

# Social And Religious Conditions: A Historical Study of Kadambas

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**\*Santhosh Kumar T S**

*Department of History, Government College for Women (Autonomous)  
Mandya, Karnataka, India*

*\* For correspondence (e-mail: [drsanthoshkumarts@gmail.com](mailto:drsanthoshkumarts@gmail.com))*

## Introduction

The people of Karnataka were mainly Hindus. It was a traditional society organized into castes. The ideal of the Hindus was the maintenance of the Varnasramadharma. Society was organized on the basis of the unique classification of various castes and classes. Now forced and factors and situations brought about changes and adjustments. Though the society was mainly traditional in character it was absorbing changes without over shadowing its main features.

Society during this period was mainly divided into four castes and many classes. It was the primary duty of the king to protect these four classes. The Brahmanas formed an important and influential social sector of society. They lived mainly on the patronage of the kings and the charity of the society in general. Individual members of the society from the king to the rustic extended their support to Brahmanas in the form of land grants, houses and other forms of wealth. The brahmanas were the recipients of honour and respect. They played an important and unique role in the educational and religious life of the country. Many records of this period speak of their high learning and morality. Many of them were specialists in one or more branches of learning. But their profession was not confined to learning alone. The service of the state in its civil departments and the army were open to this class. Become cross many instances of Brahmanas who distinguished themselves in war.

The Brahmanas enjoyed a high status. The epigraphs of this period speak of their virtues and attainments. They are stated to be well-versed in the Vedas, vedangas and grammar. They were learned and restraint. They were engaged in the six fold duties. The Brahmanas formed the most influential section of the society. They were in the forefront in the educational, political, social and intellectual fields. They made the agraharas and Brahmapuris the most important educational centers of the period.

The Brahmanas played a significant role in the political affairs of the country. Most of the ministers of the rulers of this period were Brahmanas. They were responsible to a large extent, for the cultural advancement of the country. The Brahmanas of the period

were respected by all classes of people. Their important position in the social structure did not make them a rigid section having class hatred towards other social and religious groups. They have proved their liberal outlook by showing their regard to the Jaina creed and the Jaina ascetics. The Brahmins of Bolur gave a grant to the Ashtopavasimunis for the worship of Jina. When Pattanaswami required the Parvasbasadi in KuppaturAgrahara, the Brahmins of the place named it as BrahminsJinalaya.

The ruling class was considered to be kshatriyas. The various dynasties who ruled Karnataka during this period, called themselves as Kshatriyas. Merchants called themselves as vaishyas and those whose occupation was agriculture did not call themselves as Vaishyas. Those who followed some low occupations were known as Sudras. Though the names of the four main classes were traditionally in use, they had lost most of their meaning. In times of need, the Brahmins took up to arms, whenever there was a chance to enlist, we have many instances of Brahmin generals who were prominent in war and also in learning.

### **Some Corporate Activities**

Society in this period had before it the ideals of Chorma. Life is transient. Hence man should follow dharma and earn merit. Dharmam is the light of three worlds. These were ideals which had taken root in the minds of the people of the period. These were applicable to all the people. Though belonging to different faiths. Making gifts, construction tanks, building temples and establishing satras were considered as acts of gaining merit.

Kings, high officials and rich men individually observed the making Tulapurasha, Hiranyagarbha, Kalpavraksha, Gohahasra and other great gifts in order to gain merit to themselves. Members of all classes vied with one another in setting upgods, building temples or their parts and in making gifts. Among other forms of charity of public utility were the establishment of public gardens or parks, construction of tanks or ponds, agnisthage and Satras. These were believed to bring immense merit.

The epigraphs of this period describe the gardens which were outside the towns. Most probably they were public gardens. They were known as Aramas or Araves. Gifting flower-gardens was common act of charity.

There were Satras which were not attached to temples or mathas. In some of them provision for feeding the mathas and also for pilgrims were made. In some Satras, it was limited to two, in some others it was fixed at four, and in some others it was limited to 80 persons. Out of the income from the grant of lands made by ManikaSetti, there was provision for feeding 1200 persons in the Satras. One record gives the details of the quantity to be given to every Brahmin fed in the Satra. It was called Padior quantity which included rice, dhal, ghee curd, butter milk, betel-leaves and nuts for the 16 Brahmins were fed daily in the Satra. In some satras only Brahmins were fed, but in some others people of different castes were given food. Food was also given to orphans, amandicans, the blind and beggars.

The most important act of merit and charity and work of public utility was the construction of tanks. The Kadamba king Kakusthavarna ordered the construction of a tank in front of the temple of Pranavesvara at Balagunds. A number of records inform us of how individuals and corporate bodies were continuously organized for the construction, maintenance and upkeep of tanks. Tanks were serviceable to the people in many ways.

### **Ornaments**

The epigraphs and literature of the period have interesting references to a variety of ornaments worn on the different parts of the body. The art of making ornaments of gold and precious stones had reached very advanced stage in this age. Extensive trade was being carried on by merchants

throughout the country. Trade in precious stones, diamond, sapphire, pearls, moonstones, rubies, lapaz lazuli, onyx, topaz, carbuncle, coral, and emeralds and there was widespread and flourishing one. Some of the sculpture of gods and goddess and other have the shoulder ornament commonly known as Bhujakirita or Bhujastambha. It is like a small necklace or garland of three strings with pearls and large gems strung hand just above the shoulders. The bracelets decorating the hands were called kankana. It was commonly worn by all women, this is evident from the sculptures on the memorial stone commemorating the demise of Queen Lichchavi Devi. She is represented here as wearing a crown on her head. Her wrists are decked with bangles here arms with armlets and her legs with anklets. The warriors wore large earrings.

### **Dress**

The numerous hero-stones and sati-stones that are scattered over the country show us that men wore dhoti and left the upper part of their body uncovered. They tied a turban round their head. The men wore their hair tied in a knot behind. The Masti stones suggest that the dress of the woman was saree and they covered the breast with the bodice.

### **Amusements**

About the amusements of the people, the epigraphical records give us brief view of plays and dramas that were staged in the mathas and the agraharas of dancing and music. The musical instruments in vogue were the guitar, the flute, pungi, maddala, mridanga and the drum. Hunting, fishing, swinging and wrestling were the common amusements. Fights of elephants and horse races were very popular. Of the indoor pastimes listening to stories, solving puzzles, gambling, playing chess and painting especially among women were common.

### **Food**

Rice, ghee, milk, milk products and vegetables constituted the main item of food. Manasollasa mentions that the king's party enjoyed such tasty dishes as rice with curds mixed with pepper, ginger and cardamom, preparations laddukas and khira and saline preparations of roots and fruits.

### **Status of Women**

In ancient Karnataka, the wife and daughter-in-law were considered to occupy an important and honorable place in the family. Women of the upper classes and ruling classes and of the families of officials received education. The education mainly consisted of the fine arts as music and dance, in addition to general education. Some of them were exponents in the field of their learning. Women of the royal families were entrusted with the work of administration. Among the women of the common people, the Devadasis specialized in singing and dancing. They sang delighting men with clear modulations of the seven notes. The dancing was not restricted to the class of courtesans but was regarded as one of the fine arts and accomplishments in which all classes of people participated.

There is no evidence in the records of child marriages. The girls were married only when they became youths. Jayakesi the son-in-law of the Chalukya Vikramaditya VI had attained marriageable age at the time of his marriage. Generally boys were married when they were 15-20 years and girls were married between 12-16 years. It appears that the young peoples were left free to select their own match. The event that has greater interest of the history of this period is the fact narrated by Hemachandra in his dvayasraya that Mayanalla-devi, the daughter of Jayakeshi VI. The Kadamba king of Goa, fell in love with the handsome king Karna Raja and went to the latter's capital to marry him. The instance shows that love marriages were not uncommon. During this period inter-caste marriages as not in vogue.

The dowry system was not in vogue during this period. After the marriage, the bridegroom used to be honored by presents. The king Mummuri paid 5 lakhs of gold coins to the Kadamba prince Chattayyadeva, only after the marriage Chattayyadeva's son Jayakesi I gave unlimited presentations to his son-in-law Permadideva.

According to Manu Polygamy was permissible. Kings and princes continued the practice of having more than one wife. The terms 'savatigandhavarane', 'SavatimadaBanjane' are indicative of the jealousy that existed among the queens.

Collecting of marriage tax was in vogue. This was more or less an arrangement made by the people of the locality or village. The money collected thus was usually given away given as a gift to the tank or temple of the place. Instances of the people paying this tax have been cited in some of the records of the period. The people believed that to extend monetary help to poor people and Brahmans for the purposes of marriage was an act of merit.

The very large number of Sati Stones in the region ruled by the Kadambas, points out that sati or the burning of a widow with the dead body of her husband, was largely practiced by the fighting classes. The epigraphical evidence of the practice of sati is provided by a record in the Sorab Taluk, which asserts that when Ravivarma died, one of his queens 'obtained mukti'. Sati was not a popular custom in South India. It was left completely to the free choice of the widow. It was more or less voluntary. During this period, widow re-marriage was not in vogue. But this was not prohibited among the lower sections of Hindu Society.

The scope of Stridansari has come to be considered, Vignanesvara who was the chief justice in the court of the Chalukya Vikramaditya VI advocated in the mitakshara, the widow's right of inheritance. By the end of the 13th Century A.D the widow's rights had come to be recognized. One of the records states that Tippiyya, wife of Tippiyya, made over the land Tippiyya had received towards his share to her brother-in-law Achayya to repay the debt incurred by Tippiyya. It is obvious that Tippiyya had by then passed away and his share came to be inherited by his wife. Tippiyya accepts not only the set but also the liabilities of her husband.

Devadasis were women servants of god. Their life was dedicated to his serviced in the temple. They were meant to serve god by singing and dancing in the temple. The epigraphs speak of gifts being made for the Angabhoga and Rangabhoga of the god in the temple. The Rangabhoga includes music and dancing by beautiful ladies before the ideal. Generally the dancing girls were courtesans.

Women enjoyed much freedom during this period. Women of the royal families were entrusted with the administration in political and religious matters. The epigraphs inform us of several queens taking an active part in the administration. One famous of a women administrator is that of Akkadevi. The Nangal Kadamba queen Akkadevi was ruling the divisions' kisuk du – 70, Torugave-60 and the Masavadi-140. She also participated freely in the religious matters. In a Belur record, she is described by the rituals of Jina, Buddha, Anantha and Rudra. She supported all the faiths equally. Mailaladevi who was the queen of Jayakesi II of the Goa Kadambas, lived a glorious life. The association with her husband in matters of administration speaks of her abilities in her epigraphs of Narendra.

### Religious Conditions

Karnataka has been a meeting place of almost all the major religions of India. It is the home of two religious faiths Virasaivism and Vaishnavism. During the roomy days of the Satakarnis the Vedic religion found its patrons. The worship of the satakarnis of Vishnu and Siva was adopted as the state religion of the Kadambas whose family god was the Jayanti Madhukevara. Kings from Mayuravarma to Kakusthavarma were devoted to the Vedic gods. The religion of the kadambas

was Brahmanism. The record of the same dynasty found in the Kadur Taluk, here Vishnuvarma, the donor of the grant is described as the 'Protector of the excellent Brahman faith'. We know from the records that some of the kings performed the asvamedha sacrifice. This is a purely Brahman rite.

The Kadambas kings were Brahmans by lineage and supporters of Saivism in particular. Saivism is one of the most ancient religions of India. The worship of Rudra is of Vedic origin. Each one of them has several subsidiary agamas. These were said to have been taught by Siva and Parvati. According to Saivism, the soul is bound by a bond and the Lord of all the souls or Pasupati is pasupati. To get rid of the bond, the pasu or Jiva should undertake the vow and surrender to pasupati. Saivism came to be known as Pasupata religion. The followers of this system came to be known as Mahesvaras.

Pasupati is one of the five Siddhantas mentioned in the Mahabharata. Lalulisa, Pasupatas were one of the important branches of pasupatas in early medieval India. The doctrines of this sect have been fourth in the SarvadarsanaSangraha of Sayana.

The Lakulapasupatas were also known as Kalamukhas. Their religion has been termed as Kalumukhasamsya. They were most active, highly influential Saivites prior to the rise and spread of the Virasaiva religion in Karnataka. They seem to have been widely popular enjoying the liberal support of rulers, feudatories and the people of all classes.

According to Dr. T V Mahalingam, there is very little difference between the Kalamukhas and Lakuli-Pasupatas. These two formed the major sects of Saivism in the medieval period. The followers of these sects were also known as Mahesvaras.

The Saivas teachers mention their spiritual lineage. The saktiparshe and Simhaparshe are the two well-known organizations. The branches of Parshe were probably called the Amnaa or Avali and the spiritual lineage, the sanatali. Among the Amnaya or avail the parvatavali, is one important branch, the word parva signifying Srisaila or Sriparvata. Another branch is the Bhujangavali. The branch of an important matha was probably said to belong to the 'Santali' of the matha. The branch of the SarathiyaMatha and that of the matha of Agastyes are examples of monasteries of their descent.

Among the most sacred centres of saivism, Srisaila in the Andhra Pradesh was the most important centres of Lkulisas. The spiritual head in a record is being mentioned from Kedarasktipandita of the Parvatavali. It is said that the Kalamukhas came to Karnataka from Kashmir. A record of 1066 A.D mentions a teacher named KashmiraPanditadeva.

## Conclusion

The kadamba records inform us that the worship of the Jina was the most favorite way of expressing Jaina devotion. They made lavish donations to Jaina temples or basadis. In order to make the worship effective in public life, the Kadam king Ravivarma issued an ordinance that the festival of Jinendra lasting for eight days should be celebrated regularly every year on the full moon of the month of Karthika from the revenues of the village Kurakehetaka; that the worship of Jinendra should be performed by the pious country men and citizens.

Construction of temples and installation of Jaina images increased in the 11th and 12th Centuries. Epigraphic evidences shows that Jaina temples were open to all irrespective of creed and caste. The women of Karnataka expressed their deep devotion for Jainism by erection a number of new basadis and endowing them with rich gifts. In 1047 A.D AkkadeviKadamba queen is said to have granted land for meeting the cost of plastering the broken Jinalaya at Vikramapura and for the supply of scent, incense and lamp.

The patronage of the ruling families in early and medieval times transformed the Jaina faith from a mere teachings into a living force in Karnataka politics. A large number of Jaina records show that the people belonging to the upper Strata of Jaina society made the maximum number of endowments either to some Jaina establishments or particular Jains monks.

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