# BHAGAMANDALA: Temple of Moksha

Author : Hema Narayanan, Dec 12, 2016

## BHAGAMANDALA: Temple Of Moksha

Most temples in India have a legend or a belief, of some sort associated with them. The captivating temple of **Bhagamandala** situated near River Kaveri in Coorg (*Kodagu district*) is believed to grant Moksha (*purge one, of all the negative influences*), to the devotees visiting it.? It is an iconic place, especially with its multitude of significant facts.

Long back, I had chanced upon an interesting **pencil sketch of the Bhagamandala temple** (http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/zoomify66525.html) dated 1816-17 . The artist was anonymous; nevertheless the characteristics of the sketch were poignant and seemed to narrate a tale. I was curious to know the reasons that could have inspired this artist to sketch the temple, in the bygone era. And I knew there was more to Bhagamandala than meets the eye. So I went on a trail to collect factuals around Bhagamandala during my many trips to Coorg?

For one, Bhagamandala is considered sacred, as three Rivers Cauvery, Kanika and Sujothi meet here. This place of **confluence**, at the bottom of the hill at Bhagamandala, is revered and called the ?Triveni Sangama? or ?Kudala?. Sitting by the Sangama, I could see the religious importance here; pilgrims throng the Sangama to take a dip in the waters and to perform rituals to their ancestors. Tula Sankramana festival (*in October*) attracts huge amount of people.

Talking to the local guide, I learned that the tributary Sujothi River is mythical and an invisible underground river, while River Kaveri got its name from the Tamil word, ?kav?, meaning cave and ?eri?, meaning climbed.

Dwelling further into its history, I was a bit shaken to note that this scenic place was once a **battlefield**. There is an inscription here, which refers to how Bhagamandala was captured and occupied by Tipu Sultan during his days of yore (*1785?1790*). Its is believed thatBhagamandala was then renamed by Tipu Sultan, as ?Afesalabad.? It was, King Dodda Vira Rajendra, who got Bhagamandala back into an independent Kodagu Kingdom, after a fierce battle that lasted for a week.

Architecture has a special place in my heart, as they speak of timelessness. Bhagamandala has a fusion of two architectural styles from?**Kerala** and **Nepal** ? a breathtaking portrayal. The main temple, ?Sri Bhagandeshwara temple? is constructed in a large stone courtyard, with multi-layered roofs of reddish hue and pagodas – each pagoda ending in the form of a silver hood of a snake. *Why the hood of a snake?*Perhaps,because Bhagandeshwara means ? Lord Shiva? who has a snake wound around his long neck. The temple also hosts idols of other Lords, like Subramanya, Mahavishnu and Ganesha.

*The pencil sketch still lingered on*?I thought about the inspired Artist.

As I walked out of the royal courtyard of Bhagamandala, I saw another aspect overlooking Bhagamandala that could have been an inspiration too ?the twin peaks of Mt. Thavoor and Mt. Koppatti. This region has a big potential to inspire adventure lovers or anyone who wishes to savor themesmerizing beauty of the Shola forest ranges. Well, I for one, stood and savored a moment myself.

Written by Hema Narayanan for Skyway International Travels

*Writer short brief : Hema is a well-known Photojournalist and a Travel Writer in Bangalore. She is an Entrepreneur and founder of a firm, ?WIDER ANGLES.*

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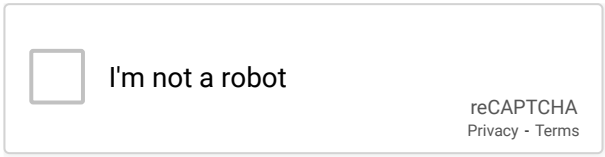
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