

SOMANATHA PALKURIKI (Telugu; c. 13th c.). The period between Nannaya and Tikkana is generally called the age of the Shaiva poets, and Palkuriki Somanatha is the foremost among them. He utilised his life and works solely for the propagation of the Shaiva religion founded by Basaveshwara. There is difference of opinion about his caste, parentage, time and place of birth. Many are of the opinion that he was a brahmin well-versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas and became a Jangama after adopting the Shaiva religion, while Bandaru Tammayya tried to establish that he was a born Jangama. In his first work *Basavapurana*, Somanatha mentioned the names of his parents as Visnuramideva and Sriyadevi. Generally Shaivites are prohibited from writing the names of their mother and father since they consider Shiva and Parvati as their parents. Regarding his time also scholars are at variance. Seshayya, however, concludes on the strength of inscriptional evidence that he lived during the reign of Prataparudra II, that is, during the second half of 13th and first quarter of the 14th century. There is difference of opinion regarding his place of birth also. The word Palkuriki goes along with his name in some of his works. This may be the name of the village where he lived. But there is a village by name Palkuriti near Warangal and many critics are of the opinion that Somanatha hailed from that village. Others hold that he belonged to a village named (Ha) Palkuriki in the Kannada country.

Four persons are mentioned as the Gurus of Somanatha, viz. Kattakuri Potidevara, Karasthali Somanathayya, Gurulinga and the grandson of Belidevara Vemanaradhya whose name is not known. Of these, he seems to have received his initial training from the first, and learnt the art of poetry from the second; the third must have given him 'Shaivadiksha, and he might have learnt the Shaiva shastras from the fourth.

Somanatha was a great scholar of Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada and wrote works in all the three languages. He was acquainted with Tamil, Marathi, and some other languages also, as well as with music. *Basavapurana* (Dwipada), *Panditaradhya charitra* (Dwipada), *Mallamadevipuranamu* (Dwipada), *Somanatha stava* (Dwipada), *Anubhavasara* (verses), *Chennamallu sisamulu* (sisa verses), *Vrishadhipashataka* (verses), *Chaturvedasara* (verses), *Basavodaharana* (verses and ragada) and *Basavaragada* are his Telugu works. *Somanathabhashya*, *Rudrabhashya*, *Vrishabhastaka*, *Basavodaharana*, *Basavashataka*, *Basava panchaka*, *Ashtottara satanama gadya*, *Pancha-prakaragadya*, and *Aksharanka gadya*, are his Sanskrit works. His Kannada works are *Basavaragada*, *Basavadhya ragada*, and *Sadguru ragada*. Of these the first two works in Sanskrit and Telugu have been published and are considered of high standard. Many other works of Somanatha were printed in one volume with the name *Somanathauri kritulu* by Bandaru Tammayya.

Somanatha was devoted to Shiva and Basava and was intolerant of other religions. He lived near Srishaila for a long time where he completed his works. He used the simplest metre dwipada and the deshi language in his important works so that all people might understand them. Pidupati Somana, the author of *Padya Basavapurana*, states that he entered 'samadhi' in village Kalikam in the Mysore state, while others hold that his 'samadhi' is in village Palkuriti near Warangal, where the temple of Somanatheswara was later built.

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