

Shivagange – A Historical Study

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Date of Submission: 28-07-2020

Date of Acceptance: 11-08-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

This article presents a study of Historical significance of Shivagange, a famous Shaivaite centre of Nelamangala Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. Shivagange has rich history where numerous shaiva temples, Inscriptions are found though most of them in ruins. The Shivagange region was ruled by various dynasties like Gangas, Hoysalas, Kakateyas, vijayanagara rulers, Nadaprabhus of Yalahanka and wodeyars of Mysore.

Shivagange is also known as 'Dakshina Kashi', due to the presence of many Shaivaite temples that adds to the divinity of the location. The sacred mountain is shaped as a shivalinga and a spring flows near locally called 'Ganga', thereby giving the place its name. The earliest reference to the name 'Shivagange' is found in the Kakudgiri Mahatme of Kalale Nanjaraja. In this literary text Shivagange was referred as a 'Kukudgiri'.¹ According to mythological sources, Agastya muni was named this place as Shivagange. Shivagange also called 'Mandakini, Dharachala and Gangadharachala'.

Shivagange is a mountain peak with a height of 4560 feet from the Sea level and also famous Shaivaite pilgrimage centre. According to available inscriptions shivagange was mentioned as *Shivagangeshadri, Kakudgiri, Shivagirinatha devagiri, Dakshina Kailasa, Dakshina Kashi, Shivagange Betta, Shiva gavi and Shivagange Devara betta*. Shivagange has various shaivaite temples and shrines such as *Gangadhreshwara temple, Honnammadevi temple, Ganesh temple, Veerabhadreshwara temple, Shanthamma temple, Mudveereshwara temple* and several theerthas such as *Agastya theeratha, Kamala theeratha, Kanva theeratha, Pathalagange, oralakallu theertha, kumbavathi theeratha, ect*. On the day of Sankranthi every year, thousands of devotees visit Shivagange mainly to witness the most eagerly awaited 'Sankramana gangotpatti' (Ganga holywater) when natural water oozes out from a certain rocky spot atop Kumbi Betta.

During the reign of Gangas, shivagange was one of the famous pilgrimage centre. Gangas gave more patronage to the development of shivagange. According to *Devarakondareddy*, Gangadhreshwara and Honnammadevi natural cave temples of shivagange was constructed by Gangas.²

After Gangas, shivagange has a close relation with Hoysalas. Hoysala kings, queens and Officials gave more contributions to development of Shivagange. According to inscription of 1140AD,³ hoysalas official Vishnu Samantha was constructed a *Mukhamantapa (Portico)* for Gangadhreshwara temple for commemorate of Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana. Another 1132AD inscription found in Shravanabelagola Savathi Gandavarana Basadi⁴ was mentioned Hoysala vishnuvardhana's Queen Shanthale was died due to *Sallekana vratha* in Shivagange. In this reference Shivagange was one of the main pilgrimage center for Jains during hoysalas time. According to the inscription of 1160AD⁵, Hoysalas *Mahapradhana* of king Narasimha-I, *Hiriya Hadavala Chokimayya* was built *Mantapa* for Gangadhreshwara temple for commemorate of his wives *Tammavve and Mallikavve*. After Narasimha-I, Ballala-II ruled the hoysala kingdom. Inscription of 1196AD, refer *Mahamandaleshwara of Ballala-II Raghavadevarasa* donated land to Gangadhreshwara of Sivagagenatha.⁶ One more inscription of 1308AD⁷ from Hoysala Ballala-III also refer grant issued to Honnammadevi temple. Official of Hoysala Ballala-III *Allapa dandanayaka of Eleyakka Nadu* was donated to grant for Honnammadevi temple for daily rituals.

According to Sanskrit Inscription⁸ Kakatheeya king of warrangal Prathaparudra visited to shivagange and also he donated land to the Brahmin family of Shivagange. But authentication of this inscription is questionable, because there are no other evidences for Assert to this.

We have some inscriptional evidences for assert to kings of Vijayanara relations with shivagange. According to Copperplate Inscription,⁹ Krishnadevaraya was visited to shivagange in 1512AD. He was donated some villages like kuppe, manchanahalli, chikkajettaganahalli, chinnadevipura to Brahmin Srinivasadwari. One more Copperplate inscription of Krishnadevaraya refer the donations of villages like *Masakallu, Kuratikere, Thammadihalli, Cholamadanahalli, Kambalu, Hosagalli, Bedarahalli, Devarahalli, Veerasagara, Baragenahalli..ect* for daily rituals for the Gangadhreshwara Temple of Sivagange.

1527AD Inscription of Vijayanagara period¹⁰ also mentions the villages of Shivagange, Gooluru and Manne. This inscription also refers Donations of Ambaligere Marappagouda and his sons. According to the Karishnadevaraya's period 1528AD Inscription,¹¹ Chandarasa Chakalabhovi's son chennanna of Viyajapura, was donated valuable things to Gangadhareshwara of Shivagange. Other Inscription of 1532AD¹² from official of Vijayanagara king Achyutaraya describe Kattige kamannanayaka also donated to Gangadhareshwara for daily rituals like *abhisheka*, *Deeparadhane*.

Vijayanaga Period Inscription from Gandragoolipura of Doddaballapura taluk¹³ states that Dalavayi Bairappanayaka of Gandragoolipura was donated fertile land to Shivagange Melina Gavi math and Gangadhareshwara and Honnamadevi Temples for their daily rituals. Another inscription from same place also refers the land grants of Vijayanagara king Achyutharaya.¹⁴

The history of this region is also associated with Yalahanka nadaprabhu's. During the reign of shivagange was well developed. Basically Yalahanka Nadaprabhu was a shaivite royal family. That's why they gave more patronage to the development of shivagange Region. Bell from Gangadhareshwara cave temple we have one Inscription of 1567AD.¹⁵ That was on Bronze Bell. This inscription refers Bangalore Kempegowda's close relative chikkagiriappagowda donations of Bell to Gangadhareshwara temple. Same place we have another inscription, that is also mention Yalahanka Nadaprabu Kempanachegowda's son Kempegowda donated bell to their family god Gangadhareshwara.¹⁶

Shivagange is also known for its centuries-old Sharadamba temple founded by Sringeri Math during the reign of Mysore's Raja wodeyar. Chamaraja wodeyar wife Devarajammanni was donated some valuable jewels to Honnamadevi temple.

Therefore in this Article a humble attempt has been made to bring out the historical significance of Shivagange and to what extent this place was responsible for spreading Shaivism in Southern Karnataka. Even today number of Shaivite visit every day to Shivagange for seeking blessings from Gangadhareshwara and Honnamadevi. At Shivagange there are so many fine and beautiful architectural Shaiva Temples. The temple of Gangadhareshwara and Honnamadevi originally caves form of temples and also main attraction to the Shaiva followers. Besides this Shivagange is also one of the seat of Historians and Epigraphists also like this place because they are so many old historical monuments and inscriptions belonging to the Gangas to Mysore wodeyars.

END NOTES

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