

Iconography of Parshvanatha at Annigere in North Karnataka – An Analysis

Dr. Soumya Manjunath Chavan*

India being the country which is known to have produced three major religions of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Jainism is still a practicing religion in many states of India like Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. The name Jaina is derived from the word jina, meaning conqueror, or liberator. Believing in immortal and indestructible soul (jiva) within every living being, its final goal is the state of liberation known as *kaivalya*, *moksha* or *nirvana*. The sramana movements rose in India in circa 550 B.C. Jainism in Karnataka began with the stable connection of the Digambara monk called Simhanandi who is credited with the establishment of the Ganga dynasty around 265 A.D. and thereafter for almost seven centuries Jain communities in Karnataka enjoyed the continuous patronage of this dynasty. Chamundaraya, a Ganga general commissioned the colossal rock-hewn statue of Bahubali at Sravana Belagola in 948 which is the holiest Jain shrine today. Gangas in the South Mysore and Kadambas and Badami Chalukyans in North Karnataka contributed to Jaina Art and Architecture. The Jinas or Tirthankaras list to twenty-four given before the beginning of the Christian era and the earliest reference occurs in the Samavayanga Sutra, Bhagavati Sutra, Kalpasutra and Purnacariyam. The Kalpasutra describes at length only the lives of Rishabhanatha, Neminatha, Parshvanatha and Mahavira. The iconographic feature of Parshvanatha was finalised first with seven-headed snake canopy in the first century B.C. followed by other Tirthankaras. Each of the Tirthankaras have specific yaksha and yakshi flanking them. There are many temples in Karnataka dedicated to Parshvanatha. The present paper attempts to discuss the iconography of Parshvanatha Tirthankara and with a special reference to the sculpture in the temple dedicated to him at Annigere, a village in Dharwad district in the Northern Karnataka.

Keywords – Parshvanatha, Tirthankara, Iconography and North Karnataka

*Asst. Prof. Department of Cultural Studies, Jain University, Bangalore, India