

“Gommaṭa Rāya”

by Dr S. Srikanta Sastri

The ancient sacred place of the Jainas in South India, sometimes called Jaina Badari, was the Kaṭavapra or Kalbappu giri, later called Sravana Belagola or Sramana Belagola and Sukla Tirtha in the Jaina scriptures. Even as early as the Mauryan age its fame had spread in Northern India and tradition asserts that the great emperor Chandragupta Maurya and his preceptor Bhadrabahu Srutakevali came and resided here for twelve years. Chandragupta is said to have passed away here and a cave at Sravanabelagola is named after him. Regarding the historicity of this episode, Fleet and others were skeptical. That the tradition is at least as old as the 7th century A. D. is proved by the Sravanabelagola inscriptions and literary works. Therefore there is nothing inherently improbable in the tradition and much stronger evidence must be produced before we can endorse Fleet's opinion that it was Ekangadhara Bhadrabahu and Guptigupta of about the first century A. D. who were associated with Sravanabelagola.

Through the succeeding early centuries of the Christian Era, Kaṭavapra was the sacred *Tirtha* attracting Jaina Sadhus of different Sakhas and different parts of India. The inscriptions of about 700 A. D. mention the names of several saints who ended their days here. The surnames Kirti, Sena, Deva, Nandi which distinguish the four sakhas of Mula Samgha, Konda Kundanvaya were of already prevalent from the beginning of the seventh century. Among the places mentioned in these early inscriptions are Ulikkal,

Agare, Kottara, Veguru, Alpura, Cittur, Adiyarenadu, Dakshina Madhura, Kittur, Malanur, Inungur, Velgola etc.

In the ninth century Jainism became a predominant religion in Karnataka under the patronage of the Rastrakutas and their subordinates the Gangas, and we have several examples of many orthodox Brahmin families accepting Jainism. The Brahmana families from Vengi in Andhra sought the patronage of the Rastrakutas and the Calukya feudatories and having accepted Jainism, rose to eminence in the field of Kannada literature. Pampa, Ponna and Vadi ghanghala Bhatta Munjalarya adorned the court of the Rastrakuta emperor Krsna III in the tenth century. The poet Ranna says that in that Kali age the greatest patrons of Jainism, in the order of increasing importance, were Butuga, Marula, Nolambantaka, Cavunda Raya, Samkara Ganda and Attimabbe. Among these Butuga is the Ganga chief Butuga II, the brother-in-law of the emperor Krsna III. His son was Marula, the son-in-law of Krsna III. Nolambantaka was the title of Marasimha who succeeded Marula on the Ganga throne and served the Rastrakutas to the end of his life. Chamunda Raya was the minister and the general of Marasimha and is the establisher of Bahubali or Gommata in Sravanabelagola. There are several legends connected with Camunda Raya, which are not historical but valuable as preserving a tradition worthy of careful investigation. The *Bahubali Carita* in Samskrt gives the following account of Camunda Raya.

*“Sri Desiya ganabdhi purna mrgabhrt chhri Simhanandi vratisripadambuja
yugma matta madhupah samyaktva cudamanih.*

Srimajjaina matabdhi vardhana sudhasutir mahimandale reje

Sri Gunabhusano budhanutah Sri Rajamallo nrpah. (st. 6)

Tasyamatya sikhamanihsakalavit samyaktva cudamanih

Bhavyambhojavijayanmanih sujanavandivrata cudamanih

Brahma ksatriya vaisyasuktisumanih kiryaugha muktamanih padanyasta

mahisa mastaka manih Camunda bhupo granih. (II)

*Bhasvad Desiganagresara rucira siddhantavin Nemichandra-sripadagres
sada shanṇavati dasa sata drvya bhū grama varyan datva Sri Gommatesotsava
savana nityarcanavaibhavaya.*

Srimac Camunda Rajo nijapura Mathuram Sanjāgama ksitisah. (61)

*Siddhantamṛta sagaram svamatimantha ksmabhrdalodya madhye
lebhe' bhista phalapradan api sada Designagresarah.*

*Srimad Gommata labdhi sara vilasat Trailokyasaramaraksmaja
srisuradhenucintitamanin Sri Nemicandro munih. (63)*

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*Kalyabde satchhatakhye vinuta Vibhava samvatsare masi Caitre Pancamyam
sukla pakse Dinamani divase Kumbha lagne suyoge Saubhagve masta nami
prakatita bhagane suprasastam cakara Srimac Camunda Rajo Belagula nagare
Gommatesappṛatistham. (64)*

*Purvam Jainamatagamabdhi vidhuacchri Nandi Samghe' bhavat sujānardhitapodhanah
kuvalayananda mavukha iva satsanghe bhūvi desa desanikare
srisuprasiddhe sati Sri Desiya gano dvitiyavilasannamna mithah
kathyate." (87).*

Among the illustrious pontiffs of Nandi Samgha and Desi Gana was Simhanandi. His successor (?) was Guna Bhusana the guru of Rajamalla. Rajamalla's minister was Camunda Raya who gave grants for the worship of Gommata, at the feet of Nemichandra and went back to his own capital (Southern) Mathura. Nemichandra of Desi gana wrote *Gommata Sara* and *Trailokya Sara*. In the Kali year 600, Vibhava, Caitra Suddha 5, Sunday, Kumbha lagna, Saubhagya yoga Masta (?) nakshatra, Camunda Raya established Gommata in Belagola nagara. He was the ornament of Brahma Ksatriya Vaisya (?).

The Same date is given in the Kannada works like Ananta Kavi's *Belgolada Gommatesvara Carita* etc. It is said that the ancient image of Bahubali at Paudanapura had become unapproachable, covered with anthills and guarded by Kukkuta Sarpas. Camunda Raya's mother had a vision in a dream that the deity resided on the (Vindhya) Indragiri and would

reveal himself when Camunda Raya shot an arrow from the top of the Chandragiri. Camunda is called the minister of Rajamalla, evidently the Ganga ruler; but he is given the status of a ruler of Mathura. Probably Madhura is not the Daksina Mathura, the centre once of Jainism and subsequently of Saivism but a Samskrt form of some place like Maddur in the Ganga country.

An inscription at Sravana Belagola (SB281) says that Camunda Raya belonged to the Brahmaksatra kula. Next his exploits are described:

*“Kalpantaksubhi tabdhibhisanabalam Patalamallanujam jetum Vajjvala
devamudyatabhujasy Endraksitisajnaya Patyussri Jagadekaviranrpater jai
tradvipasyograto asmin dantini dantavajradaji tadvi tkumbhakumbhopale
...Virapuronisadiniripuvyalamkuse ca tvayi
...syatkonama nagocarahratinrpo madbanakrsnoraga...grasasye...
rajasamare yah slaghita svamina.
...nirvyudham Ranaranga Singha parthivarne yenorjitam garjitam.
...Akrstam bhujavikramad abhilasan Gangadhirajasriyam Yenadau
Chaladanka Gangamrpatir vyarthabhilasikrtah Krtva vira kapalacasake
viradvisasionitam patum kautikanascakonapaganah purnabhilasikrtah.*

In Camundaraya's own Kannada work Adipuranna his exploits are thus catalogued.

*In Khedaga battle defeated Vajjvala and obtained the title “Samaradhurandhara”.
In Gonurbayal defeated Nolambas and obtained the title “Viramartanda”.
At Uccangi fort defeated Rajayita and obtained the title “Ranarangasinga”.
At Bageyur fort defeated Tribhuvanavira and obtained the title “Vairikulakaladanda”.
In Nrpakama's fort defeated Basa, Sivara, Kunaka and obtained the title “Bhujavikrama”.
In Nrpakama's fort killed Mudu Racayya of Gangas and obtained the title
“Samaraparasurama”.*

Title of Chaladanka Ganga for killing the enemy who had killed his younger brother Nagavarma; Pratipaksaraksasa; Samyaktvaratnkara; Saucabharana; Satyayudhistira; Subhata cudamani and Viramartanda. The

last title is also given to a Samskrt work of Camunda Raya named *Vira Martandi*. The *Caritrasara* is a work of Camunda Raya, giving a summary of *acara* as prescribed in *Tattvartha siddhanta* and *Mahapurana*. Here he has the title *Ranarangasimha* which he obtained by the capture of *Uccangi* from *rajayita*, and in the colophon he is called the disciple of *Jinasena bhattaraka* and a *maharaja*. *Winternitz (History of Samskrt Literature, Vol. II)* distinguishes him from the author of *Kannada Adipurana* but since *Camunda Raya* translated into *Kannada* the *Samskrt Mahapurana (Adi)* of *Jinasena* he may in his boyhood approached *Jinasena*; we know that *Camunda Raya* had many *gurus* and *Jinasena* is a fairly common name. His *gurus* as mentioned in the contemporary inscriptions and literature are:-

Cavunda Raya Purana-Candrikavata vasa Dharmasena.
Kumarasena of Mulgunda and Kopana.
Nagasena, Virasena, Candrasena,
Aryanandi,
Ajitasena, disciple of Nayasena Caritrasara-Jinasena.
Gommata Sara-Ajitasena, Aryasena, Indranandi, Kanakanandi,
Abhayanandi, Viranandi.

Ajitasena (of *Bankapura*) was also the *guru* of *Ganga Marasimha*, who died at his feet (*E.I., V., p. 176; S. P. 38*) *Marasimha* assisted *Krsna III* in the conquest of north India; destroyed *Allama*, crowned *Indra Raja*, defeated *Vajjvala*, *Sabara* chief *Naraga*, and *Calukya Rajaditya* of *Uccangi*. The *Karagada* inscription (*M.A.R. 1911. p. 37*) seems to place the capture of *Uccangi* from *Rajaditya* in 971 A. D. according to *Mr. R. Narasimhacarya*, *Camundaraya's Adipurana* mentioning this exploit, gives the date *Saka 900, Isvara, Phalguna, Suddha 8, Rohini, Monday*. The date is irregular, but *Dr. A. Venkatasubbaya* has equated it with *Monday, 27th January, 977 A. D.* The *tithi suddha 8* began at 12 hours and 13 minutes of the day; *Rohini* began at

15 hours and 55 minutes (by Gargas unequal space system), or 15 hours and 8 minutes according to Brahmagupta's unequal system. According to the equal space system Rohini was not at all current on Monday. The year Isvara is the northern luni-solar year. Ranna had received the patronage of Camundaraya and later of Attimabbe, the mother of Padevala Taila—both being mentioned in the Kalyani Calukya inscriptions. Ranna was born in Saumya (949 A.D.) and the Ajita Purana was completed on S. 915, Vijaya, Kartika, Nandisvara dina, 993 A.D. (Su. 8). In this work he mentions his early patron Camunda Raya and guru Ajitasena (who was the guru of Marasimha and Camunda Raya). His present patron was Attimabbe who visited Kukkuta Jinesvara (Gommata) perhaps already an old woman, before 993 A. D. By that date her son Padevala Taila Anna was governing some districts under the Calukyas and on 27th February 1007 A. D. Attimabbe made a grant to the Lokkigundi basadi constructed by her, when her son Padevala Taila was governing Masavadi (S. II. IX. 1, MER. 28 of 1926-27). Camunda Raya must have passed away by that time, and perhaps in his memory Ranna named his son, born in 989 A. D. as Raya. But Ranna named his daughter as Attimabbe, born in 27th November 993, A. D. when his benefactor Attimabbe was still alive and she was alive till 1007 A. D. The date of Camunda Rayapurana as verified by Dr. Venkatasubbayya is 977 A. D. In this work there is no specific mention of the pratistha of Gommata image by Camunda Raya. In the *Gommata Sara* we are told that after the erection of Gommata, he was called Gommata Raya also. It is therefore assumed that the pratistha must have occurred between 977 and 989 or 993 A. D.

In the previous Mastakabhisheka number of the *Jaina Antiquary* (February, March, 1940) I pointed out a reference to Sthavara Gommata Tirtha in an inscription of c. 930 A. D. It was suggested that the Gommata

image must in some shape or other have been in existence earlier. The Chikka Hanasoge inscription of Ereyappa (MAR. 1913-14 p. 28) says that Ereya was a disciple of Kelnele Deva.

Sthavara jangama tirtham, Bhavisi peldagolorade Gommata devar, Sthavara tirtham, Kalnele devar, bhupalayadologe jangama tirtham.

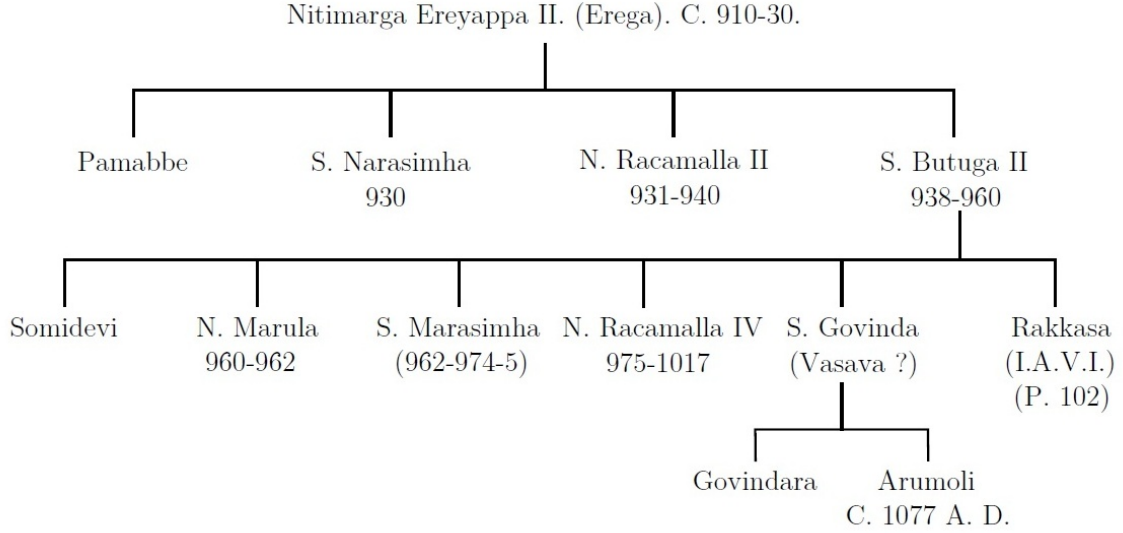
This Astopavasi Kalnele Deva set up a memorial for his guru Elacarya. E. C. IV, 28 mentions Sridhara of Desi gana, Pustaka gachha, whose disciple was Elacarya. MAR. 1913-14 p. 38 mentions a Sridhara of Hanasoge Vali, Desigana, Pustaka gachha and his disciple Nemicandra in c. 900 A. D. In the Surastha Gana (E. C., IV, Nagm. 19) we have Ananta Virya-Balacandra-Prabhacandra Kalnele Deva-Astopavasi, but he should be placed in about 1100 A. D. and moreover his gana was different and his guru was not Elacarya. Ganga Ereyappa is placed in about 930 A. D. The Ganga genealogy is shown on the top of page 62.

A. D. 959-60 is perhaps the latest date of Butuga and the emperor Krsna III lived up to 966-7 A. D. surviving his son-in-law Marula and crowning Marasimha as the ruler of Ganga Kingdom. Marasimha and Camunda Raya were assisting the Emperor Krsna III in his conquests and when Calukya usurpation took place Marasimha tried to restore Indra IV. Taila II established himself in the year Srimukha (973-974 A. D.) The Mulugunda inscription (E.I. VI, P. 251) mentions Pancala Deva, a feudatory of Marasimha as ruling Perdore in S. 897, Yuva, Bhadrpada Bahula 2, Brhaspativara, Canya Samkranti (Thursday, 26th August, 975 A. D.) He is called Calukya Pancanana. Perhaps this Pancaladeva was conquered by the husband of Attimabbe Nagadeva, a general of Iriya Bedanga and the father

of Padevala Taila Anniga, sometime before 993 A. D. (as mentioned by Ranna). The defeat of Pancala is also attributed to Ahavamalla Bhuttaya whose descendent lived in 1187 A. D. (*I. A.*, XII, P. 96). The latest verifiable date for Marasimha seems to be S. 896, Bhava, Phalguna, Su, Brhaspativara, corresponding to Thursday, 18th February 975 A. D. (*E.I.*, IV, p. 351 Hebbal).

The *Bhujabali Carita* and Kesava Varni's *Viyakhya* on the Gommata Sara say that Camunda was the amatya of Racamalla and that Nemicandra composed *Gommata Sara Panca Samgraha* for his benefit. This Racamalla may be the predecessor of Butuga II or the successor of Marasimha. If we assume that Gommata Sthvaratirtha was known in the days of Ereganga (Ereyappa) himself, it is probable that Camunda had become prominent as early as C. 930 A. D. and was the minister of Racamalla who was killed by Butuga II. He may not have taken an active part in the political affairs of Butuga II and Marula, but after their deaths, he seems to have assisted Marasimha Nolambantaka and his successor Racamalla IV. His career approximately lay between 810-30 A. D., which is not improbable.

The carving of the colossal image of Gommata may have involved fifteen or twenty years of work. Cavunda Raya seems to have established the image standing alone on the hill without a surrounding courtyard, since Gangaraja under Hoysala Visnuvardhana and his queen Santala constructed the surrounding pavilions and Savatigandhavarana Basadi. Perhaps Camundaraya Basadi may have been begun by Camundaraya himself. Ganga Raja figured in the inscriptions of about 1116-1117 A. D. For more than about 130 years the Gommata image had no *suttalaya*. Ganga Raja's son Bappa constructed Jinnathapura in c. 1140 A. D.



Regarding the traditional date Kali 600, Vibhava, Dr. Shama Sastri's date, Sunday, March 3, 1628 A. D. (March 1923) is impossible and (he himself admits) that on the night of March 3, at the time of Kumbha Lagna Krttika nakshatra and Viskambha yoga were current and not Mrgasira and Saubhagya Yoga (which occurred two days later, on March 5th). The image known as Kukkuta Jaineswara was visited by Attimabbe before 993 A. D. Whatever the Kali era used in these texts might be, assuming that at least the name of the year Vibhava is correct, we may try to identify it with same date before 993 A. D. As the Jaina works use both the northern and southern cycles, Vibhava (N) will be 908 or 967

A. D. or (S) or 968 A. D.

A. D. 907 Sunday, March 22.12 (Prabhava-Vibhava Nan S)

A. D. 908 Thursday, March 10.49 (Vibhava Nand S)

A. D. 967 Monday March 18.82 (Vibhava N)

A. D. 968 Saturday, March 7.18 (according to the Arya Siddhanta)
Vibhava S.

Assuming that the week-day is approximately correct, the choice seems to be between 907 A. D. or 967-968 A. D. for Caitra Suddha 5, Sunday; Kumbha lagna in the solar month of Mina will occur before dawn. Probably Abhijin muhurtha was another consideration. 967 A. D. does not suit the nakshatra or yoga, March 22, 907 A. D. appears to be the most suitable date, when on the morning of Monday at 3 A. M., Kumbalagna Mrgasira and Saubhagya yoga were current before dawn. There is also a tradition that Sri Rama himself had drawn the outline of Gommata on the rock with his arrow. This was being worshipped until Camunda Raya had it carved in the round. It may be that the original outline was known as Sthavara Gommata in about 906-7 A. D. and Camunda got it finished in about 967.8 A. D. "*Camunda Ravam madisidam*" may imply that he had it carved in the round.

Ereganga II (Ereyappa) was a great patron of Jainism also. *E. C.*, III Sr. 142 or C. 916 A. D. says that Permadi Ereyappa for the support of the Sramanas at Kalbappu tirtha, marked by the feet of Bhadrabahu, gave a village, Bilivakki to Cumara Sena Bhatara. Sr. 148 says that when Satya Vakya was ruling Sri Rajya in his fourth year...Margasira, Peretaleya divasa, a grant was made to Sri Vara Malisagara Pandita of Kalbappa tirtha. S.B. 150 says that Narasimha was the great minister of Ereganga and Narasimha's son-in-law's son (Nagavarma ?) died by sallekhana at Sravanabelagola. Regarding the Cikka Hanassoge inscription (March 1913-14, p. 28) some scholars on palaeographic grounds try to place it in the last quarter of the 10th century. But the characters are not so decisive and the expression in the inscription that "Erega was ruling the whole earth surrounded by the ocean," praised by the mandalikas cannot apply to any ruler but the Ganga chief Ereyappa at the beginning of the tenth century. There was no Ereyappa or Ereganga as the chief Ruler in the days of Butuga II or Marasimha.

Camunda Raya obtained the title of Gommata Raya by erecting the wonderful image of Gommata (Bhujabali) according to nemichandra's *Gommata Sara*. He had an younger brother Nagavarma and a sister Pullabbe whose *nisiddige* is found at Vijayamangalam in the Coimbatore District (M.E.R. 1905 597. According to Venkayya she was the younger sister of this Camunda Raya). He had a son Jinadeva who was also the disciple of Ajitasena and erected a basadi at Sravanabelagola (probably the Parsvantha or Camunda Raya Basadi).

Camunda Raya thus emerges into the light of history as a faithful minister, a loyal general, a profound scholar and a great patron of Jainism. His Kannada work *Adipurana* is the first prose composition in Kannada literature, with an assignable date. For the erection of the Gommata image his sculptors, seem to have employed a scale closely corresponding to the French metric scale. The proportions of the colossal image may not conform to the anatomical conventions of modern days or of some of the standard works on Silpa Sastra. The Mana Sara (Chs. 557 gives the proportions according to Navatala on the basis of Manangula or Matramgula or Dehalabhangula. According to Manangula the Jina images may be from 9 angulas, increasing by two upto 123; according to Matramgula from 7 increasing by two upto 113; or dehalabhdangula from 11 to 133. St. 36 prescribes Uttana Dasatala for the 24 Tirthamkaras. They should have no ornaments or cloth; the *samavaksa sthala* must have the Sri Vasta mark; two arms in *lamba hasta* two eyes, munda tara and sirsaka; if standing, 'Samamghri rju sthana' denoting yoga. The hands are "*mulordhvordhva mukham karari*"; with yaksas and yaksasvaris holding camaras at the sides and near the door, at the right and left Canda and Mahacanda. The *Pratima*

Athaivam akhilalokapalalalamo'pi vilaksanair jadavad Avadhuta vesa bhasa caritaih avilaksita bhagavatprabhavo yoginam sampradayavidhim anusiksayan svakalebaram jhasur atmanyatmanam asamvyavahitam anarthahtarabhavena' nviksa maṇa uparata' nuvrttir upararama...imam jagatim abhimanabhasena sankramamanah Konka Vankapata Kutukan Daksina Karnatakan desan yadichhayopagatah Kutukacalopavana asyakrtasmakabala unmada iva mukutamurdhajo' samvita eva vicacara.

(Sri Bhagavata, V. 6. 6-7)

Nemichandra in his Gommata Sara has thus eulogised Kukkuta Jina and Gommata Raya (Camunda Raya).

*Jam hi guna vissanta ganaharadevadi iddhipattanam
So Ajiyesena naho jassa guru jayau so Rayo.
Siddhantudaya tudaggaya nimmala vara Nemicanda karakaliya
Gunarayanabusanam buhi i vela bhara u bhavanayalam.
Gommata sangaha suttam Gommatasiba ruvari Gommata Jinoya
Gommata Raya vnimmipa Dakhina Kukkuta Jino jaya u.
Jena vinimmiya padima Vayanae savva dittasiddhi devehim
Savya paramohi jogihim dittham so Gommato jaya u.
Vajjayanam Jinabhavanam Isipabbharam suvanna kalasan tu
Tihuvana padimanikkam jena kayam jaya u so Rayo.
Jena vubhiyatam bhavarima jakorava kiritaggakirana jaladhoya
Siddhana suddhapaya so Ra o Gommata jaya u.
Gommata suttalihane Gommata Rayena ya kaya desi
So Ra o ciram kalam namena ya Viramattandi.*

(Gommata Sara. Karma Kanda, 966-972.)

Jiyat Trailokyanathasya Sasanam Jinasakanam.