
Research Papers



ATISHAYA KSHETRA (DISTINGUISHED PLACE) STAVANIDHI

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ABSTRACT

Shree Atishaya Kshetra (Distinguished place) Satavanidhi is located at a distance of three miles and a half towards the South from Nipani along the Nipani-Bangalore road precisely along Nipani-Sankeshwar National Highway No. 4.1

'Atishaya' here means important or significant or, so to say, a place where holy and supernatural events occurred. 'Stava' means praise of virtues and 'Nidhi' means stock or collection. Thus emanated the name 'Stavanidhi'. The place is also known as 'Tavandi' which is a combination of 'Tava' means penance and '-di' means stock. This place is the abode of pious Jain Tirthankars (saints) Vrushabh Nath, Shantinath and Parshwanath.

IMPORTANCE OF THE KSHETRA :

The Atishaya Kshetra having been lying on border-line of Karnataka and Maharashtra is well known to lakhs of people. The Northern Indian Jains unfailingly visit the Jain religious places in Southern India and pay obeisance to holy places. This amply illustrates the importance and fame of these places.

People of Digambar Jain community in a radius of about 50 to 60 miles visit this place believing that their different desires and aspirations will be fulfilled with blessings of the pious saints, such as Jawal Vidhi (child's first hair-cutting-partial or full, perform marriages, worshipping Brahmadev and Padmavati, make offering, to lay koul (drawing conclusion on the basis of natural occurrences in the temple) about favourable or unfavourable outcome of a particular event, to pay a visit (Darshan), etc. A majority of the visitors comprise those willing to fulfil the vows, and those taking a vow, which is all unacceptable to Jain religion. The only solace here is that the devotees do not take a vow to the Tirthankar image.

The God Almighty, Veetrage Bhagwan Tirthankar does not give or take anything. It is, therefore, worth its while to chant hymns eulogising the Veetrage Bhagwan and worshipping Him for His traits.

Acharya Umaswami writes,

“Mokshamargasya Netaram Bhattaram Karmabhoobhrulam
Dnyataram Vishwatkatwanam, Vande Tadguna Labdye”

•LEGENDS :

Many legends are in vogue about Stavanidhi. Some 800 to 900 years ago a devout Shravak

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(disciple) came in the field (of Jain philosophy). Once he dreamt an illustration stating that Bhagwan Parshwanath's idol is lying in Goddess Padmavati's cistern and directing the Sharavak to take it out of the water and install it at proper place. Accordingly, the Sharavak took the idol out of water but surprisingly it broke into nine pieces. The Shravak got sorry. Then, again he dreamt illustration showing that the idol had regained normalcy. The Shravak then installed the idol properly and since then the idol came to be known as Nav-khand Parshwanath (Nine-pieced Parshwanath).²

•FIVE TEMPLES AND AN IDOL :

There are five East-facing temples in the centre of the compound, which are of olden days. They are in a row, divided by just a wall between each other. In the central part, there is an image of Bhagwan Navkhand Parshwanath or Chintamani Parshwanath decorated with snake's hood, seated in a pose of Khadgasan (sword-shaped seat). At its right side, that is, towards the south there exists in the Jain temple an idol made of black stone, in a pose of Padmasan (a yogic pose of sitting), whereas there is another idol of Bhagwan Shantinath Tirthankar of ancient days, seated on a marble seat. Towards the southern end of this sanctum there is a large image of Shree Brahmadev that is, Kshetrapal.

Nishideeka (small edifice, generally open from all sides) :

At a distance of a furlong from the entrance of the Kshetra along the western side acclivity, there exists a small edifice (Nishideeka) containing Paduka (wooden slippers) of 108 Shri Payasagas Muni Maharaj.

PADMAVATI TEMPLE :

At a little distance from the above mentioned structure, towards the eastern end of the road there is a beautiful tiny temple of Goddess Padmavati facing towards the North. There is a lake here. Legend has it that the idol of Navkhand Parshwanath was found in this very lake. The image of Goddess Padmavati existing in this temple is made of blackish stone.

SHILALEKH (ROCK INSCRIPTION)

1.FIRST ROCK INSCRIPTION :

At the Peeth (seat) of Parshwanath image two Kannada rock inscriptions are found, reading :
“Shreemul Sangh Deshiyagan Pustakgucch Shree Veerneid Siddhantchakravatidaivar Gudusen Son Muttatve Lachheyade Viyaru Madisid Basdi (I) Ruvari Jeenoram Madid Pratime Mangal Maha Shree Shree (II).” The first rock inscription is as old-aged as the image. Jinojani got this image prepared from the same sculptor and the temple in which this image was installed was built by Lachchayadevi the grandmother of Senaras. Senaras was the disciple of Veernandisiddhantchakravarti of Pustakgachha, Deshiyagan and Mootsangh.

II.SECOND ROCK INSCRIPTION :

Swastishri (an epithet) Laxmisen Bhattarak Swami established Shri Shri Parshwanath, Shaka 1802.

Another Rock inscription mentions that the then Shri Laxmisen Bhattarak Maharaj installed the said image on Chaitra Shukla Dwadashi of Vikram year at Stavanidhi in Shaka 1802 (the year 1880).³

KUG-BRAHMANATH OR KSHETRAPAL :

Today Stavanidhi is famous for Koog-Brahmanath or Kshetrapal. About this Kshetrapal there is legend according to which a Mughal chieftain tried to take possession of this province. Then Shri Kshetrapal and Brahmadev rushed for their rescue and thus the temple exists there.

YATRA (FAIR OR PILGRIMAGE) :

For taking view of the Kshetrapal and Koog Brahmadev of Bhagwan Teerthankar at Stavanidhi a Yatra (i.e. fair or pilgrimage or a congregation of people) takes place every Sunday, every Amavasya (the night of the new moon and Vishali Amavasya of Poush Vadya 30) (Marathi calendar).⁴

DAXIN BHARAT JAIN SABHA AND STAVANIDHI :

Daxin Maharashtra Jain Sabha, subsequently renamed as Daxin Bharat Jain Sabha, was born in

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1898 with the inspiration of Swastishri Laxmisen Bhattarak Pattacharya Mahaswami of Kolhapur in the same holy place. This itself is the holy birth-place of this Sabha. The first meeting of the Daxin Maharashtra Jain Sabha was held under the same revered Bhattarak's Presidentship. The annual conferences of this Sabha used to be held in the same pleasant atmosphere of this birth-place of the Sabha for many years. The Presidential chairs of this Sabha have been decorated with its occupation by worthy personages like the late Laxmisen Bhattarak Maharaj, the late Jinsen Bhattarak Maharaj, the late philanthropist, Manikchand Panachand, the late Barr. Champatrai, the renowned Finance Minister of Bombay State Annasaheb Lathe, the renowned Diplomat Raobahadur Annasaheb Chougule, the internationally known Ardhmagadhi scholar Dr. A. N. Upadhye. The annual conventions of this Sabha would be held on Vishali night of the new moon and on Magh Shukla Pratipada (Marathi calendar).

ANOTEWORTHY OFFERING :

Some 15 acres of hilly land, including the Stavanidhi area, has been granted to Shri Deshbhushan Trust, Stavanidhi by Government in 1972. On the top of this hillock a twenty-one feet high image of Bhagwan Parshwanath has been installed with the generous monetary help of Rs. 21,000/- paid by Messers Rote Brothers, Kolhapur with the inspiration of reverent/ adorable 108 Acharyaratna Shri Deshbhushan Maharaj. This is a munificent offering.

HILLY LAND MADE AVAILABLE TO THE KSHETRA BY VIRTUE OF AWARD :

Shri Vasudeo Moreshwar alias Vishwambhar Dixit-Inamdar of Tavandi donated to Stavanidhi Kshetra a hilly land admeasuring 8 Acres and 36 Gunthas from out of his Inam land of 17 acres and 33 Gunthas in survey No. 66 lying towards the Western manger and Tavandi border. This award of land donation was made in the name of Jain worshippers and Manager of the Devasthan, on 2 February, 1877.5

INSTITUTIONS UNDER STAVANIDHI KSHETRA :

Three institutions are functioning under Atishaya Kshetrastavanidhi, viz., (1) Shri Atishaya Kshetra, Stavanidhi Committee, (2) Shri Atishaya Kshetra Stavanidhi Renovation Committee, and (3) Shri Deshbhushan Vidyapeeth Trust, Shri Kshetra, Stavanidhi. All the three institutions are the representatives of Digambar Jain communities in the South.

The work of Shri Atishaya Kshetra Stavanidhi is continuously going on. To look after the comforts of the pilgrims and help them in need is the aim of Shri Kshetra Committee. This institution is keeping account of income and expenditure of the Sanstha.

The Renovation Committee of the Shri Atishaya Kshetra Stavanidhi looks after the repairs of the old structures and creation of the new ones. The money required for this purpose is collected from donors and perfect accounts thereof are maintained. The Committee wholeheartedly tries to protect and boost up the name and fame of the Kshetra, thereby inspiring newer and newer donors to make donations.

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