CHAPTER VII

RELIGION

Religion has influenced human development throughout all stages of civilisation. It represents the emotional side of human nature as expressed in religious rituals, literature, and is a product of inner urge. Religion is the reaction to inner impulse as to what is conceived to be sacred and arousing awe or reverence.

The history of religion apart from its theological, philosophical and iconographical aspects has a social aspect as well, as religion is practiced by people in order to be viable. It was religion together with the code of life associated with it that has been the inner element by which life went on progressively.

Karnataka made signal contributions to the theory and practice of religion and to the philosophical thought in its various aspects. Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism found a favourable atmosphere in Karnataka. It owes an incalculable debt to famous dynasties for being the patrons of many religions. They were actively practicing different religions at different times of history.

Religion played a major role in shaping the destiny of Halasi region, which was the corner stone of many religious systems. Religion has been
one of the prime principles in the region, which moulded the culture of the people from generation to generation. Successive rulers of Halasi belonging to different dynasties were the promoters of all the existing religions of the time. This is clear from the records, which register grants for Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Jaina temples. The information that can be gleaned from various sources, though scanty and disjointed, is nevertheless, confirmative. Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Jainism were the main religious faiths that nurtured and influenced the life and thought of the people of the region.

Buddhism

Buddhism along with Jainism has played an important role in shaping the social and intellectual aspects of life in India. This religion preached non-violence to all living creatures, tolerance and self disciplined values that have become cornerstone of Indian Ethos. The teaching of this faith won immediate popular acceptance owing to its simplicity and practicality. Buddhism was the state religion of Mauryas under emperor Aśoka who sent Rakkhita along with 500 Buddhist monks to Banavāsi region.² This is how Buddhism made its advent into Banavāsi country in about 3rd century BC. Evidence of the prevalence of Buddhism under the Sātavāhana hegemony is revealed from the terracotta image of Buddha found in Vaḍagāon –Madhapur in the environs of Halasi.³ Naga sculpture
inscription of Viṅhukāda Chuṭukulānanda Sātakāraṇi at Banavāsi palaeographically assigned to 3rd century AD, states that his daughter Śivaskanda Nāgaśrī built a tank and vihāra there. It indicates the prevalence of Buddhism in Banavāsi region.⁴

That Buddhism continued to exist under the Kadambas is evident from the controversial Davanagere plates of Ravivarma dated in his 34th regnal year. It commences with an invocation to Buddha.⁵ From these evidences it can be surmised that since Buddhism was prevailing in other parts of Kadamba maṇḍala it must have been in existence in and around Halasi region. But conclusive evidence is lacking as most of the antiquities lay buried under the ground awaiting the spade of archaeologists to unearth them.

Hiuen-Tsiang notices in the early part of 7th century AD that there were about 100 sangharāmas with 1000 priests who were the followers of Hinayāna and Mahāyāna sects in the region of Konkaṇapura⁶. Konkaṇapura is identified with Banavāsi by some scholars and with Chandrapura (the capital of Kadambas of Goa) by others. Hiregutti plates of Bhōja Āsankitavarma of the early 6th century AD mentions grant of the village in Dipakavisaya for the enjoyment of Buddhist vihāra by the King at the request of a Kaikēya chief.⁷ This is the clear evidence of the
existence of Buddhism in the coastal region of Uttara Kannada district and the Goa territory. The kingdom of the Bhōjas included Halasi region.

The Bhōja coins with the figure of an elephant found near Kalghatagi in Dharwar district would indicate the Buddhist leaning of the Bhōjas as normally Buddha is symbolically represented as an elephant.8

From the above account it can be surmised again that Buddhism prevailed in the region under study. To fill the lacunae, history is aided by the literary sources. Contemporary Jain writer Hēmachandra in his Dvaiśravya makes a mention of two Buddhist monks in the court of Kadamba Jayakēśi I.9 Although Buddhism had not disappeared completely in the region it should be noted that compared to other religious sects the position enjoyed by Buddhism was relatively feeble. Ultimately it might have faded away from the map of Halasināṇu.

Jainism

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism had better days. Jainism swayed with Buddhism during a couple of centuries before and after Christ for supremacy and ultimately evolved as one of the principal religions of ancient and medieval Karnataka. Jainism is said to have its advent into Karnataka with the visit of Mauryan King Chandragupta to Śravaṇabelagola who was accompanied by his Jain preceptor Bhadrabāhu.
The dawn of Kadambas signalised the dawn of Jainism in Halasi region. During this period Ḣalasināḍu distinguished as thriving centre of Jainism, where several learned preceptors and religious institutions owned by different schools of Jaina faith flourished. This resulted in subsequent evolution of Jainism in Karnataka. Early Kadambas seem to be the pioneers in the elevation of the status of Jainism by royal patronage in the region under study.

Of the forty records of the early Kadambas except the two controversial inscriptions of Ravivarma (Davanagere Plates and Guḍṇāpur inscription) about 10 are Jain records. Of these Kakusthavarma, Ravivarma, Harivarma, and Devavarma issued one, three, three and two Jain records respectively between C. 445-495 AD. Most of these early Kadamba Jain epigraphs are copper plates and are in Sanskrit language.

Now the question arises as to what prompted the early Kadamba rulers (who were the followers of Vedic religion) to patronise Jainism? Was it because it was difficult to neglect Jainism in the background of Indian heritage, which was developed during Maurya-Satavahana period? May be the early Kadambas who were the champions of Vedic religion, were not willing to take the blame as prejudiced by the contemporary society by neglecting non-Vedic religions like Jainism. For the growing kingdom of the Kadambas, which was in its infant stage, religious harmony was the
need of the hour. Moreover to have political contacts with northern India Kadambas were in need of the helping hand of the Jains.

Jains consisted of the wealthy and aristocratic class of traders, merchants and administrators and their material and moral support was essential for the smooth functioning of the kingdom. So the ruling Kadambas emerged as the patrons of Jainism. Kadambas never made any distinction between orthodox and heterodox religions. Early Kadamba inscriptions contain the Jain grants made to basadis and ascetics. Some of these grants have a direct bearing on the history of Jainism in Karnataka.\textsuperscript{11}

The Halasi copper plates of Kākusthavarma dated 80\textsuperscript{th} victorious year commence with an invocation to Bhagavān Jinendra.\textsuperscript{12} It records an interesting information that the grant was made to senapati Śrutakirtī for saving the king.\textsuperscript{13} Śrutakirtī’s name suggests that he was the follower of Yāpanīya sect of Jainism.

Halasi plates of Mṛgēśavarma dated his 8\textsuperscript{th} regnal year inform that the king erected a Jinālaya for the merit of his father Śāntivarma.\textsuperscript{14} It also states that he granted 33 nivartanas of land to ascetic Dāmakirtī Bhōjaka of Yāpanīya, Nirgrantha and Kārchaka Saṅghas.\textsuperscript{15} This inscription throws light on the existence of the aforesaid sects of Jainism in the region. It can also be surmised from the above account that Halasinādu was the cradle of
Yāpanīya sect of Jainism. It also raises doubt that was Śāntivarman a Jain? Was he named after Jaina Tīrthankara Śāntinātha? The Jinalaya mentioned here appears to be the oldest Jinalaya of Yāpanīya Sangha.\textsuperscript{16} Since Kākusthavarma's Halasi copper plates end with Namō-Namaḥ-risabhaya-namah, it (Jinalaya) was probably devoted to Rīṣabhanātha, the first Jain Tīrthankara.\textsuperscript{17} It is assigned to the first half of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century AD.

Ravivarma, son of Mṛigēśavarman also made grants to the Jaina-basadis and the Jaina ascetics. Halasi copper plates of his 11\textsuperscript{th} regnal year, which open with an invocation to Lord Jinendra, state that 15 mattars of land situated in Palāśika region was donated for anointing of Jina on every full moon day.\textsuperscript{18} Ravivarma issued an ordinance at the mighty city of Śrīvijaya Palāśika and made gifts to Arhats and monks of Yāpanīya, Nirgrantha and Kūrčaka sects. Another undated record of Ravivarma from Palāśika records the grant of 4 nivartanas of land for the worship of Jinendra by Dāmakirti's mother.\textsuperscript{19} There is also a reference to Śrīkirti, younger brother of Dāmakirti.

A third set of copper plates also from Palāśika belonging to the reign of Ravivarma is historically most significant as it refer to the grants made to the Jaina monastery at Halasi by successive rulers Kākusthavarma,
Śāntivarma and Mṛgēśavarma. Kakūsthavarma made a grant of the village to Jain ascetic Śrūtaśūla. Śāntivarma and his son Mṛgēśavarma made donation to the mother of Dāmakūta who was probably the son of Śrūtaśūla. There is also reference to Śrūtaśūla's grandson Pratihāra Jayakūta. Ravivarma is stated to have made grants to Pratihāra Jayakūta, son of Dāmakūta. The record further states that the income from the donated village should be used for the festival performed every year on Kārtīka paúrṇimā.

Ravivarma issued an ordinance in the mighty city of Pālaśika that the festival of the glorification of Jinēndra should be celebrated on specified days regularly every year and that the ascetics of the Yāpanīya sect should be fed during the months of rainy season and that the worship of Jinēndra should be performed perpetually by the pious countrymen and citizens. Śrūtaśūla, Dāmakūta, and Jayakūta were Dharmādhikāris [bhōjakas] of the Jinālaya of Halasi. This seems to be the oldest Jinālaya of Yāpanīya sect in North Karnataka. This Jinālaya, which enjoyed royal patronage from the successive rulers of the Kadamba dynasty, celebrated annual fair on Kārtīka paúrṇimā day on a large scale.

Dr. P. B. Desai while exploring the antiquities of the place observes that near the Bhuvarāḥa-Narasimha temple complex is the idol of Hanumān.
set up on a lion pedestal. This pedestal belonged to a Jaina image and probably there was a basadi at this place. Sundara has assigned the date of this pedestal to about 11th-12th century AD. On the lion pedestal must be originally the image of Tirthankara and it must have been a basadi. In its sabhāmandapa there are only two devakōṣṭhas in the dvārābandha of garbhagṛiha, which might be originally containing the images of Yakṣa and Yakṣi. These details bear testimony on the state of Jainism as prevailed in Halasi. So Jainism continued to prosper in this region for centuries but it is curious to know that modern Halasi is absolutely devoid of vestiges of the Jaina creed. All the copper plate records disclosing above details pertaining to Jainism were found buried in an earthen mound near a well called Chakrātīrtha outside Halasi. These appear to have been deposited here by the Jain owners on finding no use for them when Jainism lost its ground in the region.

The flourishing state of Jainism is indicated by the mention of many Jain sects such as Śvetapātas, a sect distinguished by their white robes, Yapantyas a sect of religious mendicants, Kūrchaka, a community of naked monks with long hair and beards, and the Nirgranthas, those who never accepted charity and never possessed anything. That the Jain ascetics of Halasi region wielded enormous influence on the ruling class is evident from the fact that śchārya Kumāradatta who is called the chief
among the learned men is said to have been consulted by Ravivarma in matters of government and religion.  

Yāpanīya sect is said to have been founded by Śrīkālasāchārya at Kalyāṇa in about 148 AD. Yāpanīya is known vividly as Jāpanīya, Yāpulīya, Jāpuli and is other than Dīgambara and Śvētāmbara sects. It is believed that 70 years after the split of Jainism into two sects that Yāpanīya sangha came into existence. These divisions due to difference in practices was unavoidable because groups of ascetics lived and moved in different parts of the country.

Yāpanīya Sangha played an important role in the history of Halasi region in particular from 5th to 13th century AD. Its preceptors influenced profoundly the religious thoughts and practices and moulded its monastic traditions. A large number of allusions to Yāpanīya Sangha found in the epigraphs of the region evidently show its impact. The Yāpanīyas tried to bring about the reconciliation between the two sects of Jainism viz., Dīgambara and Śvētāmbara. The Yāpanīya monks moved naked with a pīṛcha (a bunch of peacock feather) and took their food once a day in their palms joined together and practiced meditation.

Some description of gana, gachcha and sangha are available. A gana was a unit, which consisted of three monks; a band of seven monks
was called gachcha and a regular community of monks was known as sangha. Sangha is also interpreted as a gathering of persons seeking salvation. But these definitions cannot be taken as universal. Sangha became a channel through which social communication with the rest of the society was achieved.

The first reference to Yāpanīya sect in the region under the Kadambas of Goa is found in Mugad inscription dated 1045 AD, which refers to Yāpanīya Sangha and Kumudigana. This grant besides mentioning long list of Yāpanīya teachers introduces a family of jaina devotees of three generations viz., Chāunda, his son Nāgadeva and Mārtanda who built Chaityālaya, repaired it and added a nātakasāle to it.

Managundi inscription gives the genealogy of the Jain ascetics of Yāpanīya Sangha, Mahilapatīrīha-anvaya and Kāreya gana of Nāgarāja jinālaya as follows:

Ekavirāchārya
| Rāmachandra
| Bāhubali

Managundi inscription dated 1221 AD refers to a Nāgarāja jinālaya in connection with the alienation of the rights of receiving taxes by the Brāhmaṇas.
Managundi, Mugud, Muttagi, Narendra, Amminabhavi, Gadag, Sigigatti, Vēṇugrāma-70, Haliyal, Halasi were the strongholds of Yāpaniya sect in Halasi-12000 under the Kadambas of Goa.

The following is a list of the main units of the sanghas, gaṇas, gachchas and anvayas as referred in the epigraphs of the Halasi region.

Table - I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vil/town</th>
<th>Ins-date</th>
<th>Sangha</th>
<th>Gaṇa</th>
<th>Gachcha</th>
<th>Anvaya</th>
<th>Ref</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mugad</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SIIXII, No78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narendra</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>Kumuda</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ARSIE, No 23, 1941-42</td>
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<td>Managunḍi</td>
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<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>Kareya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>IDT, No 53.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuggikeri</td>
<td>12th C</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Kareya</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>IDT, No 45.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aminbhavi</td>
<td>12th C</td>
<td>Mula</td>
<td>Sena</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>IDT, No 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garag</td>
<td>1230 AD</td>
<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>Kumada</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SII XV Nos. 6,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garag</td>
<td>13th C</td>
<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>Kumuda</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Ibid, No 168.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigigatti</td>
<td>12th C</td>
<td>Yāpaniya</td>
<td>Vraksha</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Gurav. P.517</td>
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</table>

From the Halasi copper plates of the early Kadambas it is evident that different sects of Jainism were prevalent due to whose influence there were about four Jaina basadis. The earliest one was Arhat Jinalaya built by
Kākūsthavarmā assigned to the first half of 5th century AD dedicated to Riṣabhanātha.39 It belonged to Yāpanīya sangha. Second one was the basadi dedicated to Vardhamāna and belonged to Vārisēpachārya Sangha of Kūrchaka sect.40 The third Jaina basadi built by Mṛgēṣavarmā belonged to Yāpanīya-Kūrchaka-Nirgranthā sects.41

The Chaityālaya built in 524 AD belonged to Aharisthi Sangha (though does not probably mention which sect it belonged to), probably be assigned to Digambara sect of Jainism. The reformist attitude of the Yāpanīyas, the flexibility in their religious precepts, grant of minor concessions to other creeds, encouragement to women to enter monastic order and establishment of religious institutions owing to generous grants from the rulers and the public resulted in the popularisation of the Yāpanīya sect in the region under study.

The initial penetration of Jainism into Karnataka coincided with Roman trade and trade with South East Asia.42 Ethical teachings of this sect was doubtlessly more appropriate to rich agriculturists, merchants and urbanites rather than pastoral and hunting tribal people.43 For mercantile community Jain teaching provided required ethics. This explains the popularity of Jainism in a commercial centre like Halasi.
Vedic Religion

Vedic religion or Hinduism is a unique phenomenon of Indian history. It is an ethnic religion and was not revealed by any prophet. There is no uniform dogma or practice in Hinduism. Karnataka has nurtured Vedic religion from early times. Hinduism has always been a house of many mansions.

Vaiṣṇavism

One of the important sects, the antiquity of which can be traced back to the Vedic times is Vaiṣṇavism. In Vedic age Lord Viṣṇu is regarded as the deity par excellence and his followers were called as Vaiṣṇavites. The Nasik inscription of Śātavāhana queen Nāganika begins in adoration of Sankarṣaṇa and Vasudeva, the other forms of Lord Viṣṇu. Nasik cave inscription reveals various epithets of Viṣṇu. Āgīhāṣaptasati of King Hāla indicates the influence of Viṣṇavism on the society. To retain the importance of Vaiṣṇavism the successors of Śātavāhanas extended patronage to it.

The epigraphical records of the early Kadambas many of which state grants to Brāhmaṇas engaged in Vedic practices, are noted for the fact that the donees were either Vaiṣṇavites or Śaivites. Invocations of Viṣṇu
started appearing in their records from the time of Kākūsthavarma. This influence was possibly due to the fact that the Kadamba contemporaries Guptas and Vākāṭakas were ardent followers of Viṣṇavism with whom Kākūsthavarma had matrimonial alliances.

Halmidi inscription besides commencing with the invocation of Viṣṇu as Achyuta also contains lotus like carving at the top being interpreted as representing Sudurṣanachakra a weapon of Lord Viṣṇu.48

If the name is an index then it is to be surmised that early Kadamba rulers like Bhagdratha, Raghu, Kākustha, Mṛigēśa, Viṣṇuvarma, Harivarma, Kriṣṇavarma were the followers of Vaiṣṇavism as they identified themselves with one or the other names of Lord Viṣṇu. Madhukēśvara was the family deity of the early Kadambas who is a Vaiṣṇava god. Vēdic religion gained its strength and popularity under the early Kadambas and gradually established its position. Considered to be the religion of scholars and intellectuals, Vaiṣṇavism had Sanskrit as its medium. Kadambas who had matrimonial alliances with the Guptas took up the resurrection work of Vēdic religion.

The Tāḷagunda inscription while describing the members of the Kadamba family says "their hair was wet with constant bathing in the holy waters of the final ablutions after any kinds of sacrifices, perfecting having
performed *avabhrita*, maintaining sacred fire according to precepts and drinking *sōmarasa*. The interiors of their house sounded with six modes of reading preceded by the syllable *Aum*.”

From this description it is obvious that *sanātana Vēdic* religion received good attention and patronage during this period. Vīrāśarman is described as well versed in all the *Vēdas* and *Aṅgas*.

Kṛṣṇavarman II is said to have performed *Āsvamedha* sacrifice.

That the Kadambas were the great followers of *Vaiṣṇavism* is evident from many of their records. That Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva were the main deities worshiped by them is revealed from invocatory verses of their inscriptions. A record of Mṛgēśavarman starts in adoration of Brahma.

The Bannahalli record describes Lord Narasimha as the Lord of creation, protection and destruction. In the *garbhagriha* of *Bhōvāraha-Narasimha* temple at Halasi there is an image of *dvibhuja Narasimha* iconographically assigned to 5th–6th century AD. All these references indicate the leaning of the early Kadambas towards *Vaiṣṇavism*.

The worship of Viṣṇu and His incarnations was popular in Halasi region. The temples dedicated to Varāha, Narasimha, Nārāyaṇa, Kēśava further substantiate this. The *Prabhāvalis* at the backdrop of which these
icons are installed have the miniatures of ten *avataras* of Viṣṇu. Degaon, Halasi, Devarahubballi, Gugikatti were pockets of Vaiṣṇavism.

Vaiṣṇavism might have flourished in the region further under the early Chalukyas and the Rastrakutas. Chalukyas worshiped Viṣṇu in the form of Varāha and Trivikrama.

The Kadamba kings of Goa also patronised Vaiṣṇavism is evident from the records of their times. Inscription on the slab in the right side of the *sabhamandapa* of Narasimha temple at Halasi begins with an invocation of God Anantaviravikrama Narasimha. The second part of this inscription refers to the grant of village Bhalike near Halasi for the worship of Bhūvarāha by King Viṣṇuchitta Permādi.

From this it is evident that Viṣṇu in the form of Narasimha and Varāha was the presiding deity of the divisional headquarters i.e. Halasige. The Degaon inscription starts with an invocation to Bhūvarāha. Degaon was then included in Halasige division. Ittage copper plates of Jayakesi I dated 1062 AD contain the invocatory verses of *Dharanendra-Viṣṇu* in Varāha incarnation.

In the temple at Unkal near Hubli there is a shrine of Sarasvati, consort of Brahma in the *lalātabimba* of the door in the west antechamber
is the four-faced head of Brahma.\textsuperscript{58} Unkal-30 division was part of Halasige-12000.

In the Kadamba epigraphs there is evidence for the prevalence of Viṣṇu worship. In a stone inscription dated 1062 AD pertaining to the period of Jayakēśi I found at Ittagi, there is reference to the grant of land in the name of Lord Kēšavadēva to hundred Brahmans of Ittagi.\textsuperscript{59} This period witnessed the popularity of Viṣṇu and his worship in the form of incarnations and the concept of Lākṣmi as Viṣṇu’s wife.

Sivachitta- Permāḍi’s queen Kamalādevi built the temple dedicated to God Shri Kamala-Nārāyanā and goddess Śrī Mahalakṣmi at Dēgāon in 1162AD.\textsuperscript{60} In 1186-87AD Jayakēśi III installed an image of God Varāha in front of Lord Narasimha at Halasi.\textsuperscript{61}

In short the groundwork was made by the rulers of the region which paved the way for the coming Haridāsa movement that became characteristic of the bhakti pantha of the Vaiṣṇavites.

Śaivism

Śaivism is one of the most ancient religions of India. Śaivism is based on Śaiva Āgamas, which are 28 in number.\textsuperscript{62} Worship of Rudra is of Vēdic origin. In Karnataka Śaivism seems to have had deeper roots as a
popular religion. That Śaivism was in vogue in Karnataka before the Kadambas is evident from Tāḷagunda inscription which asserts that at the Śaiva temple at Tāḷagunda, Sātakarṇi and other kings had formerly worshiped. From this inscription it appears that this temple must have been regarded as a great antiquity during that period itself.

Another inscriptions evidence for the prevalence of Śaivism is from a record from Vāsana in Dharwar district, which reveals the practice of worshiping Mahādeva during the rule of Sātavāhana King Pulumāvi.

The Kadambas were Brāhmaṇas by lineage and supported Śaivism. The origin of the Kadamba dynasty itself is ascribed to Lord Śiva. In an inscription of Mrigēśavarman grants are recorded to two Brāhmaṇas named Rudrārya and Nandārya of Bhargava gotra. The Sangoḷḷi plates of Harivarman's 8th regnal year begin with an invocation to Lord Śiva. The King is described in this inscription as Paramamāheśvara, a great devotee of Śiva. Sirsi plates of Kṛṣṇavarma II mention the grant of a village to a Śaiva Brāhmaṇa named Somasvāmy.

The direct reference to the Pāṣupatas in the later records of early Kadambas and indirect references through such names as Pāṣupati in the early reveal the existence of Pāṣupata cult under the Kadambas.
Under the Chalukyas of Badami, Śaivism gained popularity from the time of Vikramāditya I. It paved the way for the growth of Śaiva architecture under the Chalukyas.

Under the Rāstrakūtas that Śaivism was prominent is evident from the rock cut shrines of the period at Ellora and Elephenta. Under the later Chalukyas there was the rejuvenivation of Śaivism which ultimately paved the way for the rise of Viśvaśaivism in the 12th century AD.

The emergence of Kadambas of Goa after an obscurity of nearly four centuries coincided with the emergence of Śaivism in the region. All the three sects of Śaivism viz., Paṣupata, Kālāmukha and Lakujēśa were in vogue. Paṣupataḥ used to bathe thrice a day in the sacred ash (Bhasma). Lakujēśa recognized as the incarnation of Rudra in Vāyupurāṇa where as Kālāmukha smeared black ash on their face.

These three sects of Śaivism set up a tradition of famous teachers and monasteries (Mathas). From inscriptive evidences it can be gleaned that Śaivism was the religion of the masses. The agriculturists, traders, artisans and such other sections of the society were the followers of Śaivism.
Amminabhāvi ins informs that Chandikabbe of *Lakulīsa- Pāṣupata* sect, made a gift to the Choultry of Ādityadēva. There is also reference to other gifts made to the god Mallikārjuna of the Village. Managunḍi inscription besides naming important Śaiva ascetics informs us that the mercantile community built the temple of Tribhuvanēśvara Jayakēśidēva. The active participation of trading community in Śaiva rituals is revealed from this inscription. It further says that Chandagāṇḍa along with several other merchants of different organisations of neighboring villages came to see the *pavitra* festival and made some donations. From these inscription it seems that Śaivism was widespread in different parts of Halasi region.

Śaiva *mathas* or monasteries played an important role in the propagation of Śaivism, spread of education and in giving shelter to Śaiva ascetics. The *mathas* were mostly the establishments of Śaiva ascetics of *Kālāmukha* sect. The Śaiva priests who were in charge of the Śaiva temples are referred in the inscriptions with the suffix *śakti, rāsi, jīya*. Lord Śiva was worshipped by different names like Mallikārjuna, Kamalēśvara, Siddhēśvara etc.
Saurashtra, Gokarna, Srisaila etc were some of the centres of Śaiva pilgrimage visited by the people. Śaivism was very common religion among the high and low classes.

The śakti cult was prevalent in the region is evident from the epigraphs and the sculptural representations. The epigraphs mention the worship of Kañchidēvi, Mahālakṣmi of Kolhapur, Bhūdēvi, Bhairavi etc. The Kadamba kings are often described as the worshipers of Saptamātrikās or seven mothers. There are three sculptured panels of Saptamātrikās found in the temples of Rāmēśvara, Suvarṇēśvara and Hāṭakēśvara at Halasi.

Besides, there were number of folk deities that were looked with fear and veneration and propitiated as ‘dispensers of destinies’. The worship of Nāga or snake, which is of folk origin, was in vogue. Installation of Nāga images was popular and many Nāga images of 10th, 11th and 12th centuries are found. Certain community gods were, worshipped by the artisans and the craftsmen like Sēṇigēśvara, Uguṛēśvara, Bhōjangēśvara, Gaverēśvara, Nakarēśvara etc.

The supreme authority of Vēdas, the doctrine of Trinity of God and the incarnations, the rituals and temple worship, the sectarian beliefs of Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas and Śāktas, the faith in pilgrimages, the sanctity attached
to cows and Brāhmaṇas all these may be ascribed to the culmination of *Vedic* religion and its rejuvenation.

**Vīraśaivism**

12th century AD witnessed the rise of protestant Śaivism popularly known as Vīraśaivism which felt the need for a change in the prevailing socio religious conditions and made an attempt to renew faith in Śaivism

Vīraśaivism seems to have made its advent in the region under the Kadambas of Goa. During the period of Jayakēśī II, Allamaprabhu the great Vīraśaiva saint and philosopher is said to have spent his dedicated days, meditating at the feet of Lord Gōvēśvara at Goa before he went to Kalyāṇa where he came in contact with Basavēśvara.73

The second pontiff of *Śūnyasimhasana* viz., Channabasavēśvara came to Ulvi in the vicinity of Halasi region during the *Kalyāṇa Krānti*. When class struggle started with Bijjalē and his followers one of the battles is said to have been fought at Kadrolē in the Kadamba dominion with the army sent by Bijjalē or his successors.74 He settled down at Ulvi in Uttara Kannada district. He ceased to exist appointing Siddhārāma as the next pontiff of the *pitṛha*.75 The reason for Chennabasavēśvara's coming to Halasi region may be the prevalence of Vīraśaivism there and the royal
patronage he received from the rulers of the region. Another reason could be—of all the feudatories the Kadambas of Goa defied the power of Bijála and shook off their vassalage from the imperial clutches of Bijála. Kadambas were the only safest political power of the time that could have accorded asylum to the struggling followers of Basavēśvara after the Kalyāṇa Krānti.

The Buḍarsingi, Koṭabāgi and Katnūr grants of 1257, 1264 and 1280 A.D respectively made grants in remembrance of Śrī Sidhārāmanātha the third Pontiff of the Pīṭha for the purposes for which he strived. Therefore it appears that Śrī Sidhārāmanātha must have toured the region spreading the tenets of Vīraśaivism.

The image epigraph of Amminabhāvi is significant as there is a statue of Maḍivāḷa Māchidēva trampling down the elephant of Bijála. It appears that Maḍivāḷa Māchidēva may have been worshipped as God by that time.

Due to the prevailing socio-religious conditions, and the simplicity of its teachings, Vīraśaivism must have caught the imagination of the people of the region. As the seeds were already there in the form of strong faith in Saivism and as the population at large were Saivas the change over
to Vīraśaivism must have been easier. The Lakulīśa Śaivas merged in the Vīraśaivism.

It is interesting to note that Kadamba kings of Goa had the title Mahāmāheśvara from Jayakesī II onwards. Māheśvara is one of the followers of the Śaivism of high order than the bhakta and second in the six grades including a Śaraṇa. 79

The Devarahubbalī grant used the word Śaraṇa in the invocatory passage. 80 By the middle of the 13th century Vīraśaivism was sufficiently popular in the region so that the kings could make grants for the object and ideals of the faith.

There is no trace of Islam or Christianity in the records of the region during the period.

From the above survey it may be noted that in the beginning, it was the Vedic form of Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism which dominated the scene with the Brāhmaṇas as its perpetuators. But in due course other Śaiva sects especially Lakulīśa and Pāṇḍava appear to have had impact in the region. The Yāpanīya sect of Jainism was another prominent religion with its preaching of non-violence; tolerance and self disciplined values. Owing to its simplicity and practicality it was popular among the wealthy and aristocratic class of traders and administrators. The religious tolerance
persuaded in the region is understood to have permitted not only the peaceful co-existence of different faiths but also promoted the faiths and practices of the respective religions.
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