

The Archaeological importance of Nanjanagud (Garalapuri) (12 July, 1971)

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Garalapuri (or Nanjangud) has a history going back to mythical puranic times and archaeologically we can trace two thousand years of history in the existing Srikanteswara Temple. In the early centuries of the Christian Era this region was under the Gangas of Talakad. The early Ganga Kings were not Jains but the followers of the Vedic religion as proved by their records which mention the celebration of many Vedic sacrifices. The Garbha Griha in the Srikanteswara temple resembles the specimens of Ganga Architecture remaining at Varuna (near Mysore) and Siva Ganga in the Bangalore District. The Siva Linga of Srikanteswara differs from the usual Chola type and closely resemble the Gangadhareswara linga at Siva Ganga.

In the tenth century the Cholas began to expand their empire and Talakad became a part of their kingdom. The Cholas were ardent Sivabhaktas but Raja Raja the Great has also constructed Vishnu Temples at Marehalli, Tadi Malingi etc. About the same time was composed the Periya Puranam which deals with the Nayanars. The stone images of the sixty-three Shaiva Saints found in the Nanjangud temple Verandha are probably of Chola workmanship. The corresponding metal images in front of them were installed by Kalale Nanjaraja in the Seventeenth century. The Pancha Cholalingas in the Pradakshina hall seem to be of Chola workman.

The Hoysalas succeeded the Cholas in this region. Hoysala Vishnuvardhana in 1116 A. D. captured Talakad from the Chola Governor under Kulottunga I (see Hoysala VastuSilpa). Vishnu Vardhana was neither a Jaina nor a Srivaishnava. He conquered the Todas of Nilagiri and when returning to his capital visited the Mahabala Tirtha (Mahabaleswara temple) on the Chamundi Hill near Mysore, and gave donations to it. In the Nanjangud temple the Narayanaswamy shrine has two dvarapalas Jaya and Vijaya. Behind figure of Jaya, there is a Hoysala Inscription. The Hoysalas were succeeded by the Vijayanagar Emperors. Sri Vidyaranya the founder of the Empire sent a Kashmir Saiva of the Pratyabhijina School as the Governor of Talakad. Mahava Mantri transformed the Raja Rajeswara shrine into the existing Vaidyeswara temple. He constructed a dam to the Kaveri called even today “MADHAVA MANTRI ANEKAT” The Salva and Tuluva Dynasties of Vijayanagara strengthened their power by consolidating the Ummattur,

Sivana Samudra, Kalale, Yelandur. Pallyagar under the Aravindu Dynasty of Vijayanagara all the local chiefs became the subordinates of the Emperors who shifted their capital after the battle of Talikota (Rakkasa Tangadi) to Renukonda, Chandragiri and Belur.

The Kalale chiefs and the Wodeyars of Mysore became powerful in this region. Kalale Vira Raj seems to have installed the Vikrama Raya Basava in the courtyard of the temple Dalavay Devaraja and his brother Karachuri Nanjaraja became the King-makers at Mysore and patronised Hydar. Nanjaraja installed the metal images of the sixty three puranas and possibly the Nataraja image. He wrote Gita Gangadhara (like Jayadeva's Gita Govinda) and many works in Kannada, Telugu, Sanskrit. Hydar and

Tippu were also making donations to the temple. The Pachelinga is assumed to be Pad-shah linga. The eye disease of the elephant of Tippu is said to have been cured by application of the Mrithika (sacred earth) of Srikanteswara and therefore this linga is said to have been installed. After Tippu Sultan, Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar ascended the throne. He was an ardent devotee and has established in the temple the Bhakta Vigrahas of himself and two wives. He composed a Kannada Sataka "SIRI NANJUNDA" and gave the precious crown 'SRIKANTA MUDI' to the God. Chamaraja, Nalvadi Krishna Raja and Jayachamaraja were greatly devoted to Srikanteswara. Now Mysore has gone the way of all ancient Kingdoms.

The Ganga, Cholas, the Hoysalas of Vijayanagar. The pallayagars, Sultans, the Wodeyars and has entered as Karnataka into the Ganarajya (Republic) of Bharata. May the Lord of the Ganas Srikanteswara, shower his blessings on the Rashtrapathi and the Rashtra.