall with balconies, where Tipu Sultan used to receive envoys and guests. There are interesting paintings on the walls; the west wall displays a large-scale battle scene representing Colonel Bailey's defeat at the Battle of Pollilur. The east walls depict scenes from the courts of several Rajas and the Palegars. It is said that the paintings were defaced by Tipu Sultan prior to the siege of 1799, but they were later restored by Colonel Wellesley, who occupied the palace for some time.

Buchanan mentioned a false gilding of the flowers and other decorations, where the gilding resembles a grain of gold. However, it is not actual gold; the artisans use lead and other ingredients to create this effect. Buchanan described the process of making false gilded paper.

"Daria adaulut baug was Tippoo's favourite retreat from business. Its walls are covered with paintings which represent the manner in which two Mussulman princes, Hyder and Tippoo, appeared in public processions; the defeat of Colonel Bailie; and the costume of various casts or professions, that are common in Mysore. In these paintings the figures are much in the style of caricatures, although they retain a strong likeness of native countenance and manner."

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter II



The dome of the Gumbaz, adorned with striking tiger stripe patterns, reflecting Tipu Sultan's iconic emblem

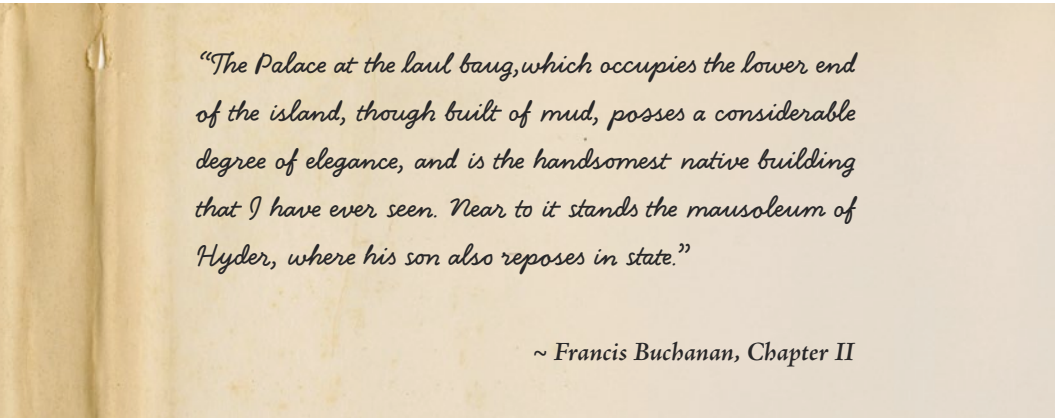
Gumbaz

At the eastern end of the island, towards the south, there is a mausoleum built by Tipu Sultan for his father, where his mother is also buried. The interior is painted in lacquer with the tiger stripes adopted by Tipu for his military uniforms.

Shahar Ganjam or Ganjam

Situated at the eastern end of the island of Srirangapatna, this suburb is part of Srirangapatna town. This town was established by Tipu Sultan, who is said to have transported twelve thousand families from Sira to provide it with an industrial population, as Sira had been a seat of the Mughal Empire.

Tipu’s Lalbagh



Buchanan mentioned the Lalbagh near the Tipu and Hyder mausoleum, but now nothing remains. It appears that the British destroyed the building.

Lal Mahal- Tipu Sultan Palace

The ruins of Lal Mahal are situated about 150 meters northeast of the Ranganatha Swamy Temple. Buchanan mentioned this palace as a very large building with handsome apartments that served as warehouses for a variety of goods, as Tipu was also a merchant. This palace was dismantled between 1807 and 1809 AD during Colonel Wellesley’s period.



Ruins of Tipu’s Palace, also known as Lal Mahal: Once home to a grand Audience Hall (40’x20’), Zenana (women’s quarters), and multiple rooms for grain storage, the palace was dismantled between 1807-1809 AD during Colonel Wellesley’s rule



Views showcasing remnants of the once grand structure, including fragmented walls and foundations that hint at the palace’s former splendour before its dismantling between 1807-1809 AD

Agriculture produce of Srirangapatna and its vicinity

Rice and ragi are the main staple foods for the people of Srirangapatna. Due to the proximity of the Cauvery River, paddy cultivation is one of the primary crops. Sugarcane farming, supported by the canal system from the River Cauvery, is often used in local jaggery production. Other common crops include coconut and banana, which thrive due to the irrigated system and favourable conditions.

In terms of vegetable produce, tomatoes, brinjal (eggplant), beans, lady’s finger (okra), green chilies, and radishes are grown in the nearby vicinity, as documented by Buchanan. However, the only crops that seem to be missing in this region nowadays are navane (foxtail millet), same (little millet, species: Panicum sumatrense), and kadle (chickpea, Cicer arietinum).

Rice harvesting, preservation, and the method of preparing rice for use by soaking

Buchanan documented the rice harvest process at Srirangapatna, which at the time was done using traditional methods relying on manpower. Workers used the Kudugolu (in Kannada) or Cudugalu, a hand sickle tool, to harvest the paddy. Afterward, the harvested paddy was carried to a flat area called a Kana in Kannada, where the surface was smeared with a mixture of clay, cow dung, and water to ensure it stayed clean and free of dirt. The paddy was then spread on the thrashing floor and trodden by bullocks to separate the grain. Once threshed, the paddy was



From top left: 1. Mechanized paddy harvesting in action at a paddy field in Navooru, Belthangady—showcasing modern agricultural techniques. (Representative image);

2 & 3. An ancient method of storing food grains in underground (in dilapidated condition), photographed at Nidugal Fort, Pavagada—offering a glimpse into historical preservation techniques; 4. Traditional Seed Storage in Waday; 5. Ancient grain storage in a wooden box, captured as a representation image from Gurupura, Jangama Mutt, Mangalore; 6. Traditional method of preserving paddy in a straw bag known as a ‘Mudy,’ represented in an image captured from Moodabidre.

piled into a heap called a Rashi (or Rashy), which was marked with clay and carefully covered with straw. A trench was dug around the heap to protect it from water. For twenty to thirty days, until the division of the crop between the government and the cultivator took place, the grain was left in the heap.

An ancient method of storing food grains in underground (in dilapidated condition), photographed at Nidugal Fort, Pavagada—offering a glimpse into historical preservation techniques.

The grain is always preserved in its husk. The paddy is stored in Kanaja, a type of storage pit or room. When the paddy needs to be processed into rice, the Kanaja (or Canajas) is securely floored with planks to protect it from bandicoots and rats. The storehouse has no openings for air, except for a small one used for loading and unloading the grain.

Another method of storing or preserving paddy involves using small cylindrical containers made by potters, called Waday (or Woday). The mouth of the container is covered with an inverted pot, and the paddy is drawn out as needed from a small hole at the bottom. There is also another method of preserving paddy using a type of bag made from paddy straw, called a Mudy. The paddy can be kept for up to two years without alteration, but beyond that, it becomes unfit for consumption.

Nowadays, only a few farmers continue to harvest by employing manpower in the field, as this practice is declining due to the rise of mechanized farming and a shortage of labor. The use of harvester machines has become common, as these machines can single-handedly perform all operations: cutting the crop, feeding it into the threshing mechanism, threshing, cleaning, and discharging the grain into a bulk wagon or directly into bags.

Method of preparing rice for use

Buchanan documented that there are two methods of processing paddy into rice: one by boiling and the other by simply beating. Boiling, in turn, is done in two ways. The first method, used to prepare rice for the Rajas (kings), is called ‘Aydu Nuchu Akki’ (anglicized as ‘Aydu Nugu Aky’),



From the Left: 1. A woman beating paddy using wooden pestles, typically four feet long and three inches in diameter, with iron-shod ends (Representative image from Tamil Nadu); 2. Ragi mudde served with Avarekalu (Hyacinth beans) curry, topped with ghee. Ragi, a staple food of the Old Mysore region, continues to be a dietary mainstay for all classes, alongside rice



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Defensive fort near the north-eastern corner; 2. Fort near the Delhi Gate; 3. Water Gate Archway at the northern end, where Tipu Sultan's body was found in May 1799; 4. Obelisk in Srirangapatna, a memorial erected in 1907 during the reign of Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV, commemorating the English soldiers who died during the Siege of Srirangapatna in 1799

meaning 'five-piece rice.' This rice was reserved for the Rajas and other luxurious individuals. It was always prepared by royal families and never made for sale.

The other process of preparing rice by boiling is in a common manner, called Cudapal Akki (Cudapal Aky), which is used by the Shudras or lower classes who can afford it. Both of the above methods are referred to as parboiled rice preparation.

The other process, without boiling, is used by Brahmins and is called Hasi Akki (Hashy Aky). This method involves beating the paddy with wooden pestles, which are generally about four feet in length and three inches in diameter, with the ends shod in iron.

At present, the boiling process of converting paddy to rice is no longer followed in the Mysore region. Instead, after thoroughly drying the paddy grains, they are sent to rice mills, where machines remove the hull and bran from the grains to produce polished rice. Further milling by machines applies pressure to rub the grains together, which removes the bran layers and reveals white or polished rice. The boiling process retains more nutrients compared to white rice.

In the coastal regions of Karnataka, such as Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, as well as in the Kerala region, the parboiled process is still used to produce palatable rice, known as Kuchalakki in Kannada and Matta rice in Malayalam.

“Ragy is always ground into flour, as wanted by means of hand mill called Visacallu (Bisakallu). In this operation it loses nothing by measure; so that a candaca of ragy is reckoned contain as much nourishment as two candacas of paddy. The flour is dresses in various ways. The most common are, a kind of pudding called sangutty (Ragi mudde) and two kinds of cakes called Rutty (Rotti) and Doshy (Dosay), both of which are fried in oil.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter II

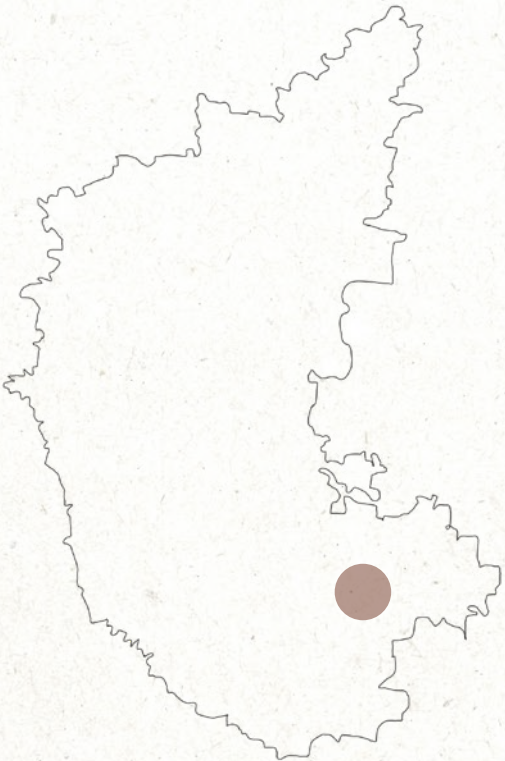


Chapter III

Journey from Srirangapatna to Bangalore



Chapter III delves into Francis Buchanan’s observations during his Journey from Srirangapatna to Bangalore, highlighting its rich cultural and industrial heritage. It begins with Srirangapatna, Mandya, and Channapatna, where he documented industries such as glassware and steel wire for musical instruments, now vanished, with Channapatna toys remaining as a legacy. At Ramadevara Betta, Buchanan focused on the Kadu Iruligars, their dwindling lac collection practices, and their current living conditions. In Ghattipura, remnants of historic iron and steel production survive as “Kittada Kallu.” The journey continues to Savanadurga’s iconic granite monolith, passing through Magadi and Tavarekere, home to the Thippagondanahalli Reservoir across the Arkavathy River.



- 1 Srirangapattana
- 2 Ganangooru (Gaynangur)
- 3 Mandya (Mundium)
- 4 Channapattana
- 5 Ramadevara Betta (Ramagiri)
- 6 Magadi (Magherry)
- 7 Ghattipura (Ghettipura)
- 8 Savanadurga
- 9 Tavarekere (Taveri-caray)
- 10 Bangalore



Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Srirangapatna to Bangalore

Srirangapatna

This has already been documented in Chapter II.

Mandya(anglicized as Mundium)

Buchanan passed through Ganangooru on his way to Mandya, now a district headquarters situated approximately 42 km northeast of Mysore. Presently, Mandya is well-connected by the Bangalore-Mysore Expressway and a railway line. During Buchanan's visit, it was a small village known as Mandium, surrounded by predominantly dry land. The construction of the Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) Dam across the River Kaveri, completed in 1931, marked a turning point for the region. The KRS irrigation project transformed the arid landscape, enabling large-scale cultivation and significantly boosting agricultural productivity. Today, paddy and sugarcane are the region's primary crops. In 1933, Mandya saw the establishment of a major sugar factory, which became one of the largest in the country and catalyzed the growth of distillation industries utilizing byproducts from the factory.



Farmers Harvesting Sugarcane: A Glimpse into Traditional Agricultural Practices in a Mandya Village

Channapatna

Channapatna, currently a Taluk headquarters in Ramanagara District, is located approximately 80 kilometers from the state capital, Bangalore.

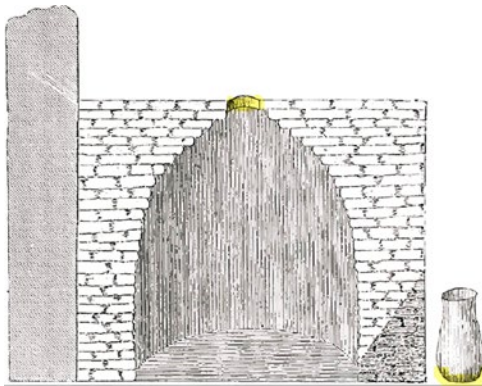
As recorded by Buchanan, Channapatna was formerly the residence of a poligar family known as the Jagadeva Rayas. This family, belonging to the Telugu Banajiga community, established



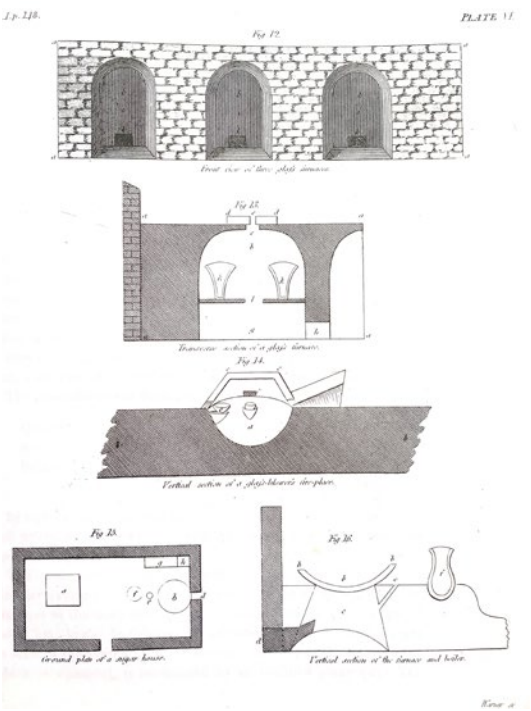
From the left: 1. 19th-century photograph of Channapatna Fort; 2. The surviving section of the fort was documented during a 2024 visit

control over the region during the Vijayanagara period. However, their power declined during the reign of the Mysore Rajas and was later further diminished under Hyder Ali's rule. Buchanan also documented that a direct descendant of this lineage, identified as Jiva Raja Chitty (Jagadeva Raya), reportedly lived in poverty in Channarayapattna, working as a petty trader.

Channapatna was once renowned for its glassware manufacturing, including glass bottles and ornamental rings worn on women's arms.



Buchanan provided sketches of the furnaces used in glass manufacturing at Channapatna



The following materials, measured according to the apothecary’s weight, were used for making green glass. The quantities listed below represent the charge for one crucible:

Material	Pound (lb)	Ounce (oz)	Dram (dr)	Seer (ser)	Grain (gr)
Broken Glass	14	9	0	0	0
Benchanu Kallu (Powdered white quartz)	14	9	0	0	0
Loha (an old button brass) *	0	3	2	1	13
Copper	0	2	9	1	16
Caricalllu, iron ore with manganese	0	2	1	2	2
Soulu (impure soda) *	29	6	0	0	0

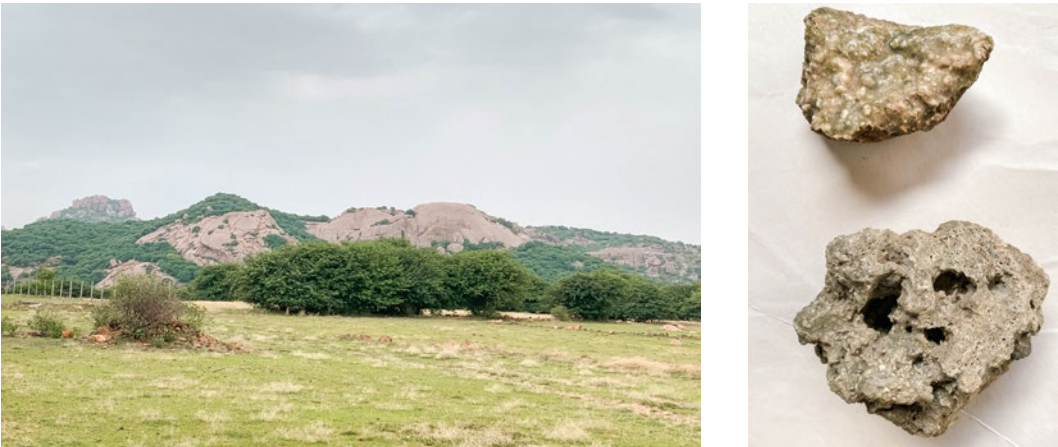
* For the production of red glass, brass (referred to as “loha”) is omitted, and forty-four crucibles are arranged within a single furnace.

* The raw materials used for producing black glass include quartz, impure soda (locally known as “soulu”), and broken glass.

Unfortunately, the glass bangle manufacturing industry in Channapatna has completely disappeared, and no one practices this craft anymore. Currently, the majority of glass bangle production is concentrated in the Bailahongala region of Belagavi District.



From the left: 1. Ruined glass bangle furnaces near Kamanadurga Hill; 2. Furnace remains at Hanumanabetta



From the left: 1. Quartz slag with glass traces; 2. Furnace beneath Hanumanabetta, 18 km from Pavagada

While no traces of the old glass manufacturing sites were found in Channapatna, large glass furnace sites were discovered behind Kamanadurga Hill in Pavagada Taluk, Karnataka.

Buchanan also documented another notable industry in Channapatna: the manufacture of steel wire for the strings of musical instruments. These strings were highly esteemed and were distributed to remote parts of India.

According to Buchanan, the smelting centers of Channarayanadurga and Devarayanadurga were likely the primary sources of steel, which was further refined in Channapatna to produce wire for musical instruments. He provided a detailed description of the wire-drawing operations and processes involved.

Unfortunately, there is no longer any trace of wire-drawing activities in the region. With the rapid industrial revolution in the steel industry, a wide variety of steel products, from cast iron to engineering steel, are now readily available in the market, rendering the traditional craft obsolete.

Between Channapatna and Kabbaladurga lies a rugged landscape characterized by the chain of Closepet Hills. The primary agricultural products of this region include coconut, areca nut, ragi, and small quantities of sugarcane.

The Kabbaladurga granite hill, standing at approximately 4,216 feet above sea level, was



From the left: 1. Kabbaladurga Hill Fort; 2. Kabbalamma Shrine at the base of Kabbaladurga



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Lake view from the hill top; 2. Rear side landscape of the hill; 3. Clospet Granite Hill Station; 4. Green pastures with coconut plantations and village hamlets



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Hyder-era prison atop Kabbaladurga Fort Hill; 2. Crumbling structure, possibly a garrison or ammunition storage; 3. Indo-Saracenic arches inside the prison; 4. Interior prison view showing bricks and mortar construction

historically significant as a fortress used by Hyder Ali to imprison captives. Notably, Murari Rao, the Chief of Gooty, surrendered to Hyder Ali and was confined in this fort along with his family. During the British Raj, the fort was used for punitive measures, with convicts reportedly being thrown off its cliffs as a form of execution.

The ruins atop the hill include old and crumbling structures that once served as a prison, garrison, ammunition storage facility, and small temples dedicated to Bheemalingeshwara and Kabbalamma.

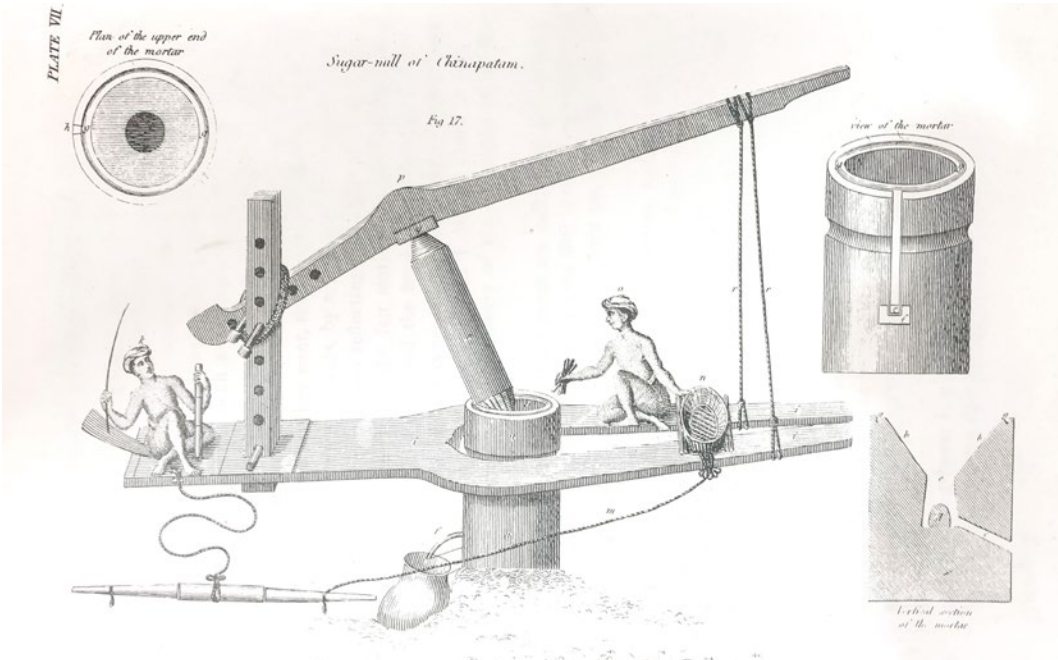
A Traditional Mysore-style Village House with a Clay Tile Roof and Wooden Pillars Supporting the Veranda Porch. The semi-circular shaped clay tiles, once common, were later replaced by Mangalore tiles with modernization.



From the left: 1. Granite Quarry in Operation at the Base of Kabbaladurga Fort Hill Entrance; 2. A Labourer at Work in the Granite Quarry

On my visit, I observed active granite quarries on the northern face of the hill. At its base lies the famous Kabbalamma Temple, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Devi, which continues to attract numerous devotees from the surrounding areas.

A sketch of the Channapatna sugar mill documented by Buchanan. The mill comprises a mortar, beam, lever, pestle, and regulator. The mortar, made of wood approximately ten feet long and



fourteen inches in diameter, is sunk perpendicularly into the ground, leaving two feet above the surface. Powered by bulls or buffaloes, the mill is operated as a man feeds sugarcane into it to extract the juice, as depicted in the sketch.

At Channapatna, Buchanan documented the process of sugar and jaggery production. Unfortunately, due to insufficient rainfall in the region, the traditional jaggery-making process has declined.



Clockwise from top left: 1. A labourer feeding sugarcane into the juice extractor; 2. A laborer in the jaggery boiling house; 3. Thick jaggery syrup spreading for cooling and solidification; 4. Jaggery from the mold, ready for sale

Today, jaggery production continues only in areas with sufficient irrigation, primarily fed by the Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) Dam or the Kannambadi Anicut, which provides irrigation to the Mandya, Maddur, Srirangapatna, and Pandavapura regions. In these areas, the Visveswaraya Canal (VC) irrigates the land, and you can still witness many cottage industries dedicated to jaggery production.

Today, Channapatna is renowned for its traditional lacquered wooden toys, a craft that dates back over 200 years. These toys are crafted using a unique process where wood, typically sourced from the hale (ivory) tree, is shaped and coated with layers of vibrant lacquer. The lacquer is applied using a spinning technique, resulting in toys with a smooth finish and bright, colorful appearance.

Many private enterprises in Channapatna are involved in the production of wooden toys. The Channapatna Crafts Park (CCP), spanning 14 acres, was developed by the government to enhance production standards and provide local manufacturers with better infrastructure.

I visited the Bharat Toy Factory in Ramanagara, where I had the opportunity to meet the owner and discuss the rich legacy of toy manufacturing and lacquerware craftsmanship in Channapatna. Initially, this craft was developed on a small scale by the artisan community known as Chitrಾಗars.



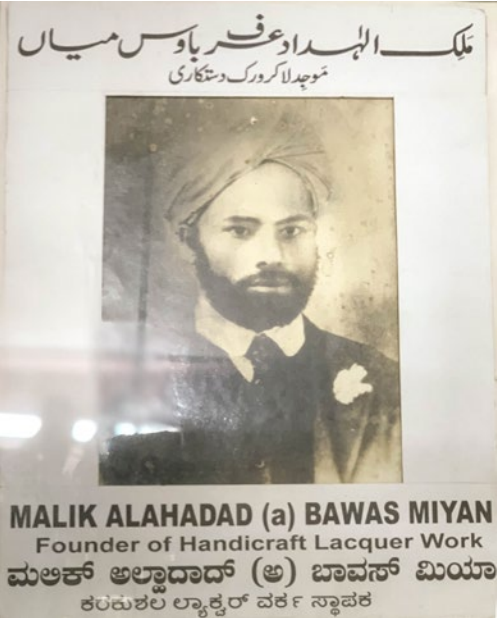
Channapatna Wooden Toys with Lacquer Finish and Natural Colour Paints



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Hale (Ivory) tree wood stored in a factory warehouse; 2. Wood undergoing processing inside the toy factory; 3. Turned components awaiting further operations; 4. A labourer surrounded by wooden chips from the manufacturing process



From the left: 1. Lacquering in process during wood-turning operation; 2. Lacquer sourced primarily from Madhya Pradesh



From the left: 1. Bawas Miyan, pioneer of Channapatna lacquerware; 2. Mr. P. Md. Ilyas, proprietor of Bharat Art and Crafts, Channapatna



Skilled in temple painting and crafting wooden masks of humans and animals for village use, this community laid the foundation for Channapatna’s artisanal wooden toy manufacturing.

In 1904, an industrial school was established in Channapatna to promote local crafts and industries, offering subjects such as instrument string making (Veena wires) and glass bead production. Mr. Bawas Miyan, appointed as the first superintendent of the school and a high school teacher, played a pivotal role in the development of the lacquerware craft. His innovative ideas and methods significantly advanced the practice, earning him recognition as the architect of Channapatna’s lacquerware industry.

The Mysore princely state also demonstrated considerable interest in supporting and promoting the development of this artisan craft.

Source: Mysore Gazetteer: Bangalore Rural District, Government of Mysore, 1904, p. 395

Ramagiri (Ramadevara Betta)

This fortified hill is located on the left bank of the River Arkavathy and is associated with the Kempegowda family. The hill rises to an elevation of 3,066 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The original settlement, Ramagiri town, was situated at the foothills (now lost) but was later relocated to a new township called Closepet, now known as Ramanagaram.

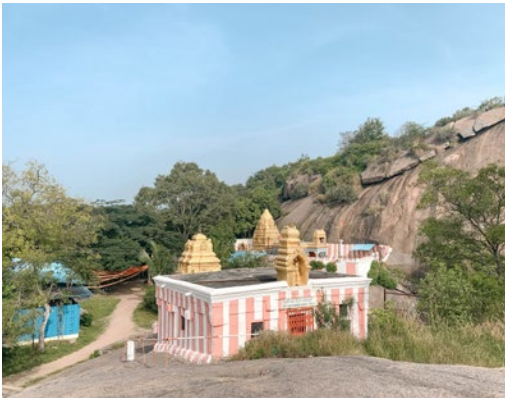
The town was named Ramagiri due to the presence of a temple dedicated to Lord Rama and another to Lord Shiva (Rameshwara) at the hilltop. These temples were constructed during the Vijayanagara-Kempegowda period.



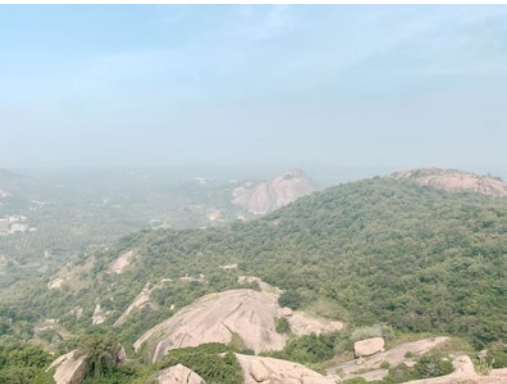
From the left: 1. Western views of Ramadevara Betta (Ramagiri Hills), Ramanagaram; 2. Fortified hill on the left bank of the River Arkavathy



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Fort entrance on the west side of the hill, likely the main access point; 2. Colonial-era survey stone at the fort entrance; 3. The path leading to the hill



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Gigantic granite boulder at Ramadevara Betta; 2. Natural rainwater storage near the temple; 3 & 4. Temples of Lord Shiva (Sri Rameshwara) and Lord Rama, after whom the town of Ramagiri is named



From the left: 1. Valley of Ramagiri (Ramadevara Betta) on the western side of the Valley view from the hilltop; 2. Deciduous shrub forest and Closepet granites



Hanuman shrine on the way to the hill

The hill is accessible from the east via modern steps and from the west through the original path, where remains of the fort, mandapas, and gates from the Vijayanagara era are still visible.

Buchanan described the granite rocks of the hill as “beautiful” and noted their composition of black mica grains. Today, this hill serves as a prime destination near Bangalore for weekend trekking and devotional hiking.

Buchanan mentioned animal husbandry in this region, focusing on goats, sheep, cows, and oxen. Even today, the ox (Basavanna) is revered in this area, with numerous shrines dedicated to Basaveshwara. For the agrarian community, the ox has historically been a vital force for agricultural activities, and this legacy continues to be honoured.

Buchanan also noted that in earlier times, if an ox suffered from any disease, a traditional remedy involved applying cautery in specific patterns, depending on the nature of the illness. The animal would be restrained, with its mouth and legs tied, and hot iron rods would be applied to its skin (known as bare in Kannada). These lines were often drawn along the entire length of the animal, and remarkably, this practice continues in some parts of the region even today.

I also recall a similar practice from my childhood. When we had a fever, my grandmother would use a piece of broken black glass bangle, heated and drawn across the skin on the chest. It was believed that this would help reduce the fever.

Buchanan mentioned a tribal community referred to as the “Cad Eriligaru” (Kadu Iruligaru), inhabiting the region between the Savanadurga hills and Ramagiri. He provided a comprehensive account of their physical appearance, linguistic characteristics, and way of life. Their language, a Tamil dialect, incorporates Kannada and Telugu words and features a unique accent distinct from Madras Tamil. Buchanan also documented their origins and habitation patterns, noting that while some members lived in forest interiors, others settled in nearby villages. Their traditional occupations included collecting forest resources such as lac, wood, wild roots, herbs, honey, wax, bamboo rice, and other products. Today, this community, commonly known as “Kaadu Poojaru”



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Iruligara Doddi, a village hamlet home to the Kadu Pujaris (Iruligas); 2. Small thatched house covered with a plastic sheet for rain protection; 3. Elderly woman, the last fluent speaker of the Iruliga language; 4. Kadu Iruligars, once living near the forest, are now scattered across Ramagiri and nearby hamlets

(Worshippers of the Forest), largely resides in clustered villages near Ramanagaram, such as Iruligara Doddi and Iruligara colonies. While some members still venture into forests to gather herbs, most have transitioned to agriculture or migrated to urban areas for employment. The younger generation is more integrated into mainstream society, adopting Kannada as their mother tongue, leading to the near-extinction of their native language. Despite these changes, many community members remain marginalized, with limited access to government welfare schemes. Immediate measures are needed to improve their living conditions and preserve their rich cultural heritage.

Lac was one of the key commodities collected by the Iruligas from the surrounding hills. The trees that produced lac were never planted but grew naturally, and the person responsible for



Lac (Aragu in Kannada) was once a key commodity collected by the Iruligas from the surrounding hills, though this practice has declined. Only a few farmers in the Sirsi and Hunsur regions of Mysore continue it. Images from Hunsur, Mysore

harvesting the lac would transfer the insects from one tree to another. The stick lac (shellac) was sold at three fanams per maund of 40 seers. It was primarily used in industries such as silk weaving and others. However, this practice has now declined, with very few individuals still involved in lac extraction. Only a handful of farmers in the Sirsi and Mysore regions (Hunsur) have resumed the practice, with assistance from the Agricultural Department. Although India remains the leading producer and exporter of lac, with Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh being the dominant state, lac continues to be widely used in industries such as chemicals, perfumes, pharmaceuticals, electrical, and food production. It is also crafted into beautiful jewelry (lac Bangles) and traditional items.

Ghattipura, Magadi (anglicized as Maghery), Savanadurga

Buchanan mentioned the path between the Ramagiri and Magadi through Ghattipura passed through a rugged valley's wild but romantic country, with low hills, mixed with cultivated valleys. A good number of timber and bamboo near Savanadurga. The summits of all the ridges of hills are bare rocks of the granitic porphyry.

Now a good road connectivity through SH 94 passes between Ramanagaram and Magadi with rugged hills and beautiful valleys.



Buchanan noted that the route between Ramagiri and Magadi through Ghattipura traversed a rugged, untamed yet picturesque region, with low hills interspersed with cultivated valleys. He observed a plentiful presence of timber and bamboo near Savanadurga, with the hilltops composed of exposed granitic porphyry rocks

Ghattipura (Ghettipura)

During his travels, Buchanan visited Ghattipura, a small village with historical significance in iron smelting and steel making during Tipu Sultan’s reign. Along with regions like Devarayanadurga, Chickbyaladakere, Madhugiri, Halaguru, and Channarayana Durga, Ghattipura was one of the principal centers of iron production in Tipu’s government. Situated between two hills, Buchanan examined several iron forges in this hilly region. The iron was produced partly from black sand found in the rainy season in local streams and partly from ores near Ghattipura. He documented detailed observations on iron smelting and steel making, including sketches of smelting factories, descriptions of furnace charging, manpower involved, labor distribution, and their wages and tax

to the government. Buchanan also recorded the process of making “Ukku,” known as crucible steel to Europeans, providing insights into this advanced metallurgical technique.

Good-quality clay is mixed with an equal amount of charcoal made from paddy husks, moistened with water, and thoroughly kneaded under oxen’s feet. After cleaning, the mixture is shaped into crucibles (cupels) and dried for one day in the shade and another in the sun. A parallelogram-shaped furnace is constructed with two parallel stones, one cubit long and 2.5 inches high, and a clay wall 8 inches tall placed a foot above the stones. One end is sealed with stone and clay, while the other is built up with clay to a height of two cubits, incorporating a tube for bellows. Each crucible is loaded with a small piece of iron (weighing 14 ounces to 1.5 seers) and five small pieces



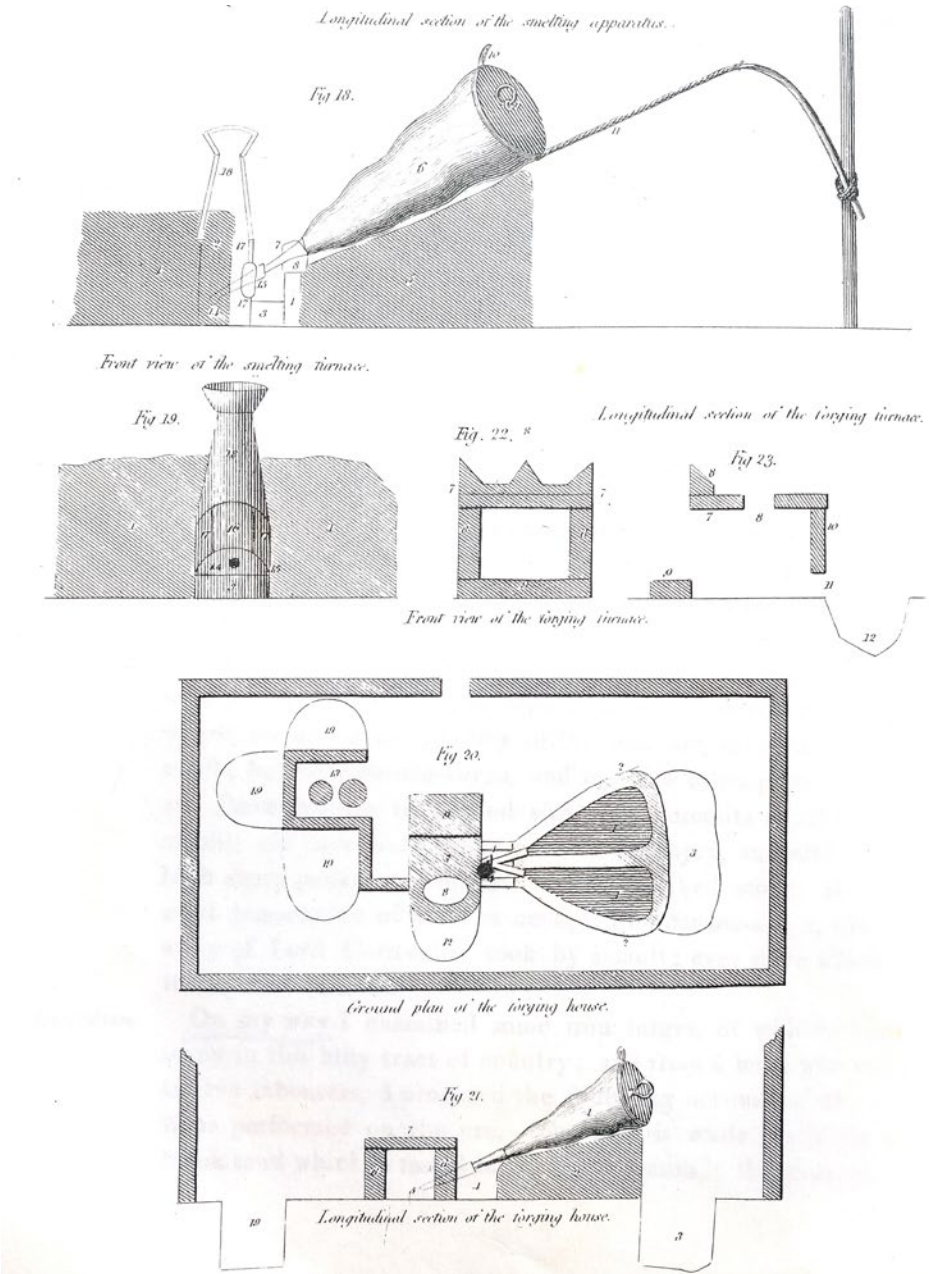
Clockwise from the top left: 1. Entrance to Ghattipura Village; 2. Ancient Someshwara Temple on a hillock south of the village; 3. Untouched prehistoric dolmen, despite 18th-century peak iron smelting activity in the region; 4. Hills rich in iron ore



The site of historic iron extraction shows no remains of the furnace, but iron slag, locally known as ‘Kittada Kallu’ (iron smelting furnace waste), can still be found.

of Tangaree wood (*Cassia auriculata*). The crucibles are stacked in three rows, leaving space for airflow from the bellows. They are then covered with two bushels of charcoal and burned for six hours, with an additional bushel added as fuel is consumed. The resulting pieces are hammered into small square bars after reheating with charcoal from *Mimosa tuggala*.

I visited a village nestled between two hills, with the southern hill featuring the ancient “Bettada Sri Someshwara Swamy Temple” and the opposite hill covered with deciduous forest and iron-rich soil and rocks, possibly used for ironmaking in the past. When I inquired with locals about iron smelting in the village and showed a sketch documented by Buchanan in 1800, they were unaware of such a history. Further questioning the village elders led them and told them that it was a “Kittada Kallu” (iron smelting furnace-charged waste) at the foothills, but this did not provide definitive answers. Proceeding north, I met a middle-aged shepherd who recounted



Iron smelting setup sketched at Ghattipura by Francis Buchanan, referred to by Europeans as the crucible steel production method

stories from his grandfather about iron smelting told by his ancestors, referred to as (Kabbina Kaysoru) Shepherds like him are invaluable guides, akin to local “Google Maps,” for uncovering undocumented historical sites.

Further exploration led me to areas scattered with numerous iron slags, partially hidden beneath dense bushes in the fields and hill tracts. I also found fragments of pottery and collected a few samples for analysis.

Magadi (Magherry)

Magadi, now a taluk center in the Ramanagara district, is located about 51 km from Bengaluru, the state capital. Historically, Magadi was ruled by various kingdoms. In the 16th century, it came under the control of Immadi Kempegowda, who established Magadi as his capital. It remained under his successors until 1728, after which it was captured by the rulers of Mysore. Magadi is home to small forts and notable temples such as the Rameshwara Temple and Ranganathaswamy Temple, both constructed and restored during the Magadi Polygar period.



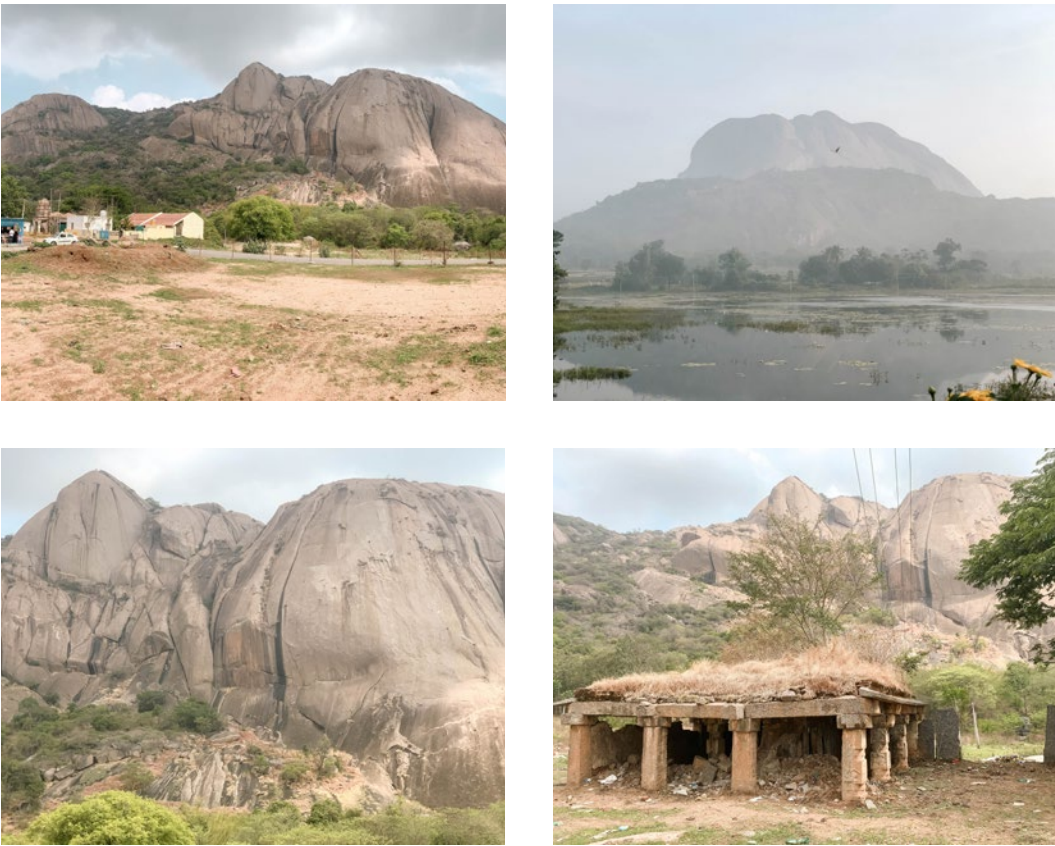
From the left: 1. Colonial-era image (1850); 2. Recent photograph of the Someshwara Temple in Magadi, dedicated to the principal deity of the Magadi Polygars

Savanadurga (Savan-Droog)

Located about 11 km from Magadi, this tall granite hill rises to 4024 feet above mean sea level and consists of two peaks locally known as Karigudda (Black Hill) and Biligudda (White Hill). It is a popular tourist destination, offering opportunities for adventure trekking as well as religious significance. The hill was fortified during the Magadi Polygar period, serving as a defensive structure alongside Ramagiri Hill (Ramadevara Betta). At the base of the hill lies the ancient Savandi Sri Veerabhadra Temple and a Narasimha Temple, which attract devotees from various regions. Nearby is a dargah associated with Hazrath Sultan Syed Ghulam Hussain Shah Khadri, a saint from Bijapur. Unfortunately, this dargah was not documented by Francis Buchanan. Other temples in the area, however, remain in ruinous condition.

Buchanan documented that Savandurga once housed numerous temples and expansive gardens belonging to the Magadi Kempegowdas. It served as a refuge for local inhabitants, who would retreat there with their grain and cattle during times of invasion.

He also described the region's dense timber woods and bamboo forests, collecting information on local trees with the help of locals and translating their Kannada names into botanical names. Additionally, Buchanan collected stone specimens from the best quarries nearby. Building on his work, Murali Sreenivasa from the FAIR organization conducted a comparative study titled "Forests of Savandurga, Karnataka: 1800-01 and Present." This study lists all the species in the region, including both local and botanical names, providing insights into its ecological evolution. Buchanan documented the production of lac in the region, noting its limited presence in



Clockwise from top left: 1. View of Savanadurga Fort Hill; 2. Full View and Western view of Savanadurga Hill; 3 & 4. Closer views from the southern side near the Savandi Veerabhadra Temple

Savandurga but significant abundance in Ramagiri (Ramadevarabetta) and nearby hill tracts. Lac was primarily used for polishing furniture and was a valuable resource in those areas. However, during the wars with Lord Cornwallis, much of the lac production was destroyed by the armies there is no longer any rearing of lac insects in the region.

Tavarekere (anglicized as Taveri-caray)

Buchanan passed through the present-day Tavarekere on their way to Bangalore, describing the pass between Magadi and Tavarekere as being overgrown with bushes and having poor soil. He mentioned several small reservoirs in the area designed primarily to supply water for cattle and drinking purposes, rather than for irrigation.

Buchanan also noted the presence of a wild animal called the Shin-Nai (wild dog or Kadu Nayi) in the forests between Magadi and Tavarekere, which is now extinct. Inquiries with locals revealed that only older generations recall seeing this animal in their childhood. Today, the region is home to wild boars and bears.

The Arkavathy River flows through the rugged valley between Magadi and Tavarekere, with the Thippagondanahalli Reservoir (Chamarajasagar) constructed across it. This river is a confluence of the Arkavathy and Kumudvathi rivers, originating from the Nandi Hills and Shivagange,



From the Left: 1. The Arkavathy River flowing through the rugged valley between Magadi and Tavarekere, with the Thippagondanahalli Reservoir (Chamarajasagar) built across it; 2. An old bridge spanning the Arkavathy River on the Magadi-Tavarekere road

respectively. Another dam, the Manchanabele Dam, is built across the Arkavathy River near Magadi, offering a stunning view of the water from the top of Savandurga Hill.

Tavarekere, now a suburban area of Bangalore, is rapidly transforming with the growth of housing and real estate developments.

Source: <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/12315/>



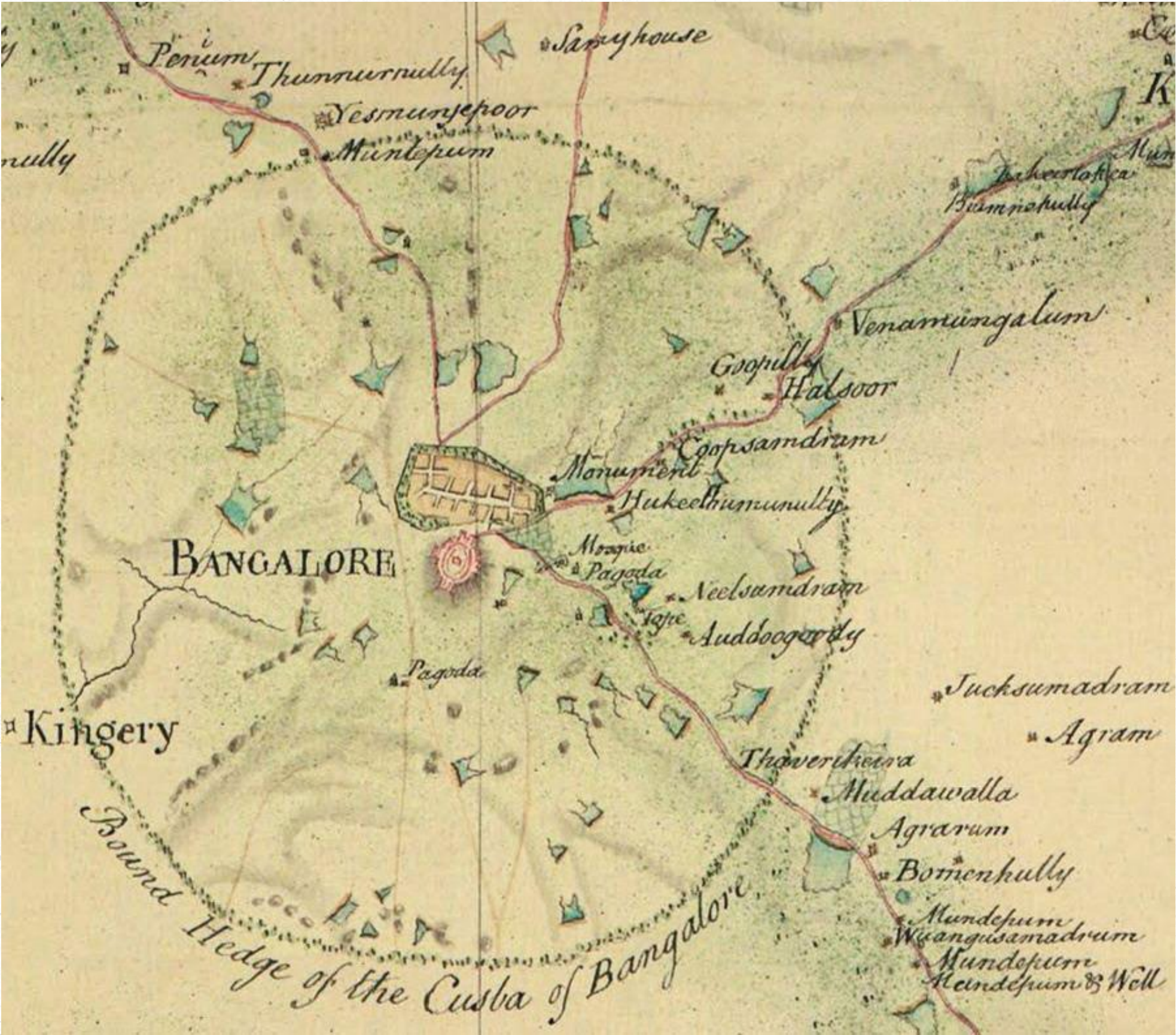
Chapter IV

At Bangalore



At Bangalore, Buchanan meticulously documented the culture, trade, caste-based professions, and the early structure of the Old Pettah (market) region. He recorded traditional industries like indigo dyeing, leather making, oil extraction, and highlighted the role of unorganized professional communities in the economy. Buchanan also described the Vrishabhavathi River, which originated in Bangalore, noting its significance—contrasting sharply with its present degraded condition.

Retracing his footsteps today uncovers the transformation of historic pettes such as Ballapura pete, Ragi Pete, Sunkal Pete, Cubbon Pete, KR Market ,Avenue Road, and Nagarath Pete, once defined by old city boundaries, now absorbed into Bangalore's expanding urban landscape. Through a comparison with old maps and present observations, this journey offers a rich perspective on Bangalore's evolution from a fortified market town to a dynamic modern metropolis, while still carrying echoes of its artisanal and trading heritage.



Bangalore Old Map: Depicting the Petta (Pete), the Bangalore Fort, and the outer defensive fort (Bound Hedge) with bamboo forests visible near Kengeri, Tavarakere, and the outskirts of present-day Yeshwanthpur



Bangalore (Now Bengaluru)

Francis Buchanan first visited Bangalore on May 10, 1800, traveling through Catcolli (present-day Hoskote) before reaching Bangalore. He returned to the city between June 22 and July 2, 1800.

During his journey from Catcolli to Bangalore, Buchanan described the landscape as largely barren, with about six-tenths of the land appearing arable, while the rest was covered with low bushes. He noted that only a small fraction of the cultivated land was irrigated. He also observed that the pastures in this region were better than those he had seen above the Ghats and even compared the cattle of Bangalore favorably to those of Bengal.

Today, this corridor along NH-75 has undergone a dramatic transformation. What was once a rural and semi-arid region has now become one of India’s most significant urban and economic hubs. The natural landscape has given way to industrial zones.

Hoskote, once primarily an agrarian town, has witnessed a significant transformation over the years. Traditionally home to Kannada-speaking farming communities, the region was known for its agricultural prosperity. However, with the rise of industrialization and the establishment of logistics hubs, the town’s economic landscape has shifted.

Many local farming families have diversified into small-scale industries, transport businesses, and warehousing, adapting to the evolving economy. Additionally, Hoskote has become a magnet for migrant workers who seek employment in factories, logistics centers, and construction projects. This shift has not only altered the town’s demography but also contributed to its emergence as a crucial industrial and trade center in the Bangalore metropolitan region.

As one moves from Hoskote towards Whitefield and Bangalore, the demographic landscape undergoes a striking transformation. Bangalore has grown into a global technology hub, drawing professionals from across India and abroad. The workforce in Whitefield, Marathahalli, and Outer Ring Road (ORR) is dominated by IT professionals, engineers, entrepreneurs, and corporate employees, shaping the region’s urban character.

This influx of a diverse population has also influenced language dynamics, with English and Hindi widely spoken alongside Kannada. Unlike Hoskote, which still retains some agrarian roots and economic disparities, Whitefield and its surrounding areas are marked by affluence, high-rise apartments, tech parks, and modern infrastructure, symbolizing Bangalore’s rapid urban expansion.

As one moves closer to Bangalore, particularly towards KR Puram, Whitefield, and Marathahalli, the real estate market becomes increasingly competitive. The demand for both luxury apartments and commercial spaces has surged, driving land prices to new heights. Whitefield, in particular, has emerged as a real estate hotspot, boasting a blend of premium residential projects, IT parks, and bustling shopping malls.

The expansion of metro connectivity, especially the Purple Line extension, along with major infrastructure developments, has further fueled real estate investments in this region. These advancements have transformed Whitefield and its surroundings into one of Bangalore’s most sought-after urban zones, attracting both home buyers and corporate investors.

In central Bangalore, land prices have skyrocketed, with commercial spaces in prime locations such as MG Road, Indiranagar, and Outer Ring Road (ORR) commanding exorbitant valuations. The demand for office spaces, retail outlets, and high-end residences has made these areas some of the most expensive in the city.

As a result, urban expansion has pushed development towards the outskirts. Hoskote, once an agrarian town, is now emerging as a key area for future IT and residential growth. With improved connectivity, upcoming infrastructure projects, and relatively lower land costs, Hoskote is being eyed as the next real estate hub, following the trend of development seen in Whitefield and Electronic City.

Further, Buchanan visited the Bangalore Fort, which was once a formidable stronghold. Today, only a few parts of the old fort remain. The North Gate, also known as the Delhi Gate, still stands as a historical landmark. Other surviving remnants include Tipu Sultan’s Palace, an underground armoury near the palace, and the Kote Prasanna Venkataramana Swamy Temple,



From the left: 1. The Delhi Gate, one of the primary remnants of Bangalore Fort, is viewed from the old Petta, now known as the Pete area; 2. Inside the northern fort gate of Bangalore



Tipu's Summer Palace is inside the Pete, near the Delhi Gate. The palace resembles the Daria Daulat, but unlike Daria Daulat, it doesn't feature many paintings inside. This palace was primarily built for his court (cutchery/office)



From the left: 1. Backside view of the palace; 2. Kote Sri Venkataramana Swamy Temple adjacent to the palace

which was once enclosed within the fort walls. These surviving structures offer a glimpse into Bangalore's rich history, reflecting its strategic and architectural significance.

From the map mentioned on page 83, the connection between the Bangalore Fort, particularly the northern gate (Delhi Gate), and the Pettah (market area) is visible through a narrow street, flanked by mosques on both sides. Buchanan noted that at the center of the fort, remnants of an older mud wall were still visible. This suggests that before Hyder Ali expanded the fort, a smaller settlement existed, likely dating back to the Kempegowda period. Given that Kempegowda was a subordinate ruler under the Vijayanagara Empire, these remains could be the fortifications from his time, reflecting the early foundation of Bangalore's defensive structures.



Few glimpses inside the underground armory at Tipu's palace



Inside the Bangalore Fort, showcasing its historical architecture and remnants of the past



The Northern Gate

The present Northern Gate of Bangalore Fort, now a bustling marketplace, is surrounded by several colonial-era landmarks. One such institution is the Vani Vilasa Women and Children's Hospital, built in 1935. Before the hospital was constructed, this land was home to the Fort Church and Fort Cemetery, which once stood within the fort's vicinity.

The Mysore Government later acquired this land from the Church of England and, as compensation, allocated land on Hardinge Road, Chamarajpet, where St. Luke's Church now stands. Other prominent colonial structures nearby include Victoria Hospital,

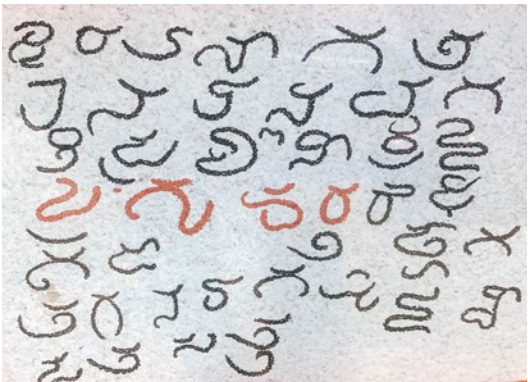
established in 1900, which today functions as a key medical institution affiliated with Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute (BMCRI).

Near the Northern Gate of Bangalore Fort, the Bangalore Metro's Green Line runs underground, passing through KR Market Metro Station. This metro line connects Madavara in the northwest to Silk Institute in the south, forming a crucial part of Namma Metro's Green Line. The metro infrastructure here blends seamlessly with the historic landscape, providing modern connectivity while passing through one of Bangalore's oldest and most historically significant areas.

When I was new to Bangalore about 15 years ago, I often heard a common story about its name. Many people would say that during the Hoysala period, a Ballala king came hunting in the present Bangalore region. There, an old lady offered him boiled beans, and in gratitude, he named the place "Benda Kalooru" (which translates to Boiled Beans Town in Kannada). Over time, this name is said to have evolved into Bangalore.

Another version suggests that the name "Bengavalooru" was historically used and gradually transformed into Bengaluru as we know it today.

The Begur inscription, dating back to 890 CE, contains one of the earliest known references to the "Battle of Bengalura" (Battle of Bengaluru). This historical record signifies that Bengaluru's history is much older than commonly believed, extending back over a thousand years.



The Begur inscription, dating back to 890 CE, contains one of the earliest known references to the 'Battle of Bengalura.' This historical record signifies that Bengaluru's history is much older than commonly believed



Belli Basavanna Temple, located at the heart of the Pete area, Bengaluru, features architectural elements that suggest it belongs to the Vijayanagara or later Vijayanagara period



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Ranganatha Swamy Temple at Ballapura Pete showcases architectural features from the Vijayanagara period; 3 & 4. Other glimpses of the Ranganatha Swamy Temple at Ballapura Pete



Basavanna Swamy Temple, located on Avenue Road



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Nagreshwara Temple, associated with the Nagartha trading community; 2. Dharmaraya Temple is a famous Bangalore shrine known for hosting the Karaga festival of the Thigala community; 3 & 4. A glimpse inside the Pete: a couple of horses owned by a Muslim community, still used for carrying goods within the city streets by traditional horse carriages



Murthis worshipped as Bisilu Maramma: A small temple houses three stone idols with carved faces, revered locally as Maramma — likely a form of Sheetala Mata — worshipped for protection against diseases like chickenpox and other epidemics



Inside Lalbagh Botanical Park, a vibrant green haven with diverse flora, winding paths, and a peaceful atmosphere, inviting visitors to explore and enjoy nature’s beauty



Buchanan visited the garden established by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, now known as Lalbagh, a prominent botanical garden in Bangalore. It remains a key attraction for tourists, along with Cubbon Park.

He described the garden as being divided into square plots, separated by walkways lined with fine cypress trees. Each plot was filled with fruit trees, herbs, and flowering plants—one entirely with roses, another with pomegranates, and so on.

For irrigation, water was drawn using the Capily (Yaatha) system, an ancient water-lifting technique where bullocks operated a pulley system to raise water in leather bags from a nearby well.



Nagalinga Pushpa tree (Bot: Gowripeta Guyansis) in full bloom inside Lalbagh Botanical Park

In 1819, the British formally took control of Lalbagh, converting it into a botanical research station. This was part of their larger colonial effort to document and control plant-based resources for trade and scientific study.

- Introduction of new plant species, expanding its botanical diversity.
- The Glass House (1890), inspired by London’s Crystal Palace, became a center for plant exhibitions, horticultural training, and scientific research.
- Lalbagh played a key role in testing cash crops and exotic trees, many of which were later planted across British India.

As mentioned in the **Sira Chapter**, the idea of the **new garden** was inspired by the **Mughal Gardens**, which were gaining popularity during **Hyder Ali’s time**. **King Hyder Ali** laid out these famous botanical gardens, and his son **Tipu Sultan** enriched them by importing trees and plants from several countries.

This design was influenced by the **Mughal Gardens** that once existed at **Sira**, which was **120 km** from **Bangalore**. At that time, Sira served as the headquarters of the southernmost **Mughal suba** (province) of the **Deccan**, before the **British Raj**.

Today, **Lalbagh** remains a critical **ecological and cultural landmark**, balancing **history, science, and urban sustainability**.

Bangalore Pettah: Present-day Chickpet and Nagarathpet

The **Bangalore Pettah**, which includes **Chickpet** and **Nagarathpet**, continues to be a bustling commercial hub, retaining its historical significance in the city’s urban fabric.

Bangalore Pettah: A Historical Trade Hub

Buchanan documented the Bangalore Pettah, which was historically bounded by:

- ♦ **West** – Binny Mills
- ♦ **East** – Halasuru Gate Police Station
- ♦ **South** – KR Market



Statue of Maharaja Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar inside Lalbagh Botanical Park



1791 March 22nd English army map, credit British Library, depicting the Bangalore Pete during the Siege of Bangalore

The Pettah functioned as a major commercial center, where merchants exchanged a variety of goods. Trade connections extended to various regions, including:

- Codeal/Kodiyala (Mangalore)
- Nizam Territory (Hyderabad & Hyderabad-Karnataka region)
- Maratha Territory (Regions above the Tungabhadra River)
- Doddaballapura, Gubbi, Srirangapatna, Arcot, Tanjore, Malabar

These regions supplied a diverse range of commodities, making Bangalore a key trading hub in South India during Buchanan's time.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Ballapura Market, once bustling with weavers and merchants of Doddaballapura, now serving as a vegetable market; 2. A roadside market along the Northern Fort Gate area; 3. Ballapura Market; 4. Mamulpet



Ganigara Pete, once this street was home to the Ganigara community (oil extractors)



From the left: 1. Kumbara Pete; 2. Ragi Pete



From the left: 1. Sunkalpete; 2. A shop near K.R. Market



A spice shop near the K.R. Market area



View of K.R. Market (Krishna Raja Market), bustling with people where vegetables and fruits are sold in bulk by farmers and mediators

The Transformation of Old Bangalore Pettah

The historic Bangalore Pettah has evolved into a bustling commercial hub, with Chickpete and its sub-areas specializing in various trades:

- ✦ Akkipete – Rice trading
- ✦ Anchepete – Postal services (historically related)
- ✦ Balepete – Bangles market
- ✦ Mamulpete – General trading
- ✦ Sourashtrapete – Textile merchants
- ✦ Tharagupete – Grain merchants
- ✦ Upparapete – Salt trading

Other specialized Pette areas include:

- ✦ Nagarathpete and Aralepete – Textile merchants, especially Devanga community
- ✦ Ganigarapete – Oil merchants of the Ganiga community
- ✦ Ballapurapete – Weavers from Doddaballapura
- ✦ Gollarapete – Golla (shepherd) community trade
- ✦ Kumbarapete – Pot traders from the Kumbara community
- ✦ Ragipete – Ragi merchants
- ✦ Sunnakalpete – Limestone traders
- ✦ Sulthanpete – Pearl traders and labor hubs

Present-Day Commercial Activities

Today, these areas have diversified into wholesale and retail trading, dealing in:

- ✦ Sarees & textiles – Chickpete
- ✦ Fruits, vegetables & spices – KR Market
- ✦ Electronics & computer components – SP Road
- ✦ Hardware & industrial goods – Near KR Market Mosque, including rubber products, fasteners, industrial safety items, and domestic machinery

Despite modern urbanization, Bangalore’s Pete areas remain the heartbeat of traditional commerce, carrying forward centuries-old trading legacies.

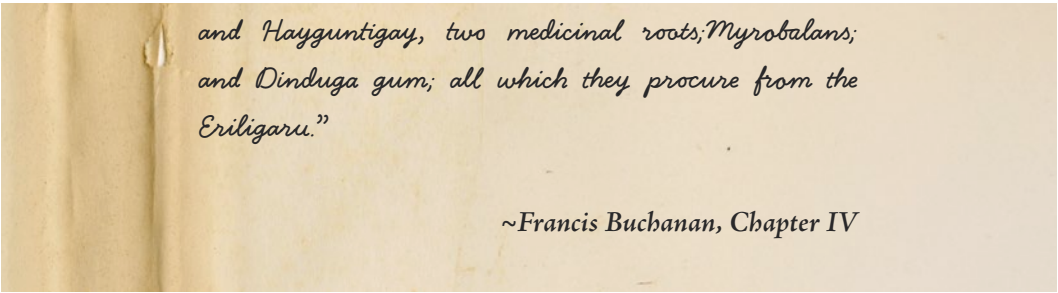
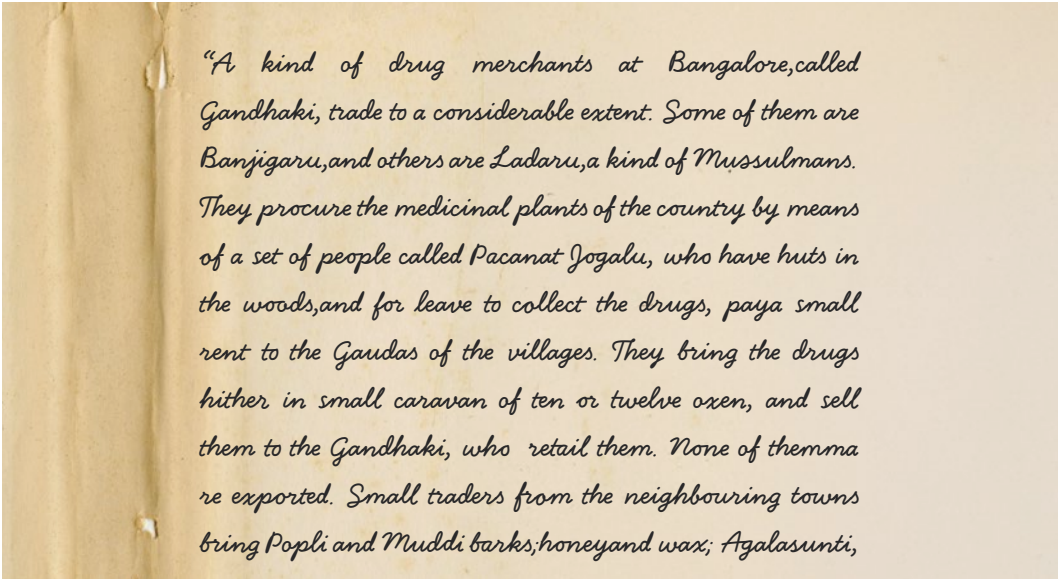


Buchanan documented the presence of drug merchants in Bangalore, referring to them as “Gandhaki” traders, which is locally known as the “Grandhige” trade



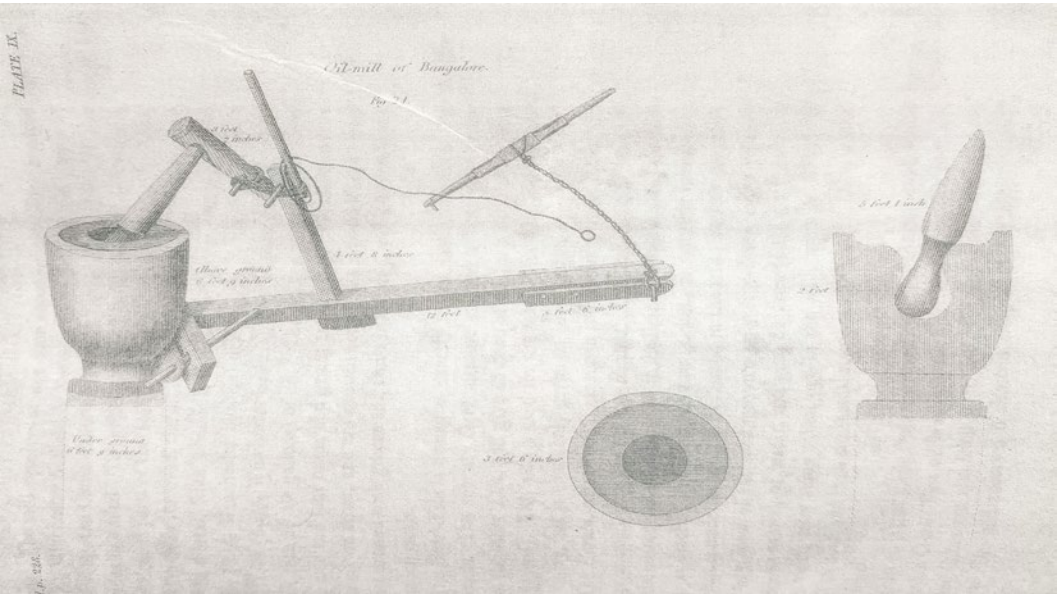
Myrobalans and Dinduga gum at the Grandhige shop

Buchanan documented the presence of drug merchants in Bangalore, referring to them as “Gandhaki” traders, which is locally known as the “Grandhige” trade. This trade, which involved the selling of medicinal herbs, aromatic substances, and traditional remedies, was once a thriving business in the old Bangalore Pettah. Even today, traces of this historic trade can still be found in Nagarathpete, where a few old-generation merchants continue to run shops specializing in Ayurvedic herbs, spices, and other indigenous medicinal products. Despite modernization and the shift towards pharmaceutical industries, these traditional stores stand as a testament to Bangalore’s rich mercantile history, preserving the age-old knowledge and trade practices that have been passed down through generations.



As Buchanan noted, many Grandhige shops still exist today, continuing the trade of herbs, roots, and medicinal ingredients. Over time, these shops have expanded their offerings to include a variety of pooja items such as camphor, incense sticks, lamp oil, turmeric, kumkuma, saffron, and lobana (benzoin gum), catering to both spiritual and medicinal needs. Unlike in Buchanan’s time, when most of these goods were sourced locally or through limited trade routes, the expansion of business, improved communication, and modern transportation systems enabled traders to procure materials from different regions of India. This diversification has allowed the Grandhige trade to adapt and thrive, maintaining its significance in Bangalore’s commercial landscape.

Francis Buchanan’s documentation of the caste structure and occupational divisions in the



Oil Mill at Bangalore: Sketch documented by Francis Buchanan, depicting the traditional oil extraction method using the Gaana (oil press)



Etthina Gaana (Traditional Oil Extraction): A traditional method of cold pressing seeds to extract oil driven by an ox, now becoming popular again near Begur, Bangalore

Mysore region remains one of the earliest and most detailed records of its kind. He observed various communities such as Panchama Banajigaru, Devanga, Pattedgars, Niligaru, Padmashali, Togataru, Rangaru, Madigaru, Ganigas, Telinga Banajigas, Koramaru, Panchalas, Komatigas, Vokkaligas, and Thigalaaru, each traditionally engaged in specific trades and crafts. During his time, caste-based occupations played a crucial role in shaping the economic framework of the region.

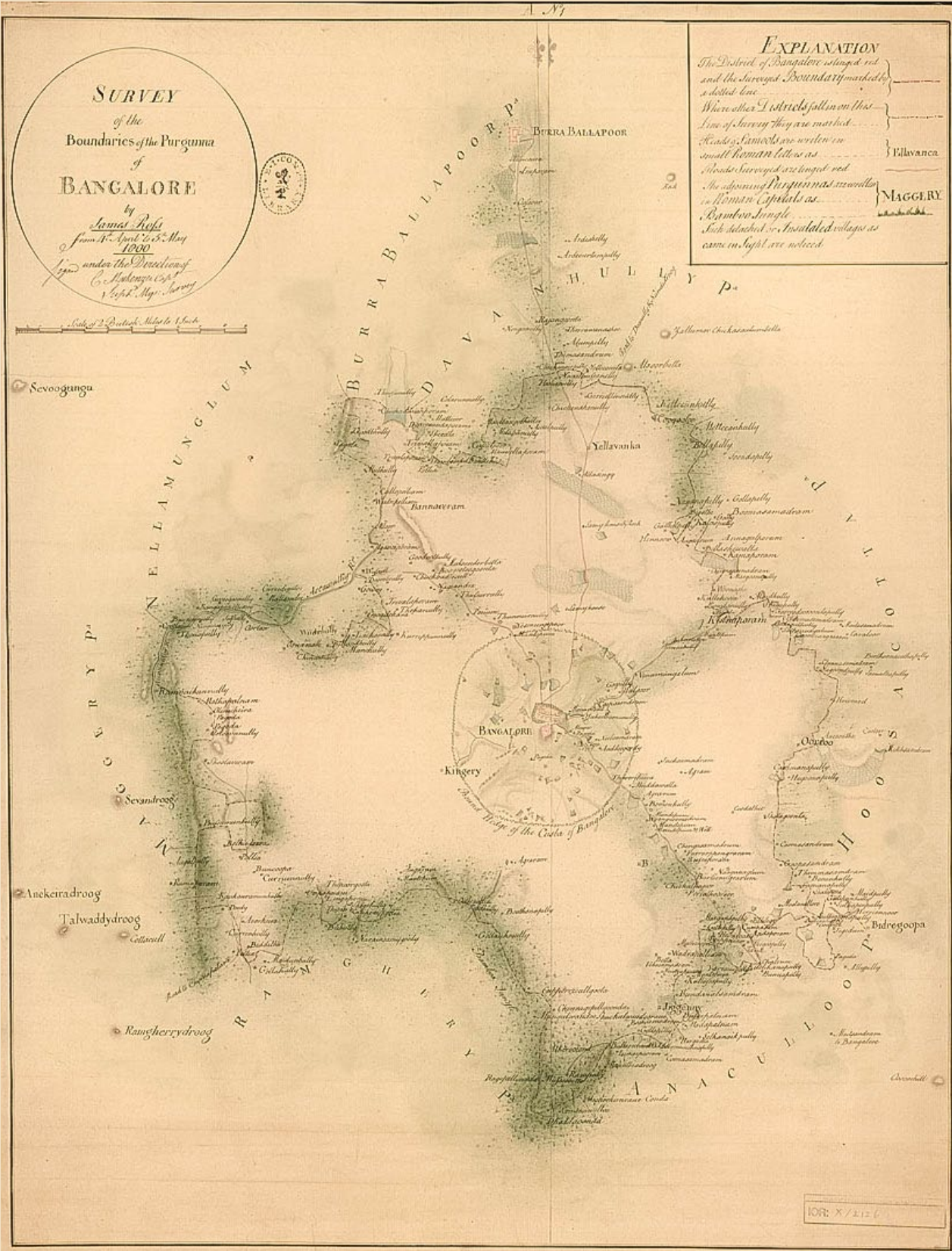


Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. At Dommasandra, Bangalore, members of the Devanga community are engaged in synthetic colour dyeing for silk, using various shades. The process involves large vats, with labourers squeezing the silk threads to achieve the desired colour; 3. The plant supervisor inspecting incoming silk threads from customers before processing, currently using artificial dyeing methods; 4. Labourers at the dyeing vat evenly dipping silk threads in the vat

However, with social and economic transformations, access to education, and the rise of new industries, many individuals from these communities have moved beyond their ancestral trades to explore diverse career opportunities. The shift from hereditary occupations to a more fluid and modern workforce reflects the changing socio-economic landscape, where traditional skills are either adapted to contemporary markets or replaced by new professions. Today, these communities contribute across various sectors, highlighting the region's dynamic evolution.

Kengeri (anglicized: Kingara/Tingara)

Buchanan further visited Kingara or Tingara, now known as Kengeri, which he described as being at the edge of hedges. As seen in the picture above (), Bangalore was once surrounded by



The map of 1800, titled 'Survey of the Boundaries of Purguna of Bangalore,' shows Kengeri at the edge of the Hedges

bamboo forest hedges. He documented the terrain as hilly, rocky, and mostly bare, with certain sections of the route passing along the banks of a small river containing little running water. This river, now called Vrishabhavathi, originates at the feet of the Bull Temple in Basavanagudi and serves as a tributary to the Arkavathi River, which flows south of Bangalore.



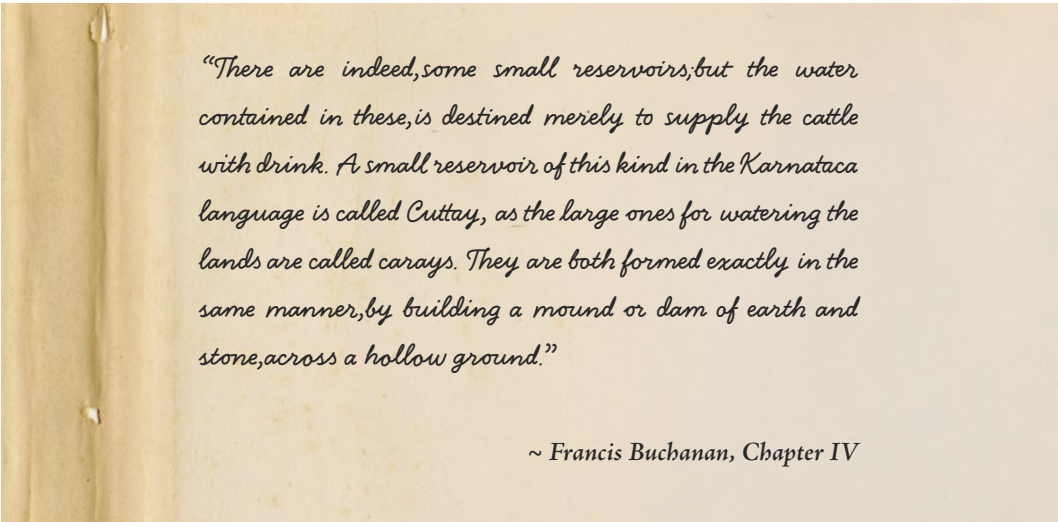
Clockwise from the top left: 1- 3. The Vrishabhavathi River, which originates at the feet of the Bull Temple in Basavanagudi, has unfortunately become one of the most polluted water bodies today due to rapid urbanization, industrial waste, and domestic sewage discharge; 4. The Vrishabhavathi River is believed to originate near the Kadu Malleshwara Temple or the Dakshinamukha Nandi Tirtha in Malleswaram

In Buchanan's time, the Vrishabhavathi was a clear, flowing stream, but today it has turned into one of the most polluted water bodies due to rapid urbanization, industrial waste, and domestic sewage discharge. The stark contrast between its pristine condition 230 years ago and its current state highlights the urgent need for government intervention and restoration efforts to revive its lost legacy.

Now, Kengeri has transformed into a rapidly growing western suburb of Bangalore. With improved transport connectivity, including the Namma Metro Purple Line extension to Kengeri and further to Challaghatta, the area has become a key residential and commercial hub. The growing demand for housing is driven by the expansion of IT and industrial sectors, attracting both professionals and businesses. Educational institutions such as Bangalore University and RV College of Architecture contribute to the locality’s student-friendly environment. Additionally, the presence of Global Tech Village and the Bidadi industrial zone has significantly influenced employment opportunities and migration patterns, further fueling Kengeri’s development.

Bidadi (anglicized: Wiridy or Biridy)

Bidadi, now a town under Ramanagara District, was once part of Bangalore Urban until the formation of Ramanagara District in 2007. The district was created by carving out regions from Bangalore Urban, including Harohalli, Kanakapura, Magadi, Channapatna, and Ramanagara. Since Bidadi was historically part of Bangalore’s periphery, it is relevant to include it in this chapter. Francis Buchanan visited this place on May 13, 1800, and documented its landscape and name origin. He mentioned that Bidadi derived its name from the Kannada word Biridi Mara (Indian Rosewood/Shisham), scientifically known as Dalbergia sissoo (synonym: Pterocarpus sissoo). As he passed through the valley, he observed small villages scattered among the wooded terrain, reflecting the rural landscape of that period.

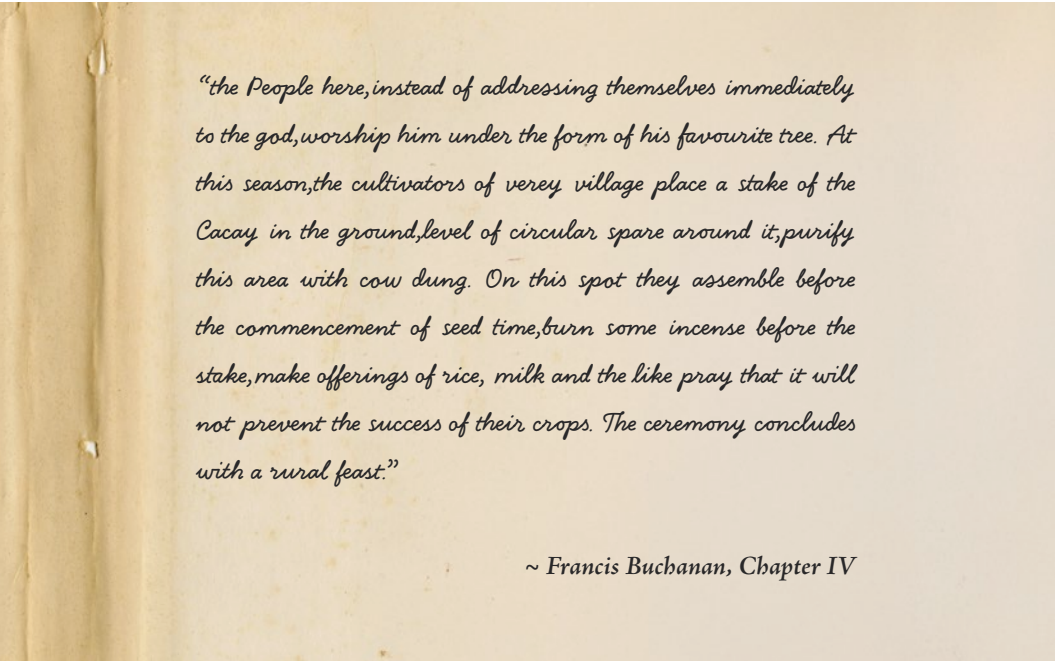


As Buchanan documented, the terrain around Bidadi was largely uncultivated, characterized by hilly and rocky landscapes with an abundance of grass. A small river ran north to south through the valley, providing a natural water source. The area was dotted with scattered trees, including mango and banyan, which thrived amidst the rocky peaks. Buchanan also recorded various tree species he encountered in the Bidadi region, highlighting the region’s natural vegetation and biodiversity during his time.

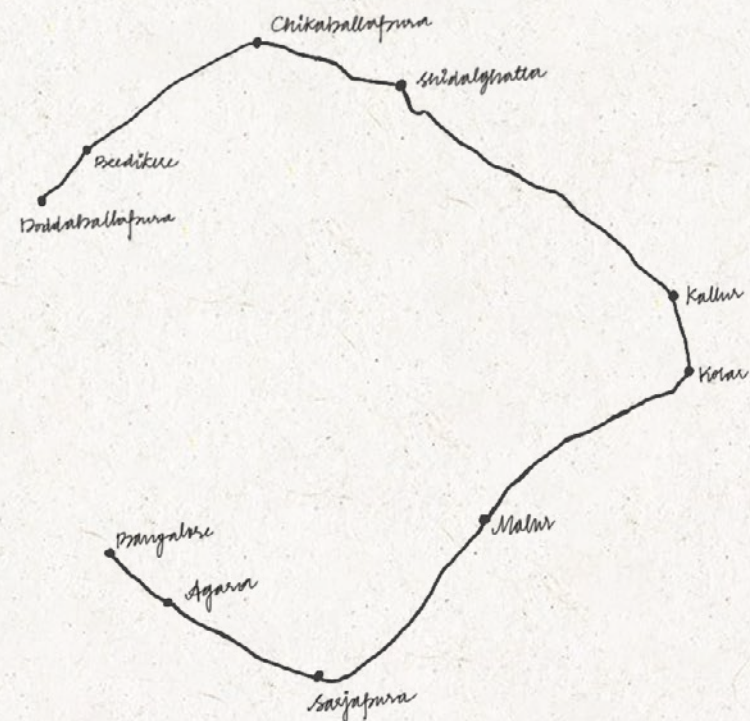
<i>Buchanan Documented</i>	<i>Other names</i>	<i>Indian Names</i>	<i>Endemic Regions</i>
<i>Mara halay, Nerium tinctorium, Rox</i>	<i>Wrightia tinctoria</i>	<i>Ajamara</i> (Kannada) <i>Dudhi</i> (Hindi) <i>Veppalai or Nila Palai or palai</i> (Tamil) <i>Kondajemudu</i> (Telugu)	<i>India, Australia, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor and Vietnam</i>
<i>Mara Harulu, Iatropa curcas, Lin</i>	<i>Jaropha Curcas</i> <i>Castor oil plant</i>	<i>Haralu</i> (Kannada)	<i>South-eastern Mediterranean Basin, East Africa and India, other Tropical regions</i>
<i>Alaygara, Terminalia Myrobana citrina of Koenig</i>	<i>Yellow Myrobalan</i>	<i>Haritaki</i> <i>Aralekaayi</i> (Kannada)	<i>Nepal, East Himalaya, Andaman & Nicobar, Bangladesh, SE Asia</i>
<i>Devadarum, Erythroxylon sideroxyloides of Lamarck</i>	<i>Dysoxylum binectariferum</i> <i>J. Hk</i>	<i>Devadaru mara</i> (Kannada)	
<i>Sri Gunda chica, Santum album, Lin</i>	<i>Santalum album</i>	<i>Shri Gandha</i> (Kannada)	<i>India, Australia, Philipphines, Indonesia</i>
<i>Wotu, Loranthus falcatus, Lin</i>	<i>Dendrophthoe falcata</i>	<i>Maduka or Bnadarike</i> (Kannada) <i>Pulluri</i> (Tamil) <i>Jiddu</i> (Telugu)	<i>Africa, Asia, Australia</i>

<i>Easy, Premna tomentosa</i>	<i>Bastard Teak</i>	<i>Eegi/Ije (Kannada)</i> <i>Kolakkatti Thekku (Tamil)</i> <i>Nagaru (Telugu)</i>	<i>Southeast Asia, Africa, Egypt, Europe</i>
<i>Ha-Shi-cai, Mimosa pennata</i>	<i>Acacia pendata (L.) Willd.</i>	<i>Kaadu seege (Kannada)</i> <i>Vellai Indu (Tamil)</i>	<i>India, Sri Lanka, S.E.Asia, China and Malaysia</i>
<i>Cacay, cassia fustula, Lin</i>	<i>Cassia fistula L.</i>	<i>Kakke (Kannada)</i> <i>Kakai (Irula)</i> <i>Sarakonnai (Tamil)</i> <i>Amaltash (Hindi)</i>	<i>Peninsular India (Deciduous forests)</i>

the local population, providing employment opportunities and enhancing the overall quality of life. Additionally, the Bangalore-Mysore Expressway runs through Bidadi, facilitating smooth transportation and connectivity. The town is also well connected by rail, linking Bangalore and Mysore, further boosting its accessibility and development.

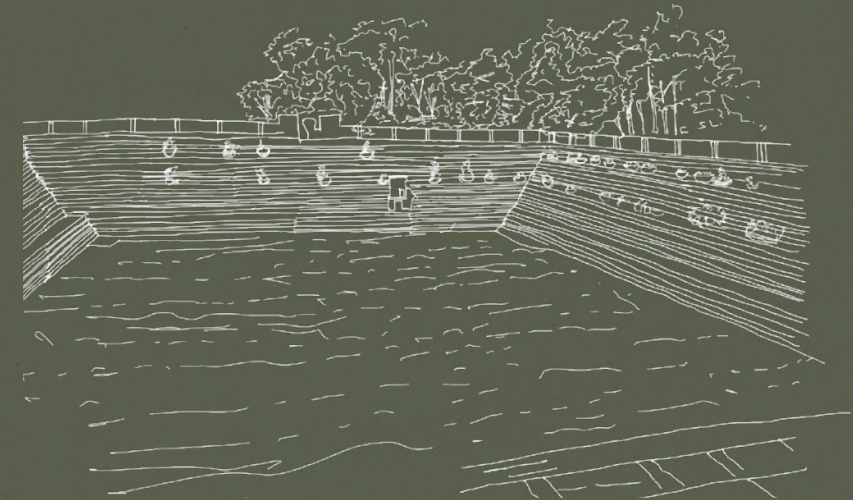


Now, Bidadi has transformed into an industrial hub, housing major manufacturing units such as Toyota Kirloskar Motors and its tier 2 and tier 3 supplier units. Other significant industries in the region include Bosch, Britannia, and Coca-Cola, contributing to the area’s economic growth. The presence of these industries has significantly improved the standard of living for



Chapter V

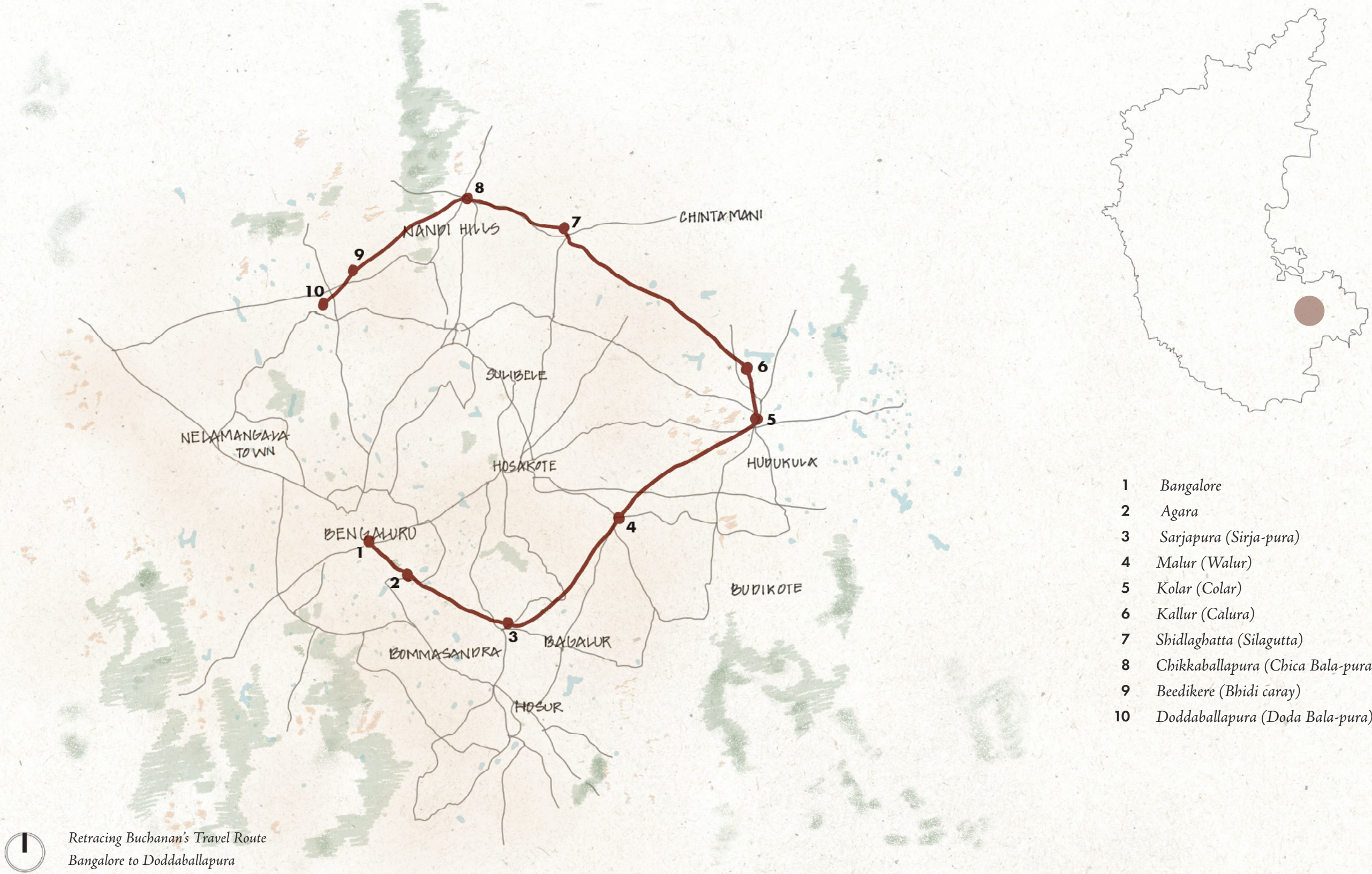
Journey from Bangalore to Doddaballapura



Retracing Buchanan's journey in Chapter V, this section follows his path through a region that has seen dramatic transformations over time. Agara, once a fortified village surrounded by mango orchards, has evolved into a bustling suburban area with Agara Lake at its center, now encircled by urban infrastructure. Sarjapura, which Buchanan described as a thriving textile hub, has transitioned from weaving fine fabrics to becoming a key IT corridor in Bengaluru.

In Kolar, Buchanan noted the region's rocky terrain, ancient temples like Kolaramma and Someshwara, and the mausoleum of Hyder Ali's father—now hidden amidst modern structures. The town's historical links to the Ganga dynasty and Rajput settlers from Aurangzeb's era continue to shape its cultural identity. The hills of Antharagange, with their ever-flowing sacred spring, remain a significant pilgrimage site.

Sidlaghatta and Chikkaballapura, once quiet agricultural lands, have become major centers for silk and flower production. Vineyards now flourish in Chikkaballapura, with grapes cultivated for fresh consumption and winemaking. Buchanan also recorded lac extraction in Beedikere, a practice that has since vanished but holds the potential for revival with government support.



East of Bangalore

Agara

Buchanan visited Agara in July 1800 during his journey towards Doddaballapura. He documented that Agara was a fortified village, surrounded by mango orchards, with its produce being sold in the Bangalore market. The village followed a system where harvested grains were shared among different classes, and charitable practices were an integral part of the community, as I have detailed in another chapter.



I still recall a similar tradition in my mother’s native place, where during festivals like Sankranti or Ugadi, the washermen would collect a lump sum of grains and money annually.

Buchanan also recorded details about the different classes



Agara Lake

residing in Agara, their customs, and occupations. Today, Agara has undergone a complete transformation—once a rural settlement with scattered vegetation and fortifications, it has now turned into a rapidly expanding suburban region. Agara Lake, which was once a vital water source, is now surrounded by modern infrastructure, corporate hubs, and dense urban sprawl. Over 230 years, the landscape has evolved from an agrarian outpost into a thriving metropolitan extension, showcasing the remarkable shift in Bangalore’s history and demographics.

Sarjapura (Sirja-pura)

In the early 1800s, Francis Buchanan visited Sarjapura, then a flourishing textile manufacturing town that relied heavily on Bangalore’s market. He documented that the weavers of Sarjapura primarily belonged to the Devanga, Togata, and Shalya (likely Padmashali?) communities, producing fine-quality cloth. However, by his time, there was a noticeable shift in demand towards coarse fabrics.

Sarjapura’s textiles were widely traded in markets across Srirangapatna, Sira, Chitradurga, Mangalore, Savanur, Gubbi, Tumkur, Magadi, Krishnagiri, and several other towns, highlighting its importance in the regional economy. Buchanan also noted the presence of fortified villages in the area and observed that the local agriculture mainly consisted of dry grain crops, reflecting the semi-arid nature of the region.

Today, Sarjapura has undergone a remarkable transformation. Once a thriving textile hub, it is now a hobli in Anekal taluk, part of Bengaluru Urban district, situated in the southeastern region of Bangalore. What was once a relatively deserted village has evolved into a key industrial and IT corridor, home to software parks, educational institutions, and modern infrastructure. Alongside Attibele, Bommasandra, Chandapura, Electronic City, and Jigani, Sarjapura is now an integral part of the rapidly expanding Greater Bangalore metropolitan region.

Further, I continued my journey towards Kolar, crossing Malur, which I have already documented in Chapter I. Along the way, I passed through Vokkaleri, which Buchanan referred to as Vackaleer. It is a small village located between Malur and Kolar, and to its south stands Bili Betta (White Hill), covered in woody shrubs. At the summit of this hill, there is an Anjaneya Swamy temple, a significant place of worship for the locals.

Kolar (Colar)

On my way to Kolar town, I passed through a narrow valley flanked by bare rocky hills on both sides before reaching the city. Kolar is now the district headquarters of the Kolar district, located around 65 km from Bangalore, near the eastern border of Karnataka. It is an important historical and commercial center, well-connected by NH-75 (previously known as Old Madras Road), which has long served as a major route between Bangalore and Chennai.



View of Kolar Hill on the northern side of Kolar town

The region’s terrain is mostly level, but its landscape is dotted with rocky, barren hills, a distinctive feature of Kolar’s geography that Buchanan also observed in the early 1800s.

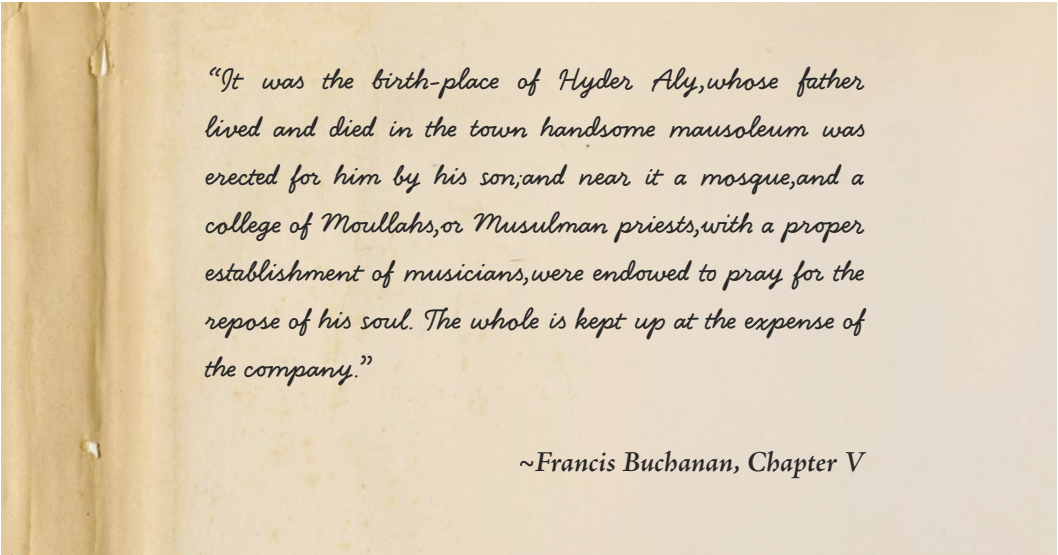
Kolar is a historic town with a rich past dating back to the 4th century AD, as evidenced by inscriptions and references in the Karnataka Gazetteer. Throughout history,



Panoramic view of Kolar Hills from the backside, with agricultural fields featuring drip irrigation

Kolar has been known by various names, including Kolahalapura, Kolhala, Kuvalala, and Kolala.

The town is home to several ancient temples, such as the Kolaramma Temple, built by the Cholas, and the Someshwara Temple, showcasing remarkable architecture. Interestingly, the Talakadu Ganga dynasty, which later ruled from Talakadu, originally hailed from Kolar, making it their early capital before expanding their reign.



~Francis Buchanan, Chapter V



From the left: 1. Coloured aquatint by J. Wells after A. Allan, 1794; 2. The only mausoleum of Hyder Ali’s father with other tombs inside the building, and the mosque on the right, modified and visible from the north side

Buchanan mentioned the mausoleum of Hyder Ali’s father in Kolar. After Kolar was annexed to the Mughals, Hyder Ali’s father became the Fouzdar (military governor) of the region under the



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The old mosque building visible from the north side; 2. Inside the mausoleum, are graves of Hyder Ali's relatives, with the left corner belonging to his grandfather, Mohammed Ali Khan; 3 & 4. A small Basavanna temple near the bus stand is identified as a Jangama Mutt of the Veerashaiva Lingayat tradition. It features a Gadduge (tomb) of an ascetic with a Basava (Nandi) stone placed on top as a mark of reverence

Subedar of Sira. The Maqbara (tomb), located near the Clock Tower, houses the graves of Hyder Ali's father and his relatives.

Today, the site is surrounded by modern buildings and mosques, making it difficult to spot from the main road.

Just past the bus stand, I noticed a small temple dedicated to Basavanna. Upon inquiry, I learned from a temple caretaker that it is a Jangama Mutt, associated with a Veerashaiva Lingayat ascetic (sanyasi). The site features a Gadduge (tomb) of the ascetic, with a small Basava (Nandi) stone placed on top, signifying reverence.



A watercolor painting of Antharagange by John Gantz, 1800

"There is a spring of water, which flows from the side of this hill in a small stream; and such a thing being here very uncommon, the Brahmans have conducted it along a gutter formed in the rock; and where it falls from thence, have, underground building, placed some stones, which the obliging imagination of natives conceives to resemble a cow's mouth. The place, as being holy, is much frequented, and a ruinous temple at some distance attracts to its annual feast about ten thousand pilgrims"

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter V



From the left: 1. Entrance to the Antharagange sacred pond and the Kashi Vishwanatha Shiva Temple, Kolar; 2. The same spot today, with changes to the temple pond and the background now covered with eucalyptus trees

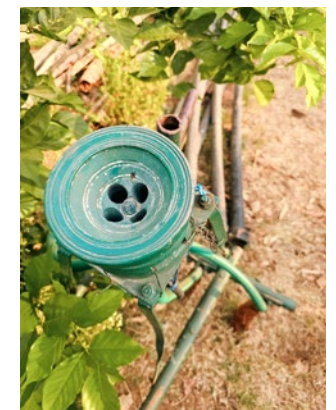
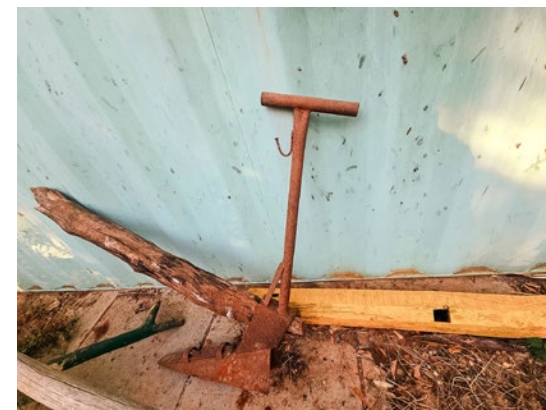


Clockwise from the top left: 1. Kashi Vishwanatha Temple; 2. A natural spring emerging from a secret passage in the hill; 3. Background view of the temple; 4. Various trees, including Jacaranda, Dalbergia sissoo, and eucalyptus, with eucalyptus being the most dominant species

To the north, a chain of hills stretches across the landscape, with Antharagange standing out as a prominent site. Now a tourist attraction and religious center, it houses the ancient Kashi Vishwanatha Temple, located midway up the hill. Beside the temple is a Kalyani (sacred tank), where water continuously flows from the mouth of a Nandi (bull). Remarkably, this natural spring remains active even during the hottest summers, maintaining its sacred presence through the ages.

Buchanan also documented the agricultural produce of this region, listing rice, ragi, sugarcane, betel leaf, corlay (millet), hessaru (green gram), uddu (urad dal), huchellu (niger seeds), jola (sorghum), and tarakari (vegetables) as the primary crops. He also recorded various paddy varieties cultivated in the area. However, in my journey through the Kolar region, I observed only a few patches of paddy fields. Due to changing rainfall patterns and frequent droughts, farmers have gradually shifted to alternative crops such as vegetables, fruits, and other drought-resistant produce to sustain their livelihood.

Buchanan documented the agricultural implements used in the early 1800s, many of which are still in use today in some rural areas. During my journey near Chikkaballapura, I observed farmers using similar traditional tools such as Garigi (a type of plow), Negilu (plowshare), Kunte (yoke), and Halivay (seed drill). While modern machinery has largely replaced these implements, a few farmers continue to rely on them, preserving age-old agricultural practices passed down through generations.



From the left: 1. An old plough (Guntay in Kannada) driven by oxen; 2 & 3. An agricultural implement documented by Buchanan as a wooden version in this region, now modified with metal and plastic pipes for seeding



A remnant of a Yatam placed on an old well, now replaced with electric pumps. However, open wells remain a primary source of irrigation in this region

erratic weather patterns and prolonged dry spells. During my journey, I met several farmers who expressed concerns over the continuous failure of monsoons for the past 10 years, possibly due to climate change. Interestingly, Buchanan also recorded similar grievances from farmers in the Sira region over 200 years ago, highlighting how water scarcity has remained a persistent challenge in these regions.

The adjacent Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh has effectively tackled dryland agriculture through well-planned irrigation systems, ensuring better water availability for both drinking and farming. A similar approach could greatly benefit the drought-prone districts of Karnataka. Historical records highlight the importance of irrigation as a solution for sustaining agriculture



An old house of a Rajput family I met in Kolar



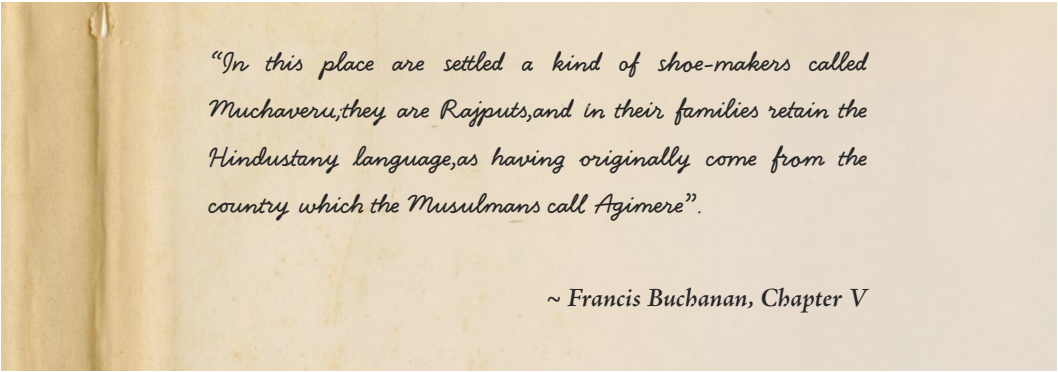
The Old Mysore region, covering Tumkur (Madhugiri, Pavagada, Sira, Koratagere), Chitradurga (Hiriyur, Challakere), Chikkaballapura, and Kolar, is severely drought-prone and in urgent need of proper irrigation facilities. Although sometimes monsoons occasionally bring better rainfall, farmers frequently struggle due to



From the left: 1. Gowripete, a suburban area of Kolar where these Rajput families reside; 2. Interaction with Rajput community member Raja Singh—these Rajputs, originally from Ajmer (which he referred to as Agmire), primarily settled in Kolar and Sira

and livelihoods in these regions. The government needs to prioritize irrigation projects, ensuring water security and meeting the basic needs of the people, which remains a fundamental responsibility.

Buchanan documented poppy cultivation in the Kolar region, noting its use for both opium production and culinary seeds. However, in modern India, opium poppy cultivation is strictly regulated. Under Section 8 of the NDPS Act, 1985, its cultivation is prohibited except under a government-issued license. The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) grants these licenses under Rule 8 of the NDPS Rules, 1985 for licit opium production. Today, poppy seeds (khus khus) are still used in Indian cuisine, but their cultivation remains under stringent control to prevent misuse.



Buchanan documented a Rajput family residing in Kolar, tracing their arrival to the time of Kasim Khan, a general under Aurangzeb. He noted that these Rajputs, originally from Ajmer (which he referred to as Agmire), had primarily settled in Kolar and Sira.

Even today, some Rajput families continue to live in Kolar. During my visit, I met Raja Singh,



Clockwise from the top left: 1- 3. Colonial buildings in Kolar, now converted into government schools and offices; 4. An Ongole ox used by mendicants to collect alms, which I saw in Kolar

a member of this community, who runs a wholesale pan ingredients business in Kolar Bazaar. Others from the community are engaged in various businesses and agriculture. Interestingly, they still speak a blend of Hindi and Deccani Urdu.

I also had the opportunity to visit a Rajput family in Gowripete, a settlement in the heart of Kolar city. We discussed their customs and traditions, many of which have been preserved over generations, reflecting their unique heritage in this historically significant town.

Today, Kolar has transformed into a bustling trading hub, with vibrant markets reflecting its growing commercial activity. Due to its proximity to Bangalore, the city has seen significant industrial development.

Nearby, the Narasapura and Vemgal industrial areas have attracted numerous MNCs and

Indian companies, providing employment opportunities to locals and migrants alike. The rapid industrialization has reshaped the region, making Kolar not just a historical town but also an emerging economic center in Karnataka.

As I continued my journey towards Sidlaghatta, I passed through Kallur, which Buchanan referred to as Calura. Near this village, he documented a fine mango grove, and even today, I witnessed many mango plantations thriving in the region.

Since my visit was in late March, the mango trees were laden with tender mangoes—a significant sight, as this period marks the beginning of the Chandramana Ugadi festival, which signifies the New Year for communities following the Shalivahana Shaka calendar.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Many tree species line the roadside, including Euphorbia grantii, Jacaranda, Delonix regia, Pongamia, Dalbergia sissoo, Rain tree, Ficus religiosa, Tamarindus indica, and Nerale mara (Jamun); 3 & 4. A mango grove near Kallur with thriving mango plantations

Interestingly, the Tamils, Malayalis, and Tulu communities follow the Solar calendar, which results in their New Year falling approximately 15 days after Chandramana Ugadi, showcasing the diverse cultural traditions across the region.

Shidlaghatta (Silagutta)

Sidlaghatta is now a town located approximately 48 km from Kolar and 66 km from Bangalore. It is one of the major silk-producing centers in Karnataka.

When Buchanan visited the region, silk cultivation had not yet been introduced. However, today, I observed vast fields of mulberry cultivation, as mulberry leaves serve as the primary feed for silkworms. Many agrarian families are actively engaged in silk production, making it a thriving industry in the region.

Buchanan mentioned that the Morasu Vokkaligas were numerous in this region, and even today, they remain highly prevalent in Chintamani, Chikkaballapura, and Doddaballapura. They are primarily cultivators in these areas.

There are two distinct groups among them:

- 1. Telugu Morasu Vokkaligas many follow Vaishnavism
- 2. Kannada Morasu Vokkaligas, who worship Kalabhairava as their sect deity, with a temple dedicated to him at Seethabetta.



Mulberry cultivation is extensive in Shidlaghatta, making it one of the major silk-producing centers in Karnataka; a silk fiber



Buchanan also documented the presence of other prominent communities in the region, including Telugu Banajigas (likely Balijas), Reddy, Gollaru, Kurubaru, and others, who have historically engaged in trade, livestock rearing, and agriculture.

Buchanan documented the commercial activities in Shidlaghatta, mentioning that betel nut and black pepper were key trade items. Merchants from this region traveled to Codeal (Mangalore) and Nagara, carrying tobacco and handloom cloth produced locally.

At that time, raw silk was not produced in **Shidlaghatta**, so traders imported it from **Madras (Chennai)**, and the Madras merchants, in turn, imported it from **China** via the sea route. Silk was one of the most valuable imported commodities in this region.

However, the scenario has completely changed today—Shidlaghatta has now become one of the finest silk-producing centers in Karnataka, with local farmers cultivating mulberry and rearing silkworms, making it a major hub in the state’s silk industry.

Chikkaballapura (Chinna Balapuram or Chica Bala-pura)

Chikkaballapura, formerly a taluk center, is now a district headquarters. The town has long been associated with the silk industry, with many farmers engaged in silkworm rearing and cocoon production.



From the left: 1. An old choultry (Chatra) for travelers on the main road, now in a dilapidated condition, Chikkaballapura; 2. A glimpse of chrysanthemum (Sevanthi) flower cultivation in Chikkaballapura, where bulbs are placed in the fields at night to provide artificial light can be used effectively to control their growth and flowering



A glimpse of chrysanthemum (Sevanthi) flower cultivation in Chikkaballapura

Historically, both Chikkaballapura and Doddaballapura were famous for candy-sugar manufacturing. However, I found no traces of this industry today, nor did I see any significant sugarcane fields, likely due to the high water requirement despite the region having suitable soil. Additionally, Chikkaballapura is well-known for its flower cultivation, with extensive farms growing Sevanthi (Chrysanthemum) in multiple varieties, Marigold, Rose, Rubi, and other flowers, making it an important hub for floriculture in Karnataka.

I met a flower farmer in the region and discussed the scope of floriculture. He mentioned that during the festive season, earnings from flower cultivation range from Rs.5 to Rs.6 lakhs per acre in a single month.

Due to the high profitability, he completely shifted from food crops like paddy to flower cultivation, finding it more lucrative than paddy or coconut farming.

The flowers grown here are widely distributed across Karnataka, including the coastal regions, and even reach neighboring Andhra Pradesh, transported via buses and other means.

In Chikkaballapura, I observed numerous vineyards, as the soil and climate in this region are highly suitable for grape cultivation. The grapes grown here are mainly used for fresh consumption, while some are sold to wine manufacturing companies.

Additionally, I came across several granite industries in the area. Upon inquiring at a granite



In Chikkaballapura, numerous vineyards thrive due to the region's suitable soil and climate



In Chikkaballapura, numerous vineyards thrive due to the region's suitable soil and climate



From the left: 1. A potter stands atop a heap of raw clay; 2. A raw clay tandoor prepares for its final transformation in the kiln

cutting factory, I learned that they source raw materials both locally and from neighboring states. Nearby, I also witnessed a hill undergoing quarrying operations, indicating active granite extraction in the region.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A hill near Chikkaballapura with quarrying in the process; 2 & 3. A glimpse of a nearby granite factory

Nearby Chikkaballapura, the Nandi Hills—also known as Nandidurga—is a famous hill station located at an altitude of 4,850 feet. Several rivers originate from this hill, including the North Palar, South Pennar, Chitravathi, Arkavathi, and Papaghni rivers.

Historically, Nandi Hills has been significant since the Ganga and Chola periods, with many Jain inscriptions found in the region. At the northeastern base of the hill lies Nandi Grama, home to the Bhoga Nandeeshwara Temple, which was built in 806 AD by the Bana dynasty.

At the hilltop, there is a sacred water pool known as “Amrita Sarovara.” Several ancient temples can also be found here. Tipu Sultan constructed a lodge atop the hill, which later became a British summer retreat due to its pleasant weather throughout the year. As per the Gazetteer,



View of Nandi Grama from Nandi Hills, with surrounding mountain valleys in the backdrop

the first hilltop garden was established by Colonel Cupez, followed by Colonel Hill, Sir Mark Cubbon, and Captain Cunningham, who built a summer lodge. This lodge was later renamed “Gandhi Nilaya” after Mahatma Gandhi’s visit and stay at Nandi Hills.

Due to its proximity to Bangalore, Nandi Hills attracts a large number of tourists, especially on weekends, making it a crowded destination.

The vegetation on the hill is characteristic of high-altitude forests. Inside the fort at the summit, several large trees have been planted, including exotic species like Eucalyptus, while the undergrowth consists of Coffee arabica along with native plant species.

The forest ecosystem plays a crucial role in cloud condensation, leading to a moist environment where trees remain covered in water each morning. This unique microclimate supports a variety of moist forest species, creating a habitat for diverse plant and animal life.

At the base of Nandi Hills, a protected forest area surrounds the region, harboring a variety of plant species.

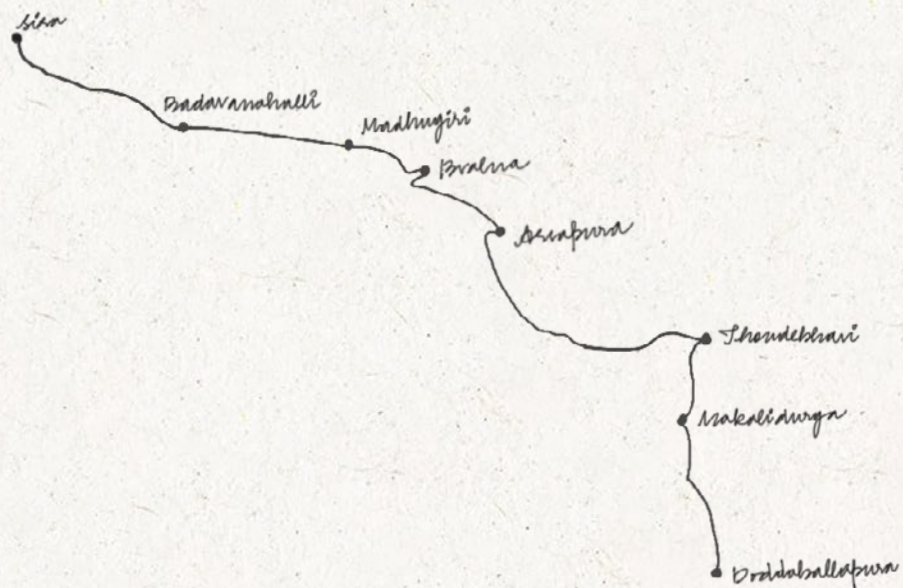


Clockwise from the top left: 1. At the hilltop, the sacred water pool is known as “Amrita Sarovara,” Nandi Hilltop; 2. An old Tipu’s Summer Lodge at the top of Nandi Hill; 3 & 4. A farmer removing weeds from the cultivated fields using modern equipment, alongside a modern tilling attachment in these regions

Buchanan documented the extraction of lac from trees around Nandi Hills and Beedikeere by the Woddar (Woddaru) community. However, today, no traces of lac extraction remain in the forest. Given that lac cultivation does not negatively impact crops, there is significant potential to revive this practice if the government initiates development programs in this region.

Currently, lac cultivation is practiced on a small scale in regions like Sirsi and Hunsur (Mysore region). To promote and expand lac production, the government should provide training and awareness programs for local communities.

Buchanan also traveled to Doddaballapura via Beedikeere, which he referred to as Bhidicaray. Details about the Doddaballapura region have already been documented in Chapter VI.



Chapter VI

Journey from Doddaballapura to Sira



Retracing Buchanan's route from Doddaballapura to Sira provides a fascinating glimpse into the historical, agricultural, ecological, and social mosaic of the region over two centuries ago. This article explores Buchanan's observations, the historical significance of his journey, and the changes that have transformed the region since his Journey.



- 1 Doddaballapura
- 2 Makalidurga
- 3 Thondebhavi
- 4 Arasapura
- 5 Byalya
- 6 Madhugiri
- 7 Badavanahalli
- 8 Sira



Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Doddaballapura to Sira

Doddaballapura

Doddaballapura is now part of the Bangalore Rural district. It has become an industrial town housing several Indian and multinational companies. It is located around 40 km north of Bangalore on the Bangalore-Hindupur highway. The establishment of a huge industrial corridor in this region, with multiple national and international garment factories, employs thousands of local and migrant laborers.

Doddaballapura is famous for its handloom industry, traditionally managed by the Devanga community, although it has now been largely replaced by power loom machines.

On July 19, 1800, Buchanan visited this place and mentioned the various castes present in Doddaballapura, including Gollaru, Vokkaligas, Lali Gundaru, Nagartas, Telugu Devangas, and others, along with their customs. He also noted the commerce in Doddaballapura, where merchants from Tadipatri brought muslin cloths, turbans, and handkerchiefs and took away jaggery and cash.

Also documented are the main agricultural products in Doddaballapura, which includes sugarcane, followed by radish, onions, garlic, capsicum, and maize. Additionally, there is sugar manufacturing, with the art of sugar making being a secret kept by certain Brahman family members.



From the left: 1. Inside the power loom factory, Doddaballapura; 2. A Hero stone near Rajghatta lake



From the left: 1. Inside of the Brick baking area in a Brick factory; 2. The women laborers working inside a Brick factory

There are many clay brick factories in the vicinity of Doddaballapur on the Chikkaballapur road. Due to the abundance of clay soil from the lakes, this industry is profitable for the people because of the high demand for construction materials from Bangalore city, driven by rapid urbanization.

Makalidurga

The hill fort situated around 60 km from Bangalore, Makalidurga Fort, stands at the top of a huge granite hillock, nestled amidst a chain of hills forming a valley near the Ghati Subramanya Temple, a well-known pilgrimage centre. The fort is located at a height of 1,117 meters.

Now, this place has become a hotspot for Bangalore residents for weekend trekking.



From the left: 1. A Train Passing near Makalidurga Hill; 2. Tippaana Halli Lake near Makalidurga

Thondebhavi

Thonde Bhavi is a small village near this cement plant operated by ACC Adani, a manufacturer of cement and ready-mix concrete. The plant employs locals and migrant workers, especially from the regions of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar. Agriculture is the main occupation for the people.

Buchanan passed through Madhugiri town via Arasapura (Assauru) and Byalya (Dodda Byalya), a landscape with rugged terrain. Near Byalya, the Jayamangali River flows to the north. On the bank of the Jayamangali River near Madhugiri is a famous Blackbuck conservation reserve forest.



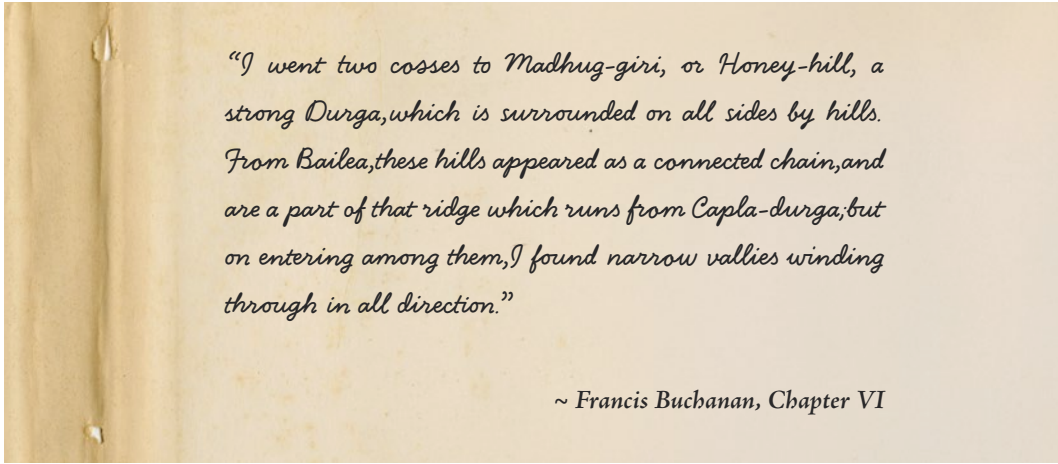
Jayamangali Blackbuck at Maidanahalli, Near Madhugiri (Photo Credit: Vishwanath S)

Madhugiri

Madhugiri is a municipal town in Tumkur district, located around 43 km north of Tumkur on the Tumkur-Pavagada road. The town is said to derive its name from Madhu-giri (Honey Hill), as it is situated at the northern base of the hill. The Madhugiri Fort is one of the finest forts in the state, and the hill, which is the second-largest monolithic hill in Asia, is made up of a single stone boulder that attracts trekkers.



From the left: 1. Madhugiri Hill; 2. A Hilltop Fort in Madhugiri



From the left: 1. A view of Chain Hills from Madhugiri Hill Fort with the landscape in the background; 2. Bird's-eye view of Madhugiri town from the hill

"The View of Madhu-giri, on approaching it from the east, is much finer than that of any hill-fort that I have seen. The woks here make a very conspicuous appearance; whereas in general they are scarcely visible, being hidden by the immensity of the rocks on which they are situated."

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VI



From the left: 1. Eastern main entrance of Madhugiri Fort; 2. View of the fort hill from the base



From the left: 1. A Kalyani (water source) mid-way up the hill; 2. Venugopala Swamy Temple at the hilltop, with nearby granaries likely used for storing grains, ghee, or oil



From the left: 1. A fort wall built on the granite slope of the hill; 2. A parapet wall constructed using granite stone, with brick and mortar detailing visible



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Northern fort entrance gate, built by Hyder Ali as per the Persian inscription above the gate; 2. Inside view of the northern fort gate; 3 & 4. Inside the northern gate: The fort remains were modified during the colonial period to house government offices (Cutchery) and even a jail — remnants of these structures are still visible today

The original fort was erected by the local poligar, Raja Heere Gauda, of the Gowda family under the Vijayanagara Empire. It was later annexed by the Mysore Kingdom, the Marathas, and then by Hyder Ali.

The fortifications were greatly expanded during the period of Hyder Ali. The town once had a considerable trade in brass and copper vessels, but now we primarily see a trade in steel and aluminium cooking vessels in Madhugiri.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Few glimpses of colonial-era structures: Old jail building remnants within the fort premises, now in a dilapidated condition; 3. An old fort entrance gate, later modified into government offices during the colonial period; 4. The old court office within the fort premises at the base of the hill, now in a dilapidated state

Buchanan mentioned the agricultural practices of sowing paddy, ragi, Jola (jowar), hotay godi (wheat), and millets such as korle (foxtail millet), Navane (little millet), and barugu (proso millet). However, now only ragi is grown in this region; the other millets have disappeared.

He also mentioned pulses like uddu and huruli (horse gram), and vegetables like maize, turmeric,



From the left: 1. The Farmer in the Ragi Kana (Separating Edible Grain from the Straw of the Ragi After Harvest), Near Hulyar; 2. Areca kernels are boiling in the steel drum near Gubbi

capsicum, onions, garlic, and hemp, which were used only for intoxication. But now, only ragi, paddy, garden vegetables like capsicum, maize, horse gram, mango trees, coconut palms, areca, and jackfruit trees are still cultivated in this region. The other varieties mentioned are no longer farmed.

The region was also known for its pomegranates of good quality and a superior variety of rice called Chinnada-salaki (golden stick), which was traditionally cultivated here. However, this rice variety has now disappeared, and even the elderly no longer recognizes it.

Buchanan mentioned the natural colouring process used for the preparation of areca nut kernels:

“The nut after being peeled is cut into seven or eight pieces and put up in heap. Then take one seer of the nut, one seer of cut of, or Terra japonica (Catechu), and a hundred leaves of the piper beetle, beat them together repeatedly with water, and strain the juice thus obtained into a pot. Take 20 seers of bark of the cari jali (Mimosa indica) and boil it during a whole night in a large pot, with forty seers of water. With this decoction mix the juice expressed from the former materials, and boil it again. While it boiling, put in the arecanut, after it has been cut, until the pot be full. Immediately after, take it pour with a ladle, and put in more, till the whole is boiled. In order to dried it must be three days exposed on mats to the sun, and then its fit for sale.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VI

Now, the process is similar, except that farmers can buy catechu (an extract of the acacia tree) in crystallized form and add it while boiling. In the Malenadu region, the farmers use ingredients such as teak tree bark, lime, betel leaves, oils, etc., which are added to the water during boiling to achieve the colour.

Buchanan was recording the situation in a feudal system. The land belonged to the king, and the farmer was just a worker who had to share the produce with others, including the poligar (local feudatory), who in turn had to give a share to the king. Buchanan mentioned the distribution of grain after the harvest among different classes of people as follows:

Total Produce		
Heap of Paddy: 20 Colagas or 1920 Seers		
Share (in Seers)	Beneficiary	Notes
6	Pujari	Taken for the gods and distributed among the Pujaris of the village temples
5	Two Jangamas and Daseri	
1.5	Panchanga	
144	Gowda, Shanboga, Iron Smith, Tallari, Totay, Watchman, Washerman, Barber, Carpenter, Potmaker	Divided equally among them
26	Nirguntty (Conductor of Water)	
96	Madiga (Tanner who makes the capily)	
12	Shanboga (Accountant)	
12	Gauda (Gowda)	Village Hereditary Head
66	All above mentioned persons	A scramble takes place and is divided among them
368.5	Total Allocated	
1551.5	Cultivator and Renter	The remaining seers are divided between the cultivator and renter



Clockwise from top left: 1.Harvest of paddy in the kana (a place where the grains are cleaned from their straw) and the ritual process before packing, Photo clicked from Shikaripura; 2.Palm Juice extraction from Phoenix sylvestris(Ichala mara); 3.A Tree of Phoenix sylvestris(Ichala mara); 4.Toddy selling: The photo was taken in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, near Madakasira

Tipu Sultan and later the British got rid of the Palegars. Tipu brought the farmers directly under his control and appointed Amildar’s as land revenue officials (Collectors). The British further established the Ryotwari system, giving farmers ownership of the land.

Presently, land-owning farmers hire laborers on a daily wage basis, providing breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon, with a daily wage of Rs 600 to Rs 650 for men and Rs 400 to Rs 450 for women.

Buchanan documented the extraction of palm juice, known as Henda or Kallu (toddy), from the Phoenix sylvestris(Ichala mara), which grows wildlly in this area. The Idiga community in this region descended from Telugu ancestors, is involved in extracting juice from this tree; however, they are prohibited from drinking the palm wine by their customs.

Earlier, they used to make palm jaggery, but now it is only used for making an intoxicating drink. Currently, the Government of Karnataka has banned toddy tapping and the sale of palm juice, except in two districts of the South Canara region of Karnataka.

He also documented the Golla community of Madhugiri, focusing on the number of cows, the quantity of milk produced, their lifestyle, and the preparation of milk products such as ghee, curd, and buttermilk.

Now, only a few families engage in this traditional occupation; some have moved to agriculture, while others, particularly the educated, have migrated to Bangalore for different occupations. A few are involved in the trading business.

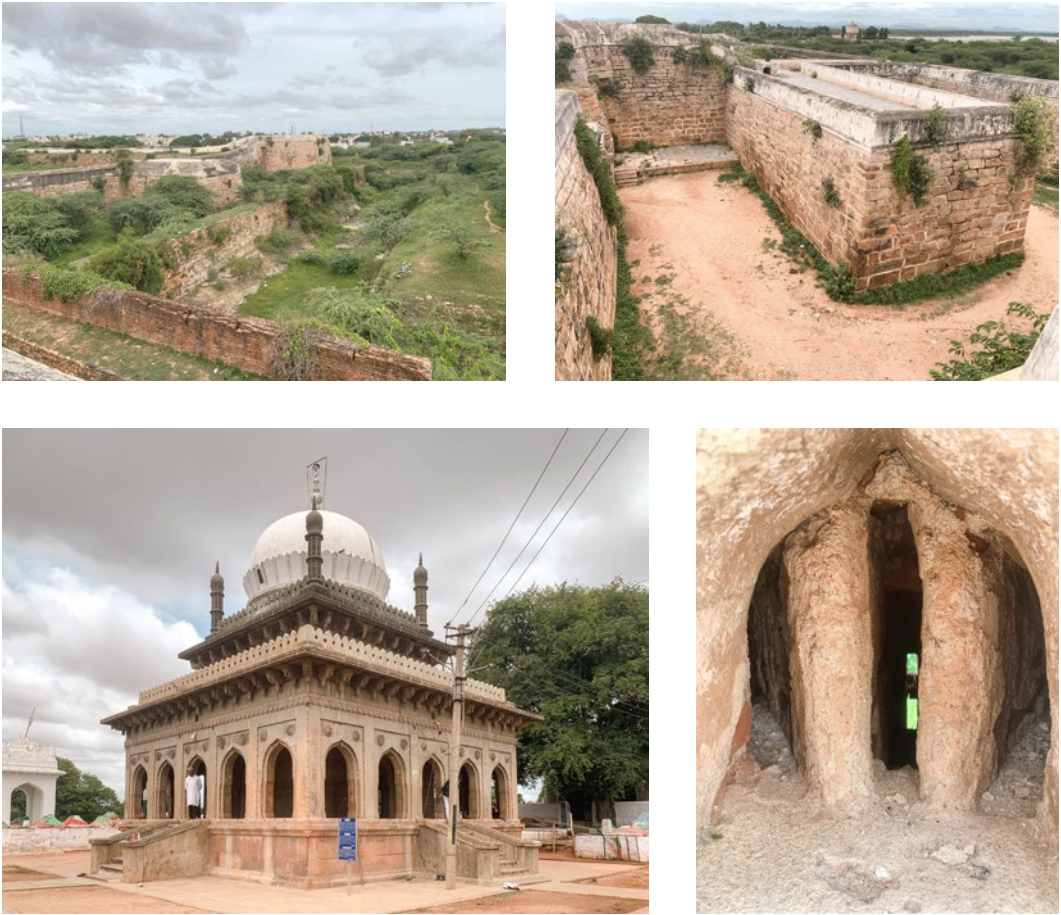


A Mysore breed bull in a cattle shed, with its red colour contrasting with other black cattle and cows of different breeds, near Anekal, Bangalore

Sira

It's a municipal town situated approximately 51 km northwest of the district headquarters, Tumkur. This town lies on the Bangalore-Poona Highway and is now rapidly developing in the Tumkur district.

Sira, the city, was founded by Kasturi Rangappa Nayaka, a chief of Ratnagiri, which is now in Andhra Pradesh and shares a border with the Sira region. Before the completion of the fort, it was annexed by Ranadulla Khan, a general of the Bijapur Kingdom. Later, this fort was conquered by Aurangzeb(Mughals), who made Sira the capital region below the Tungabhadra River. During Dilawar Khan's rule, a fine garden named Khan Bagh was established, which inspired Haidar Ali



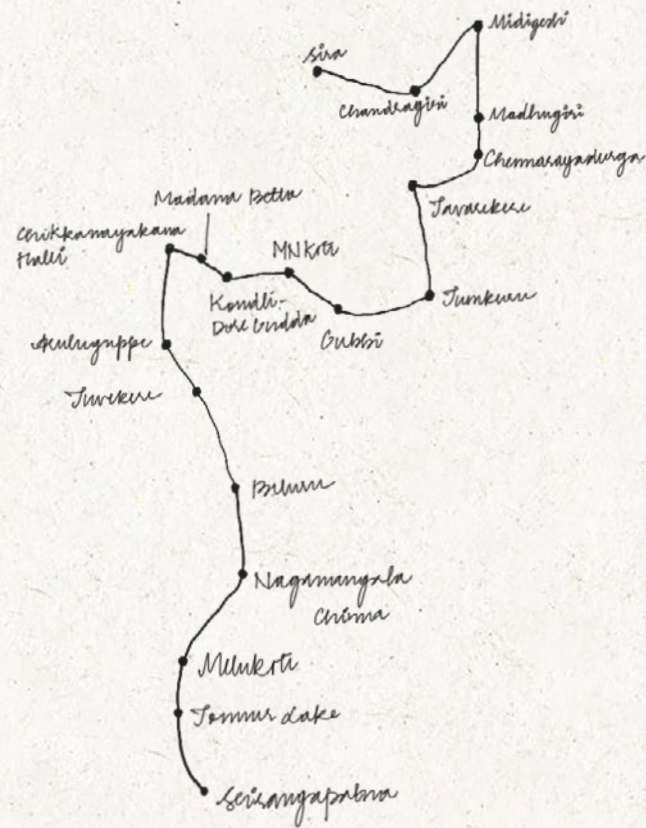
Clockwise from the top left: 1. View of Sira Fort enclosed by a moat; 2. View of the northern gate and defensive fort structure; 3. Embrasure with three angles for musket fire; 4. Malik Rehan Tomb, Sira

to set up Lal Bagh in Bangalore.

During Tipu Sultan's reign, he forcibly transported many families from Sira to a new town called Shahar Ganjam on the island of Srirangapatna.

The present fort, now called Kasthuri Rangappa Nayaka Kote, is enclosed by a moat for defense purposes. It is an architectural marvel, renovated by Tipu Sultan with the addition of bastions around the fort area. You can still witness its grandeur, and it is preserved by the ASI department. Regarding agriculture, ragi is the main staple food crop, and groundnut is also grown here. The agricultural activities are entirely dependent on the southwest monsoon, which usually commences in mid-June and lasts until August.

In the Sira region, a lot of Beedi (a local cigarette) is locally produced, usually from cut tobacco rolled in a leaf. It is an unorganized industry in the Sira region, typically a cottage industry done by women in their homes.

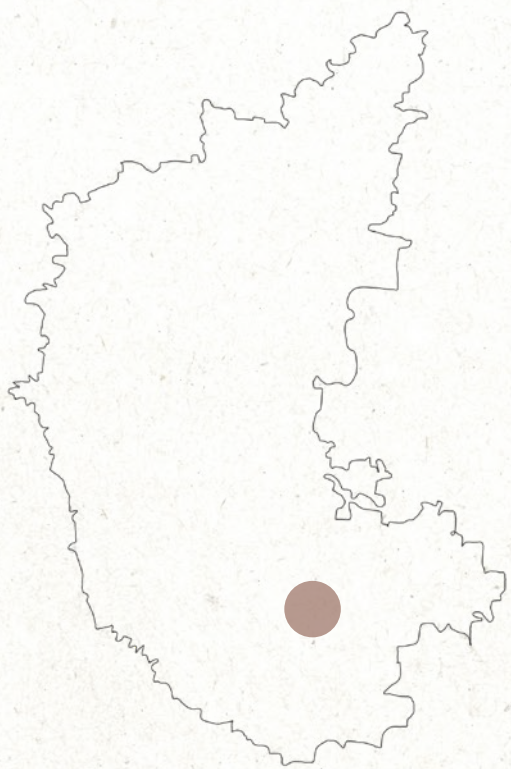


Chapter VII

Journey from Sira to Srirangapatna



Retracing Francis Buchanan's Journey from Sira to Srirangapatna shows the beautiful landscapes of Midigeshi and Channarayana Durga. It features the iron mines of Doray Gudda and Chikka Nayakana Halli, along with the detailed Hoysala architecture of the Aralaguppe and Melukote temples. The cover also includes the once-busy trade center of Gubbi, which is now a peaceful religious town.



- 1 Sira
- 2 Chandragiri
- 3 Midigeshi
- 4 Madhugiri
- 5 Chennarayanadurga
- 6 Tavarekere (Tovina Kere)
- 7 Tumakuru
- 8 Gubbi
- 9 Muganayakana Kote (MN Kote)
- 10 Kondli-Dore Gudda
- 11 Madana mada-Malleshwara betta
- 12 Chickkanayakana Halli
- 13 Aruluguppe
- 14 Turuvekere- Kadhalli
- 15 Belluru
- 16 Nagamangala-Chinna
- 17 Melukote
- 18 Tonnur Lake-Chikkamarali (Chickmally)
Betta Kunti betta (French Rocks)
- 19 Srirangapatna



Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Sira to Srirangapatna

Sira

This has already been documented in Chapter VI.

Chandragiri

I began my journey from Sira to Chandragiri, and as I approached the village, I found it nestled in the foothills of Chandragiri Hill (also known as Moon Hill), which appears like a crescent from a distance. This small village still retains its lush betel nut gardens, just as Buchanan had documented. However, unlike in the past, irrigation now relies on bore wells and open wells, with water drawn using electric pumps.

“The farmers here allege, that in the last twenty years, they have had only one season in which there was a much rain as they wanted.”

~ Francis Buchanan’s Journey, Chapter VII



Chandragiri Hill



From the left: 1. Chandragiri Hill; 2. Chandragiri Village fort entrance



Arecanut Plantation, Chandragiri

The Sira region is dotted with numerous lakes, which benefited from the abundant rainfall in 2022. A farmer from Chandragiri mentioned that they had not witnessed such heavy rains in the past 20 years. Interestingly, Buchanan had documented a similar account during his travels, where a farmer had remarked, “After 20 years, we are getting good rain.” This historical parallel highlights the recurring nature of climatic patterns in the region.

Midigeshi

Midigeshi is a small kasaba hobli in Madhugiri Taluk, located about 68 km from the headquarters of Tumkur. It lies between the Pavagada-Tumkur Road, and after Midigeshi, the Andhra Pradesh border starts towards the north side of Pavagada. The fortress, situated on top of the rocky hill, originally belonged to a polygar (Palegar) named Nagireddi, who built the fort. Later, it was taken over by Chikappa Gowda. There is a mosque on top of the hill, which was built during Hyder Ali's reign.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Midigeshi Hill; 2. Midigeshi Hill from the south side; 3. Ancient Suparshwanatha Jain Basadi at Midigeshi

"The place originally belonged to polygar family; a lady of which named Madigheshy having burned herself with her husband's corpse, her name was given to the town; for above the ghats, this practice, so far as I can learn, has been always very rare, and consequently gave the individuals who suffered a greater reputation than where it is constantly used"

~ Francis Buchanan's Journey, Chapter VII

This place is said to have been named by a local chief, Nagireddi, after his wife Midigeshi, who was so called because her hair (Kesha) was so long that it touched her heels ("midi" in Kannada).

"The climate here is arid, and agricultural activities begin after the onset of the southwest monsoon, mainly growing ragi, horse gram, and groundnut. Near the town, a fine porphyritic granite quarry is still in operation, same Buchanan also documented that "Near the town is a fine quarry, of a stone which, like that found at Ramagiri may be called a Granatic porphyry."

~ Francis Buchanan's Journey, Chapter VII



Bidarakere Near Midigeshi, Set against a Backdrop of Hills

Except for the granite quarry, no other significant minerals are found in the area. Cattle rearing is a prominent activity, supported by the vast grasslands that flourish during the monsoon season. In the summer months, farmers rely on paddy straw and groundnut haulms as fodder for their livestock.

Buchanan did not visit the Pavagada and Nidugal regions, which are principal areas for cattle herding and require crossing the ceded districts of the Nizam. Even today, to access Pavagada from Midigeshi, one needs to cross the Madakasira region of Andhra Pradesh.

If you ever look at the map of Pavagada Taluk, you'll notice its unique geography—physically disconnected from the rest of Tumkur district, with only a narrow strip linking it to Chitradurga district. Surrounded on all sides by Andhra Pradesh, it is often referred to as the “Island of Andhra Pradesh.”

In the Nidugal and Pavagada regions, sheep and goat rearing remains a thriving activity. Every Monday, a bustling livestock fair is held in Pavagada, where farmers bring their sheep and goats for sale. Traders from Bangalore, Mysore, and neighboring Andhra Pradesh gather to purchase livestock, which is then transported in specially designed sheep vans.



The historic Pavagada Fort



The historic Pavagada Fort



Nidugal Fort Hill



Nidugal Fort Hill with shepherds and cowherds grazing their livestock, is set against the rugged backdrop of the hill.

Madhugiri

This has already been documented in Chapter VI.

Channarayanadurga

On Dec 14, 2024 I visited Channarayanadurga, a village nestled at the base of a hill bearing the same name in Koratagere Taluk of Tumakuru District. This historically significant location was once a garrison stronghold during Tipu Sultan's reign and still holds traces of its storied past—a time when the region was a one of hub for the production of high-quality crucible steel.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Channarayanadurga's history is its role as a center for crucible steel manufacturing, a process that has long fascinated historians and metallurgists alike. What makes this particularly remarkable is the absence of local iron ore deposits—the nearest sources being Chikkanayakanahalli and Kudure Kanive of Chikkabyaladakere. Despite this, the area sustained a thriving iron-smelting industry.

Why Did Channarayanadurga Emerge as a Steel-Manufacturing Hub?

Two compelling reasons emerge:

1.Strategic Military Importance – As a fortified outpost under Tipu Sultan, Channarayanadurga likely played a crucial role in the production of steel for weaponry and tools, making it a tactically significant location for metalworking.



Glimpses of Channarayanadurga Fort Hill, showcasing its fort ramparts and remains.

2. Abundant Natural Resources – The region's dense forests provided an ample supply of wood, essential for charcoal production, a key component in the smelting process.

Francis Buchanan's Observations

The historical relevance of this site is further reinforced by the observations of Scottish surveyor Francis Buchanan, who visited Channarayanadurga on August 13, 1800. In his meticulous records, Buchanan documented iron-smelting activities not only in this region but also in Madhugiri, Hagalavadi, and Devarayanadurga.

His accounts describe the crucible steel-making process in detail:

- Iron wedges were combined with
- Plant materials, including leaves of Cassia auriculata,
- Small Qunarity of Water, all placed inside unbaked clay crucibles.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A shepherd in Maranayakanahalli leads the way to past smelting remains; 2. A crucible and other smelting artifacts found in the steel production area; 3. Debris containing crucibles, tuyeres, and slag remains at the smelting site; 4. The crucible steel-making process: combining iron wedges, *Cassia Auriculata* leaves, and water in unbaked clay crucibles.

Once dried, these crucibles were heated in a furnace, yielding exceptionally high-grade steel used for swords, agricultural tools, and even musical instrument strings.

Tracing the Legacy: Present-Day Remnants

During my visit, I explored the local landscape and engaged in discussions with villagers to uncover traces of this forgotten industry. The term “Kittada Kallu,” still used by locals, led me to villages such as Gowjagal, Negalal, and Maranayakanahalli. In Maranayakanahalli, a shepherd guided me to a site where remnants of centuries-old smelting operations still persist. Among the debris heaps, I discovered:

- Broken crucibles,

- Tuyeres (nozzles used to channel air into smelters), and
- Slag, clear evidence of iron production.

These findings corroborate Buchanan’s accounts, affirming the region’s historical role in the crucible steel tradition.

Tumakuru

Tumkur is the district headquarters of Tumkur district, located about 70 km from the state capital, Bangalore. It is said that the name ‘Tumkur’ was derived from ‘Thumbe’ (*Leucas aspera*), a plant that was once abundant in this region; the place was initially called ‘Thumbe Ooru,’ which eventually became ‘Thumakuru.’

Now, it is a rapidly growing city with numerous educational institutions, earning it the nickname ‘Educational City.’ Due to its proximity to Bangalore, Tumkur has seen significant industrial development along the highways that connect it to the state capital. The NH 4 (Bangalore-Pune) passes through Tumkur, as does the Bangalore-Honnavar (BH) highway. The city is also well-connected by rail under the South Western Railway zone, with all trains from Bangalore to Hubli/Dharwad and Shimoga passing through Tumkur.

Tumkur is a major trading center, dealing in commodities such as rice, groundnut, castor, tamarind, horse gram, and sunflower oil. The city also has numerous rice mills. About 5 km from Tumkur city, in the suburb of Kyatsandra, there is a hillock with the Siddalingeshwara Temple,



Kyatsandra Hill

in front of which is a natural spring called Siddha Ganga. At the foothill, the famous Siddaganga Mutt, a Veerashaiva monastery, provides free education, food, and lodging.

Gubbi

Gubbi is an important trading center situated 22 km from Tumkur, on the Bangalore-Honnavar Road (BH Road). It serves as the headquarters and main town of the region.

It is said that this town was founded about 400 years ago by a Polygar of Hosahally, who traced his descent from Honnappa Gowda, the hereditary chief of the Nonabas. This is documented in the Gazetteer, as mentioned in Buchannan’s works.

Buchanan mentioned that Gubbi held weekly fairs every Monday, frequented by merchants from neighboring and distant places. Merchants from Moodabidare, Subramanya (Dakshina Kannada), and Kalasa brought black pepper, cardamom, gum, incense, wild turmeric, and cinnamon. In exchange, they took cumin (jeerige), blankets, coarse cotton cloth, sugar candy, sugar, toor dal (togari), tamarind, and cash.

Merchants from Thalassery (Tellicherry) brought dates, raisins, nutmeg, saffron, borax, pepper, and terra japonica, and their returns were similar to the goods mentioned above.



From the left: 1. Channabasaveshwara Shrine in Gubbi; 2. William Arthur Memorial Hall, now a church in Gubbi, blending history and heritage in the heart of the town

Merchants from Bangalore, Kolar, and adjacent places brought cotton cloth and some silk, taking back betel nut, black pepper, coconuts, cinnamon, ginger, and terra japonica in return. From Pamidi, near Gutti, and other places in the Nizam’s ceded districts, merchants brought various cotton cloths and took away coconuts and lac, often balancing the trade with money.

Merchants from Haveri, in the Maratha country, brought safflower seeds (cossumba or kusume in Kannada), terra japonica, opium, tent cloth, and mailututta (blue vitriol, a crystalline compound of copper sulfate) used for coloring teeth, borax, Asafoetida and they take away betel-nut, pepper and money.

Buchanan’s Documented of Gubbi Weekly Fair and Regional Trade

Region	Goods Sold	Goods Bought
Moodabidre, Subramanya (Dakshina Kannada), and Kalasa	Black Pepper, Caradamom, Gum, Incense, Wild Turmeric, Cinnamon	Cumin (Jeerige), Blankets, Coarse Cotton Cloth, Sugar Candy, Sugar, Toor Dal (Togari), Tamarind, Cash
Thalassery	Dates, Raisins, Nutmeg, Saffron, Borax, Pepper, Terra Japonica	ditto
Bangalore, Kolar, and Adjacents Areas	Cotton Cloths, Silks	Betel Nut, Black Pepper, Coconuts, Cinnamon, Ginger, Terra Japonica
Pamidi, Near Gutti, and Other Nizam’s Ceded Districts	Cotton Cloths	Coconuts, Lac, often balancing trade with money
Haveri	Safflower Seeds (Kusume in Kannada), Terra Japonica, Opium, Tent Cloth, Mailututta (Blue Vitriol for teeth colouring)	Betel Nut, Pepper, Money

Now, at the weekly fair (Santhe in Kannada) every Monday the farmers and neighbors bring vegetables, fruits, spices, sheep, and goats to the market (there is a separate market for the animals).

Gubbi is also a holy place where Gosala Channabasaveshwara, Amaragonda Mallikarjuna, Mallanarya, and other Veerashaiva teachers lived. The oldest temple in the town is Gadde Malleshwara, with ‘Gadde’ meaning a wetland or paddy field.

Currently, the lands around Gubbi are cultivated with coconut farms and areca plantations, which are the main income-generating crops. These crops are irrigated by bore wells and lakes. The western taluks of Tumkur—Gubbi, Tumakuru, Kunigal, Chikkanayakanahalli (CN Halli), Turuvekere, and Tiptur—are greener compared to the eastern taluks like Madhugiri, Pavagada, and Sira, which are drier and more prone to drought.

Muganayakana Kote (Muga-Nayakana-Cotay)

MN Kote, Its about 18 km from Gubbi town, there was once a strong fortified village with mud walls. Before the Maratha invasion led by Parasuram Bhow, the village was well-protected. However, during the invasion, the Marathas seized large quantities of provisions, killed many peasants, and took away the young women they captured.

Buchanan mentioned that the siege lasted about two months,



The coir industry: From peeling coconuts to crafting versatile coir products

during which the Marathas fired their guns several times but never succeeded in breaching the fortifications. The peasants destroyed the market to prevent the Marathas from using the houses in their approach.

Today, no remnants of the fort remain in the village, there are extensive coconut and areca nut plantations. The village also has a couple of coir industries.

Kondli (anglicized as Conli)

Latitude: 13.362434 N and Longitude: 76.735961 E

Buchanan mentioned Kondli as ‘Conli’ in his document. It is located in Gubbi Taluk, approximately 24 km from Gubbi town. From there, one needs to take a right towards Kondli Cross Road – Hagalawadi. Kondli is a small village with lower hills and a less rugged landscape compared to the eastward region. The area is abundant with cultivation, particularly Ragi, coconut, and areca nut plantations, similar to what I observed in the vicinity of Gubbi.

Doray Gudda

Latitude 13.360236 N and Longitude: 76.764511 E

From Kondli cross it needs to reach Shivasandra village on the west side and once crossed the Shivasandra and small hill where the evidence of past mining activities. The landscape was marked by ridges and traces of old excavations. Buchanan noted that this hill was unique in the vicinity for producing iron ore, although it was known by different names in different villages. At Kondli, it was called Doray Gudda, a name Buchanan adopted in his documentation.

The strata of the hill, Buchanan observed, were vertical and ran north to south, a characteristic of many hills in this region. This chain of hills stretches all the way to Chitradurga. The ore here is embedded with earthy quartz or hornstone, with masses that are whitish and fine-grained. Another form of ore found in the area is bluish and somewhat brittle.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Doray Gudda; 2. Approaching the Eastern Side of Doray Gudda, the Hill is Known as Doray Gudda in Kondli; 3. Iron ore extraction remains, now abandoned



From the left: 1. Lush green coconut and areca nut plantations are seen from the summit of Doray Gudda, with a scenic westward view; 2. Iron ore deposits are still under the surface



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Haematite ore is a rich source of iron extracted from the earth; 2. An ore deposit shows the natural accumulation of valuable minerals; 3. A traditional house near Shivasandra, built with stone walls and a roof tile, reflects the local architectural style; 4. Ridges formed naturally by torrential rains, shaping the landscape over time.

In Buchanan’s time, the local people were engaged in iron smelting, transporting the ore using buffaloes and donkeys. Tumkur, CN Halli, Hagalwadi, Sira, and other nearby areas were hubs of iron production. Buchanan documented the number of furnaces supplied by this hill: six in Tumkur, ten in Hagalwadi, seven in CN Halli, and three in Sira.

A Cavern of Iron Ore and Mystery

Near Doray Gudda, Buchanan documented a cavern about fifty feet in length, twelve feet high, and nine feet wide, which was probably carved out for iron mining. When he cautiously, with the help of a sepoy, fired his musket into it, nothing but a large flock of bats appeared. He entered the cavern with two armed men, where they saw a bed that had probably been arranged by a tiger or leopard. They ventured about 100 feet inside and came out from the mouth of the cavern, where they found another bed that had likely been formed by a different beast. They also discovered porcupine quills, which might indicate that the porcupine had fallen prey to the leopards. Unfortunately, we were unable to trace it.

Buchanan also detailed the mining practices of the locals, including the count of manpower, the supply of iron ore from the hill, and the product of iron smelting. He also noted that the locals performed an annual sacrifice to the deities Gudada Umma (Guddadamma), the mother of the hill, and Muti Raya (Muthuraya), a male spirit believed to protect the mine hill. We, however, could only locate a Hanuman temple along the ascent to the hill.

Buchanan mentioned in his document that each set of works employed around 20 men. In the smelting house, as detailed below:

Iron Smelting

Task Description	Labourers Required
Man to put ore and charcoal, and take out the iron	1
Men to blow bellows	3
Men to supply charcoal	6

Man to supply ore to a forge (about two miles from the mine); he must keep 5 asses	1
Total	11

Forging

Task Description	Labourers Required
Blacksmith to manage the fire and the furnace	1
Bellow men	2
Hammer men	3
Charcoal men	3
Total	9



Clockwise from the top left: 1. On my way to examine the minerals of Malaiswara Betta, named after the nearby Shiva temple, now known as Honnebagi Abbige Malleshwara Betta; 2. View from the summit of Abbige Malleshwara Betta, facing east; 3. Inside the Abbige Malleshwara temple



From the left: 1 .Schistose decaying rock disposed vertically near the Abbige Malleshwara temple, showcasing natural geological formations; 2. Side view of the schistose decaying rock, highlighting its layered structure

Exploring the Lithomarge and Schistose Rocks of Malleshwara Betta

Latitude: 13.403113 N, and Longitude: 76.680305 E

Our journey continued northeast towards Malleshwara Betta, known in Buchanan’s writings as Malaiswara Betta, near Madana Madu village (13.455590; 76.713020). The hilltop temple, now called Honnebagi Abbige Malleshwara, is a small shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva, located near the CN Halli mining area. Buchanan observed that the strata here were nearly identical to those of Doray Gudda, consisting of schistose decaying rock arranged vertically. The vertical stones Buchanan described can still be seen today, preserved outside the temple. He also documented the presence of lithomarge, it’s a soft, earthy material primarily made of Kaolinite clay, formed from the weathering of feldspar-rich rocks, found in large masses atop the rocky strata, with various fragments scattered around. The view from the hilltop is breathtaking, offering a panoramic sight of cultivated fields, small lakes, and lush coconut and areca plantations.

Chikkanayakanahalli (anglicized as Chica Nayakana Hully)

It’s a town situated west-northwest of Tumkur, approximately 66 km from its district headquarters. The town derives its name from Chickkanayaka, chief of the Hagalavadi house. Buchanan mentioned a hill called Gajina Gutta, which he visited, known for producing caricallu (iron ore) or redden. He also documented the extraction of iron oxide, which was collected and



From the left: 1.Iron Mine near Chikanayakana Halli: A Town Nestled Amidst Lush Green Coconut Plantations; 2.Iron Ore Mine



Clockwise from the top left: 1. .Gajina Gutta Hill - Documented for Its Rich Iron Ore Deposits (Caricallu) and the Extraction of Iron Oxide Used in Traditional Practices, Including Wall Painting, Dyeing Sackcloths, and Coloring Monks’ Robes of the Jangama Community; 2.Iron Ore Stone; 3. Sample of Soapstone; 4. Abandoned Soapstone Quarry (Coordinates: 13.411339N, 76.656500E)



From the left: 1. Charcoals being thrown into the pit; 2. Finished coconut charcoal

used for painting walls, dyeing goni sackcloths, and coloring the cloth worn by monks (Saints) of the Jangama community.

In the vicinity of CN Halli, many coir industries and a few produce shell charcoal, which is extensively used by goldsmiths and for making activated charcoal.

Araluguppe

It's a small village, Hamlet, with historical significance, located on the Bangalore-Hubli railway line, about 63 km from its district headquarters, Tumkur. The Channakeshava Temple at this site is a fine example of Hoysala architecture, featuring several intricately carved stone wall decorations. To the south of the Channakeshava Temple is the Narasimha Temple.



From the left: 1.Entrance Street to the Channakeshava Temple; 2.Back view of the Ancient Temple



From the left: 1.Stone Tablet with Intricately Carved Wall Decorations Depicting Ganesha, Vishnu, and Other Hindu Deities; 2.The Channakeshava Temple Showcases Exquisite Hoysala Architecture



The Kalleshwara Temple is believed to Have Been Built in the 9th Century A.D. by the Nolambas

The Kalleshwara Temple here is believed to have been built in the 9th century A.D. by the Nolambas. The central ceiling, which has nine panels, showcases remarkable workmanship with Ashtra-dikpalakaru supported by four pillars and an elegantly carved Tandaveshwara (Lord Shiva) in the middle.

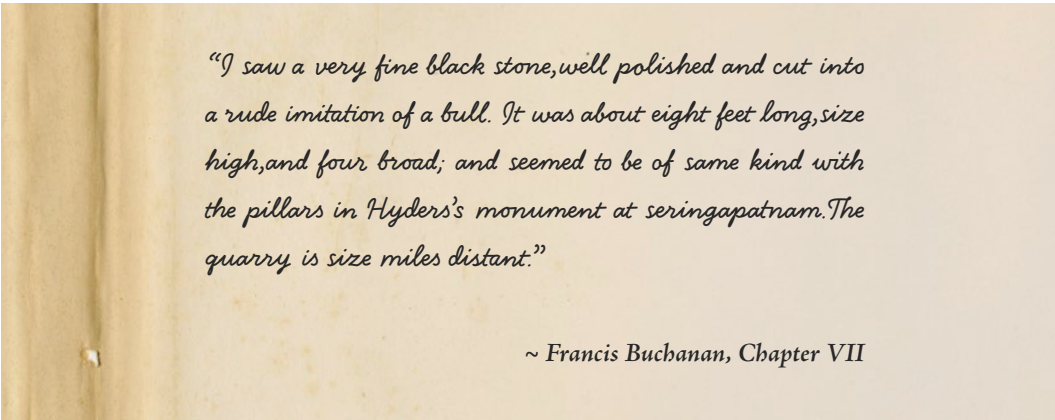
Turuvekere

Turuvekere is a municipal town located about 71 km from its district headquarters, Tumkur. It was founded as an Agrahara (rent-free) village for Brahmins during the Hoysala period. Turuvekere is home to several Hoysala temples, including the Chennakeshava Temple, built by Mahadandanayaka Somanna, the Gangadhareshwara Temple, Chennigaraya Swamy Temple, Moole Shankareshwara Temple, and the largest, Beterayaswamy Temple.

Facing the temple of Gangadhareshwara is a large, recumbent bull, intricately carved from black hornblende sourced from Karikalgudda, still retaining a brilliant polish.



The Temple of Gangadhareshwara Features a Large, Recumbent Bull, Intricately Carved from Black Hornblende Sourced from Karikalgudda, Still Shining with a Brilliant Polish



To the north of the town is a well-known reservoir called ‘Turuvekere Kere’ by the locals, which provides irrigation for coconut and areca nut plantations in its vicinity. Several lakes are also present nearby.

Kadehalli (anglicized as Cada-hully)

Latitude: 13.083192° N, and Longitude: 76.652029° E

Kadehalli is a small village near Turuvekere, located 11 km from its taluk center. Historically, Kadehalli is famous for its black stones. These stones, used for making statues, have been extracted from Kadehalli for centuries and transported to Belur and other distant places. The hard-black rock found in Kadehalli is renowned worldwide.



Kadehalli's Renowned Black Stones: Sought After for Centuries for Statue Making and Celebrated Worldwide for Their Hardness

Haddinakallu Betta (Hadduna Betta)

Latitude:12.989739 N, and Longitude: 76.790186 E

To the east of Belluru, a range of barren, rocky hills runs from north to south. Among these rises is a considerable height known as Haddina Betta, where a temple dedicated to Hanuman



Haddinakallu Betta

is located at the top. Buchanan mentioned large masses of harder pot stones, called ‘Sila Callu,’ which were likely used in the construction of Hoysala temples in Aralaguppe and Turuvekere.

Belluru

It’s a small town that falls under the Nagamangala taluk of Mandya District, near Adichunchanagiri, a mutt for followers of the Natha Sampradaya.

Buchanan mentioned a large community of Babboorkammes (Boburu Cummays) residing in this village, and even today, they are widespread in the Bellur and Mayasandra regions. They are followers of Sri Shankaracharya and the Advaita philosophy.

Nagamangala

It’s a town in Mandya district, situated on the Srirangapatna-Sira State Highway (SH). In ancient times, it was an Agrahara. It was a place of considerable importance even during the Hoysala period. The outer fort was built by Poligar Jagadevaraya of Channapattana.



From the left: 1. Nagamangala Town; 2. Saumya Keshava Temple, Nagamangala

Buchanan mentioned a great emigration of Tigaruru (Tigularu/Taycularu) from the region of Tamil Nadu. Upon inquiry with a local, it was said that their ancestors left Kanchi (Kunji) about 700 years ago. Most have lost their original language, though some can still read books in Tamil. The Saumya Keshava temple here is a large structure built during the Hoysala period and later repaired during the Vijayanagara period, with the addition of a prakara (enclosure wall) and a maha-dwara (main door). The 6-foot-tall image of Keshava stands on a Garuda platform and is a highly artistic and beautiful work by the sculptor.

~ Buchanan crossed Chinya (anglicized as Chinna) it's a small village and continued his journey towards Melukote.

Melukote (anglicized as Mail-Cotay)

It's a principal sacred place in Karnataka, especially for Sri Vaishnava followers, located in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district. This place is also known as Tirunarayanapura.

The temple is built on rocky hills called Yadavagiri or Yadugiri. In the early 12th century, the great Sri Vaishnava saint Sri Ramanujacharya, who hailed from Tamil Nadu, took residence in



Melukote Temple



Melukote: A Prominent Centre for the Sri Vaishnava Sect

Melukote under Hoysala rule. As a result, a large number of Iyengar Brahmins migrated and settled in the region. This made Melukote a prominent center for the Sri Vaishnava sect.

The famous Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana, formerly known as Bittideva, converted to the Sri Vaishnava faith and became a devoted follower of the Acharya.

Tonnur Lake (anglicized as Tonuru-Caray)

Tonnuru Lake: Size and Irrigation Area Overview

Lake Parameter	Measurement
Length (Top)	500 ft
Height	480 ft



Tonnuru Lake

Length (Bottom)	300 ft
Area of Land Irrigated by the Tank	1,390 acres

This majestic lake, referred to by Buchanan in his records, was often compared to other lakes he encountered. It is located at the southern foot of the Yadugiri hills, about 20 kilometers south of Melukote. This reservoir, also known as Yadavi Nuddi, was a remarkable feat of engineering between two mountain torrents, with its bund constructed during the Hoysala period. Sri Ramanujacharya named it Tirumalasagara.

Buchanan also mentioned, ‘Near this place is a monument dedicated to a follower of Mahmud of Ghazni, who had penetrated this far and suffered martyrdom.’ This monument, now called the Dargah of Sayyad Salar Masud Sahib, bears the date 1358 AD. The central square of the



From the left: 1. Grand View of Tonnuru Lake (‘Tirumalasagara by Sri Ramanujacharya / Moti Taalab, ‘Lake of Pearls,’ by Nasir Jung, 1746); 2. Statue of Ramanujacharya at the Base of the Lake Bund; 3. Right Side of the Hill on the Tank Bund of Tonnuru Lake; 4. Hoysala Period Nambi Narayana Temple



From the left: 1.Dargah of Sayyad Salar Masud Sahib; 2.Bullock Cart Loaded with Sugar Cane from the Plantation

hall, though quite plain, has a fine bulbous-shaped dome, and several of the pillars appear to be sourced from Hindu temples.

Nearby, there are two tombs said to belong to female members of Tipu Sultan’s family. An annual Urs is held at this site.

The crystal-clear water of this tank was named Moti Talab, meaning ‘Lake of Pearls,’ by Nasir Jung, the son of the Subedar of Deccan, who visited the area in 1746

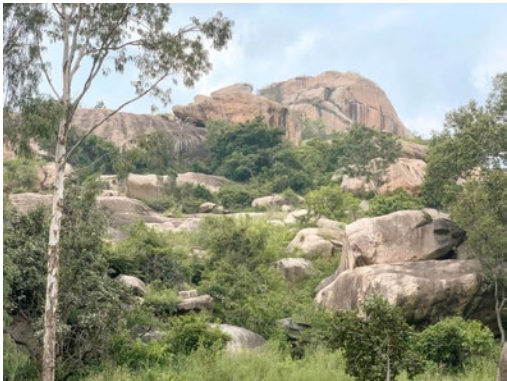
Chikkamarali (anglicized as Chica Mally Betta) and French rocks (Present Kunthi betta)

Buchanan examined the quarry of grey granite at Chikkamarali (12.5213° N, 76.7134° E), which remains a significant source of granite today, with some mining still taking place there. Buchanan mentioned Chikkamarali (Chica Mally Betta) near Tonnur Lake, which lies between Tonnur Lake and the River Cauvery. He might have been referring to the present Kunthi Betta near Pandavapura, where Buchanan noted a quarry of gray granite with workmen engaged in chipping stone blocks.

The name ‘French Rock’ dates back to the pre-Independence era, when the French army camped there while assisting Tipu Sultan in his struggle against the British. It is believed that the French named the area ‘French Rocks’ due to its proximity to two rocky hills. After Indian Independence, these rocky hills came to be known locally as ‘Kunti Betta’.



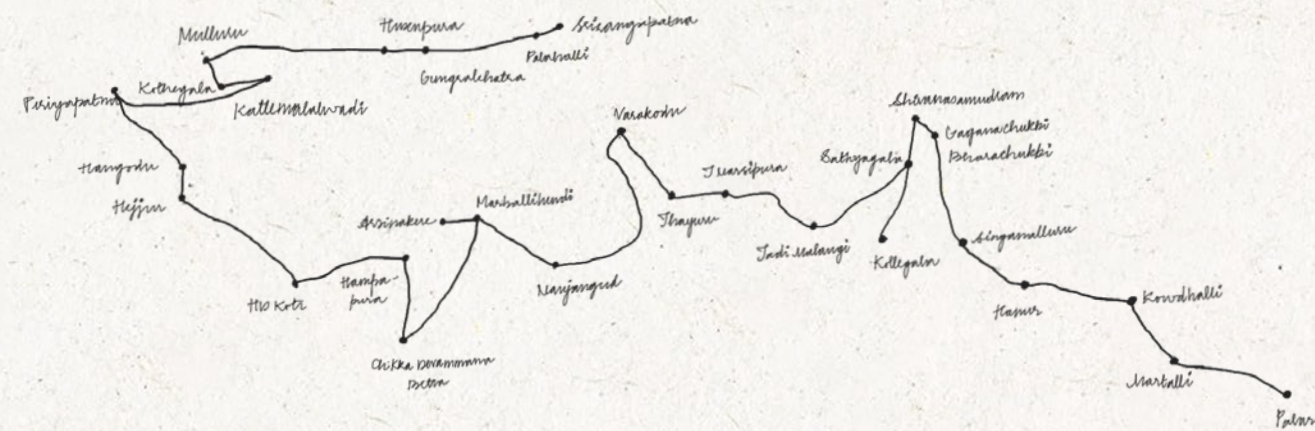
Clockwise from the top left: 1. Kunti Betta, Also Known as French Rocks, Overlooking Lush Green Paddy and Sugar Cane Fields; 2. A Small Hamlet of Chikkamarali Village (Chica Mally Betta) Surrounded by Lush Green Coconut Plantations, Sugar Cane Fields, and Granite Quarries; 3. Buchanan's Noted Quarry of Gray Granite Near Chikkamarali Village; 4. French Cemetery Near Pandavapura, Where the French Army Camped While Assisting Tipu Sultan Against the British



From the left: 1. French Rock Hill (Kunti Betta) Nestled in the Landscape; 2. Cross-Section of a Granite Boulder with Beautiful Texture



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Laborer Harvesting Sugarcane; 2 to 4. Jaggery Making Process, Fueled by the Efficient Irrigation System of the Visveswaraya Channel from the Krishna Raja Sagara Dam Across the Cauvery River



Chapter VIII

Journey through the parts of Karnataka south from the Cauvery



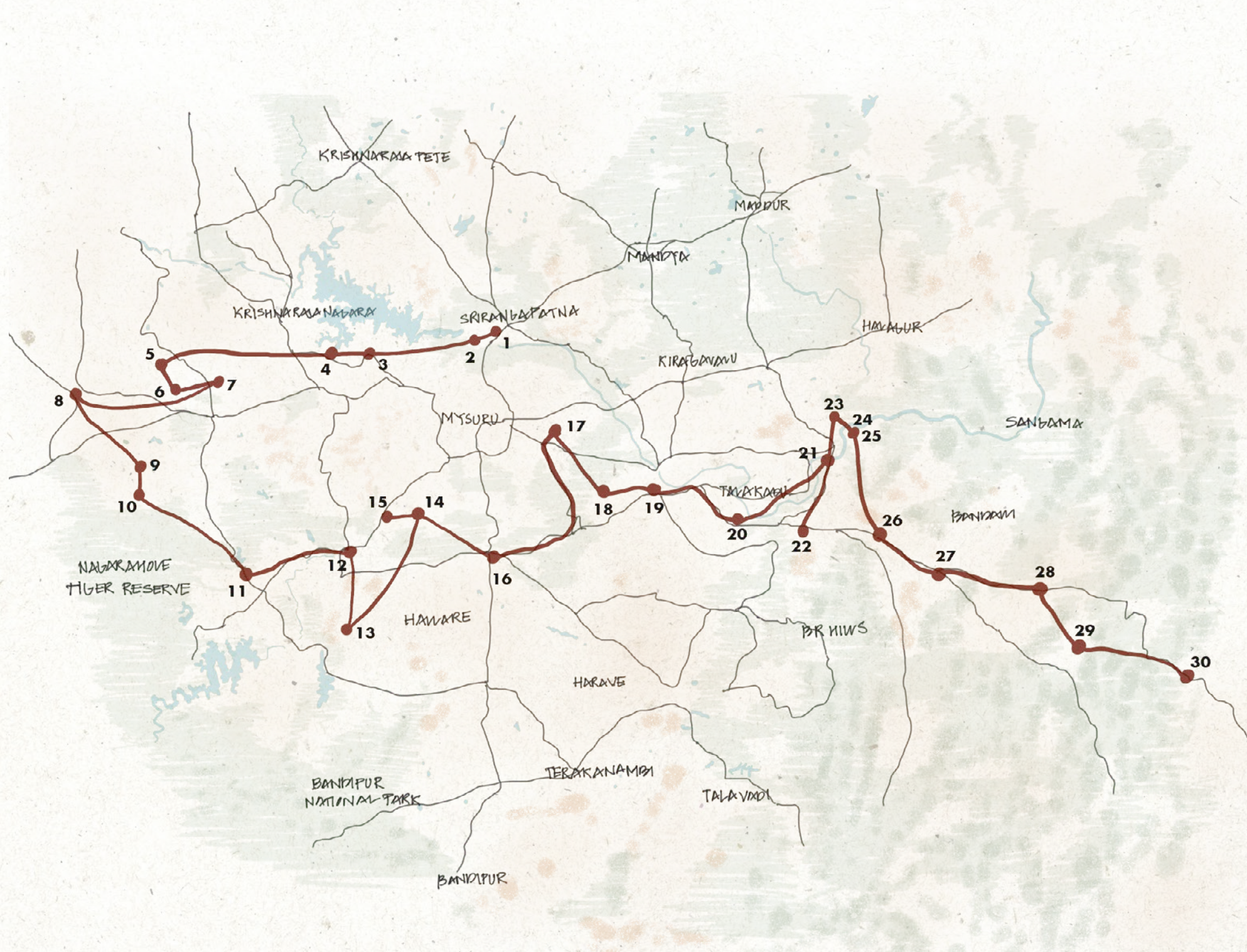
documented the course of the Lakshmana Tirtha River, which I traced in its present form before it joined the Cauvery.

In Periyapatna, Buchanan observed the presence of Poligar families; today, only remnants like fort ruins and ancient temples survive. Along the Periyapatna-Hunsur belt, tobacco and ginger fields now dominate. Buchanan also ventured into the Hejjur forests, which lead into today's Nagarhole Reserve, documenting species that shaped the biodiversity of the region.

Crossing the Kabini River near Hampapura, he described the rugged hills around Motabetta and nearby iron ore sites, which are now largely forgotten. Continuing toward Marballi, he noted stone quarries (Shila Prathima Kallu) once used for temple idol carving—a practice that continues in small pockets today. Near Marballi, ancient quarries mentioned by Buchanan survive around Arasina Kere, and fascinatingly, the Krishna Shile stone near this area is linked to the Ram Lalla idol of Ayodhya.

His path then moved toward the fertile Cauvery basin, visiting Nanjangud famous now for its GI-tagged bananas—and on to T. Narasipura and Talakadu, where he recorded the mystery of Talakadu's sand dunes and historic temples. Following the pristine Cauvery, he traveled to Shivanasamudra, documenting the twin waterfalls, and later toward the sacred MM Hills and River Palar, marking the border between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Francis Buchanan traveled south of the River Cauvery, starting from Srirangapatna toward today's Palhalli and Gungural Chatra areas of Mysore. At that time, no dams existed—whereas today, the region is richly irrigated by the KRS Dam. Buchanan recorded the agricultural practices at Kattē Malalwadi, where now extensive tobacco cultivation thrives. He



- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1 | Srirangapatna | 15 | Arasinakere(Arsina Caray) |
| 2 | Palahalli (Pal-hully) | 16 | Nanjangud(Nunjinagodu) |
| 3 | Gungralchatra (Gunngrural-Chatrur) | 17 | Varakodu (Waracadu) |
| 4 | Husenpura (Sicany-pura or Husseinpoor) | 18 | Thayuru (Taiuru) |
| 5 | Mulluru(Mallur) (Muluro) | 19 | T Narasipura (Narasingha-pura) |
| 6 | Kothegala (Emmaguma Cotagala) | 20 | Tadimalangi (Malingy) |
| 7 | Kattamalalawadi(Cuttay Malalwadi) | 21 | Sathyagala (Satteagala) |
| 8 | Piriyapatna (Priya-pattana) | 22 | Kollegala (Coleagala) |
| 9 | Hangodu (Hanagodu) | 23 | Shivanasamudram (Sivana Samudra) |
| 10 | Hejjur(Hejuru) | 24 | Gaganachukki (Gangana Chuki) |
| 11 | H.D Kote (Hegodu Devana Cotay) | 25 | Bharachukki (Birra Chuki) |
| 12 | Hampapura(Humpa-pura) | 26 | Singanallur (Singanaluru) |
| 13 | Chikka Devammana Betta(Chica Deva Betta) | 27 | Hanur (Hanuru) |
| 14 | Marballi(Maru-hully) | 28 | Kowdalli (Caud-hully) |
| | | 29 | Martalli (Mat-hully or Marat-hully) Nidy-cavil |
| | | 30 | Palar |

 Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Through part of Karnataka south from the Cauvery

Srirangapatna

As already documented in Chapter II

Palahalli (Pal-hully)

On 18th April 2025, I began my journey to retrace Francis Buchanan’s route as documented in Chapter VIII. I started from Srirangapatna and passed through Palahalli, a small village in the Srirangapatna taluk of Mandya district. It is situated on the right bank of the River Kaveri (Cauvery), along the Paschimavahini–Belagola road. According to the Karnataka Gazetteer, this place once housed the Ashtagrama Sugar Works, which was operational between 1847 and 1894. Today, Palahalli is surrounded by lush green paddy fields, where farmers grow paddy twice a year due to irrigation from the Kaveri river canals. Owing to the extensive paddy cultivation, the area has become a hub for rice industries and a center for rice trade.



Vast stretches of paddy fields thrive with irrigation from the Kaveri River

Gungralchatra (anglicized: Gunngural-Chatur)

It’s a small village in Mysore taluk, and due to the rapid urbanization of Mysore city, much of the land in Gungralchatra has been taken over for real estate development, with many residential plots visible along the Outer Ring Road towards Hunsur Road. As I passed through Husainpura — which Buchanan referred to as Sicanyapura — and Mulluru (Muluro), I further crossed Kothegala. Buchanan mentioned this area as “Emaguma Cotagala,” which likely refers to the present-day villages of Yemagumba and Kothegala. The land here is gently undulating, with rich red soil. I observed numerous mango plantations, along with extensive tobacco cultivation in the region.

Kattemalalawadi (Cuttay Malalwadi)



A glimpse of Lakshmana Theertha near Kattemalalawadi; the check dam shows brackish water, affected by sewage discharge from nearby Hunsur town

On the same day, I reached Kattemalalwadi and observed many turmeric fields along the roadside, along with small plots of coconut plantations. Kattemalalwadi is a large village in the Hunsur taluk of Mysore district, located approximately 50 kilometers from Mysore, the district headquarters.

Before reaching Kattemalalawadi village, I noticed a check dam built across the Lakshmana Theertha River on my right side. This river was mentioned by Buchanan near Sicanyapura, which is marked as Hussainapura on our current map. The check dam near Kattemalalawadi is small, and during my visit, the water appeared brackish. Unfortunately, the nearby Hunsur town, a taluk center, seems to discharge sewage into the river, resulting in a strong unpleasant odor. Despite the pollution, I saw a few communities living along the roadside near the river, engaged in fishing activities. The river Lakshmanatirtha river is a tributary of the river Kaveri. It originates in the Brahmagiri hills, Kodagu or Coorg, and later joins the river Kaveri at Krishnarajasagara.

“At a short distance near Sicany pura west form Sicanyapura a fine little river called the Lakshmana tirtha, which comes from the south west ,and raises among the hills of the country which we call Coorg.At all times it contains a stream of water, and in the rainy season is not fordable”.

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII



In Kattemalalawadi, no visible trace of the fort remains; only a few hero stones and a Basava(Nandi) statue are seen along the main road



“About midway is cuttay Malaliwadi, a large mud fort, and the chief town(Kasba) of a district(Taluc). About thirty years ago it was fully inhabited, and had a large suburb(Peta)”.

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII

Now, there is no visible trace of the fort inside the village, except for a road named Fort Road near the Venkata Chalapathi Temple. A few hero stones and a Basava statue can still be seen along the main road of Kattemalalwadi.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Vast stretches of tobacco fields from Hunsur to Piriapatna, with bundles awaiting auction at the Tobacco Board warehouse, Kattemalalawadi; 3. Seedlings are transplanted into fields for further growth. (Photo captured near Hunsur); 4. Tobacco seedlings grown in nursery beds with proper care for about seven weeks

In the village, there is a Tobacco Board office where tobacco auctions are conducted. This is because the region from Hunsur towards Piriapatna has vast stretches of land under tobacco cultivation. I spoke with a tobacco farmer about the current auction prices, and he mentioned that the rates vary from Rs. 350 to Rs. 20 per kilogram. The finest quality, which is used for cigarette processing, fetches around Rs. 350 per kg, while the lower quality used for beedies (country cigarettes) is priced around Rs. 20–25 per kg.

The farmer I met explained the process of tobacco cultivation. Initially, tobacco seedlings are grown in a nursery for about seven weeks, with adequate moisture, warmth, and protection from pests. Once ready, the seedlings are carefully removed and transplanted into the field. After transplanting, the plants continue to grow with regular care, including irrigation, fertilization, and pest control. The time to harvest depends on the type of tobacco and local growing conditions, but it generally takes around 90 to 130 days after transplanting.

Piriapatna (Priya-pattana or Periapatam)



Sketches of the Rajas of Kodagu — Left to Right: 1. Raja Linga Rajendra Wodeyar (1811–1820); 2. Prince Somashekara, eldest son of Chikka Veera Rajendra. (© Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

On the same day, after passing through Kothegala, I observed that the soil in this region is red and the area appears quite dry due to a lack of water. The land is of a swelling type, with limited areca nut and coconut plantations. Apart from tobacco, some areas also have ginger cultivation supported by drip irrigation systems. After reaching Piriapatna, the land showed better moisture and appeared greener compared to Kattemalalwadi. Here too, many fields were seen cultivating ginger abundantly.



A glimpse of the fort remains at Piriapatna — the northern fort gate near the lake

As Buchanan mentioned, Piriapatna formerly belonged to a polygar family named Nandi Raja. These princes were related to the Vir Rajas, or Rajas of Kadagu (Kodagu), and both families were followers of the Lingayat tradition and wore the Linga.

"The fort was a small square defended only by a mud wall. It contained the Mahal, or palace of the Raja; and three temples of, one of Siva, one of Jaina, and one of Veideswara, who is one of the destructive spirits. This was the largest. In the center of the palace the Raja had built mahall, which is now unroofed, but many ornamnets neatly carved teakwood, still remain. As usual in Hindu houses, this Mahal was a square surrounded by a corridor, but the central area was covered with a dome, which is not common in India".

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII



The northern and eastern entrance gates of the fort remain, along with the Vaidyeshwara temple. Opposite the temple is Nandi Betta, a small hill.



Eastern fort entrance gate remnants, are still used by locals to access a few residential streets inside the town

Unfortunately, the fort's northern and eastern entrance gates remain, along with the Vaidyeshwara temple. Opposite the temple, there is a small hill called Nandi Betta. In addition, there is a small Shiva temple known as Kamateshwara Temple. I could not find the Jain Basadi, but there is a Sheetalnath Jain Shwetambara temple (not Digambara), which is likely a newer structure. The stones used in its construction are not native; instead, marble has been used, probably indicating it was built recently by the Jain Marwadi trading community.

During the Tipu Sultan period, Vir Raja (Dodda Vira Rajendra) of the Haleri Kingdom sought the assistance of the Bombay government, requesting a few regular troops to help him destroy Tipu's fortress. General Abercromby's army ascended the Ghat near Jafferebad (Sakleshpur) and received support. By the time Tipu had already taken control of Piriapatna, he ordered the town's destruction. General Abercromby waited at Piriapatna with gunpowder in the Jain



An old small paddy and flour mill near Piriapatna, still in operation



An old huller-type rice mill, Mahadeshwara Swamy Rice Mill at Piriapatna, is still in operation

temple. Tipu and his army then blew up the temple, and as a result, the Basadi was destroyed, leaving no trace of it in Piriapatna.

Just after passing the main road of Piriapatna, I noticed an old rice mill and flour mill. The machines, although quite old, continue to operate, maintaining their legacy.

While passing through Hejjuru towards Nagarahole, I observed how the landscape gradually shifted from farmland to dense forest. This route corresponds with Buchanan's path, where he had documented forest-based activities and settlements along the edge of the jungle. In his notes, Buchanan recorded several tree species in this region such as *Tectona grandis* (Teak, locally called Doda Tayca), *Nauclea parvifolia* (Sanna Kadamba), *Pterocarpus santalinus*, *Dalbergia latifolia* (locally called Biriday), *Gumsia chloroxylon*, and *Myrobalanus arula*. Remarkably, these species are still found today and are now under conservation by the Karnataka Forest



Nagarahole National Park



Inside Nagarahole National Park: Buchanan documented several tree species here; the dense forests are home to many wild animals

Department. Hejjuru acts as a transition point from agricultural life to forested terrain, just as Buchanan described.

H.D Kote/Heggadadevanakote (Hegodu Devana Cotay)

On 19th April 2025, I passed through Heggadadevanakote (HD Kote), which Buchanan visited on 19th September 1800. HD Kote is now a taluk headquarters in Mysore district,



Nugu Reservoir as seen from Chikka Devammana Betta

located around 50 km from the district headquarters, Mysore. The Kakanakote forest lies to the southwest of HD Kote. Due to its proximity to the Kerala border (Wayanad region), many buses from Kerala and Karnataka flow through the town, making it an important border town between the two states.

This taluk has four reservoirs: Kabini, Nugu, Hebbal, and Taraka. Although many places in the taluk remain dry, the government could still make effective use of these reservoirs by connecting them to agricultural fields for irrigation. I also observed many ginger plantations along the roads, along with large-scale cultivation of kitchen vegetables such as cabbage in some fields. Additionally, sorghum (Jowar) is primarily grown for cattle feed.

I continued my journey towards Hampapura, crossing the new settlement of HD Kote Handpost near HD Kote town, along the Mysore-Mananthavady road towards the east, along the Kabini River. Buchanan had referred to sandalwood being common at intervals between cornfields and the sides of the terrain, but now there is no trace of sandalwood trees. Instead, I saw many

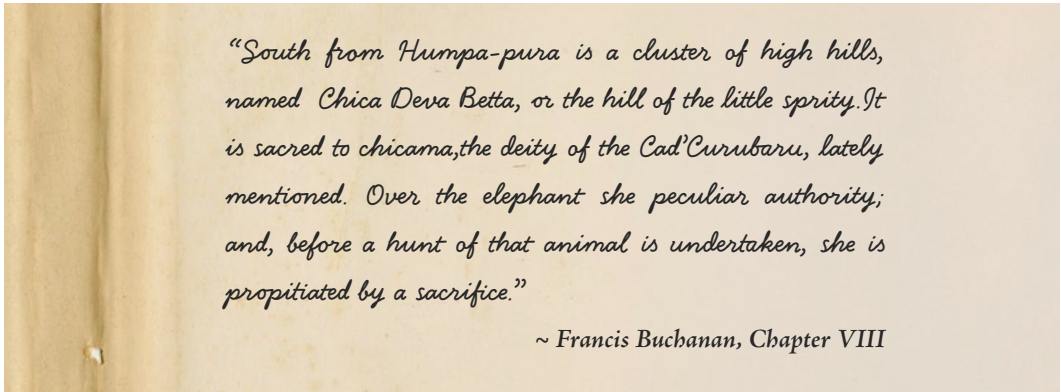


Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. View of Kabini River flowing through the landscape 3. Ginger cultivation; 4. Cabbage cultivation near H.D. Kote

fields cultivated with corn, banana plantations, and ginger crops. Coconut trees grow along the hedges or boundaries of the fields. The soil here is a mix of black and red soil. The strata at Hampapura are vertical, running north and south, and consist mainly of poor-quality potstone, which Buchanan had also noted in his observations of the topographical strata at Hampapura.

Chikka Devammana Betta(Chica Deva Betta)

Latitude:12.018317 N, Longitude: 76.450366 E



~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII

The temple of Chikka Devamma is located at the top of the hill, and the temple is under the Government of Karnataka, managed by the Muzrai Department.

People here believe that she is the sister of Chamundeshwari of Mysore. I saw many devotees coming from the neighboring villages, Mysore, and other districts. Vehicles can access this place via winding paths leading to the top of the hill. From the top, one can see the Nugu Reservoir and Kabini Reservoir. It was heavily thundering when I was at the top, with rain showers visible from nearby villages, creating a dramatic scene.

“On the north side of Chica Deva Betta are three low hills, which produce Iron ore. Mota Betta is situated about three miles E.S.E from Humpa-pura, immediately below the junction of the river Nuga with the Kapini, and to the right of both. Culia Betta is the most considerable mine, and is situated between the two rivers, being distant from Mota Betta one coss and a half.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII



A view of Chikka Deva Betta, sacred to Chikkamma diety, seen from the ginger fields



I checked with the locals about the iron mines near the hills, but they denied the presence of any mines nearby. A few elderly people laughed and joked, saying, “If there were iron mines here, would

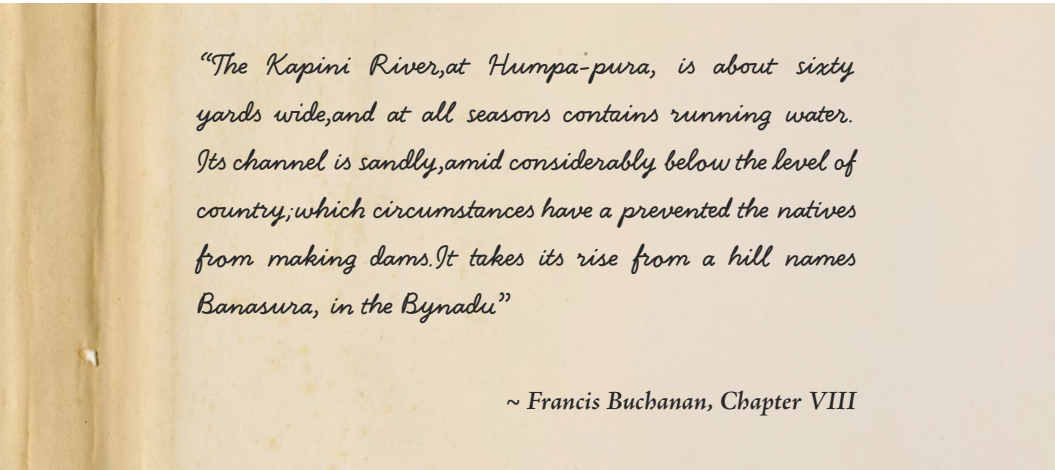
the government leave us?” They smiled humorously. Based on the soil and the few stones I observed, the presence of ferrite could be seen. The Kabini River runs from south to north near these hills.



From the left: 1. A view of Chikka Deva Betta; 2. The Chikkadevamma Temple

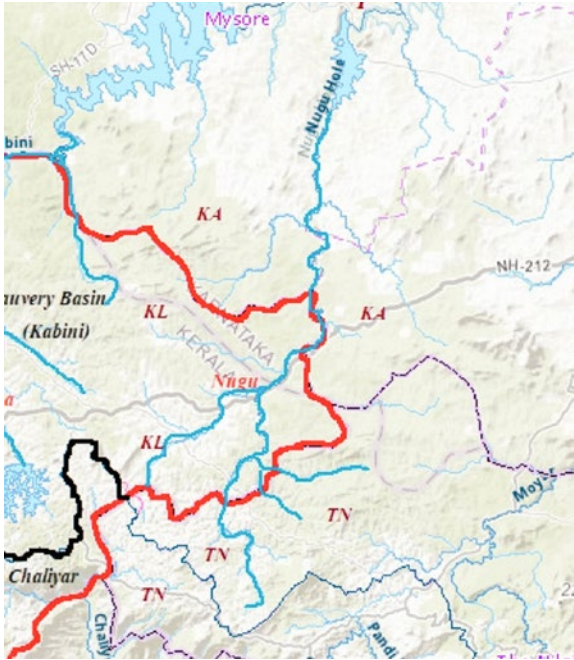


Clockwise from the top left: 1. The Kapini River at Humpa-pura, approximately sixty yards wide, consistently contains running water throughout all seasons; 2. The bridge across the River Kabini; 3. An irrigated channel near Hampapura; 4. Banasura Dam at Wayanad (Kerala) built across the Karamanathodu tributary of the Kabini River



The Kabini is also called the Kapila in Karnataka, which originates near Kavilupuram in Kozhikode district. It converges with its tributaries, the Panamaram River and the Mananthavady River, flows towards the east of Wayanad and enters the Mysore district of Karnataka. It eventually joins the Kaveri River at T. Narasipura.

Buchanan mentioned the Nugu (presently Nugu) River, which is smaller, more rapid, and rockier than the Kabini. It also originates in Bynadu (now Wayanad). The Nugu River is a tributary of the Kabini. Nugu drains the ecologically important forests of Bandipur, Mudumalai, and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). The Mavina Halla stream of the Nugu forms the tri-state border of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka. The Nugu Dam, with a capacity of 5.44 TMC, is built inside the Nugu WLS, which is part of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve Forest.



The tributaries to River Kaveri are Kapila (Kabini) and Nugu, originating from Wayanad, Kerala, as shown in the map above

Marballi or Marballihundi (anglicized as Maru-hully)

Latitude: 12.173670 N, Longitude: 76.567407 E

On the same day, I visited Marballi. Here, Buchanan mentioned the quarry of Sila, or Pratima callu. While crossing the village, I enquired about these stones. Just one kilometer towards Arasinakre, a few communities belonging to the Achari (Vishwakarma) group were busy making idols. The stones they use are sourced from nearby areas, as well as from HD Kote and Chamarajanagara.

The stones they use are called “Krishna Shile” due to their black color and suitability for designing intricate shapes. Upon use, these stones become hard. Even in Shilpashastra, they are recommended for making idols of gods. The artisans create various god idols, as well as customized idols for prominent figures in society based on customer orders. Customers place orders in advance, specifying the size, and the idols are delivered accordingly.



Village entrance to Marballi, with the nameplate visible



Clockwise from the top left: 1 to 3. A few communities belonging to the Achari's (Vishwakarma) group make idols, using stones sourced from nearby areas like HD Kote and Chamarajanagar; 4. As Buchanan referred to the quarry, I visited the pot stone quarry near Arasinakere. Inside, two ancient Basava (bull) statues were discovered. Due to their significance for the Agrarian community, no further quarrying is done in this area

"By the way I turned out of the road, and in order to examine a quarry of the stone called sila, or Pratima cullu, I went among the hills on my left to a small village, named Arasina Caray. The first name in the Sanskrit language means stone, latter appellation meaning image stone, as it is used for making idols. The quarry is in a hollow, which is surrounded by low hills that are sacred to chicama."

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII



An ancient tank at Arasinakere, near Marballi village

As Buchanan referred to the quarry above, when I visited and inquired about the places of potstone quarries, the locals showed me one near Arasinakere. It was a hollow quarry, and inside, there were two Basava (bull) statues sculpted in ancient times and left behind. These statues were recently discovered. Since Basava (Nandi) holds auspicious significance for the Agrarian community and other communities, no quarrying was done in this area. The quarry was surrounded by small, swelling hills with agricultural fields, as Buchanan had mentioned.

Nearby this village, Arasinakere, an ancient tank can be seen. Buchanan referred to this village as Arsina Caray, which is located at latitude 12.173128 and longitude 76.546458 on our map.

An interesting fact here, near Arasinakere, is the village named Harohalli, located near Gujjegowdanapura. On our map, the coordinates are latitude 12.164222 and longitude 76.528319. This is where the stone was quarried that was used to sculpt the Ram Lalla (Lord Rama depicted as a child) idol in Ayodhya by the Mysore-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj. It's interesting to note that Buchanan visited a nearby stone quarry and related it to the quarry used for sculpting idols.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Harohalli village, located near Gujjegowdanapura, is the source of the stone quarried for the Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh; 3. A farmer near Gujjegowdanapura, guarding his pumpkin field from wild peacocks; 4. Agricultural landscape nearby

Further, I started my journey towards Nanjanagudu, which Buchanan referred to as Nujinagodu. On my way, I saw many village hamlets with roof-tiled houses in the Mysore style, similar to those near Mysore and its surrounding regions. A few houses had flat roofs with pent roofs built on top. The pent roofs are likely the traditional old roofing system that existed before the advent of Mangalore roof tiles.

Nanjanagudu (Nunjinagodu)

On the same day, I visited Nanjanagudu, a holy place around 25 kilometers from Mysore. The famous and large Sri Nanjundeshwara (or Sri Kanteshwara) temple is located here. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. According to the Puranas, Lord Shiva consumed poison during the Samudra Manthana (Churning of the Ocean) by the Asuras and Devas. As a result, Shiva



Majestic Nanjundeshwara Temple (Sri Kanteshwara), Nanjangudu

became Vishakantha, later known as Shrikanta, after he disgorged the poison. Hence, the deity is called Nanjundeshwara or Shrikanteshwara.

The temple is situated on the right bank of the River Kapila (also known as Kabini). This is one of the largest temples in Karnataka, with a history spanning over 1,000 years, beginning from the Ganga dynasty. The nine-storied, 120-foot-tall temple gopuram (gateway tower) and its extensive exterior were built by Devarajammanni, the queen of Mysore King Krishnaraja Wadiyar III, according to the Mysore Gazetteer.

Now, Nanjanagudu houses many industries in the Nanjanagudu industrial area, including AT&S, which manufactures PCBs. Several brewery companies are also located here, with many of them depending on the water of the Kapila River as their primary source.

The Nanjangud Rasabaale is a popular variety of bananas, originating from Devarasanahalli Village. The Nanjanagudu banana has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag (number 29).

Further, I started my journey towards T. Narasipura (Tirumakudalu Narasipura), which Buchanan referred to as Narasingha-pura. I crossed the route Buchanan took through Varakodu, which he referred to as Waracadu, and Thayuru, which he referred to as Taiuru. Along the route, I saw many paddy fields irrigated by canals during the Rabi season.

T Narasipura or Thirumalakudalu Narasipura (angliscized :Narasingha-pura)

On 20th April, I was at T. Narasipura, also known as Tirumakudalu Narasipura. This is the place where the two rivers, Kaveri (Cauvery) and Kabini (Kapila), meet. At the confluence stands an ancient Shiva temple, and according to the Puranas, the Shiva Linga here was consecrated by Sage Agastya. Over time, the temple has been constructed and maintained by various dynasties, from the Ganga dynasty to the Mysore Wodeyars. This has been already documented in Chapter XX.

Another temple, the Gunja Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, is located on the right bank of the River Kaveri. On my way south, I saw many working women rushing towards an industrial unit. I noticed a garment export unit near T. Narasipura on the route towards Kollegala—probably the only major industry in the area. I also observed many well-irrigated paddy fields along the banks of the River Kaveri.

Further, I reached Malingi. Buchanan mentioned two Malingis—Tadi Malingi (which he referred to as Tady Malingy) and Hosa Malingi.



Nanjangud Rasabaale, a famous banana variety from Devarasanahalli, holds GI tag no. 29

Hosa Malingy is situated in the company's territory's Malingy is a small open village;but before the Marattah invasion it had a fort,and was considerable place.

The existence of two places named Tadimalingi and Hosa Maingy (or Hosa Malingi) is likely rooted in historical and practical developments over time. The term “Tadi” in Kannada generally means “old” or “original,” suggesting that Tadimalingi was the original settlement. Over time, due to reasons such as population growth, migration, or challenges like flooding issues in the original location, a section of the community may have moved and established a new settlement nearby. This newer settlement came to be known as “Hosa Maingy,” with “Hosa” meaning “new” in Kannada. Such naming is common in Karnataka and other parts of India, where older and newer villages share a name with a prefix to distinguish them. In some cases, administrative restructuring or the expansion of cultivable land also contributes to the formation of new villages.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Gunja Lakshmi Narasimha temple at T. Narasipura, near the confluence of Kaveri and Kabini rivers, once referred to by Buchanan as Narasingha-pura; 2 & 3. Lush green paddy fields near T. Narasipura (Tirumakudalu Narasipura), a fertile landscape at the heart of the confluence; 4. Malangi, located on the opposite bank of the Kaveri River from Talakadu

Buchanan mentioned that the bank at Malingi is steep, and the stream of the Kaveri River flows close to it. On the opposite bank, the sand hills appear to be higher and seem to increase in height each year. A few temples are situated atop these hills. This is a curious phenomenon, but circumstances did not permit Buchanan to investigate the details on-site. According to the local narrative, this was attributed to the prayer of a woman who drowned while attempting to cross the river to visit the place. As she was dying, she wished that the village would be overwhelmed by sand.

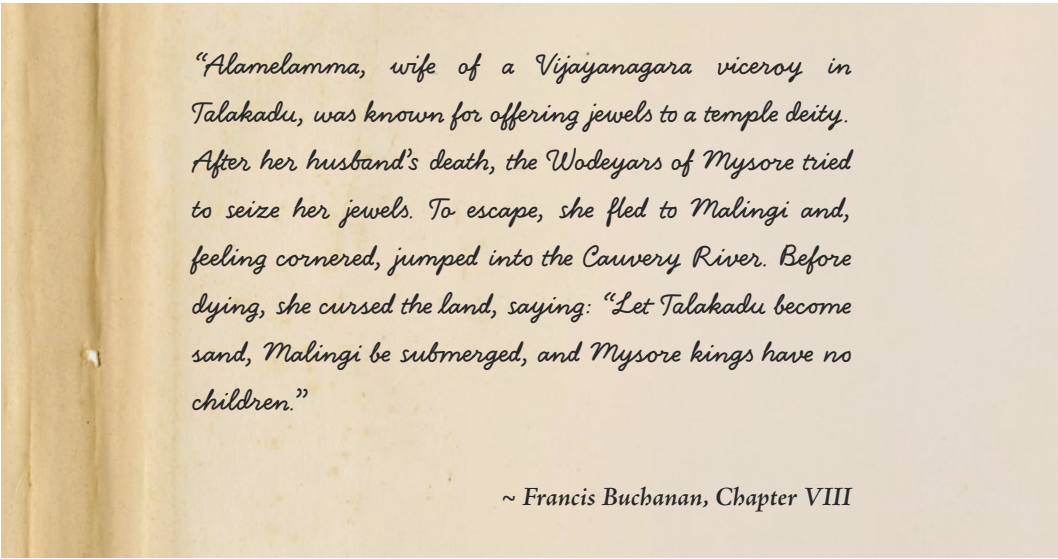
In Kannada, there is a popular folk saying: “**Talakadu maralagali, Malingi mulugali, Mysore arasarige makkalagade hogali**”, which translates to “**Let Talakadu be buried in sand, Malingi be submerged, and may the kings of Mysore remain heirless.**” This curse is said to have been uttered by Alamelamma, the queen of Srirangapatna, and is deeply rooted in the folklore of the region.



The River Kaveri flowing serenely at Talakadu



The Madhava Mantri Dam, located just behind the newly constructed dam, currently generates a small amount of hydroelectric power. Historically, it altered the flow of the Cauvery River, leading to the sand accumulation at Talakadu and the erosion and submersion of Malingi



Since then, Talakadu gradually turned into a landscape of shifting sands, Malingi experienced frequent submergence and floods, and the royal family of Mysore reportedly faced generations without a direct heir, lending eerie resonance to the ancient curse.

The old dam, often known as the Madhava Mantri Dam, is believed to have significantly altered the flow of the Cauvery River, contributing to the accumulation of sand at Talakadu and the erosion and submersion of Malingi over time.

Talakad (Talacadu)

Talakadu, located on the left bank of the River Kaveri, is one of the oldest towns in Karnataka, about 22 kilometers from T. Narasipura. Once the capital of the Ganga dynasty, Talakadu flourished under successive rulers, including the Cholas, Hoysalas, and Vijayanagara kings, becoming an important religious and cultural center. Today, the town is renowned not only for its ancient temples but also for its mysterious sandy landscape, earning it the title “the city buried in sand”.

The town is home to several ancient temples, most of which are dedicated to Lord Shiva. Among the most famous are the Panchalinga Temples – Pathaleshwara, Maruleshwara, Arkeshwara, Vaidyanatheshwara, and Mallikarjuna – each said to represent a different form of Shiva. These temples are of great religious importance and are believed to be aligned in a specific spiritual



In Talakadu, the temples display a blend of Dravidian and Hoysala architectural styles, featuring finely carved sculptures and ornate pillars. Many temples walls and remnants are still partially buried under the sand

pattern. Every few years, the Panchalinga Darshana, a rare and auspicious festival, draws thousands of pilgrims when all five lingas can be worshipped on the same day, which occurs only under special planetary conditions.



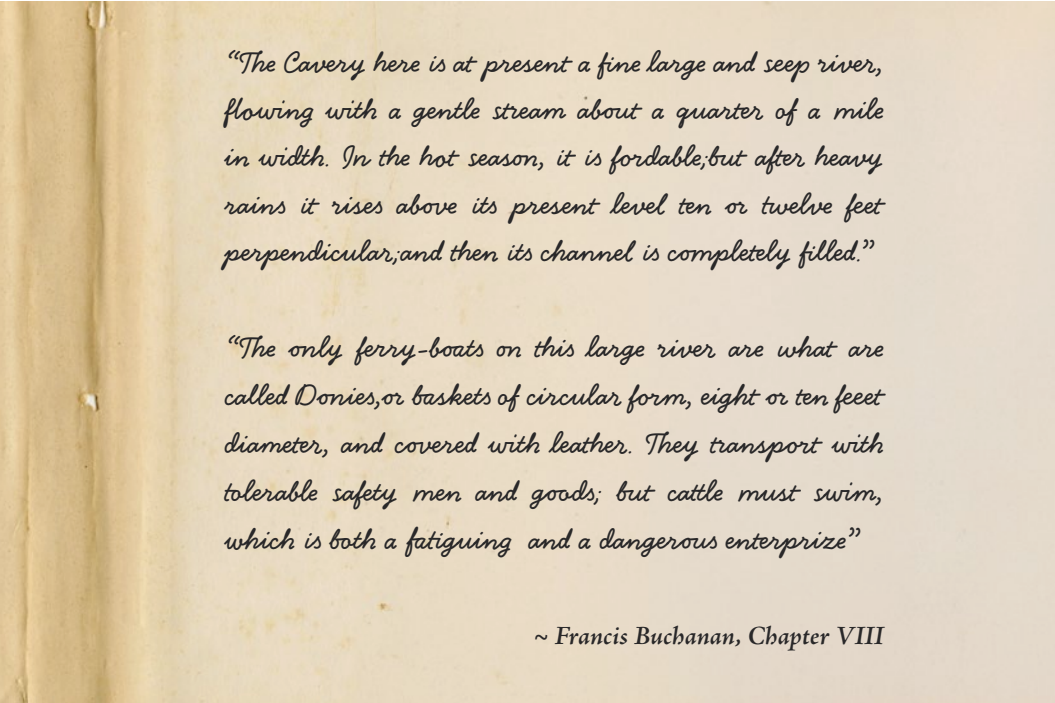
Keerthi Narayana Temple, was built around 1116 A.D. by the Hoysalas to commemorate Vishnuvardhana's victory over the Cholas. The temple is surrounded by dunes and protected by ancient walls, which are still visible today.



The Cauvery River

Architecturally, the temples exhibit a blend of Dravidian and Hoysala styles, with finely carved sculptures and ornate pillars. Many of the temples remain partially buried in sand, and though archaeological efforts have been made to excavate and conserve them, the shifting sands remain a persistent challenge. The mysterious sand cover is popularly attributed to Alamelamma’s curse, a legend deeply tied to the town’s fate.

During the Hoysala period, Vishnuvardhan captured Talakadu from the Chola governor Adiyama and assumed the title “Talakadugonda”. To commemorate his victory, he built the Keerthi Narayana Temple around 1116 A.D., as noted in the Mysore Gazetteer.



The coracle, traditionally made of woven bamboo and waterproof materials such as hides and tar, is still used by local villages across India for transporting people, and goods, and for fishing purposes.

On the same day, I visited Kollegala by crossing Sathyagala (referred to as Sathegala by Buchanan) and Mullur (referred to as Mulur on Buchanan’s route), which is a circuitous path, before proceeding further to Kollegala.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Mysore traditional houses at Talakadu, featuring roofs with traditional clay-fired tiles 3. Near Talakad, a few patches of land along the bank of the River Kaveri are cultivated with Palm oil trees (*Elaeis guineensis*), a unique sight for the region; 4. Wild boars freely roam near the dunes and temples along the River Kaveri at Talakad; 5. The coracle, traditionally made woven bamboo

Kollegala (Coleagala)

Kollegala, located 64 km from Mysore, is now a major taluk in Chamarajanagara district. Previously, it was part of the Madras Presidency under Coimbatore District. According to the Mysore Gazetteer, the earliest reference to the place was as Kollagaara, which was also an



Maruleshwara Temple, located at the heart of the town, with the ancient Kalyani (sacred tank) adjacent to it, was built during the Chola period

Agrahara according to a Chola inscription. Buchanan mentioned this town, which contained about 600 houses and was located within the Company’s territory.

“It has two large temples, and is a considerable mart for the traders between Seringaptam and the country below the Ghats, and near the Cavery.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter VIII

Near Kollegala, a considerable amount of land with black soil is suitable for the cultivation of cotton and sugarcane. However, I observed that many fields here are dedicated to paddy

cultivation, with significant amounts of sorghum (Jola) being grown. This black soil extends across areas like Nanjanagodu, Muguru, T Narasipura, Yelandur, Sosale, Malingi, and a few other regions, with some parts also featuring red soil.

Shivanasamudra (Sivana Samudra)

On the same day, I visited Shivanasamudra, which Buchanan mentioned in his map as Sivana Samudra or the “Sea of Siva,” along with its famous cataracts.

Shivanasamudra is an enchanting island created by the branching out of River Kaveri into two streams. Located in the Mandya district of Karnataka, and the place is renowned for its spectacular twin waterfalls—Gaganachukki and Bharachukki. These waterfalls are formed when the river splits into two streams and cascades down rocky cliffs, creating a thunderous roar and misty spray that attracts visitors throughout the year.



Shivana Samudra island features rocky terrain with vertical strata of gneiss, used in the construction of Ganga Raja’s buildings. Upright stone pillars, similar to those at Seringapatam, remain near the island’s upper end.

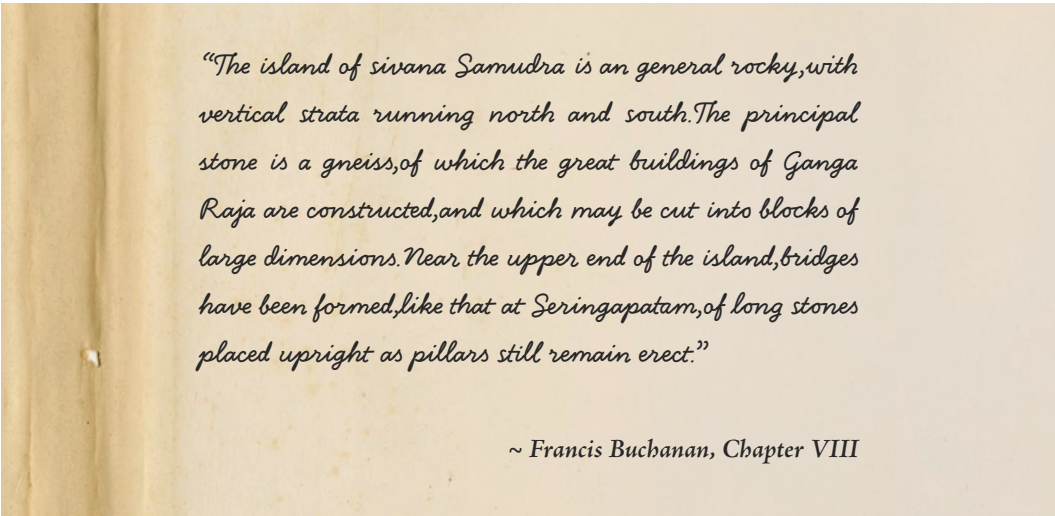


Madhya Ranganatha Swamy Temple at Shivanasamudra, seen under repair during my visit



Someshwara Temple is a significant example of early Chola architecture in Karnataka, dedicated to Lord Shiva and believed to have been built around the 10th or 11th century CE

Apart from its natural beauty, Shivanasamudra also holds historical importance. It is home to one of Asia's first hydroelectric power stations, established in 1902 during the rule of the Wodeyars of Mysore. This power plant supplied electricity to the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF), making it a symbol of early industrial progress in India.

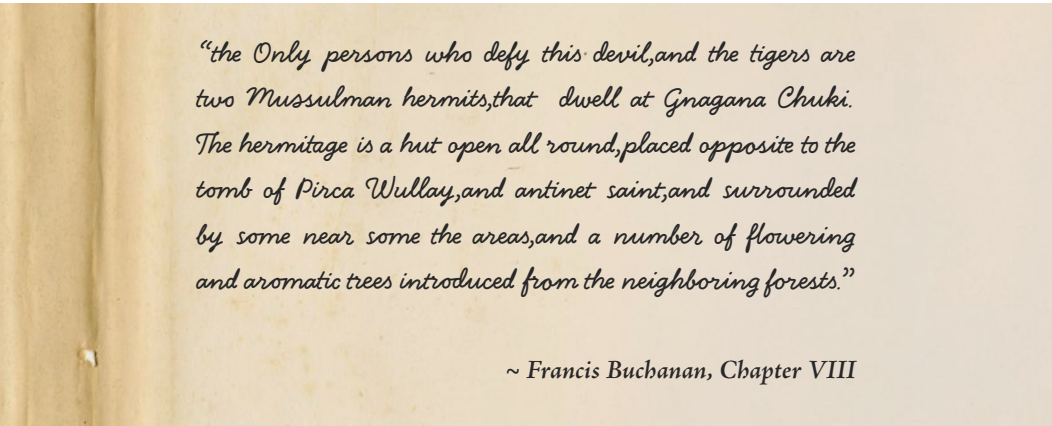


Shivanasamudra is also a place of spiritual significance. Several ancient temples, including the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, are located here. Built in the Dravidian style, this temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. Another landmark at Shivanasamudra, the Someshwara Temple stands out as an important example of early Chola architecture in Karnataka. This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is believed to have been built during the Chola period, around the 10th or 11th century CE. The Cholas, who ruled parts of southern India during that time, were great patrons of Shaivism and temple architecture. The Someshwara Temple reflects the typical Chola style with its simple yet elegant stone construction, carved pillars, and a sanctum that houses the Shiva Linga.



A statue of a royal couple, probably from the Mysore Wodeyar dynasty, at the Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Shivanasamudra

Mussulman hermitage near Bharachukki

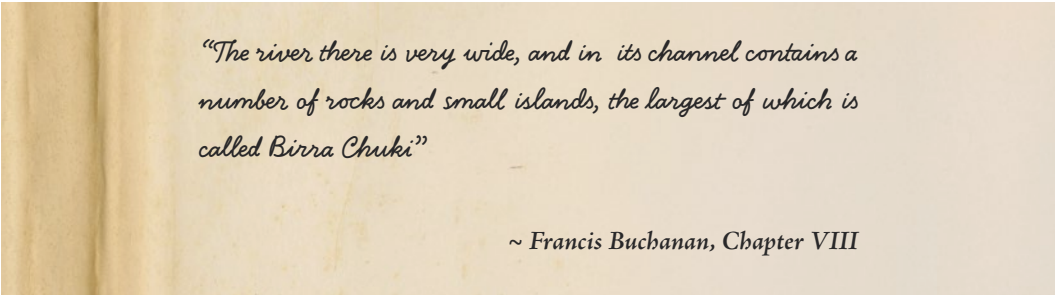


A Dargah attributed to Peer Hazrath Sayyadana Hazrath Mardana Gayib, situated on the edge of a small hillock with a deep rocky valley behind it



From the left: 1. Gaganachukki Falls seen from the Dargah, with the old hydroelectric power station visible in the background; 2. To the southeast, about one kilometer from the Dargah, lies Bharachukki, where the eastern branch of the River Kaveri cascades into a rocky valley, forming three distinct falls—though during my summer visit, the water levels were quite low

At the left entrance to the island of Shivanasamudra, there is a Dargah attributed to Peer Hazarath Sayyadana Hazarath Mardana Gayib. It is situated on the edge of a small hillock, with a deep rocky valley behind it.



To the southeast, about one kilometer from the Dargah, lies Bharachukki. Here, the eastern stream of the River Kaveri flows rapidly, cascading into a rocky valley and forming three distinct falls with a thunderous sound. Since I visited during the peak summer, the water levels were quite low. However, near Gaganachukki, I noticed a lot of waste being dumped, and there was a lack of basic amenities near the Dargah. I observed many Muslim pilgrims visiting the Dargah, but due to the absence of proper facilities, they had to stay outside the hermitage.



Bharachukki Falls, where the eastern stream of the River Kaveri cascades into a rocky valley, with barren hilly mountains forming the background

Near Shivanasamudra, many paddy fields were being transplanted. When I enquired about the farm laborers, I came to know that they were not locals but a group of workers from Paragana District, West Bengal. These Bengali laborers are well-versed in paddy cultivation. The local farmers hire them on a contract basis for paddy transplanting. The landowner pays Rs 3,000 per acre, along with other amenities like accommodation and rations.

The shortage of local labor is due to the high cost of labor, and many locals have moved to urban cities like Bangalore and Mysore. As a result, few are interested in engaging in agriculture, a common trend in many regions of Karnataka.



From the left: 1.Paddy cultivation fields flourishing around Shivanasamudra; 2.Near Shivanasamudra, paddy transplanting was actively carried out by skilled laborers from Paragana District, West Bengal, hired by local farmers on a contract basis

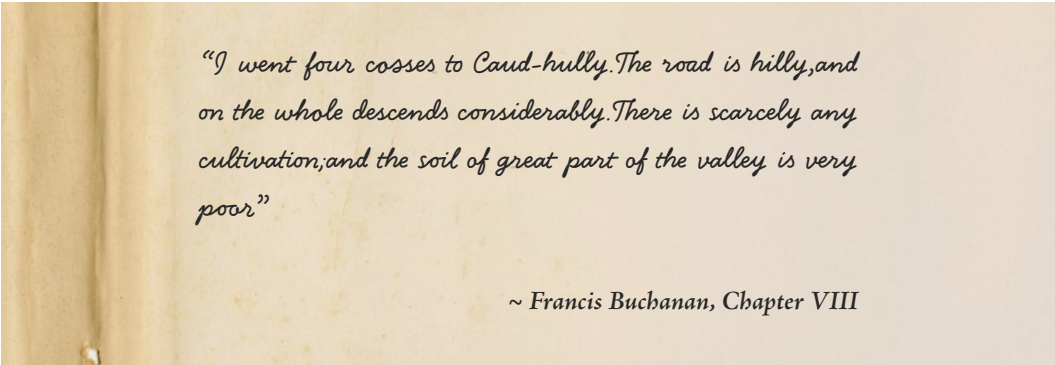


From the left: 1.A goatherd near the River Kaveri bridge, with a steep barren hill forming the background; 2. A lush green paddy field at Singanalluru

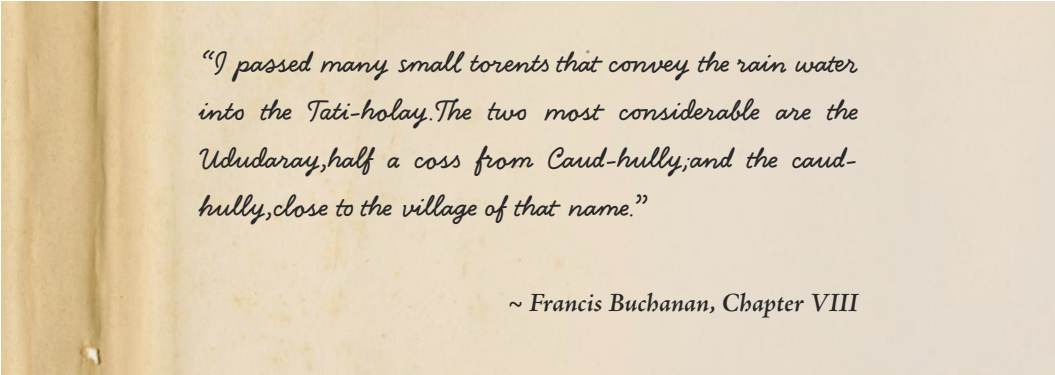


On 21st April, I started my journey towards Kowdahalli, which Buchanan refers to in his map as Caud-hully, passing through Singaalluru and Hanuru. The land here is dry, and the soil is poor. Buchanan mentioned that in Singanalluru, the people of this region consider the ox as a living god. When a bull dies, they bury it with a great ceremony. This tradition continues to this day in the old Mysore regions of Channapatna, Magadi, Mandya, Mysore, and Chamarajanagara, where the ox is regarded as Basava and holds great importance in the families, particularly among the agrarian communities.

Kowdhalli (anglicized:Caud-hully)



The strata here is very hilly, and the soil is poor and dry. Passing through Hanur, I crossed many streams, including Thatte Halla, which Buchanan referred to as Tati-holay, and another important stream, Uduthore, which Buchanan specified as Ududaray.





On my way towards Kowdhalli: The road here is hilly and mostly descends, with very little cultivation. Much of the valley soil is notably poor



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Passing through Hanur: The area is very hilly, with dry and poor soil. I crossed several streams, including Uduthore (noted by Buchanan as Ududaray); 3. Malemahadeshwara Temple; 4. View of MM Hills (Male Mahadeshwara Hills) from Maratalli



Hilly mountains of Male Mahadeshwara Hills



From the left: 1. A 108-feet tall statue of Lord Male Mahadeshwara atop MM Hills; 2. Chariots near the temple at MM Hills

The road from Kowdhalli to Martalli is surrounded by mountains. The road is not very steep but is quite stony. I continued my journey towards Martalli, which Buchanan referred to on his map as Mat-hully or Marat-hully. From Martalli, the forested hills region is rich in biodiversity, with forests that are home to various wildlife species, including elephants, gaurs, and deer.

The centerpiece of MM Hills is the **Sri Male Mahadeshwara Temple**, dedicated to Lord Mahadeshwara, an incarnation of Lord Shiva. According to legend, Saint Mahadeshwara performed penance here and is believed to reside eternally in the temple's sanctum as a self-



The Soligas, an indigenous tribal community of the BR Hills and MM Hills, have a deep bond with the forest, practicing shifting agriculture and gathering forest produce. They speak Sholaga, a dialect related to Kannada and Tamil.



Palar Bridge now serves as the border between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu



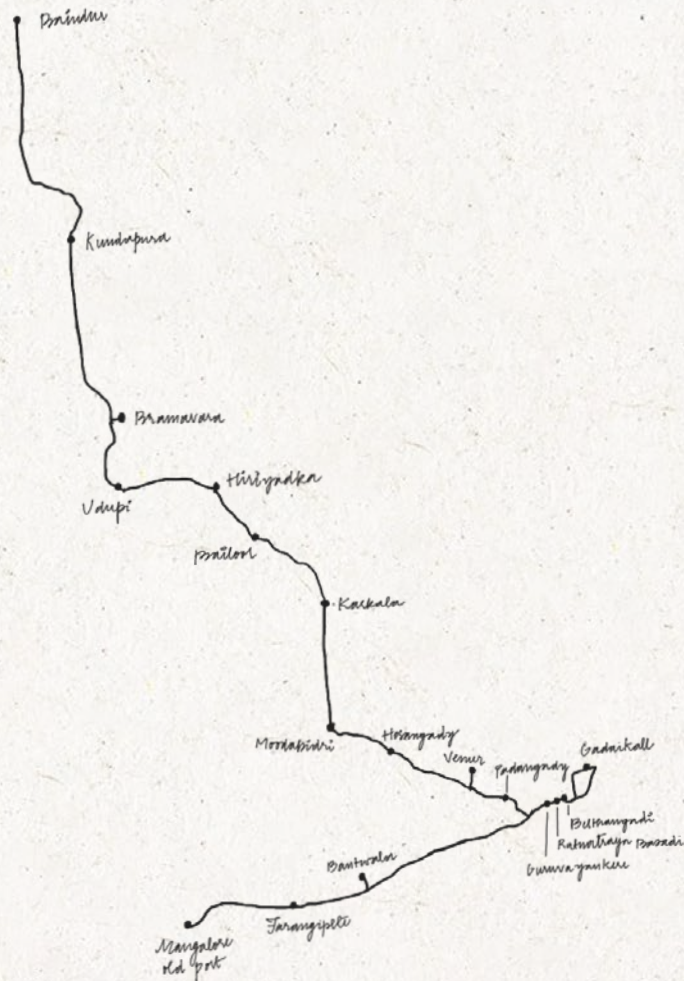
The Palar River now forms the border between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It flows through rugged terrain and dense forests, eventually merging with the River Kaveri at Palar

manifested (swayambhu) linga. The temple is surrounded by seven hills, collectively known as ‘Elu Male’, and is enveloped by dense forests, attracting both devotees.

Near MM Hill, I met a few Soligas, an indigenous tribal community primarily residing in the forests of BR Hills and MM Hills in southern Karnataka. They have a close connection with nature and depend on the forest for their livelihood. Traditionally, they practice shifting agriculture and collect honey, fruits, and medicinal plants from the forest. The Soligas speak a dialect called Sholaga, which is related to Kannada and Tamil.

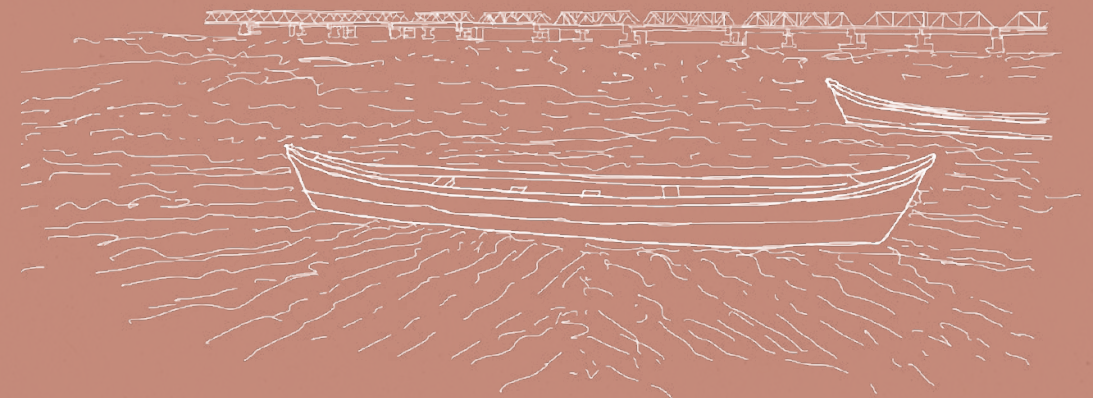
They follow a blend of nature worship and Hinduism, venerating local deities as well as Lord Shiva, particularly Male Mahadeshwara. When discussing their livelihood, I learned that, due to limited access to agriculture on the hilltops, they primarily rely on hard labor, working for six months on coffee estates in Kodagu (Coorg), Wayanad, and, for a few, as quarry laborers near Chikkaballapura.

Further, I continued my journey towards the Palar River, which Buchanan marked on his route map. From there, he entered the Coimbatore region. The Palar River now forms the border between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. It flows through rugged terrain and dense forests, eventually merging with the River Kaveri at Palar, located at latitude 11.954714 N and longitude 77.650758 E on our map.



Chapter XV

Journey from Mangalore to Baindur

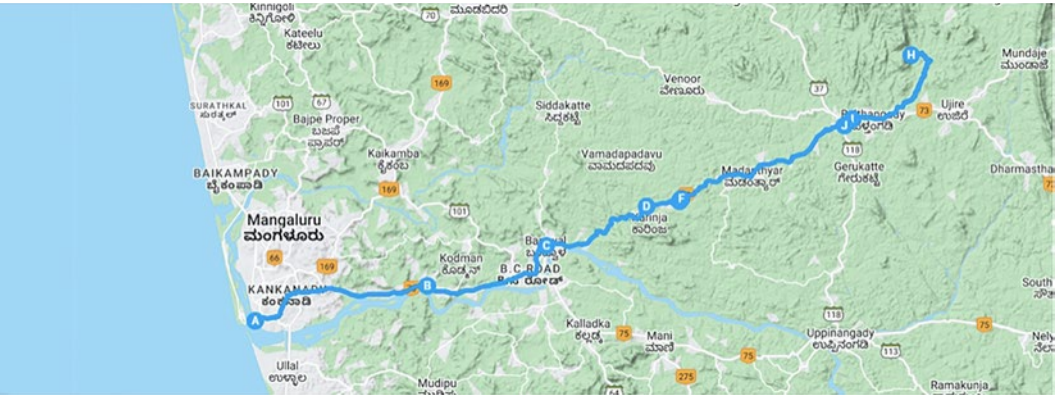


Retracing his route from Mangalore to Byndoor provides a fascinating glimpse into the historical, agricultural, ecological, and social mosaic of the region over two centuries ago. This article explores Buchanan's observations, the historical significance of his journey, and the changes that have transformed the region since his visit.



Introduction

In 1801, the Scottish physician and botanist Francis Buchanan undertook a remarkable journey through the Canara region, documenting the agricultural, natural, and cultural landscapes he encountered. His detailed accounts provide valuable insights into the region’s economy, trade routes, social structure, and ecological diversity during the early 19th century. Retracing his route from Mangalore to Byndoor offers a fascinating glimpse into the historical, agricultural, ecological, and social mosaic the region over two centuries ago.



Mangalore to Jamalabad Fort Hill

Mangalore: The Gateway of Malabar

Mangalore, also called Mangaluru in Kannada, Kodial Bunder in Konkani, Maikala by the Beary Muslim community, and Kudla by the natives, which means a confluence of two rivers. It is the headquarters of the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka State. The city is situated on the backwaters formed by the convergent mouths of the North River (Gurupura) and the South River (Nethravati).

Mangalore figures as Mandegora, Maganur, and Mangarouth in the works of Arrian, Ptolemy, and Kosmos Indikopleustes, respectively. Nitrias, perhaps referring to the Nethravati but used as a place name by Pliny (first century A.D.), is also believed to denote Mangalore. It is popularly held that the name Mangalore is derived from the Mangal Devi temple. This temple, in turn, is said to have received its name from a queen named Mangaladevi who, according to tradition,

lived in the 10th century and became a follower of the Natha Pantha. However, it may be factually the other way around, and probably the name of the place was given to the goddess of this temple. The Maratum copper-plate inscription of about the 7th century refers to this place as Mangalapura.

In 1801, Francis Buchanan visited a large salt lake—backwater near the mouth of the Nethravati River from Ullal. He described it as a most beautiful piece of salt water, by which the peninsula is formed.

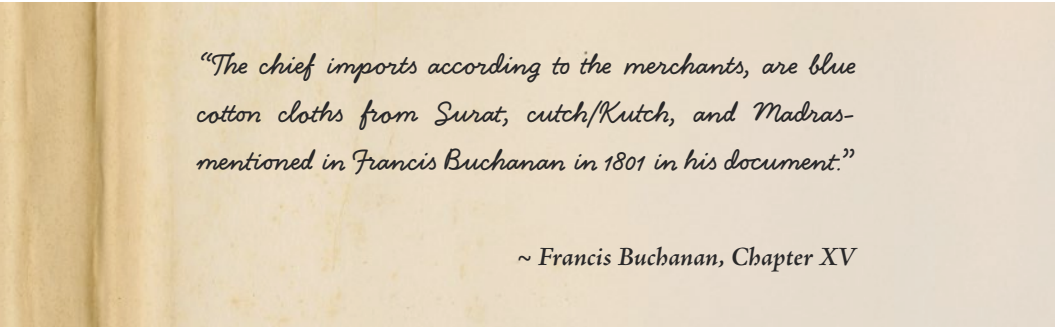
Sultan Bathery, a watchtower built by Tipu Sultan, was situated on the bank of the Gurupura River near its mouth before it discharges into the sea, in Mangalore.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. View of the Netravathi River and the bridge connecting Ullal and Mangalore; 2. Someshwara Beach, Ullal; 3. The confluence of the River Netravathi and the Gurupura River before their discharge into the Arabian Sea; 4. Sulthan Bathery, Mangalore

The place previously served as an artillery battery, which was used to observe warships entering the river. It was a primary route used by the English during their invasion. There is an underground storage area that was used to store gunpowder. Usually, gunpowder is stored in cooler locations, similar to what we saw in Srirangapatna.

Mangalore has now expanded its northern territory to Surathkal and its southern territory to Ullal and Farangipete. A major industrial port city, with big Government Oil refineries, and chemical companies in the SEZ (Special Economic zone) area of Mangalore.



Rice was one of the primary export commodities from Mangalore, with large quantities being shipped to Muscat, Bombay, Goa, and the Malabar region. The thriving maritime trade network facilitated the movement of rice from the coastal ports to various destinations, contributing significantly to the local economy.



Old Bunder, Mangalore

Now, the old port which is near State Bank, a central area in Mangalore city, is used only for fishing operations and ferrying small goods. The new mechanized port (New Mangalore Port) was shifted to Panambur in 1962, near the confluence of the Gurupura River. The major commodities exported through the port include iron ore concentrates and pellets, iron ore fines, manganese, granite stones, coffee, cashews, and containerized cargo.

Caste and Religion

The Billavas are the most dominant caste in Mangalore and in the South Canara (Dakshina Kannada) district. Other castes include Mogaveeras, Bunts, Devadigas, Havyaka Brahmins, Sthanika Brahmins, Jains, Koragas, Konkani Hindus (GSB, RSB, Chitpavan), Catholics, and Beary's and many others.

Billavas

While few Billavas continue the traditional occupation of toddy tapping in South Canara, the community has significantly shifted towards education and diverse economic activities, notably in business, agriculture, and hospitality.

Mogaveera (Marakala)

The Mogaveera, also known as Marakala, community is a prominent and industrious group along the Mangalore seashore. Traditionally, they have been deeply involved in the fishing industry, a trade that has shaped their cultural and economic identity for generations. Their expertise in navigating the challenging waters of the Arabian Sea has earned them a reputation as skilled fishermen and seafarers.

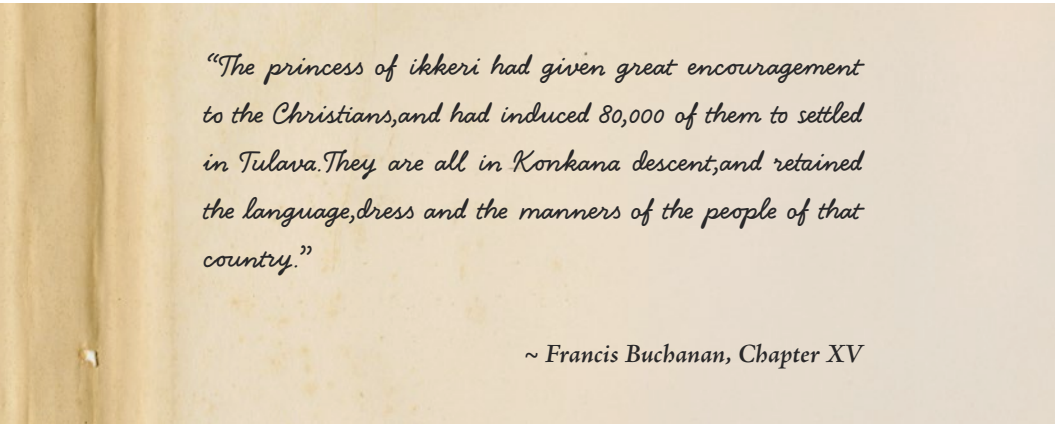
Over the years, the Mogaveeras have diversified their livelihoods, venturing into various business enterprises and contributing significantly to the local economy. Despite modernization and



From the left: 1. Annual Kola ritual at a Billava house hold; 2. Fishermen

economic shifts, they have managed to preserve their rich cultural heritage, celebrated through vibrant festivals and community gatherings.

Mangalore Catholics



The Mangalore Catholics, predominantly of Konkani descent, trace their origins to migrations from Goa during the 16th and 17th centuries. This community has maintained its distinct cultural identity, language, and religious traditions. Known for their contributions to education, business, and social development, Mangalore Catholics have played a significant role in the region’s history and progress.

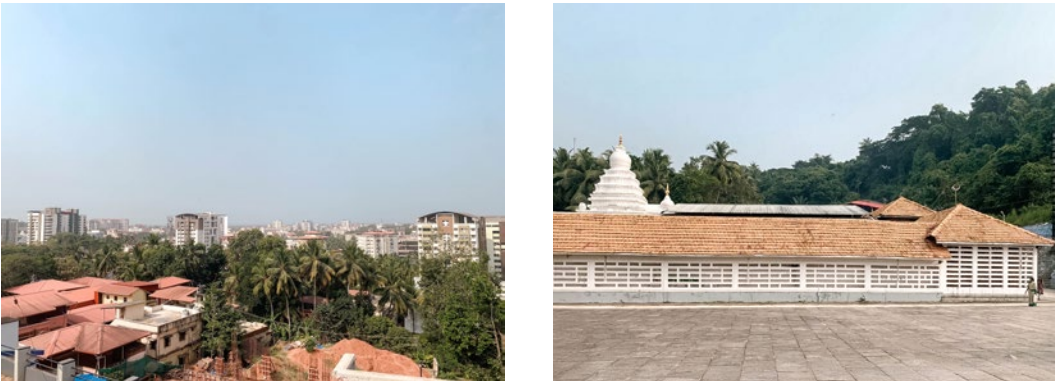
Census Chronicles in 1801 by Francis Buchanan

Interestingly, Francis Buchanan conducted a caste census along with a demographic survey, recording the number of men, women, boys, girls, and houses in his documentation of ten taluks in the undivided Canara region, which includes the present-day Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

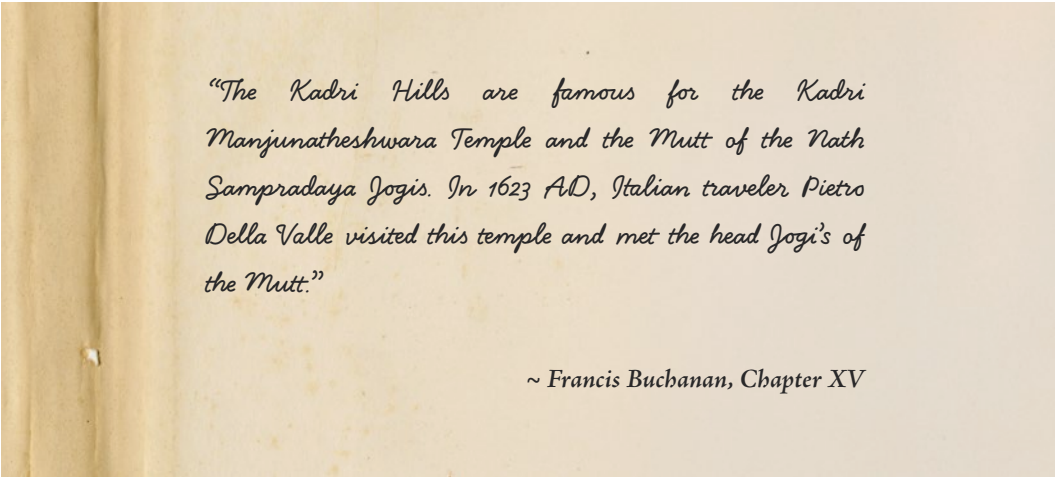
Mangalore Heritage: Traditional Houses and Architecture

Today, Mangalore has evolved into a bustling urban center, but the traditional houses and architectural styles that Buchanan admired still dot the landscape, offering a window into the city’s storied past.

- **Traditional Houses:** Many traditional houses, known locally as “Guthu Mane,” still stand, showcasing the architectural ingenuity of the past. These houses feature red-tiled roofs, large courtyards, and intricate woodwork. The layout typically includes a central courtyard surrounded by rooms, promoting natural light and ventilation. Efforts to preserve these structures have intensified, with many being restored to their former glory.
- **Architectural Heritage:** Mangalore’s temples and churches continue to be focal points of architectural and cultural significance. The Kadri Manjunath Temple, with its stunning bronze statues and historical significance, and the St. Aloysius Chapel, known for its exquisite frescoes, are prime examples of the city’s diverse architectural styles. These structures not only serve religious purposes but also attract tourists and historians alike.



From the left: 1. Bird view of Mangalore city; 2. Kadri Manjunatheshwara Temple, Mangalore



Mangalore Clay Tiles

The roof tiles native to Mangalore were introduced by the Basel Missionary. Many clay tile manufacturing companies were set up during the colonial period due to the large deposits of clay found by the banks of both rivers. The Basel Missionary Georg Plebt set up the first tile factory in Mangalore in 1860, called ‘The Commonwealth Trust Ltd,’ and in 1868, the Albuquerque Tile Factory was established.



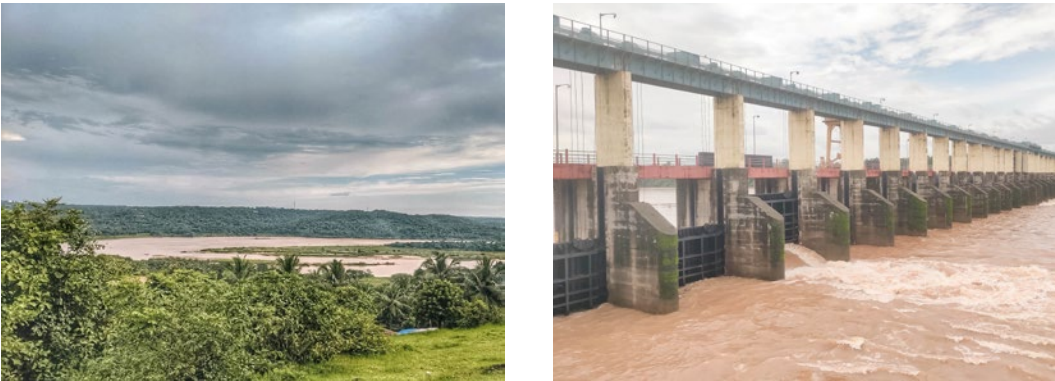
From the left: 1.Albuquerque Tile Factory: Preserving heritage in the 150-year-old Mangalore tiled building; 2.Operator operating with the molding machine at Albuquerque Tile factory, Mangalore

Farangipete

During Buchanan’s visit to Farangipete, a small hamlet around 16 kms from Mangalore, as the name suggests the Foreigners town(Farangi: Probably Portuguese) trading town.

Buchanan observed the local way of life, agricultural practices, and vibrant community dynamics. He noted the town’s strategic location along the Netravati River, which facilitated trade and communication.

Now, it’s a suburb of Mangalore, the fastest-growing town, situated between BC Road (Bantwala Cross)and Mangalore. Farangipete is famous for its fresh and affordable fish.



From the left: 1.Netravathi River Valachhil, Farangipete; 2.Thumbe Vented Dam

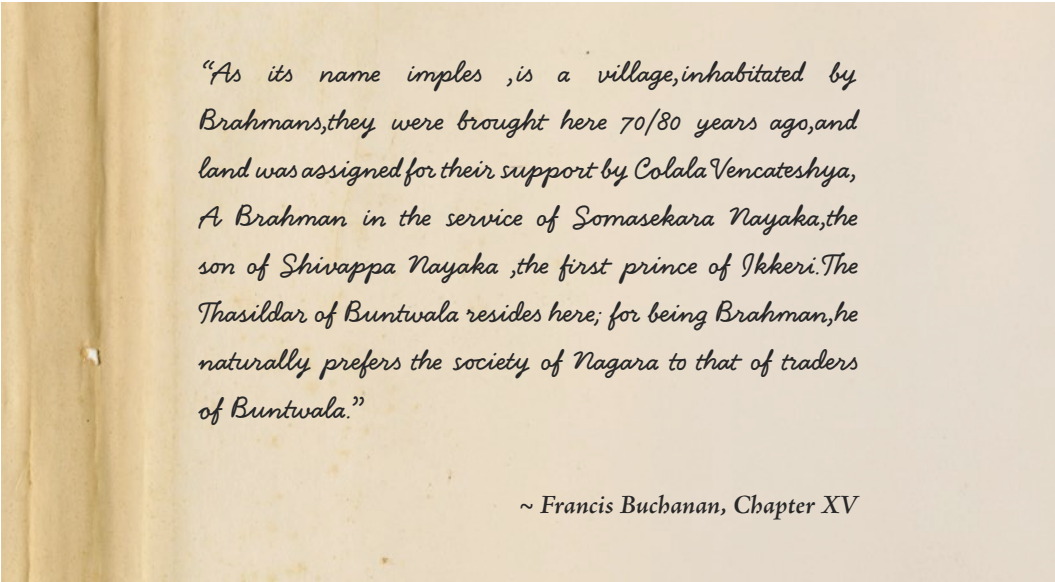
Thumbe Vented Dam

Thumbe Vented Dam is constructed across the River Netravathi near Thumbe and is primarily used for storing and facilitating drinking water for Mangalore city.

Length of Dam: 344.5m | Crest Level: +1.5M

Pond Level: +7M | Gates: 30 No’s (10*5.5m)

Nagara Agraharam

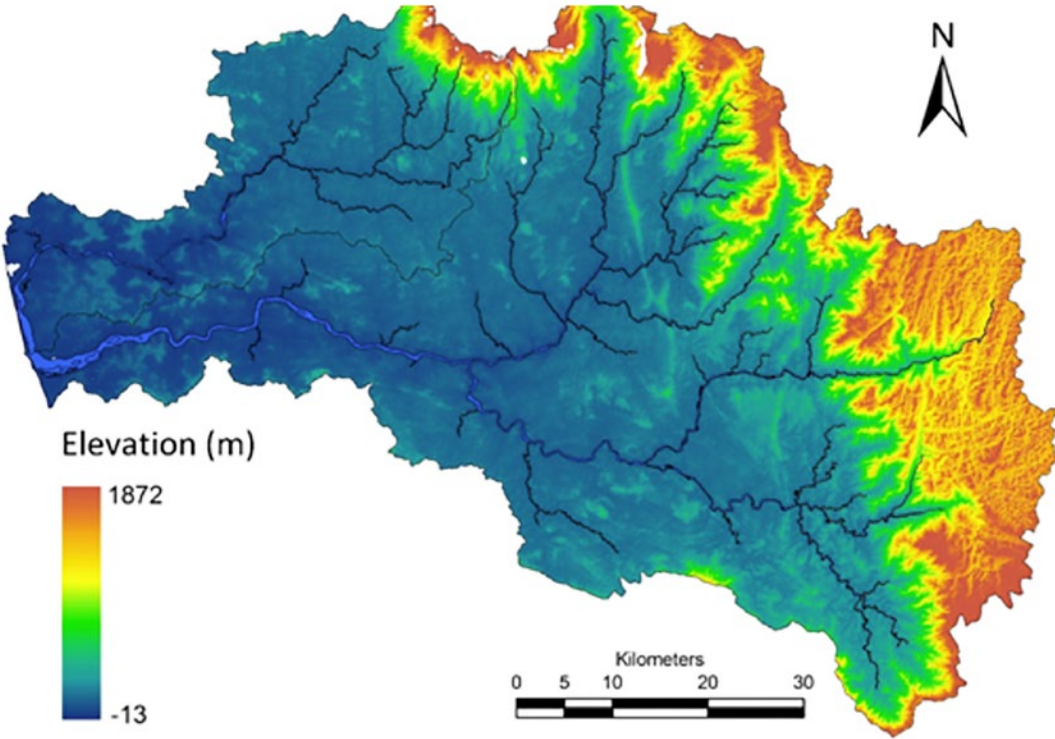


~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XV

Nagara Agraharam, now a suburban area of the B.C. Road (Bantwala Cross) vicinity, encompasses the BC Road town area and the surroundings of the Nethravati bridge.

Bantawala (Buntwala)

The town is situated on the northern bank of the River Netravathi. It is the headquarters of the Bantwala taluk and is located 25 kilometers from Mangalore. Near this town is BC Road, a junction and railway station on the Mangalore-Hassan Railway line.



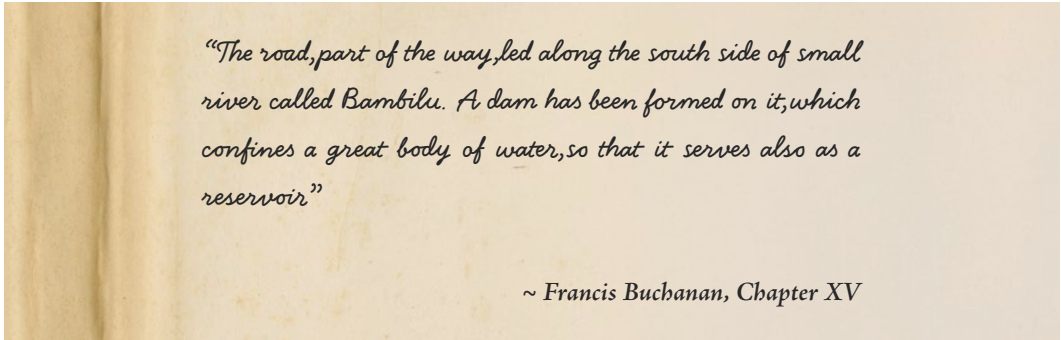
The elevation map of the River Nethravati

Nethravati also called the Bantwala River, originates in the Western Ghats in Gangamoola Hill, which is also a source for other important rivers, the Tunga and Bhadra. The Tunga flows towards the northeast, the Bhadra flows towards the east, and the Nethravati flows down from the ghat region, passing through the towns of Dharmasthala and Bantwala, and finally reaching Mangalore before joining the Laccadive Sea, also known as the Arabian Sea.

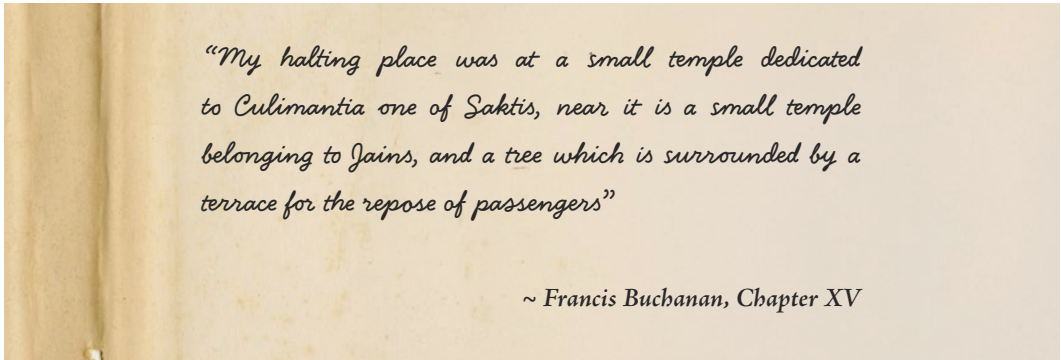


From the left: 1. Nethravati River during Monsoon; 2. Bambila small rivulet

Kavalakatte(Cavila-cuttay)



Now, it's a small stream flowing south and joining the Nethravati River near Manihalla. There are no traces of dam masonry work on it, and it flows freely.





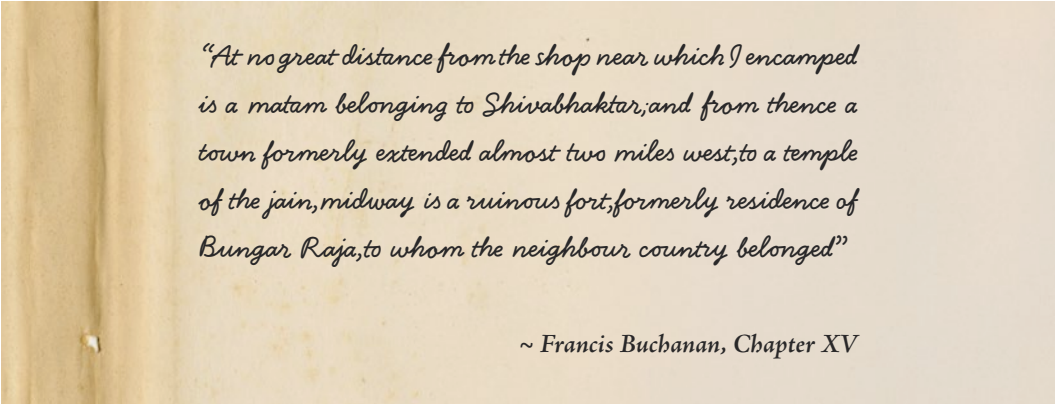
Rajandaiva Kodamanithaya Daiva, a small temple where Buchanan Halted at this place while during their journey towards Belthangady

Francis Buchanan mentioned this small temple (Kodamanithaya, misspelled as Culimantia) and Jain Basadi, as they halted at this place for a while during their journey toward Belthangady.



Digambar Jain Basadi

Belthangady (Bellate Angady)



According to Buchanan’s account, there is currently no trace of the Veerashaiva (Shivabhaktar) mutt. The only remaining structure is the Jain Basadi, now known as the Shri Shanthinatha Swamy Digambar Jain Basadi.

The Bungar (Banga Arasu) dynasty, ruling from Bangadi, a small hamlet approximately 15 kilometers from Belthangady, saw its fort and city destroyed during the Keladi Shivappa Nayaka period. Shivappa Nayaka then established his dominance in Tulava. Later, during the Tippu Sultan’s rule and the siege of Seringapatnam (Srirangapatna), the commandant of Jamalabad executed the Bunga Raja, suspecting his favor toward the English. His descendants reside in Nandavara, south of Bantwal.

I visited the present descendants of Bungar Raja (the current Banga Arasus), who reside in their ancestral capital region of Bangady (also spelled Bangadi). The locals still refer to them as the Arasu family, and they are traditionally invited to all significant daiva (spirit worship) ceremonies in the region. Their ancestral house is located near the Basadi.

It was a great privilege to meet the descendants of the Banga Arasu family, including Sri Raviaraja Ballal, who shared insights into their ancestry and the legacy of their rule. They trace their lineage back to the ancient Alupas, the rulers of Tulunadu, in what is now the undivided South Canara region. The Banga Arasus were a prominent Jain feudal family that governed the region from the 12th century until 1799 AD.

Their influence extended across four palaces, located in Bangady, Belthangady, Nandavara, and Mangalore (near the Sharavu Ganapathi Temple). The Banga Arasus also maintained matrimonial alliances with neighboring royal families, notably the Chowtas. Queen Abbakka Chowta, a legendary warrior queen, was married to Banga King Lakshmappa Arasa, further strengthening their dynastic ties.



From the left: 1. The present descendants of the Bungar Raja (Banga Arasu); 2. Present Historic Palace of Banga Arasu’s

The present palace, which was built in 1901, is home to the current descendants of Banga Arasu’s family living in Bangady, Belthangady Taluk.

Jamalabad Hill Fort

Jamalabad Fort, also known as Gadayikallu or Narasimhagada by locals, is located 8 kilometers from Belthangady on the Kudremukh range hills of the Western Ghats. Tipu Sultan re-erected the fort, strengthening its fortifications atop the hill. Accessible via a narrow path, the fort can be reached through approximately 1876 steps carved out of the granite hill.

After fortifying this stronghold, Tippu Sultan destroyed the fort at Mangalore to prevent European access, establishing this new town for both defensive and trade purposes.

Within the fort, there is a rainwater tank, and remnants of a single cannon are found at the summit. While much of the fortifications have disappeared, remnants of the fort wall with parapets are still visible.



From the left: 1. Gadayikallu Hill, also known as Jamalabad Fort Hill; 2. The fort built by Tipu Sultan at the entrance (Hebbagilu), Jamalabad Fort

Mundevu (Tulu)

Botonical: *Pandnus utilis*

It’s a common screwpine bush consisting of long, ribbon-like leaves with serrated edges, naturally found along rivers, streams, and near the seashore. In this region, the ribbon leaves are trimmed to remove the spines. They are then tendered over low fire and knitted into tubular shapes (cylindrical), traditionally used for cooking rice batter and urad in making Kotte Kadabu

Agriculture

The majority of the forest in Belthangady falls under Kudremukha National Park, a very sensitive area and one of the 38 hottest hotspots of biological diversity as designated by a UNESCO World Heritage site. Here, the people are fully engaged in agriculture along with dairy farming in almost every household, but water buffaloes are not seen as commonly as in the Ghat region.

Lush coconut groves stretch as far as the eye can see, their towering palms providing shade and shelter to the local fauna and flora. The coconut is a staple in South Canara cuisine for its distinct flavor, and coconut oil is also used for cooking, similar to the Malabar region. Although coconuts are abundant here, the maximum cultivation occurs in the Tumkur regions of Tiptur and Turuvekere.



From the left: 1. Mundevu bush; 2. Kudremukha hill ranges in Monsoon



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The majestic Kudremukha hills overlooking lush farmland 2. Labour farmer removing the coconut husk; 3. The streams running at a roar during the monsoon, serving as tributaries to the River Netravathi; 4. The power harnessed from the stream by the Malekudy tribals of Kudremukha Hill Range in Belthangady; 5. A typical Mangalore-tiled house in rural areas, with areca drying in the courtyard on dry days



From the left: 1.Black pepper harvesting from a plantation in Belthangady; 2.Harvested pepper

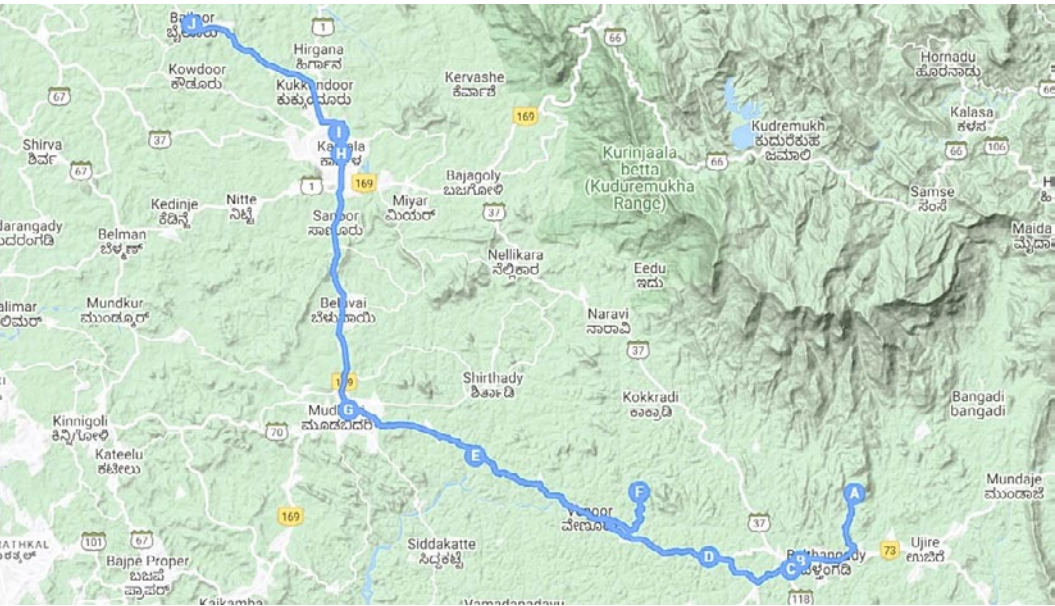
Here, cows are a mix of local and Jersey (a foreign breed) due to the surplus milk they produce. Rice is the main staple food and other crops like areca and rubber are extensively grown in this region.

Paddy cultivation is in decline, and farmers are favoring the farming of areca plantations and rubber due to their higher market prices. The average price of the white variety supari (Chaali) is Rs. 350-400 per kilogram, and it has even reached Rs. 500 per kilogram. Therefore, many farmers in this region have switched to areca plantations.

When Francis Buchanan visited here, the land was covered with grass and wild trees and bushes, and plain land with paddy agriculture was plentiful.



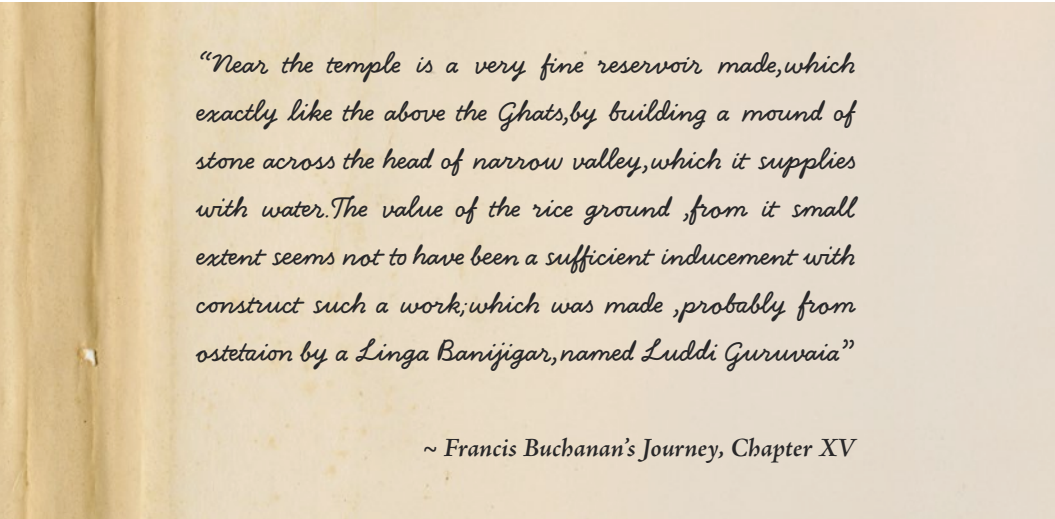
Coconut trees and paddy fields thriving together



Route from Jamalabad Fort Hill to Bailoor

Guruvayanakere

How was Guruvayanakere named?



~ Francis Buchanan's Journey, Chapter XV



Lake at Guruvayanakere



Buchanan mentioned a temple near Guruvayanakere, which he identified as belonging to a Jangama Mutt. Unfortunately, no trace of this Mutt exists in the region today. I continued my journey towards Venoor, crossing Hosangady, which Buchanan referred to as ‘Sopina Angady’.

Venoor (Einuru)

Located about 19 kilometers from its taluk headquarters, Belthangady, this small village sits on the banks of the Phalguni River (Gurupura River). The village retains remnants of its once-glorious past, with traces of old palaces and historical structures. One of its most remarkable landmarks is the towering 38-foot statue of Gommateshwara, along with a few ancient Basadis (Jain temples).

The Gommateshwara statue was commissioned in 1604 AD by Veera Thimanna Ajila IV, the ruler (Arasu) of Ajila Seeme. Venoor once served as the capital of the Ajila dynasty, which also



From the left: 1. Aladangady Palace, presently, descendants of the Ajilas resides: 2. Baraya Palace of Ajila's, Aladangady



had royal residences in Aladangadi, Kela, and Baraya. Today, the descendants of the Ajila family continue to reside in the Aladangadi palace. However, during my visit, I was unable to meet the present-day members of the Ajila lineage.

Intricate wooden carvings adorn the wooden pillars inside Baraya Palace

Moodabidre (Mudu Biddery)

Moodabidre, literally meaning “eastern bamboo area,” likely derived its name from the presence of luxurious bamboo forests that once flourished near this place. Situated amidst picturesque hills, it is often fondly referred to as the Jain Kashi or the Gateway of Jainism, owing to its long and illustrious history deeply intertwined with Jainism. The town boasts a plethora of ancient Jain temples, monasteries, and basadis.



From the left: 1. The Thousand Pillar Basadi, Moodabidre; 2. Majestic manastambha opposite the Thousand Pillar Basadi

The Chautas, a line of Jain local chiefs, had their capital at this place, with their descendants still residing in Moodabidre.

Additionally, Moodabidre is renowned for its educational institutions, including colleges and schools that offer quality education to students from various backgrounds.



Gommata (Bahubali) Statue, Karkala

Karkala (Carculla)

About 52 kilometers northeast of Mangalore lies Karkala, the headquarters town of the taluk of the same name. Karkala derives its name from a rock called Karikal, meaning “Black Stone.” The town was historically ruled by the powerful Jain kings, the Byrarasu Wodeyars (Bhairarasa Wodeyars).

Karkala is home to a large colony of Gouda Saraswat Brahmins who migrated from Goa. The Jain rulers built the large Venkataramana Temple to allow the Gouda Saraswaths to pursue their traditions.

One of Karkala’s most iconic landmarks is the gigantic monolithic statue of Gommata, also known as Bahubali. This 42-foot tall statue was installed by Veera Pandyadeva, a ruler of the Bhairarasa family, in 1432 AD. Additionally, many other Basadis (Jain temples) can be seen in the area.

Buchanan further crossed Beiluru (Bailoor), where the terrain consists of granite rocks. I observed vast paddy fields interspersed with arecanut plantations, with pepper vines climbing the arecanut trees. Continuing my journey, I reached Hiriyaadka, a town located about 15 km from Udupi.

Hiriyaadka (Haryadika)

Hiriyaadka, located about 15 km from Udupi, is renowned for the Shri Veerabhadra Swamy Temple, built during the Vijayanagara period.

Between Bailoor and Hiriyaadka, I visited an old Jangama Mutt, which is believed to have been built during the Vijayanagara period. However, upon inquiring with the head of the mutt, he mentioned that it dates back even earlier, to the Hoysala period. The mutt is situated about 200



Clockwise from the top left: 1, 2 & 3. Hiriyadaka Kondadi Jangama Mutt, Hiriyadka; 4. Bhoota (spirit) worship of Kallurthi and Korathi Daiva inside the matha, a picture from Pangala Jangama Mutt, Kapu

meters off the main road and possesses land that was likely donated during the Vijayanagara or Keladi period.

At the heart of the mutt stands a Linga of Siddeshwara Swamy, adorned with a metal-faced image, placed in the central courtyard. The entrance features a thick mud masonry wall, which, judging by its construction, appears to be quite old. The head of the mutt also showed me some antique artifacts preserved within the premises.

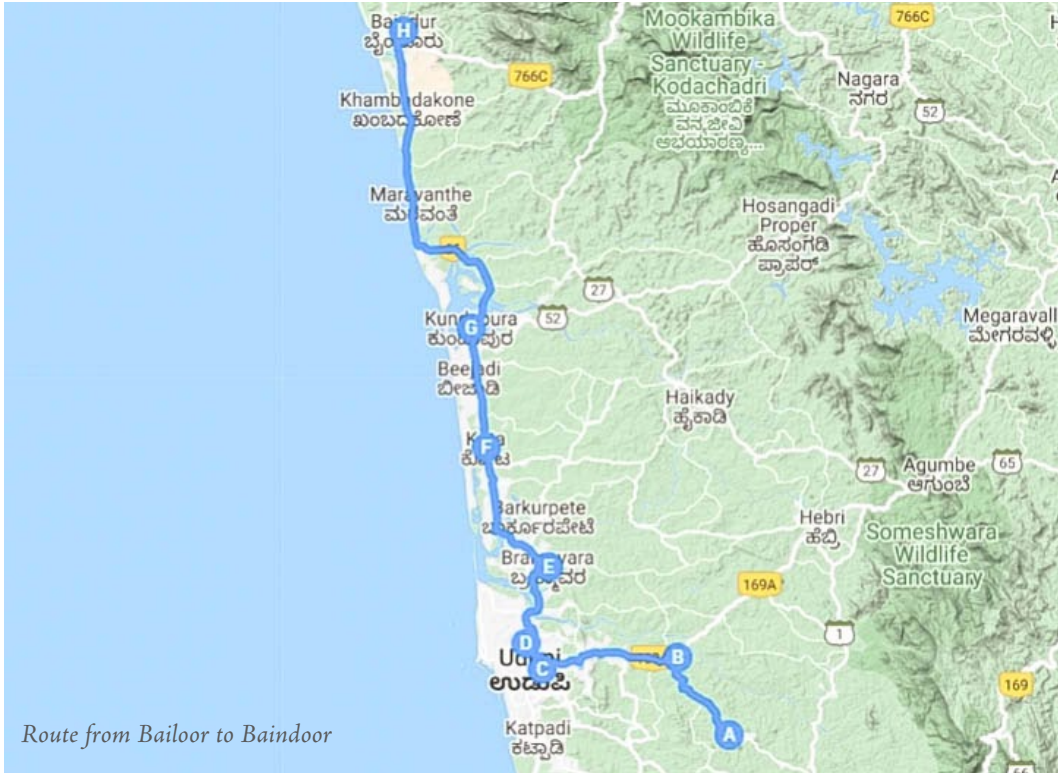
It was fascinating to learn about the Jangama community of coastal Karnataka, who have settled across various mutts in the region. They likely migrated here during the Hoysala or Vijayanagara period and later received generous donations from the Keladi rulers. Even today, they are well-versed in Kannada as their mother tongue, while Tulu serves as their commercial language.



From the left: 1. In earlier days, male buffaloes (Kona in Kannada) were traditionally used for ploughing paddy fields; 2. Manually harvesting paddy in the field

Over time, they have assimilated into the local traditions, including aspects of Bootha (spirit) worship, like other Hindu communities. Their dietary practices also align with the local customs, maintaining strict vegetarianism.

I then continued my journey towards Udupi. An interesting observation was Manipal, which is now a bustling suburb of Udupi. During Buchanan's time, Manipal did not even exist as a settlement. Today, it has transformed into a world-class educational and medical hub, attracting students from across India and abroad. The region's demographics have also changed significantly over the years.



Route from Bailoor to Baindoor

Udupi

Udupi is located 58 kilometers north of Mangalore and is renowned as a major pilgrimage center, primarily for the sacred Sri Krishna Temple. The name Udupi is believed to have originated from the word Udupa, meaning “moon,” and is associated with the establishment of the Chandramouleshwara Temple.

There are eight mathas (Ashta Matha) that pertain to the Madhwa tradition and hold authority over the Krishna temple. Additionally, there is the oldest temple in the region, the Ananteshwara temple, located near the Krishna temple. It is said to have been built by the Alupas and is considered one of the oldest temples in the region.



From the left: 1. Another glimpse of Udupi Sri Krishna Mutt; 2. Ananteshwara Temple, Udupi

“After getting within sight of the sea near Udupi, the country becomes more level, and the town is finely cultivated. The rice fields are beautifully intermixed with palm gardens. Such a delightful location has been chosen as the chief seat of the Tuluva Brahmans of the Madhwa sect.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XV

Udupi has now become an epicenter for many educational institutions. The city is rapidly expanding, and Manipal, a suburb of Udupi located 5 kilometers away, is home to a regional technology hub, as well as educational and medical institutions. This attracts students not only from within India but also from all over the world.



A laterite stone quarry near Moodabidre for representation

He also mentioned the laterite stone “*The strata of Granitie, however, are mostly covered by the Laterite*”.

Laterite stones are available abundantly and are used for construction purposes such as houses and other buildings. Laterite, regardless of its origin, often appears as hardened ferruginous red clay with a perforated or cellular structure, making it the ordinary building material of

the country. It varies greatly in quality; some of it is so soft and friable that it is practically useless, while in other localities it can be safely used even for bridgework if care is taken in its selection.

Corar (Corawar)-Koraga Community

In his Udupi expedition, Buchanan mentioned the Korava/Koraga (Corar/Corawar) community.

“Having assembled some of the corar, or corawar, who under their chief Hubashica are said to have once been masters of Tulava, I found that they are now all slaves. They engaged in making of coir, or rope from coconut husks, various kinds of baskets from Ratans and climbing plants and mudwalls.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XV



From the left: 1. In search of creepers for raw material for basket weaving; 2. A Koraga couple weaves tradition into every basket, using the bounties of the forest



Currently, a few members of the Koraga community still engage in basket weaving, making items like Hedige (Pudaayi), Gerase (thadpe), Kudpu, thattikudpu, Perarpikuruve, and many other kinds of baskets. Farmers in the region continue to use these handicrafts for agricultural and household purposes.

Malpe is a fishing harbor near Udupi approximately 6Kms from Udupi towards the west and it is situated at the mouth of the Udyavara River. The place has fascinating natural scenery an been center for commercial activities for a long time. There are four rocky islands to the west of it – Coconut Island(St Mary Island), Northern Island, Daria Bahadugar Island, and South Island.



From the left: 1. Fishing Harbour, Malpe; 2. Indian mackerel fish



Igneous Rock Formations Created by Volcanic Activity at St. Mary's Island

St Mary's Island, Malpe

The stones on this island are very distinctive in nature and consist entirely of flat-lying under formed high silica rhyolites (Igneous rock) as this formed due to the Volcanic activity associated with the break-up of Greater India (India & Seychelles) and the eastern part of Madagascar that got rifted a million of years ago.

There is also a shipbuilding company adjacent to the fishing harbor that builds ocean vessels and tugboats for the oil and gas, and other marine industries. Additionally, there are many marine export companies and fish oil processing companies around Malpe town.

Brahmavara

It is now a taluk center located approximately 13 kilometers north of Udupi and it is accessible via NH 66 Highway. NH 66 connects from Cape Comorin to Panvel near Mumbai in the east, running parallel to the Western Ghats.

Interestingly, up to this town, people speak inter mix of Tulu and Kannada as their mother tongue. Further north, the predominant dialect shifts to Kundapura Kannada, a dialect of the Kannada language.



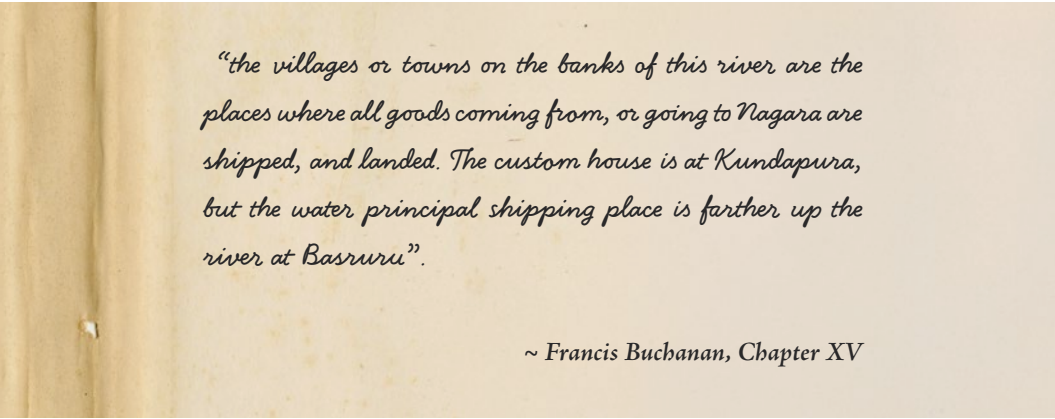
Vinayaka Cashew industries, Karje Udupi

Kota

It is about 25 kilometers north of Udupi and is a center for a sect of Brahmins called Kota Brahmins, named after this place. There is an Amritheshwari temple here, whose priests belong to the Natha Pantha tradition. There are many cashew nut processing industries located between Bhramavara and the Kota region.

Kundapura

It is the headquarters town of a taluk in Udupi district. The town’s name can be traced to the Kundeshwara Temple, built by Kundavarma of the Alupa dynasty near the Panchagangavalli River. It served as the principal port of the Rajas of Baindoor and gained prominence after the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire. The Portuguese settled here in the 16th century and built a fort.



The Halady River, flowing from the Western Ghats to the Arabian Sea, was once a vital waterway for ship navigation. The ancient city of Basarur was a prominent trading center, well known to the Greeks and Egyptians, along with the port of Mangalore. It reached its peak during the Vijayanagara period and later under the Keladi rulers, who governed Malenadu, the coastal regions, parts of the Deccan (Maidan) region of Karnataka, and some areas of Kerala.

Historical records mention Basarur as a significant maritime trade hub during the Keladi dynasty, facilitating exports and imports through this inland port. Goods were transported to the Keladi capital, Nagara (also known as Bidanur Nagar), via the Hosangady Pass (Ghat Road). Rice was the chief export commodity from this port city.

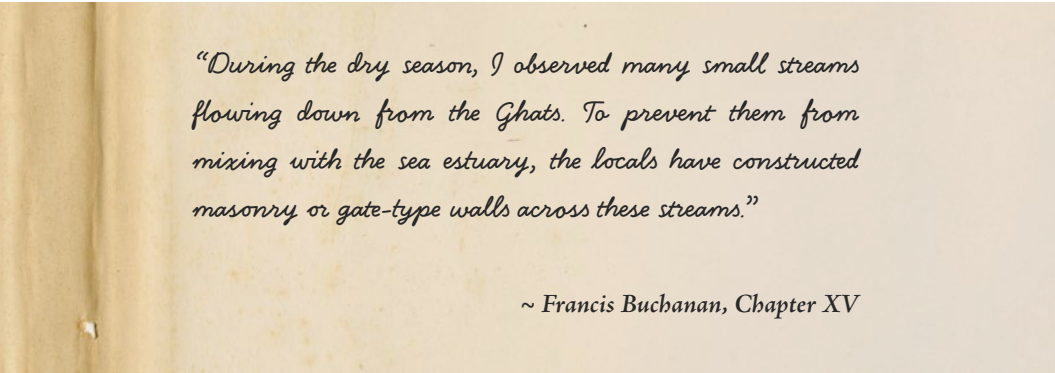
Now, it is a quiet town with a picturesque village on the banks of the Halady River (also known as the Varahi River), home to several heritage sites. The village is surrounded by lush green paddy fields and coconut plantations, with small river islands dotting the Halady River. Along its banks, a few Mangalore roof tile factories still stand, reflecting its past industrial activity.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Glimpse of Halady Holay (Stream); 2. Gulvady Dam, which pumps water during the offseason to irrigate nearby regions in summer; 3 & 4. Few glimpses of the Haladi River stream with islands, Basrur-Kundapura



The town holds historical significance, with several ancient temples and religious sites. These include the Shree Mahalingeshwara Temple, the 12th-century Nagareshwara Temple built by the traders of Basarur, and the Tuluveshwara Temple, where an ancient Shiva Linga remains under temple bushes with no structure built around it. Additionally, the town has several basadis and other religious institutions.



A similar type of bund, constructed using modern technology, has been built across the small stream. Once the water flow decreases, it prevents fresh water from mixing with seawater, ensuring its availability for agriculture.

There are also a few Mangalore clay tile factories along the Halady River stream, providing local employment. I visited Prabhakaran Tiles after crossing the Gulvadi Bridge and met the factory



From the left: 1. An old house featuring traditional mud masonry, later reinforced with embedded laterite stone. Renovated with a modern roof, this structure is estimated to be over 400 years above old; 2. A bund built across a small stream

head, Mr. Rakesh S. Soans. We discussed the history of tile-making, and he was fascinated by Buchanan's mention of his native place. He and his team were very welcoming and generously granted me permission to visit the manufacturing facility.



Glimpses of Prabhakaran, Mangalore clay Roof Tiles Factory, Gulvady near Kundapura



From the left: 1. Scraping excess clay after molding; 2. Cashew nut shells used as fuel for the kiln



From the left: 1. Molded tiles set for drying before kiln firing; 2. Finished tiles being transported

The production process here closely resembles what I observed at the Albuquerque Tiles in Mangalore. The factory produces a variety of clay products, including Mangalore roof tiles, earthen jars, ventilator bricks, earthen walls, and hollow bricks. Interestingly, they use cashew nut shells—a byproduct of the cashew processing industry—as fuel for baking the tiles, sourcing them in bulk to sustain their operations.

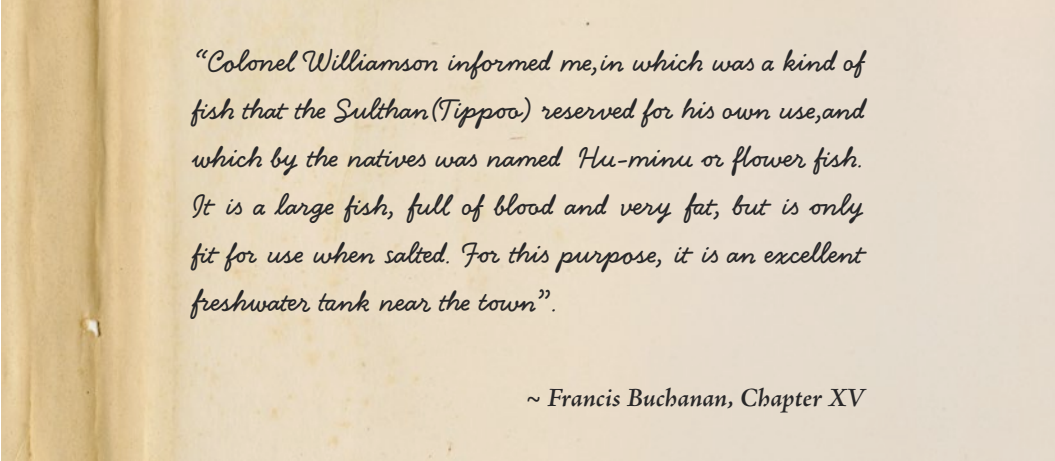
Humeenu (Hum-minu)

Buchanan mentioned a fish species called Humeenu, which piqued my curiosity. In search of this special fish, I began my journey to Kundapura town, asking several locals about it. Unfortunately, no one seemed to know about it, though a few were intrigued by the mention of this species.



Kotekere, Kundapura

During my visit to Prabhakiran Tiles, I discussed this with Rakesh Soans, whom I had met at the factory. He suggested that I should visit Kotekere (Latitude and longitude: 13.606924N, 74.674831E), near Kodi Beach, as that was the only information he had regarding it.



~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XV



Hoomeenu – From the Fish Directory

Kotekere, located near Kodi Beach and adjacent to the Mohiyuddeen Jumma Masjid, holds a fascinating history. An elderly man passing by directed me to a lake near the masjid, recalling how, during his childhood in the colonial period, it was well-maintained and in good condition. He mentioned that back then, only higher-grade policemen and

Kotwals were allowed to catch this particular fish, which was known for its large size. With a hint of humor, he remarked, “If Tipu liked it, you can imagine how good it must have tasted!”—suggesting the high demand for this fish species.

Today, however, Kotekere’s water appears greenish and suffers from a lack of maintenance. When I spoke to local fishermen, they mentioned that this fish is now rarely found in their catches. Despite searching, I was unable to spot one myself. Later, another fisherman shared a few old photographs, offering a glimpse of what was once a prized catch in these waters.

Buchanan mentioned met a learned Brahmin, Ramuppa Varmika (Varnika), likely a Goud



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Panchagangavalli River meeting the sea, Kundapura; 3. A ferry boat operator at the opposite end of Gangolli; 4. Gangolli Bunder – a heap of prawns ready for sale

Saraswat Brahmin, whose family has served as hereditary Shanbogas or accountants in the Barkur region. They served under the Vijayanagara, later Baindoor Rajas, and then the Keladi dynasty. Their lineage includes a succession of Rajas from Kadamba Rajas to the British possession of Srirangapattana. This is an interesting piece of historical documentation for today’s historians.

I continued my journey to the river mouth of the Panchagangavalli, which separates Kundapura from Gangolli—an ancient port with a rich maritime history. The area was bustling with tourists, many of whom were enjoying adventure boat rides to the estuary.

On the banks of the river estuary, I came across a private fish boat manufacturing unit, where small boats made of metal and polyfiber were being built.

I then crossed the Panchagangavalli River by boat and reached Gangolli on the other side. Here, I visited the fish market, where fishermen bring in their fresh catch from the sea and sell it in bulk. Many traders from across the coast arrive here to purchase and transport the fish, making it a significant hub for the region’s seafood trade.

Byndoor (Beindur)



View of Byndoor River meeting the sea near Someshwara Beach

Buchanan continued his journey towards Byndoor, crossing Kirimanjeshwara, which he described as a Brahmin Agrahara. However, today, only a few houses remain on either side of NH66. To the right, vast paddy fields stretch across the plain landscape, while on the left, coconut groves extend towards the sea. After crossing Yadamavu (which Buchanan referred to as Edamavany), the river flows into the sea at Gangebailu Beach near Koderi. Further along, another river, known today as the Byndoor

River (which Buchanan mentioned as Angaru), marks the beginning of Byndoor. At the river’s mouth, a small hill rises beside the sea, where the Someshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, stands. The hill’s tabletop-like formation resembles the geological features commonly found in Bhatkal and its surrounding areas..



Byndoor, located 90 kilometers north of Kundapura, was once a prominent town under the rule of the Alupa dynasty. After their decline in the 14th century, the region came under the administration of Jaina princess Chennabhairadevi of Haduvalli, famously known as the Pepper Queen. Portuguese traveler Barbosa recorded Byndoor as an important port, particularly for its rice exports. With its natural harbor and strategic location, it served as a crucial trade center, linking the coastal and Malnad regions to international markets.

Bronze statue of Channabhairadevi



Chapter XVI

Journey through the Northern Parts of Canara



This chapter follows Francis Buchanan’s journey through the northern Canara region, offering a detailed account of its maritime trade, religious significance, and geographic features. Buchanan documented Bhatkal as a prominent sea trading center where Jainism once flourished. In Honnavara, he recorded the crossing of the Sharavathi River and the fortified Basavarajadurga island. Traveling through Kumta, he noted the backwater issues affecting paddy cultivation and mentioned the Aghanashini River (Thari Holay). The journey highlights Mirjan Fort’s role as a key trading center, the salt pans of Sanikatta near Gokarna, and the historical and religious prominence of Gokarna. The Gangavali River marked the division between the Havyaka and Konkan regions.

Buchanan then traveled through Ankola and Sadashivgad, at a time when Karwar was not yet a major center. Along the Kali River, he documented the landscape long before the emergence of major projects in the region, including the construction of the Kadra Dam and the Kaiga Atomic Power Station. The journey also covers the historical significance of Sadashivgad Fort, a strategic location in the coastal belt.

Leaving behind the coastal belt, the journey ascends into the Ghats, passing through the historic lands of Sonda and Ikkeri, eventually reaching Hyder-Nagara—territories once ruled by powerful chieftains who shaped the region’s history.



Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Through the Northern Parts of Canara

- 1 Bhatkala (Batculla)
- 2 Shirali (Shiraly)
- 3 Murdeshwara (Murodeswara)
- 4 Bailur (Beiluru)
- 5 Honnavar (Honawera)
- 6 Haldipura (Hulledy-pura)
- 7 Kumta (Cumty)
- 8 Mirjan (Mirzee)
- 9 Hiregutti (Hirigutty)
- 10 Gokarna (Gaukarna)
- 11 Ankola (Ancola)
- 12 Chendiya (Chandya)
- 13 Karwar (Cadwada or Carwar)
- 14 SadashivGhad (Sedasiva-ghur)
- 15 Gopashitta (Gopi-chitty)
- 16 Kadra (Caderi)
- 17 Devakar (Deva-kara)

Bhatkal (anglicied: Batuculla)

On December 27, 2024, I visited Bhatkal town, which is a taluk center located 126 km from its district headquarters, Karwar. Bhatkal is situated at the southernmost point of the district. It is believed that the town got its name from the Jain saint Bhatta Akalanka, who lived during the 9th century. However, some suggest that the name is derived from its topography, with ‘Batta’ meaning circular and ‘Kala’ meaning arena in Kannada, as the original town on the seacoast had a circular layout surrounded by hills.

Bhatkal was one of the ancient and prominent port towns along the Karnataka coast. In European maritime maps, it was marked as ‘Bateculla,’ while Basrur appeared as ‘Barcelor,’ and Honnavar as ‘Onor.’ The town is located on the northern bank of the Chowtani River, also known as Sharabi, as documented in the Gazetteer. Buchanan referred to it as a small stream called ‘Sancada-gonda.’

Bhatkal served as an important port during the Vijayanagara Empire and was a hub for exporting iron ore, rice, and pepper. The foreign traveler Barbosa documented it as a significant port for importing horses.

There are fine Basadis, temples, and mosques



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Top view of the sea coast; 2. A street in Bhatkala with tiled-roof houses; 3. A view overlooking the town's terrain



Kettappa Nayakana Chandranatha Basadi



From the left: 1.Kettappa Nayakana Chandranatha Basadi; 2 & 3. A glimpse of Jattappa Nayakana Chandranatha Basadi, Bhatkal

in Bhatkal town. Among the notable Jain Basadis are Jatappa Nayakana Chandranatheshwara Basadi, Jatigeshwara Basadi, and Parshwanatha Basadi.

Important Hindu temples in Bhatkal include the Channapatna Anjaneya Temple, Choleswara Temple, Pashupathinatha Temple, Venkataramana Temple, and Khetpai Narayana Temple, among others.

The Jamia Masjid, also known as Chinnada Palli, is believed to have had its Kalasa (final) donated by the Keladi rulers. Another significant mosque is the Khalifa Jamia Masjid, which was documented by Francis Buchanan, who noted that during his time, only two mosques existed in Bhatkal. Today, many mosques have been built across the town.

Buchanan also mentioned the Muslim community in Bhatkal, describing them as wealthy traders engaged in commerce across different coastal regions while maintaining their homes and families in Bhatkal.

The Nawayaths are the ethnic Muslim community predominantly residing in Bhatkal. Their language, cuisine, and culture differ from the Beary Muslim community of South Canara. They speak Nawayathi, a dialect of Konkani mixed with Persian and Arabic influences.

As I passed through the main road of the old city, I observed the grand architecture of Nawayath Muslim community houses, along with many shops and bakeries run by them.

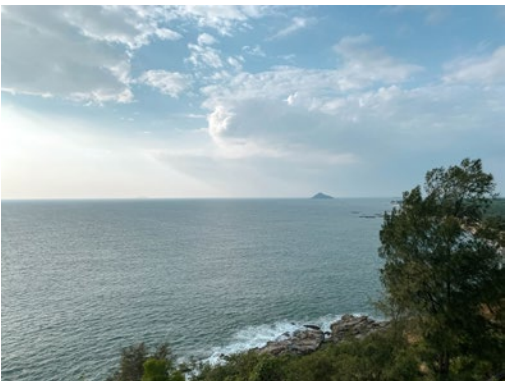
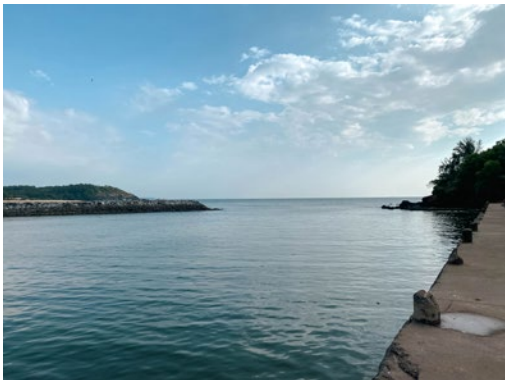
Buchanan documented that in Bhatkal, there was no Bunt (Bantara) community, and the Tulu language was not spoken in this region. The primary languages spoken here are Kannada and Nawayathi. Bhatkal falls under the Higa region, where most farmers belong to the Havyaka Brahmin community, along with other communities such as the Halepaikas (Naik community).

It is true that Tulu is not spoken in the northern coastal region. Its influence extends only up to Brahmavara in Udupi district. Beyond this, the predominant language is Kannada (Kundapura dialect).

The Havyaka Brahmins form a significant community in the Uttara Kannada (North Canara) region, traditionally engaged in agriculture. However, the younger generation has transitioned into various professions, including IT, banking, trading, and jobs abroad. Similarly, the Halepaikas (Naik's) continue to be involved in agriculture, along with other occupations.

I then visited the Bunder of Bhatkal, where many fishing boats were docked. The local fishermen mentioned that this old port had served as a center for trade and commerce for centuries. Adjacent to the Bunder, a small hill still holds the remains of a fort, located near the lighthouse.

I interacted with several workers on the fishing trawler boats, including migrant laborers from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and other regions, along with local fishermen.



Clockwise from top left: 1. Fishing boats anchored in the harbor; 2. Chowtani River discharging into the sea; 3. Fishing boats heading to the sea along the river mouth; 4. View of Hog Island from Bhatkala Lighthouse



Near the Bunder, a small hilltop houses the Kutumeshwara Temple, with a lighthouse standing adjacent to it. The public can access the lighthouse by paying a fee, and from the top, one can witness the Chowtani River's mouth merging with the Arabian Sea, with numerous fishing boats moving in and out of the dock.

Shirali (Shiraly)

On the same day, I visited Shirali en route to Honnavar after crossing the Venkatapura River, which Buchanan referred to as Shirali Tari. He mentioned that the river originates from a temple in the Ghats named Bhimeshwara.

It is true that the Venkatapura River flows across the Western Ghats in Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts of Karnataka. Originating near the Bhimeshwara Temple in Sagara (Shimoga district), the river descends from the Ghats into the valley and eventually joins the Arabian Sea at Alvekodi (also known as Tenginagundi), near Shirali.

Near Shirali, there is an old Chitrapur Math, which belongs to the Saraswat Brahmins (Shaivite



From the left: 1. Tenginagundi Port at Alvekodi near Shirali; 2. Tenginagundi Bunder, where the Venkatapur River discharges into the sea

followers). It is located in Chitrapura village, situated to the east of Shirali.

Between Shirali and Bailur (referred to as Beiluru by Buchanan), the terrain is mostly flat with small hills and groves of *Calophyllum inophyllum* (Honne in Kannada / Ponne in Tulu). The seeds of this tree were traditionally used for hair oil and as a common lamp oil, but they are rarely used today. This tree is commonly found in the coastal regions of India.



Lord Shiva statue in Murdeshwara

The famous Murudeshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located between Shirali and Bailur. It attracts numerous pilgrims from across the country and is also a popular tourist destination, known for its pristine beaches and water sports.

Near Murudeshwara, there are two islands—Hog Island and Netrani Island, the latter situated farther to the southwest. Buchanan referred to Netrani Island as Pigeon Island in his writings.

Passing through Bailur, I continued towards Honnavar (Honawera), traveling along NH66, with vast paddy fields on both sides and small laterite hills dotting the landscape.

Honnavara (anglicized:Haonwera/Onore)

On the same day, I visited Honnavar, a taluk center in Uttara Kannada district and one of the major fishing ports in Karnataka, located approximately 85 km from its district headquarters, Karwar.

Honnavara is an ancient port city and a significant maritime trade center. During the colonial era, many warehouses were built by the Portuguese and the British. The port historically hosted foreign traders from the Arab world and later, from European nations. Several renowned travelers, including Ibn Battuta and Pietro Della Valle, have documented their visits to this place.



Honnavara



Clockwise from top left: 1. The bazaar of Honnavara near Bunder Road; 2. Fish market, Bunder; 3. An old elementary school adjacent to NH66; 4. Dried fish at the Bunder



Sharavathi River and a bridge connecting the mainland

“The lake is of great extent, and like that at Kundapura, contains many islands, some of which are cultivated. It reaches almost to the Ghats, and in the dry season is quite salt, but it receives many small streams, which during the rainy monsoon become torrents, and render the whole fresh. By the natives it is commonly called a river, but lake is a more proper term”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVI

Buchanan’s statement refers to the Sharavathi River, which discharges into the Arabian Sea at Honnavar. However, the question remains as to why he referred to it as a lake. One possibility is that he visited the region in late February, when the water level may have been low, resulting in minimal flow. Another possibility is that the river was temporarily cut off from the sea due to the absence of a continuous stream flow.

I walked along the banks of the Sharavathi River at Honnavar Bunder, where many fishing boats were docked, and fishmongers were selling a variety of fish. I also came across an old customs and port office, which is no longer operational, surrounded by shops and a bustling bazaar. During my visit, I interacted with a local fisherman, gaining insights into their daily livelihood.

Towards the east, at the mouth of the Sharavathi River, lies a fortified island -Basavaraja Durga built by Shivappa Nayaka of the Ikkeri Kingdom. I inquired with the locals about any ferry or small boats to access the island but was disappointed to learn that there is no regular service. Access is permitted only once a year, on Makara Sankranti (January 14th or 15th), when the government allows local ferry and boat services for devotees visiting Jattiga, a local spiritual deity worshipped on the island. It is believed that this deity provides protection to fishermen venturing into the sea.



Basavaraja Durga Fortified Island



Local fisherman captures a crab from a fresh stream near Honnavara, with glimpses of Crabs photo's



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Paddy fields sown during the Rabi season; 2. Outskirts of Honnavara en route to the seashore village; 3 & 4. Pristine Honnavara beach featuring a traditional boat

On my journey from **Honnavar to Kumta**, I passed through **Haldipura**, which Buchanan documented as **Huledy-pura**. Initially, this place was known as **Handipura**, but during **Hyder Ali's rule**, its name was changed to **Haldipura** for religious reasons. Along the way, I saw vast **paddy fields**, interspersed with **coconut and arecanut plantations** lining both sides of the road.

Kumta (anglicized:Cumty)

On December 28, 2024, I visited Kumta, a taluk center in Uttara Kannada district. The Aghanashini River flows to the north of Kumta and discharges into the Arabian Sea.

Historically, Kumta was a commercial trading center, as documented in the Bombay Gazetteer. During the American Civil War, when cotton supplies from the southern United States to



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Aghanashini River estuary; 3 & 4. Harvested paddy fields with adjacent coconut and arecanut plantations

English mills were disrupted, the mills began importing a variety of cotton known as ‘Kumta Hatti’. This demand contributed to the development of Kumta port.

However, a question arises—how did the Kumta coastal region produce such large quantities of cotton? It is likely that cotton was cultivated in the black soil-rich regions of Haveri and Gadag, located in the above-ghat regions, and then transported to Kumta for export.



A Chinese tombstone inside Shri Shantikaparameshwari Temple, Kumta

In Kumta, I visited the Shri Shantika Parameshwari Temple, and to my surprise, my eyes fell upon a peculiar stone tablet with Chinese inscriptions engraved on it. Intrigued, I captured an image of it and inquired with the temple administration, but unfortunately, they had little information about its history, even though it had been documented.

To learn more, I consulted my Chinese friends, who identified it as a tombstone belonging to a native of Guangdong, with the surname Zhang, Chang, or Chong, depending on the regional dialect.

This discovery raises a fascinating question—how is Kumta connected to Guangdong, China? Was it due to maritime trade, or did a Buddhist monk from China once travel to this region?

Francis Buchanan visited Kumta on February 24, 1801, and encamped on the south side of the river, opposite Mirjan, near a village called Heggade, which he documented as ‘Hegada’.

Here, the Aghanashini River, also referred to as Tari Holay, was mentioned by Buchanan in the same manner. The lowlands in this area are often prone to flooding, both due to the river’s swelling and the backlash of seawater.



Southern tombstone: John Albert Cope of London (died 11 April 1880), an engineer with the former Public Works Department; Northern tombstone: Henry Gassen of War Wik (died 16 May 1877) in Kumta

I observed a significant amount of areca, coconut, and paddy cultivation in this region. The weather in Kumta is notably more pleasant compared to South Canara, possibly due to its proximity to the Western Ghats and the cool sea breeze from the Arabian Sea.



In Villages, stone walls enclose elegant gardens; in villages, simple earthen fences—reminiscent of Malabar—mark humble plots

“About towns, many gardens are enclosed with stone walls; in villages, the proprietors are contented with fences of earth, like those in Malabr.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVI



Gujiny land

Near Heggade and on the opposite side of the Aghanashini River, several small villages have gardens enclosed by stone (laterite) walls. What Buchanan documented during his visit remains unchanged, as I observed the same type of stone-enclosed gardens in many villages across this region

“the Betel-nut garden are cultivated, at a distance from the banks of rivers, in the upper ends of narrow vallies, which contains shining particles, which I take to be mica. This soil is called cagagdala. next value to this is Gujiny”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVI

My friend, who resides in **Kumta**, took me early in the morning to the banks of the **Aghanashini River (Tari Holay)**, which Buchanan described as **Gujiny land**. It was easy to understand Buchanan's reference—**Gujiny lands** are **swampy areas saturated with seawater**, rendering them **uncultivable**. However, adjacent to these wetlands, **paddy fields thrive**, and slightly higher up, **arecanut plantations intercropped with pepper** can be seen.

Mirjan (anglicized:Mirzee)

Then, I visited Mirjan, located on the northern bank of Tari Holay (Aghanashini River). Buchanan referred to this place as Midijay, and over time, under Muslim rule, its name was corrupted into Mirzee, Merzee, and Merjawn.

Mirjan Fort is a historical defensive fort, initially built by the Gersoppa rulers under the



Glimpse of Mirjan Fort, built entirely from locally sourced laterite stones



Mirjan Fort

Vijayanagara Empire. Several Jain inscriptions and Hindu temple remains can still be seen inside the fort. After the fall of the Gersoppa rulers, the Bijapur Sultanate conquered the region, and Sharif-ul-Mulk, the governor of Ponda, either built or renovated the fort, making Mirjan the headquarters of their Mahal.

The Mirjan Fort, constructed with laterite, has four entrances, each with broad steps. Inside the fort, there are nine wells, a secret escape route, one main entrance, and two additional entrances. The remains of a large darbar hall and an old marketplace can also be seen within the fort complex.

Then, I went to the banks of the Aghanashini River (Tari Holay) and visited a small village called Chatrakurve, located south of Mirjan Fort. The entire village belongs to the Patagar community, and its members typically carry the surname Gowda. They are primarily found in Kumta, Honnavar, Siddapura, and Sirsi, and their mother tongue is Kannada.



From the left: 1. Chatrakurve village, located south of Mirjan Fort; 2. Paddy grass storage



From the left: 1. Jatakeshwara Temple, dedicated to a local spiritual deity ; 2. A street in Chatrakurve village;

Gokarana

Then, I continued my journey towards Gokarna, crossing Hiregutti, which Buchanan documented as Hirigutti. In his writings, he recorded the history of the Haiga Brahmins (Havyaka Brahmins), detailing their migration from Ahichatra to this region. He also mentioned the Jain rulers who once ruled the below-ghat regions from Gersoppa.



After passing Hiregutti, I took a westward deviation to reach Gokarna, traveling through vast paddy fields on flat land, interspersed with coconut gardens. The westernmost edge of this plain is marked by a ridge of low, barren hills, which curve towards the sea, forming a natural divide between the riverbank plain and the land leading to Gokarna.

While passing to Gokarna, I passed through Sanikatta, where I saw numerous salt-making pans. Sanikatta is one of the oldest salt-producing regions in India, covering nearly 500 acres of salt pans. I visited a cooperative society where salt is extracted from seawater, sourced from the backwaters of the Aghanashini River.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Sanikatta natural salt pans; 2. A worker cleaning the salt pans before summer, preparing for the peak salt-making season (typically after February); 3. Office of the cooperative society; 4. Warehouse where salt is stored

The salt here appears brown and unrefined, a preferred choice among locals for culinary use. Fisherfolk in the region also favor this salt for drying fish. The cooperative society provides employment opportunities, especially for women, who work in the salt pans and processing plants. The salt-making process is seasonal, lasting six months, until the onset of the monsoon.

Due to its high demand, this salt is even exported to Bangalore, Mumbai, and other metropolitan regions, where locals from the area seek its distinctive quality.

Gokarna is one of the most important religious sites for Hindus, with Lord Shiva worshipped here in the form of Mahabaleshwara as the principal deity. Devotees from across the country flock to this holy town, which is lined with bazaars and mutts on both sides of the road.



A bustling street in Gokarna paired with a majestic temple chariot, capturing the town’s vibrant culture

At the Gokarna Bazaar, various religious offerings are sold, including Bhasma powder (sacred ash), colorful and fragrant benzoin, flowers, sweets, coconuts, and other items for worship.

Outside the temple stands a majestic temple chariot (Ratha) of great height, beautifully decorated with colorful cloths. The chariot’s wheels are massive, adding to its grandeur and spiritual significance.

The streets within the village are narrow and congested, with a significant Brahmin population,



A narrow street leading to Kotitheertha, with a stone inscription nearby



primarily consisting of **Havyaka Brahmins**, along with other Brahmin communities.

I then visited Koti Teertha, a large sacred tank that Buchanan had documented. He also mentioned the Shankaranarayana Temple, and a sketch of the Shankaranarayana idol is included in Chapter XVI of his work.



Koti theertha, Gokarna

Shankaranarayana represents the fusion of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu, similar to Harihara, but the idol here is notably small in size.

On the same day, I continued my journey to Ankola (Ancola), crossing the Gangavalli River, which Buchanan mentioned as the natural boundary separating Haiga (Haiva) from Konkan. This observation holds true, as after crossing the Gangavalli River, there is a noticeable shift in language and cultural traditions—unlike the Haiga region of Honnavar and Kumta, there is a greater presence of Konkani speakers in this area.



Near Kameshwara Mutt, a sketch of the Shankaranarayana idol documented by Francis Buchanan

The strata near Ankola is similar to that between Honnavar and Kumta. Further along, I passed through Chendiya, which Buchanan referred to as Chandya. Near this area, several housing complexes were under construction, primarily intended for naval defence quarters.



Gangavalli River



Karwar (Carwar/Cadawada)

On December 29, 2024, I visited Karwar city, traveling through small hills and a tunnel road before reaching Karwar. To the left, I saw pristine beaches, while on the right lay Karwar city, home to an Indian Naval base.

When Buchanan visited the region, he went to Sadashivgad instead of Karwar. It is believed that Karwar was destroyed during Tipu Sultan’s reign, though earlier, Kawada (Karwar) was a noted center for European commerce. Opposite Karwar, on the other side of the Kali River, stands Sadashivgad, which Buchanan referred to as the “River of Sadashivgad.”

During my visit, I observed that in urban Karwar, Konkani is the most widely spoken language,



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Approaching Karwar, showcasing the layered landscape strata; 2. Traditional fishing boats on the seashore; 3 & 4. Many islands visible from Karwar beach



A procession passed through the streets of Karwar with devotees

whereas in rural areas, people primarily speak Kannada. However, Kannada remains the official language, and most people are fluent in it.

Sadashighad (anglicized:Sadasiva-ghur)

Then, I visited Sadashivgad, located just opposite Karwar, on the northern bank of the Kali River estuary, where the river meets the Arabian Sea.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Sadashivgad, located just opposite Karwar on the northern bank of the Kali River estuary where the river meets the Arabian Sea; 2. Kali River estuary; 3. Sadashivgad hill fort: An archival photo from the internet; 4. A present-day image of Sadashivgad Fort Hill for comparison

The National Highway NH-66 runs across a bridge over the Kali River, and as it passes through, the road cuts through the Sadashivgad granite hill, serving as a key connection between Karnataka and Goa.

The Kali River estuary offers a breathtaking view from the bridge across the river. From a distance, it is evident that only half of the hill remains, as the western portion was removed for highway expansion, leaving only the eastern part intact.

This fort was named “Sadashivgad” by Basavalinga Raja of the Sonda chieftains, who ruled from Sonda near Sirsi.

I ascended the small hill from the eastern side, where a Dargah is located near the base of the



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Kali River view facing east with the Western Ghats in the background; 2. A bridge under construction; 3. Durgamma Temple midway on Sadashivgad Hill; 4. Near the temple, cast-iron cannons

hill. Midway up, I came across a Durga Temple, where locals mentioned that Maratha ruler Shivaji had once visited. Near the temple, I saw a few cast-iron cannons, likely dating back to the European colonial or Sonda period.

At the top of the hill, I observed the remains of the fort and its entrance gate, but the area is now occupied by the Karnataka Tourism Department and has been converted into private property for a Jungle Resort, restricting public access to the hilltop.



Remains of the fort and its entrance gate

Buchanan documented a **tribe of Konkan descent** called **Comparapeca**, which refers to the **Komparapanthis** community. They were followers of the **Sringeri Mutt** and were traditionally engaged as **cultivators and soldiers** in earlier times.

Buchanan also recorded an individual from this community, **Venja Nayaka**, who is believed to be **Henje Nayaka/Naik**. He was a **rebel against the British**, and **Tipu Sultan** had two of his sons **hanged**. When Buchanan visited **Karwar and Sadashivgad**, **Venja Nayaka** was still alive, and he wrote about him. However, in **1801**, he was killed by **Major Munro's** administration.

His tomb is located in **Karwar**, near the **main road of Kodibag**.

Then, I proceeded towards **Kadra**, located approximately **34 km east of Sadashivgad**, passing through **Gopashitta**, which Buchanan referred to as **Gopi-Chitty**. The **terrain in this region** is densely covered with **forests** and a diverse range of **tree species**.

Kadra (anglicized: Caderi)

Buchanan referred to **Kadra** as **Caderi**, which is now an important landmark where the **Kadra Dam (Kadra Reservoir)** has been built across the **Kali River** as part of a **hydropower project**. This plant generates **electricity with three Kaplan turbines**, each producing **50 MW (3 × 50 MW)**.

For security reasons, the Security authorities do not permit access to the top of the dam. However, the view can be seen from below the dam. During the **rainy season**, locals are allowed to cross the dam on top, as the **lower access route gets submerged due to excess water spillover**.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Kadra Dam built across the Kali River; 3. The downstream of the Kali River; 4. A road passage leading to Kadra village below the dam

In Kadra, I observed various **wild tree species**, including **bamboo**, which Buchanan documented in **Roxb. MSS**. Here are a few of the species I mentioned:

Buchanan Documented	Indian Names	Endemic Regions
Jambay, <i>Mimosa xylocarpon</i> (Roxb)	Arasu Tega (Kannada); Jamba (Konkani); Irul (Malayalam); Iruvel (Tamil); Erra Chinnagi (Telugu)	India, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand
<i>Terminalia alata</i>	Kare mathi (Bidlu mara)	India, Srilanka, Himalaya’s, Indo- China, Thailand and Myanmar
Biba, Holigarna, Buch: MSS	Holageru (Kannada); Ranbibo (Konkani); Karincheru (Malayalam); Ranbiba (Marathi); Karunceru (Tamil)	Western Ghats (India)
Caduma, the <i>Nauclea purpurea</i> Rox	Cadamba, Kadam, Kadamba (Kannada); Katampu	Tropical Asia, Australia
Ticay, Laurus cassia, Cabobchina	Chinese cinnamon	Southeast Asia



From the left: 1. View of Kaiga Atomic Power Station; 2. Path towards Devar, uphill, with dense forest lining the road

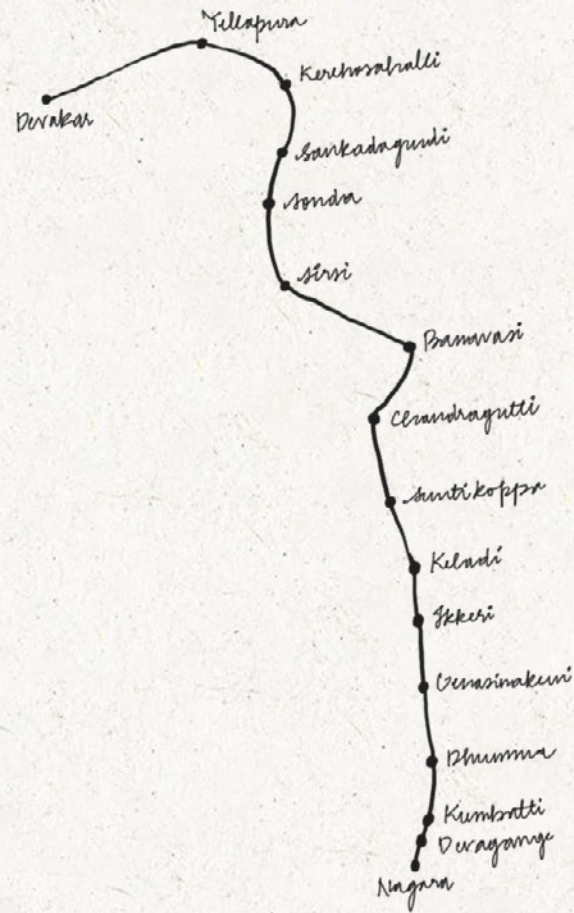


Paddy fields near Devakar

On leaving Kadra I further ahead towards east around 18kms reached Kaiga and there is a Kaiga Atomic power station its located adjascent to the Kali River, which has a power generate operational are 4x220MW Power generation comes under NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India) which is near to Devakar as Buchannan mentioned Devkar as Deva-kara. One has to cross the Kadra reservoir to reach the Devakar,only minimal movement of public vehicleaas with a dense forest and wild life.

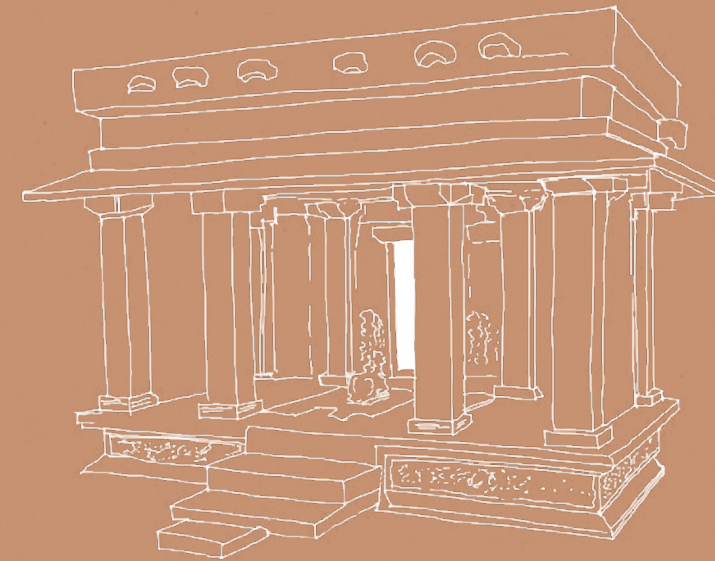
“Leaving behind Karwar and the coastal regions, the journey now enters the Ghat region, passing through the historic lands of Sonda and Ikkeri before reaching Hyder-Nagara. This route, once ruled by local chieftains, played an important role in the region’s history.

The next chapter explores the journey from the Karnataka coast into the Ghats, highlighting the landscapes, people, and the remains of past rulers.”



Chapter XVII

Journey from the entrance into Karnataka to Hyder Nagar, through the Principalities of Soonda and Ikkeri



Francis Buchanan's journey continues as he ascends into the Western Ghats through Devakara, where the Kali River, once a broad stream, narrows into smaller tributaries. Today, the landscape has changed with the addition of another dam—Kodasalli Reservoir—built alongside the existing Kadra Dam across the Kali River. Moving further into the hills, Buchanan compared the Western Ghats with the Eastern Ghats, mentioning Peddanayakana Durga. Through the rugged terrain, he observed vast areca nut and pepper plantations before approaching Yellapura, though it

remains a question why he omitted any mention of the Siddhi community.

Crossing the Bedthi River, he reached Sonda, a once-flourishing historical center known for its temples, monasteries, and royal palaces. Even today, Sonda retains its heritage, though many of its structures suffer from neglect. Buchanan continued to Sirsi, documenting the source of the Aghanashini River near Shankara Honda. From there, he proceeded to Banavasi, one of India's oldest capitals, predating recorded history, where magnificent monuments and artifacts make it a significant site for historians and archaeologists.

His journey then crossed the Varada River, leading him to Chandragutti, a prominent fort hill and religious site surrounded by dense forests and paddy fields. The region's agricultural wealth, centered around areca nut, paddy, and pepper cultivation, remained a defining feature. Buchanan then entered the heart of the Keladi dynasty, reaching Keladi town with its historically significant temples. Moving forward, he passed through Sagara, a major town in the Malenadu region, before arriving at Ikkeri—once the capital of the Keladi rulers. Ikkeri, which once housed nearly 10,000 residences, now remains a small hamlet with only the grand Aghoreshwara Temple standing as a testament to its past glory.

Continuing his exploration, Buchanan passed through Ghenasinakuni and Dhumma. While he recorded the Sharavathi River, the modern landscape has drastically transformed, with vast areas now submerged by the Linganamakki Reservoir and the Madenur Dam, which was built earlier. Finally, he reached Fateh-Petta, a place that has since disappeared, before concluding his journey at Nagara (Bidanur/Hyder-Nagara).

With this, Buchanan's journey through the Ghats comes full circle, linking his historical observations with the modern landscape. The rich legacy of the Keladi rulers, the transformation under Hyder Ali, and the breathtaking natural beauty of the Sharavathi region serve as enduring reminders of Karnataka's deep and layered history. This journey underscores the significance of preserving these historical sites so that future generations can continue to learn from and appreciate them.



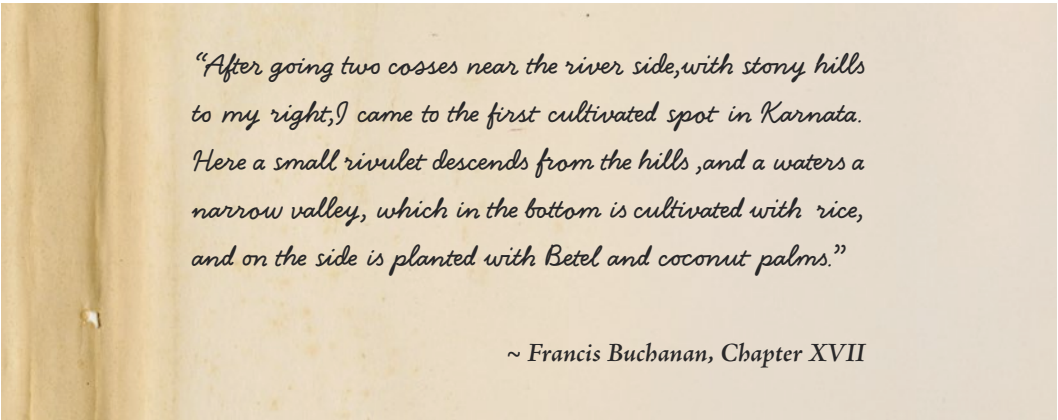
Devakar (Deva-kara)

On January 31, 2025, I began my journey from Sadashivgad, traveling towards Kaiga and reaching Devakar, located in the Kali River valley.

Buchanan mentioned that “on leaving Dava-kara, the valley watered by the Bidhati becomes very narrow.” However, this statement is incorrect. The Bedthi River, which originates near Dharwad, flows through Hubli and Kalghatagi before entering Uttara Kannada district between Yellapura and Sirsi. Near Harigadde (Latitude: 14.837791, Longitude: 74.739120), the Shalmala River joins the Bedthi River, and from there, it continues as the Gangavalli River.



Retracing Buchanan’s path: After passing riverside crossings with stony hills to my right, I reached Karnataka’s first cultivated spot, where a small rivulet descends from the hills and irrigates a narrow rice field valley



Buchanan camped near a valley called “Barabuli,” which is now known as Baraballi, located near Sathodi Falls. Today, some parts of this area are submerged under the Kodalalli Reservoir, which was built across the Kali River.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. A few glimpses of the River Kali near Kodalalli Reservoir; 3. Panoramic view of Kodalalli Reservoir, built across the Kali River



Sathodi falls near Baraballi

This region is deep within the forest, home to a variety of tree species. Due to Sathodi Falls, the area attracts many tourists, especially for hiking. However, during the rainy season, tourism is restricted due to the heavy influx of water from the southwest monsoon.

Buchanan also mentioned that the locals used the bark ashes of the Mutti tree, which they consumed along with betel leaves. This Mutti tree is known as Matti in Kannada.

Unfortunately, I couldn't find any locals who recognized the Mutti tree or its usage.

Further, Buchanan reached Cutaki, but I was unable to locate this place, either on the ground or on maps. It is likely that the name has changed over time or that it was a small settlement in the Western Ghats foothills, where the steep hills begin.



Buchanan compares this region to the Eastern Ghats, particularly the Pedda Naykana Durga Pass (near Venkatagiri on the Mangalore-Villupuram Highway) and Kaveripura Ghat. Unlike the rock-capped hills of the Eastern Ghats, the Western Ghats are densely covered with a variety of tree species and evergreen forests.

While ascending the hill, I passed through many forested areas, encountering a rich variety of flora.

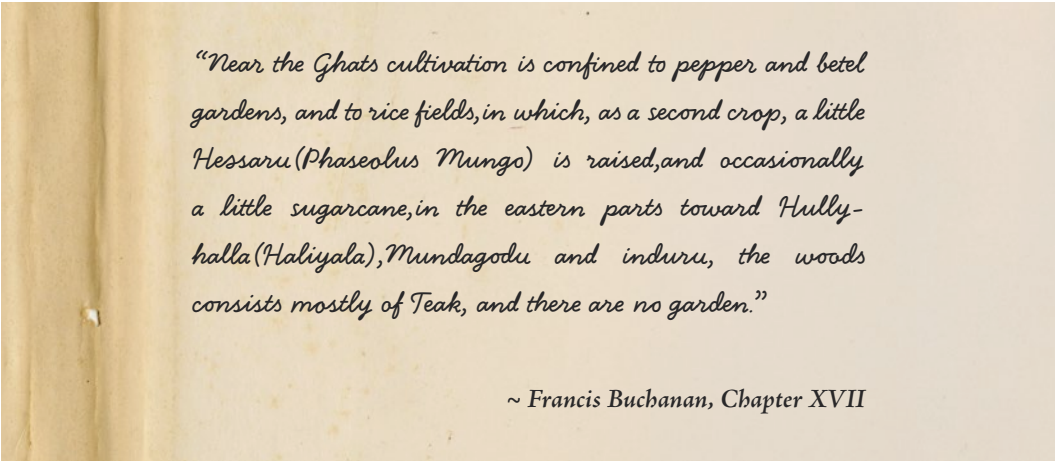
Buchanan also documented several tree species, some of which we previously discussed near Kadra. His records include both local and scientific names, providing valuable insight into the

biodiversity of the region.

Here, near Yellapura Taluk, I observed an abundance of teak trees (*Tectona grandis*), just as Buchanan had documented in his writings. Alongside teak, I noticed other species that are commonly found in the Western Ghats, including *Terminalia tomentosa* (Indian Laurel), *Lagerstroemia microcarpa* (Crepe Myrtle), and *Dalbergia latifolia* (Indian Rosewood). Many of these species were historically valued for timber and shipbuilding, a fact also mentioned in Buchanan's accounts.

Yellapura (Yella-pura)

I reached Yellapura on the same day, passing through the above Ghat region. Along the way, I passed through several villages with extensive areca nut (betel nut) plantations and paddy fields.



Yellapura is now a taluk center located in the up-ghat region of Uttara Kannada district, situated 96 km from its district headquarters, Karwar.

While traveling towards Yellapura town, I saw many people from the African Siddi community, both near and within the town. In India, people of African origin are known as Siddis. Their migration likely took place during the Portuguese and Arab trade era, when they were brought from the eastern coast of Africa, possibly as laborers or soldiers.



From the left: After approaching the ghat region—1. Paddy fields interspersed with sugarcane; 2. Arecanut plantation

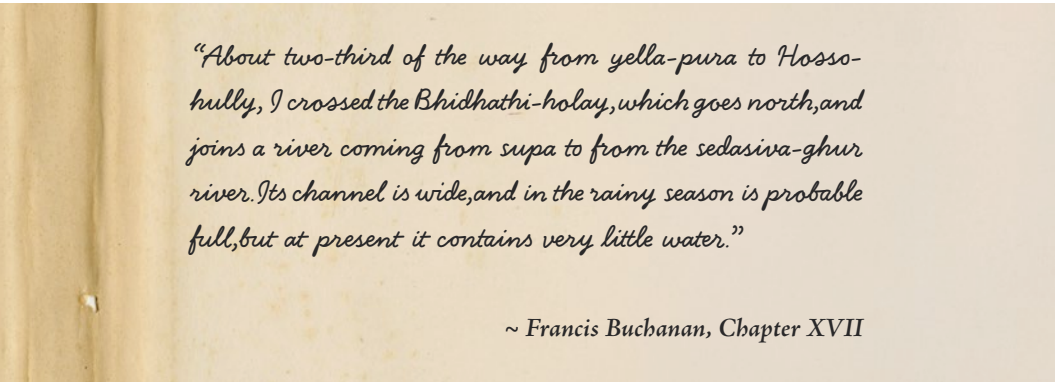


A Siddi woman near Yellapura. Photo taken with her permission

Over time, many Siddis joined the military and took up other professions, but some later escaped and settled in the dense forests of the Western Ghats for reasons unknown. Eventually, they began working in the agricultural fields of Havyaka Brahmins.

Among the Siddis, some follow Catholicism, some Hinduism, and others Islam. The Hindu Siddis worship their ancestors along with other Hindu deities.

Interestingly, Buchanan did not mention this community during his expedition near Yellapura, which makes their history in this region even more intriguing!



~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVII



Bhedthi River and the bridge spanning it. During the monsoon, the river's intensity is evident from the driftwood and bushes scattered along its bank near the bridge

After passing Yellapura, I proceeded towards Sirsi via the Yellapura-Sirsi State Highway 93. Buchanan recorded passing through a small village called “Caray Hoso-Hully,” which is now known as Kerehosahalli (Latitude: 14.904627, Longitude: 74.840328).

Along the way, I crossed a stream of the Bedthi River, which Buchanan referred to as Bhidathi Holay. After traveling a short distance, I took a left from SH-93 near the Halligadde Temple Cross. From there, after 9 km, I reached Kerehosahalli, which remains a small village, just as Buchanan described. The settlers here originally migrated from the Maratha region, and even today, their presence is evident.

Continuing further, I passed Ummachagi and, about 1 km ahead, reached Sankadagundi (Latitude: 14.806196, Longitude: 74.830667), which Buchanan documented as Sancada-gonda.

At the time of his visit, only three houses existed in this village. Today, it has grown into a small settlement with 60–70 houses, surrounded by thriving areca plantations.

Sonda (Soonda/Sudha/Sudhapura)

On February 1, 2025, I reached Sonda after passing through vast areca nut plantations and paddy fields on both sides of the road.

I crossed the Tudguni Bridge, which spans a stream that merges with the Shalmala River near Sonda. Further downstream, the Shalmala River joins the Bedthi River, eventually forming the Gangavalli River.

Sonda holds great historical significance, as it was ruled by the Sonda Nayakas from 1400 to 1764. They governed large parts of Uttara Kannada, wielding power over territories between the Sharavathi and Kali rivers below the Ghats, as well as the entire region above the Ghats. Their rule also extended to parts of Soraba and Sagar taluks in Shimoga, along with certain areas of Goa.

Initially, under Arasappa Nayaka, the Sonda Nayakas were followers of Jainism. However, during the reign of Raghunatha Nayaka, they embraced Veerashaivism. The Sonda Nayakas frequently revolted against the Keladi (Ikkeri) Nayakas, who were their neighbors, but they maintained friendly relations with the Portuguese.



From the left: On the way to Sonda, 1. Shalmala River; 2. A layered view of paddy fields and arecanut plantations



Views of pepper and arecanut plantations



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Path leading to the remains of Sonda Fort; 2. Inner fort entrance with dilapidated walls; 3. Kote Anjanesya/Hanumanatha near the fort remains; 4. A stone Lion statue dedicated to Goddess Durga from the Sonda period



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. A Shiva temple facing north, attributed to the Sonda chiefs; 3. A king's seat sculpted from stone; 4. Cannons surrounded by a moat and fort wall

The Queen of Belavadi (in Belagavi district), who defied Shivaji in 1677, is believed to have been a princess from the Sonda royal family.

In 1763, when Hyder Ali conquered Sonda, Sadashiva II (Immadi Sadashiva Raja) fled to Portuguese-controlled Goa and sought their protection. With this conquest, Sonda's territories in Uttara Kannada fell into the hands of Hyder Ali.

The present descendants of the Sonda Kings reside in the Shivrith Palace in Ponda, Goa, where they are locally known as Soundekar Raja or Rei de Sundem.

The present member of the royal family, Madhulinga Nagesh, also known as Rajendra Wadiyar currently resides in Shivrith Palace, Ponda, Goa.

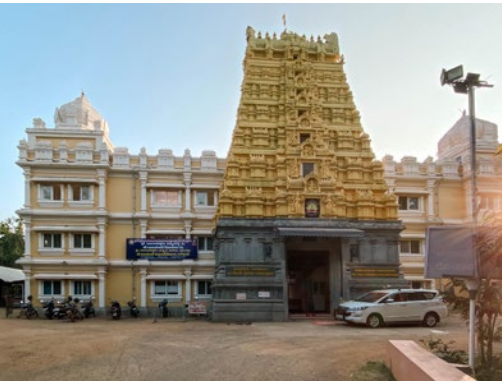


Clockwise from the top left: 1. A stone carving of Sonda King Madhu Lingappa near Sahasrahalli along the Shalamala River; 2. Sawai Basavalinga II Rajendra Wadiyar; 3. Present-day descendant Madhulinga Nagesh Rajendra Wodeyar, residing in Ponda/Belagavi; Source- Internet archive; 4. The Raja of Sundem with his wives

First, I visited Swarnavalli Matha, which Buchanan referred to as Honawully Matam or the Golden Convent. It is located on the banks of the Shalmala River and belongs to the Haigas, also known as Havyakas.

I was introduced to the Matha administrator and shared details about my retracing journey, mentioning that Francis Buchanan had visited this Matha in 1801. They found this quite interesting and even showed me old documents of Honawully Matam. The name “Honna” in Kannada translates to “gold,” which was later Sanskritized as Swarnavalli Matha.

The Matha administrator gave me a brief history of the institution. Swarnavalli Matha is a branch of Sringeri Matha, believed to have been founded by Bhaskarendra Saraswati at the instruction of Shankaracharya. Initially, the headquarters of the Matha was at Gokarna, but later, upon the invitation of the Sonda Kings, the 29th Swami arrived and settled at Sahasrahalli, on the banks of the Shalmala River. Subsequently, Arasappa Nayaka granted land and built temples and the Matha complex.



Glimpses of Swarnavalli Matha (also known as Honnavalli Matha), belonging to the Havyaka Brahmins. The matha houses small shrines dedicated to Chandramouleshwara (Lord Shiva) and Lakshmi Narasimha, built in the later Vijayanagara style.

The Matha houses small shrines dedicated to Chandramouleshwara (Lord Shiva) and Lakshmi Narasimha, both constructed in the later Vijayanagara style.

The Matha administrator offered me evening snacks of “Avalakki Mosaru” (beaten rice topped with curd) along with tea, and we discussed the history of Sonda and the surrounding regions.

Next, I visited the Swadi Digambara Jain Matha, which houses the idols of Neminatha Swami and Shri Kushmandini Devi. Beside it, there is a Matha, where I went inside and saw a partly decorated wooden seat, likely used by the head of the Jain Sannyasis on auspicious occasions.

The Jain Basadi was undergoing repairs and new construction. About 300 meters away, another Jain Basadi dedicated to Parshvanatha stands, with a beautiful temple pond in front of it, known as Muttina Kere.



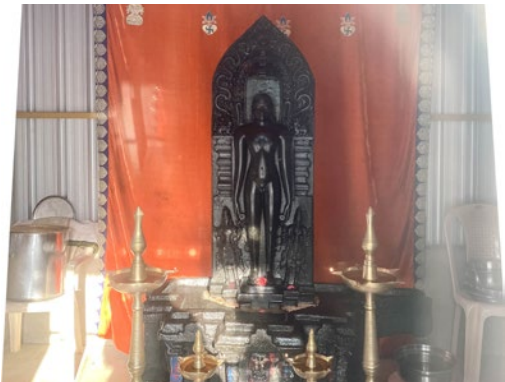
Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. The old building of Swadhi Jain Digambara Matha, Sondha; 3. Shri Neminatha Swamy and Aamra Kushmandini Devi, Sondha



Gajakesari Peetha inside Swadhi Matha



From the left: 1. Antique remains housed within the matha; 2. Stone tank used in olden days near Basadi



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The ancient Basadi removed and a new one under construction at the site; 2. Muttina Kere in front of Adinatha Swamy Basadi; 3. Image of Shri Adinatha Swamy in a temporary shed due to temple rebuilding; 4. Nagara Kaallu (Serpent Worship) within the Basadi premises

Adjacent to the Parshvanatha Basadi, there is a Venkataramana Temple.

Next, I visited the Sode Vadiraja Matha, one of the Ashta Mathas of Udupi, where Vadiraja Swamy served as the successor.

This Matha holds special reverence, as it houses the Brindavana (samadhi) of Vadiraja Swamy, the tenth guru of the Peetha.

I saw many Madhwa Brahmin students in this convent, who had come from different regions to



A glimpse of Sodhe Vadiraja Matha and Rama Trivikarama Temple, along with a stone inscription adjacent to the temple in Sondha

study the Vedas and other religious scriptures. Similarly, at Swarnavalli Matha, I also observed many students engaged in religious studies from various parts of the region.

Sonda, once a flourishing capital, is now home to numerous temples and mutts, though many of them are in ruins. According to the 1763 Uttara Kannada District Gazetteer, Hyder Ali destroyed the town. During the Sonda Nayaka rule, the town was vast, with fortified walls extending approximately three miles in all directions. It is said to have been densely populated with nearly 10,000 houses. However, after Hyder Ali's attack, only about 50 houses remained.

Today, apart from a few surviving mutts like Swarnavalli Matha, Vadiraja Matha, the Jain Basadi, and the Veerashaiva Mahattina Matha, only a handful of scattered houses remain. The once-thriving town is now covered with lush green forests and dense vegetation.



Sahasralinga (formerly Sahasrahalli): A valley along the Shalmala River featuring carved Shiva Lingas and Basava (Nandi) sculptures

Near Sonda, I visited Sahasralinga (formerly known as Sahasrahalli), a beautiful valley where the pristine Shalmala River flows through dense forests. Along the riverbed, numerous Shiva Lingas, accompanied by Nandi sculptures, are carved into the rocks. Additionally, a few inscriptions of the Sonda kings can also be found here.

Sirsi (Sersi)

On the same day, I visited Sirsi, also known as Shirasi, which is located around 16 km from Sonda. It is a taluk headquarters, situated 105 km from Karwar, in the lower Ghat region.

Buchanan mentioned that Sirsi was once surrounded by three lines of fortifications, but today, no trace of the fort remains. During his time, Sirsi was a small village, but it has now grown into a major town in Uttara Kannada district, attracting many tourists due to its historical temples, numerous waterfalls, and adventure spots.

The fort of Sirsi, which no longer exists, was built by Sonda Ramachandra Nayaka, who named it “Channapattana.

The earliest temples in Sirsi are Shankara and Ganapathi, both dating back to the Vijayanagara period. Other temples, such as Marikamba, Veerabhadra, Ishwara, and Parshwanatha, were built in later periods.



From the left:: 1. Sirsi Marikamba Temple; 2. A buffalo inside the temple premises

The Marikamba Temple in Sirsi was built in 1689 AD. The wooden idol of the goddess is believed to have been discovered in a tank, and the temple gradually developed over time. Interestingly, Francis Buchanan did not mention this temple.

The grand Sirsi Marikamba Jaatre is one of the biggest fairs in Karnataka, attracting thousands of devotees from across the region. This festival is usually held during the summer months and is celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm.

Sources of Two Rivers:



Shankara Honda (Pond), Sirsi – Buchanan noted it as the source of the Aghanashini and Shalmala rivers

“From a garden on the west side of Sersi, the shalmala, or Gangawali river takes its rise; and on its east side, from a tank called Aganasini, issues a river of the same name, which in the lower part of its course is called the Tari-holay”.

~ Francis Buchana, Chapter XVII

During my discussion at Swarnavalli Matha, the Matha administrator also confirmed that the Shalmala River originates in Sirsi, from Shankara Honda, and not from Dharwad. However, the Uttara Kannada Gazetteer mentions its origin near Dharwad, which might be a confusion with the Bedthi River.

The Bedthi River originates near Hubli, whereas the Shalmala River is a tributary of the Bedthi, as mentioned earlier.

This discrepancy highlights the need for **historians and environmentalists** to conduct further research and clarify the true origin of the **Shalmala River**.

Below Shankara Honda (pond), a family resides nearby. During the rainy season, the excess water used to overflow through a channel, which I observed. However, the channel is now blocked, and sewage is flowing through it instead.



Below Shankara Honda (Pond): The Natural Outlet Overflow Channel

When I spoke with them, they mentioned that their forefathers also believed this to be the origin of a river, but they were uncertain. They may be reluctant to disclose more information, perhaps fearing that doing so might have consequences for them.

Sirsi is renowned for its areca nut plantations, primarily cultivated by the Havyaka Brahmins, who are considered experts in its cultivation. Alongside areca nut, cardamom and pepper are also grown in abundance. The economy of the taluk revolves around agriculture and plantations, making them the main source of revenue for the region.

During my visit to Sirsi, I came across TSS (‘Totagars’ Cooperative Sale Society), a key player in the region’s agricultural trade, particularly in areca nut cultivation. Established to empower local farmers, TSS has grown into a major cooperative, ensuring fair pricing and a stable market for agricultural produce.

A visit to the TSS marketplace showcases a diverse range of products, including spices, honey, organic fertilizers, FMCG products, and traditional farming tools, reflecting the agrarian richness of Uttara Kannada district.

Banavasi (Banawasi)

On February 2, 2025, I began my journey towards Banavasi, located approximately 22 km from Sirsi. Banavasi is one of the oldest towns and former capitals of Karnataka.

Since it was winter, the roads were covered in dense fog, making visibility poor along the route. The terrain was also difficult to discern due to the fog.

The morning was pleasantly cool, but by noon, the weather turned warm. The terrain here consists of light forest cover, which becomes more prominent upon reaching Banavasi.

The terrain between Sirsi and Banavasi begins with light forest cover, but as one approaches Banavasi, the landscape transitions into plains with extensive paddy fields and arecanut plantations, interspersed with a few laterite hills.

Despite its name, Banavasi (derived from the Kannada term ‘Bana’, meaning forest) does not have dense forest cover today. The town is surrounded on three sides by the Varada River, which originates at Varadamoola, near Ikkeri, flows along the eastern side of Banavasi, and eventually



The town is encircled on three sides by the Varada River

joins the Tungabhadra River as one of its tributaries.

Today, this village is home to many ancient temples and monuments, making it a site of great historical significance. The name of Banavasi has varied over time.

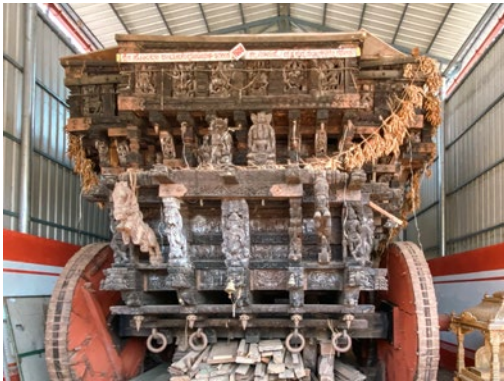
In the Mahabharata, the place is referred to as Vanavasaka. The Buddhist text Mahavamsa mentions that Emperor Ashoka sent Buddhist missionaries to Vanavasa.

Banavasi was a notable center during the Satavahana period and served as the capital of their feudatories, the Chutus. Around 325 A.D., it became the capital of the Kadambas and was also known by other names such as Jayanthipura, Vijayanthipura, and Vijayanathi.

Many inscriptions from the Satavahanas, Chalukyas, Vijayanagara rulers, and their feudatories,



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A street in Banavasi; 2 & 3. An old traditional house built with locally sourced mud walls and roof tiles; 4. The Varada River in front of Madukeshwara Temple



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Inside the navaranga mantapa of Madhukeshwara Temple; 2. A wooden chariot donated by Sonda King Ramachandra Nayaka in 1608 CE; 3. A beautiful elephant sculpture in the temple complex; 4. A mud wall in Banavasi village



Old inscriptions at the temple premises. Right-side sculpture bears a 2nd-century AD Prakrit inscription in nail-headed Brahmi, recording the donation of a Naga image, tank, and vihara by Sivaskanda Nagasri

the Sonda kings, have been discovered in this historical town, establishing Banavasi as one of Karnataka's most prominent ancient centers.

Banavasi was a significant religious hub, associated with Lakula Shaivism, Veerashaivism, Vaishnavism, and Buddhism. Several foreign travelers, including Hiuen Tsang, Ptolemy, and Alberuni, referred to this place. Ptolemy's "Banaousei" has been identified with Banavasi.

Madhukeshwara Temple Complex



The main temple in Banavasi is the Madhukeshwara Temple, which has undergone expansion over the centuries. The architecture of the temple resembles styles found in coastal and Malenadu regions, featuring sloped roofs, likely designed to drain heavy rainfall efficiently.

Madhukeshwara Temple complex

The temple is dedicated to Madhukeshwara (Shiva). When I inquired about the origin of the name "Madhu", two different explanations were given by the priests—one linking it to Madhu, a demon (Rakshasa), while another suggested that the linga's unique texture resembles honey (Madhu in Kannada/Sanskrit).

Originally built by the Kadambas, the temple saw additions during the Kalyana Chalukya and Sonda periods. The present structure was restored during the Sonda rule, though the idol of Adi Madhava and Kartikeya likely dates back to the Kadamba period.

Temple Architecture

The Madhukeshwara Temple faces east and follows a square-plan Garbhagriha (sanctum) with a



Adhi Madhava (Vishnu) image inside Madhukeshwara Temple, dating to the Kadamba period

circumambulatory (Pradakshina) passage around it, housing the Madhukeshwara Linga on a decorated Yonipitha. Two sub-shrines are attached to the eastern wall, dedicated to Mahishamardini and Ganesha.

The main hall features massive square-sectioned pillars, characteristic of Western Chalukya architecture. It leads into a Navaranga, supported by ornate lathe-turned pillars, housing a beautifully carved couchant Nandi and Kakshasana arrangements along the periphery, with entrances on three sides, dating to the Kalyana Chalukya period. Within the temple, sculptures of Adi Madhava and Kartikeya display early architectural features.

The present superstructure, built during the Vijayanagara-Sonda period, rises in a stepped pyramidal form, reflecting the Kadamba-Nagara style, with a Sukanasa in front. The Shikhara is decorated with stucco figures, including Nandi at the corners, the ten incarnations of Vishnu, the twelve forms of Aditya, the guardian deities (Dikpalakas), and Nagabandhas.

The roof of the Navaranga is flat at the center and slopes along the edges. In front of the temple stands a Dhvajastambha (flagpole). Along the Prakara (enclosure) wall, sub-shrines house Dikpalakas, Dhundiraja, Ganapati, Chintamani Narasimha, and other sculptures, contributions of the Sonda kings.

Among the most significant objects within the Madhukeshwara Temple premises are the inscribed Naga sculpture and the highly ornate stone cot. The inscribed Naga sculpture, carved on a thin rectangular slab, features a beautifully detailed five-hooded coiled serpent as the central figure. The sculpture bears an inscription in nail-headed Brahmi characters (2nd century AD), written in Prakrit, along the side borders. The inscription records the gift of this Naga image, along with



From the Left: 1. Trilokamandapa, now in the temple's Navaranga, donated by Sonda King Sadashiva Nayaka; 2. The stone cot, a remarkable piece donated by Raghunatha Nayaka (AD 1628)

a tank and Vihara, by Sivaskanda Nagasri, daughter of Hariputra Vinhukada Chutukulananda Satakarni, in his 12th regnal year.

Notably, the epigraph also mentions the sculptor's name, Nataka, a disciple of Acharya Damoraka, who hailed from Sanjayati (Banavasi). This inscription is one of the earliest epigraphical references to a sculptor's name in Indian history.

Trilokamandapa and Stone Cot

Another significant artifact is the Trilokamandapa, currently placed in the Navaranga of the temple. It was donated by Sonda king Sadasiva Nayaka (16th century AD) and features delicate carvings showcasing intricate craftsmanship.

The stone cot, another remarkable piece, was donated by Raghunatha Nayaka (AD 1628). Every inch of this masterpiece is covered with intricate floral, animal, and geometric patterns, demonstrating exceptional stone-carving skills.

Two elegantly carved stone elephants stand at the flight of steps leading to the eastern main entrance of the temple complex.



From the left: 1. Parbhudeva (Allama Probahu) Temple; 2. Holematha, Banavasi

Other Temples in Banavasi

Apart from the Madhukeshwara Temple, Banavasi is home to several other temples of modest size and ornamentation, including Adikadambeshwara, Adimadhukeshwara, Basaveshwara, Kadambeshwara, Nilakantha, Sithikantheshwara, Venkataramana, Bayala, Nilakantha Temple, Holematha, and Prabudeva (Allamaprabhu) temples, among others.

The main priest of Madhukeshwara Temple is a Havyaka Brahmin from the coastal (below Ghat) region. During my visit, I also went to Holematha, a Lingayat mutt that likely dates back to the Sonda period.

The culture, food, and language in Banavasi reflect a blend of influences from North Karnataka and the Malenadu region, given its proximity to both.

At the temple, free prasada (meal) was served, and the temple administrator advised me to partake in the temple lunch. After a long journey, feeling exhausted, I chose to rest near Holematha, where the guru graciously offered free lodging and food provided by the temple.

Chandragutthi (anglicized: Chandragupthi)

On February 3, 2025, it was a pleasant morning with dense fog as I began my journey towards Chandragutti. Just 5 km from Banavasi, I stopped at a tea shop, where I met an elderly man engaged



in a conversation with his companions.

During our discussion, he mentioned that dense fog could lead to a decrease in water levels in reservoirs and other water sources. He also remarked that as we were approaching the end of winter and the start of summer, water scarcity could become a serious issue this year.

This insight from an experienced farmer gave me a valuable perspective on how weather and climate patterns impact water availability. The stream of the **Varada River**, which I crossed via a **bridge**, had **scarce water** and was **slow-moving**.

Along the way, I saw many houses with Mangalore-tiled roofs, showcasing their unique antique architectural style. In front of these houses, areca nuts were laid out to dry, likely from the nearby areca nut plantations. I also passed through vast paddy fields, with coconut and arecanut being the main crops in the region. I noticed a farmer preparing his land for the second crop, which was jola (maize).

As I approached the Chandragutti Hills, I saw many sheep grazing in the open fields. Locals told me that after the rainy season, shepherds from Haveri and other regions migrate to the adjacent Malenadu region for grazing. Even private plantation owners pay these shepherds a good sum,



From the left: 1. Paddy cultivation along the Varada River on the way to Chandragutti from Banavasi; 2. A farmer preparing the land for a second crop—Jola (maize)



Sheep grazing in harvested paddy fields with a view of Chnadragutthi Hill from the east

allowing the sheep to graze on their land, as sheep dung is used as a natural fertilizer. I had heard of a similar practice near Malebennur in Davangere district.

Upon reaching the village of Chandragutti, I found that it is a hobli under Soraba taluk, located about 16 km northwest of Soraba town. Buchanan mentioned that upon arriving here, he entered the territory of the Mysore Raja. This suggests that during 1800-1801, Chandragutti was part of the Mysore Kingdom.

In earlier times, Chandragutti was known by different names, including Chandraguptapura, Chandraguttipura, Chandraguttipecte, and Guttidurga. The village is situated at the base of a hill, surrounded by a densely forested area.

Near the base of the hill, I saw a group of devotees from the Haveri region who had come to visit the temple. Their entire family traveled in a tractor, which was decorated and covered with plastic tarpaulin to shield them from the sun. The tractor-trailer was arranged for them to sit comfortably during the journey.

I had a conversation with them and learned that they visit the temple once a year for their annual ritual. As part of their tradition, they perform animal sacrifice and stay here for one or two days before returning home.

I recalled my childhood memories from my mother's ancestral village, where we used to attend the



Devotees from the Haveri region

annual jaathre (fair) by whole family travelling in a bullock cart—a tradition later replaced by tractors.

Renukamba Temple is located inside a large natural cave, housing a small Shiva Linga covered with the metallic face of Renuka, the wife of Jamadagni and mother of Parashurama. Here, Renuka is also called Chandraguttiamma. The cave is believed to be the place where Renuka hid when Parashurama pursued her. The outer façade of the cave serves as a vestibule, built in the Chalukyan architectural style. A pillared sabha mandapa (assembly hall) was added during the Vijayanagara period, following an east-west orientation. At the foot of the Renukamba Temple, facing west stands a Bhairava Temple, which has undergone modern alterations, such as a tiled roof.

I then began my trek to the summit, first passing through the temple and then entering the forest-covered hills. Since I was alone, I asked a local vendor about potential dangers. He assured me that there were no large wild animals, except for wild boars, and advised me to avoid trekking alone. Seeing that the incline was not as steep as Kabbaladurga or Savandurga, which I had climbed earlier, I proceeded at a slow and steady pace. After crossing the first stretch, I came across a lake, possibly an ancient water reservoir that once served the temple. Along the way, I also saw many ruined fort ramparts, remnants of an era when the fort was a significant stronghold.

This fort was an early stronghold of the Kadambas of Banavasi. It was later ruled by the Vijayanagara Empire, Keladi Nayakas, Biligi chiefs, and Hyder Ali. Eventually, Parashuram Bhau and Dhondia Wagh attacked and seized the fort, as recorded in the Gazetteer.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Chandragutyamma Temple; 2. A large banyan tree along the hill ascent; 3. Nagara Kaallu (serpent worship); 4. Renukamba (Renuka Devi), mother of Parashurama, with a small cave near the main cave temple



From the left: 1. Anjaneya Temple at the base of the hill; 2. Shoolada Beerappa on the hill near Chandragutyamma Temple



The forest route to the fort hilltop with fort remains and dilapidated fort wall ramparts



“the Rock on which the fort is built is a white granite without observable strata, exactly like that of Jamalobhad, and which is Common throughout Haiga. The nature of the minerals there and here is indeed quite similar”.

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVII



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Stone fort rampart; 2. A dilapidated cast-iron cannon; 3. An olden day's rainwater storage source; 4. A small stone trough for water, likely used for domestic animals

Since it was early morning, the hill was covered in dense fog, reducing visibility to barely five meters. I couldn't see the hill peak, but I began my hike, encountering several fort entrances, most of which were dilapidated, along with defensive structures and fort ramparts.

As I moved through the midst of the forest, I noticed several Malabar giant squirrels leaping from one tree to another, seemingly startled by my presence, as though I were a foreigner in their land. I even came across a rusted, dilapidated cannon, which appeared to be a casting-type cannon.

Further ahead, as I reached the hilltop, I saw a few ponds carved from granite, but the stagnant water was unfit for drinking. Nearby, I found the remains of an old temple, and a large stone structure, which appeared to be the remains of a magazine (ammunition storage site). The view from the hill, beneath the fog-covered forest region, resembled the scenic landscape of Nandi Hills near Bangalore. The region was densely covered with thick forests, adding to its mystique. After descending the hill, I traveled around 5 km north. As Buchanan mentioned, I came across



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Remains of a temple and magazine structure; 2. View from the top; 3. Defensive wall structure on the hill; 4. A water source carved from a huge granitic rock, probably used in olden days by soldiers

a coss (The Coss (Kos) was a historical unit of distance commonly used in India before the British approximately 3.2 to 4 km). Here, I observed black stone formations amalgamated with clay, along with laterite veins containing traces of iron ore. The samples had a high density, likely indicating iron ore deposits, just as Buchanan had documented.

Further, along the way, I met an elderly Koracha/ Korama man who was weaving a fishing net using 'Samey,' a plant similar to bamboo but distinct from it. I had encountered a similar material during my journey near Udupi.

I interacted with him about the various products he crafts, including traditional fishing nets and other household items. We discussed the market for his products, as well as his community and their language. The Koracha/Korama people speak a distinct language closely related to Kannada, with influences from Telugu and other Dravidian languages. He also mentioned that



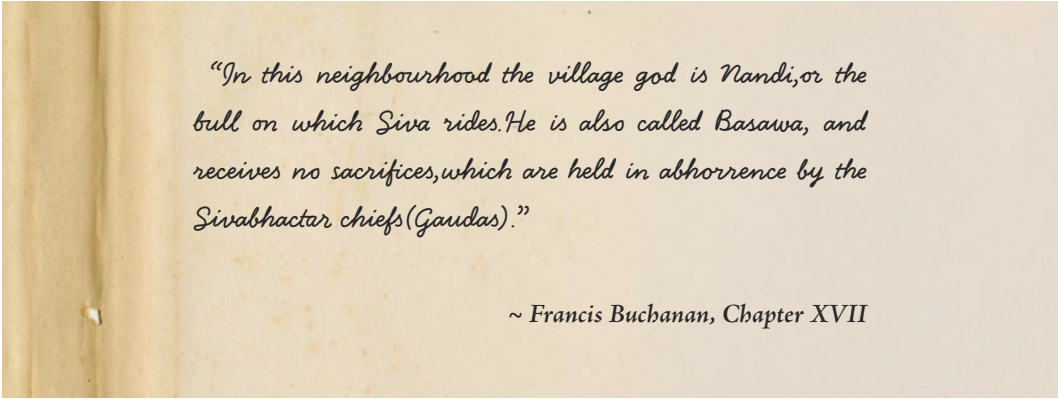
Clockwise from the top left: 1. An elder man from the Koracha/ Korama community making baskets; 2. Various types of baskets and a fishnet for local use; 3. In front of their house; 4. Raw material 'Samey,' a plant similar to bamboo but distinct from it

their community consumes all types of meat except cows, which they worship. Interestingly, his sons are educated and work in a town, while the family also owns a small piece of land with an areca nut plantation.

Buchanan mentioned that sandalwood trees were once abundant around Chandragutti and that Muslim traders extracted sandalwood oil from them. However, due to overexploitation and smuggling, the natural sandalwood population in this region has drastically declined. Today, sandalwood trees in Karnataka are protected by law, and their cutting and trade are strictly regulated by the Karnataka Forest Department.

Further, I traveled towards Keladi, passing through Suntikoppa, which Buchanan documented as Senticopa or dry ginger village. The terrain here is mostly flat, with vast paddy fields and a few plantations. The Varada River, which flows to the west, appeared dried up. Buchanan mentioned that during the monsoon season, the river overflows, often destroying crops along its banks.

The major community in this region belongs to the Idiga (Halepaika) community, with Mallava Gowdas of the Veerashaiva tradition also being significant. Interestingly, Buchanan recorded that Sadashiva Nayaka of Keladi's father belonged to this same Veerashaiva community, which aligns with the demographics he documented.



Near Suntikoppa village, close to Chikanelluru, there exists an Eshwara Nadishwara Temple, which is likely the temple Buchanan referred to in his records.

Keladi (Kilidi)

On the same day, I reached Keladi, which is now a village located around 6 km north of Sagara Town. Historically, Keladi was the first capital of the Keladi Nayakas, before they later shifted their capital to Ikkeri and then to Bidanur (Nagara).

While passing near Keladi, I reached Bandagadde, where someone informed me about an old mutt (matha) dating back to the Keladi period. This mutt served as the Rajaguru Matha for the Keladi chiefs and belongs to the Shivabhaktara (Veerashaiva) community.

I met the matha guru, who guided me through the monastery and its historical structures. A



Glimpse of Bandagadde Mutt—once the Rajaguru Matha for Keladi chiefs and belongs to the Shivabhaktara (Veerashaiva) community



significant tradition here is the public display of an Emerald Shiva Linga during the Dasara festival. For the rest of the year, the linga is securely kept in a bank, as it is a highly valuable artifact gifted by the Keladi chiefs.

Further, I crossed a big lake that locals called “Keladi Heere kere” and this lake irrigates nearby many paddy fields and plantations there an two granite pillars that are interconnected, and it’s an ancient water measuring system.

The Rameshwara Temple is the most significant temple structure at the northern end of the village, accompanied by two other medium-sized structures. Upon approaching the temple, one first encounters a large courtyard, which is now enclosed with modern tiled verandas.

At the center of the courtyard stands the Rameshwara Temple, with the Veerabhadra Temple to its right and the Parvati Temple to its left. The Rameshwara and Veerabhadra Temples share



Keladi Heere Kere

the same temple enclosure. Inside the Veerabhadra Temple, the ceiling features a stone carving of Gandabherunda, a mythical two-headed bird.

I interacted with the main Brahmin priest of the Rameshwara Temple, who mentioned that his family has continued the legacy of worship for many generations. Meanwhile, the worship at the Veerabhadra Temple is conducted by the Veerashaiva community. Within the courtyard, I also observed several religious sculptures and figures, including Hanuman, Vishnu, and other deities.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Keladi Rameshwara Temple premises; 2. A memorial to Queen Chennamma and Rajaram Chattrapati—Queen Chennamma sheltered a Maratha ruler (son of Shivaji) fleeing from Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb—erected opposite Veerabhadra Temple; 3. The Keladi kingdom's royal insignia, 'Gandaberunda'; 4. Sapthamatrikas on the temple's backside

In Keladi, there is a **Government Museum** that preserves **artifacts from the Keladi period**. The museum houses an **old temple chariot** with several **inscriptions**, along with **Masthi Kallu/ Maha Sati Kallu (memorial stones for sati)** and other **interesting historical artifacts**.

Buchanan mentioned the history of the Keladi chiefs, stating that they were originally hereditary chiefs (Gaudas) governing five to six villages in the surrounding region. They belonged to the Shivabhaktara sect of the Mallava caste (Veerashaiva Mallavaru), tracing their lineage from Basavappa Gowda and his son Chowdappa to the reign of Veerammaji.

The Keladi rulers were also known as Ikkeri Nayakas, particularly during the reign of **Veerammaji**, the wife of Basavappa Nayaka, and her adopted son, **Somashekara Nayaka**. In 1763, **Hyder Ali Khan** attacked the **Bidanur (Nagara) Fort**, capturing **Veerammaji** and **Somashekara Nayaka** and sending them to **Madhugiri Fort**. However, they were later rescued



Keladi period architecture featuring wooden log pillars at the courtyard entrance paired with modern roof tiles

by the Marathas, who attacked Madhugiri Fort. Unfortunately, Veerammaji passed away while traveling to Poona (Pune), while the Marathas took the young prince, Somashekara Nayaka, to their capital.

It is believed that Veerammaji was cremated within the premises of the Ujjini Mutt temple, one of the five sacred Panchapeethas of the Veerashaiva tradition. Since the Keladi rulers were ardent followers of this Ujjini Peetha (branch). The mutt is located in the present-day Vijayanagara district.

Further, I traveled towards Ikkeri, which is around 12 km from Keladi. To reach Ikkeri, one must cross Sagara Town, which serves as a taluk center for both of these historically significant places.

Ikkeri (Ikeri)

On my journey to Ikkeri, I passed through Sagara Town, which Buchanan described as, ‘Near Ikkeri, I saw a well-built town named Sagar. At that time, it was the residence of the Chief of the district (Amildar).’ Today, Sagara is a taluk center, located 72 km northwest of Shimoga city, serving as the headquarters of Sagar taluk. Historically, it was an important trading center for areca nut, paddy, pepper, and sandalwood products.

The town was originally built by Sadashiva Nayaka of Ikkeri, named after that lake ‘Sadashiva Sagara’. However, over time, the name was shortened to ‘Sagara’, and the lake is now locally known as Ganapathi Kere. The Bangalore-Honnagara Highway passes through Sagara, making it a strategic location for trade and tourism.

Sagara is renowned for its skilled Gudigar craftsmen, known for their exquisite sandalwood and ivory carvings. There is also a Gudigar Cooperative Society supporting these artisans. However, the town has expanded rapidly, attracting many tourists due to its proximity to Jog Falls, Ikkeri, Keladi, and other historical and natural attractions.

Given the abundant timber resources, I wondered why the government has not initiated a

wooden toy manufacturing industry, similar to Channapatna, or established a craftsmen training institute. While discussing this with a local at a nearby tea shop, he agreed that such an initiative could benefit the region’s already skilled artisans.

Near Sagara, Heggodu is known for its handwoven Khadi, woven by a small group of artisans. Close to Heggodu, there is a cooperative society named ‘Shramajeevi Ashrama and Charaka’, a dynamic rural Khadi cooperative that engages local women and other community members in traditional weaving. This initiative helps sustain age-old weaving practices, while also providing livelihood opportunities. The products crafted here are marketed in major cities like Bangalore, Mangalore, Mysore, and others.

Ikkeri is now a small hamlet near Aralikoppa, about 3 km from Sagara Town. The name ‘Ikkeri’



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Sagara Town Weekly Fair Market; 2. Arecanuts drying outside the field after processing, near Sagara; 3 & 4. Handwoven Khadi crafted by the artisan co-operative ‘Shramajeevi Ashrama and Charaka’ — a dynamic rural textile initiative

in Kannada means ‘Two Streets’. It once served as the capital of the Keladi chiefs for a period, during which they minted Ikkeri Pagodas and Fanams. Even after shifting their capital and minting operations to Bidanur (Nagara), the name Ikkeri remained associated with their coinage.

Buchanan documented that during the rule of the Ikkeri chiefs, this place was a large and prosperous town. According to local accounts, it is said—perhaps with some exaggeration—to have contained nearly 1,00,000 houses. However, by the time Buchanan visited, he noted that Ikkeri no longer had a town, describing it as a deserted place overgrown with trees and forest vegetation.

Even today, there have been no significant excavations or government-led conservation efforts to preserve this historically important site. Unfortunately, many remnants of the past have been damaged by treasure hunters. Near the Aghoreshwara Temple, there is a fine lake (kere), adding to the landscape of this once-flourishing capital.



From the left: 1. Ikkeri surrounding; 2. Lake adjacent to Aghoreshwara Temple, Ikkeri

The Aghoreshwara Temple is the only remaining vestige of Ikkeri’s former greatness. It is a large, well-proportioned stone structure, with a square Nandi Mantapa in front, housing a massive Nandi (Basava) idol. The temple consists of a garbhagriha (sanctum), an open Sukanasi, and a large Mukhamandapa, which is notably tall. The temple faces north and features lofty ornamental doors on its north, east, and west sides.

Historically, the temple housed a metallic idol of Aghoreshwara with 32 hands, representing



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Aghoreshwara and Akhilandeshwari Temple; 2. Nandi Mantapa in front of the temple; 3. Inside the temple (Navaranga Mandapa); 4. Basava (Nandi)

Lord Shiva. This was documented by Pietro Della Valle, who visited during the reign of Hiriya Venkatappa Nayaka. However, during the Bijapur Sultanate’s invasion, Randulla Khan destroyed the original idol. Today, a large Shiva Linga has been placed inside and is actively worshipped. The pedestal of the original Aghoreshwara idol, made of stone, still lies outside the temple, giving an idea of the majestic scale of the lost metallic image.

The surrounding landscape of Ikkeri is similar to Keladi, with vast areca nut plantations and paddy fields. Nearby, I also visited the Ashrama of Shridara Swamy, which attracts many devotees and is administered by the Havyaka community.

On 4th February, I began my journey towards Nagara (Bidanur Nagara/Hyder Nagara). The terrain here was similar to the previous day, with vast areca nut plantations, small laterite hills, and paddy cultivation in the lowlands.



View of Madenur Dam in summer, when reduced water levels reveal the reservoir



Clockwise from the top left: 1. An old bridge that once connected Hosanagara and Sagara; 2, 3 & 4. Madenur Dam, built during the colonial period

Further along, I crossed Genasinakuni, which Buchanan referred to as Ghenasu-guli, and then reached the Pataguppa Bridge. Near this point, two rivers merge, which Buchanan mentioned as Pada-gopi, a rivulet that is probably Pataguppa. From here, Buchanan reached Duma or Dumam, which is now known as Dhumma.



View of newly constructed Pataguppa Bridge

At the end of the bridge, I spoke with an elderly local who shared that this place was once part of the main road used by travelers between Hosanagar and Sagara. He recalled how, in his younger days, the river here was a small stream. However, in 1930, the construction of the Madenur Dam submerged much of the area, cutting off the original route. Later, in the 1960s, the Linganamakki Dam was built,

submerging even more land, including the Madenur Dam itself. Today, a new bridge has been constructed over this region, restoring connectivity.

In Dhumma, Buchanan mentioned that there was only one house, which belonged to a Mallava Gauda. Even today, his descendants still reside in Dhumma village, with Basavappa Gowda as an ancestor and the current-generation member being Revanappa Gowda. However, their grand ancestral house was submerged due to the Sharavathi backwaters.

Today, Dhumma remains a small hamlet, with a terrain similar to Genasinakuni. Much of the surrounding land is now submerged under the Sharavathi backwaters. The Linganamakki Reservoir, built across the Sharavathi River in 1964, was constructed primarily for electricity generation, altering the landscape of the region significantly.

Fatah-petta (Futty petta)

Buchanan documented this place as Fatah-Pettah, or the ‘Town of Victory,’ stating that it was built by Hyder Ali to commemorate a military advantage he gained over the troops of the Princess of Ikkeri (Veerammaji). He established a new town with around 500 houses, but by the time Buchanan visited, it had declined to only 25 houses.

Near this town, a small stream called Ramachandrapura was noted, which originates from a source area. However, its actual name is Sharavathi River, which originates at Ambuthirtha (coordinates: 13°47’32”N 75°10’36”E). Based on this, Fatah-Pettah must have been located



Fateh-Petta, as mentioned in an East India Company map by Aaron Arrowsmith (1750–1823). Credit:Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

along the banks of the Sharavathi River, possibly in the area between Kumbatti and Devaganga. Today, there are no visible traces of this historic settlement, and only a few elderly locals still refer to the place as ‘Fatah-Pete.

Buchanan also documented that nearby it, the Raja had a farm, which produced coconut, areca, and rice. This farmland was irrigated by a canal that was supplied with crystal-clear water from a perennial stream. This suggests that the chiefs had their private agricultural lands.

Close to this farm, they also built a Mahal or palace, consisting of three-square enclosures surrounded by low, modest buildings covered with tiles.



Devaganga Pond, Nagara

These structures contained baths and other conveniences suitable for a Hindu chief. Buchanan’s description possibly refers to the Devaganga pond, which is near Nagara.

Further, I traveled to Nagara, also known as Bidanur Nagara or Hyder-Nagar,

which has already been mentioned in Chapter XVIII. This historic town, once the seat of power for the Keladi Nayakas, later fell into the hands of Hyder Ali, who renamed it Hyder-Nagar. Today, while much of its grandeur has faded, its rich past remains deeply embedded in the region’s landscape and heritage.

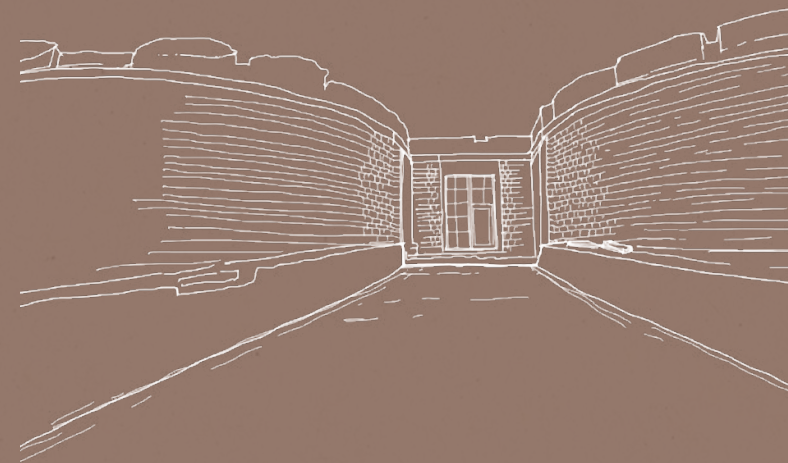
As I retraced Buchanan’s journey, I could see how the land, people, and traditions have changed over time, yet some traces of the past remain. From forgotten places like Fatah-Pettah to growing towns like Yellapura, Sirsi and Sagara, this journey showed the rich history hidden in the Western Ghats.

With this, the journey comes full circle at Nagara (Bidanur/Hyder-Nagar), linking Buchanan’s past observations with today’s landscape. The legacy of the Keladi rulers, the changes brought by Hyder Ali, and the natural beauty of the Sharavathi region are all reminders of Karnataka’s deep history. This journey also highlights the importance of preserving these historical sites so that future generations can continue to learn from them.



Chapter XVIII

Journey from Hyder Nagara to Hiriya (Heriur) through the principalities of Ikkeri and Chitradurga (Chatrakal)



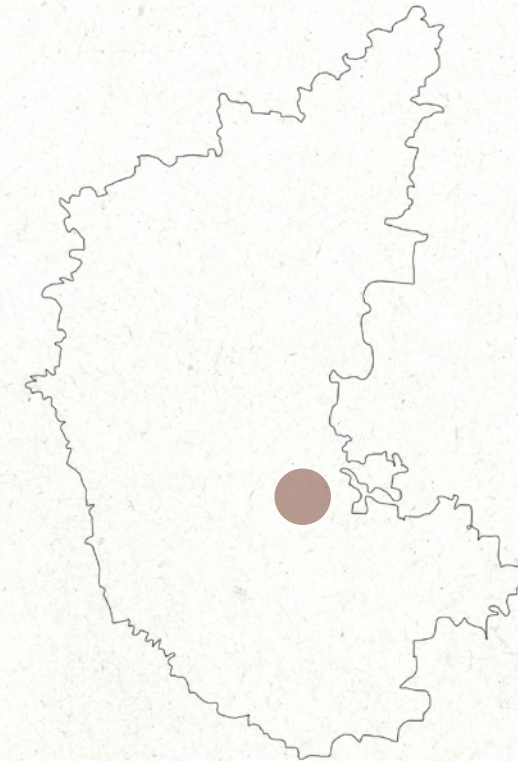
Chapter XVIII follows Francis Buchanan's journey through the hilly regions of Bidanur Nagara, which was once a bustling commercial centre, catering to trade from the Ghat regions below and the Deccan Plateau. In the past, it was famous for its pepper and areca nut commerce, and today, it remains a significant hub for agricultural activities, particularly pepper and areca nut cultivation.

Traveling through the Malenadu region along the Tunga River, Buchanan visited Shimoga and the confluence of the Tunga and Bhadra rivers at Kudali. He then proceeded to Savehalli and Basavapattana, where he recorded Asia's largest man-made tank, Sulekere (also known as the "Temple Dancer's Tank"), built during the Hoysala period. This majestic reservoir continues to serve local villages for agriculture and drinking water.

Further along his journey, Buchanan observed the extensive irrigation systems in Basavapattana and Malebennur, where the Bhadra Reservoir channels support abundant paddy and areca nut cultivation. He noted how the once dry lands had transformed into fertile green fields due to irrigation.

In Harihar, he documented historical observations of the Harihareshwara Temple and recorded details about the crops grown in the region. On the opposite bank of the Tungabhadra River, he described the Maratha-ruled territories during Tipu Sultan's reign. After crossing the river, the Haveri district commenced.

In Davangere, Buchanan documented its cotton mills and cumlies (weaving units), highlighting the region's role in textile production. Finally, in Hiriya, he recorded observations on the Vedavati River. Notably, an irrigation dam was later built across the Vedavati River exactly 100 years after his visit.



- 1 Bidanur Nagara (Hyder Nagara)
- 2 Kavaledurga (Cowldurga)
- 3 Hodla(Hodalla)
- 4 Tuduru
- 5 Mallur (Maluru)
- 6 Mahishi(Mahisi)
- 7 Mandagadde (Manday Gudday)
- 8 Shivamogga (Shiva Mogay)
- 9 Kudali
- 10 Sasve halli (Sahsiva hully)
- 11 Basavapatna
- 12 Malebennur (Malaya benuru)
- 13 Harihara
- 14 Davangere (Davana giri)
- 15 Kodaganur(Coduganar)
- 16 Alaghatta (Aligutta)
- 17 Chitradurga (Chitteldroog)
- 18 Doddasiddavanahalli (Siddamanahully)
- 19 Aimangala (Imangala)
- 20 Hiriyur (Heriuru)

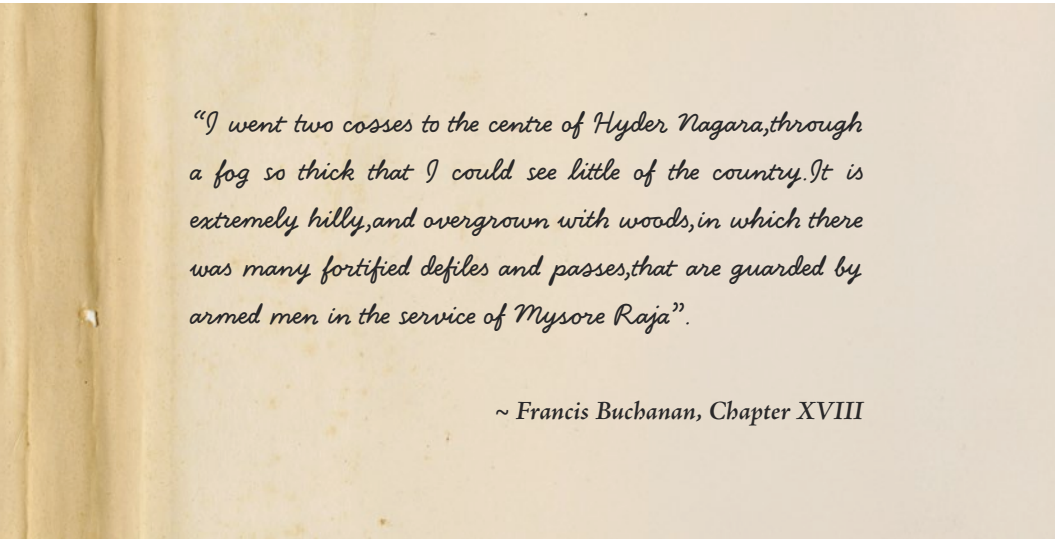


Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route Hyder Nagara to Hiriyur (Heriur)

Nagara (Bidanur Nagara or Hyder Nagara)



A view of Bidanur Nagara village from the fort hill



North chief entrance gate of Nagara Fort, Nagara

Buchanan visited Nagara on March 25th, 1801, and stayed for three days. Nagara is now a village located 15 km south of Hosnagara and approximately 86 km from Shimoga city. This place was originally called Bidarahalli due to the abundance of bamboo and woods around the village. There is a main temple shrine of Neelakanteshwara at the center of the village, surrounded by many houses.

The Ikkeri chiefs moved their royal seat from Ikkeri to Nagara under Shivappa Nayaka, the son of Chikka Sankanna Nayaka. Since the village was favorable for trade along the Hosangadi ghat, the revenue expanded rapidly during the reign of the Keladi Nayakas. Shivappa Nayaka was responsible for much of the city's expansion, and his successors ruled this city until 1763 when Hyder Ali captured the fort. At that time, Veerammaji was ruling Bidanur.

Hyder Ali took control of Nagara, seizing enormous wealth from the previous Keladi government, and renamed Bidanur as Hyder Nagara after himself. Hyder also continued to mint money, and a significant amount was coined during his reign. He encouraged merchants and attempted to introduce the cultivation of mulberries and silk, but due to adverse weather conditions and other factors, the initiative met with little success.

At the site of the present church, he built a palace and resided there for three years. However, following an invasion by General Mathews, the palace was burned, and the entire town shared the same fate during an engagement when Tipu Sultan came with his army. Later, Tipu rebuilt the palace, but once again, it was destroyed. The palace had been constructed using mud and timber, and due to excessive rain in the region, no building of that kind could stand for long.

Tipu re-established the mint and arsenal and recalled the people, but many turned back, uncertain about the outcome of the impending Siege of Mangalore.

During the reign of Queen Veerammaji of Keladi, a hundred families of Konkani Christians had settled in Bidanur/Nagara and started a business of distilling and selling spirits. However, in 1784, during Tipu's reign, they were captured and taken to Seringapatnam, as it was suspected that the Catholic Christians were aiding the British.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Basement of the Darbar Hall of Shivappa Nayaka, one of the Keladi chiefs; 2. A defensive bastion in the fort; 3. Drinking water ponds inside the fort; 4. A view of the fort

Today, only a few members of the Christian community remain in Bidanur Nagara village.

The village now appears quiet, with the Bidanur/Nagara Fort, a few temples, and churches — all built during the Keladi period — being the main attractions.

The fort of Shivappa Nayaka is an important monument. The fort is entered through a grand gateway supported by two round bastions. Inside the fort, in the southwest corner, is a large compound containing the ruins of a palace, a powder magazine, a battery serving as an observatory, robust fort ramparts, an octagonal well, a small shrine to Hanuman (the Hindu deity) at the northeastern side of the fort, and other structures that you can still witness today.

Buchanan's Interaction with Ujjini Swamy (anglicized: Hujiny Swami)

In Bidanur Nagara, Buchanan frequently interacted with Ujjini Swamy and mentioned him as one of the four great figures of the Sivabhaktar religion. He likely met a pontiff of the Veerashaiva Jangama tradition from the Ujjini Peetha, which was originally located at Ujjini village near Kudligi in Vijayanagara District. It is incorrectly referred to as “one of the four great chiefs of the Sivabhakta religion.” It is one of the five Veerashaiva Panchapeethas: Balehonnur (Balehalli), Ujjini, Srisaila, Kashi (Varanasi), and Kedara (Kedarnath). The Keladi rulers were ardent followers of the Ujjini Peetha. In Nagara, Buchanan met with the Rajguru of Keladi, a branch of the Ujjini Peetha at Nagara, and there was also another branch at Keladi— the “Keladi Rajaguru Jangama Mutt.”



Keladi Rajaguru Mutt, Bandagadde-Keladi village



The Keladi chiefs were ardent followers of the Ujjini Peetha, and this mutt is one of its branches

During their interaction, Ujjini Swamy mentioned that his predecessors were the Gurus of the Ikkeri family and had been granted freehold lands amounting to 3,000 pagodas annually. However, under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, this land was gradually taken away, and no allowances had been made since the area was granted to the Raja of Mysore. Ujjini Swamy remarked that while the village was still considered his property, he had to pay rent for it like any other farmer.

Buchanan documented that the last descendant of the Ikkeri family, the brother of Chenna Basavappa was still alive and residing in Maratha territories near Savanuru(Haveri district). Somaashekara, the last adopted son of Queen Veerammaji, had died in Maratha territory unmarried but left behind relatives who were living with the brother of Chenna Basavappa.

Buchanan also recorded an account of the Sivabhaktas’ religious traditions — particularly the Veerashaiva (Sivabhaktar) faith and the legacy of Basava, the 12th-century saint and philosopher.

Commerce at Bidanur Nagara

The principal commodities of Nagara were Pepper, Cardamom, Betel Nut, and Sandalwood, and now only the pepper and Betel nut are the important commercial crops in these regions.

“The pepper of Nagara is here reckoned better than that of the sea-cost;and a Parsi merchant says, that it sells higher at Bombay than the pepper of Malabar”.

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVIII



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Black pepper stored in the godown of a pepper mercantile—pepper remains a prime commodity in this region; 3. An arecanut plantation; 4. A pepper vine with peppercorns

Another important article of export from Nagara was betel nut. During Tipu’s reign, merchants were afraid to purchase the goods, knowing obstacles would be put in their way. The whole lot, therefore, fell into the hands of Tipu’s collectors at a lower price, as Tipu himself was a merchant and exported the goods on their behalf to Srirangapatna, Bangalore, and other cities in his dominion. Trade with foreign countries was prohibited, and as a result, the cultivation of betel nuts in this region diminished.

Trading commodities at Nagara in 1801

Merchants/ Regions	Trading Activity	Commodities
Mangalore	Buy	Pepper, Wheat, Chick pea/Bengal gram, tamarind, Capsicum, Cotton-wool, cotton thread, Goni (a cloth made from Jute), cotton cloths, Blankets, Iron and iron works and steel
	Sell	Salt, Rice, Horse gram, Coconuts, oil, turmeric and Sandalwood
Ceded provinces- south of Krishna River (Bellary, Adoni, Kurnool and others)	Sell	Cotton clothes
	Buy	Betel nut, pepper and cardamoms
Chitradurga Principalities	Sell	Buffaloes, Sheep,blankets, Ghee(Boiled butter) and Tobacco
Bangalore, Gubbi, Sira and etc	Sell	Cotton clothes, tobbacko, Blankets, Coni (Jute cloth), sheep,steel and Iron
	Buy	Betel nut, pepper and cardamoms
Dominions of Arcot	Sell	Cotton cloth, European and chinese goods
	Buy	Betel nut and pepper

Buchanan documented detailed observations of paddy cultivation in this region, and even today, you can witness many paddy fields growing during the Kharif season.

The cattle here, like those of the region below the Ghats, are remarkably small. No large ones are brought, as they do not live long.

The cattle are kept in the cattle house all year round. During the rainy season, they are littered with green leaves. Fresh litter is added every day, but the stable is cleaned only once a week. The dung is collected in a pit and called sappina goabbara (leaf manure), as Buchanan documented.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A group of women planting paddy in the prepared field (Gadde) near Nagara; 2. & 3. Malenadu Gidda cattle—small-sized native cattle of the region, similar to those found below the Ghats. Larger breeds are not common as they do not thrive here; 4. Cattle are housed year-round, with green leaves used as bedding during the rainy season. Fresh litter is added daily, but the stable is cleaned only once a week. The collected dung, known as sappina gobbara (leaf manure) used for agriculture

Kavaledurga (angliscized : Cowldurga)

Kavaledurga, also known as Bhuvanagiridurga, is situated about 20 kilometers northwest of Tirthahalli town. The village lies at the foothill of the same name and is remotely located amidst dense forests, making access to it challenging.

The name “Kavaledurga” translates to “Guarding Hill Fort.” This village served as a taluk until 1882. The Kavaledurga hill stands at an elevation of 969 meters above sea level.

At the foothill and within the village, there are several temples dedicated to deities such as Sri

Veerabhadra, Anjaneya (Hanuman), and Marikamba. There is also an old mosque built during the Keladi period, along with other shrines, which can still be witnessed today.



From the left: 1. Kavaledurga hill fort; 2. Shrikanteshwara Temple, located at the hilltop



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Path leading to the hilltop fort; 2. Kalyani (stepwell) on the hilltop, likely used by the chiefs; 3. Remains of the palace, including stone pillars and the basement; 4. Lush green paddy fields at the base of the hill

The area has two tanks: Matada Kere (now known as Abbigadde Kere) and Lingamajji Kere (now referred to as Thimanayakana Kere).

The hill fort, constructed entirely from locally available stone, features multiple gates, each adorned with stone carvings of Hanuman. At the top of the hill stands the Shrikanteshwara Temple, a simple structure without daily rituals. Nearby, there are several stone slabs believed to have been part of an old palace. Further up the hill is a fine pond called Shantha Ganga.

At the foothill near one of the tanks, there is a Veerashaiva Mutt, which served as the spiritual center for the gurus of the Keladi Nayakas.

Hodla (Hodalla)

Latitude: 13°44'45.0"N, Longitude: 75°15'11.3"E

Buchanan visited a tiny village hamlet, Hodla (Hodalla), on March 30, 1801. It is a small village near Kavaledurga. Further crossing Arga (today's Araga) and the rivers Gopinatha and Kushavathi (Kusawati), Buchanan mentioned that it was formerly the residence of a family of Polygar (Palegars) named Coramar (Korama) of Telinga (Andhra) extraction. They were hereditary flute players to the Kings of Vijayanagara. By the time of the first chief of the Keladi family, they were deprived of their authority but were allowed certain lands exempt from taxes. The family is now extinct.



Hodla Zamindar's Residence

I went to Hodla in search of the history of the aforementioned family's existence, but unfortunately, no trace of the family could be found. Even the older generation did not know of them. Instead, they mentioned a Zamindar family from Hodla. I further visited their house, and they belong to the Shivabhaktar community (Mallava Lingayaths), which is possibly linked to the Keladi rule. They might have served as officers in the Keladi government.



Bandya Zamindar's ancestral residence in Tirthahalli Taluk

I also visited Bandya Zamindar's residence in Tirthahalli Taluk, approximately 20 km from the taluk headquarters, Tirthahalli.

They claim to be descendants of Keladi Shivappa Nayaka and are locally known as 'Bandya Gowdaru.' They also belong to the Mallava Lingayat community. Bandya is a small village in the Kundapura region, and it is believed that their ancestors served in the Keladi military or as governors in that region before returning to the Malnad (above the Ghats) and continuing their legacy.

They still hold a significant amount of land in Tirthahalli, cultivating mainly areca nut, pepper, coconut, and paddy.

The ancestral house, probably over 200 years old, provides a glimpse of how the Keladi palaces might have looked.

Tuduru (Tudur) , Mallur (Maluru),Mahishi (Mahisi)

Through Tuduru, I crossed Mallur and further visited the Mahishi temple, which Buchanan mentioned. Unfortunately, I was unable to trace the Jangama Mutt at Tuduru that Buchanan referred to, nor the location where he pitched his tent during his survey, which was on the left bank of the River Tunga.

Mahishi, a temple built by Hanumanta, is located approximately 6 km by road from Mallur and

16 km northeast of Tirthahalli. Along the way, I found an ancient Veerabhadra temple and, on the left side of the road, several martyr stones (Sati Kallu). Mahishi is situated on the banks of the River Tunga, amidst enchanting paddy fields.



Veerabhadra Temple and a Basavanna (Nandi), located between Mallur and Mahishi



From the left: 1. A blacksmith family engaged in ironwork; 2. A Sati Kallu near Mallur, on the way to Mahishi



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Name board at the entrance to Mahishi village (ಮಹಿಷಿ); 2. Lush green paddy fields on the plains; 3. Ashwatha Narayana Temple; 4. Path leading to Katina Chamundeshwari Temple and the Tunga River

Buchanan mentioned about Mahishi:

“On the banks of the Tunga, near Maluru, is a celebrated temple named Mahishi, which signifies the female buffalo. It is supposed to have been built by Hanumantha, who, unwilling to accompany Rama in his expedition against Lanka, assumed for concealment the form of this animal. At this time, he built this temple and dedicated it, of course, to Vishnu, his master.”

~ Chapter XVIII



The Tunga River originates in the Western Ghats at Gangamoola, along with the Bhadra and Netravathi rivers, in Kuduremukha National Park

I observed that there are three temples at this location – Katina Chamundeshwari, Ashwatha Narayana Temple, and Kashi Vishveshwara Temple. The Ashwatha Narayana Temple, with its ancient grandeur architecture, is particularly striking and is probably the temple Buchanan referred to as Mahishi.

I observed that the roads generally follow the low hills, and the greater part of the country is cultivated with paddy and arecanut. The River

Tunga originates in the Western Ghats, at a place called Gangamoola, which is also the source of other rivers like Bhadra and Netravathi in the Kuduremukha National Park. From its origin, the Tunga flows in a north-easterly direction, passing through the towns of Sringeri, Tirthahalli, and Shimoga. A dam has been constructed across it at Gajanur. After covering a total distance of 147 km, it joins the Bhadra at Koodli near Shivamogga, forming the Tungabhadra River.

Baikshavani Mata- Mandagadde (anglicized: Manday Gadday)

Buchanan referred to the Baikshavani Mata located on the eastern plain of Mandagadde. It is associated with the Shivabhaktar Jangamas (Veerashaiva Jangamas), and he recorded that the family continues to reside at this Mata. The village is considered their domain, but they pay exceptional taxes to the authorities. They are reliant on the Umblay Guru, who resides near Shimoga. A significant portion of the farmers were Shivabhaktars, and many Jangamas were likely among them. However, they were probably too impoverished to construct any notable religious buildings. Unfortunately, I was unable to find this Jangama Mutt and even the locals were unfamiliar with it.

Shimoga (anglicized: Shiva-mogay)

Shimoga, a district headquarters with the same name, is situated on the banks of the Tunga River, approximately 274 km southwest of Bangalore. It is also known as the “Gateway to Malenadu (Malnad)”, providing access to the hilly regions. The city is surrounded by lush green paddy fields, areca nut plantations, and coconut groves.

Buchanan documented his observations on the geography, economy, and society of these areas. One of the key places he described was Shimoga, historically referred to as Shiva Mogay. At that time, Shimoga was a developing center with vast barren lands and limited agricultural activity, primarily producing a single crop annually.

Buchanan noted that he crossed the Gajanur forest on the left bank of the Tunga River. Today, this area has transformed significantly with the construction of the Gajanur Dam, which provides irrigation and drinking water to Shimoga and its surrounding regions. The Shmioga serves as a major transit point for buses traveling between Hyderabad Karnataka (Kalyana Karnataka), central Karnataka, and the coastal belt.

During the reign of Hyder Ali, Buchanan recorded that skilled carpenters were brought from Mangalore to Shimoga to construct lighters of 8-ton burden for navigation on the Tunga River. These vessels facilitated the transport of local produce, including betel nut, pepper, cattle, and



From the left: 1. Backwaters of Gajanur Dam on the Tunga River, between Mandagadde and Shimoga; 2. Shivappa Nayaka Palace in Shimoga

other goods. At that time, without a dam across the river, agricultural activity was seasonal, and only a few farmers with reservoirs cultivated paddy and areca nut plantations.

In the heart of Shimoga, one of the significant historical landmarks is the summer palace of Shivappa Nayaka, a ruler of the Keladi dynasty. Additionally, the nearby regions of Shankaragudda and Kumsi were once prime sources of manganese ore, supplying raw materials to Mysore Iron Works later called Bhadravathi Iron and Steel Works before mining operations ceased.

Today, Shimoga has evolved into a district headquarters, playing a crucial role in connecting Karnataka’s central and coastal regions. Buchanan’s documentation provides valuable insights into the economic, social, and infrastructural transformation of Shimoga over the centuries.

Kudali



On the left is the Bhadra River, and on the right is the Tunga River—converging to form the Tungabhadra River at Kudali, historically known as Kudalasangama

It is the confluence of the Tunga and Bhadra rivers, where they merge to form the Tungabhadra River, located 16 km northeast of Shimoga town. There are ancient temples built during the Hoysala and pre-Hoysala periods, including significant shrines such as the Brahmeshvara, Rameshwara, and Narasimha temples.

At the confluence of the two rivers, there is a small shrine dedicated to Sangameshwara, located



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The confluence of the Tunga and Bhadra rivers at Kudali; 2. Kudala Sangameshwara Temple at the confluence; 3. Rameshwara Temple, built during the Hoysala period; 4. Interior of the Rameshwara Temple

within the river itself, which becomes submerged during periods of high flow. A Smartha monastery (Mutt) was likely founded here in the 16th century by Narasimha Bharathi Swamy of Sringeri. It received significant support from the Palegar of Santhebennur and the Nayakas of Keladi through land grants. Additionally, there is a Mutt of the Madhva sect near the Narasimha temple at this site.

Sasvehalli (anglicized : Sahasiva-hully)

Sasvehalli is a village now located in Davanagere district, with Honnali as its Taluk headquarters, and holds no significant importance today. Buchanan described the terrain here as plain land with an open landscape that closely resembles the Mysore region. The cultivators reside in the village and own large, white cattle. They also rear sheep, and the people primarily sustain themselves



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. The Tungabhadra River below Sasvehalli, bending southwest; 3. Lift irrigation project by Karnataka Neeravari Nigam at Sasvehalli; 4. A paddy field in Sasvehalli

on dry grains, with about two-thirds of their diet consisting of ragi and tovaray (green pigeon beans/toor dal). Buchanan also documented that most of the tanks in the area have fallen into disrepair.

“The Amildar says, that by constructing reservoirs much dry field might be converted into rice ground.”

This region is now well-irrigated by the ‘Upper Tunga Project,’ which involves a dam constructed across the River Tunga, located 100 meters downstream of the existing Tunga anicut. The Upper Tunga main canal, stretching 258 km along the left bank, is a key feature of this project. It is designed to irrigate 80,494 hectares annually by utilizing 346.60 MCM (12.24 TMC) of water through the Upper Tunga Canal. The project benefits the districts of Shivamogga, as well as the drought-prone regions of Davangere and Haveri in Karnataka state. Due to irrigation, the

land now predominantly grows areca nut and paddy, which are the main crops visible across this region.

Below Sasvehalli, the river takes a bend to the southwest. Nearby, the ‘Karnataka Neeravari Nigam’ has implemented a lift irrigation project that provides drinking water and recharges groundwater. This project also helps fill 121 tanks across the districts of Shivamogga (Shimoga), Davangere, and Chitradurga.

Basavapattana (Baswa-Pattana)

Between Sasvehalli and Basavapatna lies a steep mountain range with several scattered small hills running in a northwest-to-southeast direction. Buchanan further mentioned, “As I advanced into the open country, I observed that the landscape was very bare and, like the area to the east, was



Arecanut plantation near Basavapattna



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Bhadra irrigation channel near Basavapatna; 2. Arecanut plantation with irrigation from Bhadra River and Sulekere; 3. Bhadra irrigation channel; 4. Paddy fields

covered with bushes of *Cassia auriculata* and *Dodonaea viscosa* (Hop bush).” Today, the once-barren land is well irrigated and boasts an abundance of areca nut plantations and paddy fields. Basavapatna is a small village located to the west of a small hill, through which the Bhadra Right Canal (irrigated) passes. The village is home to two lakes: one to the south of Basavapatna and the other nearby. Buchanan mentioned, “Basavapatna is one of the most celebrated works of this kind, which was erected by a dancing girl from the gains of her profession. It is called Sulekere, similar to the reservoir of Tonnur near Srirangapatna.

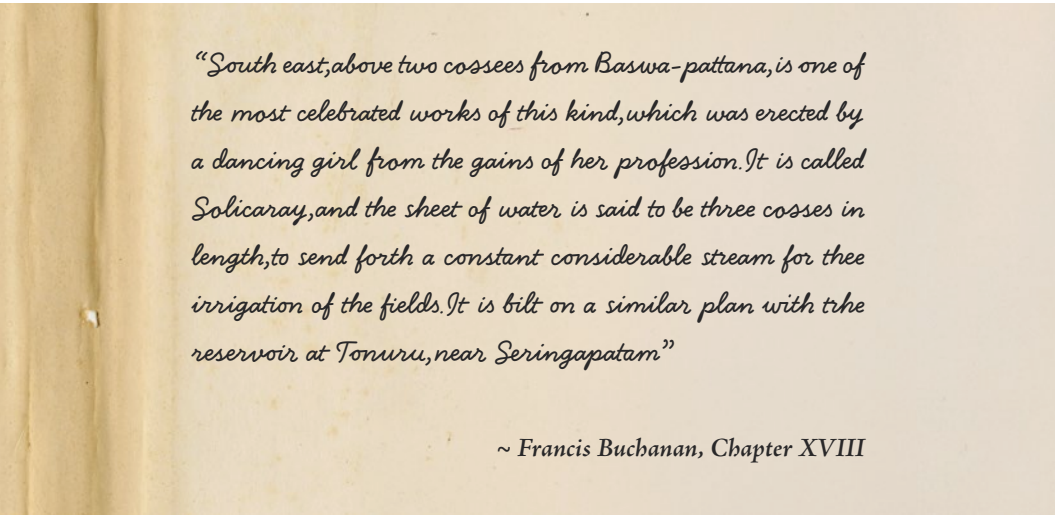
Sulekere, also known as Shanthisagara, is the largest man-made lake, located southeast of Basavapatna in Channagiri Taluk, Davangere District. It was constructed in the 11th century by a temple dancer, who, during that time, held a special privileged status and was regarded with the same respect as the king’s mistress.



South east, above two cossees from Baswa-pattana, is one of the most celebrated works of this kind, which was erected by a dancing girl from the gains of her profession. It is called Solicaray- Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVIII

There are many stories related to the construction of Sulekere, also known as Shanthisagara, but it is ultimately a great boon given by its creator to the people, serving as a source of drinking water and providing irrigation for the region.

Near Sulekere (Shanthisagara), there is a fish rearing and research center, which is operated under the Inland Fisheries Research Institute.



~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XVIII



Agricultural laborers sorting betel nuts—one of the region's chief produce

Near the village of Basavapatna, on the southwestern side, Buchanan mentioned a mosque, noting that this was the first place where Baba Budan took up residence. He later moved and resided on a hill to the south, which is now called Bababudangiri.

I further visited the site, it's a Dargah, not a Masjid, and serves as the shrine of a Sufi saint, which had been incorrectly interpreted. There are two main buildings: the primary Dargah, where Baba Budan meditated, and beside it, the burial site of his sister, Mama Jigani. Additionally, there are several tombs.

Further, I had a conversation with the Cleric or Imam (Muslim scholar) of the Dargah, who told me that this is the place where Baba Budan meditated, and beside it lies the burial site of his



The main structures include the primary Dargah, where Baba Budan meditated, and the burial site of his sister, Mama Jigani (Image 3, clockwise from top left), along with several tombs

sister, Mama Jigani. He also mentioned that from this location, Baba Budan traveled south to a prominent hill named after him, Bababudangiri, and from there, he eventually proceeded to the Krishnapalli Dargah in Tamil Nadu.

Quite interestingly, Buchanan did not mention the history of coffee seed planting by Baba Budan, a Sufi saint who is believed to have smuggled a few coffee beans from Arabia during his holy pilgrimage to Mecca. He brought them back from Mocha, as the coffee trade was a monopoly controlled by Arab traders, and there was a ban on the export of green coffee seeds. Instead, only boiled or dried beans could be carried by foreigners.

At Basavapatna, along with areca nut and paddy, I also noticed a few vegetables being grown while traveling to the Dargah.

Malebennur (Malaya Banuru)

In this region, the surname “Bennur” is common among towns and villages, such as Malebennur, Holehonnur, Ranibennur, Santhebennur, and others. The area between Basavapatna and Malebennur features bare hills on the left side of the road. On top of these small hills, windmills have now been installed. The region is well cultivated, with lush greenery, golden paddy fields, and areca nut plantations being the main crops grown here. In Malebennur, paddy cultivation thrives, with significant quantities exported to other regions, and numerous rice mills can be seen throughout the area.

Farmers in this region cultivate two crops of paddy annually, thanks to the abundant flow of Bhadra waters from the right bank canal of the Lakkavali Dam, as explained by a farmer during



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Malebennur town on the main Shimoga-Harihara road; 2. A view of Komaranahalli Lake near Malebennur; 3. Steep mountain range between Malebennur and Basavapatna with scattered hills running northwest to southeast, now topped with windmills; 4. Bhadra Canal

a conversation about the geopolitical situation of Malebennur. However, concerns were raised about the Upper Bhadra Irrigation Project. Currently, nearly four taluks benefit from Bhadra waters, cultivating paddy on over 68,000 hectares, which far exceeds the allotted area of 40,000 hectares. Farmers fear that the implementation of the Upper Bhadra Project could impact the water share in both Davangere and Harihar taluks.

When I visited the area, the water in the channel had been stopped for the past two days due to recent rainfall. The officials had halted the water flow and planned to resume it when necessary. Malebennur, now a town, was previously part of Harihara Taluk in Davangere district. Despite its fertile land and strong agricultural income, the road connecting Malebennur and Harihara remains in poor condition and urgently needs improvement. This road serves as a vital link to Shimoga, which acts as a gateway to the Malnad and coastal regions for the Hyderabad-Karnataka and central Karnataka areas.

Harihara(Hari-hara)

I crossed a small stream that Buchanan referred to as ‘Solicaray Holay’ (now Haridra River stream), originating from Sulekere Lake and merging with the Tungabhadra River near Harihara.

Between Malebennur and Harihara, the land is filled with paddy fields, transitioning into plain land, with many rice mills found along the road.

I crossed a small stream that Buchanan mentioned as ‘Solicaray Holay’ (Sulekere Holay), which is now referred to as the Haridra River stream. This small stream originates from Sulekere Lake and merges with the Tungabhadra River near Harihara.

The National Highway NH7, connecting Bangalore and Pune (Poona), passes through Harihara. Harihara is now a rapidly developing town in the Davangere district, with many industries emerging in the region. It is also an ancient town situated on the right bank of the Tungabhadra River and serves as the taluk headquarters of the same name. It is located approximately 15 km from its district headquarters, Davangere.

Buchanan documented that the land on the bank of the Tungabhadra, opposite Harihara, was part of the Maratha dominion.

“According to a legend, this spot was the capital or stronghold of a giant named Guha or Guhasura, the limits of whose territory were Uchchangi-durga in the east, Govinahal in the south, Mudunur in the west and Airani in the north. Guhasura, having by his penance, obtained from Brahma a boon of exemption from death at the hands of either Hari or Hara, became troublesome to both gods and men. On a request by the latter, Hari and Hara, in order to counteract the spell, combined themselves into one form of Harihara and destroyed him. The descent of this incarnation was at Kudlur, now Harihara, the place of confluence of the Tungabhadra and Haridra, where the ‘god’s footprints’ are still shown. The giant while dying prayed that the place might be named after him, whence it came to be called Guharanya Kshetra.”

~ From Chitradurga Gazetteer, 1967, Chapter 19

This ancient town was governed by several prominent dynasties, including the Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Yadavas, and the Vijayanagara rulers. After the decline of Vijayanagara, the area was captured by the Tarikere chiefs, who constructed the fort. It was later seized by the Nawab of Savanur, who granted it as a jagir to Shir Khan. The temple is believed to have remained intact



A train crossing the bridge over the Tungabhadra River at Harihara



A 14-arch stone bridge was built over the Tungabhadra for the Bangalore-Dharwar road, with a separate railway bridge. Nearby, Kumarapatnam houses the Harihar Polyfibre plant of Aditya Birla GRASIM on left bank of River

under these Muslim rulers, with only the roof being converted into a mosque. Harihar was later sold to the chiefs of Bidanur. The Marathas then took control, holding it until it was captured by Haidar Ali in 1763. Afterward, it was reclaimed by the Marathas three times.

Until 1865, an Indian regiment was stationed in the military area, two miles northwest of Harihar. In 1868, a magnificent bridge was completed across the Tungabhadra, over which the main road from Bangalore to Dharwar now passes. It is constructed with stone and brick and features 14 elliptical arches, each with a span of 60 feet. Additionally, there is a separate bridge over the river for the railway.

The Harihareshwara temple is the most important one at Harihar. It is a large structure built in the Hoysala style in 12~3 by Polalva, a general and minister of the Hoysala king, Narasimha II, and added to later by others.



Harihareshwara Temple, Harihara

The statue of Harihara, approximately four feet tall, features its left side depicting Vishnu and the right side representing Shiva. To the left of the temple is the shrine of Lakshmi, which consists of a sanctum, a hall with three entrances, and a veranda surrounding the interior. The shrine has an impressive tower made of brick and mortar. It is believed that corresponding to this shrine, there was a shrine of Parvati located to the right of the temple.

On the left bank of Harihara, an industrious town named Kumarapatnam is home to a Harihar polyfibre company by the Adithya Birla GRASIM group, the first production facility in India to utilize local wood resources with in-house technology. It produces VSF and rayon-grade pulp, the raw material for VSF.

Concerning agriculture in this region, the following crops are cultivated based on the type of soil and irrigation available.

Types of Soil	Agriculture crops
Eray (Black soil)	Cotton, Jowar, Wheat, Millets
Kingalu (Red soil)	Pulses
Note: If irrigation is adequate	Paddy, sugarcane, plantation crops, Arecanut

Davangere (Davana-giri)

Davangere is a district headquarters with the same name, located approximately 267 km from its state capital, Bangalore. It is situated in the center of Karnataka. Earlier, it was a taluk under Chitradurga district and became a separate district in 1997.



An old newspaper ad for Davangere’s famous cotton mill (Source: Internet Archive)

The southern and western parts of the district are irrigated by the waters of the Bhadra reservoir, while the rest of the region is semi-arid, relying on borewells and rainwater for agriculture. The agricultural practices here are similar to those in Harihara.

As Buchanan mentioned, Davangere is famous for its coarse cotton cloth along with cumlies from natural wool. Historically, Davangere was a major hub for the cotton industry, earning it the title “Manchester of Karnataka.” Today, it thrives as a center for commerce, education, and agro-processing industries.



From the left: 1. Davangere is known for its coarse cotton cloth and cumlies made from natural sheep wool; 2. A herd of sheep near Davangere

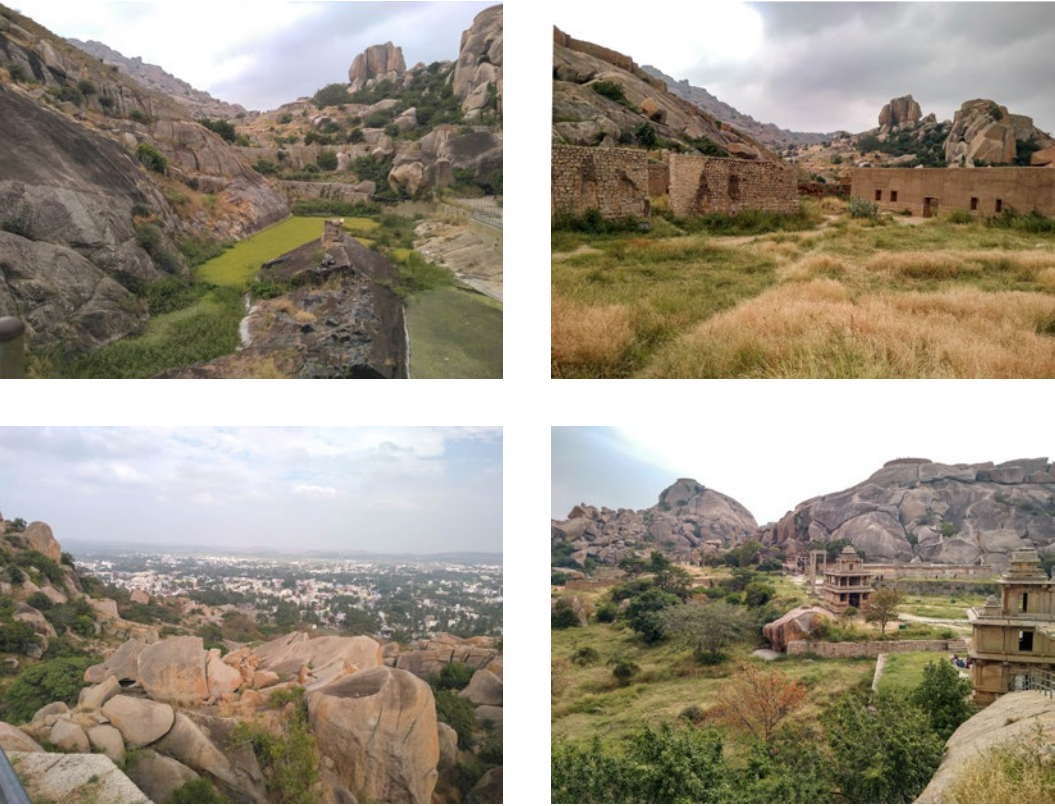
In earlier days, as Buchanan noted, the principal produce of this region included jaggery, cumlies from natural wool, and chana (Bengal gram). The region served as a trading center for goods exchanged with neighboring areas such as Nagara (Bednore Nagara), Bangalore, the Ceded Districts (Rayadurga and others), the Mysore principality, the Maratha territory beyond the Tungabhadra River, the Arcot region, and others.

Chitradurga (anglicized: Chitteldroog)

Francis Buchanan crossed Kodaganur (Coduganar) and Alaghatta (Aligutta), then crossed the Bhimasamudra reservoir before reaching Chitradurga.

Chitradurga, the district headquarters, is located approximately 203 km northwest of Bangalore. It is well connected by the Bangalore-Pune highway. Chitradurga is historically significant, known for its majestic fort and numerous historical sites in and around the city.

The present name of the place, Chitradurga, meaning ‘Picture Fort,’ appears to be a relatively recent one. Earlier names found in inscriptions include Bemmattanakallu or Bemmattanuru, Sulgal, Perumalepura, and Chitrakal-durga. In addition to these, the place has also been known as Hidimbapattana during the Mahabharata era; Mallarayanadurga, a name given by Vira Mallanna Wodeyar in the 15th century; Farrakabad, a name bestowed by Tipu Sultan but not retained after his rule; and Chinmuladri, a name with possible religious significance still used by the Swamis of the Murugharajendra and Kudali Sringeri Mathas.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Akka Thangi Honda (pond) atop Chitradurga Fort; 2. Dilapidated mint from the Palegar period; 3. Gaali Mantapa; 4. View of Chitradurga town from the fort hill

It is believed that the present name is derived from Chitrakal-durga, meaning ‘spotted’ or ‘picturesque castle,’ or from Chatrakal, meaning ‘umbrella rock,’ referring to a prominent, lofty hill of this shape in the southwest. However, the name Chitrakal itself may have evolved from the earlier name Sulgal (or perhaps Suligal), with ‘Suli’ in Kannada referring to a figure, movement, whorl, or outline.

There are many inscriptions on the hill belonging to the Chalukya, Hoysala, Vijayanagara, and Nayaka periods. To the west, among a rugged and picturesque group of hills, lies the Ankli Matha near the Chandravalli stream. Excavations at Chandravalli have uncovered earthen pots, painted bowls, and coins from Indian dynasties such as the Vijayanagara, Satavahana, and Hoysala, as well as denarii of the Roman emperor Augustus Caesar and a coin of the Chinese Han dynasty Emperor Wu Ti, dating back to the 2nd century BCE.



Chandravalli Lake behind Chitradurga Hill Fort, Chitradurga

The hill containing the Matha is known for its long series of subterranean chambers, which are now reinforced with masonry and thickly covered with plaster. A saint from Ankalagi (present-day Belagavi) is believed to have meditated and lived here.

About three miles south of Chitradurga lies Jogi Matti (or Maradi), one of the highest points in the district, standing at 3,803 feet above sea level.

In Chitradurga town, there is a renowned matha—Murugharajendra Matha—the residence of an eminent Lingayat guru. It is a large, well-built, two-storied edifice with a grand mahadwara (outer gate) known as Anebagilu or ‘Elephant Door.’ The chief object of worship in the Matha is the Gaddige (tomb) of Immadi Murugi Swami, who is regarded as its founder. The name of the Matha is said to be derived from ‘Murugi,’ representing the three ‘gi’s—Yogi, Jogi, and Bhogi. One section of the Matha features an ingenious water wheel. The original structure of the Matha was located on Chitradurga hill, in front of the Hidimbeshvara temple. This too is a spacious and impressive stone structure, with a grand pillared hall built during the reign of Bharamanna Nayaka (1689–1721).

Buchanan did not document much about Chitradurga, as he and his team suffered from severe health issues during their visit. He described the place as inhospitable, possibly because he visited during the peak summer season in April, when the weather in Chitradurga was unfavorable for him. As a result, little information was recorded about Chitradurga, its fort, and the surrounding areas.

Doddasiddavvanahalli (anglicized: Siddamana-hully)

Doddasidhavanahalli is a village located between Chitradurga and Hiriyr, beside the NH4 highway, with no significant historical or commercial importance. As Buchanan mentioned, the soil here is black, and the region is primarily inhabited by an agrarian community. Currently,

the people here grow pulses, including Kadale (*Cicer arietinum*), similar to what Buchanan documented.

Doddasidhavanahalli is also the birthplace of Siddavanahalli Krishnasharma, an eminent Kannada writer and freedom fighter.

Hiriyr (anglicized: Heriuru)

Hiriyr is a town and taluk in Chitradurga district, strategically positioned along the Bangalore-Pune National Highway (NH-4). It lies approximately 160 km from Bangalore and serves as a key agricultural and commercial hub in the region.

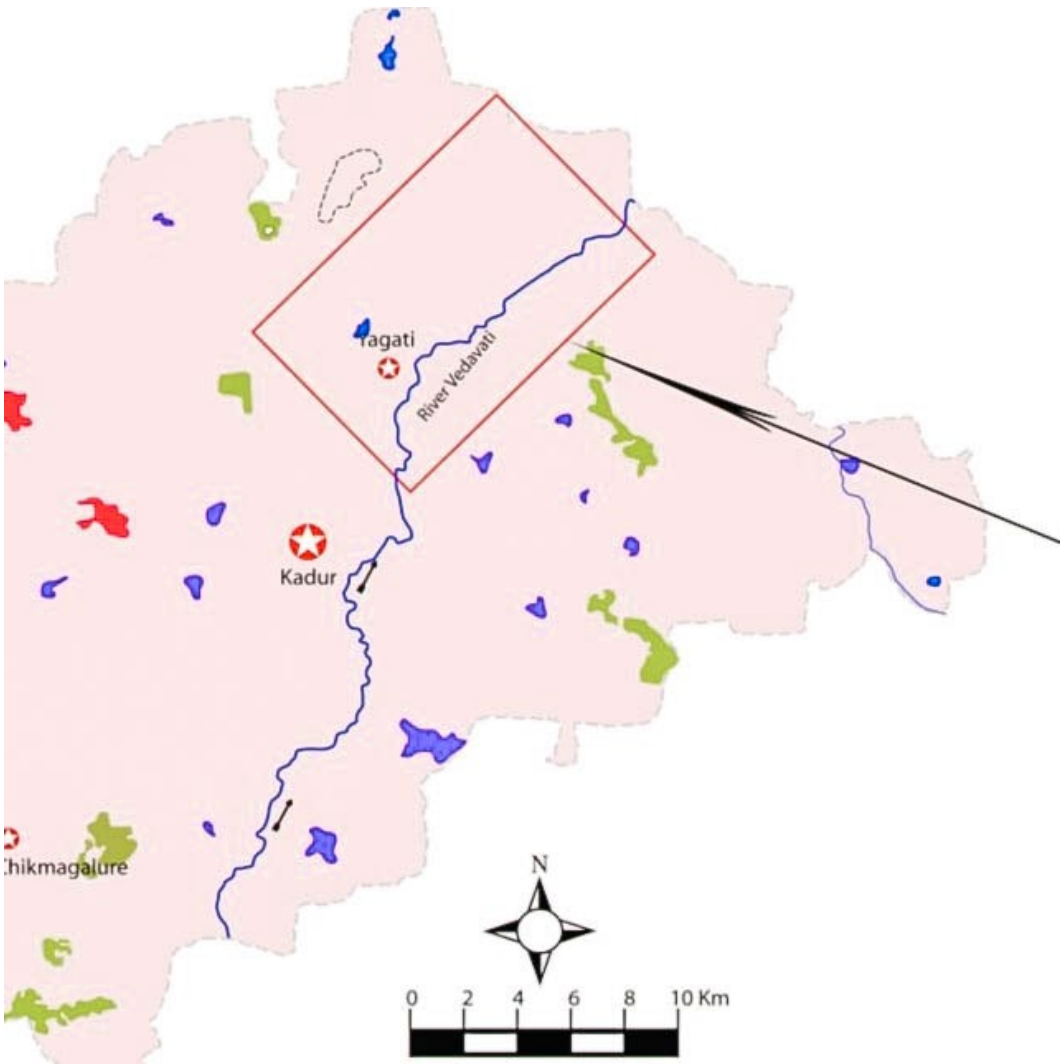
The town is situated on the banks of the Vedavathi River, which exhibits a substantial flow primarily during the monsoon season but experiences a significant reduction or complete depletion during the dry months. The river basin, however, is heavily polluted with debris and domestic waste, necessitating urgent remediation efforts to eliminate pollutants and restore ecological balance.

Vedavathi is one of the tributaries of the Tungabhadra River. In Bellary district, as well as in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, the river is locally referred to as Hagari.

The river originates from two streams, Veda and Avathi, both of which emerge on the eastern



Hiriyr’s weekly sheep market, held on Saturdays, is a key hub for farmers and traders



slopes of the Sahyadri Hills near Bababudangiri in the Chikmagalur district. These streams converge near Pura village to form the Vedavathi River. As it continues its course, the river traverses Kadur taluk before entering Chitradurga district through Hosadurga taluk.

The Vedavathi river basin extends across the taluks of Hosadurga, Hiriyr, and Challakere in Chitradurga district. Among its tributaries, Suvarnamukhi is a prominent one, merging with Vedavathi at Koodalahalli (Sangameshwara temple built) in Hiriyr taluk. After passing through the Chitradurga district, the river enters the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh via Challakere taluk, where it is locally known as Hagari.



After merging with the Suvarnamukhi, the Vedavathi River flows north into Anantapur districts (AP) and Bellary districts, where it is called Hagari

To harness the river's water resources, the Bhairavanithippa Medium Irrigation Project was constructed in 1961 at Bhairavanithippa village. This project was developed considering the catchment yield from an area of 14,386 sq. km, positioned between the Vani Vilas Sagar Dam and the Bhairavanithippa Project.

Hiriyr receives low to moderate rainfall and is categorized as one of the drought-prone regions in the state. The region exhibits diverse soil types, including deep and shallow black soil, mixed red and black soil, red loamy soil, and sandy soil, particularly in the Hiriyr region.

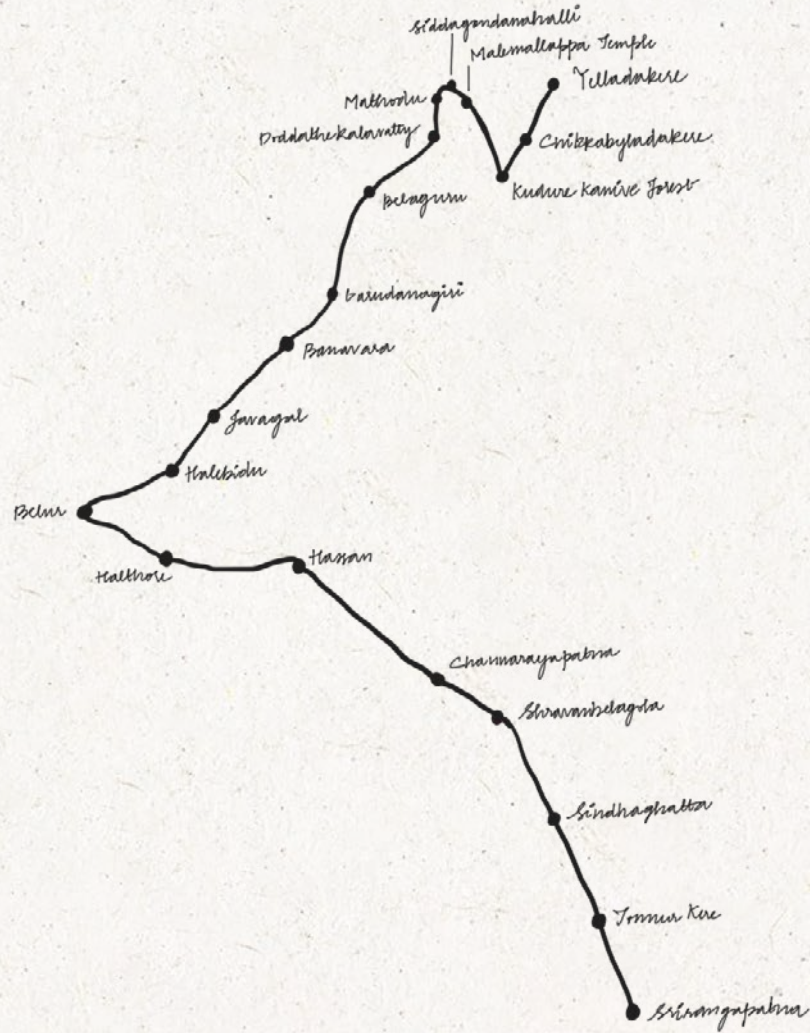
A prominent religious site in the town is the Teru Malleshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva. This temple is highly revered by the local community and is renowned for its annual Rathotsava (chariot festival), which draws a significant number of devotees from surrounding areas.



Rear view of Terumalleshwara Temple, Hiriyr

Hiriyr also has a notable Tamil-speaking population, primarily due to migration during the construction of the Vani Vilasa Sagar Dam. Many Tamil laborers who were employed in the project eventually settled in the town, contributing to its demographic and cultural diversity.

In Hiriyr, the sheep market is customarily held on Saturdays. This weekly marketplace serves as a vital center for local farmers and traders, facilitating the exchange of sheep and other livestock. Renowned for its dynamic environment, the market offers a diverse selection of sheep breeds, attracting buyers and sellers from surrounding regions.



Chapter XIX

Journey from Hiriya to Srirangapatna through the western & middle parts of Mysore dominions



Retracing Francis Buchanan's journey through Chapter XIX reveals a fascinating mosaic of industrial ingenuity, cultural diversity, and historical significance. Buchanan meticulously recorded iron smelting and forging activities at Chikkabyaladakere and the iron ore mines of Kudure Kanive, which now hold only remnants of iron ores, with no trace of traditional steel furnaces and only slag remaining. He also documented Mathodu's once-thriving glass bangle industry, now reduced to scattered slag remnants. At Mathodu, he observed a remarkable irrigation system linked to the Marikanive reservoir, which supported multiple rice crops annually—a precursor to the modern dam on the Vedavathi River.

Buchanan's travels took him to Garudanagiri Fort and Banavara, where the fort remains are still visible today. He marveled at the grandeur of Hoysala architecture, particularly in Belur, Halebidu, and Javagal. He documented the practice of cochineal rearing in Belur, now entirely lost, and recorded details about the Sanketi community at Halhore, whose families have since migrated to towns and cities, leaving no trace in the village. His journey also included Hassan, the iconic Jain pilgrimage center at Shrivani, and the ancient waterworks at Sindhaghatta and Tonnur, before culminating in Srirangapatna.

Through Buchanan's eyes, we glimpse a Karnataka where industry, tradition, and innovation thrived in harmony with nature, offering a unique window into the region's rich and layered past.

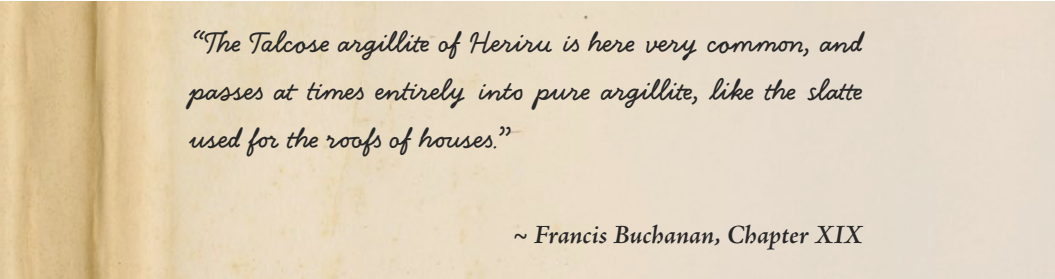


Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Hiriyr to Srirangapatna

- 1 Yelladakere
- 2 Chikkabyaladakere
- 3 Kudure Kanive
- 4 Mathodu
- 5 Siddagondanahalli,
- 6 Malemallappa
- 7 Doddathekalavatty
- 8 Belaguru
- 9 Garudanagiri
- 10 Banavara
- 11 Javagal
- 12 Halebidu
- 13 Belur
- 14 Halthore
- 15 Hassan
- 16 Channarayapatna
- 17 Shravanabelagola
- 18 Sindhaghatta
- 19 Tonnur
- 20 Srirangapatna

Yelladakere (anglicized: Ellady-caray)

It's a small village located southwest of its taluk headquarters, Hiriyur, about 24 km away. The state highway SH 19 (Srirangapatna to Jeevargi) passes through this village. On the western side, a vertical hill range runs from north to south. In the olden days, the people of Yelladakere carried black sand from this hill for iron smelting.



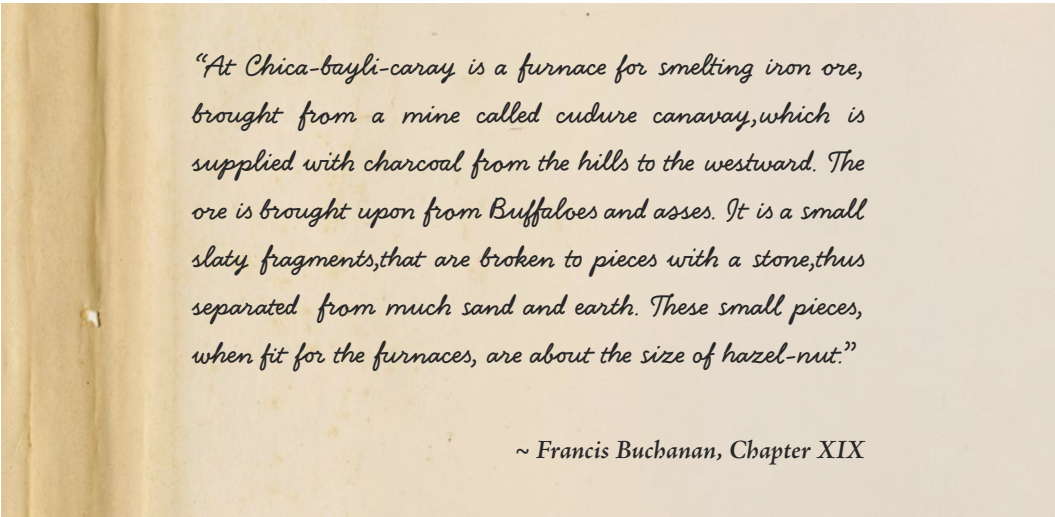
Clockwise from the top left: 1. Industrial Plant; 2. Presence of talcose argillite, a type of rock commonly found in the Hiriyur region; 3 & 4. An old dilapidated house with walls built using talcose argillite slate for masonry work

In terms of geology, Buchanan mentioned the presence of talcose argillite, a type of rock common in the Hiriyur region. It is a slate-like material that the locals once used for roofing their houses, though it is no longer in use. Nowadays, it is mostly used for wall boundaries.

Chikkabyaladakere (anglicized as Chica-bayli-caray)

Latitude: 13.7040° N, and Longitude: 76.5250° E

Chikkabyaladakere is a small village now part of Hosadurga Taluk, located approximately 36 km away. The village is situated on the southern slopes of a hill that runs from north to south. According to the 2011 census, there are approximately 520 houses.



Francis Buchanan visited this place on May 3rd, 1801, and documented the iron-smelting furnace, the ore was brought from Kudurekanive, located to the south, and the charcoal came from the hills to the west. He also recorded the small-scale production of horseshoes and hobnails. The factory consisted of three anvils, with five men employed at each anvil: one who managed the iron and provided all the tools, one who managed the fire, one to work the bellows, one to hammer the iron as it was held by the foreman, and one who finished the nail by giving it a head. The maximum output for the five men at one anvil in a day was 1,200 nails.

Currently, I met one family who continues the blacksmith work of forging, producing a small quantity of agricultural tools like sickles, tongs, axes, and other equipment. The family members—



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The strata of the hills; Chikkabyalada Kere village is situated on the southern slopes of a hill running from north to south; 2 & 3. Views of Chikkabyaladakere village; 4. A stretch of the Kudure Kanive hill



From the left: 1. A family at Chikkabyalada Kere who continues the blacksmithing tradition, producing small quantities of agricultural tools; 2. Their traditional forging facility

husband, wife, and occasionally their son—carry out the work without employing any external labor. They still use charcoal as fuel, which they prepare themselves on their property, but now they use solar-powered blowers.

They purchase raw materials such as iron tubes, square tubes, and other metal supplies from nearby hardware shops in Tumkur. In further discussion, they mentioned that this business has been passed down through many generations, and they are reluctant to leave it, as it has been their main source of livelihood. However, with the availability of standard agricultural tools in city markets, local people now buy directly from shops, and the family's business has been steadily declining.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A man showcasing a slag piece from the era when their ancestors practiced forging and iron smelting; 2. Currently, they purchase raw materials such as iron flat bars and other metal supplies from nearby hardware shops for forging purposes; 3. Blacksmith forging small quantities of agricultural tools such as sickles, tongs, and axes; 4. A metal bar from the Bangalore Fort gate, showcasing a rudimentary native forging style (image for representation purposes)

Kudure Kanive(anglicized : Cudera Canavay)

The Kudure Kanive forest, a small steep hill range with iron ore deposits, lies to the south of Chikkabyaladakere in Hosdurga Taluk of Chitradurga District. These hill ridges extend to Doray Gudda, with only Kudure Kanive and Doray Gudda being rich in hematite ore.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. A view of part of Kudure Kanive with iron ore mining on top of the hill; 2. Reddish soil with iron-intrigued stones; 3. A landscape view of Chikkabyalada Kere from Kudure Kanive; 4. SH 19 passing through Kudure Kanive

Mathodu(anglicized: Muteodu)

Latitude:13.7719° N, and Longitude: 76.4032° E

Mathodu is a small village located 10 km from its taluk headquarters, Hosadurga. Buchanan visited this place and documented that it was a center for the manufacture of glass used to make bangles, called ‘ballay’ in Kannada, which were worn around the wrists of native women.



Mathodu marked on an old East India Company map, showcasing its historical significance and Francis Buchanan’s route through the region

It is believed that five colors of bangles were manufactured here: black, green, red, blue, and yellow, with black being the most in demand. The raw materials for making glass were sourced from nearby areas. The main ingredients included ‘soulu mannu’ (washerman’s earth) and ‘benachu kallu’ (powdered white quartz). Other ingredients were added depending on the desired colour, such as ‘loha’ (brass or copper) and ‘caricallu’ (iron ore stone with manganese).

Types of ornamental bangles produced included green, red, and black.

Green glass raw material constituents:

- Broken glass
- Benachu kallu (powdered white quartz)
- Loha (brass or copper)
- Caricallu (iron ore stone with manganese)
- Impure soda (soulu)



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Balegara Beedhi, where bangle manufacturers once lived in Mathodu village; 2. A stone grinder, likely used by the Balegaras (glass bangle manufacturers); 3. Siddarameshwara Temple in Mathodu; 4. A dilapidated Thipperudra Temple, as mentioned by a passerby

Black glass raw material constituents:

- ✦ Quartz
- ✦ Impure soda (soulu)
- ✦ Broken glass

Unfortunately, no one is engaged in glass bangle manufacturing anymore, and only a few people are aware that this place once produced glass bangles. Sadly, no traces of the furnaces remain, although we were told that they were still intact about twenty-five years ago. The villagers were also uncertain about finding any old bangles made from Mathodu glass.

Our initial disappointment turned to satisfaction when we were shown pieces of discarded crucibles with a layer of glazed porcelain clinging to their sides. It felt as though we had found



A dilapidated furnace at a glass bangle manufacturing site in Pavagada Taluk, as previously discussed in the Channapatna chapter

what we were searching for. Could we determine how old the crucibles might be? Not really, as no one could say for sure when glass-making at Mathodu ceased.

In many places, we visited, we heard, much to our dismay, that remnants of the furnaces could still be found until the late 1990s and early 2000s, but have since been destroyed. While working on a project in Pavagada, we discovered a furnace in a small village called Hanumanabetta, about 18 km from Pavagada town. Nestled at the foothills of a hill covered with dense deciduous forest, we found a furnace, broken in half, measuring over 10 feet in height and 12 feet in width, in a dilapidated condition. The furnace was built using 2-inch-thick bricks and the interior was coated with ceramic clay. Scattered around the furnace were fragments of crucibles with quartz slag and traces of glass.

In 2011, Sashi Sivramrishna and Sandeep Rao visited Mathodu and collected a few discarded crucibles with a layer of glazed porcelain, along with some photographs, which indicate that Mathodu was once a hub for glass bangle manufacturing. Unfortunately, no traces of the furnaces were found, although villagers mentioned that they were intact just about twenty years ago. Additionally, the villagers were not optimistic about finding any old bangles made from Mathodu glass.

Here are some of the photographs captured during the 2011 expedition to Mathodu in search of glass:



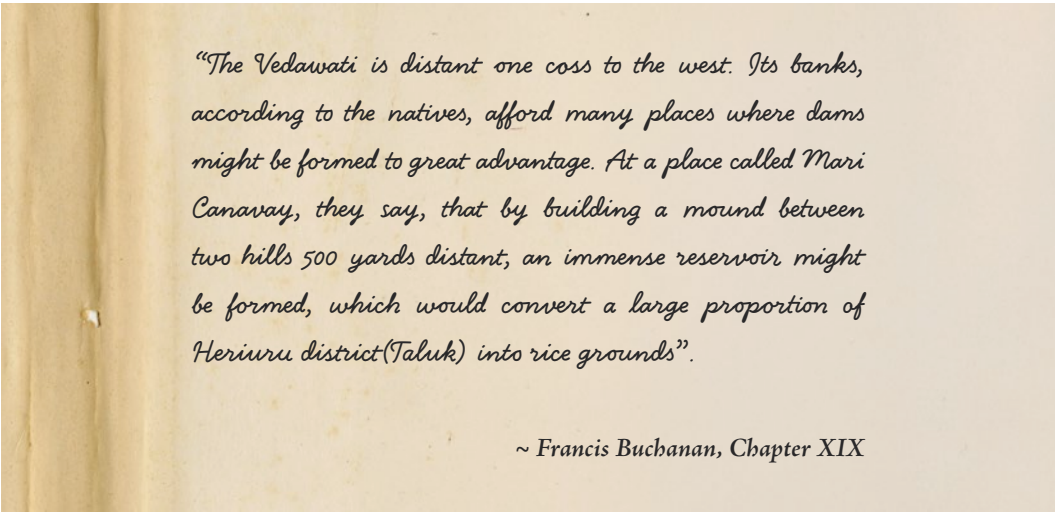
Clockwise from the top left: 1. The mantapa along the fort wall, Mathodu; 2. Local interaction at the site of the glass furnace, Mathodu; 3. The remains of the glass furnace at Mathodu; 4. ‘Soulu Mannu’ (soda ash) found at the glass furnace site, Mathodu

Currently, this traditional industry has vanished in the Old Mysore region as well as in southern Karnataka. However, a few traditional glass bangle manufacturing furnaces (Bhattis) are still operational in Bailhongal Taluk of the Belagavi district in Karnataka.

Marikanive Dam(Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam)

There is an interesting point that Buchanan mentioned regarding irrigation at Mathodu. Near this village, there was a fine reservoir. When the rainy season started early, this tank provided water for two crops of rice per year, and it never failed to supply water for at least one crop. Now,

a dam was constructed across the valley of the Vedavathi River, located to the west of Mathodu and north of the village, forming a fine reservoir called Marikanive Dam(Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam).



Marikanive Dam (Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam)



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Masonry work of the dam from the base; 2. A marble tablet with information on the project, initiated in August 1898 and completed in August 1907 in the Marikanive Valley, led by Regent Queen Maharani Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vi lasa Sannidhana; 3 & 4. Views of the Vanivilasa Sagara DaM

Interestingly, 98 years after Buchanan’s visit, a dam was constructed across the Vedavathi River. The project began in August 1898 and was completed in August 1907 in the Marikanive Valley. This initiative was led by Regent Queen Maharani Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana.

Francis Buchanan, in his quest to gather more information on the iron mines and iron smelting, visited the nearby vicinity, including Siddagondanahalli (Sida Gondana hully) and the Malemallappa Temple (Maleya Maluppa), where a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva can still be seen. He also visited Doddathekalavatty and Chickathekalvavatty (Chica Taycu-lawati), traveling westward of Kudure Kanive, where he reached the Kanive Ranganatha Swami Temple, which Buchanan referred to as the Temple of Ranga. From there, he traveled through Belaguru (Belluguru) and reached Garudanagiri.

Garudanagiri (Garuda-giri)

Latitude: 13.480241 °N, and Longitude: 76.240763 °E

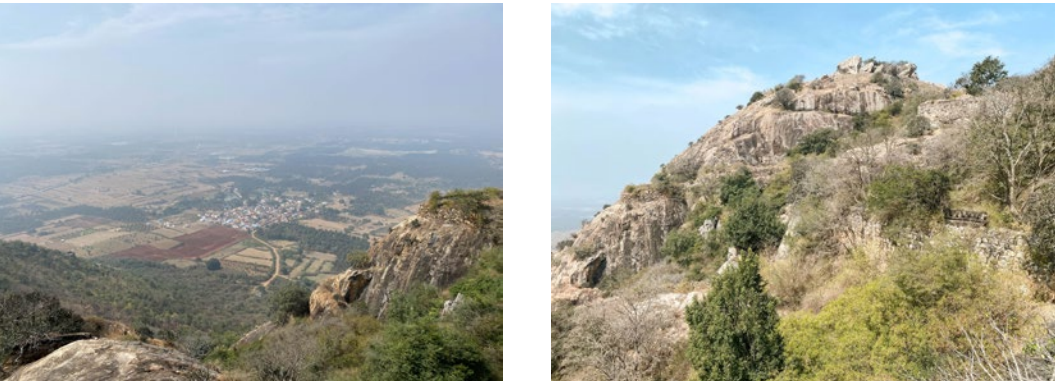
Garudanagiri is a hill fort with a small village at its base, located about 30 km from its taluk headquarters, Arsikere, and 12 km from Banavara, in Hassan District. The name Garudanagiri means “hill of the eagle,” as the hill resembles the rough shape of an eagle, which is how it got its name.

The village has around 200 houses, primarily built with Mangalore-style roof tiles. The terrain here is plain and relatively dry compared to the Tiptur region. The main crops grown in this area include coconut, ragi, and foxtail millet.

While traveling through this region, I came across several sites where coconut charcoal is manufactured, particularly between Garudanagiri and Banavara.



View of Garudanagiri Hill



Clockwise from the top left: 1. View of Garudanagiri village from the top of the hill; 2. Defensive fort wall ramparts atop the hill; 3. The final fort wall gate at the summit; 4. A 'done' masonry structure built across the ridges to collect rainwater, serving as a water body for use in olden days



From the left: 1. A shrine dedicated to the Hindu deity Hanuman, with a carved stone tablet of Hanuman in front; 2. Passage leading to the magazine house at the back of the Hanuman shrine



A magazine house, with an interior showcasing a rudimentary style

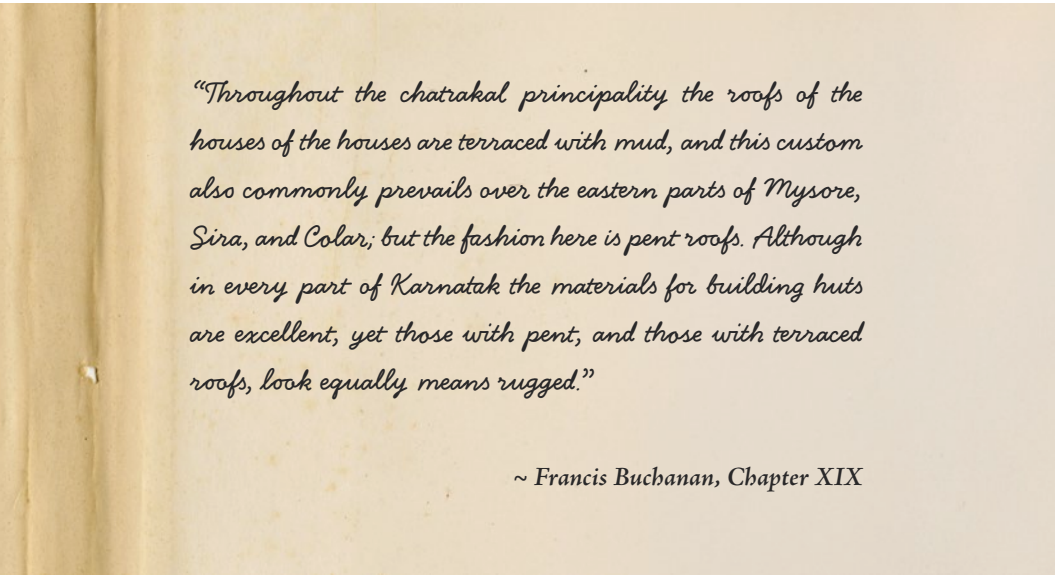
As I was heading toward the hill fort, locals shared a story about a youth who was killed by wild bees last year. They also mentioned mysterious deaths on the hilltop and the presence of wild animals like bears and leopards in the region. Additionally, an old lady living near the hill spoke of black magic rituals allegedly taking place there.

With the help of locals from Garudanagiri, I began climbing the hill. The fort is relatively small, constructed using stone with bastions built using sand and lime masonry. Many sections of the fort appear to have been repaired during Hyder Ali's rule, as the style of the entrance resembles those found in Madhugiri, Pavagada, and other forts.

In the past, tobacco was cultivated extensively in this region, but it is no longer grown here.



The street in Garudanagiri village



~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Coconut shell charcoal in charge; 2. Laborers removing the charcoal from the pit; 3. A pile of raw coconut shells for the next batch; 4. Powdered charcoal for various applications. Many coconut shell charcoal manufacturers can be found in the Garudanagiri region due to the abundance of coconut plantations

To the south of Garudanagiri a Hirekal forest which is a thick shrub forest that houses a Kadekengal Siddeshwara temple and Bettadagavi temple.

Buchanan mentioned of there a sandal and lac were available and owing to the increasing of tigers, the collecting of these has been given up.

Banavara (Banawara)

Banavara is a town in Arsikere Taluk, about 14 km from its taluk headquarters, Arsikere. The Bangalore-Honnavara Road (BH Road) passes through this town, and it is also situated along the Bangalore-Hubli train route.

The historian Buchanan once described Banavara as having “the best mud fort I have seen.” However, the fort is now in a dilapidated condition, possibly due to damage caused by Ballu Khan, who expelled the local poligar, Timmappa Nayaka. Timmappa Nayaka was later defeated by the Ikkeri Kingdom, and the fort eventually came under the control of Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar of Mysore.

During Hyder Ali’s rule, a fort named Nagapuri was constructed in a small valley west of Banavara, near the foothills of the Hirekall gudda(Hills), to protect the town from Maratha invasions. However, due to unhealthy living conditions in the valley, the residents were allowed to return to Banavara after eighteen months.

Near the old fort, a large masonry structure can still be seen at its center. This structure, now in ruins, is filled with debris and human waste. It is believed to have been the residence of the poligar who once ruled Banavara. The area is surrounded by several houses and temples that have survived the passage of time. Notable among these are the Kote Anjaneya Temple near the fort entrance, as well as the Kalikamba, Banashankari, and Channakeshava Temples, all of which can still be visited today.

Buchanan also documented the extensive cultivation of tobacco in Banavara, Garudanagiri, Kadur, and Channarayapattana. He provided detailed accounts of the tobacco farming process,



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. The dilapidated fort structure, now in ruins and filled with debris and waste; 3 & 4. The Kote Anjaneya Temple near the fort entrance, along with the Kalikamba, Banashankari, and Channakeshava Temples, all of which remain accessible today

from seedling preparation to transplantation. However, tobacco farming has completely disappeared in the region, replaced by extensive coconut cultivation.

Today, Banavara is a major market center for coconuts, playing a significant role in the region's economy.

Javagal (anglicized as Jamagallu)

The stretch between Banavara and Javagallu consists mainly of plains with some undulating terrain, and I observed occasional potstone formations scattered across the rocky surfaces. Between Banavara and Javagallu, there is an ancient Hoysala temple near a lake — the Channakeshava Temple of Arakere. This temple, classified as a Trikutachala (three-celled) structure, falls under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).



The Channakeshava Temple of Arakere, located near a lake between Banavara and Javagallu, is an ancient Hoysala temple featuring intricate sculptures on its outer walls depicting incarnations of the Hindu deity Vishnu, including Varaha, Kurmavathara, Matsyavathara, and others

Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Javagallu temple entrance with a beautifully decorated Hoysala-style elephant sculpture; 3. Sculptures depicting Vishnu's incarnations and other deities; 4. Layered carvings on the outer walls featuring elephants, horsemen, scrollwork, and scenes from the Ramayana and other Hindu myths

The temple’s ceilings and walls are adorned with intricate decorations depicting stories from the Ramayana. These carvings are a remarkable example of ancient craftsmanship, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Hoysala period.

Javagallu is a village located approximately 33 km from the taluk headquarters, Arsikere. It is home to the Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, an exquisite example of Hoysala architecture built during the mid-13th century. The sculptures on the temple’s outer walls are arranged in layers starting from the base, featuring rows of elephants, horsemen, scrollwork, and scenes from the Ramayana and other Hindu mythological tales. Above the eaves, the temple is adorned with turrets at regular intervals, each topped with a kalasha (ornamental pot).



From the left: Javagal -1. A finely carved stone sculpture resembling a plantain flower motif; 2. A rudimentary carving on a pillar depicting a donation or service by the local chieftain (Palegar) Naginayakaru

The Channakeshava Temple is a Trikutachala structure. The central sanctum houses an idol of Keshava, while the other two shrines are dedicated to Gopala on the right and Lakshmi Narasimha on the left.

The main crops in this area include coconut, jowar (sorghum), and ragi. Jowar is primarily grown as fodder for cattle, while vegetables like tomatoes and fruits such as pomegranates are also cultivated. In recent years, ginger cultivation has become popular among farmers, a practice introduced by Malayali farmers who lease land in the region. Initially, ginger farming was highly profitable, and many local farmers earned significant income. However, in recent years, ginger prices have plummeted, leading to financial challenges for these farmers.

Beyond Javagallu, on the road toward Halebeedu, there is a Sufi dargah called Qualander Baba Dargah. Although Buchanan did not document this dargah, it has grown into a significant religious site, attracting numerous devotees from the surrounding region.

Halebidu (angliciozed:Hullybedu)

The terrain between Javagal and Halebeedu is mostly plain, interspersed with small hills. The region contains deposits of calcareous tufa, a sedimentary rock formed from calcium carbonate. This area lies approximately 12 km from Javagal.

Upon reaching Halebeedu, one can see a large ancient lake called Dorasamudra. This lake was once at the center of the great city known as Dorasamudra, Dvarasamudra, or Dvaratipura, which served as the wealthy capital of the Hoysala Kings. Founded in the 11th century AD, the city faced significant devastation during the invasions of General Malik Kafur in 1311 AD and subsequent attacks in 1327 AD. These invasions almost destroyed the city.

The splendor of Dorasamudra is not only evident in the historical accounts of its immense wealth, as described by Muslim historians, but also in its surviving architectural monuments, which are regarded as masterpieces of art. Among these, the most remarkable are the Hoysaleshwara Temple and the Kedareshwara Temple.

The Hoysaleshwara Temple, built around 1141 AD by King Vishnuvardhana, features four



The entrance of the Hoysaleshwara Temple, Halebidu



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Outer view and interior of the Hoysaleshwara Temple featuring lathe-finished, finely sculpted pillars; 3. Sculpture of Lord Shiva and Parvathi on the outer wall; 4. Hoysala-style Nandi Mandapa

intricately carved entrances facing north, south, east, and west. The entranceways are adorned with beautifully sculpted lintels, showcasing the exceptional craftsmanship of the Hoysala era. This temple is the largest surviving structure in the Hoysala architectural style.

Constructed from chloritic schist, commonly known as greenschist or soapstone, the temple exemplifies the unique properties of this material. Soapstone is soft when quarried, making it easier for artisans to carve intricate details, but it hardens over time when exposed to air, ensuring the durability of the carvings.

“The temple has long been without a pujari, or a public worship, and has gone so far to decay, that it would be

repaired with great difficulty. This is a pity, as it much exceeds any Hindu building that I have elsewhere seen.”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX

It is truly disheartening to know that invaders showed no regard for the beauty and sanctity of these temples, leading to their destruction. I often wonder how magnificent the temple would have looked in its original form, untouched by the devastation of two separate invasions. Despite the damage, the temple's beauty still shines through, leaving one in awe of its grandeur. The only solace is that this temple, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will be preserved for future generations, allowing them to witness this remarkable symbol of a bygone era.

Buchanan documented two Basava (bull) sculptures associated with the temple — one made of balapam (potstone), the same material used to construct the temple, and the other crafted from finely polished marble. Even some of the temple's pillars exhibit a fine marble finish, showcasing exceptional artistry.

Halebeedu, now a thriving town under Belur Taluk, is located about 28 km from Banavara. This historic town draws numerous tourists, historians, and archaeologists, all captivated by its rich



Nandi (Basava): One sculpture crafted from balapam (potstone), the same material used for the temple, and another made of finely polished like a marble. Some temple pillars also feature a marble-like finish, reflecting exceptional artistry, Halebidu

history and the extraordinary beauty of its sculptures. These sculptures embody the quintessence of Hoysala’s artistic achievements and leave visitors spellbound.

With its growing prominence as a tourist destination, Halebeedu now boasts many hotels offering good food and comfortable accommodations to cater to the increasing number of visitors.



From the left: 1 & 2. Shanthinatha Basadi and the adjacent Adinatha Basadi in Halebidu



From the left: 1. The idol of Shanthinatha inside the Basadi in Halebidu; 2. An inscription near the Parshvanatha Basadi in Halebidu



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2 - A bullock cart near a dilapidated house; 3 - The region contains deposits of calcareous tufa, a sedimentary rock formed from calcium carbonate; 4 - A couple engaged in agricultural activity, winnowing horse gram on the road in Halebidu

Belur(anglicized: Bailuru)

The terrain from Halebidu to Belur begins with dry land, but as one approaches Belur, the landscape becomes greener, passing through the Kallahalli forest, which is part of a deciduous forest region. Before entering Belur town, one must cross the Yagachi River, which is now dry and filled with suburban waste. Buchanan mentioned crossing a small river called Bhadri, originating from the Bababudangiri hills and flowing into the Kaveri. In his documentation, he referred to the Yagachi as Bhadri. This river eventually joins the Hemavathi and flows into the Cauvery basin.

A reservoir was constructed across the Yagachi River in 2001, with a gross storage capacity of about 3.17 TMCFT. This dam serves as a source of irrigation and drinking water for Belur, Chikkamagaluru, Arsikere, and Hassan.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. View of Yagach Dam near Belur; 2 & 3. From Belur, the Malenadu region (hilly area) begins, marking the start of the coffee estates. Cheekanahalli, Belur

Belur is a taluk headquarters in the Hassan district, located about 39 km northwest of Hassan town. Belur is situated at the foothills on the eastern side of the Western Ghats. From Belur, the Malenadu region (hilly region) begins, marking the start of the coffee estates. Buchanan did not document coffee plantations near Belur, indicating that coffee had likely not been introduced to this region by 1801.

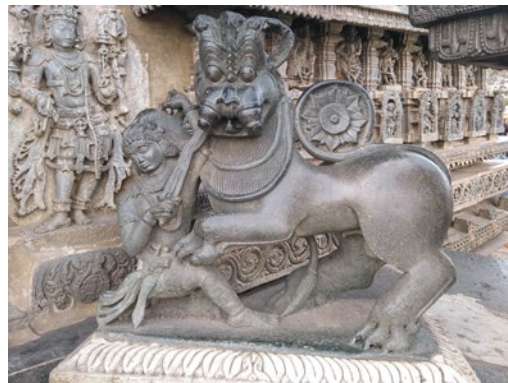
Buchanan mentioned that a considerable trade existed between Belur and Jamalabad. Even today, the stretch from Belur through Mudigere connects to the lower ghat regions, including Dharmasthala, Ujire, Belthangady, Bantwala, and Mangalore, via the Charmadi Ghat. The ghat is named after Charmadi village, the last settlement in the lower ghat region, and the road is renowned for its spectacular greenery and scenic beauty of the Western Ghats.



The stretch from Belur through Mudigere connects to the lower ghat regions, including Dharmasthala, Ujire, Belthangady, Bantwala, and Mangalore, via Charmadi Ghat, named after Charmadi village

In earlier times, goods were actively traded between Belur and Jamalabad. Items exported from Belur included tobacco, jaggery, capsicum, cumin seeds, tamarind, iron, grains, buffaloes, onions, mustard, cotton cloth, thread, and kambali (handwoven blankets made from sheep wool). Imports from the lower ghat regions consisted of betel nut, ginger, pepper, turmeric, salt, and other goods.

Belur is also known as Velapuri or Velur. The main temple of Chennakeshava was constructed during the reign of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana in the 12th century AD. This temple, built to commemorate Vishnuvardhana's victories, is surrounded by other temples, including Kappe Channigaraya, Somanayaki, Andal, and others. The image of Chennakeshava also referred to as Vijayanarayana, stands 12 feet tall and is beautifully sculpted. Even today, daily rituals are performed at the temple.



Clockwise from the top left: 1. Royal emblem of the Hoysala dynasty; 2. A sculpture on the outer wall of the Belur temple; 3. View of the Channakeshava temple; 4. Intricately carved bracket figures mounted at an angle on the exterior wall just below the eaves

The temple's architecture is exquisite, particularly within its interiors, and is often compared to the external architectural splendor of Halebidu. Stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata are intricately depicted in stone carvings, featuring women dancing, and playing instruments, as well as depictions of animals, birds, and elements from nature.

An interesting aspect documented by Buchanan in Belur was the practice of 'cochineal rearing.' He mentioned an English officer who introduced the cochineal insect to this region. Cochineal, a parasitic insect native to tropical and subtropical climates, typically lives on the pads of the prickly pear cactus or Nopal, which the locals planted as fencing along the boundaries of agricultural fields. The insects were scraped off with a small stick, collected in baskets, and then killed by pouring a little boiling water over them. They were dried for two days until the fine hairs were

removed, after which they were ready for sale. Once dried and processed, the insects produced a brilliant carmine red color, a natural dye highly valued in earlier times.

Historically, carmine dye was widely used in the Americas for coloring fabrics and became a significant export during the 16th-century colonial period. The production of cochineal is even depicted in the Codex Osuna (1565). However, with the invention of synthetic pigments and dyes like alizarin in the late 19th century, the use of natural dyes gradually diminished. It seems that cochineal rearing in Belur was introduced by the British as an experimental project.

Today, there is no trace of cochineal in this region. Even after inquiring with the agriculture department, I found no information about its historical presence, and they were unfamiliar with the insect's name itself. This lack of awareness makes Buchanan's documentation of this practice in the area all the more intriguing.

"James Anderson, a physician in the Madras Medical Service, had a profound fascination for plants. In 1789, he established a nopalry in Marmelong (Mambalam, now part of Saidapet, Chennai) to cultivate cochineal insects (scale insects). 'Nopal' is the Spanish term for the Mexican prickly pear (a type of cactus), and a nopalry is a plantation of cacti designed for breeding cochineal insects that produce carmine dye. The nopalry was later discontinued, and the cacti were relocated to Bangalore's Lal Bagh in 1800. Anderson also owned a private garden in Nungambakkam, where the site of Anderson's Gardens – now a residence rather than the original garden – is situated today. Andrew Berry, another surgeon, and James Anderson's nephew, managed the Marmelong nopalry."

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX



Cochineal rearing: Once a major dye export in the Americas, introduced to Belur by the British as an experiment (Image for representation only)

Cochineal rearing could be lucrative if successfully introduced in the dry regions on the eastern side of the Old Mysore region, such as Kolar, Chickballapur, Pavagada, Madhugiri, and others, as the climate of Mexico and these areas is similar.

Halthore (Haltoray)

Buchanan mentioned a significant population of Sankethi (Sankety) Brahmins in the Halthore region. They belonged to the Smarta Brahmin community, originally from the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Dr. Kittel's Kannada-English Dictionary defines the term Sankethi as 'a



An old photo of a Sankethi family and a group of women wearing traditional 'Gandi saree.' Photo credit: Arun Bharadwaj



sect of Smarta Brahmins in Mysore (state) speaking a corrupted form of Tamil.' The Sankethis migrated from Tirunelveli to various parts of Kerala and Karnataka around 800 years ago during the Hoysala period. They speak a distinct language called "Sankethi," which is a unique blend of Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.

Currently, no Sankethis reside in Halthore, a village approximately 22 kilometers northwest of Hassan. Only a few villages in the region now remain where Sankethis live, including DoddaMagge, Kowshika, Bettadapura, Rudrapatna, Ramanathapura, Basavapatna, Somanahalli, Hanasoge, Marithammanahalli, Harave, Mattur, Hosahalli, Chilkunda, Periyapatna, Lingadahalli, Madapura, Kanagal, and a few others in Hassan District.

Hassan (anglicized: Hasina)



The Goddess Hasanamba, the village deity of Hassan, from whom the town of Hassan got its name

Hassan is the district headquarters of Hassan district. The original town was located at the village of Chennapatna, now a suburb of Hassan town. Chennapatna was founded in the 11th century by Bukkana Nayaka, a local chieftain under the Chola reign, and later came under the rule of the Hoysala kings. The town was eventually conferred by the Hoysala rulers to Sanjiva Krishnappa Nayaka.

According to tradition, on one occasion, a hare that Sanjiva Krishnappa Nayaka started hunting entered the town gates, which he perceived as a bad omen. In great distress, the goddess Hasanamba (the "Smiling Goddess") is said to have appeared to him and directed him to build a fort at the spot where the hare started and where he would find her image. Following her guidance, he constructed the fort and named the place "Hasana" in her honor.

Hassan is now a rapidly growing city in Karnataka, with numerous agro-based medium and small-scale industries spread across the town. Several coffee-curing plants operate in and around the city, making them some of the largest industries in the region.

The city serves as an important hub connecting the state capital, Bangalore, to the port city of Mangalore via the Sakleshpur highway. This vital road facilitates the transport of essential crude-based fuels and petroleum gas from the Mangalore port to southern Karnataka and other regions.

Additionally, Hassan is known for its thriving agro-warehouse system, featuring a prominent ginger market and wholesale trade of potatoes, vegetables, and onions. Every Tuesday, the city hosts a lively weekly fair, where local farmers set up stalls to sell their agricultural produce and other goods, creating a vibrant marketplace atmosphere.

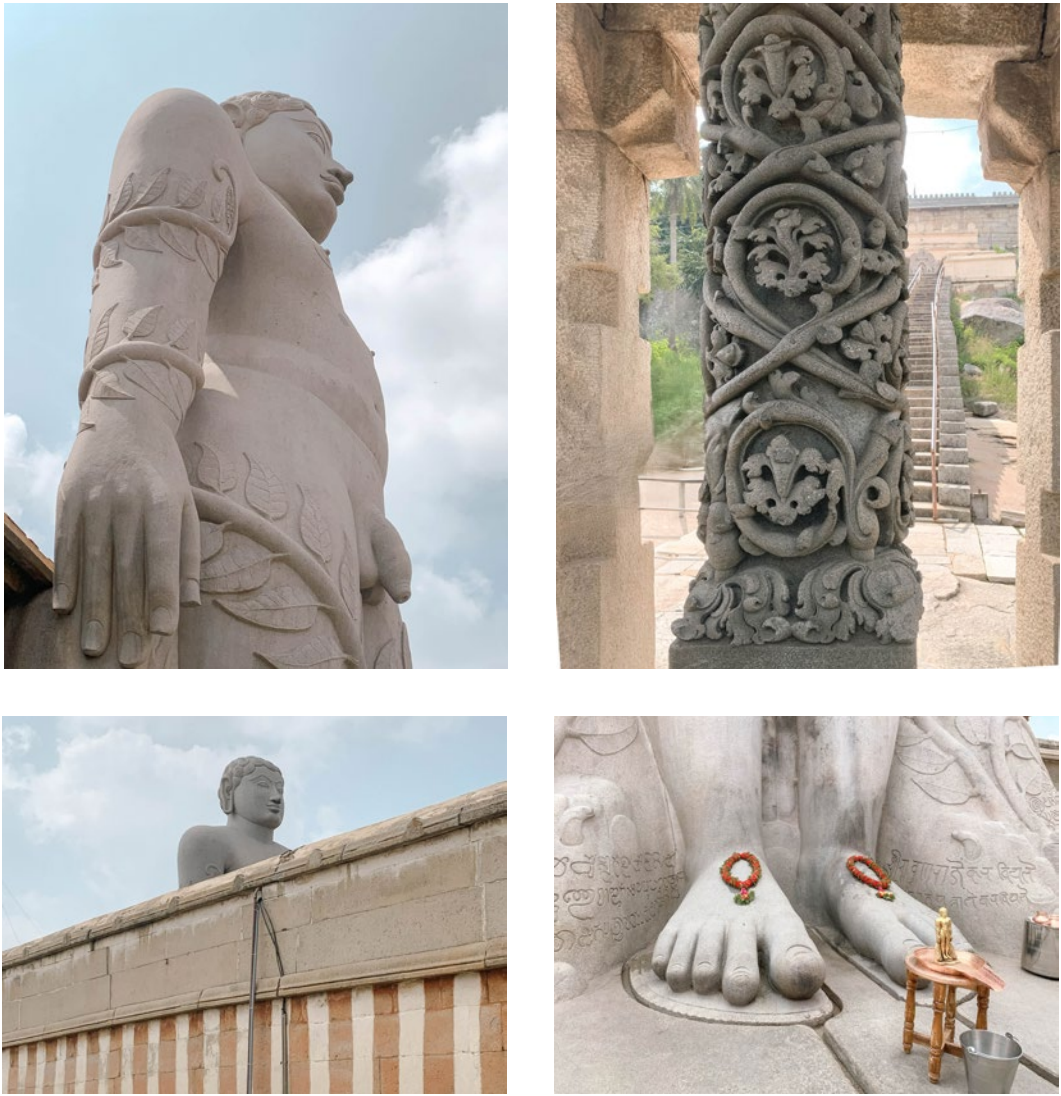
Buchanan crossed Shanthigrama (referred to as Grama) and Channarayapatna (referred to as Chin’-raya-patna) before reaching Shravanabelagola (Sravana Belgula).

Shravanabelagola (Sravana Belgula)

The landscape transitions into a terrain resembling that of Araluguppe, characterized by abundant coconut plantations. Two prominent hills dominate the area: Doddabetta (also known



From the left: 1. View of Chandragiri with a large Kalyani nestled between two hills; 2. View of Vindhyagiri, home to the colossal 57-foot statue of Gommateshwara



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The colossal 57-feet statue of Gommateshwara (Bahubali); 2. A decorated stone pillar at Shravanabelagola; 3. A close-up of the feet of Gommateshwara; 4. Side view of the statue

as Vindhyagiri) and Chikkabetta (Chandragiri). Vindhyagiri is home to the colossal 57-foot statue of Gommateshwara, surrounded by several stone structures, while Chandragiri houses numerous basadis (Jain temples) and inscriptions of historical significance.

Nestled between these two hills is a picturesque Kalyani (man-made tank) that enhances the scenic beauty and the tank serves religious purposes. The ascent to the summit of Vindhyagiri



From the left: 1. A stone carving of Chavundaraya, a general and minister under Ganga king Rachamalla, dated 978 AD; 2. Bhadrabahu cave, where Chandragupta Maurya spent his last days

involves climbing a flight of 500 granite steps, leading to the towering image of Gommateshwara. The statue, a masterpiece of Jain art and devotion, was commissioned by Chavundaraya, a general and minister under Ganga king Rachamalla, in 978 AD.

Shravanabelagola is renowned for the Mahamastakabhisheka, a grand head-anointing ceremony held every 12 to 14 years. This sacred event draws Jain monks and devotees from across India, making it a significant spiritual gathering.

As a prominent tourist destination in Hassan district, Shravanabelagola connects visitors to other historical sites such as Belur and Halebidu, further enriching its cultural and historical appeal.

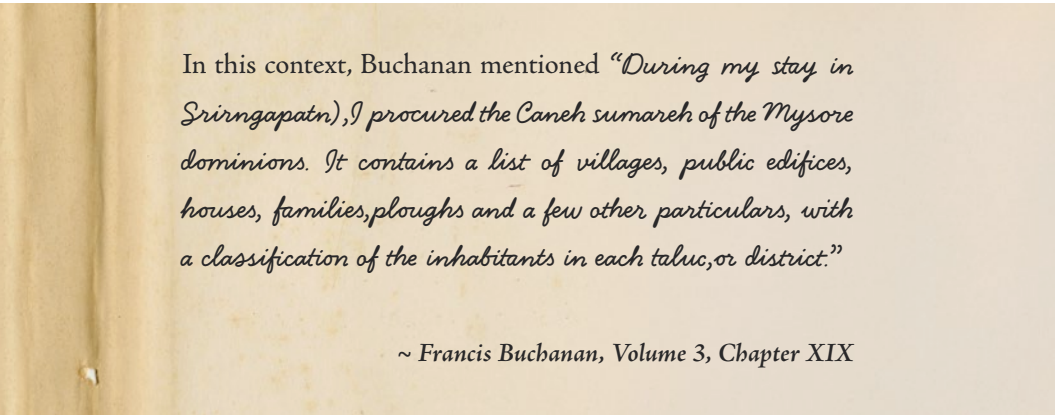
Buchanan, while passing through Sindhaghatta (Sindy-gutta) and the Tonnur Lake—both of which are elaborately described in Chapter III—proceeded to Srirangapatna. A detailed account of Srirangapatna has already been thoroughly documented in Chapter II...

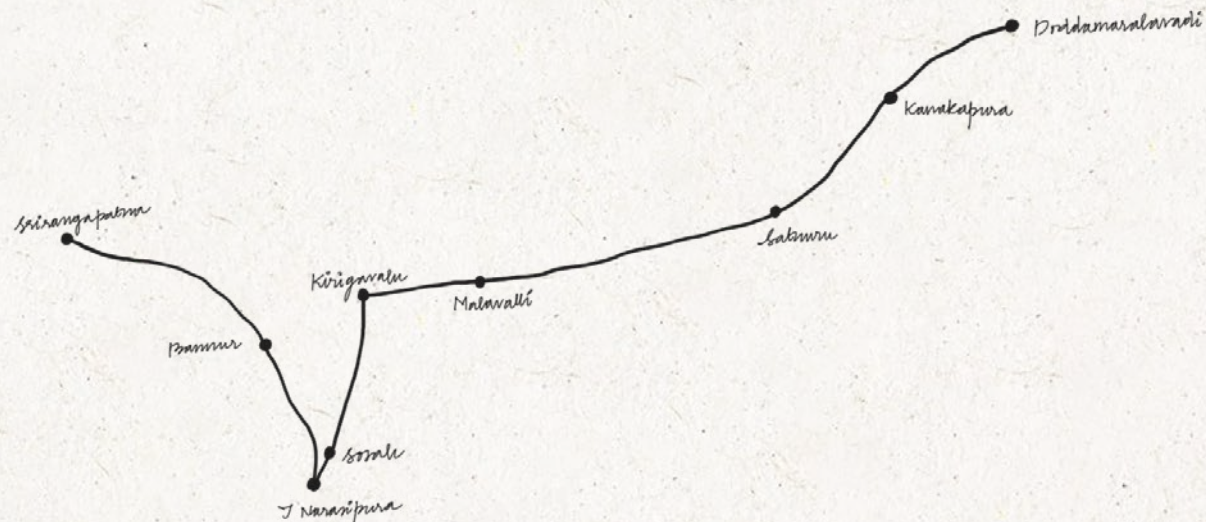
Khanesumari (anglicized: Caneh sumareh)

Buchanan, in this chapter, referenced “Caneh Sumareh,” a comprehensive report documenting resources, demographics, and activities for administrative and taxation purposes. The term “Caneh Sumareh” was initially unfamiliar to me, so I consulted others and eventually discussed

it with my wife. She recalled encountering this term during her primary school days when groups of students, led by teachers, would visit their village and surrounding areas to collect demographic data. This included population counts as well as details like the number of domestic animals, such as cows, buffaloes, chickens, dogs, sheep, and other livestock.

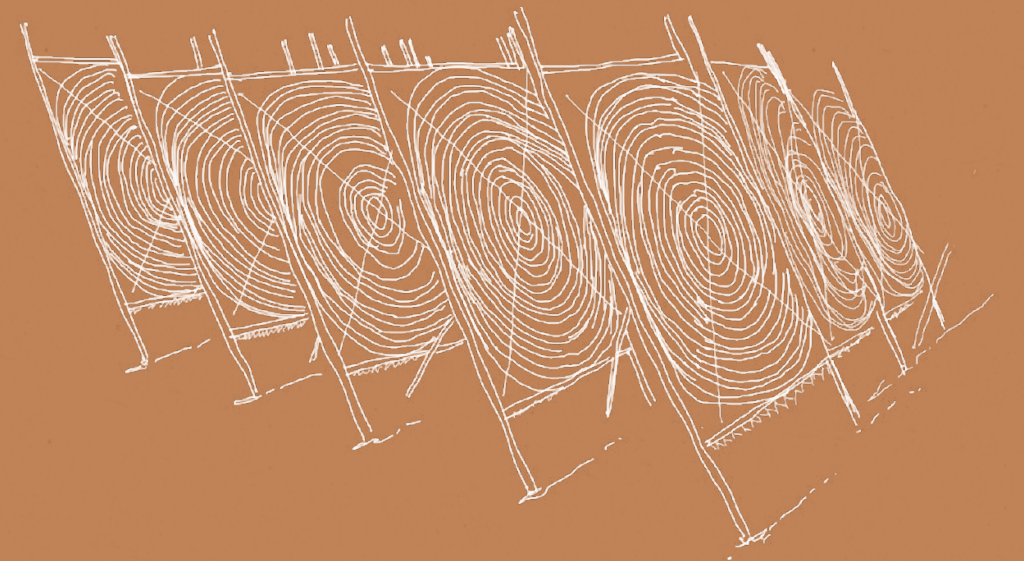
This term aligns with Buchanan’s account, which included specifics such as the number of families, houses, and ploughs in the region.





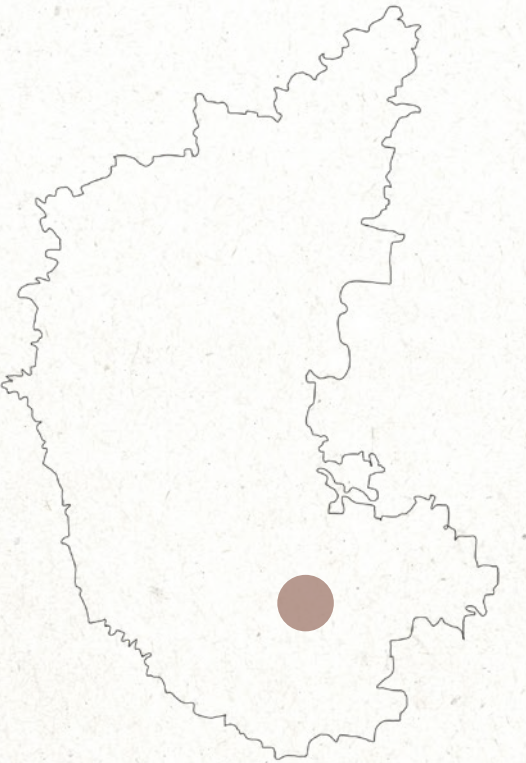
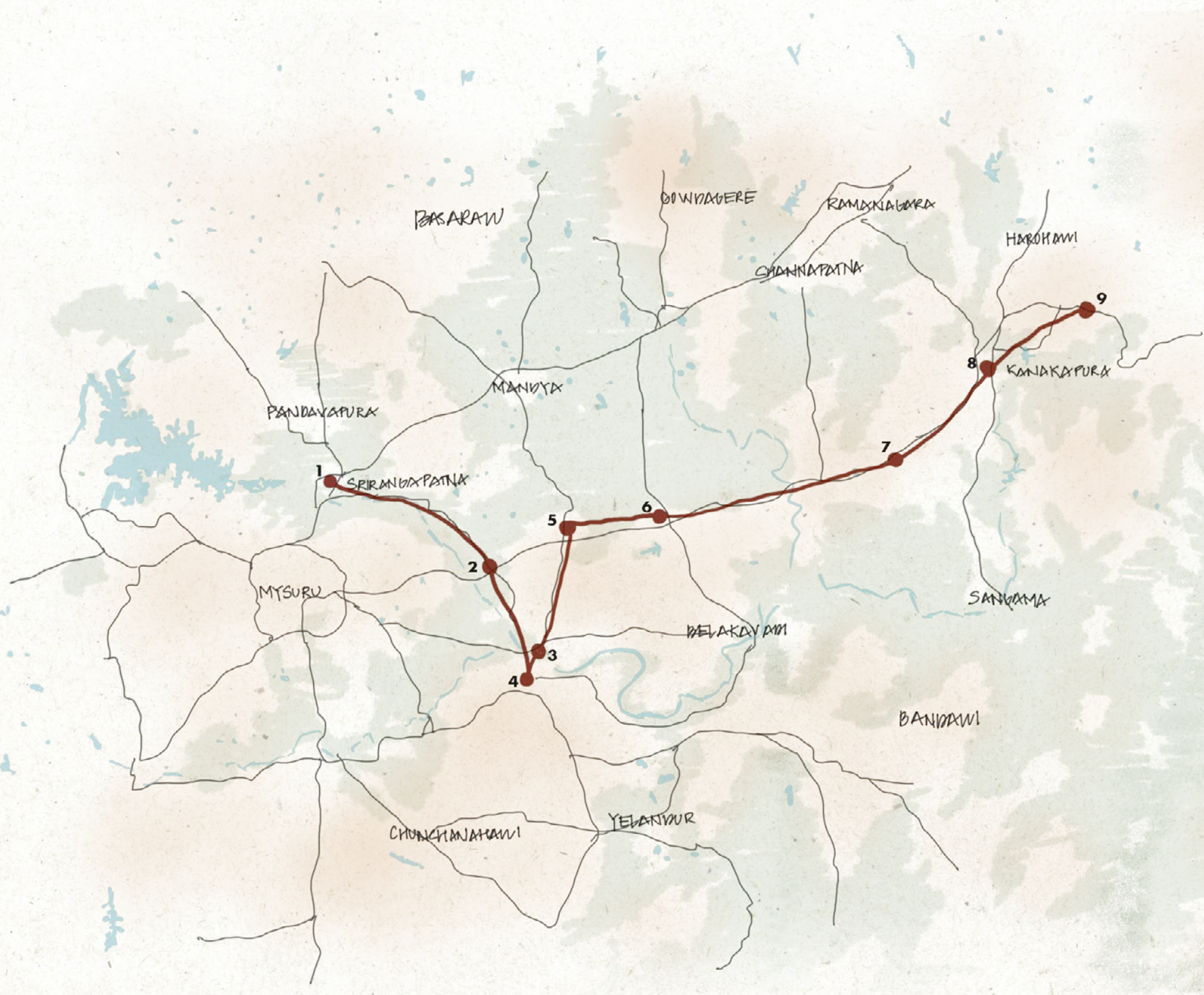
Chapter XX

**Journey from Seringapatam (Srirangapatna) to Madras
(Karnataka Region Only)**



Retracing Buchanan’s journey in Chapter XX, this passage follows his route through significant locations, each rich in history and cultural heritage. Bannur is renowned for its indigenous “Bannur Kuri” sheep breed. At T Narasipura near Sosale, the confluence of the Kaveri and Kabini rivers holds spiritual significance, with a historical Muslim community linked to Tipu Sultan’s administration. In Kirugavalu, families from this lineage still cultivate vast lands, including mango orchards with roots dating back 250 years. Malavalli and Kirugavalu reveal shifts in land use over time, from orchards to paddy fields, while Basavanabetta’s once-abundant sandalwood forests have given way to bamboo groves. The route through Sathanur and Kanakapura passes through rugged terrain with Kabbaladurga’s rocky hills in view, marking a region where sericulture—initially attempted by Tipu Sultan—only flourished under later Mysore rulers. Finally, Buchanan’s account of Malawady (Doddamaralavadi) highlights the region’s rivers, including the Arkavathi and Suvarnamukhi, which continue to shape the landscape.

With this, I conclude my retracing of Francis Buchanan’s journey through Karnataka, marking the end of an enriching expedition filled with historical insights and personal discoveries. Through this journey, I encountered diverse landscapes, met people who still hold fragments of the past, and witnessed both the enduring and transformed elements of the regions Buchanan once described.



- 1 Yelladakere
- 2 Chikkabyaladakere
- 3 Kudure Kanive
- 4 Mathodu
- 5 Siddagondanahalli,
- 6 Malemallappa
- 7 Doddathekalavatty
- 8 Belaguru
- 9 Garudanagiri
- 10 Banavara
- 11 Javagal
- 12 Halebidu
- 13 Belur
- 14 Halthore
- 15 Hassan
- 16 Channarayapatna
- 17 Shravanabelagola
- 18 Sindhaghatta
- 19 Tonnur
- 20 Srirangapatna



Retracing Buchanan's Travel Route
Seringapatam (Srirangapatna) to Madras

On 21st March 2025, after leaving Srirangapatna, I passed through Ganjam and Karighatta, which Buchanan referred to as Karighat. The route traversed small hilly terrain, with extensive paddy fields nourished by the Kaveri River’s irrigation system. Further along, I reached Arakere, which Buchanan documented as Arkaray, noting its fertile lands with abundant paddy cultivation. Even today, the edges of these fields are lined with Babul trees (*Vachellia nilotica*), just as Buchanan observed. Locals continue to use this tree’s wood as a raw material for crafting agricultural implements, preserving a tradition that has lasted for centuries.

Bannur (Banuru)

Following the course of the Kaveri River, I reached Bannur, a municipal town under T. Narasipura Taluk, located about 25 kilometers from Mysore. Nearby stands the renowned Somanathapura temple, an exquisite Hoysala-period monument known for its intricate carvings. Bannur is also historically significant as the birthplace of Vyasa-tirtha, a prominent Hindu philosopher of the



A paddy field near Bannur, bordered by areca nut plantations and coconut trees along the hedges



A shepherd with his flock of sheep, Bannur

Madhwacharya Dvaita order. The landscape here is largely flat, with vast stretches of lush green paddy fields sustained by the irrigation waters of the Kaveri, much like how Buchanan described it in his accounts.

Along with agriculture, Bannur is renowned for its indigenous sheep breed, known as “Bandur Kuri.” This breed is highly prized for its excellent quality of meat and wool. Local farmers have selectively bred these sheep over generations to suit the environmental conditions of the region. Bannur sheep are valued for their adaptability, resistance to diseases, and low maintenance requirements, making them an essential part of the region’s livestock economy.

Many agricultural lands in Bannur are irrigated by canals sourced from the Ramaswami Anecut, a masonry dam built across the Kaveri River, ensuring a steady supply of water for paddy cultivation and other crops.

Sosale (Sosila)

On the same day, I visited Sosale, a small village near T. Narasipura, surrounded by vast stretches of paddy fields. Situated on the left bank of the Kaveri River, the village is known for its Sosale Vyasara-ja Mutt, Veerabhadra Temple, and other historical sites. Nearby, in T. Narasipura, lies the confluence (Sangam) of the Kaveri and Kabini rivers, a place of cultural and spiritual significance.



Confluence of River Kaveri (Cauvery) and Kabini at Thirumakudalu near Sosale—Kaveri on the left and Kabini on the right



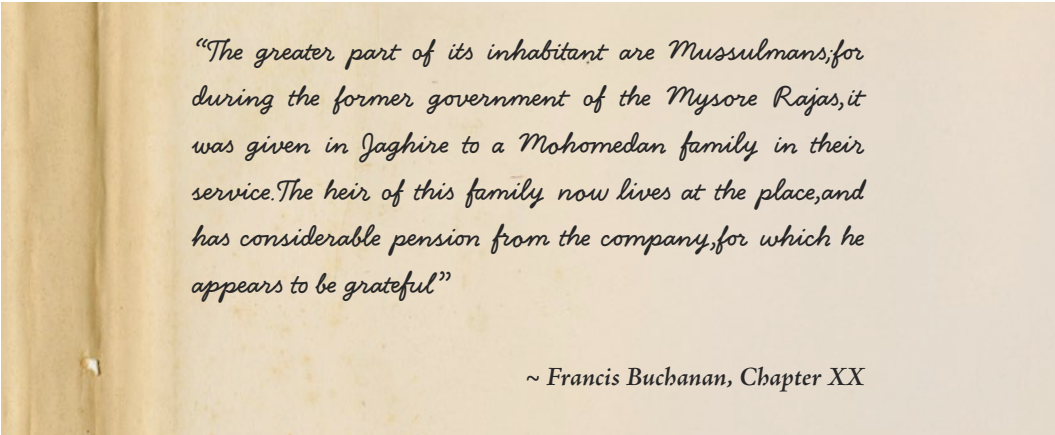
Clockwise from the top left: 1. River Kaveri; 2. Kabini River; 3. The confluence of both rivers; 4. Gunja Lakshmi Narasimha Temple on the bank of the Kaveri River

Kirugavalu (Kirigavil)

Kirugavalu is a small village in Malavalli Taluk, located about 15 kilometers from Mandya district headquarters. The region is known for its high-quality Casuarina (Sara) and Eucalyptus

poles, which are widely used for timber and construction. During my visit, I observed several trucks being loaded with these poles, likely purchased from local yards and nearby villages.

Buchanan documented that a Muslim community associated with Tipu Sultan’s administration resided here, continuing their presence even during his visit. Their historical connection to Tipu’s government adds to the village’s rich past.



From the left: 1. A bullock cart, similar to the one documented earlier—everything remains the same except for the wheels, which now have rubber tires instead of the traditional wooden wheels bound with an iron ring; 2. A mango grove in Kirugavalu is linked to the historical lineage of Syed Ghani Khan. His family continues to reside here, cultivating vast lands with diverse crops. The village is renowned for its 250-year-old mango orchards, along with various fruit trees

Even today, a few families from this historical lineage continue to reside in Kirugavalu, owning vast lands and cultivating a variety of crops. The village is particularly known for its mango orchards, some of which trace their origins back 250 years, alongside diverse fruit orchards and multiple paddy varieties.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. A glimpse of mangoes from the historic orchards of Kirugavalu; 3 & 4. A mango orchard over 250 years old, known as Bada Bagh, at Kirugavalu

During my visit, I met Syed Ghani Khan, a passionate young farmer dedicated to preserving rare and organically grown mango varieties. He shared the fascinating history of his family’s agricultural heritage:

“This land was gifted to my ancestor by Tipu Sultan. Over two centuries ago, during his struggle against the British, the Sultan established ‘Kiru Kaavalu’ in Kannada, meaning a vigilant watch system—this eventually gave the town its name. Loyal soldiers were granted land to cultivate mangoes, with the finest fruits reserved for the palace. Among them, my family received 20 acres, nurturing a thriving orchard. Now, four generations later, I continue this legacy, preserving both history and our love for mangoes.”

Malavalli (Malawully)

On the same day, I reached Malavalli, a town and taluk in the Mandya district. The town was bustling with agricultural activity, with numerous agro-chemical shops actively catering to farmers. To the north of the town, I noticed a large tank (reservoir), a significant water source for the region.

Francis Buchanan documented that Hyder Ali Khan had granted Malavalli as a Jaghir (gift) to his son Tipu Sultan. Tipu established a fruit orchard near the town, sustained by a fine reservoir that provided a constant water supply. According to Buchanan, this orchard was well-maintained under the supervision of a Daroga (Superintendent or Chief Officer), a writer, and ten laborers. The orchard once boasted 2,400 trees, with half being mango trees and the rest including orange trees.



Marehalli Kere (Lake) near Malavalli



Unfortunately, by the time Buchanan visited, the orchard had deteriorated, and the land had been converted into paddy fields. Today, there are no traces of the once-grand orchard that Tipu Sultan had cultivated for personal use.

However, during my visit to Kirugavalu, I encountered Syed Ghani Khan, a farmer whose family land was once gifted by Tipu Sultan. His ancestral orchard, which has been preserved for over 250 years, possibly carries a historical connection to the lost Malavalli orchard, continuing the legacy of Mango cultivation in the region.

“About two miles south-west from Malavalli is a large reservoir, near which sultan made a trial of his army with that of General Harris. After having by this found that his troops were totally inadequate to face the English, he shut himself up in the Seringapatam”

~ Francis Buchanan, Chapter XX



A glimpse of Marehalli Kere, near which the British forces attacked Tipu Sultan’s army

Buchanan referred to the large reservoir, now called Marehalli Kere (Latitude: 12.357494, Longitude: 77.052031), located approximately 3.7 to 4 km southwest of Malavalli town.

This vast reservoir, covering around 600 acres, plays a crucial role in irrigating the nearby paddy fields through its well-planned reservoir channels.

Interestingly, this very location was the site of the Battle of Malavalli, which took place on 27th March 1799 during the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War. The battle was fought between the East India Company and the Mysore Kingdom, led by Tipu Sultan. The British forces, commanded by General George Harris and Colonel Arthur Wellesley, launched an attack on Tipu Sultan’s army, which had taken a defensive position near this reservoir to slow the British advance toward Srirangapatna. The battle ultimately led to the Siege of Srirangapatna, marking a significant turning point in the war.

Halagur (Huluguru)

Further, I traveled to Halagur, passing through Banasamudra, which Buchanan also referred to by the same name. I crossed the Shimsha River, which Buchanan mentioned as the “Madura River.” This river flows through Maddur and is one of the important tributaries of the Cauvery (Kaveri) River. It originates from the Devarayana Durga Hills, flowing through Mandya and Ramanagara districts before joining the Cauvery River.

A dam has been constructed across the Shimsha River at Markonahalli in Kunigal Taluk,



Shimsha Water Basin, is one of the tributaries to the River Cauvery

Tumkur District. Buchanan also mentioned a large reservoir near its source, referring to “Cadaba Amanikere” near Gubbi, which might have been considered one of its sources, though the river primarily originates from Devarayana Durga Hills.

Near Halagur, Buchanan noted the presence of iron boiler manufacturing units used in sugar production. He also observed that the region had a significant population of the Vishwakarma community, who were engaged in metalwork. Today, many of them have transitioned into goldsmithing and jewelry craftsmanship, continuing their skilled tradition.

In the Halagur region, I came across many shrines dedicated to Siddappaji, a revered folk deity. I heard numerous stories about the miracles attributed to Siddappaji, deeply rooted in local traditions. The Panchalas (Vishwakarma) have a significant connection to this deity, but devotion to Siddappaji extends beyond caste boundaries, with people from various communities worshipping him. Folklore songs dedicated to Siddappaji are commonly sung, often alongside those of Manteswamy, another prominent folk deity. These oral traditions continue to play a vital role in preserving the region’s cultural and spiritual heritage.

South of Halagur lies Basavanabetta, which Buchanan described as **two hills abundant with sandalwood trees**. However, in the present day, the region is primarily covered with **bamboo forests**, with little to no trace of the once-thriving sandalwood groves.



A glimpse of the Shimsha River



From the left: 1. Basavanabetta, south of Halagur, once abundant with sandalwood trees as described by Buchanan, is now primarily covered with bamboo forests. 2. Blacksmiths of Halagur

Sathanur (Satnur)

While passing through Halaguru, I observed a major drinking water pipeline originating from Thorekadanahalli (TK Halli) on the banks of the Shimsha River. This prestigious BWSSB water treatment plant processes 775 MLD (Million Litres per Day), supplying drinking water to the urban regions of Bangalore, and playing a crucial role in meeting the city’s water demands.

The strata from Sathanur to Kanakapura consists of poor and slightly dry soil. On the left side, the Kabbaladurga hills are visible, adding to the rugged terrain of the region.



From the left: 1. The terrain from Sathanur to Kanakapura with dry, poor soil and hilly landscapes (captured in summer); 2. The hilly terrain on the backdrop from Kabbaladurga hill with green shrub forests (captured in winter)

Kanakapura (Canicarna-hully)

On the same day, I visited Kanakapura, which Buchanan documented as ‘Canicarna Hully.’ Interestingly, some elderly locals I met still refer to it as ‘Kankanahalli.’ I passed through this town by crossing a narrow valley.

Kanakapura, located in Ramanagara district, sits on the banks of the Arkavathi River and is India’s largest producer of cocoon silk. As I traveled through nearby villages, I saw numerous mango plantations and many agrarian families rearing silkworms, with cocoon trays placed in front of their houses.



Clockwise from the top left: 1 & 2. Silkworm rearing with cocoons carefully placed in bamboo rearing trays. 3. A farmer placing cocoons on the tray feed with mulberry leaves. 4. Silkworms spin their cocoons over 3 to 8 days, forming a single continuous strand of silk

I met a farmer engaged in silkworm rearing, carefully placing cocoons in rearing trays made of bamboo, as seen in the picture.

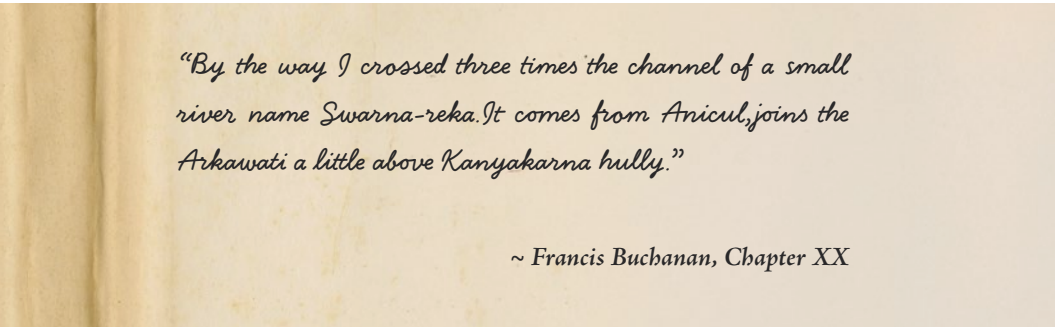
Silkworms are usually fed with mulberry leaves. Though Tipu Sultan initially attempted sericulture on a trial basis, it did not succeed. However, the industry was later systematically introduced and flourished under British administrators, particularly during the reigns of Mysore Maharajas Krishnaraja Wadiyar III and IV, who actively promoted silk production.

Francis Buchanan’s records on Bangalore Pete’s commerce highlight that in the 1800s, silk was a significant import from China, indicating its importance in trade even during that period.



From the left: 1. A traditional Mysore house with a clay tile roof, a front porch with wooden pillars, and a man engaged in silk cocoon rearing. 2. A goat near the house

Doddamaralavadi (Malalwady)



Further, I traveled northeast to Doddamaralavadi, which Buchanan referred to as Malawady. It is a small village in Kanakapura Taluk, Ramanagara district.

Along the way, I observed several areca nut plantations, mango orchards, and extensive mulberry cultivation, which is prominent in this region.

I inquired with the locals about reaching the confluence of the Swarnarekha River and the Arkavathi River, located south of the village near the Basavanna Temple.

Buchanan referred to Swarnarekha, which corresponds to the Suvarnamukhi stream that flows through the Bannerghatta forest region. The Arkavathi River, on the other hand, originates in the Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapura district.



The Arkavathi River originates in the Nandi Hills of Chikkaballapura district (left refers to Arkavathi). The Suvarnamukhi stream (referred to as Swarnarekha by Buchanan) flows through the Bannerghatta forest region (right refers to Suvarnamukhi)



From the left: 1. A mound constructed across the River Arkavathi. 2. Domestic waste disposed into the stream



Clockwise from the top left: 1. The Suvarnamukhi River dried up in summer; 2. Another glimpse of the confluence of both river streams; 3. Mulberry plants along with coconut and fruit groves on the banks of the Arkavathi River stream; 4. Mulberry cultivation, with leaves used for feeding silkworms—silk rearing is extensive in this region

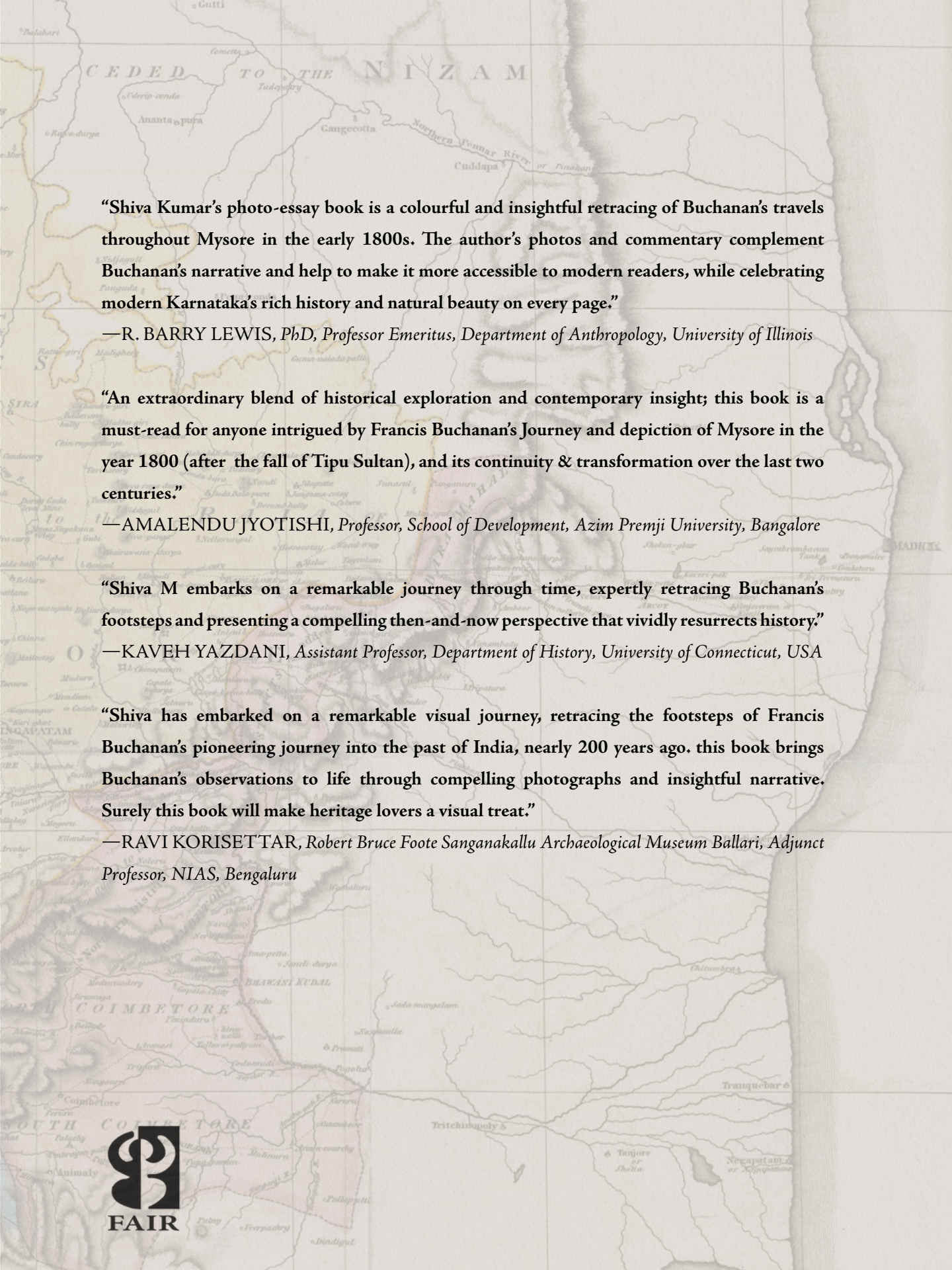
Further, Buchanan proceeded towards Tully, which is now Thalli, a town in Tamil Nadu. It is situated near the Karnataka border, adjacent to Anekal and Kanakapura regions. Presently, Thalli falls under Denkanikottai Taluk of Krishnagiri District.

With this, I conclude my retracing of Francis Buchanan's journey through Karnataka, marking the end of an enriching expedition filled with historical insights and personal discoveries. Through this journey, I encountered diverse landscapes, met people who still hold fragments of the past, and witnessed both the enduring and transformed elements of the regions Buchanan once described.

From the iron smelting sites to agricultural lands, ancient trade centers, and forgotten reservoirs,

much of what Buchanan recorded still resonates, while modernization has reshaped many places beyond recognition. His meticulous documentation has proven invaluable in understanding Karnataka's historical, cultural, and geographical evolution.

Though my journey stops here at the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, the echoes of Buchanan's observations continue to provide a bridge between the past and present, offering a deeper appreciation of this ever-changing yet historically rich land.



“Shiva Kumar’s photo-essay book is a colourful and insightful retracing of Buchanan’s travels throughout Mysore in the early 1800s. The author’s photos and commentary complement Buchanan’s narrative and help to make it more accessible to modern readers, while celebrating modern Karnataka’s rich history and natural beauty on every page.”

—R. BARRY LEWIS, *PhD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois*

“An extraordinary blend of historical exploration and contemporary insight; this book is a must-read for anyone intrigued by Francis Buchanan’s Journey and depiction of Mysore in the year 1800 (after the fall of Tipu Sultan), and its continuity & transformation over the last two centuries.”

—AMALENDU JYOTISHI, *Professor, School of Development, Azim Premji University, Bangalore*

“Shiva M embarks on a remarkable journey through time, expertly retracing Buchanan’s footsteps and presenting a compelling then-and-now perspective that vividly resurrects history.”

—KAVEH YAZDANI, *Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Connecticut, USA*

“Shiva has embarked on a remarkable visual journey, retracing the footsteps of Francis Buchanan’s pioneering journey into the past of India, nearly 200 years ago. this book brings Buchanan’s observations to life through compelling photographs and insightful narrative. Surely this book will make heritage lovers a visual treat.”

—RAVI KORISSETTAR, *Robert Bruce Foote Sanganakallu Archaeological Museum Ballari, Adjunct Professor, NIAS, Bengaluru*