CHAPTER I

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The period when the Hoysala dynasty spurted on the political horizon, it was heir to the pedigree of Chōla-Pāṇḍya splendour, across the river Kaveri on the south, the Nolamba-Ganga on the west and south and Kadamba-Alupa to the east and the Kalyāṇa Chālukyas and the Yādavas to the north of Vīrasamudra the capital of the Hoysalas. (This dynasty lasted for nearly 350 years in this vast area. The Hoysala monarchs stand on a very high level in bringing about economic prosperity, in treating the subjects with the tender care of parents, in adopting those moral values which could rightly be called as the directive principles of state policy and in subordinating their own lower self to catch the divine radiation, so that the heart of the king could reflect the glory of the God. The age itself heralded the birth of numerous luminaries not only in the field of politics, but also in religion, philosophy, literature and architecture as for example Śri Bāsavadāra, Śri Rāmānujaśārya, Ponna, Janna and most others, whose contributions form the core of our culture.)

The glory of Kārāka has been amply
demonstrated by the discovery of stone tools used by the prehistoric man of this region. The early men here selected rock shelters, rivers, thick forests to live in. The great epics, purāṇas exhibit a knowledge of Karmātaka. Asoka's edicts discovered at Naski, Koppal, Brahmagiri, Siddagurara etc. speak of the prevalence of Buddhism here as early as third century B.C., and the story of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta at Śravānabelgola about Jainism.

The Satavahanas then ruled here. The famous Nāsić cave inscription¹ speak of the brahmanic ceremonies and rites performed. The Kadambas then laid a firm foundation for Karnataka history and culture. The Tāḷagundā inscription of Kadambas² speak about the self respect and educational activities of those days. Nalasangi³ in Belgaum district formed a Jain centre of those days and Tāḷagundā the Śaiva centre. The Ganges of Talakād the next rulers ascribe the foundation of their empire to sage Gopanandi and they patronised Jainism to a great extent. The Gommateshvara image was installed and consecrated by Chāmunḍaraya the minister of Ganga Rāchamalla.
The period of the Chalukyas of Badami is an epoch-making one. They distinguished themselves in the fields of religion, art, and architecture. Their capital at Badami has the rock-cut cave temples for Vaishnava, Saiva and Jaina religions at a single spot. Aihole and Pattadakal also contributed their share. With the downfall of the Chalukyas of Badami the fortunes of Karnataka Raja Lakshmi fell into the hands of the illustrious dynasty that ruled over a larger territory than they did under the Chalukyas. The Kailasanatha temple is a master piece of their art and architecture. Their capital at Malkhed paved the way for the Jainas and Vaishnavas to flourish simultaneously.

With the decline of the Rashtrakutas and the emergence of the Chalukyas, Kalyana, Karnataka gains a new dimension. The birth of Basaveshwara brought a new area in the social and religious history of Karnataka. With their downfall the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra rose to power.

The Hoysala age is quite significant in the domain of religion and philosophy. All the four principal creeds of the period, viz. Vaishnavism,
Saivism, Jainism and Viraśāivism were flourishing side by side. The religious tolerance of the day is clearly seen in the inscriptions. The titles of the chief queen of Vishnuvardhana, Śaṅtalādevi and many others support the above view.

Nature and Scope:

Many scholars have laboured hard to reconstruct the history of Karnataka in general and the Hoysalas in particular. Many monographs on the Hoysalas viz., the Kēśava temple at Belur, Śrīmanathapura and the Lakṣmīdevi temple at Doddagaddavalli by R. Narasimachar. The Hoysalas by Jerrret and the Hoysala Vamśa by W. Coelho give a general picture of those days. Many stray articles in the distinguished journals speak a little about the subject. No comparative work has been written till now to know the religions prevalent in the period under consideration. The major religions have been studied under the various headings so as to provide the necessary background for the work. The geographical and chronological distributional pattern of the temples, the royal patronage, the various rites, rituals, and festivals performed the various forms of the gods under worship, the religious centres and teachers and the main features.
of the religions, the minor religious cults have been dealt with here from the study of a variety of source materials. All the available published sources are utilised so as to give a complete picture of the period. The photographs, scenes of religious functions are quoted wherever necessary. The local traditions are also examined.

The Sources:

The sources for understanding the problem are varied in nature. They may be classified as the inscriptions, the literary works and the temples, some of them will be briefly discussed below.

The inscriptions are the reliable and authentic source material for they provide the first hand knowledge of the happenings of those days. They are nearer to the truth in spite of the current topics of those days; they supply a clear cut picture of the society. They also help us to know the polity, economics, language, script, religions, education and many other aspects of the period. The kings, queens and the generals are devoted to a considerable extent and their meritorious works like building of the tanks, sluices, bunds, temples, basadis.
end many others are mentioned. Those dignitaries were the state authorities and naturally encouraged art, literature, religion, simultaneously. Their ancestral history and their work provide a firm foundation of culture for them to continue. There are instances to show that the king and queen, husband and wife, followed different religions throughout their life and patronised other religions in the society, they gained the title of "protector of the four creeds." This shows the religious tolerance prevalent in the society. Some of the important inscriptions from Sravanga Belgola and Balligave provide a picture of the society; such as imparting education, sacrificing one's own life on the demise of the king, queen etc., the system of Garuda, Benka and that of Siditaḷe, constructing temples in the names of persons deceased. During the history of medieval Karnataka we find the Vaishnava temples in agrahara towns, the Śiva temples in the Śivapuris and the Jain Basadis in Jaināṭhapuras. All these aspects are covered here more deliberately. They also provide information about the rare forms of Vishnu or Śiva which are altogether unknown from other sources. All the temples noticed in the thesis was, no doubt, in existence during the period under consideration but some of them
have become extinct to-day. Many grants were made to
the minor deities like Sūrya, Kārtikēya and Śakti,
others speak of their popularity. Thus the study of
these epigraphs is worth while.

Literary works are of secondary help. No
doubt, they were written during the period and under
the royal patronage in more descriptive style but are
lesser use to the historians. (In spite of such defects
they are of utmost importance, for instance nowhere
in the Hoysala and Chōla records we have the famous
event of Śrī Rāmānuja Chārya’s persecution by the Chōla
ruler. Kulōttunga ulā and Guruparaśpara prabhāva.
Tamil works narrate the event of Ramānuja coming to
Mysore. Then Rāmānuja meets Hoysala Kṛtiśēva and
cures the disease of his daughter Hariyale. It is due
to this event that Kṛtiśēva changes his race to Vīshṇu
Vardhana and accepts Śrīvācnavism. Thus it marks an
important landmark in the religious history of the
Hoysalas.) Nāminātha purāṇa and Līlāvati by Vaishnava
describe many social and religious customs of the day.
Somayapaḷika a contemporary work deals mainly with
Jainism and gives a picture of the other existing
religions of the day. Padmaṇāṅka
Padminaraka narrates the event of Padmarasa defeating Tribhuvana tāta a Vaiṣṇava from the Andhra region in a religious discourse and converting him to Viśaiva. The ragalas of the Karihara and the works of Rāghavānka give clear picture of the Śaivas and the Jains. Unfortunately we do not have any works pertaining to the Kālāmukhas who formed an important section of the society. Jagannāthavijaya though narrates the story of lord Śri Kṛṣṇa as described in the Viṣṇupūrāṇa was more popular and many Hoysala temple panels depict the stories. Neminātha purāṇa gives the Kṛṣṇa story according to Jains. Yasodhara charite of Janna speaks of violence. Thus the literary works are of great use in knowing the religious clashes, position of co-herent religions, religious customs and practices in the society, traditions and popular stories current and many other aspects.

Temple occupies an important place in the society. It was the centre of socio-religious activities of the people. The stone that was used for the building was chloritic schist which could be adequately dealt with by sensitive chisel work. The elevated Jagati, stellate platform, indented wall surfaces, highly
decorated gopuras of Southern Vimana type distinguish the Hoysala temples from those of others. Dasōja of Balligāve executed the famous madanikā figures in the navaranga and a figure of Bhairávi of Kesava temple at Belur. Another Kesava image belonging to Kikkērī is now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York and many images of Hoysalēśvara temple at Halebid belong to his period. Other sculptors of the day were - Chāvana, Chikka Hampa, Mallianna. Nāgōja of Gadag, Kēdārōja, Hāna, Kētana, Reōja, Mallitana, Deichōja of Nandi. They executed many images and were responsible to enhance the glory of the Hoysala art to a great level.) Tradition ascribes the construction of Hoysala temples to the sculptor Jakkanāchārī and his son Dakkanāchārī. It further says that the temples were built overnight. The inscriptions pertaining to the temples clarify that they were built at different periods during the Hoysala rule. Thus the names Jakkanāchārī, Dakkanāchārī are the corrupt form of Dakshināchārī or the southern tradition. The Hoysala temples depict the scenes from warfare, Bhāgavata purāṇas, Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana, the various forms of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, the minor deities like Sūrya, Kārtikeya, Brahma, Rādhā, Gaṇapati and others.
The artistic beauty of these images in their decorative aspects have no parallels elsewhere. The Salabhanjikas or the Madanika figures are world famous, and attract the attention of the tourists from different parts of the world. Many of the socio-religious practices of the day are well chiselled in the narrative panels of the outer wall. Thus these temples are of great use in knowing the subject in detail.

Thus the study is based on all the published inscriptions, literary works and the photographs of the temples and images of Gods and Goddesses. Thus an attempt has been made here to know the things in detail.
REFERENCES AND NOTES


5. R.C., II, 36 162 (132); R.C., XII, 36, 9, calls Gul Gachi as protector of four creeds.