

# HOYSALA PERIOD ARTISON COMMUNITY

## (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO 12<sup>th</sup> CE)

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Hoysala age (11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century) made quite a significant contribution in the social life and economic conditions. The three great monarchies names Vishnuvardhana, Veeraballala II and Ballala III symbolize the marvelous achievement in this regard. This period marks an important epoch in the history of Artisan community a middle class people called VeeraPanchalas. Panchala means five faces described by the tradition the legendary Visvakarma, out of them were born five sons named Manu, Maya, Silpi, Thwastra and Visvagna. These five sons are considered to be the originators of five craft (1) Blacksmithy (2) Carpentry (3) Stone carving (4) Metal work and (5) Jewelry.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Hoysal kings and noblemen gave a lead this community in the practice and development of their skill and technique and the community in turn brought out innumerable temples, eloquent buildings and other things, which bear testimony to the way in which they encouraged them. The kings recognized the merits of these artisan communities who rendered their service to the state in various ways. A study of the inscriptions enables us to get an idea of the activities of the Hoysala Kings in respect of the encouragement and interest they showed upon these Artisan community in their highly sophisticated work. Inscriptions further invariably allude to the protection given by the kings to these communities in their development of skill full traditional work. The social History of this Artisan community can be traced with the help of a number of inscriptions issued during 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### **Stone Carving (Sculptors)**

A large number of Hoysal epigraphs give us most interesting information about these stone carves. It was this artisan that helped to construct the great temples and buildings. An inscription from the Doddagaddavalli temple refers to a chief architect named MallojaManiyoja who has been praised and he has

been described as Visvakarma, the architect of Goda further is throws light on the great engineering skill and the high aesthetic taste of the architect MallojaManiyoja, that who waswell-versed in the temple building, technical terms and had a detail know, that Hoysala sculptors know about various technical terms which correspond to various parts of the Hoysala temple and they were familiar with the various types of temples suchas Ekakutas, Dvikutas, Trikutas, Chatushkutas, Panchakutas and so an.

An epigraph from SravanaBelagola mentions the carving of sculptures by maulachari and his son-in-law Karachari. From this we come to know that a group of their own family members worked together in the construction of temple as well as in making sculptures. Another inscription from Nagamangal during the reign of KingViraSomesvaradeva dated 1244 A.D.A sculptor by name Haraja,son of Honnacharya. In the inscription he is compared to the son of Manu, Maya, Visvakarma and Botakacharya and he is praised as eldest son to all the prajegaudas. This clearly give us an evidence that the stone sculptures during this time received great respect and had their own social status in the Hoysala society. They were respected by not only by Royal family but also of allwalksof the people. In another inscription of 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. from Nagamanagala which mentions the sculptors Machoja. He is described as the Visvakarma of Kaliyuga and the acharya of Kalkaninad. He appears carvers had their own Guru or master who taught them the elements of architecture and these matters were placed in different areas in the Hoysala Empire.

Many inscriptions give us references about the stone masons or sculptors, construction of temples and otherparts of the temple by themselves which in turn throw light on the religious life of that period apart from their own services as stone mason were very liberal in donations also. Three inscriptions from Sutturrefer to sculptors Naranachari and Kaluchari about the construction of Somanathadeva temple and erectionof pillars in the same. In many Hoysala temples below the images cornices, around the towers, panels and other parts of the temple bear the names of manygreat sculptors like Mallithamma, chaudeya, Chamaya, etc., Inscriptions from Nagamanagaladuring the regionof Vishnuvardhana dated 1180 A.D., Mandya during the period of Ballala II during 1221A.D., Malavalli, during the time of VishnuvardhanaNagamangala during the period ofViraSomesvaradeva. 1243 A.D.,Maddur during the reign of Viraballala II and Mandya during reign of Narasimha III dated 1276 A.D., mentions the names of sculptors for their various purposes of work like carving

the sculptors, engraving, preparing the Hero stones, etc. We come to know the great value of these stone masons who involve themselves in the different work concerned to their profession.

The epigraphs records that the artisan community people had to pay tax to the state exchequer. In an inscription from Hunsur during the reign of Narasimha I dated 1162 A.D., mentions the gift to the god. Kesavadeva, by the king from several taxes like those on imports and exports, taxes on oil mill, potter, washer man, servant cart, basket-weaver, stone worker, barber, and taxes on Sada, firewood etc. By this we get an idea that the artisan community had good earning and their economic status was high and were able to pay the tax to the State that were levied on them.

### **Metal Worker- Goldsmith and Jewelers**

The inscriptions give us an idea of the economy of the period under study. Artisans belonging to metal works goldsmith and jewelers must have been encouraged by the State to produce goods on a large scale. The sculptures of the period give us an idea of the skill and dexterity of the goldsmith and Jewelers. The jewelers were skilled in there trade and made beautiful ornaments of precious metals and stones. They brought economic prosperity to their kingdom. The wealth of the country permeated to all classes of people and supplied sinews to the great artistic effort of this period. This alone can explain the spectacular achievement of Hoysala artisans in the Hoysala society.

Many inscriptions of this period refer to the skilled achievement in preparing gold ornaments and in turn they were equally rewarded by the royal families. In an epigraph from Malavalli, during the reign of Narasimha dated 1259 A.D., states that the Goldsmith by name Kalaji received grant of lands from the king for having prepared jewels out of gold. Another inscription from Mandya refers to a goldsmith Somaiah Remmaiah son of Malloja received grants from king Somesvara during 1251 A.D., When he was ruling from his capital Kannanur. An epigraph from Malavalli issued during Narasimha III dated 1296 A.D., states that a goldsmith from Belur received gift of land for his skilled preparation of jewels. Some epigraphs give us information about the Goldsmiths religious contribution regarding grants and construction of temples. An inscription from Alugodu records the constructions of a temple by Ketachari Bogichari son of goldsmith Balachari Codayachari during the rule of Vira Narasimha III dated 1278 A.D., we got many references about the maintenance of the temple where the Goldsmiths were regularly employed and received hereditary servants feels which was distributed by king.

An inscription from T.Narasipura during the reign of Narasimha III mention that the king granted gadyanas which were distributed among for Goldsmiths for the maintenance of the Somanathapura temple ornaments, etc. Some inscriptions throw light on the heroic nature exhibited by this community. In an epigraph from Ranebennur during the time of ViraBallala II 1187 A.D., records the death of Dasoja son of the goldsmith voja, in a cattle raid and registers a gift of land by some Gaudas for the hero stone set up by his brothers Malavaloja and Ketoja, This record indicates that the artisans served their country not only by their skilled work but in times worked as great fighters and received royal treatment in the Hoysala Society.

### **Blacksmith**

The services of the blacksmith always been indispensable to the normal working of any community. For satisfying the primary creature comforts in the Hoysala times, the tools and utensils were made by the blacksmith. Many inscriptions refer to this community grant of lands for their skillful work, heroic nature for maintenance of temple, for their religious grants etc.

An epigraph from Nanjanagud during the period of Narasimha I dated 1170 A.D., refers to a grant of land bestowed by the king to blacksmith Bengatella. An inscription from T.Narasipura during the time of Narasimha III states that the king granted gadyanas for smiths for the maintenance of the temple. Another inscription from Nanjnagud during 1077 A.D. states that the KammaraAla received the hereditary servants fees and this they received by way of corn given by the villagers as their established fees. A record of 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> century from Srirangapattana states the setting up of the pillar in the Chennakesava temple at Arakere by heggadeKammaraPemoja, heggadeSovanna, Sunkadaheggade and others. Another interesting inscription from Chamarajanagar during the reign of Vishnuvardhan refers the death of Kontachari son of Konguniachari, the blacksmith of Baguli, in a fight against the enemy and the grant of land as Kodagi to the dependents of the deceased by the Vilakaragavunda and others. This record throws light on the cordial, social relations in different community during this period since the grant clearly mentions that a gaunda of Baguli granted the lands for the dependents of the deceased of the same village.

## **Carpentry**

The carpenters in wood made all kinds of furniture, both for rich and the poor. They built houses and made chariots, bullock carts, etc. They are represented in a variety of forms in Hoysala temples. The stone sculptor has taken pains to carve the enormous representations of furniture, etc, which was prepared by carpenters and used by the Hoysala people in those days. We get a few references about this community. An epigraph from T.Narasipura during the reign of Narasimha III refers that a carpenter by name Mariyane-Yoja and others carpenters were granted gadyanas by the king as a maintenance charges of the Somanathapur temple. An inscription from Chamarajanagara during the reign of Narasimha I dated 1169 A.D.refers to Bovachari and Cholachari carpenters as a witness to the same grant. This indicates that this community people were regarded and respected in Hoysala society as leading Panchala community. They were involved in day-to-day administration of the place in rendering their services as witness apart from their profession.

These inscriptions give us an idea of the Artisans and other skilled craftsmen. The services of the stone mason, the metal workers, the blacksmith, the carpenters and the Goldsmith or jeweler have always been indispensable to the normal working of any community. For satisfying the primary creature comforts in the Hoysala times, the tools and utensils were made by the black smith and the metal workers and houses and temples erected by the services of the carpenter. To impose the aesthetic sense on people in personal ornamentation, the services of the goldsmith was utilized. The Hoysala, artisan community not only satisfied by supplying ornaments to the kings and others community of the period. For it was these Panchalas that helped to construct the temple for the gods of the whole community. They also brought economic prosperity to the Hoysal country.

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