A PROJECT ON PRĀCHĪNA VĀSTU KOSHA



KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY PUBLICATION
CHIEF EDITOR: DAIVAJNA K.N. SOMAYAJI

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF INDIAN TEMPLES

VOLUME TWO



BY

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY
Post Box No. 1857, Bangalore-560 018
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PREFACE

Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore feels proud that it has been able to keep upto its publication schedule. It has completed a major project on Encyclopaedia of Indian Iconography in six volumes; and another major project, Āgama-Kosha in twelve volumes has nearly been completed (with eight volumes having been brought out and the ninth and tenth being in print). In addition to these three Koshas (Lalitha-Kosha, Ganesha Kosha and Oshadhi Kosha) have seen the light of the day. Several other publications have also been undertaken.

The academy feels happy to present now to the interested scholars and students another important book: the second volume of Art and Architecture of Indian Temples, which will be a sequel to the Encyclopaedia of Indian Iconography and Āgama-Kosha. The first volume dealt with the evolution of the Indian Temples and their distinguishing features, as also stylistic variations. This volume focusses attention on the religious and historical contexts of the Indian temples and treats the subject in a new perspective.

We have received good views and reviews about our publications and it is gratifying to note that they have made a mark, and brought prestige to the Academy.

We are grateful to Vidylankara, Sāstra-chūdāmani Vedānta-nidhi, Sangīta-Kalāratna Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao, who has prepared the volumes of the Art and Architecture of Indian Temples at our request, and to the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India for having provided generous financial assistance for this publication.

We thank all the friends and well-wishers who have directly or indirectly helped us in our publication venture. We also thank the Payonidhi Printers (P) Ltd., for having printed this volume neatly and promptly.

Bangalore
14-01-1993

Daivajna K.N. Somayaji
Director and Chief Editor
KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

INTRODUCTION

This is the second volume of *Art and Architecture of Indian temples*, continuing the story of the genesis and development of the temple-idea in India. Stylistic variations have been discussed here with special reference to South India. Enough has already been written and published on Indian temples in general. Sufficient attention, however, has not been given to specific and regional temples. It should now be the concern of archaeologists, historians and art-enthusiasts to prepare illustrated and descriptive monographs relating to both major and minor temples in each of the geographical and cultural divisions of the country, like Bengal, Gujarat, Kashmir, Orissa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil-Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. Distinguishing historical and religious contexts of each province need to be presented, for there is often a tendency of loosing sight of the interesting and important individual trees in the wood.

An attempt has been made here in this directon. Temple-culture in Karnataka is sought to be highlighted, as an instance. The forces at work in this region are dealt with in so far as they relate to the building of temples. The volume that follows will catalogue the temples in each of the districts of the state, with descriptions wherever they are indicated and illustrations wherever available. This may not be strictly of regional interest, because similar forces would be at work in all the regions of the country which is a cultural mosaic.

It is hoped that the relevant particulars of even the minor shrines in each of the states of our country would be made available in due course for students and scholars of temple-art and temple-culture so that a proper and comprehensive appreciation of the Indian temples is made possible.

I am grateful to Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Director of Kalpatharu Research Academy for having accepting my work on the art and architecture of our temples for publication in the series of Kalpatharu Research Academy. I am thankful to the Late Shri Kesar Singh who provided photographs for the earlier volume, as well as for this volume. The Payonidhi printers have spared no pains to make this book an elegant and impressive one.

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF INDIAN TEMPLES

VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER ONE

TEMPLE CULTURE

Ours is a land of temples. And temples in our country are not merely survivals from a bygone age, their contemporary relevance is all too evident. Their hold on the masses has been remarkably persistent, despite the great passage of time and enormous changes in our economic life, social organisation and political fortunes during these recent centuries. Technology and sophistication, urbanisation and altered needs have not taken away from the significance of temples to most of us.

There is no doubt that many of the old temples are in ruins or disuse. But far more numerous are the temples where worship has gone on for hundreds of years without a break. And many more temples have appeared; and attendance in the temples has also increased significantly. The reason is not far to seek. The dominant note in Indian culture has always been religion, and the characteristic expression of religion has been worship in temples. And temple-culture has been a major dimension of Indian culture.

It is true, however, that over years the role and functions of temples have changed. Until the close of the medieval period, temples in communities, both rural and urban, were focal institutions. They were linked inextricably and intimately with all

human activities, social, economic, educational, creative and recreational. But this is now no longer the case, at any rate in our towns and cities. The temple has steadily and increasingly been isolated from other institutionalized activities in the community. Nevertheless, the temple continues to fulfil the religious needs of the people. And the religious needs being universal and almost imperative for the masses in our country, the temple has retained its relevance to this day.

Temples are by definition public institutions, and they involve social organisation, as distinguished from household shrines (gṛhārchā). They are built by collective effort, and sustained by collective interest. Their size, complexity and opulence are related to the effort and economy of the supporting community. There are temples which are large and magnificent, aesthetically conceived and elegantly executed, filled with ornamental carvings, sculptured, richly endowed and elaborately administered. And there are temples on the roadside or in remote villages, which are plain, mean and humble in appearance, rough and rude in conception and execution, and with no pretentions whatever to skill or affluence of any sort. While the forms are products of artistic endeavour, the latter are simple and spontaneous, natural and artless, typically folk and altogether unpretentious.

The former category of temples is built more to suit urban tastes and sophisticated temperament than to satisfy the simple religious urges. Not only the structural forms and appearance, but also the functions (like the worship rituals, assembly of devotees, distribution of food-offerings and so on) of these temples are formalized, consciously and deliberately. This is in sharp contrast to the second variety of temples, which may be described as informal and spontaneous, having their role only in the typically folk context. Our country has a large number of formal temples. In Karnataka alone, we have over 40,000 of such temples. But the number of folk shrines would be staggering, if indeed the figures become available.

FOLK-SHRINES

The informal temples (viz. folk shrines) date back to a very distant past. They are everywhere to be seen; and devotees have been gathering to worship in them for hundreds of years. They have no architecture to speak of, nor any elegance in the structure, or in the icon that it houses. As conspicuous as the absence of formalized appearance of these shrines is the absence of canonical prescriptions in the worship-rituals that are conducted in them. Long-standing usage has no doubt a determining influence, but its hold on the minds of the devotees is unconscious and not in terms of stylized prescriptions. Notwithstanding this absence of formalization in structure and function, there is no doubt

in the minds of the devotees that gather there about the sanctity or anthenticity of these shrines.

Indeed, devotional fervour is altogether unrelated to the magnificence or meanness of the temple-structure, to the wealth or poverty of its coffers, or to the complexity or simplicity of the worship-rituals, considerations of architectural elegance, the splendour of sculptural representations, the beauty of the icon in the sanctum, and elaborate details of worship-rituals do not weigh in the minds of devotees. In fact, it often happens that the temples which attract tourists are not the ones the devotees would care to flock in. A splendid temple is more likely to fall into disuse and remain a monument, if not in ruins, than the plain temples which serve the needs of common folk.

There is need, therefore, to distinguish the folk shrines which are simple and plain religious institutions in a typically rustic setting from their more sophisticated (viz. formal, canonical and monumental) counterparts in large towns and cities. Whereas the former emerged almost spontaneously from collective religious feeling, in the latter religious feelings and sentiments are overpowered by a complex of art and craft, economy and industry, societal organisation and political motivation. The folk shrines have not only had a continuity from time immemorial till our own day, but a recognisable stereotypy in the structure as well as function while not being formal or uniform.

It is impossible in most cases to ascertain how exactly or when precisely these humble shrines began their career. Nor would it be possible to tell who built them and what norms of building they followed. The human and historical background, which each one of them must surely have had, is readily and willingly forgotten, myths and legends being allowed to take its place. The shrines are actually creatures of unconscious social processes; the individual builders or donors were not in any manner meant to be commemmorated. The role of such shrines in folk culture is at once direct, intense and intimate.

FORMAL TEMPLES

On the other hand, we have the formal temples which result from conscious, deliberate and calculated endeavour on the part of a section of the population. The building of such temples is an institutionalized activity involving not only unskilled labour, skilled workers, masons, sculptors, wood-carvers and metal-workers but those who provide patronage and incur the expenditure. The temples so built are designed to have a monumental effect, and not infrequently are they intended to satisfy the vanity of some one who is opulent and powerful. Most of the temples that belong to this

category have recorded evidence of being commissioned piously and endowed sumptuously by kings or their chieftains, royal courtiers, heroes of battles or merchants. Many of them obviously did not consider it improper or vulgar to record their own piety for all posterity to know and admire.

Most of these temples were associated with royal dynasties (like Pallava, Chōḷa, Chāḷukya and Hoysaḷa); and although they were meant to be gifts to the people, they continued to have a private character related to the royal dynasty. There were also temples exclusively meant for members of the royal family to worship in. These temples have invariably a known beginning. They entail considerable expenditure and also anticipate considerable revenue. They are usually located in capitals of kingdoms, in flourishing townships, amidst prosperous settlements or fortified areas. Most of these temples were obviously alien to the folkways and popular mores; and were destined, therefore, to lose sooner or later their social relevance and religious authenticity. They contrive to endure more as monuments than as sacred sites, if indeed they do not in the meantime achieve the status of 'splendid ruins'!

However, there are in our country numerous temples which are formal and monumental, and which have also retained their mass appeal through the ages. And it is not impossible to discern in most of them folk origin and continued folk involvement, although they had the good fortune of meriting royal patronage and munificent endowments. As illustrations, one may think of the Jagannātha temple at Puri (Orissa), the Vēnkaṭeśvara temple atop the Tirumalai-Tirupati hills, (Andhra Pradesh), the Mīnākshi Temple at Madurai and the Kāmākshi Temple at Kāñchīpuram (Tamiḷnāḍu), the Kāli Temple at Calcutta (West Bengal), the Viśvanātha Temple at Vāraṇāsi (Uttar Pradesh), the Krishṇa Temple at Dvārakā (Saurāshṭra), the Mahākāla Temple at Ujjainī (Madhya Pradesh), the Kāmākhyā Temple in Assam, the Pāṅḍuraṅga Temple at Pāṇḍharpur (Mahārāshtra), the Krishṇa Temple at Guruvāyūr (Kerala) and the Mūkāmbikā Temple at Kollūr (Karnataka). These temples had their origin in folk cults, and had wide-spread popular appeal even before royal patronage transformed them into formal and monumental temples with elaborate structure and complicated function. It is difficult for us now to visualize what their appearance, nature and function were when they were simple folk shrines. Local legends (sthala-purāṇas) do help us in many cases to ascertain the course of their transformation from humble shrines to magnificent temples.

It is important to recognise that a large number of temples in our country which have retained their popularity

over a long stretch of time were originally informal folk-shrines in a distant and forgotten past. Their historical antiquity begins only from records and evidences which can be assigned to precise periods. But there are also temples without a folk base. They appeared only as deliberate, formal, and monumental structures with assignable dates of construction, of expansion and of the proliferation of subshrines. These were mostly creatures of royal patronage. More often than not, they were conceived and commissioned by some king or chieftain, who was motivated by a sectarian zeal or by an urge to perpetuate his name and valour, or satisfy his vanity. And professional architects and sculptors of eminence were employed, and were provided with money and labour. Even when piety was the motive for the royal patron, such temples are now more of archaeological and historical interest than of the religious. They lack contemporary relevance, unlike the temples which were elaborated upon a humble folk shrine.

CULTIC ORIGIN

The earliest of formal temples in our country which also have left some traces enabling us to gather the threads, are assigned to the second and first centuries before Christ. Well-known is the Brāhmī inscription of the second century B.C. found at Besnagar (Vidisā in Madhya Pradesh), which commemmorates the erection of a religious column in honour of the revered Vāsudeva, 'the god of gods', by the Indo-Greek Ambassador Heliodorus. An inscription found at Ghosuṇḍī (in Rājasthān), recording the construction of a stone-enclosure for the worship of the hero-gods Samkarshna and Vāsudeva, by a chieftain named Gājāyana, is ascribed to the first century B.C. While neither of the inscriptions specifically mentions the construction of a temple, the flag-column ('garuḍa-dhvaja') mentioned in the former inscription and the stone-structure ('pūja-śilā-prākāra') mentioned in the second, strongly suggest the presence of a shrine of some sort. Interesting is the fact that both the donors in these inscriptions describe themselves as Bhāgavata-enthusiasts, and the monuments related to the worship of Vishṇu. It is probable that the Bhāgavata cult, with its emphasis on the devotional approach to Godhead (bhakti) encouraged the appearance of formal and monumental temples as public places of congregational worship.

But there is hardly any literary, monumental or inscriptional evidence to vouchsafe the presence of temples of this sort (either rock-cut or structural) in the country till about the fifth century A.D. The earliest structural temple that has survived is the one at

Bhitargāon (near Kānpur in Uttar Pradesh), a remarkable brick deeds of Vishṇu and Durgā. Assigned to the structure with numerous terra-cotta plaques depicting the forms and fifth century, it is credited to the religious zeal of the kings of the Gupta dynasty (who ruled this region from the fourth century to the sixth). Another temple ascribed to the same period and to the kings of the same dynasty is the stone temple (called Daśāvatāra temple) at Deogarh (also in the same region). This temple is now in ruins (unlike the Bhitargāon temple which is in a fair state of preservation considering its antiquity). While these two are Vishnu shrines, the one of Ahicchatra (in the same region, but belonging to a slightly later period) is a Siva shrine, now in ruins. It is brick temple (like the Bhitargāon temple), with terra-cotta plaques depicting the forms and deeds of Śiva.

Cults adoring Vishṇu and Śiva appear to have provided the initial impetus for the construction of formal temples during the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The folk-shrines must have been as they are even now, devoted to the worship of the Mother-goddes in her various forms, moods and manifestations. The early formal temples were rock-cut, preceded as they did by natural rock-shrines. Rock-shrines were mostly caves, and caves were important centres of the cults of the mother-goddess from prehistoric times. The expression 'Guheśvarī' ('The lady of the cave') is common for the mother-goddess all over the country. And numerous ancient shrines of the mother-goddesses are just caves, often empty caves (the later sanctum) with no icon inside. In the wake of iconic representation of the worshipful divinities, Vishṇu icons appear to have been the first, followed by the iconic (mūrti) as well as the aniconic (liṅga) representations of Śiva. When the icon was installed in the rock shelter or sanctum, the shelter or sanctum itself symbolized the mother-goddess. Thus the icon in the cella represents the grafting of the formal temple idiom upon the folk-shrine.

PREHISTORIC APPROACHES

Temples are not only 'houses of gods' but were, until recently, focal institutions for the communities that lived around them. In fact, the temples grow only amidst human habitation, for they are meant to fulfil an intensely human longing - the longing to relate oneself reassuringly with forces which are regarded as higher and more potent. Religion, as the etymology of the word suggests, is essentially a matter of relating. Relating himself to the world around him in terms of food, shelter and safety was the early man's only preoccupation.

But endowed as he was with a high-brain, and thus capable of apprehension and imagination, he felt the need to secure help from the unseen but ever-present and all-powerful 'providence'. One of the expressions of this need was to build a place of worship and devise a method of worship. The place of worship had to be both definite and monumental, accessible to the entire tribe.

Although the needs of man (food, shelter and safety) were felt individually, the expression and satisfaction of these needs, at any rate in the early stages of human evolution, were collective. The religious need was no exception. The place of worship had to be public, commonly owned and collectively managed. In the Eastern hemisphere, the age of metals is said to have begun more than four thousand years before Christ, and alongside the use of metals, organised human life in settlements also began. Although the historical period is not more than four or five thousands of years old, prehistory affords clues to the ways how the early man lived, and among them are the places of worship.

In Karnāṭaka, for instance, archaeological evidences of human settlements belonging to the stone age (especially to the period dating back to about ten thousand years age) are abundant in several sites (like Kibbanahalli, Saṅganakallu, Brahmagiri, Siddāpura, Māski, Sūdasandra, Piklihāḷ, Tekkalkōṭe, and on the banks of the river Tungabhadrā). It would not be unreasonable to trace the early efforts at some sort of temple-building in Karnāṭaka to this period. Significant in the context are the neolithic icons of burnt pottery unearthed in the sites in the vicinity of Bellāry (especially in Saṅgankallu), in Tekkalkōṭe, Māski and Piklihāḷ. The icons were obviously meant for worship in some manner, although it cannot be ascertained if they were housed in shrines. It would be unrealistic to expect the shrines of those periods, if there were any, to survive till our own day, or even to leave their traces for us to see.

In any case, such shrines, if there were any, must have been humble, informal folk-shrines, and by no means monumental. They must have been makeshift structures of mud and thatch, wood and leaves, or rings of stone (like the Tōḍa 'azarums'). The purpose was obviously to fulfil simple and unsophisticated needs of small groups of closely-knit people in a community or tribe. They could, therefore, be nothing more than mean shrines often in jungles, under the trees, in rock-shelters, on the outskirts of the settlements or in the centre of tribal territory. They were mainly enclosures facilitating periodical congregations around a cult-object or icon, for such is the case even today in many prehistoric tribes in India.

Rituals during those days (and also during these days) were more important than the icons. We find in many of the early rock-cut shrines (which, however, belong to a later date), the sanctum is empty, giving no evidence of any icon being there at any time. To this day, in many of folk-cults in our country, the shrine is only a place where the masks and weapons used in ritual dances are placed and preserved.

In the coastal regions of Karnāṭaka, especially in Tuḷu-nāḍu, there are numerous shrines (known as bhūta-sthānas), still in use, which are either entirely empty of any objects of worship, or which contain nothing more than a swing-cot on which sometimes a lamp or a small water-vessel is placed for the use of the spirit or bhūta). The equipment of the professional ritual dancer (called in this region 'pātri'), like the mask made of wood, silver, or gold, an elaborately prepared head-dress, jingling bangles and anklets, sacred swords or hand-daggers and ritual bells, are sometimes kept in a corner of that shrine-room. Indeed, these articles are called the treasure of the spirit ('bhūtada bhaṇḍāra'), and during the ritual dance the 'pātri' impersonates the spirit by using these articles.

Such shrines were obviously little more than thatched huts (or 'sheds', called in Kannaḍa 'kottige'), more in the nature of store-houses than spots of worship. On occasions when the tribal rituals were to take place, a pandal ('maṇḍapa') would be put up in front of the shrine, for the ritual participants as well as the audience. Congregations of kinsmen or tribal fellow-folk was called in Tuḷu-nāḍu 'ayana', which word come later to acquire the connotation of 'festival'. The shrine and the pandal in front of it were together the consecrated ground, belonging to the tribe as a whole and out of bounds for tribesmen who were unclean owing to any reason, and for those not belonging to the tribe. We see here the beginnings of the sanctum (cella, 'garbha-gṛha') and the assembly-hall ('mahā-maṇḍapa' or dance-hall, 'raṅga-maṇṭapa') of the later temple.

SURVIVALS IN TUḶU-NĀḌU

Tribal rituals included a variety of procedures such as the possessed dance of the officiating wizard, oracular consultations, fire-walking, animal sacrifices, community feast and tribal entertainments. The wearing of appropriate marks by the wizard is an important detail, for it signifies the presence of the spirit ('bhūtada māni'). The masks are usually those of animals with human and heroic attributes ascribed to them. In Tulu-nādu, the marks of the pig ('pañjurli'). Tiger ('pili-bhūta), horse ('jarandāye'), bull ('nandi-gōṇa') and buffalo ('mahisandā ye') are well-known, and are worshipped. It is probable that masks in



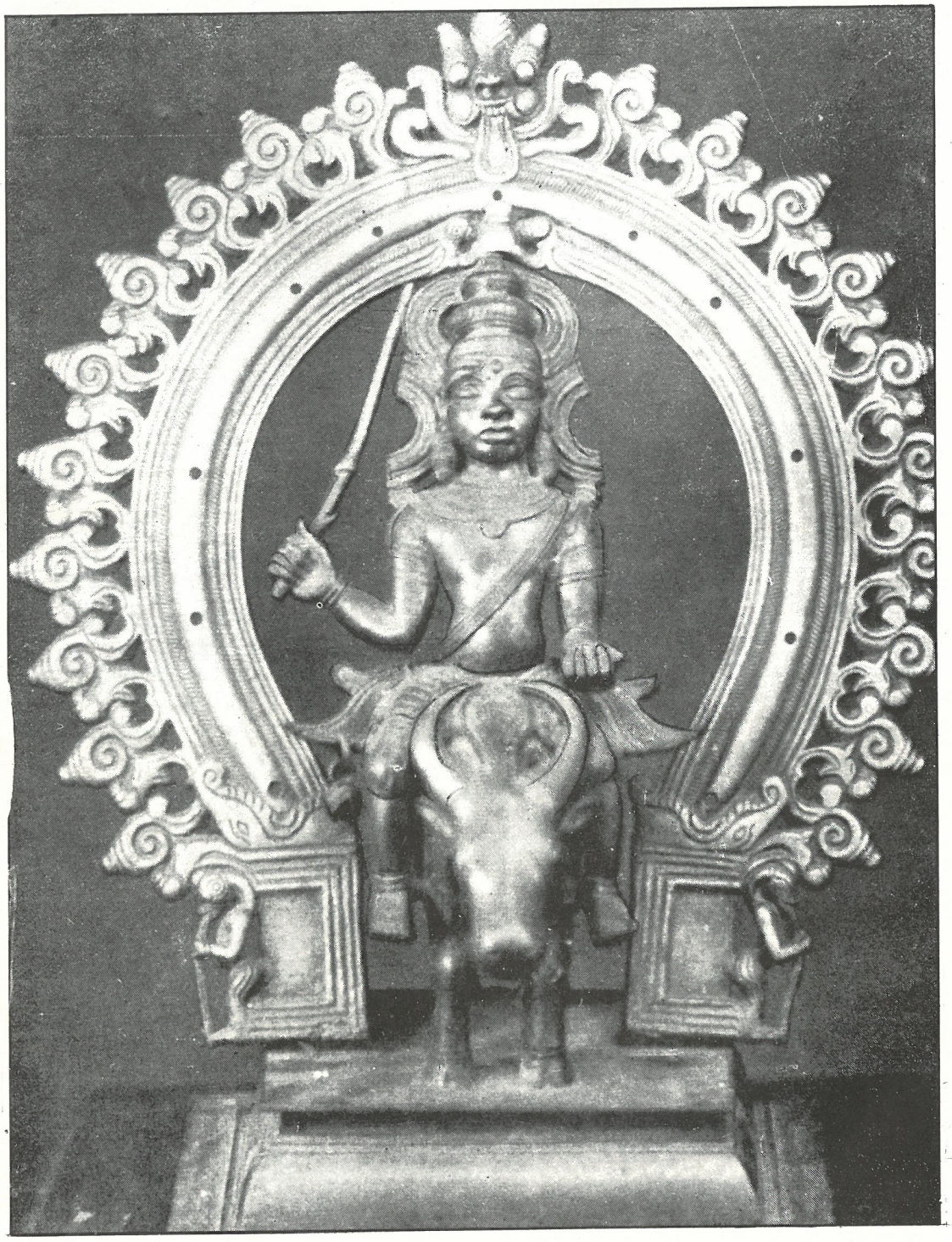
Bhagavati Mask (Therayāṭṭam, Kerala)



Mask from Tuḷu-nāḍu



Narasiṁha Mask (Bhāgavāta-Meḷa)



KUṬṬICHĀTTAN (Keraḷa Folk-deity, also worshipped in some parts of Karnataka)



wood or metal were later achievements. Earlier, they must have been content with painting their faces appropriately. Later still, the custom of representing complete bhūta-animals in wood or metal came into vogue.

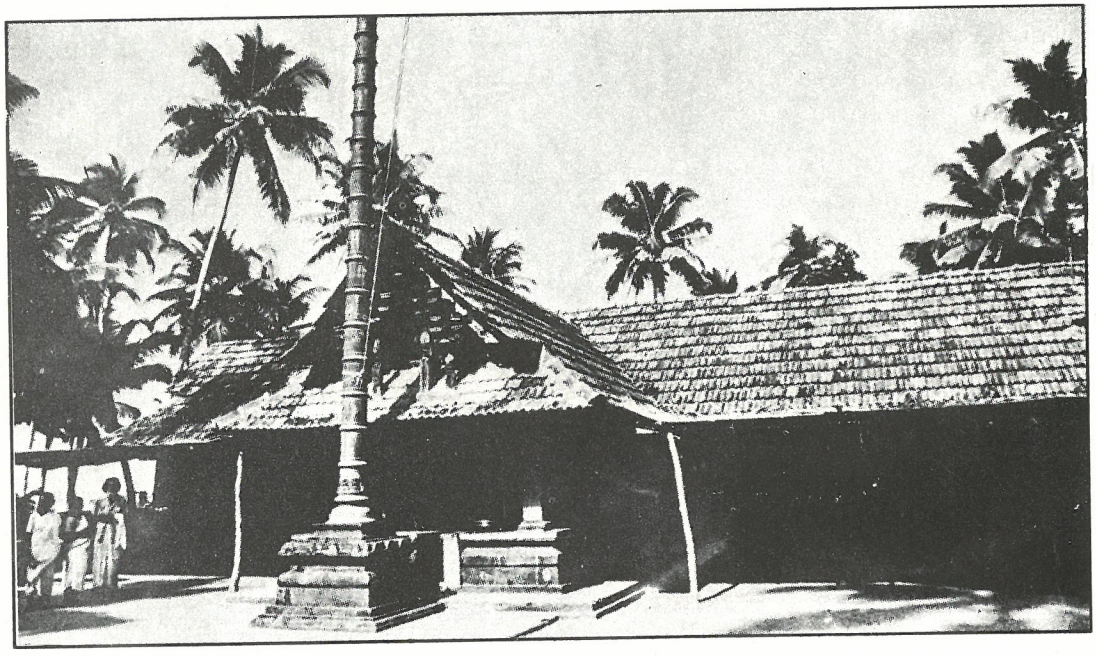
The preservation of these cult-objects of worship necessitated a separate shrine, viz. the future sanctum ('mūla-sthāna'). The shrine for the bhūta ('bhūta-sthāna') would usually be a small plain room, without windows, with a single door and thatched roof. It must be noted that these animal-masks and animal-effigies were honoured in rituals only on occasions (like 'ayana', 'kōla' 'nēma' and 'baṇḍi') and by congregations of people. Otherwise, the shrine would only be a store-room. It is the ritualistic occasion that brings the temple into being. When the occasion is not there, congregational worship too is not there. However, a priest visits the shrine often (sometimes everyday) and places fresh water in a brass vessel, or lights an oil-lamp placed on the swing-cot, without further ceremony.

The distinction between the daily worship (which is more or less a private proceeding and is extremely simple) and occasional worship (which is congregational, elaborate and colourful) in these primitive shrines provides the background for the different dimensions of 'archanā' (or 'nityārchanā') and 'utsava' (festival) in later formal temples. Like the bhūta-sanctuaries, there are also small shrines for the nāga (serpent-spirit), where stone images of the nāga are housed in enclosures (called 'āleḍe', 'nāga-bana'

or 'kāvu' in Tuḷu). It is usual for almost every house in Tuḷu-nāḍu and Keraḷa to have an enclosure of this sort, where simple worship is conducted daily and elaborate worship on occasion. The daily worship is carried out by some member of the household, but occasional worship makes it obligatory for all members of the household to participate, and also to invite their friends and kinsfolk. The most spectacular of these occasional 'festivals' is the ritual sequence known as 'nāga-maṇḍala', where hundreds of devotees gather.

Further, during the occasional (usually once a year) and congregational worship in front of the bhūta or nāga sanctuary, when the 'pātri' impersonates the spirit and dances around in a state of possession, long legends in the local dialect (viz. Tuḷu) are recited by professional and hereditary bards, recounting the advent and extolling the prowess and exploits of the particular bhūta. These recitals are known as 'pāḍdana', the original meaning of which word is rather obscure. They are heroic songs orally communicated, and preserved in the families of these bards. Each of the bhūtas has his own 'pāḍdana' which is recited during his impersonation and propitiation. The purpose of these exotic narratives appears to be to achieve the audio-visual fixture of the bhūta's image in the minds of the tribal participants.

On examination, the context and style of these narratives belong to the category of folklore. Such association of folklore with ritual dances is com-





Nāga (Chāḷukya), Āḷampura

mon among the 'people in all the regions of the country. These narratives of tribal origin in the local dialects provided the model for the later 'purāṇas' in simple Sanskrit, especially the variety known as 'sthala-purāṇas' which focus attention on regional shrines and the divinities worshipped there. While the ancient narratives are direct, vivid and forceful in their imagery with a touch of spontaneity and divine frenzy, the medieval purāṇas are more formal and stylized, and therefore long-drawn and somewhat dreary.

It is remarkable that in the coastal region of Karnāṭaka, Tuḷu-nāḍu, there is a continuity of the bhūta-cult from prehistoric days to our own day. The cult which is undoubtedly very old, is still very much in evidence in the region. There are not only ancient bhūta-shrines (bhūta-sthānas) all over the region, but worship also is conducted in them, almost in the ancient manner. This is remarkable because this area was never in geographical or historical isolation from the surrounding cultural zones, and was receptive to the influences of sophistication.

CULTURAL CONFLUENCE

Even Greek writers of the early Christian era, like Pliny (23 A.D.) and Ptolemy (150 A.D.), were acquainted with this region. The former mentions 'Nitrias' (Netrāvati), and 'Barrace' (Basure, the old name for the modern Basarūr), while the latter writer refers to 'Maganūr' (for Mangalore) and 'oloikhora' (for Āḷva-khēḍa). The earliest of the Kannaḍa inscriptions, the Halmiḍi inscription (dated about 450 A.D.) refers to a scion of the Āḷupa dynasty (the earliest historical dynasty to rule over this region), who was a vassal of the Kadaṁba King who ruled over the larger region of Karnāṭaka. Thus, when the historical period began, Tuḷu-nāḍu was under the suzereignty of the powerful Kadaṁbas of Banavāsi who ruled over a vast tract and were patrons of art and letters. It is unlikely that the chieftains of Tuḷu-nāḍu were not influenced by the temple-building zeal of the Kadaṁbas or by their interest in Śaivism, Vaishṇavism and Jainism.

The Mahākūṭa-pillar inscription dated 602 A.D. relates that the Western Chāḷukyan King Kirtivarman (566-596 A.D.) had conquered the territory now known as Tuḷu-nāḍu. When Āḷuvarasa I (650-680 A.D.) was presiding over the destinies of this region, the Chāḷukyan emperor was not only having sway over this area, but he had made this chieftain (Āḷuvarasa) the overlord of the entire Kadaṁba-maṇḍala (the area held formerly by the Kadaṁba monarchs). But when Āḷuvarasa II (730-765 A.D.), his descendent, was the lord of the region, the Pallava kings had acquired authority over him.

The Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi and the Pallavas of Kāñchīpuram were zealous builders of temples (both rock-cut and structural), and the Āḷupas of Tuḷu-nāḍu could not have resisted this impact. The early formal and structural temples in this area must thus be partly at least ascribed to the Kadamba, Chāḷukya and Pallava influences.

By the time the Chāḷukya and Pallava influences were felt in Tuḷu-nāḍu, the phase of rock-cult temples had already passed, and structural temples had come into vogue. No rock-cut temples of significance has as yet come to light in this region, although interesting natural cave-shrines are to be seen at Guḍḍettu (Gaṇapati, Kundāpur Taluk), Gujjaḍi-guhēśvara, Nelli-tīrtha and Siriyāru. The influence of the Pallavas, who were keenly interested in rock-cut or cave-temples, was felt in the northern part of Keraḷa, known then as the Chēra country, which is contiguous with Tuḷu-nāḍu in Karnāṭaka. And we have three rock-cut temples, all of Śaiva persuation, in Keraḷa one at Trikūr (Trichūr district), another in Irunilaṁkōḍe (same district), and the third one at Bhrāntapura (Pālghāṭ district). They were built by the early Chēra kings, although the exact period of their excavation is uncertain. It is obvious that they preceded the structural temples in Keraḷa and that they borrowed heavily from the Pallava idiom and style. The southern part of Keraḷa has a much larger number of rock-cut shrines, like those at Kaviyūr (Alleppey district), Tirunandikara (Kanyākumāri district), Bhūta-pāṇḍi (same district), Koṭṭukal- Vilañjam (Kōllam district) and Ayirūrpura (Trivandrum district). These, however, show a strong Pāṇḍyan influence, as this part of Keraḷa was contiguous with the Pāṇḍi-maṇḍalam of the old Tamiḷ country.

Tuḷu-nāḍu, influenced as it was by the Chāḷukyan structural temples, began building structural shrines earlier than the neighbouring Keraḷa did. The earliest temple of this sort in Keraḷa was the one built by Kulaśekhara-perumāḷ (800-820, identified often with the Āḷwār of that name), a king of the second Chēra dynasty, for Krishṇa in Tirukkulaśekharapuram (near Tiruvañchikkuḷam in Trichūr district). But the earliest temple in Tuḷu-nāḍu was probably the one dedicated to Prasanna-Someśvara at Śaṁbhukallu (Udyāvara). This is now in ruins, with only the basement remaining on a low hillock. There is a mention in the inscription of the Āḷupa ruler Āḷuvarasa II (730-765 A.D.) that this temple was already existing when this king began his rule.

This was an apsidal temple (gajapṛshṭhākāra), like the well-known and so called Durgā temple in Aihoḷe (which we will have occasion to describe later), built by the early Western Chāḷukyan kings of Bādāmi. This temple in Tuḷu-nāḍu probably inspired several apsidal temples in the region, like the Pañchalingeśvara

temple at Bārakūru, the Ananteśvara temple in Uḍipi, the Mahāliṅgeśvara temple at Aḍūru, the Mahatobhāra-mahāliṅga temple at Brahmāvara, the Akhileśvara temple in Poḷali and the big temple at Kōṭa. Some of these early apsidal temples are conjectured to have inspired the early apsidal temples of Keraḷa, like the Śiva temple at Tiruvannūr (Calicut), and Kāla-saṁhāra-mūrti temple and the Ayyappan shrine at Mañjēri. (cf. H. Sarkar, *An Architectural Survey of Temples of Kerala,* Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1978, p. 167).

It must be mentioned that before structural temples in brick or stone (laterite or granite) took shape in Tuḷu-nāḍu, or Keraḷa, temples had timber superstructures on laterite basement (adhishṭhāna), or were plain thatched mud-shrines. With such building material, the apsidal (gajapṛshtha) or even circular (maṇḍala or vṛtta) shapes could easily be handled. There are numerous circular temples in both Tuḷu-nāḍu (like the Vishṇumūrti temples at Palimāru and Yeḍappaḍavu, the Narasiṁha temple at Munnūru, the Subrahmaṇya temple at Sāntūru, and the Janārdana temple at Kārkaḍa, Kōṭa) and Keraḷa (like the Vishṇu temple at Peruṁpaḷadūr, the Śiva temples at Poḷpuḷḷi, Pulpaṭṭa, Tirunillai and Kaviyūr, the Subrahmaṇya temple at Mañjēri, the Nīramaṅkara temple at Nēmam, and the Peruntirukkōil at Udayaṁperūr).

CHAPTER TWO

There is a strong and persistent tradition, which can not lightly be brushed aside, that the Mauryan king Chandragupta (about 322-298 B.C.) visited Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa in Karnāṭaka, in the company of the Jaina saint Bhadrabāhu, and settled down on the smaller of the two hills there. Although the event is first recorded in an inscription of the seventh century A.D. the tradition itself must have been an ancient one. There are two monuments on the hill recalling this event: a rock shelter known as Bhadrabāhu-cave and a structural shrine known as Chandragupta-basadi. The present state in which the two monuments are is of course, a much later achievement; but there are evidences that ancient monuments dating back to centuries prior to Christ were renovated in subsequent periods. And we gather from the writings of the Tibetan historian Tārānātha (author of a history of Indian Buddhism entitled Gos-'dod-kun - 'byung, prepared in 1608) that Chandragupta Maurya's successor Bindusāra (about 298-273 B.C.) ruled over parts of Karnāṭaka. It is well known that Bindusāra's son, the celebrated Aśoka (about 269-232 B.C.) sent his envoys to Banavāsi (the heart of Karnāṭaka), and that among his rock-edicts ten are to be found in different parts of Karnāṭaka (like Māski, Niṭṭūr, Brahmagiri, and Koppaḷa).

Thus Karnāṭaka was exposed, even before the Christian era, not only to the religious movements that began in the northern regions of the country (Jainism and Buddhism) but also to the social and political influences of the northern kingdoms. The geographical or historical isolation was precluded for Karnāṭaka right from the dawn of recorded history.

The next royal dynasty that ruled over the greater part of the present Karnāṭaka was that of the Śātavāhanas (from the first to the third century A.D.), whose settlements at Vaḍagāon - Mādhavpura, Chandravaḷḷi, Banavāsi, Paṭṭadakallu and Sannati have come to light. While no monuments of this period have survived, the famous Tāḷaguṇḍa inscription of the Kadaṁba King, Śāntivarman (430-455 A.D.) refers to a temple to Śiva ('śātakarnyādibhih śraddhayābhyarchite') who

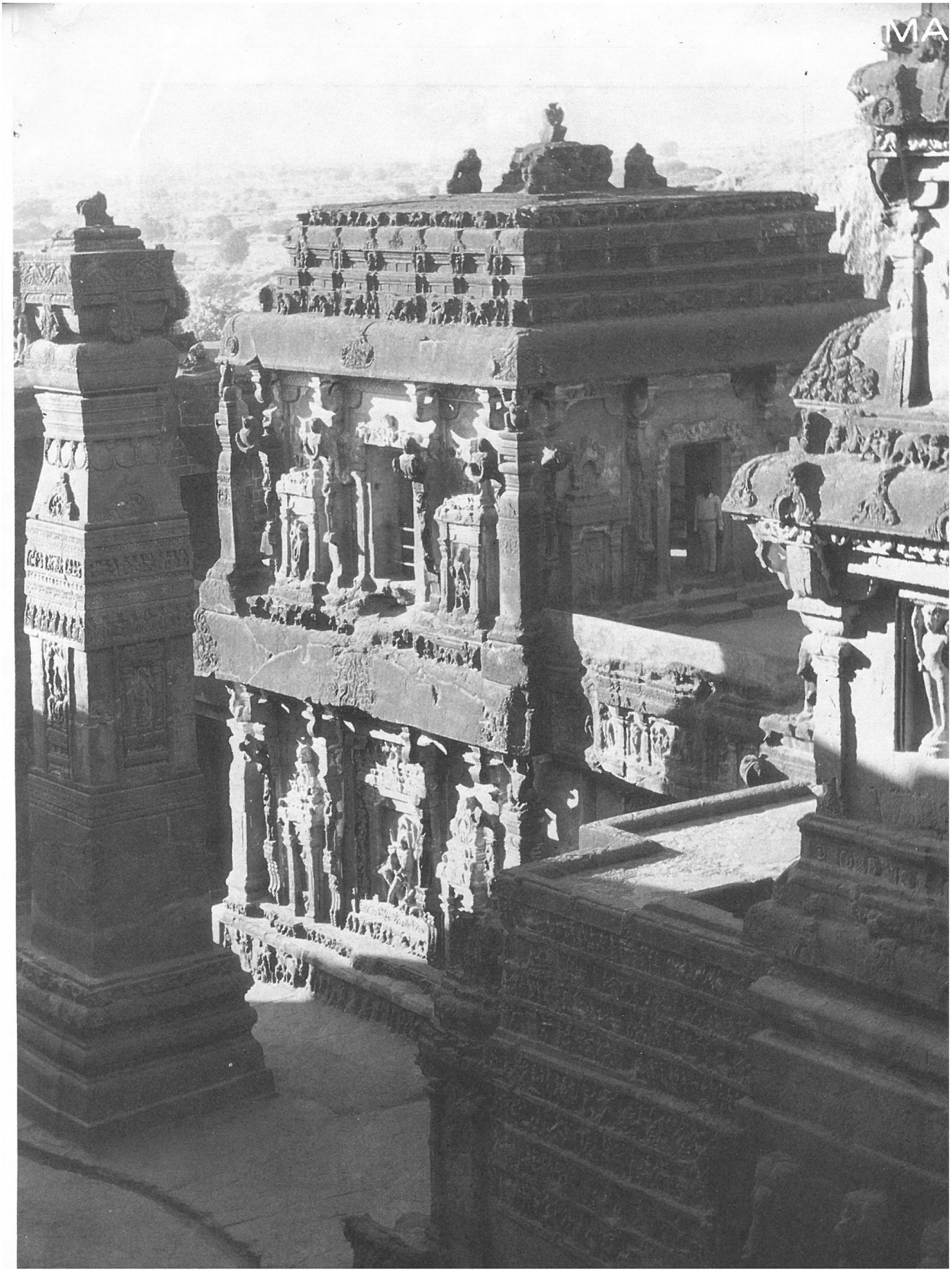
ruled about two hundred years earlier. Śāntivarman's predecessor Kākustha-varman (405-430) is recorded in the same inscription to have got a big tank ('taṭākam mahat') excavated within the premises of this temple. The temple must therefore have been a big one. And the expression 'siddhālaya' used in the inscription means an ancient temple where the icon has been installed by a yogic adept of great spiritual powers.

Following the decline of the Śātavāhana power, the Kadaṁbas of Banavāsi ruled over the northern region of Karnāṭaka and the Gaṅgas of Talakāḍu over the southern region. That there were already Śiva shrines during the rule of the early Kadaṁba kings which received royal patronage is evident from the Tālagunḍa inscription of Śāntivarman already mentioned. Śānti-varman's grandson, Ravi-varman (about 485-519) is recorded to have built a Jaina shrine, called Kāma-jinālaya, in Banavāsi, which place had already become a great cultural centre. Another Kadaṁba king of the collateral line (Triparvata) Krishṇa-varman (430-460) had performed a grand Vedic ritual, aśvamedha. Thus during the two hundred years of the Kadaṁba rule in Karnāṭaka, during which period Karnāṭaka established itself as a great political and cultural zone, Śaivism and Jainism as also the Vedic religion found royal favour and became popular. Many temples must have sprung up, although it is impossible for us to ascertain their form or nature. The rock-cut shrines at Arvalem (Goa) are also ascribed to this period.

The Gaṅgas of Talakāḍu who ruled over the southern region of Karnāṭaka for a long stretch of time (from the middle of the fourth century till about the tenth century) were fervent patrons of Jainism, but encouraged and patronized Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults also. The early monarchs of this dynsty were blessed by a Jaina ascetic, Siṁhanandi, and were protected by the Yakshiṇī Padmāvatī. Jaina shrines and temples to Padmāvatī were built in several places. Nanda-giri (the present Nandi hills near Bangalore), Kuvalālapura (the present Kōlār), Manne and Talakāḍu became important cultural centres. The Gaṅga rulers were enlightened, cultured, and religious-minded. Their contribution to temple-architecture and temple-culture is immense. The so-called Drāviḍa style of temples found its crystallization during their rule, as also the 'basadi'-architecture. The famous monolithic statue of the Jaina saint, Gommaṭa, atop the bigger of the two hills, is an achievement of the Gaṅga period. Sculptural represention in temples and basadis became an established practice. There are bronze sculptures also dating back to this period.

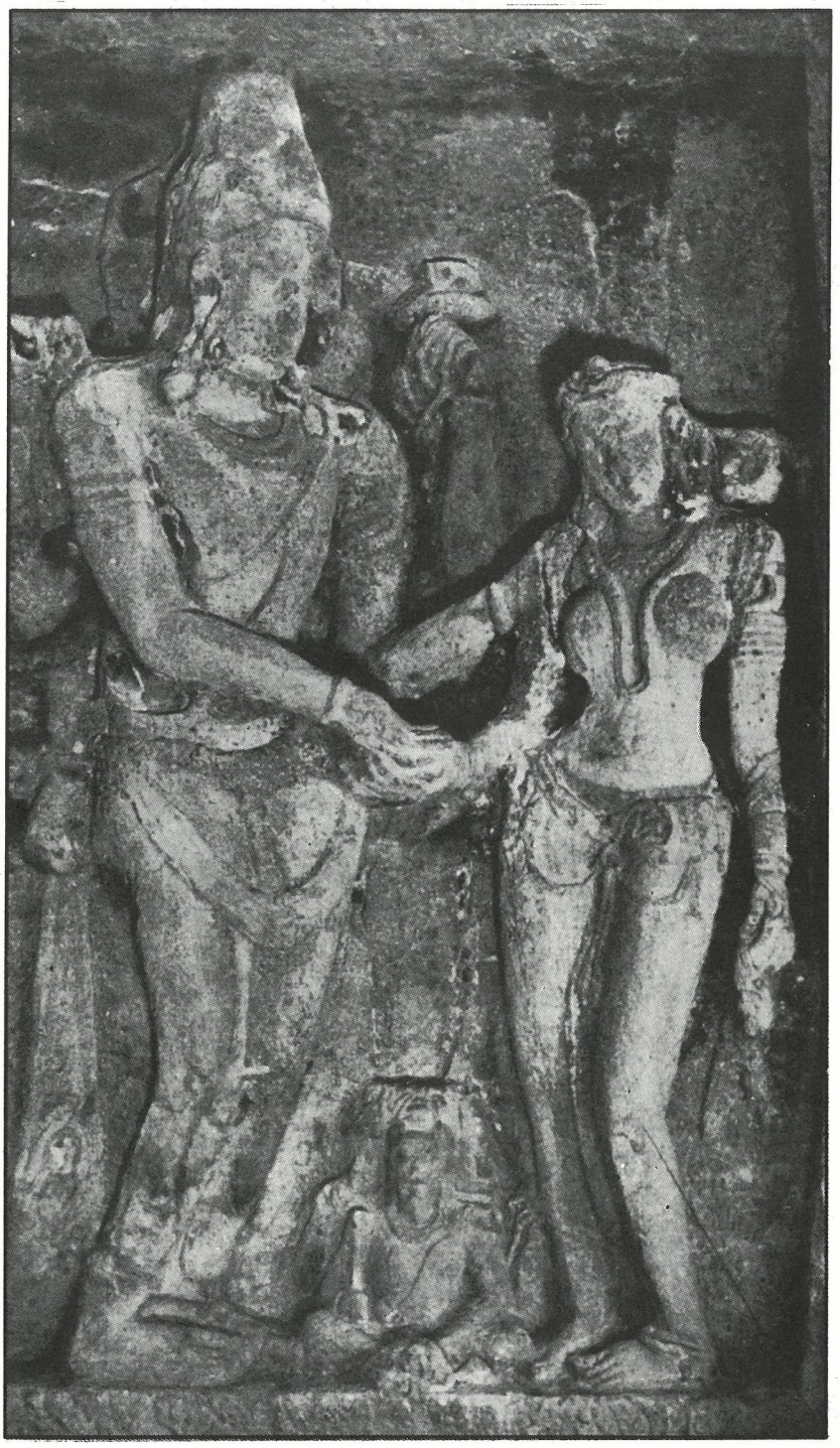
THE CHĀḶUKYAN EXPERIMENTS

The Chāḷukyas of Badāmi (also called the early Western Chāḷukyas) ruled over Karnāṭaka from about 500 A.D. till 757 A.D. and the period is rightly described as the golden age of





Painting in Kailāsa temple, Ellora



Kalyāṇa-Sundara, from Ellora



Gandharvas, Ellora



Gandharvas, Aihoḷe



Andhakāsura-Saṁhāra, Ellora



Gandharvas in Cave-temple, Ellora

temple-architecture. It was also the period when Karnāṭaka achieved political and cultural unity. Jayasiṁha, who was probably a feudatory of the Kadaṁbas rose to eminence around 500 A.D. and his grandson Pulakeśin



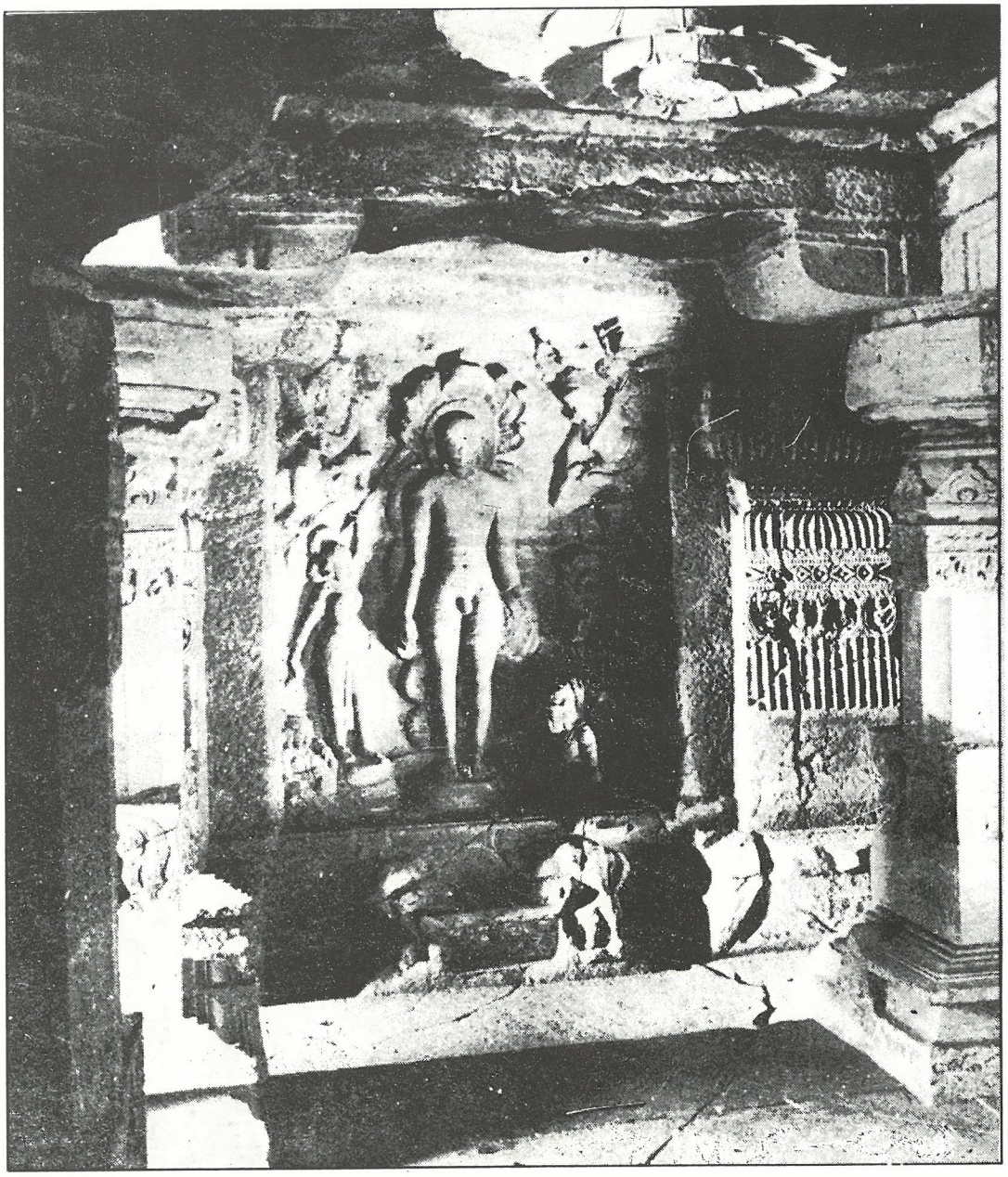
Cave-Temple in Ellora

I (about 540-566 A.D.) who assumed the title 'mahārāja' and 'satyāśraya-śrīvallabha' overthrew the Kadambas of Banavasi and became an independent monarch. He is said to have performed numerous Vedic rituals like



Cave-temple, Ellora (Sculptures)

agnishṭoma, vājapeya, aśvamedha, pauṇḍarīka, hiraṇyagarbha and agnichayana. But there is no record of any temple built by him. The Chaḷukyas of Bādāmi were, however, devoted to the worship the warrior-god



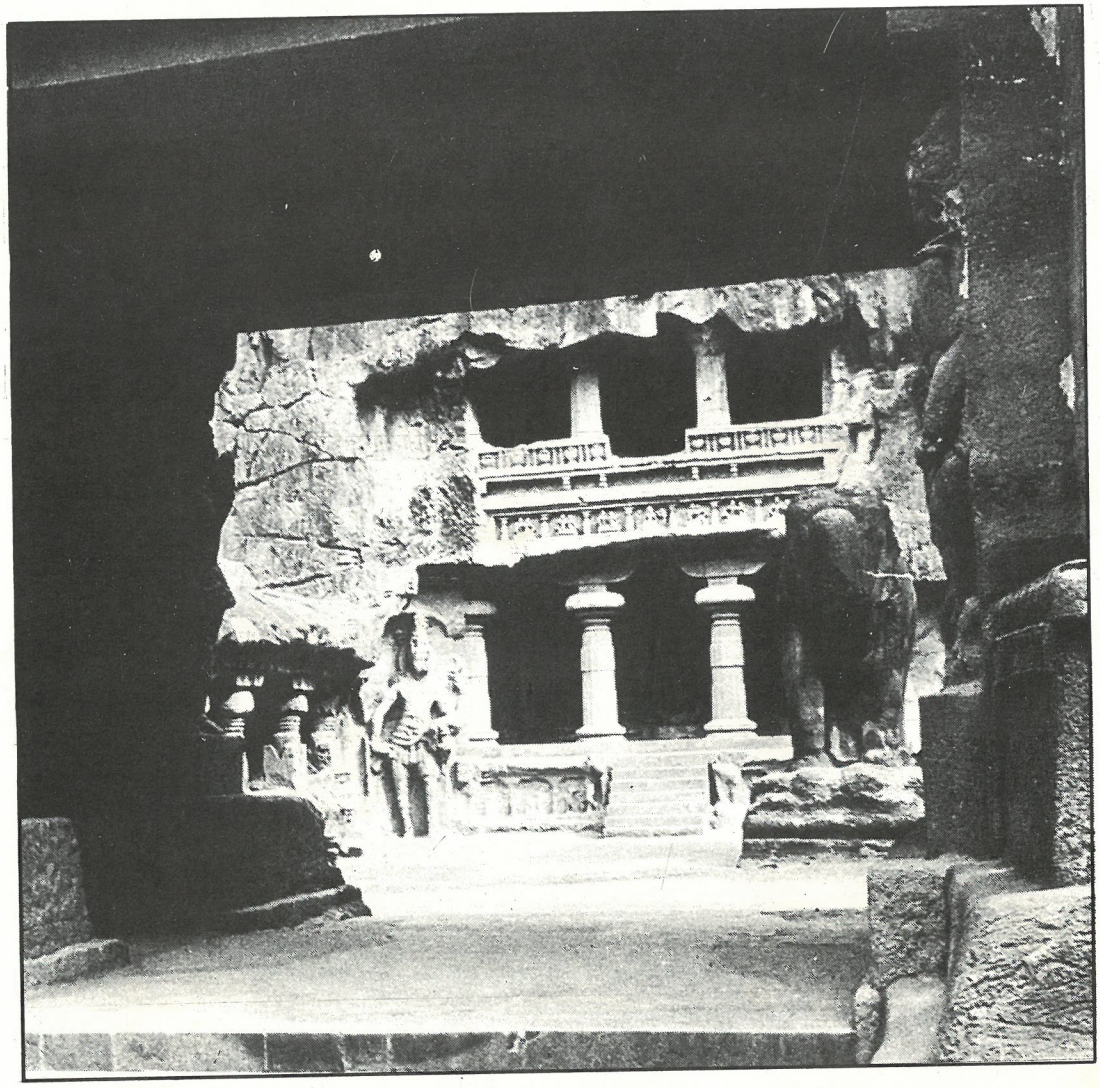
Kārtikeya (Skanda-Subrahmaṇya) and seven mother-goddesses collectively called Sapta-māṭṛkā. These were folk deities, and there must have been numerous small and informal shrines to them. There is no mention in any



Bhairava, Ellora

inscription of royal patronage being extended to them.

When Pulakeśin I died in 566, the elder of his two sons, Kīrtivarma (katti-arasu) succeeded him on the throne (566-597). A great monarch that he was, he consolidated the Chāḷukyan Kingdom and performed (like his father) many grand Vedic rituals. He is recorded to have begun in 578 A.D. the rock-cut shrine to Vishṇu (Vishṇugrha) in Bādāmi (Cave III). It is one of the earliest of temples of this genre. During this period Vaishṇava and Śaiva cults had acquired popularity and royal patronage not only in Karnāṭaka but also in the neighbouring Tamiḷ country; and incidental to these cults, temples had appeared and the temple-culture was slowly getting crystallized. This was the period when the āgama texts began to be prepared. The Saṅgam age (from 200 B.C. to about 2000 A.D.) had seen in the Tamiḷ Country different types of temples (like iḷaṅ-kōyil,



Kailāsa Temple, Ellora

māḍa-k-koyil and āḷar-kōyil) built for Śiva and Vishṇu; the literature of the period provides numerous technical expressions pertaining to temple architecturue. But most of these temples must have been of perishable material (brick, mortar, mud, thatch or wood), and none of the temples of that period has survived. There is not a single temple in the Tamiḷ country which can be dated to a period earlier than sixth century. The oldest monumental temple in this region is the rock-cut one at Mandagapaṭṭu, conceived and executed by the Pallava monarch, Mahendra-varma I (580-630). This must have appeared almost contemporaneously with Chāḷukya Kīrti-



Gaṇas in Festive Mood (from Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchipuram)

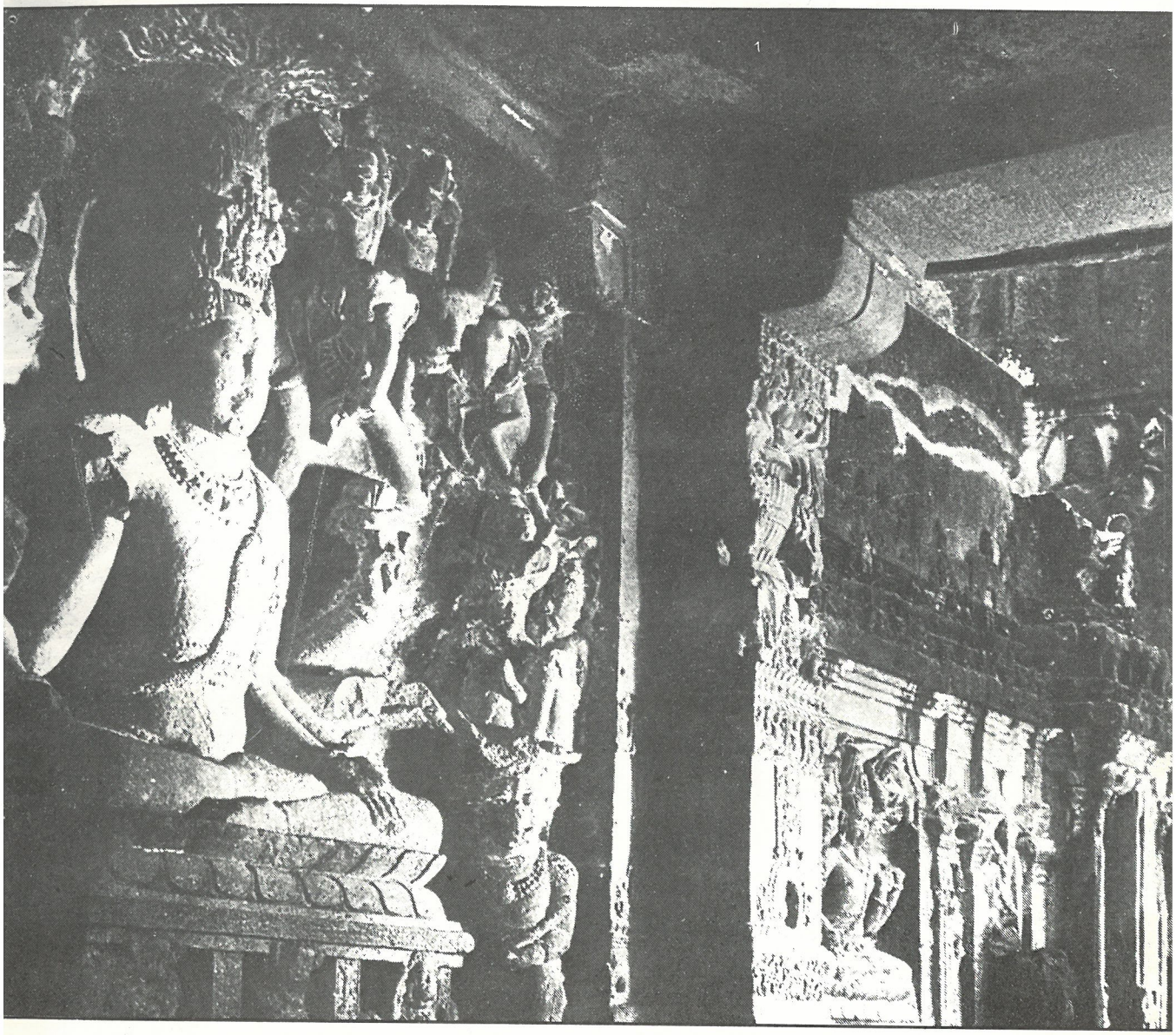
varman's Vishṇu Temple (rock-cut) in Bādāmi (Cave III).

Kīrti-varma was succeeded by his step-brother Maṅgaḷīśa (596- 610), who was a powerful king and hero of many battles. But he was also a devout 'bhāgavata', and zealously devoted to Mahākūṭeśvara-maṭha of Mahākūṭa (near Bādāmi). This temple must have existed before Maṅgaḷīśa became king, for he caused, soon after he assumed authority over the realm and won



Dancing Ganas (from Kailasanātha temple, Kānchīpuram)

some battles, a 'devotional pillar' (dharma-stambha) to be erected in the Mahakūta temple. He also made over to the temple, at the instance of his elder brother's wife Durlabhā-devi of the Bappura family, the riches he had won from his military expeditions and conquests, and also granted the revenue of ten villages to the temple (cf. Mahākūta inscription dated 602 A.D.).



Kailāsa Temple, Ellora

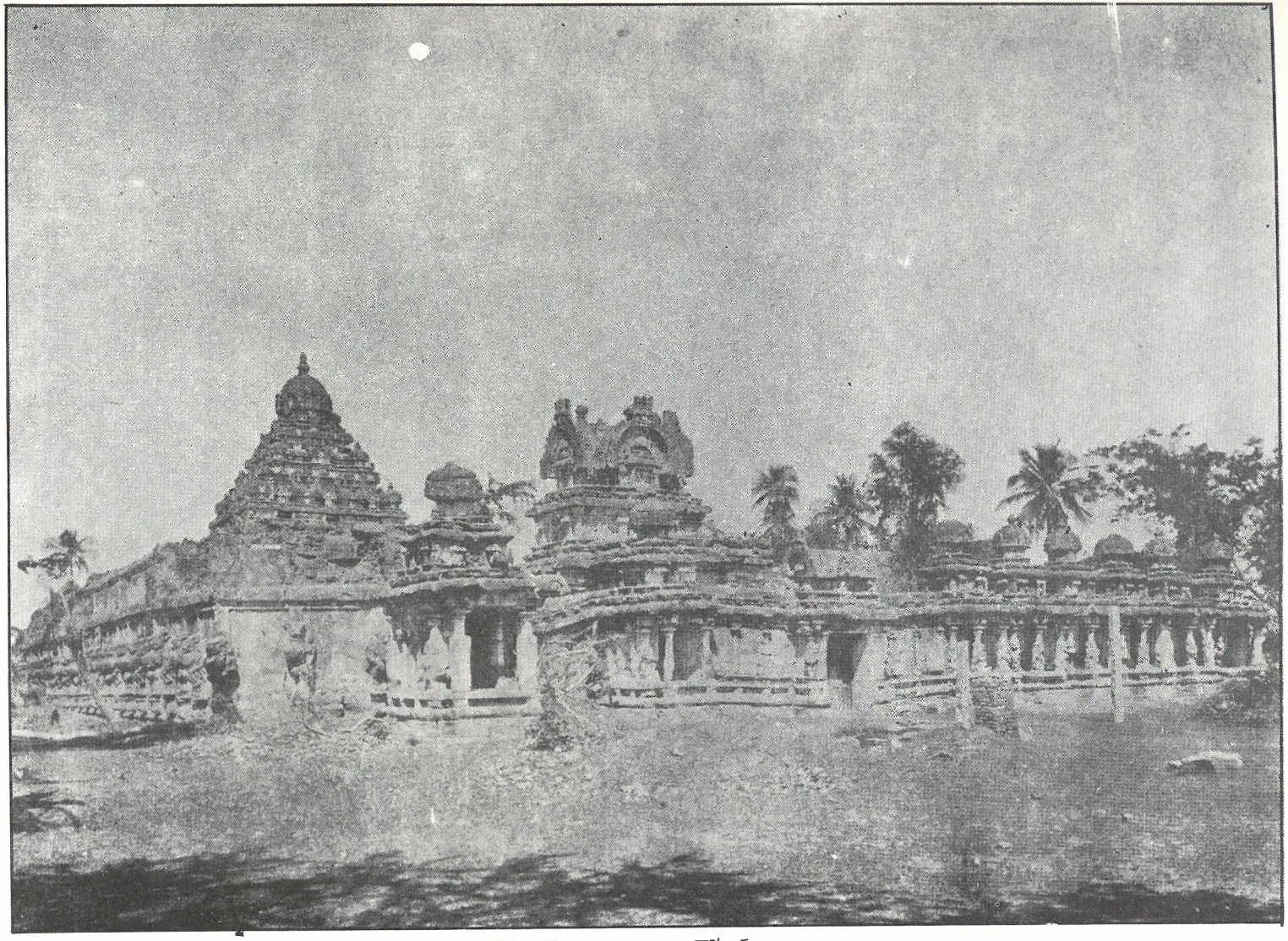
More importantly, he was responsible for the completion of rock-cut Vishṇu shrine in Bādāmi (cave III) begun by his elder brother Kirti—varma I.

It was this temple that provided the inspiration for the most celebrated of the Pallava monarch, Māmalla Narasiṁha-varman (625-645), to plan

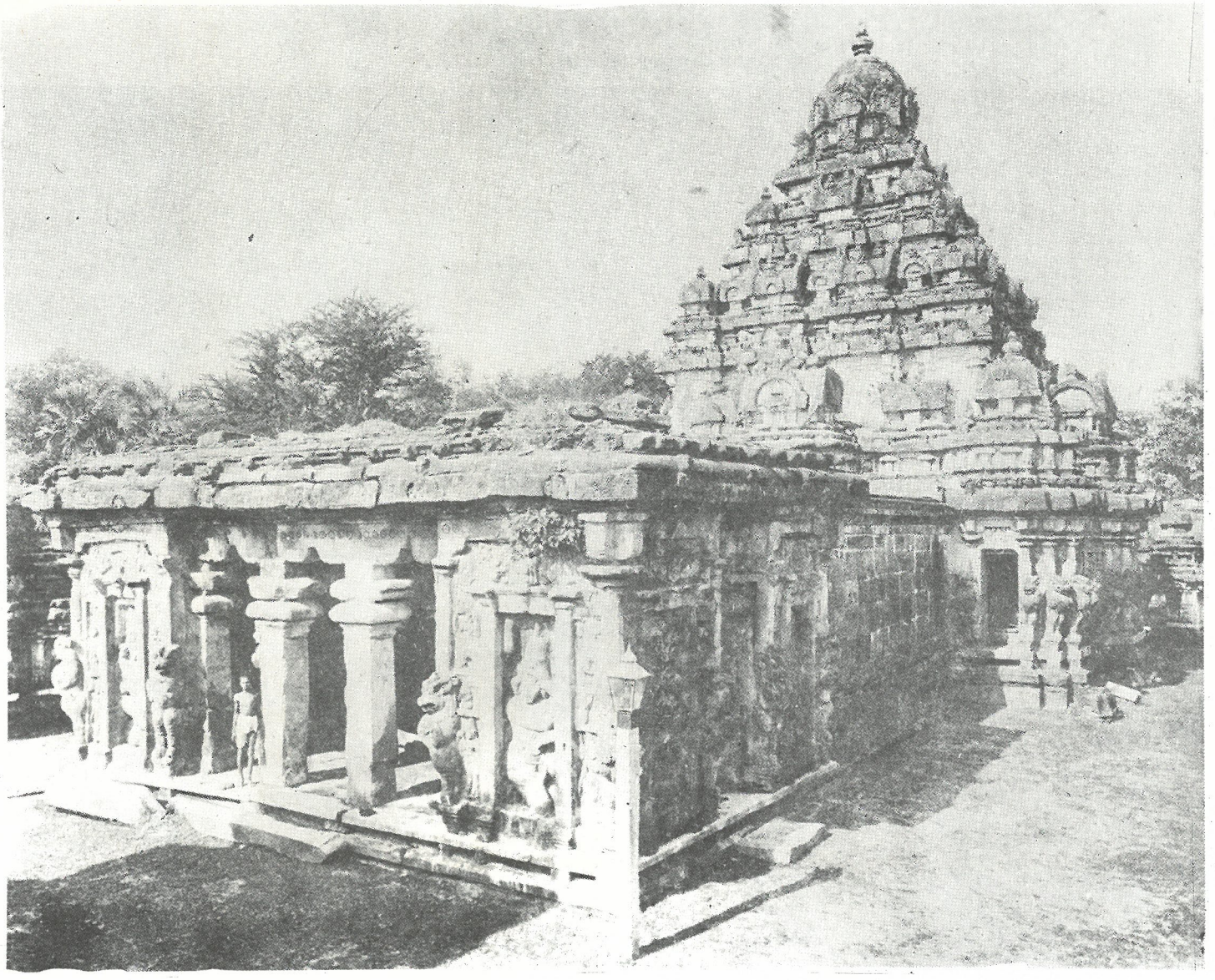


Gaṇas (from Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchipuram)

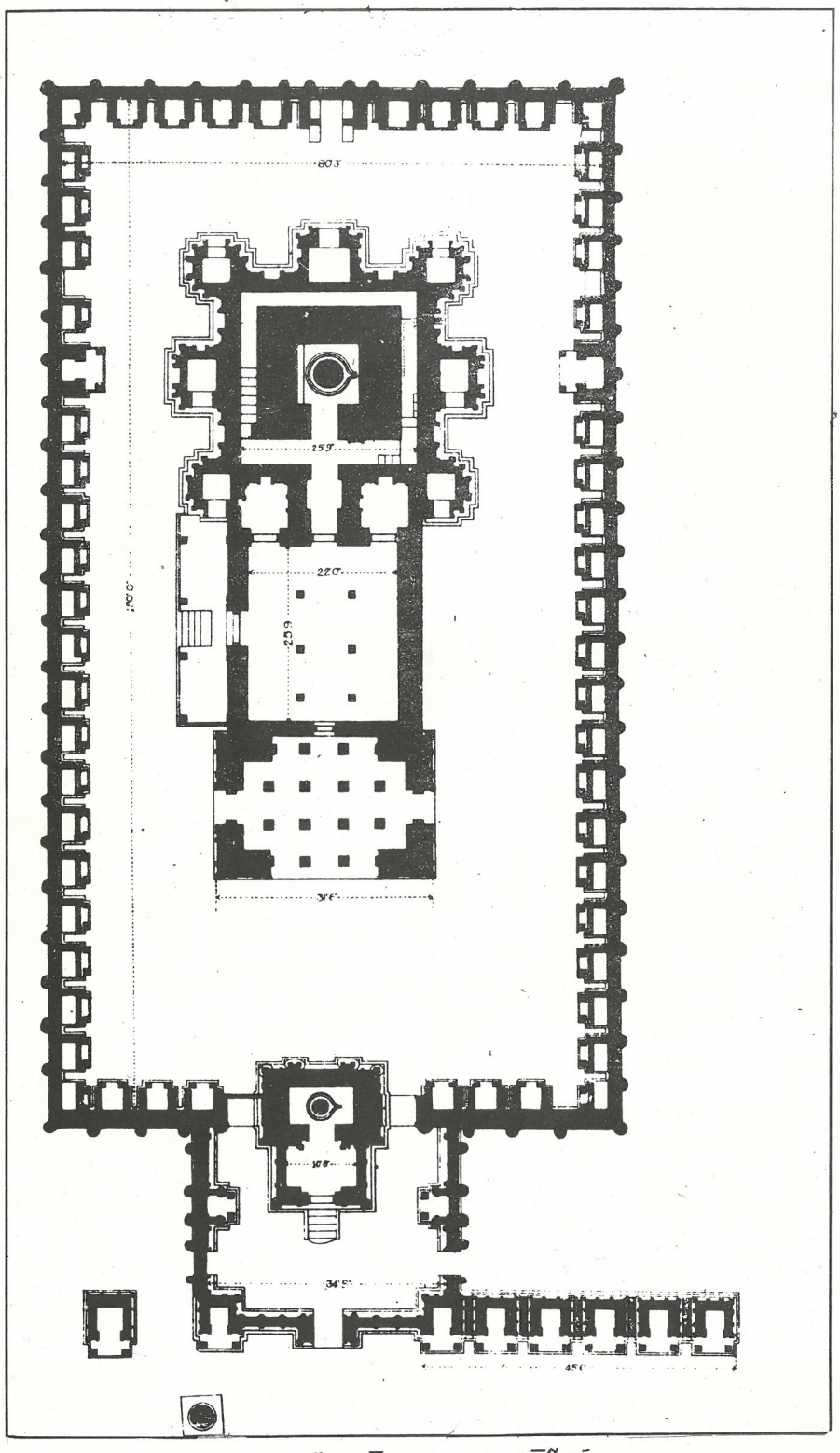
the famous rock-cut temples at Māmallapuram in the Tamiḷ country. This Pallava hero who was a contemporary of the Chāḷukyan king Pulakeśin II (610-642), conquered Bādami; he had occasion thus to visit the rock-cut temples in this Chāḷukyan capital Vikramāditya I (655-681, son of Pulakeśin II) fought with Pallava kings and regained Bādāmi from Narasiṁhavarman's successor, Parameśvara-varman (655-690), and conquered the



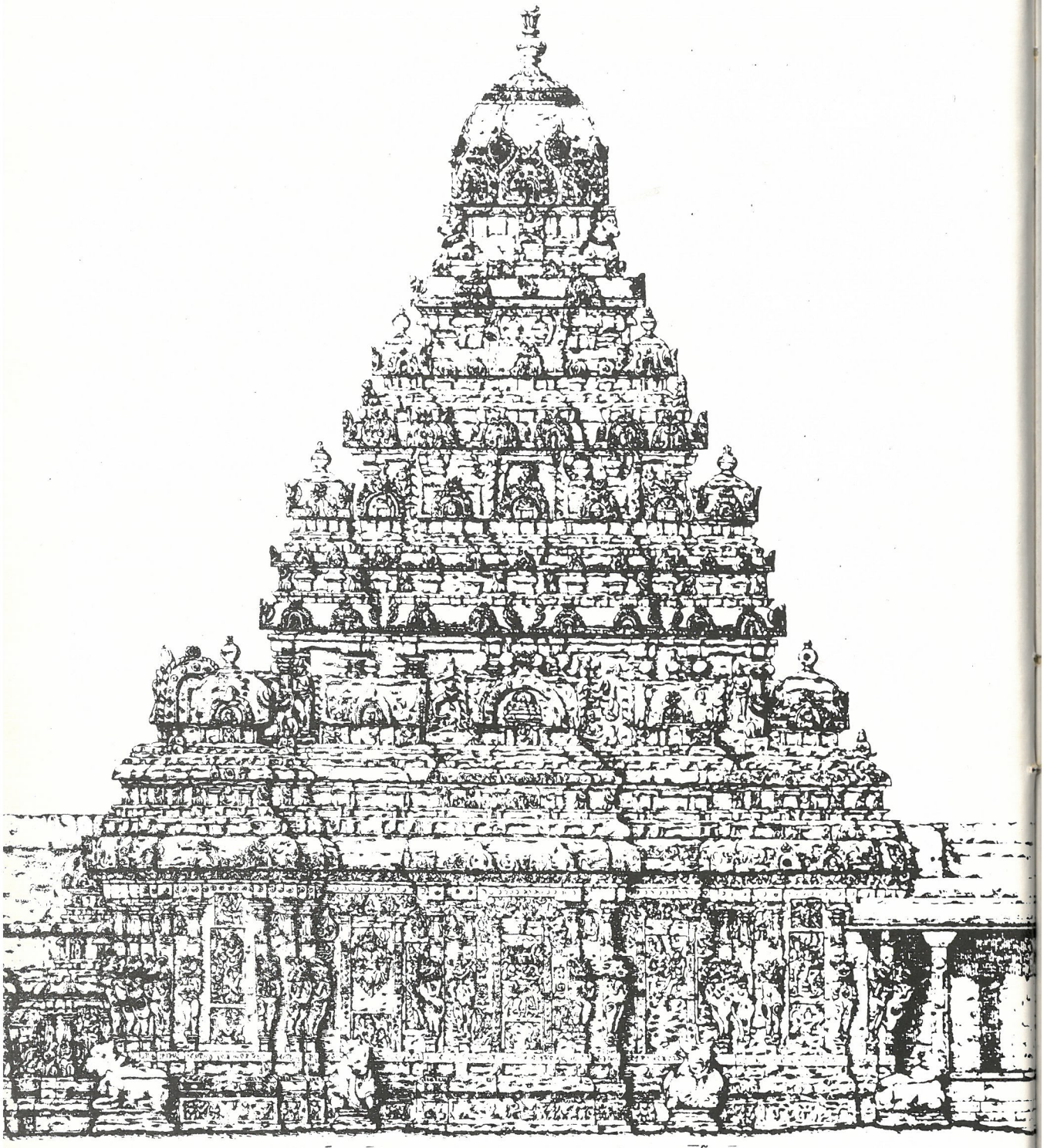
Kailāsanātha Temple, Kāñchīpuram



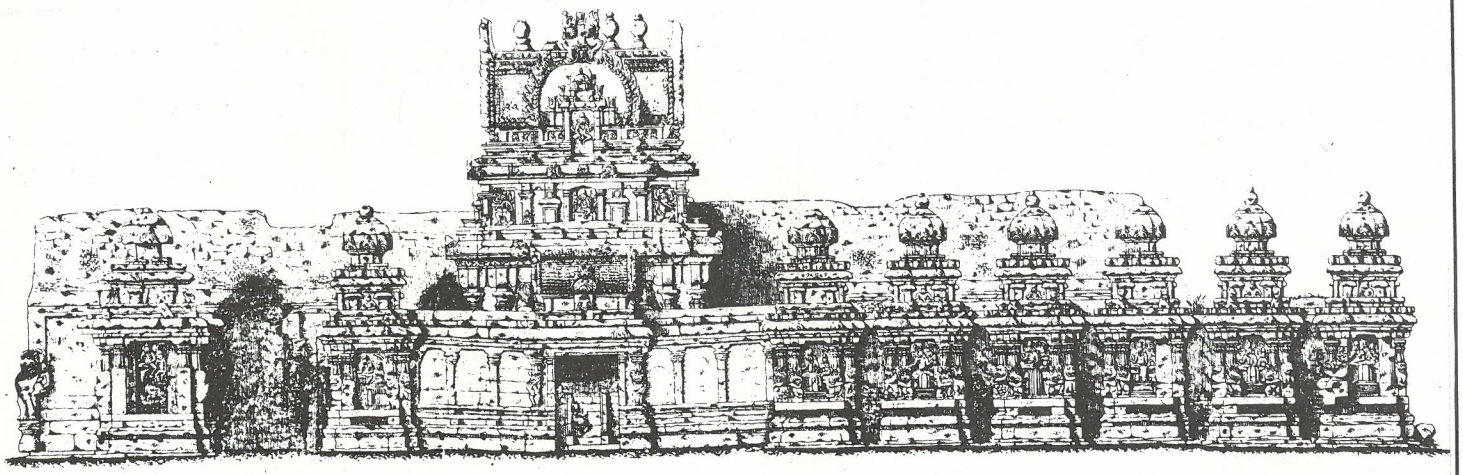
Main shrine, Kailāsanātha Temple, Kāñchīpuram



Plan of Kailāsa-nātha temple, Kāñchīpuram



Kailāsanātha temple, (Elevation on South) Kāñchīpuram



Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram (Elevation on East)



Vaikuṇṭha-Perumāḷ, Temple, Kāñchīpuram



Matangesvara Temple, Kanchipuram



A form of Siva (Kailāsanatha Temple, Kanchipuram)



Śiva playing on a percussion instrument (from Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram)



Another representation of the same



A form of Śiva playing on a bow-instrument (from Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram)



Śiva playing on lute (from Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram)



A form of Śiva (from Kailāsanātha Temple)



Sculptured entrance to a shrine (in Kailāsanātha temple, Kāñchīpuram)



Musician



Flute-player



Musician



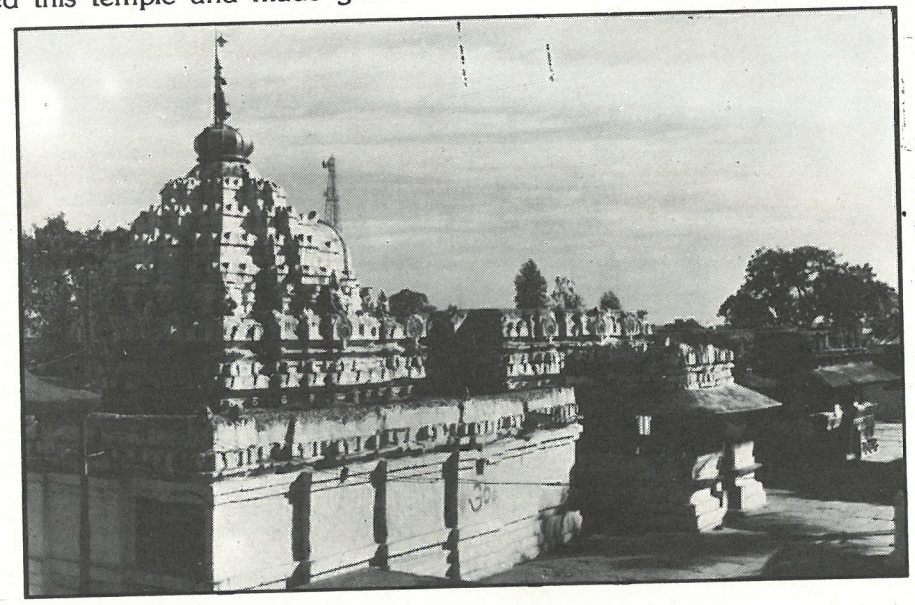
Lute-player



Musician

Pallava capital, Kāñchīpuram. Although the formal, structural shrines at Kūram (near Chinglepet) and Tirukkulikunram (both apsidal in shape) were built during his days, the famous Pallava monument in Kāñchīpuram, Kailasanātha temple, had not been built by then. It was built only next year by Rājasimha-varman, son and successor of Paramesvara-varman, who freed Kāñchīpuram from the Chālukyan hold and built this shrine in stone to commemmorate his victory. Its earlier name in fact was Rājasimhesvara temple. A descendent of this Chālukyan King, Vikramāditya II (733-745), who once again defeated the Pallavas and occupied Kāñchipuram, visited this temple and made grants of gold and jewellery to the deity enshrined there.

The Chālukyan kings had a fascination for temples and were devout in temperament. Vikramāditya I was a zealous devotee of Siva and his grandson Vijayāditya (696-733) built many temples in Bādāmi and Pattadakallu. The Vijayesvara temple (now called Sangamesvara Temple) in Pattadakallu was a monument to the military achievements of this king. He was devoted equally to the three divinities, Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva, and built the Shrine in Bādāmi named 'Traipurusha' (now known as Jambukesvara) for the merit of his mother Vinayavatī. Vikramāditya II, mentioned earlier, was Vijayaditya's son and successor. His two queens Loka-mahādevi and Trailokya-mahādevi, built temples on their own initiative. The former built the Lokesvara temple (now called Virūpāksha temple), and the latter, the Trailokyesvara temple (now in ruins), in Pattadakallu, around 740 A.D. Both these shrines have three cella, like the



Tirkutesvara temple built by Rashtrakutas at Gadag

'Traipurusha' temple built by their husband. Loka-mahādevī, the elder queen, is recorded to have honoured the architect and sculptor of the temple she sponsored, Rūvāri-Anivārtāchāri-guṇḍa, and bestowed costly gifts on him.

The Chāḷukyan monuments include both rock-cut and structural varieties. They are seen to adopt freely the two classical architectural styles known the northern or Nāgara and the Southern or Drāviḍa, and to experiment with new forms, layouts, elevations, and visual effects. They illustrate not only harmonious blending of several idioms, but the emergence of a new style, Vēsara, which may be described as central, to distinguish it from the northern and the southern styles.

THE RISE OF THE RĀSHṬRAKŪṬAS

The curtain on the two hundred and fifty years of Chāḷukyan rule, which helped Karnāṭaka acquire a personality of its own and provided a glorious period for the region, was drawn in 753 A.D. when the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Dantidurga (753-756) conquered the kingdom. The Rāshṭrakūṭas of Mānyakhēṭa (Maḷkheḍ) were from Karnāṭaka; they spoke Kannaḍa. If the Chāḷukyans crystallized the Karnāṭaka style of temple-architecture, the Rāshṭrakūṭas encouraged Kannaḍa literature and provided another dimension for Karnāṭaka culture. They ruled over the whole of Deccan, and their empire was described by a contemporary Arab traveller Sulaimān (around 851) as one of the four great empires of the world. Literature, religion, education and art flourished under them; the kingdom was also ably administered.

In the field of temple architecture, on which the Chāḷukyans had already focussed creative attention, and in which the neighbouring Pallavas had made significant contributions, the Rāshṭrakūṭas achieved celebrity for all time by the magnificent Elurā rock-cut shrines at Ellora (the former Elūra, Verūḷa or Velāpura, now in Aurangabad area of Mahārāshṭra). The renowned Kailāsa temple here is ascribed to Krishṇa I (Akāḷavarsha Kaṇṇesvara, about 756-774), although the inscription there insists that the shrine is the work of divine architects and not of human beings. Although the temple is now outside the political confines of the presentday Karnāṭaka, it should justly be regarded as an achievement of architects and craftsmen from Karnāṭaka.

The Rāshṭrakūṭa power declined after 950 A.D. and was drawn to a close by the victory achieved by the Chāḷukyan feudatory, Tailapa, over the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Karka II in 973 A.D. Tailapa, who belonged to a branch of the Bādāmi Chāḷukya family, (in Bidar) marked the beginning of a new royal dynasty, the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa in Bidar who ruled from 973 A.D. till about 1198. The earlier kings of this dynasty were constantly at war with

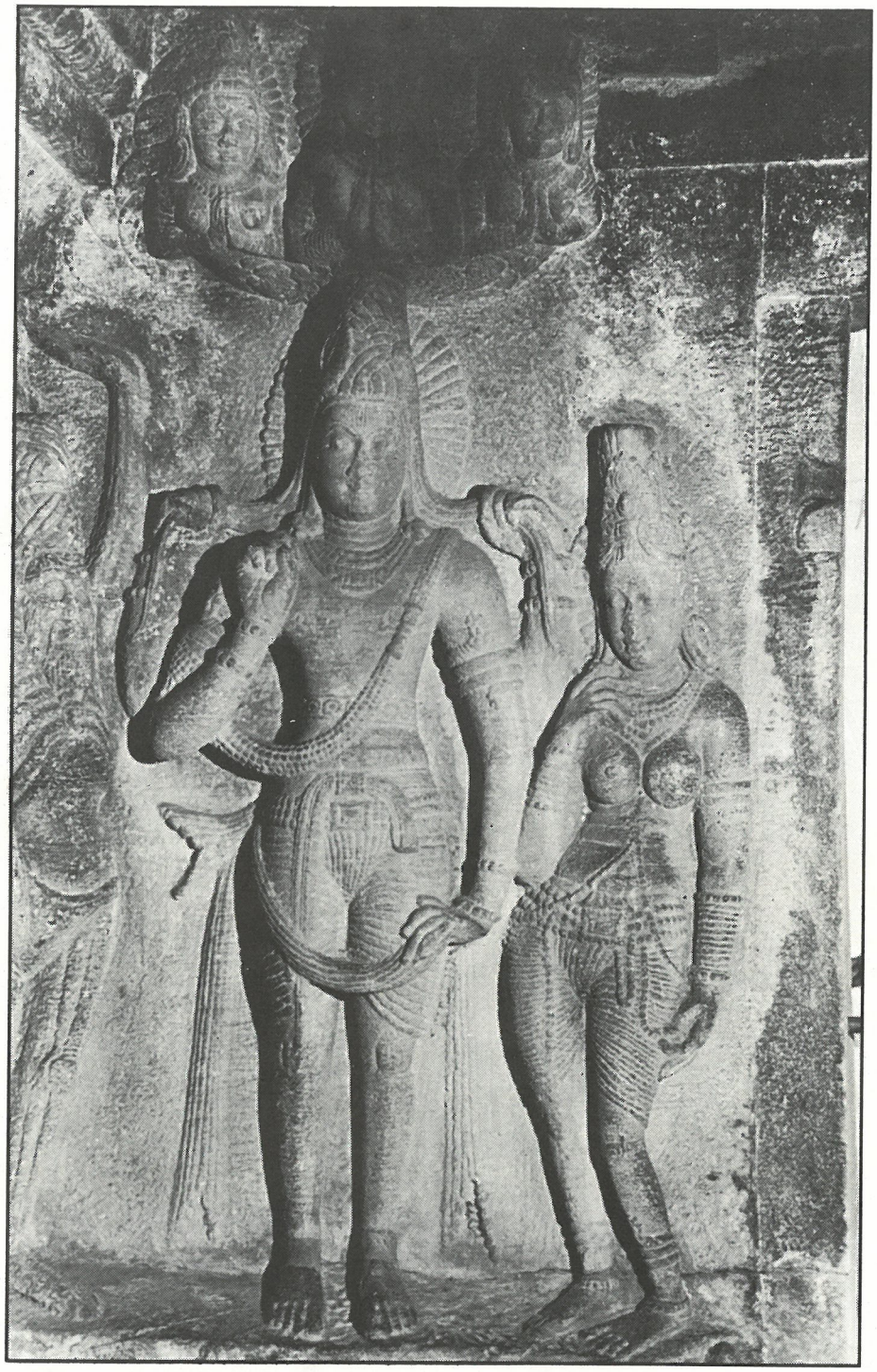
the Chōḷas and therefore in contact with the culture of the Tamiḷ country. The Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults which had already entered Karnāṭaka now took deep roots owing to the impact of the itinerant saintly poets of the Tamiḷ country, the Vaishṇava Āḷwārs and the Śaiva Nāyanmārs. It was during this period that the new movement, Vīraśaiva, spearheaded by Basava (who was treasurer to Bijjaḷa II 1130-1167, who began his career as a subordinate of the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa and became king in 1162 killing the Chāḷukyan king Taila III) gathered momentum.

The most illustrious among the kings of this line was Vikramāditya VI (1076-1127). He built many temples, among which the most excellent was the one at Jalasaṅgavi in Bīdar district (1110). Other notable temples built during the rule of this dynasty are the Navaliṅga and Kallesvara Temples at Kukkunūr, the Jaina basadi and the Kāśi-Viśvesvara temple at Lakkuṇḍi, the Mallikārjuna temple at Kuruvaṭṭi, the Mahādeva temple at Iṭagi, the Vīrabhadra temple at Humnābad, Mahābhairava-mailāra-mallemma temple at Khānāpura and Mukteśvara temple at Hāvēri.

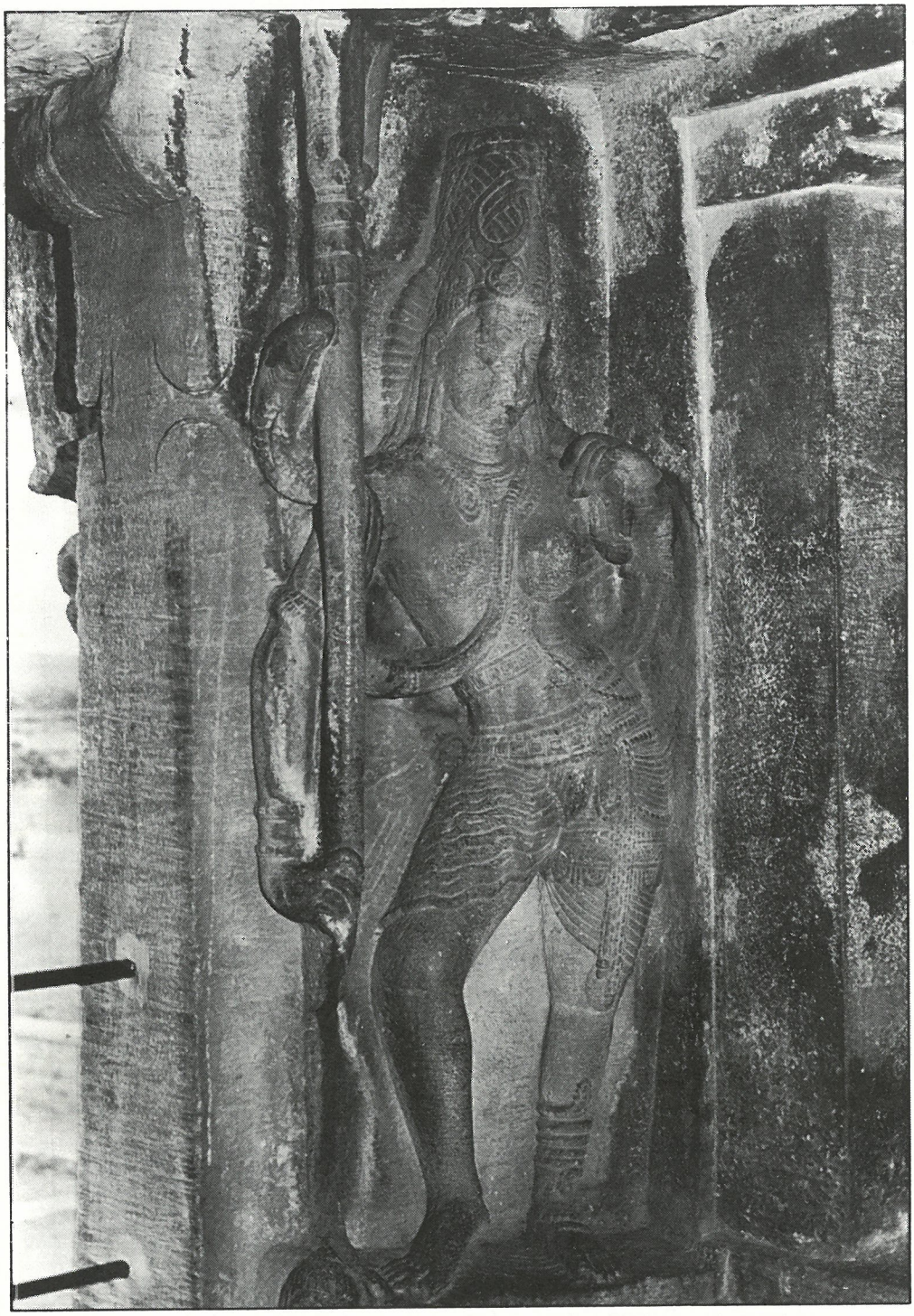
The northern part of Karnāṭaka during this period was ruled by the Yādava-Sevuṇas of Dēvagiri who were subordinates of the Rāshṭrakūṭas and later of the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa. Siṅghaṇa (1200-1247) of this dynasty was a powerful ruler of a vast empire which included almost of the whole of Deccan. During his days the Vaishṇava cult, especially the Viṭṭhala worship, became widespread, and when his grandson Krishṇa (1247-1261) was king, the well-known, Mahānubhāva Movement, with Chakradhara as its principal spokesman, was launched in Loṇār (1256). The forms of Vishṇu, known as Krishṇa and Dattātreya, began to be widely worshipped in this region, owing to the impact of this movement. And the Sevuṇas themselves encouraged this movement, because they claimed descent from Krishṇa of the Yādava clan.

THE HOYSAḶA STYLE

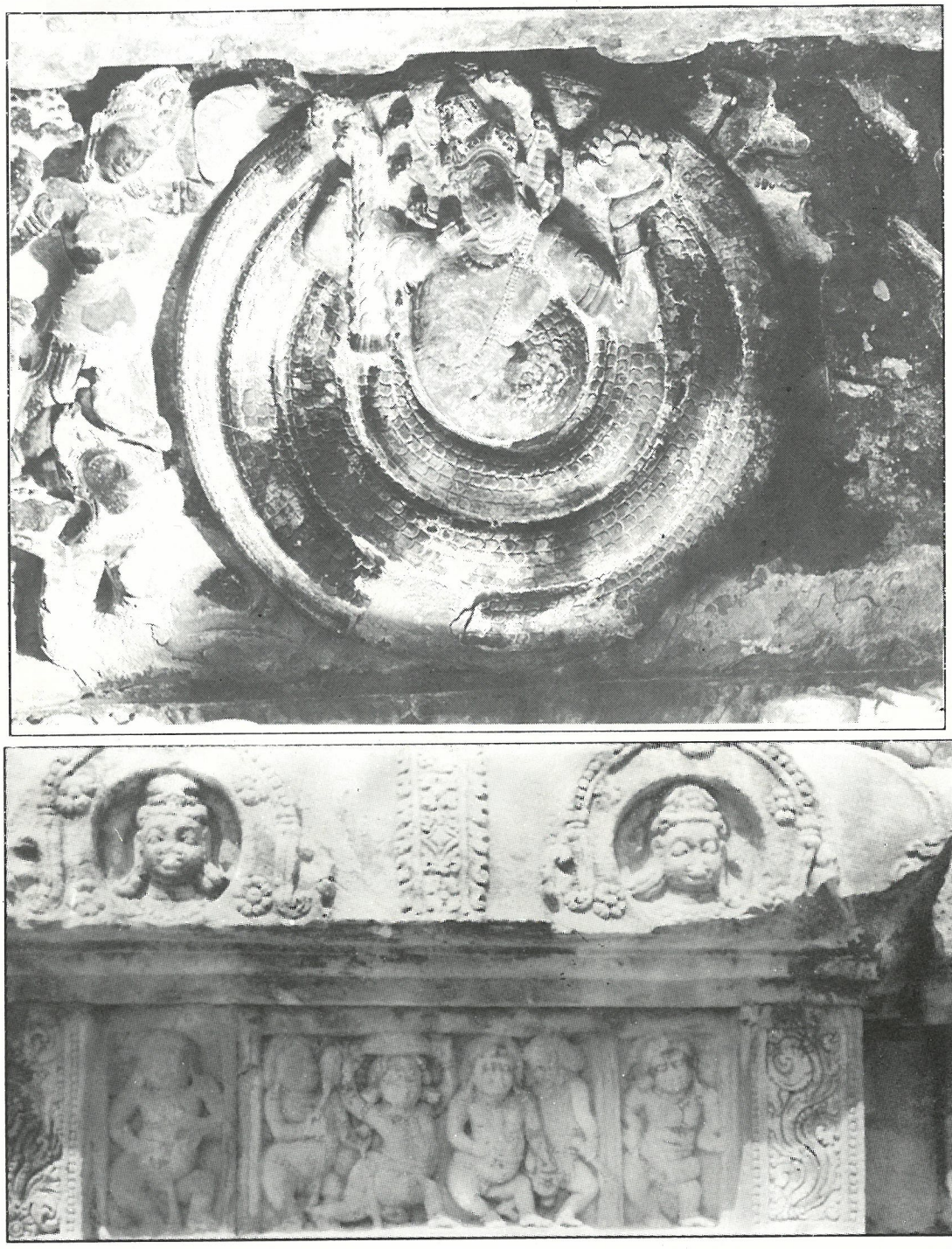
Another royal family to claim descent from the Yādava-god and rule over parts of Karnāṭaka was that of the Hoysaḷas (who styled themselves 'Yādava-nārāyaṇa' and 'lords of the town of Dvārāvati' or Dvārakā). Their power became considerable when Vinayāditya (1045-1098) occupied the major part of the Gaṅga Kingdom (Gaṅgavāḍi) and made common cause with Trailokya-malla Someśvara I (1044-1068), the Chāḷukya king of the Kalyāṇa line, who was engaged in



Gaṅgā-Visarjana form of Śiva (Chāḷukya)



Ardha-nārī form of Śiva (Chāḷukya)



(Chalukyan sculptures)



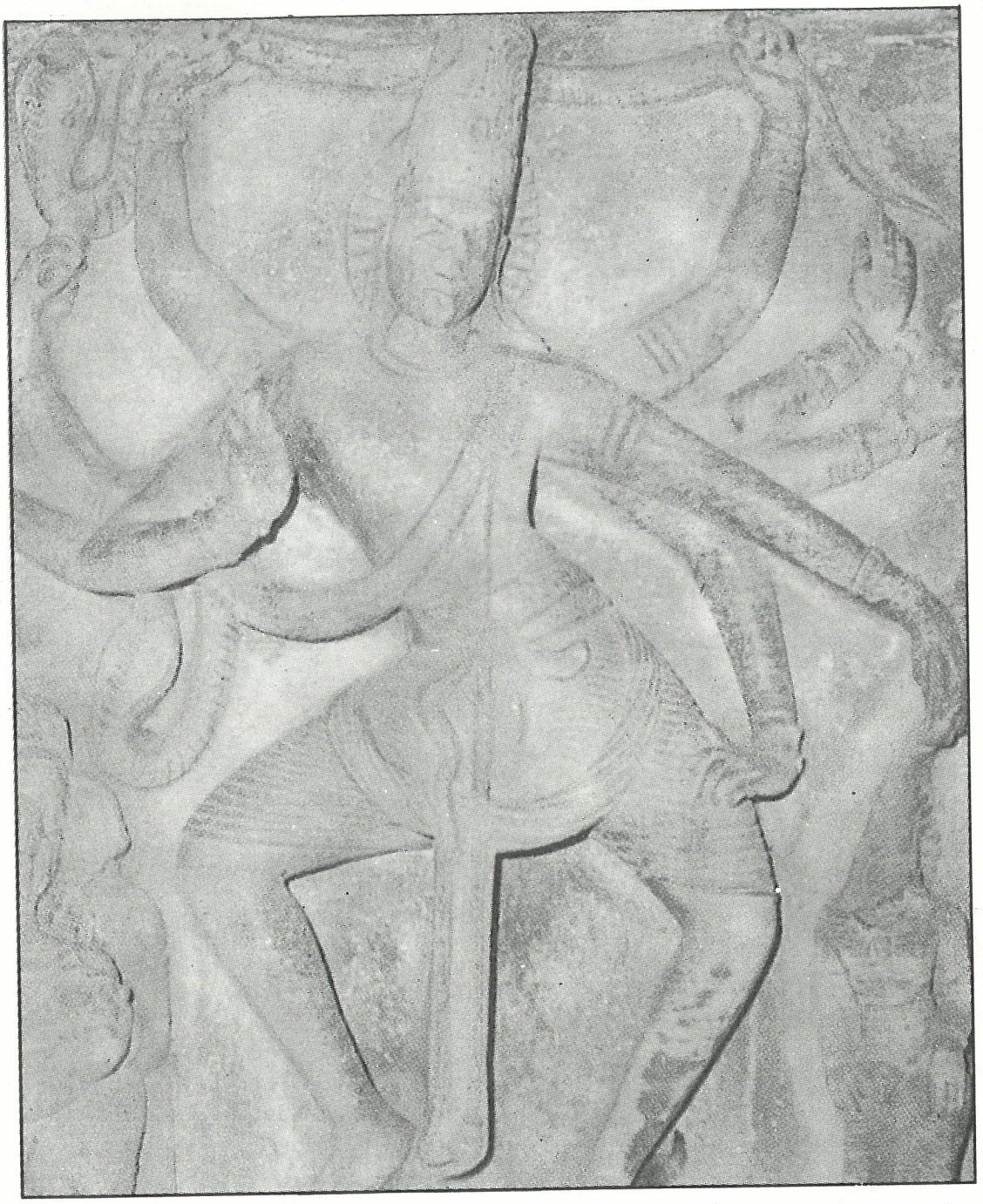
Mithuna (Chāḷukya)



Dvāra-pāla (Chāḷukyan)



repulsing the advance of the Chōḷas from the Tamiḷ country into Karnāṭaka. Vinayāditya made Bēlūr (Beluhūru, Vēlāpura, now in Hāssan District) his capital and began to rule a fairly extensive dominion. But it was his grandson, Ballāla I (1100-1018) who sought to shake off the authority of the Chāḷukya king Vikramāditya VI and become independent, and who gained control over parts of Mysore district the coastal region of Karnāṭaka (Āḷvakhēḍa) and extended his empire till the Tungabhadrā river.



Naṭarāja from Paṭṭada-kallu



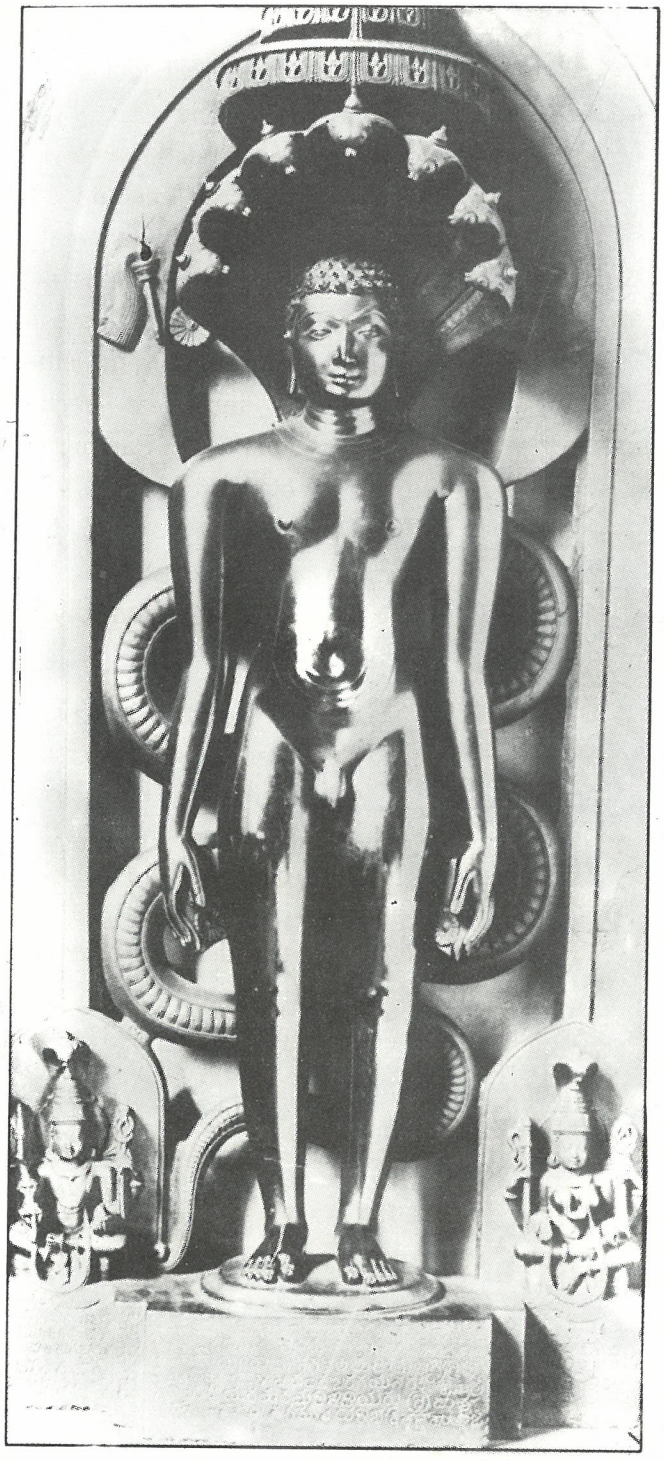
Narasimha from Bādāmi Cave-temple



He was succeeded by his brother Vishṇuvardhana (1108-1152), the most famous among the Hoysaḷa monarchs. A great warrior, an able administrator and a shrewd statesman, Vishṇuvardhana not only extended the limits of the Hoysaḷa empire but brought peace and prosperity to the land. He had three queens, Śāntaḷā-devī, Bammalā-devi and Lakshmī-devi, all of whom, and especially the first, were great patrons of art and architecture. The royal household appears to have been Jaina in religious system, but they encouraged Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults as zealously as they did Jainism. There is a popular, but quite unfounded, legend that the king was converted from Jainism to Vaishṇavism by the great teacher from the Tamiḷ country, Rāmānuja; there is no evidence for this. It is a fact however that the doctrine, practices, and shrines of Śrī-Vaishṇava sect become popular in this region during Vishnuvardhan's days.

Religious renaissance and tolerance were the principal features of this period. The Hoysaḷa kings, their queens, chieftains and wealthy merchants were responsible for a very large number of temples that sprang up all over Karnāṭaka, and especially in the central region. The Vaishṇava and Śaiva cults as also the Digaṁbara Jaina religion became popular and found wide patronage in the realm; and as a result numerous temples and basadis were built. Architects and sculptors also found encouragement and patronage, so that a new school of architecture and sculpture named after the ruling dynasty evolved.

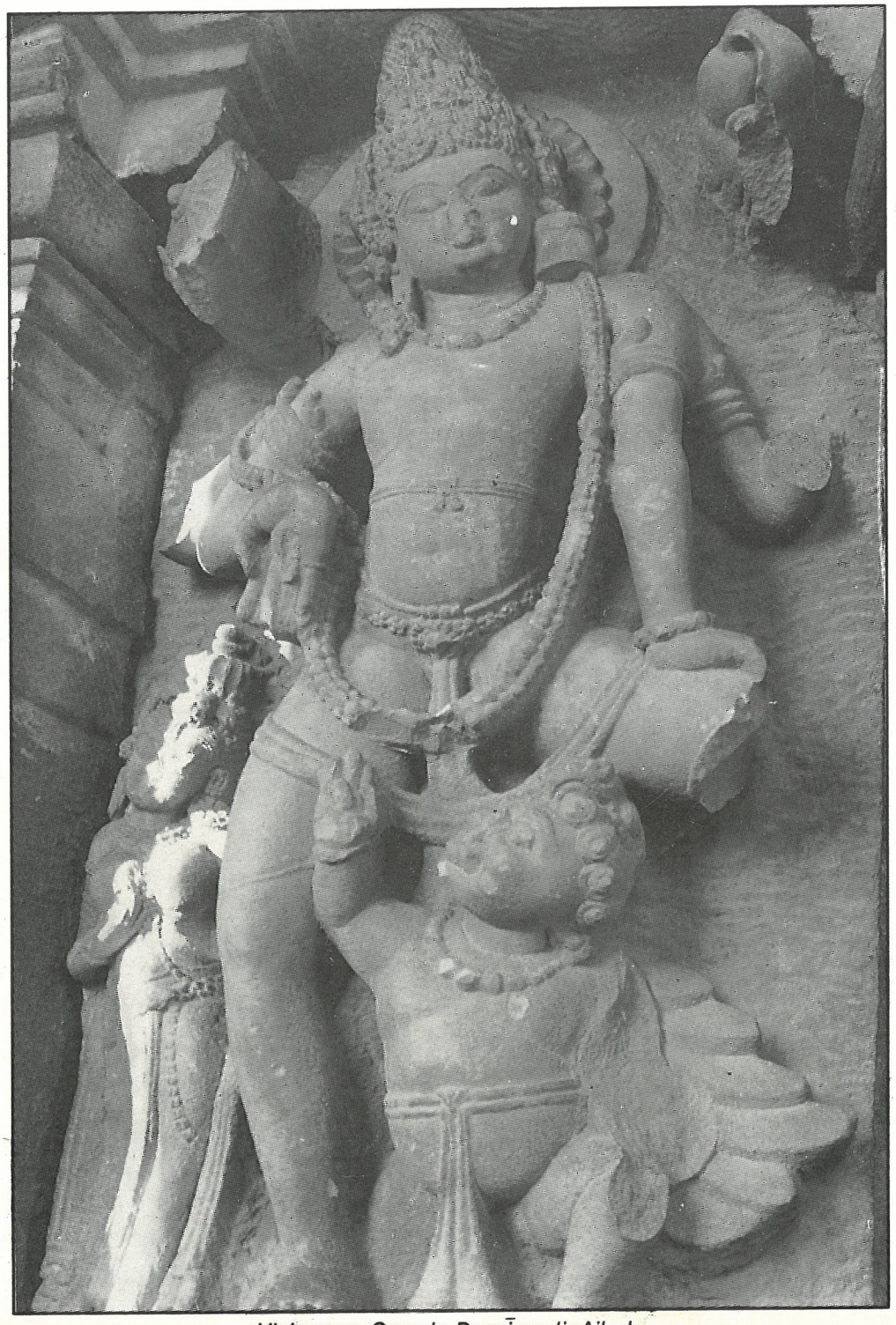
Among the principal temples that were constructed during this period and that exemplify the Hoysaḷa style



Pārśvanātha (Hoysaḷa)



Detail of Chāmuṇḍā (Chāḷukya)



Vishṇu on Garuḍa,Durgī-guḍi, Aihoḷe



Ardhanāri (Chāḷukya)



Govardhana-Kṛishṇa (Chāḷukya)



Rāvaṇa-Jaṭāyu Fight (Chāḷukya)



Mahākūṭa, Bādāmi

are the Kīrti- nārāyaṇa temple at Talakāḍu, the Chenna-kēśava temple at Bēlūr. The Vijayanagar temple at Tōṇḍanūr, the temples at Nāgamaṅgala, Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi, Kambadahaḷḷi and Beḷgoḷa during Vishṇuvardhana's reign, (1108-1152), the Hoysaleśvara temple in Haḷēbīḍu and the Trikūṭa-basadi in Chōḷasandra during the reign of Narasiṁha I (1153-1173); the Kedāreśvara temple in Haḷēbīḍu, Īśvara temple at Arasīkere, Śāntinātha-basadi in Jinanāthapura and the Amṛteśvara temple at Amṛtāpura during the reign of Vīraballāḷa II (1173- 1220); the Harihareśvara temple at Harihara, the Someśvara temple at Hārnahaḷḷi and the Mallikārjuna temple at Basarāḷu during the reign of Narasiṁha II (1220-1235); the Lakshmī-narasiṁha temple in Nuggihalli, the Narasiṁha temple at Jāvagallu, the Lakshmīnārāyaṇa temple at Hosahoḷalu, and the Pañchaliṅga temple at Govindanahaḷḷy during the reign of Someśvara (1235-1253) and the Keśava Temple at Araḷaguppe and the Prasanna -Keśava temple at Somanāthpur during the reign of Narasiṁha II (1253-1292).



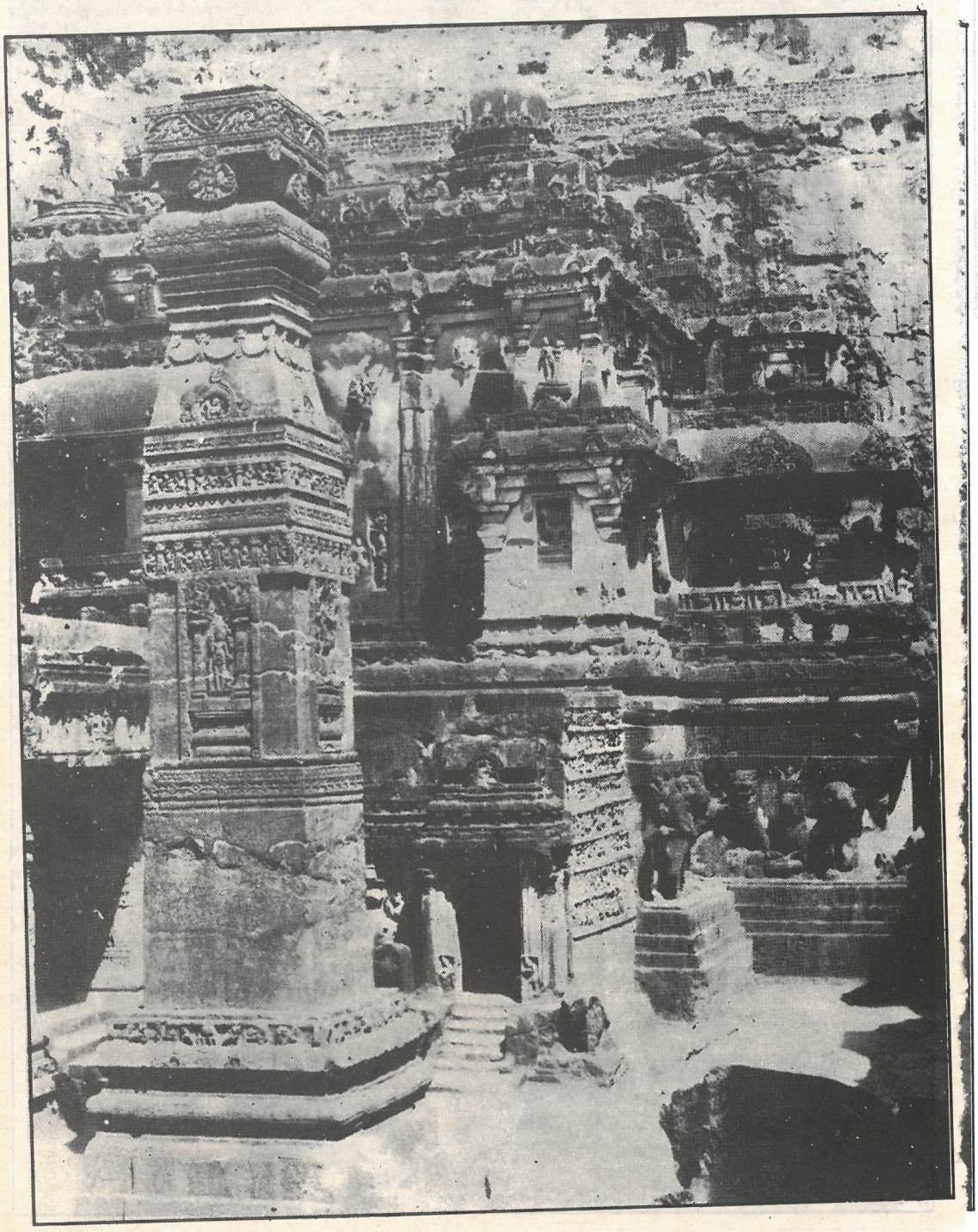
VIJAYANAGAR AND AFTERMATH

After the Hoysaḷas, the Vijayanagar kingdom (founded in 1346) rose to prominence and flourished for over two and a half centuries (from 1356 till 1630). The period was a glorious one, not only for Karnāṭaka but for the whole of South India as the authority of these kings extended from river Krishṇā to Kanyākumāri in the extreme South. The founders of the Kingdom, Harihara and Bukka, began their career as subordinates of the Hoysala ruler Ballāḷa III (1291-1342) and later carved out an empire of their own with Hampi, called also Virūpākshapura, Pampā-tirtha, Pampēya Hastināvati or Ānegondi), as capital. The earlier kings of the line were not remarkable as patrons of art or architecture. But the great Krishṇadevarāya (1509-1529) who was a Tuḷuva and thus a Kannaḍa scion although a poet in Telugu, was by all standards unusual one. An excellent king, it was during his days that art and architecture received unprecedented encouragement. The day he was officially proclaimed emperor saw a magnificent tower over the main entrance of the Virūpāksha temple in Hampi; Virūpāksha was the tutellary deity of the Vijayanagar kings. When he returned to Hampi after conquering Udayagiri, he built the splendid Krishṇasvāmi temple to commemmorate his victory. The charming Hazāra-Rāmasvāmi temple was built as a shrine for the royal household. Another excellent specimen of Vijayanagar architecture in Hampi was the Vijaya-Viṭṭhala temple with its numerous mandapas.

The Vijayanagar empire was notable as a confluence of cultural strands. The architectural style that evolved as a distinct contribution of this period was a happy blend of several styles, idioms and ideologies. It is rather strange that this style developed altogether uninfluenced by the Hoysaḷa idiom, although the Vijayanagar empire began as a part of the Hoysaḷa kingdom. The style that evolved in Hampi was more in accord with the Drāviḍa genre than either Chāḷukya or Hoysaḷa. Numerous temples to Śiva and Vishṇu were built in different parts of the extensive Vijayanagar kingdom on the model of the temples at Hampi. The Vijayanagar style is distinguished by the tall, multi-storeyed tower over the main entrance (dvāra-gopura), multiple mandapas, the long corridors with a thousand pillars (sahasra-stambha-maṇḍapa) within the temple enclosure and numerous sub-shrines. The gate-towers are peculiar to the South Indian temples; and because Krishṇadevarāya had a fancy for them, they came to be known as 'Rāya-gopuras'. This king had commissioned such towers to be built for several temples in the present day Karnāṭaka, Āndhra-pradesh and Tamiḷ-nāḍu. The temple-style which



The Ugra-Narasimha manolith at Hampi.



Ellora Cave Temple

was finalized during the Vijayanagar period has prevailed to this day in Karnāṭaka, Tamiḷ-nāḍu and Āndhra-pradesh.

The temples and other architectural monuments in and around Hampi were ruined when the four Deccan Muslim rulers united and attacked the Vijayanagar capital in 1565 A.D. (when Sadāśiva-rāya was king). The battle that was then fought on the 23rd at January in that year in Rākshasa-taṇgaḍi (or Tāḷikōṭa according to Sewell) dealt a death-blow to the glorious Hindu empire, although the royal family survived in attenuated circumstances first in Penukoṇḍa, then in Chandragiri, Vellore and finally-Śrīraṅgapaṭṭaṇa.

The legacy of the ideals and achievements of the Vijayanagar empire became evident in the Oḍeyar kingdom in Karnāṭaka and the Nāyak rule in Tañjāvūr. Rāja-Oḍeyar (1578-1617) began as a viceroy of the surviving Vijayanagar King at Śrīraṅgapaṭṭaṇa, near Mysore, and became in due course an independent monarch. But he and his successors claimed to be successors of the Vijayanagar empire, and strove to continue the patronage to culture in all its aspects that the Vijayanagar emperors, especially Krishṇadevarāya, had extended. Rāja-Oḍeyar not only gave munificent grants to the temples that were already existing, but built several new temples in the Vijayanagar style: one of such temple is the Venkataramaṇa-svāmi temple in Bangalore (in the former Fort area).

Among his successors, Chikka-devarāja-oḍeyar (1672-1704), Kaṇṭhī-rava-narasa-rāja-oḍeyar (1704-1732) and Krishṇa-rāja-oḍeyar III (1799-1831) were religiously inclined and built several temples in the old Mysore kingdom. The last named king was deprived of his administrative hold over the state by the British overlords in 1831, but till his death in 1868 he continued to be a patron of art and letters and encouraged temple-culture. Among the temples that he built is the one at Chāmarājanagar in memory of his father.

The course of historical changes not only involved Karnāṭaka in the cultural mainstream of South India from the early centuries of the Christian era, but facilitated cross-cultural influences. Even before the Kadaṁbas, the earliest of the royal dynasties to rule over this region, the Pallavas who made a mark in the Tamil country in all spheres of public life, had control over parts of Karnāṭaka. The Chāḷukya Kingdom of Bādāmi was the first to bring the entire stretch of the present day Karnāṭaka under one administration, and also bring this area into cultural contact with the neighbouring regions like the presentday Mahārāshṭra. Āndhra-pradesh and Tamiḷ-nāḍu which were also within their power-zone. This

situation continued during the Rāshṭrakūṭa rule and also during the rule of the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa. During this period, the Chōḷa emperors of the Tamiḷ country made frequent inroads into Karnāṭaka, and along with the political stresses, cultural diffusion inevitably took place. The Hoysaḷa kingdom which extended southward, was in greater contact with the Chōḷas Indeed the Hoysala king Ballāḷa II conquered parts of the Chōḷa territory, and made Śrīraṅgam and Kaṇṇanūr-Kūppam his administrative centres.

Under the Vijayanagar emperors, the political limits of their empire excluded only the northern tip of the present day Karnāṭaka (Bijāpur, Kalburgi, Bidar and Kalyāṇa) but included the whole of South India. The princely state of Mysore under the Oḍeyars was of course a fragment of the Vijayanagar kingdom and also of the present day Karnaṭaka, comprising only of the Southern districts, excluding the coastal areas and Koḍagu, but inherited the Vijayanagar mantle of cultural consolidation.

In the circumstances, the early temples of Karnaṭaka have provided models for the temples that appeared in the neighbouring areas (Tamiḷ-nāḍu, Āndhra-pradesh and Keraḷa), while the later temples reveal elements that were adapted from styles peculiar to the neighbouring regions, especially the Chōḷa style from the Tamiḷ country. But the structural modes that evolved here through the ages illustrate the principles of relevant borrowals, harmonious blending and unitary effect.

Most of the early temples, especially those belonging to the period of the Chāḷukyans of Bādāmi, are now only monuments and of archaeological interest. The formal temples that have continued to be in use in our day date mostly from the Hoysaḷa period. And these are few, when compared with the very large number of temples that have sprung up during and after the Vijayanagar period.



Naṭarāja,



Naṭarāja (Chōḷa)



Vishṇu, Kōḍumuḍi



Tripurāntaka, Kōḍumuḍi

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Karnāṭaka is well known for its spirit of religious tolerance, and this has been the case since the dawn of recorded history. The kings who have ruled this land as well as the people who have lived here have always exemplified the principle of peaceful co-existence of religious ideologies and practices. The state today presents a happy mosaic of all the religions and cults that are prevalent in the country and elsewhere. Strife on account of bigotry, fanaticism and discrimination in the name of religion has been rare and unusual. Accommodation with a respect for the view-points of others has always been held out as a virtue, especially in social and religious matters.

The history of the land has partly been responsible for this desirable detail in the inclinations of the people. The royal dynasties that have held sway over the fortunes of this region have, without an exception, taken care not to espouse the cause of any one religion at the expense of others; and they have never been guilty of suppressing a religious doctrine or custom, however inimical to their own. While expressing devotion to their own faith either by making endowments on a shrine already existing or by sponsoring a new shrine, they encouraged and supported at the same time other faiths. And it often happened in royal households that the king's personal preference was for one faith while the queen's was for another, without however disturbing domestic peace and harmony. It was quite common for the son to follow one religion in his private life while his father did another, and this would not be taken amiss either by the parties themselves or by the people.

It is difficult, therefore, to ascertain the personal religious inclinations or convictions of a ruler or chieftain by the shrines that he sponsored or supported. The Śātavāhana kings (first

three centuries A.D.) were Śaivites, but they built many Buddhist shrines (like the Tārā-bhagavatī temple in Baḷligāme) and monuments (like the stūpas near Koṭhāpur). Likewise, the Kadaṁbas, who were by preference devotees of Śiva, adored also Vishṇu and Jina, and their capital Banavāsi was a great centre of Buddhism. The Kadaṁba rulers were avid followers of the Vedic religion., but Kākutstha-varma (425-445) bestowed land-grants on the Jaina ascetic Śruta-kīrti. Mṛgeśa-varma (470-488) gave grants for Jaina-shrines and Ravi-varma (500-538) built a Jinālaya at Palasikā (Halasi) in Belgāum district. The Gaṅgas of Talakāḍu were Jainas, but many temples of Śiva and Vishṇu were built by them. Bādāmi Chāḷukyan ruler Maṅgaḷīśa is renowned for the excellent rock-cut shrine for Vishṇu ('Vishnu-gṛha) which he got made in 578 A.D., but he was a zealous devotee of Śiva (Mahā-kūṭeśvara).

The Āḷupa rulers of Tuḷu-nāḍu (about 660) were mainly Śaivas, and a few of them were Jainas; but they built shrines for Vishṇu and Śakti also, and encouraged the Nātha-siddha cult. The Hoysaḷa monarch Biṭṭiga-Vishṇuvardhana (1108-1152), who built the famous Keśava temple at Bēlūr, was in personal life a Jaina (the story of his conversion to Śrīvaishṇava faith by Rāmānuja is without foundation), and built many basadis also. The Kalyāṇa Chāḷukyan ruler Vikramāditya VI (1076-1127) was a zealous devotee of Śiva, but endowed munificently the Buddhist Vihāra at Ḍaṁbaḷa and the temple to Tārā-bhagavatī. The splendid temple to Śiva at Jalasaṅgavi (in ruins now) built by him contains most impressive sculptural representation of Vishṇu. The celebrated Vijayanagar monarch Krishṇadevarāya (1509-1530) was a Vaishṇava in his personal predilections but has made rich endowments on the Śiva temples at Kāḷahasti, Kāñchīpuram and other places.

This policy of not only religious tolerance but active encouragement of all religions was followed by all the ruling dynasties and their feudatories in Karnāṭaka. This was in view of the fact that the population was divided among many religious affiliations, but lived amicably. Religious beliefs and practices were relevant in households and sectarian communities, but the social and economic life of the people overflowed these confines. People had the wisdom to recognize that all religions were different approaches to the Godhead who is one and undivided, and to treat religions other than their own with as much respect as they bestowed on their own. The rulers and other administrators realized that their subjects would be happy if all religions were uniformly encouraged and supported. But then, it was not merely as a calculated expedient that this was done; the spirit of religious

tolerance permeated the entire social fabric among all classes of people and at all levels. There are numerous inscriptions and other literary records that eloquently pronounce the oneness of Godhead and the equal merit of all religions that approach this one God. As an example is this verse found in a poem assigned to 642 A.D.

यो विश्वं वेदवेद्यं जननजलनिधेर्भोगिनः पारदृश्वा।
पौर्यापर्याविरूद्धं वचनमनुपमं निष्कलंक यदीयं।
तं वन्दे साधुवन्द्य सकलमगुणनिधिं ध्वस्त द्वेषद्विषन्तम्।
बुद्धं वा वर्धमानं शतदलनिलयं वा केशवं वा शिवं वा॥

The verse makes obesience to that principle, free from all defects, full of all merit and whose doctrine is incomparably pure and elevating, whether it be Buddha, Vardhamana (Jina), Brahmā, Vishnu or Siva.

Another example is from an inscription of the Hoysala period in Bēlūr;

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनः।
बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः।
अर्हन्नित्यथ जैनशासनपरा कर्मेति मीमांसकाः।
सोयं वो विदधातु वांछितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो विभुः॥

"May he, the all powerful God, bestow on all of you the fulfilment of all desires, that one God whom the Saivites worship as Siva, the Vedantins regard as Brahman, the Buddhists adore as the Buddha, the Naiyāyikas conceptualize as the Maker, the Jainas worship as Jina (arhat) and the Mīmāmsakas speak of as Karma"

Still another example is form an inscription dated 1151 A.D. from Kaidāla (Tumkūr district).

जयन्ति यस्यावदातो पि भारती
विभूतयस्तीर्थकृतो पि नैहिते (?)
शिवाय धात्रे सुगताय विष्णवे
जिनाय तस्मै सकलात्मने नमः॥

Here also obscience is paid to the one principle, which is all-comprehending and which manifests itself as Siva, Brahma, Sugata (Buddha), Vishnu and Jina

THE FOUR RELIGIONS

Broadly however, in Karnātaka have flourished four religious observances and doctrines (samaya): Jainism, Buddhism, Saivism and Vaishnavism. And many kings of the dynasties that have ruled over the region have proudly claimed in their inscriptions to be 'suporters of four observances and doctrines' ('chatus-samaya- devatā-nilaya'), as an incription dated 929 A.D. informs us (E1, 13, 329). Sometimes, Brahma, the creator, is also provided a shrine for himself, as in Balligāme (cf. inscription dated 1129 'Hari-Hara-Kamalāsana-Vītarāga-Baudhā layangal') It is interesting that the Balligāme inscription speaks of these

five doctrines as the 'five streams irrigating the earth' ('vasundharegeseva pañcha-saradantire') and describes them as 'five maṭhas' ('pañcha-maṭhaṅgaḷ') or socio-religious organisations or communities. An earlier inscription (dated 1022 found at Bēlūr, Jayasiṁha), refers to a temple for three divinities (tri-purusha, viz. Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva) built by Akkadevi, but the inscription mentions that she practiced the rituals of Jina, Buddha, Ananta (viz. Vishṇu) and Rudra (viz. Śiva). The Shikāripura inscription of 1048 mentions that an officer Nāgavarma built four shrines, one each to Jina, Vishṇu, Śiva and Muni (Śākya-muni or Buddha).

Of these doctrines, Jainism and Buddhism were movements that originated in northern India and arrived in Karnāṭaka during the centuries prior to the Christian era, as a result of some adventitious historical circumstances and occurrences. The cults of Śiva and Vishṇu were not movements like Jainism and Buddhism, but were more or less indigenous to the population here. Whatever their origin, they spread among the people imperceptibly and widely along with the folk ideology in times more ancient than recorded history. The worship of Śiva and Vishṇu, sometimes with Brahmā, by people at large is as old as the folklore and myths that provided material for the purāṇas (which were compiled later).

Brahmā as self-born (Svayaṁ-bhū) and creator of the world, Vishṇu as the preserver of the world and Śiva as the destroyer (at the time of universal dissolution or pralaya) constituted the 'trinity' or three aspects of Godhead, that appear to have been adored in Karnāṭaka during the early historic period. Later, the worship of Brahma became obsolete, and the other two divinities came to have their own wide-spread cults, which have continued to our own day. But Brahma appears have continued to receive worship till about the 9th century. We have an inscription dated 866 which begins with a verse adoring all three deities (EI1, 6, p102)

जयति भुवनकारणं स्वयंभूर्जयति पुरन्दरनन्दनो मुरारिः।
जयति गिरिसुतानिरुद्धदेहो दुरितभयापहारो हरश्च देवः॥

During the period of the early Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi, it was usual for the temple to have three cella (trikūṭāchala) to accommodate the three divinities,Pitāmaha, Vishṇu and Śiva, collectively called 'tri-purusha' ('trai-purusha' or 'trayī-purusha'). The famous rock-cut shrine dedicated to Vishṇu ('Vishṇu-grha') at Bādāmi (cave 3), constructed by the Chāḷukyan ruler Maṅgaḷīśa in 578 A.D. is actually a shrine for all three divinities; Vishṇu is the central deity and he is flanked by Brahmā on the right and Śiva on the left. The Vijayeśvara temple (now known as Jaṁbuliṅga temple), built by the king of the same dynasty, Vijayāditya (696- 733) in memory of his mother Vinayavati, in Bādāmi was



Naṭarāja, Śivapuram



Narasiṁha, Pudukkōṭṭe

a 'traipurusha' shrine; the pillar inscription in the temple mentions that all the three deities were installed there. The Konti-guḍi and the Hacchappayya-maṭha (guḍi) in Aihoḷe are Śiva Shrines, but Śiva as the central deity is flanked by Vishṇu on the right and Brahmā on the left. The Trikūṭeśvara temple at Gadag, built during the days of the Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa, has three lingas representing Brahmā, Śiva and Vishṇu. The Tryambakeśvara temple complex at Aihoḷe, and the Banaśankarī temple at Aṇṇigēri are likewise shrines for all three deities.

The practice of building 'traipurusha' temples seems to have died out after the eighth century, Brahmā having ceased to receive adoration from the people. Śiva and Vishṇu shrines were separately constructed, although the composite icon of Hari-Hara (or Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa) came into vogue, and a separate shrine to this composite deity was built in 1223 by Pōlāḷva, (a minister of the Hoysaḷa king Narasiṁha II) in Harihara (Chitradurga district) and there is another shrine in Kōḍagi-Śhankara-nārayaṇa (in Tuḷu-nāḍu) built in the thirteenth century (where worship is offered to a pair of lingas instead of to a composite deity). There are several other shrines in Tuḷu-nāḍu to this composite deity, like those at Pāṇḍēsvara Bārkūru, Koḍavūru and Nandāvara. They are structures of the period later than the fifteenth century. But it is more usual for Śiva and Vishṇu shrines to be occur independently. The reason is the branching out of the Śaiva and Vaishṇava creeds as exclusive and distinct cults, with their own customs and practices, philosophies and orientations.

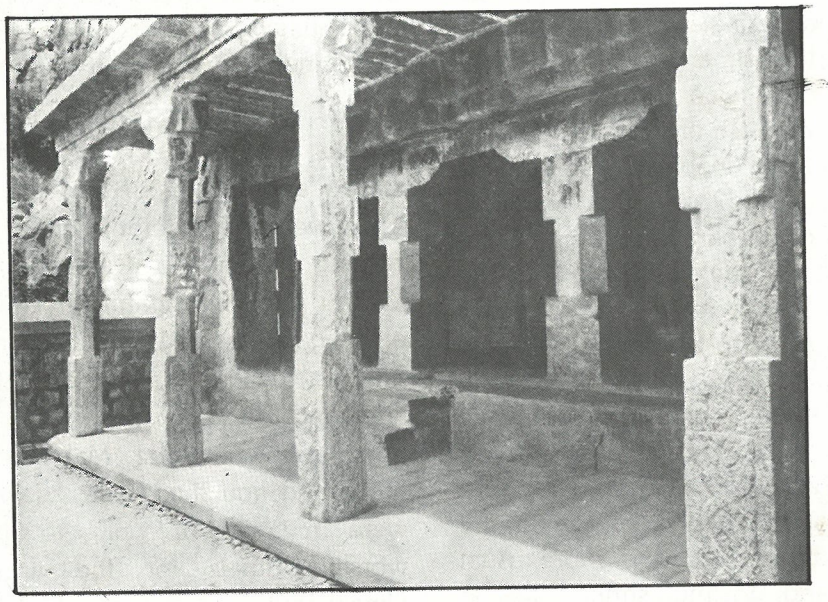
The crystallization of the cults was facilitated by the emergence and prevalence of āgamas in South India around the seventh and eighth centuries. The 'āgamas' are definitive and prescriptive texts in Sanskrit, dealing mainly with worship in temples, but dealing also with worship at home and general conduct. When temples came into being, and became popular among the people the need was felt for priests to discharge the role of worshippers on behalf of the people. There was now also a class of professional temple-priests who sought to fill this role, and it is for their benefit and guidance that the āgamas came to be prepared. It is probably that the bulk of the āgamas were composed during the Pallava and early Chōḷa periods in the Tamil country.

The division of the āgamas was mainly according to the divinity installed and worshipped in the temple. Thus we have different sets of āgamas relating to Śiva (Śaivāgamas) and to Vishṇu (Vaishṇavāgamas). There were also āgama texts, belonging to earlier periods, dealing with the worship of Jina and Buddha. They later became important when the Mahāyāna sects arose and flourshed. The Jaina-āgamas were meant not only to prescribe worship rituals for the tīrthaṅkaras (Jinas), but for their attendant Yakshas

and Yakshiṇīs. The Bauddha-āgamas (forming part of the Vajrayāna-tantras) concerned themselves with the methods and details of worship of the bodhisattvas (like Avalokiteśvara) and folk deities (like Hārīti).

It is curious that the early references to temples and temple-worship in Karnāṭaka do not include the worship of Śakti or mother goddess. But there can hardly be any doubt that this was prevalent among the people from time immemorial. There must have been folk-shrines to the village goddesses, but they could not have compared favourably with the rock-cut or structural temples that came to be constructed because of royal patronage. Among the deities worshipped in formal temples, goddesses came to be included at a later stage. The Śātavāhana inscriptions (for instance, the Nānāghāṭ inscription of Nāganikā, queen of Śātakarṇi II, 184-125 B.C.) mentions only male deities (in the above inscription, Indra, Saṅkarshaṇa, Vāsudeva, the quardians of quarters, the god of death, the god of wealth etc). But Hāla's *Gāthā-saptaśatī*, belonging to a slightly later date but composed during the reign of the Śātavahanas, begins with an invocation to Śiva (Paśupati), husband of Gauri.

The earliest shrine to a goddess was also erected during the Śātavahana period: the shrine to Tārā-bhagavatī at Baḷḷigāme. The recognition in Karnāṭaka of mother-goddesses as worthy of formal and structural temples and formal and elaborate worship, was probably due to the influence of the Mahāyāna variety of Buddhism, which



Śittannavāśal temple



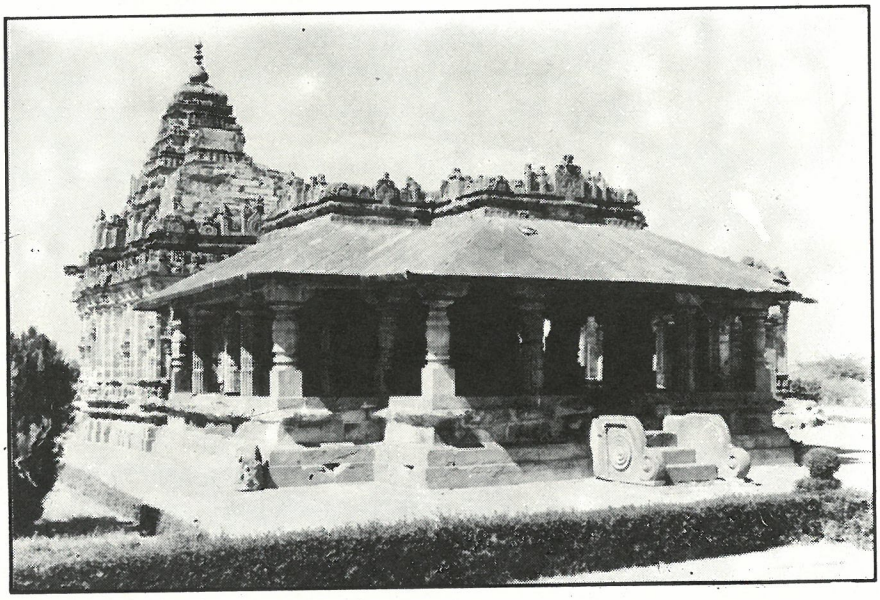
Pārshvanātha, Śittannavāśal cave-temple



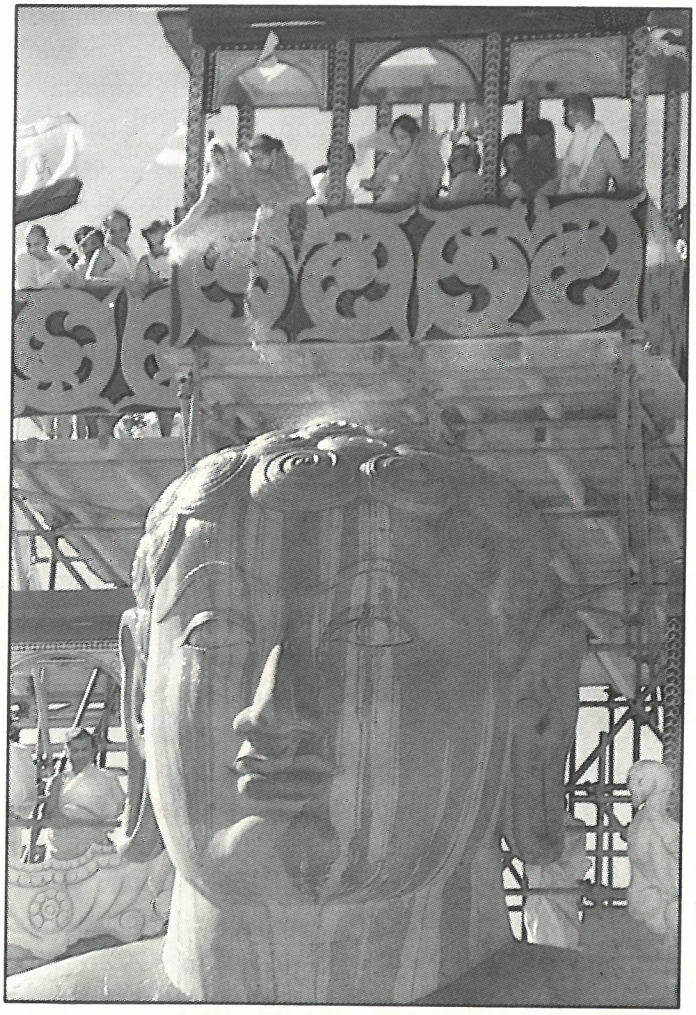
conceptualized the power of the Buddha, the enlightenment and the mission of the bodhisatvas in terms of female divinities. The Jaina ideology of Yakshinīs also helped.

THE JAINA IMPETUS

An inscription in Kannaḍa of the fifteenth century (*Śāsanapadya -mañjari* p 250) describes Karnaṭaka ('karnāṭa-deśam') as the home of the Jaina religion (jina-dharmavāsam'), which took its birth in northern India. This is verily the case. The history of Jainism in South India is really the history of Jainism in Karnāṭaka. There is a tradition that Jainism entered South India during the days of the twelfth tīrthaṅkara, Vāsupūjya, (very much anterior to the twenty-fourth tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra, who was a historical figure) viz. in prehistoric times. When the Mauryan emperor



Śaṁkha-jinālaya



Chandragupta decided to come Kakrnāṭaka and settle down here (during 323-298 B.C.), the place must already have been favourable to the new movement.

The Jaina shrines and monuments are usually known as 'basadis' (from the Sanskrit 'vasati', meaning 'residence') which comprehended temples to one, three, four, five or all twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras (jinālaya), and quarters for monks ascetics to live and practise their austerities during the four months of the rainy season when they were forbidden to travel. In Tamiḷ they are called 'koyil-basadi', which expression spells out the two-fold function of this structure. They are also known as 'Chaityalāya' or 'Chediya' (Chaitya). They were places where the devotees gathered for worshipping the images of tīrthankaras and their attendant yakshas and yakshiṇīs, and for listening to the discourses of learned monks.

The basadis were also educational centres, for the monks taught youngsters not only the religious texts but also other branches of knowledge. Usually they were plain structures, but sometimes had an impressive exterior. During the Gaṅga and Hoysaḷa periods, they became ornate and elegant structures, remarkable for their architecture and sculpture.

If the basadi houses three tīrthankaras, it is called 'trikūṭa', or sometimes 'ratna-traya'. If the basadi opens on all four directions, revealing a tīrthaṅkara in each of them, it is called 'Chaturmukha-basadi'. If five tīrthankaras are installed, the basadi is 'pañcha-basadi'. When, however, all the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras are worshipped in a basadi, it is 'chaturvimsati-jinālaya'. Sometimes the basadis were named after the devotees who got them built (e.g. Chāmuṇḍarāya-basadi, Boppaṇa-basadi, Vikrama-śeṭṭi-basadi, Bōgāra-basadi, Majjgaṇṇa basadi, Pāliyakka basadi etc), but it was more usual to call the basadi after the tīrthankara that was mainly worshipped in it. At times, the expression 'Jaina-brahmālaya' was also in vogue.

Besides the tīrthankaras (especially Pārśvanātha, Nemināṭha, Chandraprabha, Mallināṭha, Śāntināṭha and Mahāvīra), Gommaṭa (Bāhubali) receives worship in this region, as also the yakshas Dharanendra and Brahmā and Yakshiṇīs Padmāvati and Jvālāmālinī.

The early settlement of the Jaina immigrants were Śravaṇabelogola (Hāssan District) Koppaḷa (Rāichūr district) and Halasi (Belgāum district). Śravaṇabeḷogoḷa has, of course, been the principal centre of Jainism in Karnāṭaka from the dawn of the Christian era to our own day. The monks and missionaries who accompanied the emperor Chandragupta and his mentor the sage Bhadrabhāhu, made the new religion take deep root here by their own exemplary spiritual conduct and by their teaching. Even before the royal family of the Gaṅgas espoused the cause of Jainism and built basadis here, there must have been natural rock shelters and rock-cut shrines for the use of monks and ascetics. It is interesting that inscriptions in Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa describe Koppaḷa as 'the first holy place' ('ādi- tirtha'), although the Jaina religion appears to have flourished in this place only from the ninth century till about the fourteenth. And of the 772 shrines this place is said in legend to have had, the earliest Jaina shrines to be seen now is Pārśvanātha-basadi, built in the tenth century. This is said to have been the centre of the mūla-saṅgha, balātkāra-gaṇa (baḷagāra-gaṇa) of Jaina ascetics around 1100 A.D. The memory of an earlier Jaina settlement here has been wiped out by the passage of time. Likewise Halasi (Old Palasikā) is said to have received Jaina monks as early as 225 B.C. Although there are now

about fifteen basadis there, the place does not throw much light on the early spread of Jainism in Karnāṭaka.

We do not have clear monumental evidence for the spread of Jaina religion before the days of the early Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi (about 500-757 A.D.). But we know that the Kadaṁba king Mṛgeśa-varma (about 450-480) built a Jaina shrine (jinālaya) in Palasikā (the modern Halasi in Belgāum district) in memory of his father. We must remember that the Kadaṁba kings were adherents of the Vedic religion, but that it did not prevent their encouraging the Jaina faith.

The Gaṅgas of Talakāḍu (about 300 to 974) were Jainas by affiliation, and built numerous Jaina shrines. The brothers Daḍiga (Koṅguṇi-varma) and Mādhava founded the royal dynasty with the blessings of the Jaina sage Siṁha-nandi, who bestowed on them the ceremonial sword gifted by the goddess Padmāvati, the Yakshiṇī of the twenty-third tīrthaṅkara Pārśva-nātha. The brothers are said to have built in chaityālaya on the Maṇḍali-hill a Shimoga. Under the Gaṅgas, the religion spread all over Karnāṭaka. The Chandraprabha-basadi on the smaller hill at Śravaṇa-belgoḷa was built by the Gaṅga king Śivamāra (788-816); Chāvunda-rāya-basadi was built in 982 A.D. by Chāvuṇḍa-rāya, minister of the Gaṅga ruler, Rāja-malla IV. In and around Śravaṇabelgoḷa there are as many as twenty-seven basadis, most of which date back to the period of the Gaṅgas. The celebrated granite monolith image of Gommaṭeśvara on top of the bigger of the two hills in Sravanabelgola was got sculpted by Chāmuṇḍarāya in 983 A.D.

The Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi, although devotees of Śiva and Vishṇu, encouraged Jainism. The stone basadi called Jinendrālaya - Mēguḍi in Aihoḷe is the earliest of the Jaina shrines in that region. It was built by Ravikīrti, the court poet of Pulikeśin II in 634 A.D. Another early basadi was probably the Śamkha-basadi (dedicated to the twenty-second tīrthankara, Nemināṭha) in Lakshmīśvara (in Dhārwāḍ District), for we have an inscription mentioning the land-grant made to this shrine by Sendraka-durga-śakti a feudatory of Pulakeśin II (610-642). Around 707 A.D. a lady, Kumāradevī, built a Jaina-vihāra at Puligere; Dharmagāmuṇḍa built a Jinālaya in 750 in Aḍūri (Hānagal taluk). During the days of Kīrtivarma II (745-757), some Kāliyammarasa built a chaityālaya in Annigēri.

The Rāshṭrakūṭa rulers (from about 735 to 973) also extended encouragement to this faith. Three Jaina rock-cut shrines in Ellora (Chhoṭa-kailās, Indra-sabhā and Jagannāṭha-sabha) probably belong to the period of Amoghavarsha (814-878). The Indra-sabhā shrine honours Pārśvanāṭha and Śāntināṭha, who were tīrthaṅkaras, and Gommaṭa, the ascetic son of the first

tīrthaṅkara. Ṛshabha; the Jagannāthasabhā honours the twenty-fourth tīrthaṅkara, Mahāvīra. The commander-in-chief of the same king, Bankera of Kolanūr, got constructed a basadi in 860 A.D. in Koṇṇūr (Naragunda taluk in Dhārwāḍ district) on the banks of river Malaprabhā. This is now known as Parameśvara temple.

The Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇa encouraged Jainism during the early period of their suzereignty, but not after the twelfth century. The Jaina shrines at Āḷanda, Baṅkura, Teradāḷa, Lakkuṇḍi and so on appeared during this period. But the Hoysaḷa kings were zealous supporters of Jainism. The founding of the empire itself was due to the blessings of a Jaina saint, Sudatta of the Nandi-saṅgha of Kundakunda lineage. The Hoysaḷa kings, who were themselves Jainas by faith honoured Jaina ascetics and built basadis, but they also honoured and encouraged Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults, and built numerous temples to Śiva and Vishṇu. The most celebrated among them, Vishṇuvardhana (1108-1152), was by conviction a Jaina, although he built many Vishṇu shrines, as was his accomplished queen Śāntaḷā-devī. He was a devotee of the Jaina saint Śrīpāla-Traividyadeva and built many basadis. That he made a grant for repairing the Malli-Jināḷaya in 1129, and bestowed the revenues of a village to the Pārśvanātha shrine in 1133 in Dorasamudra are recorded in inscriptions. His queen Śāntalādevī built in Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa the Savatigandhavāraṇa-basadi. Vishṇuvardhana's minister Gaṅgāraja built many basadis in Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa and Jinanāthapura. The next Hoysaḷa king Narasiṁha I (1152-1173) was also an enthusiast of Jainism. He made generous endowments when his treasurer (bhaṇḍāri) Huḷḷa built the basadi for the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras- and the king honoured his pious treasurer with the title 'samyaktvachūḍāmaṇi'. Dorasamudra, the capital of the Hoysaḷas became an important seat of Jainism.

The Jaina monuments in the coastal areas of Karnāṭaka were mostly due to the piety and patronage of the rulers of the Sāntara family (also called Bhairarasas). The twenty-four basadis in Mūḍabidare, the twenty-four basadis in Vēṇūr, the twenty-one basadis in Kārkaḷa-Hiriyaṅgaḍi, and the five basadis in Gērusoppe reveal the popularity Jainism enjoyed during this period. The founder of this dynasty was Jinadattarāya of Uraga clan, who was blessed by Padmāvati, the yakshinī of Pārśvanātha. He built a temple to her in Pombuccha (Humcha, Shimoga district). The capital of these rulers was at first Kalaśa, and later shifted to Kārkaḷa. The rulers of this family called themselves Vīrapāṇḍyas at a later date, and were responsible for the monolith statues of Gommaṭa in Kārkaḷa (1432) and Vēṇūr (1603). The other important

shrines in the coastal region are to be found at Bhaṭkal (Chandranātha-basadi, dedicated to Chandranātha tīrthaṅkara flanked on the sides by two other tīrthaṅkaras Ṛshabha and Mallināṭha), Bīḷagi (Ratnatraya-basadi, with icons of three tīrthaṅkaras, Neminātha, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra), Gerusoppe (Chaturmukha-basadi), 15th century and Varāṅga (Chaturmukha-basadi and Neminātha-basadi).

Jainism continued to receive royal patronage in the subsequent period, and its popularity also increased. Although the Jains today constitute no more than 0.75 per cent of the total population of the state of Karnāṭaka, it is estimated that at one time (during the Rāshṭrakūṭa period) it was more than 30 per cent of the population (A.S. Attekar, *Rāshtrakūtas and Their Times,* 1934).

The heaviest concentration of the Jaina population today is said to be in the Belgāum district. The Jains are in large numbers also in the Hāssan district and the coastal district of Dakshiṇa Kannaḍa. The indigenous Jaina population in Karnāṭaka belongs largely to the Digaṁbara division; and in the northern parts of the state the 'yāpanīya' sect is prevalent. In recent years, there is a considerable flow of the Jainas of the Śvetāmbara division into the state, mostly from Gujarāt and Rājasthān.

The indigenous Jaina population have made rich contribution to the history and culture of Karnāṭaka in all fields, and are in their religious and social practices practically indistinguishable from the rest of the population. Worship rituals in basadis and other shrines have much in common with their counterparts in Śaiva and Vaishṇava shrines. The Jaina ideology has undoubtedly moulded the temparament and outlook of the people living here. Having entered into the life of Karnāṭaka in the dawn of recorded history, it has continued to be a vital force till our own day.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism entered Karnāṭaka a little later than Jainism did, but it never became a prevalent religion like Jainism. It cannot with precision be said when this northern religion entered Karnāṭaka. That the region was in political contact with the Mauryan Kingdom, where Buddhism first emerged as a missionary religion, has been suggested by numerous references. Chandragupta Maurya's successor was Bindusāra (about 298-273 B.C.); and Bindusāra's son, Aśoka (about 269-232 B.C.), caused some of his edicts to be put up here. The presence of the rock-edicts of Aśoka in different parts of Karnāṭaka does not prove the advent of Buddhism in Karnaṭaka; it only suggests that the area was probably within the jurisdiction of the Mauryan kings.

The Chandra-valḷi inscriptions, however, strongly suggest that the followers of the Buddhist doctrine were here during the early centuries of the Christian era. The leaden coins of the Śātavāhana kings unearthed in Chandravalḷi in 1888 bear the figure of a humped bull round which is engraved the legend 'Sadakana kalalaya mahārathisa' referring to some Śātakarṇi ruler; on the other side of the coins are the unmistakable emblems of the bodhi tree and the cairn (chaitya). This is evidence enough that the Śātavāhanas (who ruled this region during the first three centuries of the Christian era) were favourable to Buddhism. Nāgārjunakoṇḍa in Āndhra-pradesh has an inscription that Buddhism was made popular by Sinhālese monks in Banavāsi among other places by the third century A.D. If we can place trust in the Sinhālese chronicles *Mahāvaṁsa* and *Dīpavaṁsa,* Moggaliputta-tissa, a contemporary of Aśoka and reputed to be his teacher and mentor sent missionaries to Mahishaka (southern region of Karnāṭaka) under Mahādeva, and to Banavāsi (the heart of Karnāṭaka) under Rakkhita to preach the Buddha's gospal. If this is true, we have little knowledge of how the new religion fared until the Śātavāhanas took up its cause.

That the Śātavāhanas who were successors to the Mauryas ruled in the Banavāsi is evident from the Nāsik inscription of Gautamī-putra Śātakarṇi and the copper-plates from Hirēhaḍagali. There is a Prakṛit inscription belonging to the second century on the stone Nāga-effigy found in (within the precincts of Madhukeśvara temple). It refers to the fact that Śiva-skanda-nāga-śrī, daughter of Śātakarṇi of Chutukula (Vihṇukada-Chutukulānanda- sātakarṇi) who was king of Vaijayantipura or Banavāsi was responsible for the installation of that naga-effigy, the excavation of a tank nearby, and for the construction of a Buddhist Vihāra. A copper plate inscription of 338 A.D. likens a Bāna king to a bodhisattva in his great compassion towards all living beings ('prāṇinām parama-kāruṇikatayā bodhisattvo pamanāsya'). Tāḍaṅgala-mādhava (about 440-470), a Gaṅga ruler, issued a copper-plate inscription making land-grants to a Buddhist Vihāra ('gaṅga-rājye mādhava-śarmaṇaḥ śāsana buddha-sattvāya dattam').

It is clear that Buddhism had taken roots in Banavāsi during the first few centuries of the Christian era, receiving active encouragement from the Śātavahana rulers. When the Chinese pilgrim, Hieun-tsāng visited Banavāsi around 640 A.D. he found here numerous 'saṅghārāmas' or Vihāras for Buddhist monks and nuns with places of worship for lay devotees belonging to both the Hīnayāna (of Sinhalese origin) and the Mahāyāna (of Indian

origin) divisions of Buddhism. He also saw here a splendid statue of Maitreya, the future Buddha, carved out of sandal-wood by a monk named Śruta-viṁśati-koṭi. Banavāsi was undoubtedly a great centre of cultural diffusion, and there are numerous Buddhist antiquities in this area. Sannati (in Gulbarga district) was another place where Buddhism spread during the same period. We have here, on the banks of the river Bhīmā, a large number of ruins reminding us of stupas and Chaityas.

Karnāṭaka was the place where the worship of the Buddhist divinity Tārā gained ground. Tārā became celebrated in Mahāyāna Buddhism (especially Mantrayāna) and acquired popularity as the mother of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, as the power of enlightenment and as the consort of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, the patron-divinity of the Mantrayāna sect in Nepāl, Tibet, Mongolia and China, during the early centuries of the Christian era. It is probable that the cult of Tārā began in Eastern Turkisthān or Ladākh, and hence the description that this divinity is of Northern origin (uttarāmnāya). *Sādhana-mālā*, a compilation of esoteric and magical spells and rituals of the Tāntrik Buddhism, states that the cult of Ekajaṭā (a form of Tārā) was recovered by Nāgārjuna from Tibet ('bhoṭeshūddhṛtam'). The earliest reference to this cult is to be found in Nāgari inscription of 978 A.D. from Jāvā. She is the Buddhist version of Durgā. In *Mahābhārata*, Tārā and Tāriṇī are names of Kālī or Chaṇḍī. In the Tāntrik lore, she is the second of the ten great ritualistic forms of the mother-goddess (Mahāvidyā), the first being Kālī. The *Bhairava-Padmāvati-Kalpa* equates her with Gaurī (or Pārvati) of the Śaiva sect, Vajrā of the Kaula rites, Padmāvatī (Yakshiṇī) of the Jaina canon, Gāyatri of the Vedic religon and Prakṛti of the Sāṁkhyans:

तारा त्वं सुगतागमे भगवती गौरीति शैवागमे।
वज्रा कौलिकशासने जिनमते पद्मावती विश्रुता।
गायत्री श्रुतिशालिनी प्रकृतिरित्युच्यते सांख्यागमे।
मातर्भारति किं प्रभूतभणितैर्व्यासं समस्तं त्वया।।

When we realise that Tārā's consort, Avalokiteśvara-bodhisattva, is the Śiva of the Śaiva cult, the correspondance of Tārā with Durgā becomes more evident. The association between Tārā and Avalokita (Lokeśvara) is emphasized in Karnāṭaka.

In Baḷḷigāme, on the banks of the river Varadā, a Buddhist Vihāra known as 'Jayantī-pra-bauddha-vihāra' was built in 1065 by Rūpa-bhaṭṭaya, the minister of the Chāḷukyan king Āhavamalla, and the deities that were worshipped there were Tārā-bhagavatī, Keśava, Lokeśvara and Buddha. Bappure Nāgiyakka, wife of Haṁpa-chaṭṭi who was chief (nāḍa-pergaḍe) of

Banavāsi, installed the icons of Keśava, Lokeśvara and Buddha. The image of Tārā that she got made was discovered by Lewis Rice in 1830. In Ḍaṁbaḷa (Gadag Taluk, Dharwad district), Ārya-Tārā (a form of Tārā of the green variety, Khadiravaṇi) was enshrined. A 'Vihāra' of Ārya-Tārā was got constructed by Saṅgavayya-śetti at Lokkiguṇḍi. The Ḍaṁbaḷa inscription of 1095-6 begins with the customary invocation 'Namo Buddhāya' and goes on to describe at length the greatness of Tārā-bhagavatī, who is invoked to allay the fear of lions (hari), elephants (kari), fire (śikhi), reptiles (phaṇi), thieves (taskara), fetters (nigaḷa), deep waters (jala), ocean (arṇava) and goblins (piśācha). She is the wisdom (prajñā) and the bestower of the Buddha's prowesses ('buddhasya vibhūtidā'); she abides in the heart of Tathāgata and is of the nature of enlightenment (bodhi).

In Kōḷivāḍa (Hubbaḷḷi taluk, Dharwaḍ district), an icon of Tārā has been discovered, belonging to about the thirteenth century and inscribed on the pedestal of this icon are the words 'Siddham Om namo bhagavatyai Āryatārāyai' followed by the usual statement of the Buddha's teaching in brief 'ye dharmā hetu- prabhavā' etc. There were several shrines to Tārā in this region, but most of them changed their original Mantrayāna nature to more conventional āgama appearance. The famous Mūkāmbikā shrine in Kollūr is surmised to have been once a Tārā shrine; and so also the Maṅgaḷā-devī temple in Mangalore.

The Vihāra on the Kadari hill (known as 'Kadarikā-mahā-vihāra') in Mangalore (Dakshiṇa Kannaḍa) was an important site for Mahāyāna Buddhism. There are three exquisite bronze statues, now in the Mañjunātha temple there. One of them is of the Mahāyāna deity Avalokiteśvara-bodhi-sattva (consort of Tārā) called Lokeśvara, which according to the grantha inscription on the pedestal of the image was set up by the Āḷupa king Kundavarma II in 968 A.D. ('lokeśvarasya devasya pratishṭhām akarot, śrīmat kadarikā-nāmni vihāre sumanohare'). This fine piece of sculpture (now identified as Brahmā) is of a seated figure with three (tri-mukham) heads and six arms (shaḍbhujam) (but what the hands held cannot be known), with three eyes (triṇetra) on the face front, and with matted hair shaped like crown (jaṭā-makuṭa); and the normal right hand is in the gesture of boon-bestowal (varadam dakshiṇe pāṇau); There is a small effigy of the seated dhyāni-buddha on the crown. This figure corresponds in most details to the Hālāhala variety of Lokeśvara, given in *Sādhana-mālā* (without, however, the Śakti on his lap, cf B. Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 1968 p.132).

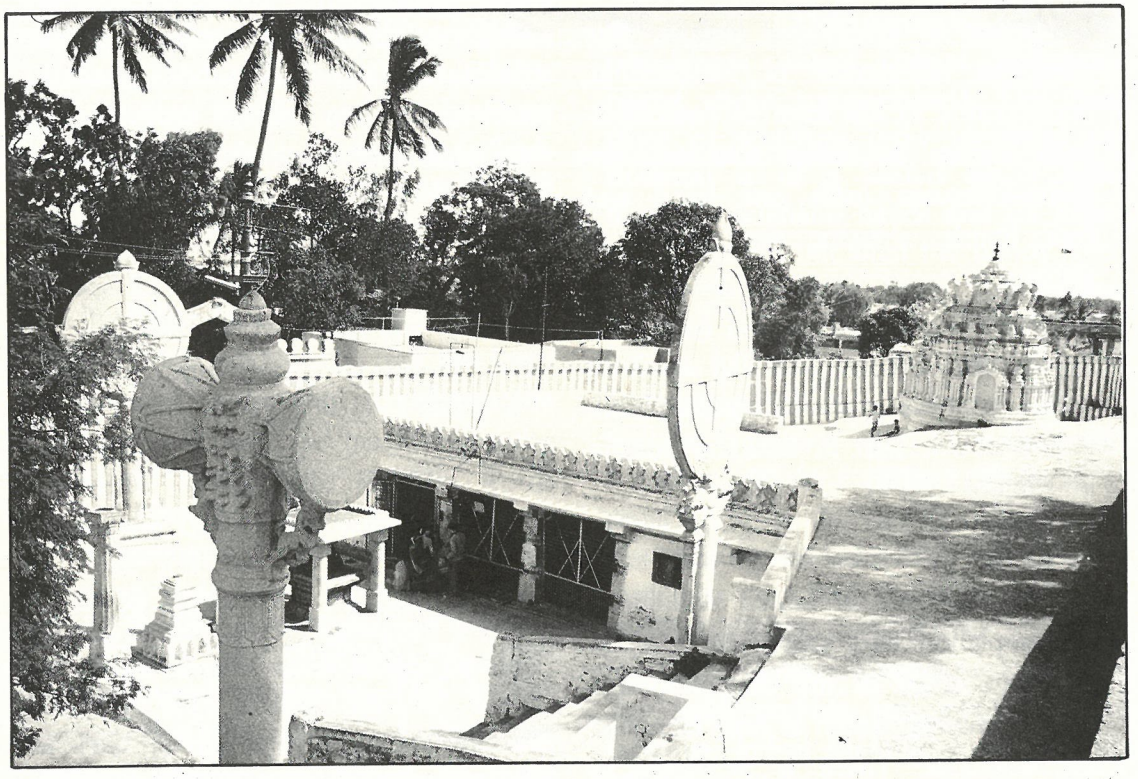
This iconic form is also to be found as No.3 among the one hundred and eight forms of Lokeśvara, painted on the wooden panels surrounding the shrine Macchandar-vahal in Nepāl. When we consider the facts that the Nātha-Siddha cult has prevailed in the Kadari Vihāra, and that the Nātha-siddha cult originated in Nepāl some light is thrown on the presence of this unusual form of Avalokiteśvara in Kadari. There is a similar icon of Avalokiteśvara (but standing and in stone) in Nepal, but of much inferior craftsmanship. The smaller icon of Lokeśvara in the Kadari temple, now used as bali-devatā of Mañjunātha, corresponds to the form of Avalokiteśvara known as Sarva- śoka-tamo-nirghāta-lokeśvara (with one head and four hands, showing the gesture of abhaya or protection in the two normal hands and carrying rosary and lotus in the two upper hands), which is no.39 in the Nepāl iconographs mentioned above (but in standing posture in Kadari).

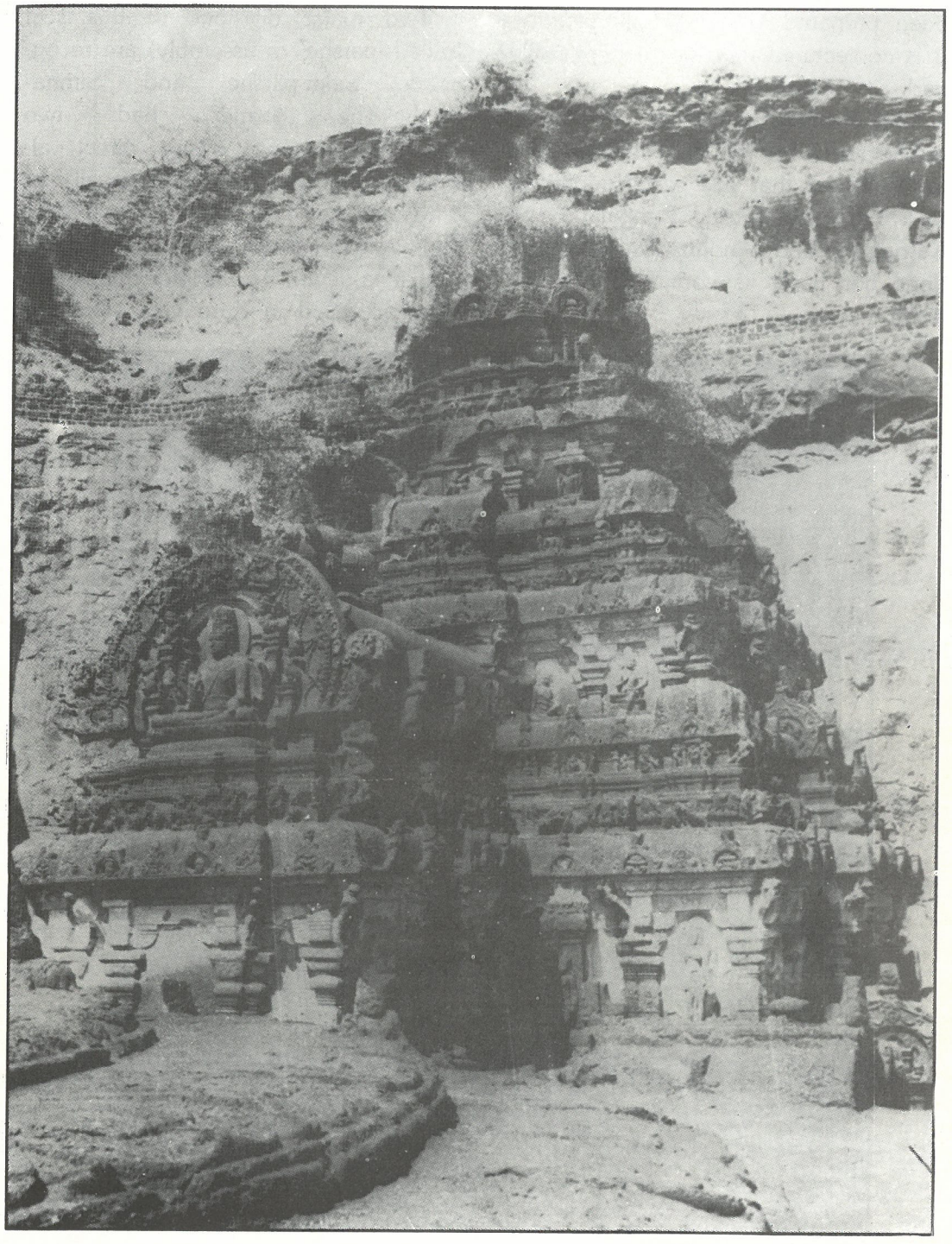
The other two bronzes in the Kadari temple are those of seated Buddha in contemplation and seated Mañjunātha (with an effigy of the dhyāni-buddha on the crown), which is now identified as Nārāyana. There is reference to another Lokesvara temple in an inscription dated 1293 at Mundukūru (Kārkaḷa tāluk) in the same area. Thus, Buddhism which never became prevalent in Tuḷu-nāḍu continued to survive till the thirteenth century. It got fused with Śaivite ideology and practices here, as elsewhere (e.g. in Nepāl and Bengal). Indeed, Kundavarma, the Āḷupa king, who installed the bronze icon of Lokeśvara in the Kadari-vihāra (mentioned earlier) describes himself (in the inscription on the lotus-seat of the icon) as 'the bee at the lotus-feet of the god who wears the crescent moon as his crest-jewel (viz. Śiva)' ('padāravinda-bhramaro bāla-chandra-śikhāmaṇih'). The king was a zealous Śaivite (as most Āḷupa kings were), who took upon himself to encourage the Mahāyāna Buddhist faith as it had much in common with his own faith. When it became hard for Buddhism to survive, it naturally lost its specific identity and got merged with Śaivism.

ŚAIVISM

If Jainism and Buddhism were religions that came to Karnāṭaka from outside,Śaivism was indigenous to the land, and must have been prevalent among the people, even before Jainism entered amidst them. One of the oldest faiths in the world, the material manifestations of it go as far back as the period of the Indus Valley civilization, more than three thousand years before the Christian era. But the

formation of sects and cults of Śaivism was a later event. The earliest of sects that we have some evidence of during the historical period in Karnaṭaka is the one identified as Pāśupata (or Kālāmukha or Māheśvara) and ascribed to the genius of Lakula (or Lakulīśa) who hailed from Saurāshṭra. Like Jainism or Buddhism, this sect must have entered Karnāṭaka at some point of time and influenced the Śaiva thought and practices here. Lakula is said to have been a historical figure, but an incarnation of Rudra; the period of his life is given as the first century of the Christian era and the composition of the *Pāśupata-sūtras,* the definitive text of this sect, is ascribed to him and to this period. He is regarded as one of the twenty-eight yogāchāryas, and on his *Pāśupata-sūtras*, Kauṇḍinya prepared a gloss probably in the third century A.D. Based on this gloss Haradatta wrote his *Gaṇa-karikā*, on which Bhā-sarvajna commented. These books are the main sources for the Pāśupata (or Kālāmukha) sect, and appears to have

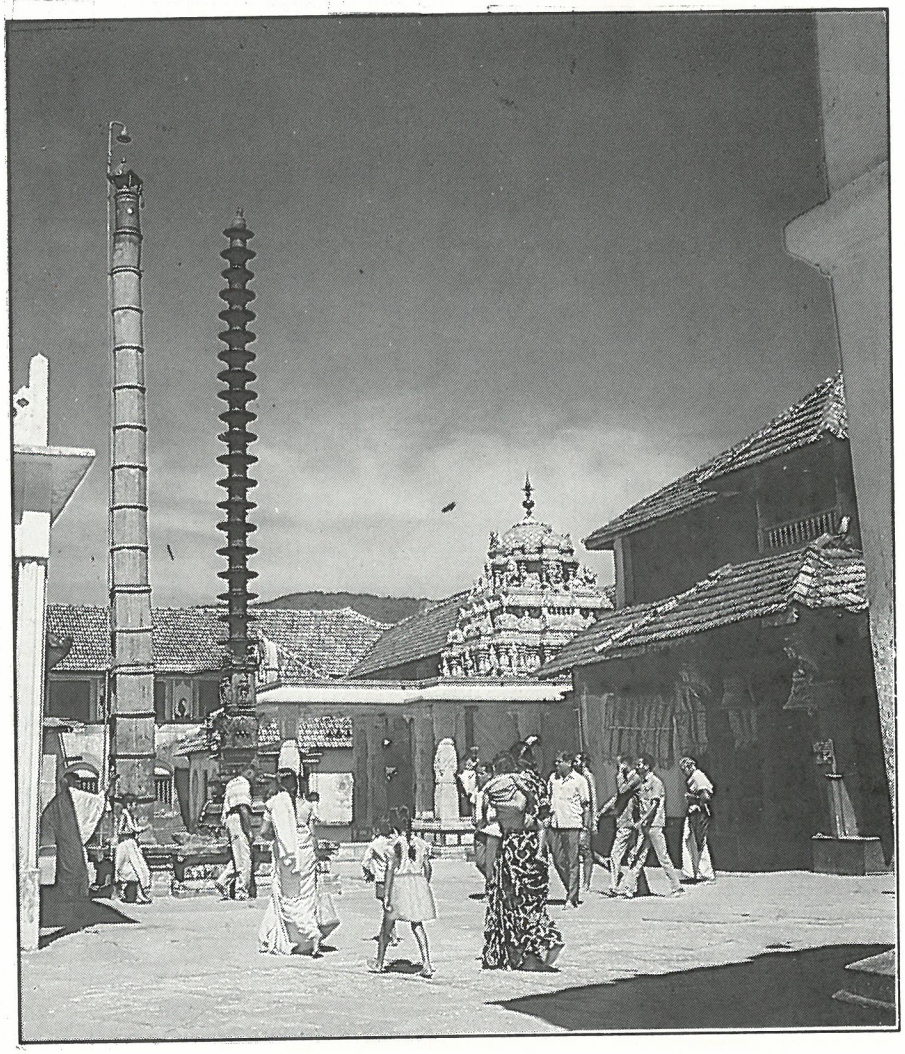




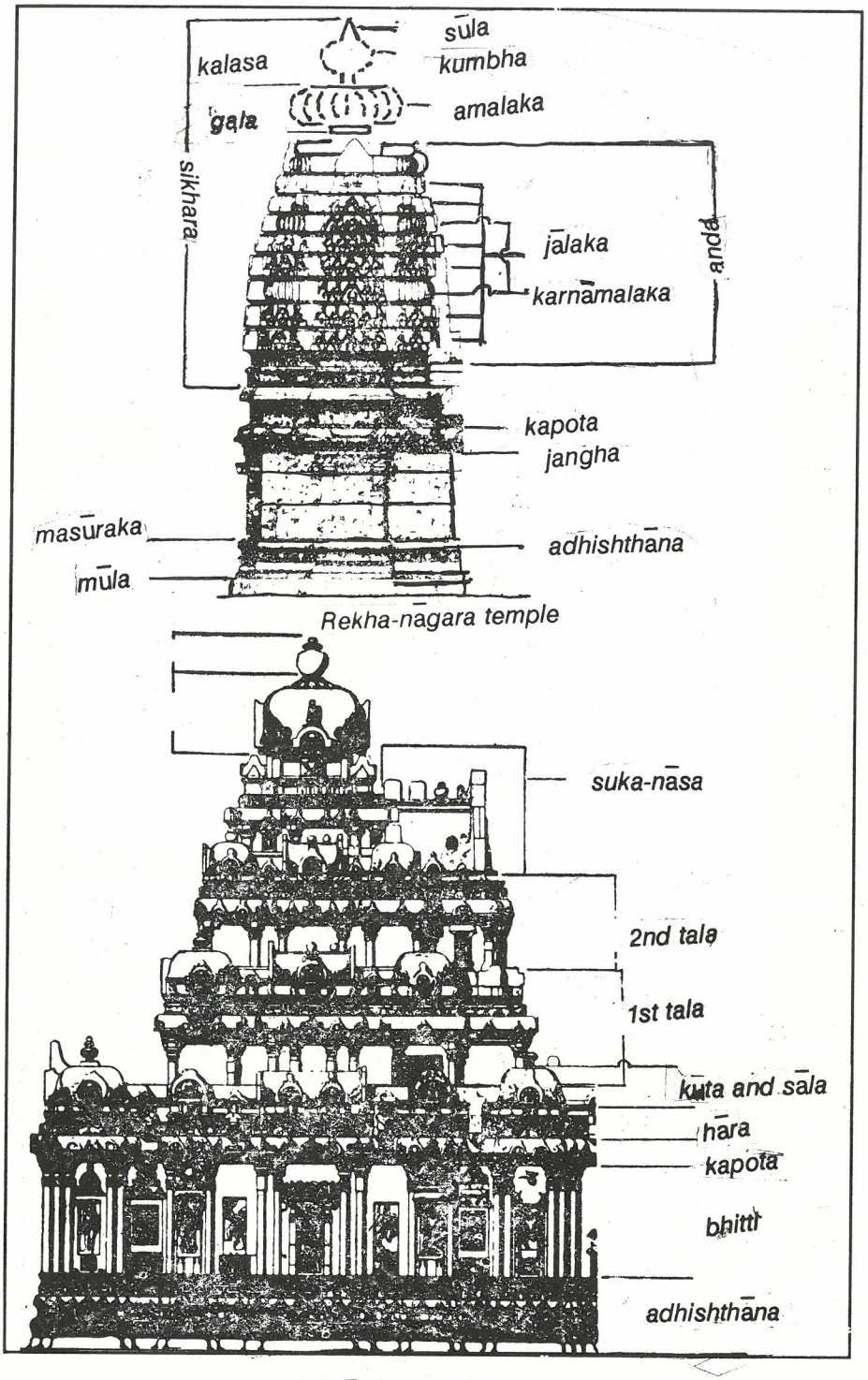
Kailāsa temple - main vimāna, Ellora

been prepared in the Telugu country. It is conjectured that the sect originally had its stronghold in Śrī-śaila in Āndhra Pradesh and entered Karnāṭaka in the fourth or the fifth century. It is to be noted that this sect is confined to South India (mostly Tamiḷ-nāḍu and Karnāṭaka and Andhra Pradesh and does not have its counterpart in the north.

Two major divisions of this sect (called 'parshe' or assembly) are recognised: 'Śakti-parshe' and 'Siṁha-parshe'. The former had two sub-divisions, one owing direct allegiance to Śrī-śaila ('Parvatāvali' or 'Parvatāmnāya') and the other calling itself 'bhujaṅgāvali' (line founded by Bhujaṅga-deva). The former appears to have prevailed in Karnāṭaka. There is



Mūkāmbika Temple, Kollūr


śūla
kalasa
kumbha
gala
amalaka
śikhara
jālaka
aṇḍa
karṇāmalaka
kapota
jaṅgha
masūraka
adhishṭhāna
mūla
Rekha-nāgara temple
suka-nāsa
2nd tala
1st tala
kūta and śāla
hāra
kapota
bhitti
adhishṭhāna
Drāvida-temple



Saṅkaranārāyaṇa temple, Mālur

a Kannaḍa inscription of 1057 from Karnūl (in Āndhra Pradesh), which refers to one Sureśvara-paṇḍita-deva, "the royal swan in the pond of the Kālāmukha sect", ('kālāmukha-samaya-sarovara-rājahaṁsar'), "veritably the sun for the water-lily of the Lākula doctrines and arguments" ('lākula-sid-dhānta-naiyāyika-naḷinī-divākarar'), "the [illegible]orative arch for the western gate

of Śrī-śaila''('śrī- śaila-paśchima-dvāra-toraṇar') and ''the person instrumental for the sight of god Mallikārjuna'' ('Mallikārjuna-deva-darśana-kāraṇa-purushar'). This inscription not only identifies the Kālāmukha sect with the sect founded by Lakula, but suggsts that the sect spread in the western direction (viz. towards Karnāṭaka) from Śrī-śaila.

That the cult named after Lakulīśa was popular in Karnāṭaka by 600 A.D. is evident from the sculpture of Lakulīśa carved in the Mahākūṭa-temple, to which temple Durlabha-devī made land-grants as mentoned in the inscription of the Chāḷukyan king Maṅgalīśa (596-610). There was a separate shrine to Lakulīśa in Bādāmi about the same time. And by 640, Nandi near Bangalore appears to have been an important centre of this sect, for an inscription dated 640 A.D.refers to a matha of the Kālāmukhas, whose head was one Kālasakti (to whose disciple, Īśvaradeva, Ratnāvali, mother of a Bāṇa king, made a grant). The famous temple at Nandi was built by the Noḷaṁba kings, who being staunch Śaivites patronized the Lākula sect. They claimed to be pillars of the Lākula doctrine and practice ('Lākula-samaya-staṁbha'). These kings, who were scions of the Pallava family, and ruled over parts of Karnāṭaka from the eighth to the eleventh century with Heñjēru (Hemāvati, now in Anantapur district of Āndhra Pradesh) as their capital. It was during their rule that Nandi rose to prominence, as also Āvaṇi (in Kolār district where they built the well-known Lakshmaṇeśvara temple), not to mention Heñjēru (where they built the Doḍḍēśvara or Noḷaṁbēśvara temple and Siddhēśvara, Virūpāksha and Mallēśvara temples) The great warrior-king Mahendra (870-897) who styled himself a 'parama-māheśvara', dedicated his own palace to Mahādeva (viz. Śiva), and installed Mahendreśvara therein, granting generous gifts to the shrine.

The Lākula-śaivas who prevailed till the fifteenth century made a profound impact on the religious life of Karnāṭaka. In particular, they were responsible for building temples in almost every village in the area, and providing a new dimension to the temple culture. The teachers of this faith were very well organised into 'mathas', and encouraged Sanskrit learning (especially Vedic lore, because they called themselves 'śruti-mukhya' or adorers of the Vedas) and ethical living. These mathas were invariably attached to temples, and the expression 'deva-sthāna' for the temple became popular under their influence. The temple was where the god's icon was installed and worshipped (deva), and also where the Lākula-teachers resided along with their celibate disciples (sthāna). As administrators of the temples and principals of the schools attached to these temples, they were called 'sthāna-patis' or 'sthānikas'. Heñjēru, the Noḷaṁba capital, had a large university

('śrīmatu-heñjēru-paṭṭanada, mahā-ghaṭikā-sthāna') attached to the Nōḷam-bēśvara temple, over which Ananta-śiva-deva presided as 'āchārya-rāja-guru'.

The Kedāreśvara temple at Baḷ-ligāme in (Shimoga district) founded by the Kālāmukha teacher Kedāra-śakti, on the banks of a pond called Tāvare-kere, had a 'maṭha' (cloister and college) attached to it. This was called Kōḍiya-maṭha, or 'Kedāra-sthāna'. It flourished at any rate from 1078 till 1215, if inscriptions are any clue. There is an inscription dated 1162 which describes the functions of this 'maṭha': it provided teaching in the four Vedas, Sanskrit grammar different branches of philosophy, the purānas, poetry, drama and other aspects of literature; it provided free food for the poor the destitute and the physically handicapped, for the professional musicians, dancers and actors, and for mendicants and strangers to the town; and medical treatment and nursing were offered free for the sick who were poor, and had none to look after; and it was "a place of assurance of safety for all living creatures" (EC VII Sk 102, tr by Fleet EI, 5, 222, cited in David N.Lorenzen. *The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas*, pp. 103- 104).

There were several temples also in Belgāum, (like Andhāsura temple at Hūli, Jagadīśvara temple at Munavaḷḷi, Mallēśvara temple of Belgāum, Mallikārjuna temple at Saundatti), Bellāry (like Dakshiṇa Someśvara temple at Tumbula, Svayaṁbhū temple at Kuragōḍu and Mallēśvara temple at Sindigēri), Bijāpur (like Svayaṁbhu-Siddhēśvara temple and the Śiva-liṅga-deva temple at Muttagi), Dhārwāḍ (like Brahmeśvara temple, now called Basaveśvara temple at Ablūr) and temples at Hāssan (like the Kālāmukha temples at Halēbīḍu, Gōjeśvara temple at Arasīkere, Kallēdeva temple at Jājūr, Jagatēśvara temple at Kaṇikaṭṭe) districts in Karnāṭaka. Most of these temples were built under the patronage of the Kalyāṇa-Chāḷukya kings, especially of 'Bhuvanaika-malla' Someśvara II (1068-1076), who was a zealous Śaiva, and of his successor 'Tribhuvana-malla' Permāḍi Vikramāditya VI (1076-1127), who notwithstanding being a Jaina by personal conviction extended patronage to the Kālāmukha shrines.

Although the Kālāmukhas were fervent Śaivas, they were not fanatical. They not only tolerated but actively encouraged other faiths and sects. They supported the learning of the four Vedas, and were themselves Vaidika in general inclination. They also imparted in their schools instruction in such varied disciplines as Nyāya, Sāṁkhya, Buddhism, Mīmāṁsā and Yoga. One of the Kālāmukha teachers, Someśvara, who administered the Nagareśvara temple and college at Sūḍi (Dhārwāḍ district) is described in

an inscription of 1075, as a Buddha to the Buddhists, a Jina to the Jainas an Akshapāda (Gotama) to the Naiyāyikas, a Kaṇāda to the Vaiśeshikas, a Jaimini to the Mīmāṁsakās and a Bṛhaspati to the grammarians. Keśirāja-daṇḍādhīśa (Keśimayya), who was minister to Bijjaḷa II (1130-1167) and had great Kālāmukha master and 'rājaguru', Vāmaśakti-deva as his 'ārādhya' (revered family priest and mentor) built a temple to Keśava in the southern quarter of Baḷḷigāme and provided a 'brahmapura' (residential quarters for learned brahmins) attached to the temple. A branch of the Kālāmukha ascetics were devotees of Mahālakshmī of Kolhāpur. Because of the receptivity of the Kālāmukhas, the Pāśupata cult from Kāshmīr could not only enter Karnāṭaka but make an impact upon the indigenous Śaiva ideology, and the Nātha-siddha votaries from Nepāl could settle down in Karnāṭaka and contribute to the merger of Buddhism in Śaivism.

The advent and influence of the Nātha-Siddha cult and its fusion with Śaivism of the Kālāmukha system are best illustrated in the coastal region of Karnāṭaka. Besides the well-known Kadari hill in Mangalore (where a vihāra was built as early as 968 A.D.), there were several centres of this cult; important among them being Chandrapuri (Chandāvara, Honnāvar taluk, 11th century), Bārakūru (1140), Basarūru (12th Century) Muṇḍukūru (Kārkaḷa taluk, around 1293), Kōṭēśvara (around 1372) and Viṭṭla (Baṇṭvāḷa taluk) as late as 1531). Settlements of the Jōgis belonging to this cult as well as to the Kālāmukha sect (-an inscription of 1372 records charity for feeding 'ubhaya-jaṅgamas' in the temple of Kōṭēśvara-) were found in several places as Kōṭēśvara, Viṭṭala, Aṁbūru, Maṅgaḷapāḍi Kāsargoḍu tāluk), Bārakūru, and Addūru (Mangalore). The worship of Bhairava, Vīrabhadra, Mañjunātha, Gorakhnāth, Hiṅgulā-devī, Nakharēśvara and several Jogi-purushas (like Jugādikuṇḍala-jōgipurusha and Sadānanda-jōgi) in this region is ascribable to the confluence of the Nātha-siddha and Kālāmukha ideologies and practices.

The Kālāmukha administration of temples in Karnāṭaka made the temple in the town or village a socio-economic organisation in addition to being a religious and educational institution. Popular entertainment (music, dance and drama) was included in the ritual sequences of temples. We have an inscription of uncertain date mentioning a land-donation to a dancing girl (sūḷe) of the Tripurāntaka temple at Baḷḷigāme made by the Kālāmukha priest of the temple, Trilochana-munīndra of Bhujangāvali lineage, which suggests that temple prostitution (devadāsi) was a feature of the temples administered by the Kālāmukhas (cf. David N. Lorenzen, op.cit, p. 139-140).

The mention of temple-prostitutes in Karnāṭaka occurs not earlier than 778 A.D. In an inscription of that date in the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭadakallu is the first mention; in subsequent years inscriptions do occasionally mention actors (pātra) and prostitutes ('dēgulada sūḷe') attached to temples to discharge the duties of 'nṛtta' (dance), 'gīta' (songs) and 'vādya' (instrumental music). The custom appears to have gathered strength from the tenth century onwards. In 1058, Nāgadevayya, who got the Nāgeśvara temple built in Saundi, also got a township built for the temple prostitutes in the vicinity of that temple (EI 15, p.18).

The sect seems to have lost its importance during the period 1160-1200, although it continued to figure in inscriptions as late as 1410. The Rājaguru of Harihara I (1336-1356) and Bukka (1356-1377) was the Kālāmukha teacher Kāśivilāsa-kriyāśakti by name. The Virūpāksha temple at Hampi was probably administered by this teacher. The shrine to Vidyā-śaṁkara at Śṛingēri was built, according to an inscription of 1390, in memory of' (or 'with the permission' of as another reading of the words in the inscription would have it) this teacher. But after this period, the influence of these Kālāmukha teachers appears to have waned.

But the major factor which pushed the Kālāmukha impact to the background was the rise of the Vīraśaiva movement spearheaded by Basava (1131- 1167) who was treasurer to the Kalachūri-Bijjala of Kalyāṇa. (1130-1167). But it was the Kālāmukha sect that provided the backdrop for the Vīraśaiva creed, and it has been suggested that the latter was only a 'reformist schism' from the former (cf Lorenzen,op.cit, p.167). But the two creeds had different social and philosophical orientations. The Kālāmukhas, however, lost their ground in Karnaṭaka after Basava, and were gradually absorbed within the Vīraśaiva fold. Many of the Kālāmukha shrines in later years came under the control of the Vīraśaivas like the Kedāreśvara temple at Baḷḷigāve, the Trikūṭeśvara temple at Gadag (in Dhārwāḍ district), the Brahmeśvara temple at Ablūr (in Dhārwāḍ district, now called Basaveśvara temple) and the Kālāmukha 'maṭha' at Hūli (in Belgāum district).

VAISHṆAVISM

It has been mentioned earlier that worship of Vishṇu in public shrines (of which we have some epigraphical or other evidence) dates back to a couple of centuries before the Christian era, and that the earliest monumental temples in India, (of which there has been some archeological evidence) were dedicated Vishṇu (viz. the Bhiṭargāon and the Deogarh temples in the north, built by the Gupta rules during the fourth or fifth century A.D.).

It has also been mentioned that the cult of devotion (bhakti), which is prevalent to this day, and which occasioned temple-culture in the country, was the consequence of the Bhāgavata movement (with its emphasis on the worship of Vishṇu). But hardly anything can be said with any semblance of precision about when or how the cult of Vishṇu-worship spread in Karnāṭaka. All available evidence suggests that it was later than Śaivism, but how much later cannot be ascertained.

The earliest inscriptional reference to Vishṇu as a god worthy of worship in South India is to be found in the Nānāghāt inscription of Nāganikā, queen of the Śātavāhana king Śātakarni I (about 184-125 B.C.) who ruled over the region including the present Karnāṭaka. It contains an eulogy of Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva, among other divinities like Indra, the Lokapālas, Yama, Varuṇa and Kubera. It is well known that according to the Bhāgavata ideology, Saṁkarshaṇa and Vāsudeva are the adorable Vyūha-forms of the great god who is hailed as 'bhagavat', representing the two hero-brothers of the Vrshni family, Balarāma and Krishṇa. The inscription, therefore, strongly suggests that the Bhāgavata ideology had already entered South India by the first or second century A.D. We cannot, however, be sure if it had gained ground by then. There are no epigraphical or literary references to shed more light on this detail.

That the Vishṇu-worship had become popular by the time the Gaṅgas began to rule is suggested by the names of the early kings, Mādhava (died 380), Harivarma (Mādhava's successor), Vishnugopa and Tāḍaṅgala-Mādhava (or Mādhava III, 440-469). And the early kings are described as "devoted to the feet of Nārāyaṇa" ('Nārāyaṇa-charaṇānudhyāta' .However, the successor of Mādhava III, Avinitā (469-529), is styled as "one who bows at the lotus-feet of Śiva" 'hara-charaṇāravinda-praṇipāta'). It is also known that his teacher and mentor was a Jaina ascetic Vijaya-kīrti by name. The Gaṅga rulers, and indeed all the subsequent royal dynasties in Karnāṭaka, encouraged all three religions: Jainism, Śaivism and Vaishṇavism.

The Halmiḍi inscription (of about 450 A.D.), which is the oldest of Kannaḍa inscriptions known to us, contains an invocatory verse in Sanskrit in praise of Vishṇu, and Vishṇu alone:

जयति श्रीपरिष्वङ्ग शार्ङ्गमानतिरच्युतः।
दानवाक्ष्णोर्युगान्ताग्निः शिष्टानां तु सुदर्शनः॥

The verse names Vishṇu as Achyuta, and describes the god as embraced by Lakshmī (Śrī) as weilding the bow named Sārnga and as appearing to the eyes of the wicked like the fire of destruction at the end of the aeon, while his aspect is benevolent to the pious. We find here a full-fledged conception of Vishṇu as the consort of Lakshmī enemy of the demons, and benefactor of the good folk.

The early Chāḷukyan kings of Bādāmi also appear to have been Vaishṇavas in personal religion, although they supported Jainism and Śaivism also. The most celebrated of the monarchs of this dynasty, Maṅgaḷīśa (596-610) was himself a 'parama-bhāgavata', notwithstanding the fact that he was a devotee of Mahākūṭeśvara. He is celebrated as one who was responsible for the magnificent rock-cut shrine to Vishṇu ('Vishṇu-gṛha') in Bādāmi, which is the earliest of the three caves in the locality and which was completed in 578 A.D. This was undertaken by Maṅgaḷīśa for the merit of his deceased elder brother and predecessor on the throne, Kīrtivarma I, who in fact had conceived and planned this shrine. But characteristically, this shrine, although named after Vishṇu, also contained Brahmā to the right and Śiva to the left of Vishṇu. It is a 'trai-purusha' shrine, but Vishṇu is the major divinity. Such a shrine was built also by the queen of Vinayāditya (691-696), Vinayāvati, in Bādāmi.

The example set by Maṅgaḷīśa was followed by the Pallava king Mahendra-varma (580-630) who was responsible for the Mandagapaṭṭu rock-cut shrine ('Brahmeśvara- Vishṇu-lakshitāyatāna'). This king also got nine other rock-cut shrines made, which include Mahendra-Vishṇu-gṛha at Mahendravāḍi and the Vishṇu-cave temple at Māmaṇḍūr. Immediately following this period, we have the Narasiṁha-cave temple at Siṅgāperumāḷ-kōyil and the Raṅganātha temple at Śiṅgavaram, the Ādi-varāha, Maha-varāha and Rāmānuja temples at Māmallapuram, showing the growing poularity of Vaishṇavism

It was during the rule of Rāshṭrakūṭa kings of Mānyakheṭa (Maḷkhēḍ) (about 753 till 973) that Vaishṇavism spread with Duntidurga was the king in this dynasty (753-756), and his uncle and successor Krishṇa I (756-774), whose fame abides as the builder of the world-renowned Kailās temple at Ellora, also built at enormous cost Kṛishṇeśvara (Kāmeśvara) temple, cut out of a hill-slope and made costly endowments on it. The most famous of the kings of this dynasty, Amogha-varsha-Nṛpatuṅga (814-878), was a devout Jaina, but he was also a worshipper of Mahālakshmī.

Vaishṇavism received a great impetus in South India, especially in the Tamil country and Keraḷa, by the life and work of the twelve 'āḻvārs' ('saints who had dived deep into divine

experience'), the first of whom is said to belong to the second century and the lastto the eighth or the ninth century. These saints who wandered about the country visiting Vishṇu shrines and singing devotional hymns in Tamiḷ (later collected into four thousand pāśurams or Prabhandha). Their impact on the religious life of the people was great, and it was in this context that Vishṇu-worship took deep root in the Tamiḷ country, and considering the social and political situation of South India during those days, it was most unlikely that Karnāṭaka was uninfluenced by the 'āḻvārs'.

Imperceptibly, the Vaishṇava ideology must have spread here, long before the alleged advent of Rāmānuja (1017-1137) into Karnāṭaka. The inheritors of the great movement started by the āḻvārs were the three 'āchāryas', (Nātha-muni, Yāmuna and Rāmānuja) who crystallized the Śrī-Vaishṇava cult and the Viśishṭādvaita philosophy in the Tamiḷ country, with Kāñchīpuram and Śrīrangam as the centres of their activity.

There is no doubt that when the Hoysala kings were ruling the southern regions of Karnāṭaka, (1000-1300), the Vishṇu-worship in temples got unprecedented encouragement, and the Śrīvaishṇava influence among the people was widely felt. There is a persistent and popular legend that Biṭṭiga-Vishṇuvardhana (1108-1152) was converted from Jainism to Vaishṇavism, under the influence of Rāmānuja who is said to have resided for fourteen years in Karnāṭaka. But the legend can hardly be substantiated by any historical documents or epigraphical evidence. While it is true that the king and the saint were contemporaries, there is little truth in the story that the saint sought refuge in Karnāṭaka, fleeing from the Tamiḷ country when persecuted by the Chōḷa King. The Chōḷa persecution and Rāmānuja's flight are equally unconfirmed; and there are epigraphs to tell us that Vishṇuvardhana had this name, and had built Vishnu temples, even before the time he is said to have met Rāmānuja, and that he continued to be a Jaina enthusiast till his last days. It was he who got built the celebrated Keśava temple at Bēlūr (1117) and Kīrti-nārāyaṇa temple at Talakāḍu.

It is not, however, impossible or unlikely that Rāmānuja visited Karnāṭaka during Vishnuvardhana's rule, for there is evidence of wide-spread Śrī-vaishṇava communities here since those days, and numerous shrines to Vishṇu, where worship was organised on Pāñcharātra lines came subsequently into being in the areas ruled by the Hoysalas. It was during the same period that the Kadamba queen Kamalā devī, wife of Śivachitta-permāḍi (1147- 1180) built in Dēgāmve (Belgāum district) the Kamala-Nārāyaṇa temple.

Vishṇu shrines in the coastal regions, especially Dakshiṇa Kannaḍa, appear to have come into existence and prominence as a result of the missionary zeal of the Keraḷa monarch Kulaśekhara (1170- 1215). The Varāha-svāmi temple at Maravante (Kundāpura taluk), with shrines also to Janārdana and Narasiṁha, is one of the earliest Vishṇu shrines of this period in this region. Ananta-deva temple at Perduru (Uḍipi-taluk), Gopālakrishṇa temple at Kuṁbaḷe (Kaṇvapura), Janārdana temples at Sīmantūr, Aṁbalapāḍi and Yarmāḷa, Chakrapāṇi temple at Attāvara (Maṅgalore) and other temples appeared in the subsequent period. The famous Krishna temple at Uḍipi is associated with the name of the saint and reformer, Madhva (1197-1276), although it is likely to have been there earlier. The Vaishṇava movement acquired strength and popular appeal after the work of Madhva and his immediate disciples, not only in the coastal a reas but in the whole of Karnāṭaka its influence was felt in Mahārāshṭra, Āndhra Pradesh and Tamiḷ nādu also.

The Vijayanagar kings (especially Tuḷuvas and of the Aravīḍu line), the Vijayanagar kings and the Mysore Oḍeyars too were supporters of the Vaishṇava faith, although many of them had Śaivite leanings. The rājagurus' of the later Vijayanagar (1500 onwards) were zealous Śri-vaishṇawas, and the Pāñcharātra cult spread during their days as also Vishṇu temples even in small villages and towns. Among the Oḍeyas, who inherited the mantle of the Vijayanagar kingdom, Rāja- oḍeyar (1578-1617) was a Vaishṇava in his personal life, and began supporting many Vishṇu temples in and around Mysore and Śrīranga-paṭṭana. Later, Chikkadevarāya (1672-1704) was a fervent Śrī-vaishṇava and encouraged poets and scholars owing allegiance patronage from him. Among the Vishṇu to this faith. Vishṇu temples of Śrī-vaishṇava leanings received temples in Karnāṭaka now, the largest number are those where worship is done according to the Pāñcharātra procedure (which was encouraged by Rāmānuja); andŚrī-Vaishṇava temples of the Vaikhānasa pursuation, which prevailed before the days of Rāmānuja, are fewer. Fewer still are the temples of Vishṇu where worship has been in the Mādhva-Tantrasāra procedure.

CHAPTER FOUR

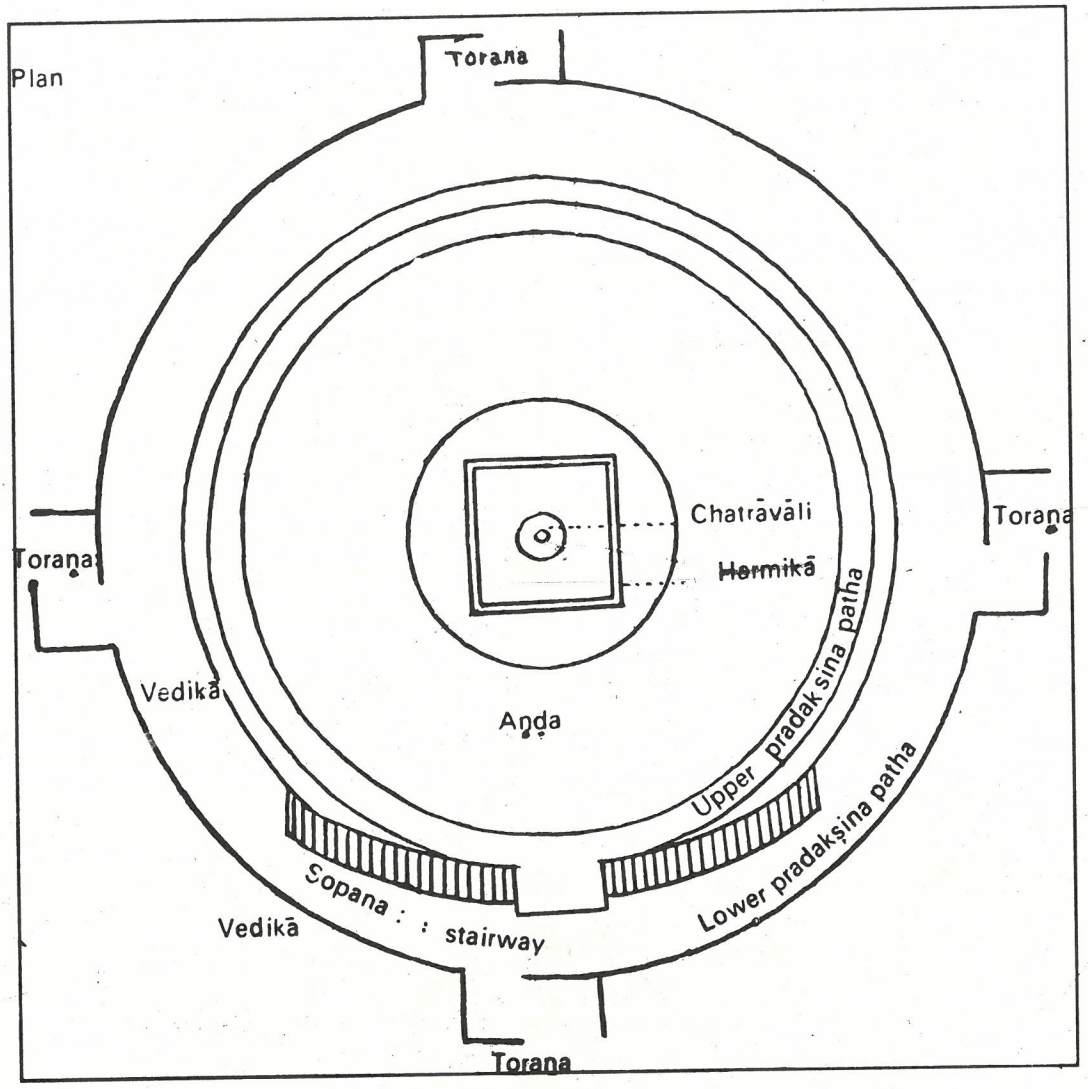
ARCHITECTURAL UNFOLDMENT

THE BEGINNINGS

Religious buildings of historical and archaelogical interest and importance in our country date back to the days of Aśoka, within whose political or moral authority Karnāṭaka was. He was responsible for the earliest Stūpas, Chaityas and Vihāras that we are acquainted with. The stūpas were either actual burial mounds or they were architectural devices to contain body-relics (śārīrika), or personal belongings (pāribhogika) of the great saints worthy of worship, or to mark some sacred occasion. There were also votive stūpas in stone for adoration, kept within a 'chaitya' or hall of worship, where the devotees regularly gathered.

The Aśokan chaitya is the nearest prototype of the temple of later days. While the stūpa was an independent building, the chaitya incorporated an votive stūpa as an object of worship. There is room to think that while the stūpa was a pre-Aśokan structure, the chaitya took shape during the days of Aśoka. The vihāra was a sanctuary with residential quarters for the members of the monastic community, who were required to stay at some place during the rainy season and not travel (as they had to do for the rest of year).

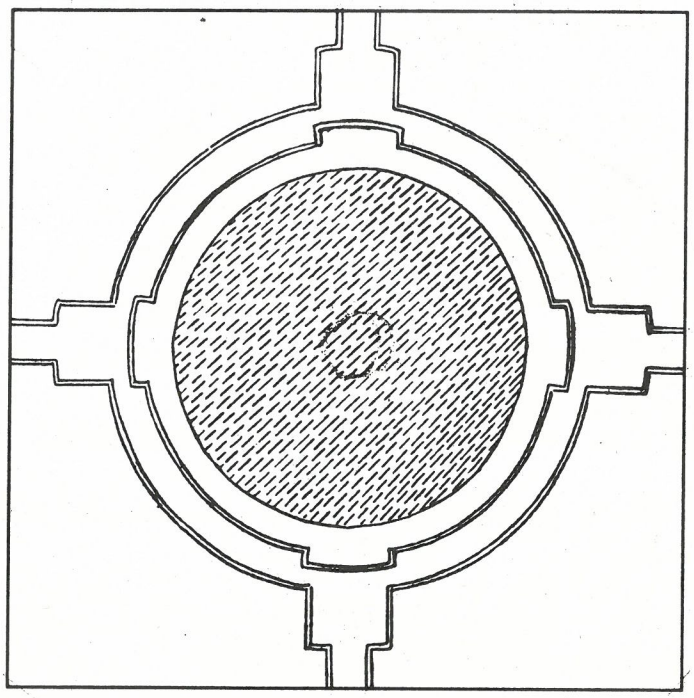
The vihāra was associated with the chaitya, but was different from it. The vihāra was a place where the monks lived and delivered sermons, and where the lay-devotees gathered to honour the monks and listen to their discourses. The chaitya on the other hand was the place of worship, where the votive stūpa or an image of the Buddha was kept. The chaitya was relevant to the people all through the year, while the vihāra bustled with activity only during the rainy months when monks were in residence. Asoka built eight rock-cut halls, hewn out of hard quartzose gneisss rock in the Bārabar and Nāgārjuni hills and one near Rājgir for the ājīvika asceties.



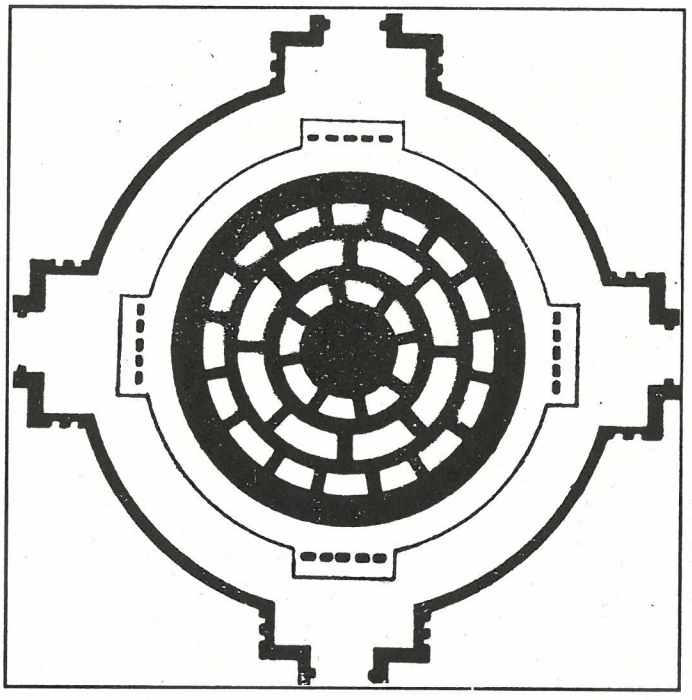
Sāñchi Stūpa

They were more in the nature of vihāras than chaityas. The chaitya proper as an architectural device developed in Bhājā, Koṇḍāne, Piṭalkhōr, Ajantā, Junnār, Nāsik, Bēḍsā, Kārle and Kāṇhēri.

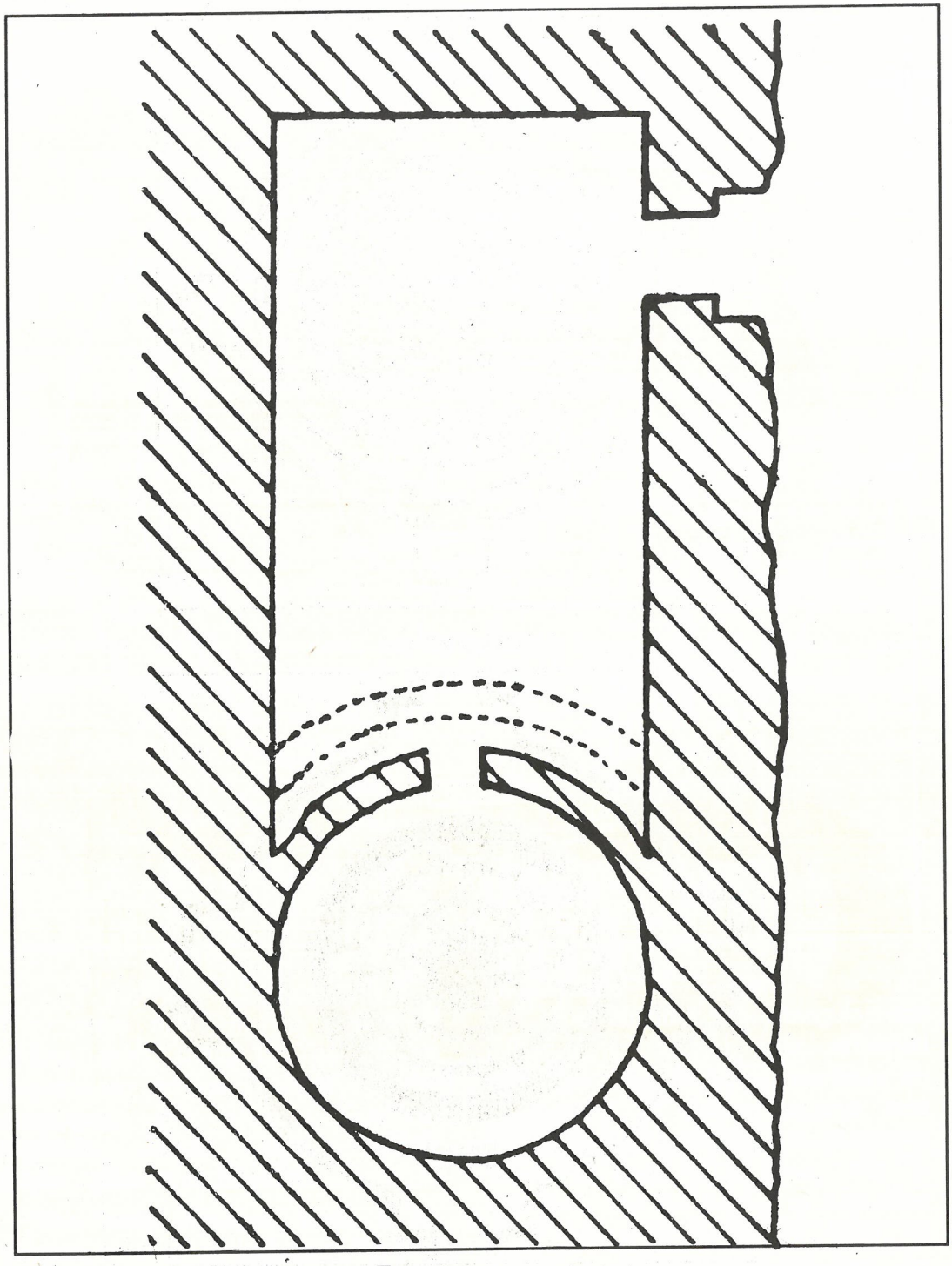
The early chaityas were distinguished by their apsidal character and compactness in plan, while the vihāra was more squarish or rectangular and diffuse with several cells arranged along the sides. In Bhājā, we have an instance of a rock-cut chaitya and vihāra in close proximity but altogether separated from each other. But in Dhammēr (on the border of Rājasthān and Madhya pradesh) we have an apsidal chaitya incorporated into the



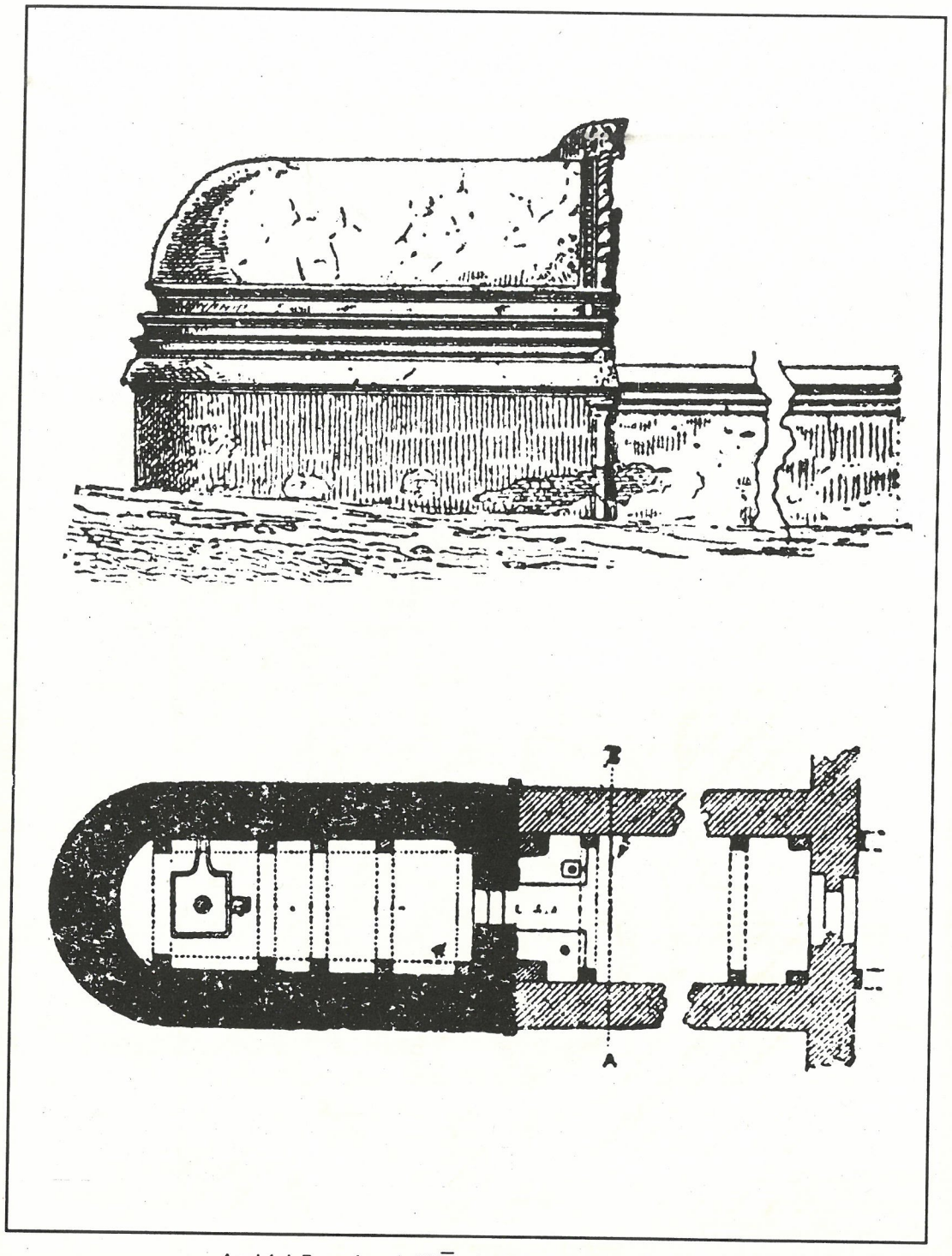
Amarāvati-Stūpa



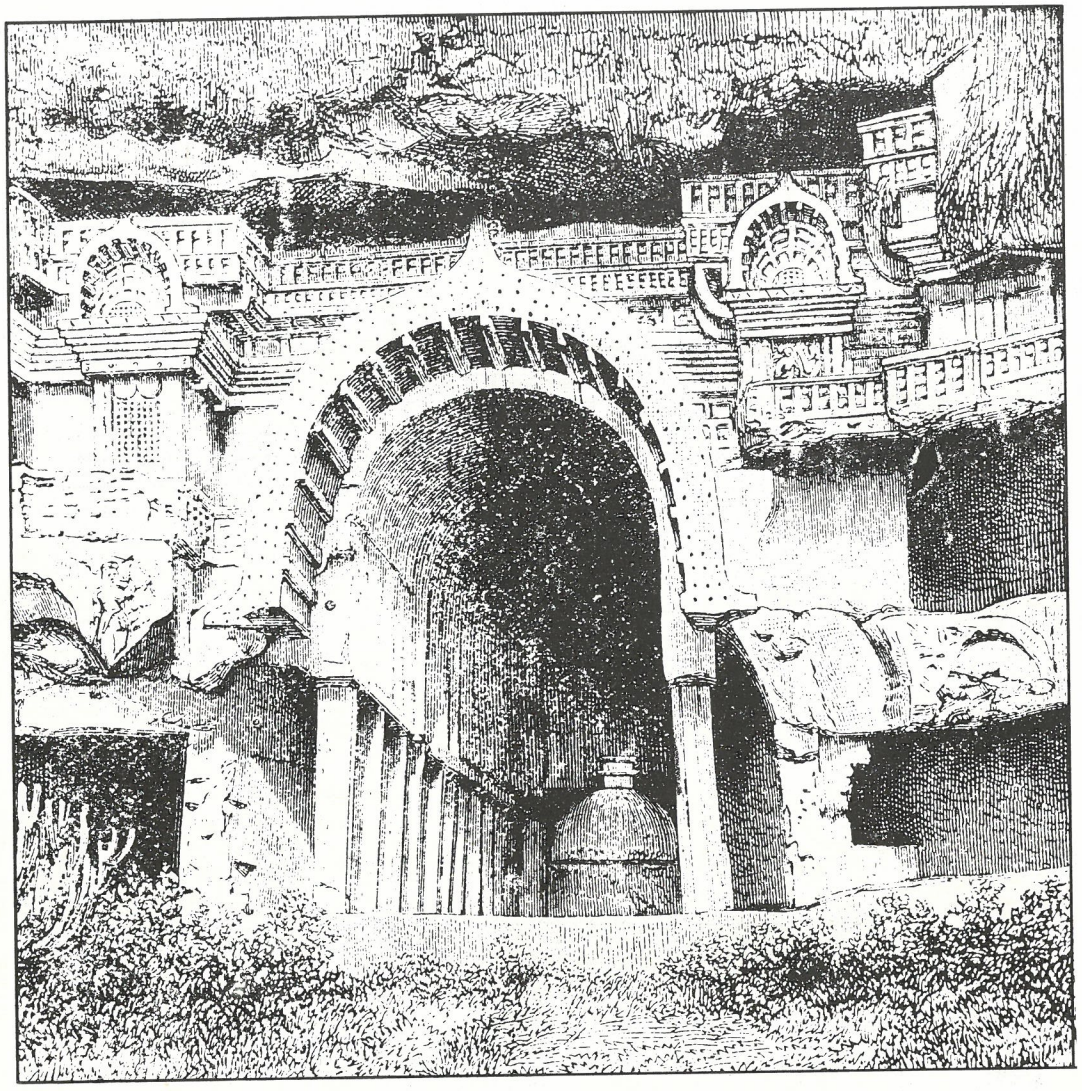
Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa stūpa



Sudhāma Cave (ground-plan)



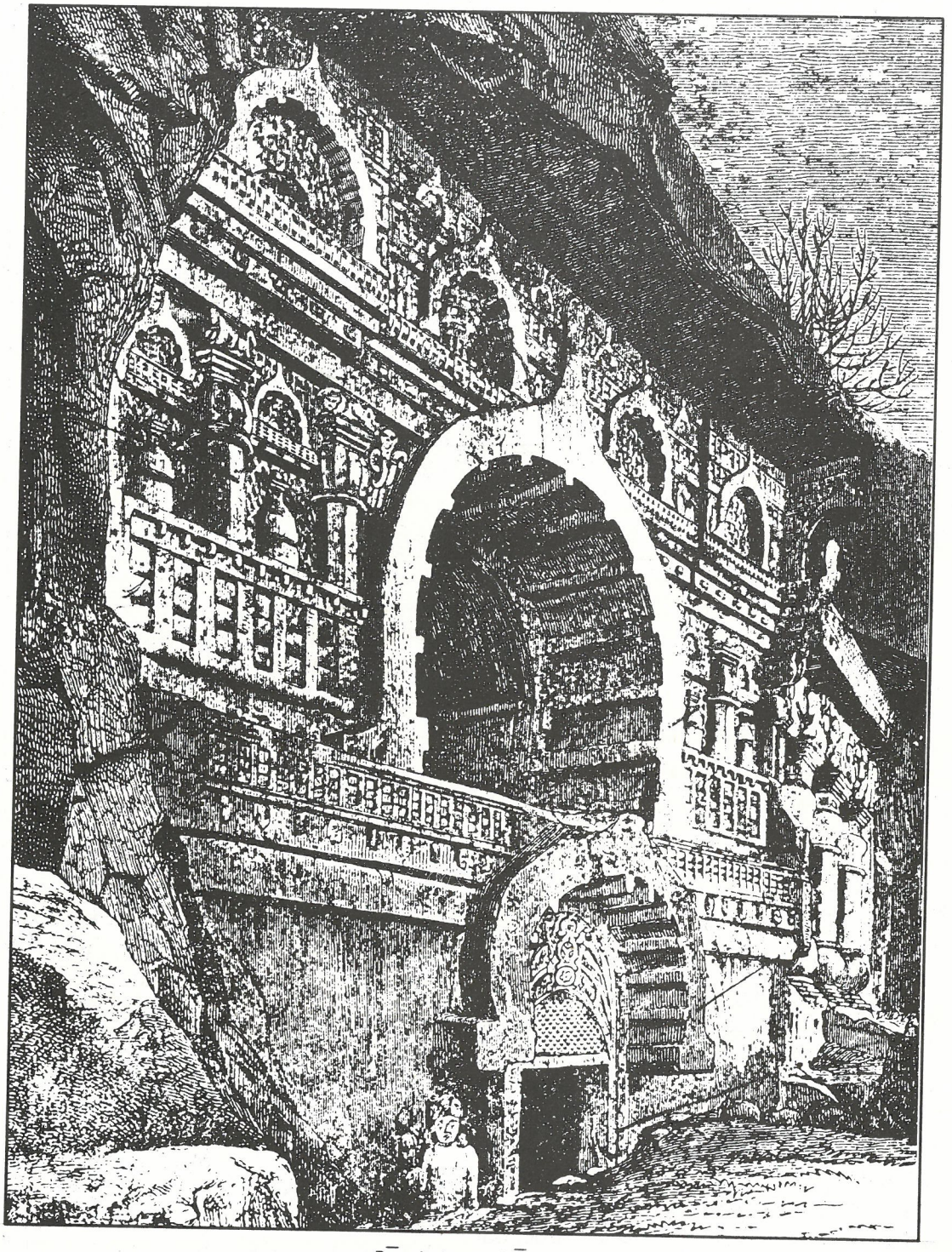
Apsidal Temple at Chējarla (elevation and plan)



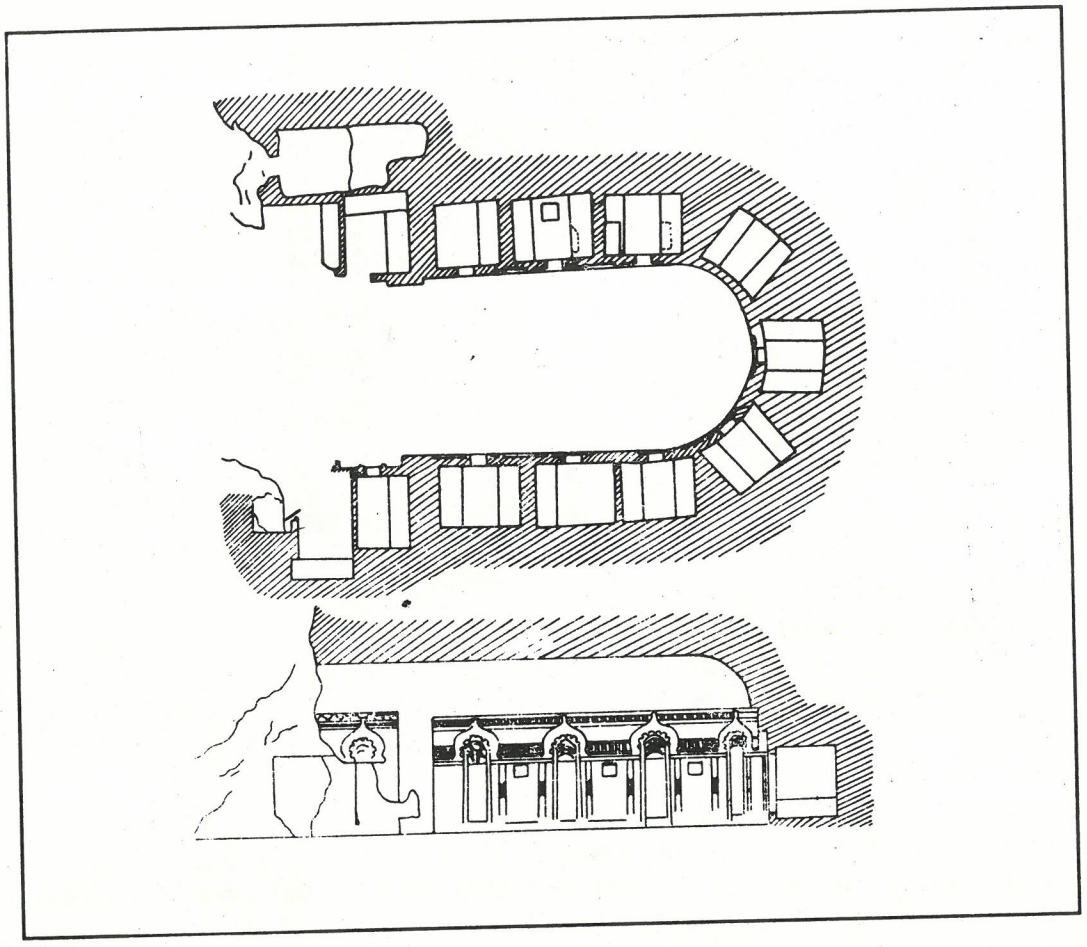
Rock-cut *Chaitya* of Bhāja (with stupa inside

rectangular vihāra. This provided the model and inspiration for the Jaina basadis (which were at once places of worship and residence for monks), which appeared on the smaller of the two hills in Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa in days before or after the beginning of the Christian era.

It was natural for the chaityas and vihāras as well as the basadis, even when rock-cut, to be made to resemble wooden buildings. In fact, the early cave-chaityas were not only in imitation of wooden structures, but made actual use of timber for parts like facade (as for instance in Bhājā), but soon enough stone replaced wood



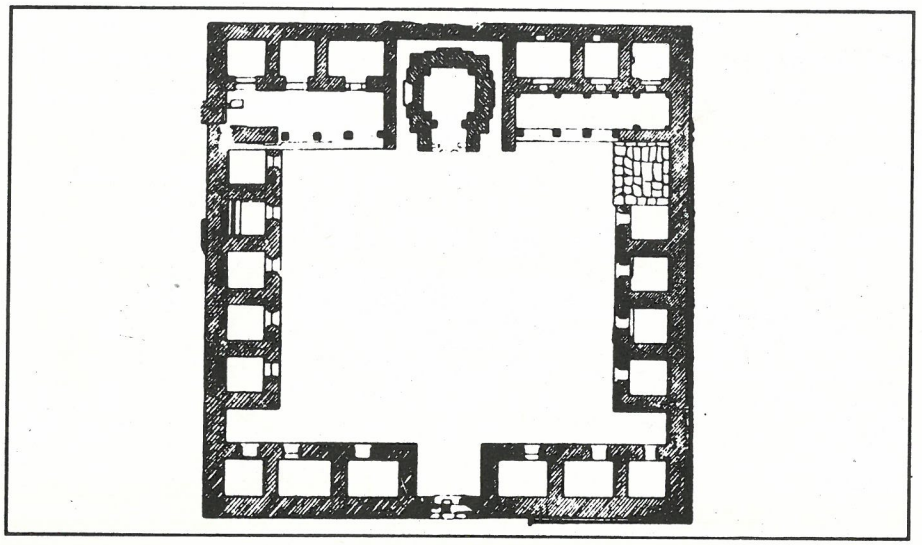
Pāṇḍu-leṇa, Nāsik



Vihāra at Bēḍsa (Plan and Section)

without however giving up the appearance or technique of wood-work (as in Piṭalkhōra and Nāsik). This was true of the structural temples also.

Even during the days of Aśoka there were structural chaityas contemporaneously with the rock-cut ones (as for instance, the structural chaitya on the hill known as Bijaḳ-ki-pahāḍi in Bairāṭ, Rājasthān); and these were usually brick structures with stone pillars. Occasionally a natural or rock-cut cave was combined with structural extensions. The earliest monument in Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa, Bhadrabāhu-cave, belongs to this variety, although the structural part of the shrine as it stands today is clearly of later date. Likewise, the original form of the Chandragupta-basadi (which it is now almost impossible to visualize) must have been of the same date as the Bhadrabāhu-cave, as it was meant to be the residence of the Mauryan monarch Chandragupta, who came here along with his teacher Bhadrabāhu and died here twelve years after his teacher did.



Vihāra at Sāñchi

It may be mentioned here that Mañjeśvara Govinda Pai has suggested that the Chandragupta of the Maurya dyansty, who according to tradition came to Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa, was Aśoka's grandson, Saṁprati-Chandragupta and not Aśoka's grandfather. That would bring down the antiquity of the earliest shrines in Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa by a few decades. Whatever the truth about the identity of Chandragupta, it is indisputable that the dawn of architecture in Karnāṭaka goes back to the days before the birth of Christ.

The next significant architectural achievement in this region is to be found in Shimoga district. In Tāḷagunda (Shikāripur taluk) is an ancient temple now in ruins, to Śiva (called here Praṇaveśvara, the 'Mahādeva residing in Tāḷagunda', in the inscriptions 'namo bhagavate sthāna-kundura-vāsine mahādevāya'), which was built in the second century A.D. A valuable inscription in Sānskrit found here (the famous Tāḷagunda pillar inscription of the Kadaṁba king Śāntivarman, 430-455 A.D. discovered by Lewis Rice in 1894) is dated about 450 A.D.,; and it refers to the temple as having received the attention of the Śātavāhanas and other benevolent rulers intent on their emancipation ('sukṛtibhir-avaniśvarair-ātma-niśśreyasa -prepsubhih śātakarṇyādibhih śraddhayābhayarchita').

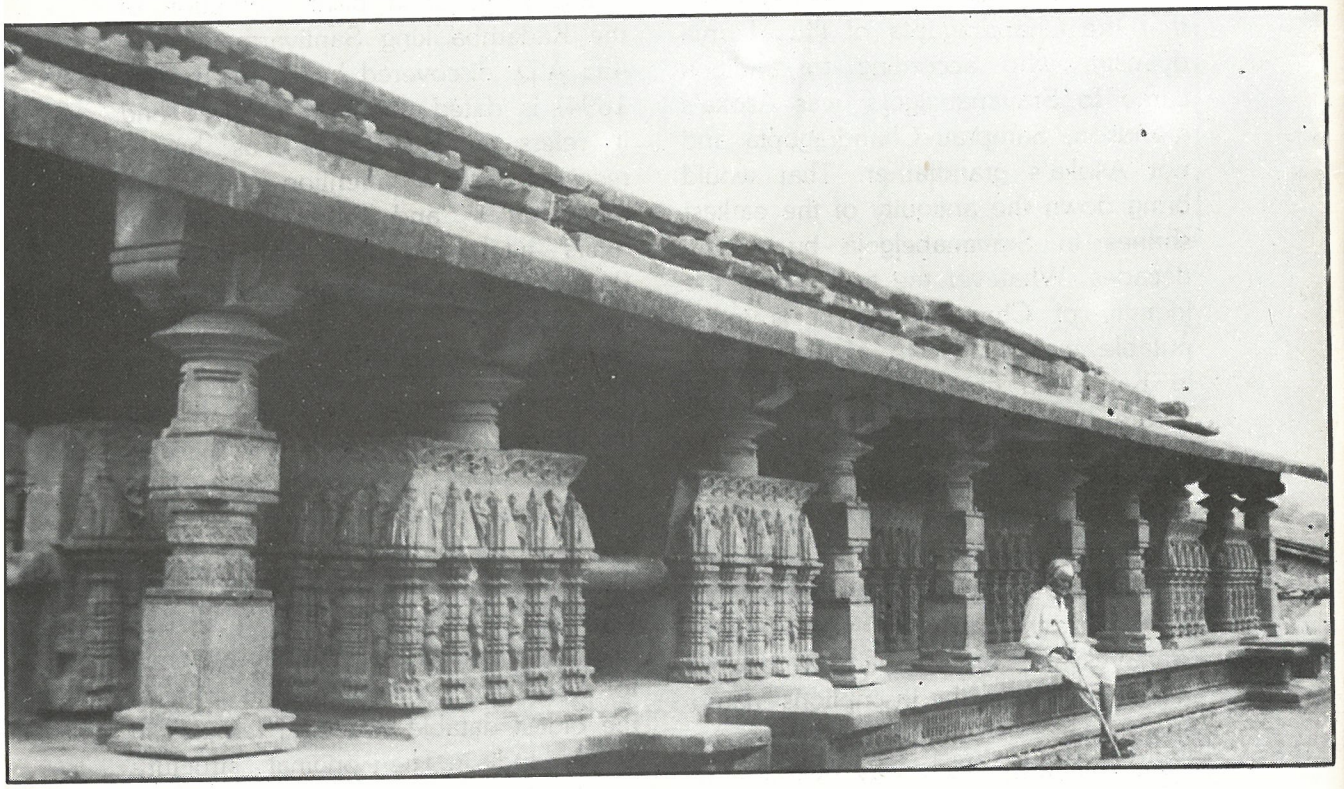
This temple-town is hailed in the inscriptions as 'the residential quarters of the pious brahmins from time immemorial' ('anādi-agrahāra'), and an inscription of the twelfth century relates that in this temple-town were forty-eight students studying the Vedic lore under six teachers, apparently attached to the temple. The temple is one of the oldest datable structural temples in South India. The original structure consisted of a square sanctum (garbha-

gṛha), and a vestibule (antarāḷa) and the entire building was small and plain, both inside and outside. The sanctum housed a linga about six feet tall with a pedestal (two feet and a half pedestal; and liṅga measuring three feet above the pedestal), and five feet in circumference at the bottom.

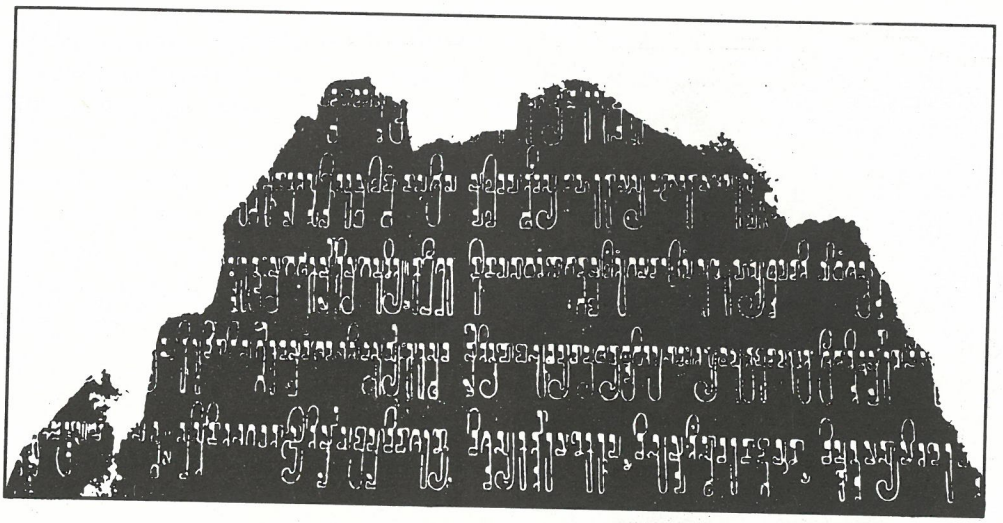
The fact that the Kadaṁba king Kākustha-varman (405-430) excavated a tank attached to the temple (as related in the Tālaguṇḍa pillar inscription of his son Śāntivarman) shows that a regular temple-complex, characteristic of South Indian temples till our own day, had already got formed in Karnāṭaka in the early centuries of the Christian era.

We must remember that Tāḷagunda is in the neighbourhood of Banavāsi, which was a celebrated township since the days of Aśoka, and a site of cultural confluences. While Banavāsi was doubtless a centre of Buddhism, no clear evidence of a stūpa or a chaitya in this place has so far been found (notwithstanding the mention made by Hieun-tsāng of a stūpa built by Aśoka here). But the place is full of temples, and among the archaeological finds are remnants of buildings apsidal in plan, reminding us of the early chaityas.

This region too was under the authority of the Kadaṁba kings, and



Kamala-nārāyaṇa temple, Dēgāṁve



Mṛgeśa-Varma's inscription in Banavāsi

we have in Banavāsi a Prākṛit inscription in Brāhmī characters on the Nāga-effigy (now within the enclosure of the Madhukeśvara temple), dated the second century A.D. as has already been mentioned). This inscription records the making of the Nāga-effigy and the excavation of a tank nearby by Śiva-skanda-nāga-śrī, daughter of Viṇhu-kaḍa Chutukulānanda Sātakarṇi (who is said to have been ruler at Banavāsi). The Madhukeśvara temple itself is probably a work of the late eighth or early ninth century. It is likely that the Nāga-effigy was housed in an independent temple, which has now disappeared.

There is an inscription which records that another Kadaṁba king Mṛgeśavarman (455-480 A.D.) made provision for worship in a 'chaityālaya' (a Jaina shrine) probably in Banavāsi in the third year of his reign (viz. 458-9 A.D.); the 'chaityālaya' must have been there already. The same king is recorded (in a copper-plate inscription) to have built a Jaina basadi (jinālaya) in Halasi in memory of his father (viz. Śāntivarman 430-455). Now in ruins, this is a simple structure of "huge boulders of granite roughly hewn and piled in a vertical position" with only the sanctum and an open vestibule-hall (śukanāsa), which is wider than the sanctum, and with no 'maṇḍapas'. George Moraes who has made a careful study of the Kadaṁba monuments (cf. *Kadambakula*, Bombay, B-X Furtado & Sons, 1931) describes this shrine as the earliest of structural temples in this region. The next stage, according to him, is illustrated in the Śiva temple at Tāḷagunda, the walls of which are built of stone, smoothly cut ("no longer heavy cyclopean blocks"), and the pillars of which are



Nāga-Śilā from Bavāsi

square or cylindrial monoliths, having no base, corbel or abacus.

The Kadaroḷi group of temples, similar to the Śiva temple at Taḷagunda, are square buildings, simple in plan but surmounted by plain towers which are "perfect pyramids marked with horizontal stages, having the appearance of steps". The tower being marked with horizontal stages is a contribution of the Kadambas to South Indian temple-architecture, which was crystallized during the Bādāmi Chāḷukyan period. Not only did the Chāḷukyan structural temples experiment with the north Indian curvilinear tower but with the pyramidal Kadamba towers also. We find that even the Hoysaḷa architects adopted the Kadamba idiom when they built the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi (in Hassan district) in 1114, four years before the Keśava temple at Belūr was built. often mistaken for a temple of the Hoysaḷa style, this is actually heavily oriented to the Kadaṁba style with its towers which are shaped like perfect pyramids, marked by horizontal stages in bold outline; and the temple is not raised on a platform, as the Hoysaḷa temples usually are (George Moraes, ibid., p. 313-314). And later Kadaṁba temples adopted freely the Hoysaḷa idiom, as for instance the Kamala-Nārāyaṇa temple at Dēgāṁve (cf George Moraes), built by Kamalā-devī, queen of the Goā-Kadaṁba ruler Permāḍi-Śiva-chitta (1147-1181).

The Kadaṁba influence on South Indian temple architecture has been profound, and the several branches of the Kadamba family (like the Kadambas of Hānagal, Goā, Veechaṅgi, Bankāpura and Belūr) have encouraged distinct regional styles. It was the Kadaṁba-background that facilitated the Bādāmi Chāḷukyan experiments in several styles of temple-building so that a recognizable South Indian idiom could in due course be crystallized.

CHĀḶUKYAN DEFINITIONS

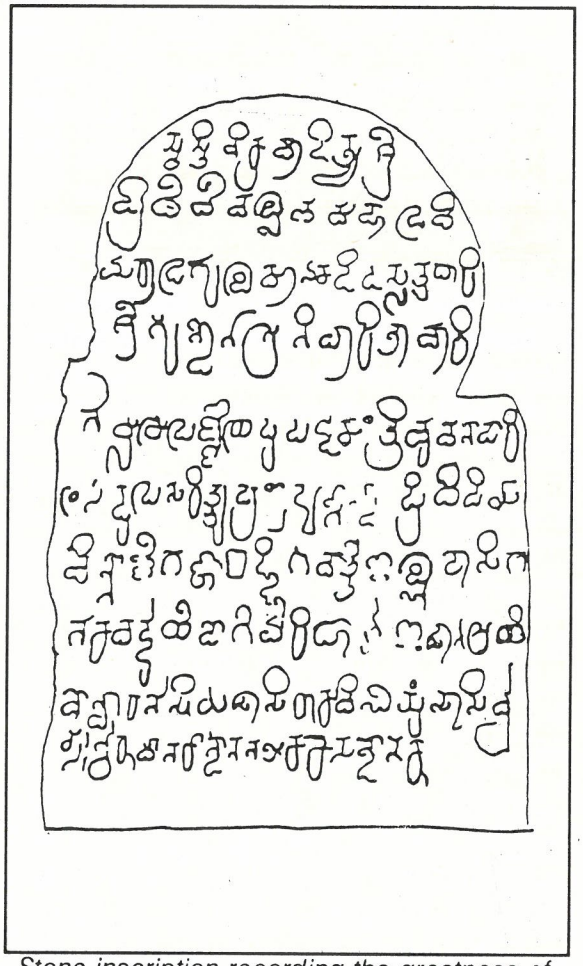
The Western Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi (who ruled this region from about 500 till 750 A.D.) were known for their great interest in temple- building. The

early kings of this dyansty not only got prepared rock-cut (or cave) shrines but built numerous structural temples in stone. Not that structural temples were unknown to the rulers who commissioned rock-cut shrines. But the structural temples of those days were being built in perishable material (like timber, mud and brick), and therefore could not be expected to endure for long. The rock-cut chaityas and vihāras of the Buddhist and Jaina religions were there since the days of Asoka in the northern regions (like the Sudāma) and Lomaśa-ṛshi caves in the Bārābar hills, the Pāṇḍu-leṇa in Nāsik and the chaityas and vihāras Ajaṇṭā). This idiom was adopted to the Śaiva and Vaishṇava shrines by the Chāḷukyan builders.

And concurrently, they experimented with building temples in stone instead of in wood and brick so that a greater measure of permanence could be ensured. The temples built by the Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi cluster in and around their capital cities, Bādāmi and Aihoḷe. On the banks of the river Malaprabhā are Bādāmi and Aihoḷe (separated from each other by about sixteen miles), and Paṭṭadakallu (which was never at any time a township of any importance, but a place where the kings were officially coronated and hence held sacred), about fourteen miles away from Bādāmi; and about three miles removed from Bādāmi is Mahākūṭa.

There are twenty temples in Bādāmi, ten in Mahākūṭa, twelve in Paṭṭadakallu and about one hundred and twenty in Aihoḷe. There are also nine temples in Ālampura (Mehbūbnagar district, Āndhra Pradesh) and one in Satyavolu (Karnool district in Andhra Pradesh) belonging to the same genre.

This is doubtless an interesting temple-complex, unique in the country,



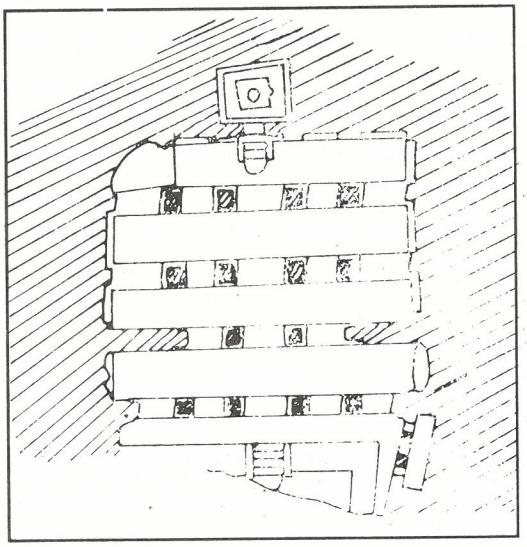
Stone inscription recording the greatness of the Chaḷukyan architect sculptor. Anivarita-guṇḍa ('Tribhuvanāchāri')

where diverse temple-styles were evolved and crystallized during the period beginning with the sixth century A.D. and ending in the eighth. Bold and innovative experiments in the plan, design, elevation and decoration of the temple were conducted in this region, especially in Aihole. Considering that in a small village, more than a hundred temples of variegated style and complexity, jostle about in close proximity, the only purpose of these temples appears to have been to provide an opportunity for the architects and sculptors to try their hands at new forms and modes. They were obviously neither products of religious fervour nor meant to fulfil a social need.

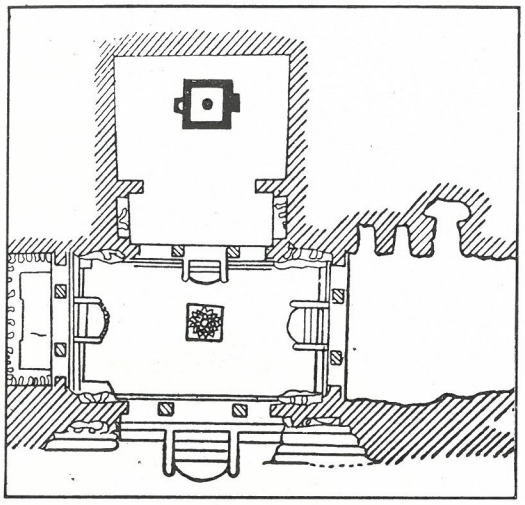
There were no stylized temple-varieties in the country by then, and the distinction between the northern tradition (the so-called 'nāgara') and the southern (the so-called 'drāviḍa') had not yet been emphasized. And the canonical texts of temple-architecture were probably still in the making, and their prescriptins had to wait for a couple of centuries to guide the hands and mind of the architect and sculptor. There must have been local styles of building in brick and mortar, bamboo and thatch; and the Chāḷukyan experimenters adopted details from them and evolved definitive styles in stone. It is unlikely that the sanctum of many of these temples contained any object of worship, or indeed that any worship was at any time conducted in them.

The Bādāmi Chāḷukyan empire during its heyday covered not only the whole of the presentday Karnāṭaka and Mahārāshṭra upto the river Narmadā, but the region around the rivers Krishṇā and Godāvari (viz. parts of Āndhra Pradesh). The anceint rock-cut shrines (chaityas and vihāras) at Bhāja, Kārle, Kaṇheri, Koṇḍāne, Beḍsā, Piṭalkhōr, NāsikAjaṇṭā and Elora were within this empire. And it was within this region (which comprehended most of South India) that the canonical texts in Sanskrit bearing on temple architecture and sculpture were composed and given currency. The earliest of these texts were prepared only in the eighth or ninth centuries of the Christian era, and the prescriptions contained in them must have necessarily presupposed the presence of actual temples.

It is not, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that the temple-models provided by the Chāḷukyan architects and sculptors (who had occasion to



Bādāmi-cave (ground-plan)



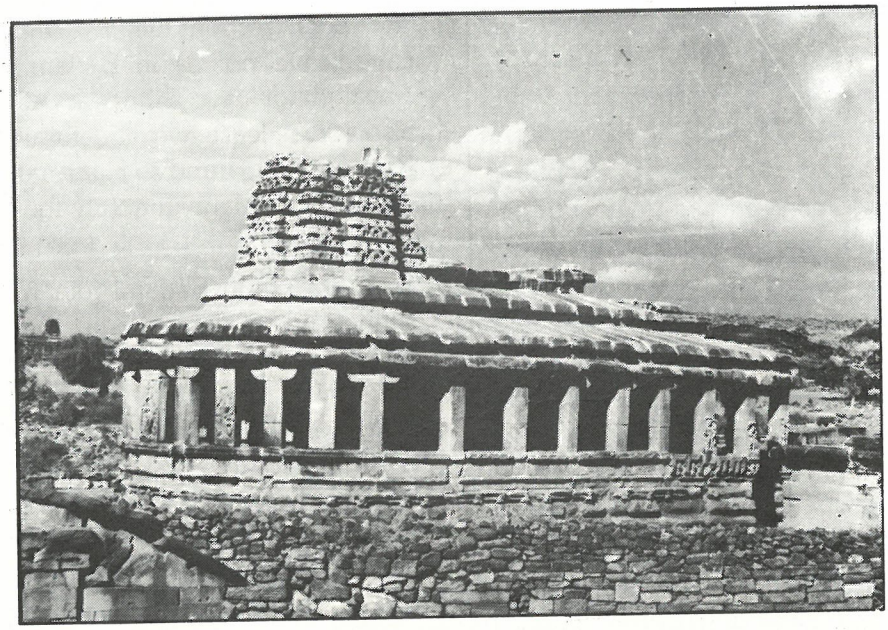
Rāvaḷa-Phaḍi (ground-plan)

acquaint themselves with a variety of local idioms and regional styles) contributed significantly to the crystallization of the canonical texts in South India. The supposition gains ground when we consider that the author of *Mānasōllasa* (also known as *Abhilashitārtha-chintāmaṇi*), which contains details of architectural, iconographic and iconometric interest, Someśvara III (bearing the title 'Sarvajña', 1127-1138, was a Chāḷukyan king of the Eastern or Kalyāṇa branch.

The rock-cut shrines of Bādāmi (Vātāpi) and Aihoḷe (Ayyāvoḷe) may be taken as the first phase of the Chāḷukyan experiments in temple-building, of whcih we have evidence. It does not, however, mean that structural temples were not there. The Chāḷukyan experiments on structural temples waited till this phase was over. Maṅgaḷīśa, (597-610) for instance, was not only responsible for the Vishṇu cave (cave no. 3) in Bādāmi and the Rāvaḷ-phaḍi cave-shrine at Aihoḷe, but also for at least two structural temples, Bānanti-gudi and Hīre-makuṭeśvara shrine near Mahākūṭa (on the outskirts of Bādāmi).

There are in Bādāmi four rock-hewn shrines in a line along the vertical scrap of a hill-range that dominates the town. The first of these cave-shrines in the ascending order of levels is dedicated to Śiva, the next two to Vishṇu, and the last to Jina. The third cave is the largest and most elaborate, while the fourth is the smallest in the series. The date of construction of the third cave ('Vishṇu-gṛha') is known in inscription; it was begun by the Chāḷukyan king, Kīrti-varman I (566-596) and was completed and dedicated by his younger brother Maṅgaḷīśa in 578, even before the latter succeeded the former on the throne. The dates of the other cave-shrines are uncertain, and they are so similar in plan and execution that it is hard stylistically to date them.

The Jaina cave-shrine (no.4), which is at one farther end of the series, and which is not only the smallest of all but also simplest in plan, may indeed be the earliest. Indeed, it may be pre-Chāḷukyan, and may have provided the model for the others. Caves numbered 1 and 2 are similar in size and plan. They have a pillared (four pillars) veranda or portico (mukha-maṇḍapa), a hall (maṇḍapa) with two rows of four columns in each



Durgi-gudi, Aihole

row, and beyond it a small square sanctum (cella, garbha-gṛha), cut deep into the rock at the back. The sanctum is separated from the hall, and is approached by a flight of two steps in the first cave and three steps in the second. The front of the caves is plain and unpretentious, while the interior reveals sculptural work of great skill and excellence. The caves are approached from the outside by flights of steps, suggesting a high and well-moulded basement (adhishṭhāna) along the length of which runs the gana-friezes.

The third cave is similar to these two caves in all details excepting the size, the number of pillars in the portico (six), and the plan of the hall (which is supported by a different arrangement of columns, for rows with four columns in the first row (as we enter from the portico), six in the second rwo, and four each in the third and fourth rows leaving an open, uncolumned and square court-yard in front of the sanctum.

We see that in the third cave there is an enlargement of the temple-area, a more artistic arrangement of the interior space, and a greater variety in the columns. The decorative element has entered more prominently. In the Rāvaḷ-phaḍi cave-shrine in Aihole, built probably comtemporaneously with the third Bādāmi cave, we have a rectangular hall (maṇḍapa with rooms at its shorter sides), a small square vestibule (antarāḷa) separated from the hall by two columns and grarded by two door-keepers (dvāra-pālas), and



Durgā, Aihoḷe

beyond it the sanctum, which is wider at the back than in the front. The idea of a vestibule was an innovation, which was followed extensively in the later structural temples.

In all these rock-hewn shrines, the sanctum is isolated from the hall, and there are no ambulatory passages (pradakshiṇā-patha) around the sanctum or the hall. Among the structural temples in Aihoḷe, the first temple in the Konta-guḍi group appears closest to the cave-shrine. It is a simple, rectangular structure on a low plinth (adhishṭhāna) containing only a hall, which is enclosed by a wall except in front. The hall has two rows of four pillars each, thus forming an open rectangular enclosure within the hall, in front of a rectangular sanctum, centred on the back wall. There are four pillars in a row (as we enter the temple) which support the roof, which is flat and devoid of any superstructure. There is no ambulatory passage around the sanctum.

The same is the case with the sanctum in the so-called Lāḍ-khān temple. The massiveness of the whole structure of this temple (which was probably originally dedicated to Vishṇu and later to Śiva but which is now named after a Muslim mendicant that lived in this abandoned shrine), the heavy pillars and the simplicity of its plan make it close to rock-cut architecture raised on a high but plain basement, the columned and rectangular porch (mukha-maṇḍapa) and the walled square hall (maṇḍapa). The rectuangular sanctum is built within the hall, against the hall's rear in front of the sanctum.

It is interesting to note that while the hall is enclosed by a wall on all sides except the part leading to the open porch, four rows of four columns in each row are placed in the central portion of the hall; thus forming an unwalled but columned enclosure, round which one can ambulate. This is an abstract ambulatory passage (pradakshinā-patha), which does not however encompass the sanctum.

This is also the case with the Sāraṅgi-guḍi (also called Sāraṅgi-maṭha) in the Konta-guḍi group, which is a rectangular shrine consisting only of a hall and the sanctum at the rear wall within the hall, so that there is no ambulatory passage round the sanctum, but there is the semblance of an 'antarāḷa' and the suggestion of an open 'śukanāsa' supported on four pillars. The roof imitates the timber model, and there is a low parapet-like superstructure, flat in form.

The ambulatory passage around the sanctum is achieved in the 'Gauḍara-guḍi', located not far from the Lāḍ-khān temple in Aihoḷe. Also raised on a high and well-moulded plinth, it is a rectangular structure, an open hall (maṇḍapa) supported on sixteen thick and square-shaped columns, four at the four corners, two in front and the

rear, and four on either side. Inside the hall, towards the rear portion is built a sanctum (rectangular in shape), thus allowing the devotee to walk round the sanctum. The roof in the case of this temple, as in that of the Lād-khān temple or the Sārangi-gudi is flat; but there is a sanctum and the six pillars that are in front of the sanctum (forming an open inner mandapa).

This is obviously the beginning of the 'sikhara', which became in later temples a prominent feature. In the case of the Lād-khān temple, the superstructure assumes the form of a flat-roofed shrine-room, but it does not cover the sanctum below. it is built on top of the four-pillared enclosure containing the Nandi in the middle of the hall and in front of the sanctum. And it appears oddly perched on the roof, neither imposing nor artistic.

The temple to the south-west of the Rāvala-phadi cave-shrine in Aihole and the Bānanti-gudi in Mahākūta contain the earliest well-formed superstructures. The former has a plain square super-



Lāḍ-Khān Temple

structure resting on a plain platform, tending towards pyramidal form although the top portion is still flat. The superstructure is devoid of the distinctive features that evolved in due course. The temple itself has a simple plan, consisting of a sanctum, over which the superstructure rests, and a flat-roofed open porch resting on four square and plain pillars (called mukha-chatushki).

The latter temple (Baṇānti-guḍi) is similar in plan, but has a more imposing and more artistic superstructure, with fairly well-defined superstructure recalling the Kadaṁba idiom of horizontal stages with emphasis on the outline.

It is difficult to fix the chronology of the early Chāḷukyan temples where inscriptional evidence is not available, and where stylistic differentiation is not all too evident. It cannot even be said with certainty that the rock-cut shrines are earlier than structural ones. But some temples (like the Gauḍara-guḍi, the Lāḍ-khān temple and the Sāraṅ-gi-guḍi in the Konta-guḍi group in Aihoḷe, and the Bāṇanti-guḍi in Mahākūṭa) appear definitely to belong to an earlier phase of temple-building than, for instance, the Hucchamalli-guḍi in Aihoḷe or the Mālegitti-śivālaya in Bādāmi or the Saṅgameśvara temple at Paṭṭadakallu. It is often claimed, not without justification, that most of the temples in Aihoḷe belong to an earlier phase of temple-architecture than the larger, more elaborate, and more impressive temples in Paṭṭadakallu.

The Virūpāksha temple in Paṭṭadakallu (built in 740 A.D.) represents the final form which the early Chāḷukyan experiments of temple-architecture took. It is a full-fledged temple (224 feet long and 105 feet wide, on a raised basement) containing the sanctum (garbha-maṇḍapa), the portico (mukha-maṇḍapa), a separate pavilion for Nandi (Nandi-maṇḍapa), a typical South-Indian (drāviḍa) vimāna on top of the sanctum with a 'śukanāsa' projection covering the vestibule ('antarāḷa), and a surrounding wall (prākāra) encompassing a large courtyard. It is one of the most impressive temples not only in Karnāṭaka but in the whole country.

The most intersting temple that took shape during the early Chāḷukyan experiments is the so-called Durga temple' built in reddish brown sandstone in Aihoḷe. It was originally called 'durgada-guḍi', (or "the temple of the fort"), because the temple was located at the gates of the fort. The interest consists not merely in the unusual apsidal plan of the shrine (the whole temple, the two basements adhishthānas, one above the other, the ambulatory passages as well as the sanctum), but also in the provision for two ambulatory passages corresponding to the two basements, the arrangement of opposed flights of steps for entrance, open and pillared veranda



Brahmā (in Konta-guḍi, Aihoḷe)



Virūpākṣha Temple, Paṭṭadakallu

alround the temple instead of the enclosing walls, the distinction between the central nave and side aisles, the open porch on four pillars, and the short linear 'northern' (rekhā-nāgara) type of superstructure built on top of the sanctum.

The temple, raised on high and well-moulded basement, is large in dimensions and neat in finish for the early period of its construction, and the decorative element (sculptures and the carvings on the ceiling and doorway) is striking. There is an unmistakable aesthetic appeal.

While the shrine is unique in the area for its apsidal plan, the plan itself is not peculiar, nor was it necessarily a borrowal from the Buddhist chaitya model. There must have been other temples of this plan built by the Chāḷukyan architects, like the one at old Mahākūṭa (Chikkiguḍi, basement of which is extant), and others at Chājarla, Satyavolu, Chitamkāru and Pāpanāśi (now in Andhra Pradesh).

That the temples of this type were more ancient and are numerous in the coastal region of Karnāṭaka (Tuḷu-nāḍu) and Keraḷa has already been mentioned.

The Prasanna-someśvara temple on the Śaṁbhukallu hillock in Udyāvara (near Uḍipi), existing prior to about 730 A.D. as suggested by an inscription of Āḷuvarasa II (730-765), was apsidal in plan, but the outer form of the sanctum is rectangular while inside it is apsidal. It was usual for the apsidal temples to have rectangular or square sanctums.

The Durga temple, however, has an apsidal sanctum, both inside and outside. What is peculiar in the Aihoḷe temple is the absence of the apsidal superstructure above the sanctum. The dwarf linear 'northern' superstructure that we now find is probably an after-thought. It might even be a later structure. The entrance for the shrine is in the southern direction, which is not usually the practice. The arrangement of niches for deities (deva-kōshṭha) along the outer ambulatory passage has already made a beginning here. The idea of enclosing the temple and the surrounding area within a running wall (prākāra) has also taken shape.

A significant outcome of the early Chāḷukyan experiments is the contribution they made towards the crystallization of the South Indian idiom, especially at Paṭṭadakallu. The Durga-gudi mentioned above and the Mēguḍi (a Jaina shrine of 634 A.D.) at Aihoḷe were followed by the Upper Śivālaya (which existed in 642 A.D.) the Mālegitti-śivālaya (between 655 and 681 A.D. having no ambulatory passage) and the Jambulingesvara-temple (699 A.D.) at Bādāmi, and they in turn by the Vijayeśvara (now called Sangameśvara) temple (about 733 A.D.), the Lokeśvara (now called Virūpāksha) temple (740 A.D.) and the Trailokyeśvara (now called Mallikārjuna) temple (755 A.D.).

Experiments with the northern idiom of the superstructure resulted in temples like Hucchappayya and Tārabasappa temples at Aihoḷe, and Pāpanātha (680 A.D.) Gaḷaganātha, Jaṁbuliṅga and Kāḍa-siddheśvara temples at Paṭṭadakallu. The impact of these experiments was felt in the northern regions and led in the eighth and ninth centuries to the emergence of what came to be known as the 'nāgara' temple-style (characterized principally by the vertical stages and curvilinear aspect of the superstructure).

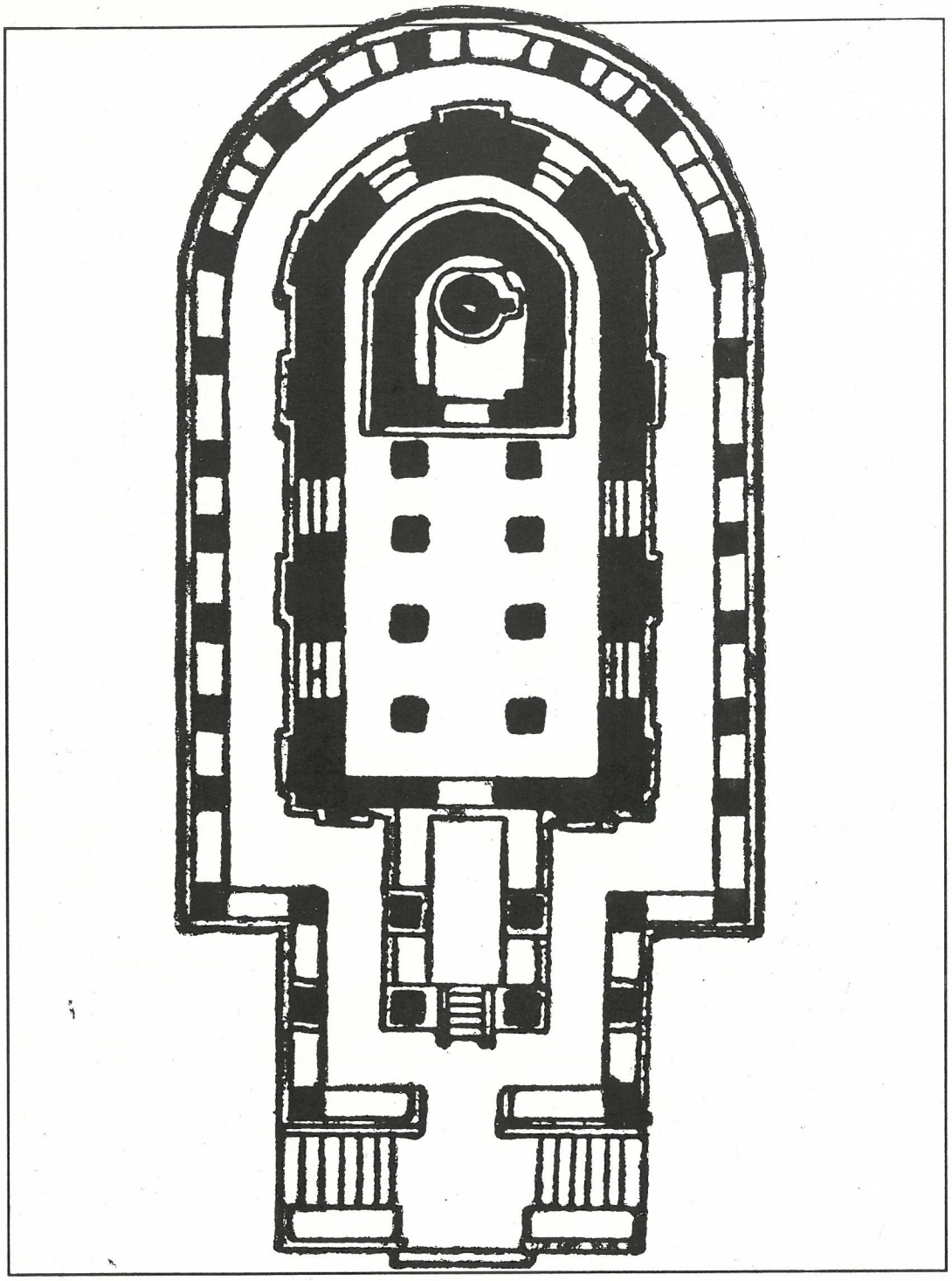
But the direct consequence of the early Chāḷukyan temple-building activity was the definition and crystallization of what came to be known as the 'drāviḍa' temple-style (with its horizontal stages of the superstructure inherited from the Kadaṁba period).

The outstanding achievement of the early Chāḷukyas was of course the





Durgi-guḍi, Aihoḷe



Durgi-guḍi, Aihoḷe (Plan)

Vīrūpaksha temple at Paṭṭadakallu, which was inspired by what the Pallava king Narasiṁha-varman II 'Rajasiṁha' had built in Kāñchīpuram the well-known Kailāsa-nātha temple, (Rājasiṁheśvara temple) an all-stone structural temple, around 725 A.D. in turn inspired and the Rāshṭrakūṭa king Krishṇa I to construct the famous Kailāsa temple in Ellōra, a copy of the structural temple in rock-hewn medium in 775 A.D.

The 'Chāḷukya-vesara' idiom

The intensive and variegated temple-building activity of the early Chāḷukyan architects during the period ranging from the sixth century to the eighth encouraged the canonization of temple-architecture in the South. While there was a general distinction between the temples to the north of the Vindhyā ranges (as illustrated by the Gupta structural temples) and the temples to the South (as illustrated by the Kadaṁba and Ganga temples) in their form, plan and elevation, the distinction had not become sharp or clear.

We do not know if there were any texts bearing on temple-architecture (vāstu-śāstra or sthāpatya) when these temples were built. The earliest available texts bearing on this subject (including the purānas like Agni, Matsya, Vishṇu- dharmottara and Brahma-vaivarta which treat this subject) are not earlier than the tenth century, barring *Bṛhat-samhitā* (which is assigned to the latter half of the sixth century) where the building of the houses (including those of the 'devas') is dealt with cursorily more for the 'pleasure of the learned astrologer' (ch. 53 verse 1) than for the benefit of the architect.

The definitive texts in use now in the northern regions and in the southern are *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtra-dhāra* of Bhoja of Mālavā (1035-1055) and *Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati* (about the same period), *Mānasollāsa* of Chāḷukya-Someśvara (1127-1138), *Kāmikāgama* (about the same period), *Aparājita pariprechchha* of Bhuvana-deva (towards the close of the twelfth century), *Lakshaṇa-samuchchaya* of Vairochani (in the thirteen century), *Vāstu-maṇḍana* of Maṇḍana-sūtradhāra of Māḷavā, and *Tantra-samucchaya* of Nārāyaṇa-naṁbūdiri (in the fifteenth century), and *Śilpa-ratna* of Śrī-kumāra (in the sixteenth century). While texts like *Māya-vāstu*, *Maya-mata* and *Mānasāra* are claimed to be more ancient, the present state of the texts indicate a later redaction. The architectural prescriptions contained in the Pañcha-rātra manuals (which, according to Schrader, belong to the eighth century) and the Vaikhānasa texts (which may be slightly older) became influential only after the eleventh century.

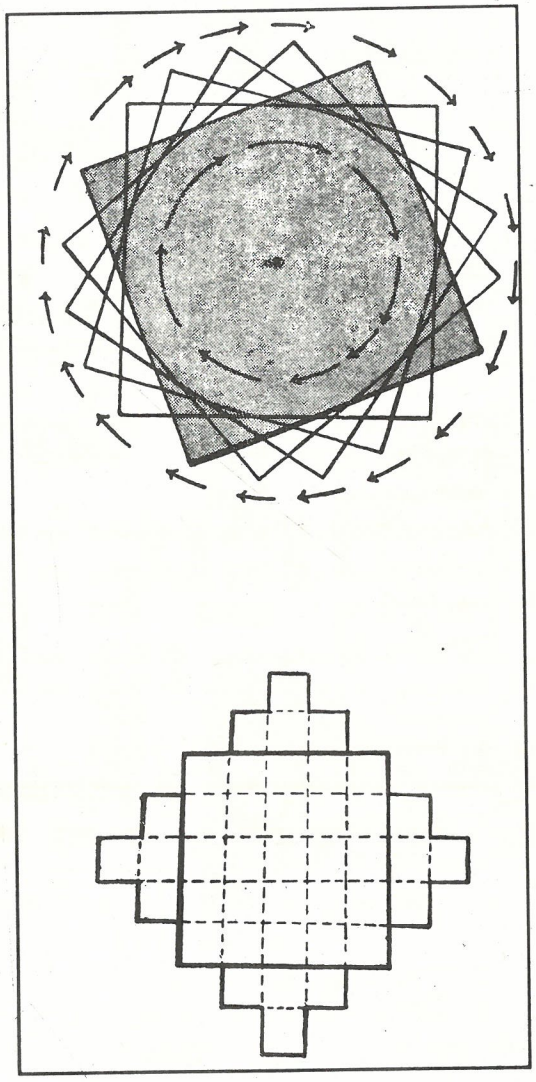
Thus when the Bādāmi Chāḷukyas temples were built, the architects do

not seem to have been under textual and academic pressures. They probably built temples guided solely by their fancy and aesthetic sense, within of course the broad framework of an oral and unwritten tradition that must have been handed down at least from the Kadaṁba days. It is likely that this tradition had made some distinction between the temples of the northern regions and the temples of the southern regions.

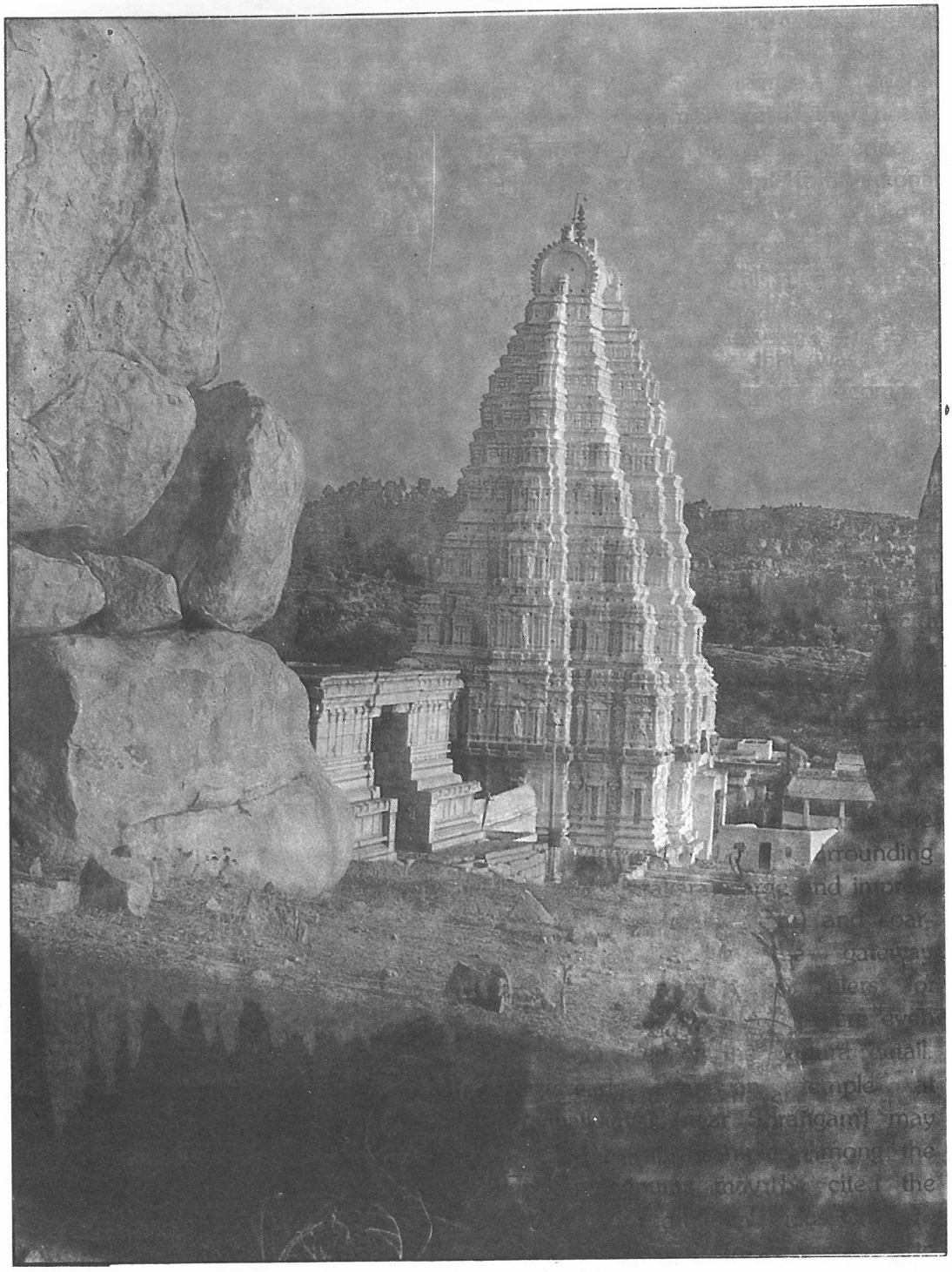
The classification of temples into two major varieties, 'nāgara' and 'drāviḍa', with a third, styled as 'vesara' in the South Indian texts, is not to be found in the manuals earlier than the ninth century. *Bṛhatsaṁhitā, Viśvakarma-prakāśa* and the 'purāṇas' like Matsya and Agni do not seem to be aware of these nomenclatures for temple-types, although they describe twenty different varieties of temples.

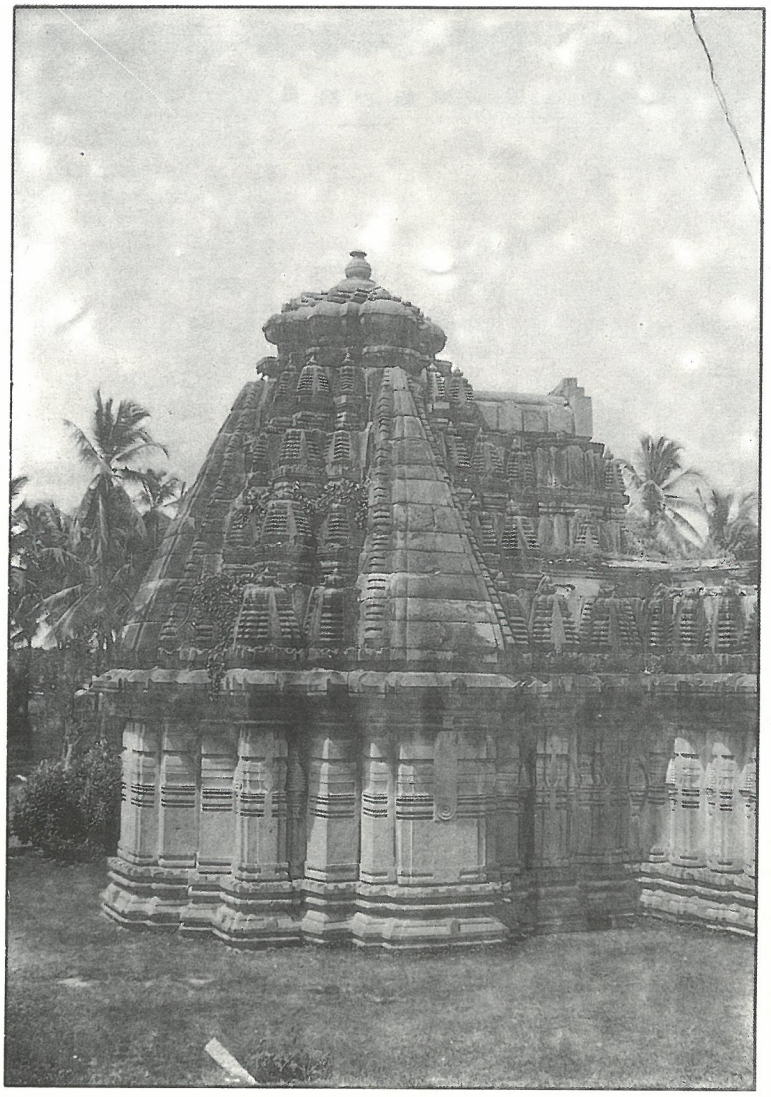
The earliest among the extant texts that make the distinction between 'nāgara' and 'drāviḍa' viz., *Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra* and *Iśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati*, appears long after the early Chāḷukyan experiments were completed, and many of their temple-types became well-known. It is, therefore, not likely that the Chāḷukyan architects were conscious that they were experimenting with the 'nāgara' and 'drāviḍa' idioms. They were experimenting with the geometrical shapes of the temples, square, oblong, eliptical, octagonal, apsidal and so on, in different parts of the temple, and not with combining details of the two idioms.

Further, the terms 'nāgara' and 'drāviḍa', even when the texts began to use them, had different connotations

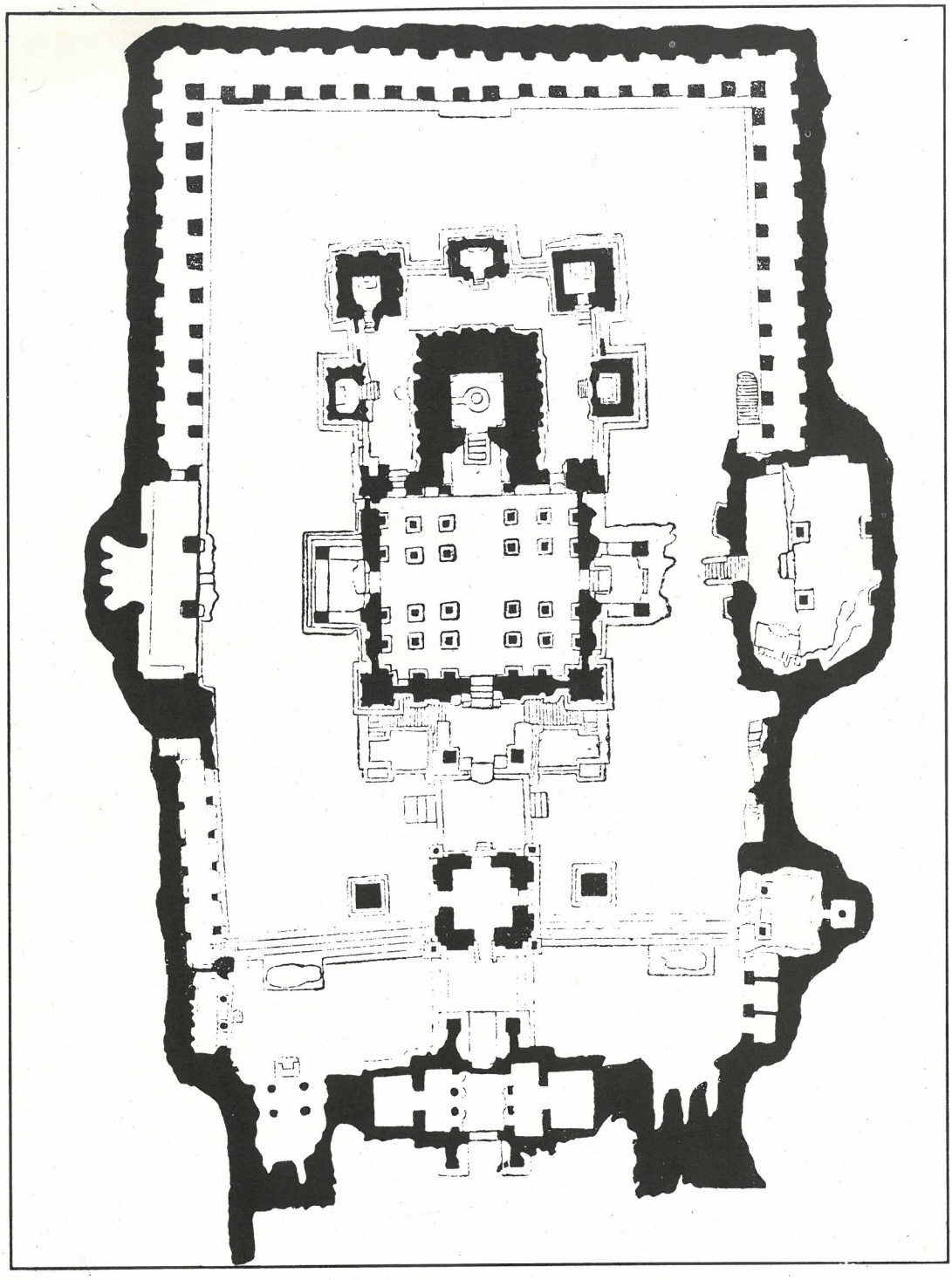








to the northern and the southern architects. And quite some confusion has been occasioned on this account. Generally, however, the temple-style that is in vogue in the northern regions is described as 'nāgara', while the style in the South is 'drāviḍa'. The nomenclature 'drāviḍa' is understandable, but the precise meaning of 'nāgara' is uncertain. The explanation that the expression 'nagara' refers to the style developed initially at Pāṭaliputra city which was called Śrī-nāgara, is not very convincing. *Aparājita-paripṛichchhā* and *Kāmikā-gama* are the earliest texts that contain architectural distinctions between the two styles, and the distinction largely relates to the superstructure above the sanctum. If the temple is square in



Kailāsanātha, Temple, Ellora (plan)

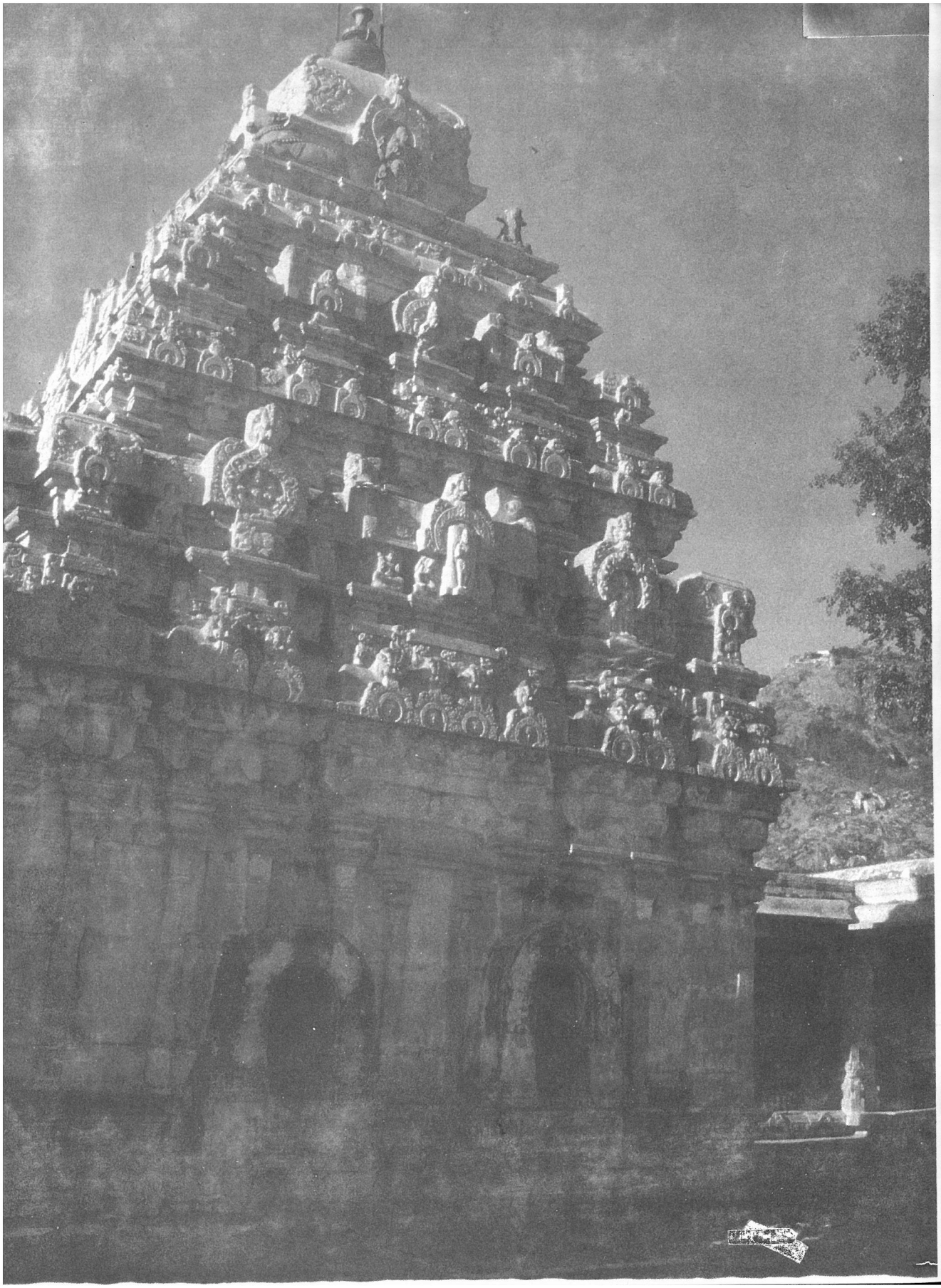




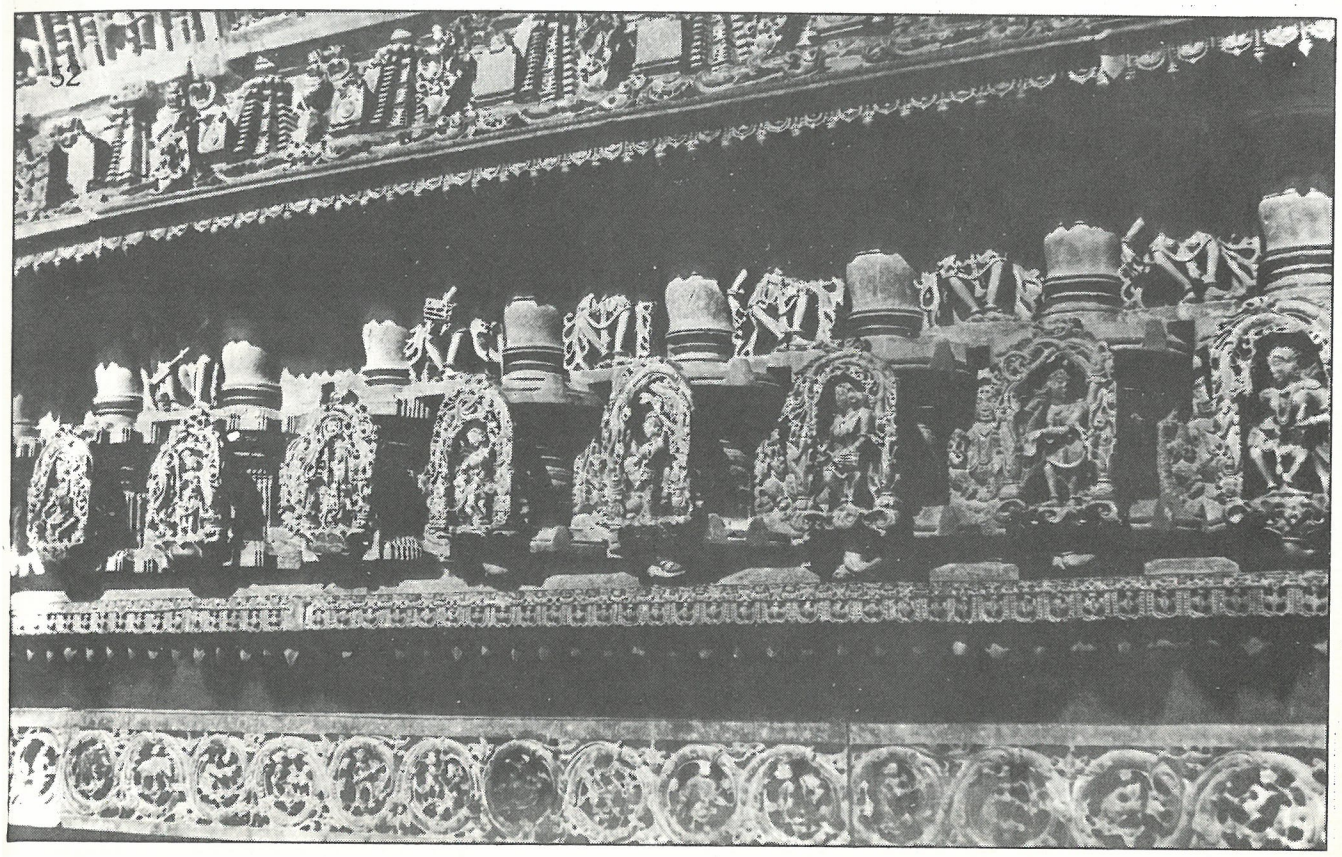
form from the base to the pinnacle (stūpī), it is described as 'nāgara'.

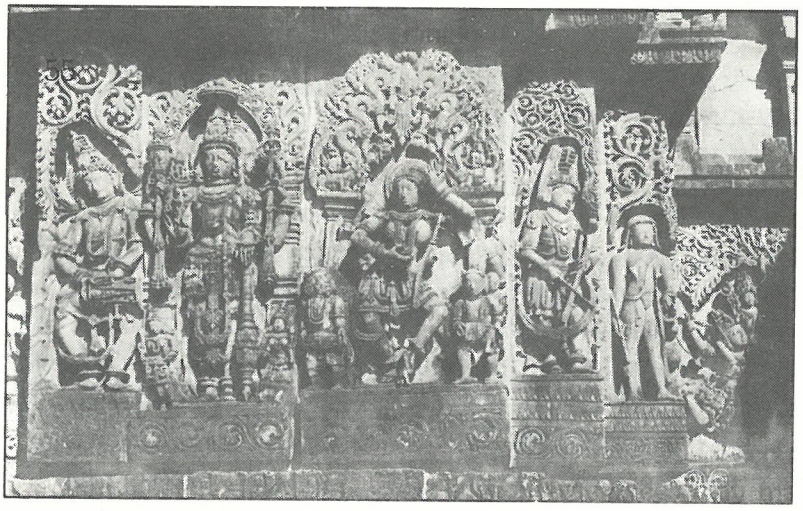
The 'drāviḍa' variety was based on the division of the temple into six limbs, (shaḍvarga), basement or stylobate (adhishṭhāna), pilastered wall (pāda or bhitti), entablature (prastara), neck of the superstructure (grīva), cupola (śikhara) and the pinnacle (stūpi). The last three limbs constitute the superstructure, and if it is octagonal (ashṭāsra), square (chaturasra), oblong (āyata) or hexagonal (shaḍasra) it is described as 'drāviḍa'. Whatever the textual descriptions, the more important point of distinction is the prevalence of the horizontal stages in the 'drāviḍa' superstructure, which was achieved first by the Kadaṁban architects and was developed in the early Chāḷukyan period, whereas the 'nāgara' temples are distinguished by the curviḷinear spire topped by the myrobalan motif (āmalaka-sāra).

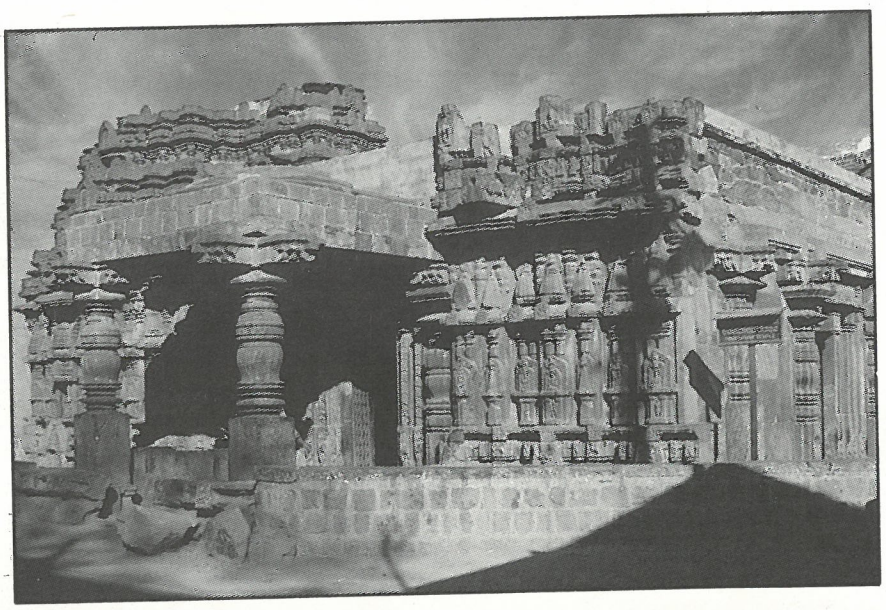
There is a third variety, vēsara, which is unknown to the northern texts of temple-architecture, but figures rather prominently in the southern texts. The expression 'vēsara' is, like 'nāgara', obscure, although there has been an attempt to explain it as hybrid or mixed (from 'vēsara', 'mule'). A more reasonable explanation is that it is a corrupt form of 'dvyasra' ('apsidal'). The texts like *Kāmikāgama, Kāśyapa-saṁhitā, Marīchi-saṁhitā* and



52







Ajitāgama emphasise that the 'vēsara' style involves the circular form of superstructure. *Maya-mata* and *Dīptāgama* indicate that the 'vēsara' form could be circular (vṛtta), elliptical (vṛttāyata) or apsidal (dvyasra). *Marīchi-saṁhitā* spells out that till the entablature (prastara) the form should be square, and above that limb circular.

But there is an interesting inscription at Hoḷalu (Bellary district) dated 1231 A.D. in the Amṛtesvara temple which refers to an architect (sūtradhāri), Bammoja by name (son of Bōkōja and disciple of Pādoja of Soge), who is described as 'the Viśvakarmā of the Kali age', 'skilled in constructing sixty-four kinds of mansions or temples (prāsāda)' and as the architect who was responsible for four varieties of mansions or temples (chaturjāti-prāsāda).

The interest of the inscription consists in spelling out the four varieties: 'nāgara', 'kaḷiṅga', 'drāviḍa' and 'vēsara' (EC. Vol. 8 Soraba, 275). It is not clear in the inscription as to what the terms connote, but the mention that the same architect was a master of all the four varieties (which includes Kaḷiṅga, the present day Orissa, as a regional style) of temple construction is significant. And the architect who is eulogized here was a Chāḷukyan, patronized by the Sevuṇa king Siṅghaṇa II (1200-1247).

By the time the Chāḷukyas (of the Bādāmi as well as Kalyāṇa lines) finished their temple-building activity, the 'vesara' had come to stay as a distinct style, which is really the Chāḷukyan idiom characterised by details such as tiered pyramidal superstructure on a usually square sanctum,

subdued neck (grīva) in the superstructure and square or octagonal cupola (śikhara), the square (ruchaka) heavy and monolithic pillars in the halls, high and well-moulded basement (adhishṭhāna), profusely decorated door-frames and division of halls into naves and lateral aisles.

This idiom became more pronounced in the temples built by the later Chāḷukyans (viz. of the Kalyāṇa line), when soft soap-stone (greenish gray chlorite schist) came to be used, espeically for pillars, instead of hard sandstone that the earlier Chāḷukyans used, and when lathes were employed to turn the pillars into rounded shapes and provide fine polish to the surface. Sculptural embellishment, ornamentation and decorations received greater attention. Most of the temples built during this period were rectangular in plan, and the use of perforated and elaborately carved screens to serve as windows (jālandhra) fitted to the walls, so as to admit some light and air to the otherwise closed and dark interior, became widespread. The decorations on the door-frames became more intricate, minute and artistic.

We can see that this furnished a suitable background for the Hoysaḷa style to emerge. The temples that were built by the Chāḷukyans which gave the impetus to the Hoysala architects and sculptors include the Jaina basadi and Kāśi-Viśveśvara temple at Lakkuṇḍi, the Mukteśvara temple at Chandradānapura, the Trikūṭeśvara temple at Gadag, the Siddarāmarā temple at Hāvēri, the Someśvara temple at Haraḷa-haḷḷi and the Mallikārjuna temple at Kuruvatti (all in Dhārwāḍ district), the Navaliṅga and Kāḷeśvara temples in Kukkanūr and the Mahādeva temple at Iṭagi (in Rāichūr district). The last named temple, built in 1112 and described as the 'emperor among temples' in the inscription, is as much Chāḷukya as Hoysaḷa in features.

THE HOYSAḶA EMBELLISHMENT

It is reasonable to describe the Hoysaḷa style of architecture as evolved from the Chāḷukyan idiom with emphasis on certain features. For instance, the Doḍḍa-basava temple at Ḍaṁbaḷa (in Dhārwāḍ district) is a Chāḷukyan building, but has a stellar basement, for the sanctum (six-sided and 24-angled) as well as the hall in front of it (eight-sided and 32-angled). The Hoysaḷa temples however usually confine the stellar plan to the sanctum, and the plan for the hall will be square or rectangular. The superstructure of the Mahādeva temple at Iṭagi anticipates the Hoysaḷa type.

The Kāśi-Viśveśvara temple at Lakkuṇḍi has two sanctums (dvi-kūṭa), and the Somesvara temple at Haraḷa-halli has three sanctums (tri-kūṭa). The multiple sanctums like these became the distinguishing feature of the the Hoysaḷa temples. An example of the

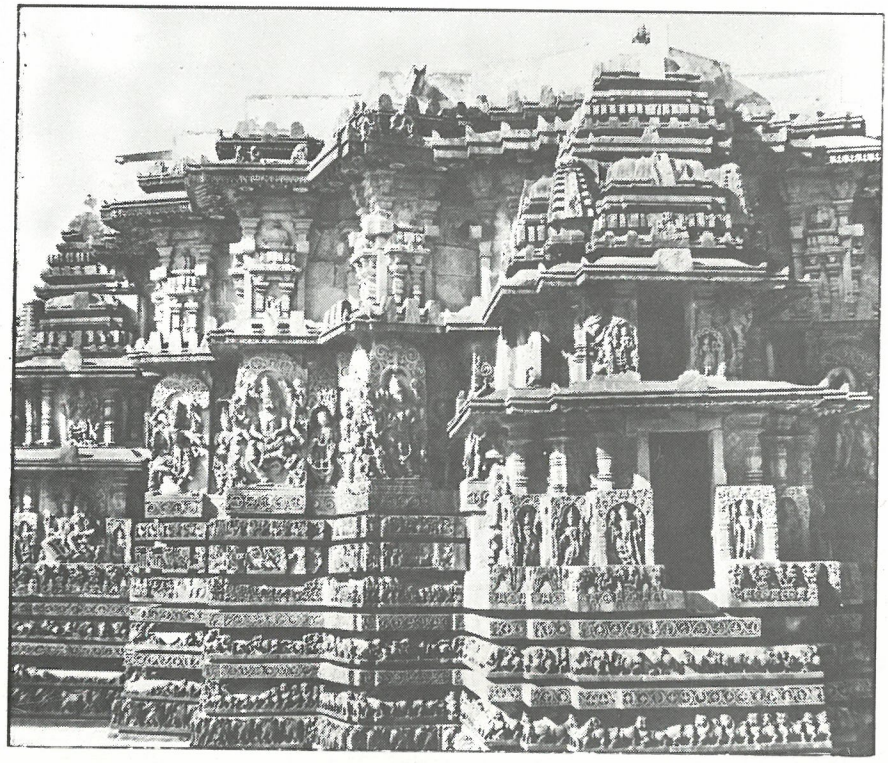
Hoysaḷa adoption of an earlier Kadaṁba style is the Kamala-Nārāyaṇa temple at Dēgāṁve (in Beḷgāum district). Built by Kamalā-devi, queen of the Kadaṁba monarch, Permāḍi Śivachitta (1147-1181 A.D.), it exhibits the mature Kadaṁba characteristics, but has an obvious early Hoysaḷa appearance, with its three sanctums, presence of vestibule (antarāḷa), pillared halls and superbly carved niches adorning the walls.

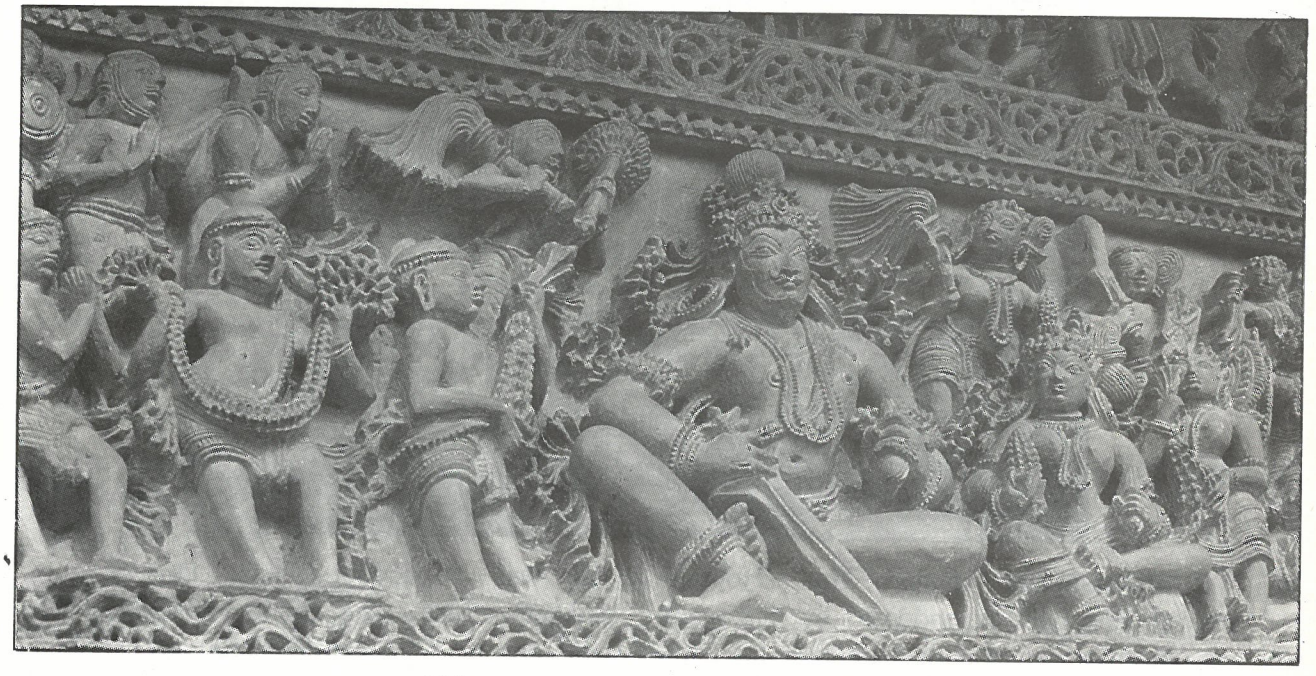
During the early period of the rulers of the Hoysaḷa dynasty (about 1000 A.D.), there was not much of temple-building activity. And what little there was continued the Kalyāṇa-Chāḷukya style. Examples are the Ādinātha-basadi at Hanasoge (Mysore district) (in the 11th century) the Pārśvanātha-basadi at Kuṁbuṭūr (Shimoga district 1017), the Makara-jinālaya at Aṅgaḍi (prior to 1054 A.D.), the Basaveśvara temple at Haḷḷūr (Bijāpūr district) 1070 A.D.), the Mallikārjuna temple at Honnāḷi (Shimoga district 1055 A.D.) the Pañchakūṭa-basadi at Hoṁbuccha (Shimoga district) (1077 A.D.), the Kōṭiśvara temple at Kōṭipura (Shimoga district) (about 1078), the Hariharēśvara temple at Harihara (Chitradurga district) and the Nārāyaṇa temple at Āne-Kannaṁbāḍi (both about 1100).

The Ādinātha basadi at Hanasoge, for instance, was built as 'Rājendra-chōḷa-jinālaya' by Nanniya-Cheṅgāḷva, dedicated to three tīrthaṅkaras (Ādinātha, Śāntinātha and Neminātha) in granite, although the icons and doorways are carved in soapstone (chlorite schist); the door-frames recall those of the Tripurāntaka temple at Balḷigāme (Shimoga district). The Hoysaḷa features here are minimal.

The most celebrated of the Hoysaḷa rulers, Biṭiga-Vishṇuvardhana (1108-1152 A.D.) and his talented queen Śāntalā-devī may be said to have provided the inspiration for a new breakthrough in the architectural style that was inherited from the Chāḷukya period. It was during the period following 1108 A.D. that the truly Hoysaḷa temples came to be built: the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi (113 A.D., incorporating the Kadaṁba elements markedly), the Channakeśava temple at Bēlūr (1117 A.D.), the Kīrti-nārāyaṇa temple at Talakāḍu (1117 A.D.), the beginning of the Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Haḷēbīḍu (1121 A.D.), the Keśava and the Siddheśvara temples at Marale (1130 A.D.), the 'suttālaya' around the Gommaṭa monolith on the bigger hill at Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa and the Pārśvanātha-basadi at Haḷēbīḍu (1133 A.D.), the Śāntīśvara-basadi in Kaṁbadahaḷḷi, the Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇa temple at Nāgamaṅgala, the Trikūṭa-basadi at Chōḷa-samudra (1145 A.D.) and the Varada-Keśava temple at Honnāvara (1149 A.D.), among others.

It has already been mentioned that there is little truth in the legend of Vishṇuvardhana's conversion to the

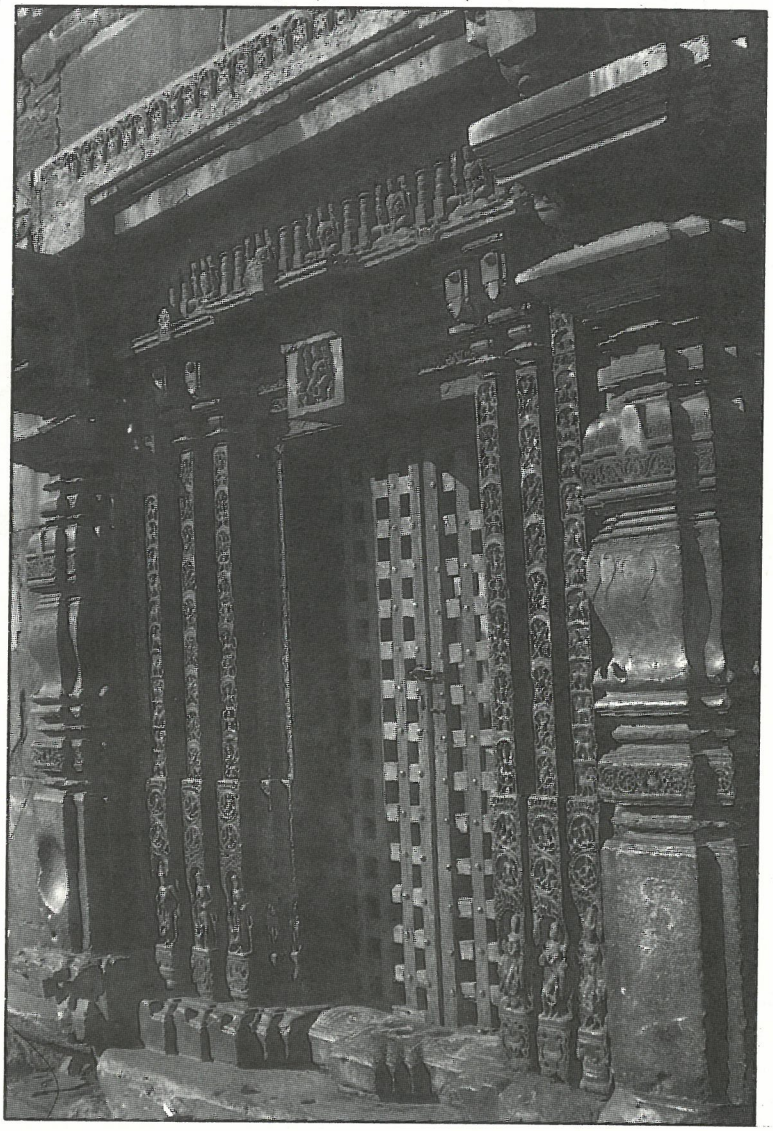




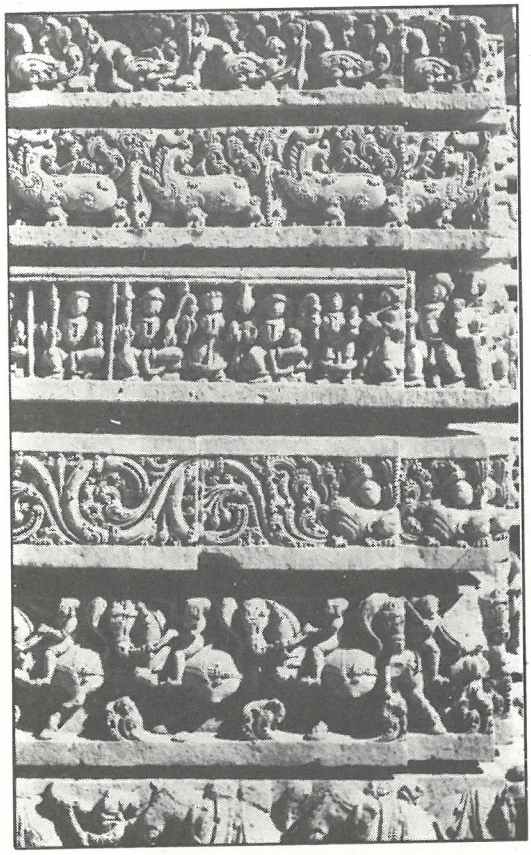
Vishṇu-vardhana, the Hoysaḷa monarch

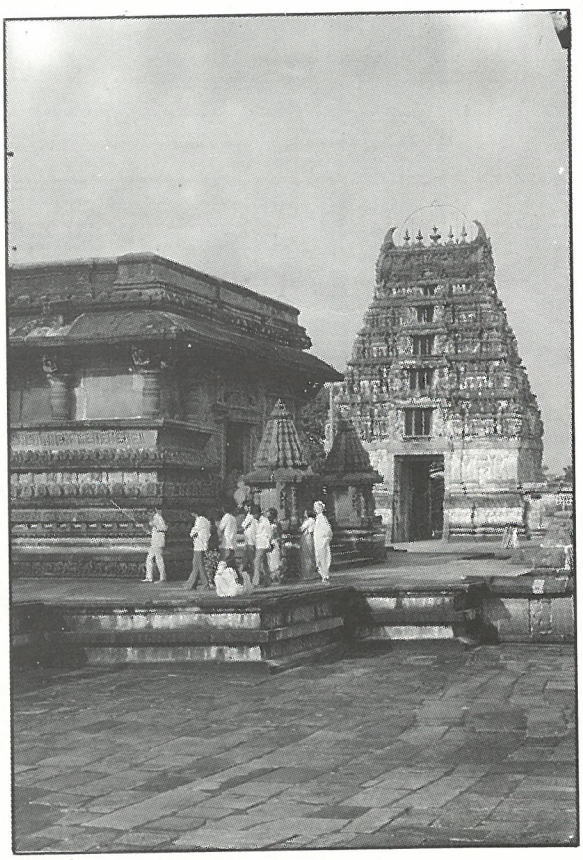


Śrī-vaishṇava faith. The Hoysaḷa shrines built or endowed by him were largely Śiva shrines, although he himself was a devout Jaina. Dr. S. Srikantha Sāstry, the eminent historian who has made a careful study of the

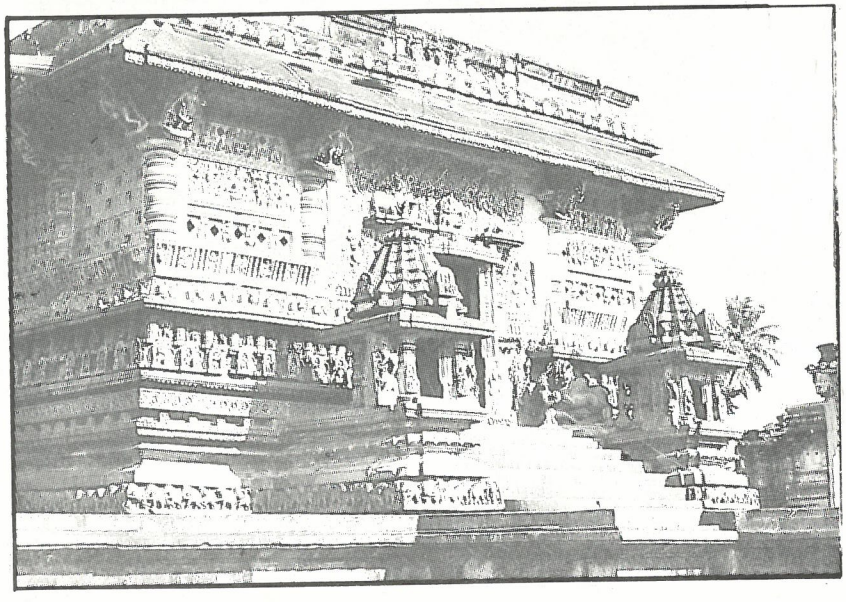


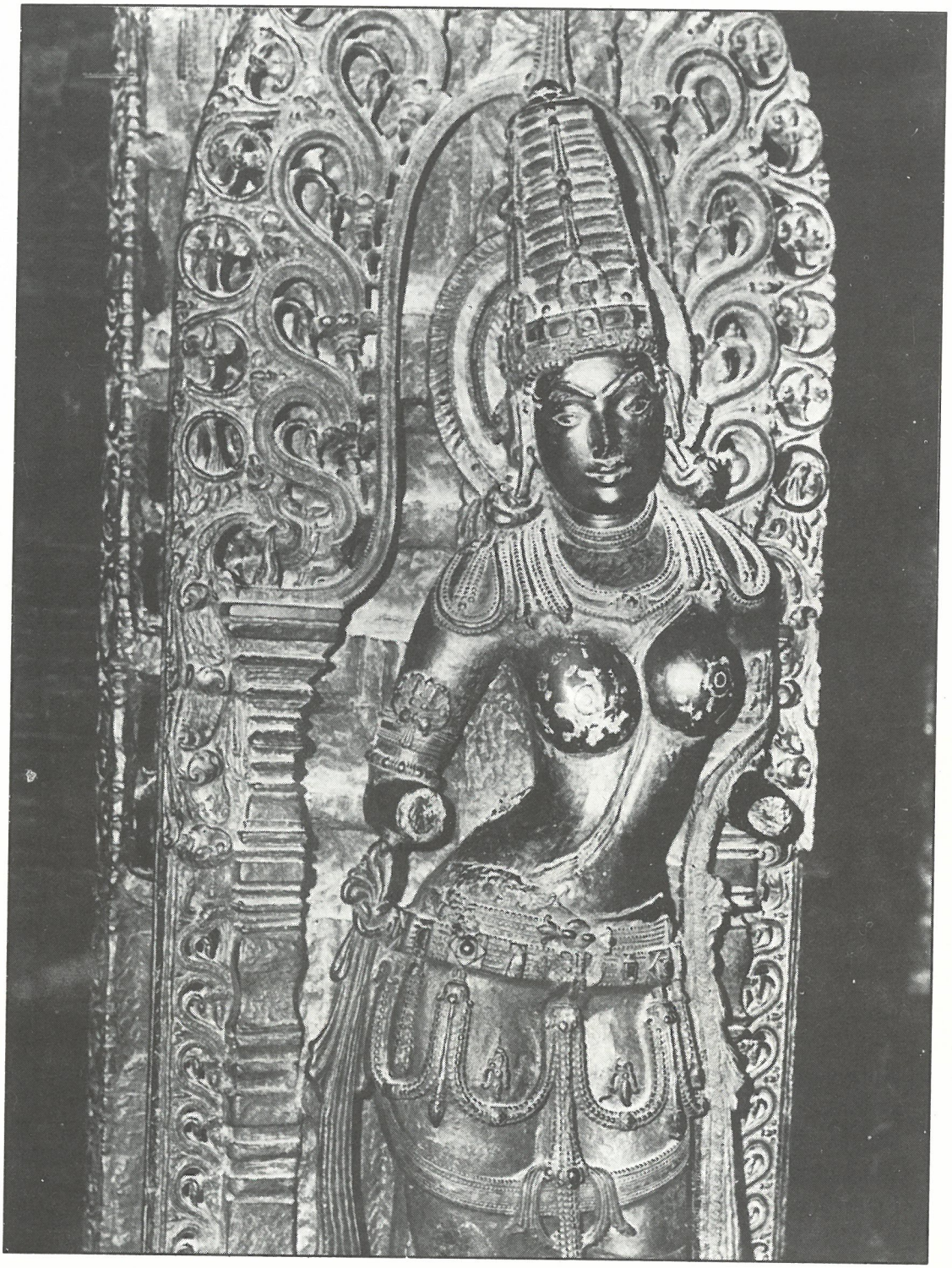
Hoysaḷa Temple, Doorway'





Hoysala Structures





Mohini, Hoysala sculpture



inscriptions of this ruler, has estimated that among the temples that he patronized, sixty per cent are Śiva shrines, twenty per cent Vishṇu shrines, and another twenty per cent Jaina-basadis (cf. *Hoysaḷa-vāstu-śilpa,* Prasaranga, Mysore University, 1965, p.3).

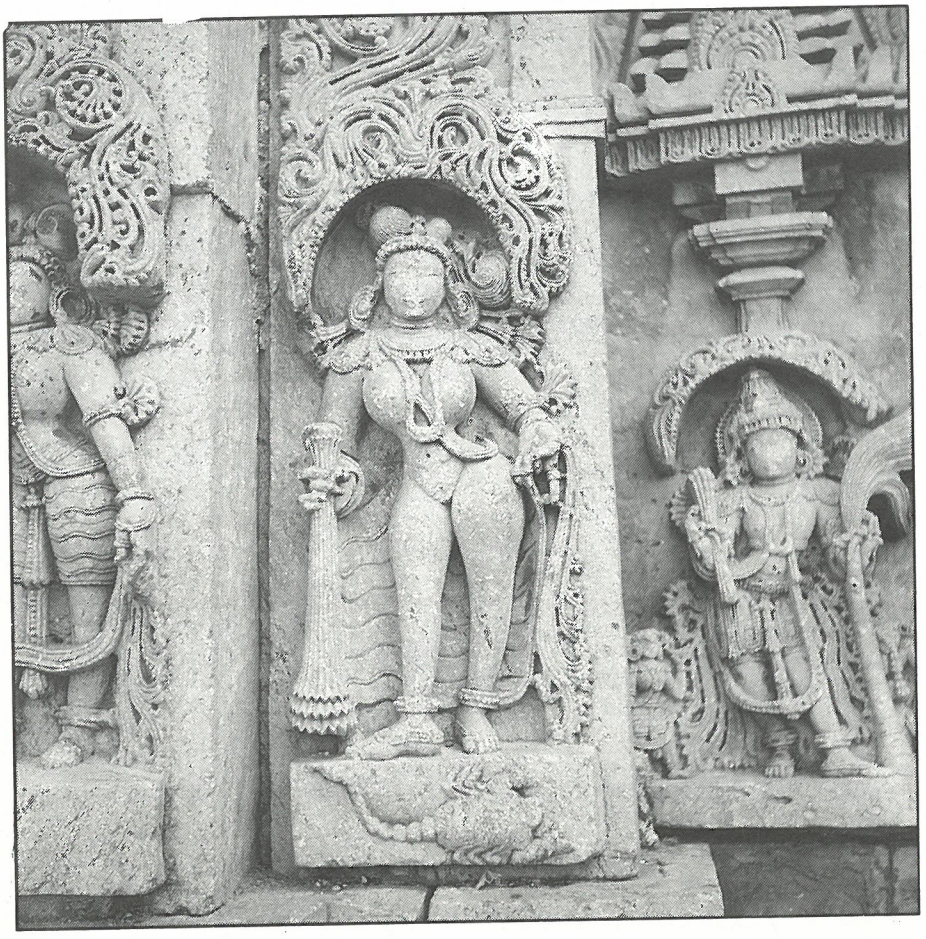
Vishṇuvardhana's successors, principally Narasiṁha I, (1142-1173 A.D.), Narasiṁha II (1220-1235 A.D.) and Someśvara, (1235-1253) followed the same policy of encouraging the religious monuments of all religions, whatever their own personal predilections. Among the important Hoysaḷa structures that appeared during their



rule are, additions to the Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Haḷebīḍu, the Trikūṭa-basadi at Chōḷasamudra (1145 A.D.), the Varada-keśava temple at Honnāvara (1149 A.D.) and the Brahmeśvara temple at Kikkēri (1171 A.D.). The Akkana-basadi, the Amrteśvara temple at Amṛtāpura (1196 A.D.), the Siṅgeśvara temple at Hebbalāḷu (1200 A.D.), the Kīrti-nārāyaṇa temple at Heragu (1218 A.D.), the Mūla-saṅgeśvara temple at Beḷḷūru (1224 A.D.), the Keśava temple at Hārana-haḷḷi (1234 A.D.) the Mūle-saṅkeśvara temple at Turuvēkere (1260 A.D.) the Prasanna-keśava temple at Somanāthapura (1268 A.D.), the Mallikārjuna temple at Basarāḷu, the Lakshmī-narasiṁha temple at Bhadrāvati, the Keśava temple at Araḷa-guppe, the Īśvara temple at Būdanūru, the Pañcha-liṅga temple at Govindanahaḷḷi and the Keśava temple at Nāgalāpura were also of this period.

Hundreds of temples, big and small, were built in the style that could readily be recognised as Hoysaḷa, mostly in the southern part of Karnāṭaka, especially in the present-day Hāssan district and the surrounding areas. There were also temples built in this style in the distant Tamiḷ country (during the reign of Someśvara 1235-1253), like the Hoysaḷeśvara temple in Kaṇṇānore and the Ballāḷēśvara temple at Tiruvinaikōvil. But after about 1260 A.D., the prevalence of this style declined, partly because the Tañjāvūru Chōḷa and the Madurai Pāṇḍya styles of temples were becoming more popular and impressive. The rise of the Vijayanagar empire encouraged a mixed style in temple-building, in which the Kadaṁba the Chāḷukya, the Hoysaḷa, the Chōḷa and the Kākatīya elements blended harmoniously.

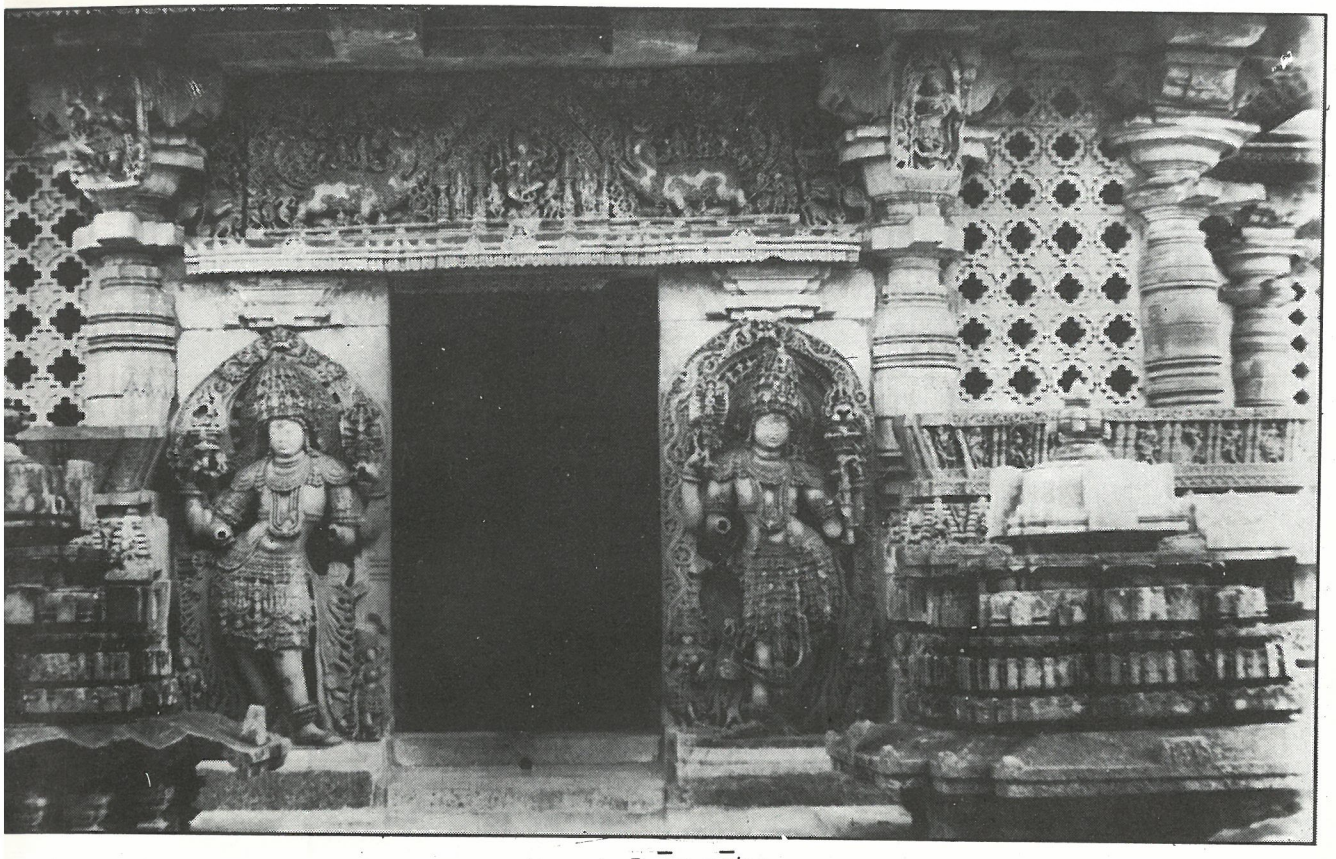
The material used by the Hoysaḷa architects and sculptors (viz. chlorite schist), unlike granite or sand-stone, was favourable for delicate carving and precision of details; it could also take fine polish and admit of subtle modulations. This was really what facilitated



the emergence of the regional sub-style known as Hoysaḷa (although the nomenclatures like Chāḷukya and Hoysaḷa are dynastic and do not denote the stylistic and functional peculiarities).

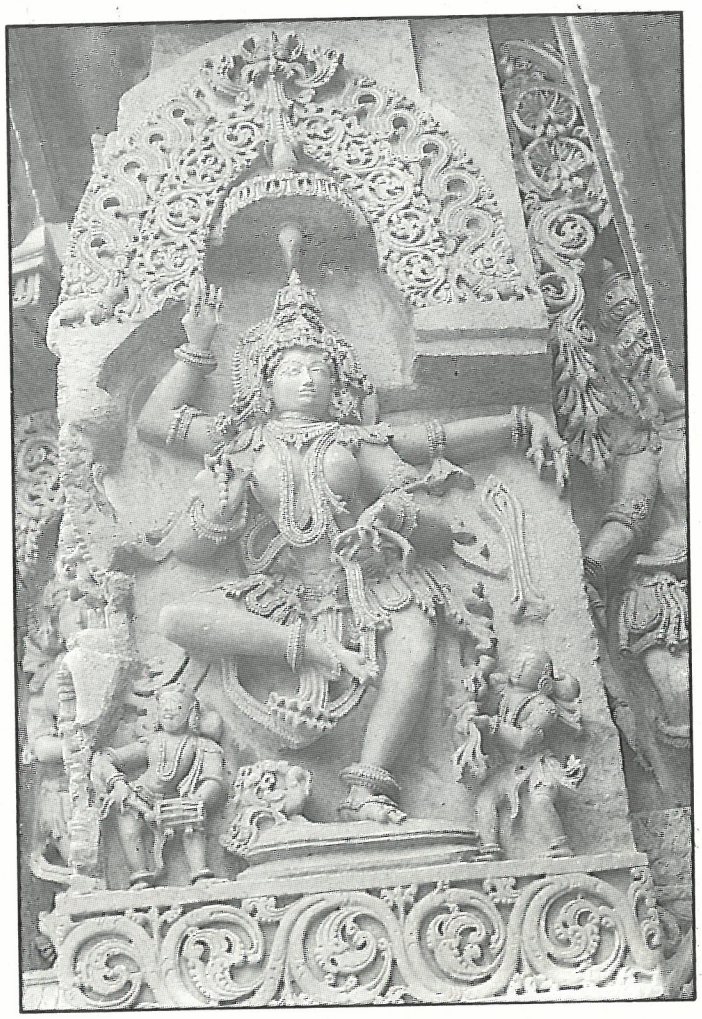
Stylistic differences are not to a little extent caused by the variety of stone that is available plentifully, whether it is hard and crystalline or soft and sedimentary. The differences in architecture and sculpture that is observable among different styles such as the Kākāṭiya idiom (which prevailed in the area where cohesive slatey rocks abound), the Chāḷukyan idiom (which took shape in the region where basalt or sandstone was available), the Nāgārjuna-koṇḍa style (which originated in the area where limestone was available), the Chōḷa style (which worked with brilliant granite) and the Hoysaḷa style (which used mainly chlorite schist) are partly at least due to the material that was handled.

The outstanding features of the Hoysaḷa temple are: the star-shaped plan (with four, six, eight, twelve or sixteen sides) for the sanctum, projections masking the outer profile and



Hoysala Dvāra-pālas





Nāṭya-sarasvati

projections also on the superstructure; the high platform following the stellate plan (jagatī or plinth about five feet high) with a number of horizontal bands carrying delicate carvings like caparisoned elephants, mounted horses, ornamental mythical animals, graceful swans, and intricate floral designs (usually in order, from base to the top); the location of the temple in the central portion of this platform; the provision of a flight of steps (sōpana) on the side of the platform that faces the sanctum directly; the provision for an open ambulatory passage (pradakshiṇā-patha) on the platform around the temple, and not around the sanctum alone inside the temple; the provision for a vestibule (or half-hall ('ardhamaṇḍapa, also called śukanāsa) between the sanctum and the hall (called here raṅga-maṇḍapa), so as to







house the processional images; the superstructure (śikhara) with a fluting effect and following the stellate plan from base to the pot on top (kalaśa), with marked horizontal stages; elaborately carved and finely polished pillars, lathe-turned and with horizontal rings and grooves; exquisite bracket-figures, damsels in several enchanting poses (madanikā or śālabhañjikā); the division of the ceiling of the hall into a number of zones (aṅkaṇa) by the pillars, the central zone (called bhuvaneśvarī) being most superbly carved; and ornate and perforated screens (jālandhra) on the walls of the hall.

It is usual for the Hoysaḷa temples to have multiple sanctums, often three (when it is called trikūṭācha la) like the

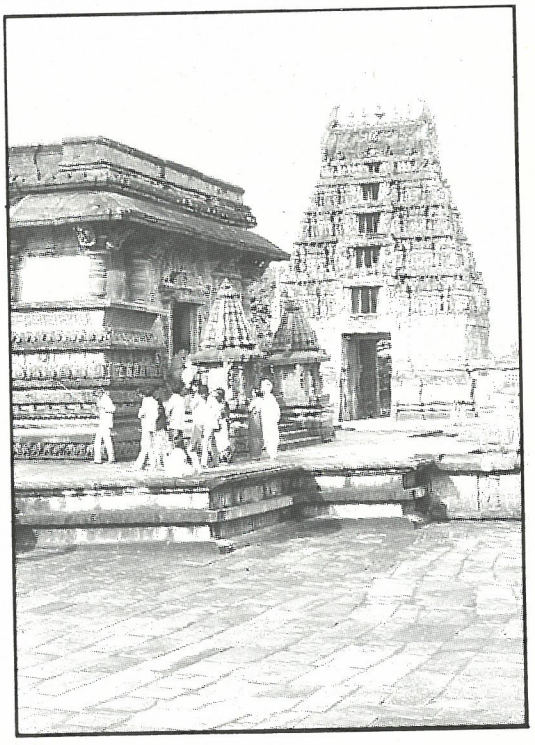
Prasanna-Keśava temple at Somanāthapur, the Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa temple at Hosaholalu, the Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇa temple at Nāgamaṅgala, and the Keśava temple at Hāranahalli. But the most celebrated among the Hoysaḷa temples, the Channa-keśava temple at Bēlūr, has only one sanctum; and so are the temples at Amṛtāpura (Amṛteśvara temple), Arasīkere (Īśvara temple) and Kōravaṅgala (Buchēśvara temple).

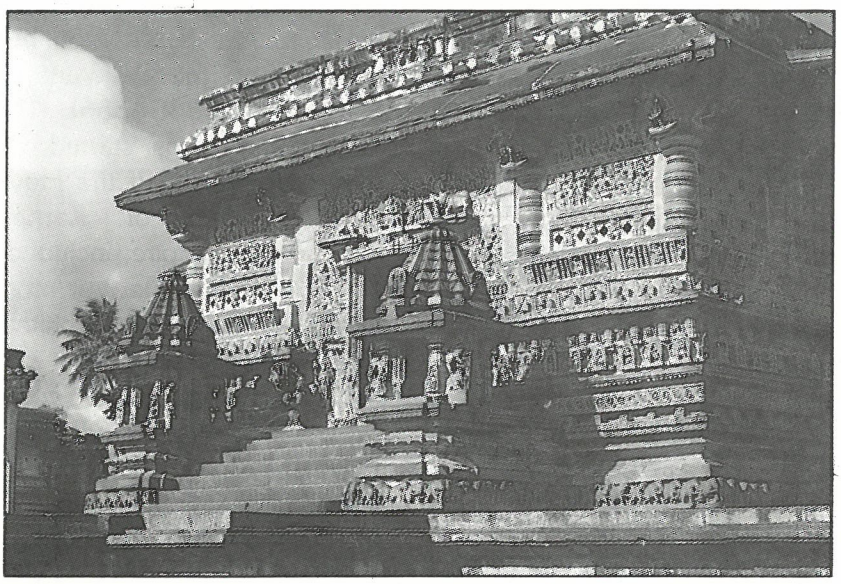
The Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Haḷēbīḍu has two sanctums, and so has the Hariheśvara temple at Harihara. Well known among the four-celled temples (chatushkūta) is the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavalli. The Pañchaliṅga temple at Govindanahalli has five sanctums (pañcha-kūṭa).

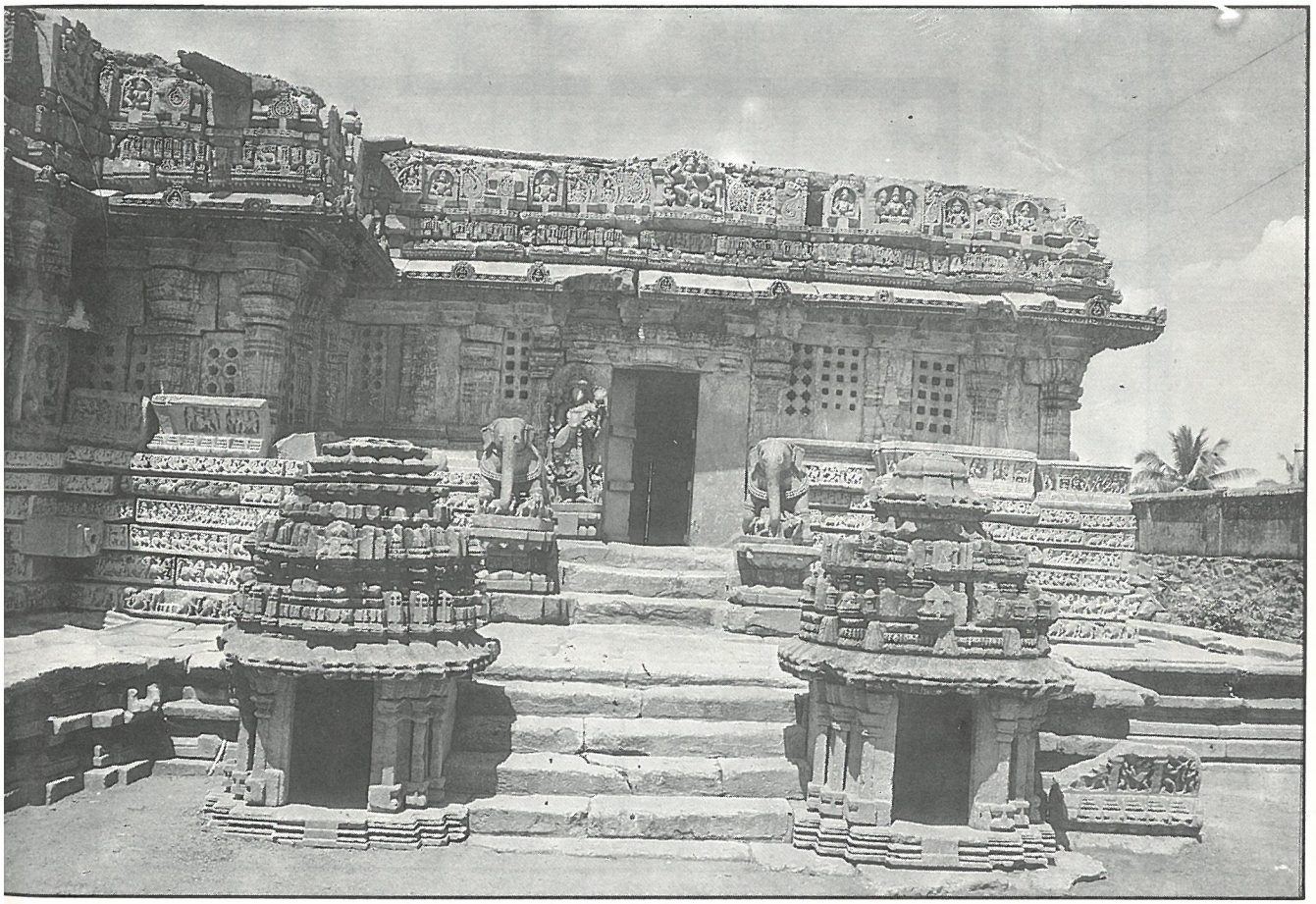
There are many basadis with multiple sanctums, accommodating two three, four or five tīrthankaras. When the shrine is two-celled or three-celled, the cells (viz. sanctums) are in a line. When, however, there are four cells, they are arranged in the four cardinal directions; and in the five-celled temples there is also a central sanctum.

The stress in the Hoysaḷa temples is not height or magnitude but on delicate and intricate sculpture. The superstructure above the sanctum is usually short and described as belonging to the Vēsara type, most ornately treated, and the temples do not have the characteristically Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya gopuras at the entrance. The central hall (nava-raṅga) receives the greatest attention from the sculptors, and the columns and the ceiling zones there are very skillfully and elaborately treated. The figure-sculptures in the Hoysaḷa temples illustrate episodes from epics (Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata) and the purānas (mainly Bhāgavata).

An interesting feature of the Hoysala temples is that many of the sculptured panels carry the names of the sculptors (called in old Kannaḍa 'ruvāri' for the Sanskrit expression 'rūpakārin') Māyiṇa, Keñcha-malliyaṇṇa, Mallōja and Mālaṇṇa (whose works are seen in the Bēlūr temple), Dāsōja (who worked in the Tripurāntaka and Kedāreśvara temples of Baḷligāme) Nāgōja (who worked in the Trikūṭeś-



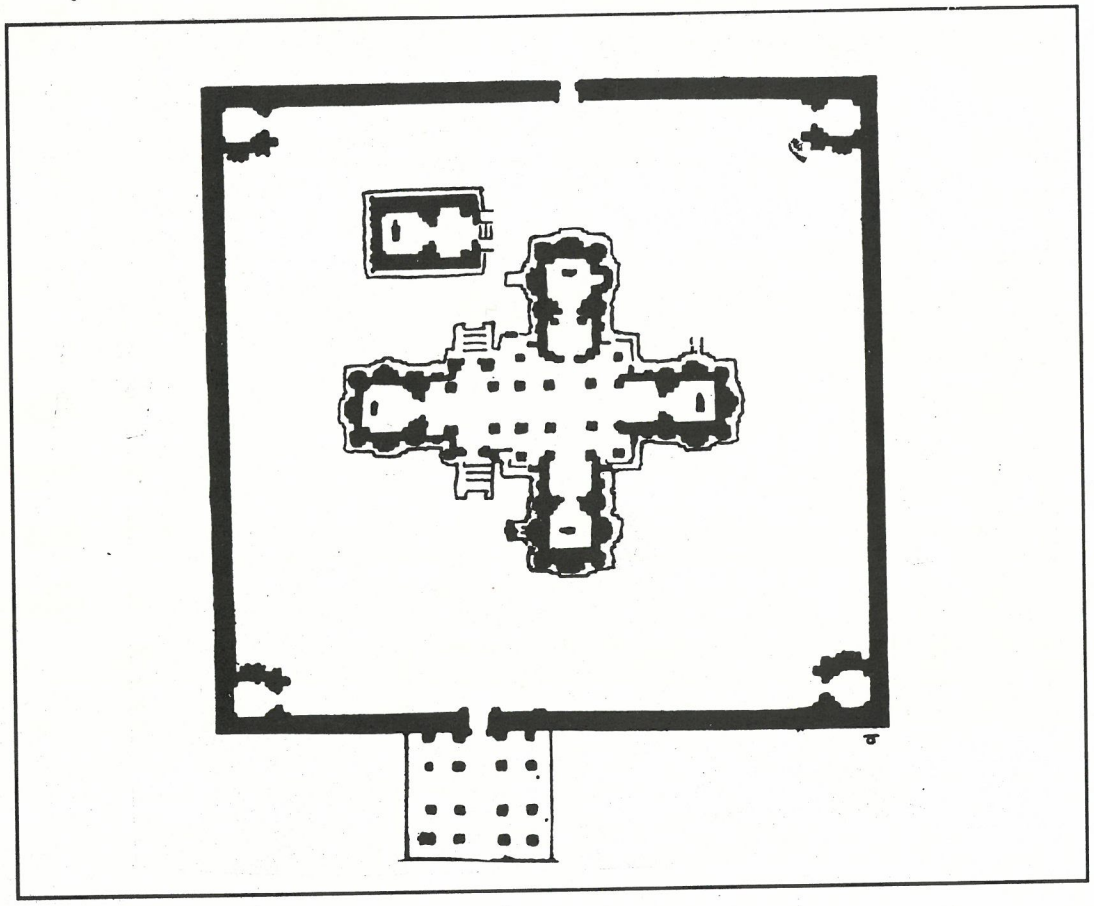




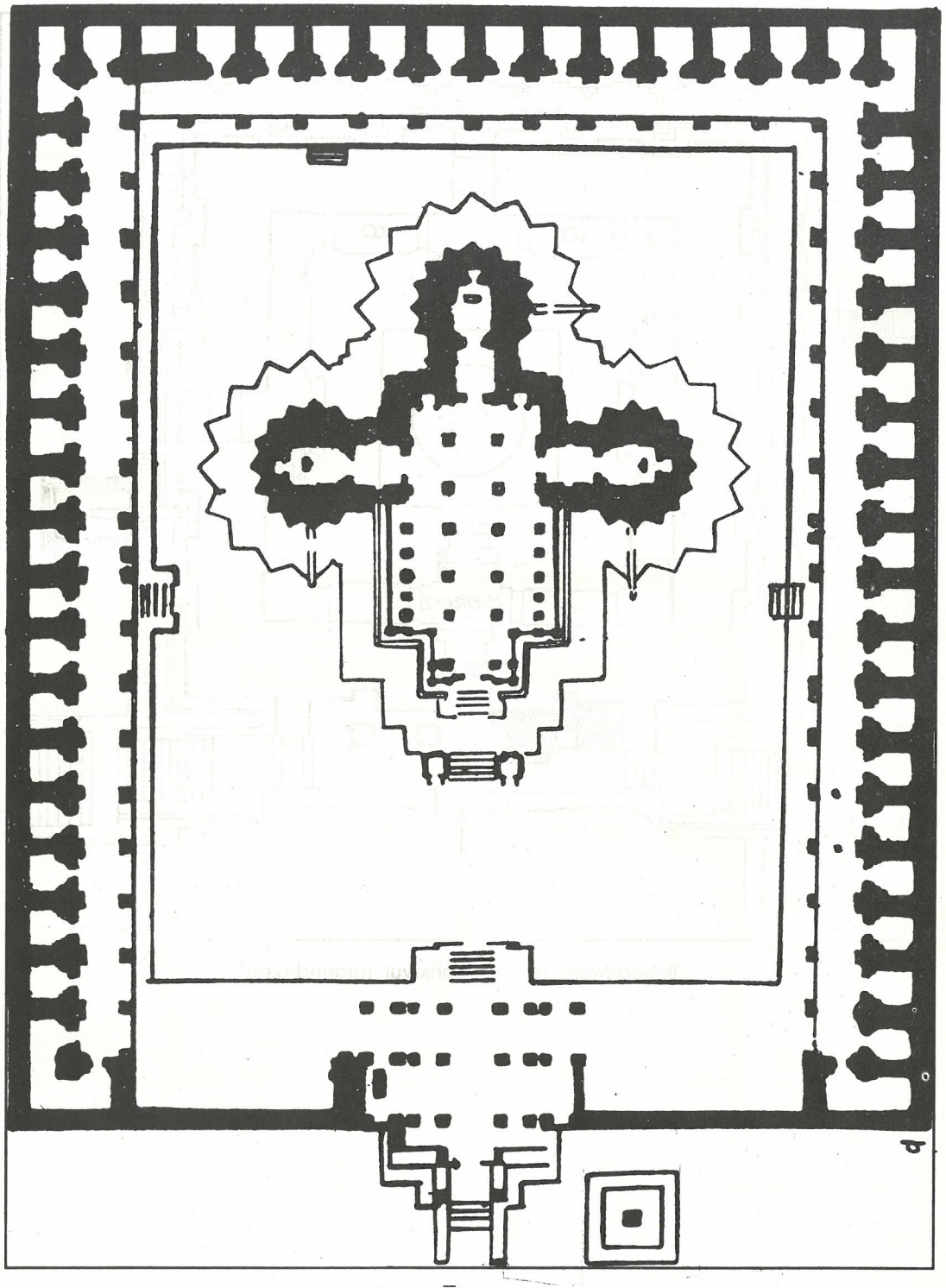
vara temple at Gadag), Kālidāsi Dēvōja, Māba, Ketana and Mallaṇṇa (who worked in the Hoysaḷeśvara temple at Haḷēbīḍu), Malli-tamma (who worked in several temples including those at Somanāthapura, Amṛtāpura, Hāranahaḷḷi and Govindanahaḷḷi), Jakkana (whose work can be seen in the Mūle-saṅkeśvara temple at Turuvēkere) and others.

THE VIJAYANAGAR STYLIZATION

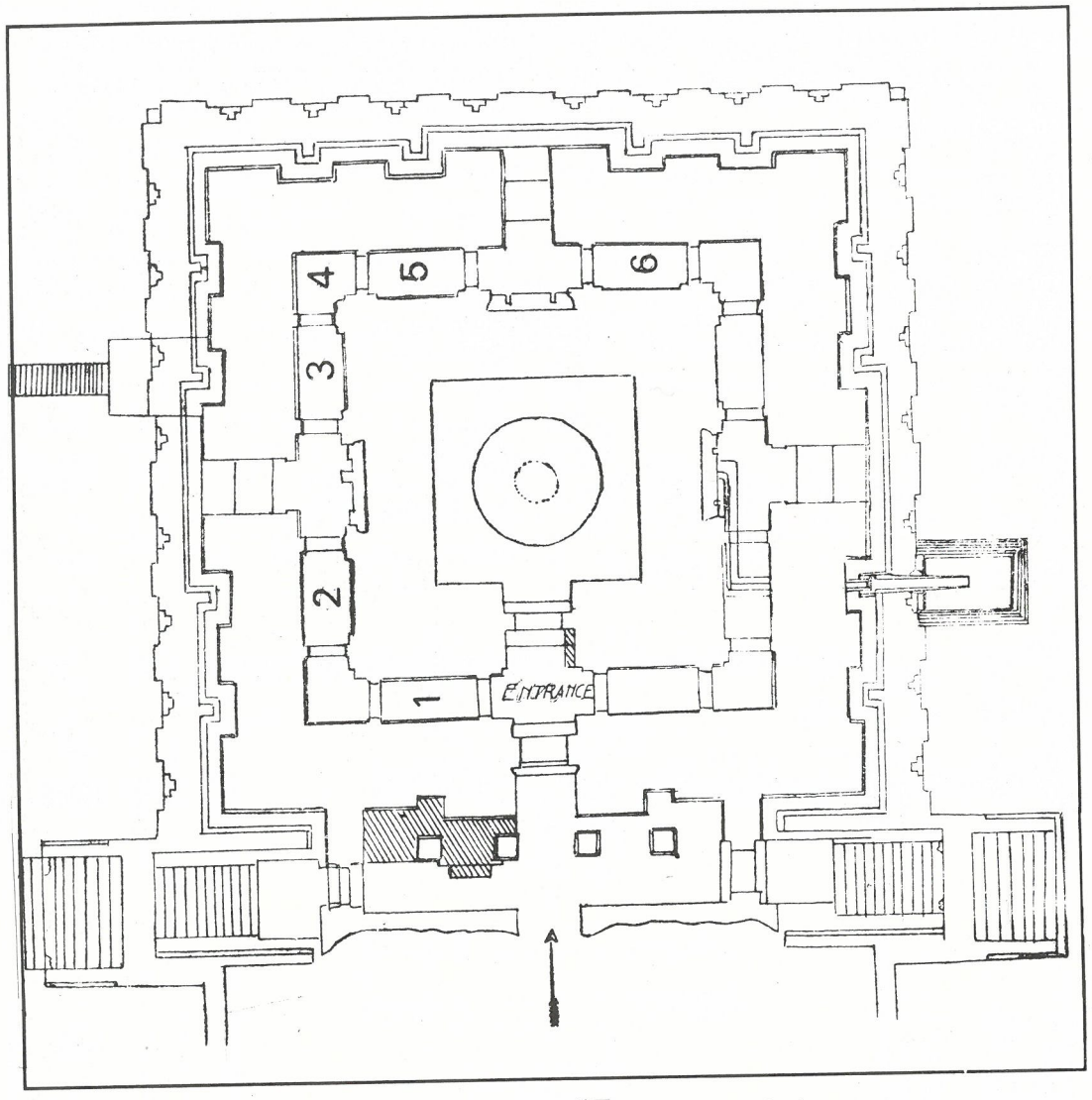
The last Hoysaḷa king Virūpāksha-Ballāḷa IV (1343-1346) was a contemporary of the founder of the Saṅgama dynasty of the Vijayanagar empire, Harihara (1336-1356). And the Vijayanagar kings started from where the Hoysalas left. If the Hoysaḷas ruled over a part of Karnāṭaka, the Vijayanagar empire included not only the entire Karnāṭaka but most of South India. Naturally, the architectural style that developed under the patronage of the Vijayanagar kings comprehended several regional styles that were prevalent in South India like the Hoysaḷa, the Pallava, the Chōḷa and the Pāṇḍya and the Chera.



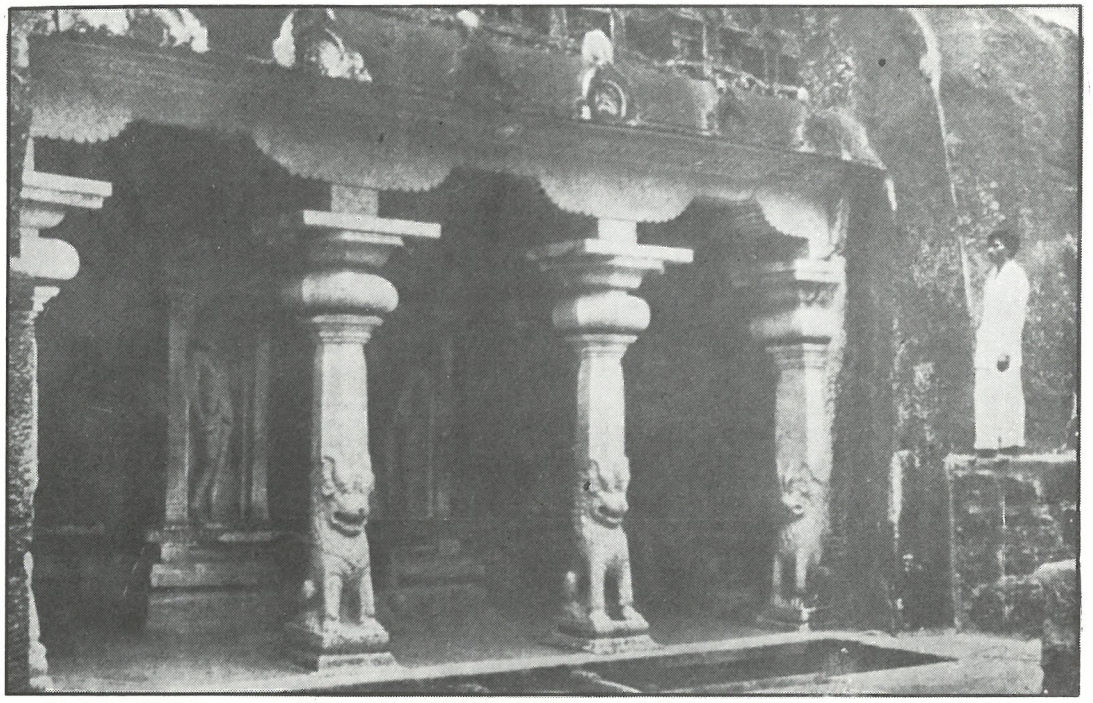
Lakshmī temple (Doḍḍa-goddavaḷḷi (ground-plan)



Temple at Somanāthapura (ground-plan)



Bṛihadīśwara temple, Tañjāvur (ground-plan)



The façade of the Varāhamaṇṭapa, Māmallapuram



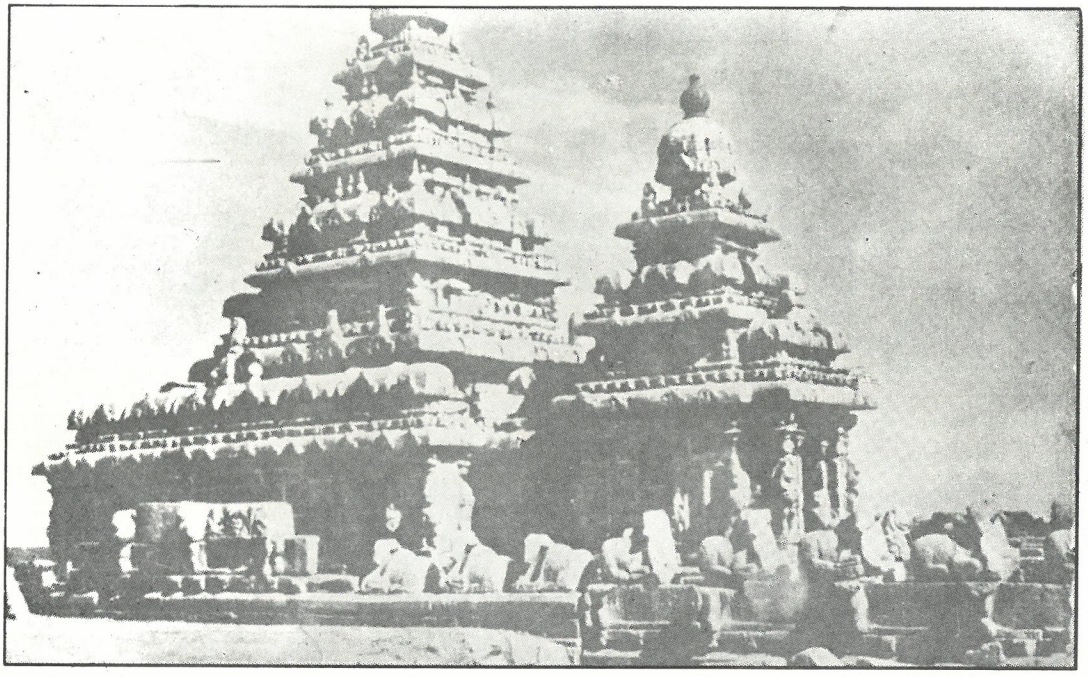
Two of the monolithic Rathas, Māmallapuram



Durgā Maṇḍapa, Māmallapuram



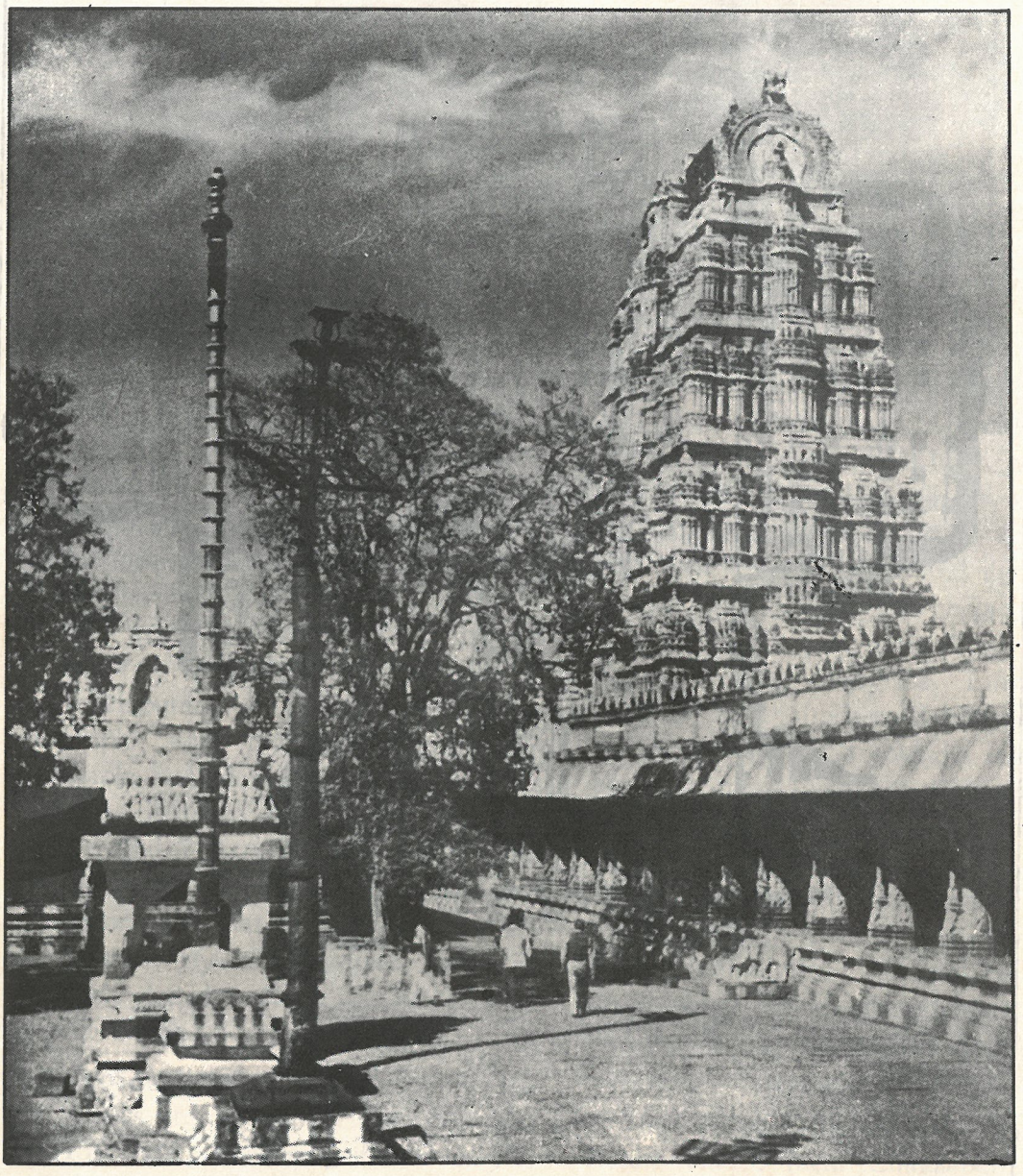
The Dharmarāja Ratha



The Shore Temple, Māmallapuram

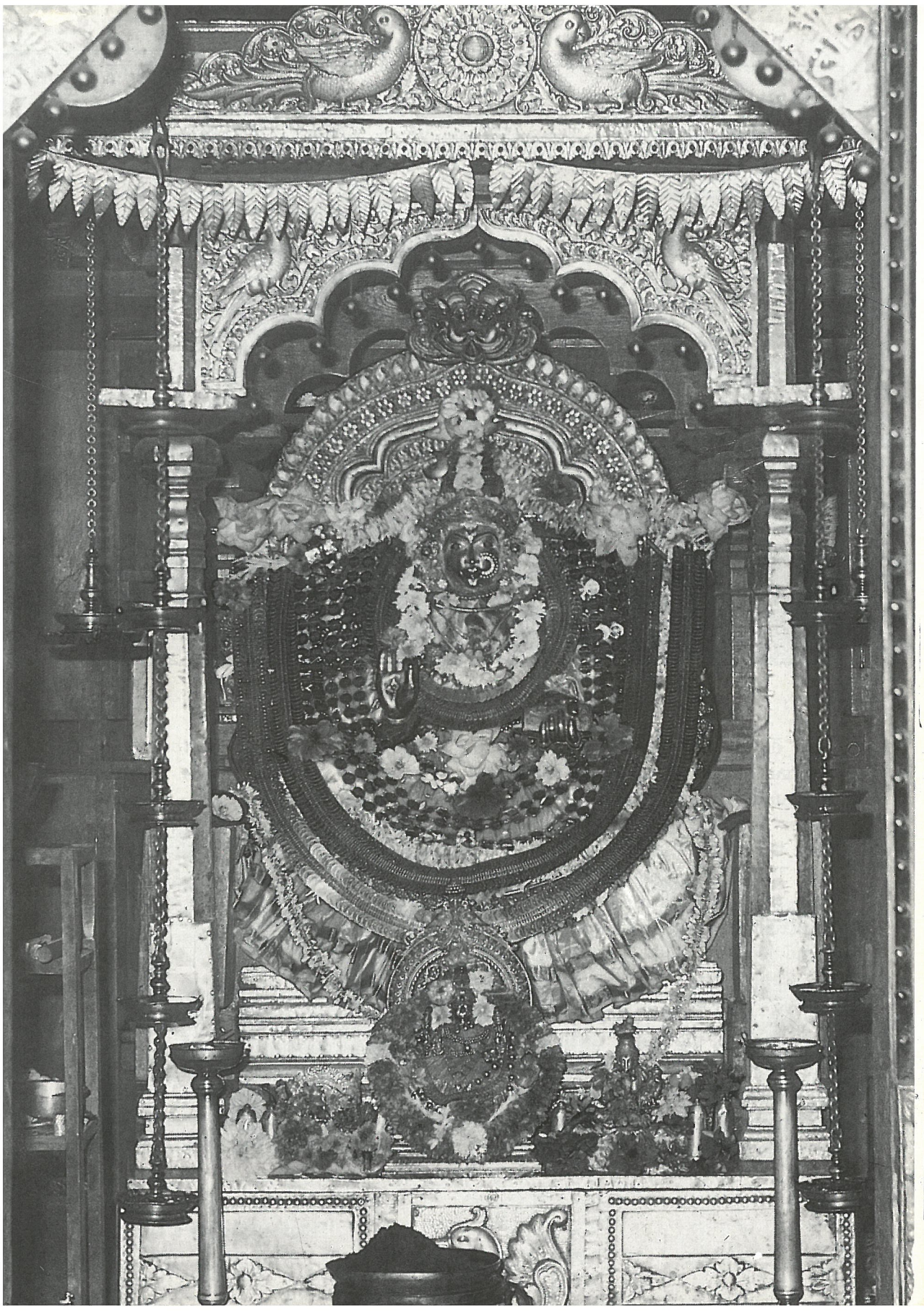


Vimāna of the Bṛihadeeswara Temple



Pampāpati Temple, Hampi







Vidyāśaṅkara temple, Śṛingēri

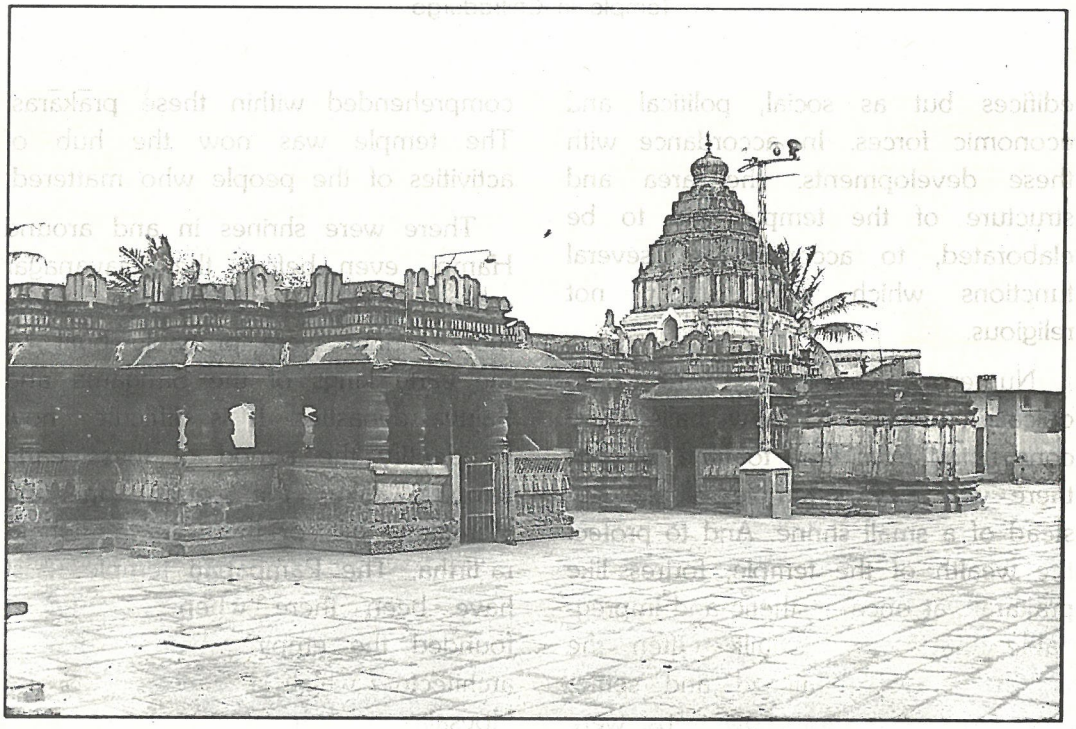
built during the reign of Parameśvara-varman (655-690 A.D.) had neither the surrounding wall (prākāra) nor the tower (gopura). One of the temples built by Narasiṁha-varman II (Rājasiṁha), Taḷa-giṙśvara temple at Panamalai, was not enclosed by a prākāra, but the Kailāsanātha temple built by the same king had a prākāra, and so had the shore temple at Māmallapuram.

The idea of a gopura was not unknown to the early Chāḷukyas; the Vīrupāksha temple at Paṭṭadakallu had one. But the detail was not important for them. The Chōḷa architects, however, were specially interested in the high and imposing walls surrounding the temple (prākāra), large and impressive gateways (mahā-dvāra) and soaring towers above the gateway (gopura). The Pāṇḍya rulers of Madurai (1150- 1350 A.D.) were even more interested in the gopura detail. The early Pāṇḍyan temple at Tiruvinaikkāval (near Śrīraṅgam) may be cited as an example. Among the Pāṇḍyan gopuras may be cited the eastern gopura at the famous Chidaṁbaram temple (1250 A.D. ascribed to

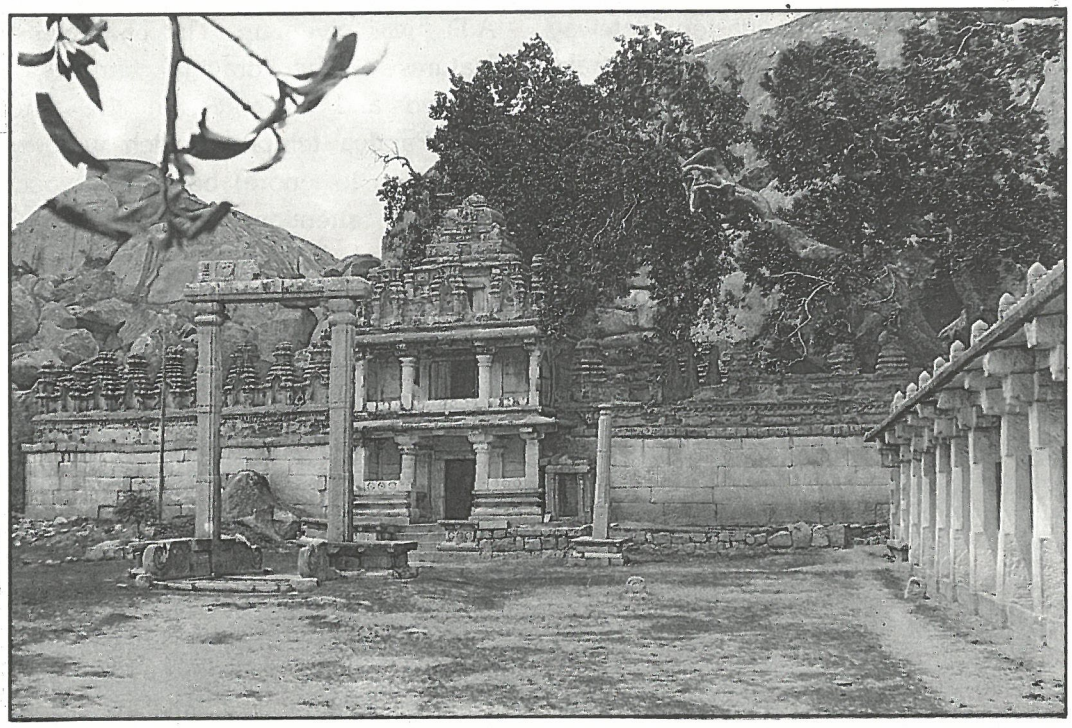
Sundara-Pāṇḍya), the eastern gateway of the inner enclosure at Tirumalai (1300 A.D.) and the gopuram at the Kumbhakoṇam temple (1350 A.D.).

The Chōḷa temple at Gaṅgaikoṇḍa-chōḷa-puram also marked the beginning of what is known as the thousand-pillared assembly halls (sahasra-staṁbha-maṇḍapa) in South Indian temples. And the Pāṇḍyans also attended to this detail. The Chōḷas and Pāndyas had built thousands of temples in the Tamiḷ country, which came under the Vijayanagar rule after 1350 A.D.

Such was the heritage that the Vijayanagar architects had, and naturally the regional Hoysaḷa style, which was already moribund by about 1250 A.D., was given up. The characteristic features of the 'drāviḍa' temples, as defined and illustrated in the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya temples (which were too numerous to ignore) became the focus of their attention. And during the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya periods, religious life in south India had become more ritualistic than ever, and temple-rituals had proliferated. The Śaiva and Vaishṇava āgamas had come into vogue; elaborate and grand ceremonials were prescribed to be performed in the temple, following the models set by royalty and wealthy households. The temples were also becoming wealthy, owing mainly to royal patronage. During the reign of the Chōḷa kings, temples emerged not only as religious



Hariharesvara temple

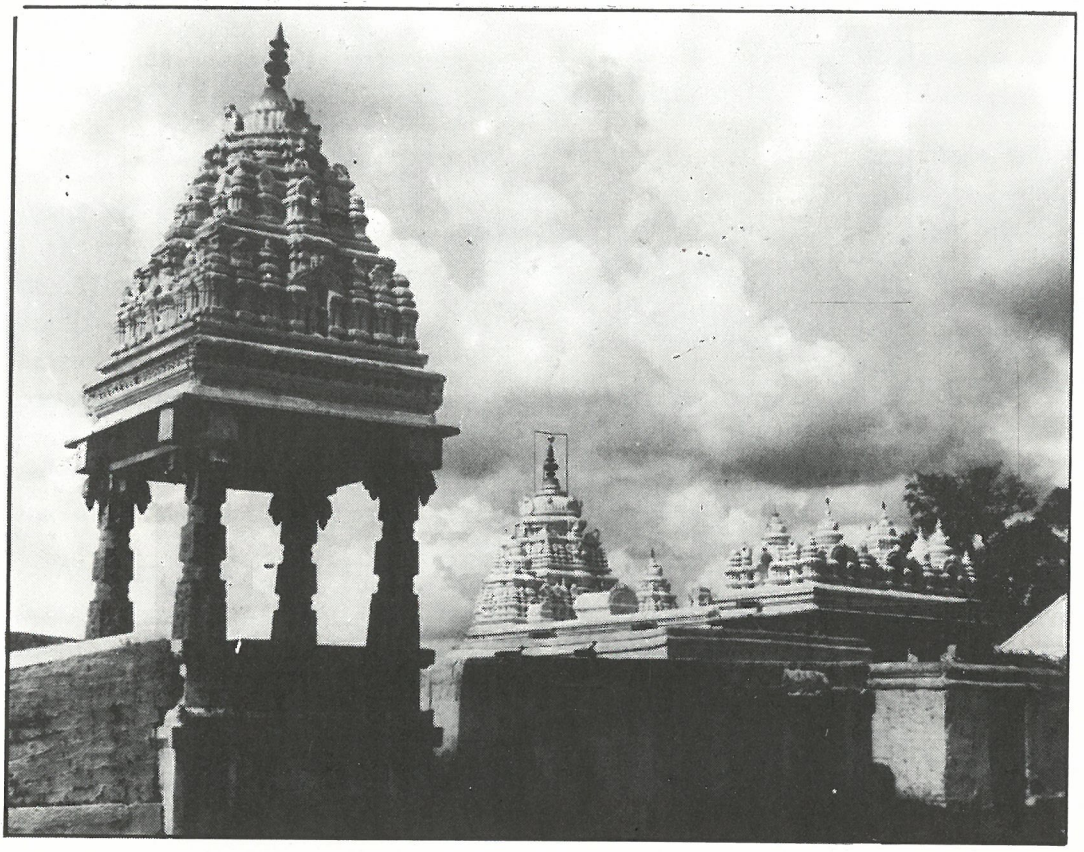


Temple in Chitradurga

edifices but as social, political and economic forces. In accordance with these developments, the area and structure of the temple had to be elaborated, to accommodate several functions which were strictly not religious.

Numerous pavilions were periodically added and new halls were constructed from time to time, so that there was a vast temple-complex instead of a small shrine. And to protect the wealth of the temple, fortress-like prākāras, at once aesthetic and impregnable, had to be built. Often the prākāras were multiplied and settlements of people, even townships, were comprehended within these prākāras. The temple was now the hub of activities of the people who mattered.

There were shrines in and around Hampi, even before the Vijayanagar empire came into being. And some more shrines were probably built by the early kings of the Saṅgama and Sāḷuva dynasties. It is difficult now to identify the period of these early temples, like the ones on the Hemakūṭa hill, or those in the Chakra-tīrtha. The Paṁpāpati temple must have been there when Harihara I founded the empire, but its original architecture which is reminiscent of the Hoysaḷa style has been masked by



Keregōḍu Temple

later additions like the 'assembly hall' (raṅga-maṇḍapa) which Krishṇadevarāya got built in 1509 to commemmorate his coronation.

We have a record when the Gaṇapati temple was built (1385 A.D.) and by whom (Irugappa, the Hoysaḷa general). But about other temples in the area, we are not sure. We are not even sure if the temples that are definitely associated with Krishṇadevarāya (1509-1529) like the Vitthala temple and the Hazāra-Rāma temple, were not actually earlier structures to which Krishṇadevarāya only added. It seems probable that many of the earlier shrines in Hampi were of Kadaṁba architecture. But later temples have a strong affinity to what is described as the 'drāviḍa' style.

The temple-building activity in the Vijayanagar period may be said to begin with the reign of Krishṇadevarāya (1509-1529) and continue during the reign of his successor Achyutarāya (1529- 1547). It has already been mentioned that his coronation coincided with the embel-



lishment of the Pampāpati temple. He is also credited to have erected the lofty tower (gopura) over the gateway at the same time.

This was probably the beginning of the Vijayanagar fascination for lofty and massive gopuras. Numerous temples in South India have these towers, and they are usually called 'rāya-gopuras' after Krishṇadevarāya. The Vijayanagar gopuras were not as picturesque as the Pāṇḍyan gopuras, but are more ornate and better organized, if somewhat more massive.

They also rose sometimes to great heights (to about 200 feet). There were large temples, where the gopuras rose on all the four cardinal directions, and there were gopuras in each of the multiple circuits (prākāra). During the Vijayanagar period, the gopuras became essential features of the temple-complex, as also the large rectangular gateways (through which even caparisoned elephants could enter). Greater attention was now paid to external appearance of the temple and the outlying elements.

Another feature that assumed importance during this period was the more elaborate organisation of the interior space into a number of halls and pavilions, closed as well as open, and supported by monolithic composite pillars which again characteristically reflected Vijayanagar style. Pillars were more dexterously carved than ever before, with figures sculpted in bold relief or often entirely in the round.

The themes of pillar sculpture were various: realistic, and imaginary gods and goddesses, mythical characters riders, animals, birds, human devotees and heroes. Their favourite subject-matter was the rearing horses, snarling and violent but graceful; there were also hippogryphs and caparisoned swans. Frequently several miniature columns slender and elegant were sculpted around a central shaft, so that the pillar acquired an artistic aspect. The Vijayanagar pillars were made not to look like pillars but as gorgeous sculptural pieces. They are remarkable for the exuberance of artistic skill.

As said earlier, ornate halls with a hundred or a thousand pillars became popular, as also ornamental pavilions known as 'kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa', tastefully decorated for occasional festivals in the temple. The area of the temple proper was enlarged, and the surrounding wall (prākāra) enclosed not only spacious courtyards, numerous subsidiary shrines, stores, strong rooms for keeping temple-jewels and costly garments of the gods, kitchens, dining halls, administrative offices, isolated pavilions outside the main shrine, but also fine and large tanks. Accommodation for the resident priests, administering personnel and guards was also provided within the temple-complex or in close proximity to it.

Among the important temples within Haṁpi, the capital city of the empire, were the Krishṇasvāmi temple (which was built by Krishṇadevarāya to commemmorate his conquest of Udayagiri), the Viṭṭhala temple (the construction of which is said to have begun in 1513 by Krishṇadevarāya and work on which continued till the city was attacked and looted in 1565) and Hazāra-Rāmasvāmi temple (which seems to have reached its present form by 1513), besides the celebrated Paṁpāpati temple.

The Vijaya-Viṭṭhala temple is a marvellous piece of art. With six

separate structures in the complex, it has achieved remarkable unity. The Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa of this temple with multi-columned and composite pillars, exquisitely carved, is probably unparalleled for its beauty. The Krishṇasvāmi temple is a typical 'drāviḍa' structure, and its Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa appears to be modelled after that of the Vijaya-Viṭṭhala temple. The Hazāra-Rāmasvāmi temple with its modest dimensions but graceful aspect, was meant as a private temple for the royal household. Notable is the narrative of the Rāmāyaṇa story in low relief stone-panels alround the temple; and the soap-stone columns inside the hall are charming. The Vishṇu temple in Panukoṇḍa appears to have been modelled after this temple in Haṁpi.

Another temple of considerable interest in Haṁpi is the Achyuta-rāya temple (1539), which has a splendid gateway. During Achyuta-rāya's reign were built the well-known Vīreśvara temple in Lēpākshi (1535) and the Chintalarāya (Śiva) temple at Tāḍapatri (about the same time). Other notable temples of the Vijayanagar period are in Vellore, Śrī-raṅgam Kuṁbhakōṇam and Viriñchipuram. Structures (like the pavilions, halls and towers) added to the earlier shrines this period are too numerous in South India to enumerate.

The temple-style that was defined in the Vijayanagar period become the standard in South India in the subsequent years. The minor royal dynasties that ruled parts of the present-day Karnāṭaka (like Oḍeyars of Mysore the Nāyakas of Ikkeri and Keḷadi, and the Pāḷḷegārs) adopted this style, and did not introduce significant architectural innovations. But there was a decline in the size and grandeur of the temple-structures, as also the quality of art and craft in them.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ĀGAMA PRESCRIPTIONS:

There is in our country a temple-lore, at once elaborate and encyclopaedic, which is called 'āgama' relating to the construction of, and worship in ,a temple. This literature consists of hundreds of texts, big and small, in classical Sanskrit, which are heavily sectarian in orientation. The texts are broadly grouped into Saiva, Vaishṇava and Śākta divisions, dealing with the worshp of Śiva (and also Gaṇesha, Skanda, Vīrabhdra and Nandi), Vishṇu (and also Lakshmī and Hanumān), and Devī respectively. While many of these texts are ascribed to seers and sages of a bygone age, it is obvious that few of them can really be assigned to a period prior to the ninth century A.D. There were already temples in the country by then, and worship was also conducted in them, porobably according to long-standing custom. The āgama texts set out to codify the temple-construction and formalize the worship-procedure that were already in vogue. The texts, therefore, rely not only on the architectural styles and religious sanctions that had evolved by the time the 'āgama' was considered necesaary, but also on regional customs and practices.

The temple culture was incidental to image-worship. While it was conceded that representation of Godhead in an image was impossible, the use of images facilitated contemplation. We read in *Vishṇu-saṁhitā*, (29,55)

'It is not possible for any one to meditate (on Godhead) without a form'.

God was looked upon as having two aspects: one that was trascendental and beyond human inderstanding or approach (para), and the other which was empirical and worthy of worship by a devotee (apara). The former is devoid of form (nirākāra), while the latter has form (sākāra). It is only the aspect with a form (viz.

an image made in stone, metal, wood or clay) that can be worshipped and contemplated upon. This image is techincally called 'archā' (worship-worthy). As mentioned earlier, images privately worshipped at home are 'household-icons' (grhārchā), and images installed in temples for public worship are 'temple-icons' (ālayārchā'). A temple is described in the āgama texts as the body (deha) of Godhead, and the image in the sanctum the 'soul' (jīva). The temple as a structure houses the image, and as an institution provides for worshipping it. The āgama texts deal with both dimensions of the temple.

Temples are classified in texts (like *Pādma-purāṇa*, 39, 14-20 and *Pārameśvara-saṁhitā*, 89, 62) into five types: (1)the temples where the image is a self-manifestation of Godhead (svyam-vyakta); (2) the temples brought into being by the gods in very ancient times (daivika) in places of exceeding purity or on mountain-tops; (3)the temples built by the sages of yore in forest-retreats by the power of their penance (ārsha); (4) the temples which are acclaimed in the purānas (paurāna); and (5) the temples built by human beings in comparatively recent times (mānusha). The 'human' temples are located in villages or towns, and built in stone or bricks (*Śrī-prasna*, 5). These are meant ot contribute to the well-being of the village or town ('grāmādi-sthiti-hetukam', "*Pādma-saṁhitā*', 'kriyā', 21, 12-14). The texts also prescribe that the temple in a village or town must be built only after obtaining permission from the ruler of the realm.

The temple may be built in stone (śilāmaya) when it is considered as the best, or in bricks (iṣṭaka), when it is regarded as of midling merit, or in wood (dāru) when it is considered inferior. (*Vishṇu-tilaka-saṁhita*, 176; *Kāpiñjala-saṁhitā*, 10, 3-4). When the entire temple is built of one meterial only (stone, bricks or wood), it is 'pure' (śuddha); when two materials are used, it is 'mixed' (miśra); and when all the materials are used, it is complex (saṁkīrṇa). (*Mānasāra*, 18, 99-100).

The pure type of temple has only one material from the foundation to the finial, while the 'mixed' type has stone for the main structure (ālaya) and brick for the superstructure (sikhara), and the complex has stone for the foundation, brick and wood for the main structure and brick for the super-structure. Temples built of brick and wood, viz. without using stone, are considered inferior and not recommended. Temples built entirely of mud are prohibited. (*Iśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati*, 86, 89; *Vishvaksena-saṁhitā* 34).

The temples in South India usually belong to the variety known as 'six-membered; (shaḍ-varga) in the elevation or the vertical projection

(Kāmikāgama, 35, 21). The component members are

(1) the lowest part of the temple, basement or plinth (adhishthāna, ādhāra), of which the texts speak of more than one hundred and fifty kinds and prescribe different types of mouldings, and parts like the plinth (upāna), fillet (paṭṭikā), dado (kandhara), torus (kumuda), projection (keshepana), drip (nimna) and so on;

(2) stone walls with embedded and projecting columns (kuḍya-staṁbha, or staṁbha-varga, called in texts 'pāda');

(3)entablature and roof (prastara) above the columns, which is of several types, and which is made up of parts like beam (gopāna), filler (vājana), carona (kapota) and drip (nimna);

(4) the quadrangular moulding (usually square) called 'neck' (kaṇṭha or gala);

(5) the spherical top in the shape of a small tower raised over the moulding (śikhara, also called sirah, mundaka), which covers the area of the sanctum (as the expansion of the word signifies, 'garbhagṛha-sthita-maṇṭapa-śikhara' and thus is said to project it) and the upper part of which is called 'śikhā' ('śikharordhva-śikhā') which in turn is surmounted by a 'crest-jewel'(śikhā-maṇi) or the apex;

and (6) the pinnacle (stūpī), consisting sometimes of gilt copper-pots (called stūpi-koḍa) and the spire (called 'stūpī-kīla').

The last three members together constitute the super-structure which rises above the sanctum, sometimes referred to as 'vimāna' and sometimes as 'śikhara'. However, the expression 'vimana' has been used in the texts in the sense of the entire sanctum (vimāna- gṛha), from the basement to the pinnacle, and also in the sense of the shrine-tower which is raised over the sanctum ('tad ūrdhve cha vimānam', *Mayamata*, 22, 57).

The word 'śikhara' which is commonly used to identify the superstructure over the sanctum (as distinguished from the superstructure over the entrance of the surrounding wall, 'prākāra-gopura') is in texts restricted to a part of the superstructure, above the entablature and below the pinnacle. 'Śuka-nāsa' (lit, 'parrot's beak') is the projection of the sikhara at its lower half, covering below the 'antarāḷa' or antechamber in front of the sanctum (while the śikhara covers only the sanctum). The antechamber also is sometimes spoken of as 'śuka-nāsā'.

The horizontal projection of the temple (ground-plan) consists of the sanctum (or shrine, garbha-gṛha), the vestibule or porch (ardha-maṇḍapa, sometimes called antarāḷa) connecting the sanctum with the pavilion in front of the shrine (mukha-maṇḍapa) and other halls or pavilions. The word 'maṇḍapa' (in Kannaḍa, maṇṭapa) means any roofed but enclosed or

open pavilion resting on pillars, standing independently (within the temple enclosure or on river-banks or road-sides) or attached to the sanctum of a temple.

As limbs of the temple, the mandapas are of various types, and they are named according to the function they are mainly intended to serve: ardha-mandapa (porch, next to the sanctum, where the processional icons are kept), mahā-maṇḍapa (the central-hall, where the devotees assemble), nityārchanā-maṇḍapa (where the daily worship to the moveable representatives of the sanctum-deity is conducted, utsava-maṇḍapa (used on festive occasions), kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa (where the ritual-marriage is performed), āsthāna-maṇḍapa (where the processional deity holds court), raṅga-maṇḍapa (which is usually a large hall with elegantly carved pillars, where drama and other entertainments are presented to the deity), nṛttya-maṇḍapa (for dance- recitals), alaṅkāra-maṇḍapa (where the processional deities are dressed before they are taken out), vāhana-mandapa (where the processional vehicles are kept), Nandi-maṇḍapa (in Śiva-temples, housing the Nandi in front of the sanctum), vasanta-maṇḍapa (the open hall in the middle of the temple-tank, for use in Vasantotsava) and pradakshiṇā-maṇḍapa (enclosed corridor or open yard facilitating circumambulation of the sanctum).

The horizontal projection will also include a ceremonial pillar (usually in stone but sometimes in wood) known as the 'flag-post' (dhvaja-stambha), facing the sanctum, and a stone-seat or platform for ritualistic food-offering (bali-pīṭha), also facing the sanctum and next to the 'flag-post' on the outside. The Śiva temples may have detached Nandi-maṇḍapa, in the temple-yard; it should face the sanctum, and must be located between the sanctum and the flag-post. It is usual for temples dedicated to Śiva or Vishṇu to have separate shrines for their consorts (Pārvati or Lakshmī), called 'Ammanavaru' in Kannaḍa.

These shrines may be detached from the main temple, or attached to it. In any case, they would have their own sanctum (garbha-gṛha), and ambulatory pathway (pradkshiṇā-patha). In bigger temples, they would have their own halls and pavilions. Other deities who constitute the retinue or family of the main deity in the sanctum (parivāra-devatā) may be accommodated in separate shrines in the courtyard of the temple.

It is prescribed in the āgamas that the temple must have a surrounding wall (prākāra) in stone with an opening facing the sanctum (called the principal gateway or mahā-dvāra), and sometiems the gateways will be in all four directions. '*Mānasāra*' 31.1- 134) mentions that the prākāra gives strength

(bala) to the temple, accommodates subsidiary deities (parivāra), adds charm to the structure (śobhā), and provides defence (rakshaṇa).

Multiple prākāras are also permitted in the texts, depending on the need for fortification. The main gateway of the prākāra is surmounted by a gate-tower called 'gopura' (more properly 'dvāra-gopura'), with their own members like ornamented and moulded storeys (bhūmi), halls (maṇḍapa) courts (śālā), narrow vestibules (kshudra-nāsā), domes (gala-kūṭā), cupolas (śikhara) and spires (śikhā).

The maximum number of storeys prescribed in the texts is sixteen (*Mānasāra*, 33), but it is usual to have five or seven storeys. According to *Artha-śāstra* (24), the front of the gate-tower should be a turret resembling an alligator's head with its mouth open ('godhā-mukha'). Tall and gigantic towers (vipulottuṅga) became a characteristic feature of the South Indian temples during the Chōḷa, Pāṇḍya and Vijiyanagar periods.

THE TEMPLE AS AN INSTITUTION

DIVERSE FUNCTIONS

The temple, as a public place of worship, tends to become an institution with social, economic and political dimensions. Collective practice of religion naturally involves professionals of various categories. A temple, for instance, not only employs priests and their attendants, but architects, sculptors, carpenters, smiths, musicians (pipers and drummers) and suppliers of several articles. The temple is a means of gainful employment for numerous people in the community.

The temple is also a big consumer in the locality; it buys not only the articles necessary for daily worship (like flowers, fruits, sandalwood, oil, milk, kumkum and turmeric, camphor, fuel, plantain leaves, betel-leaves and nut) but also the provision for the kitchen to supply the daily food-offerings as part of the worship ritual. If the temple is affluent, it must then have a well-furnished kitchen with an adequate staff of cooks and servers, for traditionally the temple is expected to feed the devotees, pilgrims, ascetics and poor people once a day.

A temple would usually have a kitchen (pāka-śālā) and store-room (ugrāṇa) attached to it, and often a dining hall (Śiva-kūṭa in the Śaiva temples and Rāmānuja-kūṭa in the Vaishṇava temples), outside the temple proper but within the enclosure. On occasions of festivals, it is customary that the whole village or the community around, to dine in the temple; food provided here is regarded as blessed by divine grace (prasāda) for it has first been offered to the presiding deity of the temple (as naivedya). Food in a temple is of course free, although the devotees may make some

offering to the temple-funds, but not as payment for food received. The temple must have provision for such mass-feeding on occasions, which would involve hired services as well as voluntary service. This would call for elaborate econimic organisation.

It is also a machanism of social service in asmuchas the strangers and visitors to the village or town would have ready and free access to food for a limited number of days (usually three days). This was expedient and welcome, especially for those who had no friends or relatives in the village or town they visit for whatever reason. In olden days there were no hotels or restuarants. This arrangement is prevalent in many temples even now.

And it was usual for many temples to finance or assist free lodging facilities in the nature of choultries (chhatra) in close proximity to the temple. The priests in the temple often catered to the boarding and lodging needs of the pilgrims and visitors, but in return to some small payment. They also functioned as guides (kshetra-purohita) for pilgrims who had special vows to discharge. The practice is current to this day in all important pilgrim-centres.

It was customary in the village or town to celebrate religio-social functions like marriage in the premises of the temple. The temple would in this event not only make available to the parties a hall (maṇḍapa) or courtyard, but also other services necessary for the solemnization of the marriage, at minimal expenses. This was a great help for the poor folk.

Many of the temples in Karnāṭaka were well-known centres of learning, some of them universities (mahā-ghaṭikā-sthāna), imparting education in the traditional or scriptural lore. Especially so were the temples managed by the Kālāmukhas, such as those at Baḷḷigāme, Heñjēru (Hemāvati, now in Andhra Pradesh), Dharmapuri, Nandi and Āvaṇi. The Koḍiya-maṭha attached to the Kedāreśvara temple at Baḷḷigāme was a centre for all branches of learning, with free boarding and lodging facilities for students. The renowned head of the centre, Vāmaśakti has been described as going about accompanied by a large number of his students (inscription 1162 A.D.).

Among the subjects taught at this centre were the four Vedas, the six philosophical systems (darśana), Buddhism, Purāṇa and Sanskrit literature. In the Praṇaveśvara temple at Tāḷagunda, there were six scholars teaching the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas like Kalpa and Vyākaraṇa, Nyaya, Mīmāṁsā. (Prābhākara) and Vedānta (1158 A.D.). In the Hariheśvara temple at Harihara too, six scholars were employed to impart elementary education to the children of the locality. Keśava-deva, the governor of Banavāsi, is recorded to have built a splendid temple to Keśava in Bal-

ḷigāme, and made provision for thirty-eight scholars to reside around the temple, endowing on them a piece of fertile land. Such colonies of teachers attached to temples were known as 'brahma-pura's.

The Saiva temples made arrangements for teaching the 'tevāram' hymns (the Tamiḷ compositions of the saints Appar, Saṁbander and Sundaramūrti) to whoever was interested to learn them; and like-wise the Vaishnava shrines made a provision for teaching the 'prabandham' hymnology (the Tamiḷ compositions of the āḻvārs).

Music and dance were specially encouraged by some temples, and almost any temple of some standing had a dance-hall (known as Raṅgamaṇṭapa) and possessed several musical instruments. Musical recitals and presentation of dance-items were included in the daily and occasional worship ritual, after the main sequence was completed. On occasions of festival, these became more important than ever, and attracted crowds to the temple. While the 'deva-dāsi' system and the institution of professional dancers and musicians in the service of the temple were not universal or widesprad in Karnāṭaka, it was customary to hire them occasionally. However, the temple had on its pay-roll pipers and drummers (nāgasvara-mēḷa) as their services were required in several sequences of daily worship. Many temples in the coastal region (especially Tuḷu-nāḍu) encouraged and supported Yaksha-gāna artistes and actors. Even to this day, the well-known Yakshagāna troops (maṇḍalis) are known by the temples to which they are attached.

It was not unusual for monastic organisations to be associated with temples, although their functions and role in society were different from worship in temples. The practice probably began with the mathas of Kālāmukha sect around the eleventh century, like the 'Koḍiya-maṭha' attached to the Kedāreśvara temple at Baḷḷigāme (the temple itself being called 'Kedāra-maṭha' or 'Kedārasthāna'), the minor matha attached to the Nakhareśvara temple at Tāvarekere (within the jurisdiction of the Kodiya-matha), the 'Bhujaṅga-devara maṭha' at Ḍoṁbaḷa, the Someśvara-matha' at the Brahmesvara temple at Ablūr and the 'Kriyā-śakti-maṭha' which is recorded to have as many as seventy-seven temples attached to it (about 1070 A.D., EC 8, Sorab 276).

Among the important temples today which have close association with local monastic organizations are those at Śṛingēri (the Śārāda temple and the Smārta Śṛingēri-maṭha), Uḍupi (the Krishṇa temple and the eight Mādhva maṭhas), Melukōte (the Tiru-nārāyaṇa temple and Śrī-vaishṇava Yatirāja-maṭha), Śravana-beḷgoḷa (the basadis and the Jaina maṭha), Huṁcha (Hoṁbuccha, the Padmāvati temple and the

Jaina maṭha), Adi-chuñchanagiri (the Bhairava temple and the matha of the Nātha- siddha tradition), Sidda-gaṅgā (the Siddagaṅgēśvara temple and the Vīra-śaiva maṭha) and Beḷavāḍi (Hooli, the Vīrabhadra temple and the Bṛhan-maṭha).

During the annual ratha-festival of a temple, which continues for more than nine days, the whole village or town assumes a festive aspect. It is usual for vendors from neighbouring areas to gather here and ply their trade. It is an occasion for brisk business, for there will be a large concourse of people drawn from different places. Known as 'jātre' in Kannada (from the Sanskrit 'jātrā', pilgrimage), this is a social and economic arrangement for trade and commerce, centering round a temple, and is a source of revenue for the temple as well as the local administration (village panchāyat or town municipality). The occasion has entertainment of several kinds to regale the assembly of pilgrims, and has musical performances and dramatic shows too.

TEMPLE CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION

A temple, even a minor one, has two distinct functions: religious and administrative. The temple as a religious institution is the place where worship is conducted for the benefit and well-being of the entire community. And worship is the responsibility of the priests and their attandants who discharge it according to custom and usage. The temple is also a public institution owned by the community and managed by the elders of the community insofar as its social, economic and educational functions are concerned. This is clearly a non-priestly preoccupation. The temple overstepped its religious role when its importance increased in the community.

Many temples were richly endowed by royal patrons and wealthy devotees. The endowments by kings and chieftains were normally made in terms of land gifts and revenue-grants (devabhoga, devādāya). An entire village, or a cluster of lands in a village was made over to the temple; the entire revenue of the village or a substantial part thereof, was to be paid to the temple-coffers. Thus it came to pass that temples were land-lords, not infrequently the biggest landlords in the region.

The maintenance of lands, collection of the revenue, control over farmers, action against illegal occupation of the temple lands and against misappropriation of temple-funds, and employment of personnel to look after these details necessiated an administrative set-up and elaborate organisation of functionaries. The more generously endowed the temple, the greater and more complex its administrative machinery. And not infrequently, such a temple would be involved in litigations and legal wrangles.

The wealth of a temple was not only in its landed property. Sometimes,

devotees would make over their buildings, gardens and groves to the temple, in which case the temple would have to let them out and collect the rent. Quite often, gifts to the deities of the temple would be costly jewels and ornaments of diverse description meant for daily or occasional wear, and silken and brocaded garments of greater value. They had to be preserved and protected in the temple-treasury; guarding these articles from the greedy hands of the burglars or of the temple-functionaries themselves, becomes an additional responsibility of the administrative machinery.

The devotees would make cash offerings, meant to be utilized for specific sequences of worship in the temple, daily or on festive occasions. Donations would also be made to feed the pilgrims free of charge in the temple. The temple-treasury should receive these donations, and arrangements must be made for the proper utilization of the funds. Accounting, auditing and financial control become necessary aspects of temple administration.

The maintenance of the temple-premises and the temple-property and the administration of the several non-religious details of the temple necessitate a large number of functionaries, whose calling is secular. The administrative machinery of the temple would have to operate within the framework of the social and legal sanctions prevalent in the region or the country. In olden days, kings would be the supreme authorities of all the temples within their domain; and officers designated and deputed by him would generally supervise and control the temple-administration. But in actuality each temple would have its own elected or nominated administrative council (sabhā) consisting of the local dignitaries, to look after the temple-administration in all its details. Priests and their attendants were in most cases subordinate and responsible to this council.

An inscription of 1148 A.D. tells us that when a temple came into existence in a village or town, several prominent citizens volunteered to share the administration of the temple. These administrators were known as 'dharma-darśis'. This practice has survived to this day. But another inscription dated earlier (viz. 1026 A.D.) mentions that the land-gifts and the revenue-grants to a temple were managed by the king of the area and the headman of the village (gāvuṇḍa). Still another inscription (of the same period) describes that the maintenance of the temple-property was the collective responsibility of the villagers or townsmen. The nomination of the few temple-administrators (dharma-darśis) was therefore a later event. The temple came to have its own 'sabhā', on the model of the village council, as an administrative set-up.

Some temples, however, had hereditary administrators, who styled themselves 'sthānikas' (who functioned independently). The expression 'sthānika', however, is derived from 'sthāna-pati', meaning the head of the temple (sthāna) or the monastic or educational institution (ghaṭikā-sthāna) attached to the temple, or rather to which a temple was attached. We have seen that the Kālāmukha teachers, who were heads of the 'maṭhas' also administered temples under their charge. Most of these teachers were also 'advisers to the king' (rāja-guru), and therefore had royal sanction for their control over temples and their revenue.

While the sthānika was the highest authority in all the matters relating to the temple, he was answerable to the ruler of the realm (deśādhipati) and could be removed by an order of the ruler. If the temple was located in a place far removed from the capital, then the sthānika was answerable to the village council (sabhā). He was thus a manager of the temple-afairs, and did not have absolute powers. It was his responsibility to see that the customary rites of worship were conducted every day by the priest, that the temple was in good repair, and that the orders of the ruler of the realm or the village council were properly executed. The charities for which monetary or land endowments were made by the devotees were a special responsibility of his. He was also the custodian of temple jewels and manager of the temple-property.

This arrangement was especially prevalent in the temples in the coastal region, where inscriptions frequently speak of the sthānikas of temples. The expression 'sthānapati' (viz. 'resident head of the temple') and 'sthānada kartā' (the manager of the temple') are used in inscriptions prior to about 1300 A.D.; and subsequently the word 'sthānika' is used. We have references to the sthāna-pati of the Lokeśvara temple (Kundukūr), of the Śiva temple at Palimāru, and to multiple sthānikas at the Subramaṇya and temple, Kukke, the temple at Bārakūru(which had a group of them, 'sthānika-parivāra'), the Mañjunātha temple at Kadari (four sthānikas), the Maṇi-deva temple at Guṇḍmi, and the Chaturmukha- basadi at Kārkaḷa (fourteen families of sthānikas).

The main task of the temple-committee and the manger was to look after the temple-properties (lands, villages, buildings, jewels, garments, vessels, utensils, icons) and to collect the revenue due to the temple (from the lands gifted, rents of buildings owned by the temple and the taxes on certain articles made over to the temple), and to make proper arrangements for the daily worship as well as the customary festivals in the temple.

The manager and the committee were in charge of the temple treasury and had to keep accounts of all the assets. Once the gifts were made to the temple, the temple authorities (viz.

the committee and the manager) had powers to retain or sell them, lands could be leased out to private parties; temple functionaries could be appointed or dismissed; structural additions could be made to the temple or some of the outying structures altered or demolished.

But they had no power to interfere with the worship procedures, which were guided by scriptural prescriptions, custom and usage. It was natural, therefore, that a struggle to gain control over the temple and its properties was frequently in evidence between the priests on the one hand and the management on the other.

In the erstwhile state of Mysore, the year 1788 marked a change in temple-administration. Tippu-Sultān, the then ruler of the State, issued an order "resuming the lands endowed to the temples except those which were supported by huzūr sanads", and two years later placed "the management of the temples under the Amildārs and other tāluk officials under the supervision of Fouzdārs". The committee (sabhā) and the manager (sthānika) had no say in temple-management from that time onwards.

The rules that were framed at this time insisted that (1) the offerings made to the temple were to be distributed among the poor and not appropriated by the priests; (2) care was to be taken to prevent the money and provisions belonging to the temple from being stolen, and (3) all the jewels belonging to the temple must be recorded and listed, and placed in charge of the temple-administrator (pārupattēgār), a new position now created to manage the affiars of the temple on behalf of the amildār.

The rules were probably made necessary because of the conditions that were prevailing in the temples. After the death of Tippu-Sultān in 1799, the British who controlled the administration of the State, included the temple-management (called officially Muzarāi) as one of the responsibilities of the Government. The nominal head of the state, Krishnarāja Odeyar III (1799-1868) took personal interest in the affairs of the temples in the state, and himself appointed the temple-administrators (pārupattēgārs) to important temples like those at Nanjanagūd and Mēlukōṭe. But the British Commissioner, who was the real ruler of the State, appointed in 1847 a committee of citizens, called 'pañchāyatdārs' to manage the affairs of the temples, and this committee was to be responsible for the superintendents of the divisions.

The arrangement does not appear to have worked out satisfactorily, and in 1852 the commissioner took over the administration of temples under his own direct supervision, and issued a new set of rules for the guidance of

the amildārs who were again entrusted with the task of managing the temple-affairs. In the year 1861, when Sir Mark Cubbon was the commissioner, the management of the temples was taken out of the Commissioner's office and was placed under the direct charge of the Superintendents of the Divisions.

And six years later (viz. in 1867), the temples coming under the jurisdiction of the Muzarāi departement were entrusted to the supervision of a Native (viz. Hindu) Assistant in each district. The native assistants began by appointing separate committees of management for the more important temples, but finding that this arrangement only encouraged rivalries, feuds and discontent among members of the committees without achieving any improvement in the management of the temple, the committees were abolished in 1874, and the management of the funds of the temples was entrusted to the Muzarāi officers who were responsible to the Deputy Commissioners of the districts.

In 1891, when Sir K. Sheshādri Iyer was the Dewan of the State (after rendition), he found that the administration of the temples by the Deputy Commissioners of districts was neither effective nor beneficial to the temples, and transferred the management of temple funds to the Huzūr Office; a separate officer designated as the Muzarāi Superintendent and Secretary to the Government was appointed and the management of the temples was placed under his charge. But in 1901, this post was abolished, and the responsibility of managing Muzarāi institutions was transferred to the Deputy Secretary to the Government in the General and Revenue departments, under which arrangement the Deputy Commissioners of districts were again directly in charge of the temples.

In 1904, however, this arrangement was modified and a separate and independent Muzarāi department came into existence, with an officer of the rank of a Secretary as its head. But the new officer could only advise the Government, but had no executive functions. Four years later, this post was amalgamated with that of the General and Revenue Secretary, and a Muzarāi Superintendent with the rank of an Under-Secretary, was appointed.

In 1913, the Muzarāi Regulation (VI of 1913) was passed, bringing all the places of worship in the State in the sole charge of the Government (defining at the same time the duties and functions of the Muzarāi officers in the districts), and empowering the Government to appoint non-governmental supervisors known as 'dharma-darsis' or a committee of citizens ot manage the affairs of a temple.

In 1917, the work of the Muzarāi department was decentralized and the

Deputy Commissioners of the districts were again entrusted with the management of temples in their jurisdiction. In 1922, the office of the Muzarāi Commissioner was created and this office was amalgamated with the office of the Revenue Commissioner.

In 1927, the Mysore Religious and Charitable Institutions Act (VII of 1927) was passed, and under this act, the chief controlling authority of temples was the Government, who could delegate its functions to the Muzarāi Commissioner, directly manage the institutions through the district or tāluk officers, or transfer the management to the 'dharma-darsis', to the committee, or to the local authorities.

Under this arrangement, the immediate administrative functionaries in the temple were: (1) the 'peshkār', the principal executive officer who represented the interests of the government on the spot and who controlled the affairs of the temple, religious as well as socio-economic, and the accounts, under orders from the Government;

(2) 'the pārupattēgāra' who was to supervise personally all the routine activities of the temple within the temple premises, was answerable to the 'peshkār';

(3) the 'nagadi-gumāsta' (called also 'inām-grāmada śyānubhāga' in some temples), who was responsible for the accounts of the temple, both receipt and expenditure, who also looked after the financial aspects of the lands endowed upon the temple, and kept records concerning the temple-property and temple-treasury;

(4) the 'jinasi-gumāsta' or (jinasi-śyānubhaga) who was in charge of provisions, the store-room (ugrāna), supply of the articles necessary for routine and occasional worship, as well as the temple-kitchen, and the special worship-sequences for which endowments have been made by the devotees or by the Government;

and (5) the 'maṇegāra' (usually two of them), who was directly in charge of the several services conducted within the temple-premises and who was answerable to the above officers.

There would also be a 'golla' who assists the routine activities in the temple, especially working under the 'jinasi-gumāsta' in the store-room. In some temples, there would be an assistant, called 'bokkasa', to the 'nagadi-gumāsta'.

The Temple Functionaries:

The real purpose of a temple is to provide an opportunity for public worship of a deity. Therefore, the administration of a temple is secondary, in comparision with the worship that is conducted there. The worship is the responsibility of priests (archaka) and their assistants (paricharaka), who visit the temple twice or thrice during the

day and perform the prescribed rituals of worship. The priesthood in a temple is mostly a hereditary calling, and there is a professional priestly class in South India who are specially trained to do this job.

The priest performs worship in his own household before he comes to the temple. Worship in a temple is not so much for the priest as for the public. The āgama prescribes two kinds of worship, private worship at home for ones own sake (ātmārtha), and public worship in a temple for the good of the community (parārtha). The latter is rewarded monetarily or materially, while the former is its own reward. The professional priests are therefore hired by the temple-authorities, and do not normally have a voice in the administration, for which there is another set of officials. In the administrative set-up of a temple, the priests occupy a secondary position, albeit the temple becomes popular and prosperous only by the mode of worship that is conducted there.

The temple houses the main deity in the sanctum, and entrance into the sanctum is the privilege of the priest who worships in it. None of the administrative staff, including the highest, can enter the sanctum; even rulers of the realm had to stand outside the sanctum, regardless of their munificent gifts and grants to the temple. And among the priests employed in the temple, not all of them had the freedom to enter the sanctum. It is only the chief priest (viz. worshipping the presiding deity, 'sannidhi- archaka') that could not only enter the sanctum at will but touch the deity that is worshipped. A few of the assistant-priests could also enter the sanctum, but they were not allowed to touch the image in the sanctum. The nature of worship in the sanctum would not allow the chief priest to move out of the sanctum until the worship is over. He would, therefore, require some attendants and helpers (parichārakas), who were also drawn from the priestly class. Thus a temple would have several functionaries assisting the routine worship.

It is usual for a temple of some standing and antiquity to have a number of priests on its pay-roll. There will be the chief priest who worships in the sanctum and directs all other priests. He is called 'sannidhi-archaka' (viz. the sanctum-priest) or 'adigalu' in and around the coastal region. The priest who helps him inside the sanctum is called 'sannidhi parichāraka' (viz. the sanctum-attendant).

In many temples, especially in the coastal regions, the general worship conducted inside the sanctum is known as 'śānti', and the chief priest is called 'mēlu-śānti', and his attendant in the sanctum 'kiḷu-śānti'. The job of the sanctum-attadant is to clean the sanctum, (for no one else can enter

the sanctum), trim the lamps (nandā-dipa), attend to the preliminaries of the worship (like arranging the water-vessels, utensils, flowers, fruits, sandal-paste and other requisites), and help the chief-priest during worship by handing over to him what he needs in various sequences of the worship.

He is sometimes also required to prepare the food-offerings to be presented to the deity during the main-worship (naivedya). If, however, there is a cook, the sanctum-attendant will bring the food-offering from the kitchen into the sanctum. This attendant has to white-wash the inside of the sanctum, whenever it is needed (as on festive occasions like 'rathotsava' or on occasions of sanctum-purification, for whatever reason).

Priests whose work is scheuled outside the sanctum, but not outside the main premises of the temple, are generally known as 'devakāris'. Cleaning the vestibule that is immediately in front of the sanctum and the cells where the processional icons are kept, cleaning the temple-kitchen (pāka-śālā) and cleaning the vessels used in worship is the responsibility of one priest. He also carries the bali-image in his hands, when the chief priest or his sanctum-attendant sets out to offer 'bali' (food-offerings) to the secondary deities in the enclosure of the temple.

Another priest is entrusted with the task of bringing water from the river or pond every morning for worship (technically called 'gaṅgā'), preparing the sandal-paste needed in worship ('gandha') daily, offering brief worship to the enclosure deities ('suttina-dēvaru'), the door-guardians (dvāra-pāla) and the Nandi (in Śiva- temples).

In some temples, this priest is called 'agni' and the other priest mentioned above is called 'śānti'. It is prescribed that during the bali-offering, the 'agni' should pour water and wash the feet of the 'śānti' who carries the bali-image around.

There are also priests engaged in the room where fire-sacrifice is daily offered according to Vedic rites (yāga-śālā), and those engaged in the kitchen (pāka-śālā), which prepares food for offering to the deity during worship. There will be priests whose services are required whenever the processional images are taken out for ceremonial worship outside the sanctum.

Some priests are detailed for specific recitations like Veda, Prabhandha (Tamil hymns), Sahasra-nāma and stotra while the worship is being conducted inside the sanctum. An astrologer's services are also required, to read the relevant details of the almanac every day during a worship sequence (pañchāṅga-śravana), to fix the auspicious moments for festivals

(muhūrtha-niśchaya), and to recite the hymns of benediction (āśīrvāda) to the king, to the devotees who have arranged special worship, to the country and to all the people at the end of the worship ritual. This priest is known as 'purohita'.

Some priests are required to read the 'purāṇas' in the premises of the temple during specific hours. Priests who are also musicians have a role to play. After the main worship is over, several formal presentations are made to the deity, like ashṭāvadhāna-sevā and among them is music, vocal or instrumental. Many temples had professional vīṇā-players as their employees. These priests, whose services are thus only casual and specific, are known as 'upādhi-vantas'.

Besides the priestly functions, the maintenance of the temple and the daily routine of worship-rituals have necessitated another class of functionaries, whose duties are neither religious nor administrative. Among them are the guards inside the temple (sannidhi-kāvalu), guards outside the temple (bāgilu-kāvalu), the palanquin bearers (pallakiyavaru), the torch-bearers (dīvaṭigeyavaru'), night-watch (pahare), the man in charge of the locking arrangement of the temple at night (golla), the suppliers of flowers and garlands, who were also in charge of the floor-decoration in the temple (raṅgōliyavaru), cleaners of the temple premises, the kitchen-vessesl and the grains for cooking (jhāḍamāli), keepers of the temple garden (tōṭada māli), those who were entrusted with the job of keeping all the lamps in the temple in good shape (dīpada māli), suppliers of fuel to the kitchen and washerman.

The services of pipers and drummers (vādyadavaru) were also requisitioned, especially on festive occasions. Among the instruments ordinarily used in a temple are wind-instruments, like mohari, sruti and sammela (pipes) and percussion instruments like bhēri, nagāri, halage, jāgaṭe, śaṁkha, chinnaṁgaḷe, ḍavaṇe, and kai-tāḷa. There would thus be a group of musicians attached to a temple.

In Tuḷu-nāḍu temples, there will be a priest known as 'tantri', an expert in āgama. He supervises all routine worship, but he will himself conduct worship on special occasions. He sanctifies the temple-premises, the materials of worship, vessels, and the priests who conduct the worship rituals.

The priests called 'aḍigalu', who worship in the sanctum, are next in importance to the 'tantri'. The temples of this region have functionaries like 'pāṭāli', who assist the sthānikas (managers of temples) and make necessary preparations for the diverse activities that go on in the temple, 'koṭhāri' or store-keeper and supplier of the materials needed for worship

under the manager's orders, 'sēnabōva' or accountant, 'dēvaḍiga', or assistant to the priest, 'padārti' who beats the drum while worship is going on, 'pāda-mūli' or guards, and 'aḍipinavaru' or sweepers.

The Worship Rituals:

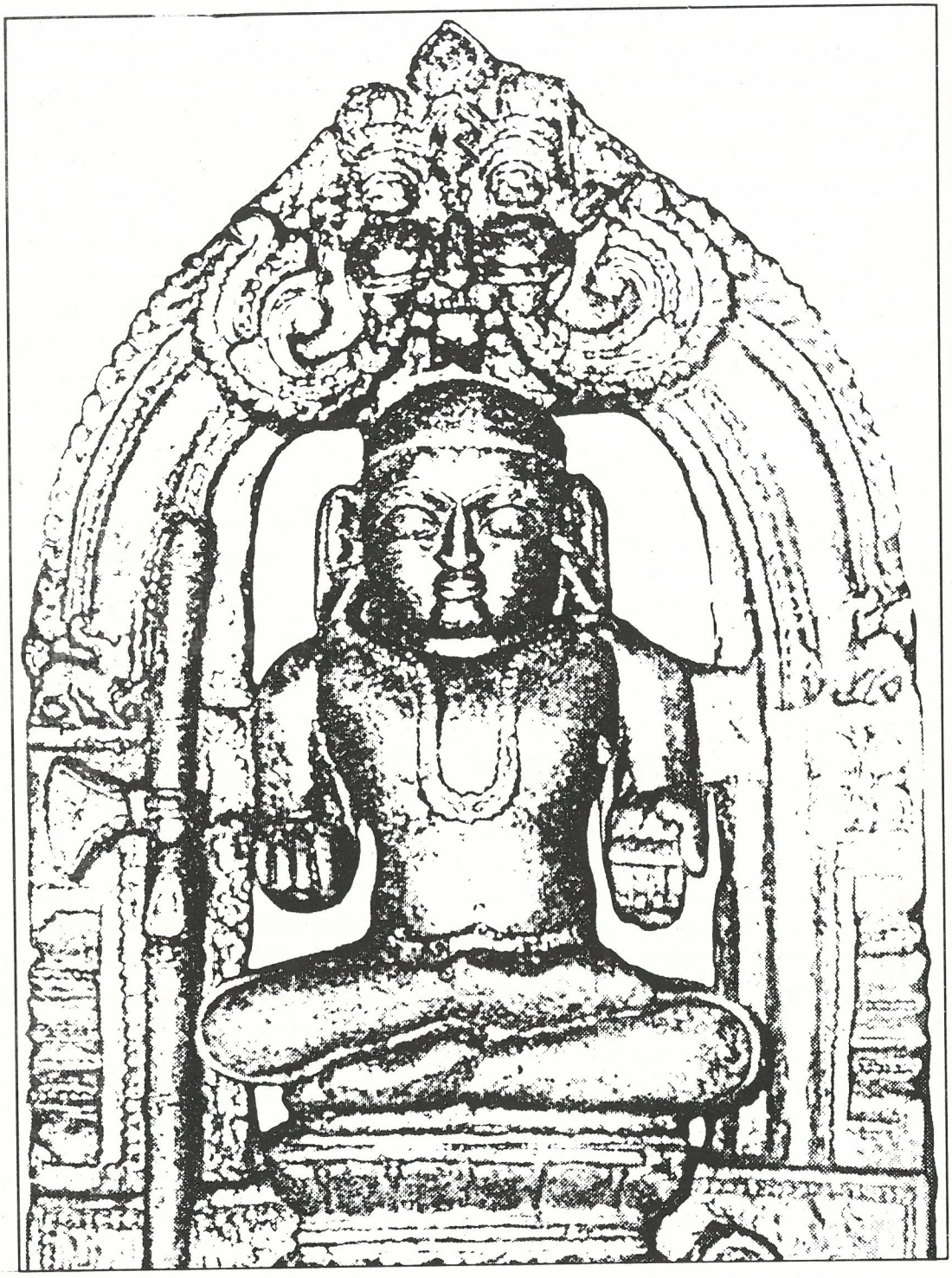
As mentioned earlier āgama which guides not only the architects but priests in the temple, comprises of numerous books dealing with all matters pertaining to temples. While most of them are ascribed to seers and sages of hoary antiquity, few of them as said earlier, really belong to a period earlier than probably the ninth or tenth century. A.D. The temples, however, were there and worship of some sort (of which we have no clue today) was being conducted in them.

But the temple-culture had not as yet taken hold of the imagination of the people. The Bhāgavata cult, which made its impact on the masses since the begining of the Christian era was principally responsible for image-worship as well as temple-culture in the country. The two details were significant aspects of the Bhakti-movement, which gathered momentum around the fifth and sixth centuries in the northern and the southern regions. In the South, the work of the Vaishṇava āḻvārs and the Śaiva nāyanārs made a profound impact upon the masses; and they made temples popular. It is only after this that the need for a comprehensive temple-lore was felt, and the need was met by the Āgama texts.

In Karnāṭaka, the temples are mostly to Śiva, or Vishṇu or Devi, and accordingly the Āgama followed is either Śaiva or Vaishṇava, for the Śāktāgama is for all practical purposes included in the Śaiva framework. The earliest temples in Karnāṭaka were for all three major divinities of the traditional lore together (traipurusha-ālayas), and we do not know what āgama was being followed in these temples.

When, however, the sects were crystallised into Śaiva, Vaishṇava and Jaina, the modes of worship were determined by the leaders of the sects. We have the Śiva temples where Śaivāgama texts (like *Kāmika, Kāraṇa, Suprabheda and Makuṭa*) are followed; and in some of the later Śiva temples, the specific Viraśaivagama (like Siddhānta-śikhāmaṇi) was followed along with the Śaivagama texts.

The Vishṇu temples follow the Vaishṇavāgama texts of the Pāñcharātra or the Vaikhānasa traditions. Since the advent of Rāmānuja (1017-1137), the pāñcharātra mode of worship, mostly according to texts like *Pādma-saṁhitā, Jayākhya-saṁhitā, Parameśvara-saṁhitā* and *Śrī-praśna,* prevails in most of the temples of the Śrī-vaishṇava orientation, with a noticeable affiliation to the Tamiḻ tradition of



Madhvacharya (stone image in Kunjaru, Udupi

Prabhandhas. The more ancient Vaikhanāsa mode of temple-worship has greater kinship with the Vedic tradition, and continues to be in use (according to texts like the manuals of Kaśyapa, Atri, Marīchi and Bhṛgu) in some temples. The temples where the Pāñcharātra mode of worship is prevalent., the shrines of the āḻvārs, of Rāmānuja and of Vedānta-deśika are generally to be found, and the Tamiḻ prabhandhas are recited as part of the daily worship ritual. This is not so in the Vaikhānasa temples.

There are temples to Vishṇu in Karnāṭaka, where neither of the above two āgama-traditions is followed. They have adopted the Pāñcharātra framework to evolve a distrinct āgama tradition, known as 'Tantra-sāra'. This tradition became popular after Madhva (1197- 1276) worte his work 'Tantra-sāra-saṅgraha' and prescribed the mode of worship for the Vishṇu temples, especially in Tuḷu-nāḍu. This tradition has close affinity with the Tāntrik outlook and with the ritualistic procedures current in the neighbouring Keraḷa. It is important to note that the Tantra-sāra mode of worship is applicable to Śiva and Devī temples also in this region.

While there are many points of correspondence in practice between these different worship-procedures, there are certain philosophical presuppositions which figure importantly in each of them. All the Āgamas have a 'dualistic' (dvaita) philosophical position (viz. making a distinction between the devotee and the Godhead), and recognise one supreme form of Godhead to which all other forms are subsidiary. Further the āgamas recognise the conjoint adoration of four 'seats' of worship (chatuh-sthānārchana); icon (bimba), sacred pot of water (kumbha), mystical diagram (yantra or maṇḍala) and sacrificial fire (agni). The worship procedures in any temple involve these four aspects.

The icon is permanently installed in the sanctum. A portion of the water freshly brought into the sanctum each day, is worshipped as representing the deity. The mystical diagram, appropriate to the deity in the sanctum, may be a permanent metallic one, or may be inscribed on the pedestal of one of the moveable icons representing the main deity, or yet drawn afresh each day by the priest. It is usual in the Devī temples to have aniconic moveable mandalas like Durgā-yantra and Śrī-chakra (in the 'meru' form), in addition to the human representation of Devī in stone or metal and to give the daily ceremonial bath (abhisheka) to the yantras and not to the installed icon (which is bathed only on Fridays and Tuesdays). The temple will normally have a a separate 'yāga-śālā', where customary oblations are offered to the sacred fire everyday, during the morning worship.

Public worship in a temple (ālayārchā) is characteristically different from the private worship at home (grhārchā): it is more elaborate and more ocular, and involves a number of people. Worship at home is done for ones own benefit, or at best for the welfare of ones own family (ātmārtha), while the priest worship is in a temple not for his own sake but for others (parārtha). That is why the āgama prescribes that the priest must finish his household worship before he comes to the temple. He is hired to worship, which is strictly not very commendable.

Although he takes up worship as a means of his livelihood, the worship that he conducts at the temple is expected to confer benefit on the entire community or country. At the end of worship every day, blessings are invoked on the ruler of the land, on all devotees, and on all human beings by a priest who is specially appointed to make the customary recitaiton of blessing (āśīrvāda).

Worship at the temple is largely guided by the āgama prescriptions, but custom and usage also play an important role. We must note that very few temples of any antiquity were really built according to āgama prescriptions, and that when worship began in most of the temples, it was not āgama that determined the procedure. The ruler or the wealthy devotee who built the temple had his own predilections and preferences, and so had the priest who was detailed to conduct worship there. And there were regional influences, local customs and situational pressures.

When the priests or the administrators of a temple decided at some point of time to choose an āgama for the worship, the āgama prescriptions had necessarily to accommodate these factors. That is the reason why there is considerable difference in the worship-procedures among many of the well-known temples, even when they all claim to follow the same āgama. This is especially so with regard to the occasional festivals that are conducted in the temple (naimittikotsava, or in Kannaḍa hecchu-kaṭṭle) The main sequences of the daily worship (nitya or in Kannaḍa nitya-kaṭṭle) are, however, common to a large extent.

These are the two types of services that are conducted within the temple by the priests: daily routine(nitya-kaṭṭle) and occasional festivals (hecchu-kaṭṭle). The latter, which are more spectacular include festivals of community or popular interest, like Yugādi, Saṅkrānti, Dīpāvali, Nava-rātri, Rāma-navami, Krishnāsṭhami, Śivarātri, Vināyaka-chaturthi, Chitrā-pūrṇimā, and Kārtika-laksha-dīpa.

Besides these, there are special worship sequences on occasions like eclipse (grahaṇa), annual observance of the day of the installation of the

main deity (usually celebrated as rathotsava stretching to several days), ceremonial purification of the temple premises (pavitrotsava), observance of the days connected wtih great saints (like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva) or of the birthdays of the rulers of the land (vardhanti) or of the supposed appearance-asterik of the main deity (called in Tamiḷ 'tirunakshatra'), and the ceremonial and symbolic celebration of events like re-enacting the imagined marriage of the main deity (kalyāṇotsava), legendary victory over a demon (like 'andhkāsura-saṁhāra in Śiva temples), or blessing a devotee (like 'gajendra-moksha' in Vishṇu temples).

But these occasional festivals entail considerable expenditure, careful planning, organization of services and mobilisation of human and other resources. The more opulent temples have a long list of these festivals; but a majority of temples are content with two or three of them in a year, the unavoidable being the 'rathotsava'.

The really important aspect of worship conducted in a temple, however, is the daily one (nityārchanā), which is the routine that cannot be missed even on occasional festivals. In many temples of antiquity, the main deity in the sanctum gets only the daily worship, which is not disturbed on any account; the occasional festivals center round the processional images, and are conducted outside the sanctum.

The daily worship consists of several customary offerings and presentations (called upachāra). The āgamas suggest five to sixty-four of these sequences, depending on the time and resources available. More common, however, are sixteen upachāras, when the temple is fairly well-to-do:

(1) offering seat (āsana) for the moveable icon representing the main deity; (2) welcome (svāgata); (3) offering water for the feet (pādya); (4) ceremonial water-offering (arghya); (5) water for sipping (āchamana); (6) giving a bath (snāna); (7) presentation of garments and ornaments (vasana-bhūshaṇe); (8) presenting sandal-paste (gandha); (9) offering flowers (pushpa); (10) burning incense (dhūpa); (11) waving lights (dīpa); (12) presentation of consecrated food (naivedya); (13) offering water for rinsing the mouth (punar-āchamanīya); (14) presentation of post-prandial tāṁbūla; (15) recitation of laudatory hymns (stotra) and (16) making prostrations (namaskriyā). The pūja proper consists of the presentation of water for the feet, sandal-paste, flowers, incense, light and food.

While these details are common for worship at home and worship in a temple, there are additional details in a temple such as formally waking the deity early in the morning (suprabhāta), purification of the premises (puṇyāha), presentation of mirror, footwear, fly-whisk etc., some sequences behind the curtain (antaraṅga-ārād-

hanā), recitation of Vedic passages and sahasra-nāma, instrumental music (vādya), waving of several kinds of ornamental lights (the āratīs), ritualistic distribution of food-offerings at the subsidiary shrines (bali-dāna), variety of food prepared for offering (like pāyasānna, guḍānna, dadhyodana, poṅgal, appam, dōse etc.) and the performance of fire-oblation (homa) as a part of worship-ritual.

While worship (pūjā) is normally performed only once during the day in the household, worship in the temple is repeated several times during twenty-four hours. The pāncharātra texts prescribe twelve pūjās, but more commonly seven sessions are mentioned in āgama texts: (1) dawn (at about 5 a.m. 'ushah-kāla'), (2) early morning (at about 6 a.m.) 'kala-sandhi'), (3) late morning (at about 9 a.m. -'upa-sandhi'). (4) noontime (at 12 noon, 'madhyāhna'), (5) eventide (at about 6 p.m. 'sāyaṅkāla'), (6) early night (at about 8 p.m. 'pradosha') and (7) late night (at about 10 p.m. 'ardha-yāma').

It is usual, however, to speak of six sessions of worship (shaṭ-kāla-pūjā) combining the dawn session with early morning one. The texts also concede that five, four or three sessions of worship would be admissible, depending on the time available and conveniences at hand, but insist that less than three sessions (tri-kāla-pūjā; morning, noon and evening) would be improper (*Nāradiya-saṁhitā*, 2, 156).

In practice, the first two sessions merge in many temples, and in effect there are but two sessions. The āgamas prescribe only the morning pūjā in temples built on hill-tops, in forests and within fortresses. Even when the worship is done in three sessions, the first session will be the main and elaborate one, and the other two will be brief and supplementary. The ceremonial bath (abhisheka) and customary decorations (alankāra) to the main deity are given only during the morning pūjā. The food offering at the bali-pitha is required to be given three times, but in practice it is given only once, at the noontime worship. The fire-oblations in the yāga-śālā are also offered in the same session.

In addition to the worship sequence mentioned above, worship in a temple begins with the chanting of the 'suprabhāta' hymns which are intended to wake up the deity, even before the first session of pūjā starts, and closes with a ritual known as 'putting the diety to sleep' (śayanotsava), when a metallic replica-icon of the main deity is used, after the last session of the pūjā is completed. Water for the worship sequences (called agrodaka) is collected every morning before the first session starts, from a river, pond or well and the priestly assistants along with a few administrative officials of the temple start out to collect water and return to the temple in a procession, to the accompaniment of music (pipe and drum).

When the temple is opulent, this procession includes an elephant, on the back of which the priest carrying the water sits. When the procession returns to the temple, the manegāra will lead the procession carrying a silver staff (belli-kōlu) and the sthānika will wave the fly-whisk for the water-pots and recite selected hymns in Sanskrit. An attendant will hold the ceremonial umbrella above the water-pots. The main water-pot will be covered by a cloth and decorated with flower-garlands. The distribution of bali at the subsidiary shrines in the temple-premises also takes the form of a procession of priests and attendants (bali-yātrā), when the drum (especially ḍuḍḍuka) is the main musical instrument. And in this procession, the bali-icon is carried in a palanquin, or by a priest in his hands or on his head. And the bell is sounded by an attendent-priest continuously.

The administration of the bath (called 'abhisheka' or in Tamil tirumañjana) to the main deity or to a metallic image specially meant for the purpose (known as snapana-bera) everyday is an elaborate ritual. If it is the metallic icon, that is used, it is brought out from its original seat which normally is in close proximity to the main deity, after an in-camera service (known as antaraṅga-ārādhanā), and seated on a platform (called in the Vishṇu temples 'snānāsana'). Milk, curds, ghee, sugar, honey (the five ingredients known as 'pañchāmrta'), coconut-water and pure water (suddhodaka, mixed with saffron, kumkuma-kesari and camphor paccha-karpūra) are employed for giving the bath one after the other in the same order.

During this ritual, the priest standing outside will recite selected Vedic hymns (like purusha-sūkta). Sometimes a golden plate with a thousand holes will be held on top of the icon, and water poured into it will give the icon a shower-bath (known as 'sahasra-dhārābhisheka).

After the bath, the icon will be removed to the seat (known as 'alaṅkārāsana') and decorated with flowers and ornaments, and draped with fresh garments. Various presentations (like mirror, fly-whisk, fan, umbrella, tāmbūla and diverse recitations) are made.

Then the icon gets transferred to 'bhojyāsana', where food-offerings (naivedya) are made. Finally, lights (ārati) are waved in front of the deities, which sequence marks the climax of the whole proceeding. All the while, instrumetal music (pipes and drums) will be going on. During the food-offering and the waving of lights, the big bell of the temple hung in the main hall will be sounded (by the temple-functionary called 'golla').

This is the principal and the most colourful part of the worship-ritual

occuring around noon, and usually a concourse of devotees would watch the proceeding from the main-hall (mahā-maṇḍapa). Sacred water (tīrtha), sanctified food-offering (prasāda) and flowers taken from the decoration of the main deity are distributed among the people who have gathered on the occasion.

Among the festivals in a temple, the annual 'rathotsava' is the most important one and also the most spectacular. The event attracts large crowds of devotees, and is more socio-economic than religious in nature. Every temple has its own fixed date for this festival, which goes on for several (usually ten) days. And much in advance, the needed repairs to the temple-cart (ratha) will be put in order and built up elaborately and elegantly, the vehicles of the deity (vāhana) will be got ready, provisions for the festival as well as for the mass-feeding will be collected, and invitations will be sent out.

Also called Brahmotsva (for Brahmā, the creator is supposed to be the chief participant in this festival), it is classed under 'necessary' festivals (nityotsava) to be gone through on fixed days and on no account to be missed or deferred. The festival that continues for nine days is said to be the best (daivika), as it makes for the well-being of the country and the people. It could, however, be a festival of seven (mānusha), five (aindra) or three (śaiva) days; or it could be the affair of a single day (brāhma), depending on the resources available to the temple.

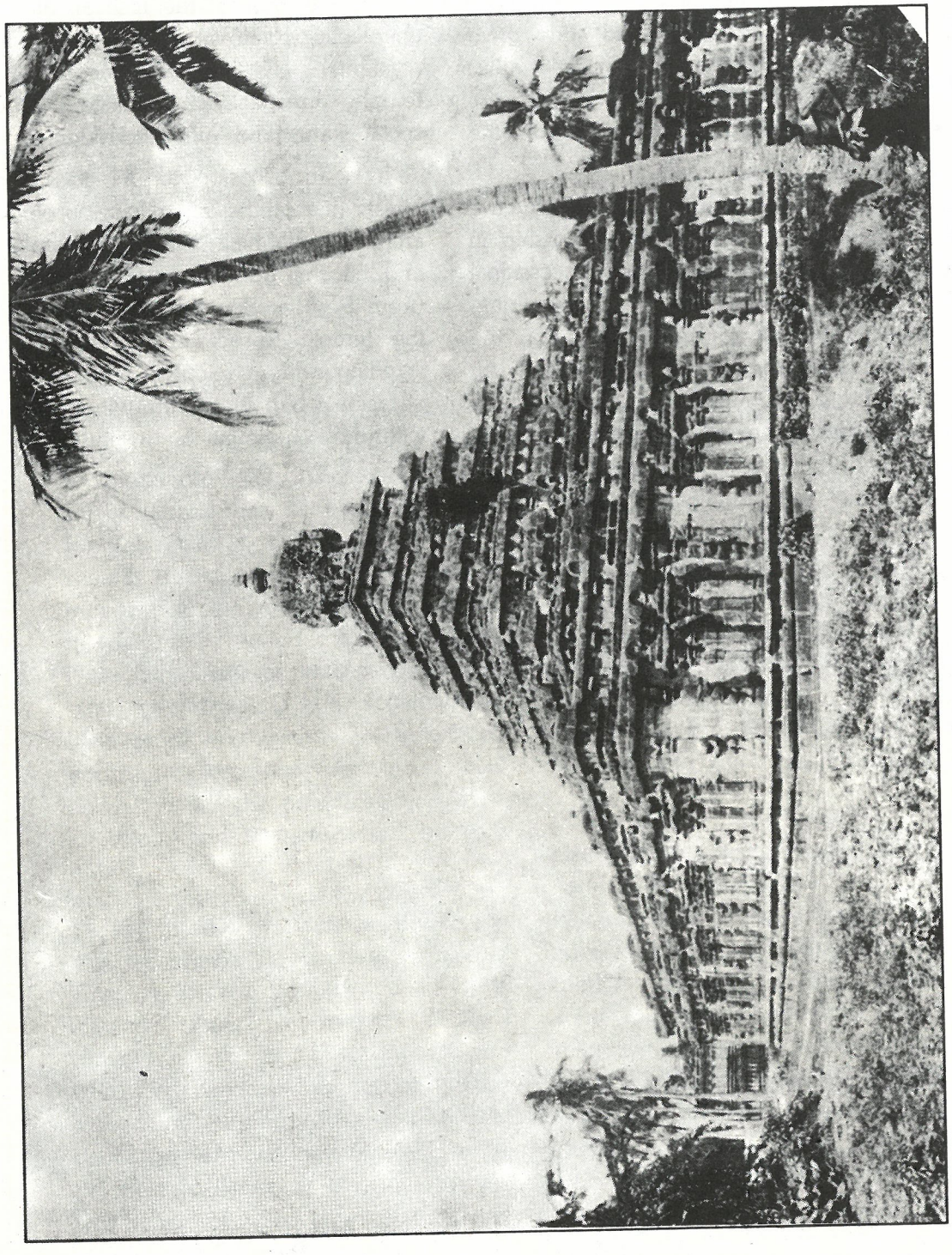
The festival formally begins by a ritual of sowing (aṅkurārpaṇa), the erection of the ceremonial flag (dhvajārohana), and the beating of the big drum (bherī-tāḍana). The important sequences are fire-sacrifice (homa, or yāgadhivāsa), installation of festival-divinities (sthāpanā), distribution of food-offerings (bali- dāna), several special worship details (mahotsava) including the decorated deity going round the township or village on vehicle (vāhana) each day of the festival, going in a procession on the last day to a river or pond for ceremonial bath (tīrtha-snāna, snapana), and flower-oblations (pushpa-yāga) on the return to the temple, followed by the taking down of the flag (dvajāva-rohaṇa).

The āgama texts prescribe the appropriate vehicles (vāhanas) that must carry wth processional deity on the different days of the festivals. Tastefully decorated vehicles (in wood or hollow metal) employed in the temples of some standing include 'solar orb' (ravi-maṇḍala), 'lunar-orb' (chandra-prabhā), lion (siṁha), peacock (mayūra), Hanumān (in Vishṇu temples), Nandi (in Śiva temples), the wish-fulfilling celestial tree (kalpa-vṛksha), the sacred mountain Meru, the flower-pavilion (pushpa-maṇḍapa), the chief of the

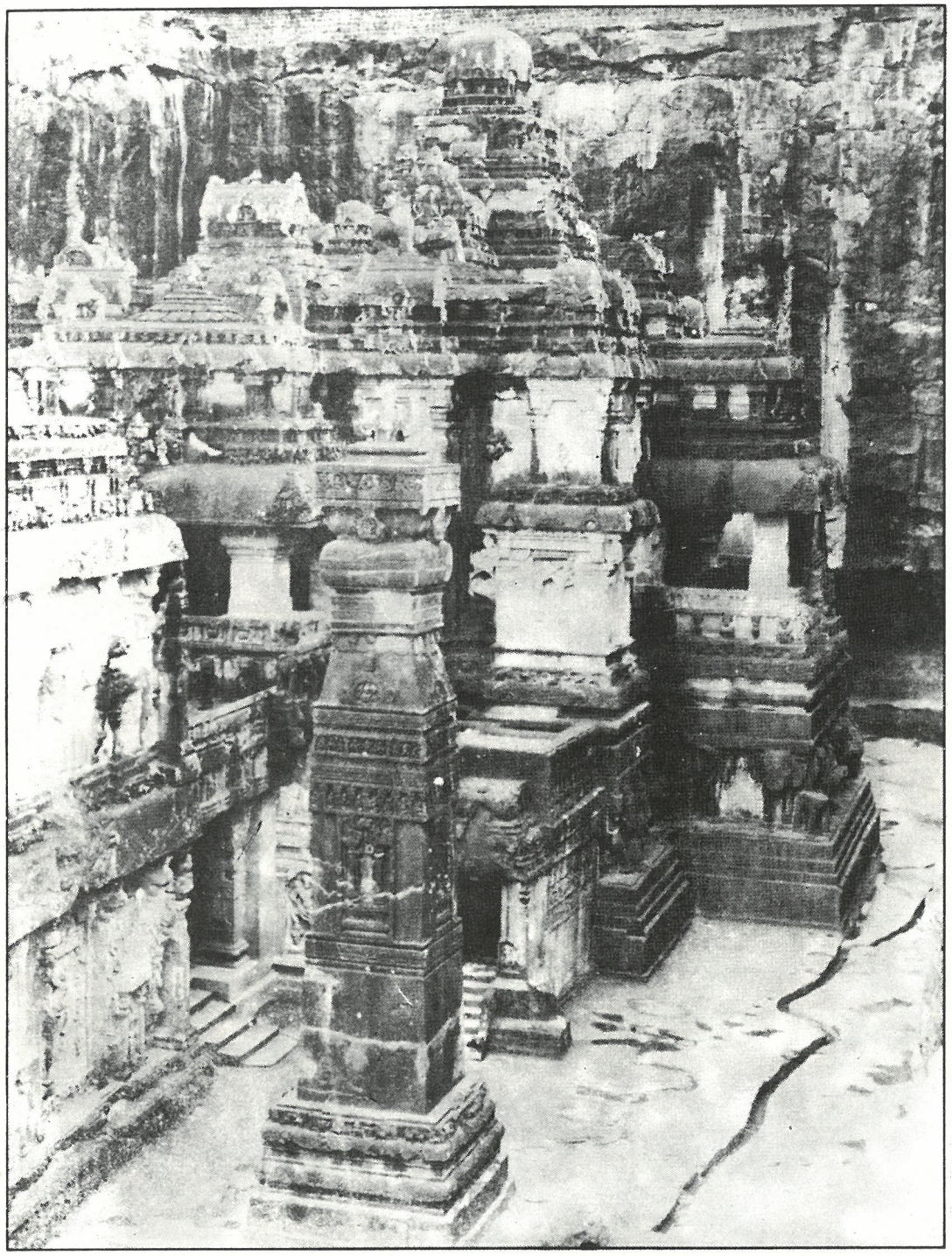
serpants (Ananta or Śesha), palanquin (śibikā or āndolikā) and the great temple-cart (ratha or Brahma-ratha) which is invariabaly the last in the series, marking the climax of the festival.

During this festival, the temple-cart, attractively got-up, receives worship in its own right, when the processional image is seated in the central enclosure; it is dragged along the streets of the village or township by a large number of devotees, who consider it an act of merit to do so. On all the days of the festival, all the devotees (pilgrims as well as the residents) will be fed free in the temple, irrespective of caste, creed, social status and other considerations.

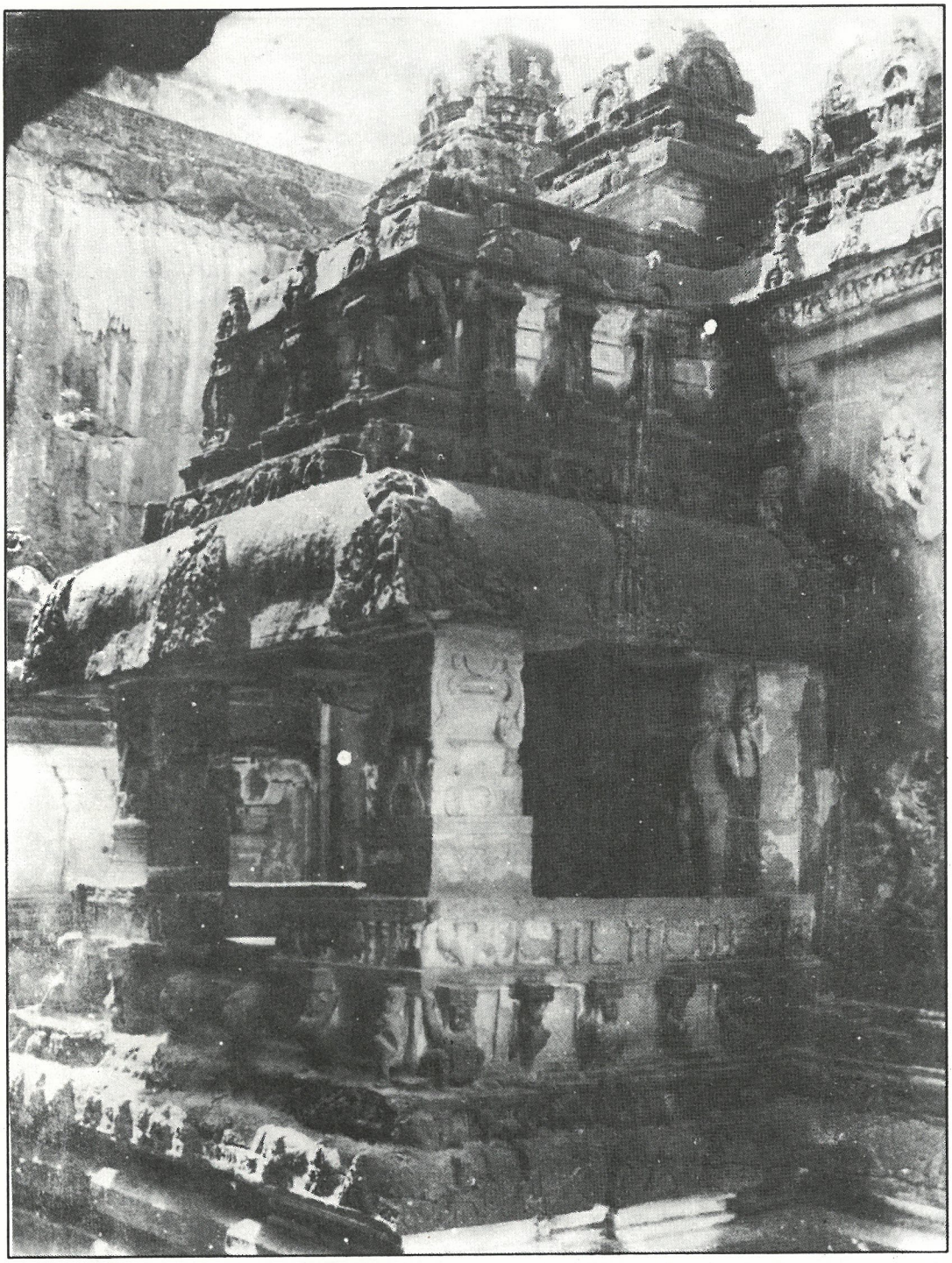
It is an occasion for all classes of priests (the tantris, āgamikas, purohitas, archakas, sthānikas and parichārakas) and all the administrative functinaries (from Pēshkār down to the cleaner) in the temple to act in perfect understanding and unanimity,. It is also an occasion when the community interacts with the temple as an institution.



Vaikkuntha-purumāl temple, Kāñchīpuram



Kailāsa (cave No. 16), Ellora



Kailāsa (cave No. 16) South-porch, Ellora

APPENDIX I

Śravaṇa-Beḷgoḷa

Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa in Karnaṭaka is a popular tourist spot, especially for Jains from all over India. Few places in the country are so replete with romantic memories of devout monarchs and valiant ascetics, pious generals and heroic women. Nowhere else in the world are to be found as many as 573 inscriptions in a single site, all important and interesting. The present celebrity of the place is no doubt due to the magnificient monolith of the early Jaina saint, Gommaṭa, to be found there. The statue is reputed to be the tallest in the world. Even if the claim is disputed, it is undoubtedly unrivalled in the excellence of its execution. Its artistic merit is obviously supreme. However, the place was celebrated even before this statue appeared in 981 A.D.

The devout general, Chāmuṇḍa-rāya, who was responsible for the appearance of this statue there, came to that spot as a pilgrim. It was even then celebrated as a sacred spot. Its sanctity was recognized as early as the third century before Christ. It was then that the great monarch of Ujjaini, Chandragupta, visited this place along with a large entourage of ascetics and pilgrims. The inscription that records his visit also mentions that the party travelled along an 'ancient' route (ārsha) from Ujjaini in the North to Kaṭavapra (or, in Kannaḍa, Kaḷbappu), as this place was called, in the South. There must then have been a steady flow of pilgrim-population from the northern regions to this town, even before the third century B.C.

Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa (in Hāssan district in Karnāṭaka) is now a complex of three distinct units: a small town (or rather a village) sandwiched between two rocky hills. The town is the seat of an old Jaina pontificate, and is otherwise unimportant. Of the two hills, the bigger one (3,250 feet above sea level) is topped by the monolith that has now become world-renowned. But

it is the smaller hill (lower than the other by about 200 feet) that is not only more interesting but historically more important. It abounds in exquisite monuments, twelve basadis (monastic temples), the oldest of which is dated 750 A.D. It is this lower hill that was regarded as the sacred spot during the third century before Christ; it was here that the visiting monarch of Ujjaini resolved to reside and end his days.

This lower hill was known as 'kaṭa-vapra' in Sanskrit, which may have meant 'the hill-slope, that is suitable for passing away'. The Jaina scriptures recommend voluntary death of the aged or ill devotee by giving up not only the normal pleasures of life but even the necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. This mode of valiant death was styled as "the perfect abandonment of life" (saṁnyasana) or as "the steady scraping away of the edges of life" (sallekhana). It was death by peaceful means, and the attainment of unshakable peace by death (samādhi). The suitability of this hill for this mode of pious, peaceful and perfect death must have been well known in the community of Jaina monks and laymen even in the northern regions. It must have reached the ears of the monarch of Ujjaini and inspired his imagination. In an inscription of 900 A.D., We are told that no less than seven hundred ascetics had shaken off their mortal coils on this hill. There are ninety inscriptions here that record such deaths as religious acts of merit.

The monarch of Ujjaini (probably Chandraputa II, son of Samudragupta of the Gupta lineage who was the grandfather of the great Asoka) became an ascetic in his declining years, having installed his son Siṁhasena on the throne. Accompanied by the enlightened saint, 'Śruta-kevalin' Bhadrabāhu (probably Bhandrabāhu III in the lineage from Mahāvīra) and 12,000 of his ascetic-disciples, he left Ujjaini and arrived in Kaṭavapra (or Kaḷbappu in old Kannaḍa), which was within the confines of the kingdom of Kākutstha-varma, his father-in-law. The exact year of his arrival cannot be ascertained, but his death on this hill, twelve years later, has been assigned to 298 B.C.

Besides an inscription that narrates the details of this event, there are literary works that reflect folk-memory enshrined in myths that tell us about the circumstances of the monarch's journey to this place (like Chidānanada's *Munivaṁśābhyudaya*). It would appear that the monarch once dreamt sixteen dreams of enigmatic import. The last of these dreams projected a dragon with twelve heads of terrifying aspect. The holy sage Bhadrabāhu interpreted these dreams as predictive of the extreme conditions of famine that would devastate the northern regions for twelve years. Aghast at the prospect, and recognizing that peity would be damaged under such conditions, the monarch resolved to leave the kingdom and move on to the South, beyond the reaches of this impending calamity. The Jaina

ascetics who feared that it would be impossible to persevere in their devotions during the days of the famine, decided to accompany the monarch who had now become an ascetic himself. The head of the religious community those days was Bhadrabāhu, and he offered to lead the party of pilgrims in their long and arduous journey.

The party arrived on the lower hill in due course. Bhadrabāhu was attracted by the peace that reigned in the place, and was charmed by the great beauty of nature that abounded there. He resolved to settle down there for a quiet contemplative life. The monarch too decided to stay there, serving the holy man. They sent the motley crowd of pilgrim-devotees further south, to more prosperous regions. Eventually Bhadrabāhu died in the cave in which he resided (the cave is shown even today),and the monarch continued to live there worshipping the imprint of feet of the holy sage (which also are shown even now). A temple was later built right on top of the hill, to commemmorate the devotions of this monarch; the shrine is now known as Chandragupta-basadi. This is one of the oldest monuments in the area.

This is how the lower hill, already celebrated, achieved a greater celebrity. The hill is now known as 'Chandra-giri', after the monarch, but inscriptions prefer to refer to the hill as Kaḷbappu, Tīrtha-giri("the sacred hill"), Ṛishigiri ("the hill of the ascetics") and Samādhi-guḍḍa ("The hillock of death leading to peace"). The first mention of the hill as Chandra-giri is to be found in a literary work, Chindānanda's *Munivaṁśābhyudaya*, composed around 1680 A.D.

The other hill, on which the colussus stands, is known as Vindhya-giri. The origin of the name is uncertain, but it may refer to its magnitude. It is also called Jina-giri, because of the monolithic statue of the saintly-victor (Jina), Gommaṭa. The township between the hills is dominated by a large pond, which in fact has given the name for the place. Beḷgoḷa in Kannaḍa means 'white lake', and we find this name mentioned as early as 995 A.D. in an inscription. White symbolizes purity, and the pond serving the needs of the pious population on the lower hill was naturally regarded as meritorious. Another inscription of 1123 A.D. refers to it more respectully as "Śrī-Beḷgoḷa", and the enhancement in popular adoration is reflected in an inscription dated 1195 A.D. which chooses to style it 'Śrīmad-beḷgoḷa-tīrtha'. Because of the residence of ascetics (śramaṇas) around it, the pond and the town on its banks came to be known around 1600 as 'Śramaṇa-Beḷgoḷa'. 'Śravaṇa' is the later change that was occasioned by usage. The name now covers not only the town and the tank, but the two hills also.

The Monolith

The larger hill. "Vindhya-giri", is more open, more rocky and more

prominent. There are about six hundred steps rudely carved on the rocky surface to take us upto a height of 470 feet. There is an elegant but simple archway under which we should pass and commence our ascent of the hill. The steps stop the sixteen- foot, equisitely carved, stone pillar, known as 'Tyāgada-Brahma, Brahma of abandonment'; the expression 'tyāga', which literally means 'giving up' is usually taken to signify gifts, and traditionally gifts were offered here to the needy) Chāmuṇḍarāya is said to have sat here and distributed gifts.

A stairway, built around 1130 A.D., leads the pilgrim to the monolithic doorway (carved in a single boulder), said to be the work carried out under instructions from Chāmuṇḍa-rāya himself, who was responsible for the Gommaṭa colossus. This doorway, called 'Akhaṇḍa-bāgilu' (describling its monolithic nature) is adorned by a Lakshmī panel on its lintel. On entering through this doowway, one arrives at the large granite pavilion. The magnificent enclosing wall (called in Kannaḍa 'Suttālaya') which was built by Gaṅga-rāja, the Hoysaḷa general, in 1117 A.D., admits the devotee into the inner courtyard to gaze with astonishment at the marvellous monolith.

It is impossible to describe this grand statue in words, to photograph it correctly and in full, without distortions, or to measure its height accurately. Several attempts have been made to measure precisely the height and proportions of this monolith. The earliest in recent years was the one commissioned by the Duke of Wellington as Col. A. Wellesley in 1800. The height of the colossus was then estimated to be 60 feet and three inches. But Dr. Buchanan, who had the statue measured independently about the same time found it to be 70 feet and three inches tall. Mr. J.D. Legge fo the Public Works Department of the Government arranged for its measurement a little later, and discovered the height to be seventy-one feet!

On the New Year Day of 1865, the Amildar of the area (Channarāyapaṭna) got the statue measured, under instructions from the Commissioner in Mysore, Bowring: his figure was fifty-seven feet. According to the estimate of the historian and archaeologist, Lewis Rice, the height of the colossus is fifty-eight feet. One fails to understand how there could be such a wide variance in the measurement.

The pedestal on which the colossus stands is shaped like an open lotus. The sculptor has provided a clue to the height of the image by engraving on the pedestal near the left foot a scale measuring three feet and four inches. Probably this was the conventional length of the bow (dhanus) employed by architects and sculptors during those days, although the bow-

length altered slightly later. Multiplied by eighteen, the total height of the figure would be sixty feet. And this may be the correct estimate.

Parts of the colossus have also been subjected to some measurement:

From the top of the head to the lower tip of the ears:6'6"

Height of the neck: 2'

From the lower tip of the ears to arm-pits: 7'

From the lower tip of the ears to the waist: 21'

Breadth of the waist: 10'

Breadth of the shoulders: 26'

Breadth of the lower abdomen: 13'

Half the circumference of the thigh: 10'

Breadth of the foot: 4'6"

Length of the big toe: 2'9"

Length of the fore-finger: 3'6"

Length of the middle-finger: 5'3"

Length of the ring-finger: 4'7"

Length of the little-finger:2'8"

There are some Samskrit verses, like Śāntarāja-paṇḍit's sixteen verses composed in 1820, which provide us with measurements in local units such as cubit (hola, 18 to 22 inches): From head to foot 36 1/2 c. from the navel ot te feet 20 c, length of the ear 2 c., from ear to ear 8 c., height of the neck 13/4 c., circumference of the neck 103/4 c, spread of the shoulders 16 c., around the waist 20 c., The total height of the statue is given as thirteen 'man-lengths'.

The colossus has been carved out of an immense boulder that stood on top of the hill. The stone is granite, finely grained and light-grey in colour. The colossus can be compared only with the stone statues of Rameses in the vicinity of the pyramids in Egypt. But our colossus is undoubtedly larger than any of them. And the standing colossus leaves on the mind of the onlooker an impression that is impossible for the crouching Rameses to evoke. The Gommaṭa colossus standing upright on the eminece of the hill is majestic and awe-inspiring, especially as the surrounding stretch of land is wide and plain . The figure can be seen above the waist for miles around.

The monolith, facing north, is carved in the round above the thighs. The thighs and legs are carved in bold relief against the mass of the supporting rock, skillfully shaped as ant-hills with serpents emerging from their orifices here and there. As Fergusson remarks: "He is the ideal ascetic who stood in meditation till the anthills arose at his feet and creeping plants around his limbs". Entwining his thighs and arms are the mādhavī creepers (Gaertnara racemosa, Kāḍugulagañji in Kannaḍa) with berries or flowers represented with consummate skill and realism.

The statue of the ascetic standing in the conventional Kāyotsarga (pratimā-yoga) posture, erect, unbending and dignified, is dominated by the serene face, which is a grand work of art in itelf, on which a slight simle is dexterously introduced. The saint is utterly nude, the arms are at the sides hanging down straight but without a suggestion of stiffnes.. The shoulders are broad and massive, and the head that rises above these squarish shoulders assumes a remarkable grandeur. The finely carved head is surmounted by a flat crown of hair in short conventional ringlets, ornately and delicately worked.

The anatomical delineation of the statue is perfect, and even the quality of the flesh can be seen through the stone medium. Standing in the open for a thousand years, exposed to all the vagaries of the treacherous weather, and altogether uncovered, the freshness of the monolith is remarkable; it looks like a work just completed. The chiselled surface of the rock has not been darkened or discoloured by continuous and complete exposure to the climate. The secret of this freshness is intriguing; what treatment was probably given to the statue after the sculptor completed it, we are unable to guess.

"So still the sky-clad figure stands; as indifferent to the passing of centuries and of dynasties; to the adoration and the pleadings of the millions upon millions who have worshipped at his feet"

The Poet's Praise

The first poet who attempted to capture the grandeur of the statue in well-chosen words was Boppaṇa-paṇḍita, who lived around 1180 A.D. in the close vicinity of the monolith. His poem, known as 'Gommaṭa-stuti' ('Praise of Gommaṭa'), has been inscribed on a stone-slab near the main door-way; it is listed among inscriptions (No. 234). The poem has 32 stanzas, of which 27 relate to the main subject-matter; hence it belongs to a class of poems styled 'The garland of stars' (nakshatra-mālikā). Another of his poems belongs to the same class, although the theme here is entirely philosophical and didactic (*Nirvāṇa-Lakshmīpati).*

Not much is known about this poet, apart from the titles that he had; 'Sujanottaṁsa', 'Sukavi-samāja-nuta', 'Vidyā-jita-vṛjina' and 'Viśada-kīrti'- all of which suggest the great esteem in which he was held in literary circles. The poem in praise of Gommaṭa narrates briefly the life-story of Gommaṭa and the meritorious undertaking of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya, who got this statue carved, and whose name was Gommaṭa. The poet also describes an anointment- ceremony (mastaka-abhisheka) of this monolith, as he witnessed it.

The best part of the poem, however, is devoted to a description of the colossus. Two stanzas, in particular, illustrate fine poetic imagination; one of them is a master-piece:

ಅತಿತುಂಗಾಕೃತಿಯಾದೊಡಾಗದದರೊಳ್
ಸೌಂದರ್ಯಮೌನ್ನತ್ಯಮುಂ ನುತ ಸೌಂದರ್ಯ
ಮುಮಾಗೆ ಮತ್ತತಿಶಯಂ ತಾನಾಗದೌನ್ನತ್ಯಮುಂ
ನುತ ಸೌಂದರ್ಯಮು ಮೂರ್ಜಿತಾತಿಶಯಮುಂ
ತನ್ನಲ್ಲಿ ನಿನ್ದಿರ್ದುವೇಂ ಕ್ಷಿತಿಸಂಪೂಜ್ಯಮೋ
ಗೊಂಮಟೀಶ್ವರ ಜಿನಶ್ರೀರೂಪಮಾತ್ಮೋಪಮಂ

A translation of this stanza made by Constance E. Parsons in 1931 is as follows:

"When an image is lofty it may not have beauty; when possessed of beauty it may not have supernatural power. Loftiness, real beauty, and mighty supernatural power being all united here, how worthy of worship in the glorious form, comparable only to itself, of Gomatesvara!"

The poet highlights the artistic excellence of the sculptural work. "The celestial craftsman, Maya, attempts to draw a likeness of this colossus and fails, the thousand-eyed chieftain of the gods; Indra, attempts to have a full view of this colossus, and fails. The earth-supporting dragon, Śesha, tries to sing the praise of this splendid image, with its two thousand tongues, and fails!"

"The birds do not fly over this colossus even inadvertantly: such is the reverence in which Gommata is held even by the winged ones!"

"The house of this colossus is unique. The foundation is the world of dragons; the floor is the wide expanse of this earth; the heavenly firmament is the roof over his head, and the stars are the chandeliers hung from its ceiling; the four quarters are the four walls!"

The great colossus is worthy of the mighty Gommaṭa. He is no ordinary mortal. "In beauty, he is imcomparable, cupid himself. In valour, he is peerless; he conquered the emperor of the realm, the possessor of the invincible magical discus (chakra). As for his generosity, he gifted away the entire earth that was his. And his asceticism is remarkable: he got as gift only the land covered by his feet as he stood still in comtemplative posture. And he offered to accommodate others in this small space that was his; He is the hero that cut asunder the snares of Karma and stood utterly free"

ಅನುಪಮರೂಪನೇ ಸ್ಮರನುದಗ್ರನೆ ನಿರ್ಜ್ಜಿತಚಕ್ರಿ
ಮತ್ತುದಾರನೆ ನೆರೆಗೆಲ್ದುಮಿತ್ತನಖಿಳೋರ್ವಿ
ಯನತ್ಯಭಿಮಾನಿಯೇ ತಪಃಸ್ಥನು ಮೆರದಂ
ಘ್ರಿಯಿತ್ತಿಳೆಯೊಳಿರ್ದ್ದಪುದೆಂಬನನೂನ ಬೋಧನೇ
ವಿರಹಿತಕರ್ಮ್ಮಬಂಧನನೆ
ಬಾಹುಬಲೀಶನಿದೇನುದಾತ್ತನೋ

The poet paints here a splendid portrait of Gommaṭa, whose vision inspired the sculptor who carved this colossus as well as Chāmuṇḍa-rāya who caused it to be carved. The poet is charmed by the guileless smile that

dances around the lips of this royal ascetic. He smiles at the arrogance of man who does not recognize the impermanence of all things, and the anxiety of monarchs to rule and conquer the kingdoms that are fleeting. Did he not have a vast kingdom, which he willingly relinquished? He is now tranquil and free! This is the secret of his superior smile. It is not a smile of derision; it is the smile of compassion for the suffering humanity. The colossus is a living message of virtuous living and spiritual eminence.

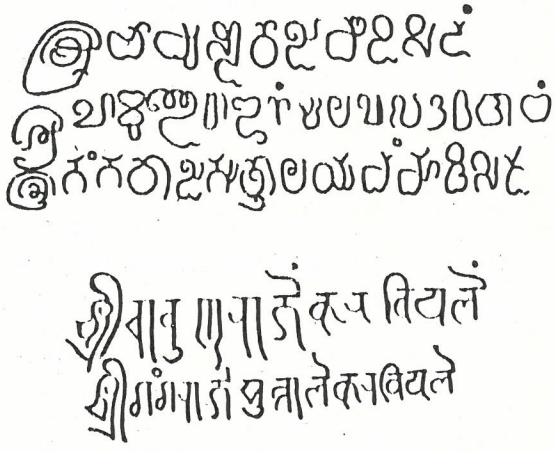
The poet is a scholar, a devotee, a master of expression and a man of fine feelings. The poem, despite its brevity, is in the nature of an epic, at once romantic and didactic. It is the earliest extant poem in praise of Bāhubali who is referred to as Gommaṭa.

The exact significance of the expression 'Gommaṭa' has remained something of a mystery. Boppaṇa's poem provides the first literary usage of this name which has stuck to the colossus, and indeed to all the monolith statues in imitation of it. It would appear from this poem that 'Gommaṭa' means 'handsome, like cupid', and that this was another name of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya who acommissioned this colossus. It may also be noted that a later poet Ananta-kavi (around 1780 A.D.) describes Chāmuṇḍa-rāya as handsome like cupid *(Belgoḷada-Gommaṭeswara-charite*, 1.44 ಚಿತ್ತಜ ಸಮರೂಪ ಚಾಮುಂಡರಾಯ.

The conjecture is reinforced by the tittle of the work (*Gommaṭa-sāra*) that the teacher Nemichandra Siddhānta-chakravarti prepared for his disciple, Chāmuṇḍa-rāya. This work is in the nature of a summary of the *Dhavaḷa* corpus of the Digambara sect, and is alternately called *Pañcha-Saṅgraha.*

The Patron's Personality

While we do not know the name of the sculptor who carved this colossus, we know for certain the patron who commissioned it. That Chāmuṇḍa-rāya caused it to be carved has been inscribed on the rock near the right foot of the colossus in Marāṭhi, Tamiḷ and Kannaḍa. The identity of this Chāmuṇḍa-rāya is ascertained by another inscription dated 1180 (Inscription No. 234). He is described here as the minister of king Rāchamalla, "the moon of the Gaṅga race", and also as matchless in valour and splendour.



We gather from other inscriptions (Nos. 235, 281, etc.) that Chāmuṇḍa-rāya belonged to the 'Brahma-Kshatra' sect, that his parents were Mahābalayya andf Kāḷalā-devi and that he served as the general and minister of the three Gaṅga kings, Māra-siṁha II (961-974 A.D.) and his son Rāchamalla IV (Satya-vākya, 974-977 A.D.), and his son Rakkasa-gaṅga (977-984 A.D.). He fought many battles for his masters and distinguished himself as a valiant conqueror. He bore the titles 'Vīra-mārtaṇḍa', 'Raṇaraṅga-siṁha' and 'Samara-Paraśurāma'.

He was also deeply religious and learned in the Jaina lore: he had the scholarly title 'Saṁyaktva-chintāmaṇi'. He was a student of the renowned Jaina saints, Ajita-Sena Bhaṭṭāraka and Nemichandra Siddhānta-Chakravarti. He was the author of a hagiological work, entitled *Tri-shashṭi-lakshaṇa-purāṇa*, in Kannaḍa (978 A.D.), and another work in Sanskrit called *Charitra-sāra*. He was a patron of great poets like Ranna and Nāgavarma; he was known as 'Kavi-jana-śekhara'.

The Ganga kings, whom Chāmuṇḍa-rāya served, were Jains by persuation, the dynasty having been founded by Koṅguṇi-varma (Mādhava, Jaya-bhūshaṇa) in the second or third century A.D. at the instance of his religious mentor Siṁha-nandi. Among the titles that the kings of this dynasty bore was 'Lord of the hill Kaḷbappu' ('Kaḷbappu-girigaḷadhipati'). But the first Gaṅga monarch who came into contact with Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa was Śiva-māra II, son of Śrī-purusha, as we learn from an inscription dated 810 A.D. Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa rose into celebrity about this time, and we learn that during 904 A.D. there was in this place a Jaina ascetic of some renown, Varamati-sāgara-paṇḍita-bhaṭṭāraka by name.

It is not known how Chāmuṇḍa-rāya became involved with Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa, for his headquarters appears to have been southern Madhurai. There is, of course, a legend to explain this. His mother, Kāḷalā Devī, who was a great devotee of Jaina-purāṇas learnt during one of the purāṇa-reading sessions about the image of Bāhubali that his brother Bharata had got set up in Paudanapura (where Bāhubali ruled before he became an ascetic). She longed to visit this sacred place and have a look at Bāhubali's statue which was reputed to be 525 bow-lengths tall. Chāmuṇḍa-rāya set out with his mother, teachers and a small retinue to discover Paudanapura, which had by then become lost in jungles. On their way, they came to Kaḷbappu (Śravaṇa-beḷgoḷa), which was even then a renowned pilgrim-spot, and made a halt on the lower hill, hallowed by the memory of Bhadrabāhu and Chandragupta.

There were then no buildings on this hill. There was only the cave in which the saint Bhadrabāhu had lived and died, and there were the sage's

foot-prints that Chadragupta had worshipped. The party of pilgrims settled down in the vicinity of the cave for the night. Chāmunda-rāya had a dream that night, in which his guardian-spirit Padmāvati-yakshiṇī appeared and dissuaded him from proceeding to Paudanapura, which was difficult of access. She revealed to him that there was an image of Bāhubali on the other hill across, set up in very ancient times by Rāma himself as an exact replica of the Paudanapura colossus. The guardian-goddess suggested to Chāmuṇḍa-rāya that he should stand on a rock near Bhadrabāhu's cave and shoot an arrow in the southern direction at the tall boulder on top of the other hill. A similar dream occured to his mother also.

Chāmuṇḍa-rāya and the party of pilgrims were camping on what is now known as Chandragiri. The boulder at which he was directed to shoot was on the hill now known as Vindhyagiri. It was a dense jungle, impenetrable and terrifying, Kushmāṇḍa-araṇya by name. The rock on the lower hill on which Chāmuṇḍa-rāya stood and took aim is called 'Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's rock', on which there came to be in later days a few relief sculptures and some inscriptions. When Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's golden arrow struck the boulder on the other hill, Bāhubali's image was at once revealed.

Chāmuṇḍa-rāya and the party got the jungle cleared and made their way to the colossus, which they worshipped with sentiments mixed with astonishment. The dream of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya was realized, and the desire of his mother was thus fulfilled. Another version of the legend, preserved in Pañchabāṇa's *Bhujabalicharite* (about 1614 A.D.) makes a wandering Jaina ascetic Jinasena by name the source of information about the Paudanapura colossus to Chāmuṇḍa- rāya's mother. According to this poem, it was only the head of Bāhubali that was uncovered when Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's arrow struck it; when the party reached the spot, the preceptor of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya struck the boulder alround with a golden hammer, and the perfectly carved statue manifested itself.

Pañchabāṇa's poem gives another interesting account which speaks volumes about Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's personality. When the stone statue was thus uncovered and sighted, Chāmuṇḍa-rāya ordered arrangements for anointment ceremony (mastakābhisheka) for the colossus as part of the procedure of formal installation. Hundreds of pots filled with milk were poured over the head of the colossus at the bidding of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya, but the milk would not touch the holy feet of the colossus. There was a general consternation and despair, for unless the feet are washed the ceremony of installation would not be complete.

They discovered an old woman in the crowd of devotees that had

thronged to witness the celebration. She was carrying in her hands a little milk in the cup of an egg-gruit (aubergine, of the brinjal variety, gulla-kāyi in Kannaḍa) to be poured over the head of the colossus. But who would bother about this tiny drop of milk when several hundreds of large pots of milk were got ready by Chāmuṇḍa-rāya? When, however, they found that the anointment could not be completed even after repeated attempts, they thought of the old woman with her egg-fruit shell filled with milk. When this little milk was poured over the head of the colossus, the milk at once streamed down and swept the feet!

Chāmuṇḍa-rāya realized that his devotion was marred by pride and arrogance; he had been so supremely confident of his high status and unbounded wealth to win the grace of Bāhubali, that his piety was not as sincere and as intense as that of the poor old woman. He learnt his lesson and became humble, and bowed before her in gratitude. He caused an image of her to be carved in stone and erected in the immediate neighbourhood of the colossus.

We find in the interior enclosure this splendid statue, measuring five feet in height, of the woman with the egg-fruit shell (known as Gullakāyi) in her hand, gazing at the feet of the colossus. And nowhere on the hill do we find an image of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya himself, whose zeal it was that uncovered the colossus. The eligibility for such lasting association with the world-honoured Bāhubali rests not on glory in the battle-field nor on splendour in life, but upon innocent devotion. The poor old woman had it, while the great general and minister had to learn from her this lesson.

We are also told that the precise spot on which this old woman stood and watched the anointment was also commemmorated. To the left as you enter the present door-way to the interior enclosure is shown a small (about a foot high) rudely carved figure of a woman("dumpy little old woman") which is identified as Gulla-kāyi-ajji. Indeed the door-way too is always covered by turmeric powder and flowers by the devotees that come to see the colossus.

The Story of the Mighty Ascetic

Bāhubali, who became celebrated as Gommaṭa, was the second son of the first emperor of the world, Puru-deva, who in later years turned an ascetic and became the first tīrthaṅkara (the saint who shows for the suffering mortals the ford across the terrible river of worldly life). Bāhubali's story is told in Kavi-parameshṭhi's *Mahā-purāṇa,* Jinasena's *Pūrva-purāṇa,* (9th century A.D.), Pampa's *Ādi-purāṇa* and Ratnākara-varṇi's *Bharatesha-vaibhava.* Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's own work *Tri-shaṣṭi-lakshaṇa-mahāpurāṇa*), which deals with the legendary lives of the sixty-

three eminent personages (tīrthaṅkaras, chakravartis, baladeva-vāsudeva-prativāsudevas), also contains an account of Bāhubali's career.

Purudeva (otherwise called Ṛshabha-deva), the first emperor of India, was ruling from his capital at Ayodhyā. He was the mightiest, wealthiest and most glorious monarch. He had two sons, Bharata from his senior queen Sumaṅgalā, Bāhubali from the junior queen, Sunandā.

Both of them were well educated and trained in administration. The monarch, while high on the tide of worldly enjoyment, witnessed the sudden death of his favourite court-dancer, Nīlañjanā, and developed a disguest for worldly life. He divided his empire between his two sons and became an ascetic. He was later hailed as a jina, victor over the snares of mundane life; he was the first of the twenty-four tīrthaṅkaras ('ford-makers') in this phase of time.

Purudeva was monarch over the entire subcontinent. When the territory was divided between Bharata and Bāhubali, the northern division with Ayodhyā (now in Uttar Pradesh) as capaital became Bharata's while the southern region with Paudanapura (now Bodan in Andhra Pradesh) as capital became Bāhubali's. Another version of the legend says that the entire kingdom of Purudeva went to Bharata who was the elder son, and that Bāhubali remained in Ayodhyā as prince.

Bharata, when he became the emperor of Ayodhyā, came into possession of a strange and powerful weapon, chakra-ratna, a discus that kept on whirling by itself in the presence of the emperor, making him invincible. Wherever he went, the discus went ahead of him, guarding him and attacking his opponents. But it would stop whenever there was the likelihood of a successful challenge to Bharata's claims. The possession of this mighty weapon made Bharata not only arrogant and haughty but greedy and capricious. He set out to conquer the entire continent and assert his suzerainty over all the rulers in the land. During his expedition, all the rulers at once submitted to him, for fear of the terrible discus that arrived ahead of him.

He came down South during his grand march and reached Paudanapura. The speed of the discus slowed down. A wicked desire to subjugate his own brother entered his heart, and he sent words to Bāhubali that he should meet the emperor like a subordinate ruler. Bāhubali, who loved his brother, nevertheless refused to meet his brother like a vassal. The indignant Bharata directed his retinue to attack his brother's palace, and rode to the gates fo the palace along with the awful discus.

Curiously, however, the discus stopped whirling as it neared the

palace and refused to forge ahead. Thereupon, Bharata challenged Bāhubali for a confrontation on the battle-field. No less valiant, Bāhubali accepted and fought. The armies struggled, and the army of the emperor Bharata was worsted. In utter indignation Bharata invited Bāhubali for a duel. Bharata's weapons were broken and blunted. They wrestled, and Bāhubali emerged victorious. Bharata was completely defeated and was covered with shame. Bāhubali thus became the lord of the entire continent and Bharata was at his mercy.

But the episode disgusted Bāhubali. Should fond brothers fight with each other for a handful of dust that the empire really is? Of what avail is all the splendour of royalty if affection is destroyed under the weight of passion and avarice? Smitten by deep remorse, Bāhubali regarded his victory as a sinful deed. Is it not an act of impropriety to fight with an elder brother? He resolved to renounce the world then and there, retire to the solitude of the jungle, and engage himself in extreme austerities to expiate this error. His words in Pampa's *Ādi-purāṇa* were:

ಅವಧರಿಸಿದೆ ನಿನ್ನೊಳ್ ಪಿರಿ–
ದವಿನಯಮಂ ನೆಗಳ್ದ ದೋಷಮಂ ತಪದೊಳ್ ನೀ–
ಗುವೆನಣ್ಣ ಕಲುಷಮಂ.....

"Elder brother, I have behaved with you outlandishly; great is my transgression ! I shall undo this sin by penance!"

He at once restores the sovereignty of the realm to his brother, gives him also his own kingdom, renounces the world, throws away his garments and repairs to the jungle. He begs of his brother who is now the lord of the entire continent, enough land for him to stand in the conventional meditative posture (known as kāyotsaraga or pratimā-yoga), suitable for the ultimate penance. He eventually accomplished his objective and becomes a Jina.

In the meantime, there is a change of heart in Bharata too. He is impressed by the spiritual maturity of his brother, and while ruling the realm that was entrusted to him, he becomes a devotee of Bāhubali. When Bāhubali attained the status of Kevalin, he got an image of his made in gold, and installed it on the spot where he performed his austerities. The spot was in the jungle in the vicinity of Paudanapura. The jungle was infested with a species of snakes that had bodies of fowls (kukkuṭa- sarpa), and they moved freely over the body of Bāhubali who stood still in meditation. The ascetic came to be known as the 'master of these fowl-serpents' (Kukkuṭeśvara).

The statue that Bharata erected in memory of Bāhubali was 525 bow-lengths; it was a remarkable colossus, a wonder of the world, and people from all over the continent thronged

to see it. But in due course, Paudanapura fell on evil days; it was deserted and the spot where the golden colossus stood was covered by a thick jungle. Wild animals made the jungle their haunt, and the presence of the statue was forgotten by the people, who could no longer approach it. The golden statue of Bāhubali became merely legendary.

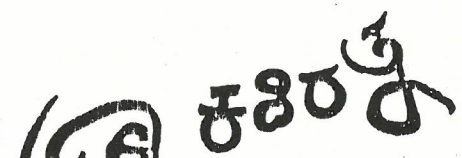
Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's mother heard about it from an exponent of Purāna. Another version makes the preceptor of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya, Ajita-sena, the source of this information. In any case, she was bent on visiting Paudanapura, which had even then become inaccessible. Her desire was fulfilled by the image of the same saint that her son got carved on Vindhya-giri, as already narrated.

Consecration of the Colossus

The date on which Chāmuṇḍa-rāya got Gommaṭa's image installed and consecrated has been a matter of some controversy. There is a Sanskrit verse (*Epigraphica Carnatika,* Vol. 2, 2, 3) which gives some particulars of the time of consecration

ಕಲ್ಯಬ್ದೇ ಷಟ್‌ಶತಾಖ್ಯೇ ವಿನುತವಿಭವಸಂವತ್ಸರೇ
ಮಾಸಿ ಚೈತ್ರೇ ಪಂಚಮ್ಯಾಂ ಶುಕ್ಲಪಕ್ಷೇ
ದಿನಮಣಿದಿವಸೇ ತ್ವಷ್ಟಯೋಗೇ ಸುಲಗ್ನೇ
ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯೇ ಹಸ್ತನಾಮ್ನಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿತ ಭಗುಣೇ
ಸುಪ್ರಶಸ್ತಾಂ ಚಕಾರ ಶ್ರೀ ಮಚ್ಚಾಮುಂಡರಾಜೋ
ಬೆಳಗುಳನಗರೇ ಗೋಮಟೇಶ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾಂ

The Kannaḍa version of this reference is to be found in Ananta-kavi's *Beḷgoḷa-Gommaṭeśvara-charite* (about 1780 A.D.). According to this reckoning, the Gommaṭa image was installed on Sunday the fifth day of the bright half of the Chaitra month during the Vibhava year corresponding to Kali 600; the precise moment was the Saubhāgya-yoga, when there was the constellation of Mrigaśirā and the lagna was Kumbha. The year in this verse would correspond to 968 A.D. But the work ascribed to Chāmuṇḍa- rāya, *Trishaṣṭi-lakshaṇa-mahāpurāṇa,* which was composed in the year 978 A.D., does not mention the Gommaṭa colossus at all, although there are many particulars given about the author. It is obvious then that the colossus had not taken shape by 978 A.D. However, the poet Ranna, whom Chāmuṇḍa-rāya patronized, wrote around 993 A.D. *Ajita-tīrthaṅkara-purāṇa* for the generous Attimabbe who had seen the Gommaṭa colossus. The poet has inscribed his own name on a rock near the colossus, which by then had obviously taken shape.



The celebrated scholar, Manjeswara Govinda Pai has calculated the exact date of the consecration of the colos-

sus: the thirteenth day of March 981 A.D. However, there are other dates suggested by scholars. Dr. S. Srikantha Sastri pushes the date back to 907 A.D., while C. Hayavadana Rao brings it forward to 983 A.D. Dr. R. Sāma Sastri has worked out the date to correspond to the third day of March 1028! The date suggested by Govinda Pai appears to be most reliable. The last king whom Chāmuṇḍa-rāya served was Rakkasa-gaṅga whose reign closed in 984 A.D. And it is recorded that the Gaṅga king who was pleased with the achievement of his minister and general in getting the colossus installed, honoured him with the title Rāya.

An important and interesting ritual in connection with the consecration of the colossus was the 'head-anointment' (mastaka- abhisheka). Chāmuṇḍa-rāya got it performed, and an account of it has already been given. Bathing the entire colossus is obviously a difficult undertaking requiring an elaborate arrangement and entailing great expense, and could not be gone through frequently. What is done daily as part of the worship ritual is only to wash the feet of the colossus. Therefore, the occasion of this head-anointing ceremony has been regarded as memorable and most meritorious.

It is said to be performed once in twelve years. But since the installation, there have been only about twenty such occasions on record! The first mention of this ceremony occurs in an inscription of 1398 A.D. (No. 254). It is said here that some Paṇḍitārya (probably the head of the Jaina pontificate in Śravaṇa-belgoḷa) got the ritual conducted seven times.

The next inscription (No. 231) that mentions the 'great bath' (mahābhisheka) is dated 1500 A.D. There are also details about the materials required for the 'great bath' and the expenses the ceremony entails. That the ceremonial bath was given to the colossus in 1612 A.D. (or 1614, but the date actually given is Monday when there was full moon in the Chaitra month of the Paridhāvi year, Śaka 1540) at the instance of some guru Śānta-varṇi, has been mentioned in Pañchabāṇa-kavi's *Bhujabali-charite* (23, 106). This work refers to the ritual as 'worship of the head', ('mastaka-pūje') of 'Aruha-Gommaṭa- Jineśvara'.

We are told that during the reign of Doḍḍa-Devarāja-Woḍeyar in Mysore there was an anointment ritual to the Gommaṭa colossus in 1659 A.D. prompted by the pontiffs of Kolhāpura, Jina-kāñchi and Penugoṇḍe Jaina monastic centres. The king also got the shrines renovated for the occasion, and donated the Madane village with an annual income of one thousand pagodas to meet the expenses of daily worship of the colossus.

Ananta-kavi's *'Belgoḷa-Gommaṭeśwara-charite'* (about 1780 A.D.) mentions two of such occasions; one in

1677 at the instance of the minister Viśālākṣha-Paṇḍita in the court of the Mysore ruler Chikka-Devarāja-Woḍeyar (Phālguṇa month of the Nala year, Śaka 1600), and another in 1767 A.D. at the instance of one Śāntayya (Phālguṇa month of the Durmukhi year, Śaka 1701). It appears that Krishṇarāja Woḍeyar III got the ritual performed at a great expense in 1825. So we learn from Śāntarāja Paṇḍita's *Sarasa-jana-chintāmaṇi.*

The strange incident of the donor of the 'great bath' dying on the very day the ritual was scheduled to take place, occured in 1827. An inscription (No. 223) mentions that the donor who died was a descendent of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya and an officer in the 'Kandāchāra-savāri' division of the Mysore court, Bhakshi Deva-rāje Arasu by name. A trust of a hundred Varāhas was created to offer special worship to the feet of the colossus in his memory.

There are references to the ritual having taken place in the years 1800, 1871, 1887, 1900, 1910, 1925, 1940, 1953 and 1967 March.

An interesting account of the ritual that was conducted in the year 1887 appeared in the *Harvest Field* for May 1887. It is reported that the ceremony costed Rs. 30,000 to the Svāmi of the Kolhāpur Jain maṭha, Lakshmī-sena Bhaṭṭāraka, at whose instance it was performed. The account as extracted by the *Mysore Gazetteer*, (Vol. V, pp. 1052-1053) is:

"The 14th March last was the day of anointing for the statue of Gommateswara. It was a great day, in anticipation of which 20,000 pilgrims gathered there from all parts of India. There were Bengalis there, Gujaratis also, and Tamil people in great numbers. Some arrived a full month before the time and the stream continued to flow until the afternoon of the day of the great festival. For a whole month there was daily worship in all the temples and Pāda-puja or worship of the feet of the great idol besides.

On the great day, the 14th, the people began to ascend the hill even before dawn in the hope of securing good places from which to see everything. Among them were large numbers of women and girls in very bright attire, carrying with them brass or earthern pots. By 10 O clock all available space in the temple enclosure was filled.

Opposite the idol an area of 40 square feet was strewed with bright yellow paddy, on which were placed, 1,000 gaily painted earthern pots, filled with sacred water, covered with cocoanuts and adorned with mango leaves. Above the image was scaffolding, on which stood several priests, each having at hand pots filled with ghee, milk and such like things.

At a signal from the Kolhāpaur Svāmi, the master of ceremonies, the contents of these vessels were poured

simultaneously over the head of the idol. There was a sort of preliminary bath, but the grand bath took place at 2 O clock. Amid the horrible dissonance of many instruments the thousand pots already mentioned were lifted as if by magic from the reserved area to the scaffolding and all their contents poured over the image, the priests meanwhile chanting texts from the sacred books.

Evidently the people were much impressed. There were mingled cries of 'Jai Jai Maharaja' and 'Ahaha, ahaha', the distinctive exclamations of Northern and Southern Indians to mark their wonder and approval.

In the final anointing, fifteen different substances were used, namely water, cocoa-nut meal, plantains, jaggery, ghee, sugar, almonds, dates, poppy seeds, milk, curds, sandal, gold flowers, silver flowers, and silver coin. With the gold and silver flowers there were mixed nine varieties of precious gems; and silver coin to the amount of Rs. 500/- completed the offering"

Inspired by this Colossus

There have been several other colossi in the country, inspired by the Śravaṇa-belgoḷa model. Gommaṭa is especially a southern image, probably because the seat of Bāhubali's rule was Paudanapura in the South. He is a favourite divinity for the Jains of Karnāṭaka, although his celebrity has spread all over the country. And it is usual for the Bāhubali images to be of gigantic proportions, probably after the legendary Paudanapura statue caused to be erected by Bharata. We find even in the Bādāmi sculptures statues of Bāhubali tending to be colossi. The size is symbolic of the spiritual height to which Bāhubali grew.

Inspired by Chāmuṇḍa-rāya's accomplishment, Vīra-pāṇḍya, the Bhairava king, got a colossus of Gommaṭa erected on the hill in Kārkaḷa (West coast) in 1431-32 A.D. The king belonged to the Sāntara family which is said to have been founded by Jinadatta-rāya of Pomḥuccha, a great Jaina center, and ruled over a small kingdom with Kerevase near Kārkaḷa as his capital. The colossus that he got carved measures 41 feet and five inches in height, and is a monolith in blackened stone. Impressive, though not as magnificent as the Śravaṇa-belgoḷa image, the Kārkaḷa colossus stands relaxed and serene, on a high platform gazing at the Rāmasamundra stretch in front of him. Unlike its model at Śravaṇa-belgoḷa which was carved in situ on top of the hill, the Kārkaḷa image was sculpted on the plains below the hillock on which it now stands and was transported up the hill for installation. The transportation of the monolith to the top of the 300 foot high mount must have been a romantic episode.

The sculptor's name is given as Śaṁbhu-śilpi.

There is another Gommaṭa colossus in the same region, at Veṇūr (or Eṇūru). This was installed in the year 1604 A.D., and is 35 feet tall. The ruler who got this made, Timma-rāya (1550- 1610) of the Ajila family is said to have been a descendant of Chāmuṇḍa-rāya.

Near Mysore, four miles away from Yelavāla, is a hillock known as Śravaṇa-guḍḍa (or Gommaṭa- giri). The name owes its origin to a Gommaṭa statue standing on it, measuring twenty feet in height. It is not known when exactly this image was carved, or at whose instance. Puṇisamayya, the general of the Hoysaḷa monarch Vishṇuvardhana, is credited with having got installed a Gommaṭa statue in Basti-haḷḷi (in Krishnarajanagar taluk in Mysore).

In recent years, the chief of the Dharmasthala religious complex has got a 39 foot-tall Gommaṭa colossus installed in Dharmasthala (in the coastal region of Karnāṭaka). The sculptor who carved this image is Rañjāḷa Gopālakrishna Sheṇoy of Kārkaḷa

All the Gommaṭa images are conventionally stylized: the erect- standing posture (pratimā-yoga) with arms hanging at the sides, the eyes being open and gaze directed at the far horizon, short and spiral ringlets of hair crowning the head, broad and massive shoulders, the mādhavī creepers entwining the arms and thighs, ant-hills around the feet, and the body entirely naked. The image symbolizes the resolve for extreme austerity and complete freedom from worldly ills. It is an ideal that has for centuries inspired millions of our most gifted countrymen.

The Gommaṭa colossus at Śravaṇabeḷgoḷa has stood for a thousand years as a silent but watchful witness to all that has happened in this country, to the dynasties of kings and chieftains that have hurried and tumbled, to the fortunes of monarchs and ministers that have been all too fleeting, to the rise and fall of cults and ideologies, and to the simple and peaceful lives of the unsophisticated masses. Gommaṭa's posture is rigid, his aspect is stern, but there is an uncanny smile on the face. The smile suggests satisfaction with himself and compassion for the world.

Gommaṭa is the symbol of our spiritual aspiration and an assurance of its fulfilment.

APPENDIX II

BĒLŪR
A Peep into Early History

The antiquity of this area (Hāssan district in Karnāṭaka State) in which Bēlūr is situated goes back to the early centuries of the modern era. A persistent account pushes it back to a more distant past. It is said that the great Mauryan King of Magadha, Chandragupta, visted this region as early as 298 B.C., coming all the way from Ujjayini in the North. The Jaina community that came with him, along with his teacher Bhadrabāhu, settled down on a hillock in this region (Śravaṇa-beḷagoḷa), and the prevalence of Jainism in Karnāṭaka dates back to this visit and settlement.

The recorded history of the area, described in a book *Kavi-kaṇṭha-hāra* by Sūryāṅka about 650 as "the hand-mirror to Kashmir , commences with the Eastern branch of the Kadaṁba Kings who ruled over this region from their capital at Banavāsi. This was in the early centuries of the Christian era. Later the Gaṅgas, with their capital at Talakāḍu, occupied this area and ruled it for over five hundred years (from the fifth century to the eleventh). They were patrons of Jainism, and were builders of temples and monuments. The next hundred and odd years saw the sovereignty of the Koṅgāḷvas (feudatories of the Choḷa Kings) over the region bounded on one side by the river Kāverī and on the other by Hemāvatī.

The most important rulers who contributed to the greatness of this area were the Hoysalas, who rose to power in the tenth century and continued till the fourteenth. Unlike the previous rulers, the Hoysaḷas had their twin capitals in the very heart of their Kingdom, Bēlūr and Dvārasamudra (the present-day Haḷēbīḍu, about 11 miles from Bēlūr). The early kings of this dynasty were Jains by persuation, but were tolerant in their poliucy. The later kings, however, became devotees of Vishṇu and Śiva. Of these kings,

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the most celebrated was Biṭṭideva, also called Vishṇu-vardhana (1113-1141 A.D.): a bold warrior, an able administrator and above all a great builder. His father was Ereyaṅga who bore the title "Right Arm of the Chāḷukyan Monarch".

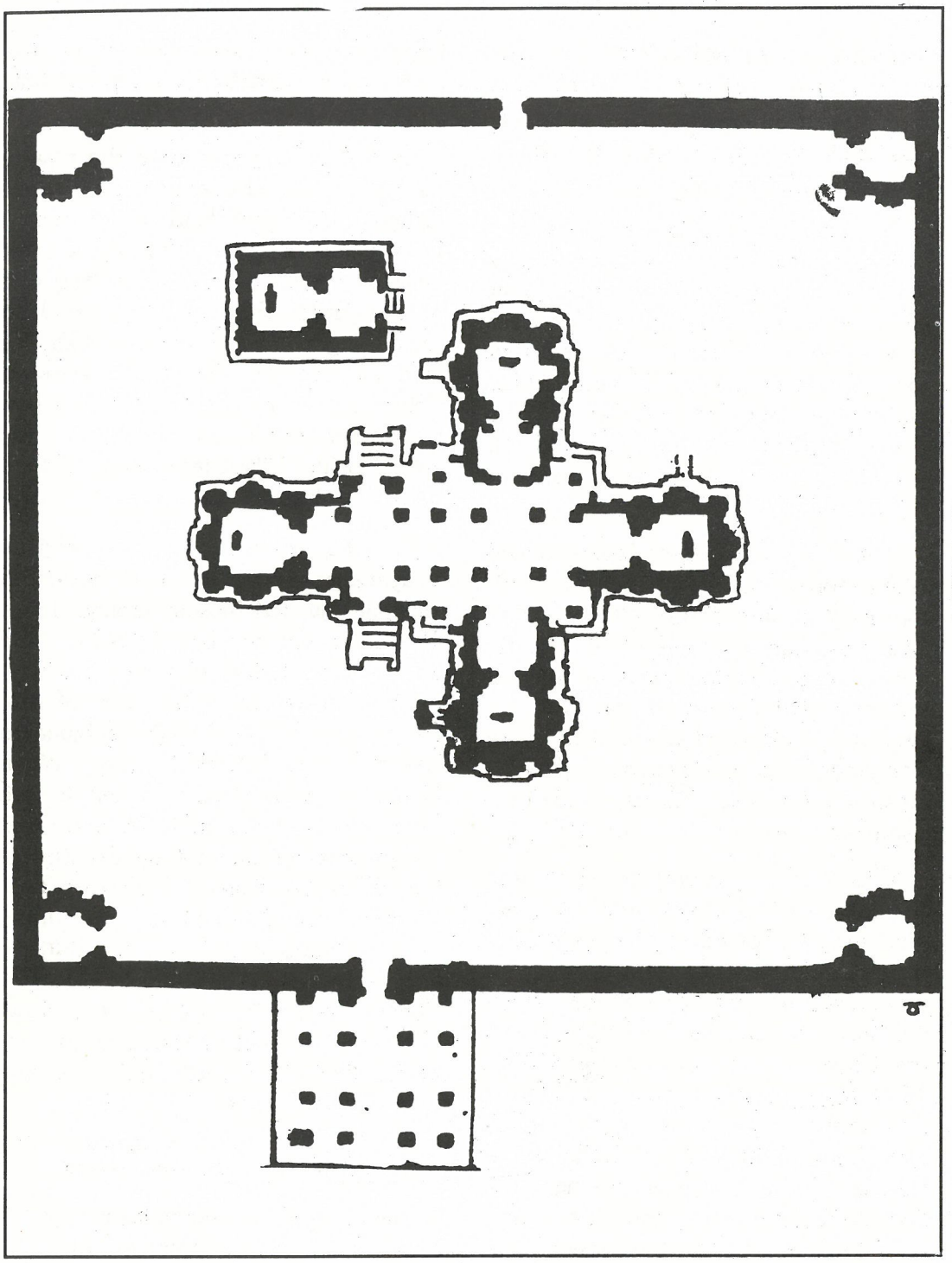
There is a persistent legend (the historicity of which is however uncertain) that he was converted to Vaishṇavism by the great reformer saint Rāmānuja who, when persecuted by the fanatic Śaiva ruler of Tamiḷ Nāḍu, had to seek refuge in this king's territory for several years. The king and the saint are said to have met in Toṇṇūr (Tōṇḍanūr) near Mēḷkoṭe in the represent-day Mandya district in Karnāṭaka. It is said that it was Rāmānuja who prompted him to build five Vishṇu shrines (pañcha-Nārāyaṇa) in the region over which he ruled. Among these five shrines, the Kīrti-nārāyaṇa temple at Talakāḍu, the Vijaya-nārāyaṇa temple at Bēlūr and the Vīra-nārāyaṇa temple of Gadag are well known. And among them, the Bēlūr shrine has justly been celebrated all over the world as an exquisite work of art.

We do not know what the exact nature of the inspiration was that made him build temples. The accounts of Rāmānuja converting him to Vishnavism are, as said earlier, quite unfounded. The King was a builder of temples, and the Hoysaḷa style of temple-architecture found its maturity and perfection during his days. Perhaps the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi (in Hāssan district) provided him the inspiration to build the Bēlūr shrine. This temple was built in the year 1113 A.D., the year Biṭṭideva (Vishṇu-vardhana) ascended the Hoysaḷa throne.

This is a fine example of the early phase of Hoysaḷa architecture, which was an adaptation of the Chāḷukyan model with an emphasis on sculptural profusion. This temple, where architectue still overshadowed sculpture, has four cells (garbha-gṛhas) contained in a rectangular plan. But three of these cells (in the Southern portion) have been structurally integrated with a common hall (navaraṅga).

We have another temple in the same region which was evidently built on the model of the Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi shrine. This temple in the village Hariharapura has only three cells. The characteristic feature of the Hoysala style is the coalescence of three cells integrated with the main hall (navaraṅga), leading to a porch (mukha-maṇḍapa), the entire structure being raised on a high plinth (Jagatī). This is known as the 'triad of cells constituting a hill" (trikūṭāchala).

It is probable, therefore, that it was the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi that gave the impetus to the Hoysala temples. We have an inscriptional record of the name of the architect who built this temple:



Mahālakshmi temple, *Doḍḍagaddavaḷḷi (plan)*

Muniyōja, whose skill is likened to that of the divine architect Viśvakarmā. And it is interesting to note that this temple was built not by a king, but by a merchant and his wife.

Biṭṭidēva, the Hoysaḷa king, got the Vishṇu temple built in the capital city about four years later. In subsequent years, as many as eighty temples were constructed in the region, all answering to the description of Hoysaḷa style, during the reigns of eight kings. This temple-building activity covered a period of over two centuries, between 1111 and 1343 A.D.

The Hoysaḷa power broke down, when Mohammedans overran this territory in 1326 and destroyed the capital, Dvāvarasamudra. Ballāḷa III (1291-1342), who was the Hoysaḷa King at that time, left the region and lived the rest of his life in different places like Toṇḍanūr (in Maṇḍya district), Hosavīdu (in Kolār district), and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai (in South Arcot district).

The Vijayanagar empire, which was founded in 1336, extended its sway and impact over this region, a portion of which (known as Bālam or the tract around Bēlūr, the present-day Manjarābad) was entrusted to the care of the Nāyak chieftains, Siṅgappa (1397-1404) and his descendents. Bēlūr was now looked upon as a kingdom in its own right. The 'lords of Bēlūr' were vassals of the Vijayanagar kings; the first 'lord', Ere-Krishṇappa, was originally a carrier of the silver box containing the betel leaves, waiting constantly on the king (haḍapa). These lords continued their hold over the town and its suburbs for a considerable length of time.

In 1645, Śivappa-nāyaka the powerful chieftain of Bēdanūru (Nagar) attacked Bēlūr and held it for nearly forty years. By then the Vijayanagar kings had fallen on evil days, and one of the kings, Śrīraṅga- rāya, had to seek refuge under Śivappa-nāyaka, his erstwhile vassal. Śivappa bestowed Bēlūr on this monarch. Bēlūr thus had the dubious distinction of becoming the capital of the Vijayanagar kings in their decadent days.

At the instance of the fugitive Vijayanagar monarch, the Bēdanūru chieftain invaded Mysore around 1654. The entire territory barring Bālam (the tract around Bēlūr) was ceded to the Mysore rulers. In 1762, the Mysore army under Hyder-āli subjugated Bālam (around Bēlūr) also. When Hyder's son Ṭīpu- Sultān fell in the Śrīraṅgapaṭṇa battle in 1799, there was an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Bēlūr chieftains to recover their independence. The region came under the Ashṭagrāma division. In 1882 it was included in a subdivision under Kaḍūr district; four years later, however, Hāssan was made into an administrative district with Bēlūr as one of the chief towns.

Bēlūr the Tmeple Town

Bēlūr, which is celebrated in legends as Vēlāpura and as Southern Banaras, is at present a town 24 miles northwest of Hāssan. It lies in a highland

area, 3,150 feet above sea level, adjoining the north-west of Coorg. There are hillocks alround, and the river Yagachi flows in the neighbourhood.

It would appear that the old name for the town was Beḷuvūr, Sanskritized as Vēlāpura. That it was a well-known town as early as 1103 is suggested by an inscription that relates the marriage of the Hoysaḷa King Ballāḷa I, elder brother of Bittideva-Vishṇuvardhana, in this town. But the town's subsequent celebrity rests chiefly upon the Keśava temple that his successor Bettideva got constructed in 1117 A.D. There are two inscriptions, one on the temple-wall (Belūr 58) and another a copper-plate preserved in the temple (Belūr 71), which record this event. The legend inscribed on the pedestal of the principal image, Keśava, also suggests that Vishṇu-vardhana it was that got the deity installed. The name of the deity given in this legend is Vijaya-nārāyaṇa.

One of the ten sculptured screens (perforated) in the Bēlūr temple depicts the court-scene of this king. It is the first screen to the right of the eastern entrance the assembly hall (navaraṅga). This screen is in three panels and the middle panel contains the court-scene. The king, holding a sword in one hand and a flower in the other, is seated with his queen to his left, and two teachers to his right. The queen is seen with a lady-in-waiting, and each of the two teachers has an attandant disciple. The monarch's retinue is also there. The sword and the flower in the hands of the king suggest that he was a great warrior as well as a patron of arts. In the top panel of the screen is seen the icon of Keśava, the main deity of the temple built by the king. There are also representations of Hanumān and Garuḍa in this panel. The bottom panel contains some fine depictions of the lion-motif.

The king is also depicted in another stone panel, found in front of the Kappe-Chenniga temple. Here he is standing in an attitude of great devotion, along wtih his queen Śāntale, who was responsible for this shrine.

The Turkish embassador, Abdur Razaak, visited the Bēlūr temple in 1433 A.D. and he wrote that he "dared not attempt any description of the wonder and beauty of the temple lest he should be accused of exaggeration." And over four hundred years later there was another visitor, who attempted to describe the temple. Mrs. Bowring has recorded in a letter written on the 15th December, 1868 her impression of this temple-town:

"I shall never forget the view on entering Belur. It was most lovely. Green rice-crops, sloping down to the edge of the tank, a fine sheet of blue water, surrounded by large trees, above which appeared the grey walls of the fortress, and the white dome and towers of the famous temple;



Channa-kesava, Bēlūr

beyond, the Bābā-buḍan mountains looking purple and blue; in the foreground, it was, altogether, as beautiful a sight as anything I have seen".

Quoted in Lewin Bowring's *Eastern Experiences*: this passage has been preserved in *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. V, p. 965 (Ed. by C. Hayavadana Rao, 1930).

The sight of the present-day Bēlūr is unfortunately not as impressive as it was during the days of Mrs. Bowring, a century ago. It is now a straggling little town, the only tourist attraction of which is the temple. Unlike in Haḷēbīḍ and Somnāthpur, where worship has altogether been abandoned, the temple in Bēlūr continues to be in popular currency; worship within the temple has gone on since its consecration except for brief spells. During April every year there will be a five-day festival in the temple, for which several thousands of devotees gather.

The Main Deity Keśava

The temple for which Bēlūr has become celebrated is dedicated to a form of Vishṇu, known popularly as Keśava. On account of the exceedingly beautiful form of this icon, it usually goes by the name of Chenna-keśava, the Kannaḍa prefix meaning 'lovely'. This image, which represents Vishṇu in a standing posture, is undoubtedly very charming; the sculptor has poured out all his skill and devotion on this image. The original name of the image, however, was Vijaya-nārāyaṇa, which perhaps was one of the titles of Biṭṭidēva (Vishṇu-vardhana), the Hoysaḷa monarch. Although it is an image of Vishṇu, the face is full of feminine grace, and the legend explains this anamoly by describing the deity as Mohinī, a form that Vishṇu assumed in order to confound the demons on the occasion of the distribution of ambrosia.

The icon, sculpted splendidly out of black stone, stands six foot tall on a pedestal which is three foot high. It bears the usual insignia of Vishṇu, the conch, discus, mace and lotus. The Keśava form bears the conch and discus in the two upper hands (right and left respectively), and lotus and mace in the two normal hands (right and left respectively). The lotus in the normal right hand is accompanied by the charactersitc abhaya ('Fear not') pose. There is an elaborate, intricate auriole (prabhāvalī) around the head, illustrating a conventional pattern artistically stylized. On the body of the deity are carved different ornaments exquisitely shaped.

The legs of the deity are flanked by two consorts, the goddesses of wealth (Śrī-devī) and earth (Bhū-devī), modelled in tiny proportions. The figure of Garuḍa (the conventional vehicle of Vishṇu) is carved on the pedestal, which also bears the inscripton that "Vishṇu-(vardhana), the protector of

the world, caused this image of Vijaya-nārāyaṇa, the god of gods, to be erected".

It is said that this grand icon was originally on the Bābā-buḍan Hills, along with that of his consort Lakshmī. It was brought to Belūr to be installed in the temple that Vishṇuvardhana built. But, owing to some reason, the Vishṇu image alone was brought at the time of consecration. The legends narrate that the later attempts to bring also the image of Lakshmī proved futile: the lady was offended and would not relent! It is further said that Vijaya-nārāyaṇa himself chivalrously makes a periodical visit to the Bābā-buḍan Hills to look up his consort!

To help him make this long and arduous journey from Belūr to the Bābā-buḍan Hills, a pair of large leather slippers were fashioned by the cobbler-devotees! This story explains the unusual presence of a pair of oversize leather slippers in front of the Kesava image. It is said that when the slippers get worn out by the journey, the cobbler-devotees of Belūr residing in Chenna-giri and Basavā-paṭṭaṇa in Shimoga district get the message in a dream to set about preparing a new pair. The cobblers are on this occasion allowed to enter the temple and present the slippers. They know the Belūr deity as 'Chennappa', and regard him as their tutellary god.

Whatever the import of the story, the main image appears to have been meant to be the sole deity in the Belūr shrine, consorts being structurally provided. But the temple now has a separate shrine for Soma-nāyakī (also called Saumya-nāyakī), reputed to be a form of Lakshmī, to the south-west of the Vijayanārāyaṇa cell.

The Temple Sculptors and Maidens

The temple, which probably was meant to be a work of art, stands as a perfect monument in a spacious courtyard, 443 feet long and 396 feet wide. The temple proper, 178 feet long and 156 feet wide, is perched on a plinth which is three feet high and ninety feet wide. The courtyard is surrounded by a high wall, the main entrance to which has a gopura as a superstructure with five storeys, in the typical South Indian style.

The temple, which was consecrated in 1117 A.D., is said to have suffered considerably during the Muhammedan invasion of 1310. During the early years of the rule of Harihara I, Vijayanagar emperor (1336-1350), the temple had been closed. But he ordered repairs to be carried out at the temple, and the endowments were restored; the shrine was reconstructed. It would appear that around 1381, the roof of the shrine had begun to sink, and the then Vijayanagar king Harihara II got the roof propped up by four main pillars through his prime minister Kampaṇa.

The tower over the main entrance which was probably built by Ballāḷa III is said to have been dismantled and burnt by Gaṅga Sālār of Gulbarga. The main entrance was repaired and the tower over it rebuilt by the general (daṇḍādhipa) of the Vijayanagar army, Guṇḍa, in 1397. The shrine has been in continuous service since those days.

It is unfortunate that we do not know who the chief architect of this splendid temple was. This is also remarkable, for we do have inscriptional mention of the architects of some of the other Hoysaḷa temples in the same region (as, for instance, of the Mahālakshmī temple at Doḍḍa-gaddavaḷḷi). The regional legends concerning the chief architect of the Bēlūr temple being Jakaṇāchāri are little more than myths. It is unlikely that any architect or sculptor with this name ever really existed: the espression may signify nothing more than 'the southern style'.

The custom of inscribing the sculptor's name on the pedestal of the sculpture-piece that he was responsible for, was already in vogue among Hoysaḷa artists. We find in the Bēlūr temple as many as eighteen pieces with such inscriptions, giving invariably the sculptor's name, sometimes also mentioning his hometown, parentage and titles.

Among the names preserved are: Dāsōja of Baḷḷigāme (in Kuntaḷa country), bearing the title 'Rūvāri-gondaḷa-baḍiva' ("the suppressor of the contending claims of sculptors"); his son Chāvaṇa, Malliyaṇṇa; Māchāri, who was in the court of the Hoysala monarch; Māyaṇa, who bore the title 'Ruvāri-giri- vajradaṇḍa' ("the thunderbolt to the mountain of sculptors"); Keñchi-Malliyaṇṇa; Chikka-haṁpa, son of Inōja, who was also in Bittideva's court; and Nāgōja, son of Dāsōja of Gadag, who was known as 'Sujana-janamano-rañjana' ("the delighter of minds of excellent folk") and 'Sarasvatī- padāṁbhoja' ("the feet-lotus of the goddess of art"). Of these sculptors, who must have been celebrities during those days, Dāsōja of Baḷḷigāme and his son Chāvaṇa appear in these inscriptions frequently.

These sculpture-pieces intended to support the eaves, standing upon the capitals answered the description of 'bracket-figures' (śālabhañjika, Kannaḍa sālabandike). The inscriptions call them so, and they also use another expression, 'doll- figure' (putthaḷi). The nomenclature that has of late come into vogue is 'madanike', which means a lovely maiden erotically active. These pieces are without doubt exquisite dance-postures and in diverse situational moods. They are all of them, without an exception, full of lyrical grace, passionate charm and idyllic power.

Of the forty such 'bracket-figures' that are installed along the outer walls of the temple (two are missing), only

three depict men; the rest are feminine representations. Inside the main hall (navaraṅga) are four more, nestling atop the four main pillars. These four, which probably were especially commissioned, are the work of Dāsōja and his son Chāvaṇa. And they are masterpieces by any standard. One of these is said to prortray the Hoysaḷa queeen Śāntalā, who herself was a great exponent of dance and music.

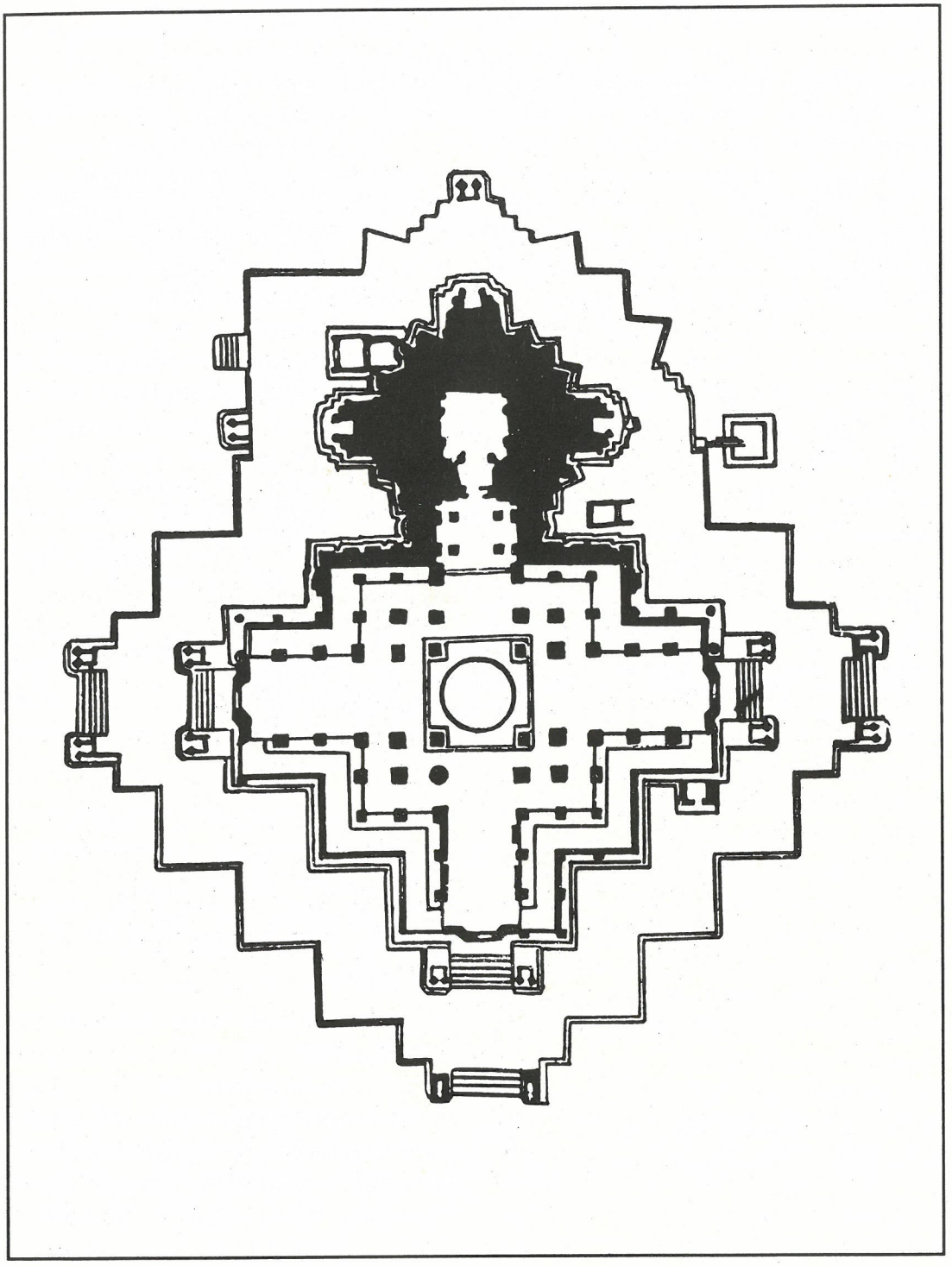
The Madanike figures have justly become celebrated. Indeed, they steal the show in Bēlūr. They have almost been uniquely associated with Bēlūr, although we do find similar figures in many other temples. Two of these are exquisite representations of the Mother-goddess, Durgā, in her usual posture of slaying the Buffalo-demon. There are, among these figures three protrayals of huntresses, a rather unusual theme. One of these delightful damsels holds a bow, and two others are caught in the act of letting the arrow go. Other figures illustrate lovely maidens engaged in typical feminine occupations; dressing up, playing on musical instruments, and dancing. These sculptures are remarkable for the fine display of moods and sentiments.

Of equally great interest are the twenty perforated screens of excellent workmanship that we find in this temple. Ten of them are sculptured, and are arranged on either side of the eastern entrance to the assembly hall (navaranga), five to the right and five to the left. The screen representing King Biṭṭideva Vishṇuvardhana has already been mentioned. The screens to the right include Purāṇic themes such as the story of Bali and Trivikrama, the lenged of the vanquishing of Hiraṇyakaśipu by Narasiṁha, and the episode of Kaṁsa's death at the hands of Kṛishṇa.

One of the screens to the left is said to depict the court-scene of Narasiṁha I, son of the great Biṭṭideva-Vishṇuvardhana. This panel is srumounted by an icon of Yogā-narasiṁha, accompanied by Hanumān and Garuḍa. The other panels on this side include the depiction of the story of the churning of the ocean of milk by gods and demons, of the exploits of Kṛishṇa (such as the slaying of Kaṁsa, fight with the wreslter Chāṇūra, and the subduing of the wild elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa), and the combat between Hanumān and Garuḍa. There are also scenes from Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa. The Mahābhārata story has been narrated with remarkable skill and brevity, but stops at Śalyaparvan. These epic narrative-sculptures are to be found in the railing to the right of the same entrance.

Other Shrines in the Complex

Although the main deity is Vijaya-nārāyaṇa, there are several other shrines within the temple complex. The most important among them is the one dedicated to Kappe-Chenniga- rāya (Chenna-Keśava with a frog inside), seen to the left of the central shrine. It is a two-celled shrine measuring 124'x105', one of the cells (facing east) housing the Kappe- Chenniga-



Plan of the temple

rāya and the other (facing north) Veṇugopāla (Kṛishṇa as cowherd, playing on flute). Kappe-Chenniga-rāya in the main cell is so called because a legend relates that a frog was found in the cavity of this stone-image after it was completed. The legend insists that this was the original icon, meant to occupy the central shrine. Because the stone employed was defective (as it contained sand and water inside a cavity in it, explaining the presence of a frog), it was abondoned; and the main deity was brought from Bābā-buḍen Hills.

There is an inscription on the pedestal of this image which relates the queen of the Hoysaḷa monarch Bittideva, Śāntale, got this icon made and installed. Śāntale was the senior queen (piriyarasi) and crown- consort (paṭṭa-mahā-devi). She was accomplished in all arts, and was learned. Although she was personally inclined towards Jaina religion, she honoured Vishṇu, who was the State God. She herself records in another inscription: "'Vishṇu is the God, but I am fond of Lord Jina (Mahāvīra) also" ('Vishṇu daivam, Jina-nātham tanagendu āptam'). She had studied Jainism under the celebrated master Prabhāchandra Siddhānta-deva of the Pustaka-gaccha sect of the Deśī-gaṇa branch of Śrī-mūla-Saṁgha. She died in Śivagaṅgā (near Bangalore) in 1131.

Alongside this shrine, got built by Śāntale around 1117 A.D., is the shrine dedicated to Soma-nāyakī (or Saumya-nāyakī). This shrine is distinguished by a tower (vimāna) over it. The front portion of the shrine was built by daḷavāyi from Mysore. To the west of the central shrine is another, dedicated to another form of Vishṇu, Vīra- nārāyaṇa. This is a smaller shrine than the other two, but there is here a sculptural profusion on the outer wall, with rows of large images, about sixty in number. The divinities represented here include Vishṇu, Śiva, Brahma, Bhairava, Sarasvati, and Pārvatī.

There are shrines in this temple-complex which reveal a strong Śrī-vaishnava influence. There are shrines dedicated not only to Rāmānuja but to the Tamiḷ Vaishṇava poet-saints anterior to him, viz., the Āṇḍāḷ (also called Godā-devi or Sūḍi-kuḍutta-nāchchiyar), the lady-devotee who was spiritually wedded to the god Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam, the holiest of places for a Śrī-vaishṇava. There are two more minor shrines, one dedicated to the memory of Vedānta-deśika, greatest of Śrī-vaishṇava teachers after Rāmānuja, and another to Maṇavāḷamā-muni, another celebrated Śrī-vaishṇava saint.

There are three main entrances to the Vijaya-nārāyaṇa (Keśava) temple: on the east, south and north. Originally, they were plain doorways. Later, the grandson of Bittideva-Vishṇuvardhana, Ballāla II, got the door-frames and lintels fixed; the perforated screens facilitating better ventilation were also his idea.

The jambs of the doorways were adorned with pairs of images: the eastern doorway with Eros, the god of love (Madana) and his consort, Delight (Rati); the southern doorway with Hanumān and Garuḍa, two model-deities of devotion; and the northern doorway with two women bearing conventional fly-whisks (chauri). The southern entrance is locally called 'the Friday-doorway' (śukravārada bāgilu), and the nothern entrance 'the doorway to heaven' (svargada bāgilu). The Hoysaḷa crest (the youth Saḷa fighting with a leogriff, śarabha) is to be found in the proximity of these doorways. The eastern entrance directly faces the main gateway to the enclosure. It is when we enter through this doorway that we find the lovely bracket-figures in the side-pillars. We also find here the pierced stone- windows, ten on each side, depicting scenes from two Indian epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhāratha.

Alround the temple runs a railed parapet (called jagatī) composed of eight sculptured friezes, arranged one above the other. The bottom-most row consists of elephants. Above it is the cornice with bead-work associated with leogriff motif or lion's head (simha-lalāṭa) at intervals. The row above it is composed of scroll work with images in every convolution. The fourth frieze is again a cornice with bead-work, above which is a row of ornamental niches with little images of in nymphs and heavenly musicians carved in bold relief. The row above this is a pilaster series, presenting the protrayal of feminine postures inbetween. The seventh frieze comprises of eaves with bead-work, continuous creeper treatment, delicate human and animal figurines and miniature turrets. The top-most frieze (the eighth) is a rail, accommodating panels of tiny sculpted images within enclosures made by double-columns, surmounted by an ornamental band.

Above this splendid railed parapet are to be seen artistically perforated screens (jālandra) with eaves on top. On the walls are portrayed various divinities of the Hindu pantheon, in finely carved sculpture-work, of considerably large proportions. There are about eighty of them, and they include the incarnations of Vishṇu (like Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana and Balarāma), the modal variations of Vishṇu (like Lakshmī-nārāyaṇa and Raṅganātha), sportive forms of Śiva (like Harihara, Gajāsura-saṁhāra, Andhakāsura-saṁhāra and Bhairava), forms of the mother goddess (like Pārvati, Durgā, Sarasvatī and Mahishāsura-mardinī), minor divinities (like Gaṇeśa, Madana and Rati, Garuḍa and Brahmā) and epic heroes (like Arjuna, Daksha, Bali, Śukra and Rāvaṇa).

It is commonly said, and justifiably too, that the interior of the Bēlūr temple is better executed than the exterior, while the exterior of the Haḷēbiḍ temple is better than its interior. The pillars of the main hall would amply bear this out, especially

the pillar known as the Narasiṁha-pillar.

The pillars are splendid works of art. Designed differently they reveal a clever plan to enhance the aesthetic effect of the entire structure. One of the most beautiful pillars in the country is to be found here: the so-called Mohinī pillar. Located in front of the southern door-guard (dvāra- pāla), it contains a lovely damsel, charming like the celestial Mohinī (who was an aspect of Vishṇu himself, and whose presence is to be found in the main deity in the sanctum). It is a remarkable piece of excellent filligree work in stone.

Another pillar, known as the Narasiṁha pillar, was originally designed to rotate. The entire face of the piller in every direction is filled from top to bottom with miniature sculptures of exceeding beauty. One of these tiny sculptured details is the bull which is no bigger than a seed of Bengal-gram (kaḍale- kāḷu-basava). The artists who worked on this pillar were so full of confidence in the excellence of their accomplishment that they have thrown a challenge for all artists in the ensuing generations: a tiny area has been deliberately left unfilled, thus inviting any artist who may dare to fill up this space with work that can be in keeping with the standard of their own work.

The central ceiling panel (bhuvaneśvarī) in the main-hall is another marvellous conception of unsurpassed beauty. The inspired skill of the sculptor has made this square block of 19'x19' a rich gallery of Indian iconography.

It is interesting that this beautiful and otherwise complete shrine does not possess the conventional vimāna (domical tower) over the principal sanctum (or the cell housing Vijayanārāyaṇa). We do not know if this superstructure was constructed when Biṭṭideva got the image consecrated in 1117 A.D. It is sometimes claimed that it was only his grandson Ballāḷa II got it built around 1180. We are told that by about 1298 the wood-work of the vimāna was in very bad shape and the superstructure was about to collapse. It was in 1736 that Veṅkaṭādri-nāyaka IV not only got the vimāna constructed but mounted also a kalaśa (finial) on top of it. In 1774, the vimāna was again crumbling, and Nañjayārya got it re-built; that was when Haider-Āli was ruling over the Mysore state. It is recorded that the Vimāna finally disappeared about 88 years ago, and no attempt has subsequently been made to set it up again.

The altar-pavilion (bali-maṇḍapa) located opposite the main cell housing the image of Vijaya-nārāyaṇa was built by a local chieftain Nāga-nāyaka. It is now known after him as "Nāga-nāyaka-maṇḍapa". We do not know

more about him. The 'marriage-pavilion' (kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa, also called here Suvarṇa-maṇḍapa or 'Golden pavilion') was got constructed by the Mysore ruler Kaṇṭhīrava-narasarāja-Woḍeyar about 1650.

To the north-east of the shrine is the customary tank, here known as Vāsudeva-saras. The entrance to this delightful spot is flanked by beautifully carved elephants. There are also two pavilions here which add considerably to the charm of the tank.

There are two entrances to the temple-enclosure: the chief one (mahādvāra) over which stands a lofty gopura in five storeys, and another called 'the elephant entrance' (āne-bāgilu), probably meant for processional elephants to enter on festive occasions.

The Bēlūr temple has become a by-word in Indian art for decorative sculpture. The entire temple is planned as a composition, in which sculptural profusion plays a predominant role. The figures, human and divine, enter into this composition only to intensify the total effect; no individual piece has been designed to stand out as an independent item. The decorative art that has been deliberately employed here will not tire the eye nor jar the mind, because it occurs in a minor key. Elaborate ornamentation, fanciful filigree work, and rich jewellery do not distract our attention. What the master-architect aimed at and achieved here is monumental grace.