

## **Kakolu: a place of rustic serenity**

The metropolitan city of Bangalore is not just a hub of IT and Business czars. Driving through the traffic lanes with irksome stales of traffic jams may not find a relief at the heart of the city. However, one is sure to find a sigh of relief at the outer regions of the famed city. Driving ahead in Bangalore north, one cannot afford to miss the rustic prospect of kakolu, a village near the proximity on the main road rather less known to the localities of the Bangalore city. Though bestowed with a gait of spirituality and scenic beauty, the place is not well off the major roadway. As we move ahead the Yelahanka-Doddaballapur Road across 35 KM, the main road is intercepted by the place of Rajankunte with a rustle of a market place on the main road. A very familiar deviation from here of about 5 kms across a fairly good road would take us to Kakolu village. The village abounds with a touch of antiquity together with a feel of calmness and spiritual touch for a must visit for those seeking a solace.

The history of the place dates back to the times of the famed Vijayanagara Empire reminding us of unique idols and significant symbology of the Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses. Regional legend of the Kakolu ascribes the place as being ruled by a subordinate ruler of the Vijayanagara Empire originally belonging to "*Chelooru Chavadi*" which is now submerged in the Hesaraghatta lake. There is an inscription on the walls of Sri Chandramouleshwara temple at Hesaragatta referring this. However, the hallmark of the place thrives not on any historical monuments like that of the Hampi but on similar exquisite images in a temple of Krishna and Hanuman in the middle of the village noted for a distinctive

feature of its own typically in the Vijayanagara style of architecture. The image of lord Krishna in Kakolu is carved out on a life size *Brindavanam* depicting the scenario of Krishna as a cowherd boy playing on the flute with the cows around him. Such a picturesque image is a reference to the pastimes of Krishna as depicted in the *Bhagavata Puranam*. This unique representation of Krishna in *Brindavanam* is further added with a symbolic representation as the lord incarnated with four shoulders with a crown instead of the usual stance of Krishna with two hands. Further, the posture of playing on the flute is contrary to the usual way of the flute on the right side. Tradition of the place ascribes this singular representation of Krishna to the *Bhagavata Puranam* which speaks of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu with his divine nature surpassing the natural ways of mortals and blessing Indra and other lords at the time of incarnation. The narrative legend of this atypical idol of lord Krishna in kakolu dates back about six hundred as being carved under the orders of the saint-scholar Sripadaraja, the preceptor of Sri Vyasa Tirtha of Vijayanagara of 15<sup>th</sup> Century.

Adding to the historicity of the idol is an another idol of Hanuman carved on a pillar with the conch and discus of either sides with the image of Garuda at the back installed by Sri Vyasa Tirtha himself in the place. This is supposed to be one of the 732 Hanuman idols installed by Sri Vyasa Tirtha through out the southern part of India.

The Brindavanam Krishna was originally installed in Chikkadevanapura on the west bank of river Arkavati. A dam creation across the Arkavati river, now better known as the Hesaraghatta tank, had submerged the idol of the Brindavanam Krishna. The fact of this consecrated idol lying submerged prompted the village

heads of the Kakolu village, Narasanna & Sheshagiri Rao to reinstall the idol in Kakolu about 75 years back. Other idols of Sri Vedavyasa, Sri Madhvacharya, Sripadaraja, Purandara Dasa, Kanaka Dasa and Navagrahas are of recent installation. The premise of the temple is endowed with a *Yagashala* with dining facility to carry out rituals in keeping the Pancharatra tradition. A place called Nagara Mantapa is traced to the hoary past with Lingam known as Dakshineshvara believed to be installed by Arjuna himself of Mahabharata glory. Amidst the place, another idol of Shiva in the form of Lingam supposed to be worshipped by Kanaka Dasa may be found. This is further authenticated with a celebration once in 12 years by the Kuruba community.

A grand car festival (*Brahma Rathotsava*) in kakolu takes place every year for 5 days as per the Madhva tradition following the Pancharatra Agama. The Brahma Rathotsava is inaugurated hoisting the flag of divinity on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the bright half of the Chaitra Masa as per the Hindu almanac. A huge mammoth of devotees throng to witness the grand festival. The second day is followed by conducting a discourse and melodrama of the *Gajendra Moksha* followed by *Kalyanotsava*. . The third day rejoices with *Brahma Rathotsava* with an idol of Krishna across the Village. Ardents of Vyasa Sahitya and Dasa Sahitya alike sing and dance the glory of the lord through the streets of Kakolu. All these rituals are followed by Vasantotsava and Garudabuthi commemorating the lord as Santana Gopalakrishna, the bestower of progeny. The *Amritamahotsava* (Platinum Jubilee) celebration of the Brahma Rathotsava was celebrated last year in an extravaganza by the Kakolu Sri Venugopalaswamy Devasthanam Trust which had organized discourses by distinguished scholars last year on Krishna styled as “Jnana Yajna - Sri Krishna Darshana” inaugurated by Sri Vishvesha Tirtha Swamiji of Pejavara

Mutt, Udupi, in various parts of the Bangalore city. Thus, the Trust is contributing to the dissemination of the Hindu philosophy beyond the borders of the place. Together with the religious activities, the Trust has taken up the cudgels of social service in the place. In collaboration with the noted social service organizations Udaya Bhanu Kala Sangha & Bhagavan Mahaveer Jain Netralaya, the Trust had organized a free eye checkup camp – “Arogyaamrita”. With about 350 localities attending the camp, about 100 free spectacles & IOL lens & surgery were done. In collaboration with the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development Institute, Government of India, Industrial Motivation Campaign for unemployed educated youth was also conducted with success. An interactive quiz (Rasaprashne) on Haridasa Sahitya with special reference to Sri Harikathamrita Sara of Sri Jagannatha Dasaru was held as a part of the platinum jubilee celebration this year. The place of Kakolu, particularly in this year car festival will bring joy to heart of devotees and like-minded.

Photographs enclosed:

1. Brindavanam Krishna
2. Hanuman in the Pillar
3. Temple premises
4. Kakolu village

Article by : P. Vinay

Lecturer in Sanskrit

No. 291, 52nd Cross, 4th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-10

E-mail: [vinay\\_acharpv@yahoo.co.in](mailto:vinay_acharpv@yahoo.co.in)

**How to reach Kakolu**

From City Market (Opp. Mosque)

BMTC Route No. 285E, 285L, 251A, 285R

From Shivajinagar : 285Q

From Majestic (KBS) 406

For further details Contact : 28479027, 98450 75250

[kakolu.krishna@gmail.com](mailto:kakolu.krishna@gmail.com)

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