

‘1,000-year-old’ Jaina sculptures found fitted to sluice near Hyderabad

The sculptures of four Jaina Tirthankaras were found carved on the four sides of two pillars; visible part of one inscription refers to a monastery that existed close to Chilukuru, a prominent Jaina centre during Rashtrakuta and Vemulawada Chalukyan times



The Jaina sculptures found at Enikepalli village in Moinabad mandal in Rangareddy district.

Two square pillars with sculptures of Jain Tirthankaras and inscriptions were found lying neglected on the outskirts of Hyderabad, at Enikepalli village in Rangareddy district's Moinabad mandal.

E. Sivanagireddy, archaeologist and CEO of Pleach India Foundation, said he inspected the spot based on information given by P. Srinath Reddy, a young archaeologist and heritage activist. He said he found two pillars, one of granite and another black basalt, with the sculptures of four Jaina Tirthankaras—Adinatha, Neminatha, Parsvanatha and Vardhamana Mahavira—in a seated

meditation pose carved on their four sides. The pillars are decorated with Keerthimukhas on the topside.

There are Inscriptions in Telugu-Kannada script on both the slabs, some of which could not be deciphered as they are fitted to the masonry walls of the sluice of the village tank. The visible part of one inscription refers to a Janina Basadi (monastery) that existed close to Chilukuru, a prominent Jaina centre during the Rashtrakuta and Vemulawada Chalukyan times (9th-10th centuries CE). More details could only be known after the slabs are removed from the sluice.

The Jaina Tirthankara slabs might have been brought from dilapidated Jain temple in the locality and fitted to the sluice about 100 years ago, said Mr. Sivanagireddy.

Owing to the archaeological importance of the Jaina sculptural pillars and inscriptions, Mr. Sivanagireddy appealed to the villagers to protect them by removing them from the sluice and erecting them on a pedestal with proper labelling of historical details.

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