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## **Tiger hunting hero stones: With special reference to Haveri District, Karnataka State**

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### **Abstract**

Death is an accidental event in human life. The feeling that death is for the body and not for the soul led to the attitude of maintaining his existence even after death. Such an attitude gave way to the cremation rites of the dead body in later days. Emotional relationships with a dead person, while instilling love in him, would instill fear of his death. This love mixed with fear led to the practice of cremation in human history and the practice of erecting monuments to commemorate the dead. In the present article it is explained that hero stones are a unique type of monumental sculpture among inscriptional types. Their nature is briefly described in the hero stones, which is identified separately in the inscription types. Hero stones found in Karnataka from Badami Chalukyan period (500 A.D.) to 18th century. Hero stones were originally (first) cultural objects and then art mediums. Memorial stones are a type of bulge sculpture. A sculpture that appears to bulge forward from a flat background is called a bulge sculpture. The bulge sculpture give a perfect depiction of the event in stages simultaneously.

Karnataka can be called the heartland of South India's hero stones. As far as Karnataka is concerned, the hero stones here have history of about 1500 years. Over such a long period of time, hero stones have grown by incorporating the social, religious and cultural aspects of their respective times. Hero stones are usually seen with an inscription along with the sculpture. Innumerable hero stones with only bare sculpture are found in Karnataka. The inscriptions on some of the hero stones contain information about the erectors, along with a description of the purpose for which they were erected. From their perusal it is clear that there are two reasons for erecting hero stones, worldly and paramarthika. If the worldly reason is to let the world know the prowess of the dead hero, and thereby put forward his ideal, and if the rest of them will also fight like him, then the otherworldly reason is to decide that it is their first duty, and let the dead hero attain heaven, Kailasa, Vaikuntha or Siddhaloka. The hero stones of Karnataka, when compared to other hero stones sculptures of India, are distinguished by their mature narrative style and lively expression. The true narrative of the event for which the hero sacrificed his life is presented in the hero stones of Karnataka with some examples.

At the beginning of the article a list of types of hero stones is given namely Yuddha Veeragallugalu, 'Turugol', 'Penbuyyal', Kote-Kalaga, Gadi-kalagad, Uralivu or Ura Huyyalu, Nentanedar, 'Eravesa', Bete veeragallugalu etc.. The hero stones of those who died fighting with animals can be divided into tiger hunting hero stones, pig hunting hero stones, elephant hunting hero stones, deer hunting hero stones, snake hunting hero stones and hero stones of heroes who died in the context of horse taming. The article has brief explanation of hero stones as well as tiger hunting hero stones with inscription and tiger hunting hero stones without inscription. At the end of the article some photographs of the tiger hunting hero stones are given.

**Keywords:** Hero stones, Memorial stones, Yuddha Veeragallugalu (those who fought and died in the war), 'Turugol' (those who fought during the cattle ride), 'Penbuyyal' (those who fought and died for the protection of the women), etc.

### **Introduction**

#### **Objectives of the Study**

A brief introduction and variety to the Hero Stones of Karnataka. It is said that Tiger hunting Hero Stones are a unique pattern in the Memorial Stones. Introducing the newly discovered Tiger hunting Hero Stones that they are unique type of Memorial Stones. To describe the contribution of Haveri district to the history of Karnataka.

### **Review of Literature**

So far many studies have been done on hero stones and heroic heritage in Karnataka. Among

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them are the memorial sculptures of the heroes who died fighting with the animals. In this regard M.M. Kalaburgi's 'Samadhi-Balidana-Veeramaran Monuments', S.M. Hiremath's 'Shasananusandhana', Dr. Chidanandamurthy's 'Veeragallugalu and Mastikallugalu' and 'Cultural Study of Kannada Inscriptions', H. Tipperudraswamy's 'Karnataka Culture Survey', J.M. Nagaiah's 'Life Values of Ancient Karnataka', R. Sheshashastri's 'Herostones of Karnataka', and D. V. Paramashivamurthys 'Kannada Shasanashilpa' can be named. Also some district and taluk wise articles of memorial sculptures have been published so far. But these do not provide information about comprehensive tiger hunting memorial stones in Haveri district. In this regard, I would like to say that this article with description about tiger hunting memorial stones of Haveri district is a short attempt to overcome that deficiency.

### Methodology

This paper includes both primary and secondary sources. As part of my research work, I undertook fieldwork in Haveri district, visited every village and discovered hunting sculptures, especially tiger-hunting hero stones. So far, sixteen tiger-hunting hero stones have been found across the district, eight of which are inscriptional tiger-hunting hero stones and the rest are non-inscribed tiger-hunting sculptures. During the fieldwork I took some photographs of tiger-hunting hero stones and write description (futures) of the sculpture. Secondary sources also used to prepare the article, although fieldwork is the soul of the essay.

### Study Area

Haveri district which was earlier an integral part of Dharwad district in Karnataka state was separated from Dharwad district on 24-08-1997 and formed as a new district. At present Haveri district is a vast district consisting of eight taluks namely Byadagi, Ranebennur, Shiggaonvi, Hanagallu, Savanur, Hirekerur, Rattihalli and Haveri. It has 4823 sq.k.m. area. The area is spacious, with highlands, semi-arid plains, and plains. Haveri district shares its border with Dharwad, Gadag, Shimoga, Davangere, Uttarakannad and Vijayanagar districts.

### Findings

Sixteen tiger-hunting hero stones have been found across the Haveri district, among them eight of which are newly founded by me. They are Emmiganur, Javalli, Abbalur, Chinnamulagunda villages of Hirekerur Taluk; Yalagachcha, Hale-Kittur villages of Haveri Taluk and Kalakeri, Bingapura tiger-hunting hero stones of Hanagallu Taluk. These are unique types of Hero stones and are rich in variety. Most of the above tiger hunting memorial stones are found in Hirekerur area of Haveri district. The surrounding area of Hirekerur, which is hilly, hilly and forested, is a prime habitat for tigers, and the presence of nine tiger-hunting hero stones is a testament to this.

War is also one of the qualities that have borne the brunt of man's nature since he became a man. For many years, humans have been waging wars, either consciously or unconsciously. Such wars are the jealousy between the dynasties, the feuds of the cousins, the quarrel between the king and the feudatories, for inheritance dispute, from the desire of the kappa (gifts), for the sake of the sovereign, for the expansion of the empire, for the reclaiming of the lost territory, for looting of cattle's and treasure. Whatever the

reasons for the wars, the damage caused by the two parties would be horrendous when they occurred. In such cases, many heroes fought and died, regardless of their lives. The rulers or his relatives planted hero stones for the heroes who died in battle.

In addition to those who died in the war and those who fought during the war, those who fought for the protection of the people, those who fought for the defence of the fort, those who fought in border disputes, those who fought for their protection in the village, who fought when their relations were in trouble, sometimes who fought and died for the fulfilment of the command of their owner, who fought and died when the thieves stole things, and also those who died fighting in the case of cruel beasts attacking on people and domestic animals, in these situations were also planted hero stones in their memory as heroes. Based on the sculptures and inscriptions on the Hero stones, they can be broadly divided into Hero stones of those who died in wars, Turugol(cattle ride), Penbuyyal(fighting with enemy who attack on women), Hero stones of the fort battle, Hero stones of those who died fighting with thieves, Gadikalaga(border disputes), Uralivu or Ura Huyyalu(attack and destroyed the village), 'Eravesa'(fighting for the fulfilment of the command of their owner), Nentanedaru(fighting for their relations who were in trouble) and hunting Hero stones (those who died fighting with animals).

Hunting of animals by humans has been practiced since ancient times. While primitive man hunted animals for food, in later times it became customary for kings and high officials to hunt animals for fun, to display their bravery and to relieve boredom. Some animals not only destroyed the crops grown by the farmers, but also entered the town and harmed the people and the animals they reared. In such cases, kings used to hunt evil animals. It seems that one of the duties of the king, the elimination of evil, the value of disciplined maintenance was also included.

It can be observed that hunting in India has developed in many ways. First of all, it is grown for the sake of maintenance of life or for the sake of preservation of the life. We get information about such hunting from Hero stones. Secondly, 'Mrigaya Vihara', which was played by the royal family for fun and entertainment, was organized at a fixed time and at a fixed place. We get details of this type of hunting from poetry. Hunting was a sport that was very popular with the kings and promoted their martial arts prowess. Hunting based on animals is 'Migavante'(animal hunting like Boar, Stag, Deer, Tiger, Elephant etc.) 'Pakkivante'(birds hunting like Partridge, Geese, Pigeon, Sparrow, Crane, Sardines etc.) 'Nirvante' (Aquatic animals like fish, crab). And can be divided into 'kiruvante' (rat, bandicoot, etc.).

Apart from the poems, the basic materials to know the details of the animal hunting are the hero stones. Many hunting scenes can be identified in the hero stones. There are many instances in Hero stones of people who lost their lives while hunting animals or accidentally solving problems caused by animals to the villagers. Such sculptures are mostly without inscriptions. Although there is an inscription, it is brief and the sculpture part is given priority. When examining the Hero stones of Haveri district, the Hero stones of hunters who died fighting with tigers and wild boars are mostly found. Little information is available from inscriptions about elephant hunting. Also there are

some instances of death due to snake bites. A sculpture of deer hunting heroes has also been found.

On some coins of the Gupta period, images of fighting with a tiger can be seen. The images of fighting with a tiger on the coins of the time of Kumaragupta-I are special. If you observe this, you will know that tiger hunting has been prevalent in India since ancient times. The number of tigers in India was high and people were often troubled by them. A person who hunted and killed a tiger had special respect in the society. Tiger is a powerful animal and only a brave man with a special heart could hunt it. But there are few instances of heroes who went hunting and killed a tiger and died themselves. A point to be noted here is that when the evil animal entered the village and was torturing people and cattle, with the intention of killing it somehow, they bravely fought it and killed it, sometimes they died. People who were grateful to such a hero used to honour his valour by erecting hero stones in his name. A hero's family would compensate for the loss of his death by giving charity. Apart from the inscriptions about the heroes who died fighting with the tiger, there are also many heroic songs. These mostly praise the heroes who killed the tiger that was giving trouble to the cattle's.

The Hero stone of Karnataka, when compared to other Hero stone sculptures of India, are distinguished by their mature narrative style and lively expression. The true narrative of the event for which the hero sacrificed his life is in the Hero stone of Karnataka. The main point that impresses everyone here is that the composition and dynamism in which the sculptor has framed the event related to the hero is evident in every phase of the hero. Expressing human instincts in a medium like stone is not easy. The Sculptor has seen the amalgamation of Veera-rasa, Sringara-rasa and Shanta-rasa in Hero stones.

Usually the first phase of tiger hunting Hero stones depicts the hero fighting with tiger. If there is a scenario where animals (cattle's) are protected by the hero from a tiger, animals were also engraved in this panel with the hero. In the second phase of tiger hunting Hero stones, the way in which the sculptors have rendered propriety and beauty in their limits is to be admired. Here the hero is carved with his hands on the shoulders of the nymphs, while the nymphs are carrying the hero sitting in a plane to heaven. To add to this, he is sometimes shown going to heaven accompanied by musicians and dancers. Heroism was celebrated by religion and even heroic death was portrayed as worthy of attaining heaven. Its influence was also expressed in the teaching and sculpture of Hero stones. So 'Shanta-rasa' rose in Hero stones. It can be seen at the upper level of tiger hunting Hero stones. Here the hero is described as residing with his favourite deity in heaven (if Shaiva), Vaikunta (if a Vaishnava) or Siddhaloka (if a Jain).

### **Tiger hunting hero stones with inscription**

In Haveri district, sixteen tiger hunting Hero stones can be found, out of sixteen, eight Hero stones are special for have inscriptions. A Hero stone from Hiremoraba in Rattihalli taluk mentions a hero who killed a tiger and himself died. In the first phase of this Hero stone, hero killing a tiger with his bow and arrow. In the scene the tiger jumping on the hero with its raised forelegs. One of the heroes in the premises of the Anaji Eshwara temple in Hirekerur taluk tells the story of Bommeyanayaka, the son of Mareyanayaka, who killed a tiger and entered heaven. 13th-

century Hirekeruru Hero stone tells of the death of a hero (name omitted) while fighting with a tiger.

Aladageri Hero stone of Yadava Singhana's reign in 1247 A.D. narrates the death of a hero Boppa in a fight with a tiger. The Hero stone has three tiers and in the first stage there is a sculpture on the panel an attacking tiger with its forelegs on the knee of the hero. Hero pricking the tiger with his spear, a person standing behind the hero. Kallihala Hero stone of the Mahadeva period of 1270 A.D. mentions that "Ajjadiya samarttasta praje heggade gounda mukshyavagi.. huliya mere kadi talutiridu kureya holanam talegotu haradamanyada mamere suraloka prapithanada" This inscription mentions the grant of land to a hero who died fighting a tiger in the presence of Ajjadi Heggade and the Gaudas. If we look at the fact that Ajjadi fought with a tiger in the presence of Ajjadi Heggade and Gowda, it seems that this incident may have happened on the occasion when probably went to the main town or when a tiger entered the town. A mahasati stone above a lake in the village of Varaha dated 1447 A.D. contains an account of the wives celebrate of 'SATI' for the sake of Maleyanayaka and another man who died in a fight with a tiger. The special feature of this inscription is that it mentions the subject of celebrate of 'SATI' association with tiger hunting. Galaganatha inscription of Haveri taluk contains a reference to 'Puliyam Kadi Kondu'. It is difficult to say that it refers to tiger hunting. Because the inscription of the panel is fully damaged.

One of the hero stone found at Sanguru in Haveri taluk is very interesting. This is an inscribed hero stone and the inscription describes the hero fighting a tiger. But in the first phase of the inscription, the hero is condemned as fighting a lion. In this panel the lion's face clearly looks with thick hair around its neck. There is a scene where a warrior advancing with a bow and arrow fights with a lion. The lion raised foreleg and with its raised tail is condemned as attacking the hero. The point to be noted here is that there are no records of lion living in any part of Karnataka. It seems that the reason may be that the sculptor may have condemned the hero in this way to portray him as the most brave.

### **Tiger hunting hero stones without inscription**

Apart from the above, many un-inscribed tiger hunting sculptures have been found in Haveri district. In front of the Parameshwara temple at Emmiganuru in Hirekerur taluk, there is a 5.5 feet tall Tiger Hunting Hero stone with three tiers. In the lower part of the Hero stone, the hero is depicted as holding the tiger's ear with his left hand and attacking the tiger with his raised right hand. Hurt by the hero's blow, the tiger turned its face back and raised its forelegs. Behind the hero another tiger is condemned as running in the opposite direction. The surprise is that the hero here is not holding any weapon and the tiger in front of the hero is tied around the neck. If we observe this, we feel that the animal holding the ear of the hero is a dog and is commanding it to chase the tiger behind him. In the first phase of Hero stone of Javalli of the Hirekerur taluk, the hero is advancing with a long bow in his left hand and an arrow in his raised right hand. Earlier the arrow experimented by the hero planted in the belly of the tiger and the tiger is condemned to fall back.

There is one phase spoiled tiger hunting hero stone above the pond of Abbaluru. In this hero stone a hero wielding a bow and arrow on a tiger. Part of the tiger's head is broken.



But the sculpture was condemned as arrow experimented by the hero went through the tiger's neck and as if coming out of in its back. Between the tiger and the hero, a cattle is depicted. The entire sculpture echoes the scene of the hero slaying a cow-ridden tiger. In one of the uninscribed three phase hero stone of Chinnamulagunda in Hirekerur tauk, a hero is denounced as biting the breast of a tiger with his long spear. But except the top of this phase, the rest of the phase is buried in the ground.

The two tiered hero stone of Yalagachcha in Haveri taluk shows in its lower phase a hero fighting with a tiger that has attacked him. There is a three tier hero stone In the Sangameshwara temple premises of Hale-Kitturu in the same taluk. At the lower phase of this hero stone, a tiger has raised its forehead legs and placed it on the hero's knee. The hero holds something in his right hand and raises both hands. Behind the hero, long-horned bullocks are condemned. The hero seems to stand in fear because he was accidentally attacked by a tiger. The whole scene echoes the idea of the hero fighting the tiger which came to eat the bullocks and died after the fighting. There is three phase spoiled tiger hunting hero stone above the pond of Kalakeri's (Hanagal taluk) filling pit. On the first phase there is a vague depiction of the hero fighting a tiger. Hero

stone is completely spoiled and it is special that the hero sculpture is condemned on the left side of the panel. There is a stone with a tiger sculpture in the field of Hanumanthappa of Bingapura village in Hanagal taluk. The tiger stands with its mouth open and its tail up. It seems to be a trace of tiger hunting. There is still a belief among the people of the village that if an ox and the yoke of an ox touch it while farming, the ox will die.

Most of the above tiger hunting monumental sculptures are found in Hirekerur area of Haveri district. The surrounding area of Hirekerur, which is hilly, hilly and forested, is a prime habitat for tigers, and the presence of nine tiger-hunting hero stones is a testament to this.

**Newly found hero stones in field work**

1. Emmiganur - Taluk Hirekerur - District Haveri.
2. Javalli - Taluk Hirekerur - District Haveri.
3. Abbalur - Taluk Hirekerur - District Haveri.
4. Chinnamulagunda - Taluk Hirekerur - District Haveri.
5. Yalagachcha - Taluk Haveri - District Haveri.
6. Hale-Kittur - Taluk Haveri - District Haveri.
7. Kalakeri - Taluk Hanagallu - District Haveri.
8. Bingapura - Taluk Hanagallu - District Haveri.



**Javalli, Taluk Hirekerur**



**Emmiganuru, Taluk Hirekerur**



**Kalakeri, Taluk Hanagallu**



**Chinnamulagunda Taluk Hirekerur**



**Abbaluru, Taluk Hirekerur**



**Yalagachcha, Taluk Haveri**



**Hale-Kittur, Taluk Haveri**



**Sanguru, Taluk Haveri**



**Kallihala, Taluk Haveri**



**Hiremoraba, Taluk Rattihalli**



**Bingapura, Taluk Hanagallu**



**Guddadabevinahalli, Taluk Ranebennur**

**Fig 1: Tiger hunting hero stones of haveri district**

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