

A GRAMMAR

OF THE

KUVI LANGUAGE,

WITH COPIOUS EXAMPLES,

BY

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I.

Introductory.

The Kond, literally the mountaineers, received their name from the Telugu word Konda, the hill wherefore other spellings are wrong. This tribe belongs to the Dravidians and claims its origin from Pandu the great king of the Konds. They were formerly living from the Delta of Orissa to the North-west of Jeypore, inhabiting Kalahandi and Ganjam as well as down the plains of Vizagapatam District.

They are living both, in the Calcutta and Madras Presidencies. The Rajah of Palkonda is considered the head of the southern part of this tribe. In former times they cultivated the whole of the plains, but were then gradually pushed backwards by the advancing Aryans. The great majority is at present living upon the hills, and as they talk another language, which none of the Telugus or Ooriyas understand, and as there exist many strange and rude customs between them, they are regarded as a semi-civilized and rude race.

There exists a great difference between the characters of the Konds and the Telugus. The Telugu is a man, who stands his place even when left alone. The Kond counts only as a member of his tribe. The Telugu is not so much afraid of intrigues of men, but fears wild beasts most. The Kond does not fear wild beasts, but

fears most of all the intrigues of men. The Telugu longs to have every day more than he had the previous day, and stretches his arms out wide to gain more and more influence and riches, he is an active never content man. The Kond is quite satisfied, when he has enough for himself, he does not think further than his own family or village and is content, if nobody disturbs him on his small property. On the whole, the Kond lives a simpler and more upright life than the Telugu does. He is still more conservative than the Telugu. The Telugu is a bright, brisk man, the Kond an emblem of stupidity and childish silliness.

The Hauta or Nayudu of a village has great influence and power. He rules his village as a father. All village questions and even family matters come before him for settlement.

The wife of a Kond is generally older than her husband and acquires a great influence over him.

The so-called Meriahs, human sacrifices, were very common among them and the destruction of new-born infants was a custom, which has still to die out.

The big tribe of Konds is divided into five different classes. They claim their descent from one ancestor, the great Pandu, who had five sons. Each caste recognizes one of these sons.

1. Mukhadora, the highest caste.
2. Mannidora.
3. Kondadora.
4. Jatapudora or Poroja, or Kodulu or Kuvi.
5. Gadaba.

The two first castes have lost their original language as they amalgamated with the Telugus, but each of the three last castes has its own language. The largest tribe is that of the Jatapudoras. This tribe has its own very fine Kuvi language, which is almost unknown to any European or educated Indian.

This tribe numbers according to the last census of the Vizagapatam District 66,000 inhabitants. Besides this, there may be counted $\frac{1}{5}$ th of the whole Jeypore population to this tribe according to W. Francis' Gazetteer. Besides this there is a large portion of the inhabitants of Kalahandi belonging to this tribe and least, not last, the whole Kui talking population in the Orissa Delta and Bengal, so that the number of all Kuvi or Kui talking men is well worthy of notice.

There are two dialects, called Kuvi and Kui, the first is spoken more to the west and south-west, the latter more in the north-eastern part of the country. As my remarks about the Kuvi and Kui language clearly show, they are only two dialects of a very rich fine language, which deserves the notice and study of Europeans and Indians.

There are no written characters in the Kuvi language, but I have tried to write 120 Biblical stories in this language using Telugu characters. It would be a very interesting undertaking to try and unify these two dialects and evolve one Grammar therefrom. I have attempted this in my Kuvi Grammar, and I court any criticisms, remarks or suggestions, which will be very thankfully accepted, as the undertaking is a serious one and I require all the help I can get.

My book "Religion, Customs and Folk-lore of the Konds" gives much interesting information and throws new light on these people. All the stories, etc., were collected from the Konds themselves, and therefore are genuine.

Some remarks about the Kuvi and Kui dialect.

The Kond language is divided into many different dialects, as : Gond, Gadaba, Konda, Saura, Kuvi, or Kui; of these Kuvi or Kui is the one mostly spoken. When we differentiate between these two dialects, we mean that Kui is spoken more in the eastern parts of the Kond territory and Kuvi more in the western parts.

When comparing these two dialects of one language, I must differ entirely from Lingam Letchmajee in his "Introduction to his Grammar of the Kui Language," when he says: "it will be strange to observe, that the

language of the Kond's country though bordering on the hill Zemindaris in the Ganjam District, does not bear the least resemblance to that of these near neighbours ;" also when he says : "I have always thought, that this (Kui) language is a corruption of, or the primitive Telugu itself."

The following short comparison of these "two languages" will clearly show :—

1. That there exists a very great resemblance of Kui with Kuvi, yea, that "both languages" are really one and the same.

2. That this Kuvi language is an entirely self-existing original language and that it has no resemblance to Telugu as its vocabulary is entirely different from Telugu. For each Telugu word there will be found a different one in Kuvi. The Grammar of both languages as well as of all Dravidian languages is nearly the same.

For this reason the Kuvi language may be learned comparatively soon by one, who has a knowledge of the Telugu language.

1.

The identity of both "languages" is established by the uniformity of their vocabulary.

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>	
kēju	the hand	kēju	କେଜୁ
keska	the hands	keska	କେସ୍କା

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>	
ūnga	the meat	ūnga	221: 022
lāa	the maid	lāa	2801 = 41
nāju	the town	nāju	1016
nāto	of the town	nāto	
āba	father	āba	5111 011
īja	mother	īja	111 17. 17
kōdi	the ox	kōdi	111 17. 17
mīnu	the fish	mīnu	1801
pēnu	god	pēnu	1811
pēnka	gods	penka	1811 17. 17
mrīesi	the son	mrīenju	1811 17. 17
mrīka	the sons	mrīka	
pūju	the flower	pūju	4
pūnga	the flowers	pūnga	4 11 17. 17
mrānu	the tree	mrānu	1811
mrāka	the trees	mrāka	1811 17. 17
paheri	the road	paheri	1811 17. 17
mungeli	the nose	mungeli	1811 17. 17
mungelka	the noses	mungelka	
ro	one	ro	1811 [
ri	two	ri.	1811 17. 17

etc.

The identity of both languages is further proved by the uniformity of the verbal forms, thus :—

PRESENT TENSE.

*Kuvi.**Kui.*

nānu	mai	I am	anu	<u>maï</u>
nīnu	manzi	you are	īnu	manzi
evasi	mannesi	he is	evanju	mannenju
mambu	mannomi	we are	amu	mannamu
mimbu	manzeri	you are	īru	manzeru
evari	manneri	they are	evaru	manneru.

REMARK 1.—Throughout the whole Grammar in Kui instead of the affix **esi**, which is the affix for the third pers. singular masculine, there is used the affix **enju**.

REMARK 2.—The affix for the first person plural seems to be borrowed from Telugu. The Kuvi affix **omi** appears as the original ending.

REMARK 3.—The difference in the ending vowels in the plural number appears in all similar forms. Here again **i** seems to be the original termination and **u** to have been subsequently adopted owing to the influence of the Telugu language.

PAST TENSE.

<i>Kuvi.</i>			<i>Kui.</i>	
nānu	maz̄zee	I was	ānu	masse
nīnu	maz̄zi	you were	īnu	massi
evasi	maz̄zesi	he was	evanju	massenju
ēdi	maz̄ze	she was	eri	masse
mambu	maz̄zomi	we were	āmu	massamu
mīmbu	maz̄zeri	you were	iru	masseri
evari	maz̄zeri	they were	evaru	masseri

REMARK 1.—The change of the consonants is, according to the rule, that *Kui* is a softer language than *Kuvi* as shown by the rule given on page 18.

REMARK 2.—The first person singular ending in *e* is quite unreasonable as the third person feminine or neuter ending in the same affix. The termination of *Kuvi ee* seems again to be the original form.

	<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
The Indefinite relative part.	manni	being	manni
„ Past	„	„ maz̄zi	having been massi
	or	punni	knowing punni
		puzzi	having pussi
		known	

Verbal Forms.

	<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
verb root	ki	to do	gi
verb noun present	kīnai		gīnai
„ „ past	kitai		gitai
present tense	kii		gii
past tense	kittee		gite
partic-pres	kīni		gīni
partic-past	kitti		giti
negative partic.	kīa		gīa
imperative	{ singular	kīmu	gīmu
	{ plural	kīdu	gīdu
emphatic form	kīkattee		gīkate

PAST TENSE.

Negative Form.

	<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
Singular.	{ 1 per' meh'atee	I did not see	meh'ate, or atenu
	{ 2 per' meh'ati	you did not see	meh'ati
	{ 3 per' meh'atesi		meh'atenju
Plural.	{ 1 per' meh'ātomi		meh'ātamu
	{ 2 per' meh'āteri		meh'āteru
	{ 3 per' meh'āteri		meh'āteru
	{ 3 per' meh'ātu		meh'ātu.

REMARK 1.—The first person singular and plural again seem to be influenced by Telugu, as **nu** and **mu** are Telugu terminations. Kuvi appears again as the pure Kond language.

3.

The identity of both languages is further proved by the personal pronoun.

	<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
Singular.	{ nānu	I	ānu I.
	{ nā	my	nā
	{ nange	to me	nange
Plural.	{ mambu	we	āmu
	{ mā	our	mā
	{ mange	to us	mange
Singular.	{ nīnu	you	īnu
	{ nī	of you (your)	nī
	{ ninge	to you	ninge
Plural.	{ mīmbu	you	īru
	{ mī	of you (your)	mī
	{ minge	to you	minge

REMARK 1.—These two tables show quite clearly, that the consonant **n** in singular and **m** in plural is a part of the root. There exists therefore no reason, why the first person

in the singular and plural should omit this consonant. The first person singular and plural of Kuvi appear again as the original and pure Kond.

REMARK 2.—The plural form ending in **mu** and **ru** seems to have been formed under the influence of Telugu, as the words *mēmu*, *māmu*, *mīru*, would be pure Telugu. The words **māmbu** and **mīmbu** appear therefore again as the original ones.

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
evasi	he	evanju
evani	of him, his	evani
evanaki	to him	evanaki
evari	they	{ avaru evaru
evari	of them	avaru
evaraki	to them	avaraki
evaska	they (fem.)	avaska

REMARK.—The root of this word **evasi**=he, is in both dialects **ev**. There is no reason, why the vowel **e** should be changed into **a** in the plural. This seems to have been influenced again by Telugu. Kuvi has the original form.

*Kuvi.**Kui.*

Singular.	{	ēdi , she, it	ēri
		ēdani , of her, it	ērani
		ēdaniki , to her, it	ēraniki
Plural.	{	ēvi , they	evi
		evaska , they	avaska, evaska
		evaskaki , to them	avaskaki, evaskaki

REMARK.—There appears a difference in the singular number, as the consonant has been changed into *r*; the plural forms are again the same.

Some differences in “both dialects” will be found, but they appear so insignificant, that they cannot overthrow the belief in the unity of the two dialects.

Such differences as appear between the two dialects are the following :—

1. The Kuvi language is harder in sound than Kui, wherefore the consonants in Kui are very often softer than those in Kuvi. Thus:—

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>
kokasi	the boy	koganju
ki	to do	gī
kamma	the work	kām
mazzee	I was	masse.
puzzee	I knew	pusse.

2. For the same reason the Kuvi consonant *h* is very often changed into *s*. Thus :—

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>	
ha	go	sa	go
hi	give	si	give
hā	die	sā	die.

3. The Kuvi consonant *h* is sometimes changed into *g*. Thus :—

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>	
nehi	good	neggi	good
nehasi	the good	negganju	the good

4. The Kuvi third person singular masc, which has the affix *esi asi*, is changed in *Kui* into *anju*. Thus :—

<i>Kuvi.</i>		<i>Kui.</i>	
gattasi	he who	gattanju	he who
pūnnasi	he who knows	punanju	
wātasi	he who came	wātanju	
wātesi	he came	wātenju	
evasi	he	evanju	
ōasi	the bearer	ōanju	
kokasi	the boy	koganju	

REMARK.—Although this form is irregular, the genitive case is in all words the same.

Kuvi.

gaṭṭani
 punnāni
 wātani
 evani
 oāni
 kokani

of him who

Kui.

gaṭṭani
 punāni
 wātani
 evani
 oāni
 kogani
