



Fig. 1. - Panel of paintings in the rock shelter.

the so-called Proto-Austroloid element is present in the majority of them. The Boyas too show the presence of this element, though in a mixed form⁵.

The view that the neolithic people of Karnatak were a hunting-cum-pastoral community is gaining ground by recent researches. So also are the Boyas, a semi-hunting community. Though they do not go for hunting as a profession, they are still the best hunters. It is interesting to note that their original profession is kept up by means of a ceremonial hunting. It is incumbent on them to go for hunting on the next day to the lunar new year's day (Ugādi or Guḍi Pāḍava) which generally falls in the month of March or April. This is a compulsory custom which cannot be neglected. Two days prior to the hunting day, i. e., on the Pāḍava and the day previous, they have a community dance of the well-known South India "kolāṭṭam" - playing with two sticks - with rhythmic, chorus singing. On the hunting day, all of them go to the surrounding hills and catch rabbits etc. When they return in the evening with the game, they will have a community feast. If they fail to go for hunting on this day for some reason or other, they must go for hunting for five days during the Dussera festival which would generally be in October as a sort of redemption.

The tradition of hunting narrated above seems to have been depicted on a panel of paintings (fig. 1: a, b, c) in one of the rock shelters which abound in these neolithic settlements on the hill. This shelter, facing north just behind the locality called TKT. II, occupies a commanding position overlooking the valley below and the northern hill range (plate: a). The paintings are drawn on the eastern face of the overhanging rock in the interior of the shelter. They

⁵ The writer is grateful to Shri K. C. MALHOTRA, Research Scholar, Deccan College, Poona, for this information. Shri K. C. MALHOTRA is studying the skeletal remains from Tekkalakota and also has undertaken an ethnographic study of the Boyas.