

6-15-2020

## New Perspectives on Jain Architecture and Sculpture at Sravana Belagola

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### Recommended Citation

Rao, Nalini (2020) "New Perspectives on Jain Architecture and Sculpture at Sravana Belagola," *International Journal of Indic Religions*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 3 , Article 2.  
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/indicreligions/vol2/iss3/2>

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## **New Perspectives on Jain Architecture and Sculpture at Sravana Belagola** **Nalini Rao**

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### **Abstract**

There have been numerous researches on Jain ecology and religious beliefs but few on the role of built and natural environment in historical sites. The paper investigates into the role and function of Jain sculpture and architecture in Sravana Belagola (Karnataka) from a socio-religious context. It attempts to redefine the relation of free-standing image of Gommatesvara to temple architecture within the gamut of sacredness and aesthetics. I argue that it addresses people's values and commitments and provided shape and content to living cultural traditions. I contend that concrete visual imagery in stone imparted a community identity, cohesiveness and social connectivity that became a part of Jain culture.

**Keywords:** Jaina Architecture; Jaina Sculpture; Karnataka Art and Architecture; Regional art of Karnataka

### **Introduction**

There have been numerous researches on Jain ecology and religious beliefs (Long 2004; Dundas 1992; Cort 2001), but there are few books on the role of built and natural environment (Pal 1995). Jain architecture has largely been descriptive and sculpture more iconographical. This paper examines the socio-religious and aesthetic role of Jain art in relation to environment and historical circumstances in Sravana Belagola. By investigating into the form and iconography of the gigantic monolithic sculpture in relation to surrounding built and un-built environment, it attempts to redefine the inter-relation of various forms within the gamut of sacredness and aesthetics. I contend that the multidimensional role of visual imagery, and its transformation sustained sacred Jain beliefs and community identity between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> C. CE.

This investigation revolves around few key questions. How does architecture reveal aspects of socio-religious system and its ideology? How does it give shape or augment Jain traditions of community cohesion, learning and identity? What was the socio-religious context for the erection

of the gigantic sculpture of Bahubali in Sravavana Belagola. What was the relation between sculpture, architecture and environment at the site? For such an examination, as an art historian, I assume that a change in architecture is a change in ideas, norms or practices.



Fig. 1 Sravana Belagola

### Description of the Site

Sravana Belagola is located in Channarayapatna Taluk of the Hassan District of Karnataka state, at a distance of about 145 km from the state capital, Bengaluru. It derives its name from the words *Śramana* in Sanskrit meaning ‘ascetic’ and *Belagola* (bella-kola in Kannada) meaning white tank – corresponding to Dhavala Sarovara in Sanskrit. The importance of Sravana Belagola (fig.1) lies in its being one of the holiest Jain pilgrim centers where India’s tallest sculpture (17.5 m) is carved out of a single rock that stands at the summit of the 143.2 m. high hill. It is a small town, about 3000 ft. above sea level, with an area of about 2 sq. km. and sandwiched between two rocky hills, the small hill, Chandragiri or Chikkabetta and the larger hill, Vindhyagiri or Indragiri (also called Doddabetta). On the larger hill, stands the majestic figure of Bahubali, popularly known as Gommateswara. In addition, it is a famous pilgrimage place for Digambara Jains and has the

largest number of Jain temples (or *basadis*), about 37 in number, along with 525 inscriptions in 3 languages and scripts that throw light on the history of the place from 3rd C BCE to 18<sup>th</sup> C CE. Many of the temples were built between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE by the Gangas, Chalukyas and Hoysalas. Chandragiri consists of about 12 temples and is well known for the Parsvanatha Basadi. While Indragiri consists of 7 temples, with 7 more in town that is in between, and 7 more in nearby Jinanathapura.

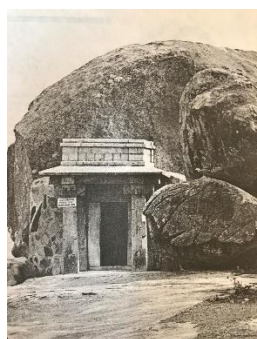


Fig. 2 Chandragiri hill cave where Bhadrabahu meditated

### Historical Background

The history of Sravana Belagola can be traced back to 3<sup>rd</sup> BCE, when Chandragupta Maurya accompanied by his guru, Srutakevalin Bhadrabahu (the last of the Dig Shruta Kevalins) is said to have migrated and meditated in a cave upon Chandragiri hill (fig.2). After his Guru died, Chandragupta continued to stay here, meditated in the cave, and died by performing *Sallekhanā Vrata* or voluntary death (Nagarjaiah 2005). Soon, the hill became famous for those who desired *samadhi* or *Sallekhanā*, and saints, laymen and women came here. Jains have emphasized the moment of death and have defined what a proper death should be, following the paradigm of deaths

of Jinas. Those who endured pain, kept minds steadfast like the Jain saints were martyred. There are different types of death in Jainism, preceded by the ritual of fasting. The rite is named variously, such as *nisidhi*, *samadhi*, *sanyasi*, *sallekhanā*, *aradhana*, etc. which involved observation of a regulated intake of food, water etc. gaining control over the body, but is not the same as suicide (Settar 1981).

Sravana Belagola remained a site for ‘voluntary death or *Sallekhanā*’ till 9<sup>th</sup> C CE. Among the 106 inscriptions, 47 memorials are those of monks, 9 of nuns, 5 of house-holders belonging to the 7-8<sup>th</sup> C. (Settar) However, in the 9<sup>th</sup> C. there was a shift and Jain temples, *basadis* came to be built, while there was a marked decline in the number of memorial inscriptions and by 10<sup>th</sup> C CE the Chandragiri was abandoned. Between 980-1100 CE more temples arose, such as those of Parsvanatha II on the small hill, as well as the large colossal sculpture of Bahubali on the Vindhyagiri hill. Whether a decrease in voluntary deaths was due to the building of temples or to the chiseling of the massive sculpture of Bahubali is intriguing. The grants towards the erection of temples, must have led to changes in Jain practice (as, even some *nisidhi* records were effaced by the temples on the rock bed). It may be conjectured that the establishment of temples does symbolize an institutionalization of not merely spiritual life, but of the Jain monk/teacher, both past and living.

The colossal figure of Bahubali, popularly known as Gommata, Gommetesa or Gommateswara, is one of the earliest tall monolithic sculptures in India. The story of Bahubali can be found in a 9<sup>th</sup> C. CE Sanskrit poem, *Adipurana*, written by Digambara monk Jinasena. Bahubali and Bharata were eminent sons of king Purudeva, later called Rishabhanatha/Adinatha, the first Tirthankara. Purudeva belonged to Ishvaku Dynasty (Pampa, *Adipurana* 1: 35). After renouncing his kingdom, he divided it between his two sons, Bharata and Bahubali. Bharata

conquered other kingdoms and expected his brother's submission as well. But Bahubali refused and they fought a duel. While Bahubali was about to crush Bharata, he was filled with remorse and decided to follow his father's footsteps and renounce the kingdom. He stood in meditation for a year, while anthills grew around his feet, snakes began to embrace his body, and birds built a nest in his hair. But only after he forgave his brother, he could realize Kevala Jñāna (complete knowledge).

About a thousand years later, in 981 CE a gigantic image of Bahubali was consecrated by Cavundaraya, minister and commander in chief of Ganga King Racamalla. Gangas ruled southern Karnataka, with their capitals at Kolar and Talakad. In fact the beginnings of Jain architecture, sculpture and literature in South India can be attributed to the Gangas (Ritti, 1985). The story of king Racamalla and his mother throws light on the figure of Bahubali. Racamalla had invited a poet to his court to hear the story of Adinatha and of his two sons, Bharata and Bahubali. Racamalla's mother, Kalaladevi saw a vision of Bharata (in Paudanapura) and desired to make it into a reality. While Cavundarya, Kalaladevi and their preceptor Nemicandra Siddhantadeva, were in Paudanapura, Cavundarya sees the vision of Bahubali. The accounts of the deeds and beliefs of Bahubali inspired Cavundarya who commissioned the colossal image in Sravana Belagola. Cavundaraya performed the *Pratishthāpana–Mahotsava* and *Mahāmastakābhiṣeka* of the image on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 981 CE (Jawaharlal 2006:152)

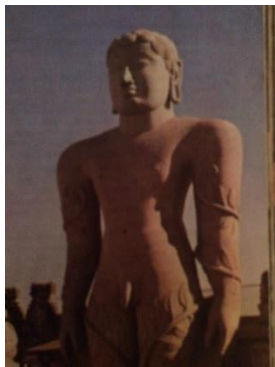


Fig. 3 Monolithic 58.8 feet figure of Bahubali

The monolithic 58.8 feet figure of Bahubali, is an epitome of power (fig. 3). Chiseled out of a light grey shade of hard granite rock, the image is naked and stands in an erect position on a full-blown lotus. It literally conveys the meaning of *Digambara* (or sky clad) (*Dik-* sky or region and *Ambara* –cloth) of *Digambara* values. The debate between the *Digambara* sect of Jainism, and the *Śvētāmbara* sect centered around 3 issues, the Jina, nakedness and women. According to the former, the authentic monk must be completely naked. They are differentiated by wearing a mouth veil for fear of harming even the tiniest of living beings. This monumental figure is in the round up-to the knees, below which it retains on the side a certain mass of rock while the base itself is part of the original rock. Later, between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, subsidiary figures were added: *mādhavī* creepers entwine around his legs and arms; and small subsidiary sculptures of ant hills and serpents (*kukkuṭā-sarpas*), women and devotees surround the figure, all of which were added between 12-17<sup>th</sup> C CE. Other images of Bahubali can be found at Badami, Aihole, Karkala, Venur, Commatagiri, Arhippur, Dharmasthala

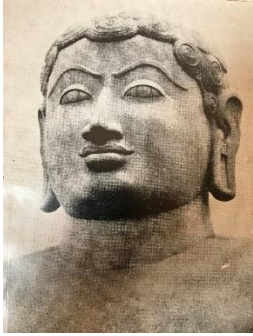


Fig. 4 Gommateswara

Set against the sky, the finely polished figure of Gommateswara, exhibits the emblems of a superhuman being (*mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇa*), such as long arms (*ājānubāhu*), long lobed ears, broad (8m) shoulders and broad heaved -up chest (3m) and volute curls. There are some anatomical details, such as in the knees, hips, and chin, while the head is almost round, about 2.2 m. high; the face is broad with a subdued smile (fig.4). The sculptor has deleted the finger nails and toes, but kept the crease lines of the neck. The modelling of the figure is compact and vigorous, and remarkable for its formality, elegance and scale. The image has withstood the onslaught of wind, rain and heat for a thousand years. Its commanding position overlooking the wide stretch of plain and size is a unique example of harmonization of monumentality and plasticity, renunciation with firmness and grace.

However, an intriguing aspect of the image is the question as to why was Bahubali carved in a colossal form while the images of Tirthankaras, which Jains considered far more important, remained small, and inside the temples. Furthermore, the tradition of depicting Tirthankaras in stone had been established in Mathura school of art during the Kushan period, while those of Bahubali were merely very few within temples. In fact, there was no early image of Bahubali in Kankali Tilaka, Mathura, but only images of Parsvanatha. The earliest image of Bahubali can be



found in Megudi Jinendrabhavana, Aihole in 634 CE, and at Badami, in Cave No. 4 in 595 CE where Bahubali is depicted with Parsvanatha. However, at Sravana Belagola, the large figure of Bahubali is not depicted with Parsvanatha (Fergusson and Burgess 1880; Nagarajaiah 1999: 51 – 52). It is possible to conjecture that Parsvanatha, who was a Kshatriya, belonged to the family of the founders of the Santara dynasty, belonging to *ugra vamsa* and hailed from Hombuja Kshetra, in Shimoga District in Karnataka.



Fig. 5 Bronze image of Bahubali in Samuel Ellenberg's Collection

In addition, the figure of Bahubali in Sravana Belagola is distinguished from the earlier bronze image of Bahubali in Samuel Ellenberg's Collection (fig. 5). The latter belongs to the post-Gupta period (4- 6<sup>th</sup> C CE), where he is represented as a child, in a *kāyotsarga* posture, on a lotus; his hair locks are combed upward, they are twisted and fall on the shoulders, while in Sravana Belagola, his curls do not fall down. This is the earliest figure of Bahubali discovered in India (Shah U.P 1986). According to M. A. Dhaky, it could belong to the late Kushan Period (Lerner 1991; Pal 1995). It is probable that the father of Bahubali, Rishabhanatha (i.e. Adinatha) was

depicted with curls. There are three different types of depicting curls, from head to armpit, up till the shoulders and restricted to the crown. It may be surmised that worship of Bahubali became popular only in the post Gupta period and he became a hero during Early Chalukyan times.

However, at Sravana Belagola, Bahubali is an independent colossal rock-cut image, which is a great departure from earlier images, while earlier, he was represented with Parsvanatha, in Badami and Aihole. This might be due to the influence of the figure of Bahubali in Meena Basadi in 580 CE where it is a narrative sculpture. Secondly, workers from Aihole were migrating to this site, due to changes in Chalukyan rule and local Jain demands increased here in the 10<sup>th</sup> C CE. More convincing is the fact that Jain monks began to have a close association with royalty, particularly after the rise of the Sramana sect in 550 BCE (Jaini 1979), with their emperors being Kshatriyas or ruling class, in both secular and spiritual life. During the Ganga period (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> C CE) Jainism was the state religion (Hampana, 1985). A succession for royal dynasties, helped spread Jainism, such as the Kadambas, Gangas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Segalavas, Kongalvas, Rattas of Saundatti, Chutas, Nagirs, Salvass and Hoyslas. Many kings were followers of a Jainism, such as Muskara, Shivamara II, Rachamalla, Nitimarga, Marasimha, Marasimha II, Ajitasenacharya, Avaneetha, Durvaneetha, Narasimha and Rachamalla. Marasimha III's love for Jainism is described in a poetic inscription (Ritti 1985). They had an affinity for Bahubali who was the son of a king and an historical personality. It is said that the Ganga dynasty was founded by a Digambara monk in 265 CE. Moreover, Jain sage were advisors to kings as preceptors.

Another departure in the form of the monumental figure lies in the incorporation of the figures of two women, added during the Hoysala period. In the figure in the Ellenberg Collection, there are no women, nor a hill, but merely creepers that wind around his body. However, at Aihole, inside the cell to the right of Parsvanatha in the sanctum of Minabasadi's is a narrative relief, about

25 ft long and 7 ft high. Parsvanatha is seated on a lion throne in *paryankasana*, flanked by two *camaradhārā*, and a triple umbrella (*chatra traya*), a 5-hooded Naga or Dharanendra and a single-hooded Padmavati (King and Queen of Nagas) on either side in Añjali Mudrā. The figures of two ladies are depicted alongside the majestic and serene image of Bahubali in Badami Cave number 4 as well. It is surrounded by celestial nymphs, *vidyādharas*, while *madhavi* creepers are overgrown in prolific abundance. Snakes issue forth from the anthill, and there are two ladies on either side of Bahubali, his sisters Brahmi and Sundari. Whether this was due to the prominence to be accorded to Bahubali with the inclusion of subsidiary figures, or a narrative story due to the influence of Chalukyas is intriguing. But the identification of the women in Sravana Belagola is open to various interpretations. Svetambara Acarya. Hemachandra (1088 -1172) in his Kali-Kala Sarvajna affirms that Brahmi and Sundari appeared on the scene to remove the creeper that had wreathed their brothers' body. Digambara Acarya Jinasena (belonging to 850 CE) states in *Adipurana* (i.e. *Purvapurana*) that 'women respectfully removed the entwined creeper to free Bahubali from any calamity or obstruction for his meditation, while Pampa states that the nymphs of Khecara class appeared on the scene and cleared the creeper (Adipurana: 14.141). In addition, at Sravanabelagola, the Yakṣa figures of Dharanenda and Padmavati are incorporated, who are actually the Yakṣa and Yakṣi of Prasvanaatha. But it was only in the 9<sup>th</sup> C CE that one finds the influence of Yakṣa and Yakṣi appear near the images of Tirthankaras, and each of the 24 Tirthankaras came to be associated with an exclusive pair of subordinate deities. The earliest image of Yaksa is in the Bandhara Basti in Sravana Belagola, in fact it is the earliest one in Karnataka (Govind 2015).



Fig. 6 Tirthankaras Depicted on Rocks

Another anomaly that one can find here, is that, the figure of Bahubali is carved outside in the open while in earlier times it was inside a temple when the Tirthankara figures by 10<sup>th</sup> C CE are not monumentalized in the open. Merely small depictions in the form of relief sculptures of the Tirthankaras can be found on rocks or near tanks (fig. 6) as in the recent excavations in Artipura, Mandya district, near Maddhur, Karnataka (Subramanian 2016). This is a conundrum and one can only speculate. Firstly, Bahubali could be depicted in the open in a monumental fashion as he was not a Tirthankara. He was a Kevalin, who had obtained the supreme knowledge, apart from being the son of the first Tirthankara, Adinatha. He is not raised to the status of a Tirthankara, who is a spiritual teacher. He could not be represented along with other Tirthankaras, but separately. Secondly Bahubali was a Deva (god), while Tirthankaras were classified as *devadhidevas* (the god of gods). According to Hemachandra's *Abhidhanacintamani*, Jain divinities fall under two classes, *devadidevas* and *devas* (Jawaharlal 2006: 13).

More importantly, narratives on Bahubali, had become popular in the 9<sup>th</sup> C CE., Bahubali was the hero of the composition of Sivalotyacarya in his *Vaddaradhane*, with the story of Bahubali and

Chandragupta Maurya. The earliest treatment of the life of Bahubali is in the *Purvapurana* in Sanskrit by Jinsenacarya (838 CE), which was later elaborated by the Kannada writers, Pampa (10<sup>th</sup> C CE) in his *Adipurana*. Pampa's epic work, of 10,800 verses is divided into 47 cantos and glorifies the principles and philosophy Jainism. The last five chapters contain the account of Bharat and Bahubali and it is about renunciation of pride. Here are dramatic touches to this poem and about Jain values: self-restraint, nobility, is praised (Hampana 1985; Sitaramayya 1967). Taranath (1985: 25) writes:

“The physical body, beauty, prosperity, youth, wealth, good fortune and duration of life, etc., are like the flash of lightning, the shadow of a cloud, the rainbow, the distension of a bubble and the plenitude of worldly pleasure.” (9: 46)

In addition, the preceptor of Cavundaraya, was Nemicnadra Siddhadeva, who had composed the *Trisasthi Sataka Mahapurana* translated into Kannada as *Gommatasara*. Thus, a large body of literature appears on the life of Bahubali's life, largely in Kannada, such as are Sivalotyacarya in work, Vaddaradhane the earliest prose lit in Kannda, that described the life of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta 9<sup>th</sup> C CE, (popularized by Goppana Pandita, in 12<sup>th</sup> C as *Gommatastuti* in 1180). With a vast body of popular poetry in a local language, the personality of Bahubali was enlivened, and substantiated in sculpture. The monolith was a generator of religious experiences as well, that was eulogized and its experience incorporated into later literature, such as by Bopanna Pandita.

That the serene gigantic image was in the open, and the Tirthankaras remained inside the temple (or in miniature form on rocks), probably relates to their ritual function within a temple setting, where worship was possible, without losing the sacred character as icons. They were chiseled in Jain resting places and with the establishment of Jain temple institutions, they acted as icons of worship and mantra. Furthermore, Tirthankaras were ascetic heroes primarily of monks; they had

acted as symbols or index of moral life. The monk being the head of Jain institutions had an important role in the decision of iconographical, architectural practices of the religion. The Bahubali image was more for the laymen, and perhaps the monks did not consent to the carving of a Tirthankara in the open. It could be that Bahubali was more for monks while the temples had a more populist role. The image of Bahubali (fig. 7) was carved in the open at a distance from those of the Tirthankaras. Such a conscious way of distancing the two, can be found in the newly excavated Jain remains at Arthipura, near Maddur, in Mandya District in Karnataka, which pre-dates the images in Sravana Belagola.



Fig. 7 Bahubali

In 2015, the Archaeological Survey of India brought to light 5 temple Jain complexes, Nishidhis, sculptures, and monasteries (Govind 2015). Here are two hills, on the Sravana Betta is the figure of Bahubali, about 13 ft. in height, while on the Chikkabetta, small hill or Kanakagiri within temple precincts are the Tirthankaras, particularly Mahavira (and very miniature bas – reliefs depicting the Jain Tirthankaras, Adinatha, Suparsvanath on the rocks, on the river bed. The date of Artipura has been established at 918 CE, while that of Sravana Belagola sculpture is 983 CE, which allows us to deduce that experimentation regarding the carving of a monolithic

sculpture took place. This was within the paradigm of separation of Bahubali and the Tirthankaras, while the monks stayed in the smaller hill, within monasteries with images of Tirthankaras – both in relief on rocks as well as in the precincts in temples. This substantiates the separateness of the function of images for monks, and the power of the living monks during the contemporary period. Adjacent to the temples, were the Jain monasteries, found in Arthipura. At Sravana Belagola, there is not much of a remains of substantial monasteries, but merely a mention of, Naviluru *saṅgha*, a prominent Jain congregation. Jain monasteries or *maṭhas* that date from 5<sup>th</sup> C CE were moving educational institutions and except for staying in one place during the rainy season (*varṣākāla*), monks were wanderers. The existence of Jain *saṅgha* or *gaṇa* and Gacchas is attested by the one in Kitturu I in 7<sup>th</sup> C, such as Kirtisenamuni (740 CE) disciple of Amitasena Acharya (700 CE) who was forerunner of Kitturu *saṅgha*. But Jain *maṭhas* or monasteries played a key role in the promotion of learning and public education, and centered around the celibate learned cleric (who formed the pivotal figure in early medieval times). It is probable that during the 10<sup>th</sup> C, the functions and ideals of the two institutions, temple and *maṭha* were separated; the monastery being for meditation and temple for gathering and worship. However, the *maṇḍapa* could have taken over the function of meditation (as meditation on death was considered significant) while the temple was resting places or gathering spaces for talks by monks.

From 10<sup>th</sup> C CE onwards numerous temples were established at the site. With the growth of pilgrimage, the site began to acquire new meaning. On the Chandragiri hill are 13 temples, such as the Santinatha basti, Suparsvanatha basti, Parsvanatha basti, Kattale basti, Chandragupta basti, Chandraprabha basti, Chavundaraya basti, Sasana basti, Majjigana basti, Eradu-katte basti, Savatigandavarana basti, Terina basti, Santisvara basti, all built between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> C CE., although, the earliest one can be dated to 8<sup>th</sup> C CE. On the Vindhyagiri were the Siddhara basti,

Chennanna basti, Odegal basti, and Chauvisa Tirthankara basti. A conglomeration of *basadis* was not uncommon. In Koppla, there were 772 basadsis, while Gulbarga had 700 shrines. These were also called, *caityalayas* and *Jinalayas*. These are modest in size, Dravidian in style, consisting of a sanctum or *garbhagrha*, a vestibule or *āntarāla*, a main hall, some with front halls or *navaraṅga* (or *mukha maṇḍapa*), portico or *maṇḍapa*, while the sanctum is surmounted by a *śīkara* and the entire temple by an enclosure or *suttalay* or *parisūtra*. Jain temples have a free-standing pillar, called *manastambhas* facing the 4 directions, called *caumukha jinas* found on the top of *manasthambas*.

The *basadis* were centers of worship, evidenced from the icons of *Tirthankaras* or *Yakṣas* and *Ambikās* and information regarding the lighting of lamps. By this time, Jaina Canonical texts and Puranas, such as the *Puraramarthprakasa*, and *Padmapurana* of Ravisena, it was a center of ritual and festive occasions, with dance and music, attested by the epigraphical evidence from Sravana Belagola that mention them as *nrittalaya* or dancing hall constructed by a *setti* in front of the Nagara Nimalaya and that dancing halls were attached to Jain monasteries. They were centers of learning and *Ghatikasthanas* (educational centers) were near Jain temples, such as in *Pulige* (*Purikaranagara*), and *Lakshmesvara*. The *Svadavada* waves of doctrines, being taught in Kannada, had spread all over Karnataka, and epicenters of Jain *saṅgha* existed in Hombuja, Hallur, Pulie, Annigeri, Adur. They were centers of congregation for the people, who could listen to the doctrines of Jainism, in a precinct established by the monk. It is well known that Jains followed the fourfold congregation or *chaturvidha saṅgha* of ourfold community of *Munis* (male ascetics), *Āryikā* (female ascetics), *Śrāvaka* (laymen), and *Śrāvikā* (laywomen).

Dictated by both functionality and design, they perhaps had an economic function as well. They were centers of gifting as recorded in inscriptions. Here stone workers, particularly the *śreṇī* of



guild of Aiyavole 500, who had probably migrated from Aihole, center of Chalukyan School of Art were employed here. The *basadis* acted as employers, regulating the guild systems (trade guilds, and stone worker's guilds). Its charities were tied to that of kings (and traders), who could now re-affirm his position as protector of religion (or *dharma*). However, the role of the Jain monk—teacher, with his routine pious life, was admired and honored in society. They won over generals, feudal chiefs, governors, traders, *Banajigas*, or middle class. The monk was the inspiration behind it, who kept alive the values of Jainism, through collective and individual ritual and congregation. Thus, architecture had a social role to play and strengthened and reinforced and renewed religious convictions, provided a religious identity to the Jain community (Weder, 2016).

In regard to temple design, and in terms of adopting a *mandapa* style of architecture, the Jains adopted the popular design as seen in Aihole and Badami. In addition, Pandyas, and Gangas were followers of Jainism. The architect did not spend designing a particular type of building; he was not a developer, but an adaptor. Temple Architecture had been standardized in terms of space and time, it had a consistency of design, with a traditional place in society. Its form had been established, popular and ubiquitous, and multifunctional and provided a space for community exchange. In addition, the *basadis* elicited charity, place of learning, of ascetic practice, worship and a safe place for women. They consisted of open mandapas in addition to free standing mandapas on the hill. *Mandapas* and temples were functional; they were shelters from the sun, and were sculpturesque than gigantic in proportion. They did not interfere or dominate the environment or even come in the way of visual emphasis, or block the sight of the gigantic sculpture, and were not solid in form. Each did not interfere with the other and there was no clash of architecture and sculpture.

This was because there is no center of gravity at the site of Sravana Belagola. Architectural elements were designed with the aid of ‘Gestalt psychology’ that understand that the human mind is structure to perceive the environment in a way that organizes through visual field into distinct and related parts. They pursued simplified forms and spatial design. There is no central axis except when going up the hill towards the colossal figure where you find a sequence of spaces and signs and symbols. The temples are interwoven with their surroundings: the natural environment, and built ones, small open *mandapas* and pillars. In addition, the ordering of structures was followed a high degree of clarity and adjacency. There was no building program, but a proximity diagram of the groupings can be found. This was achieved by the manipulation of space and their location, particularly on the hills. The hilltops were considered suitable sites for Jain shrines and seats of penance for sages, which was used advantageously by the chiseling of the rock-cut dramatic, solitary majestic, serene figure of Bahubali. The magnitude of the sculpture is greater than that of architecture, as the Indian *śilpī* was trained in both types of art. The boundaries of sculpture and architecture are blurred; both embody a sensory experience. In addition, communication through images were embedded in India visual culture. Sculpture offered an approachable road to Jain philosophy and religious beliefs and what more could be more liberating than being on open ground with no boundaries. While temples were in the form of caves, the monolith was in the form of a Jain monk, whose ideology was liberation. Both the living monk and the statue of Gommatesvara brought the community into contact with the natural world through a (image) of Jain ideals that hovered high above them. The power and role of sculpture and architecture in building social connections and psycho-social well-being learned from the monks, was a contributive aspect of the sacred site of Sravana Belagola. The sacredness proliferated into the

landscape, stone and hearts and imparted a community identity, and social connectivity that became a part of Jain culture.

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