

# GOMMATESVARA AS FOUND IN HARIVAMSAPURANA

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Gommatesvara, also called Bahubali, was a son of Lord Rsabha, the first great world Teacher (in this avasarpini) who, after teaching his people the way of house-holder's life divided his kingdom among his sons. He made Bharata, his eldest son, his successor and took to asceticism to teach mankind the way of salvation. After long years, Bharata went out to conquer the world and become the first Emperor.

Subjugating all the countries in the six continents and subduing the kings one after another Bharata returned to Ayodhya, the imperial capital. The huge and victorious army marching through triumphal arches entered the high gates of the city. First the chariots rattled in; the elephants, swinging their trunks gracefully, moved on while the bells hanging on their sides sounded ding-dong; then the horses neighed and trotted into the city with raised heads; and then the infantry clad in armour majestically walked on with swords held up. Elaborate preparations were going on briskly to celebrate the victory of Bharata, King of Kosala and Emperor of sad-Khanda. The entire city was jubilant. The Emperor himself was immersed in great joy. The ministers seated in front of him were receiving instructions regarding the details of the celebration of victory. Just then the

Commander-in-Chief stepped into the Durbar Hall and reported to the Emperor that the Discus, the cakra, was still outside the city gates. Bharata was dismayed. He was at a loss to know the reason why the discus had not entered the armoury. He asked the Minister for war if there was any king still unconquered by him. The lists of kings, who had become his vassals, was scrutinized. It was found that the name of Bahubali, the King of Paudanapura, was not in them. He was still independent and he was to be brought under the sway of Bharata.

It was suggested that that might be the reason why the cakra-ratna was still outside the gates of Ayodhya. Immediately swift ambassadors were sent to Paudanapura to demand from Bahubali recognition of the suzerainty of Bharata and submission to his rule. The ambassadors were respectfully received at the court of Bahubali. But on hearing the demands from Bharata, Bahubali got enraged. Bahubali was no less a son of Lord Rsabha than Bharata himself. So Bahubali said, "The kingdom was portioned out and allotted to us by our father the Lord, If he asks me to handover my kingdom to Bharata, I will do so most willingly. But if your king wants to take it from me, let him do so after conquering me in war". The ambassadors returned disappointed and reported to Bharata all that had happened at Paudanapura.

After the departure of the ambassadors, Bahubali gathered his army and was prepared to meet his brother in the battle. On hearing the reply of Bahubali, Bharata grew furious and summoning his entire army he marched towards Paudanapura. Both the armies came closer together at a particular place. Conchs were blown; kettle-drums were beaten, pipes, horns and trumpets blared forth making a tumultuous sound. They were about to attack one another. But the ministers of both the brothers stepped forward and prayed to their Lords not to fight and said, "O Lords, both of you are divine personalities. You are in your last births now. At the end of this life you will be attaining salvation. Your bodies are invulnerable. Why should these innocent soldiers be thrown to the jaws of death ? You may kindly decide your superiority by a duel combat".

Both the contending brothers were naturally averse to any form of injury to any life and they readily agreed to decide this question by methods of righteous fight, namely drsti-yoddha (looking at each other without winking), jalayuddha (throwing water at each other's face) and

malls-yuddha (wrestling). In all the three combats Bahubali became victorious and his army shouted with applause. Emperor Bharata felt humiliated. But Bahubali was not elated in spite of his victory. This was no victory for him. He had to fight his greater enemy karma. He asked his brother to take over his kingdom and rule over it, while he would himself renounce the temporal world and strive for the Spiritual Empire.

Bahubali became an ascetic and was deeply engaged in meditation. He was so much immersed in dhyana and self concentration that he became absolutely unconscious of the external world. Ant-hills grew up at his feet. and creepers wound themselves arround his legs and hands. As he was advancing in concentration, the divinity in him was manifesting itself until at last when he attained Omniscience, he became the fullest manifestation of the Divinity itself. Devas from above, human beings on the earth, animals and birds gathered around him to pay obeisance and hear his teachings. No less a person than His Imperial Majesty Bharata became one of his ardent devotees. Such was the Glory of Gommatesvara who was none else than Bahubali, the king of Paudanapura. The devotion of Bharata was so intense that he caused an image of Bahubali to be made in gold and installed at Paudanapura.

## REFERENCES

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