

# Some Customary Obligations of Hoysala Period

**Prakash K**

*Department of History, Government Women's College, Mandya, Karnataka, India  
\*For correspondence (e-mail: prakshrajmdy@gmail.com)*

## OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 8

Special Issue: 1

Month: February

Year: 2021

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Impact Factor: 3.025

Citation:

Prakash, K. "Some Customary Obligations of Hoysala Period." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 8, no. S1, 2021, pp. 259–63.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v8iS1-Feb.3963>

The suffix vali which is common to all these terms means an obligations or duty. Vali is in fact identical with Telugu, padi and Sanskrit Pali. The Term Jola is a king of grain or food. Therefore, it means the obligation of good. Hence it can be equated with "Annaruna So Jolavalis are those who received Jola from the Lord as their salary in the form of king. They were hero worshippers and by profession only were warriors<sup>1</sup>.

## Jolavali

The term Jolavali can be traced to the ancient period. It was an obligation probably military in character which was owed to a lord who provided his men with means of subsistence expressed in terms of Jolam, the staple grain of those days<sup>2</sup>. Bandhuvarma a poet of the 13th century refers to men at arms seeking a lord as 'Jolamgondar' or people who accepted salary as Jolam. To put in simple way it is living, dying for one who provided one's bread. We do come across enough reverences to Jolavali in the Hoysala state. The poet Kumaravyasa believes that it is an act of merit to give one's head in exchange for Jolavali of the Lord who fostered one by offering nourishment<sup>3</sup>. Perhaps in view of this conception, still earlier, the poet Pampa once through the character karma states that he did not want to disregard Jolavali and get defamed when he was invited by Kunti to join the party of the Pandavas<sup>4</sup>. "Jolakke tappiyum in balvudene" as such similarly one of the hero stones at Gonibidu, Chikmagalur district states that one Basaya fought valiantly under Bittideva Hoysala Sahani faithful to the salt and he had eaten, killed many foot soldiers and died in the battle of Talkad in 1117 A.D.<sup>5</sup> Likewise some of the examples may be noted here.

For instance an epigraph from Nagar Taluk mentions Jolavali and states that warrior fought on behalf of his master as a return for the subsistence he received from him, killed many in a battle and died of wounds<sup>6</sup>. One more record mentions that Chakagavunda committed Jolavali at the time when the chief queen of Narasingadeva, Bammala Devi expired<sup>7</sup>.

Similarly poets like Pampa and Ranna have made reference to Jolavalis on different contexts. It means that Jolavalis would escape from their vows in very rare cases. Failure on this part to discharge

their obligation was regarded as a dereliction of duty. Ponna for instance accused warriors who having deserted their master thought fulfilling valis to their Lord<sup>8</sup>. Once Duryodhana objects to Bhishma and says “Have they placed the arrow on the bow string? And Drona did not even pay regards to their Jolavali”<sup>9</sup>. However, the above illustration would explain that the chief motto of the Jolavalis was to display the heroic qualities in the battles. The question of sacrificing his life would not arise in Jolavali. He may die in the battle field or sacrifice his life voluntarily for the sake of love for his master as in one of the epigraphs stated or even he may come back with great victory from the battle ground.

### **Velavali**

According to Sanskrit lexicographer Kesava, Vela denotes an agreement, engagement or contract<sup>10</sup>. So vela means time or occasion and vali means obligation or duty. The Velavalis were also known as Priyaputra<sup>11</sup>. Manemaga, manemudda, velavadicha and porenda Magana<sup>12</sup>.

Like the Jolavalis and Garudas they were staunch loyal to the state. They possessed definite principles, norms and aims in their life. Normally they were brought up by the royal family and were treated as their own kith and kin. Therefore, their main intentions were to discharge their duty faithfully, whenever they were called upon at any moment. Their whole life was devoted to do pleasant things for their lords. They lived unto their last breath to give protection and security to their lords. They were from varied categories. The hero under the Vela oath was expected to look forward to only one thing i.e., death. Hence the goal and function of the Velavalis were obviously greater than that of the Jolavalis<sup>13</sup>.

Some of the epigraphical records and the vachana literature refer to the Velavali who opted death either plunging in to fire or cutting off their heads by their own will. Some of the examples are given below.

Examples may be given with regard to the Velavalis who offered their life soon after their lords' death. An epigraph from Chickmagalur Taluk records this term and states that one Madayya died as Velavali soon after the daughter of Udayaditya left for the world of Gods in the year 1117 during the time of Vishnuvardhana<sup>14</sup>. A hero stone from Kelagur mentions that one Rahutagauda of Bidiruru accepted and followed Velavli soon after the departure of Udayaditya to the next world<sup>15</sup>. A rare inscription of Bellal II from Shikaripura taluk records the term Priyaputra and states that one Birana fought against the enemy and protected Ubhayanadeshis in the year 1206 A.D. and went to the world of Gods<sup>16</sup>. A sculpture of Koravangala of Hassan Taluk depicts the Agnipravesa of Velavlis<sup>17</sup>. A viragal from Belur Taluk refers to this term and states that one Sirivalala Chakagavunda died as Velavali soon after the death of the chief queen Bammala Devi<sup>18</sup>.

### **Lenkavali-Enlarge**

Lenkavali means male servants<sup>19</sup>. They were also known as Anugas and Kumaras as expressed in epigraphs. Sometimes lankas followed their masters. Villages were allotted for their maintenance or territories assigned to the anugas for their assistance. They stood by their lord, ushered people into his presence, looked after his needs, helped him in management of the place and the administration of the states, accompanying him in on hunts, sported in his company in the pleasure gardens. Etc. Like the garudas Lenka warriors believed that their individual existence had no meaning after the death of his master. They sacrificed their life once for all as they were bound by political goals and social values.

Like the Garudas lenkas took oath or Bhasa. They sacrificed their life after the death of the Garuda to whom they were attached. So the warriors who had taken oath of obedience who were subordinate to a garuda were known as lenkas. In fact according to Kittel and term means the

military array<sup>20</sup> and Lenka means to male servant<sup>21</sup>, hence it can be assumed that if the military group like Garudas were attached to the Hoysala rulers, the Lenkas were attached to the Garudas. Thus it seems that Garudass and Lenkas refer to a feudal hierarchy among these warriors. A Hero stone was set up in the name of Ramayya descendant of Lenka Bittiga by his brother Kachu in the year 1194 A.D.<sup>22</sup> An epigraph from Belur taluk states the sacrifices of one thousand Lenkas who followed the death of prince Kuvara Lakshmana in 1220 A.D.<sup>23</sup> Another Virakal records the death of Lenka Kabbila Bhatta in a country raid at Hirekerur.<sup>24</sup> An epigraph from K.R. Pet taluk records the terms like Lenka and Lenkitis and states that 21 Lenkas under the Leadership of the garuda Kanneya Nayaka fought six times in battles. Probably that took place between the Hoysalas and Sevunas. Later ten lenkitis, 22 lenkas along with Kanneya nayaka and his wives sacrificed their life on the sad demise of the Hoysala King Somesvara in 1256 A.D.<sup>25</sup> Further it gives a long list of devout lenkas who sacrificed their lives along with their family and servants right from the days of Hoysala Ereyangadeva down to the rule of Narasimha III. Simultaneously, a further reference has been made in Ananthanatha Puram to a group of Lenkavalis and jolavalis who prepared the ground with great joy, to sacrifice their heads with their lord Simachuda.<sup>26</sup>

From the above source it can be deduced that lenkas were heterogeneous community drawn from several class of people. Among them the Mugila family established name and fame during Hoysala period by producing a number of lenkas and lenktis for the cause of expansion in tact of the Hoysala state. They were known for their martial qualities and attained high position in the state. They could marry and beget children, acquire property and dispose of it with the consent of their lords. It is not known whether the lenkit is were merely the wives of the lenkas or were like the Velaikkaris of the Tamil inscription.<sup>27</sup>

### **Lenkas as Defaulters-Enlarge**

The breach of the rule of lenkavli was met with serious consequences. In fact, the poet Ranna has made reference to the warriors who deserted their master thought fulfilling their velavali to that Lord.<sup>28</sup> The lenkas who deserted their master contrary to the pledge taken or attempted to seek service after their master's death under other were sternly death with. That is way the prince Kuvara lakshmana Dandadhisha is said to have justified his claims to the title as the chasteir of the Lenkas who breath their plighted world to their master under the stress of war.<sup>29</sup> Even the great Virasaiva reformer Basavanna had criticized very seriously the dishonesty of the Lenkas and further says that they should be the most obedient servants to their master<sup>30</sup>. Nothing is however know about the manner in which the punighsment was meted out to the defaulting Lenkas.

However, with regard of the Lenkavalis of the Hoysala period, the two things be noted are: First the change in the occupation from the mercantile activity to that of military service and from teaching profession to that of military field as in case of Kabila Bhatta. Perhaps this was due to the social mobilization in the Hoysala society and secondly we find Lenkavalis in large number throughout and Hoysala period in the taluk like K.R. Pet, Belur and Hassan as we come across several deaths of Lenkavalis in these regions.

### **Siditalegudu Enlarge**

This is one of the peculiar customs that existed in the Hoysala state. It means the offering the springing head according to which a devoted servant took a vow that he would not service the master, and sacrifice on the occurrence of his master's death due tone reason or the other. More than the inscriptions, tone reason or the other. More than the inscriptions, the sculptural representations from the taluks of Mandya, Molakalmuru, Hassan and Belur would reveal the existence of this practice during Hoysala period. They represent different postures of the offering

head. In the sculptures, usually we come across a bowed electric rod which was set up near the person with its end attached to the top knot of the hair to that of the head, when cut off, sprang up with the rebound of the rod. A virgal at Basaralu from Mandya taluk depicts a person seated near the rod with the hands placed palm over palm in the attitude of meditation, while another person is preparing to cut off his head<sup>31</sup>. Another posture of Siditale is represented in Siddapura at Molakalmuru taluk in a hero stone states that Honnavve Nayakiti, mother of Haivana Savantha died and her attendant Honni gave her head to the hook and attained swarga<sup>32</sup> (heaven).

A Virkal from Koravangala, Hassan Taluk shows a hero holding his own cut off head in the left hand and a sword in the right. This is depicted at the bottom panel of the hero inside the Anjaneya temple<sup>33</sup>. Sculptural postures are found in more numbers in the Taluk of Belur, The fragmentary pillars of such sculptures are more found in the surrounding place of the temple of Halebid, Doddagaddevalli, Belur and Amritapura etc.

## Reference

1. Kalaburlgi M.M. Samadhi, Balidana Viramarans, P.85.
2. J.O.R.H. (J) Vol. XIV, 1940, p. 100.
3. J.O.R.H. Vol. XIV, 1940, p. 100.
4. Narasimachar D.L. (Ed) Pamapa Bharatha Dipike Mys. I K S Mysore 1976 p. 333.
5. M.A.R., 1934, No. 12, p. 98, "Jolavaliyu Nereda basa.
6. M.A.R., 1951, p. 211. No. 209, Nagar Taluk.
7. M.A.R. 1936, 1286 A.D. p. 88, 'Jolavaligam va(ve) levaligam, and E.C. LE.C., VII (0) Sk III, 1185 A.D. No. 249 & BI NI undated.
8. J.O.R.M. Xiv 1940, p. 98.
9. Ibid.
10. J.O.R.M. Vol. XIV 1940, pp. 101 and 102.
11. E.C., V--, Tn N III 1276, A.D. Soma referred as Priyaputra, & E.C., XVIII, SK V B II 1206 A.D. No. 357--, Hero Stone Biranna Priyaputra stone.
12. Settar S. Memorial Stones – Settar, Karnataka Univeristy, Dharwad, 182, p. 32.
13. Basavannanavara Vachangalu, Vachana 189 and 313, p. 698.
14. M.A.R., 1932, CK 31 & E.C., XI, V.V. 1117 A.D.
15. M.A.R., 1951, No. 51, p. 191; V.V. 1124 A.D. Kelagur Chickmagalur, EC Vi, Kadur "Ravuta gauda Velavaliyam tale gottal" etc.
16. E.C., Vol. XVIII, SK B II 1206 A.D. No. 357 --- "Priyaputra Birana ... Bhayanana desiya ... hindikki Kondu Kadi geldu suraloka.
17. See photograph Koravangala outer wall of the Temple.
18. M.A.R., 1936, No. 22, p. 88 and E.C., V, BI undated NI "Jolavaligam Va lavaligam suroloka".
19. J.O.R.M. XIV, P. 109, 1940 & Kittel Dict. P. 1365.
20. Kittel Dictionary, p. 930.
21. Ibid., p. 1363.
22. M.A.R., 1941, No. 11, p. 147
23. E.C. V, B1 B.II, 1220m No. 112.
24. A.R.I.E., 1957-58, p. 48, No. 347, Setanahalli, Hirekerur, Dharwar.
25. E.C., Vol. VI ® Kr Som 1256 A.D. No. 82.
26. Janna: A.N.P. II Canto, P. 233, PO 74's Vachana
27. J.O.R.H. Vol. XIV, 1940, p. 110.
28. Ibid. p. 98.
29. E.C., V, B1 B II 1220 A.D. No. 112, "Lenkara Gandam"

30. Kelmatha S.V. Basavannanavara Vachanagalu. 1985. Sankesavara Publication, Gadag, Vachana 441, "Oduvata Lenkanalla ... Odalagadu Lenkana" etc.
31. M.A.R., 1951, para, 34.
32. M.A.R., 1990, Pt. I, p. 5.
33. Ibid.