

Sanskrit Sources on Vīraśaivism with special reference to Basaveśwara

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Introduction

In India many religious teachers who appeared on the scene and influence for the upliftment of the masses on moral and spiritual planes. Here also in India in 12th century the great religious reformers arise and wanted to welfare State where all people live without considering their religion, caste, sex, creed etc. The teachings and the religious faith later on became the regional environment and cultural background of the age.

The same system takes place in the time of Basaveśwara. The religious faith and philosophical school that came to prominence through the teachings of Basaveśwara is known as Līṅgayatism, also called Vīraśaivism.

The sources to know more about the Vīraśaivas are some of Śaivāgamas, Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi, and the works of Maggeya Mayideva both in Kannada and in Sanskrit a vast body of Vacana literature in Kannada, Śūnyasampadane and Vīraśaiva Purāṇas.

Śaivism is one of the oldest and widely prevalent religious whose origin can be traced to hoary antiquity. Śiva is the Supreme deity to the followers of this faith. The Śaiva branches are many like Śaiva Siddhānta, Kashmir śaivism, Pāśupata Śaivism, Kapālika etc. which are their own modes of worship of the deity. Vīraśaiva differed in certain crucial respects from the other schools of Śaivism and emerged as an independent religion.

Concept of Vīraśaivism

The ultimate goal of the Vīraśaiva philosophy is æmerging of the soul in the supreme. 'Vīraśaiva' literally means a staunch Śaivite. According one of the Śaiva

branches all being graded into three groups based on the stage of development. They are: 1) Paśu (animal), 2) Vīra (heroic), 3) Divya (divine). Herein, Vīra happens to be the middle stage, Paśu being the initial and Divya the highest. So Vīraśaiva would mean one who having ascended highest. So Vīraśaiva would mean one who having ascended from the animal stage and aspiring for the divine is engaged in a discipline heroically towards that end. In the Vīraśaiva Philosophy the term used for *æLingāṅgasāmarasya*.

So latter 'Vī' stands for the art of uniting Jīva with Śiva, 'Ra' stands for delighting oneself in that practice. So Vīraśaiva is a Śaiva who takes delight in the practice of uniting his Jīva with Śiva.

In another form many followers of Basava philosophy also called as *Lingāyats*. Here also *Lingāyat=Linga+Āyat*: *Linga* is *æIṣṭalinga* and *'Āyat'* is 'to carry'. In other words *Lingāyat* is a person who carries or wears *Linga*. The ultimate goal of a *Lingāyat* is to acquire the 'Nature of Divine' which technically called '*Śūnya Sādhane*'. To attain this stage, a devotee or *Bhakta* will have to follow three integral *Sādhana*s, which are technically called '*Aṣṭavarṇa, Pañcacara and Ṣaṣṭhala*.' Vīraśaivas also known as *Lingavanta, Lingavān, Jaṅgama, Sirijaṅgama* etc.

Vīraśaiva Philosophy

Śaktiviśiṣṭādwaita is the philosophy of Vīraśaivism. According to the philosophy of *Śaktiviśiṣṭādwaita*, Śiva is Śakti without Śakti, Śiva has no substance and without Śiva, Śakti has no completeness. This type of uniqueness and inseparable sense is found in *Śaktiviśiṣṭādwaita*. The describing the unique union of Śiva and Śakti, Hunshal has stated out, 'Śiva and Śakti are one individual whole. The *Lingāyat* philosophers give a special name '*Sāmarasya*' to this intimate union. *Sāmarasya* means essential identity and is different from *Tādātmya*.

It is significant to note that the integral association of Śiva and Śakti maintained in Vīraśaivism and this aptly termed *Śaktiviśiṣṭādwaita*.

In brief, '*Lingadhāraṇa*' is the root principle of Vīraśaivism, '*Aṣṭavarṇa*' is the religious code of conduct, whereas '*Pañcacara*' is the social and '*Ṣaṣṭhala*' is the spiritual code of conduct of Vīraśaivism. These have given specific direction to the religious, social and spiritual behavior of an individual Vīraśaivism. The building of Vīraśaivism is based on the foundation of these four basic tenets.

Till today also the distinct tenets of Vīraśaivism expounded by its founding fathers like the *Aṣṭavarṇa, Pañcacara, Ṣaṣṭhala* and *Śivayoga*, however continued to have their hold over its followers.

There is a close inter-relationship among religion, culture, philosophy and literature. Each and every religion has its own culture. The literature plays a vital role in preserving and maintaining the cultural heritage of the religion. The literature of religion and culture is made available through various sources. About sources in which Vīraśaiva philosophy is found, Manurkar has said, *ōVīraśaiva* philosophy is found in a very systematic, coherent and comprehensive manner in *Āgamas, Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi, Śrīkarabhāṣya, Vacanāgamas, etc.ō*

Sources

The literature of Vīraśaiva religion is rich and large in quantity. About the important and authentic sources of the Vīraśaivism, Malledevaru has explained, 'The Twenty Eight *Śaivāgamas* and two hundred and five *Upāgamas*; the sayings of mystic Allama Prabhu, Basavaṇṇa, Cennabasavaṇṇa, Siddharāma and works of Śivayogi Śivācārya, Nīlanātha Śivācārya, Moggeya Mayideva, Maritontadārya and others have been accepted as very valuable and authoritative sources for Vīraśaivism. Though

the basic tenets of Vīraśaivism are very ancient, they have been changed and modified as per the need of the time by the Vacanakāras, Saints and thinkers.

While taking a survey of the Vīraśaiva literature generally two sources are to be mentioned, firstly āgamas and secondly Vacanaśāstra.

Sanskrit Sources on Vīraśaivism:

Āgamas: Āgamas are the original Dharmagranthas of Indians. Āgamas are called by many names like Āgamānta, Divyāgama, Śivāgama, Śaivāgama, Śivasiddhāntāgama, Tantras, etc. The term 'Āgama' is interpreted in many ways. One of the meanings of Āgamas is to show the path of salvation by purifying the mind. Rechanna has noted it, "A" means casting 'Ga' means 'Mokṣa' and 'Ma' means casting aside 'Mala'. This sums up the process of salvation in which through Śivajñāna, 'Mala' is cast aside and 'mokṣa' is gained.

Āgamas are not only one book but a series of books like Vedas. The Āgamas are twenty eight in number. Pandit Jagadish Shastri has noted as Kamikāgama, Yogajāgama, Cintyāgama, Karmāgama, Tvajitāgama, Dīptamāgama, Suksāgama, Sahastrāgama, Anśumānāgama, Suprabhedakāgama, Vijayāgama, Nishwasāgama, Sayāgama, Bhuvāgama, Nityāgama, Pradgītāgama, Lalitāgama, Siddhāgama, Parmeśwarāgama, Kīrtanāgama and Vatulāgama are Āgamas of Śaivism and Vīraśaivism."

Sakhare has mentioned, 'Besides the twenty eight principal Shivāgamas, there are many Upāgamas or secondary Āgamas, enumerated in various Śaiva works like 'Śivatattvaratnākara', an encyclopedia Sanskrit work of Keladi Basavarāja and the 'Vivekacintāmaṇi of Kanerese encyclopedia work of Nijaguṇa Śivayogi'.

The Āgamas have been divided into four major division ūDnyāna, Yoga, Kriyā and Caryā. To conclude, Āgamagranthas are the origin and the soul of Vīraśaivism in

every respect as these impart true knowledge about Śiva and eradicate the taints of man. They provide real foundation to the Vīraśaiva concepts and Siddhāntas, and they show the path of salvation to the mankind.

Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi: Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi is one more Dharmagrantha of Vīraśaivism. Basically, this is a Pañcācārya oriented book. It has been translated into many languages, detailed explanation and description of Vīraśaiva, Iṣṭalingadhāraṇa, Aṣṭāvaraṇa, Pañcācārya, Śaṭsthala, Śaktiviśiṣṭdwaita, etc., the basic concepts and tenets of Vīraśaivism are found in this book. While explaining the details about the author and contents of this book, Sakhare has stated, "The first and a very authoritative work in Sanskrit on Lingāyatism is Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi. This is the first work, because it does not refer to any work except Śivadhāraṇottara and Śaivarahasya and the Āgamas; while this work has been referred to and quoted as authority by almost all the Sanskrit books now available. It professes to narrate the dialogue between Reṇukācārya or Revānasiddha, the prophet and Agastya, to whom the prophet reveals a part of Śaṭsthala philosophy. The author is Śivayogi." However, Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi has been accepted as one of the major Granthas of Vīraśaivas.

Sanskrit Sources on Basaveśwara:

Śrī Basaveśwara (1132-1167 A.D.):

Basaveśwara was a great prophet, socio-economic, religious reformer. He was also a great saint, revolutionary and great human being. He spend his whole life to give a good life to all the human beings without consider their caste, creed, class, sex, ritual and tradition. He was a universal man. To know the life sketch of Basaveśwara the historical data is drawn from three sources; the poetic biography of Basavaṇṇa entitled Basavarāja Devara Ragale by the reputed medieval Kannada poet Harihara; the biography in the Puranic form entitled Basava Purāṇa from

the Telugu writer Palkurki Somanatha; and finally, Basava's own Vacanas.²

Apart from some other sources like inscriptions, Edicts, hagiographies, folk traditional and a few attempts at critical biographies as well as his contemporaries mentioned his name in their Vacanas.

The contribution of Palkurki Somanātha to Sanskrit Literature: Palkurki Somanātha belongs to 12th century A.D. Palkurki Somanatha wrote in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada were 40 works. Famous among these are : Somanātha Bhāṣya, Rudra Bhāṣya, Vṛṣabhādhīpaśataka, Basavadharam in Sanskrit, and Basavapurāṇam, Paṇḍitārādhyaacaritram, Anubhavasāra, Caturvedasāra, Basava Ragada, Chenna Mallu Seesamulu, Basavaśatakam Basavapañcakam, Pañcaprakāragadya, Namaskāragadya, Aksharāṅkagadya. Somanāthastotram etc. in Telugu. In most of the works he depicted the great.

- **Basavodāharaṇam** Udāharaṇam is a symbolic gesture in pray to the almighty using all cases (Vibhaktis). A true devotee feels all his actions or kriyās are meant for worshipping God. So performs all the actions in the name of God. Since the Vibhaktis are connected to Kriyās in a way the whole of Udāharaṇa literature is meant for worshipping God. This is the significance of Udāharaṇa literature. Here he Almighty is worshipped and praised with all the Vibhaktis indicating that the God exists in all kriyās of human existence. In Basavodāharaṇa Somanatha described in the eight vibhaktis the qualities of life and the religious Siddhānta of Basaveśwara. This work is written in both the Telugu and Sanskrit. Somanātha was completely successful in showing his deepest faith and devotion towards Basaveśwara which he poured in this poetic work.³

- **Vṛṣādhipaśataka** : A poetic work containing hundred ślokas is known as Śataka. Somanātha was fully immersed in the devotion of Basaveśwara by the time he started writing this work. So he used the Makuta ō Basavaa, Basava, Vṛṣādhipaō. This Makuta clearly indicates his great love and devotion for Basaveśwara. In this work, the great qualities of Basaveśwara like his devotion, his affection and kindness for Śiva Śaraṇas are well described in this book. Vṛṣādhipaśataka is not a pure Sanskrit work but it was written in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Maṇipravāla style thus indicating the writer's scholarship in many languages.
- **Somanāthabhāṣya**: Palkuriki Somanātha was a multi lingual writer who was proficient in as many as eight languages in which he wrote his books. Somanāthabhāṣya is an irrefutable proof of his extraordinary scholarship. He was one of the greatest Paṇḍita Kavis of all times. To establish his thought, religion and philosophy among other scholars, he wrote this Prāmāṇika Bhāṣya in Sanskrit. For propagating the religion among the common masses, he wrote his Telugu works in Jannu Telugu.

One finds a type of revolutionary tendency in his writings which led him to initiate new techniques in literary field. Śataka, Dhaharana, Dwipada, Ragale, Seesa etc., introduced by Somanatha in 12th century are new experiments. He did this to take down the Vīraśaivism to the common folk through literature.⁴

Śaṅkarārādhyā of Kanchi's Basavapurāṇa or Vṛṣabheśvarapurāṇa:

- **Basavapurāṇa** or Vṛṣabheśvarapurāṇa of Śaṅkarārādhyā of Kanchi, the modern Kanjivaram in Madras State. It is a big book consisting of 4,714 verses in various metres divided into 43 chapters.

Each chapter begins with *æŚruṇu tvam Keśavāmātya* and ends with a verse praising Keśavāmātya. The author was undoubtedly well versed in Sanskrit.⁵

- He narrates the circumstances under which he undertook to compose the book and the place where he wrote and explained the Purāṇa. Once on the occasion of Vasantotsava of Skanda Someśa of Kandakura, learned men and devotees of Śiva hailing from different parts assembled in the hall of the temple and initiated discussions on various religious topics including the life and work of various Śivaśaraṇas.
- The life of Śrī Basaveśwara was available then only in regional (deśīya) languages and then felt the necessity of one written in Sanskrit, the common language of India to make it popular in other parts. They referred this topic to the Keśavāmātya, chief minister of king Kumāra Macha of Kandakura Reddi family. The minister informed the learned assembly that their object could be fulfilled as he had at hand a learned man. Śaṅkarārādhyā of Kanchi who on his way to visit holy places was staying with minister. Śaṅkarārādhyā was invited and was assigned the work of composing the Purāṇa. He wrote it under the patronage of the minister Keśavāmātya and perhaps read it in the Sabhāmaṇṭapa of the temple where the minister listened to it with attention and devotion. Śaṅkarārādhyā considers himself very lucky as the minister himself was very eager to hear the stories of Śivabhaktas (Śivabhaktāthakāvyaśravaṇotsuka).

Basavapurāṇa: In the beginning of the first chapter he offers his obeisance to Śiva, Mañcana-Paṇḍita, Śrīpatipāṇḍita, Śrī Mallikārjuna-Paṇḍita, Kinnara Brahmaṇya, Eleśvara Ketayya, Haradattācārya and Bibbi Bacayya. He then

describes Śrīśaila parvata the deity Śrī Mallikārjuna, Bhramarāmba, Skandasomeśa, Skandapura etc and glorifies the family of the ruler king Kumāra Macha and his patron Keśavāmātya.

The minister Keśava belonged to a highly learned family of administrators who held the post of ministers under Reddi kings.⁶

The second chapter narrates how Śrī Vṛṣabha descended to this world to propagate and spread Śivadharmā. Once Nārada visited Kailāsa and reported to Śiva that Śivadharmā in Karnataka was almost extinct due to the influence of Buddha and Jaina religions. Śiva ordered Vṛṣabha to take birth in the mortal world and to establish Śivadharmā. To fulfill this mission Basava was born as a son to Madarasa and Madalāmbhike, a pious Brahmin couple.⁷

The Purāṇa narrates miracles worked by Śrī Basaveśwara. Many pious deeds which glorified Śivabhakti are narrated. The major portion of the Purāṇa contains Śivaśaraṇa Carite. The foremost among them are Cennabasaveśwara, Allamaprabhu, Madivala Machayya, Kinnarya Brahmaṇya, Nuliyya Candayya, Molige Marayya and others.⁸ In addition to these the Purāṇa supplies us in information about the Śivaśaraṇas who lived before and a few years after Śrī Basaveśwara. Among Siriyalasetti, Devara Dāsimayya, Sanakara Dasimayya, Adayya, Ekantada-Ramayya and others.

The work of Śrī Basaveśwara consisted not only of preaching and promotion of Śivadharmā but also effecting social reforms such as dignity of labour, equality of all men and women of all communities irrespective of caste and creed.

From the above summary of the Basavapurāṇa of Śaṅkarārādhyā it is clear that the life sketch of Śrī Basaveśwara is in many respects similar to one presented in

From the above account it is clear that the Sanskrit Basavapurāṇas depict Śrī Basaveśwara as an incarnation of Vṛṣabha. They further go to identify him with Śiva as he is called Dvitiyaśambhu (the second Śiva). It is he who revived and reformed the Vīraśaiva religion in Karnataka which spread even to Maharashtra, Andhra and Tamil country, that is, the whole of South India.

Conclusion: Basaveśwara believed in the goodness of human nature. He wanted to build a society consisting of devotees of Śiva. That society should have the concept of work as sacred, the fraternity and equality of men and the inter-related ideas of individual and social welfare. Basaveśwara gave a practical demonstration of an ideal society through the concepts of Kāyaka and Dāsoha. Both these two concepts provided material, social and economic, spiritual and moral prosperity and laid stress on contentment and peace of mind for the people.

Basaveśwara's movement like Sarvodaya wanted welfare of all. Basaveśwara pointed out that Bhāvi's may become Bhakta's if they follow the principles of Vīraśaivism. Hence Basaveśwara's ideal society, concepts are all embracing love without exception ūprince and peasant, touchable and untouchable. No individual or group was to be suppressed and exploited. All were to be equally members of that society, all sharing in the produce of their labour, and functioning as Dāsohees promoting the welfare of whole society. Basaveśwara stressed the cultivation of a moral and spiritual outlook.

The above Vīraśaiva works in general belong to the Puranic category. They were written with the avowed intention of glorifying Basaveśwara as a superhuman divine manifestation of Śiva or Nandi, and describe in glowing terms his marvelous performances. Their purpose was to arouse and cherish devotional fervor among the faithful devotees and common people and not to present a historical account of the teacher. It is no wonder, they yield historical information.

These works, though not of great historical value, are useful as testimony to the ascending position of popularly enjoyed throughout the long centuries by Basaveśwara and his Vīraśaiva faith. However, it must be said to their credit that their, occupy a worthy place in the religious and devotional literature.

As for the legendary conception of Basaveśwara being originally Vṛṣabha Gaṇeśvara or Nandi in Śiva's Kailāsa, the idea appears to have been conveniently suggested from his name Basava, derived from Vṛṣabha. The Puranic accounts of his deification, it may be noted, were composed only after his life's glorious achievements and departure from the mortal world.

End Note :-¹ Malwad, Virasaivism and Vacanakaras, Basava Journal. Vol.5, July 1980, Basava Samithi, Banagalore, p.1.

² B.D.Jatti, Pathway to God through Lingayatism, Basava Journal, July-Sept 2003, Basava Samithi, Bangalore, p.29.

³ Hunshal.S.M., The Lingayat Movement A Social Revolution in Karnataka, Karnataka Sahitya Mandir, Dharwar, 1947, p.9.

⁴ Kumar Swamiji, Mirror of Virasaivism, Navakalyana Math Prakashan, Dharwar, 1960, p.5-8.

⁵ Article by Manukar, Shivachandra, in æMajalgaonkar Maharaj Roupya Mahotsava Smaranikaö, p.25.

⁶ H.P.Malledevaru, Essentials of Virasaivism, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1973, p.92.

⁷ G.N.Rechanna, ö The idea of God in Shaiva Siddhant and in Veerashaivismö, A Dissertation submitted to Mysore University. Mysore, 1960, p.8.

⁸ Jagadishshastri, Nalwar (ed), Suprabidhagama, Dhamaveer Gramntha Ratna Mala, Solapur, 1944 (Marathi/Sanskrit), p.IV.

⁹ Suryakant B.Ghugare, Veerashaivism in India, Sadhana Book Stall, Handhiganj, Kolhapur, 1995, p.153.

¹⁰ M.R.Sakhare, History and Philosophy of Lingayat Religion, Karnataka University, Dharwar, Second Edition, 1978, p.234.

¹¹ M.Chidananda Murthy, Basavanna, National book Trust, India, 1991, p.32-40 and also referre S.C.Nandimath, æHandbook of VirasaivismÆ The Literary Committee, L.E.Association, Dharwar, India 1941, pp.12-50.

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Pārijātamañjarī alias Vijayaśrī-An Inscriptional Nāṭikā in Sanskrit

Siddharth Y.Wakankar

Inscriptional Sanskrit Dramatic Literature has not been to attract the due attention of the Sanskrit scholars as well as the Archaeologists, in spite of their being the valid proof or documents of historical and cultural importance. As is well-known, the Inscriptions are authentic in their nature, though they may contain poetic heights or fancy of the composer/s who generally happen to be the protégés of the Ruling King or his family.

Some foreign scholars have done extensive research in the field of Ancient Inscriptions of India and many Indian scholars followed in their footsteps.

The present paper is based on one such paper by an outstanding foreign scholar, viz. E. Hultzsch of Halle(Salle). It was published under the title, **Dhar Prasasti of Arjunavarman: Pārijātamañjarī-Nāṭikā** by Madana. It runs from page 96 to 122 and is published in Vol.VIII, No.9 of the *Epigraphia Indica*.

This inscriptional drama was first discovered in 1903 by the late Shri K.K.Lele, the then Superintendent of the Education of the former State of Dhar, in the then Central India. This inscription, consisting of 82 lines and couched in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages, was found at the Bhoja-shala (now, the Kamal Maula Mosque) in Dhar in 1903. The credit of breaking the news of the discovery of this inscription goes to Shri K. K. Lele, when he wrote a paper, viz. **Summary of the Dramatic Inscription found at the Bhoja-shala (Kamal Maula Mosque) Dhar**, E. I. in 1903.

Prof. Hultzsch openly records his extreme gratitude to Shri K.K. Lele, for his kind gesture of providing copies (estampages) of this inscription-the most important source material-on which the Prof. based his paper. Hence,