

HISTORICAL PLACES PERTAINING TO BASAVESHWARA

Dr. Nalini Avinash Waghmare

Department of History

Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune

Mobile no—9975833748

Email: naliniwaghmare@reiffmail.com.

Introduction: Places connected with important events in the lives of great men exercise profound influence on men of succeeding generation. If the great men happen to be religious leaders or saints of spiritual eminence, the influence becomes deeper and pervasive, particularly in a country like India. Basaveshwara was one of the great religious leaders and social reformers of Karnataka. He lived in the 12th century. During his lifetime he must have come into contact with a good number of places, where he might have stayed for days or lived for years. Some of these places might have been holy places or centers of pilgrimage. Unfortunately we have little information about them all. However, from epigraphically and literary sources, we know at least of four places where Basaveshwara spent long years of his most eventful life. All of them are highly interesting, not only on account of this teacher's historic associations with them, but also because they had attained historical importance even before his contacts with them. The places are Bagevadi, Sangamesvara, Mangalavedhe and Kalyana. We shall deal with them one by one indicating their significance in the study of Basaveshwara's life.

To know the life sketch of Basaveshwara the historical data is drawn from three sources; the poetic biography of Basaveshwara entitled Basavaraja Devara Ragale by the reputed medieval Kannada poet Harihara; the biography in the Puranic form entitled 'Basava Purana' from the Telugu writer Palkurki Somanatha; and finally, Basaveshwara's own Vachanas. There are also other sources like inscriptions, edicts, hagiographies and folk traditions, as well as the Vachanas of his contemporaries.

Basaveshwara's Vachanas guided many people not only in the 12th century but in present time also. Basaveshwara established Anubhava Mantapa at Kalyana. Many Shivasaranas participated there.

Almost all saints have sung their realization in different strains and expressed their views and opinions on men and society in varied sayings. The collection of these sayings is known as the Vachana Sahitya, the scripture of the Virasaiva faith.

Bagewadi : Basava was born in the year 1132 AD in Bagewadi, a village presently at Bijapur District of Karnataka. The Karnataka of twelfth century included parts of present Maharashtra and Andhrapradesh ruled by Chalukyas of Kalyana. Bagewadi was an Agrahara a special settlement for Brahmans who devoted their life to the study and promulgation of Hindu lore. Being nourished both by the state officials and King himself, Bagewadi was a known as learning centre.

Ingaleshwara, a neighbouring village, six miles to Bagewadi was religious centre known for its temples belonging to both Shaiva and Viashnava sects. In such sacred region, Basava was born to Shaiva Brahmans Madiraja and his wife Madalambike. Madiraja also called madarasa was the chief of the village Bagewadi. He was a rich man yet pious and religious. His wife Madalambike too was equally religious who took pleasure in listening to Shivastuti and Shivapurana.

Basava had his early schooling in Bagewadi. According to the family traditions, the boy Basava started learning Grammar, Language, Agamas, Puranas and Vedas. As a young boy Basava was sensitive, analytical and inquisitive. Poet Harihara remarks that boy Basava was intolerant to discriminatory practices and was always in thoughtful mood. When Basava was nearing sixteen, he tore away the thread worn (upanayana thread), discarded his relations and citizenry of Bagewadi and walked towards the east. The road he walked was not unfamiliar. It was the same road his sister Nagamma went through to join her husband Shivaswamy at Sangama. He reached Sangama.

Kudala Sangama : According to poet Harihara, Basava stayed in Sangama for the next twelve years, i.e., till he was twenty eight. His twelve years in Sangama was spent religiously. His daily iternary was to get up early in the morning collect fresh flowers and offer it to Lord Sangamesha. He then studied Veda, Agamas and Puranas and various other religious codes. Also according to poet Harihara, it was here Basava realized his inner self, and found answer to most of the questions and problems he sought.

During the twelve years spent studying at Sangama, Basava visualized a blue print for himself and society. He decided that his main aim and goal of his life is to eradicate color based social structure and establish a new society based on universal truth. A society where there is no discrimination based on caste, profession and gender. A society where there is dignity of labour, and redistribution of wealth. His spirit to change the society, his faith in 'Ishtalinga' and 'Dasoha' led him to leave Sangama and move to Mangalavedha. He was twenty eight.

Mangalavedha : At this time Bijjala of Kalacuri dynasty was rising star on the political horizon. His capital town was Mangalavada, modern Mangalavedha near Pandharpur in Maharashtra state. This was considered a fitting place for a youth to start his worldly career and Basava was persuaded to go there. Thus he left Sangama for Mangalavedha.

The above account of Basava's stay at Sangama and his departure there from to Mangalavedha is primarily based on Harihara's narration in the *Basavarajadevara Ragale*. This further receives support from the epigraphical sources which furnish many details about Bijjala's family and his political career.

Mangalavedha was a province of Chalukya for this province; Bijjala of Kalchuri Dynasty was the Feudatory chief or Mahamandaleshwara. After coming to Mangalavada, Basava with the help of his maternal uncle Baladevarasa, the Prime Minister of Bijjala secured a job as clerk or junior accountant in the Royal treasury. Later on he rose to the position of Chief Treasurer. Bijjala, pleased with honesty and integrity of Basava, often broached his personal affairs, had frequent consultations and sought Basava's advise. This brought them closer to friendly level. Bijjala was so pleased with Basavas qualities he gave his foster sister Neelambike in marriage to Basava. This marriage made Basava not only a high ranking official but a valued relative of Bijjala.

Alongside his career advancement Basava made considerable progress in his mission of establishing an egalitarian society. In the mornings and evenings, sitting in front of his house, he preached about 'Ishtalinga', 'Dasoha' and 'Dignity of labour'. His ideas, preaching's and reformatory practices attracted people from all over the region and wide. The activities which used to take place in front of his house assumed cultural proportions which led to the establishment of

Anubhava Mantapa (A hall of Shiva Experience) i.e., after nine years of coming to Mangalavada. Anubhava Mantapa was a place where shivasharnas exchanged their thoughts ; put forth their views and opinions. A place where ideologies pertaining to the establishment of lingayat society were discussed. Early prominent participants who contributed to the building of lingayat society were Chennabasavanna, Siddarama, Machideva, Aayidikki, Moolgi couple, chandiah, choadah, Ghathivaliah and others. Basavesvara lived at Mangalavedhe upto 1153 A.D. when he rose to a supreme position in the court of Bijjala and made preparations for his social and religious movement, which matured and bore fruit at Kalyana.

Kalyan (Basavakalyana) : This town must have been a place of some importance even before it was selected as their capital by the Chalukyas. This is supported by the inscription at Kalyan itself. It is interesting to note that this epigraph speaks of a Jain temple constructed at Kalyan by Attimbbe, the reputed Jain philanthropist and patron of the famed Kannada poet Ranna. An inscription at Lakkundi near Gadag in Dharwar district, dated 1007 A.D., informs that this lady built 1500 Jain temples in various places. One of them must be at Kalyan as mentioned above.

Bijjala was a politically ambitious man, who thought of seizing the Chalukya kingdom even by wrongful means. In order to achieve his ambition Bijjala moved his capital to Kalyana in 1150 AD. Basava also moved along with his family. Bijjala declared his independence from Chalukya Kings and later usurped the Chalukya throne.

In those days Basava's fame was not confined to the city of Kalyana; it was known all over Karnataka. It was at this place that there was the upsurge of the revolutionary Sharana (Virasaiva) movement led by Basaveshwara, Allama Prabhu and their associates, which attracted like-minded persons from various parts of India.

The illustrious Sharanas, who came from all strata of the society composed inimitable Vachanas here and founded the " Anubhava Mantapa" where they carried on deliberations. This protestant movement, which aimed at radical religious and social reforms, gained formidable popular strength. When the traditionalists and the imperial power headed by Kalachuri Bijjala clashed with it and made violent attempts to suppress it, there was an upheaval which

shook up the imperial authority and brought about a different chain of social and political events.

Trouble begins (1167 A.D.):Basava's philosophy that all are equal, that there is no Brahman, no Holey (Sudra, untouchable) had reached its pinnacle in the entire kingdom. Basava 'movement' and his growing popularity was not tolerated by King Bijjala. Bijjala feared that the 'movement' could shake the foundation of Kalachuri Dynasty and waited for an opportunity to suppress the , movement. That opportunity for him came in the form of a marriage. A pratiloma marriage. A marriage took place between Madhavaras daughter a Brahman and Haralayyas Son a sudra. This marriage infuriated the traditionalists and blamed Basava for polluting the higher classes.

King Bijjala summoned Haralayya and Madhvaras and punished them by removing their eyes. Basava and his followers watched this horror. Basavas followers sought his permission to retaliate but for Basava, whose religious foundation was based on compassion did not entertain, He visualized that the revolution has come to an end. He left to Kudalasangama, and few days prior to the catastrophe he attained union with the lord of confluence – Kudala Sangameshwar.

2.The End (Beginning) of Revolution: The news Basava left for Sangama shocked his followers. They became Intolerant and lost their patience. Some of them resorted to violent means. The situation became grave and chaotic. Bijjala's army started to harass and kill Basava followers. Thousands were killed.

Many devotees fled Kalyana. Some under the leadership of Chennabasavanna who traveled south to reach Dharwad and Ulavi in Uttarkanada district. Many others dispersed in different directions throughout Karnataka. After this catastrophe Bijjala left the throne and installed his son Murari Sovideva as his successor to the throne. King Bijjala lived upto March 1168 A.D.

Relics relating to Basaveshwara and other Sharanas at Kalyana : There is a famous temple known as Basaveshwara temple situated in a central place of the city. Antiquities relating to Basaveshwara and associated with his movement are found in a large number. An open site is pointed out as the mansion or residence of Basaveshwara. No structural remains have survived. In this site are seen two lateritic caves, said to have been used by Basaveshwara for his religious and

meditation. Prabhudevara Gaddige or the seat of Allama Prabhu is a late memorial structure erected in honour of Allama Prabhu, mystic saint and senior contemporary of Basaveshwara. He presided over the deliberations of the renowned Anubhava Mantapa. Akka-Nagamma Cave has some elegant stone pillars, Akka-Nagamma was the sister of Basaveshwara. **Basaveshwara Mahamane-ground, Arvina –Gavi and Arivina-Mane** : These are pointed out behind Akka-Nagamma's cave. Mahamane means great abode which was respectfully called so by the people. It is believed that Basaveshwara resided here. **Nuliya Chandayya's Cave**: This is a spacious one. He was famous for his intense devotion to Kayaka and composed many Vachanas. **Madivala Machayya's Honda (pond)** is situated south of Prabhudevara Gaddige. The temple of Tripurantaka Siva was far – famed among the temples of Kalyana. This is often mentioned in the Virasaiva literary works including the saying Chennabasavanna.

Conclusion: Basaveshwara stands out as one of the most outstanding personalities in the history of India. He was not only a socio-religious and economic philosopher but also a great literary scholar. His period is also called Vachana Yuga, because along with him, other Shivasaranas also wrote Vachanas. Instead of Sanskrit Kannada become a popular mass language of the people. His life and teachings have been a source of inspiration to millions of people in South India for the last nearly nine hundred years, and influenced and moulded their lives and continues to do so even to this day. Bagevadi, Kudala Sangama, Mangalvedhe and Basavakalyana places focuses on Basaveshwaras life and personality. Today many devotees of Basava visited these places as a pilgrimage centers. These places also promote tourism.

References:

- Basavaraja, K.R. Basaveshwara His Life, Vision and Work, Someswara publications, Dharwad, 2001.
- Desai, P.B. Basaveshwara and His Times, Karnataka Research Institute, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1968
- Hardekar Majappa , Basava: The Dimension of Universal Man, Hardekar Manjappa Smaraka Granthamale, Dharwad, 1966
- Indumati.P.Patil, Cultural History of Chalukyan's Basavakalyan, ABD Publishing, New Delhi, 2012, pp.19-20.
- Lohit D.Naikar, Basava and Human Rights, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, 2012.

- Malwad, Virasaivism and Vacanakaras, Basava Journal. Vol.5, July 1980, Basava Samithi, Banagalore, pp-1-4.
- Mate Mahadevi, Revolution in Kalyana, Suyidhana Publications, Akkamahadevi Ashrama, Dharwad, 2001.
- Nalini Waghmare, Historical importance of Basaveshwara's Vachana Shastra, Ekvira publicity, Pune ,2015
- Nandimath, S.C. Handbook of Virasaivism, the Literary Committee Association, Dharwad, 1942,
- Nandimath, S.C.L.M.A. Menezes and R.C. Hiremath , Sunyasampadane Vol. I, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1965,
- Ramanujan R.K, The Speaking of Siva, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1973.
- Uttangi C.D (Ed). Trans by Gunjal S.R., Anubhava Mantapa the Heart of the Lingayat Religion, reverend C.D. Uttangi Centenary Commemoration Committee, Gulbarga ,1982
- Vijaya Ramaswamy, Divinity and Deviance, Women in Virasaivism, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1996.
- Wodeyar, S.S. Sri Basaveshwara, Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, Govt of Mysore, 1965.