

Shaiva Acharyas of Northern Madhya Pradesh

(A Socio-Political study on the basis of temples and Monasteries)

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Abstract

Ancient Hindu tradition has steps involved in worshipping gods. Different procedures are carried out to perform rituals. Every ritual is not compulsory as per the different preceptors. There are different ways to invoke God, thus there is an urgent need of a Guru or a teacher in Hinduism. Our sages in ancient time teach a true student about this mystic world. Every one cannot get a Guru by his own wish instead a Guru used to find a suitable student for performing such activities which involved a long process. A student must have patience in watching the act of worships because there are certain rituals which involve only action and no commentary. Thus a Guru is very important in ancient Hindu tradition. We find a long list of such Gurus in Our Vedic Literatures, Puranas and Epic lores. The inscriptions are also not silent on the activities of such Guru traditions. One such inscription is an inscription found from Rannod in Ashoknagar district. The present paper is based on a particular lineage of Guru tradition. We find the names of Kings also who became their disciples.

Keywords: Shaiva Acharyas, Sects, Kalchuris, Kacchhaphghats, Mattamayur, Pratiharas, Rannod, gurgi, Bilhari, Surwaya, Kadwaha, Tehri, Tantra, Amardak, Madhumatteya, Purander.

Introduction

Madhya Pradesh, the heart of India is very rich due to its religious and cultural heritage and history. Numerous monuments are providing ample evidences that once it was a seat of highest learning. Geographically most of the parts of Northern Madhya Pradesh (Gwalior, Morena, Bhind, Shivpuri, Guna districts) are hilly and mountainous due to northern offshoots of the Vindhyas encroaching upon it but leaving a small flat low lying tip at the north. In history these physical aspects are very well reflected in the numerous forts and fortresses such as Gwalior, Narwar, Chanderi, Karera etc. and the numerous stone built temples, materials for which were available ready at hand from the sand stone of rocky hills.

The period of our study was governed by Kalchuris, Gurjar-Pratiharas, Kachchhaphghats and Chandelas. A large number of beautiful temples and huge monasteries provide ample evidences that they had full support of royal houses. The royal Patronage was proved by the inscriptions found from Rannod¹, Chandrehe², Bilhari³ and Gurgi⁴. In the 8th Century A.D the entire central India was under that suzerainty of Gurjar-Pratiharas. they gradually extended their power till their chief Vatsa ruled from Gujarat to Bengal. About 800 A.D he was defeated and driven into Marwar by the rising power of the Rastrakuta clan. The Gurjara however, as we learn from the inscription of Gwalior and elsewhere again advanced and recovered their lost dominion as far east as Gwalior under Rambhadra.⁵

In 10th to 11th Century A.D central India was ruled by Kachchhaphghatas. they constructed temples in various places like Kadwaha, Thoban in Ashoknagar district, Terahi, Rannod and Surwaya in Shivpuri district and Mitawali, Padawali in Morena district. The Malwa region was centre of Shaivite activities during Rastrakutas and Pratiharas. In north eastern part of Malwa there is a branch of Shaiva - Acharayas which started from Arnipadra (Rannod in Shivpuri district) and which is said to have commanded the royal houses for a long period of time. They were credited to have founded a new sect of shaivism called the Mattamayur sect of shaivism.

It is mentioned in the Rannod Inscription the Shiva was pleased by the Brahma and he himself narrated the teachings of Shaiva doctrines to that person who has been performing the rituals with full devotion and faith to the Lord. From that person the doctrine was propagated far and wide. In this Brahman line of descent was an ascetic named Purander who was staying at Upendrapur and he was the founder of Mattamayur branch of shaivism. The king of Avanti, in desire to get initiated in Shaivite doctrines, reached Upendrapura and requested Purander to accompany him to his city. Purander accepted his offer and came to his city, Mattamayurpur where he initiated the King.⁶

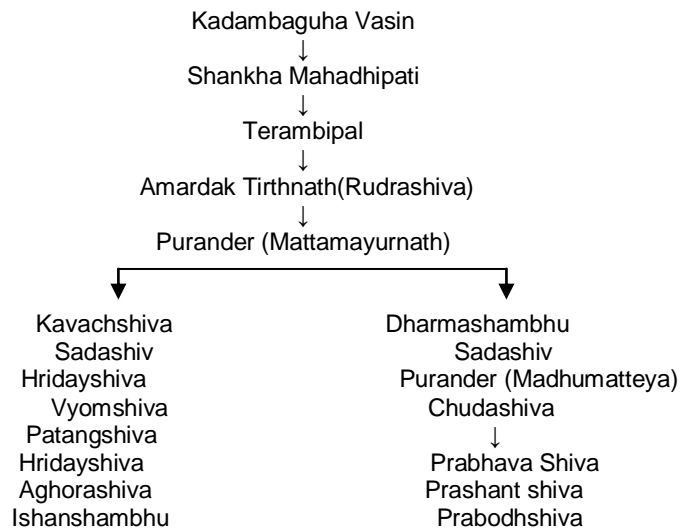
According to the available inscriptions, There were four predecessors of Purander- Acharya Kadambguhanivasi, Shankh Madikadhipati, Terambipal and Amardak Tirthnath. Keilhorn identified Kadambaguha and Terambi with Kadwaha and

Terrahi.⁷ It has been identified by the scholars that from Kadambaguhanivasi to Acharya Purander there were five acharyas residing in Guna -Shivpuri area of Malwa Madhya Pradesh.⁸

The three branches of Shaiva doctrine have been mentioned in various inscriptions. These are-

1. Amaradak
2. Mattamayur
3. Madhumatteya

The saints of Mattamayura sect are known to have founded temples, tanks and monasteries at various places, being highly honoured and favoured with magnificent gifts by certain Kalchuri rulers. On the basis of all inscripational evidence brought from Chandrehe inscription of Prabodhshiva, Bilhari inscription, Gurgi inscription of Kokkaldev, Rannod Inscription and Patangashambhu inscription in Gwalior museum, Dr.V.V.Mirashi⁹ made a lineage of these shaivaite Guru-shishya tradition as follows-



According to Shaiva doctrines, The Mattamayuras have three principles- Pati, Pashu and Pasha and used to perform four practices- Vidya(Knowledge), Kriya(Practice), Yoga (Physical Exercise) and Charcha (Discussion). The Kalchuri inscriptions throws a flood of light on their practices. They established Mathas and temples and tanks for their austere practices.

Rannod (Arnipadra or Ranipadra of inscriptions)

Rannod inscription itself belong to one such sage, called Vyomshiva, who is stated to have restored to Ranipadra and revived its past glory and also beautified the Matha there by building in its vicinity a magnificent- tank, a temple, a garden and shrines with images of Shiva, Uma, Natyeshwara and vinayak¹⁰.

As mentioned in Epigraphia Indica, Rannod has a magnificent tank, a monastery, gardens but shrines are demolished and no remains are found there. The most remarkable feature of Rannod is a stepped tank made of carved stone blocks. It belonged to Kachchhapghat period. Series of steps are provided in all directions to do down. Its square in

plan and is connected to a deep well from which water was filled in this tank by some advanced technique.





Square Water Tank - Rannod Water mechanism connected with the tank -Rannod

There is a monastery built in sandstone blocks without mortar and roofed with series of huge stone slabs of same material. Presently this building is locally known as Khokhai Math. The inscription of King Avantivarman¹¹ of 10th-11th century A.D is installed on the wall of this monastery. Monastery is a double story building provided with a central courtyard along with open corridors on all sides. Roof of the corridors is supported by plain square pillars with simple cushion brackets. These corridors are provided by small cells for the monks meditations. On the roof deep grooves have been provided to drain out the rain water. It is dateable to the medieval period.

The inscriptions tells us that the monastery was built by Purandar, a religious preceptor of King Avantivarman and was extended by Vyomshiva, a disciple of the fourth generation from the original builder. It is recorded that Vyomshiva also built the tank chopada which is still seen in front of the monastery., and around it a number of temples (Which no longer exist)¹²

Kadwaha (Kadambaguha of Inscription)

Kadwaha is a small village with the population of about five thousand and it is well connected by road. It was once a flourishing place is evident by the beautiful temples found in this area. These medieval temples are scattered in small groups on all its side and are fifteen in number. Shri Krishna Deva¹³ opined that a highly ornate temple style was developed with their principal seat at Gwalior and subsidiary centres at Kadwaha, Surwaya, Mahur & Terahi, Suhania, Padawali, Mitawali & Kherat all in Madhya Pradesh. These temples are generally raised on low plinths, porch with dwarf pillars which is open from three sides, Pillars are low height and decorated with Ghatapallava and topped with plain bracket. Presently most of the temples at Kadawaha are located around the cultivated land. Krishna Deva identified that these temples are constructed in three phases. In the earliest phase, the temples are simple and plain in terms of sculptural art, ground plan, elevation. In the second phase temples are comparatively decorated and sculptures are shown in panels on the exterior of the temple. mouldings of vedibandh are also increased. In the third phase there is only one temple known as shiv temple Talao group A which is decorated with mouldings of various designs and height of this temple has been increased considerably.

The monastery of Kadwaha is built of huge blocks of stone and large slabs being used for roofing purpose. The monastery was once attached to a temple of Shiva nearby which is still at the site nearly half buried in the ground. The monastery is a double story structure with an open space in the centre.



Monastery at Kadambaguha (modern Kadwaha)

There is a fragmented inscription the monastery¹⁴ mentioned in EI, the inscription mentions that a local king Gobhata came to hermitage of Dharamshiva, the successor of Purandar and apparently caused death of one of his monks. Dharmshiva armed himself with magical weapons, emulating the God Shiva in his destructive capacity, out of rage and defeated the whole army of the king. The inscription further mentions about a Pratihara King, Hariraja, who came to visit the monastery at Kadwaha to get initiated into the shaivite sect. The pontiff of the monastery probably Sadashiva, second in disciple succession after Purandar, first enquired about the king and his lineage. After the ascetic was satisfied about the king's Pratihara Lineage then only he initiated him into the sect.¹⁵

The monastery has long pillars in the inner area which is open to sky. Proper drainage system is also noticed inside the monastery. Bricks are also used to separate some portions of it but it is probable that it may have been used in later period.



A square Step well- Kadwaha

The waterbodies are found in the form of Well, tanks and Baolis and some of them are too deep. They are made of dressed sandstone but at the base level undressed stones were used. A small square tank with steps going down can be noticed here.

Terahi (Terambi of Inscriptions)

Village Terahi is five miles north east of Kadwaha. It attracts people due a tantric cult temple called Mohaj Mata mandir, which is unique in its style. Terahi also possess ruins of few temples and a monastery of Mattamayur sect. In the dcompound of Mohaj mata mandir there is an inscribed memorial pillar of a warrior killed in a battle which was fought in the neighbourhood on the banks of Madhumatt (modern Mahuar) river in 960VS(A.D903). The monastery is now enclosed in the ruins of a modern gadhi or fort in the village. Near the monastery there is also a shiva temple of about 11th century Fairly well preserved but partially concealed under the ground level.



Mahua- Monastery courtyard
Mahua- The ground floor of the monastery
Mahua (Madhumattaye or Mahuar)

It is situated on the banks of river Mahuar which was earlier called Madumati. It is one mile south of Terahi, there stand the ruins of three temples. One of these is a small Mahadev temple consisting of a shrine room and a porch. The spire has disappeared. There is some good vigorous arabesque work and figure sculptures on the exterior faces of the shrine and the sanskrit inscription on the front lintel of the porch which is undated though assignable to 7th century A.D. Almost contemporary to this there is another Mahadev temple which is in good state of preservation.



Surwaya (Saraswati Pattana)^{1b}

It has three surviving temples and a huge monastery. The structure is provided with a small open court surrounded by corridors and with a large hall and a number of rooms. Part of it is two storied. Huge slabs of stone have been used for roofing purpose and being meant for residential purpose. It has a same structure as in Rannod and Kadwaha monasteries. The stone cut ventilations used in all these monasteries are of same fashion. This monastery has a Yantra diagram on the floor of a room which was used for some group worship by the ascetics of this monastery.



Yantra on the floor of Surwaya monastery
An angular air passage in the monastery -
Surwaya

This monastery has a well inside it and proper water outlet is also made to throw the water out. By the side of the monastery are a group of temples built on a paved plinth. The doorway of the shrines bear very rich carvings and figure sculptures. The ceiling of the porch is beautifully carved and similar in fashion as in Kadwaha temples. There is a rectangular baoli in front of the temple no03 which is quite deep and made of dressed sand stone blocks. Steps are made downwards to approach to the water at the southern side. There is a slab depicting Sheshsya Vishnu with Lakshmi sitting near his feet.

Objective of the Study

To find out the various cult and practices in ancient Indian worship traditions, the importance of Guru lineage.

Conclusion

By studying these monasteries following conclusions are drawn

1. Round the monasteries, the Garhis are constructed in later period. This proved the fact that due to Muslim invasion in these areas the rulers of this area protected the monasteries and the temples by hiding them inside a fortification. So much of royal patronage is seen by this amazing fact.
2. Most of the temples are half buried or partially buried in the ground. The Muslim rulers tried to destroy the images installed in the temples and on the outer walls of the temple. To protect them from these damages the temples are covered by mud as much as they could. This was a period when the Hindu sages were saving their culture with the help of royal support and the support of the masses. Most of the monasteries are made in deep forests which are not freely visible to the unknown persons. Thus all the monasteries are made in such a fashion that no wild animal could enter into it and they may have enough of sunlight and open areas inside the monasteries. They are often double storied with a open courtyard.
3. Muslim mosques are also constructed in the vicinity of these monasteries.. Many such

monasteries are still buried in the ground which need to be excavated as early as possible.

4. The Madhya Pradesh Government should make efforts to make links of these ancient sites and develop the tourist points to generate revenue form our ancient developed culture and civilization.

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