

CHAPTER ELEVEN,

The rise of the Lingayat Religion and its founder

Now we come to the most knotty and intricate question of determining the time that Lingayatism was founded and the Prophet that founded it. The question has not been tried till now historically; and certain things have been taken for granted, which have made confusion worse confounded. The things taken for granted are based on some hollow traditions handed down from generation to generation, so that they have become a kind of gospel truth, too sacrosanct to be touched. But if truth traced historically is to be respected more than tradition which is often fictitious and baseless, it is necessary to determine the truth historically. We are aware that we tread on a dangerous ground, indeed, but truth impels us to attempt the task unmindful of dangers and difficulties.

The things handed down traditionally are (1) that the Lingayat religion was founded long ago by the five great prophets (पंचाचार्यः), namely, Revanārādhya or Revanasiddha, Marulārādhya or Marulashiddha, Ekorāmārādhya, Panditārādhya, and Vishvārādhya (2) that they rose out of the five great स्थावरलिंगs of Kolliṇpāki (Balehalli or Balehounur), Mysore state, Ujjani, Bellary district, Himavat Kedāar, Shrīshail Mallikarjuna, and Kashi or

Benares, under different names in different yugas or ages as follows:

सद्योजातश्च प्रथमो वामदेवो द्वितीयकः ।

अधोरश्च तृतीयस्तु तत्पुरुषश्चतुर्थकः । ।

ईशानः पंचमश्चेति मुखानि मम सर्वशः ।

तान्यानलानि गोत्राणि वेदोक्तानि न संशयः । ।

सद्योजातो भवेद्भूमिर्वामदेवस्तथा जलम् ।

अधोरश्चाग्निरित्युक्तस्तत्पुरुषो वायुरुच्यते । ।

ईशानो गगनाकारः पंचव्रह्ममयं जगत् । ।

नंदी भृंगी तथा वीरो वृषभः स्कंद एव च ।

मत्स्वरूपाः समुत्पन्नाः पंचगोत्राधिकारिणः । ।

दारुकः शंकुकर्णश्च रेणुको धेनुकर्णकः ।

विश्वकर्णश्च पंचैते पंचगोत्रसमुद्भवाः । ।

एतेषां प्रतिनामानि युगभेदेन सर्वशः ।

एकाक्षरो द्विवक्त्रश्च त्रिवक्त्रश्चतुराननः । ।

पंचवक्त्रश्च त्रेतायां पंचनामानि सर्वशः । ।

द्वापरे दारुकश्चेति शंकुकर्णो द्वितीयकः । ।

रेणुकस्तु तृतीयः स्यान्धेनुकर्णश्चतुर्थकः ।

विश्वकर्णश्च पंचैते पंच नामानि सर्वशः । ।

मरूदश्चैकरामश्च रेणुकः पंडितस्तथा ।

विश्वाराध्य इति प्रोक्ताः कलौ पंचार्यनायकाः । ।

(see पंचाचार्यपंचमोत्पत्तिप्रकरणम्)

The above is from सुप्रबोधगम, which professes to trace the origin of the Acharyas to the five faces of परमशिव. But the स्वायंभुवागम tells the origin of the Acharyas as follows:-

प्रवक्ष्यामि भवि श्च शृणु तज्जननकमम् ।

श्रीमद्वेवणसिद्धस्य को ल्लिपाकिपुरोत्तमे । ।

सोमेशलिंगाज्जननमावासः कदलीपुरे ।

तद्वन्मरूदसिद्धस्य वटक्षेत्रे महत्तरे । ।

सिद्धेशलिगजननं स्थानमुज्जयनीपुरे ।
 सुधाकुंडाख्यसुक्षेत्रे मल्लिकार्जनलिंगतः । ।
 जननं पंडितार्यस्य निवासः श्रीगिरौ शिवे ।
 द्राक्षारामारव्यसुक्षेत्रे रामनाथारव्यलिंगतः । ।
 एकोरामस्य जननमावासस्तु हिमालये ।
 काश्यां विश्वेशलिंगाच्च विश्वाराध्यास्य संभवः । ।
 स्थानं त्रीकाशिकाक्षेत्रे श्रुणु पार्वती सादरम् ।
 एते युगचतुष्के तु पंचाराध्या यथाविधि । ।
 मम लिंगमुखोद्भूता लोकविश्रुतकीर्तयः । ।

It can be easily seen how the two Agamas differ and contradict; and the contradiction cannot be removed, unless we suppose that the five स्थावरलिंग (we cannot understand why and how only those) represent the five faces of Shiva. Now we have to see from the data available at present whether and how far this is the truth; and if it does not stand historically, we must determine who founded it and when.

The first and a very authoritative work in Sanskrit on Lingayatism is सिद्धांतशिखामणि. This is the first work, because it does not refer to any work except * शिवधर्मोत्तर and शिवरहस्य and the Agamas; while this work has been referred to and quoted as an authority by almost all the Sanskrit books now available. It professes to narrate the dialogue between Renukāchārya or Revansiddha, the prophet, and Agastya, to whom the prophet reveals a part of षट्स्थल philosophy. It is in verses of simple अनुष्टुप् metre except those in different metres coming at the end of every chapter (परिच्छेद). Most of the verses have notes prefixed to them, explanatory of the subject matter

* The two works are on Shaivism in general.

of the verses. The author is Shivayogi (शिवयोगीत्यभिधानवान् कश्चिन्माहेश्वरः) in the first chapter the author gives some account of the line of Achāryas to which he belongs. In chapters II-IV he states how Veerashaiva or Lingayat religion came to be preached and promulgated in the world. And in the remaining chapters the 101 स्थल or steps, that are but the elaboration of षट्स्थल, are explained. It is said that Renuka, one of the Pramathas or divine attendants of Shiva once committed an indiscretion of violating the order of precedence in his eagerness to receive the प्रसाद of Shiva in the divine assembly in Kailasa. Shiva did not like the precedence of Dāruka being superseded by Renuka. He, therefore, cursed Renuka that he be born as a human being in the world. Renuka repented and begged forgiveness of Shiva, who thereon relented and modified the curse that Renuka might regain his position in the divine order of the प्रमथ after preaching and promulgating the Veerashaiva faith. Thereafter Renuka is said to have risen out of the Linga (स्थावरलिंग) at Kollipaki in Telangana or Telgu country, as recorded in the verse-

अथ त्रिलिंगविषये कोल्लिपिकायभिधे पुरे ।
 सोमेश्वरमहालिंगात्प्रादुरासीत् रेणकः । ।

Kollipaki is the modern Balehonnur, Mysore State, and cannot be otherwise as it is a well known pontifical seat or Math of Renukāchārya or Revanārādyā and his successors. Again this Renukāchārya is identical with Revanasiddha as will be evident from the following:-

उवाच शान्तया वाचा रेवणः सिद्धशेखरः IV-38.
 Thus Renukāchārya, Revansiddha, and Revanārādyā are one and the same. If the five Achāryas were the founders of the

religion, is it not strange that the book should mention Renuka or Revanasiddha alone as having descended to the earth and founded the religion to the exclusion of other Achāryās? This is quite understandable.

Moreover the attempts of the author at making Renuka or Revana- siddha as the founder of the religion are quite ill-disguised and unsuccessful; because the Renuka of the book is none other than the author himself, as may be unmistakably known from the colophons subjoined to every chapter except the † first. They are-

- (1) इति श्रीसिद्धांतशिखामणौ रेणुकदारूकावतरणं नाम द्वितीयः परिच्छेदः ।
- (2) इति श्रीसिद्धांतशिखामणौ रेणुकस्य भूलोकावगतिर्नाम तृतीयः परिच्छेदः ।
- (3) इति श्रीसिद्धांतशिखामणौ रेणुकागस्त्यदर्शनप्रसंगो नाम चतुर्थः परिच्छेदः ।
- (4) इति श्रीवीरशैवधर्मनिर्णये सिद्धांतशिखामणौ भक्तस्थले पिंडज्ञानसंसारहेयस्थलप्रसंगो नाम पंचमः परिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।
- (5) इति श्रीवीरशैवधर्मनिर्णये सिद्धांतशिखामणौ भक्तस्थले गुरुकारुण्यलिंगधारणप्रसंगो षष्ठ्यपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।
- (6) इति श्रीषट्स्थलब्रह्मिणा शिवयोगिनाम्ना प्रणीते वीरशैवधर्मनिर्णये सिद्धांतशिखामणौ भक्तस्थले विभूतिरूपाक्षधारणप्रसंगो नाम सप्तमपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।
- (7) इति षट्स्थलब्रह्मिणा शिवयोगिनाम्ना माहेश्वरेण विरचिते सिद्धांतशिखामणौ भक्तस्थले पंचाक्षरीजप प्रसंगो नाम अष्टमपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।
- (8) इति श्रीषट्स्थलब्रह्मिणा शिवयोगिनाम्ना रेणुकाचार्येण विरचिते सिद्धांतशिखामणौ माहेश्वरस्य नवविधस्थलप्रसंगो नवमपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।
- (9) इति षट्स्थलब्रह्मिणा शिवयोगिनाम्ना रेणुकाचार्येण प्रणीते सिद्धांतशिखामणौ माहेश्वरस्य नवविधस्थलप्रसंगो नाम दशमपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।

† The Sholapur edition of the book has no colophon at the end of the first chapter. But the manuscript copy in the Madras Oriental Library has the colophon as follows :- इति श्रीवीरशैवधर्मनिर्णये रेणुकागस्त्यसंवादे सिद्धांतशिखामणौ अनुक्रमणिकाप्रसंगो नाम प्रथमः परिच्छेदः ।

- (10) इति षट्स्थलब्रह्मिणा शिवयोगिनाम्ना रेणुकाचार्येण प्रणीते सिद्धांतशिखामणौ प्रसादिनः सप्तविधस्थल प्रसंगो नामैकादशीयपरिच्छेदः समाप्तः ।

In the same way all the remaining chapters have identical colophons except in respect of the subject-matter treated in a chapter. It will be seen from the colophons how gradually the author goes on telling something more and more about himself and from chapters IX-XXI he identifies himself with Renuka. It is irrefutable and makes it quite evident that Renuka was none other than the author himself. Very funnily the author takes himself back to the times of Vibhishana, the brother of the Dravidian king, Rāvana. For it is said in the last chapter that Renuka goes on a tour to Lanka and instals three crores of Lingas there. The relevant verses of the event are :-

रावणस्तु मम भ्राता माहेश्वरशखामणिः ।

अदृष्टशत्रुसंबन्धं शसास हि जगतत्रयम् ।। 20 ।।

स तु रामशराविद्धः कंठस्खलितजीवितः ।

अवशिष्टं समालोक्य मामवादीत्सुदुःखितः ।। 23 ।।

विभीषण विशेषज्ञ महाबुद्धे सुधार्मिक ।

अवशिष्टोऽसि वंशस्य रक्षां भाग्यगौरवात् ।। 24 ।।

नवकं लिंगकोटीनां प्रतिष्ठाप्यमिह स्थले ।

इति संकल्पितं पूर्वं मया तदवशिष्यते ।। 26 ।।

कोटिषट्कं तु लिंगानां मया साधु प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

कोटित्रयं तु लिंगानां स्थापनीयमतस्त्वया ।। 26 ।।

हति तस्य वचःश्रुत्वा दीनबुद्धेर्मरिष्यतः ।

तथा साधु करोमीति प्रतिज्ञातं मया तदा ।। 28 ।।

युगपच्छिवलिंगानां कोवित्रयमनुत्तमम् ।

प्रतिष्ठाप्यं यथाशास्त्रदिति मे निश्चयोऽभवत् ।। 29 ।।

लिंगकोटित्रयस्येह युगपत्स्थापनाविधौ ।

अविदन्नेकमाचार्यमहमेवमेवमवस्थितः ।। 130 ।।

शिवशास्त्रविशेषज्ञः शिवज्ञाननिधिर्भवान् ।

आचार्यभावमासाद्य मम पूरय वाञ्छितम् ।। 131 ।।

तस्येति वचनं श्रुत्वा राक्षसेन्द्रस्य धीमतः ।

तथेति प्रतिशुश्राव सर्वज्ञो गणनायकः ।। 132 ।।

तत्र संतुष्टचित्तस्य पौलस्त्यस्येष्टसिद्धये ।

कोटित्रयं तु लिंगानां यथाशास्त्रं यथाविधि ।

त्रिलोक्याचार्यरूपेण स्थापितं तेन तत्क्षणे ।। 133 ।।

It is very difficult to understand how this event of the first magnitude has not been recorded in the Rāmāyana, if it were a fact, specially when it is seen that very minor incidents of Vibhīshana's life have been recorded therein. It is strange that this event should be omitted in that great work. It is quite obvious that the author wants to show that Veerashaivism is very ancient, being founded during the times of Vibhīshana by Renuka in ancient times. But as shown above, that Renukāchārya was the author himself; and he makes the ill-disguised attempt at pushing back the religion to pre-historic times under the idea that antiquity of a religion was the proof of its being the best. Besides that, the author makes an attempt at showing how Brahmā repeatedly failed to bring into existence the universe, how he requested Shiva to help him in the work of creation entrusted to him, how Shiva asked the प्रमथ्स to help Brahmā in his work, and how he did his work successfully with their help. All this is evidently an attempt to show that the creation took place in a particular way and was distinct from, though similar to, that described by other Hindu religious sects. Thus the philosophy of creation is shown to be peculiar to Veerashaivism in order to mark it off from other religions of India. It seems that all this attempt is due to the author's conviction that old alone was gold and the later a religion the inferior it would be.

Now the question arises who this Shivayogi was and when he lived. The answer to the question is furnished by the author himself. In chapter I he gives some information about the line of Achāryas to which he belonged. In the first prefatory note in the beginning of the work the author says that he belonged to the order of the Achāryas of the name of Siddharāma that was born (to his parents) by the favour of Revanasiddha, who, first known as Renuka, taught the principles of Veerashaivism to the pot-born sage (Agastya) after the Kali age set in, in words- अत्र कलिकालप्रवेशानंतरं लोकहितार्थं रेणुकगणेश्वर इति प्रसिद्धः रेवणसिद्धेश्वरः कुंभसंभवाय वीरशैवाशास्त्रमुपदेष्टवान् । तदनंतरं रेवणसिद्धेश्वरदृष्टिमागसंभूतसिद्धरामेश्वरसंप्रदायप्रसिद्धः सकलनिगमागमपारगः शिवयोगीश्वर इत्यभिधानवान् कश्चिन्माहेश्वरः etc. etc. This information well tallies with the Pauranik account that Siddharāma of Sonnalige or Sonnalapur (modern Sholapur) was born to his parents by the blessings of Revanārādhya or Revanasiddha. The following extracts will make it clear :-

ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊರಡಿಯ ಮುದ್ದುಗೌಡನರ್ಧಾಂಗಿಯೊಳು |

ಸಲ್ಲಲಿತ ಸುಗ್ಗವೈಯೆಂಬ ಕಾರಣಿಕೆಯೊಳು |

ಕಾರಣಿಕ ಸಿದ್ಧನು ದಯಸುವನೊಬ್ಬಂ ಕೇಳ್.

Revanashiddharagale, chapter 5, page 41.

"ಸೊನ್ನಲಾಪುರಿಗೆ ಬಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಚಾಮಲದೇವಿ |

ಯನ್ನೋಡಿ ಶಿವಸಿದ್ಧನು ದಯಪ್ರದನರುಹಿ" ದರು ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧರು.

Bommarasa's Revanashiddha Purana.

'ಚಾಮಲವೈಗೆಯೊಲಿದು ಸೊನ್ನಲಾಪುರ ಸಿದ್ಧ |

ರಾಮನು ದಯವನರುಹಿ' ದನು.

Gururaja-charitre.

Hence the Siddharāma referred to in the book is the Siddharāma of the Puranas. He was the disciple of Allamprabhu, a great Veerashaiva Shivayogi, and went over with him to Basaveshwar at Kalyāna. Thus Shivayogi, the author of Siddhāntshikhāmani was post-Basava. Moreover the author refers directly to Basaveshvara in the prefatory note (IX-36), where it is said- वीरभद्रचारवसवाचारं सूचयन् भक्ताचारं प्रतिपादयति. It is, therefore, conclusive that the author lived after Basaveshvara. It would be wrong to think that the prefatory notes are by the commentator. That they are by the author himself can be well established by internal evidence. All the notes must either be by the author or by the commentator. It is not only unreasonable but ridiculous to think that some notes should be by the author and some by the commentator. The note no.1 in the beginning in which the author gives some account of himself, is undoubtedly by the author, as is customary with authors in general. This has been made doubly sure by the reference made to it by the note (V-1) where it is said :-

एवमगस्त्यविज्ञापनावक्तृश्रवणानंतरं तच्छास्त्रप्रचाराथमेव भूलोकमाधिगतः शिवगणाधीशः श्रीरेणुकार्यः क्षणमवंचलमनाः दयया प्रारंभणीयशिवशास्त्रपरिसमाप्तिप्रतिबंधकीभूतविघ्न देवतासंघसमाधानशक्तशिवध्यानरूपमंगल मनसि विधाय तस्योत्तसाहेति शिवयोगी निरूपयतीति अवतारिकयैव अस्यार्थस्य स्फुटत्वेऽपि योजनाद्वारेण ईषाद्विशेषः सूच्यते. If this note were by the commentator the reference to the author's previous statement in the introductory note would be meaningless and would stultify the position or assumption that the notes are by the commentator. Nor is it possible or reasonable to think that the first alone is by the author and the rest by the commentator. Such a thing is quite absurd and unimaginable.

The author invariably speaks of himself in the third person; and all references to the author in the third person fit in well with the treatment of the subject-matter in the book. In a note to IV-50, however, the author refers to himself directly in the first person in words "कोऽहमित्याकांक्षायामाह." This unconscious slip on the part of the author makes it clear that the references to the author in the third person are by himself to himself and not by the commentator. That the notes are by the author will also be plain from the fact that a note is affixed to VIII-49. If it were by the commentator he could have included in the commentary (which is merely 'स्पष्ट्.')

all the statement contained in the note. But as it is not so done it is sure that the commentator has nothing to do with notes. Nor is it likely that the commentator should subjoin a note instead of commenting on the verse. It is unusual no doubt that a note should be affixed; but evidently the author gives his final explanation of पंचाक्षरीमंत्रजप and concludes the chapter with the note. From all the foregoing it may be concluded that (1) Renuka, Revanasiddha, and Shivayogi are one and the same. (2) and that Shivayogi lived after Basaveshvara.

In the first chapter the author states that there were three Achāryas before him in the line. Thus Shivayogi was the fourth in the line founded or named after Siddharāma (सिद्धारामेश्वरसंप्रदाय.) Calculating at 30 or 35 years for each Achārya that preceded the author we may well hold that about a hundred years must have passed before the author came to succeed, i. e., the author must have lived about the middle of the 13th century A. D. * The same conclusion has been arrived at by Rao-Saheb

* Introduction to Shrikarbhāshya, pp. 54, 55.

Hayavadanarao, Bangalore, who bases his conclusion on the data furnished by a different copy of सिद्धांतशिखामणि. Anyway it is clear that Shivayogi, the author, is post-Basava.

After settling the date of Shivayogi we have to face the worst paradox, that is sure to confound readers most and that arises from our conclusion. The paradox would be if Shivayogi is identical with Revanasiddha, he cannot be a successor of Siddharāmeshvar, who, as is professed, was born from the favour of Revanasiddha, i. e., he preceded Siddharāmeshvara; and if he preceded Siddharāmeshvara, he cannot be his successor, as stated in the work. Such is the absurdity in which we are landed by the author's account, and it needs to be cleared up. Hence Revanasiddha, that blessed the parents of Siddharāma, must be a person different from the Revana-siddha with whom the author identifies himself. This is exactly the position and cannot but be so. The thing, as furnished by various books, is that there was one Revanasiddha, an older or senior contemporary of Basaveshvara. He was a Shaiva and had a son named Rudramuni who was asked by his father to join the band of the saints (sharanas) that followed Basava, Channabasava and Siddharāma. Rudramuni joined them. But unfortunately the catastrophe, that fell upon Basava and his followers in their fight with Bijjala, whose prime minister Basava was, broke the band of neo-religionists and dispersed them. As a result of the catastrophe almost all the members of the band ran pellmell in different directions and either died or lived in obscurity. Before the dispersal took place, Rudramuni was asked by Channabasava to go and work for the spread of their new religion. Rudramuni did as much as he could and had a Shishya or disciple named Muktimuni. Muktimuni

had a disciple called Digambar muktimuni, who founded a Math at Rambhāpuri; and Balehalli, the exact Kanarese translation of Rambhāpuri, is the present Balehonnur. And the Math founded by him is the present pontifical seat of Reva nārādhyā, considered to be an avatār of Renukachārya. Digambarmuktimuni, the founder of the Math, named it after Revanasiddha, the father of Rudramuni, out of respect for him, as he (Revanasiddha) was a great Shivayogi, and out of humility, as generally great men do out of humility and out of respect for their predecessors. Such in short is the history of the Math of Revanasiddha. We shall note in more detail the history presently. But the time that Shivayogi came to succeed to the line of Siddharāmeshvara this Math must have attained eminence and earned reputation in the cause of the religion, the Lingayatism. Shivayogi then must have thought fit to father the religion upon him (Revanasiddheshwar) after whom the Math was named. In his eagerness to make the religion very ancient, as already remarked, Shivayogi has attempted to make Revanasiddha an avatār of Renuka and takes him back to the times of Vibhīshana. But he has failed so badly in his attempts, as has been proved irrefutably from the internal evidence given by the book itself. Anyhow the example furnished by Shivayogi was imitated by his successors, who conveniently started the tradition of the remaining Achāryas also being the founders of religion, gradually as their Maths came to be founded in due course and attained reputation in the cause of the religion. But history does not corroborate this. On the contrary it tells a different tale altogether, which is going to be noted presently. Before we proceed to determine the prophet that founded the religion we like to examine the theory of five Achāryas being the founders of the religion in more detail collectively and severally in order to explode the myth of their being the founders.

In the first place Siddhānta Shikhāmani is the only book, in which Revanasiddha, an avatāra of Renuka, has been stated to have preached and promulgated the religion. In no other Sanskrit book he has been described as the founder of the religion, much less the other Achāryas. Even in Panditarādhyacharitra, a big Sanskrit work by Gururāja of 15th century A. D., Panditarādhyā the hero of the book (one of the five Achāryas) is not described as the founder of the religion. There is no mention of other Achāryas. This also is significant and shows that the founding of the religion by the five Achāryas, collectively or severally is not at all a fact. While in that very book Allamaprabhu, Basava, Channabasava, and some other sharanas of Kalyāna have been praised. Why should it be so if Panditarādhyā and other Achāryas were the founders? The reason is obvious that it is not so. The following slokas will make this plain :-

श्रीलिंगरूपं वेदानां कर्तारं चिक्रियात्मकं ।
जगत्पतिं चन्नमल्लिकार्जुनं प्रणमाम्यहम् ।
प्राणलिंगैक्यविज्ञानरहस्यं येन दर्शितम् ।
जगद्धितार्थं तस्मै मत्प्रभवे प्रभवे नमः ॥ 14 ॥
कृपया शिवसद्भक्तिर्भुवि येन प्रकाशिता ।
द्वितीयशंभुं भक्त्या तं नमामि बसवेश्वरम् ॥ 15 ॥
दर्शितं षट्स्थलज्ञानं शिवत्वप्रतिपादकं ।
येन तस्मै नमश्चन्नमसवाय करोम्यहम् ॥ 16 ॥
बसवेशयापि ददौ यः प्राणभक्तिवैभवाम् ।
तं माचिदेवं महितं शतकृत्वो नमाम्यहम् ॥ 10 ॥
स्वर्णं कृत्वा काष्ठभारं भक्तवृन्दाय यो ददौ ।
तस्मै मोक्षिगेमाराय साक्षान्मारारये नमः ॥ 11 ॥
अवादयच्छिवं साक्षिवचनं यः स भक्तिमतः ।
आश्रिताभयदायास्मै किन्नरब्रह्मणे नमः ॥ 13 ॥

There is no mention of the four Achāryas, much less their being the founders.

If we should believe that Renuka taught Agastya the doctrines of Veerashaivism, we should also believe Basavapurāna professed to have been written by Vyāsa. In that Purana it is stated that Agastya goes to Shiva's son Skanda and requests him to tell the story of a great Shivabhakta in the following words.

अगस्त्यः सर्वसिद्धांतकोविदः करुणानिधिः ।

द्रष्टुं तारकहतारं कुमारचलमाययौ । ।

भक्ता महीतले सन्ति हिमवत्पुत्रिकात्मज ।

सर्वेष्वेतेषु भक्तः कोनु महत्तरः । ।

लिंगव्रतधरः कोनु लिंगार्चने रतः ।

एवंविधगुणं लोके शिवभक्तं दृढव्रतं ।

वक्तुमर्हसि देवेश मयाद्य त्वं पदानन । ।

Skanda then goes on to relate the life of Basava in the Purana. If we have to believe this we shall have to believe that Basava existed before अगस्त्य, which would be absurd. Similarly we shall have to believe Prabhulingalīlā, which is a part of भविष्यपुराण written by Vyāsa. We shall have to consider that Allamaprabhu was an ancient person but we cannot do so because Allama and Basava are 12th century person.

At the same time we fail to understand the motive of the enthusiasts that strive to make Revanasiddha a mythical figure and father upon him and the other Achāryas the religion. It is a wrong notion if it be their motive, that the excellence of a religion depends upon the founder being a mythical or an ancient figure.

If it were so Jainism and Buddhism would not be important or intrinsically valuable, their founders being historic persons. Zoroaster, the founder of the Parsee religion (Zoroastrianism), though ancient is not a mythical person. Does it mean that Zoroastrianism has no merit in it? Sikhism, founded by Guru Nānak only five centuries ago, does not lose its importance or worth simply because it has been founded so late. So also the Brahmo Samaja and the Arya Samaja would not be much worth, being founded only during the last century, if the idea of our fanatical enthusiasts were the criterion. But nothing depends on whether a religion is founded early or late or by this person or that person. Everything depends upon the principles of a religion that impart intrinsic value or worth to the religion. The founder becomes great because of the principles that he teaches; and not because he is ancient or Pauranik. Thus if the Lingayat religion is of value, it is not so, because it is founded by the Achāryas or Basava or any other person, but because it has sound principles that are a beacon light to the bound souls, guiding them on the road to eternal happiness.

Apart from historial information, there are two more considerations that do not allow us to push back the Lingayat religion to ancient times. (1) Kashmere Shivādvaita, on which the Shaktivishishtādvaita of the Lingayat religion is based with an improved appropriate name, did not exist before ninth century, (2) There is no evidence of the existence of Ashtāvarana (अष्टावरण), Shatsthala (षट्स्थल), and Panchāchāra (पंचाचार) form the connotation of the religion, before the twelfth century A. D. We shall see how.

(1) That शिवाद्वैत is named शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत, in Lingayatism will be

evident from what is said in * "शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैतापरवाचके शिवाद्वैतसिद्धांते". शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत is therefore, the basis of Lingayat religion and philosophy and is a principle or aspect of monism like other monistic aspects or principles of other schools of philosophy. It means that Shiva is the Parabramhan. He is characterized or qualified by Shakti (Divine power or Energy) that resides in him in intimate union § "सामरस्याभेदलक्षणतादात्म्यसंबंधेन वर्तमाना." His Shakti is capable of working wonders, † शक्तेरघटनघटनापटीयस्त्वात्" Shivaparambrahma creates, protects, and reabsorbs the universe by means of His Shakti. There are clear and unmistakable references to the आलविमर्श of Kashmee Shaivism in the treatises of Lingayat religion the आलविमर्श being another name चित्, परासंवि, चिद्भगवती and शक्तिः. That शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत is only the modified or improved name of Kashmere Shivadvaita will be evident from the following :-

शिवाभिधं परं ब्रह्म जगन्निर्मातुमिच्छया ।

स्वरूपमादधे किञ्चित्खसूक्तिर्विजृम्भितम् ।

निरस्तदोषसंबंध निरूपाधिकमव्ययम् । ।

तदीया परमा शक्तिः सच्चिदानंदलक्षणा ।

समस्तलोकनिर्माणसमवायत्वरूपिणी । ।

तदिच्छयाभवत्साक्षात्तत्त्वरूपानुसारिणी ।

स शंभुर्भगवान्देवः सर्वज्ञः सर्वशक्तिमान् । । सि । II- 8, R.B.

ब्रह्मांडशतकोटीनां सर्गस्थितिलयान्प्रति ।

स्थानभूतो विमर्शो यस्तद्ब्रह्मांडस्थलमुच्यते । ।

विमर्शाख्या पराशक्तिर्विश्वोद्भासनकारिणी ।

साक्षिणी सर्वभूतानां समिधे सर्वतोमुखी । ।

* शिवाद्वैतदर्पण, page 62 § सिद्धांतशिखामणि, page 65 † Ibid, page 66

विश्वं यत्र लयं याति विभात्यात्मा चिदाकृतिः

सदानन्दमयः साक्षात्सा विमर्शमयी कला । ।

पराहंता समावेशपरिपूर्णविमर्शवान् ।

सर्वज्ञ सर्वगः साक्षी सर्वकर्ता महेश्वरः । ।

विश्वधारमहावित्प्रकाशपरिपूरितम् ।

पराहंतामयं विमर्शः परमात्मनः । ।

विमर्शभांडविन्यन्विश्वतत्त्वविजृम्भण ।

अनन्यमुखसंप्रेक्षा मुक्तः स्वात्मनि तिष्ठति । । सि. - XX-16.

This will prove that शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत is based on Kashmere Shivadvaitha. If further proof is required we may note what is said in शिवाद्वैतमंजरी, page 26- एवं स्थिते ब्रह्मणस्तावत् दृक्त्रियायास्वभावत्वेन चेतनत्वात् अतः "चैतन्यमात्मा" इति शिवेन सूत्रितत्वात् ब्रह्मशिवसूत्रयोः एकार्थविश्रांतत्वेत विरोधभावात् शास्त्रैक्यं विमर्शनीयम् । This establishes how Kashmere Shivadvaitha is adopted as the basis of the Lingayat religion. कमुगुप्त, the founder of Kashmere philosophy, has been proved to have lived in the ninth century. Hence शक्तिविशिष्टाद्वैत cannot be early and ancient. Moreover it is admitted that श्रीकण्ठसूरि, author of रत्नत्रयं, was a Kashmere Brahamin. It is said- अस्य प्रकरणस्थ कर्ता श्रीकण्ठसूरिः स च रामकण्ठांतेवासीति च प्रतिभाति । आचार्यवरश्चायं ग्रंथकर्ता काश्मीरस्थशैवसंतानज इति ग्रंथांतरेः प्रायशः संप्रतीयते । (अष्टप्रकरणे रत्नत्रयस्य भूमिका, p. 2.) This shows that Kashmere Shaivism had influence on South India. Over and above all this in a Kanarese work called (चोरवसवपुराण) (a Purana of Basava; thief, -the term " thief" has been used here as a term of endearment out of liberty, love, and devotion of the author - to Basava) it is elaborately stated how Basava arranged and

* The evidence based on this book is not quite authoritative, as according to Prof. S. S. Suryanarayanashastri, the work is very late. See शिवाद्वैत of श्रीकण्ठ, page 120.

managed to bring some Shaiva pandits from Kashmere, who were probably unwilling and were stolen or persuaded from the place, as it were. All this shows that Linigayatism is not an anient religion existing in the times of Vibhishana.

" Next, the three, (1) अष्टावरण (the eightfold coverings or protective shields that ward off the devotee from the evils of Māyā), (2) षट्स्थल (the six localities or steps to Mukti), (3) पंचाचार (the fivefold modes of living) form the connotation or differentia of the religion. Ashtāvarana consists of Guru, Linga, Jangama, Prasāda, Pādodaka, Vibhūti or Bhasma, Rudrāksha (plant beads), and Mantra. All these existed before the twelfth century but not in the form in which they are meaningfully connected in the ritualism of the Lingayat religion. Guru or the preceptor, one that shows and explains the path of religion and religious rites to मुक्ति is not peculiar to Shaivism but is common to all religions. And he existed before.

So far as Linga is concerned it existed in the form of स्थावरलिंग and not in the form of इष्टलिंग worn on the body. There is evidence that linga worn on the body also existed before. For instance in शंकरविजय * of Anandagiri there is a reference to the Linga worn on the body, as it is said in it - फाले लिंगचिन्हधारिणः भट्टाः हृदि त्रिशूलं शिरसि पाषाणलिंगं च धारिणः जंगमाः । Here पाषाणलिंग undoubtedly means the miniature Linga borne on the body. But better evidence is that of हरिभद्र, a Jain author of repute of 10th century. In his षड्दर्शनसमुच्चय he says- ते च पंचाग्निसाधनपराः करे जगदौ च प्राणलिंगधराश्चपि भवन्ति. Here there is a statement that some Shaivas carried a small Linga, as dear as life (प्राणलिंगधराः). But it does not mean at all the प्राणलिंग (Linga, the vital or mental) of the Lingāyats; because they Were

the worshippers of fivefold fire (पंचाग्निसाधनपराः) which the Lingayats never do. Undoubtedly the Linga carried by the devotees on their bodies was miniature स्थावरलिंग for facility of worship wherever they went. The Shaivas in their movements from place to place must have felt the want of स्थावरलिंगs in all places, without worshipping which every day these devoted staunch Shaivas could not be happy, specially because those were the days, when Jainism, Buddhism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism were each contending to be prevalent to the exclusion of the rest. Hence gradually they must have felt the necessity of carrying a miniature स्थावरलिंग with them so that they could do their daily devotion without difficulty. And the Linga being so holy they had to bear it on their head or tie it round their necks or arms, as is well expressed- यथा यदि सः स्थावरपूजको अर्थात् देवालयस्थमूर्तिपूजकोऽस्ति चेत् सहस्रावधि द्रव्यागमनव्यवहाराय ग्रामांतरं यदि गंतुकामः स भवेत् तथा तत्र देवालयो नास्ति चेद् किं तेन व्रतं त्याज्यमथवा व्यवहारस्त्याज्यः अथवा स्वग्रामस्थदेवालय एव तत्र नेतव्यः इति विचारे क्रियमाणे सति ब्रत्यागेऽपि दोषः व्यवहरात्यागे अनर्थापत्तिः देवालयविषयस्त्वसाध्य एव । अत एतादृशसंदिग्धसमये सगुणोपासकेन किं कार्यमिति प्रश्ने लिंगमेवावधार्य प्रपंचपारमार्थिकसुखार्थमि । लिंगागिधर्मप्रकाशः, page 17. But this Linga is not the Linga of the Lingayat system i.e. इष्टलिंग; because now here this small Linga has been explained, and significance is attached to it in the way, in which it has been done in the Lingayat religious literature. It was merely a custom growing out of necessity as a matter of facility for offering the daily devotion to the deity by the devotee. But it was later incorporated with the ritualism of the Lingāyat religion-with philosophical meaning given to it.

Jangamas were there before the 12th century but not the Jangamas of the Lingayat religion. The Jangama was an itinerant yogi (Shivayogi), moved about in the country to preach and teach

devotion to Shiva as a means of attaining मुक्ति If the were Jangamas of the Lingāyat religion, there was no necessity for God Shiva, as is stated in Sanskrit Basava- purāna, to assure (Basava) that He would Himself tie Linga round his neck on his coming to birth. If there was Lingayatism before what reason was there for God to assure Basava like this ? Basava's mother, Mādālāmbikā, could not understand why Sangameshvara should go to her lying-in-chamber and give Linga to Basava, as expressed in the following-

इदानीमागतः कोऽयमयोग्यं सूतिकाग्रहं ।

लोकेऽस्मिन्पुरुषाः सर्वे न विशन्ति कदाचन । ।

कथं वर्दतांथे तूर्णमाश्चर्यमिव भाति नः ।

तर्धधे तूरणमाश्चर्यमिव भाति नः ।

मादांबानुग्रहाथय शिवः किं समुपागतः । ।

लिंगधारणमेतादृि गर्मस्थस्य शिशोः कथम् ।

न दृष्टं न श्रुतं पूर्व महत्यास्मिन्महीतले । ।

लोके ये शिशवो जाताः सर्वे वर्णानुसारतः ।

तेषां नास्तीदृशं रूपं सर्वनेत्रावगुंठनम् । । IV-56-59

This shows that there was जननसूतक, that is done away with in Lingayatism; and there was no Lingadhārana at the time of Basava's birth. It was altogether a new thing, neither heard nor practised before (न दृष्टं न श्रुतं पूर्व). It is, therefore, undoubtedly an anachronism on the part of the writer of the Purana. It seems that he was in a dilemma that such a great prophet of Lingayatism like Basava should be born and not have लिंगधारण at his birth. Hence the anachronism coirriinted by him to be out of the dilemma only to be betrayed. The Jangamas referred to in the Basava-purāna are not the Jangamas of this religion. There is another circumstance to prove that there was no Lingayatism before

Basava. In Lingayatism all the sixteen संस्कारs of वर्णाश्रमधर्म are given the go-by. There are only two real संस्कारs, namely, लिंगधारण, peculiar to Lingayatism and दीक्षा that is common to all Shaiva sects and Shāktas. दीक्षा, in Lingayatism is ceremonially connected with the eight âvaranas and not an ordinary दीक्षा of other Shaivas. Thus if Lingayatism existed before, Mādirājā or Mādarasa, the father of Basava, could not have urged Basava to undergo the उपनयन ceremony. The father's attempt to perform the customary ceremony caused serious difference of opinion between the father and the son and led to a complete cleavage and separation between them. Basava strongly argues out in the assembly (of Pandits called together by मादिराज) the futility of उपनयन and vanquishes the upholders of the वर्णाश्रमधर्म in the disputation. This topic forms the most important and interesting chapter in all Puranas of Basava, Kanarese or Sanskrit.

प्रसाद and पादोदक were there; and they still are in all other Shaiva schools. But they differ in the meaning underlying them. In other schools, and for that matter in all other sects of Hinduism, प्रसाद is merely the thing addressed to the Godhead and taken by the devotees as a holy thing. But among the Lingayats the प्रसाद is anything and everything that is taken by the devotee for enjoyment and preservation of the body and it is a matter of grace of God. Everything taken or enjoyed by the devotee is in the first instance addressed to the deity and then taken as a matter of grace. So also all actions done are done in the name of God. The whole scheme of addressing (अर्पण) things to the deity in the पट्स्थल worship forms the highest form of कर्मयोग. Similarly पादोदक, according to Lingayatism, is what washes the taints; i.e., the devotee is conscious that by his sincere devotion to the Godhead he is

gradually washing the taints off his soul and is becoming free from, sins step by step. Lastly भस्म, रुद्राक्ष and मंत्र were there before but have not much special significance attached to them, like Linga, Jangama, Prasāda and Pādodaka. Though all these existed before they did not exist in the sense of Ashtāvaranas in an interconnected form of ritualism, as will be explained later.

So also there is no evidence of the पट्स्थल philosophy existing before. Tirumular uses the word पट्स्थल in his Tirumandiram. But by पट्स्थल he only means the six localities or nerve centres, in which the universal power, Kundalini, lies. He mentions the six Lingas. But they are different from those of the Lingayat पट्स्थल. They are Andalinga, Pindlinga, Sadashivalinga, Atmalinga, Jnānalinga, and Shivalinga; while according to the पट्स्थलs of the Lingayat religion they are, Mahālinga, Prasadalīnga, Charalīnga or Jangamalīnga, Shivalīnga, Gurulīnga, and Acharalīnga (in order from the high to the low). Moreover the sixfold Shaktis, the six Angas, the six Bhaktis, are not to be found in the पट्स्थल of Tirumular. All these form the corner stone of the Lingayat पट्स्थलs. And except for this there is no reference to पट्स्थल in Tamil Shaiva literature. It is incontrovertible, therefore, that there was no पट्स्थल before the time of Basava. Hence it is conclusive that there was no Lingayatism before the 12th century A. D. It is altogether unreasonable to think and hold that Renuka taught Agastya the doctrines of the religion in pre-historic times, as the enthusiasts in favour of its antiquity would have us believe.

Much stress is laid on the Agamas that contain and treat the doctrines of the religion. One important thing to be noted in this connection is that the principles and doctrines of the religion

are said to be found or contained in the latter parts or books of the Agamas and are called उत्तर e.g. उत्तरवातुल or वातुलोत्तर, उत्तरकामिक कर्मिकेतर etc. Thus it is implied that the latter parts of books contain the doctrines of Veerashaivism in particular. The उत्तर or the latter parts are the New Testaments of the Agamas, the earlier parts forming the old Testaments, as it were. We have already seen how this Agamas have grown so bulky by continuous additions made to them even in times after Basava. Allamaprabhu, Basava, Chennabasava, and the Acharyas come to be referred to in them. But Basava has the highest honour of being included in Mantras namely,-

प्रथमं वसवाक्षरं द्वितीयं अडमाक्षरं

तृतीयं षडक्षरं च गुरुलिंगं जंगमं तु । पारमेश्वरागम - XI-73

वसवेत्यक्षरं पूर्वं पश्चिमं अडमाक्षरं

वामे षडक्षरं ज्ञेयं दक्षिमं च प्रसादकं । । Ibid XVIII-70

Thus historically such portions are very late additions. अनुभवसूत्र is an important small Sanskrit book written by मायिदेव, the highest admirer of Basava. The whole book by internal evidence forms a part of वातुलोत्तर, a.s may be known from the colophons :-

- (1) इत्यनुभवसूत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये पारंपर्यकमो नाम प्रथमाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।
- (2) इत्यनुभवसूत्रे शिवसिद्धांततंत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये स्थलनिर्णयो नाम द्वितीयाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।
- (3) इत्यनुभवसूत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये लिंगस्थलनिरूपणं नाम तृतीयाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।
- (4) इति श्रीवातुलोत्तरतंत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये अंगस्थलनिरूपणं नाम चतुर्थाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।
- (5) इत्यनुभवसूत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये लिंगांगसंयोगविधिनाम पंचमाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।
- (6) इति श्रीवातुलतंत्रे शिवानुभवसूत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये सर्वेगलिंगसाहित्यं नाम षष्ठाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।

(7) इति श्रीवातुलोत्तरतंत्रे शिवानुभव सूत्र षट्स्थलनिर्णये लिंगर्पणसद्भावो नाम सप्तमाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।

(8) इति श्रीवातुलोत्तरतंत्रे शिवानुभवसूत्रे षट्स्थलनिर्णये क्रियाविश्रान्तिनामाष्टमाधिकरणं संपूर्णम् ।

It is clear that मायिदेव composes the book and inserts it in the वातुलागम as वातुलोत्तरतंत्र. This is a clear instance that we have found so far. Thus it is very unreasonable to believe on the authority of the Agamas (whose origin goes back to the times of Aranyakas, as already proved) that the persons referred to in the Agamas existed before the Aranyakas. Hence the references to the Achâryas in them are later additions, pure and simple, by their enthusiastic admirers, whoever they were.

If we have to believe what is said in सुप्रबोधागम and स्वायंभुवागम about the Achâryas (already) we must also believe what is said about Allamaprabhu and Basava. It is said in it Allamaprabhu appeared in different Yugas with different names, as निरंजनदेव in कृतयुग, निर्मायदेव in त्रेतायुग, निष्कलदेव in द्वापर and प्रभुदेव in कलियुग. So also it is written that Basava was स्कंदगणेश in कृतयुग, नीललोहितगणेश in त्रेतायुग, वृषभगणेश in द्वापर and वसवगणेश in कलियुग. So also yogajāgama says-

अनादि भक्तरूपेण भगवान् परमेश्वरः ।

पंचाचाराश्च षड्रूपाण्यष्टावरणानि च ।

लिंगांगसामरस्यं च मुक्तिमाह जगद्गुरुः । ।

All these are attempts at making these persons mystic and divine figures under the wrong notion that such mystic and divine origin alone would make them important and-venerable. But we

beg to differ. Great persons are always great not because they are ancient or mystic figures but because of their messages. Shakespeare, Kālidāsa and Count Tolstoy, Tukārām, Shankarāchārya, Lakshmīsha and Shadkshari, are immortal, not because they are ancient or mystic persons but because of their message to human beings. Similarly Allamaprabhu, Basava, Channabasava, Veerashaiva Sharanas and the Achāryas will over live on account of the doctrines they have-taught, the message they have delivered, the right path to mukti they have shown, and the work they have done. We have every respect and all reverence for the Achāryas. We adore, venerate, and worship them in deep gratitude for what they have done to the Lingayat religion and the Lingayat world by propagating and stabilizing the religion. They chose important centres in India from which to do the work in service of the religion and the creed. Their work is admirable, their exertions are praiseworthy and they have made themselves immortal, not by founding the religion but by propagating and stabilizing it.

There is one more reason why Revanasiddha, an avatāra of Renuka, is not the founder of the religion. If he were the founder of the religion, why did he not teach Vibhīshana the principles of the religion founded by him and convert him (Vibhīshana) to it? Instead of doing so he simply establishes three crores स्थावरलिंगs, which goes against his own crede of Ishtalinga worship. He himself says that स्थावरलिंगनिर्मात्य (anything addressed to स्थावरलिंग) is unacceptable in the following-

सदाशिवैकनिधानां वीरशैवध्ववर्तिनां ।

नहि स्थावरलिंगानां निर्मात्याद्युपयुज्यते । ।

यत्र स्थावरलिंगानामपायः परिवर्तते ।

तत्र प्राणान्चिहायापि परिहारं समाचरेत् । । सि IX - 34-35.

All this shows that स्थावरलिंगs may be protected but their प्रसाद is not acceptable; because the Lingayats rise superior to the worship of स्थावरलिंग on account of their wearing and worshipping the इष्टलिंग. Shivayogi, therefore, has bungled badly in his enthusiasm of pushing the religion to a remote antiquity.

Now we proceed to examine the information about the Achāryas collected from various books extant.

'They are the five traditional Acharyas associated with the Veerashaiva religion. In the minds of men that have any knowledge of them their figures are dim. Their memories are curiously mixed up with men and matters belonging to different ages. Agastya, Vibhīshana, Rajendra Chola, Bijjala, all come to be their contemporaries regardless of the fact that historically ages yawn between Bijjala and Vibhīshana.

But then, these Acharyas are not altogether a myth. Their devotees in their enthusiasm to make them and their religion ancient have exaggerated things about them to the extent of mystifying their personalities. The maths, which they are reputed to have founded are still in existence. Again we have clear reference to them in Kannada literature. Even some works in Kannada and Telugu are attributed to them. And above all, it is a fact that they tried to propagate the religion. That is why their names have come down to us in connection with the Veerashaiva religion. But with all that, that they are responsible for the religion is a myth. Those who try to establish that they originated the religion in pre-Vedic times involve themselves in a chain of contradictions. According to them Shiva is said to have explained the religion to Pārvasī. . Then Shiva is the founder and not the Acharyas.

We are told that the five Achāryas originated from five faces of Shiva. We are again told that they are the five of the Shivaganas chosen by Shiva and sent down to the earth to found the religion. These two statements evidently contradict each other. If they cannot be true together which of the two is true ?

How can five Achāryas be founders of a religion at one and the same time ? The order in which the names of these five Acharyas are usually mentioned gives one the impression that they came down to the earth one after another. If they did so, how can all the five be credited with the founding of the religion? Must it not be that only one of them founded it and the others only promoted it ?

The Acharyas-are said to have risen from Sthāvaralingas with a view to preaching the religion of Ishtalinga, the soul of Lingayat religion. Can anything be more absurd than this ?

Even supposing that they rose from the Sthāvaralingas to found the religion of Ishtalinga, how to reconcile their preaching of the worship of Ishtalinga with their establishing of Sthāvaralinga? (Renukāchārya; for example, is said to have established thirty million Sthāvaralingas at Lankā for Vibhishana instead of preaching the religion and philosophy of Ishtalinga).

Even supposing that they originated from the five faces of Parameshvara at one and the same time and that they founded the religion on earth one and the same time, how possibly can we explain their founding it four times in the four successive Yugas?

They are said to have lived for fourteen hundred years. Even supposing that they did live for fourteen hundred years (which reason cannot accept) how can we possibly make that period cover the lives of Bijjala of the 12th century and Vibhishana of the pre-historic age ?

What explanation is there for their having lived incognito for seven hundred years out of 1400 years? What purpose did they serve by living incognito ?

And how about the Puranas of the Achāryas. Puranas are after all Puranas and we have to be very cautious in the matter of gleaning historical facts from them. They are usually a confused medley of facts and fiction. - It is a common characteristic of them to make their heroes come down to the earth directly from heaven. They are sent down to the earth by God to keep dharma intact, and it is through miracles that they keep it intact the miracles true or false-more often they are false than any thing else. But if rightly used and if facts are properly sifted from fiction, they afford good clues to solve the puzzle of the past.

The Panchāchāryas have come to be the heroes of Puranas. Consequently they have all been deified and legends replete with miracles have grown round them. Even then we find in them certain pieces of evidence to help us to establish the dates of the Acharyas and their relationship with the Veerashaiva religion. The pieces of evidence from Kannada Puranic literature given below go to prove conclusively that they are not the originators of the Veerashaiva faith.

Wherever the Acharyas are mentioned Renuka invariably appears first in order. In point of time also he must have been the first, to appear. The first book written about the Achāryas is that about Revana by Harihara, the well-known (Veerashaiva?) poet. (It should be noted that there is no Sanskrit work about Revana).* The date fixed for Harihara, by R. Narasimhacharya, the author of Karnataka Kavicharite, a stupendous work ever attempted in Kannada, is 1165. A. D. Harihara's book goes by the name of Revanasiddha Ragale. It is the life story of Renukacharya written in the Kannada metre known as 'ragale'. Harihara being nearer to Revana than any other Kannada poet who has poetised his life, what he says about the first of the five Acharyas we can safely believe to be authentic, making at the same time allowance for certain exaggerations indulged in for the glorification of the hero.

In the ragale it is said that Renuka was ordered by God Shiva to take birth on earth because of a fault committed by him. It should be noted that he did not originate from one of the five faces of Parameshvara. This is to show that the ragale differs from the Shivagamas.

§ Revana is said to have come down to the earth expressly for the purpose of purifying the earth by performing miracles. There is not even a remote hint to the effect that he descended from heaven to found the Veerashaiva religion.

* Karnataka Kavicharite part I Page 224

§ Revanashiddha ragale page 9.

ಲೋಕಮಂ ಪಾವನಂ ಮಾಡುದ್ಯೋಗದಿಂ
ಆಕಸ್ಮಿಕಂಗಳಂ ತೋರುವನುರಾಗದಿಂ.

† (i) One Bijjala of Mangalvada (ii) one king Vikramāditya (iii) one Rajendra Chola are mentioned to have had the benefit of Revana's darshana (interview or meeting). All these three kings are historically true; they were all contemporaries.

The Bijjala in the Ragale must be the Bijjala of Kalyana. Mangalvada has been only another (translated) name for Kalyana. We are not without an evidence to bear this out. This very poet Harihara has used Mangalvada for Kalyan in his Basava-raja-ragale in connection with Basava and Bijjala. There Sangameshvara asks Basaveshvara to go to Mangalvada the royal city of king Bijjala. * On the evidence of inscriptions the date of this Bijjala has been finally settled.

As he was the king of Karnatak at the time of Basava under whose leadership and spiritual influence Veerashaivism had sprung and had reached the height of its glory in Karnatak, the settling of his date shed considerable light on things connected with the Veerashaiva faith. Seen in that light Revanasiddha clearly emerges to be the contemporary of both Bijjala and Basava. So he belongs to the middle of the 12th century A. D.

† Revanashiddheshvara Ragale. Chapter III.

(I) ಮಂಗಳವಾಡಮಂ ಪೊಕ್ಕು ಸಂತತಂ ಬಿಜ್ಜಳನ ಸಭೆಯೊಳ್.

(II) Chapter II :- ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧಂ ಜಯಂತಿಗೆ ನೆಗೆದು ಪುರಮಂ ಪೊಕ್ಕರಮನೆಯು ಸಭಾನಿಲಯಾಗ್ರದೊಳೊಂದಿರೆ ಎಕ್ಕಮಾದಿತ್ಯಂ ಕಂಡಿರೇಳ್ವು.

(III) ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧಂ ಪುರಮಂ ಪೊರಮಟ್ಟು ಬಿಜ್ಜಳಂಗೆ ಬೀಳ್ಕೊಟ್ಟು ನಡೆತಂದು ಚೋಳದೇಶಮಂ ಪೊಕ್ಕು ರಾಜೇಂದ್ರಚೋಳನಂ ಕಾಣಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು.

* Basavadeva-raja-ragale. (Edited by T.S. Venkannayya, M.A.) page .21. ಎಲೆ ಪುಗನೆ ಬಸವಣ್ಣ. ಬಸವಿದೇವ, ನಿನ್ನಂ ಮಹೀತಳದೊಳು ಮರೆದಪವು. ನೀಂ ಬಿಜ್ಜಳರಾಯನಿಪ್ಪ ಮಂಗಳವಾಡಕ್ಕೆ ಪೋಗು.

§ According to inscriptions of Mahadevaraya No. 2 and 3, one Guttarasa Vikrama was ruling in Guttaholala, a place near Ujjaini in Bellati district in about 1140 A. D. Most probably it is this very Vikrama that is referred to in Revanasiddha ragale.

According to geneology of the Chola dynasty given by E. P. Rice Raja-Raja-chola was ruling in 1146. A. D. Kulottanga Chola had the title of Rajendra chola. Rajendra chola of the ragale must be either of these two.

These, then, put together point to the conclusion that Revana must have been living about the middle of the 12th century A. D.

In the ragale there are two more facts to support the date. One is about Siddharāma of Sonnalige (modern Sholapur) and the other is about Rudramuni. *Revanasiddha foretells the birth of Siddharāma of Sonnalige. This Siddharāma we all know to be one of the religious colleagues of Basवेशvara; and so Revana lived in about the same time.

And then there is Rudramuni. He is said to be the son of Revana by one of the daughters of Rajendra Chola. This Rudramuni is the same as the one referred to in Channabasava

§ Veerashaiva Matacharya kalanirnaya by Kala mangala Shrikanthiya page 31

* Revana-Siddha ragale Chapter 5- page 44.

ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊರಡಿಯ ಮುದ್ದು ಗೌಡನಾರ್ಥಾಂಗಿಯೊಳು
ಸಲ್ಲಲಿತ ಸುಗ್ಗವೈಯಂಬ ಕಾರಣಿಕೆಯೊಳು
ಕಾರಣಿಕೆ ಸಿದ್ಧನುದಯಿಸುವನೊಬ್ಬಂ ಕೇಳ

Purana of Virupaksha Pandita. According to Channabasava Purana, Rudramuni, one of the chief Charapatis, who was with Channabasava, at the time of the breaking up of the band of one lakh and ninety six Jangamas is, subsequent to the disappearance of Basava, its originator, from the scene of action at Kalyana in order to ergem into Sangameshvara, asks his disciples to tour the country and to destroy the enemies of the Veerashaiva religion. ‡ It is the disciple of this Muktimuni that sets up the pontifical throne at Balehalli (of which Revana is reputed to be the first pontiff) in order to put down the enemies of the Veerashaiva religion and to protect the Sharanas. In Sharanālāmrita also we find the mention of Rudramuni and Channabasaveshvara together in connection with the breaking up of the band of Sharanas. In this case also Revana must have been a contemporary of Basava though older.

There is one more evidence. Revana is stated to have got his son Rudramuni to initiate one Havina Haleya Kallaya into the religion of Shiva. § Perhaps this is the same Havina Haleya

‡ Channabasava Purana. Canto 5, Sandhi 9, Stanzas 36-41.

ಲಕ್ಕದಿಂ ಮೇಲೆ ತೊಂಬತ್ತಾರು ಸಾವಿರದ |
ಲಕ್ಕದಿಂ ಮಿಗಿಲಾದ ಜಂಗಮಂ ಚರಿಸುವೊಡೆ |
ದಿಕ್ಕು ದಿಕ್ಕಿಗೆ ಪೋಪರುಳಿದ ಚರಪತಿಗಳೇ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಕ್ಕೆತರುವರು |
ಬಂದನಿಬರತಿಗೋಪ್ಯದಿಂದಿರುತೆ ರುದ್ರಮುನಿ
ತಂದೆ ತನ್ನಯ ಶಿಷ್ಯ ಮುಕ್ತಿಮುನಿಯೊಡನೆತಾವು -ನಲೆಯಾಗಿ ನಿಂದು
ದುರ್ಜರ ಸಂಹರಿಸುವೊಡೆ ಸ್ಥಳವಿದೆಂದು ಬಾಳೆಹಳ್ಳಿ ಪುರಮಂ ಬೇಗ ಕಟ್ಟಿಸುವರು.

§ Revanasiddha-ragale:

ರುದ್ರಮುನಿದೇವನಿಂ ಕರಣಮಂ ಮಾಡಿಸುತೆ
ಕಲ್ಲಯ್ಯನಂ ತತ್ಪುರಕೆ ಕರುಣಿಸಿ ಕಳುಪಿ

Kallayya whom in his Kannada Kavicharite Part I, Rao-bahadur R. Narasimhacharya has included among the Vachana-karas of the times of Basaveshvara. The date assigned to him is 1150 A.D. § This Kallaya again appears in Bhīmakavi's (1369) Basava Purāṇa.†

Crowning all these we have an inscriptional evidence. The stone inscription of the Shaka year 1109, corresponding 1187 A.D. in the temple of Siddhalingesvara of Shirivala in the Nizama's Dominions (published in the Shivānubhava magazine for the month of May, 1929) may be seen. The incidents mentioned in six stanzas of the inscription correspond exactly to those mentioned in Harihara's Revanasiddha Ragale, Bomma-rasa's Revanasiddha Purana and Basavāṅka's Revanasiddha Sāṅgatyā. The Inscription containing the six stanzas runs as follows :-

ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ಗಣಿಮಾದ್ಯಷ್ಟಗುಣ ಸಂಪನ್ನರುಂ, ಪಟ್ಟಿಯಾನ್ವಿತರುಂ,
ಸಾರಸಾರಭ್ಯ ಸರ್ಪನಿಸ್ಸಂಗರುಮಪ್ಪ ಶಿವಯೋಗಿ ಶಾಂತಿಮಯ್ಯಗಳ
ಪುತ್ರ ರೇಣುಕಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧಿಯಂತೆಂದೊಡೆ ||

|| ಕಂದ ||

ಬರ್ಬಲ ತಂಡುಲದಿಂದೆ |

ದೊರ್ಬೀಶಂ ರಾಯಕಟಕಮಂ ತಣಿಪಿದನಾ ||

ಸರ್ವಜ್ಞಮೂರ್ತಿ ಜಗದೊಳ |

ಗೋರ್ವನೆ ಸಿವ್ವಸಿದ್ಧಚಕ್ರಿ ರೇವಣ ದೇವಾ ||

ತೊರೆತುಂಬಿ ಬಂದಡರೆ ತಾ |

ಹರಗೋಲಂ ತನ್ನಿವೆನ್ನದಾಜ್ಞಾಬಲದಿಂ |

§ Karnataka Kavicharite, part I, page 204.

† Basavapurana, Sandhi55.

ತೊರೆಯಂ ದಾಂಟುವನಂತಿರೆ

ದರುಪಿನ ತತುಕಾರನೀತ ರೇವಣದೇವಂ ||

ಅಂದೊಮ್ಮೆ ಸಿದ್ಧನೆಂದಡೆ

ನಿಂದಿಸಿದರು ಮನುಜರಲ್ಲ ಧರೆ ಭೂರ್ಬಗಲಿನೆಂ |

ಬಂದದಿ ಸತ್ವರಜಂ ತಮ |

ವಂದಿನ ಸಿದ್ಧಂ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧ ರೇವಣದೇವಂ ||

ಮುನ್ನೊಮ್ಮೆ ಸಿದ್ಧನಾಗಿಯು |

ವಂದದ ತವನಿಧಿಯ ತೋರೆ ಲೋಕದೊಳೊಮ್ಮೆ ||

ತ್ತಿನ್ನೊಮ್ಮೆ ತೋರ್ಪೆನೆಂದು |

ತನ ತಾನರಿದು ನೆಗಳ್ಳ ರೇವಣದೇವಂ ||

ತಾರದ ಮಂತ್ರದ ಮಧುರದ |

ಸಾರಾಯದ ಸಪ್ತಸ್ವರದಿಂದಾ ನರೇಶ್ವರಂ ||

ಭೋರನೆ ಕೇಳಿಸುತಿರ್ಪಂ |

ಧಾರುಣಿ ತಳದೊಳಗೆ ನೆಗಳ್ಳ ರೇವಣದೇವಾ ||

ನೃತ್ಯಕೆ ನಿಂದಡೆ ಬಳಿಕಾ |

ಅತ್ಯದ್ಭುತಲಿಂಗ ಮರುಳು ತಾಂಡ ರೌದ್ರವಿಮನಲುಂ ||

ಪ್ರತ್ಯಕ್ಷಲಿಂಗ ಬೆಮರಲು |

ಸತ್ಯದಲತ್ಯಂತ ಸಿದ್ಧರೇವಣದೇವ ||

ಆ ಮೂಲೋಕ ಸಿದ್ಧ ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧರಪ್ಪ ಸಿದ್ಧರೇವಣಯ್ಯಂಗಳ ಪಾದ

ಪ್ರಕ್ಷಾಳನಂ ಮಾಡಿ ಸಿರವೊಳಲ ಸರ್ವ ಸಮಸ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಧಾರಾ

ಪೂರ್ವಕದಿಂ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಟ್ಟರು. || ಮಂಗಳಂ ಮಹಾ ಶ್ರೀ ಶ್ರೀ ||

The first stanza gives in a nutshell the popular story narrated in the works mentioned above, that when Revanasiddha begged the king Vira- Bijjala for alms, at Mangalwada, Vira Bijjala offered him boiling Pāyasa.

The second stanza refers to the popular incident that while rescuing the daughter of one Sule Mayidevi from Vira

Bijjala's sacrifice Revana- siddha, without using a ferry boat crossed the stream by his own will power.

The incident mentioned in the third stanza is that when- once Revanasiddha uttered the word Siddha, all people took objection to the same, upon which Revanasiddha made the earth shake.

The incident referred to in the fourth Stanza is that Revenasiddha showed Tavanidhi (treasure) to Gānada Kallishetti and his wife and thus ended their poverty.

The incident mentioned in the fifth stanza is not clear. The incident mentioned in the last stanza is that Revana took to dancing and behaved as a mad man when he worked in the house of Cānada Shetti mentioned above.

The Renuka or Revana of the Purāṇas, then, is the same as the Renuka or Revana of the inscription. Only the authors of the Puranas, in order to heighten the glory of their hero, have tried to push back the date of their hero, have tried to push back the date of their hero with the result that Revana has become a mythical personage in the Purāṇas.

So the real Renukācharya lived in the 12th century, more or less a contemporary of Basava. If so, he could not have been the founder of the Veerashiva faith.

Nowhere in the Ragale it is said that Revana originated the faith. Not only that, the word Veerashaiva has not occurred even once in the whole of the Ragale. Revana is spoken* of as merely a Shaiva saint who performed miracles and promoted devotion for Shiva on earth. He toured the Dravida country worshipping Shivalingas that he came across. One wonders as to how Revana who worshipped Sthāvara Lingas could be credited with the founding of the religion of Ishtalinga. Again nowhere in the Ragale has any mention been made of Astāvarana, Shatsthala and Panchāchāra, the differentia of the Veerashaiva religion. The impression that we get from the perusal of the Ragale as a whole is that Revana was not a Veerashaiva, at least not when Harihara-deva wrote his Ragale. The Revana of the Ragale is a § Lakulisha Shaiva. But Basavaraja, the hero of another Ragale by the same author (Harihara), is pictured as a perfect Veerashaiva as he needs must be. It may not be out of place here to quote from the two aforesaid Ragales of Harihara to note the glaring contrast between Revana and Basava from the religious point of view.

Harihara's Revana toured the Dravida country and worshipped Sthāvaralingas.

ದ್ರವಿಡ ದೇಶದ ಶಿವಪುರಂಗಳಂ ನೋಡುತಂ

ಶಿವಲಿಂಗ ಸಂತತಿಗಳಂ ಪೂಜೆಗೈವುತಂ |

* 19-20 (Revanashiddha Ragale)

ನಿಷ್ಕಮಿಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧರೇವಣ ನಾಮದಿಂ ನೋಡ.

ದ್ರವಿಡದೇಶದ ಶಿವಪುರಂಗಳಂ ನೋಡುತಂ

ಶಿವಲಿಂಗ ಸಂತತಿಗಳಂ ಪೂಜೆಗೈವುತಂ

§ Revansiddha Ragale : ಲಾಕುಳದ ಲಾಕ್ಷ್ಮಣಿಕ

Harihara's Basaveshvara worshipped Ishtalinga and jangama in his Linga and Linga in jangama.

ಲಿಂಗಜಂಮವೋ ಮೇಣ್ ಜಂಗಮವೆ ಲಿಂಗವೋ Basavarajadeva ಎಂಬಂತೆ ಸಾತ್ವಿಕ ಪ್ರಭು ಪೂಜಿಸುತ್ತಿರಲಿಕ್ಕೆ Ragale, the third sthala Harihara describes his Revana to be a Lakulish Shaiva.

ಸೋಮಧರ ಮಹಿಮನಸಮಾನ ಶೈವಾರ್ಚಕಂ

X X X X

ಲಾಕುಳದ ಲಾಕ್ಷಣಿಕ ನಮ್ಮಮ್ಮ ಬರುತಿರ್ದ

Harihara's Basavaraja is ಜಂಗಮ ಪ್ರಾಣಿ, ವಿಭೂತಿಯ ಸುಭಟಂ ರುದ್ರಾಕ್ಷಿಯ ರುದ್ರಂ ಪಂಚಾಕ್ಷರಿಯ ಪಂಚಮುಖಂ. All these are the epithets of Basava and they indicate some of the Astāvaranas which form the special feature of Veerashaivism. Revana gives Shaivopadesha (initiation into the Shaiva faith) to his son Rudramuni.

ಎಂಟನೆಯ ಪರುಷದೊಳ್ ಮಗನಂ ನೋಡಿ ಮಿಗೆ ಸಂತಸಂಬಟ್ಟು

ಶೈವೋಪದೇಶಮಂ ತಾನೆ ಕರುಣಿಸಿ..... ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧ ಮಂಗಳವಾಡದೊಳ್ಳಿದಂ ||

But Basava's son is described as one with the Ishtalingam (ಹೊಂಗಡದ ಲಿಂಗವಂತ)

Why does Harihara depict Revana as a Shaiva and Basava as a Veet-ashaiva ? What conclusion does this point to ? The conclusion can be none other than that Revana was not a Veerashaiva when Harihara wrote his Ragale and that he was certainly not the originator of the faith.

The picture of Revana changes in the works of subsequent Kannada authors. The hero from the Shaiva Saint becomes a Veerashaiva saint. But even in these later works we do not get any evidence to the effect that Revana should be looked upon as the founder of Veerashaivism. As to the miracles and other like incidents they are the same as in Hariharadeva's work and they are narrated almost in the same sequence.

Now the question arises: How to reconcile the Shaiva Revana of Harihara with the Veerashaiva Revana of later authors ? This apparent contradiction, however, can be explained away in two ways. Either the Veerashaiva authors after Harihara have ascribed their own religion to their hero, or the hero, first a Shaiva saint, might have embraced the Veerashaiva religion afterwards. The latter, however, seems to be more probable. In that case Revana, Basava and Harihara become contemporaries, more or less, and the date 1165 A. D. assigned to Harihara by R.Narasimhacharya gets support. Harihara, himself a Shaiva first, appears to have become a Veerashaiva afterwards under the prevailing influence of Veerashaivism in the South in general and in Karnatak in particular, in the latter part of the 12th century owing to the activities of the great Basava of Kalyan and his colleagues in the realm of religion.

Now among the authors, who have written about Revana after Harihara, Bommarasa, (1450 A. D.), Siddananjesha (1650), Sampadaneya Parvateshvara (1698) may be mentioned as important. Revanasiddha Purāṇa,

Gururājachāritra and Chaturāchārya charitre are the books written by them respectively. They have, one and all mentioned Vikrama, the king of Ujjani, Bijjala, the king of Kalyan, and Rajendra Chola, Rudramuni and Siddharama of Sonnalige* who, as has been already pointed out, throw light on the question of the date of Revana.

In all the works about Revana the hero is depicted as a saint performing miracles, and none as the founder of the Veerashaiva religion though the title such as the first of the Veerashaiva saints (ವೀರಶೈವ ಪ್ರಥಮ ದೇಶಿಕ). the preacher of the Veerashaiva religion (ವೀರಶೈವ ಮತಸ್ಥಾಪನಾಚಾರ್ಯ) are in very loose sense used here and there in the books. Revana was a Veerashaivaāchārya but not the founder of the religion. In Sanganasabasaveshvara vachanas (1600 A.D.) we have clear evidence to the effect that Revanasiddha received instructions in the Veerashaiva religion at the hands of one Nirlajja Shantayya who himself had been instructed directly by Channabasaveshvara and indirectly by Allamaprabhu. It is further stated that Revana, in his turn, gave the instruction to those who came to him and became his disciples * That is why he is looked upon as the first Achārya as such. The word Achārya is significant and throws light on the point at issue. The word 'deshika' (ದೇಶಿಕ) is also significant. It means a preacher and a teacher and never a founder. Let us by all

* Bommarasa's Revanasiddha purana.

ಸೊನ್ನಲಾಪುರಿಗೆ ಬಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಚಾಮಲದೇವಿಯನ್ನೋಡಿ ಶಿವಸಿದ್ಧನು ದಯಪುಡನರುಹಿ.....

Gururājachāritra

"ಚಾಮಲವೈಗೆಯೊಲೆದು ಸೊನ್ನಲಾಪುರ ಸಿದ್ಧರಾಮನು ದಯವನರುಹಿ".

means regard him as the first Veerashaiva achārya; but to regard him as the founder of the faith is to lay the axe at the root of the truth:

Marulārādhyā

Next in order comes Marulārādhyā. Marula seems to have lived at the time of Revanārādhyā; though a bit younger than Revana. We have but little information about Marula in Kannada literature. Many books about Revana are extant; but about Marula only a few are found so far.

§ In Marulasiddha Sāngatya the date of which is not known, Marula is said to have been the disciple of Revanārādhyā. Gorakha, † Maraya, Muktai, one Vikrama, king of Ujjaini are mentioned as having been contemporaries of Marula. If Revana announced the birth of Siddharama,

* Sanganasabasaveshvara Vachanagalu, edited by Rao Saheb Halkatti, page I :- ಅನುಭವ ಮಂಟಪದ ಶೂನ್ಯ ಸಿಂಹಾಸನದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಹಾಪ್ರಭುವು ವೀರಶೈವ ಶರಣರ ನಿಜಾಚರಣೆಯ ನಿಲುಕಡೆಯನರುಹಿದರು ನೋಡಾ.... ಅದೇ ಪ್ರಸಾದವನ್ನೇ ನಿರ್ಲಿಚ್ಛ ಶಾಂತಯ್ಯನೆಂಬ ದೇಶಿಕೇಂದ್ರನು....ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧರಿಗೆ ಬೋಧಿಸಿದರು ನೋಡಾ, ರೇವಣ ಸಿದ್ಧೇಶ್ವರನೆಂಬ ದೇಶಿಕೇಂದ್ರನು ಜ್ಞಾನೋದಯವಾಗಿ ತಮ್ಮಡಿಗರೆಗೆ ಶಿಷ್ಯೋತ್ತಮರಿಗೆ ಸ್ವಾನುಭವ ಸೂತ್ರವ ಬೋಧಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು ನೋಡಾ.

* Marulasiddhas-Sāngatya chapter IV

ಇರುತ್ತಿತ್ತ ಭಿಕ್ಷುವ ತರುತಲಿ | ಮರುಳೇಶ ಗುರುವಿನೊಳ್ ಬಿನ್ನೈಸಿದನು.

ಚೆನ್ನಾಗಿ ಅರುಹುವನೆನುತ ರೇವಣಸಿದ್ಧ | ತನ್ನ ಶಿಷ್ಯನಿಗುಸುರಿದನು.

§ 'Marulasiddha-Sāngatya : Chapter IV.

(I) ಬಲ್ಲಿದ ಶರಣ ಮಾರಯ್ಯಾ ಸೊನ್ನಲದೇವಿ | ಕಲ್ಯಾಣದಿಂದ ಬಂದಹರೇ

(II) ಧುರಧೀರ ವಿಕ್ರಮನಿರುವನು ಉಜ್ಜನಿ | ಪುರವ ಸತ್ಯದೊಳಾಳುತಿಹನು.

Marula predicted the coming of Prabhu (Allama) to Ujjaini where Allama Prabhu would dispel * doubts of Muktai.

It is stated there that he was also called by the name of Marulasiddha. We know that the second of the so-called Panchācharyas is the founder of the pontifical throne at Ujjaini. May we not say that the Achārya and Murularadhya are one and the same ?

The account of Marula in Guru-rajā-charitre is very brief. Nothing is mentioned there to help us to fix his date. Again, there is nothing in it to show that he was a Veerashaiva, muchless the originator of the Veera-shaiva religion. He is merely described as a Siddha, a Saint of Great psychic powers, though the author has made a passing mention in the first chapter that Marula founder the religion along with the other Achāryas. The only incident that is narrated about him is that he killed the demoness, Maya, at Kolhapur.

In Chaturāchārya-charitre of Parvateshvara also we get little or nothing to decide the date of Marula. Again, we are left as much in the dark about his founding the Veerashaiva religion, † Only once in the whole account is Marula stated to be a Veerashaiva.

* Marula Sangatya : Chapter III

ಮುಕ್ತಾಯಕ್ಕೆ ಚರಣಕಮಲದೊಳು ಕೆಡೆದು.... ಚಂದ್ರಶೇಖರ ನನಗೆ ಸುಜ್ಞಾನಗಳೆಂದು ಕೇಳಿದಳು...
"ಇನಿತು ನೀನಿರುತ್ತಿರೆ ಅಲ್ಲ ಮಪ್ರಭು ಬಂದು ಮನದ ಸಂಶಯವ ಬಿಡಿಸುವ".

† Chaturāchārvacharitre, canto 3, Sandhi I, stanza 9.

ವೀರಶೈವಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಕಾಮಿನಿಯ ಮುಂದಲೆಯ ಕೊಂಕುಗುರುಗಳು

The Marula-siddha of the Sāngatya, however, is nothing if not a Veerashaiva. In the Sāngatya there are clear references to Ashtāvaranas, though the term ashtāvarana itself does not Occur therein. Marula is instructed in ashtāvarana by his master, Revana. Perhaps Marula was one of those disciples to whom, as has been already mentioned in these pages, Revana imparted religious instruction he received indirectly from Allama- prabhu.

To sum up, as Revana and Marula lived at the time of Basava, the spirit incarnate of Veerashaivism, as they preached and promoted the religion and as they were known at their time as Achāryas, they in course of time have come to be regarded as the Veerashaiva-Samsthāpanāchāryas.

Panditārādhyā

It is difficult, to say who is the third āchārya and who is the fourth. If in some Kannada works Ekorāma is given the third place and Panditārādhyā the fourth, we find the order reversed in others. We shall however give the third place to Panditārādhyā.

About Panditārādhyā we seem to tread on surer ground than any of the other āchāryas. Happily we have much information regarding him in literature, at least in Kannada literature. He is intimately connected with Veerashaiva religion and with Basava; he was a contemporary of Basava, though a little younger. * It is

* Gururaja-charitra (Sanskrit) Mahimā-Sandhi, stanza 56.

श्रीवीरशैवधर्मस्य सरणिं परमेश्वर ।

अविच्छिन्नां स्थापयितुं को वा शक्तो महीतले ।

said that he was eager to have the darshana of Basaveshvara (whom perhaps he had not seen before, but about whom he had heard much in connection with the Veerashaiva religion which was then gaining ground in the country around) but before he could have it, news reached him that Basava had merged into Sangameshvara. The news caused him intense grief which expressed itself in a lyric. §

‡ One whole chapter has been devoted to this incident in Aradhya charitre of Nīlakanthāchārya. (1845 A. D.) Therein the Pandita laments the end of Basava and says- "Who else is there to found and promote the Veerashaiva religion?" † Some thing to the same effect has been said in Sanskrit Gururaja-charitre by Gururaja (1500 A. D.).

* Panditārādhyā's devotion towards Basaveshvara was so great that he was able to see the figure of Basava in his own Ishtalinga even after the death of Basava.

The incident is narrated in the Panditārādhyā-charitre of Palkurike Somanātha (1195 A.D.) written in Telugu. The same Somanātha wrote Basava Purana which was later translated by

§ Aradhyacharitre, Sandhi 10, stanzas 47 & 48.

ಆ ಲಿಂಗದುರುತರ ಗರ್ಭದೊಳ್ ಪೊಳೆಯೆ ಬಸವರಾಜನ ರೂಪು.

‡ Gurirajcharitre: Sandhi 2 Stanza 25.

ಲಿಂಗಾರ್ಚನೆಯ ಮಾಡಿ ಬಸವಪದ ದರುಶನಕೆ ತಾಂ ಗಮಿಪೆನೆಂದು ಸಡಗರಿಸತೀರಲ್

† Gururajeharitre Sandhi 2. Stanza. 26.

ಬಸವ ಬಯಲಾದೆಯಾ ಎಂದಳಲಿ ಗೀತವ ಹಾಡಲು.

* Aradbyacharitre (Kannada) Sandhi 9.

ವೀರಮಾಹೇಶ್ವರಾಚಾರ ವರ್ತನೆಗೆ ಪಿರಿದು ದಿಕ್ಕಿನ್ನಾವನೀ ಸಮಯಮಂ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವೆನ್ನಾವನು ?

Bhimakavi in Kannada. Palkurike Somanātha seems to have equal devotion for Basava and Panditārādhyā, and as he is much near to Basava, his information must be given due credit and must be regarded as authoritative and trustworthy. So we can safely put down Panditārādhyā's date to be the latter part of the 12th century.

Panditārādhyā is said to have proved the superiority of his religion over other religions such as Bauddha, Charvaka and Jaina, in the court of one Chola king. This Chola must have been Kulottunga the Chola who lived in about 1178 A. D.

Panditārādhyā must have been a Shaiva first. Afterwards under the influence of Basava's religious activities he must have become a convert to the Veerashaiva faith. * We have support for this in Kannada Gururaja-charitre wherein it is stated that one Kotipallārādhyā invested Panditārādhyā with Linga. Maliikārādhyā Pandita is credited with the authorship of Gana-Sahasra-nama, Ishtalinga-Shastra and Basava-gite, all of which give him out to be a Veerashaiva. Basavagite, as its name indicates, a eulogy on Basava, is said to have been composed in Kannada. Panditārādhyā was a Telugu man, and there is a story how he learned Kannada at once by a miracle. § The story tells us that Basava sent him

* Gururaja-charite sandhi 2, stanza 21.

ಕೋಟಿ ಮಲ್ಲಾರಾಧ್ಯರತ್ತಣಿಂ ದೀಕ್ಷೆಯಂ ಪಡೆದು ಲಿಂಗವಂ ಧರಿಸುತ್ತದಾತ್ತ ಮಹಿಮೆಯ ಪಡೆದು ಮಲ್ಲಿಕಾರ್ಜುನ ಪಂಡಿತಾರಾಧ್ಯನೊಪ್ಪಿದನು.

§ Gururaja-charite sandhi 2, stanza 32.

ಬಸವೇಶ ಭಸಿತಮಂ ಕಳುಹಿಸಲು ಕೈಕೊಂಡು ಧರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಕ್ಷಣವೆ ಬಂತು ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷೆಯು.

.Bhasita (holy ashes) and that as soon as he applied it to his body Kannada rose to his lips. It was then he is said to have composed the encomium on Basava. The miracle, however, can be explained in this way. Pandita was a Telugu man; Basava was a Kannada man. Basava's Vachanas, a literary treasure of Veerashaiva religion and philosophy, are in Kannada. Panditārādhyā learned Kannada afterwards in order to acquaint himself with the Vachanas of Basava and his notable colleagues in which the religion and philosophy of Veerashaivas are couched. Because of his earnestness and devotion for his new religion he might have picked up the language in a surprisingly, short time.

In Shivatattvasāra written by Panditārādhyā he has very affectionately referred to ‡ Basava. In that work he has dedicated three stanzas to the praise of Basava. The stanzas in Telugu are quoted below :

ಅಸಮೇಕ್ಷಣ ಶಿವಭಕ್ತಂ

ದಸಮ ಶ್ರೇಷ್ಠಢನಿ ಪಲಕಿ ಯನ್ಮುಲ ತೋಡನ್

ಬೊಸಪೋರೈ ಬಂಡಾರವು

ಬಸವಡು ವಿಸಮೆತ್ತಿ ತ್ರಾವಿ ಬ್ರತುಕಡೆ ರುದ್ರಾ

ವಸುಧನ ಮೇಶುಡೆ ದೈವಮು

ಪ್ರಸಾದಮು ಪವಿತ್ರ ಮೀಶ ಭಕ್ತುಲೆ ಕುಲಜಲ್

ಪೊಸಪೋರನಿ ಬಂಡಾರವು

ಬಸವನ ವಿಸಮೆತ್ತಿ ತ್ರಾವಿ ಬ್ರತುಕಡೆ ರುದ್ರಾ

ಕುಸುಮ ಶರಾರೀ ಶಿವಲಿಂ

ಗಸಮೇತುಲು ದಕ್ಕ ಬೊಂದಗಾದನಿ ನಿರ್ಮಾ

ಲ್ಮಸುಖಿಂಬನಿ ಬಂಡಾರವು

ಬಸವನ ವಿಸಮೆತ್ತಿ ತಾವಿ ಬ್ರತುಕಡೆ ರುದ್ರಾ

‡ Shivatattva - sara : ಮನ ಬಸವುದು - My Basava.

With all this there seems to be a fundamental difference, as has been pointed out by the late T. S. Venkanayya in an article under the caption, 'Shivataptvasāra' published in an issue of * Prabuddha Karnatak, a Kannada quarterly, between the religion propounded and practised by Basava and his colleagues and that preached and practised by Panditārādhyā. In the religion of Panditārādhyā the Varnashramic idea and certain Vedic customs are found lingering, whereas in the religion of Basava they find no place whatever. This difference has well been brought out by T. S. Venkanayya in the issue of Prabuddha Karnatak already referred to. He writes to the following effect.

"The Vachanakāras (Basava and his colleagues) adhere to the Shaṭsthala philosophy. They are usually called Shaṭsthala-brahmi's. In Shaṭsthala philosophy we have a systematic exposition of the six stages of discipline to be passed through. But not even a bare mention of this Shaṭsthala philosophy which forms the basis of the faith of the Vachanakāras is made in Shivatattvasāra. The Shaṭsthala philosophy does not seem to have been known by the 63 Tamil Purāṭanas who were regarded by the Vachanakāras as their models in the matter of devotion.

"There is one more thing to be considered historically. It is about the wearing of Lingam. According to the creed of the Vachanakāras the investment of the Lingam forms an important part of the initiation ceremony. The Vachanakāras and their followers wear the Lingam on their person consequence thereof they are called Linga-wearers (Lingavantas). There is no doubt

that Panditārādhyā was well aware of this fact, for in Shivatattvasāra in a stanza eulogising Basava there occurs the phrase "Shivalinga-sametulu" "which means 'one who is with Shivalinga.' It is. used to mean "one who wears the Lingam." Be it 'what it may, no where in Shivatattvasāra is it mentioned that the wearing of the Lingam is part of Shiva-dikshā or initiation ceremony. It is doubtful whether this custom existed among the Tamil Puratanas. Therefore the wearing of Linga may be said to be one of the special features of the creed of the Vachankāras." "There is another question boundup with the two mentioned above; and it is concerned with conduct. Those who receive Shivadikshā get a new life free from the influence of former lives. Those who are reborn in this way are to give up all their former customs and conventions with the initiation; the former distinction of caste disappears. A Brahman and a Sudra become equal in all respects. They can interdine with each other. Clearly there is a positive difference between this view of the Vachanakāras and the view of Shivatattvasāra. The Shiva faith as it is expounded in Shivatattvasāra has a Vedic basis.

"A Veerashiva that wears a lingam offered to him by his Guru is forbidden to worship any other lingam. But Shivatattvasāra on the contrary advocates the necessity of the worship of Sthāvaralingas (as against the Ishtalinga or the Linga worn on one's person.)

"When we consider all these things together, the conclusion forces itself that a special form of Shaivism arose

in the 12th century, spread rapidly because of its intrinsic worth and because of the sincere efforts of the devout Vachanakāras, it attracted a great many Shaivas in Karnatak."

But it is most likely that Panditārādhyā embraced the faith of the Vachanakāras after he wrote his Shivatattvasāra. He might have written it before he started to have the darshana of Basava and his reply (ಭಕ್ತಿ ಮೀದಿ ವಲಪು ಬ್ರಾಹ್ಮಣಬುತೊ ಬೊತ್ತು ಬಾಯಲೇನು ನೇನು ಬಸವಲಿಂಗ) to Basava's message to him to embrace his faith might have preceded his setting out to have the darshana of Basava.

It may be argued that this Panditārādhyā is not the same Panditārādhyā who is said to have founded the Veershaiva faith. In that case the founder Panditārādhyā must have either gone before him or must have been a Shaiva, since the Panditārādhyā of the Shivatattvasāra is depicted as a Shaiva. Surely the predecessor of a shaiva could not have been a Veerashaiva. Conversely, if the original Panditārādhyā of Shivatattvasāra would not have been a Shaiva.

If the founder Panditārādhyā came after the Panditārādhyā of Shivatattvasāra, then he must have been post-Basava, since the Panditārādhyā of Shivatattvasāra and Basava have been already proved to be contemporaries. If he is post-Basava then no reasonable person can assert that Panditārādhyā is the founder of the Veerashaiva faith. In either case then Panditārādhyā could not have been the founder.

It seems that Panditārādhyā failed to assimilate the fundamental tenets of the Veerashaiva religion even after he embraced it. It must be remembered in this connection that Veerashaivism was then a great departure from the old Shaiva faith. The old order was yielding place to the new under the inspiration of Basava. The glamour of the new religion attracted a great many people. Some could enter into its spirit; other could only grasp its form. Panditārādhyā seems to have been one of the latter class at once a Shaiva and Veerashaiva, a Telugu man and a Kannada man; he seems to present a dual personality. But then he was no ordinary man. He was a Pandit. He had been known as such even before he became a Veerashaiva. His influence might have been great. To add to all this he accepted the new creed that seemed to sweep all the South over. What wonder then if he came to be recognised as one of the great Veerashaiva Acharyas ?

Ekorāma

Now we come to Ekorāmārādhyā. We have a brief account of this acharya in * Gururāja-charitre of Siddhananjesha. It is stated therein that he preached the Veerashaiva religion and defeated the learned men of other faiths. In a religious controversy, it is said, that he defeated one very learned Brahmin by name Vyāsa and convinced him

* Ouru-rajacharitre. Sandhi 2, stanza 70.

ವೀವಧಸಕಂ ಬಸವರಾಜನೊಳು ಸೋತು ಲಿಂಗವ ಧರಿಸಿದಂತೆ ಏಕೋರಾಮ
ತಂದೆಯೊಳು ವಾದವಮಾಡಿ ಲಿಂಗಮಂ ಧರಿಸಿದಂ ವಯಾಸಬುಧವರಂ

of the greatness and superiority of the Veerashaiva religion to which he ultimately converted him, just as Basava had already defeated a Meemansaka and had got him to wear Linga on his body. So here is an evidence to show that Ekorāma is later than Basaveshvara; but we are not sure how many years after Basava he came to be. He is said to have lived at Mudrāpura at the time of one Veerabhāskara, king of Mudrāpura. But until something turns up to throw light on the date of the king we have got to be content with this much information that Ekorāma is later than Basava.

There is a 'Purāṇa' in Sanskrit called 'Devāṅga Purāṇa' in which the story of Devaradāsīmāyā, a contemporary of Basava has been given. It is stated therein that Ekorāma was the son of Dasīmāyā. In that Purāṇa the word, Veerashaiva, occurs a few times. But the perusal of the book will make it clear that both the father and the son were Shaivas of a dvija class and not Veerashaivas; for it is stated that both had their Upanayana ceremony performed. If Ekorāma had been a Veerashaiva he would not have undergone the Upanayana ceremony; so he must have become a Veerashaiva late in life. As he is later than Basaveshvara and as he embraced the Veerashaiva religion late in life he could not have been the founder of the faith. It is clearly stated in Guru-rajacharitre that he was given initiation into the Veerashaiva religion by one *-Ghaṇṭākarna Gaṇanātha, otherwise known as

* Ouru-rajacharitre Sandhi 2.

ಶಂಖುಕರ್ಣ ಗಣನಾಥನೇಕೋರಾಮಿತಂದೆಯೆಂಬ ಉನ್ನತದ ನಾಮದಿಂ ಚನ್ನಮುದ್ರಾಪುರದ
ಭಕ್ತರುದರದಿ ಜನಿಸಿ..... ಘಂಟಕರ್ಣ ಗಣನಾಥಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಎಂಬಾಭಿದಾನದಿಂ.....
ಪ್ರೇಮದಿಂದವರ ಕೈಯಿಂದ ವೀರ ಶೈವೋಪದೇಶದ ಪಡೆದ.

Rāmanathāchārya. He in his turn is said to have converted many persons of other faiths to his own faith. Since he helped the growth of the faith he has come to be regarded as one of the founders of the religion by the people of generations far removed from his.

Vishvārādhyā

Last of all we have Vishvārādhyā. We find very little account of him in Kannada literature. He is not at all mentioned by some writers who have written anything at all about the Panchāchāryas. The reason seems to be that he is very recent. He must have dawned on the Veera-shaiva horizon generations after Basava. A great many authors mention only four Achāryas, starting with Revana and ending with Ekorāma and thus excluding Vishvārādhyā. § For example, Bommarasa has mentioned only four of the Achāryas. Some works go by the name of Chaturāchārya charitre, Chaturāchārya Purāna and so on, and in them Vishvārādhyā finds no place. The fifth Achārya then seems to have been very recent. He seems to have been classed along with the other four acharyas only to make the number of achāryas five, corresponding to the number of the five faces of Shiva. The myth of the five achāryas rising from the five faces of Parameshvara must have gained currency only recently. In *Veerashaiva Sanjīvinī* of Mummadi Karyendra the following account is given of the birth of the fifth achārya.

§ *Revanasiddha Purana* (by Bommarasa), chapter I, stanzas 4, 5, 6 and 7.

One day Shiva was seated in his audience hall in Kailasas. At that time Nārada, the reputed news-monger, made his appearance there. Upon Shiva's inquiry about the Shaiva faith on earth, Narada replied that the faith in question was on the decline. Thereupon Shiva ordered Sthūla Ganesha, a member of his assembly, to go down to earth and to revive the Veerashaiva faith as the four Achāryas had done before him. Accordingly, Sthūla-ganesha took birth on earth as the son of one Kempa-bhūpati.

It is to be noted that, according to this account, Vishvārādhyā did not rise either from one of the five faces of Shaiva or from a Sthāvaralinga as mythical stories would have us believe. This account clearly explodes the myth of the Panchāchāryas, and reveals the fact that Vishvārādhyā, the fifth of the so called Achāryas is very recent. In that case how should we believe that all the five Achāryas founded the Veerashaiva religion in some very remote time which history dare not approach? It is significant to note that the Acharyas have left no literature behind them. No religious literature propounding or expounding the doctrines of the Veerashaiva faith is left by the Panchāchāryas, nor do we find any such literature in any of the Purāṇas written about them. But on the other hand, all founders of religions that the World, knows of, have given to the world their doctrines in literature of the religions they founded. The Buddha has left the literature of his religion, Christ has left that of his, and the same holds true in the case of the founders of other religions. Of course Veerashaivism has its own literature- aye, ample of it, but the

Panchāchāryas have nothing to do with it and it has nothing to do with the Panchāchāryas. But Basava's connection with the Veerashaiva faith reveals a striking contrast to the Panchāchāryas, for the literature which Basava has left behind him is simply abundant. It is in a very vague and a very loose sense, then, that the Āchāryas are spoken of as the founders of the faith.

Nor are the Āchāryas the only persons who are spoken of as the founders of the Veerashaiva faith in this loose sense. In *Mānasavijaya Kavya* one Gurubasava who lived about 1430 A.D. is said to have founded the "Veerashaiva mata". Kereya Padmarasa of the 12th century, likewise, is spoken of as the founder of "Shree Shivadvaita Sākāra Siddhānta". In the work, *Anādi Veerashaiva Sārasangraha*, *Siddhaveeraṇāchārya* of *Sampadane*, who lived at the close of the 16th century, is said to have been the foremost of those who founded the religion of Shatsthala. There are other instances also. If all these persons can be called the founders of the faith in question, the Panchāchāryas also can be called the founders along with them, and in the same sense.

The foregoing pages hold in solution, the conclusion pleasant or otherwise, and more often than not, truth is unpleasant, that the so called Veerashaiva āchāryas are not the originators of the faith since some of them are found to be contemporaries of Basava and others even later than he. If they, as their advocates would have us believe, did found the faith centuries before Christ, and if Revana did instruct the

epic sage Agastya in the Veerashaiva religion, then it must have been a very queer sort of Veerashaiva religion which sank into oblivion soon after it was founded and remained unknown for centuries.

If there were the Veerashaiva religion before Basava, why is history silent about it? History speaks of Jainism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism together with its various forms such as Kāpālīka, Kālāmukha and Lakulīsha, but as to Veerashaivism, before the 12th century, we find absolutely no mention anywhere. The same thing holds good in the case of literature about Veerashaivism before the 12th century and why should there be such a flood of it at the time of Basava and after him?

Basava and his colleagues in their Vachana literature have mentioned the names of the 63 Purātanās with great reverence even though they happened to be only Shaivas. Surely they would have mentioned with equal affection and reverence the names of the Panchāchāryas if they had really founded the Veerashaiva religion before them. But the Āchāryas are conspicuously absent in Vachana literature, and hence the conclusion that they are not the originators of the faith.

Who, then, is the founder of the faith? Is it Basaveshvara? Our emphatic answer is; he is. The following evidence will bear out the truth of what we say.

1. Palkurike Somārādhya, than whom we can have no better authority in his work called Gana-sahasra describes Basava as the spirit of the religion of Shiva and as the first Āchārya.
2. Chāmarasa (1430) in his *Prabhulingalile* addresses him as the first apostle of the religion.
3. Guru-rāja-kavi in the *Guru-rājacharitre* makes Panditārādhya say : "Who else can permanently establish the Veerashaiva religion on earth ?"
4. Nilakanthāchārya, in , his *Ārādhya-charitre*, in the context where Panditārādhya laments the death of Basava makes the Pandit say: "Who else is there to found and promote the Veerashaiva religion ?"
5. Maggeya Māyideva (1478 A.D.) in his *Shatakatraya* describes Basava as the very incarnation of Veerashaiva religion, and as its first apostle.
6. Maritontadārya in his *Siddheshvara Purāṇa* (1560. A. D.) prays to Basava, addressing him as the founder of the Veerashaiva religion.

- 1 Palkurike Somārādhya's *Ganasahasra* (1195A.D.) ಶಿವತತ್ತ್ವ ಸರ್ವಜ್ಞತನ್ಮಂ ಈಶಗುರು ಬಸವಲಿಂಗ ಪ್ರಥಮಾಚಾರ್ಯರೆಂದು ವಂದಿಸಿ ನುತಿಸುವೆಂ.
- 2 ರಾಯ ಪೂರ್ವಾಚಾರಿ ಸಂಗನ ಬಸವ ಶರಣಾರ್ಥಿ.
- 3 ಶ್ರೀವೀರಶೈವಧರ್ಮಸ್ಯ ಸರಣಿಂ ಪರಮೇಶ್ವರ ಅವಿಚ್ಛಿನ್ನಾಂ ಸ್ಥಾಪಯಿತುಂ ಕೌ ವಾ ಶಕ್ತೌ ಮಹೀತಲೇ ವಸವೇಂದ್ರಸ್ಯ ತು ಪ್ರಾಣಾಃ
- 4 ವೀರಶೈವಾಚಾರವರ್ತನೆಗೆ ಪಿರಿದು ದಿಕ್ಕಿನ್ನಾವನೀ ವೀರಸಮಯಮಂ ಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವನಿನ್ನಾವನು ?
- 5 ವೀರಶೈವ ನಿರ್ಣಯ ಪರಮಾವತಾರ..... ಆದಿ ದೇಶಿಕ.
- 6 ವರ ವೀರಶೈವ ನೆಲೆಗೊಳಿಸಿದ ಬಸವನೆಮಗನವರತ ಶಿವಭಕ್ತಿಯಂ ಕೊಟ್ಟು ರಕ್ಷಿಸುಗೆ.

7. The king of Keladi (Basavappa Nayaka) writes in his *Shivatattvaratnakara* that the great Basava founded and promoted the Veerashaiva religion.

In the Vachanas of the Sharanas themselves there is evidence enough to the effect that Basava alone is the founder of the Veerashaiva religion. We quote below but a few of them :

- 8 Allama Prabhu in one of his Vachanas describes Basava as the founder of the faith of Shiva.
- 9 Allama Prabhu in another Vachana says to Chanabasava that they both get linga from Basava; and that they both belong to the same line.
- 10 Maritontadārya says :- ನನು ವೀರಶೈವನಾಮಪ್ರಾಕೃತಾಥವರಣಪಂಚಾಚಾರ್ಯನೀಕಾಗ್ರಹದಯಃ ಶ್ರೀಮತ್ತಪರಮೇಶ್ವರಾನುಜ್ಞಾತನಂದಿಶ್ವರಾಪರಾವತಾರಃ ಶ್ರೀವಸವೇಶ್ವರಃ etc.etc.

To the solution of the problem- Who is the founder of the Veerashaiva faith? -We have a clue in the very word 'Veerashaiva.' By the time 12th century was ushered in, Jainism and Vaishnavism had gained ascendancy. Shaivism in the South had reached a crisis and time had come for it to rise or to fall. But it was not to

7 ಭಗವಾನ್ ವಸವೇಶ್ವರಃವೀರಶವಮತಂ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪ್ಯ ಪ್ರಕಾಶನಮಕಾರಯೇತ್

8 ಶಿವಸಮಯ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾಪನಾಚಾರ್ಯ ಬಸವಣ್ಣ

9 ಅನಿಮಿಷಯ್ಯಂಗೆ ಲಿಂಗವಕೊಟ್ಟಾತ ಬಸವಣ್ಣ, ಆ ಲಿಂಗ ನಿನಗೆ ಸೇರಿತ್ತಾಗಿ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯದ ಕಂದನು ನೋಡಾ ನೀನು ಭಕ್ತಿದಳದಳದಿಂದೆ ಚೆನ್ನಸಂಗಮನಾಥನೆಂಬ ಲಿಂಗವನನುಗ್ರಹಿಸಿಕೊಂಡೆನಾಗಿ, ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯದ ಕಂದನು ನೋಡಾ ನಾನು.....

10 (ವೀರಶೈವಾನಂದಚಂದ್ರಿಕಾ p.447)

go down; for by the time the century had half passed, there shot into space a great hero who revolutionized the Shaivite faith in a short space of time. The attempt was heroic and the achievement was brilliant. Shaivism rose triumphant over the trammels of Varṇāshrama and the result was Veerashaivism. The hero happened to be the prime minister of the then king of Karnatak. He was a Kannada man and what wonder if Kannada became the language of the scriptures of the new heroic religion and Karnatak became the home of the new faith as it is even today? That was how the new faith came to be heroically founded and that is why it has come to be called Veerashaiva religion, meaning the heroic Shaiva faith. That was how again Basava became the king of a great religion though the premier of a little province.

We shall next consider that glorious institution of Basava and his colleagues- the Shivānubhavamāṇṭapa, or what we may fittingly call the birth place and cradle of Veerashaivism. It was a religious institution organized by Basava and presided over by Allama-prabhu, a tremendously great spiritual personage. It is not a myth created by fancy but a fact that stands pre-eminent in the history of Veerashaivism in as much as it was through the 'Shivānubhavamāṇṭapa,' that Veerashaivism emerged. It was a religious academy the like of which never existed before and has never existed since. Basaveshvara brought it into existence, Allama-prabhu presided over the discussions that were held in it, and a great many Sharanas of the time flocked to it to take part in the discussions. So we owe to it that flood of religious literature in Kannada which is usually styled the

Vachana literature. In it were shaped formulated as the result of the discussion among sharanas, the doctrines of the Veerashaiva religion. From it, above all, did emerge the Shatsthala philosophy which is the most remarkable and essential feature of the faith and which again is a unique contribution to the world of religion and philosophy. The Sharanas that participated in the discussions about Shatsthala in the Shivānubhavamāṇṭapa are called Shatsthalabrahmis, and the first and foremost of them all was Channabasava, who is called Shatsthala-karta or the creator of Shatsthala. Shatsthalabrahmi also means one who has attained Brahman by means of Shatsthala.. The term Shatsthala-brahmi is meant to be a distinguishing epithet for Basava and his colleagues only. Nowhere do we find this epithet used in connection with the Panchāchāryas. "If Channabasava formulated the Shatsthala philosophy, the most distinguishing feature of Veerashaivism, why should Basava be called the originator of the Veerashaiva faith and why not Channabasava?" is a question likely to be raised. The question is reasonable so far as it goes, but the pity of it is that it cannot go in favour of the advocates of the Panchāchāryas. True, Basava was not the formulator of the Shatsthala philosophy; but he was something more than that. He was the leader of the whole movement in whose service the afore-said philosophy came to be formulated. It was he who unfurled the banner of revolt against the Varnashramic tyranny. It was under his leadership that every scheme was planned and executed. It was he who got Allama-prabhu to guide them in the discussions at the Shivānubhavamāṇṭapa; it was he again, who got people together to carry things to a successful end. Above all it was

he who exemplified the path of devotion by his own perfect devout conduct.* If Kaliketa Brahma systematized the *ashtāvaraṇas* and Channabasava formulated Shatsthala under the efficient guidance of Allamaprabhu, Basava showed the practical way to the people to apply them in their everyday life, So the unique credit of having, brought religion to bear on the everyday life of men, goes to Basava and Basava alone. He lived the practical side of religion and thereby set a sure example to the masses of people. To him again, do we owe the superb social structure raised on the basis of the practical philosophy of Kāyaka (work). All this is revealed to us in the Vachanas of Basaveshvara and other Sharanas. The whole of Vachanashāstra is a glorious monument to his sugreme personality. With all this to his credit does he not deserve the rightful title to be called the founder of the Veerashaiva raith? Do we find anything approaching to this about the Panchāchāryas? If not, why thrust the hollow title on them?

Whereas everything is vague and indefinite about the -

* That the Ashtāvaraṇas, brought together into a ritualistic chain, were due to the Sharanas that flocked to the banner of Basava's new religion while being forged in the Shivānubhavamaṇṭapa, will be proved by what is said in the texts:- एकपात्रस्थितं पादोदकं पुरातनवसवेश्वरप्रमुखप्रथमसंप्रदायानुरोधेन वीरशैवदीक्षितभक्तमहेश्वराः क्रमेणैकैकशः ऋतं सत्यमिति मंत्रेण पिबेयुः। So also the following verse will prove that Kaliketabrahmayā wai th father of Ashtāvaraṇas.

कलिकेतब्रह्मनाम्ना पुरा शीलवंता स्फुटम्।

स्थापितं बसवेशादिप्रमथानां सभांतरे।

गुरुवर्य त्वया प्रोक्तमष्टावरणवैभवम्।

निपीय बहुधा कर्णपुटाभ्यां हर्षितोऽभवम्।।

(See वीरशैवानंदचन्द्रिका pp. 119,188).

Panchāchāryas, everything about Basava and his colleagues is definite and clear as day-light. The Purāṇas of Āchāryas are a confused medley of facts and fiction. But the Vachana literature of the Vachanakāras is singularly free from all myth and mystification. They refer to historical personages and propound practicable principles for practical people. In a word, they preach what may be called, socio-religious conduct of life as obtained from practical experience of life. We hardly come across any miracle in the Vachanas. All we find therein is human endeavour for social and spiritual freedom- human endeavor that resulted in divine achievement only because it was sincere and unselfish. What a splendid endeavour and what a magnificent achievement! Considering the brief space of time of less than two decades in which this spiritual enrichment of life was brought about, through the Vachanas that have survived the Sharanas, we can clearly see the spiritual heights reached and kept by them; we can clearly see Basava, the-torchbearer enkindling light and love among the masses. This verily was a miracle of miracles and before this miracle all the mythical miracles of the Panchāchāryas fade into insignificance. The voice of Basava still speaks to us across the centuries that intervene and rouses us from the slumber in which we seem to be buried; but where can we hope to hear the voice of the Panchāchāryas?

Again we find that among the Veerashaiva poets more have paid tribute to the memory of Basava than to the names of the Panchāchāryas. Not to speak of poets like Pālkurike Somanatha and Harihara, Bhimakavi and Shaḍaksharadeva, who have written their best works about Basava; even those poets who have

expressely written their works about the Āchāryas, have praised Basava in their works. We may cite Panditārādhyā-charitre and Revansiddhapurana as instances. No Āchārya has come in for as much share of praise as Basava at 'the hands of any poet. Sarvajna the well-known Kannada poet, has lauded Basava to the skies but he has not devoted a single stanza to the praise of any of the Āchāryas. Writing about Basava he says:

ಬಸವನಂದರೆ ಪಾಪ | ದೆಸೆಗೆಟ್ಟು ಹೋಗುವುದು

ಬಿಸಿಲಿಗೆ ಹಸುರಿನೊಳಗಿರ್ಪ ಹನಿಯಾರಿ

ಹಸಿದು ಹೋದಂತೆ ಸರ್ವಜ್ಞ

ಹಸಿದಡಂಬಲಿ ಮುದ್ದು ಬಿಸಿಲಿಗೆ ಕೊಡೆ ಮುದ್ದು

ಬಸಿರಲ್ಲಿ ಬಂದ ಶಿಶು ಮುದ್ದು ಲೋಕಕ್ಕೆ

ಬಸವಣ್ಣನೇ ಮುದ್ದು ಸರ್ವಜ್ಞ

Shadaksharadeva has dedicated one whole book in Sanskrit to the praise of Basava.

Similarly Basava has been praised equally highly by writers of Sanskrit works of Veerashaiva religion. The following few may be noted (in addition to those quoted already in this section from ಪಂಡಿತಾರಾಧ್ಯಚರಿತ of Gururāja):-

ನಮೋ ಬಸವರಾಜಾಯ ವೃಷೇಂದ್ರಾಪರಮೃತೇ |

ಚರಾಚಕ್ರೇನಿಷ್ಠಾಯ ಶಿವಾಚಾರಪ್ರವರ್ತಿನೇ | |

ಶಿವತತ್ವಾಮೃತಾಸ್ವಾದಚೇತಸೇ ಯೋಗಿನೇ ನಮಃ |

ಶ್ರೀಚಕ್ರಬಸವೇಶಾಯ ಷಟ್ಸ್ಥಲಬ್ರಹ್ಮವಾದಿನೇ | |

ಬಸವೇಶಾದಿಸರ್ವೇಷಾಂ ಗಣಾನಾಂ ಜ್ಞಾನದಾಯಿನೇ |

ಯೋಗಿನ್ದ್ರಾಯ ನಮಸ್ತಸ್ಮೈ ಪ್ರಭವೇ ಶಿವಮೃತೇ | |

ಶಿವಯೋಗಾಮೃತಾಂಭೋಧಿಮಗ್ರಮಾನಸವೃತ್ತೇ |

ವಂದೇ ಶ್ರೀಸಿದ್ಧರಾಮಾಯ ಭಕ್ತಿಸಂಪತ್ತಮೋದಿನೇ | |

ನಮಃ ಪಂಡಿತಾರಾಧ್ಯಗುರವೇ ಸರ್ವವೇದಿನೇ |

ಮಹೇಶ್ವರಾಂಭೋಜಪರಿನಿಷ್ಠಿತಚೇತಸೇ | |

ವೀರಮಹೇಶ್ವರಾಚಾರ ಸಂಗ್ರಹ -1-9-13.

ಮಾದಲಾಂಬಗರ್ಮಿಸಿಂಧೌ ಜಾತಂ ವಸವಧೀಮಣಿಮ್ |

ಧರ್ಮಸ್ವರೂಪಂ ಸ್ಥಾಪುಂ ಚ ನಮಾಮಿ ಶಿರಸಾನಿಶಮ್ | |

ದ್ರಾಕ್ಷಾರಾಮೇ ಹಮಾಗ್ರಾಮೇ ಕೋಟಿಪಲ್ಲಯಾಖ್ಯದೇಶಿಕಃ |

ವೇದವೇದಾಂತತತ್ವಜ್ಞಃ ಪುರಾಣಾಗಮತತ್ವವಿತ್ | |

ವೀರಶೈವಾಚಾರಪ್ರದೀಪಿಕಾ -1-3-4.

ಓಂ ನಮಃ ಶ್ರೀವೃಷಭಾಯಾನಾದಿಭಕ್ತಸ್ವರೂಪಿಣೇ |

ಶಿವಾಷ್ಟಾವರಣಾಗಾಯ ಷಟ್ಸ್ಥಲಾಧ್ಯಪ್ರವರ್ತಿನೇ | |

ಜಯತು ವಸವರಾಜಃ ಸ್ಥೈರ್ಯನೈರ್ಮಲ್ಯಪೂಜಃ |

ಪ್ರಮಥಗಣಸಮಾಜಪ್ರೊಲ್ಲಸದ್ಭಕ್ತಿನೈಜಃ |

ಪ್ರಹತವಿನಮದಾರ್ತಿಃ ಸ್ಥಾಯದಾಮ್ನಾಯಪೂರ್ತಿಃ |

ಸ್ಥಿರದಿಗಮಿತಕೀರ್ತಿಃ ಶ್ರಿವೃಷಾಧೀಶಮೂರ್ತಿಃ | |

ಬಕಾರೋ ಗುರೂರೂಪಂ ಚ ಸಕಾರೋ ಲಿಂಗಮೇವ ಚ |

ವಕಾರಶ್ಚರೂಪಂ ಚ ತ್ರಿವಿಧಂ ವಸವಾಧರ್ಮ |

ಬಕಾರೋ ನಾದರೂಪಂ ಚ ಸಕಾರೋ ವಿಂದುರೂಪಃ |

ಕಲಾರೂಪಂ ವಕಾರಃಸ್ಯಾತು ತ್ರಿವರ್ಣಂ ವಸವಾಕ್ಷರಮ್ | |

ಭಕ್ತಮುಕ್ತವಿರಾಕ್ತಶ್ಚ ವಸವೇತ್ಯಕ್ಷ ತ್ರಯಮ್ |

ಸದಾ ಭಕ್ತ್ಯಾ ಜಪೇಯುಸ್ತತ್ಪಾಪತುಲಾಗ್ರಸನ್ನಿಭಮ್ | |

ಯಸ್ಯ ವಕ್ತ್ರಂ ಸ್ಥಿತಂ ದೇವಿ ವಸವೇತ್ಯಧರತ್ರಯಮ್ |

ವಸಾಭಿ ಸತತಂ ತತ್ರ ಸತ್ಯಂ ಸತ್ಯಂ ನ ಚಾನ್ಯಥಾ |

ಅನಾದಿವೀರಶೈವಸಾರಸಂಗ್ರಹ -I- 14-17.

ನಿರ್ಮಾಯ ವಾದಮಪಿ ತಾದೃಶಮಾದಿಶಕ್ತ್ಯಾ |

ನಿರ್ಮಾಯತಾಂ ಭುವಿ ನಿಜಾಂ ವಿಶದಾಂ ವಿತನ್ವನ್ |

ಸೃಷ್ಟಿಶ್ಚಕಾರ ಚ ನಿರಂಜನಜಂಗಮಂ ತತ್ |

ಇಥಾರ್ಥಮಲ್ಲಮ್ ಇತಿ ಪ್ರಭುರಪೇಕ್ಷಾಃ | |

ವಿಜಿತಯ ಯೋ ವಿಜಲಭೂಮಾಯಾಂ |

ನಿಜಪ್ರಭಾವೈರ್ವಸವೇಶ್ವರಾಖ್ಯಃ |

ಸದ್ಭಕ್ತಿಮಾಹಾರಮ್ಯಮದರ್ಶಯನ್ |

ಸದ್ಭಾವಮಂತಃಕರಣಂ ಸ ದತ್ತಾತ್ | |

स्कंदात्मनावतरणं विरचय्य मार्गे ।

मंदानबोधयत षट्स्थलधर्मविद्याम् ।

यः संप्रसादविभवप्रकटीक्रियोक्तम् ।

प्रस्तौमि चन्नवसमप्रमथाधिनाथम् । ।

वीरशैवसुधानिधि - 2- 4.

Basava has come to be regarded by the Veerashaivas as Dvitiya Shambhu, meaning the second Almighty God. Unless he were the founder of their religion there is no reason why he should be so called. It is worth noting that none of the Āchāryas is so called. Again like the name of God Shiva the name of Basava has been formulated into a *mantra*. Every letter of the word वसव is explained as a mantric syllable. What is more important is that the mantric significance of Basava's name has been brought out in a book called Shivānubhavasāstra, published in Kannada by one of the descendants of Ujjani Marulasiddhamatha. If Basava were not the originator of the Veerashaiva faith there is no reason why his name should be treated as a mantra among the Veerashaivas; and certainly there should be much less reason why his name should occur as a mantra in a book published by the descendants of one of the Panchāchāryas.

It is worthy of note that it is stated at the very outset in the said Shivanubhavasāstra that the book is prepared in accordance with, and on the authority of * Agamas and Vachanas. These Vachanas must have been none other than the Vachanas of Basava and his colleagues. Nor is this a

* ಶಿವಲಿಂಗಾಂಗ ಸಂಬಂಧತ್ವ ಪ್ರತಿಪಾದಕಾಗಮ ಗ್ರಂಥಾರ್ಥವಾಚ್ಯಂಗಳಿಂ ಕೆಲವು ಪಚನಂಗಳಿಂ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸಿದ ಉದ್ಧರಣೆ.

mere conjecture; for in connection with Shūnya Lingoddharane in the said book a Vachana by a Vachanakāra of the time of Basava has been actually quoted. It is clear from this that it is usual even with the descendants of the Veerashaiva Pachāchārayas to look upon the Vachanas of Basava and other contemporary Sharanas as the scriptures of Veerashaivism, as certainly they are. We give below the said Vachana for verification.:

ನಿರಾಳ ಅಷ್ಟದಳಕಮಲದೊಳಗೆ ನಿರಂಜನ ಚೌಕಮಧ್ಯವ ನೋಡು, ಅದರ ಬೀಜಾಕ್ಷರದ ಭೇದವನಾರು ಬಲ್ಲರೋ ! ನಿರಂಜನ ಪ್ರಣವ, ಕಲಾಪ್ರಣವ, ಆದಿಪ್ರಣವ, ಅನಾದಿ ಪ್ರಣವ, ಅಕಾರ ಪ್ರಣವ, ಉಕಾರ ಪ್ರಣವ, ಅಖಂಡ ಜ್ಯೋತಿಃಪ್ರಣವ ಅಖಂಡ ಮಹಾಜ್ಯೋತಿಃಪ್ರಣವ ಗೋಳಾಕಾರ ಪ್ರಣವ ಅಖಂಡ ಮಹಾಗೋಳಾಕಾರಪ್ರಣವ, ಇಂತೀ ನಿರಾಳ ಅಷ್ಟದಳ ಕಮಲದೊಳಗೆ ನಿರಂಜನ ಚೌಕ ಮಧ್ಯವನೋಡು ! ಇದರ ಬೀಜಾಕ್ಷರದ ಭೇದವ ನಿಜಲಿಂಗೈಕ್ಯರ ಬಲ್ಲರಲ್ಲದೆ ಮಿಕ್ಕಿನ ವೇಷಧಾರಿಗಳೆತ್ತ ಬಲ್ಲರಯ್ಯಾ ; ಉರಿಲಿಂಗ ಪೆದ್ದಿ ಪ್ರಿಯ ವಿಶ್ವೇಶ್ವರ.

If Marula or any other Āchārya were the founder, his authority would certainly have been quoted in a book of this kind. But there is no reference whatever to any of the Āchāryas in the body of the book.

There are only-two mantras usually repeated by the Veerashaivas; one is the mantra of Shambhu, the great god Shiva, and the other is of Basava, the second Shambhu. So Basava's place, at least so far as Veerashaivas are concerned is next only to God's.

It is significant to note that none of the Panchāchāryas has his name constructed into a mantra.

Basava has endeared himself to the Veerashaivas as no Āchārya has done. The reason is clear; for it is to him that they owe their religion. It is not uncommon to find among the Veerashaiva people who rise with the name of Basava on their lips and go to bed with the name on their lips. They usually address him as Basavanna, where 'anna' is a term of endearment. Their favourite mantra is: ಬಸವಾ ಶಿವನೇ ಶಿವನೇ ಬಸವಾ:- Basava is Shiva and Shiva is Basava. Basava is the most common of the proper names found among Veerashaivas. Though names like Revana and Marula are found only here and there we scarcely come across proper names like, Panditaradhya & Ekorama. There is one more thing that deserves consideration, 'Linga' generally goes with Basava and it is not infrequently that we hear the name, Basava-linga. This only shows that there is some very intimate association between Basava and Linga. Panditalinga, Ekoramalinga are absent.

If the Veerashaiva religion were there even before Basava, then there would be no necessity on the part of Basava to revolt against the Varnashramic faith. It would have been enough for him to become a convert to the Veerashaiva religion and he would have lived contentedly in that fold. But as it was, his very revolt led to the rise of the Veerashaiva faith. There appears to be a curious resemblance between the ways in which the Buddhist and the Veerashaiva religions came into being. The Buddha was dissatisfied with things as they were, went into the forest and lived there a life of meditation. Consequently a way out of the difficulty suggested itself to him; the light he so received spread among

the people and that was the Buddhist religion. Basava got disgusted with things as he found them, went to Sangameshvara and concentrated his mind on finding a way out of the difficulty. Light did dawn upon him and in accordance with the promptings of his conscience he went to Kalyana, the then capital city of Karnatak, to spread the light he received at Sangameshvara. His religion was the religion of Ishtalinga. Though the idea of Linga itself was not new, the idea of Ishtalinga was new and this idea he seems to have received at Sangameshvara. Ishtalinga stood for him as the symbol of both Sangamalinga at Sangameshvara and his own soul. Happily he got the services of great souls like, Prabhudeva, Channabasava and Mahadeviyakka to contribute to and to propagate his cult. In no other way can we explain the height of glory to which the cult of the Ishtalinga rose at Kalyana and near about, within less than two decades. There is no mention of any other source of Veerashaiva religion in the Vachana literature which is virtually Veerashaiva literature. Basava and his colleagues who were modest to a degree would have mentioned in their Vachanas about the existence of Veerashaiva religion before them, if it did exist before them. Again there is nowhere any mention of Basava having got Lingadīkshā from any body. He himself was responsible for his Lingadīkshā. This is only another way of saying that he and he alone started Linga-diksha or the cult of the Ishtalinga. The Vachan of Allamprabhu which we have already quoted in these pages lends ample support to this. Allamprabhu says that Channabasava and he belong to the tradition of Linga started by Basava.

§ ಅನಿಮಿಷಂಗೆ ಲಿಂಗವ ಕೊಟ್ಟಾತ ಬಸವಣ್ಣ. ಆ ಲಿಂಗ ನಿನಗೆ ಸೇರಿತ್ತಾಗಿ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯದ ಕಂದನು ನೋಡಾ ನೀನು, ಭಕ್ತದಳದುಳದಿಂದೆ ಚೆನ್ನಸಂಗಮನಾಥನೆಂಬ ಲಿಂಗವನನುಗ್ರಹಿಸಿಕೊಂಡೆನಾಗಿ, ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ಸಂಪ್ರದಾಯದ ಕಂದನು ನೋಡಾ ನಾನು. ಇಂತೀ ಇಬ್ಬರಿಗಯ್ಯ ಒಂದೇ ಕುಳಸ್ಥಳವಾದ ಕಾರಣ ಕೂಡಲ ಚೆನ್ನಸಂಗಯ್ಯನಲ್ಲಿ ಬಸವಣ್ಣನ ಮಹಾಮನೆಯ ಪ್ರಾಸದ ಒಂದೇ ಕಣಾ ಪ್ರಭುವೇ.

The first Veerashaiva pontifical throne was that of Allamaprabhu. It is known as the Shunyasinhāsana. The five pontifical thrones of the five Āchāryas were established later to propagate the Veerashaiva religion and to protect it against aggression. We have already quoted a few pages earlier a stanza, from Channabasava Purana to the effect the pontifical throne of Revana was established close at the heels of the disruption that followed the affair of Haralayya and Madhuvayya, and close at the heels of Basava's disappearance from the scene of action at Kalyana. At such a critical juncture the need was of a math for the protection of the faith founded only a few years before. The math that was founded in consequence was done so in the name of Revanārādhyā. The other four maths followed suit in course of time and they came to be named after the other four Āchāryas. The Āchāryas after Basava are real personages. The Āchāryas before Basava have no existence apart from miracles and Basava performed no miracle apart from his life. In the kingdom of a Jain king Basava, in spite of his being the prime minister of that Jain king, founded the Veerashaiva religion and heightened its glory within a decade or so. It was nothing short of a miracle. Nothing less wonderful than a miracle was witnessed during

§ Vide chapter on "Channabasavadevara Sampadane" in the Sūnya Sampadane by Gūlūru Siddha Veeranāchārya.

that short space of time. Whoever turns over the pages of Vachana Shastra, that rich and vast treasure of religious literature cannot but feel that it is all original. There is a freshness and a vigour about it, which no borrowed literature can ever have. It pulsates with the life and spirit of the Sharanas under the leadership of Basava. It is all inspired by Basava and Basava alone.

We can reach back to Basava, to Christ and to the Buddha. We can reach back to Agastya, to Vibhishana, we can reach back to Revana, to Marula, to Panditārādhyā and to Ekōrama, the Veerashaiva āchāryas who at best only helped to spread and promote Veerashaivism; but we fail to reach back to the Scharyas who founded the Veerashaiva faith in all the four Yugas. We fail to reach back to the Agastya who received the knowledge of Shatsthala at the hands of Revana. Only by outraging history can we prove the antiquity of the Veerashaiva faith and make the Panchāchāryas its founders? But Basaveshvara and his connection with the Veerashaiva religion are nothing if not historical. He stands out clear from all myth. His figure stands surrounded by the halo of Veerashaivism. In and through history, in and through the Vachana literature, and above all, in and through the faith we follow today, we can reach back to Basava, the real founder of the faith.

In an article entitled "The Lingayats" published in Triveni vol IX No II, Miss. V. T. Lakshmi M.A. writes as follows:-A study of the course of ViraSaivism is interesting. In the time of the king Bijjala of the Kalchurya line, in the 12th century, his minister Basava gave a popular, if not a political turn to Shaivism. The ground had already been prepared for him by a succession

of Saiva teachers.....originating in Kalyana; the Virasaiva faith soon spread through the north-west of Mysore and according to tradition, within sixty years of Basava's death (1161-1228 A.D.) it was embraced from Ulvi to Sholapur from Balehalli or Bale-honnur to Sivaganga. The principal Lingayat maths at Chittal-droog, the Balehonnur math and a host of others of lesser significance and Basava, Channabasava and their followers, Prabhudeva, Madiraja, Machaiya, poetess Mabadevi and others are revered by the Vira Saivas.

"In this connection, a passing reference must be made to Fleet's conjecture that neither Basava nor Channabasava could have been the founders of Virasaivism, in the light of the absence of inscriptional evidences..... But this theory is not sound, in view of the weighty literary evidence.

"Such is the brief history of the origin and growth of one of the sanest and most powerful and influential branches of Saivism in South India, in the 12th century. It was as generally agreed upon, a very popular religion in its day. Simple living and high thinking were the ringing watch- words of its worthy founder, Basava, whose views were, however, far in advance of the times. He believed that the religious life of the people was closely allied to their social welfare. In the words-of Rice he carried on social revolution, side by side with religious reformation."



CHAPTER TWELVE

Philosophy and Practice of Lingayat Religion

Now we come to the most difficult task indeed, that of giving the philosophy and practice of the Lingayat religion. It is certain that we shall not be able to do justice to the subject. It was much better if it had been treated by a competent scholar of the religion fully and properly. But as none such has been forthcoming it has fallen to our lot. We profess our incompetence and inability to set forth the doctrines of the religion fully and properly, though we shall try to perform the task to the best of our ability, now that it has fallen to our lot.

A religion may be defined as a system of belief in the Superhuman Power, which governs the course of the universe and the human life in it, and is entitled to some form of worship from the human beings for their attaining eternal happiness. The system of belief connotes doctrines concerning the relation of the universe and man to God, the Superhuman Power, and explains how God, as the Almighty Power, creates, sustains, and destroys or reabsorbs the Universe. They also explain and lay down the procedure and methods of worshipping God for the human beings so that they may be free from the trammels of the