

Mallikarjana Jyothirlingam



Sri Bramarambha Mallikarjuna Temple

Sri Bramarambha Mallikarjuna Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the deities Shiva and Parvati, located at Srisailem in Andhra Pradesh, is the second Jyothirlingam mentioned among the Dwadasa Jyothirlingams on the bank of River Krishna. Here, the River Krishna is known as Pathala Ganga. The temple is significant to the Hindu sects of both Shaivism and Shaktism as this temple is referred to as one of the twelve Jyothirlingas of Lord Shiva and as one of the eighteen Shakti Peethas of Goddess Parvati. Shiva is worshiped as Mallikarjuna, and is represented by the Lingam. His consort Parvati is depicted as Bhramarambha. The holy temple is revered as both Jyotirlinga and Shaktipeeth.

The origin of this ancient temple that is architecturally and sculpturally rich has been lost in antiquity. It is said in Puranas that in Satya Yuga, Hiranyakasapa, a demon king, regularly worshiped this Jyothirlingam. In Treta Yuga, Sri Rama with his wife Sita on their way to Ayodhya from Lanka stopped at this place, installed Sahasra (thousand) Lingas at the temple, and worshiped Lord Shiva to get rid of his sins of killing Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. In Dwapara Yuga, Pandavas visited this temple before Mahabharata war, installed Panch (five) Lingas and worshipped them. These Panch Lingas as well as Sahasra Lingas installed by Lord Rama can be seen even today in this temple complex. It is said that Jagad Guru Sankaracharya visited this temple and composed Sivanadalahari, slokas in praise of Lord Shiva. Shivananda Lahari is one of the foremost among the Shiva Stotras. This is a virtual Bahkti Shastra. It explains the various types or kinds of Bhakti. The opening Stotra is as;

कलाभ्याम् चूडालंकृत-शशिकलाभ्यां निजतपः-
फलाभ्यां भक्तेषु प्रकटित-फलाभ्यां भवतु मे ।
शिवाभ्या-मस्तोक-त्रिभुवन-शिवाभ्यां हृदि पुन-
र्भाभ्या-मानन्द-स्फुर-दनुभवाभ्यां नतिरियम् ॥ १ ॥

My Namskar to auspicious Shiva and Parashakti who have artistic form, wear crescent moon on the head, beneficiaries of mutual penance, whose grace is displayed on their Bhaktas, who lavishly bestow all Mangalams to the three worlds, who appear in the heart afresh every time they are thought of and who experience the bliss of *Atma Anubhava*.

Epigraphic evidence reveals that Srisailam was ruled by Sathavahans in the first century A.D. and later by many other dynasties that ruled South India. In the fifteenth Century A.D. Harihara Rayalu built a new temple with stone walls that comprised the same old deities. The stone walls are strong fortifications, festooned with relief carvings representing scenes from Hindu mythology. In sixteenth century A.D. Srisailam was under a Muslim ruler. Later, in the seventeenth Century Chatrapathi Shivaji with blessings of Goddess Bramarambika Devi fought with the Muslim ruler and got Srisailam under his control. He built a Gharbhalayam and a Gopuram in 1667 AD, with the money he collected from the Muslim ruler as tax. Srisaila Kshetram is now a huge complex with Goddess Bramarambika Temple and many smaller shrines inside the primary and secondary gates and tall Gopurams on all four sides.

Every day thousands of pilgrims visit this Kshethram and get blessings from Lord Mallikarjan Swamy and Goddess Bramarambika Devi. Visiting this Jyothirlingam not only blesses one with innumerable wealth, but also with name and fame and fulfils all the desires. Puranas say that whoever visits the place or by having mere sight of the cliff of Srisaila Mountain even from a distance achieve *Moksha* after death.

(EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK HINDU SANSKRITI BY CHAMAN LAL GADOO)