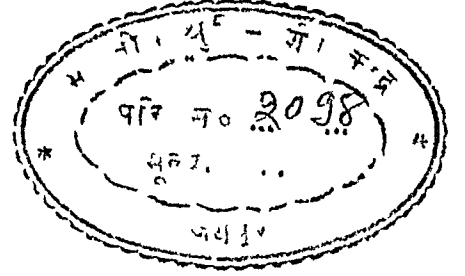








COLOSSUS OF SHRAVANBELGOLA  
and  
Other Jain Shrines of Deccan



SURENDRANATH SHRIPALJI JAIN

*Sahityaratna*

भारतीय श्रृंगार-प्रदर्शन केन्द्र  
जयपुर

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## DEDICATION

*To those Jain youths, who solemnly pledge themselves to—*

- 1 Redeem the freedom of Lord Bahubali and this Tirtha,*
- 2 Revive the past glory of this tirtha by opening a Jain Vidyalaya for imparting religious education; an Udasinashram for Jain monks. a Central Museum for preservation of Jain relics scattered all over Mysore State, and a full-fledged Publishing House for publishing the holy Jain Scriptures rotting in Shashtra Bhandars;*

*this work is humbly dedicated*

## FOREWORD

IT was over six months back when Sri S. N. Jain approached me to afford him all possible facilities to publish a book on Sravana belgola. The nature of the facilities required by Sri Jain appeared to me in the first instance to be rather impossible to provide. But the earnestness with which Sri Jain renewed his requests and the importance of the subject he wished to deal with prompted me to meet his requirements at least partially.

The Department of Archaeology, Mysore, have spared no pains during the past fifty years or more to conduct an exhaustive survey of the ancient inscriptions and monuments at Sravanabelgola and the results of the labours of Mr B. L. Rice and Rao Bahadur R. Narasimhachar, are to be found in the monographs published by the Department. A useful guide to this historic place (a revised edition is in the press) was also published by the late Dr. Krishna. The brochure issued by Sri Jain, coming as it does on the eve of the "Mahamastakabhisheka" has got a special appeal particularly to the Jain pilgrim and the tourists.

Some inaccurate statements are to be found here and there in this book probably due to the author's lack of a first-hand knowledge of local affairs. Even controversial points of history have been accepted as facts. I am sure the author will do well to avoid all such discrepancies in the second edition of the book. I cannot also associate myself with the opinion expressed by him on certain matters of religious importance found therein. It may, however, be stated that the Government of Mysore have always been solicitous towards the welfare of all the subjects of the State irrespective of their religious persuasions and with this object in view every thing that is possible has been done to maintain the monuments at Sravanabelgola in a fair state of preservation.

Sravanabelgola is a centre of attraction not only to the Jain pilgrim but also to the non-Jain tourists from all parts of the World. The author has taken great pains especially in collecting information about the Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony and in arranging for the publication of this book which will be useful to one and all. The large number of illustrations enhance the value of the same. I wish him success in his endeavour to popularise the importance and significance of Jain *tirthakshetras*.

MYSORE,  
30th December 1952

K. NARAYANA IYENGAR, M.A.,  
Ag. Director of Archaeology,  
Mysore

## INTRODUCTION

NOT only in India, but also in the world there can only be a few places where the historic, archaeological, religious, and picturesque clasp hands so firmly as at Shravanbelgola. Its history is as old as the authentic history of India itself. Its Chandragupt and Chandragupta Basti link its history with the two stalwart and most illustrious emperors of Indian History, viz., Chandragupta Mourya, and his by far illustrious grand-son, Ashoka-the-great. Historical records and numerous inscriptions bear testimony that numerous ruling dynasties rose here one after the other and went into oblivion, but this tiny village and its supreme Sentinel received honours from everybody even from the most antagonist Kings like Hyderalli and Tippu Sultan, and there is not a shred of doubt about the truism of this claim. From the archaeological point of view the art of these temples and shrines link it with the arts of many ages and eras, ranging from the earliest 3rd B C upto the 17th century A D. If Chandragupta Basti made it venerable to Jains, the colossus of Gommateshvara made it yet more venerable and a place of unusual interest to all the people throughout the world !

A tiny place like Shravanbelgola with such a bright and long heritage of historical, archaeological and picturesque wealth is so rich that it defies even the most voluminous books to claim its full description, like its eponymous Lord Gommateshvara who defies all descriptions and imitations. Its history in fact, is quite inaccessible like Mt Everest, its archaeology uncompassable like the sky, its art unfathomable like the sea, and therefore, it is absurd for any author, howsoever clever, to introduce it in full. In fact, it is the author who introduces himself as Shravanbelgola is beyond introduction. The author is fully conscious of the fact that had there been thousands of writers writing about this very tiny village for whole of their lives, there was no end to the end-less story of Shravanbelgola, and it is destined to remain so, like its divine Sentinel !

However, an honest effort is made to introduce some of the most important and salient aspects of this place to the non-Jain public in general and North-India-Jains in particular, so that they may have the much-needed first-hand information about this sacred place, in such a manner that their curiosity to know about it further may day-by-day increase

The author has tried his utmost to make it lucid and fully illustrated, as far as possible, by including every subject of common interest in such a way that he who touches this book may touch the very hearts of Jainism and Jainbādi both.

The work involved far greater a labour than my anticipation when I undertook it. With every item of new information, as it came



like wave after wave in the open sea, I began to realise that no book in the world was complete so far this holy place was concerned. Shravan belgola occupies the same place in the body-religious structure of Jainism and Jains as the heart occupies in physical structure of the human body. How a book could ever describe a place which had its very brilliant history inscribed as past as 2500 years, and has been linked to thousands of persons of historical importance throughout all the ages, and even now which stands like a rock in surging ocean of hostility, but yet un-moved, un-deterred, and un-concerned like its Lord, who has gazed for the past 1,000 years beneath the plains ! Bahubali and Jainbīdri have so intermingled with each other that nobody dare them separate. The mention of one denotes the other. They have become one like milk and water, body and soul, and inseparable like heat from fire, cold from ice and light from the sun. No author is born to describe them fully as no painter is born to paint them in their true colours.

So, this small treatise is not claimed to be all or the last word on Shravanbelgola. However, an humble effort is made to include all aspects like history, archaeology, architecture, etc., where possible, and have been presented from a devotee's angle.

In order to attest all versions and study all aspects in their true perspective, the author stayed at Jainbīdri for six months and visited sacred places like Gommatgiri, and collected every item of new data useful for this publication. However, he could not visit other holy places like Moodbīdri, etc., in spite of his great desire. The author is sadly conscious of the short-comings of a publication intermingled with so many aspects, touching history and legends, the sources of which are inaccessible, more over a work written at a considerable distance like Bombay from the places described. The indulgence of readers is craved for omissions which could not be helped for the lack of space.

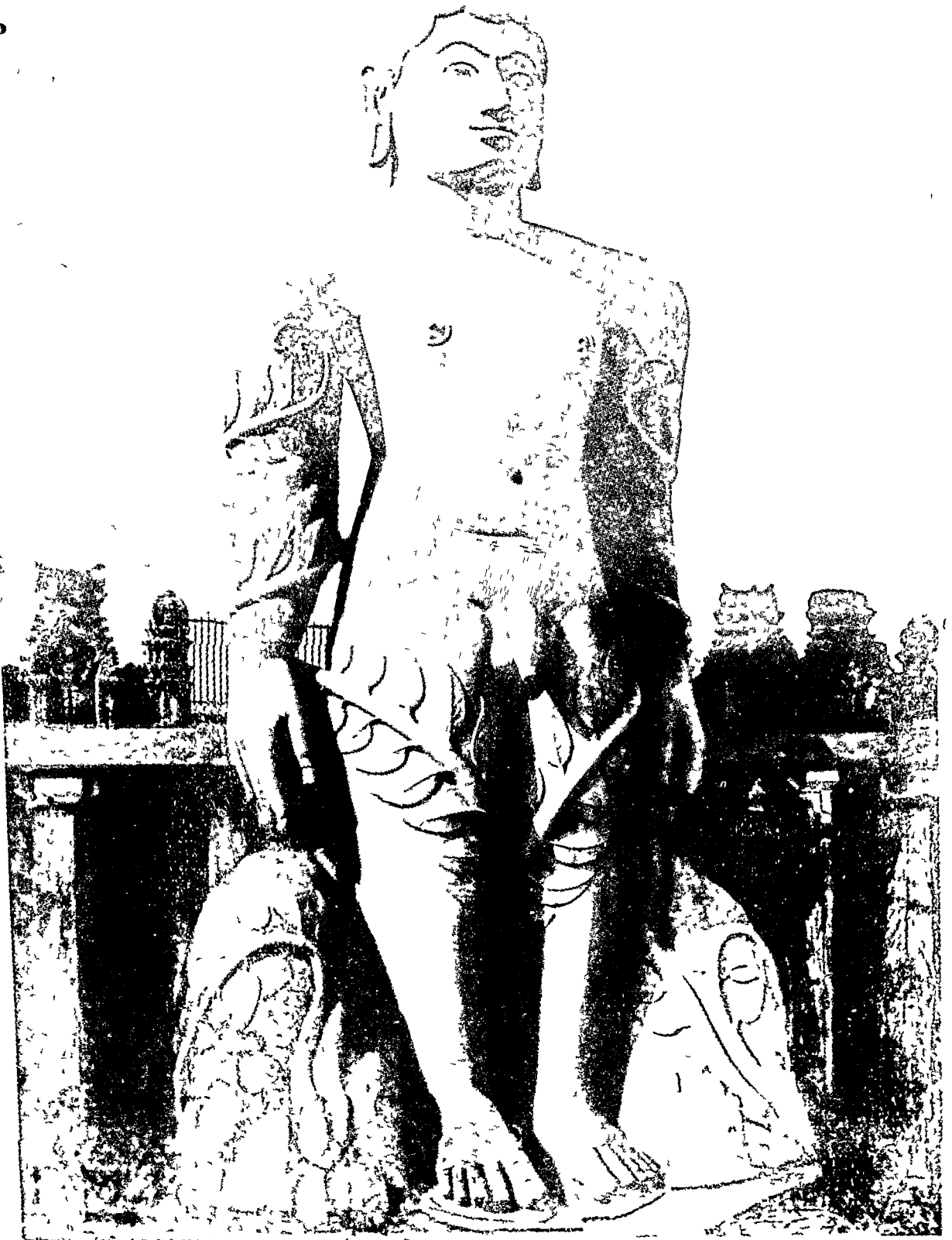
My hearty thanks are due and are hereby offered to Shri R. R. Gyani, M A, Curator, Western India Museum, Bombay, and Shri K. Narayana Iyengar, M A, Ag Director of Archaeology, Mysore, for loan of blocks of his Department, and for writing a nice *Foreword*. Religious traditions and historical records do stand on two different footings. Between them no agreement on any topic is possible, naturally, therefore, we honestly agree to disagree to each other in these matters. My thanks are also due to the Curator, Jain Siddhant Bhawan, Arrah, Shri Puttaswamy, B A . LL B Mangalore, and Shri G H Rama Rao, B Sc, proprietor of Mysore Printing and Publishing House, Mysore, who helped me in every way to make this publication attractive. I consciously know that it is due to these friends that this book has been made what it is and for every error and omission I cannot escape my responsibility, I humbly plead guilty and beg pardon of all the concerned.

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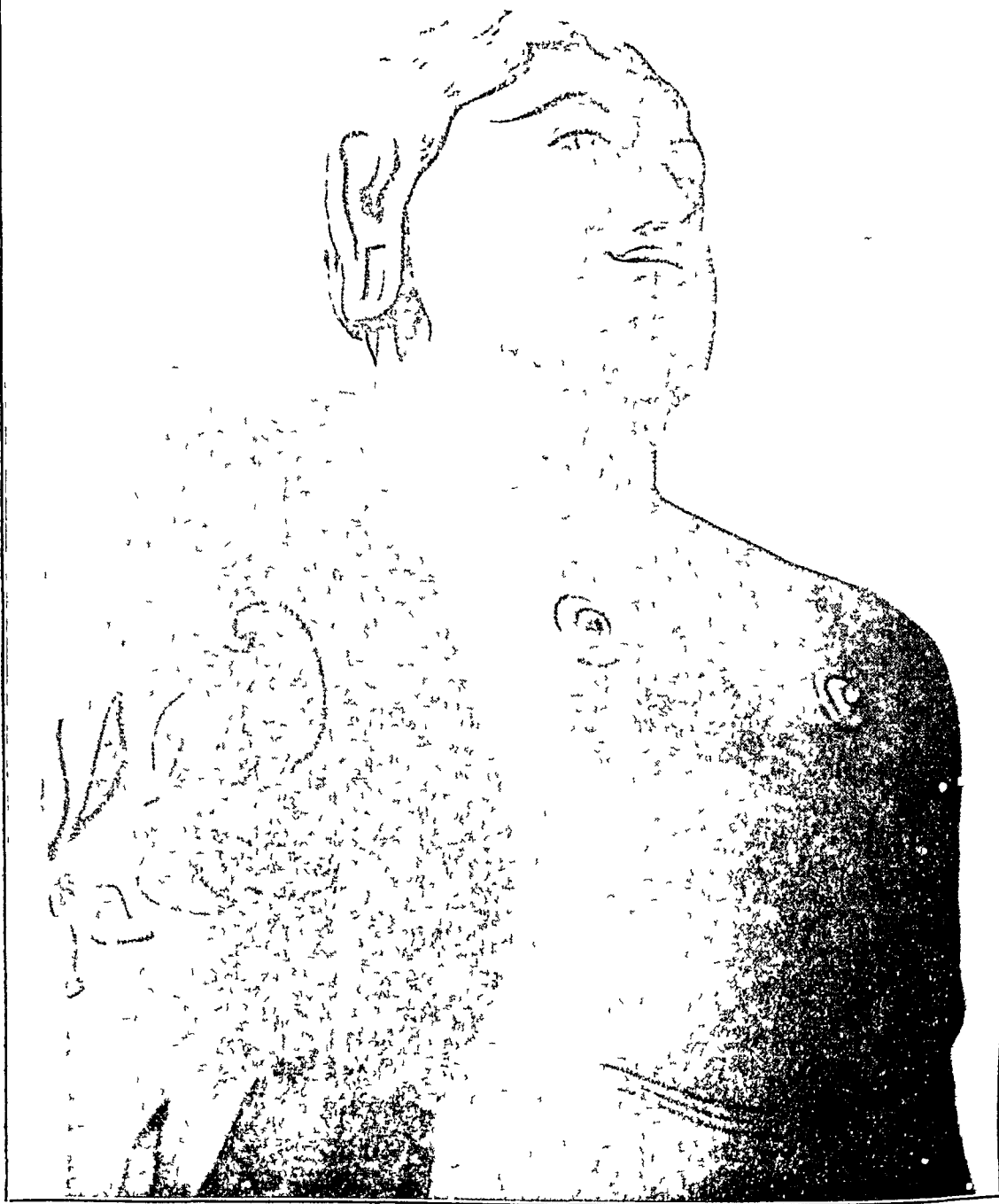
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**LORD GOMMATESHWAR, THE SENTINEL OF SHRAVANBELGOLA**  
Who is watching here since 1,000 years



### SMILING LORD GOMMATESHWARA

Ages have rolled over him, ancient civilizations have swept around his feet, contending armies of Hindu Rajas and Muslim Kings, and French and English had devastated the plain below but this unmoving SENTINEL OF SHRAVANBELGOLA stands here and here alone smiling over the distressed humanity! If you keep gazing for only a few seconds at Him, it seems that He is going to burst into laughter right now!

# I

ALL THAT IS good and great in the East has gone into the building of temples. It is not surprising then, that the temples of India are architectural wonders, specially this is true of temples in south India. India is a veritable treasure-house for the students of Architecture. Our towns and villages are full of architectural master-pieces which are visited by tourists from all over the world. Wherever we travel in India from the Himalayas in the North to Cape Comorin in the South, we are never far from some fine examples of the sculptors' art. Some of the most beautiful temples are to be found in the Mysore State where the delicate and intricate sculpture makes them particularly attractive. Here is an account of one of such temples in the Mysore State which by its super-architectural elegance has become one of the 'Greatest Wonders of the World', and is likely to remain such for hundreds of years to come.

Thirty-two miles from Hassan, 42 miles from Arsikere, 62 miles from Mysore and only eight miles south-east of Channarayapattan, in the centre of Mysore State, is one of the marvels of ancient India, a gigantic human figure hewn out of the solid rock. Standing upon a summit of an isolated hill, with its outline silhouetted against the sky, it can be seen for at least 15 miles around. The eye of the traveller passing along the Trunk Road from Bangalore to the western coast through Manjarabad Ghat is arrested on approaching Channarayapattan by a conspicuous hill, a few miles to the south, bearing on its summit which appears at first to be a column but which on drawing nearer proves to be a colossal statue in the human form. And for nearly a thousand years this great image has looked down upon the fertile plain and humming humanity beneath in the same majestic style and compassionate pose! This striking and unusual object marks the site of one of the most interesting spots in south India, one whose traditions carry us back to the earliest authentic period of Indian history. This place is the famous Shravanbelgola, the chief seat of Lord Gommateshvara and his adherent Jains in southern India.

Few tourists ever reach this remote sanctuary, yet there are not many places in south India that better repay a visit. Tourists going to Shravanbelgola either get down at Arsikere, Mysore or at Hassan stations on the Southern Railway, where one can catch a bus direct for Shravanbelgola.

The hill upon which it stands is one of the two that guard the petty village of Shravanbelgola, otherwise known as 'JAINBIDRI' in north India. The latter of them is the other of the two.

as 'Indrabetta' or 'Doddabetta') is a great dome of smooth granite upon which no blade of grass can grow. Its summit, some 470 ft above the plain (and 3,347 ft high above the sea-level), is strewn with mighty boulders and masses of broken rocks, one of which, apparently, was utilised by the old-time sculptors, and fashioned into the huge figure shown in the accompanying photographs. It faces towards north and is bright tinted greyish or rather, to be more precise, like mother's breast milk in colour. Large cloistered court was afterwards built around its feet and this was surrounded with the halls and court of a temple even later.

Between these two hills of Chandragiri on the north, and Vindhyagiri to the south, and surrounding the sacred lake of Kalyani there lies the petty in size, but by far pretty village of Shravanbelgola.

From the time immemorial, Shravanbelgola has lived up to the fame of being a great seat of learning of Jainism in its every branch ethics, philosophy, *Nyay* (logic), and various codes of conduct of Jain monks and laity. The very name of 'Belgola' is found in the very old records dating 7th century A D. It was the 3rd Mourya Emperor Ashok the-Great, who prefixed it with a word 'Shraman' meaning a Jain monk, most probably indicating his grand-father Chandragupta Mourya, to commemorate the place of his death, who had adopted the Jain hermitage for his last twelve years. It is said that Ashoka paid a visit to this place and also to the very site on the Chandragiri hills where Chandragupta died. It was he who built Chandragupta Basti on it, and named this very hill after him, and since then the hill became to be called 'Chandragiri'. Though the Basti does not contain any inscribed record to that effect, but an authority not less than Mr B Lewis Rice, C I E, M R A S, who made very deep investigations and thorough study of the temples and hundreds of inscriptions on these hills as far back as 1887 A D confirms it to be very ancient—most probably of the 3rd century B C. when Ashoka-the-Great was ruling this country. Ashoka's visit has further been supported by a legend denoting the very birth of this village out of his encampment.

Shravanbelgola is composed of two words Shravan (Shraman) and Belgola, and here they seem to have so intermingled that it is impossible to separate them from each other, specially in view of their rich history which befits each other so closely and precisely that one does not sound well without the other. Naturally then, various legends have sprung up round about them and both of them are so ancient and their history is so shrouded in mystery that none can authentically say which preceded the other. The usual derivation of Belgola is from the two Kannada words Belu (white) and *Kola* by euphony *Gola* (a pond or a vessel) and various legends have sprung up to suit these meanings as well.

The most important legend connects its origin with the sacred lake, named Bhudevi-Mangaladarsha-Kalyani, which is just in its centre so it is but quite natural that the village itself got to be called after this lake.

In one of the inscriptions it is called 'Devar Belgola' distinctly denoting—'Belgola of Jindeva'. There are two more Belgolas just in suburb of this village, which bear the names of Hale Belgola (old Belgola) and Koddı Belgola (Belgola with a canal). It is quite probable that in order to distinguish these three Belgolas, this might have been called after the saint Chandragupta who quitted the world after implicit observation of *Sallekhana*.

In comparatively latter medieval periods, we find its numerous mentions' in the inscriptions dating the 7th century A. D. under the names of 'Belgula', 'Belugula', and 'Belagula', and they apparently seem to have a common origin from a word 'gulla'—a white herb (*Solanum feiox*) which connects it with a pious old woman Gullikayıjı who completely anointed the colossal image with the *Panchamrita* (five liquids) she had brought in a *gullıkayı* (fruit of *gulla*). This origin has firm footing in a tradition and strangely enough we find an image of Gullikayıjı just in front of the door of the colossus itself. In the most recent past records, we find its mentions in the name of Gommatpura—the city of Gommat (the name of colossus) in some of the inscriptions and is also called a *tıtha* (holy place) in several others. In some of the comparatively new records it is mentioned under the surname of 'Dakshina (southern) Kashi' which denotes it to be a great seat of learning. Already so rich in traditional eminence from very old times, it has further been enriched by the installation of the colossus of Gommateshvar in the 10th century A.D. and thus has become a place of world-wide interest.

The road from Arsikere to Jainbidri passes through dense jungles of sandalwood, clove, and eucalyptus trees amid the panoramic natural scenery strewn with rich rice-fields alround, right to the extremity of yonder horizon studded with gorgeous gardens of cocoanut and betel-nut trees making it all the more picturesque. Such views are indeed unknown to the people of north India. Nowhere else throughout India, the Nature has ever been so bountiful as it has vividly been here, and every casual glance all around meets with most exceptionally charming scenery impelling a visitor to feel his visit worthwhile and fully recompensated. The galaxy of such beauty-spots un-mistakably makes it a treasure of ever-lasting memory. In the whole beautiful State of Mysore it would be hard to find a spot, where the historic and picturesque elements clasp hands so firmly as here.



Some 30 years back, Danvir Seth Guumukhrai Sukhanand of Bombay built a Dharmashala at Mandagere railway station at the cost of Rs 30,000 which is just about 15 miles from Shravanbelgola. Seth Sukhanandji built this Dharmashala in anticipation that Mysore Government will build a bridge across the adjoining river Hemavati, which never materialised till this day resulting in utter ruin of the said Dharmashala. Seth Sukhanandji was a great Jain philanthropist and built numerous Dharmashalas and institutions of public utility. It was he who built steps on Chandragiri and also at Gajapantha Tirtha near Nasik. A palace-like Dharmashala was built by him at Bhuleshwar, Bombay, besides so many others which owe their existence to his charities, which shine even to-day though his noble self is no more!

The statue of Gommateshvar is clearly visible within the radius of 15 miles from Jainbidri, and every devotee unconsciously feels an impulse of awe towards the serene Sentinel of Shravanbelgola, who seems guiding him forth from such a long distance towards him, and in proper Shravanbelgola, it is the saint and saint only who meets the visitor's eyes from every corner, as there is nothing so grand which catches the eye of a visitor so easily except the Saint.

The colossus of Shravanbelgola stands on the Vindhyagiri. The ascent is made by nearly 500 steps hewn in the granite and as the hill is held in great esteem and sanctity, not only the Jains but also the non-Jains and foreigners climb it bare-foot. After a short ascent one reaches a Jain temple which was built by a local Jain Seth G. K. Padmarajiah usually called 'Brahmadeva Temple' above it and is a temple of Parshwanath, with an idol of black stone 5 ft. in height seated in 'Padmasan'. The steps lead through two decorative stone-arches and past the first small shrine and the arch as one ascends, he has a beautiful view of the village below with its fine temples, sacred lake and graceful palm. These steps were built by Danvir Seth Manikchand Huachand, J. P.,—a great philanthropist Jain jeweller of Bombay in 1886 A.D. The next ascent brings the pilgrim right to the first door leading to the outer enclosure of the lower court. The walls of this enclosure are made by putting massive stones one upon the other without any masonry art or use of chunam or cement.

The outer walls are coloured in white and crimson bars to mark the place of sanctity. Immediately one enters the lower court containing eight Basties and a few objects of unusual interest. Before we get into the upper court, let us have a glance around this lower court. There are 32 Jain temples at Jainbidri out of which eight are situated on the Vindhyagiri in this very court. They are in the following order,—

1. **Choubis Tirthankara Basti.**—It is a small shrine wherein the images of twenty-four Tirthankaras are inscribed on a slab of 2½ ft. width. There are three big inscribed images in the lower row, surrounded by twenty-one smaller ones. This was built by Charukirti Pandit, Dharmachandra, etc., in 1648 A.D. Nearby to its north-west lies a small tank, the water of which is used at Mahamastakabhishekas for anointing the colossus.

2. **Chennanna Basti.**—This temple stands at some distance to the west of the pillar and was built by Chennanna in 1673 A.D. and an idol of Lord Chandraprabhu of about 2½ ft. in height is installed in it. This Basti is unique as it has a pillar just before it, and two pillars of veranda facing each other bear images of a man and a woman with folded hands most probably of Chennanna and his wife. It consists of a *Garbhagriha*, a porch, and a verandha. Both the pillars are about 5 ft. in height and bear a number of inscriptions and images of Jain Acharyas. Just nearby lies a pond (*Done*). Just before the temple stands a *manastambha* which also bears some inscriptions. To its north-east is a mantapa or pillared hall between the two *done*s and is lying in half-ruined condition.

3. **Oudegal Basti.**—This is one of the biggest temples on Vindhya-giri, and is so called due to the massive props (oudegals) to its outer wall. It is also called 'Trikut Basti' after its three images of Adinath, Shantinath and Neminath seated in *Padmasan*. This is built on higher pedestal and one has to enter it by the flight of steps. It is a grand structure and occupies a prominent place on Vindhya-giri. It is praised for its superb architectural art. On the rocks, to the west of the temple are engraved nearly 30 maiwadi inscriptions in *nagari* letters.

4. **Tyagad Brahmdeva Stambha.**—It is also called 'Chagad Kamb' to denote the place of giving alms. It was the customary in the olden days that every builder of a shrine or a temple should also distribute substantial wealth in alms to the Pandits and the beggars, and it was the place meant for this purpose here on this hill. It is a beautifully carved pillar with some of the best designs and is made of a massive stone. On it one can see Chamundaraya with his illustrious preceptor Acharya Nemichand Siddhanta Chakravarti, flanked by chauri-bearers. Besides there are numerous inscriptions of great historical importance. It is about 5 ft. in height. This column with its overhead pavilion was also built by Chamundaraya according to one of the traditions. It is said that Chamundaraya got inscribed upon it some of the most important events of his life and also the particulars pertaining to the colossus itself, but were effaced later by one Kanna Hergade so that he might substitute a brief one of his own. Now, lost of the most important historical facts about the builder of the colossus as well as his own life, these two things have

become matters of mere guess-work. In one of the inscriptions, Arishtanemi is mentioned as the artisan of the colossus, but it is not so very definite and one is left in wilderness of confusion in these respects and has to rely upon the legends and common folklores.

It is said to be supported from above in such a way that a handkerchief could be passed under it, but now, due to some mishap in the roof this fantasy is not to be found any more.

5. Siddhargundu (otherwise also known as Siddhashila) —is a big slab made out of granite boulder and lies to the right of the Akhand Bagilu. It has numerous inscriptions and images of some of the prominent Jain Acharyas with their names.

6. Akhand bagilu —It means a door without joints, which is literally true about this door. It has been carved out of a single massive boulder of granite and has no joints whatsoever. It is the entrance door to the upper enclosure of Gommateshvar. On the top of its lintel there is a fine inscribed figure of Laxmi seated on a lotus and is being bathed by two elephants standing on either side of her. This door-way is also said to be built by Chamundaraya, the builder of the colossus. There are two small side-shrines of Bahubali and Bharat on its right and left sides. These temples were built by Bharateshwar Dandnayak (Home Minister) at the instruction of his Guru Gandvimukta Siddhantdev in 1130 A D.

7. Gullikayiji bagilu —It got its name after the well-known devotee Gullikayiji and is so called because of an inscribed image of a sitting woman with folded hands on a nearby boulder about one foot in height. It is mistook for Gullikayiji whereas in one of the inscriptions it is referred to as that of the daughter of Mallishetti (*Vide* Ins. No. 418) and it commemorates the place of her death.

8. Siddhara Basti —This is a small temple just close to the outer enclosure and the door to enter into inner court of Bahubali. It has a small image of Lord Siddha of 3 ft in height. It has two richly inscribed columns on its either side of about 6 ft in height of elegant workmanship specially on their tops.

Then by flight of some 20 steps one gets in the Akhandbagilu and yet ascending some 20 steps one enters an open court surrounded by a battlemented corridor containing numerous side-cells, each enshrining a Tirthankara's figure in centre with their *Dwarpals* on their either side. This corridor is again surrounded by a mighty wall, a good part of which is picturesquely formed by heavy boulders apparently in their natural position. Gangaraj who built this *suttalaya* was a mighty great general and army Commander-in-Chief of Hoyasala Kings of Dwaravati and seems to be a man of great foresight. Though the figures in cells show the distinct signs

of gradual decay, there is no evident sign of deterioration or injury wrought by time to these mighty walls and they look quite fresh and immune from decay for hundreds of years yet to come. Here in the centre there is a great door with open portico, which has an image of *Dwarpal* on its either side and in a corner there stands a big slab besides the gate bearing an inscription tracing the history of Lord Bahubali and a brief reference of its builder Chamundaya. Here under the canopy of Brahmdeva stands Gullikayiji with a vessel in her hand. This is the door of the court in the centre of which stands a mighty colossus of Lord Bahubali, 57 ft high, one of the greatest wonders of the world which made this tiny village of Shravanbelgola a place of pilgrimage not only for Indians but world-wide tourists as well.

The Jain Architecture of the South India solely belongs to Dravidian style of Architecture and is represented by two classes Basties and Bettas and in this respect is totally different from that of the North, where the latter are unknown. The Basties are regular temples in the usual acceptance of that word containing an image of one of the Tirthankaras as the object of worship. Bettas (literally mean hills) are courtyards at the summits of the hills open to the sky and contain a colossal image of Gommateshvar.

Now, let us enter the very court in which the colossus stands, and we find ourselves just in front of a huge human figure, a masterpiece of super-workmanship. The colossus represents Gommateshvara, younger brother of Bharata, who, according to Jain mythology was the first man to attain salvation in the current Avasarpini era even before his father Shri Rishabhadeva.

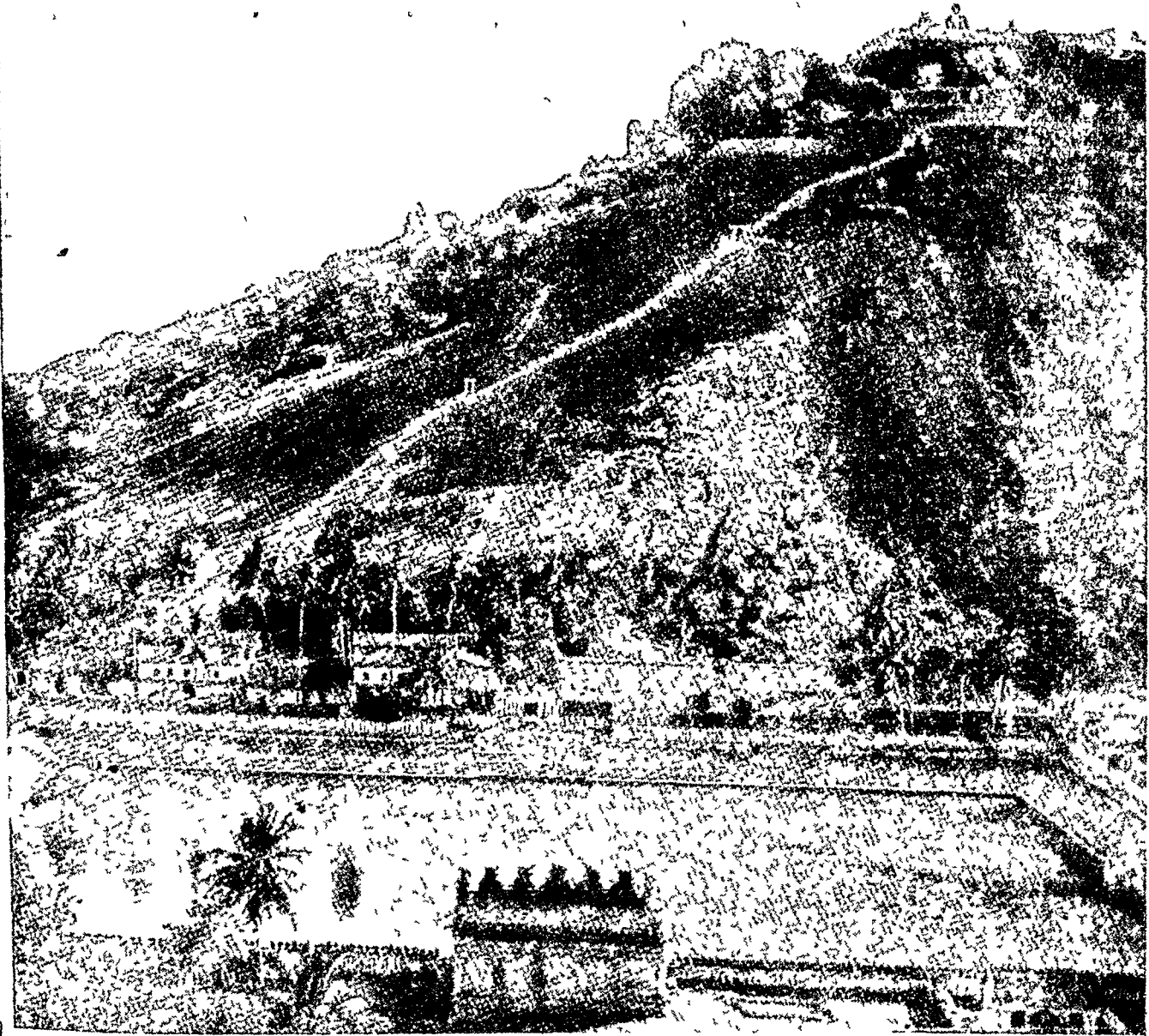
The huge image stands majestically in almost perfect state of preservation despite its antiquity. Its height is 57 ft., the breadth across the shoulders is 26 ft., the toes are 2 ft. 9 in. long, and the middle finger 5 ft 3 in., a foot 9 ft., height of the heel  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft., and waist comparatively small, only 10 ft. The figure is nude and stands erect, facing north towards some particularly sacred shrines on the second hill. The mighty feet rest upon a low pedestal carved to represent an open lotus flower. In order to support the enormous weight of the body, the rock has been left around and behind the legs and carved in the shape of large ant hills. A climbing creeper cut in the stone twines its tendrils and leaves and berries around the huge limbs, and cobras are seen issuing from the ant-hills. Though the lower parts of the leg are comparatively a bit dwarfed and shoulders broad in proportion to body, the figure is remarkably well-cut and is treated conventionally and the more so when we consider of the difficulties those ancient sculptors must have encountered. Owing to its abnormal height, and absence of any high place from which to get a satisfactory view, it is difficult to see the image in its true perspective, specially is this true of the face, which is quite the best

part of the statue. The features are regular, hair is done in spiral ringlets, and the lobes of the ears are very long— $5\frac{1}{2}$  ft. in length. The figure is standing with shoulders squared and arms hanging straight down the sides with the thumb turned outwards. Its upper half projects above the surrounding ramparts. It is carved out of a fine grained light grey granite, and has not been injured by weather or violence, and looks as bright and clean as if just from the chisel of the artisan. Around the pedestal and on the stone of ant-hill on the either side are inscriptions in Marathi, archaic Kannad, Grantha and Vatteluttu (*quasi-malayalam*) characters and in Marathi, Kannad and Tamil languages a proclamation "Chamundaraya caused the image to be made"

The image though not either very decorative like the other deities of Hoyasala architecture, nor very elegant like the Greek or Egyptian gods, yet is not wanting in majestic and impressive grandeur. The image in its extreme simplicity has been an ideal exponent of marvellous charm of supreme Indian architectural art, and hardly there exists any other monolithic statue throughout the world which can surpass it in its beauty or perfection of the art which it displays. Its simplicity has been the highest landmark of its charm and it is doubtful whether any kind of ornamentation could ever have added an iota of beauty or dignity to this wonderful architectural specimen. Its grandeur is only superceded by its simplicity, and that by serenity and that too by its majestic pose. Nothing grander, or more majestic or superb exists than this and it will remain unparalleled in these respects in future also as it ever had been a great wonder to all the people of all the ages, in the past and it was no less a wonder to its builders then than is it to us to-day.

It is not an easy job to measure such a mighty colossus, so it is quite natural then that there may be difference of opinions in respect of its height and also the length of other limbs. Mr Buchanan fixed its height at 70 ft -3 in which was most probably arrived at by multiplying by 18 to the length of the foot. There is an inscription to that effect just below the left foot denoting it 3 ft -4 in, but it is obviously erroneous. Sir Arthur Wellesley, who visited this image in 1799 A D fixed it at 60 ft -3 in. Mr B Bowring, C S I, Chief Commissioner, Mysore (from 1862 to 1870), finally fixed it at 57 ft after actual measurement in 1865 A D. At 1871-Mahamastakabhisheka it was again measured and the following measurements were finally established —

		ft	in.
1	Total height to the bottom of the ear	50	0
2	From the bottom of the ear to the crown of the head	6	6
3	Length of the foot	9	0
4.	Breadth across the front of the foot	4	6



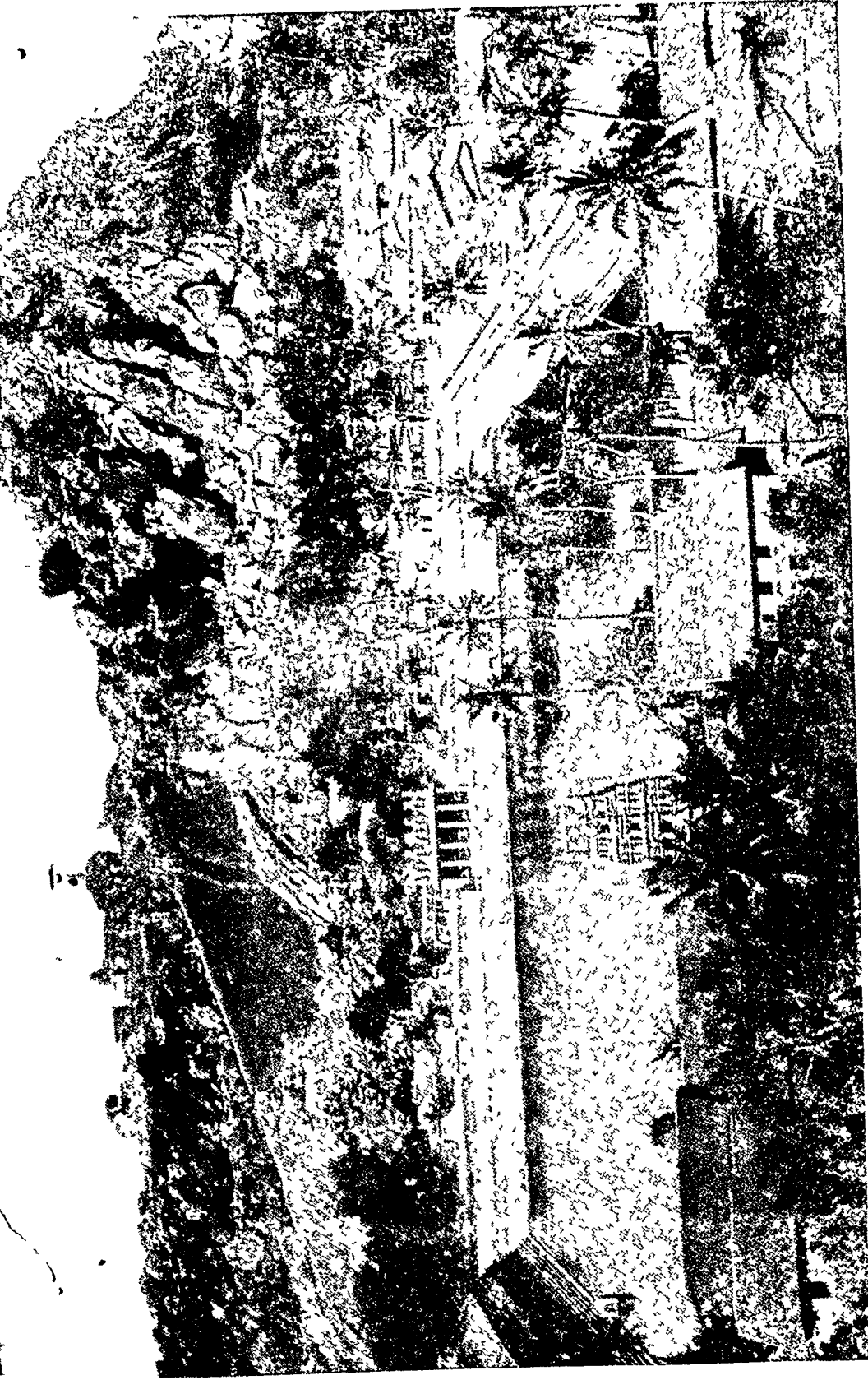
#### THE SACRED HILL UPON WHICH THE COLOSSUS STANDS

Gommateshvara stands on the summit of a sacred hill called Vindhyagiri. It is a great dome of granite upon which not a single blade of grass can grow. The figure was undoubtedly cut out of a projecting boulder which was later fashioned into a human figure. This figure is so huge that it is quite visible within the radius of 15 miles around. Village of Shravanbelgola lies at the foot of the hill with sacred lake of Kalyani in its centre. The path along the hill-side is also visible with its two arches. The stone-hewn steps count 496 and were built by Danvir Seth Manikchand Hirachand, J P, Bombay, in 1886 A D.



**CARVED BODILY FROM A HILLTOP**

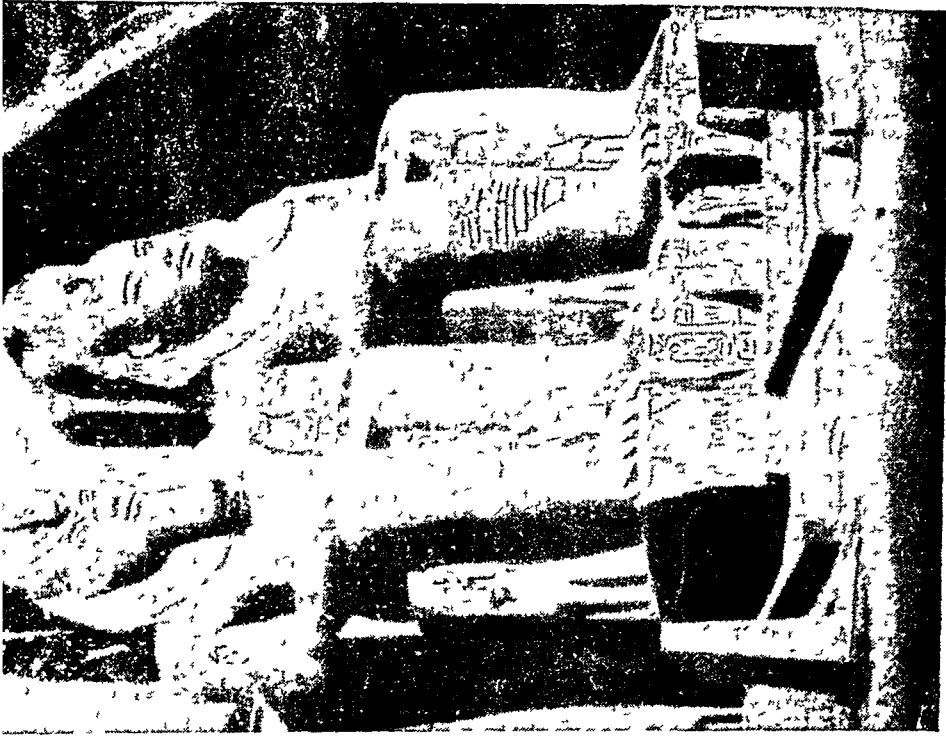
Nothing grander exists than the grand Gommataeshwara,—the eponymous of spiritual  
at Shravanbelgola Gommataeshwara seems to be almost a living saint



### CHANDRAGIRI SANCTIFIED BY BHADRABAHU AND CHANDRAGUPTA

This is the sacred hill of Chandragiri upon which Chandragupta Basti and Bhadrabahu cave exist. It bears about 100 inscriptions of the persons ranking high in positions from the Kings, Commanders to common folks denoting their quitting this world after implicit observance of *Sallekhana*. It links the eras from 3rd century BC to the last days of Ganga Kings in 10th Century. Sixteen small temples of different eras tell of those past glories that had been the Jainism once in Southern India. It is comparatively lower than the Vindhyagiri, and has only 220 steps hewn out of the granite. These steps were built by another Danvir from Bombay—Seth Gurumukhrajji Sukhanandji originally of Fatehpur in Jaipur State. Lake Kalyani lies at the foot of Chandragiri after which this village is said to have acquired its name.





**NO COMPARISON POSSIBLE !**

Gommateshwara has watched over India for only 1,000 years, whilst the statues of Rameses have gazed upon the Nile for more than 4,000 years ! Gommateshwara represents an spiritual empire of his own whilst Rameses glorify in their illimitable pride and personal vanity ! Dr Fer~~g~~sson opines that the Egyptian Rameses are more artistic than the figure of Gommateshwara Every reader can judge himself how far ~~he~~ the eminent Dr is right in his remarks.

	ft.	in.
5 Length of the great toe	2	9
6. Half girth at the instep	6	4
7 Half girth of the thigh	10	0
8 Length from the hip to the ear	24.	6
9 Length from coccyx to the ear	20	0
10. Breadth across the pelvis	13	0
11 Breadth at the waist	10	0
12. Length from the elbow and waist to the ear	17	0
13 Length from the armpit to the ear	7	0
14. Breadth across the shoulders	26	0
15. Length from the base of the neck to the ear	2	6
16. Length of the fore finger	3	6
17 Length of the middle finger	5	3
18 Length of the third finger	4	7
19. Length of the fourth finger	2	8

As is already stated above that all the limbs are in proportion and the figure as a whole is well-cut, but this is quite true of the face which is exceptionally beautiful with its wonderful contemplative expression touched with a faint smile. The spirit of Jain renunciation is fully brought out in the statue. The nudity of the image indicates absolute renunciation while its stiff and erect posture stands for perfect self-control. The benign smile on the face shows inward bliss and sympathy for the struggling world, and if one sees the face for only a few seconds he may not help feeling that smiling Gommateshvara will burst into a laughter right now !

Chamundaraya is universally held to be the builder of this colossus. He was the Commander-Minister of Rachamalla (IV) of the Gang Dynasty who ruled from 974 to 984 A D, and it seems certain that the figure was hewn out about the year 983 A D. The surrounding cloister was built in 1116 A D by Gangaraja, the Commander-in-Chief of Hoyasala. King Vishnuvardhana of Dwara-vati. A note to that effect has been inscribed on the ant-hill at the foot of the statue.

There can be no question as to how the colossus was made. As it is cut from a single block of granite, it is manifestly impossible that it could have been hauled up such a smooth and steep hill as Vindhyagiri and raised to an upright position. It seems practically certain that a projecting mass of rock on the very summit of this hill was carved into the figure, as now we see it — a task from which the Indian mind would not shrink. Dr Fergusson, the distinguished Archaeologist, says.—“Nothing grander or more imposing exists out of Egypt and even there no known statue surpasses it in height, though it must be confessed they do excel it in perfection of the Art they exhibit”. (See Fergusson’s History of Indian and Eastern Architectures, Part II, p 72.)

Gommateshvara has watched over India for only 1,000 years, whilst the statues of Rameses have gazed upon the Nile for more than 4,000 years. The monolithic Indian Saint is thousands of years younger than the prostrate Rameses or the guardians of Abu Simbal, but he is more impressive, both on account of his commanding position on the brow of a hill overlooking the wide stretch of plain and of his size. It is the biggest monolithic statue in the world. It is impossible to over-estimate the sublimity and grandeur of the image of Shri Gommateshvara for at the height of its massive conception and perfection of art. It defies all descriptions even as it does any imitation of it!

The image represents Gommateshvara, a Jain saint, popular in south India, but it is known by the name of Bahubali in north India. The very name of Gommateshvara is rather peculiar to north India. Jains, as there is none of this name in the long list of Jain celebrities, including 24 Tirthankaras, 12 Chakravarties, 9 Narayanas, 9 Prati-Narayanas, and 9 Balbhadras, nor any such mythological person, it is quite possible that word 'Gommat' acquired its origin from 'Manmatha' in Sanskrit, and as Bahubali was the first *Manmatha* (*Kamadeva*) he was rightly called 'Gommateshvara'. Secondly, Gommat was one of the names of Chamundaraya and so the image is known as a Gommateshvar meaning the Lord of Gommata. According to Jain traditions, it was Bahubali who attained salvation first during the current Avasarpini era and so being the first man to attain such a high distinction, he became an object of universal worship. Gommateshvara is very popular name with the masses, including Jains and Non-Jains alike, in the southern India, specially below Godavari, and we find numerous images of Gommateshvara in standing pose with all the similar outward features of superb architectural beauty all around. We find such colossuses at Karkal, Venur, Gommatgiri, and also at Ellora Jain caves. No image of Bahubali is to be found in north India, and excepting one at Ellora, he is conspicuously intraceable elsewhere in the north of river Krishna. The most probable reason of his popularity with Gang Dynasty and other contemporary Kings of the Deccan seems to be based on their having adopted him as 'Kuldeva'. A most important fact in relation to this ideology should not be lost sight of is that all these Kings and their Generals belonged to *Kshatriya* caste and were always at wars against each other, naturally therefore they adopted Bahubali as their *Kuldeva*, because the latter had defeated his elder brother Bharat in three kinds of wars according to Jain traditions. The word Bahubali stands literally for 'victory' and his adoption as such was evidently quite appropriate.

There is another story describing the reason of erection of this image at Shravanbelgola. The tradition says that Shri Kalaldevi, the mother of Chamundaraya took a vow not to taste milk till she saw Gommat about whose existence she had heard from Acharya

Jainsain This news was divulged to Chamundaraya by his wife Ajitadevi and he undertook to pay a pilgrimage to Bahubali image which was situated at Podanapur—somewhere in the north probably near Taxila according to Swetambar tradition. Originally this image was erected by Bharat Chakravarti in commemoration of his younger brother (Bahubali), being the only son of his second mother Sunanda. That image being very antique was surrounded by *kukkut sarpa* and creepers to such an extent that the image became practically invisible to the naked eye. Chamundaraya who accompanied his mother on the holy pilgrimage resolved to erect a similar image of Bahubali at Shriavanbelgola in order to fulfil the vow of his mother. Under the instruction of his Guru Shri Nemichandra, he struck an arrow from Chandragiri hill which fell on a very big granite boulder on Vindhya giri. Approaching near to it, Chamundaraya perceived a clear image of Gommateshvar in it, and immediately ordered the sculptors to carve the colossus out of the very boulder which was perfected in the presence of his Guru Siddhant Chakravarti (a title acquired for writing numerous books, viz, Gommatsar, Triloksar, Kshapanasar, etc.) Nemichandra and this anecdote has also been carved out on a pillar named “Tyagad Brahmadeva Stambha” referred to above.

This ancient monument, in the stillness of its hill-top shrine is a most impressive sight and one stands before it with feelings of wonder and awe. Gommateshvar seems to be almost a living thing yet unconscious or rather unconcerned of the visitor's presence. The sculptor's conception was that of a holy man wrapt in contemplation so profound as to be unconscious of the serpents about his feet or the plants winding their tendrils around his mighty arms must be oblivious to every thing. One seems to be in the presence of a saint of bygone ages and one feels impelled to tread softly and speak in undertones lest he might awaken the Saint from his deep meditation, where he has been standing for well-nigh a thousand years in this very majestic pose! Ages have rolled over him, ancient civilizations have swept around his feet, contending armies of Hindu Rajas and Moslem Kings, and French and English had devastated the plain below but this unmoved Sentinel of Shriavanbelgola stands here and here only smiling over the distressed humanity and its greedy avocations, resulting ultimately in utter despair!

This image can truly be claimed to be one of the highest living specimens of the Jain Iconographical Art. Jain Art is so great and ancient that, even the most prominent western critics have to accept candidly that it is the Jainism which initiated idolatry in India. Hardly there exists any Jain holy book or an epic which does not exalt idol worshipping. They are full with very lucid long descriptions of *Akrurim Charitralayas* in sixteen heavens and also in the *Bhogabhumi* and *Kulparvatas*. In fact, the roots of idolatry

have gone deep into the meta-physical and ethical structure of Jainism to such an extent that it is impossible to separate this aspect of worship from Jainism at all. Though Jainism has ever been accused by Hindu and allied schools of philosophies to be an atheist for not believing in gods and idols. The colossus of Bahubali is the greatest proof with Jainism which nail their accusation down *in toto*.

In spite of all this, it will not be out of place to point herein that the fundamental conception behind Jain idol-worship is quite different, and to a great extent, contrary to all other philosophies, and this alone puts the Art of Jain Iconography absolutely on different footing. The main theme of Jainism rests on renunciation while others do glorify in mundane pomps and decorations. The others prefer all those decorations and charms in order to satisfy their sexual impulse or arouse a sense of awe, which is totally absent in Jain Iconographical Art. Naturally then, the image of Bahubali was not meant to serve as a highest specimen of decorative art like that of Dankhanacharya's Hoyasala Art, or the grandeur of Egyptian gods who symbolised authority, unlimited pride and vanity, or the Roman Art based on the vanity of their national eminence, but to carve out a saint absorbed in seeking after self, though evidently in his body, but by profession, far and far away not only from his body but the world itself! The sculptor has marvellously been successful in depicting the highest sense of renunciation, self control, inner bliss and supreme attainment with the profound expression of serenity touched with graceful smile and all other main characteristics of Jain Iconographical Art, and it was, indeed, well-nigh an impossible job to carve all these characteristics in an idol out of a rough cliff except but for an exceptionally master-artisan. The colossus of Gommateshvara provides a specimen of Jain ethics incarnate combined with highest articulate technique. It seems that this figure of Gommateshvara evidently defines both Jain philosophy and Jain Iconographical Art at the same time.

More than a century ago, Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards the Great Duke of Wellington, and Governor-General of India from 1798-1805 A D) turned aside from the conquests of 4th Mysorean War against Tippu Sultan in 1799 to have a gaze at this mysterious figure and expressed his wonder for the amount of labour it involved and also for its superior workmanship and marked artistic technique.

On both the sides of the image of Gommateshvara, a little to front, are two chouri-bearers about 6 ft high, very beautifully carved and richly ornamented. The one to the right being a *yaksha* and other to the left is a *Yakshi*. They hold a fruit in their hands as an emblem of an offering. To the left of the colossus is a circular stone-basin called 'Lalit Sarovara' (lovely pond) and it is mentioned in an inscription on the ant-hill.

The mandapa or a pillared hall in front of Gommat is decorated with nine well-carved ceilings. Eight of them have figures of *Ashta-Digpals* and the middle figure is that of the *Indra* holding a Kalasha for anointing Gommat. All the ceilings are artistically executed. They were built by Baldeva Mantri in the early 12th century A.D. and the railings around the statue were built by Bharatmayya in about 1160 A.D.

Around the court with its images of 23 Tirthankaras (curiously enough there is no image of *Padmaprabhu* out of 43 images installed here) one passes into the numerous side-shrines where formerly due to extreme dark no idol was distinctly visible, but now the whole hill and its shrines have been fitted with electric light, so these idols are quite visible. Lastly one climbs to the flat roof of the cloister to get a better view of the great central figure. More and more one sees the colossus from the closer corners, more and more he feels fascinated with its superb beauty and perfection. His head is low in reverence to the Saint and the probable sculptor Arishtanemi for such an extra-ordinary creation. On closer scrutiny it becomes quite clear that nothing escaped of the artisan's attention which was needed to make it a 'Wonder of the World' for thousands of years yet to come.

This colossal image is not only one of its kind, but in fact, is by far the largest and the best. There are two more but a bit smaller stone hewn figures of Gommateshvar within the radius of 150 miles from Shravanbelgola. One is at Karkal, and the other at Venur, both in the South Kanara District of Madras Province, which lie within the radius of 50 miles from Moodbidri. A third one is also to be found at the Ellora Jain Caves along with Indra Sabha which is by far smaller in size. A special feature of it lies in respect of numerous serpents surrounding the central Gommateshvar instead of a creeper as is a common feature with all these three images of this side. So far I think, Ellora Gommateshvar is the first and also the last of its kind in the north of Godavari. Pilgrims going to Moodbidri should make a point to pay visits to the other three Gommateshvaras at Gommatagiri, Karkal, and Venur. All these Gommateshvaras are built with the same salient features but are lower in artistic calibre.

### WHO WAS CHAMUNDARAYA ?

It is indeed a thousand pities that we do not have an authentic account of life of such an illustrious bannerman like Chamundaraya, who virtually donated everything belonging to him in the glorification of Jainism in those ages which by no means present a happy reading. It was he who by self-less manifestation of glory of Jainism tried once more to revive it and its noble ethics which were showing

clear signs of gradual decay. It is exclusively due to him and such other illustrious donors like Gangaraj that Jainism yet survives in the South.

His father Mahaballayya and grand-father Govindmayya were trusted servants of the royal Ganga family and had served it for many years with great distinction under the King Marsing II. Like his illustrious parents Chamundaraya too had distinguished himself in Marsing's campaigns and had displayed remarkable valour and personal gallantry particularly in the wars against Nolamba, a Pallava King. He not only did frustrate all the designs of the usurpers after the death of Marsing (II) but also placed Rachamull (IV) on the throne by strongly suppressing all the elements of disaffection and discord ruthlessly. It was due to this war-like and brave Commander-Minister who waged unending wars against the hostile neighbours and refractory chief feudatories. He stormed the fort of Uchhangī and conquered it. This fort was considered to be impregnable one by all, being protected by chain of lofty hills. In the second war, he defeated the mighty armies of Vajvaldeva, brother of Patalmull in the battle of Khedagi. In the next battle he killed Prabhuvanvir at Bayelur. He ruthlessly suppressed the feudatories, viz, Raja, Basa, Shivara, Kumanka, and brought them under the subjugation of his master Rachamull (IV). By showing his great valour and unstinted devotion in the cause of the State, he was honoured by titles like Vir Martanda, Rana Rang Singha, Samar Dhurandhar, Vanī-Kul-Kal danda, Bhujavikram, Vatamar etc., with rich endowments from time to time.

Though he was the Napoleon of his time in the South, but he was by no means less enthusiastic or lacked in what we call fine arts, like poetry or prosody. It is now an admitted fact that he was equally a pen master as he was the holder of the sword in the battle field. He wrote in 978 A D an epic in Kannad called '*Chamundaraya Purana*' mainly in prose, which initiated Kannad prose. In this work Chamundaraya has virtually excelled at many places in praise of Jain tirthankaras. In his work he has used a number of Sanskrit, Tamil and Prakrit words with their derivations which prove beyond doubts what a wonderful command he had over these languages. He was undoubtedly the contemporary of poet Pampa—the author of Kannad *Adipurana*, which is considered to be one of the rare works in Kannad literature and is prescribed for the degree of M A in many Universities in south India.

He was the disciple of Acharya Ajitsain and it is inscribed in one of the inscriptions that the King Marsing (II) performed *Sallekhana* in the presence of Ajitsain at Bankapur. His only son Jindevanna was also his disciple. He was honoured with a title of 'Raya' for building this colossus of Gommateshvara here. It is recorded that though he had unlimited powers and authority, yet

he was very simple and kind to every body. He had no grain of self-pride or ego, and was ever ready to do every thing in the promotion of the welfare of Jainism and Jain monks in those critical days in South India when Jainism was being attacked from all sides. It was he who saved it from its doom and complete annihilation. It is said about him that he never uttered a lie even in jest and for this reason only he was given a title of 'Satyvak Yudhishtir'. Jainism had no second Chamundaraya after his death and downfall of Jainism in South could not be checked any more, so now we see it at its lowest ebb!

## II

### MAHA - MASTAKABHISHEKA.

An ancient legend tells the following story about the colossus which, in all probabilities was responsible for the introduction of a ritual known as 'Mahamastakabhisheka', which takes place once in ten or twelve years. When Chamundaraya had finally completed the image he resolved to perform '*Panchamritabhisheka*' ceremony, i.e., bathing of the image with five liquids, viz, milk, butter, honey, sugar, and water with a faint air of vanity. Vast quantities of these things were collected in many hundreds of pots, but to the intense annoyance and wonder of Chamundaraya, when the liquids were poured from a great scaffolding upon the head of the image they would not flow below the waist of Gommateshvara. He tried again and again but in vain, and thus the intention of bathing the image from head to foot was frustrated. Then a celestial nymph Kushmandini appeared disguised as an old poor woman, holding the five liquids in a small silver pot and declared that she could accomplish what the valient commander had failed to achieve. Chamundaraya first laughed at the suggestion but later permitted her to make the attempt, whereupon she poured out the contents of her small silver pot, and lo, the sacred liquid at once flowed down and completely bathed the image! This old woman was none else but Gullikayiji and her devotion did a miracle which mighty minister like Chamundaraya could not do. He accepted his defeat at the feet of an humble devotee and he immortalised his utter defeat also by erecting Gullikayiji's image just opposite to the colossus outside the door. No better homage could ever have been paid by a vanquished to his victor in more dignified manner than this!

Two things resulted from that time - the place began to be called "Belgola" (Belliya Gola means a small pot or a tank of pure water)



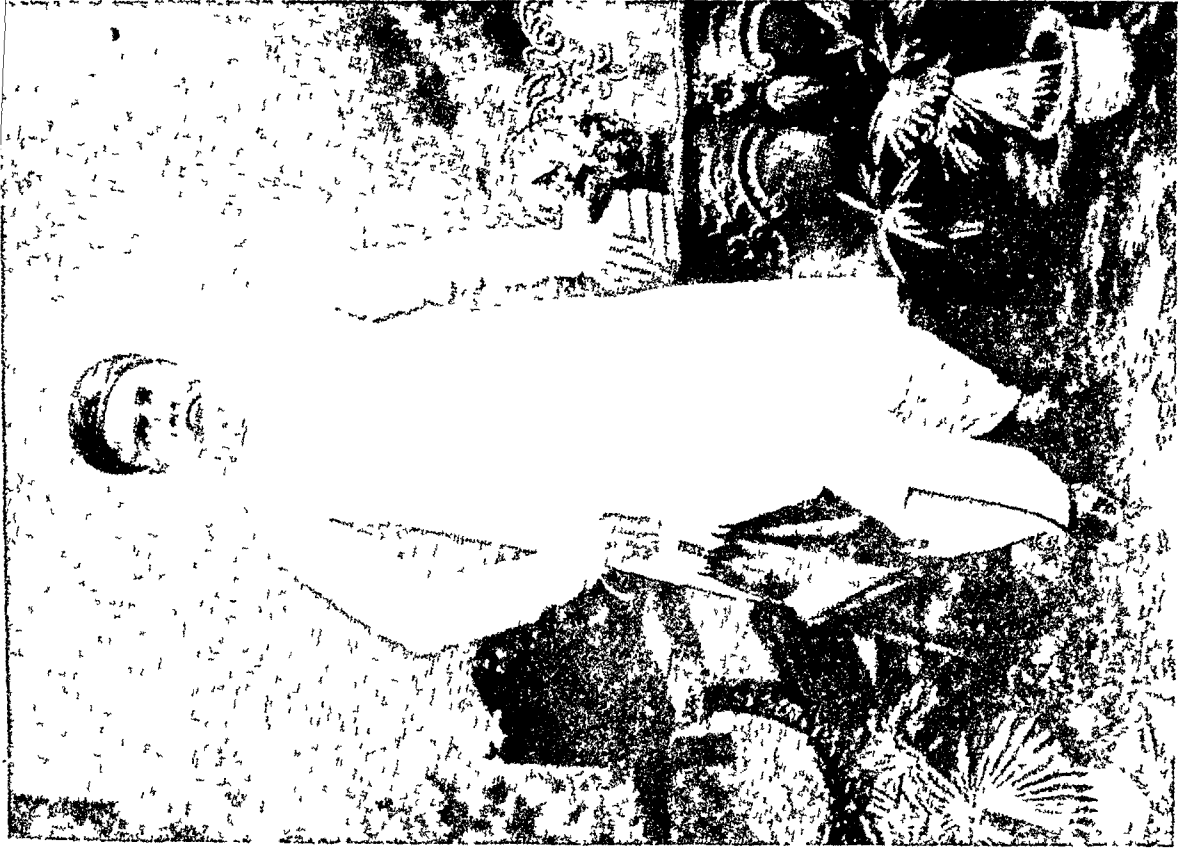
and periodically the great image got to be bathed by its Jain guardians and pilgrims who gather for the ceremony. The first mention of this rite is traced as back as the year 1398 A.D. The last three ceremonies were held respectively in 1910 (30-3-10), 1925 (14-3-25) and 1940 (24-3-40). The next ceremony is going to be held on the 5th March 1953. This festival of anointing the image is called "Mahamastakabhisheka" which means, the great head-anointing ceremony, and it requires a certain rare conjunction of the heavenly bodies for its observation. The huge proportions of the graceful colossus, whose head is anointed on that day by thousands of priests and pilgrims gives to the ritual an impressive character. This festival begins about a fortnight earlier and terminates after a fortnight of the Mahamastakabhisheka. Between these two dates there are various festivals including *Pancha Kalyan Pujas*.

The written records are available to establish the Mahamastakabhishekas having taken place in the following years —

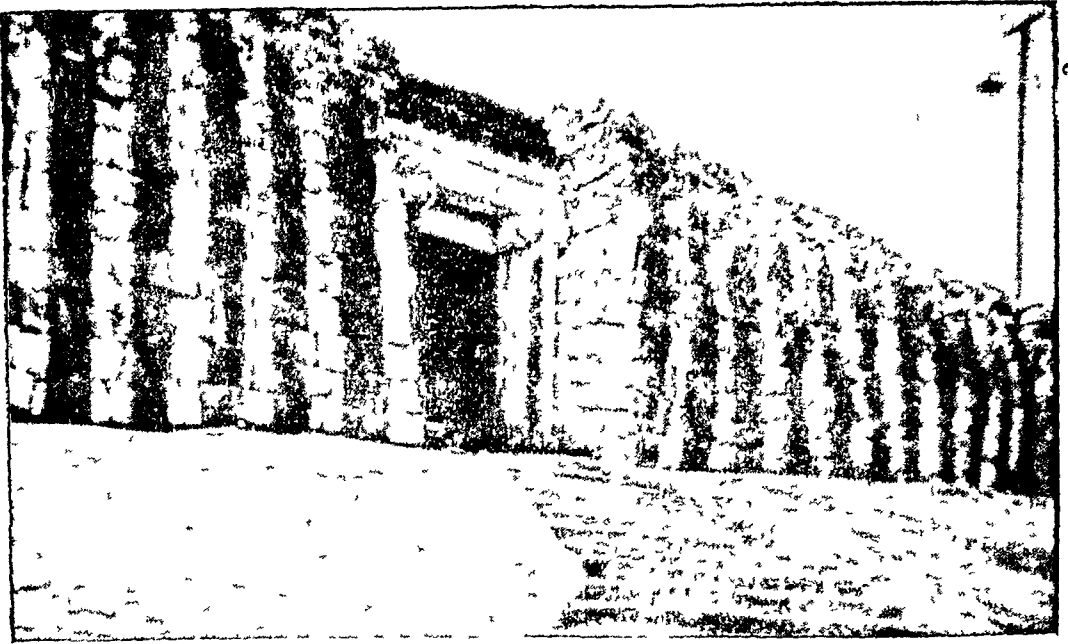
1. 1398 A D —Mentioned in Inscription No 105 at Shravanbelgola. There is also a mention therein to the effect that one Panditarya did perform seven Mahamastakabhishekas like this prior to it,
2. 1612 A.D.—Mentioned by poet Panchabana of its being performed by Shanti Varni,
3. 1659 A D —Performed by H H Maharaja Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore,
4. 1675 A D —Performed by H H Maharaja Chikka Devaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore,
5. 1677 A D.—Mentioned by poet Anant of its being performed by Vishalaksha, the Minister of H.H. Chikka Devaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore;
6. 1800 A.D —Performed by H H Maharaja Bhumadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar (IV) Bahadur of Mysore,
7. 1825 A D.—Mentioned by Pandit Shantiraj of its being performed by H H Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar (III) of Mysore,
8. 1827 A D —Mentioned in inscription No 98 at Shravanbelgola,
9. 1871 A D —Mentioned in Indian Antiquary;
10. 1887 A.D —Mentioned in Epigraphica Carnatica, Vol. 2, Shravanbelgola, pp 18-19, performed by Kolhapur Mutt Bhattarak Laxmisen at the expenses of Rs 30,000.



**LATE) DANVIR SETH MANEKCHAND HIRACHAND JHAVERI, J.P**  
his charities amount to Rs. 25,00,000/ to-day. It was he who built  
steps on Vindhya giri in 1880 A D. and founded the All India  
Digamber Jan Tirthakshetra Committee, Bombay.



**(LATE) DANVIR SETH GURUMUKHRAJJI SUKHANANDJI OF BOMBAY**  
A prince among Jains and once a king-Cotton-Merchant of Bombay, was a  
type of those philanthropists who made munificent donations in the service of  
Jain community at large The total amount of his donations in the cause of the  
Jain community amounts to a million of rupees The steps on Chandragiri and a  
big Dharmashala at Mundgere owe their existence to his munificence



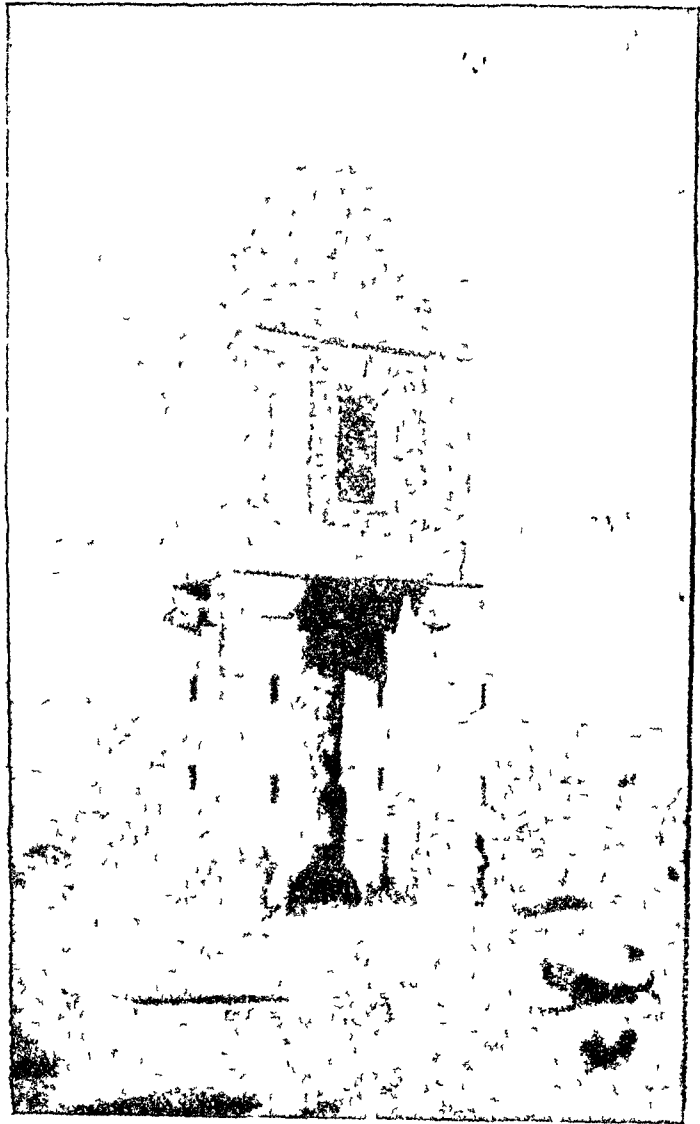
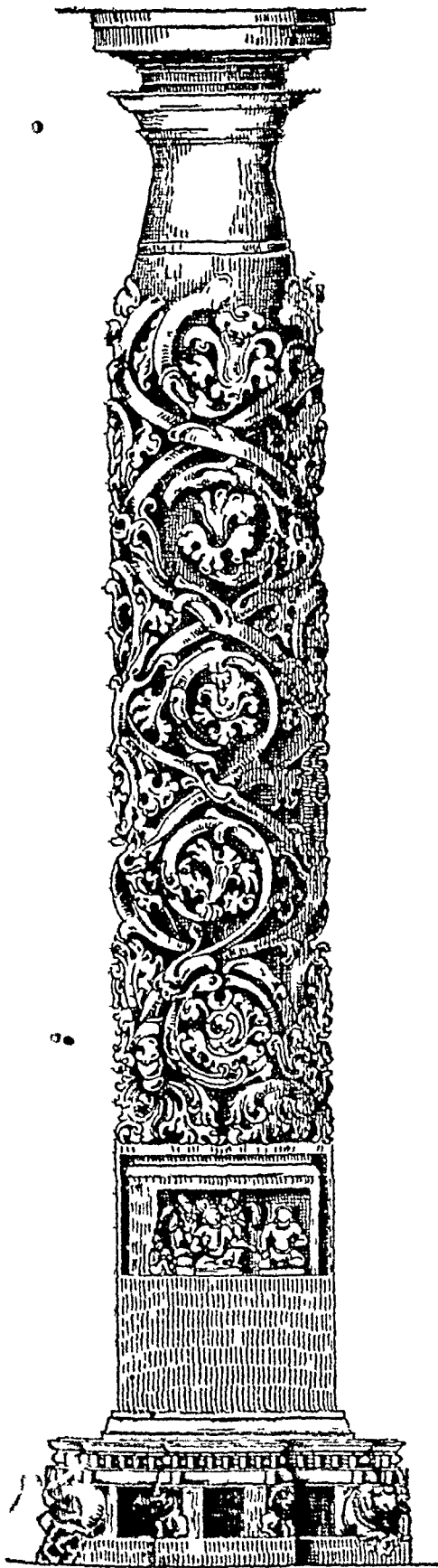
**GATEWAY TO THE OUTER ENCLOSURE**

After ascending 500 steps one comes to this door and enters the outer enclosure containing eight Temples



**OUDEGAL BASTI**

On the high pedestal stands this magnificent Temple Its outer wall is supported by props (*Oudegals*) and so acquired its name



**TYAGAD BRAHMADEVA STAMBHA**

Stands under a pavilion Due to some mishap, this pillar is not hanging any more, as it used to do Numerous inscriptions of great historical value are inscribed on it.

**TYAGAD BRAHMADEVA PILLAR**

This is one of the most historical pillars on the Vindhyagiri It was built by Chamundaraya —the builder of the colossus.

श्रीगंगारजैरूपवियते  
 श्रीगंगारजैरूपवियते

ॐ अक्षयैरुच्यते  
 ॐ अक्षयैरुच्यते  
 ॐ अक्षयैरुच्यते

INSCRIPTIONS ON THE IMAGE

On the ant-hill to the left of the colossus there are inscriptions in Marathi, Kannada and Malayala announcing that this image was caused to be built by Chamundaray and the inner enclosure was built by Gangaraj (in 1116 A D )

11. 1900 A.D.—Mentioned in Indian Antiquery ;
12. 1910 A D —Resolution passed for opening Jain Boarding Schools under the scheme of Danvir Seth Manekchand Hn achand, J.P., and Brahmachari Sitalprasadji of Bombay;
13. 1925 A D.—H. H. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar (IV) presided over All India Digamber Jain Conference and an address was presented to him by late Shri M.L. Vardhmaniah under the presidentship of Sir Sarupchandji Hukamchandji, Kt., Indore. The surplus of Rs. 72,000/- was deposited with Muzrai Department, Mysore, under "Mahamastakabhisheka Fund ;"
14. 1940 A.D.—H.H. Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore attended it in presence of lakhs of Jains. It was for this first time that this ceremony was wholly and solely managed by the Muzrai Department of Mysore State, instead of All India Digamber Jain Tirthakshetra Committee, Bombay, which managed 1910 and 1925 Mastakabhishekas, and thus this tirtha slipped from the hands of Jain Community for ever.

Months before the festival is due, a scaffolding composed of thousands of strong bamboos is built around the statue of Gommateshvar, so that the priests can pour on its head the fifteen libations required for anointing.

Two-hundred-thousand pilgrims of the Jain sect gather at the town of Shravanbelgola on the day of bath. They come from all parts of India and in the crowd one can pick out Punjabis, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Tamils, and fair-skinned Lalajis from north India, all of them in holiday attire which makes the scene really a colourful spectacle.

On the morning of the *Panchamritabhisheka* the court-yard before the colossus is strewn with layers of fresh paddy. On this green carpet, one thousand-and-eight coloured pots filled with sacred water are arranged in rows, sticking out from the mouth of each, a cocoanut with ceremonial dressing of mango leaves fastened with coloured sacred twine. Out of these 1,008 pots, 900 are used for the first anointing, 103 pots for the second, and only five pots for the third and last anointing.

When ceremony is due to start, a number of Jain priests take up their stations on the scaffoldings. Each holds in his hands one clay-pot brimming over with milk, and one with ghee. At a signal of the officiating dignitary, they start the bath by pouring the potfulls of milk over the image. Then ghee follows.

After these preliminary anointings, Gommateshvar is worshipped till noon by the Jain priests. On the stroke of 1 o'clock, the great Mahamastakabhisheka begins. The Maharajas of Mysore State have ever been the greatest patrons of the colossus since the very remote past and it is they who have a hereditary privilege of performing the first puja of the colossus at this occasion.

As the appointed hour draws near, the thousand priests climb to their places on the scaffolding with pots of water. Suitable music is played by the temple musicians while the priests chant hymns and prayers from the Jain sacred texts. Meanwhile the vast assembly of the pilgrims shouts ovations of Gommateshvar. Then at the bidding of the master of the ceremony, the thousand pots of water are emptied over the image.

Following these baths 15 other offerings are showered upon Gommateshvar in the following order —

1 Water, 2 Coconut, 3 Plantains, 4 Jaggery, 5. Ghee, 6 Sugar, 7. Almonds, 8 Dates, 9. Poppy-seeds, 10. Milk, 11 Curds, 12. Sandal, 13 Gold Flowers, 14 Silver Flowers, 15. Silver coins.

All the while worshippers, and their faces turned to the image go on crying '*Jaya, Jaya, Maharaja* (Victory, Victory to Lord)' It was during this ceremony that the image was again measured, scaffolding making it possible.

The earliest Mahamastakabhisheka on record took place in 1398 A D and the latest in 1940. The following account of the ceremony held in 1887 is quoted from *Epigraphica Carnatika*, Vol. 2, Shravanbelgola, pp. 18-19.—

#### 1887—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

“The 14th March last was the day of anointing for the statue of Gommateshvar. It was a great day, in anticipation of which 20,000 pilgrims gathered there from all parts of India. There were Bengalis, Gujaratis and Tamil people in great numbers. Some arrived a full month before the time and the stream continued to flow until the afternoon of the day of the great festival. For a whole month there was daily worship in all the temples, and *Padapuja* (worship of the feet) of the great idol besides. On the great day, the 14th, the people began to ascend the hill even before dawn in the hope of securing good places from which to see everything. Among them were large numbers of women and girls in very bright attire, carrying brass or earthen pots with them. By ten o'clock all available space in the temple enclosure was filled. Opposite the idol, an area of 40 sq feet, was strewn with bright yellow paddy, on which were placed 1,008 gaily painted earthenware pots filled with sacred water, covered with cocoanuts and adorned

with mango leaves. Around the image was scaffolding on which stood several priests, each having at hand pots filled with ghee, milk and such alike things. At a signal from the Kolhapur Swami (Shri Laxmisain Bhattarak), the master of the ceremonies, the contents of these vessels were poured simultaneously over the head of the idol. This was a sort of preliminary bath, but the grand bath took place at 2 o'clock. Amid the horrible dissonance of many instruments the thousand pots already mentioned were lifted if by magic from the reserved area to the scaffolding and all their contents poured over the image, the priests meanwhile chanting texts from the sacred books. Evidently the people were much impressed. There were mingled cries of "*Jaya, Jaya, Maharajah,*" and "*Ahaha, Ahaha*"—the distinctive exclamations of northern and southern Indians to mark the wonder and approval. In the final anointing 15 different substances were used, namely, water, cocoanut-milk, plantains, jaggeriy, ghee, sugar, almonds, dates, poppy-seeds, milk, curds, sandal, gold flowers, silver flowers and silver coins. With the gold and silver flowers there were mixed nine varieties of precious gems, and silver coins to the amount of Rs. 500 completed the offering."

#### 1910—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

The 1910—Mahamastakabhisheka also proved out to be a great success from the social point of view. All India Digamber Jain Conference held its special convocation at this juncture. Among the resolutions that were passed was one concerning the opening of new Boarding Schools at all the important cities through-out India, and such institutions were opened at Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Sholapur, Kolhapur, and many other places in consonance to the above resolution. It is said that Danvir Seth Manikchand Hirachand, J P, Bombay, and Brahmachari Sitalprasadji took a pioneer part in bringing out the said resolution, and the said Sethji declared a munificent donation on his behalf for opening Boarding Schools at several places and thus set an ideal example to other Jain philanthropists to open their purses in the interest of the community.

#### 1925—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

The 1925—Mahamastakabhisheka was held on the 14th March and was marked by a new and characteristically a most modern feature. The presence of hundreds of thousands of Jains from all over India was availed of as an opportunity of holding a session of All India Digamber Jain Conference and the special session of Mysore Jain Education Fund Association under the worthy presidentship of H.H the Mysore Maharaja Sir Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur G.C.S.I., G.B.E., who while welcoming the Jain community at large paid a very glowing warm tribute to the past Jain Poets and Pandits who made a single contribution to Kannad literature in its initial stage. The whole speech of the Maharaja



is saturated with sense of high gratitude to the self-less services of the late Jain authors and as such stands unparalleled in the history of Jains and Jainism. Every sentence of that speech is full of high emotions and love for Jainism, Śhīravanbelgola and Jain Community alike. A few sentences of the speech of the said Mahārāja are quoted herebelow.—

### GOMMATESHVARA'S SPIRITUAL EMPIRE

“It gives me a great pleasure to be with you on the solemn and auspicious occasion like the present when you have assembled in such large numbers from all parts of India for such a holy purpose. In welcoming this All India gathering of Jains to the land of Mysore, I can not forget that this land is to them a land of pilgrimage, consecrated by some of the holiest traditions and tenderest memories of their faith. This is the holy spot sacred to the Munishvar Gommat, whom tradition represents to have been the younger brother of Bharat,—the eponymous Emperor of Bharatvarsha. The land of Mysore, therefore, symbolises Gommat's spiritual empire as Bharatvarsha stands for the empire for his brother Bharat.”

### SIGNAL SERVICE TO KANNAD LITERATURE

“But Jainism repaid the debt, for Jainism, not only did create our Kannad literature but also inspired some of the noblest master-pieces of that literature in its early history, and Jain learned men have ever since continued to render signal service to it.”

### GREATNESS OF JAINISM

“No less memorable have been the services of Jainism to the evolution of India's spiritual and philosophic life. Jainism has cultivated certain aspects of that life which have broadened India's religious outlook. It is not merely that Jainism has aimed at carrying *Ahimsa* to its logical conclusion undeterred by the practicalities of the world, it is not only that Jainism has attempted to perfect the doctrine of the spiritual conquest of Matter in its doctrine of the Jina,—what is unique in Jainism among Indian religions and philosophical systems is that it had sought Emancipation in an upward movement of the Spirit towards the realm of Infinitude and Transcendence—and that it has made Power, Will, Character, in one word *Charitra*, an integral element of perfection side by side with Knowledge and Faith. And Jainism has sought a harmony of all religions and of all philosophical and dialectical standpoints, in its *Sarvadharmā* and *Anekantvada*. At the other end of scales, in its rock-cut sculptured architecture, Jainism has created a new style, and carried it to a pitch of excellence which places the glories of Mount Abu side by side with the mausoleum of the Taj among the architectural wonders of the world.”

Such a glowing expression of gratitude can only come from a generous heart who has nothing but sympathies and great love towards Shravanbelgola. Jainism and Kannad literature Shravanbelgola is indeed the great seat of Munishwar Gommat's spiritual Empire !

A brief news of this event appeared in 'Vir'—a prominent Jain weekly of Delhi thus —

“ On the 15th March 1925, H H. the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore with his two brothers-in-law went to hill and got performed the Mahamastakabhishek of the image on his behalf. The management was excellent. About 30,000 people partook the ceremony out of which 5,000 were present on the Vindhya giri while the rest took their seats on the Chandragiri from where they could have most satisfactory view of the ritual Maharaja donated Rs. 5,000 for the ceremony He got worshipped the image with eight libations and made *sashtanga-namaskars* to it He also bowed to the Bhattarakji Maharaj and presented him Rs. 500/. The preliminary anointing ceremony was performed with great pomp and in peace.”

#### SALIENT FEATURES OF 1940—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

1. Sanction was accorded in Government Order No 877-Muz. 28-2, dated 4th November 1938 for the celebrations of Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony in February 1940 (This was the first time that Mysore Government took up the direct management of this function, which was performed by All India Digamber Jain Tirthakshetra Committee in 1910 and 1925, and has Rs. 75,000/— lying unused since then !)

2 There were about five committees to look after the welfare and provide for every kind of amenities to the pilgrims ,

3 Kalsas —The disposal of different classes of Kalsas and the names of persons who offered the highest bid at the *haraaj* are given here—below For purpose of sale, the Kalsas were divided in four categories as follows, viz , —

1. Gold Kalsas	51
2 Silver Kalsas	300
3 German-silver Kalsas	300
4 Brass Kalsas	357

Total Kalsas	1 008
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Out of the 51 gold Kalsas, only one was bid for Rs. 8,001/- by Doshi Kewalchand Ugaichand, Phaltan, and another was bid for Rs 3,500/- by Shri Motichand Bhaichand Shioff, Baramati. The rest of the Kalsas were disposed of at different rates ranging from Rs. 501/- and upwards. Out of 300 silver Kalsas, 128

were disposed of at a uniform rate of Rs 111/- each with one exception which was bid for Rs. 301/- by Dhannalaji of Indore. Out of 300 German silver Kalsas 88 were disposed of at a uniform rate of Rs 25/- each, and out of 357 brass Kalsas 278 were sold at Rs Rs 7/- each. Thus the realisation from the sale of Kalsas amounted to Rs 77,193.

**General.**—The preliminary Pujas of the ceremony commenced on the 11th February and the *Mahamastakabhisheka* took place on the 26th February 1940 very successfully in the august presence of (late) His Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur and Prince (now His Highness the Maharaja) Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar who arrived at Shravanbelgola at 7-30 a m that day Their Highnesses went up the hill in procession which created an inspiration of joy in the minds of lakhs of people that had assembled there The first Puja was performed to the sacred image by (late) His Highness Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur at 9-30 a m after which several other pujas were performed by the Jain devotees Their Highnesses after performing the worship, alighted from the hill accompanied by His Holiness the Swami, Sir Seth Hukamchandji, several officers and citizens, and after paying a visit to Sri Jain Mutt, proceeded to the Reception Committee His Highness Sir Krishnaraja Wadiyar accompanied by the Prince (now His Highness the Maharaja) Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar opened the Conference at 4 p m held under the auspicious of All India Digamber Jain Mahasabha.

**LIST OF BIDDERS OF GOLD KALSAS FOR MORE THAN Rs 501**

1	Doshi Kewalchand Ugarchand, Phaltan	Rs 8,001	
2	Onkarji Kasturchandji, Indore	Rs 6,102	~
3	Motichand Bhaichand Shioff, Baiamati	Rs 3,500	
4	Raghuchandra Ballal, Mangalore	Rs. 2,201	
5	Sidhurmali, Delhi	Rs 2,201	
6	Loonkaranji Madanmohanji, Ujjain	Rs 2,200	
7	Sri Sarupchandji Hukamchandji, Indore	Rs 2,100	

The following bade for Rs 1101/- each —

8 A K A Dharnappa, Tumkur, 9 Sahu Shantiprasad Jain, Dalmianagar, 10 Jokhram Magniraj, Calcutta, 11 Brahmappa Tavanappavar, Devangere, 12 Jawahirmalji Gambhirmalji, Calcutta, 13 Babu Nirmalkumarji, Arrah, 14. Chandulal Gulabchand, 15 G K D Bhurmarah, Mysore, 16 H S Puttaswamaiah, Hassan, 17 Jawahirmal Champalal, Calcutta, 18 Tularam Nathmal, Calcutta, 19 Ganeshilal Premasukh, Patna, 20 Premasukh Pannalal, Calcutta.

Rest 32 Jains bade Rs 501 for each Kalsa The total amount received under this head amounted to Rs 58,548/-

129 Silver Kalsas fetched Rs 14,499/-, 88 German-Silver Kalsas Rs. 2200/-, and 281 Brass Kalsas a total sum of Rs. 1946/- only.

## TRAFFIC FACILITIES. ;

The following traffic facilities were allowed to the pilgrims attending the 1940-Mahamastakabhisheka Ceremony —

1. Posters were got printed and distributed to all the Railways for exhibition at the important Jain centres. Folders on Shravanbelgola were got printed through the Publicity Officer to the Government of Mysore and distributed to the public ;
2. Concession return tickets were issued locally on this Railway to Arsikere, Hassan and French Rocks (Pandavapura) from stations situated at 75 miles and above. Concession in fares was allowed one anna per return mile by second class and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  Mail-fare for the double-journey by third class,
3. Numerous special trains were run between Hassan-Arsikere, Hubli-Arsikere, and Mysore-Arsikere.

On the 26th February 1940, the Mahamastakabhisheka was graced by (late) H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore, Sir Shri Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur who was accompanied by the Prince Jaya Chamarajendra Wadiyar (the present H. H. the Maharaja). The rush of the pilgrims increased enormously on and from the 24th February to 28th February due to important functions on the Hill

## III

## CHANDRAGIRI (CHIKKABETTA)

Quitting the presence of colossus, let us descend the rock-steps of Vindhyagiri. In doing so, we get a wonderful view of the sister-hill Chandragiri, that rises precipitiously on the other side of Shravanbelgola village. Though it is somewhat smaller in size and lower in height than the Vindhygiri hill, it is held in yet higher esteem than the former, firstly because, it has the Bhadrabahu's Cave where Bhadrabahu—the last Shrutakewali of Digamber sect and a very prominent Acharya of his age died here. Secondly, it acquired great importance to every student of Indian History, as there are numerous inscriptions of very old origin which authentically establish account of the last days of the 1st Mourya Emperor—Chandragupta Mourya (1st authentic Emperor of India, who conquered Seluekus Nicator, a Greek King of Bactria, and who is mentioned in Greek History under the name of 'Sandrocottes' who ruled not only the North India but also the countries like Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Kashmere and Bactria from 321 to 296 B.C.) are found here.

No historian worth the name has been able to account for the last days of the 1st Indian Emperor and history books are silent in this respect. No other authentic proofs are available to disprove or contradict these inscriptions. The third reason for its being held more sacred than the Vindhya giri is not far to seek. It is virtually strewn with 16 ancient temples and hundreds of stone hewn inscriptions in commemoration of those monks and laities (*Shravakas*) who quitted after due observance of *Sallekhana*, amongst whom some were the Kings of mighty domains and also the people from every walk of life. Some of them came here journeying from far for only observance of *Sallekhana* leaving their vast worldly possessions and dear and near ones for ever. The untold inherent sufferings and dismal ultimate result of their vow did not daunt them in the least. It behoves from their conduct as if they were waiting very eagerly since very long for these auspicious moments with deep faith in Jainism which emboldened them to sacrifice their lives in anticipation of a higher spiritual attainment, and thus set examples of the highest sacrifices in preservation of one of the principal tenets of Jainism by such an ocular physical demonstration than one by mere precepts from holy scriptures.

Chandragiri is smaller than Vindhya giri by 294 ft in height. It is about 175 ft above the plain, and therefore is called Chikka-betta. In Kannad the word 'Chikka' means 'smaller' and 'Betta' the 'hill'. Numerous references are found in Sanskrit and Prakrit Jain and non-Jain works about it under the surname of 'Kata-vapra' in the former and 'Katvalpu' or 'Kalvappu' in the latter. Between these two hills and with a fine lake in its centre, graceful palm all round adorned with rich green paddy-fields stretched to the extreme horizon, wrapt in religious sanctity and grand bewitching scenery down make the petty village of Shraavanbelgola really a grand enchantment. Chandragiri stands in utter solitude and consists of a number of caves—where absolute calm and quiet ever reign supreme. So it is no wonder and one needs not to go far to seek a reason why Bhadrabahu should have selected it for meditation and also to quit his body at last. Chandragiri even to-day possesses all those charms which make it an ideal *Tapobhumi* for Jain monks. The climate of the place is temperate through out the year. It is free from all kinds of nuisances such as mosquitoes, flies, bugs or alike. It is endowed with that soothy atmosphere which is most essential for deep meditation in solitude.

The sanctity of this hill dates back from the 3rd century B.C., if not more, and happily much of its story has been revealed by the inscriptions no less than about 800, out of which about 450 have with immense labour and great skill been patiently copied and translated by Mr Lewis Rice, C I E, M R A S, Director of Archaeological Researches to the Government of Mysore. It goes without saying that several years were required for completion of the task. Now



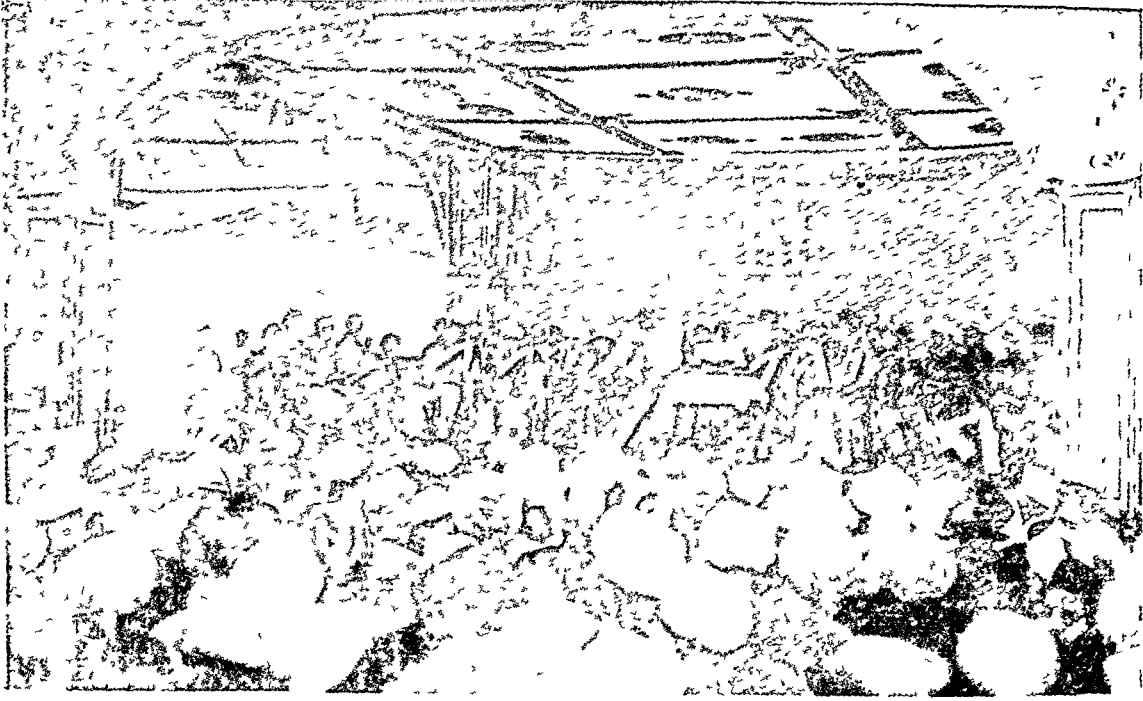
1925—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

It was one of the most memorable of all the *Mahamastakabhishekas*. On this occasion, a Digamber Jain Conference was held under the presidentship of H H the Maharaja Sir Krishnaraja Wadiyar, G C I, G C B, who paid warmest and highest tributes to the past Jain Acharyas who wrote excellent works in Kannada literature.



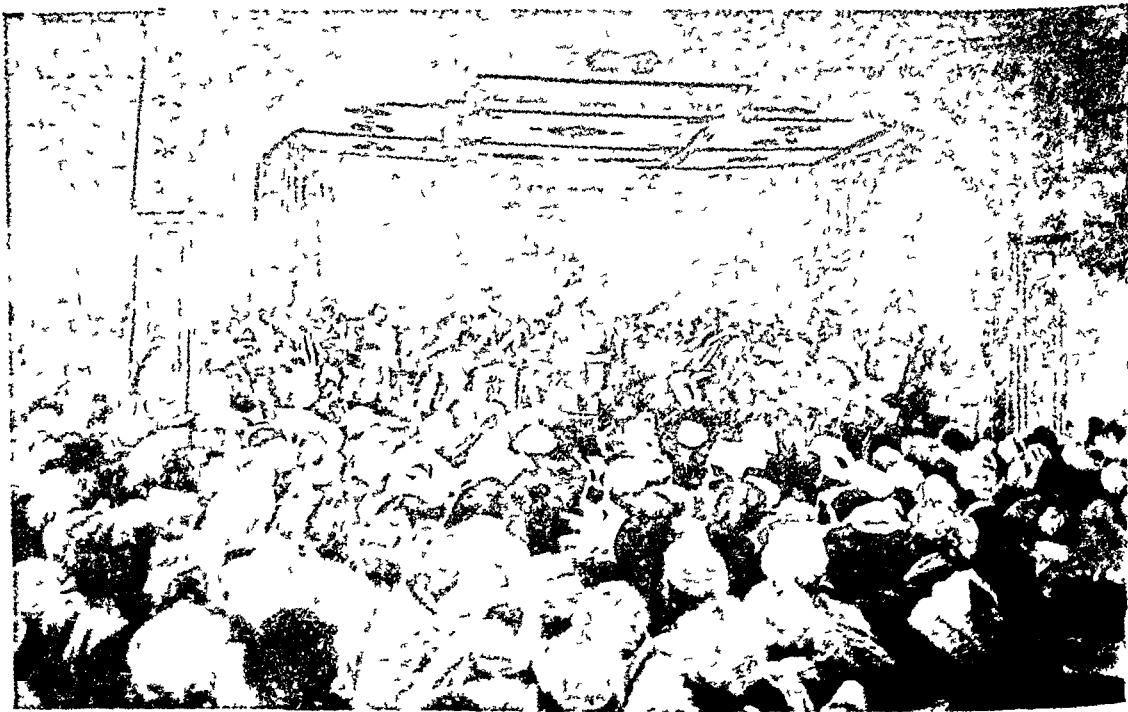
SCAFFOLDING AROUND THE COLOSSUS

Months before the Mahamastakabhisheka is due a scaffolding of thousands of strong bamboos is built around the statue so that the priests can pour on its head 1008 pot-fuls of milk and water with 15 other libations required for anointing.



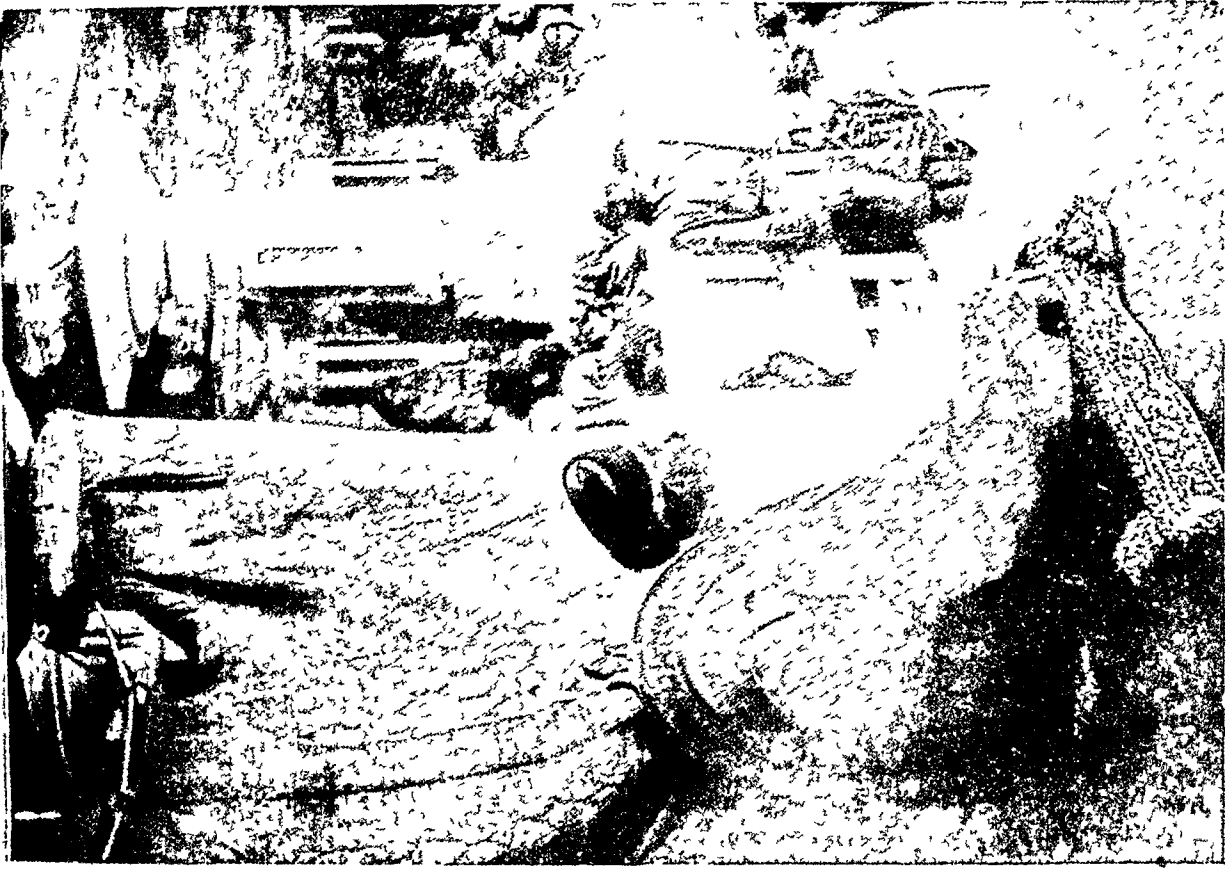
**(Late) H H MAHARAJA SIR KRISHNARAJ WADIYAR BAHADUR  
RECEIVES AN ADDRESS**

1925—Mahamastakabhisheka is memorable for more than one reason Mysore Jain Education Association held its special session on this occasion and an address was presented to the late Maharaja In picture late Seth Vardhmanrao is seen reading the address

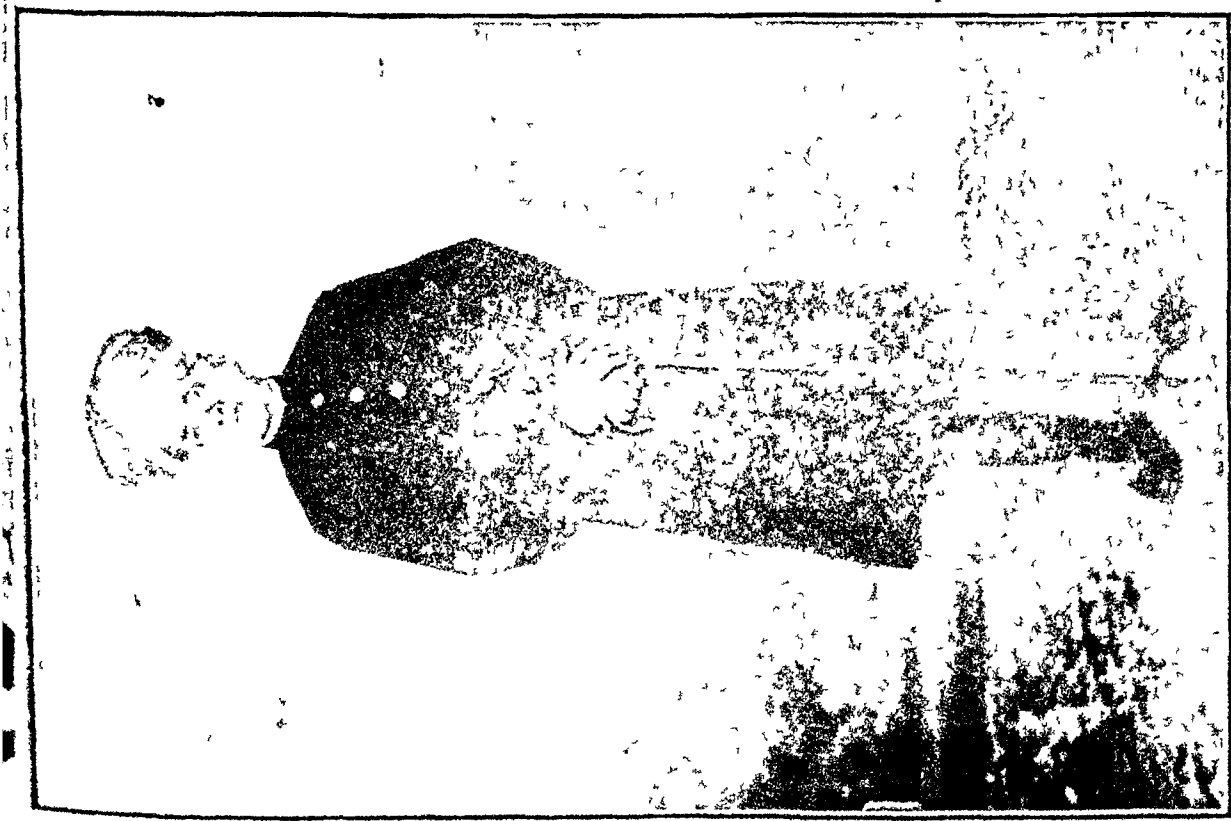


**SIR HUKUMCHANDJI DELIVERS HIS PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

A special session of All India Digamber Jain Conference was held here on this occasion under the presidentship of Sir Hukumchandji of Indore



(Late) H. H. MAHARAJA SIR KRISHNARAJA WADIYAR  
 WITNESSES THE 1925—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA CEREMONY  
 Mysore Durbars have earned a hereditary right to pour the 1st *Kalash*  
 of milk on the head of Gommateshwara Here he is seen witnessing  
 the preliminary *Puja*.



(Late) H. H. Sir KRISHNARAJ WADEYAR BAHADUR, GCSI, GCB  
 Maharaja of Mysore  
 The late Maharaja Sir Krishnaraj Wadiyar won the heart and head  
 of the Jain community by mingling himself freely with it. He will  
 ever be remembered by Jains with great respect





**(Late) H H MAHARAJA SIR KRISHNARAJA WADIYAR BAHADUR PRESIDES  
OVER THE 1925—DIGAMBER JAIN CONFERENCE  
On this occasion he delivered the Inaugural Address**



**(Late) SETH M L VARDHMANIAH OF MYSORE**

Success of the 1910 and 1925 Mahamastakabhishakas go to his credit Due to his emulative zeal for Jains and Jainism, he was the most favourite Jain leader in those days and Founder President of the Mysore Jain Association and established a Jain Boarding School at Mysore

these translations are available in almost all museums in India and abroad. A Hindi Edition of the same has also been published in the 'Manikchand Granthamala Series', edited by Prof. Dr. Hiralal Jain, M.A., LL.B., Ph.D., and is priced at Rs. 2. Though it is outside the pale of this treatise to give full texts of such inscriptions, yet some of them have been quoted herein with their English renderings to show the nature of these inscriptions.

### IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENT

A legend which is supported by Jain scriptures and traditions, and also by the inscriptions of Shriavanbelgola, and which has never been contradicted by any historian of note, is given herebelow, which provides a data to fulfil one of the most important gap in the Indian History. Every historian has made mention of Chandragupta Mourya, the founder of the Mourya dynasty and the grandfather of Ashok the-great. Much of his early career and aftermath have been established and recorded in the books of History, but no mention is found about the last days after he resigned from his vast empire and adopted Jain hermitage. The legend goes thus.-

Somewhere about the year 290 B.C., a famous Jain Acharya Bhadrabahu led a big migration of Jains from north India towards the South to escape from a period of 12 years famine, which he himself had predicted. One of his disciples was named Chandragupta and it is practically certain that it was none other than the famous Mourya Emperor who ruled over vast areas in North India in the year from 321 to 296 B.C. A Jain tradition declares that on the night of a full-moon, Chandragupta had sixteen dreams which were interpreted for him by Bhadrabahu Acharya. The prediction of a famine in which numbers would die of starvation still further impressed the Emperor and he resigned the throne in favour of his eldest son Bimbisara, and adopted *Pancha Mahavratas* (the vows) of Jain hermitage and accompanied Shri Bhadrabahu Acharya and his 12,000 disciples in the southward migration. On reaching what is now called the Mysore State, they drew near to the twin hills that overshadow Shriavanbelgola. Here it was revealed to Acharya Bhadrabahu that he was about to die, so he sent his followers onward further south to Chola and Pandya kingdoms under the leadership of Vishakhacharya, an *Ardha shrutkewali*, keeping only one attendant-disciple Chandragupta, and then he climbed the lower hill and died there in a cave among the rocks. The erstwhile Emperor-disciple remained here at least for a dozen years after and practised asceticism upon this hill where his Acharya had expired. We read of 'spending his time in worshipping his master's footprints and his hair grew to a thick mass, and he devoted his life in purifactory meditations and there in solitariness he died.'

From that time the hill acquired special sanctity, and began to be called 'Chandiagiri', after the name of this imperial-ascetic

Chandragupta. The cave where Bhadrabahu Acharya died is sacred, but the spot where Chandragupta breathed his last became even more sacred. The cave of Bhadrabahu is still shown and it is visited by the pilgrims in great numbers and so the Chandragupta Basti—a small Jain temple, which was built to mark the place where Chandragupta died. It is very small in dimension as it internally measures 19 ft. x 15 ft only. It is impossible to establish the date of its erection. Of course, there are signs indicating alterations which might have been made from time to time, yet it is undoubtedly very very ancient. A remarkable stone-screen was built afterwards in front of it giving in 90 small panels of bas-relief the story of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta. This screen is also very ancient but it appears to be subsequently rebuilt most probably in the 12th century. Then a temple and a pillared portico were built in front of it and so the whole shrine was practically hidden.

There are about 560 stone-hewn inscriptions all around this small Basti of Chandragupta recording the deaths of Jain monks and laities. With a few exceptions they are in what are called Hale (archaic) Kannad characters and are engraved either on the horizontal face of the rocks, where they have been exposed to every vicissitude and the vagaries of weathers of the past centuries after centuries, or else, on prepared slabs or pillars of black hornblends protected by *mandaps* (pavilions) from weather. These inscriptions are very numerous and date from the remote times of Chandragupta (earliest authenticated date in Indian History) to as late as 1880 A. D. They mainly deal with -

- (1) The exploits of old kings and *Shravakas* about 40 inscriptions<sup>c</sup>,
- (2) Buildings or enlargements of temples about 100 inscriptions,
- (3) The dates of Jain ascetics etc who died here performing *Sallekhana* about 100 inscriptions,
- (4) Monuments raised by pilgrims bearing their names about 160 inscriptions,
- (5) Other historical events recorded about 160 inscriptions.

A very numerous inscriptions relate to the fact that hereunder the shrine of Chandragupta, men and women departed from this world after having observed "*Sallekhana*" with a mention of the period of vow. Such spots are still awe-embibing when one thinks that centuries back, men and women lay on these rocks, bearing all kinds of physical pangs, calmly and quietly awaiting for the encroaching death! Some examples, all relating to 700 A. D., are quoted herebelow which clearly mention these salient facts, viz -

#### Inscription No 2

अदेयेरेनाड चिचूर मानिगुरवडिगल शिषित्तिर नागमति गन्तिर मूरु तिङ्गलनोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

Nagamati Gantiar of Adeyerendu, a disciple of excellent Mouni Guru of Chittur expired here after having kept the vow for three months

**Inscription No. 3**

श्रीदुरिताभूद् वृषभान्कील्लतरे पोदेदज्ञानशैलेन्द्रमाम्नेह । दूर मिथ्यात्वप्रमूढ स्थिरतर-नृपनान्मेहि  
गन्धेभमयदान ॥ सूरविद्यावल्लभेन्दास्सुरवर मुनिभिस्तुत्य कल्पिपिनामेल् चरितश्रीनामधेयप्रभुमुनिन्वतगल्  
नोन्तु सौख्यस्थनाय्यदान ॥

Charitashree Muni having observed the monkship and controlled his senses and cut the bonds of sins, ignorance, and wrong faith attained godhead from the hill of Katvapra

**Inscription No. 4**

..... गल्नोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

having observed *Sallekhana* expired.

**Inscription No. 5**

स्वस्ति श्री जम्बुयनागिर् तील्यदोल् नोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

Be it well Jambunaygi expired here at this holy place after having observed *Sallekhana*.

**Inscription No. 6**

श्रीनेडुवोरेय पानपभटारन्नोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

Panap Bhatar of Neduborey expired here after having observed *Sallekhana*.

**Inscription No. 7**

श्री कित्तूरावेलमाददाधर्मसेनगुस्वडिगल शिष्यर बालदेवगुरवडिगल संन्यारानं नोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

Baldevguru Kittura, a disciple of Dharmasain Guru of Velmada quitted this world after having observed *Sallekhana*.

**Inscription No. 8**

श्रीमालनूर पट्टिनि गुरवडियल शिष्यर उग्रसेन गुरवडियलओन्दु तिङ्गल संन्यासनं नोन्तु मुडिपिदर ।

Ugrasainguru of Malnur, a disciple of Pattniguru expired here after having observed *Sallekhana* for a month.

**Inscription No. 53**

This is a long inscription and gives the story of a mother of a dead queen who came journeying from very far to this hill to perform grim vow of *Sallekhana* and several verses are devoted in glorification of her act. The short precis is given herebelow.:-

The queen has attained godhead and it has fallen to my lot to remain, and thus saying she came to this hill at Shravanbelgola to observe the last rites of *Sallekhana* and observing the vow, Machikavve quitted her body with eyes half-closed Repeating *Pancha namaska Mantra* and fasting for a month Machikavve attained godhead by means of *Sallekhana* in the presence of all the blessed,

## SALLEKHANA AND ITS WAY OF PERFORMANCE

Till to the very recent times, the European writers, also including one Vincent Smith—an eminent historian, have been misrepresenting Jainism by falsely accusing it for extolling a cult of suicide. On reading the “Inscriptions of Shravanbelgola” and finding 100 inscriptions denoting deaths by *Sallekhana*, he remarked in his book ‘History of India’, (unfortunately prescribed for Matriculation examination in 1921) that Jainism eulogized self-immolation to death and quoted the above book in support of his version. Later he realised his folly and repugned that untrue statement from the book. However, some writers including Indians as well, still go on clinging to their unreasonable accusation of Jainism and are leading a crusade against it for this baseless charge.

Some couplets are quoted herebelow from famous Jain holy scriptures, defining, extolling and the way of practising *Sallekhana*. The readers are requested to ponder over this problem at its every stage with open mind, without any bias or prejudice, for or against Jainism, and form their own independent opinion on the subject.

*Ratnakarandashnavakachar* (by Swami Samantbhadra Acharya) a Jain code-book for Jain laities, lays down the following regulations for observation of *Sallekhana*, viz —

उपसर्गे दुर्भिक्षे जरसि रुजाया च नि प्रतीकारे ।

धर्माय तनुविमोचनमाहु सल्लेखनाभार्या ॥

This couplet defines *Sallekhana*. It clearly stresses that to quit or lay down one's body for the sake of religion is *Sallekhana*; but when? It is a very big ‘when’ indeed! Only then, when one encounters a sudden calamity like that of an encounter with a lion or a man-eater in jungle, sudden outbreak of fire in house, drowning tragedy of a boat, snake-bite, epidemics or alike disasters), famine (viz Bengal famine killing 4 millions human lives), extremely old (ripe) age or in event of suffering with an incurable disease (viz cholera, bubonic plague, etc.) and only under such circumstances where death becomes evidently unavoidable and prompt (i.e., a matter of a few hours or at the most of a few days only), then and then only one needs to resort to *Sallekhana* and not otherwise. Is it not clear even now that *Sallekhana* does not extol suicides but is meant to maintain the highest degree of mental peace. It is a travesty of facts what European writers say. A query as to why this rite should be exercised has been replied thus —

अन्तःक्रियाधिकरणं तप फल सकलदर्शिनः स्तुवते ।

तस्माद्यावद्भिभवं समाधिमरणे प्रयतितन्वयम् ॥

As all the saints of all the religions admit that only the last rites bear fruit of lifelong penance, therefore every one, even though he might be a layman, should try his utmost to exercise this rite in

accordance to his own strength. The following five couplets lay down the mode of performing *Sallekhana* :—

स्नेहं वैर संगं परिग्रहं चापहाय शुद्धमनाः ।  
स्वजनं परिजनमपि च क्षान्त्वा क्षमयेत्प्रियैः वचुनैः ॥

In order to make ones mind pure and immune from impurities, the observer of *Sallekhana*, firstly should beg and grant pardon to his relatives and all sundries and further should forsake every kind of tangles of love, enmity, affinity, and attraction or attachment for every thing. So long the latter exist, how the purity of the heart can be achieved ?

भालोच्य सर्वमेतन् कृतकारितमनुमतं च निर्व्याजम् ।  
भारोपयेन्महाव्रतमामरणस्थायि निःशेषम् ॥

In order to attain perfection in the abovesaid ideals he should secondly, recant and express repentance for all his past misdeeds and indulgences either done by himself or caused to be done through others or eulogised by him without any reserve Having thus attained immunity from mental maladies, he should embrace *Panch Mahavratas* for the rest of his life ;

शोकं भयमवसादं क्लेदं कालुष्यमरतिमपि हित्वा ।  
सत्त्वोत्साहमुदीर्य च, मनः प्रसाद्यं श्रुतैरमृतैः ॥

He should avoid all kinds of mental maladies like frustration, fear, sorrow, despondency, malice or avarice, and cultivate high spirits by drinking the constant nectarine and embrodial doses of holy scriptures and sermons ;

आहारं परिहाप्य क्रमशः स्निग्धं विवर्द्धयेत्पानम् ।  
स्निग्धं च हापयित्वा खरपानं पूरयेत्क्रमशः ॥

By and by he should reduce his solid food and increase liquid one instead like milk and deminishing that too even gradually should ultimately resort himself to water only ;

खरपानहापनामपि कृत्वा कृत्वोपवासमपि शक्यता  
पंचनमस्कारमनास्तनुस्त्यजेत्सर्वयत्नेन ॥

And lastly, abandoning water too, he should resort to total fasting according to his strength. He should keep his mind intent upon *Pancha Namaskar* and thus he should quit his body in perfect peace of mind.

From this narration one can clearly realise that there is not the least intention— much less the deliberate one, to put an abrupt end to ones life haphazardly or wantonly, on the contrary all efforts are to be made to prolong it so that the period of *Mahavratas* may be extended to the maximum As death is imminent, so it follows shortly and the observer quits the body in peace Can this kind of death ever be called suicide? Is this extolling of suicides in the least? Do all

these lines not make it clear that *Sallekhana* is meant to seek inner peace and maintain maximum degree of equilibrium of mind, but, how is it possible till the mind is tangled in mundane bonds of love or enmity? To call it a suicide is indeed nothing short of the height of folly

Five hundred inscriptions collected in and near Shravanbelgola which range in date from 600 A. D. until recent times tell us that the place was successively ruled by the Ganga, Rashtrakuta, Chalukya, Hoysala, Vijaynagar and Mysore rulers

To-day a number of interesting Jain temples are grouped around the old Chandragupta Basti on this hill-top. There are 16 of them and though small in dimensions, are very striking and require a careful study. All these temples grouped here represent specimens of first class Dravidian art. The oldest of the temples dates about 8th century A. D. The first important item which a pilgrim comes across is the Bhadrabahu Cave. It is so called because Bhadrabahu, the last *Shruthewali* breathed his last and his foot-prints are engraved here on a slab which are about two spans in length. There is a pretty lot of such foot prints of other Jain monks also on the summit of this hill who quitted this world after due observance of *Sallekhana*. It seems quite possible that hundreds of such inscriptions have disappeared and perished, and in hundreds of cases, it is evident that no such record was ever made at all. And such an inordinate big number of these foot prints is certainly an index to prove that Shravanbelgola had lived upto the highest fame of being the true Jain *Tapobhumi* for a number of centuries in the past.

Most of these temples consist of a main shrine with a pillared hall before it, and an entrance portico, usually with a flight of steps. One shrine is surmounted by a richly decorated terraced structure culminating in a small dome. The largest of these temples is barely 90 ft. x 36 ft x 50 ft in height. The exteriors are more or less ornate, their blank walls being decorated with pilasters, above which are several rows or cornices of carved stone ornamented with Jain symbols and mythological representations. The interiors are very dark of the most if not all, light being admitted by the door ways only. There are numerous Jain images in and around the temples and also a small stone figure of Gommateshvar of 10 ft high but it is only carved out from the head down to thighs. Some call it Bharateshvarji as well. The most beautiful object of all is a splendid *stambha* (pillar) which towers above all the temples. It is exceedingly graceful in design, a fine column with several steps around its basement and surmounted with a graceful open lantern. It appears to have been built in about 973 A. D. most probably by King Marsing (II) of the Ganga dynasty in commemoration of his victory and an inscription is carved on the pillar to this effect.

Around it there are numerous inscriptions mostly recording deaths of those who observed *Sallekhana* here.

**Chamundaraya Basti** — is one among the biggest and handsomest temples of Chandragiri and is dedicated to 22nd Tirthankar Neminnath. It was built by Chamundaraya in 982 A. D. Its dimension is 68 ft x 36 ft. and has a storey with a fine tower. A new floor was added to it by his son Jindeva. In the lower court an idol of 22nd Tirthankar Shri Neminnath of about 5 ft. height is enshrined. In the upper storey Lord Parshwanath is enshrined by Jindeva. The pillars and the battlements of this temple are carved with numerous fine pieces of Art. This is one of the most ancient temples here and is now taken over by India Government under National Monuments Act (No LXXI of 1951).

**Shantinath Basti** — It is also a big temple measuring 50 ft. x 30 ft in dimension and is built on Hoysala style of Art to some extent. An image of Lord Shantinath about 11 ft. high is enshrined here in the standing pose. It seems its walls and ceilings had fine paintings once but are erased now. Nothing is known about its builder or the period.

**Chandragupta Basti** — It is the smallest temple (22' x 16') on Chandragiri. It got to be called after the legends pertaining to Acharya Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Mourya. It contains 5 slabs engraved on bas-relief depicting these episodes. This is a temple where the most reliable history of the 1st authenticated Indian Emperor is carved in stone. These carved stone-screens separate it from the portico of a larger temple built evidently later in front of it. The screens nearly half of which is visible in the picture, has 90 carved panels which give the story of Chandragupta Mourya and his *guru* relating to that great migration of 12,000 Jain monks to South about 3rd century B.C. It is the temple where the 1st Indian Emperor breathed his last wrapped in Jain asceticism. Though there is no inscription to denote that, yet it is generally held to be built by Asoka-the-great in pious memory of his illustrious grand-father. In other words, this small temple is a link with Chandragupta and Ashoka and that golden era when Jainism was patronised by mightiest Emperors of India. In history of India, that era is referred to by the name of 'golden era.' This small temple gave the name of Chandragiri to the hill on which it stands. The saga of glory is sung by this temple which it was in 3rd century B.C. Lord Parshwanath is seated in the middle cell. There are several other carvings as well on the walls, which if taken in their true perspective are likely to throw a flood of light and may go a long way in solving some of the most intricacies pertaining to Indian history.

**Parshwanath Basti** — It is one of the biggest temples of this hill and has an idol of the Lord Parshwanath 15 ft high, canopied



by seven-hooded cobra. Its dimension is 59 ft x 29 ft. The exterior walls and pilasters are carved with designs and idols are carved in the battlements of the walls. It has an elegant pillar (*manastambha*) topped by broken empty lantern. There is no mention as to by whom and when it was built. The *Stambha* was built by one Puttaiya in 1700 A.D. He also built the enclosing wall around the temple area.

**Kattale Basti**— In Kannad 'Kattale' means 'darkness' and it is so called because of its darkness. This temple is the biggest and unique in the respect as it has a *Pradakshina* (circumambulatory passage) around its main shrine. Its dimension is 124' x 40'. It is dedicated to Lord Adinath and an idol of the same is installed herein. It is 6 ft. in height. It was built by Gangaraj in commemoration of his mother Pochavve in 1118 A.D. It was repaired by two ladies of Mysore Royal House named Devarammani and Kemparamanni in 1885 A.D.

**Chandraprabhu Basti**.—It is 42 ft. x 25 ft in dimension. It most probably was built by Ganga King Shivamai (II) son of Shripurusha in 800 A.D. Lord Chandraprabhu of about 3 ft high is seated in *Padmasan*.

**Shasan Basti**— It is 55 ft x 26 ft. in dimension. It was built by Gangaraj who named it 'Indrakulagraha' in 1137 A.D. He also donated a village of 'Param' towards its upkeep. Shasan means an inscription and as there is an inscription at the door of this temple, it got to be called so. Lord Adinath about 5 ft. in height is enshrined here.

**Majjigana Basti**— It is 32 ft. x 19 ft in dimension. It is dedicated to Anantanath. Builder was most probably one Majjigana and the year of its erection is not known.

**Eradukatte Basti**— It is 55 ft. x 26 ft in dimension, and is dedicated to Lord Adinath 5 ft in height. It was built by Laxmi, the wife of Gangaraj, in 1118 A.D.

**Savati Gandha Varan Basti**— it was built by the queen named Shantal of Hoysala King Vishnuvardhan in 1123 A.D. It is 69 ft x 35 ft in dimension. It is dedicated to Lord Shantinath and an idol of 5 ft in height is installed here flanked by chauri bearers on both the sides.

**Terin Basti**— It is 70 ft x 26 ft in dimension. It was built by one Machhikavve, the mother of Poyasala Setti in 1115 A.D. It is dedicated to Lord Bahubali, 5 ft in height.

**Bhadrabahu Cave**.— This is the very cave in which Bhadrabahu Acharya died. His foot-prints are engraved on a slab two spans in length. It is the very place where Chandragupta passed his last 12 years in Jain hermitage.



1940—MAHAMASTAKABHISHEKA

This Mahamastakabhisheka was performed on very grand scale when about 5,00,000 pilgrims attended it It was held on 26-2-1940



**GENERAL VIEW OF THE JAIN TEMPLES ON CHANDRAGIRI**

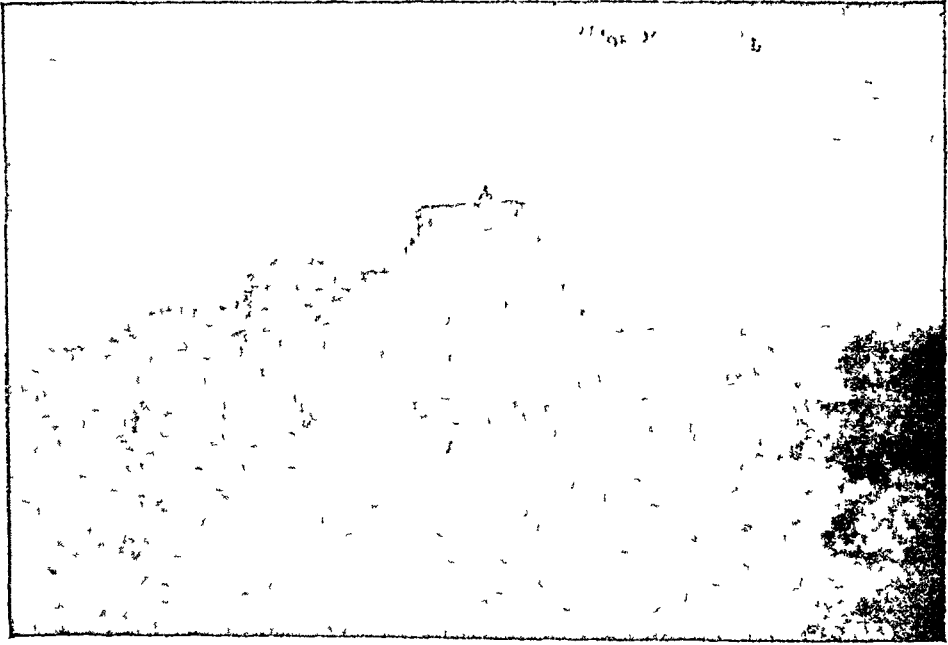
There are thirteen temples in an enclosure built by stalwart Jain Kings, queens, etc , on the *Chandragiri*



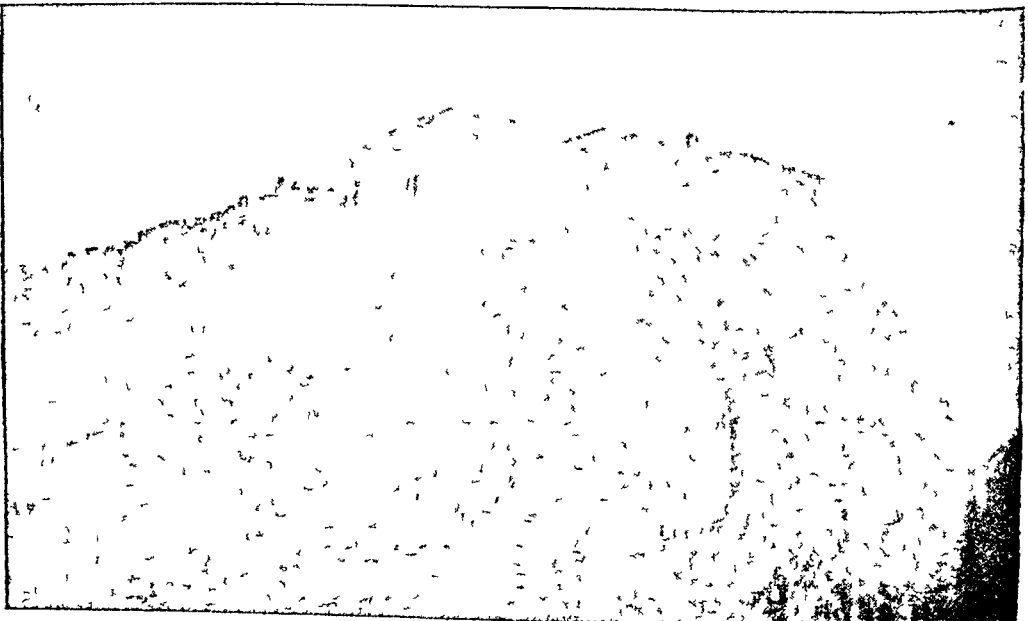
**INSCRIPTIONS DENOTING THE FULL STORY OF INDIA'S FIRST EMPEROR**

The most remarkable feature of Chandragupta Basti is a very unusual carved stone-screen that separates it from the portico of a larger temple built in front of it. The screen, nearly half of which is visible in the picture, has 90 carved panels giving in bas relief the story of erstwhile Emperor Chandragupta Mourya and his *Guru* Bhadrabahu, who also died on this hill-top nearly 3 centuries B C. This is the most authentic account about the last days of Chandragupta and no historian worth the name has been able to dis-prove these accounts given herein. Dr Radhakumud Mukherji, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, confirms them to be the most authentic and reliable.

## GOMMATGIRI VIEWS



In spacious isolation stands Gommateshwar on an isolated rock commanding a wide view



Mahamastakabhishekas are attended by thousands of Jains and non-Jains  
This picture shows hundreds of pilgrims ascending the hill at this occasion

**Chamundaray Shila** — There is a big boulder of granite with this name just at the foot of Chandragiri. It is said that Chamundaray discharged an golden arrow on Vindhya giri from this slab and so it acquired this name. However, it bears seven inscribed Jain images evidently of very recent origin.

Besides, there are hundreds of inscriptions all around the Basties of Chandragupta, Chamundaray, and Parshwanath referred to above.

**Kuge Brahmdeva Stambha** — This lofty pillar stands at the south entrance to the enclosure with a seated figure of Brahmdev on the top facing east. Once it had eight elephants supporting its pedestal, but now only a few are left and rest perished. It bears an inscription denoting the death of Ganga King Maising (II) which occurred in 974 A D. It is a fine pillar, comprising a solid shaft beautifully carved into eight segments with three tiers in pedestal. This towers all the temples on Chandragiri

**Mahanavami Mandap** — To the south of Kattle Basti these are two *mandaps* side by side facing east. Both contain inscribed slabs in their middle. One of the slabs denote the place of *Sallekhana* of Nayakirti Muni, who died here in 1176 A D. It was built by minister Nagdeva

**Bharateshwarji** — This statue about nine feet high facing west is said to be that of Bharateshwarji, the elder brother of Bahubali. It rises from knees to head. Though protected by Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, its several features have been deliberately damaged by unknown people, as there is nobody to look after its safety. It is carved out of a big rock which originally projected here.

**Iruve Brahmdeva Temple** — This temple is outside the walled area. It is in the north of the north entrance to the enclosure. It enshrines a figure of Brahmdeva, and was built in 950 A D. Besides, there are certain small ponds which are also held to be sacred.

Although the whole group of temples is enclosed by a wall, there is an air of desolation about the entire place, as hardly any priest, pujari, or watchman ever attends them, and only once or twice a year these temples on Chandragiri are used for worship. Pilgrims who come from far and wide usually visit these temples, or at the occasion of Mahamastakabhisheka only these temples are once more crowded with the faithful, otherwise lie deserted through out the year and that is why a miscreant finds enough time to damage the temples and images.

It is a common knowledge that the Jain monks mostly made use of the hilly caves and the cave in which Bhadrabahu died here is one of the oldest so far known and the important inscriptions referred to above, make it more of the unusual interest. There are similar caves at Udaigiri and Khandagiri in the province of

Orissa, and they belong most probably to the 2nd century B.C., if not much earlier, but others are comparatively of much later date. One of them called Singhagupha at Udaigiri is very curious. It is hewn out of a very big boulder with its exteriors cut to resemble a tiger's head with its mouth wide open. It is certainly hewn before the Christian era. Comparing this cave-temple of Chandragiri to those mentioned above mark much of the development in design and advancement in workmanship and skill. The latter have been characteristically different in every sphere of Art, which is quite evident by their designed pillared halls and exquisite workmanship and thus prove themselves creations of comparatively more recent origin than Bhadrabahu cave.

The sculptured Jain images also show considerable progress of design, though the colossus of Shravanbelgola is in every way unique that no other specimen either from Hindu School of Art of Vijaynagar or Rameshwar can favourably be compared to this piece of super Art. Why to talk of others, even the sculptured Jain images of Karakala, Venur, Gwalior and Ellora can not withstand in the comparison to its supremacy in any way. Archaeologists like Marshall, B.L. Rice, and Cunningham are all unanimous in their praise for its superb workmanship. It rightly occupies the proud place of being enlisted as a 'WONDER OF THE WORLD' and it is going to hold this unique distinction for further thousands of years! Though one thousand years old, the charm of the figure and its expressive beauty mixed with serenity of meditative pose will ever remain so unsolvable a mystery which no oral word can fully describe or no painter will ever be able to paint as they are by all means beyond the power of expression or painting.

### SHRAVANBELGOLA (JAINBIDRI)

Apart from the archaeological wealth of the twin hills already narrated in the foregoing pages, the temples and pillars in the village of Shravanbelgola do also largely contribute to the glorious past of Jainism and add a golden leaf to those annals of superb *glory which was India*. The very name of Shravanbelgola denotes 'a sacred tank of Jain monks' - which attests cent per cent truism in its literal sense. Which city in the world has stood so rigidly true to its meaning as this petty village has done with such a vast and varied glorious past traditions! The word 'Shraman' explicitly denotes 'a Jain monk' and no city throughout the length and breadth of India can claim to possess better specimens of true Jain monkship as Jainbidri claims! In other words, Jainbidri is a true representative of all that is represented by the phrase 'Jain Culture and Archaeology, and a step further, contains those unwritten moral codes of Jain monks better depicted than precepted. It is, in fact, something more to Jains what Buddha Gaya is to Buddhists, Kashi to Brahmins, Mecca to Muslims, and Jerusalem or Bethelham to Christians!

It has ever been a great seat of learning known throughout the Deccan, and Jain Bhattarakas and also the Jain Brahmin Pandits of this place have ever earned great laurels in the courts of Rajas and Maharajas. Even to-day, there are about 50 Jain Brahmin Pandits who hold hereditary awards and the Bhattarakas of Jain Mutt get an annuity of Rs 500/— from the Mysore State, besides a permanent Inami Patta of five villages towards the upkeep of the colossus of Gommateshvar and Jainbidri Mutta. The Bhattarakas of this Mutta are the hereditary holders of an esteemed title of 'Panditacharyavarya' from this State. In old times, all Bhattarakas in general were endowed with their own insignia, flag, and other royal pomps like elephant, Palanquin, and *Damama*. Due to the changed times, all these pomps and shows have vanished and what little is left is also on wane. Due to the extreme poverty of local Jains and callous neglect of Jain community towards the upkeep of their sacred places, all the past glory of this place is steadily vanishing. There are eight temples in the village of Shravanbelgola of architectural eminence and have rare equals elsewhere. They are the following. —

1. **Bhandari Basti.**— This is the biggest temple in all the temples of the village. Its dimension is 266 ft. x 78 ft. It is a wonderful specimen of its kind. As the idols of 24 tirthankaras are installed in the main pavilion, so it is also called 'Choubis Tirthankar Basti'. It had had a number of unique paintings on its walls. There is a *Manastambha* just before it made out of one massive stone. It was built by Hull, Bhandari of Hoysala King Narsingha (I) in 1175 A. D. and so it got to be called after its builder as 'Bhandari Basti' also. It also carries the distinction of being called '*Bhavya Chudamani*' by King Narsingha who endowed it with a village for its upkeep.

2. **Akkan Basti.**— This is an exceptionally bright specimen of Hoysala architecture and is dedicated to Lord Parshwanath seated under a seven-hooded cobra, protected by Dharnendra and Padmavati on its right and left of the entrance door. It was built by Achiyakka, wife of a Brahmin Minister named Chandramouli of Hoysala King Ballal (II) in 1180 A. D. The very name of the temple acquired its origin after its builder, and *Akkan* is an abbreviation of her name.

3. **Siddhant Basti.**— Just in the same compound there is one very small shrine called Siddhant Basti. It is so called because once upon a time all the sacred books of Jains were kept here preserved. The famous scriptures like Dhawal, Jaya Dhawal and Maha Dhawal belonged to this temple and found their way to Moodbidri later. There is a marble slab inscribed with 24 Tirthankaras around Lord Parshwanath in the middle. It was set up in 1700 A. D. by some marwadi pilgrims from north India.

4. **Danashale Basti.**— It is a temple to denote the place where various gifts by the past and present Maharajas towards the



upkeep of these shrines and the colossus were made. From one of the records it is found that late Chikka Devaraja Wadeyar, Maharaja of Mysore, donated a village of Madneya here for the above purposes in 1672 A.D. It enshrines an image of *Pancha Parmeshthi* about 3 ft. high.

*Kallamma temple* — is a non-Jain temple just near to it and is dedicated to Goddess Kali. Jain Math sends rice for the worship of this Goddess, probably to show its sense of toleration towards dieties other than Jains and also for a reason that no animal sacrifice be made here.

5 *Nagar Jinalaya* — This is a small plain building and enshrines a standing figure of Adinath about 2' ft high with glorious *prabhavali*. The construction of the temple is in common with the other temples. It was built in 1195 A.D. by Nagadeva, Minister of Hoysala King Ballal (II) but because it was supported by the merchants of the city, it got to be called 'Nagar Jinalaya'. It was also called '*Shrinilaya*'.

6 *Mangayi Basti* — It is of course a plain structure but has two elaborately decorated carved stone elephants at the entrance. An image of Lord Shantinath, 4 ft high is enshrined here. It was built by Mangayi, a crest jewel of royal dancing girls and a disciple of Bhattarak Charukirti in 1325 A.D. It was also known as '*Tribhuvan Chudamani*'.

7 *Jain Math* — It is the residence of the Bhattaraka Charukirti Panditacharya and is a pretty structure with an open courtyard in the middle. An upper storey had recently been added to the building. The pillars of the porch are richly carved. The temple which is just in front of the door contains a number of marble and metallic idols of Jain Tirathankaras which are daily worshipped. There is a good collection of Jain scriptures inscribed on palm leaves. The Swamiji was pleased to show the Author *Triloksar* written in Hale Kannad containing numerous fine drawings pertaining to Jain Geography. Besides there are some eight small idols of valuable rare stones like ruby, sapphire, sphatic coral and emerald. On the walls of the Matha past lives of Lord Parshwanath are painted besides many other fine paintings.

8 *Kalyani* — It is a large lake in the centre of the village.

9 *Jakki Katte* — is another pond south of Bhandari Basti and was built some 850 years back by Jakkimavve, the wife of the elder brother of Gangaraja.

10 *Chennanna Pond*. — At some distance to the south of the village is a small pond known as Chennanna Pond. It was built by the same Chennanna who built Chennanna Basti on Vindhayagiri in 1673 A.D.

## ADJACENT VILLAGES

Jinanathapura — Besides these temples there are two more temples at Jinanathapura, only a mile away from Shravanbelgola which can really be called the best in comparison to all these temples from the architectural point of view. This village was founded by Gangaraja— the general of Hoysala King Vishnuwardhana in 117 A. D. and it was Rechimayya who built a temple of Lord Shantinath, one of the best specimen of Hoysala style of architecture here. The image of Lord Shantinath is about 5½ ft. high with *prabhavali* flanked by male Chauri-bearers on either side. Its pillars are really elegantly executed adorned with bead work. Though the temple is small in structure but has most richly carved walls. It is unique in all the temples of Jainbidri and none excels it in structure. But now due to change of the wheel of merciless *Kala* it has seen its worst evil days. As there is no Jain in this village and even in spite of its being so rich in architectural wealth, it lies always open day and night uncared and unprotected, so its diety suffers every kind of insults and is subject to ridicules and mischief from the non-Jains of the village. Rechimayya knew little about the fate of this unfortunate temple at the time of its erection. Though, the temple is for the name's sake protected under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1925, but evidently lies in desolation and there is nothing to save it from a miscreant's hand and his mischief to the figures or the walls. Consequently, majority of the naked Jina figures have been disfigured in very recent years, and are still open to further injury as there is none to look after them.

The most important aspects of the temple are its outer walls which have a row of large images, surmounted by beautiful turrets and scrolls. Photos given show the west and north views of the temple and enlarged views of the walls to the south and north walls. The images consist of Jinas, Yakshas, Yakshis, Brahma, Saraswati, Manmatha, Mohini, Drummer, Musicians' Dancers, etc.,—a common feature found in almost all ancient Jain temples at Rishabhadeva (Kesarayaji) in Udaipur State also. The construction of this temple and specially its walls are of unusual interest and deserve close study, as it shows some of those ancient features which were commonly held sacred by Jains though apparently were in contrast to Jain ethics. This gives a clue to the birth of what is popularly called '*Bispantha*' in Digamber Jains. As the walls lie in dilapidated condition so they are supported by props.

Aregal Basti — It is another temple built exclusively on one rock on the way to the above Jain temple from 'Akkan Basti'. It is older than the former and is common in construction with the rest of the Jain temples here. It enshrines a fine seated marble figure of Parshwanath about 5 ft. high with glorious *prabhavali*, canopied by an eleven-hooded cobra, with usual *dwarpals* of Dharnendra

and Padmavati. The temple is very neatly kept. As the old idol was mutilated so new one was installed instead as late as 1889 A D for the spiritual welfare of Seth Bhujabaliah of this place. The original figure was a standing one, and now lies in the adjacent tank and can be seen even now. It is now looked after by one B P Paishwanathiah of Tumkur. The image of Parshwanath is unique being of white marble and no such image exists through out Mysore State.

**Tombs of Past Bhattarakas.**— To the south-west of the village there is a place reserved for burial of Bhattarakas and there is an inscribed Jain tomb generally known as *Samadhi-Mandap* but designated as *Silakuta* or Stone house. It is a square stone structure of 4 x 4 x 5 ft surmounted by a turret. It is the tomb of Balachandradeva's son who died in 1213 A D. He was a disciple of the royal guru Nemi chandra Pandit of Belikumba. Probably his wife also ended her life here in 1214 A D. There is similar tomb of Charukirti Panditacharya who died in 1643 A.D.

#### HALE BELGOLA

This is a small village about 4 miles north of Shravanbelgola. It has a ruined Jain temple of excellent Hoysala Architecture with richly ornamented walls and inner halls. A fine row of eight *digpals* with their wives is carved out in central ceiling seated on their vehicles. Chauri-bearers are also very beautiful and are about 5 ft in height. It was probably built by Hoysala King Ereyanga, father of Vishnuwardhan in 1094 A D. There are a few more remains of temples which conclusively prove them to be Jains.

#### SANE HALLI

It is about 3 miles distance from Shravanbelgola and has ruined Jain temple built by Jakkimavva, Gangaraja's elder brother's wife in 1120 A D.

#### KAMBADAHALLI

Very few Jain temples can equal in elegance and workmanship with a Jain temple which is lying in ruined condition now at Kambadahalli. It is easily accessible from Shravanbelgola as it is only 12 miles directly to east and only about a mile from the town of Bindiganavale. The existing roads between the two places are bad even for bullock carts.

The name of the village Kambadahalli is derived from the lofty Jain pillar that stands in the front of a mighty Jain temple which can rightly be claimed to be one of the choicest specimens of Jain temples of Hoysala Architectural Art. The pillar stands in the north west side of the temple, and it is counted as one of the most elegant pillar in Mysore State, and is topped by a seated Brahma which is by far elegant than others.

To the west of the pillar stands a group of seven shrines which are most probably the most ancient Jain monuments of the highest historical and architectural importance, not only in Mysore State, but through out India. Its construction evidently comprises three varieties of styles and designs, which represent three choicest eras of architectural perfection in South India.

The earliest structure is that of Adinath is a cross-shaped *trikutachala* with straight sides having three *Garbhagrīhas*, with open *Sukhanasis* and a common *Navaranga* all facing north. The temple has five domes and each of them is a bulbose which resembles exactly to the bulbose dome of Chamundaraya Basti on Chandragiri Hill. The main feature of difference with the latest structures is that there is no Kalasha on the top. It reminds some of the very ancient Budhistic Stupas or the Bhoganandi temple of Nandi. The whole structure is almost completely built of granite. There is no doubt that they belong to a period very much earlier than that of the Hoysalas. Most probably it was built about 900 A.D., if not even much earlier.

In the main cell Lord Adinath is installed. It is made of soapstone. The eastern cell contains the figure of Nemīnath of granite flanked by two chauri-bearers. Lord Shantinath occupies the west cell with similar features. About 10 ft. in front of the porch of the *Trikutachal* is a pair of twin temples built facing each other and similar to each other. There appears to have been a compound wall enclosing these five temples which were collectively known as 'Panchakuta Basti'.

About 20 ft in front to the north of the compound wall is another grand temple dedicated to Lord Shantinath 12 ft in height. The basement is about four ft high and has a finely carved frieze of ridden horses, elephants, wild lions and yalis which are decidedly superior to that occurring in any Hoysala temple, which are supposed to be the best in the world for the art which they exhibit. These temples have no towers at present, most probably might have perished long before. The group of these temples is certainly one of the most beautiful temples in Mysore State and one of the choicest of all the Jain temples in Southern India.

There are numerous inscriptions in and outside of the temples and also on the pillar, written in Hale (archaic) Kannad and from one of them it is traced to have been built by Boppa, son of Gangaraj, the famous general of Vishnuvardhan, and most probably might have been built in the late 12th century.

It is a thousand pities that these jewels in Jain temples are lying in ruin and all dieties are exposed to utter destruction and open mockery of the general public. The figures of Chouri bearers and *Digpals* are exceedingly charming and their counterparts in the Jain

temples at Ajmer and Indore cannot claim comparison in artistic elegance to them. Will it not be fitting for a well-to-do community like Jain to build a Central Museum somewhere near Shravanbelgola for collection of these pieces where thousands of such priceless treasure of marvellous Art are lying scattered all over within the radius of 50 miles around. I hope my call receives due appreciation before it is too late. It is indeed very shameful for a community like Jain to allow their gods to suffer this kind of humiliation!

## IV

### OTHER JAIN SHRINES OF DECCAN

#### 1. JAINBIDRI MUTT

The principal seats of Jain faith in Mysore State are at Shravan belgola, Maleyur, Humach and Narsimhrajapura in Shimoga district. The first place is the residence of a Guru who claims authority all over the Jains throughout the South. He is admitted to be their chief pontiff. Though the consecration of Chandragiri dates back to the 3rd century B.C. but the foundation of the present Mutt is attributed to Chamundaraya to provide for the maintenance and worship of the colossus with liberal endowment of 1,96,000 *barahs* of land.

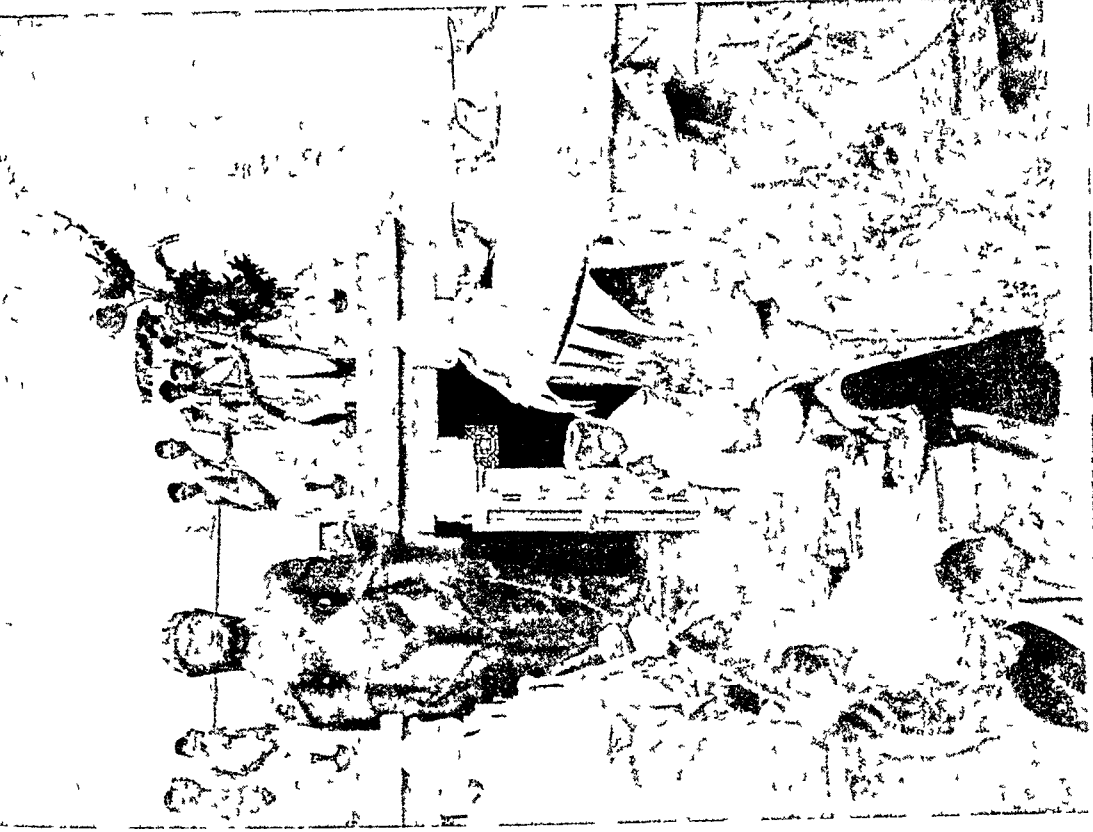
According to a list from the Mutt, the following were in succession of Gurus. They belong to Kundakundacharya, the founder of Mool Sangha, Deshi Gana, and Pustaka Gachha —

1. Nemichandra Siddhant Chakravarti appointed by Chamundaraya in 983 A.D. ,
2. Kundakundacharya appointed by Pandyaraya ,
3. Siddhantacharya appointed by Vir Pandya ,
4. Amalkirti Acharya appointed by Kun Pandya ,
5. Somanandi Acharya appointed by Vinayaditya Hoysala ,
6. Bivudhacharya appointed by Vinayaditya Hoysala ,
7. Prabhachandracharya appointed by Aninga in 1090 A.D. ;
8. Gunabhadracharya appointed by Ballal Hoysala in 1102 A.D. ;
9. Shubhachandracharya appointed by Bitthideva in 1110 A.D.

From 1117 A.D. and onwards the Gurus bear a common name of Charukirti Panditacharya and munificent endowments have been granted to this Mutt by all the succeeding Kings. Maleyur Mutt has been closed for the last 50 years. It is about 80 miles away from here. It was founded by Pujoyapad Acharya, the famous Jain grammarian.

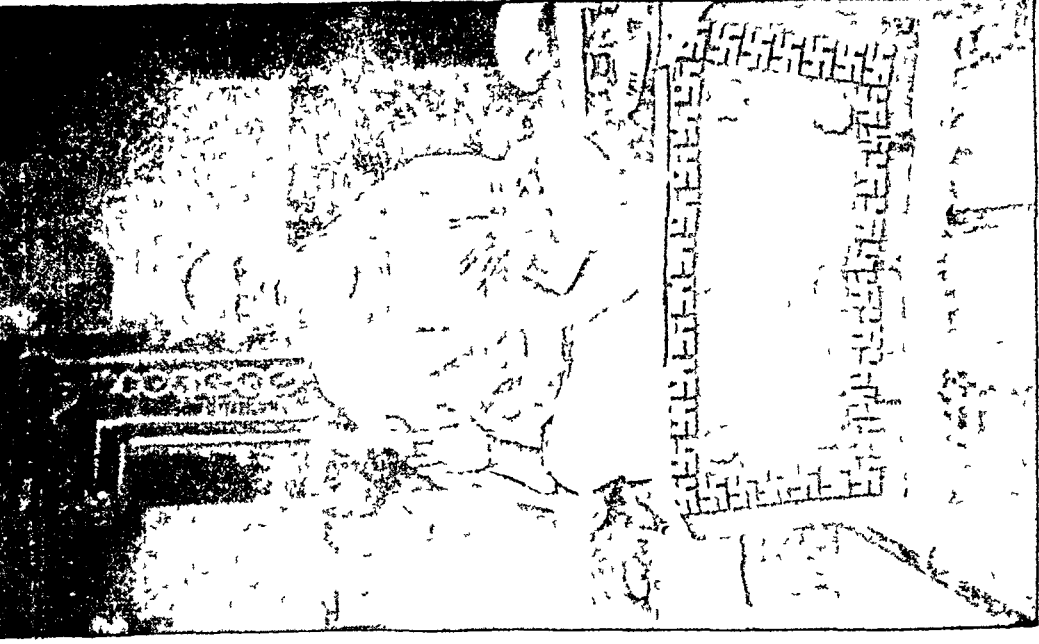


1951—MASTAKABHISHEKA AT GOMMATGIRI



1952—MASTAKABHISHEKA AT GOMMATGIRI

This was held on the 7-9-1952 In the picture H H Maharaja Sir Chamarajendra Wadiyar is seen with folded hands offering his obeisances to Lord Gommateshwara,



THE PRESENT BHATTARAK OF THE NARSIMHARAJPUR  
JAIN MATTHA

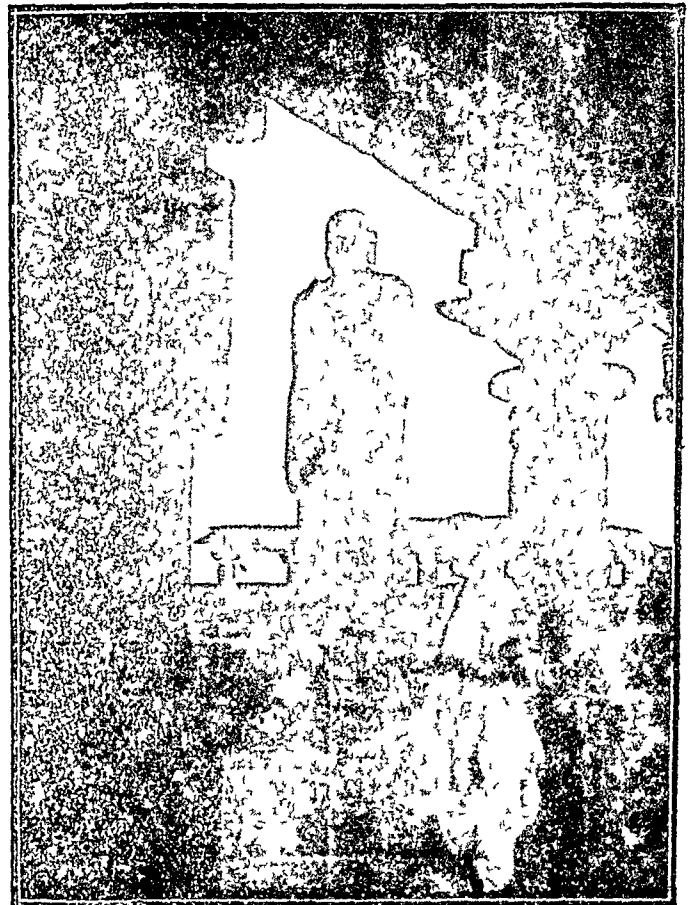
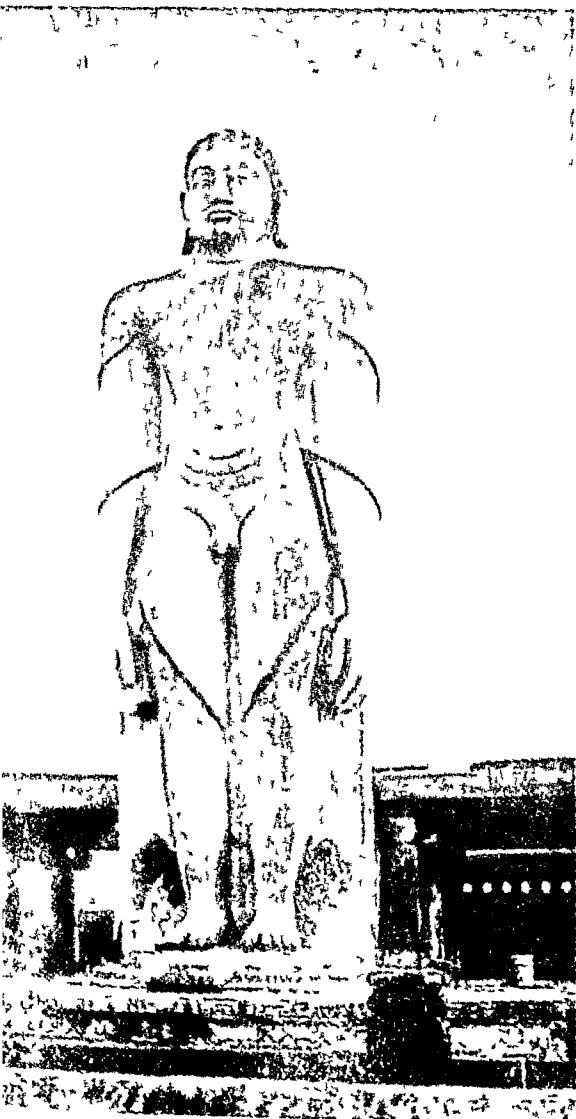
**SWASTISHRI LAXMISAINJI MAHARAJ**

He is an enlightened Bhattarak with reformist views,



**NEMISHVARA BASTI, HIRIYANGADI**

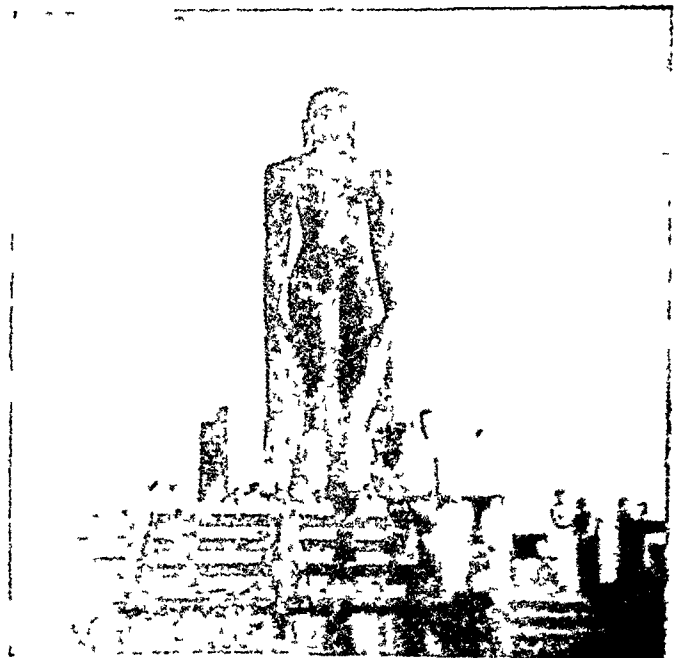
(1)



**KARKAL GOMMATESHWARA**  
As he looks from the adjoining verandah

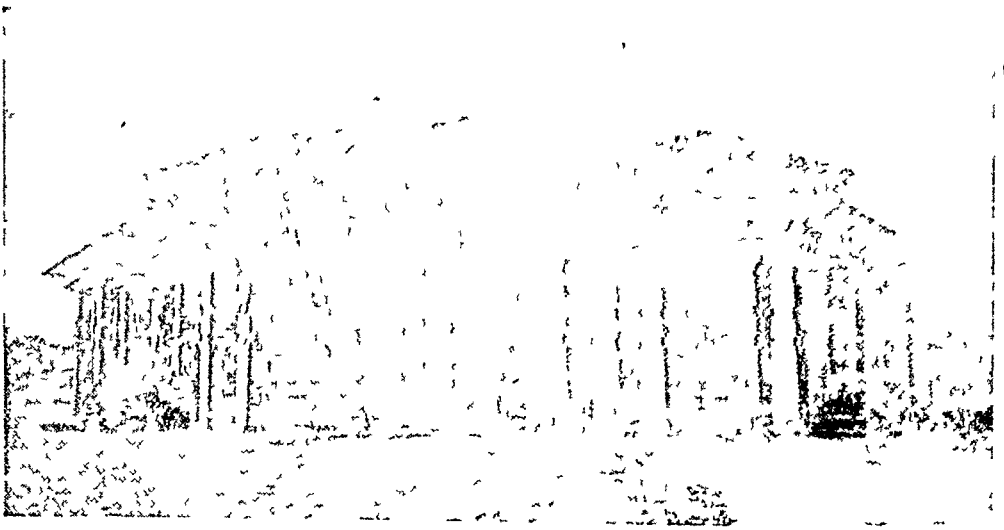
**KARKAL GOMMATESHWARA**

ssus of Karkal Gcmmateshwar It was built  
ing Vir Pandya in 1432 A D It is 41 ft -5 in  
It also stands upon a hill-top like that one  
aravanbelgola

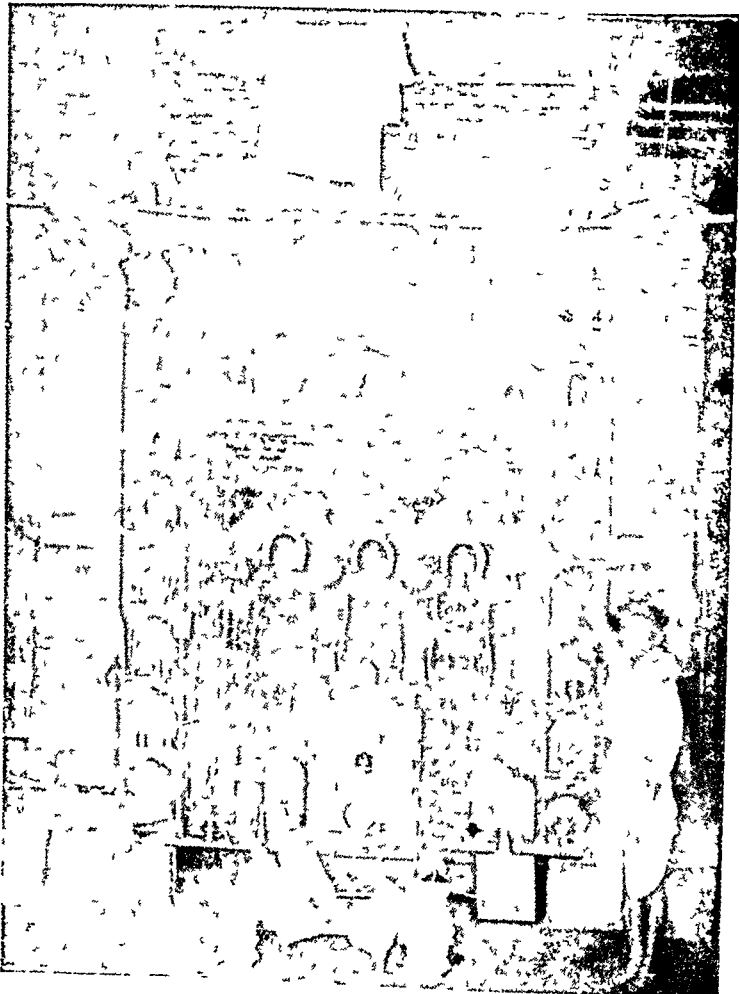


**VENUR GOMMATESHWARA**  
It is the shortest of all the Gommateshwaras





FULL VIEW OF THE CHATURMUKHA BASTI, KARKAL  
(4)



Inner view of the temple where three colossi of Jain images stand  
on each of the four sides like this

In spite of all the rich endowments made by the past kings and also of five villages yielding Rs. 5000/- per year, by the past Mysore Maharajas, there are records to show that the colossus of Gommateshvar saw its evil days also, and in 1578 A.D. it so happened that the very idol was mortgaged with some non-Jain money-lenders and was kept so for a pretty long time, but thanks to the then-Mysore-Maharaja Sir Chamaraja Wadiyar who offered to redeem the colossus by clearing all the debts from his own privy purse and made a permanent law that such pledging of the sacred idols will be legally void and law courts should not recognise such transfers at all, and thus the colossus of Gommateshvar was restored to Jains. Now this sacred image is under direct supervision and management of Mysore Muzrai Department and the Bhattarakas of Jain Mutt have no hand (except the right of worship) in the upkeep or maintenance of the image. The Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore have spared no pains either in the excellent upkeep of the glorious Jain antiquities at Shravanbelgola or in providing all facilities to the lakhs of pilgrims who throng to the place at the time of important ceremonies. The intimate relations between Jainism and Mysore Durbars have been beautifully expressed by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore in his speech at All India Jain Conference held at Shravanbelgola on the 14th March 1925, at the time of Mahamastakabhisheka, already mentioned before. The perfect safety of sacred shrines and colossus of this place is fully guaranteed in the hands of Mysore Durbars and they will spare nothing in discharge of their duties towards this sacred trust.

## II. GOMMATAGIRI

About 14 miles to the south-west of Mysore proper stands an isolated hill which apparently got to be called after the temple it has on its summit. Gommatgiri is a great dome of smooth granite upon which no blade of grass can grow. Its summit rises 400 ft. above the surrounding plains and has no boulders or broken rocks around. The whole hill apparently seems to comprise only one very big main rock, and legends say that some fifty years back the rock was split into two by a stroke of lightning, making the approach to the shrine most impossible. Since then the approach to the little shrine and its Gommateshvara which it enshrines, was by no means an easy climb—the only possible way up was by a scramble through the brambles in the clefts of the north side of the great rock which is about 400 ft. high.

The image is inside the most western of the three small courts, and through the open front may be seen from below of the rock. It was covered with a massive stone and brick pavilion which being seriously cracked due to its antiquity had caused a great danger to the safety of the idol itself, so it has lately been removed and is now surrounded with a tiny cloister and Lord Gommat looks over

it and also the surrounding plains for about hundreds of square miles around, on the same pattern of the Saint of Shravanbelgola."

The image represents Gommateshvara and stands there majestically in perfect state of preservation despite its antiquity. It is about 18 ft high and is of tinted black in colour. Apparently it is not certain whether the image is carved in black stone or is darkened by the long past ages that it has stood there or votive oil, specially as its age is not known. It is nude with a face of the type of the great Jain image at Sharavanbelgola in almost all the characteristics except in the following three respects.— (1) Its facial form denotes a young saint only, (2) Total absence of ant hills on both the sides, and lastly, (3) The hands are shown resting on the hoods of cobras which are quite in contrast to the image at Shravanbelgola. However, the figure is well cut and is in proportion. The creepers are shown twining the legs and arms but they do not grow out of the moles or ant hills. The countenance bears a remarkably strong expression of a saint wrapt in solitary contemplation with unlimited treasure of inner celestial bliss clearly visible on the face. His beauty is bewitching and charm par-excellence.

Just before the image at the distance of about a yard stands an idol of a horse without its rider. It represents the Brahmadeva Yaksha. Horse-riding Brahmadeva is also found on the Kuge Brahmadeva pillar on Chandragiri Hill at Shravanbelgola.

There is no inscription of any kind to give a clue as to the age, sculptor, or the donor, of the image. The nearest Jain inscription is dated 1423 A.D. The buildings are inordinately simple and without any kind of ornamentation or decoration and late renovations have turned what little was left antique into quite modern. There is nothing to denote its antiquity except the figure.

The ascent is made by about 100 steps hewn in solid granite. These steps and all renovations were carried out by Gommatgiri Tirtha Committee and due to its able guidance, enthusiastic work and organising capacities of its Secretaries in persons of Shri C B M. Chandiah and Shri M V Vasupal, this once dilapidated shrine has not only been renovated but has also come into prominence since the last four years. Every year Mahamastakabhisheka of the image takes place and about 10,000 devotees attend the ceremony with great rejoicings and pomps. In this ritual not only the Jains but also the non-Jains partake in thousands like Shri Mahabirji where *Gujjar* and *Mainas* predominate and exceed by far than the Jains. The latest Mahamastakabhisheka took place on the 7th September 1952 which was third in its series. It was graced by the presence of the present Mysore Maharaja H.H Sir Chamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, like his predecessors, who had shown their highest devotion to Jain Gods to such an extent that people more than usual are mistaken to take them for Jains. Legends connect it with the

old Royal House of the Mysore State, but in absence of any direct evidence about it nothing definite can be said. However, from the style of the construction of the shrine and use of bricks we may presumably fix its erection period to the 11th century A.D.

Gradually but steadily well, the *tirtha* is coming into prominence by the endless efforts of the said committee and only some months back this holy place was visited by personalities not less than Sir Bhagchandji Soni of Ajmer and R.B Seth Rajkumarsingh, son of Sir Hukamchandji of Indore. The Ministers of the Mysore Government have also begun evincing their due interest in this *tirtha*, and so the 1951-Mahamastkabhisheka ceremony was attended by Shri H.C. Dasappa, an ex-Minister among the many other notables. The Author of this book was also fortunate in having offered his devoted obeisances at the feet of Gommateshwara with the office-bearers of the said committee, notably Seth G.K.D Bharmiah, the President of the said Committee who has done yeomen services in reviving this *tirtha* and all credit goes to his able guidance that committee is doing excellently good progress

Gommateshwara stands in an absolute solitude par-excellence in a spot commanding a wonderful view of hundreds of square miles around. It is indeed a land of great distances. The Cauveri flows through some thirty of those miles away to the north-west end and joined by its tributary the Laxmantirtha, by the great Sagarkatte bridge, 10 miles below, a few cattle in charge of a small girl, a passing bird, a chirp of cicades, are the only signs of animal life in all that wide prospect.

And we leave Gommat to a spacious silence, which is all that his isolated position, his calm face, and his stiff figure seem to demand, quiet for his eternal mediation, and only that !

Though it is not a great statue but it has the dignity and some strange arresting charm. In its placid way it does seem to express a sense of peace and in the grave and dimpled smile one can apparently see the hints of its inner bliss. The spirit of Jain renunciation is fully brought out in the statue. It is impressive as it stands on the brow of a precipitous hill overlooking a wider plain below. Jain pilgrims going to Jainbidri should make a point to visit this wonderful sacred place also.

### III HUMACH MATTHA

This Mattha was established by Jinduttaraya, the founder of a Jain kingdom at Humach in about 8th century. Here is that famous temple of Padmavati-devi- a popular diety among Jains and non-Jains alike throughout the surrounding districts. The *Gurus* as given in the following list originally claimed to belong to Kundakundacharya, Nandisangha, and from Guru Jayakirtideva and onward they adopted the name of 'Saraswati Gachha'. The

decent is traced in a general way from Bhadrabahu Acharya and then Vishakhacharya (*Ardha-Shrutakewali* who led the *Sangha* of 12,000 disciples to Chola and Pandya territories), then to Umaswati (the well-known *Sutrakar* of *Tattvartha Sutra*) and the following -

1. Samantabhadracharya (composer of Devagam Stotra),
2. Pujiyapada (well-known Jain Grammarian of Jainendra Vyakaran),
3. Siddhantkirti (appointed by Jinduttaraya—founder king of Humach),
4. Akalankacharya (commentator on Devagam),
5. Vidyanandi Acharya (commentator on Apta Mimansa),
6. Manikyanandi Acharya,
7. Prabhachandracharya (commentator on *Nyayakumudachandrodaya* and *Shakatayan Vyakaran*),
8. Vardhaman Munindra.

Henceforth the *Gurus* of this Matha were appointed hereditary pontiffs to the Royal houses of Hoysala, Cholas, and others. The table of their order is as follows -

Vasupujyavratī (*Guru* to Ballalray of Hoysala), Shripal, Nemichandra, Abhayachandra, (*Guru* to Chamkeshavray), Jayakirtideva, Jinchandracharya, Indranandi, Vasantkirti, Vishalkirti, Shubhakirti, Padmanandi, Mahanandi, Maghanandi, Sinhanandi, Padmaprabhu, Vasunandi, Singhakirti, Sudarshan, Merunandi, Devendrakirti, Amarkirti, Vishalkirti, Nemichandra, and hence onward all the Bhattarakas bear a common name of Devendravrīya Bhattarak Maharaj.

Humach Matta holds about two lakhs worth gold ornaments and annually pays Rs. 3000/- in revenue. It claims to possess the widest circle of followers even from the remotest districts of Konkan, Sholapur, Belgaum and others. Humach Matta is noted for its deity 'Padmavati' who is enshrined in a separate temple. This deity is very popular among Jains and non-Jains alike and specially among females. It is generally held that Goddess Padmavati protects the husbands and keeps them safe from troubles of her female worshippers. Every year the goddess is anointed on grand scale and is carried in procession when thousands of votaries attend this function from distant districts.

Intending pilgrims changing at Birur Junction get down at Adasal Railway Station and reach Humach by bus. There are also regular bus-services from Shimoga, Arsikere, and Harihar to Humach.

#### IV MALEYUR MATTHA

Maleyur Mattha, one of the principal seats of Jainism in Mysore State, was famous till some 80 years back. This Matha is situated in Chamaraajnar Taluka, and from an inscription of 1400 A D, it

is apparently evident that Shubhchandradev built a temple enshrining Lord Chandraprabhu there. From another inscription of 908 A. D. we know that a Ganga King named Konguni Verma donated this village along with Kanakgiri to Kanaksen Bhattarak. Formerly it had a seat of a Mattha but now is under Jainbidri Mattha. This *tirtha* was dedicated to Lord Parshwanath but now lies deserted.

### V. NARSIMHRAJPURA MATTHA

Among the numerous prominent Jain seats of Southern India, Narsimhrajapura Jain Mattha occupies particularly a more important place for more than three reasons, viz, (1) it is one of the most ancient of Jain Matthas which did marvellously well in promotion of Jainism and Jain tenets, preserved Jain ethics in those memorable past historical eras, Secondly, (2) it is the main seat of a Jain deity called Jwalamalinidevi, a Yakshi of Lord Chandraprabhu, the eighth Tirthankar of Jains, and, thirdly, (3) this is the most popular among the Jain Matthas of Southern India and has the largest number of its votaries among the Jain and non-Jains alike. No other Jain Mattha including those of Jainbidri, Moodbidri, Karkal, Kolhapur, Jinkanchi, etc., etc., is so popular and has such a vast number of followers as it does.

Besides, it has three ancient Jain temples of Lord Shantinath, Chandraprabhu, and Brahmadev—who is supposed to be the male counterpart of Yakshi Jwalamalini, and this is her main seat. The most salient feature of southern Jain worship, which constitutes the major part but quite contrary to the form of worship in North India Jains is in respect of worship of numerous Yakshas along with the rest of Tirthankaras, and there are many places noted for their being the only seats of certain Yaksha, like Kambadhalli, where despite numerous Jain figures of Tirthankaras, only Yaksha is worshipped on a grand scale, while the Jain Tirthankaras have secondary role so far the ritual of worship is concerned. Brahmdeva is the most popular among the twenty-four Yakshas so much so that it is included in the very list of Jain celebrities for worship by the southern India Jains. There is not a single Jain temple in South India where worship of Yaksha is not regularly performed. This is the most astounding difference pertaining to formal worship of *Terapanth* and *Bispanth*, as we north India Jains call it. There is very little evident difference between a Southern India Digamber Jain and Swetamber Jain of north India (as that sect is conspicuously absent here, except a few emigrant Swetambers who have established themselves in big commercial cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, etc., etc., but they are comparatively of very recent date). Looking into their vast numbers together with the Swetambers, it becomes amply evident that Jainism originally worshipped a number of Yakshas besides the 24 tirthankaras, and *terapanth*, as we find it in North India to-day, is nothing but a reformist offshoot of Jains,

All these temples are very ancient, and the temple of Shantinath is traced to have a direct link to the history dating back about 900 years, and is mentioned in one of the four copper-plates which give an account of Samantbhadra Acharya, and as such link it to those eras of history of Jains which can rightly be called the 'Glory that was Ind' about some nine centuries back.

Narsimharajpura Muttha has had a very chequered history indeed! From the four copper-plates referred to above, which are in possession of this Muttha, it is undoubtedly proved that this Muttha was founded by one Samantbhadra Acharya in Shaka Samvat 1355 (1432 A.D.) who was succeeded by his two disciples, namely, Gunabhadra and Virsain and again the historical link becomes obscure till Shaka Samvat 1468 (1546 A.D.) when Bhattarak Laxmisain of Pengunde ascended the Gadi. The date as given in one of the four copper-plates of its foundation is '*Shuklanam Samvatsare Chaitra Shukla Dwitiya, Thursday*' and this was the date on which Acharya Samantbhadra Acharya is said to have come and founded the Muttha, firstly at Shantinath temple, and later in the present building which is equally ancient. After having been succeeded by his two disciples as stated above, Laxmisain of Pengunda established himself and was regularly succeeded one after the other bearing a common name of 'Laxmisain Pattacharya'. The present Bhattarak was installed only six years back, and was known by name of Shripal Varni. He is an enlightened Jain pandit of reformist views, and is doing his very best to revive its glory, which had fallen to a wretched condition of late.

Narsimharajpura is not a very big town, and the Muttha is about two miles away from the town itself. The nearest railway station is Tarikere in Shimoga district. However, one can reach here by bus and such services are available at Shimoga, Channarayapattan, and Tarikeri thrice a day and the bus stand is just at the gate of the Muttha.

The Muttha and the temple of Jwalamalini Devi, for which this *tirtha* is specially renowned, are situated in lonely calm and quiet place surrounded by dense jungles, with picturesque natural beauty through out the whole year. It receives more rains than its surroundings, and I hear reports about its unhealthy climate for continuous four months during the monsoons when mosquito nuisance reaches a high pitch and becomes intolerable.

Though the place has three Jain temples as aforesaid, but it is chiefly famous for the temple of Jwalamalini Devi, which though a Jain yakshi of eighth Tirthankara is largely worshipped by Jains and non-Jains alike. There are numerous legends supporting the version that this image was originally brought here by the most distinguished Jain Acharya Samantbhadra from Sivakanthi after defeating king Shivakoti in discourse. It is claimed that it was

due to the timely help of this Yakshi that Samantbhadra could do a miracle of producing the figure of Lord Chandraprabhu out of the Shivalingam when he recited *Syambhu Stotra*! Such being the case, Jwalamalini devi became an object of worship of Jains for ever, as a benefactress diety of Jainism. But all these versions evidently are not based on facts and obviously have sprung up to satisfy the votaries than any historical event.

There are numerous benedictions which this particular diety is supposed to bestow upon its votaries, but the most cherished one pertains to fulfilling ones innate desire, particularly in respect of conjugal happiness. You can find numerous would-be-brides and grooms surrounding the Jwalamalini to predict about the suitability of their wedlock relation, and if suitable, the diety expresses her approval by throwing the flower two feet afar, but, the flower will keep sticking, if the relation was going to be unhappy one. So, Jwalamalini devi has been playing as a deciding factor specially in matrimonial matters, and as such, is held in great reverence by Jains and non-Jains alike, and it is no wonder that among its staunch votaries, the fair-sex carries the majority. Among the votaries attending the annual fair which is held on every first *Chaitra Sud Padwa* to sixth every year, one can pick up peoples from the districts of Belgaum, Kolhapur, Sholapur, Madras, and the people right from the districts adjoining river Krishna in the south and Godavari in the north.

No other Jain diety has ever been anointed except Jwalamalini and is anointed by her votaries with five liquids and is carried in a chariot-procession with great pomp and show. During these days the whole area is surged with a great mass of humanity which presents an unique spectacle.

Due to the popularity of the diety, the Muttha and Bhattarakji have also come into the great prominence and it is rightly claimed that the majority of Jains in south India follows this Muttha including the places like Shravanbelgola and Kolhapur where there are independent Mutthas, yet many followers may be counted belonging to this Muttha even there!

## V

### I HALEBID

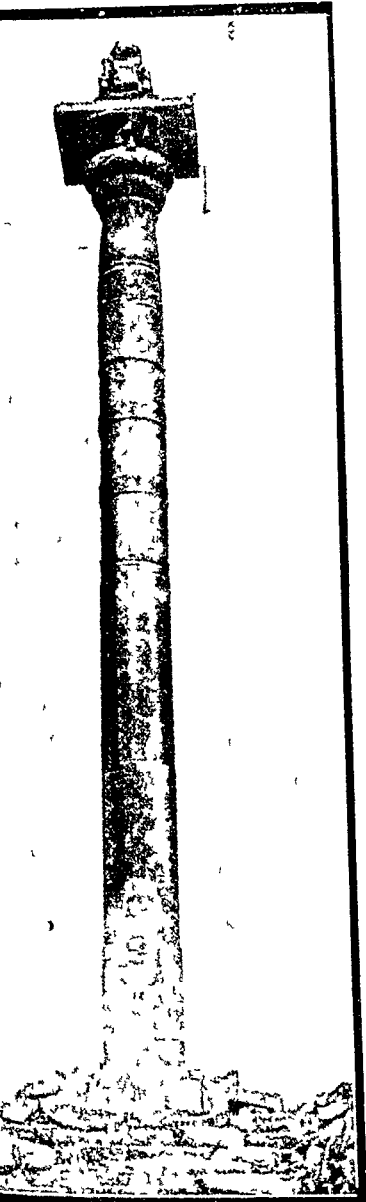
Halebidi is a small village in the north-east of Belur taluka of Hassan district in Mysore State and is situated in  $13^{\circ}-13' N$  and  $76^{\circ} E$ , 18 miles south-west of Banavar Railway Station. The old capital marks the site of Dwarasamudra, the capital of Hoysala Kings.



This prosperous city was first plundered by General Malik Kafur of Allauddin Khilji (the 2nd Khilji King of North India, who ruled from 1296-1321 A.D.) in 1311 A D and he took away immense wealth and camel-loads of gold, silver and diamonds, and what little was left was plundered by another Mohamedan King Muhammad Tughlaq in 1326 A D and it was he who totally destroyed the city Its splendour is attested not by the fabulous wealth obtained from such conquests, as stated by the Mohamedan historians, but by its architectural monuments which still rank among the best and choicest masterpieces of the Hindu and Jain Arts The Jain Basties though very grand and imposing, are comparatively less decorated, and less lavishly sculptured than the Hindu temples about whom Marshall says "These temples can be said to be the true representatives of Hindu Art throughout India !"

It is recorded in the annals of History that all former Hoysala Kings were staunch Jains and patronised it by making rich endowments. One of the most outstanding figure of them was Hull, Prime Minister—treasurer to Hoysala King Narsimh (I) who built a number of Jain temples at Halebid, Jainbidri and elsewhere. The famous temple of Bhandari Basti at Jainbidri, five temples on Kallangiri where numerous Jain temples had been previously built by former Ganga Kings, and endowed village Savneru for the upkeep of the former He also repaired many old Jain temples, specially Uppattayata temple Commander Gangaraja was the second who held the banners of Jainism aloft in the South and some of the most striking Jain temples, owe their existence to his munificence even to-day

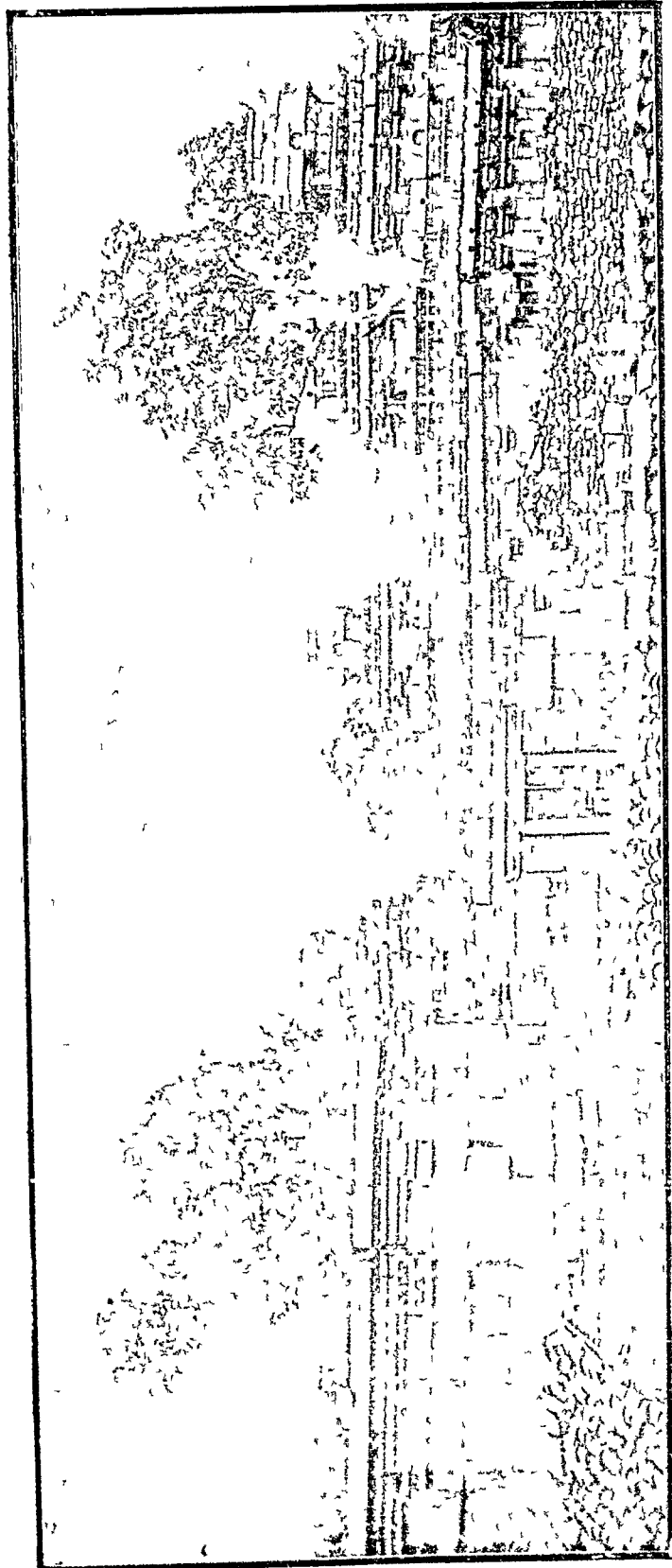
The most striking of all the temples of Halebid is that of the "*Vijay Parshwanath Basti*" which was built by King Vishnuvardhan Hoysala It is dedicated to Lord Parshwanath and an idol of 14 ft. in height is enshrined herein It stands majestically in the main hall besides hundreds of others of no less charm in architectural workmanship It has a stone pavilion in front borne on thirty-two elegant pillars of costliest pot-stone The basement and the parapets of the outer walls of the temple are ornamented with good sculptures. The *navaranga* hall of the temple has a number of towered niches which formerly contained images of the twenty-four Jain Tirthankars. The central ceiling is perhaps the best carved in Halebid It is borne on twelve beautiful pillars of hard dark touch-stone perfectly designed, carved and finished They are so finely polished that visitors can see their faces and figures reflected on the pillars Since the curvatures of the latter are varied, the reflections assume many funny forms Lord Parshwanath's image is virtually a colossus of black-stone 14 ft high with a seven-hooded cobra over its head. The figure is naked and its form is that of a perfect saint with a benign sympathetic smile on his face According to Jains when Vishnuvardhan married the daughter of a king who was staunch follower



THE ELEGANT YAKSHA  
PILLAR STANDING BEFORE THE  
KAMBADAHALLI TEMPLE

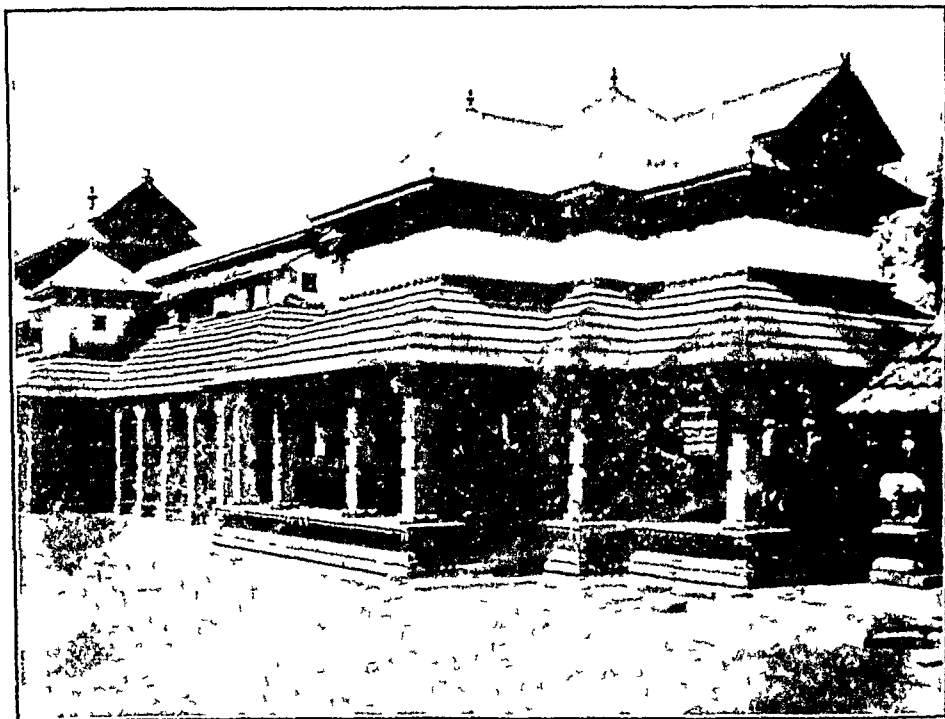
This is one of the choicest pillars in  
of the Mysore State. It is topped  
with an image of a sitting *yaksha* who is  
worshipped on grand scale once a year.  
The pillar bears numerous inscriptions of the  
highest historical value.

(Courtesy—Mysore Archaeological Department)



RUINED TEMPLE OF PANCHAKUT BASTI AT KAMBADAHALLI

It was built by Boppa, son of General Gangaraj in somewhere about 900 A D. Due to callous dis-regard and negligence  
of Jains such a wonderful temple is lying in ruined condition! Pilgrimage to Jambidri is incomplete without paying a  
visit to this ruined temple which lies at the distance of 11 miles only from Jambidri by cart.



**WONDERFUL CHANDRANATH BASTI (TEMPLE), WITH 1,000 PILLARS  
AT MOODBIDRI**

Dr Ferguson opines that its nearest resemblance can only be found in Nepal  
and nowhere else in India



**AUTHOR**

of Siva, he was converted to Shivaism and then he built the big Hoysaleswar temple at Halebid and demolished all the Jain temples except three which were allowed to remain due to great entreaties of his mother—the first queen

Another wonderful temple is that of Lord Shantinath (the Lord of Peace) which is in the middle of the three temples. It is said that the city of Halebid at one time contained no less than 720 Jain temples but were razed to dust by Vishnuwardhan himself except these three which are situated at Bastihalli two furlongs away from the famous Hindu temple of Hoysaleswara. The great mass of ruined temples and broken idols scattered all over remind a cursory onlooker what glorious city once it should have been! Among the most famous Hindu temples, Hoysaleswara is the most striking and is so richly engraved that Dr. Fergusson had to remark “one of the buildings on which the advocate of Hindu Architecture would desire to take his stand.” Nothing grander than this specimen of Hindu Art exists elsewhere through out India

## II KARKAL

Karkal is a small town in the Udipi Taluka of the South Kanara District in the province of Madras. It is situated in 13° 13' N. and 74° 59' E. It was once a great and populous Jain city and capital of Bhairarasa Wadeyars—a very powerful Jain community of the South. The present Mysore Maharajas are also Wadeyars and belong to the same community. Bhairaras' family has since long been extinct.

Among the most memorable relics of the past is a monolithic statue of Gommatraya, built by King Vir of Pandya Dynasty, in 1432 A.D. at the instance of the Jain Acharya Lalitkirti of Pansoge. It stands on the summit of the rocky hill in an enclosure south of the village overlooking a picturesque lake and is 41 ft 5 in. in height. It was not built out of a rock of the hill but was built outside and then was hauled up to the spot where it now stands (*See Indian Antiquary V, p. 36*). In '*Karkalad Gommateshwara charite*'—a Kannad treatise on the subject written by Chandrama in 1646 A.D., it is stated that the statue was placed on a long cart of 20 wheels and was continuously dragged up for a month. Once in 60 years, Jains from all parts of India gather at Karkal to bathe this colossus with cocoanut milk. The statue of Gommatraya is made in perfect resemblance to that of Gommateshwara of Shravanabelgola, but it is certainly of inferior artistic calibre, specially is this true of the face, which is neither so impressive nor so beautiful as that of the former.

To the north on the summit of a smaller hill stands a square temple with projecting porticoes facing each of the four quarters, its columns, pediments and friezes being alike richly carved and ornamented figures in burnished copper counter-parts of the great statue

above. It is called "*Chaturmukha Basti*" and was built by King Immadi Bhanava. It acquired its name after its construction, i.e., having a door on every direction with a dozen colossuses each of 21 ft in height. Each idol is a living specimen of the highest architectural art and unique workmanship. A living monument of the glory of Jainism what it was in the past, and that emulative respect and love it enjoyed from the ruling kings in those memorable bygone ages!

Karkal is also a seat of a Bhattaraka under the name of Lalitkirtiji Maharaj, and he controls about a dozen temples of this place and the suburbs. At Halengadi, close by, is the finest Jain *Stambha* in the district. It has a monolithic shaft of 33 ft high in eight segments each beautifully and variously ornamented, supporting an elegant capital and topped by a lantern containing a Jin statue. The total height is about 50 ft. Karkal lies at the distance of 18 miles from Udipi and 26 miles from Mangalore respectively.

### III VENUR

Venur is a small village and lies at the distance of 24 miles from Karkal and 12 miles from Moodbidri respectively. It is situated on the bank of river Gurupar. It is another seat of Gommatraya. It lies on the Shravanabelgola-Moodbidri Road. Venur though now lies in ruins and reduced to a small village below 1,000 in population, was once a great seat of Jainism and had remained so far many centuries in the past.

It was the capital of the kings of Ajmir Dynasty and one of the most prominent of them King Timmujaji built a colossus of Gommatraya 35 ft high in 1604 A.D. He was a direct descendant of Chamundaraya, who built one at Shravanbelgola. Venur colossus is the shortest of all the three Gommateshvaras within the radius of 150 miles around it. It also stands in an enclosure, on the same pattern as that of Shravanbelgola but stands on the bank of river Gurupar. The statue stands on a raised pedestal without any support. The features are well-cut and are in proportion. It is a nice specimen of Dravidian architecture and is of lower artistic calibre in design and workmanship than one at Shravanbelgola.

There are two more Jain temples in the same enclosure and yet another of Lord Shantishvar, by far bigger and the oldest of all the temples, outside the enclosure. It was built by Pandippa Oras Binnaney in 1491 A.D. In all, here are eight Jain temples but all of them now lie deserted almost through out the year!

The Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony that took place last year proved to be a great success. Annual fair takes place every year on *Falgun Sud 15* when Jains from the surrounding districts bathe the colossus. Madras Government pays an annual gratuity of Rs 90/- towards the upkeep of this statue.

## IV MOOBBIDRI

Moodbidri lies at the distance of 12 miles from Venur and 22 miles due east from Mangalore. It is truly called the terminus of Jain Archaeology and culture. Though there are a few more Jain temples further south to it in Cochin and Travancore States, but none of note for traditional eminence. Moodbidri lies in open plain and amidst the green fields of rice, and gardens of coconut and betel-nut. While journeying from Jainbidri to Moodbidri one passes through the dense jungles of cardamom, clove, and sandalwood groves, and meets the profusely charming natural scenery all around, which may remain enshrined in ones memory for ever.

Moodbidri had ever been occupying a very prominent and proud place in the historical annals of Jainism in the Deccan, and it has ever remained so very close to it through out the long centuries of Jain Kingdoms, which at one time dominated the whole of the extreme southern peninsula of India. Moodbidri proved always to be a great source of strength and spiritual guidance to the rest of the southern peninsula. It was the seat of Choutter Kings till the very recent past, and a descendant of that family still resides here and receives a small pension from the Madras Government.

It contains no less than 18 ancient Jain temples, the most striking of them is that of Lord Chandranath so far the architectural beauty is concerned. It has about 1,000 pillars richly decorated. The very form of the *Basti* is so striking in appearance that Dr. Fergusson said "the nearest approach to the type is to be found only in Nepal." Close by lie a few tombs of the past Bhattarakas, though once might have been very imposing, but now lie in decay.

Moodbidri, though now reduced to a small town in the Karkal taluka of the South Kanara District, was once an important Jain town known widely as a great seat of International trade. It is said about its past glory that at one time it contained about 40 multi-millionaires besides hundreds of millionaires, who had trade-connections through out the East and West, including Java, Sumatra and other islands of East Indies in the East, and Persia, Arabia and other Persian colonies in the East Africa in the west. Merchants from those countries thronged the streets of Moodbidri. A glorious reference about the said *Basti* can also be found in the diary of one, Abdul Razzak, a Persian Trader, who after visiting this wonderful temple remarked with great astonishment. 'It is unique and has no rival through out the World. Its images seem to have been made of solid gold.' It was built in 1430 A.D at the exorbitant cost of Rs. 9,00,00,000/! There is no temple of this unique variety through out the whole peninsula below Narmada.

Moodbidri is also a great seat of Jain Bhattaraka and one of the most prominent Jain Mutta, founded as early as 2400 years ago.

The Bhattarakas hold the hereditary title of 'Charukirtiswamy'. They have been the hereditary pontiffs of Jains and Kings alike and wielded a great influence and commanded great respect in Royal Durbars of all the surrounding States. The Bhattarakas of this Mutta have been very famous for their high accomplishments in learning of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Jain ethics and Philosophy. Moodbidri is also called 'Jain Kashi' for being a great seat of Jain learnings and is yet well-known far and wide. The Bhattaraka of the Mutta controls 18 temples of Moodbidri and also one at Venur, where there is another colossus of Gommatraya, 35 ft high.

The Moodbidri Jain *Shastrabhandar* is the richest of all the Jain *Shastrabhandars* through out India and contains very ancient and unique works of famous Jain Acharyas written on the palm leaves. It is common knowledge with all of us that the renowned Jain scriptures *Dhawal*, *Jaya Dhawal*, and *Maha Dhawal* were once the property of this *Bhandar*, and could only see the light of the day after great efforts and exorbitant expenses incurred by Seth Manikchand Hirachnd Zaveri, J.P, Bombay, Seth Hirachand Nemchand Doshi of Sholapur and Lala Jambuprasadjai Jain Rais of Saharanpur (U P.) There are many more rare unpublished works lying rotting in the *Bhandar* and it shall be fitting in the tune of time as well as of the public and general opinion that these sacred works be brought to light, and the ensuing Mahamastakabhisek will be achieving hundred fold success if some suitable scheme is chalked out for this purpose.

*Tribhuvan-tilak-Chudamani* is another temple of wonderful architectural beauty. It consists of an unique *Charityalaya* (shrine) with 1,008 idols of wonderful workmanship and craftsmanship cast out of a rare mettalic alloy which glitters like gold inspite antiquity. An array of 32 idols of Jain Tirthankaras of precious stones like emerald, rubies, saphire, etc, is indeed an exclusive precious possession of this Mutta.

Moodbidri Mutta is also one of the most ancient Mutta linked to the past Jain history of 2400 years! Chronologically it is also linked with Shri Kundakundacharya, the founder of *Mool sangha*. Hundreds of Bhattarakas succeeded him since then and earned great laurels for their high achievement in every sphere of learnings, viz, Jain ethics, grammar, *Nyaya* (logic), Sanskrit, Kannad, and wrote many books of immortal literature. It has rightly earned a distinction of being called the 'last bastion of Jainism, Jain ethics, and Jain Literature for so many past centuries. None could rightly rival it in this respect so far, but now, it is only the matter of distant past. It is in fact the last bastion of the glory which was once the Jainism in the Deccan.

# VI

## HISTORICAL JAIN KINGS

### I. GANGA DYNASTY

The most striking feature of the ancient history of the Ruling Dynasties in the South, is their staunch adherence to Jainism for several centuries. Jainism occupied the proud place of being State religion of almost all the States in the South right from the 3rd century B C to 12th century A D., and historical annals of almost every state in the South stands testimony to this claim. Among the prominent dynasties of the South Kadambas, Pallavas, Nolambas, Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas, Gangas, Cholas, Cheras, Ajnirs, Pandyas, Changals, Kongals, and Kalchuries are most noteworthy and there is hardly any line of kings in the above dynasties which has not contributed its rich share in promotion what may be called Jain Art, Culture, Architecture, Archaeology, etc., and they made lavish endowments for the upkeep of Jain institutions, temples, shrines and every thing which went in promotion of their cherished religion which was none but Jainism. Some of the best specimens of architecture and archaeological eminence are due to the benevolence of certain Kings and there are numerous examples and hundreds of inscriptions that lately have come to light to prove in unequivocal terms that almost every King of the above dynasties did something or made generous awards in glorification of Jainism or its causes in the shape of building of big temples, images, idols, cave-temples, etc. However, Ganga Dynasty singles out to be the best and longest in keeping the longest adherence to it for continuous 1,000 years—from 3rd to 12th century. There were 37 Kings in succession in all, who rigidly adhered to the benevolent tenets of Jainism without any break in between; and hardly there is any other religion in South which can claim such a long adherence to itself by particular dynasty except Jainism.

The very name of Ganga for the Jain Kings is obviously most curious, and as such, denotes some extraordinary significance or rather a mystery. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence available to justify the designation. Similarly, whence and how their kingdom was called Gangawadi and its subjects Gangadikars is also shrouded in mystery. A number of Hindu legends have sprung about these names linking its origin right from River Ganga and thus connect indirectly the dynasty to Hinduism, but they are mere myths and not reliable.

There is another interesting version about the persons who founded the Ganga Dynasty in the South. It is said that one Padmanabhi, son of Kampa, was much distressed being childless,



so he supplicated *Shasanadevata* Padmaprabhu, and obtained two sons and a daughter and named them Rama and Lakshman. After some time Padmanabhi was attacked by King Mahipal of Ujjain, and finding no other way of safety, he planned to send out his children with 48 select body-guards to South. Both the brothers assumed the names of Dadiga and Madhava. On arriving at Perur, they visited a Jain temple and met there Singhanandi—a most influential Jain monk of those times of *Kanurgana*. In an inscription he is referred to with a number of high-sounding adjectives. Here Dadiga narrated his family's plight to him in such a melancholy tone that the said Singhanandi took their case in his hand out of mercy, and supplicated Goddess Padmavati and obtained boons for them, confirmed by a gift of a sword and a kingdom. Dadiga being much enchanted with gifts, laid hold of the sword at once and making a loud ovation of *Jinaraja* struck it with all his might at a stone pillar which immediately fell into two. Singhanandi recognised it as an auspicious omen, so he made two crowns from the petals of the *karnika* flowers and placed them on the heads of both the brothers.

He also gave them his peacock-feather *pitchhi* for their royal insignia, and in due course, also provided them with a strong army and vested them with all kingly powers and pomps. Then at last he also impressed upon them the following counsel -

“O ye brothers, listen to me - If you fail in what you promise, if you shirk Jain-*shasan* (Jainism), if you take wives of others, if you addict yourselves to wines or flesh, if you associate with the base, if you do not help the needy, and lastly, if you flee from the battle-field, your race will go to ruins, otherwise rule till the end of the earth”

Both the brothers took the vow to remain staunch adherents to Jainism till last, and also held a promise on behalf of their would-be-successors to follow the teachings of Jainism and his counsels for ever. Thus with Nandiguru as their fort, Kuvalala as their capital, ninety six thousand country as their kingdom, victory as their companion in the battle-field, Jinendra as their God, and *Jainshasan* as their religion, both the brothers began to rule this earth. The boundries of their kingdom touched Madakale in the North, Toudanad in the East, ocean in the West, and Kongu in the South, and within these limits of Gangawadi ninety-six-thousands did Gangas undertake the subjection of all the enemies. They also built a Jain temple on the hills of Mandali in Konkan.

Evidently, most of this seems to be legendry and so be treated with caution. But some truth certainly underlie the narrative and specially with the arrival of Dadiga and Madhava at Perur, we are seemingly on the very sound ground. Perur is probably in Cuddappa district still distinguished as ‘Ganga Perur’. So also is well-known the figure like Singhanandi in the literature and is

expressly mentioned in numerous inscriptions of his having helped the Gangas in founding the Ganga Kingdom. Besides all these evidences, there is such a lot of further evidence in shape of various traditions, hearsays, and other records of inscriptions, found in all parts of Mysore State that it hardly requires any further support. Singhanandi is also mentioned in a work 'Indrabhuti Samayabhushan' (*vide* Indian Antiquary, Vol. XII, p. 20) which goes in full support of this version.

The following is the table of the Ganga Kings of Mysore before the 5th century, though taken from inscriptions but not very authentic.—

1	Kongini Verma (Dadiga)	ruled in 340-400 A.D.
2	Kuniya Madhav (Madhav)	" 400-435 A.D.
3	Hari Varma (son of Dadiga)	" 436 A.D.
4	Vishnugopa	"
5	Prithwi Ganga	"
6	Tadanal Madhava	" 450-500 A.D.
7	Avanti Ganga Kongini	" 520-540 A.D.
8	Durvinita Kongini	" 540-600 A.D.
9	Mushakai Kongini Mokkara	"
10	Shrivikram Kongini	" 608-670 A.D.
11	Bhuvikram Shrivallabha	" 675 A.D.
12	Navkama Shivamar	" 676-715 A.D.
13	Airyang	" 716-720 A.D.
14	Shrivallabha	" 721-725 A.D.
15	Shripurusha	" 726-788 A.D.
16	Shivamar	" 788-812 A.D.
17	Marsimha	"
18	Anupam Jagtunga	"
19	Rachamull (I)	" 817-853 A.D.
20	Marulayya	"
21	Butuga Parammad	"
22	Airayappa	"
23	Vir vedanga	"
24	Rachamull (II)	" 870-907 A.D.
25	Airayanga (II)	"
26	Butuga	" 907-935 A.D.
27	Maruldeva	"
28	Guttiya Ganga	"
29	Marsimha	"
30	Govinda	"
31	Saigotra Vijayaditya	" 922-937 A.D.
32	Rachamull (III)	" 937-960 A.D.
33	Marsimha (III)	" 971-985 A.D.
34	Rachamull (IV)	"
35	Garvad Ganga	" 985-1002 A.D.
36	Mallgovinda	" 1002-1004 A.D.
37	Kali Rakkas Ganga	"

All these kings except the last two remained throughout staunch Jains, and did every thing humanly possible to promote its interests in South India, and scrupulously clung to the promise that their ancestors Dadiga and Madhav had held to Singhanandi Acharya. Some of the kings were very learned and composed excellent works of poetry and commentaries on the Jain scriptures. Avanti Ganga took the idol of Jindeva and crossed the Cauvery in floods. Some acquired distinction by writing learned books in art, prosody, grammar, and alike subjects in Sanskrit and Kannad languages of great charm. Chamundaraya, the builder of the famous colossus of Gommateshvar at Shravanbelgola was the Commander-Minister of Rachamalla (IV), the 34th king in the above list. He ruled from 971 to 985 A.D. and it was in 983 A.D. that the said colossus was built.

The last two kings forsook Jainism and soon after the breach of their ancestors' promise, the Ganga Kingdom came to a close and was destroyed for ever by King Rajendra Chola in 1004 A.D. The blessings of Singhanandi Acharya protected this dynasty from fall till they adhered to Jainism and the moment they shrunk from that solemn pledge they saw their doom. Adherence to Jainism saved them from all calamities, but the moment that chasm was gone nothing could save them from going to pieces. There are many inscriptions found all over the Mysore State which prove that the first 35 Kings of this Dynasty made rich endowments towards the upkeep of Jain temples and built numerous new ones at many a places, majority of them now lie in decay or are in possession of Lingayats.

## II MYSORE MAHARAJAS

Next to Ganga Kings, the most notable among the Royal line of successions are the Maharajas of Mysore. They belong to Wadiyar family which was very influential community in the extreme southern India from the 9th to 13th century. Though the present Maharajas are staunch *lingayats* but their patronage to Jainism has ever remained beyond doubts. The next notable fact about them is that numerous Jains even now can be counted among intimate relatives and kins of the Mysore House, namely Palegars, Urs, etc., who are Jains and most of the Maharajas are married in these communities. Most of the *Maharanis* belonged to Jain families. The present Maharani is also said to belong to a Jain family.

### MYSORE STATE

Few places in India have a greater concentration of attractions than the picturesque State of Mysore. Situated in the south of the sub-continent with a mean elevation of 2,000 to 3,000 ft above sea-level, it enjoys a mild, equable and salubrious climate throughout the year.

It is a land of lofty mountains, primeval forests, most lovely water-falls, world famous ancient temples and shrines of wonderful

architectural delicacy and also, one of the greatest monolithic Colossus of Gommateshvara, which is one among the 'Greatest Wonders of the World'. Its forests are full of Bengal tigers, bisons and wild elephants and it is here that the cultivation of coffee, sandalwood and teak is carried on very high standards. Among all the countries of the East, Mysore produces by far the greatest quantity of gold at Kolar gold-fields and some of the mines have gone to the depth of 8000 ft. Geisoppa water-falls are unique and are considered to be the highest in the world. They are formed by river Sharavati falling over a tremendous chasm of about half a mile wide and 830 ft. deep.

Besides, it is equally rich and carries the distinction of being the greatest meeting place of various religions, ethics and spiritual philosophies through-out India. Harihar, Melkote, Belur, Halebid, Shringeri, and Shivanbelgola, Humach, Narasimharajapura, etc., etc., are neighbouring towns concentrated within a radius of 100 miles in this very State which have been the greatest seats of different faiths in India, and have even to-day millions and millions of their adherents throughout India and abroad alike. There are great Muttas in each of the said towns and highest pontiffs of different faiths do live here with pomps. These towns contain some of the rarest specimens of the ancient monuments which are world wide famous for their richest architectural heritage of India and most glorious examples of Hoysala Architecture. Sagas in stone here sing the architectural achievements of ages which immortalise the Jain, Vaishanava, and Shiva pantheons.

The State covers an area of about 29,500 square miles and is divided into nine administrative districts and has to-day a population of nearly nine and a half millions.

The history of this beautiful land is not less interesting. Traditions, in the first instance, connect it with the two great Indian epics - the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. Coming down to more authenticated historical times, some of the famous edicts and pillars of Ashok-the-great at Maski (Nizam's dominion) and Chitaldruga (Mysore State) definitely bear testimony of its being a part of the mighty Mouryan Empire, in the third century B.C. Coming down to the medieval historical period, we find that Mysore had been and had remained so for the centuries the cradle of the four great royal dynasties which dominated not only what we call the present Mysore State but whole of the Deccan peninsula, namely, Kadambas, Hoysalas, Gangas and Kings of Vijaynagar.

During the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries this beautiful land of Mysore was ruled by a succession of Hoysala and Ganga Kings whose personal religious devotion and piety wrapt in great spirit of religious toleration towards all the religions of the day and their benevolent patronage expressed themselves in the building of the

unrivalled ornate temples and idols which are matchless in themselves and have no equals throughout the world. They stand even to day, as the outstanding examples of architectural beauties and none parallels them in their supreme delicacy of Art and ornamentation. To these master-builders we owe the famous temples of Somnathpur, Belur, Halebid, Shringeri, and also the colossus of Shravanbelgola. Even to day at the peak of scientific progress around, these specimens defy all rivals throughout the world in respect of their immeasurable and incompassable richness of architectural wealth so far. They are by far the 'The Wonders of the World' and are likely to remain so for many years yet to come. An average tourist is held in breathless wilderness for a few moments when he sees a galaxy of such wonderful aristocratic display of architectural wealth carved out in rough cliffs. For moments he is left spell-bound and he deliberately refuses to believe his eyes! Ages after ages have rolled by, but their freshness and display of such wonderful artistic wealth has not been marred by time in an iota. Some of them bear distinct sign of destruction at the hands of the past religious fanatics, but they look yet more charming inspite of their pollution to such an extent that neither a poet can ever sing their beauty nor a painter can paint their charm in full! An average tourist has only to pity that cruel hand who dared to raise his hammer against such marvellous beauty spots to which no grander in grandeur exists elsewhere throughout the world.

Mysore came under the rule of the present Ruling House during the fourteenth century. Since then it has been governed by a line of distinguished Rulers who figured very prominently in the modern Indian History. Towards the end of the 18th century, the real power was usurped by the famous Hyderalli Khan and after him by his equally famous son, Tippu Sultan. In 1799 he was defeated by the British in the fourth Mysorean War at Seringapatnam and once again the original Hindu Dynasty was restored to the Mysorean Gadi in the person of Shri Krishnaraja Wadiyar (III) who ruled from 1799 to 1868 A D.

The following is the succession line of the Mysore Rajas according to annals compiled in the Mysore Palace —

1.	Yaduraya Vijaya	1399-1423 A D.
2.	Fire Bettada Chamaraja Wadiyar (I)	1423-1458 A D.
3.	Timmaraja Wadiyar (I)	1458-1478 A D.
4.	Hire Chamaraja Wadiyar (II) Aruberal	1478-1513 A D.
5.	Bettada Chamaraja Wadiyar (III)	1513-1552 A D.
6.	Timmaraja Wadiyar (II) Appannan	1552-1571 A D.
7.	Bola Chamaraja Wadiyar (IV)	1571-1576 A.D.
8.	Rajada Chamaraja Wadiyar (V)	1576-1578 A D.
9.	Raja Wadiyar (I)	1578-1617 A D.
10.	Chamaraja Wadiyar (VI)	1617-1637 A.D.

11	Immadi Raja Wadiyar (II)	1637-1638 A.D.
12	Randhira Kanthirava Naisrao Wadiyar	1638-1659 A.D.
13	Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar	1659-1672 A.D.
14.	Chikka Devaraja Wadiyar	1672-1704 A.D.
15-	Kanthirava Wadiyar Mukai asu	1704-1713 A.D.
16.	Dodda Krishnaraja Wadiyar (I)	1713-1731 A.D.
17.	Chamaraja Wadiyar (VII)	1731-1734 A.D.
18.	Krishnaraja Wadiyar (II)	..... 1734-1766 A.D.
19.	Nanjaraja Wadiyar	. 1766-1770 A.D.
20.	Bettada Chamaraja Wadiyar (VIII)	..... 1770-1776 A.D.
21.	Khasa Chamaraja Wadiyar (IX)	. 1776-1796 A.D.
22.	Krishnaraja Wadiyar (III)	1796-1868 A.D.
23.	Chamrajendra Wadiyar (IX)	1868-1898 A.D.
24.	Krishnaraja Wadiyar (IV)	1898-1940 A.D.
25.	Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar	1940—

All these Maharajas have shown their highest benevolence and greatest sense of patronage to the colossus of Gommateshvara and some of them made rich endowments for the maintenance of the image from time to time. The most ancient inscription dates back to 1634 A.D. when the Maharaja Chamaraja Wadiyar (VI) (1617-1637 A.D.) redeemed the Jain shrines from money-lenders Channanna etc., etc., and it was he who promulgated an ordinance prohibiting such mortgages of idols and shrines in future. It was he who visited Shravanbelgola and restored the Gadi of the said Mutta to Bhattarak who had fled to Gersoppa due to the atrocities of the Collector of the District. Not only did he restore the shrines and idol of Gommateshvara to him but also made a rich endowment of four villages towards the upkeep of them. Some of the most important events concerning the different Maharajas are given here-below with their dates .-

1 1611 A.D. — Raja Wadiyar (I) began to pay an annuity of Rs. 3000/- towards the upkeep of the colossus and other 33 Jain temples at Shravanbelgola,

2 1672 A.D.— Dodda Devaraja Wadiyar performed the Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshvara and in token of that ceremony endowed a village of Madan,

3. 1675 A.D. — Chikka Devaraja Wadiyar performed the Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshvara and renovated the lake of Kalyani,

4 1800 A.D. — Bhummadri Krishnaraja Wadiyar (III) performed the Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshvara;

5 1830 A.D. — He further endowed five villages of Shravanbelgola, Uttenhalli, Hosahalli, Nagayyam, Koppattu, Behan Koppattu, and further supplemented it later by a gift of a village of Kawwalu,

6. 1925 A D — Krishnaraja Wadiyar ( IV ) attended the Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshvara and presided over All India Digamber Jain Conference and also delivered inaugural speech from the chair ,

7 1940 A D.— The same attended the Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshvara and also the All India Digamber Jain Conference under the Presidentship of Sri Hukamchandji, Kt., Indore

8 1953 A D — The present Maharaja H. H. Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur is also very scrupulously following his illustrious forefathers in upkeep and care of this sacred *Tirtha* of Jains and spares no troubles in discharge of his duties in protection of the best interests of the image and other 33 shrines of Jainbidri He is going to attend Mahamastakabhisheka ceremony.

It may be gainsaid herein that all the managerial powers and administrative responsibilities of holding the image at present vest in Mysore State , and the present Bhattarak Swami Charukirtiji Maharaj has no direct control whatsoever either on the shrines or their properties He is simply a nominal pontiff of the Jains and gets an annuity of Rs 600/- from the State in addition to the income from landed properties attached to his Mutt One of the late Bhattaraks resigned from his post leaving all managerial powers in the hands of the State and so the State are continuing in that office even to-day Some of the temples of the Chandragiri and Vindhyagiri hills are under the direct charge of Government of India (under the National Monuments Preservation Act) and Jain community or the Bhattarakas of the place have no rights whatsoever except the right of worship Virtual ownership of all the idols and shrines of this *Tirtha* is vested either in the Mysore State or Government of India, both non-Jains agencies, and as such no Jain has any right to meddle with the inner management of the *Tirtha* or the shrines situated here

There is only one temple named 'Aregal Basti' outside the orbit of this authority and is exclusively managed by Seth Parshwanath of Tumkur who has appointed his own Pujari here This small temple was built by Gangaraj but fell in decay and the father of Seth Parshwanath repaired it and installed a new idol of Parshwanath in the place of an old one which can even now be seen in the bed of the adjoining tank

In spite of these temples being protected by Government of India under the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, the general condition of almost all the temples in general in the village of Shriavanbelgola is far from being satisfactory The Pujaries are hereditary and therefore are very careless in discharge of their duties They get very poor pays, and in some cases, their pays range from annas three to five per month ! Of course, they hold tax-free lands for cultivation.

Under these extremely poor circumstances, it is no wonder that the majority of the Brahmin Pujaries has been impelled to migrate to neighbouring towns and cities in search of better means of livelihood, which ultimately resulted in utter carelessness on their part towards these shrines. There are instances when idols in certain temples go without worship for months together! Absence of Puja for weeks is a regular matter of course. The present Bhattarak also does not take any keen interest in the welfare of these temples. He is neither very popular figure with the local Jains nor with the Jain community at large. He is not a Jain Pandit in the strict sense of the word. He knows very little of the languages, and much less of Sanskrit, Prakrit or Jain ethics for which this Mutt was once famous throughout India. Under such unfit supervision every kind of mismanagement and decay in the status of the *Tirtha* are possible.

The temple at Jinanathpur, though one of the best specimens of Hoysala Architectural Art lies dormant, and its figures on the walls have been disfigured and are still open to further damages by the ignorant villagers who know nothing about the sanctity which the Jains attach to these temples. The doors are usually lie wide open and cows and goats get free access to this temple day and night without any check whatsoever! Gangaraj knew little about the sad fate of this wonderful temple at the time of its building, otherwise even the slightest idea about its present ill-fate should have made him shudder to build such a temple at such an unauspicious place. The miserable conditions this temple is suffering at present distinctly display the unworthiness of we Jains who have proved ourselves cent per cent incapable to manage those sacred trusts left to our care by our ancestors!

From the report of the last Mahamastakabhisheka, published by the Government of Mysore, one can find that there was a surplus of Rs 72000/- which was invested at that time in Government Bonds which by now has earned Rs. 30,000/- by way of interest only. Such a huge surplus amount was allowed to lie idle on one hand while our sacred temples and holy dieties suffered every kind of humiliation at the hands of the atheists on the other! In the humble opinion of the author of this book, it is most opportune time to represent our case to Government of Mysore and through them to Government of India to restore this Tirtha to Digamber Jain sect for its better management and upkeep of the temples and idols. Some of the temples are at the verge of immediate decay and some of the idols can only be safeguarded by Jains themselves instead by Governmental agency. Let All India Digamber Jain Tirthakshetra Committee open its permanent office at Shravanbelgola and undertake much needed repairs of the *tirtha*.



## EPILOGUE

If one peeps into the history of the South India of only a few centuries past, he can not fail to see an age covering many eras of untold and un-describable glories of India and Indians alike. In those times every Indian in every walk of life enjoyed the highest possible bliss which may impell the reader with the same kind of feelings which moved the famous English Poet Wordsworth to sing -

**BLISS WAS IT IN THAT DAWN TO BE ALIVE,  
BUT TO BE YOUNG WAS HEAVEN !**

The '*Glory that was Ind*' was due more or less to the teachings of Jainism which preaches the gospel of 'Non-violence' and doctrine of 'Universal Love' towards every thing living. The tenets of Jainism are based on the very high moral code of 'self-restraint, renunciation, and non-injury to living soul' and hardly there is any code which can guarantee the maximum happiness and protection of the masses as can be done by Jainism. If India is intent to revert to those bygone ages of prosperity, plenty and profuse, there is no right royal way than to adopt that very high moral code which Jainism preached and stood by it for all the time in the past. Let the gospel of Jainism once more kindle the light of Universal Love in every heart and there is none so greater a need than this at the present moment in human history. Let the flame of Jainism once more illuminate the hearts of warring elements in the world and prompt them to make their heart-searching so that they may divert their energies to construction than destruction in order to make this world of ours more prosperous and happy.

Much though I wished to confine myself to the archaeological aspect of the subject, but could not see my way to close this chapter without a personal appeal to the Jain Community in general and philanthropist Jain Sethias in particular to rise up to the occasion in respect of these revered places of pilgrimage. There is hardly a tract of ten square miles in the peninsula of Deccan, south of Godavari, which does not contain numerous Jain temples or images. But due to our callous neglect, it is not wonder, that many of such holy places have gone in the hands of non-Jains, where they are subjected to every kind of disrespect or ridicule and mockery to our Gods, and in many cases are left to the mercies of the weather and so are steadily in the process of gradual decay. Hundreds of Jain temples and idols have perished and some of them that have remained are about to perish! Some of the Jain images have been adopted by the pagans in the name of their Gods, where fowls and goats are freely sacrificed in order to appease them! This very lamentable carelessness of ours is responsible for numerous Jain idols to find shelter in museums in India and abroad and are

exposed to open mockery of the visitors. Numerous temples, like Khujaraha (in C. P. ) which were once built by mighty Kings and were strongholds of Jain Culture and sources of strength for the Jain community at large are now lie deserted and demand immediate care of the generous Jain community for their repairs, which if not rendered in time will certainly bring their doom. It is indeed a thousand pities that we Jains of to-day are totally incapable to take care of those temples and images which once should have costed our fore-fathers immense of wealth in men and money to build them. What kind of worthy sons we are that we can not even safeguard the trust that our fore-fathers left to our care! Let this appeal arouse within us the senses of introspection and responsibility towards the upkeep of our sacred places

In order to revive the past glory of this *tirtha*, I put the following programme of activities for consideration of All India Digamber Jain Conference to be held on this occasion and also of the Mysore Government.:-

1. Jain Mahavidyalaya —The whole of the Deccan peninsula is suffering greatly due to the total absence of any Jain religious institution, where Jain and non-Jain students be taught the tenets of Jainism. It is one of the crying needs of the Jain community in the South to have a full-fledged Jain Mahavidyalaya or Jain Brahm-charyashram, and there is no better place than Shravanbelgola for establishment of such an institution,

2. Central Museum —Virtually the whole of the Deccan peninsula is full of Jain relics, and hundreds of thousands Jain idols of the highest architectural workmanship are lying scattered alround this state. It shall be a fitting contribution by Jain community to build a Central Museum for collection and preservation of such idols. It is our pious duty towards our revered gods, which were once installed by our ancestors, and thus save them from further degradation and open mockery. We owe a duty towards them and it must be carried out right now.

3. Udasin Ashram —I came across a number of instances of Jain monks and *vratis* who want to pass the rest of their lives at the feet of Lord Bahubali, but they can not do so due to absence of such an asylum here. Will it not be a fitting contribution by the Jain Community to build such an Ashram here right now?

4. Jain Publishing House —There are hundreds of unpublished works written on palm-leaves by very prominent Jain Acharyas in the past. Hundreds of them perished for absence of such a publishing house. In the *Shastrabhandar* of Jainbidri Mutta only, there are about 500 Jain scriptures of par-excellence-charm and knowledge, besides by far a greater number in other *Shastrabhandars* like

Moodbidri etc It is indeed a high time for establishing a full-fledged Printing Press here at Jainbidri so that these unpublished Jain works may be brought to light

There is no scarcity of funds for the execution of these activities. Here are the following funds lying idle for many years with —

Rs 2,00,000/	R B Seth Lalchandji Sethi of Ujjain under Shri Ailak Pannalal Digamber Jain Saraswati Bhawan which is lying idle since 40 years! Why that fund be allowed to remain idle when many ancient Jain scriptures are facing immediate destruction in <i>Bhandars</i> ? What is good of keeping only the funds and allowing holy books to perish, when the very fund was raised to preserve them!
Rs. 1,00,000/	Mysore Muzrai Dept under Gommateshvar Fund,
Rs 1,50,000/	Mysore Muzrai Dept under <i>Tirtha</i> fund,
Rs 1,00,000/	All India Digamber Jain Tirthakshetra Committee, Bombay,
Rs 25,000/	Expected annual income from Jain pilgrims,
Rs 25,000/	Other incomes from the sources like lands

These funds are quite sufficient to start with any kind of activities in general promotion of the interests of Jainism, Jain community and this *tirtha*. Only co-operation between the parties and co ordination of our resources are required, only that and nothing else. Let there be an independent newly formed committee like 'Bahubali Tirthodharak Committee,' which exercise overall supervision over the activities conducted under separate units. This will go a long way to revive the past glory of Lord Bahubali and his adherent Jains of Shravanbelgola once more. Amen!

