

THE VISHṆUKUṆḌINS

(The William Meyer Endowment Lectures in
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by

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THE VISHṆUKUṆḌINS

Dr. N. VENKATARAMANAYYA

I propose to describe in this and the following lectures the political and cultural history of the Vishṇukuṇḍins, who rose to power on the downfall of the Ikshvākus in the early decades of the fifth and ruled up to the beginning of the seventh century of the Christian era over the Coastal Āndhra and the Deccan. The history of the Vishṇukuṇḍins like that of the other dynasties that bore sway over our country in ancient times is not recorded in any ancient chronicle, Puranic or other kind, but is reconstructed on the basis of information furnished by the inscriptions, mostly copper-plate charters registering the gifts made by the rulers of the dynasty to the gods, brāhmaṇas and other religious foundations. These records mention generally the donor and three or more generations of his ancestors, and allude incidentally to their achievements in peace and war, thereby bringing to light events of historical importance which had long remained buried under the sands of time. Nine copperplate charters of the dynasty have come to light so far. These are,—

1. The Īpūru Plates I ¹
2. The Īpūru Plates II ²
3. The Rāmatīrtham Plates ³
4. The Chikkuḷḷa Plates ⁴
5. The Tuṇḍi grant ⁵

1. *Ep.- Ind.* XVII, No. 20, pp. 334-37

2. *Ibid* „ No. 21 pp. 337-39

3. *Ibid* XVII, pp. 133-36

4. *Ibid* IV pp. 193-98

5. A. P. G. S. No. 8

6. The Tummalagūḍem plates I °
7. The Tummalagūḍem Plates II °
8. The Pulumbūru plates °
9. The Khānāpur Plates °

Besides these copper plates, there is a solitary epigraph at Vēlpūr in the Sattenapalle taluk of the Guṇṭūr district. ¹⁰

These inscriptions, needless to say, do not all belong to the same kings. Some belong to different members of the family who issued them at different times. Though these records mention the donor and two or more generations of his ancestors, they do not indicate the inter-connection between the groups of kings mentioned in them. It is therefore necessary before proceeding to narrate the history of the dynasty to reconstruct with such evidence furnished by these records at first the genealogy of the family and then formulate the chronology of its rulers.

First, about the genealogy. We begin with the two sets of Copper-plates discovered at Īpūr in the Tenali taluk of the Guṇṭūr district (10).

1. The first set mentions two kings, (1) *Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman*, and (2) his son, *Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman*, besides *Yuvarāja Mañchyaṇṇa-bhaṭṭāraka*, the son of the latter, of the Vishṇukunḍin rulers.

Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman
|
Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman
|
Mañchyaṇṇa-bhaṭṭāraka

The inscription gives the following information about these kings. It is stated that 1) *Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman* was a devout wor

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6. & 7. *Bhārati* Vol. 42, Nos. 6 and 7 pp. 14-28 & 2-14. These two sets were published there under the caption '*Indrapālanagaram copperplates*. As there is no place of the name of Indrapālanagaram, these are here named as Tummalagūḍem plates after the village where they were discovered.
 8. *Bhārati* VII No. 8, VIII pp. 302-315
 9. *Ep. Ind.* XXVII No. 49 p. 312f
 10. A. R. No. 350 of 1937

shipper of the god Śrī Parvatasvāmi. He is said to have made the gift of innumerable cows, large quantities of gold and much land evidently to gods and brāhmanas and all the *sāmantas* or the subordinate chiefs are said to have bowed down to him in submission and that the orders of 2) his son and successor Śrī *Mahārāja* Śrī Mādhavarman were obeyed by the kings of all the countries; that he was the possessor of the strength of *bala*, *naya*, and *vinaya* of all the *sāmantas* whom he conquered by means of force and diplomacy; that he was the delighter of the hearts of the youthful ladies in the palace of Trivaranagara; that he performed the Agnishtōma sacrifice; that he was born of *Hiraṇya-garbha*, and that he washed off the sins of the World by the *avabhṛta-snānas* (ceremonial bathing) after performing a series of eleven *Aśvamētha* sacrifices. This king, it is further stated, granted in the 37th year of his reign, while he lay encamped in the victorious *skandhāvāra* (army headquarters) at Kuṇḍāvāḍa the village of Vilembali in Guddavādi-*viśaya* to the brāhman Agni Śarman of Vatsa-*gōtra* for the prosperity of his family. The executor of the grant was Mañch-*yaṇa-bhaṭṭāraka*, the dear son of the king.

- (2) The second set of Ipūru plates mentions three generations of kings

Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman

|

Dēvarman

|

... Śrī Mādhavarman

Of these three kings, Dēvarman, the second in the line is mentioned without titles. He appears to have had no achievements to his credit. The first Śrī Mādhavarman is said to have washed away the evil of the world by means of his *avabhṛta* (ceremonial bath) after the performance of eleven *Aśvamētha* sacrifices; besides he is also said to have performed one thousand *Agnishtōma* sacrifices. His feet are said to have been illumined by the rays of gems set in diadems of innumerable *sāmantas*. The official designation, *Mahārāja* of the third, Mādhavarman is lost in the damage in the inscription. He is said to be a devout worshipper of the god, Śrī Parvatasvāmi. He is said to possess *naya*, *vinaya* and *satva*; and is the lord of Malaya and Trikūṭa.

The inscription registers the gift of a village to two brāhmanas, Agni Śarman and Indra Śarman by the king. The gift is said to have been made at Amarapura, (Amarāvati), probably the capital of the king in the 47th year of his reign.

(3) The Rāmatīrtham plates mention three generations of kings.

Śrīman Mahārāja Mādhavavarman

|

Rāja Vikramēndravarman

|

Rāja Indravarman

It is said that the first king Mahārāja Mādhavavarman was a devout worshipper of the god Śrīparvatasvāmi; that his feet were covered by the rays of the gems set in the diadems of the *Sāmantas* of the whole earth who bowed before him in submission. The second king Rāja Vikramēndravarman is said to have been the crest jewel of the exalted line of Viṣṇukuṇḍin kings.

(4) The Chikkuḷḷa Plates

The genealogy in this record begins as in the previous with Mādavarman

Mahārāja Mādhavavarman

|

Vikramēndravarman

|

Mahārāja Śrī Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman

|

Mahārāja Vikramēndravarman

?

Of these kings, (1) Mādhavavarman is stated to have been the worshipper of the feet of the god Śrī Parvatasvāmi, who among the Viṣṇukuṇḍin kings washed off the evils of the World by his ceremonial bath after the performance of eleven *Aśvamēdha* sacrifices. He was the performer of *sahasra-kratu*, *sarvamēdha*, *bahu-suvarṇa*, *pañḍarīka*, *purushamēdha*, *Tūdyā*? *Rājasūyas*, *Prādhirājya*, *Prājāpaya*, and a thousand other sacrifices as a consequence of which

he became supreme, and all the kings of the earth bowed before his feet in submission. Of the (2) Vikramēn ravarman only one fact is stated, that is, that he was born to adorn both the Vishṇukunḍin and the Vākātaka families. (3) Indrabhaṭṭabakavarman is said to have established his ascendancy over the circle for the earth by the power of his sharp sword ; scattered his *dāyādas* by knitting his brows ; won victories over elephant squadrons in several *Chāturdanta*-battles ; obtained religious merit by establishing *gaṇṭhikas* as ordained by law ; and lived a righteous life in virtue of his gifts of land, cows and *kanyas* (virgins). He was a *Parama-māhēśvara* and Mahārāja. (4) Vikramēndra was famous for the excellent qualities from his boyhood ; and he bore with efficiency all the burdens of the kingdom. He was a *Paramamāhēśvara*,

5. *Tuṇḍi Plates* :

The genealogy begins, as in the previous record, with Mādhavarman

Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman
|
Mahārāja Śrī Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman
|
Mahārāja Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman
|
Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman

The first king Mādhavarman is said to have been the worshipper of the feet of the god Śrī Parvatasvāmi, who washed off the evils of the world by means of the ceremonial bath after the performance of eleven *Aśvamēdhas* ; performed *Sahasrakraṭus* (a thousand *agnishōmas*), eleven *bahusvarṇas*, eleven *pauṇḍarikas* besides several other sacrifices in virtue of which he acquired the occult power of achieving any thing he desired ; and a *purushamēdha* and other sacrifices as a consequence of which he became a *paramēśṭhi* and *Dēvādīdēva*. The second king of the line Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman is said to have adorned by his birth both the Vishṇukunḍin and Vākātaka families. Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman, the third Chief of the line is said to have vanquished his *dāyādas*, some of whom were driven to the far off regions whereas others were destroyed completely ; he is further said to have

won victories in several *Chāturdanta*-battles, and made himself supreme lord of the empire with the help of his own right-hand. He was a *Parama-māhēśvara*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, and a *parama-brāhmaṇya* and a *dharma-vijayi*, who acquired vast religious merit by establishing *ghaṭikas* as ordained by law. The last king Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka is said to have been the crest-jewel of the Vishṇukunḍin dynasty who was possessed of the great requisite qualities for the protection of the whole earth. He was a *Mahīmahēndra* the great Indra of the earth.

(6) *Tummalagūḍem Plates I*

This inscription describes Vishṇukunḍin kings of three generations.

Mahārājēndravarmān
|
Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavavarman
|
Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman

Of the first two kings of this line, nothing of interest is mentioned. The third, Gōvindavarman, the donor of the grant appears to be the most important ruler of the family. It is stated that he, by the strength of his arms obtained his kingdom which consisted of the territories conquered from the other *sāmantas*; was the beloved of the *Varṇas* and *āśramas* as well as of his relatives and followers; was the munificent bestower of gifts of villages, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, conches, seats, vehicles, drinks, food, vessels, houses, dresses ornaments, virgins, and male and female slaves in thousands; was the builder of several temples, *Vihāras*, assembly halls, *prapas* (sheds for serving water and drinks to the thirsty way-farers), irrigation tanks, wells and graves; was the possessor of wealth enjoyed by the *bhikshus*, the twice-born, the poor, the beggars, the sick, the lowly and the miserable; was the acquirer of insight into the nature of this and the other world by means of the knowledge obtained from the study of the *śāstras*; was the protector of the learned, the valiant, and the high-born; and was the possessor of a mind highly enlightened for the uplift of all beings. He made a gift of the village Penkapaṇa for a monastery built by his chief queen Parama Mahādēvī for the use of *Chāturdaś = ārya-bhikshu-saṃgha* in the 37th year of his reign.

(7) *Tummalagūḍem Plates II*

This inscription, unlike the others enumerated above, describes a genealogy of five generations. It also begins with a sanskrit verse wishing success to the arms of Uttamāśraya, son of *Satyāśraya*.

Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman
 |
Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman
 |
Mahārāja Śrī Vikramēndravarman
 |
Śrī Indrabhaṭṭāarakavarman
 |
Śrīman Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāarakavarman

Of Gōvindavarman, the progenitor of this line of kings, it is said that he embraced Buddhism after studying the doctrines propounded by the Buddha (*śaḍabhiññā-prātihārya darśan-ānugraha-janita sugaṭa-śāsan-ābhi-prasādasya*) and that he acquired *brahma-punya* (religious merit resulting in final emancipation by the construction of several great *vihāras* rivalling the celestial mansions of the gods.) Mādhavarman, the second in the line performed all the sacrificial rites such as *bahusuvarṇa*, *paunḍarika*, *Vājapēya*, *Sarvamēdha*, *rājasūya*, and *Purushamēdha Kratu-sahasra*, as enjoined by the scriptures; and he was the lord of the land-encircled by the waters of the Eastern and the Western seas and the river Rēvā (Narmada). Vikramēndravarman, the third in the line was the son of the above by Vākāṭaka Mahādēvī; he was a *mahākavi* (great poet) and a *parama-saṅgata* (devoted Buddhist); Indrabhaṭṭāraka-varman; the fourth king made himself master of the entire *Chakravartī-kṣētra* (the emperor's territory or domain) and destroyed the whole body of his *dāyādas* (*dāyāda-manḍala*). And Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāarakavarman, the last ruler and the donor of the present grant, was made king by the *prakṛtis* (ministers) while he was still a boy. He was a *dharma-vijayi* who was devoted to the *dharma*. Uttamāśraya, that is, Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāarakavarman led an expedition against a Pallava king named Simha, and after scoring a victory over him in a battle, returned first to Śakrapura (Indrapura) and made in Śaka 488 (ex) (A.D. 566) in the 11th year of his reign, a gift of the village of Ireṇḍēṅu to the *Chāturdaś-ārya-vaṛa-bhikṣu saṅgha* residing in the *mahāvihāra* built by Parama-bhaṭṭārika. The inscription gives

much interesting information about Paramabhaṭṭārikā's antecedents and her family connections. It is stated that she was born like Lakshmi in the ocean of the family of Pṛithvī Mūlarāja, which was honoured by its alliance with the Vishṇukunḍin, the crest-jewel of the *sāmantas*; that she married Gōvindarāja who built in every *vishaya* (district) in the Dakṣiṇāpatha wonderful *stūpas* and *vihāras* adorned with several kinds of sculptural work; who was brilliant like the *kaustubha* pendant in the series of necklaces viz., the kings on the east and the west of the Śrīparvata, and who resembled Gōvinda (Vishṇu) in virtue, beauty and wealth that she had a son called Mādhavavarman whose greatness is manifested by the conquest of the kings of other dynasties; who was adorned by the qualities of *naya* and *parākrama* (diplomacy and prowess;) and who was charming in personal appearance.

Although the inscription does not explicitly state the family affiliations of Gōvindavarman and Mādhavavarman, the husband and son respectively of Paramabhaṭṭārikā, there can be no doubt that they were Vishṇukunḍins. This is implied in the statement that the royal family of Prithvīmūla of which Paramabhaṭṭārikā was a daughter acquired fame by its alliance (evidently by her marriage) with the Vishṇukunḍins. How these were related to the kings described in the genealogy is not stated in the inscription, though it can be inferred that they were the ancestors of the donor. Govindavarman, the husband of Paramabhaṭṭārikā, was a Buddhist. He is said to have built *vihāras* in all the provinces of the Dakṣiṇāpatha, adorned with sculptures of various kinds. Similarly, Gōvindavarman the progenitor of the donor Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman's family was also a Buddhist. Like his namesake, he not only built several *vihāras* in virtue of which he obtained *brahma-puṇya* but also embraced Buddhism after a study of *śaḍ-abhiñña-prātihārya-darśana*; and both of them had a son named Mādhavavarman. Mādhavavarman, the great grandfather of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman, the donor of the present record, was a great and powerful monarch, who performed several Vēdic sacrifices and was the lord of the earth encircled by the Eastern and the Western oceans and the river of Rēva. Mādhavavarman, the son of Gōvindavarman and Paramabhaṭṭārikā was unsurpassed in greatness as shown by his forcible seizure of the royalty of the kings of other dynasties. Taking these points of similarity into consideration, it is not unreasonable to presume that Gōvindavarman and Mādhavar-

man mentioned in the grant portion of the inscription are identical respectively with the kings of the same names in the genealogical part of it.

(8) *The Pulumbūru plates*

The Pulumbūru plates describe the following genealogy of three generations

Śrī Vikramāhēndravarmān

|

Gōvindavarman

|

Mahārāja Mādhavarman

Of the first Vikramāhēndravarmān, it is stated that he was the worshipper of the god Śrīparvatasvāmī; and that he subdued a multitude of the *Sāmanta* chiefs; that Gōvindavarman the second in the line won victories in many battles and had the title *Vikramāśraya*; and that the third Mādhavarman, the donor of the present record was the ruler of the entire *Daśaśata-dharaṇītala* or Ten hundreds (Thousands) country; was fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of Trivaranagara; was the performer of the *Satakratu* (hundred sacrifices) was the offspring of the golden womb (*hiranya-garbha-prasūta*): that he washed off the evils of the world by ceremonial bath after performing eleven *Aśvamēdha* sacrifices; that he was the protector of the learned, the twice-born, the *gurus* (teachers), the aged and the ascetics; that he was the sun (shining on) the kings of the earth; that he was a *Parama-brahmaṇya* (devoted to the Brahman); that he meditated on the feet of his parents; and that he was known as *Janāśraya Mahārāja*. It is further stated that in his 48th regnal year he crossed the Gōdavāri to conquer the eastern quarter (*prāg-dig-vijaya*.)

(9) *The Khānāpūr plates*

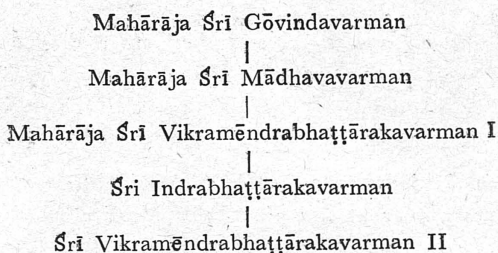
The first plate in the inscription is lost. The second plate mentions Mahārāja Mādhavarman who was a *sārvabhauma* (emperor) and who performed the *pauṇḍarika*, *bahusuvarṇa*, *ekādaśa aśvamēdha*? sacrifices. He had the title of *Chātūrvarṇya*, *Chātūrāśrama-dharma-karma-sētu* (the bond uniting the rites pertaining to the four *Varṇas* and

āśramas). Though the dynastic affiliations of this Madhāvarman are not known, he has been identified, on the basis of the performance of the sacrifices attributed to him with the Vishṇukunḍin king of the same name. Even if the identification is accepted, it does not add much to our knowledge of the Vishṇukunḍin history.

(10) *The Vēlpūru inscription*

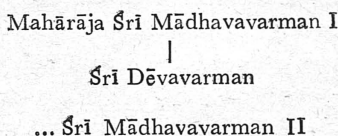
This is a fragmentary record. The broken pieces which mention the Vishṇukunḍin and the Pallava families, refer to a *skandhāvāra* (military encampment) where Mādhavavarman and his son Vikramēndra were camping. The inscription is dated in the 37th regnal year of the former.

Of the inscriptions listed above, the Chikkuḷḷa and Tuṇḍi grants belong to one and the same king; for Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman, the donor of these two records, was the son of Indrabhaṭṭarakavarman the grandson of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman, the ornament of the two dynasties of the Vishṇukunḍins and the Vākātakas, and the great grandson of Mādhavavarman, the performer of eleven *Aśvamēdhas*, and innumerable other sacrifices. The Tummalagūḍem plates II also belong to the same monarch; for Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka, the donor of this grant like his namesake donors of the other two, was the son of Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman, the grandson Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman who was the son of Vākāṭaka Mahādēvī and a great grandson of Mādhavavarman, the performer of eleven *Aśvamēdhas* besides innumerable other sacrifices. In addition to the names of these four generations of kings, the Tummalagūḍem plates II introduces a fifth king viz., Gōvindavarman, the father of Mādhavavarman, so that we have here five generations of kings instead of the usual four. The Rāmatīrtham grant also belongs to the king of the family; for Indravarman (the abridged form of Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman), was the son of Vikramēndravarmān, the ornament of both (Vishṇukunḍin and Vākāṭaka families) and the grandson of Mādhavavarman, the performer of eleven *Aśvamēdhas* and *Kratu-sahasra* (thousand sacrifices). It is evident the Vikramēndra, the donor of the Rāmatīrtham plates was the father of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman, the donor of the three inscriptions mentioned above. Taken together they describe a genealogy of five generations of Vishnukundin kings.

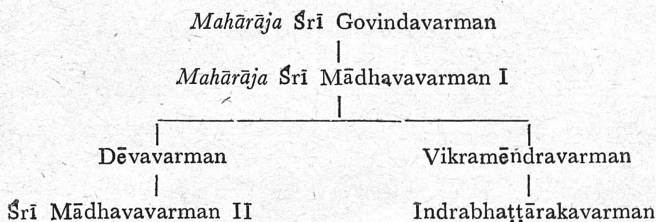


This genealogy is unquestionable, and has to be accepted by all. We have now to see whether and how the genealogies described in the remaining records are connected with this.

We take up first the two Īpūr sets into consideration. Of the two, the second set is considered by the palaeographers to be more ancient than the first. The second set refers only to three generations of kings.



Mādhavarman I, the first king of this line, performed like his namesake of the other four inscriptions mentioned above, eleven *Aśvamēdhas* besides *Agnishṭoma-sahasra* (thousand Agnishthōmas. They may therefore be considered identical. If this identification is acceptable, taking this on to the combined genealogy of the foregoing four inscriptions, we get the following :



The Īpūr I set mentions as stated already, two generations of kings, and together with the *yūvarāja* who is also the executor. Three generations :

Mahārāja Śrī Govindavarman
 |
Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman
 |
Yuvarāja Mañchayāna-bhaṭṭaraka

Mahārāja Gōvindavarman and *Mahārāja* Mādhavarman of inscription may appear at first sight to be identical with the kings of the same names in the genealogy formulated above. Their mutual relationship as father and son and the attribution of the titles - *praṇata-sakala-sāmanta* and *gō-hiraṇya-bhū-pradāta* of the former and *agnishṭōma-sahasra-yājī*, *ekādaś-āśvamedh-āvabhrīt-āvadhūta-jagat-kalmashaḥ* of the latter - lend colour to it; but the title *Trivaranagara bhavana-gata-yuvati-hṛidayarañjana* of Mādhavarman of this record is not associated with Mādhavarman of the Rāmatīrtham, Chikkulja, Tuṇḍi and Tummalagūḍem II plates seems to indicate that Mādhavarman of Īpūr I plates is not identical with Mādhavarman of the four records mentioned above but a different monarch. The genealogy of this inscription appears to be the same as that described in the Pulumbūru plates. The latter refer to three generations of Viṣṇukunḍin kings :

Śrī Vikramahēndravarmān
 |
Gōvindavarman
 |
Mādhavarman

Vikramahēndravarmān, the name of the first king of this line, has been taken by scholars to be a scribal error for Vikramēndravarmān. This may have been so. He is said to have been a devout worshipper of the feet of *Śrīparvata-svāmi*; to whom the circle of the *sāmanta*-kings bowed in submission. The second king, Gōvindavarman was a victor in several battles; his feet, it is stated, were illuminated by the light of the gems set in the crowns of the enemy kings; and he bore the title of *Vikramāśraya*. Vikramahēndra's son, Mahārāja Mādhavarman was like Mādhavarman of the Rāmatīrtham, Chikkulja, Tuṇḍi and Tummalagūḍem II plates as well as Mādhavarman of the Īpūr I plates, was the performer of eleven *Āśvamedhas* and other sacrifices; but unlike the former and like the latter, he was *Trivaranagara-bhavana-gata-yuvati-jana-vihāra-rata* (or *hṛidaya-rañjana*) and *hiraṇyagrabha-prasūta*-that is, he took delight in sporting with (or in the alternative caused

delight to the hearts of) the young damsels of Trivarnagara and took his birth from the womb of the golden (cow). It is reasonable to suppose that Mādhavavarman of the Īpūru I and Pulum̄būru plates are one and the same person and that the genealogical lists given therein are identical. Combining the pedigrees of these two records, we get the following :-

Mahārāja Vikram(ah)ēndravarman

|

Mahārāja Gōvindavarman

|

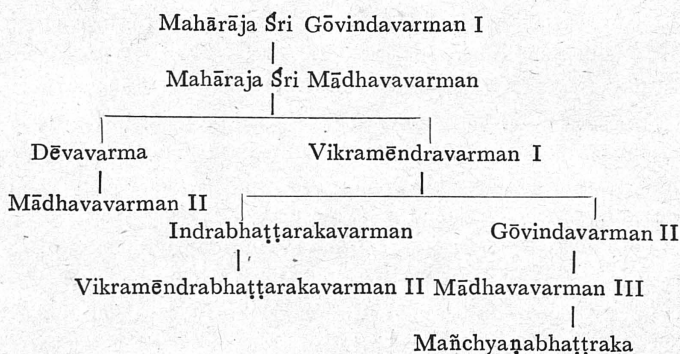
Mahārāja Mādhavarman

|

Mañchyaṇa bhaṭṭāraka

We shall next proceed to find whether this line of rulers has any connection with the Vishṇukunḍin monarchs of the four inscriptions mentioned above ; and if so where in the genealogy described therein they have to be accommodated. Now, Vikramēndravarman, the first name in the Īpūru I-cum-Pulumbūru list offers a clue. It may be remembered that this name occurs twice in the list furnished by the four (Chikkulla, Tundi, Rāmatīrtham, and Tummalagudem II) inscriptions mentioned above. Of the two Vikramēndravarman of this list, the first was the son of Mādhavarman, the performer of eleven Aśvamēdhas and other sacrifices. He is referred to in the inscriptions as the son of Vākāṭakamahādevi, *ubhayavaṃśālaṃkārabhūta*, and *Vishṇukunḍi-Vākāṭaka-ubhayavaṃśadvay=ālaṃkāra-janma* (born as an adornment both of the Vishṇukunḍi and Vākataka families) ; and the other was the grandson of the above, son of his son Indrabhaṭṭāraka-varman. The Vikramēndra (Vikramahēndra) varman of the Īpūr I-cum-Pulumbūru list must be identical with one of these two. Some have identified him with the latter ; but this cannot be accepted, as it militates known historical facts. If Vikramēndra (Vikramahēndra) of Pulumburu plates is identified with his namesake, the donor of the Chikkulḷa, Tuṇḍi and Tummalagūḍem II plates, his son Gōvindavarman, and grandson Mādhavarman must have ruled the kingdom one after the other. We know from the Tummalagūḍem II and Tuṇḍi plates that he ruled at least up to A. D. 570. Allotting a period of 25 years rule to Gōvindavarman, and adding to it the 48 years rule of his son Mādhavarman, we get A. D. 643 as the latest known year of

the latter. This is impossible ; for, in the first place, the Chālukyan conquest took place, as revealed by the recently discovered Mārāṭūru grant of Pulakēśin II, in A. D. 616—17.¹¹ After the Chālukyan conquest, the Vishṇukuṇḍins could not have been ruling in Vēngi or anywhere in the coastal Andhra country. Therefore, it is not possible to accept that the Pulumbūru line of kings succeeded Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka, the donor of the Chikkuḷḷa, Tuṇḍi and Tummalagūdem II plates. There is reason to believe that they were contemporaneous with this Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka and his predecessors. In the first place the characters of the Pulumbūru plates resemble those of Tummalagūdem plates. Secondly, Mādhavarman and his father Gōvindavarman of the former, bear titles ending with the suffix *āśraya* like Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman and his father Indrabhaṭṭāraka. It seems, therefore, reasonable to think that Vikramahendra of the Pulumbūru plates is identical with Vikramēndra, the son of Mādhavarman and Vākāṭaka Mahādēvi and that he was the common ancestor of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka (the donor of Chikkuḷḷa, Tuṇḍi and Tummalagūdem records), and Mādhavarman of the Pulumburu grant. Assuming the correctness of this line of thought, the Vishṇukuṇḍin genealogy may be drawn up as follows :-



There is yet one more record Tummalagūdem plates to consider before we complete the Vishṇukuṇḍin genealogy. It describes a line of three kings :

11. The copper plate inscription in the A.P. Govt. Museum pp. 36-39

Mahārājēndravarman

|
Mahārāja Śrī Mādhavarman

|
Mahārāja Śrī Gōvindavarman

Though the similarity of the characters of this record to those of the Tummalagudem II plates seem to indicate that they belong to the same period, there are strong grounds to believe that the former is much anterior to the latter. Gōvindavarman, the donor of Tummalagudem I set granted the village of Peṅkapaṅu to the monastery of the Chāturdaś-aryabandha-bhikshu-saṁgha built by his chief queen Parama Mahādēvī at Indranagara.

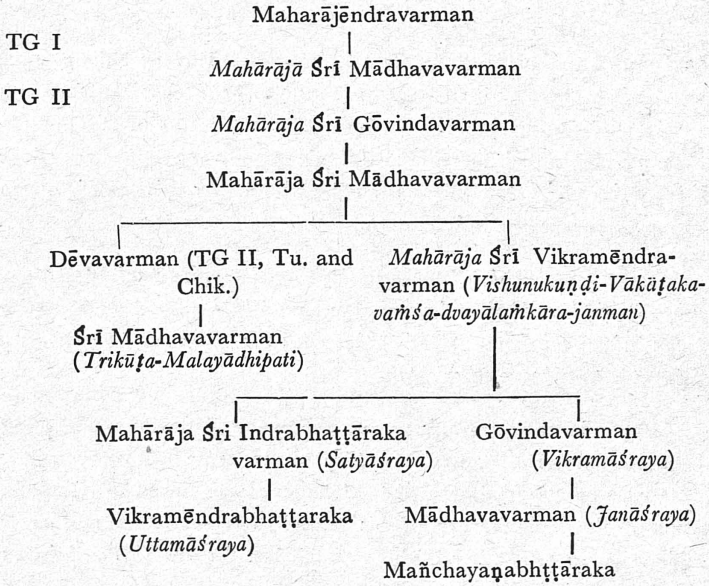
Soasy = āgra-mahishyā Parama-Mahādēvyā-vihārasya dīpa-dhūpa-gandha-pushpa-dhvaja-pāna-bhōjana-śayan = āsana-gūṇa-bhāishajya-khaṇḍa-sphutita-sīraṇa-kuśāla-mūl-anupach-ahhēd-ārtham dvā...la Peṅkapaṅō-nāmādheyāo-udaka-dāna-pūrvakam, ati sṛishṭaḥ.

Vikramēndrabhaṭṭarakavarman, the donor of the Tummalagudem II set granted the village of Iraṇḍēru to the same monastery built at Indrapura by Paramabhaṭṭarikā Mahādevī, the queen of Govindavarman, the grandfather of his grandfather and the mother of Mādhavarman the father of his grandfather for the Chātur-daś-ārya-vara-bhikshu-saṁgha.

Śrī Govinda-rājasya mūrtimati śriya-pratyā-vishayākṛita-manorathayā Parama-bhaṭṭarikā Mahādēvyā Śrī-mad-Indrapuram-uchchair-alakartu kāma-yeva pratishṭhāpitē śrīmatu Paramabhaṭṭarikā vihāri chatur-daś-ārya-vara-bhikshu-saṁgha paribhōgāya Iraṇḍēru-nāma grāmō dattaḥ.

It is evident from these that Gōvindavarman and his Parama (bhaṭṭarikā) Mahādēvī of these two inscriptions are identical and not two different sets of individuals. The fact that Parama (bhaṭṭarikā) Mahādēvī was the builder of the *vihāra* at Indranagara (pura) for the monks of the Chātur-daś-ārya-vara-bhikshu-saṁgha strengthens this identification. Therefore, it may be declared with confidence that the Tummalagudem I set is anterior to the II set. The similarity of the alphabet must have been due to the fact that the former is a later copy of an earlier document which was damaged or otherwise impaired in course of time. Accepting this to be the correct reading of the facts,

it may be asserted that the genealogies in the two records are interconnected, and the kings mentioned in the first set are the ancestors of those in the second. The genealogy of the Vishṇukunḍin kings may be finally set forth as follows :-



CHRONOLOGY

The Vishṇukuṇḍin Chronology had been resting hitherto on the basis of two copper-plate grants (1) Of the Vishṇukuṇḍin Mādhavarman II Janāśraya, and (2) Of the E. Chalukya Jayasimha Vallabha I, both from the village of Pulumbur (the present Polamūr) in the E. Godavari district A. P. These are referred to, for the sake of convenience, as Pulumbūru plates I and II respectively in the course of the following discussion. The former registers the gift of the village of Pulumbūru as a *sarva-kara-parihāra agrahāra* to Śiva Śarman, son of Dāmaśarman and grandson of Rudraśarman of Gautamasa-gōtra by Mādhavarman surnamed Janāśraya, son of Govindavarman and Vikramahēndravarman of the Vishṇukuṇḍin family on the occasion of a lunar eclipse on Phālguna-paurṇamāsyā in the 48th year of his rule after crossing the Gōdāvarī for the conquest of the eastern region.¹ The latter records the renewal of the grant of the same *agrahāra* to its former owner Rudra Śarman, son of Śiva Śarman, grandson of Dāma Śarman of Gautamasa-gōtra by Jayasimhavallabha, son of Kubja-Vishṇuvardhana, younger brother of Satyāśraya Pulakēśi Vallabha II and grandson of the Chālukya king Kirtivarman II.² It is evident from these (1) that Śiva Śarman who obtained Pulumbūr as an *agrahāra* from the Vishṇukuṇḍin Mādhavarman IV Janāśraya was the father of Rudra Śarman, who obtained the renewal of the grant of a former *grahāra* from the E. Chalukya Jayasimhavallabha I; and (2) that Śiva Śarman and his son Rudra Śarman were the contemporaries of Vishṇukuṇḍin IV Janāśraya and the E. Chalukya Jayasimhavallabha I respectively. It may be inferred from this that the last two belonged to two successive generations and that the latter might even have been the younger contemporary of the former.

The data furnished by these two records had formed until recently the basis of the Vishṇukuṇḍin chronology. Sri K. V. Lakshmana Rao, the first writer to formulate the chronology of the

1. Bhārathi, VII: 8; pp. 302, 315

2. Ep. Ind: XX: 42. pp. 254 ff

Vishṇukunḍin rulers, sets forth the problem as follows: "As the donee of Mādhavavarman's inscription was the father of the donee of Jayasimhavallabha's inscription, Madhavavarman must have been a contemporary of Jayasimhavallabha's father Kubja-Vishṇuvardhana, the founder of the E. Chalukya kingdom of Vengi and of the former's paternal uncle Pulakēśin II, the famous South Indian opponent of Śri Harsha. It is evident from this that Mādhavavarman must have flourished about the close of the 6th and commencement of the 7th centuries A.D. We must now see whether it is possible to ascertain the period of his rule more precisely. We learn from Pulumbūru plates I that Mādhavavarman made the gift described therein at the time of a lunar eclipse on Phālgua Paurṇami (11-25-27). Now during the period under consideration, the Moon suffered eclipse on Phālgua Paurṇami in A.D. 575, 593, 594, 612 and 621. The first of these dates (A.D. 575) must be rejected as too early to be the 48th regnal year of a king (viz., Mādhavavarman) who should have suffered defeat at the hands either of Kubja Vishṇuvardhana or of his elder brother Pulakēśin II. Similarly, the last date (A.D. 621) must also be rejected as too late, as he (Mādhavavarman) was vanquished by Pulakēśin II at the beginning of the 7th century, very probably about 610 A.D. We know that Kubja-Vishṇuvardhana established his independence about 616 A.D. Of the remaining three dates 593 and 612 must also be rejected, as the lunar eclipses, which occurred when the Sun was above (below?) the horizon were not visible in India. Therefore, the only date that satisfies the conditions is A.D. 594 (to be more exact 10th February A.D. 594), when Madhavavarman issued the charter (i.e. Pulumbūru Plates I). As the inscription is dated in the 48th regnal year of the king, his reign must have commenced in A.D. 546. As Mādhavavarman, perhaps the last Vishṇukunḍin king of Vengi, ruled that country before its conquest by Pulakēśin II or his brother Kubja Vishṇuvardhana, he must have ruled for 65 years from 546 to 610 A.D.

Śri Lakshmana Rao next proceeds to reconstruct, on the basis of the period of Mādhavavarman's rule which he had fixed, the chronology of the Vishṇukunḍin kings as follows:

ARE. C. P. No. 12 of of 1919-20	}	Mādhavarman I (A.D. 357-382)
		Dēvarman (A.D. 382-407)
		Mādhavarman II (A.D. 407-444)
Rāmatirtham Plates Ep. Ind. XII, p. 133 Chikkulla Plates Ep. Ind. IV, p. 193	}	Vikramēndravarmān I (A.D. 444-469)
		Indrabhaṭṭarakavarman (A.D. 469-496)
		Vikramēndravarmān II (A.D. 496-521)
Āndhraparishad (Pulumbūru) plates Bhārati VII No. 8 and VIII pp. 302-315	}	Govindavarman (A.D. 521-546)
		Mādhavarman III (A.D. 546-610)
		Mañchanabhaṭṭāraka (A.D. 610—?)

Scholars, who discussed the problems of the Vishṇukunḍin genealogy and chronology subsequently, accepted the dates suggested by Śrī Lakshmana Rao as the basis of their chronological schemes, though they differed from him about the actual succession of the kings and put forward variant versions of their pedigree. Like him they made the two sets of Pulumbūr plates the bed-rocks of their chronology, and proposed on their basis chronologies which, however, differ from one another. As these like the one put forward by Lakshmana Rao are opposed to facts that had come to light recently, they are not taken into consideration here.

The dates A.D. 546 and 594 suggested by Sri Lakshmana Rao for the first and the 48th regnal years respectively of Mādhavarman may be accepted as correct as they are based on the astronomical and chronological data furnished by the Pulumbūru Plates I. There is, however, no justification for prolonging the reign of that king until A.D. 610. It is not also possible to accept the genealogy and the chronology propounded by him as they are opposed to facts that have come to light in recent years. The Pulumburu plates I and II, no doubt, show that their donees Śivaśarman and Rudraśarman were contemporaries of their respective donors Mādhavarman and Jayasimhavallabha; but it does not necessarily follow from this that like the former the latter also belong to two successive generations and that Kubja-Vishṇuvardhana and Pulakesin II, the father and paternal uncle respectively of Jayasimhavallabha were contemporaries

of Mādhavavarman; and that it was from him that they conquered Vengi in A.D. 610. There is reason to believe that the Vishṇukunḍins ceased to exist some time before the Chalukyan conquest which as a matter of fact, took place in A.D. 616-17 and not in A.D. 610 as assumed by Śrī Lakshmana Rao. The recently discovered Maratūru grant of Pulakēśin II shows that he invaded Vengi for the first time in his 7th regnal year (A.D. 616-17), and that he was accompanied not by his younger brother Kubja Vishṇuvardhana as it is generally believed but by the Ālupa king of Mangalapura (Mangalore on the West Coast)*. Kubja Vishṇuvardhana was in fact, governing the three Mahārāshṭrakas from Achalapura as the deputy of his brother, at the time⁴. It is utterly baseless that he should have declared his independence as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao in A. D. 617. His association with Vengi began some seven years later in A. D. 624 from which, as shown by Sri M. S. Sarma, he reckoned his regnal years⁵. His rule over Vengi lasted for 18 years not from A.D. 617 to 633 as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao but from A.D. 624 when he was succeeded by Jayasimhavallabha. He revived the old grant of Pulumburu to Rudraśarman in his 5th regnal year, that is in A.D. 647. There should have elapsed therefore 53 years between the grant of Pulumbūru to Śivaśarman by Mādhavavarman in his 48th regnal year (A.D. 594), and the regrant of the same village to the former's son Rudraśarman by Jayasimhavallabha in his fifth regnal year (A. D. 647). Reckoning 25 years for a generation, two generations have passed in the interval. It is therefore doubtful whether Rudraśarman was actually a son of Śivaśarman, as stated by Śrī Lakshmana Rao, and not a later descendant.

The belief that the Vishṇukunḍin rule lasted upto the time of the Chalukyan conquest of Vengi, and Mādhavavarman (IV), the donor of the Pulumbūru Plates I, was the Vishṇukunḍin monarch who suffered defeat at the hands of either Pulakēśin II or Kubja Vishṇuvardhana and forfeited as a consequence his throne and kingdom, is not supported by evidence. The Chalukyan inscriptions, it may be

3. Copper plate Ins. of A. P. Govt. Museum, Vol. I. pp. 36-39.

4. I am obliged to Sri B. Narasimham, M. A., Lecturer in History S. N. College, Hyderabad for bringing this fact to my notice.

5. E. Chalukyas of Vengi, p. 55 n. 1 and 2,



noted, do not even remotely allude to the Vishṇukunḍins. They declare, on the contrary, that Kubja Vishṇuvardhana, the founder of the E. Chalukya dynasty, conquered Vengi from the Durjayas who were then ruling that country. The earliest record to mention this fact is the Kāṭlapaṇḍu grant of Guṇaga Vijayāditya, wherein it is stated that Kubja Vishṇuvardhana brother of Satyāśraya (Pulakēśin II) defeated the Durjayas and seized Vengi⁶. This is also referred in the inscriptions of some of his successors. The Pandipāka grant of Chālukya Bhīma I for instance states that Kubja Vishṇuvardhana, the unrivalled in prowess, dislodged the Durjayas from the Āndhra-Vishaya which was in their possession and conquered and occupied Vengi⁷. The Kākamānu grant of the same king also declares that Kubja-Vishṇuvardhana having driven out at first the Durjayas from Vengi ruled over that country for eighteen years⁸. Similarly, the Kandayam plates of Dānārṇava assert that Kubja Vishṇuvardhana took Vengi by force from the Durjayas and ruled over it for eighteen years.⁹ The evidence of these inscriptions make it clear (1) that the Vishṇukunḍin rule did not last, as supposed by Sri Lakshmaṇa Rao and others, until the Chālukyan conquest; (2) that the Chālukyas conquered Vengi not from the Vishṇukunḍins but the Durjayas, and (3) that the Durjayas had been in possession of Vengi for some time before the advent of the Chalukyas having conquered it earlier from the Vishṇukunḍins.

Sri B. N. Sastri has placed the scholarly world engaged in historical research under a deep debt of gratitude by his discovery and publication of the two sets of Tummalaguḍem (Indrapālanagaram) Copper-plates¹⁰, which have greatly enriched our knowledge of ancient Andhra history. Of these, the second set which is by far the most important Vishṇukunḍin record both from the chronological and historical points of view, that has come to light so far may be regarded as the sheet anchor of the Vishṇukunḍin chronology. It has given it, by coupling Ś. 488 (A. D. 556) with the 11th regnal year of Vikramendrabhaṭṭarakavarman II, fixity which it had never known before.

6. STVN High School Annual 1939-40 p. 24

7. Madras Govt. Or. Mss. Lib. Elliot collection 15-4-26 pp. 185 f.

8. A. P. Govt. Museum, Hyderabad, under publication.

9. J. A. H. R. S. XI p. 35.

10. Bhārati XLII, Nos. 6 and 7 pp. 14-28 and 2-14.

If, as stated in this inscription, the 11th regnal year of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II coincided with Śaka 488 (A.D. 556), he ruled, as shown by his Tuṇḍi grant, for fourteen years, and his rule consequently lasted from A. D. 553 to 570. On the basis of these dates and with the help of the regnal years furnished for each king by his inscriptions, it is possible to formulate a tolerably correct chronology of the Vishṇukunḍin dynasty; but before proceeding to do so a fact which seems to militate against it demands consideration. We have deduced from the Tummalagūḍem II and the Tuṇḍi grants that Vikramēndrabhaṭṭārakavarman II ruled from A. D. 555-6 to 570-71. His father Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman who preceded him on the throne ruled according to the Rāmatirtham plates for 27 years. (1) Deducting 27 years from A. D. 556 when he was succeeded by his son, we get A. D. 529 for the beginning of his reign. We have accepted above the dates A.D. 546-596 calculated by Sri Lakshmana Rao on the basis of the astronomical and chronological data provided by Pulumbūru plates I for the reign of Mādhavavarman (IV) as correct. This would mean that during the whole of the reign of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka and part of that of his predecessor Mādhavavarman (IV) was also ruling simultaneously as the sovereign of the Vishṇukunḍin dominions. This, however, is not as incompatible as it may appear at sight. Mādhavavarman IV was a member of a collateral branch of the Vishṇukunḍin royal family ruling over a tract of territory granted to it as an appanage by the sovereign. The *biruda Trivara-nagara bhavana-parama yuvati-jana-viharaṇa-rata* associated with his name in the inscriptions shows that he was a native of Trivara-nagara, identified with modern Tēvār on the banks of the Narmadā, which was in all probability the headquarters of the appanage granted to his family. It may be noted that the peace of the Vishṇukundin dominion was considerably disturbed during the time of Indrabhaṭṭāraka. The Maukharis from the north and the Pallavas from the south invaded the kingdom. The *dāyādas* or the cognates belonging to the collateral branches of the royal family taking advantage of the foreign invasions rose up in rebellion against him. Particular emphasis is laid on Indrabhaṭṭāraka's conflict with his *dāyādas* in all the inscriptions of his son Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II. In the Chikkuḷla plates, it is stated that he (Indrabhaṭṭāraka) scattered the whole body of his *dāyādas* by knitting his eye brows; in the Tummalagūḍem plates it is said that he destroyed completely the

multitude of his *dāyādas*; and in the Tuṇḍi grant it is asserted that he put to flight and ruined all his *dāyādas* by his attacks. Mādhavarman IV was obviously one of the *dāyādas* referred to in these inscriptions. He may have suffered defeat at the hands of Indrabhaṭṭāraka but was not destroyed by him. As his estate lay far away from the capital on the northern side from the kingdom in the vicinity of Maukhari territories, his submission could not have been permanent. He must have repudiated his allegiance and considered himself independent as he had reckoned his regnal years, from A. D. 546, when he succeeded to the family estate; and his reign naturally ran parallel to those of Indrabhaṭṭāraka and his son Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka for the duration of their rule.

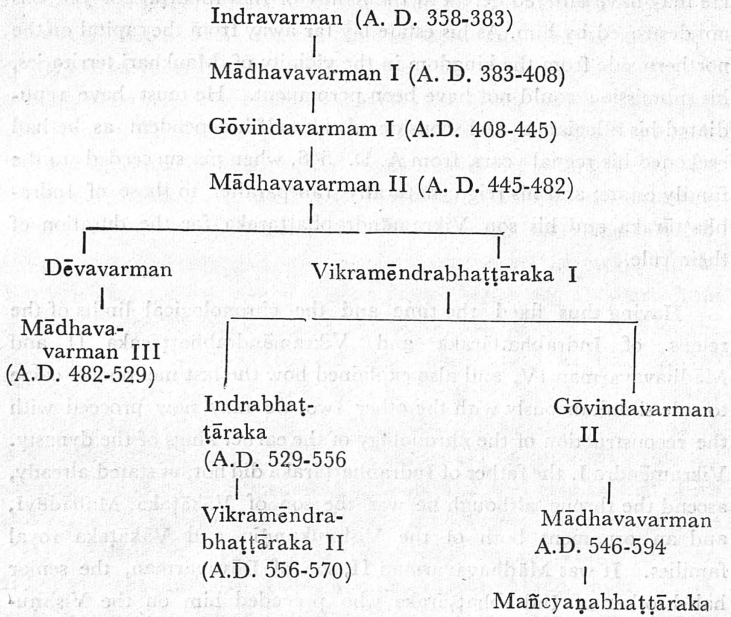
Having thus fixed the time and the chronological limits of the reigns of Indrabhaṭṭāraka and Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II and Mādhavarman IV, and also explained how the last mentioned came to rule simultaneously with the other two, we may now proceed with the reconstruction of the chronology of the earlier kings of the dynasty. Vikramēndra I, the father of Indrabhaṭṭāraka did not, as stated already, ascend the throne, although he was the son of Vākāṭaka Mahādēvī, and an ornament both of the Vishṇukunḍin and Vākāṭaka royal families. It was Mādhavarman II, son of Dēvarman, the senior half-brother of Indrabhaṭṭāraka who preceded him on the Vishṇukunḍin throne. As this Mādhavarman ruled, according to the Īpūru plates II for 47 years¹¹, his reign must have lasted from A. D. 482 to 529. Mādhavarman II, the grandfather of Mādhavarman III, was his immediate predecessor. As the former ruled, according to Īpūru plates I,¹² for 37 years his reign must have lasted from 445 to 482 A.D. As Mādhavarman's father, Govindavarman I was the immediate predecessor who ruled, according to his Tummalagudem plates I for 37 years he must have held sway over the kingdom from A.D. 408 to 445. It is not known how long Mādhavarman I and Indrarman, the father and grandfather of Govindavarman I ruled. Assigning the conventional 25 years for each of them, they may both be considered to have ruled for a period of 50 years, Mādhavarman I from A.D. 383 to 408; and his father

11. Ep. Ind. XVII pp. 337-39.

12. Ep. Ind. XVII pp. 314-17

13. Ibid, pp. 334-7.

Indravarman from A. D. 358 to 383. If the chronology formulated here is correct, beginnings of the Vishṇukuṇḍin rule may be placed in the middle of the 4th century A.D.



VISHṆUKUṆḌIN HISTORY

Very little is known about the origin and the antecedents of the Vishṇukuṇḍins. The name Vishṇukuṇḍin is used variously in the inscriptions to denote their *gōtra* as well as their family. In the Vēlpūru epigraph of Mādhavavarman II, his father Gōvindavarman I is stated to be an offspring of the Vishṇukuṇḍin *gōtrā*.¹ In the Tuṇḍi grant of Vikramēndra II, his grandfather Vikramēndra I is spoken of as an ornament of both the Vishṇukuṇḍi and the Vākāṭaka families; his father Indrabhaṭṭāraka and himself as the crest-jewel of and the gem adorning the crown respectively of the Vishṇukuṇḍi family.²

It is evident from these that the name Vishṇukuṇḍin is used as a common appellation of their *gōtra* and family (*vaṁsa*, *kula* and *anvaya*).

Opinion is divided about the original habitat of the Vishṇukuṇḍins. Inscriptions are silent on the subject. Nevertheless, scholars have divided themselves into two groups, some contending that they were outsiders who came to the Telugu country along with some invaders and established themselves there as its rulers, and others upholding that they were the indigenous inhabitants of the country who rose to power and fame by their own efforts. Dr. G. Jouveau Dubreuil expounds the foreign origin theory as follows :—

“The Vākāṭakas were the neighbours of the Kadam̐bas, and the Vākāṭaka kingdom extended up to the modern town of Kurnool on the banks of the Kṛishṇā. We know that the famous temple of Śrīsailam or Śrīparvata is in the Kurnool district; and a story as related in the Sthala Māhātmya of the place says that the princess Chandrāvati, a daughter of the Gupta king Chandragupta conceived

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1. A. R. No. 350 of 1937-38 ‘*Vishṇukuṇḍi-gotrāt-prabhavasya*’.
 2. APGMS No. 8. U. G.-10 *Vishṇukuṇḍi Vākāṭaka-Vaṁsa-dvay ālamkṛita-janmanah*.
 1. 13-14 *Vishṇukuṇḍ-kula-tilakasya*.
 - R. 21 *Vishṇukuṇḍi-kula-tilakasya*.

a passion for the God of the Śrīśaila hill and began offering every day a garland of jasmine (*mallikā*) flowers to him". (Report of Epigraphy 1914-15, G. O. No. 1260, 25th August 1915, Part II No. 13, p. 91). "This information is very precious as throwing light on the origin of the dynasty of the Vishṇukuṇḍins that we shall study further. In fact, we shall see that this dynasty had for its tutelary deity, the God of Śrīparvata, and that the first king of this dynasty, Mādhavarman married a Vākāṭaka princess. I think there can be no doubt that this princess was a daughter or grand daughter of the queen Prabhāvatī or Chandrāvatī, who was the daughter of the Gupta emperor, wife of Rudrasēna II, mother of Pravarasēna and a votary of the God of Śrīparvata. It was probably during the reign of Pravarasēna II that the Vākāṭakas who reigned over almost the whole of the modern states of Hyderabad, succeeded in founding the dynasty of the Vishṇukuṇḍins by placing on the throne of Vēṅgi Madhavavarman I who was the husband of the Vākāṭaka princess and an adorer of the God of Śrī-Parvata".³ Again, 'we have said already that very probably in the middle of the Vth century the Vākāṭakas uprooted the ancient Śālaṅkāyana dynasty of Vēṅgi and placed on the throne their relation Mādhavarman I"⁴.

This is a bold attempt to convert legend into history. Apart from the similarity of the name there is nothing to connect the legendary king Chandragupta with the Gupta sovereign of that name, nor his daughter Chandrāvatī with Prabhāvatī Gupta, the daughter of the latter. Chandragupta of the Sthalapurāṇa, even if he were really a historical personage was but a local potentate, the ruler of Chandraguptapaṭṭana, the ruins of which are still to be seen in the forest on the northern bank of the Kṛishṇā, exactly opposite to the Śrīsailam shrine situated on the southern bank of the same river. Apart from this fanciful identification, Dr. Dubreuil's theory has no other foundation. There is absolutely no evidence to show that the Vākāṭaka authority had extended over any part of the Telugu country. No doubt, the Vākāṭaka Harishēṇa of the Bassin branch claims to have conquered Āndhra along with several other countries, though no evidence of his conquest is found anywhere in the Telugu country ;

3. Ancient History of the Deccan, pp. 73-4.

4. Ibid, p. 90.

That was, however, in the beginning of the 6th century A. D. As the Śālaṅkāyana had disappeared yielding place to the Viṣṇukunḍins about a century before that date, his invasion could not have had anything to do with the overthrow of the former and the establishment of the latter in Vēṅgī.

Some believe that the Viṣṇukunḍins were the natives of Vinukonḍa, the headquarters of the taluk of the same name in the Guntur district of the Andhra Pradesh. This is said to gain support from their title *Śrī Parvatasvami Pād-ānudhyāta*, which is taken to connote their devotion to the God Mallikārjuna of Śrīśailam in the Kurnool district not very far from Vinukonḍa⁵. They argue that the word Viṣṇukunḍin is a Sanskritisation of Vinukonḍa which must have been, since they adopted it as their cognomen, their original home. It must be pointed out, however, that Viṣṇukunḍi cannot be the Sanskrit form of Vinukonḍa. The name Vinukonḍa is made up of two Telugu words *vinu* and *konḍa*, meaning 'to hear' and a 'hill' respectively, and both taken together 'a hearing hill' or *Śrutiparvata* as correctly rendered into Sanskrit by Vallabharāya in this *Krīḍābhirāmam*.⁶ Viṣṇu on the other hand denotes the God of that name or any person named after him. In Prakrit it becomes Vinhu and in Telugu Venna; kunḍi means a vessel made of clay or metal; and both taken together signify Viṣṇu's pot or vessel. It is not therefore possible to agree that Viṣṇukunḍi is the Sanskrit translation of Vinukonḍa. It is also doubtful whether 'Śrī-parvatasvāmi' in the title *Śrī-parvata-svāmi-pād-ānudhyāta* refers to the God Mallikārjuna of Śrīśailam in the Kurnool district, for in the first place, there is no evidence to show that there existed at Śrīśailam a shrine dedicated to Mallikārjuna or as to that matter any other deity at such an early date. Secondly, Śrī-parvata is mentioned in the Ikshvāku inscriptions of the 3rd-4th centuries A. D. as the ancient name of Nāgārjunakonḍa now in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh⁷. This is also believed to be the Aparasāila of Hiuen Tsaing, a famous Buddhist Centre of international repute in the early centuries of the Christian era⁸. It may be noted in this context that

5. B. V. Krishna Rao, Early Dynasties of the Andhradesa, pp. 422-27.

6. *Krīḍābhirāmam*, 20.

7. Ep. Ind. XX, Pp. 9, 22, 23 and 36.

8. Ibid.

Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, that is the ancient Śrīparvata, was also a great centre of Hindu worship at the time. Several Ikshvāku kings were staunch Śaivas, and they erected several temples in their capital Vijayapuri (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa) dedicated to the God Śiva and his attendant deities. Chāntamūla II, for instance was a great devotee of Śiva and his Commander-in-Chief Eli-Siri was also a devout worshipper of the same God and especially of his son Kārtikēya, the war-God. He built in the 11th regnal year of his master, a storied temple to the God Sarvadēva (Śiva) as a mark of his gratitude to the Lord Kārtikēya for a victory which he had won by the grace of that god over some enemy⁹. Similarly, the Ābhira King Vasushēna, who came to Vijayapuri at the head of an army of several confederate kings, to help Chāntamūla II against some of his enemies, celebrated his victory over them by constructing a temple for the god Aṣṭabhujaśvāmi, identified by some with Viṣṇu and others with 'Śiva'¹⁰. Chāntamūla II himself erected in the 16th year of his reign a temple to the God Śiva under the name or Pushpabhadrasvāmi, set up a *dhvaja-stambha* (flag-staff) and gifted lands for carrying on the worship therein. During the course of his reign, he also built temples for the Goddess Durga, Navagrahas and Yakshas¹¹. The existence of several temples dedicated to Kārtikēya, brought to light by the spade of the archaeologist at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, shows that the worship of the War-God Kūmāra-svāmi or simply Svāmi was also popular in ancient Śrīparvata. It is not unlikely, taking into consideration the early association of the Viṣṇukunḍins with the Nāgarjunakoṇḍa and its neighbourhood, that Śrī Parvata-svāmi to whose worship they were devoted was to God Śiva or what is more probable Kārtikēya of Vijayapuri (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa).

The Viṣṇukunḍins were probably a local family inhabiting the lower Kṛishṇa valley. Gōvindavarman I, the founder of the dynasty, compares himself in his Tummalagūḍem plates I to the Kaustubha pendant adorning the *hāra* (necklace) viz., the kings ruling in the east and the west of the Śrī Parvata.¹² This perhaps indicates that

9. Indian Archaeology, 1958-59 p. 8.

10. Jr. Baroda University.

11. Indian Archaeology, 1956-57 p.

12. Bhārati, Vol. 48, No. 6 pp. 14-28.

he was a native of Śrī Parvata (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa) and the region round about.

The Vishṇukuṇḍins, like the Vākātakas, the Pallavas, the Sālankāyanas and the Kadāmbas, were originally a brahman family. In his Tummalagūḍem plates II, Vikramēndravarmā II proudly asserts that the Vishṇukuṇḍins bore the glory of the *brahmakshatras*¹³, a statement which clearly indicates that they were originally brahmans who having adopted the profession of arms became kshatriyas.

GŌVINDAVARMA I (C. A.D. 408-455)

Of the first two Vishṇukuṇḍin Chiefs, Indravarmā and Mādhavavarmā I, the grandfather and father respectively of Gōvindavarmā I, nothing is known. They seem to have been ordinary feudatory chiefs with no particular achievement to distinguish them. Gōvindavarmā I himself like his predecessors was at first a mere *sāmanta* although it is not possible to discover in the present state of knowledge who his overlord was. The circumstances which favoured his rise to power are not known. The statements in the Tummalagūḍem Plates I and II that he acquired his kingdom by the might of his arms and that he made himself master of the territories of the other feudatories (*anya-āmantas*) by his heroism, bravery and prowess show that he established his kingdom by reducing to subjection his fellow feudatories and annexing their lands.¹⁴ The feudatories whom he conquered must have been the rulers of the petty states situated on the eastern and the western sides of the Śrī Parvata of whom he is stated to have been the chief (*kshatipati param̐parā hāra madhya nir upama virājīṭayā kaustubhāyamana yaśō janmanah*). Though the extent of the country under his rule cannot be definitely estimated, it must have been large, as it is stated to have comprised of several *vishayas*.

Gōvindavarmā I married Parama of Paramabhaṭṭārika Mahā-dēvi, a daughter of the family of Prithvī Mūla, whose identity is not known. A chief of that name, no doubt, figures as the donor of the

13. Ibid No. 7 pp. 2-14, 'brahma-kshatra tejabhrtam Vishṇukuṇḍinam

14. 'Sva-bhuja-balōtsāha prabhav ānurāg āvāpta svarājya' (Bhārati, vol. 42 No. 6 pp. 14-28) and Śaurya dhairya pratāpānubhavād anyasāmanta ākrānta rājyāntara (Ibid No. 7 pp. 2-14).

Gōdāvarī Plates¹⁵, and the father of Harivarman of the Kaṭṭacheruvu plates¹⁶ he was however a contemporary of Indrabhaṭṭārakavarman, the great grandson of Gōvindavarman I. He could not have been therefore the ancestor of Paramabhaṭṭārikā Mahādēvi the chief queen of the latter.

Gōvindavarman I and his queen were Buddhists in faith. He is said to have built in all provinces of Dakṣiṇāpatha Vihāras adorned with sculptures of various kinds by which he acquired *brahma-punya*. He accepted Buddhism after a study of *Shaḍ = abhiñña pratihārya darśana*. He acquired knowledge by a study of all the *śāstras* and gained through it an insight into the real nature of this and the other world. He loved learning and spent a good deal of his time in the company of the learned holding discussions with them on various topics of interest. Though he embraced Buddhism, he was tolerant: he patronised the brahmans and built temples for the Hindu gods. He protected the *varṇās* and *āśramas*, and distributed largesses with an even hand. He was a munificent bestower of gifts of villages, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, couches, seats, vehicles, drinks, food, vessels, houses, dresses, ornaments, virgins, and male and female slaves; he believed that his wealth was for the enjoyment of the *bhikṣhus*, the twice-born, the poor, the beggars, the sick the lowly and the distressed; and gave away all his possessions in charity. Gōvindavarman I was a great builder. Besides the *vihāras* and temples referred to already, he built assembly halls, sheds for serving water and drinks to thirsty travellers; constructed irrigation tanks, dug wells and planted groves for the benefit of the people. Judging from what is said of him in the inscriptions, Gōvindavarman I appears to have been an enlightened monarch, who strove hard for the uplift not only of his subjects but of all the living beings.

Paramabhaṭṭārikā Mahādēvi, his queen, was a worthy spouse of her husband. She was also a devout follower of the Buddha; she built a spacious *vihāra* at Śakrapura (Amarāvati) for the use of the *bhikṣhus* of Chāturdasārya vara-saṅgha and persuaded her husband to grant the village Peṇukaparu for the repairs and the white washing of

15. I. A. X p. 244

16. APGAS No. 6, p. 246

the monastery and for providing for the comforts such as food, drink, couch, settee, lamps, incense perfume and medicine of the resident monks.

After a rule of 37 years Gōvindavarman I died and was succeeded by Mādhavavarman II, his son by the chief queen Paramabhaṭṭārika Mahādēvi.

Mādhavavarman II

Mādhavavarman II, unlike his parents, was a devoted follower of Vēdic Brahmanism. He is said to have performed several sacrifices such as *agnishṭōma*, *vājapēya*, *bahusuvarṇa*, *paunḍarika*, *aśvamēdha*, *kratusahaśra*, *sarvamēdha*, *rājasūya*, and *purushamēdha* as enjoined in the *śāstras*. Of these, *aśvamēdha* and *rājasūya* are important. They indicate that he attained the position of a *sārvabhauma* or paramount sovereign, who was the overlord of many subordinate kings. The statement that he performed eleven *aśvamēdhas* implies that he embarked on *digvijaya* expeditions and subjugated the monarchs of the neighbouring countries who held out against his authority as many times. He seems to have built up his empire after a series of conquests spread over several years of warfare. Mādhavavarman II, if you can trust the evidence of some medieval kings claiming descent from him, appears to have been a powerful war-lord, who had at his command an enormous army, consisting of 8000 elephants, 10 crores of horses and countless foot soldiers¹⁷. The military strength is no doubt grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless, he must have had a large army in his service; for, it is stated in the Tummalaḡūḍem plates II that by his prowess Mādhavavarman seized the royalty of the kings of other dynasties and that his authority extended over the region surrounded by the eastern southern and western seas and the river Rēvā (Narmada) in the North¹⁸. Mādhavavarman II must have possessed a very large army though not as huge as that envisaged in the inscriptions of his medieval descendants to vanquish the kings of other dynasties and appropriate their royalty and bring under his sway vast territories

17. EP. And. I. P.

18. *Yathā prathita prabhāv ānya rāja vaṁśas ātmibhūta prithivīpati pada prasahy aharana vyakta niratiśaya mahimānam* (U. 8-9) *Prāḡ dakṣiṇ āpar āmbhoniḍhi rēvā sarit salila valaya vibhūshaṇāyā bhuvō bhartuḥ*,

comprising the whole of the Deccan and South India. No information is available about the identity of the kings of the other dynasties excepting the Pallavas, whom Mādhavavarman II is said to have conquered. From Vēlpūr inscription dated in his (33rd) regnal year (A.D. 478) we learn that he was camping at Vēlpūru during the course of a war with the Pallavas. The causes of this war are not difficult to seek. The Pallavas who succeeded the Śātavāhanas were at this time the most dominant power in the South ruling over vast territories in Karnāṭaka, Āndhra and Draviḍa countries from their capital Kāñchī in Toṇḍai maṇḍalam. According to the Vēlūr-pālaiyam plates, the Pallavas were brahmans of the Bhāradvājagotra, descendants of Drōṇa and Aśvatthāma, the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*. Vira Kūrcha Pallava, the first to attain royalty, obtained his kingdom through his marriage with the daughter of a Nāga chief whose name however is not mentioned in the record.¹⁹ He has however been identified by modern scholars with Skanda Nāga or Śiva Skanda Nāga, the *mahāsēnāpati* of Pulumāyi IV, the last Śātavāhana monarch who became on the death of his master, king of the Śātavahana dominions in the south.²⁰ The Pallavas regarded themselves as the political successors of the Śātavāhanas and strove hard to impose their hegemony over all the peoples of the south. They directed their attention at first to the Ikshvākus, who seized, on the downfall of the Śātavāhana dynasty the lower Krishna valley and established a small but powerful kingdom with Vijayapuri (Nāgarjunakoṇḍa) in the Guntur district as their capital. During the time of Rudra Puriṣadata, the last king of the Ikshvāku dynasty who is believed to have ruled upto A.D. 410²¹ the Pallava king Simhavarman I seems to have launched an attack upon the Ikshvāku kingdom, overthrew their authority and annexed their territory. A Prakrit inscription of this king in the Brahmi characters of the early 4th Century A.D. in the village of Mañchikallu in the Palnad taluk of the Guntur district bears testimony to the Pallava occupation of the Ikshvāku kingdom²². He constituted the conquered territory into a separate

19. S. I. I. Vol. II p.

20. Durbreuil-Ancient History of the Deccan, pp. 55-7.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

province called the Āndhrāpatha with Dannakaḍa as its capital and entrusted its government to Yuva Mahārāja Śivaskandavarman believed by some to be his son.²³ After the death of Siṃhavarman he was succeeded by Śivaskandavarman and he appointed his son Yuva Mahārāja Buddhavarman as the governor of Āndhrāpatha.²⁴ The Pallavas remained in undisturbed possession of the lower Kṛishṇa valley until Samudragupta's invasion about the middle of the 4th century A.D. The triumphant advance of the Gupta monarch on Kāñchī and the defeat of Vishṇugōpa at his hands caused much confusion in the Pallava dominions and let loose the forces of disintegration. The Śrīparvata and its environs in the heart of their kingdom became the hot bed of rebellion. The *Kadamba* Brahman rebel Mayūraśarman established himself in the impenetrable forests on the slopes of the Śrīparvata, carried fire and sword to the neighbouring districts and levied tribute on the Bṛihad Bāṇa and other Pallava feudatories. The Pallavas made many unsuccessful attempts to put down his rebellion. Unable to vanquish him by force of arms, they made peace with him at last and granting him the territory between Aparārṇava (Western sea) and Prēhāra as an appanage, they made him the Commander-in-Chief of their army.²⁵

The example of Mayūraśarman bestirred the Pallava feudatories in the other parts of the kingdom to similar activity. The Vishṇu-kunḍin Gōvindavarman I took up arms, as noticed already in the eastern fringes of the Śrīparvata against the Pallavas, drove out the Governor of Dannakaḍa, conquered the petty chiefs in the eastern and the western sides of the Śrīparvata and carved out a small kingdom for himself around Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. He could not however dislodge the Pallavas completely from the Kṛishṇa valley. The task of completing the work devolved on his son and successor Mādhavavarman II. In pursuance of this object Mādhavavarman II had to wage war upon the Pallavas. It was evidently during the course of this war that he encamped in the *skandhāvāra* at Vēlpūru as stated in the epigraph found in the village. Mādhavavarman II does not seem to have been completely successful in his war against the Pallavas; for, the inscrip-

23. Ep. Ind. VI, pp. 84-89.

24. Ibid VIII, p. 143 f.

25. Ep. Ind. VIII pp. 33-36, EC VII, Sk. 176.

tions of Siṃhavarman III and of Viṣṇugōpavarman II, and grandson respectively of Yuvamahārāja Viṣṇugōpa show that Mangalur, Tamrapa (Chēbrōlu) and Chūra, all situated in the Guntur district still remained in the possession of the Pallavas even after the death of Mādhavarman II.

Mādhavarman II appears to have been also engaged earlier in warfare with Vākātakas in the north, for, it is stated in the Tummalagūḍem Plates II that his kingdom was bounded by the Western sea and the river Rēva in the north. He could not have acquired this territory without ousting the Vākātakas who were at this time the overlords of the whole of the western Deccan. Prithvisēna II, the last king of the main branch of the Vākāṭaka dynasty states in his Balaghat Plates that he had twice recovered from the enemies his kingdom which they had apparently conquered.²⁶ Although these enemies are not named in the record, it may be asserted with confidence that Mādhavarman II is one of them. The Viṣṇukuṇḍin attack on the Vākāṭaka kingdom seems to have ended in a compromise. Prithvisēna II gave his daughter, Vākāṭaka-mahādēvī, in marriage to Mādhavarman II, and agreed that after his demise his son-in-law should become the master of his territories. The Vākāṭaka kingdom must have passed into the hands of the Viṣṇukuṇḍins in this manner.

Mādhavarman II was the greatest of the Viṣṇukuṇḍin monarchs. He was a great conqueror; and the Viṣṇukuṇḍin kingdom was transformed as a result of his conquests into a big empire comprising almost the whole of the Deccan. After a rule of 37 years, he seems to have passed away in A.D. 482.

Mādhavarman III (A.D. 482—529)

Mādhavarman II had two sons Dēvarman and Vikramēndrarman. The former appears to have predeceased his father leaving a son Mādhavarman III. On the death of Mādhavarman II he was succeeded by his grandson Mādhavarman III, and not by Vikramēndra, his surviving son by Vākāṭaka Mahādēvī. Very little is known about the events of his reign. From the Īpūru Plates II which he issued in his 47th regnal year we learn that he bore the title

26. Ep. Ind, IX p. 267.

Trikūṭa-Malayādhipati and that his capital was Amarapura, that is, Amarāvati on the banks of Kṛishṇa very near Guntur in A.P. Regarding the identity of Trikūṭa and Malaya, especially the former there is considerable difference of opinion among scholars. Some believe that Trikūṭa is identical with Kōṭappa koṇḍa in the Guntur district whereas others identify it with a peak of the Sahyādri (W. Ghats) near Nasik in Maharashtra²⁷ The latter appears to be more reasonable. Malaya is the ancient name of the E. Ghats included in the two Gōdāvarīs. This region is spoken of in the early inscriptions as Malayamaṇḍalam in Vēngī.²⁸ We have probably to understand by the title *Trikūṭa-Malayādhipati* that Mādhavavarman III was the ruler of the territory extending from the Trikūṭa in the West to Malaya in the east.

The reign of Mādhavavarman III does not appear to have been peaceful, disturbed as it was by foreign invasions and internal rebellions. In the first place there was the Vākāṭaka Harisēna's invasion. Harisēna, son of Dēvasēna of the Bassin branch, considering himself to be the rightful heir of the Vākāṭaka throne led an attack on Mādhavavarman III in an attempt to seize the old Vākāṭaka territory then under the Vishṇukunḍin rule. Though it is stated in his Ajanta inscription that Harisēna conquered Kuntala, Avanti, Kaṭṅga, Kōsala, Trikūṭa, Lāṭa and Āndhra²⁹ no corroborative evidence of such extensive conquests is available from other sources. If these conquests are genuine, they must have caused much confusion in the Vishṇukunḍin territories. The *dāyādas* of Mādhavavarman III, especially Indrabhaṭṭāraka, son of his uncle Vikramēndra I, took advantage of the situation and set up the standard of rebellion. Most of the titles of Indrabhaṭṭāraka mentioned in the inscriptions refer to his victories over his *dāyādas*. Of these two (1) *Sva-dakṣhiṇa-aika-bāhu saḥāy auchchurita samkram ādhigat adhirājya* and (2) *Anēka-Chāturdanta Vijayādhigat āśēsha chakravarti kshētra* are of special interest, as they indicate clearly that he acquired his kingdom by force of arms. Mādhavavarman's reign seems to have come to an abrupt end on account of Indrabhaṭṭāraka's victories over him.

27. The Early Dynasties of Andhra desa, pp. 427-28 Arch. Sur. I. W. India IV, p. 125.

28. SII. IV. No. 177 Cp. 10 of 1916-17, APER No. 1 of 1965

29. Ep. Ind. XVII, p. 338

Indrabhaṭṭāraka (A.D. 529-556)

Indrabhaṭṭāraka ruled over the kingdom which he had thus won from his dāyādas for twenty seven years. Though praised as a powerful warrior and a great monarch in his own as well as in the inscriptions of his son and successor, Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II³⁰ very little information is provided by them about the actual events of his reign. He is said to be the victor in innumerable *chāturdanta* battles; his feet are said to have been illumined by the lustre in the daidems of the monarchs of the four oceans prostrating before him as a mark of their submission; and innumerable *sāmantas* are said to have carried out his behests in unquestioning obedience; but the battles and enemies who fought against them in these battles are not named and the kings and the *sāmantas* paying obeisance to him remain anonymous. Casual references in the records of some of the contemporary rulers of other dynasties however afford glimpses of some of the important events. These may be noticed here with advantage. The Haraha grant of the Maukhārī king Iśānavarman dated Vikrama Samvat 611 (A.D. 554), for instance, refers to a victory won by him over an Āndhra king who could have been none other than Indrabhaṭṭāraka himself, as shown by the recently discovered Tummalagūḍem plates II. The Harha Grant however does not describe the circumstances in which this conflict had taken place though it is not difficult to envisage them.

The Maukhrīs, an ancient Kshatriya family of North India with a pedigree going back to the age of the Mahābhārata rose to political fame and power in the post Gupta period. Taking advantage of the anarchy and confusion caused by the Hūṇa invasions and the consequent fall of the Gupta empire, they carved out a small kingdom for themselves in the upper Gangetic valley. Iśānavarman, the third king of the family was an ambitious prince. With the object of extending his dominions, he set out on an expedition of the conquest of the neighbouring countries; and it was during this expedition that he vanquished the Āndhra monarch. Iśānavarman does not however seem to have invaded Āndhra, but encountered the ruler of that country somewhere in Mālwa in the north; for it is stated in the Janpur inscription of Iśānavarman that he inflicted defeat on the

30. Ep. Ind. XIV, p. 120.

Āndhra king somewhere in the neighbourhood of Dhāra, after which he fled in fear at first to the crevices in the Vindhyas and thence to the Raivataka to hide himself.³¹ It may be remembered that the king of Āndhra was at this time the master of an extensive empire comprising the whole of the northern Deccan. On hearing of the invasion of the Maukhārī monarch, Indrabhaṭṭāraka appears to have marched northwards with his forces to defend his empire, and suffered defeat at the hands of the invader somewhere in the Narmada valley. The conflict, however, seems to have ended in a compromise. Indrabhaṭṭāraka gave his daughter Indrabhaṭṭārīka-mahādēvī in marriage to Śarvavarman, son of Iśānavarman and concluded peace with him.³²

Indrabhaṭṭāraka had also to fight against a formidable rising of several kings very probably subject to his authority. In the Gōdāvary plates of Prīthvīmūla, it is stated that a certain Adhirāja Indra, son of the brahman (*dvija*) Mitavarman of Maṇāḷkuḍi, acquired fame by slaying the elephant Kumuda, which came against the elephant Supratīka on the he was riding in the tumultuous battle in which all the kings joined together to uproot Indrabhaṭṭāraka.³³ The names of the elephants Kumuda and Supratīka, which are identical with those of the guardian elephants (*dig-gajas*) of the South-western (*nair-rutya*) and north-eastern (*Īsānya*) quarters respectively have been made the basis for the identification of Indrabhaṭṭāraka and Adhirāja Indra mentioned in the inscription. The former who is believed to have been riding on the Kumuda has been identified with the Viṣṇukunḍin Indrabhaṭṭāraka ruling Vēngi in the south-west and the latter mounted on the Supratīka with the E. Ganga Indrarāja king of Kaṇṇiga and Orissa in the north-east.³⁴ The similarity of the names of the elephants, those of Kumuda and Supratīka with the *dig-gajas* is accidental. It was customary in ancient times to give such mythological names to their war-elephants by the Hindu monarchs. Airāvata and Vāmana are mentioned for instance, as the names of the elephants in the Vijayanagara army in the time of Rāmarāja in the *Rāmarājana-*

31. CII. III. No. 51. p. 230

32. Bhāratiya Vidyābhavan: History and Culture of Indian people Vol. III, Classical Age, pp. 67f.

33. Jr. B. Br. R.A. S. XVI, p. 114.

34. Dubreuil, Ancient History of the Deccan p. 91.

bakhiru.³⁵ No special significance need be attached to the names Kumuda and Supratika of the Gōdāvary plates; and the kings riding on them need not necessarily be the rulers of the quarters to which these *diggajas* belong.

It must be pointed out that Adhirāja Indra could not have been the scion of the E. Ganga family; for, the inscription makes it pretty clear that he was the son of the brahman Mitavarman of Maṇalkuḍi. As Mitavarman is stated to have been the victor in the Chāturdanta battles, he must have been an *āyudhōpajīvin*, that is, one who follows the profession of arms as a means of living³⁶. Maṇalkuḍi, his village has obviously a Tamil name and seems to be identical with Maṅgali in the Saidapeta taluk of the Chingleput district in Tamilnad. Adhirāja Indra appears to be a brahman warrior of the South who migrated to coastal Āndhra in search of a military career³⁷. How could this Tamil brahman warrior be an E. Ganga monarch? Though he is generally taken to be an opponent of Indrabhaṭṭāraka the evidence of the inscription does not lend colour to this view. The fact that he participated in the fight and killed the elephant Kumuda does not indicate the side on which he was fighting in the battle. The evidence of the inscription seems to suggest that he was not an enemy of Indrabhaṭṭāraka but an ally, who supported his cause. Adhirāja Indra, it is stated being desirous of making the gift of an *agrahāra* to brahmans for the spiritual benefit of his parents requested Pṛithvīmūla to give him a village for the purpose. Why Indra, if he were really an *adhirāja* as stated in the record, had to beg of Pṛithvīmūla for a village instead of donating one from his own dominion, is not clear. It looks as if he were not a ruling king as indicated by his title *adhirāja*. The fact that he asked Pṛithvīmūla for a village shows

35. Bhārati

36. I.A, X P. 78 Śrut ābhijana-vritta saṃpat prabhā bhāsur = ōdara puru-sharatnaprakara nikara prasūti hētu prakhyāta Manalakudi Vāstavya dvijaty = anvaya payōdhi sambhūta-sītarasmēr asakrid āvāpta chāturdanta Saṃgrāma vijayasya Mitavarmanaḥ priya-tanayēna.

37. Instances of the kind are not uncommon in the early history of South India. To cite an example, Rājāditya, one of Gunaga Vijayaditya's generals was the grandson of the brahman Kumārasvāmī, a *sēnapati* in the service of the Kāḍuveṭṭi in Tondaimandalam, who quarrelled with his master and migrated to Vēngī and entered the service of the E. Chālukya monarch. *E. Chālukyas of Vēngi* P. 133, *Pallavulu-Chāḷukyulu* p. 289.

that he could not have been an enemy but an ally of Indrabhaṭṭāraka; for the former was a *sāmanta* of the Vishṇukunḍin monarch, who seems to have played an important part in the affairs of the kingdom, for, it is said of him in the Tummalagūḍem plates II of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II of which he is the executor that he uplifted the falling fortunes of his master's family by means of his diplomacy and prowess.³⁸ Therefore, Adhirāja whatever may have been his status, must have been a friend of Pṛithvīmūla and his sovereign, who helped them to defeat the combined forces of the kings in the tumultuous battle.

Certain facts which have come recently to light seem to indicate that Indrabhaṭṭāraka came into conflict with the Chāḷukyas. Although the Chāḷukyas rose to power and fame in Karnāṭaka, they were originally easterners, inhabitants of the Telugu country, especially that part of it, which is known at present as the Rāyala-sīma who migrated gradually westwards and finally established themselves in and around Bādāmi in the Bijapur district in the first half of the 6th century A.D. According to the tradition embodied in the Chāḷukyan inscriptions, Mudivēmu, that is Peda-Muḍiyam in the Jammalamadugu taluk of the Cuddapah district is the cradle of the Chāḷukya family.³⁹ The Chāḷukyas probably came to the south with the Ikshvākus of Vijayapuri. They belong to the Hiramñakas of the Hiramnya-rāshṭra on the banks of the river, Suprayōgā (the Pennar) river, corresponding to the Atmakur (Nellore Dt.) and the Rajampeta (Cuddapah Dt.) taluks of the present Andhra Pradesh.⁴⁰ The Chāḷukyas make their appearance for the first time as the subordinates of the Ikshvākus of Vijayapuri in the 3rd century A.D. A chief of this family Kaṁḍa Cheliki Remmaṇaka i.e. Remmaṇaka, son (or grandson) of Khaṁḍa Cheliki (Skanda Chāḷukya) was a *Mahāsēnāpati* and *Mahātālavara* of the Ikshvāku king Vīra Puriṣadata⁴¹ The Chāḷukyas moved subsequently westwards and settled down on the Western slopes of the Śrīsaila mountain in a tract of territory on both the banks of the Kṛishṇa in the Nandikotkur taluk and the Gadwal region of the

38. *En=ōddhṛita bhartṛu kulasya lakshmīr adhaḥpatantī naya-Vikramābhyān ājñāpanākhyaṭa kula prasūtaḥ Sri Mūlarājah sa nripēshu-mukhyaḥ.*

39. Ep. Ind. VI. p. 3471. SII IX Part I No. ...

40. Ex. Ind. XX. p. 19. XI. p. 345

41. Ibid.

Kurnool and Mahboobnagar districts respectively, which as a consequence acquired the name of the Chālukya-vishaya.⁴²

The Chālukyas must have come subsequently under the Vishṇukuṇḍin rule. It may be remembered that Gōvindavarman I, the founder of the Vishṇukuṇḍin kingdom, claims to have conquered his fellow *sāmantas* and became as a consequence the *kaustubha* pendant in the necklace (*hara*) of the kings ruling both on the eastern and the western sides of the Śrīparvata. As the Chālukya *vishaya*, the homeland of the Chālukyas, was situated in the western outskirts of the Śrīparvata they must have been the first amongst the erstwhile *sāmantas* of the Ikshvākus to come under the Vishṇukuṇḍin yoke. Both Jayasīmhavallabha, the progenitor of the Chālukya king's of Bādāmi and his son Raṇarāga must have been the subordinates of Mādhavavarman II and III respectively. Pulakēśin I who was a contemporary of Indrabhaṭṭāraka appears to have risen against the Vishṇukuṇḍins and asserted his independence. There is reason to believe that Indrabhaṭṭāraka made an unsuccessful attempt to suppress him. Two facts deserve notice in this connection.

(1) The occurrence twice, on a pillar at Elēśvaram in the Nalgonda district now submerged in the Nāgārjunasāgar of the label Raṇavikrama the well known *biruda* of Chālukya Pulakēśin I, in the archaic Telugu-Kannada characters of 6th century A.D. The existence of this label at Elēśvaram on the bank of the Kṛishṇa just opposite the erstwhile Ikshvāku capital Vijayapuri, is significant as it bears testimony to his presence in that neighbourhood. The circumstances in which he happened to visit the place are not known. It is not unlikely that he came there on a military expedition. (2) The assumption of the *biruda* *Satyāśraya* by Pulakēśin I lends colour to this supposition. The *biruda* did not originally belong to the Chālukyas but to the Vishṇukuṇḍins. Several members of the family are known to have borne titles ending with the suffix, *āśraya*. In the Tummala-gūḍem Plates I, Gōvindavarman I, the founder of the dynasty bore the title of *Vidvach-chhūra-mahākulīna janāśraya*; Tummala-gūḍem Plates II refer to Indrabhaṭṭāraka and Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II as *Satyāśraya* and *Uttamāśraya* respectively. Similarly the Pulumbūru Plates I state that Gōvindavarman II and his son Mādhavavarman IV bore

respectively the titles of *Vikramāśraya*—and *Janāśraya*. The title *Satyāśraya*, borne by Pulakēśin I belonged, as seen from what is stated above, originally to the Vishṇukunḍin Indrabhaṭṭāraka a fact which gives us an idea as to how they stood in relation to each other. It was customary in ancient and medieval South India for the victorious warriors to appropriate to themselves the titles and the insignia of their vanquished enemies. In pursuance of this practice it is not unreasonable to suppose that Pulakēśin I defeated Indrabhaṭṭāraka either at Eleśvaram itself or some other place in the neighbourhood and assumed as a mark of his victory the Vishṇukunḍin monarch's title *Satyāśraya*, and celebrated the *aśvamēdha* sacrifice to symbolise the event.

Indrabhaṭṭāraka seems to have died in A. D. 556 and was succeeded by his young son, Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II.

Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II

(A. D. 556—570)

Indrabhaṭṭāraka was succeeded by his son Vikramēndra-bhaṭṭāraka II. The statements *prakṛitimaṇḍalēna śaiśava ēv-āropita-rājya-bhārah* and *garishṭha-śaiśava-ēva-sakala-nṛpa-gun-ālaṅkṛtaḥ* in his inscriptions inform us that at the time of the death of his father, Vikramēndra II was a lad of tender age and that he was placed on the throne by the *mañtri-maṇḍala* or the council of ministers. Vikramēndra had the title *Uttamāśraya*. The phrase *sakala-bhuvana-rakshābharaṇaik-āśraya* which is applied to him in the Tuṇḍī grant seems to suggest that in addition he may have had another title *sakala-bhuvan-āśraya*. Vikramēndra II had probably one or more younger brothers. Of these, however, nothing is known.

The reign of Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II like that of his predecessor was disturbed by foreign invasions and internal rebellions. The recently discovered Tummalagūḍem plates II refer to the invasion of a Pallava king called Simha and his defeat at the hands Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II. As the latter is said to have visited Śakrapura first on his return from the victorious battle-field in Śaka 488 (A. D. 566), the Pallava invasion must have taken place in the same year. The Pallava Simha who led the invasion must have been identical with Simhavarman IV, the predecessor of Simhaviṣṇu and a descendant

of Yuva-mahārāja Viṣṇugōpa a younger brother of Siṃhavarman II. His ancestors were ruling, as shown by their inscriptions, the coastal Āndhra country from Tāmrāpa, Daśanapura, Mēnmātūra and Palak-kada. On the death of Naṇḍivarman I, the grandson of Siṃhavarman II without issue, Siṃhavarman IV succeeded him as the supreme sovereign of the Pallava kingdom. Between the Pallavas and the Viṣṇukuṇḍins there existed long standing enmity. It may be remembered that Viṣṇukuṇḍin Gōvindavarman I dislodged the Pallavas from Dannakaḍa and its neighbourhood and made himself the master of the Kṛishṇa valley and his son Mādhavarman II waged war on them in an attempt to push them out of coastal Āndhra. Though the Pallavas lost Dannakaḍa and the neighbouring tracts, they still held the bulk of Karma-rāshṭra of which it was the capital, and had been making attempts ever since to recover the territory which they had lost to the Viṣṇukuṇḍins. This led to constant war between the two kingdoms and Siṃhavarman's attack on the Viṣṇukuṇḍin kingdom must have been prompted by his desire to recover what had been lost by his predecessors formerly. The invasion, if we can depend on the evidence of the Tummalagūḍem plates II, was not however, successful. Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka II defeated the Pallava monarch and drove him back to his own kingdom.

The Pallava invasion seems to have caused some disorders in the Viṣṇukuṇḍin dominions. Some of the nobles, seem to have risen up in revolt against Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka and asserted their independence. Of these Pṛithvī Mahārāja of the Rāmakāśyapa *gōtra* deserves special mention. Two sets of copper plate inscriptions of this chief—the Tāndivāḍa plates dated in his 46th regnal year⁴³ and Golavalli grant dated in his 49th year⁴⁴—have come to light. From these we learn that he was the grandson of Raṇa Durjaya and the son of Vikramēndra and that he was ruling over the western Kaṇṇiga from his capital Piṣṭapura, that is Piṭhāpuram in the E. Godavari district. Though it is not possible to fix the exact chronological limits of his reign as his inscriptions are not dated in any era, scholars have assigned them on palaeographical grounds, to the first half of the 7th century

43. JOR IX, pp. 188-94

44. Ep. Ind. XXXI, pp. 221 f.

A.D.⁴⁵ As the recently discovered Māraṭūru grant of Pulakēśin II shows that he invaded Kaṭinga and Vēngi in the 8th regnal year (A.D. 616-17) and captured Pishṭapura and Kollēru the rule of Pṛithvī Mahārāja must have preceded the Chāḷukyan conquest. If it is supposed it was from Pṛithvī Mahārāja that Pulakēśin II conquered Pishṭapura and Kollēru, the 49th year of the former must have coincided with 8th regnal year (A.D. 616-17) of the latter. In that case, the former must have commenced his rule in A.D. 567-68, that is about the time of the Pallava invasion of Vishṇukuṇḍin kingdom, when evidently he threw off Vishṇukuṇḍin yoke and asserted his independence. He was not able, however, to maintain his position. Vikramēndra II seems to have re-established his authority over a part if not the whole of Kaṭinga subsequent to the expulsion of the Pallava invasion, for, his Tuṇḍi grant dated in his 14th regnal year (A.D. 570) shows that his authority extended at that time up to Tuni in the E. Godavari district. As nothing is known of Vikramēndra II subsequent to the date of the issue of the Tuṇḍi Grant, that may be taken to be the last year of his rule.

Mādhavavarman IV (A.D. 546—594)

Mādhavavarman IV of the Tivarangara branch of the Vishṇukuṇḍin family succeeded Vikramēndra II. He must have been an elderly prince at the time of his accession; for, as stated already he was ruling his family estate probably as an independent chief since A.D. 546. On his succession to the throne, he seems to have transferred the state from his native Tivarangara to Amarapura (Amarāvati), the capital of the kingdom. At the time of his accession, the territory under his rule was limited to a small area around the capital. He was obliged to fight hard to bring under his rule even Vēngi which must have formed the core of the Vishṇukuṇḍin dominions. In the Īpur plates II, it is stated that in his 37th regnal year (A.D. 583) he was camping, during the course of an expedition, at Kuḍavāḍa (Gudivada in the Krishna district),⁴⁶ though the identity of the enemy against whom he was fighting is not known. It is not unlikely that he was the Durjaya chief Pṛithvī Mahārāja. Though it is not possible to

45. Ibid XXIII, No. 15, p. 88

46. Ep. Ind. XVII, pp. 334-37.

state how the expedition ended, Mādhavavarman seems to have been successful ultimately in establishing his authority over the whole of Vēngi, for, he proudly asserts in the Pulum̃būru grant, dated in his 48th regnal year (A.D. 594) that he was the lord of the whole of *daśa-śata-sakala—dharanītala* 'the Thousand county', which had been correctly identified by Sri M. S. Sarma with Vēngi thousand.⁴⁷ It is evident that Mādhavavarman made himself master of the whole of Vēgi, that is, the country between the deltas of the rivers Kṛishṇa and Gōdāvari. Having consolidated his position in Vēngi, Mādhavarman crossed the Gōdāvari in his 48th year (A.D. 594) with the object of conquering the Eastern country, that is, Kaṭṇṇga, which was formerly under the Vishṇukunḍin rule. It was on this occasion, while camping on the eastern bank of the Gōdāvari, that he made the gift of the village of Pulum̃būru to Śiva Śarma of Gautamasa-gōtra a native of Kundūru in Karmarāshṭra.⁴⁸ What happened after this is not known. As nothing is heard of Mādhavavarman or of the Vishṇukunḍins subsequent to the issue of this grant, it may be assumed that his expedition for the conquest of the eastern region ended in disaster, and that he may have perished on the battle field during the course of the campaign. With the death of Mādhavavarman IV, the Vishṇukunḍins disappear from history altogether.

Mādhavavarman IV was a learned monarch. He had, as noticed already, the title Janāśraya, and he is believed to be the author of *Janāśraya chhandō-vichchitti*, a treatise on prosody.

The death of Mādhavavarman IV paved the way for the the rise of the power of the Durjayas. Pṛithvī Mahārāja having established himself firmly in Kaṭṇṇga crossed the Gōdāvari and effected the conquest of Vēngi without difficulty as there was apparently none after the death of Mādhavavarman IV to oppose him. The Durjaya power, however, did not last long: for the Chāḷukya king Pulakēśin II invaded coastal Andhra in A.D. 616, and having subdued the country

47. Bharati Vol. 7 p. 475-6 fn. No. 6 *Vēngi-grāma-sahasrakam* [(S. I. Vol. IV No. 1158) and '*Vēngi-sahasra-kshmadhīśvarah*' (Ibid No. 98) of the later inscriptions show that this territorial unit was in existence even as late as the 12th and the 13th centuries A.D.

48. Ibid.

and established his younger brother Kubjavishṇuvardhana on the throne of Vēngi.

The Religion of the Vishṇukuṇḍins

The age of the Vishṇukuṇḍins is a transitional period in the religious history of the country. Buddhism which appears to have been dominant during the time of the Śātāvāhanas began to show signs of decay under the Ikshvākus, who succeeded them as the rulers of coastal Andhra. Though the *stūpas* and *vihāras* were still built for the Buddha by the ladies of the royal family, several of the kings and their officials followed the Brahmanic Hindu dharma. They performed the Vēdic sacrifices and erected temples for Śiva, Kārtikēya, Durga and other Hindu deities and made gifts of lands for the maintenance of worship therein. Under the Vishṇukuṇḍins, who followed the Ikshvākus, Buddhism continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishṇukuṇḍin period. True, Gōvindavarman I, the founder of Vishṇukuṇḍin monarchy, his chief queen Paramabhaṭṭārikā Mahādēvī, and Vikramēndrabhaṭṭāraka I among the later members of the royal family as well as a few nobles still adored the Buddha, built *stūpas* and *vihāras* and encouraged the *bhikshus* to propagate the faith the subsequent rulers of the family were all staunch followers of Brahmanic Hindu dharma. They performed Vēdic sacrifices, patronized the brahmins, worshipped the gods of Puranic Hindu pantheon and made suitable arrangements for carrying on worship in their temples. The performance of Vēdic sacrifices appear to have become popular, for most of the ruling kings of this age claim to have performed the *aśvamēdha* and a number of other sacrifices. Among the Vishṇukuṇḍins, Mād-hava varmans II and IV are credited with the performance of several sacrifices. The former is said to have performed the *agnishṭōma*, *kratusahasra*, *aśvamēdha*, *sarvamēdha*, *purushamēdha*, *bahusuvarṇa*, *vājapēya*, *pañḍarika*, *prādhirāja* and *prājāpatya*, and the latter *kratusahara* and *aśvamēdha*. Of these sacrifices *aśvamēdha* and *rājasūya*, especially the former is important as they can be performed only by warrior kings to proclaim their paramountcy over the rulers of the countries, whom they have vanquished. Some are inclined to doubt whether these kings had actually performed the sacrifices listed against their names in the inscriptions, or enumerated them merely to exalt and glorify

themselves. However that may be, the very fact that they have taken credit for performing them shows that sacrifices and the Vēdic religion of which they are an essential feature was very popular at the time. Besides the hieratic cult of sacrifices, the worship of the gods of the Purāṇic pantheon, specially Śiva and his attendant deities, was very much in vogue. All the Vishṇukuṇḍins with the exception of Gōvindavarman I, his queen Paramabhāṭṭārikā Mahādēvi and Vikramēndra I, were Śaivas in faith. The Śrīparvata-svāmi (the lord of the Śrīparvata) was their family deity. Both Indrabhāṭṭāraka and his son Vikramēndra II were *Parama-Māhēśvaras* who had taken vows to worship the God Mahēśvara and none else.

The Vishṇukuṇḍins strove hard to uphold the *dharma*, and spent much of their wealth in promoting goodness. They built, as stated already, *stūpas*, *vihāras*, temples *prapas* & c., and made gifts of land and money for their upkeep. They patronised the *bhikṣhu* and the brahman alike and encouraged them to propagate their respective faiths. Among the Vishṇukuṇḍin kings, Gōvindavarman I and Indrabhāṭṭāraka are specially praised in the inscriptions for their munificence. The benefactions of the former were numerous. His construction of the *stūpas*, *vihāras*, and temples and his deeds of charity have already been enumerated. The latter is said to have led a righteous life sanctified by the merit acquired by interminable distribution of the gifts of land, gold, cows, *kanyas* (*virgins*) & c.

The Vishṇukuṇḍins loved learning. Gōvindavarman I was a learned monarch, well-versed in the Buddhist scriptures and all the *śāstras*. He was fond of the company of the learned and engaged himself frequently in discussions on several topics specially religion and philosophy. Some of the kings were distinguished men of letters. Vikramēndra I is stated to have been a *mahā-kavi* (great poet), though none of his literary works has come down to posterity. Mādhavarman IV, surnamed Janāśraya, is, as noticed already the reputed author of a treatise on prosody called the *Janāśraya Chhandō vichchitti*. The Vishṇukuṇḍins described themselves as *parama-brahmaṇyas* that is the well-wishers of the brahmans, and granted to them *agrahāras* or land free from the payment of taxes. Their love for brahmans may have been due to the fact that they were themselves *brahma-kshatris*. More important than this was the exclusive devotion of the brahman's

to religion and learning. *Agrahāras* were granted to brahmins by kings in ancient times for a definite purpose to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to the study, and the teaching of the Vēdas, and perform sacrifices, which were believed to bring prosperity to the country and its people. In pursuance of their duty to teach the Vēdas, the brahmins of these *agrahāras* had to teach their young not only the Vēdas but also the allied literature and the *śāstras* which had grown up in course of time. The holders of the *agrahāras* had to take in students, provide them with food and raiment, and teach them without any remuneration. The *agrahāras* became centres of learning, and spread light and learning in the country.

Another type of educational institution that deserves notice is the *ghaṭika*. Opinion differs regarding the derivation of the word *ghaṭika*. Dr. Kielhorn considers that it is synonymous with *gōshṭhi* and understands it to mean an assembly of the learned brahmin scholars. Dr. C. Minakshi derives *ghaṭika* “from the Sanskrit root *ghaṭ*, which means ‘to be busy with’ ‘to strive after’, ‘exert oneself for’, ‘be intimately occupied with any thing’, and understands it to mean “the place or institution where scholars and students strove for knowledge”⁴⁹. Whatever may be the root from which *ghaṭika* is derived, there can be no doubt that it denotes an educational institution. *Ghaṭikas* are known to have existed during the time of the Vishṇukunḍins and for several centuries after them in Āndhra and other parts of South India. Among the Vishṇukunḍins Indrabhaṭṭāraka is said to have acquired *punya* (religious merit) by establishing *ghaṭikas* according to the rules laid down by the law. It is evident from this that the establishment of a *ghaṭika* was regarded as a pious act, which had to be performed according to certain regulations prescribed by tradition and law. The places where Indrabhaṭṭāraka established the *ghaṭikas* are not known, though it may be presumed that one of them was situated in Amarāvati, the capital of his kingdom. The *ghaṭika* at Asanapura (Annavaram?) in Vēngi mentioned in one of the inscriptions of the E. Chālukya king Jayasimhavarāṇa I,⁵¹ may have been another of Indrabhaṭṭāraka’s foundations. The most famous

49. Ep. Ind. VIII p, 20, n. 1.

50. Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas pp. 186-7.

51. Ep. Ind. XVIII, p. 56.

ghaṭika of this age in the whole of South India was situated at Kāñchī, the capital of the Pallava kingdom.⁵² It was also known as the *Trairājya-Ghaṭika* as it was situated at the capital of the Pallava-trairājya or the Traid of the Pallava kingdoms. *Ghaṭikas* are known to have existed in several places in Āndhra and Karnāṭaka during the time of the Chālukyas. In an inscription of Shikarpur taluk dated A. D. 1182 it is stated that Kuntaladēśa was the *ghaṭikāsthāna* supporting like the principal pillar the edifice of the *dharma*⁵³. Another inscription dated A. D. 1058 refers to the establishment of a *ghaṭika* in the *agrahāra* of Nagavāvi in the Aralu 300 by Madhusūdana, one of the daṇḍanāyakas (commanders) of Āhavamalla Sōmēśvara I⁵⁴. In another inscription from Kurnool district dated A. D. 1068 it is stated that Jayasingadēva younger brother of the Chālukya emperor Bhuva-naikamalladēva made a gift of land as *vidyādāna* for the maintenance of the students of the *ghaṭikāsthāna* in the *mahāagrahāra* of Tumbaḷam in Sindavāḍi-Thousand.⁵⁵ Another inscription dated A. D. 1128 refers to the *ghaṭikāsthāna* attached to the temple of Rāmēśvaradēva at Kukkanūr in the Pattikonda taluk of the same district.⁵⁶ Another inscription dated A. D. 1168 mentions a *mahā ghaṭikāsthāna* attached to the temple of the God Nōṇambēśvara at Hemāvati, that is the present Henjeru in the Anantapur district.⁵⁷ The evidence of these inscriptions shows that *ghaṭikas* flourished in several places in South India from the 4th to the 12th centuries of the Christian era.

The *Ghaṭikas* referred to above fall into two classes, the Brahman and the Śaiva. The former seem to have been situated in the brahman *agrahāras* and the capital cities of the various kingdoms and the latter in the important Śaivite shrines.

Much information is not however available about the organisation and the management of and the curriculam of studies taught in the *ghaṭikas*. The Niḍuparru inscription of the E. Chālukya Jayasīmha

52. Ibid VIII p. 28.

53. EC. VII, SK. 197.

54. HAS No. 8 p. 15,

55. A. R. No. 514 of 1915

56. A. R. No. 286 of 1935-36

57. EC. XII Si 23, SII Vol. VI. No. 557

Vallabha I mentions a *ghaṭikā sāmānya* or a member of the *ghaṭika*.⁵⁸ Some of the early *ghaṭikas* seem to have had very large membership. An epigraph at Tiruvallam in the N. Arcot district dated in the 52nd regnal year of Naṇdivarman II Pallavamalla refers to the *ghaṭika* seven thousands.⁵⁹ The Helligere copper-plate grant of the W. Ganga Śivamāra mentions among the donees Āryaśarma, a member of, the *ghaṭika-sahasra* or the *ghaṭika-thousand*.⁶⁰ One of the Brahmadēsam (N.A.) inscriptions of the time of Pārthivēndravarmān speaks of the *madhyastas* of the *Trairājya-Ghaṭikā-trisahasrā* or the *Trairājya-Ghaṭikā-Three thousand*.⁶¹ Evidently this *ghaṭika* had three thousand members besides some *madhyastas* whose character and functions are not specified. The term *madhyasta* means mediator, who hears both parties in a dispute and pronounces an impartial judgment. This meaning, however, is not applicable in the present context. It seems to have here a special meaning as in some of the Chōḷa inscriptions of the 10th and the 11th centuries A.D. where it denotes a functionary employed by the village assembly. "The *madhyastas*", observes Prof. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, "are a small staff of servants, appointed by the village assemblies to assist their executive committees and maintain the records of the villages. The *madhyastas* attended the meetings of the assemblies and assisted them in the conduct of the proceedings. They however took no part in the deliberations nor had they the right to vote. Their duties and remuneration were fixed by the assemblies and they⁶² held obviously their office at the pleasure of their employers. It is not unlikely that the position of the *madhyastas* in the *ghaṭikas* was similar. Very probably they also convened the meetings of the *ghaṭikas*, assisted them in their deliberations and kept the records. All the ancient *ghaṭikas* appear to have been foundations which flourished under the aegis of the state. The establishment of the *ghaṭika* was regarded as a meritorious act which secured happiness to its founder in heaven. The Tuṇḍi grant of Vikramēndra II, declares that his father Indrabhaṭṭāraka acquired *brahma-punya*, that *puṇya* which enabled him to attain the *brahman* by the foundation of the

58. Ep. Ind. XVIII P.

59. S. I. I. III, part II, p. 91

60. EC. III Md. 113

61. A. R. No. 194 of 1915 ; 197 of 1915

62. Colas (Sec. Ed) p. 510

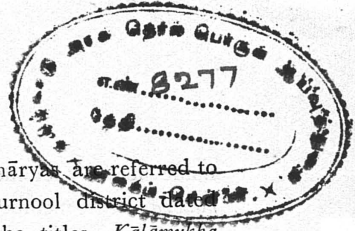
ghaṭikas.⁶³ The *Trairājya-ghaṭika* at Kāñchīpuram, the most ancient institution of its kind in the South was founded by the Pallavas, and it flourished under their protection during the six or seven centuries of their rule. We learn from the Velūrpālayam plates that it was seized in the early days of its history by a chief of the name of Satyasēna, but was recaptured by Skandaśishya who handed it over to Brahmans once again. Narasiṃha II better known as Rājasīṃha spent much of his wealth on Gods and Brahmans and revived the *ghaṭika* in his capital.⁶⁴ The Vishṇukuṇḍin monarchs also must have fostered the *ghaṭika* in their kingdom in the same manner.

It is not possible to describe the courses of study taught in the *ghaṭikas* whether brahman or śaiva, as our information on the subject is scanty. A few facts mentioned here and there incidentally in the inscriptions however enable us to form a hazy notion of the subjects taught in these institutions. It is stated in the Tālaguṇḍa pillar inscription of the Kadam̐ba king Kākusthavarman, that his ancestor Mayūraśarman joined the *ghaṭikā-sthāna* at Kāñchī to study the *pravachana* in its entirety.⁶⁵ The word *pravachana* means the Vēdas, and the Vēdic literature comprising of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *śaḍaṅgas* viz., *śiksha*, *vyākaraṇa*, *chandas*, *nirukta*, *jyōtisha* and *kalpa*. We may infer from this that *pravachana* was taught as at Kāñchī in the *ghaṭikas* in the Vishṇukuṇḍin kingdom. In the *ghaṭikāsthāna* at Nagavāvi in the 11th century A.D, provision was made for the study of the *darśanas* besides the Vēdas (i. e. Vēdic literature). There were two hundred scholars engaged in the study of the Vēdas and fifty in the Śāstras. Of the six *darśanas* only two *nyāya* and the *pūrva-mīmāṃsa* (*bhāṭya* as well as the *prābhākara*) are mentioned in the inscription. Besides the *pravachana* and the *śāstras*, the *āgamas*, and the *siddhāntas* of different schools of the Śaiva faith appear to have been taught in the Śaiva *ghaṭikas*. As the rank and file of the ancient śaiva monks whether of the Pāśupata Kālāmukha or of the Kāpālika persuasion were drawn from the Brahman community, they studied and taught Vēdas and śāstras; they supplemented this with the study of the subjects peculiar to their faith. Certain systems

63. Ibid.

64. SII. Vol. II, No. 8, pp. 507 f.

65. Ep. Ind. VIII, p. 28.



of thought specialised by our medieval Śaiva āchāryas are referred to in the inscriptions. An inscription from the Kurnool district dated A.D. 1058 mentions Sūrēśvara Paṇḍita with the titles *Kālāmukha sarōja rāja haṁsa*, *Lākula siddhānta-naīyyāyika naṇiṇi divākara* and *Mallikārjunadēvara-darśana-karaṇa puruṣa*; and another inscription from the same region refers to Chandrabhūṣaṇa Paṇḍita who is praised as ‘*anēka-tarka-śāstrādi-pāraga*.’⁶⁶ These āchāryas must have studied in the Śaiva *ghaṭikas* of which there were several, as noticed above in this region. The Kālāmukha and Lākula-siddhāntas refer to one and the same system of Philosophoy propounded by Lakuliśa in the early centuries of the Christian era. Nothing is known of the *Mallikārjuna dēvara darśana*. Who the Mallikārjunadēva after whom this *darśana* is named cannot be ascertained. He is perhaps the great Kālāmukha teacher, Śrīśaila Mallikārjuna Paṇḍita to whom the poet Nanni Chōḍadēva dedicated his Telugu *Kumārasāmbhavam*.

The arrangements made in the ancient *ghaṭikā-sthānas* for imparting education to the alumni are not known, but the Nāgari inscriptions referred to above give us a glimpse of the system that was obtaining in the *ghaṭika* in the middle of the 11th century A.D. It is stated that “for the two hundred scholars studying the Vēdas in the institute, for the fifty two (scholars) studying the śāstras, for their three teachers, for the three expounders of the *Bhāṭṭa-darśana*, Nyāsa and *Prābhākara*, for the three teachers that taught the Vēdas and for the six *bhāṇḍārikas* (i. e. librarians) of the institute (viz.) for the boarding and the lodging of these 257 (267) men in all, for the renovation and repairs and fresh plastering of the temple, for sandal and consecrated rice, for flowers, incense, lamps and for food offerings to the God and to the respectable members of the assembly of the institute of (the) Traipurushadēva (temple) a field measuring 1000 *mattar*” was given, besides 35 *mattars* of land to the expounder of *Bhāṭṭadarśana*, 30 *mattars* to the expounder of Nyāsa, 45 *mattars* to the expounder of the *Prābhākara*, 30 *mattars*, to each of the librarians, 30 *mattars* to the striker of the hours (*ghaṇṭikāprahāri*) were given by the donor of the record.”⁶⁷

We understand from this that *ghaṭikāsthāna* as Nāgavāvi was an educational institution of the residential type in which provision was

66. A. R. No. 577 of 1922-23, and 9 of 1928

67. Hyd. Arch. Series No. 8 p. 23.

made not only for the boarding (*aśana*) but also for clothing (*āchchhādana*) of its members including teachers and pupils. The teachers of the *ghaṭikāsthāna* were given *vr̥tis* of land in lieu of salaries. The subjects of study were taught in accordance with a well formulated time table, and the *ghantikāprahāris* sounded the bell to mark the beginning and the end of the periods of study. There was also a library attached to the *ghaṭika* for the use of the teachers, managed by a small staff of librarians.

The *ghatika* it may be remembered is an institution, the establishment of which is governed by certain rules said to have been laid down in the *Vēdas*.⁶⁸ Therefore, the organisation of the *ghaṭikas* whether ancient or mediaeval could not have been different. The method of teaching the *Pravachana* and probably also of the *śāstras* and other subjects must have been the same. It may therefore be presumed that the ancient *ghaṭikas* of the Vishṇukuṇḍin times must have resembled the *ghaṭika* of Nāgavāvi. The curriculum of studies as well as the methods of teaching must have been the same. The ancient Vishṇukuṇḍins like Chāḷukya commanders of a later age must have made similar arrangements for the boarding and lodging of the teachers and taught and established libraries for facilitating their studies.

68. In the Chikkulla Plates Indrabhaṭṭāraka is said to have established *ghaṭikas* in accordance with the rules laid down in the *Vēda-Yathā-vidhi-nirmāpita* (Ep. IV pp. 193-98). According to a late Vijayanagara inscription of the 15th century, the rules are attributed to the sage Uttanka and said to be found in the *Sāma*vēda (E.C. V. 178, p. 462).

THE VISHṆUKUṆḌIN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Vishṇukuṇḍin contribution to art especially architecture has hardly won the recognition it deserves at the hands of scholars who devoted themselves to the study of Indian art and architecture. This is not surprising as their history has received but scanty notice even by the historians who have set forth to describe the annals of the local dynasties of the country. The Vishṇukuṇḍins played, as a matter of fact, an important part in the political as well as the cultural and art history of the Deccan, which the devotees of art can ill afford to ignore. The Vishṇukuṇḍins inherited the artistic traditions of both the Ikshvākus whom they succeeded and the Vākātakas with whom they came into contact, enriched them by their own contribution and transmitted to posterity. The credit of placing them in the map of Indian art goes to the talented French savant Dr. G. J. Dubreuil who first brought to notice of the scholarly-world, the importance of the Vishṇukuṇḍin art and especially architecture in his monumental history of the Pallavas in the opening decades of the present century. Dr. Dubreuil's account, valuable as it is, is imperfect and stands in need of supplementation. He has shown that the cave temples at Uṇḍavalli and Mogalrājapuram on the banks of the Kṛishṇa are Vishṇukuṇḍin excavations; that the Pallava king Mahēndravarman I was inspired by a study of these to excavate similar shrines in several places in his dominions in the South.¹ It must be noted, however, that the Uṇḍavalli and Mogalrājapuram caves are not the only cave temples on the banks of the Kṛishṇa. The so called Akkanna-Madanna caves at Vijayavada, and the Guntupalli caves at Jilakaṛṇḍem in the West Godavari district deserve mention in this connection. These however, are earlier and belong to the age of Śātavāhanas and are affiliated to the Buddhistic faith.

The archaeological, epigraphical and literary evidence shows beyond the shadow of doubt that there existed in several places in the Deccan especially in Andhra, temples (*dēvakulas*) dedicated to the Hindu gods from the 2nd century B. C. to the 7th Century A.D. It is

1. Pallavas. Ch. III, pp. 27 f.

not possible, however, to describe the style of architecture in which they were built excepting in the solitary case of the Kapōtēśvara temple at Chējerla in the Narasaraopet taluk of the Guntur district. It is generally believed that the Brahmanical temple builders borrowed this style from the Chaityas of the Buddhists.² This is based on the assumption that the Brahmanical Hindus in the early days did not know the art of temple building until the advent of the Buddhists whom they are supposed to have emulated in later ages to popularise their faith. The possibility of the converse of this being true has not even been contemplated. It may be remembered that Gautama was a Brahmanical Hindu before he became the Buddha and founded his new faith, and that the converts to his new faith were also like him Brahmanical Hindus before their conversion. The Buddha incorporated into his new faith much of the Brahmanical mythology, philosophical doctrines, religious and social institutions. The stūpa, the most important religious foundation of the Buddhists, was itself pre-Buddhistic in origin. It existed long before the time of the Buddha. It was a common form of tomb, nothing more or less than a regularly built dome-shaped pile of masonry, which was undoubtedly the oldest form of funeral monuments.³ There were no Buddhist stūpas before the death of the Buddha. To enshrine the bones and the relics of the Buddha, his disciples erected stūpas on the models of those of the Brahmanical Hindus, which the latter built on the remains of Chakravartins, saints and other great men. The Chaitya like the stūpa was also a pre-Buddhist institution adopted by the Buddhists to secure the loyalty of the masses to their own faith. The word Chaitya is generally derived from Chiti which denotes a funeral pyre. It is not, however clear how exactly it is connected with Chiti. The epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa mention Chaityas in several places. The former gives us some idea of what may be regarded as the earliest form of the Chaitya.

Originally the Chaitya was not a building religious or secular but a tree. Thus in MBh book XII, 59, we have 'He should cut down all the smaller trees excepting those trees called the Chaitya, he should not touch (its) very leaves'. The Vanaparvam also refers to the sacred trees. According to Book xii, 69:41 &c.

2. Percy Brown, Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu periods p. 64 .

gods, yakshas, rākshasas, nāgas, piśāchas, gandharvas, apsarasas and cruel bhūtas dwell in the Chaityas. Book III 125-17, mentions the Chaityas of the Three and Thirty (gods). From these texts it is clear that the Chaitya in the Mahābhārata denotes a tree in which dwell spirits good or evil; but its connection with Chiti from which the word Chaitya is derived remains unintelligible. Mahābhārata, xiii. 141.18 offers a clue which seems to indicate the connection between the Chaitya tree and the funeral pyre (chiti). It is stated that the crematorium is generally shaded by the branches of the banyan (tree). In BK IV, cemetery outside the capital of King Virāta is called Pitṛvana or the grave of the fathers. From these texts it is evident that the chief characteristic of the cemetery in the Mahābhārata appears to be the presence of big trees. Their presence in the crematorium can be accounted for by assuming that people were accustomed to plant them on the grave. The Rīg Vēda (X 58.7; 16.3) alludes to a belief among the Āryans that the spirits of the dead enter plants and trees: It was, perhaps, due to a belief of this kind that the Āryans planted trees upon the graves. The Rāmāyaṇa presents a later stage in the development of the Chaitya. Here, it is no longer a tree but a shrine or a temple. The Sundarakāṇḍa 20:29 refers to a Chaitya in a crematorium: *śmaśāna-Chaitya pratimō bhūshitō'pi bhayaṃkaraḥ* The 15th sarga of the same book describes the Chaityaprāsāda of Rāvaṇa. It is a royal palace built by Rāvaṇa in his pleasure garden Aśōka, on the model evidently of a Chaitya. It is a lofty building white as mount Kailāsa supported by a thousand pillars in the centre; it has *vēdikas*, terraces, coral stairs, and a *vimāna* surmounting it.⁴ If the assumption that the Chaitya-prāsāda is modelled on a chaitya is correct, then a shrine seems to have grown up, in course of time, around the sacred tree, and to have claimed equal honour with the temple. This is but natural; for the tree worship is known everywhere to have preceded the temple worship. The combined evidence of the two great epics discussed above makes it clear that the Chaitya was originally a Hindu religious foundation. The same fact is clearly indicated by the Buddhist *Suttas* also. The Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta alludes to them as a general feature of the religious life at that time. The Buddha declares on one occasion, while speaking of the people of

3. Annual Report of Archaeology, Southern circle 1915-16 p. 90.

4. Rāmāyaṇa 5.15, 5, 16-17 5-43, 3-4, 12.

Vaiśāli that so long as they honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjain shrines (*Chāṭiyāni*) in town or country and allow not the proper offerings and rites formerly given and performed, to fall into destitute,⁵ they shall prosper. On another occasion the Buddha enumerates all the Chaityas at Vaiśāli.

“When I was once staying, O Brahman, at Vaiśāli at Sārāṇadada shrine (*Chēṭiya*), I taught the Vajjians the conditions of Welfare.”⁶

“So the Exalted one, proceeded to Chāpala shrine, and when he had come down on the mat spread out for him, and the Venerable Ānanda took his seat respectfully beside him, that the Exalted one addressed Ānanda and said, ‘How delightful a spot, Ānanda is Vēsāli and how charming is the Udēna shrine and the Gotamaka shrine and shrine of the Seven Mangoes, and the Shrine of the Manysons, and the Sārāṇadada shrine, and Chāpala shrine.’⁷

According to the *Sumaṅgaḷa-Vilāsini*, quoted in the Dialogues, there were Yakkha-Cēṭiyāni, i.e., the Chaityas to the Yakkhas. These were, as pointed out by Rhys Davids, shrines of Pre-Buddhistic Worship.⁸ They did not become exclusively Buddhistic even in the fourth century B.C.

The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya teems with allusions to the Chaityas. It appears that in the time of the Mauryas, the Chaitya was still a Hindu religious institution. Certain interesting details regarding the Chaitya are given in one place: ‘On full and new moon days, the Worship of the Chaityas may be performed by placing on a verandah, offerings such as an umbrella, *hasta*, a flag and a *chhāga* (he-goat).’⁹ This was done in order to propitiate the demons which were supposed to cause national calamities. The first point which deserves notice in this context is that the Chaitya is a building with a verandah. Next, the character of the offerings, especially of *hasta* and *chhāga*. The former means a human hand or a picture of it, according to Dr. Shāma Śāstri. It refers to a time, even if Dr. Shāma Śāstri’s interpreta-

5. The Dialogues of the Buddha Vol. II p. 80

6. Ibid

7. Ibid, p. 110

8. Ibid p. 110 n.

9. Kautilya’s *Arthaśāstra*, Shāma Sastri’s translation p. 256

tion is accepted, when an actual human hand was placed as an offering; the latter, *chhāga* is indeed interesting, as a he-goat, especially the black he-goat, is the most acceptable offering to the village deity even at present. These considerations justify the conclusion that the *Chatiya* was originally a Hindu religious institution, before it was adopted by the Buddhists.

The foregoing discussion has shown that the Buddhists and not the Brahmanical Hindus were the borrowers as generally believed. They borrowed good many things from the Hindus in giving a definite shape to their religion. The extent of their indebtedness is not limited to a few technical terms and points of discipline; it extends to the incorporation of the *Stūpa* and the *Chaitya* which are the essential features of practical Buddhism. Now, it may be asserted with confidence that the *Chaitya* type of temples such as those at Chējerla, Ter and other places were not Buddhist temples in their original condition, but Brahmanical structures built by the Hindu architects, in accordance with the architectural traditions which they inherited from their ancestors.

The Ikshvākus fell from power at the beginning of the 4th century A.D. Their place was taken by the Vishṇukuṇḍins, a *sāmānta* family which had been subordinate to their authority. The advent of Vishṇukuṇḍins seems to have opened a new era in the history of temple building. At Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Amarāvati and Yēlēśwaram, the post-Ikshvāku period is characterised by the Vishṇukuṇḍin coins. Latest digs have yielded copper coins of Vishṇukuṇḍins right over the post Ikshvāku period. Gōvindavarman, the founder of the dynasty, though an ardent follower of Buddhism was an active builder of Hindu temples. In the Tummalagūḍem plates I it is stated that he decorated all the quarters by the construction of *dēvāyatanas* (temples), *Vihāras* (Monasteries) and *sabhas* (assembly halls), *prapas* (sheds for the distribution of water to the thirsty), *tāḍākas* (tanks) *upādānas* (?) and *ārāmas* (pleasure gardens).¹⁰ It is not known whether any of the temples built by Gōvindavarman are still in existence. The Sōmagiriśvara Triyaṃbaka temple mentioned in the Chikkuḷla plates of Vikramēndravarman may have been one of them.¹¹ Besides, some of the

10. Bharati 46 No. 6 pp. 14-28

11. Ep. Ind. IV, p. 193 f

* Note: Read Pages 57 to 64 for Pages 73 to 80.

early temples that are found in Gunṭūr district may belong to this period. The existence of the temples of this age are referred to in some of the Pallava Prakrit and early Sanskrit inscriptions.

Prof. G. Jouveau Dubreuil after a careful comparative study of the Vishṇukuṇḍin caves at Uṇḍavalli on the Kṛishnā in the Gunṭūr district with those excavated by the Pallava king Mahēndravarman I at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu, Māmandūr, Pallavaram and other places in the Tamil country had come to the conclusion that the latter bear close resemblance to the former in design and style, and that Mahēndra who admired the Vishṇukuṇḍin caves had similar ones cut on the rock around his capital Kāñchipuram and other places in his dominions.¹² He also notices 'small rathas by the side of the niches'. They exactly resemble the small shrine seen in the middle of the bas relief, 'Bhagīratha's penance' at Mahābalipuram. These contain lingas.¹³ If Dr. Dubreuil had, instead of confining himself to the caves at Uṇḍavalli and its neighbourhood on the opposite bank of the Kṛishnā, extended his survey to the structural temples in the Guntur and Kurnool districts, especially the miniature votive shrines in several places belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era, he would have discovered small structural rathas similar in style and structure to those at Mahabali-puram, and that the so called Dravidian style of architecture had its roots in the trans-Kṛishna coastal Āndhra country. Mahēndravarman I appears to have also carried this style like the art of scooping out cave temples from the same region to the South. The Mandagapattu inscription refers as a matter of fact to structural temples built of bricks, timber, and metal and cemented with mortar which he must have seen in the Telugu part of his kingdom.¹⁴ As these were liable to be destroyed in course of time, the Vichitrachitta that he was, in order to make them permanent, he initiated the practice of cutting their models in imperishable rock at Mahābalipuram.

No specimen of the temple structure of the Vishṇukuṇḍin period is known to exist at present. There is reason to believe that the temples of Rāmalingeśvara and Bhīmalingeśvara at Satyavōlu go back

12. The Pallavas, pp. 27-35

13. Ibid. 31

14. Ep. Ind. XVII, pp. 14-17.

to the age of Vishṇukunḍin monarchs. The horned *dvārapālas* (Pls.-I & II) guarding the entrance of the sanctum deserve notice in this context. This type of *dvārapālas* are peculiar to the Vishṇukunḍin and the Pallava temples. The observations of Sri C. Śivarāmamurti, who examined the *dvārapālas* of the Vishṇukunḍin, Pallava, Chālukya, and Rāshtrakūṭa temples may be noted here with advantage. 'While the tradition of the horned *dvārapālas* from the Vishṇukunḍin caves is found transported to the Pallava area through Bhairavunikoṇḍa further south to Tiruchirāpalli caves, it is absent in these Eastern Chālukya figures that follow the traditions of the homeland. Even with the lapse of time and the interplay of influences we find the horned *dvārapāla* as one of a pair just as in Pallava temples, fails to occur in the Chālukyan temples, and normal type continues as in the Mallēśvara temple at Vijayavāda or the temples at Biccavōlu.'¹⁵ If the horned *dvārapāla* is characteristic of the Vishṇukunḍin and the Pallava temples, and not found in the Chālukyan temples either of Bādāmi or of Vēngi as stated by Śrī Sivarāmamūrti, the Satyavōlu temples could not have been built by the Chālukyas. As all the Pallava temples were built only in the Dravidian style, and no specimen of a Pallava shrine in the Indo-Āryan style is found anywhere; it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Satyavōlu temples (Pl. III) were built by the Vishṇukunḍins. The Chālukyas acquired the taste for and inherited the traditions of art and architecture from the Vishṇukunḍins of whom in the early days of their history they were the subordinates.

The Chālukyas, like their former Ikshvāku and Vishṇukunḍin overlords, patronized architecture and art. Temples decorated with fine carvings and magnificent sculpture built by them at Alampūr, Aihole, Bādāmi, Paṭṭaḍakal and other places still stand to proclaim their glory. The Chālukya builders seem to have started their building operations by experimenting with different styles of architecture that were in vogue at that time before they ultimately adopted the curvilinear or Indo-Āryan style, which seems to have had special appeal to their mind.

Now, about the Indo-Āryan or the Rēkhā-śikhara style, which may be more appropriately called the Alampūr style, as the most

15. Early Eastern Chālukya sculpture. The Madras Govt. Museum Bulletin N. S. Vol. VII, No. 2 p. 26

important specimens of this style of temples, are found at Alampūr in the Mahboobnagar district of the Andhra Pradesh, opinion differs regarding the origin and the age of these temples. Some draw attention to their resemblance to the Orissan temples and assign them to the 12th century A. D.¹⁶ whereas others assign them more correctly to the western Chāḷukya kings of Bādāmi who ruled over this part of the country in the 7th and 8th centuries of the Christian era. The evidence of epigraphy clearly indicates that these temples are some of the earliest in existence in the Andhra Pradesh. Now, an inscription dated in the 18th regnal year of Vijayāditya corresponding to Ś. 636 (A.D. 714) states that the king built at the instance of Bhagavat Iśānāchārya Svāmi the *prākāra bandha* (enclosure) obviously to the temple complex was already in existence, and that Bhagavat Iśānāchāryasvāmi at whose instance the *prākāra-bandha* was built was the chief priest in charge of them. Another inscription engraved over the image of *dvārapālaka* in the Svarga-Brahma temple states, that the Ela-arasa (Yuvarāja) Lōkāditya built the *dēvakula* (temple) of the chief queen of Vinayāditya (Vinayāditya-prithvī-Vallabha Mahādēviyarū.)¹⁷ Another inscription on a pillar in the Arka-Brahma temple states, that the chief queen (Mahādēvī) of Anivārīta Vikramāditya granted some land in the village of Vardhamāni to a Brahmaṇa at the time of the installation of a linga in the temple of Mahādēva, that is, Śiva¹⁸. These inscriptions make it clear that these temples were in existence in the latter half of the 7th century A.D. Labels in archaic characters found on the walls of other temples in this complex show that they belong to an even earlier period. An epigraph at Guruzāla in the Palnad taluk of the Guntur district dated in the 4th regnal year of the Ikshvāku king, Rudra Puriṣadāta, registers the gift of a field by a certain Noḍukusiri to Bhagavān Halaṃpurasvāmi.¹⁹ If Halaṃpuram of this inscription is identical with Alampuram under discussion as suggested by Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the editor of the inscription, the temple of Halaṃpurasvāmi very probably Bāla-Brahmēśvara, must be assigned to the 3rd century

16. Yazdani, Early History of the Deccan pp. 739-40

17. Ibid.

18. unpublished

19. Ep. Ind. XXVI pp. 123-25

A. D. when the Ikshvākus ruled in the Kṛṣṇā valley from their capital Vijayapurī.

The Alampūr temples are among the most important ancient monuments in Āndhra Pradesh. They are, in the first place, the largest temple complex in the state; and secondly they are distinguished by the style of their architecture; but they do not stand alone forming a class apart by themselves, as they are generally believed to be. Temples built in the same style are found in several other places in the State. There is a fine temple of this type dedicated to Śiva at Kaṣamulakālva (pl. IV) in the Nandyala taluk of the Kurnool district. Another shrine of the same style is at Mahānādi in the same taluk. Similar temples are also found at Satyavōlu in the Giddalūr taluk of the Prakasam district. There are two temples in the village dedicated respectively to Rāmalingēśvara and Bhīmalīngēśvara close to each other inside the same compound. They are built of stone from basement to śikhara. The *vimānas* of both the shrines rise in tiers, eleven in the Bhīmalīngēśvara and fourteen in Rāmalingēśvara, they are surmounted by a circular śikhara capped over by fluted *kalaśa*. The shrines consist of a square *garbha-gr̥ha* and a waggon roof *maṇṭapa* attached to it.²⁰ In front of the *garbha-gr̥ha* on either side of the gateway, stand two horned *dvārapālas* very closely resembling their counterparts in the early Pallava temples of Mahēndravarmān I's time. Another temple of the same type is found at Terāla in the Palnād taluk of the Guntur district. A careful survey of the temples in this area may reveal the existence of some more shrines of this description hidden in obscure and out of the way places. At Kaṣamulakālva for instance, there is an inscription of the western Chālukya king Vikramāditya I.

Another point that demands consideration about the curvilinear temples of Alampūr and other places in Āndhra Pradesh and Karṇāṭaka is their striking resemblance to the temples of Orissa. Speaking of the Rāmalingēśvara and the Bhīmalīngēśvara temples at Satyavōlu, C. R. Kṛṣṇamāchāryulu states that, "they approach very nearly what is designated as Orissan style"²¹ Dr. Yazdani more emphati-

20. A.R.E. 1939-40 to 1942-43 p. 5.

21. ARE 1939-40 1941-3 p. 5.

cally asserts that the spires of the temples of Alam̐pur“ are so ingeniously overlaid with decorative detail that they appear to be almost replicas of the Liṅgarāja temple at Bhuvanēśvar in Orissa.” At Alam̐pūr one notices a marked change in the shape of the spire, which is more akin to the towers in the temples of Orissa than to those in South India²². The resemblance is also noticed by Percy Brown: “A comparison may be instituted between this (Paraśurāmēśvara) temple (at Bhuvanēśvar) and the somewhat earlier temples of the Chāḷukyans at Aihole. It will be seen that of the Paraśurāmēśvara example, although inclined to be heavy and crude, is an improvement of the Indo-Āryan type of *śikhara*s subsequently added to the Aihole building. Moreover the incipient form of clerestory introduced into the Orissan temple is also an advance on the double roof of the Durga and Hūchchimaliguḍi temples of Chāḷukyan group from which, however, it may have been derived”²³.

The resemblance between the two groups of temples, noticed by the writers cited above, pertains only to their *śikhara* or spires. They are not, however, without differences. The Āndhra-Karṇāṭaka group differs from the Orissan in one important respect. Whereas the spire of the former is built on the roof of the square chambered garbhagṛha or sanctum, the spire of the latter starts straight away from the ground a cell inside at the ground level forming the sanctum (*garbha-gṛha*). Notwithstanding this difference, the close resemblance between the two calls for explanation. The Orissan architect seems to have derived inspiration from his Āndhra-Karṇāṭaka compeer. This is not unlikely; for the Orissan style had its origin in the temples of Mukhalingam in Āndhra or that part of Āndhra which in ancient times had gone by the name of Kaḷinga. Although the Kāḷingas, as the people of Kaḷinga were called, formed a distinct group by themselves from the Āndhras, they were racially, linguistically, and culturally one and the same with the Āndhras. Apart from this, Kaḷinga which was at first conquered by the Viṣṇukunḍins in the 5th and subsequently by the Chāḷukyas in the beginning of the 7th century A.D. remained an integral part of the kingdom of Vēṅgi for several centuries when the peoples of the two countries

22. Early History of the Deccan, pp. 736 and 739

23. Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu periods p. 103.

mingled freely and lived together as common citizens of a single state. The Kaṇṇiṅgas must have imbibed during this period the artistic traditions of their western neighbours and gave a concrete shape to them by erecting the temples at Mukhalingam. The observations of Percy Brown deserve notice in this connection. "There is reason to believe that this (Orissan) style of temple architecture approached the eastern region from its southern extremity, spreading northwards to form the development in Orissa. Although the small series at Mukhalingam may not comprise the earliest examples, that the beginning was made in this locality is not unlikely. It has already been shown that a type of temple in a primitive Indo-Āryan style had begun to appear as far south as in the territory of the Chāḷukyas as early as the sixth century A.D. implying that they may have originated in that quarter. That the style of the Mukhalingam temples and of those of Orissa of a later date originated in the south (south west) may be readily admitted. Whether it had come from the Chāḷukyas is more than doubtful. It is true that Pulakēśin II had conquered Kaṇṇiṅga and together with it Vēṅgi in 616-17 A.D. but he conferred the sovereignty of the countries on his younger brother Kubja Viṣṇuvardhana and recognized his right to bequeath them as a hereditary dominion to his descendants. With the appointment of Kubja Viṣṇuvardhana as the ruler of Vēṅgi, Pulakēśin II's connection with the east coast came to an end; and his successors at Bādāmi had nothing to do with it. The style of Mukhalingam temples could not have come from the Bādāmi Chāḷukyan dominions where the Indo-Āryan style of temples were popular. The E. Chāḷukyas, as the descendants of Kubja Viṣṇuvardhana or the E. Chāḷukyas as they are called, ruled over Kaṇṇiṅga for several centuries and came into intimate contact with their Kaṇṇiṅga subjects. They did not however favour the Indo-Āryan style; they built all their temples in the pyramidal or the Dravidian style. The builders of the Mukhalingam temples could not have adopted the style of their architecture from the Eastern Chāḷukyas. The recent discovery of inscriptions in the 6th 7th century Telugu characters and the existence of horned dvārapālas in the Mukhalingam temple (Pl. V) show that this temple goes back to the Viṣṇukunḍin period. It may be remembered that the Viṣṇukunḍins, who ruled over Kaṇṇiṅga before the Chāḷukyas made their appearance on the east coast, favoured the Indo-Āryan type. If the Kalinga architects of

Mukhalingam and their predecessors acquired their fondness for the Indo-Aryan style from the south, as it is quite obvious, it must have been from their Vishṇukuṇḍin masters of Vengi. The eastern Gangas who were the feudatories at first of the Vishṇukuṇḍins and subsequently of their Eastern Chāḷukya successors carried it later into Orissa in the east when they conquered that country in the 12th century A.D.

The resemblance between the Āndhra-Karnāṭaka and the Orissan temples noticed above seems to be due to the inheritance of the same type from a common source rather than to conscious adoption. The Chāḷukyas in the west and the Kalinga Gangas in the east adopted the practice of building temples in the Indo-Aryan style from their Vishṇukuṇḍin overlords who appear to have been the first among the South Indian dynasties to introduce it in the south.



