



E-ISSN: 2706-9117
P-ISSN: 2706-9109
www.historyjournal.net
IJH 2024; 6(1): 103-104
Received: 19-12-2023
Accepted: 25-01-2024

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A study of footsteps of the Natha Sampradaya at Kadri: Karnataka state

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/27069109.2024.v6.i1b.268>

Abstract

In the medieval period, it is very amazing to know that Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains enthusiastically worshipped Lord Shiva. During this period, a large number of Sadhus lived in caves, attached to forests. In this environment, Matsyendranatha and Gorakhnath came into the picture. The cool and peaceful atmosphere of Kadri made them to settle at Kadri. Kadri Manjunath Temple and Natha Mutt became very popular. We have an inscription of 10 C A. D which was issued by Alupa King Kundavarma. The bronze Lokeshwara image of Kadri is really interesting from the point of view of the history of iconography and religion.

Keywords: Gorakhnath, Kadri, Alupa, Tulunadu

Introduction

7th century A.D onwards tantric system entered to Buddhist fold. Some tantric practices entered Shaivism. During this period, a large number of Sadhus lived in caves, attached to forests. Most of them were detached from the common people. They followed local customs, and traditions, practiced magic, witchcraft, and travelled across the country. They came from different social, and religious, backgrounds and followed their system. Some of them were holy and a large number of them led unholy life. They belonged to different branches. In this environment, two religious leaders appear on the scene. i.e. Matsyendranatha and Gorakhnath. Gorakhnath was the disciple of Matsyendranatha. It was the disciple who brought the teacher into the mainstream and brought revolutionary changes.

Background

Matsyendranatha and Gorakhnath wandered here and there from Nepal to Kanyakumari. During their wandering life, they popularised the yoga tradition. They stayed in different mountains and hills where the atmosphere was cool and peaceful. In these places, they conducted Hatha yoga and spread the Natha Sampradaya among the people.

The guru and disciple came to Kadri and settled there. Matsyendranatha got one Ling, a place where he took a bath and started worshipping with the name of 'Manjunatha'. One day Gorakhnath had merged with the ling of Lord Manjunatha. This news spread to the whole of India and a large number of monks and common followers of this Sampradaya gathered here and their place became very sacred. A few years onwards Guru Matsyendranatha finished Avatara (end of life). Disciple of Gorakhnath, Chauranginath continued to worship Lord Manjunatha. In this way, Kadri became a sacred pilgrim center.

Discussion

There are many Natha Mutts in Tulunadu. Among them, Kadri is the prominent one. It is a hilly area situated in the heart of Mangalore, with many tombs, caves, and shrines. It was an ancient Buddhist Vihara, turned into the Vajrayana Centre, and changed into the Natha Centre.

The word Kadri came from Kadali which was a center of Siddha Yogi, Yogenis. They came here and conducted penance and got salvation. So, Kadali means Muktivana (salvation). It is used in philosophic and spiritual form.

Yogi Mutt is found at Mangalore in Dakshina Kannada district. It was established atop of the hill Kadri; it is called Kadri Mutt. In Kadri Mutt we find Kashi Kala Bhairava Shrine, idols

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of Gorakhanath, Matsyendranath, and Chauranginath, and tombs of monks. One can also see Pandava's cave, Bhairava shrine, Parasuramas pyre pit, and Barapanthi Katte. At the bottom of the hill, we can see Kadri Manjunath temple.

The Manjunath temple of Kadri is a middle-sized, beautiful structure. Perhaps the temple was established in the 10th C A.D., as evidenced by the installation of the Lokeshwara image in 968 A. D, on the pedestal of the main image an inscription is carved over the top horizontal band. According to the inscription dated 968 A.D., this image was installed by the Alupa King Kundavarma.

The bronze Lokeshwara image of Kadri is really interesting from the point of view of the history of iconography and religion. Dr. Gururaj Bhatsays that we may tentatively identify Lokeshwara with Shiva or Matsyendranath, who had his incarnation in Adinatha according to the mythology of the Natha Sampradaya. The presence of the Rudrakshamala and the specific mention that Kundavarma, who installed this image, was a great devotee of Lord Shiva, further support this inference. Kadri belongs to the Nagara style of structure. The monk of Kadri Mutt has the responsibility of looking after the Natha Mutts of Karnataka. Kadri Mutt's monk has a title called 'Raja'.

It is very difficult to accept P. Gururaj Bhat's inferences. If it is Shiva's image then why it was expelled from Garbhgriha? How did a Shaiva king Kundavarma establish Buddhist Vihara? How was a Buddhist Vihara converted into a Natha center?

Govinda Pai says that, in Banavasi Bellegave Vihara was established by Sathakarani and Kalyana Chalukyas. They were not Buddhists. The ruling dynasty would support any religion which was popular among the people. This ruling dynasty would support any religion which was popular among the people. This is not a new phenomenon. By 10th C A.D. a branch of Buddhism accepted Shaiva principles. So, this thing had prevented Kundavarma from establishing a Buddhist Vihara at A.D. Perhaps, Avalokita image, is an attempt to identify Buddhists Lokeshwara with Matsyendranath. Natha legends say that Matsyendranatha learned yoga from Shiva. So, a Shaiva Kundavarma built one Vihara for Avalokiteswara, who was unified with Matsyendranath, a disciple of Shiva.

In the ancient period, perhaps Kadri was a Buddhist centre. It was a Chaitya and people worshipped Manjusri. In the second stage, it turned towards the Vajrayana sect. So, Shaiva system became very popular in this region. During this period the main deity Manjusri was expelled from the sanctum sanctorum, now it is kept left side traditionally it is called Narayana. In the sanctum sanctorum, the Lokeshwara image was installed and became the Natha centre. Later on, the Lokeshwara idol was expelled from the sanctum sanctorum and kept on the right side of the temple and Shiva Linga was kept in the sanctum sanctorum.

When all these changes occurred, one name used perpetually. This is Manjunatha. This is evidence for the welding of sanctum sanctorum Buddhism and Natha Sampradaya in Tulunadu. In Mahayana Manju (in Tibet it is called Manchu) is the name of Buddha. To this Manju, the Shiva symbol was added. When Kadrika Vihara became Shaiva centre Manjusri Buddha became Manjunatha Linga. From the word Manjugosha (Manjusri) Gosha was removed, and Natha was added. It became Manjunatha. Here Lord Shiva is called Lord Manjunath. If a new deity enters a shrine, then the commonly old name will be retained. In

Udupi, Chandranatha Basadi became Chandramauleswara temple. Ananthanath Basadi became Anantheswara temple. Likewise, Manjugosha became Manjunatha.

The Manjunatha temple, Kadri belongs to the Nagara style of structure. Kadri Jogi Mutt has one monk, he is selected in Trimbakeswara. He will be appointed as the head of Yogi Mutt for 12 years. Kadri Mutt is a very important Natha pilgrimage centre. All the North Indian followers of this tradition, once in their lifetime want to visit this place. It is a prominent Natha center in the Tulunadu as well as the whole of South India. The monk of Kadri Mutt has the responsibility of looking after the Natha Mutts of Karnataka. Kadri Mutt's monk has a title called 'Raja'.

In Tulunadu, the Kadri Mutt has a few upa mutts. They are Mundana Mutt, Manelu mutt, Yeyyadi Mutt (Mangalore), Vittala Mutt (Bantwala), Sode Mutt (Karkala), Udyavara Mutt (Manjeswara), Kota Halavari Mutt (Kundapura), Belluru Mutt (Kasargod). The Head of Kadri Mutt through a horse visits these upa mutts, through riding. The wealth of the mutts was under his discharge.

Conclusion

Kadri is a very interesting place. The scenic beauty of the Kadri hills, the presence of the pre-historic caves cut into the laterite mounds, and the historical and religious importance of the Manjunatha temple gave particular enchantment to this center. The Kadri Hill is situated as the biggest centre of the Natha Sampradaya.

Natha Sampradaya found its origin and subsequent progress with the help of many sects. One sect joining with another sect, one sect originating in the stomach of another sect, and one sect itself changing its principles are very common features in India. Natha Sampradaya too, had shown the same history about its origin and mixing of principles. In ancient it is very amazing that Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains enthusiastically worshipped Lord Shiva. During this period, the Vedic system and Vedas were opposed. In this confusing atmosphere, Natha Sampradaya originated.

Natha Sampradaya originated with the influence of Kapalika, Shaktha, Vajrayana, and Rasa Siddha (saints). It has its influence over the Sharan, Suffi, Dutta, Varakari, Mahanubhava, Nanak and Kabir Sects.

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