SRĪ VARADARĀJASWĀMI
TEMPLE—KĀṆCHI
अस्तु श्रीस्तनकस्तूरीवासनावासितोरसे।
श्रीहस्तदिगरिनाथाय देवराजाय मञ्जुलम्॥
Dedicated to the generations of kings and queens and the humbler folk whose devotion and charity have sustained this temple through the ages
Kāñchīpuram, one of the reputed Muktikshetras, not very far from Madras, is probably the best known of all places in South India to the earliest writers. Aśoka had a stūpa built here which Hiuen-Tsang had seen and described. Kāñchī was famous along with Takshaśilā, Vāraṇasī, Valabhī, Nālandā and other great centres of learning. Patañjali, as early as the 2nd century B.C., gives the word Kāñchipuraka to explain a derivation meaning ‘one associated and hailing from Kāñchī’. The famous Tālaguṇḍa inscription of the Kadaṁba king KakutstHAVarman, in tracing the origin of the Kadaṁba family, vividly describes how Mayūrāśarman, the founder of this family, went to Kāñchipuram along with his teacher, to give finishing touches to his Vedic learning by studying the highest realms of thought in the field, possible only in Kāñchipuram, at that time, reputed for its famous university, Ghaṭikā. Patañjali, the highest intellectual of his time, naturally could only think of a rare intellectual centre like Kāñchī. We know from one of the famous historical sculptures in the Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl temple, narrating the sequence of Pallava history in a series of panels, that, when the main line broke and a prince of the collateral line was to be elected king, Hiranyakavarman was requested to permit his son, Nandivarman, to be made the king. This request was made by the most prominent leaders of the people themselves headed by the elders of the University of Kāñchī, the Ghaṭikā. Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese traveller that came to Kāñchī early in the 7th century A.D., has praised the city for its intellectual eminence and its love for learning. It is no wonder, since the rulers like Mahendravarman were versatile, prolific in writing and great patrons of art and literature. Buddhism and Jainism also flourished and Jaina Kāñchī is yet an important adjunct of Kāñchī. Dharmapāla, the great Buddhist scholar at Nālandā, was from Kāñchī.

There are two great temples that adorn Kāñchī today as the most conspicuous, the Ekāmreśvara and Vāradarāja. There have been many innovations and additions to these temples during the different periods of history. The smaller temples, but aesthetically the most valuable for the study of Pallava art and culture, the Kailāsanātha, Mataṅgeśvara, Airāvateśvara, Vaikuṇṭhaperumāl, have suffered no change or tampering by additions. The Kāmakshī temple, a great seat of Devī worship, with extraordinary reputation as the seat of the grace of Devī extended to the dumb poet Mūka who composed the unforgettable honey-sweet verses in a bunch of five hundred with a rare lilt and resonance, Mūka-Paṅchaśati, is another
Foreword

of the famous shrines here. The only portrait of the greatest intellectual of India for all time, Śaṅkara, is the sculpture of his in a Pallava temple, Eravaneśvara, as a juvenile ascetic, seated reverentially beside Vyāsa, who along with Jaimini, flanks Dakshināmūrti, the Lord of Learning.

Varadarāja, the form of the Lord who showed compassion to the elephant in distress, Karivarada, is the most reputed Vişṇu temple in Kāṇḍiñipuram. Varada was a favourite of successive kings and philosophers. Raṅganātha at Śrīraṅgam, Varadarāja at Kāṇḍi and Śrīnivāsa at Tirupati are the three great deities ever sought for succour by one and all in general and by the Śrī Vaishṇavas in particular. Venkaṭanātha, Vedānta Deśika as he is better known, clearly says that his ancestral property is the Lord in the ‘Elephant Hill’, Hastiśaila—asti me hastiśailēgre pitṛipai-tāīram dhvanam. Appayya Dīkshita, the polymath philosopher of the 16th century who wrote the ‘Śivārkamaṇḍiṭipīkā’, was so attached to Varada, that he would never miss an opportunity to visit Kāṇḍiñipuram to have his darśana. Infirmity, which made it difficult for him to travel too often, made him build a temple for Varada, along with that for Śiva, Kālakaṁtha, in his village Aḍayapalam, utilising the gold with which he was bathed in a Kanakābhishēka by king Chinnabomma in appreciation of the Parimala, the commentary he wrote on Amalānanda’s Kalpataru.

The beautiful mandapa of the Varadarāja temple with its spirited row of horses prancing on the pillars and the monkey and the cat running after the pigeons on the roofline are unforgettable gems of art.

This temple has long remained without a proper exposition of its treasures both artistic and religious. I am glad that Dr. K.V. Raman has written an excellent account of this famous temple discussing its history, epigraphy, ritual, religion, philosophy and thought. He has chosen suitable illustrations to visually present its importance. I have great pleasure in requesting the discerning scholarly world to appreciate this very interesting monograph on a great temple.

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20.6.75

C. Sivaramamurti
Director
PREFACE

This book formed the subject matter of my dissertation for the Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Madras. I am thankful to the University for permitting me to publish the thesis.

I must acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. K.K. Pillay, formerly Professor of Social Science, University of Madras, and now Director, Institute of Traditional Cultures, Madras, for his valuable suggestions and guidance in the preparation of the thesis. I thank the Chief Epigraphist, Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore, for giving me access to the originals and transcripts of the inscriptions; the Superintendent Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Southern Circle, Madras for lending me some of the photographs illustrated in the book; the Commissioner, H.R.&C.E. (Adm.) Department for permitting me to prepare plans and drawings of the buildings, besides giving me other facilities.

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CHAPTER I

LOCATION AND PHYSICAL FEATURES

Kâñchipuram in Lat. 12°50’ N, Long. 79°40’ E is situated 72 kilometres (45 miles) from Madras City in a west-south-westerly direction. It is a town of considerable size (8 kilometres long and 3 kilometres broad on the average) and is now the headquarters of Kâñchipuram taluk, which forms part of the Chingleput District in Madras State. The town is not only large but also pretty, with its long and broad roads, lined with closely built houses. The town is well connected to important places on all sides by road or rail. The Grand Western Trunk Road coming from Madras runs through it in the south-westerly direction, connecting it with other historic towns like Arcot, Vellore, Bangalore and the well-known Vaishnavite centres like Sriperumbudur, Tirumâlsai and Pûmadalli. On the north-east is the road that connects it with Arakanam, from where the roads proceed to well-known places like Tirupati and Nellore both in the Andhra region. On the south are the two small roads cutting across the River Vêgavati and going to places like Uttiramerur and Madurântakam. On the eastern side a road runs along the northern bank of the river connecting Kânchi with Chingleput (about 40 kilometres). Both Chingleput and Madurântakam are on the Grand Southern Trunk Road leading to all major towns of South India.

Some of these roads are doubtless laid on the older tracts which connected Kânchi with the neighbouring territories. From early times, Kânchi was frequented by men hailing from different parts of the country who had come here for study or on pilgrimage or for political purposes. Kânchi was in touch with the region lying on the west including the Karnâtaka and Goa. Even the Kadamba king Mayûra Sarman of the West Coast (Goa) region is said to have entered one of the ghâlikâs at Kânchi as early as the 4th century A.D.¹ Subsequently, the Gangas had friendly relations with the Pallavas of Kânchi. Still later in the 13th century the Hoysâjas came upto Kânchi. About the same time, the later Gangas of Kûvalpura or Kolar (on the same road) have visited Kânchi and done many benefactions to the temple there. This contact could have been possible by the presence of a highway which, in all probability, was on the lines of the present Western Trunk Road.

The road on the north-east placed Kânchi within the reach of the highways leading to the ancient kingdoms of Châlukyas and Râshtrakûtas. The frequent struggles between the Pallavas of Kânchi and the Châlukyas of Badami and the swift movement of their armies to and fro are too well known. Yuan Chuang is also said to have journeyed to Kânchi from the Châlukyan territory in the 7th century A.D., and he has testified to the fact that the people of Kânchi were highly esteemed for learning. Later on, in A.D. 960, the Râshtrakûta king Krishna III invaded
Kāṇchi from the north-west and a famous battle was fought at Takkolam, a place on the road between Kāṇchi and Arkonam. The same road should have served the later rulers like the Kākatiyas, the Telugu-Chōdas of Nellore and the Vijayanagar army in their entry into Kāṇchi.

On the southern side, Kāṇchi is girdled by the River Palar and its branch, the Vēgavati. But the roads across the river-bed, traces of which are still seen, gave access to places like Madurāntakam on the high road to Tiruchirāpāḷḷi, Thāḻjavūr, and other places in the south Tamil country. The Vaishnava literature of the 13th century records that Rāmānuja, while going to Srīrangam (near Tiruchirāpāḷḷi), passed through Madurāntakam on his way. This route connecting Kāṇchi and Madurāntakam is still there.

The road on the east, leading to Chingleput, should have been an important one as it connected Kāṇchi, the capital, with its port-town, Mahābalipuram, about 53 kms. away. This seems to be confirmed by the presence of two rock-cut Pallava caves on the road—one at Vallam and another at Tirukkalukunram.

In spite of many changes, the city of Kāṇchi preserves much of its ancient layout with its unusually broad streets laid around the numerous old temples standing as prominent landmarks of history. Many of the Pallava temples like the Kailāsānātha, the Vaikunṭaperumāḷ, the Muktēśvara and the Mātangēśvara, not to speak of the numerous large temples of later days like the Ekāmrēśvarar and Kāmākshī Amman temples, are still in good state of preservation. There are still many streets bearing the older names such as the Rājavidhi or the king’s way.

The town of Kāṇchi has two principal divisions, the ‘Big Kāṇchi’ and the ‘Little Kāṇchi’, which are also called respectively the ‘Siva-Kāṇchi’ and ‘Vishnu-Kāṇchi’. The former is the bigger division having the group of larger temples like the Kailāsānātha, Ekāmrēśvarar, Kāmākshī Amman and Vaikunṭaperumāḷ. The ‘Little Kāṇchi’ is on the eastern extremity of the town. It is a compact little village, nucleating round the Srī Varadarājasvāmi temple. The temple-complex comprises of a vast rectangular enclosure, occupying an area of about 20 acres in all, with two imposing gateways or gopuras on the eastern and the western sides. There are the māḍavīdhis (main streets) on the four sides of the temple. The long and broad street, opposite the western gateway, known as the sannidhi-street connects the temple with the main road that leads to ‘Big Kāṇchi’ or ‘Siva Kāṇchi’.

Physical features

The land around Kāṇchi is flat and sloping towards the east. The general level of the town is about 250 feet above the mean sea-level. The Palar river rises from the hills of the Mysore country and after flowing through North Arcot enters the Chingleput District a few miles west of Kāṇchipuram.

‘Little Kāṇchi’ is surrounded by extensive cultivable lands and coconut groves on all sides. A view from the topmost storey of the western gopura gives a panoramic vista of the enchanting landscape which is a vast plain area, dotted with a number of lakes and ponds, cultivated fields and coconut and other plantations (Fig. 1) The River Vēgavati, an arm of the Palar, flows by the southern side of the temple and joins the River Palar at Tirumukkūḍal, about 10 miles south-east of Kāṇchi The soil is somewhat clayey, derived from the decomposition of the felspar
which abounds in granite and is very favourable for cultivation. There is no hill or visible rocky outcrop in the vicinity and the nearest hill is the Śivaram hills, about 10 miles east of Kāñchi. This hill which is of granite had possibly served as the main quarry that supplied the stones for the construction of this temple. The well-known Pallava temples of Kāñchi like the Vaikunṭaperumāḷ, Kailāsānātha, Muktēśvara, Mātangaśvara etc., are entirely made of sandstone available at Kāñchi and its vicinity as bed-rock. The extant structures of Śrī Varadarājāswāmi temple, however, belong to a much later period and are built of granite stone, probably transported from Paḷaẏa-Śivaram and the Malappattu hills. The dexterity achieved in quarrying and working this hard-stone by the artisans of the Chōla and the Vijayanagar times is evident in the various shrines, maṇḍapas and gōpuras of this temple. The temple-complex built of this hard material and in different periods presents a picture of solidity and grace.

Place names and their origins

The name Vishnu-Kāñchi is today applied to the immediate vicinity of this temple and upto the Thērāḍi, where the temple car is stationed. Included in this locality would also be the temples of Tiruvēka or Yadōktakāri and Ashtabhuja, besides the Varadarāja temple. It is indeed curious that the majority of the ancient Vishnu temples like Vaikunṭaperumāḷ, Īragam, Pādagaṇam, Ulagandalaperumāḷ, Nilaiṁalaiyattundam etc., which have received the encomium (mangalāśāsanam) of the Ālvārs, are in the so-called Siva-Kāñchi. This shows that the appellations 'Siva Kāñchi' and 'Vishnu Kāñchi' are rather late in origin and the latter name has come to be applied to this locality, after the Varadarāja temple became dominant there. It is noteworthy in this connection that in none of the works of Rāmānuja’s period or in the Chōla inscriptions, the term Vishnu-Kāñchi appears. The name seems to have gained currency only during the Vijayanagar times. One of the inscriptions of Krishnadēva Rāya in our temple is interesting in this connection. When he was camping at Kāñchi in A.D. 1516, he was met by the representatives of Varadarājāswāmi and Ekāṁrēśvarar temples, who had certain grievances about the routes to be taken by their respective temple-chariots. On hearing this, Krishnadēva Rāya fixed the exact routes of procession for the deities of the two temples. This record gives us the impression that probably this was the beginning of the demarcation of the Vishnu-Kāñchi and Siva-Kāñchi. Perhaps, this was the time when the smaller settlement of Attiyūr was expanded to its present size which includes the Tiruvēka and Ashtabhuja temples. The earlier name by which the area around Varadarājāswāmi temple was known was Attiyūr, or Tiruvattiyūr. This name occurs in the verses of Bhūdattālvār and subsequent literature and inscriptions. Bhūdattālvār, who is considered to be one of the earliest of the twelve Ālvārs, or Vaishnava saints, calls the deity of this temple simply but familiarly as ‘Attiyūrān’, i.e., ‘the one from Attiyūr’. After the time of the Ālvār and because of his ‘mangalāśāsanam’ or praise, the place became doubly sacred to the Vaishnavas as one of the great divyadesas (holy shrines), so that in the Vaishnava literature both of Rāmānuja’s time and later, the place is called ‘Tiruvattiyūr’, the prefix ‘tiru’ meaning ‘sacred’. It is worthy of note that the place is mentioned without reference to the parent city of Kāñchi or Kachi. It was a common practice among the Vaishnava Ālvārs and the Saivite
Nāyanmārs to club the name of a suburb with that of the better known parent town in their songs. For instance, both Tirumālaisai Ālvār and Tirumangai Ālvār, while referring to Tiruvallikēṇi, speak of it as ‘Mayilai-Tiruvallikēṇi," because Mayilai or Mylapur was better known as it was an important port-town on the east coast. But here, on the other hand, Attiyūr is mentioned by Bhuḍattālvār without reference to the adjoining city of Kāṇchi. It may perhaps indicate that in the early days Attiyūr was an independent entity, distinctly separate from Kachī proper. Probably, the south-easternmost limit of the older Kachī stopped short of the present temple of Tiruvēhka or Yadōktakārī in early times, as attested by the Perumpānarrupādai,7 which is one of the Sangam anthologies known as Pattrupāṭu or Ten Idyls. "This is evidently because Attiyūr at that time did not form part of the city of Kāṇchi Presumably, the outlying villages were brought into its widening fold to form the Greater Kāṇchi much later.

It is interesting in this connection to note that one of the verses of the Tamil work Yāpparungālavritti, attributed to the 11th century A.D., compares Kāṇchi city to a peacock, Attiyūr to its head and the splendid groves to its plumage.8 But an inscription of Kulöttunga I dated A.D. 1073 refers to this place simply as Tiruvattiyūr in Eyiñādu in Eyiṅkōṭam of Jayankondasōlamandalam.9 Again, an inscription of Vikramachōla dated A.D. 1127 refers to the place in the same manner (i.e., Eyikōṭṭattu Eyīṅnāṭu Tiruvattiyūr).10 The inscriptions of later times (13th century) mention it as ‘Kāṇchipurattu Tiruvattiyūr’, i.e., ‘Tiruvattiyūr, part of Kāṇchipuram.11 All these would clearly show that Attiyūr was a separate village for considerable time and its integration with the Kāṇchi city was gradual.

Ālvār’s references

The earliest reference to this temple is of course found in Bhuḍattālvār’s hymns. He has devoted two beautiful verses in his Tiruvandādi to this deity and pours out his heart to ‘one who resides at Attiyūr’.12

It is interesting to note that saint Bhuḍattālvār’s hymns containing the references were popular at this temple even as early as A.D. 1129, for an inscription of that date mentions the special offerings to ‘Bhuḍattālvār who has sung the praise of the Lord of Tiruvattiyūr on his birth asterism.13 It is rather strange that Ālvārs like Poigai, who was born in Kachī and Tirumālaisai who spent considerable time in the city (and particularly at Tiruvēhka) have not referred to the temple at Attiyūr. Nor has it been sung by Tirumangai Ālvār who has composed hymns on even the smaller temples at Kachī like Úragam, Paḍagam, Tiruvēhka, besides the Paramēśvara Vinṇagaram. One of his verses, however, is taken by some scholars to be a probable reference to Śrī Varadarājā temple.14 The verse occurs in his hymn padikam on Paramēśvara Vinṇagaram (i.e., Vaikunṭaperumāl) temple, wherein he describes Kachī as the place where resides ‘the great boon-giver and the Lord of the blue colour (varam taruṃ māṃṣaṇi vaṇṇan idam Kachī).15 But here again, the reference is perhaps not specific to the deity of our temple but only to the general attributes of Vishnu who resides at Paramēśvara Vinṇagaram with which the Ālvār is immediately concerned in this hymn. However, we find Tirumangai Ālvār’s description echoed by a Chōla epigraph at Varadarājā temple dated A.D. 1227 which calls the deity Varamtarum perumāl, the Lord who bestows
boons. From this, we can infer that there was a long and persistent tradition associating Tirumangai Alvar’s verse with Lord Varadaraja of Kanchi.

Derivation of the village name Attiyur

There are a number of places in Tondaimandalam which are called after the names of trees such as Marudur (after the Marudu tree), Navalur (after the Naval tree), Panaiyur (after the Panai—palmyra tree), Kadambur (after the Kadamba tree—An thocephalus Cadamba). It may be pointed out here that in South India, shrines were erected in places where certain trees were regarded as the abode of the deity and worshipped as such; these trees were regarded later on as sthala vrikshas. For example, the mango (amra) tree at Ekamrreshvar temple at Kanchi and the Jambu tree at Jambukeshwaram and tillai forest of Chidambaram. Similarly, Attiyur is said to be called after or formed under the Atti tree, Ficus Glomerata, commonly found in this country particularly on the river-banks. There is a reference in the sthala-purana that this place was once full of Atti trees. But, perhaps a better reason for this association is that the image of the original deity is said to have been made of the Atti tree, and hence called Atti-varadar. At least one old Sanskrit text clearly mentions that the main deity of our temple was made of wood and was in a standing posture. As wood was subject to deterioration and weathering, the wooden deity might have been successively changed until it was finally replaced at one time by the present stone image. The wooden image of the deity that was last in the sanctum is now preserved in a small mandapa built in the interior of the large tank (anantasaras) within the outermost prakara of the temple. The image is made of atti wood and called Atti-varadar or Adi-atti-varadar. It is said to have been displaced sometime in the 15th century A.D. Once in 40 years, the image is taken out and a special offering called mandala-aradanai is conducted here.

The association of the atti or udumbara tree with the main deity of this temple is significant. It has been prescribed in many of the Silpa and Agama texts as the most suitable for making images. Indeed, even the later texts prescribe wood as the first material for making the principal images and then only the others, like mortar (kaṭi-sarkara) or painting (chitra) and metal and lastly stone. In many of the ancient temples the principal images of deities are still wood or stucco. For instance, at Tirukkoilur (South Arcot District), the huge image of Trivikrama is still of wood. At Kanchi itself the mālavār (primary) deities of the ancient temples of Tiruvekha, Ulagalandaperumal and Pādagam are still in stucco. This clearly shows that installation of images in wood or stucco was the earlier practice, which was also followed in our temple.

The atti or udumbara wood is of special importance to the Vaishnavites, as, of all the trees, it is viewed as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu himself. The Vishnu sahasranāma includes ‘udumbara’ among the thousand names of Vishnu.

The special preference of the udumbara tree for Vishnu image was in vogue in the third or fourth century A.D., as attested by an inscription discovered at Nagarjunakonda which refers to the consecration of Ashtabhujaswami (eight-armed Vishnu) made of udumbara wood. It is indeed remarkable that this early practice was followed in Sri Varadarajaswami temple also.
We do not know when exactly the original wooden deity of Atti-varadar was replaced by the present sculpture. The original wooden image seems to have been replaced by the present one sometime during the 15th century A.D. An epigraph dated Ś 1409 (A.D. 1487) seems to confirm this. It refers to the reconsecration of the images of Lord Varadarāja and Perundēvi Tāyār in the temple. The money for the expenses for the consecration ceremony was contributed by Virūpākshadannāyaka, a chief officer under the Vijayanagar king Narasinga Rāya. From other inscriptions we know that Aḷagia-manavāḷa Jiyar was the Köił-kēḷvi of the temple at that time. The reconsecration was probably done in connection with the installation of the present mūḷavar-image in the place of the older wooden one.

Derivation of Hastigiri

The other name by which the place is popularly called in the Vaishnavite literature is Hastigiri or Hastiśaila, elephant-hill, said to have been derived from the Sanskrit word hastin or elephant. A great peculiarity of the temple is that the main shrine of Varadarāja is not on the ground level; but is placed on the top of a square platform raised to a height of 10 metres. This high platform is believed to represent a hillock, locally designated as the ‘Hastigiri’, the ‘elephant-hill’ or simply as a ‘malai’ or hill. The hillock on which the temple is supposed to stand was, according to the sthala-purāṇa of the temple, the abode of the divine elephant—Gajēndra, whom the Lord Varadarāja saved from the clutches of a crocodile. This association is at least as old as the 11th century A.D. because Kūrathālvār, a contemporary and disciple of Rāmānuja, calls the deity as ‘Karigirisa’ i.e., Lord of the elephant-hill or ‘Hasti Bhūshana’, the ornament of the elephant-hill. An 11th century stone record mentions the place as Hastipura. Vedānta Dēśika (15th-14th century) also calls the place Hastigiri, Karigiri in Sanskrit and Vēlamalai and Nāgamalai in Tamil. A late inscription refers to the deity as Gajēndragirinātha i.e., ‘the God who resides on the elephant-hill’. An inscription of 22nd year of Gandagōpāla (circa A.D. 1272) calls the deity of the temple as Dviradāchalanātha, the God of the elephant mountain.

The Tamil form of Hastigiri viz., Attigiri was also frequently used in Tamil poems of Vedānta Dēśika and the inscriptions. ‘Attigiri Aruḷālar’ is a very familiar name used in the epigraphs and literature alike.

Thus, the etymology of place-name has had a chequered evolution. The simple Tamil name of Attiyur, glorified by the Āḻvār, had to undergo a painful course of Sanskritisation to become Hastipura and then Hastigiri and then the latter was again tried to be Tamilised as Attigiri! Curiously, the latter word is a hybrid, neither purely Sanskrit nor Tamil. Atti is Tamil but giri, meaning hill, is Sanskrit; when the word Hastigiri attained popularity in the Vaishnavite literature, the legendary story of the elephant was probably tagged on to it because Hasti in Sanskrit means elephant. This legend has attained currency so much that the significance of the original Tamil word, Attiyur, was lost.

This is of course not peculiar to Attiyur alone. Several places in Tamilnād had almost lost their original Tamil names as the Sanskritised names obtained greater currency. To cite only two examples, Kāṁchipuram was known to the early Tamil literature only as Kachi and Kachipēdu. But now the Sanskrit form, namely,
Kâñchipurum has come to stay.

Similarly, the original Tamil word Mallai which later became Mâmallapuram was Sanskritised to Mahâbalipuram and then the legend of king Mahâbali was later on dovetailed into it in a most artificial manner. From Attiyûr to Hastigiri, a similar metamorphosis has occurred.

**Perumâl-kôil and Tyâga-mandaâpa**

Two more names of the places are also found in the Vaishnavite literature. One of them is in the usage among the Sri-Vaishnavas while the other is not so well-known but found occurring in their literature of the 13th and 14th centuries A.D. The former is Perumâl-kôil and the latter is Tyâga-mandaâpa. Three most important places for the Sri-Vaishnavites are Sîrirângam, Tirumalai and Kânchi which are referred to by them as Kôil, Tirumalai and Perumâl-kôil respectively. The name Perumâl-kôil for referring to the Kânchi temple gained currency evidently after Râmânuja’s three temples. The other name, Tyâga-mandaâpa, occurs in the Guruparampara of Pinbaḷagia Perumâl Jîyar (13th century A.D.) and the Āchârya-Hridayam of Aḷâgia-manaṕâḷâ Nâïnr (14th century). Hastigiri is referred to as Tyâga-mandaâpa, while Sîrirângam and Tirumalai are referred to as Bhôga-mandaâpa and Pushpa-mandaâpa respectively. The exact import of the names is not clear, but the name Tyâga-mandaâpa seems to signify the bountiful grace of the Lord. Tyâga means sacrifice or ‘to give up’ and Lord Varadarâja as the king among boon-bestowers gives up everything for his devotee. Hence, the name Tyâga-mandaâpa.

**The names of the main deities**

The same trend of Sanskrit words gaining greater currency is noticeable in the case of the names of the presiding deities as well. In all the early records belonging to the Chôla times, the presiding deity was popularly known as Tiruvattiyûr-Āḻvâr or Attiyûr-Āḻvâr or Tiruvattiyûrirnaruḷâpâremaḷ—all meaning the Lord who presides over Tiruvattiyûr. This was in keeping with the practice of the times. We can find similar references to the presiding deities of various other well-known places. Lord Varâha, the presiding deity of Tiruvida-endai, was known in inscriptions as Tiruvida-entai-Āḻvâr, the Lord at Tiruppâdagam in Kânchi, who is now called Pâṇḍava-Thûthar, was called Tiruppâdagattu-āḻvâr. Such instances can be multiplied. But these clearly show that the presiding deities were named in relation to their locality for which invariably the Tamil names used by the Āḻvârs were in common usage. Sanskrit names, though known, did not obtain wide currency. To give one more example, the reclining Vishnu at Tiruveka at Kânchi was known to the Āḻvârs as Sonnavaṇṇam-Seida-Peṟumâḷ and is referred to as such in the lithic records. But now the deity is more familiarly known by the Sanskrit equivalent Yadôkitakârî. Likewise, the name Attiyûrān, used by Bhûdattâḻvâr first, was subsequently popularly used in the Chôla days and hence, the name Attiyûr-Āḻvâr. But this name gradually disappears in later records, especially in the Vijayanagar times.

The other popular Tamil names of the deity which are used in the early as well as later records are Aruḷâḷapperumâḷ and Peṟaruḷâḷar. These terms, it is impor-
tant to note, are frequently used in the hymns of the Āḷvārs to describe Vishnu and His bountiful grace.\textsuperscript{41} Arul, meaning grace or boon and arulāḷar means the source of all grace or the bestower of grace. Another Tamil name conveying the same idea and which is mentioned in the inscriptions is varam-tarumperumāḷ, the Lord who bestows boons.\textsuperscript{42} The Sanskrit equivalent of this name ‘varada’ or ‘Varadarāja’ meaning the king among boon-bestowers is used by the Sanskrit literature of Rāmānuja’s time like Kūrattāḷvār’s Varadarājastavam. Another familiar Sanskrit name by which he was known was Devarāja—the king of Gods. This name occurs in Tirukkachinambi’s work—Devarājaṭagam. The Tamil equivalents of this used in the later inscriptions are : Devapperumāḷ or Thepperumāḷ.\textsuperscript{43} The last two names, as well as Varadarāja, are very popular now and the original names Attiyūr-Āḷvār or Arulāḷapperumāḷ are hardly known to the common people, though the knowledgeable Śrīvaishnavites know about this. In the Kannada inscription of the Hoysālas, the deity is mentioned as Allālanātha, a Kannada form of the name Arulāalanātha.\textsuperscript{44} A few later epigraphs refer to the Lord as Śrī-Kāṇchipurattu-perumāḷ, the Lord of Kāṇchi.\textsuperscript{45} This shows the great popularity attained by the temple.

The chief consort of Lord Varadarāja for whom there is a separate shrine within the temple is known by the name Perundēvi Tāyār. The term Tāyār in Tamil means ‘mother’ and is popularly used by the Vaishnavas to denote Śrī or Lakshmi. The Saivites use the word ‘amman’, also meaning mother to denote the consort of Siva. An inscription dated A.D. 1268 mentions the Tāyār by the Tamil form Periapirāṭṭiyār and another dated A.D. 1487 as Perundēviyār,\textsuperscript{46} both meaning the ‘great or chief consort’ of Vishnu. The word pirāṭṭi (feminine of piraṇ) is a word often used in the Āḷvār’s hymns and the Vaishnavite commentaries for Vishnu’s consorts. The terms like Śīta-piraṇṭṭi and Nappinnai-piraṇṭṭi referring respectively to Śīta and Nappinnai are well known.

To sum up the foregoing discussion, we find that the ancient name of the place where Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple was situated, was known as Attiyūr or Tiruvattiyūr as found in the hymns of Bhūdattāḷvār and the earlier Chōḷa inscriptions of the temple. The name Vishnu-Kāṇchi was applied to the locality when it was made a bigger unit sometime during the 16th century A.D. The name Attiyūr perhaps owed its origin to the Atti or udumbara tree which formed the nucleus of the temple and the village. The older principal deity of the temple was also of Atti (udumbara) wood. It was replaced sometime in the late 15th century. Attiyūr was Sanskritised into Hastipurā and Hastigiri, by which name it is familiar to the Sanskrit works. Since Hasti means an elephant in Sanskrit, the elephant-aspect was dovetailed into it in the Sthala purāṇa of the temple. The central elevated enclosure in which the main sanctum is placed came to be likened to a hill and it was designated as Hastigiri or elephant-hill. This name occurs in the works of Kūrattāḷvār and Tirukkachi Nambi, contemporaries of Rāmānuja. Probably, in the earlier days, Attiyūr was an independent village as it is mentioned in the inscriptions of the 11th century without any relation to Kāṇchi city. But in the later records, it is specifically mentioned as forming part of Kāṇchi city (Kāṇchi-nagarattu-Tiruvattiyār).

In the early stone-records in Tamil, the presiding deity is called Attiyūr-āḷvār. The other Tamil names used for the deity are Arulāḷapperumāḷ or Pēraruḷāḷar. But since the days of Rāmānuja, the names like Varadarāja, Dévarāja, Hastigirinātha
etc., became more popular. The Tamil forms of the latter in Dēvapperumāḻ and Tēpperumāḻ are also currently popular now. The chief consort of Lord Varadarāja is known as Perundēvi Tāyār or Peria-pirāṭṭi, both of which occur in inscriptions of the 13th century A.D.

Before we end the chapter, we will briefly review the legends that have grown round the temple. As is usual with the many other temples, the Sthalapurāṇa of the temple purports to tell its hoary origin in its own artificial but ingenuous manner known as the Hastigiri-mahātmīyam, it is in the form of a dialogue between two sages Brīghu and Nārada. According to it, the temple was the place chosen by Brahma to do his yajña and out of it emerged Vishnu in the form of Lord Varadarāja, in the Punyakōṭi-vimāna. Brahma requested him to permanently remain in the spot to bless His devotees for all time to come. The legend also relates the story of Gajendra-mākṣha and connects the temple with the legend.

Sṛ Viḍānta Dēśika (circa A.D. 1269 to 1370) retold the purānic story in his own elaborate and inimitable style in his well-known work Satyavṛta-Mahātmīyam or the Meivrata-mānmiyam. This will go to show that the legend in its full-fledged form was already current in his time. The occurrence of names like Hastigiri or Karigiri (elephant-hill) in the Sanskrit work Varadarājastavam by Kūrattāḻvar may suggest that the nucleus of the legend was current during his time (11th century A.D.).

It is almost futile to dissect the Sthalapurāṇa with the weapons of historical criticism. It is typical of the Indian way of recording the history of a hoary institution like temples by investing them with a divine origin and connecting them with the Gods like Brahma and sages like Brīghu, Nārada etc. These types of stories are repeated in the sthalapurāṇa of many a temple in the same monotonous pattern. Their aim was to appeal to faith and not reason. Nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid that these legends were quite popular with the devotees through the ages. These legends have provided the theme for many devotional poems on the temple, like Viḍānta Dēśika’s work already cited, Manavāḷa Mahāmuni’s Dēvarāja-mangalam, Appayya Dikshitar’s Varadarājastavam etc. The legends have inspired a few festivals that are introduced in the temple and quite a few sculptural compositions found in the Kalyāṇa-manḍapa of the temple (see Chapter IX).

NOTES

1. Ep. Ind. VIII, p. 34.
3. 644 of 1919.
4. Iyarpa II Tiruvandāḍi, verses 95 and 96.
5. Rāmānuja Nāṟṟipettai, verse 31.
8. Perumpāṇṭṟupadai, verses 2 to 425.
11. S.I.I. IV, No. 862 (49 to 1893).
13. S.I.I. Vol. III, No. 80; “Tiruvattiyur Āḻvāṟṟai Pāṭīṟṟulina Sṛī Bhūṭṭāḻṭāḷ” — The editor has wrongly read that Poigai Āḷḷar has also sung about this temple and identifies Vehka with this temple. It is well known that Vehka or Tiruvheka refers to Yadottakāṛi temple of Kāṭṭhi and not to the Varadarāja temple.
16. 598 of 1919.
17. 645 of 1919.
18. Terminalia Tomentos.


27. See Chapter V for further details about the Jyar.


29. Vide Chapter II below for further details. See Chapter IX also for the significance of iconographic concept of Varadarāja or Gajendra-varada.


32. *Aḍaikkalapathu*, verse 3.

33. 45 of 1893; *S.I.I.* IV, 859.


35. 519 of 1919 (A D. 1050).


37. 260 and 261 of 1910.


40. 406, 348, 622, 431, 375 etc. of 1919.

41. *Vinaiolithamarar Perusivumbu aru unlpēraru-ūlānan* (*Peria Tirumoli* 1-4-4).

42. 598 of 1919.


46. *S.I.* IV, No. 852.
CHAPTER II

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The three hundred and fifty inscriptions found in the Varadarājaswāmi temple contain many interesting details regarding the political vicissitudes through which the Attiyūr village or indeed the city of Kāñchī had passed. From them, we know that Kāñchī city had continuously played a dominant role in the history of Tamilnād and that its possession was coveted by successive dynasties of kings, with varying degrees of success. Thus, epigraphs belonging to the dynasties like the Chōla, the Pāṇḍya, the Hoysāḷa, the Kākatiya, the Vijayanagar, besides the various smaller dynasties like the Telugu-Chōdas, the Kāḍavarāyas and the Sāmbūvarāyas clearly indicate the eventful variations in the political fortunes of Attiyūr and Kāñchī. There are also a few epigraphs of the post-Vijayanagar period, many of which do not mention the reigning dynasty, probably because the political pendulum was swinging too fast. One of them, however, belongs to the Nawab of the Carnātic under whose control came the Kāñchī area in the beginning of the 18th century.

This chapter explains the political implications of these epigraphs against the general background of the history of Kāñchī and South India as a whole. These epigraphs can indeed be said to epitomise the history of the Tonḍaimandalam region of which Kāñchī was the most important city and, for some considerable time, the capital. Apart from the light that these inscriptions throw on the broad political developments that were taking place, they are of considerable value as they introduce to us many little-known nobles, chieftains or officers and their activities. Very often, these local leaders had considerable power and influence and extended patronage to the religious institutions and the men of letters. Several kings, queens and princes have paid their homage to Kāñchī and to the shrine of Pērarulāja in the midst of wars and battles. It is a remarkable fact that this great temple had withstood several stormy political upheavals and come down to us almost unscathed by any of them. The reason obviously is that even though several dynasties were fighting with one another to have a hold over the Kāñchī city, they all had equal veneration for the established religious institutions. That is why we find every new conqueror or the victor making new grants and donations to this temple. All these will be noticed in greater detail in the sequel.

The inscriptional evidences are quite substantial up to the end of the Vijayanagar empire. Subsequent to that period, we have only a few stray epigraphs, the latest dated A.D. 1723. Except the latter epigraph, the post-Vijayanagar inscriptions, as a rule, omit to mention the ruling king and dynasty. This glaring departure from their normal practice of mentioning the ruling king is probably indicative of the political uncertainty that prevailed in South India or the Carnātic region as the
major portion of it came to be called later, consequent on the collapse of the Vijaya-
nagar empire. Kāñchi city also lost its former political importance. Even during
the reign of Sriranga III, it was only a part of the governorship of Pundamalli, under
the control of a minor chief—Dāmarla Venkaṭappa. In the latter half of 17th century,
the Kāñchi area passed under the control of the Golkonda power and later of the
Nawabs of the Carnatic under the general control of the Mughal Empire. In the
same period, the town was occupied by the Mahrāṭa forces under Sivāji for a brief
period. In the 18th century, during the Carnatic wars, it was the scene of many a
battle between the French and the English between whom it changed hands in quick
succession. By 1761, the French ceased to be a political power in the Carnatic and
the English were in charge of a considerable portion of the present Chingleput
District including Kāñchi and its neighbourhood. From then on, except for a few
years when Hyder Ali invaded Kāñchi, the latter place remained under the de fact-o
control of the English East India Company at Madras. In 1801, the English formally
took over the administration of the Carnatic from the Nawab who was pensioned
off. Śrī Varadarājaswāmi Temple was undoubtedly in existence during the Pallava
times, as attested by the hymns of Bhūdattālayār. But neither the inscription nor
the architectural vestiges of that period have come down to us except the two lion-
pillars in sandstone that are to be found on the tank-bund and in the Sudarsana
shrine. In the last quarter of the 9th century, the Chōla under the dynamic leader-
ship of Ṭiditya I decisively defeated the Pallavas and the Pandyas and established
their sway over Tondaimanḍalam and the Kāvēri basin. Ṭiditya's hold over here is
well attested by his inscriptions found at Kāñchi, Takkōlam, Tirukkaḷukunram and
other places. The rise of the Chōla power to an imperial position and its conflicts
first with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and later with their successors, form the dominant fea-
tures of the history of South India for next 350 years—from 850 to 1200 A.D. Under
the two brilliant monarchs, Rājarāja the Great and his son Rāvjendrā I (A.D.
1012-1044), the Chōla dominion became extensive including the whole of the modern
states of Tamilnād (or Madras), Āndhra and Kērala, parts of Mysore and the island
of Ceylon. One important fact to be noted is that in Rājarāja's reign Tondaimanḍa-
lam came to be called Jayamongala Sōḷamandalam—after Rājarāja's own title.
Kāñchi, by virtue of its strategic position, was considered an important city. It was
a base and perhaps a secondary capital for the Chōla on their northward expansion.
When the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Krishna III made a brief incursion into the Tamil coun-
try in A.D. 949, he boasted that he had captured Kāñchi and Thanjavūr (Kachchhiyum
Thanjaiyum kōṇḍa). From an epigraph of Uttama Chōla, we know that there was a
palace with a chitramanḍapa at Kāñchi, where probably the durbars were held. Sundara Chōla, while directing his northern campaign, is said to have died in 973 in
his golden palace at Kāñchi. Similarly, Rāvjendrā I stayed at Kāñchipuram before
he set out on a march against the Ratta country. The palace and a manḍapa probably continued to be there at Kāñchi for some considerable time for we again hear
of it in connection with the Kalinga War during the time of Kulōttunga I.

Rājādhirāja I

Rājendrā I was succeeded by Rājādhirāja I (A.D. 1018-1054). His inscription
dated 32nd year (A.D. 1050) is found on the right wall inside the Narasimha shrine
in the Varadarājaswāmi temple at Kāñchi." It begins with his prāsasti "Tingalartaru". Rājadhirāja was a great warrior, who personally led the Chōla army against the Western Chālukyas under Sōmeśvara I and inflicted a heavy blow on them in the battle of Koppam in 1052. But unfortunately, he fell fighting on the battle-field. Rājadhirāja’s son Rājendra II crowned himself king on the very battle-field of Koppam, where he distinguished himself by his bravery and is said to have marched to Kolhapūr to erect a pillar of victory there. He scored yet another victory over the Western Chālukyas at Kūḍal-Sangamam at the junction of the Tunga and Bhadra in Mysore country. As Rājendra’s immediate brother Rājamahēndra, who was chosen heir-apparent in 1059, died prematurely, his younger brother Virarājendra I succeeded to the Chōla throne. He ruled from A.D. 1063 to 1069. During his time, the Western Chālukya king Vikramāditya and his brother Jayasimha planned to invade the Chōla country; but Jayakēśi, the Kadamba king of Goa, is said to have mediated and brought about peace between the Chōla and Chālukya at Kāñchipuram. The Chōla also gave his daughter in marriage to Vikramāditya. Virarājendra’s another daughter was given in marriage to the Ganga prince of Kalinga named Rājarāja.

Kulōttunga I (1070-1120)

Virarājendra was succeeded by his son Ādhirājendra who ruled from 1067 to 1070 with his father, and only for a few weeks, as sole monarch. After him the Chōla throne passed on to Kulōttunga I, who did not belong to the direct line of the Chōlas; but he was an Eastern Chālukya prince who had married the daughter of the Chōla king Rājendra II. He succeeded in occupying the coveted Chōla throne, despite the attempts of Chālukya king Vikramāditya VI to prevent a union of the Vēngi and the Chōla power in the same hands. During his reign the Chōla empire became somewhat depleted in extent, for Ceylon which was part of the Chōla empire till his time asserted its independence; Gangavādi and Vēngi also slipped out of the Chōla hands—the former to the Hoysāḷa Vishnudevahana (A.D. 1111-1141) and the latter to the Western Chālukyas. But Kulōttunga I exhibited the strength of the Chōla power by undertaking two successful raids on the Kalinga territory in 1096 and 1110 A.D. The second expedition is more famous, for it has been immortalised by a Jayangonḍar, a contemporary Tamil poet, in his famous work Kalingattuapparani. The Chōla army was led by Karunākara Tonḍaimān, a scion of the old Pallava family, who now served under the Chōlas. The parani has it that when Kulōttunga held a durbar in his palace at Kāñchipuram it was reported to him that the Kalinga king Anantavarman was in default of his annual tribute which caused the expedition.  

It is indeed interesting to note that an epigraph dated 43rd year of Kulōttunga I in our temple mentions Karunākara Tonḍaimān and his wife Aḷagiyamanavāḷini-mandāiyālvār. He is said to have belonged to Vanḍalāńjēri in Tīrumaraiyūr nāḍu in Kulōttunga Chōla Valanādu. His wife donated a lamp to the temple. Aḷagiyamanavāḷini is the name of the consort of Lord Ranganātha of Srīrangam and the adoption of this name and her gift to this Vishnu temple at Kāñchi may show us that she was a devotee of Vishnu.  

Even though this expedition resulted in the defeat of the king of North Kalinga, and brought large booty for the Chōlas, it did not result in any permanent occupation
of Kalinga.

Five inscriptions of Kulōttunga I are found in the Varadarājasthāmi temple—dated from his 3rd year to 45th year.\textsuperscript{12} The former is found engraved on the left wall of the gopura in front of the Narasimha shrine. It begins with his famous praśasti—"Tirumannīvalangu," which he used in his early records. The later epigraphs are found on the gopura-wall in front of the Abhishēka-maṇḍapa. His epigraphs are also found in the other temples of Kāṇchi and its neighbourhood like Pāṇḍava-perumāl temple, Tiruvanēkatānkapadam temple and Ulagaḻandaperumāl temple.\textsuperscript{13} The epigraph in the last mentioned temple informs us that Kulōttunga I visited this temple in his 40th year along with his two wives Tribhuvanamūḍaiyāl and Sōjakulavalli. They made donations to that Vishnu temple on the occasion.\textsuperscript{14} The epigraph dated 45th year in our temple records a grant of money at the early morning service by Vangamulyūr Uḍaiyān Āraiyan Mūmμuḍi-Sōḷan alias AnuKKapallavaraiyan of Mannināḍu in Sōlamanḍalam.\textsuperscript{15} His titles show that he should have been an official of importance. The epithets Pāḷlavariyan and Mūmμuḍi-Sōḷan are significant. We have one Irāyiravan Pāḷlavariyan alias Mūmμuḍi-Sōḷappan, a high official of Perunadam rank in the time of Rājaṛāja I, who had mūmμuḍi as one of his titles. It is possible that the official of the Kāṇchi record was a descendant or a relative of the official mentioned in the Tanjore record.\textsuperscript{16}

Another famous general of Kulōttunga I was Naralōkāvīra, who did substantial service to the Varadārāja temple. He was a highly respected official who had a large fief at Māṇavil in North Arcot District, which he perhaps obtained as a reward for his distinguished services in the southern campaigns of Kulōttunga I.\textsuperscript{17} His various military exploits on behalf of the Chōḷa king in the Pāṇḍyam, Vēngi and Orissa countries are borne out by a number of inscriptions found at Chidambaram and Tiruvaḍī (in South Arcot) and in the Pāṇḍyam country and also the Vikrampāḷan-ūla, a Tamil poem composed by Otṭakkūttan.\textsuperscript{18} He had many colourful titles such as Kalingar-kōn (chief of Kalingas), Aruljākāra, Ponnambalakkūttan, Tondaimān etc. He did meritorious religious and charitable works such as the construction of the hundred-pillared maṇḍapa, the laying out of a garden, and fixing of street lights (vīḍhi-dīpa) at the famous Siva temple at Chidambaram; construction of a hundred-pillared maṇḍapa, a dancing hall and other structures at Tiruvaḍī. Similarly, his patronage extended to Varadārājaswāmi temple also. A long Sanskrit record of the temple which bears no date records the construction by Naralōkāvīra of the kitchen-room, a maṇḍapa and the high prākāra walls and the setting up of the recumbent image of Hari. He made a gift of gold pinnacle to this new shrine and made endowment for the perpetual lamps and a flower-garden. It is a record couched in beautiful poetic language. Naralōkāvīra continued to serve Vikrama Chōḷa, the son and successor of Kulōttunga I.

Vikrama Chōḷa (A.D. 1118-1135)

After Kulōttunga I, came Vikrama Chōḷa (A.D. 1118-1135), Kulōttunga II (1133-1150) and Rājaṛāja II (1146-1173), whose inscriptions are found in this temple. The reign of these kings, except that of the first one, was characterised by general peace. Vikrama Chōḷa's reign witnessed expeditions to recover Vēngi and Gangavāḍi which the Chōḷas had lost in the time of Kulōttunga I. Vikrama Chōḷa,
as a prince, is said to have participated in the Kalinga expedition, led by Karunākara Tonḍamān. He is said to have joined it at Kāñchi. His epigraphs, seven in number and ranging from his 8th to 17th regnal years, are found on the south and north walls of the ‘Rock’, inside the Narasimha shrine and another at the small shrine of Kariḻāmāṇikkavāラdarad shrine. The latter epigraph records that king Vikrama Chōla set up the image in the temple and made a gift of land as dēvādāna for its daily worship. The image is mentioned as Vikrama-Chōla-Vinnagar-ālvār. Though a Saivite, he was liberal to Vishnu temples. His services to the Vishnu (Ranganātha) temple, Sṛṅgagam, like the construction of the fifth pūrāṇa and other structures are recorded in the Sṛṅgagam Kōḻ-olugu.

Kulōṭṭunga II (A.D. 1133-1150)

Vikrama Chōla’s son and successor Kulōṭṭunga II is represented in our temple by only one epigraph found on the south wall of the ‘Rock’. It is an undated epigraph; but the use of the praṇastī Pūmanu padum may show that it belonged to the first decade of his reign i.e., sometime before A.D. 1143. The reign of Kulōṭṭunga was marked by peace and prosperity and literary activities. The extent of the empire was well-maintained. Some scholars have held that Krimikanṭa Chōla, mentioned in the Vaishnava guruparamparai as the persecutor of Rāmānuja, was Kulōṭṭunga II.

Rājarāja II

The successor of Kulōṭṭunga II on the Chōla throne was Rājarāja II whose regnal years are counted from about A.D. 1146. He is represented in our collection by two inscriptions dated in his third and fourth regnal years. The former epigraph begins with his praṇastī ‘pū mariviya tirumādu’—which gives a high-flown account of the benefits of his rule. The major part of Rājarāja’s reign was peaceful; but the closing years witnessed the outbreak of a fierce civil war in the Pāṇḍya kingdom which dragged the Chōla and the Sinhalese power on opposite sides. The succession dispute dragged on till about A.D. 1177, the ultimate result being dreadful to both the Chōla and the Sinhalese powers for ‘out of the ashes of the civil war arose the Pāṇḍya power which in its renewed strength soon swallowed up both the kingdoms which espoused the rival causes of the Protagonists in the civil war’.

Rājādhirāja II

He succeeded Rājarāja II and ruled from about A.D. 1163 to 1179. He continued the Chōla policy of intervention in the Pāṇḍya affairs, successfully drove back the Sinhalese and placed Vira Pāṇḍya on the Pāṇḍyan throne as against Kulaśekhara who was found guilty of treachery towards the Chōla power. Under him, the extent of the Chōla empire continued to be the same as under Rājarāja II. His inscriptions are found in many places in Tonḍaimandalam and even at Nellore in the Andhra State. His inscription dated 14th year is found engraved on the north wall of the third prākāra. It mentions the gift by a Ganga chief named Ghaṭṭi-nulamba Bhujabala-vira Ahomallarasa. He is described as Mahāmāṇḍalika of Ganga-māṇḍal. As pointed out by Prof. Nilakanta Sastri, this may show that even a part of the Ganga country was included in the Chōla empire and that he was a feudatory of Rājādhir-
rāja II. In the reign of the latter's successor Kulōttunga III, another Ganga chieftain did service to the temple.

Kulōttunga III (A.D. 1178-1216)

He has been called the last great Chōla king to enjoy the benefits of an extensive empire. His was a troublesome period for the Chōla empire came to be incessantly threatened by disruptive forces from within and the ambitious and newly rising powers from outside. Even though Kulōttunga III in the early years of his reign actively interfered with the Pāṇḍya civil war and put his own candidate, Vikrama Pāṇḍya, on the throne and later still, could penetrate as far south as Ceylon, his last years saw the invasion of his dominion by Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, the first of a series of powerful Pāṇḍyas, who retrieved their kingdom from the civil wars and made it the most dominant power in South India in the first half of the 13th century. The victorious march of the Pāṇḍya forces right up to the heart of the Chōla kingdom exposed the vulnerability of the Chōla power. The Chōla monarch sought refuge in flight but later on, restored to the throne after some negotiations and thanks, in a way, to the intervention of the Hoysāla king Vīranarasimha. Added to this challenge posed by the rapidly rising Pāṇḍya power was the recalcitrant spirit of the numerous feudatories like the Telugu-Chōlas, the Kāḍavārāyas and the Sāmbūvarāyas who were preparing to break off from the Chōla yoke and assume their independence. For a brief period, during his reign, the Telugu-Chōlas who were his vassals tried to declare their independent rule over Kāñchi which necessitated Kulōttunga to undertake a campaign and recapture the city. This is attested by his Srīrangam record which states that he 'entered Kāñchi with his anger abated'. More about this temporary loss of Kāñchi and its recapture, and about the chequered career of the overgrown vassals and their bearings on the history of Kāñchi will be considered in greater detail later.

Quite a number of epigraphs of Kulōttunga III are found in the Varadarājāswāmi temple, their dates range from 3rd to 37th year of his reign. They record a number of grants to the temple by many of his chieftains and officers. Siyagangan, son of Chōljendra Simha, built a shrine at this temple. He was the Ganga chieftain of Kōḷār (near Mysore) who figures in many inscriptions of Kulōttunga. In this record, he calls himself as 'Kūvalalapura-paramēśvara'—'Ganga-kulōṭbhava', i.e., 'the Lord of Kōḷār' and 'one who was born of the Ganga family'. The significance of the Tamil biruda Siraimiṭṭappurumāḷ i.e., the rescuer or saviour from the prison, is rather obscure. Incidentally, it is of interest to note that this chieftain Siyagangan was the patron of the well-known Tamil grammarian Pavanandi, the author of the nannāl. These donations and patronage, extended by the Ganga chieftains to the temples and poets in Tamilnāḍu, show their friendly attitude to their Chōla overlords. Another epigraph dated 14th year of Kulōttunga III (i.e., A.D. 1191) records a gift by one Ilaalāvān Kālīngārāyan of Neṭṭūr. Neṭṭūr was scene of a battle between Vīra Pāṇḍya and Kulōttunga in which the former was worsted. This battle of Neṭṭūr took place in A.D. 1189 and our epigraph here is dated in 1191—two years later than the event. Kālīngārāyan might have been a general, who took part in the famous battle. The other chieftains who made endowments to the Varadarājāswāmi temple were: Ammaiyappan Kānnaḍaippurumāḷ al'as Vikramaśōla Sāmbūva-
rāya, Peddarasar, son of Madurāntaka Pottappichchōlar Nallasiddharasan, the Telugu-Chōda chieftain. Mahābalivānarayar who was probably a Bāna chieftain. He gave a village named Kulöttunga-vilagam free of taxes to the temple. Another chieftain, probably of Malai-nāḍu or Kērala named Rājādhīrāja Malaiyarāyan alias Dharmaparipāḷan son of Munaiyadirāyan, one of the malai-mudalis of Kulöttunga. Rājārāja III and Rājendra III

The reigns of Rājārāja III (A.D. 1216-1246) and Rājendra III (A.D. 1246-1279) represent the last phase of the Chōla power. The central authority was openly defied and finally overthrown by the subordinate vassals as well as the newly rising Pāṇḍyan power. This period also witnessed the active interference of the Hoysāḷas, who tried to use the internal disunity and weakness to their advantage. Similarly, the Kākatiyas of Warangal also found it possible to occupy Kāṇchipuram for some time. Rājārāja III, in particular, was a very weak monarch and during his time the Chōla power was put to great troubles by its own vassals. Thus, the Pāṇḍyas under Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I (acc. 1216) inflicted a crushing defeat on Rājārāja III, who had to abandon his capital. The Sanskrit work Gadyakarnāmṛta and the Tiruvēndipuram inscriptions say that while the Chōla king was going away from his capital with his retinue, the Kāḍava chieftain Kōpperuṅjinga attacked him and made him a prisoner. This shocking news reached the Hoysāḷa king, Vīra Narasimha, who despatched his army under his able generals, who struck terror in the Kāḍava country and forced Kōpperuṅjinga to release the Chōla monarch and restore him to the throne. The Hoysāḷa army did not stop with this; it further penetrated into the Pāṇḍya country and defeated the Pāṇḍyas at Mahēndramāndalam and went as far south as Rāmēśwaram. This gave excellent opportunity for the Hoysāḷas to give effect to their designs of domination over the Tamil country and the Chōla country virtually became a protectorate of the Hoysāḷas during the time of Rājārāja III. More than fifty inscriptions of Rājārāja III ranging from his fifth to twentyninth year are found at the Varadarājaśwāmi temple and they clearly show the dominant role played by the Hoysāḷas and the Telugu-Chōda chieftains in the Kāṇchi area. The presence of the Hoysāḷa troops (bhērundas) at Kāṇchi is attested by one of the inscriptions dated A.D. 1221. A number of Hoysāḷa generals and officers also figure prominently in the epigraphs and they will be reviewed separately.

The general trends leading to the downfall of the Chōla-empire under Rājendra III may be summed up here before a review of Kāṇchi's association with the various dynasties like the Hoysāḷa, the Kākatiyas, and the Telugu-Chōdas is taken up. Rājendra III was more vigorous than his predecessors and he made a bold bid to salvage the reputation of the Chōla power by inflicting defeat on the Pāṇḍyan king Māravarman Sundara II and even made him acknowledge the overlordship of the Chōlas. The Hoysāḷas who espoused the Chōla cause earlier now supported the Pāṇḍyas to redress the balance of power. This forced the Chōlas to return to their allies the Telugu-Chōdas for help. They were in active control of the areas round Nellore, Cuddappah and also Kāṇchi. The Telugu-Chōda king even assumed the title of "Chōla-sthāpanāchārya", establisher of the Chōlas. But with accession of the strong Jātāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya II in A.D. 1251, events took a different turn. Under the admirable leadership of the great warrior, the Pāṇḍyas defeated the Chōlas under Rājendra III and the Hoysāḷas under Sōmēśvara. The latter was
killed in the battle at Kannanūr in A.D. 1264, and his successor Rāmanātha who came to the rescue of the Chōlas was also defeated. Consequently, the Hoysālas were compelled to withdraw from the Tamil country, over which they had dominated for quite some time. Their power was now confined to the Mysore Plateau. The Chōla king Rājendra III's latest regnal year was A.D. 1279, which also roughly marks the end of the Chōla rule in South India. The Chōla empire was completely absorbed in the Pândyan empire which extended up to Nellore in the north where he performed his Virābhishēka.37 The feudatories of the Chōlas ruling over Kannuchi now accepted the Pândyan overlordship.

We can now proceed to sketch the fortunes of Kannuchi city under various dynasties who came to importance in the wake of the disintegration of the Chōla empire.

Hoysālas in Kannuchi

It was already shown how the Hoysālas exploited the disunity prevailing in the Tamil country and played a dominant role there as protectors of the Chōla power. This is illustrated well in the epigraphs at Srī Varadarājaswāmi temple which mention the numerous Hoysāla Mahāpradhānas, Dandanāyakas or commanders and Sāmantas, who probably stayed at Kannuchi at this time. The stationing of the Hoysāla troops probably necessitated their visit to the city. These epigraphs dated between A.D. 1226 and 1240 i.e., contemporaneous with the reign of Vishnuvardhana Vira Narasimha II and Vira Sōmeśvara. In all these epigraphs the nominal overlordship of Rājarāja III Chōla is, however, acknowledged.58

Thus, we find Goppayya Dandanāyaka, the famous general who along with Appannasundara Hoysāla forces victoriously into Tamil country also and subdued Kadava Koppurunţinda and restored Rājarāja III to the Chōla throne donating a village to Lord Vira Narasimha in A.D. 1231. He is described as the son of Mallayya Dandanāyaka.39 The two other Hoysāla generals who gave donations to this temple were Ammanna Dandanāyaka and Mallappa Dandanāyaka—both in the 14th year of Rājarāja III i.e., in A.D. 1230 when Vira Narasimha was the Hoysāla king.40 In A.D. 1234, Vira Sōmeśvara came to the Hoysāla throne and during his time Polavi Dandanāyaka, Vallaiya Dandanāyaka, both ministers, donated cows to the temple in 1235 and 1238 A.D.41 The other ministers who made gifts to this temple were Mallappa Dandanāyaka and Goppayya Dandanāyaka sons of Appayya Dandanāyaka.42 Another general Kēsava Dandanāyaka who is described as the son of Mallayya also gave a grant to the temple. This was in the 24th year of Rājarāja III i.e., about A.D. 1240.43

The presence of the numerous generals and the Hoysāla army in Kannuchi clearly indicates that this area was virtually under the Hoysāla control, though the name of Rājarāja III was only nominally or formally mentioned in the epigraphs. Even this nominal mention is absent in one undated epigraph at the Varadarājaswāmi temple.44 It eulogises king Sōmeśvara who descended from the family of Yādūś and that Devika, born of the Chālukya family, was his chief queen. The reference is obviously to the Hoysāla king Vira Sōmeśvara who was killed by the Pândya king in the battle of Kannanūr (A.D. 1264) already referred to.

Kāuchi under the Telugu-Chōdas

Prominent among the quasi-independent feudatories who had held Kāuchi city for
a considerable length of time were the Telugu-Chōdas of Nellore. The chronology and the genealogy of these rulers are not free from controversy. They seem to have traced their origin far back, including Karikāla Chōla as one of their ancestors. First, they were subordinates of the Chōjas and having control probably over portions of land near Nellore and Kālahasti or Pottapi (near Chittoor). Hence, some of them had the title Pottapi-Chōla or Tirukkālattidiēva. One of their ancestors Bēta was a feudatory of Vikrama Chōla. Bēta’s son was Ėrasiddha who had in turn three sons—Manmu Siddha I (alias Nalla Siddha), Bēta II and Tammu Siddha I. They held a subordinate position under Kulottunga III. An epigraph of the latter in the Varadarājaswāmi temple at Kāṇchi mentions a gift by Peddarasa, son of Nalla Siddharasans who is given the title Madurāntaka Pottapi Chōlan. But, during the closing years of Kulottunga’s reign, Nalla Siddha advanced upon Kāṇchi and captured it for a short time. This necessitated Kulottunga to take a punitive expedition against him and recovered Kāṇchi in A.D. 1196. The Telugu-Chōdas accepted his suzerainty for some time more. But the coming of the weak monarchs Rājarāja III and Rājendra III gave them an excellent opportunity to strengthen their hold on Nellore-Kāṇchi region with a quasi-independence status, owing only nominal allegiance to the Chōja overlord. Even the nominal hold on Kāṇchi disappeared in the time of Rājendra III, whose inscriptions are virtually absent at Kāṇchi.

But again in A.D. 1205 we have a record of Tammu Siddha I at Varadarājaswāmi temple which states that in Ś 1127, he anointed himself at Nellore and presented a village to Hasti Sālēsā or Lord of Hasti Hill at Kāṇchi.

**Tikka I alias Tirukkālattidiēva alias Ganḍagōpāla (c. 1223-1250)**

After Nalla Siddha alias Manmu Siddha I came his younger brother Tammu Siddha to power in A.D. 1205. His three records are found at Kāṇchi. His successor Tikka I alias Āluntikka-Kāḷatti I ruled between circa A.D. 1223 and 1250. There are nearly twenty-five inscriptions of this chief at Varadarājaswāmi temple. Most of them are dated in the reign of Rājarāja III, whose nominal overlordship is acknowledged by him. His full name as it occurs in these epigraphs is Madurāntaka Pottappichōḷan Tirukkālattidiēva alias Ganḍagōpālan. In an epigraph dated Ś 1153 (A.D. 1230) he claims to have captured Kāṇchi. But, as pointed out by Sewel, this “is a mere boast” for the most of his epigraphs he acknowledges the Chōla suzerainty. However, there are a few epigraphs in which he cites his own regnal years as, for example, in an epigraph dated A.D. 1235. From this, it appears that his claim to have captured Kāṇchi was substantially true. He almost exercised independent authority in the grant of lands and villages to the Arulāḷappurumāl temple. He was an ardent devotee of this temple in which he instituted the service called Gandagōpālan-sandi (offerings) in the 15th year of Rājarāja III (A.D. 1230). In the 17th year of the same king, the chief granted some villages for the maintenance of the sandi and conducting repairs to the temple. This was repeatedly maintained by grants given year after year. He granted exemption of taxes for lands forming the flower-garden of the temple. His several other gifts to this temple and other Vaishnavite temples are recorded. His queen Lakshmīdevi also made many gifts to our temple for maintaining garden, feeding-service etc. Lakshmīdevi is described as the daughter of Vīra Narasingadēva, probably the
Yādavarāya chief. Tikka had a number of subordinate officers or mudalis and servants. He levied taxes on the oil-merchants. Boundary stones set up to mark the jurisdiction of lands bore the insignia of Gaṇḍagopāla. There was even a street named Gaṇḍagopālappuṇḍeru. A village named Gaṇḍagopāla-Chaturvēdīmangalam is also mentioned. All these show that he was the de facto ruler of Kāṇchi.

It was during the time of Tikka I that the Hoysālas were becoming strong in the Tamil country. The inscriptions describing their dominance at Kāṇchi noticed earlier were dated in this period i.e., between A.D. 1226 and 1240. But later, the Telugu-Chōdas seem to have asserted themselves and according to the introductory verses of Tikkana Sōmayāji's Nirvacanottara Ramāyanamu, the Telugu-Chōda chief Tikka I subdued the Hoysāla ruler Sōmeśvara and established the Chōla in his position and earned for himself the title Chōlasthāpanāchāryā. This is confirmed by a Hoysāla epigraph dated Ś 1162 (A.D. 1240) which mentions Sōmeśvara's expedition against Gaṇḍagopāla. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons why the Hoysālas withdrew from the Kāṇchi area and they are not heard of so frequently in this place after A.D. 1240. Tikka I continued to be a Chōla feudatory in charge of Kāṇchi until 1249 when Kākatiya Gaṇapati captured Kāṇchi, as attested by the presence of his epigraph dated in June 8th, 1249. The Telugu-Chōdas apparently transferred their allegiance to the Kākatiyas. In A.D. 1250 Manma Siddha II succeeded his father Tikka I. An inscription at Nandālur makes it clear that Gaṇapati and Manma Siddha were on friendly terms.

Manma Siddha II Vijaya Gaṇḍagopāla

His full name as it occurs in the inscription is Trībhuvanachakravarthi Vijaya Gaṇḍagopāladeva. He called himself the Lord of Kāṇchi. His rule commenced in A.D. 1250 and he seems to have been “practically, if not actually, independent”. But his rule between 1250 and 1291 witnessed crucial developments. Kāṇchi changed hands in rapid succession among the Telugu-Chōdas, the Kākatiyas, the Kādava Köpperuṇjinga and Pândyas. But the change of rule often meant only the de jure change of the overlords. Vijaya Gaṇḍagopāla seems to have continued as the local chieftain directly in charge of Kāṇchi. His reign was coeval with Rājendra III, Jaṭāvarman Sundara-Pändya, Köpperuṇjinga and Kākatiya Gaṇapati. His epigraphs numbering above 20 and issued in his own regnal years ranging from 2nd to 31st year are found in the Varadarājaswāmi temple i.e., between 1253 and 1291. But this long rule was frequently interrupted by external intrusions. For example, Köpperuṇjinga is recognised as the ruler of Kāṇchi in A.D. 1253-1254 and again in May 1257 and once again in 1260. Curiously, in the same years, Vijaya-Gaṇḍagopāla is also recognised as the ruler. This may not only show the rapid changes in the political fortunes of Kāṇchi but also perhaps show that at one time the rival kings were “severely supported by their adherents”. Another important feature during this time was the rising power of the Pândyas, who superseded the Chōlas and penetrated into the Tondaimaṇḍalam. A number of inscriptions of Jaṭāvarman II are found in Chingleput district dated A.D. 1258 and 1259. In 1260, he overran Vijaya Gaṇḍagopāla's territory and marched as far as Nellore where he performed his vīrabhīṣhēka. He anointed himself at Kāṇchi also. His inscriptions dated in A.D. 1256 and
1266 are found in the Varadarājswāmi temple and these will be reviewed in a later context. We do not have a clear idea about Vijaya Gaṇḍagōpāla’s position vis-a-vis the Pandyyan king. Probably, he now functioned as the latter’s feudatory. But we find the Telugu-Chōḍa’s inscriptions continuously issued in his own regnal years right up to A.D. 1291 and several of them are found in the Varadarājswāmi temple.75

Like Tikka, Tribhuvanachakravarthi Vijaya Gaṇḍagōpāla had his subordinate officers. One of them was Nalla Siddharasan who figures with high sounding titles in an epigraph at Varadarājswāmi temple.76 It records a donation of a number of villages for instituting a service called Rāḥuttarāyan-Sandi called after the donor who bears titles like Pallava-kulatilaka, Rājaparamēśvara, Mukkanḍi Kāḍuveṭṭivamsāvatāra, while the title Rāḥuttarāyan might show that he was ‘the lord of the horsemen’, his other titles may suggest that he was a Telugu-Pallava.77 Another epigraph in the same temple clearly refers to his Nalla Siddha as subordinate to Vijaya Gaṇḍagōpāla.78 One interesting fact, that has come to light from the inscriptions of this chief at Kāṇchi, is that a number of Nāyakas evidently chieftains from Malaimandalam, figure frequently as donors to the Varadarājswāmi temple. Thus, we have the grants of Srikumāran, a member of Nāyakanmar of Malaimandalam in A.D. 1254, two other Nāyakas in A.D. 1257 and 1265 and another Rāmanakkan Nāyaka of Malaimandalam in 1271.79 Malaimandalam is evidently a reference to Malainādu or the hilly tract of the West Coast.80 We know that Jaṭāvarman Sundara the great Pandyyan king invaded Malainādu and defeated the Chēra king. It is possible that many of the military chiefs or nāyakas from the Chēra country accompanied the Pandyyan army in its campaign in Tondaimandalam. It is interesting to note in this connection that there is a street named Malayāḷa-street in Vishnu-Kāṇchi. Probably, some of the Nāyakas and merchants of Malayāḷa-dēsa or Malaimandalam had settled here.

Vīra Gaṇḍagōpāla

The next Telugu-Chōḍa chieftain who figures in our inscriptions is one Vīra Gaṇḍagōpāla who is identified by Sewel as Manmu Siddha III.81 His accession took place sometime late in A.D. 1290 or beginning of 1291. He is represented by only one epigraph dated in his 3rd regnal year corresponding to A.D. 1294.82 His inscriptions immediately after this are not found at Kāṇchi. Perhaps he had lost hold of the city and regained it in A.D. 1297 when he ruled as a vassal of Kākatiya king Pratāparudrāva II.83

Kāḍava Köpperuṇjinga at Kāṇchi

Another important feudatory power which shot into prominence in the 13th century was the Kāḍavarāya family, claiming descent from the ancient Pallava family. It was working its way up from the days of Vikrāmachōla. But it was under Köpperuṇjinga (circa 1229-1278), the Kāḍava power rose to a position of an independent power, though only for a short time. Köpperuṇjinga was in charge of the South Arcot region with his capital at Sēndamangalam. As pointed out earlier, he utilised the weak rule of Rājarāja III to strengthen himself. When the Pandyya king Māravarman Sundara I invaded the Chōḷa empire and defeated its king Rājarāja III, Köpperuṇjinga rebelled against his overlord and even took him a cap-
tive and only released him due to Hoysāla invasion of the Kāḍava country. The defeat of Köpperuṇjinga at the hands of the Hoysāla Narasimha in 1230-1231 curbed the Kāḍava's ambition only temporarily. He acknowledged the Chōla overlordship perhaps only upto the year A.D. 1243; from that year onwards, his inscriptions are recorded in his own regnal years which might mean that he became more or less an independent power. Later on, Köpperuṇjinga scored a victory over Sōmēśvara and then went upto Kāṇchi, which was then under the control of Kākatiya Gaṇapati and his feudatory Vijayaganḍagōpāla. This Kāṇchi expedition took place sometime around 1253 as an inscription of Köpperuṇjinga of that date is found at Varadarāja-swāmī temple, Kāṇchi. His other inscriptions at the temple are dated in his 11th, 12th, 15th, 18th, 19th and 20th years i.e., dates ranging from 1253 to 1262 A.D. He is called in all these inscriptions as 'Sakalabhuvanachakravartin'. In this expedition, he was helped by his son Kāḍava Kumaran who is eulogised as the Lord of Mallai, Mayilai, Kāṇchi and Tondhaṉādu (Tondaimandalam).

But Köpperuṇjinga’s sway over Tondaimandalam was ended by the strong Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I, who decisively defeated him after A.D. 1264. From then Köpperuṇjinga became a subordinate ally of the Pāṇḍyan king and even assisted him in his expedition to the north. With the death of Köpperuṇjinga, the Kāḍava power, for all practical purposes, ceased to be a force.

His inscriptions mention two Nilagangarayans, one Koḍakkōn Nilagangarayan and another Aruṇagiri Perumāl Nilagangarayan son of Paṇchanadivānān Nilagangarayan and their gifts to the Varadarājaswāmī temple. They were probably local officers or agents. Another Nāyak’s (of Malaimandalam) gift is recorded in an inscription.

**Eastern Ganga interlude at Kāṇchi**

The two inscriptions mentioning gifts by the Ganga king Anangabhīma III and his queen Sōmalādevī Mahādevī to Arūḷḷa[purrumāḷ] temple are interesting. One of them is dated the 19th year of the reign of Anantavarma Mahita-dēva of the Ganga family (i.e., Anangabhīma III). The date of this inscription corresponds to A.D. 1230. It records a gift of the village Udayākāmam in Anantarudra-Vishaya by Sōmalādevi Mahādevi for offerings and worship to God Allālanātha while she was at Abhinava-vāranasi, the modern Cuttack in Orissa which was the capital of the Eastern Ganges. The second inscription records a gift of 128 cows and four bulls by the same king and dated in the 20th year of Rājarāja III, which corresponds to A.D. 1235. Regarding the latter inscription, there is no controversy. But the first inscription dated in the regnal year of the Ganga king has led Dr. Mahalingam to postulate an intrusion of the Eastern Ganga forces into Tamilnād. According to him, the Eastern Ganga army entered Kāṇchippuram and occupied it for a short time and was later driven out by the Hoysāla Narasimha II. He tries to identify the foreign troops (mēchchadeśa) that helped the Kāḍava during his attack on Rājarāja III as the Eastern Ganga forces. Later on, according to him, the Eastern Ganga forces were driven out by the Hoysāla king Vira Narasimha, who claims, in his epigraphs that he pursued the “Trikalinga” forces which he identifies with the Eastern Ganga forces. In another inscription at Kāṇchi itself mention is made of Vira Narasimha’s invasion and uprooting of the Magara kingdom (*Magara-rājya mūrṇa*—
lya), his setting up of the Chōla king who had sought his protection and his stationing at Kānchipuram of the army of the bhērundas (probably a regiment) for uprooting the evil-doers (dushyanirmulam artham tatra bhērunda vargam sthāpayitvā). He thinks that the dushṭa element at Kānchipuram was none other than the Trikalinga army. All this, he believes, occurred in A.D. 1230.93 But Dr. Sircar does not agree with this view and states that the Eastern Ganga army could not have penetrated as far south as Kāṇchi without conquering thousands of square miles of the Kākatiya territory that lay north of the Chōla territory and there is absolutely no proof to show that Anangabhīma III was ever engaged in a successful war with Gaṇapati. He also states that Hoysāḷa Vira Narasimha II was in possession of Kāṇchi even in March 1229 A.D., whereas the Eastern Ganga inscription is dated A.D. 1230. He says that it is thus very difficult to believe that the place was occupied by the army of Anangabhīma III in 1230 A.D. He thinks that the Hoysāḷa's claim against Trikalinga forces may be as empty a boast as his other claim regarding the conquest of the Vindhyan region. Dr. Sircar further surmises that Sōmalādevi, the wife of the Eastern Ganga king, was probably the sister or daughter of the Chōla king Rāja-raja III through a Hoysāḷa princess and hence, the presence of the Eastern Ganga inscription recording a pious gift does not imply any political conquest.94

Kāṇchi under the Pāṇḍyas

It was shown that the Pāṇḍyan power under the great warrior Jaṭāvarman Sundara I launched on an ambitious policy of expansion which met with splendid success. He defeated the Chōla king Rājaendra III, Hoysāḷa power under Sōmeśvara, Kāḷava Kōpperuṇjinga, Telugu-Chōḍa Vijayaganḍagōpāḷa and the Kākatiya Gaṇapati (both of whom he killed). He performed his 'vīrabhīṣhēka' at Nellore and Kāṇchi became his second capital.95 He gloried the new conquests by assuming titles Kāṇchīpura-Varadhiśvara and Kāṇchipuram Kōṇḍān.96 The erstwhile feudatories of the Chōḷas now transferred their allegiance to their new master. The Pāṇḍyan sway over Kāṇchi is well attested by their inscriptions found in the temples of Kāṇchi. Thus, Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya's inscriptions dated in his 5th and 15th (i.e., A.D. 1256-1266) regnal years are found in Sri Varadarājaswāmi temple.97 One of them, a grant to the temple by Soliyadaraiyan of Uttamapāṇḍyanallur in Pāṇḍya-nāḍu98 while another records a gift by Madhusūdan Āpantsahāyan alias Rāmachandradēva from Sōrailādevi in Pāṇḍimandalam.99 He was probably a military officer or chieftain and hence, the village gifted by him was named after himself as Āpantsahāyanallur.

The next Pāṇḍyan king represented in the inscriptions of the Varadarājaswāmi temple is Jaṭāvarman Vira Pāṇḍya in his 8th regnal year, which may correspond to A.D. 1261.100 Probably, he was co-regent with Jaṭāvarman Sundara for some time and succeeded him later.101

But, at the same time, we cannot say that the Pāṇḍyan control of the territory around Kāṇchi was by any means firm. This is clearly seen in the existence of many inscriptions issued in Telugu-Chōḍa chieftains. To cite a few examples, we have inscription of Manmu Siddha II Vijayaganḍagōpāḷa from 1265 to 1291 at Varadarājaswāmi temple,102 though an inscription of Jaṭāvarman Sundara II is found as far north as Cuddapah in 1286.103 Probably, this means that the Telugu-Chōḍas
continued to be the local rulers under the nominal overlordship of the Pândyas. 
This Pândyan hegemony over the Tondaimandalam region continued for three more 
years as attested by the provenance of the inscriptions of Márarvarman Kulasékhará 
I (1268-1308), Játavarman Sundara Pândya II (acc. 1276), Márarvarman Vikrama 
Pândya (acc. 1283). But their hold could not last long because of the civil war 
in their own ranks. After the death of Kulasékhará I in about 1308, a civil war 
broke out between the latter’s sons Víra Pándya and Sundara Pándya, the two rival 
claimants to the throne. Having suffered a defeat at the hands of Víra Pándya, 
Sundara invoked the aid of Malik Kafur the general of Allaúddín Khiljí who was 
only too ready to seize such an opportunity. He had already conquered the Yádava 
kingdom of Dēvagiri and the Kákatiya kingdom of Warangal and was advancing 
towards the Hoysála country and now was a chance for him to enter further south 
and conquer the extensive Pándyan kingdom. Malik Kafur invaded the Tamil 
country in A.D. 1310, went right upto Madurai and raided many cities and temples, 
including those of Káñchi and Srírangam on his way, resulting in plunder and 
desecration. This invasion was at best a military raid which did not lead to any 
permanent conquest. It made the political confusion more confounded in South 
India. In the state of confusion to which South India had now been brought, the 
way lay open for any strong ruler to increase his strength by conquest.

Chéra King at Káñchi

This opportune moment was seized by the Chéra king Rávivarman Kulasékhará, 
who in the words of his epigraph at Káñchi “vanquished the Kéralas, the Páñdya and 
Chólas and having driven the enemy Víra-Páñdya and having conquered the northern 
region, entered Káñchi”. This inscription which is at the Varadarájaswámi temple 
states that he performed the second coronation on the banks of the River Végavati at 
Káñchi in his 46th regnal year (i.e., A.D. 1312-1313) and on the occasion gave gifts 
to the Arulájappérmál temple. He calls himself as Végavatinátha or the Lord of the 
Végavati. His first coronation took place in A.D. 1309. His inscriptions found 
at Pándamalli and Tiruvaúdi in South Arcot go to confirm his conquests.

Kákatiya Pratáparudra II at Káñchi, A.D. 1316

But Rávivarman Kulasékhará’s hold over Káñchi was only short-lived. The 
Kákatiya power under the dynamic king Pratáparudra II recovered from Malik 
Kafur’s attacks earlier and marched southwards. The Kákatiya army under the 
command of Muppidí Náyaka marched to Káñchi, and captured the city in A.D. 
1316. An inscription of that date belonging to Pratáparudra at the Varadarájaswámi 
temple states that the general came to Káñchi and installed certain Mánávira as 
the governor and granted the revenues of the two villages to Arulájappérmál which 
amounted to 1002 Gandágópála-máddai, the Telugu-Chóda coin that was still current 
at Káñchi at that time. The Kákatiya power penetrated further south and probably in alliance with the Hoysála power, defeated and reduced the last remnants of the Páñdyan power. Pratáparudra’s inscription found at Srírangam commemorates his victory over the Páñcha Páñdya or the Five Páñdya.

The Muslim invasions and Ballája III, the Hoysála King

Nothing is heard of this Mánávira subsequently; nor is it clearly known how
long the Kākatiya overlordship of Kāñchi continued. Probably, political uncertainty that prevailed in this region and indeed in Tamilnād was further aggravated by another Muslim invasion in A.D. 1327. This time the army of Muhammad Bin Tuglak after overpowering the Deccan marched against the Hoysāla capital Dwārasamudra and caused considerable damage and marched further south and captured Madurai ‘This led in the first instance to the establishment of a garrison in Madurai and later to the creation of a Sultanate there’. This rule, which was marked by oppression, lasted to about A.D. 1371. But meanwhile, Ballāla III, the Hoysāla king, vacated the capital Dwārasamudra and settled at Tiruvannamalai sometime in A.D. 1328. From there, he was operating against the Madura Sultans. In A.D. 1335, Jalal-ud-din revolted against his Delhi overlord and set up his independence. This estrangement between the Muslim powers was taken advantage of by the Hoysāla king Ballāla III who strengthened himself in the South Arcot-Coimbatore region. It was during this time probably the Hoysāla made a short visit to Kāñchi. His inscription at Varadarājaswāmi temple dated in A.D. 1335 mentions that Vira-Vallabādeva was camping at Kāñchi and that his minister or chief Kampayya Dannāyaka made a grant to the temple. Another undated epigraph records that the Hoysāla king and his queens visited this temple where they were seated on a throne called (after the king) Vira-Vallālādevan and under the canopy called Ariyannavallālan. These inscriptions would clearly indicate that Ballāla’s sway extended however briefly to the Kāñchi region. The years between A.D. 1335 and 1342 were of great activity for Ballāla in consolidating the Hoysāla hold and making it a bulwark of attack on the Muslim power of Madurai. With the huge army he encamped at Tiruchirāppalli and fought a battle with the Muslim powers. But in spite of initial successes, this battle proved disastrous for Ballāla who was first taken prisoner and later killed mercilessly in A.D. 1342. The Hoysāla power did not recover from this blow. It survived for a year more under Ballāla IV and later about A.D. 1346 was overrun by the victorious Vijayanagar power.

Kāñchi under Sāmbūvarāyas

The Sāmbūvarāyas were originally chieftains under the Chōlas who were powerful in some portions of the North Arcot and Chingleput regions. As far as Kāñchi was concerned they could not make much headway towards it so long as the Telugu-Chōdas were in control of it. During the time of Kulōttunga III, one of them Ammaippan Kunnudaipperumāḷ alias Vikrama Chōla Sāmbūvarāyan figures as a donor to the temple of Varadarājaswāmi. Later, in A.D. 1247 during the time of Rājarāja III, another chieftain Viḷaperumāḷ Edirili Chōla Sāmbūvarāyan alias Rājarāja Sāmbūvarāyan donated lands for worship and offerings. He instituted a service, Āḷapprandān-Sandi named after his title. All these attest to their subordinate position. But, later we have an inscription issued in the name of Champa, son of Vira-Chōla and dated A.D. 1314. Probably, he was Vira-Champarāya alias Sāmbūvarāya who figures in the inscriptions in North Arcot as a subordinate of the new conqueror Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya. Subsequently, when the Pāṇḍyan and the Telugu-Chōda and Hoysāla powers were on the decline in Tondaimandalam the Sāmbūvarāya chiefs were in charge of the area till they were overrun by the Vijayanagar power. Two of them viz., Venrumankonda Sāmbūvarāya (acc. A.D.
1322) and Rājanārayaṇa Sāmbūvarāya (acc. A.D. 1337) ruled independently. The latter’s inscriptions dated in 7th and 14th regnal years are found in our temple.\[^{117}\]

**Kāṇchi under the Vijayanagar rule**

Meanwhile, the newly rising Vijayanagar power was making rapid strides. The Udayagiri-rāja, one of the provinces of the kingdom, bordered on the Tonḍai-maṇḍalam region. That province was under Sāyana-Uḍaiyār, the son of Kampana I in Ś 1273 (A.D. 1352).\[^{118}\] A few of his inscriptions are found in Kāṇchi and also the area north of it.\[^{119}\] This marks the slow beginning of the spread of the Vijayanagar authority in the Tamil country. This extension of the Vijayanagar power was well established after the brilliant victory scored by Kumāra Kampana, the son of Bukka, over the Sāmbūvarāya and the capture of his fort at Rājagambhirām in A.D. 1361. He entered Kāṇchi triumphantly and proceeded further south and crushed the Sultanate of Madurai. The conquest of Madurai and Kampana’s triumphal march formed the theme for an epic poem *Madura vijayam* by his wife Gangādevī.\[^{120}\] As symbolic of the revival of the Hindu power, the image of Ranganātha at Srīrangam, which had been removed for safety earlier, was reinstalled. In his southern campaign, Kampana was ably assisted by two generals Gōpanna and Sāluva Mangu. The latter figures in two inscriptions at Varadarājaswāmi temple, one of which mentions that his pradhānī or chief Pettarasān was authorised to levy certain taxes.\[^{121}\] Kampana’s inscription dated A.D. 1364 is found at the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāṇchi where he reinstated worship which was abandoned since long.\[^{122}\] His inscription dated Ś 1288 (A.D. 1367) is found at the Varadarājaswāmi temple.\[^{123}\] Many more of his epigraphs are found in other parts of Tamil country like Chingleput, South Arcot District.\[^{124}\] Kampana II died in A.D. 1374 while his father Bukka I continued to rule till 1377. The latter was succeeded by his son Harihara II who ruled from 1377 to 1404.

**Harihara II (A.D. 1377-1404)**

His authority extended to a considerable portion of South India including the Mysore and the whole of the Tamil country. Four of his inscriptions are found in our temple at Kāṇchi. Two of them are dated Ś 1300 (A.D. 1378).\[^{125}\] Another dated Ś 1325 (A.D. 1403) informs us that the Tonḍaimaṇḍalam region continued to be called Jayamgondaśaḻaṉa maṇḍalam, a name given to it in the time of Rājarāja I.\[^{126}\] Another records his grant of a village to a Vaishnava *maṭha* in our temple.\[^{127}\]

After Harihara’s death, in about A.D. 1404, there was a succession dispute between his surviving sons. Virūpāksha I first succeeded in securing the throne between A.D. 1404 and 1405. In his time, according to Nuniz, ‘Coromandel’ rebelled against the Vijayanagar authority and Virūpāksha had to re-conquer the provinces of Tondira (Tonḍaimaṇḍalam), the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya. This account of Nuniz is confirmed by other sources also.\[^{128}\] But Virūpāksha’s rule was soon cut short by his brother Bukka II who ejected him and ruled the kingdom between A.D. 1405 and 1406. After him, his brother Dēvarāya I became the king and ruled till 1422. The inscriptions of all the three brothers are found in the District of Chingleput, though none at Varadarājaswāmi temple.
The next Vijayanagar ruler Dēvarāya II ruled between A.D. 1422 to 1446. His authority spread far and wide. Razak and Nuniz, two contemporary writers, testify to the fact that Dēvarāya was supreme over the whole of South India and that his dominion even spread to Quilon and Ceylon in the South. But his relations with the kingdoms of Orissa and Bāhmini continued to be hostile. His inscriptions have been found in the neighbourhood of Kānchi, though none in our temple.129 There is some ground to suspect that Kānchi city was temporarily captured by the Vēlama chieftain Vasantarāya whose inscription is found in our temple.

Vēlama Intrusion

During the early years of the reign of Dēvarāya II, the Vēlama Nāyaks remained friendly. When Bāhmini Sultan Ahmad Shah declared war on Vijayanagar about A.D. 1424, the latter under Dēvarāya obtained considerable help from them. The Nāyak Anapōta II promptly despatched his forces to the battle-field under Linga. But due to some reasons which are not clear, he withdrew the help in the middle. This allegedly treacherous conduct prompted the Vijayanagar king Dēvarāya II to send help to the Redcis of Rajamundry in their fight against the Vēlama general Linga. This widened the gap between the Vijayanagar and the Vēlama power. Thereafter, Linga made a series of attacks on the different portions of the Vijayanagar empire like Nāgarjunakonda, Konḍavīdu etc. He also directed his attention towards south, subdued Nellore chieftain and even came as far as Kānchi. An inscription of A.D. 1437 which registers a gift of two Dwārapāla images to Arulāḷapperumāḷ temple of Kānchi by Recerla Vasantarāya, son of Anapōta II and the younger brother of Singa III alias Sarvajña points to the presence of Vēlama forces in the neighbourhood of the city.130

Dēvarāya II was succeeded by Vijaya Rāya II (1446-47) and shortly after, by his son, Mallikārjuna, who ruled between 1447 and 1465. The period of Mallikārjuna’s rule was one of great difficulty for the Vijayanagar empire as it came to be threatened by the combined forces of the Bāhmini king, Muhammad II and the Orissa king, Kapilēśvara Gajapati. The Vijayanagar armies were defeated and important forts of Konḍavīdu, Vinukonda and Addanki were captured. The Orissa army under Hamavira assisted by Kapilēśvara, marched into the southern regions as well, in A.D. 1463. It captured important places like Udayagiri, Chandragiri, Paḍaivīdu, Kānchi, Tiruvārur and Tiruchirāppālil.131 The expedition was a grand success. But the conquering force was compelled to retrace its steps within two years. The Oriya expedition of the South was thus only a sudden raid which disappeared as quickly as it came, so that we find Mallikārjuna’s rule being recognised again in Tondaimandalam in A.D. 1465. There is one inscription of Mallikārjunanāḍēva at Varadarāja temple dated A.D. 1465.132

After Mallikārjuna, the Vijayanagar throne passed on to his cousin Virūpāksha II, who ruled between A.D. 1465-1485. His inscriptions dated A.D. 1467 and 1471 are found at Kānchi.133

The former epigraph informs us that there was a Paḍaiparłu or military station of the Vijayanagar army at Tēpperumāḷnallūr, near Kānchi. According to this epigraph the village Tēpperumāḷnallūr (called after Tēpperumāḷ i.e., Dēvapperumāḷ,
another name of Lord Varadaraja), as Padaiparpu. It was evidently a military station or cantonment where the Vijayanagar forces were stationed.

The Gajapatis of Orissa rose up again to threaten the Vijayanagar empire. They marched southward along the Coromandel Coast as far as Kāśhipuram. It was at this critical time that the Vijayanagar empire was saved by the Sāluva Narasimha, the powerful Vijayanagar Viceroy, who along with his trusted generals, beat the invaders back up to Rajamundry in A.D. 1474-75. But some years later, about 1480, the Bāhmīni Sultan Muhammad Shah invaded the South. Firishta tells us that the Sultan received information about the richness and grandeur of the temples at the Hindu city, Kāśi, which was said to be of only ten days’ journey from Kōndavīdu, his camping place. He invaded Kāśi and looted much of its wealth. Sāluva Narasimha sent his general Īśvara Nāyaka to Kāśi, who successfully drove the Sultan out of Kāśi and even managed to recapture much of the booty which the Sultan had collected by plunder of Kāśi.

Virūpaśkha’s rule ended in 1485. He was killed by his eldest son who in turn was killed by his younger brother. This state of confusion was the most opportune moment for Sāluva Narasimha, the powerful subordinate of Vijayanagar empire, to usurp the throne, which he did in 1486. Till then, he was only a governor in charge of the modern districts of South Arcot, North Arcot and Chingleput, with his headquarters at Chandragiri. This usurpation which is called the First Usurpation marked the replacement of the Sangama dynasty by the new Sāluva line of kings over the Vijayanagar throne. Sāluva Narasimha was quite an able king. He recovered most of the revolted provinces during his six years rule. Though he could not recover Raichur Doab from the Bāhmīnis and Udayagiri from the king of Orissa, Sāluva Narasimha’s hold over the Tamil country was quite intact. He was a great devotee of Vishnu and during his time, the Vishnu temple of Tirupati and Kāśi received great many benefactions. He had the services of a dynamic Śrī-Vaishnava leader named Kandādai Rāmanuja Iyengār, who utilised the royal benefactions for various charitable and religious purposes at Tirupati, Śrīrangam and Kāśi. His epigraphs dated A.D. 1486 and 1487 are found in our temple.

After the death of Sāluva Narasimha in 1491, his son Ṭimmaṇi Narasimha succeeded to the throne. He was however put to death sometime in 1505. His general Narasa Nāyaka now seized the throne and from him started the Tuḷuva line. Shortly afterwards, Narasa died. He was succeeded by his son Vīra Narasimha (A.D. 1505 to 1509). His inscription dated April 1509 is found on the east wall of the Abhisekā-maṇḍapa of the Varadarājāswāmi temple. It records a gift of a village called Narasingarāyapuram, evidently called after Vīra Narasimha. The latter was succeeded by his able and strong brother Krishnadeva Rāya, who ruled between A.D. 1509-1529.

**Krishnadeva Rāya (A.D. 1509-1529)**

The reign of Krishnadeva Rāya is a landmark in the history of South India. Under him, the Vijayanagar empire was at the zenith of its power and glory. It included practically the whole of South India. By his military prowess he made his authority felt by the rebel chieftains of Ummattūr, the Gajapatis of Orissa, Sultan Muhammad II of Bāhmīni and the Sultan of Bijapur. Tonḍaimanḍalam and the
rest of the Tamil country were so quiet and calm, that Krishnadēva Rāya could not only fully divert his attention to his arduous wars with the Gajapati, but also could pay frequent visits to holy places like Tirupati, Kālahasti and Kāñchi. As many as 16 inscriptions of Krishnadēva Rāya are found at the Varadarājaswāmi temple ranging between Š 1431 to Š 1451 (A.D. 1510-1528). Two of these inscriptions give us a complete list of his conquests prior to Š 1438. After the conquests, the king made a religious tour of the South and halted at Kāñchi and visited Varadarājaswāmi temple. He made benefactions for the merit of his father Narasa Nāyaka and his mother Nāgaladēvi. This grant was recorded in three languages viz., Tamil, Telugu and Kannāda. These inscriptions begin with the usual historical introduction in Sanskrit and give the genealogy of the Tuluva dynasty from Īśvara down to Krishnadēva Rāya. An epigraph mentions a gift by an official adhikāram Rāyasam Ayyapparasayyar, son of Gottimukku Tipparasavar of Bharadvāja-gōtra. Another epigraph dated Š 1446 mentions a gift of jewelled pendant to God by another officer Rāyasam Śripātaya. The latter's local agent one Narapparasayya also made gifts. In Š 1438 the king himself gave five villages yielding an annual income of 1,500 varahas as gift.

Three months later, Krishnadēva Rāya again visited Kāñchi perhaps on his way back to his capital and gave donations to Varadarājaswāmi and Ekāmbarēśvarar temples at Kāñchi.

Achyutadēva Rāya (A.D. 1530-1542)

Krishnadēva Rāya was succeeded by his brother Achyuta Rāyā in A.D. 1529 and nearly 23 inscriptions of his are found at Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple, their dates ranging from Š 1450 to Š 1463 (i.e., from A.D. 1530 to 1542). He performed his coronation at Tirupati. A record at Kāñchi dated A.D. 1533 states that soon after his coronation in the year Virodhī (1529-30), the king directed his local agent at Kāñchi, Sāluva Nāyaka, to distribute his gifts of villages equally between the temples of Varadarāja and Ekāmbarēśvarar in the city of Kāñchipuram in Chandragiri-rāj. But the latter failed in his trust and allotted more to the Śiva temple. When this irregularity was brought to the notice of the king while he was at Kāñchi, he ordered a revised allocation to be made and had the necessary documents drawn up in his presence. An earlier record of the year Š 1454 (A.D. 1532) states that Achyuta Rāya visited Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple in the company of his wife Varadadēvi Amman and his son Kumāra Vēnkaṭādri. During the occasion he made enormous gifts including 17 villages and a thousand cows. He also performed 'Mukta-thulābhāra' by weighing himself against pearls. This is inscribed in three languages, Tamil, Telugu and Kannāda. The Sanskrit historical poem Achyutarāyabhyudayam also refers to this event. It says that Achyuta in the course of his expedition to the Tamil country to quell the rebellious governor Chellappā, visited holy places like Tirupati and Kālahasti and from there he “proceeded with his army to Kāñchi”. Then the king weighed himself against pearls which were distributed for charity. While at Kāñchi several forest kings (kīrātas) waited upon him with tribute and presents. Accompanied by them he proceeded further south and went to Tiruvaṅṇāmalai. After worshipping the God of the place, he entered the Chōla country and, after a few days march, reached
Srírangam. Having stayed there for some time, he intended proceeding further on his expedition, when one of his officers told him that it was not necessary for the king to go against a small chief like Chellappā and requested that he might be entrusted with the expedition. Chellappā referred to in the poem was Sāluva Nāyaka or Sāluva Narasimha, who served as governor of the Tamil provinces under Krishnadhēva Rāya. He was probably a native of Kāṅchipuram. An inscription from Kunnattūr dated in the time of Krishnadhēva Rāya (A.D. 1510) informs us that Sāluva Nāyakkar Sellappar was the son of Tirukkalaindān Bhaṭṭa, a Dēvakānmi of the temple of Tiruvēkambamiṇḍaya Nāyinār (Ekāmbarēśvarar temple) at Kāṅchipuram. During Achyuta's time he became rebellious and defied the Vijayanagar authority. It was the same Sāluva Nāyaka who was also responsible for the irregularity in the distribution of lands between Varadarāja and Ekāmbarēśvarar temples, which the king himself had to set right during his visit to the city. But when Achyuta's forces entered deep into Tamilnād, Sellappa fled to Tiruvaḍi rāya. He was pursued even there by Achyuta's brother-in-law. He defeated the local king who gave protection to Sellappa and brought both of them as prisoners.

One officer by name Kumāra Dānnāyaka is mentioned as having made gifts to the temple for the merit of Rāyasam Narasayya, the son of Virūpākṣa Dānnāyaka.

Achyuta's reign also witnessed the growth of resentment amongst many of the subordinate viceroy of the Vijayanagar empire like the Nāyak of Madura. Some of them joined Rāmarāya, Tirumala and Vēṅkaṭa of the Araviḍu family as against the influential nephews of Achyutarāya. This consequently plunged the country into troubles.

Sadāśiva (A.D. 1542-1576)

Achyuta was succeeded by his son Vēṅkaṭa I in 1541 but a few months later, he was murdered by his maternal uncle Salakarāju Tirumala who seized the throne. The latter's tyrannical rule was however cut short by Sadāśiva who ruled between A.D. 1542 and 1576. Quite a number of Sadāśiva's records are found at the Varadarājaswāmi temple, their dates ranging from Ś 1466 to Ś 1484 (i.e., A.D. 1544-1562). Sadāśiva was a weak monarch and so his reign was dominated by his able minister Rāma Rāya who wielded all the power and was indeed the de facto ruler of the kingdom. Sadāśiva is even said to have been imprisoned and later exhibited to the people once a year. But this great power he wielded and his interference in the affairs of the Sultanates of Deccan alienated the latter and brought about the disastrous battle of Talikotta in A.D. 1565. The battle ended in utter defeat of the Vijayanagar army. Rāma Rāya was taken prisoner and put to death. Rāma Rāya's brother Tirumala made good his escape and also took Sadāśiva his sovereign as captive.

An important feature of Sadāśiva's reign was the domination of the realm by his kinsmen and other chieftains. He replaced the old nobility and elevated his own brothers, cousins and nephews to high posts of chieftainship. They were mostly of the Araviḍu or Telugu-Choḍa families. This is very well borne out by his inscriptions at Varadarāja temple in which his numerous powerful chieftains are mentioned with high-sounding titles. They are:

1. Matli Varadarāju: He was one of the important chiefs of the Matli-family
who claimed descent from the Dēva-Choḍa family of the Solar race. He is described as the son of Sōmarāja. Like Aliya Rāmarāja, Varadarāja was also the son-in-law of Krishnadhēva Rāya having married the latter’s daughter Krishnamma. Varadarāja is described in an epigraph as Kāvēri-Vallabha, Katikasurahara, Gajasimha etc.159 His grants to the Vishnu shrine at Tirupati figure in the inscriptions at Tirupati. He made cash award to our temple in A.D. 1544.160

2. Sūrappa Nāyaka: He was probably the same as Aḍaippam Sūrappa-Nāyaka, the son of Potṭu or Pottappa Nāyaka of Kāṣyapa-gōтра, Āpastambha sūtra and yajus-sāki. He seems to have been an agent (Kāryakarta) of Sadāśiva and exercised authority over Tiruvaḍi-rājiya or South Arcot region, where he did numerous benefactions to temples of Eṇnaiyiram, Sembēdu etc.161 He purchased a village and donated it to this temple in A.D. 1548.162

3. Rangayyasōla Mahārāja: He is described as the son of Chaliyadēva Chōla-Mahārāja of Kāṣyapa-gōtra, Āpastambha sūtra and of Solar race.163 The income from a village was entrusted to him for making certain offerings in the temple. This was in A.D. 1551.

4. Tiruppadirāja: He gave a grant to the temple for the merit of his parents, Mahāmandalēśwara Chinnayadēva Mahārāja and Akkamma.164 Probably, the former is to be identified with Chinnamayyadēva-Mahārāja, the third son of Pottapati-Timmarāja of the Āravidu family who was in charge of the Chandragiri rājiya.165

5. Rāmarāju Chinnamayyadēva Mahārāja: A record dated A.D. 1549 says that he was to conduct all charities.166 His agent Gopinayaningaru gave gifts in his merit.167 His two Daḷavāy, Kuppam Nāyakar and Timmarāja, also gave gifts.167a

6. Daḷavāy Timmarāja: He was an agent under Mahāmandalēśwara Rāmarāja Chinnna Timmarāja who had his headquarters at Sengalinirpatru Sirmai (the modern Chingleput town). He gave a village in his province as gift to Varadarāja temple.168

7. Rāmarāja, son of Mahāmandalēśwara Chikkayyarāja of Araviti: As the name itself implies he belongs to the Āravidu family. He is stated to have been in charge of the conduct of annual festivals at Kānchi.169 This record is datable to A.D. 1558.

8. Rāyasam Vēṅkaṭādri: Mentioned as son of Mōsilanādugu Timmarāja. He was assigned the income from certain villages on interest for providing offerings.170 From the T.T.D. inscriptions we know that Vēṅkaṭādri was the grandson of Mōsalimadugu Viramarāja of Haritasa-gōtra, Āpastambha-sūtra and yajus-sāki. Vēṅkaṭādri served Achyutarāja as his rāyasam or secretary while his father Timmarāja was a minister of the crown during the same reign.171 From Tirupati inscriptions we know that both father and son continued to serve Sadāśiva and made large gifts to the Tirupati temple.172

9. Rāja Rāmarāju Ayyan: An inscription dated 8 1466 (A.D. 1544) mentions certain charities made for his merits.173 Aliya Rāmarāja was often referred to in inscriptions as Rājarāmarāju Ayyan.174
10. **Nāgarāja**: Nāgarāja son of Kaṭappai Siddharāja of Atreyagōtra and the lunar race was the brother of Siddhirāju Śrī Rangarāja who is perhaps identical with the agent of Yara Tirumalarājaya who was in charge of the Konḍavīḍu area.\(^{176}\)

Thus, so far as this temple was concerned, it was a bright period as it received large benefactions from the nobles and chieftains in the form of money, lands and villages for conducting many festivals like Garden-festival, repairs to the Porṛmarai tank, maintenance of flower gardens and for conducting charities.

**Tirumala (A.D. 1570-1571)**

"Talikōṭta", it has been truly said, "was the climacteric but not the grand climacteric". The capital city Vijayanagar was no doubt sacked and reduced to ruins. The empire received the rude shock from the Muslim confederates. But the imperial authority continued to be a force in South Indian politics for another half a century. It still continued its resistance to the rise of the Muslim power and patronage of the Hindu religion.\(^{176}\)

Tirumala attempted to re-establish the capital of Vijayanagar, but failed because, the Regent of Sadāśiva shifted his capital from Vijayanagar to Penugonda in 1567. After three years, king Sadāśiva was killed by Tirumala's son. Then Tirumala usurped the throne and assumed the title "Reviver of the Decadent Karnātaka Empire". He was the first ruler of the Āraviṇu line of kings. One of the important acts of Tirumala was the division of his kingdom into three viceroyalties as a step to counteract the expansionist activity of the Muslim powers on the northern provinces. He appointed each of his sons as viceroy of a province. Thus, Ṣrīranga, the eldest son, was put in charge of the Telugu country with his capital at Udayagiri; his second son Rāma Rāja II in charge of the Kannada country with his capital at Srīrangapaṭṭa (near Mysore); the youngest son Vēnkaṭapati in charge of the Tamil country with the capital at Chandragiri. Tirumala was a scholar and author. He patronised poets and was an ardent devotee of the Lord of Tirupati where his bronze statue is kept.

**Srīranga I (A.D. 1572-1585)**

Shortly after this reorganisation of his empire, Tirumala died and was succeeded by his first son Srīranga I in A.D. 1572. Five inscriptions of Srīranga are found at the Varadarājaswāmi temple, their dates ranging from Ś 1493 to Ś 1504. An inscription records gift of 5 villages by the temple authorities for conducting festivals in the month of Vaigāsi for the merit of Achyutappa Nāyaka, son of Adaippan Sinna Sēvappa Nāyaka who is evidently a Nāyak ruler of Tāṇjavūr (380 of 1919, *S.I.T.I.* No. 369). From two inscriptions (383 and 479 of 1919), we learn that orders pertaining to the worship festivals in the temple etc., were given in the name of Venkatapatidēva-Mahārāja, who was presumably Venkaṭa II who was in charge of Chandragiri rājya in a subordinate viceroyalty during his elder brother Srīranga's reign from Penugonda. These inscriptions also inform us that during this time, Eṭṭūr Kumāra Tatāchārya was managing the affairs of the temple. Srīranga's reign witnessed some more incursions of the Muslim powers into Vijayanagar kingdom. The territory north of Penugonda was occupied by the Sultan of Bijapur,
while the important portions of the province of Udayagiri like the districts of Guntur, Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary and Nellore were conquered by the Sultan of Golkonda. Sriranga’s capital Penugonda was itself threatened. In the midst of such trying circumstances, Sriranga I died in A.D. 1585 and was succeeded by his younger brother Venkata II.

Venkata II (A.D. 1586-1614)

The reign of Venkata, which lasted nearly three decades, was marked by a revival of strength and prosperity of the empire. His capital was at Chandragiri. He attacked the Muslim army of the Deccan successfully and recovered many of the territories like Udayagiri which had been lost to them by his predecessors. He also overcame many internal troubles within the empire. From 1606 Vellore became his second capital.

Inscriptions of Venkata II ranging between S 1509 and S 1527 i.e., from A.D. 1587 to 1605, are found in Sri Varadarajaswami temple and they are not of any particular importance except that they mention the local agents or representatives giving grants to the temple. Ettur Kumara Tattachariar is mentioned as the manager of the temple and one Visva-Pundita was his agent. Two other inscriptions mention one Periatirumalainambi Chakkarayar, agent of the Tattacharya. Tattacharya was the preceptor of Venkata II and was the manager of many temples at Kanchi and elsewhere.

Venkata II died in 1614 and a bitter civil war ensued soon after in which his rightful nominee, Sriranga was put to death by the rebel group. But the loyalists headed by Yachama crowned Sriranga’s son Ramadeva who ruled till A.D. 1630. His inscriptions have been found in places like Chingleput, North Arcot Districts, though none in our temple. Ramadeva was succeeded by Venkata III who ruled between A.D. 1630-1642. He is represented in our collection by a Telugu inscription dated S 1564 (A.D. 1642). It mentions gift by one Tamappa or Tammi Bhoupati, son of Chinna Krishna. His inscriptions too have been found in other parts of Chingleput District.

Venkata III (1630-1642)

The political condition prevailing in the Vijayanagar empire round about A.D. 1630 at the accession of Venkata III, can briefly be outlined here. The Vijayanagar empire became a shadow of its former self, crippled in territorial extent and power. The separation of the viceroyalty of Srirangapatinam and the formation of kingdom of Mysore under Raja Odayar had already abridged the size and the revenues of the empire. Immediately to the north of it, was the chieftainship of Ikkeri or Keladi comprising the districts, extending from the Western Ghats right upto Harihar. The area east of it constituted a separate province with its headquarters at Penugonda Ikkeri and Penugonda regions were almost at the frontiers of the Bijapur territory. In the Tamil country, the Vijayanagar empire became parcelled out among its viceroyalties like the Nayeaks of Madurai, Thanjavur and Gingee owing only nominal allegiance to their Vijayanagar overlord, but often working against the latter.

Pedda Venkata ruled between A.D. 1630 and 1642. Along with him was nominated his nephew Sriranga as the governor of Chandragiri. This further divided the
loyalties of the officers and the people. Venkaṭa probably had his residence at Vellore. The territories around Kāṇchi, Poonamallee (Pundamallī), Chingleput, and modern city of Madras and upto Wandiwash, were directly under Venkaṭa III. In the conduct of administration the latter had to take the assistance of the two influential officers Dāmarla Venkaṭa and Dāmarla Ayyappa. These were the two sons of Chenna, the famous general of Venkaṭa II and they belonged to the Velugoti family of Kālahasti. During Venkaṭa III’s time Venkaṭappa and Ayyappa were in charge of Wandiwash and Poonamallee respectively and as such wielded great influence with the king. It was these two Dāmarla brothers who offered the present site of the Fort St. George, Madras, to the English East India Company in A.D. 1639 for their settlement. The English in their records gratefully refer to Dāmarla Venkaṭappa Nāyaka, the elder and the more influential of the brothers as the ‘Lord General of the Carnātic’ and ‘Grant Vazier’.

But Venkaṭa III seems to have been only the nominal Vijayanagar emperor. The region round Chandragiri fell to the share of his nephew Srīranga, whose territory bordered on that of the Gōlkonda and hence had to bear the brunt of the Gōlkonda attacks from the north-west. Srīranga did this important task and was largely responsible for guarding the fortress of the Vijayanagar empire. Gōlkonda launched the policy of expansion towards south and its army advanced right upto Venkatagiri and Armagon, as attested by the company correspondence at Pulicat. But they were beaten back by Srīranga’s forces which cut short their southern movement. Srīranga had a clear policy in checking the Gōlkonda aggression. But, unfortunately, he did not have the hearty co-operation from the principal officers of the empire. The Dāmarla brothers were not favourably disposed towards him. The Nāyaks of Gingee, Thanjavūr and Madurai did not rally round and were pulling in different directions.

Srīranga III

Venkata died in 1642 and Srīranga was raised to the imperial throne in spite of opposition from many chiefs including the Dāmarla brothers. The Gōlkonda army had advanced upto Pulicat and even laid siege to it. But Srīranga showed great courage, beat them back and checked their advance. The condition of South India in about 1642-43 is admirably summed up in a letter of Fort St. George dated Jan. 4, 1643: “This country being all in broils, the old king of Karnātaka dead. So is the Nāyak of Armagon, whose country is all in the hands of the Moors and who will ere long by all likelihood be masters of all this country.” The mention of Moors in this letter is obviously a reference to the Gōlkonda army which was advancing but which was temporarily driven back by Srīranga.

Gōlkonda and Bijapur armies invade

The siege of Pulicat conducted by Mallai was cut short by the invasion of the Muslim forces of the Gōlkonda and Bijapur who had now overrun a considerable part of Srīranga’s dominion. The forces from Pulicat front had therefore to be withdrawn for opposing the Muslim invaders. But even Mallai’s troops could not stem the tide of the Muslim invasion. By about 1645 the combined forces of Bijapur and
Gōlkonda laid siege to Vellore, the seat of Srīranga’s residence. In this war, the latter was defeated decisively and his royal residence was occupied by the Muslim forces. Srīranga had to seek refuge in flight, leaving his defence operations to Mallai who only proved treacherous to his overlord. According to the Fort St. George letter despatch dated February 1645/1646 he surrendered “the strongest hold in the kingdom to Mir Jumla, upon composition to himself and all his people to go free.” Another letter dated 9th October of the same year informs us that the General of the Gōlkonda “hath almost conquered this kingdom and reigneth as king under the title Annabob” (i.e., Nawab). After this, Mir Jumla continued his march towards Gingee and captured it with the help of Bijapur to whom it was ultimately given in A.D. 1649. After this Srīranga made some feeble attempts to reinstate himself. But again he was betrayed by his own chiefs—this time Konēri Cheṭty, the commander who went over to side of Mir Jumla now backed up by the Mughal. Mir Jumla’s forces were led by Tuppākki Krishnappa. Srīranga’s forces were ambushed by the latter and defeated in October 1658. Thus, there was confusion in the political situation and places were changing hands quickly which made English Company’s servants at Fort St. George even think of abandoning their settlement at Madras (letter dated November 1661). Between years 1661 and 1664, the Gōlkonda forces succeeded gradually in dislodging the officers of Mir Jumla and taking possession of all the territory under his control including those which were under Srīranga’s control. This led to the definite establishment of the Gōlkonda authority in the region known as the Carnātic extending from the coast down to the borders of the highlands and from Gōlkonda down to Madras. In 1645, Srīranga retired to Tirupati and that was the end of the Vijayanagar kingdom.

Paucity of Inscriptions at the Varadarājaswāmi temple

The political confusion and uncertainty that prevailed in the region was probably the reason for the paucity of inscriptions of this time at the Varadarājaswāmi temple. Even in a few of these that occur, the usual mention of the reigning king is omitted. For example, in an epigraph dated Ś 1581 corresponding to A.D. 1659, the name of the ruling king or dynasty is omitted. But this epigraph is valuable in so far as it mentions the troublous times through which the temple passed. It records that one Vēnkatādri, son of Dharmayya of Kōṭṭapalji, was given certain honours and privileges in recognition of his services to the temple in running the administration during the difficult times of Muslim (Turukkar) invasion. The reference is obviously to the incursions of the Gōlkonda forces. Even inscriptions of this temple dated A.D. 1677 or A.D. 1687 do not mention the ruling king, or the dynasty evidently because the authorities who were in charge of recording the transactions preferred to be non-committal in the fast-changing political developments. But an outline of the political condition of this area, as known from other sources, can be given here.

Kāāchi under the Gōlkonda

By about A.D. 1672, the supremacy of the Gōlkonda power became established in the Toṇḍaimandalam region or the Carnātic. Abdulla Kutub Shah, the Sultan of Gōlkonda, even issued farman to East India Co., at Madras confirming the privileges
given to them earlier.\textsuperscript{185} At this time, Kannichipuram formed part of the province of Pundamalli, which was directly under an officer named Podelle Lingappa. Of the two Brahmin ministers of Golkon\=da, Madanna and Akkanna, the former appointed his nephew Podelle Lingappa as a Collector of rents for the province of Pundamalli. Kannichipuram came under this province. His headquarters seem to have been at Kannichipuram also for some time. He is said to have constructed a few streets and some minor temples at Kannichi. One of the streets still goes by its name.\textsuperscript{196} In 1674, Abdulla Kutub Shah was succeeded by his son-in-law Abdul Hasan Qutub Shah, the last Golkon\=da Nawab. In 1675, the Nawab lost all grip over the administration and left the direction of the affairs to his ministers and subordinate officers. The effect was felt at Madras in so far as Lingappa governor of Pundamalli assumed greater powers and came into clash with the English at Madras.\textsuperscript{197}

The Mahratta army at Kannichi, 1676

In 1676, the Mahratta army under Sivaji moved into the Carnatic country. The English council at Madras reported that Sivaji, with the support of the king of Golkon\=da, was marching to sack and recapture Gingee, which was under the Bijapur. He sacked Gingee and laid siege to Vellore and even went upto Thanjavur and left his brother Ekoji alias Venkaji as ruler of Thanjavur. In August 1678, Abdulla Khan, the commander of the Bijapur forces in the Vellore castle surrendered to Sivaji's forces after a siege. In October of the same year, he made himself the master of the advanced territory. In 1678, Sivaji's forces were at Kannichipuram on their way to capture Pundamalli, the headquarters of Lingappa and then lay siege to the English fort at Madras. This is clearly expressed in the Fort St. George Diary dated 21st August 1678, which says:

"Yesterday there came intelligence from Conjeevaram (which is the chief city of these parts, about 40 miles distance), that there was 1000 or 1500 of Sevajee's horsemen under the command of Santejee, his brother, which appeared before the place. Wherefore the inhabitants were put into great fears, thinking the town would be taken and plundered. And they reported also that those horse, and with other forces, now intended to proceed further into the king of Golkonda's country and to take Punnamalle castle, about 10 miles in land from us. But this day came under other persons from Conjeevaram who reported that those horse of Sevajee about 1000 came thither in pursuit of some Vijapore fort that were intended to relieve and succour Vellore castle which hath been besieged by the Sevajee's forces these 14 months...The said castle of Vellore is now surrendered to Sevajee's forces...

The possible invasion of Sivaji's forces terrorised the English at Madras. But somehow Sivaji suddenly changed plans and turned towards Mysore. All his further designs of conquest came to a sudden end by his premature death in 1680. He was succeeded by his son Sambaji.

Kannichi under the Moghuls

Just as the old Hindu State of Vijayanagar succumbed to the Golkon\=da army forty years before, the effete dynasty of the Qutub Shahs now fell before the victorious Moghuls. Aurangzeb, the Moghul emperor, was determined to conquer and annex the two kingdoms of Golkon\=da and Bijapur. In the years 1686 and 1687, Aurangzeb invaded Bijapur and Golkon\=da and conquered them. The Moghul army
continued its march down to the Carnatic. In October 1687, news reached the Fort St. George that the Golkonda stronghold had yielded after protracted siege and the king was a prisoner. The next few days brought the news that the Moghul forces had come as far south as Kañchipuram and that the Moghul flag was hoisted on the fort at Pundamallii.

During this time, one ‘Potty Cawn’ (Fath-Khan) was appointed Subhedar of the Kañchipuram area with his headquarters at Chingleput. The Moghul army penetrated further south. But Sambaji, the son and successor of Sivaji, took up army against the Moghuls in the Deccan and prepared to resist their incursions into Gingee territory. He sent a force into the Carnatic under his general named Santoji Rau to fight the Moghuls. Early in 1688, an action was fought at Kañchipuram between the Moghul forces and Santoji in which the latter was worsted. The Mahratta army consisted of 2,000 horses and 5000 footmen and this war did considerable damage to the city of Kañchi. Late in 1689, Aurangzeb captured Sambaji, the Mahratta king and tortured him to death. Sambaji’s brother Raja Rama Maharaaja was made the king of the Mahratta at Gingee.

Kañchi under the Nawabs of the Carnatic, the viceroys of the Moghuls

Having thus conquered the two kingdoms of Golkonda and Bijapur and inflicted a heavy blow to the Mahratta power, the Moghul power under Aurangzeb became supreme in the Deccan and South India upto Trichinopoly. Aurangzeb demanded allegiance from the other Indian States like Mysore and Madurai. Resistance came from the Nayak of Gingee, but this was put down by Aurangzeb’s able general Zulfikar Khan, after a long and arduous siege. With the fall of Gingee, the southern province of the Moghuls was established with Zulfikar as the chief. He was called the Nawab of the Carnatic. Sometime later, Zulfikar’s services were wanted elsewhere and so, he had to leave for Delhi. He left behind him his lieutenant Daud Khan in charge. Daud Khan resided for some time in Gingee and then in Arcot, which later on became the capital of the Carnatic. His own civil officer, Sayyad Muzafar, became Nawab in his turn as Sadrat-Ullah-Khan of Arcot in 1710. Orme considered him as the first regular and acknowledged Nabob of the Carnatic. But as pointed out by Crole, this is a mistake for he did not differ in this respect from his predecessor. The only distinction is that with him a hereditary character was given to the office.

Image of Varadaraja removed from Kãñchi: A.D. 1688

What was the condition of the Kãñchi city and Sri Varadarajaswami temple therein? The whole of the 17th century was indeed an unfortunate period in the history of the Carnatic. It was characterised by political uncertainty, instability and the consequent break in the administration of the land. Constant warfare, the extortions of the local Nayaks and each victor trying to exploit the maximum he could within his short time, plunged the people in great misery and poverty. As Crole remarks “there was no one to take up their (people’s) cause. They silently suffered and not a record remains among them of the horrors of that time.” This horror was never greater than on the eve of the Moghul invasion of the South in 1688, already mentioned. Kañchipuram, in common with several other important centres of South India, felt
the shock of the iconoclastic zeal of Aurangzeb. His zeal for destroying the Hindu
temples and idols seems to have been already widely known at Kāñchipuram. So,
the authorities of the three prominent temples of the city (Varadarāja, Ekāmrēśvara
and Kāmākṣhi temples), apprehending desecration at the hands of the invaders,
disguised the images of the temple Gods and conveyed them secretly out of the town.
The images of Lord Varadarāja and His consorts found an asylum in the jungles of
Udayārpālayam in the Tiruchirapalli District. But in A.D. 1710, when the danger
was past and Kāñchi considered safe, attempts were made to bring the deities back.
But the local chieftain of Udayārpālayam refused to part with the images with which
he was enraputured. At this time, an influential Śrī-Vaishnava ascetic or Jīyar named
Śrīmat Paramahamsa Parivrājākāchārya Āṭṭān Jīyar caused his disciple Lāla Tōḍarmalla
to intercede. The latter terrorised the chief with a strong contingent of troops
and safely brought back the image and reinstalled it with great pomp and splendour.
This is recorded in a long inscription found on a slab erected in the temple near the
Tāyār shrine dated Ś 1632 corresponding to A.D. 1710.204 This incident is even
today commemorated in an annual festival called ‘Udayārpālayam-festival’. This
person, Āṭṭān Jīyar alias Srinivāsadāsa was a relative of Akkanna and Mādana, the
two influential Brahmin ministers of the Gōlkonda kingdom. He came down to
Kāñchi probably in the wake of Aurangzeb’s attack on Gōlkonda. In a copper-
plate grant dated 5 years later than the above one i.e., Ś 1636 (A.D. 1714-15),
the same Srinivāsadāsa is mentioned as a guru of Rāja Tōḍarmalla and that he granted five
villages to the temple near Chidambaram. Rāja Tōḍarmalla was a General under
Sa-ādet-ulla-khān, the Nawab of Carnātic. He took a leading part in the capture of
Ginge.205

The Āṭṭān Jīyar inscription mentioned above is dated in the reign of Sādat-Ullah-
Khān who became the Nawab of Arcot in A.D. 1710. Under him and his successor
Dost Ali for a period of almost 30 years, there was some peace and good administra-
tion in the Carnātic. Perhaps that is the reason why the restoration of the images
was undertaken in A.D. 1710, the moment the political confusion ended. The rule
of Sādat-Ullah-Khān over Kāñchipuram is again attested by another inscription at
Śrī Varadarāja dated Ś 1645 (A.D. 1723-24), which mentions him as Nabob
Sadulla Khān Bahadur the governor of the Carnatic province under the Alamgir
Pasha Mahmad, the Moghul Emperor at Delhi.206 Sādat-Ullah-Khān ruled as
Nawab until 1732 when he was succeeded by his nephew Dost Ali.

The inscription mentioned above which is dated 1723 is the last one in this temple
in point of time. For the rest of the period, Kāñchi shared the political fate of the
area known as the Carnatic which was sacked in turn by the Mahrāṭṭas in 1724 and
1740 and by the forces of Nizam of Hyderabad in 1742. Later, it featured in the
Carnatic Wars and was even raided by the French and the English. The latter under
Clive captured the considerable tract on the north of Pālār including Kāñchi on
behalf of Muhammed Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic. The Ekāmrēśvara Temple,
referred to as the ‘Great Pagoda’ in the English records, seems to have served
alternatively as the citadel of the contending army in 1763. The English got from
the Nawab the district of Chingleput (including Kāñchipuram) almost by compulsion
for the expenses of the war with the French. It was known as the ‘Jaghir’. This
was the first tract of the country of the Carnatic where the Company’s authority was
felt, though here too it was only indirect in the beginning. On the outbreak of the II Mysore war (1780) with Hyder Ali, it came under direct control of the East India Company. First it was placed under the committee of assigned revenues. In 1786, the committee was abolished. In 1788, the ‘Jaghir’ was divided into two divisions called northern and the southern and placed under two Collectors. In 1794, the jaghir came to be known as the Chingleput District, which included the present districts of Chingleput and Madras. Kānchi continues to be in the District of Chingleput.

NOTES

1. Dr. S.K. Iyengar: Introduction to R. Gopalas ‘The Pallavas of Kānchi’ (1928), pp. XV and XVII.
6. Ibid, p. 73.
7. 519 of 1919.
9. K.A.N. Sastri, op. cit., p. 323. The pra-
šasti of the epigraph (S.I.I. IV, 445) records the war as a personal achievement of Kulottunga I.
10. S I I. No. IV, 862.
13. 22 of 1890; 18 of 1893; 36 of 1888 etc.
14. 39 of 1921.
15. 632 of 1919.
17. K.A.N. Sastri, Navalokawra in his Studies in Chola History and Administration, Madras, 1932, pp. 183-185 and also p. 188.
18. For full details of his various military exploits and the significance of the titles see ibid.
19. 33 of 1893; 436, 440, 471, 516, 518, 520 and 590 of 1919.
20. 406 of 1919.
22. 465 and 389 of 1919.
24. 48 of 1893; S.I.I. IV, No. 861. This is on the 3rd pākāra according to the scheme adopted in this thesis though it is mentioned as second in the Ep. Report.
26. See Appendix III.
27. 589 of 1919.
28. 493 and 487 of 1919.
29. 620 of 1919.
30. 456 of 1919.
31. 494 of 1919.
32. 554 of 1919.
35. Appendix III.
38. 404, 408, 369 and 366 and 397 of 1919.
39. 404 of 1919.
40. 408 and 397 of 1919.

Dansanayaka or Dannayaka was the Hoysala official of the higher grade with wide civil and military powers (cf. J. Duncan M. Derret, The Hoysalas, Madras, 1957), p. 188.
41. 369 and 366 of 1919.
42. 397 and 404 and 615 of 1919.
43. 612 of 1919.
44. 602 of 1919.
45. K.A.N. Sastri has identified Manmu Siddha I with Nalla Siddha, Cholās, p 388; contra Sewel, HISI, p. 130.
46. 456 of 1919.
47. K.A.N. Sastri, op. cit., p. 390.
49. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 396.
50. Appendix III. See both under Rājarāja III and Tikkaka I.
51. 446 of 1919.
52. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 140.
53. 34 of 1893 (Ś 1157).
54. 432, 434 of 1919; 463.
55. 446, 416, 395, 357 etc. of 1919.
57. 621 and 620 of 1919.
58. 46 of 1893; S.I.I. IV, No. 859.
59. 416 of 1919.
60. 345 of 1919.
61. 570 of 1919.
62. 607 of 1919.
63. 609 of 1919.
64. 415 of 1919.
66. 2 of 1893 and 26 of 1890; *I.A. XII* 122 and 197 ff.
68. 580 of 1907; *ARE* 1908 II, 75.
69. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 148.
70. See Appendix III.
71. 353, 450 of 1919, 38 of 1890; 350 of 1919.
72. 538, 393, 571 and 343 of 1919. (all from Varadarājaswāmi temple, Kāñchi).
73. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 152.
74. *Ibid*, pp. 154-155. The Pāṇḍya king claims to have killed a Telugu-Chāḍa chief "Ganṭagōpāla". There is considerable difficulty in identifying this chief, because this title was common to many of them. One thing is certain that he could not have been Tribhuvanachakravarti Ganṭagōpāla, for we find his inscriptions coming right up to 1291. It might have been Tikka I.
75. Appendix III.
76. 568 of 1919.
77. *ARE* 1920 of p. 118.
78. 39 of 1893; *S.I.I. IV*, No. 852.
79. 538, 393, 503 of 1919; 36 of 1890
81. R. Sewel, op. cit., pp. 171 and 396.
83. *Ep. Ind.* VII, 128; R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 172. A theory of two Kōpperujingas, father and son, bearing the same name has also been put forward and also different versions are held about his relations with the Pāṇḍyas. Refer K.A.N. Sastri, Chōlas; R. Sātyanātha Iyer, *The Kāḻavaraya Problem in Dr. S.K. Iyengar's Commemorative Volume*; V. Vridhagirisān, *The Kāḻavarayas in Journal of Indian History*, vol. XVI, 137-160; and views of S. Somasundara Desikar, *J.I.H.*, vol. XVII, pt. 3.
84. K.A.N. Sastri, op. cit., p. 430.
85. 353 of 1919.
86. 353, 450 of 1919; 38 of 1890; 365 and 356 of 1919 respectively.
87. *JMU*, X, p. 56.
88. 350.
90. 450 of 1919.
92. *Ibid*.
93. *Ibid*.
96. 64 of 1927.
97. 52 of 1893; 485, 486 and 488 of 1919.
98. 488 of 1919.
99. 485 of 1919.
100. 483 of 1919.
101. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 150.
103. Supra.
104. 592 of 1907; R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 65.
105. R. Sewel, op. cit., pp. 165-175.
108. 34 of 1890; *Ep. Ind.* IV, No. 145.
110. *Ep. Ind.* VII, pp. 128/132; Hultzh, the editor of the epigraph, rightly surmises that Mānavra was probably a member of the Ganṭagōpāla family which was connected with Kāñchi.
111. Dr. N.V. Ramanayya has pointed that since the *Vilgūṭivaravamsāvali* mentions that Muppudu Nāyaka defeated the Pancha Pāṇḍyas and captured Kāñchi, the latter was probably under the Pāṇḍyas who might have recaptured the city from the Chēra king Ravivarman Kulasekharā. *Vilgūṭivaravamsāvali* (1939, Madras, p. 7).
112. 401 of 1919; *SITI*, I, No. 397.
113. 572 and 585 of 1919.
115. 620 of 1919.
116. 566 of 1919.
118. 604 and 524 of 1919.
119. 523 of 1919.
120. 357 of 1929, 213 of 1912, 213 and 214 of 1901.
121. S.K. Iyengar's *Sources of Vijayanagar History*, p. 23 ff.
122. 573 and 585 of 1919.
124. 33 of 1890.
125. 152 of 1923; 210 of 1912 etc. R. Sewel, op. cit., pp. 197-198.
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125. 31 and 32 of 1890.
126. 661 of 1919.
128. R. Sewel, pp. 208-211, Bukka II's inscriptions at Kâñchi dated 1406 found at Kâñchi (12 of 1893).
131. K.A.N. Sastri and M. Venkataramanayya, *Further Sources of Vijayanagar History*, vol. I, p. 120.
132. 37 of 1890.
133. 658 and 613 of 1919.
137. *ARE* 1910, para 54.
138. See Chapter V for fuller details.
139. 667 and 648 of 1919.
140. 601 of 1919.
142. 474 and 533 of 1919.
143. 478, 513 and 569 of 1919.
144. 418 of 1919.
145. 413 of 1919.
146. 414 of 1919.
147. 474 of 1919.
149. See Appendix III.
150. 584 of 1919.
151. 546, 543 and 511 of 1919.
153. *Ibid*.
154. 182 of 1929-30.
156. 498 of 1919.
157. Appendix III.
159. *ARE* 1920, p. 114.
160. 528 of 1919.
162. 482 of 1919.
163. 504 of 1919.
164. 580 of 1919.
166. 507 of 1919.
167. 527 of 1919.
167a. 592 and 591 of 1919.
168. *Ibid*.
169. 535 of 1919.
170. 534 of 1919.
173. 484 of 1919.
174. *ARE* 1912, para 58.
175. *ARE*, 1920, p. 115.
177. R. Satyanatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 298.
179. R. Satyanatha Iyer, op. cit., p. 299.
180. 421, 381 and 382 of 1919.
181. 499 of 1919.
183. 502 of 1919.
184. 201 of 1922.
188. *Ibid*.
190. H.D. Love, op. cit., p. 76.
194. 398 of 1919
196. Crole, op. cit., p. 118.
201. R. Sewel, op. cit., p. 289.
203. *Ibid*.
204. Crole, *Manual*, p. 117, on the basis of wrong calculation assigned this epigraph to A.D. 1799 and held that the images were secretly removed for fear of Hyder Ali's invasion of Kâñchi in 1780. But actually, the epigraph is dated A.D. 1710 and as it refers to the reinstallation of the images, the removal of them should
have taken place much earlier. Moreover, the reference to Rāja Tōdarmalla is another clear proof for the earlier date (cf. ARE 1920, p. 20).


206. 424 of 1919; ARE 1920, p. 123. A few more inscriptions of the Moghul ruler Alamgir Pasha are available in the neighbourhood of Kāñchi e.g., 130 of 1922 found at Putteri. Also see ARE 1922, pp. 125-126.
CHAPTER III

THE LAY-OUT OF THE TEMPLE AND
SEQUENCE OF CONSTRUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the general lay-out of the Varadarāja-
swāmi temple and the disposition of the various shrines, maṇḍapas and other
structures therein. The ground-plans of the structures together with their measure-
ments are given and the same are illustrated in general ground plan of the temple (Fig.
39). Like many of the big temple-complexes of South India, such as those at Śrīran-
gam, Tiruvannāmalai, Madurai and Chidambaram, this temple was not built all at one
time but was the result of many centuries of growth and development and therefore,
it is essential to know the sequence of construction and the probable age of each of
the enclosures and, wherever possible, of each structure therein. Inscriptions found
on the walls in situ afford interesting and valuable evidence for determining the age
of the structures. Many of them make explicit mention of the date of construction
and the person responsible for the same; while many others, though not explicit,
help us to fix the upper age-limit of a particular structure. For instance, the gopura-
entrance in the second prākāra opposite to the Narasimha shrine bears a number of
Chōla epigraphs, the earliest going back to A.D. 1073. From this we can reason-
ably infer that the gateway was either coeval with it or earlier than the date of the
epigraph, and certainly not later than that date. But, care should be taken to
see whether the earliest inscription in a particular structure is in its original position
and not built into or subjoined later. Caution is also necessary in another respect.
In this case, we cannot blindly date the superstructure over the gateway with the
help of the inscriptions found on the basement of the gateway, because we know
many examples where the stone basal portion alone was built at one time and the
brick superstructure built or rebuilt considerably later. In such cases, corroboration
from the architectural features is absolutely necessary. A more detailed architectu-
ral study of this temple is reserved for another chapter, but here it is briefly mention-
ed as corroborative evidence to fix the age of a structure wherever necessary.

Some useful information is also available from the traditional Vaishnavite
literature, regarding certain shrines and prākāras, which is taken into consideration
in outlining the sequence of construction. Description of the shrines and other
structural features in the works of Manavāla Mahāmuni (1376-1445) and Appayya
Dikshitar (16th century), however brief, furnish important information.

Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple as it stands today is a vast and impressive complex
of structures, enclosed by high and massive compound walls, all around, occupying
a rectangular plot of land 377.40 metres long and 211.65 metres broad. Thus,
it is easily one of the largest temple-complexes of South India. There are two main
entrances to the temple—one on the west which is the principal entrance and another
on the east, which is virtually closed except for a small wicket-gate opening within the door-frame. An unusual, though not a prohibited feature, of this temple is that the main deity is facing west and hence the gateway that is in its front has become the principal entrance. Inside this walled enclosure is a series of concentric courtyards, around the central nucleus—the Hastigiri ‘Hill’—on which is located the main sanctum of Lord Varadarāja. There are thus four courtyards in the temple and the local Śrī-Varaṇavasmāras would add the mādāvidhis or the main streets around the temple as the fifth one.¹ The narrow closed passage immediately around the sanctum which is known as Tirumalaḷigai is excluded in the reckoning of the prākāras. The first enclosure which is on the ‘hill’ is named Vayyamāligai; the second is called the Sēnayarkōntirumālam; the third Yambuṉāṭuṟaivar-tirumālam and the fourth or the last is known as Āḻvar-pradakṣhinam (see Fig. 39, General Plan).

The first prākāra which is on the Hastigiri ‘Hill’ comprises of the garbhagriha with its forward complements like the antarāla and two axial walled maṇḍapas and a pillared maḥāmaṇḍapa (G.P. Nos. 1 to 9).² The garbhagriha is a square cella (3 × 3 sq. metres) with the mūlabhīra of Lord Varadarāja standing majestically in the rear half. A narrow antarāla or vestibule connects the sanctum to the closed maṇḍapa (3.30 × 1.60 metres) in its front. There is a beautiful dvitāla vimāna of the śāla (wagon vault) type over the sanctum.³ It is called the Purvakōṭi-vimāṇa, which is taken to signify the bestowal of countless benefits on the devotee who sees and worships it. In front of the mukhamāṇḍapa and 1.53 metres lower than the floor-level of the sanctum, is the eight-pillared rectangular maḥāmaṇḍapa (11.15 × 4.60 metres). It is a closed hall of granite masonry with its entrance leading us out into the first ambulatory which runs around the entire complex described above. This ambulatory is a closed pillared verandah which now affords the devotee the pradakṣhinapatha or passage around the sanctum. This is known as the vayyamāligai. This term is mentioned both in the Guruparamparai of Pinjaligia-Perumal-Jiyar (13th century) and an inscription dated A.D. 1560.⁴ The word Vayyamāligai means the mansion or house on this earth. According to the conception of the Śrī-Varaṇavasmāras, Lord Vishnu has His residence in the two worlds—Nitya-vibhūti and Līla-vibhūti. The former is His original abode in the terrestrial world and the latter is His abode on the earth where He manifests Himself in the archa or image form. This abode on earth is called in Tamil, Vayyamāligai. The roof of this courtyard is supported by two rows of pillars which are all of the Vijayanagar type. It is quite likely that, at first, it was an open courtyard and in the Vijayanagar days, it was made into a closed hall, supported by a colonnade of pillars. The inner faces of the walls of this enclosure bear some good paintings of the late Vijayanagar times.

Unfortunately, there is no inscription or literary evidence to fix the date of the present structures of the garbhagriha and the two ardhamaṇḍapas in its front. But the architectural features clearly show that they belong to the Chōla times and probably to the 11th century A.D. This is fully discussed in the chapter on ‘Architecture’.

Second Prākāra

On the south-east corner of the Hastigiri hill is a flight of 24 steps which we descend to reach the second prākāra round the foot of the ‘Hill’. It is an open
court yard which runs around the ‘hill’ or ‘malai’ and hence known as Malai-pradak-
shnam. It is also known as the Śēnaiyarkōṅ tirumurram, as there is a shrine for Śēnai-
yarkōṅ or Visvaksēna, the mythical Commander-in-Chief of the Lord, on the nor-
thern wing of the courtyard (G.P. No. 16). Passing along this courtyard, we see
the high walls of the ‘Hill’ built of well-dressed blocks of stone. Its entire wall-
space is studded with numerous Chōja and later inscriptions which are clearly
readable from this courtyard.

This courtyard is enclosed by a double-storeyed cloistered verandah with colon-
nades of pillars of uniform size (2 metres tall) and design with circular cross-section
and the typical Chōja corbel of the bevelled variety. This verandah may be later
than its central entrance-gateway which is datable to the 11th century A.D. There are
a number of inscriptions in the plinth portions of the gateway, the earliest belonging
to the 3rd year of Kulōttunga I (i.e., A.D. 1073). This inscription does not allude
to the construction of the gateway or the prākāra and therefore it may reasonably be
presumed that the structure was slightly older than that date, perhaps contemporary
with the Narasimha shrine, opposite to it.

Narasimha shrine

At the western foot of the ‘hill’ is the shrine of Nrisimha. It is a long but narrow
shrine with a low ceiling (about 2 metres high) improvised by walling up the front
portion of the inner core of the hill. It is conceived in the form of a cave in which
Nrisimha is seated in the yogic form at the far end. The inner faces of the walls of
this shrine are profusely inscribed—the earliest going to A.D. 1053 which means
that the shrine in its present form is at least as old as A.D. 1053, if not earlier. The
garbhagriha, the antarāla are all in one and the same level. The pillars of the mukha-
mandapa are short and thick with heavy tenon-like corbels, typical of the early and
middle Chōja style. The access to this shrine is by a small doorway (2.25 × 1.18 ml)
on the west.

In front of this shrine is a sixteen-pillared mukhamaṇḍapa of late Vijayanagar
date. The Vijayanagar state-crest is carved on its pillars. This maṇḍapa is inter-
posed between the Narasimha shrine and the entrance-gateway to this prākāra.

The cloistered verandah running along the periphery of the enclosure accommod-
dates four shrines: one for Daṇvantri on the south-eastern corner, one for Gaṅgēsa
on the south-west and those of Āṇḍāḷ and Malayāḷa Nāchchiār on either side of the
gateway (G.P. Nos. 12, 13, 14 & 15). Āṇḍāḷ, or Gōda, the divine maiden, who attain-
ed godhood by her intense devotion and whose Tamil hymns like Tiruppāvai are
sung in every Vishnu temple, seems to have been enshrined sometime in the 14th cen-
tury A.D. The existence of this shrine in the 15th and 16th century is attested by
inscriptions. Āṇḍāḷ is referred to by her other name Sūḍikkoḍuttaṇāchchiār.
From the disposition of the shrines, we can infer that the shrine of Malayāḷa Nāchchiār is probably as old as that of Āṇḍāḷ. The word Malayāḷa Nāchchiār
literally means the ‘consort from Malayāḷadēsa or Kērala country’. We do not know
how and when this concept of Malayāḷa Nāchchiār and her consecration in a separate
shrine on almost equal footing with Āṇḍāḷ, came into being. Perhaps, it was a result
of the brief conquest of Kānchi by the Chēra king Ravivarman Kulasēkhara in
A.D. 1316, who performed his second coronation at Kānchi on the bank of the Vēga-
vati and worshipped in the temple of Arulā[apperumā]. Probably, Malayāla Nāch-chiār was installed here as a gift of the Chēra family to the Lord Varadarāja. The reference to Sērakulavalli-nāch-chiār in an epigraph of this temple lends plausibility to this surmise.  

A parallel development is reported at Srīrangam. There, a legendary Chēra king Kulasēkhara is said to have given his daughter Sērakulavalli in marriage to Lord Ranganāthā and done extensive constructional activities in the third prākāra. It is hence known as ‘Kulasēkhara Tiruvīḍi’.

There are twelve pillared and nine-pillared maṇḍapas attached to the shrines of Āṇḍāl and Malayāla Nāch-chiār respectively. Both of them are considerably later than the shrines and belong to the later Vijayanagar times, about the 16th century A.D.

Third prākāra

An entrance (G.P. No. 17) with a gōpura leads us out into the third prākāra known as maṇḍapalli-prākāra as there is the madappalli or the temple kitchen at the south-eastern corner of the prākāra. It is also called Yamunai Thuraivar tirumuṟram i.e., the courtyard of Yamunaithuraivar, so called because Yamunaithuraivar or Āḷavāṇḍār, the great Sri-Vaishnava āchārya is believed to have met Sri Rāmānuja for the first time in this courtyard. This is considered to be a historic meeting, as it led to Āḷavāṇḍār’s choice of Rāmānuja as his successor at Srīrangam. A number of shrines and maṇḍapas are located in this courtyard. They are:

Garuḍa shrine (G.P. No. 19)

In front of the gōpura, leading to the Yamunaithuraivan prākāra and facing the main deity, is a small shrine for Garuḍa who stands with Anjali Hasta, i.e., hands clasped in worshipful mood.

Tiru-Anantālvar shrine (G.P. No. 21)

On the north-western side of this prākāra is the beautiful shrine for Anantālvar or Ādisēsha, the divine serpent on which Lord Vishnu reclines. The shrine faces east. It consists of a square garbhagriha, an antarāla and a mukhamaṇḍapa. There are a number of inscriptions on the walls. One of them, on the base of the south wall is dated A.D. 1212 (35th year of Kulōttunga III). It states that this shrine was built by Siyaganga of the Ganga family, son of Chōlēndra Simha. He was a Ganga feudatory of Kulōttunga III. He was known to be the patron of Pavanandi, the author of Namūl.

Karumāṇikka Perumāl shrine (G P. No. 22)

On the northern side, and in the centre of this courtyard, is the small, but beautiful, shrine for Kariamāṇikka Varadar or Karumāṇikka Perumāl facing west. The present shrine was probably built by Vikrama-Chōla, sometime around his 11th year i.e., A D. 1129. An inscription in the shrine of the year refers to the king setting up the image which was known as Vikrama-Chōla-Vinnagar-Āḻvār. The presence of this shrine is mentioned in the Guruparamparai of Pinbaḷaji Perumāḷ Jiyar who lived during the beginning of the 13th century A.D. It has a square garbhagriha, an antarāla and a mukhamaṇḍapa. There is no vimāna or tower over the sanctum,
The thousand-pillared maṇḍapa (G.P. No. 23)

Beyond this and on the north-eastern corner of the prākāra is the pavilion called the Āyirakkāl-maṇḍapam or the hall of a thousand columns, built in two storeys. Though there are no thousand-pillars in the hall, it has become a convention to call it so. It seems to have been built under the patronage of Pratāpa Rudra Dēva, the Kākatiya king who had a brief spell of power over Kāñchi in A.D. 1316.13

On the south-eastern corner of this prākāra is the maṇḍappāli or the kitchen (G.P. No. 24). It is an old structure having a number of Chōla characteristics. An interesting inscription states that the kitchen was built by Nāralōka-Vīra, the famous general and minister of Kulōttunga I. The structure is, therefore, datable to the latter half of the 11th century A.D.

Abhishēka-maṇḍapa (G.P. No. 20)

In a central position of the forecourt of this prākāra is a fine edifice called the abhishēka-maṇḍapa where the tirumanṭanam of the utsava hēras (processional deities) of Lord Varadarāja and His consorts takes place. It is a pillared hall (10 metres long, 5 metres broad) closed on three sides with a stepped approach. The structure appears to have been built in the early half of the 13th century A.D. From outside, it looks more like a shrine than a maṇḍapa, especially because of the presence of the pilasters on its exterior walls. An undated inscription records the construction of this maṇḍapa by one Elambilakkāṭtu-Nāyakar.14 Since it is an epigraph subjoined to the one dated in 21st year of Rājendra III i.e., A.D. 1236, it can be taken to be of the same year. On palaeographical grounds too, the inscription may belong to the same time.15 The architectural features of the maṇḍapa also point to the same date.16 The same inscription informs us that this structure was also known as Dēvamāradēvan. The front porch with the balustraded stepped entrance of the maṇḍapa was probably constructed in the 16th century by one Aḻagia-manavāla-Jīyar, a prominent religious leader of Kāñchi, who held an important position in the temple. The Kannāḍi Arai or the Mirror-Hall in which the utsava deity stays during festival days and the present safe-vault of the temple are located inside this maṇḍapa.

An interesting epigraph belonging to the time of Ballāḷa III dated 8 1282 (A.D. 1359) mentions that the Hōysāḷa king seated with his consorts on the throne named Viravallāḷan in the abhishēka maṇḍapa listened to the Tamil hymns of Saṭagōpa17 (Nammāḻvār’s Tiruvōyμoḻi).

In front of the abhishēka-maṇḍapa is a large thirty-two-pillared maṇḍapa with fine carvings (G.P. No. 27). When the holy bath to the deity is performed in the abhishēka-maṇḍapa, the Śrī-Vaishnavā devotees assemble here and recite the portions of the Purusha Śūktam and the Tamil devotional hymns (Prabhandaṁs) of the Āḻvārs. This is also a structure in Vijayanagar style bearing their royal boar crest on its ceilings.

On the northern side of the abhishēka-maṇḍapa is the elevated maṇḍapam called the kilī-maṇḍapa or the Pavitraṭṣava maṇḍapa where pavitraṭṣava festival is conducted (G.P. No. 34). The vāhanas or the God’s processional vehicles are kept in this now. The shrine for Rāma is on the extreme north of this maṇḍapa (G.P. No. 35). It is a structure of the Vijayanagar times. The plinth of the maṇḍapa overlaps with the plinth of the abhishēka-maṇḍapa and covers the moulded plinth portions of the latter.
Some of the inscriptions of the abhishēka-maṇḍapa are thus covered by end-portions of this maṇḍapa. This clearly proves that the latter was built long after the abhishēka-maṇḍapa.

Shrine of Perundēvi Tāyār (G.P. No. 28)

On the western side of this prākāra is the shrine of Perundēvi Tāyār, the chief consort of Lord Varadarāja. It is customary to offer worship to this shrine before going to the shrine of Varadarāja. While the latter faces west, the former faces east. The Tāyār shrine is built on an elevated pediment about 3 metres (about 10 feet) high reached by a flight of 10 steps. This elevation was given probably to match it with that of the sanctum of Her consort, stationed at the height of nearly 14.60 metres (45 feet) from the ground level. There is an open circumambulation around the sanctum and then a cloistered verandah around, a nukha-maṇḍapa close to the sanctum and a spacious pillared hall, mahā-maṇḍapa in front—all occupying a total area of 11.80 sq. metres (G.P. Nos. 29, 30 and 31).

In general, separate shrines for Dēvi came to be built in Tamilnād only in the later Chōḷa times.18 In this temple also, the shrine for Tāyār seems to have been built sometime in the first half of the 13th century A.D. It is conspicuous by its absence in the early epigraphs. The earliest reference to the shrine is found in a record dated A.D. 1236, belonging to Rājarāja III.19 It registers a gift of 33 heads of cattle for a lamp in the shrine of Periapirāṭṭiar, the prime consort of Aruḷāḷapperumāḷ. An inscription of the 17th year of the Telugu-Chōḷa chief Vijaya Gaṇḍāgōpāla dated circa A.D. 1265 also records gift to the same shrine. The Guruparāmpara prabhāvam written by Pinbaḷagia-perumāḷ Jīyar in the 13th century clearly mentions the presence of the shrine.

The mukhamañḍapa right in its front (G.P. No. 30) was also constructed sometime around A.D. 1259 by one Vanga-Kālingarayan of Kappalūr whose portrait-sculpture in bas-relief is found in the wall of the maṇḍapa with an inscription20 which reads ‘Kappalūr-udayoṇ-vanga-kālingarayan-Tirumañḍapam’. The inscription does not bear a date, but we know from other sources that he was a feudatory of the Pāṇḍya king Vira-Pāṇḍya who came to the throne in A.D. 1253.21 The construction of this maṇḍapa might have taken place a few years later than that date. The architectural features of the structure support the date.

But the original Tāyār shrine of the later Chōḷa times was subsequently replaced by the existing one, sometime in the latter half of the 15th century A.D., evidently under the royal patronage of the Vijayanagar rulers. It is interesting to note in this connection that an inscription dated A.D. 1487 refers to the resegregation of the image of Perundēvi Tāyār.22 Probably, this was done soon after the construction of the present shrine. It is an elegant structure which displays the exuberance of the Vijayanagar style of architecture. The vimāna over the sanctum is known as the Kalyāṇakōṭi vimāna and was built by Ėṭṭūr Kumāra Tāṭāchāryā in A.D. 1614 (Ś 1536)23 He is said to have covered the vimāna with gold-coated plate. Now, the copper sheet alone remains there, with a few tinges of gold here and there.

The mahāmaṇḍapa to the east (G.P. No. 31) of the Tāyār shrine is also a fine product of Vijayanagar times. Here is celebrated the famous Mahānaṇami festival on which day Varadarāja and Perundēvi are seated in the same pedestal—the only
day in the whole year when this occurs. This ornamental maṇḍapa was built by Aḻagia Maṇavāḷa Jīyar, the Kōil-kēḻvi (Superintendent) of this temple by about the middle of the 16th century. His portrait-figure is sculptured in one of the pillars of this maṇḍapa. This maṇḍapa with its typical ornamental double-pillars with the rearing horsemen has close stylistic resemblance to the hundred-pillared maṇḍapa, in the outer courtyard of the temple, which was also built by the same Jīyar.

Ūṇjal maṇḍapa (G.P. No. 26)

A small but noteworthy pavilion in this prākāra is the Ūṇjal maṇḍapa located in the open courtyard (called Aḻagiyā Maṇavāḷa tirumūṟam) adjacent to the Tāyār shrine (G.P. No. 25). It is a four-pillared pavilion, standing on a high terrace. The pillars and the coffered ceiling are minutely carved and display elegance and beauty. This is a construction of Vijayanagar times. Their royal crest is boldly carved in more than one place on the ceiling of this pavilion. Here, we have a good example of intricate chiselling that was adopted by the Vijayanagar artisans, so that the whole maṇḍapa resembles a fine feligree work. This maṇḍapa is specifically mentioned in an epigraph of Achyutarāya dated in A.D. 1530.24

From this courtyard we go to the next, the fourth and the outermost prākāra passing through a gateway crowned by a gōpura (G.P. No. 36). This gateway is now known as Tondaradippodi vāsal. The correct name seems to have been Tōḍarmal-vāsal as the statue of Rāja Tōḍarmal is kept near this entrance. He did great service to this temple by restoring the utsava image of Varadarāja from a forest to which it had been previously removed for fear of desecration at the hands of the Muslim invaders25 and is kept near this entrance. This gateway and its adjoining compound wall can be dated back to the 11th century A.D., as inscriptions of Kulōttunga I dated 36th (A.D. 1106) are found on its walls.26 One of them refers to a grant by the wife of Karunākara Tōṇḍaimān, the famous general of Kulōttunga I. However, this enclosure wall, according to the local tradition, was heightened and rebuilt by Aḻagiy-ya-maṇavāḷa Jīyar in the 16th century. The Jīyar’s portrait-sculptures are placed on the top of the compound wall at two places.27

Fourth Prākāra

We now come to the 4th and the largest courtyard of this temple. This is called the Aḻvār-pradakshinam or Aḻvār-Tiruvādī, as the shrines of all the Āḻvārs are situated in this enclosure. This is a very long and broad courtyard consisting of a number of shrines, maṇḍapas, the dvajaṭhamba, the balīṭa, tanks and gardens—all giving a magnificent appearance. The shrines of the Āḻvārs and āchāryas as also some of the shrines like those of Krishna, Varāha, Ranganātha are built along the periphery of the enclosure—all of them gravitating towards the main sanctum of the temple at the centre.

In describing the structures of this vast courtyard we can conveniently divide the enclosure into four quadrants with reference to two axial lines east-west and north-south, cutting across the sanctum, the quadrants—the north-east, south-east, south-west and north-west. North-east: In this sector is the shrine of Nammāḻvār which faces west (G.P. No. 43). It consists of a square sanctum (4.30 sq. metres), an antarāla and a mahāmaṇḍapa. There is a beautiful bronze image of Nammāḻvār for
whom regular festivals are conducted. From the reference to the popularity of Nammāḷvār’s Tiruṇōyndrii mentioned in the inscription of Ballāla III, we will not be wrong if we infer that Nammāḷvār was already deified here. South-east: In the south-east quadrant are shrines for Tirumangai Ālvār and Maņavāḷa Mahāmuni, the former facing west and the latter facing north (G.P. Nos. 45 & 46). The Tirumangai Ālvār shrine has been completely rebuilt in recent years. The shrine of Maņavāḷa Mahāmuni is a spacious building. It appears to have been built in the Vijayanagar times, as is indicated by the typical Vijayanagar pillars and pilasters of the shrine having pushpa-pōdigai corbels and a number of typical bas-relief sculptures on the pillars.

An inscription dated A.D. 1555 records an endowment for offerings to Peria Jīyar (Maņavāḷa Mahāmuni) on his birth asterism of Mūlam. From this it may be inferred that he was already enshrined, probably, in the present shrine. The architectural features tally well with that period. Near the shrine of Maņavāḷa Mahāmuni towards the west are the shrines of Tirumāḷisai Ālvār and Rāmānuja (G.P. Nos. 47 and 48). From many Chōḷa inscriptions, we know that offerings were made to many Ālvārs like Poigai and Bhūdām, and in all likelihood they along with Tirumāḷisai were also deified during the same time. The present shrine however seems to have been constructed during the 15th century under the Vijayanagar patronage. An epigraph of king Virupāksha dated Śaka 1389 (A.D. 1467) is found on the maṇḍapa in front of the shrine. It records the purchase of land for the shrine of Tirumāḷisai Ālvār. From this, we can infer that the shrine was in existence even before this date. Next to the shrine of Rāmānuja is that of Mūdāḷ-ālvārs which is closed now (G.P. No. 49).

South-west: Vāhana maṇḍapa—This is a beautiful pavilion in late Vijayanagar style having pillars with rearing horses (G.P. No. 50). It is closely modelled on the design of the Kalyōṇa maṇḍapa, situated opposite to it. In the rear portion of this pavilion are accommodated the shrines of Vēdana Dēsika, and Lakṣhmikumāra Tātā-chārya (G.P. No. 51). The latter was the manager of this temple during the times of Vijayanagar king Vēnkaṭa I. During the Vaisākha festivals, the utsava deities mounted on the vāhanas would be placed in this pavilion on the return from processions and the concluding portions of the Vēda and the Prabhandam would be recited here.

Tulābhāra-maṇḍapas (G.P. Nos. 52 & 53)

There are two small four-pillared maṇḍapas, about 12 feet high, on the west of the dvajāsthamba. These are known as Tulābhāra maṇḍapas, probably because they were built on the occasion of the Tulābhāra ceremony performed by the Vijayanagar king Achyutarāya in A.D. 1532. He is said to have weighed himself against pearls (mukta-tulābhāra) and given the entire wealth as gift to this temple. These two maṇḍapas, almost identical in construction and style, might have been built for this occasion. There is a specific reference to the Tulābhāra maṇḍapa in his inscription dated A.D. 1533. The Stable maṇḍapa (G.P. No. 56)

This maṇḍapa which faces north is a spacious one with high pials on either side.
It consists of long cloistered verandahs with a square open courtyard in the centre. It has no architectural or sculptural embellishment. The Vijayanagar royal-crest is carved in bold relief at many places on the kodungal or the flexed carriole over the maṇḍapa. But now the building is in a state of neglect and disuse. This seems to have been used once for shelter for the cows, horses etc., belonging to the temple. Adjacent to it is the Vasanta-maṇḍapa where the temple-office is now situated (G.P. No. 57). North-east: In this sector are situated important shrines, maṇḍapas, tanks and gardens.

Anantarasas—the sacred tank (Fig. 2)

This enchanting tank occupies a central position in this sector. About 78.6 metre long, 60 metre broad, it has well-paved stone steps all around for the devotees to have easy access and have a holy dip before entering into the temple. It is quite an old tank, mentioned in the Guruparamparai (13th century) and Vedânta Desika’s Satyavrata Mahâtmiya. In addition to the usual Neerâli-maṇḍapa (16 pillared) in the centre of the tank, there is another smaller four-pillared maṇḍapa, surmounted by a small vimâna or tower (G.P. Nos. 67 & 68). It is here that the original but mutilated mûlabhêra of Lord Varadarâja called Ādi Atti-Varada is made to rest. The stone-steps of the tank were repaired and reset under the orders of the Vijayanagar minister Râmarâya in the latter half of the 16th century A.D.

On the western bank of this tank are the small shrines of Krishna and Varâha, both facing east and their rear portion going very near but not abutting on the outer compound wall of the temple.

Krishna shrine (G.P. No. 63)

It has a square sanctum, an antarâla and a nukha-maṇḍapa. The sanctum is crowned by a vimâna, about 25 ft. in height. The architectural style is suggestive of the later Pândya period. On its sanctum wall, a fragmentary Tamil epigraph of the late 13th century characters belonging to one Mâravarman Sundara Pândya is found. The wall niches, five in number, are squattish and the pillar corbels show the incipient pûmunai bracket. This shrine is now without the deity, the utsava idol is preserved elsewhere in the temple. The shrine is now used as a store-room for the trappings of the temple elephant.

Varâha and other ruined shrines (G.P. No. 64)

Further north on the same row are the dilapidated shrines of Lord Varâha and an empty shrine—both have square maṇḍapas with the sanctums in their centre. They are empty, the deities having been removed to the interior of the temple. The extant structures are devoid of any notable architectural features. They are in the normal Vijayanagar pattern and are datable to 16th century A.D. Further north also there is a ruined unused maṇḍapa of Vijayanagar times (G.P. No. 68).

Sri Ranganâtha shrine (G.P. No. 66)

On the northern bank of the tank Anantarasas stands a solitary shrine dedicated to Ranganâtha. It is of modest size, and built in the same pattern as the Varâha shrine i.e., a small sanctum and frontal porch within a covered maṇḍapa. The large
mūlabhēra of Ranganātha in the reclining posture is a beautiful image. According to the Sanskrit inscription of Narālākavīra (11th century) already referred to, a shrine for Hari (Vishnu) in reclining posture was built by him, and crowned by a vimāna with a golden kalaśa. But it is difficult to say if this is the shrine under reference. The shrine is now without a vimāna. The shrine itself seems to have been rebuilt in the Vijayanagar times.

The Chakrattālvār shrine (G.P. No. 40)

On the eastern bank of the Anantasaras tank is the shrine of Chakrattālvār or Sudarsana, personification of Lord Vishnu's discus. The shrine seems to have been constructed by one Ilaiḻvān Kālingarāyan of Neḻtūr in the 14th year of Kulōtungā III i.e., A.D. 1191. The inscription recording this fact calls the deity by its Tamil name—Tiru-āḻi-Ālvār-āḻḷ meaning the discus.³²

The sanctum is unusually spacious here. In the centre of the sanctum is placed a large, two-faced and exquisite image of Chakrattālvār.

Probably because the image is two-faced, the sanctum also has two doorways, so that both the faces would be visible to the worshipper when he circumambulates the shrine. Similarly, the outer maṇḍapa built around the sanctum has two entrances—one on the east and the other on the west.

Both the maṇḍapas are built in the Vijayanagar style, as evidenced by the tall and ornate pillars and the Pushpa-pōḍigai corbel. The Vijayanagar state-emblem, the boar and dagger motif, is carved prominently on the ceiling of the maṇḍapa on the west.

Poṟṟāmarai tank

There is a big tank behind the Nammālvār shrine and on the north-east of the outer courtyard and near the eastern entrance of the temple. An inscription dated A.D. 1544 records a grant of money for the repairs to this tank by one Chennayyāngar.³³ The tank is stated to have been first dug by the donor's great grandfather. From this we can infer that the tank came into existence sometime around A.D. 1500.

Dorai Thōṭṭam (Garden)

Immediately on the east of the Chakrattālvār shrine is a vast flower garden of the temple, which occupies almost the entire length of the prākāra upto the eastern Tirumadil. A variety of flower-plants like the jasmine (malli), the rose, nāṇjavāṭṭai (white flowers), besides trees of mango, coconut, jack-fruit are also grown for the use in the temple.

Perundēvi Tāyār's 'Friday maṇḍapa' is situated here (G.P. No. 42-a). The utsava idol of Tāyār used to be brought in procession to this pavilion and made to rest here every Friday. The annual Davanōṭsavam (garden-festival) for Lord Varadarāja is celebrated here in the month of Chaitra (April). An epigraph of Sadāśiva dated Śaka 1473 mentions the festival in the Vasantha Tōppu, in the month of Chittirai. Probably, the reference is to this garden.

In the same garden are situated the two shrines, one for Periālvār and another for Toṇḍarattipōḍi Ālvār and Tiruppān Ālvār (G.P. Nos. 41 and 42). These shrines
seem to have been built in the early Vijayanagar period. The presence of the shrine for both the Ājñās is mentioned by an inscription of Sadāśiva dated A.D. 1558 and 1560 (447 and 448 of 1919). But owing to sheer negligence, these shrines are overgrown with vegetation covering the entire structure. Hence, the deities have been removed and placed in various other shrines.

The Kalyāṇa-manḍapa (G.P. No. 61)

Perhaps the most attractive structure in this prākāra is the hundred-pillared kalyāṇa-manḍapa on the south bank of the Anantasaras tank. In accordance with the convention, it is placed slightly to the side of the principal entrance to the temple. It is a magnificent pillared pavilion with a raised platform for a throne in its centre for the reception of the utsava deities of the Lord and His consorts on ceremonial occasions. There is a beautiful and small pavilion made of black polished granite and placed at the rear bay on a high pedestal. It is here that the utsava deities are placed. On certain festival days, religious discourses are given to the people assembled.

The Kalyāṇa-manḍapa is an important contribution of the Vijayanagar times. The pillars are tall and monolithic and their shafts are sculptured into rich and varying patterns like rearing horsemen etc. It is by far the most attractive edifice, richly adorned with innumerable sculptures of the Vaishnava pantheon, puranic stories, portrait-figures, besides remarkable architectural motifs and designs. This is discussed in detail in chapter on ‘Architecture’. It appears to have been built by Aḷagia-Maṇavāḷa-Jīyar in the latter half of the 16th century A.D. evidently under the royal patronage. The Jīyar’s portrait-figures are sculptured on two pillars of this manḍapa.

Having described the buildings in the four quarters of this outer courtyard, we now turn to those on the east-west axial line. There are the Dvajastambha and the balipīṭha (G.P. 38 and 39), the two tall four-pillared manḍapas—all in the forecourt and the two imposing gateways or entrances, one each on the east and west. One remarkable fact that was revealed by our survey plan of this temple is that the central axis-line, drawn from the centre of the outer gateways on the east to that of the west, runs along the exact centre of the gateways of all the inner prākāras and the garbhagriha. This clearly shows that in expanding the temple premises or courtyards, the central-axial line of the innermost sanctum served as the base line to which all the additional gateways were aligned.

Four-pillared manḍapas (G.P. Nos. 59 and 60)

Situated further east along the central axis are the two tall four-pillared manḍapas, crowned by small vimāṇas. They have the style and grace of the Vijayanagar workmanship. Carved stone rings are seen hanging from tips of the cornices. Sculptural representations of some Vijayanagar kings and a few other benefactors of the temple are carved on their pillars. The one nearer to the dvajastambha is known as Tirukkachinambi manḍapa as the figure of this āchārya was carved on all its pillars.
Outer courtyard

The entire outer courtyard is enclosed by a high boundary wall (tirumadil) on all sides with only two openings which form the gateways to the temple—the eastern gate (kilakku-gopura vaisal) and the western gateway (merku-gopura vaisal) (G.P. Nos. 44 and 58). The principal gateway in this temple is the one on the west instead of the usual east because the principal deity is facing in that direction. So, necessarily, all the important structures like those of Garuda, the dvajastambha, the balipaHA and the main entrance are on the west. That is the reason why the western gateway is kept open for the public, whereas the eastern gateway is always kept closed except for a small opening (about 2 metre square) in the closed door. The signs of disuse and neglect are evident on the eastern portion of the courtyard. The floor is not paved. The tank is in disrepair and wild vegetation have grown everywhere. In sharp contrast to this, the western portion of the courtyard is kept spick and span.

Gopuras: The western gopura, though smaller in size (160 ft. or 53 metres) than the one on the east (180 ft. or 60 metres), is better proportioned and more beautiful. Both stand on a lofty plinth built of solid stone-masonry which form a stable foundation for the superstructure, built of brick and mortar. The superstructures which are pyramidal in shape rise in several storeys which are composed of a series of diminishing tiers. The western gopura has seven storeys, while the eastern one has nine. But, while the horizontal and vertical arrangements seem to be well-balanced in the western gopura, it is not so in the eastern one, where there is a pronounced emphasis on the verticality.

Fortunately, there are a number of inscriptions on the plinth portions of the western gopura, giving us clues to its probable date. The earliest of them is dated Ś 1296 (A.D. 1374) and belongs to Kaumapa Udayiyar, while another belongs to successor Harihara and dated Ś 1325 (A.D. 1403). This gopura thus belongs to the early Vijayanagar period in point of time though in style it is still rooted in the late Chola or Pandyya pattern. But the eastern gopura is much more evolved and resembles closely the tall gopura of Ekambareswarar temple at Kanchi which was built by Krishnadēva Rāya in the first half of the 16th century A.D.

Before concluding this chapter, we may refer to one important verse of Maṇavāla Mahāmuni in his Kānchi Divya Dēsa Sangraha Slokamālikā in which he has described the important shrines existing in this temple during his days. He lived between A.D. 1370 and 1445 and in this verse we get a fairly good picture of this temple for that period. The items of structure he has mentioned and the present-day equivalents are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present equivalents</th>
<th>Names used in the vei</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gateway</td>
<td>Srīmat Dvāram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BalipaHA</td>
<td>MahābalipaHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anantasaras tank</td>
<td>Panindrahradam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vēṇugopāla</td>
<td>Gōpinam Ramaṇam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattarpirān or Periālvār</td>
<td>Baṭṭanātha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnānapirān</td>
<td>Varāhavapusham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nammālvār</td>
<td>Saṭavāriṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāliyan (Tirumangai Ālvār)</td>
<td>Kaliripum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the order of shrines he has mentioned, we can easily infer that he has described the temple right from the principal gateway i.e., the gateway on the west to the sanctum sanctorum. In all likelihood, there was only one gateway to this temple during his time because the present gateway on the east and the gopura over it can be ascribed only to the first half of the 16th century. After mentioning the Mahabalipitha, he describes the shrines in the outermost court i.e., the fourth prakāra in the order in which one would see during circumambulation. After mentioning the Anantasaras-tank, he mentions the shrines of Venugopala, Varaha, Periālvār, Namamalivār, Tirumangai Ālvār, Tirumalaisai, Rāmanuja, and Mudal ālvār—all these are now within the fourth prakāra. Then at the entrance to the inner prakāra (III prakāra), he mentions the dvārapālaks, which are still there. The shrines mentioned by him in this prakāra are: Perundēvi Tāyār, Anandālvān, Chakrattālvān, Rāma, Karamānīkkapperumāḷ and Garuda, besides the abhisheka-maṇḍapa and the madapalḷi (kitchen). The reference to the Chakrattālvān in this connection is interesting. Probably, originally this shrine was in the third prakāra and later on in the Vijayanagar times, it was built in its present position i.e., in the fourth prakāra. Manavāla Mahāmuni then describes the next inner prakāra (II prakāra) beginning with Nrisimha. Therein, as he circumambulates, he mentions the shrines of Anḍāḷ, Sēnaināṭar, Karigiri or the Hastigiri hill, the Punyakōṭi-vimāṇa and the Lord therein—which all tally precisely with the disposition of the structures as they stand today.

Some of the omissions in this description are also significant. For example, the absence of reference to the Kalyāṇa maṇḍapa or Vāhana-maṇḍapa in the outermost prakāra is quite natural for, as shown earlier, they are the products of the later Vijayanagar period.

Similarly, while he has mentioned the Punyakōṭi-vimāṇa, he does not refer to the Kalyāṇa kōṭi vimāṇa over the shrine of Perundēvi Tāyār. It is in keeping with our
evidence that the *Kalyāna kōṭi vimāna* was erected only in the beginning of the 17th century by Tātāchārya.

One important fact that we know from Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni's description is that the general outer plan of this temple in its present form with all its four prākāras had already taken shape. All the important Vaishnava Āḷvārs were already deified. This is in conformity with the epigraphical evidence cited earlier.

The description and study of the genesis of the structures of the temple can be concluded by outlining the probable sequence of constructional development:

**I stage**: The temple was of humble or modest proportions during the time of Bhūdattālvār, i.e., about the 7th century A.D. There are no structural or inscriptive vestiges of this period.

**II stage**: A thorough reconstruction of the temple into a bigger complex sometime around the middle of the 11th century A.D. during the time of Rājadhirāja I and his successor Kulōttunga I. The inscription of the former dated A.D. 1050 is found intact inside the sanctum of Nrisimha shrine. It mentions the presiding deity, Tiruvattiyūr Āḷvār. From the inscription, we can infer that the shrines of Nrisimha and the main sanctum were already there. Probably, the latter with its forward complements like the two arāha maṇḍapas and the mahā maṇḍapa were built in this time.

The reign of Kulōttunga I witnesses remarkable development. In his time, two more prākāras or courtyards (the second and the third) were added together with their entrance gateways and towers. Of these, the second prākāra seems to have come up slightly earlier, sometime before A.D. 1073 (3rd year of Kulōttunga I) for an inscription of that date is found on the basement of the entrance tower. Probably, a few years hence, the third prākāra with its gateway was built, because inscriptions on the walls there are dated in the 36th, 31st and 36th years of Kulōttunga I (i.e., A.D. 1100 to 1106). This prākāra wall with the kitchen in the south-east corner was built by Naralōkavārī, the famous minister of Kulōttunga I as attested by his beautiful Sanskrit inscription. The inscription specifically refers to the construction of a lofty, stone-built prākāra-wall that cannot be destroyed by time. The inscription is probably datable to the 30th year of Kulōttunga I. The compound wall of this courtyard was reconstructed by Āḷagia Maṇavāḷa Jīyar in the 16th century.

**III stage**: Subsequently, various structures were built within these prākāras at different times in the 12th and 13 centuries, such as the Kariḷamāṇikkaperumāḷ shrine in the 11th year of Vikrama Chōḷa i.e. A.D. 1129; the Anantālvār shrine in A.D. 1212; the abhīshēka-maṇḍapa in A.D. 1236; the Tāyār shrine also round about the same time. Probably, at this stage, the fourth prākāra was an open one, not enclosed as it is now. The Anantasaras tank was there at its north-eastern side. The shrine of Chakrattālvār or Sudarsana which was originally built somewhere inside, was probably rebuilt in its present position. The Krishna shrine on the west bank of the tank was built probably in the latter half of the 13th century as already indicated.

Towards the end of the 13th century or, more probably, in the first half of the 14th century, the fourth courtyard was enclosed by a compound wall with a gateway and gōpura on its west. The eastern gōpura had not been built at this stage.

**IV stage**: The outline of the temple complex having been completed, towards the
end of the 13th century A.D. this stage only witnessed further amplification by the construction of a number of pillared halls, pavilions and ancillary shrines, besides the reconstruction of some of the existing structures. This was the period when there was a great increase in the numerous temple-rituals and festivals which necessitated many additional structures. Moreover, the Vijayanagar monarchs who zealously fostered the best Hindu traditions evinced sympathetic interest in fulfilling the religious aspirations of the people. Thus, under their patronage were built the towering gopura on the east; the Kalyana-mandapa, the Vahana-mandapa, the Tulabhara-mandapa, the Unjal-mandapa and the Vasantha-mandapa, and probably separate shrines for Aylvars and acharyas. This was indeed the brightest period in the history of the temple, when there was a great spurt in the celebration of festivals, in the elaborate arrangements for offerings, in the various benefactions of lands, jewels etc., as will be shown in the sequel.

NOTES

1. It is interesting to note in this connection that Appayya Dikshitar (16th century A.D.) mentions the presence of five prakaras and compares them to the five kojas or outer covers which encase the ultimate reality or the Paramatma (Varadaraja-stavam, v. 10).

2. G.P. refers to General Plan shown in Fig. 39.

3. The word vimana connotes the entire temple in the general sense, but it is used especially in later South Indian context only to refer to the superstructure over the sanctum from the prastara to sikhara. It has been used in this sense even in some silpa texts. Sikhara in the South Indian context only denotes that part of the vimana between the griva and the stupa. For elucidation of these points see K.V. Soundara Rajan, The Matrix of South Indian Architecture, JIH, December 1965, pp. 792-793.

4. 448 of 1919.
5. 522 of 1919.
6. 519 of 1919.
7. 447 of 1919.
8. E.I. IV, No. 145.
9. 479 of 1919.
11. 590 of 1919.
12. Vide Chapter V.
16. Chapter IX.
17. 572 and 585 of 1919.
19. 609 of 1919.
20. This inscription has not been noticed in the Epigraphical Reports so far. This was noticed in situ by the writer.
21. This information is found in an inscription vide 59 of 1919—V. Rangacharya, Top List, Vol. I, 341.
22. 648 of 1919.
23. 650 of 1919; ARE 1919-20, p. 115.
24. 646 of 1919.
25. See Chapter III for further details of this episode.
26. 631 of 1919.
27. For the illustration see Plate in Chapter XI.
28. SITI, I. No. 390, p. 375.
29. 543, 546 of 1919.
31. 656 of 1919.
32. 487 of 1919.
33. 484 of 1919.
CHAPTER IV
THE ROLE OF THE TEMPLE
IN THE GROWTH OF SRI-VAISHNAVISM

INTRODUCTION

Early Tamil works of the Sangam period attest to the popularity of Vishnu-worship in the Tamil country. The Toikappiam mentions four Gods as the recognised guardian deities of the Tamil land, one each for the four geographical divisions of the land viz., the forest-land presided over by Māyōn (Vishnu), the hilly tract by Śeyōn (Muruga), cultivated plains by Vēṇḍan (Indra) and the coastal strips by Varuṇa.1 The Puranāṁuru mentions Śiva, Balārāma, Vishnu and Muruga as the four principal Gods.2 In the Paripādai also Balārāma and Krishna are mentioned together.3

The Tamil epic Silappadikāram makes clear reference to the Vishnu temples at Vēṇgaḍam, Arangam, Tirumāl-irum-sōlai.4 That these three places were leading centres of Vishnu-worship is attested by the great attachment of their Vaishnava saints, the Śivārs. So far as Kāṇchī is concerned, it is spoken of as a centre of many religions.5 The Vishnu temple at Vēhka in Kāṇchī seems to have been well-known in the Sangam period. The Perum-Pāṇāṟṟuppāḍai, one of the Sangam anthologies called Pattuṟṟu or Ten Idyls, makes a pointed reference to the Vishnu in reclining position at Vēhkanai or Vēhka.6 It is very likely that the other Vishnu temples at Kāṇchī came to prominence in the wake of the great Bhakti movement propagated by the Śivārs or the Vaishnava saints sometime between the sixth and the eighth centuries A.D. Like the Śaivite Nāyanmārs, the Vaishnavite Śivārs toured extensively in South India, addressing their soul-stirring songs to the idol-manifestations (archāyatāra) of Vishnu of the various places. This movement gave a fresh impetus to the growth of Vishnu-worship in the Tamil country and the places sung by them came to be known as the Divyadēsas or the holy places which are now counted as 108 in number. In Kāṇchī alone there are eighteen such shrines sung by the Śivārs and Śri Varadarājaswāmī is one among them, having been sung by Bhūdattālvar, one of the earliest Śivārs. As already noted, the Śivār mentions Him as Attiyūrān after the place. Because of the Śivār’s praise the place came to be known as Tiruvattiyūr or sacred Attiyūr, later on.7 There is nothing to indicate that it was a prominent temple in the beginning. On the other hand, from the works of the other Śivārs, it is seen that Vēhka was the most prominent Vishnu temple at Kāṇchī. Both Poigai and Pēy Śivārs frequently refer to Vēhka and rank it with other shrines like Srīrangam and Vēṇgaḍam etc. For instance in verse 77, Poigai mentions four places in which Lord Vishnu is manifest in four different postures—standing at Vēṇgaḍam, seated at Vinṇagar, reclining at Vēhka and walking at Kōvalur.8 Similarly Pēy Śivār a contemporary of Poigai and Bhūtam makes many references to Vēhka and ranks it with Vēṇgaḍam, Srīrangam, Kuḍandai
(Kumbakōnām), Viṇṇagaram etc. Another Āḻvār, Tirumalaisai, was associated with the temple of Vehka to which he was deeply devoted. He has sung about the temple with great ecstasy. So, the Sangam poem Perumpōṇāṟṟuppadai and the hymns of the Āḻvārs quoted above, clearly indicate that Vehka was the most prominent Vishnu temple at Kāñchi.

In subsequent times however, i.e., in the age of the Āchāryas, the modest temple of Attiyūr grew in importance and in the course of time completely overshadowed the other Vishnu temples of Kāñchi. Known as Hastigiri, it became one of the three most important places for a Śrī-Vaishnava. The three in their order of importance are Kōil, Tirumālai and Perumāl-kōil, which are respectively Srīrangam, Vēṅgaṭam and Hastigiri at Kāñchi. These three are considered the holiest of the holies. Hastigiri attained this eminent position mainly due to its association with the life and activities of Śrī Rāmānuja, the propounder and the establisher of the Visishtādvaitic philosophy. A galaxy of eminent āchāryas noted for their piety and literary accomplishments, some of whom were elder (like Tirukkachinambi) and some younger contemporaries of Rāmānuja (like Kūrattāḷvār) were attracted to this temple.

Rāmānuja spent the most formative years of his life here and is said to have received injunctions from Lord Varadarāja through Tirukkachinambi which served as the guideline for Rāmānuja's Visishtādvaitic philosophy. Rāmānuja himself considered Hastigiri as one of the four most important places which a Śrī-Vaishnava had to meditate during the daily Sandhyā-prayers, the other three being Srīrangam, Vēṅgaṭam and Yatisilam or Tirunārāyanaṇapuram in Mysore. All these factors naturally bestowed on the temple a position of importance in the eyes of his followers. Moreover, Śrī Varadarājāswāmi temple was one of the first to receive the impact of Rāmānuja's teachings and reforms relating to the form of worship, the code of religious conduct and procedures regarding festivals etc. It was hence looked upon as one of the 'model-temples' to be followed by the numerous smaller shrines in other towns and villages.

Subsequent to Rāmānuja, the temple not only maintained its eminent position but also registered further progress and reached the zenith of glory during the Vijayanagar period. Eminent āchāryas like Naḍādūr Ammāl, Vēṅḍānta Dēskī, Maṇavāḷa Maḥāmuni have paid their homage to Lord Varadarāja, the presiding deity of this temple. Members of several distinguished āchārya purusha-families, and Jiyars (ascetics), were connected with this temple. Several seminaries or mathas were situated in this temple for the propagation of Rāmānuja-darsana.

Rāmānuja's school of Vaishnavism is called the Śrī-Sampradāya or Śrī-Vaishnavism and its philosophy is known as the Visishtādvaita or qualified non-dualism. The latter term is explained elsewhere in this chapter. The significance of the term Śrī-Vaishnavism may briefly be explained here. It signifies only a special facet of Vishnu-worship, already popular in the theistic works like the Pariṇāma and the works of the Āḻvārs. In this scheme Śrī or Lakshmi plays an important role. In a sense, Śrī as the Purushākāra or mediatrix dominates the conception. She serves as a link between the devotee and the Lord and recommends even a sinner for the Lord's mercy. Her position as the sharer of all powers and responsibilities with Her consort Nārāyaṇa is emphasised by the prefix Śrī in the words Śrī-Vaishnavism.
or Sri-Sampradāya. She is not only the mediatrix but also first in the line of preceptors or āchāryas. It is the belief of the Sri-Vaishnavas that the divine teachings of the Pāñcharātra were transmitted by the Lord to Sri who in turn communicated them to Viswaksena or Śeṇainātha, who passed them on to Nammāḷvār. Thus, the line of Sri-Vaishnava preceptors begins with Sri and includes Viswaksena, Nammāḷvār and many successive āchāryas. Rāmānuja comes eighth in this line. Subsequent to Rāmānuja, the line divides itself into two, one representing the Sri-Bāṣhya or in the popular parlance the Northern School and the other representing the Prabhandic or the Southern School.

The association of Sri Varadarājaswāmi temple with the Vaishnava saints and teachers is studied under three sections.

Section 1

THE AGE OF THE ĀCHĀRYAS

Sources: The inscriptions of this temple, though very valuable in many other respects, are not of much help to us regarding the lives and activities of the early āchāryas like Tirukkachinambi, Kūrattālvār or even Rāmānuja. It is indeed a puzzle why the contemporary epigraphs which furnish us with numerous details of kings, nobles and their gifts are so silent about such eminent religious leaders who have dedicated themselves to the cause of Sri-Vaishnavism. We do, however, get some useful information regarding the installation of Rāmānuja’s image in this temple, the provisions for propagating his tenets etc., but they are comparatively scanty and they hardly do justice to the great missionary work he did. So, one has necessarily to depend on the traditional works like the Vaishnava Guruparamparas or hagiologies, supplemented in a few cases by the compositions of the āchāryas themselves. For the period subsequent to the 15th century, however, the inscriptions are extremely useful. A number of āchārya-purushas, Jiyars and other leaders, and their connections with the temple, are recorded.

Tirukkachinambi

Among the elder contemporaries of Rāmānuja, Tirukkachinambi was known to be most deeply attached to the service of Lord Varadarāja. He was born in Pundamalli, about 20 miles east of Kāṇchi in the Vaisya (Chettiār) family. It is said that every day he used to take flowers to Kāṇchi for Lord Varadarāja. He did “ālavaṭṭa kainkarya” (fanning service). In course of time, he won the unique reputation of the only person who could converse with Lord Pērurāḷa. Humble and devoted, he was venerated by all. When he talked, people considered that the Lord spoke through him. He was revered by all people to whom he was a rare jewel among men living at Kāṇchi. Once, he went to Srīrangam, which was in those days the headquarters, as it were, of Vaishnavism, and met Perianambi (Mahāpūrṇa) and Āḻavandār, who praised his services to Pērurulāḷa. After the formal initiation, Āḻavandār conferred on him the dāsyanāma pērurulāḷadāsa i.e., the servant of Pērurulāḷa. After spending some time at Srīrangam in the service of his preceptor, he returned to Kāṇchi and resumed his service there. Another title which is said to have been conferred upon him by Lord Varadarāja was “Gajendra-
dāsa”. He is said to have founded a temple for his favourite deity at Pūndamalli.

Rāmānuja (circa 1017-1137 A.D.)

Among the four main centres of his activity (Srīrangam, Tirumalai, Kāñchi and Melkote), Rāmānuja seemed to have had special attachment to Kāñchi and the Varadarājswāmi temple because he spent his early and most formative years here. His disciple Tiruvanangattamudanār emphasised this point when he called him by the appellation “Ten Attiyūrkalainakīl pūnda-anbhājan”, meaning one who served at the feet of the Lord Attiyūr.¹⁰

Rāmānuja was born in Srīperumbudur in 1017 A.D. His father imparted to him preliminary education. After the latter’s death, Rāmānuja moved to Kāñchi along with his wife and mother. There is a tradition that he lived in the first house on the north-western end of the Sannidhi Street on the east of the temple. He studied Vedānta under Yādavapraṅkāśa, a great Advaitic scholar at Kāñchi. Rāmānuja’s thirst for knowledge and sincere approach soon made him a favourite student and disciple of Yādavapraṅkāśa. But, as time passed on, Rāmānuja found Yādavapraṅkāśa’s explanations or interpretations of Vedānta unacceptable to him. On one or two occasions, he modestly put forth his view which the teacher considered an affront to him. He regarded Rāmānuja a heretic and working against the hitherto accepted notions of advaita or non-dualism. Yādavapraṅkāśa is said to have even plotted to kill Rāmānuja while on pilgrimage to the north. But differences in interpretation of concepts like “Brahmam” again arose and Rāmānuja had to leave the school politely. Straight he went to Tirukkachinambi, the pious and venerable saint doing humble fanning service to Lord Varadarāja. He requested him to accept him as a disciple. Nambi told Rāmānuja that he was not well-versed in the Śāstras and had no formal education and was only doing some bodily service to the temple. For Rāmānuja, however, true devotion to God and not mere knowledge was the real index of greatness. Intensively moved by Rāmānuja’s sincere approach, Nambi asked him to bring daily a jarful of water from a well, known as the ‘śāla-well’, for the worship at the Varadarāja temple which Rāmānuja faithfully carried out. Even today, this practice of bringing water daily from the same ‘śāla-well’, about two miles away, is continued in this temple. This is in accordance with the Vaishnavite principle that bodily service or kainkarya to one’s personal God would give a sense of humility necessary for true devotion.

One important episode mentioned in the Vaishnava hagiology is that Lord Varadarāja chose Tirukkachinambi as his medium to convey to Rāmānuja the six famous tenets of Visishtādvaita, which served as the guideline for Rāmānuja’s teachings. Tirukkachi Nambi advised Rāmānuja to seek guidance under Peria Nambi at Srīrangam.

Meanwhile, Peria-nambi with his wife was coming towards Kāñchi to meet Rāmānuja. They met each other at Madurāntakam, about 40 miles south-east of Kāñchi on the main road to Srīrangam. The initiation ceremony took place there, after which they all returned to Kāñchi. Rāmānuja set apart a portion of his own house for them to live in and looked after all their comforts. He studied the Tamil prabhandams at the master’s feet. Though Rāmānuja rose above all caste distinctions, his wife did not keep pace with her husband’s liberal and enlightened views. She
picked up quarrels with Peria-nambi’s wife on trivial matters which made Peria-
nambi and his wife quit their house and return to Srírangam. Rāmānuja was
disgusted with the petty-mindedness of his wife and felt deeply distressed for causing
difficulties to his Guru. Later on, he renounced the home and became a sanyāsin
(ascetic). He came to be known as Rāmānujamuni. He had his own matha, where
his nephew Kandādai Mudali-Āndān and Kūrēsa or Kūrattālvār joined as his
disciples. Thereafter, they became inseparable companions of Rāmānuja, taking
part in religious and intellectual pursuits. Yādavaprakāsa, it is said, also accepted
the Visishṭādvaita philosophy and became a Vaishnavite. He was given the name
Gōvinda Jīyar. He also wrote a book ‘Yatidharmasamuccaya’. Rāmānuja’s fame
spread far and wide; his path of devotion and scholarship were universally ack-
nowledged.

Meanwhile, Peria-nambi who was at Srírangam wanted to instal Rāmānuja as his
successor-head of the Srī-Vaishnava monastery (matha) at Srírangam and thus fulfil
the desire of the departed āchārya—Ālavanādār. Peria-nambi sent Tiruvanagarupur-
māḷ Arayar (Vararanga) to Kānchi for inviting Rāmānuja. Arayar was specially sent
for this because, he could sing his prayer beautifully before Pērarulāja and who would
be moved to grant the desired boon, namely, sending Rāmānuja to Srírangam. Ara-
yar succeeded in his mission. Rāmānuja accompanied by his companions Mudali-
āndān and Kūrattālvār and Arayar left Kānchi and settled down at Srírangam. He
then completed his studies under his teachers, namely, Tiruvanagarappurumāḷ Arayar
and Tirumalai Āndān at Srírangam. He also went to Tirukkōṭṭiyūr (in Rāmanā-
thapuram district) and learnt the sacred Tirumandiram from Tirukkōṭṭiyūr-nambi.
Thus, Rāmānuja had the unique opportunity to study different aspects of the religious
lore from Peria-nambi, Tirumalai-nambi, Tirukkōṭṭiyūr-nambi, Tirumalai Āndān and
Tiruvanagarappurumāḷ Arayar who were all the disciples of the great Yāmunāchārya
or Ālavanādār. With this rich legacy and his own in-born genius, Rāmānuja was
considered eminently fitted to occupy the seat of the Āchārya at Srírangam adorned
by such worthies like Nāthamuni, Ālavanādār and Peria-nambi.

Srīrangam became thenceforward the chief centre of his activities. He made
some wholesome reforms in the temple there, which are graphically detailed in the
kōil-olugu, the temple-record of Srīrangam. The other two temples in which he
is said to have introduced some administrative or organisational reforms were Tiru-
malai and Tirunārāyaṇapuram (Melkote). Though Kānchi did not figure as pro-
minently in his later life as before, the Guruparampara mentions that during his
visits to Tirumalai and North India in connection with the collection of manuscripts
for writing his Srī Bāshyas, he visited Kānchi to seek the blessings of Lord Pērarulāja
and Tirukkachi-nambi. Further details of Rāmānuja’s life like his flight to the
Mysore country consequent on the fear of Chōja persecution, his conversion of the
Hoysāla king to Vaishnavism, his composition of the magnum-opus the Srī Bāshya
commentary etc., are too well known. He became the leading light of the Vaish-
navite world by his teachings and reforms which had far-reaching effect on the sub-
sequent history of Srī-Vaishnavism in South India.

The three important acts of Rāmānuja were: firstly, he refuted the māyavāda of
Śankara and interpreted the Brahmasūtras and Upanishads and the Bhāgavat Gītā in
the light of his own Visishṭādvaitic system; secondly, he popularised the Divya-prabhan-
dams or the divine songs of the Ālvārs; and thirdly, he inspired and trained a line of worthy disciples to propagate his tenets.

The essential tenets of Rāmānuja's Visishtādvaita philosophy may briefly be recalled: Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Lord, was endowed with all auspicious qualities like omniscience (jñāna), strength (bala), sovereignty (aśvarya), constancy (virya), power (sakti) and lustre (ījās), capable of granting salvation to those who surrendered unto Him absolutely. In the place of abstract, impersonal God or Nirguṇa-Brahma of the Advaita school, Rāmānuja justified the need for a personal God, possessed of all good qualities. He repudiated the doctrine of illusoriness of the material world and the finite self and postulated that ultimate Reality is one in which the material world and the finite self find a necessary place. He emphasised the importance of self-surrender or prapatti as a means to receive the grace of the Lord. Just as Paramātma or the Supreme Lord is personal and individual, the Jīva or the soul is also personal and individual by nature and once emitted, lives for ever. It is never merged in the Brahman or Bhagavān. His doctrine of Bhakti and Prapatti had a powerful influence on the outlook of the Śrī-Vaishnavas. His work Gatyatraya is an outstanding example of prapatti literature which contains his devotional out-pourings on Lord Nārāyaṇa and His consort Lakshmi. His philosophy inspired many devotional poems and after his life time, such as Kurattālvār's Pancha-stavams, one of which is the famous Varadarājastavam, on Lord Varadarāja. Rāmānuja advocated the path of devotion and self-surrender for all castes and even arranged for the entry of outcastes into the temple at Melkote. He accepted Tirukkachi-nambi of the Vaisya caste as his teacher. He had non-Brahman disciples like Piḷḷai-Uraṅgāvalli-dāsār. He gave them a definite place in the Vaishnava fold by encouraging them to wear the punda (mark on the forehead), to dress themselves like the Śrī-Vaishnavas and to study the Divya-prabhandams.

Rāmānuja did much to popularise the compositions of the Tamil saints and particularly the Tiruvōyulum of Nammālvār which contained the truths and tenets of the upanishads. In this he was only continuing the work started by Nāṭhamuni and Āḻavāndār. Rāmānuja authorised Kurukēsa or Ten-kurukaipirān-piḷḷān, son of Tirumalai-nambi, to compose an authoritative commentary on Tiruvōyulum which the latter did. It was known as the Ārāyirappādi or the Six-thousand. It was the first commentary which was followed by a number of others like the Nine-thousand, the Twelve-thousand, the Thirty-six-thousand etc. It was Rāmānuja, who was again largely responsible for arranging to chant the Tamil Prabhandams in the temples along with the vēdíc hymns during the period of worship and festivals. Though the practice might have started first at Srīrangam, it soon became an essential feature in all Vishnu temples. Today, the “Iyal Ghōṣṭi” or the Prabhanda-reciters are given precedence and they form the vanguard of the temple processions. Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple is one of the few centres where there had been an unbroken line of the Prabhanda-reciters and even today, one can see one of their largest and the most impressive gatherings during the annual Vaisāka and other festivals. From the inscriptions of the temple, we learn that even in A.D. 1129 during the life time of Rāmānuja the first Tamil Prabhandas of Poigai Ālvār and Bhūdatālvār were popular here. A record of the 14th century refers to the recital of Tiruvōyulum of Saṭṭagopā at this temple.
The third important act of Rāmānuja was the creation of a set of spiritual leaders or āchārya-purushas to propagate the Visistadvaitic philosophy far and wide. He appointed seventyfour Simhāsanatipatis out of whom he authorised a few to devote themselves for the exposition of his Śrī Bāṣhya in Sanskrit and the rest for the exposition of the Tamil Prabhandams. This clearly shows that Rāmānuja recognised the importance of the Tamil Prabhandams which alone could be easily understood by the vast majority of Tamil population being in their own mother-tongue. It was also the duty of the āchārya-purushas to maintain the form of temple-worship as modelled by him.

Subsequent history has shown that the members of these distinguished families rendered and are still rendering great service to the cause of spreading Rāmānuja’s teachings. They have carried his faith to the distant villages and homes not only in Tamil country but far beyond in the Andhra, Mysore and Upper India too. At important Vaishnavite centres at Tirumalai, Srīrangam and Kāñchi, the scions of the families are still engaged in the service of the temple and dissemination of religious knowledge etc. The association of many of these āchārya-purushas with Kāñchi will be mentioned in the sequel.

Rāmānuja’s special attachment to Lord Varadarāja

Rāmānuja’s special devotion to Lord Pērarulāja of Kāñchi was already briefly mentioned. A few more incidents can be recounted to illustrate this point. The Guruparamparai informs us that when Kūrattālvār’s eyes were plucked by the Chōja king, Rāmānuja exhorted the former to do prapatti to Lord Varadarāja and compose a laudatory poem on the Lord. Kūrattālvār is said to have composed his famous Varadarājastavam, a string of hundred beautiful verses on the deity. They are recited in the Varadarājāswāmi temple on certain important occasions.

Another contemporary of Rāmānuja was Yajñamūrti who was first an Advaitin and later brought to the Vaishnava fold by Rāmānuja. As Rāmānuja could do this only by the grace of Arulāja or Dēvarāja, he called his new convert as Dēvarājamuni or Arulālapperumāl-Emberumānār and assigned him the duty of offering daily pūja or worship to Lord Pērarulāja kept for his (Rāmānuja’s) private worship (ārādhana).

Rāmānuja’s deification in the temple

The impact of Rāmānuja’s life and activities on the temple can hardly be exagge-
rate. His association with the temple in the formative years of his life and his frequent visits to the same gave considerable importance to the temple in the esteem of his associates and devotees. Many of the reforms in the temple set-up and form of worship he introduced at Srīrangam had their influence in this temple as will be seen in later chapters. In recognition of his great services, Rāmānuja was deified in the Varadarājāswāmi temple within 55 years after his demise. This is attested by a record of Kulottunga III dated A.D. 1191 which informs us that an influential Chōja chieftain by name Ilaiālvān Kālingarāyan of Neṭṭūr consecrated the image of Emberumānār (Rāmānuja) and donated all the taxes accruing from two villages to meet the expenses for the offerings to the deity. The same donor Ilaiālvān made special provisions for the Bhāṣyavṛtti or exposition of Rāmānuja-bhāṣya. Ilaiālvān was another name of Rāmānuja. The donor was evidently a great devotee
of Rāmānuja, whose name, 'Iļaiālvān', he adopted as his own.

**Section 2**

**THE POST-RĀMĀNUJA PERIOD**

Many of Rāmānuja’s younger contemporaries like Embār, Baṭtar, Kurukēsa and Nanjīyar who lived during the latter part of the 12th century, continued to serve the cause of Śrī-Vaiśnavism as expounded by their great master Rāmānuja by writing commentaries and discoursing on the subject to their followers. Indeed, the post-Rāmānuja period was marked by a growing interest among his followers in the interpretation and popularisation of his teachings which came to be known as Rāmānuja-darśanam. A series of commentaries on Nammālvār’s Tiruvōymoil and the prabhandoms of the other Ālvārs were written in accordance with Rāmānuja’s avowed desire to popularise the works of the Tamil saints. Another development which gradually reared its head and which Rāmānuja could hardly have foreseen, was the emergence of certain differences of opinion and interpretation among his followers concerning chiefly (1) the prapatti-mārga or the path of surrender and (2) the relative importance of the Sanskrit and Tamil texts, besides various other matters. Some of the followers gave importance to the Sanskrit texts and specialised in the study and exposition of Śrī Bāṣhya, while others specialised in the Tamil prabhandoms of the Ālvārs. In course of time, two distinct modes of expounding the Vaishnava-darśana or system came to be recognised. They were the Śrī-Bāṣhya-pravachana and the Drāvidādmaya or the Bhagavat-Vishya-pravachana. The former consisted of the study of vēdānta-sūtras with the help of Rāmānuja’s commentary on them. Śrī-Bhagavat-Vishya-pravachana meant largely the study of the Nālāyira-Dīva-prabhandom and the Tiruvōymoil in particular, with the various commentaries that appeared in a quick succession. But these two modes of exposition gradually gave rise to the appearance of two separate schools with two paramparas or hagiologies or succession lists.

In course of time, the former came to be known as the Sanskritists or the Vaḍakalai school and the latter as the Prabhandic or the Tenkalai school. Kāṇchi was the centre of the Vaḍakalai school while Srīrangam was the centre of Tenkalai school. But it should be remembered that the differences in interpretation or language did not lead to any immediate schism or cleavage in the Śrī-Vaishnava fold which had the common object of serving the Rāmānuja-darśana. Even regarding the texts, the difference was one of preference. In fact, most of the followers of Rāmānuja like Embār, Baṭtar, Kurukēsa, Nanjīyar, Nampillai Periāvāchān Pillai, Pillai Lōkāchārya, Vēdānta Dēṣika and others were well-versed in both Sanskrit and Tamil lore. In their works, they struck a balance by adopting the manipravāja style, a free mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil words, which was peculiar to this period. So, the view of some scholars that the āchāryas of the Tenkalai school like Nampillai or Pillai Lōkāchārya were not well-versed in the Sanskrit texts is as untenable as to say that Vēdānta Dēṣika did not know the Tamil prabhandoms. The works of the āchāryas of Prabhandic school were a series of attempts to interpret the Tamil hymns in terms of the known Sanskrit authorities and hence, their works were full of citations and parables from the Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata etc. Similarly, Kurukēsa and Vēdānta Dēṣi-
ka of the so-called Vaḍakalai group wrote works in Tamil—the former his commentary on Tiruvōympoli and the latter several poems. Nor was there any antagonism between these two groups. In fact, except for the past two or three hundred years when the differences assumed a sectarian bias, the post-Rāmānuja period was marked by a remarkable unity of purpose in spite of diversity of interpretation. The period was conspicuous by the absence of any sectarian rancour within the Vaishnava fold such as the one witnessed in more recent years. The doctrinal differences that were simmering got crystallised into two distinct groups or sects with two different sets of Guruparamparais or lines of āchāryas, two different types of sect-marks etc., much later than Vēdānta Dēsika’s time. In the post-Maṇavāla Mahāmuni’s time, we can see the traces or the beginning of the cleavage though they were by no means sharp even then. In many of his commentaries Maṇavāla Mahāmuni quotes as his authorities not only from the works of the āchāryas of his own school but also from those of Naḍādur Ammāl, Srutantrapakāśika Baṭṭar, Vēdnāta Dēsika and even the latter’s son, Naina Varadāchārya. From this, one thing is clear that even during his time the differences did not assume any sectarian rift. His upadēsarvatnamālai gives the hierarchy of the āchāryas of the prabhandic school, whereas the Guruparamparai of the III Brahmatantra-svatantra Jiyar gives the list of āchāryas of the Vaḍakalai school. Upto Rāmānuja there is agreement between the two versions. Only after Rāmānuja, the hierarchy is divided into two lines.

Rāmānuja (circa A.D. 1017-1137)

Prabhandic School

Baṭṭar (12th century)

Nanṭiyar (12th century)

Nampīḷḷai (13th century)

Periavāchān Piḷḷai (13th century)

Vaḍakku Tiruvīdi Piḷḷai (13th century)

Piḷḷai Lokāchārya (13th & 14th century—elder contemporary of Vēdānta Dēsika)

Maṇavāḷappurumāḷ Nāinār (do)

Tiruvōympoli Piḷḷai (14th century)

Maṇavāla Mahāmuni (A.D. 1370-1443)

Sūri Bāshya School

Kurukēsa (12th century)

Engaḷ Ālvān (12th c.)

Naḍādur Ammāl (13th c.)

Āṭrēya Rāmānuja (13th c.)

Vēdānta Dēsika (A.D. 1268-1369)

Naina Varadāchārya (14th century)

The āchāryas of the Prabhandic school mentioned above settled down at Srīrangam and successively held the apostolic leadership there, while Kāṇchi became the centre of the Northern or Sūri Bāshya school. We know for certain that the last four āchāryas
of the Vaññakalai school viz., Naññadür Ammāḷ, Āṭṣeya Rāmānuja, Vēḍānta Dēśika and his son Naina Varadāchārya had Kāññīchi as the centre of their activities.

The main doctrinal differences between these two schools may be summed up here.24

(i) Though both the schools were agreed on the necessity of prapatti or saranāgati i.e., self-surrender unto God as the path to salvation, the Vaññakalai school held that self-effort was needed on the part of the devotee. He should hold to God even as the young monkey holds to the mother (Markaṇṭanyāya or the monkey analogy). The Tenkalai view is that God's grace (kriyā) is spontaneous, unconditional and irresistible (nirhātuka) and descends on the living beings even if there is no self-effort on the latter's part. It is like the case of the mother-cat which holds its young one in its mouth even though there is no effort on the latter's part (Mārjāran-yaṇa or analogy of the cat).

(ii) Another doctrinal disagreement concerns the position of Śrī or Lakshmi. According to the Northern School, Lakshmi, like the Lord, is indistinguishable from the Lord, equally infinite and illimitable. She too can grant final emancipation or mokṣha. The Southern School holds her to be a finite being (Jīva), though divine. She is a superior servant of God. She is the mediatrix (Purushakāra) between the sinning folk and the Lord. Because of infinite mercy she recommends to the Lord to grant salvation, but she cannot grant it herself.

(iii) Another important point of difference is in connection with the caste system. The northern school holds that while all the Bhāgavatas are to be treated with reverence, worshipping them should only be in strict accordance with the status of their birth. It also holds the view that people of the lower caste are not entitled to learn mūlamāntra and prājñā. But the southern school holds liberal views on these matters.25 According to it, all Bhāgavatas (devotees) are to be considered equally high, born without distinction. True devotees, to whichever caste they belong, are worthy of honour and worship as āchāryas. The varna or status of birth will wither away, the moment one becomes a blessed soul (Jāti naḍīkkum). The leaders of this school gave greater prominence to the Tamil saints—āḻvārs—most of whom belonged to the lower caste. Similarly, āchāryas belonging to lower castes like Tirukkachi-nambi, Piḷḷai-Urangāvaḷḷī-dāsar are frequently praised in their writings.

To these doctrinal differences were added a few more minor social and ritual differences too. The differences are on matters like the efficacy of the pilgrimage, the details of ceremonial to be observed on certain occasions, the shape of the sect-mark, etiquette, the relation between the ascetics (sanyāsins) and householders, the tonsure of widow etc.26 On the whole, the prabhānic school held more progressive views on these matters. For example, it prohibited the tonsure of the widows as an obnoxious practice.27

But curiously, in the early stages, the doctrinal differences took a keen edge only in academic level. There was never a check on free social harmony at home or temple. But only in the recent centuries when the differences in the other forms like the caste-mark, attachment to the rituals, assumed a greater importance, the division has widened to make them almost two sub-castes. Particularly, the scramble for control over the temple is conspicuously seen in the 19th century records.
With these brief introductory remarks, let us review the activities of these āchāryas in relation to the growth of Śrī-Vaishnavas at Kāṇchi in a chronological manner.

Baṭṭar and Kurukēsa were younger contemporaries of Rāmānuja. The former was the son of Kūrattāḻvār and is said to have succeeded Rāmānuja in the apostolic seat at Srīrangam. He wrote a commentary on the Vishnu-Sahasranāma besides Śrī Ranganāthī stōtram. In the latter work he briefly mentions the Varadarāja temple at Kāṇchi or ‘Karigiri’ as one of the important places dear to Rāmānuja’s heart. Kurukēsa or Piḷḷān was the author of the first commentary on Tiruvōy-minūḷ known as the Six-thousand. Baṭṭar’s disciple was Nanjīyar who was an Advaitin in his early days and was brought to the Vaishnava fold by Baṭṭar. Nanjīyar also wrote a commentary on the Tiruvōy-minūḷ known as the Nine-thousand. Engel Āḻvār or Vishnu Chittārīya also lived in the latter half of the 12th century.

In the first half of the 13th century lived Nampiḷḷai, the disciple of Nanjīyar. He was a greater scholar and thinker, whose discourses on Tiruvōy-minūḷ were committed to writing by his disciple Vaṭakkku-tiru-vīdīḷai. Nampiḷḷai’s commentary came to be known as the Idu or the Thirtysix-thousand. The Idu is noted for its remarkable literary flourishes and incisive comments and is therefore very popular with a large section of the Śrī-Vaishnavas. Under the inspiring leadership of Nampiḷḷai, his two other disciples Peria Vāchān Piḷḷai and Pinbaḷagiya-perumāḷ-Jīyar did signal service to the cause of Śrī-Vaishnavism, the former by composing a comprehensive commentary on all the Four-thousand prabhands of the Āḻvārs and the latter by writing his famous Guruparamparai, a succession list of Āchāryas up to the time of his teacher, Nampiḷḷai. This work, it is important to remember, does not make any difference between the two schools and indeed deals with the life of Kurukēsa and Engel Āḻvān as well. There are a number of references in this work to the Kāṇchi temple, particularly, in connection with the life-history of Rāmānuja and his contemporaries which have been noted earlier.

A contemporary of Nampiḷḷai was Naṭādūr Ammāḷ (circa A.D. 1200-1250) or Varadāchārīya who was a disciple of Engal Āḻvān. He was the grandson of Naṭādūr Āḻvān the nephew of Rāmānuja and one of the seventyfour Simhāsanādhipatis. Naṭādūr Ammāḷ is said to have preferred his native place Kāṇchi for his residence and activities. He is said to have given regular discourses on the Śrī Bāṣhya in the premises of the Varadarājaswāmi temple at Kāṇchi. The substance of his lectures and interpretations of Rāmānuja’s Śrī Bāṣhya were committed to writing by his talented disciple Sudarsana-Baṭṭar. The work was called the Srutprakāśika. It was an important contribution which made the understanding of the Śrī Bāṣhya easier. Naṭādūr Ammāḷ’s other works were: the Tatvasāram, Prapannapārījātam and the Parādhwāṭi Pāṇchagam. In the first work of the above list, he summed up the teachings of the Upanishads. In the Parādhwāṭi-Pāṇchagam, he refers to Hastigiri (Varadarājaswāmi temple) as one of the three most important among the 108 holy Vishnu shrines.

The son and successor of Vaṭakkku-tiruvidi Piḷḷai was the famous Piḷḷai Lōkāchārīya considered a leading light of the Prabhandic school. According to the traditional account, he was born in Kali 4366 or A.D. 1265. A profound scholar and prolific writer, he composed several treatises like the famous Tattvātraya, Mumukṣupāḍī and Śrī Vachana Bhūshaṇa wherein he has dealt with the doctrine
of prapatti in all its bearings. His Srī Vachana Bhūshaṇa is an important work which contains a number of terse aphorisms (in the maṇipravāḷa style) on various subjects such as Srī as the mediatrix (Purushaṅkara), the value of bodily service (kainkarya) to God, devotion to God, devotion to the teacher (āchāryabhimāna), the import of prapatti, the greatness of the archa or the idol form etc., which have all become the foundation for the Tenkalai school. His writings are considered to be the authoritative interpretation of the tenets of the Āḻvārs and Rāmānuja by the SrīVaishnavas of the Prabhantic school. Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya’s younger brother Āḷaṅgiya-manavāḷa perumāḷ Nāinār was another distinguished scholar and commentator who did much to popularise the greatness of Āḻvārs and the tenets of the Prabhantic school, wrote commentaries on Tamil hymns like the Amalanāḍipirāṇ and Āṇḍāl’s Tiruppāvai. But his best-known work is the Āchārya-Hridayam in which he brilliantly expatiates on the heart (Hridaya) of Nammāḷvār. In it, while writing about the Āḻvār’s eclectic outlook, which knew no caste or class restrictions, the author cites many classic examples where the true devotees belonging to low station in life have been honoured and worshipped by people of higher class. Srī Rāmā regarded the tribal chief Guga as his brother. Similarly, the person of humble origin who did ‘paippu kainkarya’ at Tirumalai (Pushpa-maṇḍapa) was venerated by the ruling king Tonḍai-mān; Tirukkachi-nambi who did the fanning (ālavatta) service to the Lord at Hastigiri (Tyāga-maṇḍapa) was honoured by Rāmānuja as his guru; Tiruppān-āḻvār, an outcaste who sang his soul-stirring songs addressed to the Lord Ranganātha at Srīrangam (Bhōga-maṇḍapa) was venerated by Ulōgasāranga-Mahāmuni.22

Naṭādūr Ammāḷ’s disciple was Āṭrēya Rāmānuja alias Appiḷḷār who lived in Kāṇchi about the middle of the 13th century A.D. He also wrote a commentary on the Srī-Bashya. He was the maternal uncle of the great Vēdānta Dēsika. The latter in his works frequently expresses his indebtedness to his uncle and guru. In one context he says that he is merely giving outward expression to what is inscribed in his mind by his āchārya.23

Vēdānta Dēsika (A.D. 1268-1369)

The traditional date of Vēdānta Dēsika’s birth is Kali 4371 or Ś 1190 corresponding to A.D. 1268. He is said to have lived for a full span of 100 years. He was born in Tūppiḷ, a suburb of Kāṇchipuram. His father Anantaśūri was an āchārya-purusha. His mother Tōṭādiyamma was the sister of Āṭrēya Rāmānuja. The latter was a renowned scholar and Vēṇikaṭanāṭha studied under him and mastered different aspects of the religious literature at a comparatively young age. He was endowed with retentive memory, critical mind and gift for interpretation. Added to this was his innate poetic talents. All these made him a versatile writer whose works were characterised by beauty of diction and deep spiritual insight. He was a poet, philosopher and controversialist who won coveted titles like the Kavitārka-simha, the lion of poets and philosophers and Sarvatantra-svatantra, the master of all science and knowledge. His life-story can briefly be sketched here.

As a young boy, Vēṇkaṭanāṭha used to accompany his maternal uncle Āṭrēya Rāmānuja to the discourses given by Naṭādūr Ammāḷ. He showed extraordinary grasp of even complicated subjects and mastered the Vedas, the Vedāngas, āgamas etc. He is said to have entered into a controversy with Vidyāraṇya and defeated
him. He also arbitrated in the polemical dispute between Vidyārānya and Akshabyāmuni.\textsuperscript{34} He visited places like Tiruvēndipuram, Srimūshnam and Srīrangam. It was at Srīrangam that he defeated the Advaita scholar Krishnamisra and the titles of \textit{Vedāntāchārya} and \textit{Sarvatrantra-svatantrar} were conferred on him. He composed his famous works like the \textit{Satadāshini}, \textit{Sankalpa-Suryodaya}, \textit{Yādavabhyaḍaya}, \textit{Yatirāja-sapitā}, \textit{Srī-stuti}, \textit{Bhū-stuti} etc. It was during his stay at Srīrangam that the place was overrun by the Muslim invaders who sacked the temple. This compelled many \textit{Srī-Vaishnava} leaders to leave the place or commit self-immolation. Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya saved the idol of Ranganātha by taking it to the forests, while Vēdānta Dēsika had to retire to Satyamangalam near Coimbatore. He is said to have saved the copy of the \textit{Srutapraṇāśika} commentary on the \textit{Srī-Bāṣya}. He came back to Srīrangam and spent his last days peacefully.\textsuperscript{35}

His intimate connection with Kāṇchi and his special love for Lord Varadārāja, are evident in many of his works. Though he has composed verses on many temples at Kāṇchi such as Tiruvēlka, Dīpaprakāsār, Ashtabhuja, he had special attachment for Lord Varadārāja. His \textit{Varadarāja-Pañcāśat} contains fifty stanzas in praise of the Lord which would serve as an ideal \textit{prapatti} prayer-song for the worshippers. It is also a good elucidation of the philosophy of \textit{Vishishtādvaīta}. This work of Dēsika is recited on certain important occasions in front of Lord Varadārāja.\textsuperscript{36} But perhaps one of the most heartfelt tributes he had paid to his favourite deity is to be found in his \textit{Vairāgya-Pañchaka} which he wrote on the occasion when he declined the rewards and invitation from the contemporary Vijayanagar court.\textsuperscript{37} His Tamil poem \textit{Adaikkalapattu} also embodies his boundless love for Lord Arulāja to whom he does \textit{prapatti}. He says in the first verse, that even the deep devotion or \textit{Baktiyōga} has failed to give him the salvation. He ran about all directions and finally fell at the feet of Lord Pērarulāja of Attigiri in Kāṇchi, which is the most important among the seven sacred cities. To show the value of the \textit{prapatti-mārga} or the path of surrender, he says that he fell as the famous crow (Kākāśūra) fell at the feet of Rāma.\textsuperscript{38} Another verse cites the well-known stories of Vībhīṣanā, Draupadī, Gajendrā and others who attained salvation by absolute surrender unto God.\textsuperscript{39} In another verse, he recommends the study of the Vēdas, the Tamil \textit{prabhānandam} of the Ālvārs and the works of the Āchāryas like Rāmānuja to know the greatness of the \textit{prapatti-mārga}.\textsuperscript{40} His remarkable mastery of the Sanskrit and Tamil lore is attested by his sumptuous works. He gave discourses on the \textit{Srī-Bāṣya} thirty times. One of the important services rendered by Dēsika was his saving of the \textit{Srutapraṇāśika}, a commentary on Rāmānuja’s \textit{Srī-Bāṣya} by Srutapraṇāśika Baṭṭar from the chaos that followed the Muslim sack of Srīrangam in A.D. 1328. This is the reason why Vēdānta Dēsika’s name is gratefully invoked before the commencement of the study of \textit{Srī-Bāṣya} by all the \textit{Srī-Vaishnavas} without any sectarian difference. Ālvārs’ Tamil \textit{prabhānandams} were also dear to him. He pays his tribute to those saints in his \textit{Drāvidopanishad-sūra}. He pays tribute to the \textit{prabhānandam}-reciters of Tondaimandalam in one of his poems thus:

"Long live the Brahmins of Tondaimandalam
Long live those who are well-versed in the spotless Tamil Vēdas."\textsuperscript{41}

The Vaḍakalai version of the \textit{Guruparamparai} mentions that the \textit{Srī-Vaishnavas} of the Tenkailai school were not favourably disposed towards Vēdānta Dēsika and they
boycotted him. But scholars of the Tenkalai school like Sri P.B. Annangarachariar consider this story as nothing but a figment of imagination and that it is not supported by facts. They point out that neither the works of Dēsika nor his contemporaries have any reference to such rivalry. The earliest and the reliable biography of Vēdānta Dēsika is only the Āchārya Champu written by an admirer of Dēsika and it does not contain any such story. It does not contain even a hint of any sectarian split in the Śrī-Vaishnava fold, and much less of any ill-will among sects. Their contention is that there were no Vaṭākalai-Tenkalai sects in the times of Dēsika and that all the Śrī-Vaishnavas held him in high regard and esteem. In the entire gamut of literature of the Tenkalai teachers, it is pointed out, there is not even a hint of disrespect for Dēsika. On the other hand, it is stated they have paid encomiums to him. Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya has composed a tāniyam, laudatory verse in praise of Vēdānta Dēsika. Maṇavāḷamuni, in many of his commentaries, quotes many authorities from the works of Vēdānta Dēsika, whom he respectfully calls “Abhyuktar”. Subsequent Tenkalai āchāryas like Prativāti Bhayankaram Anṇan and Dodddayāchārya have paid their homage to him.

Anandālīyan of Mysore, a celebrity of the Tenkalai school who lived in the early part of the 19th century and Kunrapākkam swami, another reputed scholar of the Tenkalai school who lived later, have extolled the greatness of Dēsika and made frequent references to his works in their own writings. The latter respectfully hails him ‘Jayati Bhagwān Vēdāntārya-sa-thārkikakēsari’ in his work Tatva-Ratnāvali. Even on doctrinal matters like prapatti, the position of Lakshmi etc., the Tenkalai school claims that Dēsika’s writings were in support of their own school. It is further pointed out that because of their continuous pratibhakti or devotion to Vēdānta Dēsika, that the Tenkalai school installed his image in almost all the temples under their control and celebrated festivals for him. All these are pointed out to show that Dēsika was equally dear to them and the Vaṭākalai version of any antagonism is anachronistic and fictitious. They point out that Vēdānta Dēsika lived in perfect harmony and amity with his contemporary āchāryas who had equal veneration for him. Vēdānta Dēsika has, in his works, paid tributes to the Śrī-Vaishnava luminaries of the Prabhandic school at Srīrangam. It was this abiding love and regard for these āchāryas that made Vēdānta Dēsika deeply yearn for his return to Srīrangam, after he had to leave the place during the Muslim attacks on the temple. He gave expression to this intense longing in one of the verses in his famous poem Abhīdastavam:

“Oh Lord! Let me reside in Srīrangam near the great ones who are mutual well-wishers.”

He had great admiration for the Pūrvāchāryas like Nampiḷḷai, Peria-vāchānPīḷḷai and Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya from whose works he has drawn inspiration. At several places he has approvingly quoted from the commentaries of Peria Vāchān Piḷḷai whom he endearingly calls ‘āchārya’. From the foregoing discussion it can be inferred that though there were two different schools of thought with regard to some doctrinal matters, there was no mutual rivalry or competition. Indeed, till recently, both the schools were considered complementary to each other—one specialising in exposition of the Sanskrit and the other in the Tamil prabhandaṁs for the establishment of the greatness of the Visishtādvaitic philosophy. This state of mutual respect
continued even up to the end of the 18th century A.D. But in the very nature of things, the tenets of the Prabhanda school became extremely popular with the vast masses of the people because of the use of the Tamil language and the celebration of the festivals of the Tamil saints and various other reasons which are explained in a later context.

Nāyana Varadāchāriar

Vēdānta Dēsika’s son Nāyana Varadāchārya alias Kumāra Vēdāntāchārya also lived and studied at Kānchi. He studied under his own distinguished father and began to give discourses of Sri-Bāshya. He wrote a commentary on Adikaraṇa Sārāvali. He is considered the last of the Vaṭakalai āchāryas. His life period was during the 14th century and with him the pūrvāchārya line among the Vaṭakalais came to a close.

Brahmatantra-Svatantrar

Another disciple of Vēdānta Dēsika was Brahmatantra Svatantra swami who spent his early years at Kānchi and later settled down at Tirupati. He figures in an epigraph at Varadarājaswāmi temple dated A.D. 1359 as the head of a māṭha in Kānchi. It is said that this māṭha was later on shifted to Tirupati and then to Mēlkote (Mysore State) where it later became the famous Parakāla-maṭha. This is discussed fully elsewhere. Brahmatantra-Svatantrar figures both in the Sri-Bāshya Guruparamparai and the Bhagavat-Vishya parampara.

Prativāti Bhayankaram Aṇṇan

Kumāra Vēdāntāchārya or Varadāchārya had a disciple—Prativāti Bhayankaram Aṇṇan—who learnt Sri Bāshyam under him and then wrote his commentary on it named Sukapakshiya, besides a few more like the commentaries on the Bhāgavata and the Ashvalōki. He was one of the leading scholars of the time living at Kānchi. Then he lived for some time at Sīrangam and wrote his Saptati Ratnamālākika, the jewel-garland of 70 verses in praise of Vēdānta Dēsika. He later on studied Thirty-six thousand commentary (on the Tamil prabhanda) under Maṇavaḷa Mahāmuni, became one of the latter’s eight chief disciples known as Ashṭādiggajas appointed for the propagation of the Prabhanda creed. He composed many laudatory verses in praise of Maṇavaḷa Mahāmuni which are regularly recited by the Tenkalai people.

Maṇavaḷa Mahāmuni (A.D. 1370-1443)

The life and activities of Maṇavaḷa Mahāmuni constitute another milestone in the history of Sri-Vaishnavism. By his writings as well as his organising genius, he has left indelible impression on a vast majority of Sri-Vaishnava devotees.

Maṇavaḷa was born in A.D. 1370 at Ālvār Tirunagari the birthplace of Nammāḻvār. He was the disciple of Srīsailēsa alias Tiruvāymōḻippilai, who was in turn the disciple of the great Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya. After leading married life for some time, he became an ascetic and settled down at Sīrangam where he had his māṭha. He was known as the Peria Jyar. His erudition and dedication to the cause of spreading the message of the Ālvārs and Rāmānuja won wide recognition. His discourses at Sīrangam temple became popular and the people were delighte
to hear his brilliant exposition of the Āḻvārs’ hymns in all their ramifications. Eminent scholars like Kōiḻ Kandādaik Aṇṇan, Pratīvāti Bhayankaram Aṇṇan and Erumbi-appa and ascetics like Vaṇamālamai Jiyar became his disciples.

Once he visited Kāṭchipuram and stayed there for a year to complete the Śrī-Bāṣhya studies under Kidāmbi Nāyanār, a distinguished scholar at Kāṭchi. He gave a series of discourses in the temple of Tiruvēkha. He worshipped Lord Varadarāja and paid his homage to him by composing his Devarāja-mangalam. It contains 12 Sanskrit verses which describe the divine origin of the deity and the benign qualities of Lord Varadarāja.58

Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni’s chief contribution lies in the popularisation of the Āḻvārs’ Divya-prabhāndams and the commentaries thereon like the Idu-Thirtysix thousand. It is said that the latter work was confined to a few private hands and it was he who popularised it. He also added a glossary to it called Idu-Prajāpatiraṭṭu. He also wrote a series of illuminating commentaries on the esoteric aphorisms of Pīḷḷai Lōkāchārya like the Śrī-Vacana-Bhūṣhana, Tatvāttriyam, Rahasytrayam, Alagia Maṇavala Nainar’s Āchārya-Hridayam, Amudanar’s Rāmānuja-Nārāṇadādi. In order to popularise the works of his predecessors, he wrote a number of “digests” or Tiraṭṭu, like the Idu-Pramāṇa-tiraṭṭu, Tatvāttraya-pramāṇa-tiraṭṭu etc. Besides, a full poem on Rāmānuja’s greatness, Yatirāja-Vimasati, he wrote a short poetic biography of the Āḻvārs and Āchāryas, entitled the Upadeśa-ratnamālai.59 Written in limpid and moving style, this poem has become famous and is recited on important occasions in almost all Vishnu temples, including Varadarājaswāmi temple. It is a fine poem of 73 stanzas expatiating on the spiritual greatness of the Āḻvārs and their works and the masterly commentaries written by the Prabhandic āchāryas. Because of his unparalleled service to the cause of propagation of the liberal doctrines of the Āḻvārs, Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni is given a special place of honour in the temples, and his presence and blessings are invoked before the commencement of the recital of the prabhāndams. Laudatory poems written by his disciples—like the Varavaramuni-Sadakam by Erumbiappa, Yatindrapravāṇa-prabhāvam by Pīḷḷai Lōkam Jiyar—clearly show that he was held in veneration in his own life-time as an avatāra (incarnation) of Rāmānuja.

There is a separate shrine for Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni in the Varadarājaswāmi temple and a regular ten-day annual festival is conducted in the Tamil month of Aippasi on his birth asterism.

The popularity of the Prabhandic school and Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni’s contribution

Thus, from the foregoing account, it can be seen that one line of āchāryas or preceptors showed a marked preference to the study and exposition of the Śrī-Bāṣhya in the light of the ancient Sanskrit texts, whereas the other line displayed a strong attachment to the study of the Tamil verses of Nammāḻvār and other Āḻvārs. The leaders of the former school were undoubtedly men of great learning and character, recognised by all as the authoritative exponents of the Vedic and the Purānic lore. But the great emphasis they laid on the strict observance of the daily rituals like the japa, hōma etc., enjoined by the Śāstras, their concentration on the Sanskrit texts and their orthodox and conservative social views inevitably made their tenets more
exclusive. On the other hand, the Southern or the Prabhandic school advocated a less ritualistic and more devotional and popular approach to religion. They gave great prominence to the Tamil saints and their inspired hymns which brought them closer to the vast majority of the non-Brahmin community. The festivals they organised for the Tamil saints many of whom were from the lower castes were participated with great enthusiasm by the common folk who lavished endowments for the same. As has been observed by Prof. P.N. Srinivasacharya, “the chief contribution of Tenkalai to the cause of Sri-Vaishnavism consisted in its democratic dissemination to all people of the truths of the darsana confined till then to the higher castes.”

Moreover, the Prabhandic school laid greater emphasis on Kainkarya or personal service to God in the idol (archa) form in the temple as against karma or performance of ritualistic duties like hōma, japa etc. This brought them closer to the temples and their services. To such a popular creed, Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni’s writings and organising genius gave a further impetus. He gave a permanent organisational basis to it by appointing authorised teachers known as Asṭadigajas in different parts of the Śrī-Vaishnava world from Mysore to Kanyakumāri. These leaders “made the Prabhandic cult highly prosperous throughout the land. Their descendants have carried on the torch of learning and teaching. The celebrated monasteries of Vanamālai, Tirupati and other places have produced great men of attainments and character who made the tenets of Varavaramuni popular in the courts as well as in the ordinary households. It is no wonder that a vast majority of the Vishnu temples came under their spell. Śrī Varadarājaswāmī temple is no exception to this general rule.

Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni’s deification in the temple

His tenets and teachings were popular at Kāṇchi also which led to his deification in the Varadarājaswāmī temple sometime towards the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century. An inscription dated A.D. 1555 records endowments to various āḷvārs and āchāryas in the temple during their Tirunakṣhatram or birth-star. The list is exhaustive and includes all the twelve āḷvārs and the following āchāryas:

Tirukkachi Nambi (birth star Mrigasīrham)
Emberumānār (-do- Tiruvādirai)
Kūṟṟattāḷvār (-do- Hastam)
Nāṭhamuni (-do- Anusham)
Peria Jiyar (-do- Mūlam)

Peria Jiyar was another name for Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni whose birth-star was Mūlam. This epigraph clearly shows that Maṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni was held in high esteem and ranked with great āchāryas like Emberumānār and Nāṭhamuni, even as early as A.D. 1555. His deification might well have taken place considerably earlier than the date. Another inscription dated Ś 1504 (A.D. 1582) records an endowment for various festivals including the one in honour of Maṇavāḷa-mahāmuni on the birth anniversary falling in the month of Arpasi (Maṇavāḷa-mahāmuni-arppasi-mūla Sirappu).

A copper-plate grant dated A.D. 1724 records endowment of villages for various charities in the temple including the feeding of devotees in the shrine of Peria Jiyar during the annual festival (Peria Jiyar Sannidiyil Nadakkira Nitya tariyāradanai).

The deification of Maṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni and continuous endowments for the celebra-
tions of his birth-day and the conspicuous absence of mention of any of the āchāryas of the Vaḍakalai school in any of the inscriptions of this temple may perhaps go to show the growing influence of the Prabhândic school in this temple. 61

Section 3

THE POST-MANAVĀLA MAHĀMUNI PERIOD
(A.D. 1440 TO THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY)

With Maṇavāla Mahāmuni we come to the end of the line of Pūrvāchāryas. From this period onwards i.e., from the middle of the 15th century A.D., the history of Śrī-Vaishnavas has to be reckoned by reviewing the services of a number of distinguished Āchārya-purushas and other Vaishnava leaders. Another important development was the great spurt in the activities of the Jiyars or ascetics, many of whom were appointed to look after the proper conduct of worship in the temples. A number of seminaries or maṭhas like the Āḷaġiya-maṇavāla-Jiyar-maṭha, Van-Saṭāgopa-maṭha and the Vāṇamāmalai-maṭha gave an organised lead to the Śrī-Vaishnavas and ministered to their religious needs. Besides these, there were a number of local maṭhas. In Kāṇchi too, there were a few maṭhas attached to Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple mainly for the propagation of Rāmānuja-darsana. The work of the maṭhas will be reviewed in a later context. We will now refer to the various Śrī-Vaishnava leaders associated with this temple from about the 15th century A.D. This period, it is worthy to note, was specially conducive to the growth of Vaishnavism because of the ardent enthusiasm and patronage of the Vijayanagar kings, who were devoted Vaishnavas. Though helpful and sympathetic to all other religions, they developed special affinity to Vaishnavism and extended their patronage to the Vaishnava-āchāryas and institutions on a large scale. The Vijayanagar kings and nobles vied with one another in extending their patronage on a lavish scale to the Śrī-Vaishnavism and their institutions. For Śrī Varadarājaswāmi temple, it was indeed a prosperous period, as it received enormous gifts by way of land, money, jewels, vehicles (vāhanas) etc. Many of its elegant structures like the beautiful Kalyāṇa maṇḍapa, the Kalyāṇakōṭi vimāṇa, the eastern gopura, the vāhana-maṇḍapa, the ūṇjal-maṇḍapa, the Tulabhāra-maṇḍapa etc., were constructed during this period. Another notable development is the enormous increase in the celebration of festivals not only for the main deity but also for all the Āḷvārs and āchāryas. Offerings in honour of Tirukkachi Nambi, Kūrattāḻvār, Maṇavāla Mahāmuni are frequently referred to in the epigraphs of the 16th century. In short, it can be called a golden age for Śrī-Vaishnavism and also for our temple.

Āḷaġiya-maṇavāla-Jiyar

The most prominent Jiyar at Kāṇchi in the post-Maṇavāla Mahāmuni period was Āḷaġiya-maṇavāla-Jiyar. Several inscriptions datable to the latter half of the 15th century and the earlier half of the 16th century, speak of his services to the temple and his eminent position in the temple affairs at Kāṇchi. His life period was from A.D. 1420 to 1468. It was already pointed out that during this period there was a great spurt in the activities of the Jiyars whose main function was to look after the proper conduct of worship and festivals in the temple and to administer certain endowments
and see that they were utilised for the purposes for which they were meant. Thus, the Tirupati inscriptions as well as the Tirumalai-olugu speak of the eminence of Vaḍa-Tiruvēṅgaḍa Jiyar, the Kōil-kēḷi of the temple. According to the Tirumalai-olugu Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni appointed his disciple Śrīranga Nārāyana Jiyar as the superintendent of the Śrīrangam temple and Vaḍa Tiruvēṅgaḍam Jiyar as the Kōil-kēḷi of the Tirupati temple. Inscriptions at Tirupati refer to successive Vaḍa-Tiruvēṅgaḍa Jiyars. Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar seems to have held a similar position at Kāṇchi from the last decade of the 15th century.

He was the disciple of Paṭṭarpirān Jiyar, one of the asṭṭadigajas of Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni. It is interesting to note that Maṇavāḷa was similarly known as Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar. Thus, the affinity of Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar of Kāṇchi to Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni is beyond doubt. An interesting inscription of the latter half of the 15th century at Tirupati records the offerings to Lord on the birth-star of these two ascetics (sanyāsis) famed as ‘the beautiful’ as both were called Alagia-maṇavāḷar. The Sanskrit names of the two ascetics were Ramya-jāmātru-muni (Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni) and Saumya-jāmātru-muni—both meaning ‘the beautiful’. Alagia-maṇavāḷa Jiyar and his disciple Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār played a notable part in the development of the temple. Both were contemporaries of the Vijayanagar king Sāluva Narasimha who was a great devotee of Vēṅkatēśvara of Tirumalai. Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār was held in high esteem by Sāluva Narasimha. From Tirupati inscriptions, we know that Narasimha appointed Rāmānuja Ayyangār as the manager of the feeding houses or Rāmānuja-kāyas at Tirupati and also at Kāṇchi. His activities at Kāṇchi are also well attested by the inscriptions (dating from A.D. 1487) found at the Varadarāja temple which will be reviewed later. What is to be noted here is, that he is frequently referred to as the disciple of Alagia-maṇavāḷa Jiyar of Kāṇchi. The earliest reference to the Jiyar is found in Tirupati inscription dated Ś 1388 (A.D. 1466) and another in Ś 1391 (A.D. 1469). Both of them refer to him as a faithful personality at Kāṇchi and the preceptor of Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār. Another inscription of Tirupati dated A.D. 1535 records the institution of offerings by Vaḍa-Tiruvēṅgaḍa Jiyar (the Kōil-kēḷi at Tirupati) in honour of his āchārya (preceptor) Tiruvāyomol-perumāl Nāyānar and Paramāchārya (preceptor of preceptors) Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar, whose birth star was asvini in the month of Ānti. From this epigraph we can infer that Alagia-maṇavāḷa Jiyar was of advanced age or had already passed away.

The next Jiyar in succession, who was also called Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar, figures very prominently in the Kāṇchi inscriptions dating from A.D. 1553 to A.D. 1562, during the time of Sadāśiva Rāya. In some of them, he is designated as Śrī-kāryam or manager of the temple and in others as Kōil-kēḷi or the superintendent of the temple. Two inscriptions dated A.D. 1558 and 1562 refer to Alagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar’s gift of four villages to meet the expenses for various offerings including a ten-day festival for Tondaradippodī Ālvār in the month of Tati and tiruvadyayana-utsavam for Śūḍik-koṇduṭha-nāchiyār (Āndāl). He also made provision for offerings to Lord Varadarāja when he visited Alagia-maṇavāḷa-perumottppu (garden named after the Jiyar) in the Tamil months of Ādi, Āvaṅi, Puraṭṭasi, Kārttiṅai, Māsi and Vaikāśi. In A.D. 1560, Alagia-maṇavāḷa Jiyar the superintendent of the temple (kōil-kēḷi) gifted some lands to the temple, the income from which had to be utilised for making elaborate provi-
sions and offerings for festivals of Tiruppān Āḷvār and Alagia Singar (Narasimha). The village was named Poigaippakkam alias Alagia Maṇavāḻapuram—named after the Jīyar again.69

The same Jīyar was responsible for many constructional activities in the temple. According to the Vaihavaprakāśika of the Alagia-maṇavāḻa-Jīyar maṭha at Kāṇchī, the Jīyar built the maṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine, the western annexe to the Abhishēkā-maṇḍapa, the hundred-pilledared Kālyāṇa maṇḍapa and reconstructed the compound wall of the third prākāra. It also says that he caused his own statue to be carved in those structures.70 This version is remarkably borne out by the presence of the sculpture of the Jīyar in those buildings. In the maṇḍapa in front of Tāyār shrine, his sculpture is found on the second pillar in the front row facing north. He is depicted in standing pose with his antariya flowing right up to the ankle and a cloth tied on the waist and having a tridanda in his hand. He wears a clear Tenkalai mark on his forehead. An exactly similar figure is found in a niche at the top of the compound wall of the fourth prākāra on the north and east sides of the main shrine. Alagia-maṇavāḻa-Jīyar’s figure, with his typical dress of a Jīyar, is found in two places at the Kālyāṇa maṇḍapa. Both are shown in seated postures holding the tridanda and bearing the Tenkalai mark. It is pointed out that wearing the antariya up to the ankle and tying another cloth on the waist, are typical characteristics of the Jīyars of the Tenkalai school, whereas the Jīyars of the Vaṭakalai sect wear the lower cloth only up to the knee and have the other piece of cloth near the arm-pit.

Perhaps, the same Alagia-maṇavāḻa-Jīyar figures in two Sanskrit inscriptions found at Vilakkoliperumāl temple at Kāṇchī itself. Both are undated records which refer to the construction of a certain maṇḍapa and the prākāra walls in that temple by one Sankaradāsa, a disciple of Alagia-maṇavāḻa Jīyar. The Jīyar is eulogised in the inscription as one who was well-versed in the Udbhaya-Vēdānta (Sanskrit and Tamil lore), deeply immersed in the philosophy of Śrī Bāṣhya and a veritable ornament of Kāṇchī.71

Further history of the successors of this Alagia-maṇavāḻa-Jīyar and the maṭha over which they presided will be pursued in a later context.

Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyan

We know from the Tirupati inscriptions that one Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyan, who was probably a Sāttāda-Śrī-Vaiṣṇava, was held in high esteem by the Vijayanagar king, Sāluva Narasimha. Rāmānuja Ayyan or Ayyangār’s life-period was from 1430 to 1496. The king appointed him as the kartār or the guardian of the gold treasury (Porocardam) of the temple at Tirupati.72 Rāmānuja Ayyan was undoubtedly an influential person who was instrumental in getting numerous grants from the king to the Tirupati temple and particularly for the celebration of festivals for Āḻvārs and aṭṭuriyas.73 He also made many salutary reforms in that temple. He was appointed the manager of the feeding houses or Rāmānujakūṭams at Tirupati and probably elsewhere also. From the inscriptions at Śrīrangam we learn that he and his successors were in charge of the Rāmānuja-kūṭa there also.74 A record of Sāluva Narasimha dated Ś 1409 (A.D. 1487) informs us that this Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyan was in charge of the Rāmānuja-kūṭa at Kāṇchī. It records a gift of money to Virūpākshadānāyaka a chieftain of Sāluva Narasimha for the reconstruction ceremony of the image
of Perundēvi Tāyār in the temple and for laying out groves in the temple-lands etc. He ordered that from produce of the lands certain offerings should be given to the deities and one fourth of the offerings should be given to the ‘Kandāḍai-Rāmānuja-Ayyangār Rāmānukṣaṇa’ in the Sannidhi Street. This epigraph clearly shows that Kandāḍai Rāmānuja-ayyangār was in charge of the Rāmānuja-kūta situated at the Sannidhi Street at Kāṇchi also as early as A.D. 1487. His connection with Kāṇchi need not surprise us for the Tirupati inscriptions frequently refer to him as the disciple of Alagia-maṇavāla-Jiyar of Kāṇchi.

After his discipleship under Alagia-maṇavāla-Jiyar at Kāṇchi in his early years, he went on pilgrimage to all the shrines of the south. He observed in detail how the temple worship and various festivals were carried on in the famous temples like Srīrangam where he did some notable service. His services at Srīrangam and Kāṇchipuram are mentioned in an incomplete tablet on the east wall of the Pādikāval gōpuram in Tirumalai. He won the respect and esteem of Sāḷuvā Narasimha who appointed him as the kartār or manager of all the Rāmānuja-kūtas. His reforms, at Tirumalai are recorded in the inscriptions there. Particularly, he did much to popularise the festivals connected with the Āḷvār’s (like the Tiruvadiyana festival, Tiruvāyumoḷi-strappu) and Rāmānuja there. He gave prominence to the prabhanda-recital and associated even the Sāttāda-Vaishnavas in it. The intimate association of Kandāḍai Rāmānuja Ayyangār and his disciples with the Srīrangam temple is attested not only by the Srīrangam inscription but also the kōil-ōḷugu. It eulogises his benefactions to the temple. He is said to have obtained the dāṣyānāma Kandāḍai Rāmānujadāsan at the hands of kōil-Kandāḍai Aṇṇa, one of the eight chief disciples of Maṇavāla Mahāmuni. He doned the robes of Ekāṅgi and was in charge of the various branches of the temple organisation.

Successive members of this family were in charge of the Rāmānuja-kūtas at Kāṇchi as at Tirupati and Srīrangam. An epigraph dated A.D. 1512 (in Krishna-deva Rāya’s time) records an endowment by a member of the Cheṭṭiār community for offerings for Tiruvakischi-nambi in the name of the donor’s āchārya (preceptor) Kandāḍai-ayyangār. An inscription dated A.D. 1530 records an endowment of 2,600 gold coins by Kandāḍai-Rāmānuja-ayyangār, the dharmakartha of the charities of Rāmānuja-kūtam in the Sannidhi Street. It was to be utilised for various festivals, processions and offerings to Pēraruḷaḷa and Mahālakshmi. The next record dated A.D. 1537 registers a royal gift in honour of Tirumala Rāya, the nephew of the king Achyutarāya. The donated money of 300 pon was entrusted to Kandāḍai-Rāmānuja-ayyangār of the Rāmānuja-kūta, who had to conduct the various festivals which included the Tiruvadiyana-festival for the Āḷvārs and offerings on the day of the birth-asterism (Tai-chitra) of Kandāḍai-Rāmānuja-ayyangār. This epigraph clearly shows Kandāḍai Rāmānuja was held in high esteem and trust by the Vijayanagar kings. Next year i.e., A.D. 1538 Kandāḍai Rāmānuja-ayyangār is specifically mentioned as the manager (Srī-kāryam) of the temple in an epigraph which records the grant of Vaḍa Tiruvēṅgaḍa Jiyar, the kōil-kēḻi at Tirupati. The grant was for the Tiruvadiyana-festival in the month of mārgalī. It gives the shares for the prabhanda-reciters of the Brahmin community. From this epigraph we also understand that importance was given to the Sattāda-Vaishnavas or non-Brahmin devotees in the temple. One of the shares of the prasādam was to go to the Rāmānuja-kūta.
Another epigraph of the Vijayanagar times, the exact year of which is however not given, records that one Kandadai Annamayyangar evidently a member of the same Kandadai family conducted certain festivals during which the Tiruppallandu-hymns of Periññar were recited. The grant was made by royal officer Räyasam Timmakkann.\(^5\)

The foregoing instances go to show that the descendants of Kandadai Rämänuja-ayyangar were highly respected by the kings and common folk alike. Particularly, they had numerous Sattäda Vaishnavas as disciples who lavished endowments both at Tirupati and Känñchi. Another noteworthy point is that they paid particular care to create endowments for the celebrations of the festivals in honour of the Ályärs and the achäryas like Tirukkachi-nambi and also for maintaining the due shares for the prabhändam-reciters who are frequently mentioned in their inscriptions. They showed special patronage to the festivals of the Ályärs. Their services to the temples at Srängam and Tirupati are eulogised in the koil-olugu. All these factors together with the discipleship of the first Kandadai Rämänuja to Alagia-manavälal-Jiyar at Känñchi and his devotion to koil-Kandadai Añnan of Srängam, one of the eight chief disciples of Manavälal Mahämuni—all clearly show their affiliation to the Prabhändic school.\(^8\) It was already shown that Manavälal Mahämuni was deified in this temple sometime earlier than A.D. 1555. Probably, it was done during the time of the first Kandadai Rämänuja-ayyangar, the powerful lieutenant of Säluva Narasimha.

Van-Satçgöpa Jiyar

One of the influential mäthas of the second half of the 15th-16th century whos presiding Jiyars did yeoman service in the cause of Sri-Vaishnavism, was the Van-Satçgöpa mätham, later known as Ahöbila-mätha. Ádi Van Satçgöpa Jiyar, the founder of the mätha, was the guru of Allasänì Peddannä, the poet-laureate of the Vijayanagar monarch Krishnädeva Räya. The Jiyar is eulogised as the “asylum of all learning” by Peddañä in his Manucharitamu.\(^8\) The king himself in his Amuktamälavadä praises Van Satçgöpa’s efforts to popularise Sri-Vaishnavism in the Andhra country.\(^9\) The date of birth given to the Jiyar in the Sannidhi guruparam-para has been found to be antedated by 60 years. Calculating from the epigraphical data available at Känñchi and Tirupati, it has been shown that Van Satçgöpa Jiyar was born in A.D. 1437 and lived upto A.D. 1516. His pontificate for sixty years should have continued until the beginning years of Krishnädeva Räya.\(^1\) At Varadaräjaswarmi temple a record dated Ș 1431 or A.D. 1509 mentions the gift of a land in a village named Van-Satçgöpapuram evidently after the Jiyar.\(^2\)

He is said to have been a native of Mëlköte near Mysore. He spent his early years at Känñchi and pursued studies under a well-known scholar Ghatikästanaam-ammäl alias Varadakavi. After leading married life for some time, he proceeded to Ahöbilam (in Kurnool District in Andhra Pradesh) and is believed to have received initiation into Sanyäsa-äśrama (ascetic life) at the hands of God Narasimha.

According to the Tenkalai tradition, Van Satçgöpa Jiyar was devoted to Manavälal Mahämuni for whom he built a shrine at Mëlköte.\(^3\)

Ádi Van-Satçgöpa was succeeded first by Sriñman Näräyaña Jiyar and next by Paränkuša Jiyar I. The former occupied the gadi from A.D. 1515 to 1528, and the
latter from A.D. 1528 to 1541. Nārāyaṇa Jiyar lived almost to the end of Krishna-
dēva Rāya's reign while his successor Parāṇkuśa Jiyar was a contemporary of Krishna-
dēva and Achyuta Rāya. There are two records at Varadarājaswāmi temple, Kāñchi, 
dated Ś 1452 and Ś 1461 corresponding respectively to A.D. 1530 and 1539 which 
mention the Parāṇkuśa Jiyar's offering to this temple during auspicious occasions like 
the Chaturmāsā-Ekādaśi days and on the Kauśikadvādaśi days. He also made provi-
sion for reading the Kauśika purāṇa on the Kauśikadvādaśi days. Three villages in 
Dāmarkōṭṭam were donated by him for meeting the expenses of 15 Ekādaśi days. 
The items of expenditure included the presentation of cloth to one who recited the 
Kauśika-purāṇa.

These instances clearly show that the Jiyars of the Van-Saṭagōpa maṭha took keen 
interest in fostering the religious faith and observances in many Vaishnava temples 
of South India.

Paravastu and Nallān Chakravarti families

In Achyutarāya's inscriptions of the temple several members of the Srī-Vaishnava 
families are mentioned. A record dated Ś 1460 (A.D. 1538) mentions a gift to 
this temple by Vaḍa Tiruvēngadā Jiyar the kōll-kēvi or the temple-superintendent at 
Tirumalai and disciple of Paravastu Naynār Ayyangār. Another epigraph of the 
same king records a gift by a member of the well-known Āchārya-purusha family, Nallān Chakravarti. He made a gift of 1,200 pon (gold) to the temple, out of which 
150 pon should be granted to Gōvinda Ayyangār, the son of his preceptor Nallān 
Chakravarti Srīranga Ayyangār. The latter was given one eighth of the offerings.

Tallāppakkam family

The members of this family were renowned musicians and poets who composed 
hundreds of devotional songs set to music and sang them regularly in the presence 
of Lord Venkaṭēśvara of Tirumalai. They were Nandavarika Brahmanas and 
belonged to the Bharadwāja-gōtra. Annamāchārya or Sankīrtanāchārya, the well-
known Telugu poet and musical-composer, was the earliest member of this family. 
He lived during the reigns of Sāluva Narasimha and Krishnadēva Rāya. He was 
first a Smārtha and later became a staunch adherent of Rāmānuja-siddānta. His son 
Pedda or Peria Tirumal-ayyangār, grandson Siru or Chinna Tirumala-ayyangār and 
his great grandson Tiruvēngalappar figure in the inscriptions of our temple as donors. 
The epigraphs at Tirupati testify to their prosperity and also their liberal benefactions 
to the temple there. Here in our records too, their donations are recorded. Thus, an 
epigraph dated Ś 1474 (A.D. 1553) records that Pedda Tirumala-ayyangār and his 
son together provided for offerings for God Arulāja and arranged for conducting cer-
tain festivals at specified scales of expenditure. Pedda Tirumala ayyangār was a 
profound scholar and philosopher. His son Chinna Tirumala ayyangār was also a 
prolific composer, whose works include Adhyātma-sankīrtana-Lakshanam. His various 
other benefactions to Gōvindarāja temple at Tirupati and the temple at Tiruchānūr 
are recorded in the inscriptions of those places.

Another member of the Tallāppakkam family of poets was Chinna-Tirumala 
ayyangār's son Tiruvēngalappar. In Ś 1475 (A.D. 1553) he donated the income 
from two villages to the Varadarājaswāmi temple to be utilised for certain offerings.
on festival days. He wrote a commentary in Telugu called Bālaprabōdini or Amara. In the preface to this work, he traces his descent from Tallāpākkam Anna-
māchārya.

The Kāñchi records clearly show that the beneficial hand of the Tallāpākkam family extended even upto Kāñchi.

**Anandām Piḷḷai**

An epigraph dated A.D. 1535 records an endowment for the festival of Tiruk-
kachi-nambi and stipulates certain shares in the prasādam for the preceptors like Anandām Piḷḷai Iyengār and the Srī-Vaishnavas reciting the Prabhandas. The members of Anandām Piḷḷai family are found still in Kāñchipuram and other places and they are staunch exponents of the Prabhandic or Tenkalai school. It is interesting to recall here that another member of the Anandām Piḷḷai family residing at Tirumalai donated (in A.D. 1545) a large sum of money to the temples of Tirumalai and Tirupati for offerings during the time when the “kanyinum-Siruttāmbu” verses in praise of Nammāḻvār were sung in the annual Adyayanōtsavam festival.

**Parakāla Alagia Singar**

There is an interesting record dated Ś 1477 (A.D. 1555) which mentions an endow-
ment made by Parakāla Alagia Singar of Tirunārāyaṇapuram, son of Mudumbi Appiḷḷai Annāvaiyyangār. He was probably the head of the Parakāla maṭha of Tirunārāyaṇapuram or Mēlkote. His father was a native of Mudumbi village to which the great Piḷḷai Lōkāchārya also belonged. Here in this record Parakāla Alagia Singar made sumptuous gift of lands for meeting the expenses for offerings for all the Āḻvārs and some āchārya-puruṣhas on their respective asterism. The āchāryas mentioned are: Nāthamuni, Emberumānār (Rāmānuja), Kūrattāḻvār, Tirukkachi-nambi and Peria-Jiyan or Maṉavāḷa-Mahāmuni (Mūlam star). The birth-star of Parakāla Jiyan (star Uttīram) either himself or one of his predecessors is also included.

**Tātāchārya family**

Another famous Srī-Vaishnava family was that of the Tātāchāryas. According to the Sanskrit work Prapannāmṛutam written by Anantāchārya, a disciple of Tātāchā-
rya, the Tātāchāryas were the descendants of the Srī Sailanātha or Tirumalai-nambi, the uncle and teacher of Rāmānuja. Two of the early members of this family who were proficient in the exposition of the Rāmāyaṇa are said to have migrated from Tirupati to Eṭṭūr and from there to Hampi, the capital of the Vijayanagar. They were highly respected by the Vijayanagar monarchs. One of the descendants of this family was the famous Pañchamatabhaṇjanam Tātāchārya who lived in the court of Rāmarāya I and contemporary of Mahāchārya or Doḍḍayāchārya. Both Doḍḍayā-
chārya and Tātāchārya defended the tenets of the Visishtādvaita philosophy and refuted the criticisms of Appayya Dīkshitar, the well-known Advaitic scholar of the times. Doḍḍayāchārya who lived at Sōlasimhapuram (about 45 miles from Kāñchi on the way to Tirupati) wrote his famous work Chandamāṛutam while Tātāchārya wrote the work Pañchamatabhaṇjanam. Both these Srī-Vaishnava leaders are said to have played a notable part in reinstalling the image of Gōvindarāja at Chidam-
baram.105

Till the disastrous battle of 1565, the members of the Tāṭāchārya family lived in the vicinity of Vijayanagar. But after that, they went to different places.106 The Vijayanagar capital was for some time at Penugonda and later shifted to Chandragiri by Srīranga I whose rule commenced in A.D. 1572. It is during this time of Srīranga I that one branch of the Tāṭāchārya family settled down at Kāṇchi. The earliest epigraph at Kāṇchi mentioning Tāṭāchārya is dated Ś 1496 (A.D. 1574).107 He was Eṭṭūr Kumāra Tirumalai Tāṭāchārya, who became the best known member of the family later on.108 The place-names like Eṭṭūr and Tirumalai prefixed to his name showed his original homes from where his family first hailed. In this epigraph he is mentioned in connection with the sale of certain services like the conduct of Tiruvadigayana festival in the Tamil month of mārgaiṭi, Śrī Jayanti and other minor festivals. But Tāṭāchārya’s position in the temple is not mentioned in this inscription. However, the next epigraph dated A.D. 1582 mentions him as Śrī-kārṇa-Durantara or manager-general of the temple.109 This is an important inscription as it gives us information about the various ālvārs and āchāryas for whom therewere shrines in the temple, and the various festivals conducted in their honour. It records an agreement by the Śrī Bandārattār (treasurer) of the temple and Tāṭāchārya-ayyan with the military commander (Dālavāy) of the Vijayanagar king to provide offerings and worship to Pērarulālar, Perundēviyēr (Goddess), Sērakulavalli-nāchchār, all the ālvārs and some āchāryas. The āchāryas mentioned are Emberumānār (Rāmānuja), Nāṭhamuni and Maṇavāla Mahāmuni. The specific mention of Tāṭāchārya’s agreement to perform the Janma-nakshatiram of Maṇavāla Mahāmuni on his annual birthday is indeed significant as it shows his devotion to this āchārya. In another record dated A.D. 1583 it is mentioned that he was the āchārya of Tirumalai, Kumbakōṭam and Tirumālirumōlai and that he performed Vājaṇēya yēga at the temple.110 In the same year i.e., A.D. 1583 he donated one village for conducting festivals, Tiruvadigayana festival in the month of mārgaiṭi, Tiruppavitra-utsavam festival for Āndāl etc. (586 of 1919). Eṭṭūr Tirumalai Kumāra Tāṭāchārya continued to hold an eminent position as royal preceptor under Srīranga’s successor Vēnkaṭa II, who succeeded to the throne in A.D. 1586. The Tāṭāchārya is said to have officiated as the royal guru during his coronation. There are a number of inscriptions of Vēnkaṭa II at Varadarājaswāmi temple and elsewhere, reciting the benefactions and other acts of Kumāra Tāṭāchārya. Their dates range between A.D. 1587 and 1614, till almost the end of Vēnkaṭa’s reign. He is stated to have weighed himself against gold and silver and to have used that wealth in the service of Varadarāja in erecting the Kalyāṇa-kōṭi vimāna for goddess Lakshmi.111 The Tāyār shrine was already there (as has already been shown) but the tower was rebuilt and covered with gold-coated plate. He built it in emulation of the Punya-kōṭi vimāna set up by Krishnadēva Rāya Tāṭāchārya repaired and re-gilt with gold as it got defaced in the course of a century. His benefactions include many vāhanas or processional vehicles and some jewels.112 He also dug a tank at Kāṇchi named Tātāsamudram (now known as Ayyankulam) and built a shrine on its bank for Hanuman. He composed a poem of 20 verses named Hanumadivimsati which is now inscribed on the east and north walls of the rock and also on the outermost gōpuram, right of the entrance at Varadarājaswāmi temple.113 It should be remembered that Hanuman was a favourite God of the
Vijayanagar kings. In an inscription found at the Hanuman temple at Ayyankulam, it is stated that the consecration ceremony was celebrated in a grand manner and king Venkaṭa was present at Kāṇchi to witness the same.114 His assistants or agents Visva Puṇḍitār and Tiruppaṇi Piḷḷai of Tiruppullānī are also mentioned. But two of the inscriptions give us the information that Tāṭāchārya was not the sole manager of this temple. While the inscription dated A.D. 1591 mentions him as one of the managers,115 the other dated earlier i.e., A.D. 1588, specifically mentions Sāṇidhi Sīrāmā Ayyangār as another Sṛī-kārya or manager.116 The position appears to be like this. Each temple had its own traditional local Sṛī-kārya or manager. Tāṭāchārya was evidently appointed as the Sṛī-kārya-durantāra or manager-general of many Vishnu temples not only in Kāṇchi but also at Srīperumbuddur, Tirunilimalai etc., probably to have an overall supervision in their affairs.117 Hence, in his inscriptions we get the names of a number of agents and local managers under him. But, the last that we hear of Eṭṭūr Kumāra Tāṭāchāri at Kāṇchi is A.D. 1614, the last year of his patron Venkaṭa II. Practically, that marks the end of Tāṭāchārya’s administration. His son Eṭṭūr Immaḍi Kumāra Tirumalai Tāṭāchārya figures in an inscription at Srīperumbuddur which is dated in A.D. 1634, as the manager of that temple. He also figures in two inscriptions at Tennēri (15 miles from Kāṇchi) where he built a sluice for the tank. There also he is called Eṭṭūr Immaḍi Kumāra Tirumalai Tāṭāchārya. He personally laid the foundation of this first sluice. But, strangely the junior Tāṭāchārya does not figure in the inscriptions of our temple. It was the time when the Vijayanagar power was rapidly declining. Soon after the death of Venkaṭa II in 1614, there was a bitter civil war in which the rightful nominee Sriranga was put to death by the rebel group. The empire was parcelled into many governorships and the Vijayanagar kingdom lost its supremacy and influence. In 1645, the combined forces of Bijapur and Golkonda laid siege to Vellore the capital and seized it. That was practically the death-knell of the Vijayanagar empire. With its decline, the Tāṭāchāryas were also losing their royal backing and patronage. The inscriptions at Kāṇchi are silent about their activities. In this turbulent period the only strong Hindu kingdom which looked like stepping into the shoes of the Vijayanagar kingdom was that of the Mysore Wodeyārs, who were strong Vaishnavas. So, the Eṭṭūr Kumāra Tāṭāchārya family moved to Sīrāngapāṭna, the capital of the Mysore kings, in search of better fortunes. This is clearly borne out by an inscription found in Mysore from which we learn that Venkaṭa-Varadāchārya of Yēḍūr (i.e., Eṭṭūr), grandson of Immaḍi-Tirumalai-Tāṭāchārya and son of Kōṭi-Kanyādānam-Lakshmi-Kumārā Tāṭāchārya proceeded to the court of Sīrāngapāṭinam as the preceptor of Dēvārāya Wodeyār, the king of Mysore. He reached Mysore in A.D. 1663.118 As Hayavadana Rao says:119

"The arrival of the celebrated Tāṭāchārya family of Sṛī-Vaishnavite royal preceptors from the court of Vijayanagar and their settlement in Sīrāngapāṭnam probably contributed not a little to confirm in the Royal House of Mysore the vanishing glories of the Vijayanagar imperialism."

Vēṇkaṭādri and Gōmaṭam family (A.D. 1658-59)

When Kāṇchi was in the grip of Muslim inroads, the temple was ably managed by one Vēṇkaṭādri, an agent of the Vijayanagar king. This is attested by an epigraph
dated A.D. 1658-59 (§ 1581). It records the conferring of privileges like Parivaṭṭam (holy turban), Tirtham (holy water) and Satāgōpam (the placing of the sacred feet of the Lord on one’s head) on Vēṅkaṭādri, who administered the temple ably during the Muslim disturbances. In 1684, Vēṅkaṭādri transferred the honours as privileges to his preceptor or āchārya of the Gōmatām Tirumalāchārya family, a Śrī-Vaishnava belonging to the Tenkalai school. The descendants of this family continue to enjoy the privileges even today.

Aruḷappādu rights for Prativāti Bhayankaram family
(A.D. 1677 and 1687)

The other Śrī-Vaishnava leaders of the times who were presented with certain honours like the Arulappādu and holy water (Tirtham), all belonged to the Tenkalai school. Arulappādu right holders were also the Stalattārs of the temple. Thus, in A.D. 1677 (§ 1599) the Arulappādu rights and privileges were conferred on one Śrīrangāchārya, son of Vādibhikara Śrīṇivāsa Guru of Śrī-vatsa-gōṭra. He belonged to the Prativāti Bhayankaram family.

The next inscription dated § 1609 (A.D. 1687) confers the privileges like the first Tirtham and Arulappādu on Govindāchārya son of Prativāti Bhayankaram Rangāchārya of Śrī-vatsa-gōṭra. First Tirtham means precedence in honours during the distribution of the consecrated water and food. It is interesting to note that the representatives of this family still-enjoy this Arulappādu right though the ‘first tirtham’ honour has lapsed, due to various reasons. The Prativāti Bhayankaram family, as pointed out earlier, is one of the distinguished families of preceptors, who have played an important role in the dissemination of the Śrī-Vaishnava tenets in various places such as Tirupati, Kāṇchi etc.

Āttān Jiyar

In 1688, Aurangzeb’s expedition into the South took place and Kāṇchipuram, in common with several other important centres of South India, felt the shock of the invading army. It was the time when the temple authorities fearing desecration, disguised the images of Lord Varadarāja and His consorts and conveyed them out of Kāṇchi city. These images found their asylum in the jungles of Udayārpalayam. After nearly 22 years, when Kāṇchipuram was considered safe, the temple authorities wanted to bring back the images to the temple. But the local chieftain at Udayārpalayam refused to part with them. At the special intercession of Śrīmat-Parmahamsa Parivṛjākačārya Āttān Tiruvēṅkada Rāmānuja Jiyar, his disciple and chieftain Lāla Tōḍarmāl used force and brought back the images safely and reinstalled them in their original abode—Kāṇchi. This took place in § 1632 (A.D. 1710) as is attested by a long inscription found in a slab erected prominently near the Tāyār shrine. The slab bears a clear and bold Tenkalai caste-mark (mutilated and later restored under court orders) flanked by Sankha and Chakra showing, incidentally, that it was the recognised mark of the temple at that time (Fig. 3). In recognition of the yeoman services rendered to this temple by Rāja Tōḍarmāl, those who were in the authority of the temple known as the Stalattārs conferred the right of management of the temple on Tōḍarmāl, who in his turn, transferred it to his guru Āttān Jiyar. Āttān Jiyar was a Śrī-Vaishnava of Tenkalai sect and he was
managing the temple till his death in 1723. Then Rāja Tūdarmál re-conferred the title of full proprietorship (Sarva-Srī-Kārya-Durantaratvam) on Āttān Jiyar’s son (born before he became a Sānyasin) by name Rāmānuja Rayanivāru which was to be enjoyed hereditarily also. Thus, the descendants of Āttān Jiyar were holding the office of trusteeship for nearly four generations till 1794. In 1794, the Government took over the administration of the temple.

The Tenkalai preponderance in the temple is again confirmed by another record of A.D. 1713 which registers that the Stalattārs of the temple conferred the Arulappādu Tirtham honours on one Srirangam Nallān Chakravarti. This family is still enjoying this right in this temple and its members belong to the Tenkalai school.

Return of Tātāchārya family to Kāñchi (A.D. 1711)

In A.D. 1711 a year after the restoration, the descendant of the Eṭṭur Tirunalai Kumāra Tātāchārya returned to Kāñchi from Mysore. At the instance of Āttān Jiyar and Tūdarmallā, the Tātāchārya was made to receive priority of honours (Agra-tāṁbōślam) in the temple, in view of the past eminent position of the family as the royal priests of the Vijayanagar kings. But this was done on the definite undertaking given by the Tātāchārya that he would honour the Tenkalai traditions (māmūl) of the temple and that he would honour the Tenkalai Āchārya, Maṇavāṇa Mahāmuni and that he would chant the tanian or invocatory verses (Srīsailēsa Dayā Patram) in honour of the āchārya in the temple as it was done in all the eighteen sacred Vishnu temples of Kāñchi. This famous agreement known as the Āttān Jiyar agreement was signed by Eṭṭur Immaḍi Lakshmi Kumāra Tātāchārya and delivered to Āttān Jiyar.126 We do not know why such a strong undertaking was felt necessary. Was it because the Tenkalai Stalattārs feared that the Tātāchārya would introduce innovation contrary to the established customs of the temple? Whatever it is, this document clearly shows that the Tenkalai mode of ceremonies and worship prevailed in the temple.

Except for some stray occasions when a deviation was sought to be made (as in A.D. 1770),127 the major part of the 18th century was characterised by peace and concord. The Tenkalai procedure of worship, ceremonies and mantras prevailed in the temple as they did in the seventeen other Vishnu temples of Kāñchi. The Tātāchāryas accepted to respect the prevailing customs. But from the beginning of the 19th century, we witness the sectarian disputes coming into sharp focus, which often tended to mar the religious atmosphere.

Vaishnava sect-marks

A word about the external symbols of the temples. It is well-known that two types of ārdhavapundra or sacred perpendicular marks are worn by the Srī-Vaishnavas on their forehead. They consist of three vertical streaks, the middle one being red, or yellow, and the other two, white in colour. Various interpretations are given for their significance and they are considered to be the yogic symbols. But the common belief is that the ārdhavapundra represents the sacred feet of Lord Vishnu.128 The central streak is taken to represent the grace of Srī or Lakshmi and hence called Srī-chārma. We know that even during Rāmānuja’s time the practice of wearing the ārdhavapundra was in vogue. Kūrattālvār makes a pointed reference to the presence of ārdhavapundra on the forehead of Lord Varadarāja.129 But there is difference of opi-
nion regarding the exact shape of it. The Vaḍakalai and Tenkalai schools claim that it was like their own. The two schools, in course of time, have adopted two types of punda—the Vaḍakalais have the U-like mark with a prominent curvature; the Tenkalais have a slightly different type with a distinct pada projection at the bottom. Most of the references regarding the old form point not to three streaks but to only one, as the mark, it is said, should resemble either the flame, bamboo, leaf, tortoise, mace, lotus-lily or fish. So in the earlier days it appears to have been a single perpendicular mark, broader at the base and narrower at the top. This is followed even now in the temples of North India. But here in the South, the emergence of the two schools has perhaps necessitated the two different forms which have unfortunately added to accentuate the division.

Be that as it may, the practice of inscribing the tiru-nāmam on the temple-walls seems to have come into vogue only in the Vijayanagar times. They are conspicuous by their absence in the Chōja structures. But in many of the structures of the Vijayanagar days both at Hampi and Chandragiri, the tiru-nāmams are found flanked by the Śankha and Chakra, the symbols of Vishnu, sometime with the Vijayanagar state-crest. They are neither incised nor painted but they are reliefs from the original surface of the stone and therefore coeval with the structure. Here in our temple similar ‘nāmams’ originally sculptured by the Vijayanagar sculptors are found on the ornamental door-jamb of the eastern gōpuram, on the pillars of the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapam, the maṇḍapam in front of the Tāyār shrine, the outer compound wall etc. (Fig. 12). They are all, as a rule, the Tenkalai marks i.e., they have the unmistakable pada projection at the bottom. It should be borne in mind that all the old Tenkalai marks have only a short pada-projection and many of them do not bear the central line or Śrī-chūrṇa. Such Tenkalai marks are found in the Chandragiri fort, almost all the leading temples of Hampi, at the entrance of Rāmānuja temple at Sriperumbūdūr with a Vijayanagar inscription, carved below. Exactly the same type of Tenkalai nāmam is found carved on the door-jamb of the eastern gōpuram entrance of Śrī Varadarājāswāmi temple (Fig. 12). Portions of the pada were mutilated during the later sectarian disputes; but still the traces of the pada are unmistakable as illustrated here. They are not extraneous but bas-reliefs and form part of the original structure and therefore belong to the beginning of the 16th century A.D. to which date the gōpuram belongs.

Tenkalai nāmams in stone-reliefs are again found in the Kalyāṇa maṇḍapa, the maṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine—both built by Alagia-maṇavāḷa-Jīyar in the 16th century. They are also found distributed in different shrines and structures such as the cornice of the Abhisheka-maṇḍapa, the door-jamb of the Rāmānuja shrine, the maṇḍapa in front of the Nammālvār shrine at the top of the outer compound walls etc. What need be noted here is that external symbol, like the internal mode of worship, was that of the preponderant sect viz., the Tenkalai. The presence of the two prominent old Tenkalai-marks as stone-reliefs at the door-jamb of the eastern gōpuram, not to speak of the numerous ones found distributed all over the temple, is an eloquent proof of the same.

To sum up the foregoing discussion, we find that the modest temple of Attiyūr rose up in the wake of the great Bhakti movement fostered by the Ālvārs. Bhūdattaḻvār, one of the earliest Ālvārs ascribable to the seventh century A.D., has eulogised the deity of the temple. The shrine came to be considered a Divyadēsa or holy
shrine. But the temple was by no means prominent in the early days. The Vishnu
temple of Tiruvelkai in the same locality was the most prominent temple in Kāñchi.
But, thanks to the association of the great āchāryas, like Rāmānuja, Tirukkachi-
nambi and Kūrattālvār the temple became, from about the 11th century A.D., one
of the three foremost centres of Sri-Vaishnavism, the other two being Srīrangam and
Tirumalai. It became an important seat of the Visishtādvaitic philosophy as pro-
pounded by Rāmānuja. The Pāṭīcharatra-form of worship which was popularised by
Rāmānuja at Srīrangam and elsewhere was adopted in our temple also. Rāmānuja’s
emphasis on the archa or idol form of God gave an impetus to the ritual and struc-
tural expansion of the temple and indeed the 11th and 12th centuries witnessed
remarkable improvement to the temple by way of construction of the first three
prākāras.

Subsequent to Rāmānuja, a galaxy of eminent preceptors carried on his work. A
division arose gradually among his followers on doctrinal matters. The Prabhandic
school with its eminent exponents like Nānpiḷḷai, Peria Vāchān Piḷḷai, Piḷḷai Lōkā-
chārya, Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni had Srīrangam as their headquarters; while the Srī-
Bābṣhya school led by great savants like Naṭādūr Aṭṭamāḷ, Vēdānta Dēsika, Nainā
Varadāchāriar remained at Kāñchi. But this did not immediately bring about any
cleavage or schism. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that each respected the
other and both were considered complementary to the tenets of Sri-Vaishnavism,
one specialising in the Tamil lore and the other in the Sanskrit lore. But, in due
course, the Tenkalai school with its devotional approach, its free use of the vernac-
ular, its liberal outlook towards the caste system, its deep attachment to Āḻvārs
among whom many were from the lower castes became immensely popular and
spread far and wide. Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni and his eight disciples gave a firm
organisational basis to it. The Vaḍakalai school on the other hand, with its emphasis
on the Vedic rites, its use of the Sanskrit language, which was foreign to the vast
Tamil population, and its orthodox and conservative views on many social problems
made itself more exclusive. Hence, the vast majority of the temples of South India
came under the spell of the eclectist Tenkalai school. The Varadarājaswāmī temple
and indeed all the 18 sacred Vishnu temples of Kāñchi were no exception to this.

In the post-Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni’s period i.e., from about the middle of the 15th
century A.D., a number of Sri-Vaishnava leaders were associated with this temple.
Moreover, the period coincided with the ascendancy of the Vijayanagar kings who
bestowed special attention on the growth of the Vaishnavism. Successive Jiyars of
Aḷagia Maṇavāḷa-maṭha held supreme position in our temple. Kandaḍai Rāmānuja-
Ayyan, a disciple of Aḷagia Maṇavāḷa Jiyar of Kāñchi and Kōil Kandaḍai Anṉan of
Srīrangam did great service to our temple. So did his successors. All these leaders
were the champions of the Tenkalai school who did much to popularise the festivals
for the Āḻvārs like the Tiru-āḍiyana festival and encouraged the recital of the
Tamil prabhandas. The temple became predominantly of the Tenkalai character.
Several Tenkalai āchārya-purusha families like Prativāti Bhayankaram, Gōmāṭam
Chakravarti were honoured with Arulappādu rights in the 17th century A.D. In the
same century, Eṭṭūr Tirumalai Tāṭāchārya, a scion of the distinguished Tāṭāchārya
family, was appointed the manager of the temple. He probably belonged to the
Vaḍakalai school. He held an honoured place and did many useful services to the
temple. But with the fall of the Vijayanagar power in South India in about A.D. 1645, this family migrated to Mysore. The Tenkalai stālattārās re-asserted their power. In A.D. 1688 due to the threats of invasion by Muslim army, the idols of Varadarāja and His consorts were removed to a forest of Udāyāpālayam and were brought back only after 22 years. Āttān Jiyr who did much useful work in connection with the reinstallation of the deity was appointed the manager of the temple and after him, his successors looked after it for well over 70 years. The member of the Tāṭāchārya family returned to Kāyichī in 1711 and, in deference to the high position held by the family, was given the honour of First Water (or Tirţha) right on the condition that he would respect the existing Tenkalai mode of worship, recital etc. The Tāṭāchāryas honoured the Āttān Jiyr agreement for well over eighty years. But later, they sought to alter the existing procedure and introduce what the Tenkalai considered as innovations. This, later on, led to clashes between the two sects from 19th century onwards. But records from the 15th to 18th century clearly show the ascendancy of the Prabhandic or the Tenkalai school. Even the early stone-cut tirunāmams or caste-marks in this temple were Tenkalai for which tell-tale evidences are available at many places in the temple.

NOTES

1. Tolkāppiam Porūţ, 5.
2. Puram 56.
3. Paripādaḷ III 11. 82-83.
4. Silappadikāram, cantos X and XI.
7. Vide Chapter 1.
8. Verse 77.
9. III Centum.
13. For a critical survey of Rāmānuja's life period vide T.N. Subramaniam, 'A Note on the date of Rāmānuja' in S I I I., Vol. III, pt. II, pp. 147/160 His conclusions are worth noting here: (1) Kulōttunga II (A.D. 1133-1150) was the Chōḷa monarch who persecuted Rāmānuja and his followers; (2) Rāmānuja's flight to the Hoyāḷa country took place in A.D. 1138; (3) He returned to Śrīrangam after 12 years i.e., A.D. 1150 after the death of Kulōttunga II, (4) The Śrī Bhāskyar was completed in S 1077 or A.D. 1155-56. This dating though slightly at variance with the traditional one seems to be convincing. Also see Dr. S.K. Iyengar, History of Tirupati, Vol. I, p. 287.
17. Rāmānuja's contemporary Tiruvanagattu-amudānār pays glowing tributes to the former's services in popularising the Divya Prabandham in his Rāmānuja-nūṟṟandāḷ. In the first verse he calls Rāmānuja as the disciple of Nammāḷvār.
18. Though there is evidence to show that the Āḷvār's Prabandhams were recited in a few Vishnu temples like Śrīrangam earlier than Rāmānuja's time, it is agreed that he was largely responsible to make their recital an essential feature on all festival occasions (K.A.N. Sastrā: Chōḷas, p. 639 and T.K.T. Veeraraghavacharya, History of Tirupati, II, pp. 953 and 974.
20. 572 of 1919.
21. Chapters V and VI.
22. 493 of 1919.
23. The fixing of responsibility for the schism is a moot point and different views have been expressed. The usual popular view is that the Tenkalai line became distinct with Pillai Lōkāchārya and the Vaḍakalai with Vedānta Desika. "After Pillai Lōkāchārya and Vedānta Desika, the
split between the Tenkalai and Vadakalai became more pronounced. While the latter traditions were carried on by Varadāchārya, Brahmatantra Svatanastra and other disciples, the Tenkalai position was consolidated and established by Mana-vāla Mahāmunī." P.N. Srinivasachari, Philosophy of Visistādhaśāstra, p. 533. But another reputed scholar A. Govindacharya fixes the responsibility on Vedānta Dēśika and not Pillai Lōkāchārya. He says: "Lōkāchārya was not the first great teacher of the Tenkalai school. In his day there was no distinction of such schools. If any schism arose in virtue of differences of interpretation it is in all probability to be attributed to the time of Vedāntāchārya. In Vedāntāchārya's works such differences in interpretation of the teachings that prevailed before his day are clearly discernible." But he quickly adds that Vedāntāchārya looked upon the opinions of those from whom he differed as simply due to specialisation of certain aspects of truth. Therefore, Govindacharya rightly concludes that no oculus theologicum could be imputed to him (p. 716).


24. On the whole, there are said to be eighteen differences. A. Govindacharya, Ashādhasabhdas, J.R.A.S. 1910.


27. Ibid., Chingleput District Gazetteer, p. 35.

28. From the Guruparamparai of Pinbalagia Perumāl Jiyar, it is learnt that Battar's contemporary on the Chōja throne was one Thiruvannāṉayadeva. We know that this title was borne by Kulottunga III in his inscriptions. The latter ruled from A.D. 1178 to 1217, S I T.I., Vol. III, Pt. II, p. 159.

29. Sri Ranganāthaṉṭhastōirinam.

30. The kōil-olagu records that Nampīḷḷai was alive about S 1175 i.e., A.D. 1253 when the Pāṇḍyan king Jafāvarman Sundara covered the central shrine of Sīrāngam with gold. S.I.T.I., op. cit., p. 159.

31. Parāvāṭi Paṭṭaṅgaram.


34. This is stated in Doddāyāchārya's biography on Dēśika entitled Vaibhavaprakāśika; also Vij. Sexcentenary Com. Volume, p. 49.

35. Dr. S.K. Iyengar, Sources, pp. 34-35.

36. Vide Chapter V

37. Verse 5.

38. Adaikkalapattu, verse 1.

39. Ibid., verse 4.

40. Ibid., verse 9.

41. Meiviritamāṇṇiyam, verse 27.


43. Professor R. Ramanujacharya agrees with this view and states: "The division of the Vaishnavite fold into the Northern and the Southern schools does not appear to have been known in Dēśika's time. There is ample evidence to show there was great cordiality among the Vaishnavite thinkers and the eminent teachers now regarded as affiliated to the Southern School held Dēśika in great esteem and veneration"—Venkatana in Sri Vedānta Dēśika Sampadāya Sahas Souvenir (Bombay, 1968), p. 53.

44. V. Rangacharya is of the view that it was out of disgust with the prevailing atmosphere of Srīrāgam that Dēśika left for Satyamangalam, Q.J.M.S. VII, p. 111. But from Dēśika's work Abhidāsotavam it is seen that far from being disgusted, he longed to live at Srīrāgam.

A free English rendering of verse 28 can be given: "Oh Lord! my youth was spent in drinking deep into the beauties of the works of Rāmānuja. Now my hairs have turned completely grey. Hereafter, kindly grant me this: Let me live at Srīrāngam or any similar place which is free from the enemies and where people are mutual well-wishers."

In another context, he states that his mind which was not fully mature, bloomed on account of his close association with the elder-āchāryas at Srīrāngam (Bhagavat Dhyana-sūpāram).
several instances from Dēśika’s works to show that in interpreting the Tamil Prabandhams, he has faithfully followed Peria Vāchān Pillai’s famous commentary.

46. Ep. Ind. XXV, No. 34.
47. Ibid.

Pratīvātī Bhayankara Anṇan figures equally prominently in the history of both the schools. He was a disciple of both Nāṇa Varadāchārya and Māṇavāḷa Mahāmuni. He has written poems in praise of the latter as well as Vēḍānta Dēśika. This amply proves that even in his period the differences between the two schools had not hardened. But after his contact with Māṇavāḷa Mahāmuni at Śṛīraṅgam P.B. Anṇan joined the Prabandhic school. P.B. Anṇan’s descendants are also known to have belonged to the Tenkalai school and many of them are still living in Kāṇchī and Tirupati. See J.I.H. XVIII, 1939, pp. 382-383.

49. The traditional date of birth is Kāli 4471, Ṭippatt-Mulam star he lived for 73 years. See S.I.T I, III, Pt. II, p. 1361.

50. The Kōll-olugu gives Ś 1347 (A.D. 1425) as the date for his advent at Śṛīraṅgam.

51. This name is found both in the Kōll-olugu and the Tirumalai-olugu and it is interesting to find that the same name occurs in the inscriptions of our temple.

52. These verses are noted for their rhythm and beauty.

53. Pratīvātī Bhayankara Annangaraścharya gives a comprehensive treatment to all the works of Māṇavāḷa Mahāmuni in his Varavaramunindra Granthamālā (Kāṇchī, 1966).

54. Even in 1879, it is reported in the Chingleput District Gazetteer, that ‘the majority of the Vaishnavite Śīdras are Tenkalai’ (p. 35). Also see ‘The History and the Culture of  Indian People, VI (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, p. 558).

55. P.N. Srivasaccharya, op. cit., p. 524.


58. 653 of 1919; S.I.T I, I, No. 390.
59. 479 of 1919.
60. S.I.T I, I, No. 429.

61. It is interesting to note in this connection that an inscription of the Vijayangar times which is datable to not later than the 16th century records an endowment of a village as gift (Tiruvirudaiyātīlam) to Māṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni at Śṛīperumbūdr. This clearly shows that Mahāmuni was deified at Śṛīperumbūdr in the 16th century, if not slightly earlier (203 of 1949-50).


The learned editor K. Balasundara Nīviker has shown that this work was written sometime before Śadāgīva’s time, roughly before A.D. 1550. Many of the details are remarkably supported by inscriptions.

64. An epigraph dated A.D. 1514 refers to an offering in honour of Alagia-Māṇavāḷa Jiyar, the disciple of Pattarpiran Jiyar. The birth-star of the former is mentioned as Āśvini in the month of Āṇi (T.T.D., Vol. III, No. 98).

68. 447 and 443 of 1919.
69. 448 of 1919.

70. This work Vaibhava-prakāśika of the maṭha is available in fragments in palm-leaves with the present Jiyar of the Alagia-māṇavāḷa-Jiyar maṭha at Kāṇchī.

83. 476 of 1919.
84. 646 of 1919.
85. 422 of 1919; *S I T I*, I, pp 327-328.
86. 579 of 1919.
87. 657 of 1919. See Appendix II ‘D’ for the text.
91. *T D E R*, VI, Part II, Table No. 87.
92. 411 of 1919.
93. The succession list of preceptors (Samāsrayana-Paramparai) of Ādīvan Satagopa Jiyar includes Nañjyiar, Nam-Pillai, Vañakkku Tiruvidi Pillai of the Prabandhic school. The granta-parampara of the māṭha includes the Vañakkalai achār-yas—see *T D E R*, VI, Part II, Table 87. According to the Tenkalai tradition, the first six Jiyars of this māṭha were Tenkalai.
95. 374 and 373 of 1919.
96. 579 of 1919.
97. 576 of 1919.
98. *T D E R*, I, pp. 283 ff, for full details regarding their activities at Tirupati.
99. 495 of 1919.
101. 495 of 1919.
102. 583 of 1919.
103. No 146 of *T T D*.
104. 653 of 1919; *S I T I*, I, No. 390.
107. 383 of 1919.
108. He is said to have been the adopted son of Ayyānāyyaṅgar of Satamarshana gōtra and belonging to Tirumalai Nambi family (30 of 1921). Another writer holds that Eṭtur Kumāra Tāṭāchāri of Kānchi record belongs to a branch family, cf. T.K.T.V. Chary, *History of Tirupati*, Vol. II.
109. 479 of 1919.
110. 588 of 1919.
111. 363 of 1919; *S I T I*, III, Pt. II, p 1358.
112. 475 of 1919.
113. 651 of 1919; *S I T I*, op. cit., p. 1357.
114. 92 and 95 of 1923.
115. 421 of 1919.
116. 587 of 1919.
117. This is borne out by the mention of a number of local managers functioning in temples of Tiruvehka, Srirumberudur etc.
120. *S I T I*, I, No. 388.
121. This is supported by the document in the possession of the present members of this family, which was filed in the courts and held as genuine by them.
122. 398 of 1919.
123. 423 of 1919.
125. In a copper plate grant deposited in the Madras Museum and dated § 1636 (A.D. 1714-15) the same Srinivāsadāsa alias Attān Jiyar is mentioned as the protege of Todarmalla. The Jiyar’s grant of five villages to the temple of Srūmpahnam is recorded in that grant. *Vide* R. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Catalogue of Copper Plate Grants*, p. 41.
126. Though hailing from the Andhra, the Jiyar’s interest in the Tamil prabandhams was great. He wrote a Tamil work...
named Adoyavalaindham Arumpadam.


127. Exhibit 'A' of A.S. No. 175 of 1910.

128. Ibid., Exhibit 'B'.

129. For a discussion of the rationale of the ārdhavapundra and the various interpretations see K. Devarathachari, Sri-Vaishnavism and its caste-marks, Q.J.M.S., V, 4, pp. 125-139.
CHAPTER V

PŪJAS AND FESTIVALS

In a Hindu temple, the daily offer of worship to the various deities at different times in the day, is of fundamental importance. The day-to-day ceremonies connected with the worship are called the Nitya-pūja while the occasional ceremonies in connection with some special festival are called the Naimittika. The daily offerings are obligatory and are very essential to preserve the sanctity of the shrine. They represent the basic ceremonial rituals to be performed in the temple, which are governed by the āgamas. The Vaishnava āgamas fall under two groups: the vaikhānasa and the pāṇcharātra. The former was perhaps older but not so popular. The Pāṇcharātra āgama literature came to be considered as authoritative as the Vēdas by the Bhāgavatas, as they contain the quintessence of the religion of devotion or Bhakti. As the reference to the archa-form or image-worship in the Vēdas was at best considered to be vague, the pāṇcharātra-literature which glorified the doctrine of avatāra or divine incarnation and the archāvatāra, or the belief of the presence of God in images, were considered superior to the Vēdas.1 The Vaishnavas claim great antiquity for the pāṇcharātra-āgamas and consider them to be the bedrock of the temple-worship, the pūjas, festivals etc. They contain liturgical texts with the emphasis on the form, nature and meaning of the rituals, and the earthly and spiritual benefits assured to their ardent followers. The word āgama is indeed the counterpart of mantra or vēda and denotes a popular cult wherein practical religious formalities and offerings in the form of fruits, flowers, food and drinks made with devotion, take the place of incantations and sacrifices.2 Rāmānuja who emphasised the devotional aspect (Bhakti) of religion and propagated the need for a personal God with all auspicious qualities, found the Pāṇcharātra-literature a great source of inspiration. He popularised it in South India by introducing it at Srīrangam temple and Melkōte in the Mysore country. Kāṇchi also was influenced by his reforms. Thus, the three important texts or the samhitas of the pāṇcharātra-literature which are considered to be the “three gems”, were adopted for the three leading temples—the Paushkara-samhita at Srīrangam, the Jayākhyā-samhita at Hastigiri or Kāṇchi and the Iśwara-samhita at Melkōte.3 The interpolated chapter in the Jayākhyā-samhita informs us that the Pādmasamhita was the commentary and elaboration of the Jayākhyā samhita.4 The former has attained unique popularity due to its encyclopaedic range of interests, covering systematically almost all major topics of the pāṇcharātra concern. This is followed in our temple for all ceremonial rituals connected with the installation of images, consecration ceremonies, festivals, offerings etc., and hence a knowledge of the same is considered essential to be the chief priest of the temple.

If the nitya-pūja denotes the daily offerings to the deity, the naimittika-class inclu-
des the various festivals (utsavas) celebrated in particular months of a year not only for the main deity but also for the subsidiary ones. These festivals are not compulsory but they add colour and grandeur to the temples. They are great occasions when the common folk from even the distant places gather to take part in the celebration. But their scale and grandeur are determined by the financial resources of the temple and the benefactions of the devotees. From the epigraphs of Śrī Varadarājāswāmī temple, we know that this temple was richly endowed with provisions for the daily offerings (nitya-nimitangaḷukku)⁶ as well as a number of festivals which have, in the course of centuries, become famous for their grandeur and beauty.

Section 1

Pūja or Worship

The ceremonial worship in this temple takes place five times in the day. First early in the morning, the second at twelve in the noon, the third in the evening at six, the fourth at eight in the night and the fifth and the last at nine in the night, after which the temple is closed. Of these, the most important and elaborately done is the early morning service. The others are all practically abridged versions of the same. The morning worship consists of six āsanas or stages. The temple priest or the archaka conducts the worship. The first āsana is known as the mantra-āsana by which the presence of the Almighty is invoked; the second is the snāna-āsana during which time the tirumaṅjanam or holy bath is performed to the deity; the third is the Alankāra-āsana when the deity is clothed and adorned with jewels. The fourth is the Bhūga-āsana when food is offered to the deity. The fifth is the mantra-āsana when a ceremony called mantra-pushpam is performed i.e., archana is done by offering tulasi (basil) leaves and chanting the mantras. This is done for about ten or fifteen minutes. Then comes the last stage known as sayana-āsana when the deity is believed to go to sleep. The pūja ceremony is closed with this. This last-mentioned service is reserved for the night.

Another important item in the nitya-pūja is what is known as the sēvākālam or the congregational recitation of the portions of the Prabhandaṁ which takes place during the entire duration of the pūja. This ritual reaches its climax with sāthumural after which the consecrated water (tīrtham) and food (prasādam) are distributed to the reciters and other devotees.

The pūja-ceremonies at other times of the day are not done so elaborately. In the evening service mantra-pushpam and sēvākālam are again done. The last service in the night is called popularly in this temple as Tirugusādam, when sweet rice-pudding is offered to God before He goes to sleep.⁷

A portion of the consecrated food is taken and offered to the Ālvār and Āchāryas in their respective shrines. There are archakas or priests in all the attendant or ancillary shrines who attend to the daily pūja, holy bath etc., in their respective shrines. Separate offerings are done to Narasimha and Perundēvi Tāyār.

Elaborate qualifications and training are stipulated in the āgamas and śāstras for the temple-priests. The interpolated section of the Jayākhyā-samhita which deals exclusively with the system of worship prevailing at Śrī Varadarājāswāmī temple, lays down certain basic qualifications. It states that they should be well-versed
in the Kava-Sāka and the prapattī-śāstras and should be clean in their personal life. Preferably, those born in the Kauśika and Aupakāyan-gōtras should be selected and given initiation into the Jayākya-tantra.

Holy Bath

Tirumaṉjanam or abhishēkam or the holy bath is a picturesque ceremony in a Vishnu temple. It forms an essential daily item in the worship, but it is done only to the Bhūga-mūrti, represented by a silver image. For the mūla-bhēra, as well as Perundēvi Tāyār, this is done on every Friday. For the Utsava-bhēra or the processional deity the holy bath is performed on six days in a month and they are: the first day of a month, the full-moon day, the New moon day and the day following and on the days of the Hasta and Sravana stars. On all these days, the processional deity is taken to the abhishēka-maṇḍapa where the holy bath is performed to the accompaniment of chanting of Sanskrit and Tamil verses and the periodical display of the trumpets and drums. In the evening there would be a procession of the deity in the streets. Besides these, on all festive occasions like the Deepāvali, Yugādi etc., special Tirumaṉjanams are performed to the Utsava-bhēra.

It is interesting to recall the tradition that Rāmānuja used to bring water daily from the śāla-well to the temple for the holy bath for the deity. This service known as Sālaikkīṉaru-kāmkkarya is still continued here and a special man is posted to attend to it. A record of Vikrama Chōla dated A.D. 1129 refers to the monthly birth-star festival for the Mudal-Āḻvārs during which time Arulāḻappumāḷ was brought out and bathed daily with eightyone kalaśas or water-pots. The endowments for the holy bath became more in the Vijayānagar times. We have an inscription of A.D. 1540 which records the grant of three villages to meet the expenses of 15 Ekādasi days in a year inclusive of the Tirumaṉjanam. A record of A.D. 1574 mentions that abhishēka was performed for the Mulabhēra every Friday. This practice is still continued. Endowments for Tirumaṉjanam during various festivals like Yugādi, Dīpāvali etc., are recorded in the epigraphs of the 16th and 17th centuries A.D.

The record dated A.D. 1574 mentioned above refers to the objects used for the holy bath as Tirumaṉjana-drivyam but does not specify them. But usually, on such occasions, various items are used for bathing the deity such as oil, milk, curd, coconut-water, rose-water, turmeric, sandal etc. After the bath is over, the images are dried with cloth and dressed with fine clothes and bedecked with ornaments and fresh garlands. A salad with a mixture of fruits, coconut, honey (paṇchāmruntham) and lemon juice (panagam) and betels are offered to the deity and later distributed to the devotees. An interesting record mentions the items of perfumery and other articles used during the holy bath such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kastūrī</td>
<td>(musk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunkumappu</td>
<td>(saffron)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pannīr</td>
<td>(rose-water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandanam</td>
<td>(sandal-paste)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karpūram</td>
<td>(camphor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parimaḷam</td>
<td>(scented oil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitāmbaram</td>
<td>(fine silk clothes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kastūri or musk is usually placed on the forehead as tilaka before the pūdra is applied. Kunkumappu or saffron is mixed with water for the bath as it gives a fine smell. Refined camphor or Pachai-Karpūram is also added. The ordinary camphor (karpūra) is used for the Dipa-āratti or waving a light in front of God. Pannir or rose-water and sandal-paste mixed with water are used for the bath.

Another type of application known as Pulukkāppu is mentioned in an epigraph of Srīranga II dated A.D. 1575. It is a reference to the smearing of civet-oil over the image during the abhishēkam, after which plain water is poured. Champaka-oil was also used for the bath. This was done every Friday.

Special services or Sandhi

Apart from these normal daily offerings, special offerings or services were instituted by kings and other men of note and rank. Such offerings or Sandhis were instituted in large numbers in the 12th and 13th centuries and they were often named after the donors. One of the earliest of such offerings was the kōdandarāman-sandhi instituted in honour to Kulōttunga III. For these the income from two villages amounting to 2,000 pon was donated. The other services instituted during the same reign were the Vīra-kēralan-sandhi and the other Sundara-Pāṇḍya-Kālingarayansandhi. Though the inscription does not specify the nature of the service, it provides for the expenses amounting to 3,000 pon required for the service. It included the feeding of 45 Brahmins in the two services. In the 11th year of Kulōttunga III, another service named Dharma-paripālan-sandhi was instituted by Dharmaparipālan alias Rājādhirāja Malaiyaryan, one of the Malai-mudalis of the king.17

A service named Āḷappirandān-sandhi was instituted in the 14th year of Rājarāja III (A.D. 1230) for which land was donated at Perumagar. This service was named in honour of the Sambuvaraya chieftain Edirilisōla Sambuvarayan Āḷappirandān alias Rājarāja Sambuvarayan grandson of Sengeni Ammiappan. Another epigraph dated A.D. 1247 refers to the same service and adds that it was performed soon after the service called the Gandagōpālan-sandhi. The latter was first instituted in A.D. 1230 and was subsequently patronised by numerous grants. It seems to have been an important and grand service instituted by Tikka I alias Gandagōpādēva. The other services mentioned in the epigraph of this time are: Rāhuttarayan-sandhi called after an officer under Vijayaganḍagōpāla;20 Kumāragōpālan-sandhi perhaps called after Gandagōpāla’s son;21 Amarābaran-sandhi named after Siyagangan, the Ganga Lord of Kūvalpura or Kolar;22 Ānaikaṭṭina-Sankaranārāyaṇa-sandhi instituted by Rājaganḍagōpālan in A.D. 1220.28

Divya-prabhandam Recital

In no other temple of South India is the congregational recitation of the inspired Tamil hymns of the Āḷvārs and the Āchāryas, called the Divya-prabhanda-Sevākālam, done before the deity in such a methodical and grand manner as in this temple. This service called the Adayāpākam—service is rendered both inside the temple on the pūja occasions and during processions in festival times. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it had been one of the important features responsible for making this temple famous and much-sought-after by the Srī-Vaishnava devotees. The Divya-prabhanda-reciters formed the vanguard of all processions. It is said that the vēdas go in
search of God, whereas the latter goes in search of the Divya-prabhandams, as He longs to hear the devotional songs of His devotees. The great poet Kamban, in his work Satagopa-pan-andādi, has paid a glowing tribute to Divya-prabhandams and their reciters. He says:

“The eternal, brilliant Lord of the Universe can transcend the reach of the Vedas, the keenest intelligence of the learned and the wise; He cannot but be bound by the love-lorn, devotional songs of saint (Nammāḷvār) of Kurukūr.”

In another verse he emphasises that the recital of Tiruvōymoli was the most important item in the temple-festivals. He says: ‘Had not the saint (Nammāḷvār) come to Kurukūr and rendered into the sweet Tamil all the thousand and odd eternal Vedas, where would the Brahmins, their temples, feasts and festivals and their beauties stand? They would have been nowhere.’ Thus, there is no doubt that distinguishing features of a Śrī-Vaishnava temple are the offer of worship of the twelve Āḻvārs and the recital and exposition of the hymns of Nammāḷvār and the other eleven Āḻvārs. An abridged version containing select excerpts from the works of the various Āḻvārs is recited almost daily during the nitya-pūja and more elaborately on the festive occasions. The great āchārya Nāṭhamuni resuscitated and codified the composition of the Āḻvārs and popularised their singing with musical notes. Following him, Rāmānuja made their recital an important feature in the temples. The Āchāryas who succeeded Rāmānuja and particularly belonging to the Prabhandic school, were chiefly responsible for maintaining and preserving the mode and style of reciting these Tamil verses. In fact, even today, the vast majority of the Divya-prabhanda ghoṣṭi or reciters in most of the temples of South India belong to the Tenkalai school. They are also called Iyal-Ghoṣṭi. The rendering of these Tamil verses with correct intonations is transmitted from generation to generation by oral teachings called Sandhai. These Tamil songs, couched in simple and touching language, when rendered in this traditional Iyal style, are extremely moving and a large concourse of people is attracted and held spell-bound for hours together.

Usually, in all the Śrī-Vaishnava temples, in the mornings, the Tiruppāvi is recited and in the evenings passages from the Nityā-usandānam are recited. To the latter will be added the relevant passages which are in praise of that particular temple. But in Varadarājasmālī temple, the practice is rather peculiar. Here, the reciters complete the 4,030 verses thrice or four times a year singing fifty verses every day. They continue the cycle even when the festival days intervene. On such occasions besides reciting their usual 50 verses they recite more number of verses, as they go out in procession. But Nammāḷvār’s Tiruvōymoli is recited only within the precincts of the temple and never in the streets.

Besides the Āḻvārs’ Divya-prabhandams, the other Tamil hymns that are recited on certain specific occasions are: Amudānār’s Rāmānujanūrṇandādi and Maṇavāla Mahāmuni’s Upadēsaratnamālai and Tiruvōymoli-nūrṇandādi. The first one is in praise of Rāmānuja, the second in praise of the Āḻvārs and āchāryas and the last in praise of Nammāḷvār.

Stōtrapāṭa recital

Sanskrit laudatory verses are also recited in this temple on six specified occasions. The members of the Tātāchārya family take a leading part in it. Kūrattāḻvār’s
Varadarājastavam and Vēdānta Dēsika’s Varadarāja-Panchāsat are recited.

Food-offerings

Offering of water and food or tūrtham and prasādam to the deities on the different occasions or specified hours of the day is an important item in the daily pūjās. This holy water and food after they are offered to God are distributed among the temple-employees and also to the devotees who have gathered for the service. The terms used in the inscriptions for the holy food are Amudu, prasādam or tāligai. The latter term is peculiar to the Vishnu temples. The food is offered thrice in a day in the morning (Udayakālam), midday (Uchikālam) and the early hours of the night (ardhajāmam). The offering occurs usually at the end of each of the series of functions in the course of the worship of the deity. During the late Chōla and the Vijayanagar days, extensive provisions for the food-offerings are recorded in the inscriptions, not only for the daily routine but also on numerous festive occasions. In fact, most inscriptions give a long list of details regarding the different proportions of the various provisions and groceries required for different kinds of food-offerings. During Achyuta Rāya’s time, a ‘Mahā-neiśvēyam’ a big special offering was instituted in the temple for the king’s merit for which 14 villages were donated. The epigraph gives graphic details of the Tāligai and other items of groceries.35 While for the daily routine, only ordinary plain rice was offered, special food preparations were offered often. They are mentioned frequently in the inscriptions and they make an interesting reading:

(1) Pānagam — Lemon juice mixed with water and jaggery.
(2) Vaḍaparuppu — Gram soaked in water and mixed with salt, green-chillies etc.
(3) Kari-amudu — Cooked vegetable.
(13) Pongal — Rice-pudding (Ibid).
(14) İōḍali — Rice-cake (Ibid).
(15) Akkāravadasil — Sweet pudding with cooked rice and milk (Ibid).

Section 2

FESTIVALs

Not only through worship and daily service to the deities, but through the impressive celebrations of their annual festivals, when the images were taken out in processions, that this temple created religious fervour among the huge crowds of people drawn from far and near. The processions of Lord Varadarāja afford a
grand spectacle of royal pageantry. Some of the general features of the festivals can be noted here:

(i) The deity is beautifully dressed and decorated with several costly jewels mounted on various vehicles of wooden horse, elephant, lion, swan etc., and taken in procession to different quarters of the Kāñchi city. The Gangai-kondān-mandapam, about 3 miles away from the temple, is the usual terminus for all the processions.

(ii) The deity is given all the traditional royal paraphernalia like huge umbrellas (chatra) and chāmara (fly-whisks) as He is considered to be the king of kings. Two huge umbrellas, fly-whisks or chāmaras flank the deity. The priests or archakas sit in front. The processional deity is stopped at various places so that the devotees can go near to offer worship.

(iii) In front of the procession proceed the persons bearing the sacred banners and festoons; then follow the trumpeters, drum-beaters announcing the Lord’s arrival. Usually, the drums are carried on the horse’s back. Then come the caparisoned elephants. Next in order comes the huge concourse of Prabhandam-reciters called Iyal-ghōṣṭi. They stand closely together and move forward slowly reciting the Divya-prabhandams in their characteristic mellifluous tones.

(iv) Behind the deity come the Vēda-reciters called Vēdaparāyaṇa-ghōṣṭi, who recite the different vēdas in the traditional orthodox style.

(v) Following them come the various Bhajana-ghōṣṭis or groups of singers of devotional songs, mostly from Tamil prabhandams. They come in groups from different parts of Tamil country to take part in this devotional service. They are also known as the Bhāgavata-ghōṣṭis and their recitals are marked by great emotion and ecstasy.

These are the general features of the processions of this temple. Let us now review the various festivals that take place in the course of the year. From the inscriptions of this temple and the literary references, it is seen that many of these festivals have been going on for centuries. In earlier stages, they seem to have been done on a smaller scale. But from about 15th and 16th centuries, the festivals and celebrations increased in number and grandeur, thanks to the numerous royal grants and other private benefactions.

Chitra (April)

The most important festival in this month is the Tiruvatāra-utsavam which celebrates the birth of Śrī Varadarājā. This falls on the hasta-star when the Lord is believed to have appeared before Brahma from the sacrificial fire. It marks the descent of God Varadarājā on the earth. Special tirumāñjanam (bath) and procession in the streets around the temple take place. On the full moon day of this month called Chitrāpurnami day, Lord Varadarājā is taken in procession to the banks of the river Pālār for the famous Naḍabhāvi-utsavam. On the way He goes to the Ayyangār-kuḷām. On the river-bank Brahma-ārādana, Brahma’s worship of Lord Varadarājā is re-enacted and the same is witnessed by thousands of worshippers. This performance of the festival in A.D. 1595 is attested by an inscription which calls the festival as ‘Tiruvūral’. The latter word refers to the spring-water in
the river-bed where the festival takes place.

The Thōṭṭa-utsava or Garden-festival is another important festival during this month. This festival was probably instituted in the 14th century by one Echchaya-Dannayakkar, a minister of the Hoyśaḷa king Ballāḷa III. Two other epigraphs dated Ś 1471 and Ś 1473 record grant for making provisions and offerings for the garden-festival. It is called Tōṭpu Tiruvāḷ and Vasanta Tōṭpu utsavam in the month of Chitra. In A.D. 1595, the garden was known as Visva-pundita-tōṭpu, wherein there was a sixteen-pillared maṇḍapa for the celebration of the festivals.

Vaikāsī (May)

The most famous festival, namely, the Brahmōtsava, is conducted on a spectacular scale during this month for ten days. The day before the actual commencement of the festival is known as the Sēnai Mudaliār Utsavam or Āḷvār Tiruvāḷ. In the evening of that day, Sēnai Mudaliār or Vishvaksēna is propitiated. He is taken in procession to collect the miririgai or the sacred earth for construction of the altar for conducting hōma or sacrifice in the mornings and evenings during the ten days of this festival. This ceremony of the collection of sacred earth is mentioned as Tiruman-puludivāra in an inscription of Sadāśiva's time (dated A.D. 1558).

First day: Early in the morning Śrī Varadarājaswāmi with his consorts Śrī-dēvi and Bhū-dēvi is taken in procession from the Hastigiri, gorgeously adorned with exquisite jewels to the Vāhana-maṇḍapa in the outermost prākāra. Then the dwaja-rōhanam or flag-hoisting takes place to the accompaniment of ritualistic observances, as ordained by the Pānccharātra-āgama. The hoisting of the flag formally signifies the commencement of the festival. After this, offerings are made to the guardian-deities of the eight cardinal directions known as the Ashṭadikpātās. Then the deity goes out in procession in a golden vimāna or chapram along the streets of Kāñchi to the Gangai-kōṇān-maṇḍapa, about 3 miles away, and returns to the temple by about 10 a.m.

In the evening, the deity again goes out in procession on the Simha-vāhana (lion-vehicle) and returns to the temple by about 9 p.m. After this, takes place a unique celebration in this temple called the Dvitiyā-rakshā-bandanam or Irandām kāppu. For this Lord Varadarāja is taken back to his shrine on the Hastigiri where this second rakshā-bandanam is performed. This is very unusual because in the other temples when once the Utsavabhēras are taken out of their sanctum and the flag-hoisting ceremony is completed, they are never taken back to the sanctum-sanctorum till the flag is drawn down after the ten-day festival is over. But this peculiar practice was occasioned by certain historical circumstances. During the troublesome days of the Muslim invasion, the main deities were removed to the Udayārpālayam forest where they remained for some years. During this time, substitute idols were installed here and festivals conducted. Some years afterwards, when peace prevailed in the land, the original images were brought back to Kāñchi. Just then, the second day of the annual Vaśāka festival was going on. The devotees hastened back to the temple with the original image in the evening of the second day. Rejoiced at the happy event, a fresh rakshā-bandanam was done for that deity and at the same time the festival continued with the original deities. This is said to have occasioned the second kāppu festival which continues to be celebrated even now.
The details of the vāhanas or vehicles for this ten-day Brahmōtsavam are outlined as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Evening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Golden chapram (canopy)</td>
<td>Simha-vāhana (Lion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Hanusa vāhana or swan</td>
<td>Sūrya-prabhāi (Sun-vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Garuḍa or the Eagle</td>
<td>Hanuman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Śeṣha-vāhana (the divine serpent)</td>
<td>Chandra-prabhāi (the moon-vehicle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Mōhini-avatāra (in a golden palanquin)</td>
<td>Yāḷi-vāhana (combined form of elephant and lion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Chapram or canopy—the deity is dressed like Vēṇugōpāla</td>
<td>Elephant-vāhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Rathōtsava or Tiruthe r i.e., car-festival</td>
<td>No procession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>No procession—only Toṭṭi Tirumōṭṭanam (the deity is given a holy bath in a tub)</td>
<td>Horse-vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Āḍum-pallakku (swinging palanquin)</td>
<td>Punyakōṭi-vimāna (canopy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>No procession—only Dwādasārāḍanaṃ within the temple</td>
<td>Vattivēr-chapram procession only around the temple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Historical reference to the Vaikāsi Festival

This ten-day Brahmōtsava festival has been going on in this temple for many centuries in the same order in which it is described above. An interesting epigraph of the 14th century A.D. enumerates the localities to which the image of the God may be taken on the days in which it is carried in procession on elephant, horse and garuda vehicles respectively. It stipulates that on these days, the deity should be taken upto Rangan Street. But from the day of the car festival on the 7th day, the deity should be taken upto the Gangai-kōndān-mandapam. The epigraph further stipulates four groves (Tōppu) Sēramān-Perumāl-Tiruttōppu, Aрапerunchelvi Tiruttōppu, Senbagattiruttōppu, Rajēnādevar-tiruttōppu. This inscription should not be mistaken to refer to the genesis of the festival. It only stipulates the routes for the procession. The festival was evidently much older. The third day festival of Garuḍōtsavam is specially mentioned by Vēṇānta Dēsika in his Varadarāja-pāncchāsāt. Doḍdayāchārya, who lived in the 16th century, has described the beauty of the Garuḍa festival. Tyāgarāja and Muthuswami Dikshitar, the two renowned music-composers who lived in the 18th century, have sung ecstatically about this festival in their famous compositions beginning with Vināṭi suta and Srī Varadarāja respectively.

There are many more references in the inscriptions to the grants made at different times for providing offerings to God during this Vaikāsi festival. An inscription dated A.D. 1537 refers to this festival beginning with Āḷvār-tirunāl. An epigraph dated Š 1493 (A.D. 1572) records the grant of five villages to this temple for con-
ducting this festival which is called as "Tiruvaiyyāsī Tirunāl". It gives minute details of various food offerings made on these festival days and to the distribution of the food offerings to the Sri-Vaishnava and other devotees beginning with Ankurāpanam and the Dwajārohaṇam and ending with the Viḍāyattī. This epigraph refers to the various mandapas where the procession was stopped for making offerings to God. They are: Garuḍa-mandapa, abhishekā-mandapa, Timmarāja-mandapa and Nambi-mandapa and Gangai-kondān-mandapa.33

It is interesting to see even today the presence of a number of stone-built mandapas at various points on the road between the Sri Varadarājaswāmi temple and the Gangai-kondān mandapa, though many of them are in disuse now. Many of them have since been converted into shops or hotels.

Another important festival of this month is that of Nammālvār, the greatest of the Vaishnava Āḻvārs for whom there is a separate shrine in this temple. His birth-day falls on the Vaisāka-star of the Vaikāśi-month and so, happily coincides with the annual Brahmōtsavam. On the final day (sāthumurai), Lord Varadarāja is taken in procession to the Āḻvār’s shrine to receive the mangalā-sāsana (benediction) from His great devotee.

Āṇi (June-July)

In this month Kōṭai-utsavam or summer festival is celebrated for seven days. On the eighth day the Lord is mounted on the Garuḍa-vāhana (Āṇi Garuḍan). As the birth-day of Periāḻvār coincides with this, the Paratata-nirnaya festival takes place on this day. This festival is mentioned in a record of Sadāśiva dated A.D. 1558.34 It speaks of the procession of Perumāl and Periāḻvār around the streets. Another record refers to this festival as Tirupallandu-Sirappu.35 The third important festival of this month is the Jyēṣṭhābhishēka of both the utsava images of Perumāl and Perunāvi Tāyār. It is conducted on the Sravana-star. It is on this occasion that the gold covers or kavachams are removed and, after necessary adjustments are made, are again fitted to the icons.

Āṭi (July-August)

In this month is celebrated the Tiruvaṭipūram festival in honour of Āṇḍāḷ or Sudikkoḍutta Nāchiar for whom there is a separate shrine in the second prākāra. The festival culminates in the celebration of the marriage of Āṇḍāḷ, the divine maiden and the Lord. An inscription of the Vijayanagar times records provisions for offerings to Sudikkoṭutta Nāchiar (Āṇḍāḷ) on the occasion of Tiruvāḍi-tirunāl.36 On the Āṭi full-moon day, the Gajendra-mōkṣha festival takes place.

The procession takes place in the night and is confined to the four streets around the temple. But perhaps in the Vijayanagar times, the procession went as far as the Gangai-kondān-mandapa. An epigraph dated A.D. 1592 refers to the grant of a village for conducting the festivals in the month of Āṭi. During this time, the deity used to go to the Gangai-kondān-mandapa and after his return used to witness the Agrisṭoma-sacrifice.37 A record dated 21st year registers a grant of village by the Telugu-Chōḍa chief Madurāntaka Pottāpi Chōlan for conducting the Āṭi-festival.38
Āvani (August-September)

In this month is performed the Puṣṭi-ṭṣava festival. Its object is the expiation of the sins of omission and commission arising in the daily worship and other religious rites performed in temples. It is essentially a purificatory ceremony. During this time, Śri Varadāraja is decorated with puṭṭramālā or purificatory garlands made of silk thread. The ceremonies included the performance of Ṛṣiṇa and Vedic recitations on all daṇḍas. It ends with the Poorna-āḥuti. That the puṣṭi-ṭṣavam was celebrated even as early as A.D. 1521 is attested by an epigraph.⁴⁹ The performance of this festival is referred to in a record of Achyuta Rāya dated A.D. 1533. It mentioned a grant of many villages for the provision of many important festivals including the Tirupavitra-tirunāl.⁵⁰ This is again referred to in an inscription dated A.D. 1537.⁴¹

Another important festival of this month is the Śri Jayanti or the birth anniversary of Krishna which falls on the day of the Rōhini. This falls on the 8th day or Ashṭami of the dark fortnight. The festival celebrates the birth and boyish pranks of Krishna. There are special puḫjas, offerings, holy bath followed by processions. Next day is held the Uriyaḍi festival which symbolises the stealing of butter by Krishna. This game creates a lot of fun and frolic, commemorative of the playful acts of Krishna as child. An epigraph dated A.D. 1538 makes clear reference to the celebration of this festival. It records a grant of money by one Vada Tiruvēṅgaḍa Jīyar of Tirupati.⁴²

An undated epigraph of the Vijayanagar times informs us that the Uriyaḍi festival was conducted in front of the Hanuman temple—the place in which it is conducted even today.⁴³ An epigraph dated A.D. 1517 mentions that the main deity used to be taken in procession to the Hanuman temple to witness the Uriyaḍi festival.⁴⁴

Puraṭṭāsi (September-October)

The grand Navarātri festival is celebrated for ten days in this month, when both Varadāraja and Perundēvi Tāyār grace the durbār or kolu in the hundred-pillared māṇḍapa in the outermost prākāra on the Mahānāvami day, an abhishēkam or holy bath for the deities is performed in the māṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine followed by a street procession. The festival of puraṭṭāsi mentioned in a 13th century record perhaps refers to this festival.⁴⁵

An epigraph dated A.D. 1530 evidently refers to the same festival and calls it Mahālakṣmi festival in Puraṭṭāsi.⁴⁶ Closely following Navarātri festival comes Vijayadaśami which is considered as specially auspicious for the commencement of any venture. On this occasion is performed the Vasī-tree festival. This is mentioned in a record of A.D. 1530.⁴⁷ On the Sravana-day of this month is celebrated the Sāthumurai festival in honour of Śri Vēḏānta Dēśika of Viḍakōli kōil at Thūppil, a suburb of Kāṇchi. Dēśika is brought in procession from his shrine to the Varadārājaśwāmi temple for worship. This is in addition to a festival for Dēśika enshrined in the temple itself in the vāhana-māṇḍapa. It is curious that none of the inscriptions mentions this festival.
Aippasi (October-November)

This month witnessed the festivals for the Mudal-ālvārs and Maṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni besides the Deepāvali. Perhaps in the Chōḷa days the festival for the Mudal-ālvārs was celebrated on a more attractive scale. As early as A.D. 1129, we hear about the festivals in honour of Bhūdam and Pēy Ālvārs conducted on their birth-days. A grant of the date provides for their worship on 13 days of every year on their birth-stars. On these days Arūḷāḷapperumāl was brought out and bathed with eightyone kalaśas or pots, and received great offerings. Ankurāraṇam a ceremony preliminary to the religious feast was also conducted. For this function nine varieties of pulses (navadhānya) are kept in nine vessels with water sprinkled over them so as to allow for the germination of the seeds. This function is believed to symbolise prosperity and therefore done before the commencement of any festival. Maṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni’s festival is conducted for ten days in his shrine at the south-eastern corner of the outermost enclosure. The final day i.e., on Moola-nakshatram, Lord Varadarāja is brought in procession to Mahāmuni’s shrine and made to rest for some time, when many verses from the Divya-prabhandam are recited. Then both are taken together in procession into the inner precincts of the temple upto the abhishēka-maṇḍapa when a picturesque ceremony takes place. After receiving the blessings of the Lord, Maṇavāḷa-Mahāmuni returns to his shrine. This old festival was suspended for 92 years from 1852 owing to sectarian disputes; but revived from the year 1944 under the judicial orders. Offerings and festivals in honour of Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni are specifically mentioned in two inscriptions dated A.D. 1555 and 1582. The former which belongs to the time of Sadāśiva records a grant by Parakāla Alagiya Singar for offerings to all the 12 Ālvārs and some āchāryas on their birth-days. The āchāryas mentioned are: Tirukkachi-nambi (Mrigaisira), Emberumanar (Tiruvāṭhirai), Kūrattāḷvār (Hasīam), Nāthamunigal (Anusham) and Peria Jiyar (Mūlam). Peria Jiyar was Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni whose birth-star was Mūlam. The record of 1582 clearly mentions Maṇavāḷa Mahāmuni-Arpaśī-mūla-Sirappu, the festival conducted on his annual birth-day for which honours were sent from the main shrine.

Kārthigai (November-December)

In this month are celebrated the Kārthigai festival and the festival for Tirumangai Ālvār. The latter falls on the Kṛithika-star. The Kārthigai festival was performed even as early as A.D. 1533. It was known as Tirukkārtigai-tirunāḷ. It is celebrated on the full-moon day. The temple premises and private houses outside are all profusely illuminated with the traditional earthen lamps. This is observed to propitiate Agni (Fire), one of the five elements.

Mārgalī (December-January)

One of the most important festivals in a Śrī-Vaishnava temple is the Adhyayana-utsavam that takes place in this month for 20 days. The period of this festival is divided into two equal parts—the earlier ten days forming the first period or pagalpattu (i.e., days ten) and the latter ten days the second period or irāppattu (in ten nights). The second half commences on the Vaikuṇṭha-Ekādāsi day. Here in this temple there is no procession during the first half, namely, pagalpattu. On the Bögi festival day, there is Tirukkalyāṇam or marriage performed for the Lord Varada and


Andal. The Adhyayana-utsavam is considered as the very soul of a Sri-Vaishnava temple because it is a solemn occasion when the intimate relationship between God and His devotees—Alvars and Acharyas—is fully brought out. During this time all the devotional outpourings of the Alvars are recited in the presence of the chief deity and all the Alvars and the Acharyas assembled in front. The second half (10 days) is devoted chiefly to the recital of the Tiruvoyyoli of Nammalvar, the central figure among the Vaishnava canonised saints. At the finishing stage of the recital of the Tiruvoyyoli, which marks the culmination of the festival, the image of Nammalvar is lifted and taken to the feet of the Lord to the accompaniment of the recital of the last 20 stanzas of the work which give a graphic description of how a released soul transcends unto Godhood. He becomes one with the Almighty; but some time after, the Alvar is re-granted to the world at the request of the earthly devotees for the redemption of humanity. This festival is marked by profound solemnity and dignity.

A record of Achyuta Raya dated A.D. 1533 clearly refers to the Tiru-adhyayana festival and the grant of provision for the same.51

Another inscription dated A.D. 1591 records a grant of village for the purpose of conducting the Tiru-adhyayana festival in the month of MargaLI.52 It makes particular reference to the "ulagamunda-peruvayan-sirappu" which is on the sixth day after the Ekadasi when the sixth canto of Tiruvoyyoli beginning with the words "Ulagamunda-peruvayan" is recited.

Besides this, the regular morning Dhanurmasa worship takes place in the temple when Andal's Tamil composition—Tiruppadai—is recited. A special endowment was made in A.D. 1527 in the time of Krishnadeva Raya for Dhanurmasa-puja and offerings for all the 30 days of the month.58 On the day after the Iyarpa Sattumurai of the Adhyayana festival, the Amushthiakulam festival is performed to commemorate the incident in Ramanauja's life. Varadaraja, accompanied by Ramanauja or Udaiyavar, goes to the sāla-well (about two miles away from the temple) from where Ramanuja is believed to have carried water to the temple daily. There is now a small temple for Ramanuja near the well. On the return, the chief deity is dressed like a hunter (Vēdan) as he once appeared to Ramanuja. There seems to be a reference to this festival in an undated record of Vijayanagar king.54

Thai (January-February)

This month is famous for the Parivēṭṭai festival at Śivaram, a place about ten miles east of Kānchi and on the banks of the River Palar. Varadarāja goes there in the early hours of the morning. He is taken up the hill and stationed at a temple there. Thousands of people who gather from all neighbouring villages go up the hill and offer worship. In the evening, He is taken to the river and then back to Kānchi. The reference to Parivēṭṭai in a record dated Ś 1470 (A.D. 1548) may be to the festival.56 In the same month, on the Pournami day, the floating festival is conducted in the enchanting Anantasaras tank within the temple. The Lord and His consort are taken into a wooden pavilion which slowly floats and glides on the water. The pavilion is beautifully illuminated.

The festival in honour of Kūrattālvār takes place during the Hasta-star of this month. As the author of the famous Varadarājastavam and as one who was a close associate of Ramanuja, he is specially honoured in this temple. Offering on Kūrat-
tālvār’s birth-day is recorded in an epigraph dated A.D. 1555.  

Māsi (February-March)

Another grand floating festival or Teppōtsavam takes place in this month at Rāja-kulam or Rāyajee tank about six miles from Kāṇchi. It takes place on the full-moon day. There are references to this festival in the inscriptions of the temple which mention it as ṣdhām-tirunāl.

This is followed immediately by Davana-utsavam or Garden-festival for three days within the temple garden called now as Doraī Thottam. This is a festival for both Perumāl and Tāyār.

Panguni (March-April)

In this last month of the year is conducted the Panguni-Pallava Utsavam for seven days when the sthalapurāṇa of the temple viz., the Hastigiri Mahātmiya is read in the hundred-pillared maṇḍapa in the presence of Lord Varada.

In the same month is celebrated the marriage festival for Malayāḷa Nāčiyār for whom there is a separate shrine in the temple. This is held for a week ending with the marriage on the Uttiram day. This is a unique festival for this temple and it attracts a vast concourse of devotees who are delighted to witness the divine marriage on the auspicious day.

The performance of this festival in A.D. 1582 is attested by an epigraph of Śrī-rangarāya. It records endowment for offerings to be made during this festival which is specially called Sērakula-nāchiar-panguni-uttiram-sattumurai. It also informs us that on that day Sērakula-nāchiar, Varadarāja and Sēnai-mudaliār were taken in procession to a garden named Dalavāy-tōppu where offerings were made.

Thus, it will be seen from the foregoing that the temple bristles with festivals all through the year. They have been arranged with great forethought and planning, so that many of them are appropriate to the season and weather-conditions. For instance, the grand annual Brahmoṭsavam takes place in the month of May when the vast agricultural population has resting time; the Teppōtsavam or floating festival in Māsi soon after the rainy season is over, when the tanks would be full to the brim. Even though there is evidence attesting to the occurrence of the annual and a few other festivals in the Chōḷa days, it is clear from the inscriptive evidences cited above, that it was during the Vijayanagar times—from about the 14th century, the festivals increased both in number and grandeur. The rituals and functions in the temple also increased which correspondingly needed new types of structures like the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, uṇjal-maṇḍapa and Vasanta-maṇḍapa.

Any description of the Kāṇchi festivals can hardly do justice to their grandeur. The vast multitude that throng the thoroughfares and the temple premises and wait for hours on end to have a glimpse of the Lord, the great devotional surge that one witnesses in the emotional recitation of the Vedaś and the Divya-prabhandaś, the bhajanās or singing-parties, the graceful march of the Lord from the temple to the Gangaṭkōṇān-maṇḍapa and back, amidst the milling crowds, all these scenes are to be seen to be believed.
NOTES

1. It is generally considered that the image-worship was not popular in the Vedic period. Even the āgamas explicitly state that idols are a mere help though a very necessary one for the sādhaka (worshipper) to conceive and meditate on God. *Vishnu-samhita*, XXIX, 55-57. See also S. Dasgupta: *A History of Indian Philosophy*, III (1952), pp. 18-19.


8. Interpolated chapter of the *Jayākhyā Samhita*, verses 90-120.


17. 566 of 1919.

18. 566 of 1919.

19. 432, 446, 463 etc. of 1919.

20. 568 of 1919.

21. 508 of 1919.

22. 44 of 1893.

23. 489 of 1919.

24. *Satgoparanadadi* verse, *Vedattin mun Selga...*


26. 401 of 1919.

27. 530 and 539 of 1919.


29. 585 of 1919.


31. See Appendix I for details of such descriptions.


34. 585 of 1919.

35. 657 of 1919.


37. 381 of 1919.

38. 419 and 432 of 1919.


41. 422 of 1919.

42. 579 of 1919.


45. 432 of 1919.

46. 646 of 1919; *S.I.T.I.*, No. 378.


The Vanntree (*Prosopis Spicigera*) is held specially auspicious, the worship of which would grant many boons. Rāma is said to have worshipped it before he started his search for his lost wife, Sita.
CHAPTER VI

FUNCTIONARIES AND HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT

The position of the temple as an institution providing work for a large number of people is a striking feature of the socio-economic life of the mediaeval times. Large temples afforded ample opportunities to the people of the locality to serve the temple in various capacities involving religious, administrative and other quasi-religious and manual work. We know that the great temple at Thaňjavûr had nearly 600 employees on its rolls in A.D. 1011. The koíl-oļugu, the chronicle of the Sri-rangam Vishnu temple, gives graphic details of the various classes of the temple-servants and their duties. Though no such written account is available for the Vara-darâjaswâmi temple, the inscriptions therein provide us with valuable data regarding this aspect. The temple employees are referred to by many general terms such as koíl-parivârangal, koíl-paniseivârgal, Ûliyakkârârgal. A record dated 35th year of Kulottunga Chôla III (circa A.D. 1213) informs us that there were 200 women (padi-yilâr) serving in this temple. They were known as Tribhuvana-viradêvan-padiyilâr, perhaps named after the king’s title—Tribhuvana-vîra-dêvan. The same inscription also informs us that these 200 persons were provided with lands and houses. Perhaps this was the general pattern followed by way of remunerating the temple servants. Unfortunately, the record does not give the details of the various servants and their functions. The true import of the numerous names and designations that occur in many other epigraphs is discussed in the light of the data available in the koíl-oļugu and in the inscriptions of other temples. The history of the management is traced under a separate section.

The functionaries of the temple can be studied under three broad categories:

(i) those engaged in purely spiritual or religious services like the performance of the pûja or worship, chanting the sacred hymns etc.;
(ii) those engaged in rendering various kinds of quasi-religious, artistic and other manual work; and
(iii) those appointed to do administrative work pertaining to matters like the management, supervision over the staff, the maintenance of accounts etc.

Section 1

SPIRITUAL FUNCTIONARIES

(1) Jiýars

The most highly respected spiritual or religious dignitaries who were in charge of the proper conduct of the religious ceremonies, worship and other procedures were the Jiýars. A few Chôla records of the temple make pointed reference to the presence of the ‘koíl-Jiýars’ though the exact nature of their religious duties is not
specified. But we know from the works like the Kōil-ōlugu and the Tirumalai-ōlugu that the Jiya were functioning as the spiritual heads in both the temples at Srirangan and Tirupati from the days of Rāmānuja. They were the authorities in the modes and procedures of the ceremonies, connected with the worship.

The Jiya were ascetics (sanyāsīs). Usually, persons of sound knowledge of the scriptures and good character were selected for the Jiya’s position. They need not be necessarily celebates, but persons leading a normal married life (grihasthas) were also often chosen. But after the selection, they should renounce their household duties and other material comforts and take to the ascetic life, dedicating themselves to the religious service. The Jiya had their own mathas or monasteries, having a number of disciples who sought spiritual initiation and enlightenment.

From the records of the 15th, the 16th and the 17th centuries of our temple, we learn that successive Jiya with the monastic cognomen Alagiya-maṇavāḷa-Jiya functioned as the spiritual heads in this temple. They were known as the Kōyil-Kēḻvi-Jiya i.e., the Jiya who was the Kōil-Kēḻvi or the temple superintendent, just like Vaḍa-Tiruvēṅgāḻa Jiya was the Kōil-Kēḻvi of the Tirumalai temple, more or less at the same period.

The Jiya held an important and honoured place in the temple hierarchy and their presence during momentous occasions attests to this. Thus, when the Vijayanagar king Krishnadeva Raya specified the routes to be followed by the cars of the Śrī Varadarājswāmi temple and the Ekāmrēśvarar temple, the former was represented by the Jiya, Stānattārs and the Accountant.

Many are the epigraphs which specify the shares in the prasādam (holy food) of the Jiya. A record dated A.D. 1562 allots one fourth of the share to Alagiya Maṇavāḷa Jiya. Whereas a record dated 1595 allots a share to the Jiya equal to that of the Stānattārs and the Śrī-Vaishnavas of the temple.

The Alagiya-maṇavāḷa Jiya held an eminent position in the temple even as late as A.D. 1724 as attested by the copper plate grant of that date. But, they seem to have lost their eminent position of kōil-kēḻvi in the wake of the sectarian disputes.

However, the Alagiya-maṇavāḷa-Jiya-maṭha is still there at Kāṇchi and the Jiya attends the morning and evening services regularly every day and takes part in the recital of the Tamil hymns (Divya-prabhandams) along with the Tenkalai adhyāpākas or reciters. During the festivals, the Jiya takes a leading part in the procession along with his prabhandam reciters.

(2) Śrī-Vaishnavas of the temple

Members of the many Śrī-Vaishnava families did the duties of chanting the Sanskrit vedas and the Tamil prabhandams. Many Chōḷa and later epigraphs mention them as the Kōil-Śrī-Vaishnavas. An epigraph of Kulōttunga III (A.D. 1178-1216) mentions them as the Tiruppadi-Śrī-Vaishnavas, the word Tiruppadi meaning here “the sacred shrine”. From two records of the reign of the same king, we learn that they constituted an important body who entered into agreements with the donors, accepted donations and agreed to implement the provisions of the agreement. They anticipated the Stālattārs of the later periods (481 and 493 of 1919). Another record refers to them as “Perumāl Kōil-Śrī-Vaishnavas”. They were entitled to get
a regular share in the sanctified food or any other special offerings. A number of epigraphs of the 15th and 16th centuries frequently refer to the Iyal-sevikkum-Sri-Vaishnavas i.e., the Sri-Vaishnavas reciting Iyal or Tamil hymns. An epigraph dated A.D. 1242 records the grant of 17½ vēlis of land to 58 Brahmins reciting the Vaishnava hymn Tiruvōynol. Another record refers to the Sri-Vaishnavas reciting the Vēdas and says that they were paid some cash also. Even today, there is what is known as the adhyāpaka-mirās by which many reciters of the sacred hymns get a regular emolument in kind and cash.

In the 17th century, a few selected Sri-Vaishnava leaders received the honour of precedence in reciting the Tamil hymns and receiving the Tīrtham and prasādam i.e., holy water and food. It is known as the arulappadu honour which is being enjoyed hereditarily.

(3) Archakas

The officiating priests who conduct the worship in the inner shrines are called the archakas or Bhaṭṭāchāryas. Now there are ten priests to attend to the various shrines in the temple by a system of rotation (murail). There are separate priests for the shrines of the Āḻvār and the āchāryas. A record of the 13th century informs us that there were 10 Baṭṭars (priests) in the temple at the time. The one who did service at the main sanctum was known as Periaperumāl-Nambi and the names of some of the other priests were: Karuṇākara-Battar, Dēvappirān Varadarāja-Baṭṭar. The priest attending to the Narasimha shrine was known by the general name Singaperumāl-Dikshitar. The priest in charge of dressing the deity was called Singāra-nambi. Some of the names of the priests occurring in the inscriptions are interesting. They are:

(1) Śrīdhara Baṭṭar
(2) Rāmānuja-Gōvinda Baṭṭar
(3) Aḷḷāgiya-manavāḷa-Baṭṭar
(4) Narasinga Baṭṭar
(5) Vāṣudēva Baṭṭar.

As already seen, the interpolated chapter in the Jayākhya-Samhitā lays down certain qualifications of birth and training for the priests of this temple.

In the older times, the priests of the temples were provided with houses to live in and some lands for sustenance, besides a regular share in the daily food-offerings. Thus, a record datable to the first half of the 14th century registers a gift of a house-site and some privileges to a priest named Narasinga Baṭṭar of this temple. Any donation for festival or offerings made special allotment of a share thereof for the priests. The practice continues even today. But now no residential quarters are given. Only a share in the food and some cash award constitute their remuneration. Money collected through the individual devotees and pilgrims by way of performing the archanas (special worship) goes to the priests. But on the whole, their income is poor and is hardly commensurate with the labour and time spent.

(4) Parichārakas

They are the attendants who render assistance to the officiating priests. They do various smaller duties like the supply of water for the holy bath and various other
sundry items like the incense, camphor etc., at regular intervals to the priest when the latter is engaged in performing the pūja.

These employees are referred to in an epigraph dated A.D. 1592 as the Sannidhi Parichārakas, the attendants in the shrine.\(^{28}\)

(5) Viṇṇappam-seivār

They were the temple singers and reciters. According to the Kōil-olugu, they were known as the Araiyyars at Šrīrangam. They used to sing the Tamil prabhāndams in front of the deity in a particular musical note, accompanied by the vīna. Sometimes, they would show gestures and act. Particularly, their swing-songs during the swing-festival (Ūnjal) and Tiruppalli-eluchi in the month of mārgalī are mentioned in the olugu. The Araiyyars are still functioning at Šrīrangam. We know from an inscription dated A.D. 1242, that there were 22 viṇṇappam-seivār of the Brahmin caste at the Varadaṉāya temple.\(^{29}\)

(6) Tirumañjanam-eḍukkiravar (carriers of holy water)

This is a class of Brahmin employees engaged in bringing water from the river for the holy bath. On festive occasions, they used to go in groups and carry water in decorated silver or brass vessels for the anointment. They are mentioned in the two records dated A.D. 1536 and 1540.\(^{30}\) The former record mentions that each of them was paid one panam per day as wage.

Section 2

FUNCTIONARIES FOR QUASI-RELIGIOUS AND OTHER MANUAL WORK

Besides those engaged in the purely religious duties, there were numerous employees rendering various kinds of semi-religious and other physical service to the temple.

(1) Swayamppākis (cooks)

There was a kitchen or maḍappalli in the temple. An epigraph of even the 11th century refers to the construction of a kitchen (Mahānasa) in the temple.\(^{31}\) It was meant to prepare taligai or food of various kinds to be offered to the deities. The cooks were regular employees of the temple getting remuneration both in kind and cash. Their chief duties were, the preparation of food, making the cooked rice into blocks, and taking them to the various shrines from the kitchen. They are not hereditary servants, but are appointed from time to time. An inscription dated A.D. 1591 mentions the share of food to the Swayamppākis from the offerings made by a donor.\(^{32}\) Apart from cooking the normal quota of food for the daily offerings, the cooks have to prepare special kinds of food during the festival times for which they would get extra allowance in kind and cash.

(2) Viṇiyōgam-seivār (food-distributors)

These were in charge of distributing the consecrated food to the customary claimants as well as the ordinary devotees who have gathered for a particular service. There was one head for this class called "Viṇiyōgam-seiyum pārupatyakārār"\(^{33}\) who
supervised the distribution and saw to it that it was made in accordance with the conditions in force. Probably he was responsible for making over the stipulated shares for various service-holders.

(3) Singan-murai (suppliers of fuel)

These were in charge of the supply of fuel to the kitchen. The fuel is frequently referred to in the epigraphs as Erikarum.\textsuperscript{31} This service called Singan-murai is mentioned in the Tirupati inscriptions as well as Tirumalai-Olugu.\textsuperscript{35}

(4) Sri-padam Tangiravar\textsuperscript{36}

This phrase refers to the devotees who carry the processional deities within the precincts of the temple. This is not a fixed office, but it is often rendered as a voluntary service.

(5) Mun-tandu-pin-tandu-pidikkavar or Kodii-karar\textsuperscript{37}

This refers to the labourers who carry the deities mounted on the big vehicles or vahanas in the streets, outside the temple. Mostly the labourers did this difficult and strenuous work. The vahanas are very heavy and are usually fixed to a large flat wooden plank. Large and thick wooden poles about 100 ft. long are tied to the bottom and lifted by labourers who divide themselves into four groups for the four sides. The terms mun-tandu, pin-tandu refer to the poles in front and at the back of the deity. They were paid daily wages in cash, besides food.

(6) Kodi-kudai-al\textsuperscript{38} (banner and umbrella-bearers)

This refers to the labourers who carry the banners and the umbrellas. There are special colourful banners, with the Vaishnava-symbols which are carried in front of the festival processions.

Similarly, one of the things for which Kanchipuram is famous, is the making of huge and beautiful temple umbrellas which are carried on either side of the deity.

(7) Ther-niminda-al\textsuperscript{40} (car-pullers)

This refers to the labourers who were engaged in directing and pulling the huge wooden car along the streets on the seventh day of the annual festival. The wheels are huge, about 10 ft. in diameter. As it is difficult to pull the car straightaway, persons were engaged in inserting long poles as an incline-lever behind the wheels and press it so that wheels would move and once they got moving, it was easy to pull the car. This term niminda perhaps refers to this initial operation in starting the car. The car-pullers were given wages which is mentioned as Vadam-piditha-kuli, vadham meaning the thick ropes tied to the car for pulling.\textsuperscript{40}

(8) Tiruvidi-pandam-pidittavan\textsuperscript{41} (torch-bearers)

There were a number of torch-bearers in all processions both inside the temple and in the outer streets. A bundle of cotton rags tied around iron prongs at the end of a wooden handle and soaked in the gingelly or ground-nut oil and lighted usually served as the light or the pandam. It is called Tirvatti. A long metal rod was also used as handle. This is called by an epigraph as Tirukkulai-pandam.\textsuperscript{42} The wages
for the light-bearer are described in an epigraph as *Tivatti-sumanda-küli*.\(^43\)

(9) Tiruvilākku-kāran

This office is mentioned in an epigraph of A.D. 1572.\(^44\) Perhaps, he was responsible for all the lighting arrangements in the shrines, entrances, outer precincts and the processions.

(10) Men in charge of crackers

A few persons were specially engaged in letting fireworks and crackers during the festivals. On certain nights there would be a splendid show of colourful lights and crackers. Such persons are mentioned as *vānam-suṭikkum-āḷ*.\(^45\)

(11) Sculptors (Śilpis)

This class of artisans is mentioned as *śilpis* in an inscription dated A.D. 1571.\(^46\) They were an important class of well-trained artisans, steeped in the architectural traditions and texts. Here in South India, this continues to be a hereditary family profession. In such a vast temple complex the need to employ this class is quite obvious. Besides structural additions or alterations, repairs to the existing structures must have been entrusted to them. One inscription refers to them as those who undertake repairs to the *maṇḍapas* (*Maṇḍapam Seppaniṭugira*).\(^47\)

Now the sculptors or masons are not permanently on the rolls of the temple employees. But, formerly, they seem to have been employed regularly to attend to various constructional and repair-activities and special grants of lands were given to them.

(12) Carpenters

There were also temple carpenters to attend to various duties like the making or repairing of the *vāhanas* or vehicles, preparing the wooden poles to carry them, wooden pedestals, wooden handles for umbrellas etc., which were needed from time to time. The making of the huge wooden car with exquisite ornamental work must have involved considerable labour and ingenuity. This class is mentioned in inscriptions dated A.D. 1558 and 1572.\(^48\) From the latter epigraph we learn that on the eve of the car festival the carpenters were in charge of seeing that the car was put in road-worthy condition and carry out any repairs, if necessary. Often, the carpenters were given lands named *Tacha-māṇiam*.

(13) Blacksmiths

The record dated A.D. 1558, referred to above, mentions this class of artisans as *karumārs*, engaged to do certain works in the temple. Their services were also needed in the preparation and maintenance of the wooden car and other vehicles with their vast network of bolts and nails. Besides, they had also to supply solid iron-blocks to be placed in front of the wheels of the car in order to stop it at various places from moving. This is specially mentioned in an epigraph as "*Tiruthēr Irumbu muṭṭi*".\(^49\)
(14) Goldsmiths

Though there is no direct reference to them in any of the epigraphs, we can easily presume that they were of immense service to the temple. We get a number of references to the donations of costly golden and other precious stone jewels to the deity—like the golden yajñopavīṭa\textsuperscript{40} (sacred thread), golden krīḍa (headgear), śankha, chakra, abhaya-hasta (a covering over the hand set in precious stones).\textsuperscript{41} All the deities were endowed with gold ornaments like necklaces, armlets etc. To make such jewels as well as renew and burnish the old ones from time to time, the services of the goldsmiths were required by the temple which perhaps allotted certain lands for the goldsmiths (Taṭṭāra māniani), as it was done in many villages.

(15) Bronze and bell-metal workers

Another important class of artisans whose services are indispensable for a temple were the metal workers who made a number of bronze idols from time to time. A variety of brass lamp-stands were presented to the temple.\textsuperscript{52} Like sculptors, they must have also been in regular employment receiving fixed annual remuneration in kind and occasional cash rewards. They also prepared the bells and gongs in the temple used during the ceremonies and festivals. They also made the metal sheet coverings over the stone steps, śikharas and thresholds in the temple.

(16) Potters and Washermen

Both the classes should have been on the regular rolls of the temple-employees. Potters supplied the necessary cooking vessels and pots for keeping the grains, cereals, sandal paste etc.

Washermen cleaned the garments of the deities daily. Besides this, they had to supply the necessary waste-cotton or cloth for the processional torches.

Probably they were granted lands by the temple for their maintenance. Even now a special festival is held annually to honour the potters, washermen, barbers etc., serving in the temple.

(17) Pandal-erectors

Erection of pandal or shamanias with the help of dried coconut leaves on a vast scale is a special feature of all festivals in South India. Rows of bamboo or other poles would be erected or planted in the ground and over them cross poles would be fixed or tied and then the plaited and dried coconut leaves, each about two metres long, would be spread and tied. This would provide the necessary shade around the temple for the pilgrims. The edges of the ceilings of the pandal would be decorated with festoons, pendants etc. Probably a special batch of men attended to this work who were paid daily wages. An epigraph dated 1553 mentions them as pandal-sungārikka-āl-kūli.\textsuperscript{53}

(18) Garden-keepers and Garland-makers

Maintenance of gardens and supply of garlands and flowers to the temple was considered a pious duty. Periaḷār and Tondaradippodi Āḻvār spent their life-time in this sacred duty. We find in the epigraphs of the Chōla and Vijayanagar times a number of references of a class of people named Dāsa-nambis. Much of the garden-
service was done by them not only in Kāṇchi but also at Tirumalai, Srīrangam, Sriperumbūdūr. A record dated the time of Gāndagopāla refers to the Tirumālaichattum Dāsa nambi i.e., the Dāsa-nambi who supplies the garland. Numerous are the grants of lands particularly specified for rearing flower-gardens for the supply of flowers to the temple. The services rendered by the class are considered separately in a later context.  

Section 3

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT

Even from the Chōla days, a number of administrative and supervisory officers worked in this temple to manage its affairs. The earliest among them were the Vārīar and the Karanaṭṭān, both of them mentioned in a record datable to A.D. 1155. The former is explicitly stated to be in charge of the management of the temple whereas the latter’s duties are not specified in the record. However, both are mentioned in connection with the responsible work of receiving and supervising the endowments made to the temple by the assembly (sabhā) of a nearby village. The explicit statement in the epigraph about the Vārīars is: Arulāḷapperumāl koil Srīkāryam seyyum Vāriapparumakkaḷ. This clearly means the great men of the vāriam who are doing the Srī-kāryam or the management of the Arulāḷapperumāl temple. From this record, it is quite clear that the Srī-kāryam was the office and the body of people called the Vāriapparumakkaḷ were in charge of it. Who were these vāriapparumakkaḷ? Vārīam may literally mean a committee of chosen or selected men to execute certain works. Early mediaeval epigraphs of Tamilnad are replete with instances of the village-assemblies appointing a number of vārīams or committees to look after the special works such as the supervision of lakes, gardens, irrigation etc. Likewise was the vāriapparumakkaḷ of the Arulāḷapperumāl temple, a committee of the village assembly, appointed to look after the management of the temple. Possibly it was so; but the evidence is not clear, especially because there is no mention about the sabhā or any other form of assembly in the inscriptions of Varadarājaswāmi temple. However, what appears more plausible is that Attiyūr, being essentially a small temple-village, might have had a committee of Great Men or Elders—Vāriapparumakkaḷ—to look into the affairs of the temple as well as the village. Such instances of religious bodies or corporations having quasi-public character are not unknown in the mediaeval South India. A similar case in point is a record of a temple at Uttiramēṟur which mentions the transactions done by the Vāriapparumakkaḷ. Prof. Nilakanta Sastri, who has examined that record at length observes: “The phrase (vāriapparumakkaḷ) may mean great men doing vārīam and may only be another form of the term vāriyar; but it looks very much like meaning ‘members of the vārīam’ the last being understood as a committee. But it should be noticed that there is no reference whatever to the sabhā in this record, and possibly the vāriyam of this record had nothing to do with the sabhā.” So, we may not be wrong if we take the vāriapparumakkaḷ of our record to be a committee of elders elected or appointed by the village-people to look after the local affairs of the village as well as the temple which were closely linked together in multifarious ways. The conspicuous absence of any mention about any known form of administrative assem-
bly for the Attiyūr village sabhā, Ėr or Nagaram and designating the members of the vāriam as ‘perumakkal’ or great men or elderly men in the inscriptions lend support to this view. Indeed, in the entire gamut of the epigraphs of Sri Varadarājāswāmi temple, ranging for a long period from the 11th to the 18th century, there is no mention of assembly of the village anywhere. On the other hand, for the early periods we get the term vāriapperumakkal and for the later period, the stānattār who were in charge of the temple-management. Perhaps, the latter people were the lineal descendants of vāriapperumakkal and were in charge of not only the affairs of the temple but also those of the village as a whole.

It is interesting to find the slow evolution that the ‘vāriam’ underwent. A record of slightly later period mentions that Köoil-vāriam and karanattān received the cash endowment on behalf of the temple. A record of Kulottunga III dated to A D. 1190 registers the receipt of cash by the köoil-vāriam and the karanattān.57 A later record belonging to Rājarāja III (5th year = A D. 1221) records a gift of cash received by them.58 The mention of a single official vāriam instead of a body of men ‘vāriapperumakkal’ may well indicate that sometimes the executive power was transferred from a committee to one or more officials named vāriam, or it may simply mean that vāriam, as a representative of the committee, did the functions of a committee as a whole.

Similar instances of the vāriars together with the karanattārs functioning as the managers of a temple which were till then done by a committee or assembly, are known to us from places like Suändram in Kanyakumāri District.59 Anyway, the record cited last which is dated A.D. 1221, is the last one that speaks of the vāriam. After that they are no longer heard of. Instead, we see the emergence of a new group or board of managers or trustees named the stānattārs.

Karanattān

As mentioned earlier, this is one of the important officers of the temple mentioned in the early records. He was evidently the accountant and the record-keeper. In fact, the word karaṇam means document and obviously therefore karanattān was in charge of the drafting of the documents and the proper unkeep of the accounts. In the two records datable to A.D. 1155 and 1189, he is mentioned along with the vāriars as the authorities with whose knowledge and acceptance the endowments are made.60 In one they are said to receive the cash endowment made for the temple. Probably, while the vāriars were the executive officials or managers, the karanattān was in charge of the maintenance of the accounts of all transactions. Later on, the designation seems to have been slightly modified. In the later records, he is designated köoil-kaṇakkku, and invariably all the records of the Chōla and Vijayanagar kings, registering the temple transactions, were written in his presence and signed and authenticated by him. Almost every inscription of this temple thus ends with the words “Ivai köoil-kaṇakkku (name of the individual) Eluttu” meaning that these were written by köoil-kaṇakkku or the temple accountant. Incidentally, we get a number of interesting personal names of the accountants at various times. Mostly, they added the name Arūḷālapriyan61 (lover of Arūḷāla) or Tiru Attiyūr Priyan62 (lover of the sacred Attiyūr) to their surnames.

The accountants were probably not granted any lands because none of the inscriptions has any reference to that effect, but they were probably given remuneration in
kind, like paddy and also some cash. In addition, they were given a specific daily share
in the cooked rice. Besides this in all endowments for festivals and other offerings,
a special mention is made of the share of the prāsadām (consecrated food and other
delicacies) to the accountant. This shows that they enjoyed certain special duties and
privileges during the festivals and ceremonies.

In a record of Krishnadeva Rāya dated Ś 1439 (A.D. 1517) the accountant
is called the kanaḷu pillai63 by which he is mentioned in all 17th and 18th century
records and he has signified so in important documents of the temple. We know for
certain, that till a few decades ago, the post was hereditary. The office of Kanakkupillai
still continues under the same name.

Sri-Bhanḍārattār

Sri-Bhanḍāram was the temple treasury and those who were in charge of the
treasury were known as the Sri-Bhanḍārattār. The large amount of cash and gold
that accrued to the temple’s credit through donations and income were deposited in
the safe-vaults of the temple. Apparently, they were at first a merely receiving and
distributing body; but later on, came to possess also administrative powers like
selling of the temple lands on suitable conditions. Thus, while most of the transac-
tions were approved of by the stānattār, a few which involved cash-gifts, were done
by Sri-Bhanḍārattār, either all alone or along with the stānattār. For instance, in
A.D. 1537, a cash gift of 80 gold paṇam was received by the Sri-Bhanḍārattār who
agreed to utilise the interest towards certain offerings.64 In this record, the stānattārs
are not mentioned. On another occasion in A.D. 1537, in connection with the
refixing of the temple’s share from its lands cultivated by its tenants, the transactions
were agreed to by Sri-Bhanḍārattār and the Sri-kāryam.65 Similar instances are
recorded in many other inscriptions.66

Besides the treasury of the main temple, there seem to have been separate treasu-
ries for certain subsidiary shrines of the temple. This is borne out by a record dated
Ś 1389 (A.D. 1467) which registers an agreement between the treasury of Tirumalai-
saiĀḻvār shrine and those of the main temple.67 The former purchased from the
latter two pieces of waste lands and brought them under cultivation. From this, we
might infer that there was a separate body of treasurers to administer the funds
and charities of this shrine. Whether this was also the case with all other smaller
shrines, we do not know.

Stānattār

By far the most important class of officers of the temple were the stānattārs who
are variously called the tānattārs and the stalattārs. The earliest reference to them
in our temple records occurs in two inscriptions, one of them belonging to A.D. 1234,
and another datable to A.D. 1236.68 Unfortunately, we do not get much information
regarding the composition of this group, the mode of appointment etc. But, as
mentioned earlier, they were probably the prototypes or the lineal descendants of
the vāriappermakkal of the earlier times and as such, included among themselves the
select and the best qualified elderly people of the locality.

Dr. Venkataramanayya calls the stānattārs as the Board of Trustees and equates
them with the Stānikas mentioned in the Telugu work Amuktamālaya (of Krishna-
dēva Rāya) as having been in charge of the Vishnu temple at Srivilliputtur. He says that during the Vijayanagar times, the stānattārs were mostly set up by the government and by private donors or local people. But in the case of our temple, there is no evidence of the stānattārs having been appointed by the Government. On the other hand, viewed from the context of the stalattārs mentioned in the records of the 18th century, it appears that they were selected by the local people, though the mode of appointment remains obscure.

Almost all transactions of the temple like the receiving of the gifts from the chiefs, kings or private persons or institution of special offerings or services, were done only on the approval of the stānattārs. On behalf of the temple, they agreed to fulfil the purposes of an endowment.

In the records of the 17th and 18th centuries, the stānattārs are referred to as the stalattārs. They continued to wield decisive powers not only in the administration of the temple but on allied matters also like the procedures of festivals, conferring of honours etc. The honours of “first tirham and arulappādu” were conferred by them on select and deserving people of the locality. Thus in A.D. 1687, the stalattārs conferred such rights of receiving the first tirham and arulappādu on one Gōvindāchārya, son of Prativāti Bhayankaram Rangāchārya. Again in A.D. 1714, they conferred honours on one Kōnappāchāriar to be enjoyed hereditarily.

Thus, from the inscriptions as well as later temple records, it is seen that the stalattārs of the temple were a powerful body of temple-trustees who were the supreme authorities in the temple administration.

Royal control over the temple

The presence of the king’s representative in such a big town as Kāñchipuram both in the later Chōla and the Vijayanagar times, possibly acted as a check over the trustees. But it is well known that even in mediaeval times, the Government did not interfere with the internal affairs of a temple. The general policy of the Hindu monarchs to the religious institutions was one of non-interference. They protected and maintained the institutions by their liberal grants and did not undertake the actual management of them or interference in their internal administration, which was largely left to their own controlling bodies. But there was a general supervision by the local officers of the king, who were responsible for maintaining law and order in the land. If the king or his officer did interfere, it was rarely and in order to correct some local error or irregularity or to arbitrate in a dispute and this was never taken amiss. The temple-lands and properties were subject to the usual taxation and other regulations, unless explicitly exempted.

On the whole, the royal control was much less in the Chōla times when the temple establishment was not so large and its income limited. But with the increase in its properties, landed interests and the enlargement of the temple’s role in the social and economic spheres, the royal control tended to become greater. Some indications to this effect are available in post-Chōla and Vijayanagar records of our temple. An inscription of the 13th century records an order of the local king Rājanārāyana Sambūvaraya to the stalattārs of the temple that they should follow certain routes and stop at certain groves during the processions of the festivals.
Similarly, in A.D. 1517 Krishnadeva Rāya, the Vijayanagar king, fixed the routes of procession for the car festivals of Lord Varadarāja and Ekāmrēśvara. This he did in the presence of the stalattārs and Jīyars of the Vishnu temple and the stalattārs and the Mahēśvaras of the Śiva temple.⁷⁴

Thus, except for such rare instances which called for the royal regulation, there is no reference to any unhappy or hostile relationship. Kings, viceroys and officials were given due honour and they are often mentioned in the temple inscriptions with all their titles. Special offerings were made in honour and for the merit of the kings and their officers. Whenever the local royal agent misbehaved, the temple-authorities appealed to the king. Thus, in A.D. 1529 during the time of Achyutarāya, when Vīra Narasimha or Sellappa showed partiality for the Śiva Ekāmrēśvara temple and allotted a greater share to it and gave less than the stipulated amount of land to Varadarāja temple, the stalattārs brought this injustice to the notice of the king. The latter, during his visit to Kāñchi, redistributed the lands equally between the two temples and ordered the documents to be re-written.⁷⁵

The royal control over the temples was greater during the Vijayanagar times especially under Vēṅkata. The appointment of a Śrī-kārya-Curantara, a manager-general of all Vishnu temples around Kāñchi by Vēṅkata-II, is an instance of the increasing royal control over the temples. From the kōil-olugu account, it is seen that this appointment was resented by the local stalattār of the temple, because it was considered a sort of imposition.

The relation between the temple and the government during the days of the English East India Company and later, will be considered at the end of this chapter. We will now advert to the rise of the office of Śrī-kāryam or manager and its impact on the temple administration.

The rise of the Śrī-kāryam

The 16th century witnessed the rise of a new officer named Śrī-kāryam to a position of importance in the management of the temple. Either to honour men of outstanding abilities and services or as a check over the stalattār this post of the manager was created. The first person to hold the post in this temple was the redoubtable Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār. A record of Achyutarāya datable to A.D. 1538 clearly mentions him as the Śrī-kāryam of the temple.⁷⁶ We know from other records that he was in charge of the feeding house Rāmānuja-kūṭa attached to the temple. In addition to that he was also the manager of the temple. In this case, evidently in recognition of the services he and his predecessor had rendered to the cause of Śrī-Vaishnavism, the stalattār themselves appointed him as the manager. They might have considered that his popularity and influence would attract greater royal favour and benefaction to the temple.

The next person to hold the post of the Śrī-kāryam was probably Aḷagiya-manavāḷa-Jīyar. We have already seen that these Jīyars have successively held the post of the köyil-kēḷi or the temple-superintendence. Now in addition to the old position, Aḷagiya-manavāḷa-Jīyar is called the Śrī-kāryam of the temple in a record of Sadāśiva Rāya datable to A.D. 1553.⁷⁷ In co-ordination with the stānattār he received certain gifts made to the temple and signed the agreement with the owner on behalf of the temple (Arulāḷapperumāḷ köyil stanattārum Śrī-kāryam-seivār Aḷagiya-manavāḷa-
It is worthy of note that there is not a single record in which the transaction is done exclusively in the name of Sri-kāryam. Always either the stānattār or in some cases the Sri-Bhandārattār are mentioned first. On the contrary, there are quite a few records in which the latter two alone figure as signatories in the transactions. From this, we can infer that the stānattār were still the ultimate authorities and the Sri-kāryam was at best a co-ordinate or executive authority.

Probably the post of Sri-kāryam continued to be in the hands of Ajagiya-mana-vāḷa-Jiyars till the advent of the famous Eṭṭūr Kumāra Tātāchārya. As already pointed out, this Tātāchārya family which was formerly in the city of the Vijayanagar and later migrated to Chandragiri along with the shift in the capital arrived in Kāṇchi roundabout A.D. 1574. It was in that year we hear for the first time the Tātāchārya figuring in the epigraph of our temple. Owing to the great influence he wielded with the Vijayanagar king Sriranga-I and his successor Vēnkaṭa-II, he became the Manager-General or Sri-Kārya-Durantiara of many important Vishnu temples in and around, Kāṇchi. But it should be clearly understood that each temple had its own manager or Sri-kāryam as before and the Tātāchārya was only the manager-general, having overall supervision over them, probably on behalf of the king. He had no direct hand in the administration which continued to be in the hands of the stānattār.

A record of our temple dated A.D. 1588 specifically mentions the Tātāchārya as one of the two managers—the other one was Sannidi Srīrāmāyyanār. From the kōil-olugu account, we learn that his appointment was opposed by the stalattār of our temple who belonged to the Tenkalai sect. But the Tātāchārya carried with him the Vijayanagar royal order (ōlai) exhorting the stalattār to accept him. Here, for the first time we get clear evidence of royal interference in the internal administration of the temple. But here too, it was marked by restraint and caution. The Tātāchārya had only overall supervision but no direct hand in the internal administration which was still largely in the hands of the stalattār. The temple transactions were still registered in the names of the stalattār or Sri-Bhandārattār as before. The Tātāchārya effected his supervisory control through a number of agents, placed at different temples. His agents in our temple were one Visva-pundita and another Periatirumālai-nambi Chakkarayar. Similarly, he had his agents at Srīperumbudur. This again goes to prove only his indirect hand in the temple-administration. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the presence of such a strong and influential person as the manager-general acted as a check on the power of the stānattār. The Tātāchārya almost lived in royal splendour and could even, in one of his inscriptions, boast of performing eleven tulabhārās along with his eleven wives. Whether this could have been possible at a time when the Vijayanagar kingdom had already lost its glory as kings Sriranga-I and Vēnkaṭa-II were ruling from Chandragiri over a crippled territory threatened by hostile forces is indeed doubtful. But it would however be taken to show the general affluent position of the Tātāchārya which enabled him to do many beneficial acts to the temple like the re-coating of the Pūnya-kōṭi-vimāna with gold, the construction of the vimāna over the Tāyār shrine, the presentation of many vāhanas or vehicles.

History of management in the post-Vijayanagar period

With the death of Tātāchārya’s patron Vēnkaṭa-II in A.D. 1614 and the consequent
civil war which convulsed the kingdom, the Tāṭāchāryyas lost their position as royal preceptors. Our inscriptions are silent about their activities. Though Eṭṭur Kumāra Tāṭāchāryya's immediate successor figures in the epigraphs of Srīperumbudur and Tennēri, he is not mentioned in the inscriptions of this temple. Here, the stalattār, strong as they were, seem to have re-asserted their power. In 1645, when Vijayanagar had ceased to be a power and the Golkonda army had marched into the Carnatic, the Tāṭāchāryya family left Kāṇchī for Mysore where they became the royal preceptors of the Mysore kings. But here in Kāṇchī, one Darmayya of Kōtrapalī, managed the affairs of the temple in those troublous times. In recognition of his services, the stalattār of the temple conferred special honours and privileges on him in A.D. 1659. The stalattār mentioned in the record are: Aḷagia-manavāḷa-Baṭṭar Varadayangār, Anṇan Varadayangār, Tiruvenkada Ayyangār, Saṭṭagōpa-perumāḷ-dāsan and the temple accountant Nallatambi Dānappa. The record clearly shows that the Tenkalai stalattār became once again a strong body.

The next landmark in the history of the administration of this temple was the appointment of Rāja Tōḍarmal as the Srī-kāryam or manager of the temple in 1710 by the stalattār in recognition of his yeoman service to the temple during a critical time in its history. Tōḍarmal re-conferred the right of managership on Āttān Jiyar's son (born before he became a Jiyar) as a hereditary title. Thus, the managership of the temple was successively in the hands of this family for four generations and up to A.D. 1792. In that year there was no eligible successor in the family as the three heirs were still minors. One Mr. Rama Rao, a distant cousin of the female descendant, took up the managership. This was the time when the members of the Tāṭāchāryya family who came back from Mysore in 1711 (soon after the troublous period was over and the restoration of the images was accomplished at Kāṇchī by Rāja Tōḍarmal and Āttān Jiyar) pushed forward their claims to hold the management. The Tenkalai stalattār resisted it with equal force. As this was causing frequent breaches of peace, the then English Collector Mr. Balfour ordered Mr. Rama Rao not to perform the annual Vaikāśi festival unless the two parties composed their differences. But stopping the annual festival was considered extraordinary and inauspicious and so Mr. Rama Rao refused to comply with the orders. Mr. Balfour, without going into the merits of the dispute, took an extreme step of advising the Board of Revenue to wrest the management from the hands of Mr. Rama Rao and handed it over to a new person. Thus, the hereditary management of the temple by the Āttān Jiyar family for more than 80 years (from 1711-1794) was broken. But the new incumbent held the post only for two years, from 1794-1796. Mr. Place, the immediate successor of Mr. Balfour, found him guilty of gross mismanagement and dismissed him. This led to the assumption of management by the Government of the East India Company directly in 1796 which continued till 1842.

This was the time when the Court-of-Directors of the East India Company began to take a greater interest in the affairs of the religious institutions. The Board of Revenue which was established in 1789 and which was in charge of the organisation of collection of revenue also, managed the affairs relating to religious institutions. This was but natural as these institutions possessed properties yielding huge revenues. The Collectors were the agents in the districts and were not only in charge of the collection of revenue but also maintaining law and order, besides being magistrates.
Thus, by assuming such executive and judicial responsibilities, the Government consolidated its hold. These increased responsibilities led to the framing of the Regulation VII of 1817 which gave legal clothing to the functions already assumed. It defined the functions and powers of the Board of Revenue, the Collectors of the Districts and the managerial staff or trustees of the temples. The day-to-day administration was done by the Board of trustees or stānattār, as before. But above it, were the Collectors who were responsible for due appropriation of endowments, for recording lost properties, for informing the Board of Revenue about the number of endowments and to arbitrate in the disputes. The Board of Revenue had an overall supreme voice in all matters listed above. Undoubtedly, this period of administration was on the whole beneficial to this temple and protected it from many abuses like alienation of temple-lands etc. The ceremonies and rituals were allowed to be done as per established customs and the Government did not interfere in the religious practices.

But in 1841, the Court-of-Directors of the East India Company suddenly decided to sever all connections with the religious institutions and pursue a policy of disengagement. On 12th June 1841, they ordered “immediate withdrawal of all interference with the native temples and places of religious resort”. Their object was to leave the management of these institutions to a Committee of the people of the locality, qualified to conduct the administration. Thus, all the leading temples like Tirupati, Srirangam, Kāṇchi were handed over to the Mahants or Dharma Karthās or Trustees or ‘Committee of native gentlemen’ as the case may be.

In respect of the Varadarājāswāmi temple, applications or petitions were received from both the Tenkalai and the Tātāchārya families. Mr. Appa Rao, a lineal descendant of Āṭṭān Jiyar, was also an applicant. He had stated in his application that he should be permitted to resume the management of the temple enjoyed hereditarily by his family for the past 80 years. Mr. Kumāra Tātāchārya in his petition had stated that one of his ancestors, the famous Kōṭikanyadānām Tātāchārya, was the royal preceptor of the Vijayanagar kings and that he had provided numerous benefactions to the temple and that therefore he should be appointed as the hereditary trustee. Mr. Arthur Freeze, the then Collector, after due enquiry and consideration, recommended that in the interests of the institution, it should be managed by a Committee of five persons, including two Tenkalais and a member of the Tātāchārya family in order to safeguard the rights of various classes of persons who had established rights in the temple. The Collector’s recommendations were rejected. The application of Mr. Appa Rao, the descendant of Āṭṭān Jiyar, was also rejected. Thus, the application of Kumāra Tātāchārya alone found favour with the Board of Revenue. He was appointed the trustee of Varadarājā temple in 1842.

The Tātāchārya family was in enjoyment of this right for nearly 100 years from 1842 to 1941. As already stated, it was a period when the Government pursued a policy of non-interference in the religious matters and hence, the Tātāchārya trustees enjoyed untrammelled powers. The Tenkalai Stalattār complained that the Tātāchārya trustees took a strong partisan attitude and did their maximum to unsettle the established rights and practices of the Tenkalai service-holders and adhiyāpakas. What these acts were and the reactions and results flowing therefrom, need not be detailed here. The Tenkalais, who formed the rank and file of the service-holders, had to
resort to the courts of law and vindicate every one of their rights. This was indeed the period most fertile for litigation. There was a general dissatisfaction over the administration even among a section of the trustees, who filed a suit for a scheme in the District Court, Chingleput.\textsuperscript{92} Matters went to such a head that the trustees themselves had to admit, in the suit, the necessity for a new scheme. This suit went up to the High Court.\textsuperscript{93} In the meanwhile the Tenkalais also filed a suit.\textsuperscript{94} According to the new scheme, the trusteeship was vested with the five Tātāchāryas, one of whom was to be an executive trustee for a year by turn. Above this, was set up a Board of Supervision to supervise their work. The Board was to consist of a Tenkali and a Vaḍakalai representative and one other member of the Smārtha or Madhva group.

But this scheme of 1909 proved to be a failure in the actual working, particularly because of the non-representation of the Tenkalais and theₛₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚₚ₌
35. Tirumalai-olugu, op. cit., p. 58.
37. 373 of 1919 (A.D. 1540).
38. Ibid.
40. 535 of 1919 (A.D. 1558).
41. 373 of 1919 (A.D. 1540).
42. 584 of 1919 (A.D. 1533).
43. 535 of 1919.
44. 380 of 1919.
47. 535 of 1919 (A.D. 1558).
48. 535 and 380 of 1919.
49. 380 of 1919 (A.D. 1572).
50. 430 of 1919.
52. 459 of 1919. This refers to the making of two-tiered, gold-plated, brass-lamp.
54. Vide Chapter VII.
55. 389 of 1919.
57. 554 of 1919.
60. 389 and 554 of 1919.
64. S.I.T.I., No. 376.
65. Ibid, No. 389.
66. Ibid, Nos. 390, 391, 392 etc.
70. 423 of 1919 (dated Š 1609 = A.D. 1687).
71. Ibid.
72. 425 of 1919.
74. Ibid, No. 384.
75. 584 of 1919.
76. 579 of 1919.
77. 495 of 1919.
78. 526 of 1919.
81. 383 of 1919.
82. 587 of 1919.
83. V.N. Hari Rao: Koil-olugu, op. cit., pp. 183-185. The olugu says that with the same order the Tattacharya went to Srirangam and claimed certain special honours from the temple authorities who refused to comply with his requirements. The Nayak chief-tain of Madurai who was in charge of the Srirangam by name Muthuvirappa Nayaka interceded on Tattacharya's behalf but in vain. The Tenkalai Stalattar who were all-important in the temple considered these unprecedented and contrary to the established practices and threatened to resort to self-immolation if they were forced to accept it. When the panic-stricken Nayak informed Tattacharya about it, the latter said that the Tenkalai Stalattar at Kanchi also opposed him first but later he subdues them. He went back to Kanchi.
87. See Chapter IV for details.
89. See Chapter IV for details.
90. The documents filed in the temple scheme suit—A.S. 212 of 1909 reported in MLJ-23, p. 134.
91. Court of Directors' Manifesto dated 12th June 1841.
92. O.S. No. 11 of 1907.
94. O.S. No. 27 of 1908.
95. C R.P. No. 1355 of 1940.
96. A.S. 175 of 1934 (High Court, Madras).
CHAPTER VII

THE TEMPLE AND SOCIETY

Attiyūr is a neatly laid out village nucleating around Srī Varadarājaswāmi temple. Though in later years, many portions on its west, including the areas around the Vishnu temples of Tiruvēhka and Aṣṭabhujaswāmi, were added to make it the present bigger unit, named Vishnu-Kāṇchi, the original settlement probably was confined to the four streets around the Varadarājaswāmi temple, besides a few more clusters of houses on the eastern and western outskirts of the village. It is indeed a noteworthy feature in Kāṇchi city even today, that all major temples are immediately surrounded by streets, invariably occupied by the Brahmins. Thus, while the Śaiva Brahmins live in the immediate neighbourhood of Ekāṃrēśvarar and Kāmākshi temples, Srī-Vaishnava settlements are to be found around Tiruvēhka, Aṣṭabhujam and the Varadarājaswāmi temples. Communal settlements were indeed the order of the day in the ancient and mediaeval times; only in the recent decades some changes have occurred towards a free mixing of the communities in the residential quarters.

Attiyūr, however, was not exclusively a Brahmin village any more than Vishnu-Kāṇchi is today. The Brahmin villages were usually known as the Brahmadēyas or Chaturvedimangalams. A Brahmadēya in mediaeval South India referred to the village where the rights of cultivation as well as supervision and control of lands were bestowed on the Brahmin beneficiaries by the donor who wished the donees to lead a religious life, performing the rites and ceremonies of the temple. Attiyūr is nowhere mentioned as a Brahmadēya. Though the Srī-Vaishnava Brahmins formed a sizable bulk of the population, there were people belonging to the other communities who had landed property and who also had a lively interest in the temple. From the inscriptions of the temple it is gathered that many of the non-Brahmin residents too rendered numerous services in the temple. The Vellāḷa residents looked after the temple lands and cultivation; the Vaiśyas who were engaged in trade, small and big, have made enormous endowments for the offerings in the temple; the Dāsa-nambis were in charge of the flower-gardens of the temple; the manrādis or the shepherd-class maintained the cattle donated to the temple and supplied ghee, butter, curd etc., to the temple. Besides these, there were many professional and artisan classes like the stone-masons, carpenters, metal-workers, umbrella-makers, pipers, musicians, dancers who lived at Attiyūr and served in the temple. In fact, from the inscriptions of the temple we get a representative cross-section of the general population of the village.

Srī-Vaishnava residents

It is needless to say that the day-to-day life of the Srī-Vaishnava Brahmin was intimately associated with the temple. Especially after the impact of teachings of
Rāmānuja, the importance of the temple and service to the deity housed therein, assumed new dimensions. The emphasis that he and the āchāryas who followed him, laid on the archa-form or idol-manifestation and the value of kainkarya (bodily-service) to God in the temple, every Śrī- Vaishnava deemed it his duty and honour to do one kind of service or the other to the temple. As already shown in a previous chapter, the Śrī- Vaishnava Brahmīns were engaged as priests in various shrines of the temple, in reciting the sacred hymns in front of the deity, some in assisting the priests, some in bringing water for the oblutions, some in cooking the food for consecration. In short, at least one male adult of every Śrī- Vaishnava house did some service in the temple. This was so in many villages of Tamilnāḍ until recent times, when the other avenues of employment and the urbanisation had opened up new vistas. Even now many Śrī- Vaishnava Brahmīns who had to leave Kāñchi seeking employment in other cities, make it a point to be present in Kāñchi during the annual and other important festivals and take pleasure in rendering some voluntary service to the temple. The importance given to the conception of personal God imparts a spirit of local patriotism and Lord Varadarāja, for a Śrī- Vaishnava resident of Kāñchi, is unsurpassable in beauty and compassion.

The Śrī- Vaishnava community is composed of two sects—the Tenkalai and the Vaṭakalai. The former are greater in number and are to be found in the north, south and the east-māda streets around the temple. Leaders of the Tenkalai sect like Aḷagia-Manavāḷa Jiyor and Pratīvāti Bhayankaram Annangarāchārya, have their residence here. The majority of the Vaṭakalai residents are found in the Western Sannidhi street, the Ānaikattī street and a few on the south māda street (vide Map II). The members of the Tāṭāchārya family, the leaders of the Vaṭakalai community have their residence in the Western Sannidhi street, though many Tenkalai families like the Kandādai, Anantāmpillai etc., are also living here side by side. From the inscriptions we know that the famous Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyan had his residence as well as his Rāmānuja-kūṭa in this street. The Vanamāmalai-majha belonging to the Tenkalais is also situated here.

As already pointed out, in the earlier days, when the doctrinal differences between the two schools were confined only to the academic level, there were no social restrictions between the two communities. But in later years, when the difference pervaded to matters of social observances, daily domestic rituals, and other quasi-religious practices, the division widened, making it difficult for the families of the two groups to come together into intimate social relations. Even inter-marriage among them is somewhat rare. Perhaps, nowhere else in the Tamil country, with the exception of Sṛīrongam and Kumbakōṇam, the Śrī- Vaishnava Brahmīns are so sect-conscious as they are at Kāñchi. This place which was the centre of culture and learning has in the past two centuries become one of the worst battle-grounds of sectarian disputes centring round Śrī Varadarājaswāmī temple and the scramble for control thereof. Very often, the annual festivals were marred by unseemly clashes, inviting strict police control and vigilance. In 1879 Crole, the author of the Chingleput District Gazetteer wrote:

"Their (the Vaṭakalai-Tenkalai) disputes are even now carried on with much rancour and have frequently, in regard to the Varadarāja temple especially, occupied the attention of both the civil and criminal courts. The rival parties have, however, become chary of
even during these nearly 95 years since Crole wrote this, the position has not materially improved. The civil cases have increased enormously. But the first half of the present century was marked by the appearance of a series of firm court decisions, mostly in favour of the Tenkalaıı cause, which have somewhat quenched the sectarian rivalry. Moreover, the members of the younger generation in both the sects, on whom the impact of the ritualistic approach has considerably loosened, look at the problem more rationally and have no interest to display the sectarian fervour.

Family groups among the Sri-Vaishnava Brahmins

Among the Sri-Vaishnava Brahmins of both the sects there are many family groups at Kaṁchi. Some of the old and well-known families who are residing in the streets around Varadaraja temple are: the Pratīvāti-Bhayankaram family, one of whom enjoys the tīrtham rights in the temple; the Chakravartiar, evidently descendants of the famous Nallān Chakravarti, who resided at Kaṁchi during the time of Rāmaṇuja; Kandādai family, descendants of Mudalaiṉāṇ, a close associate of Rāmaṇuja; Tirumalai Anantām Piḷḷai family, descendants of Anantāḷvār, Rāmaṇuja’s contemporary at Tirumala; Vinjamūr family, who are the descendants of Aruṭṭalapperumāl Emberumāṇār, a chief disciple of Rāmaṇuja; Gomadattiar family, one of whose members enjoys the tīrtham rights in the temple. On the Vaṭakalai side are: the Tattācharya family, whose members are the descendants of Srī Śailapūrnan or Tirumalai Nambi, Rāmaṇuja’s uncle; Naṭdār family, descendants of Naṭdār Ammāl etc. In short, representatives of many of the seventy-four āchārya-purusha families are settled down here, as in other important Sri-Vaishnava centres like Srirangam and Tirumala. While they did great service in the propagation of the ideals of Sri-Vaishnavism and a large number of disciples among the lower classes, a certain amount of competition for royal patronage, temple-rights ensued. Moreover, the conception of the āchārya-purusha cultivated in course of time, narrow loyalties, each member giving pride of place and importance to his own family preceptor—all these worked to the detriment of the solidarity of the Sri-Vaishnava fold with certain obvious repercussion on social life.

Endowments to the Brahmins

Brahmins were respected for their learning and religious life. Numerous were the endowments made in their honour and maintenance. During the time of Kūḷottunga-I, a tax-free gift of land was made to a maṇha inside the temple for feeding the Brahmins well-versed in the sacred lore. A Chāḷa record of later date registers a grant of 17½ vēlis of land to 58 Sri-Vaishnava Brahmins for reciting the sacred Tamil hymns. Similar gifts to Brahmins are recorded in the reigns of Kūḷottunga-II, Rājaraṇa-III and subsequent times.

Sāttāda Sri-Vaishnavas and Other Classes

There were a number of non-Brahmin Sri-Vaishnava inhabitants at Attyūr as in other Vaishnava centres like Srirangam and Śrīperumbūdūr. They are commonly re-
ferred to as Sāttāda Śrī-Vaishnavas both in inscriptions and literature. They were called so because they did not wear the sacred thread (yajnopavīta), while the Brahmans who wore it were called Sāttina-Śrī-Vaishnavas. But often they were denoted by the common name Koīl-Śrī-Vaishnavas. One of the major reforms made by Rāmānuja was that within the framework of the Hindu Varnaśrama-dharma or caste-code, he liberalised the tenets and made them more acceptable to the common folk. The famous episodes in Rāmānuja’s life, like his voluntary acceptance of discipleship under the non-Brahmin teacher Tirukkachi-nambi, his close companionship with Pillai Uragāvillī dāsar, his propagation of the closely-guarded sacred mulamantra from the top of the temple-tower to all castes at Tirukkōṭṭiyūr were certainly revolutionary for his times and did much to popularise his creed among the lowly. He gave the latter a definite place in the Śrī-Vaishnava fold by encouraging them to wear the ārdhiva-pundra, to dress themselves like the Brahmin Śrī-Vaishnava (with panchakaka lower garments etc.), and to recite and study the Tamil prabhandams of the Āḻvārs. He gave them important duties in the Śrīrangam temple, which are followed to this day. He even went to the extent of admitting the paṇḍhāmas or the outcasts into the Vishnu temple at Melkōte—a remarkably bold act for his age. The steps undertaken by him to uplift the lower castes succeeded to a large extent in the strictly religious sphere but failed in the social sphere, for the steel frame of the caste system re-asserted itself. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the most distinguishing feature of Śrī-Vaishnavism was its catholicity and democratic basis. Particularly, the āchāryas of the Tenkalai school like Pillai Lōkāchārya championed the cause of the Tamil language and the Tamil sacred hymns and asserted again and again that for the true prapanna, caste restrictions did not matter. It can almost be said that the Tenkalai represented the anti-caste tendencies while the Vaḍakalai school championed the cause of purity of the Vēdic tenets. In fact, even the many episodes, cited above, depicting Rāmānuja as a friend of the lower classes, are considered by the Vaḍakalai school to be the creations of the Tenkalai school. The Vaḍakalai school was scrupulous in following even the form and the ritual aspects of religion. But the Tenkalais held that prapatti or surrender would render all this superfluous. Prapatti, according to them, can be done by all persons irrespective of caste, community or status. They were even ‘liberal enough to think the spiritual knowledge could be obtained through a teacher of the lower order, while the Vaḍakalais opposed such notion’. From the koīl-olugu account, we know that at Śrīrangam, Rāmānuja employed a number of the Sāttāda-Vaishnavas to do various services in the temple for which they were paid regular emoluments in kind and cash. In the inscriptions of our temple also there are a number of references to the share in the prasādam allotted to the Sāttāda-Śrī-Vaishnavas. Later, during the time of Sāluva Narasimha (15th century) Kandādai Rāmānuja-ayyan, a Sāttāda-Śrī-Vaishnava, wielded great influence over the rulers of the land and the authorities of the temples of Tirupati, Śrīrangam and Kāṇchi. He had numerous Sāttāda-Śrī-Vaishnava disciples in all the centres and he was chiefly responsible for providing many facilities and privileges in the temples. At Tirupati and Śrīrangam, they undertook to supply incense, spices, perfumery for the daily bath of the deities and in consideration of these and similar services that they were granted a share of the consecrated food daily and on special occasions. They seem to have performed similar duties in our temple.
Vaiśyas

There seems to have been a sizable number of the Vaiśyas who were mostly tradesmen. They are called the Setṭiārs or nagarattār in Tamilāṭ. There is a separate Chetti-street in Vishnu-Kāṇchi. Reputed as principal merchants, they had business connection in different parts of South India. They had mercantile guilds of their own which traded with foreign countries also. Members of this community both from Kāṇchi and outside have lavished endowments for the various offerings to Āḻvārs and Āchāryas in the temple. Probably, they were responsible for constructing a separate temple for Tirukkachi-nambi who was a distinguished member of this community. In fact the earliest epigraph in this temple dated A.D. 1050 records a gift of an ear-ornament and sheep given by a lady-member of this community. Her name was Setṭi-Rājamānīkkattār alias Viranulambadēviyar, daughter of one Ayyan-Seṭṭiār. Another record dated 22nd year of Rājarāja III mentions the gift of 33 cattle for a lamp by Purusha-māṇikkaseṭṭi. In A.D. 1532, one Kōnappa Setṭiār of Vannikha-gōṭra donated 100 pon to provide certain sacred offerings. In A.D. 1535, one Nārāyaṇa Setṭiār of Nedunkunra-gōṭra gave 530 gold coins to the temple and stipulated that the interest accruing from it was to be utilised for various festivals of Āḻvārs and offerings to Lord Varadarāja when His processional image was stopped in front of Tirukkachi-nambi temple. He also provided for keeping a permanent lamp at the same temple.

From the two epigraphs of the time of Gandāgopāla dated A.D. 1241, we learn that the oil-merchants, who also belong to a section of the Setṭiār-community, lived in a street named Mummudi Chōla-perunderu and another section of the merchants lived in the street named Kuraivaniapperunderu. A record of 11th century A.D. found at Pāṇḍavaperumāl temple at Kāṇchi registers a gift to the temple by a leading merchant named Peruvian Devan Erinjodi alias Perarulāla-dāsān residing at the great street of Arumoljēdivān at Kāṇchi. The name Arulāla-dāsān indicates that he was a great devotee of Arulālapurumāl.

Dāsa-nambis

They were an important class of Sattāda Sī-vaishnavas. They looked after the gardens of the temple and were responsible for the supply of garlands and flowers to the temple regularly (Tirunandavanam-eduthu-tirumalai-sāttum). They were also called Pundarikadāsas or tāta-nambis. A number of Chōla epigraphs refer to them as Tirunandavanakkudi i.e., those attached to the gardens of the temple. They had a respectable place in the temple and were known for their dedicated service. Often they were exempted from paying taxes for the lands under their cultivation. From a Chōla record of A.D. 1245 we learn that there was a head or a leader for this class and his name was Peria-Perumal-dasan. Many of their personal names bear that they were after the presiding deity of our temple such as:

Dēvapperumāl Tātan
Uttaravēdi Āḷagiyar
Garuden-mēl-Āḷagiyar
Āḷagiya-Perumāl Tātan.
Manrādis

The cowherds or the manrādis formed an important section of the population whose services were essential. Even in the early Tamil literature, there are references to their settlements which were called the āyarpāḍi. In the inscriptions of mediaeval times their services to the temple are often mentioned. They had a long tradition of tending cattle and supplying milk, ghee, curd and other milk-products to the residents of the villages and towns. The families of the cowherds today have their quarters on the eastern and southern fringes of Vishnu-Kāṇchi. Some of the earlier as well as the later inscriptions of our temple refer to the numerous gifts of sheep, cows, buffaloes for the supply of curd and ghee to the temple. Such gifts were entrusted to the cowherds referred to by their generic names—manrādis or kōnars who received them and agreed to supply a certain quantity of ghee or milk to the temple for the daily abhishēka and oblations. A record datable to A.D. 1242 clearly mentions that the shepherds who received the gift of 115 sheep on behalf of the temple agreed to the condition that ghee and curd should be brought by them daily to the temple kitchen, measured with the temple-measure and supplied to the temple. Another record gives us an interesting list of the different categories of cattle gifted to the temple. The cowherds to whom the cattle were entrusted agreed to supply one ulakku of ghee and one nālī of curd every day as well as on certain special festival days “as long as the sun and moon last”.

The intention of the donor in donating the different categories of the cattle was not merely to supply ghee or curd but also to foster and cultivate the cattle-population, which was necessary for the prosperity of the rural-economy. The temple, as the largest consumer of milk and ghee, encouraged the cattle-raising and dairy farming by having a large contingent of cowherds or manrādis to protect the cattle.

Some of the personal names of the cowherds found in the inscriptions are interesting. They show that they were followers of Vaishnavism. Generally, the cowherds were and continue to be Vaishnavas, as their favourite deity, Krishna, was himself a cowherd. The names are:

Āḻvār-kōṁ
Perumāḻ-kōṁ
Dāmōḍa-ra-kōṁ
Tiruvattiyūr-kōṁ
Varam-taram-Perumāḻ-kōṁ
Pēṟaruḷāḷan-kōṁ.

While all the names have the unmistakable Vaishnava character, the last two are after the deity of our temple.

One of the interesting records of our temple informs us about the privilege of free grazing allowed to the temple cows. We are told that the cows and sheep belonging to this temple might freely graze on certain lands in a large number of villages in the Tondaimandalam whose names are enumerated and that no tax would be levied on them by the owner.

Other than these Vellāḷas, Vaiśyas, Manrādis and the Dāsa-nambis, there were at Attiyūr people belonging to various artisan classes like goldsmiths, blacksmiths, car-
pentrers, stone-masons and sculptors about whom references were already made in the previous chapter.

Women

The position of women in the mediaeval South India was generally subordinate to that of men. Essentially concerned with the household duties, they were necessarily excluded from taking any prominent part in other activities. Even the women of the Brahmin class, though they shared some of the religious duties of their husbands, were debarred from the Brahma-vidyā or the Védántic studies. They could not wear the sacred thread which alone initiated one into the védic knowledge. The study of the epics, the purānas and other texts was open to them, but not the védas. The Śrī-Śaivishnava women of the Tamil country have, however, evinced much interest in the study of the Divya-prabhandams of the Āḻvārs and the commentaries thereon. Many ladies know the Tamil hymns by heart, even though they do not recite them along with the male reciters. The ladies usually stand in a separate group during the temple service. Generally in all the temples of South India, the consecrated water and food would be distributed to them only after they are done to the men. All these clearly indicate the secondary or subordinate place given to them, though they were considered the ornaments of the house.

The inscriptions of this temple, however, give us the interesting information that ladies also took part in the chorus-singing in front of the deity. Thus, a record of the 13th century registers a special endowment by the Telugu-Chōḍa chieftain Ganḍaṅgōpāla for the maintenance of the female chorists (Perumāl mun pādum pendugal Nīmithathu).26 Another record datable to A.D. 1535 specifies a certain share in the holy food for the ladies who took part in the group-singing in front of the deity (Tiruvōlakkam Śevitha pengal).27 But this practice is no longer observed now in the temple. The ladies are simply the spectators, while all the recital is done by men.

There are also quite a few other services which the ladies seem to have been doing in the temple. Duties like cleaning the premises, drawing kōlam or designs (in white rice-powder), cleaning of the cooked vessels, husking the paddy, cutting the vegetables and other sundry works are even today done by them, some of them voluntarily, and some for an honorarium. That the ladies had property of their own is known from a few gifts made by them to our temple. Thus, one of the handmaids (agambadipendu) of the Telugu-Chōḍa chieftain Ganḍaṅgōpāla donated some cattle for a perpetual lamp to the temple.28

Female ascetics

The life of the ascetic strongly appealed to the imagination of the Hindus and the ladies were no exception to this. Though Vaishnavism was, on the whole, moderate in its devotion to the ascetic ideal, we do get many instances of ladies renouncing their wealth and taking to the ascetic life. Such female Vaishnava mendicants were known as Kōṛis. They used to wear the basil garlands and other religious marks. There were a few such kōṛi among Rāmānuja’s disciples. In the 13th century, a lady by name Pēraruṅal-kōṛi made a will that 100 kulī of land purchased by selling her jewels should go to the temple after her demise.29 Another lady-mendicant by name Tiruvattiyur-kōṛi donated cattle for a lamp in the temple.30
Courtesans

Like many leading temples of South India, the Varadarājāswāmi temple had this unique class of lady servants who were called the Dēvaraḍiyāl and were dedicated to the temple service. They were also called the Dēvadāsīs. Their main duties were to sing and dance in front of God at specified time daily and accompany the deity in procession. Their public appearances were usually associated with religious festivals and they were generally experts in music and dance. We do not know when they were first appointed in our temple; but they are met with for the first time in a record datable to A.D. 1558. It records a share in the prasādam for Thivaḍiyāl, a corrupt form of the word Dēvaraḍiyāl.31

Originally instituted with the pious intention of providing dance and music to the deities in the same way the kings were provided, this class of women later on became the symbols of cultured ease and pleasure. From the epigraphs of the Chōla times, we know that they had a respectable place in the society and even rich people dedicated their daughters to the service of God. But in the Vījayanagar and subsequent times, deterioration seems to have set in in their moral standards which drew adverse remarks from many foreign visitors living in India. Emmanuel de Veiga, a Jesuit who witnessed a festival at Tiruvārūr in the Tamil country, recorded that there were 30 women dancers going before the deity and observed: "They may not marry but prostitute themselves for the most part, all goodly and richly arrayed and carrying lamp burning".32 We do not know how far this characterisation is correct. Probably it is a superfluous generalisation; but there is no doubt that the Dēvadāsi system as a whole came to be considered "an undesirable institution which has outlived its time". Accordingly, it was abolished by an act of legislation in the beginning of the present century. Until this date, the Dēvadāsis were in employment in our temple, enjoying landed property and steady remuneration in cash and kind.

Temple as a patron of music and arts

Whatever might have been the defects of the Dēvadāsi-system, it cannot be gain-said that the Devadīyars were good exponents of dance and music who did much to preserve the traditional dance forms for generations. The temple was the greatest single agent which extended patronage to them and utilised their services during festive occasions.

There were also musicians in our temple who are referred to as the Vidwāns or the artistes in an epigraph dated A.D. 1558.33 Probably, during the festivals, they rendered classical songs in front of the deity. The Vidwāns included the nādaswarāvidwāns or pipers who are essential to the temple. Playing on the nādaswaram with its accompaniments is considered to be specially auspicious and so it is played in the temple during the early morning service and other services. The artistes considered it a privilege and honour to sing in front of the deity.

Similarly, architecture, sculpture, painting, bronze-casting and other arts received encouragement in our temple. The presence of the numerous shrines, mandapas and the magnificent gōparas should have given to stone and stucco workers, stāpattis and sīlpis ample scope for the exercise of their artistic talents and ingenuity. Today, the temple stands as a monument to the labour and the skill of the countless artisans and
artists who have worked there for generations to enlarge and embellish their house of God.

Temple as a centre of learning

This temple was also a centre of learning and education. In it were situated a various times mathas or monasteries which served as seminaries and schools. Thus, in the time of Kulöttunga-I, there was a matha named Arikēsavan-mathā situated on the bank of the sacred tank of the temple. It was the place where the Brahmins versed in the sacred lore congregated for discussion and recital. It was presided over by one Mahāmuni (the great sage) of Peria-kōil. The inhabitants of the nearby village granted lands free of taxes for feeding the Brahmins who studied in the matha.

Another interesting record datable to A.D. 1359 informs us about another monastery at Kāñchi presided over by Vaishnavadāsa alias Brahmāmantra Svatāntara. The main aim of the matha was to propagate the tenets of Rāmānuja-darśana to the Vaishnava laity. From the record we gather that this matha had a good collection of books evidently in the form of manuscripts made by Vaishnavadāsa and other accessories of a library. The accessories probably included racks, spare sets of cadjan leaves for copying work and other scribal apparatus (ivan teṭina postakankaḷum idukku vendum upakaranangalum). The pontiff of this matha, Brahmāmantra Svatāntara, was a profound scholar and disciple of Vēdānta Dēśika and his son Nāma Varadāchārya and as such his matha should have been a great centre of philosophical and literae studies.

At about the same time, there was in the Varadarājaswāmi temple another matha named the Vēda-mathā which was presided over by a certain Vedandraśāgara Śṛipāda and which probably specialised in the teaching of the Vedas. This matha was probably patronised by the Madhvas who were also Vaishnavas, but not followers of Rāmānuja. They were the followers of Madhvāchārya, the founder of the Dvaita school. From subsequent records of the temple we learn, that several leaders of the Dvaita school like Vyāsātṛtha and Satya Vijaya Tīrtha had evinced interest in this temple. The former who is considered the second founder of this school was held in high respect by contemporary king Krishnādēva Rāya. An epigraph of our temple datable to A.D. 1511 records that the Madhavaguru presented a village and the serpent-vehicle to the Varadarāja temple and instituted a festival in honour of king Krishnādēva Rāya. Another record dated Ś 1649 (A.D. 1726) mentions that another Madhavaguru of Uttarādimatha by name Satyavijaya Tīrtha was honoured in the temple with certain privileges.

Another matha that was attached to the temple was the Aṭāgiya-Manavāla-Jīyar matha. The Jīyars of this matha held important positions in this temple and they were outstanding scholars of the times. One of them is specially eulogised in a 16th century record as the ornament of Kāñchi and well versed in the Sanskrit and Tamil lore (Ubhayavēdānta). The pontiffs of this matha were greatly honoured by the successive kings of Mysore in the 17th and 18th centuries. This is attested by several inscriptions. The Aṭāgiya-manavāla-Jīyar matha is still there at Kāñchi and continues to be a centre of religious and philosophical studies.
Temple as an agent of poor-relief

Feeding the poor and the deserving persons on the occasion of feasts and festivals, marriages and other ceremonies was considered an act of piety. The need for a rest-house for the travellers and visitors from outside in a pilgrim centre like Kāñchi is quite obvious. Even now such feeding (Tariārādanai) is done in private homes or through the agency of public institutions such as maṭhas like the Vānamāmalai and Ahōbila maṭha. But an important institution that admirably served as the rest-house with board and lodging facilities was the Rāmānuja-kūṭa. In earlier days the temple itself served as the agency to carry on the charity on account of the sanctity attached to it. It was easy for arranging to distribute a portion of the offered food freely among the devotees and the desāntaris (visitors from outside the place) and also the local people who took part in some service.

But, towards the end of the 15th century A.D., thanks to the dynamic leadership of Śāluva Narasimha and Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyan, an important institution called Rāmānuja-kūṭa was established in many important Śrī-Vaishnava centres like Tirupati, Kāñchi, Sṛīrangam, Srīperumbūdūr. At Tirumalai, it is explicitly stated that the Rāmānuja-kūṭa was situated in the Sannidhi Street and it was under the management of Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār. Here in Kāñchi also, it was situated in the Sannidhi Street under the management of the same person, who, as we have seen earlier, was put in charge of such feeding houses all over South India by the Vijayanagar king.

The keen interest evinced for patronising the Rāmānuja-kūṭa by a number of devotees and the popularity gained for it through Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār and his successors are evidenced by the provisions made by these devotees individually for the delivery of the donor's share in each case of the offered food for the Rāmānuja-kūṭa. In all cases of food-offerings made to the temple, Kandādai Rāmānuja Ayyangār gave away his share to the Rāmānuja-kūṭa. All these and the royal grants sustained this free feeding house which did a useful social service. The institution of the Rāmānuja-kūṭa is found even today in many pilgrim centres like Triplicane, Srīperumbūdūr, Srivilliputṭūr, but strangely it is no longer functioning at Kāñchi. The residents of the Sannidhi-street in front of the Varadarāja temple are not able to even guess where the Rāmānuja-kūṭa was situated!

We have so far seen the pivotal role played by this temple in the social and cultural life of the people of the locality. We will now review the activities of the temple in the economic sphere as well.

The temple as a land-owner

Agriculture was the basic industry on which the vast majority of the population depended for livelihood. The temple as the biggest land-owner filled a large place in the agricultural economy of the locality. Right from the Chōlā times, this temple had considerable landed property. Both royal benefaction and public patronage took the form of land-grants. The royal grants were of two kinds, one the Sarvamānyas, whereby the entire village with proprietary rights over lands was given to the temple and the second type specified that all taxes, payable by a village to the
Government, were to be collected and enjoyed by the temple. The former category was also called Dēvadānam or Tiruvidaiyāṭṭam. Epigraphs of this temple were replete with instances of gifts of both the types and it is needless to catalogue all of them. From one of the records we learn that the Tiruvidaiyāṭṭam lands of our temple were marked with stones bearing the Vishnu symbol of discus (Nāngellaikalilum tiruvāḷi-nilāntti). A number of villages in the neighbourhood of Kānchi and elsewhere figure in the inscriptions as having been gifted to the temple. To cite only a few examples, Nilagangarayan, an officer under Kulottunga-III, gifted the village of Ārpākkam to the temple to meet the expenses with the daily offerings in the temple. A part of the village belonging to the temple was designated as Peria-Perumāl-Vilāgam—the first name Periapermāḷ referring to Lord Varadarāja. Telugu-Chōḍa chieftains like Madurāntaka Pōṭāpi Manmusiddha and Vijayanāgagopāla gave away a number of villages like Paiyanūr, Mavandūr, Vayalaiyārru and Puduchchēri. They also made tax-free gifts of lands. Gifts of villages and lands greatly increased during the Vijayanagar times. Achyutarāya donated the revenues of 14 villages sometime in A.D. 1529 for a big special offering in the temple. Subsequently, in the same reign, several villages like Uttirasūlai in Damalkottam, Tirumukkūḍāl (in Kalattūr-kōṭṭam) were assigned to the temple. Similarly, gifts of villages are recorded in the inscriptions of later kings like Saddāśiva, Śrīranga and Vēṇkaṭa. In Ś 1562 (A.D. 1640) four villages—Nedungal, Karumbakkam, Namakkam and Surithil—were granted to the temple. Even lands or villages in distant provinces like the Chōḍa and Pāṇḍyan countries, Andhra, Orissa and Mysore areas were granted to the temple. Thus, roundabout A.D. 1230 Sōmalādēvi Mahādevi, the queen of the Kālūga (Orissa) king Anangabhīma-III, granted a village Udaiyakamas in the Antarudravishya in the Orissa region. In A.D. 1724, the Mysore king Krishnārāja Odayār granted a village comprising of 12 hamlets in north Mysore region to the temple. But unfortunately, no accurate record is available for the total landed property of the temple or total yield accruing to the temple, in the mediaeval times or later. However, from the inscriptions, some of which were cited above, it is seen that the landed property increased considerably during the Vijayanagar times. Today the temple has wet and dry lands to the extent of about 275 acres in 12 villages which are under lease cultivation.

Gardens of the temple

Very interesting information is available about a number of gardens that were gifted to this temple in answer to the constant need for flowers and fruits for the daily worship, as well as during festivals.

Narālōkavira, the renowned general of Kulōttunga-I, laid out a flower-garden (Pusūpavanan) in which all the varieties of flowers were collected and donated for Lord Varadarāja. Another record datable to A.D. 1316, however, gives interesting information regarding the flower-garden donated by the Kākatiya king Pratāparudra-dēva. He provided 240 mādai (gold coin) per year for the maintenance of a garden wherein the temple-garlands, fruits and vegetables for offerings should be grown. He constructed four lotus-tanks for the supply of water and appointed 20 gardeners for the maintenance of the garden. The names of the trees and plants grown in the
garden were:

Indian chrysanthamum (Javandhi)
Oleander (alari)
Large flowered jasmine (śādi)
Chempak (Champaka)
Mangoes
Pomegranate (Mādulai)
Coconuts
Lemon and orange.

Cultivation of temple-lands

How could the temple authorities manage the agricultural operations in the lands distributed in so many villages, far and near? Obviously, they could not do all of them directly. Both direct cultivation of temple-lands by the agents of the temple and the system of leasing them to the tenants seem to have prevailed. In the former case, the supervision was done by certain local agents appointed by the temple who took every precaution during the cultivation and the harvest and saw to it that after paying all the wages and other dues to the farmers, the produce was brought to the temple. The procedure was that paddy or any other cultivated grain should be brought to the precincts of the temple and measured in the proper manner in the temple-measure. This procedure is stipulated in an epigraph dated A.D. 1259. The agents were either appointed by the temple or by the donors. An interesting record of the 13th century informs us that when lands in nine villages were donated by an individual to the temple, the provision to appoint supervisors or Kankānippār in each village to look after the cultivation on behalf of the temple for which they were paid a remuneration of one paḍakku of paddy per day was given. Another officer named Āraṇdu-nirippān was appointed to supervise the work of the Kankānippārs. In this type of direct cultivation the labourers or peasants were paid daily wages in cash or kind and the entire proceeds went to the temple.

The system of lease also prevailed side by side. This would entitle the temple for the mēlvāram or owner's share of the produce which was usually 3/4, while 1/4 would belong to the tenant. This was the owner-cultivator ratio that obtained here even in A.D. 1535 as attested by a record of that date. But the same record informs us that during a severe drought, the temple's share was reduced to two thirds, instead of three fourths in the case of areca, coconut and mango cultivation. In the case of sesamum, green-gram and sugar-cane, the rates obtaining in the adjacent villages were adopted. In the case of betel, plantain and other quick-yielding crops reared side by side in the newly planted areca and coconut groves, the mēlvāram was fixed at the older rate of 3/4. This might show that the temple-authorities showed due consideration for the drought conditions and other difficulties of the ryots by giving adequate concessions.

Reclamation of waste lands

One of the greatest services rendered by the temples was in the field of reclamation of waste lands by bringing them under cultivation. For private individuals, it would
have been a formidable task but a wealthy institution like this temple, with its men and money, could easily do this. Thus, in about A.D. 1467, the two pieces of lands at Tēppermāṇallur which remained uncultivated on account of their non-irrigable high level were purchased as Ulavukkāṇi by the treasury of the Tirumalaiśai-Āḻvār shrine in our temple and brought under cultivation and then leased for 200 payām of gold per year.57

Ulavukkāṇi was the system of lease by which the lessee was given a permanent lease and authorised to reclaim a waste-land and grow the crops either wet or dry. He could enjoy all the produce but only pay certain taxes in gold or grain.58 This gave the necessary incentive to the cultivator to work hard and reclaim a waste piece of land.

Irrigation facilities for temple lands and tanks

Apart from the seasonal rains on which the cultivation mainly depended, irrigation by tanks, canals and wells was prevalent. Lands near the Pāḷār or the Vēga-vati rivers received supply from the canals dug from them. Wells served a useful purpose. A record dated A.D. 1487, informs us that a Vijayanagar chieftain Virupaksha Dannayaka made arrangements for digging an irrigation channel in the temple lands and planted groves all around them.59

In about 1723, a water-supply project was undertaken and completed. One Rayar Sitakonnirayar, a deputy of the Nawab of the Carnatic, Sādat-Ulla-Khān, dug an underground aqueduct from a large tank named Sarvatirtham to the tank inside the Varadarājaswāmi temple. The former is at the north-western end of Kāṅchi town while the latter is at the southern end at a distance of about 3 miles. Provision was made to catch up the spring water percolating from the river-bed to feed many of the tanks with which Kāṅchipuram is dotted. Traces of this ruined aqueduct are still seen here and there.60 Crole who served as the Collector of Chingleput District in mid-19th century has paid a handsome tribute to the irrigation system of Vijayanagar days, traces of which he saw at many places. He says:

"Many of them (irrigation works) now abandoned or in ruins, evinced the solicitude of those ancient monarchs for the extension of cultivation even in tracts not favoured by natural position or good soil. Almost every catchment basin, however small, still bears traces of having been bunded across and in many cases this was done in order to secure a few acres of stony ungenerous soil, to which all the fostering care of the British administration has failed to induce cultivation."61

Land-measures

The land-units mentioned in our epigraphs are the kuḷi, kāṇi, mā and vēli. Hundred kuḷis of land went to make one mā and 20 of the latter went to make one vēli which was the largest unit of measure. In other words, 2000 kuḷis went to make one vēli.62 The area fixed by each of them was not permanently or uniformly fixed but varied according to the length of the measuring rod used. The length of the rod (kōl) used is known from such expressions like the sixteen-foot-rod (padināraṇṇi-kōl), twelve-foot-rod (pān̄iṇaṇṇi-kōl). The latter rod was used for reckoning the lands of this temple both in the Chōla and the Vijayanagar days. The earliest mention of this 12-
foot-rod in this temple occurs in an epigraph of Vikrama Chōla dated A.D. 1130. Subsequently, it is mentioned as the standard measuring rod of the temple. In A.D. 1261, a new name occurs viz., Nādu-ālakkum-kōl. This need not be taken as a new type of measuring rod. The phrase simply means land-measuring rod and it is likely that it might refer to the already existing 12-foot-rod. In a 14th century record, the measuring rod was named Gangarāgangān-kōl. Probably, this was current in northern Tondaimanālam area, as attested by an inscription dated A.D. 1390 from Tiruppālaivanam and another at Tiruppalakkuli in Chingleput District. It is very interesting to see that this rod is carved to its full length with its denominations on the wall of the abhishēka-māndapa of this temple. By the side of the rod, the label Gangarāgangān-kōl is carved. Perhaps this served as the correct standard length to be referred to in case of any doubt or controversy.

Scholars have pointed out that the absence of a common measuring rod for the whole empire, both Chōla and Vijayanagar, was the cause of great difficulty felt by the Government in fixing a uniform rate of assessment on land. Under the British rule certain common measures like the ‘cent’ the smallest unit and ‘acre’ the largest (measuring 100 cents) came to prevail.

Land price

We get a few scrappy information regarding the prices of land. In A.D. 1073, during the time of Kulottunga-I, a village-assembly sold 3 vēlis of land to our temple for 30 kāsus which was equivalent to the value of 30 pon of gold. Probably, in circa A.D. 1254 the land-price went down considerably for it is reported that 7½ vēlis of land was purchased for only 25 pon.

Grain-measure

The grain-measures that were in vogue in the temple at various times were the kalam, marakkāl, kuruni and nāli. These were of course prevalent in other parts of Tamilnād as well, but there were often local variations. From a record from Thanjavūr, we learn that 6 nālis made one kuruni.

\[
\begin{align*}
6 \text{ nālis} & = 1 \text{ kuruni} \\
15 \text{ kurunis} & = 1 \text{ kalam}
\end{align*}
\]

Another record stipulates 8 nālis for 1 kuruni and 7 nālis and 1 uri for one marakkāl. The generally prevalent denominations and their ratio can be given here:

\[
\begin{align*}
2 \text{ ālākku} & = 1 \text{ ulākku} \\
2 \text{ ulākku} & = 1 \text{ uri} \\
2 \text{ uri} & = 1 \text{ nāli} \\
8 \text{ nāli} & = 1 \text{ kuruni or marakkāl} \\
2 \text{ kuruni} & = 1 \text{ paḍakku} \\
2 \text{ paḍakku} & = 1 \text{ tūni} \\
3 \text{ tūni} & = 1 \text{ kalam}.
\end{align*}
\]

Probably, in order to avoid any confusion, the temple had its own standard measures. The marakkāl and the nāli used by this temple were named Ariana vallān-kāl and Ariana vallān-nāli. They were used both in the later Chōla and the entire Vijayanagar period.
Another unit used for measuring the cooked food of the temple was Arulālan-kāl called after the name of the presiding deity—Arulālan.74

Liquid-measure

The earliest unit of liquid-measure occurs in an epigraph dated A.D. 1129. The measure mentioned was Tirunārāyanän.75 The quantity it denoted is not known. Later on, the liquid-measure that was continuously in usage in the temple during the Chōja period was Arumōlinangai-nāli.76 It was evidently called after the queen of Vīra-Rājēndra Chōjadēva, whose name was Arumōlinangai. The earliest epigraph in which this measure occurs in our temple is the 11th year of Kūlōttunga-III i.e., A.D. 1081.77 Another frequently occurring liquid measure in the late Chōja and the Vijayanagar days was Arianvallän-nāli, which was evidently the standard measure used by the temple. From many of the records we gather that ghee or curd supplied to the temple was required to be measured by this standard.

Coins

The inscriptions of this temple furnish us with interesting information regarding the coins that were current at various times. It is well-known that gold-coins were issued by many of the Chōja kings. The mādai or the pon was the standard gold coin of the realm and it was equal to one kalaṇju or 70 grains of gold. The kāsu was exactly half of this. The madurāntakan-mādai, perhaps first issued by Madurāntaka Uttama Chōja, was current in the time of Kūlōttunga-I and it is said to have been equivalent to one kalaṇju of gold or 9½ māttu or two kāsus.78 From the time of Kūlōttunga-I, many local issues made their appearance. Thus a gold coin named Bhujabala-virān-mādai is mentioned in a record of this temple 79 It was given as a gift to the temple by a chieftain from the Ganga-mandālam who had the title Bhujabala-virān. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the value or the gold-content of this issue, though we know that it was current in many parts of the present Chingleput District. Still later, during the time of last kings, the Telugu-Chōja chief Gaṇḍagōpālan’s coin was current in Kāṇchi. It was known as Gaṇḍagaṇḍagōpālan-mādai or pūdu-mādai.80 In the Vijayanagar days, the coins which were current here were the paṇam and the varāham. The latter was a gold coin of the average standard weight of 52.7 grams.81 An half the varāha was called pratāpa. The paṇam was 1/10 of the pratāpa or 1/20 of the varāha. In our inscriptions there are references both to the varāha and the paṇam. Thus, during the reign of Krishnadēva Rāya, the annual income from 5 villages amounting to 1,500 varāhas was donated to the temple.82 From another record of the same reign, we learn that paṇam was also a gold coin.83

The temple as a consumer

As an institution requiring a variety of commodities and services for its day-to-day conduct as well as on special festive occasions, the temple was the biggest consumer of the locality. In the early stages, the requirements of the temple were probably few; some rice for offerings, flowers, sandal, milk, ghee and oil for lamp etc., were all that were required. The steady increase in the offerings, festivals, and rituals from about 13th century A.D. resulted in the increase of the articles required by the temple.
manifold. Perhaps in no other temple do we get such graphic details about the articles used by the temple and their various proportions for preparing different kinds of food-offerings as we do in the numerous Vijayanagar records of this temple. The items constantly required by the temple were: rice, gram, pulses, turmeric, pepper, mustard, jaggery, salt, areca-nuts, betel, camphor, kumkum, coconut, fruits, milk, ghee, butter, curd, oil, honey. Different items of vegetables are mentioned in a record dated Ś 1514 (A.D. 1592).

Not only in the food-articles and the perfumery, but in other articles like cloth, wooden objects, jewels, gold, silver and brass, metal lamps, decorative articles and the like, the temple was and still continues to be the biggest consumer in the locality. In this way, the temple stimulated and encouraged local trade and industry.

Thus, from the foregoing account it is seen that Varadarājāswāmi temple filled a large place in the social and economic life of the people of Attiyür and Kāñchi. Thanks to the rich benefactions in the later Chōja and the Vijayanagar days the temple reached a point of affluence and glory from about the 13th century. It gave employment to numerous priests, servants of various categories, hymnists, musicians, dancing girls. It also patronised the learned and the cultured. In short, it is no exaggeration to say that the temple gathered round itself all that was best in arts of civilized existence. The temple played a leading and constructive role for the larger social and moral well-being of the people.

NOTES

1. For a full discussion on the socio-religious practices of the two sects of the Sri-Vaishnava Brahmans, see K. Rangachari: The Sri-Vaishnava Brahmans (Madras, 1931).
2. Crole, op. cit, p. 32.
3. 635 of 1919.
4. 557 of 1919.
7. 519 of 1919.
8. 368 of 1919.
9. 472 of 1919.
10. 583 of 1919.
11. 607 and 609 of 1919.
13. 571 of 1919.
15. 637 of 1919.
16. 400, 557 of 1919.
17. 566 of 1919.
18. 618 of 1919.
19. Ibid.
20. 566 of 1919
25. 623 of 1919.
27. 535 of 1919.
28. 570 of 1919.
29. 431 of 1919.
30. 388 of 1919.
31. 535 of 1919.
32. Quoted by T.V. Mahalingam: Administration and Social Life under the Vijayanagar, p. 269.
33. 535 of 1919.
34. 635 of 1919.
35. Ep. Ind. XXV, No. 34. Also see Chapter IV above.
37. 370 of 1919.
38. 377 of 1919.
42. 361 of 1919.
43. 434 and 461 of 1919.
44. 438 of 1917.
46. Ibid, Nos. 406, 358; 575 of 1919.
47. 443, 482, 507, 535, 592 of 1919; 588 and 380 of 1919 and 502 of 1919.
48. 443 of 1919.
49. 427, 441 (Pundya); 457 (Mysore) of 1919.
50. 444 of 1919.
52. 473 of 1919.
54. 428 of 1919.
55. 441 of 1919.
57. 658 of 1919.
58. 648 of 1919.
62. This is in accordance with the ratio given in inscriptions of Thanjavur and Chingleput areas (A. Appadurai, Economic Conditions of S. India, I, p. 405).
63. 520 of 1919.
64. 483 of 1919.
65. 357 of 1928 and 212 of 1916.
66. K.A.N. Sastri: Cholas, p. 528; T.V. Mahalingam: Administration and Social Life under the Vijayanagar, p. 47.
67. 522 of 1919.
68. 565 of 1919.
71. Ibid, No. 377.
72. 560 of 1919.
73. S.I.I., IV, No. 361.
74. 507 of 1919, Arulalan-kalal-amudupadi.
75. 436 of 1919.
76. S.I.T.I., I, No. 349 and also No. 367.
77. 554 of 1919.
79. 48 of 1893; 453 and 360 of 1919.
80. 428, 385 of 1919.
82. 474 of 1919.
83. 512 of 1919.
84. For instance refer S.I.T.I., I, No. 349.
CHAPTER VIII
ARCHITECTURE

General features

This chapter is complementary to Chapter III wherein a fairly detailed description of the various shrines, mandapas and other structures of this temple is given. The disposition of the shrines, as also their probable origin based mainly on the epigraphical and literary sources were indicated. Architectural features were briefly cited as corroborative evidence. In this chapter attention is focussed on structural details of the temple and its constituents. This temple is important for such a study because it preserves the different architectural and stylistic patterns that were in vogue at different epochs in the Tamil country. We are indeed fortunate to have a good number of structures in the temple which are specifically datable. They give us the prevailing norms of construction and style. They serve as landmarks in architectural evolution and provide us with the necessary data for comparison with architectural details of the undated structures and for fixing the date of the latter.

We have already outlined four stages of development of this temple-complex (Chapter III). Leaving out the first stage for which there are no structural vestiges left, we find the next three stages that can be taken as representing three phases in the evolution of the style as well. The second stage which coincides with the times of the Chōla kings Rājādhirāja-I, Kulottunga-I was the most formative stage as far as this temple is concerned, for it witnessed a thorough reconstruction of a modest temple into a bigger complex. It started by about the middle of the 11th century A.D. Most probably, the present sanctum-complex over the ‘hill’ and the Narasimha shrine down below, were the earliest to be built, and this took place sometime during the reign of Rājādhirāja-I. This is well attested by the presence of the latter’s inscription in the Narasimha shrine. Probably a little later, sometime before A.D. 1073 and during the reign of Kulottunga-I, was built the second enclosure-wall with its central gateway on the west. Slightly later, but during the reign of the same king, the third enclosure was also constructed with its central gateway. Thus, the reigns of Rājādhirāja-I and Kulottunga-I roughly occupying a period of a little more than 100 years from A.D. 1018-1120 witnessed the most remarkable structural improvement in the temple. The structures that rose up during this period are essentially rooted in the orthodox, well-developed Chōla pattern with their plain spaces and simple designs. They can indeed be said to belong to the middle Chōla phase as we see in them the continuation of the characteristics of the mature or the imperial Chōla style, as exemplified in the temples of Brihadiśvara at Thaḍaijāvūr and Gangaikondachōlapuram. No doubt certain new features were introduced even during the reign of Kulottunga-I, but as far as this temple is concerned, we
find the structures of these times retaining the middle ChōJa style in all their essentials. The structures are massive in proportions and austere in appearance. They have short and squattish pillars and pilasters made up of two sadurams or squares at the two ends and an octagonal middle. They have heavy corbels or pōdikai with bevelled end and angular profile, having tenon-like projection. The square and thick abacus (palagai) has also a plain doucene on its underside which was rarely scalloped. Entrance-gōpuras were always broad and squattish so as not to dwarf the stature of the central shrine. This principle was admirably kept up in our temple as the central sanctum situated on an elevated platform (hill) still dominates the entire composition.

The second stage in the growth of the temple coincides with the reigns of the later ChōJa kings beginning with Vikrama ChōJa-I. This would roughly, though not exactly, coincide with the period indicated by Dubruel between 1100-1350. Here we see some new traits or features in the pattern of the pillars, pilasters and corbels making their appearance which later on became well developed and attained full consummation during the Vijayanagar times. This traditional stage is well represented in this temple by many shrines like the Kariamāṇikaperumāḷ shrine, Anantāḻvar shrine, Krishna shrine and the Abhishēka-maṇḍapa. We see in them the presence of the earlier features as well as the emergence of new ones. Here, we see the pillar-corbels taking the form of a moulded campanulate pendant, tending to become floral and anticipating the incipient madalai of the pushpa-pōtika (lotus-bud), characteristic of the Vijayanagar style. The abacus (palagai) of the capital is not only thinner in contrast to the large and thick ones of the earlier ChōJa times but also becomes scalloped. Deep niches with sculptures and topped by a massive-ChōJa ornamental tōrana, common in the early and middle-ChōJa temples, seldom appear on the wall-portions of the shrines. Instead, only shallow niches without sculptures and with the constricted tōrana in low relief are found. All these peculiar traits in plan and the elevation of the shrines and the maṇḍapas will be discussed in detail in the sequel. Figure 40 clearly indicates the changing stylistic features.

In the succeeding Vijayanagar period, the temple witnessed greater constructional activity and some of the buildings are remarkable for the great size of their component structures—maṇḍapas and gōpuras. During this phase, increased importance was given to the growth of the temple precincts and the ancillary structures. There was considerable increase in the temple-rituals and festivals and, correspondingly new structures like the kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, the tulābhāra-maṇḍapa, the uṇjal-maṇḍapa and the vasanta-maṇḍapa had to be built. The gōpuram or towering gateway also came to occupy a more prominent position in this temple-scheme and became so imposing as to completely dwarf the main sanctum. The embellishments of the adhistāna mouldings, pillars, ceilings, towers etc., became markedly rich and varied and the decorative treatment excelled all previous attempts. The shafts of the pillars and pilasters became more ornamental with the former. The lower part of the abacus or pāli which was somewhat scalloped into petals in the early and late ChōJa times assumed a more pronounced floral form with the petals or idal of the Padma, the corbel which was an incipient pendant evolved into the characteristic pushpa-pōtika, with a double-flexed arm extending from the main block and scallop-
ed at the free-hanging extremity into the everted petals with a small bud or torus hanging at the centre. The pillared halls such as the kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, the uñjal-
maṇḍapa and the vāhara-maṇḍapa in this temple which belong to this period are noted for their minute carvings and extravagant embellishment characteristic of the style. The intricately worked colonnade, often with attached small pillars or animal or human sculptures lend immense beauty to the structures. The other important Vijayanagar contributions to this temple are the tall and magnificent gopura on the east with its massive elaborately moulded granite-built plinth, and the compact little shrines for the numerous Ājīvārs and Āchāryas which are neatly built along the periphery of the outermost prakāra.

As already pointed out, the first three prakāras have in them many of the earliest structures of this temple. A discussion on the architectural significance of the so-called ‘hill’ which is in the form of a square enclosure is given at the end of this chapter. We will study the architecture of the other parts of this temple one by one.

First prakāra

The complex of structures over the hill is interesting. On plan, it is composed of a square cella, an antarāla, two long rectangular maṇḍapas in the axial line. There is no epigraphical or literary data available to date this complex and thus we have only to depend on the architectural style of the structure. The mouldings on the wall-surface of the garbagriha give us admirable clues. The adhistāna as we see it from inside is composed of a high jagati, a tripaṭṭa (three-faceted) kumuda, a recessed kaṇṭa and a plain paṭṭika. Over the paṭṭika is the vedi which comprises a recessed kaṇṭa-like fillet and an ārdhvaspadma course and topped by the prati. Below the jagati there must have been an upāna moulding which is evidently buried in the inner floorings. The pilasters are plain and square in section. They have rather heavy corbels which are bevelled having a tenon-like projection, a typical feature of the Chōja style. The pilasters on the two mukha-
maṇḍapas also display identical features thus, showing that they, together with the sanctum, form one compact group. The adhistāna mouldings in this complex are of the simplest type, devoid of any ornamentation. This together with other features like the massive pilasters and heavy tenon-corbel etc., may give it an early date. It can be ascribed to the middle of the eleventh century A.D. (Fig. 40—item A).

Punyakoti-vimāna (Fig. 4)

There is a fine dvitāla (two-storeyed) vimāna of āyatāsra (oblong) type with the śala or wagon-vault śikhara, over the garbagriha. Normally, the śala-śikhara with a rectangular base can be built over a rectangular sanctum. But here unusually, the śikhara having a rectangular base has been superposed over a square sanctum. This is indeed a rarity and it has been made possible by resting the rectangular base of the śikhara not only on the sanctum walls proper but also beyond and over the walls of the second circuit around the sanctum, as can be seen from the accompanying plan. The vimāna has completely been renovated and replastered in the thirties of the present century, thus obliterating all the old features. But we know from an epigraph that Krishnahēva Rāya covered this Punyakoti-vimāna with gold sometime in A.D. 1514.5
All around the harmya of the second storey, there runs a hāra or string of miniature shrines such as the karnakūṭas at the four corners and the bhadrāsālās in the centre and paṇjaras in between forming the components over the prastara of the ground storey. The top of the second storey has four seated Garudas in anjali pose at the four corners besides some representations of Vishnu as Viṁāna-dēvatas, occupying the nāsika projections of the rectangular grīva. The wagon-top or śāla-śikhara carries a row of seven metal stūpās, over its ridge and its two ends are large nāsika fronts.

The eight-pillared mahāmāndapa in this complex also seems to be of the Chōḷa times. The pillars have round cross-section and bear heavy bevelled corbels at the top.

The pillared cloister (prakāshana) around the entire sanctum-complex is an addition of the Vijayanagar times, as already pointed out. The pillars which are rather tall (2 metres high) have the evolved pushpa-pōtikai corbels.

Second prākāra

At the base of the hill with the second prākāra, some details of the Narasimha shrine and the double-storeyed pillared cloister around deserve our attention. The small shrine of Narasimha is of the nīrandhāra type, having no circumambulatory around it. So only its frontal view is to be seen as in a cave-temple. The pilasters that flank its facade are noteworthy. They are short but massive and are composed of two sadurams or square sections at the ends with an octagonal middle—a feature which is a survival of the Pallava and the early Chōḷa style. They have very heavy bevelled corbels with prominent tenon-like projections. The earliest inscription in this shrine and indeed in this temple which is found on the inner sanctum wall is dated A.D. 1050, and as it does not refer to the construction of this shrine, there is room to presume that the shrine might have been there even slightly earlier.

Since Narasimha is a cave-dweller, this shrine has been conceived of in the form of a cave, cut, as it were, into the Hastigiri hill. But actually, it is only an improvised masonry cell with a low ceiling.

The gopura-entrance in front of the Narasimha shrine is a fine structure of the 11th century A.D. The earliest epigraph is dated A.D. 1073 and belongs to the Chōḷa king Kulōttunga-I. It is inscribed on the plinth (adhisīṇa) portion of the gateway. The plinth of this entrance is quite high and carries a number of mouldings which, from the bottom upwards, are: the upāna, the plain jagati, a prominent vritta-kumuda, the top of which has the lotus-petal decoration, a double kanta which is relieved at intervals by the rafter-end motifs and a frieze of animals, probably lions. Over it, is the wall portion which is relieved by a number of tall and plain pilasters (of square cross-section) having the bevelled corbels and tenon-like projections. The superstructure over this is of brick and mortar. It rises in three diminishing tiers to a height of about 35 ft. and is topped by a rectangular grīva surmounted by a wagon-top śikhara with large nāsika-ends on either side and a series of kalaśas on top. The parapets of the storeys carry strings of kūtas, śālas and paṇjaras all around. There are no sculptures except on the grīva portions which have some stucco reliefs. They have been spoiled by later-day renovation. Though the exterior is renovated, the gopura preserves the older contours and the style of the Chōḷa gopuras which
are usually broad and squattish and are invariably smaller than the vimāna on the central shrine. The maṇḍapa in front of Āṇḍāl shrine is a fine Vijayanagar structure (Fig. 5).

Third prākāra

This gopura leads us out into the courtyard enclosed by third prākāra, wherein very important shrines are situated. They are:

Kariamāṇnikaperumāl shrine

The simple and elegant shrine seems to have been built roundabout A.D. 1129 and in many ways it typifies the prevailing norms or styles of the day.

It has a square garbagriha, an antarāla and a small mukha-maṇḍapa. Its height is not more than 3 metres. There is no superstructure over the sanctum. Here we see the adhistāna mouldings still retaining their simplicity with only a few additional lotus-petal ornamentations (Fig. 40, item B). The bottom-most fillets constitute the upāna, over it on the vertical plane are the adhōpadma mouldings, then a plain jagati which bears a number of Čōḷa inscriptions, a tripaṭṭa-kumuda, a plain kanta with padma base, a projecting paṭṭika and over it is the vedi portion and finally the prati. The wall portion is adorned by a number of simple and shallow niches and beautiful pilasters. There are five niches, two each on the north and south and one on the back wall i.e., on the west. The niches are square and simple in design, unlike the later ones which are highly ornamental, as found in the Perundēvi Tāyār.

The shafts of the pilasters are square in cross-section and carry a paḍma-banda neck moulding, kalaśa, the tādi, the kumbha rather flattish, the idal or the petal moulding and the thin abacus or phalaka. We see the two types of corbels employed here—the typical bevelled one for the corner pilasters and the incipient pumunai-corbel for the rest. This latter type of corbel indicates the slow and gradual transition to the next stage of evolution, with the central tenon assuming a campanulate floral form, the precursor of the pushpa-poṭika of the later period. The cornice carries a number of kudos on its face. Over the cornice is a short parapet carrying the vyālavari frieze which becomes a recurring motif for the structures of this period. The pillar design of mukha-maṇḍapa is interesting. It is composed of three sadurams (square) and two octagonal intervening portions. They have the typical Čōḷa corbels.

Abhishēka-maṇḍapa

The abhishēka-maṇḍapa is large square and closed pavilion built in the early part of the 13th century A.D. It preserves its late Čōḷa characteristics intact. The adhistāna or the basement is built in bold proportion having a number of mouldings like the plain and flat upāna, the adhōpadma moulding, the jagati, vritta-kumuda, a simple recessed kanta with lotus petal moulding flanking the upper and the lower sides and a straight projecting paṭṭika on which are seen a number of inscriptions. The vritta-kumuda, though boldly depicted, is much more stylised than the one found in earlier structures, such as the gopura basement in front of the Narasimha shrine, described above. Again, over the paṭṭika is a frieze of petal-moulding which serves, as it were, the base for the wall portion of the shrine. The exterior of the
wall shows reliefs of pilasters which display the late-Chōja features like the padma-bandā neck moulding over the shaft (kāl). The shaping of the vase-like kalaśa is also noteworthy. The lower doucen of the abacus or the palagai is scalloped into petals or idal—another late feature. Here also two types of corbels are employed—the bevelled type for the corner pilasters and the incipient pūmuni for the rest. The cornice tends to become heavy and is curved in two to form a double-flexure that is typical of the Vijayanagar kapōtas. There is only one niche on the eastern wall of this closed maṇḍapa. In it is placed a large image of Gurūḍa, facing the main shrine on the east.

On the western side of this maṇḍapa, a later annexe was added as a facade in the Vijayanagar times. There are two elegant balustraded steps leading to this maṇḍapa. This was built in the 16th century A.D.

Anantāḷvār shrine (Fig. 6)

This is another modest and well-dated shrine. It was built in A.D. 1212. It has a square sanctum, an antarāla and a small four-pillared mukha- maṇḍapa. The entire shrine stands on a padma-pīṭha or expanded lotus-basement and over it is the adhīśāna which is composed of low upāna, a jagati, a vṛttā kumudā, a recessed flat kanta and a flat and straight patṭika (Fig. 40, item c). Over it, is the wall portion which is recessed and relieved by niches and pilasters. The niches are short but embellished with a canopy of the śīla type with a central kūṭa arch. Here also the niches are quite simple in design, unlike those of the Vijayanagar times, found in the Tāyār shrine. The shafts of the pilasters are square in cross-section and have the padma-bandā neck moulding. The abacus is neither thick nor broad but has the scalloped lotus on its underside. The corbel does not have the tenon-like projection but has an incipient pūmuni curvature, characteristic of the transitional period. Over it is the curved kapōta and then a vyālavarī or frieze of leonine griffins over the prastara. The shrine has a dvitāla vimāṇa which is square upto the second tala. Over it is circular grīva which is topped by a circular domical śikhara. There are four prominent nāsikas with kirtimukha finial. On the four corners of pindi terrace below the grīva are seated four Gurūḍas, alternating with Vishnu as vimāna-devata. The Hayagrīva form of Vishnu is seated on the southern side and the Nrisimha form on the northern side.

Thousand-pillared-maṇḍapa

The thousand-pillared-maṇḍapa on the north-eastern corner of this prākara is also a contribution of the beginning of the 14th century A.D. and hence, we see many of the features of the transitional period. The plinth is embellished with many ornamental mouldings, particularly a double vyālavarī frieze; the pillars are rather tall and slender; the corbels have a distinct pūmuni corbel, and there is a well-bent kōṭungai forming the cornice. The pillars have not yet assumed the extravagant ornamentation of the Vijayanagar times.

Kitchen

The kitchen on the south-east corner of the prākara is an older structure constructed during the time of Kulottunga-I. It is a closed room with a mukha-maṇḍapa
at its entrance. The pillars are square with three sadurams (square portions) and two hexagonal or fluted intervening portions. The pillar capital bears pronounced chamfered corbels. The cornice is thick and straight.

Perundēvi Tāyār shrine (Fig. 7)

It has already been noticed that the shrine for Perundēvi Tāyār came into existence probably in the beginning of the 13th century. Its presence is mentioned in an epigraph dated A.D. 1236. But the shrine proper, in its present form, is a construction of the Vijayanagar times, though the high pediment on which its enclosure wall is constructed is an older structure, belonging to the 13th century. Obviously, this portion underwent elaboration during the Vijayanagar times. The earlier shrine was replaced by the present elegant shrine together with its other forward complements like the cloistered verandah, sometime around about A.D. 1487 as already shown.

The sanctum antarāla complex of the Tāyār shrine is one of the best illustrations of the ornate architecture of the Vijayanagar epoch. It closely resembles the Amman shrine in the Hazārā Rāma temple at Hampi. From the base to the cornice, the entire surface is embellished with rich ornamental details, bold in design and exuberant in expression. The niche projection and the corresponding recesses which start right from the basement level break the monotony of the plan while the deep plinth-mouldings produce sharp effect of light and shade.

The adhōpadma moulding over the upāna is very pronounced. The jagati is plain except for the Vijayanagar inscriptions over it. The vṛttaka-kumuda is very much constricted and ribbed, while the paṭṭika is quite prominent. There are altogether five niches—two on the sides and one on the rear wall, all projecting out from the ground level, thus breaking the straight line of the plan. The niches are highly ornate with an ornamental kapōta canopy which are in turn surmounted by nāsika fronts. The niches are flanked on either side by richly decorated kumbha-pañjaras placed in the recesses of the wall. They are pilasters having pārṇa-kumbhas or full vases of plenty as their bases with excentric foliage with emergent pillar shaft carrying a nāsika top. The other pilasters have faceted shafts and the nāgapaḍam decoration at the base. The phalaka is thin and has its lower part prominently scalloped into petals. The pushpa-pōrīka corbel at the top is very pronounced. The cornice (koṇungu) is also embellished with a string of kūḍu arches, extending forward considerably.

The vimāna over the sanctum is named the Kalyānakōti vimāna, built in the 17th century. It is fully covered with copper sheet and hence its architectural features are masked.

Vijayanagar-mañḍapas

The pillared mahā-mañḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine seems to have been built in the 16th century by Ḍalāja Manavāla Jīyā. It has typical Vijayanagar ornamental columns with rearing horsemen attached to their shafts. In some pillars rearing vyālas are also attached.

There are four more maṇḍapas of the Vijayanagar times in the forecourts of this prakāra. They are: the kili-mañḍapa, the uṇṭal-mañḍapa and two other pillared
halls, one in front of the abhishekā-mañḍapa and the other interposed between the latter and the Tāyār shrine entrance. All of them bear unmistakable Vijayanagar characteristic like the tall fluted pillars with a prominent pushpa-pōṭika corbel and a protruding koṭungu, with double flexure. Moreover as already seen the Vijayanagar royal emblem is carved boldly in almost all these manḍapas. There are some interesting bas-relief sculptures which will be noticed later. The ūṇjal-mañḍapa in particular is an exquisite specimen of Vijayanagar art. Built on high plinth in an open courtyard, it is supported by elaborately worked composite pillars with clusters of smaller pillars, inter-connected, as it were, by some filigree work. The capitals over them are multi-faceted and massive. The koṭungu or the cornice is very conspicuous with its double flexure; on the eastern face of it is carved the Vijayanagar crest—Varāha, sun, moon etc. The compact little tower with the śāla-śikhara and ekataḍa lends beauty to the manḍapa. There are some good stucco figures over the vimāna and fine carving over the inner ceiling of the manḍapa (Fig. 8) From its style this manḍapa can be ascribed to the 16th century A.D.

Gōpura entrance and the compound wall

As we go out of the third prākāra, we pass through a gōpura entrance which is now called Tōdarmal-vāsal. It is a fine and solid structure going back to the time of Kulottunga-I. Many of his inscriptions are seen on the plinth portions and earliest of them belongs to A.D. 1106. The style of its massive adhisṭāna mouldings and the pilasters is exactly like that of the gōpura entrance in front of the Narasimha shrine; both of them were apparently built in the time of Kulottunga-I. The compound wall abutting on it seems to have been reconstructed more elaborately under the supervision of Alagia Manavāla Jiyar, whose portrait figures are kept in small niches at the top of this compound wall.

The gōpura is broad-based and rises gradually in five diminishing tiers, the grīva is rectangular over and is crowned by a śāla-śikhara with five kalaśas. At the centre of every tala there is a doorway flanked by dvārapālakas made of stucco. Four garuḍas in anjali are seated on the four corners of the topmost tala, just below the grīva. Other than this, there are no sculptures on its body. Strings of miniature shrines like paṇjara, kūpa, śāla are seen marking the parapet of every tala. Though renovated in recent years the gōpura has unmistakable later Chōla elegance and proportion. Abutting over this gōpura on the west is a rectangular pillared portico built probably during the time of Krishnadēva Rāya, whose inscriptions are found on its plinth.

Fourth prākāra

Most of the shrines in this courtyard, in their present extant form, as well as the manḍapas are the products of the Vijayanagar times. Some of them like the kal-yāṇa-mañḍapa and the vāhana manḍapas are extraordinarily elegant and are of great architectural and iconographic interest while many of the shrines are simple and unpretentious structures. To the latter category belong the shrines of Peria-āḻvār, Mudal-āḻvār, Tiruppān, Tondaraḍippodi and Tirumaljisai, which are distributed along the periphery of the outer enclosure. All of them display the same pattern of construction—a square sanctum, a small antarāla and a mukha-mañḍapa with open
pradakshina round the sanctum (see General Plan I). The pillars and pilasters display the typical features of the 15th and 16th centuries.

The shrine of Tiruppān and Tondaraṇḍippodi is noteworthy for its elegant vimāna over the sanctum.

Similarly, the shrine of Nammālvār possesses a fine śikhara over its square sanctum. Another noteworthy structure in the Nammālvār shrine is its pillared mahā-maṇḍapa in front. It is a product of Vijayanagar times and it contains some portrait sculptures of a Vijayanagar chieftain besides the sculptures of Āḻvārs and āchāryas like Tirukkachi-nambi.

Krishna shrine

From the architectural point of view this is very interesting shrine in the outermost prākāra. It has a square sanctum, a transverse antarāla and a mukha-maṇḍapa of a late date. The cubical or the samachaturasra sanctum is topped by a dvitāla śikhara (two-storied) or nāgara class.12 This is indeed a unique type in the temple, for invariably all the square sanctums here are crowned only by circular or vēsara grīva and śikhara. Square grīva and square śikhara are indeed rare. This might have been built under the patronage of the later Pāṇḍyas who were familiar with such square-type vimānas.13 An inscription of one Sundara Pāṇḍya is found on the south wall of the entrance of the shrine. Evidently, it was Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya who brought Kāṇchi under the Pāṇḍyan control sometime around A.D. 1260. But unfortunately the inscription is fragmentary. Probably, the shrine was built sometime during this period. The pilaster corbels have the incipient pūmunaī motif. There are five niches, two on either side and one on the back wall. The niches are each crowned by a small sāla-śikhara with a central nāśika arch. The cornice is short and straight. The small maṇḍapa in front is a Vijayanagar addition.

Chakrattālvār shrine14

This shrine is more like a spacious square hall without any features. The antarāla is not well marked. Around the hall is a closed pradakshina passage. Since Chakrattālvār or Sudarsana image is two-faced, there are entrance gateways on either side of the shrine chamber. There are also two mukha-maṇḍapas in front of the two entrances.

The adhiṣṭāṇa of the sanctum is composed of a plain upāna, a faceted kumuda, a recessed kanta and two plain paṭṭikas. The wall space is relieved by pilasters with shafts having square cross-section and the incipient pūṣpa-pōṭika corbel. The features show that the shrine might have been built in the latter half of the 13th or the earlier half of the 14th century.

The twelve-pillared mukha-maṇḍapa on the west is a clear Vijayanagar addition, as evidenced by the tall double columns with prominent corbels. The central ceiling near the entrance is occupied by a large granite slab, bearing fine relief carving of Rāma, Hanumān and Bālakrishna. In the centre of the slab is a large lotus in blossom. Around it are some of the scenes from Krishna’s life such as Krishna killing a demon in the form of a bird (Bakāśura), another in the form of a calf (Dhēṅukāśura), killing the elephant kēśi, swallowing butter. Other figures carved in the next panel are Rāma, Lakṣmanā, Sītā and Viṣṇu on Garuḍa etc. The Vijayanagar royal
insignia is also carved prominently.

Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa (Fig 9)

Perhaps the most remarkable product of the Vijayanagar art in this temple is the kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, the ornamental pillared pavilion used for the annual ceremonial marriage of the God and the Goddess. Standing on an exquisitely carved elevated platform and occupying an area of 575 square metres this pavilion is supported by a closely lined colonnade of pillars, 96 in number, which are remarkable for their varied decorative detail and sculptural exuberance. Its lofty plinth (2 metres high) is divided by a number of prominent horizontal bands with finely carved designs, animal as well as floral, each band being separated from the next one by a deeply recessed portion. Friezes of elephants, horses, swans (hamsa), narrative panels from the Rāmāyaṇa, dancing figures etc., occupy these bands.

The pillars are all tall and monolithic and their shafts are sculptured into rich and varying patterns like warriors and hunters on rearing horses, the rampant yāli which are very characteristic of the Vijayanagar art motifs, as seen in similar pavilions at Vellore, Srirangam, Virinchipuram (North Arcot District). In some of them, full sculptures in the round are projecting out like Rati on the parrot, Manmata on swan etc. "The pillars consist", in the words of Percy Brown, "a bizarre grouping of imaginary statuary with stone-cutting of a high order." About the rampant animal motif which repeatedly occurs in all their maṇḍapas the same renowned art-critic observes aptly, "during the Vijayanagar regime this motif appears so frequently that it dominates every conception until it becomes an obsession. The rampant horseman in the later Dravidian building reveals the spirit of the times as the Vijayanagar era corresponds in some respects to the age of chivalry and romance which prevailed in the mediaeval Europe. That the armed forces of the Vijayanagar empire were of the finest calibre which kept their hereditary foes (Muslim powers) at bay, whereas almost every other part of the country succumbed at once. Something of this temper seems embodied in the art of this period and accounts for the columns of splendid cavaliers nonchalantly astride the gigantic rearing chargers and engaged in furious combat with fabulous creatures." Here in this temple motif is profusely depicted in its multifarious variety not only in the kalyāṇa maṇḍapa but also repeated in the vāhana maṇḍapa and the maha-maṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine—all of which belong to the 16th century. Besides the normal Vijayanagar soldier with his typical head-dress, full sleeve and sword, a few European soldiers with carbines or muskets are also portrayed. Probably, they represent the Portuguese soldiers who were recruited into the Vijayanagar army.

Besides these elaborately wrought composite columns which are found invariably near the facade and the sides the vast majority of the monolithic pillars inside display contrasting geometrical shapes—a cube or saduram alternative with a fluted cylinder, all copiously carved. Each capital is a substantial four-branched foliated volute each terminating in the characteristic flower-pendant. Two other interesting features of this maṇḍapa are its magnificent balustraded stepped entrance and the marvellous free-hanging chains of stone-rings at the four corners of the massive double flexed and intricately wrought cornice above.
Entrance gôpuras

This immense temple-complex is appropriately enclosed by a high outer boundary wall, having two imposing gateways—one on the east and the other on the west—both being two towering gôpuras. As already pointed out, the gôpura on the west is shorter and more squattish whereas the one on the east is taller and narrower. The former is of an earlier date, as it seems to be essentially rooted in the late Chôla tradition.

The earliest inscription on the plinth portion is of the 13th century. The door-jambs, made of single tall monolithic pieces, are plain without the śālabanjika and the creeper motif, that invariably appears in the Vijayanagar gateways. This motif is prominently carved on the eastern gôpura. Further, the Vijayanagar insignia that is boldly carved on the ceilings of the gateway on the east is conspicuous by its absence on the western gateway. The corbels of the pilasters in the latter are still in the traditional stage, namely, undeveloped pushpa-pōtiKA. Hence, the western gôpura is to be dated to the latter half of the 13th century while the eastern gôpura—entrance belongs to the first half of the 16th century A.D.

Western gôpura (Fig. 10)

The massive granite base of the adhistâna of the gôpura, about 7 metres in height, is divided in its vertical plane into two principal storeys by a prominent paṭṭika. Along the horizontal section, this huge mass is broken up by a number of projecting bays, alternating with recesses. The lower section or storey of the vertical stone part is composed of prominent horizontal mouldings with a very bold padma-tala base, a massive vṛitta kumuda, a paṭṭika, vedi and prati over which are arranged a series of ornamental pilasters. Over this series is a broad prastara with a number of shallow kûḍA-arches. This prastara marks the dividing line between the lower and the upper storeys of the stone base. The upper section is almost a repetition of the lower one with certain differences. In addition to the similar horizontal mouldings we see the presence of four projecting niches on each side and the kumbha-paṇjaras in the recesses. The corbels of the pilasters are in the form of undeveloped pushpa-pōtiKA; the eave or kapôta has not assumed the prominent double-flexure curvature. Hence, the style is characteristic of the later-Chôla or the transitional period. The same can be said of the superstructure which is built in brick and mortar in seven diminishing tiers. It is broad and stunted. The body of the tower is not embellished by sculptures as are those of later gôpuras of the Nayak period. Rather it is absolutely plain except for a series of miniature shrines composed of the śālas, karnakûjas and paṇjaras. The central projecting doorways are carried right up to the griva portion. The griva is rectangular and at the apex is the massive śala-śikhara topped by nine glittering metal kalaśas.

Eastern gôpura (Fig. 11)

The gôpura in the east is much taller (50 metres high) and composed of nine storeys, and topped by eleven kalaśas. In fact it is the tallest structure in the entire temple-complex. It is a typical product of the mature Vijayanagar style—tall and narrow with a pronounced emphasis on verticality. It closely resembles the main tower of the Ekámreśvarar temple at Kâńchi which was built by Krishnadēva Râya in the beginning of the 16th century. This gôpura, as already pointed out, may also
belong to the same period. The Vijayanagar state-crest is boldly depicted on the ceilings of this gopura. There are two fine šalabanjikas (ladies with creepers) carved on either side of the door-frame. The door-frame is highly ornamental (Fig. 12).

The massive stone-base is made up of two parts, divided by a prominent kapota. The road level outside the gopura has risen considerably, burying the lowest mouldings. However, the prominent vritta-kumuda, paṭṭika and prati are clearly seen relieving the horizontal plane, while the vertical plane is broken up by a number of pilasters and projected niches. The upper section of the basement is relieved by projecting niches and the recesses bearing the kumba-paṇjara pilaster. The corbels are very much evolved with prominent lotus-bud end.

The superstructure, made up of brick and mortar, is plain except for the indentations made by the series of miniature shrines like the sāla in the centre and kūṭas at the corners and the paṇjaras in between on the sides. The central doorway opening is present in every tala right up to the grīva which is rectangular. At the apex is the massive sāla-śikhara with the kirti-mukha ends.

Hastigiri—a hillock or a raised mound?

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, a peculiar and almost intriguing feature of this temple is the so-called Hasti-hill, over which the main sanctuary is placed. It is in the form of a square enclosure closed by huge walls covering an area of 30 metre square.

The enclosing walls are about 7.3 metres high and are plain except for one kapota moulding in the middle and the vyālavari on the top. The shrine of Varadarāja on the upper floor is reached by a flight of steps at the south-eastern corner of the enclosure. On the western side of the ‘hill’, on the ground floor, is the shrine for Nrisimha which is conceived of as a cave, though this is also a built-up structure.

What is inside this huge square enclosure on the ground floor which has since been closed? When and why was it closed? All the Vaishnava ācāryas like Kūrattālvār, Tirukkachi-nambi (11th century) and Vēdānta Dēsika (13th century) mention it as the hill. Kūrattālvār in one of his verses calls the Lord as residing at the Śikhara (peak) of the hill. The present walled enclosure can be dated not later than the middle of the 11th century A.D. at the latest as attested by the presence of an inscription dated A.D. 1050 inside. In all probability, the walled enclosure was there during the times of Rāmānuja (1016-1137) and his contemporary Kūrattālvār and Tirukkachi-nambi. Therefore their references to the giri or śailam were only to this walled elevation.

What is inside this enclosure is anybody’s guess—natural hillock or an artificially raised mound? The chances for the existence of a rocky hillock there are remote, for we do not see any visible rocky outcrop for miles around in the neighbourhood. Secondly, if it were a natural hillock there was no need to build the enclosure walls and encase it; nor is such a practice known. On the other hand, from a few exposures seen near the flight of steps (leading up the ‘hill’) it can be observed, that the outer veneering is done by roughly-hewn blocks of stone, giving us the appearance of an artificially raised mound or platform. This also explains or justifies the camouflage done with the high walls to cover up the mound and at the same time
give it the sanctity of a hill. This camouflaging is seen very clearly in the so-called cave-shrine of Nrisimha on the ground floor. There is no trace of natural rock anywhere inside the shrine which has been improvised by building walls of dressed stones to make it a narrow and rectangular cell about 11 metres long and 2 metres broad (in the average). The hind wall is in the form of a stone-screen which prevents the onlooker from seeing the inner core or the portals of the ‘hill’. It appears to have been the result of a deliberate attempt to create an artificial cave-shrine to provide an abode for Nrisimha, the cave-dweller.

Whatever may be the true contents or nature of this hill, it cannot be gainsaid that it is a solid foundation meant to carry massive superstructures—the sanctum with a narrow processional circuit around it (which is now closed), an antarāla, two mukha-manḍapas, a mahā-manḍapa and an outer pillared verandah—all occupying an area of 900 sq. metres. The walls of the sanctum are nearly 4 metres thick. Added to it is the weight of the large śāla-śikhara on the sanctum. This massive weight could stand only on a solid foundation on either rock or well-ramped platform. We are not permitted to make any openings in this enclosure to have a glimpse of its contents. But perhaps a near parallel is afforded by the temple of Chandraprabha at Tiruparuttikunram near Kānchi. There also, the ground-floor is closed and the main shrine of Chandraprabha is situated on the upper floor, reached by a flight of steps. This was also called by the Jainas as ‘Ērvana sthalam’ or the Malayanār Kövil (the hill temple) because of its elevation. Some trial diggings were made at the top near the antarāla portion and it was found that the so-called hill was filled with sand and mud. The possibility of a similar arrangement at Hastigiri cannot be ruled out.17

What is the purpose in creating this elevated platform? Why was the garbagriha placed on its top? The reason, as pointed out earlier, may simply be to give a hill-like elevation, as in the case of a few other temples of Tamilnād. Such an artificially raised hill is called in Tamil Kaṭṭu-malai and a few temples built over such ‘hills’ are found scattered in Tamilnād. The Vishnu temple built by Dantivarman at Alampakkam is an outstanding example. The main deities in the two famous shrines—Vatapatrasāyi temple at Srīvilliputtūr and Tirukkōtiyur temple—both in Ramanathapuram District of Tamilnād are also not on the ground floor but on the raised platform.

Uttaravēdi Concept

But a deeper significance may perhaps also be considered as regards the raised enclosure of this temple. It may be an architectural depiction of the purānic description of the Uttaravēdi on which Brahma performed his yajña to invoke the presence of Lord Vishnu. The sthalapurāna account has it that Brahma ordered Visvakarma, the divine architect, to convert the hill into a square Uttaravēdi for him to perform the yajña.18 Whatever may be the value of the purānic account, the concept of Uttaravēdi mentioned here seems to be significant. The Uttaravēdi, according to the ancient texts,19 was a high platform or mound, square in shape, which served as the ground or basement for the fire-altar which was also a square and which was at the centre of the Uttaravēdi. The fire-altar was called the Nāhhi and in it was placed the fire-pan or the ukha made of clay. It is also square in
shape. It is spoken of as the womb of Agni or fire and its cube is stated to hold the manifested universe. The Hindu temple, as Stella Kramrisch has shown, reflects this conception very well.20

Here in this temple, the so-called Hastigiri is a large enclosure of 30 metre square with nearly 8 metres high walls, which might represent the Uttaravēdi, the high square basement. In the centre of this basement, we have two more concentric square enclosures, the outer measuring 13 metre square (around the sanctum including the tiruvunnāligai) which might represent the fire-altar or the nābhi and the innermost sanctuary (garbagrīha) which is a chamber of 3 metre square might represent the fire-pan or the womb-chamber.

Though basically, every Hindu temple may be taken to represent this concept and the vēḷi has been incorporated as an integral architectural member in the temple elevation, special emphasis is laid here on the Uttaravēdi. Because the place had come to be renowned as the place where Brahma erected the Uttaravēdi for his yajña and Lord Varadarāja in his Punyakōṭi-vimāna came out of the sacrificial fire, it is likely that this idea was architecturally depicted by laying emphasis on the Uttaravēdi and making it into a large and imposing platform for the extant vimāna along with its circumambulatory. It is an instance of the knowledge of the rites inspiring architectural forms.

NOTES

J. Dubreuil classified the styles in the following manner: from A.D. 850 to 1100 Chōḷa; from A.D. 1100 to 1350 Pāṇḍya; though broadly correct, the need for revision has been emphasised by more than one scholar. See K.R. Srinivasan, J.O.I.S.O.A. XVI (1948), The Last of the Great Chōḷa Temple. In the Chōḷa period itself three phases, the Early, the Middle and the Later have been distinguished. The Middle Chōḷa phase coincides with the reigns of Rājarāja-I, Rājendra-I and Rājēndirāja-I. K.A.N. Sastri, Chōḷas, p. 693. Also see S.R. Balasubramaniam, Four Chōḷa Temples (1963), pp. 34-35.

2. Dubreuil called it the 'Pāṇḍyan phase'. K.R. Srinivasan has rightly questioned this and shown that the Chōḷa style continued to hold the ground for a considerably longer period, almost to the end of the 13th century A.D., if not later (J.O.I.S.O.A., op. cit., p. 33). Particularly, the Pāṇḍyan appellation cannot be applied in toto to the Tondaimandalam region, where the later Chōḷa style imperceptibly merged with the succeeding Vijayānagar style. The incipient pushpa-pūṣṭikā corbel which is usually considered to be a Pāṇḍyan contribution, actually occurs in well dated Chōḷa structures of this temple, datable to A.D 1129 (see Fig. 40, item B).

Similarly, they occur in the Chōḷa structure at Đārasuram and Trichūvannam. For all these reasons it would be better to designate the style of the period for 1100-1350 as later Chōḷa, particularly in the Tondaimandalam area.

3. 478 of 1919.
4. 519 of 1919.
5. See also at the end of the chapter for further discussion on the point.
6. 522 of 1919.
7. This gopura compares well with the gopura on the Āryaṭṭal-vāsal at Srirangam temple, built in the 11th century A.D. (Hari Rao, The Srirangam Temple, p. 56).
8. 605 of 1919.
9. See Chapter III.
10. See for illustration, Longhurst, Humpi Ruins, Fig. 28, p. 74.
11. 631, 632 and 635 of 1919.
13. The Kattalagia Singar shrine within the Srirangam temple has a similar nīgarā type of sikhara and it was also built by a Pāṇḍya king (Hari Rao, The Srirangam Temple, p. 64).
14. The Chakrattālvār shrine is slightly on the north-west of the main sanctum. At Srirangam it is on the south-west. Evidently a fixed location for the shrine was not evolved. But both are in the fourth enclosure.


16. See also the western gōpura at Tiruvannamalai whose superstructure was built by Krishnadeva Raya about A.D. 1516. F.H. Gravely, *The Gopuras of Tiruvannamalai*, Madras, 1959, p. 5.


18. Vide Chapter I.


CHAPTER IX

ICONOGRAPHY

General features

As one of the largest Vishnu temples of South India, having shrines for different forms or aspects of Vishnu, His äyudhapurushas and other ävaraṇa dēvatās (subsidiary deities), Sri Varadarājāswāmī temple presents interesting iconographic details which deserve study. As in architecture so in iconography, we find that the temple possesses fine stone and metal specimens, representative of the Chōla and Vijayanagar traditions. While the former are comparatively scarce and found only as enshrined images, the latter are found in great profusion not only as cult-images but also bas-reliefs on the pillars and the plinths of the maṇḍapās. Stone images such as those of Ranganātha, Narasimha, Valampuri Gānēśa and the metal icons of the main deity of Varadarāja and His two consorts, Perundēvi, Rāmānuja, Nammāḻvār, Madurakavi-Āḷvar, Nāṭhamuni, Anantāḻvār and Chakrattāḻvār are some of the outstanding specimens which typify the naturalness in form and simplicity of demeanour, the hallmarks of the Chōla style. The contours of the body are not angular or rigid but natural and flowing. The ornamentation or the garments like the antarīya are simple and depicted as though they are part of the body and do not stand out separately. While the icons of Gods and Goddesses with their abhaya and varada mudrās radiate the qualities of saulabhya (easy accessibility) and sausīlya (graciousness), the twin qualities held supreme by the Sri-Vaishnavas, the icons of the Āḻvārs like Nammāḻvār and Madurakavi and the āchāryas like Nāṭhamuni and Rāmānuja are embodiments of humility, devotion and absolute surrender in body and soul to the one they held as the Supreme Being. They were mortals but worshipped as divine beings. These images, with their characteristic aṅjali or vyakṣyāna-mudra, inspire the same emotions of humility and devotion in the hearts and minds of multitudes, who hold them in veneration. Their lives and works are considered the beacon-lights, showing the path of salvation for the humanity. Hence, the importance given to these saints in the temples.

The Vijayanagar period continued the iconographic traditions with fresh vigour. Icons of the majority of the Āḻvārs and āchāryas in this temple were products of this time. Manavāḷa Mahāmuni, the last of the great āchāryas, was deified in this period. The sculptural reliefs found in the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, the Vāhana-maṇḍapa, and a few other places, show remarkable variety in theme and beauty in depiction. Though the classic touch of the Chōla art is missing, still they possess considerable grace and artistic charm and merit. In Section 1, attention is confined only to the images that are installed in the shrines, while Section 2 deals with those found outside the shrines.
Section 1

ICONS (ENSHRINED)

The principal deity of the temple is Vishnu as Varadarāja. The Hindu mind took delight and solace in conceiving of God in multifarious forms and aspects. In the temples of Tamilnad, Vishnu was worshipped in the different attitudes—sthānaka or standing, āsana or sitting and sayana or reclining. Here, Varadarāja is depicted in his standing posture in the erect samabhanga pose. His two upper hands hold śanka and chakra, while his lower left holds the gada and the right is in the abhaya-mudrā. All the characteristic attributes of Vishnu are found—kiritā-makuṭa or a high crown, makara-kundala in the ears, hāras or necklaces, keyūra (armlets), kankaṇas (wristlets), udara-banda round his waist, kaṭibanda around his hip, yajnopavīta or the sacred thread. Śrī or Lakshmi is on his right chest. The mūlabhēra is shown without consorts, whereas the utsavamūrti is flanked by Śrī-dēvi on his right and Bhū-dēvi on his left. As already pointed out, the mūlabhēra was originally in wood and was changed at a later date into one of stone. The utsava-vigraha of Lord Varadarāja is also in the same pose but flanked by the consorts. They are bronze-icons of exquisite beauty (Fig. 13). In fact, they are considered by the Śrī-Vaishnavas to be among the oldest and most beautiful icons. The central figure is in the samabhanga posture, whereas flanking images of Śrī-dēvi and Bhū-dēvi are in rhythmic trībhaṅga pose. The depiction is tender and charming and can well belong to the earlier half of the 11th century A.D.

Nrisimha

In the second prākāra there is a shrine for Nrisimha the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu. An inscription dated A.D. 1131 mentions the deity as Singapperumāl (the Lion-God). Almost all early temples have idols of Nrisimha and Varāha. The āgamas require the figure of Nrisimha to be set up on the west of the central shrine. This is faithfully followed in this temple. Here in this shrine he is represented in the yōga-form. He is seated on the padmāsana in the utkṣiṭa posture i.e., knees bent crosswise and belted around by the yōgapaṭṭa.

Ranganātha

Vishnu is enshrined in the sayana pose as anantasāyi here. This shrine is on the outermost prākāra on northern bank of the Anantasāyī tank. Though the present shrine is of only the Vijayanagar times, the deity seems to be older. There is an inscription of the 11th century elsewhere in the temple which refers to the installation of Vishnu in recumbent pose in a shrine in this temple. It is quite probable that the reference is to this image. According to the āgamic injunctions, the head of the reclining figure should be to the left of the worshipper. This is followed here too. The shrine and the deity face south and the head is placed on the west.

The popularity of the temple of Ranganātha at Srīrangam has probably influenced the erection of this deity here. We get a number of other instances showing the influence of Srīrangam on Kāṇchi. This is one of them. Though the shrine is unfortunately in a state of neglect, the deity is graceful and bold in its features.
The other forms of Vishnu for whom there are separate shrines are Varāha (boar-incarnation), Krishna and Rāma. The shrines for the former two are dilapidated and in disuse. The utsava-idol of Krishna is kept in the main shrine. Another image of Krishna depicted as a young boy drinking milk was installed in the time of Krishnadēva Rāya.

Perundēvi

Srī or Lakshmi, the chief consort of Vishnu, is called by different local Tamil names such as Ranganāyaki in Srīrangam, Alarmelumangai or PADMĀVATI at Tirupati, Vēdavalli at TiruPallikēnī. Here, she is called Perundēvi or Periapirāṭṭi, the prime consort. But the iconic representation of all of them is more or less the same. She is as usual seated on the padmāsana. She has four arms, the lower two being in the abhaya and varada-mudras and the rear ones carry the lotus-bud in each of them. She is richly decked with the karanda makuṭa and other jewels. The icons both in stone and metal are beautiful, though conventional (see Fig. 13 left extreme). They may be placed in the later Chōla period, about the first half of the 13th century A.D., when indeed the Tāyār shrine came to be built.

Āṇḍāl and Malayāla Nāchiār

There is a separate shrine for each of them on either side of the gōpura-entrance of the second prākāra. The mūlabhēra and the utsava-bhēras of both the figures are of exquisite beauty and have interesting iconographic details. Āṇḍāl or Gōda is represented as a beautiful young maiden, a bride with her hair done up as kēsa-banda. She stands in a graceful tribhanga pose, holding a flower in her hand. While Āṇḍāl was the daughter of a commoner, Periāḻvār, Sērakulavallināchiār, was the daughter of the Chēra king and hence she is wearing a kirita-makuṭa. She also stands in the tribhanga pose. While Āṇḍāl holds the flower in her left, she holds it in her right hand. It is of interest to note that at Srīrangam, Sērakulavalli Nāchiār is represented in the seated pose, while here at Kāṇchi she is standing. The icons of the Āṇḍāl and Sērakulavalli look almost alike and seem to have been the products of early 14th century A.D., when the late-Chōla tradition was yielding place to the early Vijayanagar style. Conventionalism had set in but the beauty of the form was not affected.

Sēnai Mudaliār

Visvaksēna or Sēnai-mudaliār is the commander of the hordes of Vishnu and as such holds an important place, nearest to the main deity. There is a small shrine for him within the second prākāra close to the ‘hill’. He holds an important place in the āchārya hierarchy of the Srī-Vaishnavaśas, next only to Srī or Lakshmi. He is invoked by them at the beginning of all auspicious ceremonies. He is also the custodian of the personal effects of the Lord and so, in all important festivals, special worship is offered to him first. His image which is a small one here represents him in seated posture with four hands, the upper ones carrying the discus and the conch while the right lower hand is in tarjani (warning) pose and the left one holds a heavy Gada or mace.5
Anantālvār (Fig. 14)

An interesting feature of this temple is that it has a separate shrine for Garuḍa, Ananta and Sudarsana Chakra as at Srirangam. These three and the Pānchajanya (conch) are called the Nītis or Nītis-Sūtras, who eternally enjoy the presence and contact of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa in His abode Paramapada. They are considered to be in eternal communion with the Lord even in His Transcendent or the Para form. They are engaged in continuous service (kaīnkanra) to the Lord. A popular Tamil verse of the Ālvārs eulogises Ananta for the multifarious services he renders to the Lord: “He serves as a couch to the Lord in the distinctive seat; as an umbrella when the Lord walks; as a seat when He sits; as sandals when He stands and as a float in the sacred ocean of milk.” The very name Śeṣa means that he is in eternal servitude to Lord in various forms, in all places, in all states and at all times. The depiction of the Ananta or Śeṣa in the human form with the hood above is one of the exquisite representations in this temple. It is datable to the 13th century A.D.

Garuḍa

Garuḍa who is affectionately called by the Sṛ-vaishnavas as Garuḍālvār or Peria-Tiruvaḍi has his place directly opposite to the presiding deity in all temples. So also here. He is the faithful devotee of the Lord and so he is in the anjali pose. Being the Lord’s mount he is standing with outspread wings, ever ready to carry Him. The fine image of Garuḍa is placed in a specially allotted shrine facing the sanctum. The Garuḍa image is placed not only in the shrine but also in the corners of the maṇḍapas and the prākāra walls.

Sudarśana or Chakrattālvār

Chakrattālvār is the personification of the discus, one of the weapons of Vishnu. Though the metal image of the chakra alone can be found in all Vishnu temples, separate shrines for the chakra as the mālābhāra and in the personified form are extremely rare and found only in older temples like Srīrangam and Tirumalai. The representation found in our temple is one of the most powerful and impressive of its kind. It is in outline a chakra or circular frame with jvāla or flames depicted on the rim. Within the large circle, there is the shatkōṇa design made up by two interlacing equilateral triangles. In the centre of this is another smaller circle in which stands Sudarśana in fearful aspect, his hair standing out in jāṭas or plaits which are like the flames of the God of fire. He is having prominent tusks. On the reverse, there is the figure of Narasimha in the centre in the yōga form. This image in our temple is quite impressive both in stone and metal. One peculiarity observed in the metal image or utṣava idol is that within the circular framework there are as many as seven figures of Chakrattālvār in standing pose—the main one in the centre and six smaller ones are in each of the small peripheral triangles of rays of the six-pointed star. This depiction is indeed unique and hardly met with anywhere else.

Gaṅgēśa

The presence of a separate shrine for Gaṅgēśa in a Vishnu temple is interesting. It is in the south-west corner of the second prākāra. It is an uncommon type of
Ganēsa known as the Valampuri Ganēsa, who has his trunk or proboscis turned to his right instead of left. The image is a fine product of the later Chōla times.

Danvantrin

Another rarity in this temple is the shrine for Danvantrin—the father of Indian Medicine and an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The shrine is on the south-east corner of the second prākāra. Both the mūla and the utsava images are small. He is seated with two hands, one of them bearing a vessel of nectar. It is well known that Rāmānuja instituted a hospital or arāgyaśāla and renovated the Danvantrin shrine at Srirangam temple. He placed his disciple Garudavāhana Pundita in charge of the shrine and made arrangements for offering of medicinal decoction or kashāya to God every night before the closure of the temple. Some such practice based on Rāmānuja’s injunctions should have inspired the construction of a shrine for Danvantrin at Kāṇchi too.

Icons of Āḻvārs and Āchāryas

As already remarked an important feature of a Śrī-Vaishnava temple is the deification of the Āḻvārs and Āchāryas. Inscriptional and literary evidences were cited to show that probably the Mudal-āḻvārs, Nammāḻvār and possibly Tirumangai and Āṇṭāḷ were deified prior to the Vijayanagar times, though separate shrines for them came later on. The rest of the Āḻvārs seem to have been deified in the early decades of the Vijayanagar rule. The iconographic features of many of the Āḻvārs are alike i.e., the three Mudal-āḻvārs and Tirumalisai are seated with anjali-hasta. Tirumangai Āḻvār, Kulasēkhara and Tondaradippodi are in standing pose—the former two in royal dress and the third as a humble devotee. The metal-icons of Nammāḻvār and Madurakavi and the Nāṭhamunigal housed in the same shrine are of remarkable beauty. They display unmistakable Chōla grace. Nammāḻvār is seated in the centre in a yōgic posture while Madurakavi and Nāṭhamuni are standing on either side. The former was a direct disciple who said that he knew no God other than Nammāḻvār and the latter (Nāṭhamuni) was the first to popularise Nammāḻvār’s hymns. So, they form an inseparable trio in the minds of the Śrī-Vaishnavas. This sentiment has been admirably portrayed in metal here. The depiction of Nammāḻvār with his right arm half bent and held near his chest in chin-mudra is said to be unique and not to be found in any other temple of South India.

Among the idols of āchāryas, that of Rāmānuja stands out for its suppleness and beauty. It is a rare and fine Chōla image, depicting Rāmānuja with the vyakhyāna-mudra which is very unusual. He is usually shown in anjali pose; but here, and at Tirumalai, he is depicted with the vyākyāna-mudra or pose of exposition. This image was installed here in A.D. 1191 and as such is one of the earliest portrayals of Rāmānuja.

The iconographic features of other āchāryas like Ālavandār and Kūrattāḻvār are more or less of the same pattern. They are, as usual, shown seated with anjali pose. Both the mūlabhēra and the bronze icon of Manavāla Mahāmuni are handsome and display admirable poise, characteristic of the Vijayanagar times (Fig. 15). The mūlabhēra has a serpent hood over as Manavāla Mahāmuni is believed to be an
incarnation of Adisesha.

Section 2

ICONS (NOT ENSHRINED)

All the extant specimens of Chola sculptures in stone and metal are found installed only in the shrines. Outside in the various maṇḍapas and other auxiliary structures, the plastic scheme is dominated by the Vijayanagar style. In fact, this temple provides a fine array of Vijayanagar sculptures, rich in iconographic details and visual beauty.

The places where these sculptures are found are the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, the Vāhana-maṇḍapa, the Tirukkachi-nambi-maṇḍapa, the maṇḍapas in front and by the side of the Abhisheka maṇḍapa and Nammāḻvār shrine. But the best representative collection is to be found at the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa which alone contains more than eight hundred bas-reliefs, depicting various purāṇic themes and characters. But, many of the themes are often repeated in this maṇḍapa and elsewhere. The subject matter of sculpture is varied and comprises of the scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa, the Bhāgavata and other purāṇas; the episodes connected with the sthalapurāṇa of the temple; the Dāsāvatāra or the ten incarnations of Vishnu and other minor incarnations; the Vaishnava saints or Āḻvārs and āchāryas; portrait-sculptures of royal benefactors; mithunas or love-scenes, comic scenes and a few animal motifs.

The sculptures described below are all from the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa unless otherwise stated.

Style

The sculptures found in the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa and the other maṇḍapas of this temple mentioned above undoubtedly take their rank with some of the best and mature specimens of the Vijayanagar art of the 16th century A.D. Though conventional, they display accurate and mature workmanship. Except in a few cases where there is exaggeration of features or stiff disposition, the figures are natural in pose and attitude. A certain amount of standardisation of iconographic details is noticeable, but there is no stylisation as is seen in some of the exaggerated figures of Nāyak school of Madurai or Tirunelveli. Here, the figures are of modest size and of pleasing demeanour. The artist's fondness for displaying the towering jewelled crown, some of which are typical of those worn by the Vijayanagar kings, elaborately folded draperies and lavish jewellery like necklaces, armlets, anklets etc., is clearly noticeable. A desire to depict Vishnu in unique forms is also seen in such peculiar poses like the Dasabhujavishnu, Astabhujavishnu, Vishnu dancing on the apasmāra (like Naṭarāja), etc. While some of the figures of Gods are somewhat static, the figures like Dasaratha and his queens, Tirukkachi-nambi are admirable examples to show that the sculptors were capable of depicting feelings and aspirations. The sculpture of Tirukkachi-nambi ever standing to do his fanning service to the Lord is one of the best sculptures of this temple. The narrative panels depicting various scenes from Rāmāyaṇa and the Bhāgavata testify that the artists were capable of showing movement. There is a good number of portrait-sculptures of kings, queens and chieftains, with the Vijayanagar royal dress.
The dexterity in depicting the sensuousness of the amorous couples indulging in the various acts of the love-game is seen in many sculptures in the Kalyāṇa-manḍapa and the vāhana-manḍapa. The Vijayanagar artists took special delight in depicting many comic figures of clown, street-dancer, gipsy etc., which throw interesting side-lights on the folk-arts and many amusements of the times. Similarly, curious animal figures like two cows having one common head are also seen.

In short, one sees in these sculptures a close affinity of theme and style to the beautiful sculptures found in the temples like the Hazāra Rāma and Viṭṭhala temples at Hampi. They are exuberant but not exaggerated or uncouth. They are conventional, but not stylised or prosaic. They combine beauty of form with restraint in modelling. Though a few jarring notes could be seen here and there, they are on the whole excellent products of one of the most attractive schools of art of South India.

A. Rāmāyana scenes

A lofty and ornamental plinth of the Kalyāṇa-manḍapa is divided into a number of horizontal bands with exquisitely carved designs. While friezes of floral and animal designs occupy the top bands, the lowest course has a running narrative panel depicting some of the scenes from the Rāmāyana. Some of the outstanding episodes are: Rishyasringa performing the yajña wherefrom he got the havis; Dasaratha with his three queens receiving the havis (Fig. 16); the birth of Rāma, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna; two men lifting up the divine bow of Janaka and Rāma breaking it. Rāma’s meeting with Sugrīva and his encounter with Vāli are depicted with vigour.

In one of the panels Rāma demonstrates his valour as an archer to Sugrīva by shooting through the seven trees with a single arrow (Fig. 17). All the seven trees are standing on the body of a serpent. The arrow piercing all the trees passed through the serpent’s neck. This is evidently after a Kannada version of the episode found later in the Ānanda Rāmāyana also. Earlier version has inspired similar panels at the Hoysalēśvara temple at Halebid and the Hazāra Rāma temple at Hampi.

After Rāma proved his valour Sugrīva sought his help against his powerful brother Vāli. In another panel Sugrīva is seen bowing down humbly in front of Rāma who blesses him.

The Vāli-Sugrīva fight is depicted with considerable vigour. Vāli is shown overpowering Sugrīva by pressing the latter’s head down. Sugrīva is groaning in agony. Rāma and Lakshmana are shown standing behind the tree and watching the fight. Rāma is aiming an arrow at Vāli (Fig. 18).

The other scenes depicted are: the union between Rāma and Vibhīṣhana; Rāma embracing Hanumān who brought the ring from Sīta; Hanumān lifting the Sanjivī hill; Rāma seated on the shoulders of Hanumān and fighting Rāvana etc. Hanumān in particular is depicted repeatedly in different poses. Worship of Hanumān, the symbol of Hindu valour and prowess, became very popular during the days of Vijayanagar empire (Fig. 19). He was glorified with many attributes of Vishnu and in one figure, he is shown with Śankha, Chakra etc.
B. Scenes from Krishnāvatāra

Scenes depicting Krishna-līla or the playful acts of Krishna were popular with the Vijayanagar poets and artists. Several works appeared on the theme of the Krishna legend such as Pōtana’s Bhāgavata-purāṇa, Virabhadra’s Jāminī Bhārata, Krishnadēva Rāya’s Jāmbavati Kalyāṇam and Timmana’s Pārijātahāranam. Similarly there was a spurt in the sculpture representation too. He is depicted in three stages: as a child, as a mischievous little boy full of fun and frolic and fond of stealing milk and butter and as a grown-up man affording protection to the cowherds. Some of the scenes depicted are: Krishna killing the demon who came in the form of a bird (Bakāsura) (Fig. 20); Krishna seated with a stolen pot of butter; tied to a stone-mortar by Yasoda; dancing over the shoulders of the Gopis; making love with a Gopi and at the same time stealthily taking butter from the pot kept on her head; stealing the sarees and garments of the Gopis while they were taking bath in the Yamuna, i.e., Vasrāpaharana (Fig. 21) is found in the vāhana-maṇḍapa; lifting the Gōvardhana hill (Fig. 22); dancing over the hooded snake (Kālyamardana—Fig. 23).

Some queer depictions like the aṣṭabhujā and dasabhujā Venugōpāla are also found. In both of them Krishna stands cross-legged, playing on the flute. He has six weapons in his hands and the two hands are engaged in playing on flute. The two extra hands of Dasabhujā Venugōpāla hold flowers. The cows are shown to be spell-bound by the divine music. The pāñcharātra-āgama calls this form of Krishna by the name Madana-Gōpāla.13

C. Dasāvatāra and other forms of Vishnu

Though the stories of Rāma and Krishna dominate the sculptural scheme, other forms of Vishnu like the Dasāvatāra have also received attention. All the ten incarnations have been sculptured. Particularly popular were the incarnations of Narasimha and Trivikrama. In the varāha-āvata (Fig. 24), he is shown having the human form and the face of a boar. His left leg is bent and made to rest on the jewelled hood of the mythical serpent, Adisesha, representing the nether-world or pātāla-lōka from where the earth was delivered. Over the bent leg is seated the Bhū-dēvi the Goddess of the earth, just rescued from ocean. In the Bhū-varāha panels at Māmallapuram, Bhū-dēvi is seated on the right bent leg.14 The depiction here is more formal.

Narasimhāvatāra is depicted in several scenes. The man-lion figure is shown advancing towards Hiranyaka who lifts up the sword to strike. Narasimha overpowers him, his right hand holding the neck and another catching hold of his crown while a third tightly grips the sword-bearing hand of Hiranyaka, completely disarming him (Fig. 25). A similar depiction in the Pallava style is found at the Vaikuntaperumāḷ temple at Kāñchi. The next final act of Narasimha tearing the chest of Hiranyaka is also depicted.

Trivikrama-āvata is also depicted beautifully. Vishnu took this gigantic form to stride the three worlds—the earth, the mid-world and the heaven. In Tamil he is called Ulagalānda-Perumāḷ, for whom there is a separate temple at Kāñchi. Here he is shown only with four hands unlike the Pallava figure of Mahābalipuram which shows eight arms, as required by the Vaikhānasa-āgama.15

Vishnu as Mōbini was a favourite theme and is found repeated at several places. It represents Vishnu in the form of a charming and seductive lady, distributing
the amrita to the dēvas. Śiva requested Vishnu to curb the pride of the sages of the Daruka forest. They were seduced and made to lose control of their senses. This theme has given the Vijayanagar artists an opportunity to depict the female form with all its voluptuousness. The rishis are shown clustering round her in a sensuous frenzy (Fig. 26).

The rare form of Vishnu as Ādimurthi or Vaikuntanātha is also found. He is seated on the coiled serpent (Fig. 27). Astabhujā Vishnu is also represented. In one of them he is shown dancing on the apasmāra like demon (like Naṭarāja). Vishnu on Garuḍa (Gajendra-Varada) and as Hayagrīva is also shown, besides separate depiction of Śrī-dēvi and Bhu-dēvi.

D. Sthalapurāṇa legends

The following incidents connected with the Sthalapurāṇa of this temple have also formed the subject matter of sculptures here.

Brahma with other sages engaged in the performance of the sacrifice at Kāṇchi.

Brahma’s consort Saraswati who was angry with her husband for not giving her due honour induces the River Vēgavati to flood the sacrificial altar and spoil it (Fig. 28). Nārada who instigated Saraswati is also shown in the sculpture. From the sacrificial fire emerged Vishnu in the Punyakōṭi vimāna (Fig. 29).

E. Āḻvārs and Āchāryas

A few representations of the Āḻvārs are also found. Tirumangai is represented as a warrior-chieftain (Fig. 30), Periāyār and Nāthamuni with cymbals, Kulasēkhara in his royal dress. By far the best representation is that of Tirukkachi-nambi, found in many maṇḍapaś including the Tirukkachi-nambi-maṇḍapa. He is depicted in anjali in all humility carrying the ālavatta, a long-handled fan (Fig. 31). Rāmānuja getting initiation from Peria-nambi is also represented.

According to the Bhogavatapurāṇa, Vēdayāsa was one of the manifestations of Vishnu. Hence, his representations are found in the Vishnu temples at Srirangam and Kāṇchi. The Vishnudarmottara states that Vyāsa should wear dark brown jaṭās and should be shown with his four disciples, Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila and Vaisampāyana. In this figure, the disciples are not clearly identifiable. Perhaps Śankara was one.

F. Āyudapurushas and other celestial figures

Sudarśana or discus, the chief of Vishnu’s weapons, is personified. He stands within a circle of flame. In another sculpture he is represented on the Garuḍa and topped by the Ādisēsha. He has five faces and sixteen hands and carries Sūlas (Fig 32).

Besides this, Gandharvas, Kinnaris and Yakshas are also shown.

G. Love scenes

Quite a number of sculptures depict intimate love-scenes. As in poetry, so in sculpture, due place was given for the Śringāra-rasa. Various explanations have been given to justify their presence in a religious place, which need not be repeated here. But what is to be noted is that such representations which were restrained
and limited increased in number and sensuousness during the Vijayanagar epoch. They are to be seen repeated in almost all Vijayanagar and Nāyak structures all over South India. They are characteristic of the age which glorified joyous life and happiness.

At the main entrance to the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa are the life-size representations of Manmatha and Rati, embodiments of God and Goddess of Love in Indian mythology (Fig. 33). Manmatha or Kāma is the son of Krishna and is believed to be personification of everlasting manly beauty. He is seated on the swan (hamsa) and is engaged in a sport of shooting an arrow of flowers from his bow made of sugar-cane stalk. His consort Rati is riding merrily on a parrot.

Inside the maṇḍapa, there are representations of royal courtesans, amorous couples in numerous intimate and some even in obscene poses (Fig. 34).

H. Jesters and folk scenes

A comic touch is given to the whole treatment by the depiction of many royal clowns, folk-dancers, acrobatic scenes and curious-headed animals. There is the typical buffoon with his pot-belly, snub-nose and wide mouth in uncouth dance pose. His cross-belt, wristlets, armlets, and the stylish head-gear show that he was a court-jester (Fig. 35). Another dancing figure is playing on the drum Jālara tightly held close to his chest. Two other street-jesters, possibly gypsies, are having two small sticks or kōḷāṭjāms to play with one another. A gypsy girl or kuratti is depicted in a dance pose. She is wearing a skirt instead of a saree and has an elaborate coiffeur. Her little baby is tied close to her breasts in the typical fashion in which it is done even today by the gypsies. The palm-leaf basket which she holds in her hands is usually made by this gypsy class.¹⁶

I. Portrait-sculptures

Representation of the mortals among the immortals was not popular in early sculptures. Hence, portrait-sculptures of kings and queens are extremely few in the Pallava and the Chōla times. But in the Vijayanagar and the Nāyak times, the artists came out of this obsession and introduced portrait-sculptures of kings, chieftains etc., who patronised the temples. Thus the bronze-portraits of Krishnadēva Rāya and his queens are found at Tirumalai. Similarly, the portrait-sculptures of a number of the Nāyak rulers are found in Pudumandapam, Madurai. In our temple also, there is a good sprinkling of such figures, both in stone relief and bronze. But unfortunately, there are no labels and so they remain unidentified. Some tentative identifications are suggested here.

In one of the pillars of the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa there is a royal figure. Since the maṇḍapa was built by Aḷagia Manavāḷa Jīyar in the 16th century, this may be of the king Sādāśiva or his predecessor Achyuta who visited this temple and performed mukta-tulabhāra (Fig. 36). Similarly, in the four-pillared maṇḍapa near the entrance the representation may be that of Achyuta and his wife Varadāmbika. The portrait-figure of Aḷagia Manavāḷa Jīyar is found in several places—in a niche at the top of the compound walls in the fourth prākāra; in one of the pillars of the maṇḍapa in front of the Tāyār shrine and also in the Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa.
Rāja Tōdarmal

There are bronze figures of Rāja Tōdarmal and his family at the entrance of the fourth prākāra (Fig. 37). They are kept in memory of his services to the temple at a critical time. Of the three life-size statues, the central one is that of Tōdarmal and the other two are probably his mother Māta Mōhan De and his wife Pīta Bibi. He was a Hindu chieftain who served under Sādat-ulla-Khān, the first Nawab of the Carnatic. He has the beard, dress and turban in the Muslim fashion. He did notable services to the Vishnu temples at Tirupati and Srīrangam, where too his statues are kept.

NOTES

1. Peria Tirumōṭi, v. 8. 3.
2. 521 of 1919.
4. Ibid.
8. EI. XXIV, p. 90 ff.
9. I. Thousand.
10. 493 of 1919. The images at Srīperumbūdūr, Srīrangam and Melkote are believed to have been prepared during the last days of Rāmānuja.
11. A similar scene is found in the Kalyāna-manḍapa at Hazāra Rāma temple, Hampi.
15. Plate XXXVI.
16. Ibid.
17. Similar gypsy sculptures are seen in the Minākshi temple, Madurai, Āṅdāḷ temple at Srivilliputtur etc.
CHAPTER X
PAINTING AND OTHER ARTS

General features

The art of painting which was cultivated by the Pallava kings to a limited extent reached the zenith of glory under Rājarāja Chōṇa the Great, as exemplified by the specimens available in the Great Temple, Thanjavūr. Subsequent to this period the art seems to have suffered for want of patronage. But the art witnessed a revivalism and fresh impetus in the Vijayanagar epoch when a great spurt in the painting-art was noticeable in many of their temples. Numerous specimens are available at places like Somapalli in Chittoor District, Lepakshi in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh, Hampi and Anagondi. Kāṇchipuram which received ample patronage from the Vijayanagar monarchs like Krishnadēva Rāya, Achyuta Rāya, Sadāśiva Rāya, Venkaṭa-II and others in architectural and sculptural spheres did not fail to attract the Vijayanagar painters also. Thus the specimens of the Vijayanagar paintings are to be seen in the Varadarājāswāmī temple and the Jain temple at Tiruparuttikunram at Kāṇchī. But the former are comparatively less known and no separate study of them has been made so far.

Section 1
PAINTINGS

Places where paintings are found

In the Varadarājāswāmī temple the paintings are found on the walls of the outer verandah surrounding the central shrine. The wall-space is divided into a number of crudely drawn compartments in which are accommodated the painted panels. The figures are large-sized and bold, but much defaced and darkened. Traces of vandalism are clearly seen, especially with the caste-mark on the paintings.

Subject-matter

The subject-matter of the paintings is religious. It is limited in range. Scenes from the sthalapurāṇa of the temple, Ājvārs and Āchāryas and the presiding deities of the various Divya-dēsas or sacred Vishnu temples are portrayed. Most of the paintings contain labels in Tamil and Telugu in the script which is clearly of the 16th century A.D. We shall study these paintings under three groups:

(i) Scenes from the sthalapurāṇa

(1) Gajendra-Varada panel: Varada mounted on Garuḍa comes to rescue the elephant from the clutches of the crocodile. The elephant is shown crying for help
with its uplifted trunk. The small square below the elephant is the tank.

(2) Varadaraja as he emerged in the resplendent Punyakoti-vimana.

(ii) Alvār and Āchāryas

At a few places Nammālvār and Rāmānuja are depicted with characteristic poses. Nammālvār is depicted as at his birth-place Alvār Tirunagar (Tirunelveli District). He is seated in the yōgic posture and on either side of him are shown in a smaller scale all the other Ālvārs and Rāmānuja. The idea that Nammālvār or Satagopa is the central figure among Sṛi-Vaishnava preceptors is well portrayed here. The label above mentions the place as 'Tirunagari-sthalam'. In another painting, the famous scene of the three saints 'Mudal Ālvār' or 'First Ālvār' meeting at a place called Tirukkōlūr and having a vision of Lord Tiruvikrama is depicted.

(iii) The majority of the figures are those of the presiding deities of many of sacred Sṛi-Vaishnava centres (Divya-dāsas). The labels above mention details like the place-name, the presiding deity therein, the sacred dīrtha, the sage to whom the Lord gave a vision. Places beyond the borders of Tamilnad like Ahobilam in Andhra Pradesh and Naimi-sāraṇyam in Upper India have also been included. Some of the places and deities portrayed are:

1. Vishnu as anantasāyil (reclining on the Serpent Ananta) from the place named Tirukkōlūr in Tirunelveli District of Tamilnad. It was the birth-place of Madurakavi-alvār, a direct disciple of Nammālvār. The Goddess Kōlūr-Valli Tāyār is shown in a small inset-shrine on the right side of the main deity; on the left is Garuḍa in anjali pose.

2. Vishnu in standing posture from Tirukkanḍiyūr in Thanjavur District, on his right Kōmalavalli Tāyār is shown seated in a shrine.

3. Vishnu seated in ardhasanyankāsana and flanked by Sṛi and Bhū, also seated, from the temple Tanjaimanānākkōil in Thanjavur; on the deity's left stands a sage or rishi with the jatā and the beard. The name of the Goddess is mentioned as Sembakavalli Tāyār.

4. Vishnu as Narasimha from Ahobilam in Andhra Pradesh. Narasimha is depicted in different poses—seated in the yōgic form in the utkutika posture; seated in padmāsana; seated with Lakshmi on his lap (Lakshmi-Narasimha form) and then at the extreme right, lower panel, he is depicted in the act of killing Hiranya. Depiction is vigorous and fine.

5. One other painting near the steps is not clearly identifiable (Fig. 38). At the top are seen Chandra or the Moon-God, a sage and the Garuḍa—all in anjali pose probably worshipping the Lord. At the bottom, the Goddess is seated in a shrine. Brahma (three-headed) and another Dēva, probably Indra, are worshipping the Goddess. The name of the place is not indicated. Probably it is Naimi-sāraṇyam in North India.

Besides these, Vishnu in reclining posture from places like Sṛirangam and Padmanābapuram; in standing posture from places like Tirumalai is depicted at different places. The Dasaśaṅkaras or the ten-incarnations of Vishnu have also been drawn. But most of them have been blurred and considerably spoiled.
Technique of painting

Dr. Paramasivam, who has done some considerable scientific analysis of the Chōla and Vijayanagar paintings at Thanjavūr and other places, has observed that the paintings of the Vijayanagar times were generally done in the technique known as *fresco-Secco* as distinct from the fresco technique adopted by the Chōla artists.⁴ The former method consists in mixing the pigments with lime water and applying it over the wet plaster. The Chōla paintings had to be done before the wet plaster could dry up. Hence, they required dexterous and swift hand on the part of the artist. But in the *fresco-Secco* process of the Vijayanagar days, the painting was done on the dry wall. This process did not require the skill and quickness in execution. As Dr. Paramasivam remarks, ‘the five centuries that separate the Chōla art from the Vijayanagar art mark a period when slow decadence set in not only over the art of painting, but also in the technique of the process of painting’.⁵

Colour-scheme and stylistic features

Most of the colour has vanished or become dull and what remains can only be seen in patches. Still in some places the brightness of the colours especially in the golden ones is retained. Originally, the colours should have been strong. The colours discernible are red, yellow, light green and white. Light yellow has been used for the body complexion of the Ålvārs and āchāryas while light green or blue is used for the body complexion of deities like Ranganātha. Red has been used for the garments, while golden colour has been used to denote jewels like necklaces, bangles etc. For the Goddesses and the devotees, mineral colours seem to have been used.

The background is adorned with simply drawn flowers, creepers and trees in white pigments against dark background. Ornamental exaggeration in depicting flowers and clouds is noticeable. The paintings are of course conventional and in a few places much stylised. But the majority of them are in good form and proportion having clear conception. Many of the figures have the feet directed to one side and therefore shown in half or three-fourth profile—a characteristic feature of the Vijayanagar and the Nāyak style. But the majority of the figures, as those of Nammālvār and other deities, are shown in full frontal view. The figures have somewhat pointed nose and elongated eyes whose upper eye-lid is drawn in. In a few instances such as the Gajēndra-Varada panel and the Narasimha panel there is an attempt to show movements. But otherwise, there is none of the graceful or rhythmic movement displayed in the earlier styles. Many of the features noticed in the sculptures of the *Kalyāṇa-mandapa* characterised these paintings also such as the fondness to exhibit the jewelled crown and other jewellery like necklaces, armlets, anklets etc., elaborately folded draperies with hard, flat curves of their designs, heavy stress laid on the many curves in the flesh folds of the neck, belly etc.

Date of the paintings

These paintings display unmistakable kinship with the well-known Vijayanagar paintings at Lepakshi and Tirupparuttikunram at Kāñchi itself. The theme as well as the style of the dress and the headgears of figures are similar to the sculptural traditions found in the *Kalyāṇa-mandapa* of the temple and as such can be dated certainly to the middle of the 16th century A.D. The palaeography of the letters
found in the labels clearly confirms this. Dr. N. Venkataramanayya is inclined to date the paintings of the Varadarājaśwāmi temple slightly earlier i.e., the beginning of the 16th century. According to him they are 'far superior to the Lepakshi paintings' though he does not explain in what way they are. Though some of the paintings of our temple compare well with those of Lepakshi, the majority of them depict the deities in their formal static pose. They display less flexibility and grace than those of Lepakshi or even Tirupparuttikunram. In the latter places attempts at portraying narrative panels depicting connected episodes are there, which are conspicuous by their absence in the paintings of Varadarāja temple. The colours are not so subdued. Hence, the paintings of the Varadarājaśwāmi temple can at best be dated to the latter half of the 16th century and in style they seem to be closely following those of Lepakshi.

Section 2

WOOD CARVINGS

The temple is also a treasure-house of wood-carvings. A number of vāhanas or processional vehicles are all made of wood and covered even by copper-plate. The vāhanas, such as the Garuḍa, Hanumān, elephant, horse, swan, lion, vāli etc., are massive in size and beautiful in form. These vehicles are mentioned even in an inscription datable to the 13th century A.D.7 Later, the serpent vehicle was presented to this temple in about A.D. 1511 by the Madhva-guru, Vyāsa-tīrtha.8 Again, in the beginning of the 17th century, Ėṭṭur Kumāra Tātāchārya is said to have presented a number of vāhanas, though the names are not specified.9 There are also two beautiful palanquins made of wood.

Temple car

But the finest specimen of wood-work is the magnificent Ratho or the wooden-car of the temple. Nearly 60 ft. in height, it is a veritable temple on wheels. The wheels are about ten feet in diameter. Over the wheels is the basement of the Ratho which is schematically a prototype of the temple adhīśāna with all its different horizontal divisions—deeply recessed portions alternating with the projecting bands—all intricately carved with multifarious patterns.

Over the massive and richly decorated base is the portion corresponding to the wall (pāda) portion of the temple. But here of course there is no wall but instead a cluster of wooden pillars. In the centre is a high pedestal where the deities are placed. Over the pillars is the prastara portion represented by the canopy or the superstructure in the form of a tapering vimāna composed of diminishing tiers of wooden rafters. In short, the Ratho has all the complements of a shrine.

We can have a closer look at the adhīśāna portion of the Ratho of this temple and note its plastic details. On the whole, it is made up of three recessed parts separated by two projecting bands or patākikas. The recessed portions are occupied by an array of carved panels, interspersed by turret-like pavilions. The panels present various deities and purānic themes all carved in high relief. At the bottom are a series of Bhūta-ganas or amazons who carry, as it were, the entire weight of the Ratho on their shoulders. In the next panel are seen the carved figures of seated Narasimha, Gaṇeśa and Vishnu on Garuḍa, Rati and Manmatha. In the corners are the galloping horses with mounted warriors. In the next recessed panel are
shown a continuous array of figures of warriors on horse-back. In the corners are shown the rampant yāgli.

In the third and the last upper panel are carved a series of mithuna or erotic figures including erotic poses of women. They evidently represent the gāpis or the cowherd-women with whom little Krishna sported. In one place, Krishna is shown embracing a gāpi who is carrying a pot on her head.

The projecting horizontal paṭṭikas or bands that separate the panelled portions of the plinth are decorated in the form of expanded lotus-petals and a number of decorative bulbous pendants hang out from the bands. While the car is on the move, these bulbous pendants would swing against one another and create a plethora of bell-like sounds.

It is one of the most beautiful temple-cars of South India. It bears close affinity to the decorative style adopted for the Kālaṅga-maṇḍapa inside the Varadarāja temple. In fact, the motifs and themes of sculpture are almost the same and very characteristic of the style of the Vijayanagar period. In an inscription dated A.D. 1517, king Krishnadēva Rāya is reported to have donated a car to this temple and it is not unlikely the present car was the one donated by him. The wooden car has been protected well against weathering by covering it over with well-knit coconut leaves in the olden times and with the zinc sheets at present.

Section 3

JEWELLERY

The practice of adorning the images, particularly those used during processions, with numerous jewels, set with precious stones, encouraged the jewellers’ art to a considerable extent. We get several instances of both gold and jewels donated to the temple. Thus in A.D. 1053, a private individual donated golden ear-ornaments to the deity. Naralokavira, the minister of Kulōttunga-I, fixed a golden pinnacle over the shrine of Ranganātha within this temple. In about A.D. 1126, 1972 kaḷaṅju of gold and a golden vessel named sahasradhāra (a plate with thousand holes used for bathing the deities) were donated by an individual. In the 12th century, a military chieftain Kālingarayan presented to the deity a yajñōpavīta in gold. In A.D. 1524, a Vijayanagar officer Rāyasam Sripādayya donated a jewelled pendant to the God. In S 1454 (A.D. 1532), king Achyutadēva Rāya presented a conch, a discus and ārdhvapunogram—all made of gold and studded with gems and diamonds. He also gave a pendant and a necklace set with gems and pearls. Among the gems mentioned are emerald (pachai), opalescent gem (vaiḍūryam), sapphire (nīlam) and coral. But some of the later ones are intact. For instance the famous Nila-vanqta-padakkan and other padakkan donated by Aḷagia-manavāḷa-Jiyar in the 16th century are still the prized possession. Lord Clive presented a gem-set makarakandī for the deity which displays rare workmanship. Another makarakandī noted for its exquisite beauty is known as Anantāchār-makarakandī presented by Prativāti Bhayankaram Anantāchārya in the middle of the 19th century. In the same century, Mr. Place, the Collector of Chingleput district, in charge of the temple administration, presented jewels used as head-ornaments. Several other devotees have given large presents to the temple so that today it possesses about 600 ornaments. These
include, among other things, ear-ornaments, *kavachas* or coverings over the body, *kiritas* or crowns of different shapes, conical, circular and bulbous, *ūrdhvapundra*, nose-ornaments for the Goddesses, necklaces, pendants etc.

**NOTES**

5. *Ibid.* Also see K.R. Srinivasan, *South Indian Paintings* in the Proceedings of the Indian History Congress (Allahabad, 1944) for the elucidation of the techniques in various periods.
6. Dr. Venkataramanaya’s opinion as expressed to Dr. S. Paramasivam personally is quoted by the latter in his article, “The Vijayanagar Paintings” in the Vij. Sex Cen. Com. Volume, p. 92.
9. 475 of 1919.
10. 641 of 1919.
11. 519 of 1919.
12. 473 of 1919.
13. 516 of 1919.
14. 430 of 1919.
15. 413 of 1919.
## APPENDIX

The following is a select list of inscriptions of the Varadarājāsvarāmi temple, classified according to the dynasty, king and date. The last column gives references to the numbers to the inscriptions given in the Epigraphical Reports. References to the originals wherever published are also given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Date given in the inscription</th>
<th>Equivalents in A.D.</th>
<th>Reference (unless otherwise stated, all inscription Nos. belong to the Epigraphical Report for year 1919)</th>
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<td>32nd regnal year</td>
<td>A.D. 1050</td>
<td>519</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kulōttunga-I</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>A.D. 1073</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A.D. 1070-1120)</td>
<td>36th year</td>
<td>A.D. 1106</td>
<td>631</td>
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<td></td>
<td>43rd year</td>
<td>A.D. 1113</td>
<td>49 of 1893, S.I.I., IV, 862</td>
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<td>45th year</td>
<td>A.D. 1115</td>
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<td>Vikrama-Chōla</td>
<td>8th year</td>
<td>A.D. 1126</td>
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<td>A.D. 1127</td>
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<td>A.D. 1128</td>
<td>440, 520, S.I.T.I., I, 410</td>
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<td>11th year</td>
<td>A.D. 1129</td>
<td>590</td>
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<td>17th year</td>
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<td>(A.D. 1163-1179)</td>
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<td>Kulōttunga-III</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>A.D. 1181</td>
<td>403</td>
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<td>(A.D. 1178-1216)</td>
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<td>477; S.I.T.I., I, 355</td>
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Rājarāja-III (A.D. 1216-1246)

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<td>A.D. 1227</td>
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<td>A.D. 1231</td>
<td>432, 463 &amp; 464</td>
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**TELUGU-CHŌDAS**

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<tr>
<td>Tammu-Siddhi</td>
<td>Š 1127</td>
<td>A.D. 1204-05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tikka-I alias</td>
<td>Š 1153</td>
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<td>Š 1157</td>
<td>A.D. 1235</td>
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<td>1223-1250)</td>
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<td>Manma Siddha-II</td>
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<td>Vijayaganda-gōpāla (A.D.</td>
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<td>393; SITI, I, 341</td>
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<td>A.D. 1281</td>
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<td>Vīra-Gandgopāla (c. A.D. 1290-1316)</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>A.D. 1293</td>
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**KĀḍAVARĀYA**

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<tr>
<th>Köpperunjangadēva (c. A.D. 1229-1278)</th>
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<th>A.D. 1256</th>
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| Vīra Kulasēkhara (A.D. 1268-1308) | — | —                                     | 480                                    |

| Māravarman Vikramā Pāndya (acc. A.D. 1283) | 6th year | A.D. 1289                              | 640                                    |

**CHĒRA**

<p>| Ravivarman Kulasēkhara | 46th year | A.D. 1312-13                           | 34 of 1890; Ep. Ind. IV, 145           |</p>
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<td>A.D. 1316</td>
<td>43 of 1893; Ep. Ind. VII, p. 128 ff</td>
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<td>(A.D. 1295-1326)</td>
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<td><strong>SĀMBUVARĀYA</strong></td>
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<td>Champa <em>alias</em></td>
<td>Š 1236</td>
<td>A.D. 1314</td>
<td>51 of 1893; Ep. Ind. III, p. 71</td>
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<td>Kampana-II</td>
<td>Š 1288</td>
<td>A.D. 1366</td>
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<td>(c. A.D. 1364)</td>
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| Alamghir Pāsha Muhammad of Delhi | S 1645  | A.D. 1723 | 424; SITI, I, 386 | }
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