

PAÑCA GAUḌA AND PAÑCA DRĀVIḌA: CONTESTED BORDERS OF A TRADITIONAL CLASSIFICATION

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1. HISTORY OF THE EXPRESSIONS: PAÑCA GAUḌA/DRĀVIḌA

The classification of the Brahmins of India into two groups, i.e. Five Gauḍa brahmins (*pañca-gauḍa*) and Five Drāviḍa brahmins (*pañca-drāviḍa*) is found in the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* section of the *Skandapurāṇa* and is approximately a thousand years old. The first five are Brahmins found in India, north of the Vindhya mountains, while the latter five are said to be found to the south of the Vindhyas. Traditionally, the five Gauḍa brahmins include the following types: Sārasvata, Kānyakubja, Gauḍa, Maithila, and Utkala. The five Drāviḍa brahmins include the following types: Gurjara, Mahārāṣṭra, Tailāṅga, Karnāṭaka, and Drāviḍa. It is clear that the terms *gauḍa* and *drāviḍa* are each used in two meanings. They, in a narrow sense, refer to a sub-group, i.e. the brahmins of Bengal (*gauḍa*) and Tamilnadu (*drāviḍa*), and yet the same terms are used in the broader sense to refer to the two groups, i.e. the northern and the southern. Additionally, the identification of Gauḍa with Bengal also poses certain significant problems,¹ since the brahmins calling themselves Gauḍa are found to be more numerous in the region near Delhi. The classification presents numerous issues which are not yet clearly dealt with in the available research, and in my paper I would like to make a beginning to deal with some of these issues.

C.V. Vaidya (1920: 87) refers to the Buland Shahar Gazetteer in connection with the term *gauḍa*. Evidently, this Gazetteer refers to a copper-plate, found in the village of Indur near Anoop Shahar, dated to 465 AD and contains a mention of a Gauḍa brahmin. This would take the earliest use of the term *gauḍa* referring to a brahmin to the fifth century AD. Vaidya himself, however, disagrees with

¹ In commentaries on Dharmaśāstra, typically a Gauḍa author is a Bengali brahmin author, cf. *Nirṇayasindhu*, p. 288, passim. In such references, the Gauḍa (= Bengali) authors are distinguished from Maithila authors, cf. *ibid.* p. 376, 452. Often the views of these Gauḍa authors are contrasted with the views of the Dākṣiṇātya authors, cf. *ibid.* p. 499, 547, 551. On different interpretations of Dharmaśāstra passages in north and south, see Trautmann 1981: 238 ff. For more historical information on *gauḍa*, see Law 1973: 270–274.

this view and points out that the copper-plate contains the expression *gaura-anvaya-sambhūta* ‘born in the *gaura* family’, and does not refer to the *pañca gauḍa* classification. Vaidya (1926: 552 ff.) comments: “The *pañca-gauḍa/drāviḍa* classification of the brahmins does not appear in inscriptions until 1200 AD. It is no wonder that it does not appear even in the Skandapurāṇa, which we have dated to the ninth century AD. It seems that this distinction developed after the twelfth century. Most likely this classification was intended to emphasize that the Gauḍa brahmins are not vegetarians, while the Drāviḍa brahmins are.” Expressing a similar opinion, Raychaudhuri (1953: 633) says: “The use of the term Pañca Gauḍa as the designation of a territory embracing Northern India as far as Kanauj and the river Sarasvatī is distinctly late and dates only from the twelfth century AD. The term is possibly reminiscent of the Gauḍa empire of Dharmapāla and Devapāla, and cannot be equated with the ancient realm of the Gauḍas in the early centuries of the Christian era.”

More recent research on the inscriptional evidence provides us with a clearer understanding. While one does not know the exact delimitation of the term ‘gauḍa’, the Prince of Wales Museum Plates of Govindarāja, issued in Śaka 732 (= 810 AD), refer to a Brahmin Bhubika who had migrated from the Gauḍa country to Baroda. More than a century later, a Pañca-Gauḍīya-Mahāpariṣad of Samyāna or Thane is mentioned in a grant of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Indra III in Śaka 848 (= 926–927 AD). Referring to these two instances, Swati Datta (1989: 100) remarks: “Gauḍa in those days comprised a geographical region covering a larger section of Northern India and the Brāhmaṇas of the two charters mentioned above, may have migrated from anywhere within its limits.” The expression *pañca-gauḍīya-mahāpariṣad*, referring to an assembly of Brahmins, is very significant, in that it points to the possible emergence of the *pañca-gauḍa/drāviḍa* classification as early as the tenth century AD, and it also points to the fact of migrations of Gauḍa Brahmins to the south, where they retained their distinct Northern identity. The migration of the northern brahmins to southern regions is known from many inscriptional sources, but these are the earliest inscriptional references using the term *pañca-gauḍa*.

2. PAÑCA GAUḌA/DRĀVIḌA CLASSIFICATION IN EARLY INDOLOGY

Before launching my own investigation into the original context of this classification, it would be important to see how this classification was understood in modern Indological studies. In his 1801 article “On the Sanscrit and Pracrit Languages”, Henry Thomas Colebrooke brings up this classification in the context of describing the linguistic geography of India. Without a hint that this is a classification of brahmins, albeit in different regions of India, Colebrooke (1801: 226) generalizes this into a classification of the “Hindu nations”:

The five Hindu nations, whose peculiar dialects have been thus briefly noticed, occupy the northern and eastern portions of India; they are denominated the five *Gaurs*. The rest, called the five *Dravirs*, inhabit the southern and western parts of the peninsula.

Colebrooke's sources were not unanimous on all the details of this classification, and he points out some of these divergences (1801: 226):

Some *Pandits* indeed exclude *Carnata*, and substitute *Casmira*; but others, with more propriety, omit the *Casmirian* tribe; and, by adding the *Canaras* to the list of *Dravirs*, avoid the inconsistency of placing a northern tribe among southern nations. There is reason too for doubting whether *Cashmira* be occupied by a distinct nation, and whether the inhabitants of it be not rather a tribe of *Canyakubjas*.

The different informants of Colebrooke were probably *Pandits* who were attempting to incorporate their own groups in this traditional classification by changing its readings. As we shall see later, this was an ongoing struggle, and not unique for the brahmins of Kashmir.

Colebrooke also noted several different anomalies in this classification. The first concerns the use of the term *gauḍa* to refer to Bengali brahmins. He points out (1801: 223–224):

It is necessary to remark, that although *Gaura* be the name of Bengal, yet the *Brahmanas*, who bear that appellation, are not inhabitants of *Bengal*, but of *Hindusthan* proper. They reside chiefly in the *Suba* of *Delhi*; while the *Brahmanas* of Bengal are avowed colonists from *Canoj*.

Colebrooke's observations are now supported by modern anthropological studies of brahmins of northern India.² Thus, while the general classificatory term *pañca-gauḍa* is commonly used for north-Indian brahmins, the reference of the specific term *gauḍa* as a sub-category remains problematic.

2 "They are divided into two main groups, the *Dravidas*, or those who live to the south of the *Vindhya* range and the *Gaudiyas*, or those who have their residence to the north of the *Vindhya* range. The *Brahmans* of Bengal fall in the latter group. They are divided into the following main subgroups – the *Radhiyas*, the *Varendras*, the *Vaidikas* and *Saptasatis*. There are some who would add *Madhyasreni* and *Gaud Brahmanas*" (T.C. Raychaudhuri & B. Raychaudhuri 1981: 1). While the higher ranks of the Bengal brahmins like the *Radhiyas* and *Varendras* claim to have originated from *Kānyakubjas*, the so-called *Gaud* brahmins are ranked low and are said to be "very rare in Bengal. At present they are found in *Delhi* and *Bihar*" (ibid. 13).

Colebrooke had changed the context of the general classification away from a classification of brahmins to a classification of “Hindu nations” based upon their affiliation with language and regionality. Here too, he detected certain contradictions. He had doubts about the appropriateness of the classification of the Gurjaras among the Draviḍas, and the classification of the Utkalas among the Gauḍas. He says (1801: 229):

Considering the situation of their country, and the analogy of language and writing, I cannot hesitate in thinking that the *Gurjaras* should be considered as the fifth northern nation of India, and the *Uriyas* should be ranked among the tribes of the *Dacshin*.

What is difficult for us to understand is the exact basis upon which Colebrooke is making these judgments, because, as Trautmann (1997: 147) points out: “He [...] derives all the major Indian languages from Sanskrit, excepting only those known to have come from the invasions of foreigners.” As we shall see later, the classification in its original context does have a regional basis, but has no connection with languages or scripts, whether they are or are not derived from Sanskrit. It is more closely connected with differences in Brahmanical ritual practices and Vedic affiliations across different regions.

The fact that Colebrooke moved this classification into the area of linguistic geography set the course for the future Indological use of this classification in the works of his successors, where a clearer recognition of major differences between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian language families becomes evident. Further linguistic extension of these terms, and departure from its original context, is seen in the works of Robert Caldwell and A.F. Rudolf Hoernle. In Caldwell’s work (1856, 1974: 56–57), we see a contrast set up between “Gaurian Idioms” and “Dravidian Idioms”. The languages included under the heading *Gaurian* are Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, and Sindhi. Under the heading *Dravidian* are listed Tamil, Canarese, Tulu, Malayalam, Telugu, Tuda, Kota, Gond, Ku, Rajmahal, Brahui, and Oraon. The departure from the original context in the direction of a language-classification, since the writing of Colebrooke, is so complete in Caldwell that there is no oddity felt in listing Marathi and Gujarati among the *Gaurian* group. The terms are undergoing a process of redefinition and recontextualization. We see the same process in Rudolf Hoernle’s 1880 work *A Comparative Grammar of the Gaudian Languages*. Hoernle (*Introduction*, p. i) explains his choice of the term *Gaudian*: “I have adopted the term Gaudian to designate collectively all North-Indian vernaculars of Sanskrit affinity, for want of a better word; not as being the least objectionable, but as being the most convenient one.” Referring to the specific languages, Hoernle (*ibid.*) says: “Seven languages of the Sanskrit stock are usually enumerated as spoken in North India, viz. Sindhi, Gujarati,

Punjabi, Hindi, Bangali, Oriya, Marathi.” The languages of Maharashtra and Gujarat, coming under the old *pañca drāviḍas*, are now listed as “languages of the Sanskrit stock [...] spoken in North India”. Here we see the development of a palimpsest in progress. There is a newly emerging notion of a linguistic divide between Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, and this divide is expressed by using the old terminology of Gauḍa vs Drāviḍa. In this process, the contents of the old terms change, and their boundaries had to be redrawn.³

3. POLITICS OF THE SAHYĀDRIKHAṆḌA

The text of *Sahyādrikhāṇḍa*, claimed to be a part of the *Skandapurāṇa*, is the most commonly cited source of this classification. This text is found in manuscripts containing different parts in different places, and probably contains materials that belong to different time-frames. It refers to the king Mayūraśarmā dated to 345–370 AD and also to Madhvācārya of the 13th century AD. One can say that at least parts of it are composed after the 13th century.⁴ Since it contains some highly contentious accounts of the origins of certain Brahmin groups, there are good reasons to be suspicious about the motivations behind its stories. The verses referring to this classification in the *Sahyādrikhāṇḍa* are as follows (Chapter 1, verses 1–4):

skanda uvāca -

Skanda said -

*brāhmaṇā daśadhā proktāḥ pañcagauḍāś ca drāviḍāḥ /
teṣāṃ sarveṣāṃ cotpattim kathayasva suvistaram //1//*

There are said to be ten kinds of Brahmins, five Gauḍas and five Drāviḍas.
Please describe to me the origin of all of them in detail.

mahādeva uvāca -

Mahādeva said -

3 There is mis-statement about the term *drāviḍa* in Margaret & James Stutley (1977: 80): “Ancient Tamil tradition speaks of five Dravidian regions, viz., Andhra or Telugu and the Kanarese countries, the Mahārāṣṭra or Marāthā provinces, and Gujarāt.” My enquiry suggests that there is no such Tamil tradition, and that this is a somewhat convoluted representation of the Pañca Drāviḍa list.

4 Cf. *Sahyādrikhāṇḍa*, Introduction, pp. 8–9. Professor Hans Bakker of Groningen is editing the *Skandapurāṇa* based on Nepalese manuscripts dated to the 9th century AD. These manuscripts do not contain the *Sahyādrikhāṇḍa*. Bakker believes that this text probably dates to the 14th century or later (pers. comm.).

*drāviḍās caiva tailaṅgāḥ karnāṭā madhyadeśagāḥ /
gurjarās caiva pañcaite kathyante pañcadrāviḍāḥ //2//*

The Drāviḍas (= Tamils), the Tailaṅgas, the Karnāṭas, the residents of the Madhyadeśa, and the Gurjaras, these five are said to be the five Drāviḍas.

*sārasvatāḥ kānyakubjā utkalā maithilās ca ye /
gauḍās ca pañcadhā caiva daśa viprāḥ prakīrtitāḥ //3//⁵*

The Sārasvatas, the Kānyakubjas, the Utkalas, the Maithilas, and the Gauḍas, these five [Gauḍas, together with the five Drāviḍas] are the ten [kinds of] Brahmins.

*trihotrā hyagnivaiśyās ca kānyakubjāḥ kanojayaḥ /
maitrāyaṇās ca pañcaite pañcagauḍāḥ prakīrtitāḥ //4//⁶*

The Trihotras, the Āgnivaiśyas, the Kānyakubjas, the Kanojis, and the Maitrāyaṇas, these five are said to be the five Gauḍas.

Clearly the text of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* as it has come down to us has undergone many mutilations and interpolations (see Levitt 1977). The list of the Pañca Drāviḍas as found in this text makes no direct reference to Maharashtra, but it refers to Madhyadeśa. In the Dharmasāstra literature, this term normally refers to the north-central India, and, on the first glance, it is not clear what it is doing in the list of the five Drāviḍas. The *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* itself later defines this term as referring to the region between the river Narmadā and Krishna (*narmadāyās ca kṛṣṇāyā deśo madhyaḥ prakīrtitāḥ*, Chapter 4, verse 39, p. 134).⁷ This would seem to cover most of the Maharashtra, except the Konkan region, though it seems that this did not alleviate difficulties for most readers. The variant readings of this passage seem to remove this difficulty by getting rid of this ambiguous term

5 The *Śabdakalpādruma*, vol. II, p. 370 cites a verse from the *Skandapurāṇa* with a slightly different reading: *sārasvatāḥ kānyakubjā gauḍamaithilakotkalāḥ / pañca gauḍā iti khyātā vindhyasyottaravāsinaḥ //*

6 In comparison with the previous verse, this verse is flawed in some significant ways and looks like an interpolation. The double reference to Kānyakubja and Kanoji which are one and the same is an indication of the sloppiness of the author of this interpolation. I suspect that the author wanted to get some important groups like the Trihotras into this listing. As will be noted later, the Gauḍa Sārasvatas, according to the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, are migrants from Trihotra. The Maitrāyaṇas are also a relative late migrant group in Maharashtra, probably from Gujarat, and the text looks kindly upon them in including them among the five Gauḍas, some of whom later migrated to the southern region. This indicates the process of changing definitions of these terms at various times and localities to suit various purposes.

7 It is possible that this is the origin of the use of the term 'deśa' to refer to the plateau region of Maharashtra, and the source of the term 'Deśastha' to refer to brahmins residing in this region.

and replace it with a clearer reference to Maharashtra. A version of these verses incorporated in the *Kānyakubjavamśāvalī* (verse 16, p. 9) reads:

*karṇāṭakās ca tailaṅgā mahārāṣṭrās ca drāviḍāḥ /
gurjarās ceti pañcaiva drāviḍā vindhyadakṣiṇe //*

Besides replacing the ambiguous expression *madhyadeśagāḥ* with *mahārāṣṭrāḥ*, the verse explicitly says that the five Drāviḍas live to the south of the Vindhyas. Similarly, the next verse (17) of the *Kānyakubjavamśāvalī* lists the five Gauḍas without any alteration, but says that they are found to the north of the Vindhyas (*vindhyasyottaravādināḥ*). The *Bhāratīya-Saṁskṛti-Kośa* (vol. V, p. 285) cites the following version:

*mahārāṣṭrāṅdhraḍrāviḍāḥ karṇāṭās caiva gurjarāḥ /
drāviḍāḥ pañcadhā proktā vindhyadakṣiṇavāsinaḥ //*

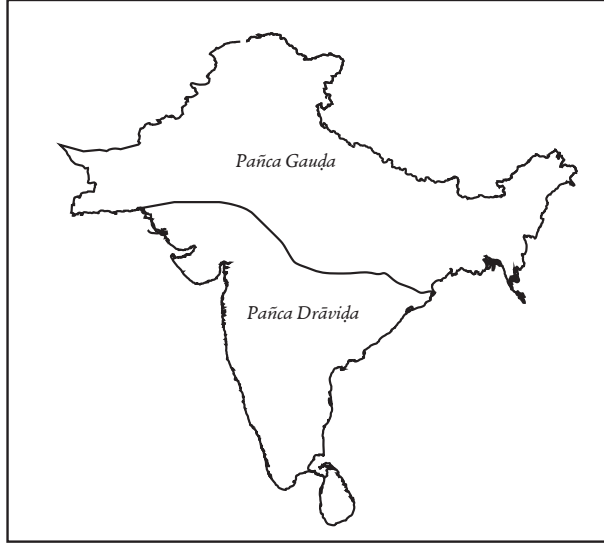
Here, the wording makes a clear inclusion of the Maharashtra brahmins, and there is no mention of the ambiguous *madhyadeśagāḥ*.

V.S. Apte's *Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (p. 844) says that the term *drāviḍa* is "a general name for a Brāhmaṇa of any of the five southern tribes" and cites the following verse (referring to *Skandapurāṇa*):

*karṇāṭās caiva tailaṅgā gurjarā rāṣṭravāsinaḥ /
āndhrās ca drāviḍāḥ pañca vindhyadakṣiṇavāsinaḥ //*⁸

Of all the versions cited so far, this version represents the most irrational mutilation. It lists *tailaṅga* and *āndhra* separately and eliminates the term *drāviḍa* as a sub-group, though the term *drāviḍa* is retained as the collective term. This alteration goes against all the other versions. However, the version indicates a determined effort to get the inclusion of Maharashtra, even through the truncated *rāṣṭravāsinaḥ*. This spectrum of readings shows the first stage of textual struggle, i.e. the removal of the inconvenient and ambiguous *madhyadeśagāḥ*, and the explicit inclusion of Maharashtra. The *Saṁketakośa* (p. 97) refers to a verse from the *Vārāḥapurāṇa*, without citing its list, and makes a definite inclusion of the Maharashtra brahmins. The inclusion of the Maharashtra brahmins is taken for granted by P.V. Kane (1974: 103) whose citation of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* verse actually contains the reading *madhyadeśagāḥ*. Kane does not even note that there is a problem. Also see Adalbert Gail 1977: 202.

⁸ An identical verse is found in the *Śabdakalpadruma*, vol. II, p. 760, ascribed to *Skandapurāṇa*.



Map 1. Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa Geography

The next level of problems also relates to the mention or non-mention of different sub-groups among Brahmins of a given region. The editor of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, Gajanan Gaitonde, does bring up a problem in his introduction. He says (*Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, Introduction, p. 7) that the text describes the creation of the seven Koṅkaṇas by Paraśurāma and the settlement of particular Brahmin communities in these regions, i.e. Bhārgava, Nāgara, Citpāvana, Karhāḍe, Sārasvata, Havik, and Nambudrī. However, Gaitonde notes that the list of the Pañca Drāviḍas does not include the names of the Citpāvans, Karhāḍes, and Padyes, though they are generally included by convention among the Pañca Drāviḍas. Compare this with the unquestioned inclusion of these communities among the Pañca Drāviḍas by authorities like Kane (1974: 103): “Among the Drāviḍa brāhmaṇas, the Mahārāṣṭra brāhmaṇas are again subdivided into numerous sub-castes such as the Citpāvan (or Koṅkaṇastha), Karhāḍe, Deśastha, Devarukhe etc.” (also cf. *Mahārāṣṭrīya Jñānakośa*, part 23, supplementary vol. I, *Hindusthān Khaṇḍa*, p. 195; *Bhāratīya-Saṃskṛti-Kośa*, vol. V, p. 284; Schwartzberg 1978: 107). However, this is in reality a very sensitive issue till today for these communities, and for its comprehension, we must look into the politics of communities reflected in the very composition of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*.

The *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* is a mythical account of the creation of the coastal regions like Konkan and their settlement. The main mythical agent for this task is the brahmin Paraśurāma, the son of the sage Jamadagni. After Jamadagni is killed by members of the Haihaya family, Paraśurāma vows to destroy all Kṣatriyas on the

earth twentyone times in revenge. As he carries out this gruesome vow and wins the earth, he is afflicted by the sin of these killings. He is advised by the sages to expiate for this sin by donating the whole earth to them. After the whole earth is donated to the sages, Paraśurāma realizes that he has no place to live, unless he creates some new land. Coming to the Sahyādri mountain, Paraśurāma asks the ocean to move back and yield some land. After a brief fight, the ocean yields the coastal lands to Paraśurāma. Now it is incumbent upon Paraśurāma to settle this new land with brahmins who would carry out religious rites.

This is the beginning point for introducing stories explaining the origin of the various brahmin communities in Konkan and Goa. The first chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* is titled *citpāvanabrāhmaṇoṭpattiḥ* “Origin of the Citpāvan brahmins”. In the newly recovered land of Konkan, there are no traditional brahmins, either of the Gauḍa or Draviḍa persuasion, to be found. Paraśurāma invites all the brahmins for carrying out ancestral offerings (*śrāddha-pakṣa*), and yet no one showed up (Chapter 1, verse 31). The angry brahmin Paraśurāma decided to produce new brahmins (*brāhmaṇā nūtanāḥ kāryāḥ*, Chapter 1, verse 33). As he was wandering along the bank of the ocean, he saw some men gathered around a funeral pyre and asked them about their caste and *dharma*. These were fishermen, and Paraśurāma purified their sixty families and offered them brahminhood (*brāhmaṇyaṁ ca tato dattvā*, Chapter 1, verse 37). Since these fishermen were purified at the location of a funeral pyre (*citā*), they received the designation of *citapāvana* (ibid.). These “newly created” brahmins soon engaged in unrighteous works (*akāryaṁ kurvate karma*, Chapter 1, verse 42). Observing this, Paraśurāma cursed them to become despised and poor (*śāpaś ca prāpyate tasmāt kutsitāś ca daridrīṇaḥ*, Chapter 1, verse 44), and settled them in the town of Cittapolana (= modern Chiplun), Chapter 1, verses 46–47. This account of the origin of the Chitpavan brahmins was felt to be so demeaning by the editor-translator, Gajanan Gaitonde, that he omits this account in his translation, and instead adds (*Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, p. 123): “There Paraśurāma established sixty families of Citpāvan brahmins and assigned fourteen Gotras to them. All these brahmins were particularly fair, handsome, and had beautiful eyes. By the grace of the sage Paraśurāma, they all became very learned in all branches of knowledge. This place at the foot of the Sahyādri mountain is well known by the name Cittapolana.” All the negative portion of the account is excised from the Marathi statement, as it was perceived to be offensive to the Chitpavan readers of the book.⁹

9 The same account is again repeated in the 7th chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, verses 30–31 (p. 150): *ābrahmaṇye tadā deśe kaivarttān prekṣya bhārgavaḥ //30// chitvā sabaddīśam kaṇṭhe yajña-sūtram akalpayat / dāśān eva tadā viprān cakāra bhṛgunandanāḥ //31//*.

The *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* (Chapter 6, p. 146) provides a more elaborate version of Paraśurāma's curse upon the Citpāvan brahmins. After he created them, Paraśurāma told them that in times of calamity they could just remember him and he would appear to protect them. Later the Citpāvan brahmins, in order to test the truth of this promise, recalled Paraśurāma, when in fact there was no calamity. Angered by this audacity, Paraśurāma cursed them (verses 72–76):

bhaved vidyāsu garviṣṭhā īrṣyānyonyaṁ bhaviṣyati //72cd//
kaṣṭaiva vṛttir bhavatu bharjite sa(d)dvijair api /
bhūmir na dadyāt satsasyaṁ yācakā bhavatāpriyāḥ //73//
yācamānās ca vo dānaṁ śūdrā dadatu sevakāḥ /
bhavata kṣatriyāṇām ca parapreṣyās tathā dvijāḥ //74//
bhaviṣyathālpavijñānā hatapūjāparāyaṇāḥ /
daridrā bahuputrās ca sampannāḥ putravarjitāḥ //75//
kanyāvittagrhitāraḥ puṇyavikrayakāriṇāḥ /

In times to come there will be a great jealousy among you toward each other regarding learning. Your livelihood will be a difficult one. Even after being treated, the soil will not yield good crops. You will become despised mendicants. Let the serving Śūdras, after being begged by you, give you donations. You will become servants to the Kṣatriyas. You will have little learning and your worship and recitation will perish. The poor among you will have many sons, and the rich will have no sons. You will take money from your daughters and will sell your good karma.

After being cursed this way, the Citpāvan brahmins beg for a reprieve from this curse, but are refused. Paraśurāma asserts (verse 80):

prāpte kaliyuge ghore svasvadharmavivarjite /
maduktam satyam evaṁ tu bhaviṣyati na sainśayah //

With the coming of the Kali age, when each person abandons his appointed dharmic duty, my words will undoubtedly come true.

Gajanan Gaitonde, the editor-translator of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, again leaves these passages untranslated, recognizing the negativity flowing from these words. In the *Introduction* to his edition of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* (p. 7), Gaitonde refers to the view of S.A. Joglekar (1952; 1993: 490) that the text of *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* was composed to denigrate certain brahmin groups, i.e. Citpāvans, by those who were displeased with their prosperity. Joglekar is not alone in holding such a view. The *Kulavṛttānta* of the Khare family (*Khare-Kula-Vṛttānta*, p. 18) refers to a variant of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* account. When no brahmins responded to

Paraśurāma's call, he found fourteen dead bodies on the bank of the ocean. He purified them in the funeral fire, and hence they were called *citāpāvana*. The *Khare-Kula-Vṛttānta* would prefer another account according to which the place of Chiplun pleased Paraśurāma's heart and hence was called *cittapāvana*, and hence the brahmins of that place received the name *cittapāvana*. This account is found in the following verses of a Sanskrit poem titled *Vāḍeśvarodaya* (5.31–32, cited in *Khare-Kula-Vṛttānta*, p. 18):

rāmasya cittam apunāt pūrṇakāmasya tad yataḥ //31//
purain hr̥dyatamain nāmnān̄ vidaye (vidyate?) cittapāvanam /
tatas te brāhmaṇās tatssthā nāmnāsaīm̄s cittapāvanāḥ //32//

The *Khare-Kula-Vṛttānta* conceives the Citpavans to be followers of Paraśurāma, and rejects the account of transformation of fishermen into brahmins. The *Sāṭhe-Sāṭhe-Kula-Vṛttānta* (p. 753) also rejects the account of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*. It prefers the derivation of the name either from *citya+pāvana* “purified through sacrificial fire”, as suggested by V.K. Rajwade, or from *cit+pāvana* “wise and pure”, as suggested by N.G. Chaphekar. In these derivations, there is no negative implication about the origin of this group. The *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, itself on rare occasions (Chapter 6, verse 59, p. 146), seems to use a more benevolent term *cittapūtātman* to refer to the Citpāvans.

The next Maharashtrian brahmin group considered by the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* and presented in a negative light is that of the Karhāḍe brahmins. The second chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* (pp. 126–127) is devoted to an account of the origins of this group: *Kārāṣṭrabrahmaṇotpatti* “the origin of the Kārāṣṭra brahmins”. Already by Sanskritizing the Marathi name *karhāḍe* with an evil-sounding *kā+rāṣṭra* ‘evil region’, the die is cast for a negative account. We are told that there is an evil region (*duṣṭa-deśa*) named Kārāṣṭra to the north of the river Vetravatī and to the south of the river Koyanā, where all the people are harsh (*kaṭhina*), wicked (*durjana*) and evil-doers (*pāpa-karmiṇaḥ*). The brahmins of this region are called Kārāṣṭra. They are utterly doomed due to their evil deeds (*pāpakarmamahānaṣṭa*) and are born from deviant sexual acts (*vyabhicāra-samudbhavāḥ*). Not being satisfied with the negativity expressed so far, the author offers another explanation. The semen of an ass (*kharasya retaḥ*) in contact with a bone (*asthi*) is the origin of these evil brahmins. The explanation is based upon a folk-etymological derivation of *karhāḍe* from *khara+asthi*, prompted by the fact that the Marathi word for Skt. *asthi* is *hāḍ*. The text then talks about these evil brahmins worshipping an evil goddess (*devī mahāduṣṭā*) with the sacrifice of a brahmin, especially a son-in-law or the son of one's sister. Thus, the Karhāḍe brahmins are depicted as being “newly created”, i.e. not part of the “old” Gauḍa/Drāviḍa brahmins, and discarded as being evil in every way.

The same folk-etymology is repeated in the 20th chapter, verse 29: *anye 'pi karahātās te karha-ṛṣṭhāsthisambhavāḥ, Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, p. 204. The subsequent verses (30–32) say that these Karahāṭa brahmins engaged in matrimonial relations, through ignorance, with evil brahmins named Garada¹⁰ from the Vindhya regions, and therefore attained a somewhat despised state. “Therefore, these should be recognized as Anāryas, poison-givers, and brahmin-killers, engaged in theft of gold in towns and villages, and should be always carefully avoided in all auspicious occasions” (*aparair vindhyadeṣṭyaṅgaradair brāhmaṇādhamaiḥ //30// ajñānād yonisambandhāt kiñcin nindyatvam āgatāḥ / atas tv anāryās te jñeyā viśadā brahmaghātinaḥ //31// suvarṇasteyaniratā grāmeṣu nagareṣu ca / śubhakāryeṣu sarveṣu varjyās te vipra yatnataḥ //32//*). This virulent anti-Karahāṭe tirade of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* is again left untranslated by its editor-translator, Gajanan Gaitonde. These accounts are repugnant to the Karhāṭe brahmin community.¹¹

The same chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* also gives a negative account of another brahmin community from the region of Konkan, i.e. the Padye or Pade brahmins. They only know the words (*padamātra*) of the Gāyatrī mantra. They are so evil that if they attend a religious rite, it perishes (*śrāddhe vā mauñjikarmaṇi māṅgalye vā sukarmasu //19// āgatāḥ padyayo viprāḥ kāryanaśo na saṁśayaḥ / varjayet sarvakāryeṣu sarvadharmavivarjitam //20//*, p. 126). The 20th chapter repeats similar allegations saying that the Padika [*> padia > padye*] brahmins can recite only the *padas*, and hence are not eligible for Veda-study, and hence should be excluded from Vedic rites (*anye 'pi padikā viprā: padamātraṁ pipāṭhinaḥ //26cd// svādhyāyādhyayane nārḥāḥ śrautakarmavivarjitāḥ /27ab*, p. 204). The editor-translator, Gajanan Gaitonde, again leaves these passages untranslated.

The heroes of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* are the Gauḍa-Sārasvata brahmins of Maharashtra. This is a community of fish-eating brahmins resident mostly in Goa and other coastal regions. Within the Marathi regions, these brahmins were considered to be low-ranking by the rest of the brahmins. During the the reign of

10 Compare the family name ‘Garde’ among the Karhāṭe brahmins today. For another virulent tirade against the Garada brahmins, see *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*, Chapter 5, verses 48–53.

11 This is most clearly seen in Athalye (1948, 1992). Athalye (p. 28 ff.) says that the chapters in the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* describing the origin of the Citpāvan and Karhāṭe Brahmins are both later interpolations. He cites a letter dated to January 10, 1890 by his uncle, J.H. Athalye, who searched for manuscripts of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*. J.H. Athalye says that he found six manuscripts of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* which are older than 300 years and which do not contain these chapters. He refers to another work titled *Sadbodhacintāmaṇi* published by the community of goldsmiths in Bombay which evidently contains similar chapters ascribed to the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*. J.H. Athalye says that such descriptions of these Brahmins are not found in the *Karahāṭakakṣetrapurāṇa* and *Karavīrakṣetramāhātmya*.

Shivaji and the Peshwas,¹² there were continuous debates regarding their status and these debates continued well into the 19th century. In the eyes of the rest of the brahmins in Maharashtra, the Sārasvata brahmins were not full-fledged brahmins, i.e. they were not allowed to perform all the six duties of brahmins: *yajana-yājana* ‘sacrificing for oneself and for others’, *adhyayana-adhyāpana* ‘learning and teaching the Vedas’, *dāna-pratigrāha* ‘giving and receiving gifts’. They were only considered to be *trikarmī*, i.e. eligible for *yajana* ‘sacrificing for themselves’, *adhyayana* ‘learning the Veda’, and *dāna* ‘giving gifts’, but not for *yājana* ‘sacrificing for others’, *adhyāpana* ‘teaching the Veda’, and *pratigrāha* ‘receiving gifts’.¹³ As noted by Dhananjay Keer (1979: 86), the brahmins in Pune did not let Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar participate in a Śāstrārtha-sabhā on the age of marriage as a principal participant, because he was a Sārasvata brahmin. One can read a virulent anti-Sārasvata attack in Bambardekar (1939), who questions their brahmin-hood itself,¹⁴ and alleges that they misrepresented the Kannada word *gowḍa* ‘village chief’ as being identical with the Sanskrit word *gauḍa* (1939: 174 ff.). On the other hand, works like the *Gauḍa-Sārasvata-Samāja-Paricaya-Grantha* of 1994 (p. 9) place the Gauḍa Sārasvata brahmin community at the center of brahmin history, by claiming that the Vedic brahmins lived along the banks of the river Sarasvati and were, therefore, the original Sārasvata brahmins. While other brahmin groups changed their identities, the Sārasvatas have maintained their Vedic identity with unbroken continuity.

The other brahmin communities in Maharashtra have their own perceptions of origins. The Deśastha brahmins consider themselves to be the original residents of the region of Maharashtra. The fact that the text of the *Sahyadrikhaṇḍa* uses the word *madhyadeśa* to refer to the region between the Narmadā and Krishna rivers,

12 Bambardekar (1939: 242–243) cites some interesting details about a debate on this issue which took place at the court of Shivaji in 1664, and refers to a text titled *Śyenaṅvijātiniṛṇaya* (published in the annual report of the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, Pune, 1913). The debate in Śivājī’s court evidently concluded that the Śeṇavīs, due to their eating of fish, are only *trikarmī* brahmins.

13 Bambardekar (1939: 119–120, fn. 2, and p. 168) refers to this dispute.

14 Bambardekar (1939: 111) cites two documents dated 1863 AD and 1694 AD where the brahmins are listed separately from the Seṇavīs. He argues that the Seṇavīs appropriated the term Gauḍa-Sārasvata only in the late 19th century. He also cites a letter from a Śeṇavī scholar (p. 297): “You are certainly right when you say that the term [...] Sarasvata is a term of modern origin. Being myself a so-called [...] Sarasvata, I may tell you that this term was invented only the other day to suit the conservative mentality of some of my community people.” It may be noted that British administrative documents from the early 19th century Maharashtra always list brahmins and Shenavis as two separate castes, cf. Parulekar (1945; 1951: 26 ff.).

with its component *-deśa-*, is taken as an indication of their connection with the region. Bambardekar (1939) rejects the *gauḍa*-ness and brahminness of the Gauḍa Sārasvatas, and yet seems to feel some unease with the Drāviḍa-ness of the other brahmins of Maharashtra. He (pp. 98–99) argues that even the ancestors of the Pañca Drāviḍa brahmins came from the northern Gauḍa region, and hence they are also originally Gauḍa brahmins. He cites a verse from the *Skandapurāṇa* in support of this view (*gauḍebhyo nirgatā bhūmyām prasiddhā daśabrāhmaṇāḥ / pañca gauḍāḥ pṛthak jātāḥ tathā ca pañca drāviḍāḥ //*). The notion of the northern origin of the Drāviḍa brahmins, of course, became the focal point of the non-Brahmin politics in Maharashtra (cf. the views of Jotirao Phule, Phadke 1991: 117 ff.), as well as in Tamilnadu (cf. Irschick 1969: 74–75, 105). On the other hand, the southern brahmins believed that they had preserved the original Vedic religion, while the northern brahmins had given up its practice. In support of such a view, Pavagi (1898: 38–39) cites the following Smṛti verses:

*samprāpte tu kalau kāle vindhyādreṣu uttare sthitāḥ /
brāhmaṇā yajñarahitā jyotiḥsāstraparāṇmukhāḥ //*

With the coming of the Kali age, the brahmins living to the north of the Vindhya (will be) bereft of the Vedic sacrifices and will pay no heed to the science of astrology.

*vindhyasya dakṣiṇe bhāge yatra godāvarī sthitā /
tatra vedāś ca yajñāś ca bhaviṣyanti kalau yuge //*

To the south of the Vindhya, where the river Godāvarī flows, the Vedas and the Vedic sacrifices will survive in the Kali age.

While the text of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* depicts the Citpāvan and Karhāḍe brahmins as being “new” creations of base-origins, and thus being outside of the “old and established” Gauḍa and Drāviḍa brahmin groups, it depicts the Sārasvata brahmins of Goa in a very different light.

The first chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* seems to present a particular contrast between the Citpāvans and the Sārasvat brahmins. After Paraśurāma created the Citpāvan brahmins by the transformation of fishermen around a funeral fire, their subsequent misbehavior leaves him dissatisfied. As if to remedy his mistake, Paraśurāma brought ten sages from the northern region of Trihotra (= Tirhut in Bihar) who were sub-groups among the Pañca Gauḍas, and established them in the region of Goa (*paścāt paraśurāmeṇa hy ānītā munayo daśa // 47cd // trihotravāsinaś caiva pañcagauḍāntarās tathā / gomāñcale sthāpitās te ... // 48 //*, p. 122, also see Chapter 3, verses 16–17, p. 128). These were established for the purposes of carrying out ancestral rites (*śrāddha*), sacrifices (*yajña*), and receiving dinner-offerings (*bhojana*), cf. Chapter 1, verse 50. Paraśurāma also brought gods like Śāntā Durgā and Māṅgirīśa to the region of Goa from the northern region of Trihotra, cf. Chapter 1, verses 51 ff. and Chapter 3, verses 2–3. The fourth

chapter of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* describes the various gotras of these brahmins brought from the north into the region of Goa and it calls them “best brahmins, honored by the kings, good-looking, with righteous behavior, and expert in all rites” (*uttamā rājapūjitāḥ / sudarśanāḥ sadācārāś caturāḥ sarvakarmasu //6//*, p. 130). It then proceeds to give the specific names of their settlements such as the towns of Loṭālī and Kuśasthalī.

The story of the origin is played in very important ways. The community of Gauḍa Sārasvat brahmins is found in the southern parts of India, cf. the title of Kudva’s 1972 book: *History of the Dakshinatyā Saraswats*. At the same time, the community needed to distinguish itself from the surrounding Drāviḍa brahmin communities, who did not often accept their claim to brahminhood. The text of the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* seems to provide a response to this situation. Wagle (1970a: 12–13) makes an important statement:

The claim of the Gauḍa Sārasvata brahmanas (= GSB), whether real or imagined, of a north Indian origin is not an obscure historical problem; it is a relevant problem which has been of constant interest to the GSB. Many GSB leaders in the 1870’s and 1880’s have referred to this northern origin to indicate the solidarity of the GSB in contrast with other brahmana groups of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. In the late 19th century the GSB spokesmen wrote books and articles, gave public speeches, cited documentary evidence in the native Indian as well as English court of law to prove that they belonged to the Northern stock of brahmanas. In this, their claim was in line with their efforts to be recognized as brahmanas, a right which was challenged by the Chitpavans, Deshasthas and Karhades, among others.

One of these Gauḍa Sārasvata publications is the booklet *The Origin of Sanskrit* by P. Ramananda Nayak (1962). The booklet begins by arguing that the Vedic Aryans did not come to India from outside, but were indigenous to India. Secondly, the Vedic Aryans resided along the banks of the river Sarasvatī and hence came to be known as the Sārasvatas (p. 9). The Gauḍa Sārasvatas are claimed “to strictly follow the code of life laid down by Manu, which is rarely followed by other Brahmans, so much so [...] that they are none else than the ancestors of the ancient Aryans of India” (p. 12). “The Gauḍa Sārasvata Brahmans alone are the full representatives of the civilization and culture that are embodied in the language of the Vedas, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads” (p. 14). The booklet wants to have it both ways. The Gauḍa Sārasvatas are “the ancestors of the ancient Aryans of India”, and also talks about “the ancient Aryans whose descendants are now known by the name Gouda Saraswat Brahmans” (p. 15). It was these “ancient Saraswat Brahmans otherwise called the Aryans of India who developed Sanskrit in its present form from their own spoken tongue.” Contrary to the modern historical view which looks upon Konkani as one of the languages derived from Prakrits,

this booklet insists that Sanskrit is derived from Konkani (p. 16). Let me end my discussion of this booklet with a final quote: “And so, we may conclude beyond doubt that Sanskrit language got its origin from Konkani and Konkani alone” (p. 25). The author says that Sārasvata women refer to their husband by the word *bammunū* in Konkani, and that the Sanskrit word *brāhmaṇa* is obviously derived from this Konkani word. “This formation of the word *brāhmaṇa* from the word *bammunū* can also be taken as a philological proof to show that this community, namely Saraswat, which resided on the banks of the river Saraswati once and thus which adopted its (river’s) own regional name perhaps, alone acquired the title namely Brahmins first in the annals of mankind!” (pp. 25–26). I do not need to comment on the validity of this argument. It shows to what lengths the apologists for a community are willing to go to establish their claim to being superior to everyone else.

The *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* (Chapter 4, verses 42–45) presents a contrast between these communities. The brahmins living in the city of Trihotra are like gods (*kevalā devarūpiṇaḥ*, verse 43). To the west of Trihotra are the Gauḍas. Excepting these, elsewhere there are demons and people without devotion or compassion (*anyatra rākṣasā jñeyā hy abhaktā nirdayā janāḥ*, verse 44). Further the text says that the Karnāṭas are without compassion and the Koṅkaṇas are wicked (*karnāṭā nirdayās caiva kauṅkaṇās caiva durjanāḥ*, verse 45), though the Tailaṅgas and Drāviḍas are compassionate (verse 46). Thus, the text seems to say that the Gauḍa brahmins from Trihotra are the ideal brahmins, and by extension, so are the migrants from Trihotra to Goa, i.e. the Gauḍa Sārasvata brahmins. However, they are living in the midst of other brahmin groups who are wicked and without compassion. While the other brahmin communities in the immediate vicinity seem to be wicked and without compassion, the relatively distant Tailaṅgas and Drāviḍa brahmins seem compassionate. Thus, it seems to me that at least one of the purposes of the currently available *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* is to provide scriptural/mythological basis for the distinct identity of the Gauḍa Sārasvata community, which found itself despised among the surrounding Pañca Drāviḍa brahmin communities. Whether it historically migrated from the north-Indian region is not entirely clear,¹⁵ and yet it found it convenient to link up with a perceived Gauḍa

15 David Lorenzen’s 1972 study *The Kāpālikas and Kālamukhas, Two Lost Śaivite Sects* offers substantial evidence for the migration of Kashmiri Śaivite teachers to southern regions like Karnataka. Referring to one such migrant teacher Someśvara, mentioned in an inscription dated to 1113 AD, Lorenzen (p. 114) says: “Most of the epithets are of little interest save one, listed twice, which identifies him as a “distinguished Sārasvata.” In all likelihood the term Sārasvata designates the caste of Someśvara although the generic sense, ‘a learned man,’ may also be implied. The Sārasvatas were and are a Brāhmaṇa caste resident chiefly in Punjab and

heritage in the contemporary Drāviḍa brahmin environment in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

N.K. Wagle (1970a: 10) makes a different suggestion: “It is suggested that *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* [...] was written by a Deshastha brahmana of Maharashtra who apparently had a dislike for the Chitpawan and Karhade brahmanas of the same area.” Even granting the dislike for the Citpāvan and Karhāḍe brahmins on the part of the Deśastha brahmins, there was no love lost among the Deśasthas for the Sārasvatas, and one would not expect a Deśastha brahmin writing an avowedly pro-Sārasvata text like the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa*. The Deśasthas, Citpāvans and Karhāḍes were united in their rejection of the brahminhood for the Sārasvatas, and Wagle himself provides evidence of this animosity. See Wagle 1970b: 318–319 for court cases filed by different brahmins against the Sārasvatas in 1788 AD, 1850 AD and 1864 AD. Also see Bambardekar 1939 and Conlon 1977: 39ff.

4. PAÑCA GAUḌA/DRĀVIḌA IN THE VEDAVICĀRA OF ŚĀMAŚĀSTRĪ DRAVIḌA DVIVEDĪ

Now I want to turn to the treatment of the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification as elaborated by Śāmaśāstrī Draviḍa Dvivedī in his work *Vedavicāra*. This work was edited and published with a Marathi translation by Kashinath Vaman Lele from Vai (near Pune) in 1912. There is a lone manuscript of this work at the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal in Pune (p. 269 of their manuscript catalogue, no. 36/717). It is copied by Sadāśivabhaṭṭa Gadre in Śaka year 1746 (= 1824 AD). The author of the text refers to the *Vedabhāṣyas* of Mādhavācārya who is dated 1330–1385 AD. Thus our author must be dated between 1385 AD and 1824 AD, the date on the copy of the manuscript at the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal. Given the fact that there is no reference to the British rule and the fact that it refers copiously to the Maharashtrian brahmin sub-castes like Citpāvan, Deśastha, Karhāḍe, etc., distinctions which appear prominently only in the period of the Peshwa rule, I would tend to date our author to the 18th century.

The purpose of the *Vedavicāra* is to explain the controversies among various brahmin groups over who is superior and how and in what rank-order they

Sind but also prominent in both Kashmir and Mysore. The identification of a Kālāmukha priest as a member of this caste shows that at least some, and probably most, of the Kālāmukha priests claimed Brāhmaṇa status and also tends to confirm the connection of the Kālāmukhas with the Northwest and Kashmir. It seems probable that a good number of the present day Sārasvatas of Mysore are descended from northern migrants including Kālāmukhas.” This is a promising avenue for further investigation.

should participate in ritual. In doing so, the text deals with numerous issues of socio-cultural geography, especially as it relates to the distribution of the Vedic branches (*śākhā*) and their role in the performance of sacrificial rites as seen by different communities. Śāmaśāstrī integrates the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification of brahmins into this larger purpose, and produces a discussion which is very elaborate and unique. Here, this classification is neither related to language distinctions, nor to issues like the prevalence of regional practices like the cross-cousin marriage among the southerners, but to Vedic affiliations, and marriage-eligibility based on these Vedic affiliations.

While Śāmaśāstrī takes for granted the standard Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification, his elaboration begins with the introduction of the geography of the Vedic branches by citing a passage from *Mahārṇava* (quoted in the *Caraṇavyūha-bhāṣya*, *Vedavicāra*, pp. 80–81; *Caraṇavyūhasūtra*, p. 33–34):

*prthivyām madhyarekhā ca narmadā parikīrtitā /
dakṣiṇottarayor bhāge śākhābhedaś ca vakyate //1//*

The river Narmadā is said to be the central [dividing] line [between the north and the south]. We shall explain the division of Vedic branches to the north and south [of Narmadā].

Śāmaśāstrī's integration of the Mahārṇava geography with the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification begins with a simple question. How is it that Narmadā is the central dividing line of the earth? Presumably the earth is far larger to the north upto the shores of the northern ocean (*uttara-samudra*) according to the Purāṇic cosmology. Śāmaśāstrī responds by saying that the dimensions of the physical earth are not relevant. The region occupied by the learned Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa brahmins, engaged in śrauta and smārta rites, is referred to by the word 'earth', and Narmadā is the dividing line between these two divisions, i.e. Gauḍa and Drāviḍa (cf. *Vedavicāra*, p. 82). Though Śāmaśāstrī does not cite the definitions of the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa divisions, there is clearly a conflation of the two classifications made possible by the proximity of Narmadā and the Vindhya mountains as dividing lines between the north and the south.

*narmadādakṣiṇe bhāge tv āpastamby āśvalāyanī /
rāṇāyanī paippalādī yajñakanyāvibhāginah //2//*

In the region to the south of Narmadā, there are the following branches, i.e. Āpastambī (of the Kṛṣṇayajurveda), Āśvalāyanī (of the Śākalya-Ṛgveda), Rāṇāyanī (of the Sāmaveda), and Paippalādī (of the Atharvaveda), (members of which) share both (roles in) sacrificial performances and daughters (in marriage).

Referring to this verse, Śāmaśāstrī points out (cf. *Vedavicāra*, p. 82) that here the word Āpastambī is meant to refer to followers of the Taittirīya Yajurveda,

including those who follow the Sūtras of Baudhāyana and Hiranyakeśin. Such an inclusion is necessary to ensure that they are also eligible to share in sacrificial rites and eligible for intermarriage among the Vedic branches listed in this verse.

*mādhyandinī sāmkyāyanī kauthumī śaunakī tathā /
narmadottarabhāge tu yajñakanyāvibhāginah //3//*

In the region to the north of Narmadā, there are the following Vedic branches, i.e. Mādhyandinī (of the Śukla Yajurveda), Sāmkyāyanī (of the Ṛgveda), Kauthumī (of the Sāmaveda), and Śaunakī (of the Atharvaveda), (members of which) share both (roles in) sacrificial performances and daughters (in marriage).

Śāmaśāstrī says (*Vedavicāra*, p. 82) that the reference to Mādhyandina in this verse is inclusive of the Kāṇva branch of the Vājasaneyi Yajurveda as well. This is perhaps a departure from the Mahārṇava geography, but is meant to ensure their mutual marriagibility.

*tuṅgā kṛṣṇā tathā godā sahyādriśikharāvadhī /
āndhradeśān ca paryantam bahvṛcaś cāśvalāyanī //4//*

From the peaks of the Sahyādrī mountain along the rivers Tuṅgā, Kṛṣṇā and Godā[varī], upto the Āndhra region is spread the Āśvalāyanī branch of the Ṛgveda.

Śāmaśāstrī says (*Vedavicāra*, p. 83) that this verse refers to the region of Maharashtra where the followers of the Ṛgveda and the Āśvalāyanasūtra predominate.

*uttare gurjare deśe vedo bahvṛca tritaḥ /
kauṣītakibrāhmaṇam ca śākhā sāmkyāyanī smṛtā //5//*

To the north of Narmadā, in the Gurjara region, the Ṛgveda is said to be prevalent. It is the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa and the Sāmkyāyanī branch (of the Ṛgveda).

Śāmaśāstrī points out (*Vedavicāra*, p. 83) that this verse suggests that to the south of Narmadā, it is the predominance of the Aitareya-Brahmaṇa, in contrast with the Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa in the northern regions.

*āndhrādidakṣiṇāgneye godāsāgarasaṅgame /
yajurvedas taittirīyo hy āpastambī pratiṣṭhitā //6//*

In the Āndhra region, the southern and the south-eastern regions, and at the confluence of Godāvarī with the ocean, the Taittirīya Yajurveda, with its Āpastambī branch, is established.

*sahyādriparvatārambhād diśāṁ nairṛtyasāgarāt /
hiraṇyakeśī śākhā tu paraśurāmasya sannidhau //7//*

From the beginning of the Sahyādri range upto the ocean in the south-west, near the region of Paraśurāma, the Hiraṇyakeśī branch (of the Taittirīya Yajurveda) prevails.

*mayūraparvatāc caiva yāvad gurjaradeśataḥ /
vyāptavāyavyadeśe tu maitrāyaṇī pratiṣṭhitā //8//*

From the Mayūra mountain upto Gurjara, in the north-western region, the Maitrāyaṇī (branch of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda) prevails.

*aṅgavaṅgakaliṅgās ca kānīto gurjaras tathā /
vājasaneyīśākhā ca mādhyandinī pratiṣṭhitā //9//*

The Mādhyandinī branch of the Vājasaneyī (Yajurveda) prevails in the regions of Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kānīna, and Gurjara.

Śāmaśāstrī points out (*Vedavicāra*, p. 84) that while the regions like Aṅga, Vaṅga and Kaliṅga are squarely Gauḍa regions, the region of Gurjara, though included among the Drāviḍas, follows the pattern of the Gauḍas. This distinction of the Gurjara region makes it an anomaly in Śāmaśāstrī's view. They are listed among the Pañca Drāviḍas, but their pattern of Vedic śākhās seems to follow the Gauḍa way.

*ṛṣiṇā yājñavalkyena sarvadeśeṣu viśṛtā /
vājasaneyivedasya prathamā kāṇvasamjñitā //10//*

The sage Yājñavalkya spread into all regions the Kāṇva branch of the Vājasaneyī (Yajur-)veda.

These ten verses from *Mahārṇava* provide us an important snapshot of the geography of the Vedic branches in the medieval period, and this can be compared with the older geographies of the Vedic branches in the early, middle, and late Vedic periods discussed in detail by Witzel (1987; 1989: 113–114), where all the Vedic branches, though moving around, are still very much to the north of the Vindhya mountain. After examining the data from a wide range of Vedic texts, Witzel (1987: 207) concludes:

The data presented here allow the conclusion that the horizon even of the late Vedic texts was restricted to Northern India, – but *intentionally* so. Certainly one did, by 500 or even 150 BC, know more about the South, – but it was not *worth* mentioning: these areas were such that a Brahmin would not go (in fact, he

had to undergo a *prāyaścitta* if he did do so), and if one went there, as apparently Agastya was thought to have done quite early, one was, as J[aiminīya]-B[rāhmaṇa] states, ‘outside the Kuru-Pañcālas’.

The *Mahābhārata* geography indicates substantial migrations of these traditions into southern India in such a way that several Vedic traditions are now found exclusively in south India and others only in north India. It is this migration of the Vedic traditions into southern India that is responsible for the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa divide. In Śāmaśāstrī’s *Vedavicāra*, the geography of *Mahābhārata* actually serves as a point of departure for noting further changes. Particularly the region of Gurjara turns out to be in a dubious zone. It is listed among the Pañca Drāviḍas and yet follows the Vedic branches of the Gauḍas. This creates a dividing line between the Gurjaras and the other four Drāviḍa brahmins. For a detailed geography of the branches of the Veda as known from more recent periods, see Kashikar 1977: 142 ff. However, Kashikar does not bring in the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification in his discussion of the branches of the Veda.

Thus, besides the regional distinctions among the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa brahmins, Śāmaśāstrī adds specific configurations of Vedic branches to the Gauḍa and Drāviḍa groups.

	Gauḍa/Gurjara	Drāviḍa (except Gurjara)
Veda/śākhā		
RV	Sāmkyāyana	Śākalya
YV	Vājasaneyi	Taittirīya
SV	Kauthuma	Rāṇyānīya
AV	Śaunakīya	Paippalāda

We must keep in mind that Śāmaśāstrī may not have been aware of the Paippalāda Atharvaveda traditions in the regions of Orissa and Kashmir, regions which were distant for his personal information. Given this basic structure of the Vedic configurations for the Gauḍas and Drāviḍas, Śāmaśāstrī (*Vedavicāra*, p. 165) says that the Gauḍas can participate in ritual and marriage with other Gauḍas, and the Drāviḍas can participate in ritual and marriage with other Drāviḍas (*yajñakanyā-vibhāginah*).¹⁶ Śāmaśāstrī, however, recognizes that migrations of brahmins in

16 The same idea is expressed in verse 97 of the *Kānyakubjavainśāvalī* (p. 35):
drāviḍair drāviḍeṣu eva gauḍair gauḍeṣu caiva hi /
tathā svajñātīmadhye tu yatra ṣaṭkarmaśuddhitā //97//

every direction have complicated these issues. Conceiving of a steady-state ancient period when the Gauḍas and Drāviḍas happily lived under righteous kings in their own Gauḍa and Drāviḍa regions, he points out that things are different nowadays. Due to decline in Dharma, with the destruction of good kings and expansion of the Mlecchas, brahmins have migrated to different regions where they could find a livelihood. Hence there are Drāviḍas in Gauḍa regions and Gauḍas in Drāviḍa regions. This has resulted in chaos as far as the study of the Veda is concerned. There are Gauḍas learning from Drāviḍas, and vice versa. Śāmaśāstrī says (*Vedavicāra*, p. 166) that such cross-over in learning the Veda is acceptable, and one should not find fault with it, especially under these difficult circumstances. He makes a reference to Dharmasūtras where it is stated that a brahmin, under stressful circumstances, may learn the Vedas even from a Kṣatriya. However, he does not approve of the ritual participation and intermarriage across the Gauḍa/Drāviḍa divide. He says that intermarriage across this divide is not observed,¹⁷ though he has occasionally seen crossover in sacrificial rites. Also see Kashikar 1977: 142 ff.

Śāmaśāstrī then talks (*Vedavicāra*, pp. 167 ff.) about specific cases where there is ritual crossover among the Gauḍas and Drāviḍas. In regions like Maharashtra, the followers of the Śākala Ṛgveda, when there is need to use Sāmavedic chants, opt for the Kauthuma Sāmaveda of the Gauḍas, in stead of choosing the Rāṇāyanīya Sāmaveda of the Drāviḍas. This is done, it is said, through either incapacity (*aśakti*), absence (*abhāva*), or laziness (*ālasya*). Similarly, the Vājasaneyins, who are all Gauḍas, sometime abandon the Hautra part of the Sāṁkhyāyana Ṛgveda, and follow the Āśvalāyana Hautra connected with the Drāviḍas.

This second case is indeed fascinating. The Vājasaneyins who are resident in Maharashtra claim to be Maharashtra brahmins. How could they be treated as Gauḍas? Śāmaśāstrī (*Vedavicāra*, p. 168) takes a conservative position on this issue. Referring again to the passage from *Mahārṇava* that Drāviḍa brahmins are found to the south of Narmadā, and that there are no marriage-relations of the Vājasaneyins with the Drāviḍas, Śāmaśāstrī says that these Vājasaneyins in Maharashtra should be treated as Gauḍas.¹⁸ He extends the same logic to the

¹⁷ The *Vedavicāra* (p. 167) says that due to regional differences and differences in local languages, there is generally no intermarriage among the Drāviḍa (= Tamil), Āndhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra brahmins, there is no prohibition on such intermarriage, since they are all Drāviḍa brahmins.

¹⁸ In more recent times, this issue has been resolved differently. The Deśastha brahmin community of Maharashtra is now conceived of as having two sub-divisions, i.e. Ṛgvedins and (Śukla)-Yajurvedins. While there have been contentious relations between these two sub-groups, there is no feeling that the Deśastha Yajurvedins are not Maharashtrians, or

Mādhyandina and Kāṇva brahmins in the regions of Āndhra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu, and considers them to be Gauḍas. In the same way, according to him, the followers of the Śākala Ṛgveda and the Taittirīya Yajurveda in the Gauḍa regions should be considered to be Drāviḍa brahmins.¹⁹

Śāmaśāstrī offers a detailed analysis (*Vedavicāra*, pp. 174–175) of the situation of the Gurjaras in this scheme. Having found the Gurjaras in the list of Pañca Drāviḍas, he is puzzled to find that they follow the Vedaśākhās of the Gauḍas. In stead of the Śākala Ṛgveda of the Drāviḍas, the Gurjaras follow the Sāṁkhyāyana Ṛgveda of the Gauḍas. In stead of the Taittirīya Yajurveda of the Drāviḍas, they follow the Vājasaneyi Yajurveda of the Gauḍas. In stead of the Paippalāda Atharvaveda of the Drāviḍas, they follow the Śaunakīya Atharvaveda of the Gauḍas. Finally, in stead of the Rāṇyānīya Sāmaveda of the Drāviḍas, they follow the Kauthuma Sāmaveda of the Gauḍas. Śāmaśāstrī faults them for abandoning their Drāviḍa heritage and adopting the Gauḍa heritage. Historically speaking, there is no reason to believe that there was such an abandonment of the Drāviḍa brahmin heritage by the Gurjaras. Their inclusion among the Drāviḍas took place purely on the basis of geography,²⁰ which had no connection to the distribution of the Vedaśākhās. It is the conflation of two originally unrelated conceptions that has created a problem for Śāmaśāstrī. However, Śāmaśāstrī is relentless in

that they are northerners. It is however the case that the Śukla Yajurvedins and Citpāvans in Maharashtra do not follow the system of cross-cousin marriage. “Are they therefore later immigrants than other Brahmins?”, Karve (1961; 1968: 156). The intermarriage between the Śukla Yajurvedins and other Brahmin communities of Maharashtra was rare, and yet Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrao (1927: Introduction, p. 17–18) notes that a Brahmin Parishad in Akola passed a resolution that there should not be any prohibition on such an intermarriage. He cites a letter dated July 16, 1915 from Hari Shastri Garge of Nasik (addressed to Mr. Lakshman Rajaram Atre of Vardha) confirming the same conclusion. Chitrao himself sees no reason why there should not be intermarriage between these communities. Chitrao notes that the Deśastha Ṛgvedins and Kāṇva Yajurvedins do follow the tradition of cross-cousin marriage, specifically, marriage with maternal uncle’s daughter (*mātulakanyāpariṇaya*), and that this is not followed by the Mādhyandina Yajurvedins. However, there is no indication in Chitrao’s work that the Mādhyandinas are to be treated as Gauḍas.

19 This points to the significant changes in the history of the Vedic texts and their transmission. The Ṛgveda is indeed composed in the northwestern regions of the subcontinent. Then there may have been a northeastern recension of the Ṛgveda (Witzel 1989: 114, “Eastern RV?”). However, for Śāmaśāstrī, the Ṛgveda is exclusively preserved by the Drāviḍa brahmins, and the few Ṛgvedins and the Taittirīyas in the north must be treated as Drāviḍa brahmins.

20 It may be noted that certain communities in Kathiawar seem to allow the cross cousin marriage typical of the Dravidians, and Gujarat falls in a sort of frontier zone on this issue between the north and the south, cf. Trautmann, 1979: 160–163. Dharmasāstra writers have noted a shared lack of certain rites among the Gurjaras and Dākṣiṇātyas, cf. *dākṣiṇātyānām gurjarānām ca vistṛtavṛddhīśrāddhābhāvat ...*, Gadādhara’s commentary on the *Pāraskaragṛhyasūtra*, p. 32.

his criticism of the Gurjaras. There is no sharing of food between the Gurjaras and the rest of the Drāviḍa brahmins, nor do they share in the study of the Veda. Śāmasāstrī, a defender of the purity of the Drāviḍa brahmin group, says that like the unrighteous behavior in the Gauḍa regions, the Gurjara region is also filled with unrighteousness, and hence it was cursed by the Ācārya (who?), and, for this reason, the Drāviḍa brahmins are not supposed to have any dealings with the Gurjara brahmins,²¹ as with the brahmins of the Kerala region.

This last suggestion by the author of the *Vedavicāra* for the exclusion of the Kerala brahmins from the Drāviḍa category raises some important issues. Here, the reason for their exclusion is expressed in terms of their unrighteous behavior (*anācāra*). However, one may also note that the Nambudrī brahmins of Kerala, like the Gauḍa Sārasvata brahmins of Goa, consider themselves to be migrants from the north, brought to Kerala by Paraśurāma, cf. Kesavan Veluthat 1978: 4–5. This places the Nambudrī brahmins in a dubious zone. Are they Drāviḍa brahmins, or are they Gauḍa brahmins resident in the Drāviḍa region? The rejection of their Drāviḍa-ness by our author may be contrasted with the arguments offered by texts like the *Līlātilakam* to show that the Keralas are true Drāviḍas, like the Tamils, though they would not extend the same Drāviḍa-ness to Karṇāṭaka and Āndhra. Freeman (1998: 57) reports: “It (= the *Līlātilakam*) advances the claim that Keraḷabhāṣā, with other varieties of Tamil, is linguistically closer to the medium of this “Dravidian Veda” (= Tamil Vaiṣṇava Canon) than the other neighboring regional languages of Āndhra and Karṇāṭaka, thereby establishing the distinctively Dravidian identity of the Keraḷas and their language, even as it excludes these others.” At the same time, “There are indeed a number of references to Kannaḍa and its Brahmans in the *Līlātilakam*, as well as to the charter myth which refers to the Brahmans’ joint settlement in Keraḷa and Karṇāṭaka by the god Paraśurāma, with Kannaḍa having been created earlier than Malayāḷam” (ibid. 56). This gives us a view of the free-for-all fights for inclusion and exclusion of particular communities based on differing sets of criteria – mythological, Vedic, ritual, and linguistic – which raged throughout India, using this particular classification as the battleground.

21 The notion that the Pañca Drāviḍas, with the exception of the Gurjaras, can intermarry is found in Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrao (1927: Introduction, p. 19), though he gives no explanation for the exclusion of the Gurjaras. He notes that such an intermarriage among the Pañca Drāviḍas is confirmed by the practice of the Deśastha Brahmmins.

5. CONCLUSION

The Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification arose at a particular point in the history of brahmin settlements in India. It is clear from Witzel's (1987 and 1989) work on the distribution of Vedic communities from early to late Vedic periods that these communities were still residing to the north of the Vindhya and had not penetrated to the south. The first hint of late Vedic notions about south-Indian communities, among other peripheral communities, comes through the story in the *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa* (*Adhyāya* 33, *Khaṇḍa* 6, ASS edition, part II, p. 856) about the banishment of the one-hundred sons of Viśvāmītra. After they disobey his command, he curses them that they be banished to the outer regions (*antān vaḥ prajā bhakṣiṣṭa*), and these became the Āndhras, Puṇḍras, Śabaras, Pulindas, and Mūtibas. The passage simultaneously seeks a Vedic origin of these outer communities, and yet considers them fallen, and outside the pale of Vedic orthodoxy. We see the same attitude in the *Manusmṛiti* (10.43–44): “In consequence of the omission of the sacred rites, and of their not consulting brahmins, the following tribes of Kṣatriyas have gradually sunk in this world to the condition of Śūdras, i.e. the Pauṇḍakas, the Coḍas, the Draviḍas, the Kāmbojas, the Yavanas, the Śakas, the Pāradas, the Pahlavas, the Cīnas, the Kirātas, and the Daradas.” The same attitude toward the “outer” communities continues to show up in other Dharmasūtras. The *Baudhāyanadharmasūtra* (1.1.32–33) gives us a clear idea of how the late Vedic Aryans of Āryāvartta viewed the communities of the outer regions: “The inhabitants of Ānartta, of Aṅga, of Magadha, of Saurāṣṭra, of the Deccan, of Upavṛt, of Sindh and the Sauvīras are of mixed origin. He who has visited the countries of the Āraṭtas, Kāraskaras, Puṇḍras, Sauvīras, Vaṅgas, Kaliṅgas or Pranūnas shall offer a Punastoma or Sarvapṛṣṭhī sacrifice for expiation.” It is only gradually and grudgingly that the brahmin communities spread to the outer regions and lead to the emergence of the Pañca Gauḍa/Draviḍa classification. The main regional divide was strong enough to produce a general prohibition on ritual and marital cross-over between these groups. This is the indication of the emergence of Jātis and sub-Jātis within a single Varṇa-group. As Śāmaśāstrī points out (*Vedavicāra*, p. 167), even among the Drāviḍa groups, generally there is no intermarriage among the brahmins from Tamilnadu, Āndhra, Karnataka, and Maharashtra *due to differences of region and language, in spite of the fact that the Dharmasāstra allows such marriages*. The same logic must have worked at an earlier period to create a de facto prohibition of intermarriage between Gauḍa and Drāviḍa groups, though such prohibitions are not seen in the earlier Dharmasāstra sources. The *Dharmasindhu* of Kāśīnātha Upādhyāya (p. 113) makes an important statement regarding eligibility of a child for adoption:

*viprāḍinām varṇānām samānavarṇa eva tatrāpi deśabheda-
prayuktagurjaratvāndhratvādinā samānajātīya eva /*

[The adoption of a child] can occur for Varṇas like brahmins within the same Varṇa. Even within the same Varṇa, it occurs only within the same Jāti, such as Gurjara-ness and Āndhra-ness, differentiated on account of the region.

The significance of this passage lies in the emergence of regional distinctions within the same Varṇa leading to distinct Jātis, and these Jātis were more important as determinants of social interaction, than the Varṇas.

The treatment of the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa classification in the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* and the *Vedavīcāra* also shows that continuing migrations of brahmins across the Gauḍa/Drāviḍa divide produced further complications in recognizing who was Gauḍa or Drāviḍa at a given point in time. The examples of the Gauḍa Sārasvata brahmins and the Śukla Yajurvedin brahmins of Maharashtra reveal these complications. The first community, claiming a Gauḍa descent, attempted to distinguish itself from the surrounding Drāviḍa brahmin communities, while the other community, i.e. the Śukla Yajurvedins of Maharashtra, still exhibit northern kinship preferences, and yet do not claim a northern origin. However, as we have seen, Śāmaśāstrī treats all Śukla Yajurvedins of south India to be Gauḍas, and prohibits their intermarriage with other Drāviḍa communities of the region. More recent accounts show that this is no longer the case, and that, at least in Maharashtra, the Śukla Yajurvedins are not treated as Gauḍas any longer (cf. fn. 17). The classifications such as the Pañca Gauḍa/Drāviḍa seem to have provided temporary settlements of complicated issues, but their fuzzy and porous boundaries leave enough scope for continuing inclusion and exclusion of various groups.²² An investigation of these shifting boundaries allows us a glimpse of the history of the formative social forces in action.

²² I have considered only a few examples of contentious identity in this paper. However, the Gauḍa communities have their own contentious issues about identity. The Kānyakubjavamśāvalī (p. 9) excludes the brahmins of Mathurā and Magadha from the Kānyakubja group. Similarly, the accounts of the origin of the Bengali brahmins show their migration from the Kānyakubja area. But when they tried to return to the Kānyakubja area from Bengal, they were rejected by the Kānyakubjas, cf. Tarak Chandra & Bikash Raychaudhuri (1981: 5): “Then the Brahmans [who had migrated to Bengal from Kanauj] returned home. But their relatives were unwilling to take them back in the society, unless they atoned for their long residence in the forbidden countries.” Also see Rajatbaran Dattaray (1974: 21 ff.).

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