

**Important Jaina Centres in Gadag Taluk : Mulgund and Lakkundi**

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The Mulgund and Lakkundi of Gadag Taluk. These two villages are the strongholds of Jainism in this taluk. The Rashtrakutas and Kalyani Chalukyas was patronized Jainism in this area. They built many temples among these two are very important Jaina Centres. They constructed many Jaina Basadi's and also given more grants to the Basadi's. But Mulgund and Lakkundi have number of Jaina inscription and Jain Basadi's as under fallows:

**Mulgund:**

Mulgund in Gadag taluk had the unique privilege of being an eminent resort of Jaina faith. For several centuries it remained as a renowned and highly sanctified area by the presence of great teachers and several Jaina religious institutions. The Poet Nayasena<sup>1</sup> who hailed from Mulgund, wrote Dharmamrita in Kannada in the year 1112 A.D. He was a distinguished scholar and a Jain monk. Dharmamrita contains 14 chapters dealing with stories connected with eight darshanas and five anuvratas. Even though it is a collection of stories, it contains a lot of interesting information regarding Jain teachers, places of historical importance and Jaina philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The inscription engraved on the slab set up to the wall of Parsvanatha temple at Mulgund, states that during the Rasfrakuta ruler Krishna II, Chikarya, the son of Chandrarya of the Vaisya caste had constructed a Jain temple at Mulgund in 902-903 A.D and Chikarya's son Arasarya had made an endowment of land for the worship and maintenance of the temple<sup>3</sup>. The recipient of the gift on behalf of the temple was one preceptor Kanakasena, the disciple of Virasena. The latter was the senior pupil of Kumarasena who is described as "a great acharya whose feet were worthy to be worshipped by men, king and great 71 ascetics". Again, this Kumarasena belonged to the Sena anvaya of Chandrikavata. A local guild of 360 merchants donated another piece of land to the same temple. The inscription of 977-978 A.D., incised on the dhavajasthambha which stands in front of the Narayana temple at Mulgund refers to this pillar as mdnasthambha. Obviously this originally belonged to a Jaina basadi. Later, it was installed as dhavajasthambha in front of the above temple at Mulgund.

Being an ardent devotee of the Jaina faith Amritayya died by the vow of sanyasana<sup>4</sup> in 1275 A.D. Mahapradhana Heggade Devanna who served as minister and bahattaraniyogadhipati of Tilakavasa of Soratur, was the father of the deceased. The long epithets of Amritayya described in the inscription shows that he was a learned and wealthy man of Belavalanadu. Another record,<sup>5</sup> on a slab built into a wall inside the Chandranatha basti, describes the death of Bulisettiya Keshappa of Mulgund. He was a lay disciple of Acharya Hemasena of Senagana who bore the epithet - Rayarajaru, Mandalacharya, Vadi-Vadisvara, Sakalavidhavibhu dhajana Chakravarti. A record<sup>6</sup> in the Chandranatha which belongs to 1421 A.D., states the death by the vow of sanyasa, of Amrita, the disciple of Bhattarakadeva of Balatkara gana and it also refers to the death of Nigarasa, the son of senabova, Heggade Maduvarasa who was a minister and bahattaraniyogadhipati of Tilakarasa of Soratur.

Due to onslaughts of the people of other faiths several Jain temples were devastated. A lithic record<sup>7</sup> of the 16th century A.D., states that Mohammadans burnt the Sidila Parsvanatha mahachaityalaya at Mulgund, while preceptor Saharakirtf the disciple of Lalitakhti of Desigana,

Pustaka-gachchha and Hanasoge-anvaya. stayed unshaken inside the temple. He was burnt to death by the indiscreet Mohammadans The shrine with strong pillars, beams and walls, according to the inscription, collapsed completely due to the strong flames of fire. Preceptor Sahasrakhti thus vindicated the greatness of Jaina faith by his great deed of sacrifice. Another record<sup>8</sup> on a pillar in Chandranath basadi at Mulgund of 1675 A.D., states that the Adinatha image which was polluted by the Mohammadans, was reconsecrated by Bandambike, the wife of Nagabhupa.

Lakshmesvar and Mulgund epigraphs and Chavundaraya Parana<sup>9</sup> furnish some details of the line of preceptors. Some of them were eminent scholars and their eminence and eruditions are described at length. Various Jain preceptors like Dharmasena, Kumarasena, Virasena, Kanakasena, Aryanandisena, Ajitasena, Kanakasena II, Jinasena, Narendrasena I, Mallisena, Navasena I, Narendrasena II, Nayasena II (author of Dharmamrita) Bhattarakadeva, Hemasena, Lalitakirti, Sahasrakuti, etc., flourished from the 9th century to the 15th century A.D. Most of these preceptors belonged to Senagana and Mulasangha. Several of them were associated with the Chandrikavata or Chandrakavate lineage of Senagana. Ajitasena<sup>10</sup> who must be the guru of general Chavundaraya, Marasimha and Rachamalla, was the most renowned teacher. Gommatasara of Nemichandra Siddhanta-Chakravarti has paid glowing tribute to Ajitasena who lived approximately in the 10th century A.D. Mallishenasuri who lived in the middle of the 11th century A.D., was the author of several works including works on tantric lore in Sanskrit. A few acharyas wielded considerable influence on society by their profound learning and ascetic practices. It is interesting to note that the administrative control of some of the temples and religious institutions vested in the hands of Jaina preceptors and recipients of the grants, generally were acharyas.

**Lakkundi:**

Lakkundi, (in Gadag taluk) the ancient name of which was Lokkigundi, was a stronghold of Jainism. It is a place of historical importance with a large number of 74 temples and inscriptions. Danachintamani Attimabe, a distinguished lady was a champion of Jainism. Born at Punganur of Kammadesa in Vengimandala, Attimabe was the daughter of Mallapayya who had four sons and three daughters. Of whom he gave in marriage his two daughters Attimabe and Gundamabe to Nagadeva, son of Dhalla of the Vaji family. Attimabe's son Pedevaja Taila was the commander of the force and also the governor of the Masavadi region.

During the reign of the western Chalukya King Irvabedanga Satyasraya, Attimabe built the Brahma-Jinalaya at Lokkigundi in 1007 A.D., and made suitable endowments<sup>11</sup> for its maintenance. On behalf of this temple, the preceptor Arhanandi Pandita of Surasta gana and Kaurur gaccha received these endowments. Attimabe induced Ahavamalla or Irvabedanga Satyasraya to make grants to the Brahma Jinalaya soon after the conquest of the Gujjara country.<sup>12</sup> The Brahma Jinalaya which is one of the largest Jain temples, comprises a garbagriha, an ardhmantapa, a navaranga, and a large open pillared mantapa with an entrance in the front. Great artistic skill is reflected in the stone carving of this temple. In the literature it is stated that Attimabe who had caused the construction of one thousand five hundred Jain temples, also got made one thousand copies of Ponna's Shantipurana and one thousand five hundred images of Jina and distributed them cost-free among the devotees.<sup>13</sup> The famous Kannada poet Raima received encouragement in the hands of Attimabe and composed Ajitapurana which is a champu work that deals with the life of the second Tirthankara, Ajitanatha. This work in Kannada was composed in 993 A.D. An epigraph describes at length the philanthropic activities of this saintly lady who had dedicated her life to the promotion of Jaina Art and culture. She is adorned with various epithets<sup>14</sup> like Danachintamani, Chairantana Chelim, 75 Gunadankakarti, Katakavatre, Kavivarakamadhenu, Jina Dharmapatake. Akalankachante, Danavinode,

Sajjanachudamani Jainashasanarakshamani, Charitrameru, Chakravartipujite etc. Raima, in his work Ajitapurana highly extols Dana Chintamani Attimabbe.

From the epigraphs found at Lokkigundi we are also in a position to glean a few names of the temples and charitable institutions that adorned this town at one time.

- 1) An inscription<sup>15</sup> of 1118 A.D., found on the pillar in the mantapa of Somesvara temple registers a gift of gold made by the sculptors of Bharatesvara temple to the God. The temple which is referred to in the inscription has not survived to the present.
- 2) Another inscription<sup>16</sup> of 1172 A.D., records a gift of money made by Gunanidhi Kesava for the worship of the deity in the basadi of Balleya Jemayya. Anikara Nagishetti also made a similar type of gift to the same deity.
- 3) The epigraph<sup>17</sup> of 1185 A.D., registers a gift made for the eight-fold worship of god in the Nompia basadi and for the burning of a lamp before the deity of Kammatesvara at Lokkigundi.
- 4) A series of donations<sup>18</sup> were made for the worship of Santinatha in the Kammata Jinalaya by several members of the artisan community. An interesting fact is that the gifts were given to the temple in the presence of one thousand Mahajanas, all Goles and Gobrahamanas of Lokkigundi which is said to be an agrahara created by Sri Rama.
- 5) The inscription<sup>19</sup> incised on the pedestal of a Jaina image in the temple, states that the image was a gift of Samkhadeva of MulaSangha and Devagana. This image belongs to the 12th century A.D. 76
- 6) Another epigraph<sup>20</sup> of the 12th century A.D., refers to the gift of a site for the danasala, made in favour of God Tribhuvantilaka Santinatha of Vasudhaika-bandhava Jinalaya. This gift was given by the Mahajanas of Lokkigundi agrahara.

Lokkigundi was a great seat of learning. Being an eminent agrahara administered by one thousand Mahajans who were masters of different branches of knowledge, many of the subjects like the vedas, puranas, dharmasastras etc., were taught here. Most of the Jaina epigraphs have made references to Lokkigundi agrahara. Several gifts were made to the Jain temples in the presence of these Mahajans. From the epigraphically evidence it is clear that followers of different religions were then living in full amity and participating in the religious functions of other communities.

#### References :

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- 2) Mahisawadi, B.B. and Patil, S.P., Dharmamrita, p 729-732.
- 3) EI, Vol.XIII, p.192-94.
- 4) SII. XYNo.615.
- 5) Ibid., pt.II, 666.
- 6) Ibid., No.667.
- 7) Ibid, No.695.
- 8) Ibid., No.716.
- 9) Patil, S.P., Chavundaraya Purana., Dharwad, 1993, p.81-84
- 10) Shantiraja, Shastri., (ed) Mahapurana, Vol.I, Bangalore 1992, p.XI-XIV
- 11) SII., XI-pt. I, No.52.
- 12) BH, Int, p/VIII, &No.53.
- 13) Kamala, Hampana., Attimabbe and Chalukyas, Bangalore 1995, p. 12.
- 14) SII., XI, pt.I, No.52.
- 15) SII, XI, pt.II, No. 193.
- 16) SII, XV, pt.II, No. 119.
- 17) Ibid., No.67.
- 18) Ibid, No.67
- 19) Ibid, No.556
- 20) Ibid, No.557