

# MAN in INDIA.

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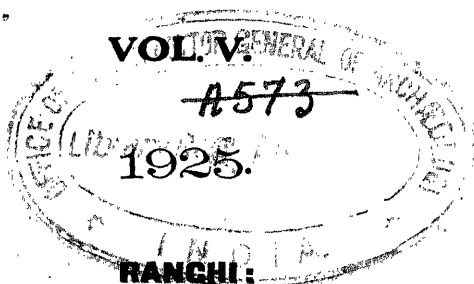
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(VI.76.57½) रामस्तु व्युथितं श्रुत्वा वाक्त्रि पुत्रं रणाक्षरे ।

व्यादिदेश हरिश्चेष्टान् काम्बव त्पुमुखां स्ततः ॥

In spite of these glaring statements in the epic itself, it is inconceivable how the word could be understood to mean 'a bear'; its original significance must have been either forgotten or its original form must have been so mutilated as to obscure its real meaning.

The *क्तवङ्ग* is used about 240 times, its use appears to be appropriate wherever it is used. It signifies their capacity to run. V. 60.1. अश्विपुत्रो महावेगो बक्तवन्तो पत्तवङ्गमौ. Wherever the word is used it should be understood to intimate the quickness of their speed or their natural habit of running. They run away at the sight of civilized men. Because Hanuman was the best of runners he was sent to bring the herbs.

Kapi which is used about 420 times furnishes us with a clue to identify the people of Kishkindhya with the modern hill-men. 'Kapi' means a monkey but we have seen that other words used to name these men signify the tribes wandering in the forest. It has already been proved that the customs and manners of the people of Sugreeva are still found in a hill tribe called the Savaras. But the Rāmāyana describes these Vānars to have had tails and therefore they were *kapayah*. It is this appendage that has misled many to understand the Vānars of Sugreeva's army to have been monkeys. That this tail is not a natural one is intimated in V. 53.3, where Vibheeshana says—

कपीनां किल लांगुल मिष्टं भवति भुषणम् ।

That tail is an important ornament but not a limb of the body. Among the Savaras there are a class of men who wear the ornament of a tail.

“A tribe of Savaras is called Arsi or Arisi which means a monkey in the Savara language. Their Oriya neighbours call them ‘Lambo Lanjiya’ (long-tailed) which is the Oriya translation of the Savara word “Arsi” (*Castes and Tribes of S. I.*). They got this name from the long piece of cloth which the males allow to hang down. The name signifies the peculiarity in the dress of men and it does not appear in that of women. In Rāmāyana also the Vānar women are not said to have had tails. If the Savara ‘Arsi’ is translated into the Oriya ‘Lambo Lanjiya’ even in modern times, what wonder if it has been translated into the Sanskrit कपि by the poet Valmiki? As these forest men wear a long piece of their dress, hanging down they were called कपयः and the word signifies, as every name in the epic does, a striking feature in these men.

Just as the Vānaras were divided into the कपयः and क्वाः by their colour or complexion, the long appendage in the dress gave rise to the two classes of वानराः and गोलाङ्गुलाः. We have already seen that the significance of कपि was a long hanging piece of dress; गोलाङ्गुल, from its root meaning, signifies a tail with a tuft of hair at the end. In spite of this, it is understood to mean a long-tailed monkey with a black face; but this

monkey has no tuft of hair at the end of the tail. The tail of this class of गोलकुला is a piece of ornament like the tail of the Arsi (कपि) The chief feature of the गोलकुला: is a tuft of hair at the end. This kind of tail also is worn for ornament by the Savaras.

“Usually the Saora’s dress (his full dress) consists of a large bunch of feathers (white generally) stuck in his hair on the crown of his head, a coloured cloth round his head as a turban, and worn much of the back of the head, and folded tightly, so as to be a good protection to the head. When feathers are not worn, the hair is tied on the top of the head or a little at the side of it” (*Castes and Tribes of S. I.*). A tuft of hair hanging out loose from a knot, two or three inches high, gives the idea of the end of a cow’s tail. Hill-men with such a head dress have been noticed by previous writers.

Since the Vānars of the Rāmāyaṇa resemble in dress, customs and manners the Savaras of today, and many of the names of persons, places and objects existing between the Ganges and Lanka are of Savara origin; it is clear that Sugreeva and his men were Savaras or of tribes allied to them.

In modern times all the tribes allied to the Savaras are called the Mundaris and the name includes the Savaras, the Gadabas, the Asuras, the Mundaris &c living in Central India from Indore on the west to the Ganjam District in the east. But these tribes being influenced by the neighbour-

ing Aryan classes have partly adopted the Aryan languages and customs, or have altogether forgotten their original language and became Aryanised completely.

“There are, on the other hand, several Aryanised tribes in Northern India who have certainly once spoken some Munda dialect. Such are the Cheros in Behar and Chota Nagpur; the Kherwars, the Savaras who have formerly extended so far north as Shahbad, many of the so-called Rajbansis and so forth... At all events Munda languages must once have been spoken over a wide area in Central India and probably also in the Ganges valley” (Grierson).

Ptolemy writes, “Towards the Ganges are the Sabari, in whose country the diamond is found in great abundance.” That their original home was to the South of the Ganges can be understood from the distribution of the Savaras in modern times. “We find them largely spread over the Orissa division and the Orissa tributary states..... Farther to the north they occur in Saugar and Damoh and in former times they are said to have been settled in Shahbad.” (Grierson).

The Vānars of the Rāmāyaṇa had their headquarters at Kishkindhya which, from the statements made in the epic, clearly appears to have existed to the north of the Vindhya mountains and south of the Ganges. To the north of the Ganges lived the semi-Aryanised foresters called the Nishādas who had their chief centre at Sringi-bera. Then how did these foresters living between the Ganges

and the Vindhya come to spread themselves from the Vindhya to the hills of Orissa? The reason is not far to seek. The political changes that had taken place in the North-west of India had dislocated the forest tribes and compelled them to seek shelter elsewhere. Sir Herbert Risley says, "Local tradition ascribes to the Savars the conquest of the Cheros and their expulsion from the plateau of Shahabad in about the year 421 of the Salivahana era or A. D. 500." The occupation of Shahabad by the Savars is evidenced by a number of ancient monuments in the district that are still put down to the Savars, who are supposed to have been driven South by the inroad of Rajputs under the Bhojpur chief which made an end to their rule". The disturbances caused to the peaceful rule of the Eastern Ganga Kings of Kalinga during the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries by the hill tribes show the incursions of the Savars into that country. Ranaka Dharmakhedi, a vassal of Vajrahasta III says in his grant dated A. D. 1054 that he had terrified a host of enemies on the western mountains. In the 7th century the earlier dynasty of the Gangas had been overthrown by one Bālāditya; Kāmarnava I had to defeat the enemy and establish the Ganga rule again. These documentary evidences combined with the evidences offered by the place-names such as Jayati, Kindām &c clearly show that the Savaras had made serious attempts to establish settlements in the kingdom of Kalinga until they were finally subdued and were forced to settled peacefully during the reign of Vajrahasta III of Kalinga.

From these considerations it can be seen that the Savaras were, from time to time, dislodged from their settlements and were compelled to find new homes. Being naturally accustomed to live in forests and hills, they seem to have always occupied such tracts as the plateau of Shahbad and the forests of the Eastern Ghats. A careful study of the localities now occupied by the Savaras show that they preferred to migrate through hills and forests. This natural propensity to avoid cities and other centres of civilization and to move over hills and dales is mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa. When Rāma led the Vanar hordes to Lanka, they avoided the cities and Janapadas and marched along the hill sides. (VI. 4·39).

वर्ज्य अग्राभ्यांश्च स्तथा ज्ञानपदानपि ।

By taking this route it was easy for them to obtain roots and fruits they chiefly lived upon. Wherever they settled they were particular to see that the chief articles of their food were abundantly procurable. This natural habit is poetically expressed when Rāma was made to pray to Indra to bless the Vānars that roots and fruits should be abundantly obtained wherever they inhabit, (VI. 123·8½)—

अकाले चपि मुख्यानि मूलानिच फलानि च ।

नद्याश्च विमला स्तत्र तिष्ठेयु र्यत्र वानराः ॥

The above considerations show that the Savaras or the Vānars had their original home between the Ganges and the Vindhya, but were, in subsequent times, compelled to leave those homes and find new ones elsewhere. Even in their original

homes they seem to have been divided into tribes as in modern times, according the amount of admixture of Aryan civilization in their customs and language. The Nishādas on the banks of the Ganges, the Jaṭāyu tribe at the Panchavati, the Sabari tribe at the Pampā, the Vānars of Kishkindhyā and the Sampati tribe in the Vindhya,—such are some of the tribes of the Savaras mentioned under the name of the Vānars or foresters in the epic.

From the distinct mention of the detailed habits, customs and manners of the tribes of the so-called Rākshasas and of the Vānars, and the use of the aboriginal names of persons, places and objects with such changes as would be required by Aryan intonation, it may be reasonably inferred that Valmiki had personal knowledge of the peoples and of the places lived in by those men; if not, he could not have depicted them so faithfully and so truthfully. This inference may help us to rightly interpret the tradition attached to the origin of the poet.

It is said that, though he was born a Brāhman, at first he led the life of a *Chandāla* for a long time when seven Rishis took pity on him and initiated him in the *mantra* of Rāma. Uttering the name he sat down in a place and an ant-hill grew over him. Nārada came to the ant-hill after sometime and told him the story of Rāma's wanderings. Because he came out of an ant-hill he was named Vālmiki. Because he has narrated the story of Rāma, he has been raised to the rank of a *rishi*. This tradition, as all traditions