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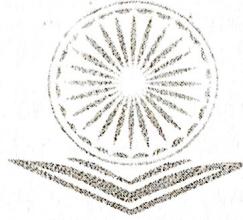
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Introduction

KRANTISINH VIR SHIROMANI SEVALAL MAHARAJ (15 February 1739) He was the great revolutionary of India who fought the first independent war in India against the Britishcelibate throughout his life. KRANTISINH VIR SHIROMANI SEVALAL MAHARAJ died at Ruhiyagad and was buried at Pohra in Washim district, now in the state of Maharashtra. His samadhi still stands there, adjacent to a temple dedicated to Jagadamba. Although he was opposed to personality cults and rituals, it is a popular destination for Banjaras at Hindu festivals such as Diwali. Similar adjacent temples dedicated to Sevalal and to Jagadamba exist elsewhere and also attract worshippers in significant numbers. A temple has been recently built in Surgondankoppa village, near Nyamathi Taluk, in Davangere district, Karnataka.

Sant Shree Sevalal Maharaj was born on 15.02.1739, on this Holy Land, to parents Shree Bhima Nayak and Dharmini Yaadi (Mother). At this time this location was popularly known as Ramagundam or Ramji Nayak Tanda (Ramji Nayak is Grand-father of SevaBhaya Ji, who came to this location with 360 families of his Tanda and about 4000 loaded cattles). Sevabhaya lived with his parents, at this place, upto the age of 12. He bathed in KALO KUNDO (transparent clean water of natural spring water pond), Worshipped in Chanakeshva (Shiva) Temple on the top of Chandrayana Gutta (Hill), near Ramji Nayak Tanda grazed his cattles in ZOOMRI/ZHANDA JHOL (forest of Palms). All these relics and monuments are existing even today. Banjaras and Non- Banjaras in the locality hold Bhima Nayak Katta (platform) in high esteem. Since residue (ORE) from the womb of Sevabhaya's Mother is buried below this Katta (burying ORE under the ground is the tradition of Banjaras, after child's birth). Therefore Banjara people hold this Katta with high reverence. Shri Bhima Nayak (father of Sevabhaya Ji) delivered his judgements to Banjaras of his and neighboring Tandas from this Katta. There is a piece of land of 18 acres, next to dilapidated Ramji Nayak Tanda and the same is shown in revenue records as NAYAKUNI BHOOMI (Land of Nayak).

After lot of research works and explorations by many research scholars, linguists, historians, particularly by Banjara Dharmik Parishad of Bangalore, as well as found from Banjara folk songs and folk lores sung and oral history as told by Banjara. for the last 200 years, in narration and in praise of Sevabhaya's life and deeds. It is mentioned that GOOTY-BELLARY MA JANMO SEVABHAYA (meaning: Sevabhaya was born at GOOTY-BELLARY). Gooty Taluka was in the then Bellary District of then Madras Province of British Raj. During that period there was no separate District called Anantapur - as the Anantpur town was part of Bellary District. It is abundantly clear and proved that Sevabhaya's Birth Place is identified to this location, in Peddadoddi Revenue Village. It is also mentioned in the book "Sevadas Leelamrut", authored by Sant Shree Ramrao Maharaj of Pohragad (Sevabhaya's Samadhi Place), Gooty-Bellary as birth place of Sevabhaya. Sant Shri Ramrao ji Maharaj is living saint of seventh generation of Shri Sevabhaya's family. Even well known author, poet and Banjara folk Singer Shri Atmaram Rathod of Yevatmal District (Maharashtra) has also established the same location in his popular book "Shree Sant Sevadas Leela Charitra" as Sevabhaya's Birth place. After identifying this birth place, first time, Banjaras of Country celebrated Sevabhaya's 262nd Janmotsav, at this holy land on 15.02.2001 and sanctified it and named this land as "SEVAGAD", at the hands of Shri Ranjit Naik, President of All India Banjara Seva Sangh (AIBSS). Address of Sevagad Asthan: Sevagad, Near Charlopalli, Via: Gollala Doddi Crossing, On Gooti - Guntakal Road, Mandal/Taluka: Gooty, District: Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh. Baba Haathiram Ji was North-Indian by birth. He came down to South. In Tirupati, he constructed a small Math and settled. Every day he used to worship the Lord of the Seven Hills.

Genetic Data on the Banjaras

The Banjaras are one of the largest tribal groups in India with a population of more than 5 million, and are found in large parts of the country. Traditionally they were connected with travelling caravans and the transportation of goods, and they traded over vast stretches of the Indian subcontinent. Genetic data on the Banjaras are sparse, possibly because their group identity is difficult to define. Studies such as the one carried out by Sachdev (2012) have focused on the Banjaras of the Rajasthan region, where they conventionally are believed to have originated. Mastana and Papiha (1992) have compared the genes of the Banjara sub-tribe called Lambana with the gypsies of Central and Western Europe. Their results suggest that gypsy populations of Eastern Europe still have great affinity with Indian nomadic groups, and the

genetic differentiation in these populations may primarily be due to isolation, high rates of migration of subgroups towards Europe and genetic drift. The Western gypsies are more homogeneous as a local population, which may have resulted from a high degree of admixture. In a recent study, Moorjani et al. (2013) compared the Roma population with various South Asian groups. They estimate that the Roma harbour about 80% West Eurasian ancestry—derived from a combination of European and South Asian sources—and that the date of the admixture of South Asian and European ancestry was about 850 years before the present. They provide evidence for Eastern Europe being a major source of European ancestry, and NorthWest India being a major source of the South Asian ancestry in the Roma. By computing allele sharing as a measure of linkage disequilibrium, they estimate that the migration of the Roma out of the Indian subcontinent was accompanied by a severe ‘_Founder Effect’, which appears to have been followed by a major demographic expansion after their arrival in Europe. A Founder Event is when a very small group separates from a parent group carrying some vagaries in their genetic signal which then persist in the new community even though these provide no specific survival benefit. This may include facial features; body size, etc. (see e.g. Stone and Lurquin, 2010: 113).

Banjara Astronomy and Meteorology

The list of Banjara villages visited by us and their individual memory of astronomy and other information provided by them is given in Appendix 1, while the results are summarised in Table 1 below. Village 5 is not included in this Table since at that village we met a historian who supplied us with many details of the Banjaras but no insight into their astronomical knowledge and beliefs. The most commonly-known astronomical objects amongst the Banjaras are the stars in Orion (which they see as a deer), and the Pleiades asterism, which they proudly proclaim to be a piece of jewellery that is worn on the forehead and that typically has many little metallic balls (generally of silver) strung together to appear like a bunch of grapes. They know of an evening star and morning star—no particular star, just the one that tells them that the day or the night has just begun. They have many indicators to predict the intensity of the monsoon, the two most favoured being the glow around the Moon, and the activities of the crow: if it builds its nest high up in a tree in late May strong rains are unlikely but if it builds a well-protected nest in the lower branches then the rains are expected to be heavy. The direction from which the rains will come is opposite to the direction in which the nest is made in relation to the tree trunk. The Banjaras are aware of comets as stars with tails, and they think of them as bad omens. Meteors also are

considered bad omens. Saptarshi (the Big Dipper) is divided into the four stars of the polygon that form the death bed (Jamkhat), with a procession of three people following the bed. Upon dying, Banjaras walk along the Milky Way (the path of the dead) to reach the heavens. They do not seem to have stories about the afterlife, and the worship of ancestors is more in the sense of gratitude than out of any expectation (unlike the belief in main-stream Hinduism).

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