



SHAIVISM IN THE DAYS OF KRISHNADEVARAYA

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INTRODUCTION:

The conditions prevailing in south India on the eve of the foundation of Vijayanagar Empire and the circumstances which led to this epoch marking event have been detailed by various inscriptions. The Vijayanagara empire was founded in 1336 A.D but Shringeri inscription states that the empire succeeded in freeing the whole of south India from Muslim occupation within next ten years and bringing the Pampa region of the Tungabhadra under their control in 1346 AD. The Vijayanagara empire was ruled over by successive kings from four different dynasties one after the other by usurping the throne from the immediately preceding one. The first one is called Sangama dyanasty, the second one Saluva, the third Tuluva and the fourth Aravidu. After the great king Devaraya II of the Sangama dynasty, Krishnadevaraya ruled from 1509 to 1529. He was undoubtedly the greatest of the Vijayanagara rulers with his statesmanship, diplomacy, conquests, generosity, love of literature, contribution to art and architecture, and religions like Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Jainism. The purpose of this article is to throw light on Shaivism during the reign of Krishnadevaraya.

SHAIVISM

Twenty-eight Shaivagamas are the cornerstone of the of the Shaiva tradition, and there are 63 ancient ancestors of Shaivism, who worshiped Lord Shiva in the form of Linga. They are identified as Pashupats, kalamukhas, and kapalikas. Many temples were built to worship Lord Shiva. Vijayanagara inscriptions show that they made generous contributions to Shaivism and accepted the Kriya Shakti Guru as their mentor, along with Chandrabhooshana Kriya shakti, Mallikarjuna Kriya Shakti, and other Kalamukha Gurus. Shaivism was at its peak during the reign of Proudhadevaraya. Krishnadevaraya gave priority to Vaishnavism, but he also issued Shaiva inscriptions.

Inscriptions of the time of Krishnadevaraya

In the reign of Krishnadevaraya, the king himself, his queens, vassals, merchants, and others made donations on the coronation anniversary of the king, Shivaratri, new moon day, solar eclipse, lunar eclipse, Sankranti and so on, praying for the welfare of the king, parents or people. In order to make these permanent, they issued iscriptions. Raya's inscriptions which

are available in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, have linguistic diversity. According to D V Paramashivamurti's *'Krishnadevarayana Kaalada Shasanagalu- Vol I'*, there are total 363 inscriptions found in Kannada and Sanskrit, of which 289 are in Karnataka, 63 in Andhra Pradesh, 10 in Tamil Nadu and 1 in Maharashtra. In *'Inscriptions of Vijayanagara Rulers-Vol II'* edited by Ritti Srinivasa and Gopal. B. R, 271 inscriptions of Krishnadevaraya are given from number 73 to the 344. Of these, there are 154 inscriptions which are related to Vaishnavism, 125 Shaiva inscriptions, four inscriptions related to Jainism and 8 inscriptions which are not affiliated to any particular religion or sect, but provide information about donations or renovations, etc.

Regional inscriptions of Krishnadevaraya

In Karnataka, 280 inscriptions of Krishnadevaraya's period are found, among them- Udipi (13), Uttara Kannada (04), Koppal (08), Kolar (13), Gadag (02), Chamarajanagar (26), Chikkaballapur (07), Chikkamagalur (01), Chitradurga (12), Tumkur (19), Dakshina Kannada (03), Davanagere (08), Dharwad (01), Bellary (48), Bangalore Rural (12), Bangalore City (04), Belgaum (01), Mandya (16), Mysore (27), Hassan (14)

Total 62 inscriptions are found in Andhra Pradesh - Ananthpuram (18), Kadapa (3), Kurnool (7), Chittoor (28), Nellore (2) and Mehaboobanagar district (04). In Tamil Nadu, 10 inscriptions are found at Kanjivaram (02), Chenglepete (01), Tiruchanapalli (02) and in Thiruvalli district (05). Only one inscription is found in Sangli district of Maharashtra.

Donations to Virupaksha Temple:

During the reign of Krishnadevaraya there are eighteen inscriptions mentioning donations made at Hampi. All these are not issued by Krishnadevaraya. Only 4 inscriptions directly issued by the king are discovered. The inscription of 1510 refers to the birth of Krishnadevaraya. On the day of his coronation, he donated the village of Singanayakanahalli to the service of Virupaksha and renovated the huge rangamantapa in front of the temple, and two gopuras. He also donated one golden plate, 2 golden lamps and 24 silver lamps for the worship of Virupaksha.

The inscription standing on the back of the large gopura of the Veerupaksha temple coincides with January 24 1510 AD, Thursday¹. It contains the above mentioned details and recounts the renovation of the Mahagopuram of the temple. "The inscription of the Prasanna Virupaksha Temple of Friday, March 11, 1513 AD" ² (SII iX-II 491) states that he donated the produce of the villages of Kankaniya Kate, Bukkapura, Nagalapura, Ramapura, etc. for the services and festivals of the god of Veerupaksha, in the name of his parents during the solar eclipse. The inscription written on both sides of the southern entrance gate of the Virupaksha Temple, dated 8th June of the same year (SII iX-II 493), mentions that he has donated Nagabharana, Navaratna Lotus, 1 Golden Plate, 2 Golden lamps, 24 silver lamps, etc to God Virupaksha in the name of his father Narasannanayaka and mother Nagaji Amma.

Donation to Kalahasteshwar Temple

"There are two inscriptions numbered (SII iX-II 488-482) written on Thursday, February 10, 1513 AD, on the western wall of the Kalahasteshwara temple, which mention the donation of various items made by Krishnadevaraya to lord Kalahasteshwar"³. On Wednesday, May 11, 1513, in the same shrine (SII iX-II 492), the inscription is dedicated to Lord Kalahasteshwar recording the donation of pearls, emerald and other precious stones. In 1513 AD the inscription on the right side of the north entrance of the shrine (SII iX-II 489) shows

that the king made land grants to provide coconut cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, sugar, coriander, banana, honey, adu, leaf, nut, for the worship of Kalahasteshwar and for construction of shed for 50 Brahmins. "On Tuesday 17th March 1517 (SI) in the inscription of (SII IX-II 505), it is mentioned that the repository of the temple of Kalahasti was donated to Madanayaka to carry out the service of Kalahasteshwara. He made this donation to the temple himself"⁴.

Donation to Gangadhareshwara of Shivagange

There is a reference to Channamana Shetty in a large lettered inscription on the hill, on the wall of "Gangadhareshwara temple" dated to Saturday 4th April 1528 AD (SII IX-II). Another inscription (SII IX-II K,S,A,254) dated Thursday, October 22, 1528,"⁵ mentions the building of the gopura of this temple.

Construction of Temple Foundation

"The inscription of January 24, 1510 AD, erected in the temple premises of Virupaksha temple mention that on the coronation day of Krishnadevaraya, he donated Singanayakanahalli for the provision of amrutapadi and worship of God Virupaksha and renovated the large tower and sanctum sanctorum of the temple and also donated clothes. The inscription of May 27, 1511 AD" ⁶ of the Nagamangala Temple at Nagamangala mentions that he built the Gandha Godhi mantapa at the Veerabhadra temple there. (E.K.A 7) The Savadatti inscription of the Bailahongal taluk of the Belgaum district reveals that Thimmappanayaka, the door keeper of Veerakrishnaraya built the mantapa and its storey near the western entrance of Savadatti Yallamma temple (SII IXX 253), " April 20, 1523, inscription on the Ishwar Temple of Kurukuppe in the Sonduru taluk of Bellary district"⁷ mentions the donation of land for Virupaksha by Banakarasa.

Donation to the temples, Charity

The King, saints, councilors, ministers, queens, merchants, officials, commoners, the people who had faith in God and had love for religion came forward to make out of devotion, at auspicious occasions and special festivals and fares. Donors are able to make the name of their parents, king, last forever, by making use of their wealth for good purposes. During the reign of Krishnadevaraya, Padumaladevi, Mahamandaleshwara of Mirzana, in the Kumta taluk of Uttar Kannada district, donated Haive, Tulu and Konkan regions for the worship of Lord Raghunatha and Lord Vinayaka.

The donation by Commanders, warlords and officers:

"In the east of the field of Maggigudi Titta in Bhandigere in Chamarajanagar taluk, an inscription dated September 4, 1513 AD"⁸, mentions that Krishnadevaraya's Mahapradani gave the deeds and fields of the house east of the Haradanahalli for the service of the god Divyalinga Sri Anileshwara. "During the reign of Prime Minister Nayamappayya, Honnebhova, son of Nagabhova, donated six hundred pattapadas to the God Myalara and gave the Money to those who planted the canals. VA Krishna "The inscription of 24th February 1513 AD in the Basaveshwara temple at Gopalapura village has that village"⁹ donated by Gajapati Narasayya to Ramayya, narrated by Krishnadevaraya's Prime Minister Memmarasa. (K.D.R.S.Vol -1)

Donation to saints:

Chamarajnagar District, an inscription dated April 14, 1514 AD states that King Govinda donated Mooguru village and its proceeds to Somaiyya Deva Odeya. There is also the matter of Krishnadevaraya's inscription dated December 3 1519 AD in the town of Channarayapatam that mentions that he donated the Sanabha village to the Basavadikshita Guru. Written in the records of the Archaeological Survey, the inscription of December 13, 1513 AD refers to a land grant to the son of the scholar Ahobalaraya who was the son of Sriranga Deshika, VenkataTatarya.

Donations to the General:

"January 16, 1527 AD inscription of Kuppattur states that the Nadaprabhu Sankaman of Kundatur"¹⁰ Nadu donated the produce of the village of Kuppattur for the first worship, meals, tambolu, festivals, panchadharmajayanti services of Lord. Another nearby inscription states that Krishnadevaraya's Prime Minister has given a small village called Madapuramba to a Devadasi named Nellavva wodeyar.

Constuction of lakes Regeneration

In the reign of Krishndevaraya, one of the basic neccessities of people was to give priority to preservation of water. On April 8, 1513, Kencha Somanna Odeya, son of Thimmanna Odeya of Devaraya town of Hosavalli of the Channapatna taluk, constructed a lake for the king to rejoice when the eldest lake of Kodloor in town of his Nayakaship was destroyed. The declaration of Sankalpur, September 7, 1513, donated a land for the service of the god Vinayaka and builds Hosakere. Nayaka Sivarinnappa granted a field for the sustenance of silt-removal from the tank in the name of his father. October 18, 1518, the inscription of the Gangasamudra states that Bamarasa, the officer there, had renovated the lake in his territory.

Different types of taxes:

Krishnadevaraya's abolition of marriage taxes was one of the most popular acts among the people. October 15th 1515, AD Malebennur area in Davanageri District donated the Marriage taxes in the area of Lingamhalli (E,K XI). It can be seen from the inscriptions that the citizens of Nana Seth, Pattanaswamy and I have come to Krishnarayapuram in Anantapuram district of Andra Pradesh and have given three years tax exemption to the citizens.

CONCLUSION

This king was a great Vaishnava, as seen from the study of the inscriptions of Krishnadevaraya. However it is evident that he looked equsly upin Shaivas and Jainas and ensured the welfare of his people at all times. It is evident that Raya did not give prominence to other classes apart from Shaivas, Vaishnavas and Jains. Krishnadevaraya was a great Vaishnava but from the study of his inscriptions, we can understand his religious policy more comprehensively.

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