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JAINISM DURING THE WODEYARS OF MYSORE

DR. VASANTHA KUMARI

Among the dynasties of Southern India, which arose and played a significant role during the centuries following the battle of Talikota in 1565 A.D., the Wodeyars of Mysore claim foremost attention. They rose to prominence in that part of Karnataka, which was once ruled over by the Gangas of Talakad and Hoysalas of Dwarasamundra. They constituted the important ruling dynasties in the Southern part of Karnataka and have transmitted in succession through centuries a very rich Jaina cultural tradition. While the Gangas exercised their sway from the second century A.D., the Hoysalas, who succeeded them continued to rule from the eleventh century A.D.

However, it is obvious that Jainism with all its attributes of religious and moral efficacy had failed to occupy at this time the prime status of a major religion. At the outset, the adherents of Jainism apparently constituted only a minor community. Nevertheless, the Wodeyars of Mysore by keeping up the long established tradition of mutual spirit of toleration and respect offered unstinted patronage to Jainism.

1. L. Rice, Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. 1.

* Yadu Raya (1399-1423), Hire Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar i (1423-1458), Timmaraja Wodeyar i (1458-1478), Here Chamaraja Wodeyar ii (1478-1513), Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar iii (1513-1552), Timmaraja Wodeyar ii (1552-1571), Bola Chamaraja Wodeyar vi (1571-1576), Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar v (1576-1578), Raja Wodeyar I (1578-1617), Chamaraja Wodeyar iv (1617-1637), Raja Wodeyar ii (1637-1638), Ranadhira Kantirava Narasaraja Wodeyar (1658-1659), Dodda Devaraja Wodeyar (1659-1672), Chikkadeva Raja Wodeyar (1672-1704), Kantiravava Narasaraja Wodeyar (1704-1713), Dodda Krishna Raja Wodeyar I (1713-1731), Chamaraja Wodeyar vii (1731-1734), Krishna Raja Wodeyar ii (1734-1766), Nanja Raja Wodeyar (1766-1770), Bettada Chamaraja Wodeyar (1770-1776), Kasa Chamaraja Wodeyar (1776-1796), Krishna Raja Wodeyar iii (1779-1868), Chamaraja Wodeyar iii (1868-1895), Krishna Raja Wodeyar iv (1895-1940), Jaya Chama Raja Wodeyar (1940-1948), (Died in 1974)

The march of Jainism during the Wodeyar's period, despite many vicissitudes, presents an interesting picture and may be studied under the following classifications.

- 1) Patronage of Wodeyars to Jainism and Jaina officials in the royal court
- 2) Patronage to Sri Ksetra-Sravanabelagola
- 3) Reflections of the European travellers on the Jaina Socio-religious life.

1) Patronage of Wodeyars to Jainism

Infact, twenty-five rulers beginning from Yaduraya to Jayachamarendra Wodeyar (1399-1948) ruled the Kingdom of Mysore for nearly five and a half centuries.¹ Although the Wodeyar's rule began as early as the last year of the fourteenth century not much is known of them until the time of Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617). The history of Wodeyars, obviously, begins only from the time of Raja Wodeyar when he occupied Srirangapattana in 1610 A.D., destroying the viceroyalty of the Vijayanagar rulers over there.²

Various theories have been evolved by the scholars regarding the origin of the Wodeyars. Besides, it is also important to note the Jaina version explained in the Rajavali Kathasara by Devachandra. Devachandra attributes the origin of the Wodeyar's kingdom to the Hoysala descents-Timmaraja, Devaraja and Santaraja.³ They are stated to have established their authority as chieftains in different parts of Mysore. Raja Wodeyar the decent of those Hoysala adventurers ultimately was successful in effecting his plans. This resulted in the establishment of an independent kingdom of Mysore.⁴ The above reference made in the Rajavali Kathasara is to be analyzed with an open mind in order to authenticate the role of the Jaina elitist class in the establishment of Wodeyar's authority over Mysore.⁵

Interestingly, Santharaja of Maleyure-Keshtra is stated to have helped Raja Wodeyar to secure the throne.⁶ Raja Wodeyar after assuming power as an independent ruler entrusted the state responsibility of Chief Ministership to Dodda Santaraja, the son of

2. R.R. Diwakar, Karnataka through the Ages, p

3. Rajavali, pp. 322 off.

4. Ibid.

5. Vasantha Kumari, Socio-religious life of the Jains under the Wodeyars of Mysore. (Unpublished Thesis.)

6. Rajavali, p. 322 off

Santaraja.⁷ It is relevant to note in this context that the Wodeyar rulers maintained a close affinity with the Jaina Brahmana sect and the latter influence in the royal court was consistent until the end of Krishnaraja Wodeyar's III (1799-1868) reign.⁸ Raja Wodeyar is even believed to have regulated his Food habits under the prevailing influence of Jaina officials in the royal court.^{8a} Further, the king is said to have made land grants to Adinatha Tirthankara Basadi at Srirangapattana and built an enclosure to the Basadi at Kanakagiri at Maleyure Ksetra.⁹ It should be noted that Maleyure was an important religious center of the Jainas during the hey days of Jainism in Karnataka. The independent Jaina Matta named after Acharya Akalanka is stated to have existed at Kanakagiri ksetra.

Chamaraja Wodeyar (1617-1637) who succeeded Raja Wodeyar to the throne of Mysore followed the benevolent policy of his predecessors towards Jainism. He took special interest in rejuvenating the religious activities of Sri-Jaina Matta.¹⁰ Less than a decade after the demise of Raja Wodeyar, Sravanabelagola, the chief religious center of the Jaina community had gone to wrack and ruin.¹¹ Even the Lands belonging to the basadis of this kshetra had also been mortgaged.¹² Further, Charukeerti Panditacharya of the Jaina Matta had even escaped from Sravanabelagola leaving the center of its own fate.¹³ Details pertaining to this fact of this are narrated in an inscription on the Indragiri at Sravanabelagola.¹⁴ From the contents of the inscription it is clear that the king took special interest in saving the Sri-Ksetra from total dissolution.¹⁵ It is obvious from the fact that he expressed his desire to pay off the holder of the mortgaged property belonging to the Jaina Matta.¹⁶ However, having heard of the interest of the king the holders of the mortgaged property they voluntarily redeemed the mortgaged land.¹⁷ Charukeerti Panditacharya was called back from Ballatakupura and was entrusted with the charge of Sri Ksetra the main pilgrimage center of the Jaina community.¹⁸ The mortgaged lands were redeemed at the instance of Sri Charukeerti Panditacharya and the king in the presence of the colossus of Bahubali.¹⁹ The king even went to the extent of issuing injunction curtailing the rights of the Purohitas of the respective basadis to have jurisdiction over the lands.²⁰ Instead,

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 222.

9. Ibid., p. 224.

10. E.C. Vol. II. No. 352 (sb).

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

the same was entrusted to the Battaraka Charukeerti Panditacharya.²¹ These measures of the king, no doubt, created a sense of confidence in the minds of the Battaraka Panditacharya and the people.

Chamaraja Wodeyar is stated to have kept himself more in acquaintance with the philosophers and literary men in the court. He took delight in listening to the recitation of some Jaina works like Baratesha-Vaibhava, Harivamsha purana, and Sanathkumara Charita.²²

Chikkadevaraj Wodeyar (1672-1704) is said to have possessed special inclination to Jainism. References to the regular religious discussions on Mimamsa, Saiva Vaishnava and Jaina systems of philosophy held at his court have been found in the literary works.²³ Such constructive and critical discussions obviously enabled the king to acquire a thorough knowledge of all the religions and specially Jainism. His predilection to Jainism may be gauged from the fact that he greatly respected the Jaina goal of absolute sanctity of life. The king is believed to have even banned animal sacrifice in the name of religion. The devotees were advised to offer coconut at the altar of god instead of sacrificing animals.²⁴

Like Chamaraja Wodeyar, even Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704) also took keen interest in saving the Sri Matta from total dissolution. The existing bad condition of Sri Matta is well explained by Chidananda Kavi, the author of Munivamsabhyudaya. Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar bestowed on Chidananda kavi, the Pontifical seat of Sravanabelagola when it fell vacant on account of the demise of the previous Charukeerti Panditacharya at Somawarpet.²⁵ Chidananda kavi appears to have been an advisor to the king earlier at his court.²⁶ Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar's liberal religious policy and inclination to Jainism is generally attributed to the following factors. His early life had been spent at Yalandore near Mysore where he had developed an intimacy with a native Jaina Brahmana by the name Visalaksha pandit. Later, when the king was confined at Hangala for 6 years (1667-1675) Visalaksha pandita continued his association with the king and followed him to captivity. Visalaksha pandita had even ascertained knowledge of astrology that the king would succeed the

21. Ibid.

22. Rajavali, p. 272 off.

23. Munivamsa, p. 16.

24. Rajavali, pp. 345 off.

25. Munivamsa, pp. 25 off.

26. Ibid.

throne. In fact, he even had obtained a promise to the extent that if such an event should come true he should be made the Prime Minister. Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar after having asserted his right over the throne, according to his promise, appointed Visalaksa Pandita as his Prime minister. He is referred to as the foremost minister of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.²⁷ He was well-known for his intelligence and extraordinary virtues. It is believed that his enemies on sectarian grounds brought about his death in a conspiracy.²⁸

Amritammani, the mother of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, was the daughter of Channa raja the Jaina chieftain who was converted to Veerasaivism under the influence of Jangamas.²⁹ However, the Jaina samskara inherited by her did, obviously, play its influence that was later imparted to Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.

Religious strife and factions were not uncommon during those days. On one occasion the religious fanatics prevented a Jaina religious procession when it was passing through the streets at Hassan. The samgha nayaka by name Puttaiah of Hassan is believed to have represented the matter to the king. The king after having studied the situation issued Nirupa condemning the fanatical attitude of the non-Jaina elitist group. From then onwards the Jaina festivals and processions at Hassan and perhaps even elsewhere were celebrated peacefully.³⁰

Chikkana pandita, the author of Vaidya nigantu, a medical lexicon, lived in the court of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.³¹ Kantirava Narasaraja Wodeyar II (1704-1713) and Dodda Krishna Raja Wodeyar (1713-1731) like their predecessors, continued their liberal policies towards Jainism. Rajavali Kathasara refers to the repairs of Jaina basadis around Mysore including the one at Kanakagiri by Kantirava Narasaraja Wodeyar II.³²

A few inscriptions found on the puja vessels preserved in the Santiswara Basadi at Mysore refer to the gifts made by Devammaji, the queen of Kasa Chamaraja Wodeyar IX (1776-1796).³³ It is important to note, in this connection, that many more such inscriptions must have been lost or destroyed during the course of the demolition of the

27. Rajavali, p. 349; Mysore Gazette, pp. 366-367.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 340.

30. Gom Cha, Ch III. St 131-132

31. Hayavadana Rao, Mysore Gazetteer, Vol. II, Part I, p. 409.

32. Rajavali, p. 351.

33. E.C. Vol. V, Nos. 10-14.

Santiswara Basadi which was situated originally within the palace vicinity.³⁴

Krishna Raja Wodeyar III (1799-1868) also made grant of 300 varaha tasdik for the maintenance of Santiswara basadi at Mysore.³⁵ It was during this period that the royal throne was shifted in 1800 A.D. to Mysore from Srirangapattana. He is also stated to have taken keen interest in restoring the perpetual performance of rituals in 23 basadis which existed around Chamaraja Nagar at that time.³⁶ It should be noted that Chamaraja Nagar which bore the name Arikutara earlier was the birth place of Chamaraja Wodeyar, the father of Krishna raja Wodeyar III.³⁷ The family of scholars of Chamaraja Nagar namely Suri Pandita, his son Bommarasa, and his son Lakshmi pandita enjoyed the liberal patronage of the king.³⁸ Interestingly, pilgrimage to the holy places was a regular routine of the Wodeyar's activities. They paid regular visits to holy places like Udupi, Sringeri, Dharmasthala, and Subramanya. On one such occasion Krishna raja Wodeyar III also visited the Jaina centers like Modabidere, Karkala, Venur, as well as Shravanabelagola.³⁹

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III is also stated to have caused the Mruthyunjaya, Kalikunda, Siddhachakra, Ganadharavalaya, pancha chakra aradhana and Ugrasanti ceremonies performed in the palace, in accordance with the Jaina system.⁴⁰ It is also significant to note that Devachandra performed these ceremonies for five days at the instance of the king.⁴¹ An inscription dated 1829 refers to the renovation of a basadi at Kelasuru and the installation of an image of Chandraprabha Tirthankara. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III encouraged many Jaina scholars and as many as 10 Jaina physicians are stated to have lived in his court. The most prominent among them was Suri pandita and he was honoured with the title Vaidya Raja.⁴²

The walls of Sri Matta at Sravanabelogola are decorated with paintings illustrating scenes from the lives of the Tirthankaras. The

34. Santidhara-Santiswara basadi centenary Commemoration Volume. Santiswara basadi-ondru Samikshe.

35. Rajavali, pp. 311-360.

36. Ibid., p. 360.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 360.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 360.

41. Ibid.

42. Archive Records, Mysore.

panel to the right of the middle cell also represents the Dasara Darbar of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III seated on the throne.⁴³ It should be noted that special *pūjās* in the basadis of Sriḷkṣetra were arranged on this occasion in honour of the Maharaja of Mysore and such a practice is being continued to this day. The paintings stand as evidence to assert the close association of Charukeerti Panditacharya of Sri Kṣetra with the rulers of Mysore.

However, after 1868, there seem to have been a notable decline in the influence of the Jainas in the royal court. They were excluded from all palace activities. Thus, there is hardly any reference to them sharing in any of the high administrative responsibilities. Meanwhile, the Jainas had learnt to live a sort of reclusive life without expecting much in their favour from the authorities.

However, there are a few stray instances of members who belonged to the Jaina community being appointed to the ordinary posts in the palace. One Vardhamāna pandita, the son of Jinachandriah, was the palace vaidya from 1838-1868. He was appointed on a monthly salary of rupees ten in the Chamundy Totty. Chamundy Totty constituted a department that looked after the supply of rations. Later, the All India Digamber Jaina Mahasabha also passed a resolution to that effect on the 28 March 1910. The content of the resolution was as follows – The Mahasabha is glad to learn that among the learned men patronage by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore in the palace in olden times were included the Jaina pandits also. But the Mahasabha regrets the absence of any Jaina Pandits in the list of such learned men in the palace at present; and therefore, resolves that His Highness the Maharaja be prayed for to admit and patronise Jaina pandits also. The Mahasabha also recommended the name of the pandit Dorbali Jinadas Sastry of Sravanabelagola. He was hailed as a fit person this recognition because of his hereditary excellence in learning. The resolution passed by the Digambara Jaina Mahasabha was consented to and in accordance with this pandit Dorbali Jinadasa Sastry was employed as palace Vidvan. Expressing their joy on hearing the decision of the Wodeyar to employ a Jaina member as palace Vidvan the Jainas of Sravanabelagola under the presidency of Charukeerti Panditacharya Swami expressed their gratitude to His Highness Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.⁴⁴

Obviously, the Jainas were actually excluded from the royal palace campus when a fire destroyed the Santiswara basadi. It was believed

43. Hayavadana Rao. Mysore Gazetteer. Vol. II, Part I. p. 461.

44. Archive Records-Mysore.

to have situated inside the royal palace campus at Mysore. The relics, which survived the fire, were no doubt removed from the original place. The palace records throw light on the fact that His Highness the Maharaja graciously made an allotment of a site for the purpose of erecting the new basadi. The present structure of Santiswara basadi at Mysore clearly reveals that the materials of the demolished basadi had been used to raise the new structure.⁴⁵ The consecration ceremony was held on the 30th August 1897. The palace honours were sent for the occasion.⁴⁶

The Jaina officials and scholars in the roval court. Santaiah and Dodda Santaiah

A brief historical survey brings to light the prevalence of the Jaina influence to a considerable extent in the Wodeyar's court. The competent members of the Jaina community had won the confidence of the rulers. They were employed as ministers and officials under various capacities. A few eminent scholars also enjoyed the patronage of the Wodeyars. Padmarasa in Bhujabali Charita and Devachandra in Rajavali Kathasara refer to Santaiah a Jaina minister of Raja Wodeyar. Devachandra credits him to have saved the life of the princess Mahadevi of Bettadapura, the mother of Raja Wodeyar.⁴⁷ After the death of Santaiah Raja Wodeyar appointed his son Dodda Santaiah as minister. Dodda Santaiah is stated to have commanded a small troop to Sravanabelagola on the eve of the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony to maintain the law and order at the holy center.⁴⁸ But no further details about the minister are now available. Nevertheless, it is evident that Dodda Santaiah must have taken active part in the military ventures undertaken by Raja Wodeyar to assert his independent position over the kingdom of Mysore. The king is stated to have caused the construction of the *prākāra* around the basadi on the Kanakagiri, the family deity of Dodda Santaiah and made land grants on the occasion.⁴⁹

Visalaksha Pandita

As mentioned earlier Visalaksha Pandita was the Prime minister of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar. When the king was confined at Hangala

44a. Ibid.

45. Santidhara-Santiswara basadi centenary Commemoration, Volume.

46. Ibid.

47. Bujabali Charita.

48. Ibid.

49. Rajavali.

during his younger days, he is believed to have come in close contact with Visalaksha Pandita. Having been impressed highly by the Pandita's geniuses, the king is stated to honour him with the position of Prime Minister in 1673 A.D. Thus, he was in power until 1686 A.D.⁵⁰

The Jaina families of hereditary martial class employed in the service of the king under different capacities obviously disappeared from the scene during the time of the Wodeyar's rule. It is important to note that Visalaksha Pandita, the Prime Minister of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, belonged to the family of the Jaina Brahmana sect. The Jaina Brahmanas as noted earlier are the immigrants from Tamil Nadu.⁵¹ Visalaksha Pandita was the son of Bommarasa Pandita and Gunambika.⁵²

While in power, Visalaksha Pandita caused the erection of the Mahavira Tirthankara basadi at Srirangapattana the earlier capital of the Wodeyars. Devachandra states that the new Mahavira Tirthankara basadi was built near the existing Adiswara basadi.⁵³ However, no trace of this basadi exists today. Visalaksha Pandita, like his predecessors is stated to have renovated the dilapidated basadis in the kingdom, and presented a Ratha to the Sri-Matta at Sravanabelagola.⁵⁴ The most significant part of his religious work was that he performed the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony to lord Gommata at Sravanabelagola.⁵⁵ The act of piety shown by the pandita created a deep imprint especially on the Jaina community of the time. Thus, he was bestowed with the title 'Jaina-kula-ratna-bhusana'.⁵⁶ Visalaksha Pandita is the last in the list of Jaina ministers in the history of Southern Karnataka.

Visalaksha Pandita was granted Echaganahalli, a village near Mysore by the king in recognition of his services. The charter of this grant was engraved on a stone that was placed on the four boundaries of that village. The charter also confirmed the hereditary rights of the village to Visalaksha Pandita, which enabled his sons, grand sons and descendants to enjoy the rights.⁵⁷

50. Ibid., p. 281. 343.

51. Ibid., pp. 165-165.

52. Gom Cha Ch: 6 sts: 6-8.

53. Ibid., Ch: 6. st: 19.

54. Ibid., Ch: 6 sts: 20, 24.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., Ch : 6 st: 21.

57. E.C. Vol. iii, No. 167.

Srikantha puttaiah

He was a prominent personality of the Jaina community who lived during the period covering the reign of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704) and Krishnaraja Wodeyar I. (1713-1731). He hailed from Hassan and wielded considerable influence in the royal court especially during the reign of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.⁵⁸ He is said to have been the Samgha Naika of the Jaina community probably of Hassan region. Puttaiah submitted a petition to the king at Srirangapattana when a few miscreants tried to disrupt the religious procession at Hassan. The king after inquiry is stated to have warned the miscreants against obstruction and allowed the Jains to observe the religious festivals.⁵⁹ Puttaiah is stated to have built the Manastamba in front of the Parswanatha basadi on the Chandragiri hill at Sravanabelagala.⁶⁰ He got repaired all the basadis and built a Prākāra around the basadis on the Chandragiri hill. Srikantha puttaiah is stated to have entered the monastic life during the later period of his life. He attained Samadhi Marana at Modabidere, the holy center of the Jains.⁶¹

Chidananda kavi

Munivamsabhyudaya composed by Chidananda kavi offers valuable information about the prevalence of the Jaina influence in the court of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar. The contents of this work reveal that Chidananda was not merely a literary giant of the time but also was a chief political advisor to the king. He was well-versed in the political philosophy of Somadevasuri, the author of the Nitivakyamrita.

When the Pontifical seat of Sri Jaina-matta at Sravanabelagola fell vacant on account of the death of the previous Pontiff, Chikkadeva Raja Wodeyar conferred the pontifical position to Chidananda.⁶²

Annaiah Setty

Annaiah Setty was a prominent figure among the Jaina delegates who accompanied Karanika Lingaraja to the court of Aurangzeb at Delhi, sent by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.⁶³ Later Annaiah Setty was appointed as the chief mint officer by the king in recognition of his

58. Gom cha. Ch : 6. St. 131.

59. Ibid., Ch : 6. Sts. 131-132.

60. Ibid., Ch: 6. Sts: 96-103.

61. Ibid., Ch: 6 Sts: 143-153.

62. Muni. Ch: 2. Sts: 91-100.

63. QJMS. Vol. XI. No. 2. 1921; Rajavali. pp. 183, 345, 346.

service and honesty.⁶⁴ As a mark of his honour the king Annaiah Setty built Chikkadevaraja Kalyani at Sravanabelagola. Being a pious Jaina, he utilized his wealth and position for the cause of Jainism and caused the renovation of many basadis around Mysore.⁶⁵ The king under the influence of Annaiah Setty is stated to have made the land grants to the basadi at Maleyure.⁶⁶

Kalliah Setty

He was a celebrated Jaina royal merchant who had established at Srirangapattana during the reign of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar. Devachandra, in Rajavali Kathasara credits him to have built the Silamaya Matta at Sravanabelagola.⁶⁷ However, on one occasion he appears to have incurred the displeasure of the king and Prime Minister Visalaksha Pandita. When he failed to win the confidence of the king again in utter distress, he shifted his residence to Saligrama.⁶⁸

Bilekere Santaraja Pandita

He was a prominent leader of the Jaina community who strove hard for the cause of Jainism and he belonged to the period of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. He, by convincing the British resident who had stationed at Srirangapattana got the sanction of rupees 500 for the renovation of the Adiswara basadi at Srirangapattana. The additional amount required for that purpose was raised by him from the Jaina residents of Saligrama.⁶⁹ The affinity of the residents of Saligrama to that of the Adiswara basadi at Srirangapattana is well-recognised. It is believed that the Jaina residents of Srirangapattana under unforceable circumstances unknown are believed to have had migrated to Saligrama during the period of Tippu Sultan.⁷⁰ However, the causes for such a migration is not known.

Devachandra

He was a prominent scholar of Maleyure. Gifted with unquestionable literary skill he wrote Ramakathavatara, Sumerusataka, Bhaktisara, Satakatraya, Sastrasara, Laghuvritti, Pravachanasiddhanta, Dravyasamgraha, Dvadasanupreksha,

64. Ibid., p. 283.

65. Gom cha. Ch 6, 40-68; Rajavali, pp. 283-286.

66. Rajavali, p. 286.

67. Ibid., pp. 286-345.

68. Ibid., p. 282.

69. Mackenzie's collections. -Pattanada Basadi Jirnodara.

70. Oral tradition.

Dhayanasamrajya, Adhyatmavichara and Rajavalikathasara.⁷¹ Rajavalikathasara is the most popular composition of Devachandra; and this work contains the most valuable historical materials.⁷² Devachandra is stated to have assisted Col. Mackenzie to record many prevalent oral traditions, collect inscriptions and other useful historical materials.⁷³ Col. Mackenzie visited Mysore after the fall of Tippu Sultan, to study the existing conditions in the kingdom of Mysore.⁷⁴ On recognising the rich knowledge of Devachandra he requested him to accompany him while on tour in Mysore. He even requested Devachandra to provide him with the documents of all the Jaina customs and traditions. Further more, Col. Mackenzie is stated to have even invited him to Calcutta.⁷⁵ Perhaps the survey officer intended to avail his knowledge to compile the history of the Jains under the auspices of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. However, it is apparent that Devachandra was inspired by Col. Mackenzie to write Rajavalikathasara and submitted it to Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.⁷⁶ Rajavalikathasara is a historical compendium of the Jaina Political and Socio-religious events relating to the history of Mysore up to the middle of the 19th century. The validity of this work cannot be questioned as its contents are further substantiated from the inscriptions and other literary evidences.

Sri Ksetra Sravanabelagola and the Wodeyar's

The benevolent Wodeyar rulers of Mysore extended their benefactions to the Sri Ksetra Sravanabelagola and in fact they were the chief contributors to the survival and development of the matta. The sanctity of Sravanabelagola is in fact closely related to the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony. The earliest reference to the ceremony is found in a lithical record dated 1398 A.D.⁷⁷ Another inscription dated 1500 A.D. also provides details about the payments made to different personalities on the eve of the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony.⁷⁸ On the basis of this inscription it may be stated that the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony was performed during that year, but no details are available about the ceremony performed during the early Wodeyar's period. The poet Panchabana in Bhujabali Charita refers to

71. Rajavali. Intro.

72. Ibid., p. 314.

73. Ibid., p. 315.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid., pp. 362-363.

77. EC. Vol. ii, No. 360 (Sb).

78. Ibid., No. 332.

the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony performed by Santavarni in 1614.⁷⁹ Raja Wodeyar, the king of Mysore is stated to have sent his minister Dodda Santaiah to assist the Battaraka Santavarni alias Charukeerti Panditacharya to conduct the ceremony and to maintain peace and order.⁸⁰ However, no further details are available. Ananta kavi refers to the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony performed by Vishalaksha pandita, the Jaina minister of Chikkadeveraja Wodeyar, at his expenses in 1678 A.D.⁸¹ Another was caused by one Santaiah in 1767 A.D. the ruler in power at this time was Nanjaraja Wodeyar.⁸² The ceremony was also performed during the reign of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in 1827 A.D.⁸³, Similar ceremonies were also were performed in 1857⁸⁴, 1871⁸⁵, 1887⁸⁶, 1900⁸⁷, 1925⁸⁸, 1940⁸⁹, and 1953⁹⁰. The Pontiff Kolhapur Jaina Matta met the expenses of Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony in 1857 and he is reported to have spent about 30,000 rupees for that purpose.⁹¹

The freedom struggle in 1940 in the kingdom of Mysore had become vigorous due to the wide spread activities of the Mysore Congress. Nevertheless, Charukeerti Panditacharya performed the Head anointing ceremony successfully on account of the support extended by His Highness Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

The Wodeyar rulers have spared no pains either in the excellent upkeep of the glorious Jaina antiquities at Sravanabelagola or in providing all facilities to the lacks of pilgrims who throng to that place at the time of Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony. The intimate relations between Jains and the rulers of Mysore was well-expressed by His Highness the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV of Mysore in his inaugural speech on 14th March 1925 while welcoming the all India

79. Sravanabelagola-Rajakiya Sahitya and Samskritika Mahatva, p. 327.

80. Bujabali Charita. Ch 8, Sts 66-68.

81. Gom cha. Ch; 6 Sts; 21-26.

82. Sravanabelagola-Rajakiya Sahitya Samskritika Mahatva, p. 327.

83. EC. Vol. ii. No. 223. (Sb)

84. A Report in the Harvest Field of May, 1887.

85. EC. Vol. ii. Intro. (1923); Sravanabelagola Rajakiya Sahitya Samskritika Mahatva p. 328.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., p. 328; EC. Vol. ii. Intro.

88. Sravanabelagola-Rajakiya Sahitya Samskritika Mahatva, p. 328.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. EC. Vol. II, Intro. (1923).

gathering of the Jainas to the land of Mysore. I cannot forget that this land is to them a land of pilgrimage, consecrated by some of the holiest traditions and tenders memories of their faith. This is also the holy spot sacred to the Muniswara Gommata, whom tradition represents to have been the younger brother of Bharata, the eponymous emperor of Bharatavarsha. The land of Mysore, therefore, symbolizes Gommata's spiritual empire, as Bharatavarsha stands for the empire of his brother Bharata. Jainism not only found a second birth-place and home in Mysore, but the Jainas have also contributed to Kannada literature, inspired some of the noblest masterpieces of that literature in its early history; and Jaina learned men have ever since continued to render signal service to it. What is unique in Jainism among Indian religious and philosophical systems is that it has sought emancipation in an upward movement of the spirit towards the realm of infinitude and transcendence. Jainism has sought a harmony of all religious in its Sarvadharmā and its Anekantavada.⁹²

His Highness Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar kept up the precedent of sending the palace honours on the occasion of the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony. The palace honours were sent on the occasions in 1909⁹³, 1925⁹⁴, and in 1940⁹⁵. His signature on the Chandragiri marks the visit of His Highness Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV to Sri Ksetra Sravanabelagola.⁹⁶

The practice of causing the Samgha puja by the Jaina inhabitants of various towns and cities became an integral part of the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony. Some times Samgha pujas were also performed by the pontiffs of other Jaina Mattas on behalf of the Jaina community residing in the area of their jurisdiction. Ananta Kavi in Gommateswara Charita refers to the samgha puja caused by Lakshmisena Bhattaraka of Kollapur⁹⁷, Charukeerti of Modabidre,⁹⁸ Lakshmisena of Singhanagadde⁹⁹ and Devendrakeerti of Humcha.¹⁰⁰

Obviously, Charukeerti Panditadevas are also responsible for popularizing the Bahubali cult in Karnataka. The smaller Bahubali

92. Speeches of His Highness Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur.

93. Archiveal Report-Mysore.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. EC. Vol. II. Intro. (1923).

97. Gomcha. Ch, Sts 151-152.

98. Ibid., Ch 4 ,Sts 151-152.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

Colossus at Venur in South Canara was installed at the instance of Charukeerti Panditadeva in 1664 A.D.¹⁰¹ Near Mysore at Basadi Hosakote and Bilikere exist Bahubali Colossus of 18 and 20 feet respectively.¹⁰²

The erection of the free standing Colossus and icons enshrined in the basadis project the religious feelings and popular Bahubali cult in the region of Mysore. It is apparent that the Bahubali cult became a potent factor in the Socio-religious life of the Jaina Community in the region of Mysore. This is further evidenced by a number of Stotras and Astakas composed in adoration of Bahubali. Even a great number of folk songs composed during this period in praise of Bahubali and adoring the sanctity of Sri Ksetra further substantiate the above fact. Interestingly, Charukeerti Panditacharya of Sri Matta of Sravanabelagola as the chief functionary of the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony specially commanded high respect from the Jaina laity of India.

Apprehensions on Sri Ksetra

Charukeerti Panditacharya had to vacate the pontifical seat and take shelter elsewhere due to the repeated apprehensions caused by the local administrative chieftains. One such event occurred during the reign of Chamaraja Wodeyar IV and this has been discussed earlier in this paper. The most significant outcome of this event was that both the pontiff and pontifical seat received special attention of the Wodeyar ruler who in fact considered it his primary duty to offer protection to the Sri Ksetra the great Jaina religious center. The benevolent king Chamaraja Wodeyar IV decided to call back the Panditacharya from Ballakipura with an assurance to protect the interest of the holy center and the same was entrusted to him.¹⁰³

Munivamsabhyudaya refers to one Vimalacharya alias Charukeerti Panditacharya, who faced apprehensions by the non-Jaina sectarian groups.¹⁰⁴ He, in utter distress, had to vacate Sri Ksetra and establish himself at Somawarpet.¹⁰⁵ When Vimalacharya died Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar conferred the pontifical seat to Chidananda kavi.¹⁰⁶ He as

101. EI. Vol. vii.

102. Jainism and Karnataka Culture, pp. 159-167.

103. EC. Vol. II. No. 352. (Sb); Muni. Ch. II Sts 19-21.

104. Ibid., Ch. II. Sts 58-66.

105. Ibid., St 89.

106. Ibid., Sts. 91-92.

noted earlier was an influential personality in the court of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar and was well-versed in Jaina philosophy.

Abbe J.A. Dubois, a Christian missionary who visited Mysore after the fall of Tippu Sultan also provides a vivid picture of the conditions that prevailed at Sravanabelagola on the eve of his visit. He states : The Europeans frequently visited Sravanabelagola. It was a great source of grief to the devotees of the sect to see this Punyastala defiled by a crowd of unbelieving visitors. And what was still worse, this inquisitive foreigner were often accompanied by their dogs and pariah servants. In one resting place they would cook a stew, in another they would roast a piece of beef under the very nose, as it were, of the idol, whose sense of smell, the Jains thought, was infinitely disgusted by the smoke of this abominable style of cooking. At last the guru attached to the temple, shocked at all this desecration fled from the unhallowed spot, and retired to some solitary place on the Malabar Coast. After three years of this voluntary exile, he returned to his former abode on the assurance that Europeans had ceased to visit the place, and the temple had been thoroughly purified.¹⁰⁷

From the trend of events mentioned above it seems almost certain that Sri Ksetra had to struggle constantly for its existence. The observation made by Abbe J.A. Dubois also substantiates the critical conditions and humiliation suffered by the Pontiff at that time. However, the above developments should not come in the way of making a real assessment of the appellations given by the rulers for the protection and functioning of the Pontiff and the Pontifical center. At the outset, the Wodeyars' were the chief contributors to the survival and the development of the Sri Matta. It may also be noted that it was on account of the peace and order established at the holy center that the Jains were able to continue their religious activities. The Wodeyars even exercised their right to nominate the Pontiff whenever disputes arose among the leaders of the Community over the choice of a new pontiff.¹⁰⁸ As noted above, initially this right was exercised explicitly by Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar, when he nominated Chidananda Kavi as the Pontiff of Sri- Matta.¹⁰⁹ The king exercised this power not because he wanted to become the ecclesiastical head or demonstrate the supremacy of the royal authority over the spiritual power but to maintain the Socio-religious solidarity. The Pontiff and the elite members of the Jaina community played a significant role as the

107. Abbe. J.A. Dubois. Op.cit., p. 700.

108. Muni Ch. II. Sts. 38-66.

109. Socio-religious life of the Jainas under the Wodeyars of Mysore.

upholders of the cultural and religious interest of the Jaina community and they could do this due to their amicable relationship with the rulers.

Developmental programme of Sri Ksetra and the Wodeyars

Sri Ksetra that was functioning in full swing during the time of Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617) suffered a sudden setback within a short period. Sparing references found in the sources provide an idea with regard to the developmental work undertaken to improve the conditions of the holy center and the personal involvement of the Wodeyar's in it. Inscription on the Indragiri hill at Sravanabelagola dated 1632 A.D. throws light on the dilapidated financial position of the Jaina Matta and the subsequent grants of villages made by Chamaraja Wodeyar IV (1617-1637) to improve the economic condition of Sri Matta.¹¹⁰

Dodda Devaraja Wodeyar (1659-1672) renewed all kinds of grants made by his predecessors. The benevolent king also made grant of money and donated the village called Madane for the upkeep of the holy center.¹¹¹

Jainism made a deep impression on Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar particularly during the early part of his reign. Before ascending the throne, during the reign of his predecessor, he paid a visit to Sravanabelagola, and made gifts to provide for the daily distribution of food to the acharyas.¹¹² Under his rule, Annaiah, son of Javanasettya, was the officer in charge of the mint and treasury.¹¹³ It is stated that he performed his duties conscientiously and was favoured by his master. He constructed a pond at Sravanabelagola in between the two hills- Indragiri and Chandragiri. This Kalyani was also further beautified by him with additional towers and Prākāra around it. It was dedicated to the ruler and was named after Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar.¹¹⁴

Dodda Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1713-1731) took steps to provide the necessary support to meet the requirements of the holy center. He granted many villages like—Aranahalli, Hosahalli, Uttanahalli, Jinnanahalli, Rachanahalli, Vastigrama, Kabbalu etc., as

110. EC. Vol. II. No. 352. (Sb).

111. Stala Purana published in Indian Antiquary 1873, p. 132.

112. EC. Vol. V., No. 275. (Cn); It is doubtful whether this grant was made by him. or by his predecessor Doddadevaraja.

113. Rajavali, p. 286.

114. EC. Vol. II, Nos. 351, 501. (Sb).

Sarvamanya.¹¹⁵ These villages were granted so as to enable the Bhattaraka to conduct religious festivals and also, for the daily worship of Gommata.¹¹⁶ The village of Kaballe specially was granted for maintaining the Danashale situated near Chikkadevaraja Kalyani.¹¹⁷

Krishnaraja Wodeyar III issued Sannads confirming the formal grants of villages made by his predecessor Dodda Krishnaraja Wodeyar I (1713-1731).¹¹⁸ These grants were renewed by Dewan Pornaiah when Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was a minor on the personal application made by Kumara Heggde of Dharmastala.¹¹⁹ He is stated to have come down to Mysore to show the original of the Sannad formerly issued by Krishnaraja Wodeyar I.¹²⁰ The original Sannad confirmed the grant of village Kabbalu for the maintenance of the Matta as well as other charitable purpose.¹²¹

The king issued himself another Sannad in 1830. The regency of Dewan Pornaiah had come to an end by then and Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was exercising his independent power with the help of British resident.¹²² This Sannad confirmed the grant of villages mentioned above for the repairs and other expenses of basadis at Sravanabelagola.¹²³ The Sannad also provided the list of basadis numbering 32 of which eight were situated on the Indragiri hill; sixteen on the small hill and eight in the village. In addition, the Sannad also refers to one more basadi on the Kanakagiri hill. From the prasasti of the pontiff it is obvious that Charukeerti Panditacharya of Sri Matta was also the acting chief of Maleyure Akalanka Matta.¹²⁴

Santaraja pandita, the author of Sarasajana Chintamani states that the measurement of the colossus of Lord Gommata was taken up by him on the order issued by the king Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.¹²⁵ The king is stated to have issued the order to this effect on the eve of Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony performed in the year 1828. The height as reported by the poet is 54 feet and 3 inches.¹²⁶ However, in

115. Ibid., Intro List of villages.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

119. G. Brahmappa, op.cit., Nos. (485a) (485b).

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Ibid., MAR. 1908-1909.

125. EC. Vol. I, intro (1923).

126. Ibid.

recent years the department of archaeology has announced 58 feet as the correct measurement of the Colossus.

Architectural developments

There was a phenomenal decline in the building activities relating to basadis and Manastambas after 1600 A.D. The reason for this may be ascribed to the important changes in the political and economic position of the Jaina Community, whose influence steadily declined. High level martial class and mercantile classes had disappeared from the scene; the number of Jaina Mattas also had declined, over and above, neither the Battarakas nor the acharyas were able to exert any influence on the rulers.

It should be noted that most of the existing Jaina basadis in the region of Mysore are those, which were built during the hey days of Jainism and only a few of them, may be ascribed to the period after 1600 A.D.

Mahavira basadi, according to Devachandra, was built during the reign of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar by his Prime Minister Vishalaksha Pandita at Srirangapattana, the capital city of the Wodeyars.¹²⁷ This basadi is stated to have survived for nearly one hundred years.¹²⁸ But no traces of it exist today.

Anantakavi, the author of Gommateswara Charita, refers to the Brahmastambha built on the Chandragiri hill at Sravanabelagola by a leading merchant of Hassan during the reign of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar along with an enclosing wall around the basadis area.¹²⁹ The Brahmastambha contains a seated figure Yakshi Padmavati, Kushmandini and Yaksha Brahmadeva on the four sides of the pillars. The figures of Yaksha and Yakshi symbolize that the Ksetra was guarded by the protector God and Goddesses of the Jaina mythology while setting the stambha it is believed that molten lead was poured into the plinth area so as to fix it firmly. This is indeed the unique achievement of Puttaih of Hassan.¹³⁰

Channanna basadi is situated to the west of the Tyagada Brahmadeva pillar on the Indragiri. It is a simple structure and was built by Channanna, a prominent sravaka of Narasihmapura in 1673

127. Rajavali, p. 340.

128. Socio-religious life of the Jains under the Wodeyars of Mysore.

129. Gomcha. Ch 6. Sts 99-100; EC. Vol. II. Intro. (1923).

130. Ibid.

A.D.¹³¹ On the two pillars of the Mukha Mantapa of the basadi there are two figures a male and a female with folded hands. These figures apparently represent Channanna and his wife. Channanna also built a pillared Mantapa near the basadi. An inscription engraved near the Mantapa states that Channanna consecrated the image of Adiswara Tirthankara.¹³² However, the image of Chandraprabha Tirthankara which is there at present only suggests that it is due to some reason, which is unknown, the original image has been replaced by the present image.¹³³ The Chaturvimsati Tirthankara basadi on the Indragiri is only a small structure. A Marwadi inscription found here state that the images of 24 Tirthankaras were set up in 1648 by Charukeerti Panditacharya and other Sravakas.¹³⁴

The Brahmadeva basadi is a small shrine at the foot of Indragiri. One Rangaiah and his younger brother Giri Gowda of Hirisave erected this in about 1679.¹³⁵ This basadi has an upper storey wherein which the image of Parswanatha Tirthankara is installed. J.K.D. Padmarajaiah of Sravanabelagola built this portion of the basadi according to the sources in 1896.¹³⁶

Santiswara basadi at Mysore that is stated to have been the ancient one, and it existed inside the palace complex near the Darbar Hall, close to the Krishna temple.¹³⁷ However, on account of an accidental fire a major portion of the front view of the basadi was damaged.¹³⁸ After this event, the high level advisors to His Highness Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV seemed to have decided to remove the remaining structure of the basadi from its original place. A new site outside the palace complex was granted for its reconstruction at Mysore. The consecration ceremony of the new basadi was held in the year 1897.¹³⁹ The palace honours according to the tradition were presented during the occasion His Highness the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV also attended the consecration ceremony.

Sakkare Setty built the Vimalanatha Tirthankara basadi at Bellure during the reign of Dodda Devaraja in 1680 A.D.¹⁴⁰

131. EC. Vol. II. Nos. 424-429; 507-516.

132. Ibid. No. 422.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid. No. 422.

135. Ibid., No. 439.

136. Ibid., Davalashree Vol. No.

137. Santidhara, Santishwara basadi Centenary Commemoration Volume.

138. Ibid.

139. Ibid.

140. EC. Vol. VII. No. 94.

The Anantanatha basadi at Saligrama was rebuilt by Veerappa and his brother Timmappa in 1872 A.D.¹⁴¹ An inscription, on the pedestal of the image of Anantanatha Tirthankara, assigns the antiquity of the image of twelfth century A.D.¹⁴² Hosa basadi, Nemiswar basadi, Parswanatha basadi and Chaturtha basadi—all these seem to have been built during the later years of the 19th century.

Socio-Religious practices of the Jains as observed by European travellers

It is due to fundamental doctrinal differences, the Jainas and other Hindu communities almost lived apart; and they hardly mixed with each other in relation to socio-religious ceremonies. This was noticed by Abbe. J.A. Dubbe, during his travels in Mysore. He observes :

The Jains form perfectly a distinct class. Brahmins never attended any of their religious or civil ceremonies, while Jains on their part never attended those of the Brahmins. They have their own temples, and men professing the same tenets as themselves fill the priestly office.¹⁴³

It is apparent that, in addition to their own festivals, the Jains also observed other great festivals like Ugadi, Sankranti, Mahanavami and Gouri etc., as they constituted either regional or seasonal festivals. However, while doing so the cultural system is being Jainised with in the well-established Socio-religious structure.

Col. Mackenzie who studied the distinctive aspects of Jaina religious life, observes :

Ram is never represented by an idol in a basadi; although he is acknowledged to be a Siddha; and although Ganesha and Hanuman are acknowledged to be devas these favourites of the followers of the Vedas have no image in the temples of the Arhants.¹⁴⁴

Francis Buchanon, the survey officer, who visited Mysore after the fall of Tippu Sultan ridicules the poor awareness of the Jains regarding the richness of their culture and antiquity. He reports that they were not qualified to give any satisfactory information concerning the origin of their order or the means by which it came to prevail over other.¹⁴⁵

141. Ibid., Vol. Nos. 58-60.

142. Ibid., No. 63.

143. Abbe J.A. Dubois, op.cit., p. 699.

144. Accounts of the Jains, Vol. IX, p. 286.

145. Buchanon, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 142.

Francis Buchanon also reportes about strong oral traditions that were narrated to him by the followers of the Jaina religion when he came in contact with them at different places in the kingdom of Mysore during his travels. Such oral traditions are mainly connected with the prosperous period of Jainism in Southern Karnataka; and its subsequent decline after the advent of Sri Vaishnavism; and the conversion of Bittideva the Hoysala king from Jainism to Sri Vaishnavism, at the instance of Sri Ramanujacharya.¹⁴⁶

Social Structure

Jainism as a religion is not interwoven with the complex features of caste hierarchy though segmentation among the Jains obviously exists. The Purohita (Brahmanas), Bogara Panchama and Chaturtha are the main sub-divisions, which prevail in this region. However, the European travellers have also made references to the existence of some minor sects.

Francis Buchanon and Col. Mackenzie, refer to the existence of some Jaina sects like Jaina Banajiga, Jaina Sadaru, and Jaina Komattis. In addition, other sects like Jaina Arasu, Jaina Chippiga, and Jaina Gowda are also reported, in the literary sources, to have existed in considerable number during this period.

In the census report of 1901, the Sadars have been included among the Jains.¹⁴⁷ This caste is stated to have originally been the Jains, but later on a few of them embraced Vaishnavism. This caste, which was originally a homogenous one, was split up into three sects, namely Lingayat Sadar, Jaina Sadar and non-Ligaya Sadar.¹⁴⁸ The Jaina Sadars were a thriving sect in the kingdom of Mysore.

Francis Buchanon refers to three categories of Banajigas namely the Panchama, the Jaina and Telinga Banajinga.¹⁴⁹ Many of the Jains were converted to Veerasaivism during the time of Basaveswara. Their descendents during the later years are stated to have formed a separate group called Jaina Banajiga.¹⁵⁰

Col. Mackenzie, refers to a Jaina sect called Seelavanta Banajiga. He states that they observed strictly the Jaina social practices like

146. Ibid., p. 96.

147. Census report, 1901.

148. The Mysore Tribes and Castes. Vol. IV, p. 527.

149. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 123-124; Buchanon, op.cit., pp. 256 off.

150. Ibid.

Hosavrata. It is stated that they did not even interline with the other Banajigas.¹⁵¹

Among the Arasu community especially those who resided at Bilikere, Halebeedu Satyamangala and Hosakote were called Jaina Arasu.¹⁵² The Bilikere Arasu family is stated to have caused the erection of the colossus Bahubali at Gommatagiri near Mysore.¹⁵³ The descendents of the Changalva ruler, Mangarasa who ruled from Kallhalli, also belonged to the Jaina Arasu sect.¹⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that until the beginning of this century, the Jaina influence obviously prevailed in the family of Devaraja Arasu, the former Chief Minister of Karnataka.¹⁵⁵

It is important to note that many Gowda families in the Shimoga region are still in possession of the images of Tirthankaras. In the annual Paksha ceremony which is widely practised in that region, the custom of keeping the Jaina Yade is still in vogue. The Jaina Gowdas and Jaina Chippigas who were completely eliminated from the Jaina social groups have been now initiated into Jainism.

The Jaina Kommatis are called so on account of their devotion to Gommatadeva. The Jaina Kommatis claim their descent to a mythological hero Kubera.¹⁵⁶

It should also be noted that among the Panchamas of Saligrama a few are identified as Hastantaras. Among them a group is stated to have been the descendants of the Jains who migrated from Sri Rangapattana along with Kallaiah Setty, a royal merchant to whom reference has been made earlier while the others are those who migrated during the time of Tippu Sultan from Ganjam. As the members of this group in general were engaged in high level mercantile activities, they appeared to have kept themselves at a distance from the other Jaina residents who mostly formed the Chaturtha sect.

The Jaina Brahmanas of Mysore are said to have been the immigrants from Tamil Nadu to Karnataka. It was during the Wodeyar's

151. Mackenzie's collection. Local Records, No. 24.

152. Socio-religious life of the Jains under the Wodeyars of Mysore.

153. Ibid.

154. Ibid.

155. Jaina Sahitya Sammelana Patrike. ed. P. Nagarajaiah.

156. Jainism in South India and Jaina Epigraphs, p. 14.

157. Socio-religious life of the Jainas under the Wodeyar's of Mysore.

158. Rajavali. pp. 316-367.

rule that they established themselves in large numbers in and around Mysore. They were employed in the royal service as ministers, Vaidyas, Panditas and Astrologers etc. Many among this class, specially lived at Arikutara (Chamaraja Nagar), Yalandore, Srirangapattana, Kelasuru, Piriyaipattana and Umatturu Vishalaksha Pandita as noted earlier was the Prime Minister of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar. Abb. J.A. Dubois who was interested in exploring their relationships towards the other Jaina sects during his time notices that the Jaina Brahmanas were isolated by the other Jaina sects.

This has been by no means either a comprehensive or an exhaustive study of Jainism during the Wodeyar's of Mysore. Amidst many great upheavals, and against great odds, the Community could manage to sustain itself on account of the patronage extended by the benevolent rulers. Sravanabelagola continued to be the great spiritual center and it attracted the votaries from all over the country. The interest of this holy center was safe guarded by the rulers. The patronage that Jainas received under the successive rulers of Mysore as well as the historical role it played in developing the Karnataka culture, accounts for its permanent hold in Karnataka.

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WORSHIPPING A SYMBOL—MY VIEW POINT

LALIT KUMAR NAHATA

For any one striving for a spiritual world idol worship is the first and the foremost step—concentrate on the Lord in some form and direct your spiritual energies on to that form or object. That is where idol worship assumes significance. In the initial stages of a human's spiritual evolution, the striver needs a tool, a medium to cling to. When an evolved soul reaches the top rung of spiritual awareness, such a soul may not need these crutches or tools; but even such realized souls will never discount the importance of such medium for the evolving humans. In this context, one remembers what Swami Vivekanand said during his discourse in Chicago in USA on the 19th September, 1893 before the World Religious Conference "Childhood gives birth to youth etc." So, should we assume that an old man will be justified in calling his childhood and youth days as useless or a wicked phase of his life? Not at all ! One never becomes old without having been a child or youth.

Idol worship has been there down the ages because this comes naturally to a human being. Unless you imagine the thing to be venerated in the form of a certain object/idol it is as difficult to concentrate spiritually on that thing as it is life without breathing.

Idol worship is not something to be despised; on the other hand, it is a very essential medium or aid for the evolving soul to climb up the spiritual ladder. How far one is justified in despising idolatory worship when such a worship enables the devotee to experience higher spiritual solace? Even the evolved souls cannot question the efficiency of such a medium.

According to his or her faith everyone directly or indirectly does 'Idol worship'. Even a follower of Islam while doing 'Namaz' (praying), subconsciously assumes that he/she is standing in the Kaba (Mosque at Mecca) and positions himself/herself in the direction where the above Mosque is situated. Such a Mosque is also a symbol of a religious place for them. For the Christians the Church is a symbol of their holy place. The Protestants among the Christians respect the symbol + (cross) as much as the Catholics worship the idols of 'Mother Mary &

infant Jesus'. The Gurudwaras are the symbol of a holy place for the Sikhs where they worship the 'Adi Granth' as a symbol. If all these are not 'Idol worship', what are they? Every faith has its objects of veneration and the followers do 'Idol worship' in one form or the other. "An idol or symbol is lifeless and therefore no education is imparted by it" say the condemners of faith. Yes, an idol, by itself, may be lifeless, but the divine power of the facial expressions which are animate and are passed on to the devotees are very much there to be felt by such a worshipper. When the devotees pray to the idol they are not praying to the lifeless stone or sculpture but to the inherent power their mind invests with the idol. They are unknowingly guided by this latent power. The idol, on its own, does not guide the devotee, but the devotee has to draw guidance from it. The idol is like a milestone in the spiritual journey. The milestone is a dumb stone on the road, but the travelers by noticing the milestone know their position and proceed correctly on the path further. The idol of the Lord to a devotee, sends out similar signals in the path of spiritual realisation. Through this medium of idol worship, a devotee can one day attain spiritual realisation! Whether animate or inanimate everything has its own importance. Without the soul even the human body is inanimate and without a body the soul also cannot attain salvation! In this way even the epic religious scriptures adorning the various libraries are lifeless; but don't they guide a seeker on the right path?

Through these aids, the devotee brings before his mind's eye, as if on a mirror, the grand personality of the divine being and aims to merge his 'Atman' (soul) with that 'Parmatman' (supreme soul)! Does it not make sense then that idol worship is a powerful medium to attain the supreme spiritual Bliss? In prayer while idol worship has its symbolic importance, the importance of the visual impact of the idol on the devotee cannot be discounted. What you learn by actually seeing cannot be taught by any number of scriptures/sacred books. There are always conflicting literatures ever confusing a reader. But a visual object is free from controversies and misunderstandings. By seeing an object with our own eyes we get to know the details about the particular object but we cannot understand the same by reading a thousand words about it. What you feel with your organs whether by seeing, hearing, smelling, touching or tasting is always better than just the theoretical study of many years. A devotee gets immense inner pleasure by just looking at the idol of his or her beloved God, and this is no less than any other pleasure. The same idol helps the beginner in spiritual quest to transcend slowly different levels of spiritual awareness till one reaches a stage spiritually when one does not require any external aids to attain spiritual salvation!

Just by seeing a picture, in a fleeting second, one's ideas/conceptions undergo a see-saw change. For example, when one looks at the picture of a venerable personality immense respect wells in one's mind; when one looks at the picture of one's ancestors a feeling of pride is born; when one sees the picture of a warrior, one's innate martial instincts awaken; and when one espies a frame containing a child's picture, love and affection rules one's heart at that moment. Similarly when one confronts the picture of a miscreant or an enemy a feeling of hatred and retribution arises in the mind. When one is subjected to such varying moods by seeing just pictures, who can deny that when one has the 'sight' of one's beloved deity even in the form of an idol his or her mind gets filled with a deep spiritual awareness and a sense of abject obeisance to the Almighty Lord !

When one stands before the Lord's idol, one is filled with reverence, one becomes humble and is overwhelmed by a sense of abject surrender to Him. That intellectual philosopher Shri Rajneesh (Osho) has aptly said, "When you bow at the feet of the Lord in a temple it is not the point whether the feet are of the Lord but, whether the head that bows is bowing before the God or not ! The feet are only symbolic. They only serve the purpose of making you bow your head before the Lord.

According to revered Swami Shivananda Saraswati, even the science of Psychology admits that through idol worship, the power of concentration of the mind is easily obtained : For beginners in spiritual quest, idol worship is very much a needed medium to stabilise the mind on one point which is indeed difficult. For devotion one needs some aid, that is external worship. The seeker concentrates on the form of God as seen in the idol and slowly the devotee turns inwards and starts realising the Eternal Bliss that Lord is, and at the same time starts realising his/her own self ! He/she starts slowly realising that his/her own soul is but an aspect of the all-pervading Supreme Spirit. In this way, idol worship is of great merit !

For a soldier the flag is everything. He cannot tolerate an insult to his flag. For its sake, he is prepared to sacrifice his all, including his own life. A devotee's attachment to the idol also something on these lines !

Some people aver that the Supreme Spirit is all pervading, formless and indescribable. If so, how can you confine him in an idol? Ok, But do these people, knowing the Lord as all pervading respect Him that way? How one can aver/worship the formless, when one does not pay obeisance to the visible object/idol. Actually these people, filled with

self-egotism, do not even bow before the idol of the Lord, let alone remembering Him in his all-pervasive form! God save these people !

If one remembers the devotion of God by simply remembering his name or his great qualities or by hearing of his spotless character, or by following his commands, one can devote himself/herself similarly to the great soul by standing in obeisance before his idol, statue or picture ! If this fact is not admitted; then one's devotion towards the great soul is incomplete !

If devotion swells out of just remembering the name of God, how can one ignore worship by way of obeisance before an idol? A name is not based on the qualities of anyone but on the form of that someone. If a name was given to God just on their qualities/attainment there would be no reason to call them by different names. In spite of the same qualities the body structures of the God being different the necessity of giving different names is there. When only by chanting the name of a particular figure of the God can give fruitful results then why not by worshipping the figure? This is nothing but sheer foolishness. If only by taking the name of the Lord gives us prosperity then by praying to the idol of the Lord will be more prosperous. There would be no two opinions about this for any intelligent person. Without name and form to pray unto a formless object and to imbibe its qualities is indeed very difficult for a devotee.

For example a Muslim devotee does not straightaway believe in idol worship, but actually, instead of a small idol, what occupies their mind at the time of devotion, is the full premises of the mosque and each and every part. An idol hating Muslim worships every brick of the mosque as pure and for defending the premises, they are even prepared to sacrifice their life. They do not believe in idols but they are prepared to sacrifice themselves or take the life of somebody else for the sake of the Mosque. Disrespect to a mosque is something that a Muslim can never tolerate ! Is this not a type of idol worship?

Like a Muslim, who does not believe in idol worship, but still has some form imbibed in his heart, similarly, a Protestant, an Arya Samaji, Kabir Panthi, Nanak Panthi, 'Bayees' Panthi, Terah Panthi also cannot ignore the disrespect of objects that they revere. They cannot tolerate any disrespect to a picture or a statue or an image that they revere.

When an idol worshipper or one who is opposed to idol worship is equally pained when disrespect is shown to the objects that they revere, is it not sheer foolishness to argue whether idol worship is needed or

not ! These arguments emanate out of lack of appreciation of what actually occurs at the ground level in the path of devotion of different sects !

Yogi Saint Chetananand brings out beautifully the efficacy of idol worship by illustrating this example which is as follows : To think of God in a 'formless' manner is like comprehending fire without its form. Fire is everywhere, it is in the wood, the grass, the stone or the match stick. But, it is not visible unless the above objects are put to an impact. When these objects are subjected to impact, flames of fire sprouts out and then it is put to use. Therefore, when fire turns from 'formless' to 'form', its use is felt. This 'form' is what 'idol' worship is all about.

Guru (teacher) Dronacharya did not teach the art of bow & arrow fighting to Eklavya, because he was a 'Bhil' (untouchable) by caste. But Eklavya made a 'Murti' (statue) of the Guru (teacher) by mud and paying obeisance to that 'Murti' (statue) he learnt the 'Dhanurvedhya' (archery) to such an extent that even the great archer Arjuna was wonderstruck at his competence in this art ! If it is so, how far is it correct to say that praying before the idol of the Lord is not blissful?

Without 'idol' worship, worshipping seems to be aimless, it seems as if one is aiming an arrow aimlessly without an object to hit. An archer finds it futile to fire his arrow unless there is an object to be aimed at. Prithviraj was blind, though he was able to hit any object through the medium of hearing ! Here he used his hearing faculty to achieve his objective. Similarly, a devotee also has to depend on a medium to achieve one's goal. It is another thing that once one realizes the supreme Bliss, one does not have the necessity for a medium, but that does not mean that one did not need the medium at any stage or at the very beginning.

This point can well be illustrated by the following example : I am a devotee and I want to undertake a pilgrimage trip from Delhi to the holy 'SHRI SAMMETSHIKHAR'. To reach the above pilgrim centre, I have to use the rail or road way. Once I reach the centre, I get off the train and I don't need its services any more. Nobody can logically question me as to why I needed the services of the train at all in the first instance if I were to dispense with the same later. If that be so, I would not have left Delhi, let alone reaching the pilgrim centre ! Similarly for merging the 'Soul' with the supreme spirit the devotee has to have a symbol before him/her to concentrate on the supreme power. That is where the importance of idol worship lies. Once the

soul has realised itself, it doesn't need any external aids of devotion. But then, to reach such a stage, one needs a medium !

The revered Panyās Pravar Jain Muni (Saint) Shri Bhadrakar Vijayji aptly remarked;

"In the absence of an aid, the devotion of a devotee is like the construction of a building without a 'plan'. A plan (Blueprint) is very much necessary before one undertakes construction of a building. By consulting the plan at every stage, the workers are able to complete the construction of the building. They have to keep the plan all the time in front of them till the construction is over. Similarly, a devotee also has to have a certain medium which will enable him/her to concentrate and ultimately attain the Supreme Bliss of oneness with the Supreme Spirit. Once this stage is attained, he/she does not anymore have the need for the medium, just as a contractor does not have the need for the plan once the building is constructed and completed fully."

Some opponents of idol worship say that the idols are after all stones and what is the difference between idols and ordinary stones? This is a sheer foolish argument. For example, is there not a difference between a plain unwritten paper and a paper on which a picture is drawn or say a currency note ? Anybody can trample upon a plain paper under his/her feet, but will one do so on a paper on which the picture of someone he/she reveres, is drawn or on a currency note ? A money cheque is of no value, without the account-holder's signature, once it is signed its value is immeasurable. Similar is the difference between a plain stone and an idol. Once the idol is consecrated it becomes an object of worship & reverence just as a cheque becomes valuable after a signature ! (Conditionally if there is a bank balance). If simply by writing on a piece of paper its value increases drastically then why should not the importance of a stone should increase after an idol is made out of it ?

The idol worship baiters see the idols as mere stones. I wrote once to a leader of a sect who does not believe in idol worship, that he should not see the idols as stones but should respect the divine personalities that these idols represent. If we accept the idol of the Lord it may sound wrong but then how is it wrong to accept the Lord's idol as an idol of the Lord ? The idol worshipper also while praying in front of the idols experience the presence of the Almighty through the medium. Religion is based on faith. By praying to the idol of the Lord with this faith in mind that we are praying to the Lord himself will necessarily be fruitful.

Imagine, you see a stone lying in the work place of a sculptor. You just don't feel anything about it. But you order the sculptor to sculpt an idol out of this stone of your ancestors or your deity in whom you have faith; and after some time when you visit the sculptor's work place, you find the idol you wanted instead of the bare stone. What happens to you? A feeling of affection and reverence wells in your heart towards the idol. You don't see it any more as a stone, but you take the idol as your very own ancestors or deity. That is the significance of idol worship!

It is a matter of deep consideration and research to find out as to in what circumstances idol worship came to be denounced? What is the basis for opposing idol worship? Even those who oppose idol worship can think in this matter deeply and dispassionately. Is it what they oppose actually idol worship or the tradition and method of idol worship? Do they oppose the ostentation that has come to be associated with idol worship or the blind faith that idol worship inculcates in a devotee? Or particularly in India when the Mughals destroyed the temples and the idols in them, a sect of devotees decided that there was no need for construction of new idols or temples for purpose of worship. This very sect in course of time, might have started to oppose idol worship! May be, people, out of fear of the Mughals stopped going to temples or worshipping the idols or in order to flatter the Mughals, started telling that idol worship **was wrong** ! The reason to oppose idol worship can also be that some people in order to give themselves an identity in society, started preaching a new sect of rules that was totally in contrast to the traditional ones !

Whatever be the fact it cannot be denied that opposition to idol worship took roots in India only on the advent of the Mughals. Any change taking place in the psyche of a society has a deep-rooted basis in the circumstances obtaining at that point of time, and it is the Mughals who are responsible for the opposition to idol worship.

Whenever arguments are bandied in this matter, those opposed to idol worship question as to when, where & why idol worship started and what is the proof thereof ? They never want to find out when the actual opposition to idol worship started ? You find in this essay the reason as to why idol worship is necessary—but to find out when exactly, this form of idol worship started is as difficult as, say, to try to find out who is the first ancestor who started your lineage ! whereas, on the other hand, proof exists as to from when opposition to idol worship started. Research also is possible as to why idol worship came to be opposed ? Those opposing idol worship instead of trying to decry

this form of worship should actually look into themselves to find out whether, what they are doing is right and whether their opposition to idol worship is justified or they have been taken for a ride by the rank agnostics such as the Mughals ! They should free themselves from set ideas and fanatic ideologies and come to grip with the reality !

My humble request to all the learned is "Free yourselves from dogmas and find out when, why and where this opposition to idol worship started in India and other parts of the world and surely, a convergence of views in this matter can in due course, be established in the general interest of the praying public of this great Universe !"

(As translated by P. Raghunathan and Asha Nahta).

THE GAṄGA MONARCHY AND JAINISM

PROF. NAGARAJAIAH HAMPA

The Mauryas had paved and prepared a conducive infrastructure for a smooth sailing of Jaina faith. Their successors, the Sātavāhanas *olim* Āndhras reigned with glory till about third cent. C.E. Sātavāhana Simukha (C. 1st cent. B.C.) was a follower of Jaina faith. The system of matriarchy followed in the Jaina community in South Kanara region can be traced back to the influence of the Sātavāhanas. Thus, a Jaina basement was made available for the Gaṅgas, to encash and enlarge, by their predecessors, the Mauryas and the Sātavāhanas. Whether the Gaṅgas were an offshoot of the Sātavāhanas, needs further investigation. (Gaṅga) Pērūr, believed to be the place of their ancestors and origin, in Andhradēsa, puts an extra stich into the theory. Albeit, that the Gaṅgas took models from Andhras *olim* Sātavāhanas can not be denied. However, the Gaṅgas were an indigenous race like the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, the Hoysaḷas and the Seuṇas. They had a Jaina legacy handed down from the Mauryas and Sātavāhanas, which the Gaṅgas promptly transmitted to the Kadambas, the Cālukyās and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. Koṅgaṇivarma, Koṅgāḷva, Koṅguvēḷir and other similar nomen suggest that Koṅga and Gaṅga are cognates. Since the initial letter in the word is always pronounced as a voiceless consonant 'k' - in Tamil, it is but natural that the word Gaṅga is pronounced as Koṅga or Koṅgu, and Gaṅganāḍu as Koṅgu-nāḍu. Inscriptions of Koṅgu country (nāḍu) demonstrate the influence of Jaina faith.

Of the ruling houses of Jaina involvement in Karnāṭaka, the most striking are the Gaṅgas and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, two coeval dynasties. Particularly the Gaṅgas, who ruled from 3rd to 12th century C.E. proposed and flourished through Simhanandī, a Jaina sage and promoter of the Gaṅgas. A dynasty which owed its origin to the timely help of Jaina ascetic should be staunch supporter to that creed is but natural.

The Gaṅgas played a dominant role in the socio-cultural milieu of Karnāṭaka and left an indelible mark on the life and thought of the people in Karnāṭaka. The unmatched patronage extended to Jainism by them is apparent from their lithic and copperplate records. Some of the Gaṅga monarchs went so far as to take the vows and to meet their deaths by the rite of *sallekhanā*. Most of them engaged in extensive temple building activity.

The Gaṅgas, along with the Kadambas of Banavāsi, were the earliest known dynasties to build several celebrated *basadis*, mentioned in inscriptions. They first constructed the *āyatana*s of wood, mud, bricks and finally of stone. Kongaṇivarma Mādhava (C.E. 350-75) had found a small kingdom of his own and commissioned a *caityālaya* in wood on the hillock near Shimoga, which in course of time was renovated and rebuilt in stone.

The earliest brick temples founded by the Gaṅgas were at Perboḷal, Uranūr, Noṇamaṅgala and Pērūr (Kolar Dt) in fourth century. Mādhavavarma-III (C. 440-69 C.E.) on the advice of his preceptor Viradeva, proficient in Jaina doctrine, granted wet-land under the big tank, a garden and the village Kumārapura to the *basadi* at Perboḷal, free of all imposts. This temple was in the fold of the Mūla-sangha abbatial monks.

There were two Jaina shrines at Uranūr, constructed in 4th cent. C.E., by the followers of Candranandi, a local pontiff. Evāni Aḍigaḷ had built one temple. King Avinita made a great of village Cennalkarani, 1/4 of *Kārṣāpaṇa* and customs duty of the place. These *Jinālayas* were attached to the diocese of Noṇamangala *olīm* Jayamangala Jaina monastery.

The Gaṅga kings continued to be bulwarks of Nirgrantha creed and obviously Jainism gathered momentum. Simhavarma's 22nd regional year is equated with Śaka 380 (C.E. 458) in the *Lōkavibhāga*, a Nirgrantha surrogate canonical text of the monk Sarvanandi (C.E. 458). Nandavva, the king's favourite courtesan, had spiritual insight and unequivocal faith in the teachings of Jina. She also commissioned a Jaina temple at Pērūr. She purchased an estate garden and entrusted it, free of all hindrances to the above *basadi*. Simhavarmarāja, aparamour of Nandavva, to mark the auspicious occasion of his 18th victorious year, granted wet-land under the tank at Pērūr to the *basadi*.

On the advice of his friar Vijayakīrti, king Avinīta made a grant of wet-land and a dwelling to the *Arhadāyatana*, built by the mother of Simhaviṣṇu, a Pallava king commissioned the *basadi* for the prosperity of her husband Simhavarmarman-II (C.E. 436-60) and for the augmentation of her own merit.

Avinīta (469-529) endowed the village Badanaguppe and other gifts to the illustrious Śrīvijaya Jinālaya. The donee was Candanandibhaṭāra, a pupil of Guṇanandibhaṭāra of Koṇḍakunda *anvaya*. A charter describes Avinīta Gaṅga as bearing the foot-point of the supreme Jina fixed as a rock of mount Mēru on his heart. During his reign, the influence of Jainism in the Gaṅgavāḍi-9600

kingdom swelled to the brim. Responding to the kings inclination, the prosperous mercantile guilds and individual well-to-do traders endowed the *basadis* with liberal grants in cash and kind.

Durvinita (C. 529-79), son of Avinīta, was a far greater benefactor of Jainism. He had commissioned a *sarvatōbhadra Jinālaya* at Kogaḷi, a holy pilgrim centre with many *basadis*. It was the earliest *caturmukha basadi* in Karnataka, consisting of quadruple images, i.e., a group of four Jinas, either standing or seated, back to back, capped with triple umbrella. Durvinīta was trained under Pūjapāda's care, and has also authored some commentaries.

Mokkara alias Muṣkara (C. 579-604) who succeeded his father Durvinīta, founded Mokkara *basadi*, and was an ardent devotee of Puligere-tīrtha. During the reign of Śivamāra-I (679-725) the Jinālaya at Kellipusūr (Kelsūr in Cāmarājanagara Dt) continued to receive more and more gifts of land and villages, garden, houses, sites free of all imposts.

The illustrious Śrīpuruṣa (725-88) asserted his preference for Jainism. He endowed Koṅgeśvara Caityālaya in the city of Pērūr with lands and gave donation to *Lōkatilaka-basadi*, Jaina temple *par excellence* of the world, founded by illustrious Kundācci, a zealot lady votary of Jaina faith, at Śrīpura. Śrīpuruṣa gifted Maḷavalli village to the Tolḷa caityālaya, extended favours to the monasteries of Beḷagoḷa and Nandihills. Prabhācandra, Puṣpanandi, Caṇḍranandi, Kumāranandi, Kirtinandi, Vimalacandra and other Jaina partriarchs and Śāntisena Abbegaḷu, Jaina nun were commanding respect from all quarters. Tolḷagrāma *caityāla* enjoyed royal patronage.

King Duggamāra (C.E. 788), son of Śrīpuruṣa, who was behind Jainism, erected Duggamāra *basadi* at Hebbalaguppe and Nārāyaṇa Peruñcattan was the architect. Faithful adherents of surrounding villages granted six khaṇḍugas of wet-land and another 6 khaṇḍugas of dry land.

Śrīvijaya *sēnādhpati*, commander of the army of *Lōkatrinētra Mārasimha-I* (C.E. 796), an ardent devotee of Jina, had built Jaina temples at a number of places, villages, towns, on the bank of river, on mountains, in islands and near tanks. Of them, a lofty and grand *Jinabhavana* at Maṇṇe was imposing. This *basadi* was patronised by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda-III in C.E. 802. A grant, free of all imposts was year marked for the dancers, singers and drummers of this *basadi*.

Jainism rose to the status of a state religion, when the king Śivamāra-II himself had embraced Jainism at the instance of Tōraṇācārya and commissioned four *basadis* at Beḷgoḷa, Kummadavāḍa, Hebbalaguppe and Muḷivalli. Rācamalla-I (816-43)

enhanced the glory of *Satyavākya-Jinālaya* at Peṇṇegaḍaṅga and presented the profits of twelve hamlets, 80 gold coins and 800 measures of paddy, free of all imposts, on the auspicious occasion of the 18th year of his coronation. Rācamalla's love for Jainism knew no bounds and it flowed copiously. He founded a Jaina shrine at Vaḷḷimalai with bas relief sculptures representing Jinas and Jinaśāsanadevas at the instance of Ajjanandi.

Rajamalla-II (877-907) founded two temples dedicated to *Arhats* at Sivamaṅgalam, on top of Vidyādri. He sought to convert the living rock into quasi eternal temples in honour of Jinas. During this period *basadis* at Kannamangala received charities for the upkeep of the temple and feeding monks and nuns of the Jaina order. Kamungare Kantiyar, a Jaina mother superior to and disciple of Maṇḍalabhaṭāra was the donee.

Kella basadi built by king Nītimārga Ereyaṅga and the *pañca-kūṭa* basadi at Kambadahalli thrived under these kings, patrons of *sramaṇa samgha*, Nītimārga Ereyapa alias Eregaṅga (886-920), ever meditating the holy feet of the Arhats, encouraged Jaina art and literature. Guṇavarma-I (C. 900) rendered the famous Sanskrit *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* of Jinasena-I (783) into Kannada. He also authored *Sūdraka*, a *campū* classic, equating king Ereyapa with the legendary hero Śūdraka. A *basadi* at Peggūr prospered.

The period of tenth century and the last four decades of the Gaṅga dynasty, i.e., between C.E. 935 and 975, was the golden age of Jaina history in Karṇāṭaka. Būtuga-II was an avowed Jaina wedded to the cause of spreading the glory of the religion expounded by Jinas. He founded a Jinālaya at Aṇṇigere and endowed it with four villages, free from all encumbrances, made Śivalayya basadi at Mūguru more prominent. He had married the elder sister of Kṛṣṇa-III, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor. Maruḷadeva, the eldest son of Būtuga, had married the daughter of Kṛṣṇa-III.

Būtuga, a grandee of many provinces, had four wives, five sons and two daughters. All of them were extraordinary householders who rendered unparalleled yeomen service to Jaina church. Women of the Gaṅga's seraglio were also better and more faithful custodians of Jaina traditions and culture. They profusely followed the highest altruistic principles as laid for the *srāvikaś* in the canon. They conformed to the Jaina order of giving charities of food, shelter, medicine and education.

Rēvakanimmadi, the eldest wife of Būtuga and a devout Jaina *upāsaki*, lady votary, lead a religious and philanthropic way of ideal

life. She died at Koppaḷa, accepting the vow of *sallekhanā*, death with equanimity. Padmāvati alias Padmabbarasi, the elder wife of Būtuga, reached Koppaḷa, and amidst applause and appreciation of all around, accepted the ritual death by fasting. Maladhārideva, an ascetic of integrity, conqueror of all desires, administered the ritual. Padmabbarasi, while still in meditation, died on 3-12-973. She had built a Jaina temple at Naregal and made it rich and famous. She has been eulogised as the *Kali-kāla pratyakṣa Gouri*, goddess Pārvati of the present age.

Kallabbā, a younger wife of Būtuga, was renowned for her devotion to Jainism. The effects of her zeal for her religion has been extolled in the inscriptions. Divalāmbā, the youngest of Būtuga's consorts, had commissioned a Jaina temple at Sūḍi and her spouse Būtuga had made donation of land in C.E. 938.

Būtuga's two daughters, Kundaṇasomidevī and Bijjāambarasi, dedicated their lives to serve Nirgrantha church. They conscientiously performed the four-fold charities of *āhāra*, *abbhaya*, *bhaiṣajya* and *sāstra dānas*. Kundaṇasōmidēvi pioneered the cause of supporting Jainism of unparalleled magnitude. She founded a *Māṇikyā-jinabimba* in bronze, in C.E. 970. She breathed her last at Koppaḷa by courting death by abstinence from food. Kundaṇasōmidevi was the first poetess of Karnataka. Her accomplishments in learning and fine arts, her patronage to the erudite, deep devotion to Jinadharma, her knowledge of Jaina doctrine—are applauded in the inscriptions. Koppala inscription has the following benediction : with the death of people like Kundaṇasōmidēvi, kind words of charitable disposition like bounteousness and righteousness, vanished from the world.

Mārasimha-II, Būtuga's second son, was one of the greatest persons of the period. He was Duke of Gaṅgavāḍi territory. Inscriptions eulogise his generosity to protect Jainism. He had constructed *basadis* at Puligere, Hunugunda and other places, erected *mānastambhas* and endowed Jaina places of worship at Naregal, Puligere, Aṇṇigere and other towns. Mārasimha was mainly responsible for the glory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. But when he failed in his mission in C.E. 974, Mārasimha willingly submitted himself to the inevitable death. He accepted the rite of *sallekhanā* at the feet of his preceptor the adept Ajitasēnācārya, royal patriarch of the Gaṅga dynasty.

Cāmuṇḍarāya (Rāya, Aṇṇa) who had a number of titles, a wise minister and a brave warrior of many decisive battles, erected the huge 58' monolith colossus of Gommaṭa at the crest of larger hill at Śravaṇabelagoḷa. His service to Jainism is multifacet. He founded Cāmuṇḍarāya *basadi* on the smaller hill at Belagoḷa, on top of it

Jinadevaṇa, his son, built another *basadi*. Rāya's early life was devoted to wars but later life was wedded to religious activities. Both Ajitasēnācārya and Nēmicandrācārya were his preceptors. The latter, bearing the surname of Siddhānta Cakravartī, encoded the quintessence of Jaina philosophy, for the sake of Rāya, wrote *Gommata-sāra*, a major non-canonical text in Prakrit. Rāya also wrote *Cāmuṇḍarajapurāṇam* in Kannada, *Cāritrasāra* in Sanskrit, and *Viramārtaṇḍī*, a commentary not extant. His younger sister Pullabbā, followed her brother's ideal life and finally met her death with equanimity by the vow of *sallekhanā* in the Candranātha *basadi* at Vijayamangalam, where a bas relief depicting the scene of Pullabbā engrossed in deep meditation exists to this day.

Epitome

Jainism found a congenial home and a royal patronage in the domains of the Gaṅga monarchy. They produced some of the eminent protagonists who vehemently vouched Jainism. They had a strong tradition of spiritual lineage which started from their first apostle-mentor Simhanandī. The Gaṅgas and their overlords, the Raṣṭrakūṭas, together shouldered the yoke of Jaina chariot and pushed it to the apogee of popularity, and that was undoubtedly the best period of its glory. Succeeding ages will reverence the Gaṅga's memory. Their contribution to the Jaina iconography, art, architecture and literature is peerless. They provided the basic infrastructure of a Jaina base. The Gaṅgas have carved a niche in the temple of fame.

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THE HOYSALAS AND JAINISM

DR. KAMALA HAMPANA

Resurgence of Viraśaivism and their open encounter brought hard times for Jainas, particularly in the region of north Karnataka, which resulted in the inevitable conversion of lakhs of Jainas enmasse. Those who could afford to resist the proselytization began slowly to move away to establish at hospitable remote places and to seek the favour of other kings in distant regions. Some sought to move to further north to Kolhapur and Sangli region and some migrated southwards to old Mysore and Tuḷunāḍu region. Albeit, this set back was duly compensated by the Hoysalas who brought a tremendous increase in that sect's power, prestige and popularity. Thus, though Jaina preponderance had suffered a decline, it was a temporary phase.

The Hoysalas, with Haḷēbiḍu, (Dōrasamudra) as their nucleus, started as feudatory rulers of the imperial Cālukyas, gradually overcame their imperial preference to rule as an independent kingdom. The Hoysala dynasty owed its origin to a Jaina saint, like the Gaṅgas, chose to nurture and follow the faith, as far as possible, and favoured the Jaina church to bloom without permit. As a consequence, the Jainas managed to keep both their tradition and their community intact and revive its early opulence and might. Vinayāditya (1050), one of the earliest rulers of the dynasty, laid strong foundation for the sustenance of Jaina church.

The Hoysalas took off from Aṅgadi *olīm* Sosevūr in Cikkamagaḷūr Dt. Nine out of ten inscriptions, all lithic records, from Aṅgaḍi are Jaina. A good number of *basadis* also existed, along with a Jaina monastery. It is believed that Saḷa, a pupil of Sudattācārya, a Jaina ascetic, killed a wild animal tiger/lion with *Kuñca* or dagger, on the orders of his preceptor, who commanded *poy* Saḷa which means *strike* Saḷa. In fact the very derivation of the phrase needs reinterpretation, because this incidence has been the source of the family name Poysaḷa/Hoysaḷa. It is a Kannada compound word consisting of two free morphemes, *Poy* + *saḷa*. Word initial p—, a bilabial non-aspirant, was changed to h—in the medieval period. Hence Poysaḷa became Hoysaḷa. But the expression should not be taken only for its face value.

The above circumstance of killing the cruel animal is a symbolic expression of an historical event. Actually the word carries a suggested

meaning . Killing the tiger/lion stands for the act of annihilating Cōḷas who were their enemies, thus the intended meaning of the phrase 'poysaḷa' is 'strike (the) Cōḷas' and tiger is the royal insignia of the Cōḷas. The tiger attacking the Jaina friar is the symbolic representation of the Cōḷas crushing the Jaina seats and the creed as a whole.

Hence the Jaina monk asking his *kṣatriya* warrior disciple to raise his arms against the Cōḷas. The mutation of the word initial S – and C – is an established phonetic factor. Therefore, Saḷa and Cōḷa are cognates. Whatever be the veracity of the incident, it not only gave the dynasty its name, but also justifies why most of the Hoysaḷa monarchs were Jains. One of their constant and significant royal cognomen was 'samyaktva-bhūṣaṇa', ornament of the faith in the teachings of the Jina. Besides, Vāsantikādevi alias Padmāvatidevī, attendant deity of Jina is the family goddess of the Hoysaḷa dynasty *de novo*. Historians agree about the Jaina affiliations of the Hoysaḷa sovereigns *ab initio*. Though the period after Vira Ballāḷa witnessed a general trend of more and more encouragement offered to Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, yet it was not a total shift from Jainism. A careful study of the epigraphical and literary sources divulge that the Hoysaḷas were following the traditions of the early Karnataka monarchs who from antiquated period had set the precedent of selecting their *rāja-gurus*, the royal teachers, from the famous Jaina centres.

A distinct and distinguished factor of this eon is that many of the ministers, generals, treasures and other officials at the helm of state affairs were devout Jains. Bharata, Boppa, Gaṅgarāja, Mariyāne, Puṇisimayya, Viṣṇu etc were famous generals who actively advanced the cause of Jainism by either founding or repairing Jaina temples. Undisputedly the greatest of all the generals was Gaṅgarāja, who was equal only to Mārasimha, Būtuga and Cāmuṇḍarāja and second to none. His victories on the battle field were many and are splendid. His endowments to the cause of his faith were numerous. Myriads of ruined Jaina temples were built again. Many ways in which Gaṅga-rāja *camūpati* made his unbounded gifts caused the Gaṅgavāḍi region shine like Jinavāḍi of golden days.

Huḷḷarāja, the Hoysaḷa minister-treasurer, heralded a golden chapter for the sustenance of Jainism which continued to prosper for centuries. He commissioned the huge Bhāṇḍāra *basadi* at Śravaṇbelgoḷa. He continued his work of rebuilding dilapidated *basadis* at Kelleṅgere, Baṅkāpura, Koppaḷa and other places which had passed into political limbo, and he enhanced the status of Jainism. Delighting in restoration of *basadis*, in assemblies for Jina worship, in gifts to

groups of Jaina ascetics, in hearing holy Jina purāṇas, the general Hulla passed his time every day.

Of course, there were many more Jaina luminaries, both men and women, who perpetuated the cause of Jaina church. Jainism reached its apogee in the epoch making era of Biṭṭidēva *alias* Viṣṇuvardhana. The popular legend that Biṭṭidēva was later converted to Vaiṣṇava faith is not borne out by historical evidence. Pleased by Gaṅgarāja's accomplishments, he granted the village Parama which was in turn made over to the Jaina temple. Boppa, Ecirāja, Pōcikabbe, Lakṣmī and others, all of Gaṅgarāja's house, made very many grants and gifts to the subsistence and sway of *Jinadharmā*.

A conspicuous characteristic factor of the complex age is followers of different faiths and creeds living under a common roof. Members of one and the same family following separate religion but yet living under the same ceiling was common in this period. Husband and wife belonging to diverse caste or sect did not divorce but made a happy couple and a harmonious living. The royal couple with divergent faiths, Viṣṇu and *paṭṭa-mahiṣi*, crown queen, Śāntaladēvi, had set a model to the kingdom in this respect. Her mother was a staunch Jaina and her father a Śaiva.

Viṣṇuvardhana had several queen consorts, but foremost of them being Śāntaladevi, 'crest jewel of perfect faith in the teachings of the Jina'. (*samyaktva-cūḍāmaṇi*). Śāntaladēvi, an ardent follower of Jinadharmā, contributed to the flourishing state of *Syādvādamata*. She founded Jaina shrines at Śravaṇabelagoḷa and other places. Epigraphs of the time have eulogised her commitment to Jainism and acclaimed her many acts of merit. Prabhācandra Siddhāntadeva, scholar teacher and patriarch of Jaina diocese was her preceptor. *Jinadharmā-parāyaṇe*, zealously intent on following Jaina faith, Śāntaladēvi, crowning glory of the Hoysala kingdom, accepted the vow of *sallekhanā* at Śivagaṅge, a Jaina place of pilgrim, and courted ritual death by abstinence, from taking food, gracefully departing from the profane world in the year 1131. An epigraph of Śravaṇabelagoḷa has framed her picture with silver lining of extoling her virtues in the following words :

Śāntaladēvi was a rampart to the Jaina faith, delighting in the narration of stories related to Jainism, taking pleasure in gifts of food, shelter, medicine and learning, pure in Jaina faith, kind to the blessed, having the head purified by the fragrant water of Jina.

After the celebrated *Dānacintāmaṇi* Attimabbe, it is the illustrious

Śāntaladēvi who has been the cream of Jaina culture in the history of Karnataka. On hearing the sad news of the death of her daughter the matchless Śāntaladevi, Mācikaḥbe, the abode of virtues was greatly disturbed. She said to herself, 'the queen has attained the state of the gods, I cannot remain behind'. The proficient Mācikaḥbe immediately rushed to Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa, took the permission of her husband Mārasingayya, loving father of Śāntaladevi, adopted severe *sanyāsana*, i.e., *sallekhanā*. Mārasingayya, who had embraced by this time the faith of his wife also accepted the rite of *sallekhanā* and renounced the world. Mācikaḥbe, fasting cheerfully for one month, attained the state of gods by *samādhi*, in the presence of all the blessed. People said in one voice : 'who among women that adopted *sanyāsana* was so proficient as she?'. What more can be said of her greatness?

Ācaladēvi alias Āciyakka, was consort of Candramouli, a Śaiva minister. In matters of religion women had freedom, is something commendable. Āciyakka of great glory and endless merit was a lady disciple of Nayakīrtideva. Having her faith in the glorious lord Jina, the abode of unending happiness, Ācaladēvi speedily caused to be made, with great devotion, a fine temple for the lord of Jainas, Pārśvanātha at the holy place of Beḷagoḷa. King Vira-Ballāḷa granted a village for the maintenance of the temple.

One of the important phenomena of the Hoysaḷa times was liberal patronisation of Jaina literature by the cultured aristocracy. The period is noteworthy for the rich crop of Kannada literary works, secular as well as religious. Mallikārjuna, Janna and Keśirāja belonged to a Jaina family of scholar authors, holding many distinguished titles. They adorned the court of Hoysaḷas and were credited with the composition of meritorious works of academic excellence.

Mallikārjuna compiled *Sūktishudhārṇava* an anthology of several hundred stanzas selected from many early classics, grouping them under 18 categories. This work contains some rare verses from unknown sources. Mallikārjuna is the first editor of old Kannada classics, and the earliest author to quote stanzas from inscriptions. While selecting the stanzas from different authors, he has not confined of Jaina writers only. His son, Janna, is decidedly the best writer of the Hoysaḷa kingdom. He has authored three long epigraphs of historical importance, all the three are non-Jaina in nature. Of the literary works of Jaina persuasion, Janna's *Anantanāthapurāṇa* is a long poem in Campū style, narrating the biography of the 14th Tīrthaṅkara. But his master piece is decidedly *Yaśōdhara carite*, based on Vādirāja's Sanskrit work with the same title. Janna has made a substantial contribution of the religious dogmas and philosophy of the Jaina school

of thought. Janna who flourished in the court of Ballāḷa-II, was honoured as the '*kavīcakravartī*', 'poet emperor', which he richly deserves.

Keśirāja, chip of the old block, son of Mallikārjuna and cousin of Janna, wrote *Śabdamañi-darpaṇa*, a masterly treatise on grammar based on Nāgavarma's *Śabdasmṛti*. Rajāditya is credited with a number of mathematical works and is the second Jaina writer to take up writing on that subject after Mahāvīrācārya, a celebrity in the field. Jagaddaḷa Sōmanātha chose to translate *Kalyāṇa-kāraka*, a famous work on medicine, in Sanskrit authored by Ugrāditya, an ascetic-doctor. At Sravaṇabeḷagoḷa and some other places Jaina scholars wrote literary charters and poetic epigraphs containing a fund of information on various aspects of political conditions, religious faiths and social life of the times.

Many monks and nuns of eminence flourished in the kingdom at various Jaina monasteries-Belgoḷa, Muḷgunda, Kanakagiri-Tīrtha, Hombuja, Lakkunḍi, Baṅkāpura, Aṇṇigere, Puligere, Koppaḷa. Prabhācandra, Māghanandi, Mēghacandra, Nayakīrti, Subhacandra, Śrīpāla Traividyadēva and other renowned ācāryas adorned the period with their spiritual counsel. Because of their guidance many Jaina seats were recovered, and revived. Many new Jinālayas were commissioned in a number of centres and the old ones were renovated. Hoysala kings and their feudal tenants founded Jaina shrines and endowed them with generous grants. *Akkana basadi* and *Savati-gandhavāraṇa-basadi* at Beḷagoḷa, Jina Pārśva temple at Mattāvāra, magnificent Śāntināthabasadi at Haḷēbiḍu, Maiduvoḷala-Tīrtha on the hills at Mandalagiri near Tumkūr, *Trikūta-Pārśva-Jinālaya* at Yellādaḥalli and the temples at Taṇḍaga, Heggere, Niṭṭūru, Karḍaḷu and Tailangere deserve a special mention.

Conclusion

Jainism received immense impetus and thrived amidst revivalist movements. Despite their sectarian preferences, the Hoysala rulers, on the whole, adopted the deliberate policy of tolerance towards all religions. They favoured Jaina institutions, bestowed lavish grants and gifts on Jaina shrines. Perhaps it would be appropriate to consider that the period of Hoysalas was the last stronghold of Jaina Church in Karantaka. Even though Jainism continued to be fairly influential during the Vijayanagara period also, it was no match to the extensive royal condescension that Jainism enjoyed under the monarchs from the Gaṅgas to the Hoysalas. The decline of Jaina faith was irreversible

and it came to be mainly restricted to certain pockets such as the Tuluva country, dominated by the Digambara order. But the fact remains that the Hoysaḷas very liberally patronised Jaina art and architecture introducing innovations. They are unrivalled in their sculptural craftsmanship. Hoysaḷa sculptor and stone mason reached its peak of perfection in exhausting the beauty of sculpture in stone and the supreme craftsmanship of the time. Jaina shrines at Beḷagoḷa, Halebīḍu and Niṭṭur representing the Hoysaḷa style of architecture are a feast for the eye.

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