



JAIN TIRTHAS OF MANDYA DISTRICT AS GLEANED FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS

Prakash.N

Research Scholar

Department Of Studies in History And Research
Karnataka State Open University
Muktha Gangotri Mysore-570006

Dr.V.M.Ramesh

Assistant Professor

Department Of Studies in History And Research
Karnataka State Open University
Muktha Gangotri Mysore-570006

Abstract: Jain tirtha of Jains, Sravanabelagola of Hassan district of South Karnataka is located. Jains call sacred places Tirthakshetras. Tirtha is a Sanskrit word which means sacred place and sacred water. In Jain parlance, a tirtha is a shallow part of a body of water that may be easily crossed and is used to refer both to pilgrimage sites as well as to the four sections of the sangha. A tirtha inspires one to cross over from worldly engagement to the side of moksha. There are many types of tirthas like Siddhakshetras or sites where Arihant or Kevalin or Tirthankaras attained the moksha liberation like Ashtapada Hill, Shikharji, Girnar, Pawapuri, Palitana, Mangi-Tungi and Champapuri the capital of Anga. Atishayakshetras where divine events have occurred like Mahavirji, Rishabhdeo, Kundalpur, Aharji etc. Puranakshetras are associated with the lives of great men like Ayodhya, Vidisha, Hastinapur, and Rajgir Gyanakshetra: associated with famous acharyas or centres of learning like Mohankheda, Shravanabelagola and Ladnu. Jain Gyanakshetra or tirthas are located throughout India.

Key words: Sravanabelagola, like Ashtapada Hill, Shikharji, Girnar, Pawapuri, Palitana, Mangi-Tungi, Dharmashala, Aditirtha. Shravakas, Shravakis, Tirthakshetra.

Just like there are holy places related to the Vedic religion in India, Jainism also has holy places across the nation. Mandy district is not an exception to this. In the proximity of the Mandy district, the most sacred Jain tirtha of Jains, Sravanabelagola of Hassan district of South Karnataka is located. Jains call sacred places Tirthakshetras. Tirtha is a Sanskrit word which means sacred place and sacred water. In Jain parlance, a tirtha is a shallow part of a body of water that may be easily crossed and is used to refer both to pilgrimage sites as well as to the four sections of the sangha. A tirtha inspires one to cross over from worldly engagement to the side of moksha.¹ There are many types of tirthas like Siddhakshetras or sites where Arihant or Kevalin or Tirthankaras attained the moksha liberation like Ashtapada

Hill, Shikharji, Girnar, Pawapuri, Palitana, Mangi-Tungi and Champapurithecapital of Anga. *Atishayakshetras* where divine events have occurred like Mahavirji, Rishabhdeo, Kundalpur, Aharji etc. *Puranakshetras* are associated with the lives of great men like Ayodhya, Vidisha, Hastinapur, and Rajgir *Gyanakshetra*: associated with famous acharyas or centres of learning like Mohankheda, Shravanabelagola and Ladnu. Jain *Gyanakshetra* or *tirthas* are located throughout India. Often a *tirtha* has some temples as well as residences like Dharmashala of South Canara district for the pilgrims and wandering monks and scholars. *Tirtha* means path, Jain path, and Muni Marga. In Jainism, sacred places are called *AtishayaJaina*, *Tirthas*, and *Aditirthas*. The places where extraordinary events and miracles took place during the life of Mahamunis are called *AtishayaKshetras*. Aretippur of the Mandya district is one such place of austerity where three *munis* of Jain faith did penance in a span of four hundred years ranging from the 10th to the 14th century. Therefore, this place is identified as a great *tirtha* and the Kellalagere and Koppanatirtha of the district are also known as *Aditirtha*. Shravakas, Shravakis, Arhantas call the place of Mokshagamiya as Tirthakshetra. An important practice of Jainism was that devotees from distant places visited the shrines and followed the path of liberation. Many Jain shrines can be found in Mandya and Tumkur districts.

KANAKAGIRI TIRTHA:

An inscription dated 1117 AD mentions Tippur as KanakagiriTirtha. By the 10th century AD, Kanakagiritirtha had attained a status of fame as this Basadi was seen mentioned in an inscription dated to 909 AD when King Manileya of Sagara built a Basadihere and donated it to KanakasenaBhataraka in the presence of Niti². Hampana³ opined that it was at the beginning of the 9th century. Scholars are of the opinion that Maleyur of Chamarajanagartaluk could be KanakagiriTirtha. But the reference to MaleyurTirtha is found in CE 1355. Hampana recorded that KanakagiriTirtha was included in TippurTirtha.⁴ Based on all these factors it can be understood that KanakagiriTirtha was the most ancient Tirtha of Mandya district.

TIPPUR-TIRTHA:

Arethippur is a small Village in Maddur Taluk in the Mandya District of Karnataka State. It is located 28 kilometres East of the District headquarters in Mandya, 15 kilometres from the Taluk headquarters of Maddur and 85 headquarters from the State capital Bangalore. Arethippure is a modern name which was earlier called Thippeyur. This is a historical place, here we can find 10-foot tall idols of Gommata which is located at the top of ShravannappaBetta and is made of a single rock. On the top of the big rock, there is a pool which is filled with natural water and structure built of bricks. This place is mentioned as Kanakagiri by I. Kartikeya Sarma.⁵ The villagers use this water for drinking especially in the festival season when they are making worship here.

The earliest mentions of this place appears in an epigraph from Mallahalli (Bengalore) copper plates of Avinita (559 CE) was the Western Ganga dynasty king who ascended the throne after King Madhava III⁶. It can be observed that Tippuru has a very close resemblance to Shravanabelagola in the layout of the Ancient Jain monuments. TippurChikkabetta (*Jinagudda*) DoddaBetta (*SavanappanaBetta*) can be seen from Sravanabelagola. Narasimha Murthy opined that Aretippur was a centre of Jainism in the 5th century CE and

Jain's settlements were built during the Ganga era. Based on this, the brick-built structure found in Talakad was compared with the brick fragments found in Tippur. On the other hand, it is known that the idol of Gommata built-in Sravanabelagola may have been inspired by the idol of Savanappa of Aretippur. The Ganga inscription found at Ganjam a suburb of Srirangapattana mentions the fact that a village called Tippur was donated in CE 810 to a person namely Ponnadi a Brahmin as a Brahmadeya.⁷ This indicates that in this place Jainism had not yet established its ground inflexibly in the village at the time of the above-mentioned inscription. It is known from another inscription that after the victory of Talakad, Gangaraja obtained from Vishnuvardhana. He later donated Aretippur to it his guru namely MeghachandraSiddhanta Deva of Kanargana and Tintrini Gachcha.⁸ It appears to have been obtained from Tippur to bring it back to prosperity. In the Hagalahalilu inscription,⁹ the TippurTirtha is an encompassed village called Hadarivagilu. In the inscription of C E 1698, there is a mention of disciples of TintriniGaccha of Kanurgana of MulaSangha, namely MeghachandraSiddhantadeva, KumudaChandradeva, SaddharmaSrutakirtiand Adinath Pandita.¹⁰ The fact that this Hadivagilu was donated to TippurTirtha is known. It is mentioned that it is the place where sages namely Kanakasena, Balachandradeva, Meghachandradeva and Siddhantadeva did penance. Also, it can be said that the inscription was found at this place and it was a suitable place for those who referred without being heard. Based on all these factors it can be said that Tippuru was a place of pilgrimage.

BINDIGANAVILE TIRTHA:

Bindiganavale is a village and hobli headquarters in Nagamangalataluka of Mandya district. It is about 50 kilometres from Mandya and 130 km from Bangalore. According to the inscriptions found in the place, it was an ancient Jain religious place. At present, it has a Vaishnava temple dedicated to Garuda who is worshipped here as Vainatheyar and according to tradition, it was one of the eight villages that were donated to Sri Ramanujacharya by Hoysala Vishnuvardhana.

A Nisidi inscription dated 975 CE from Bindiganavile in Nagamangalataluk mentions that the Jain nun AmritabbeKanti died a momentous death after performing great austerities.¹¹ It is said that her son PadmanadiBhataraka erected this Nisidi stone as an indirect courtesy to his mother. AmritabbeKanti is the first Jain Kanti to be cited in the inscriptions of the Mandya and Tumkur districts. In the Kambadahalli inscription of 1118 CE¹² and 1168 CE,¹³ it is mentioned that Bindiganavile was the *tirtha*. Bindiganavile was a famous Jain centre in the 9th century before Kambadahalli became famous. In the 8th-9th century, apart from Belagola, Bindiganaville was a peaceful place for Jain sages. It would take at least a century for it to become famous as a Jain *tirtha*. For this reason, it can be concluded that Bindinavile was a place of pilgrimage before the 9th century CE. Today there is no Jain settlement; Because after Kambadahalli became famous, Bindiganaville lost its importance. The reason for this is that Bindiganavile had to go through a very difficult route and reach the hills. It can be seen that Bindiganavile became a Shaiva and then a Vaishnava centre over time.

KAMBADAHALLI TIRTHA

Kambadahalli is a Village in NagamanaglaTaluk in Mandya District. Kambadahalli is an ancient Jain centre and the landmark of this village is a 12th century Jain Basati (temple) complex. SravanaBelgola, the renowned seat of South Indian Jainism is 18 km away from this village. In its early inscriptions, the place is referred to as Bindiganavile which, at present, is another nearby village. It might be possible that the present village was part of the large Bindiganavile *tirtha* then and Bindiganavile continued to enjoy that reputation. However, soon, this village is rechristened as Kambadahalli, probably after the setting up of the famed pillar. Kambadahalli was a great Jain centre during the Ganga period and it continues this reputation even today. The Gangas were devout Jainas and carried out various activities to uplift and maintain the faith. Shravanabelagola became the most famous Jain centre in the south during the Ganga period. Vicinity to Shravanabelagola acted as a catalyst for Kambadahalli which helped the latter to attain the reputation and fame.

The PanchakutaBasati complex was built by the Gangas of Talakad and renovated during the period of Vishnuvardhana of the Hoysala dynasty during the 12th century. A Nisidi inscription found erected near the outer courtyard of the Jain Basadi at Kambadahalli mentions that *yama, niyama, svadhyaya, dhyana, dharana, muanaanusthana, japa, samadhi, sila, gunasampannarad* Prabhachandradeva the pontiff of the Jana basadi erected a Nisidi stone in memory of his beloved the disciples Rukumavve and JakkavveKanti those who died of asceticism in the 12th century.¹⁴ An inscription from the same region mentions EkkodiJinalaya situated in KambadahalliTirtha in which a saint by the name of EkkodiRudrira belongs to Sri Moolasangha, of PustakaGachchada was living and conducting the penance.¹⁵ Kambadhahalli appears to have gained prominence after Bindiganavile. It is also known, that there was a Jain educational centre, a monastery and a temple in Kambadahalli. It can be seen that Bindiganavile has lost its importance and Kambadahalli has become more prominent and has become a pilgrimage site.

SRAVANANAHALLI TRIBHUVANA TILAK TIRTHA:

In the Sravananahalli inscription of AkkihebbaluHobali, it is mentioned that PiriyaarsiChandaladevi of Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana, along with her brother Malladeva, donated Kavanahalli which they received from her father to PrabhachandraSiddhanta Deva, who had come to ViraKongalvaJinalaya of TribhuvanTilakaTirtha.¹⁶ TribhuvanTilak'sBasadi in Kolhapur, Maharashtra and Pampana at Annigere are seen to have built their own TribhuvanTilak'sBasadi. That is, it is seen that many basadis of the same name are built next to each other. But it can be understood that this TribhuvanaTilak is Kavanahalli also known as Shravananahalli.

KALASATAVADI TIRTHA:

Shravanabelagola inscription number 520 belongs to the 12th century and states that MalavveGuddi, beloved follower of Sri MaddevanandiBhattaraka prepared a PanchalohaJinabimba for the Jain shrine Kadasatavagi or Kalasthavadi.¹⁷ Another inscription mentions that the KannabeKanti gave a panchalohaJinabimba to the

KalasatavadiTirtha.¹⁸ This inscription belongs to the 11th century. Kalasatavadi is known to have been an important religious centre of Jainism as well as a trade centre during the Ganga period i.e. during the time of Vinayaditya. As mentioned in the RajavaliKathasara, the ruins of this Basadi were used during the expansion of Srirangapattana and Tannur temples. Hampana mentions that Kalasatwadi was an important place for Jains in the 10th century or earlier, so it could be called a tirtha in the 11th century.

MALIGEYUR TIRTHA:

At Maligeyur in Krishnarajpettaluk, PiriarsiShante queen of HoysalaVishnuvardhanaand his brother in law *Maiduna* Balleya was ruling. Baladeva, the son of Nagadeva matron-uncial or brother-in-law of queen Shantala. It is known from the Sravanabelagola inscription that, was the leader of Balleya, died at Morimgere Tirth.¹⁹ When *Maiduna* Balleya died after performing the sallekhana as ordained as a monk, his mother Nagiyakka-ThangiEchiyakka built a monastery in Maligeyur and donated it to PrabhachandraSiddhanta Deva. But there are no remains of this settlement.

CONCLUSIONS:

From the above discussion, it is evident that Jainism flourishing in the Mandya district as early as the 5th century CE from the available evidence in the form of inscriptions. In the south, the Digambra faith of Jainism was very much prevalent rather than the Swetambar cult. This condition facilitated the builders to build the monasteries for munis and the Basadies for worshipping. The Jain sages lived in the Basadies, conducted penance and attained enlightenment of truth that created higher respect towards them and the place where they lived. In turn, this envisaged the creation of the *tirthas* in the region. These *tirthas* continued to survive for centuries, even in adverse situations, without patronisation by the ruling powers. In such a juncture, Jain community rose to the occasion to support such institutions, which are depleting in financial support. Some other institutions suffered the spiritual downfall, avoiding this was not in the hands of the contributors. Thus, a few institutions vanished forever from the spiritual arena of the region.

References

1. Kurt Titze, Klaus Bruhn, 2001, *Jainism: A Pictorial Guide to the Religion of Non-Violence*, 2nd edition, MotilalBanarsidass, Delhi, p. 16-26
2. EC. VII, Maddur 54, CE, 1178
3. Hampa. Nagarajaiah, 1997, *Chandrakode, A collections of Research Papers* Kannada University, Hampi, p,103
4. *Ibid*; 16-17.
5. Sarma, I. K.,1992, *The Temples of the Gangas*, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, p.19, 33, 47, 178-187, 223-224
6. Puttaswamy, B 2011, Jainism in Mandya District, in *Jainism through The Ages*, Ed., R Gopal Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Mysore 281-285.
7. EC. VI, Srirangapattana -60, CE 810
8. EC.VII, Maddur54, CE1117

9. *EC.VII*, Maddur 103, 12th Century
10. *EC.VII*, Maddur 106, CE1698
11. *EC.VII*, Nagamangala 55, CE. 975
12. *EC.VII*, Nagamangala 33, CE.1118
13. *EC.. VII*, Nagamangala 26, CE.1168
14. *EC.. VII*, Nagamangala 28, CE. 12th Century
15. *EC.. VII*, Nagamangala 31, CE. 12th -13th Century
16. *EC.. VI*, K R Pete -21, CE. 12th Century
17. *EC.. II*, Shravanabelagola -520, CE. 12th Century
18. *EC.. II*, Shravanabelagola -521, CE. 12th Century
19. *EC.. II*, Shravanabelagola -174, CE. 1139

