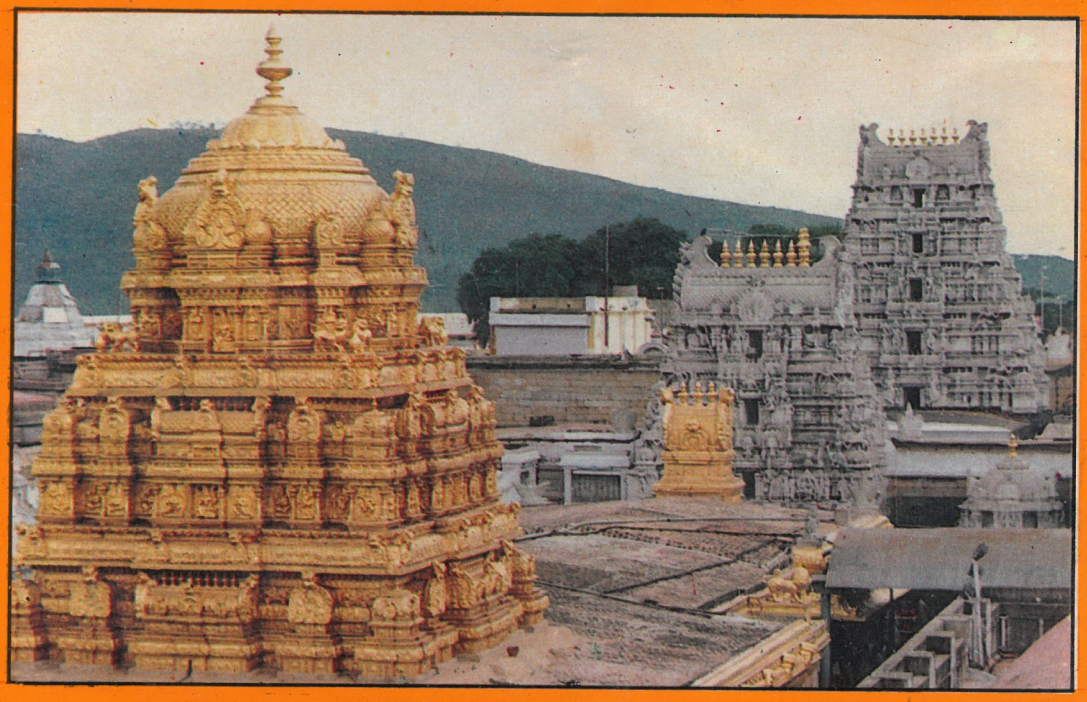
A PROJECT ON ŚRĪ-VEṄKAṬEŚA-SEVĀ-KRAMA



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

THE HILL-SHRINE OF VEṄGADAM

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ĀGAMA OF TIRUMALA TEMPLE



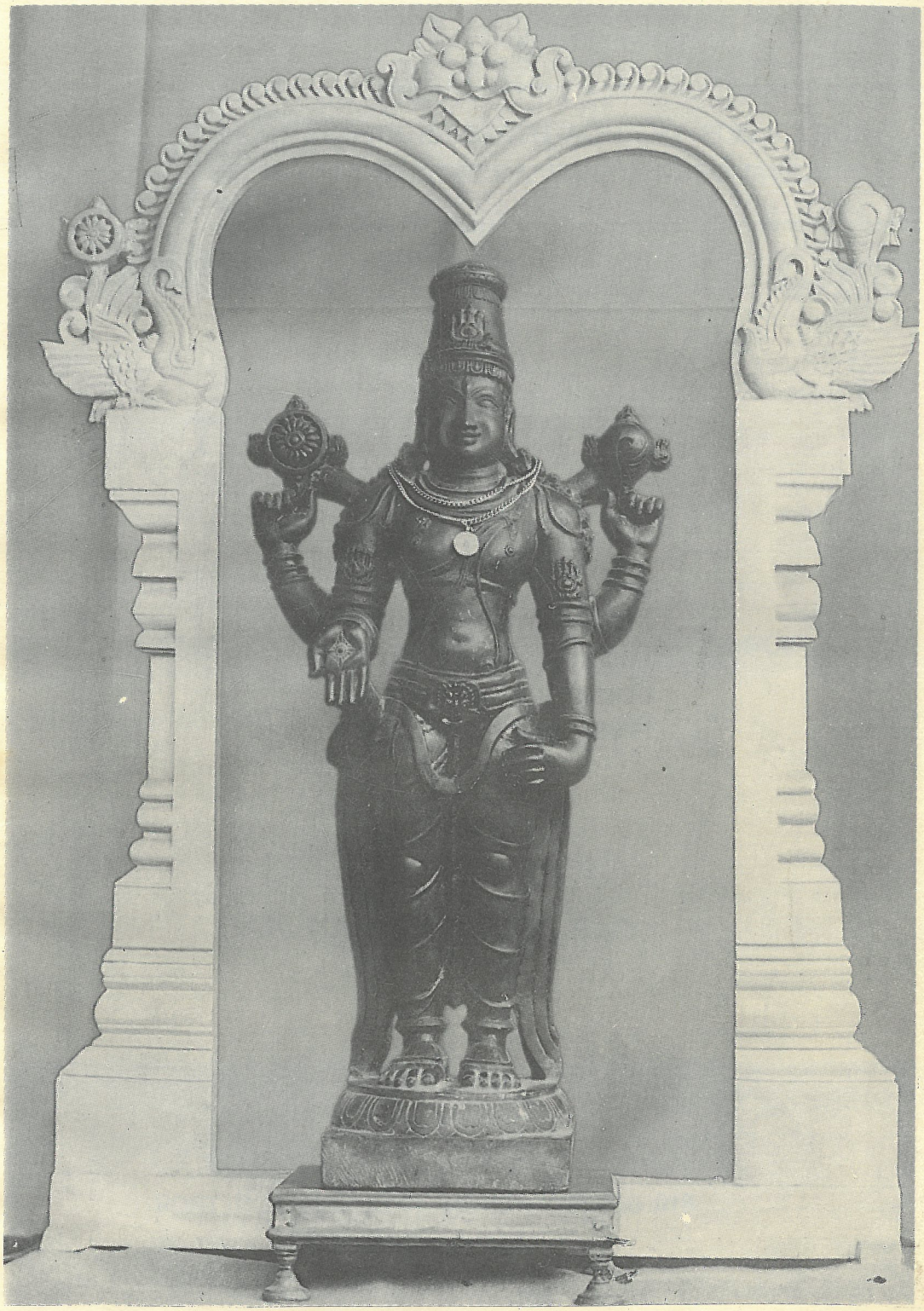
BY

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

THE HILL-SHRINE OF VEṄGAḌAM

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND AGAMA OF TIRUMALA TEMPLE



An image of the hill-god, sculpted by Syamsundar Bhat of Bangalore on the basis of the author's sketches and impression.

निरुपमगुणसिन्धुर्नित्यलक्ष्मीसमेतो
निखिलनिगमवेद्यो निस्तुलो वेङ्कटेशः।
निजचरणसमर्चासक्तभक्तौघरक्षी
निवसतु हृदये मे स्वांघ्रिभक्तिं वितन्वन्।।

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THE HILL-SHRINE OF VĒṄGAḌAM, (Art, Architecture and Āgama of Tirumala Temple) by Vidyālaṅkāra Śāstra-chūḍāmaṇi Vedānta-nidhi, Saṅgīta-Kalāratna Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao, and published by Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Chief Editor and Director, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Post Box No. 1857, Bangalore-560 018, Phone: 624847.

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PREFACE

We have pleasure in presenting to the public this well-documented and profusely illustrated monograph on the Tirumala-Tirupati Temple, which is a famous and popular religious institution in the country. This has been prepared by Vidyālaṅkāra, Śāstra-chūḍāmaṇi, Saṅgita-kalāratna Professor S.K. Ramachandra Rao, who is well-known in the scholarly world. He has worked for several years on this theme, and we are grateful to him for having given us the benefit of his experience and scholarship by way of editing this work in the collection of Manuscripts of Kalpatharu Research Academy, entitled VEṄKAṬEŚA-SEVĀ-KRAMA. This book is at once authentic and informative. He has viewed the temple with a historical perspective, in the religious context, and has based his conclusions on inscriptional and literary evidences.

The Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore, has achieved another important landmark by this publication. It hopes to undertake many more of such valuable publication-projects, and maintain the good name it has already earned for scholarly publications.

The Academy acknowledges the generous help rendered by Dr. R.K. PERTI, Director General, National Archives of India, Government of India, New Delhi.

We take this opportunity to thank all those who have been directly and indirectly responsible for this publication, and in particular Sri. D.V. Chary, Executive Engineer (Retd.), Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati for the excellent photographs he has kindly supplied, and M/S Payonidhi Printers Ltd., for the neat and prompt printing of the volume.

Bangalore
26.10.1993
Vijaya Dashami

Daivajna K.N. Somayaji
Director and Chief Editor
Kalpatharu Research Academy

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INTRODUCTION

When I finished the manuscript of this book, I felt relieved and fulfilled. I could truly say

अद्य मे सफलं जन्म जीवितं च सुजीवितम्।

'Today my life has been fulfilled, and I have indeed lived well'

For this was on my mind for over fifty years. Even when, as a boy, I visited this hill-shrine with my parents and grandparents, I was excited by the idyllic surroundings (which alas has disappeared in recent years) of the shrine, the majestic peaks, the deep gorges and the dense jungle through which one had to journey to reach the shrine. The god of the hills is my tutellary deity, and it has been a custom in our family for several generations now to visit the hill-shrine as frequently as possible, at least once a year. We go to no other place of pilgrimage, and in our pūja-room it is only this hill-god who is worshipped. I could say, with Nammāḷvār, that here is the god whom my parents, their parents, their parents and all their ancestors have worshipped.

".....tiru veṅgaḍattu

eḷil-koḷ śodi yendai tandai tandaikku"

"endai tandai tandai tandai tandaikku mundai....."

During my annual visits as a young man I have roamed about three of the seven hills, visited the several shrines associated with the water-falls and streams on the hill, and have gone round all the apartments and enclosures of the hill-shrine. I also had occasion to study the inscriptions that abound here; I have looked at the temple's art, and architecture rather closely. In art and architecture, it cannot of course compare favourably with most of the South Indian temples. As a student of art I found little here that was really interesting. But the history of the temples over the centuries, as revealed by the inscriptions as well as by the structures, fascinated me.

The enduring hold of this shrine over the imagination and peity of the people from different parts of the country, and for great many generations, filled me with wonder. I have visited the shrine several times when travel to the shrine was rather hazardous, when facilities that we are now used

to were utterly lacking, and when the sole attraction was the god of the hills that stands in the sanctum, towering over all the hills. Even then, crowds of pilgrims and devotees thronged the hill all through the year, excepting in the rainy season. I was struck by the deep devotion and single-minded zeal that were all too evident in these pilgrims, who cared for nothing else, and they did hardly anything else on the hills; especially the rural folk and tribals who climbed the hills almost mechanically went straight to the shrine as if nothing else mattered, and returned home as soon as they had a glimpse of the god of their dreams. What a contrast the current picture presents!

Whatever else I was doing in my professional career, this was always at the back of my mind: to reconstruct the history of this hill-shrine and to present to myself a complete account of the worship that went on there. About fifteen years ago I did write a book in Kannada, giving as many details as I could get from my own visits and my study of the inscriptions. I wove a neat and meaningful fabric within the limits of historical accuracy. The book was no doubt well-received, and it even bagged the coveted Sahitya Academy award. But somehow I was left dissatisfied: I had not discussed the architectural unfoldment of the shrine; and had at that time very few photographs with me to illustrate the peculiarities of the apartments, the sculptures, the icons, and the festivals. I had also not unravelled many a riddle concerning the structures here.

I was, however, sure that I would be able to do a more satisfying job sometime later, and that I would procure all the necessary materials to present the hill-shrine in a much clearer light. My faith in the hill-god left no room for despair. And sure enough, the pieces began falling into their places, doubts were cleared, the dark niches were illumined, and the missing links were gathered. The hill-god found me friends and favourable circumstances.

The first and foremost among the gifts of the hill-god to me in the endeavour was Divi Vikhanasacharyulu (D.V. Chary), the retired Executive Engineer of the Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams. He was associated with the hill-shrine for more than forty years, and is intimately acquainted with every inch of the temple as well as the hill on which it stands. He is an extraordinarily intelligent, energetic, honest and efficient man. He had painstakingly collected all documents, reports, measurements, maps publications and photographs pertaining to this temple and its environs all of which he put in my possession with a readiness that was amazing, and without my having to ask for them! It was indeed a treasure for me. He

was in charge of most of the alterations that have been effected in the temple in recent years, and he spent hours telling me all about them. All the photographs appearing in this book (excepting about twenty) are his contributions, as also the source-materials that have been used here.

Next in the list of gifts is Archakam Śrīnivāsa Nārāyaṇa Dīkshitulu of the Paiḍipalli family (one of the four families hereditarily entrusted with the worship of the hill-god). He made available to me several Āgama texts and arranged for my observation of the icons in the sanctum and of the details of the main shrine. Himself a poet, musician, and artist, he impressed me as a devout, sincere and earnest person, a friendly and intense soul. The hours I have spent with him were most precious experiences for me. He filled my heart with his songs and with the narration of his experiences which bordered on the occult.

He introduced me to the head-priest of the temple, Māḍaṁbākaṁ Śrīnivāsa Bhaṭṭāchārya, who proved a veritable mine of practical and relevant information not only about the Āgamic worship in the hill-shrine, but about the hill-shrine itself. Having spent long years in the worship of the hill-god, year after year, he was probably the best authority I could dream of encountering for discussing the discrepancies between the Āgamic prescriptions and the actual practices in the temple. He has taken very kindly to me, and his explanations are always marked by wisdom wit, and frankness. I consider it my good fortune that I got to know him.

The friend who made my visits to the hill-shrine not only pleasant but altogether worthwhile, who is truly a selfless benefactor in various ways, and whose knowledge of the men and matters in the temple-town is remarkable, is Vāraṇasi Chenchaiah.

Should I express my gratitude formally to these gentlemen who have become my personal and valued friends? I would sound artificial and words would surely be inadequate. As Kālidāsa has put it,

प्रमाणमन्तः करणप्रवृत्तयः

There is a reason why I undertook to write this book. Tirumala is an important religious centre which has always attracted large crowds of pilgrims from far and near. In recent years, with the modern modes of transport and conveniences provided by the Temple administrators, the pilgrim population has increased enormously: on the average about five to six lakhs every year. The Defence Institute of Work study of Mussoorie conducted a survey in this regard in 1976, and found that there were about five hundred people arriving at the shrine every hour, and that about 850 people were passing in front of the sanctum in each of the hours

allowed for sarva-darśana. The study showed that the minimum number of pilgrims that wait for the vision of the god in the sanctum is 7,569 per day, and the maximum (on Sundays, holidays and festive days) is 26,785. The actual time available for each pilgrim to stand in front of the sanctum would therefore be between two and four seconds; walking in the queue, it would take him about eight minutes to move from the Golden Doorway (Baṅgāru-vākili) to the viewing point inside the front porch of the sanctum called Śayana-maṇṭapa! And he would have waited from three to thirteen hours in the Queue Complex (depending upon the season, time of the day and day of the week), to reach the Golden Doorway!!!

The Queue, however, is a necessary evil here. Without this, there would be stampede all the time, and no one would be able to get anywhere near the main shrine at all. The TTD authorities must surely be thanked for the excellent queue arrangements that they have made, and for the conveniences that they have made possible. But the fact remains that every pilgrim becomes a virtual prisoner in the queue passages, and his movement along the queue lines precludes his having a look at the structural details of the temple. His movements become exceedingly restricted, and he can possibly have no idea whatever of the art and architecture of the temple. Not that most pilgrims would be interested in this aspect of the hill-shrine; but for those that happen to be inclined that way, the queue complex presents a handicap.

It is for these few that my book has been planned. I have attempted to provide here as graphic a description as possible of the various structural details of the temple, as many particulars as were available to me of the practices prevalent in the temple. The purpose is to present an integrated picture of the shrine, the deity and the worship. It would not only be artificial but meaningless to divide them into so many disparate studies. I have taken care to consider all or most of the details within the Āgama framework, which is undeniably the most relevant one. And in this sense, this book may claim to be the first of such attempts. But I do hope that other and better studies would follow.

I have also taken as my prop an unusual but altogether interesting poem in Sanskrit called *Śrī-veṅkaṭeśa-sevā-krama*. It is long poem of 122 short two-line verses, taking the pious pilgrim to the hill-shrine in hand, and conducting him right up to the sanctum, showing him all the spots of significance en route. The poem provides an excellent pen-picture of the hill as well as the shrine on top of it. It also describes vividly the main deity in the sanctum.

I have for years been intrigued, and also fascinated, by the iconography of the so-called Veṅkaṭeśa (or Śrinivāsa) form of Vishṇu, which is the form in which we find the hill-god. It is not one of the usual or classical forms of Vishnu that we come across in the Āgama texts or Śilpa-śastra manuals. It does not figure in the lists of four (chatur-murti), five (pañcha-vyuha), ten (daśavatara), twelve (dvādaśa-rūpa), twenty-four (chaturviṅśati-rūpa) or thirty-eight (ashṭa-triṁśad-vibhava-deva) forms of Vishṇu which are well-known in Vaishṇava inconography. Legends or episodes connected with the assumption of this particular form (of Veṅkaṭeśa) are not available in any early texts (like *Bhāgavata or Sāttvata-saṁhitā*). There is, of course, the popular tale recounting Bhṛgu's curse, Vishṇu's separation from Lakshmī, Choḷa-rāja's discovery of the human form of Vishṇu and Ākaśa-rāja's bestowal of Padmāvatī (incarnation of Lakshmī) on Veṅkaṭeśa (the form of Vishṇu) to be found in the Puraṇas. Even as a story it is a poor one: it abounds in absurdities and wild flights of fancy. It is of recent origin, and the Mahants who administered the temple were mainly responsible for its popularity. Whatever the relevance of the tale to the appearance of the hill-god here, it does not in any way explain the iconographic peculiarities of this god.

It has been one of the most precious good fortunes in my life to have been privileged to observe several times the magnificent icon in the sanctum, bereft of all the glittering ornaments, flower-decorations and gilt coverings. Words fail to describe my feelings whenever I have stood in front of this icon, on Friday mornings, bewitched by its beauty, charmed by its grace, and overwhelmed by its majesty. It is truly a remarkable work of art, perfect in every detail, and most compelling in its appeal. Its spiritual attraction is too well-known to need any mention of it by me. Whether the icon is self-manifest or was fashioned by an inspired genius, there is no doubt whatsoever that "thousand eyes would not be enough to look at this god", as a poet spoke of it:

नाथं प्रेक्षितुमञ्जनाचलतटे
नालं सहस्रं दृशाम्

And one who stands before the sanctum and obtains even a fleeting vision of the icon within, would feel fulfilled and ejaculate without words what occurred to the author of *Mārkaṇḍeya-puraṇa* (4,5)

अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यमहो महत्।
वेंकटेशं कृपासिन्धुं दृष्टवानस्मि सांप्रतम्।

There was a time when I was interested in the controversy concerning the identification of the icon as Vishṇu, Śiva, Śakti, Skanda, Bhairava or Vīrabhadra. I got out of it when my father chided me for my interest in such controversies which were unseemly, irrelevant, purposeless and mean-minded. Later, I was duly impressed with what I read in *Varāha-purāṇa* (1, 16, 6-10) about this god who dwells on the sacred hill of Vēṅgaḍam: "Who indeed can fathom your form as it really is? Sometimes myriad-headed, myriad-eyed and myriad-footed; sometimes with but two arms, and at times four-armed; sometimes devoid of all limbs and subtly pervasive like sky. At times, you become readily known to our minds, and at other times perceived only in deep contemplation. For some, you are full of forms, shapes, qualities and aspects; and for others, totally devoid of any identifiable form or attribute. Some realize you as pure awareness, and some only as pure existence. However, what we prefer is the view that you have a magnificent and bewitching form, charming our hearts and bringing hope and succour to our lives. It comes well within our inner experience, and its authenticity as beyound doubt"

ओं नमो वेंकटेशाय शेषाद्रिनिलयाय च।
सिंहाचलनिवासाय श्रीमन्नारायणाय च।।
त्वत्स्वरूपं यथावद्धि ज्ञातुं शन्कोति कः पुमान्।
क्वचित्सहस्रमूर्धा त्वं सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात्।।
कदाचिद् द्विभुजस्त्वं तु कदाचित् त्वं चतुर्भुजः।
कदाचिच्चतव स्वामिन्न किञ्चच्चरणादिकम्।।
आकाशमिव ते रूपं कदाचित् ज्ञानगोचरम्।
कदाचिन्निर्विकल्पेन वेद्यं यत्नेन कस्यचित्।।
आहुस्त्वां सगुणं कोचिन्निर्गुणं ज्ञानमात्रकम्।
किञ्चिदित्येव केचितु सदित्येव तु केचन।
दिव्यावयवसौन्दर्यं नित्यविग्रहयोगिनम्।
वदन्ति केचिदस्माकमापि तन्मतमुत्तमम्।
हृद्यं प्रामाणभूयिष्ठं तं नताःस्म जगद्गुरुम्।।

I am inclined to believe, after years of study, that the hill-god was originally a folk-deity, a god worshipped by forest-tribes and hunters, and that the shrine is of very great antiquity. All available evidences point to the conclusion that the icon was earlier than the temple. For a great length of time, it must have

been a free-standing figure without a roof over it, and the first temple was probably built in the fourth or fifth century after Christ. The celebrity of the icon dates back to the first century at least. Although at first glance, the image seems to have early Pallava features, on closer scrutiny (which is by no means easy to accomplish in recent years, as every one who has been in the hill-shrine knows) it is characteristically pre-Pallava. In fact, the details of the icon (in so far as I was able to note, and as could be guessed from the descriptions left by the early Ālvars), suggest a period for the icon which is long before iconometric and iconographic stylization, and very much anterior to the rise of Saiva and Vaishnava cults as distinct religious ideologies. It is natural, therefore, that the figure does not conform with Āgamic prescriptions regarding proportions, ornamentations, hand-gestures and postural orientations. On the other hand, the celebrity of the icon must have influenced the Āgama ideology in several particulars, and also the early Pallava sculptural representations.

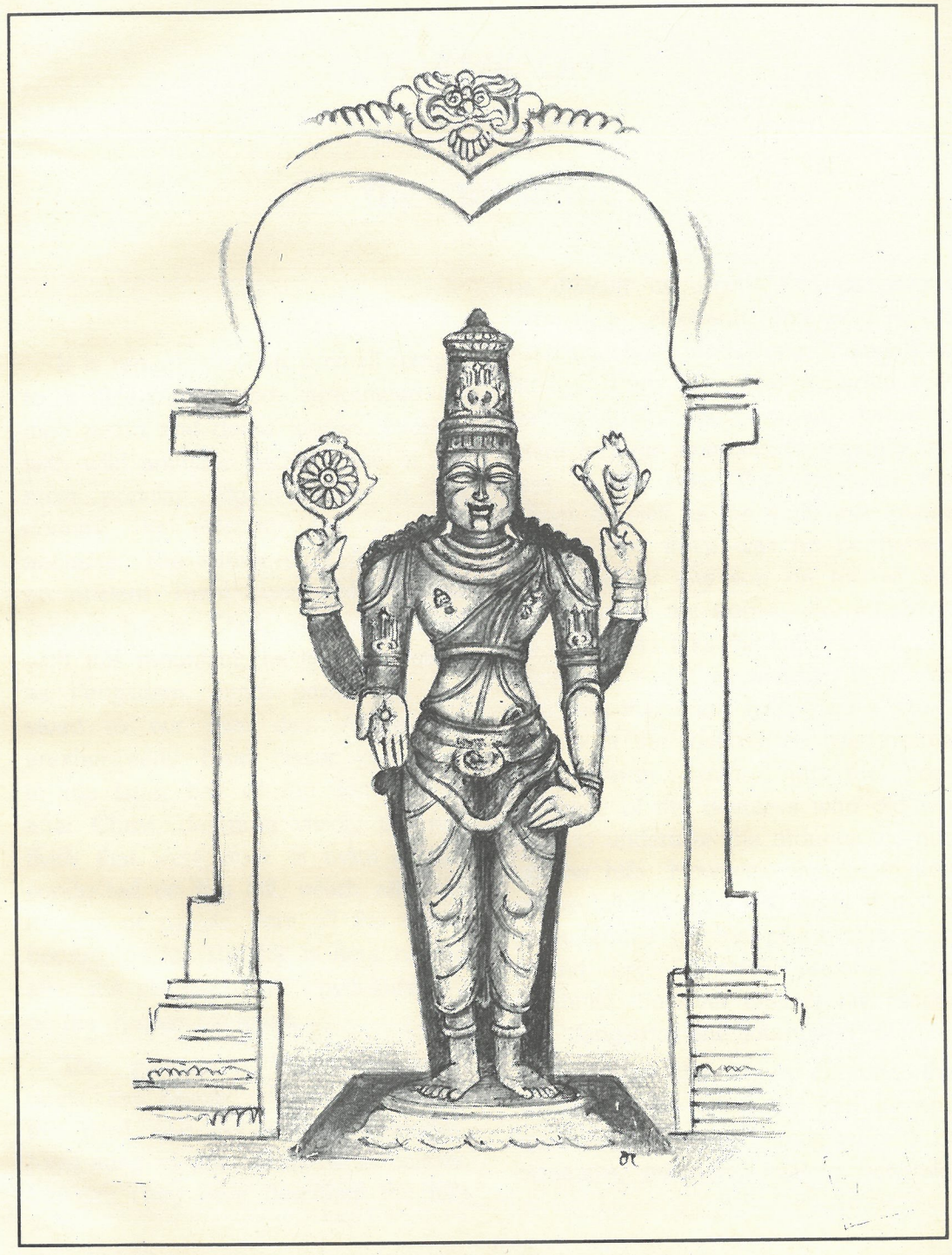
In any case, here is an account of the hill-shrine which seeks to present a comprehensive picture. I hasten to add that it is not in the nature of an academic exercise, nor in that of a research monograph. I have been a devotee of this hill-god all my life, and it is therefore that the feelings of devotion are uppermost in my mind; this is obviously the undercurrent in the whole volume. Writing this book has been for me an act of devotion. And when I have completed it, there is reason to feel relieved and fulfilled.

But I am aware that it was made possible only by the will and mercy of the hill-god himself. I could not even dream of the extremely favourable opportunities that were in fact provided for me to make extensive and relevant observations, and to collect without effort all the material required for completing this work. It was not even in my wildest imagination that I ever hoped that the turn of events would throughout and consistently be in my favour, as it in fact became. I can only ascribe it to providential arrangement. How can I, then, not say that it is the hand of the hill-god that wrote, and that I was but a pen that it held?

धन्योऽस्म्यनुगृहीतोऽस्मि कृतार्थोऽस्मीति च ब्रुवन्

I must record my sense of gratitude to Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Director of Kalpatharu Research Academy, who, as usual, readily agreed to publish this work at considerable cost, and to the Payonidhi Printers who have spared no pain to produce this book excellently.

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO



The Hill-God (Author's Sketch on a Friday)

CHAPTER ONE

The Hill-Shrine

(1)

It is remarkable that a small temple to a little-known god, surrounded by high peaks and dense jungles, infested with wild animals, became one of the most popular pilgrim-centres in the country. Its celebrity has a great antiquity. The author of *Tolkāppiyam*, an ancient Tamil classic of the first century before Christ, was acquainted with this mountain; he gives its name as Vēngadam, which name has survived to our own day. *Ahanānūru*, another early Tamil classic composed in the latter half of the first century after Christ, describes vividly the festivals that were once or twice a year conducted on this hill, which attracted throngs of people from all the neighbouring tracts. The hill is here named after the chieftain Pulli ('pulli-kunram') of the Kalvar hill-tribes.

The peripetatic Vaishnava saint-poets, the Ālvārs, who lived between the third and the seventh centuries, have sung of this hill-shrine in ecstatic fervour. They have described the hills as difficult of ascent and dangerous with huge elephants and wild boars roaming about, and leopards and lions lurking. They have also recorded that people (men and women) gathered there in large numbers to worship the god of the hills. The songs of the Ālvārs as well as the early inscriptions suggest that there was no permanent settlement of any sort on top of the hill, although the slopes were inhabited by wild tribes (like the kalvars, koravas, kurumbas and the yānādis). It is also indicated that there sprang up a proxy temple at the foot of the hills around the seventh century for the convenience of the devotees who did not dare to undertake the arduous journey up the hills. However, the fascination of the hill-shrine was so great that this proxy-temple on the plains was soon wound up. Devotees preferred the hill-shrine, however difficult the ascent and dangerous the journey!

By about the eighth century, the sanctity of the hill-shrine had already appealed to the imagination of monarchs, ministers, military generals,

merchants as well as the common folk from all neighbouring tracts. Periodical visits to the hill-shrine became a regular feature in the area around the Eastern ghāṭs (of which the sacred hill is a part), although the terrors of the wilderness and the risks of being robbed on the way continued, to make the pilgrims uneasy and wary. The hill-shrine also became increasingly affluent with royal patronage and numerous endowments, grants and gifts, although the place continued to be uninhabited except for a few hours during daytime. There are inscriptions available from eighth century down to the nineteenth which give us some idea of how the fortune of the hill-shrine was ever on the ascending note all through the centuries.

Even when the shrine was wealthy and resplendent with a fairly extensive temple-complex and the tower above the sanctum .gold-plated, it still did not have a township worth its name, and the approach to the hill was still full of trouble and risk. There was forest beyond the four streets immediately around the temple and only the priests, guards and other officials of the temple resided in the village. The conditions prevailing on the hill-top around 1800 A.D., soon after the East India Company gained control over the revenues from the temple (in 1748), are documented in the *Meckenzie Collections: Manuscript Translations and Reports,* (Vol.XVI 48, item 6, p 449 preserved in Fort St. George, Madras)

"The streets which surround the Pagoda on the mountain are inhabited, wild hogs, daily at present, come into the place and remain indisturbed by the inhabitants passing and repassing through all the streets, never attempting to bite anyone, unless they are attacked and troubled ,and in that case the wild hog will tear the offender to pieces; otherwise they never disturb any person walking alone. Snakes also abound and frequently come in sight but never bite.

"In the woods of this mountain, a lakh yanadies collect honey, beeswax, chendana (or Red-wood), fruits and roots by great exertions; these they dispose of by sale and also medicinal roots and other rare things by which they maintain themselves, residing in these woods, (caves) which no one ever enters".

The above extract supports the rather paradoxical conjecture that the area beyond the four streets round the temple was extremely dangerous even at the beginning of the modern period. There is also a suggestion in the above manuscript that there was the ever-present danger of one being lost in the woods; instances are also provided of members of the parties of pilgrims perishing during their journey up the hills. This was despite the celebrity, popularity and glory of the temple for several centuries before this period.

The British District Collector writing in the *Asian Journal* of May-August, 1831 A.D. describes not only the temple but the worship as it was conducted then. He records that "the annual net proceeds from this source" (viz. offerings by the people) was 1,02,000 rupees in 1820, and "one lakh forty two thousand and odd" in 1822. He, however, made bold to predict that "the revenues of Tripetty are on a gradual decline and will die in the lapse of years a natural death. Some of the most celebrated temples in the country are worse off. But there are still, alas, many more strong holds of the devil."

The poor officer with an understandable missionary zeal of invoking fury on the heathen, would find, were he to return now to the hill-temple, that the 'devil' has after all won the battle; the revenues of the temple, far from dying a natural death as he predicted, have multiplied marvelously and in terms of wealth; this shrine now ranks only next to the Vatican among the religious institutions of the world. This enlightened Britisher who "on my road to Tripetty we passed several groups of these besoted heathens, and it made the road quite lively, whilst strange anomaly, a slight reflexion excited mournful feelings", would now be stricken dumb looking at the vast crowds of people flocking at this shrine in their thousands every day of the year; he would no doubt have more of the "mournful feelings"!

(2)

The precise origins of the hill-shrine cannot satisfactorily be ascertained. But it is certain that it was an early expression of the ancient cult of deification and worship of mountains, which was almost universally practised. The Babylonian gods (like Entil) abided on hills. The Phrygian Cybele, "the mother of the mountains" stood, veiled in glory, on a mountain-top. The devotees of Zeus visualized the great god holding court on the mount Olympus. The Celtic god Poeninus was lord of the Penine Alps. The Mexican Tlabe had his home on a mountain. In Persia, the mountain Alburz (or Hara Berezaiti) was honoured as the first of the mountains on earth; the sun and the stars revolved round it, and light emerged from it and returned to it. Images of gods were set upon it in ancient times. It was 'brilliant with holiness' and 'glorious with sanctity'. The Japanese word 'Kami' meant not only deities but mountains. The Chinese included their hills in the class of 'beneficent gods' (shen); they worshipped the mountain-spirits with prayers and offerings. Mountains were regarded in all ancient cultures as possessors of unusual and inordinate power.

In India, the worship of mountains is not merely a practice of the past, but it is very much prevalent even to this day. Like many other details, this particular too confirms a continuity of

culture in our country from a distant past to our own times. From Vedic times, all through the long stretches of time, mountains have been deified, and periodical and reverential visits to them undertaken. The folk practices as well as sophisticated religious conduct have regarded mountains not only as abodes of gods and goddesses but as divinities in their own right. Legends are legion which extol the might and merit of the mountains. The tribes of the hills and forests (like the Cheñchus, Goṇḍs, Bhils, Santāls, Iruḷas, Kurumbas, Malai-pandarams, Totos, Yānādis, Birhors etc,) adore the mountains, and look upon them as alive and holy, persistent and benign presences, and protectors of the folk who live in their vicinity.

The great gods of classical Hinduism are invariably associated with hills, valleys, streams and jungles. The Himālayas, the Vindhyas, the Sahyādri ranges, the Malayan mountain, the Śrī-śaila group, Aruṇachala and Nīlāchala are some of the better known among the thousands of hill-shrines in the country. The purāṇas celebrate their greatness and relate tales of their glory.

The mountain with its great height, immensity and mighty presence naturally evokes in the sensitive mind the sense of the mysterious. The natural dangers in the fastness of the forests that cover the mountain, the strange and frightening sounds produced by the elements of nature as well as by the wild animals, the persistent veil of mist and the canopy of clouds conspire to render the mountain at once wierd and fascinating. While located on earth , it pro vides a haven on its top for the denizens of the celestial realms. The early religious consciousness is inclined to endow holiness on the mountain itself; a shrine on top of it is but incidental. The Indian temple is in fact built in the image of a mountain. Many are the inscriptions where a temple is likened to a great hill.

· The hills that are now collectively called Tirumala (or in Tamil Tirumalai, Śrī-giri in Sanskrit, meaning the 'great hills') form the northern part of the Eastern ghats, which constitute a long range with numerous passes from the plains (Kollūr in Chandragiri taluk, Mogili in Chittoor taluk and Sainaguṇta being the principal passes) in Chittoor district of Āndhra Pradesh. Situated on 13°41' North latitude and 79°21' East longitude, the seven hills are connected with the Eastern Ghāṭs through Śeshā chalam hills in the Cuddapah district, Nallamalai ranges in the Karnool district and Nagari hills of Chittoor district. They rise to a maximum height of 3,622 feet above sea level, and are traditionally described as a collection of seven peaks or ridges (hence the expression Sapta-giri), called in the purāṇas by different names: Śeshāchala, Vedāchala, Garuḍachala, Añjanāchala, Vṛshabhāchala, Nārayaṇa chala and Veṅkaṭāchala. The total extent of the sacred hills is one

hundred square miles, and the jungle path across the length of the range of seven hills would be about twelve miles. Of the seven peaks, the first three of them are low, almost flat, while two others are separated by a deep gorge (known as Auvachari-koṇa). The entire range of the hills is visualized as the divine dragon Ādi-śesha, The head being Tirumalai (Veṅkateśvara), the tail being Śri-saila (Mallikārjuna, about 180 miles to the north of the foot-hills of Tirumalai), and the middle portion Ahobila (Narasimha, about 120 miles to the north of the Tirumalai foot -hills). The latter two sacred spots are in the Nallamalai ranges in Karnool district in Andhra Pradesh. The hill range in Chittoor district, however, is known as Śeshachala.

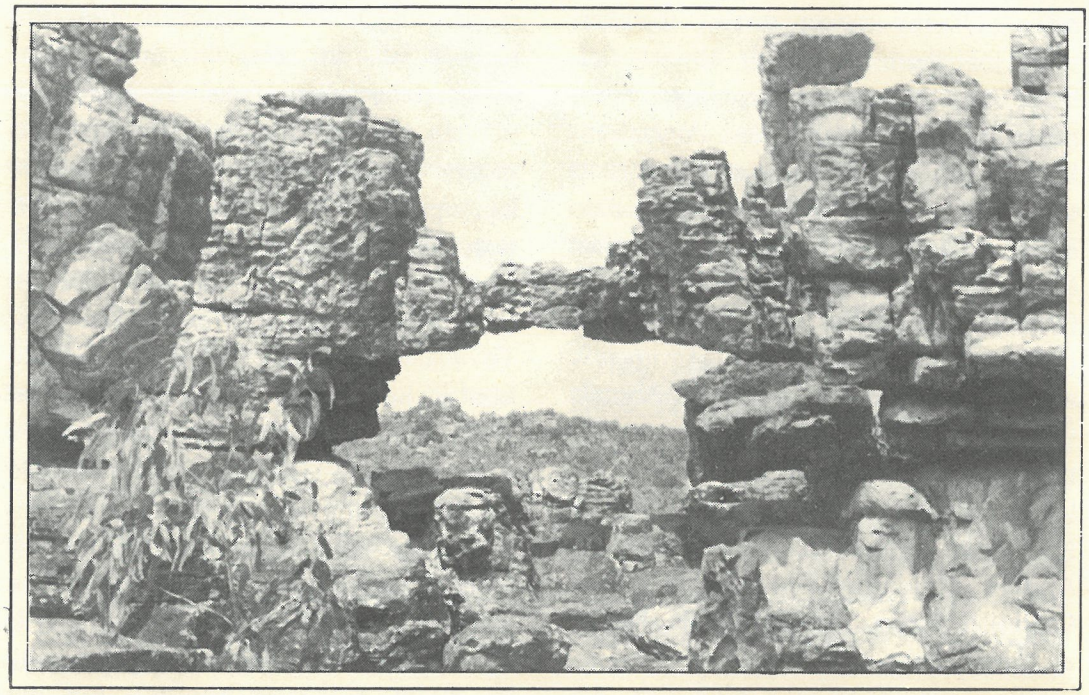
We read in *Bhavishyottara* (2, 43-46):

वैकुण्ठ सदृशा दिव्या नारायणसमाश्रया
शेषमास्तमवादादागतः पुण्यकाननः॥
योजनत्रयविस्तिर्णः त्रिंशद्योजनमायतः।
वदनं वेंकटगिरिः नृसिंहाद्रिश्च मध्यमः।
श्रीशैलः पुच्छभागस्थः सर्वक्षेत्रमयो गिरिः॥

The hill on which the shrine is situated is about 2,800 feet above mean sea level. The standard Bench-mark noted on a stone slab in the left hand corner of the entrance to the temple on the hill, (probably during the late 1800s) gives 2916.70 feet above mean sea level as the height of the hill-top on which the temple stands. It is, however, not the highest hill. In fact, this hill is surrounded by taller peaks. To the north of the temple, the hill on which a trigonometrical station in recent years has appeared is 3,426 feet in height; near Jābāla-tirtha the height is 3,177 feet. To the east, the hills rise to heights between 2,250 and 2,750 feet. To the south, the hill stands 2,920 feet in height. On the south-west the peak known as Nārāyaṇa-giri rises to a height of 3,620 feet, about a mile away from the temple along the Ghāṭ road. The land to the west of the hill is 1,800 feet above sea level. The early references to the god on the hills was that he stood on the highest peak (in Tamil, 'uchchiyil ninrān'); but the references after 980 A.D. show a realization that actually the god stands on a low hill, surrounded by higher peaks ('malai-kuniya ninrān', "one who stands where the hill bends")

Vādirāja-svāmi, who is reputed to have worshipped in this shrine for twelve years (1486-1498 A.D.) at the bidding of the Vijayanagar monarch Krishnadeva-rāya, describes the shrine in his *Tirtha-prabandha* as located in a basin between two tall mountains.

श्रीवेंकटगिरिद्रोणी कोणी यस्यानणियसी।
तं वरेण्यं गुरुाग्रण्यं वेदगम्यं भजामहे॥



A natural rock-formation in the form of an arch (hence now known as sila-torana) to be seen near Chakra-tirtha by the side of the road that leads to the Microwave Station. Geologists have identified the rocks on the hill as Precambrian; and this arch-formation suggests an antiquity of several million years to the hill. It is said that there are only two other natural rock-arches of such great antiquity in the world.

(3)

F. Wilkinson, who was the acting Sub-collector of Salem, sent a note on September 10, 1873 to W.S. Whiteside, Collector of North Arcot, as required by the Board of Revenues, giving a graphic description of the hill-shrine and the approach to it. Excerpts from this note (paragraphs 3 to 7) bear reproduction.

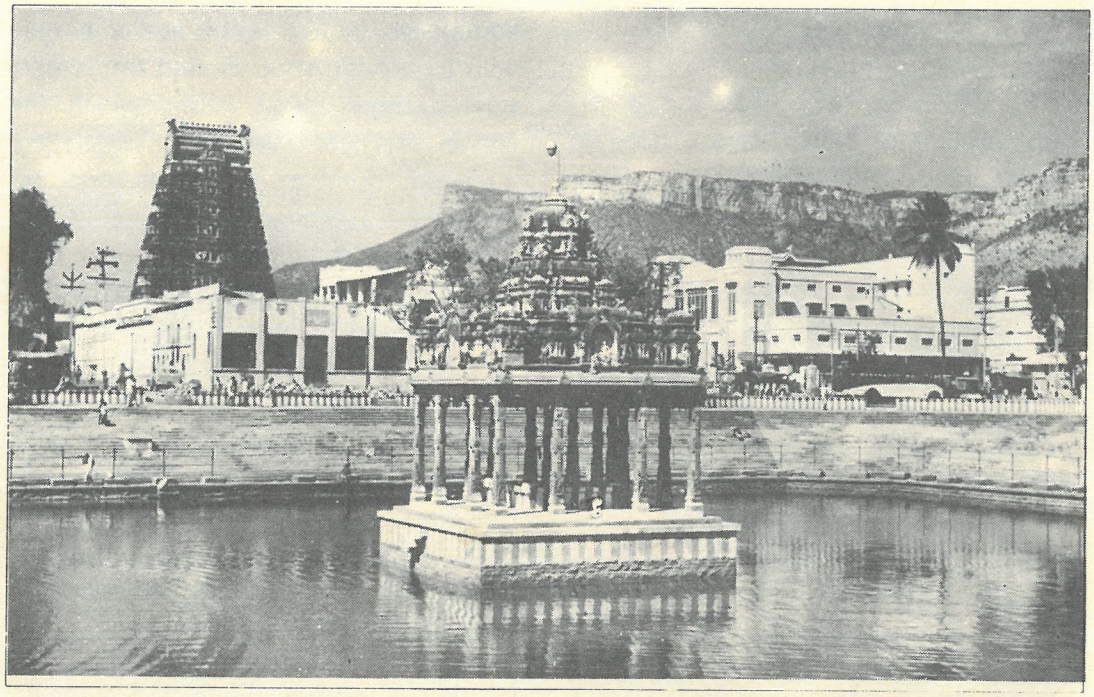
"The range of the hills on which the celebrated Tirupathi pagoda stands are situated in the north east corner of the Taluk. The ascent commences at the Adipadi-gopuram or portal which is about half a mile distant from lower Tirupathi. Beyond this gopuram none but Hindus are allowed to proceed. At the summit of the slope stands the Gali-gopuram or portal where a light is kept burning every night. The distance from here to upper Tirupathi is six miles. The road or path which passes through scrub-jungles, and is in many places very precipitious is paved with stone. There are mantapams and halting places at different intervals."

"About halfway between the Galigopuram and upper Tirupathi, there is a fine well, said to have been sunk by one of the predecessors of the mahant. Joining it is a mattam (Skt. 'matham') and a tope (viz. grove, Kannada 'topu') containing fruit trees is kept up by the mahant himself."

"The village of Tirumalai or upper Tirupathi lies in a hollow, surrounded by hills on every side but the east or south-east. In the centre is the temple with its gilded dome. Round the temple runs a broad street, along which the car is dragged. Facing the street are a large number of mattams (viz., monastic institutions) and chutrams (viz., charitable centres where free food and lodging is provided for pilgrims), belonging to different zamindars and private individuals... At the back of these mattams and chutrems are topes (viz., Topu', groves) containing jack, orange, plantain, mango and other fruit-trees. On the south-west on the path leading to Chandragiri is a fine tank from which the topes are watered."

"Beyond the topes is jungle. There are four roads or paths from upper Tirupathi, the most frequented path is the one which leads to lower Tirupathi, passing through Gali-gopuram; another path leads to Chandragiri; a third to Balapali, and a fourth to the tirthams or water falls".

The sacred hill is traditionally approached from Tirupati, as the above note mentions. Tirupati was for long a tiny village, but now a town, on the plains overlooking the hills, at a distance of less than two miles from the foot of hills. The pathway described above would be about seven miles from Tirupati (or Lower Tirupati in the above note) to the hill-shrine (or Upper Tirupati, better known as Tirumala), and is covered in about three hours. Crossing the seven hills along this route could be delightful, enchanting, awe-



View of the Hills from Tirupati

inspiring and breath-taking, with fine views of cliffs and dales covered by luxuriant vegetation. Most of the journey is accomplished by easy ascents and descents over hill-slopes but there are two rather stiff climbs over steep hill-sides covered by steps: one at the commencement itself (the entrance-tower known as Alipiri or Aḍipaḍi leading to it), and the other just before we enter the holy precincts on top. There is more recently a motorable road, stretching to about twelve miles, from the outskirts of Tirupati right up to the shrine.

Tirupati (called Koṭṭūr after a neighbouring tract before the days of Rāmānuja), however, became cele brated only from the twelfth century, after the advent of Rāmānuja (1017-1137 A.D). There were at least three other approaches to the hill-shrine before this period. The route from Chandragiri, another town of considerable political significance from about 990 A.D., is a much shorter one, a little more than two miles in distance from the foot of the hills known as Śrīpati-vāri-meṭṭu. But it involves a stiff climb over a steep hill. However, the pilgrims who take this route will reach the shrine from behind, which is regarded as inauspicious, whereas the route from Tirupati will take him directly to the main entrance of the shrine. Devotees prefer walking along the main street (sannidhi) facing the deity, and so the route from Tirupati

became more popular, the additional reason being the comparative ease in ascending the hill. The present township of Chandragiri is about seven miles west of Tirupati, and about five miles away to the south of the hill.

A memorandum dated 16th of March 1874 from the Collector to the Secretary of the Board of Revenues gives the distances covered by the roads from the hill-top to places below. The road leading to Tirupati was given as 9337 yards (five miles, two furlongs and ninety-seven yards); the road to Chandragiri 3920 yards (two miles, one furlong and one hundred and eighty yards); and the road to Bālapalli (the third route) 14745 yards (eight miles, three furlongs and five yards). The road from Bālapalli begins with the Chittoor district border.

In deciding the boundaries of this sacred hill-shrine, the East India Company, which took over the control of the shrine's revenues, instituted an inquiry around 1873 A.D. The general opinion was that the area considered holy upon this hill "begins with a tīrtham named Śrīnivāsa-pushkariṇi (where are some feet of the god on the rock) about two miles from Bālapalli on the north-east; that the eastern boundary of Tirumalai is Kirukamadi and Māmandoor, the western Nāgapatla, Gopālapuram and the Cuddapah frontier and the southern Adipadigopuram". Broadly, however, 'on the Bālapalli side by Śrīnivāsa-pushkariṇi and on the east Tumburukoṇa are the boundaries of the hill which belongs to the god" (cf. note by F.Wilkinson).

An important consideration was the location of tīrthas (water-falls, rivulets or ponds), which were visited periodically by the pilgrims. "On these occasions, people bathe in the pools, the puranas are read and rice is distributed". The note prepared by Wilkinson also noted that "all these thīrthams are situated on the northern and eastern sides alone, and there are none on the south and west" (paragraphs 27 and 30). The pathways leading to these tīrthas were also carefully measured in order to ascertain the extent of the territory of the hill-shrine. Twelve of such tirthas were identified on the hill-top outside the immediate vicinity of the shrine, although the purānas spoke of as many as one hundred and eight *(Brahmapurāṇa,* 3, 16)

अष्टोत्तरसहस्राणि सन्ति तीर्थानि चात्र वै।

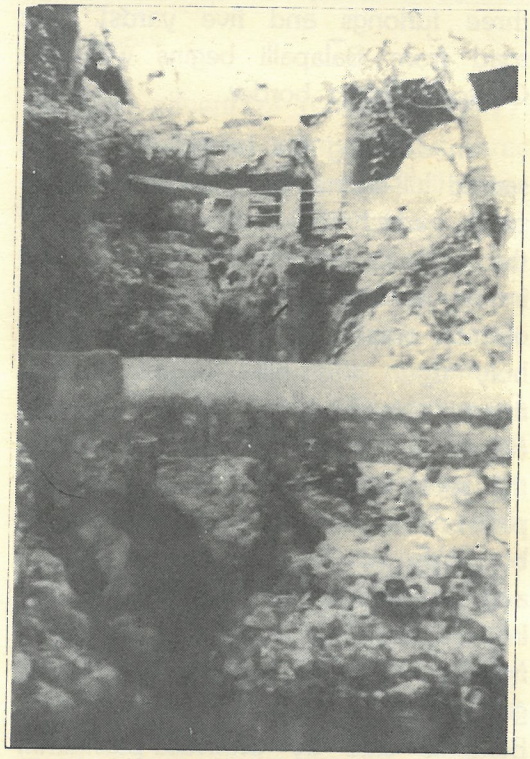
Traditionally, seven tīrthas are recognised as capable of bestowing salvation (sapta-muktidāni) (*Skandapurāṇa,* 4, 8-9)

स्वमिपुष्करिणी चैव वियद्गंगा ततः परं।
पश्चात्पापविनाशं च पाण्डुतीर्थं ततः परम्।।
कुमारधारिकातीर्थं तुम्बोस्तीर्थं ततः परम्।
कृष्णतीर्थमिति ख्यातं सर्वपापहरं शुभम्।।

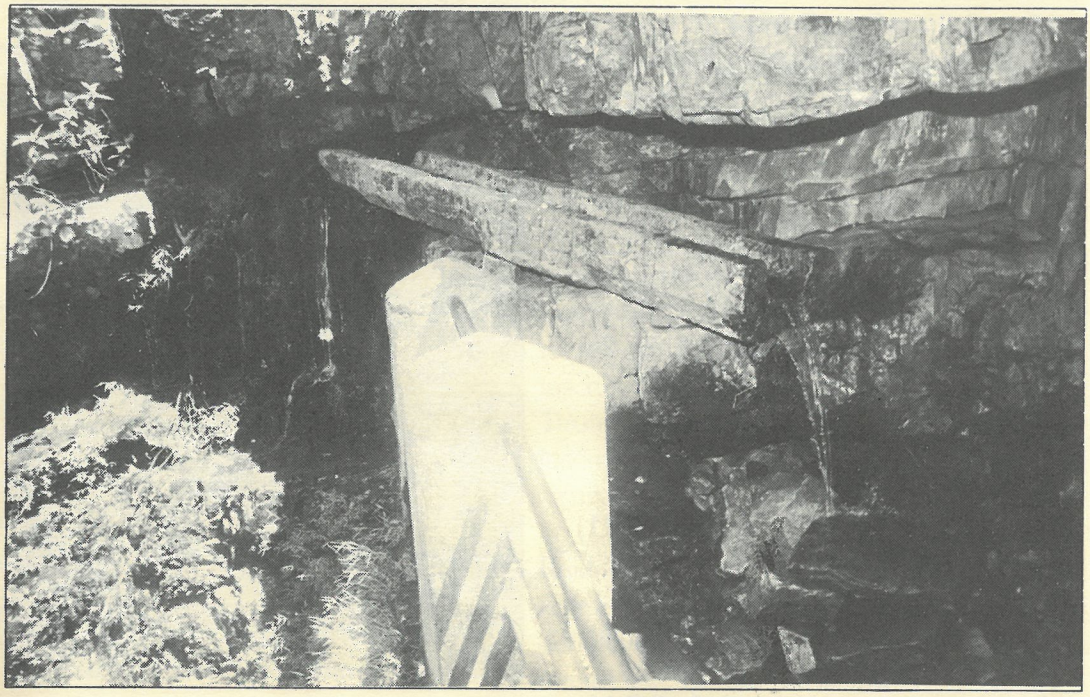
However, the following are mentioned as the sacred waters on the hill:

1. Ākāśa-gaṅgā, two miles to the north of temple (the road measured in 1870 was 2685 yards) but the report says: "One tirtham by name Ākāsa-gangā is about a mile from upper Tirupathi. From this water in which the god is bathed is daily brought to the temple"
2. Jābāli-tīrtha, about two miles to the northwest of the temple (road: 1966 yards);
3. Pāpa-vināśanam, low water-fall about three miles to the north of the temple (1561 yards); source of water supply for the township on the hill;
4. Tumburu-koṇa, about two miles to the north of the temple in the midst of a thick forest (4390 yards);
5. Kumāra-dhārā, about three miles to the northwest of the Pāpavināśa-tīrtha (1200 yards);
6. Vaikuṇṭha-tīrtha, to the northeast of the temple; water coming out of a cave called Vaikuṇṭha-guhā (2304 yards);
7. Gogarbha-tīrtha, about a mile to the northeast of the temple; also called Pāṇḍava-tīrtha (430 yards);
8. Śesha-tīrtha (4390 yards);
9. Rāmakṛishṇa-tīrtha, about six miles to the north of the temple (2740 yards);
10. Sanaka-sanandana-tīrtha, on the same road as to the above, and about four miles to the north of Pāpavināsam; said to be not visible to the common people;
11. Chakra-tīrtha almost two miles to the northwest of the temple where images of Sudarśana and Lakshmī-narasiṁha are installed (835 yards);
12. Pasupu-tīrtha (1961 yards)

Besides these twelve, Svāmi-pushkariṇi in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple (about which details will be given later), Āḷvār-tīrtha (close to the temple), and Kapila-tīrtha (at the foot of the hill, with a shrine to Kapileśvara) are also included in the tīrtha-yātrā prescribed in the purānas. Within the temple-complex itself are two more tirthas. Kaṭāha-tirtha (also



Ākaśa-Gaṅgā



Ākāśa-Ganga

called Toṭṭi-tirtha) said to emerge from the feet of the deity in the sanctum ('idam tīrtham mahā-puṇyam bhagavat-pāda-nissṛtam' *Skanda-purāṇa,* 2, 37, 19) within the first enclosure of the Vimāna-pradakṣiṇā on the northern side of the temple) and Virajā-tīrtha (water of a river called Virajā which is said to flow under the feet of the main deity in the sanctum, collected in a small stone tub in the second enclosure or Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇā, at the entrance of the store-room at the northen corner). Kaṭāha-tīrtha, which was a brick and mortar tub, into which was poured the water from abhishekam of the deity in the sanctum on Fridays, no longer exists; and after digging a borewell in the street behind the temple, the quantity of water in Virajā- tīrtha is very much reduced.

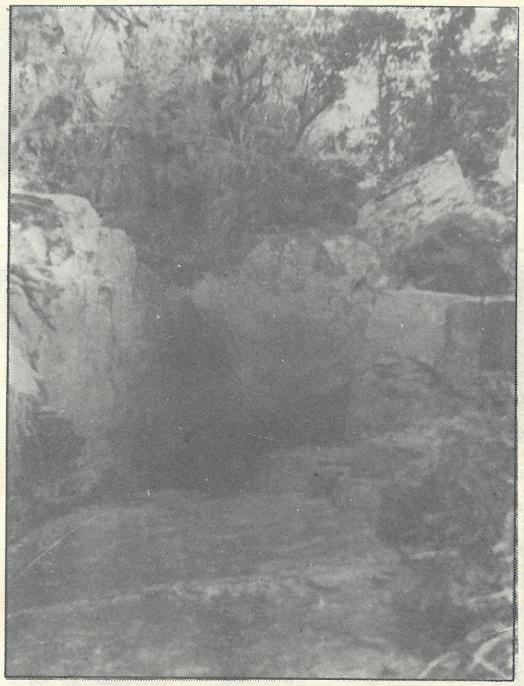
In *Skanda-purāṇa* (4,123), mention is made of another-tīrtha, Brahma-tīrtha by name, on the hill Ghanāchala, which is said to be the residence of Narasiṁha, about ten yojanās away in the southern direction of the temple. And about ten yojanās distant from this tīrtha in the east, the celebrated river Svarṇa-mukhari (also called Suvarṇa-mukhī) flows (ibid 25, 26). According to the Puraṇic accounts the sacred hill Veṅkaṭa, also known as Varāha-kshetra, is situated on the banks of this river, to the north.

सुवर्णमुखरीतीरे ऋषिसंघनिषेविते ।
वर्तते दैवतै: सेव्य: पावनो वेंकटाचल:॥
(Skanda,10,23)

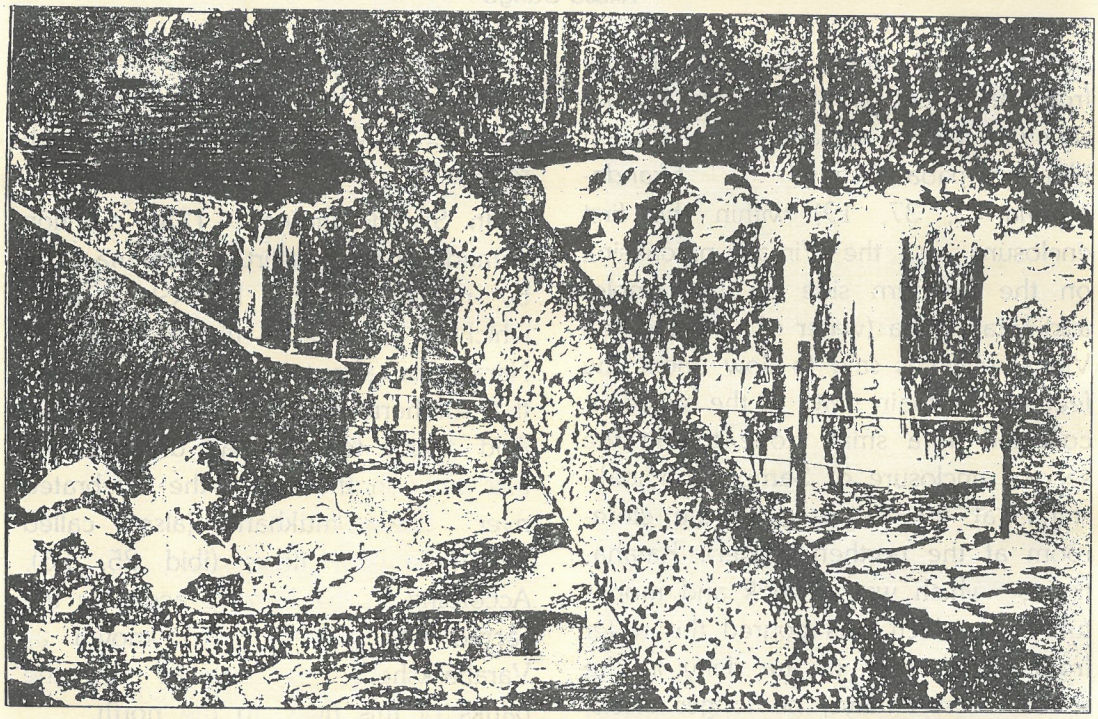
सुवर्णमुखरी नाम नदीनां प्रवरो नदी।
तस्या एवोत्तरे भागो वृषभाचलनामत:।
तस्याग्रे सरसी नाम्नी स्वामिपुष्करिणी शुभा॥
(ibid, 4,1,25,-26)

अथोदीच्यां महानद्यो योजनार्धे विराजते।
योजनोत्सेधसहितो विरब्यातो वेंकटाचल:
(ibid, 3,7,11)

वराहक्षेत्रमित्यार्यै: कीर्तितोयं महीधर:।
सुवर्णमुखरी तीरे विरख्याते वेंकटाचले॥
(ibid, 3,7,11)



Chakra-Tirtha



Pāpavināśana-Tirtha

अज्ञानन्तवृषभनीलकेगरिपोत्रिण:।
एतान्युपवनान्यद्रे: स्युर्नारायणवेंकटौ।
वराहवपुषा पूर्वं स्वीकृतत्वान्मधुद्विष:।।

(ibid,3,7,14)

सुवर्णमुखरीतीरे चोत्तरे क्रोशमात्रके।
वेंकटाद्रिरिति ख्यात: सर्वलोकनमस्कृत:।।

(ibid,3,7,12,13)

Suvarṇa-mukharī comes to a lot of praise in the purāṇas. Its source is given as Agastyachala and destination the Southern Sea.

सुवर्णमिव लोकानां भागधेयादियं नदी।
नीता भुवमगस्त्येन मुखरीकृतादिङमुखा।।

(Skanda. 3.4.5)

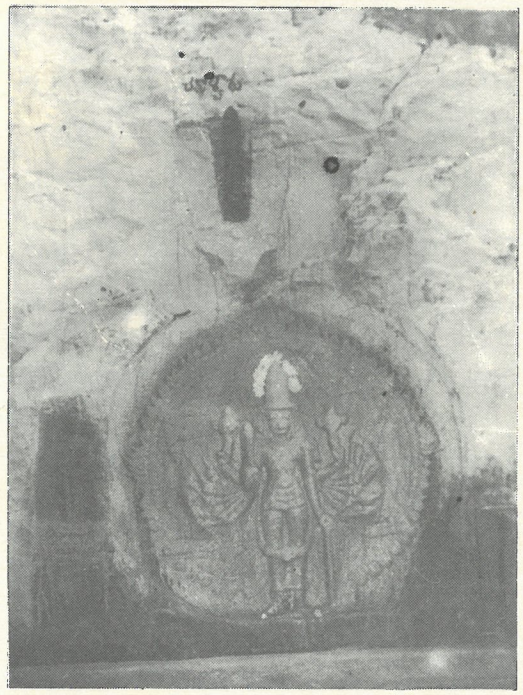
अगस्त्याचलसंभूतां दक्षिणोदधिगामिनीम्।
समस्तपापहन्त्रीं त्वां सुवर्णमुखरीं श्रये।।

(ibid, 3, 5, 42)

But "the river rises just beyond the south east border of the Chandragiri-taluk, near Pākāla passing along the broad valley in which the towns of Chandragiri and Tirupati are situated, it reaches the town of Kālahasti, and passes thence in a north easterly direction into Nellore, disembogues a little north of the Pulicat lake" (*North Arcot Manual* by Arthur Cox, revised by Harold Stuart, Vol I, Madras, 1895 p.7)

(4)

Although the sacred hill is at present known as Tirumala (in Tamil Tirumalai), meaning "the great hill", the traditional name which has been in vogue from a distant past is Vēṅgaḍam (Sanskritized as Veṅkaṭa, and in Telugu and Kannaḍa Veṅgaḷa). All the ancient Tamil classics (like *Tolkāppiyam* and *Śilappadikāram*), the songs of the Āḻvārs, and the early and medieval inscriptions give only this name to the hill-shrine. The earliest inscriptional reference to the hill as Tirumala is dated 1013 A.D.; an inscription of that period speaks of "annai kaṭṭi tirumalaikku" (Inscriptions of TTD, I, 19, during the reign of Rājendra Chola I). Even here, the name may be more descriptive than definitive. The Purāṇas also frequently make use of the Sanskritized form of Veṅgaḍam, as for instance, in *Skanda-purāṇa* (3. 37. 11)



Chakra-Tirtha

शिरसा तं प्रणम्याथ ययौ वेङ्कटपर्वतम्।

or in *Brahma-purāna* (7,25)

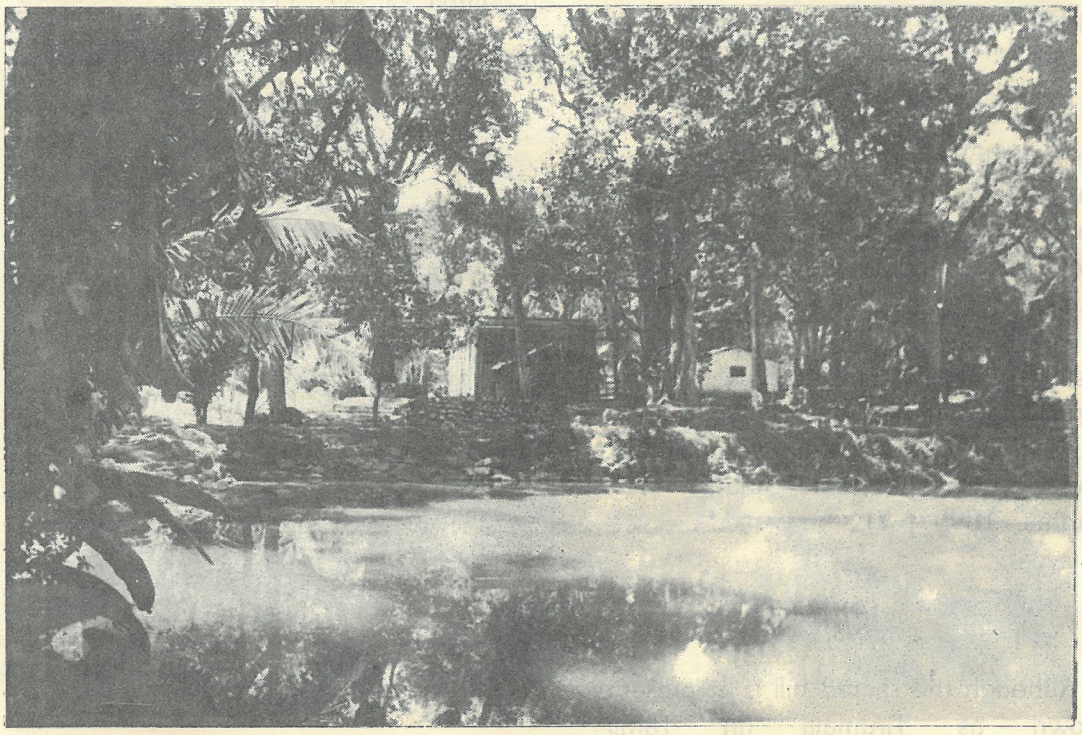
प्रीत्या जगाम शैलेन्द्रं वेङ्कटाख्यं स्वमिद्धये।

What the word Vēṅgaḍam means precisely is not clear. It is, however, certain that it was once used to designate the boundary of a territory. We frequently meet with expressions like 'the northern Vengadam' ('vaḍa-vēṅgaḍam') in early Tamil works. In *Tolkāppiyam*, for instance, we have:

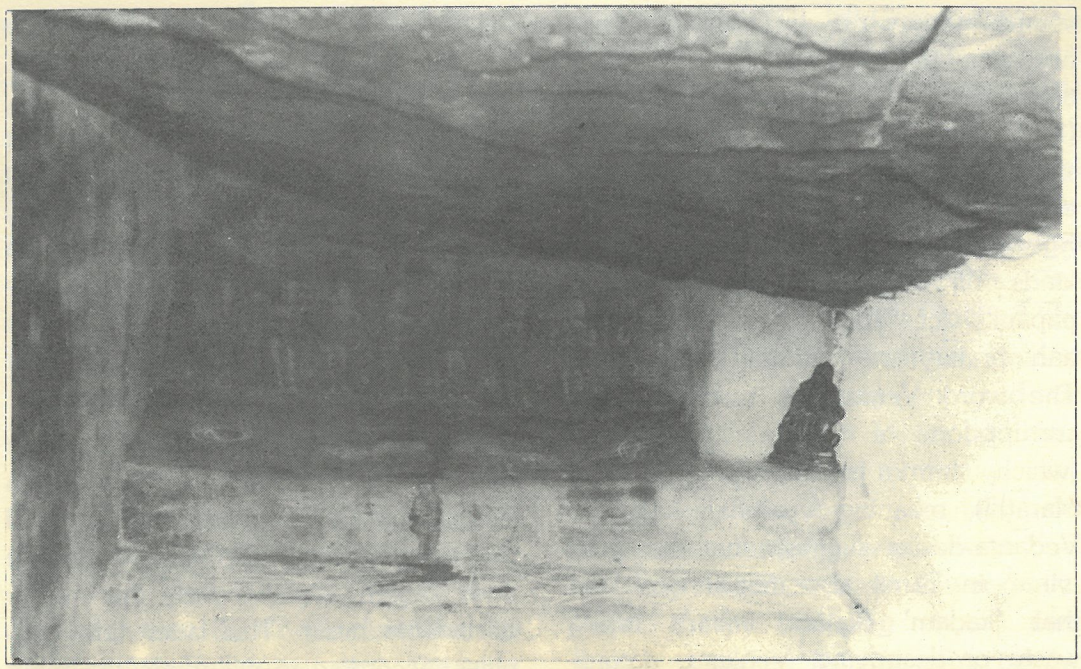
"vaḍa-vēṅgaḍat ten kumari yāyiḍat

tamiḷ kūrum nal-ulaḥam"

The words specify the tract between Vengadam in the north and Kumāri (viz., Kanyā-kumāri) in the extreme south. We find references to an early political division of this part of the country known as Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam, comprising of the presentday district of Chittoor, North Arcot, and Chinglepet during the days of the Pallava monarch, Kō-Vijaya-Danti Vikrama-varma (about 830 A.D.) Toṇḍa-maṇḍa-lam (Tuṇḍīra-vishaya in Sanskrit) which after the days of Rāja-rāja I was called Jayaṅgoṇḍa-choḷa-maṇḍalam, had twenty-four districts each of which was called a kōṭṭam. And a kōṭṭam had its own subdivisions called nāḍus. A kōṭṭam signified an important temple-town after which the entire district was named. Many of these temple-



Jābāli-Tirtha



Gogarbha-Tīrtha

towns were associated with forests and with hills (like Ven-kunra-kōṭṭam, Gok-kaṭṭu-kōṭṭam, Ūṟṟu-kaṭṭu-kōṭṭam, Kunra-vattana-kōṭṭam, Manavīr-kōṭṭam); and Vēṅgaḍa-kōṭṭam (or Tiru- vēṅgaḍa-kōṭṭam) was associated with the Veṅgaḍam hill. This district, which was an administrative unit, consisted of four subdivisions (nāḍus); Kuḍavūr-nāḍu (the villages around the presentday town of Tirupati), Vaikunda-vala -nāḍu (the area around Chandragiri), Tuyya-nāḍu (presentday Chittoor and its suburbs) and Aṟṟūr-nāḍu (roundabout the present Kāḷahasti). Tiru-vēṅgaḍa-kōṭṭam was the region in which the Vēṅgaḍam group of hills were situated marking off the boundary of the province known as Toṇḍa- maṇḍalam.

That this hill was always considered sacred becomes evident not only from the references in ancient Tamil classics but also from the accounts in the purāṇas. Hence ,the later puranic conjectures about the probable meaning of the word seek to establish this sanctity. The word 'Vēṅkaṭa' (the Sanskrit form of Vēṅgaḍa) is made to suggest diminution, burning or destruction (*kaṭa*) of all sins (*ven*). *Bhavishyottara*, says:

सर्वपापानि वें प्राहुः कटस्तद्दाह उच्यते।

तस्माद्वेङ्कटशैलोयं लोके विख्यात कीर्तिमान्॥

likewise , *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa* (6, 44)

सर्वपापदहो यस्मात्तस्माद्वेंकटाचल इत्यभूत्॥

In Sanskrit, the expression 'kaṭa' signifies showering or enveloping ('kaṭe

varshavāraṇayoh'). *Trikāṇḍa-śesha*, however, takes the word to mean a crematorium, buring ground ('pañchāvasthah kaṭah sthānah, smaśānam tu śatanakam). And the expression 'vyaṁhah' is Vedic (cf. *Ṛgveda* 10, 155,1) and means different kinds of evils and sins ('vividhāni pāpāni') (cf. *Taittiṙiya-saṁhitā*: vyaṁhah prātaryagne prataran na āyuh'), The word Veṅkaṭa is resolved as a corrupt form of the Prākṛt 'Vyaṁkaṭa' (which form is still prevalent in Marāṭhi), meaning 'vyaṁhah kaṭayati'. Vedānta-deśika suggests that the word 'vinai' in Tamiḷ also means sins, and that 'kaḍam' (kaṭam) means laying waste or destroying. Veṅkaṭa, according to him, is derived from the Tamiḷ 'Vınai-kaḍam' or Vēṅgaḍam.

'Kaḍam' in Tamiḷ means not only arid waste (cf. 'aranguram', comm. on *Śilappadikāram*), but a mountain-slope ('malaich chāral,' *Piṅgalanthai*) or shrubby jungle ('purvani koṇḍa budaru-kaḍa-ttiḍai', *Nartinai*, 48). There is a Vedic word which means just this, and which is very close to Venkaṭa, 'vikaṭa'. A hymn in *Ṛig-veda* (maṇḍala 10, annuvāka 12 sūkta 155, ascribed to Śiriṁbiṭha-bhāradvāja), employs this word almost in the same context, and it is small wonder that *Bhavishyottara-purāṇa* (4,21) quoted this hymn as a scriptural authority (śruti):

अरायि काणे विकटे गिरिं गच्छ सदान्वे

The deity (devatā) of this hymn is the destroyer of ill-luck (Alakshmighna). The hymn entreats the evil ('arayi', adāyini, miserliness, 'kaṇe', kutsita śabda-kariṇi), which is of deformed gait or nature like the torturous pathway of a densely forested hill (padapaṭha of 'vi-kaṭe' is vi+akāṭe; meaning 'vikṛta-gamane, vikṛatāṅgi vā, Sāyaṇa), to disappear in the loneliness of the mountain ('girim', nirjana-pradeśaṁ).

There is also another explanation offered. The commentary on *Tiruvaimoḷi* (3, 36 iḍu) takes the word to be comprised of 'veṁ' (burning) and 'kaḍam ' (debts viz., the misery of indebtedness). The latter term signifies, according to this work, the three debts with which an individual is born (debt to the gods, 'deva-ṛṇa', debt to the ancestors, 'pitṛ-ṛṇa', and debt to the sages, 'ṛshi-ṛṇa') and to discharge himself from which he strives all his life. Veṅgaḍa is the hill which helps him accomplish this purpose.

Varāha-purāṇa (4, 31) provides altogether a different meaning :'veṁ' is seed of immortality, while 'kaṭa' is immeasurable wealth; veṁkaṭa thus accommodates the benefits of ultimate release from the bonds of transmigration (moksha or nihśreyasa) and of prosperity in this life here and now (abhyudaya);

वेंकारो अमृतबीजस्तु कटमैश्वर्यमुच्यते।
अमृतैश्वर्यसंघत्वाद्वेंकटाद्रिरिति स्मृतः॥

But *Skanda-purāṇa* (3,10) suggests that Vēṅkaṭa is only a corrupt form of Vaikuṇṭha, which is Vishṇu's natural abode. There are references like

वैकुण्ठनाम्नि शैलेस्मिन्नद्य प्रभृति सर्वदा।
कृतावासो भविष्यामि मुने प्रार्थनया तव॥
सुवर्णमुखरीस्नानक्षालिताघौघकर्दमाः।
अस्मिन् वैकुण्ठशैले मां ये पश्यन्ति समाहिताः॥
(ibid 50,70)

The names Vaikuṇṭha and Vēṅgaḍa (Vēṅkaṭa) no doubt bear a close resemblance, and for the Sanskrit Vaikuṇṭha, Vēṅgaḍa may reasonably be the prākṛit form (tadbhava). Bhavishyottara (2, 42-44) describes this hill like unto Vaikuṇṭha, verily the form assumed by Vishṇu's couch Śesha.

सुवर्णगिरिपुत्रस्तु सर्वतीर्थसमन्वितः।
साक्षाच्छेषावतारो सो सर्वधातुविराजितः।
वैकुण्ठसदृशो दिव्यो नारायणसमाश्रयः।

The celebrated Vaishṇava saints, known as the Āḻvārs (who lived between the third and the seventh centuries A.D.) have visited and described this sacred hill, which is known to them only as Vengadam. They confirm the general notion prevailing at that time that the mountain itself was held sacred and their songs indicate that the entire region, hill-ranges with peaks as well as the plains around them was one vast and thick jungle, at quite a few places impenetrable. The hill, Vengadam, according to them, abounded in huge black elephants, poisonous snakes, wild pigs, monkeys, lions and yāḻis which roamed about freely. The slopes were marked by tall bamboo bushes "growing upto the sky", decay and sprout again growing to great heights. The forest on top of the hills 'rubbed the sky'. There were numerous streams with "flowery creepers entwined on either bank", which developed into torrential rapids due to heavy rain. There was dense fog on the hills most of the year, and the woods were cool and fragrant. There were flower-groves "with honey dripping from their branches, sucked by humming beetles and buzzing bees"; there were ponds filled with lovely lotuses.

But there were also the Korava tribesmen, who drove away the elephants with bows and arrows. The early Āḻvārs refer to their valour as well as their splendid appearance. Other tribes like Kurumbas, Iruḷas, Yānādis, Cheñchus and Kāḍars are known to have resided in the Nallamalai ranges. They moved about fearlessly in the jungles and were excellent hunters. It is probable that they had their scattered settlements close to the hill-ranges. In fact, the early Yādava kings were kurumbas originally; they overpowered the more primitive hunting tribes (vedars, ventari) and founded their settlements in Nārāyaṇavanam on the banks of the

Aruṇā river (three miles from the presentday Puttūr).

"They are the modern representatives of ancient Pallavas, who were once so powerful in southern India. In the seventh century the power of the Pallava kings seems to have been at its zenith, though very little trace of their greatness now remains. But soon after this, the Koṅgu, Choḷa and Chāḷukya chiefs succeeded in winning several victories over them, and the final overthrow of the Kurumba sovereignty was effected by the Choḷa king Āḍoṇḍai about the eighth century A.D. and the Kurumbas were scattered far and wide" (A.F. Cox., *Manual of the North Arcot District*, revised by H.A. Stuart, Madras, 1895 p.220)

Even as late as 1804 A.D., "there were about a lakh of yanadis who collected honey and bees' wax and sandal wood, fruits, and roots by great exertion. These they dispose of by sale and also medicinal roots and other rare things by which they maintain themselves, residing in these woods" (cf. *Meckenzie Collections, Manuscripts translations and Reports*, vol XVI, ITEM 6, p. 449). The Yanadis are a dark-skinned tribe of middle height. "They are regarded as possessing magical powers, and are often applied to for fortune-telling, spells and such exercises of their power by members of the lower castes"" (A.F.COX. op. cit, p. 250)

The Tamiḷ songs of the Āḻvārs make it clear that none but the Korava tribesfolk lived in the woods on Vengadam, but they also describe the fascinating festivals that were occasionally held on the sacred hill to participate in which large groups of people assembled from the neighbourhood. The most picturesque of these festivals, according to the early Āḻvārs, was the one held on Mukkoṭi-dvādaśi ('paraśi-naḷ'), when men and women with incense and flower-garlands ascended the hill. It is not clear if there was at that time a temple to the god of the hills (whom the Āḻvārs uniformly call Veṅgaḍattu-meyān or Veṅgaḍattān), but the hill itself was held in high esteem: "It annihilated the sins". Even when the shrine became celebrated, the sanctity of the Veṅgaḍam hill did not disappear. Vedānta-deśika, for instance, begins his *Dayāśataka* (a hymn of hundred verses eulogizing the mercy of the god on the hill Vengadam) with an adoration of the hill, which is verily the form assumed by the grace of the great god, even as the flow of sugar-cane juice gets solidified as a rock of sugar:

प्रपद्ये तं गिरिं प्रायः श्रीनिवासानुकम्पया।
इक्षुसार स्रवन्त्येव यन्मूर्त्या शर्करायितम्॥

Even as late as 1803 A.D. Geo. Stratton, who was the Collector of Chittoor, noted: "In such veneration is even the hill held that pilgrims

resorting to the pagoda prostrate themselves to the ground first getting a sight of the range of hills connected with it" (Report to the Board of Revenue, dated 31st January 1803).

The hill that provided the scene for the self-manifestation of God, was traditionally looked upon as the worthy offspring of the mythical mountain of gold, Sumeru, which is the hub on which the universe revolves.

We read in *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa* (1, 7):

मेरो: पुत्रो महाशैलो जम्बूनदीतटे।
योजनत्रयविस्तीर्ण: त्रिंशद्योजनमायत:।
वेंकटेति कृतं नाम्ना

and in *Skanda*,2,37,76

मेरो: पुत्रो महापुण्य: सर्वदेवाभिवन्दित:।
वैकुण्ठलोकादानीतो विष्णो: क्रीडाचलो महान्॥

It was an aspect of Vaikuṇṭha itself, the natural abode of God, who however preferred the Vengadam hill to Vaikuṇṭha in his compassion for the mortals ('tyaktvā vaikuṇṭham uttamam svāmi-pushkariṇi tire ramayā saha modate'),

In *Bhavishyottara* (10, 19), this hill has been described as Vaikuṇṭha itself

वासुदेवो वसत्यत्र वैकुण्ठगिरिमूर्धनि।

and elsewhere (ibid, 9, 25)

वैकुण्ठस्थो हरि: साक्षाद्वर्तते वेंकटाचले।

According to *Skanda-purāṇa* (10, 63), this is the hill dispatched from Vaikuṇṭha for the god's sport:

गन्धर्वयक्षशैलादि सेवितं मेरुपुत्रकम्।
वैकुण्ठादागातं दिव्यं कीडाचलमनुत्तमम्।
मेरुपुत्रो महापुण्य: सर्वदेवाभिवन्दित:।
वैकुण्ठलोकादानीतो विष्णो: क्रीडाचलो महान्॥

The sanctity of the hill was so great that it was considered a sin to walk up the hill. The purāṇas prescribe that before one thinks of ascending the hill, he must seek forgiveness from it: "It is a golden mountain, and all the gods abide in it and adore it. How can a mortal set his foot on it?" But one has to ascend the hill to behold the great god that dwells on its top. Therefore, one prays the hill to forgive him and permit him to see the god; and he must walk on it gently, with humility in his heart (Skanda-purāṇa, 9, 10-13)

वेंकटाद्रि गिरिं तं तु प्रार्थयेत्पुण्यवर्धनम्।
स्वर्णाचल महापुण्य सर्वदेवनिषेवित॥
ब्रह्मादयोऽपि यं देवा: सेवन्ते श्रध्दया सह।
तं भवन्तमहं पद्भ्यांमाक्रमेयं नगोत्तम।
क्षमस्व तदघं मेद्य दयया पापचेतस:।
त्वन्मूर्धनि कृतावासं माधवं पर्शयस्व मे॥
प्रार्थायित्वा नरस्त्वेवं वेंकटाद्रिं नगोत्तमम।
ततो मृदुपदं गच्छेत् पावनं वेंकटाचलम्॥

The purāṇas describe this hill as enduring through all the aeons: in the first aeon it was called Vṛshādri (or Vṛshabhāchala); in the second Anjanādri, in the third Śeshādri and in

the fourth Vēṅkaṭachala (viz., Vēṅgaḍam).

कृते वृषाद्रिं वक्ष्यन्ति त्रेतायामञ्जनाचलम्।
द्वापरे शेषशैलेति कलौ वेङ्कटाचलम्।
नामानि युगभेदेन शैलस्यास्य भवन्ति हि।।

(5)

It is a matter of pure conjecture as to when it was that the temple appeared on the hill. As mentioned above, the ancient Tamil classics and the songs of the early Āḻvārs do not refer to any temple having been there. *Silappadikāram*, however, speaks of the hill as Vishṇu's ('seṅkaṇ neḍiyon kunram'). The early Āḻvārs also identify the god of the hill as Vishṇu, whose image they saw on the hill. Their songs suggest that it was a free-standing image, exposed to sun, moon, wind and the rains. The later Āḻvārs indicate presence of a low stone enclosure round the image, allowing the image to be seen from all sides. (e.g. Tirumaḷiśai-āḻvar). The presence of a regular temple is not documented until 830-850 A.D., when a local ruler of the Bāṇa dynasty, Vijayaditya, made arrangements for a perpetual light to temple to the hill-god (nandā-viḷakku for Tiru-vēṅgaḍattu-peruman-aḍigaḷ I, 3). But then it must have been a small shrine, and people must have visited it only once or twice a year, during festivals. The hill was still a thick forest, filled with dangers of all sorts, and inaccessible to all but the brave and sturdy, as evident from the songs of the Āḻvārs.

It is probable that considering the long-standing and ever-increasing celebrity of the god of the hills (who has always been known simply as the 'god of the Vēṅgaḍam hill', 'Veṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān', without any sectarian labels), a proxy temple, housing a representative image of the god of the hills, was set up at the foot of the hills, for the benefit of the devotees and for assuring daily worship. In fact, an inscription of 830 A.D. found in the Padmāvati temple at the present day Tiruchānuru refers to Ulahapperumānār, who was a Chola chief governing Chola-nāḍu under a Pallava ruler, making a gift of thirty kalanju of gold for burning a lamp in the temple that was set up at Tiruchānuru (called in the inscription Tirucchokinūr, a village in Kuḍavūr-nāḍu district of Tiruveṅkaṭa-koṭṭai division). The god is called 'Tiru-viḷaṅ-koil peruman-aḍigal' (the god of the minor shrine or provisional temple, 'bālālaya' or 'taruṇālaya' in the Āgama terminology, 'iḷaṅ-koil ''in Tamil), who was deemed to be representative of the god of the Veṅgaḍam hills ('tiru-veṅkaṭattu emperuman-aḍigaḷukku eḷundaruvitta tiru-viḷaṅkoil-peruman aḍigaḷukku...')

The expression 'bālālaya' (tiruviḷaṅ koil, 'young temple') signifies a temporary or make-shift shrine when the main temple is being constructed or repaired It is not meant to be a regular or permanent temple. The deity

worshipped here would eventually be accommodated within the sanctum. This structure, according to Āgama must be situated to the east or north east of the main shrine, and must be square in shape (e.g. Rauravāgama, 27, 5). It may further have a pavilion (maṇṭapa) in front of it, called 'agra-maṇṭapa'. The 'tiru-viḷaṅ-koil' in this case was obviously in the hill-shrine, in front of the sanctum. It is probable that the hill-shrine had been in a state of disrepair, and the 'kautuka-bera' was housed in a temporary substitute shrine.

While we get to know that such a temple existed in Tiruchānuru no traces of it have survived now; it must have fallen into disuse or must have been closed, when hill-shrine was repaired and became more easily accessible, with forests cut down and pathways made. In any case, the sanctity attached to the hill-shrine could never be transferred to any other shrine, however representative. But Tirucha nuru, which was a deva-dana village, bestowed upon the hill-shrine, continued to be the seat of administration (including the arrangement of worship in the hill-shrine) till at least 1013 A.D. An officer, who probably was a governor of a province (adhikari Korra-mangalam-udaiyan) encamped at Tirucha nuru to settle a case concerning the hill-shrine. The assembly of the the deva-dana village (tiru-mundiyam) had received twenty-three gold coins (pon) to light twenty-four lamps in the hill-shrine, including one of camphor. But the servants of the temple were burning only two lamps, because of some difficulty in the transference of funds. The officer heard the case and ordered that the necessary money must immediately be transferred to the temple funds to enable all the twenty-four lamps to be lit.

This inscription suggests that the hill-shrine was already there: the lighting of as many as twenty-four lamps would imply the presence of a sanctum and a covered circumambulatory pathway (pradakshina-patha), with a porch (mukha-mandapa) in front of the sanctum. There is also reference to ghee and other articles of daily provision being transported to the hill-shrine from Tiruchanuru. Tirupati (Kottur) had not, at that point of time, become important enough to serve as the gateway to the hill-shrine. It rose into prominence only during the rule of the Yadava kings, and after Ramanuja arrived on the scene.

We have another inscription dated 614 A.D. (TT No. 18, this is a correction of opinion that this inscription is dated 966 A.D.), assigned to the reign of the Pallava king Mahendra-varman (600- 630 A.D.) and found in the first prakara (north wall) of the hill-shrine, which records that Samavai(kadavan-perun-devi), daughter of a Pallava chieftain (pallavap-pergadeyar) and wife of the kadava chief Sakti-vitankan another Pallava chief, got a silver image installed in the

Tiru-vilaṅ-koil of the hill-shrine, for purposes of regular worship (karmarchanā). This inscription will be noticed again when we discuss about the mobile icons in the shrine. But it should be mentioned here that the hill-shrine had a' tiruvilaṅ-koil' of its own, quite distinct from the later (830 A.D.) one at Tiruchanuru. The location of the Tiru-vilaṅ-koil in the present hill-shrine will be discussed later.

Yet another inscription which suggests the growing popularity of the hill-shrine is dated about 1000 A.D. and found in the western wall of Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa of the hill-shrine (TT No. 117). Ulaga-mā-devi (Danti-śakti-viṭaṅki), queen-consort of the Choḷa king, Raja-raja I (985-1005), provided a lamp for Tiru-veṅkaṭam-uḍaiyan, the god of the hill-shrine. Thus the temple was already becoming celebrated, although there is no inscriptional reference whatever to the founding of the temple.

The puraṇas however, ascribe the origin of the temple to Raṅgadāsa of the Paṇḍya-country. Even before his days, it is said that a Haihaya king, Saṁkha by name, had excavated the image of the god from an ant-hill under a tamarind tree on this hill-top in the latter part of the first aeon (*Brahma-purāṇa*, 6, 20-21)

वल्मीकस्यान्तरे विष्णोः प्रतिमा वर्तते शुभा।
शंखेन निर्मिता पुण्या सर्वपापहरा मला।
जानुमात्रे निमग्ना हि तिन्त्रिणीवृक्षमूलतः॥

In course of time, a Vaikhānasa priest, Gopinatha by name, was ascending the hill everyday to worship this image ('pritya jagama śailendram veṅkaṭākhyam sva-siddhaye'); and he was joined by a śudra devotee, Raṅgadāsa, who undertook to provide flowers for daily worship. The two of them are said to have lifted the image from under the tamarind tree to its left side and provided a hut-pavilion ('tṛṇaih kṛtvā cha maṇḍapam') for it (ibid.30);

तिन्त्रिणीवृक्षमूलस्थं हरिं परम्।
उद्धृत्य पश्चिमे भागे स्थापयामासतुश्च तौ।

According to *Varāha-purāṇa* (9, 16-50), Raṅga-dāsa, mentioned earlier, when he was travelling in the vicinity of Nārayaṇa-puri in Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam, heard about the hill-shrine and went through a thick jungle to reach it. He was joined by the Vaikhānasa-priest, Gopinatha, and the two of them beheld the image of the god "poised in air," viz. open to the elements ('ākaśastha'), beneath a tamarind tree on the southern bank of the pond, now known as Svami-pushkariṇi. Raṅga-dāsa resolved to raise a flower-garden in the vicinity. Both Gopinatha and Raṅga-dāsa lived on the hill, levelled the ground and cleared the jungle around the tamarind tree, and built a wall of stones alround the image. Raṅga-dāsa raised a garden of

flower-plants, creepers and trees. He spent seventy years in the service of the hill-god, and after he died he was reborn as Toṇḍamān, the ruler of Nārayaṇa-vanam.

According to the Purāṇas, it was this Toṇḍamān who was responsible for the shrine on the hill. Son of Suvīra and Nandinī, he married Padmā, the daughter of a Pāṇḍya king, and ruled from Nārāyaṇa-pura. He discovered the image of the God "standing under a tree, with the lower part of the body hidden in an ant-hill" when he ascended the hill in the company of a hunter (nishāda), who was cultivating śyāmāka grains in his fields on the hill-slope. The purāṇa says that the local deity, Varāha (wild boar), entered into the hunter and through him gave out to the king the direction that enclosure for a temple must be constructed (ibid, 10, 1-53). Toṇḍamān constructed the prākara with a gateway with a gopuram on it, and arranged for regular worship of the god. The oracle had told him that the actual temple would be built by a descendent of his.

But other sources (viz. *Brahma-purāṇa,* 7, 55-57 and *Bhavishyottara,* 13, 31ff) say that Tondamān built the entire temple-complex with three prākāras and two gopuras.

प्राकार त्रयसंयुक्तं गोपुरद्वयसंयुतम्।
गर्भागारसमायुक्तं अकरोद्दिव्यमालयम्॥

The description of the temple said to be built by Toṇḍamān given in these two purāṇas (especially the latter) is derived from the temple that actually existed when this section of the purāṇas (Veṅkaṭachala- mahātmya) came to be written (around the 15th or 16th century)

It would not be correct to dismiss the purānic account as altogether unreliable. Toṇḍamān, for instance, is not a fictitious character. He was a historical personage. We know from other sources that this Toṇḍamān -chakravarti was Āḍoṇḍai (Audaṇḍa-choḷan), the illegitimate son of Kulottuṅga- choḷa who ruled at Tañjavūr (cf. A.F. Cox. *North Arcot District Manual.* Vol. I, p.39). He was the governor of Kāḷahasti, and it was he who cleared away the jungles and built Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam in the vicinity of Kāḷahasti. He is also reputed to have attacked the Pallava forces. However, his date is uncertain. He appears to have been a contemporary of Iḷan-tirayyan, the grandson of Karikāla-choḷa, who lived about 550 A.D. The kingdom that Toṇḍamān founded came to be known as Toṇḍama-nāḍu (or Toṇḍa-maṇḍala), and later as Jayaṅ-koṇḍa-choḷa-maṇḍala. This area is immediately below the Vengadam hill-ranges; and the first temple on the hill is associated with his name.

Bhavishyottara-purāṇa (3, 15-16) also describes the first builder of the hill-temple as a Choḷa prince born to a girl of the Nāga tribe.

अतीते वत्सरे कश्चिच्चोलराजो नृपोत्तमः।
अवतारं समापन्नो नागकन्योदरे तथा।
तस्मिञ्छासति भूखण्डं बहुपुण्यफलप्रदम्॥

It should also be noted that the Tamil works call the Pallavas 'toṇḍaiyars' or 'kāḍavars'; they are also described as 'kāṭu-veṭṭigal '(those who cleared the forests for making human settlements). It is surmised that they came to the south from some northern province and began living in the forests. "The Pallavas were almost the first people to acquire dominion in the south. All the tract of country that lay between the Cholas and the Kaliṅgas was formed into a dominion and over this the Pallavas ruled" (K.V. Subrahmanya Iyer, *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan, Madras*, 1917, p.20). There must have been close interaction between the early Pallavas and the early Cholas. Toṇḍamān's identification as an illegitimate son of a Chola king may not be purely fictitious. He may have been a Pallava, and Pallavas are associated with Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam until the Cholas conquered it in the latter part of the eighth century and renamed Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam as Jayaṅ-goṇḍa-chola maṇḍalam.

This may also be the reason why Sāmavai, who was the daughter of a Pallava chieftain ('pallavap-pergaḍe') and wife of a 'kāḍavar' chief ('kāḍavar' was another name for Pallava), was devoted to the hill-shrine of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam. And the Bāṇa kings, who were devoted to this hill-shrine as indicated by their inscriptions, were feudatories of the Pallavas governing their frontier territory (ibid, p.24)

According to the information contained in *Meckenzie Collection of Manuscripts, Translations and Reports* (Vol. XVI, pages 299-314), after Toṇḍamān, seventeen Yādava kings of Nārayaṇa-vanam ruled over the region of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam. The Yādavas belonged to the Kurumba tribe, which was patronized and made strong by Toṇḍamān himself. Nārayaṇa-vanam was a stronghold of these tribals, and the forest adjoining it was reputed to be frequented by Vishṇu. The Kurumbas initially did not have a chieftain of their own, but later selected Komanduru-kurumba-prabhu (probably a Pallava chief) as their lord and king. This king divided the country into twenty-four 'kottas' (divisions), and built a fort at Nārayaṇa-vanam.

A Marāṭhī manuscript (cited by V.N. Srinivas Rao in his *Tirupati Sri Venkatesvara-Balaji*, Umadevan & Son, Madras 1949, p.87) documents that the rulers of the Yādava dynasty ruled between 809 and 1262 A.D. Among the Yādava kings who ruled over Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam, the names of Śrīraṅga-yādavarāya (about 800 A.D.), Vīra-narāyaṇa, Vobaḷa, Tiru-veṅgaḷa, Porumkeyana-Gaṇḍa-gopāla (about 900 A.D.), Narasiṁha, and Vīra-narasiṅga (968 - 1000 A.D.) have been preserved. The last named king is said to have built or renovated the hill-temple; he ruled the country from Nārayaṇa-vanam and is reputed to

have loved to dwell in front of Śeshachalam (viz. Vēṅgaḍa hills).

The kings had their capitals in Nārayaṇa-vanam, Chandragiri and Tirupati, and they were staunch devotees of the god of Kaḷahasti as well as the Veṅgaḍam hill-god. One of the Yādava monarchs, probably Toya-yādava-rāya (or Ghaṭṭi-deva) is said to have been a contemporary of Rāmanuja (1017-1137) and to have been converted by him around 1020-1029 A.D. He is said to have put the affairs of the hill-shrine in order and arranged for regular worship, with the help of, and under the guidance of Rāmanuja, as claimed by Tirumalai-oḷugu (which is a history of the hill-shrine from Rāmanuja's days till Tiruveṅkaṭa-rāmanuja-jiyar's period, 1544, ed. by R Balasundara Nayakar, V.O.I., Tirupati).

The later Yādava rulers, Narasiṅga-Tirukkaḷatti-deva (about 1185 A.D.) and Tiruk-kaḷatti-deva Yādava-rāya (1191-1246) described themselves as 'mahārājadhirāja', 'Chaḷukya-nārāyaṇa', 'Godavari-vallabha' and 'veṇṭari- pālaka' ('The protector of the hunter-tribes'). The latter ruler is said to have bestowed upon the hill-shrine the Kuḍavūr village around 1209 A.D. Vīra-narasiṅga Yādava-rāya (1209-1262) was a contemporary of Parāntaka I (Sundara-choḷa), who renovated the sanctum of the hill-shrine. This Yādava king ruled for over fifty years, and his services to the hill-shrine were considerable. Among them was his weighing himself with gold (tulārohaṇa) and presenting that gold to gild the vimāna. He permitted the pilgrim (deśāntri), Tiruppullani-dāsar, to reconstruct the central vimāna of the shrine. His queen-consort (yādava-rāya-nācchiyār), however, was devoted to Govindarāja-svāmi of Tirupati, which shrine had been consecrated by Rāmanuja in 1130 A.D. A later descendent of his, Hobaḷa-yādava, who was the governor of Tañjai (viz., Tañjāvūr), got a gem-set and gilt copper covering made for the right hand (varada-hasta) of the god of the hills.

The hill-temple grew enormously in wealth and celebrity during the reign of the Yādava kings of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam. The last of the Yādava kings, Gaṇḍa-gopāla, is said to have ruled between 1250-1285. After the collapse of the Yādava line, the Saḷuva family of the Vijayanagar empire turned their attention to the hill-shrine. The period between 1359 and 1684 was a golden age for the temple, which became richer than ever, and celebrated in the land. Especially so when Kṛishṇadeva-rāya was emperor (1509-1530). He visited the shrine seven times and has left 54 inscriptions recording his gifts and the gifts of his two queens.

There are altogether 807 inscriptions on the walls of the temple: in Telugu (47), Kannaḍa (24), Tamiḷ (720), Sanskrit (15) and Hindi (1), which record the gifts of land, villages, ornaments, funds for food-offerings and their distribution among pilgrims, rent on land leased out (puliyuṭṭu) and

various other sources of income to the temple, made by Pallavas, Cholas, Yadava-rayas, Telugu-Cholas, Telugu-pallavas and the Vijayanagar kings (cf. published in 6 volumes by T.T.D., between 1931 and 1938).

After the collapse of the Vijayanagar empire in 1565 (the battle of Talikota), the affairs of the southern region known as 'Karnatik' were in a state of flux and confusion, uncertainty and strife, and several were the contenders who were eager to appropriate the income of the hill-shrine while taking care to preserve the celebrity of the shrine (which had become the proverbial goose laying golden eggs). Even during these troubled times, the temple continued to attract large crowds of devotees from all over the country.

Now there are over 30,000 pilgrims on the average that visit the hill-shrine every day of the year. Even in the lean months (usually January and February), there will be an influx of about 20,000 pilgrims daily. During the celebrated Brahmotsavam, there will be more than one lakh each day !In 1961, the pilgrim population was 10.4 lakhs, in 1970 it was 16.4 lakhs, and in 1972 it rose to 18.2 lakhs. In 1981, it became 22-34 lakhs and in 1991 it stood at 29.41 lakhs. The figures provide a fair idea of how increasingly popular the shrine is becoming even in recent years.

There was only a small village on top of the hill lying in the hollow surrounded by hills on all sides except east or south-east in close vicinity of the temple as late as 1951; the total population of residents in this village then was only 43. But in 1961, it had already become a town with a population of 5,561. Ten years later, the population rose to 12,879. And in 1981 it was in the neighbourhood of 25,000. The projected population figure for 1991 was 37,3491 (cf. *Background paper for Development of Tirumala,* Director of Town planning Govt, of A.P., p.10). The area of the township is 1.50 square miles, while the forest surrounding it spreads to 10.33 square miles.

Entrance of the pilgrims into the shrine is controlled by a queue complex, which is 9210 feet in length, accommodating about 10,000 pilgrims. Hours of waiting for every one of them has become unavoidable. And one can hardly have a fleeting glance of the deity in the sanctum. Even according to the *Workstudy Project Report* (Defence Institute of Workstudy, Mussoorie, TTD, Tirupati) of 1976, "The estimated time that a pilgrim gets to stand and pray before the lord is about 4 seconds" (p.21). This was a generous estimate, and only theoretically valid at that. Now after seventeen years, the crowd has enormously increased and the time a pilgrim can get to have a look at the deity has proportionately been reduced, despite the increased hours of queue visits to the shrine (the so called sarva-darsana).

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

(1)

It was mentioned earlier that the hill-god had, since ancient times, the reputation of standing where the hills bent *(malai-kuniya-ninran)*. It is not only that the Vengadam hill is surrounded by higher peaks, but the actual shrine too is located in a depression even on this hill. The level of the area, bounded by the four main streets (called māḍa-streets) around the shrine, is much lower than that of the neighbouring land. The depression is as much as fifteen feet. The shrine faces east; and the street that runs right in front of the temple (called East Māda-Street) is again at a level lower than the street at the back of the temple (West Māḍa-Street). The ground slopes from west to east. The North and South Māḍa-Streets are each of them 800 feet in length, while the West Māḍa-Street is 900 feet and the East Māḍa-Street 750. This constitutes what is known as the 'great circumambulation' round the shrine (mahā-pradakshiṇa), and includes the sacred tank called Svāmi-pushkariṇi (or Tiruk-kōneri). As one proceeds towards the shrine from the Sannidhi street (to be described later), there is a flight of steps for getting down to reach the East Māḍa -Street and begin this 'great circumambulation'.

The total area of the shrine as at present is sixteen acres in extent, but the temple itself covers only 2.20 acres out of this large area. The tank (Svāmi-pushkariṇi) which is outside the actual temple abutting the North Māḍa-Street covers 1.50 acres of the area, and another old tank (Pāta-pushkariṇi) which has dried up and is being now used for flower-gardens, cottages, tenements and queue-sheds, also abutting the North Māda Street, covers 2.50 acres. The available area on the hill is in extent 1.2 square miles. Of this area, 0.8% (viz., 6.00 acres) is mountainous, 12.7% (viz., 94.8 acres) is covered by water-stretches, and 44.5% (viz., 345.9 acres) is forest. It is only in the remaining area that we find the temple, the streets around it and the human habitation.

The temple is rectangular in shape, and the sides measure 413 feet long and 263 feet wide, It is by no means

a big temple when compared with the several celebrated temples of South India, especially in Tamiḷ-nāḍu (like the ones at Madurai, Chidambaram, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai and Rāmeśvaram). The streets around the temple are called East Māḍa-Street (where the main and the only entrance to the temple is situate), South Māḍa-Street, west side prākāram lane(behind the temple, and very narrow) and the Tīrtha-kaṭṭa street (on the northern side, adjoining the sacred tank (tīrtha-kaṭṭe) known as Svāmi-pushkariṇi.

It is a time-honoured custom for the pilgrim (now, alas, observed by very few indeed) to enter the shrine only after walking along the four Māḍa streets, always keeping the shrine to his right. This is, as mentioned earlier, known as 'maha-pradakshiṇa ' (the great circumambulation), and includes, besides the shrine, the sacred tank (Svāmi-pushkariṇi), Varāha-svāmi temple and the original village of Tirumala.

The temple as it stands now, and curiously enough as described in the *Varāha-purāṇa* (7,55-57) as built by Toṇḍamān, has three enclosing walls (prākāras) and two entrances surmounted by towers (gopuras), and a sanctum (garbha-gṛha).

प्राकारत्रयसंयुक्तं गोपुरद्वयसंयुतम्।
गर्भागारसमायुक्तमकरोद्दिव्यमालयम्॥

Bhavishyottara-purāṇa (13, 31f) describes the temple that Toṇḍamān built more elaborately, and probably the description is based on the structures that the author actually saw (in the fourteenth or fifteenth century). All the apartments that the purāṇa mentions can really be found within the precincts of the temple (except perhaps the 'seven doors').

अत्रैव कार्यं राजेन्द्र चैत्यं पूर्वमुखं शुभम्।
गोपुरद्वयसंयुक्तं प्राकारत्रयमव्ययम्॥
सप्तद्वारसमोपेतं देहलीतोरणान्वितम्॥
आस्थानमण्डपं दिव्यमद्भुतं यागमण्डपम्।
गोशालां धान्यभवनं ततो मालाकरं गृहम्॥
वस्त्रगेहं तैलशालां घृतार्थं भवनं पृथक्।
भक्ष्यशालां विशालां च भूषणानां गृहं तथा॥
कर्पूरगन्धसार्जालतैलकस्तूरिकागृहम्।
कल्पयाशु च राजेन्द्र गजाश्वभवनं पृथक्॥

The Purāṇic account, which puts this description in the mouth of the god himself (instruction to king Toṇḍamān) is obviously misleading, for these apartments were actually built at different periods of time. They might have been there when the author of the 'Veṅkaṭachala-māhatmya' section of the purāṇa composed the verses; but such was certainly not the temple that Toṇḍamān built. That the temple complex which we find now (and in essence as the purāṇa describes) has evolved during several centuries is known by textual and inscriptional references.

While it is not difficult to reconstruct the stages in the shrine's development or to ascertain their periods, it is not easy to determine the social and religious forces at work during the long history of the temple. There are several aspects of the temple's architecture which are unusual and enigmatic, as for instance, the closure of the first circumambutatory path (mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa). We are often unsure if the inscriptional references to some of the additional structures in the temple pertain to altogether new structures or to renovations of old structures. We hear of major and extensive renovations in the thirteenth century, but how the temple looked before this period can hardly be ascertained.

The central shrine (consisting of the sanctum, the antarāla, and the mukha-maṇḍapa) must have been the nucleus of the temple in strict conformity with the āgama conception of temples. The raṅga-maṇṭapa (known now as Mahāmaṇi-maṇṭapa) constructed in 1417 A.D. by Mādhava-dāsar of Chandragiri must have made provision for a circumambutatory path (now called Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa or Vaikuṇṭha-pradakshiṇa), which has now been closed. The rest of the temple evolved in course of time as necessitated by needs at different periods of time; the structures that were added after 1417 A.D. were not directly related to the central shrine, nor were they interconnected organically.

(2)

It is impossible for a pilgrim at present to obtain an idea of the temple as a whole; he is confined to the queue lines, and has little opportunity to observe either the art or architectural peculiarities of this temple. The administration too has altered many of the structures to suit contemporary needs and ideas. Therefore, an account of the "denominations, measurements and utility of the various apartments and structures" in the temple officially prepared in 1818 (for the East India Company which took possession of this temple) would be the best guide to get a detailed picture of the temple. This is known as the Paimāyishi Account and was prepared by the Karṇams (administrative officers on the spot) of the temple. The account is here reproduced from Sādhu Subrahmaṇya Śāstry's *Tirupati Sri Venkateswara* (T.T.D., Tirupati, 1981, pp. 324-326).

"In Venkatesvara's temple in Tirumala, it (Paimāyishi Account) notices the garbha-grham (sactum sactorum) with the Vimānam (dome) over it, the Antarālam (walls or roof) and the Mukha-mantapam (front portico) as item No.1, then the mancapu-sevā-grham (the apartment in which the cot is suspended from the ceiling for the bed of the Deity), next the Sri Rāmacandrasvami-sannidhi (the high pial where Sri Rāma was stationed), adjoining it on the east Mukha-an-

tarāla-mantapam (front terraced or walled portico) and lastly the Ranga-mantapam (a pavilion for public show of functions and services to the Deity, the unwalled Mahāmani-mantapam) with an inner circuit (to pradaksinam) commencing at south-east and passing around the sanctum from the dolu-mantapam (for the play of the drummer and pipers) and ending on the north-side with the shrine of Sena-Mudaliyar and the adjoining exit mantapam. All these together form the central shrine.

To the south east of this group, stands the Svayam-pākasālā or Mel-potu (kitchen); from this westwards upto the Kalyāna-mantapam (pavilion for the performance of the marriage of the Deity) is a passage with a line of 10 stone pillars in front and three rooms behind, one for the lamp-lighter, next the Yāgasālā (Sacrificial room for oblations to the Fire-God); and the third in charge of Mehtāji Sāhukar. The Kalyāna-mantapam is said to comprise a thin sculptured double-pillared Simhasana (seating)-mantapam, a small shrine for lodging Malayappasvāmi (Processional Image) during the Brahmotsavam, and a small Garbha-grham behind it. All these stand on a high platform to the south of the Vimāna-Pradaksinam (corridor around the central shrine with the Vimāna (dome) over the sanctum).

The platform on the western side of this corridor is said to contain rooms (1) for Raghoji Bhonsle's pallaki (palanquin) and Vāhanālu (vehicles), (2) for the vāhanālu of the Nadigaddam family men, (3) Surapuram state's Vāhanams and other things, (4) Venkatagiri Raja's prasādam distribution, (5) in Padagala family's charge, and (6) room for extraction of civet oil.

On the platform to the north of the Vimāna-Pradaksinam were rooms occupied serially by the cooks, the Mysore state for provisions, the Matla chief's people, the Kaikāla servant, Vagapadi (offered panyārams), Tallapākam musicians inscribed copper-plates, Sabhā-ara for keeping the Deities' cloths', Bhasyakāra's shrine, mancapu-ara (room for keeping the Deity's cot), the Kānuka-ara (room for keeping donations from the pilgrims), and the Bokkasam people's panyāram room, the sandal-grinding room, temple-prasādam-keeping room, and to its south at the east end the shrine of Yoga-Narasimhasvāmi.

At the south-east corner between the inner door-way under the samller tower and the kitchen stands Varadarājasvāmi's shrine.

In the second circuit, the Sampangi-Pradaksinam around the inner prākāra commencing from the guards-gate at the entrance under the bigger front tower, it first refers to the statues of Achutarāyalu and Krsnarāyalu beside the east prākāra wall, then on the south-side it locates the room for torches and the room for keeping Mysore state's vehicles, next Ran-

ganāyaka's kitchen and His shrine with a Vimānam of plaster over it and a Simhāsana-mantapam of four slender posts in front of it, adjoining it on the west the Pindisālā (rice flouring room), then an unenclosed mantapam; on the west side the store room with a small shallow well of oozing water called Virajā-nadī at its entrance; on the north side the panyaram preparing kitchen, the Yamunottara where flower-garlands are tied and last the Suvarna (golden) mantapam with four storeys. To the west of this is noted the Rajita (silver)-mantapam. In the midst of the Suvarna-mantapam adjoining the entrance gate is the mantapam in the north portion of which the three forged statues of Krsnarāya and his two queens are noted to have been installed and in the southern portion the statues of Acyutarāya and his queen.

The darvājā (central gate) is noted to be 33 feet from east to west, 21 feet from north to south and 15 feet high, with the gopuram of three tiers of plaster surmounted by Kalasams, (small ornamental vases) of 33 feet in length from east to west, 21 feet in breadth from north to south and 51 feet in height.

It mentions the Tirumalarāya-mantapam as containing 54 pillars and built in three stages, comprising the upper most Simhāsana-mantapam (for seating the Processional Images) of black stone of 6x6 square feet with a Vimānam of plaster supported by four small pillars; the lower second mantapam with 30 pillars and measuring 33 feet from east ot west in width and 39 feet in length from north to south; and the third lowest one with 16 pillars and in extent 24 feet high, 33 feet long from north to south, and 30 feet broad from east to west; and its pillars are beautifully sculptured.

It then refers to the Dhvaja-stambham-mantapam in front of the Tirumalarāya-mantapam with the gilded flag-staff and the Bali-pitham.

To the north of it is mentioned a brick mantapam of four pillars with cast images of Tondramallu and others installed in it (Todaramalla).

Between this Tondramallu's (the family) mantapam and the pula-bāvi (the well into which the flowers and garlands on removal after decoration are deposited so as not to be worn by any body) it specifies, on the east side, adjoining the Suvarna-mantapam, the Rajita-mantapam, and behind the Todaramallu-mantapam, the four pillared mantapam of 9x9 square feet containing the image of "Venkata patirāju."

More interesting is an account of important spots in the Vēṅgaḍam temple-complex, given in the time-honoured *Temple-Dittam* relating to the lamps that are to be lit during Kārtikotsavam. Traditionally the lights signify the areas which are most relevant in a complex. The *Dittam* enumerates as many as forty-two spots, six of them

being outside the temple-complex but within the kshetra:

1. Svāmi-pushkariṇī (the sacred tank by the side of the temple);
2. Varāha-svāmi shrine (on its bank);
3. Pushkariṇī - Āñjaneya shrine (in front of the Varāha-svāmi-shrine);
4. Bēḍi-Āñjaneya shrine (at the beginning of the Sannidhi Street);
5. Kshetra-pālaka (near Gogarbha-tīrtha); and
6. Dova-Brhāshyakāra shrine (Rāmā nuja-shrine at the summit of the last flight of steps, which mark the entrance into the kshetra)

The spots in the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa are:

7. Mahā-dvāra (Paḍi-kāvali; first towered gateway)
8. Raṅga-nāyakula-maṇṭapa
9. Kshetra-pālaka (near Balipīṭha)
10. Yāmunat-turai(room where flower-garlands are prepared)
11. Poola-bāvi (the step-well where used flower-garlands are immersed)
12. Piṇḍi-poṭu (kitchen)
13. Paḍi-poṭu (kitchen)
14. Ugrāṇa (store-room)
15. Tēru-bommala ara (room where the materials of temple are kept)
16. Tirumala-rāyan-maṇṭapa
17. Bali-pīṭha (altar)
18. Dhvaja-staṁbha (flag-pole)
19. Naḍimi-Paḍikāvali (second towered gateway)

The spots in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa are;

20. Parimaḷa-ara (room where fragrant articles like civet-oil etc are kept)
21. Narasiṁha-svāmi shrine
22. Chandana-ara (room for grinding sandal-paste)
23. Mañcham-ara (room where the Śayanotsava cot is kept).
24. Bhāshya-kāra-sannidhi (Rāmānuja-shrine)
25. Senādhipati (image of Vishvaksena)
26. Toṭṭi-tīrtha (tub where abhishekam water is received)
27. Tāḷḷapākam-ara (the Saṅkīrtana-bhaṇḍāra)
28. Vagapaḍi-ara (room for keeping paṇyāram-offerings).
29. Kaikāla-ara (room for temple-servants)
30. Vāhana-ara (room where processional vehicles are kept)
31. Pāḍagāla-ara (room where some delicacies are stored)
32. Bokkasa-ara (treasury; also peoples' panyāram room)
33. Kalyāṇa-maṇḍapa
34. Bangāra-bāvi (well in front of the kitchen)
35. Poṭu-amma (Kitchen, Bakulā-devī near the door)
36. Varada-rāja-sannidhi
37. Vimānam (dome over the sanctum)
38. Garuḍālvār (in Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa)

Dvāra-pālakas (in Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa)

The spots within the main shrine:

40. Baṅgāru-vākili (entrance door for the shrine)
41. Śrī-rāmula-vāri-mēḍa
42. Kulaśekharap-paḍi (door-step of the sanctum)

(3)

The temple owns numerous flower-gardens (nanda-vanams) which are spread around the township of Tirumalai. From very ancient times, decorating the deity of the hill-shrine with flowers and sandal paste has been a well-known feature. We read about it in ancient Tamiḻ calssics and in the songs of the Āḻvārs.

In fact, tradition ascribes the first flower-garden as an accessory to the temple to the time when the deity was discovered and consecrated. The puraṇas tell us that Raṅga-dāsa in the distant past took upon himself the task of supplying everyday flower-garlands to the god of the hills, which was being worshipped by the Vaikhānasa priest Gopīnātha. Raṅga-dāsa and Gopīnātha were the builders of the first shrine, which must have been a simple one; the flower garden was close by. Raṅga-dāsa was reborn as the prince Toṇḍamān, who was, according to the Puraṇas, responsible for a magnificent temple, and also for numerous flower-gardens.

At present there are about three hundred temple-gardens from which flowers are supplied. About fifty-three gardens have inscriptional references. The earliest was Ariśiṇālaiyan tirunanda-vanam started by Piḷḷai Tiru vēṅkaṭach-chirukkar in 1390 A.D., while the last inscriptional reference to a garden was in 1606 A.D. However, a garden mentioned in an inscription of 1250 A.D. (Moita-śōlai tiru-nanda vanam, set up by Mullai Tiru-vēṅkaṭa-jīyar) was in Tirupati. In 1848, there were thirty-seven nandavanams attached to the temple, but by 1905 many of them had disappeared into the adjoining jungles. A note dated 1906 (D. Dis. No. 170 dated 3-11-1906) granted the area of 10 1/3 square miles to the temple, conferring the right to use the flowers and fuel within this area.

It is likely that Sāmavai (Kaḍavan-peruṁdevi) who got made the silver replica of the hill-god and instituted some festivals in 614 A.D. also arranged for a flower-garden on the hill. There was a 'peruṁdevi-toṭam' on the northern side of Varāhasvāmi temple until recently. However, the first garden attached to the hill-shrine in the recognizable past was set up by the first citizen of the village on top of the hill, Tirumala-naṁbi (about 1000-1074). Also known as Śrī-saila-pūrṇa, he was the grandson of the celebrated Śrī-vaishṇava teacher Yāmuna-muni

(Āḷavandār) and the maternal uncle of the great Rāmānuja. He heard one day his grandfather explain the eulogy of the hill-god by Nammāḷvar (*Tiruvāymoḷi*, ten verses of the third ten of the third centum); he was just twenty years of age then, but decided immediately that he should visit Vēṅgaḍam. When he did visit, he resolved to settle down permanently on the hill and grow a flower-garden as service for the deity. He lived there alone for a long time. He is supposed to have taught the hidden meaning of *Rāmāyaṇa* to Rāmānuja for a year. He would everyday come down to the foot of the hills for this purpose, as Rāmānuja was living in Koṭṭūr (which was later absorbed into Tirupati). The spot where he taught was under a tamarind tree on the foot-path to the hill, and a shrine to Rāmānuja was subsequently built there.

Ānandāḷvār (also called Anantāḷvān, born in 1046 A.D.), who was a disciple of Rāmānuja, joined Tirumala-nambi and took up the same service (nanda-vana-kaiṅkarya). He dug up a new tank as watersource for the flower garden. This fresh-water tank is now known as Āḷvār-cheruvu, not far from the temple, to the north of the road which leads to Chandra-giri. The garden that Ānandāḷvār set up was known as Purusha-vāri-tōṭam. His son and grandson continued this service to the god; there are several inscriptions (No. 171 to 175 in vol I) to this effect by his grandson Vēṅkaṭat-turaivār. Ānandāḷvār's descendents are to this day-associated with the hill-shrine as 'ācharya-purushas'.

The *Karāru-nāmā* executed on the 21st of April 1843 by the then administrator of the hill-shrine (mahant), Sevā-dāsa of Hathīrāmji-maṭha, mentions several 'pagodas' (viz. shrines) of minor importance (on the hill) which he took possession of, along with ornaments, clothes, vehicles, idols and all other property belonging to each of them.

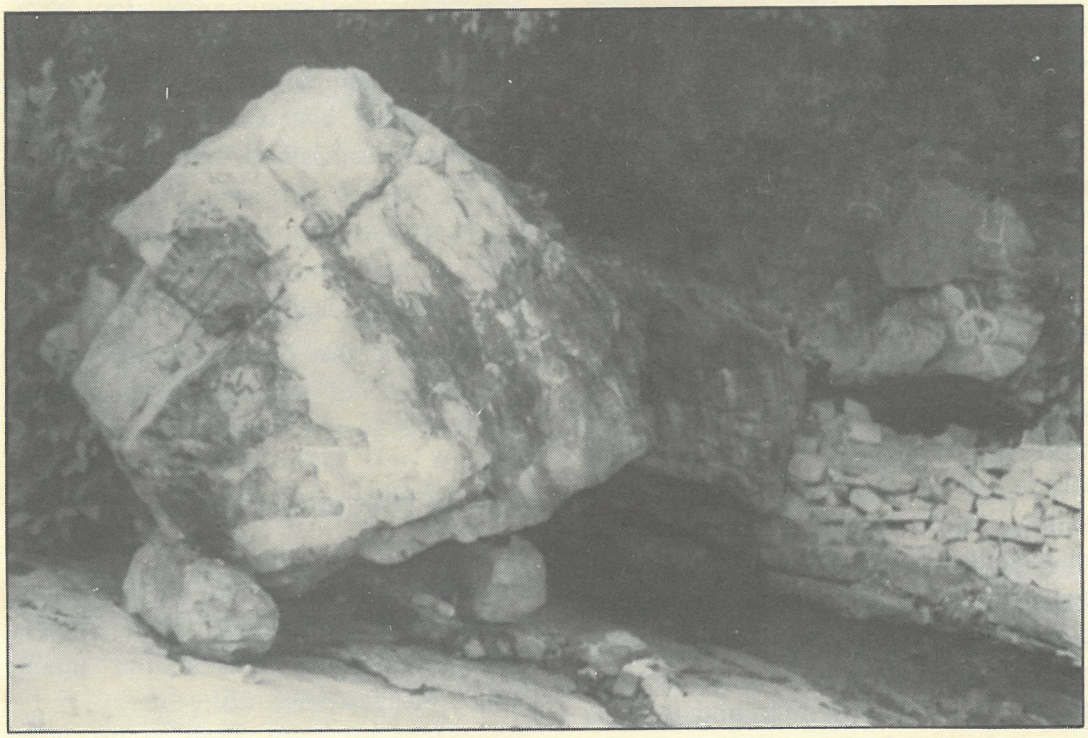
1. The Varāha-svāmi temple, on the north-western bank of the sacred tank, Svāmi-pushkariṇi;
2. The Āñjaneya temple, in front of the above;
3. Bēḍi-Hanumān temple, in front of the main entrance to the hill-shrine, at the other end of the Sannidhi street (viz. the street that leads the devotee straight to the main entrance, and touches the East Māḍa-Street);
4. Kshetra-pāla shrine, which was originally inside the present precincts of the hill-shrine but now stands shifted to the Gogarbha tīrtha;
5. Bhāshyakāra shrine, being the shrine to Rāmānuja which is now found in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa enclosure, within the temple-complex, and

6. Dova-Bhāshyakāra shrine, being the shrine to Rāmānuja near the summit of the foot-path that leads the pilgrim to the hill-top.

This is an interesting document, for it provides an insight into the landmarks of the then village of Tirumala, besides the main shrine.

During kārtika-dīpotsava, lamps are lit at forty-two spots in the hill-shrine, as already mentioned, and of them thirty-six are within the temple precincts; the remaining six are lit outside the temple and at the spots identified as Dova-bhāshyakāra, Gogarbha-kshetrapālaka, Bēḍi-Āñjaneya, Pushkariṇi-Āñjaneya, Varāhasvami and Svāmi-pushkariṇi. These are the very 'pagodas' mentioned in the *Karāru-nāmā* executed by Mahant Sēva-dāsa in 1843 (excepting Svāmi-pushkariṇi, which is substituted by the Rāmānuja shrine in the Vimāna-Pradakshiṇa). The customary kārtika-dīpa in a temple suggests the limits of the town or village. The six spots for dīpa prescribed in the Tirumala Devasthanam's *Nitya-diṭṭam* (T.T.D., reprinted 1963, pp. 33-35) indicates the customary landmarks of the Tirumala village.

The Kshetra-pāla is actually a huge stone believed to be the guardan-spirit of the place, which was formerly kept near the present Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa, outside the inner prākara. It was



Kshetra-Pāla-Guṇḍu in Gogarbha-Tīrtha

believed that, as the shrine was in the midst of a wild forest and as there was no human habitation near the shrine, the Kshetra-pāla-guṇḍu would roam about during daytime and come back at night. The priest, who visited the shrine everyday, would lock the doors of the shrine in the evening, and place the keys on the Kshetra-pāla-guṇḍu before he got down the hill. He would find them safe there, when he arrived at the shrine the next morning. It became the custom to worship this stone periodically during nights, when the village of Tirumala took shape. The custom was observed all along the history of the temple, until recently, when the stone was shifted to a spot near the Gogarbha-tīrtha, about a mile to the north-east of the temple. The reason for this shifting has not been made explicit. But the temple administration still arranges for worship of this stone in Gogarbha-tīrtha on Śivarātri night every year.

However, for an official document to mention this stone as a 'pagoda' and for the Mahant to be interested in taking possession of it, it must have been of considerable importance in the village. It is usual for Kshetrapāla shrines to be located on the outskirts of a settlement; and being a guardian-spirit it is usually fierce in nature, demanding animal sacrifices. In the case of Tirumala, the village first grew at the back of the temple and towards the northern side, as evidenced by the location of the West Māḍa-street and North Māḍa-street, as well as by the location of the Āḻvār-cheruvu (the water-source for the village). The two streets mentioned above enclosed the original village. The Kshetrapāla stone, situated outside the enclosure known as Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa probably denoted the limits of the village on the eastern side (including the shrine within the limits of the village).

A medieval work, *Śrī-Vēṅkaṭeśa-sevā-krama*, by Gārgya-Śaṭhāri (which will be discussed later) was composed when the temple had only the enclosure known now as Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. Outside the stone walls of this enclosure was an uncovered and unenclosed circumambulatory path called Champaka-vithikā (pathway named Champaka, or Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa), because of the Champaka-tree which stood there (verse 64).

आगम्य चम्पकतरुं तन्नामाङ्कितवीथिकां।

The pilgrim who went round the shrine along this open pathway would see the sacred tank Svāmi-pushkariṇī to his left (verse 66)

स्वामिपुष्करिणीतीर्थं दृष्ट्वाचम्य ततः परम्।

before he again reached the bali-piṭha in front of what now is the inner dvāra-gopura and outside the inner prākāra walls (verse 68):

बलिपीठं पुनर्गत्वा प्रत्यग्द्वारं च चाम्पकं।

His circumambulation which had started from this bali-pīṭha (which is even now in the same spot) ends there, before he enters into the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. It is clear from the account that what now is the inner gopura was, when the work was composed, the main entrance, (mahād-vārā). The precincts of the temple were bounded by the outer prākāra walls of the Vimāna-pradashiṇa.

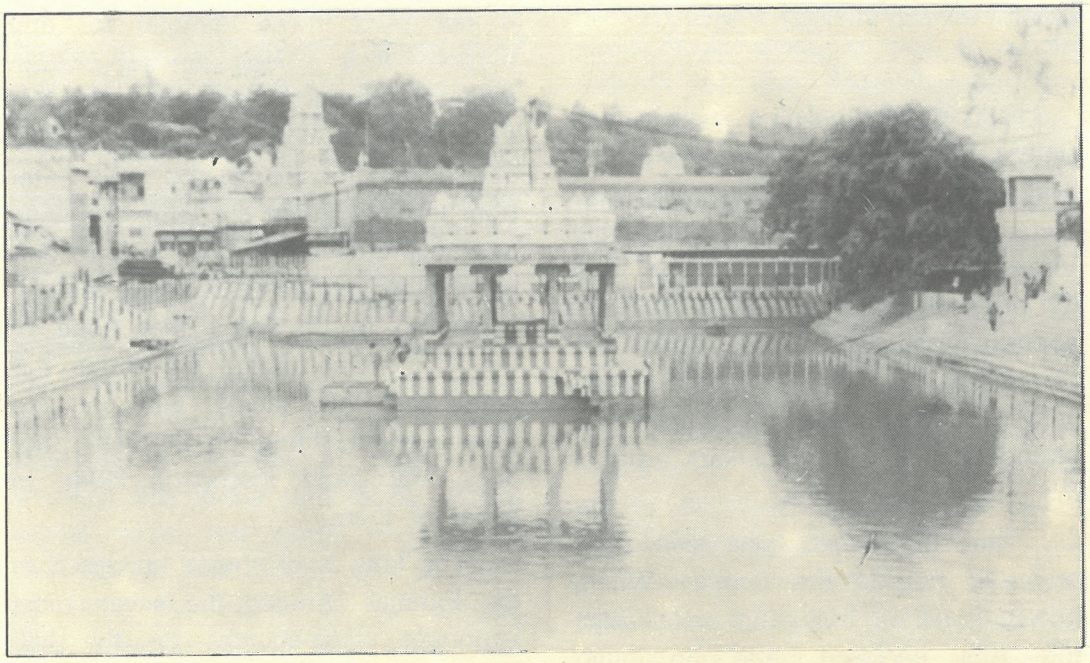
Thus the Kshetra-pāla stone was originally outside the temple. When, however, the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa too was enclosed, and an outer gateway was constructed (probably around 1217 A.D., for an inscription of the Yādava-prince Vīra-narasiṅga-devar is found on this gopuram), its location was included in the shrine area, and it was no longer on the outskirts of the village. And its independent identity was also lost: it could no longer be propitiated with the customary food -offerings by the village folk. It was in this context that it was probably shifted near Gogarbha-tīrtham, to accommodate the possible expansion of the village on this side of the temple.

Of the other 'minor pagodas', Varāha-svāmi-shrine and one of the two Āñjaneya-shrines are associated with the sacred tank, Svāmi-pushkariṇī. The sacred tank itself is outside the precincts of the temple, and its water is not used in the temple for any purpose. It is a long-standing custom that water from Ākāśa-gaṅgā, about a mile away, is brought for the Friday abhishekam for the hill-god; and water from the well inside the temple, known as Baṅgāru-bāvi, was used until recently for other requirements in the temple. It is also to be noted that none of the Āḻvārs who visited the shrine has mentioned this sacred tank, or the Varāha-svāmi shrine on its bank; nor does any early inscription refer to either of them.

The tank is of course eulogized in the Purāṇas. Among the seven most important water-sources on the hill, *Brahma-purāṇa*(4,7) counts this tank as the first. *Skanda-purāṇa* (3,49-50) says:

सुवर्णमुखरीतीरे वेंकटे नाम पर्वते।
सर्वपापहरे पुण्ये नानाधातुविनिर्मिते।।
स्वामिपुष्करिणी चेति तीर्थमस्ति महत्तरम्।
पवित्राणां पवित्रं हि मंगलानां च मंगलम्।
श्रुतिसिद्धं महापुण्यं ब्रह्महत्यादिशोधकम्।।

According to the puraṇic accounts, the sacred tank was there much earlier than Varāha-svāmi's shrine was built on its banks; and Venkateśa appeared on the scene much later. The mahants took advantage of the puraṇic prescription, and made the tank a source of more revenue. The sage Agastya of yore is said to have bathed in the tank, and paid reverence to Varāha-svāmi before he visited Venkateśa's

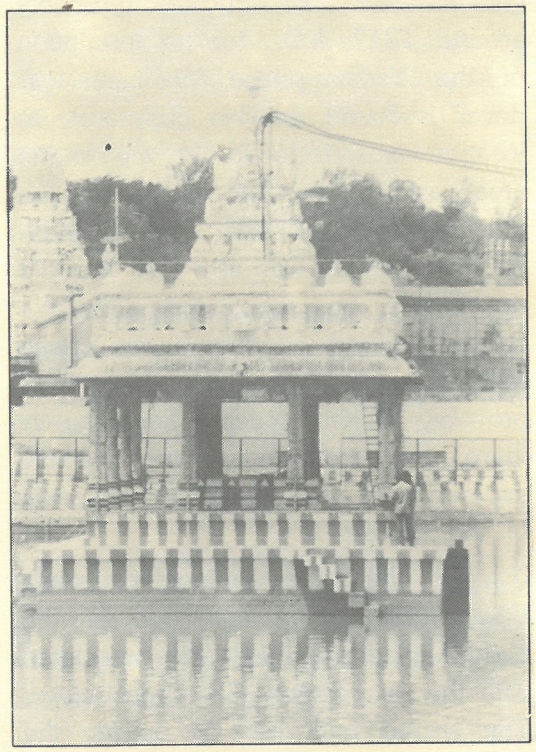


Svāmi-Pushkariṇi

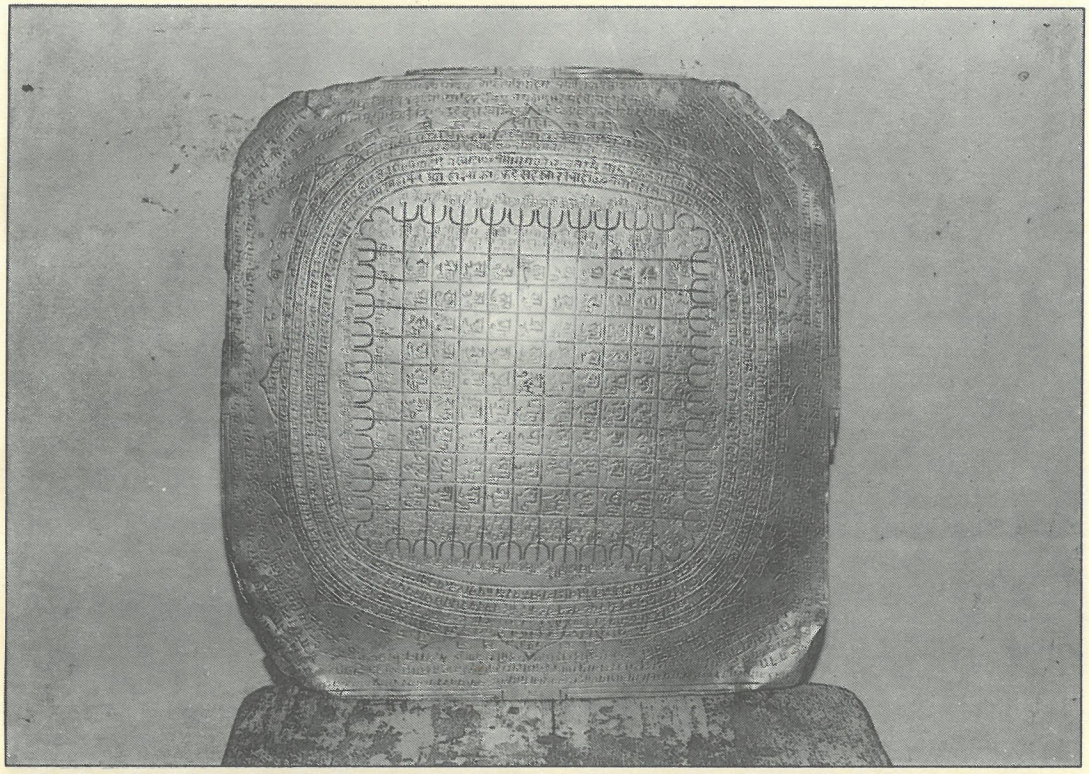
shrine; and the pilgrim therefore had to follow suit.

ततः कालान्तरेऽगस्त्यो वेंकटाद्रिं मनोहरम्।
गत्वा श्रीस्वामितीर्थं च स्नात्वा नियमपूर्वकम्॥
वराहस्वामिनं देवं नत्वा तीर्थस्य दक्षिणे।
वेंकटेशालयं गत्वा श्रीनिवासं कृपानिधिम्॥

A bath in Svāmi-pushkariṇi, and a visit to Varāha-svāmi's shrine on its banks became an established practice for the pilgrims; and legends about Varāha-svāmi being the earlier owner of the land on which Veṅkaṭeśa's shrine was built and about Varāha-svāmi, before he allowed Veṅkaṭeśa to dwell where he now dwells, stipulating that every pilgrim must therefore visit him first, were set afloat.



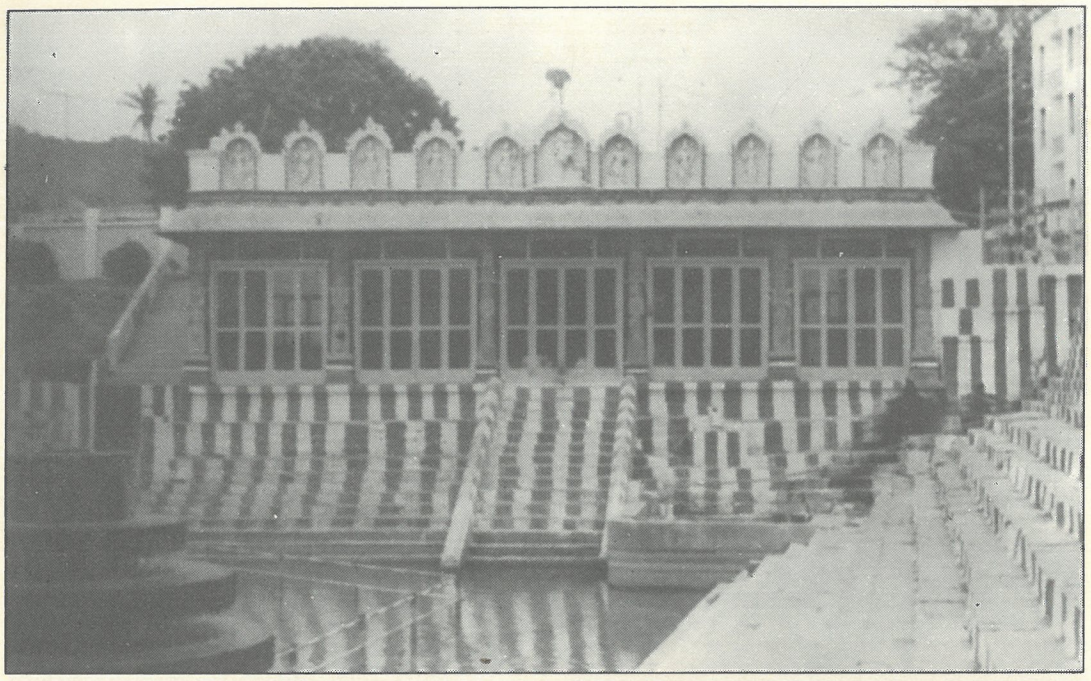
Nirāḷi-Maṇṭapa in Svāmi-Pushkariṇi



Yantra in the sanctum of Varāha-Svāmi Shrine

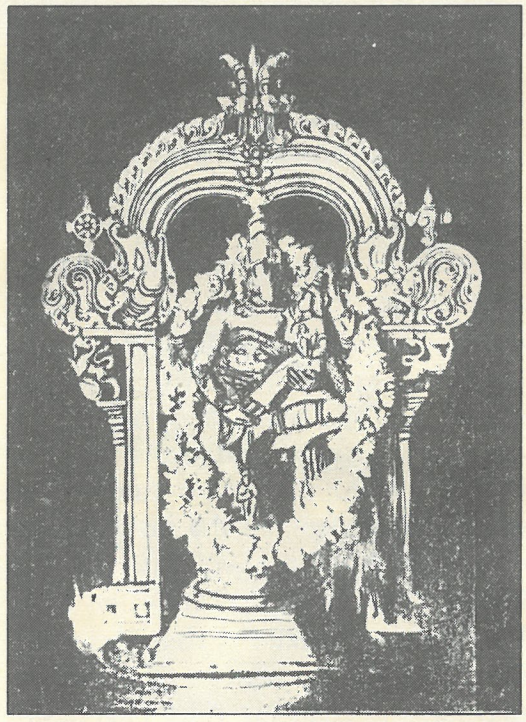
But it would seem from a perusal of the development of the shrine that this tank was never very useful for the village of Tirumala. If it was, why would Ānandālvār think of digging another tank to the west of the village in the close vicinity of the temple, the tank subsequently known as Āḻvār cheruvu? This latter tank has really been of great use in Tirumala for over eight- hundred years now. Among the works undertaken by the first Mahant was to fill Svāmi-pushkariṇi, which had become almost dry, with water from Pāta-pushkariṇi (also called Achyuta-rāya-kōnēru) on the west through underground channels. After Pāta-pushkariṇi also dried up, Svāmi-pushkariṇi is now being fed by water from Āḻvār-cheruvu.

And Varāha-svāmi's shrine on the banks of Svāmi-pushkariṇi finds mention for the first time in an inscription of 1380 A.D. (relating to the tirup-pumaṇḍapa in front of the Varāha-nāyanār, a service instituted by Aḻagappiranār Tiru-kkaḷi-kaṉṟ-dāsar). It is probable that a small shrine was built for this deity around that time; but there is little to show that it was of any importance on the hill in subsequent years. But the attention devoted by Śrī-vaishṇava enthusiasts on Varāha was not entirely absent, for

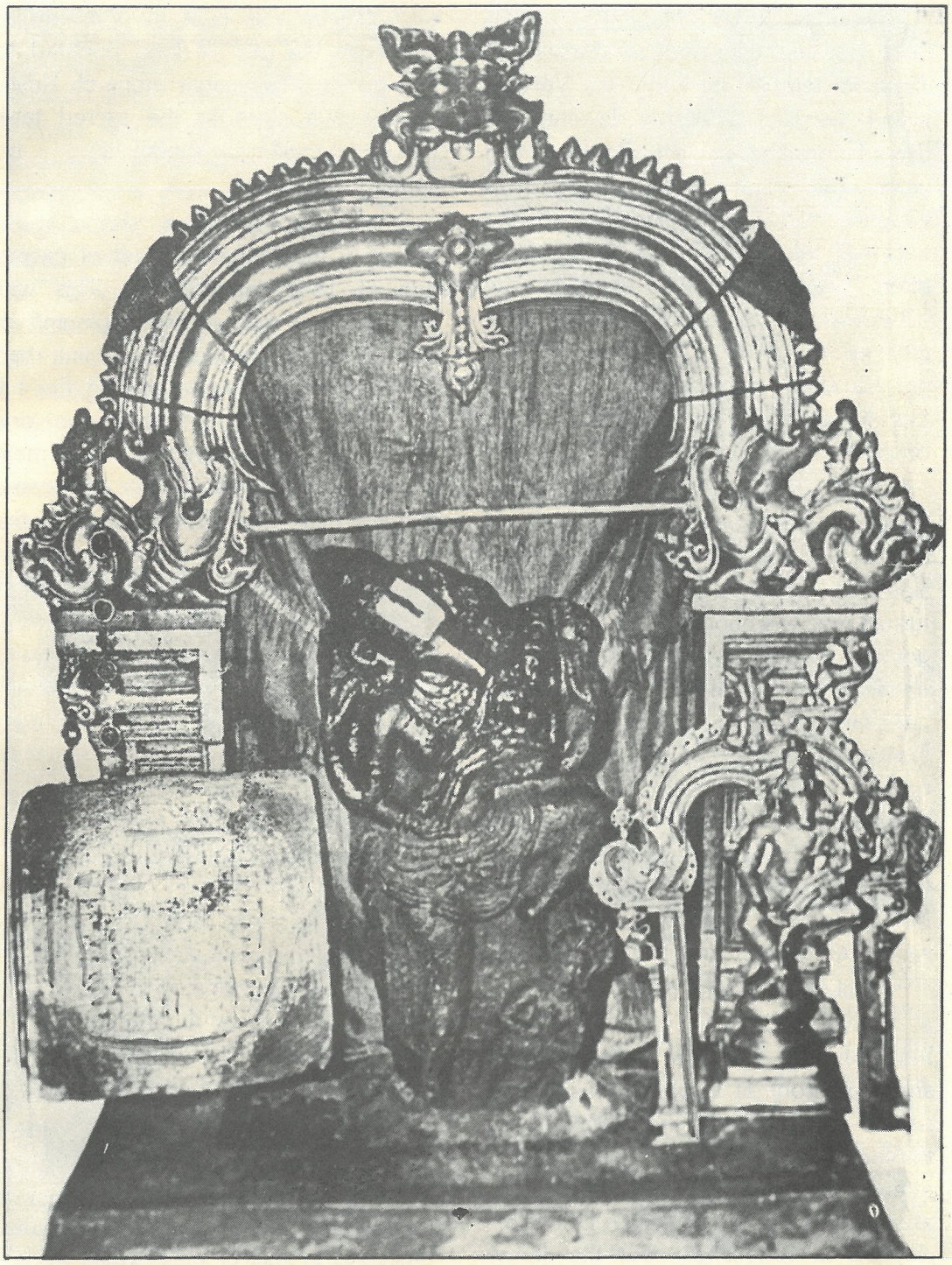


Varāha-Svāmi Shrine on the banks of Svāmi-Pushkariṇī

Varāha is one of the three principal manifestations of Godhead (mukhya-vṛtti, the other two being Nṛsiṁha and Hayagrīva) in the Śrivaishṇava theology, and was the foundation for the Vijñāna-maya-kosha of human constitution (and hence called Jñānappirān). An inscription of 1476 elevates this Varāha-nāyanār to the status of Jñānap-pirān ('tiruk-kōnēri karayil jñānappirān sannidiyil irāmanujayyan tirup-pū-maṇḍapattil'). Very soon, the deity was addressed as Ādi-varāha-perumāḷ (in an inscription of 1481). But in 1801 the East India Company did not consider it worthwhile to take over the administration of this temple, for its income was less than Rs. 250 in a year!



Varāha-Svāmi



Varāha-Svāmi in the sanctum of the shrine

When in 1900, Mahant Prayāga-dāsa became the administrator of the Tirumala temples he found the Varāha-svāmi temple in a terrible state of dilapidation and neglect. For over ten years, the Varāha-svāmi idol had to be protected in the Aina-mahal (the enclosed maṇṭapam to the right of the main gateway as one enters) of the hill-shrine. It was this Mahant that took pity on this Ādi-varāhap-perumāḷ and got his shrine repaired and renovated; the image was shifted back to its original sanctum!

The sacred tank was not in a happier position either; never of much use in the village, it was also in a state of utter neglect. This Mahant turned his attention to this tank, and got a Nirāḷi-maṇḍapam (also called Vasanta-maṇḍapam) constructed within the tank, for occasional spectacular festivals like the tīrthavari (ablutions) on the ninth day of Brahmotsava (tirokkōḍi-tirunāḷ) and Mārgaḷi-nirāṭṭam which had become popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Mahant was obviously thinking of tourist attractions and revenue.

While the Varāha-svāmi shrine had a background and did become a landmark in Tirumala, the Āñjaneya shrine in front of it, which was sought to be projected by the Mahant as another landmark failed to attract any attention, despite the claim that Vyāsa-rāya-svāmi (born 1446 A.D.) worshipped it. It is likely that the shrine to Āñjaneya was built by Vyāsa-rāya-svāmi on the plot of land donated to him by the Vijayanagar monarch Krishnadeva-raya close to the sacred tank ('tirumalai-melil-tiruk-kōnērikku') on January 12, 1524.

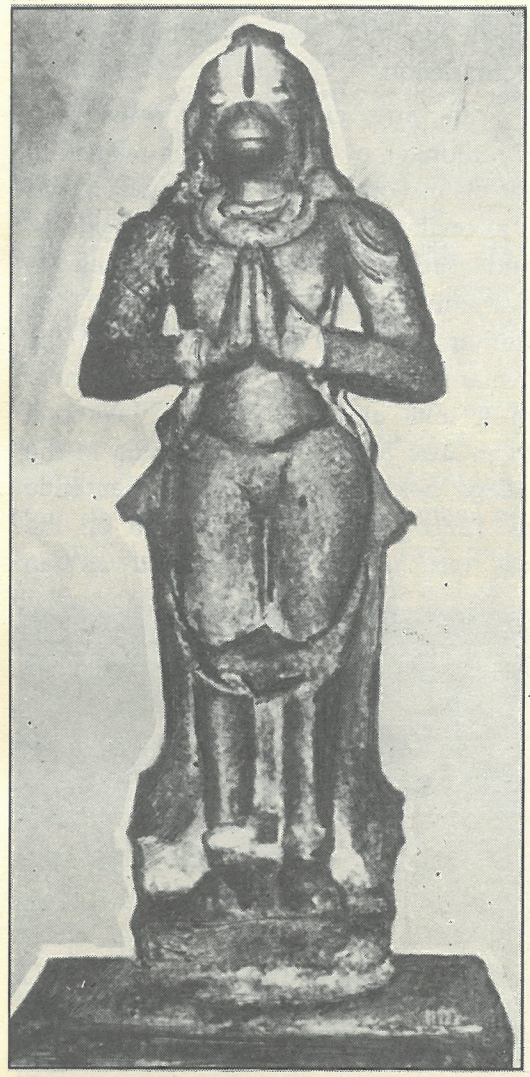
The other Āñjaneya shrine mentioned in the Mahant's deed of execution of 1843 fared better. This was the one that marked the beginning of the Sannidhi Street, the only link-road for the pilgrims who ascended the hill from the Tirupati side and the one that led the pilgrim to the main entrance of the hill-shrine, and came therefore easily to the attention of the



Āñjaneya in front of Varahasvāmi shrine on the banks of Svāmi-pushkariṇi

pilgrim. Known as Bēḍi-Hanumān (viz. 'Āñjaneya in chains'), called so for an unknown reason (although there is a fanciful story of how the hill-god chained the monkey-god's feet and prevented his being constantly on the move), he stands directly facing the hill-god. This shrine was formerly contiguous with other structures adjoining the 'thousand-pillared-hall' (sahasra-stambha-maṇṭapa),which is on the left side of the Sannidhi-street. There was a passage through which the pilgrims could enter and this was by the side of this shrine. Thus, the pilgrim would worship at this shrine before he walked along the Sannidhi street. When the street was widened in 1970 by the TTD, the Bēḍi-Hanumān shrine was isolated, and this is almost a modern structure now. In any case, this was one of the landmarks in the old temple area which began with the Sannidhi-street, and included the thousand-pillared maṇṭapam.

Then the document mentions two shrines for Rāmānuja (Bhāshyakāra) as 'minor pagodas' one within the temple complex and the other, known as Dova-Bhāshyakāra-shrine, on the summit of the stiff flight of steps (called 'knee-breaker', 'moṇa-kāl-murippu'). Rāmānuja (1017-1137 A.D.), the great ācārya and leader of the Śrī-vaishṇava- community had much to do with the regularization of worship in the hill-shrine, and has left a deep imprint on the village on the plains, Koṭṭūr, which he renamed Tirupati. He is said

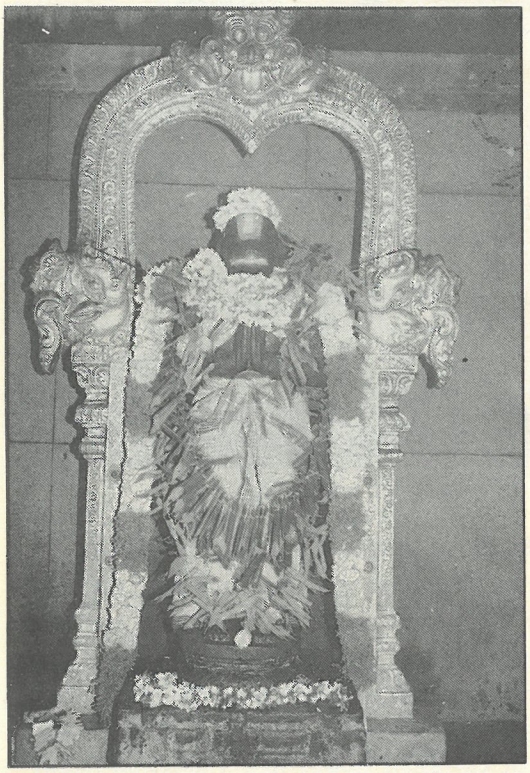


Bēḍi-Āñjaneya

to have initiated many trends in the development of the village on the hill-top, although there is not a single inscriptional reference to the work he did in the hill-shrine or in the village atop the hill. We have to rely entirely on sectarian works like *Tirumalai-oḷugu, Kōil-oḷugu* and *Guru-paramparā,*

which do not always distinguish fact from fiction.

In any case, the Śrī-vaishṇava community of Tirupati was eager to set claims on the hill-shrine, which was a stronghold of the Vaikhānasa priests, and set up these two shrines to Rāmānuja. About the shrine to Rāmānuja within the hill-shrine (in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa), we do not hear of it until about 1476 A.D., although there was a shrine to Rāmānuja in the village below the hill (Tirupati) as early as 1220 A.D. And this shrine on the hill has never been treated as an independent one, and did not at any time mean the ascendance of the usual Pāñcharātragama in the hill-shrine. It cannot be ascertained how or why the Mahant described it as a minor pagoda, which he was anxious to take control of. Being a part of the temple-complex on the hill, it would naturally be under his administrative control. The possible reason may be that this shrine was being managed by the Śrī-vaishṇava community from Tirupati, the Vaikhānasa priests having no interest in it whatsoever. Although within the temple-complex, it may have been treated as a separate entity during the days of the East India Company.



Āñjaneya (Bēḍi-Hanumān) installed by Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha in the Sannidhi street, facing the temple of the hill-god

The other shrine to Rāmānuja (the Dova-Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi which was erected in 1485 A.D.) now served as a landmark in the outer periphery of the Tirumala village, signifying the pilgrim's entry into the sacred circuit on top of the hill. It should also be remembered that the Mahant had about this time represented before the Board of Revenue that he be given "a circular tract of two square miles in extent having the temple in the centre, and a radius of 1404 yards, and also as regards the roads leading to lower Tirupati, Chandragiri, Balepalli and the water-falls" (which came up for hearing only druing 1876 before D.F. Carmichael, Secretary to Government). Inclusion of Dova-Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi among the minor pagodas was

probably meant to strengthen the Mahant's claim.

(4)

Despite the availability of a large number of inscriptions recording numerous royal benefactions and providing information about a variety of festivals newly instituted and a richer variety of food offerings , arranged for different occasions, it is hard to reconstruct the religious history of the hill-shrine. The elaborate puranic accounts no doubt offer some clues, but they are not sufficient. Books like *Kōil-oḷugu*, *Tirumalai-oḷugu*, and *Veṅkaṭāchala-māhāthmyam* are sectarian in orientation and give details only suited to their religious inclinations. The documents got prepared by the East India Company when they took over the administration in 1748 A.D. (the well-known Meckenzie manuscripts, the Dittams, the Kaiṅkarya-paṭṭis, Bruce's Code, the Sawāl-Jawāb Paṭṭi, the Paimāyishi account etc.) throw light on the conditions (more administrative and economic than religious) prevailing then, and have limited interest in the religious character of the temple.

Two details, however, stand out as almost undisputed. One is the influence exerted by the great Śrī-vaishṇava teacher Rāmānuja (1017-1137 A.D.), who visited the shrine two or three times during his long life; and the other is the persistence of the Vaikhānasa mode of worship in the temple, from very ancient times till today, in spite of the impact of Rāmānuja (who was an enthusiastic supporter of the Pāñcharatra system of worhship) and his followers (not only the temple functionaries like the ekāṅgi, jiyar, ācharya-purusha, dāsa-naṁbi, koil-kelvi and kaikkoḷar but royal patrons like the Yadava-rayas and the Vijayanagar monarchs). The Vaikhānaṣas are zealous worshippers of Vishṇu but do not follow Rāmānuja; they do not recognize Pāñcharatra as a valid method of worhsip. And they have never been other than temple-priests, and do not form a powerful or influential community. The hill-shrine was dominated for long years by members of the Śrī-vaishṇava community from Tirupati, Śrī-raṅgam and Kāñchīpuram after the thirteenth century. Unlike the Vaikhānasa priests, the Śrī-vaishṇava managers and supervisors of the hill-shrine had political support. It is remarkable in the circumstances that the Vaikhānasa hold over the worship details never weakened, and that there was very little confrontation between the two groups in the history of the hill-shrine.

Rāmānuja's association with the hill-shrine began with his visit to the hill as a young man to learn the hidden meanings of Rāmayaṇa from his maternal uncle, (brother of his mother Bhū-pirāṭṭi), Tirumala-naṁbi, who had taken up residence on the

hill to raise a flower-garden for the service of the hill-god. The traditional accounts insist that Rāmānuja did not go up the hill for this purpose, but stayed on the plains; Tirumala-nambi used to descend the hills to reach Rāmānuja. The Rāmāyaṇa sessions took place under a tamarind tree, and were carried on for a year.

Although Tirumala-nambi was the grandson of the illustrious predecessor of Rāmānuja, Yāmuna-muni (or Āḷavandār A.D., 918-1038 A.D.) and was conversant with the temple-rituals and temple -administraton in Śrī-raṅgam and Kāñchīpuram, he never interfered with either the customary worship that was carried on in the temple or with the administration of the temple. He confined his attention to the duty that he had himself chosen to provide flowers and water for the daily worship of the god, whom all the Āḻvārs had glorified.

The second time that Rāmānuja visited the hill-shrine was after he had become the Āchārya or leader of the Śrī-vaishṇava community in Śrī-raṅgam (hence called Emperumānār or Uḍaiyavar); it is said that Tirumala-nambi was still living at that time. The books mentioned above say that Rāmānuja visited the hill-shrine for the third time in his extreme old age, a year or two before he passed away, and that the Yādava-king Ghaṭṭiga (or Ghaṭṭi-deva) who ruled over the region, patronized him and carried out the changes in the temple according to his directions. It is said that this king ruled from Nārayaṇa-vanam as a feudatory of the Choḷa monarch Kulottuṅga-choḷa II (1123-1146). And the books, sectarian as they are, especially the *Tirumalai-oḻugu)*, narrate in great detail how Rāmānuja converted the hill-shrine into an unmistakably vaishnavite one. Among the changes instituted by Rāmānuja, the following are noted in them:

1. he identified the deity as Vishṇu;
2. he provided the deity with the usual emblems in the two upper hands, samkha and chakra, which were then absent;
3. he bestowed a golden pendant with the image of Tirumal-nāchiyār (viz. Lakshmī) to be hung round the deity's neck;
4. he arranged for the Friday bath for the deity (tiru-mañjanam);
5. he prescribed the characteristic Vaishṇava mark on the forehead (ūrdhva-puṇḍra);
6. he got the vimāna over the sanctum (Ānanda-nilaya) repaired and also got the forms of Vishṇu, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vaikuṇṭha-nātha and Veṅkaṭeśa installed on its four sides, as also the figures of Vishṇu's attendants, Ananta, Garuḍa, Vishvaksena and the dvāra-pālakas;
7. he organized the flower-gardens on the hill (nanda-vana); the garden tended by Tirumala-nambi, his uncle, had already gone into disuse; he therefore asked Tirumala-

nambi's grandson Tōḷappan - tātāchārya to look after this garden;

8. he installed the processional deity, Malayappan (which is now being used), in place of Ugra-śrīnivāsa (about which there will be an occasion to deal with later);

9. he appointed a mendicant-disciple of his, Śaṭha-kōpa-yati, to supervise the worship in the temple, and an ekāṅgi was named as a helper.

The account giving the above details is certainly not a historical one, and the details themselves are open to serious misgivings. The sectarian prejudices have freely played their role; and there are more conjectures and fictions than a faithful narration of actual events. For instance, the story about the identification of the hill-god as Vishṇu presupposes a tussle between the Śaivas and the Vaishṇavas. There is no evidence that the character of the hill-god was ever disputed ; nor is there evidence for the occurrence of an encounter between the Śaivite and Vaishṇavite factions on the hill at that time, or at anytime for that matter. Such encounters became prevalent only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Tamiḷ country; and then they raised an unwholesome dust of discontent, animosity and suspicion. It was probably under this influence that such stories were invented and projected back to Rāmānuja's days.

There was no king Ghaṭṭiga by name in the Yādava line of kings who ruled over the northern and eastern divisions of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam; the lists documented in the *Meckenzie Manuscripts* (vol XVI, pp. 390-414) mention Toya-yādava (1008-1020), Talālu-goṭṭina-raya (1020-1029) and Vasudeva-rāya (1029-1041) as contemporaneous with Rāmānuja. There was a Ghaṭṭi-deva among the Yādava-kings, (the father of Rāja-malla). He ascended the throne only in 1184 A.D., long after the passing away of Rāmānuja. But these are mere names, and we know little about what the Yādava-kings did until we come to Tirukkaḷatti-deva Yādava-rāya (1191-1246 A.D.) who ruled the region of Toṇḍa-maṇḍalam with Veṅkaṭa-giri as capital, and who bestowed the Kuḍavūr village to the hill-shrine as a source of revenue in 1209 A.D., long after Rāmānuja passed away. His successor Vīra-narasiṅga Yādava-rāya (1209 probable date of his birth-1262 A.D.) was a contemporary of the famous Choḷa monarch Parāntaka II (Sundara-choḷa), who renovated the vimāna of the hill-shrine. Vīra-narasiṅga is said to have weighed himself against gold (tulārohaṇa) and to have presented this gold for gilt-plating of the Vimāna. His wife, Yādava-rāya-nacchiyār, was a devotee of the Govindarāja shrine in Tirupati, which had been established by Rāmānuja in 1130 A.D. (24th February). It was probably after the days of Vīra-narasiṅga that the in-

fluence of the Śrī-vaishṇava community began to be felt on the hill.

The 'reforms' in the hill-shrine that are ascribed to Rāmānuja may actually have been the doings of the powerful Śrī-vaishṇava lobby during the later Yādava-rāyas, especially during the reigns of Vīra-narasiṅga-deva, Gaṇḍa-Gopāla (1250-1285) and Śrī-raṅga-nātha Yādava-rāya (1336-1367). What Rāmānuja did was probably only to organize the flower-gardens (nanda-vanams) on the hill and associate his disciples with them. The expression 'maṭham' being usually linked in the inscriptions (e.g. TT 354) with the nanda-vanams is very suggestive. The owners of the gardens were also heads of 'maṭhas' as, for instance, Emperumānār-Jīyar (who was also a Kōil-keḷvi, a temple functionary in the hill-shrine) who is mentioned as such in an inscription of 1445 A.D. In fact, it was the manager of Ariśiṇālayam-nandavanam (made over by the original owner Singaṇṇa Daṇṇāyaka, commander of the army of Hoysaḷa Vīra-Ballāḷa), who was also the head of a maṭha, Mullai Tiru-vēṅkaṭa-jīyar (1375-1445), who established the Periya-jīyar - maṭham, which is very much involved in the worship-rituals in the hill-shrine. His successor, Emperumānār-jīyar, (1445-1493) who looked after Paṅkayachchelli-nan-davanam, has been called in an inscription (TT, 106, 48, 15) 'kōyil-keḷvi' (temple-functionary). After his death, Rāmānuja-jīyar was the manager of the same flower-garden as well as a temple functionary. And the jīyar that came after him, Anusandhānam Tiruveṅkaṭa-jīyar (1504-1520) managed a flower- garden after his own name, Tiru-vēṅkaṭa-nāthan-nandavanam, as well as another, Per-aruḷāḷan-nan-davanam. It was during his time that a junior Jīyar (another kōil-keḷvi) was also there to assist him in the hill-shrine; and so he came to be known as Periya-Jīyar. It is thus that the Jīyar-maṭham came to be associated with the hill-shrine in an important manner.

The image of Rāmānuja is claimed to have been installed in the hill-shrine around 1248-49 A.D., during the days of Vijaya-gaṇḍa-gopāla (D.No. 79), over a hundred years after the passing away of the great teacher. The claim that Rāmānuja himself established the Jīyar-maṭham in 1047 A.D. to supervise and guide the worship rituals in the hill-shrine can hardly be sustained, as we have shown above. But it is a fact that there was an increasing influence of the Śrī-vaishṇava ideology in the hill-shrine. The residence of the processional image of Raṅganātha of Śrī-raṅgam (along with the leaders of the Śrī-vaishṇava community) within the temple-complex on this hill (in the present Raṅga-nāyakula-maṇḍapam) for several years during its travel from 1368 (when it was taken out of Śrīraṅgam to protect it from the imminent invasion by the Muslim army

of Malik-kāfur) to 1371 (when it was brought back to Śrī-raṅgam when the place was safe) was another circumstance that made the Śrī-vaishṇava ideas and practices familiar to the Vaikhānasa priests. Likewise, the processional images of Varada-rāja of Kāñchīpuram and Narasiṁha of Sholiṅghūr are said to have found refuge in this hill-shrine at different periods, although evidence for such residence is not there.

Even before this date, the Vaikhānasa priests had agreed to accommodate some of the Pāñcharātra practices (of the Śrī-vaishṇava brand in the hill-shrine. The images of Vishṇu with two) consorts (ubhaya-nāchchiyār, Śrī-devī and Bhū-devī) appeared in the hill-shrine for the first time in 1339, during the third regnal year of Śrī-raṅga-nātha Yādava-rāya (inscriptions, I, 104). Considering that this was an 'eka-bera' temple (the sanctum housing the lone image of Vishṇu), and considering that even the silver iconic replica of the hill-god which was got made by Sāmavai in 614 A.D. and installed in the 'tiruviḷaṅkōil 'of the hill-shrine was a lone figure (without consorts), this was a big concession indeed. And permission to sing the Tamiḷ verses of Nammāḷvar's *Tiruvāymoḷi* before the hill-god in 1360 (inscriptions, I, 107) was another concession given to the Pāñcharātra enthusiasts. As mentioned earlier, a shrine to Rāmānuja was already there within the temple-precincts, although no independent worship was allowed there; but shrines to the Āḻvārs did not come up in the hill-shrine or in its vicinity.

During the reign of Vīra-narasiṅga-deva Yādava-rāya (1209-1262) there was an extensive renovation of the hill-shrine, as indicated by an inscription (No. 17 TT) on the north wall of the first enclosure of the hill-shrine. This was at the instance of a Śrīvaishṇava pilgrim from outside the region (deśāntri), Tiruppullani-dāsar of the Tamiḷ country (Śeravān-mahādevi-chaturvedi-maṅgaḷam, the present day Shermādevi). The renovation work is said to have begun around 1245 A.D. But what changes were actually carried out at that time cannot be known. But there is a reference in the inscription to some work done with regard to the sanctum. The words of the inscription are:' kōvil-āḻvārukku kōvilukku kōvil śeyya'. There is a play on the word 'Kōvil' (kō-il,"great house"), which generally means shrine or temple. The 'āḻvār' of the 'Kōvil' is of course the god housed in the shrine-sanctum. The expression speaks of a shrine being constructed for the god of the shrine ('kōvil-āḻvārukku') as also for the shrine itself ('kōvilukku'). It may refer to the erection of a vimānam over the sanctum, for a vimānam is architecturally indicative of the location of the sanctum and the crowning glory of the temple-complex.

The expression 'śeyya' in the inscription literally means 'doing',

Bhūta and Tirumaḷiśai) has strong correspondances with the Vaikhānasa outlook. Worship of Vishṇu had become popular in the South by the time the Gaṅgas began to rule (early fourth century). The Halmiḍi inscription (of about 450 A.D.), which is one of the earliest inscriptions, suggests the prevalence of the Vaikhānasa doctrine of Lakshmi-viśishṭādvaita.

जयति श्रीपारिष्वंगशार्ङ्गमानतिरच्युतः।
दानवाक्ष्णोर्युगान्ताग्निः शिष्टानां तु सुदर्शनः॥

The Vaishṇava movement in the south gathered momentum when the Pallavas crossed the Vindhyas and came down to the South to establish a great empire here. The early Pallavas were Vaishṇavas by creed and were 'temple-builders' (cheṭṭha-kāri). Mahendra-varman (580-630 A.D.) built the famous Mahendra-Vishṇu-gṛha in Mahendra-vāḍi and the Vishṇu cave-shrine in Māmaṇḍur. His successors were responsible for Narasiṁha cave-temple at Śiṅgap-perumāḷ-kōil, Ranganātha shrine at Śiṅgavaram and, Mahā-varāha shrine at Māmallapuram. Of the early Chāḷukyas of Bādāmi, 'Maṅgaḷiśa (596-619 A.D.) called himself a 'parama-bhāgavata'. The Āḷvārs moved about and composed their paśuram-songs during the same period. The Vaikhānasa group was probably formed in the wake of the popularity of iconic worship and the institution of temples.

The Vaikhānasas are a small community of temple priests, devoted to the worship of Vishṇu in iconic form (samūrtārchanā). They trace their descent from an early group of hermits, who were within the Vedic fold and who combined sacrificial rituals with an ascetic and austere way of life. The worship of Vishṇu was, according to them, tantamount to the performance of a great Vedic sacrifice; and Vishṇu was for them the Vedic god par excellence. In fact, the credit for having institutionalized the iconic worship of Vishṇu within the Vedic framework must go to the Vaikhānasas.

They do not recognize Rāmānuja or the earlier Āḷvārs in their guru-prampara. Nor do they subscribe entirely to the Viśishṭādvaita doctrine as followed by the Śrī-vaishṇavas. They have their own philosophical position which is ably summarized in Śrīnivāsa-makhin's Lakshmi-viśishṭādvaita-bhāshya, based on the Vaikhānasa scriptures. They carry on their worship entirely with Vedic mantras and rituals, and have no place in their worship for the recital of Tamiḷ prabandhas and tāntrik ceremonials. They are strict in their adherence to the Vedic sacraments, and they also insist on the performance of fire-rituals, at home and in the temple, as ordained by the *Taittirīya-brāhmaṇa* texts. Equal importance is given by them to the Vedic sacraments and rituals on the one hand and worship of Vishṇu-icon at home and in temples on the other; in their view, the two are complementary to each other. They worship Vishṇu alone

as the supreme god comprehending in himself all other gods:

अथाग्नौ नित्यहोमान्ते विष्णोर्नित्यार्चा सर्वदेवार्चा भवति।

अग्निर्देवानामवमो विष्णुः परमस्तदन्तरेण सर्वा अन्या देवता इति ब्राह्मणम्॥

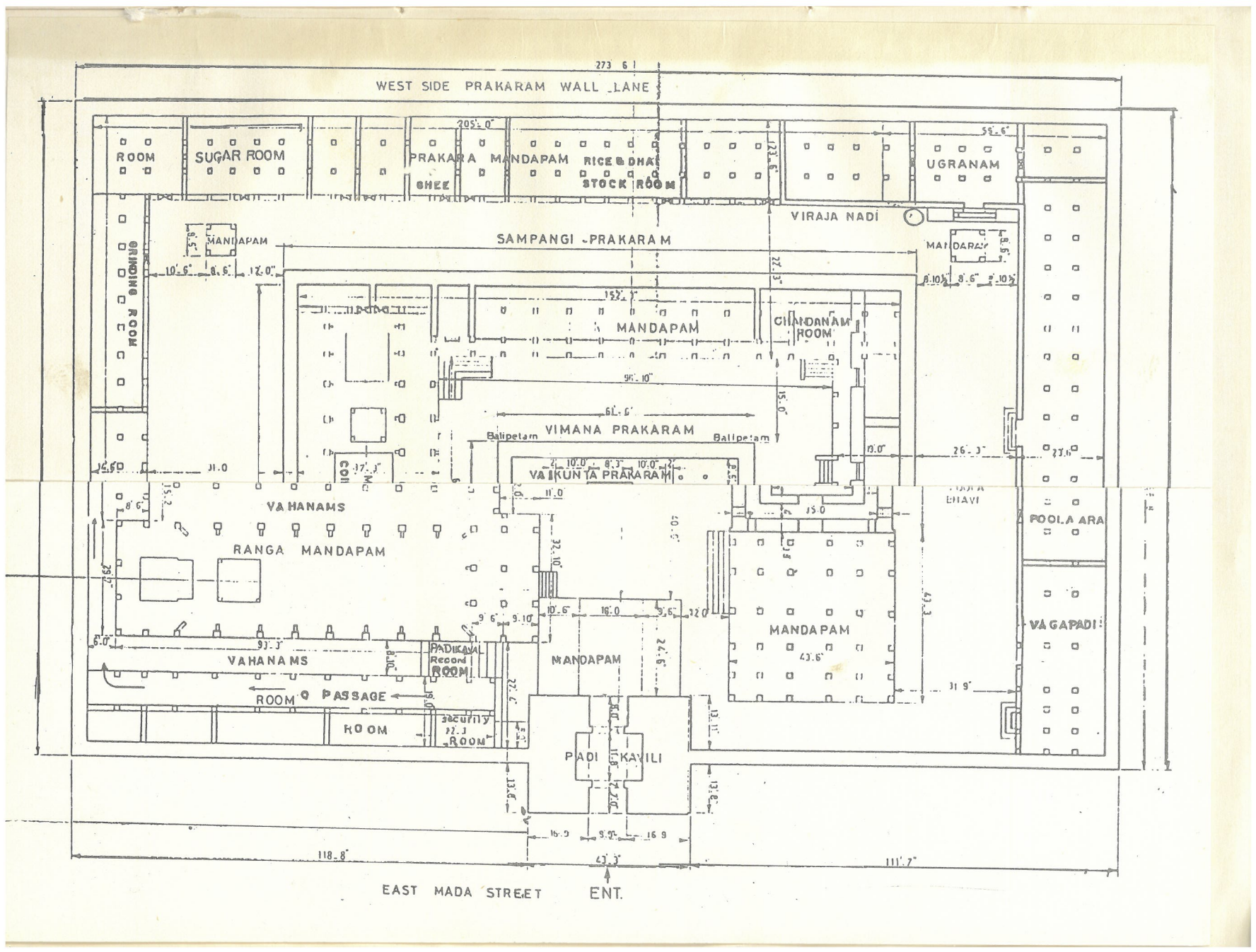
Vaikhānasa-smārta-sūtra, 4,10, 95 and 97)

आखिलजगदेकारणभूतश्रीनारायणैकपरत्वात्।

(*Daśa-vidha-hetu-nirūpaṇa,* 9)

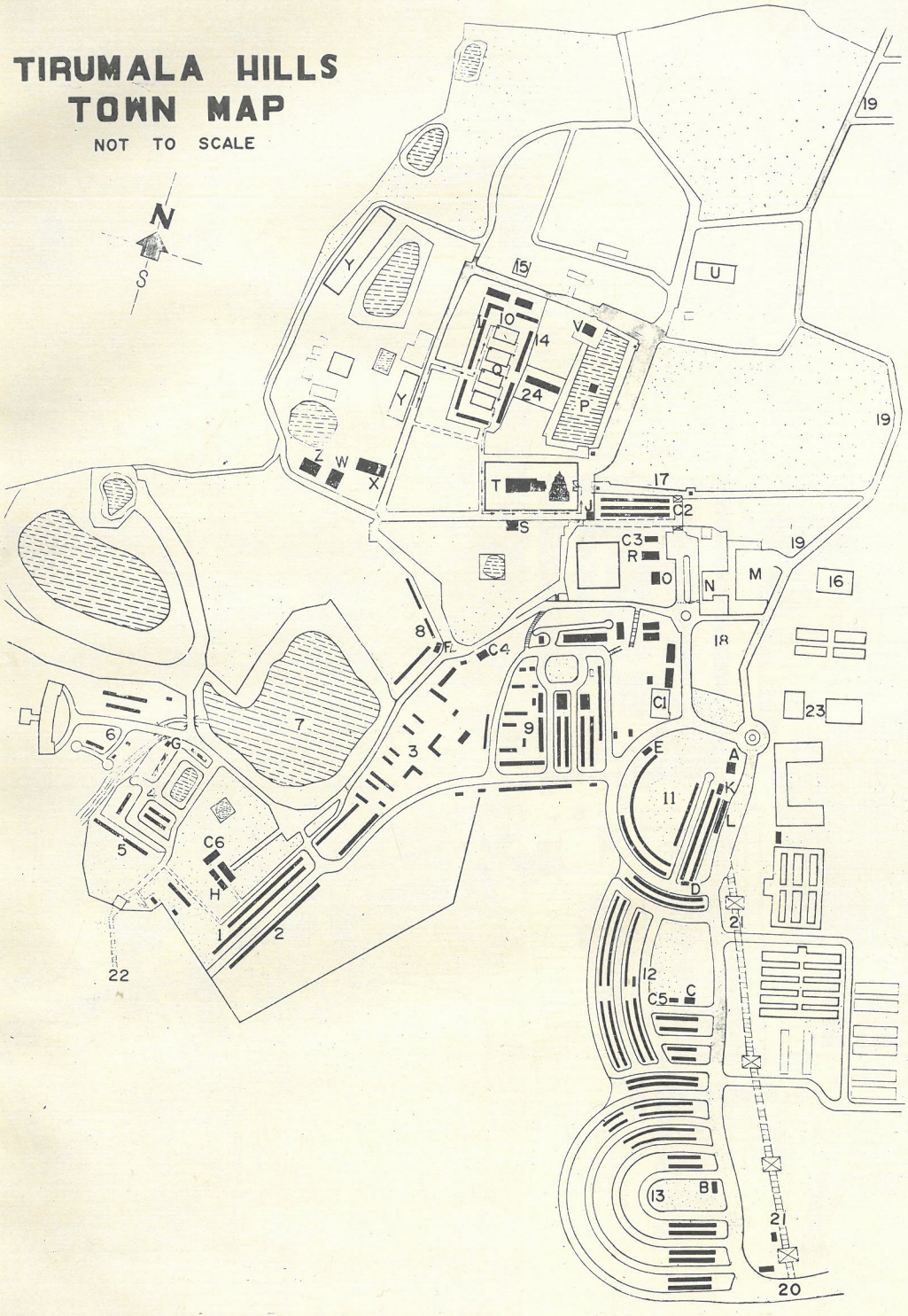
This is characteristically different from the Pāñcharātra view that the role of Lakshmi merits equal recognition. The Vaikhānasas, while accepting one Vishṇu-icon as the main object of worship (mūla or dhruva-bera) recognize four other iconic forms thereof for various ritual sequences: kautuka, snapana, utsava and bali. This is known as the 'pañcha-murti' ideology, quite distinct from the Vyūha doctrine of the Pāñcharātra. The main icon is likened to the fire that is worshipped at home (aupāsanāgni), and the other iconic forms are said to represent other ritual-fires that are derived and sanctified from this fire (sabhya, āhavaniya, anvāharya and avasathya). The five forms are technically called Vishṇu, Purusha, Satya, Achyuta and Aniruddha. If Vishṇu is the 'praṇa', the other four are apāna, vyāna, udāna and samāna. (*Marīchi-Vimānārchanā-kalpa,* paṭala 89). We will have occasion later to deal with the five iconic forms found in the hill-shrine.

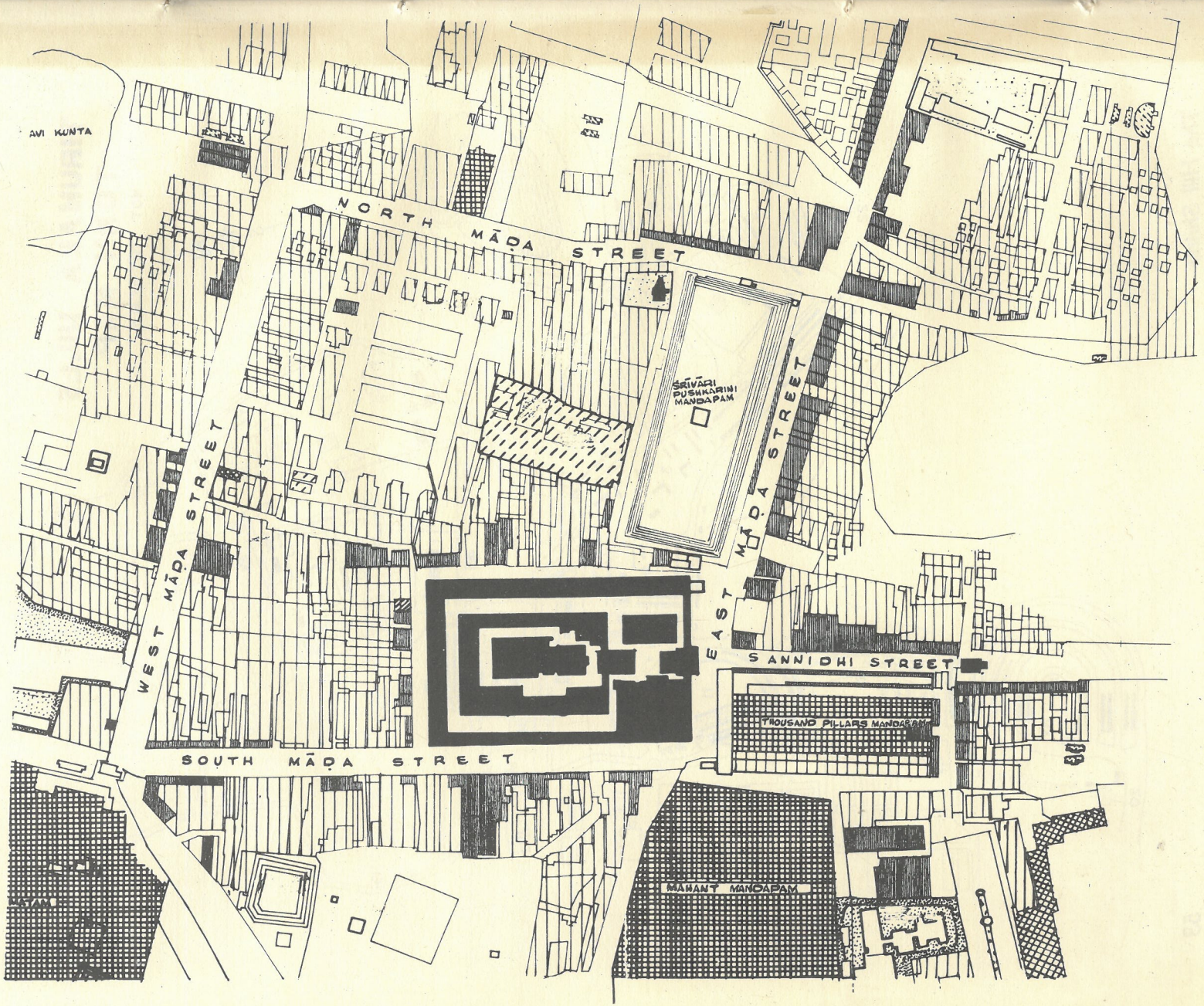
The Telugu-speaking Vaikhānasa priests appear to have been the original inhabitants of Toṇḍa-maṇḍala; and most of the temples in this area had Vaikhānasa priests. Later, they spread to the other areas, but after the advent of Rāmānuja, they suffered a set-back, as he preferred the Pāñcharātra mode of worship. There are even today many important Vishṇu temples in the South besides the hill-shrine, where worhsip is conducted according to Vaikhānasa prescription; temples in Tirupati, Māmallapuram, Śrī-Kākuḷam, Vijayanagaram, Amarāvati, Tiruchirapalli, Vedādri, Dharmavaram, Kākinaḍa, Choḷa-simha-puram, Ramanātha-puram, Piṭhāpuram, Vinukoṇḍa, Khādri, Uttara-merur, Tañjavur, Tirukkuruṅguḍi, Madurai, Darbha śayanam, Koṇḍa-viḍu, Nellūr, Tirumaśai, Śeñji, Vellūr, Vēnkaṭa-giri and Kārveṭi-nagar. It is to be noted that many of the shrines intimately associated with Rāmānuja and the Āḻvārs (like those in Śrī-perumbudur, Poonamalli, Vānamā-malai, Aḻagar-kōil and Tiruvaḷi-tirunagari) continue to have Vaikhānasa priests, even as the hill-shine. The large-hearted Rāmānuja does not seem to have cared to interfere with the age-old customs prevailing in these temples.


WEST SIDE PRAKARAM WALL LANE
ROOM
SUGAR ROOM
PRAKARA MANDAPAM
GHEE
RICE & DHA
STOCK ROOM
UGRANAM
VIRAJA NADI
MANDAPAM
SAMPANGI PRAKARAM
MANDAPAM
CHANDANAM ROOM
VIMANA PRAKARAM
Balipetam
Balipetam
VAIKUNTA PRAKARAM
VAHANAMS
RANGA MANDAPAM
VAHANAMS
PADIKAVAL Record ROOM
MANDAPAM
ROOM
PASSAGE
ROOM
Security ROOM
PADIKAVILI
MANDAPAM
POOLA ARA
VAGAPADI
EAST MADA STREET
ENT.

TIRUMALA HILLS TOWN MAP

NOT TO SCALE




AVI KUNTA
NORTH MĀḌA STREET
ŚRĪVĀRI PUSHKARINI MANDAPAM
WEST MĀḌA STREET
EAST MĀḌA STREET
SANNIDHI STREET
THOUSAND PILLARS MANDAPAM
SOUTH MĀḌA STREET
MAHANT MANDAPAM


Akasa-
Vāppal Theertham
Chakra Tirth
Manikam-bgva
Manalpam
Kolla
Uha Gunta

CHAPTER THREE

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HILL-SHRINE

There is a long-standing custom in this country to visit the holy places periodically. Known as 'tīrtha-yātrā', it is regarded as a sacred duty and has been indulged in by our people since very ancient times. This has contributed considerably to the cultural unity of our population. Places thrown widely apart like Kedārnāth and Badarī in the Himalayas, Rāmeśvaram, and Kanyākumāri in the extreme South, Dvārakā in the West, Puri-Jagannātha in the East; places like Vāraṇāsi, Prayāga, Vindhya-vāsinī, Gayā, Ujjayinī, Nāsik, Śrī-śaila, Madurai, Tañjāvūr, Kāñchīpuram, and Uḍupi on the mainland, are well-known as places of pilgrimage. Among the large number of such pilgrim-spots, Tirumala-Tirupati has a unique place of honour. There are devotees of this shrine all over the country, and the shrine has been one of the most popular centres of religious devotion and piety since at least the beginning of the Christian era.

A report included in the *Meckenzie Manuscripts* (Translations and Reports, Vol XVI, pages 491-493) dated 1804 A.D. has the following to say; (my comments are given within brackets):

"1. Tirupathy (meaning Tirumala-Tirupati) is revered as a Mahachatra (viz. mahā-kshetra, great place of pilgrimage) or very holy place, and many from various dasums (viz. deśams, countries or rather parts of the country) resort thither, viz.

1. Cunnud (Karnātaka),
2. Cannada (the coastal Karnātaka)
3. Goojur (Gurjara, Gujarāt)
4. Mahurvaada (Marwār, Rājasthān)
5. Maharāstra
6. Sourāstra (Saurāshṭra)
7. Conkan (Koṅkaṇa, now included in Mahārāshṭra)
8. Mallayal (Malayāla or Kerala).

Also Hindus come to visit the Swamee (viz. the hill-god) from several other countries (viz. parts of India)

2. The following is a particular account of the stallums (viz. sthalam, places or towns) from whence the Parasha (viz. Parishe, gathering of people) or Pilgrims visit this place, viz. on the North from

1. Caasee (Kāśi, Vāraṇāsi)
2. Gayāh

3. Prayāg
4. Hurridwar (Hardvār)

5. Cashmeer (Kāśmīra)
6. Oojanee (Ujjayini)
7. Babayola
8. Ayodhaya (Ayodhyā)
9. Jaganaat (Puri-Jagannātha)

3. on the South from

1. Arcot
2. Teru-na velly (Tirunalvēli)
3. Madura
4. Rameswar
5. Malleyal (Malayalam, Kerala)
6. Anuntasaina (Ananta-śayana)

4. on the East from

1. Chinnaputtana (or Madras)
2. Callasree (Kāḷahasti)
3. Nellore
4. Bunder or Masulipatam
5. Rajamahendra (-varam)
6. Sickakole (Chikakolu) etc.

5. on the west from

1. Seringapatam (śrī-raṅga-paṭṭaṇa)
2. Bedanoor
3. Oodipee (Udipi)
4. Soobramanya (Kukke-Subrahmaṇya)
5. Goa
6. Gocurnum (Gokarṇa)
7. Ickery (Ikkēri)
8. Gooty
9. Audavanae
10. Harryhur (Harihara)
11. Bellary etc"

Tarigoṇḍa-Veṅkamāmbā, a pious poetess who was a devotee of the hill-shrine, wrote in a work dated about 1750 that the hill-god receives offerings from pilgrims who come from a variety of places like Magadha, Mālava, Malayāḷa, Choḷa, Nepāla, Koṅkaṇa, Drāviḍa, Teṅkaṇa, Saurāshṭra, Sauvīra, Kuru, Kukara, Kosala, Puḷinda, Lāṭa, Marāṭa, Ghoṭa, Karṇāṭa, Kāmboja, Kāshmīra etc. ("Kāśmīrādi-sakala-deśādhīśvarādhīna-samasta-jana-vittāpa-haraṇam sādhu-satkaraṇam śrī-veṅkaṭeśam").

People who visit the hill-shrine are all pilgrims, and few ever think of settling down there. And many of them go there to discharge a vow, to express their gratitude for a favour conferred, or to seek providential intervention in a predicament; and, therefore, they follow a regimen in order to make the pilgrimage effective and fruitful. There is an injunction that one who sets out on a pilgrimage must have faith and devotion;

तीर्थयात्रां प्रकुर्वीत श्रद्धाभक्तिसमन्वितः॥

For, going on a pilgrimage, one can purify onself.

विशुध्द्यर्थं प्रकुर्वन्ति सत्क्षेत्रस्यानुवर्तनम्।

One must have good company (satsaṅgī) while on a pilgrimage, must listen to good talk (satkathām śṛṇvan), and observe the codes of good conduct (sadāchāra-samanvitah). He must also be conversant with the details of how the particular pilgrimage is to be undertaken (vidhi-jñah): what spots are sacred and must be visited, what route in going round is proper, and how one should conduct himself while he is there. Texts like *Brahma-purāṇa* (ch. 9 verses 3 ff) say that a pilgrimage helps understand the import of the scriptures.

तीर्थयात्रां प्रकुर्वन्ति शास्त्राणां प्रत्ययाय च।

Unless one recognizes the veracity of scriptural prescriptions and teachings, he does not develop lasting faith, and it is such faith that brings about real devotion, which is indispensable for obtaining the ultimate benefit of pilgrimage (viz. grace of god).

दृष्टप्रत्ययशास्त्रार्थे पुनः श्रद्धाभिजायते।
श्रद्धया जायते भक्तिर्भक्त्या तुष्यति केशवः॥

With regard to the pilgrimage undertaken to the hill-shrine, there are several details given in the purāṇas. The several sacred spots (tīrthas) on the hill are mentioned; bath in tanks like Svāmi-pushkariṇī and rivers like Svarṇa-mukhī is recommended; and approaches to numerous shrines are described. There is, however, a long poem in Sanskrit entitled *Śrī-venkaṭeśa-sevā-krama,* composed by Gārgya-Saṭhāri of the Tirupati village, which provides a graphic account of the main temple-complex on the hill, the ascent up the hill, enclosures and pavilions, deities and minor shrines along the circumambulatory paths. There is in it an excellent pen-picture of the hill-god. The exact date of composition of this work cannot be ascertained, but the pen-picture of the temple given here suggests that the work belongs to the fifteenth century. This work which has been included in *Śrī Vēnkaṭeśa-Kāvya Kalāpa* (ed. by D.T. Tātāchārya, T.T.D, Tirupati, 1943), is here given in full to focuss attention on the architecture of the temple.

॥वेंकटेशसेवाक्रमः॥
यश्चक्रे वेंकटेशस्य सेवाक्रममनुत्तमम्
तं शाठारिगुरुं वन्दे गार्ग्यं श्रीपुरवासिनम्॥

This laudatory verse (taniyan) has been composed by a disciple of the author, who is mentioned as a resident of Tirupati.

श्रीवेंकटाचलाधीशं श्रियाध्यासितवक्षसम्।
श्रितचेतनमन्दारं श्रीनिवासमहं भजे॥१॥

The opening verse is in the nature of

supplication to the hill-god who is addressed here as Śrīnivāsa and described as the lord of the Vēṅgaḍam hill; Lakshmī abiding in his chest and the god being the protector of the people who seek refuge in him are given as his distinguishing features.

प्रातरुत्थाय पूतात्मा ध्यायेय स्वगुरोः पदे।
श्रीवेंकटेशपादाब्जे इयासुर्वेंकटाचलम्॥२॥

The devotee, desirous of making a pilgrimage to the Vēṅgaḍam hill, should get up early in the morning and contemplate on the feet of his religious preceptor as also the sacred lotus-like feet of the lord of the Vēṅgaḍam hill.

चक्रतीर्थे ततः स्नात्वा कृतपूर्वाह्निकक्रियः।
ध्यायन् श्रीवेंकटाधीशं
सेवेयाञ्जनभूधरम्॥३॥

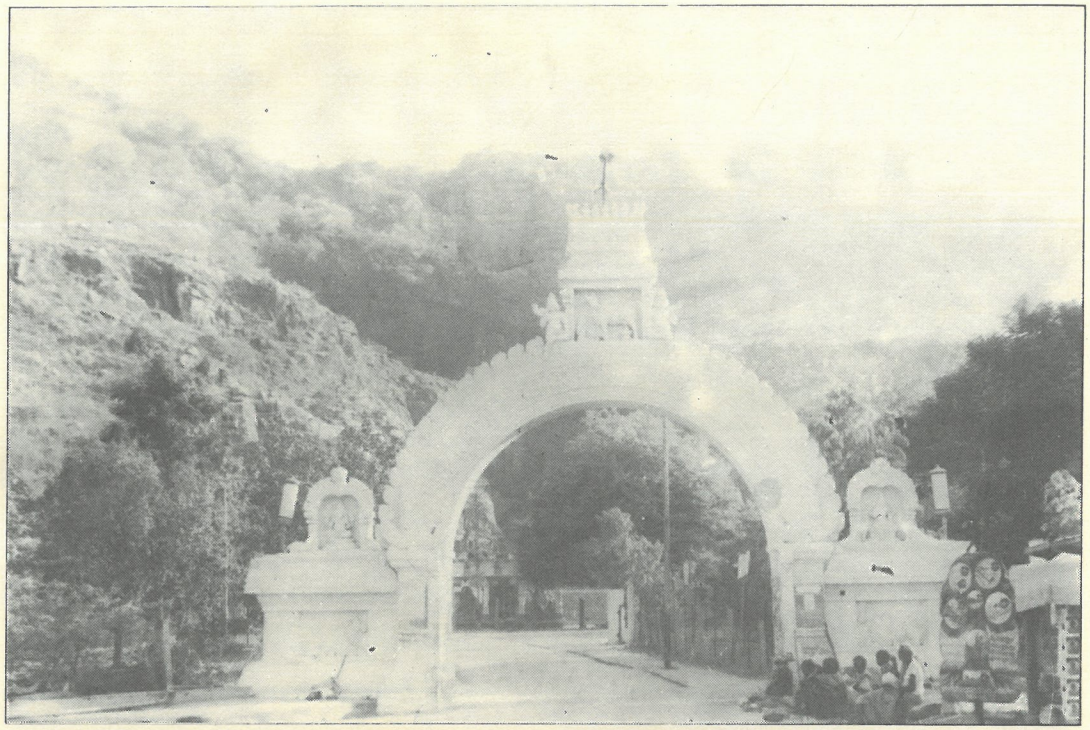
Having left the town (Tirupati), he goes to the Chakra-tīrtha for his bath and morning rites, before he approaches the sacred hill.

KAPILA-TĪRTHA

The Chakra-tīrtha mentioned here is more familiarly known as Kapila-tīrtha, for there is a small shrine to Kapileśvara just beneath a boulder and on the banks of a pool formed by a splendid water-fall at the foot of the hill, about a mile to the north of the Tirupati town. This is a shrine to Śiva constructed in the latter part of the eleventh century by Rāyan-Rājendra-Choḷan (Brahma-mārāyan), who was governing the village Koṭṭūr (which was on the outskirts of the Tirupati town and has now disappeared).

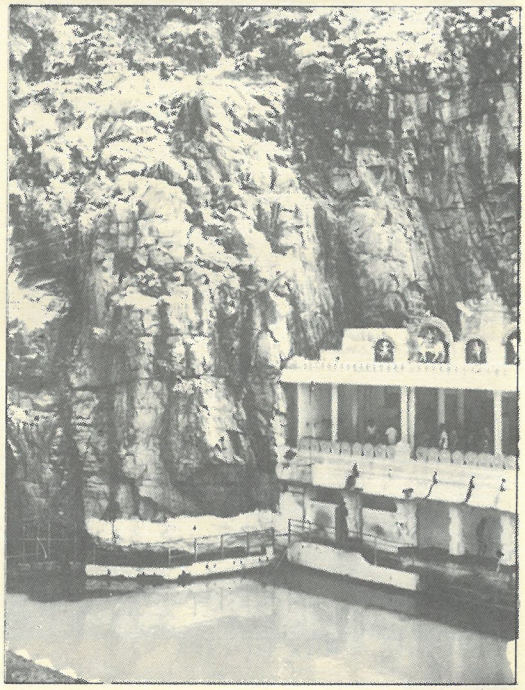
The sanctum containing the liṅga called Kapileśvara is 6 3/4 x 7 1/4 x 7 cubic feet. To the north of the sanctum is another room 9 x 5 1/4 x 6 cubic feet, where the processional images are kept, along with the celestial cow of plenty, Kāmadhenu, and its calf. In front of the sanctum is a porch (mukha-maṇḍapa), where the bull sits facing the lingam in the sanctum. There are sculptural representations (facing west) of Umā-maheśvara (in the northern wing), Sūrya-nārāyaṇa and Vināyaka (Southern wing). There are the usual door-guardians in the outer apartment.

This tīrtham (water-fall and pool) was used for the festival (like tīrthavari) in the Govinda-rāja temple at Tirupati, until Govinda-pushkariṇī was formed near the temple. Rāmānuja, who consecrated the Govindarāja temple is said to have installed the Sudarśana-chakra in the four directions on the banks of this tīrtham. From this circumstance, it came to be known as Chakra-tīrtha among the Śrī-vaishṇavas. The Tamil name for Sudarśana-chakra being Tiruvaḷi-āḻvār, it was also known as Āḻvār-tīrtha. There is also a shrine to Nammāḻvār on the southern side of the tank.



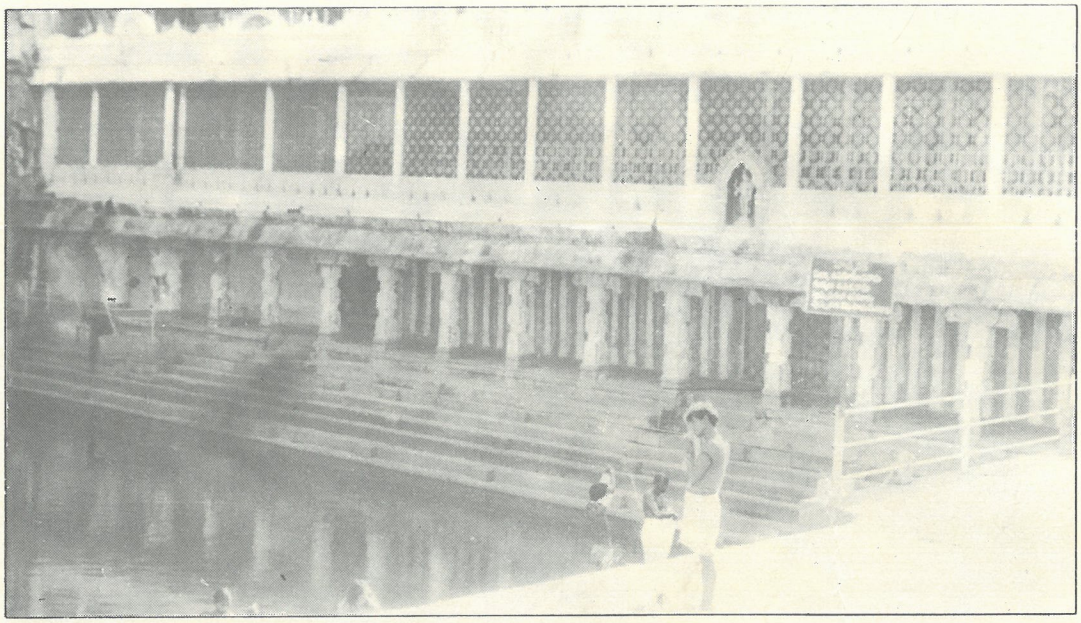
Entrance to Kapila-Tirtha

But soon, the Śrī-vaishṇavas of Tirupati found little use for this tank, which is situated so far away; and it was neglected. The Vijayanagar monarch Achyuta-rāya turned his attention to this tīrtham, which he referred to in an inscription only as Chakra-tīrtha, in 1531. The water-fall was rendered picturesque by granite stone steps; he got sandhyā-vandana-mantapas constructed in two rows on the eastern and western sides for the performance of ablutions and rituals by the pilgrim before he ascended the hill. This has been mentioned in the above verse ('kṛta-purvāhnika-kriyah').



Kapila-Tirtha (before renovation)

Because of the presence of Koṭṭūr village and the growing popularity of



Kapila-Tīrtha (after renovation)

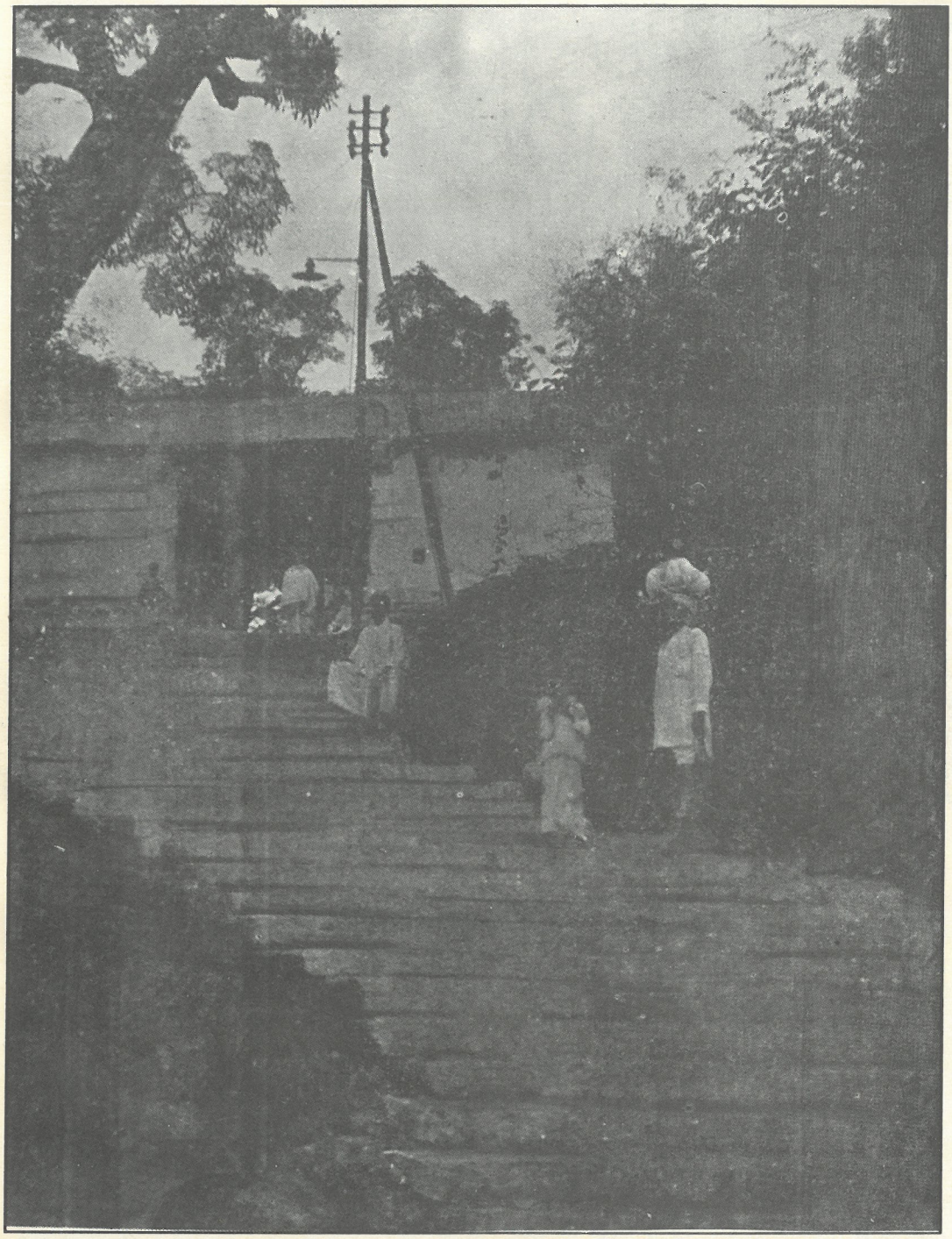
Tirupati from the twelfth century, the ascent to the Vēṅgaḍam from Tirupati became more popular than the other approaches (viz., from Chandragiri and from Bāle-palli). And from Tirupati, of the two alternative approaches, the road from the Municipal boundary of the town to Kapila-tīrtha was preferred by most pilgrims.

ततः पश्चिमादिग्भागे गत्वा
कञ्चिन्महापथम्।
श्रीवेंकटगिरेर्मूले शेषांशेनोत्थितां
भुवः॥४॥
चिश्चामुन्निद्रसुभगां दिव्यां तन्मूलतः शुभे।
श्रीनिवासपदाम्भोजे स्वसंकल्पात्
समुस्थिते॥५॥
तन्मूलतः स्वयंव्यक्तान् सरोयोगिमुखानपि।
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं शेषाद्रिं प्रणिपत्य
कृताञ्जलिः॥६॥

From Chakra-tīrtha (viz. Kapila-tīrtha) the pilgrim walks for some distance in the western direction along the wide pathway and comes to the foot of the Vēṅgaḍam hills. There he sees the holy tamarind tree, looking splendid with spreading branches, and emanated from an aspect of Śesha (viz. Ananta, an attendant deity of Vishṇu). Then he sights the holy feet (imprints) of the hill-god, appearing there from the god's own choice. The pilgrim then visits the shrines of the Āḻvārs, Poygai and others, prostrates before Lakshmī-Nṛsiṁha and bows to the sacred hill (Śeshādri).

BEGINNING OF THE ASCENT

Outside Kapila-tīrtha are some interesting spots, like the cave-shrine of



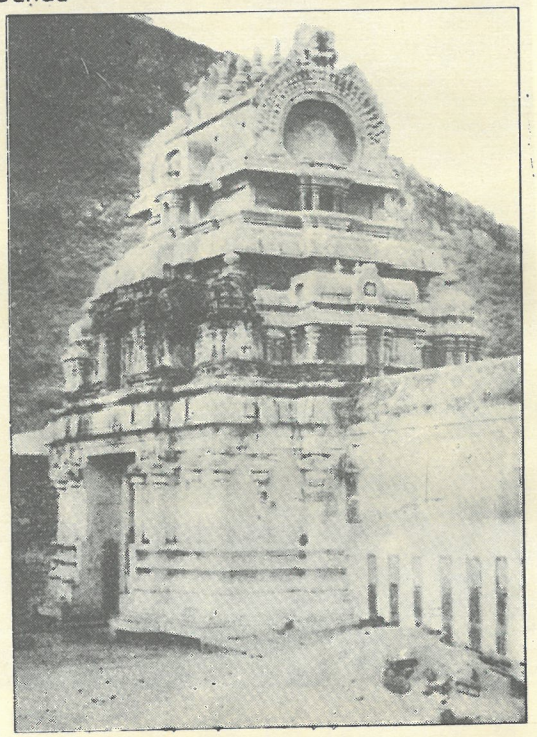
THE ASCENT ON THE HILL



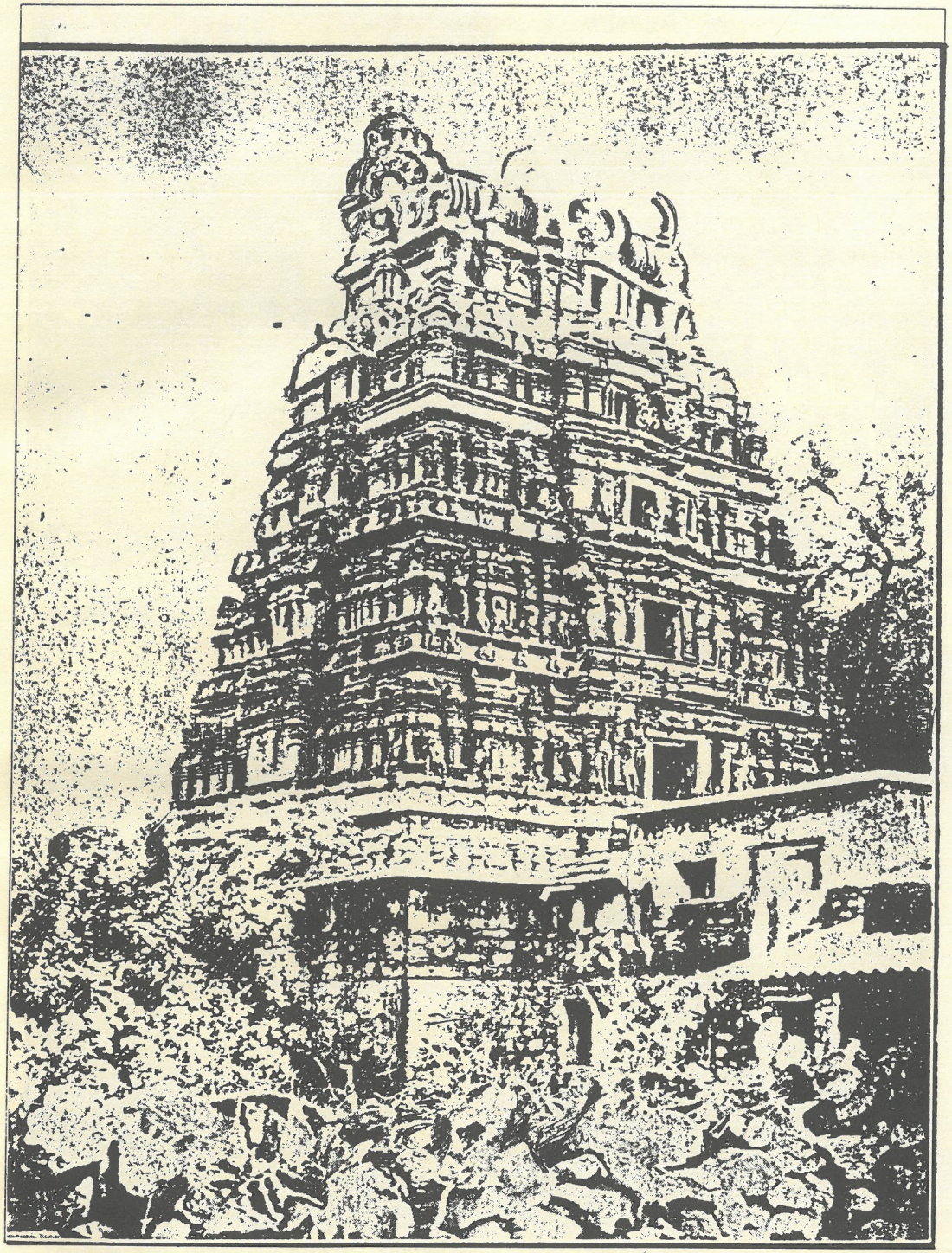
Talayēru-Guṇḍu

Lakshmī-nrsiṁha to the west of the western bank of the tank, and the Nammāḷvār shrine at the entrance of the tank. The latter was built by Vanedutta-kai-aḷagiriyār (Pallava-rāyar) about 1285 A.D. (vol I, No. 57, 58, 165). On the eastern road to the tank there is a shrine to Tirumaṅgai-āḻvār, and to the west of the road leading to the tank a shrine to Kula-śekhara-āḻvār, built by Ayodhyā Rāmānuja jīyanagār.

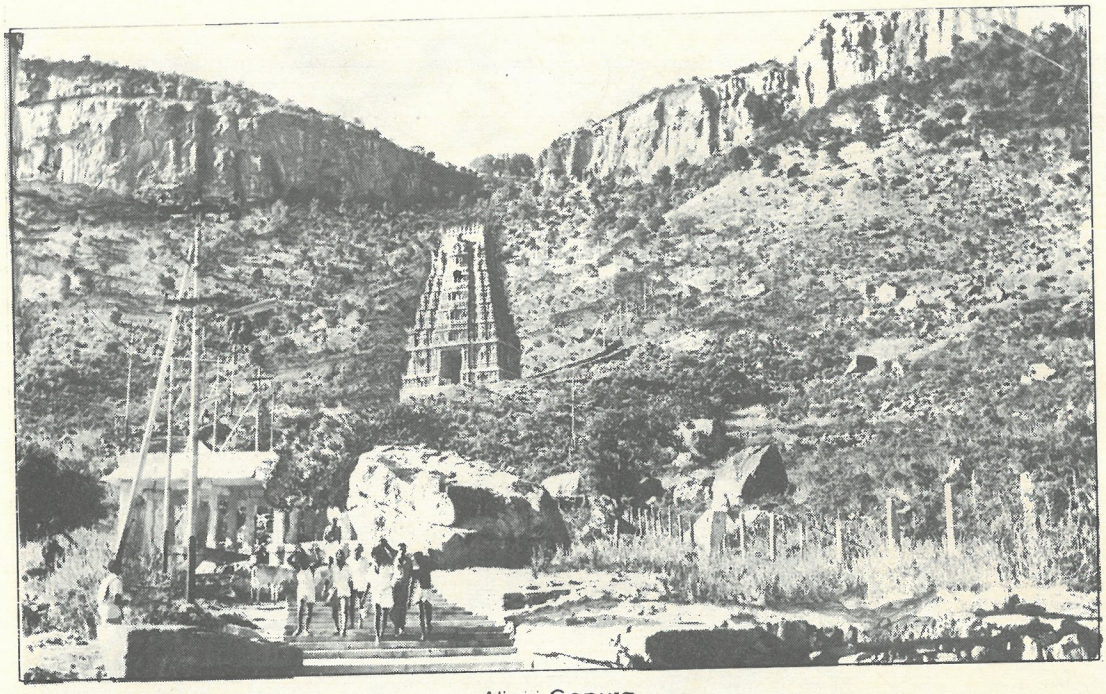
From Kapila-tīrtha one walks in the westerly direction and reaches the flight of steps up the hill. The mantapa at this spot is called Alipiri-pādāla maṇṭapam (or Aḍi-vāra-maṇṭapam) : 'ali-piri' (aḍi-paḍi) means the lowest step in the flight of steps at the foot of the hill.



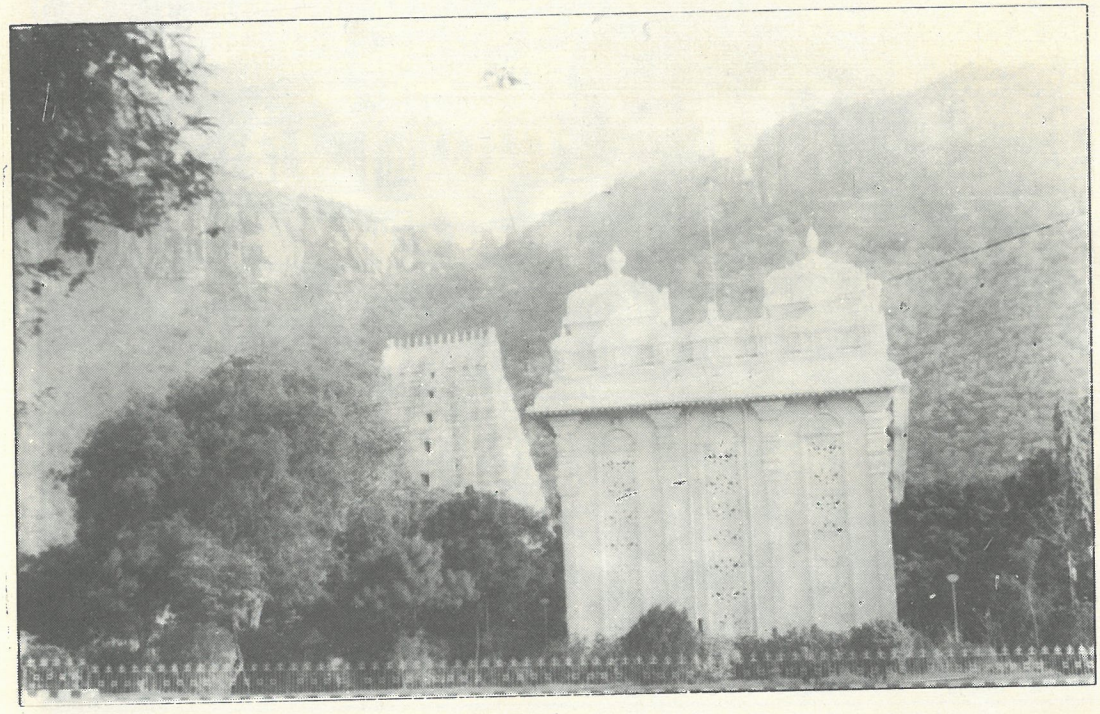
Sri-Lakshmi-Narasimha-Svāmi temple
(now deserted)



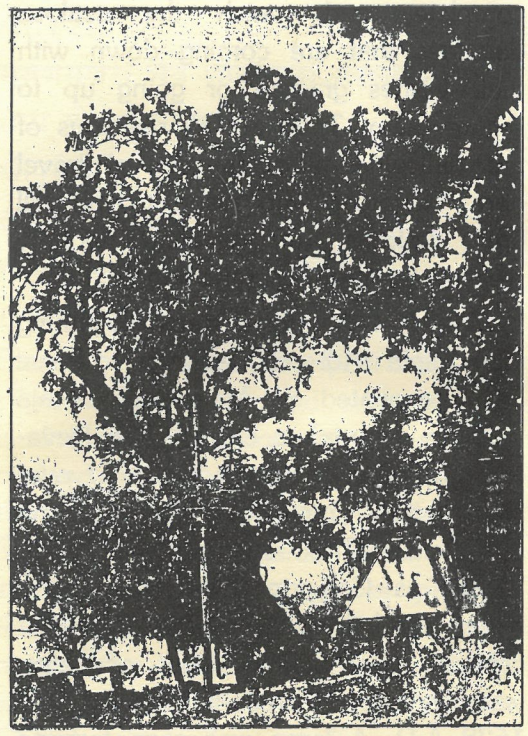
Gāḷi-Gopura (Agra-gopura, 1628)



Alipiri-Gopura



Alipiri-Gopura



The Tamarind Tree

The stone maṇṭapam has a tower called Alipiri-gopuram (or Aḍipāḍa-gopuram). And not far from this maṇṭapam are ancient shrines to the Periyāḷvār, Tiruppāṇāḷvār and Tōṇḍar aḍip-poḍy-āḷvār.

Nearby is the rock called Talayēruguṇḍu, touch of which is said to bestow luck in ascending the hill; there is on this rock a splendid sculpture in relief of Hanumān. There is also to be seen in the same spot the famous tamarind tree, under which Rāmānuja is believed to have learnt mystic aspects of *Rāmāyaṇa* from Tirumala-nambi, his maternal uncle. Rāmānuja is regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu's couch, Śesha, and this tamarind tree is said to share this detail.

The story is that Rāmānuja, before he became an Āchārya, was residing for a year in Koṭṭūr, a village on the outskirts of the presentday Tirupati, for learning the secret doctrines taught in *Rāmāyaṇa* from his uncle Tirumala-nambi, who was residing on top of the hill, engaged in the daily service of the hill-god. Every morning Tirumala-nambi was coming down the hill and Rāmānuja would be waiting for him under this tamarind tree. He would return as soon as the lessons were over, to be in time for the service of the hill-god. Out of consideration for this devotee, the hill-god manifested his holy feet close to the tamarind tree, so that Tirumala-nambi may offer his services to them, without having to hurry back.

The feet of the hill-god are even now shown to the pilgrims, as engraved on a granite-slab in relief on the floor of what is known as Śrī-vāri-pādāla-maṇṭapam. This has been referred to in the above verses as 'śrīnivāsa-padāmbhoje sva-saṁkalpāt-samutthite'.

There is also a shrine to Lakshmī nṛsiṁha on the pathway to Śeshādri (the name of the hill). This was constructed in 1485 by Sāḷuva Nara siṁha to commemmorate his becoming the Vijayanagar monarch (śrīman-sār-

vabhauma-narasiṁha) (G.T. No. 273, and No. 82). An inscription of 1544 refers to this temple as 'tirumalai-vaḷi-kaṭṭi-siṅgar kōil'. This is said to have been destroyed by Hyder-ali when he attacked Chandragiri in 1782.

दयाशतकमप्युच्चैः स्तोत्रगद्ये समुच्चरन्।
भक्तैर्भागवतैः सार्धमारोहेयं वृषाचलम्॥७।
घुष्यद्भिः संघशश्चोच्चैर्गोविन्देति पुनः पुनः।
गच्छद्भिः
स्वामिसेवार्थमागच्छद्भिर्निरन्तरम्॥८॥
सम्पूर्णं लब्धकामैश्च चतुर्वर्गार्थिभिर्नरैः।
शिखराणि च रम्याणि निर्झरान्
परिषत्प्रभुम्॥९॥
श्रीवेंकटेशं संसेव्य गच्छेयं तं महापथम्।
आरुह्य
तिष्ठन्नामोदादञ्जनाद्रिशिरोवरम्॥१०॥

AS ONE ASCENDS

These verses describe the crowds that one meets with while ascending the hill. They constantly shout 'Govinda', not only to offset the strain of climbing the steep steps, but out of devotional fervour. Śrī-vaishṇavas would recite verses from *Dayā-śataka*, a work of Vedānta-deśika eulogizing the hill-god's mercy, Yāmuna-muni's *Stotra-ratna*, or Rāmānuja's two works in prose: *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* and *Vaikuṇṭha-gadya*. One should go along with devotees and learned men, so that the benefits of the pilgrimage may be complete, and watch the zealous devotees that are coming down with their wishes granted or going up to secure them. They are all oblivious of the difficulties and dangers of travel here. Devotees who resort to this hill are desirous of wealth, worldly pleasures, virtue or salvation.

The first of stone steps beginning with Alipiri (Aḍi-paḍi) appears to have been renovated by Maṭla Ananta-rāja (Kumāra-Ananta), a chief of the Deva-choḷa family, exercising authority over the region between Tirupati and Ahobilam. The Agra-gopura (also known as Gāḷi-gopuram) on the top of the first hill, which one reaches after climbing this winding flight of steps, was also constructed by him around 1628 A.D. A lamp was seen burning in this gopura at nights.

And as one climbs the stone steps and walks along the foot-paths on the hill-tops, he is bewitched by the spectacle of lovely hills, dales, valleys, streams and thick jungles. It is of course an unforgettable experience, and the pilgrim is not in a hurry: he rests at times, tarries on the steps or on the path, to drink deep the scenic beauty, and moves along in slow strides, at this stage of the journey.

The 'mahā-patha' mentioned here may probably refer to what now is known as 'pedda-yekkuḍu', which is a very tiresome patch on the ascent.

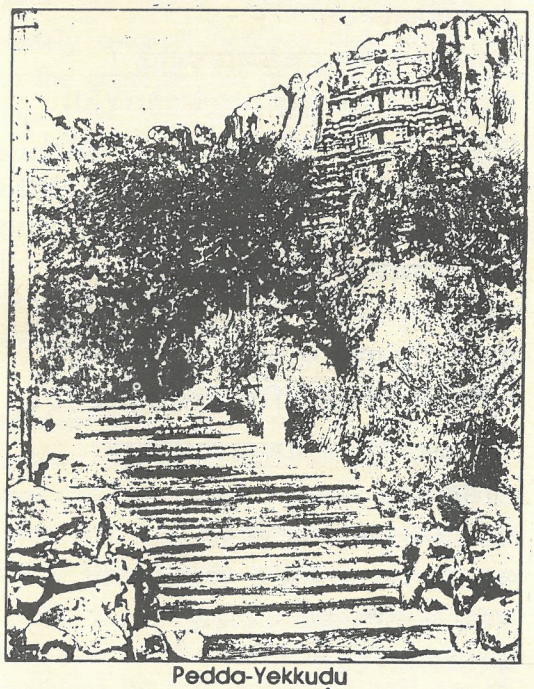
श्रीवेंकटाचलप्रान्तभूमिपर्यन्तपर्वतान्।

वापीकूपतटाकादिन् वनान्युपवनानि च॥११॥
सुवर्णमुखरीं चैव शोभमानां महानदीम्।
धाम गोविन्दराजस्य पश्येयं श्रीपुरीमपि॥१२॥
ततः कर्पूरसुरभितीर्थं कर्पूरनिर्झरम्।
गत्वाचम्य ततश्चान्यच्छृङ्गमारुह्य सुन्दरम्॥१३॥

Standing on the first hill-top, the pilgrim may turn round and see the land that he has covered, the stretch of land from the foot of the hills to the town of Tirupati (called here Śrī-puri). Numerous tanks, pools, wells, streams, gardens and groves present themselves before him. He can see the meandering river Suvarṇa-mukharī, which flows past Tiruchānūr and Chandra-giri and at a distance of a little more than two miles south of Tirupati. The purāṇas describe this river as most sacred, and it is by the side of this river that the Vēṅgaḍam hill rises, according to the purāṇas. It was an important river during the reigns of Pallavas and Cholas.

He can also behold the great temple to Govinda-rāja in the town. Rāmānuja on his second visit to this place found an ancient shrine to Pārthasārathi on the outskirts of the village Koṭṭūr. As at that time there was a threat of desecration of the Śrīvaishṇava temple at Chidambaram, the processional deity of Govinda-rāja of that temple had to be shifted to some safe place. Rāmānuja arranged for this deity to be housed within the Pārthasārathi shrine near Koṭṭūr. Later, when the processional image was taken back to Chidambaram, and due to some reason the original icon of Parthasārathi could no longer be worshipped, Rāmānuja installed a new main icon (mūla-bera) here, and called it Govindarāja.

The processional image of Pārthasārathi became the kautuka-bera of Govindarāja. This was in the year 1129-30 A.D. Rāmānuja was also responsible for the new township called Tirupati, incorporating the area formerly known as Koṭṭūr. The Yādavarāya ruler Vīra-narasiṅga-deva contributed to the magnificence of this temple and



Pedda-Yekkudu

the celebrity of this temple-town (around 1234 A.D.)

The 'tīrtha' mentioned in verse 13 is actually a canal that one comes to, after the first steep ascent and before the steep flight of steps known as 'knee-breaker' (moṇakāl-murippu).

पक्षिवृक्षाकृतिधरैर्निबिडं नित्यसूरिभिः।
शीघ्रं क्वचिच्च गच्छेयं
सेवाचपलमानसः॥१४॥
सुखमत्रैव वर्तेय रम्ये श्रीशैलसानुनि।
इतीरयन् मन्दमतिर्गच्छेयं
कुत्रचित्पुनः॥१५॥
सुवर्चसां सुरूपाणां पुण्यानां मृगपक्षिणाम्।
श्रृणुयमद्भुतं शब्दं कूजतां मधुरं
पथि॥१६॥
अतीत्य कञ्चित्पन्थानमटवीनृहरिं ततः।
प्रणम्य तदनुज्ञातः प्रविशन्
वनमन्तरा॥१७॥
सालतालतमालाम्रचन्दनागरुभूरुहैः।
नालिकेराम्रपनसकदलीक्रमुकैरपि॥१८॥
पुष्पवद्भिः फलोपेतैश्छायावद्भिर्मनोहरैः।
भूषितं भुरुहैश्चान्यैर्निर्झरैश्चामलोदकैः॥१९॥
सिंहकुञ्जरगोव्याघ्रतरक्षुहरिणादिभिः।
निर्वैरैर्मृगसंघैश्च रममाणैः
समाकुलम्॥२०॥
मयूरकोकिलानां च मधुरैः कूजितैरपि।
शारिकाशुकसंलापैर्मोदिताखिलचेतनम्॥२१॥
चन्दनागरुसंवाहि मन्दमारुतसेवितम्।
श्रीमदप्राकृतं दिव्यं
झिल्लिकागणनादितम्॥२२॥
नयनानन्दजनकं नवीनं पश्यतां सदा।
सर्वत्र फलपुष्पाढ्यं संपश्येयं
वनस्थलम्॥२३॥

NEARING THE SUMMIT

Then follows a graphic description of the charming wilderness that abounds on the hills. The pilgrim looks at the tall trees of many varieties, listens to the sounds of many birds and beasts, and enjoys the cool and fragrant breeze that wafts across. Many are the animals that freely roam about in the forests on the hills, and they seem to live amicably. The pilgrim, filled with devotion, imagines that the fortunate birds and animals that live on these sacred hills are indeed the celestial beings (nitya-sūris) who have assumed those forms. The nitya-sūris are the ever-liberated beings who have secured fully the grace of the great god, but they are eager to dwell on these hills and forests of Vēṅgaḍam, which is verily Vaikuṇṭha where they normally reside. They, like the god himself, have abandoned Vaikuṇṭha and have teemed up here to be near the god.

The journey to the hill-shrine is accomplished by ascents and descents over hills (which are seven in number) and moving in and out of forests. The landscape is throughout picturesque and delightful. There is never a dull moment for the pilgrim as he walks amidst trees laden with fruits and flowers, plants and creepers which are shapely and charming, and scents and sounds which are fascinating. But now he is all eager to get near the hill-shrine, and hurries onward.

ततोऽन्यच्छृङ्गमारुह्य ततोन्यत्रावरुह्य च।
क्वचिद्गच्छन्क्वचित्तिष्ठन्क्वचिद्ध्यायन्रमाप-
तिम्।।२४।।
सानुमन्यं समारोहन् श्रीश
मामानयान्तिकम्।
इति ब्रुवन् यतिवरं प्राप्नुयां परया
मुदा।।२५।।
तं प्रणम्याभ्यनुज्ञातः परं पन्थानमास्थितः।
अर्चिरादिपथे दिव्ये
मित्रचन्द्रेन्द्रवेधसाम्।।२६।।
लोकपंक्तिवदत्यन्तरम्यां मण्डपसन्ततिम्।
संपश्यंस्तत्र गच्छेयं
शौरेर्धामान्तिकस्थलम्।।२७।।

He has to climb one hill and get down, only to climb another. He moves on, resting for a while, and contemplating on the god whose presence he is approaching. He reaches the final hill, and as he climbs it, the thought uppermost in his mind is that the god should draw him soon to his presence.

DOVA-BHĀSHYAKĀRA-SANNIDHI

When he climbs the last flight of steps rightly called the 'knee-breaker' (moḷakāl-murippān-paḍi or mōkāḷa-meṭṭu), for the steps are so high and the ascent so steep, he comes to the top of the hill that is chosen by the god for his manifestation. Even as he reaches the summit of the flight of steps, he finds himself in front of the shrine dedicated to Rāmānuja. This shrine is known as Dōva-Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi, and marks the commencement of the holy area of Vēṅgaḍam.

The pilgrim has at last entered the sacred precincts of the extended hill-shrine. There is an ancient custom of lighting a lamp in this Dōva-Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi by the temple authorities on Kārtika-dīpotsava, marking one of the outer limits of the kshetra, the other one being the Kshetra-pālaka shrine near Gogarbha-tīrtha.

When Rāmānuja visited Tirupati for the first time to learn the esoteric meanings of *Rāmāyaṇa* from his maternal uncle Tirumala-nambi, he was still a young man whose greatness was not as yet recognized. He did not, at that time, ascend the Vēṅgaḍam hill to visit the hill-shrine, although he stayed at the foot-hills for a year. But the second time he visited Tirupati he was a widely revered Āchārya duly anointed in the great temple of Śrī-raṅgam. This time, he ascended the hills and as soon as he climbed up the last flight of steps, his maternal uncle, Tirumala-nambi, received him with all temple-honours at the spot where the shrine (known as Dova-Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi) was later erected.

Beyond this shrine, the poem speaks of a long row of fine mantapams on either side of the pathway that led the pilgrim to the hill-shrine. They are not all there now, nor are those that remain so fine.

As the pilgrim enters the sacred precincts of the kshetra, he is overpowered by the excitement and joy of

ततोऽन्यच्छृङ्गमारुह्य ततोऽन्यत्रावरुह्य च।
क्वचिद्गच्छन्क्वचित्तिष्ठन्क्वचिद्ध्यायन्रमापतिम्॥२४॥
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DOVA-BHĀSHYAKĀRA-SANNIDHI

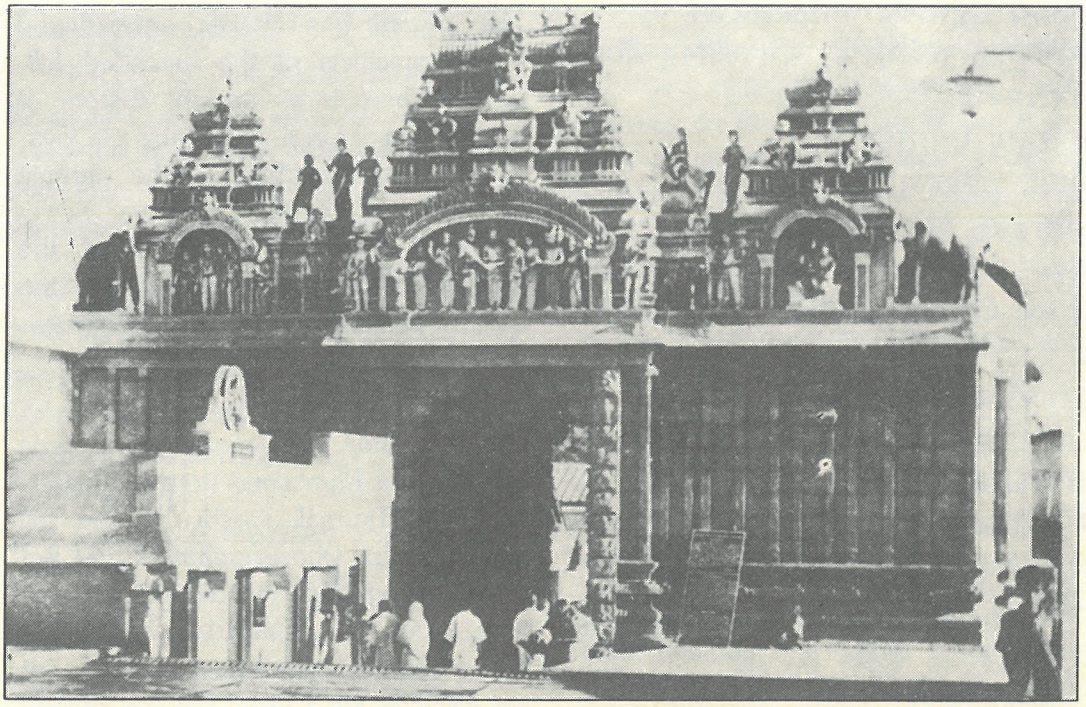
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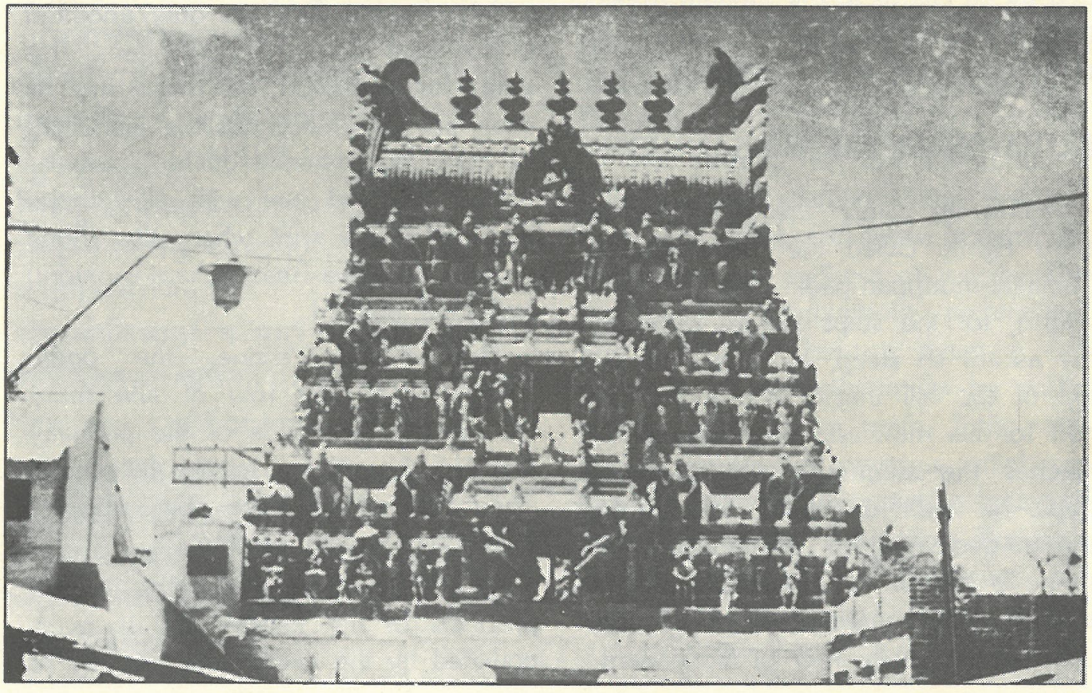
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Moṇḍi-Gopuram (now dismantled)



Bommala-Gopuram (now dismantled)

those who have already reached there. An air of festivity surrounds him. Music fills his ears. The maṇṭapas as well as the ground alround are decorated with flowers of variegated colours; and the sight is delightful to his eyes.

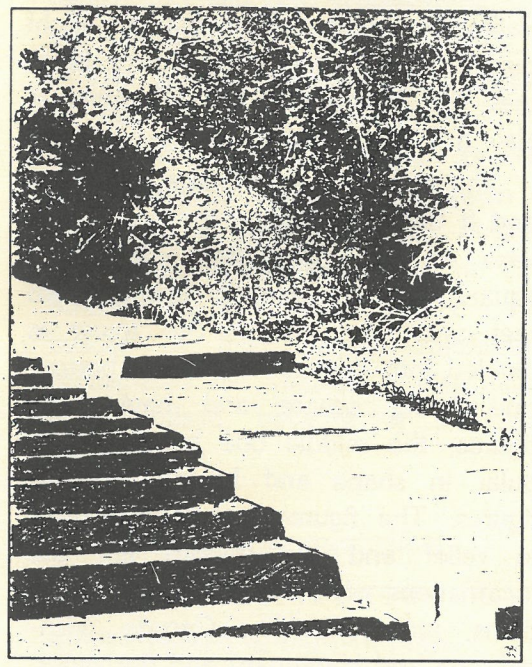
As he walks along, bewitched by the beauty of the place, he beholds a small tower, bereft of the usual vase and finial (śṛṅga-vihīnam tad-gopuram). The reference is to the unfinished gateway, surmounted by a tower facing south, called Moṇḍi-gopuram. As we proceed from this Moṇḍi-gopuram towards north through a short pathway, we come to another tower called Bommala-gopuram. Both these ornate gopurams were dismantled in 1982 to make way for a plain cement-arch which appeared three years later. The ten incarnations of Vishṇu were prominently displayed here.

Passing through this gateway, the pilgrim enters the village where the hill-shrine is located. In fact, he has now the first vision of the sacred temple.

दिव्यं सुवर्णप्राकारैरुज्ज्वलं महत्।
ततश्चोद्यत्सहस्रांशुशतकोटिसमप्रभम्।।३६।।
मङ्गलं सर्वजगतां मण्डनं शोषभूभृतः।
भूमावनुपमं दिव्यं
लोकानुग्रहकाम्यया।।३७।।
स्वयं व्यक्तं विमानं तदानन्दनिलयाह्वयम्।
दिव्यं च नगरं पश्यन्
श्रीवैकुण्ठमिवापरम्।।३८।।

धन्योऽस्म्यनुगृहीतोऽस्मि कृतार्थोऽस्मीति ब्रुवन्।
परमानन्दभरितः प्रणमेयं प्रसन्नधीः।।३९।।

His dream of many days, months or years has now come true; he stands in the close vicinity of the most sacred of all shrines. He can see the temple at a distance and over the sanctum shines brilliantly the dome with its gilt covering. The vimāna, known as Ānanda-nilaya, is believed by the faithful to have appeared here of its own accord (svayam-vyakta) for securing the welfare of the world (lokānugraha). It is indeed a unique structure on earth, a bright ornament on the head of the Vēṅgaḍam hill (Śeshādri).



Mōkāḷa-Muḍippu

The pilgrim moves on in the village, which indeed is like another Vaikuṇṭha, congratulating himself on his own good fortune in having been able to come here. He is grateful to the spirits who have made his ascent of the hill safe and memorable; and he is full of praise for the god whom he has come to see.

ĀNANDA-NILAYA-VIMĀNA

This is undoubtedly the most picturesque and attractive structure in the temple-complex. The golden plates covering it are intricately and exquisitely carved with traditional motifs. The shape of the Vimāna very strongly resembles the Dharma-rāja-ratha at Māmallapuram (which was built by the Pallava monarch Dantivarma of Kāñchī pūram in 830 A.D.). It is very likely that this vimāna in the hill-shrine is also a Pallava structure.

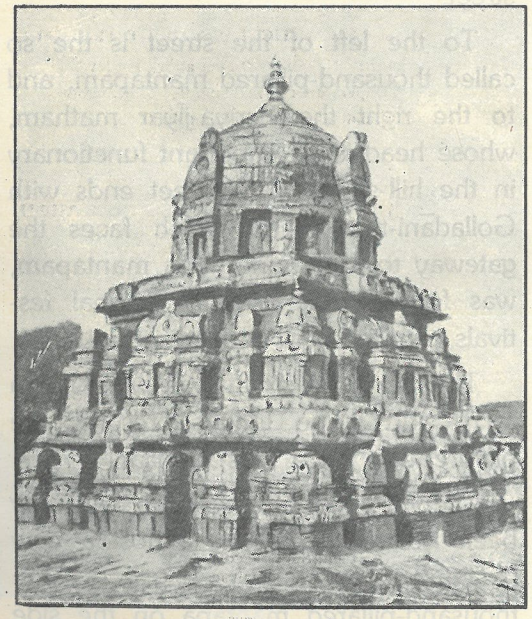
The height of the vimāna is 37 feet and 8 inches, including the ceremonial vase on the top (kalaśa). It has a square base, measuring twenty-seven feet and four inches. The tower is divided into three sections, the bottom one being square and having no figures; the middle one being rectangular in shape and having nineteen figures. The figures are all sculptures in relief and the themes are the incarnations of Vishṇu, the door-guardians, attendents (like Garuḍa, Vishvaksena and Hanumān) and the sages. In the four directions are the customary forms of Vishṇu described as the presiding deities of the vimāna (vimanādhi-daivata): Varāha, Narasiṁha, Ananta and Vaikuṇṭha-nātha. On the northern side is the representation of the deity in the sanctum, known as Vimāna-Śrīnivāsa. It is said that Vyāsatīrtha used to worship this small iconic representation. It has become customary to have a look at this figure (Vimāna-Śrīnivāsa) while going round the shrine in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa.

The figures and the ornamental decorations of this Vimāna are only in the gilt copper plates that cover the vimāna. The actual vimāna which is in mortar and stucco is devoid of figures; it has only the architectural features of the Pallava vimāna. We do not know how old the vimāna is. But we have inscriptional references to the covering of the vimāna with copper plates gilt by the Yādava chieftain Vīra-narasiṅga-deva in 1260 A.D. and the fixing of a golden vase (kalaśa) on the vimāna by the Pāṇḍyan king Jaṭā-varma Sundara-pāṇḍya in 1262 A.D. (T.T. 371 No. 19). The Yādava chieftain was a feudatory of the Pāṇḍyan king, and the two together made the vimāna look like the mythical mountain of gold (Sumeru, sura-giri)

The next service to the vimāna was in the year 1359 A.D. (6-7-1959), Sāḷuva Maṅgi-deva-mahārāja, who was the general under Kumāra-kampaṇa-oḍeyar is said to have fixed the golden śikhara 'for Tiru-vēṅgaḷa-nātha', on that

date. The vimāna was renovated in 1417 A.D. by Amātya-śekhara Mallaṇa, who was the governor of Chandra-giri-rājya, during the rule of Sāḷuva-narasiṁha (I, 198). The famous Vijayanagar monarch Kṛishṇadeva-rāya presented thirty thousand gold varāhas for gilding the vimāna again, during his fifth visit to the hill-shrine. The work began on 2-1-1517 and was completed on 9-9-1518 (III 81, TT 576). Koṭi-kanyā-dānam Tatāchārya of Kāñchīpuram got the vimāna gilt again in 1630 (Madras Epigraphical Report 1919, 650). Adhikāri Rām-lakshmaṇ Dāsa, a brother-disciple of the then Mahant Prayāga-dāsa, arranged for gold plating the vase over the vimāna (kanaka-kalaśa) on 30-9-1908.

Thus, in seven hundred years (1261-1908) there were six services to the vimāna (vimāna-kaiṁkarya) rendered. The gold plates covering the vimāna soon lost their brilliance and the covering plates themselves got loosened and disturbed because of the weather conditions prevailing on the hill. After the period of the Mahants, the TTD took over the administration of the temple, and thought of gold-plating the vimāna again in 1958. It was then discovered that the masonry work of the vimāna beneath the covering had decayed, and that it had to be repaired before the old plates were replaced by new ones. The work began with the Bālālaya-ritual (October 25, to November 1, 1957), and the gold plates were set in position on November 2, 1957 (kavacha-punar-ud-dharaṇa). Final consecration (mahā-samprokshaṇa) was performed on August 25, 1958. Copper sheets worth Rs 57, 375 and gold weighing 12, 020 tolas were used in this renovation.



Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna

The purānas describe this vimāna as Ānanda-nilaya. But we find the name Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna for the first time in a damaged inscription of 1417 A.D. of Amātya-śekhara Mallaṇa (No. 196). *Bhavishyottara-purāṇa* (13, 80-81) says that even when the first builder of the temple, Toṇḍāman, consecrated the vimāna, it was called Ānanda-nilaya, because it produced great delight.

तत आनन्दनिलये तोण्डमान्नृपनिर्मिते।
विमानाग्र्ये श्रीनिवासो रराज भगवान् हरिः।
आनन्दजनकत्वात्तं आनन्दनिलयं विदुः॥

Āditya-purāṇa (1, 42) explains that the god is distinguished by his power to bestow bliss and gnosis and so he is himself known essentially as bliss (ānanda); when Toṇḍamān beheld him in this vimāna, he was filled with bliss.

आनन्दज्ञानदं विष्णुं आनन्दमयनामकम्।
आनन्देन ददर्शायं आनन्दनिलयालये॥

The purāṇas also claim that when the hill-shrine was consecrated, Brahma the creator put up two lamps in front of the god for the alround prosperity of all beings in the world. And he begged the god to ordain that these lamps may be burning till the end of the present aeon (kali-yuga). When the Ānanda-nilaya- vimāna crumbles down and the lamps are put out, then the manifestation of the god as Veṅkaṭeśa (lord abiding in the Veṅgaḍam hill) would be over.

सर्वाभ्युदयकामोऽथ भूतानां हितकाम्यया।
तदा वै भगवान् ब्रह्मा दीपद्वयमकल्पयत्॥
प्रार्थयामास गोविन्दं वरमेकमनामयम्।
यावत्कलियुगं तिष्ठेत्तावद्दीपोऽभिवर्धताम्॥
यदा विमानपतनं यदा दीपविनाशनम्॥
तदावतारः सम्पूर्ण इति मे निश्चितोऽवधिः॥

(*Bhavishyottara,* 14, 2-3)

The pilgrim bows with delight before this most impressive indication of divine presence, and proceeds towards it. He now enters what is known as Sannidhi street, which runs east to west.

SANNIDHI-STREET

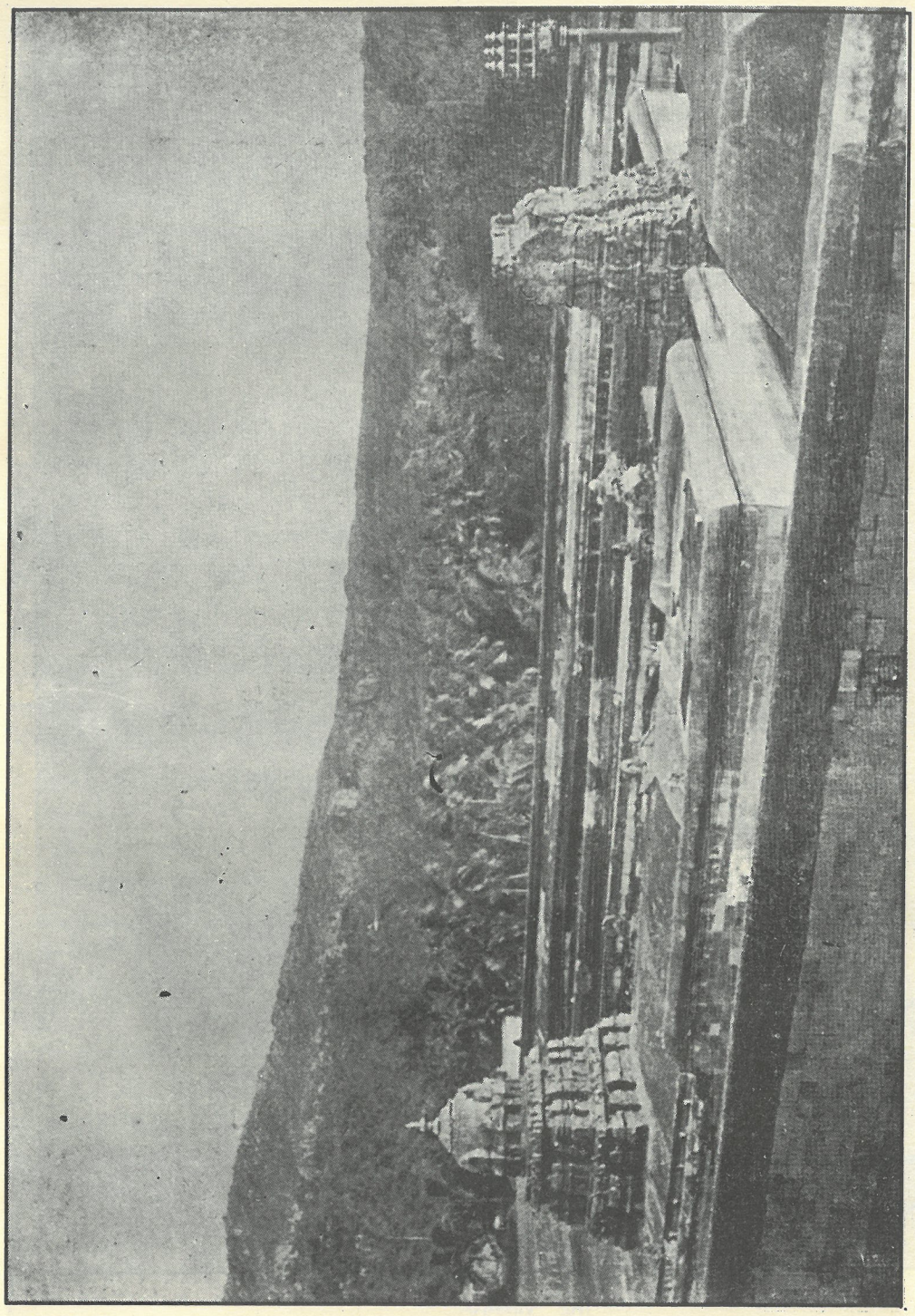
ततः सन्निधिवीथ्यग्रभूषणं पवनात्मजम्।
नमस्कृत्य ततः पश्यन् सहस्र-
स्तम्भमण्टपम्॥४०॥

The Sannidhi-street is so called because it leads the pilgrim directly to the presence of the god. This short and rather narrow (until recently) street extended from the shrine to Āñjaneya, known as Bēḍi-Hanumān, already mentioned, at the eastern end to the tall four-pillared and open maṇṭapa (called Golladāni-maṇṭapa) at the Western end. Bēḍi-Hanumān faces west, and stands right in front of the main (and only) entrance to the hill-shrine, at the other end of the street.

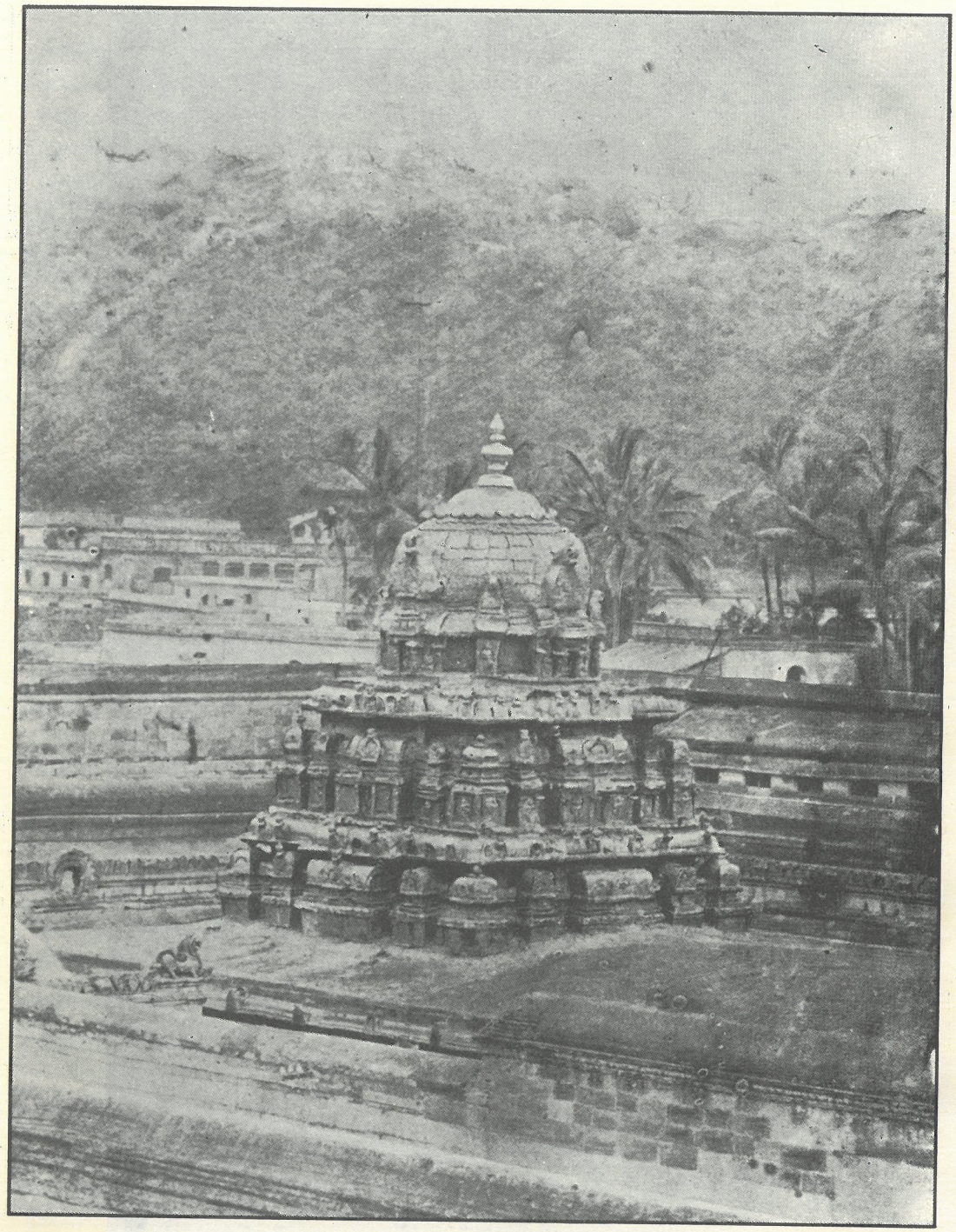
To the left of the street is the so called thousand-pillared mantapam, and to the right the Periya-jīyar matham, whose head is an important functionary in the hill-shrine. The street ends with Golladāni-maṇṭapam, which faces the gateway to the shrine. This mantapam, was formerly used for occasional festivals, but now is altogether unused.

The Sannidhi street was widened in 1970 and it no longer presents the picture that once was familiar.

The Beḍi-Hanumān shrine has now been isolated, and it is almost a new structure now. Two bays of the thousand-pillared maṇṭapa on the side



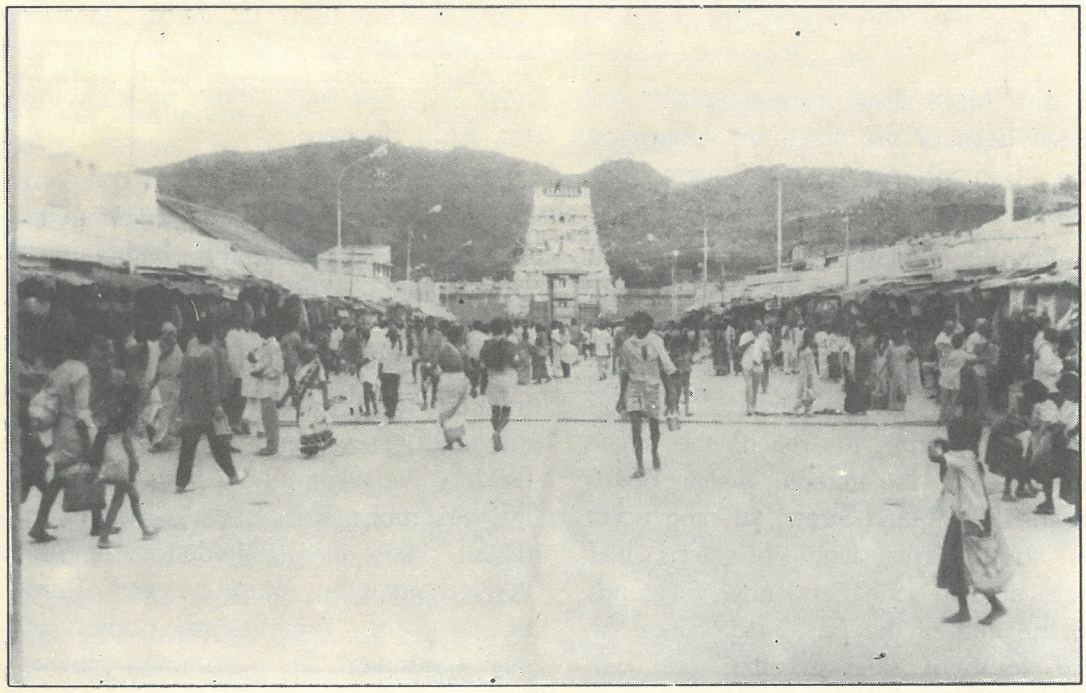
THE HILL-SHRINE



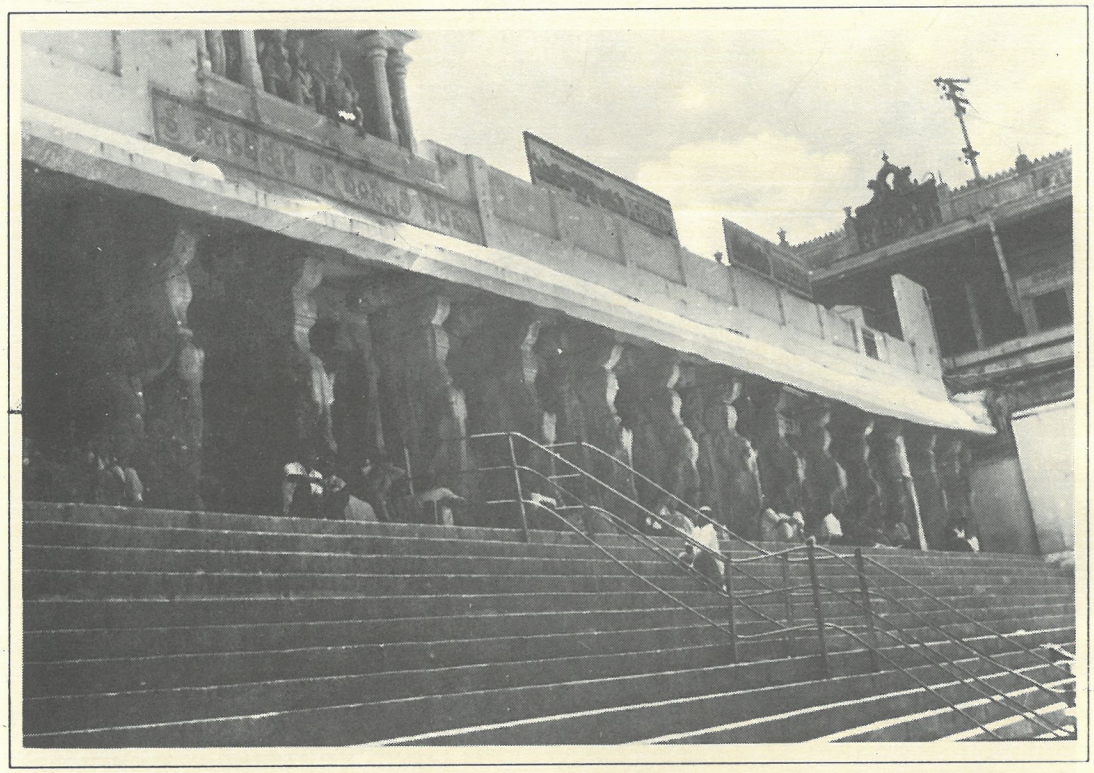
THE VIMĀNA



Sannidhi-Street



Sannidhi-Street



Thousand-Pillared Mantapa (western side)

of East Māḍa-street were removed; and three bays of the same mantapam on the Sannidhi-street side were dismantled and shops were constructed.

From Golladāni-maṇṭapa which marks the end of the Sannidhi-street, there is a flight of steps to the full width of the road (viz. Sannidhi-street). The pilgrim has to climb down this flight of steps to reach the main entrance of the temple which opens to the East Māḍa-Street, running north to south. This flight of steps was renovated in 1990, and now it extends to the end of the East Māḍa-Street on the southern side, so that one can enter the thousand-pillared maṇṭapa from the East-Māḍa street by climbing the flight of steps.

The thousand-pillared maṇṭapam which faces east is a rectangular structure, accommodated within the area covered by the Sannidhi-street on the north, East Māḍa-street on the west, a pathway on the east, and the road in front of Hāthirāmji-maṭha on the south. This mantapam was formerly used by the pilgrims, but now it houses the assembly hall (sadas), which in recent years was shifted to the Āsthāna-maṇṭapam, Museum and Purohita-sangham. The western portion of the mantapam had crumbled down, leaving an open space on that side.

We do not know precisely when this mantapam was constructed, or by whom. It appears to have been one of the structures undertaken to give effect to an endowment of the Durgā-samudram village (near Tirupati) to the hill-temple made by the Sāḷuva Narasiṁha (in 1472 A.D.), the governor of the Chandra-giri province who rose to become the lord of the entire Vijayanagar ('rāja-mahārāja-uḍaiyār). This endowment was meant to enable mantapas and gopuras to be constructed in Tirumala and Tirupati.

The name of Sāḷuva-Mallaya-deva, son of Sāḷuva-Erra-Kaṁpaya-deva, a cousin of Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha, is associated with the building of this mantapa.

It cannot be known if the original mantapa was designed to have a thousand pillars. The sahasra-stambha mantapa is a familiar architectural member of big temples in South India. It may not always have a thousand pillars. When the Sanskrit expressions 'daśa' (ten), 'śata' (hundred) and sahasra' (thousand) are used in contexts like this, they are not meant to signify those specific numbers, but are used only in the sense of multitude. The 'thousand-pillared mantapa' means only a hall with a large number of the pillars. There is a small pavilion in the middle of the mantapam, suggesting that on some occasions the processional deity of the hill-shrine was brought to this mantapam.

Then, the text mentions that the pilgrim approaches Vaikuntha-dvāra, of the shrine which is marvellous (adbhutam)

प्रविशेयं प्रसन्नात्मा वैकुण्ठद्वारमद्भुतम्।
ततः काञ्चनदीप्त्या च रत्नकान्त्या च
रूषितम्।।४१।।
भूषितं दिव्यमाल्यैश्च मुक्तादामभिरेव च।
चन्दनागरुधूपैश्च सर्वतः सुरभीकृतम्।।४२।।
आज्ञामुद्राधरैर्भीमैरस्थानभयशङ्किभिः।
चण्डप्रचण्डप्रमुखैर्द्वारपालैः
सुरक्षितम्।।४३।।
भेरीमृदङ्गपणवतूर्यशङ्खादिभिः शुभैः।
अष्टादशविधैर्वाद्यैः-
राघोषितनभः स्थलम्।।४४।।
ब्रह्मरुद्रादिदेवानां महर्षीणां महात्मनाम्।
योगिनां सनकादीनां
दिव्यस्थाननिवासिनाम्।।४५।।
दिव्याप्सरोगणानां च नृत्तं गीतं च कुर्वताम्।
चातुर्वर्ण्यप्रसूतानां सदा भक्तिमतां
हरौ।।४६।।
आबालवृद्धमाबद्धमस्ताञ्जलिशोभिनाम्।
नानादेशगतानां च नराणां
भाग्यशालिनाम्।।४७।।
सपुत्रमित्रदाराणां वृन्दैः सान्द्रं सुशोभनम्।
विच्छिन्नाग्रनिवेशं तत्परीतं
द्वारमास्थितः।।४८।।

The main entrance to the temple is described here. The temple doorway is decorated with festoons, garlands and buntings; fragrant smokes of incense fill the air. The doors are guarded by Chaṇḍa, Prachaṇḍa and other attendants mentioned in the Āgama texts. Celestial beings crowd the entrance, as also the spiritual adepts in their invisible bodies. Pilgrims from different parts of the country, young and old, with their families are jostling about in front of the entrance.

They are filled with devotion and bow down humbly with palms joined in supplication above their heads. They are all eager to enter.

The text calls this entrance, which one encounters as soon as he gets down the flight of steps from the Sannidhi-street, 'Vaikuṇṭha-dvāra'. The expression is now used for the entrance to the enclosure immediately around the sanctum (viz., Vaikuṇṭha-pradakshiṇa or Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa) and which is kept open only once in a year (on the night of Mukkoṭi-ekādaśī).

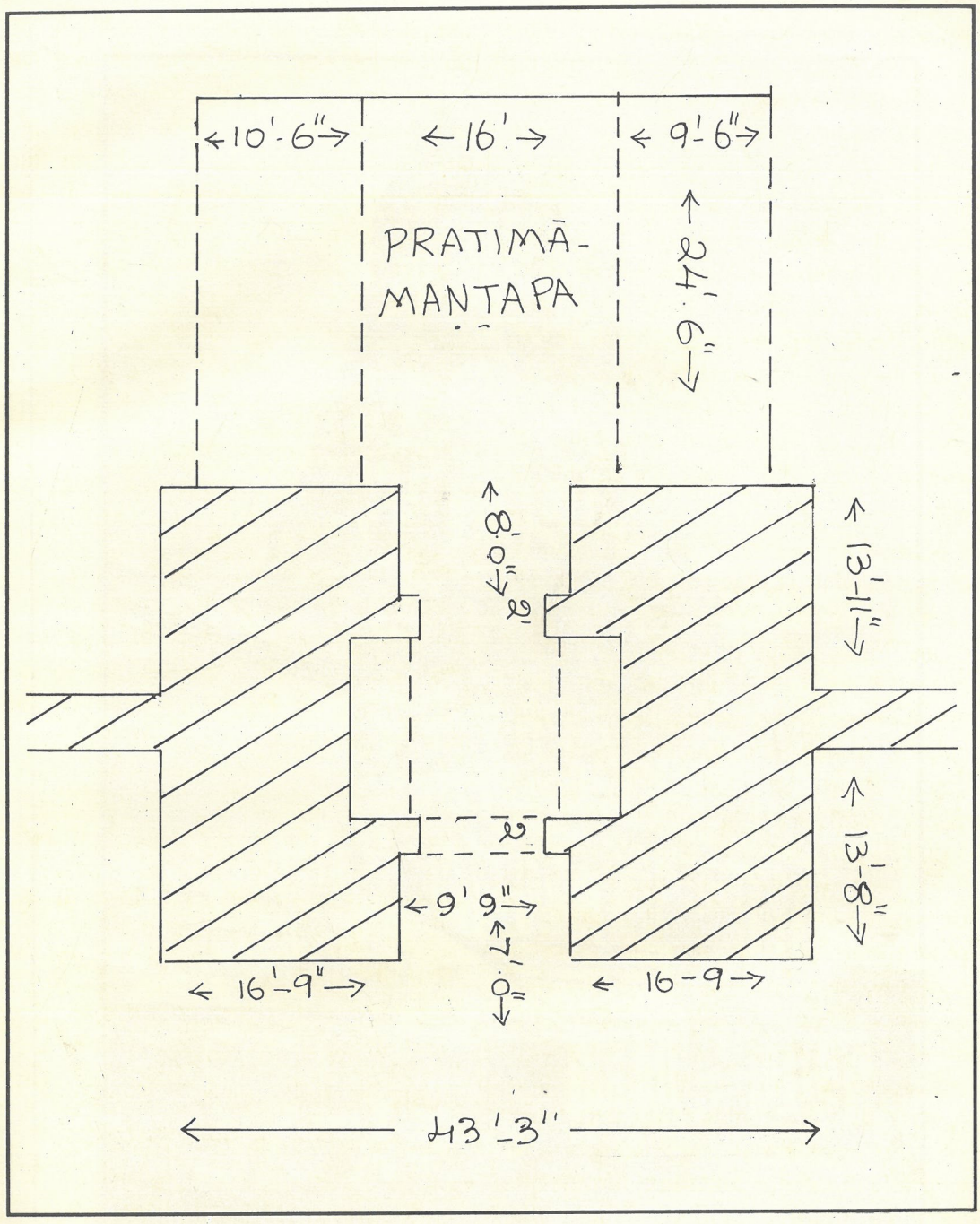
The door-way that the text speaks of is not what is now called Paḍi-kāvali (entrance guarded by sentinels) also called Mahā-dvāra (the main entrance, tiru-vāśal in Tamil), for the text later on mentions (in verse 56) that the pilgrim enters the mahā-dvāra after going round the main streets of the village. And, according to the text, he 'enters' ('praviśeyam') this Vaikuṇṭha-dvāra to reach the main streets. What, or where, then is this Vaikuṇṭha-dvāra now? Was it some structure that no longer exists? or does it refer to what we now know as Golladāni-maṇṭapam at the end of the Sannidhi-street? It is hard to ascertain what the condition was at that time. It is likely that there was an ornamental arch-way at the foot of the flight of steps (from the Sannidhi-street) without either the prākāra walls on the sides or the gopuram on its top. It was perhaps meant to indicate the entrance into the temple-area, which was described by the devout as Vaikuṇṭha itself. The verses included in the mantra-pushpa traditionally recited in this temple say that the god enjoys himself on the banks of the sacred tank here, having come away from Vaikuṇṭha. And wherever the god dwells is verily Vaikuṇṭha.

मायावी परमानन्दं त्यक्त्वा वैकुण्ठमुत्तमम्।
स्वामिपुष्करिणीतीरे रमया सह मोदते।।
भोगिराजगिरिं गत्वा स्वामिपुष्करिणितटे।
रमते रमणीकान्ते रमणीये श्रियःपतिः।।

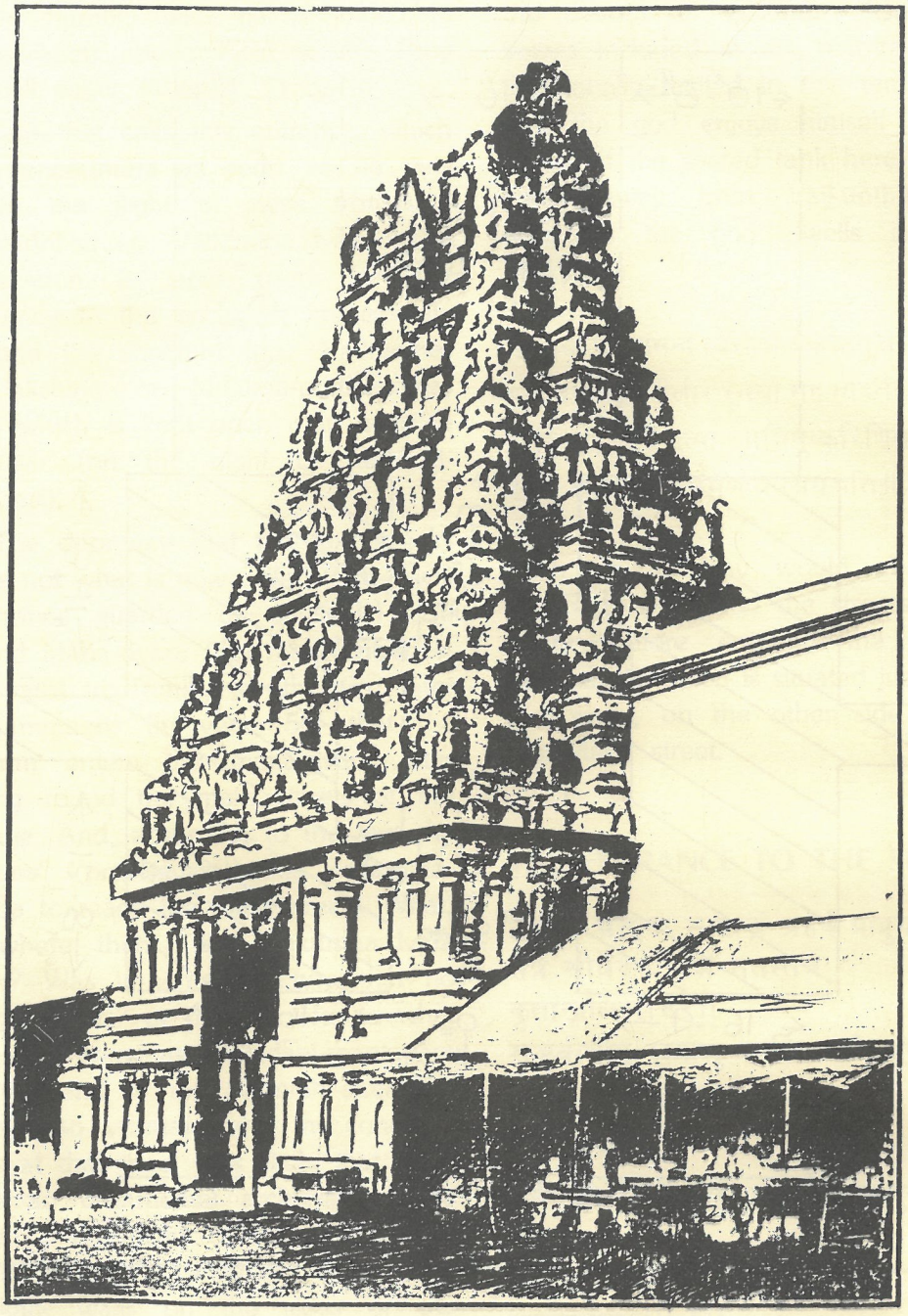
Such an archway would allow the pilgrim to go round the streets of the village before entering the present Paḍi-kāvali, which is situated just a few feet away, on the other side of the East-Māḍa street.

THE ENTRANCE TO THE SHRINE

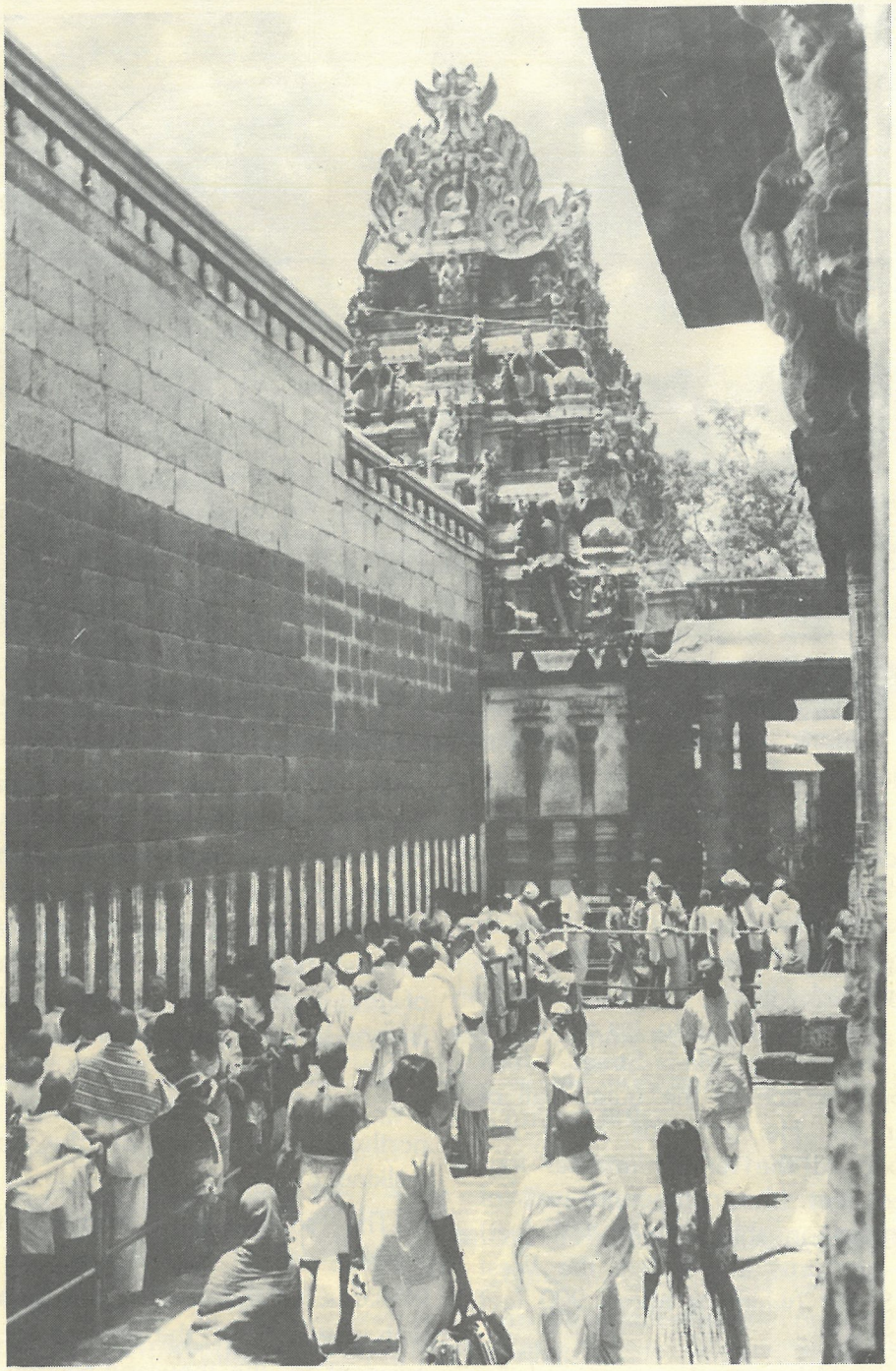
प्रणम्य भक्त्या साष्टाङ्गं प्रहर्षं प्राप्नुयां परम्।
तत्र श्रीवेंकटाधीशं ततस्तत्र
कृताञ्जलिः।।४९।।
राजवीथीषु रम्यासु प्रदक्षिणपरो भवन्।
नित्यमुक्तसमानानां तदीयानां
महात्मनाम्।।५०।।
भवनानि विचित्राणि पश्यन् हृष्टः पुनः
पुनः।
स्वामिपुष्करिणीतीरं श्रयेयं
श्रमनाशनम्।।५१।।



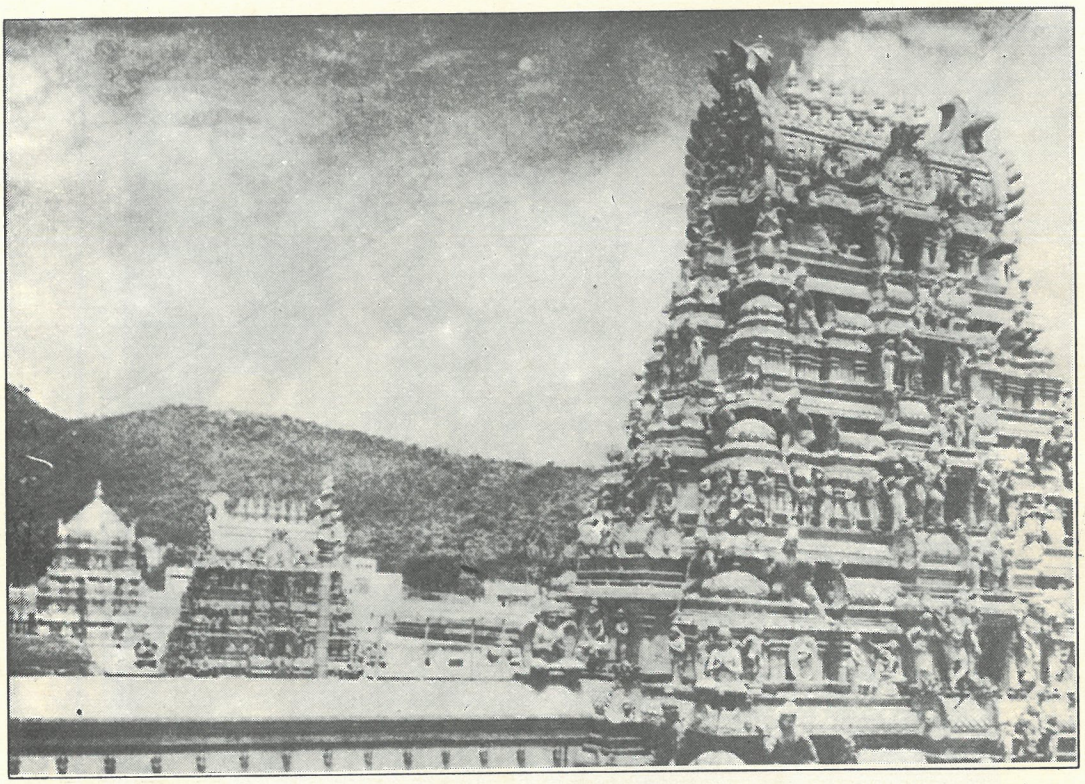
MAHĀ-DVĀRA



PAḌI-KAVALI Mahā-Dvāra



Entrance to the Hill-Shrine



View of Tirumala Temple

The pilgrim prostrates before the main entrance and begins the first great circumambulation (mahā-pradakshiṇa), which takes him round the village which is also holy. He turns to his left, keeping the shrine to his right, and proceeds along the East Māḍa-Street. Then he turns to his right and enters the South Māḍa-Street which goes by the side of the outer wall of the temple. He proceeds along this road beyond the temple another four hundred feet (the compound wall of the temple on this side is 414 feet) before he turns and enters the West Māḍa Street (which is about 900 feet in length).

He would by now have covered the village proper, the Pāta-pushkariṇi area where a tank had been excavated by the Vijayanagar king, Achyuta-rāya, in the sixteenth century, and which was filled up during the days of the Mahants in the nineteenth; and, at the far end of the road, the shorter side of the sacred tank (Svāmi-pushkariṇi) Before he gets back to the East Māḍa street he covers the entire length of the tank before he reaches the north-eastern corner of the temple, walking along this road.

The south-eastern corner of the temple faces the Maṭha of the Mahants, on the raised ground on level with the top of the terrace of, and adjacent to, the thousand-pillared maṇṭapam. It is learnt that one of the later

Yādava-rāya kings, Śrī-raṅganātha, built for himself a palace in 1351-52 A.D. on the hill here (I, 109). It was probably this palace that was appropriated by the Mahants who administered the temple as Vichāraṇa -kartas from 1843 to 1933.

THE SECRED TANK SVĀMI-PUSHKARIṆI

ततस्त्वाचम्य तत्तीर्थे कृतमाध्याह्निकक्रिय:
वराहरूपिणं देवं
वामाङ्कस्थवसुन्धराम्।।५२।।
प्रणम्य प्राञ्जलि: कुर्या प्रदक्षिणमहं तत:।
तीर्थं प्रदक्षिणं कुर्वन्
श्रीशैलस्तुतिरूपिणी:।।५३।।

The pilgrim now comes to the sacred tank called Svāmi-pushkariṇī (or Svāmi-saras, or Tiruk-kōnēri in inscriptions), ceremonially sips water from it and finishes his noon-ablutions there. Then he visits the Varāha-svāmi's shrine which is on the banks of this tank, and circumambulates the shrine as well as the tank before proceeding towards the great temple which has not been mentioned by the Āḻvārs at all, Svāmi-pushkariṇi in the purāṇas as most sacred upon the hill: is extolled .

सुवर्णमुखरी नाम नदीनां प्रवरा नदी।
तस्या एवोत्तरे भागे वृषभाचलनामत:।
तस्याग्रे सरसी नाम्नी स्वामिपुष्करिणी शुभा।।

(*Skanda*, 4, 1, 25, 86)

स्वामिपुष्करिणी चेति सर्वपापापापनोदिनी।
उत्तरे श्रीनिवासस्य वर्तते मङ्गलप्रदा।।

(ibid., 4, 1, 86)

तीर्थानामुत्तमं तीर्थं स्वमिपुष्करिणी शुभम्।

(*Brāhma* 8, 2)

The tank which is almost at the middle of the North Māḍa-Street is 100 yards in length and 50 yards in width, covering a total area of 1.50 acres. It is actually twin-tanks: Varāha-tīrtha near the Varāha-svāmi shrine which is on its north-western shore, and Śrīnivāsa-tīrtha, near the hill-shrine which is on its southern side. A low wall separates the two parts. And traditionally the large tank is said to consist of nine separate well-like water sources (tīrthas), each displaying silt deposits of a particular colour. According to *Brahma-purāṇa* (8, 32-38):

i) on the northern side of the tank, Kubera-tīrtha;
ii) in the north-eastern corner, Gālava tīrtha;
iii) on the eastern side, Mārkaṇḍeya-tīrtha;
iv) in the south-eastern corner, Agni-tīrtha;

v) on the southern side, Yama-tīrtha;

vi) in the north-western corner, Vāyu-tīrtha;

vii) on the western side, Varuṇa-tirtha;

viii) in the south-western corner, Vaśishṭha-tīrtha, and

ix) in the centre, Sarasvatī-tīrtha.

There are cut-stone steps for the tank alround, and from the midst of the waters rises a maṇṭapa called Vasanta-maṇṭapa (or Nīrāḷi-maṇṭapa), which was built by Sāḷuva-narasiṁha in 1468 A.D. (TT No. 54). It is interesting that his inscription calls the tank not Svāmi-pushkariṇī but Tiruk-kōnēri, although another inscription thirty-five years earlier (I, 201, Deva-rāya) calls it Svāmi-pushkariṇī; and this is the first time the sacred tank comes to our notice in inscriptions. The Vasanta-maṇṭapa was meant to be used for the floating (tiruppaḷḷi-ōḍat-tirunāḷ) ōn the ninth day of the annual festival, Brahmotsava (or Kōḍait-tirunāḷ) This maṇṭapa was renovated by Mahanta Prayāga-dāsa in 1900; it would appear that the maṇṭapa had almost crumbled down by that time.

Svāmi-pushkariṇī is an important landmark on the hills, for it is on the banks of this tank that the god of the hills (Vēṅgaḍattān) chose to manifest himself, according to the purāṇas. The legendary account of the origin of the hill-shrine relates that Varāha-svāmi (the boar-incarnation of Vishṇu) was the original inhabitant of the land adjoining the tank; and that he allowed the god of the hills to dwell in a part of the land owned by him. And Brahma himself is said to have consecrated a shrine to Varāha on the north-western shore of the tank. It is related that Varāha hid himself in a huge ant-hill which, in fact, was his residence.

प्रविवेश स्ववल्मीकं स्वामिपुष्करिणीतटे।

(*Brāhma*, 8, 14, 21)

Later, Brahma consecrated a stone-image of this form of Vishṇu, which was dug out from the ant-hill by the hunter (nishāda) who also constructed a shrine.

नाहं दृश्योस्मि ते पुत्र सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः।
किं तु वक्ष्यामि ते पुत्र ब्रह्मणा स्थापितं पुरा।।
शिलारूपं च वल्मीके वर्तते तत्समुद्धर।
विमानं कारयित्वा च तस्य पुष्करिणीतटे।।

The shrine and the part of the tank in front of it was named Varāha-tīrtha:

तस्या वायव्यभागे तु वाराहं तीर्थमुत्तमम्।

The custom prescribed for the pilgrim in the purāṇas is that Varāha svāmi must be worshipped after a bath in the sacred tank and before he proceeds to the hill-shrine.

अस्नातुर्नवतीर्थे तु वराहं चाप्यपश्यतः।
सर्वं निष्फलतां याति श्रीनिवासो न तुष्यति।।

ĀDI-VARĀHA-SHRINE

The Varāha-shrine on the hill, however, is not mentioned by any of the Ālvārs, or in any inscription before 1380 A.D., when Aḷagap-pirānār Tiruk-kalikaṉṟ-dāsar made an endowment to this small shrine. The deity is called here Varāha-nāyanār. As mentioned earlier, the next inscription, eighty-six years later in 1476 A.D. (by Śaṭhakōpar Narasiṁha-rāya- mudaliar) refers to this minor god on the hill as Jñānappirān, a typical Śrī-vaishṇava name ('tiruk-kōnēri karaiyil jñānap-pirān'). After 1481 he is referred to as Ādi-varāhap-perumāḷ (Kandāḍe Doḍ-ḍappayyaṅgār, 1519, Tāḷḷapākam Tiru malayyaṅgār, 1535, Śeṭṭlūr Śrīnivāsa-yyaṅgār, 1541). It was Tāḷḷapākam Tirumalayyaṅgār who constructed the mantapas, the prākāra-wall and the east gopura of this shrine in 1535 (IV 40). However, it has always remained a minor shrine, and when the East India Company came in to take control over the shrines on the hill, the annual income of this shrine was not more than Rs. 250.

Bhavishyottara-purāṇa (3, 10-11) provides a general iconographic description of Varāha:

एवं तीर्थवरा तत्र स्वामिपुष्करिणी शुभा।
तस्याः दक्षिणदिग्भागे वराहवदनो हरिः।
धरामालिंग्य वल्मीके आस्ते पिप्पलराजिते।।

The icon that we find in the shrine now is a small one with the four-armed Varāha, standing and lifting up the earth-goddess with two of his hands. It is in relief on a rock. The description of Ādi-varāha given in the Vaikhānasa text *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (56th paṭala) is fully portrayed in the main image here.

आदिवराहं चतुर्भुजं शंखचक्रधरं सस्यश्यामनिभं
नागेन्द्रफणामणिस्थापितदक्षिणपादं
रसातलादुत्क्रमणाय कुञ्चितपादं
तदूरौ महीं दधानं दक्षिणहस्तेन देव्याः पादौ गुह्यन्तं
वामहस्तेन तामुपग्रह्यन्तं मुखेन देवीं
जिघ्रन्तं कृत्वा महीं प्राञ्जलीकृतहस्तां
प्रसारितपादां
पुष्पाम्बरधरां श्यामाभां
किञ्चिद्देवं समीक्ष्य व्रीडाहर्षसमायुक्तां
सर्वाभरणसंयुतां
देवस्य नाभ्यन्तां स्तनान्तां वा पञ्चतालेन कारयेत्

The god must be represented as four-armed. Two of his hands (the upper ones) carry conch and discus. His complexion is grass-green (dark). His right leg is placed on the hood of Ādi-śesha and his left leg is bent for

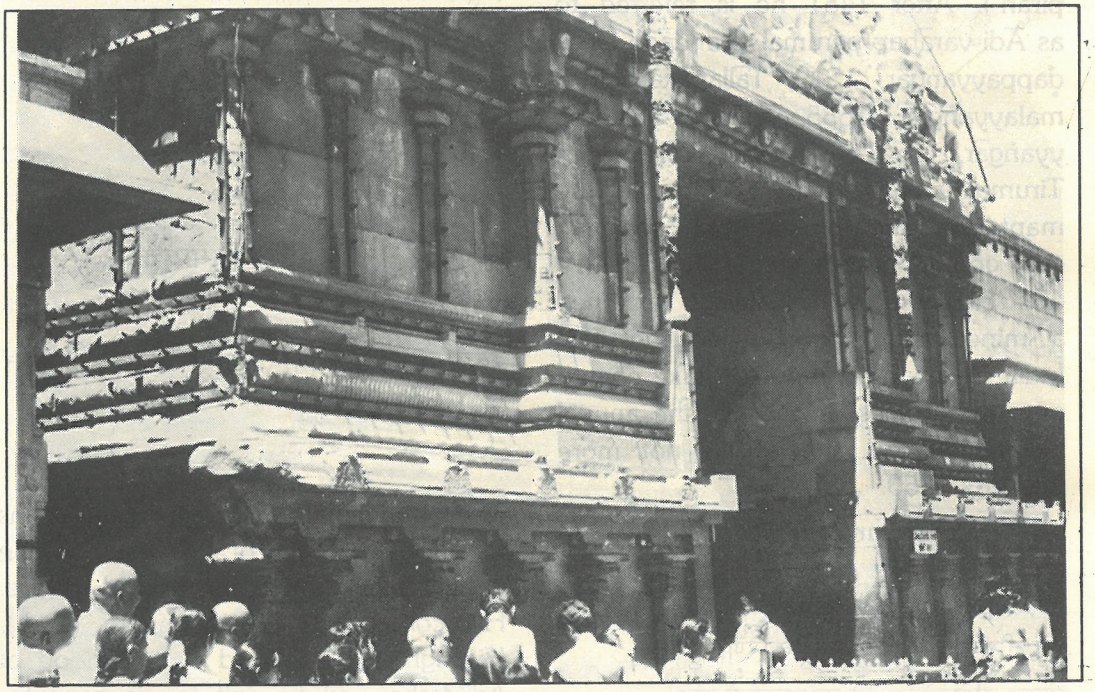
ascending from the depths of the netherworld. He carries the goddess of earth on his thigh, supporting her feet by his right hand, and holding her up with his left. His head is turned towards the goddess, smelling her with his snout. The goddess, dark in complexion, folds her palms in supplication and looks at the god with coyness and glee. She is decorated with all ornaments, and her garment is flowery in design. She must be made in five tāla-measure and her height must reach the god's navel or breast.

A similar but more concise description is given in *Prakīṃādhikāra* (Bhārgava-saṁhitā)

चतुर्बाहुसमायुक्तं शंखचक्रधरं परम्।
वामपादं समाकुञ्च्य महीमद्धृत्य सादरम्॥
दक्षिणं चण्डितं कुर्यान्महीमूरौ समाचरेत्।
महीं च श्यामवर्णां तु कुर्याच्चैव विधानतः।
एवमादिवराहस्तु कारयेल्लक्षणान्वितम्॥

कुलशेखरसूक्तीरप्युच्चार्यानम्य वै रथम्।
पुनः परीतं विच्छिन्नाभिनिवेशमुपेत्य च
॥५४॥
नत्वा श्रीमन्महद्धवारं प्रविश्यान्तः
प्रसन्नधीः।
आस्थानचिञ्चामचलच्छायां शेषाशंकां
ततः॥५५॥

Coming out of the Varāha-shrine, the pilgrim walks along the North Māḍa- Street keeping the sacred tank



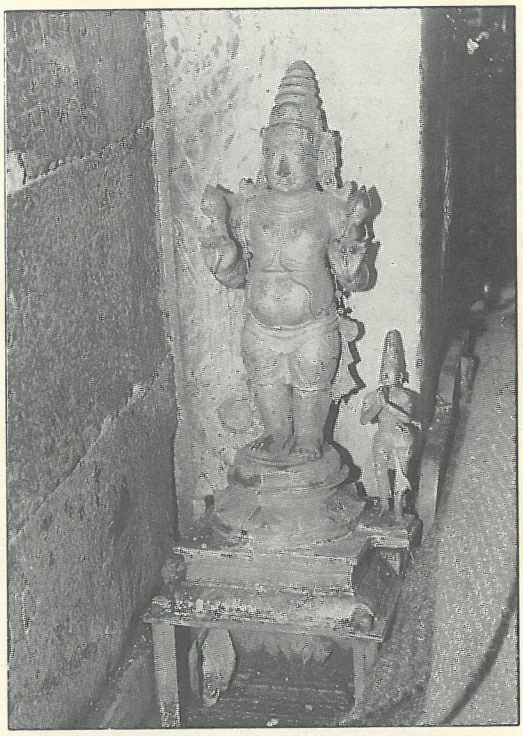
Mahādvāra (Entrance)



Mahādvāra-Gopura



SAṂKHA-NIDHI (at Main Entrance)



PADMA-NIDHI (at Main Entrance)

to his right, and enters the East Māḍa-Street. Going beyond the length of the sacred tank, he beholds to his left the tall shed where the processional chariot (ratha) is kept. He bows to this chariot and proceeds towards the main entrance of the shrine. He returns to where he began his mahā-pradakshiṇa and enters the tall gateway known as Mahā-dvāra (or mukha-dvāra; Periya-tiru-vāśal), or Paḍi-kāvali.

The gateway to the shrine is 43' 3'' wide and about 30' long. The passage through which one can enter is 9' 9'' wide, and is in the centre of this gateway. The passage widens when one reaches what is known as the Pratimā-maṇṭapam; it will be 16' here. On the large stone slabs covered with metal sheets constituting the door step are now seen two bronze icons of the traditional gateway-gods Śaṁkha-nidhi and Padma-nidhi. Āgama prescribes that these are the guardians of the third of the seven enclosures (āvaraṇa) that may be had for a shrine. It may be noted that the hill-shrine has only three enclosures covered by Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa (outer), Vimāna-pradakshiṇa (middle) and Mukkoṭi-pradakrishṇa (inner). The Mahādvāra (the principal gateway) admits the pilgrim to the outer (Sampaṅgi) enclosure. On either side, two cut stone door-frames are to be seen. In the words of T.K.T. Vīrarāghavā-

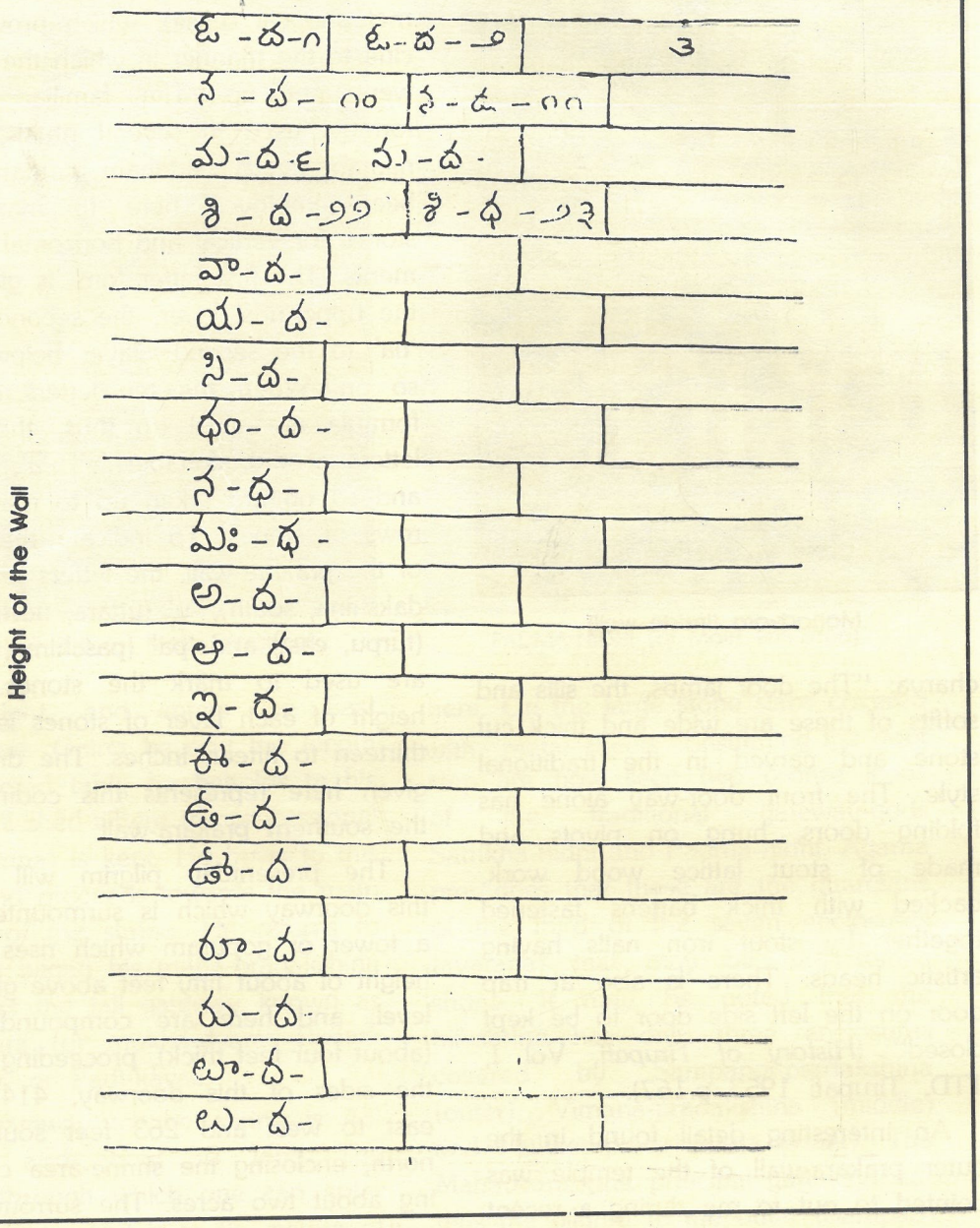


Mahādvāra (Inside wall)

charya: "The door jambs, the sills and soffits of these are wide and thick cut stone and carved in the traditional style. The front door-way alone has folding doors, hung on pivots and made of stout lattice wood work, backed with thick battens fastened together by stout iron nails having artistic heads. There is also at trap door on the left side door to be kept closed" (*History of Tirupati*, Vol I, TTD, Tirupati 1953 p.167).

An interesting detail found in the outer prākāra-wall of the temple was pointed to out to me during a recent visit of mine to the hill-shrine by my friend, Shri D.V. Chary, who was then the Executive Engineer of the TTD. This pertains to the 'writing on the wall' (in the literal and not the metaphorical sense), which provides a clue to the manner in which the stones were put up. The familiar sacred formula used in several rituals, "Om namah śivāya, siddham namah" has been employed here to mark the stones for vertical and horizontal placements. The first letter 'om 'is given to the uppermost layer, the second letter 'na' to the second layer below, and so on. When the ten letters of the formula are used up thus, then the letters of the alphabet 'a', 'ā', 'i', 'ī' and so on are taken up to mark the rows of stones. To indicate the sides of the prākāra-wall, the letters 'da' (for dakshiṇa, south), 'u' (uttara, north) 'tu' (tūrpu, east) and 'pa' (paśchima, west) are used to mark the stones. The height of each layer of stones is from thirteen to fifteen inches. The drawing given here represents this coding on the southern prākāra-wall.

The presentday pilgrim will enter this doorway which is surmounted by a tower or gopuram which rises to a height of about fifty feet above ground level; and here are compound-walls (about four feet thick), proceeding from the sides of this doorway, 414 feet east to west and 263 feet south to north, enclosing the shrine-area covering about two acres. The surrounding walls give the appearance of a fort rather than a temple. And the tower over the gateway, which stands on a



Marking of stones in each layer of the Prākāram-wall

rectangular base, 38 feet south to north and 32 feet east to west, and has five tiers (talas), is by no means impressive. The sculpture-mouldings are very ordinary, and the renovation done in 1953 has not added any charm to the tower.

But prior to 1250 A.D., there appears to have been no gopuram at all above the gateway (which, however,was there), and the bald gopuram that came into existence around that date, rose in five tiers only about 1472-1482 A.D. (after the endowment for repairing gopurams was made by Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha, *Inscriptions* Vol. II No. 79). The surrounding walls (outer prākāra) may date only from about 1260 A.D.; but we do not find mention of their presence till 1320 or 1330 A.D. The processional image of the Śrī-raṅgam shrine was housed in the maṇṭapam inside this prākāram in 1320 or 1330. The sanctum of this maṇṭapam almost abuts the southern prākāra-wall. The earliest inscriptions on this outer prākāra are all of the fifteenth century.

It is also suggested that the inner prākāra-wall which encloses the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa was raised earlier than this outer compound-wall, for the inscriptions on the former wall belong to an earlier period. As T.K.T. Vīrarāghavāchārya rightly notes: "It is thus seen that the third or outer prākāram wall came into use for inscriptions long after the second one had been largely used" (op.cit., p.170).

Our text (verse 55) mentions 'mahā-dvāra', but does not refer to any gopura on it - or to the prākāra-wall. It is likely that the 'mahā-dvāra' was only a tall gateway, an arch-sort of structure, without any superstructure above it, or walls emanating from its sides.

Further, the text (same verse) says that the pilgrim would see a huge tamarind tree as soon as he enters through the gateway ('śrīman-mahād-dvāram praviśyāntah āsthāna-chiñchām achala-chhāyām'). We do not, however, see it now. The text also mentions that there were a few maṇṭapas (verse 65), probably free structures standing apart from each other, outside the inner enclosure. Thus, for about 120 feet from the outer gateway to the inner, there must have been open ground with trees alround the shrine, extending on the north-eastern side to the sacred tank (Svāmi-pushkariṇī).

The purāṇas associate the tamarind tree with the manifestation of the hill-god. The Vaikhānasa priest Gopīnātha and his śūdra attendant Raṅga-dāsa together recovered the image of the god from the huge ant-hill that was beneath the tamarind tree on the banks of Svāmi-pushkariṇī and installed it on the western side of the tree. (*Brahma-purāṇa* 7, 30)

तन्त्रिणिवृक्षमूलस्य वल्मीकस्य हरेरिदम्

उद्धृत्य पश्चिमे भागे स्थापयामसतुश्च तौ।

This agrees with the present location of the god in the sanctum and the purāṇa specifies that the image was hidden under the ant-hill only till the knees ('jānu-mātra nimagnā hi-tintriṇī - vṛksha-mūlatah', 20-21)

According to *Varāha-purāṇa* (9, 16-50), the two of them (Gopīnātha and Raṅgadāsa) discovered the image of the god, freely standing ('ākāśastha') beneath the tamarind tree on the southern bank of Svāmi-pushkariṇī, the image was exposed to the sun, moon, wind and rain. They levelled the ground and cleared it of all vegetation, barring the tamarind tree under which the god's image was found and a champaka tree which was dear to Lakshmī. The tamarind tree apparently stood near the outer gateway while the champaka tree was near the present inner gateway. The circumambulation known as Saṁpaṅgi-pradakshiṇa (sam-baga-chchurru) is called so because of the presence of the champaka tree, left uncut by the two builders of the original shrine.

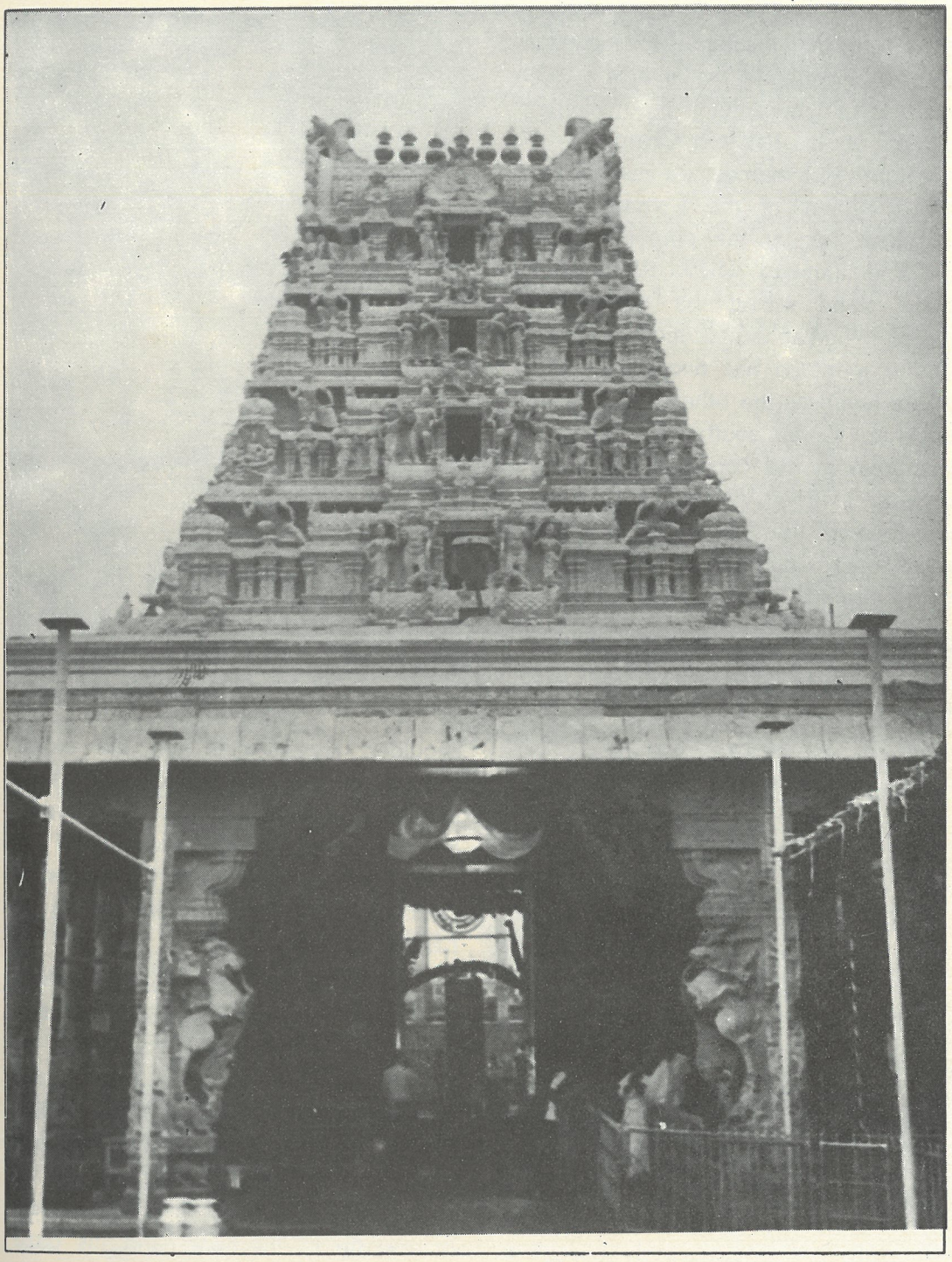
Bhavishyottara-purāṇa (4, 19-21) explains the hidden meaning of the ant-hill, the tamarind tree, the sacred tank and the hill itself. The hill-god is a reincarnation of Kṛishṇa of the Dvāpara age. His mother Devakī now took the shape of an ant-hill, and his father Vasudeva appeared in the form of the tamarind tree; his brother Bala-bhadra (who is an incarnation of Śesha or Ananta) was the hill, Śeshādri; the river Yamunā became Svāmi-pushkariṇi and the land around it was Mathurā indeed. All the animals on this hill are in fact the Yādavas who were playmates of Kṛshṇa, and the birds are none other than the gopikā-damsels.

वल्मीकं देवकी साक्षाद्वसुदेवोऽथ तिन्त्रिणी।
बलभद्रः शेषशैलो मथुराभूदधित्यका॥
स्वामिपुष्करिणी तत्र यमुना च व्यराजत।
यादवाश्च मृगाः सर्वे खगा वै गोपिकादयः।
एवं श्रीकृष्णरूपेण क्रीडते वेंकटाचले॥

PRATIMĀ-MAṆṬAPA

At present, one who enters through the first gateway (mahā-dvāra or mukha-dvāra) finds himself within an open mantapa known sometimes as Pratimā-maṇṭapa, for the splendid portrait icons (pratimā) kept here. This maṇṭapa is continuous with the gateway structurally. It is rectangular in shape, about 27 feet in width and 24' 6" in length. Leaving a passage of 16' feet in the middle, the maṇṭapa has two wings, the southern one being 10'6" wide and the northern one 9'6". The wings have pillars, and the entire mantapa rests on sixteen pillars.

As you enter facing the shrine, to your right is a group of three copper cast statues of excellent workmanship.



Pratimā-Maṇṭapa (view from inside)

They represent the famous Vijayanagar emperor Kṛishṇadeva-rāya (1509-1530) and his two consorts Tirumala-devi his left on his left and Chinnā-devi to his right. The names are inscribed on the shoulders of the statues. They were set up by the emperor himself on 2nd January 1517. All three of them stand facing the shrine, with hands joined in supplication. This wing of the maṇṭapa has two rows of four pillars (even as the other has). To your left (viz. in the southern wing of this mantapa) is the copper-cast statue of another king of Vijayanagar, Vēnkaṭa-pati-rāya of the Araviḍu dynasty, who ruled over Chandra-giri around 1570, with the name inscribed on the shoulder. By its side are the stone statues of Achayuta-rāya, who succeeded Kṛishṇadeva-rāya on the throne and his wife Varadāji-amma. But the identification of these stone statues is doubtful, there being no inscription of names on them.



Image of Venkaṭapati-rāya, king of Vijayanagar, in the Pratimā-maṇṭapa



Image of Venkaṭapati-rāya (close up)

These images have been made perfectly in accordance with the Āgamic prescriptions: "The figures of a devotee must be made realistically in the eight-tāla measure, in gold, silver, copper or in stone. The devotee must hold his hands in the posture of supplication; his eyes must be settled on the tip of his nose; and his gaze must be one of abstraction. If he is a

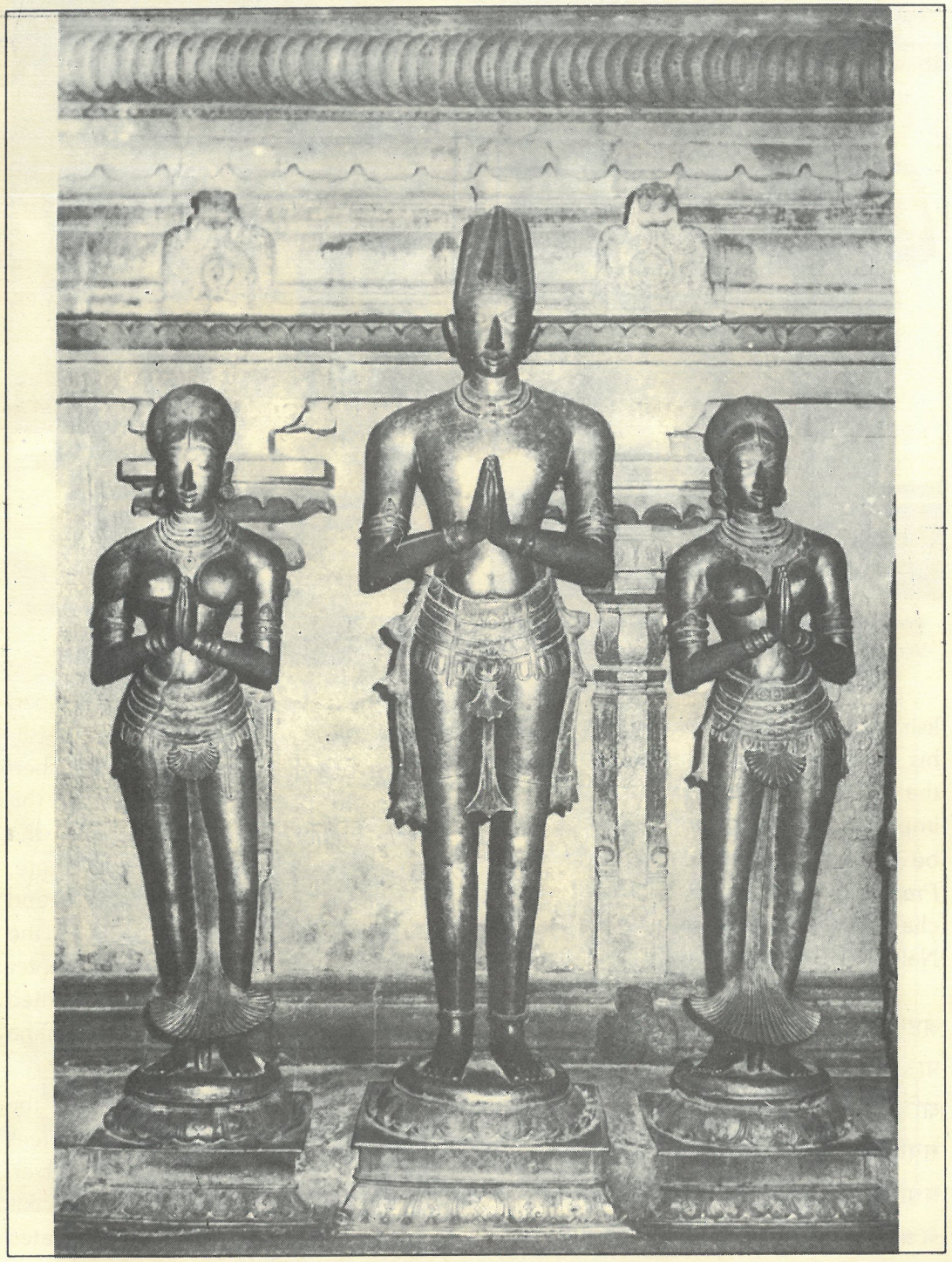


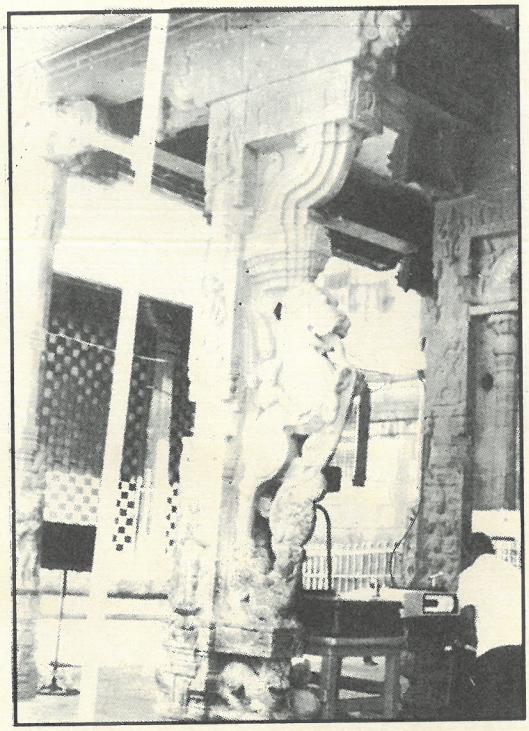
Image of Krishnadeva-rāya with queens (in Pratimā-maṇṭapa)



Image of Achyutarāya-mahārāya, king of Vijayanagar, in the Pratimā-Maṇṭapa, with his queen

kshatriya, he must wear the crown on his head, but he must be shown in the attire of a devotee. He must be impressive -looking, and his limbs must be well-proportioned *(Śrī- Vaikhānasa Pratishṭhānukramaṇikā*, Part II 36th chap. ed. Divi Veṅkaṭa-nṛsiṁhā chārya, Nallūr, 1978, pp. 300-301).

अष्टतालेन मानेन मानुषाणां तु कारयेत्॥०॥
प्राञ्जलिं भावनायुक्तं नासान्ताहितलोचनम्।
क्षत्रियं मकुटोपेतं ···· ॥०॥
सर्वाभरणसंयुक्तं मुनिवेषमथापि वा।
यथासौन्दर्यसंयुक्तं सर्वावयवशोभितम्।
अञ्जलि ध्यानमाविश्य तत्तदाकृतिमेव वा॥



Pratimā-Maṇṭapa (Pillars)

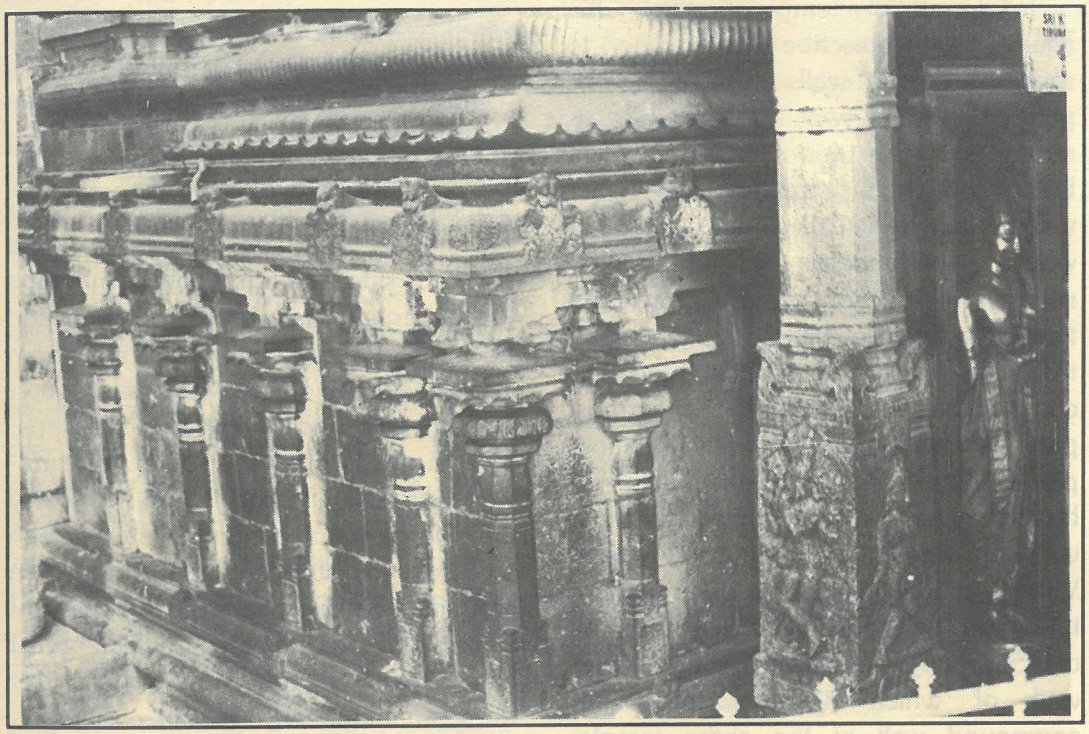
The text does not mention this open mantapa or any other mantapa specifically; it merely says 'maṇṭapān'. Then it takes the pilgrim stranghtaway to the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa, where the bali-pīṭha also is located. From there, the pilgrim is supposed to go round the enclosure and come back to the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa; and enter into the Second Gateway surmounted by a tower, and then come to Vimāna pradakshiṇa.

From 1987, the scales for the tulābhāra offerings by the devotees (weighing themselves against silver, gold, jaggery etc), were placed in this mantapa. Till then they were located

near the Koppara (Huṇḍi) in the Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa.

THREE PRĀKĀRAS

In terms of the present-day temple plan, there are three enclosures (prākāra-walls) for the shrine. Between two prākāra walls is the circumbalatory path, pradakshiṇā-patha. Between the outermost prākāra wall and middle prākāra-wall is the pathway for circumambulation known as Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa. And between the middle prākāra-wall and the shrine proper (consisting of the sanctum, śayana-maṇṭapa, Rāmar-mēḍa, Snapana-maṇṭapa and Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa) is the pathway known Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, for the golden Vimāna (Ānanda-nilaya) is visible for the pilgrims as they go round. There is another pathway which is closed for the pilgrims except for a single day in a year, between the prākāra wall of the five limbed shrine and the wall round the sanctum, the Śayana-maṇṭapa, and Rāman-mēḍa. This narrow and covered pathway is known as Vaikuntha-pradakshiṇa or mukkoti-pradakshina, on account of its being kept open on Vaikuṇṭha or Mukkoṭi ekādaśi. All three pathways have their openings only on the eastern side.



Mahādwāra (Inside: north-face basement)

SAMPAṄGI-PRADAKSHIṆA

Of these three, the middle pathway (viz. Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa) contains several interesting maṇṭapas like Raṅga-maṇṭapa, Tirumala-rāya-maṇṭapa, Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha- maṇṭapas, Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa and Ainā-mahal. In fact, the so-called Pratimā-maṇṭapa which we have just now described is also in this pradakshiṇa. At present, however, no pilgrim can use this pathway for circumambulation. The queue lines as well as the irregular (even haphzard) contours of the maṇṭapas make it difficult even to visualize the pathway.

In terms of temple-structure, the āgama-texts prescribe from one to seven enclosure-walls (prākāra). The path between two prākāra-walls is meant not only for circumambulation but the pavilions abutting the outer wall of this path (called madil-maṇṭapa) would accommodate several requirements and functions of the temple. In the case of the hill-shrine there are three prākāra- walls, and three circumambulatory paths. The innermost path now called Vaikuṇṭha or Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa is bound on the outer side by the wall that becomes the inner wall of the middle one, now called Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. The outer wall of this path will become the inner wall of Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa, the outer wall of which is also the outer compound wall of the entire temple. The āgama terminology for the first (or innermost) circumambulatory path would be 'antar-maṇḍala'; for the second (or middle) path (viz. Vimāna-pradakshiṇa), 'madhya-hāra'; and for the third (viz. Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa) 'mahā-maryādi'. However, the mahā-pradakshiṇa (viz., going round the four streets around the shrine) is not counted here.

In former times, this pathway was an open one, not enclosed by any prākāra-wall. It is also said that there were champaka trees around this pathway, which circumstance was responsible for its name (Champakāvaraṇa, Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa, Saṁbaga-churru). The maṇṭapas that were there were probably stray and unconnected structures. As mentioned earlier, one could, according to this text (verse 66), see the sacred tank, Svāmi-pushkariṇī, without a hindrance from the Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa. And the shrine at the far end of the present Raṅga-maṇṭapa does not have the outer prākāra-wall as its back on the southern side; there is another maṇṭapa (used formerly as a sort of kitchen and now as Panel-Room, security room and queue line) between the outer prākāra-wall and the Raṅga-maṇṭapa. This suggests that the outer prākāra-wall was a later construction; originally the Raṅga-maṇṭapa must have been an isolated structure on the open ground, at a distance from the present Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa (which must have been there even when this Raṅga-maṇṭapa was raised).

The pathway known as Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa skirted close to the inner

prākāra-wall (viz., outer prākāra wall of the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa), which appears to have been built around 1190 A.D. There was no other wall enclosing this pradakshiṇa at the time our text was prepared. The Bali-pīṭha and the Dhvaja-staṁbha were outside the precincts of the shrine.

In the north-western corner of this pradakshiṇa there is even now a spring-well, small and shallow, called Virajā-nadī; at present its water is unfit for use. But it must have been in use in former days.

Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha constructed around 1470 A.D. four maṇṭapas in the open court-yard at the four corners of Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa, in the names of himself, his wife and his two sons. On occasions of festival, the processional image of the hill-god was brought out to go round this pradakshiṇa, and it held court in each of these maṇṭapas, when food-offerings were made to the pilgrims. Each maṇṭapa is tall, unenclosed, and stands on four plain pillars. The four mantapas, however, are not of the same size. The two at the corners of the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa behind the shrine are 8' 6" square each, while the one at the south-eastern corner is 11 feet square and the other at the north-eastern corner is 11' 6" x 12' 3"

When, however, the outer prākāram wall was raised, maṇṭapas or rooms were constructed along the wall in front of the long corridors on the three sides (excluding the eastern) till the Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa. Beyond the Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa , were large structures like the Tirumala-rāya-maṇṭapa and Raṅga-maṇṭapa on the southern side. The rooms constructed in front of the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa were used as Ugrāṇa (store-room), Paṭṭāḍi (the room where silk garments were preserved), Rāmānuja-kūṭam (where pilgrims were fed freely, constructed in 1450), Paḍi-pōṭu (kitchen for the preparation of sweets known as 'paṇyārams', fried and baked delicacies and Yāmunat-turai (where flower-garlands for the god were strewn)

A word may be said here about Yāmunat-turai, where flower-garlands for daily worship are prepared. It is a custom of great antiquity in this temple that specific numbers of garlands are prepared each day, and each of them of a specific length. The length of the garlands is in terms of 'mūra' (18 inches) and 'bāra' (36 inches). The list of garlands used in tōmāla-sevā everyday is given below:

1) Tiru-vaḍi garlands 2 in number, each 18" long
2) for Vaksha-sthala-Lakshmī 2; 27"
3) garland for neck (kaṇṭha-sari): 1; 60"
4) Tāvaḷamu 1: 40"
7) Tāvaḷamu 1: 50"
8) Sāligrāma-mālā 2: 60"



Narasimha panel in a pillar in one the open Maṇṭapas (four legged) in Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa

7) Kaṭhāri-sara (waist) 1 :36"
8) Śikhāmaṇi (of crown) 1: 50"
9) Bhoga-śrīnivāsa 1: 27"
10) Koluvu-śrīnivāsa 1: 27"
11) Utsava-mūrti 3
12) Ugra-śrīnivāsa 3
13) Rāma 3
14) Kṛishṇa 1
15) Chakrattāḷvār 1

Outside the sanctum: One garland for each of the following: Ananta, Vishvaksena (bronze), Garuḍa, Hanumān. Angada, Sugrīva,in Rāmarmēḍa; Dvāra-pālaka, and Garuḍāḷvār in Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa; Varada-rāja, Vishvaksena, Narasiṁha and Rāmānuja in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa.

In 1923, some rooms were built on the southern side to store several articles relating to teppōtsavam (float-festival). Now these rooms are used to store laḍḍus. The small tub-like water-source on the north-eastern corner of the shrine has been used to deposit the used flowers in worship (nirmālya) every day. The custom in the hill-shrine forbids flowers worn by the god being distributed to the devotees; such flowers are dumped in this tub called pūla-bāvi ('the well for flowers'). In 1952, this tub was converted to a small well.

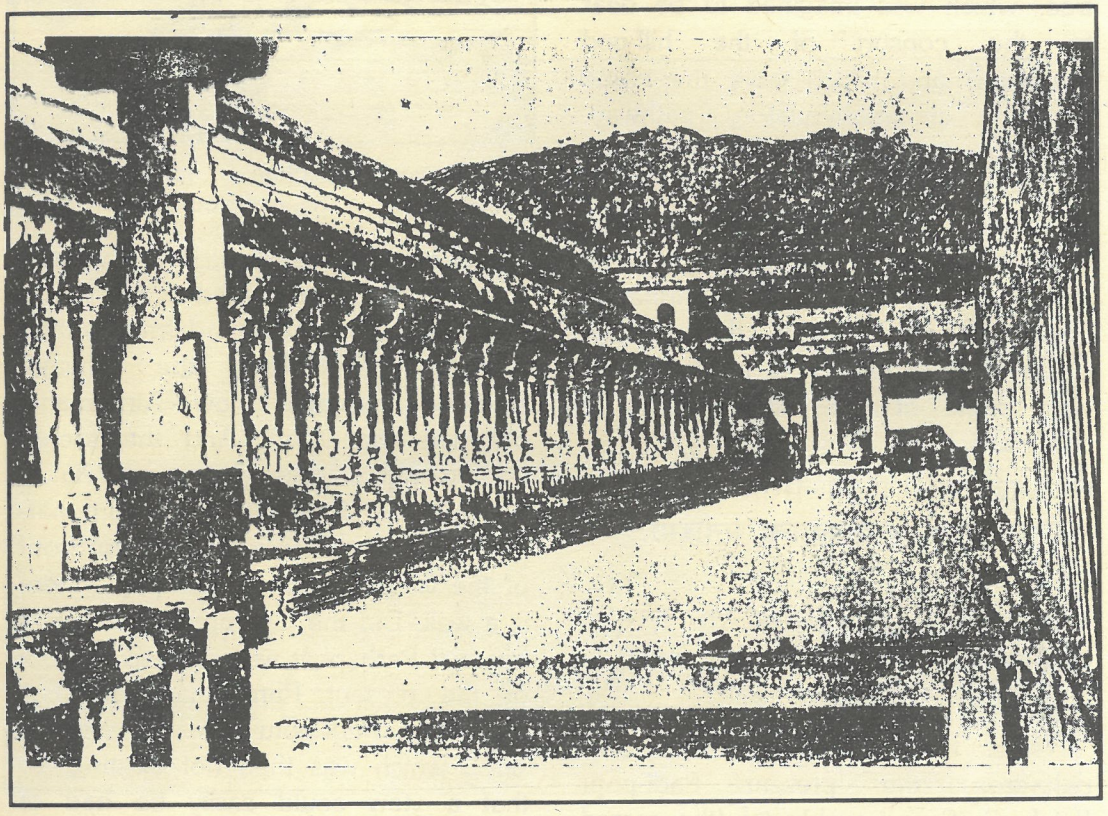
The Paimāyishi Account mentions that on the northern side of Sampangi-pradakshiṇa there was a Suvarṇa-maṇṭapa of four storeys. Our text (verse 67) also mentions a Suvarṇa-maṇṭapa, which the pilgrim is said to see in this pradakshiṇa, after beholding Svāmi-pushkariṇī. It is difficult to determine what this Suvarṇa-maṇṭapa refers to. The text also mentions that the pilgrim would see Nārāyaṇa-giri after seeing Suvarṇa-maṇṭapa ('suvarṇa-maṇṭapam chaiva nārāyaṇa-girim tathā'). Does it mean that the custom was to climb the four-storeyed maṇṭapa mentioned in the Paimāyishi Account, and have a look at the highest peak (3620 feet) Nārāyaṇa-giri from a distance? Nārāyaṇa-giri peak is claimed to be the spot where the hill-god

landed; there are the stone imprints of his feet on the peak, which the hardy pilgrims visit. According to our text, the order of noteworthy details in this part of the pilgrim's journey are Paḍi-pōṭu (kitchen), Svāmi-pushkariṇī (the sacred tank), Yāmuneya-mālyāgāra (the present Yāmunat-turai), the icon of Krishna installed therein, Suvarṇa-maṇ-ṭapa, Nārāyaṇa-giri and Bali-pīṭha.

Here is this portion of the text, much of which however is not relevant to our purpose here:

आनम्य मण्टपांश्चैव पश्येयं विपुलोन्नतान्।
बलिपीठं महादिव्यं ब्रह्मरुद्रादि सेवितम् ॥५६॥
ध्वजस्तम्भेन सहितं प्रणम्य प्राञ्जलिर्मुदा।
भावयेयं वृषाद्रीशं प्रणतार्तिहरं प्रभुम् ॥५७॥

तत्र प्रदक्षिणपरान् नमस्कारपरान् मुहुः।
वेदपाराणपरान् वेदान्तव्याक्रियापरान्॥५८॥
इतिहांसपुराणादीन् पठतः श्रृण्वतो पि च।
स्तोत्रपाठे च निरतान् ब्रह्मविद्यासु निष्ठितान्। ।५९॥
सङ्कीर्तनपरान् शौरेः गुणश्रवण तत्परान्
ध्याननिष्ठान् योगनिष्ठान्
जपशीलांस्तथा यतीन्॥६०॥
आबद्धाञ्जलिपदांश्चाप्यानन्दाश्रुभिराप्लुतान्।



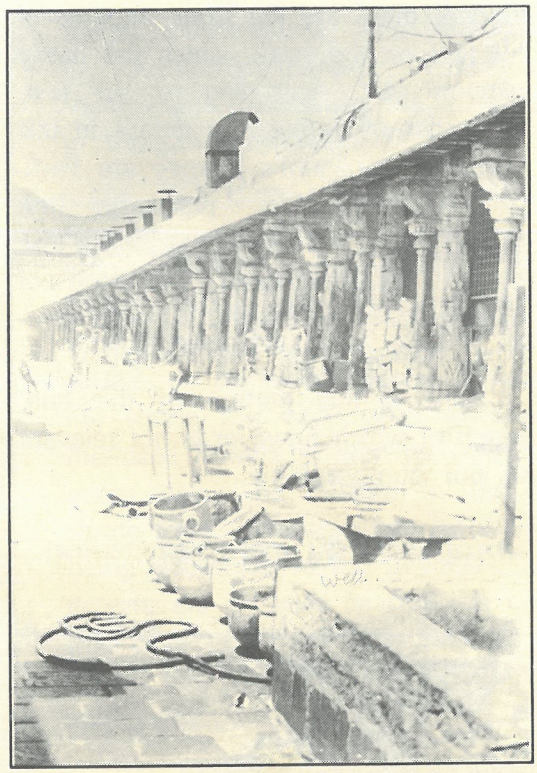
Sampangi-pradakshina

पुलकाञ्चितगात्रांश्च पूतभावान्महात्मनः
॥६१॥
सन्तानधनराज्यश्रीसम्पदादिवरार्थिनः।
लब्ध्वा वरं ततस्तूर्णमिष्टालाप परानपि
॥६२॥
सर्वान् महाभागवतान् सम्पश्येयं पुनः
पुनः।
ततो वेंकटनायक्याः स्थानं दृष्ट्वा ततः
परम् ॥६३॥
अनम्य चम्पकतरुं तन्नामाङ्कितवीथिकाम्।
प्रदक्षिणपरं सर्वं पश्येयं च कृताञ्जलिः
॥६४॥

Here is mentioned the champaka-tree, which was imagined to be dear to the consort of the hill-god (Lakshmī) and which gave the name for this circumambulatory pathway. However, the text speaks of an abode to this goddess (vēṅkaṭa-nāyakyāḥ sthānam), in this pradakshiṇā-patha. What or where it was cannot now be known. There is now no shrine to Lakshmī anywhere in the temple. Lakshmī is supposed to reside in the right chest of the hill-god, who is eka-mūrti here.

शालिमुद्गतिलादीनां शालास्तत्र सहस्रशः।
सर्वसम्पत्समृद्धाश्च पाकशाला मनोरमाः
॥६५॥
स्वामिपुष्करिणीतीर्थं दृष्ट्वाचम्य ततः परम्।
यामुनेयाभिधं दिव्यं माल्यागारं मनोहरम्
॥६६॥

(After the mention of the Champaka-tree, the present Paḍi-pōṭu (kitchen), Svāmi-pushkariṇī (the sacred tank), and Yāmunat-turai are mentioned one after another. Paḍi-pōṭu and Yāmunat-turai are located in the northern side of Sampangi-pradakshiṇa, then probably overlooking the Dhvaja-stambha mantapa (now Ainā-mahal obstructs the view). And the sacred tank would be almost immediately at the back of Paḍi-pōṭu and Yāmunat-turai, not very far removed. In front of the western end of Paḍi-pōṭu, there is a well. Did the Champaka tree stand nearby? Perhaps it was situated in front of the present Rāmānuja-kūṭam hall (adjoining Paḍi-pōṭu on its western side), which was then not existing, so that a view could easily be had of Svāmi-pushkariṇī. Even at present,

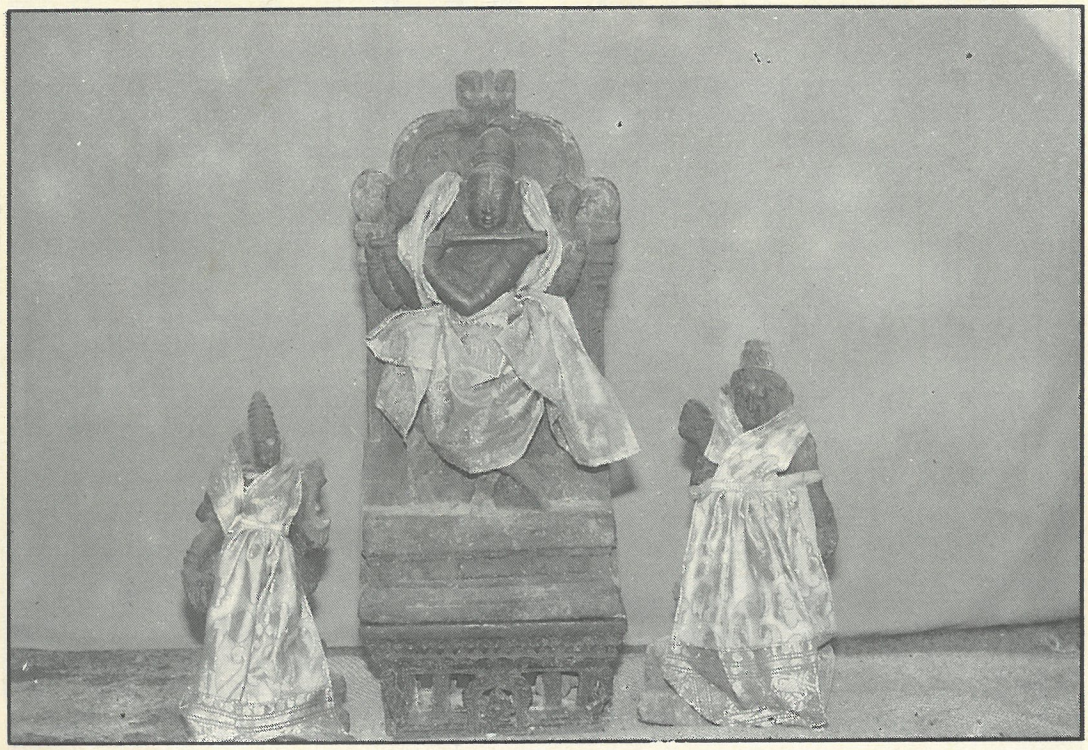


PAḌI-PŌṬU, Kitchen (in Sampangi Pradakshiṇa) In the foreground is the well

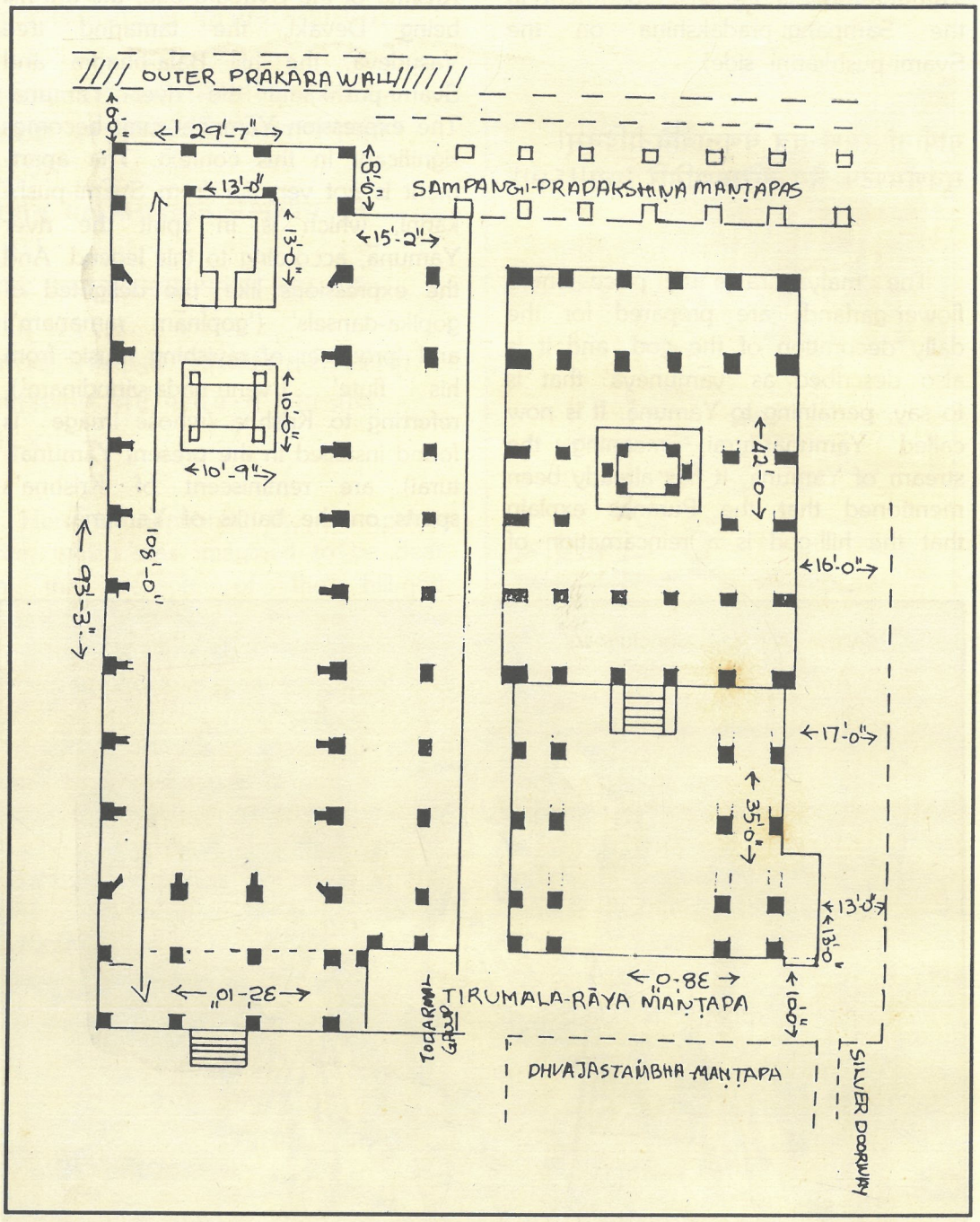
Yāmuna-turai is the last apartment in the Sampangi-pradakshiṇa on the Svāmi-pushkariṇī side)

गोपीनां रमणं तत्र वेणुनादविनोदिनम्।
सुवर्णमण्टपं चैव नारायणगिरिं तथा।।६७।।

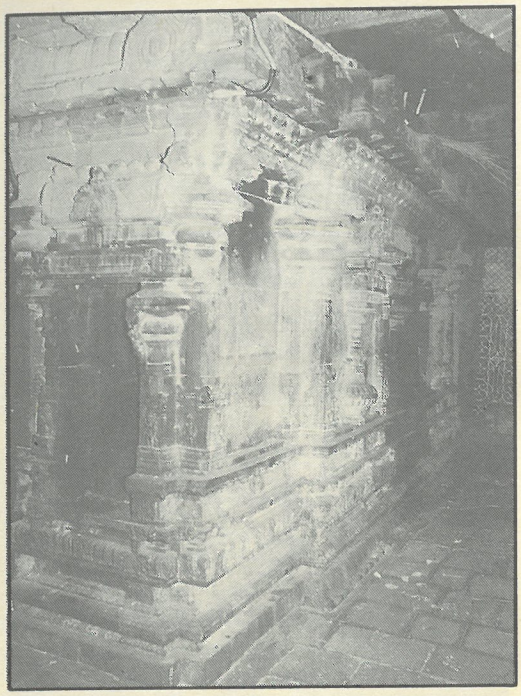
The 'mālyāgāra is the place where flower-garlands are prepared for the daily decoration of the god, and it is also described as 'yāmuneya' that is to say, pertaining to Yamunā. It is now called Yāmunat-turai, meaning the stream of Yamunā. It has already been mentioned that the Purāṇas explain that the hill-god is a reincarnation of Kṛishṇa of the Dvāpara age; the ant-hill being Devakī, the tamarind tree Vasudeva, the hill Bala-bhadra and Svāmī-pushkariṇī the river Yamunā. The expression Yāmunat-turai becomes significant in this context. The apartment is not very far from Svāmi-pushkariṇi, which is in spirit the river Yamunā, according to this legend. And the expressions like 'the delighted of gopikā-dansels' ('gopīnām ramaṇam') and 'producer of ravishing music from his flute' ('veṇu-nāda-vinodinam'), referring to Kṛishṇa (whose image is found installed in the present Yāmunat-turai) are reminiscent of Kṛishṇa's sports on the banks of Yamunā.



KṚSHṆA IN YAMUNAT-TURAI



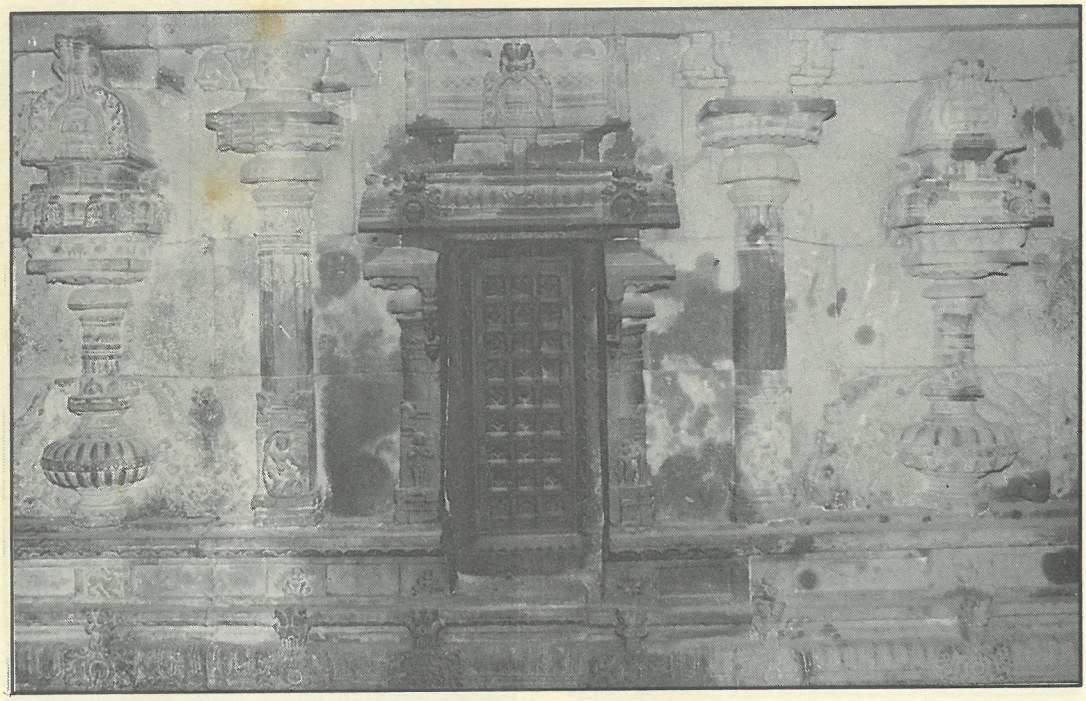
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA



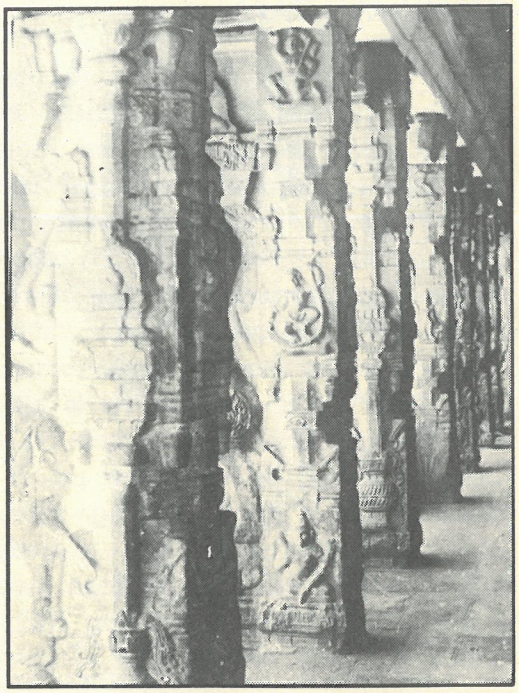
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Sanctum)

RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA

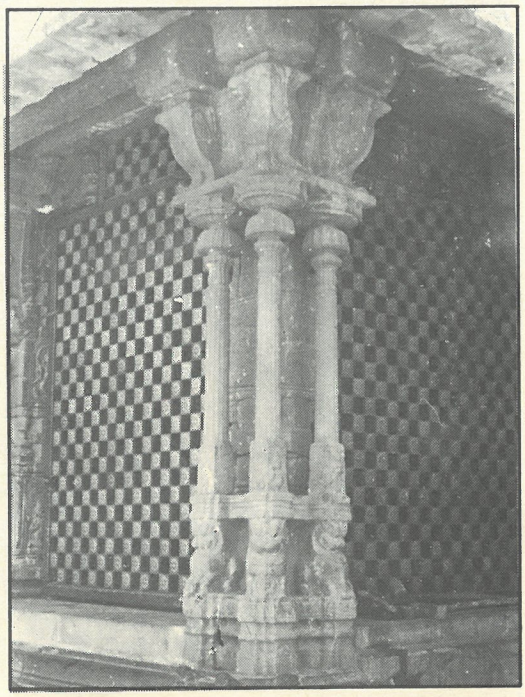
Of the many mantapas in the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa mentioned in general terms in the text, the most important are the Raṅga-maṇṭapa (108 x 60') and Tirumala-rāya-maṇṭapa (108' x 401'). The former is called Raṅga-nāyakula-maṇṭapa in the official *Diṭṭam* for Kārtikotsava (enumerating the spots in the temple-complex where lights have to be put up). It is also called Raṅga-nātha-maṇṭapa, because it was constructed to house the processional image of the god Raṅga-nātha of Śrīrangam (which was being secretly conveyed from place to place to save it from Muslim vandalism during 1320-1360); and also because the Yādava-



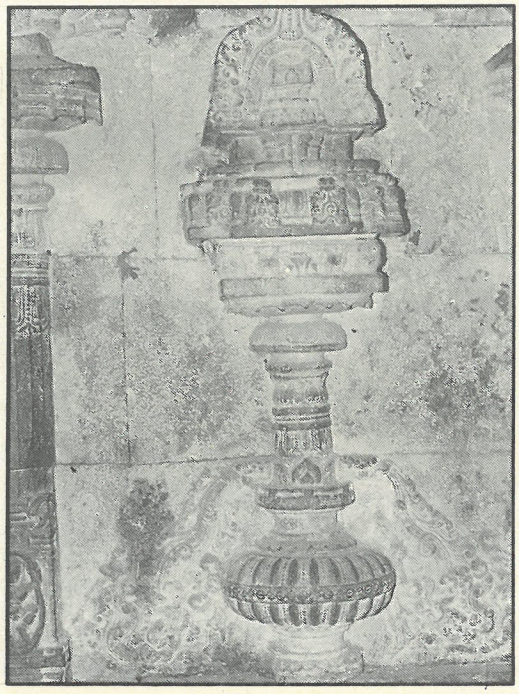
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Inside)



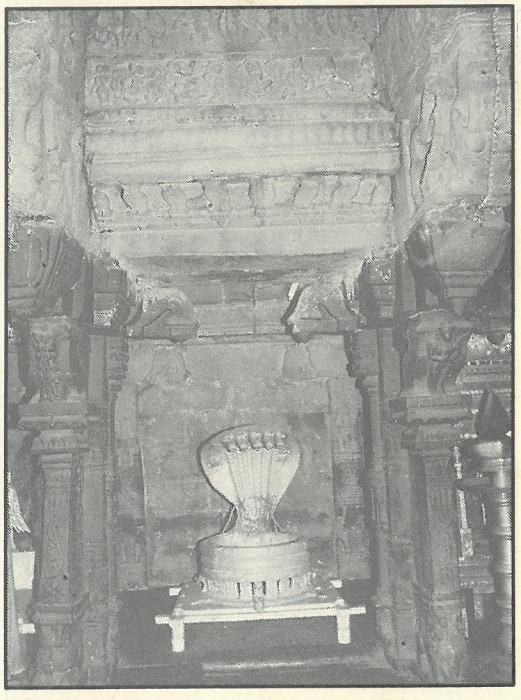
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Pillars)



RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Northern corner)



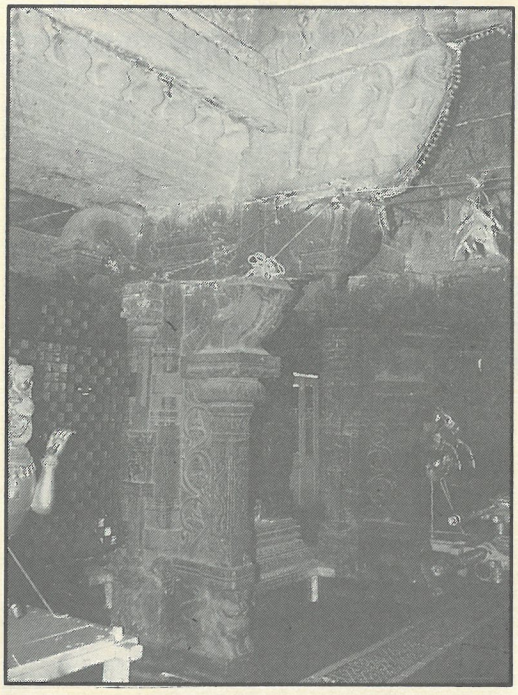
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Western side)



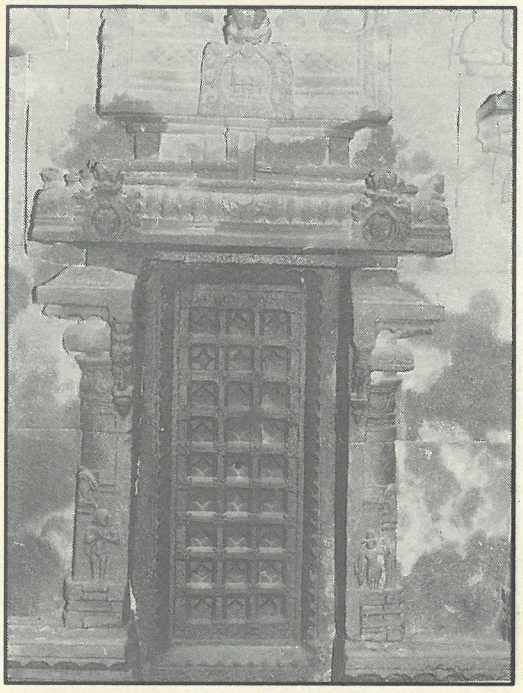
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Hall)



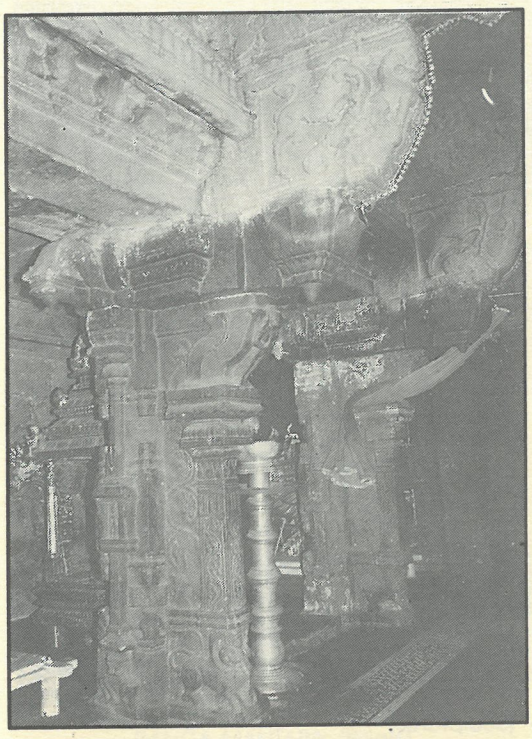
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Sculptures)



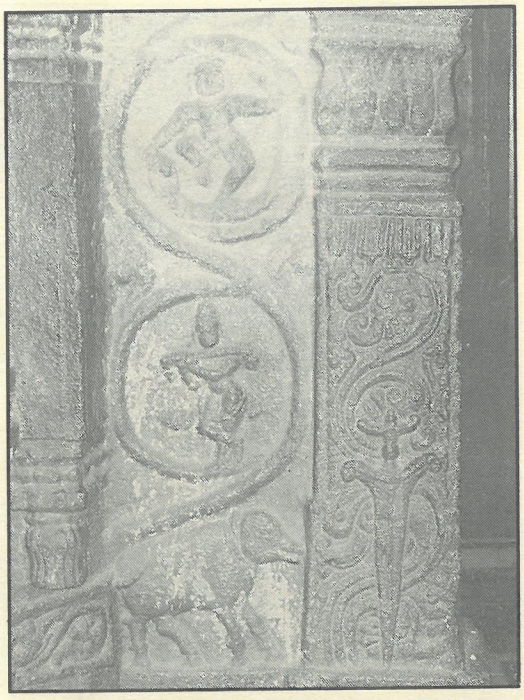
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Inside)



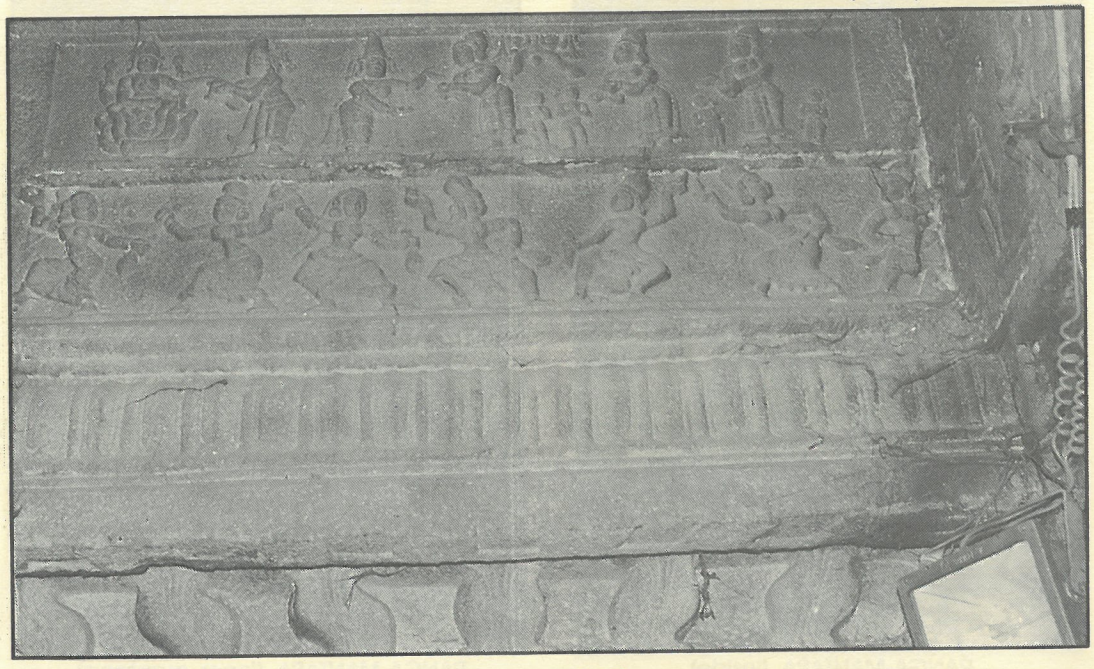
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Inner maṇṭapa)



RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Central Hall)



RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA
(Vijayanagar royal emblem on the entrance pillars)



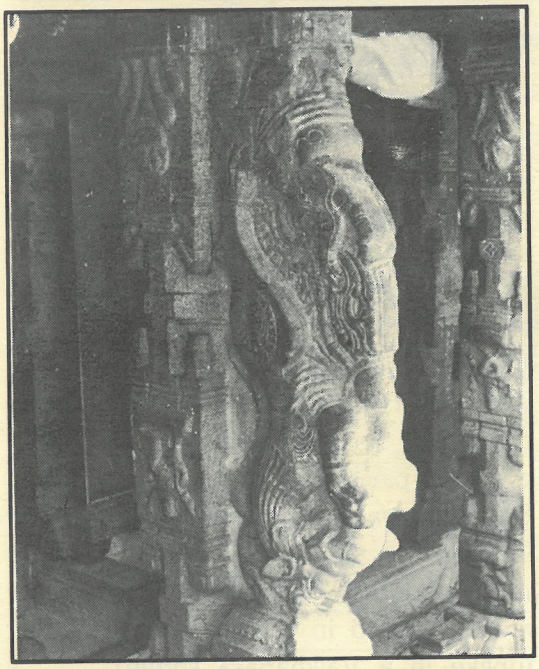
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Rāmāyaṇa-frieze)



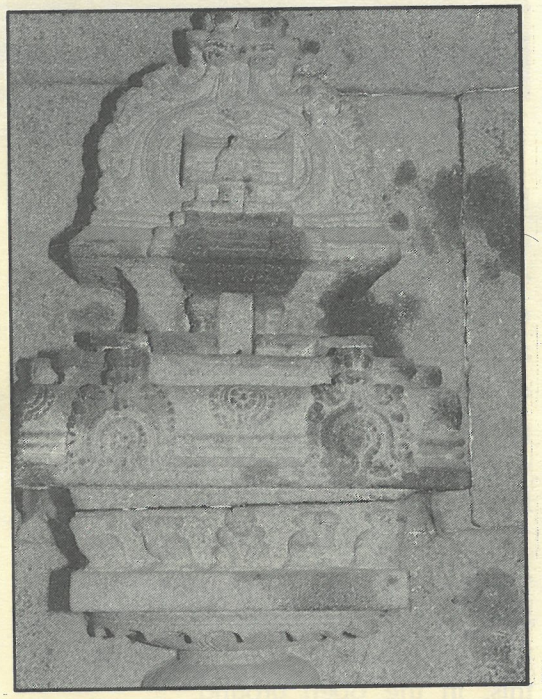
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Western wall)

king , Śrī-ranga-nātha, was responsible for its construction.

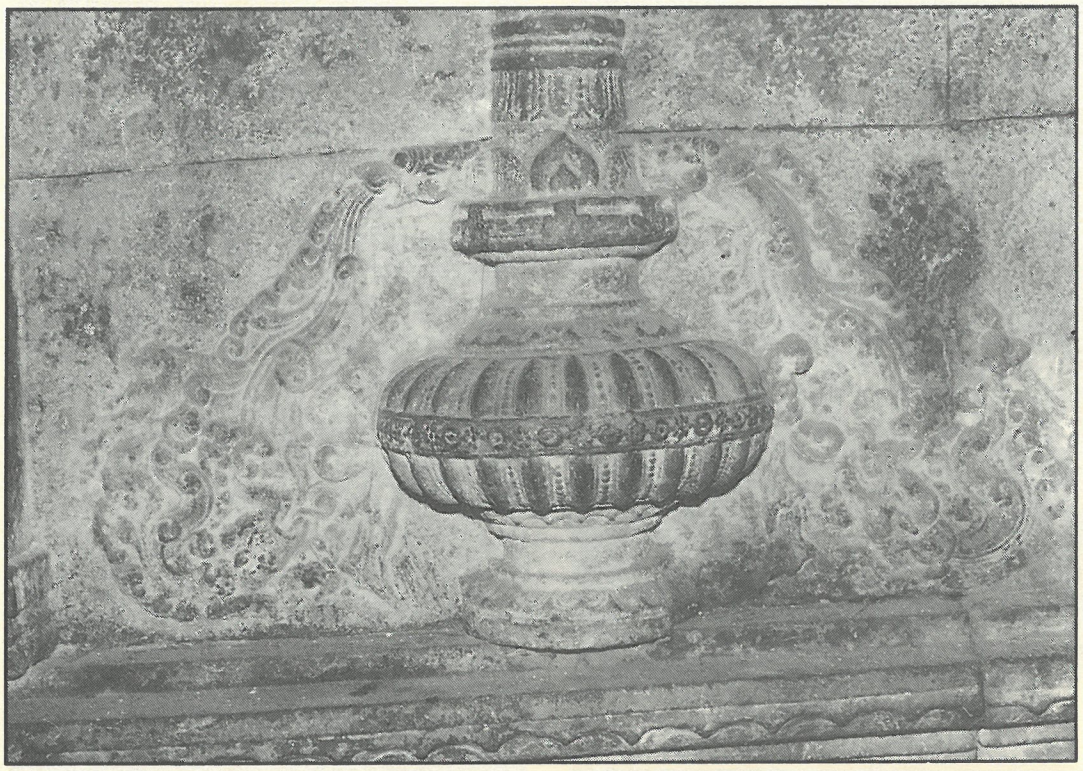
This spacious mantapa comes to our view as soon as we step out of the Pratimā-maṇṭapa at the very entrance to the shrine, and turn our head to the left. This maṇṭapa, which is at the south-eastern corner of the large court-yard of the temple, is positioned between the eastern and southern sides of the outer compound-wall (prākāra), to the south of the Pratimā-maṇṭapa, leaving, however, a gap of six feet from the southern prākāra-wall, and 27'4" from the eastern wall. It is doubtful, however, if this prākāra was at all there when this maṇṭapa was



A piller in Raṅga-Maṇṭapa



RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Portion of Kuṁbha-pañjara on the western wall of shrine-room)



RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Portion of Kumbha-pañjara in the western wall of shrine-room)

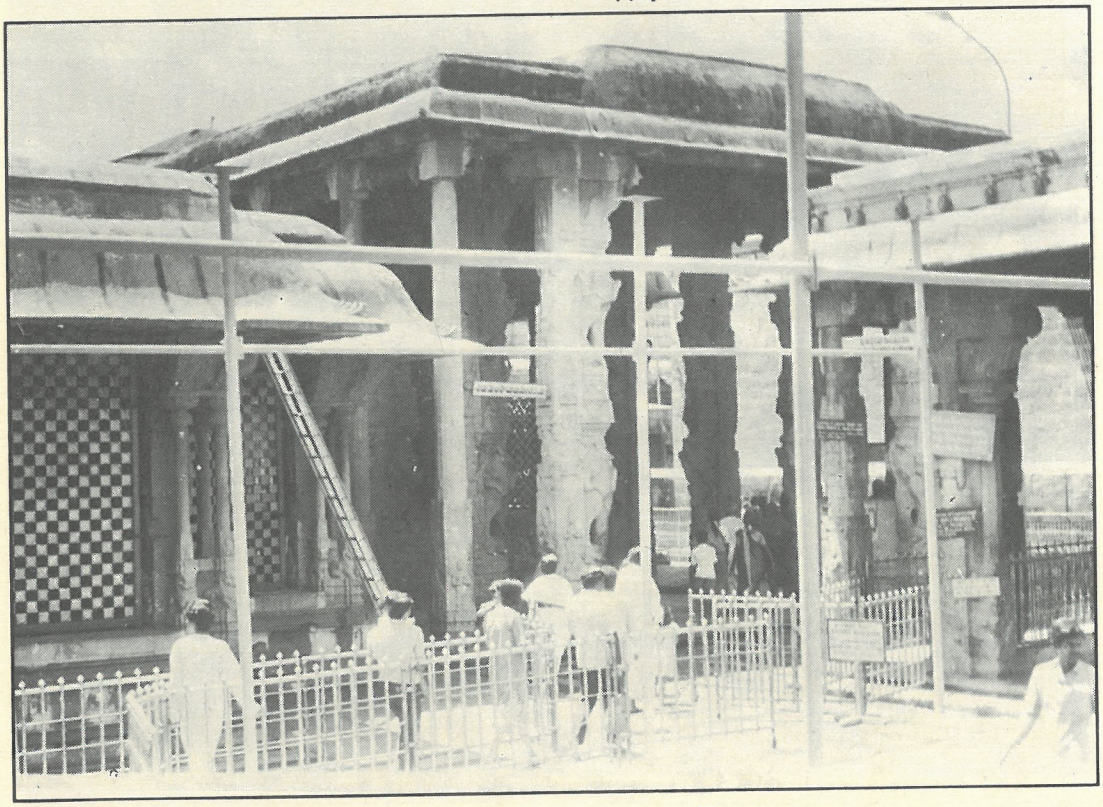
built. It would be more reasonable to assume that if this maṇṭapa was constructed to be a shrine for the god of Śrī-rangam who was worshipped according to the Pāñcharātra division of the Āgama, it should be outside the premises of the hill-god, who was worshipped according to the Vaikhānasa division of the Āgama. During 1320-1360, therefore, the outer limit of the hill-shrine must have been the Bali-pīṭha, and the present Raṅga-maṇṭapa would have been built beyond this, in the open ground.

And even now, it can be seen that this maṇṭapa is a shrine in its own right. It has a sanctum with a vimānam of plaster over it, and a separate kitchen and rooms for torches and vāhanas (cf. Paimāyishi Account which states that at the southern side of the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa in this mantapa consisting of a room for torches, a room for keeping Mysore state's vehicles, Raṅga-nāyaka's kitchen and a shrine). It must have been an unenclosed pavilion, large enough for the Śrī-vaishṇavas from Śrī-raṅgam and Tirupati to gather for congregational worship during the many festivals that are celebrated in a Pāñcharātra shrine (unlike in a Vaikhānasa shrine)

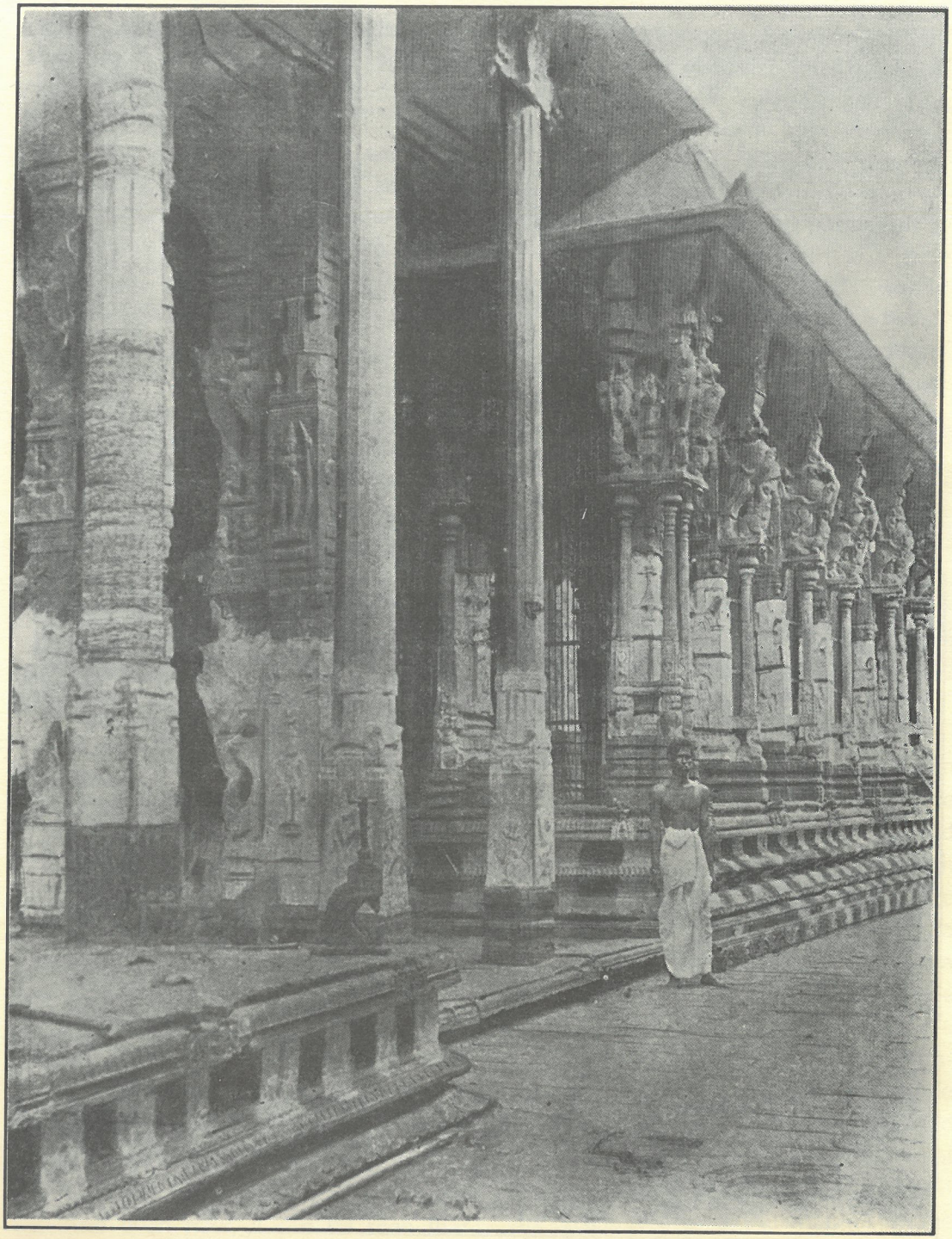
This maṇṭapa, supported by massive granite pillars, delicately sculpted in the Vijayanagar style, stands on a high basement, and measures 44' 10" east to west and 112' 7" north to south. At the far end on the southern side is the shrine (garbha-gṛha and antarāla) that was mentioned earlier, square in shape (12 feet) with a porch. It is called in the Paimāyishi Account 'Siṁhāsana-maṇṭapa', having four slender posts in front of it; adjoining it on the west, continues the Account, is the rice-flowering room (piṇḍi-śālā). The doors of the shrine were closed and locked up, after the Pāñcharātra god was taken back to Śrī-raṅgam, when favourable conditions prevailed there. A large Śesha-vāhana is kept there now, blocking the entrance to this shrine. The hall was later used for functions like kalyāṇotsava. And the vāhanas (processional vehicles) have been kept here now in the rectangular space to the west (15'2" wide)

TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA

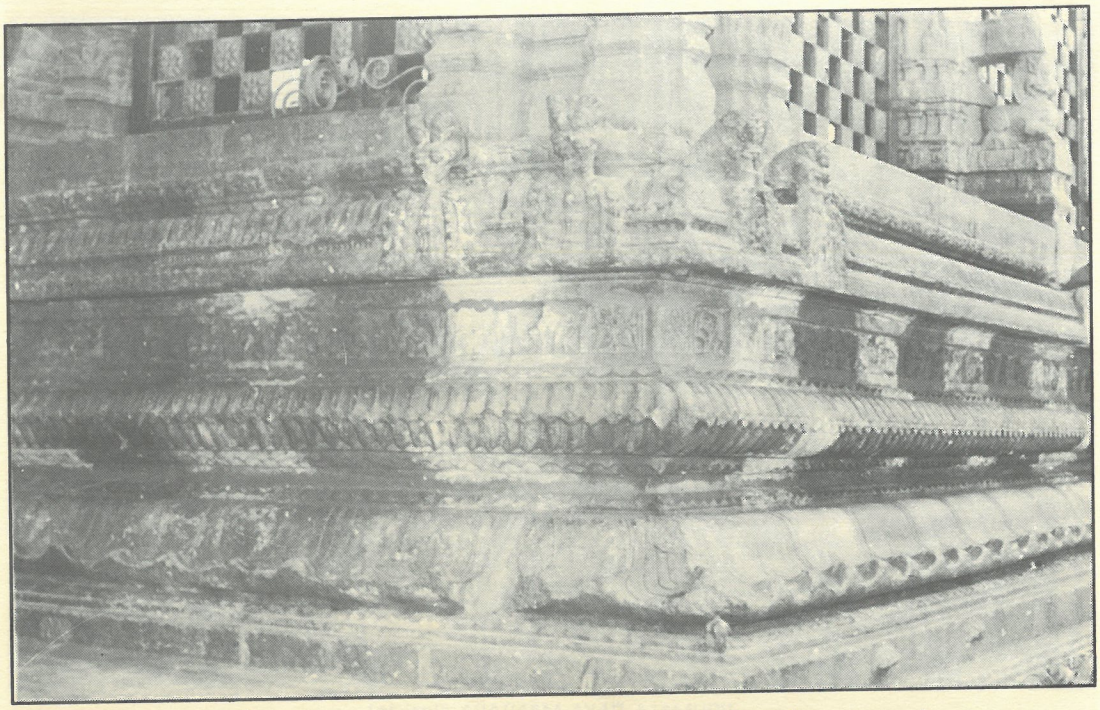
Adjoining the Raṅga-maṇṭapa on the western side, farther removed from the southern prākāra-wall (about 10 feet) and facing the Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa, is a spacious complex of



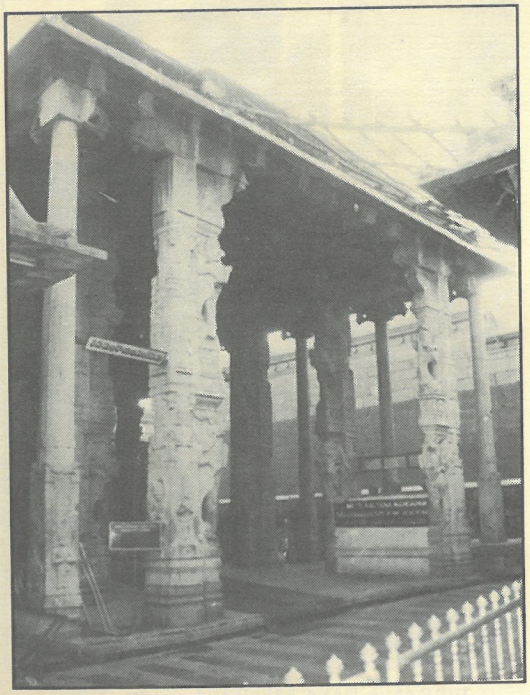
RAṄGA-MAṆṬAPA (Left) and Tirumala-Rāya-Maṇṭapa



TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA

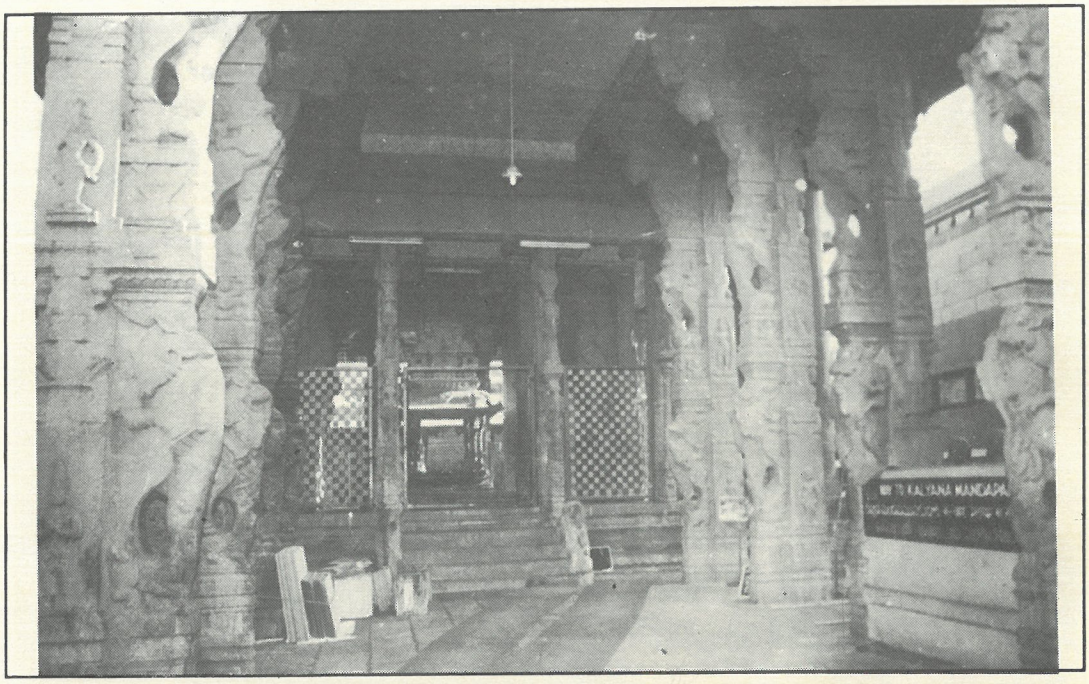


TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (basement of the northwestern corner)

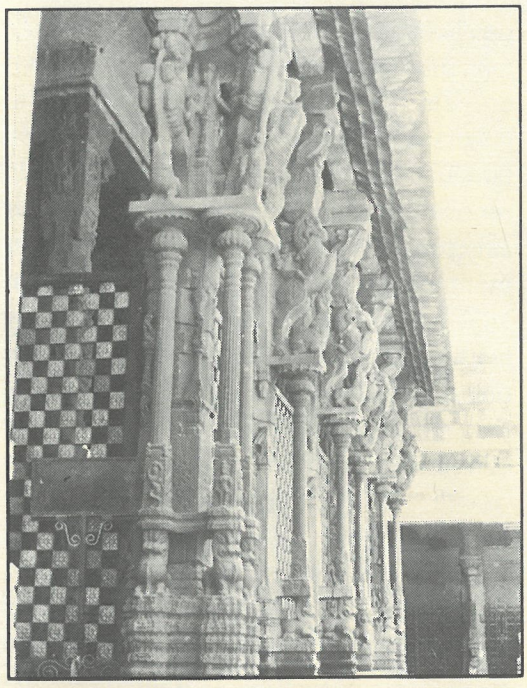


TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Front View)

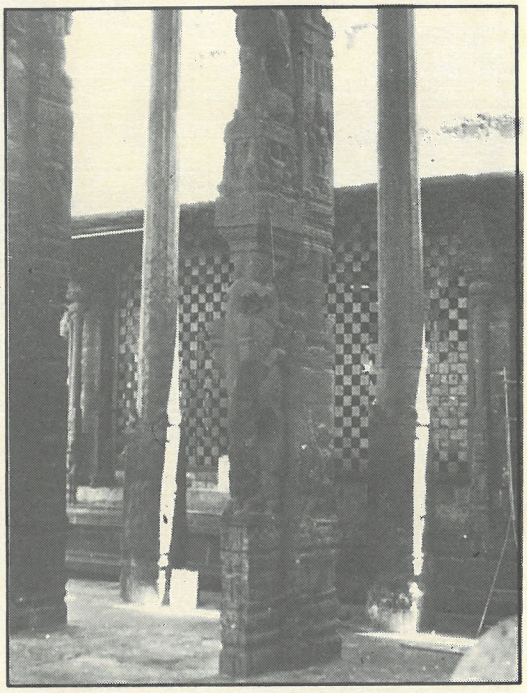
pavilions (38 feet east to west and 77 feet north to south) generally known as Tirumala-rāya-maṇṭapa, after the chieftain Tirumala-rāja of the Araviṭi family. But this chieftain only renovated and extended an earlier structure (the southern or the inner mantapa) built by Sāḷuva-Narasiṁha in 1473 A.D. for celebrating a new festival to the hill-god (processional deity) called in Tamiḷ, annā-ūñjal-tirunāḷ (Skt. haṁsa-tūlikā-dolotsava, swinging ceremony), a five-day festival in the month of Āṇi (June-July). There are two tall stone pillars in this earlier pavilion for suspending the swing; but there is also a small maṇṭapa (of black granite), 6 feet square in extent and supported by four ornamental (in Vijayanagar style) pillars, and with



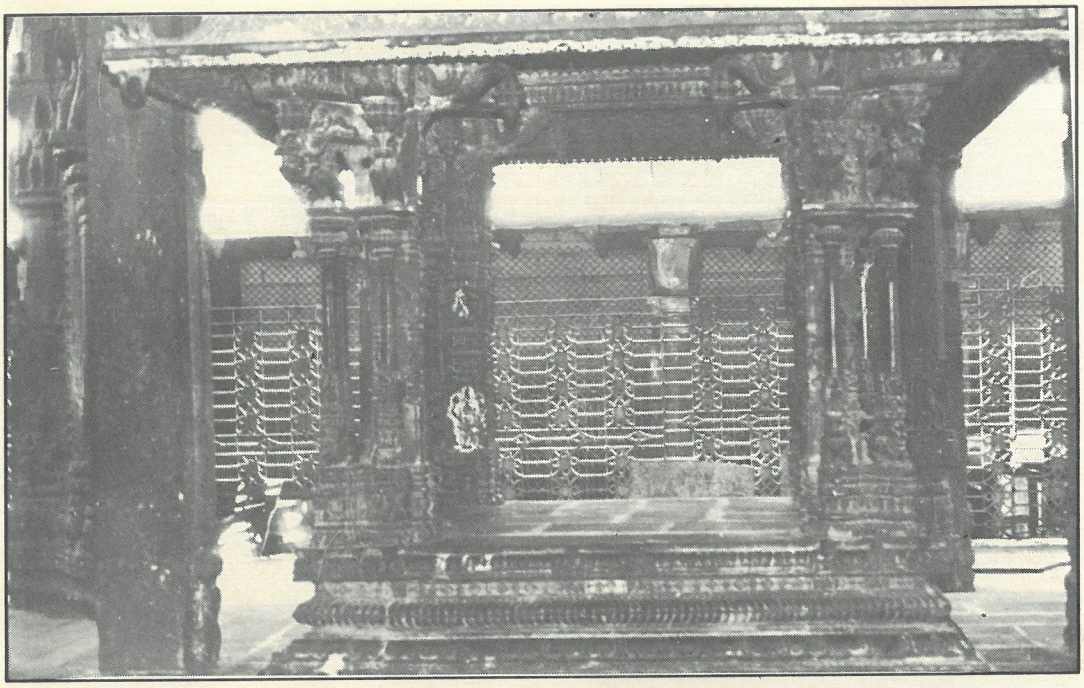
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Inside)



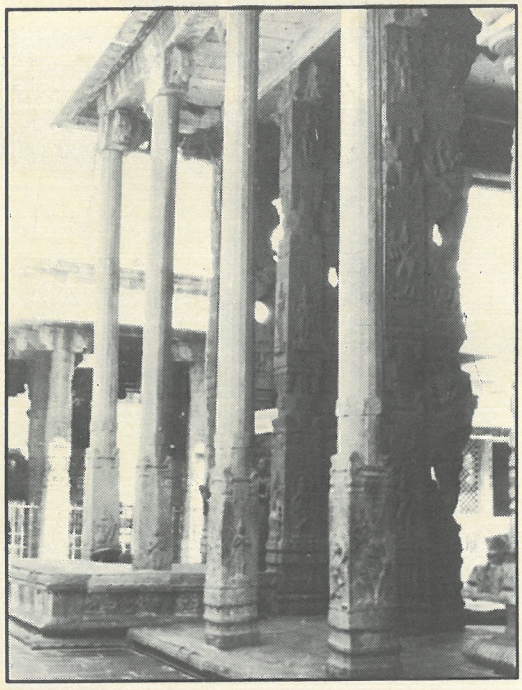
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Pillars on the Western side)



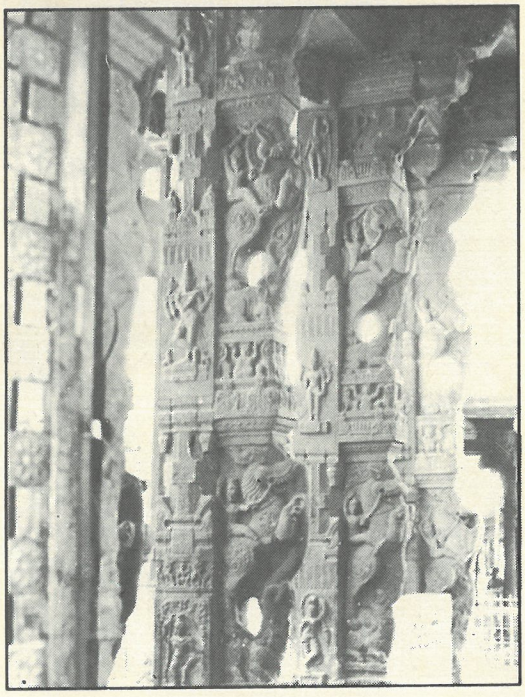
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Side View)



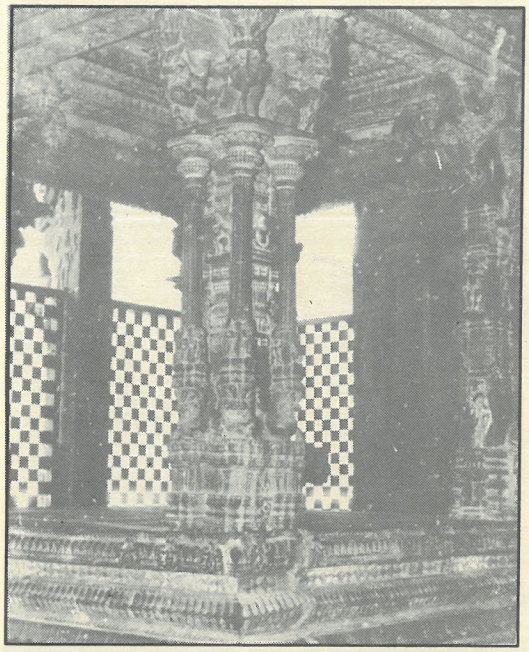
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Inner Pavilion)



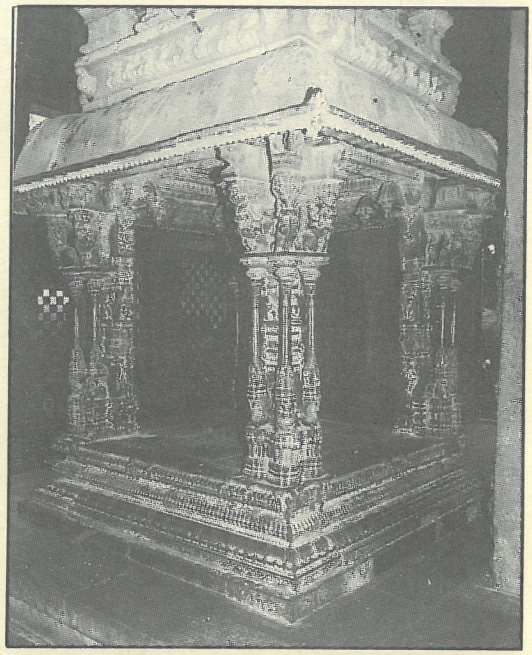
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Pillars at the entrance)



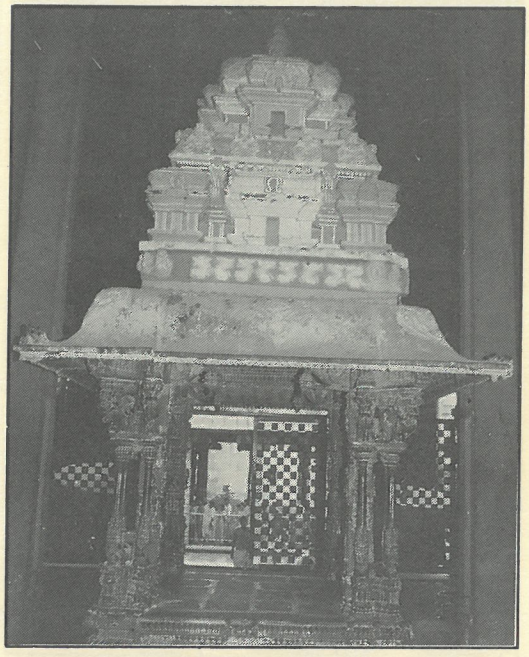
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Pillars on the Western Side)



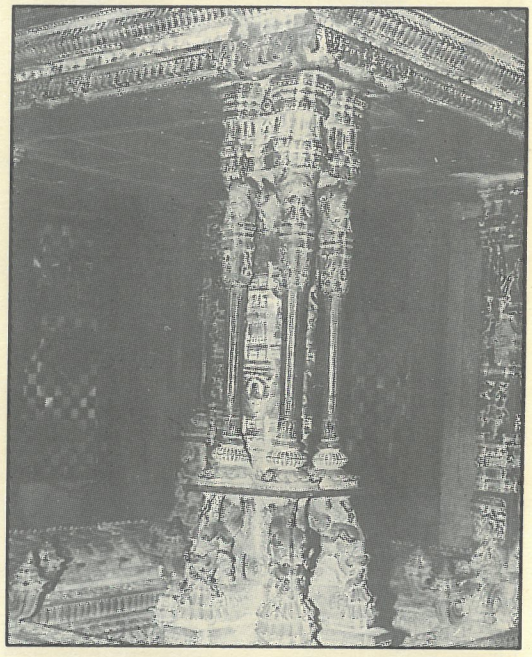
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Southeastern corner of inner pavilion)



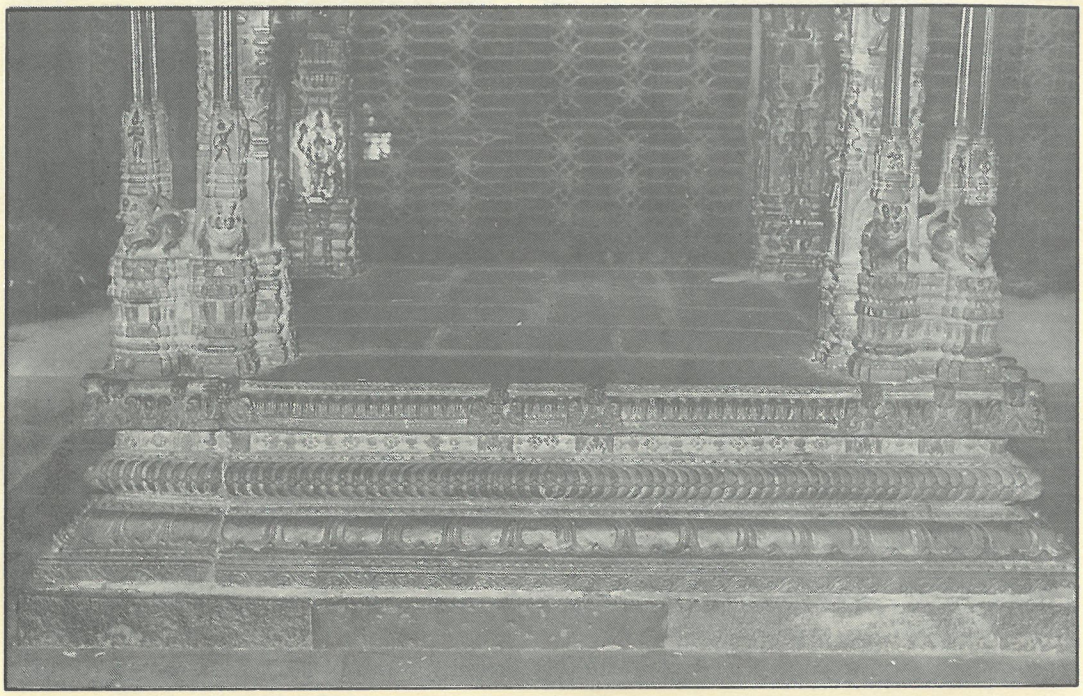
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (Southeastern corner of inner pavilion)



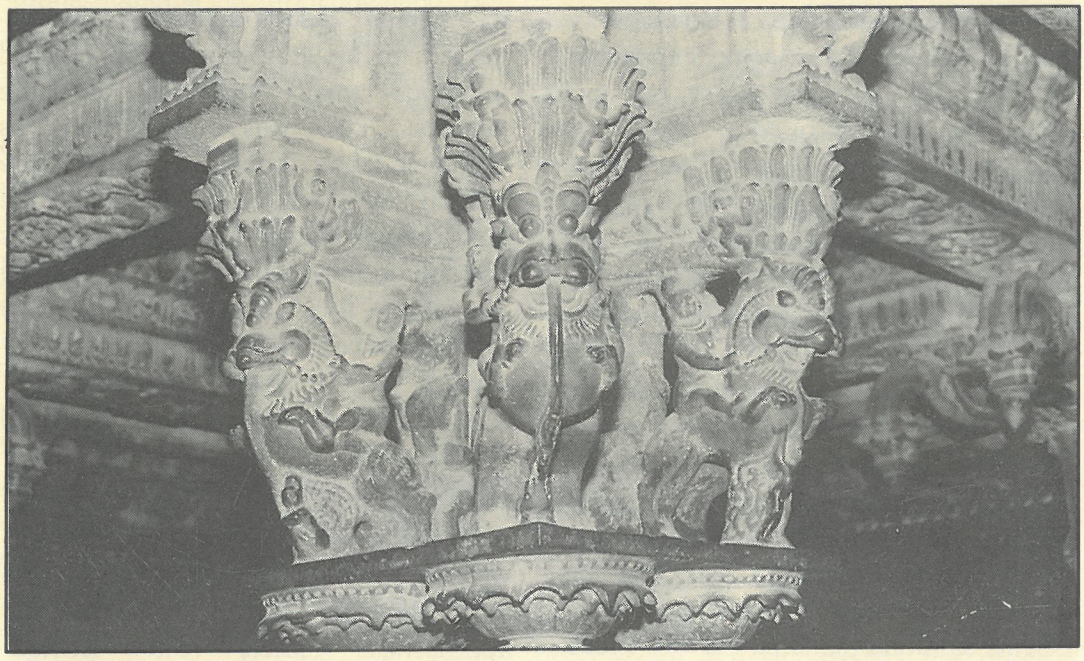
TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (inner pavilion from the southern side)



TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (inner pavilion southestern corner)



TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (basement of the inner pavilion, northern side)



TIRUMALA-RĀYA-MAṆṬAPA (pillar-top in the southern corner)

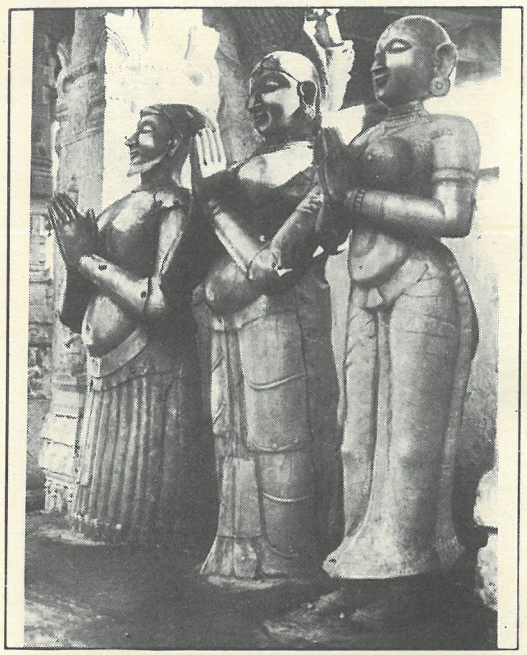


Bronze Images of Lāla-Khem-ram (Tōḍar-mal) his wife and mother

vimāna of plaster, according to Paimāyishi Account (which calls this the 'simhāsana-maṇṭapa') between the pillars, making the swinging impossible.

Continuous with this inner and earlier maṇṭapa (called in inscriptions Narasimha-rāya-maṇṭapa, II, 79) which is rectangular in shape, is another mantapa, lower in level and reached by steps, which faces Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa. This latter maṇṭapa is almost square in shape (35') and at its north-western corner is the platform (13' long) on which the portrait statues of Tōḍar-mal are kept. The distance between this maṇṭapa and the prākāra-wall by the side of the Inner Gate-way (Naḍimi-paḍikāvali) is 17 feet; and the distance between this maṇṭapa and the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa is 10 feet. This maṇṭapa was built by Araviṭi Tirumala-rāya for the performance of the annual Vasantosava. He also arranged for the free distribution of food -offerings (made to god)to the pilgrims; this was well-known as 'Tirumala-rāyan poṅgal'. Latterly, the custom came into vogue of seating the processional image (Malayappa) in this pavilion to hold court on the evening of the flag hoisting ceremony (dhvajārohaṇa), marking the commencement of the grand Brahmotsavam. The location of this maṇṭapa facilitated this practice.

This western end of the complex of pavilions is close to the inner prākāra-wall of Sampaṅgi- pradakshiṇa (a little more than ten feet in distance) and approaches closely the Dhvaja-



Bronze images of Lala-Khem-Ram-and others (another view)

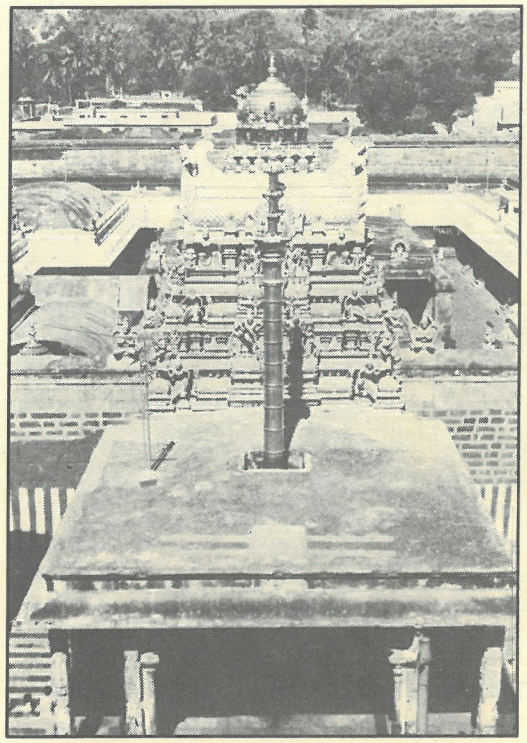
stambha-mantapa in front (leaving of course a gap). In the north-western corner is a small pavilion (originally a brick one with four pillars), now a rectangular platform 13 feet long, containing the bronze cast portrait-statues of Lālā Khēm-rām (better known as Tōḍar-mall), his mother Mātā-Mohanā and his wife Pitā-bībī (the names are inscribed on their shoulders). Lālā-Khēm-rām was a trusted chieftain under the Nawāb of Arcot, Sadāt-ul-la-Khān around 1714 A.D. and was administering the Karnatik area under this Nawāb. It appears he was a resident of Koṇḍa-vīḍu near Vijayawāḍa in Āndhra Pradesh. Of the three statues the one of Pitā-bībī (wife) is complete, that of Lālā-Khēm-Rām has the lower legs missing, and that of Matā- Mohanā-pe is devoid of the feet. The three personages are shown in the standing posture in an attitude of devotion, facing the shrine.

AINĀ-MAHAL

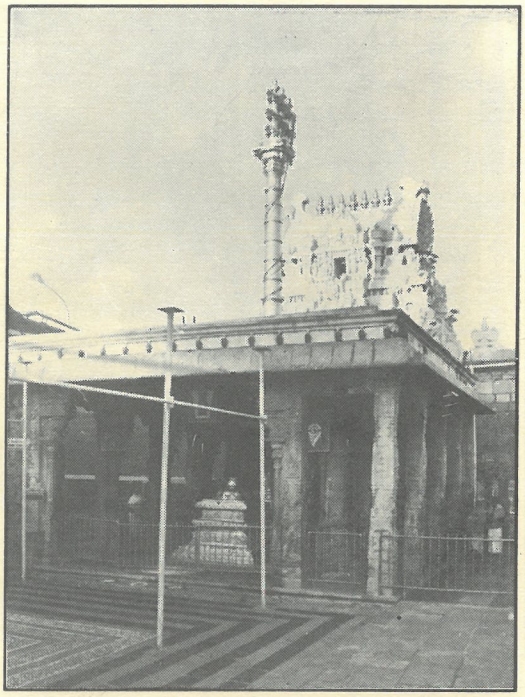
Among the other structures within the Sampangi-pradakshiṇa is an unusual Hall of Mirrors (Ainā-mahal, or Addāla-maṇṭapam), built on a high basement, to our right as we enter through the Outer Gateway. It faces the Raṅga-maṇṭapa on the other side and is about 12 feet away from Pratimā- maṇṭapa. This is obviously a late addition to the temple-complex. The open front pavilion is square in shape (43' 13" x 43' 6") and there are six rows of six pillars in each row. There is an enclosed room of about the same size (41' 9" x 42') behind this open pavilion, with its entrance to the east. Inside this room, there is a sanctum-sort of apartment (23' x 2' 9") with a pathway alround it. The walls of the room are faced with large mirrors. There is also a railing in the middle of the room.

It is not known why or when this room was built. For a long time, the administrative offices of the temple were located here. Now, the laddus are stored in this hall.

In effect, the pathway freely available in Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa is the open space actually around the outer wall of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. This path-



DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MAṆṬAPA (View as we enter through the Main Doorway)

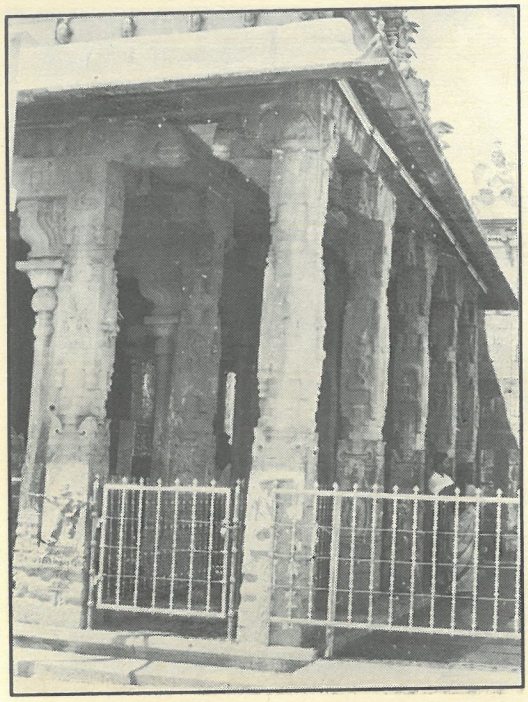


DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MAṆṬAPA (View along with Naḍimi-Paḍikāvali and Ānanda-nilaya) vimana)

way is 30' 7" wide on the southern side, 21 feet behind the shrine. I remember that as an youngster, I would, as would all the other pilgrims, go up to the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa and turn left to enter into the Sampangi-pradakshiṇa. The eastern bit of this pathway towards south was very narrow, because of the Tirumala-rāyan-maṇṭapa coming very close, whereas the other side of the eastern prākāra (towards north) was much far removed. Now, of course, the Sampangi-pradakshiṇa cannot be used by the pilgrims at all. The only pradakshina that is permitted by the TTD authorities at present is the Vimāna-pradikshiṇa.

DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MAṆṬAPA

The Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa, where the pilgrim would find the Bali-pīṭha (seat for food offering) and the Dhvaja-stambha (flag-pole), is located physically in the Sampangi-pradakshiṇa, but technically it is the outer limit of the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. According to the Āgama requirements, bali-pīṭha and dhvaja-stambha must be found in the first enclosure itself (prathamāvaraṇa). But to have a pavilion (maṇṭapa) for the Balī-pīṭha and Dhvaja-stambha is rather unusual. Being a hill-shrine, the uncertainties of the weather conditions probably necessitated a covered maṇṭapa, where the

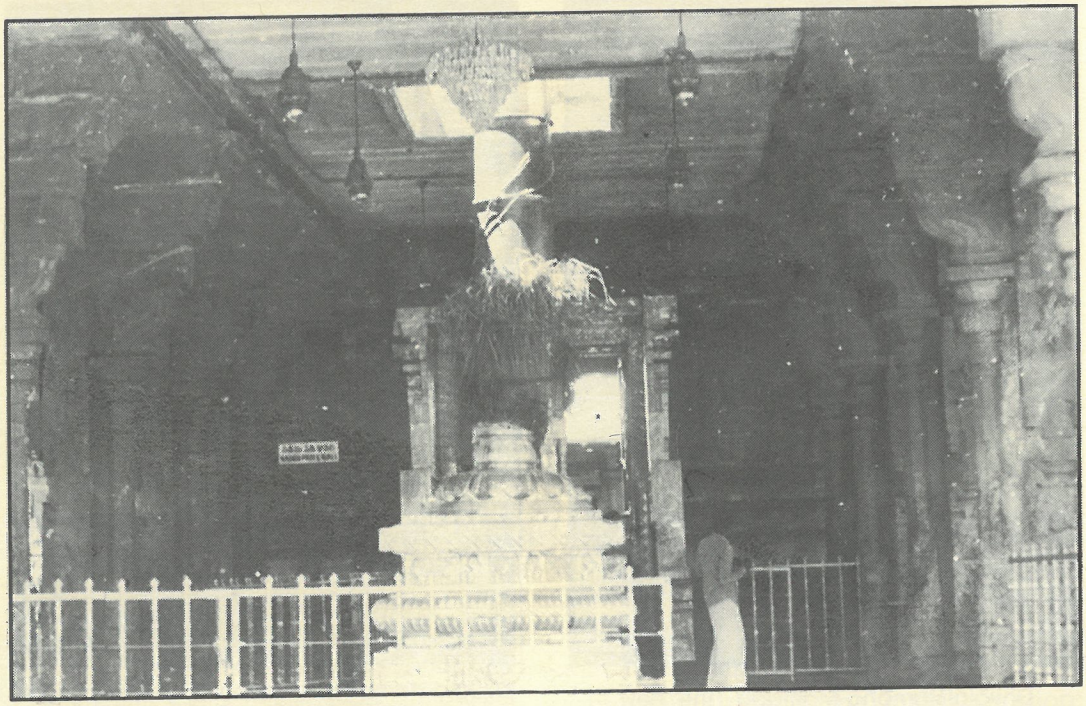


DHVAJA-STAṀBHA-MAṆṬAPA (northern side)

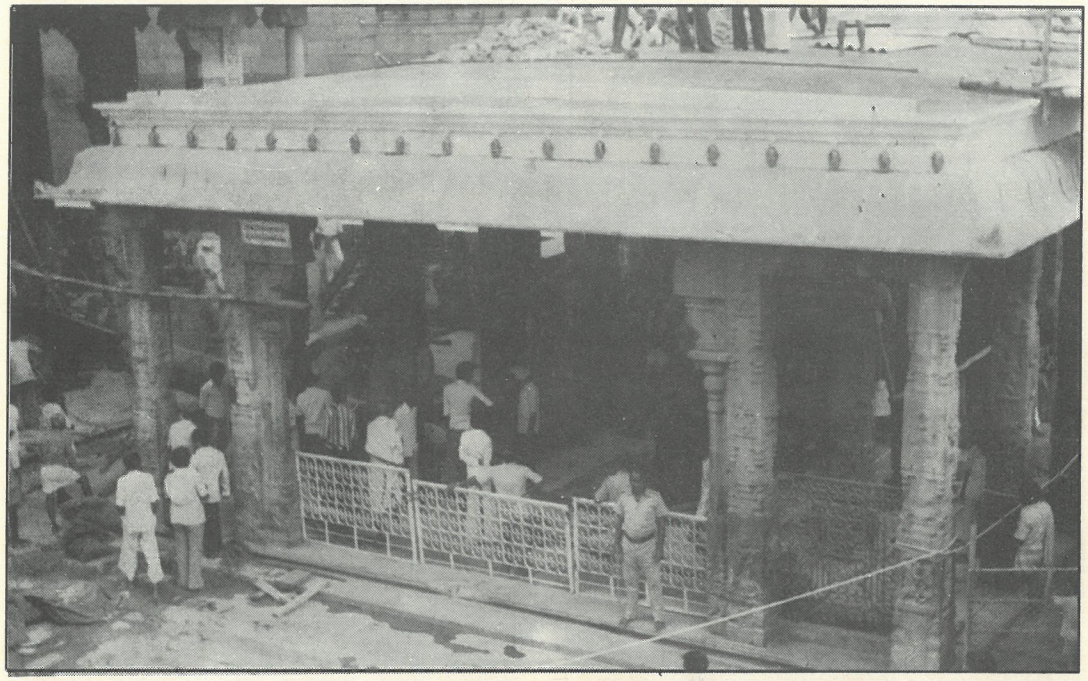
rituals may be carried out even when it rains, for the very purpose of a dhvaja-staṁbha and bali-pīṭha is to facilitate festivals. It is said in Bhṛgu's *Khilādhikāra* (32, 19)

हरेस्तु पुरतो नित्यं बलिपीठं ध्वजस्तथा।
नियमेन प्रतिष्ठाप्यौ हीनयोर्नास्त्युत्सवस्तयोः।।

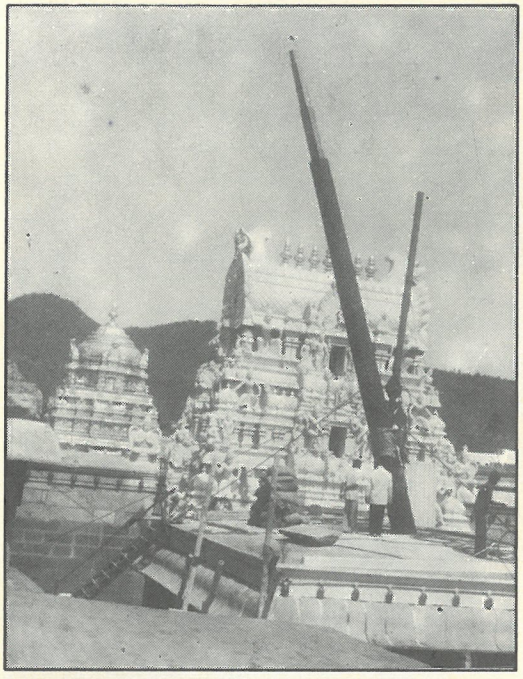
The relative positions of the two details are in accordance with Āgamic prescriptions. The flag-pole must be, according to the texts, between the dvāra-gopura (gateway-tower) and the bali-pīṭha (altar), directly in front of the entrance, and the altar is situated immediately behind it. The huge altar is square in shape, made of cut-stone, rising to a height of five and a half



DHVAJA-STAṀBHA-MAṆṬAPA (inside)



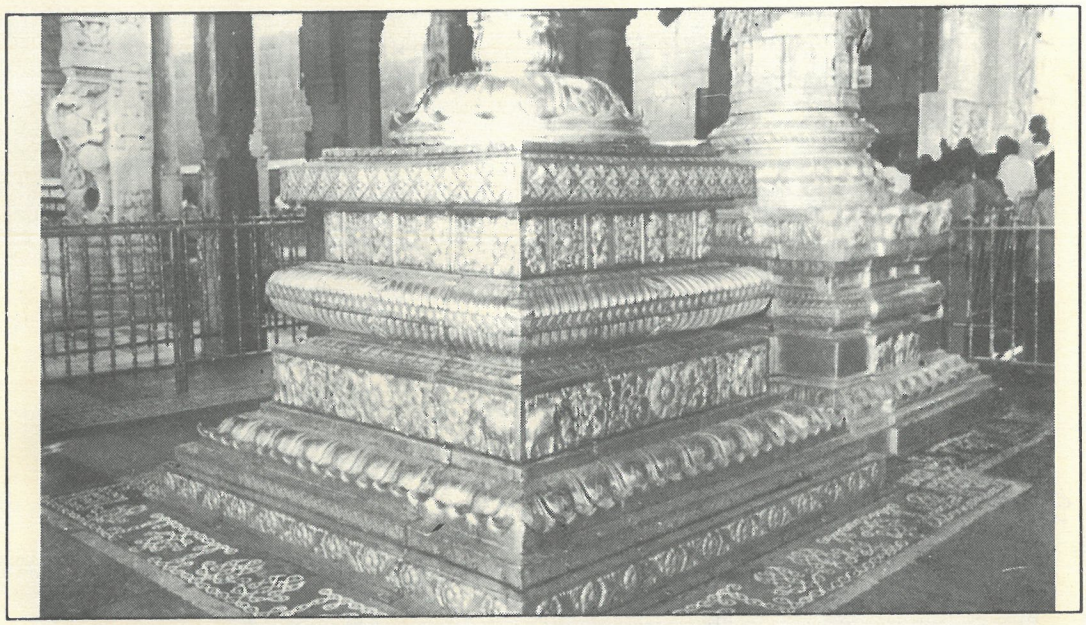
DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MANTAPA (during the repairs of 1982)



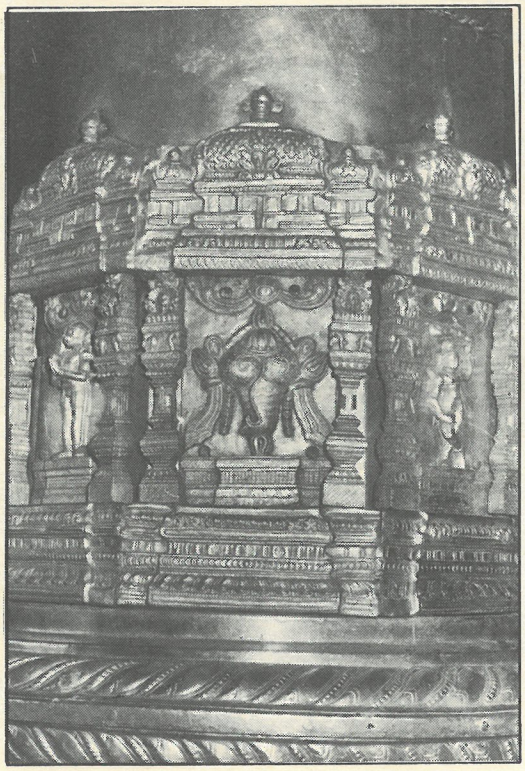
Dhvaja-stambha-Mantapa (The new wooden flagpole being installed in 1982)



Dhvaja-stambha-Mantapa (Old Bali-pitham, which was removed during the renovations of 1982)



DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MANṬAPA (Bali-pitham and adhishṭhana of Dhvaja-stambha, with gilt coverings)



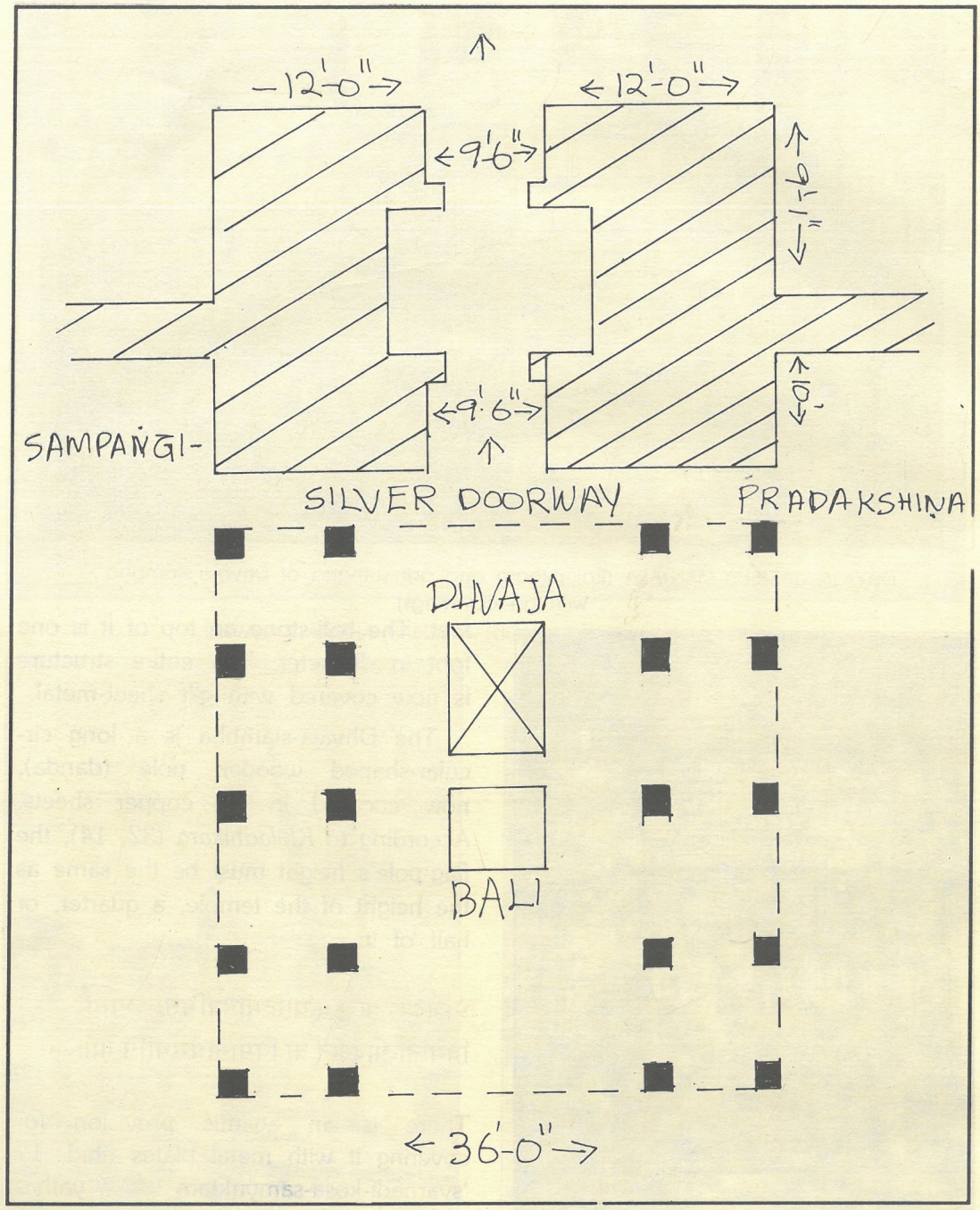
On Dhvaja-stambha

feet. The bali-stone on top of it is one foot in diameter. The entire structure is now covered with gilt sheet-metal.

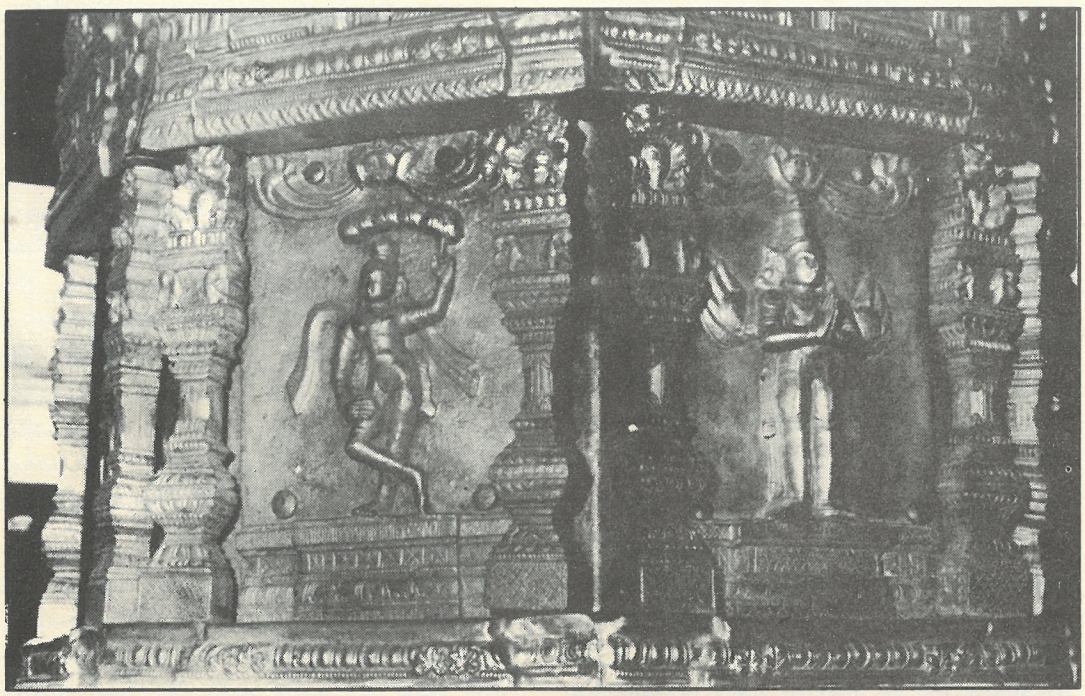
The Dhvaja-stambha is a long circular-shaped wooden pole (daṇḍa), now encased in gilt copper sheets. According to *Khilādhikāra* (32, 14), the flag-pole's height must be the same as the height of the temple, a quarter, or half of it:

ध्वजदण्डं ऋजुं कुर्याद्विमानप्रमितोच्छ्रयम्।
विमानात्पादहीनं वा विमानार्धमथापि वा॥

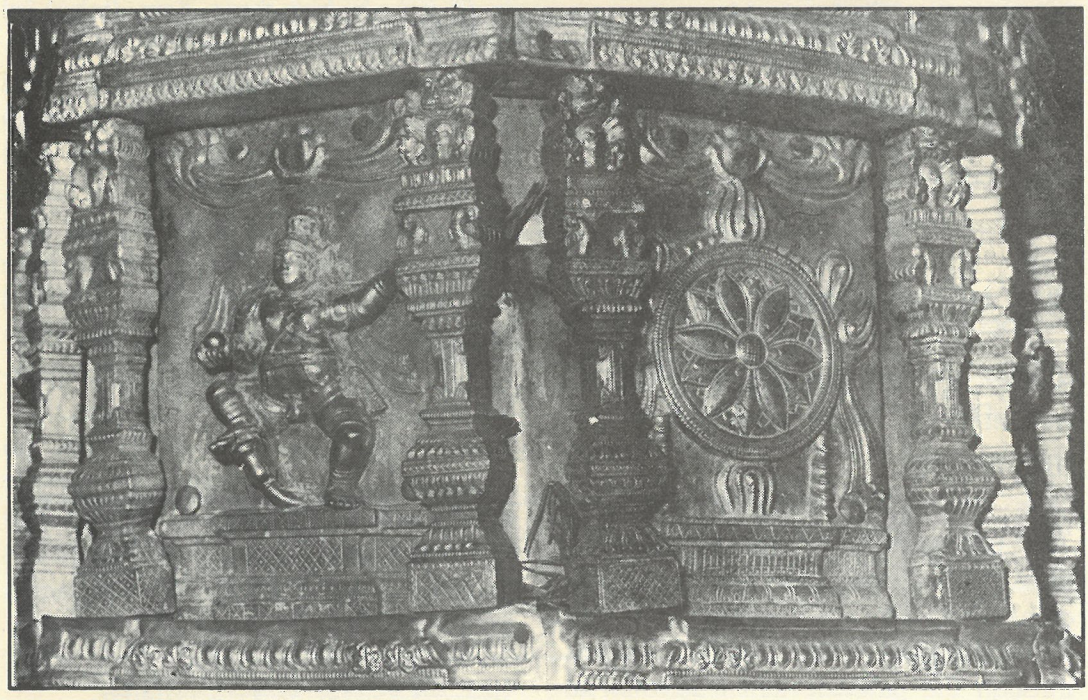
There is an āgamic provision for covering it with metal plates (ibid, 17 'svarṇādi-kośa-samyuktam yathā-vibava-vistaram'). The supposition is that the bottom portion of the pole represents Brahmā, the middle portion



DHVAJA-STAMBHA-MANTAPA



On Dhvaja-stambha



On Dhvaja-stambha

ne portion Vishṇú (ibid. 'Śiva dhyānta bhāgeshu brahmeśa-ivatam')

base is cut-stone, cubical in also covered by gilt plates. The le and the altar together e 15 feet east to west.

he space between the Bali-pīṭha e Dhvaja-stambha are kept five altar-stones; it is on these that li (food offerings for the atten-ivinities) is actually placed.

pavilion that contains the flag-nd the altar is a structure 36 quare, and it stands on twenty pillars, on which are carved erotic figures and also some tions of Vishṇu (like Narasimha, and Kṛishṇa). There is also to n the Pāṇḍya emblem of a pair (matsya-yugma).

flag-pole and the altar were d during the renovations that arried out in 1982.

NNER ENTRANCE

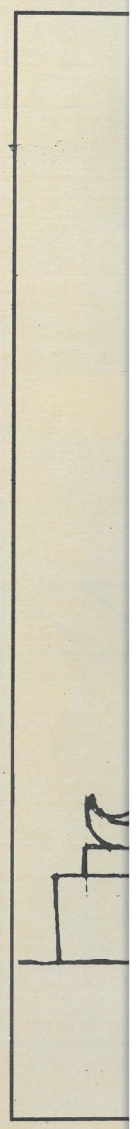
: पुनर्गत्वा प्रत्यग्द्वारं च चाम्पकम्।
लेस्ततः पश्यन् प्रासादान्पर-
न् ॥६८॥

lgrim now returns to the Bali-rom where he began his cir-bulation along the ṅgi-pradakshiṇa. He enters the gateway that leads him to -pradakshiṇa. The towered gateway is known as Naḍimi-paḍi-kāvali, or middle main entrance. The temple has only two towered gateways (dvāra-gopuras); the outer entrance which admits the pilgrim into the temple -complex (Paḍi-kāvali or Mahā-dvāra) pierced through the outermost enclosure, and the inner entrance, the wooden doors of which are covered by silver plates (hence known as Veṇḍi-Vākili). The distance between the two gateways is about 120 feet, covering an open courtyard. The inner gateway is reached only through the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa.

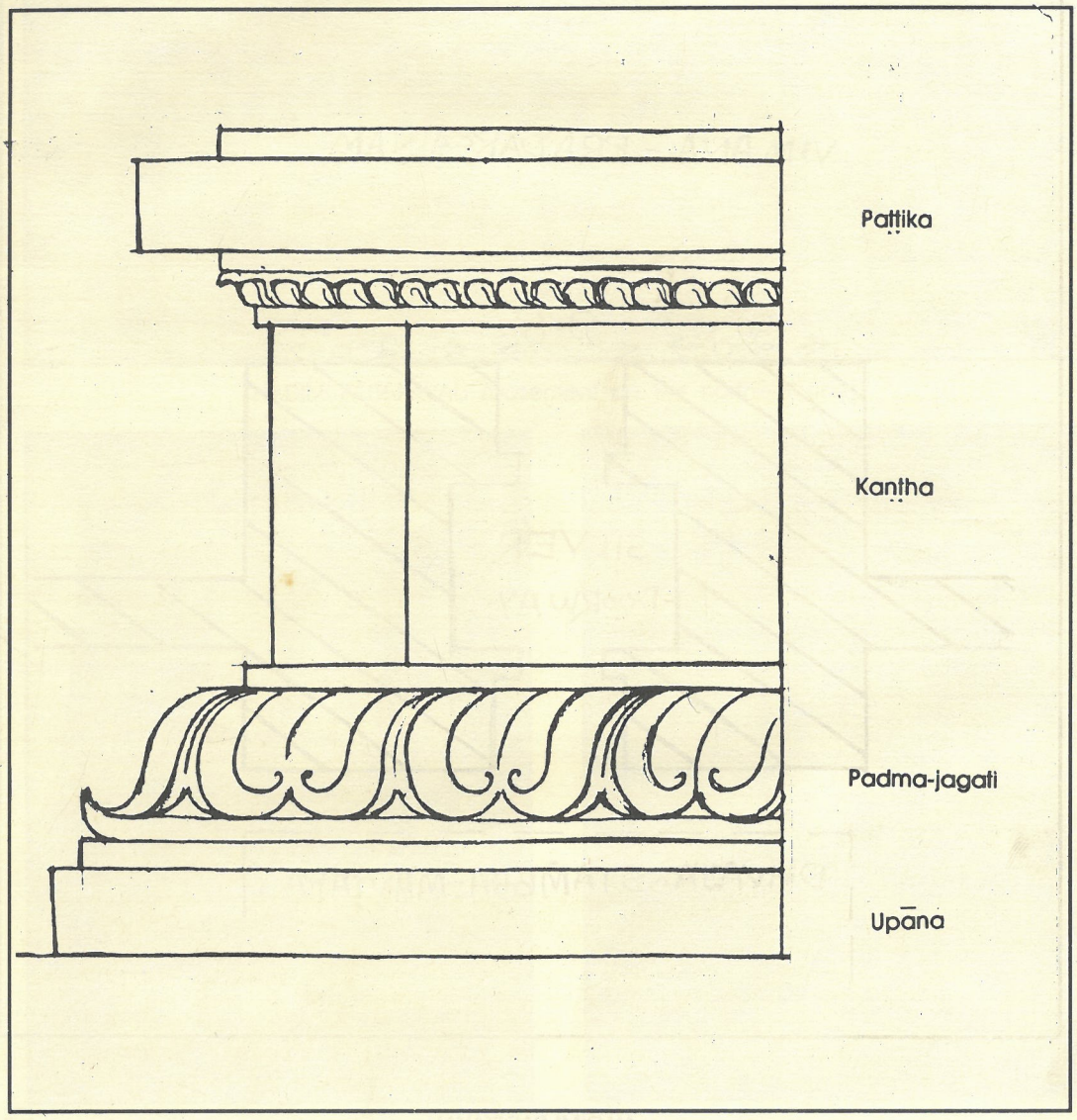
The two gopuras are similar in design, but the inner one is smaller, its height being nine feet and base 24 feet east to west and 36 feet south to north; and the width of the gateway is 9' 6". It has three tiers (talas) of plaster work, surmounted by ornamental vases. The enclosure walls that emanate from the sides of this gateway measure on the outside 235 feet east to west and 160 feet south to north. The walls are faced with dressed cut-stones, about three feet thick. There are numerous inscriptions to be found here, the earliest relating to the Pāndyan monarch, Jaṭā-varma Sundara-pāṇḍya, who began his rule in 1251 A.D. This enclosure, thus, was in existence long before the outer enclosure took shape. This gopura like the outer one, was renovated between 1472 and 1482 (cf II 79) and again in 1950 - 53.

पायसान्नैर्गुडान्नैश्च शुध्दैरोदनराशिभिः

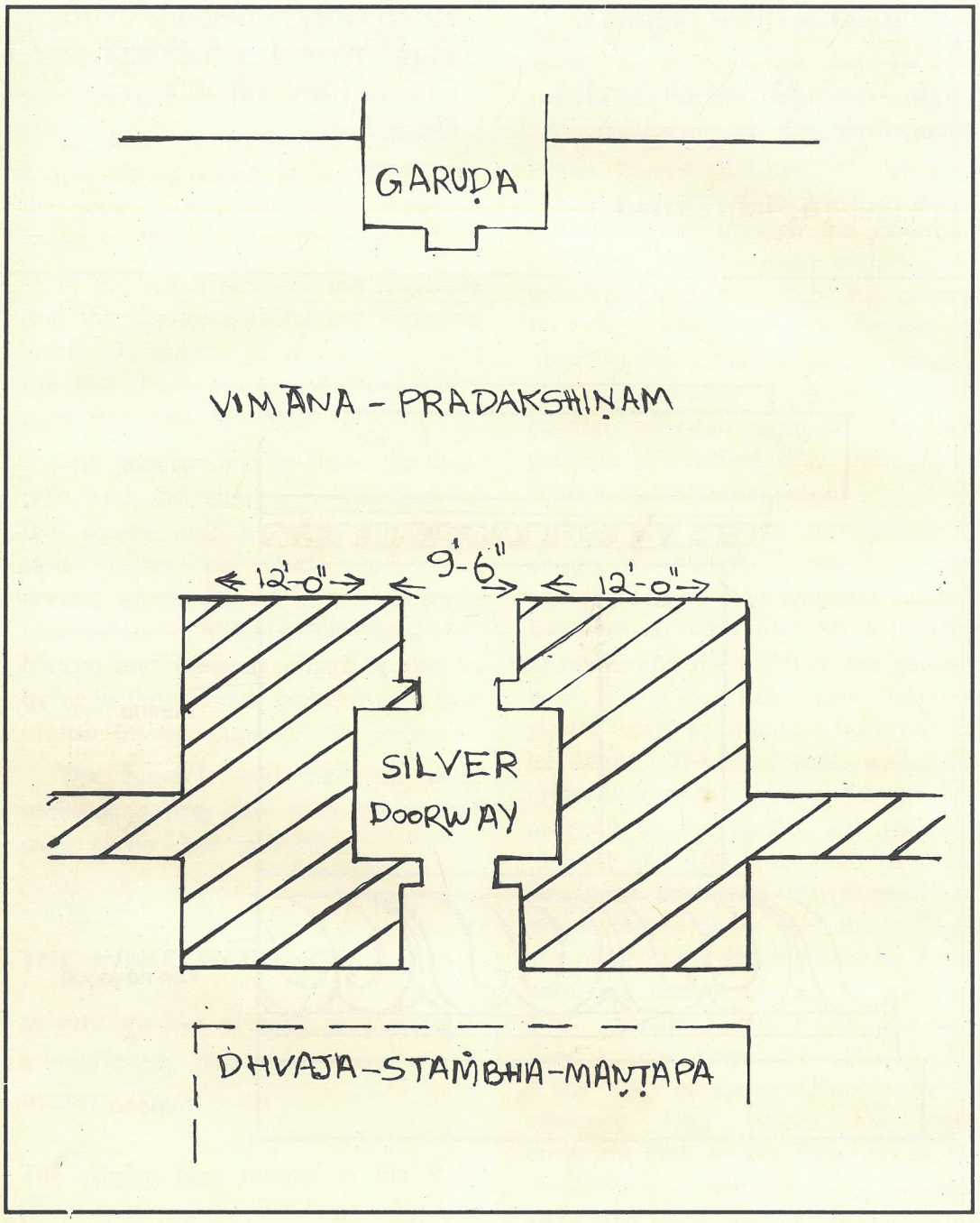
दधिक्षीरा
॥६९॥
अपूपैः स्व
सुगन्धैर्गौद्
॥७०॥
पृथुकैर्गुडस



दधिक्षीराज्यसम्पन्नैर्मृष्टान्नै र्विविधोदनै: ॥६९॥
अपूपै: स्वादुभिर्हृद्यै: शालिपिष्टोपपादितै:।
सुगन्धैर्गौघृतै: पक्वै: प्रभूतगुडसंमितै: ॥७०॥
पृथुकैर्गुडसम्मिश्रै: सजीरकमरीचकै:।
कन्दमूलफलैश्चैव व्यञ्जनैर्विविधैरपि॥७१॥
सम्पूर्णां पाकशालां च संप्रविश्याथ सन्नत:।
श्रियं तत्र स्थितां देवीं श्रीनिवासमन:-
प्रियाम् ॥७२॥
प्रणमेयम्.....।



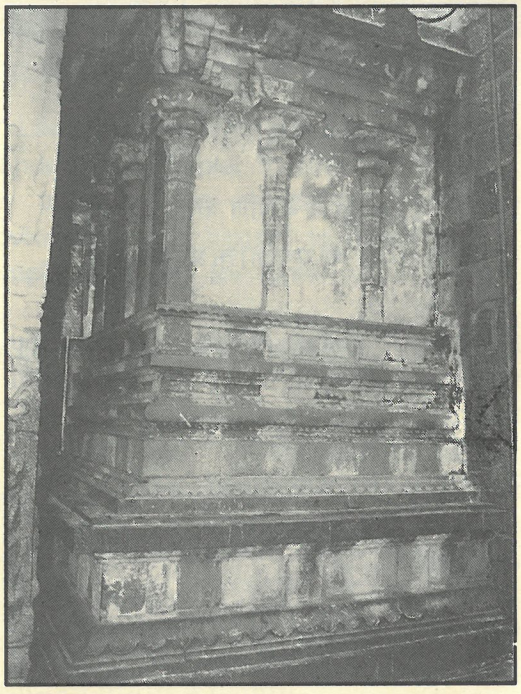
Upa-pīṭha of the Naḍimi-paḍi-kāvali (Inner Entrance)



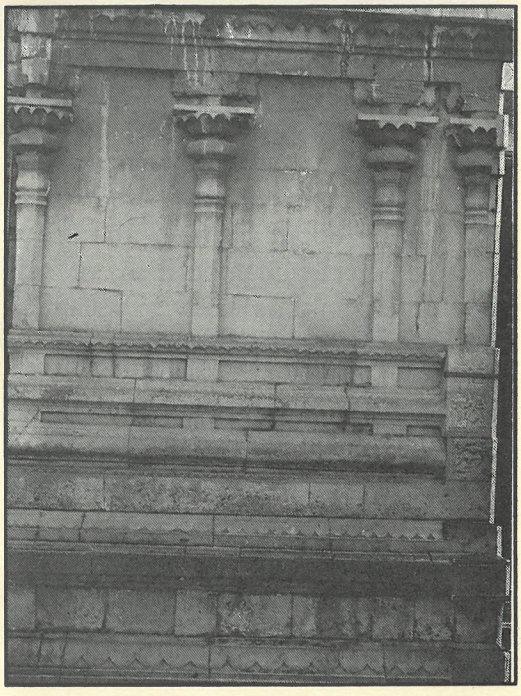
NAḌIMI-PAḌIKĀVALI



NAḌIMI-PAḌI-KĀVALI (basement on the northern side)



NAḌIMI-PAḌI-KĀVALI (Wall on the western side)



NAḌIMI-PAḌI-KĀVALI (Outside the prākāra wall on the northern side)

VIMĀNA-PRADAKSHIṆA

The pilgrim who passes through the inner gopuram steps into the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, which is the circumambulatory pathway round the central shrine in the direct sight of the gilt dome over the sanctum (called Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna). The use of this name for the enclosure appears to have begun in 1190 A.D. Besides the open ground for devotees to go round, there are also many apartments which are significant in the history and administration of the temple. Our text deals with only a few of them; it will, therefore, be desirable to give a complete picture of the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa as it obtains now.

As soon as we enter the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, we see the back of the Garuḍāḷvār-sannidhi which blocks the main entrance to the open pavilion known as Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa. The pavilion is removed from the Inner Gateway by about 30 feet. The space available for circumambulation, or rolling around on ones body in fulfilment of a vow called aṅga-pradakshiṇa, is 30' 7" wide on the right side of the main shrine, till we reach the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa (which intrudes into the passage by about 15'), 15 feet at the back of the shrine, and 21 feet on the left side. The Pradakshiṇa is rectangular in shape, with 235 feet long (east to west) and 160 feet wide (north to south).

The expression 'vimāna' signifies in the Āgama texts the main shrine itself or the dome (or tower) raised over the sanctum Maya-mata(22,8), *Kāmikāgama* (50, 91-93), *Agni-purāṇa* (104, 14-15), and other texts use the word Vimāna in the former sense, which apears to be the earlier usage. In the Vaikhānasa texts also, vimāna refers to a temple, as for instance, in the well-known work of Marīchi, *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (7th paṭala). Bhṛgu's *Khilādhikāra* deals with the thirty-two kinds of temples under the section 'vimāna-bhedāh' (ch. 6); and uses the expression the vimāna sometimes in the sense of a sanctum, as for instance (2, 77),

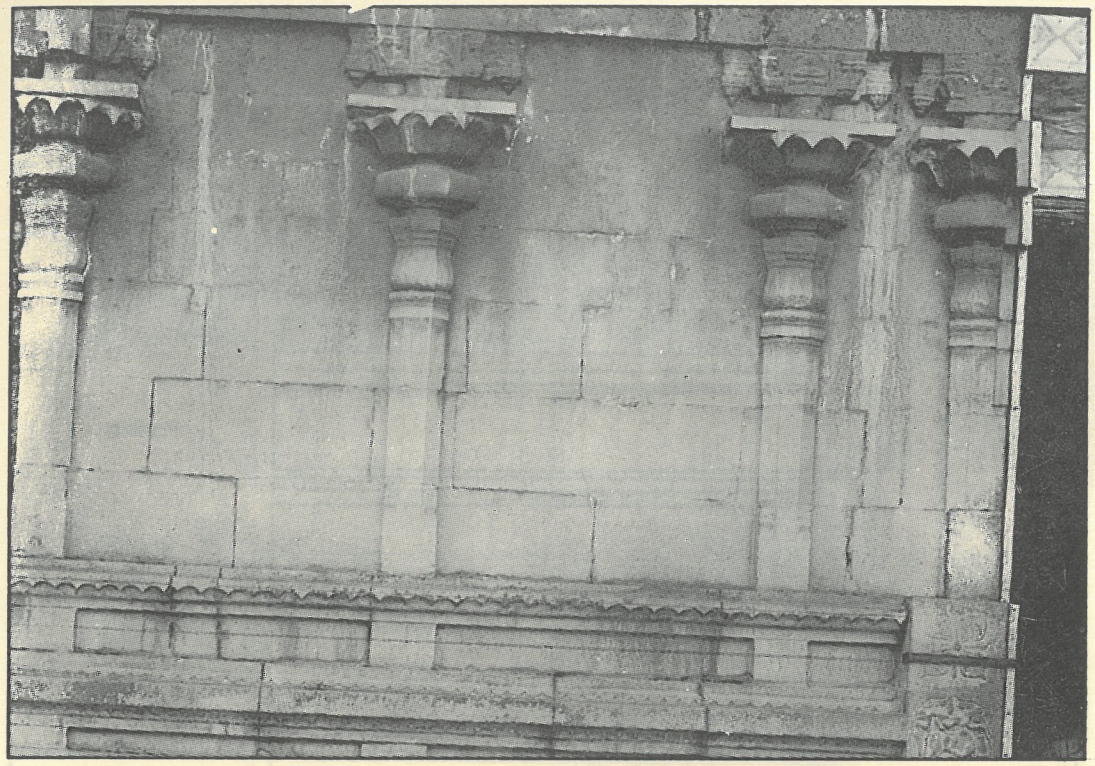
विमानस्यानुरूपं च ध्रुवं निर्णीय पूर्वतः।
ध्रुवानुरूपमानेन कौतुकं कारयेद् बुधः॥

or (20, 3-4),

एकस्मिंस्तु विमाने वै बेराणि त्रीणि कल्पयेत्।
अशक्तो द्वे तथैकं वा यथाशक्ति प्रकल्पयेत्॥

Kāśyapīya Jñāna-kāṇḍa means by vimāna a temple when it deals with the eighteen kinds of vimāna (chap-32, 'ashṭādaśa-vimānāni devadevasya vishṇoh'). In *Yajñādhikāra* (ch. 5, 21) we have the same meaning in another context:

शिलाभेदं प्रवक्ष्यामि विमानार्थं द्विजोत्तमाः।



NAḌIMI-PAḌI-KĀVALI (Wall on the western side)

Likewise, in the purāṇas, vimāna stands for a temple. In *Bhavishyottara*, for instance, the prince Samkha is advised by God himself to construct a temple (vimāna) for him:

विमानं च शिलादारुलोष्टेष्टखचितं कुरु।

(3,47)

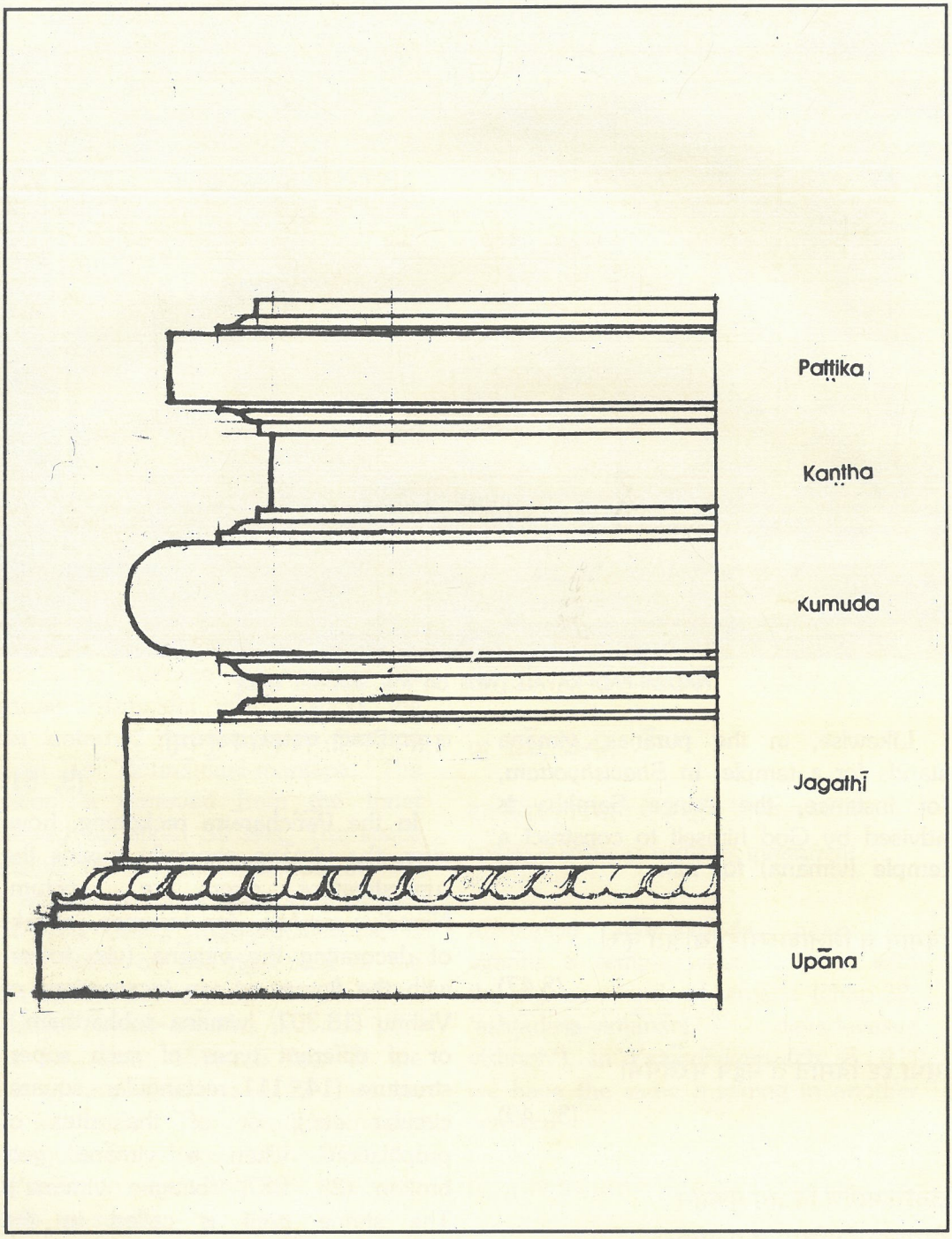
यथा दृष्टं विमानं ते मद्रूपं भरतर्षभ।

(3, 49)

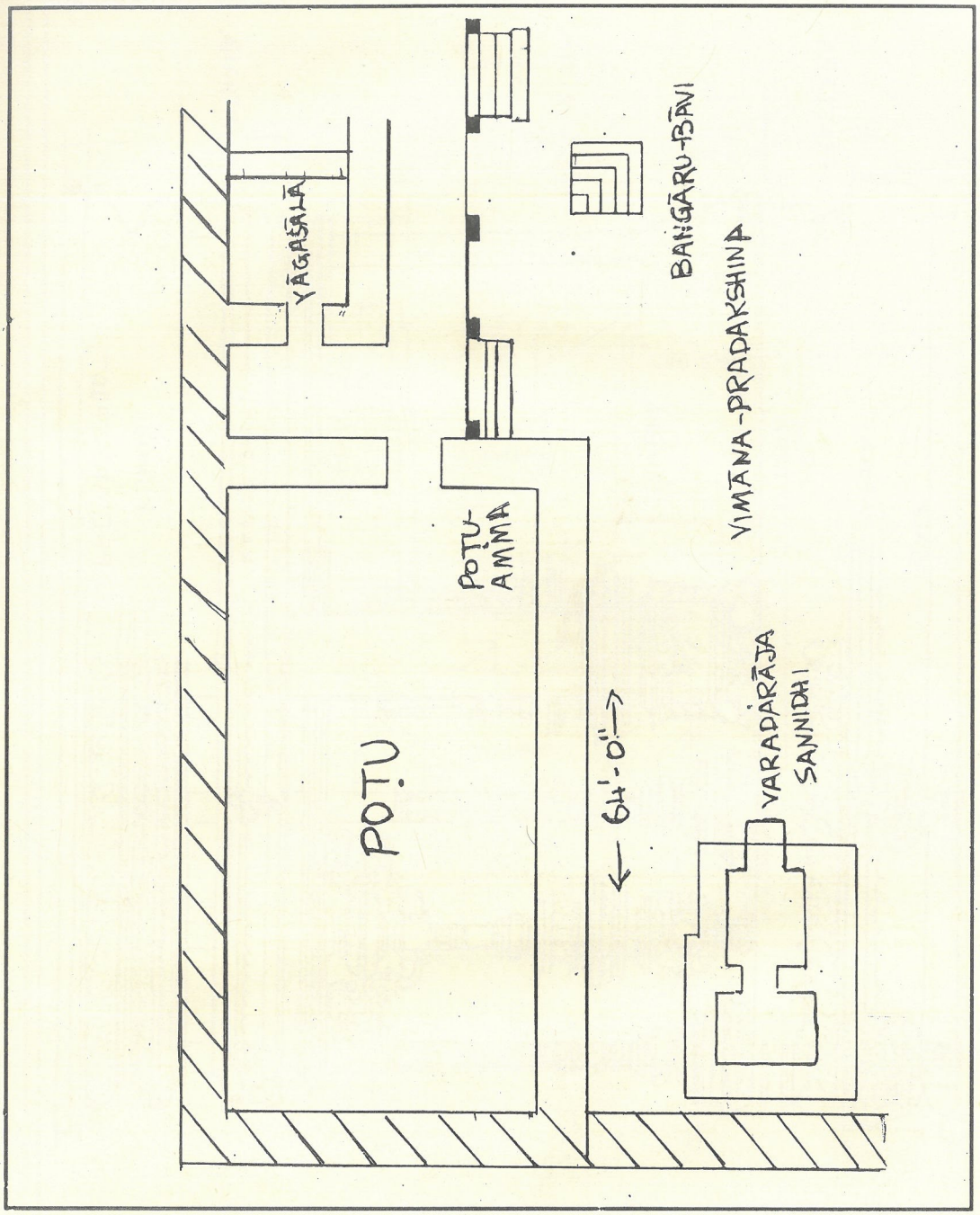
तेनोक्तमार्गेण विधाय पुण्याम्
विमानवर्यं प्रतिमां च पुण्याम्।
प्रख्याप्य शंखो नरलोकसंघे
जगाम विष्णोः पदमव्ययं शुभम्।।

(3, 51)

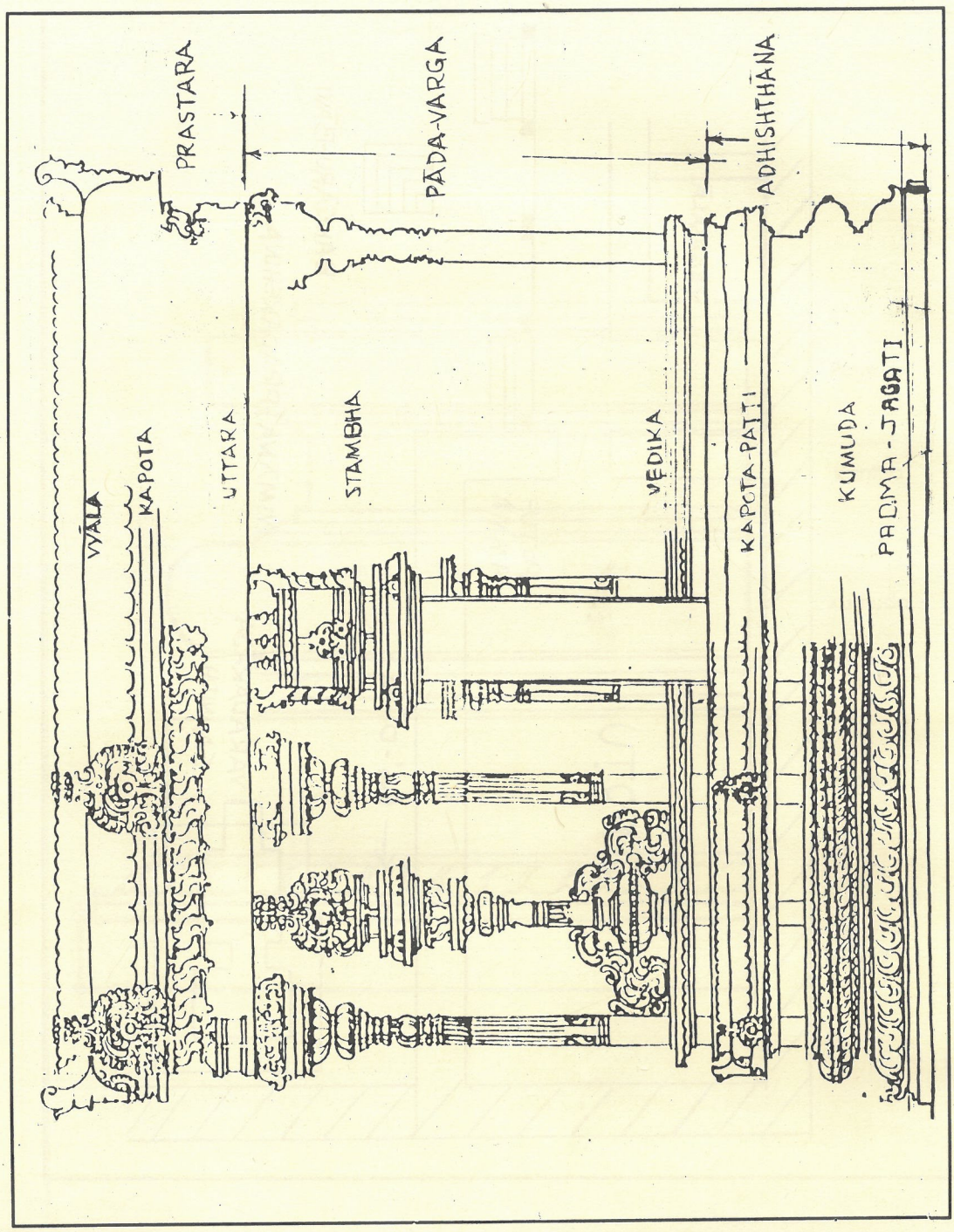
In the Pāñcharātra reckoning, however, the vimāna generally means the superstructure over the sanctum. *Nāradiya-saṁhitā*, for instance, speaks of decorating the vimāna (viz. tower) with the figures of ten incarnations of Vishṇu (13,307, 'vimāna-śobhārtham'), or of different types of such superstructure (14, 111 rectangular, square, circular etc.), or of the rites of propitiations when a vimāna gets broken (25, 287, 'bhagne vimāne'). The shrine itself is called in the Pāñcharātra texts 'ālaya' or 'prāsāda'.



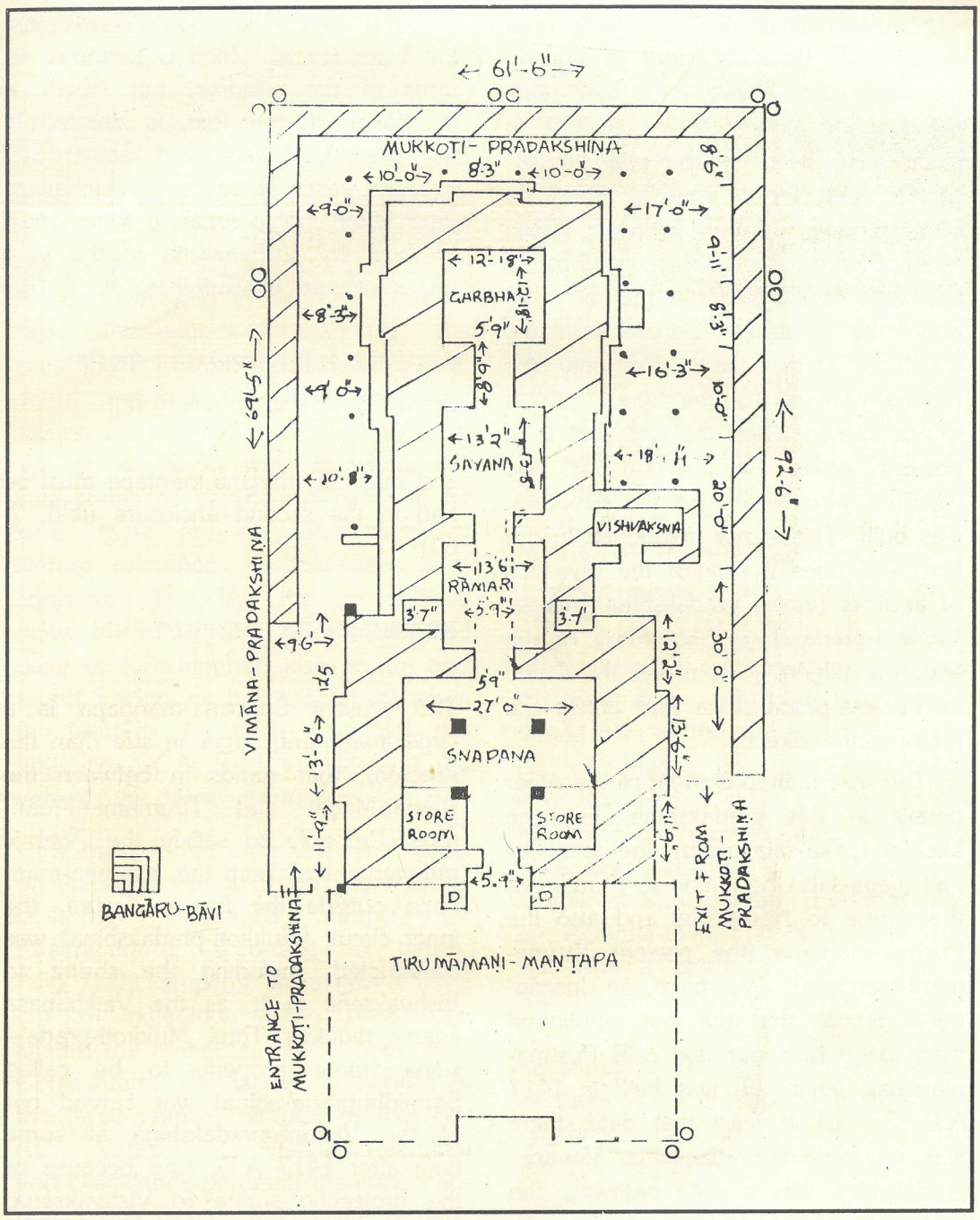
Adhiṣṭhāna of the Naḍimi-paḍikāvali (inner entrance)



Entrance to Vimāna-pradakshiṇa



Outer wall of the sanctum in the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa



Inside Vimāna-pradakshiṇa

Vimāna-pradakshiṇa in a Vaikhānasa shrine (like the hill-shrine) is actually the circumambulatory path that skirts the sanctum along with the pavilion in front of it, which is the main shrine. In this case, this is what is now the covered and narrow pathway called Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa, which goes round the walls of the sanctum (garbha-gṛha) and the present Śayana-maṇṭapa, which in former days was only the mukha-maṇṭapa (or the 'Iḷan-kōyil'). It is not known when the wall that is at present called Vimāna-prākāra, and which is also closed for the devotees, was built. This is not mentioned in our text; nor does it suggest the presence of another (inner) pradakshiṇa, besides Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. According to the text, the pilgrim goes round the shrine in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa and enters the main shrine directly.

The text mentions most of the other details in this pradakshiṇa, like the kitchen (pāka-śāla, pōṭu), the sacrificial hall (yāga-śālā),the shrine to Rāmānuja, the shrine to Narasiṁha and also the Pushpa-maṇṭapa (the present Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa). We have an inscriptional record that the last mentioned maṇṭapa (which our text calls Pushpa-maṇṭapa, verse 79) was built in 1417 A.D. So, till at least that date, there was no Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa; Vimāna-pradakshiṇa was a wide pathway, the inner side of which touched the walls of the sanctum and the present Śayana-maṇṭapa.

The small shrine to Vishvaksena, the existence of which is unknown to most of the pilgrims, but which is mentioned in our text, is situated in the present Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa; and it faces east. There is a Vaikhānasa prescription that a separate shrine must be built for Vishvaksena in the very first enclosure (*Khilādhikāra* 9, 7, 39)

इन्द्रादीनां च सर्वेषां विष्वक्सेनेन चैव हि।
आलयं संप्रकुर्वीत प्रथमावरणे पि हि॥

and that the snapana-maṇṭapa must be had in the second enclosure (ibid, 7, 64)

स्नानालयं प्रकुर्वीत द्वितीयावरणे तथा॥

The present Snapana-maṇḍapa is a large apartment, larger in size than the sanctum, that stands in between the Rāmar-Mēḍai and Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa. Probably to satisfy the Āgamic requirement to keep the snapana-mandapa outside the first enclosure, the inner circuit (Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa) was constructed, including the shrine to Vishvaksena in it, as the Vaikhānasa āgama requires. Thus, Mukkoṭi-pradakshina (more properly to be called Sannidhi-pradakshiṇa) was carved out of the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa at some time after 1417 A.D. And because of the projecting shrine to Vishvaksena, on the northern side of the circuit, the width of Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa on this side is almost double of what it is on the southern side.

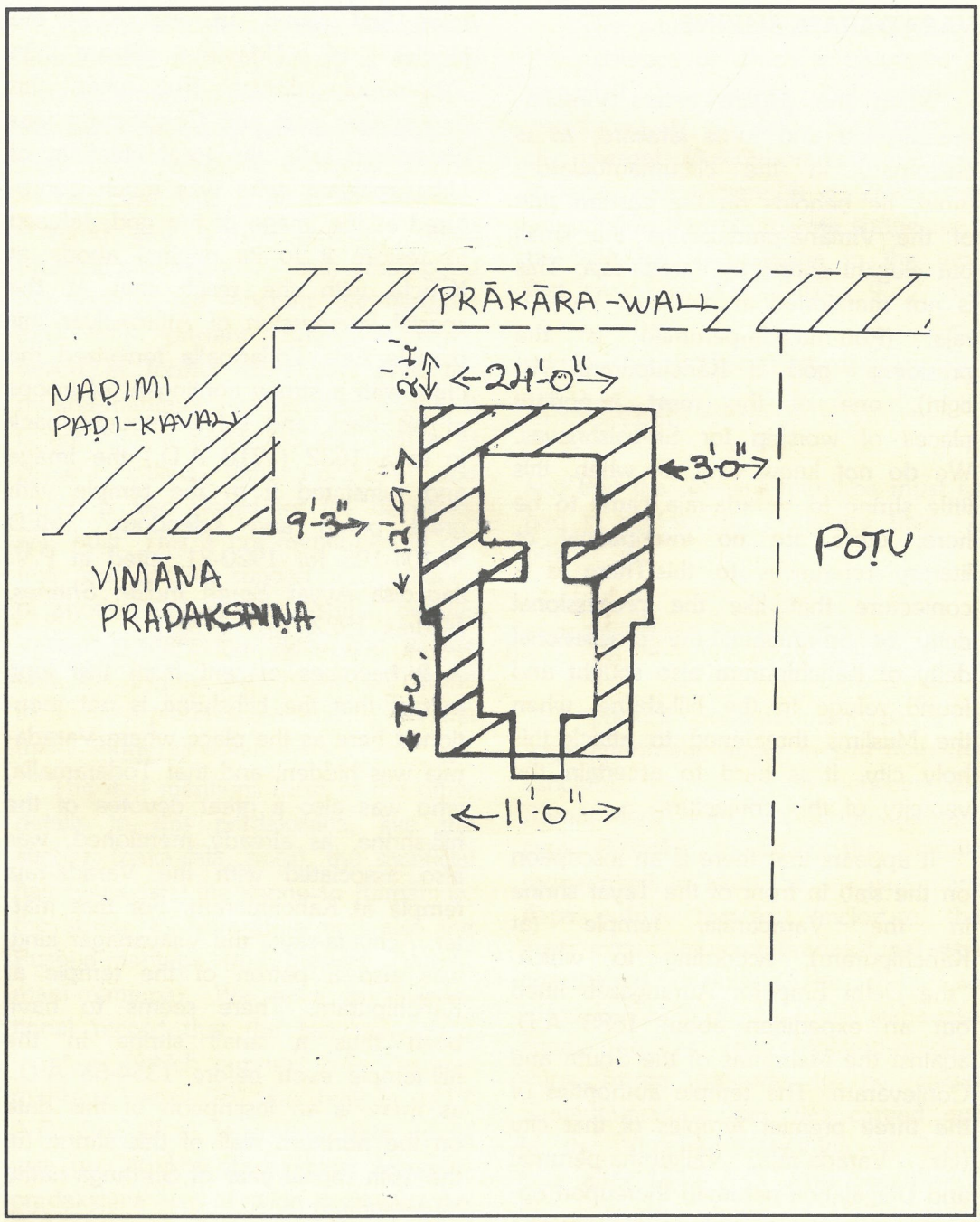
VARADARĀJA-SHRINE

When the pilgrim enters Vimāna-pradakshiṇa and turns leftward, as is customary in the circumambulatory ritual, he beholds on the eastern side of the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa the small but elegant shrine to Varada-rāja. This is not mentioned in our text. Varada-rāja (Pon-mainda-perumāḷ) is the presiding god at Kāñchīpuram (Attigiri), one of the most important places of worship for Śrī-vaishṇavas. We do not know why, or when, this little shrine to Varada-rāja came to be here; there are no inscriptional or literary references to this. There is a conjecture that like the processional deity of Śrī-raṅgam, the processional deity of Kāñchīpuram also sought and found refuge in the hill-shrine, when the Muslims threatened to attack this holy city. It is hard to ascertain the veracity of this conjecture.

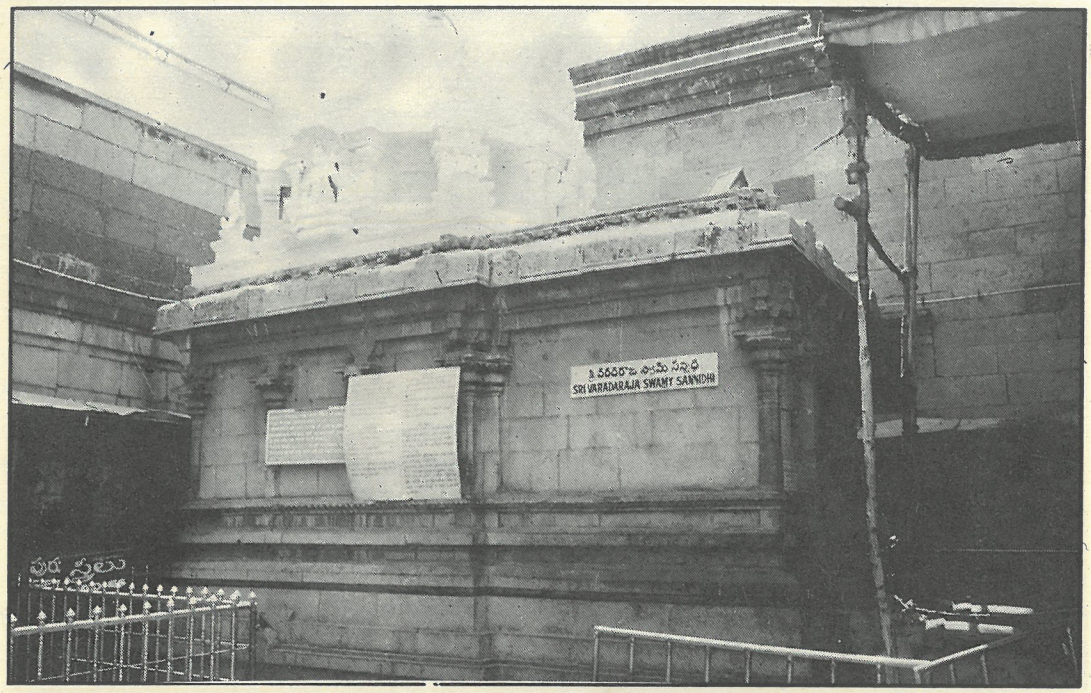
It appears that there is an inscription on the slab in front of the Tāyār shrine in the Varadarāja temple (at Kāñchīpuram), according to which, "the Delhi Emperor Aurangazeb fitted out an expedition about 1688 A.D. against the Mahrāttas of the South and Conjevaram. The temple authorities of the three premier temples of that city (viz., Varada-rāja, Vaikuṇṭha-perumāḷ and Uḷagalaṇḍa-perumāḷ) thereupon apprehending desecration at the profane hands of the invaders, disguised the images of the temple gods as corpses and conveyed them secretly out of the town and found an asylum in the jungles of Uḍayār - pāḷyam in Trichinopoly district. But when the danger was past and Conjevaram was considered safe, the local chieftain of Uḍayārpāḷyam, who was much enraptured at the image of the god, refused to restore it to its original abode at Kāñchi with the result that at the special intereession of Attān-Jīyar, his disciple Lālā-Toḍarmalla terrorized the chief with a strong contingent of troops at his back and safely brought back in saka 1632 (1710 A.D.) the image and reinstated it in the temple with great pomp and splendour" (MED M-104-105 for 1920-21, cited in P.V. Jagadīśa Ayyar *South Indian Shrines*, Madras 1922, pp 77-78)

It becomes evident from this long extract that the hill-shrine is not mentioned here as the place where Varada-rāja was hidden, and that Tōḍaramalla, who was also a great devotee of the hill-shrine, as already mentioned, was also associated with the Varada-rāja temple at Kāñchīpuram. For that matter, Achyuta-rāya, the Vijayanagar king, was also a patron of the temple at Kāñchīpuram. There seems to have been thus a small shrine in the hill-temple even before 1354-55 A.D., as there is an inscription of this date on the northern wall of this shrine (in the 16th regnal year of Śrī-raṅga-nātha Yādava-rāya).

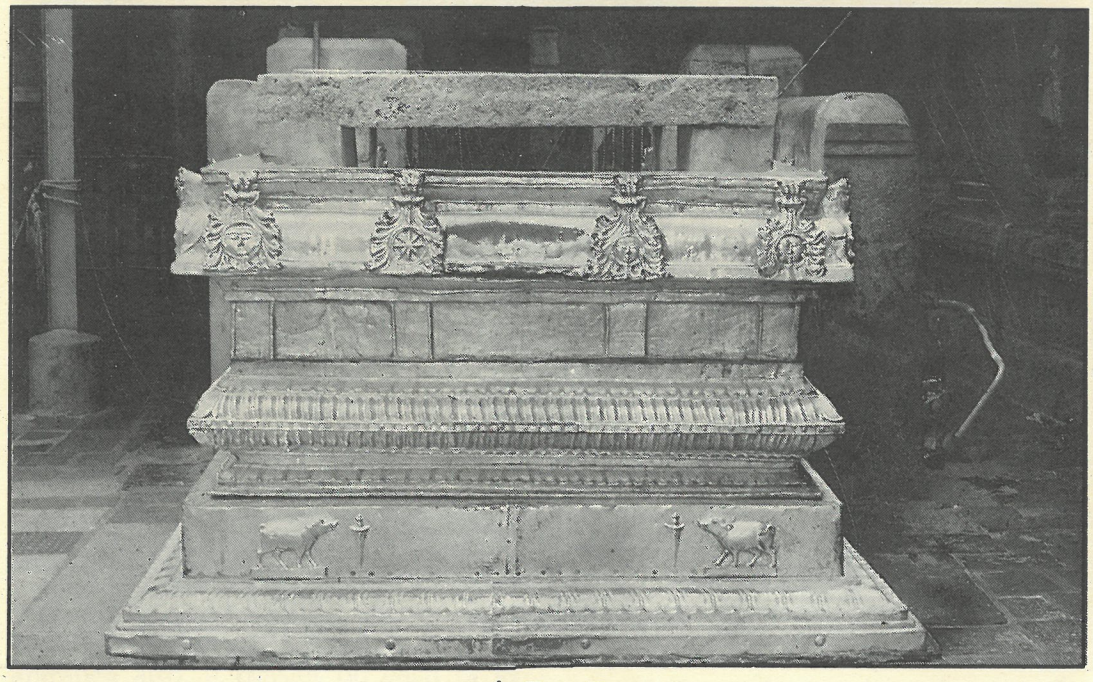
However, that this small shrine was really to Varada-rāja does not become evident by any inscriptional or literary



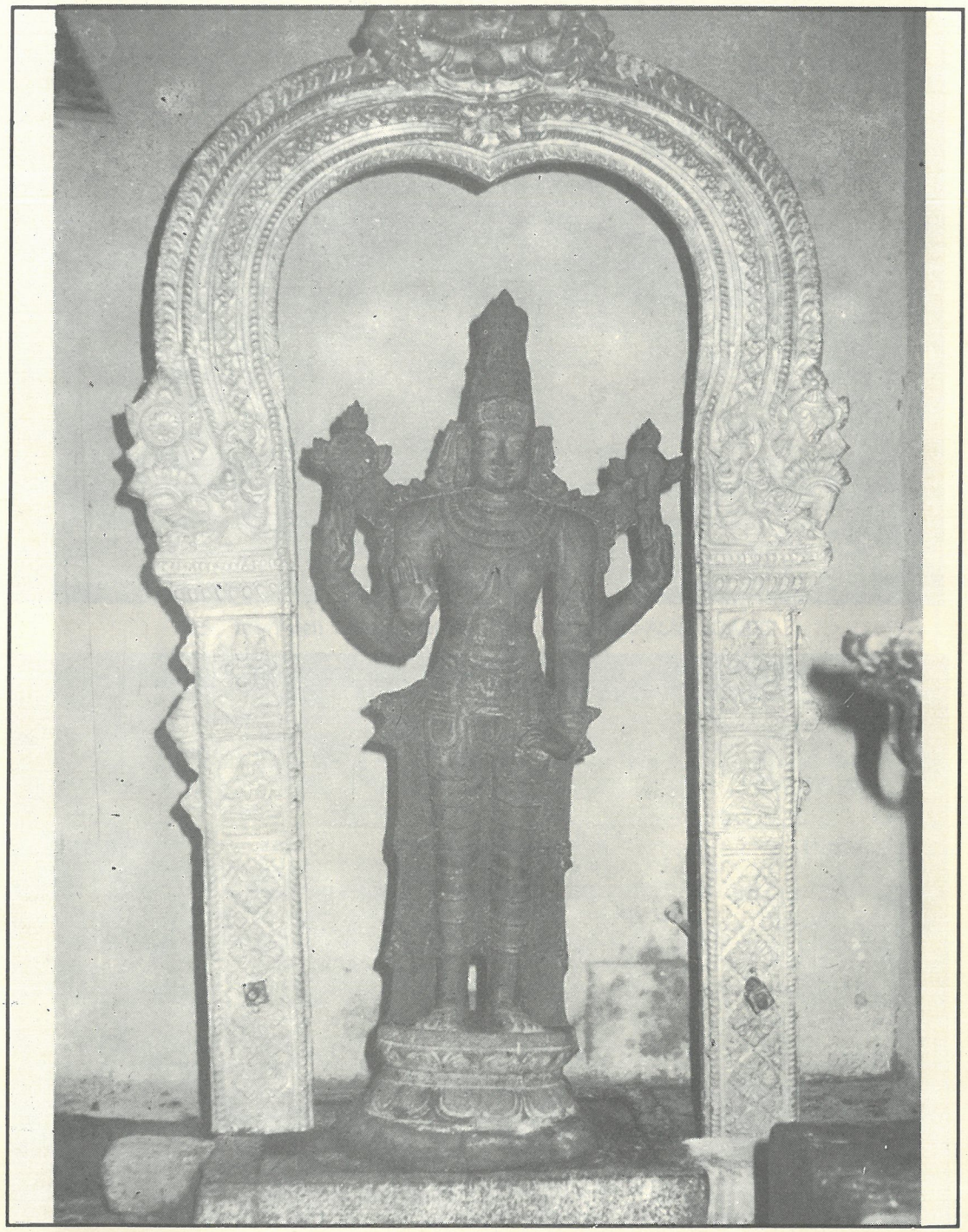
VARADARĀJA-SANNIDHI



VARADA-RĀJA-SHRINE in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa (Northern wall)



BAṄGĀRU-BĀVI
(outside Pōṭu or Kitchen)



VARADA-RĀJA-SVĀMI

reference; there is no festival or endowment specially associated with Varada-rāja here, as there are to Rāmānuja and Narasiṁha also (located in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa). The worship of Varada-rāja, of course, was popular among the Śrī-vaishṇavas of Tiruchānūr, which was once known as Varada-rāja-puram (inscription in vol.V, 66., cf. TKT. Vīrarāghavāvhārya, *History of Tirupati,* vol I. p. 399). There was a well-known Varada-rāja temple here, which appears in an inscription of 1541 A.D. (IV, No. 157). There is also the Maiñji-Varada-rāja-svāmi temple in Tirupati, probably of the same period. All that could be said is that this small shrine on the hill was there much earlier than Varada-rāja came to be installed in it. When precisely this shrine was built, and for what deity, are hard to tell.

In any case, this is an independent shrine (the only one of that kind here in the hill-temple) to the left of the Inner Gateway, removed from it by 9' 3", and close to the eastern prākāra-wall of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa (at a distance of 2' 4" from it). The shrine faces west, and consists of a sanctum (garbha-gṛha) and a porch (antarāla). Standing on a high plinth (adhishṭhāna), it is surmounted by a dome (vimāna) of the Vesara variety. The walls of the sanctum are decorated with four pilasters, projecting wall-columns(kuḍya-staṁbha), and, at the entrance also, a pilaster on each of its sides. The architectural details of the pilaster include a cornice (kapota), a niche (nāsikā) and siṁha-lalāṭa. This is an exquisite structure, like a jewel-box in stone, an unusual specimen in this complex.

THE KITCHEN AND LAKSHMI SHRINE

To the south of the so-called Varada-rāja shrine, three feet away is the main kitchen of the temple (svayam-pākaśālā, mēl-pōṭu), where the food-offerings for the hill-god are prepared. It is a rectangular sturcture, 64 feet long (east to west) and 30 feet wide (south to north), with its entrance to the west. The right wall of this apartment is also the southern prākāra-wall of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. It stands on a high basement (2 feet and a half in height). One has to turn left during his circumambulation, climb a few steps, and turn again to the left to enter into the kitchen.

As soon as he enters the kitchen, he finds to his left a small shrine to Lakshmī, who is called here Pōṭu-amma ('the lady of the kitchen') or Maḍapuḷi-nāchchiyār. She is identifed with Vakuḷa-mālikā, who was, according to the Purāṇic accounts, sent by Varāha-svāmi to be the house-keeper to Śrī-nivāsa when he resided on the hill; it was she who prepared food for him, mainly śyāmāka-rice with honey, nursed him when sick and generally took care of him. We read in

Bhavishyottara (5, 31-34)

तदारभ्य धराकान्तो वकुलां पाककारिणीम्।
अर्पयामास देवस्य सेवार्थं वेंकटेशितुः॥
भोजनार्थं रमेशस्य श्यामाकान्नं निरन्तरम्।
समधु प्रेषयन्नित्यं तथा वकुलमालया॥
सा बाला भक्तिनिरता श्रीनिवासस्य सन्निधौ।
पूजयामास गोविन्दं श्रीनिवासं निरामयम्॥

It was this Vakuḷa-mālikā, who is said to have arranged the marriage of the hill-god with Padmāvatī. And the purāṇic account identifies this Vakuḷa-mālikā with the wife of Nanda-rāja and foster-mother of Kṛishṇa, Yaśodā, who desired very much to witness the marriage of Kṛishṇa. Kṛishṇa had promised her that this desire would be fulfilled when she took birth as Vakuḷa-mālikā (ibid., 37-39)

पुरा यशोदा वकुला कृष्णस्य जननी ह्यभूत्।
अदृष्टानन्तरूपस्य कृष्णस्य तनयस्य सा॥
कल्याणं सुखदं स्वस्य तदयाचत तं हरिम्।
मनः सीदति मे कृष्ण तव कल्याणवीक्षणे॥
जन्मन्यन्तरे देवि तावकीनं मनोरथम्।
श्रीशैले पूरयिष्यामि किञ्चित्कालादनन्तरम्॥

The tradition in the hill-temple, however, is that she presides over the kitchen, with a watchful eye that every article of food is prepared according to custom. But, in actuality, she is regarded as Lakshmī, and worshipped as such. During Vara-lakshmī-vratam in the month of Śrāvaṇa, it is this deity that is by custom worshipped by abhisheka and alaṅkāra. The *Diṭṭam* of the temple has prescribed the exact procedure of how this worship is to be conducted. The identification of this goddess with Vakuḷa-mālikā and Yaśodā is obviously a fabric woven after the purāṇic accounts and the *Vēnkaṭāchala-māhātmyam* were composed around the fourteenth century.

According to Vaikhānasāgama, the hill-shrine is an eka-berālaya, that is to say, a shrine where only one god in the entire sanctuary receives all the worship. The form of Vishṇu that is represented here belongs to he 'Vīra-sthanāka' variety. In this variety, the god is represented alone in the sanctum, without the goddesses (Lakshmī and Bhūdevi) ('devībhyām rahitam'), and not carrying discus and conch in his upper hands ('śaṁkha-chakrābhyām rahitam vīra-sthānakam iti', *Kāśyapīya Jñāna-kāṇḍa,* paṭala 53). The discus and conch that are now seen in the hands of the hill-god are only gilt copper coverings. Thus, strictly according to the Āgama, a separate shrine to Lakshmī is not indicated here. Lakshmī is worshipped only as the Śrī-vatsa on the right chest of the hill-god.

However, *Khilādhikāra* recognizes the needs of the common folk, and provides a separate shrine for the goddess of prosperity within the temple-complex; but independent worship cannot be offered to her. This is

what we read in this text (41, 2-4):

पुंसां यथोत्तमो विष्णु: स्त्रीणां श्रीरुत्तमा तथा।
स्त्रीभि: पूज्या तत: श्रीर्हि कांक्षन्तीभि: सुखं परम्॥
साधारणौ दम्पती तौ सदा स्त्रीपुंसयोर्द्वयो:।
तस्माच्छ्रियं विष्णुपत्नीं भूतिकाम: समर्चयेत्॥
देव्यै श्रियै तत: कुर्यादालयं पृथगिच्छता।
अर्चयेदिष्टमाप्नोति इह लोके परत्र च॥

Even as Vishṇu is supreme among men (the Purusha), Lakshmī is supreme among women (the Prakṛti). The two constitute a pair. One who desires wordly prosperity could, if he so wishes, worship the consort of Vishṇu, and may, if he so desires, make a separate shrine for her.

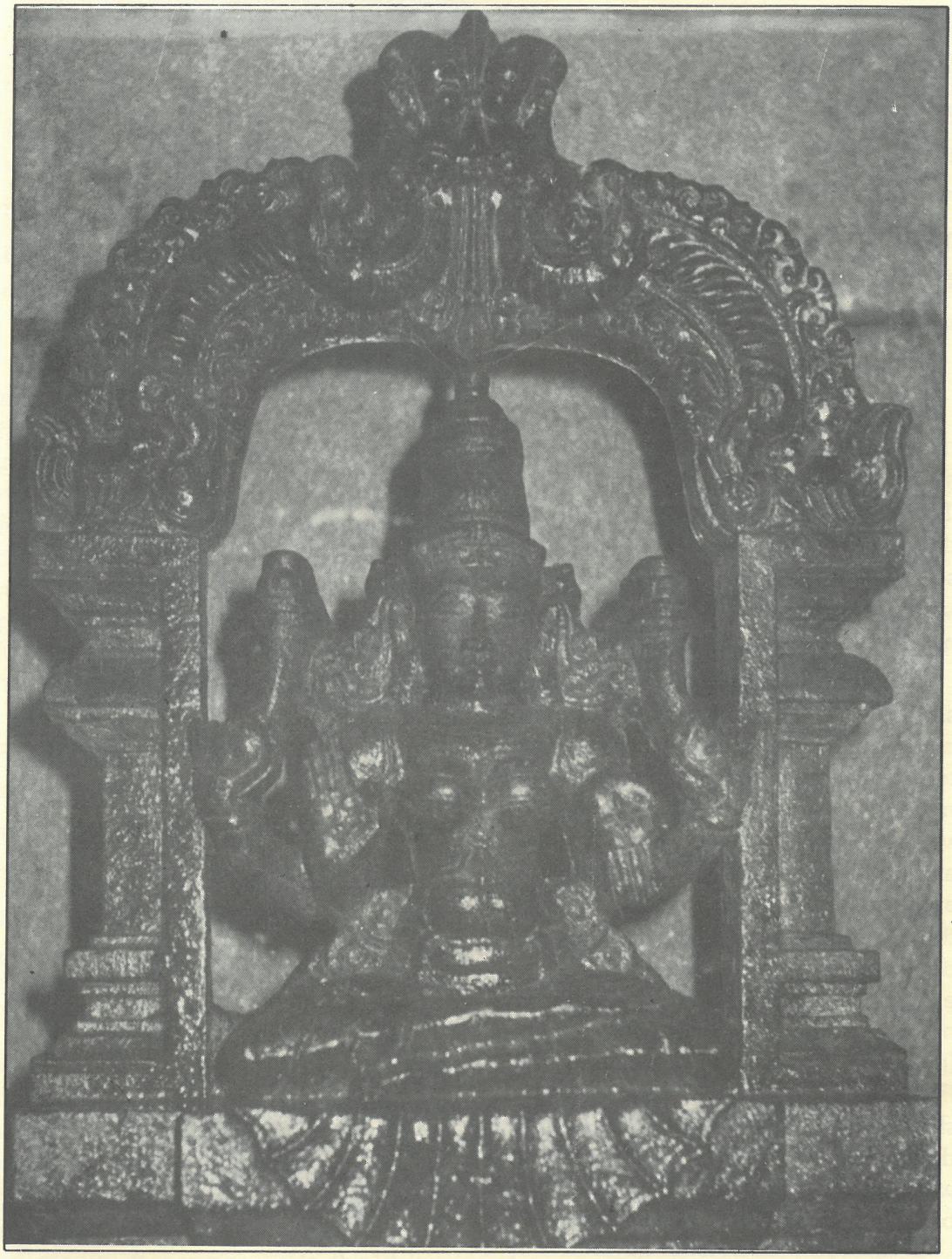
In the hill-temple complex, some shrines have no doubt been accomodated in course of time, and due to several reasons; a shrine to Yogā-narasiṁha, a shrine now known as Varada-rāja's, a shrine to Garuḍālvār, another to Vishvaksena, and yet another to Rāmānuja. But in none of these shrines is independent worhship done; nor are they treated as 'dependent' shrines ('āśritālaya' in the language of the Āgama), constituting 'limbs' (aṅga) of a whole. It is usual for the Pāñcharātra temples to have separate shrines for Lakshmī (svatantra-lakshmī) designated by names in accordance with the form of the god or the place of origin. They are known as Tāyār-



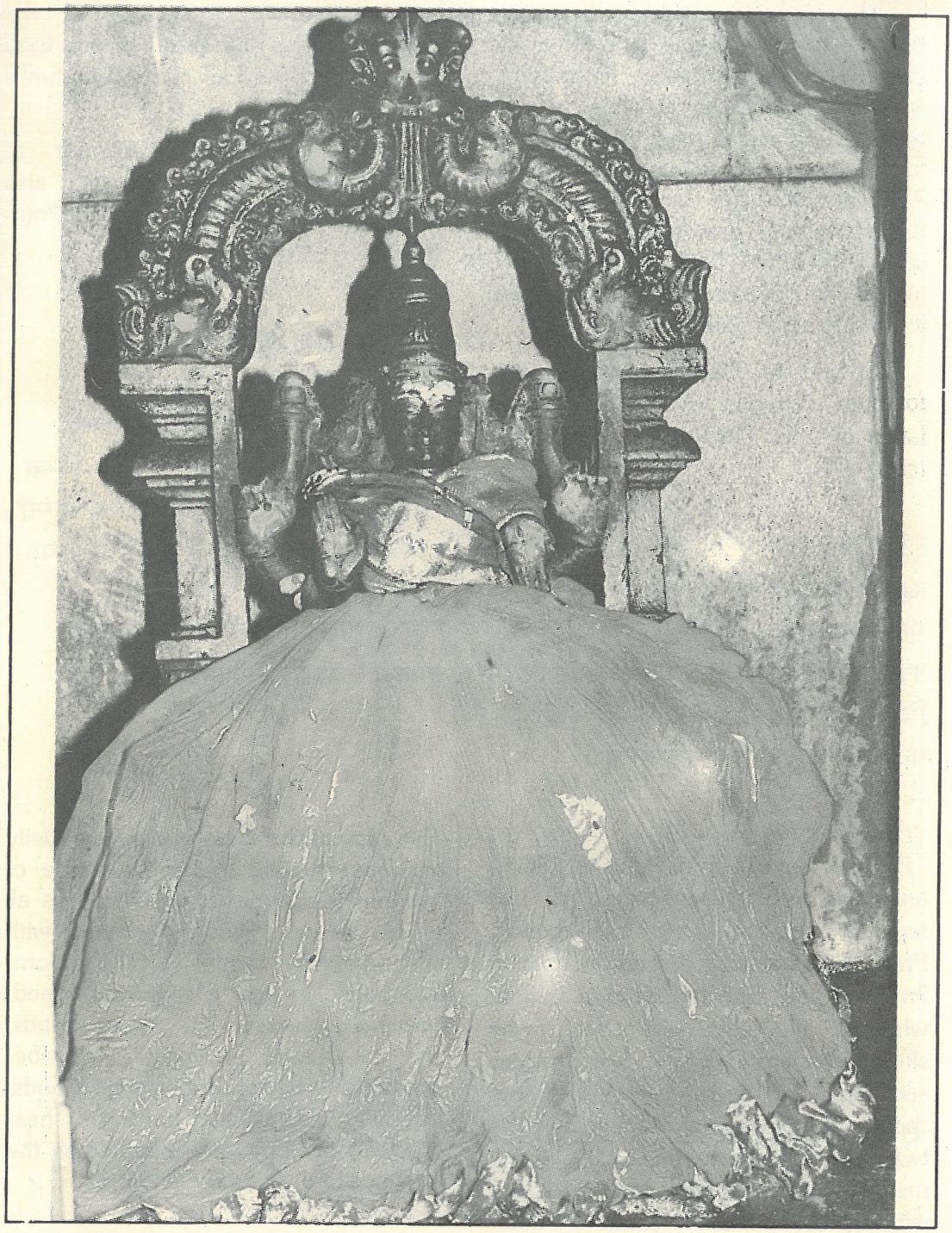
Padi-Potu-Amma

sannidhi (like the Amman-shrines of the Śaiva-temples).

Our work (verse 63), the author of which is a staunch adherent of the Pāñcharātra system, speaks of a shrine to 'Venkaṭa-nāyakī' in the hill-shrine (reminding one of Raṅga-nāyakī of Śrī-raṅgam and Tañjai-nāyaki of the Narasiṁha temple in Tañjore known to Śri-vaishṇavas as Tañjai-māmaṇik-kōil). Was there an independent 'Tāyār-sannidhi' here, under the Pāñcharātra influence? If there was one, it has disappeared, leaving no traces or clues, like the champaka tree itself by the side of which this shrine is claimed to have existed (verses 63-64).



PŌṬU-TĀYĀRU (Lakshmī in the Kitchen)



PŌṬU-TĀYĀRU (Lakshmī in the Kitchen)

The only spot which could possibly be spoken of as Tāyār-sannidhi is the place in the kitchen where Pōṭu-amma is present. But the worship here is restricted to cooks and others related to work in the kitchen (gammekārs). A pilgrim now does not normally visit this spot; very few indeed are aware of its existence. There is a similar icon, also called Pōṭu-amma in the Paḍi-pōṭu in Sampangi-pradakshiṇa.

We find the Vaikhānasa justification for the worship of Pōtu-amma as Lakshmī in *Kāśyapīya-Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap. 38).

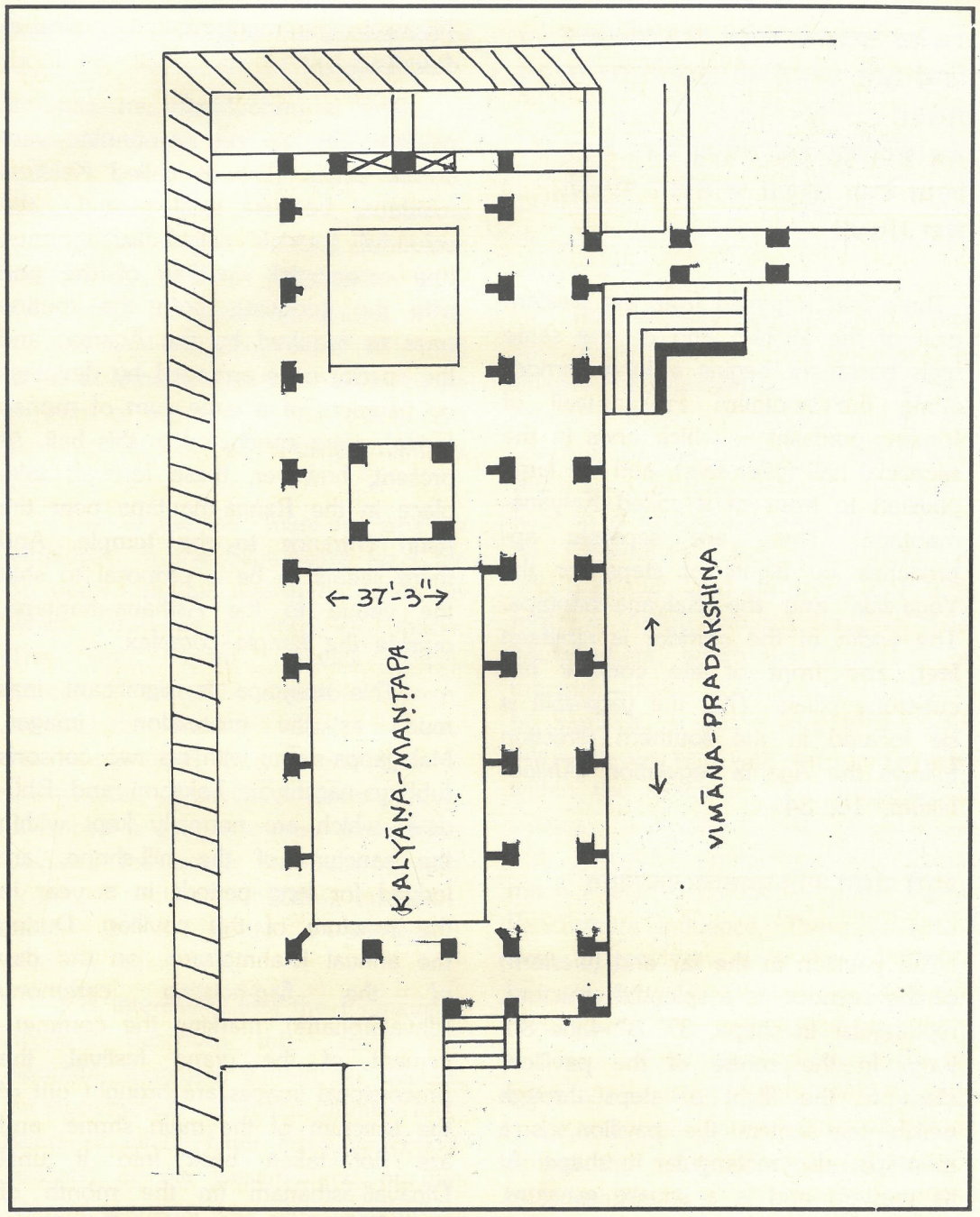
प्रकृतिपुरुषावुभावनादी। ताभ्यां लोकप्रवर्तनम्।
कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिः। सा प्रकृतिः
श्रीरिति व्याख्याता।
प्रकृत्यैव सर्वकार्याणि करोति तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन
श्रियं देवीं पूजयेत्।
सा च प्रसादानुग्रहपरा वैष्णववत्सला॥

Prakṛti (Nature) and Purusha (Spirit) are both without beginning. The two together set the world into motion. Prakṛti is the source and motivation for all action. She is indeed, Lakshmī, who is all action. Therefore, one should worship Lakshmī. She provides succour to the devotees of Vishṇu and secures his prasāda and anugraha. The two Sanskrit words have the same meaning: grace, compassion. But the word 'prasāda' has acquired an additional meaning of food first offered to god and then distributed to the devotees. Thus the place where food is prepared is in fact Lakshmī's domain.

The iconographic account of Lakshmī as given in this text also agrees with the details found in Poṭu-amma:

इन्दिरां सुमुखीमाबद्धपट्टमकुटां
मुक्तालङ्करमालिकां
सर्वरत्नमण्डितमुक्ताभरणविभूषितगात्रिकां
बद्धपीनस्तनीं कृशमध्यां पृथुतर नितम्ब-बिम्बां
अनादियौवनसौभाग्यां धृतहस्तसितपङ्कजयुग्मां
वरदैकहस्तां धृतरत्नमञ्जरीं वा द्वाभ्यां हस्ताभ्यां
धृतकमलां हृद्यां सहस्रादित्यसमप्रभां
मन्दारमालालङ्कृतां देवीं पद्मासनसमारूढां
छायायां कल्पतरोः संस्थाप्य॥

The prescription here is that the deity must be installed under the shade of the tree (Kalpavṛksha), which fulfills all of our desires. She is bedecked with fine ornaments, and is lovely in form and young in age. She is four-armed, carrying lotuses in the upper hands, and the mudrā of varada (boon-bestowal) in one of the normal hands, the other normal hand holding a sheaf of jewels or corn. She is seated in the lotus-posture, or upon a lotus.



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA

प्रणमेयं तदाज्ञप्तो भजेयं यागशालिकाम् ।
दिव्यं ततो रत्नमयं श्रीमहामणिमण्टपम्
॥७३॥
तत्र शय्यागृहं रम्यं तत्रस्थं देवमच्युतम् ।
श्रिया देव्या धरण्या च सेवितं पार्श्वयोः
सदा ॥७४॥

Three feet removed from the western wall of the kitchen and on the same high basement begins a long corridor along the southern Prākāra-wall of Vimāna-pradashiṇa, which ends in the sacrificial hall (yāga-śālā), and the large pavilion in front of it called Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa. There are separate approaches by flights of steps for the Yāga-śālā and the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa. The width of the corridor is nineteen feet, and front of the corridor has cut-stone pillars. That the yāga-śālā is be located in the southern direction follows the Āgama regulation (*Khilādhikāra*, 16, 84:

प्रमुखे दक्षिणे वापि यज्ञशालां प्रकल्पेयत्

The pavilion at the far end (western) of the corridor is a splendid structure, rectangular in shape, 37' 3" wide 80' long. In the centre of the pavilion, close to the flight of steps through which one enters the pavilion, is a mantapa, also rectangular in shape. At its western end is a square sanctum, an isolated square structure of polished black granite, of excellent workmanship. The plan and execuation of this pavilion resembles closely those of Tirumala-rāyan-maṇṭapa, already described.

This is undoubtedly an exquisite pavilion, standing on twenty-nine very artistic pillars. This is called Kalyāṇa-mantapa, because, until recently, the colourful festivals called kalyāṇotsava (the ceremonial wedding of the god with the goddess), both the routine ones as required by the Āgama, and the special ones arranged by devotees by payment of a large sum of money (ārjita), were conducted in this hall. At present, however, these festivals take place in the Raṅga-maṇṭapa near the main entrance to the temple. And there seems to be a proposal to shift the venue to the Āsthāna-maṇṭapa, outside the temple-complex.

This maṇṭapa is significant inas much as the procession images, Malayappa-svāmi with his two consorts (ubhaya-nācchiyār, Lakshmī and Bhū-devī) which are normally kept within the sanctum of the hill-shrine, are lodged for long periods in a year in the sanctum of this pavilion. During the annual Brahmotsava, on the day of the flag-hoisting ceremony (dhvajārohaṇa), marking the commencement of the grand festival, the processional images are brought out of the sanctum of the main shrine, and are not taken back into it until Dīpāvalī-āsthānam (in the month of Puraṭṭāśi). Again during Adhyayanotsava (the ceremony involving recital of Tamiḻ prabandham), the processional images are lodged in the sanctum of

the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa for twenty three days (in the month of Mārgaḷi).

This maṇṭapa, which is said to have been built in 1586 by an officer called Chennappa, may not have been constructed all at once. It is now a typical Vijayanagar structure. But it was not always called Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa. Our text, for instance, knows it as ('mahā-maṇi-maṇṭapa, verse 73); and what is known as mahā-maṇi-mantapa in front of the main shrine was known to our author as Pushpa-maṇṭapa (verse 79).

The expression 'maṇi-maṇṭapa' is employed in the Śilpa-śāstra texts for an open maṇṭapa resting on pillars on which jewel-like carvings are made. The word 'mani' signifies 'jewel' (ratna). In texts like *Suprabhedāgama*, we find that 'maṇi-maṇṭapa' (or maṇi-bhadra-maṇṭapa) is given as one of the varieties of pavilions. *Rudra-yāmaḷa* describes a maṇi-maṇṭapa (bejewelled pavilion) located in the midst of the ocean of nectar (sudhābdhi), and containing in its centre a bejewelled platform (ratna-vedī).

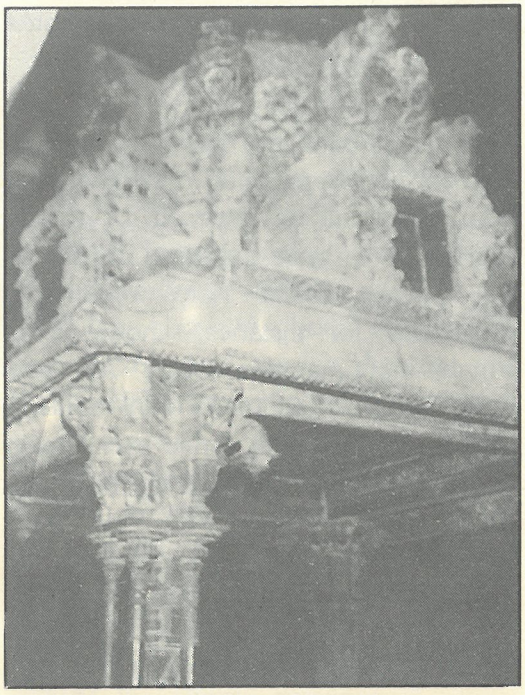
It is interesting that the Paimāyishi Account describes this "small but beautiful' maṇṭapa, carried on slender cut-stone pillars (of black granite, four pillars of which have three projecting pillarets) at the western end of the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa" as Siṁhāsana-maṇṭapa. Our text here calls this sanctum-like structure 'śayyā-gṛham ramyam' (viz. Śayana-maṇṭapa), located within the pavilion ('Śrī-mahā-maṇi-maṇṭapam tatra śayyā-gṛham ramyam', verse 73-74). And within that structure were kept the processional images (of Malayappa with his two consorts, ('tatrastham devam achyutam; śriyā devyā dharaṇyā cha sevitam pārśvayos sadā').

This strongly suggests that there was a time when the processional images of Malayappa with his two consorts were not lodged within the sanctum of the hill-shrine, along with the main icon (dhruva-bera); they were kept in a separate apartment. It must be remembered that this shrine is 'eka-berālaya', and the main icon is a form of Vishṇu without consorts. The kautuka-bera, which was a replica of the main image, got made in 614 A.D. by Sāmavai, is also a lone figure, and this is always kept with the main image within the sanctum. The processional images (utsava-bera viz. Malayappa with consorts) arrived on the scene much later, probably under the Pāñcharātra influence. There is, however, a provision made in the Vaikhānasa texts that even when the dhruva-bera and kautuka bera belong to the 'rahita' (viz. lone, without consorts) variety, the processional image may be got made as accompanied by consorts (*Vimānārchanā-kalpa*, paṭala 40):

ध्रुवे देवीसमायुक्ते वियुक्ते वा कौतुकस्य देव्यो:
स्थापनं कारयेत् ।



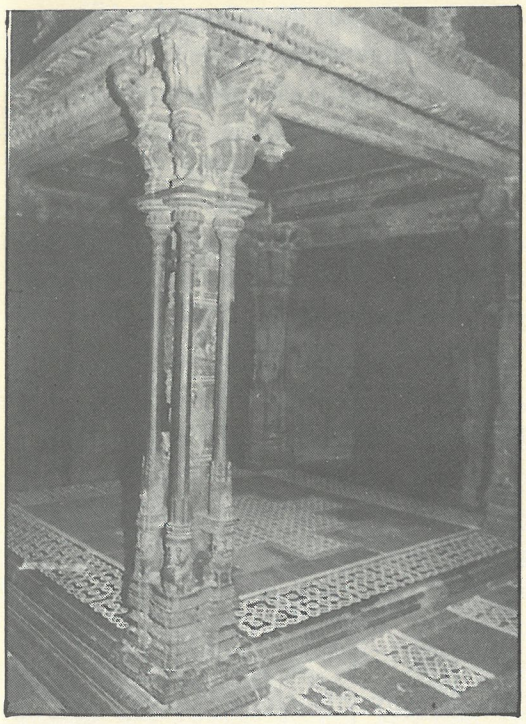
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (inside room)



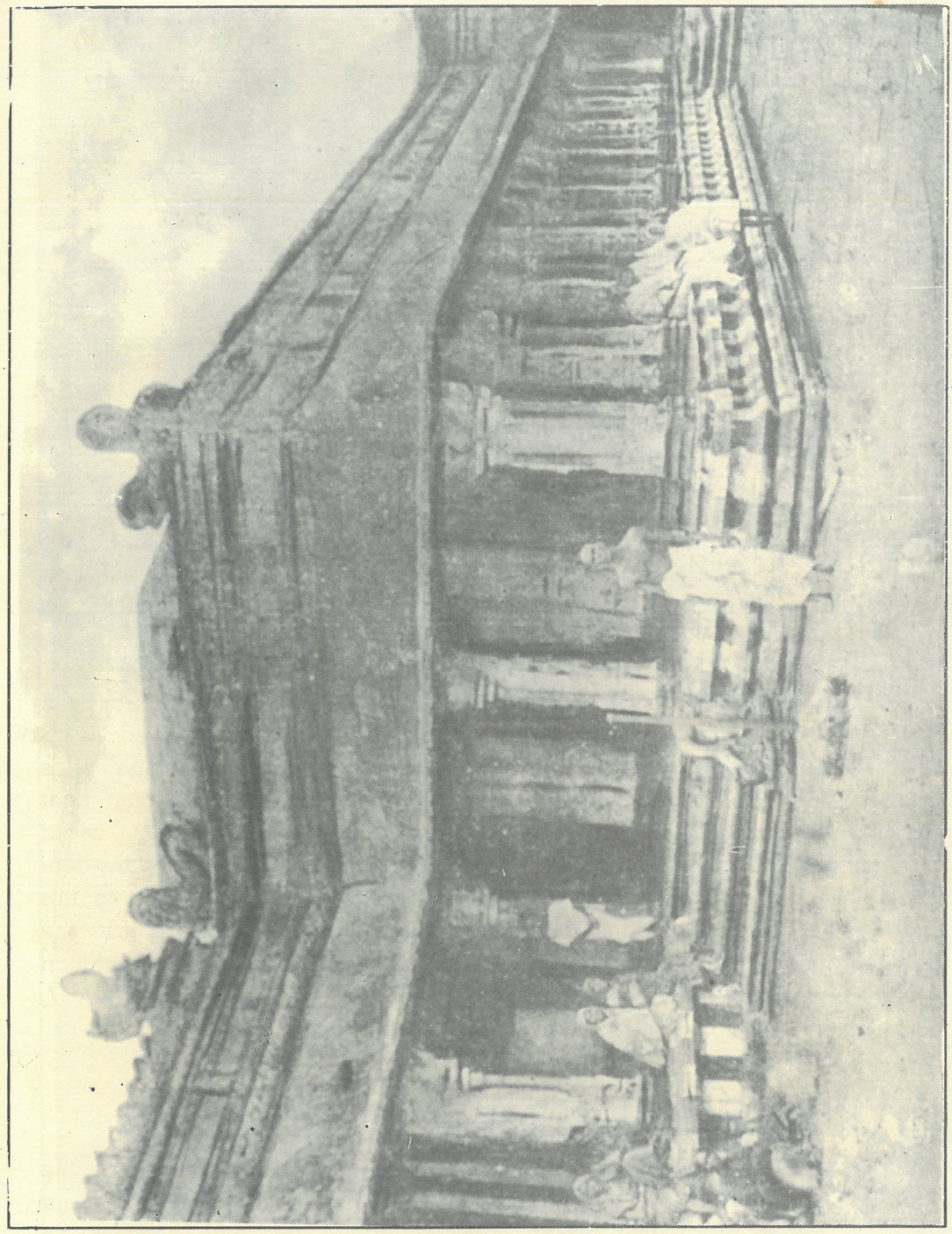
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (inside)

कौतुके देवीसमायुक्ते वियुक्ते वा पि औत्सवं
देवीभ्यां
सहितं स्थापितं चेत् तद् ग्रामस्य समृद्धिर्भवति॥

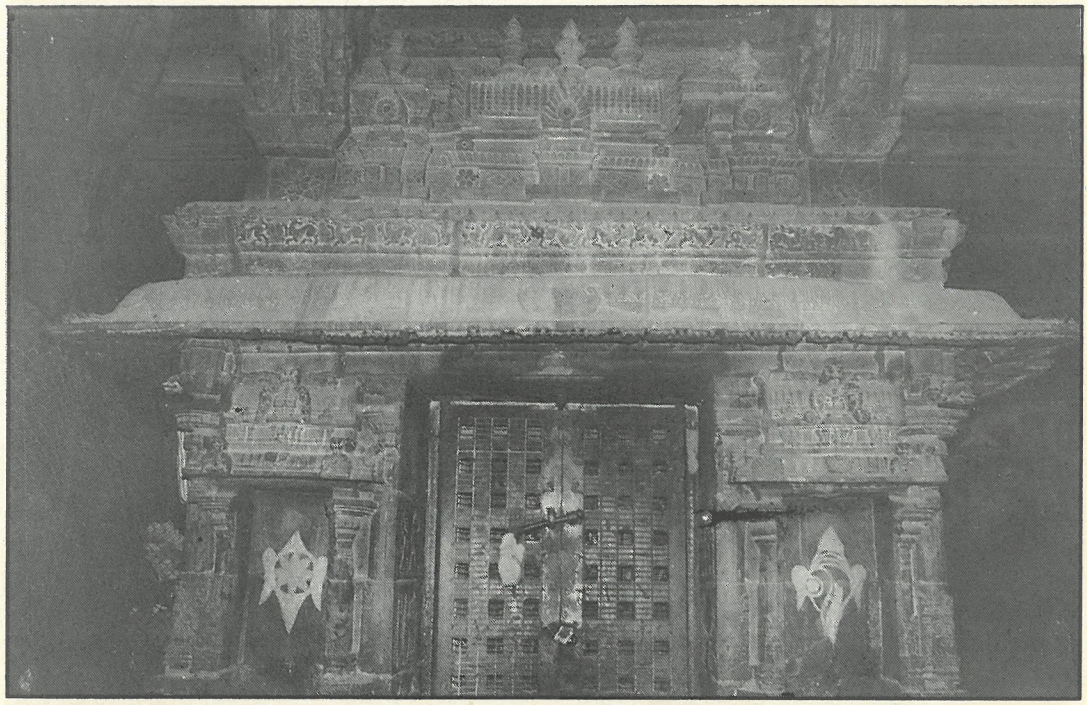
This is not given as an obligatory prescripton, but as an optional one. The processional image with consorts is to be preferred, if prosperity and plenty of the township is desired. It is understandable if there was some resistance on the part of the Vaikhānasa priests to admit this as the processional image of the 'rahita' god. Malayappa-svāmi may, there fore have been housed in the sanctum of the present Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa. The outer pavilion was the place where his kalyāṇotsava could be conducted in an assembly; and the sanctum would



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (inside pavilion)



KALYANA-MANTAPA



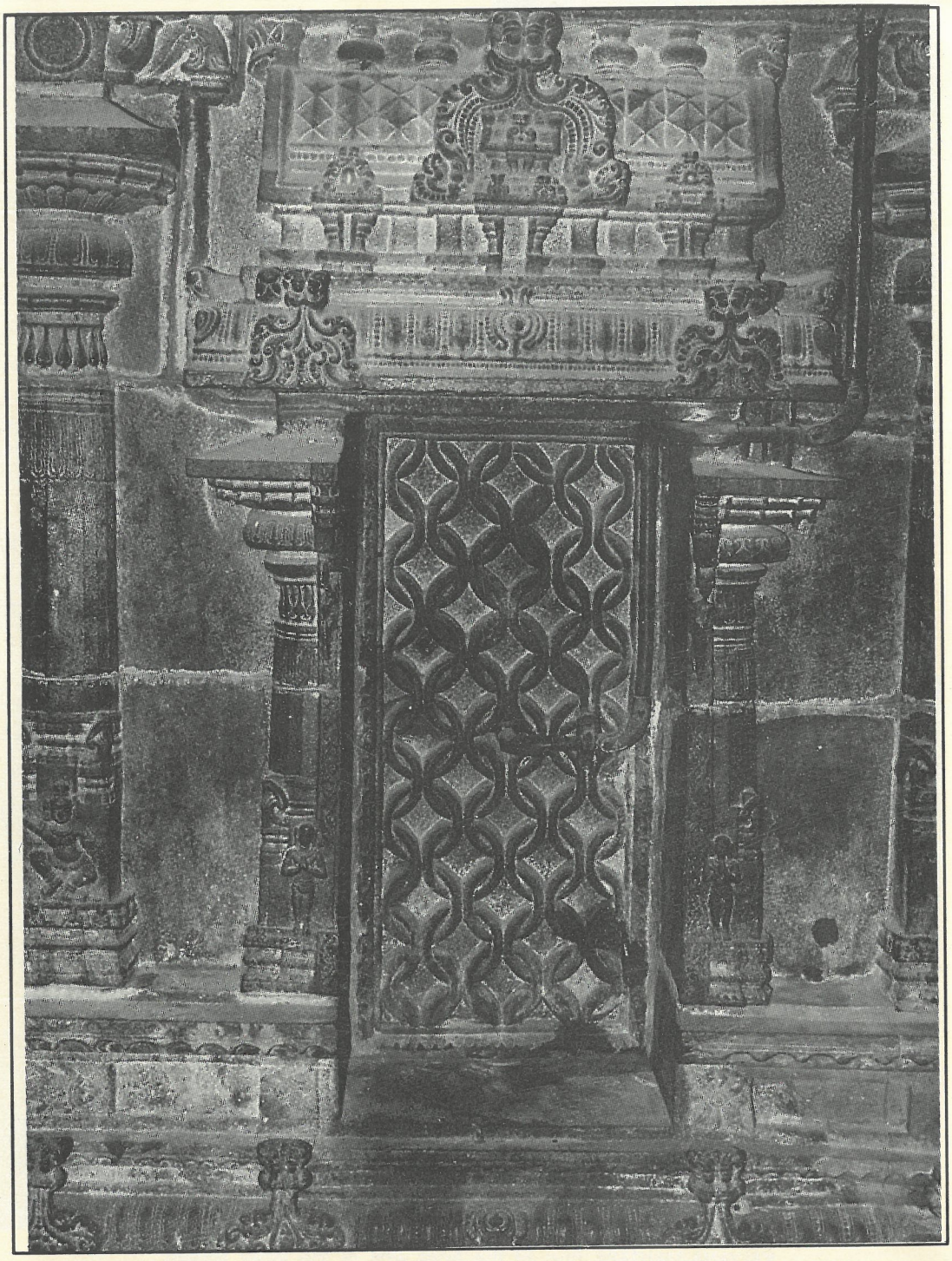
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (front view of the inner shrine, facing east)

provide the place for sayanotsava. In a shrine for the 'rahita' form of god, there is no propriety in conducting either the kalyāṇotsava (festival marking ceremonial wedding), or sayanotsava (ritual of leading the god to the pleasures of the bed). These were probably not conducted in the hill-shrine until the Vijayanagar period, when the Pāñcharātra influences began to be felt.

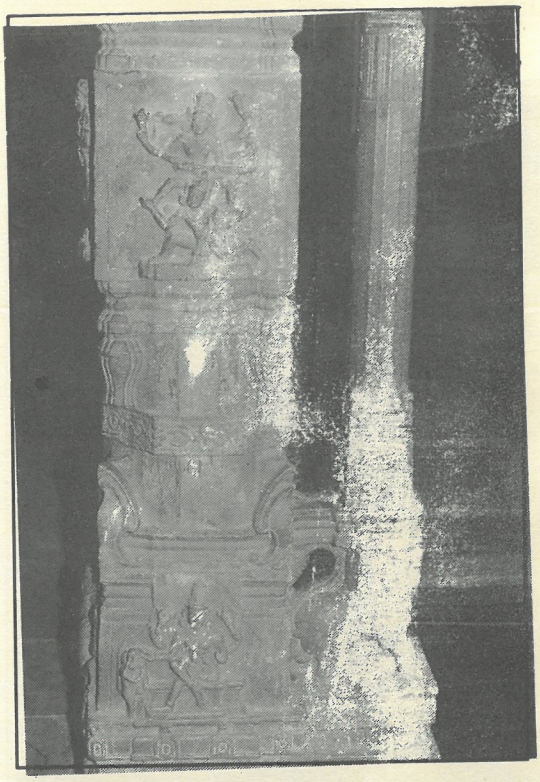
The references in our text are quite clear that the processional image of the 'sahita' variety (viz. the present Malayappan with ubhaya-nāchchiyār) had not as yet moved into the sanctum of the shrine (as we find today), which must have contained the main icon (dhruva-bera) and the small silver replica thereof (the kautuka-bera, Bhoga-śrīnivāsa). It was in the present Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, which served as its 'śayyā-grha' or śayana-maṇṭapa. It is also to be noted that the room right in front of the sanctum is now called 'śayana-maṇṭapa', for the kautuka-bera (Bhoga-śrīnivāsa) is put to bed in this room at night and this is in accordance with the Vaikhānasāgama prescription (cf. *Kāśyapīya-Jñāna-kāṇḍa,* ch. 87, TTD. ed.p. 166)

देवालयस्याभिमुखे शयनमण्डपम् ।

And the Kautuka-bera is alone on the bed; and the 'śayana-sūktas' that are recited during this ritual breathe a typically Vaikhānasa approach. That is to say, even when at a later time the 'sahita' form (viz. Malayappan) was



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (inner shrine, jālaka on the northern wall)

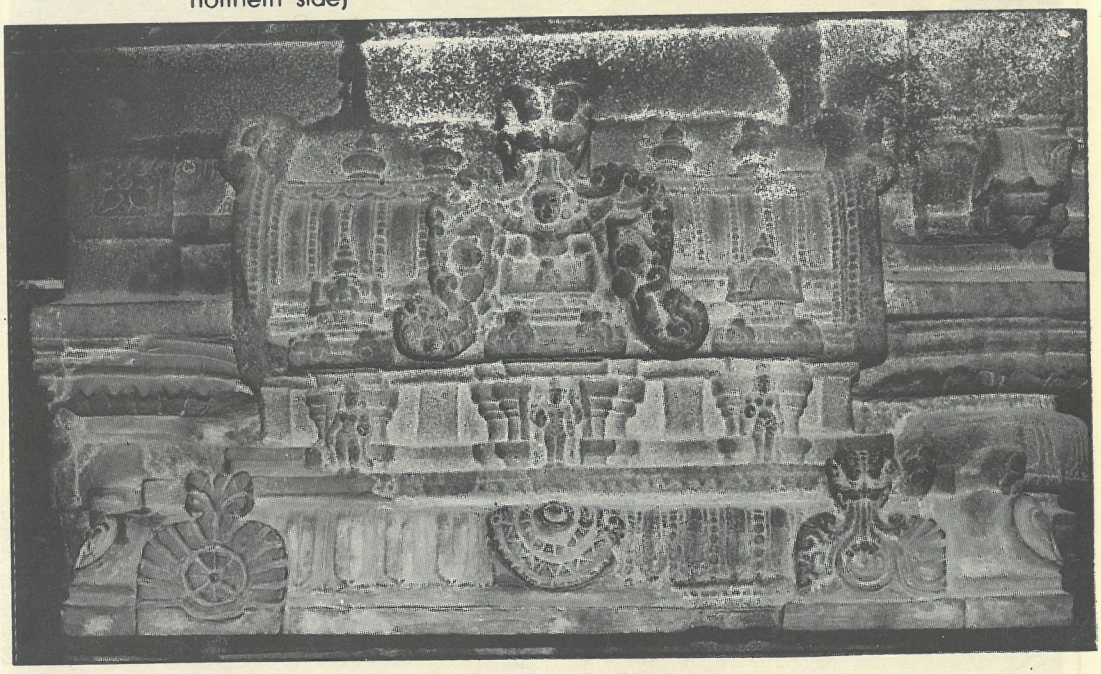


KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (a pillar on the northern side)

admitted into the sanctum, and was most eligible to officiate in the sayanotsava ritual, the long-standing Vaikhānasa custom of having the lone Kautuka-bera for this ritual continued. It has continued to this day.

उत्सवार्हमुदाराङ्गमुज्ज्वलायुधभूषणम् ।
प्रणिपत्य प्रसन्नात्मा परमानन्दमाप्नुयात्
॥७५॥
ततः परीत्य तं धन्यो वस्त्रागारं महार्द्धि-
मत् ।
वाहनानि महार्हाणि विमानं चानतस्ततः
॥७६॥

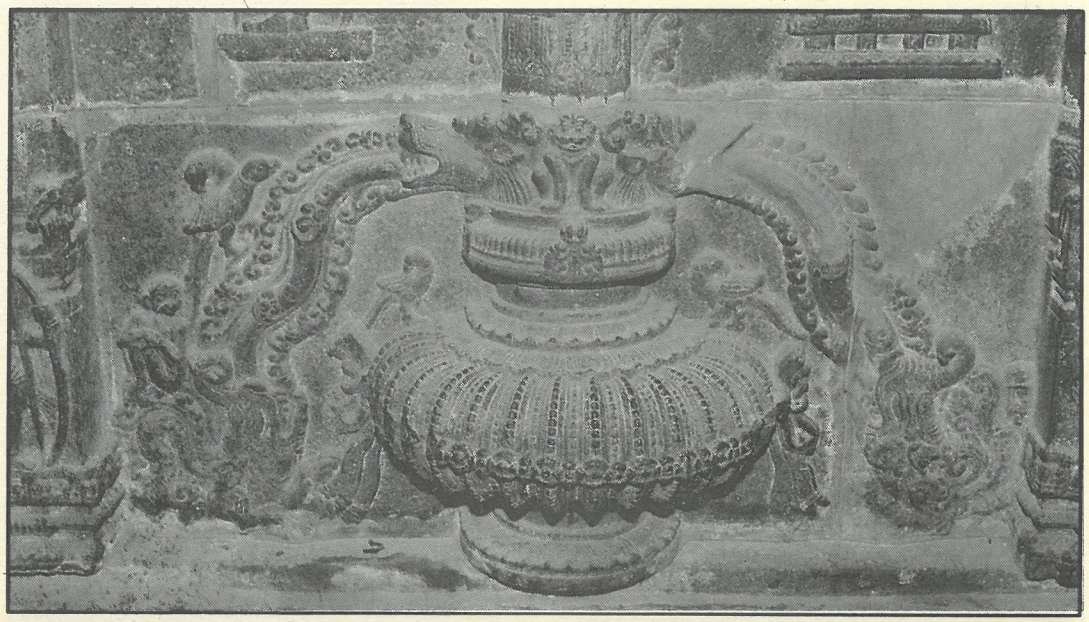
Of these two verses, the former describes the western prākāra-wall (152' 3" long on the inside) of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, along which are



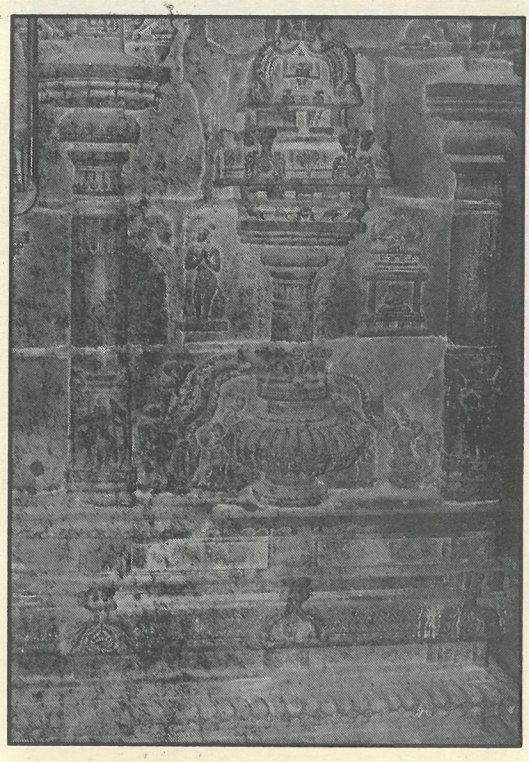
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (top of the front wall of the inner shrine)



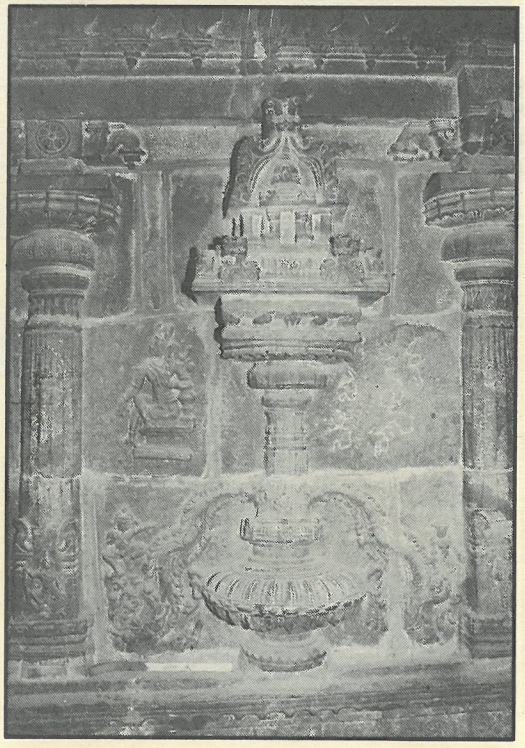
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (northern wall of the inner shrine showing Kumbha-pañjara design and some sculptures)



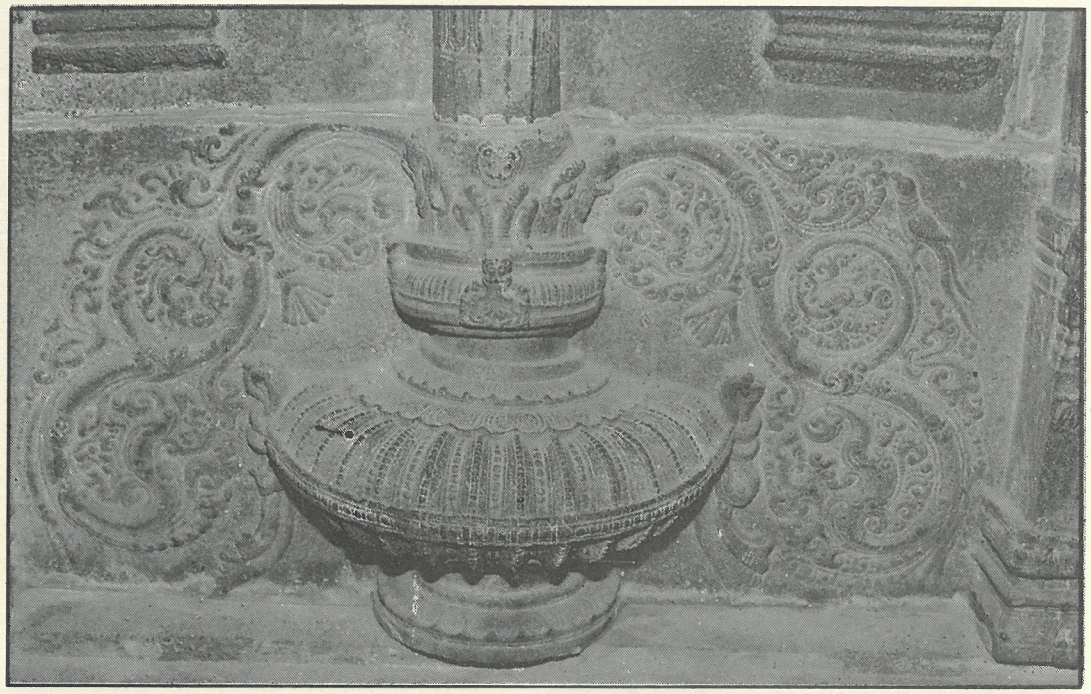
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (Kumbha-panjara base on the northern-wall of the inner shrine)



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (northern wall of the inner shrine)



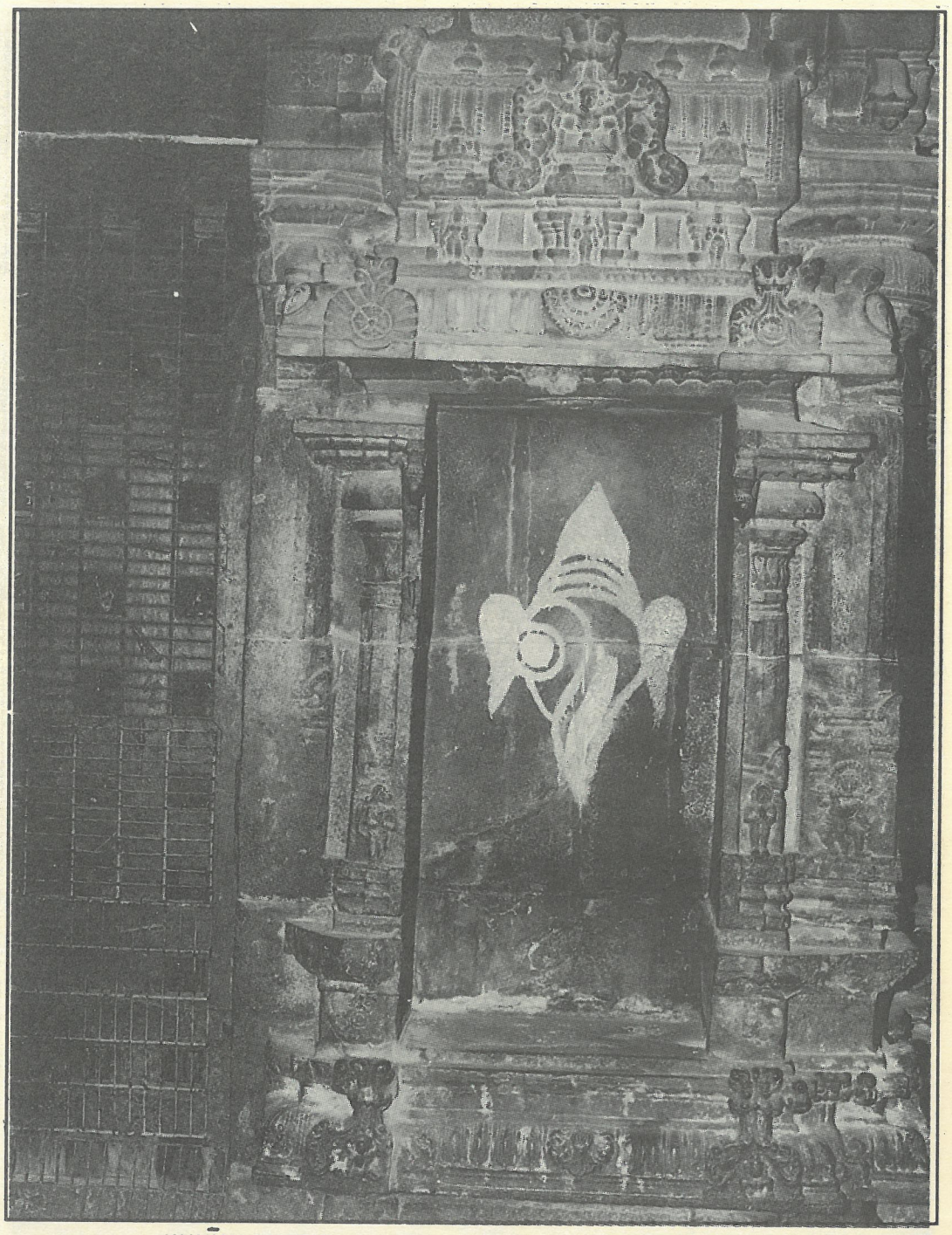
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (Kumbha-panjara on the western wall of the inner shrine)



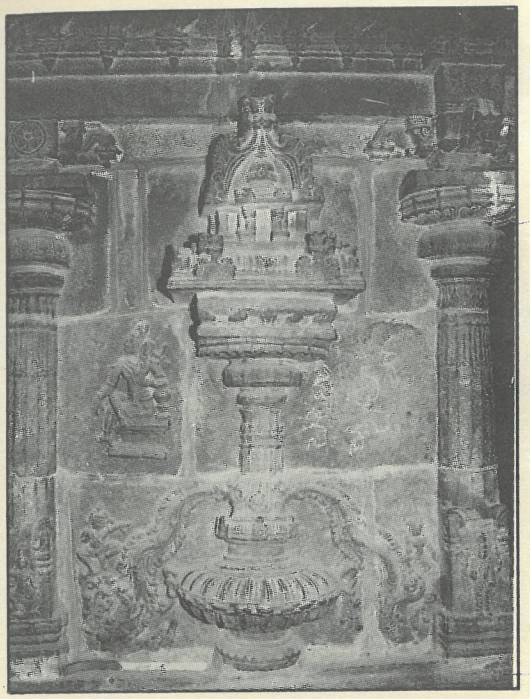
KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (kuṁbha-pañjara base on the northern wall of inner shrine)



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (another version of Kuṁbha-pañjara base)



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (sanctum, right niche in the front portion)



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (Kumbha-pañjara on the western wall of the inner shrine)

several mantapas, used for several purposes like storing vāhanas and materials and preparing sandal-paste. The Paimāyishi Account mentions that there were six rooms along this side of the prākāra-wall: (1) temple-vehicles (vāhanas) and palanquin presented by Raghoji Bhonsle, (2) the vehicles (vāhanas) managed by the Naḍi-gaḍ-ḍam family men, (3) vehicles donated by the state of Suragiri (4) distribution of prasāda endowed by the Rājā of Veṅkaṭa-giri, (5) the room in Pāḍagāla family's charge, (6) room for the extraction of civet oil. Of course, this is an account that is no longer valid. Excepting the chandanam room at the northern end of the prākāra-walls, other rooms have been put to different uses from time to time.

The latter verse makes the pilgrim turn rightward and enter into the northern circuit of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, which is an important one for the pilgrims, for the sight of Vimāna-śrinivāsa (bas -relief with gold covering) is had here. The legend has it that owing to the arrogance and cruelty of a monarch (the name of the Vijayanagar king Achyuta-rāya is mentioned), the Vaikhānasa priests could not worhsip the hill-god in the sanctum. For as long as twelve years, the main shrine was closed. During this time all pilgrims went round the shrine, and had the god's 'darśana' in the Vimāna. Another account makes the saint Vyāsa-rāya-svāmi around 1524 worship the hill-god in the sanctum for twelve years, in order to expiate the sin of the monarch who killed a Vaikhānasa priest within the sanctum. Because of the ferocious aspect which the hill-god assumed, the sanctum was closed for pilgrims, who were asked by the saint to be content with having the darsana of Vimāna-śrinivāsa. It is a practice, even now, for pilgrims, especially of the Mādhva sect, to climb the steps of the northern maṇṭapa-corridor and bow to this image on the Vimānam, even after they have had the 'darśana' of the god in the sanctum.

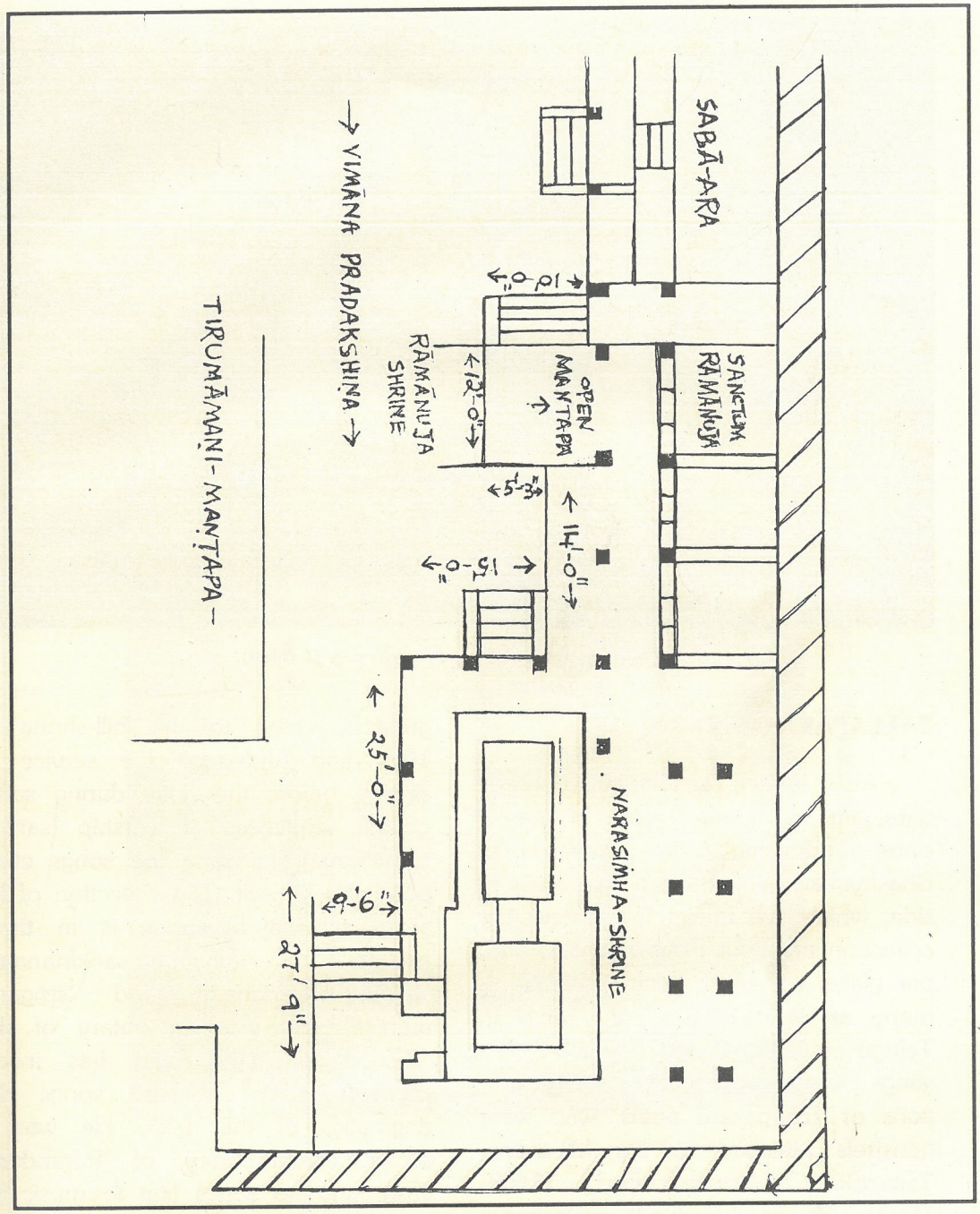
The width of the circuit on this side is 21 feet, along the length of the main shrine. But on the side of Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa after the main



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (basement)

shrine the Bhāshya-kāra-sannidhi and Narasiṁha-shrine cut into this circuit by ten feet and fifteen feet respectively, diminishing the width of the pathway to that extent. The apartments as they were formerly used have been given in Paimāyishi Account; cooks (gamikārs), provisions from the Mysore state, Kaikāḷa (temple-servants), Vagaipaḍi (store for paṇyāram preparations which are special delicacies like laḍḍu and vaḍa, which are boiled in pure ghee), Tāḷḷapākam saṅgīta-bhaṇḍāra, sabhā-ara (vastrāgāra, room where the garments for the main deity are kept), Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi, Mañchapu-ara (room where the cot used for the daily ekānta-sevā of the main deity, which is done in the Śayana-maṇṭapa in front of the sanctum, is kept when not used), Kāṇuka-ara (room where monetary and other offerings and donations from the pilgrims are kept until they are transferred to the treasury), bokkasam (people's paṇyāram room), chandana-ara (the room where the needed sandal-paste for worship is prepared every day) and prasādam room. To the south of the last mentioned apartment at the eastern end is the Narasiṁha-shrine.

Of these, the three important apartments are the Tāḷḷapākam-ara, Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi and Narasiṁhālaya.



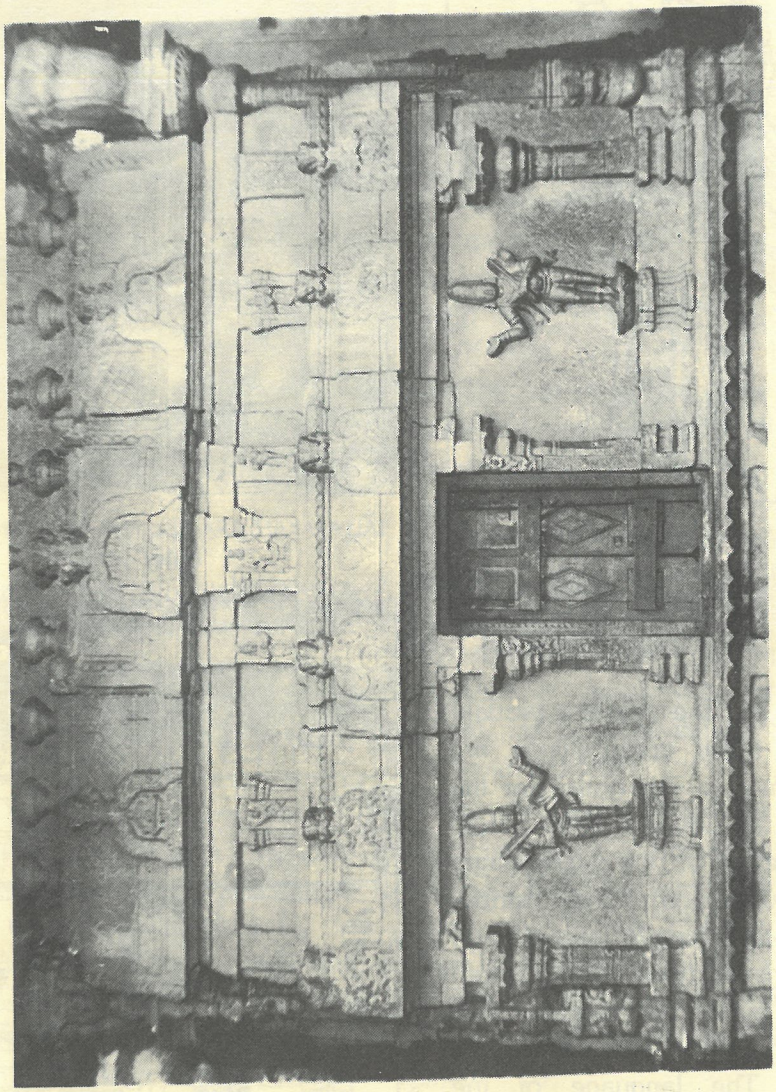
On the northern side of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa



KALYĀṆA-MAṆṬAPA (sculpture on a pillar)

TĀḶḶAPĀKAM-ARA

Also known as Sankīrtana-bhaṇḍāra, this is a small room of granite slabs adjoining the porch of Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi on its western side, which was meant to preserve the collection of about three-thousand copper plates on which were inscribed as many as eighteen thousand songs in Telugu eulogizing the hill-god. The songs were composed by three generations of Tāḷḷapākam poets, who were minstrels attached to the hill-shrine: Tāḷḷapākam Aṇṇamāchārya (1408-1503), his son Pedda-tirumalāchārya and grandson Chinna-tirumalāchārya. The first of them, who was also the greatest, came to the hill-shrine in 1424 and undertook the service of singing before the deity during some of the sequences of worship (sankīrtanāchārya); he sang the songs composed by himself. The collection of his songs in the hill-shrine is in three groups: 'ādhyātma-sankīrtanam', 'śṛṅgāra-sankīrtanam' and 'śṛṅgāra-mañjari'. He was an votary of the Śrī-vaishṇava faith, and has incorporated in his inspired songs the dogmatics of this faith. He was a senior contemporary of Purandara-dāsa, and his songs (set to music by himself) mark a significant stage in the evolution of South Indian music. His compositions are undoubtedly imbued



TĀḶḶAPĀKAM-ARA (Saṅkīrtna-bhaṇḍāra)



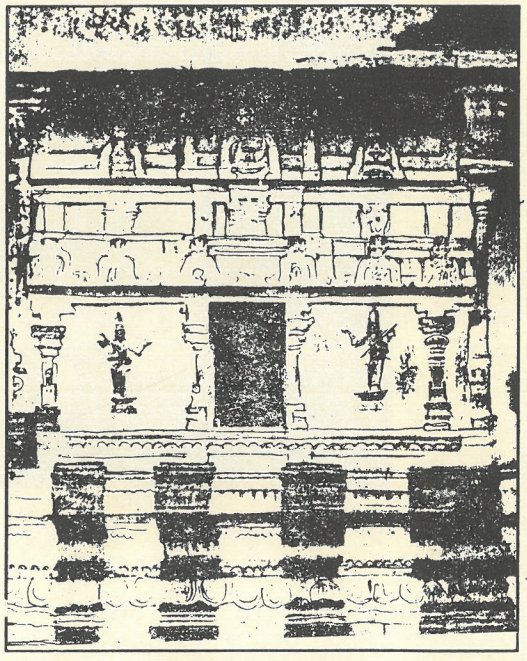
Aṇṇamacharya



TĀḶḶAPĀKAM-ARA (portrait sculpture on the outer wall)

with devotion and spiritual fervour. He was a poet and composer of rare distinction.

The room in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, where these compositions are preserved, comes to our notice for the first time in an inscription of 1530 (during the reign of the Vijayanagar monarch Achyuta-rāya). The distribution of the food-offerings (atirasa-paḍi) for the pilgrims in front of this room was arranged by an endowment on a particular day during the festival of Brahmotsava. The language of the inscription suggests that the room had only recently been specially commisioned as a saṅkīrtana-bhaṇḍāra. It is likely, therefore, that Aṇṇamāchārya's gifted and worthy son Peddatirumalāchārya it was that got the



TĀḶḶAPĀKAM-ARA

songs inscribed on thick copper plates and persuaded the temple- authorities to set apart a room for their preservation.

The songs were preserved in the Tāḷḷapākam-ara for more than four hundred years, before they were transferred to the Devasthanams-office in Tirupati for the preparation of transcripts for publication during the days of the last Mahant, Prayāga-dās, at the instance of the Devasthānam epigraphist, Sādhu Subrahmaṇya-śāstri.

छत्रचामरकोशं च श्रयेयं सैन्यनायकम् ।
ततो रामानुजाचार्यं प्रपन्नकुलशेखरम्
॥७७॥

Vishvaksena's shrine (the existence of which few people are aware of) is in the inner circuit at the north-eastern corner of the sanctum. This circuit (the so-called Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa) being closed now, the pilgrim has no chance of visiting Vishvaksena, described in this text as the commander of Vishṇu's troops ('sainya-nāyakam') before he arrives at Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. When this text was composed, it is likely that the shrine to Vishvaksena was visible for those who went round along Vimāna-pradakshiṇa.

Vishvaksena is an attendant deity who is worshipped by Śrī-vaishṇavas as well as by the Vaikhānasas. While he is commonly regarded as the commander of Vishṇu's troops, the Śrī-vaishṇavas regard him as the third in the line of gurus, (guru-paramparā), after Vishṇu and Lakshmī. The Vaikhānasas do not recognize Vishvaksena as an āchārya, but accept the story that he was born as the son of Suvarchalā (a celestial damsel who was cursed by Durvāsa to be born as the daughter of a tribal chieftain, Vīrabāhu) and Dharma-putra (by an aspect of Varuṇa). Abandoned by the parents, the golden-hued,and wide-eyed child, which had marks of conch, discus, sword and bow on his body, was brought up by the sage Kāśyapa. Becoming well-versed in all the traditional lore, Vishvaksena performed penance on the slopes of the hill, Nārāyaṇādri for twelve years. Vishnu bestowed upon him the position of the master of all the forces in Vaikuṇṭha. (suvarchalā-suta-nyasta-sainapatyabharāy namah' in *Vēṅkaṭesa-ashṭottara-śata-nāma)* He is also called Senādhipati or Senai-mudaliār.

He, however, does not occupy a very important position in the Vaikhānasa daily worship although he heads the group of five attendants (pañcha-praivāra): Vishvaksena, Garuḍa, Śrī-bhūta, Nyaksha and Bhūta-pīṭha (*Vimānārchanā-kalpa,* paṭala 14)

In the daily worship, the priest is required to enter the sanctum early in the morning and remove the old flowers from the body of the deity, and take them out; he worships



TĀḶḶAPĀKAM PEDA-TIRUMALĀCHĀRYA (portrait sculpture in relief on the right side of the entrance of the Tāḷḷapākam-ara)

Vishvaksena and comes back to the sanctum to clean it up (cf. *Vimānārchanā-kalpa,* paṭala 45, 'eka-berārchanā').

देवस्य निर्माल्यमादाय विष्वक्सेनमाराध्य
गर्भालयादिषु सर्वत्र संमार्जनं कृत्वा।

It is, therefore, that the shrine to Vishvaksena is prescribed to be in the first enclosure itself *(Khilādhikāra,* 7,39)

इन्द्रादिनां च सर्वेषां विष्वकसेनेन चैव हि।
आलयं संप्रकुर्वीत प्रथमावरणे पि हि॥

or, according to *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (paṭala 11), in the courtyard of the first enclosure

विष्वक्सेनं प्रथमावरणाद्यङ्गणे।

Vimānārchanā-kalpa (paṭala 37) further specifies that the shrine to Vishvaksena must be located between the eastern and north-eastern directions of the sanctum ('indreśānayar madhye vishvaksenasya'. cf. *Khilādhikāra,* 15, 224 'iśāna-somayor madhye vish-vakenālayam charet'). Vishvaksena's shrine in the hill-temple is in the north-eastern corner. (outside Śayana-maṇṭapa which is in front of the sanctum). It is a small rectangular apartment (13' 6" north to south and 10' 8" east to west) with its entrance to the east, but the diety is kept towards the northern wall, facing south. It is now separated from Vimāna-pradakshiṇa by the northern prākāra-wall of the inner circuit, but it can be approached from Vimāna-pradakshiṇa by the entrance which adjoins Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa. From the end of the northern prākāra-wall, this shrine is situated at a distance



VISHVAKSENA (in the inner shrine in the Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa)

of thirty feet on the inside (viz. in the inner circuit). And because of this shrine, the width of the inner circuit at this point is reduced to 5' 9".

The location of Vishvaksena in the hill-shrine is in accordance with the Vaikhānasa texts like *Vimanārchanā-kalpa* (paṭala 20)

उदक्प्राकार पार्श्वे विमानपार्श्वे कुबेरेशानयो
र्मध्ये दक्षिणाभिमुख: सिंहासने समासीन:

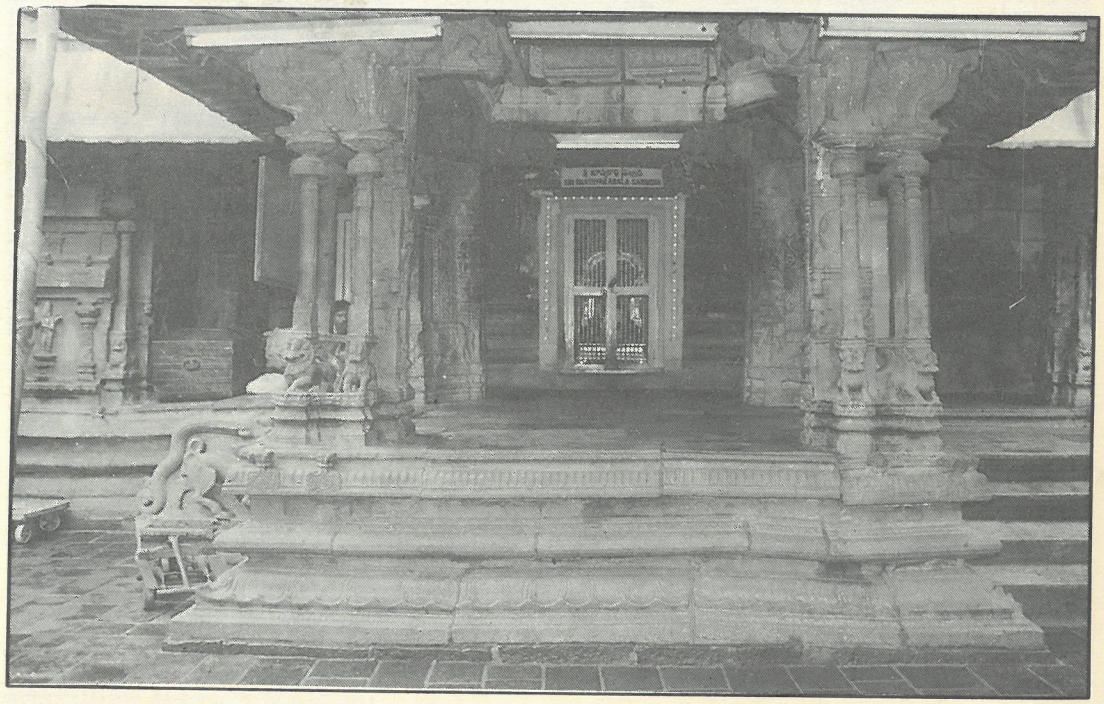
According to *khilādhikāra* (15, 226), his shrine must be square or rectangular in shape.

Vishvaksena becomes important in festivals (utsava), when he functions very much like Gaṇapati among the Śaivites. He is invoked to ward off obstacles.

यस्यं द्विरदवक्त्राद्या: परिषद्या: पर: शतम्।
विघ्नं निघ्नन्ति सततं विष्वक्सेनं समाश्रये ॥
सुरासुरशिरोरत्नमरीचिखचितांघ्रये ।
विघ्नान्धकारसूर्याय विष्वक्सेनाय ते नम:॥

He is visualized rather differently on such occasions. The *Bhagavad-utsavānukramaṇikā* (ed. by Nallūr Śhri Rāmachandra Bhaṭṭāchārya, Buḍḍam, Bāpatla), for instance, gives this dhyāna-śloka

विष्वक्सेनं सकलविबुधप्रौढसेनाधिनाथम्।



Pavilion in front of the Rāmānuja shrine (in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa)

मुद्राचक्रे करकमलयुगे शखदण्डौ दधानम्।

One can see here the Pāñcharātra influence (cf. *Pādma*, kriyā 22, 'gadām mukhye jaghanye tu śaṁkham cha parikalpayet', 39). In the Vaikhānasa texts, his consort's name is given as Jayā, while the Pāñcharātra texts call her Vetra-vatī.

According to the yearly *Diṭṭam* of the temple, on one night in the year 'Senādhipati-āsthānam' is conducted in this shrine, when the processional images, (Malayappa, with consorts) are brought near, and the processional image of Vishvaksena (which is normally kept in Rāmar-mēḍai) is seated facing east. The stone image is then given a ceremonial path and honoured. Tamiḷ prabandhams are recited and śāttumora is conducted. This is a typical Pāñcharātra practice, as also the gosthṭhī-śaṭhāri which is then offered to the participants (cf. *Diṭṭam Scales* TTD, Tirupati, reprinted 1963, page 29). During Adhyayanotsava (which is also a Pāñcharātra festival), the processional image of Vishvaksena is taken to the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, and seated facing south, in front of the processional images of Malayappa and his consorts. On this occasion , during the twenty-three days of the festival, Vishvaksena and Rāmānuja are together honoured with parivaṭṭa, śaṭhāri and hārati.

The shrine to Vishvaksena in a Vaikhānasa temple is only for the prosperity of the temple, and the worship of this god is prescribed only for those who seek wealth (*Khilādhikāra*, 15,55).

The Pāñcharātra texts describe Vishvaksena as dark-coloured, pot-bellied, four-armed and red-haired. He wears a crown on his head, and in his two upper hands he carries conch and discus. He holds his normal right hand in the gesture of offering protection (mukhye abhīṭih); and the corresponding left hand is held in the kaṭaka-posture (kaṭakākāra-mudrayā) (cf. *Īśvara-saṁhitā* 8, 11-13; *Pādma-saṁhitā*, kriyā 22, 39); *Parāśara-saṁhitā* 19). Generally he is represented as Vishṇu himself but devoid of the Śrī-vatsa mark, which is characteristic of Vishṇu.

The Vaikhānasa-texts, however, differ in some of incographical details. *Khilādhikāra* (15, 224-226) says that Śānta (another name for Vishvaksena) is extremely dear to Vishṇu ('vishṇoh priya-tarah śāntah') and is the lord of his troops ('anapāyi-gaṇādhipah'). He must be decorated with all ornaments, like Vishṇu himself, excepting Śrī-vatsa and the sacrificial chord. *(Vimānārchanā-kalpa*, paṭala 20) *Khilādhikāra* (15, 42-55), however, specifies that Vishvaksena, who is only two-armed, holds the magical weapon śakti in one hand and a cudgel and flower in the other. There is no mention of his carrying conch and discus. He is seated in an easy posture, his right leg held down, slightly bent, and left leg stretched across the seat.

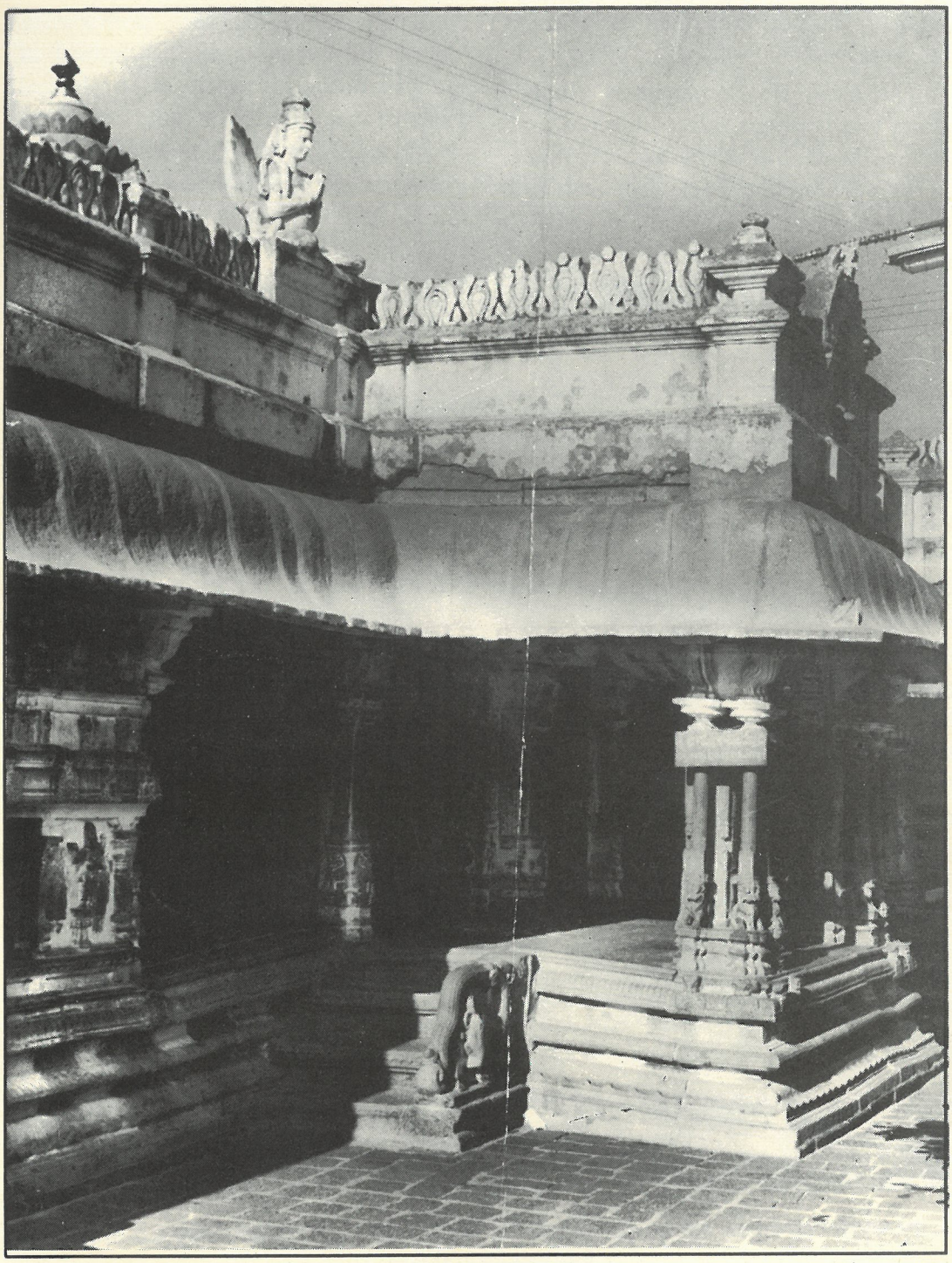
It is obvious that the image of Vishvaksena in the hill-shrine accords more with the Pāñcharātra description than with the Vaikhānasa. He is seated, but is without the consort. He carries in his upper hands conch and discus ('pṛshṭha-dakshiṇa-vāmābhyām chakra-śaṁkha-dharam kramāt', *Īśvara-samhitā*, 8, 125); and his normal right hand assumes the abhaya posture ('mukhya-dakshiṇa-hastena bhaktānām abhaya-pradam', ibid). The normal left hand is in the kaṭaka (or siṁha-karṇa) posture ('kaṭakākāra-mudrayā', ibid.). Further, the Vaikhānasa texts insist that when the main deity is in the standing posture, the attendants must also be shown as standing. But Vishvaksena is found here seated.

While this image is a stone one, there is also a bronze replica thereof (a processional image), which is kept on the pial of the apartment of the main shrine known as Rāmar-mēḍai. It is likely that the Vishvaksena shrine appeared in the hill-temple under Śrī-vaishṇava influence. The normal Vaikhānasa practice is to invoke Vishvaksena in a bowl of rice as a preparatory ritual.

RĀMĀNUJA-SHRINE

We come out of the inner circuit and get back to Vimāna-pradakshiṇa to reach Bhāshyakāra-sannidhi, the shrine dedicated to Rāmānuja, the great Śrī-vaishṇava leader and teacher (1017-1137). It has been indicated earlier that, contrary to popular beliefs and rather fanciful accounts like *Tirumalai-oḷugu*, the influence of Rāmānuja during his own life-time on the hill-shrine was rather meagre. It was only later, when the Vijayanagar monarchs became powerful, that the Śrī-vaishṇava influence grew and made itself felt in the hill-shrine. Rāmānuja's work on the hill appears chiefly to have been the organization of flower-gardens (nanda-vanams). He might also have introduced some order in the worship-procedures and in the attendant services. But his presence was not felt here as it was in Tirupati. He was, in fact, the architect of Tirupati and of the Śrī-vaishṇava community there. It is not surprising, therefore, that we do not hear of a Rāmānuja shrine in the hill-temple complex until 1476, whereas his shrine in the Govinda-rāja temple at Tirupati is said to have appeared as early as 1220.

According to the Śrī-vaishṇava account, *Guru-paramparā*, four life-life like images of Rāmānuja were set up by his immediate disciples; at Śrī-perumbudūr (the Āchārya's birth-place) by Mudaliy-āṇḍān, in Kāñchīpuram (where the Āchārya grew up) by Naḍādūr āḻvān, in Śrī-raṅgam (which was the main place of his life-work) by Tiruk-kuruk-kai-piḷḷār, and at Tirupati by Piḷḷai-tirumalai-nambi. The image in the hill-temple is claimed to have been got made and installed by another direct disciple, Ananta-āḻvān (also known as Ānandāḻvār) around



ENTRANCE TO RĀMĀNUJA-SHRINE (in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa)

1137 A.D. But the claim is hard to be sustained.

The shrine to Rāmānuja is situated along the northern side of the prākāra-wall of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. It consists of a sanctum (the back wall of which is a portion of the northern prākāra wall), which measures 15' x 12', and a porch (mukha-maṇṭapa) 19' x 12'. This shrine overlooks the western end of Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa on the other side of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. The stone image is in a rather unusual posture; the right hand is held in the gesture of exposition (vyākhyāna-mudrā) while the left hand assumes the gesture of boon- bestowal (varada-hasta) or of holding a book (pustaka-hasta). Usually, however, images of Rāmānuja show him with hands joined in supplication (añjali-mudrā). There is also in this shrine on the hill a splendid bronze processional image of the great teacher, a replica of the stone icon in the sanctum. It is by all standards an excellent piece of sculpture.

This shrine figures prominently during the twenty-three day festival of Adhyayanotsava, which is a typical Pāñcharātra observance. And there are some occasions in a year (like Gandha-poḍi-utsavam, Bhāshya-kāra-utsavam) when special worship is conducted at this shrine. The processional bronze image of Rāmānuja is brought out and taken in a grand procession to meet the processional images of Malayapa and his consorts near the main entrance (Paḍi-kāvali).

In this shrine, the sanctum appears to have been earlier than the porch in front of it. The porch (mukha-maṇṭapa) is a large one, more than twice the size of the sanctum, and cuts into the open space of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa by ten feet. The largeness of the hall is justified by the congregational worship that is enjoined on the Śrī-vaishṇavas (Pāñcharātrins).



RĀMĀNUJA (BHĀSHYA-KĀRA) (stone image in the sanctum of the Rāmānuja-shrine in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa)

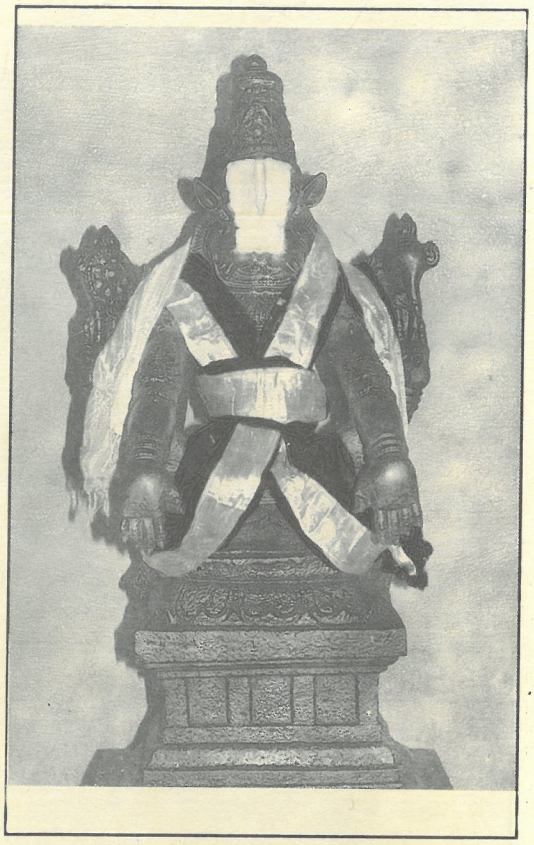
NARASIṀHA-SHRINE

अप्राकृतं विमानं च आनन्दनिलयाह्वयम्।
प्रणम्य तदनुज्ञातः प्रणमन् नृहरिं ततः
॥७५॥

Rāmānunja's shrine faces south, and when we come out of the front pavilion of that shrine, the golden dome of Ānanda-Nilaya-Vimāna looms large before our eyes. We get down the steps, and turn to our left to continue the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa, when we come directly to the Narasiṁha shrine. This shrine, where a beautiful stone



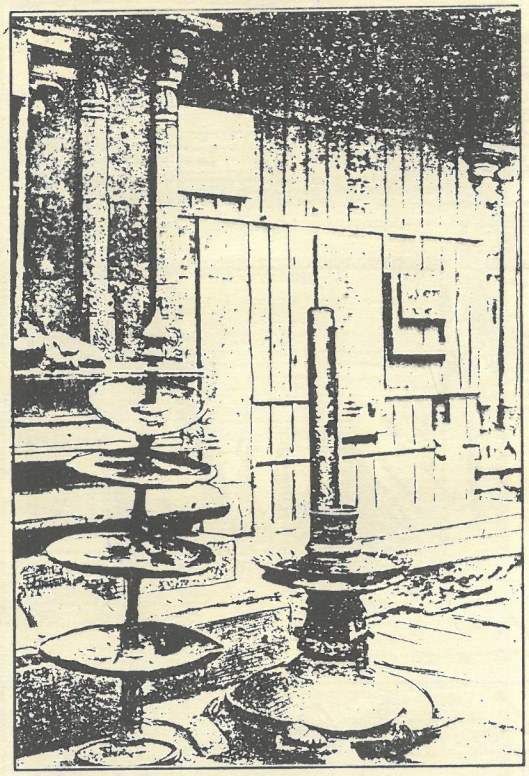
YOGĀ-NARASIMHA (in the sanctum of the shrine in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa)



YOGĀ-NARASIMHA

image of Yogā-narasiṁha is installed in the sanctum facing west, has a flight of steps. Although it is a continuation of the maṇṭapas abutting the northern prākāra-wall (called technically madil-paṭṭi-maṇṭapas), the Narasiṁha shrine is removed from this wall by about twenty feet. There are two rows of four pillars in each row on the northern side of this shrine. The sanctum of this shrine is very close to the inner entrance (the so-called Silver Gateway, Veṇḍi-vākili). And it is in the north-eastern direction of the Tirumā-maṇi maṇṭapa.

The shrine on the hill to this form of Vishṇu (also called Veṅkaṭa-tari or 'the lion of the hill' or Aḷagiya-siṅgar or,' the beautiful lion') comes to our notice in an inscription of 1469, when a Śrī-vaishṇava enthusiast Kandāḍe Rāmānuja-Ayyaṅgār made on endowment to this shrine. The circumstance in which this god came to be here cannot be ascertained. It is suggested in *Tirumalai-oḷugu* that this stone image was lying on the hill, unworshipped, when Rāmānuja visited the hill-shrine, and that he got it enshrined here.

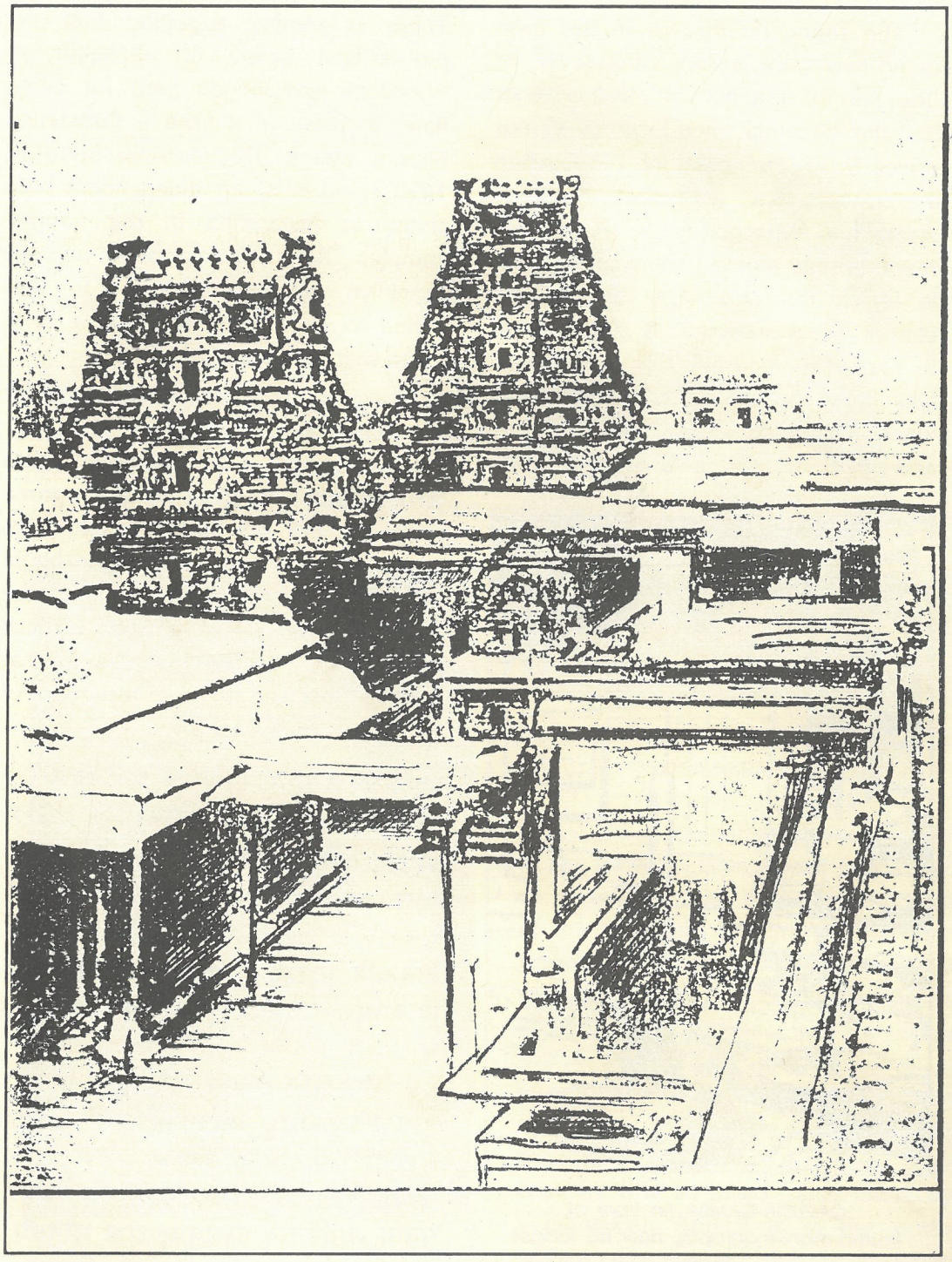


GARUḌA-GAṀBA (in front of Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa), now no longer there

There is another sugestion that the processional image of Sholighūr or Ahobilam was lodged here for some time, to preserve it from a threatened Muslim attack. But an inscription of 1493 speakes of an independent sub-shrine to Narasiṁha in the temple-complex here ('tiru-vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān sannidiyil aḷagiya-siṅgarku'). It was meant to be a temporary shrine or a make-shift arrangement

There is no processional image for Narasiṁha in this shrine or elsewhere in the temple. A ceremonial bath (tiru-mañjana) is given to the stone image in the sanctum on Saturdays; and on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month of Vaiśākha (in the lunar calendar), he receives special worship (on account of Narasiṁha-jayanti), followed by the recitation of Tamiḷ prabandhams.

प्रदक्षिणपरो भूत्वा पक्षिराजं त्रयीमयम्।
परमानन्दजनकं पश्येयं पुष्पमण्डपम् ।।७९।।
प्रविश्य पक्षिराजं च भजेयं द्वारपालकौ।
ततस्तत्र विचित्राणि रत्नानि विविधानि च
।।५०।।
वाहनानि महार्हाणि भूषणानि सहस्रशः।
दिव्याम्बराण्यनेकानि क्षौम पीताम्बराणि ।
च।।५१।।
सुवर्णरौप्यकानि धनानि विविधानि च।
गजांश्च पशुसंघांश्च छत्रव्यजनचामरैः।।५२।।
समस्तदेशजातानि वस्तून्यन्यान्यनेकशः।
श्रीवेंकटेशप्रीत्यर्थं सर्वदेशनिवासिभिः।।५३।।
सर्वान् समर्पितान् पश्यन्नुपहारांश्च संनिधौ।
आत्मस्वरूपानुगुणमपि श्रीशमनः प्रियम्।
।५४।।



Tirumāmaṇi-mantapa (early days)

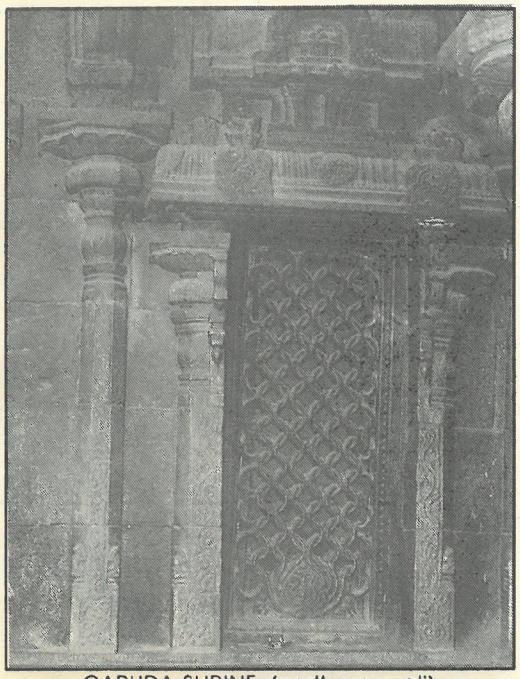
द्रव्यं यत्किञ्चिदतुलमुपहारं समर्प्य च।
प्रणमन् परया भक्त्या भजेयं
कृतकृत्यताम्।।५५।।

TIRUMĀ-MAṆI-MAṆṬAPA

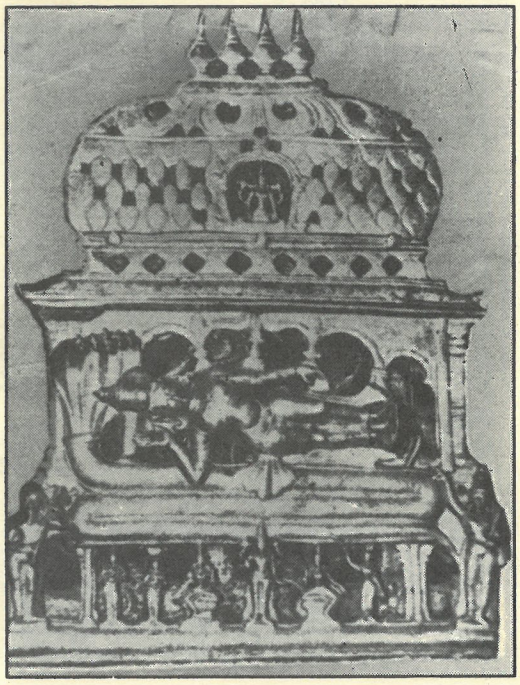
The text then takes the pilgrim to the shrine of Garuḍāḻvār (pakshi-rāja) who is the personification of the Vedic corpus (trayī-maya), on the circumabulatory path (within Vimāna-pradakshiṇa). The pilgrim then enters the Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa, which has been called Pushpa-maṇṭapa in the text. It may be recalled that the text names the present Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa



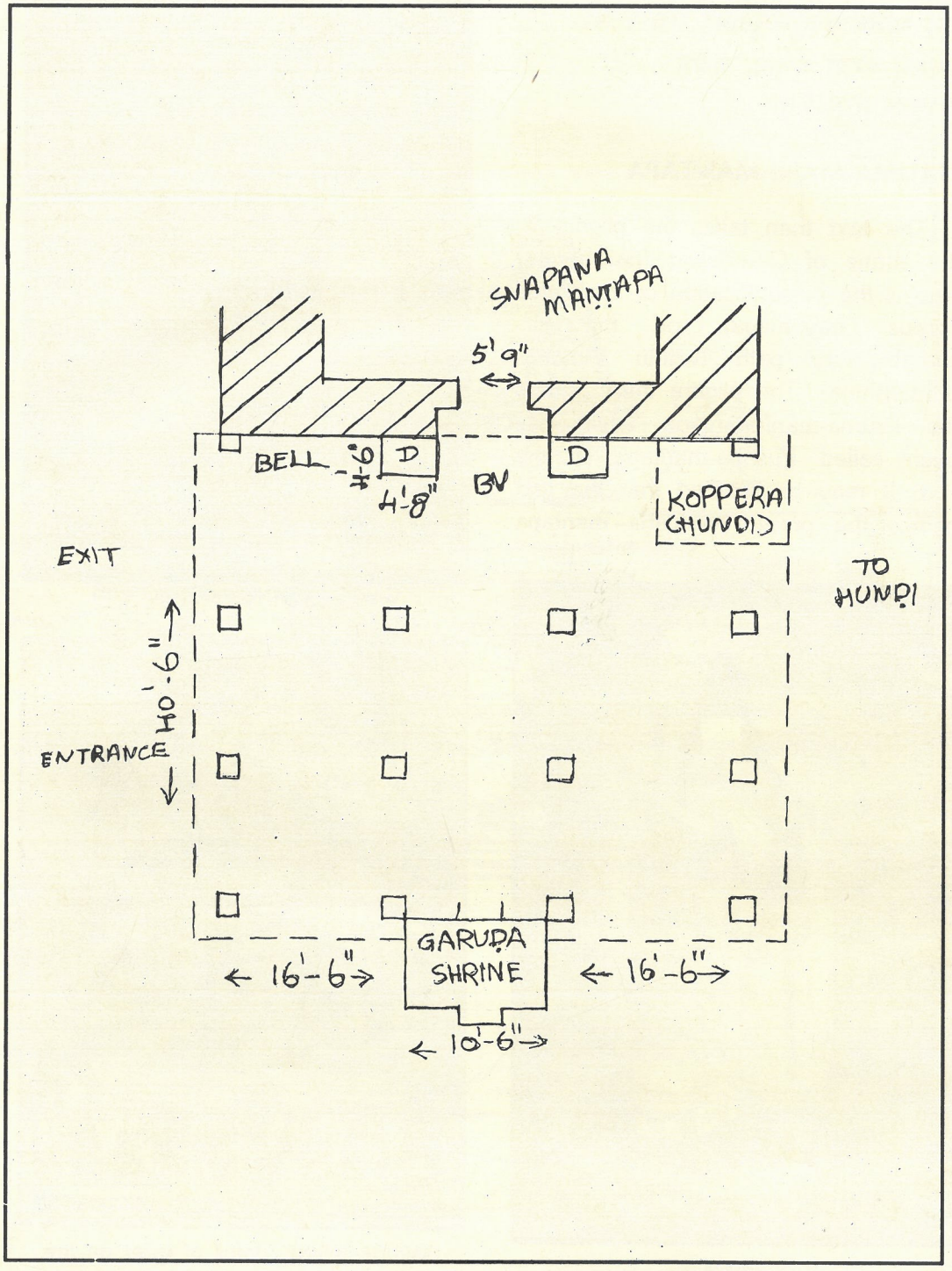
GARUḌA



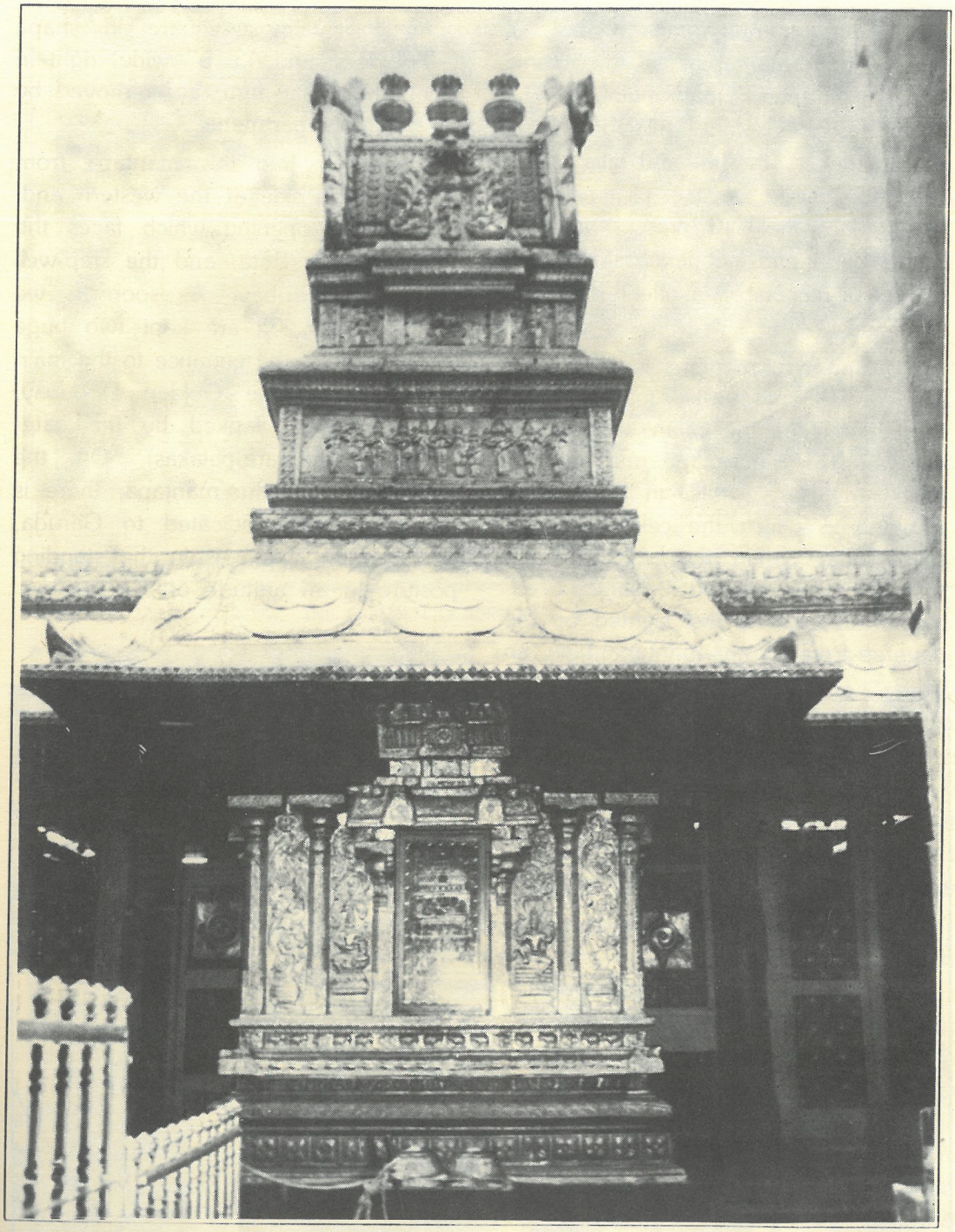
GARUḌA-SHRINE (northern wall)



GARUḌA-SHRINE (detail of relief on the western wall)



TIRUMĀMAṆI-MAṆṬAPA

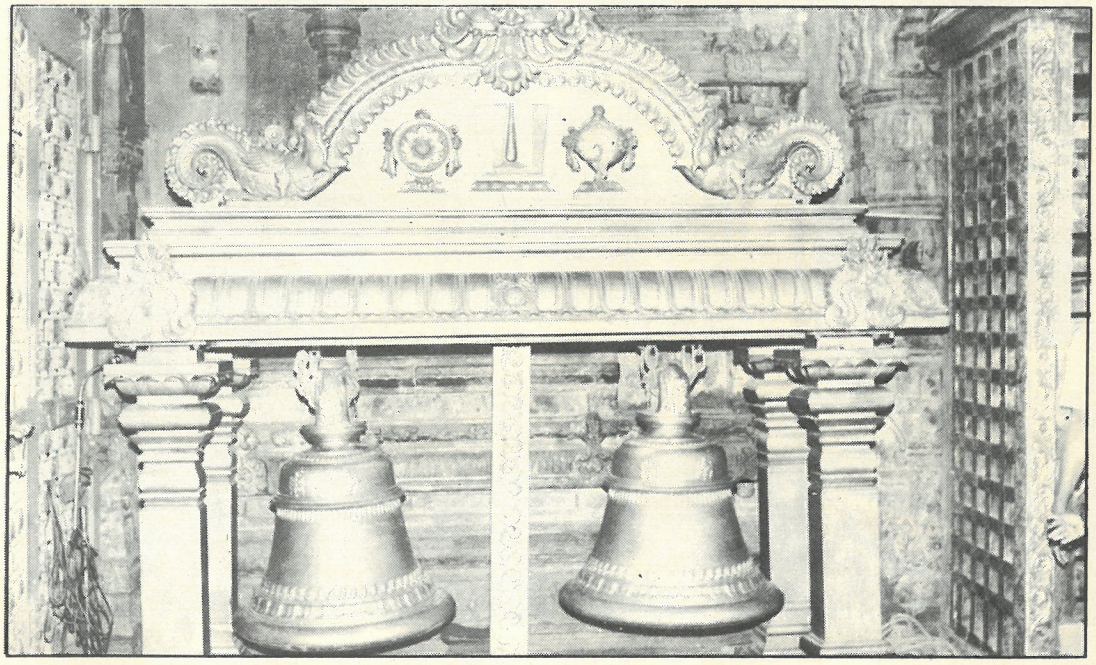


GARUḌA-SHRINE (view as we enter through the Naḍimi-paḍi-kavali)

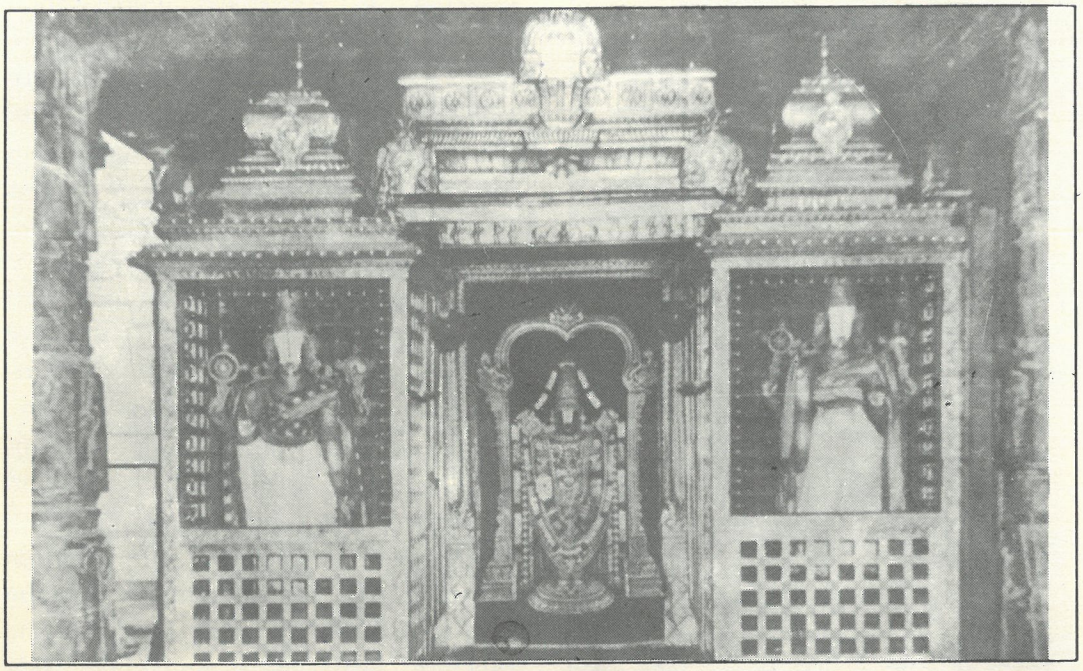
as Śrī-mahā-maṇi-maṇṭapa (verse 32). Tiru-mā maṇi-maṇṭapa is the Tamil form of Śrī-mahā- maṇi-maṇṭapa. The text describes that all donations, presentations, offerings and gifts to the hill-shrine made by the pilgrims were kept in this hall. At present, the hall houses a large Koppara (also called Huṇḍi), a receptable of offerings in cash and kind.

Tiru-mā-maṇi-maṇṭapa is in actuality the conventional mukha-maṇṭapa, the front porch of the main shrine. The expression Tiru-mā-maṇi- maṇṭapa signifies the large hall in Vaikuṇṭha, standing in which the celestial beings (nitya-sūris) obtain the vision of the Vishṇu. The hill-god Vishṇu (Vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān) is first sighted by the devotee from Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa, an open hall, almost square in shape (40'6" long and 43' 6" wide) right in front of the sanctum, but removed by three inner apartments.

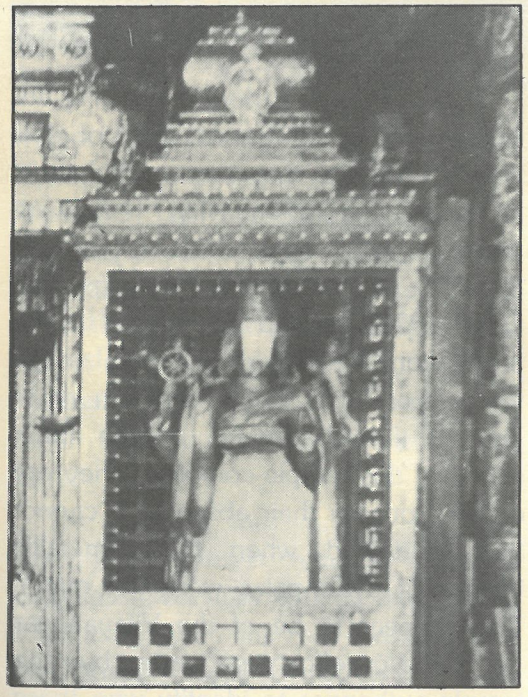
We enter into this maṇṭapa from the southern side at the western end, through an opening which faces the main kitchen (Poṭu) and the step-well called Baṅgāru-bāvi. As soon as we enter. to our left are kept two huge bells,adjoining the entrance to the main shrine (called the Golden Doorway, Bāṅgāru-vākili), flanked by the gate-guardians (dhvāra-pālakas). On the eastern side of the maṇṭapa, there is a small shrine dedicated to Garuḍa, whose stone image is in the standing posture in an attitude of supplication.



The two Huge Bells inside the Maṇṭapa



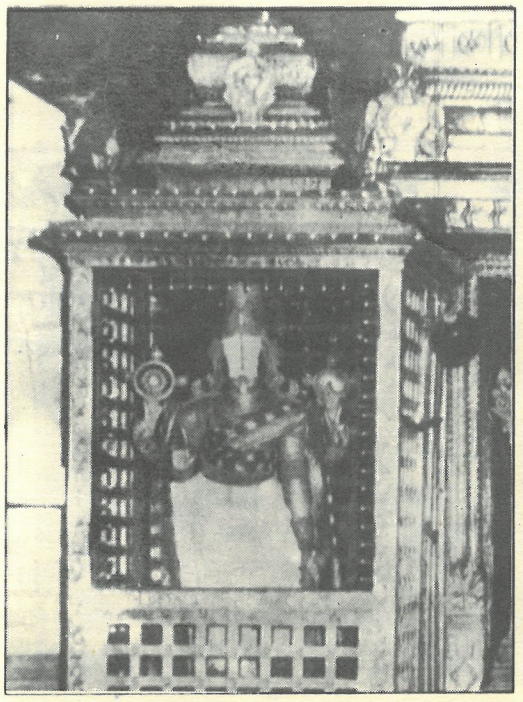
THE GOLDEN DOORWAY



THE DVĀRA-PALAKA (on the right side of the Golden Doorway)

The part of the maṇṭapa connecting the Golden Doorway and Garuḍa's shrine may be looked upon as the central aisle. The maṇṭapa, which is undoubtedly one of most artistic halls on the hill, is supported by sixteen carved pillars, which introduce a natural division of the area into three aisles, oriented east to west.

The central aisle has on its eastern end the shrine for Garuḍa, which is obviously a later construction and which no longer makes the hall open, for this side of the maṇṭapa is now blocked. There is at present a tower-sort of superstructure over Garuḍa's shrine, which is covered by gilt copper plates, flaunting prominently a representation of Raṅga-nātha of Śrī-raṅgam. The superstructure bears strong

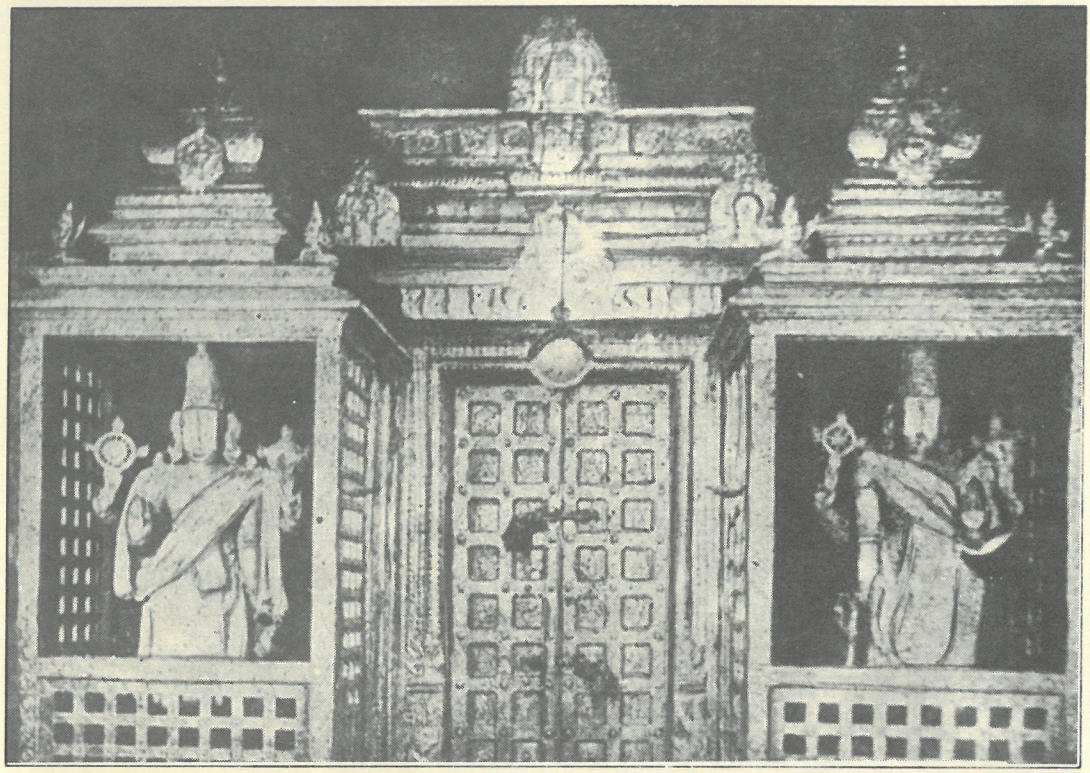


THE DVARA-PALAKA (at the left side of the Golden Doorway)

semblance to the vimāna of the Śrī-raṅgam temple. Garuḍa's shrine comes to our notice for the first time in an inscription of 1512, while the maṇṭapa itself was built in 1417. It is obvious that the shrine to Garuḍāḷvār was set up by some Śrī-vaishṇava enthusiast, who had been worried about the marked absence of a shrine for Garuḍāḷvār here for so long!

The Vaikhānasas are not exercised over the presence or absence of Garuḍa, whom they do recognize as one of the five important pārshada-devatās of Vishṇu. This āgama insists that these devatās have to be visualized or conceptualized at appropriate places within the temple-precincts, and they are not necessarily iconically represented. In *Kāśyapīya Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap. 35), Garuḍa is described as the personification of the five primary elements ('pṛthivyādi pañchātmā'), the totality of all the gods ('sarva-deva mayah'), the very soul of all beings ('sarva-bhūtāmā'), and all pervasive ('sarva-ga'). He must be located between the eastern and south-eastern directions ('indrāgnayor madhye garuḍasya'), according to *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (paṭala 38); or in the centre of the front maṇṭapa ('maṇḍapasya tu madhye garuḍam samprakalpayet'), according to *Khilādhikāra* (7, 33). However, the Garuḍa shrine in the temple-complex on the hill is exactly to the east of the sanctum, facing it. It is 10' 6" wide on the outside with free space of 16'6" on each side of the eastern portion of the maṇṭapa.

The dvāra-pālas (door-guardians) are situated at the western end of this aisle. These are fine bronze sculptures of remarkable workmanship. They were enclosed in silver-plated lattice-cells 4' 8" x 4' 6", by Mahant Prayāga-dāsa (1901-1933). It is to be noted that the usual stone images of dvāra-pālas are not to be found in the sanctum or in any of the apartments of the main shrine in this temple-complex. They are conspicuous by their absence. It cannot be ascertained when these metallic images of dvāra-palas were got made. They appear to be of the Vijayanagar period. No effort is made by the temple authorities to identify who these

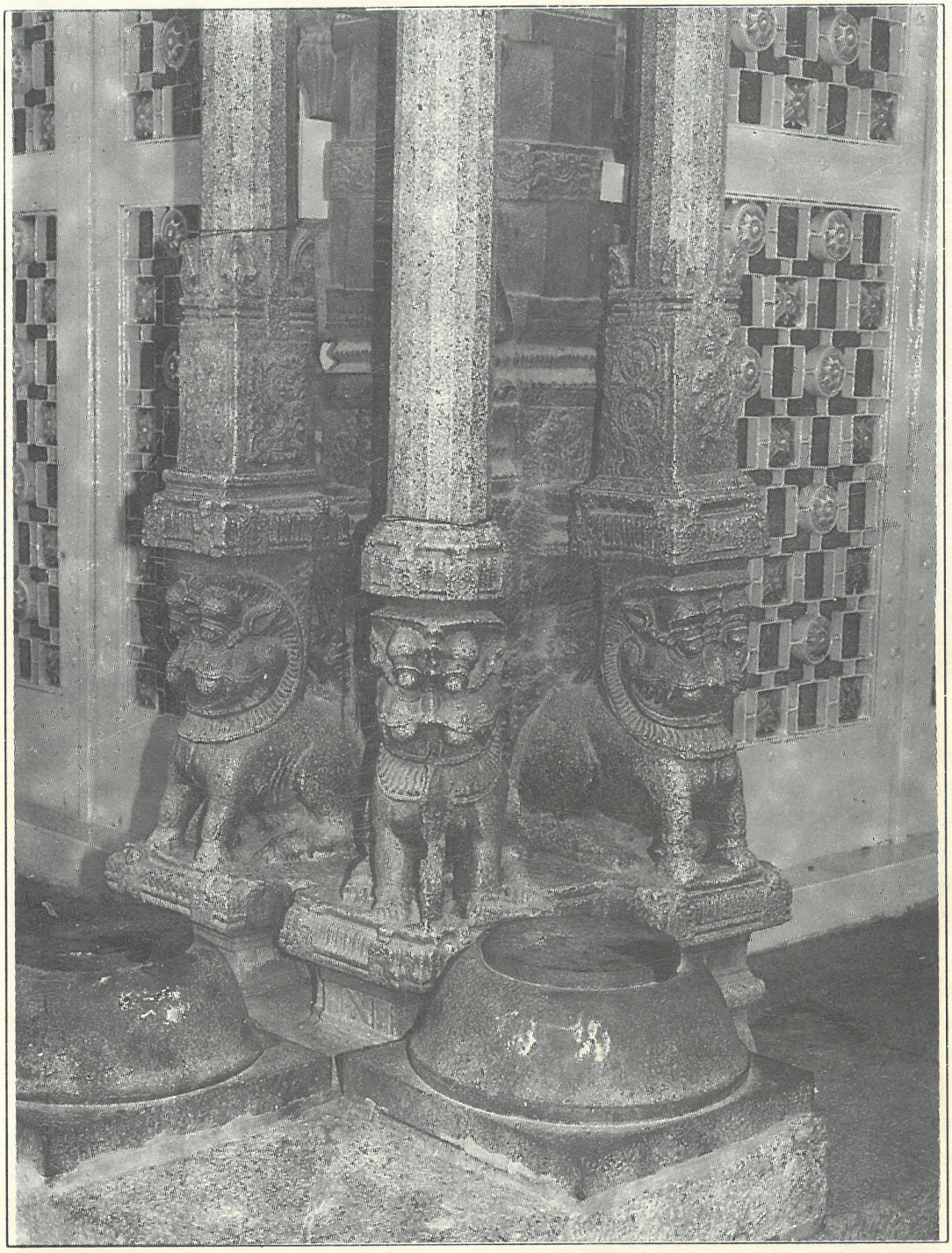


GOLDEN DOORWAY (Bangāru-vakili)

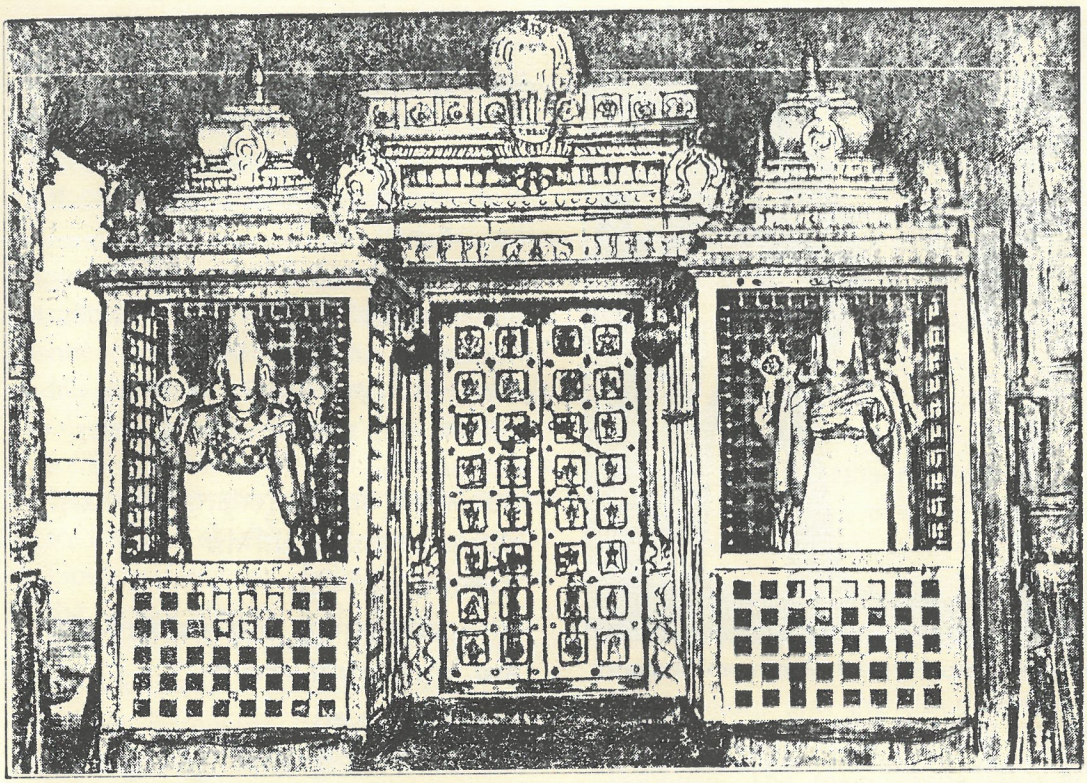
images represent: Kishkindha, and Tīrtha (1st enclosure) or Ćhaṇḍa and Prachaṇḍa (7th enclosure) of the Vaikhānasas, or Jaya and Vijaya of the Pāñcharātrins. However, they look more like the Pāñcharātra images. The Vaikhanāsa door-guardians in the first enclosure are Maṇika and Sandhyā (a lady). Here both the dvara-pālas are men.

The aisle on the southern side has nothing of interest, except the two huge inscribed bells already mentioned. It is likely that the hall was named after these bells (which are in the āgama language known as tiru-maṇi or when large 'tiru-mahā-maṇi') It is said that these bells were being used in former days during the naivedya-sequence of worship in the sanctum. The aisle on the northern side is dominated by the huge Koppara (Huṇḍi), also called 'gaṅgāla' in the temple terminology, which is actually a large brass vessel for depositing all votive offerings, but is placed in a fabrication resembling a huge kettle-drum.

The Tirumā-maṇi maṇṭapa was built by Mallaṇa (Mādhava-dāsa) who was chief (amātya -śekhara) of Chandragiri. There is a record that it was completed on the 25th of August 1417. The inscription relating to this maṇṭapa,



TIRUMĀ-MAṆI-MAṆṬAPA (north-eastern corner on the outside)



GOLDEN DOORWAY (Bangāru-vākili)

found near the Yāga-śālā speaks of the stone fountation (kal-dāram), fine mortar flooring (tiru-muttinadaṇḍal), sloping roof (mēyakkal) and carved pillars.

This hall was used as the temporary place of residence for the processional images (Malayappa and consorts) during Brahmotsava and Adhyayanotsava, before the present Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa was constructed; and later for the ritual known as Sahasra-kalaśābhisheka. At present, it serves as an Āsthāna-maṇṭapa, where Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa holds court after the morning tōmāla-sevā sequence of daily worship in the sanctum, listens to the reading of the almanac (pañchāṅga-śravaṇa) and presides over the giving of daily rations of rice (mātrā-dāna). The recitation of Suprabhāta hymns early in the morning also takes place here.

These fine lyrical verses in three sections in Sanskrit were composed around 1465 A.D. by Maṇavāḷa-mahāmuni (also called Periya-jīyar) who was living in the Pallava-rāyan maṭham in Śrī-raṅgam. He is said have lived on the Vēṅgaḍam hills for a year, when he is said to have composed these songs. These verses are recited by a group of priests who stand in the southern aisle of Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa, and wait for the Golden Doorway



HUṆḌI (koppara) (in Tiruma-maṇi-maṇṭapa)

to be opened, after the arrangments are made inside the main shrine, for pilgrims to enter.

The pilgrim enters the Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa only to approach the celebrated entrance to the main shrine, known as the Golden Doors (Baṅgāru-vākili), already mentioned. The doors of this entrance are made of thick timber but covered with gilt plates with depiction of the ten incarnations of Vishṇu. These plates were fitted in 1884 by Mahant Dharma-dāsa. This door-way actually admits the pilgrim into what now is called Snapana maṇṭapa. Before Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa appeared, this stood where the Sannidhi-pradakshiṇa started and ended; one who came through the Inner Gateway or the Silver Doorway (Veṇḍi-Vākili or the Naḍimi-paḍikāvali) could walk straight upto the Golden-doorway (Baṅgāru-vākili). The three dvāras (the outer gopura, the inner gopura and the Baṅgāru-vākili) were all in one line, and led directly to the the sanctum.

The width of the passage through Baṅgāru-vākili is 5' 9"; this width is maintained through the other inner entrances upto, and including, the Kulaśekharap-paḍi or the doorstep of the sanctum.

ततो रामानुजाचार्यं पुरस्कृत्य यतीश्वरम्।
श्रीवेंकटाचलाधीशं श्रीनिधिं
करुणानिधिम्।।५६।।
अस्मद्भाग्यपरीपाकं अखिलाभीष्टदायिनम्।
नाथं समस्तजगतां नाथं नः
कुलदैवतम्।।५७।।
मातरं पितरं बन्धुं भ्रातरं सुहृदं गुरुम्।
अस्मत्कुलधनं भोग्यमाचार्यकुलदर्शितम्।
शेषाचलशिरोरत्नं श्रीनिवासं परात्परम्।
महनीयं परं ब्रह्म वन्दिषीय पुनः
पुनः।।५५-५९।।
पश्यन् रमन् समुत्तिष्टंस्तुवन्नृत्यन् पुनः
पुनः।
पुलकाञ्चितगात्रश्च भवेयं
प्राञ्जलिस्ततः।।६०।।
द्वारपालाभ्यनुज्ञातः कृपया चावलोकितः।
कथञ्चित् प्रविशन् भीतो
महामण्टपमन्तरा।।६१।।
पश्यन् हरिं प्रसन्नात्मा प्राप्नुयामर्धमण्टपम्।
तस्मिन् धनुर्धरं रामं सौमित्रिमपि
जानकीम्।।६२।।
हनूमन्तं च सुग्रीवमङ्गदं दौत्यलक्षणम्।
विष्वक्सेनं विहङ्गेशं अनन्तं
चानतस्ततः।।६३।।

THE MAIN SHRINE

The devout pilgrim standing in front of the Golden Doorway is overjoyed when he obtains the first glimpse of the hill-god. It is the realisation of the fondest of his dreams; and he is supremely grateful for this great moment when the god has allowed himself to be viewed by a mere mortal. His heart is overwhelmed by feelings of wonder and joy and a sense of fulfilment. He is blessed with a glorious vision, and he pushes ahead, eager to have a closer view. He leaves the Golden Doorway behind and enters the main shrine. The author of our text being a staunch Śrī-vaishṇava of the Pāñcharātra persuation, would bow before Rāmānuja (whose shrine is to his right, as he stands in front of the Golden Doorway, outside the Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa, and about twenty feet away) before entering the main shrine (verse 86)

It should be obvious to the reader by now that the temple as described in our text was very different from what it is at present. There have been structural alterations, additions and functional changes instituted from time to time. One of the alterations that is relavant to our study at this stage is with regard to the main shrine.

The Āgama expression for the main shrine is 'mūlālaya' (original shrine), or 'mūla-harmya'. This normally consists of the sanctum (garbha-gṛha) and the porch in front of it; between the two there may be an intermediate porch (antarāla) ('maṇḍapākhya-dvayor antarālam prakalpayet', *Raurava,* 40,6). This is the essential structure for the installation of the main deity as well as for the main worship. And this is distinguished in texts from other structures that are built in course of time around the main shrine ('mūla-harmyāt paritah'), like shrines for attendant deities (parivārālaya), sacrificial hall (yajña-śālā), place for depositing used flowers (nirmālya-sthāna), assembly hall (āsthāna-maṇḍapa), altar for food-offering (bali-nirvāpaṇa), and so on. (cf. *Matsya-purāṇa,* 252, 28-34).

With regard to the hill-shrine, the expression 'main shrine' may include the sanctum and the three successive halls in front of it till the Golden Doorway. The main shrine now consists of:

(1) the Snapana-maṇṭapa, a large hall, square in shape (27'), the eastern portion of which has been converted into a store on either side (śrī-bhaṇḍāra);

(2) the Rāmar-mēḍa, a rectangular hall (13' x 13' 6"), the northern and southern wings of which are converted into pials (3' 7" wide) to contain the bronze icons of attendant deities (to be mentioned later), allowing a passage in between (5' 9');

(3) the Śayana-maṇṭapa, also rectangular in shape (13' 2" x 13' 8"), where the ekānta-sevā (or śayanotsava) is conducted every night; and

(4) the sanctum or garbhagṛha, which is a square room (12' 8"), in the centre of which the hill-god stands. In between the sanctum and the Śayana-maṇṭapa is the celebrated threshold called Kulaśekharap-paḍi. It is remarkable that the breadth of this threshold is as much as 7' 2" at the base. The entrances of all these maṇṭapas are uniformly 5' 9".

It is common sense that the sanctum must have been the earliest part of the main shrine. Early references to the hill-shrine, as already indicated, suggest that there was a time when the deity stood without a roof or walls. Then, we find that the deity was enshrined in a small enclosure with ramparts alround and a threshold in front. When Āgamic worship was regularized, the Snapana-maṇṭapa and the Śayana-maṇṭapa must have been added to the sanctum. The present Rāmar-mēḍa was formerly only an ardha-maṇṭapa, as our text explicitly mentions. The walls that enclose the sanctum, Śayana-maṇṭapa and Rāmar-mēḍa are 7' 2" thick as also are the walls of Snapana-maṇṭapa excepting the front (viz. eastern walls which are 4' 6" thick).

The hall now called Tirumā-maṇi-maṇḍapa is only an entrance-hall outside the main shrine. It was in all likelihood originally a detached hall, open on all sides. According to the description of such a hall in *Matsya-purāṇa* (264,15), it should be four-faced and must have entrance-arches on all four sides ('chaturbhis toraṇair yukto maṇḍapas syāch chatur-mukhah'). At present, there are steps to get into the hall from the southern and northern sides. The Garuḍa-shrine blocks the eastern side, and the outer-wall of the Snapana-maṇṭapa the western side. When this hall was built, there must have been some open space after the present Snapana-maṇṭapa, probably the area currently occupied by the stores within that maṇṭapa. This conjecture is strengthened when we look at the northern vimāna-prākāra wall (viz. the inner wall of Vimāna-pradakshiṇa) which stops just at this point.

It may also be noticed that of the two arms of this Vimāna-prākāra-wall (viz. the northern and southern sides) which encloses the present inner, enclosed circuit called Vaikuṇṭha-(or Mukkoṭi-) pradakshiṇa, the southern arm is shorter than its northern counterpart. And this prākāra does not now have the eastern side at all. A pradakshiṇa-pathway normally is bound by prākāra walls on all four sides, with an opening (dvāra) on the side which is in front of the sanctum. If the inner, enclosed pradakshiṇa (now closed to the pilgrims) was originally meant for actual circumambulation, the northern arm must also have extended only as far as the southern one does; and then there must have been a prākāra-wall on the eastern side, with an entrance in line with the Silver Gateway (Veṇḍi-vākili). This prākāra-

wall, which we do not find now, must have been where we now find the Rāmar-mēḍa.

Our text mentions that the pilgrim enters the 'Mahā-maṇṭapa', being duly permitted by the door-guardians (dvāra-pāla), and proceeds to the 'Ardha-maṇṭapa'. If we identify the present Snapana-maṇṭapa with the Mahā-maṇṭapa of the text, then the 'Ardha-maṇṭapa' must be the present Rāmar-mēḍa. In fact, the text says that the pilgrim would behold the icons of the Rāma group in the 'Ardha-maṇṭapa'; the text is not aware of the expression Rāmar-mēḍa. There is no mention of another maṇṭapa between this and the sanctum; according to the text, immediately after the Ardha-maṇṭapa would be the threshold of the sanctum, Kulaśekharap-paḍi.

Then the identification needs to be altered. The text's 'Ardha-maṇṭapa' would be then the present Śayana maṇṭapa; and the 'Mahā-maṇṭapa' would be the present Snapana-maṇṭapa which is also a big one justifying the name. The main shrine, according to our text, consisted of Mahā-maṇṭapa, Ardha-maṇṭapa and the sanctum.

SNAPANA-MAṆḌAPA

It is interesting that the present Snapana-maṇṭapa is known to the inscriptions as 'tiru-viḷan-kōil', (Tamiḷ word for the Āgamic Bālālaya). It would appear that Sāmavai got this hall constructed for consecrating the silver replica of the hill-god in 614 A.D. According to the Āgama texts, the Bālālaya can be one of two types ('dvidhā bālālayam proktam'). When a regular temple has been resolved to be raised, as a preliminary rite a Bālālaya must be there. For the construction of a regular temple without this Bālālaya is forbidden ('bāla-harmyam vinā pūrvam mūla-sthānam na kārayet', *Suprabheda*, 1,26, 5). Secondly, when the temple needs to be renovated, repaired or altered to suit the new needs, a Bālālaya must be arranged ('jīrṇod-dhāre navīkaraṇārtham, harmye bhinne cha patite pi vā kartavyam bāla-harmyakam'. *Kāraṇāgama*, 1, 135, 466). It is difficult to tell now what the condition of the hill-shrine was during Sāmavai's days. The temple must already have been there, in whatever condition. So the Bālālaya must have been of the second variety.

It is significant that this lady bestowed valuable gifts on the silver icon that she got installed, and nothing at all to the main deity in the sanctum. Was it because the sanctum was not a safe place? And did she get this new 'iḷan-kōil' (Bālālaya) function like a strong room? We cannot now imagine what the reasons were for the construction of the Bālālaya in 614 A.D.

But it is a fact that this hall, supported on four central pillars, was used even as late as 1831 for keeping



Sculpture on a pillar in Snapana-maṇṭapa showing Hanumān conveying to Rāma and Lakshmaṇa news about Sītā

the Koppara (viz. Huṇḍi) in it and for storing the jewels and other valuables of the hill-shrine. Our text also mentions that the pilgrim would have a chance to look at the valuable offerings made by devotees from different lands at this spot (verses 81-83). It is also a fact that the eastern wing of this maṇṭapa has been converted into two strong rooms, (called stores or Śrī-bhaṇḍāra), one on either side of the passage. The room to our left is where the jewellery and ornaments used to decorate the diety are stored. And the room to our right is where the Koppara collections are kept before they are counted and sorted. It may be mentioned here that the Koppara (Huṇḍi which is now placed in a corner of the southern aisle of Tirumā-maṇi

maṇṭapa) is emptied twice daily, once before the 'second bell' of pūjā (around noon) and the second time before the concluding ritual 'tirmānam' after 'ekānta-sevā', which takes place late in the night. The room in the Snapana-maṇṭapa, where the collections are then kept before 'parakāmaṇi' (counting and sorting) is sometimes known as Kāṇuka-bhaṇḍāra.

As regards the jewels that are kept in one of the rooms in Snapana-maṇṭapa, it may be of interest to know that the jewels that belong to the hill-god is of three categories: (1) Sadā-samarpaṇa jewels are those which are worn by the deity all the time; they are in the custody of the priest-mirāsidārs (vantu-archaka), who keeps them in the steel almirahs in Snapana-maṇṭapa under his own lock and seal. Their value is roughly about a crore of rupees. (2) Visesha-ābharaṇas are special ornaments (like diamond-studded crown, ear-pieces, coverings for the hands and conch and discus) which are used on special occasions. They are in the custody of the temple Peshkār, and their value is to the tune of two crores of Rupees. They are kept in the strong room of the Snapana-maṇṭapa under lock and key of the Peshkār as well as the Parakāmaṇi officer. (3) Mociati-jewels are used for decorating the deities in various sub-shrines of the temple during festive occasions (utsavas). They are in the custody of the Treasurer at Tirupati, who issues them when occasion demands and receives them back after their use.

Despite the name, the Snapana-maṇṭapa is not at present used for the administration of ceremonial bath to any of the icons in the sanctum. Probably, the apartment was named so because the silver replica called Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ of the hill-god, donated by Sāmavai, was given here the bath during its consecration.

According to *Khilādhikāra* (7.64), the Snapana-maṇṭapa must be located in the second enclosure ('snānālayam prakurvīta dvitiyāvaraṇe tathā'), and that, except on the day prescribed for



KĪRITA

the ceremonial bath for the diety, the pavilion must be used on all days for worshipping the subsidiary deities like Chakra, Dhvaja-deva, Śaṁkha and Bhūta-pīṭha (ibid, 112-114)

स्नपनोक्तदिनं हित्वा सर्वकालेषु यत्नतः।
स्नानालये तु पंक्तीशपश्चिमे चक्रमर्चयेत्।।
चक्रस्य पूर्वभागे ध्वजदेवं समर्चयेत्।

Thus this maṇṭapa is a multi-purpose pavilion. And it is likely that this was originally outside the first enclosure (viz. sannidhi-pradakshiṇa), and was meant to be a strong room.

RĀMAR-MĒḌA

Meaning 'the elevated platform for Rāma', this name for the maṇṭapa, which we enter after leaving the Snapana-maṇṭapa behind, is of late origin. The name was meaningful when the bronze icons of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā were kept on a platform or on a pial on one side of this room. But these icons of the Rāma group are now kept in the sanctum by the side of the hill-god. Like the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa of this temple where no kalyāṇotsava is performed, and the Snapana-maṇṭapa where no bathing ritual is gone through, Rāmar-mēḍa is where Rāma no longer abides!

The first inscriptional reference to Rāma's presence in the hill-shrine is around 1476 A.D. (II 68). An ardent Śrī-vaishṇava devotee, Śaṭhakopa-dāsar Narasimha-rāya-mudaliār, made an endowment to Rāma on the hill ('tirumalai-mēl raghu-nāthan'), to fulfil a condition for his endowment to Rāmānuja. It is a custom among the Śrī-vaishṇavas to arrange for a shrine to Rāma whenever a shrine to Rāmānuja is built, because no food-offerings can be made to Rāmānuja independently, Rāmānuja being a saint and devotee. The form of Vishṇu chosen for this purpose is Rāma, because Rāmānuja is regarded as an incarnation of Rāma's brother Lakshmaṇa.

It is said that the beautiful copper images in madhyama-tāla and tribhaṅga of Raghunātha (viz. Rāma) and Jānakī (viz. Sītā) were presented to Rāmānuja by the devotees in Tirupati, while he was studying *Rāmāyaṇa* under his uncle Tirumala-nambi, and that these were presented to the hill-shrine by Rāmānuja. Originally the icons were only two, Rāma and Sītā, and we do not know where in the hill-shrine they were kept. There is an inscription of 1504 A.D. (III, 1) which makes an endowment for permanent light to be lit before "Rāma who is in the presence of the hill-god" ('tiru-vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān sannidiyil irukkum raghu-nāthanukku tiru-nandā-viḷakku'). Does it mean that the image of Rāma was already kept in the sanctum, as we find it today? or does the 'presence' (sannidhi) of the hill-god include the maṇṭapa in front of the

sanctum? The author of our text saw the image in the Ardha-maṇṭapa, viz. the present Śayana-maṇṭapa, right in front of the sanctum. We do not know when or why the icons were moved into the sanctum. Probably this was done when Ekānta-sevā became an established and profitable sequence in daily worship.

Further, the Rāma group that we find today in the hill-shrine has six personages, while the original images were only those of Rāma and Sītā. The group now has not only the icons of Lakshmaṇa and Hanumān, which are usually to be seen in all Rāma shrines, but those of Sugrīva and Aṅgada (Vali's son). It is said that one of the Mahants got these additional figures made.

Whoever got them made, and whatever the period they may have got into the hill-shrine, these copper icons are undoubtedly superb specimens of South Indian metal-craft; especially the icon of Aṅgada who is shown in a characteristic primate posture. Our text describes Aṅgada's attitude as that of a faithful emissary. ('dautya-lakshaṇam', verse 93). The image of Rāma is 32" tall from head to foot, with a pedestal 9" high. The image of Lakshmaṇa is 29" tall, with a pedestal 8" high. The icon of Sītā is 28" tall, with a pedestal 8" high. While the icons of Rāma, Sītā and Lakshmaṇa are now in the sanctum, the other figures of the group are kept on one of the platforms in the apartment known as Rāmar-mēḍa.

Also found here (kept on the platform opposite the above) are very beautiful bronze images of the three attendant divinities of Vishṇu, Vishvaksena, Garuḍa and Ananta. The images of Vishvaksena and Garuḍa (14" tall with a pedestal which is 7" high, and 18" tall with a pedestal 6" high respectively) are the processional images (utsava-mūrti) of the subshrines already mentioned, Vishvaksena's in the inner circuit and Garuḍa's in the Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa. Ananta (Śesha) has no shrine in the temple-complex.

Vaikhānasa-āgama prescribes that this god, who represents the principle of time and also functions as the couch of Vishṇu, must be located on the left side of the doorway. He is visualized as golden green, or white like conch, in complexion, donning slightly blue garments; he may be shown as seated on a throne or on a lotus-seat; alternately, he may be represented as two-armed lord of serpents, his head shaded under the canopy of a hooded serpent *(Khilādhikāra,* 15, 70). The bronze in Rāmar-mēḍa (which is 15" tall on a pedestal 4" high) approximates to the last particular in the above prescription.

It is significant that following the age-old custom in Kārtikotsava (selecting the most important spots in the temple-complex to put up the lights), besides the light known as Akhaṇḍa-

dīpa, supposed to have been lit by Brahmā the creator, the only lights that are lit till the Golden Doorway (Bangāru-vākili) are on the threshold of the sanctum (Kulaśekharap-paḍi) and in the Rāmar-mēḍa (Śrī-rāmula-vāri mēḍa, as given in the Temple *Diṭṭam*). The other two apartments, Śayana-maṇṭapa and Snapana-maṇṭapa are, according to this custom, not important at all.

What then was the special significance of Rāmar-mēḍa, which in any case does not house Rāma? The guess that appears to be reasonable is that this spot marked the entrance for the inner circuit (Mukkoṭi- or Vaikuṇṭha-pradakshiṇa). Ardha-maṇṭapa (viz. Śayana-maṇṭapa) was inside this entrance and Snapana-maṇṭapa was outside, exactly as the Āgama requires. *Khilādhikāra* (7, 104) prescribes:

यमपावकयोर्मध्ये प्रथमावरणे ततः।
शय्यास्थान प्रकुर्वीत सर्वालंकारसंयुतम्।।

and (7, 64)

स्नानालयं प्रकुर्वीत द्वितीयावरणे तथा।

It may not be out of place here to refer in passing to one of the conjectures made by T.K.T. Vīrāraghavāchārya in his *History of Tirupati* (vol I. T.T.D., Tirupati, 1953). He feels on the basis of some inscriptions that the Rāmar-mēḍa was formed between 1262 and 1285, blocking up the eastern wing of the Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa (pp. 208-209), which was closed about the same time. He suggests that this was done during the days of the Telugu Pallava chieftain, Vijaya-gaṇḍa-gopāla, who was a feudatory of Sundara-pāṇḍya (1250-1285). But his view that the intention of the builders "to treat this first pradakshinam as a kōyil for four additional Mūrtis was frustrated by the formation of the Rāmar Meḍai" seems rather far-fetched. He argues that the Pāñcharātra adherents wanted to convert this hill-shrine into a chatur-mūrti-ālaya (temple with four vyūha images) with the Pāñcharātra images put up on the south, west and north walls of the sanctum; and that this attempt was foiled. He does not, however, refer to any āgamic prescription, either of the Pāñcharātras or of the Vaikhānasas about the need for, or objection to, the four koshṭha-devatās. But his contention that the present Rāmar-mēḍa appeared where the eastern prākāra-wall of the inner circuit was, seems well-founded, although the reasons he adduces for it cannot be sustained. It is likely that there were doors where we find platforms now in Rāmar-mēḍa; or the entire area was a free passage, admitting the pilgrim to go round the sanctum and mukha-maṇṭapa (the present Śayana-maṇṭapa). The location of the small shrine to Vishvaksena and the entrance to it on the east are tell-tales of a passage that was there in front of the Śayana-maṇṭapa.

ŚAYANA-MAṆṬAPA

From Rāmar-mēḍa, the pilgrim enters Śayana-maṇṭapa, called in our text Ardha-maṇṭapa, and stands right in front of the sanctum. This is as far as he can go, for no one, excepting the priests on duty, is permitted to proceed beyond this point. This apartment (13' 8" east to west, and 13' 2" north to south) is connected with the sanctum through the wide threshold known as Kulaśekharap-paḍi, after one of the Āḻvārs who yearned to be reborn as threshold to the God's shrine so that pious devotees may step on him. This is called Śayana-maṇṭapa, because it is here that the representative icon of the hill-god (Bhoga-śrīnivāsa) is ceremoniously put to bed as the last sequence of daily worhsip (śayanotsava or ekānta-sevā). This accords with the Āgamic prescription that the Śayana-maṇṭapa (śayyā-gṛha) must be in front of the sanctum ('ālayasya purato').

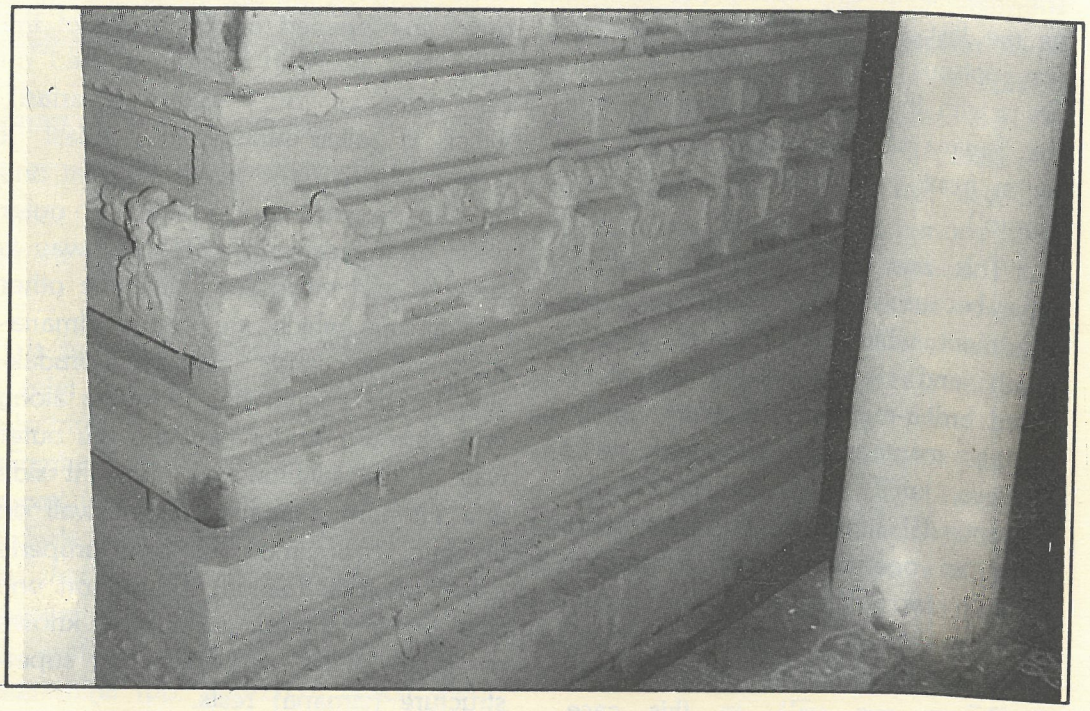
This was also called Ardha-maṇṭapa, because in the Āgama texts the apartment which is in front of the porch, and closely linked with it, is called ardha-maṇṭapa, mukha-maṇṭapa or agra-maṇṭapa. Some texts (like *Raurava*, kriyā, 40,6) would call this an 'antarāla' (intermediate apartment), either an open space or a pavilion between two major maṇṭapas ('maṇḍapākhya-dvayor antar antarālam prakalpayet; sāvakāśāntarālam vā maṇḍapākāram eva vā'), in this case, garbha-gṛha (sanctum) and mahā-maṇṭapa (viz. snapana-maṇṭapa). It is the façade of the sanctum. Its main purpose is to provide additional space for rituals, which cannot all of them be performed within the sanctum.

MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA

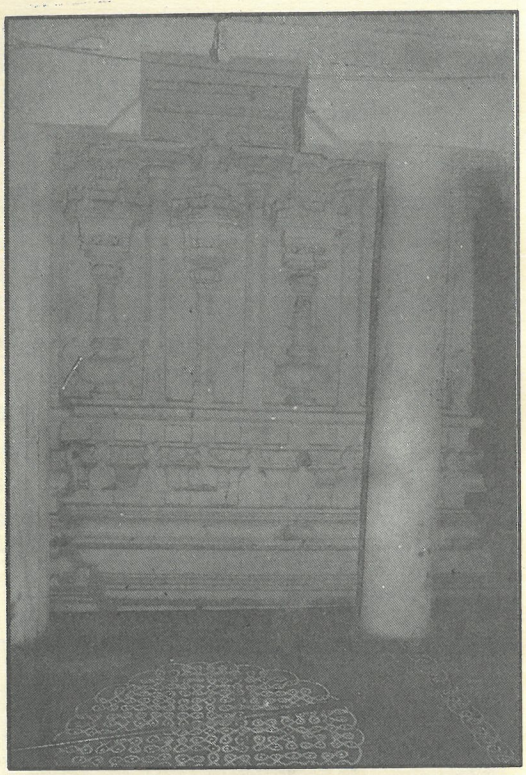
The pathway for circumambulation in the hill-shrine around the sanctum and the porch in front of it, is now closed for the pilgrims all through the year, excepting for two days, Mukkoṭi-ekādaśī (the eleventh day of the bright half of the Pausha month, Dhanurmāsa, also called Vaikuṇṭha-ekādaśī) and the next day, Mukkoṭi-dvādaśī (or Vaikuṇṭha-dvādaśī). The doors are opened on the night of the tenth day (daśamī) and are closed on the night of the twelfth (dvādaśī), which is called Mārgaḷi-tiru-dvādaśī. It is only during these two days that one has an opportunity to see the outer walls of the sanctum. This pathway is covered and enclosed, unlike the other two circuits which are open (Vimāna-pradakshiṇa and Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa). The pilgrim has to move along in a narrow corridor between the outer wall of the sanctum on his right side and the inner vimāna-prākāra wall on his left. The circuit is more properly called an aisle (alinda), bound on one side by an interior solid wall known as 'gṛha- piṇḍi', on which the superstructure (vimāna) rests.

Some discussion about this circuit has already been made in connection with the formation of Rāmar-mēḍa. There can only be conjectures about when or why this circuit was formed, and when or why it was susequently closed. It is a fact that there was an inner enclosed circuit, which is not now in use. In this context, some Āgama considerations need to be noted. Vaikhānasāgama prescribes that five forms of Vishṇu must be worshipped in a temple. In the sanctum, Vishṇu is to be installed in the brahma-bhāga, and the other four forms must be accommodated in the pavilion in front of the sanctum, viz. the ardha-maṇṭapa; Purusha in the centre, Satya on the southern side, Achyuta on the eastern side and Aniruddha on the northern side. The Āgama insists that there must be an enclosure around the area where these five forms are installed, consecreated and worshipped. We read in *Khilādhikāra* (2, 111-114):

पञ्चमूर्तिप्रतिष्ठा चेद् गर्भागारे पदं चरेत्।
उर्ध्वं तलं समुद्दिश्य मानुषे स्थापयेत्क्रमात्।।
बाह्ये तु विष्णुमूर्तिं च स्थापयित्वा विचक्षणः।
अर्धमण्डपमध्ये तु पुरुषमूर्तिं समर्चयेत्।।
सत्यं दक्षिणतः पार्श्वे पश्चिमेऽप्यच्युतं तथा।
उत्तरे चानिरुद्धं च स्थापयित्वा समर्चयेत्।।
परितः प्रावरणं कुर्याद्यथायोगं विचक्षणः।
स्थिपयित्वा विधानेन नित्यं विधिवदर्चयेत्।।



MUKKOTI-PRADAKSHINA (northwestern corner of the sanctum on the outside)



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (outer wall of the sanctum)

Alternately, Vishṇu is located in the sanctum, Purusha in the Ardha-maṇṭapa, Satya on the southern wall of the sanctum (outside), Achyuta on the outer wall of the back of the sanctum, and Aniruddha on the outer wall at the northern side. It is not necessary for these forms to be iconically represented and actually installed. Vaikhānasa-āgama provides for the visualisation of these forms at appropriate spots. This is in any case a sanction for the first enclosure which should cover nothing other than the garbha-gṛha and ardha-maṇṭapa.

Vimānārchanā-kalpa, in another context (paṭala 32, section on 'Sarva-devārchanam'), speaks of the gods that must be worshipped in the three enclosures ('prāgādi chatur-dikshu dhruva-kautakayor āvaraṇa-traya-devān'), concentric circuits round the Dhruva-bera and Kautuka-bera. *Khilādhikāra* (20, 112-115) also speaks only of three enclosures, while mentioning the dvara-pālas. Thus, three āvaraṇas appear to be the standard Vaikhānasa practice.

The expression Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa has a double meaning. The obvious meaning is the circuit that is



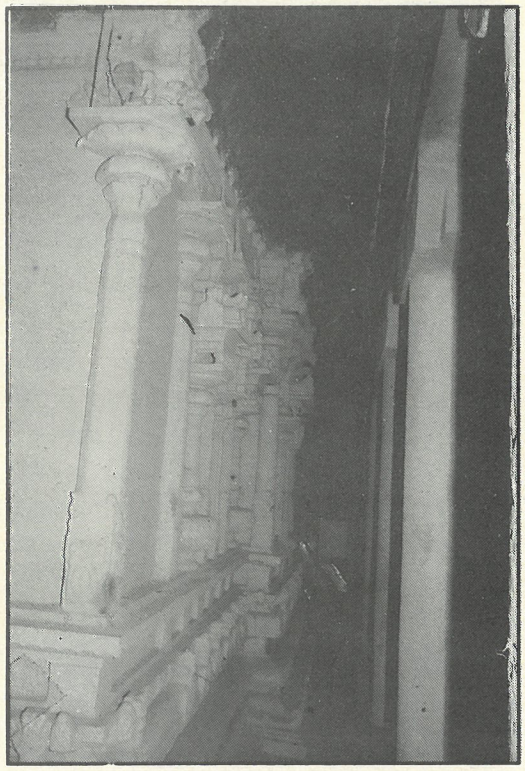
MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (central niche in the western wall of the sanctum)



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (northern wall of the sanctum)

open during the Mukkoṭi days (ekādaśī and dvādaśī), which are otherwise known as Vaikuṇṭha-ekādaśī and Vaikuṇṭha-dvādaśī, the days that are specially sacred to Vishṇu, and the days on which the three crores of gods gather together. In Kannaḍa, Telugu and Tamiḷ, 'mukkoṭi' is the form 'mūru-koṭi' assumes. In the Dravidian terminology that is relevent in architecture, 'mukkoṭi' means three-sided. Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa is a circuit that has enclosing walls on three sides only. The circuit so named in the hill-shrine answers to this description; its wall on the eastern side is altogether missing. Whether this was so even when it was formed, we do not know; nor are we certain that it was always called Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa.

The entrance to this circuit now is only through the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. We go a little beyond the Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa in the southern wing of this pradakshiṇa, and enter the inner circuit through a door-way (that is kept locked all through the year except on the two days mentioned above) at the outside corner of Snapana-maṇṭapa. When we come out of this circuit, we are again in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa close to Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa and Rāmānuja's shrine. The vimāna-



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (northwestern corner of the sanctum on the outside)

prākāra-wall (which constitutes the outer limit of this circuit) on the southern side measures 69' 6", on the western side 61' 6" and on the northern side 76' 9". It does not have a wall on the eastern side. And there is no way of getting into the inner circuit from any of the apartments of the main shrine (sanctum, Śayana-maṇṭapa, Rāmar-mēḍa and Snapana-maṇṭapa).

The space available for moving along this circuit is not uniform. On the western side (viz. behind the sanctum), the pathway is extremely narrow; it is 8' 6"; and it further diminishes where the projection indicating the brahma-bhāga of the sanctum is. There are four pillars here. It is a little wider on the southern side



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (southeastern corner of the sanctum on the outside)



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (northern basement of the sanctum on the outside)



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (northwestern corner of the sanctum on the outside)



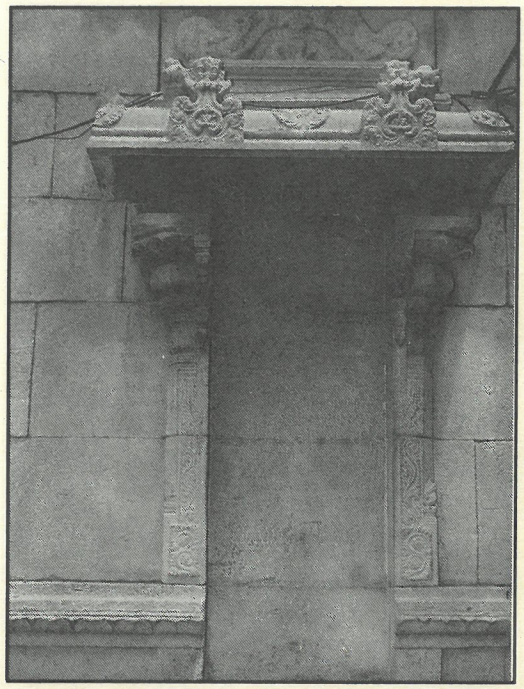
MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (the southern wall of the sanctum)

(through which we enter), varying between 8' 3" and 10'. There are six pillars in a line on this side. The pathway on the northern side of the circuit is much wider than its southern counterpart, varying between 16' 3" and 18' 4", except where the Vishvaksena shrine projects (where it is only 4' 6"). And there are twelve pillars on this side (in two rows). It is likely that this side of the circuit was used on festive occasions for congregational worship, when there were no separate apartments like Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa and Āsthāna-maṇṭapa. The greater width of this side of the circuit may have been intended to facilitate this purpose. And the presence of Vishvaksena's shrine may also have been an additional reason.

THE SANCTUM

But the relative narrowness of the Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa might have been occasioned when the thickness of the walls of the main shrine (the sanctum and the Śayana-maṇṭapa) was enormously increased. The present thickness of the walls is as much as eight feet. It is remarkable that this thickness of the walls is maintained even around the Snapana-maṇṭapa, except on its eastern side (where it is about 5').

However, the walls of the sanctum would not have been this thick always.



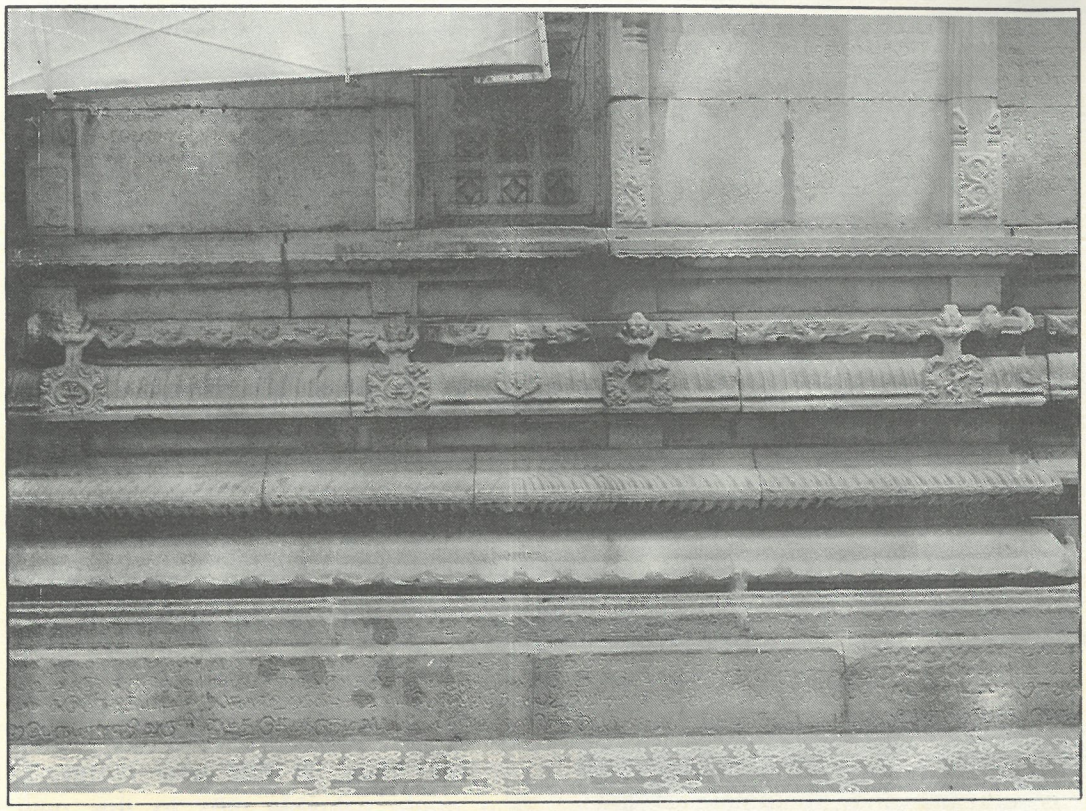
MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (southern wall of the Ardhamaṇḍapa on the outside)

It is unusual and abnormal for any enclosure, and more so for a sanctum. Half its thickness would be in order. Probably this was the original thickness of the walls of the sanctum. It is not known when it was increased. It is on record that large-scale renovation work was undertaken at this shrine, during the long reign of Vīra-narasiṅga (Yādava-rāya 1205-1262) who ruled for fifty-seven years, and was a feudatory of Jaṭā-varma Sundara-pāṇḍya (1250-1275). It was then (around 1260 A.D.) that the dome known as Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna over the sanctum was covered by gilt copper plates and surmounted by a golden vase (kanaka-kalaśa).

We do not hear of this superstructure before this date; it is likely it was raised only then, or a few years earlier. The conjecture that additional walls of the sanctum reinforcing the walls that were already there, were built before the dome (Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna) was raised over the sanctum appears reasonable. The old walls (which could not be pulled down, owing to the great sancitity attached to the sanctum) may not have been strong enough to bear the load of the superstructure. According to T.K.T. Virāraghavāchārya (op.cit., p.194), "two distinct and separate sets of walls do exist, one set enclosing or gripping the other with perhaps an



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (southern wall of the antarālaya)

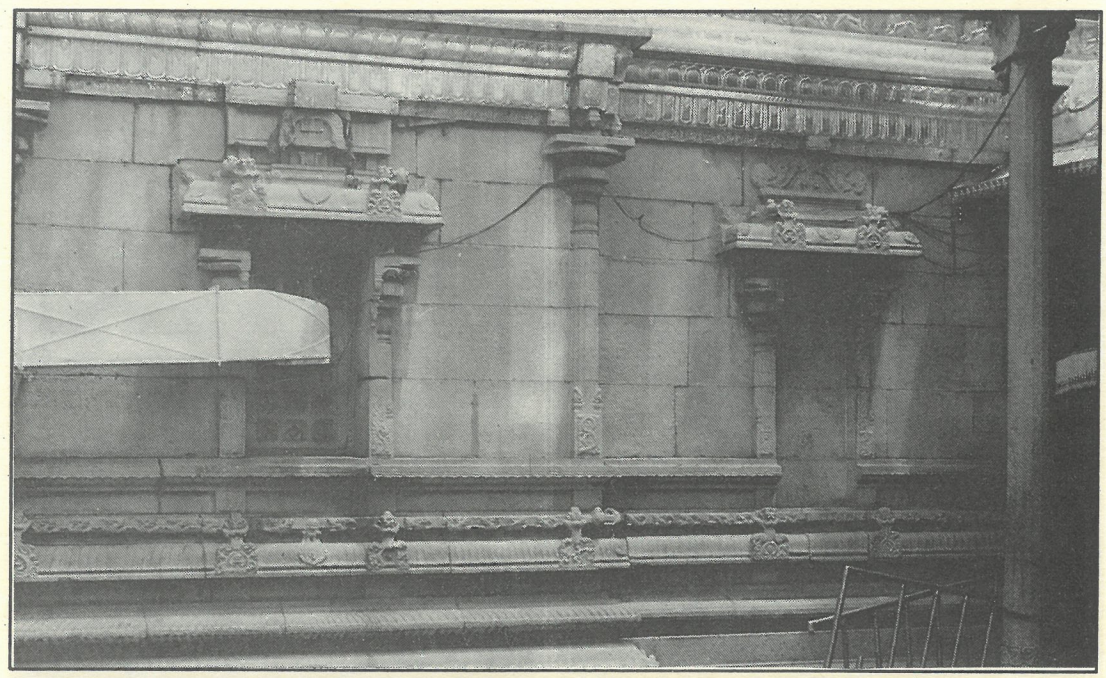


MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (basement of the southern wall of the mahā-maṇṭapa)

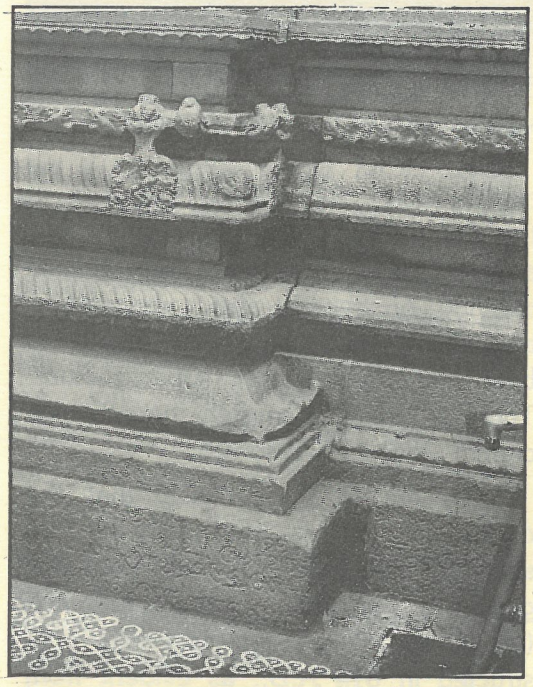
airspace (or antar-maṇḍalam) in between. The Vimānam was built along and in connection with the new (or outer) walls of the garbhagṛiham between the years 1244 and 1250 A.D." This may be so, although one cannot be sure. But the air-space between the walls (that he supposes exists) is not called 'antar-maṇḍala' in the language of the Āgama; the expression signifies the most interior enclosure (āvaraṇa), where one may move about.

While this may be so, why are the walls around Śayana-maṇṭapa, Rāmar-mēḍa and Snapana-maṇṭapa also equally thick? Are they also double-walls? There is no objection in the Āgama for pulling down the walls around these functional areas, while carrying on repairs and renovation; and these walls were not meant to bear the load of the superstructure. There is indeed a mystery here, which cannot easily be resolved.

To me, it seems likely that the original shrine consisted only of the sanctum. The Pallava princess Sāmavai got the present Snapana-maṇṭapa (which she called tiru-viḷan-kōil) constructed in 614 A.D., as evident from the inscription, which also makes it clear that she consecrated the silver

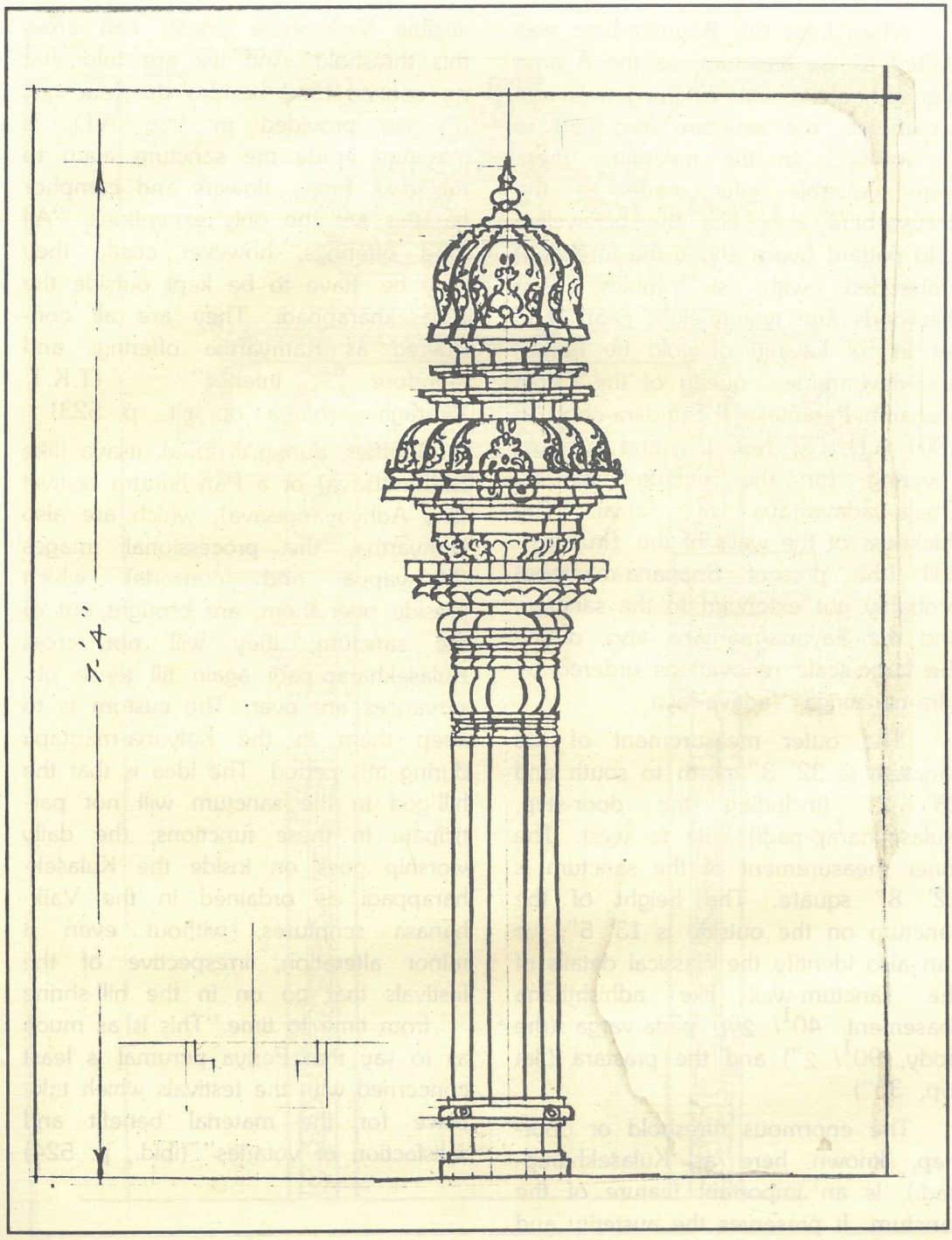


MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (Southern wall of the Mahāmaṇṭapa)



MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHIṆA (a view of the basement of the southern wall of the Mahā-maṇṭapa)

replica of the hill-god (Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ) here, in this new maṇṭapa. She made valuable gifts to this new image (T.T. No 18, vol I, 8 and 9). The ornaments and jewels that she presented to this image had to be safely stored; and the maṇṭapa where the silver icon and the jewels were kept had to be a strong room. It is interesting that she made no gifts whatever to the main hill-god, whom she describes as "the god presiding over the sacred Vēṅkaṭa hill". ('tiru-vēṅkaṭattu eḷundaruḷi ninra perumān-aḍigaḷ'). The obvious reason is that the sanctum was not a safe place in 614 A.D. in which valuables may be kept. The 'tiru-viḷan-kōil' that she got made was specially designed to be a strong room; hence the unusually thick walls.



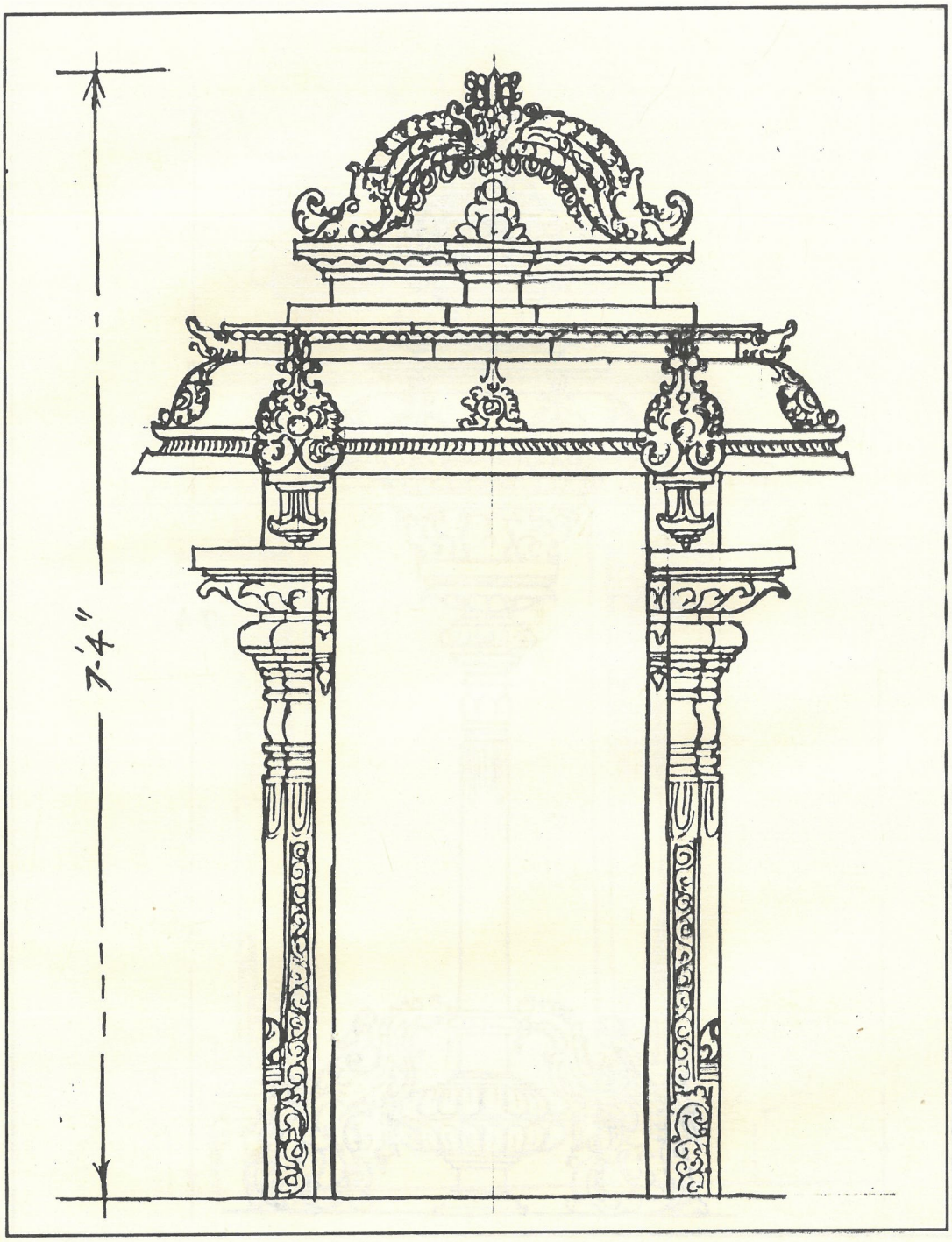
Detail of Kumbha-pañjara on the outer wall of the sanctum (northern side); hieght 7'4"

When later this Kautuka-bera was shifted to the sanctum, as the Āgama required, along with all the jewels and ornaments, the sanctum also had to be fortified. In the meantime, there were valuable gifts made to the dhruva-bera also, like the bejewelled gold paṭṭam (worn above the forehead) embedded with six rubies, four diamonds and twenty-eight pearls and set in 52 kaḷañju of gold by Parāntaka-devi-amman, queen of the Choḷa monarch Parāntaka II Sundara-choḷa in 1001 A.D. (TT NO. 17), and the gold covering for the varada-hasta by Ōbaḷa-yādava-rāya of Tañjai. The thickness of the walls of the Tiru-viḷankōil (the present Snapana-maṇṭapa) probably got extended to the sanctum and the Śayana-maṇṭapa also, during the large-scale renovations ordered by Vīra-narasiṅga Yādava-rāya.

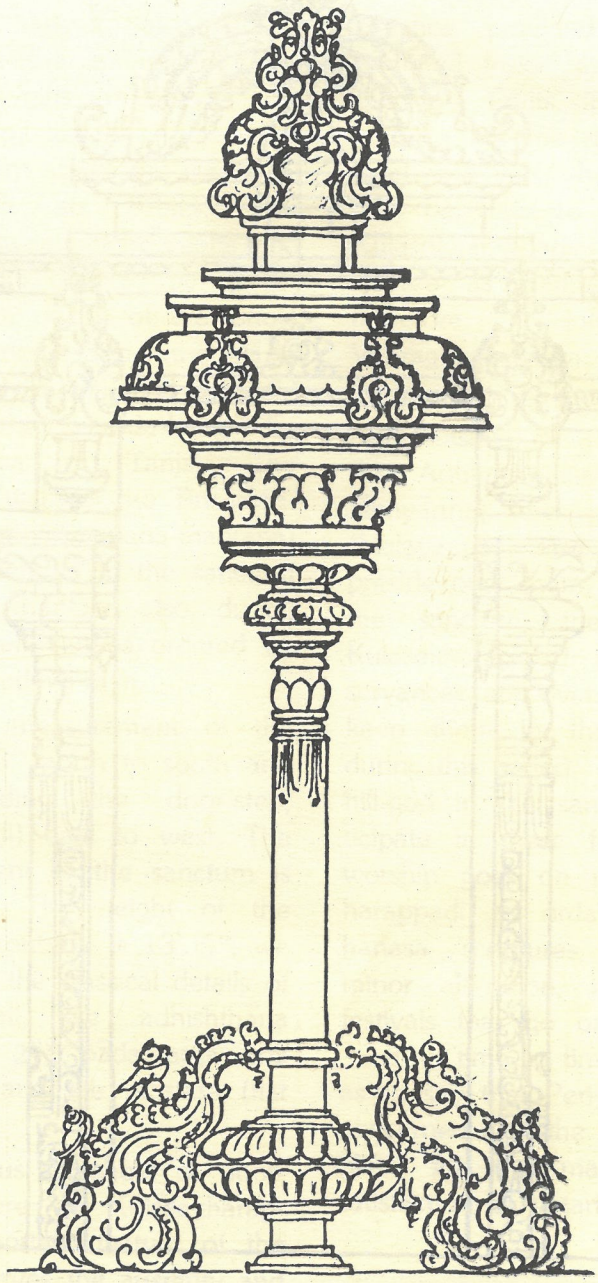
The outer measurement of the sanctum is 32' 3" north to south and 28' 2" (including the door-step, Kulaśekharap-paḍi) east to west. The inner measurement of the sanctum is 12' 8" square. The height of the sanctum on the outside is 13' 5"; we can also identify the classical details of the sanctum-wall like adhishṭhāna (basement, $40\frac{1}{2}$"), pāda-varga (the body, $90\frac{1}{2}$") and the prastara (flat top, 30")

The enormous threshold or door-step, known here as Kulaśekharap-paḍi), is an important feature of the sanctum. It preserves the austerity and sanctity of the sanctum. None but the eligible Vaikhānasa priests can cross this threshold. And we are told that no cooked food besides the four nāḷi of rice provided in 966 A.D. is admitted inside the sanctum even to this day. Fruits, flowers and camphor hārathis are the only exceptions. "All food offerings, however costly they may be, have to be kept outside the Kulaśekharappadi. They are all considered as Kāmyārtha offerings and therefore inferior" (T.K.T. Vīrarāghavāchārya, op. cit., p. 523)

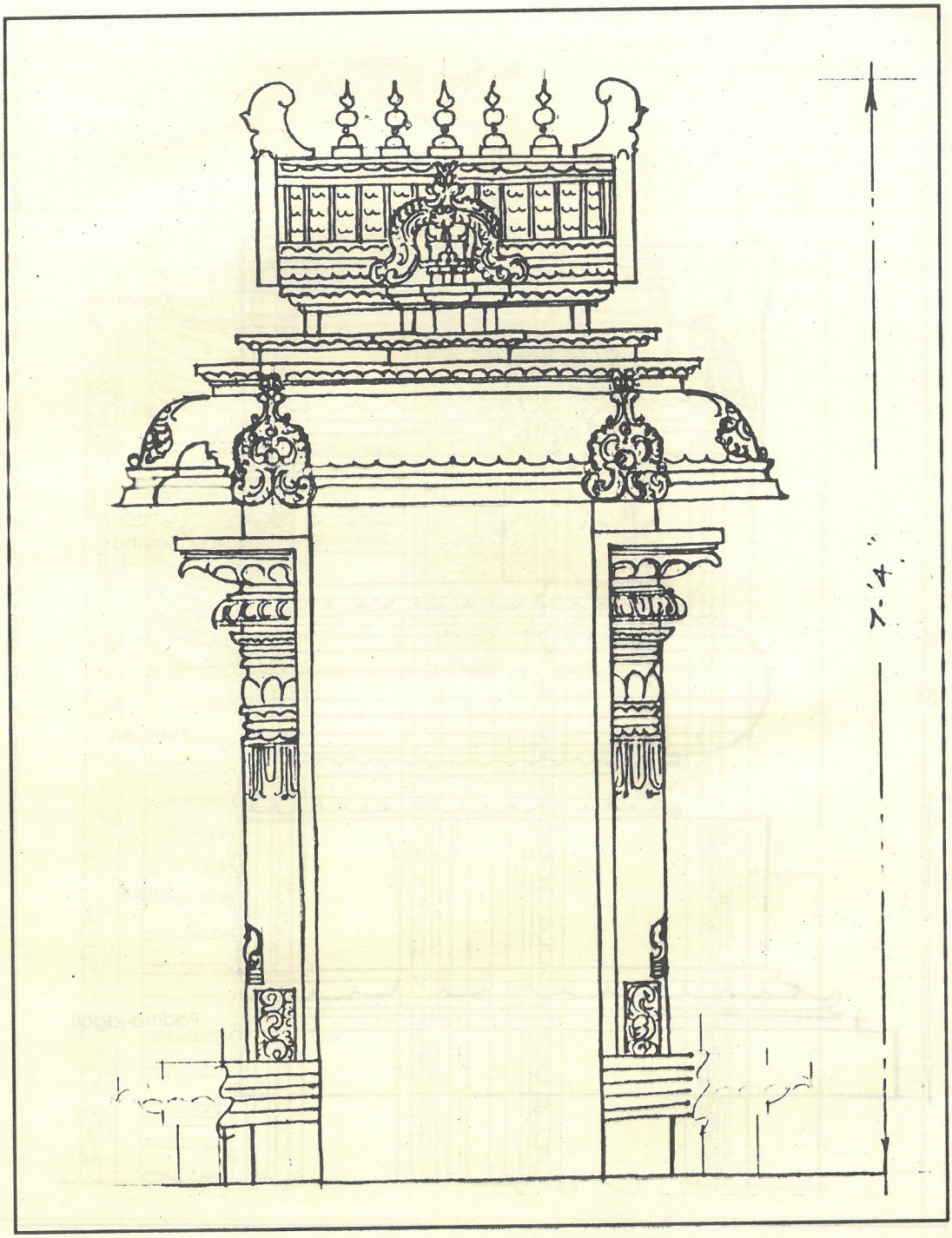
Further, during a grand utsava (like Brahmotsava) or a Pāñcharātra festival (like Adhyayanotsava), which are also kāmyārtha, the processional images (Malayappa and consorts) which preside over them, are brought out of the sanctum; they will not cross Kulaśekharap-paḍi again till these observances are over. The custom is to keep them in the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa during this period. The idea is that the hill-god in the sanctum will not participate in these functions; the daily worship goes on inside the Kulaśekharappaḍi as ordained in the Vaikhānasa scriptures, without even a minor alteration, irrespective of the festivals that go on in the hill-shrine from time to time. "This is as much as to say that Periya perumāḷ is least concerned with the festivals which take place for the material benefit and satisfaction of votaries" (ibid., p. 524)



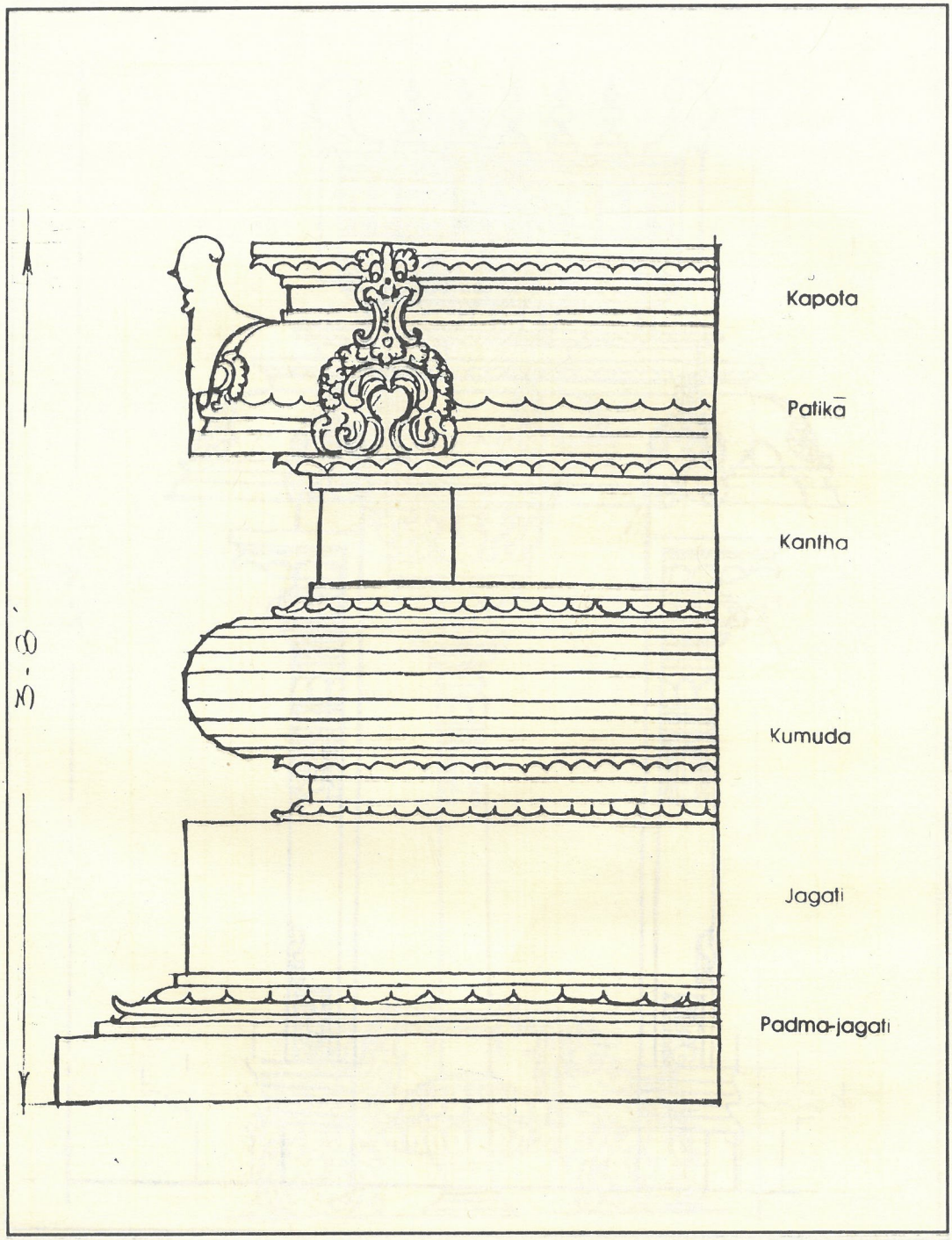
Torana-pañjara on the outer wall of the sanctum (northern side)



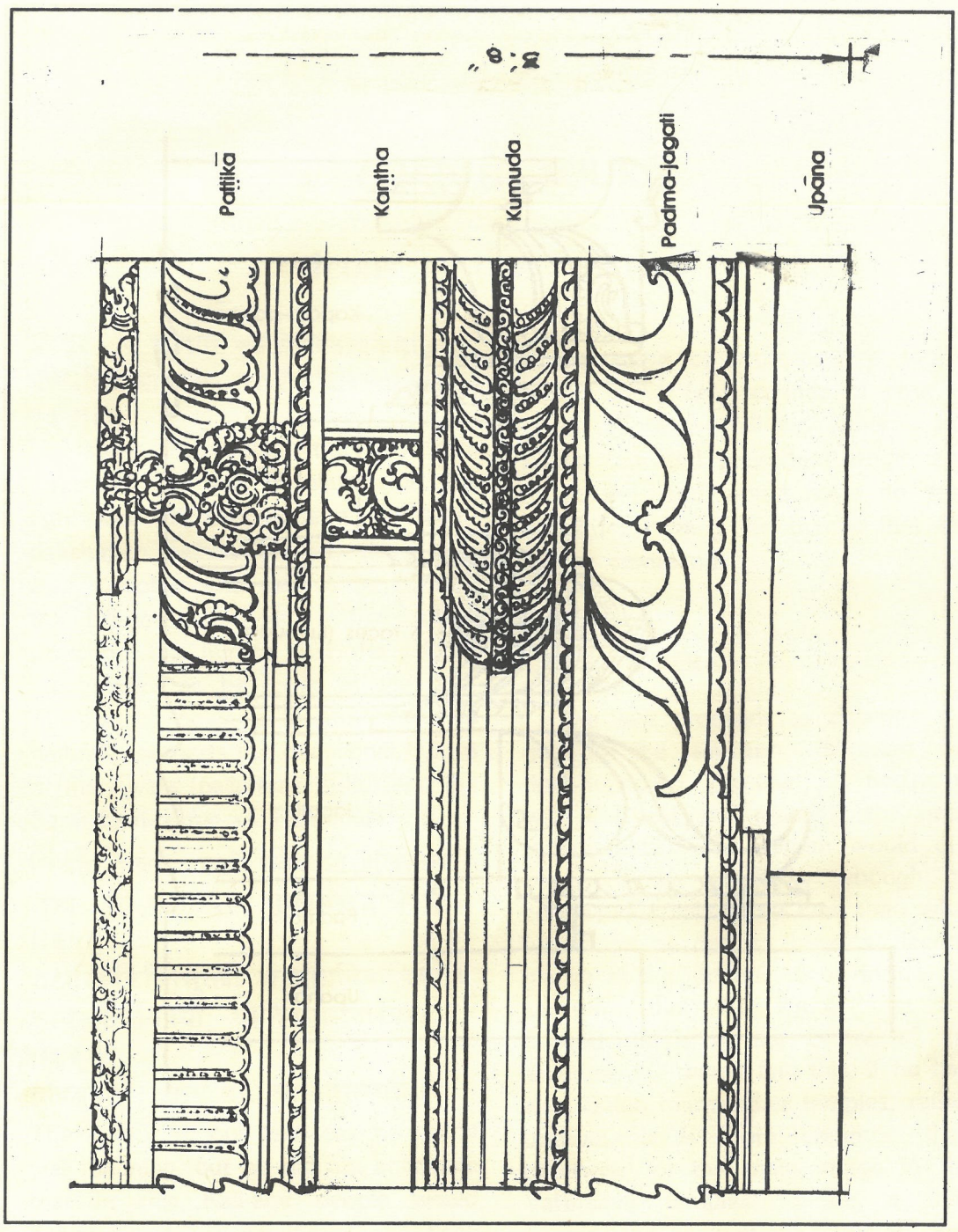
MUKKOṬI-PRADAKSHINA



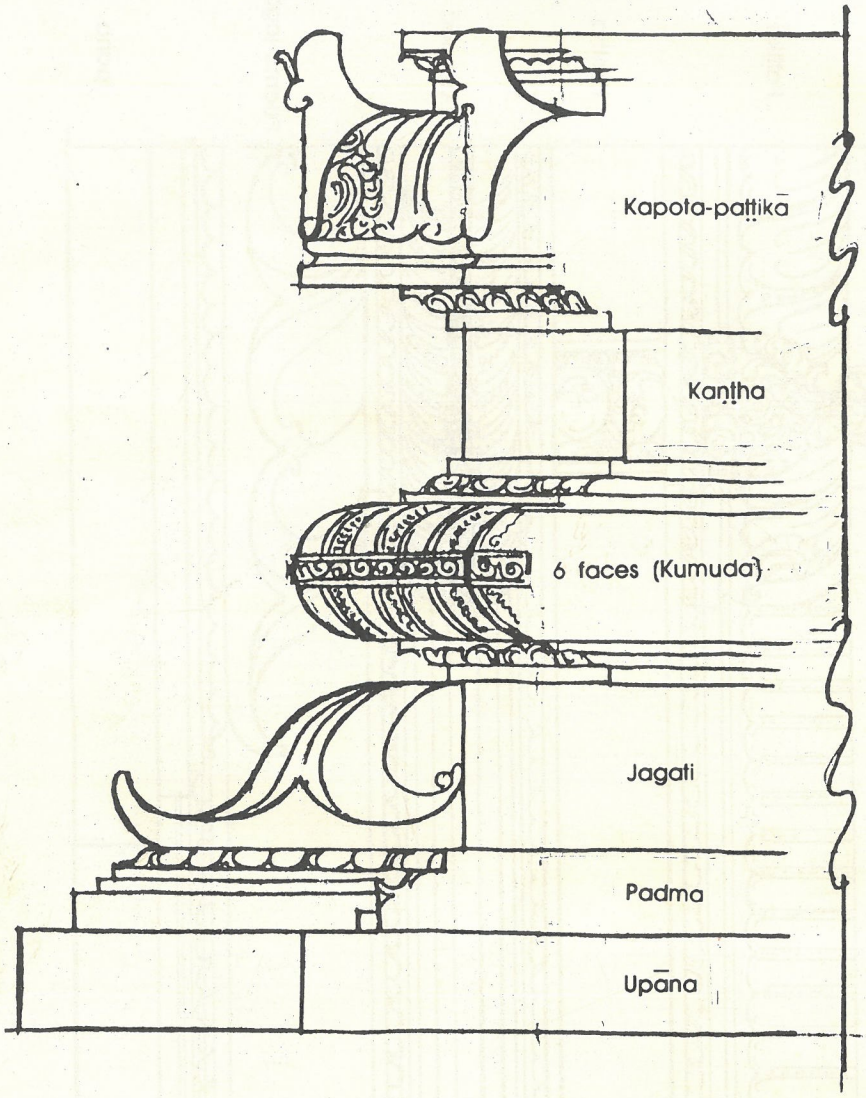
Pañjara in Mukkoṭi-Pradakshiṇa



Adhisthana of the porch of the sanctum (southern side)



Adhiṣṭhāna of the sanctum-porch in Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa



Adhishṭhāna of the porch of the sanctum (southern side)

CHAPTER FOUR

Icons in the Sanctum

उपसृत्य च सोपानं कुलशेखरनामकम्।
भयभक्तिसमाक्रान्तः पार्श्वं दक्षिणमास्थितः
॥६४॥

Having approached the sanctum's threshold, the pilgrim stands on the right side of the sanctum ('pārśvam dakshiṇam āsthitah'); and, filled with awe, devotion and marvel, he beholds the hill-god. The verses that follow prescribe the hymns that the pilgrim must recite as he looks at the god. The author being a Śrī-vaishṇava, he naturally suggests the devotional hymns of the Āḻvārs (pāśurams, sūkti) and the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* of Rāmānuja

निभृतः प्रणतः प्रह्वो भवेयं प्राञ्जलिस्ततः।
शुभाः श्री भट्टनाथस्य सूक्तीर्मङ्गलरूपिणीः
॥६५॥
शठारिकलिजित्सुक्तीः शरणागतिवाचिकाः।
श्रीवेङ्कटेशविषयाः श्रीनिवासमनःप्रियाः
॥६६॥
तदियप्रवरैः सार्धं गद्यं चाप्यनुसन्दधत्।

The author of our text was no doubt well-meaning, but he did not anticipate that in this Kali-age people would become ever so devotional and flock at the hill-shrine in such unimaginably large numbers that one, after waiting in the queue for hours on end, would hardly get a few seconds of time to stand before the hill-god (whom the Āḻvārs saw and praised at length and at leisure), and would have no time at all for reciting the hymns that the author commends!

DHRUVA-BERA

The text proceeds to describe the god in the sanctum, following the time-honoured practice of beginning with the feet and reaching the head (āpāda-mauli). The pilgrim would discover, if he is lucky enough to command a little more time than what would be needed to have a fleeting glance at the glorious vision inside the sanctum, that the figure of the hill-god stands in the centre of the sanctum. He would find this, if he had also visited many other temples, rather unusual. It is more common than otherwise for the main image in the Vaishṇava temples to be a little towards the back of the sanctum, and not in the centre. This needs some explanation.

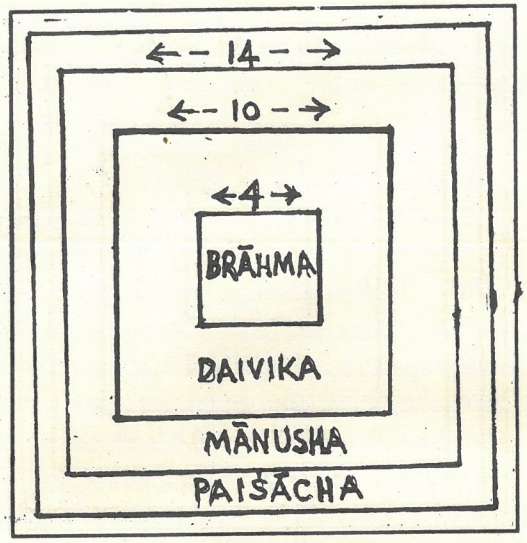
VĀSTU PADA-VINYĀSA OF SANCTUM

The area of the sanctum is regarded as the principal vāstu-maṇḍala, and for architectural details as well as for religious purposes, the entire area is looked upon as a square divided into several small square-units called 'padas'. *Mānasāra*, for instance, suggests thirty-two ways of dividing the 'maṇḍala' into padas (chap 7, 1-267, 'pāda-vinyāsa'). Two of them are relevant for us in the present context. One of them is to divide each side of the square into 16 equal units so that we have a site-plan of 256 units (pāda, small squares) This is called Padma-garbha. The other is to divide each side of the square into seven equal units so that we have 49 cells (padas) in all. This is known as Sthaṇḍila. A detail of further importance is to demarcate the zones within the vāstu-maṇḍalas. The middle-most zone which is considered most auspicious is Brāhma; the zone surrounding it is Daiva (divine); the zone surrounding the Daiva is the Mānusha (human) and the outer-most zone is Paiśācha (demoniacal).

In the pada-vinyāsa known as Padma-garbha (256 cells), the Brāhma zone consists of 16 small squares (4 divisions on each side); the Daiva zone consists of 84 cells; the Mānusha zone 96 cells; and the Paiśācha 60 cells. In the other arrangement (sthaṇḍila, 49 cells), the Brāhma consists of a single square cell in the centre; Daiva of eight cells, with three units on each side (omitting Brāhma or the central cell); Mānusha of 16 cells, with five units on each side (omitting the cells of the Brāhma and Daiva zones); and Paiśācha 24 cells.

The Vaikhānasa texts accept these two kinds of unit-divisions (pada-vinyāsa) for the sanctum. If the main immovable image is to be installed, it is to be located in the Brāhma zone or in the Daiva. If, during the ritual of installation, a representative metallic and moveable image (kautuka-bera) also is used, the latter must occupy the Brāhma zone, for it is this image that receives all formal worship (kar-mārchā) as a representative of the immovable image (Dhruva-bera), which is installed at its back in the Daiva zone. Most of the Vaishṇava temples adopt this procedure; the Dhruva-bera, therefore, is a little towards the back of the sanctum, while the Kautuka-bera is in front of it.

But the Vaikhānasa texts provide for the installation, consecration and continued worship of a dhruva-bera alone in the sanctum; it may, however, come to possess a kautuka counterpart at a later period, as it happened in the hill-shrine. The stone image alone was in the sanctum, and therefore its proper place was in the Brāhma zone, viz., in the centre of the sanctum. We read in *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (paṭala 15)

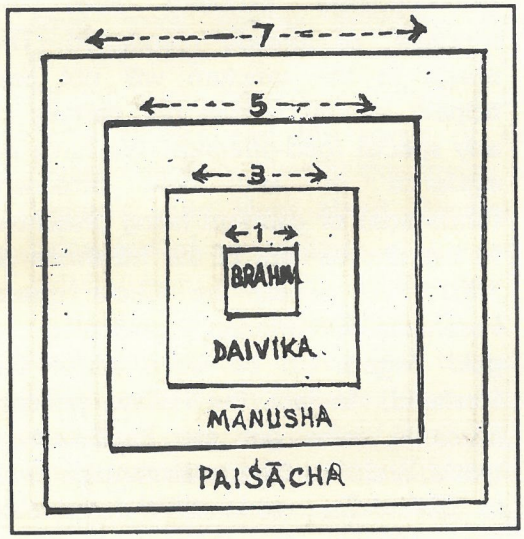


The Dhruva-bera and Kautuka-bera are to be located in the Brahma-bhāga and Daivika-bhāga, when both receive worship in the shrine

अथ गर्भागारपदविन्यासविधिं वक्ष्ये।
प्रागग्रैरुत्तराग्रैश्च सूत्रैः षट्पञ्चाशद् द्विशतभागं च विभज्य तन्मध्ये
षोडशभागं ब्राह्मं तत्परितश्चतुरधिकाशीतिभागं दैविकं तत्परितः षण्णवतिभागं मानुषं
तदबहिःषष्टिभागं पैशाचं भवति।
तन्मध्ये ब्राह्मे कौतुकपीठ दैविकभागं त्रिधा कृत्वा तस्यापरभागे तन्मध्ये वा स्थानकं स्थापयेत्।
ध्रुवार्चा चेद् गर्भगारं सप्तसप्तविभागं कृत्वा
तन्मध्ये चैकं पदं ब्राह्मं तत्परितश्चाष्टभागं दैविकं
तद्बाह्ये षोडशभागं मानुषं
तद्बहिश्चतुर्विंशतिभागं पैशाचं भवति।
ब्रह्मस्थाने स्थापयेच्छान्तिकं, दैविके पौष्टिकं
देवमानुषयोर्मध्ये जयदं, एवं ध्रुवार्चां संस्थापयेत्॥

Worship is said to be of two types: worship for the dhruva-bera alone, or worship done conjointly to dhruva-bera and kautuka-bera (*Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, chap. 54 'dhruva-kautuka-samyuktam dhruvār chanam ityarchanādvividham bhavati')

The above citation not only mentions the two kinds of 'pada-vinyāsa' admissible with regard to the sanctum in connection with the two types of worship along with the zonal divisions, but some additional details. What was said above with regard to the dhruva-bera applies only to the sthānaka variety (viz. the images in the standing posture), as, for instance, the hill-god who is properly located in the Brāhma-zone. The location, however, varies if the image is seated (āsīna) or is recumbent (śayāna). Further, the passage cited specifies the location in accordance with the motives with



The icon to be placed in Brahma-bhāga within the sanctum, when it is the Dhruvarchā-shrine.

which installation is made or worship conducted. If the purpose is to obtain peace, tranquility or spiritual excellence (śānti), the image must be in the Brāhma-zone. If, on the other hand, the purpose is nourishment, health or worldly prosperity, the Daiva zone is preferred for the location of the image. Installing the image in between the Daiva and Mānusha zones would secure success and victory.

The Daiva and Mānusha zones are suitable for images which are calculated to fulfil the normal aspirations of devotees (kāmyārtha). The Paiśācha zone, of course, is to be avoided, as it spells disaster or ruin. The hill-god being located in the Brāhma zone indicates that this god is to be worshipped by the devotees who aspire for śānti. This is also why all festivals and offerings which are 'kāmyārtha' are severely excluded from the sanctum, as already mentioned. The image in the sanctum will not participate in any festival nor partake of any special food-offerings. We have no evidence of any new ornament (bhūshaṇa) or garment being presented to the dhruva-bera of the hill-shrine till 1001 A.D. when the Choḷa queen Parāntaka-dēvi-amman presented a gold paṭṭam (to be worn above the forehead). In fact, the Pallava princess Sāmavai, who got the Kautaka-bera made and the Snapana-maṇṭapa built in 614 A.D., made all the valuable presentations to the kautuka-bera (Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ or Bhoga-śrīnivāsa) and nothing at all to the dhruva-bera, whom the kautuka-bera was after all meant to represent (TT 1-8).

Vaikhānasa texts also insist that where dhruva-bera alone is in the shrine, no festival (utsava) is possible. It was in order to enable the festivals (like brahmotsava, tirukkoḍi-tirunāḷ) being conducted that Sāmavai got the kautuka-bera installed and consecrated. And the texts also prescribe that when the kautuka-bera is to be installed in a sanctum where the dhruva-bera is already there, the former should also be placed in the Brāhma-zone along with the dhruva-bera. This is what we find in the hill-shrine. If the dhruva-bera alone is in the sanctum, all worship is directly offered to it. But if there is a kautuka-bera also there, normal daily worship in all its sequences is made to the kautuka-bera, the dhruva-bera being only a witness to it. This is what is being done in the hill-shrine.

It must, however, be noted that in the case of the hill-shrine the sanctum did not appear first and then the Dhruva-bera. The Dhruva-bera was there as a self-manifest phenomenon (svayaṁ-vyakta) for a long long time before it was discovered; and it was then installed by a Vaikhānasa priest Gopīnātha, according to purānic accounts, in an open space and not in any sanctum. It was only later that a sanctum was constructed for the deity, keeping in mind the regulation in retrospect that where the Dhruva-bera

stood was the Brāhma-zone, the zones of the sanctum were accordingly planned.

DHRUVA-BERA

The hill-shrine is famous as an 'eka-berālaya', the shrine where only one form of god receives all the worship. This form is known in Tamiḷ as Vēṅgaḍattān, Vēṅgaḍavā or Vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān, all of which terms mean "one who is the lord of the hill named Vēṅgaḍa". The Tamiḷ expression has been Sanskritized as Veṅkaṭāchalapati, Veṅkaṭeśa, Veṅkaṭeśvara, Veṅkaṭa-ramaṇa. While this is the ancient name, Rāmānuja called him Śrīnivāsa. He begins his great work Śrī-bhashya by bowing before this god who stands on the peak of the mountain that the Vedic lore is, "who is responsible for the creation, preservation and dissolution of all the worlds" who has taken upon himself the task of protecting all creatures who seek refuge in him, and who verily is the Vedāntic Brahman:

अखिलभुवनजन्मस्थेमभंगादिलीले ।
विनतविविधभूतव्रातरक्षैकदीक्षे।
श्रुतिशिरसिविदीप्ते ब्रह्मणि श्रीनिवासे ।
भवतु मम परस्मिन् शेमुषी भक्तिरूपा।।

Since the days of Rāmānuja, the expression Śrī-nivāsa (meaning 'the abode of Lakshmī', for Lakshmī is said to dwell in the chest of Vishṇu as Śrī-vatsa) has become popular, especially among the Śrī-vaishṇavas. The devotees from the northern parts of the country know this god as Bālāji. The name Bālāji is given to any unspecified, mysterious but powerful spirit among the Hindi-speaking folk. The name sometimes refers to Hanumān, and sometimes to deified village-heroes. It is, however, never used in the sense of a goddess, as some writers have imagined (as, for instance, V.N. Srinivasa Rao, *Tirupati Sri Venkatesvara Balaji*, Madras, 1949)

That the hill-god was always regarded as a form of Vishṇu can hardly be disputed. It is indeed remarkable that there should have been a controversy over this issue at all. The fact that the Vaikhānasas, who are an ancient group of temple-priests given exclusively to the worship of Vishṇu, have, since remote antiquity, worshipped here is sufficient evidence. All the early references including the Tamiḷ classics and the songs of the Āḻvārs uniformly identify this image as Vishṇu's. The story about Rāmānuja being invited to arbitrate in the sectarian claims of this shrine is a fabrication of *Tirumalai-oḻugu* (a work of the last quarter of the 16th century, which contains more fables than facts, and is a poor imitation of *Koil-oḻugu*, an historical account of the Śrī-raṅgam temple). Written in maṇi-pravāḷa style (Tamiḷ and Sanskrit mixed), this work seeks to project the importance of the hill-shrine for the Śrī-vaishṇava community. The purpose of the work was

not so much to establish the Vaishṇava claim over the Śaiva as to justify the Pāñcharātra precedence over the Vaikhānasa in the hill-shrine. This outlook is also reflected in another equally unreliable and late work, *Veṅkaṭāchala-itihāsa-mālā*.

It is true that Veṅkaṭeśa or Śrīnivāsa is not one of the classical forms of Vishṇu mentioned in texts of Śilpa and Āgama; it is also true that the original image in the sanctum, which is tall (about eight feet), majestic and bewitchingly beautiful, is bereft of the usual emblems of Vishṇu: conch and discus. What we see at present in the upper hands of the deity are gilt copper coverings fixed on the empty hands, probably during or after the days of Rāmānuja. But then, the Vaikhānasa visualization of Vishṇu is not always as one carrying conch and discus.

The Vaikhānasa texts recognize three major varieties of icons: sthānaka (standing); āsīna (seated) and śayāna (recumbent). In each variety there are four types: yoga, bhoga, viraha and vīra (according to *Kāśyapiya Jñāna-kāṇḍa* chap. 53), or yoga, bhoga, vīra and ābhichārika (according to *Vimānārchanā-kalpa*, paṭala 19), or three types, yoga, bhoga and vīra (according to *Khilādhikāra*, chap. 12). The yoga type of icon is worshipped by ascetics, recluses and renunciants whose sole interest is salvation; the bhoga type by the worldlings who aspire for prosperity and enjoyment; the vīra type by those who seek strength, power and success; and the ābhichārika type by sorcerers and magicians engaged in the black art of love-charms, paralysing the faculties, killing and inciting hate. Excluding the last type, these types are accommodated in the three-fold values of worship, mentioned in *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* in another context (paṭala 15) śānti (pease), pushṭi (nourishment) and jaya (victory). The yoga type is suited for securing peace, the bhoga type for nourishment, and the vīra type for victory.

The hill-god is in a standing (sthānaka) posture and is alone the sanctum (kevala); following a detail in Bhṛgu's *Kriyādhikāra* (12, 37),

एकबेरप्रतिष्ठायां देव्यौ न स्थापयेत्पुनः।

although this image is self-manifest and was not installed: According to *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* of Kāśyapa (chap. 53), the yoga type is alone (viz., without the consorts 'śrī-bhūmibhyām rahitam'), but is attended by the priest Mārkaṇḍeya on the right and the sage Bhṛgu on the left, or accopanied by Daṇḍaka on the right and Garuḍa on the left. The bhoga type is flanked by Lakshmī and Bhū-devī and is accompanied by the priest Mārkaṇḍeya and the sage Bhrgu. The vīra type is bereft of the consorts (devībhyām rahitam) and bereft also of conch and discus (śaṁkha-chakrābhyām rahitam), but optionally accompanied by the priest

Mārkaṇḍeya and the sage Bhṛgu ('archaka-munibhyām sahitam vā'). The hill-god accordingly answers to the vīra-sthānka type, not accompanied by the goddesses and not carrying conch and discus in the hands. *Khilādhikāra* (12, 20-21), however, provides an option regarding conch and discus; the vīra-sthānaka type may or may not carry them, but insists that it should not be accompanied by either the goddesses or the priest-sages:

देव्यौ मुनी वर्जयित्वा देवेशस्तत्र शिष्यते।
वीरमेवं प्रकुर्वीत सर्वाभरणसंयुतम्।
शंखचक्रे विना कुर्यादथ वा तदलंकृतम्।।

Thus the absence of conch and discus in the original image, therefore, cannot be an argument against the image being Vishṇu. It was altogether unnecessary for the purāṇas to invent the story of the hill-god giving away his conch and discus to his devotee Toṇḍamān who was fighting a battle with the intruding enemies and of his agreeing to be seen without them for all time (*Brāhma*, chap. 7)

वरं वरय भद्र इति देवो राजानमब्रवीत्।
मयायुधप्रदानस्य ख्यात्यै देवोत्तम प्रभो।।
अर्चाबिम्बे शिलाबिम्बे चक्रशंखौ न धारय।
इति संप्रार्थितो देवो न दधार पुनश्च तौ।।

When in 614 A.D., the Pallava princess Sāmavai got the silver kautuka-bera (called Maṇāvaḷaperumāḷ), made in the exact image of the dhruva or original figure in the sanctum, the conch and discus were made integral with the upper arms, and not detachable as in the original immovable icon. This was obviously a concession to the pre-Rāmānuja Śrīvaishṇavas, whose protection Sāmavai humbly invoked in the inscription. The Vaikhānasa priests could not object, for *Khilādhikāra* does allow the vīra-sthānaka image to be provided with conch and discus. But it was a lone (kevala) figure, viz., without consorts, as the Vaikhānasa texts insist. There is a prescription in *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap. 54) that the kautuka-bera should be an exact replica of the dhruva-bera.

ध्रुवबेरस्यानुरूपमेव तत् कौतुकं बिम्बं कारयेत्।

Or in Atri's *Samūrtārchanādhikaraṇa* (24, 27);

ध्रुवबेरानुरूपं तु कौतुकं त्विति शासनम्।

The former text explains that even if there is a deficiency in the dhruva-bera, it may be corrected in the kautuka-bera ('mahā-bere doshepi kautuka-sampadā naśyati', chap-55).

The dhruva-bera is immoveable (achala), it is all-pervading (sarvaga), like unto space (vyomābha); undifferentiated in form (nishkala), and imponderable even for the gods headed by Brahmā. Worship of this

bera is said to be without props (nirālamba). It has no identifiable form (arūpa), and it only shines like supreme light (paraṁ-jyotirūpam). The kautuka-bera, on the other hand is moveable, and endowed with form (sakala); its worship can only be with props (sālaṁ-ba). It is, therefore, a necessary detail in formal worship. Let me cite the entire passage for it would help us understand why the dhruva-bera in the hill-shrine is rendered an indistinguish-able mass of flowers, jewellery and camphor, glorious but obscure, dark but luminous

अचलं चलमिति द्विविधं भगवतो रूपम्। तत्र सर्वगं व्योमाभं अपोहलक्षणं ब्रह्माद्यैरप्यनभिलक्ष्यं निष्कलमचलम्। तदाराधनं निरालम्बम्। तत्स्थानीयं ध्रुवरूपम्। तस्मादचलमात्मनो यद्भिन्नं सर्वदेवात्मकं मत्स्याद्यंशजनकं सकलं तच्चलम्। तदाराधनं सालम्बम्। तत्स्थानीयं कौतुकम्। तस्मान्महाबेरे दोषेपि कौतुकसम्पदा नश्यति। ध्रुवबेरं परंज्यातीरूपं तदक्षणमपि न दोषाय भवति अरूपत्वात्तस्य॥

The dhruva-bera is in other words like the Vedāntic Brahman, absolute and transcendent, unfathomable and inscrutable. It can hardly be a proper object for worship. Kāśyapa, after providing iconographical details, con-cludes that determination of the nature of god is impossible even for the gods who in their devotion make their own visualizations. Devotion, therefore, is what is all important. And this will project a form that is satisfying for oneself (chap. 51)

ब्रह्मादयोऽपि तदुपलक्षणनिश्चयं ज्ञातुमशक्ता: चित्तभित्तौ तद्रूपं भक्तितूलिकया सकल्प्य वर्णैरालिख्यावलोकयन्ति। तस्माद् भक्तिरेव कारणम्। तत्रातोभीष्टदर्शनयोग्यं तद् भगवद्रूपं कल्पयेत्॥

The hill-god, accordingly, does not appear the same to all. Each devotee carries his own impression in his heart and mind. This is the unique character of the hill-shrine; there is a mystery in the sanctum, which is fascinating and elusive at the same time. The icon is experienced but not perceived, felt but not caught; it is an encounter that is at once satisfying, but leaves one yearning for more of it. It is full of spiritual power and, therefore, not to be directly approached by all people. The Āgama, therefore, makes the kautuka-bera, an intermediary between the dhruva-bera and the devotee. So we read in *Khilādhikāra* (17, 321):

ध्रुवस्य शक्तिं तत्काले समावाह्य च कौतुके

The power of the dhruva-bera has to be invoked in the Kautuka-bera during worship.

KAUTUKA-BERA

When the hill-shrine began to attract people from the neighbouring tracts, and when festivals within the shrine had to be resorted to for various reasons, the need for a kautuka-bera was strongly felt. The dhruva-bera was in itself sufficient for the devotees who aspired only for peace and salvation. But when devotees who were also mundane in their approach and aspiration flocked at the shrine, the dhruva-bera had to have a kautuka-bera along with it, for it is said in Kāśyapa's *Jñāna kāṇḍa* (chap. 54):

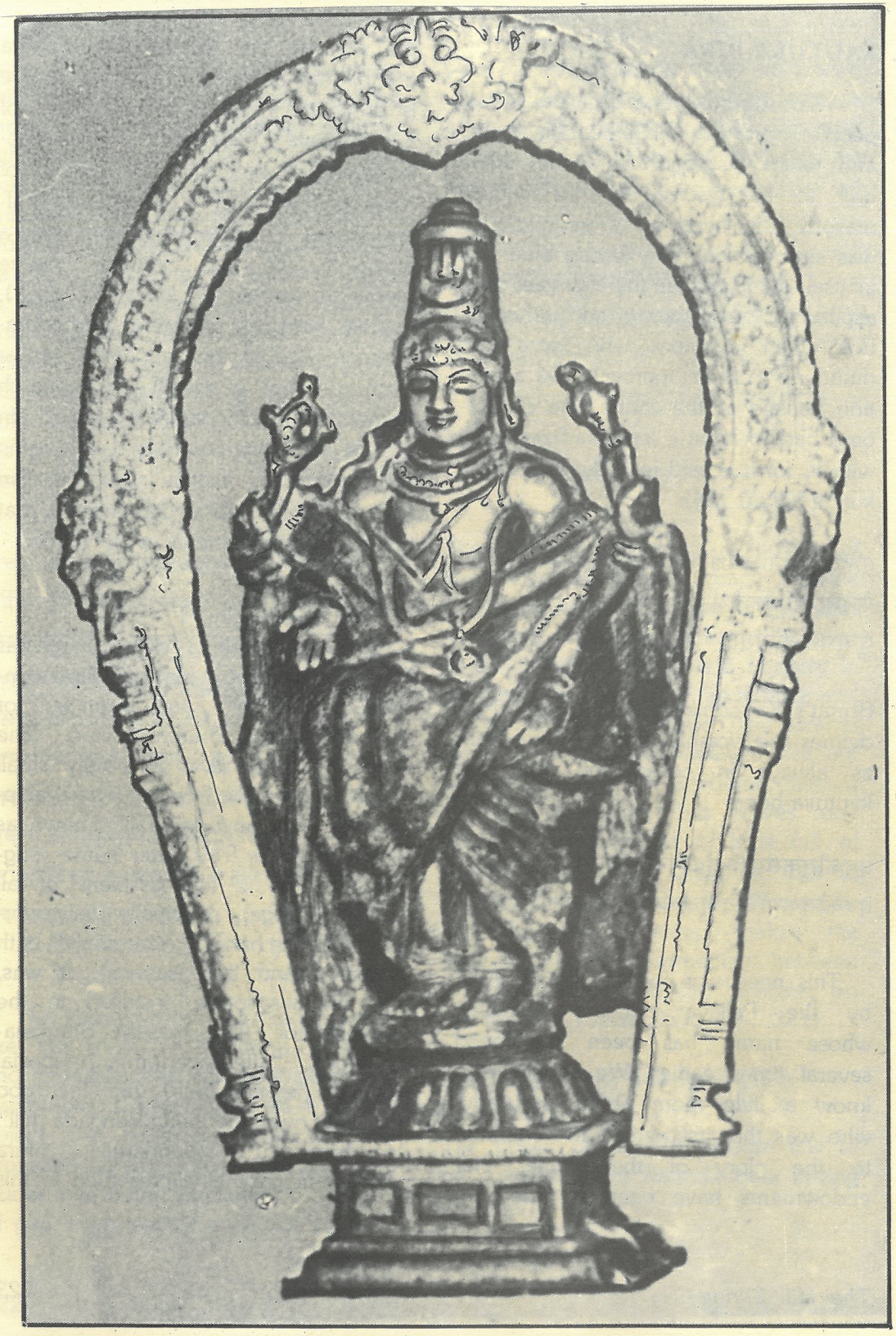
ऐहिकामुष्मिकापेक्षी ध्रुवकौतुकसंयुक्तम्।
केवलामुष्मिकापेक्षी
ध्रुवार्चनं कुर्यात्॥

Bhṛgu's *Kriyādhikāra* (7, 143 and 146) defines the worship of the Dhruva-bera as always in conjunction with the kautuka-bera

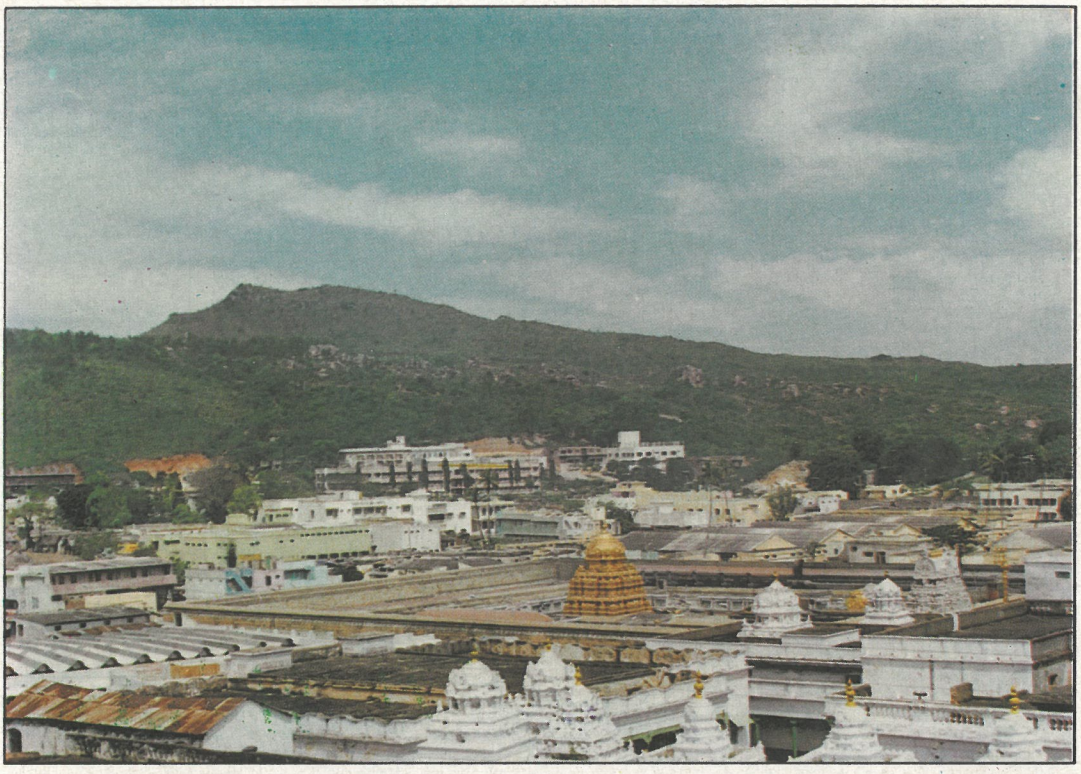
ध्रुवकौतुकसंयुक्तं ध्रुवार्चनमिति स्मृतम्॥
ध्रुवकौतुकयोरैक्ये ध्रुवार्चनमुदाहृतम्॥

This need was fulfilled in 614 A.D. by the Pallava princess Sāmavai, whose name has been mentioned several times earlier. We should now know a little more about this lady, who was the first person to contribute to the glory of the shrine. Her endowments have been recorded on the northern wall of the first prākāra (inscriptions 8 and 9 of volume I). She is described here as the daughter of a Pallava chieftain ('pallavap-pērgaḍaiyār') and wife (perundevi) of Kāḍa-paṭṭigaḷ (chief of Kaḍāva or Pallava tribe) Śakti-viṭaṅka, who was a feudatory of the Pallava prince Mahendra-varman I (600-630 A.D.), named here as Kō-pātra Mahendra-panmār, who in turn appears to have been a vassal of the Choḷa monarch Parāntaka II Sundara-choḷa, and in charge of Tōṇḍa-maṇḍalam. It was in the fourteenth regnal year of the Pallava prince, Mahendra-varman, that Sāmavai's endowments were made.

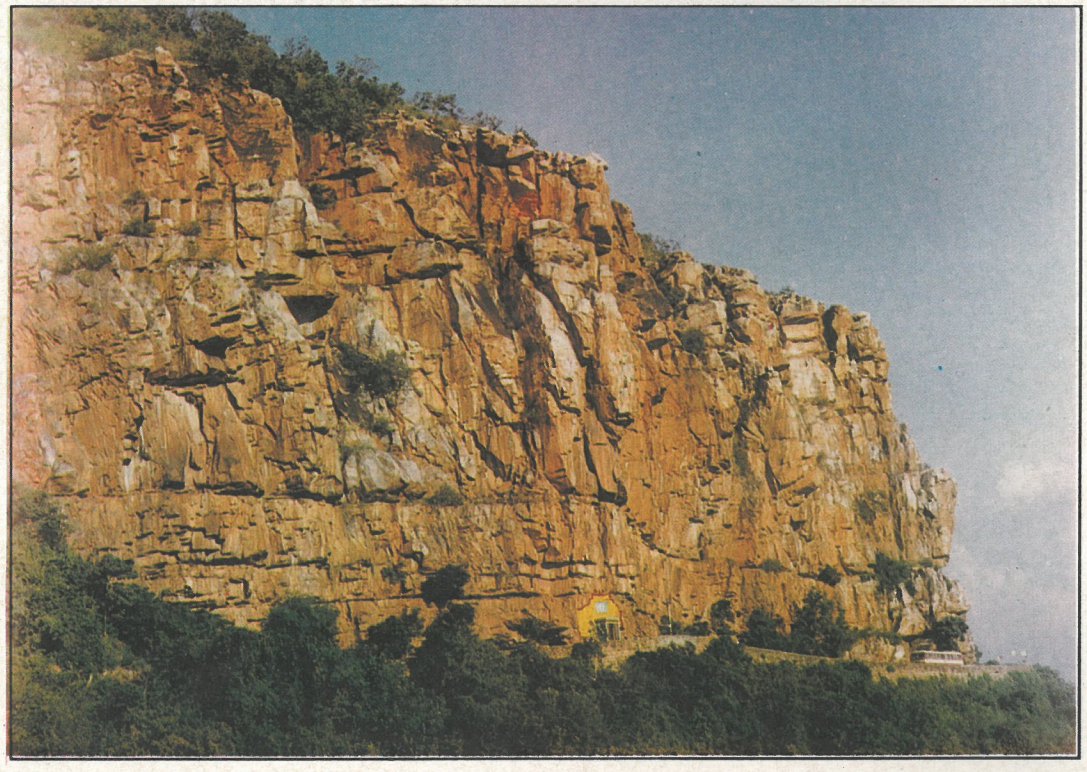
She got made a silver image as kautuka-bera, got a new pavilion constructed (iḷaṅ-kōil), and arranged for the first ever Brahmotsavam. The image made of silver is a very small one and was called by her Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ: it is now generally known as Bhoga-śrīnivāsa. This latter name suggests that it is the recipient of all worship (bhoga), principally daily worship (karmārchanā) ceremonial bath (snapana) and bed (śayana). It was, says the inscription, installed in the Tiru-viḷaṅ-kōil (the present Snapana-maṇṭapa), "after performing special worship (karmārchanā) for the god presiding over the holy Vēṅgaḍa hill" ('śri-vēṅgaḍattu eḷundaruḷi ninra perumān-aḍigaḷ'). She presented to this new image:



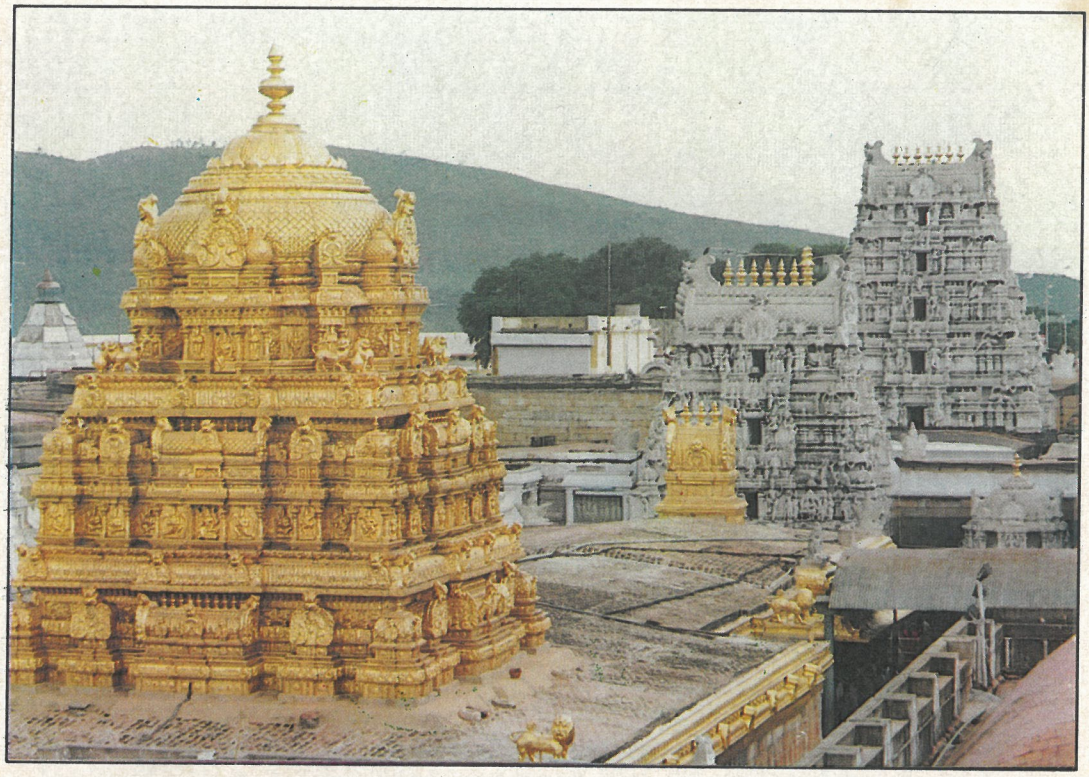
BHOGA-ŚRĪNIVĀSA (Kautuka-bera)



The Temple from a distance



Along the ascent



Ananda-Nilaya Vimana



Malayappa With Consorts (Utsava-Murti)



Nadimi-Padi-Kavali (Silver Doorway)



Varada-rāja-Svami (close-up)



Padi-Poṭu-Amma



Yoga-Narashimha (same)



Garuḍa-Shrine (stone image of Garuḍālvār inside)

"one crown (tirumuḍi) containing 23 diamonds, 16 big pearls, 2 big central rubies, and 3 cut-rubies, in all, 5 rubies (taḍavik-kaṭṭina māṇikkam);

two gold ornaments (of the shape of the makara (ponnin makaram) and one pair of coral koppu for the two holy ears;

necklace of four strings (mālai) of gold for the holy neck into which are set 14 diamonds, 3 rubies, 11 big pearls and several (small) red pearls:

one belt (udara-bandhanam) of gold; one gold waist girdle (tiru-varai-paṭṭikai) with 4 rubies;

two gold circular ornaments for the arms (bāhu-valayam);

four gold bracelets (tiru-chchandam) set with 2 cut-rubies;

four circular ornaments of gold (vaḷaiyal) for the holy neck;

two solid anklets (kārai) for the holy feet, being ornaments made of gold set with precious stones, corals and pearls, totalling 52 articles;

two anklets with belts (pāda-chāyalam) and one luminous disc (prabhā) of silver set with one big central ruby (nāyaka-māṇikkam);

the gold used in making these articles being 47 kaḷañju"

She also made arrangments of daily food-offering (nimandanam) with four nāḷi of cooked rice (tiruv-amudu) and a perpetual lamp (nandā-viḷakku) to burn in front of the deity. Bathing the holy image (tiru-mañjanam) on two ayana-sankrānti days: 15th of January, Makara-sankramaṇa and 15th of July, Kaṭaka-sankramaṇa, (or Uttarāyaṇa and Dakshiṇāyana Sankrānatis) and two vishuva-sankrānti days (the sun's entry into Mesha-rāśi about the middle of April and into Tulā-rāśi about the middle of October), and conduct of Puraṭṭāśi (September-October) festival of seven days and Mārgaḷi-tiru-dvādaśi (December-January) of two days, were also instituted by her. She also made over a total of 7176 and odd kuḷi of land (about 24 acres) for this purpose.

This marked the beginning of the real history of the hill-shrine. The first documented endowments of land were made by this lady. The conduct of calendar festivals (utsava), the number of which swelled in course of time to more than 400 in a year, began at her instance. The custom of making arrangements for burning perpetual lamps in the shrine was also inaugurated by her. Presentation of ornaments to the icons (bhūshaṇa) appears to have been her original idea. More than all this, the practice of employing metallic and moveable images for formal and regular worship in accordance with Āgama requirements, which Sāmavai brought into vogue, contributed to the ever-increasing popularity of the hill-shrine.

The introduction of kautuka-bera was in a sense correcting an initial lapse. For, according to the Vaikhānasa Āgama, complete worship in a shrine should necessarily involve the Dhruva-

bera associated with a Kautuka-bera, Kāśyapa's *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap. 54) says

ध्रुवबेरं कौतुकबिम्बं च प्रतिष्ठाप्यार्चनं
ध्रुवकौतुकसंयुक्तं सर्वांगयुक्तं प्रमाणै: सम्पूर्णम्।

In fact, Kautuka-bera is also called archā (the real icon for worship) and prāna (the very life of all other icons). It is called Kautuka because it secures all welfare. We read in Atri's *Samūrtārchanādhikaraṇa* (24,1-3):

अर्चा च कौतुकं प्राणो वर एकार्थवाचका:॥
अर्च्यत्वाञ्जलपुष्पाद्यै: कीर्तितार्चेति सूरिभि:।
सर्वमङ्गलकारित्वात् कौतुकं ह्यभिधीयते॥
सर्वेषां प्राणभूतत्वात् प्राण:।

Bhṛgu's *Kriyādhikāra* (9,11-15) argues that the Dhruva-bera is never properly worshipped, or formally, for it is abstract and undefined. It is the Kautuka-bera that is suitable for worship by ordinary mortals who have desires to be fulfilled; the Dhruva-bera is resorted to by sages who have no desires whatever, besides salvation. Therefore, worship of Kautuka-bera is superior, for it provides an effective base. One must invoke the power of the Dhruva-bera in the Kautuka-bera and worship the latter duly. It will benefit both the disinterested yogis as well as common folk:

अनर्च्यं ध्रुवबेरं स्याज्जलपुष्पानुलेपनै:।
निष्कलं तन्निरालम्बं केवलामुष्मिकप्रदम्॥
सालम्बं सगुणं श्रेष्टं सकलं कौतुकार्चनम्।
सकामानां समुचितं संसाराश्रमिणामिदम्।
ध्रुवबेरार्चनं प्रोक्तं निराशी: कर्मकारिणाम्॥
आवाह्य कौतुकं तस्मन्नित्यं विधिवदर्चयेत्।
सकामाकामयोर्योग्यमैहिकामुष्मिकप्रदम्॥

The text prescribes that all daily and formal worship is to be accorded only to the Kautuka-bera and to no other (10, 46):

नित्यपूजां विशेषेण कुर्यात्कौतुक एव वै।

It was mentioned earlier that worship of Dhruva-bera alone was described as 'nirālaṁba' (without props), whereas the worship of Dhruva-bera along with its Kautuka-bera is 'sālaṁba' (with props). The former is possible only for the best of human beings whose capacity to visualize and concentrate is great (saṅkalpa-dhaninām śreshṭhāśramiṇām), but all ordinary people (samyak-saṁsāra-nishṭhānām) are eligible for the latter. The Kautuka-bera is indispensable for generating devotion in the worshipper; and without devotion, whatever done is wasted ('nṛṇām abhaktānām kṛtam sarvam nishphalam'). Therefore, says the Āgama, the Kautuka-bera must be made and installed; by this, the prosperity of all the devotees is assured

('sālambārādhena kautuka-sampat sarveshām sampad iti vijñāyate')

Devotion is generated not only by an icon duly consecrated ('bhakti-hetutvāt sa-lakshaṇam purusha-rūpam kṛtvā') but by elaborate worship rituals, and colourful festivals and food-offerings. These latter were not there in the hill-shrine before Sāmavai instituted them. That she was prompted by the Vaikhānasa priests to instal the kautuka-bera becomes evident when we consider the restriction in the Āgama texts of this division that the Kautuka-bera must only be made of silver (*Kāśyapīya Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, chap. 99)

जातरूपं विना अन्यलोहमिश्रितं बिम्बं न स्यापयेत्।
स्थापितेतदपनिय पूर्ववद्धुत्वा अन्यं संस्थापयेत्॥

Elsewhere in the same text (chap. 55), however, a choice is given between silver, gold and wood; but silver is the first choice:

रजतताम्रदारूणामन्यतमेन सलक्षणमेव कौतुकं कारयेत्।

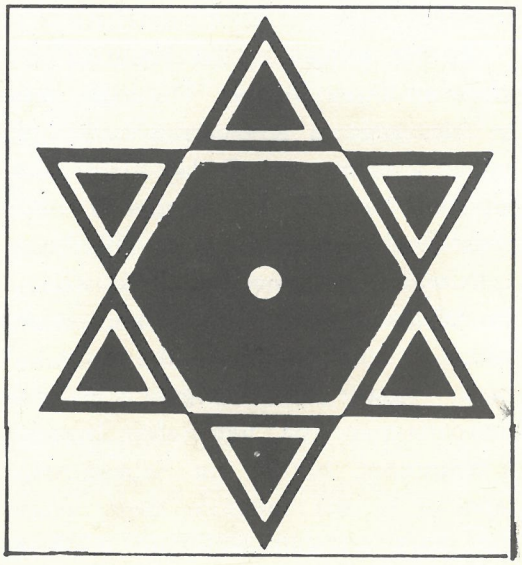
The upachāras (services) that are offered to this day to this Kautuka-bera are note-worthy. Everyday, the first major sequence of worship is called 'tōmāla-sevā', because the main deity is decorated with flower-garlands. But this sequence involves a ceremonial bath being given to the Kautuka-bera and elaborate worship offered to it. It is only after this, that the gold-coverings of the two feet of the main deity are removed and given a bath on a separate seat.

In this sequence, the Kautuka-bera plays an important role. The main deity in the sanctum is given a bath only once a week, on Friday. But daily worship includes the sequence of a ritual bath (snānāsana) or abhisheka, with water, perfumed oil, milk, honey, sandal-wood paste, turmeric and so on, which is administered to the Kautuka-bera, now not however in the Snapana-maṇḍapa, which has became a misnomer, but in the Śayana-maṇṭapa or in the sanctum itself. When the day's worship draws to a close, this image is brought to Śayana-maṇṭapa (the hall in front of the sanctum) and put to bed.

A swing-cot hangs from the ceiling of the Śayana-maṇṭapa by silver chains, and a soft mattress is prepared on it. The image is laid on this mattress in a recumbent position to the accompaniment of music and recitation of appropriate hymns. The Kautuka-bera enjoys this service every night of the year (hence also called Śayana-bera), except for a month during the dhanur-māsa, when the image of Kṛishṇa (also kept in the sanctum) is substituted.

It is said that a six-cornered Yantra (shāḍguṇya-yantra), the corners repre-

senting the god's jñāna (gnosis), aiśvarya (lordship), śakti (power), bala (strength), tejas (glory) and vīrya (might), is inscribed on the pedestal of this image.



BALI-BERA

After Sāmavai introduced the Kautuka-bera into the hill-shrine, we hear of another endowment in 826 A.D. (by Ulagap-perumānār of Śōḷanūr in Śōḷa-nāḍu). A few years later, however, there were already three deities in the hill-shrine (inscription No.4.). During the reign of the Pallava king Vijaya-Danti-vikrama-deva, the Bāṇa prince called Vijayāditya-mahāvaḷi-bāṇa-rāya, arranged for two food-offerings jointly to Tiru-viḷaṅ-kōil-perumān-aḍigaḷ, Tiru-mantira-śālai-perumān-aḍigaḷ and Tiru-vēṅkaṭattu-perumān-aḍigaḷ. But what these three images were is hard to say. There are, of course, some conjectures made, especially by T.K.T. Vīrarāghavāchārya (op. cit., pp. 110-119). But they do not carry conviction.

All that one can reasonably say is that of the three 'holy images' (perumān-aḍigaḷ) mentioned in the inscription, two are readily identifiable; the dhruva-bera (mūlavar, called here Tiru-vēṅgaṭattu-perumān-aḍigaḷ) and the Kautuka-bera (Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ or Bhoga-Śrīnivāsa, called here Tiru-viḷaṅ-kōil-perumān-aḍigaḷ). What the third one is can only be guessed. Since the inscription does not mention consorts for any of these holy images, the only other image which is alone (kevala), and which answers to the vīra-sthānaka type (as the Dhruva-bera and Kautuka-bera also do) is the present Bali-bera (also called Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa, or Aḷagap-pirānār), and this may be the Tirumantira-śālaip-perumān-aḍigaḷ of the inscription. Like the Kautuka-bera, this is also in the exact likeness of the Dhruva-bera.

We do not know when or how this image got into the hill-shrine; there are no inscriptional references to it, nor to the function which it now presides over, viz. the Koluvu (audience or assembly). The image is now kept inside the sanctum.

After the morning ritual known as Tomāla-sevā (short for Tiru-māla-seva, offering of flower-garlands) within the sanctum, this image is brought to the Tirumā-maṇi-mantapa (or Āsthāna-



Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa (Bali-bera)

maṇṭapa) and is seated on a silver throne (called koluvu-simhāsana), shaded by a golden parasol. The golden parasol is the gift of the Mahārājas of Mysore; the Koluvu also includes torches (dīvaṭi) provided by the Gadwāl kings, fly-whisks (chāmara) and pipers (meḷam). During this function the recital of the thousand names (sahasra-nāma) and worship (called Koluvu-ārādhanā) are gone through.

Then an account of the collections of money, jewellery and other articles in the Koppara (Huṇḍi) for the previous day is presented to this image. The details of the almanac (pañchāṅga) for that day, the previous day and the following day are read out. The daily ration-allotments (mātrā-dāna) of rice (16 sēru) for the priests are also made in front of this image. This is known as Koluvu or darbar; this image is said to hold court. Hence the name Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa. The Koluvu sequence does not occur during the period beginning with the commencement of Brahmotsavam and the ending with the Dīpāvaḷi-āsthānam.

But the expression Bali-bera for it is not, now at any rate, justified. There is a sequence in daily worship known as Yātrāsana in Vaishṇava temples and Bali-haraṇa in Śaiva temples. This is the formal distribution of food-offerings to the attendant-deities within the enclosure of the temple, after the naivedya (food-offering) is presented to the main deity in the sanctum. While the priest and his attendant go in a procession to do this, a representative image (representing the main deity) is also taken out in a palanquin, or on the head of a priest. This image is called Bali-bera. In the hill-shrine, however, no image accompanies the priest and his attendant as they go round the Vimāna-pradkshiṇa, distributing food-offerings to Vishvaksena and Garuḍa, and come to the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa to make offerings to Dhvaja and Yūthādhipa (attendant deities) and place the rest of the food on the five small altar-stones between the Dhvaja-stambha and the big Bali-pīṭha.

In the circumstances, how this image came to be known as Bali-bera cannot be ascertained. Nor can we know when this rather unusual manner in which Yātrāsana is conducted in the hill-shrine began. Besides the five small bali-pīṭhas (which are prominently used) in the Dhvaja-stambha-maṇṭapa, there are several other small altar-stones (as mentioned earlier) in the shrine, like the ones we find in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa along the Vimāna-prākāra wall. It is therefore likely that a regular bali-yātrā was being conducted here at some time in the past; and this bali-bera was probably taken out on such occasions, because the Vaikhānasa texts insist upon this. *Vimānārchanā-kalpa* (paṭala 41), for instance, says:

बलिबेरयुतमालयं प्रदक्षिणं कारयेत्।

or Bhṛgu in his *Yajñādhikāra* (19, 67)

बलिबिम्बं समभ्यर्च्यालयं तत्प्रदक्षिणंकृत्वा प्रदक्षिणमथाचरेत्।

But Atri's *Samūrtārchanādhikaraṇa* (42, 15-16) provides an option. "Some authorities", according to this book, "prescribe that the bali-bera must be taken in procession".

In the alternative, the vessel in which the bali is collected must be worshipped, and the presence of the Bali-bera invoked in it (the Bali image being placed on top of the vessel) before taking it out in circumambulation;

पुरतो बलिबिम्बं च नयेदिति च केचन॥
अथवा पात्रमाराध्य बलिद्रव्यं समाक्षिपेत्
तदूर्ध्वे बलिबिम्बं च न्यसेत् कुर्यात्प्रदक्षिणम्।

Bali-haraṇa is an elaborate procedure. Food-offerings are to be made, besides Vishvaksena, to the guardians of gateways like Maṇika, the indispensable attendants (anapāyi, like Śrī-bhūta, Garuḍa, Chakra Śaṁkha, Dhvaja, Yūthādhipa and Pāvakorjuna), the direction-deities (dig-devatās), the dome-guardians (vimāna-pālas, Nyaksha, Vivasvān, Mitra and Kshatta); and the remnants thereof (bali-śesha) to the bhūtas, yakshas, piśāchas and nāgas. This is likened to a festival which takes place every day (nityotsava). The bali-distribution takes the form of a procession with music, song and dance.

PAÑCHA-MŪRTI IDEOLOGY

In the Vaikhānasa lore, the iconic worship is likened to a fire-ritual Even as there are five forms of fire (pañchāgni) employed in a ritual, sabhya, āhavanīya, anvāhārya, gārhapatya and āvasathya), there are five forms of Vishṇu involved in iconic worship. These forms, when duly installed in a temple, will secure peace, nourishment and happiness for the devotees. So we read in Atri's *Samūrtāchanādhikaraṇa* (37, 4):

पञ्चानां स्थापनं नित्यं शान्तिपुष्टिसुखप्रदम्।

The five forms are Vishṇu representing the main deity (Dhruva-bera) in the sanctum, Purusha (represented by the Kautuka-bera), Satya (Utsava-bera), Achyuta (Snapana-bera), and Aniruddha (Bali-bera). Vishṇu is to be located in the middle (madhye) and the other four are arranged in the four directions ('prāgādishu', east, south, west and north in order). These four forms symbolize the great aspects of Vishṇu (also called Nārāyaṇa or Ādi-mūrthi): Vishṇu, Mahā-vishṇu, Sadā-vishṇu and Vyāpi-nārāyaṇa respectively (see for details the author's *Āgama-Kosha,* vol. III, *Vaikhānasāgama*, Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore 1990).

The Brahman is described as four-footed (chatushpāt). The absolute, inscrutable reality that is also perfect

unity, rests in the transactional, phenomenal manifestation on four props, which are known as guṇas. They are the great qualities on which the devotee should contemplate; and they are also involved in iconic worship, which the Vaikhānasas regard as the most effective approach to Godhead. The qualities are: (1) Dharma, (common, ultimate and unfailing support for all existence and evolution), (2) Jñāna (eternal, immutable, and universal gnosis); (3) Aiśvarya (unobstructed, unassisted and limitless lordship over all existence); and (4) Vairāgya (total, untainted and unmotivated dispassion). The four forms of Vishṇu, Purusha and others, represent these four qualities:

विष्णुं च पुरुषं सत्यमच्युतं चानिरुद्धकम्।
विष्ण्वादि मूर्तयस्त्वेता: पञ्चमूर्तय ईरिता:॥
धर्मो ज्ञानं तथैश्वर्यं वैराग्यंमिति तद्गुणा:॥
आदिमूर्तेस्तु भिन्नास्ते मूर्तयोन्याश्च तद्गुणा:॥

This is known as 'pañcha-mūrti-vidhāna' (in *Marīchi-saṁhitā*) or 'chutur-mūrtyarchana' (in *Khilaḍhikāra)*. If the Dhruva-bera that is in the centre of the sanctum facing east, is Vishṇu, the right side of the doorway is the place for Purusha, who also faces east; in the central niche outside the southern wall of the sanctum will be Satya, facing south; in the niche outside the wall at the back of Dhruva-bera will be Achyuta, facing west; and in the northern wall will be Aniruddha, facing north. However, it is not necessary to represent these four forms iconically. The priest while worshipping the Dhruva-bera will conceptualize and invoke in the abstract these four forms; and uttering their names, will place flowers on the feet of the Dhruva-bera.

In the hill-shrine, there are five beras; but then their identification with the above five forms is not clear. The beras are not treated as these forms, either in theory or in practice here. And they have not all of them appeared in the shrine at one time. The Dhruva-bera, of course, was the earliest of them. We have recorded evidence for the introduction of Kautuka-bera (in 614 A.D.). How, when, or why the other three beras made their entry into the shrine, we do not know.

Two of the icons are even anamolous in their functions. The so-called Snapana-bera (Ugra-Śrīnivāsa or Vēṅkaṭa-turaivār) does not participate in the daily ceremonial bath; it is the Kautuka-bera (Bhoga-Śrīnivāsa or Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ) that does it. Even the 'sahasra-kalaśābhisheka' (bath from a thousand holy vessels) which is administered every Wednesday in the hill-shrine, is done only for the Kautuka-bera. This is done in Snapana-maṇṭapa while the daily bath is administered in the sanctum or in the porch in front of it. The so-called Bali-bera (Aḷagap-pirānār or Prasanna tiru-vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān) does not go

out during the customary Yātrāsana (bali-haraṇa) every day; no bera in fact is taken out for that purpose here. It is also said that the so-called Snapana-bera (Ugra-Śrīnivāsa or Venkat-turaivār) served as the utsava-bera (processional image) before the present Utsava-bera (Malayappan or Malai-kūniya-ninra-perumāḷ) was introduced in the fourteenth century.

According to Āgama, customary practice is more important than textual prescriptions. *Kriyādhikāra* (21, 58-59) says that a long-standing practice must be adhered to in a sacred shrine of hoary antiquity, even if such practice is not in accordance with scriptural dictates, or appears as improper.

दैविके चार्षके क्षेत्रे यथापूर्वं तथाचरेत्।
अविधिकमलक्षण्यमप्रमाणं न दोषकृत्॥
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन यथापूर्वं तथाचरेत्।
अन्यथा चेन्महादोष इति पूर्वजशासनम्॥

However, the practices found in the hill-shrine are not entirely contradictory to the scriptural injunctions. There is, for instance, a provision for Kautuaka-bera to be used as Snapana-bera.

स्नपने यदि संप्राप्ते कौतुके स्नपनं चरेत्।

(*Yajñādhikāra* of Bhṛgu, 40, 64):

The Kautuka-bera is like fire, which can be put to many uses (ibid, 40, 68)

कौतुक चेद्यथैकाग्नौ बहुकर्माणिवच्चरेत्॥

And the utsava-bera (processional image) must be accompanied by consorts (ibid, 30, 2) for the welfare of the village or town.

औत्सवं च विशोषेण देवीभ्यां स्थापयेत्सह।
तद्ग्रामस्याभिवृद्धयर्थमुत्सवार्थं विशेषतः॥

They had to have, therefore, a representative of the Dhruva-bera, flanked by Śrī-devi and Bhū-devi. The old Snapana-bera or the present Utsava-bera answers to this description. In fact, these are the only two beras which have consorts with them (devī-bhyām-sahita). The other three beras (Dhruva-bera, Kautuka-bera and Bali-bera) are lone figures (rahita or kevala).

There is a legend regarding the discovery and introduction of the Ut-sava-bera (Malayappa) into the shrine. In former days, when once the snapana-bera (Ugra-Śrīnivāsa), which was used as a processional image, was taken out on the streets of the then village on the hill, fire broke out causing considerable damage and dis-tress. It was then revealed to one of the devotees that had gathered, that this snapana-bera was unsuited for utsava purposes, because of its fero-cious nature (ugra-mūrti), and that a substitute image would be found in a glen on the slopes of the hill. When a search was made, the present Utsava-bera with consorts was found.



UGRA-SRĪNIVĀSA

Since then, the Snapana-bera (Ugra-Śrīnivāsa) is confined to the sanctum, except for one day in a year (kaiśika-dvādaśī), when in the early hours of the morning it is taken out in a hurried procession round the streets and is brought back before sun-rise. The custom in the hill-shrine on that day is to begin the worship in the sanctum at 3.00 A.M. and after the sequence of tōmāla-sevā, the image of Snapana-bera with consorts is to have a ceremonial bath (tirumañjana) followed by regular worship. Then the decorated and bejewelled Snapana-bera is taken out of the sanctum and placed in a golden palanquin, which is then taken round the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa and then on the main streets round the temple. Care is taken not to allow sunlight to fall on the image; the procession returns to the shrine before dawn (udayāt-pūrvam). The image with consorts is then seated in the Raṅga-maṇṭapa, and the honour of sarvabhūpala-vāhana, assembly (āsthāna), offerings of ornaments and formal worship (tiruvārādhanā), are accorded to it. This image comes out of the sanctum a second time during dvādaśārādhanā following the annual Brahmotsava, and receives honour and worship in front of the Garuḍa-shrine in Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa.

This icon is made in a copper alloy, and is twenty inches in height; it stands on a pedestal which is six inches high. While this is almost an exact replica of the main deity, the discus in the right upper hand is held in a posture ready to be used (technically known as prayoga-chakra). This is what has added the adjective 'ugra' ('ferocious' or warlike) to Śrīnivāsa. The heights of the consort-icons are each eighteen inches, on the pedestals each of which is five inches and a half.

These are the four moveable beras in the hill-shrine that represent the main immoveable image (dhruva-bera), and they are all kept in the sanctum. Of them, the Kautuaka-bera alone is connected with the main deity with a silken chord and goden links. This is said to have continued since 614 A.D., when Sāmavai got the Kautuka-bera installed, and never has the Kautuka-bera moved out of it. The chord is long enough to allow the Kautuka-bera which will normally be in the sanctum (where it is kept close to the feet of the main deity) to be moved into the Snapana-maṇṭapa (and come near the Golden Doorway). The other beras are not connected with the Dhruva-bera in this or any other way. This follows the Āgama prescription that it is only the Kautuka-bera that must be associated with the Dhruva-bera (*Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, chap. 54):

ध्रुवबेरेण कौतुकबिम्बस्यैकस्यैव सम्बन्धो
नान्येषाम।

Therefore, the text continues, there is a view that in a shrine, it is only the Kautuka-bera that must be installed

(with the Dhruva-bera): 'tasmāt tadekam eva sthāpayed ity eke'.

Normally, however, the Vaikhānasa-āgama prescribes that three beras must be installed in any shrine; the dhruva-bera (archā), the kautuka-bera and the utsava-bera. If all the three are not available or possible, then two of them, or at least the first of them ('asakto dve, tathaikam vā yathāsakti prakalpayet'). *Khilādhikāra* (20, 4-7) says that the kautuka-bera must be located in the middle of the sanctum (in brahma-bhāga); the utsava-bera must be placed to its left; and the 'archā' (viz. Dhruva-bera) to the right of the Kautuka-bera, slightly at the back. The Kautuka-bera must receive the formal daily worship, while the Utsava-bera must be employed in festivals or worship for mundane benefits.

एकंस्मिस्तु विमाने वै बेराणि त्रीणि प्रकल्पयेत्।
कौतुकं चौत्सवार्चा त्रिविधं बिम्बमुच्यते॥
कौतुकं ब्रह्मण: स्थाने विधिना स्थापयेद् बुध:।
तस्यैवोत्तरत: पार्श्वे औत्सवं स्थापयेत्रत:॥
दक्षिणे कौतुकस्यात्र किञ्चित्पूर्वं समाश्रिते।
स्थापयित्वा तथैवार्चां नित्यपूजां समाचरेत्॥
कुर्यात्कौतुकाबिम्बे वै नित्यपूजां यथाक्रमम्।
औत्सवे च तथा बिम्बे काम्यकर्माणि कारयेत्॥

We find in the hill-shrine the above conditions being only partly satisfied. The three beras were not installed simultaneously, and the Kautuka-bera was installed at a subsequent period but is seen to the left of the Dhruva-bera, slightly in front; and the utsava-bera is placed on the right side of the Dhruva-bera.

There is a provision in the Āgama that if it is not possible to have all the beras at the time of the installation of the main deity (viz. Dhruva-bera), at least the Kautuka-bera must be installed; and that others may be introduced when they become available. (Jñāna-kāṇḍa, chap. 54):

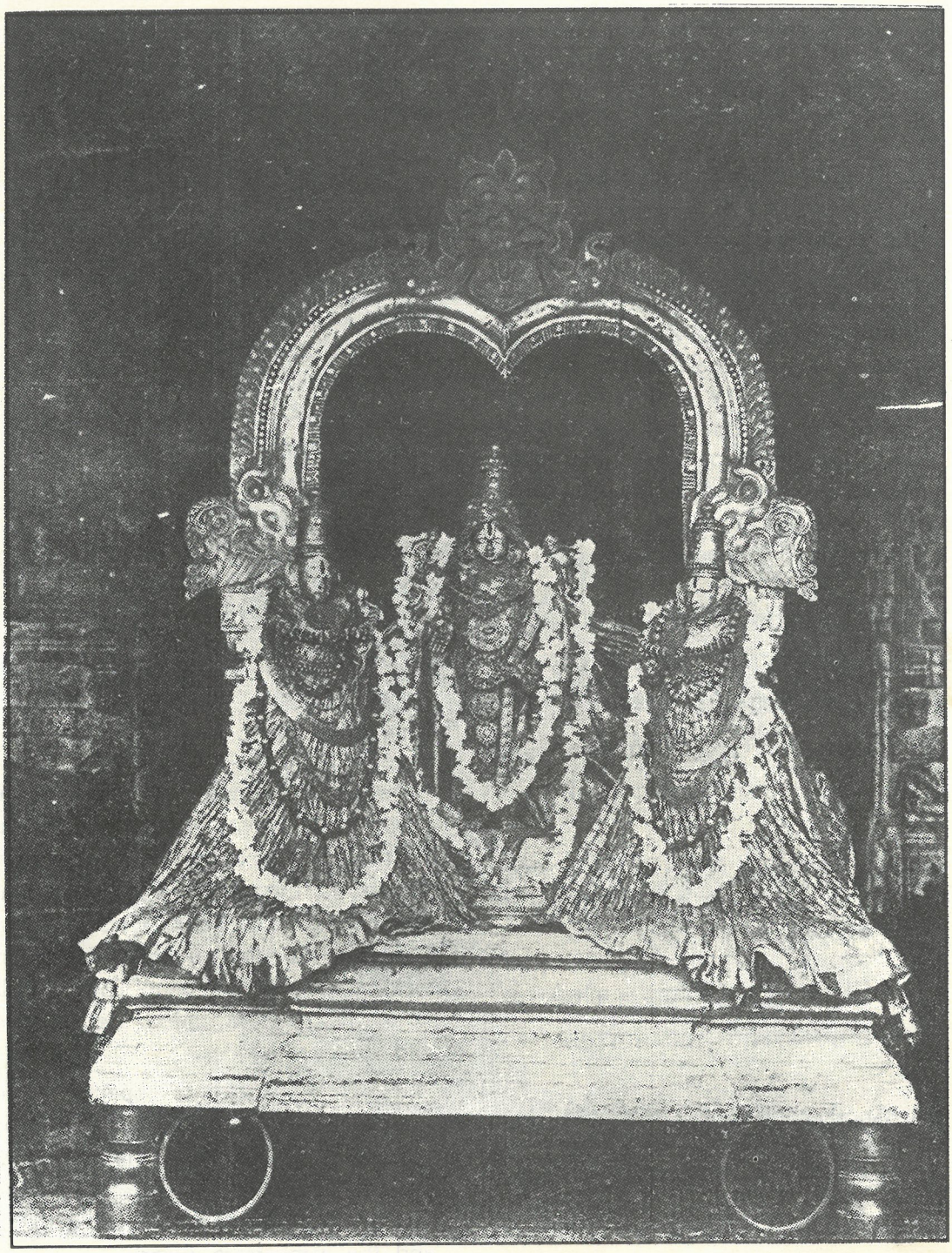
प्रथमप्रतिष्ठायां त्रयाणामलाभे कौतुक
बिम्बमेकमेव प्रतिष्ठाप्य पश्चादन्ययोर्लाभे
प्रतिष्ठापनं कर्तव्यम्।

In the hill-shrine, the Dhruva-bera alone was present for a long time, before the Kautuka-bera was installed with it in 614 A.D. The other beras have entered the shrine from time to time, at long intervals.

Atri's *Samūrtārchanādhikarana* (24, 4 and 26) insists that the three beras, Kautuka, Snapana and Utsava, must be present in a shrine:

कौतुकं स्नापनं बिम्बमौत्सवं त्रीणि कारयेत्॥
विधिना कौतुकं बिम्बं औत्सवं स्नपनं तथा।
तानि त्रीण्यपि बिम्बानि कारयेत प्रयत्नत:॥

This enumeration obviously does not include the Dhruva-bera, for later in the text there is a prescription that all three beras must be in the likeness of



Utsava-Bera (Malayappa)

the Dhruva-bera (24, 63).

ध्रुवरूपानुरूपं च कौतुकादि त्रयं स्मृतम्॥

Bhṛgu's *Yajñādhikāra* adds another icon, Bali-bera (17, 4). And it gives the procedure of vitalizing these four moveable beras. The power of the Dhruva-bera must be invoked in the Kautuka-bera, even as one lamp is lit from another (dīpād dīpam iva), and in turn the power is to be invoked in Snapana-bera from the Kautuka-bera, and power from the Snapana-bera should be invoked in the Utsava-bera (19, 61), and finally into the Bali-bera from the Utsava-bera.

ध्रुवबेरात्तथा शक्तिं दीपाद्दीपमिव क्रमात्।
कौतुके सम्यगावाह्य स्नपने चोत्सवे ततः।
ध्यायन्नावाहयेद्विद्वान् ध्रुवात्तत् क्रमशः सुधीः॥
समावाह्य ध्रुवाच्छक्तिं स्नापने चोत्सवे ततः।
बलिबेरे समावाह्य क्रमेणैव तथार्चयेत्॥

Khilādhikāra (17, 321), however, uses the expression 'archā' to represent the Snapana-bera:

ध्रुवस्य शक्तिं तत्काले समावाह्य च कौतुके।
अर्चायामौत्सवे चैव तथैवावाहनं चरेत्॥

Another instance of the word 'archā' being used for Snapana-bera is to found in Kāśyapa's *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap. 54), which also speaks of three beras:

यथैकस्मिन् गृहे त्रेताग्निन् कल्पयति तथैकस्मिन् विमाने कौतुकमौत्सवमर्चोति त्राणि बेराणि कल्पयेत्।

Yajñādhikāra explains that all beras are in fact only Vishṇu, and the invocation of power from one to another does not in any way alter the essential nature of the beras, even as one lamp does not lose its brightness when other lamps are lit from it. (34, 44 'sarvatra vāsudevatvāt dipād uddīpanam yathā'). But the enumeration suggests an order of priority: Dhruva-bera, Kautuka-bera, Snapana-bera, Utsava-bera and Bali-bera. But in practice, the Utsava-bera steals the show, for the people are fond of festivities, processions and congregations.

UTSAVA BERA

In the hill-shrine too, the Utsava-bera (called here Malayappan) ranks next in importance to the Dhruva-bera so far as the devotees and pilgrims are concerned. In actual worship, however, the Kautuka-bera is more important than the Utsava-bera. The festivals in the Vaikhānasa shrine are grouped into three categories:

(1) Kālotsava, or specific and routine festivals ordained to be celebrated according to the nakshatra (asterisk or constellation), the māsa (the lunar month), the vāra, (weekday), and the saṁvatsara (year);

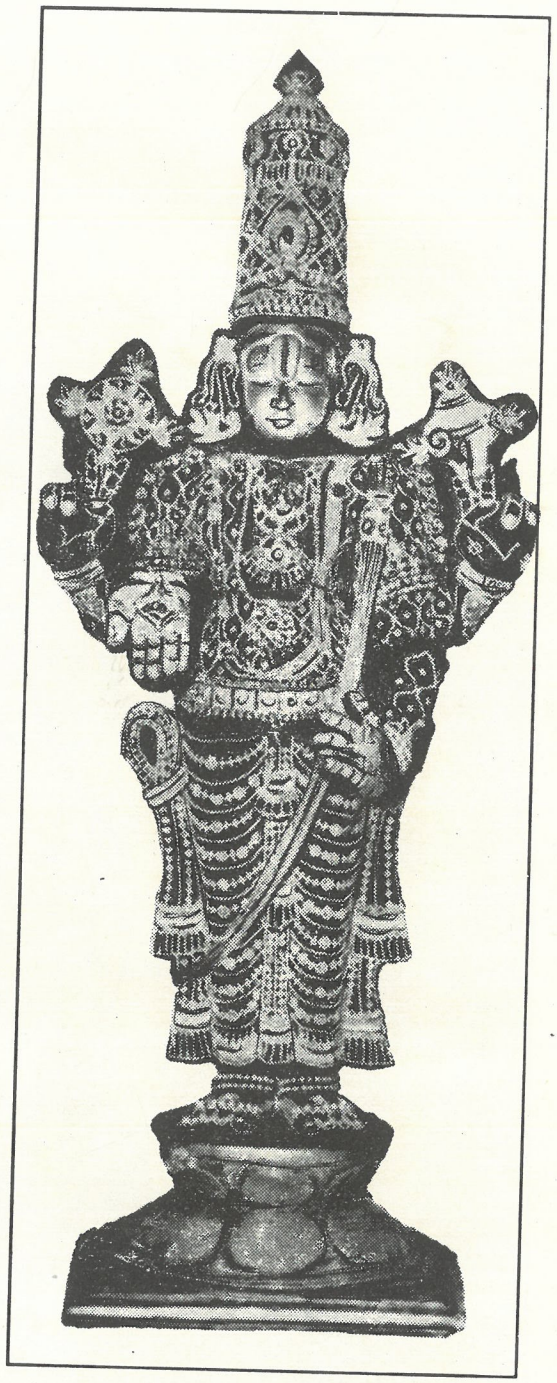


Utsava-Bera

(2) śraddhotsava (the festivals or worship rituals specially requested and stipulated by devotees out of their faith); and

(3) nimittotsava (the festivals and observances meant to purify the premises, to avoid the ill-effects of stellar combinations, to eradicate draught-conditions, to bring peace and prosperity, and to expiate sins and amend lapses).

We have references in the early Tamil classics and in the songs of Āḻvārs that the Vēṅgaḍam hill was known for its festivals. But the first festivals in the hill-shrine which are documented are the ones which were instituted in 614 A.D. by the Pallava princess, Sāmavai: the two Brahmotsavas already mentioned. The Brahmotsava (during the Navarātri in the Śarat season) is still the most important festival in the hill-shrine. Mukkoṭi-dvādaśi appears to have been an even more ancient festival in the hill-shrine; there are references to this festival known as Pāraśi-nāḷ in the songs of the Āḻvārs. The festivals during the two solar transitions (saṅkramaṇa), vishu and ayana, also appear to be time-honoured. But during and after the days of the Yādava-rāya kings, the number of festivals increased. Several new and colourful occasions were introduced, like kalyāṇotsava (enacting the marriage of the hill-god with his supposed consort Padmāvati), Dolotsava (swing-festival, ūñjal), teppotsava (floating on the waters of Svāmi-push-

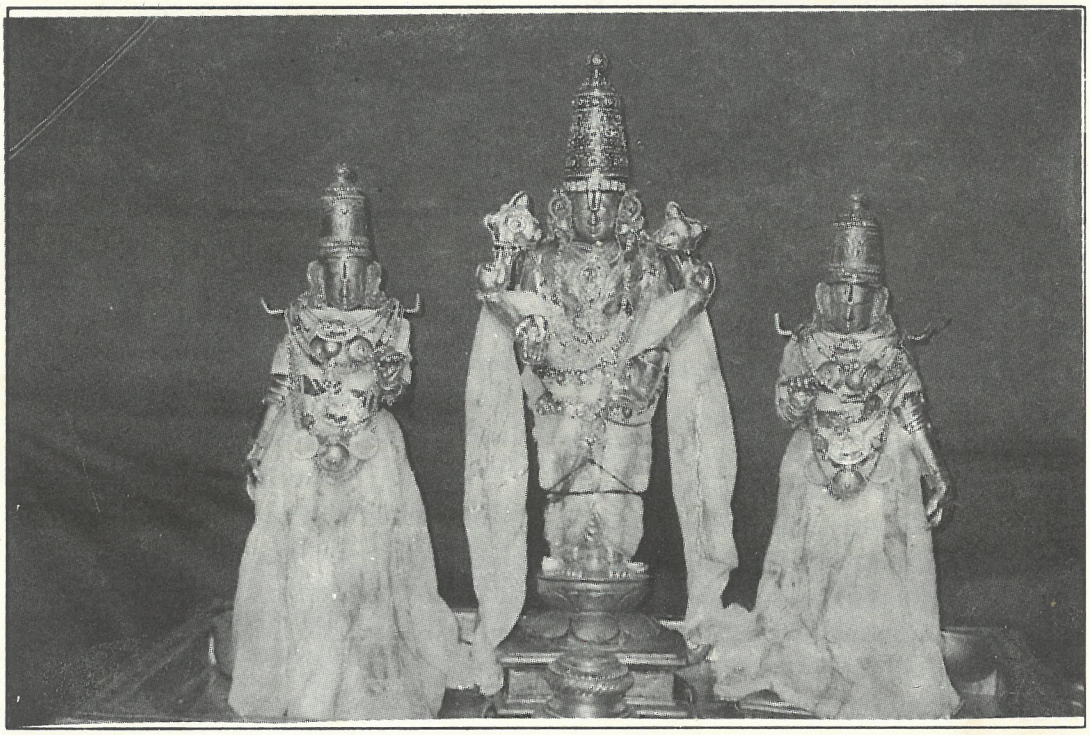


Utsava-Bera (Malayappa)

karini, Tirup-palḷip-paḍam), and Mṛgayā-vihārotsava (feigning a hunting spree, Pāḍiya-vēṭṭai). The Pāñcharātra enthusiasm for festivals and congregational worship was reflected in the inordinate increase of festivals, food-offerings during worship sequences (sandhi), varieties of offerings (avasara), processions and so on. Most of these festivals were śraddhotsavas, instituted by devout donors as their services (sevā). These constitute the content of the bulk of inscriptions in Tirumala and Tirupati. There are now about 450 utsavas to be conducted in 365 days of the year in the hill-shrine!

So Malayappa (the utsava-mūrti) is kept busy throughout the year. It is this bera that is most often seen by the pilgrims and devotees. Naturally, it is decorated elaborately with splendid ornaments of gold studded with diamonds, pearls, corals and other precious stones, and carried about on different vāhanas (vehicles) which are equally exquisite and attractive.

The grandest moment for this icon, along with his consorts is of course the car-festival marking the climax of the Navarātri (puraṭṭāśi) Brahmotsava (Tirukkōḍit-tirunāḷ), when millions of pilgrims gather on the hill. On the days preceding this final event, he rides



Utsava-Bera (Malayappa With consorts during Jyeshṭhābhishekam ceremony)

about in great pomp and glory on several bedecked vāhanas. The usual order of these rides, morning and night will be:

Inauguration (aṅkurārpaṇa): Senādhipati (Vishvaksena) utsava;

1st day: tiruchi-utsava (morning);big Śesha-vāhana (serpent) (night)

(ceremonial flag-hoisting);(swan)

2nd day: Small Śesha (serpent)-vāhana; Haṁsa (swan)-vāhana;

3rd day: Siṁha (lion)-vāhana; mutyap-pandil (the pearl-pavilion);

4th day: Kalpa-vṛksha (celestial tree)-vāhana;Sarva-bhūpāla-vāhana (emperor's throne);

5th day: Ivory palanquin (Mohinī); Garuḍa (sacred eagle)-vāhana;

6th day: Hanumad-vāhana; Gaja (elephant)-vāhana;

7th day: Sūya-prabha (solar orb)-vāhana; Chandra-prabha (lunar orb)-vāhana;

8th day: Rathotsava, car-festival; Aśva (horse)-vāhana

9th day: Ivory palanquin; tiruchi-utsava for lowering the flag.

In the evening of the seventh day, Vasantotsava is celebrated; and on the tenth day there will be tīrtha-vari (avarbhṛtha) marking the final sequence of the festival, followed by the lowering of the ceremonial flag (dhvajā varohaṇa). Among the festive rides, Garuḍa-vāhana (which is to be conducted on the fifth night according to the Dittam) is regarded as especially meritorious to watch. On this occasion, the Utsava-bera will be decorated with the holiest ornament adorning the Dhruva-bera, namely 'lakshmi-hāra', and Utsava-bera on this occasion will be taken out, without his consorts.

The car-festival, of course, is the event to which the crowds eagerly look forward. It is undoubtedly the most magnificient spectacle. The devotees believe that seeing Śrīnivāsa on the chariot would secure salvation ('rathārūḍham śrīnivāsam dṛshṭvā purarjanma na vidyate'). In the evenings of the first five days and on the seventh day there will be swing-festival (dolotsava, ūnjal), which is also colourful and grand. In the evening of the sixth day will be vasantotsava in the Kalyāṇa-mantapa. On the ninth day there will be chūrṇābhisheka, also in the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, after which the Utsava-bera goes in a procession to the Snapana-maṇṭapa of Varāhasvāmi shrine on the banks of Svāmi-pushkariṇī for a ceremonial bath. (avabhṛtha-snāna). When the Utsava-bera returns in a tiruchchi to the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, the Brahmotsava is deemed to have drawn to a close.

It may be recalled that as legend would have it, it was the Snapana-bera (Ugra-śrīnivāsa) that was used as the processional image, before the present Utsava-bera (viz. Malayappa with consorts) was found. There is also a practical consideration in this change. The snapana-bera is only one and a half foot tall, while the Utsava-bera

(Malayappa) is three feet tall, and therefore better suited for processions and public displays. And it is likely that before the Snapana-bera was introduced, the Kautuka-bera was used for the purpose, for the festivals were instituted at the same time as the Kautuka-bera was consecrated (614 A.D.). There is a provision in Vaikhānasa-āgama for this. We read in Bhṛgu's *Yajñādhikāra* (40, 16) that when the *utsava-bera* is not available, the Snapana-bera may be used for festivities; and when even the Snapana-bera is not to be had, the Kautuka-bera should be used:

उत्सवप्रतिमाभावे स्नापने वा विशेषतः।
स्नापनस्याप्यभावे तु कौतुके वा चरेत्तु वा।।

There is an interesting and intriguing practice in the hill-shrine concerning the Utsava-bera (Malayappa). There are two occasions in year when this image (with consorts) is taken out of the sanctum and accommodated in the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, outside the main shrine (consisting of Garbha-gṛha, Śayana-maṇṭapa, Rāmar-mēḍa and Snapana-maṇṭapa). The first occasion is during Brahmotsavam. The Utsava-bera comes out of the sanctum when the Brahmotsavam begins, and holds an independent court in Kalyāṇa-Maṇṭapa. The Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa will be the main focus of attention during the ten-day festival. The Utsava-bera will not return to the sanctum, till Dīpāvali-āsthānam about a fortnight later. The second occasion (for twenty-two days) is during Adhyayanotsava (during December), which begins eleven days before Vaikuṇṭha-ekādaśī in the month of Kārtika. This is a typical Pāñcharātra festival, in which the congregational worship and collective recital of the Tamiḻ songs of the Āḻvārs (prabandha) are the main features.

On these occasions, the Utsava-bera, which got into the sanctum around 1339 A.D., is practically excluded from the sanctum, strongly suggesting that the present Utsava-bera (Malayappa with consorts) is an essentially pāñcharātra image, and that its role is rather inconsistent with the Vaikhānasa outlook. During Ārdrā-nakshatra-utsava (which is a celebration of Rāmānuja's birth-anniversary), the custom in the hill-temple is to take out Malayappa in a procession, and as the procession reaches the outer gateway (Paḍi-kāvali), the processional image of Rāmānuja, which is also taken out in a procession, is made to receive Malayappa here; and the two together are then taken out in procession on the streets surrounding the temple.

Like this, there are several other Kālotsavas in the hill-shrine (like Tiruvāḍip-pūra-utsava, Dīpāvaḻi-āsthāna, Senādhipati-āsthāna, Chakra-tīrtha-mukkoṭi, Pañchamī-tīrtha-mukkoṭi, Bhāshyakāra-gandha-poḍi-utsava, Vasantotsava and Mukkoṭi ekādaśi-āsthāna) which reveal the close association between Rāmānuja and this image instituted by the Pāñcharātra en-

thusiasts a couple of centuries after the days of Rāmānuja. For the Pāñcharātras, festivals are very important, in fact more important than daily worship, for so says *Śrī-Praśna-saṁhitā* (30, 7-8)

आराधनादियोगेभ्य एषोऽतिप्रीतिवर्धनः।
महत्प्रीतिर्येन मम उत्सवेन भविष्यति॥

There is also a practice in the sanctum, which betrays an impact of the Pāñcharātra view-point, and which goes against the Vaikhānasa rules. This is with regard to the placement of the four beras in the sanctum. At present, the Utsava-bera or Malayappa with consorts is placed on the right side of Kautuka-bera. To the immediate left of Dhruva-bera is found Rāma with Sītā (the form of Vishṇu that was dear to Rāmānuja, for after all he was believed to be an incarnation of Lakshmaṇa); beside him Kṛishṇa (which is also a Pāñcharātra image). And only at the extreme left are to be seen Snapana-bera (Ugra-Śrīnivāsa) and Bali-bera (Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa).

Bhṛgu-saṁhitā, however, prescribes that the Utsava-bera is to be placed on the left side of the Dhruva-bera, while the Snapana-bera and the Bali-bera on the right side.

Kāśyapīya *Jñāna-kāṇḍa* (chap 57) says:

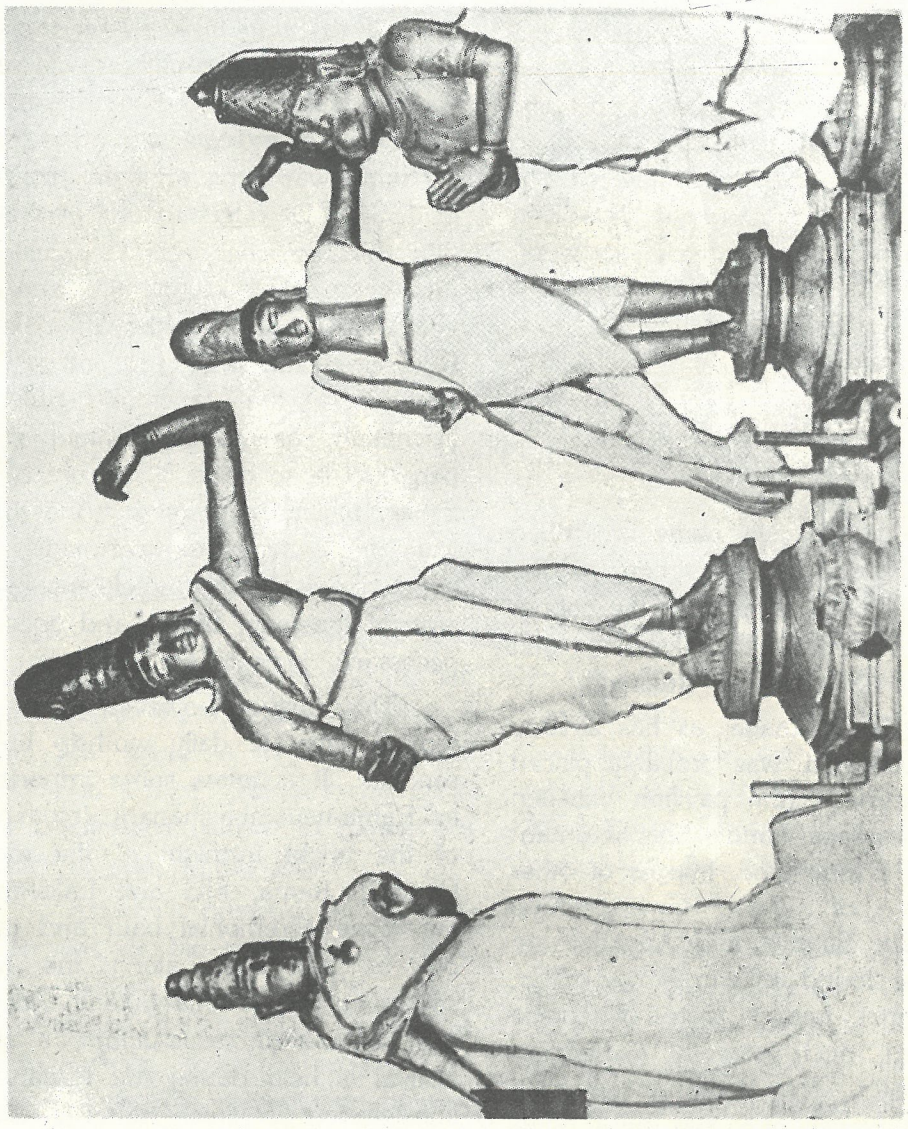
ब्राह्मे कौतुकं दक्षिणे स्नपनं वामे चैत्सवम् ॥

The Kautuka-bera should find its place in the brahma-sthāna along with the Dhruva-bera, the Snapana-bera should be placed on the right side of Kautuka-bera while the utsava-bera should be accommodated on the left side.

The Kautuka-bera, which is all important in the Vaikhānasa mode of worhship, is, of course, found in the brahma-sthāna ("brahmasthānam kautukasya') along with the Dhruva-bera, with which it is ritualisticaly connected. *Kriyādhikāra* (9,4-5) lays down:

कौतुकं ब्रह्मणः स्थाने स्थापितं सम्यगर्चयेत्।
दक्षिणोत्तरयोस्तस्य पूजयेत् स्नापनोत्सवौ॥
देवस्य वामभागे तु स्थापयेद् बिम्बमौत्सवम्।
स्नापनं बलिबेरं च दक्षिणे स्थापयेद् बुधः॥
उत्तरे कौतुकस्यैव बलिबेरं समर्चयेत्॥
ब्रह्मस्थाने प्रतिष्ठाप्य कौतुकं वैष्णवेन तु।
पार्श्वयोरुभयोर्देव्यौ स्नापनं दक्षिणे ततः॥
उत्सवं बलिबेरं च स्थापयेच्चोत्तरे तथा।

The icons of utsava-bera in the temple (Malayappan with consorts) are made in pañcha-loha (an alloy of five 'dhātus' or metals, viz. gold, silver, copper, lead and iron). Malayappa is 27 inches in height, and stands on a lotus-pedestal which is nine inches high. Lakshmī (Śrī-devī) stands to his right, and is 24 inches tall, standing on a pedestal which is four inches high. Bhū-devī, who stands on the left side of Malayappa is about the same size. The two consorts (nāchchiyār) are each two-armed, one of the hands (nearer the god) being held in the



RĀMA GROUP (in the sanctum)

kaṭaka-posture, and the other (farther away) hanging loosely and gracefully.

Malayappa is four-armed, the two upper hands holding conch and discus and the two normal hands in the boon-bestowal (varada, right) and the hip-holding (kaṭyavalaṁbita) postures. He is not an exact replica of the main deity in the sanctum, as regards the ornaments and proportions. This icon appears to be an early Choḷa work. There are numerous bejewelled ornaments for this image, gifted by pious pilgrims from time to time.

RĀMA AND KṚSHṆA

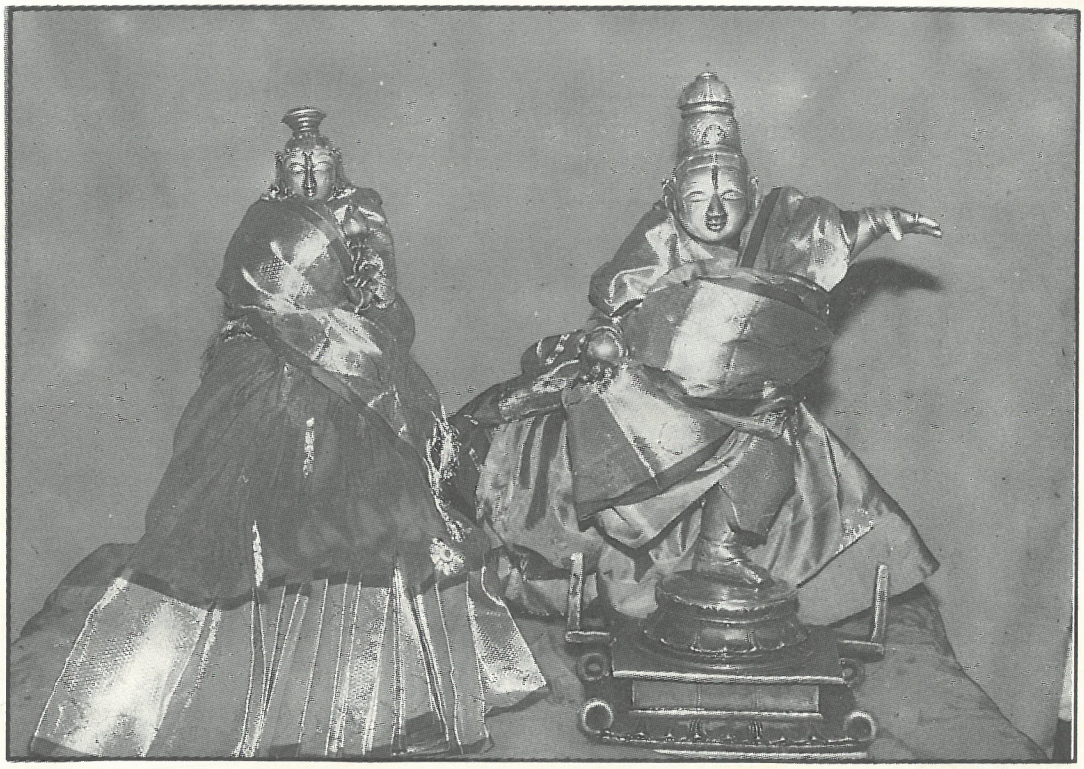
Besides the five beras prescribed in the Āgama, the sanctum of the hill-shrine houses at present the copper images of Rāma (with Lakshmaṇa and Sītā) and Kṛshṇa (with Rukmiṇī).

The Rāma image, as has already been mentioned, was probably placed in Rāmar-mēḍa (the pavilion between Śayana-maṇṭapa and Snapana-maṇṭapa) for a long time. Images of other members of the Rāma group (Hanumān, Sugrīva and Aṅgada) are still to be found only in Rāmar-mēḍa. These latter images were of course introduced much later by a Mahant-administrator. The Rāma image (with those of Lakshmaṇa and Sita) dates probably from the days of Rāmānuja to whom, it is claimed, it was presented by the Śrī-Vaishṇavas of Tirupati on the occasion of his second visit.

The earliest reference to this god occurs in an inscription of 1476 A.D. which records the service of Śaṭhakopa -dāsar Narasiṁha-rāya-mudaliār of Tirupati to "Raghunāthan on the hill" ('tiru-malai-mēl ragu-nāthan') (a daily tirupponaka offering). While the inscription does not indicate where the image of Rāma was kept, another inscription of 1504 A.D. refers to this god being "in the presence of the hill-god" ('tiru-vēṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān sannadiyil eḷundaraḷi yirukkum raghunāthanakku'). Does it mean that the image was already in the sanctum? But the inscription makes arrangement for a perpetual lamp being lit in front of this image, which suggests that the image was in a separate apartment. The expression 'sannidhi' merely means the area of the main shrine, and does not necessarily indicate the sanctum.

This image, however, does not receive separate daily worhsip in the sanctum. It acquires some importance in Rāma-navami-āsthānam (ninth day of the bright fortnight of the month Chaitra). Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmaṇa are given ceremonial bath and taken out in procession along the main streets on Hanumanta-vāhana. According to *Nakshatrotsava-diṭṭam*, a small festival is held during the Punarvasu-constellation (in which Rāma is said to have been born).

The Rāma group in the sanctum is a collection of four excellent specimens of metalcraft. Rāma is two-armed, the right hand assuming kaṭaka-



KṚISHṆA WITH RUKMIṆI (in the sanctum)

mudrā (to hold the arrow) and the left hand held in the attitude of holding a bow. The figure is in a three-bend (tri-bhaṅgi) stance. Sītā is to his right, and Lakshmaṇa (similar to Rāma, but smaller in size) to his left.

Kṛishṇa's presence in the hill-shrine was, on the evidence of inscriptions, earlier than Rama's. Avani-muḷuduḍaiyaḷ, the queen of Rāja-kesari Rājendra-choḷa, made a provision in 1100 A.D. for the presentation of milk and curds ('pāl-amudu, tayir-amudu') to this Kṛshṇa (called in the inscription 'ninra āḻvār eṅgaḷ-uḍaiya tiruvāypāḍi') who is with the hill-god (tirumalai āḻvārukku). It is a long-standing custom in the hill-shrine to use this image as Śayana-bera (the image receiving 'ekānta-sevā' or the last sequence of worship at night) during the month of Mārgaḷi (viz. Dhanur-māsa) every year, instead of the Kautuka-bera (Bhoga-Śrīnivāsa).

Like the Rāma-image in the sanctum, this image of Kṛshṇa also does not receive separate worship in the daily ritual. But he gets special attention during Gokulāshṭami (in the month of Śrāvaṇa). He is ceremonially bathed (tirumañjana) and is seated on sarva-bhūpāla-vāhana, fitted to a swing (ūñjal) in the Raṅga-maṇṭapa. Tamil songs of the Āḻvārs (prabandha) are

recited in a group by the Śrī-vaishṇavas, who also go through their customary śāttumorai. But this festival is celebrated on the ashṭami day (when Kṛishṇa was born), and not necessarily during the Rohiṇī constellation. Rohiṇī nakshatrotsava is separately conducted, as also uṭla-utsavam (when Kṛishṇa and Rukmiṇī are taken out in a procession, along with the Utsava-bera with consorts, to Yāmunat-turai and Paḍi-pōṭu in the Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa, where they receive special worship).

Besides these icons, there is also a large metallic processional image of Sudarśana (chakrat-tāḷvār), in the form of a discus, without however the personified deity involved in it, kept in the sanctum, at a little distance from the main deity, along the southern wall of the sanctum. It is taken out and worshipped on some occasions like Brahmotsava, tīrtha-vari, Ananta-chaturdaśi and Chakra-tīrtha-mukkoṭi.

There are also four large śālagrama-stones kept near the main deity, and they receive daily worship during tōmāla-sevā.



CHAKRATTĀḶVĀR (SUDARŚANA) (in the sanctum)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HILL-GOD

श्रीभूमिनीलादेवीनां दिव्यहस्तोपलालितौ
॥९७॥
शरण्यौ चाशरण्यानां शंखचक्रादिचिन्हितौ।
विलासविक्रमक्रान्तत्रैलोक्यौ लोकपावनौ
॥९८॥
वन्दारुजनमन्दारौ मञ्जीरद्युतिरञ्जितौ।
हंसकालंकृतौ दिव्यौ किङ्किणीकविभूषितौ
॥९९॥
पारिजातादिकुसुमैः सूरिभिश्चाप्यर्चितौ सदा।
श्रीमच्छठारिकलिजिच्छ्रीरामानुज
योगिभिः॥१००॥
प्राप्यप्रापकभावेन प्रपन्नौ परभक्तितः।
सेवेय श्रीनिवासस्य चरणौ जलजोपमौ
॥१०१॥
सौवर्णकाहलाकारे जंघे सर्वमनोहरे।
समानसंनिवेशं च चारुजानुयुगं तथा
॥१०२॥
कदलीकाण्डकान्तोरुयुगलं चातिसुन्दरम्।
दिव्यपीताम्बराश्लिष्टं दीप्रकाञ्ची-
गुणोज्ज्वलम्॥१०३॥
कटीतटं च रुचिरं कान्तखड्गविराजितम्।
वन्दारुभववाराशिकटीदघ्नत्वसूचकम्॥१०४॥

करं वामं कटिन्यस्तं कनत्कङ्कणभूषणम्।
वैकुण्ठमेतद्धामेति व्यञ्जकं दक्षिणं करम्
॥१०५॥
लावण्यनिम्नगावर्तनाभिं चापि तनूदरम्।
इन्दिरामन्दरं वक्षश्चन्द्रचन्दनचर्चितम्
॥१०६॥
विहरन्तीं श्रियं तत्र वेङ्कटाचलनायिकाम्।
ग्रीवां च कम्बुवत्कान्तां ग्रैवेयक विभूषिताम्
॥१०७॥
समस्तशोकशमनं चन्द्रकान्तं तदाननम्।
शुचिस्मितं सुन्दरोष्ठं शोभनाधरपल्लवम्
॥१०८॥
सुकपोलौ सुनासां च सुन्दरभ्रूलतायुगम्।
दयाकञ्चुकितापाङ्गैर्दृष्टादृष्टफलप्रदे॥१०९॥
दिव्याम्बुजदलाकारे दीर्घे दिव्ये च लोचने।
तथा करयुगोदञ्चच्छङ्खचक्रे सदोज्ज्वले।
॥११०॥
उन्नतांसयुगालम्बिलसन्मकरकुण्डले।
उदग्रकर्णचापौ चाप्युल्लसत्कर्णपूरके॥१११॥
रम्ये ललाटे विलसदूर्ध्वपुंड्रं ललाटिकाम्।
लसद्रत्नकिरीटं च जगन्नाथत्वसूचकम्
॥११२॥

The text now provides an eye-witness account of the iconographical details of the Dhruva-bera in the sanctum. The sight of the main deity is, of course, the cherished objective of the pilgrim: it is for this that he has been yearning and he has undertaken the perilous journey. He stands in front of the sanctum in a state of excitement and rapture and is overwhelmed with the fervour of devotion and the feeling of fulfilment.

The text allows the pilgrim to stand unhurried in front of the main deity and drink deep and at leisure the unparalleled charm of the figure, and observe the several limbs, each of which is a master-piece of beauty. Alas, this is no longer possible for the pilgrim, who can, if lucky, snatch at best a fleeting vision of the glorious image. The text begins with the feet of the god and goes to the crown, following the time-honoured custom of āpāda-mauli-paryanta. The feet of the god are, of course, the only refuge for the devotee ('śaraṇyau cha aśaranyāṇām'); they must be deep within his heart and on top of his head. The well-known *Suprabhāta* sung in the hill-shrine makes this a refrain of the fifteen verses in the 'Prapatti' part.

श्रीवेंकटेशचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये॥

The image of the lord of the Vēṅgaḍam-hill is undoubtedly a marvellous specimen of stone-sculpture. The devotee, of course, believes that it is a self-manifest one, un-sculpted by human hand; and one would readily agree that it is an exceedingly ancient image going back to centuries before Christ. While we do not know when this figure was prepared, if indeed it was; nor do we know who accomplished this marvel. But such works of art are always providentially occasioned, and the divine guidance in them is all too obvious. The human sculptor would only be a mere instrument in the hands of the divine will to manifest an aspect of divinity. In a real sense, it is certainly self-manifest; but in a practical context, human agency needs to be involved. It is a work of art imbued with the perfection of devotion that is before us: and no ordinary intellect, effort, skill or genius could have produced a work like this. If a sculptor was at it, it is the divine energy that worked through him, and this is readily recognizable.

Even the purāṇas concede that the image was got prepared by the prince Śaṁkha of the Solar dynasty and Haihaya lineage in a bygone age (*Brahma-purāṇa*, 7, 21)

वल्मीकस्यान्तरे विष्णोः प्रतिमा वर्तते शुभा।
शंखेन निर्मिता पुण्या सर्वपापहरा३मला॥

Later, when it was hidden in an ant-hill during the great passage of time, Toṇḍamān took it out, again as directed by the god himself. The legend relates that even Śaṁkha got the image prepared as directed by the god. *Skānda-purāṇa* (3, 10, 12-15) relates that the hill-god appeared before Śaṁkha, the sage Agastya and others in a form that was at once bewitching and terrifying; it was impossible to comprehend its innumerable details, and it was overwhelming in its impact. With flames of fire gushing forth from it, but Lakshmī abiding

calmly in his chest. It covered the entire universe, and dominated over it with its bright lustre. The creator himself was frightened by this intriguing and inscrutable apparition and begged the god to withdraw it. Then the form that is at present seen appeared. It was tranquil and reassuring.

वाङ्मनसातीतं विश्रुतैश्वर्यभासुरम्।
सहस्रनेत्रं सहस्रबाहुपादैः समन्वितम्।।
तप्तकार्तस्वरनिभस्फुरत् कान्तिमनोहरम्।
दंष्ट्राकरालं दुर्दर्शं वमन्तं दहनच्छटाः।
कौस्तुभेन विराजन्तं दधानमुरसि श्रियम्।।
अविचिन्त्यमनाद्यन्तमत्यन्तभयदायकम्।
प्रकाशयन्तं ब्रह्माण्डं सर्वमात्मनि सर्वगम्।।

The sage Durvāsa describes to the king, Dilīpa (ibid, 7, 2-8), the form that now appeared. It is peaceful in aspect, and four-armed. It is alone, without his usual consorts, Lakshmī and Bhū-devī, at his sides. The upper hands carry conch and discus. The left normal hand touches the hip and the right one assumes the gesture of boon-bestowal. The complexion is that of a dark rain-bearing cloud; and the figure is attired in silken garments of yellow colour. It is a well-proportioned figure, and the arms are well-shaped and long. The nose is shapely, and eyes beautiful. The chest is broad and prominent; and Lakshmī (Śrī-vatsa) is seated on the breast. The ears are adorned with makara-kuṇḍalas. The figure's beauty is that of a million gods of love (Eros). He satisfies the desires of the devotees, and he gave away, to show his affection for his devotees, his own conch and discus to the king (Toṇḍamān). That is how he is seen now without the usual conch and discus. The image is made out of stone and is suitable for worship (archā)

श्रीनिवासाख्यया देवः शंखचक्रधरो विभुः।
शान्तभावं समापन्नो मृगयोद्दामलोचनः।।
कटिं स्पृशन् वमकरात् वरमुद्रां च दक्षिणात्।
तिरोहितश्रीभूभ्यां दृश्यते मृगयुर्यथा।
निलजीमूतसंकाशः पीतकौशेयशोभितः।।
पीनवृत्तबृहद्बाहुः सुनासश्चारुलोचनः।
दोषगन्धविदूरश्च गुणसान्द्रः सुखोचितः।।
कोटिकन्दर्पलावण्यः स्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलः।
बृहद्वक्षस्थावासमहालक्ष्म्या च शोभितः।।
तत्तदिष्टातमं कामं ददद्भक्तानामनुकम्पया।।
दर्शयन् भक्तवात्सल्यं यो ददौ हस्तगे शुभे।।
शंखचक्रे नृपेन्द्राय चक्रवर्तीति यो विदुः।
अत एवारिशंखाभ्यां दृश्यते रहितौ करौ।
अर्चारूपशिलारूपविग्रहस्य महात्मनः।।

The iconographic features of the hill-god are fairly uniformly given in the purāṇas, and the descriptions are in general agreement with the actual details that one can now see in the image. The image in all accounts is four-armed. In the two upper hands can now be seen gilt copper coverings of discus (chakra, in the right hand) and conch (śaṁkha, in the left hand). These are only sheet-metal fittings and

do not represent the weapons in the original figure. The gilt coverings weigh 0.513.500 kg (conch) and 0.517.000 kg (discus). The upper arms are in the original image bare, and the legend of the hill-god having given the weapons away to Toṇḍamān has already been mentioned. And Rāmānuja (1017-1137) is credited with having fixed the gilt-copper coverings of conch and discus to the upper hands to make the deity an obviously Vaishṇava one and to satisfy the Pāñcharātra expectations. It has already been mentioned that, according to the Vaikhānasa scriptures, the vīra-sthānaka form of Vishṇu may or may not have conch and discus in his hands; and that some texts even insist that this form is distinguished by the absence of conch and discus. Thus, when, for a long time, the deity was bereft of conch and discus for whatever reason, it was by no means less of a Vishṇu image; and when Rāmānuja, or any one else, provided conch and discus, it did not become more so.

In any case, the iconographic description in all accounts (most of which are after Rāmānuja) mention conch and discus in the upper hands, the left normal hand placed on the waist (kaṭyavalambita, called here kati-hasta) and the right normal hand held in the boon-bestowal posture (varada-hasta, called here vaikuṇṭha-hasta). In actuality, the normal left hand is placed on the thigh (ūru-hasta, below the waist). Even these two hands are covered by gilt copper replicas weighing 2.343.700 kg (kaṭi-hasta) and 2.286.00 kg (vaikuṇṭha-hasta, encrusted, with precious stones). Śrivatsa (mark on the right breast indicating the presence of Lakshmī) and Kaustubha (the gem on the chest, characteristic of the divine personage) are also noticed. In *Padma-purāṇa*, the dhyāna-śloka includes Vaijayanti-garland also:

चतुर्भुजः शंखचक्रवरावनतिहस्तकः।
श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभोरस्को वैजयन्त्या विराजितः॥

Skānda-purāṇa has the following dhyāna-śloka:

केयूराङ्गदसद्भूषं वृत्तायतचतुर्भुजम्।
ज्वालायुतसहस्रारसुदर्शनधरं परम्॥
शरच्चन्द्रप्रतीकाश पाञ्चजन्यधरं शुभम्।
अश्रान्तवरदानोद्यद्दक्षपाणिसरोरुहम्।
कटीतटसुविन्यस्त वामपाणि जलेरुहम्॥

Another dhyāna-śloka:

उर्ध्वौ हस्तौ यदीयौ सुररिपुदलने बिभ्रतौ शंखचक्रे
सेव्यावंघ्री स्वकीयावभिदधदधरो दक्षिणो यस्य पाणिः।
तावन्मात्रं भवाब्धिं गमयति भजतामूरुगो वामपाणिः
श्रीवत्सांकश्च लक्ष्मीर्यदुरसि लसतस्तं भजे वेंकटेशम्॥

Bhavishyottara-purāṇa(13, 82-85) mentions Lakshmī on the chest, but makes the conch and discus prominent by their absence.

पद्मावतीं विशालाक्षीं भगवानात्मवक्षसि।
अरिशंखविहीनोऽसौ कटिन्यस्तकरोत्तमः॥
दर्शयन् पाणिनैकेन दक्षिणेन वृषाकपिः।
पादपद्मं सुराराध्यं गतिं च परमां नृणाम्॥
कटिन्यस्तकरेणापि निजपादाब्जगामिनाम्।
नृणां भवपयोराशिं कटिदघ्नं प्रदर्शयन्।
विराजते वेंकटेशः संप्रत्यपि रमापतिः॥

The presence of Lakshmī on the body of the hill-god is responsible for the name Śrī-nivāsa (the abode of Lakshmī) for him. This image of Lakshmī is in the āgamas prescribed to be two-armed and seated in the lotus posture; this form is called Vyūha-lakshmī:

द्विभुजा व्यूहलक्ष्मीः स्यात् बद्धपद्मासनप्रिया।
श्रीनिवासाङ्कमध्यस्था सुतरां केशवप्रिया॥

And the consecration and worship of Vyūha-lakshmī are meant to secure unbounded and eternal prosperity ('niravadhika-samṛddhi-siddhaye'). In the daily worship of the hill-god, after the Veṅkaṭeśa-sahasra-nāma-archana (reciting the thousand names of the hill-god and offering flowers and tulasī-leaves after each name) in the morning, this Vyūha-lakshmī on the god's chest is also worshipped reciting the sixteen names of Lakshmī (lakshmī-shoḍaśa-nāma) with the offering of tulasī-leaves after each name. This image is specially and separately worshipped during the main deity's ceremonial bath on Fridays, as also during Makara-sankrānti, when this Lakshmī on the chest of the hill-god receives bath with perfumed water, before worship is offered to Pōṭu-amma (who, as mentioned earlier, represents Lakshmī in the hill-shrine).

Rāmānuja is said to have prompted one of the Yādava-rāya kings to offer for the hill-god a golden necklace in which the image of Lakshmī (sculpted in relief and encrusted with precious stones) was hung as a pendant (lakshmī-hāra). This necklace with the pendant, weighing 2kg and 333 mg is still to be seen round the neck of the hill-god. This was offered, according to a traditional account, on a Friday in the 'ratna-mālikā-yoga' (conjunction of the constellation uttarā-phālguṇī on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight). Every Friday, since that time, special worship is accorded to this image. After the customary ceremonial bath (tirumañjana) for the god, this pendant-image is separately given a bath with water, perfumes and turmeric. During the sequence of tōmāla-sevā everyday, two garlands are offered to the goddess, each garland being 27" in length. On the fifth day of the annual Brahmotsava, this lakshmi-hāra is taken out of the sanctum in a ritual procession and presented to the Utsava-bera

(Malayappa) when he goes out in Garuḍotsava; and after the event it is immediately returned to the sanctum and worn by the main deity.

In a poetic vein, the purānas explain the symbolism of the attitudes of the normal hands. The right hand, in varada-mudrā, points to the feet, which are the sole refuge for all devotees and which are uninterruptedly worshipped by all the gods and sages. The posture teaches the doctrine of total submission (prapatti, śaraṇāgati). The left hand placed on the waist or thigh indicates that the ocean of transmigration will reach only this point, that is to say, the devotee who has surrendered himself will be saved from being drowned in the waters of worldly fetters.

शंखं चक्रं धारयन्तं कराभ्याम्
फलप्रदश्योरुगवामहस्तम्।
प्राप्याविमावित्यपरेण पादौ
संदर्शयन्तं करपङ्कजेन।।

This explanation, however, is rather fanciful; and does not accord with the śilpa-śāstra ideas. Boon-bestowal (vara-dāna) is the significance of the posture of the right hand; and the left hand held in kaṭyavalaṁbita or ūru-hasta attitude is merely a graceful stance, indicative of ease, majesty and lordship.

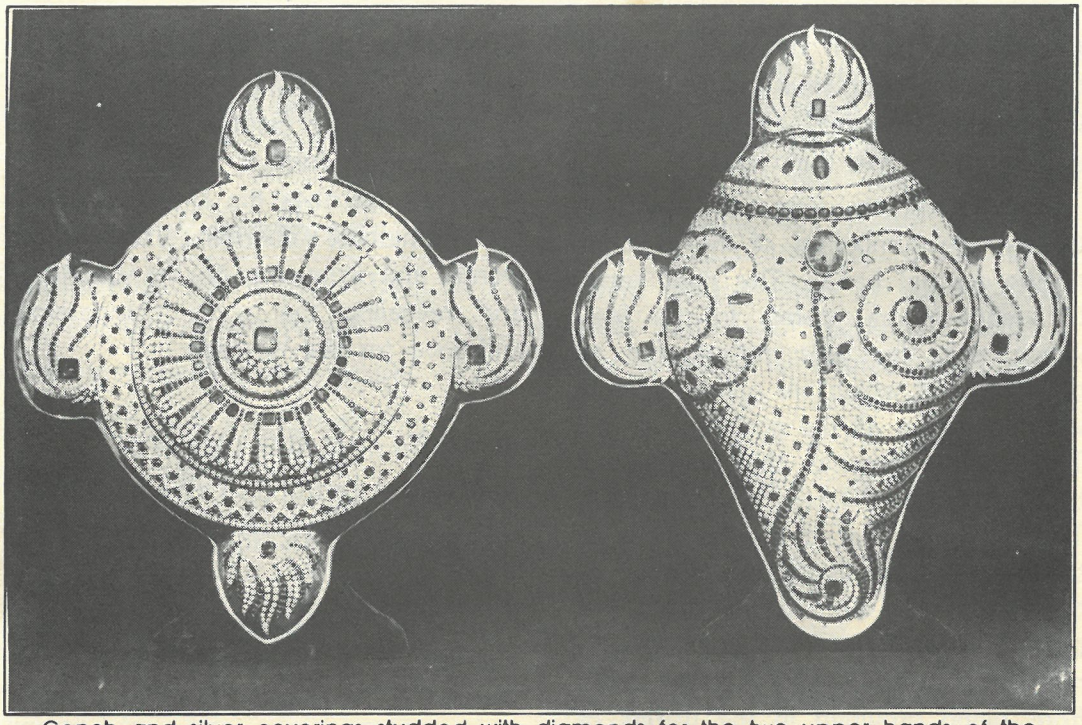
Some accounts notice and emphasize the bewitching smile that can be seen on the deity's face. This is indeed a fascinating feature of the figure, rarely met with in icons of this size and form. *Skānda-purāṇa* (4,11,11) describes the smile as bright and luminous, charming the three worlds and illumining all the quarters, and revealing the god's compassion and love for the devotee:

मन्दस्मितेन सकलं मोहयन् भुवनत्रयम्।
स्वभासा भासयन् सर्वा दिशो दश विराजयन्।
सुभक्तसुलभो देवो वेंकटेशो दयानिधिः।।

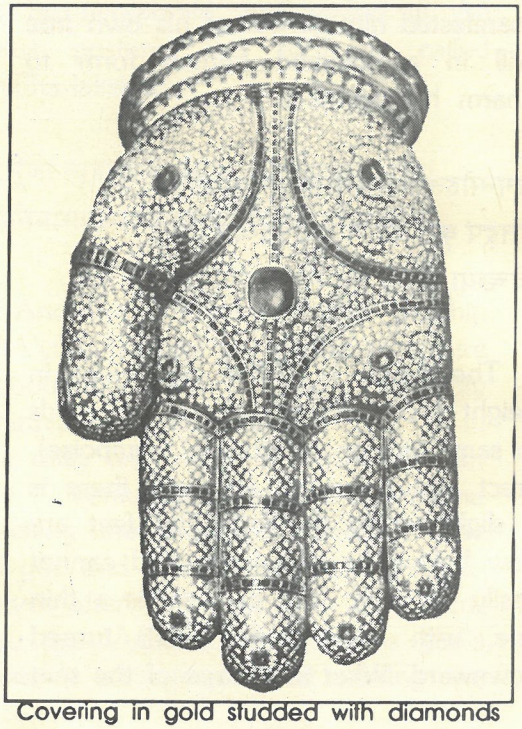
Bhavishyottara-purāṇa (5, 5) wonders if any sculptor, human or celestial, could possibly bring about this beatific smile on the face, and declares that the god has undoubtedly manifested himself out of his own free will in a splendid human form to charm his devotees

जगन्मोहनसौन्दर्यलीलामानुषविग्रहः।
नैतद्रूपं कृतं देवैः न कृतं विश्वकर्मणा।
स्वेच्छया क्रीडते तत्र स्वेच्छारूपविराजितः।।

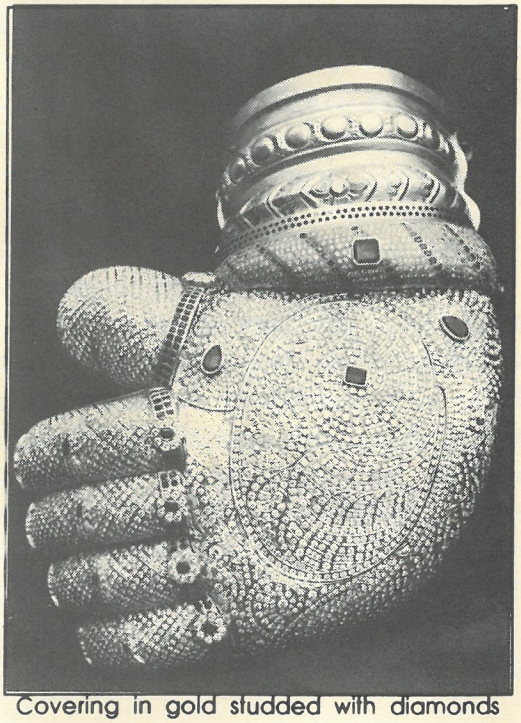
The figure is about eight feet in height and well-proportioned. It stands in sama-bhaṅga (posture of equipoise), erect and balanced, although there is a slight tilt to the left. The feet are now below the floor-level, and cannot easily be seen. The pedestal is a thin one, with lotus motif, petals turned downward. What the shape of the seat



Conch and silver coverings studded with diamonds for the two upper hands of the main icon in the sanctum



Covering in gold studded with diamonds for the Varada-hasta of the main icon in the sanctum



Covering in gold studded with diamonds for Kaṭi-hasta of the main icon in the sanctum



1.



2.

1. Rāmānuja (stone image in the sanctum, decorated)

2. Rāmānuja (Processional image in the shrine in Vimāna Pradakshiṇa)

3. Utsava-Mūrti decorated with Mutyāla-Kavacham



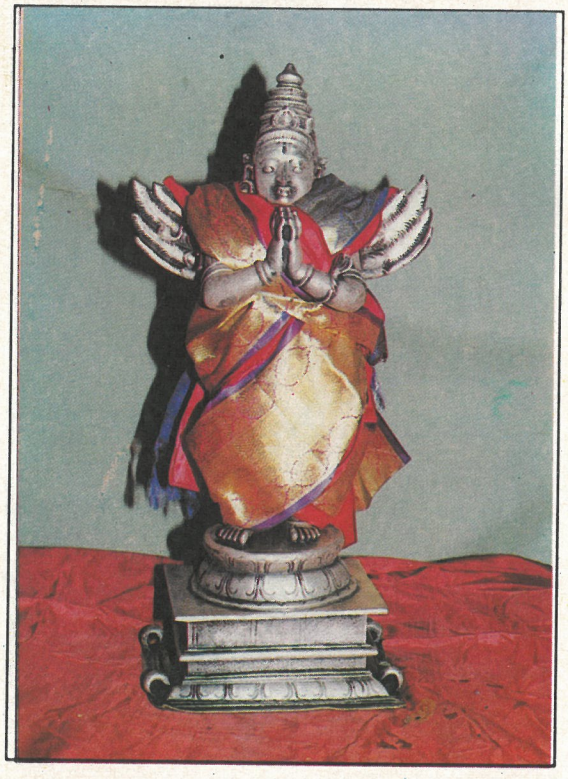
3.



1



2.



3.

Bronze images in Ramar-meda (left pial)

1. Ananta
2. Vishvaksena
3. Garuda



1



2



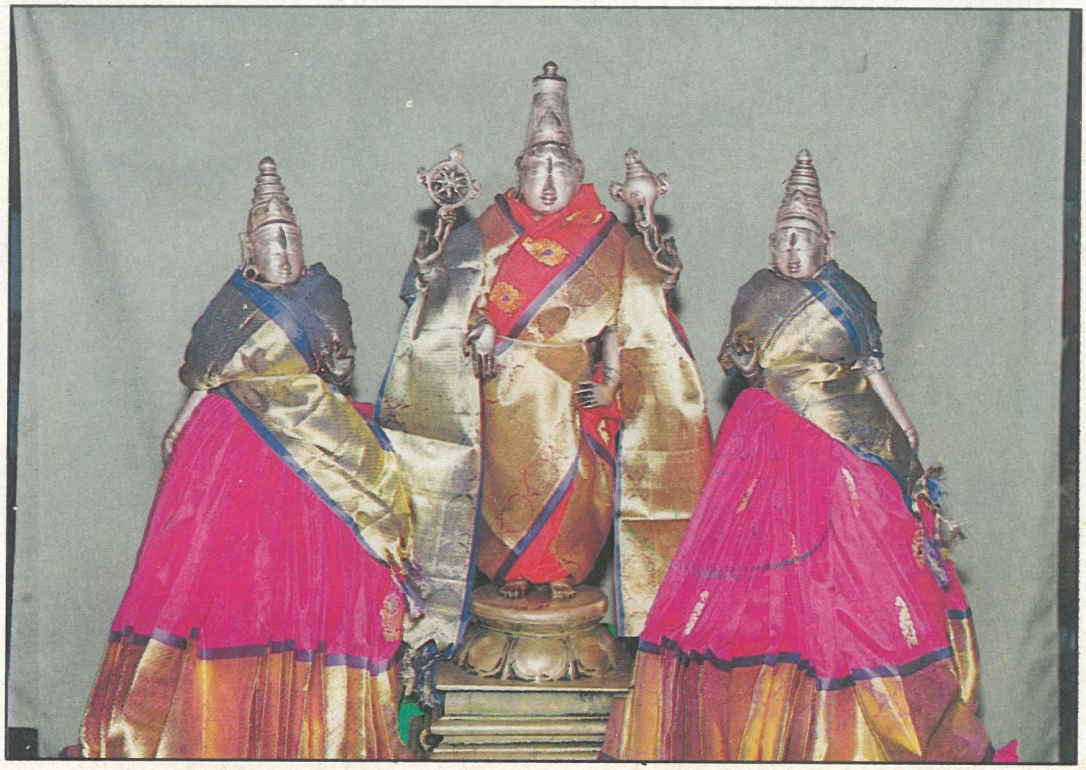
3

Bronze images in Ramar-meḍa (right pial)

1. Hanuman
2. Aṅgada
3. Sugrīva



Koluvu-Śrīnivasa (Bali-bera)



1.



Bronze images in the sanctum

1. Ugra-Srinivasa
(Snapana-bera)

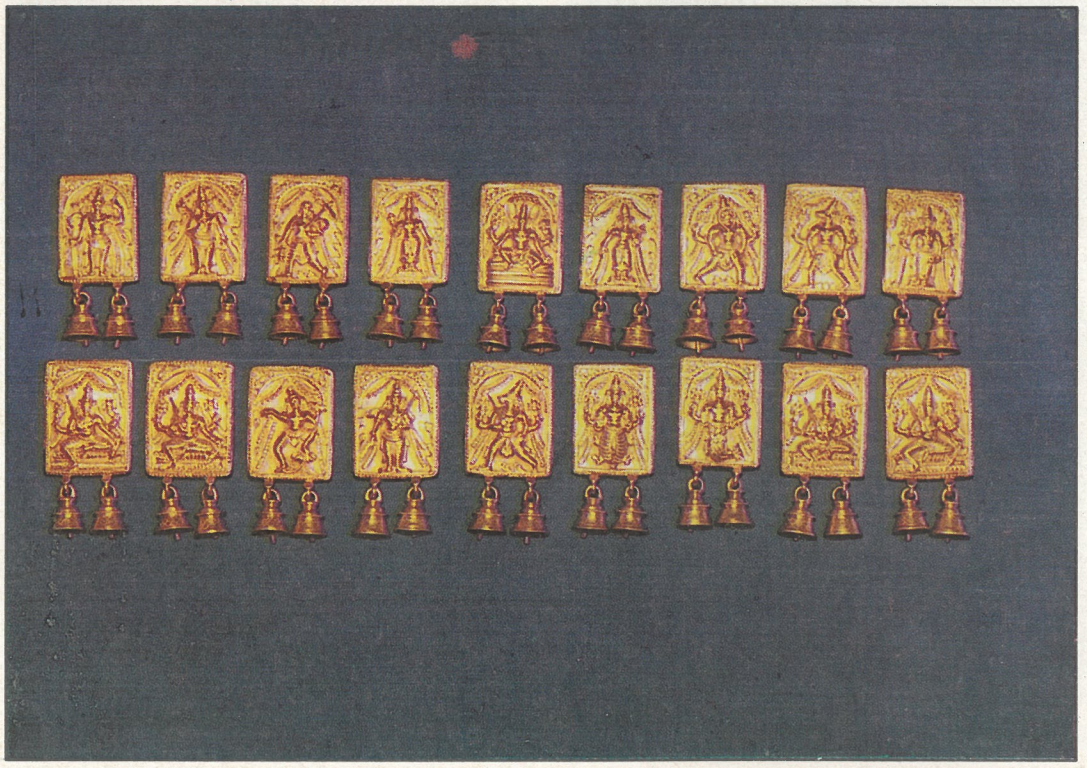
2. Utsava-Murti decorated for
Jyeshṭhabhisheka



Kirīṭa (Presented by the Ruler of Gadwāl State)



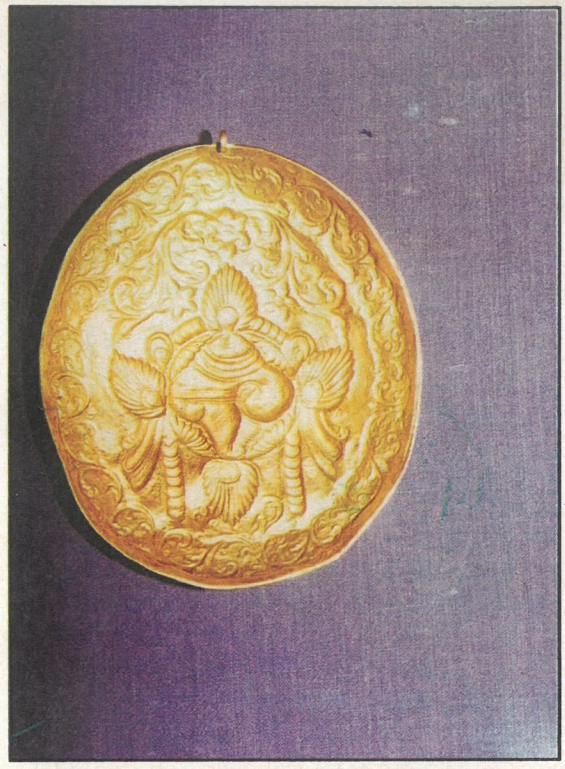
Golden Kavachas (for the Utsava-Mūrti)



Waist-Band (Vaḍyāṇa) (with the ten incarnations of Vishṇu represented)



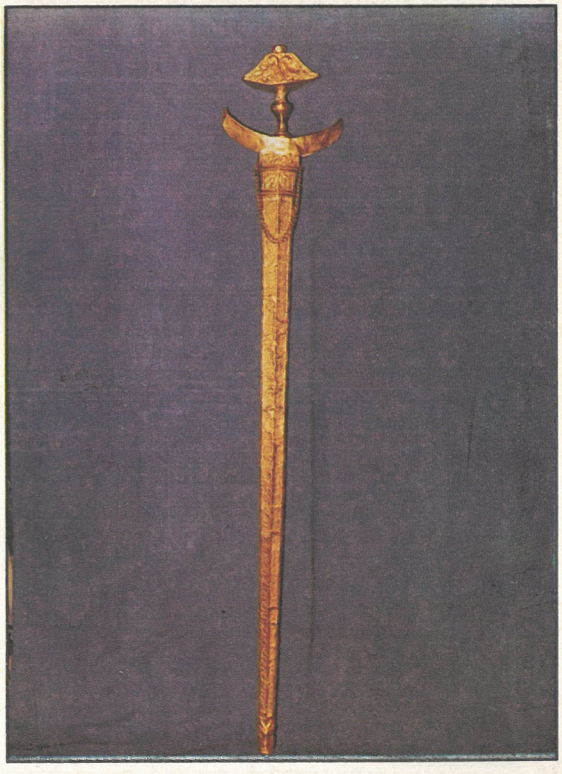
Covering For Chakra (right upper hand)



Shoulder-Plate (bhuja-kīrti) (left)



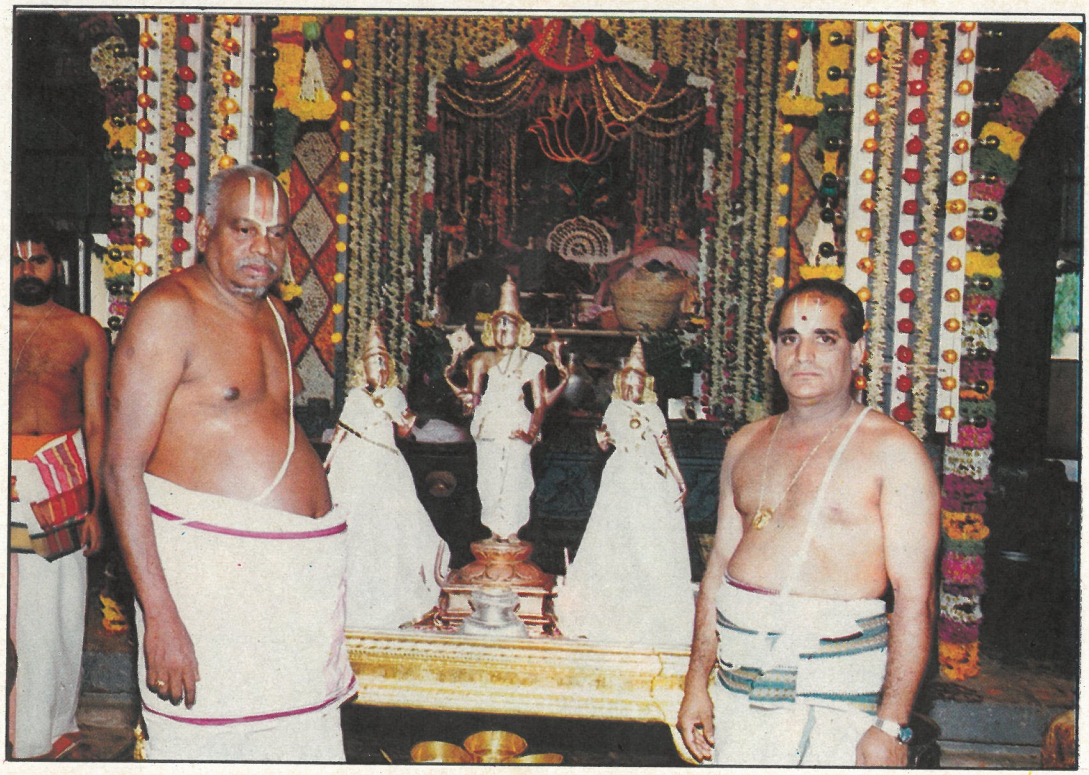
Nāgābharaṇa (arm-band)



Sword (sūrya-kaṭhāri)



Lakshmi-Hara of The Dhruva-Bera (being brought from the Sanctum for being worn by the Utsava-murti during Garuḍotsava)



The Utsava-Murti being bathed during Vasantotsava

is beneath this padma-pīṭha cannot be known, for it is hidden under the ground. Usually a gilt copper coverings for the feet are placed on the floor, so that the actual feet are not seen. The weight of this sheet-metal covering which is in the nature of a lotus pedestal, called Śrī-vāri-padma-pīṭhamu, is 19.012 kg. During daily worship, after the ceremonial bath to the Kautuka-bera (Bhoga-śrīnivāsa), the coverings of the two feet are removed from this pedestal to a separate seat and given a bath, behind curtains. During this ceremony, the actual feet of the hill-god are rubbed with perfumed oil and then covered with a fresh cloth. Then the sheet metal coverings of the feet are replaced, after which the curtain is drawn aside. Placed upon the sheet metal padma-pīṭha normally are separate gold coverings for the two feet; the left one weighs 1.428 kg and the right one 1.452 kg.

From the feet upwards till the waist, there seems to be a slight stoop forward; The knee-caps are prominent, and over the thighs and the upper legs can be seen lines indicating the folds of the garment; there is a central pleat hanging between the legs reaching a little above the anklets. There are three or four waist-bands holding the garments in order, and in front can be discerned a round medallion-like ornament, somewhat like the lion's head (simha-mukha), fastened to the waist-bands just below the navel. There is also a broad girdle, drooping below this central medallion-like clasp. From the waist upwards there is no indication of a garment, but three plain necklaces (upa-grīva) and an upa-vīta-like string can be seen on the body. There is also a rather broad horizontal band (udara-bandha) immediately below the chest, which is broad, thick and prominent. While there are certainly no breasts, the chest comes forward and the nipples are clearly visible. And there is an unmistakable Śrī-vatsa mark on the right chest.

The arms are decorated with armlets (keyūra and kaṭaka) in the early Pallava style with ornamental and serpentine projections which are upward in orientation.

There is a widespread, but mistaken, notion that the deity's original form has armlets actually representing hooded serpants. This is only the Pallava armlet misperceived. There are, however, golden ornaments called 'nāgābharaṇa' with the design of a serpent entwining round the arm and raising its many hoods. These are put on the deity as a part of daily decoration. The ornament on the left arm wieghs 2.525 kg, and the one on the right hand 2.232 kg.

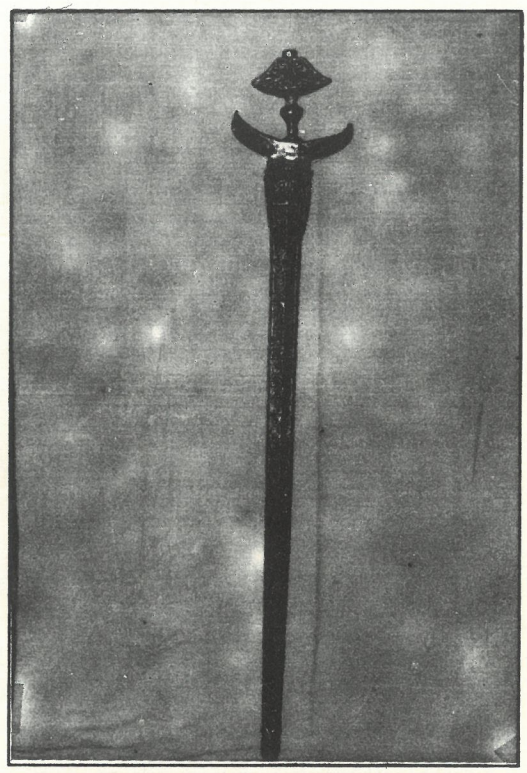
There are plain bracelets (kaṅkaṇa, kaḍiya in Telugu, kaḍaga in Kannaḍa) for the hands. Between the bracelet and the armlet on each arm is an other ornament known as valaya, right above the fore-arm.

The palm of the right hand, which is in the attitude of boon-bestowal (vara-dāna mudrā), is rather stiffly held, and in the hollow of the palm is seen a jewel (maṇi) with radiating arms. Hōbaḷa, the Yādava king in the thirteenth century, got a gold covering for this hand made. This was among the earliest of ornaments. The posture of the other hand, which is known as the kaṭi-hasta, involves the four fingers touching the thigh and the thumb raised up. It is the type of hand that holds a bow. It would appear that in olden days a bow used to be inserted into this hand on some occasions. *Vāmana-purāṇa*, in fact, describes this god as carrying bow and arrow in addition to conch and discus ('śaṁkha-chakra-dhanur-bāṇa-pāṇim nīlotpala-dyutim'). And also *(Bhavishyottara -purāna* 'dhanur-bana-dharah śrīmān-sakshan-manmatha-manmathah').

The custom of decorating the figure with a variety of ornaments and weapons appears to have ben an ancient one. Pey-āḻvār had seen the god carrying a battle-axe ('oṇ maḻuvum') in one of the hands; *Skānda-purāṇa* refers to sword, mace, bow, śakti and club which the god was seen carrying:

असिरलगदाचापशात्रितोमरपाणये।
प्रदीप्तायुधजालाय प्रदीप्तवपुषे नमः॥

In more recent years, the Vijayanagar monarch, Kṛishna-deva-



SWORD (Sūrya-kaṭhāri)

rāya, presented to the hill-god long swords encrusted with jewels (kaṭhāri). It is a practice, while decorating the deity, to suspend an ornamental sword from the waist band which hangs down between the thighs. Known as sūrya-kaṭhāri, it is made of gold and weighs 3.620 kg.

The ears are decorated with ornaments in the likeness of makara-kuṇḍala, which rest on the shoulders. On the shoulders are also seen curled ends of the hair that is let down. There are strands of hair that are represented at the back of the head and the shoulders also (so I am told). On the head is a tall crown, rather plain and

increasingly narrow. There is a band that sits above the forehead. It is on this band that the gift of Parāntaka-devi-amman (daughter of a Chera chieftain and wife of the Chola king Parāntaka II) in 1001 A.D. was worn. It was a golden 'paṭṭam' encrusted with six rubies, four diamonds and twenty-eight pearls; the gold weighed 52 kalanju. After about 430 years, when this ornament was worn out, Deva-rāya II, the Vijayanagar king, got a new head-band in gold and set with jewels made ('paṭṭam nūtna-suvarṇa-ratna-ruchiram veṅkaṭādri-prabhoh prādāt') in 1430 A.D.

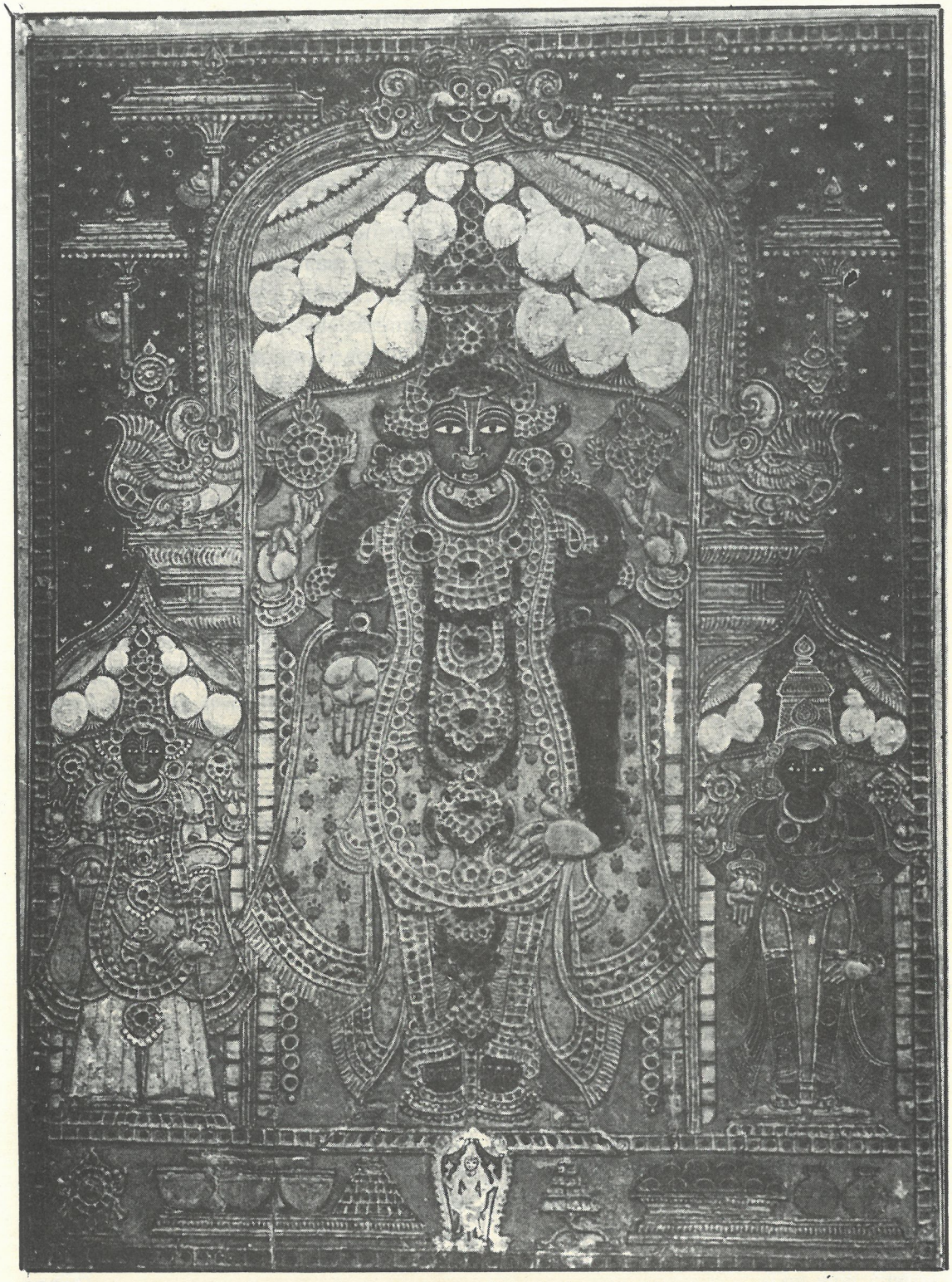
The crown on the head answers to the 'veṇu-karṇābha' type mentioned in the śilpa-śāstra texts: narrow and long like the bamboo stem. The bottom portion is adorned with a jewel-band (ratna-paṭṭa). In the central portion, right above the forehead, is an ornate design 'pūrimā' or 'ratna-bandha'. The top of the crown has a jewel known as 'śikhā-maṇi', below which is an ornamental bulge, 'mukula'; this is connected with the body of the crown with short chains in loops of pearls, in rows, called in the texts 'patra-dāma'. The body of the crown is plain, without any cross lines or designs (taraṅga). The style of the head-wear reminds us of early Pallava specimens.

The forehead of the deity is described in *Padma-purāṇa* as like into the moon on the eighth night of the fortnight (ashtamīndu-kalākāra); else where, it is described as 'ardhendu-maṇḍala'. On this, the upward marks (ūrdhva-puṇḍra) were said to be worn:

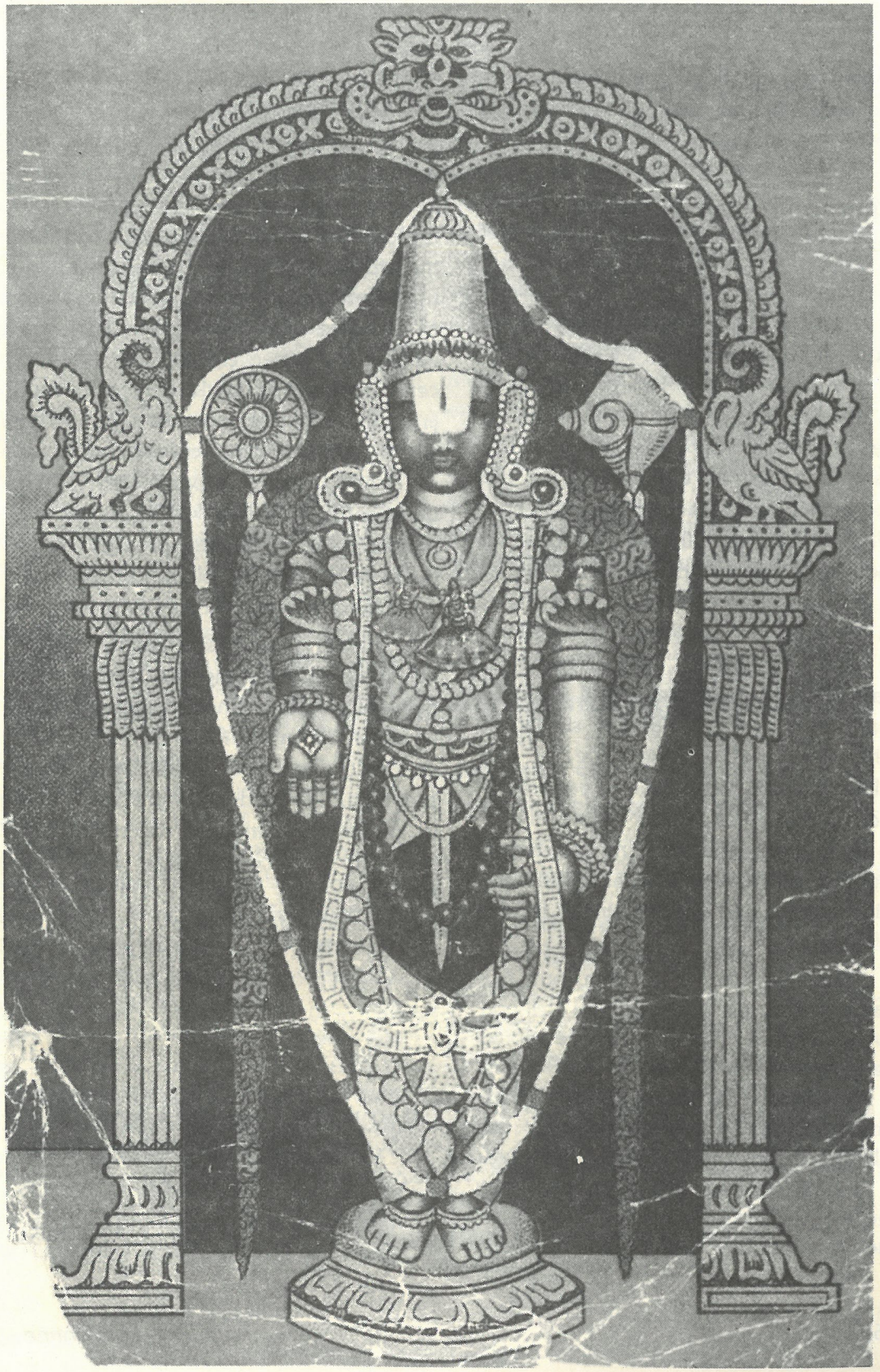
अष्टमीन्दकलाकारे ललाटे दर्पणस्फुटे।
ऊर्ध्वं पुंड्रं दधाराथ श्रीनिवासः सतां गतिः॥

In actuality, there is a slight vertical bulge in the centre of the forehead, immediately above the point where the eye-brows meet. This has probably given rise to the incorrect impression that it is the third eye indicating that the image may represent Śiva, Bhairava, Vīrabhadra or even Śakti. At present, the white 'nāmam' covers three-fourths of the deity's face, and hides the forehead, the eyes, the nose and portions of the cheeks. This practice appears to have started only in 1465. The early accounts relate that the entire face was visible to the pilgrim. Even the early paintings of the hill-god do not cover up the eyes and nose with the nāmam; they show on the forehead the dainty Śri-vaishṇava nāmam.

The nāmam here, however, is not of the Śri-vaishṇava brand. It is not drawn in white clay (tiru-maṇ, śveta-mṛttika) or the clay known as Gopī-chandana, and the central line is neither kuṁkuma nor turmeric. The substance used in the hill-shrine is refined camphor (pachcha-karpūra), done by a line drawn in fine dust of musk (kastūri). It is said that the Vaikhānasa texts prescribe that the



An early painting of the hill-god done in Mysore



nāmam should begin with the base of the nose and go up in two bands and cover the forehead:

नासिकामूलमारभ्य रेखाद्वितयसंयुतम्।
धारयेदूर्ध्वपुड्रं हरेः फालतले शुभे।।

It is not clear whether the Sanskrit expression 'nāsikā-mūla' signifies the tip of the nose or the top of the nose. In former days, it is obvious that it was taken in the latter sense. The nāmam began at the meeting of the eye-brows and reached the hair-line. When it was that the former meaning took hold of the people who matter in the hill-shrine cannot be ascertained. In my own memory, the various deities in the hill-shrine (like Narasiṁha, Varada-rāja, Vishvaksena and Garuḍa) did not flaunt the nāmam similar to what we see on the face of the hill-god, until very recent years; the face in these cases was visible almost in its entirety. But now the face-masking nāmam has unfortunately become wide-spread and indiscriminate in the hill-shrine.

The practice is to thin out this nāmam on the face of the hill-god every Thursday, so that the eyes could be seen ('netra-darśana'); and this is a preparation for the ceremonial bath (tiru-mañjana) that is given to the hill-god in the early hours of Friday. It is only during the abhisheka that the whole face of the hill-god (as also the rest of the body) can be seen clearly. Soon after the bath is over, the nāmam is again applied.

The peculiarity of the practice in vogue in this temple is not to smear camphor-powder (pachcha-karpūra) on the face directly, but to throw it on the upper part of the face repeatedly until some of it sticks. Then the parts of the face not to be covered by the nāmam are wiped clean. After this, the central parting is made with a Kastūri line. During this operation, a large sheet of silken cloth covers the body of the image from the neck downwards. While applying the nāmam, the priest has to stand on a wooden make-shift platform, because the figure is very tall.

There is also a custom in this hill-shrine of smearing the chin of the deity also with refined camphor. This however, is not an ancient practice, and is certainly not what the agamas prescribe. We find no mention of this in any of the elaborate descriptions of the figure that we have from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (cf included in *Śrī-veṅkaṭesa-kāvya-kalāpa*, ed. by D.T. Tātāchārya, TTD, 1943). We do not know when this practice began, or why.

There is, of course, a legend that the chin of the deity was wounded (viz. damaged), and was later attended to by Ānandāḻvār, who has already been referred to in connection with the excavation of a tank known as Āḻvār-cheruvu behind the temple. He was

digging the ground for the tank all by himself. He had resolved that he would not accept any help from any one in this service (kaiṅkarya). The hill-god, out of compassion for this aged and infirm devotee, assumed the form of a young man, and began clearing the earth dug up by the old man. Ānandāḷvār, when he saw this, got furious and threw the spade he was carrying at the young man; and it hit him at the chin, which began bleeding. Ānandāḷvār was aghast when the priest later told him that blood was oozing out of the chin of the stone deity in the sanctum. He now realized the identity of the young man who had come to assist him, and was filled with remorse. The priest applied refined camphor to the chin of the deity, and the wound was healed.

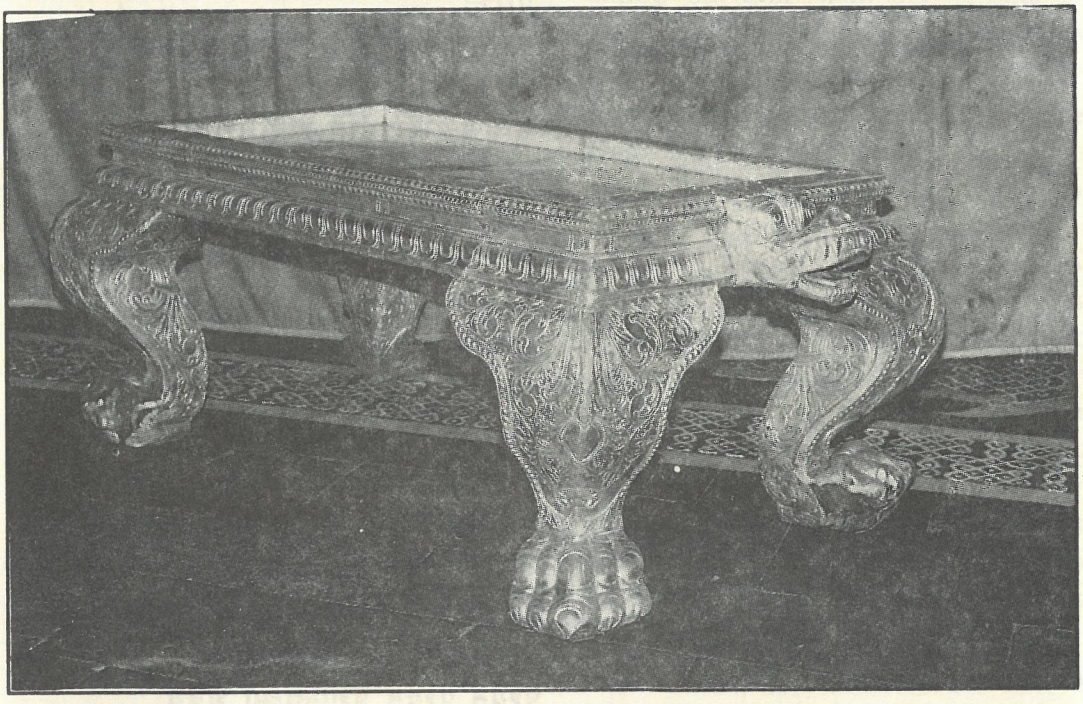
It cannot be ascertained when this fable was fabricated, but it contains a suggestion that the chin of the main deity in the sanctum of the hill-shrine is damaged. Even if this be true, it does not entail any disability on the part of the icon to receive worship, for the icon belongs to the 'self-manifest' (svayaṁ-vyakta) category, and the part that is said to have suffered is a minor one (upāṅga); and the affliction a superficial one. And in any case, it is the Kautuka-bera (viz. Bhoga-śrīnivāsa) that prinicipally receives all worship (karmārchā).

The nose of the icon is well-formed but is not prominent. It merges with the high and round cheeks imperceptibly. The elevation of the nose is rather flat, but the tip is sharp. The lips are small but prominent; they are elegantly shaped, with the ends slightly lifted up, occasioning the charming smile, which is the characteristic feature of the face of the hill-god. The eyes are round and fully open; they are only slightly elongated. And the eyebrows are arched and delicate. They meet where the nose takes off. The entire face gives an appearance of being rather flat and spread out. It is undoubtedly a most fascinating countenance.

एवं सर्वाङ्गसौन्दर्यमियत्तारहितं प्रभुम्।
आपादमौलिलावण्यमखिलाभरणादिकम्
॥११३॥
समस्तार्तिहरं सद्यः सौख्यदं च पृथक्
पृथक्।
अनुभूयानुभूयाहमामुयां प्रीतिमुत्तमाम्
॥११४॥
सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरं पुंसां दृष्टिचित्तापहारिणम्।
महनीयोपवीतेन वैजयन्त्यादिभूषितम्॥११५॥
हारकेयूरकटकैरन्यैराभरोणोत्तमैः।
माल्यैश्चम्पकपुन्नगमालतीकुसुमाञ्चितैः॥११६॥
अन्यैः कमलकल्हारैरसंख्येयैरलंकृतम्।
सौशिल्याश्रितवात्सल्यसौलभ्यादि
गुणार्णवम्॥११७॥
वेदान्तवेद्यविभवं विधिरुद्रादिसेवितम्।
चिन्तामणिमशोषाणां शेषाचल शिरोमणिम्
॥११८॥
श्रीभूनीलाकुचमणिं देवदेवशिखामणिम्।
वैकुण्ठनाथं मन्नाथं वासुदेवमिवापरम्॥११९॥
वेंकटाचलशृंगाग्रराजसेकं हरिम्।
पश्यन् पश्यन् प्रशान्तात्मा भवेयं
नित्यकिङ्करः॥१२०॥



VESSELS (golden) USED IN DAILY WORSHIP



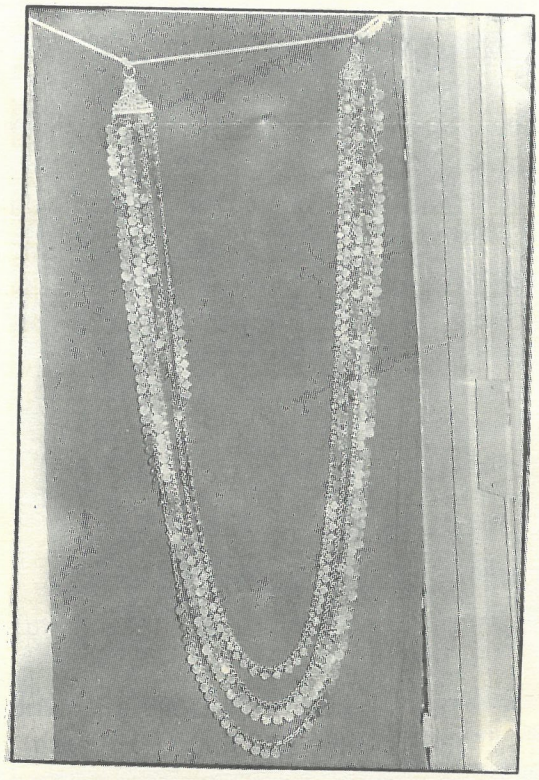
SNAPANA-PĪṬHA

The poet here points out the indescribable and unsurpassed beauty of the hill-god as represented in he sanctum. Every limb from head to foot thereof is splendidly well-formed, and the whole figure is exquisite, delightful to the eyes, and fascinating for the mind. One who stands before it is filled with awe, and cannot take his eyes away from it. Drinking deep the charm of the figure, he is suffused with a sense of peace and bliss. Even while going out, he turns his head again and again to look at the icon, before leaving the sacred enclosure. The devout pilgrim would, spontaneously congratulate himself on his rare good fortune in having beheld this god of mercy:

अहो भाग्यमहो भाग्यं अहो भाग्यमहो महत्।
वेंकटेशं कृपासिन्धुं दृष्टवानस्मि साम्प्रतम्॥

For, it is only the fortunate folk that can have this opportunity of beholding the hill-god ('paśyanti tvām bhāgyavantā hi loke'). The author of the text, like all pilgrims, is fascinated with the variety of dazzling and bejewelled ornaments that are put on the deity, and the richly decorated coverings for the hands and feet. It is a long-standing custom in the hill-shrine to drape the image with an unusually long saree-like silken fabric and then put the heavy golden ornaments studded with precious stones, on the deity. An incomplete list of ornaments daily worn by the hill-god (sāda-samarpaṇa) is given below:

1. The golden crown: (weighing 9.745.00 kg)
2. The ear-pieces (in the shape of karṇa-patra) encrusted with jewels:
   (left: 1.759.000 kg)
   (right: 1.736.000 kg)
3. The ear-ornaments (in the shape of pendants, bāvali)
   (left: 0.357.000 kg)
   (right: 0.357.000 kg)
4. The golden cloak (pītāmbara): (19.415.000 kg)
5. The golden shoulder-ornaments (bhuja-kīrti): (0.830.000 kg each)
6. The golden neck-lace (chandra-vaṅki): (0.414.000 kg)
7. Ornamental golden waist-band (Vaḍḍāṇa): (2.725.000 kg)
8. The golden waist band (kammara-paṭṭi): (0.702.000 kg)
9. The golden tulasī necklace (tulasī-hāra): (2.406.000 kg)
10. The golden necklace of coins (in 4 strands): (10.196.000 kg)
11. The golden necklace with the 108 sacred names (inscribed on the leaves):(2.055.000 kg)
12. The golden necklace representing the goddess on the chest, encrusted with precious stones: (2.333.000 kg)



Necklace of Golden Coins (Kāsu) (with writings in Persian)

13. The garland of a thousand śālagrāmams covered with gold: (5.781.000 kg)
14. Golden yajñopavīta (in 6 strands): (0.855.000 kg)
15. Plain necklace of pure gold (gala-hāra): (0.570.200 kg)
16. The plain necklaces (kaṇṭhi): (4.191.000 kg)
17. The sword called 'sūrya-kaṭhāri' hanging from the waist-band: (3.620.000 kg)
18. Another waist-band called 'nāgā-bharaṇa: (2.725.000 kg)
19. Golden covering studded with precious stones for the vaikuṇṭha-hasta (right): (2.286.000 kg)
20. The arm-let (nāgābharaṇa) for the right arm: (2.232.000 kg)
21. An arm-let in gold below the nāgābharaṇa: (0.840.000 kg)
22. Plain golden arm-let for the right arm: (0.342.000 kg)
23. The golden covering for the kaṭi-hasta: (2.343.700 kg)
24. The golden bracelet for this hand: (0.853.500 kg)



Necklace in five strands of gold coins on which the Vēṅkaṭeśa-sahasra-nāma is inscribed

25. The arm-let known as 'nāgābharaṇa' for the left arm: (2.525.000 kg)
26. The golden covering of conch (śaṁkha) encrusted with jewels: (1.400.000 kg)
27. The golden covering of discus (chakra) encrusted with jewels: (1.050.000 kg)
28. The golden coverings for the feet (pāda-kavacha):
    right foot: (1.452.000 kg)
    left foot: (1.428.000 kg)
29. The golden lotus-pedestal (padma-pīṭha):(10.012.000 kg)
30. The ornamental gilt arch (makara-toraṇa): (35.271.486 kg)

The text ends with two verses which are in the nature of 'phala śloka', recounting the name of the author (Gārgya-śrī-śaṭhāri), the name of the work (śrī-vēṅkaṭeśasya sevā-kramam), the nature of the work (prayer as a means of achieving salvation, 'prārthanā-rūpām'), and the benefit one gets by reading it (viz. the merit of daily service in the form of mentally undertaking the pilgrimage to the sacred hill):

इत्त्थं श्रीवेंकटेशस्य सेवाक्रमपरां शुभाम्।
गार्ग्यश्री शठजिद्दाससूक्तिं श्रुतिसुखावहम्
॥१२१॥
प्राप्यां च प्रार्थनारूपामनुसन्दधोन्वहम्।
लभन्ते श्रीनिवासस्य नित्यसेवामनुत्तमाम्
॥१२२॥

CHAPTER SIX

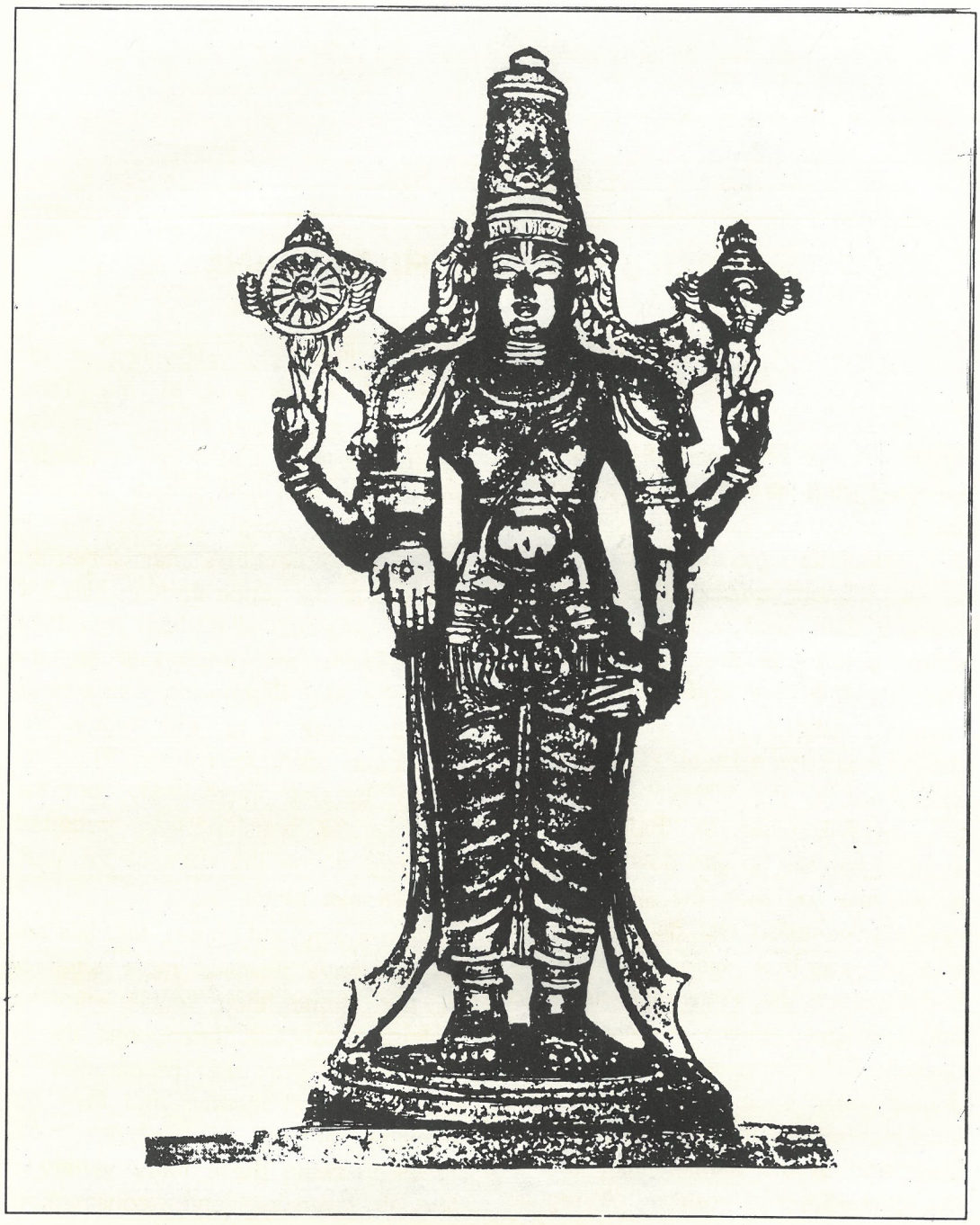
WORSHIP IN THE HILL-SHRINE

1

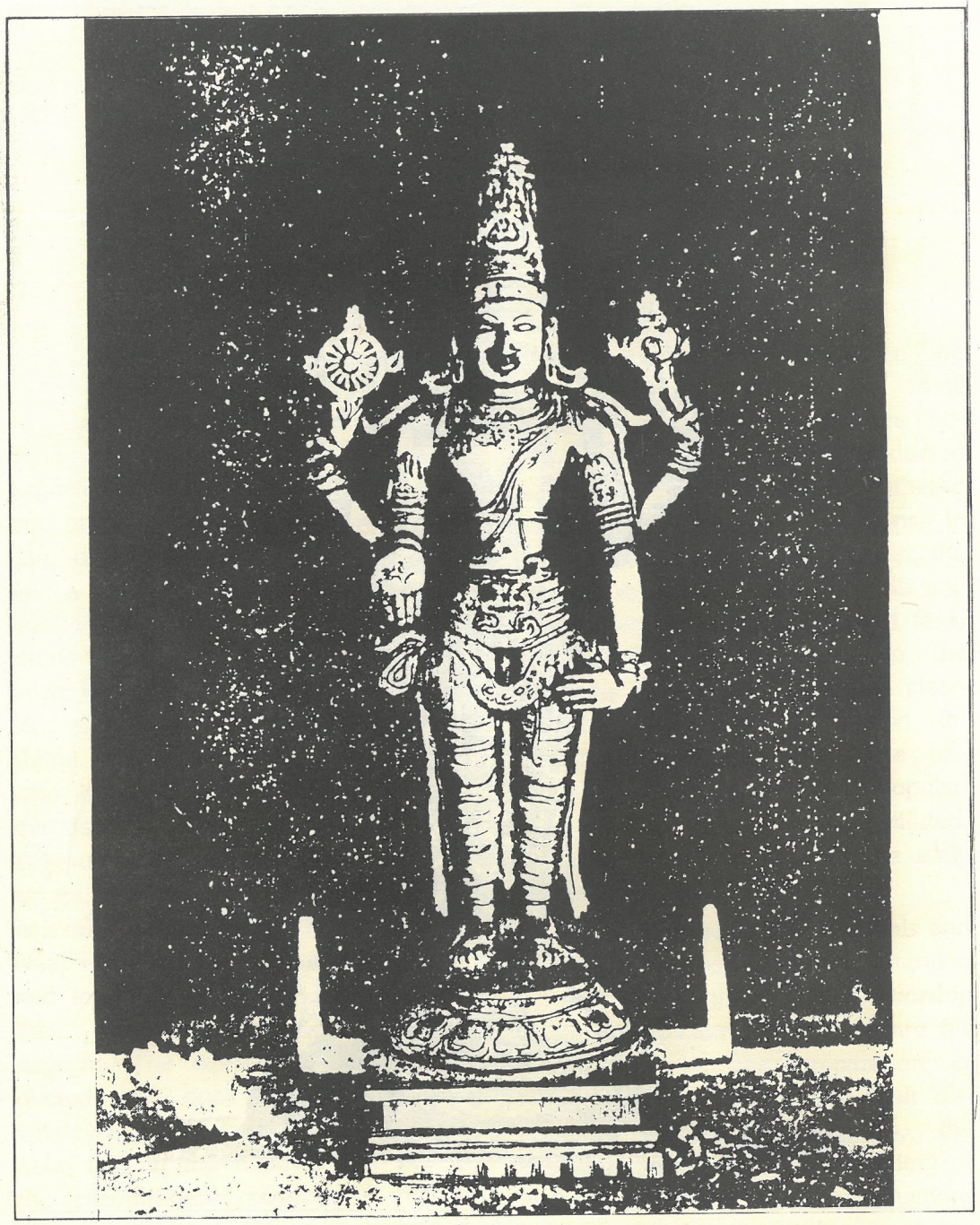
Considering the location and antiquity of the hill-shrine, it is to be expected that regular worship would not, or could not, be carried out every day, or all through the year. Located on a hill-top amidst thick jungles infested with wild animals, the hill-shrine could not be reached easily even by the bold and hardy priests. Human habitation in the vicinity of the shrine was non-existent. The priests, who lived in the villages nestling in the foot-hills, had to undertake an arduous journey up and down as many as six hills to reach the shrine. They naturally ventured out only when the weather was not inimical. And they had to reach the shrine and return to their villages when it was broad daylight. The worship could be conducted only once a day, and with whatever articles that were easily available, and in the manner that was in the circumstances possible. A regular and elaborate worship as prescribed in the āgamas was naturally out of the question.

But the early references in the songs of Āḻvārs and in the Tamiḻ classics suggest that there were occasional festivals that were conducted on the hill, and that crowds gathered in the shrine on these occasions. In the couple of centuries after Christ, the pathway to the shrine through hills and valleys became well-trodden and fairly safe. There are references to the Kurumba and Kāḍava chieftains clearing the forests in the region for settlements and townships. The hill-shrine became increasingly popular, and regular worship was instituted, probably during the days of the early Yādava-rāya rulers.

From very early times, festivals and pilgrims have received more attention in the shrine than regular worship within the sanctum. Inscriptions are full of concern for the preparation of numerous food-offerings and their distribution among the pilgrims, the provision being made for a variety of festivals, repairs and constructions being undertaken in and around the shrine, and expensive ornaments being presented to the Utsava-bera (Malayap-



Stone image of Kalyāṇa-Vēṅkaṭeśvara (9 feet tall) in the temple at Śrīnivāsa-maṅgāpura in Chandragiri



The bronze icon worshipped in the household of TĀḷḷAPĀKAM AṆṆAMĀCHĀRYA



An ancient bronze icon of Vēṅkaṭeśvara in worship
in the author's household

pa). All these no doubt rendered the shrine magnificent, popular and wealthy. However, the Vaikhānasa priests have shown remarkable perseverance in preserving the form of worship rendered to the main deity in the sanctum strictly according to āgama and custom. The form of worship has not changed, despite the changes in administration and the fortunes of the shrine over long years. Generous and frequent royal patronage, unsettled political and religious conditions, enormous increase in opulence, and the growing influx of pilgrims have not introduced even a minor change in the manner in which the hill-god has always been worshipped.

The form of worship in vogue here is in accordance with the Vaikhānasa texts, principally the works of Marīchi (*Vimānārchanā-kalpa*), Atri (*Samūrtārchanādhikaraṇa*), Bhṛgu (*Prakīrṇādhikāra*) and Kāśyapa (*Jñāna-kāṇḍa*). This has been so from the earliest times that we have known. Even the purāṇic account of this shrine associates the formal installation of this image (which was, in fact, self-manifest) (pratishṭhā) and the mode of worship (archanā) to a Vaikhānasa priest, Gopīnātha-dīkshita. The architecture of the main-shrine as well as the five-beras that are in the sanctum leave no room for uncertainty about the uninterrupted continuance of the Vaikhānasa mode of worship all through the ages.

Before we describe the daily routine worship here, it may help to get acquainted with the ideology which supports and justifies the form of worship adopted by the Vaikhānasas.

The Vaikhānasas are uncompromising in their adoration of the Vedic (and not the purānic) Vishṇu as the supreme or only deity, but with two aspects:(1) absolute, unmanifest, undifferentiated and utterly devoid of form, shape, parts and attributes (nishkala), and (2) worshipful icon (archā), with identifiable forms and attributes (sakala). Approach to Godhead can be of three types: (i) mental (mānasa) viz. contemplation; (ii) verbal (vāchika), viz. recitation of Vedic hymns and prayers, and (iii) physical (kāyika) viz. (a)tending the sacred fire and offering oblations into it (homa), or (b)formal worship of an icon (samūrtārchanā). The last variety, viz. iconic worship) is said to be the best, for it involves not only the three aforementioned details but also materials and feeling ('mantrochchāra-kriyā-dravya-dhyāna-bhāvāṅga-pañchakam', *Ānanda-samhitā*, 1, 49).

Again, this iconic worship (archanā) can be done at home (gṛhārchā), for the benefit of the worshipper himself and his family (svārtha), or in a temple (ālayārchā), for the welfare of all the people (parārtha or 'sarva-lokābhivṛddhi-dam'). The Vaikhānasas are required to engage themselves in both kinds of worship. The former is like lighting a lamp at home in the night,

while the latter is like the sunlight during the day.

परार्थं स्याज्जगच्चक्षुः स्वार्थं स्याद् गृहदीपिका।

The temple, where worship for the benefit of all people can be conducted, is of five kinds (sthāna-pañchaka), in accordance with how the worshipful deity or icon has come into being: 'daiva' (where the deity is installed by a god); ārsha (where the sages in the remote past have installed and worshipped the deity); 'purāṇa'(the icon eulogized in the purāṇas, viz. very ancient places of worship); 'mānusha' (the temples built and icons installed by human beings in historical times); and svayaṁ-vyakta (self-manifest, where the god, out of compassion for the beings, has chosen to appear in an icon) 'bhūtānukampayā devo yasmin āvir-bhavet svayam' (*Ānanda-saṁhitā*, 14, 225). Worship in the last kind of temples is likely to benefit all people

स्वयंव्यक्तार्चनं यत्तत्सर्वलोकशुभावहम्॥

The hill-shrine answers to this kind of a temple, for the hill-god is self-manifest here, and not carved or shaped by a human or celestial sculptor. It is the worshipful form (archā-svarūpa) assumed by Vishṇu for eradicating the misery of all his devotees ('sarva-jīvānām duḥkha-nāśana-hetave') and for helping people attain salvation with ease ('sulabhān-mokṣha-siddhyai cha'). All that one must do is to bow before the icon, worship it and offer prayers with a heart filled with devotion ('namaskāra-pūja-mantreṇa chādarāt') (ibid, 14, 134, 12-13). It facilitates the devotee, for the formal worship is done by the priest on his behalf. And the priest does it as a routine and in fulfilment of his sacred calling (parārtha-pūjā).

2

The main deity in the sanctum is, of course, the self-manifest hill-god, known to people variously as Veṅgaḍam-uḍaiyān, Veṅkateśvara, Veṅkaṭāchala-pati, Śeshādri-vāsa, and Śrinivāsa. In the language of the āgama, it is the 'dhruva-bera', immobile, permanently fixed icon in stone ('archā-rūpa śilā-rūpa'). It is to behold this image that crowds of devotees have gathered at the shrine since very ancient times until our own day. Being self-manifest, there can be no doubt about its power to bestow happiness on those who are fortunate enough to stand in front of it.

But the Vaikhānasa texts insist that this Dhruva-bera is unfit to be worshipped by worldly people whose interests are ordinary and desires mundane ('anarchyam dhruva-berām; sa-kāmānām anuchitam saṁsārāśramiṇām idam'); such an image can be worshipped with benefit only by those who are self-less and who

emselves in spiritual en-
hruva-berārchanam proktam
ıa-kāriṇām';'kevalam idam
·pradam'). For others, it is
e. And formal worship by
uents, flowers and so on
berly be offered to it, for it
rmless (nirguṇa), undifferen-
hkala) and unsupported
('anarchyam dhruva-beram
bānulepanaih').

ırposes of formal worship,
ı Kautuka-bera is installed
ıruva-bera. When the power
uva-bera is invoked in the
:a, the latter can formally
ped by worldly people as
the spiritual aspirants. This
mundane benefits as well

क तस्मान्नित्यं विधिवदर्चयेत्।
ार्योग्यमैहिकामुष्मिकप्रदम्॥

ill-shrine, the Kautuka-bera
ıted by the small silver
he hill-god, now known as
vāsa, consecrated by the
ıcess Sāmavai in 614 A.D.
ee this icon, (if he carefully
ingly looks for it), placed
eet of the Dhruva-bera on
e. The height of this icon
ach even the anklet of the
ı. But all worship in the
strictly offered only to this
nd the gigantic and dazzling
ı (who attracts all the

pilgrims) is but a witness to this worship.

This is called Bhoga-śrīnivāsa because it receives all the services of the worship, called 'bhogas' (viz. services or upachāras). It may also be pointed out here that some authorities prescribe a separate icon called bhoga-bera to receive "all worship at all places" ('sarvatra sarva-bhogārtham bhoga-beram cha kechana'). This is in addition to the Kautuka-bera which receives the routine main worship ('nitya-pradhāna-pūjārtham'), snapana-bera for receiving the ceremonial bath ('snapanārtham'), utsava-bera to participate in processions and festivals ('utsavārtham'), and bali-bera for food-offerings to the attendant-deities ('nityam tu bali-yātrārtham'). Here, the bhoga-bera is regarded as all-important ('mukhyatah') for it can deputise for all other beras. When in 614 A.D., the icon known as Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ was installed and consecrated, it was the only bera in the shrine that was moveable (chala). Hence, it was the 'bhoga-bera' in the sense that it received all services of worship inside the sanctum and outside. *Archanā-navanīta* describes the bhoga-bera as the icon suited for all normal transactions (laukika-bera).

But the 'Bhoga-śrīnivāsa' in the hill-shrine does not become relevant in the utsāvas, bali-yātrā or tīrtha-vari. Its only function is to receive the daily worship, that too which is neither kāmya nor naimithika (for which the

utsava-bera and snapana-bera are detailed) but 'nitya'. Therefore, it is strictly only a kautuka-bera ('archanārtham tu kautukam'; 'nityārchanam tu kautuka eva'). Naturally, it derives its power and authority from the Dhruva-bera (which is self-manifest) to receive all worship meant in fact for the Dhruva-bera. It is only when the Kautuka-bera is worshipped that the Dhruva-bera gets worshipped.

देवस्यापतितोर्षस्तत् सोपानं कौतुके ध्रुवात्।
अन्यथा च कृता पूजा ध्रुवं नैवोपतिष्ठते॥

The Vaikhānasa practice is to establish a contact between the Dhruva-bera and the Kautuka-bera by a device known as 'sambandha-kūrchā', during worship. It is a bunch of thirty-two blades of darbha grass (Saccharum cylindricum), tied by a knot in a rightward orientation, leaving the ends of the grass free four angulas in front (the area occupied for tying up being two angulas in length). The front portion of the bunch represents Brahmā, the knot Vishṇu and the rest Rudra. This 'sambandha-kūrchā' is placed in the space that intervenes between the Dhruva-bera and Kautuka-bera with the front portion of the kūrchā pointing towards the Kautuka-bera. ('dhruva-kautukayor antare kautukāgram sambhandha-kūrcham nikshipya'). The sanctum is likened to water, while Dhruva-bera is the earth below; the flower is the Kautuka-bera, which springs up from the earth but grows in the water; the 'sambandha-kūrchā' is the stalk of the flower, which connects the earth with the flower through water.

न्यसेत् कौतुकबेराग्रं सम्यक्सम्बन्धकूर्चकम्।
जलं पङ्कं च नालं च पुष्पं चेति चतुष्टयम्॥
मूलबेरं तु पङ्कं स्यात्पुष्पं कौतुकमेव हि।
जलं विमानं कूर्चं च नालमित्येव भावयेत्॥

The drawing of the power from the Dhruva-bera is technically known as 'kalākarshaṇa', and its infusion into the Kautuka-bera 'āvāhana'; and consecrated water placed in front of the Dhruva-bera (pramidhi-jala) functions as an intermediary. Power of the Dhruva-bera is invoked in the water first, and then transferred to the Kautuka-bera. Five aspects of the vital power (jīva-kalā) of the Dhruva-bera are drawn separately; from the face (vaktra, representing Vishṇu, and the aspect being 'bhogada-sūrya-jīva-kalā'), arms (bāhu, representing Mahā-vishṇu, or Satya, and the aspect being 'kshamā-sūrya-jīva-kalā'), heart (hṛdaya, representing Vyāpi-nārāyaṇa or Aniruddha, and the aspect being 'udāna-vāyu-jīva-kalā), genitals (kāmya-sthāna, representing Satya who embodies all dissolution, 'sarva-saṁhārātmaka', and the aspect being 'archin-nāmakāgni-jīva-kalā), and feet (pāda, representing Aniruddha who embodies all glory, 'sarva-tejo-maya', and the aspect being 'havya-vāhiny-agni').

While drawing the power from the Dhruva-bera, the order of 'vyāhṛitis' employed is 'bhūh-bhuvah-suvah' (signifying the earth symbolized by the feet, the mid-region symbolized by navel and the heavens symbolized by head, in each of the five aspects mentioned above). But while invoking by means of a kūrchā that power in the Kautuka-bera, the order gets reversed; 'suvah-bhuvah-bhūh' (the heavens, the mid-region and the earth). And the placement-spots enumerated are twelve: top of the head, fore-head, eyes, nostrils, ears, face, arms, heart, navel, genitals and the two feet ('kalā-nyāse sthānāni dvādaśa smṛtāh'). The drawing of power from the Dhruva-bera, however, does not in any way diminish the power that obtains in it. It is like lighting many lamps from one lamp, not in the least interfering with the original light.

ध्रुवादावाहनं नित्यं कौतुकादेर्विधीयते।
दीपाद्दीपशतकं जातं मूलदीपो न शाम्यति॥

The actual ritual of invocation involves the following major sequences. The Kautuka-bera is removed from its normal seat (jīva-sthāna) near the Dhruva-bera, and placed upon the seat meant for bathing (snānāsana). The icon is given a bath in clean water and water mixed with sandal-paste. It is then placed upon the seat meant for worship (archā-pīṭha). Now the 'saṁbandha-kūrchā is placed between the Dhruva-bera and the Kautuka-bera, after the seat is sprinkled with water accompanied by the recitation of Vishṇu-gāyatrī. Flowers are placed in between the feet of the Dhruva-bera. Then 'ātma-sūkta' is recited, and placements are made on the head (suvah), navel (bhuvah) and feet (bhūh); on the heart (with prāṇava and 'am') and on the feet (yam). The priest lifts up the 'praṇidhi'-vessel with both of his hands and contemplates upon the worshipful form of Vishṇu. He invokes the presence of Vishṇu from the Dhruva-bera into the water through a kūrchā ('idam vishṇur āyātu bhagavān'), The water, thus suffuced with the spirit of Vishṇu, is poured on the head of the Kautuka-bera ('vishṇum āvāhayamī'). The priest invokes the presence of the four forms or vital aspects or prāṇas of Vishṇu (Purusha, Satya, Achyuta and Aniruddha) with appropriate mantras (cf. *Vimānārchanā-kalpa*, paṭala 4', and *Yajñādhikāra*, chap.32)

The ritual involves an intense contemplation which visualizes a concrete form in a specific object (like the praṇidhi-water or the Kautuka-bera) of the Divine Presence which is inherently formless and all-pervasive ('nishkalena sakalam devam sarva-vyāpinam avyayam dhyāna-manthena sammathya praṇidhyapsu niveśayet'). The priest's resolve (saṁkalpa) mentions that this drawing of power is for securing the immediate presence of godhead during the worship conducted.

नित्यार्चायां भगवत्साक्षात्कार सिद्ध्यर्थं ध्रुवात् कौतुकादिषु कलावाहनं करिष्यामि॥

When, however, this is done, the Kautuka-bera, which is in the Brahma-sthāna of the sanctum along with the Dhruva-bera, becomes ready to receive formal worship ('kautukam tu brahma-sthāne tu sthāpitam samyag archayet'). Ceremonial worship done according to the āgama prescription and custom would be potent enough to induce the Divinity to suffuce itself in the icon and bestow grace on the devotee



THE HEAD PRIEST OF THE HILL-SHRINE
(Māḍambākkam Śrinivāsa Bhaṭṭachārya)

बेरे मन्त्रैर्विधानेन भक्त्या चावाहने कृते।
भक्तानुकम्पया देवो बिम्बं व्याप्यैव तिष्ठति॥

It is not that the Divinity would not be present in the icon before this ritual of invocation and due worship. The main image being self-manifest (svayam-vyakta), and the Kautuka-bera being not only properly installed and consecrated but in continuous contact with the Dhruva-bera all along, the two icons have inherent and pervasive power; this power never gets lost. But the ritual and worship make that power swell and become apparent. The situation is compared to the fire in a pot or altar; when however, the breeze wafts across, the fire burns brighter and spreads.

यथा कुण्डगतो वह्निर्वायुना ज्वालितो भवेत्।
तथा बिम्बगतो विष्णुर्मन्त्रेण ज्वलितो भवति॥

3

Daily elaborate worship (nityārchanā) in the hill-shrine is conducted only once during the day; and that is in the morning. A briefer version of the same worship is repeated at night. The main sequence of this worship is called in this hill-shrine 'tōmāla-sevā'. The word 'tōmāla' is the short form of the Tamiḷ expression 'tōḍitta-mālai', meaning 'flowers strung into garlands'. As a sequence in worship, this refers to the adorning of the main deity (Dhruva-bera) with flower-garlands.

While this is the most ostensible service conducted in the sanctum, it precedes and follows, other ritualistically more important services. It is probable that in the days when the Kautuka bera had not as yet made its appearance, the worship of the hill-god was predominently this service. For the āgama forbids services like administration of bath, cleansing and application of unguents, when the Dhruva-bera alone is worshipped; other details like arghya, pādya, dhūpa, dīpa and naivedya may, however, be offered.

नित्यार्चायां भगवत्साक्षात्कार सिद्धये ध्रुवात्
कौतुकादिषु कलावाहनं करिष्यामि॥

Out of the six prescribed sequences called āsanas' (viz. mantrāsana, snānāsana, alaṅkārāsana, yātrāsana, bhojyāsana and paryaṅkāsana), 'alaṅkārāsana', viz. decorating the deity with flowers and waving lights before the deity, is most attractive, as far as the assembled pilgrims are concerned. Other 'āsanas' are rituals, the significance of which is generally not perceived.

In any case, the first formal worship in the hill-shrine is called, even in the temple-manuals, tōmāla-sevā. Before this can begin, there are four important preliminary rituals to be completed:

(1) The flowers used during the worship of the previous day and night, and left on the deities in the sanctum are ceremonially removed. This is known as 'nirmālya-śodhana'. The flowers plucked and left overnight, as well as water collected the previous day or night, become polluted, and must be removed before the new sequence of worship begins. This rule, however, does not apply to the ornaments worn by the deities ('svarṇa-loha-mayam dravyam na nirmālyam bhaved iti'), according to *Samūrtār-chanādhikaraṇa* (43, 80). The books prescribe that the flowers worn on the body of the Dhruva-bera should be offered to Vishvaksena. But the custom prevailing in the hill-shrine is to dump all flowers from the sanctum in the tub called Poola-bāvi in Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa.

(2) The Kautuka-bera which acted as Śayana-bera during the previous night (śayanotsava or ekānta-sevā) is removed from the Śayana-maṇṭapa (in front of the sanctum) where it rested during the night, and is taken back into the sanctum, to be restored to its usual seat known as jīva-sthāna. The Śayana-maṇṭapa is also cleared of the cot and other articles that were used for ekānta-sevā.

(3) The entire stretch of the main shrine (from the sanctum till the Golden Doorway) is cleaned and purified. This is called 'śuddhi'. The sanctum is cleaned by the Vaishṇavas of the Sabhā-ara, while the other three apartments (Śayana-maṇṭapa, Rāmar-mēḍa and Snapana-maṇṭapa) are cleaned by paid servants known as

ghaṇṭā-pāṇis. The gold and silver vessels in the sanctum are also cleaned by the people from the Sabhā-ara.

(4) The articles necessary for the ritualistic worship are received and arranged in the sanctum. (a) Fresh water is brought in a procession in three pots from Ākāśa-gangā-tīrtha by hereditary āchārya-purushas (descendents of Tōḷappāchārya) and placed in front of the main deity. (b) Tulasī leaves, flowers and flower-garlands are brought in baskets (pōṭṭam) from Yāmunat-turai, and placed on the seat meant for them inside the sanctum on the right side of Kulaśekharap-paḍi (the threshold). While these baskets are brought, there is a ritualistic circumambulation passing round the Dhvaja-staṁbha. (c) The authorities of the Sabhā-ara send into the sanctum fresh strips of cloth (vastra) for covering the holy feet of the main deity (śrī-pāda), for presenting to the Bhoga-mūrti after the ceremonial bath, and for covering the śālagrāmas, which also receive ceremonial bath during tōmāla-sevā. (d) Fragrant articles and perfumes (parimaḷa) to be used along with water while administering the bath to Bhoga-mūrti will be provided by the assistant called ekāṅgī. (e) And milk needed for the ritual bath will be supplied by the temple-kitchen (Pōṭu).

The actual archanā consists of numerous services, called upachāras or bhogas. In the Vaikhānasa texts, they are known as 'vigrahas' (defined as 'pūjāṅgopachārā'). *Vāsādhikāra* describes worship with as many as 128 upachāras as the best among the superior variety (uttamottama), worship with 108 of them as of midling merit in the same variety (uttama-madhyama), and worship with 32 upachāras as inferior in the superior variety (uttamādhama). Worship in the hill-shrine belongs to the last type, but has twenty-nine details (or the vigrahas), as allowed by the texts ('vimānārchanāyām evam dvā-triṁśad-vigrahāḥ nava-viṁśati-vigrahās cha', *Kāśyapīya Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, chap. 73). The services are as follows:

(1) āsana (getting the deity seated on a place of honour); (2) svāgata (words and gestures of welcome, and orienting the deity towards ourselves 'vigrahasyābhimukhī-karaṇam'); (3) anumāna (begging the deity to condescend and accept the worship to be offered 'archārtham prasīda iti yāchanam'); (4) pādya (water for washing the feet, 'pāda-prakshālanāya'); (5) āchamana (water for ceremonial sipping) being given on the right hand of the deity by means of kūrchā); (6) pushpa (flowers being offered at the feet, on the shoulders, and on the conch and discus); (7) gandha (sandal-paste being applied to parts of the body above the navel); (8) dhūpa (incense wafting in the four directions); (9) dīpa (light with clarified butter or oil at the sides of the deity); (10) arghya (water-offering, lifting the container to the level of the forehead); (11) āchamana ; (12)

snāna (giving a ceremonial bath or abhisheka in the morning or sprinkling water on the deity (abhyukshaṇa) in the afternoon), (13) plota (drying the icon with a clean cloth); (14) vastra (draping the icon with fresh garments of silk or cotton); (15) uttarīya (providing an upper garment); (16) ābharaṇa (decorating the image with ornaments);(17) upavīta (bestowing the sacrificial cord of cotton or gold); (18) pādya; (19) ācha mana; (20) pushpa; (21) gandha; (22) dhūpa; (23) dīpa; (24) havis (food-offering, baked and seasoned); (24) pānīya (offering water for drinking while eating food); (25) ācha mana (to signify the completion of the food-offering); (26) mukha-vāsa (fragrant substances to clean the mouth); (27) bali (food-offering for the attendant-deities); (28) praṇāma (prostrations), (29) pushpāñjali (offering of flowers at the completion of the ritual of worship; (30)stuti (prayers in eulogy). The other two upachāras, viz. āvāhana (invocation at the beginning) and udvāsana or visarga (or visarjana, a formal send-off at the end) are prohibited in the worship carried out in a temple dedicated to a single deity ('eka-berārchane tāvad āvāhana-visargau pratishiddhau').

4

However, it is more usual, and also more meaningful, to classify the services rendered in terms of the major sequences in the worship ritual, technically known as 'āsana' (so called because a different seat is provided for the deity in each sequence). This is a typical Pāñcharātra idea, but we find that in the secondary Vaikhānasa literature (like Gopana-bhaṭṭa's *Vishṇvarchanā-sāra-saṅgraha*) this has been incorporated. In the Pāñcharātra texts (like *Nārada-saṁhitā* 27, 61-62), the 'āsana' is only five-fold; yogāsana, snānāsana, alaṅkārāsana, bhojanāsana and yātrāsana. But the Vaikhānasa worship recognizes mantrāsana instead of yogāsana, and adds paryaṅkāsana to the list. The sequences in each of these phases are also specified. Worship in the hill-shrine generally follows this order:

I mantrāsana.

God who is all-pervading and abstract is rendered concrete and proximately available for purposes of worship; this is achieved by employing specific mantras, which are calculated to transform the icon into an embodiment of the mantras ('tatah sarvagatam devam mantra-mūrtitvam āgatam', *Īsvara-saṁhitā*, chap.4). The sequence is a device to secure the presence of the deity during worship.

The priest sits on a wooden seat called kūrma-pīṭha on the right side in front of the deity, and engages himself in ritual breath-control (prāṇāyāma); he then makes a formal resolve (samkalpa). He proceeds thereupon to ad-

minister the five services that constitute this sequence; āsana, pādya, āchamana, arghya and mukha-vāsa (already explained).

II snānāsana (abhisheka)

In this sequence, the deity is given a ceremonial bath. The books enumerate eight services under this head: (1) pādya (water for washing the feet) followed by arghya (honouring the guest with water-oblations); (2) danta-kāshṭha and jihvā-śodhana (provi ding a tooth-stick and tongue-scraper); (3) taila (application of fragrant oil with unguents to the deity's limbs); (4) udvartana (rubbing the body with ground beans known as māsha-pishṭa); (5) āmalaka (applying emblica fruit on the head); (6) snapana (bath with water); (7) kaṅkata (cleaning the hair) and (8) plota (drying the limbs with clean cloth).

The bath is given for cleansing the icon ('biṁba-śuddhyartham'). It takes two forms; abhisheka, a regular bath by pouring water on the icon through conch or a vessel; and abhyukshaṇa (or prokshaṇa), a ritualistic sprinkling of consecrated water upon the icon. The former is done in the morning worship (prātar-archanā) while the latter is sufficient for the worship in the afternoon (madhyāhna). However, in the worship at night, neither is indicated.

Atri's *Samūrtārchanādhikaraṇa* prescribes that this service is to be rendered daily only to the Kautuka-bera (also cf 'kautuke snapanam nityam archanāṅgam udīritam)', and adds that water mixed with sandal paste (chandana) and fragrant unguents (parimaḷa) must be used for this service (43, 39, 'kautuka-snāpanam kuryān nityam vai chandanādibhih'). This prescription is followed in the hill-shrine. Further, the same text lays down that the main deity, which is in reality abstract (arūpa), must only be sprinkled with water, while the representative deity (viz the kautuka-bera) must be administered a bath (ibid, 45, 'rūpe tu snapanam kuryād arūpe prokshaṇam charet'). The kautuka-bera in the hill-shrine is called Bhoga-śrīnivāsa, the silver icon got consecrated by Sāmavai in 614 A.D. under the name Maṇavāḷap-perumāḷ. And this is the image that receives daily the ceremonial bath; and it is placed on a separate seat for this purpose. Water used for this service is brought, according to tradition, from Ākāśa-gangā, the water-fall a mile away from the hill-shrine. While administering this service, Purusha-sūkta is recited by the persons whose hereditary duty it is to recite it and who stand in the Śayana-maṇṭapa, while the priest bathes the Kautuka-bera with a conch.

After the abhisheka for the Kautuka-bera, the golden coverings for the two feet of the Dhruva-bera are

removed and kept on the seat meant for bath. They are administered a ceremonial bath, behind a curtain drawn against the doorway of the sanctum. The bare feet of the Dhruva-bera are anointed with fragrant oil, and a fresh cloth is spread over them, before the golden coverings are replaced on them. Everyday, the Sabhā-ara supplies a fresh cloth for this purpose (śrī-pāda-vastra). It is a long-standing custom in this temple to cover the feet with a piece of cloth, before the metallic coverings of the feet are put on. After the golden covering of the feet are restored, the śāligrāmas that are kept near the Dhruva-bera are given a bath; and they are also covered by a fresh cloth (supplied by the Sabhā-ara every day).

The Dhruva-bera does not receive an abhisheka every day; at present, the elaborate ceremonial bath (known as tiru-manjana) for this deity is conducted every Friday, early in the morning. We do not know what the custom was in former times. It appears that during the days of the Vijayanagar monarch Kṛishṇa-deva-rāya, the abhisheka for the Dhruva-bera was conducted only once in a fortnight (every alternate Friday); it is said that it was during his reign that the sacred bath began to be administered once a week. Another account (after *Tirumalai-oḷugu*) credits Rāmānuja with having brought about this change.

But the custom of conducting abhisheka for the hill-god on Fridays goes back to a distant past. When in 614 A.D. Sāmavai got the kautuka-bera consecrated in the hill-shrine, and arranged for a bath for the Dhruva-bera as part of the regular worship (karmārchā), it was a Friday (Āṇi month, bahula tṛtīyā, śravana nakshatra). And when Rāmānuja hung round the neck of the hill-god a necklace with Lakshmī as pendant (Lakshmī-hāra), it was a Friday again (ratna-mālikā-yoga, on śukla-dvādaśī, uttarā-phālguṇi nakshatra). The Vaikhānasa texts also commend 'bhargava-vāsara' (viz. Friday) for this ritual.

On Fridays, the Dhruva-bera is bathed first in water from Ākāśa-gaṅgā (by a conch filled with a gold cover), then with milk, followed by a bath in water (in former days collected from Baṅgāru-bāvi which, however, is now no longer in use; water is collected from some other source these days). The body of the deity is then anointed with a mixture of sandal-paste (chandanam), saffron and refined camphor. This mixture is called 'puḷi-kāpu'.

After anointing the body with this mixture, there will be a bath in water which washes down the Puḷi-kāpu. This water, known as 'puḷi-kāpu-tīrtham', is collected, and distributed to some devotees. After this bath, the deity is adorned with garments, and the nāmam is put on the forehead with powdered refined camphor ('neer tirumaṇi-kāppu'). Tirumaṇi-kāppu-parimaḷam and Śrī-pāda-reṇu (mixed with refined camphor and civet oil) are

offered. Then the deity gets decorated, while cleaning up the premises (śuddhi) goes on. The Lakshmī on the chest (śrī-vakshah-sthala-ammavāru), which is hung in a necklace adorning the Dhruva-bera, gets a separate abhishekam with parimaḷam and turmeric powder, as the last sequence; this is known here as 'tāyār-tiru-mañjanam'. The necklace is finally restored to its original seat (viz. on the chest of the Dhruva-bera).

The parimaḷam articles required for the above abhishekam are:

1. refined camphor (pachcha-karpūra): 84 tolas
2. saffron (kuṁkuma-ppū):30 tolas
3. musk (kastūri):1 tola
4. civet oil (punugu-tailam):1 tola
5. gingelly oil:half a viśa
6. turmeric powder (pasupu-poḍi): 8 palams

While the Dhruva-bera is being bathed, the ekāṅgi helps the priest, handing over to him the articles required (like water, milk, parimaḷa etc). But the image is a huge one, and the priest cannot manage the task all by himself. The ekāṅgi, not being a Vaikhānasa, cannot touch the image. Therefore, an assistant Vaikhānasa priest stands at the back of the image and helps the main priest. He also assists, while ornaments are put on after the bath is completed. An unusually long silken saree is wound round the image and draped over the shoulders. This is known as 'uḷ-chāttu'. Then the golden covers (kavachas) for the legs, chest, arms and hands are secured. A fresh cloth, supplied by the Sabhā-ara is used to cover the crown, before the gold kiriṭam is inserted. Other decorations are subsequently made. A list of ornaments in daily use (sadā-samarpaṇa) has already been given.

Every Wednesday, the Kautuka-bera is treated to an elaborate bath with water brought in a thousand silver pots (sahasra-kalaśābhisheka). This is conducted in the Snapana-maṇṭapa.

III alaṅkārāsana (Tōmāla-sevā)

This is the well-known sequence, known in the hill-shrine as Tōmāla-sevā. This word is the short form of the Tamiḷ expression 'tōḍitta-mālai' (adorning the deity with strung garlands of flowers). But this detail of decoration of the Dhruva-bera with flowers is only one of the ten services included in this sequence. After the ritual bath for the kautuka-bera, are offered vastra, upavīta (sacred chord), gandha-lepana, bhūshaṇa (ornaments), pushpa-dāma (flower-garlands), ādarśa (holding a looking-glass), dhūpa (incense), dīpa (lights), arghya (water offered respectfully) and āchamana (water for ceremonial sipping). The term used in early inscriptions for this sequence is 'tiruv-aḍi-viḷakkina-poludu' (washing the holy feet').

In the hill-shrine, the procedure is as follows. The priest engages himself

again in prāṇāyāma and saṁkalpa. He invokes the vital power (śakti) from the Dhruva-bera to descend into the Kautuka-bera, Utsava-bera, Snapana-bera and Bali-bera, on the principle of lighting a lamp from another lamp (dīpād-dīpam iva). However, the vital power of all the four beras are invoked directly from Dhruva-bera, according to the Vaikhānasa system (*Gopana-bhaṭṭīya*).

The connecting golden link (saṁbandha-kūrcha) between the Dhruva-bera and the Kautuka-bera, which was removed during the administration of the ceremonial bath (snānāsana), is now reinstated. The formal worship of the Kautuka-bera begins; this is called 'kautukārādhana'. Worship is offered to the Lakshmī abiding in the chest of the Dhruva-bera and to the Utsava-bera and Bali-bera.

This is followed by 'tōmāla-sevā' proper, viz. adorning the Dhruva-bera with flower-garlands, prepared in Yāmunat-turai and brought to the sanctum in a procession by the Periya-jīyar or his ekāṅgi (celibate disciple), carrying the basket (pōṭṭam) of the garlands on his head. The texts prescribe that flowers must be placed on the deity's head (mūrdhni), forehead (lalāṭa), feet', (pādayoh), pedestal (pīṭhe), arms (bhujayoh), ears (karṇa), heart (hṛdaye) and on the conch and discus held in the upper hands (śaṁkha-chakrayoh).

भुजे चक्रे च शंखे च पुष्पं दधात्समन्त्रकम्।
मौलौ ललाटे कर्णौ च हृदये भुजयोस्तथा॥

It is also suggested that in case of the absence of the ornaments like crown, neck-laces, arm-lets etc, flowers may be placed on these spots ('tadalābhe tat-tad aṅgeshu pushpāni yojayet'). The hill-god, however, is heavily decorated with golden ornaments encrusted with a variety of precious stones. The use of flowers for decoration can thus be only minimal.

It is a long-standing custom in the hill-shrine to prepare everyday a specific set of garlands with prescribed flowers, and with the lengths of the garlands also specified. They are prepared in the apartment known as Yāmunat-turai in Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa. The flower-garlands used in the sanctum and outside are:

I For the Dhruva-bera:

1. for the holy feet (tiruv-aḍi-sara)
   (2 garlands, each 18" long)
2. for the neck (kaṇṭhi-sara):
   (1 garland, 60" long)
3. for Lakshmī on the chest
   (vakshah-sthala-tāyārlu-sara)
   (2 garlands, each 27" long)
4. Tāvaḷa (1 garland, 40" long)
   (1 garland, 50" long)
5. For the crown (śikhāmaṇi)
   (1 garland, 50" long)
6. For the sword (kaṭhāri-sara)
   (1 garland, 36" long)

II For other deities in the sanctum:

1. Bhoga-śrīnivāsa (viz. Kautuka-bera)
   (1 garland, 27" long)
2. Malayappa (Utsava-bera)
   (3 garlands, one for the god and two for the consorts)
3. Koluvu-śrīnivāsa (viz. Bali-bera)
   (1 garland, 27" long)
4. Ugra-śrīnivāsa (Snapana-bera)
   (3 garlands, one for the god and two for the consorts)
5. Śāligrāmas (near the Dhruva-bera)
   (2 garlands, each 60")
6. Chakrat-tāḷvār (1 garland)
7. Rāma group
   (3, one for Rāma, one for Sītā and one for Lakshmaṇa)
8. Kṛishṇa group
   (2, one for Kṛishṇa, and one for Rukmiṇī)

III For the deities in Rāmar-mēḍa:

1. Ananta, Garuḍa and Vishvaksena
   (3 garlands, one for each)
2. Hanumān, Aṅgada and Sugrīva
   (3 garlands, one for each)

IV outside the main shrine:

(a) in Tirumāmaṇi-maṇṭapa:

1. Dvāra-pālakas
   (2 garlands)
2. Garuḍāḷvār
   (2 garlands)

(b) in Mukkoṭi-pradakshiṇa

3. Vishvaksena (1 garland)

(c) in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa

4. Varada-rāja
   (1 garland)
5. Yogā-narasiṁha
   (1 garland)
6. Bhāshyakāra (1 garland)

The garlands are prepared according to the old measures like 'mūra' (equivalent of 18"), 'bāra' (36") and 1 1/4 'mūra'. The garlands are carried on the head of the Jīyaṅgār or his ekāṅgi (celibate disciple) in a basket called 'poṭṭam', from Yāmunat-turai in a circumambulation around the dhvaja-stambha and in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa and brought into the sanctum everyday in time for Tōmāla-sevā. A torch and a jāghaṇṭā (a metal disc beat with a stick) accompany this procession.

The flower-garlands are offered to the Dhruva-bera on the feet first and finally on the crown (charaṇādi-śirobhāga-paryanta'). Then, the flowers and tulasī are placed on the feet of Dhruva-bera, while 'mantra-pushpam' is being recited in the Śayana-maṇṭapa. After decorating the Dhruva-bera, other beras in the sanctum are suitably decorated with flower-garlands. The service comes to a close with the waving of the light known as 'nakshatra-ārati', the sprinkling of

'mantrodaka' (prokshaṇa), waving of flywhisk or fan (āla-vaṭṭa), and the priest dedicating the service at the feet of the Dhruva-bera (pāda-sevā). During the entire service, the Vaikhānasa priest is assisted by the ekāngi, who is a celibate disciple of the Śrī-vaishṇava jiyar-maṭham. The ekāngi hands over the articles to the priest, who presents them to the diety.

IV bhojyāsana

This is the sequence where prepared food (nivedana) is offered to the Dhruva-bera. The texts describe five services under this head; offering of madhu-parka (mixture in equal parts of milk, curds, honey, clarified butter and sugar-cane-juice, or in the case of non-availability of these ingredients, only curds), presentation of 'havis' (prepared food of five kinds; śuddhodana, mudgānna, pāyasa, kṛsara, gauḷya and yāvaka) to the accompaniment of 'anna-sūkta'; offering of water (pānīya); presentation of betel-nut, leaves and fragrant and edible articles to cleanse the mouth (mukha-vāsa); and oblations offered in fire (nitya-homa). And the time suitable for the presentation of food was called a 'sandhi': usually dawn (udaya-kāla), early morning (aruṇodaya), noon (madhyāhna), eventide (sandhyā) and late night (ardha-yāma) are regarded as suitable for this purpose.

In the hill-shrine, however, early morning (suprabhāta), noon (after tōmāla-sevā), and night (ardha-yāma) were the three sandhis since ancient times. Later, the sandhis were multiplied as also the variety of prepared food. Now, the categories of food prepared in the temple-kitchen for being offered to the hill-god are numerous; ati-rasa, appam, charum dōsai, eḷḷuṇḍe, iḍḍali, poṭṭaṇam-dōse, kaḍale-śuṇḍal, paruppu-viyal, kuṇukku, manoharap-paḍi, poṅgal-paḍi, rājānna-tirup-pōnakam, tēn-talai, pōri-viḷaṅgai, taḷigai-tirup-pā-vaḍai, tirup-paṇyāram, vaḍai-parappu, uluṇḍu-ōgarai, sukhiyan, tirukkanāmaḍai, tiruch-chhivikaip-paḍi, vagaip-paḍi and so on. However, an ancient custom in the hill-shrine will not allow any of these inside the sanctum; all food-offerings, other than the time-honoured four nālis of rice, must be presented from outside the Kulaśekharap-paḍi.

It was also an old custom in the hill-shrine, now discontined, to prepare the food-offerings for the hill-god only in fresh earthern pots; and this was in accordance with the Āgama prescription (*Jñāna-kāṇḍa,* chap 75. 'mṛd-bhāṇḍe pachanam śreshṭham'; 'purāṇe mṛdbhāṇḍe na kuryāt'). The texts also prescribe that after the food-offering, fire-oblations are to be made.

देवदेवस्य नैवेद्यानन्तरं होमः कर्तव्यः॥

This prescription, however, is not observed here.

V yātrāsana

Yātrāsana (also called Bali-haraṇa) is the sequence where the Bali-bera sets out on bali-yātrā to preside over the distribution of food-offerings to the attendant-deities, after the main deity is presented with the food-offerings in Bhojyāsana. It is a colourful procession, in which the protector of the food-offerings is invoked ('bali-rakshakam āvāhya'), and three kinds of bali (anna or food, arghya or water, and pushpa or flowers, 'balis trividhah') are offered to the deities outside the sanctum in this order: to Maṇika and Sandhyā on the right side of the door of the sanctum, Tāpasa and Siddhida on the left side, Nyaksha and Indra in the porch, Kishkindha and Tīrtha in between the steps and the flagpole ('sopāna-dhvaja-daṇḍayor madhye'), Śrī-bhūta and Garuḍa in between the Bhūta-pīṭha and Garuḍa-sannidhi, Chakra, Śaṁkha, Dhvaja, Yūthādhipa and Aksha-hantṛ behind the flagpole or in front ('dhvaja-daṇḍa-pṛshṭhe pramukhe vā'), Havi-rakshaka and Agni in the southern direction, Vivasvān and Yama the south-western direction, and Bali-rakshaka and Nirṛti in the western direction.

But in the hill-shrine, the Bali-bera does not participate in the 'bali-haraṇa' ritual. It is brought to the Tirumā-maṇi-maṇṭapa and is seated on a small silver throne, in front of the door-guardians. It is called in the hill-shrine Koluvu-Śrīnivāsa, because the deity holds court here, and presides over an assembly.

The priest preliminarily resolves to perform the pavilion-worship (saṁkalpa for maṇṭapārādhana). The 'mātrādāna' service is conducted here in the presence of this deity. Actually, this service must be included in alaṁkārāsana, where the deity is treated to all the honours of a monarch (rājopachāra) like white parasol, flywhisks, fan, horse, dance, music and so on. But in the hill-shrine, this is not done. The royal honours are never offered to the Dhruva-bera or to the Kautuka-bera. It is only the Utsava-bera that receives them, but only on festive occasions and outside the main shrine.

The sequence known as 'mātrā-dāna' involves gifting of the prescribed measures of rice to the officiating priest by the temple-administrators in the presence of the deity. The procedure prescribed in the texts is to fill a brass vessel with a droṇa-measure of rice, and mix it with sesame half its quantity or quarter, place upon the rice fruits like cocoanut, banana, jack-fruit and mango, along with the tāṁbūla (betel leaves, nut and some coins); then the master of ceremonies (āchārya), assuming the nārācha-mudrā, invites the officiating priest, lifts the vessel to come into contact with the right hand of the deity, and presents it to the priest. In this function the priest is decorated with the flowers and sandal-paste that have already been offered to the deity (cf. Gopana-bhaṭṭa's *Vishṇvarchana-sāra-saṁgraha*, chap. 5).

It is said that without this sequence, the entire worship ritual would be in vain:

पूजान्ते तुलसीतीर्थं मात्रादानं च मध्यमे।
अर्चकाय प्रदातव्यमन्यथा निष्फलं भवेत्॥

After the 'mātrā-dāna', relevant details of the day in the almanac (pañchāṅga) are read before the deity (Bali-bera), and the income of the previous day is presented in brief to the deity. The Bali-bera is then taken back to the sanctum, where the alaṅkārāsana is repeated and dhūpārti (incense) is presented.

In the hill-shrine the custom is that soon after this 'Koluvu' (assembly), the Dhruva-bera receives worship with tulasī-leaves and flowers, before the Bhojyāsana takes place. This sequence is technically known as 'archana'. The priest sits on the kūrmāsana, to the right and in front of the Dhruva-bera, and goes through the customary 'saṅkalpa' (resolution for archanā). The details like incense and light are offered. He then takes in all solemnity tulasi-leaves and flowers and places them on the feet of Dhruva-bera one thousand times, while the 'sahasra-nāma' is being recited in the Śayana-maṇṭapa. The text used for this worship is not the usual Vishṇu-sahas-ra-nāma (included in *Mahābhārata*), but a special list of thousand names relevant to the hill-god. This is known as Śrī-vēṅkaṭeśa-sahasra-nāma; this has been given in the appendix.

अष्टोत्तरशतनामभिः सहस्रनामभिः
केशवादिचतुर्विंशतिनामभिः
मूर्तिमन्त्रैर्वा तुलसीदलसम्मिश्रैः
पुण्यपुष्पैरभ्यर्चयेत्॥

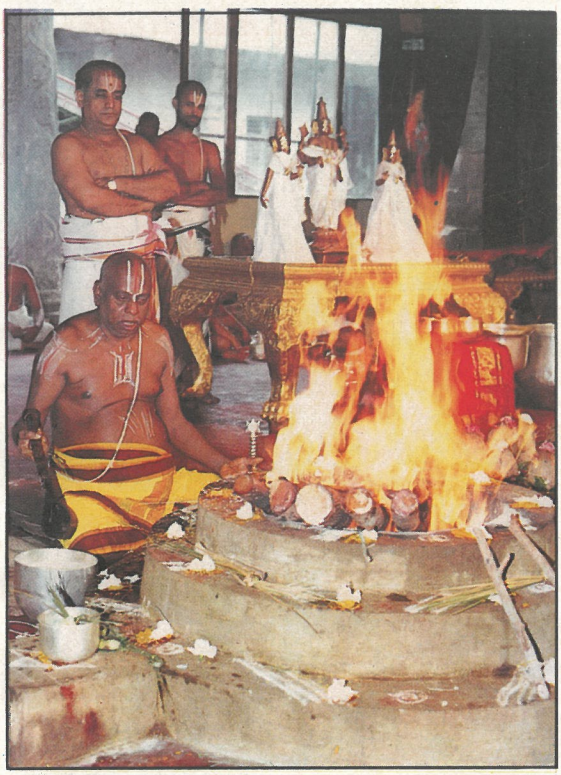
After this, Lakshmī on the Dhruva-bera's chest is separately worshipped with the offering of tulasī-leaves and flowers sixteen times, using the Lakshmī-shoḍaśa-nāmāvalī. Waving of the light (nakshatra-ārati) marks the closure of this sequence.

Following this, the priest in the hill-shrine makes another saṁkalpa and offers the Bhojyāsana. And yātrāsana starts, goes round the Vimāna-pradak-shiṇa, distributing food to the dvāra-devatas, Varada-rāja, Vishvaksena, Narasiṁha and Rāmānuja. Bali is then taken to the Dhvaja-staṁbha-maṇṭapa. Bali-yātrā goes as far as the shrine of Beḍi-Hanumān in the Sannidhi-street.

This marks the completion of the morning worship (prātar-archanā), and the cleaning of the main shrine (sud-dhi) begins at once. The second phase of the day's worship involves mainly a repitition of the morning worship. It begins before noon with mantrāsana and goes through alaṅkārāsana, skip-ping snānāsana (for it is prescribed that ceremonial sprinkling or abhyukshaṇa is enough for madhyānha-pūjā). After presenting incense (dhūpa) and light (dīpa), there will be archanā with flowers and tulasī-leaves one hundred and eight times, while 'Ashṭottara-śata-nāmāvaḷi' (specific to the hill-god) is



Dhvajarohaṇa on the Occasion of Brahmotsava



Homa during Pavitrotsavam being conducted by the Officiating Priest (Madambakkam Śrinivasa Bhattacharya)



Honouring the Chief Priest (Śrinivasa-Narayaṇa Dikshita of Paidipalli family after Brahmotsavam (Archaka-Bahumanam)



Rathotsavam



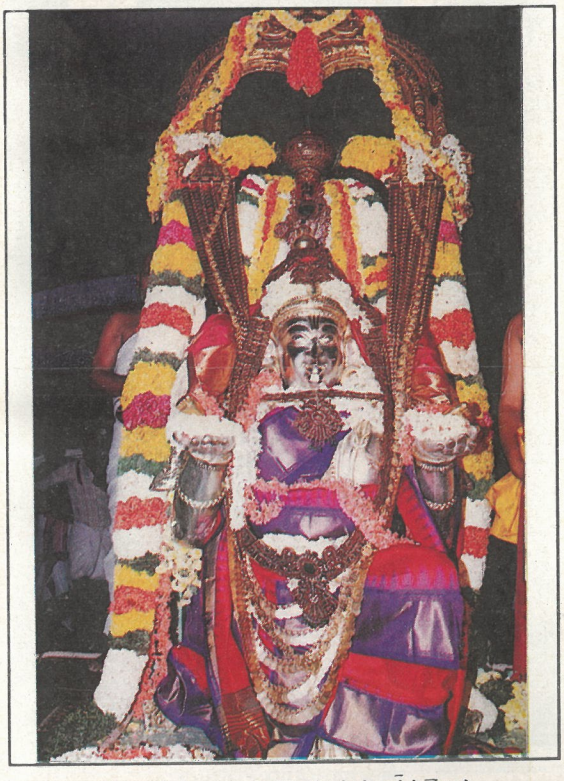
Garuḍa-Vāhana



Garuḍa-Vāhana



Garuḍa-Vāhana



Garuḍotsava (with Lakshmī-hāra)



Kalpa-Vrksha-Vahana



Kalpa-Vṛksha-Vahana



Hanumanta-Vahana



Hanumanta-Vahana



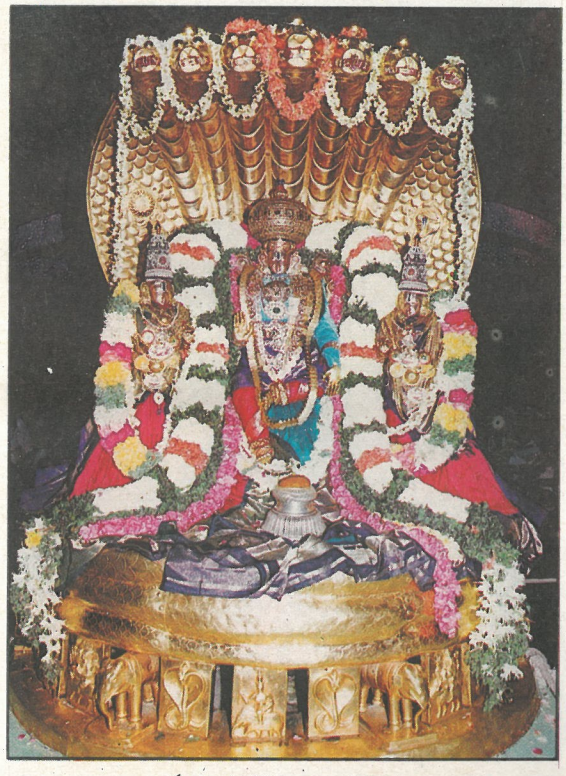
Śesha-Vāhana (small)



Śesha-Vāhana (small)



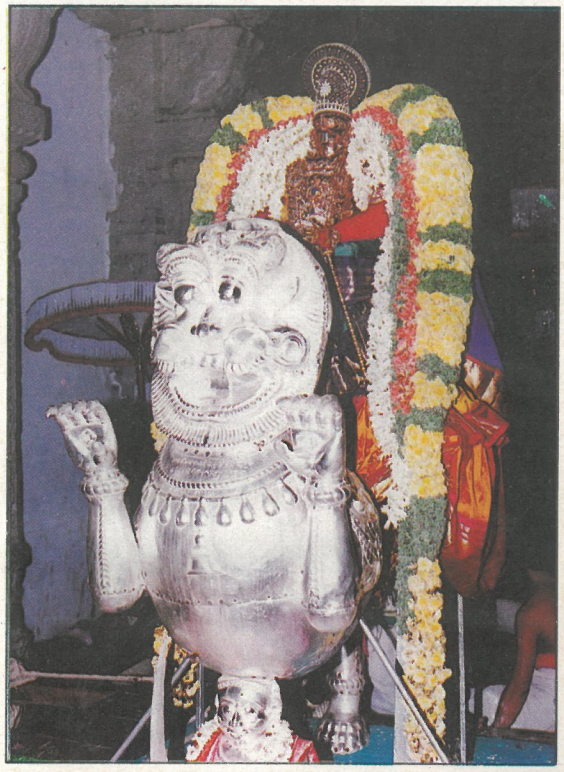
Śesha-Vāhana (Big)



Śesha-Vāhana (Big)



Simha-Vāhana



Simha-Vāhana



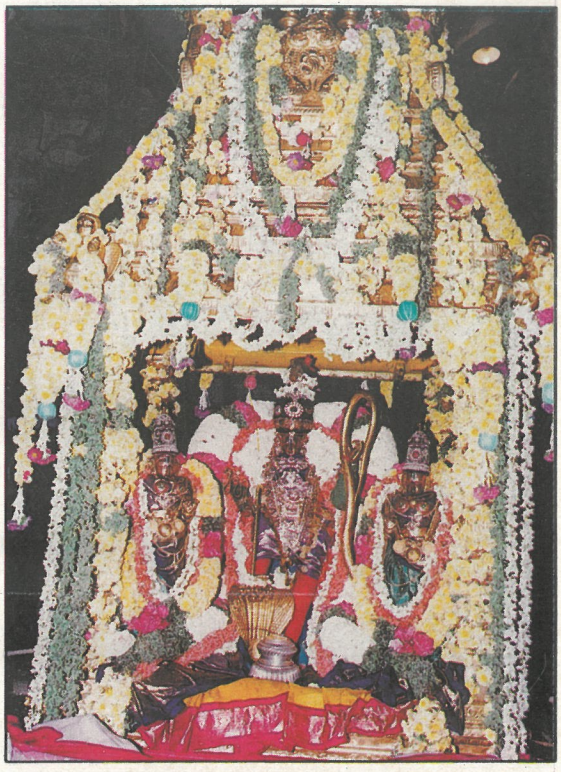
Aśva-Vāhana



Gaja-Vāhana



Sarva-Bhūpāla-Vāhana



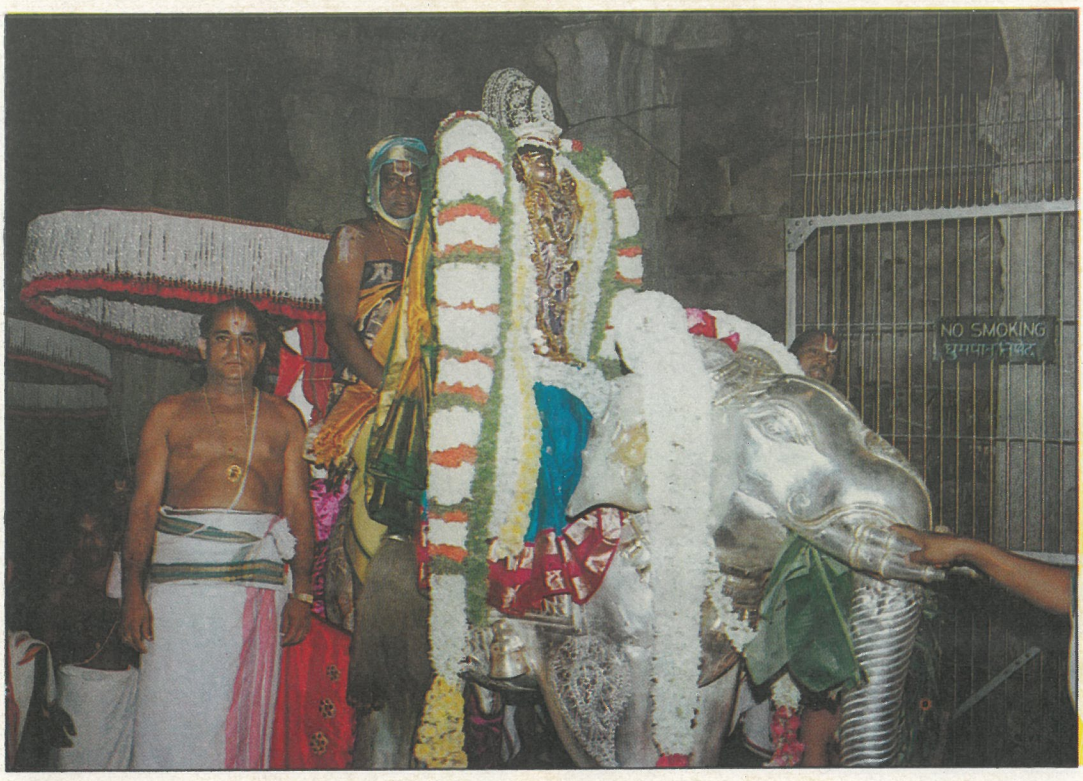
Sarva-Bhupāla-Vahana



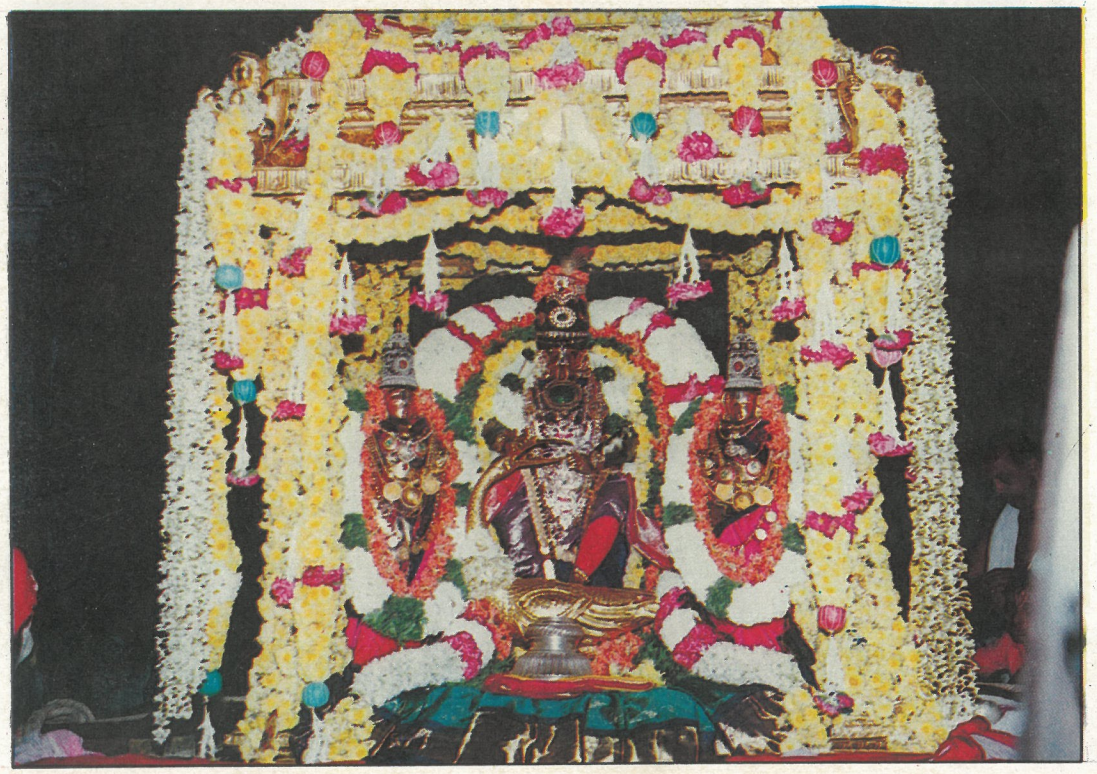
Surya-Prabha-Vāhana



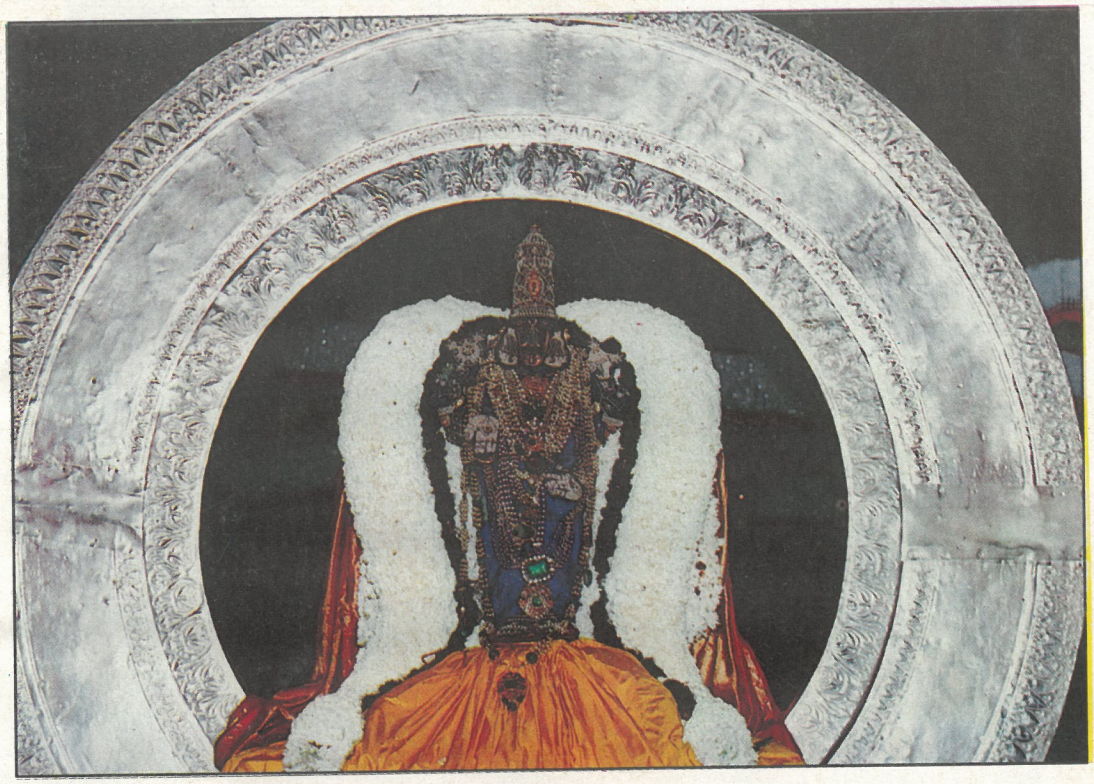
Hamsa-Vāhana



GAJA-VĀHANA



MUTYALA-PANDALI



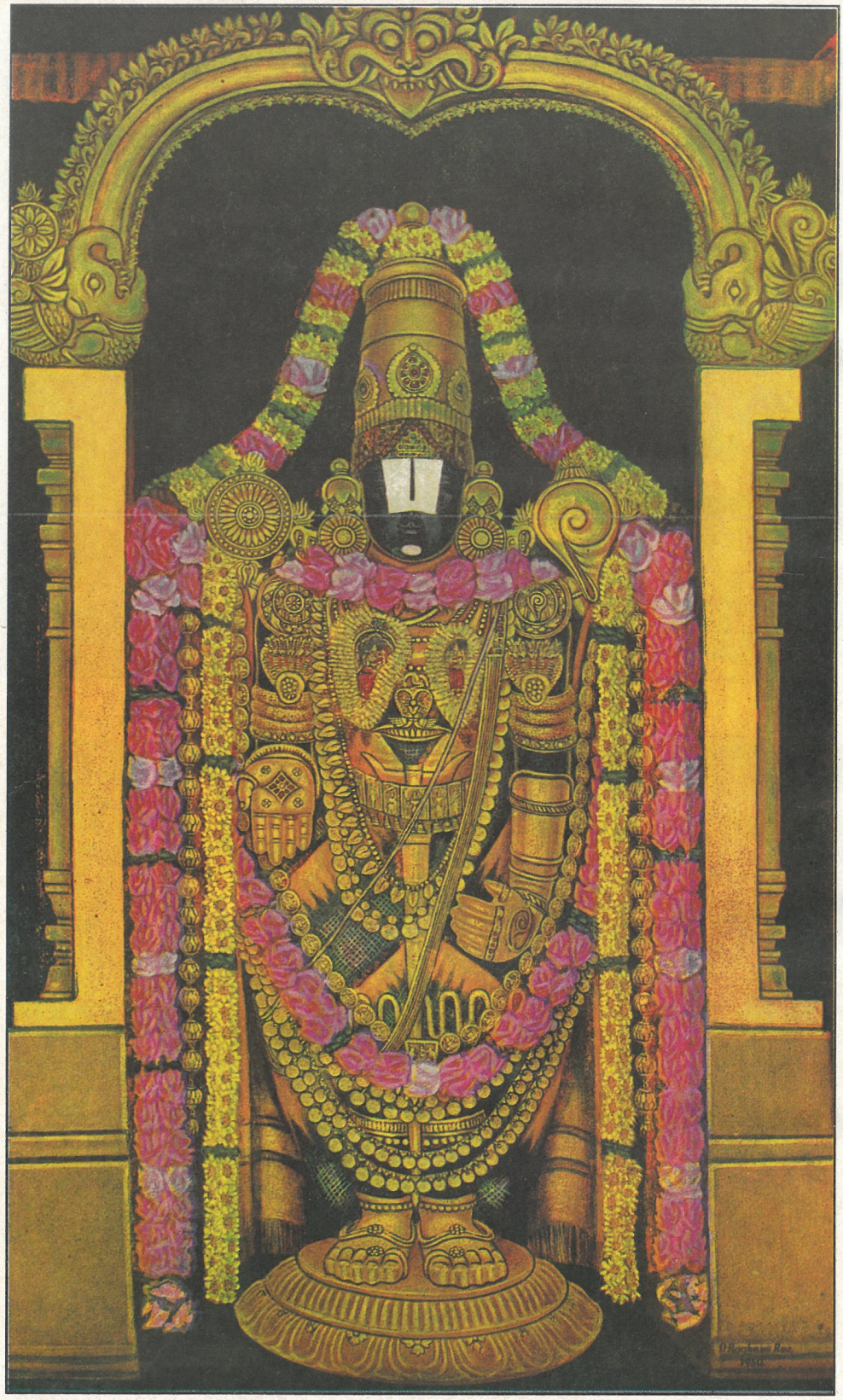
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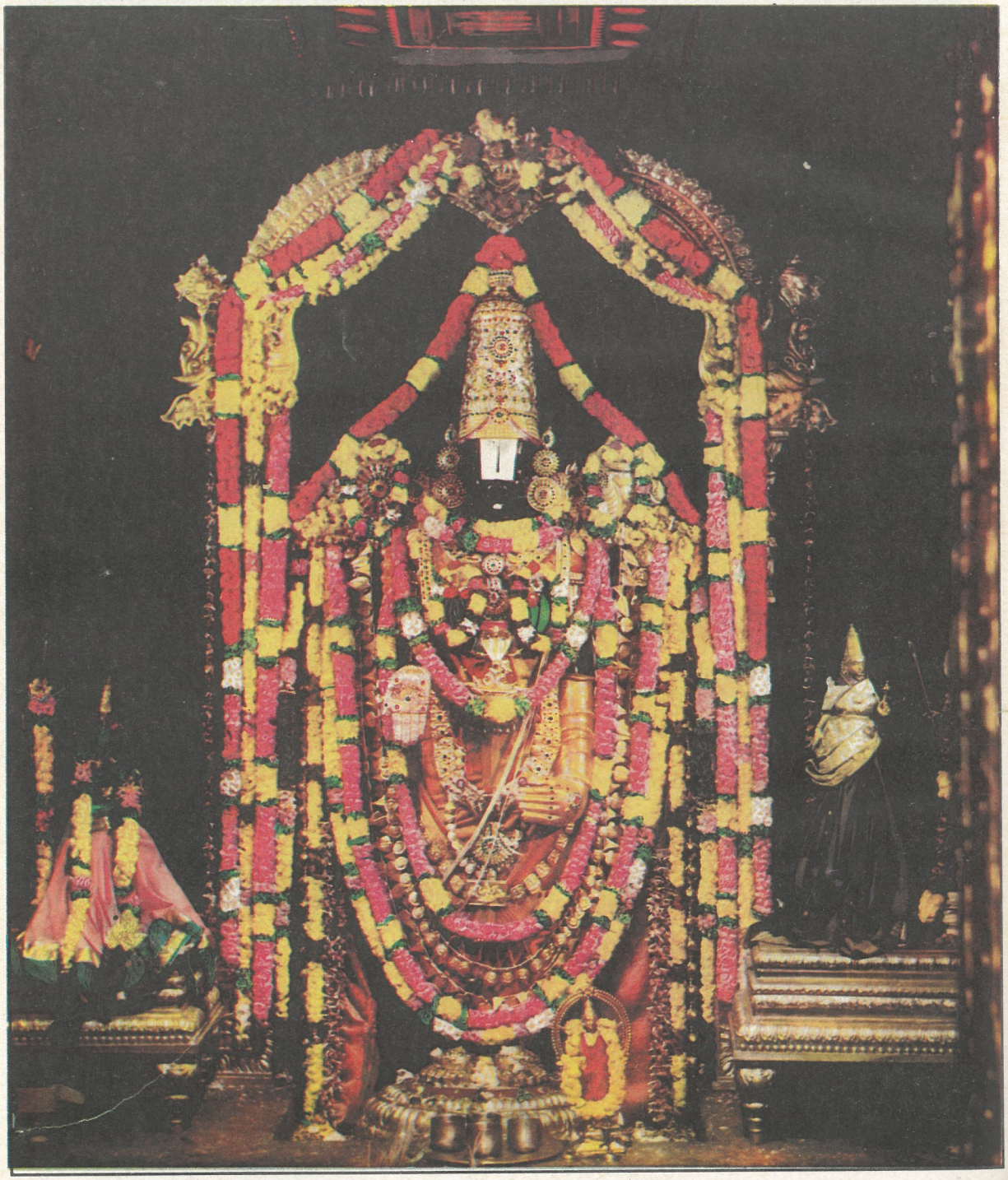
1. CHANDRA-PRABHA-VĀHANA

2. ANDOLIKA (Mohinhi-Rūpā)





UTSAVA-MŪRTI DECORATED WITH DAIMOND-STUDDED COVERINGS (Vajra-kavacha)



being recited in the Śayana-maṇṭapa. As in the morning, Lakshmī on the chest of the Dhruva-bera (vakshah-sthala-lakshmī) is worshipped with flowers and tulasī-leaves sixteen times to the accompaniment of 'Shoḍaśa-nāmāvali'. Food-offering is made to the Dhruva-bera for the second time. The premises are cleaned again, and day's worship in the sanctum is thus concluded (tirmāna). The priest who began his work in the early hours of the morning is now free to leave the main shrine and go to his residence. It will then be about two in the afternoon.

VI paryaṅkāsana

The night worship (the last of the three routine archanās done in the hill-shrine) begins with the cleaning of the main shrine (śuddhi). Fragrant articles and water are brought in; the basket of flower-garlands (pōṭṭam) arrives from Yāmunat-turai. Tōmāla-sevā takes place as in the two sequences during the course of the day, but without either bath (snāna) or sprinkling (abhyukshaṇa) being offered.

रात्रौ स्नानासनमभ्युक्षणं च नेष्टम्॥

(*Vishṇvarchanā-sāra-saṅgraha*, chap. 4)

The texts also preclude the presentation of 'madhu-parka' (already explained), 'dadhyodana' (curds-rice), 'āvahana' (formal invocation), 'pushpa-nyāsa' (placement of flowers on the feet of the Dhruva-bera) and 'ādarśa' (looking-glass in rājopachāra) in the night.

मधुपर्कदध्योदनस्नानावाहनपुष्पन्यासादर्शमिति षड्डपचारान् वर्जयित्वा॥
रात्रौ स्नानादि षड्भिश्च विनान्यैर्विग्रहैर्यजेत्॥

Barring these six, the other twenty-three services (upachāras) are to be offered in the night. These are gone through in the hill-shrine, and while worship is offered with tulasī-leaves and flowers, 'Ashṭottara-śata-nāmāvalī' is employed. Food-offerings are made (nivedana) as the final service in this sequence ('havir-nivedanāt pūrvam rātrau').

The last sequence of worship, known as Paryaṅkāsana (or Śayanāsana) is the putting of the representative icon to rest for the night, before the temple-doors are closed. For this purpose, Kautuka-bera is used in the hill-shrine. *Vaikhānasa-āgama* provides that Kautuka-bera, Bali-bera or any other bera may be used as a Śayana-bera; an icon of Kṛishṇa may also be used.

कौतुकं बलिबेरं वान्यलौकिकमेव वा।
अथवा कृष्णरूपं वा शयनाय कल्पते॥

In fact, the bronze image of Kṛshṇa (which is kept in the sanctum on the left side of Dhruva-bera) is used for this service instead of the Kautuka-bera

for thirty days during 'dhanur-māsa' (about December) in the hill-shrine.

According to the texts, this final sequence is marked by five services: offering of musk along with betel leaves and nut, presentation of sandal-paste, offering flowers, performing circumambulation and prostrations

मृगनाभिश्च ताम्बूलं गन्धः पुष्पं तथैव च।
प्रदक्षिणनमस्कारौ पर्यङ्कासनसंग्रहे॥

The order of presentations usually takes this form: flowers, (pushpa), sandal-paste (gandha), incense (dhūpa), light, apūpa cakes, medicinal drink (kashāya-toya), water to drink (pāniya), water for ceremonial sipping (āchamaniya) and fragrant articles to clease the mouth (mukha-vāsa or tāmbūla).

In the hill-shrine, this is a fairly elaborate ritual, taking about three-fourths of an hour, and including, as mentioned earlier, a brief Tōmāla-sevā and archanā with Ashṭottara-śata-nāmāvali. After cleaning the sanctum, the priest does the 'śrī-pāda-sevā', viz. devotion at the sacred feet of the Dhruva-bera, as his personal service. Then the golden coverings for the feet (pāda-kavacha) are removed and kept separately. A piece of cloth is laid on the bare feet and two balls of freshly ground sandal-paste (chandana) are placed on it. In the meantime, the Śayana-maṇṭapa is got ready for the paryaṅkāsana. The silver cot would have been brought in and suspended from the silver chains; and cushions spread on the cot. The apartment would have been tastefully decorated, with ranga-valli designs on the floor. The Kautuka-bera is then dislodged from its 'jīva-sthāna' and taken out of the sanctum. Its power is restored to the Dhruva-bera, for the priest is said to recite:

अर्चितः सुष्टतश्चासि सुपर्ण गरुडध्वज चक्रपणे
महाबाहो यथेष्टं वस ओं नमः विष्णुं ध्रुवबेरे
समारोपयामि।

The sanctum is cleaned, and the milk to be offered to the Kautuka-bera (one kg and 800 gms) is brought from the kitchen in a silver pot. A large silver plate in which are placed white sugar, cashew-nut, almonds, dried grapes, clarified butter, fruits and sugar candy, together with the tāmbūlam (mudupu, consisting of 50 betel leaves, nut, cocoanut gratings, cloves, cardamum, and jāpatre) is also offered. After the services that custom requires are done, the Kautuka-bera is laid on the decorated cot-cushion (paryaṅka) with its head to the south, while Śayana-sūkta is recited. This sequence (also known as 'ekānta-sevā') occurs late at night, following which the doors of the main shrine are closed.

Before closing the doors, the priest goes again into the sanctum and puts

out all the lights, barring the 'brahmākhaṇḍam' (the perpetual lamp, said to have been lit by the creator himself while consecrating this shrine). This lamp is fed every day by more than seventeen kgs of clarified butter. The priest then locks the lattice door called Kaṭāñjana. The other lights in the main shrine upto Snapana-maṇṭapa are also put out, before the Golden Doorway is closed and bolted inside by the priest with his 'key-stand' (kuñchi-kōlu). Then the priest goes to the temple-kitchen (pōṭu), and offers 'pāyasam' to the goddess there (Pōṭu-tāyār, a form of Lakshmī); he also decorates the image with the flower-garland offered previously at the feet of Dhruva-bera ('tiruv-aḍi-saram'). After this service, the priest leaves the temple-premises and goes home.

This, then, is the worship-ritual that takes place in the hill-shrine every day of the year.

5

The hill-shrine is celebrated since very early days for the spectacular festivals that were conducted there. The songs of the Āḻvārs speak of great concourses of people gathering on the hill during 'Pāraśi-nāḷ'. At any rate, since 614 A.D. at least, festivals have been instituted in the hill-shrine. Now there are more festivals in vogue there than even the days of the year. There are festivals, special occasions and observances involving colourful processions, impressive services, varieties of food-offerings and grand assemblies. But, it is to be noted that festivals can take place only after the routine morning worship (tōmāla-sevā) is completed in the sanctum; a festival is not allowed to interfere with the normal schedule with reference to the Dhruva-bera. The idea is that the main deity in the sanctum has nothing to do with the festivals. The Utsava-bera, which presides over the festivals, is in fact brought out of the sanctum on these occasions.

The Vaikhānasa texts do recognize the value of festivals in a temple but, keep them to a minimum and attach lesser importance to them than they do to the daily worship (nityārchanā). A festival is said to contribute peace and nourishment to the people ('utsavam sarva-lokānām śānti-pushṭi-karam viduh'); and it is a sort of 'yajña' where people participate. Festivals are of three kinds: (1) kālotsava, those take place without fail on certain days every year; (2) śraddhotsava, the festivals which are arranged by devotees out of their faith to be conducted on a day that they choose ('ishṭa-māse dine cheshṭe'); and (3) naimittikotsava, the festivals that are conducted in times of distress, draught, fright and unrest, and for bringing about peace and plenty (cf. Atri: *Samūrtārchanādhikāra*, 54, 2-4 and Bhṛgu, *Yajñādhikāra*, chap. 38).

I Kālotsava.

These are calender events; they are indicated in the almanac (pañchāṅga). And the temple-administration would have set apart funds and made arrangements for the conduct of these festivals in the prescribed manner on the specified days.

(1) Brahmotsava (tiruk-kōḍi-tirunāḷ) is the most important festival in this group. Even as early as 614 A.D., this was being conducted in the hill-shrine twice: once in the month of Puraṭṭāśi and then again in Mārgaḷi. During 1300 A.D., a third one was added, to be conducted in Āḍi-māsam (or Āshāḍha). An account of this festival has elsewhere been given.



CHAKRA-SNĀNA in Svāmi-Pushkariṇi in front of Varaha-Svāmi Shrine



Dhvaja-paṭa being taken in procession along with the officiating priest (Māḍambākam Śrīnivāsa-bhaṭṭāchārya) during Brahmotsava



Hamsa-Vāhana

(2) Vasantotsava (spring festival) is conducted in the month of Māśi (or Māgha) as a part of the Brahmotsavam, and in the month of Chittirai as a main festival of three days. An inscription of 1547 (Peṇḍli-koḍuku Thimma-rājayya) refers to this festival (V, 93).

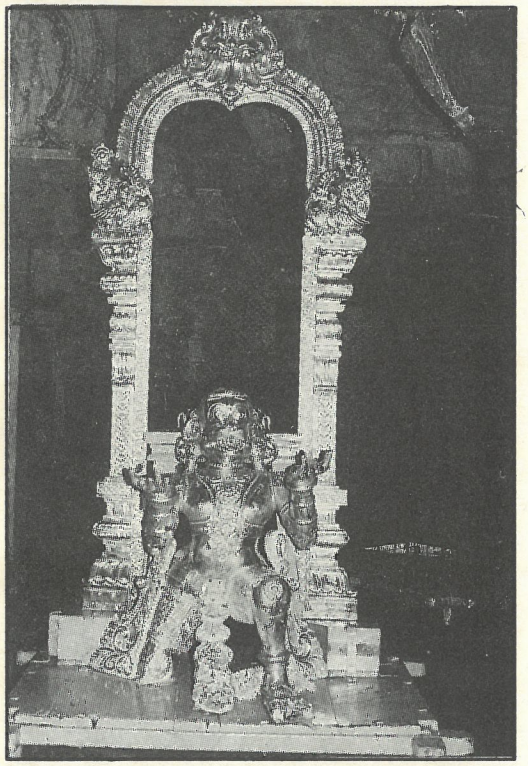
(3) Kōḍai-tirunāḷ (summer festival), which was conducted for twenty days; associated with this festival on its tenth day was Aṇṇā-ūñjal-utsavam (swan-swing festival).

(4) Saṅkrānti festivals during winter solstice (Makara) and summer solstice (Karkāṭaka).

(5) Yugādi-āsthānam (on the new year's day according to the lunar or Chāndramāna calaender which is followed in the temple). On this day there is a special cleaning of the sanctum ('kōil-āḷvār-tirumañjanam'), and cleansing of the vessels soon after midnight. The Utsava-bera (Malayappa) and Vishvaksena are treated to a ceremonial bath (tiru-mañjana) and tōmāla-sevā.

(6) Dīpāvalī-āsthānam

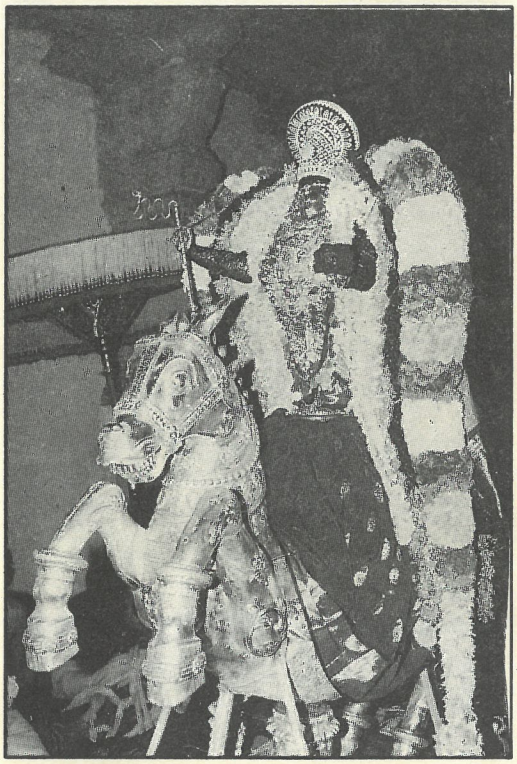
(7) Ratha-saptamī. The Utsava-bera (Malayappa) is given a ceremonial bath and taken out in a procession on sūrya-prabha-vāhana. In the afternoon,



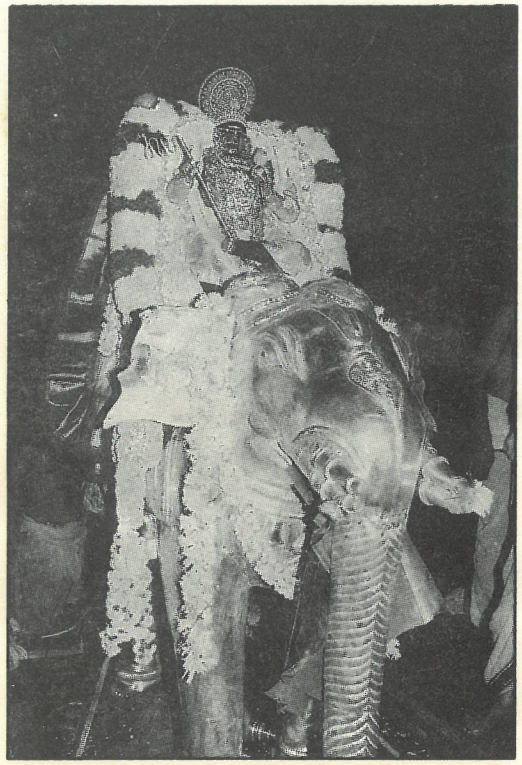
Hanumad-Vāhana

Chakrattāḷvār visits Svāmi-pushkariṇī and has a bath there (tīrtha-vari). In the evening, the Utsava-bera goes out in Hanumān-vāhana. There is an inscription of 1564 which mentions this festival (V, 173).

(8) Makara-saṅkrānti. This is celebrated as a hunting festival (mṛgayā, pārveṭa-utsava). In the afternoon, the Utsava-bera and Kṛishṇa are taken out to the Pārveṭa-maṇṭapam some distance away from the Tirumala village, and a hunting scene in which the Utsava-bera participates is enacted. Kṛishṇa receives special honour by the Golla community in a mantapam nearby. The procession from the temple to



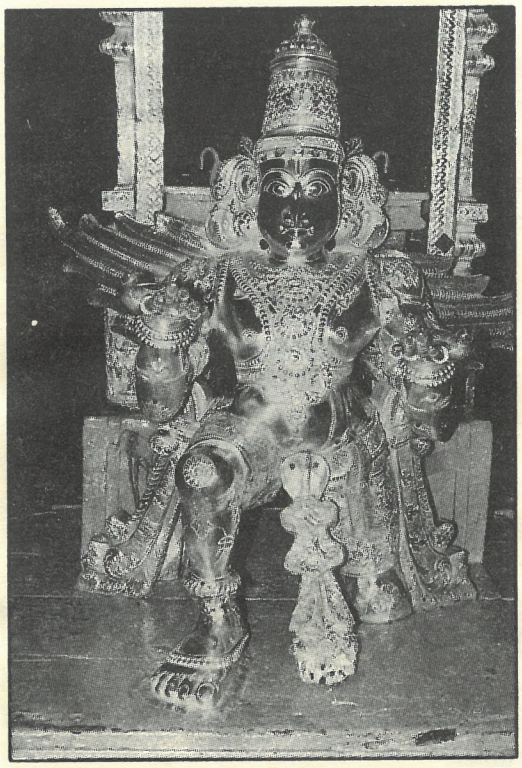
Aśva-Vāhana



Gaja-Vāhana

the Pārveta-maṇṭapam is a hurried one both ways; the participants actually run. In the morning, Lakshmī on the chest of the Dhruva-bera (vakshah-sthala-amma) receives a ceremonial bath with perfumed water, food-offerings (nivedana) and the waving of the light (ārati). This is followed by a similar service for Pōṭu-amma in the temple-kitchen. The Ānanda-nilaya-vimāna also receives worship on the occasion.

(9) Vaikuṇṭha (mukkōṭi) ekādaśī and Mukkoṭi-dvādaśī. The Utsava-bera receives a ceremonial bath, holds court specialy bedecked in Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa, and goes out in a procession on the



Garuḍa-Vāhana

streets around the temple on the first day; and Chakrattāḷvār visits Svāmi-pushkariṇī for a bath on the second day. The inner circuit known as Mukkoṭi-(or Vaikuṇṭha-) pradakshiṇa is kept open these two days. In the evening of the second day, *Mukkoṭi-purāṇam* is read in an assembly

(10) Kaiśika-dvādasī. The Snapana-bera (Ugra-śrīnivāsa) along with the consorts is given a ceremonial bath, and taken out in a hurried procession on the streets in the early hours of the morning (before daybreak). It is customary to bring back the deity before sun-rise. *Kaiśika-purāṇam* is read in an assembly presided over by this deity.

(11) Gokulāshṭami. This is a festival to honour the birth of Kṛishṇa, whose image is housed in the sanctum of the hill-shrine. This image is treated to a ceremonial bath (tiru-mañjana), special food-offerings (nivedana) and a grand assembly (āsthāna). There is also an Uṭla-utsava in which the Kṛshṇa-image and the Utsava-bera (Malayappa) are conducted in a procession to Yāmunat-turai in Sampaṅgi-pradakshiṇa, in the afternoon. The Utsava-bera is made to stay in Yāmunat-turai, while the Kṛishṇa-image is put up in a mantapa near Paḍi-pōṭu, adjacent to Yāmunat-turai. The two deities receive honours before they return.

It is also a custom here to conduct 'dvādaśārādhana' to the Snapana-bera (Ugra-śrīnivāsa) on the occasion.

(12) Rāma-navamī. This is to celebrate the birth of Rāma, who is an incarnation of Vishṇu and whose image abides in the sanctum. Rāma is given a ceremonial bath on this day, and is taken out in a procession on Hanumān-vāhana. There is an assembly held (āsthāna). The day following is observed as Rama-paṭṭābhisheka-utsava, when Rāma is taken out in a grand procession on Sarva-bhūpāla-vāhana in the evening.

(13) Narasiṁha-jayanti. On this day, the stone image of Yogā-narasiṁha in the sub-shrine in Vimāna-prakakshiṇa receives special worship.

(14) Ananta-padmanābha-vrata. On this Chaturdaśī day, Chakrattāḷvār which is in the sanctum is given a ceremonial bath and is taken on the streets around the temple in a procession.

(15) Dhanurmāsa. The Dhruva-bera is worshipped with the bilva-leaves during this period. The image of Kṛshṇa, which is in the sanctum is given a ceremonial bath every night. And in the thirty nights of this period, Kṛishṇa and Rukmiṇī partake the sequence of Śayanotsava, instead of the Kautuka-bera.

(16) Kārtika-dīpotsava. Lights are ceremonially put up at 52 places in and around the temple. There will be a special function on the banks of Svāmi-pushkariṇī and at Vāraha-svāmi shrine.

(17) Vara-lakshmī-vratam. The image of Pōṭu-amma (a form of Lakshmī) in the temple-kitchen receives a ceremonial bath(tirumañjanam) and food-offerings (nivedana).

(18) Chakra-tīrtha-mukkōṭi. The temple priests and other officers close the Golden Doorway, and visit Chakra-tīrtham in a grand procession and offer worship to Chakrattāḷvār, Narasiṁha and Āñjaneya there.

II Śraddhotsava.

These festivals are not scheduled to be conducted on specific dates or occasions. They are instituted by individual devotees who make endowments and other arrangements. Not all of them have āgamic sanction. Some of them are due entirely to the fancy of the donor.

(1) Kalyāṇotsava. This is now a popular 'ārjitam' festival in the hill-shrine, which seeks to enact the event of the grand wedding of the hill-god with Lakshmī. But this was not heard of on the hill until 1554 A.D., when Tāḷḷapākam Tirumala Ayyaṅgār made an endowment for the institution of this new festival (V, 153). He was probably inspired to do so by Chinna-Tirumala-Ayyaṅgār of the same family, who had instituted the same festival for Govindarāja in Tirupati seven years earlier.

(2) Adhyayanotsava. This festival of 27 days (commencing ten days prior to Mukkōṭi-ekādaśī), which is a typical Pāñcharātra event, distinguished by the congregate recitation of the Tamiḷ prabandham), was first introduced in 1400 A.D.

(3) Annā-ūñjal-tirunāḷ. This festival is a spectacular one, when the Utsava-bera (Malayappa), gorgeously bedecked, is treated to a 'swan-swing' in a tastefully decorated hall, outside the main shrine. We learn that this was instituted by Sāḷuva-narasiṁha in 1473 A.D.

(4) Tiruppaḷi-ōḍam-tirunāḷ. The Utsava-bera is taken out on a decorated float on the waters of Svāmi-push-

karinī, in the night. This spectacular event is to be repeated for five days, according to an inscription dated the saka year 1445. On the first night, Kṛshṇa is taken out; on the second night Rāma; and on the following three nights the Utsava-bera (Malayappa). This floating festival is referred to also as 'sport in water' (jala-krīḍā).

(5) Vāhanotsavas. During the ten or twelve days of Brahmotsava, the Utsava-bera is taken out on specific vehicles (vāhana) each day. This is a custom which was by no means ancient; it is later than the sixteenth century. There were only a few vāhanas to start with, as we learn from the inscriptions: Tiruv-anantāḷ (Śesha), Muttu-pandal ('pearl-pavilion'), Garuḍa, Haṁsa, Chātaka-pakshi (the Indian bird which is celebrated for its wanting only rain-water) and Pallakki(or śibikā, palanquin). Later, the number of vāhanas swelled. The use of vāhanas in Brahmotsava answers to the description of Kālotsava. But when devotees arrange for this or that vāhana on any day of their choice (altogether independent of Brahmotsava), it is śraddhotsava. This is done in fulfilment of some vows or for a material gain (kāmya). Garuḍotsava, however, is frequently resorted to.

III Nimittotsava.

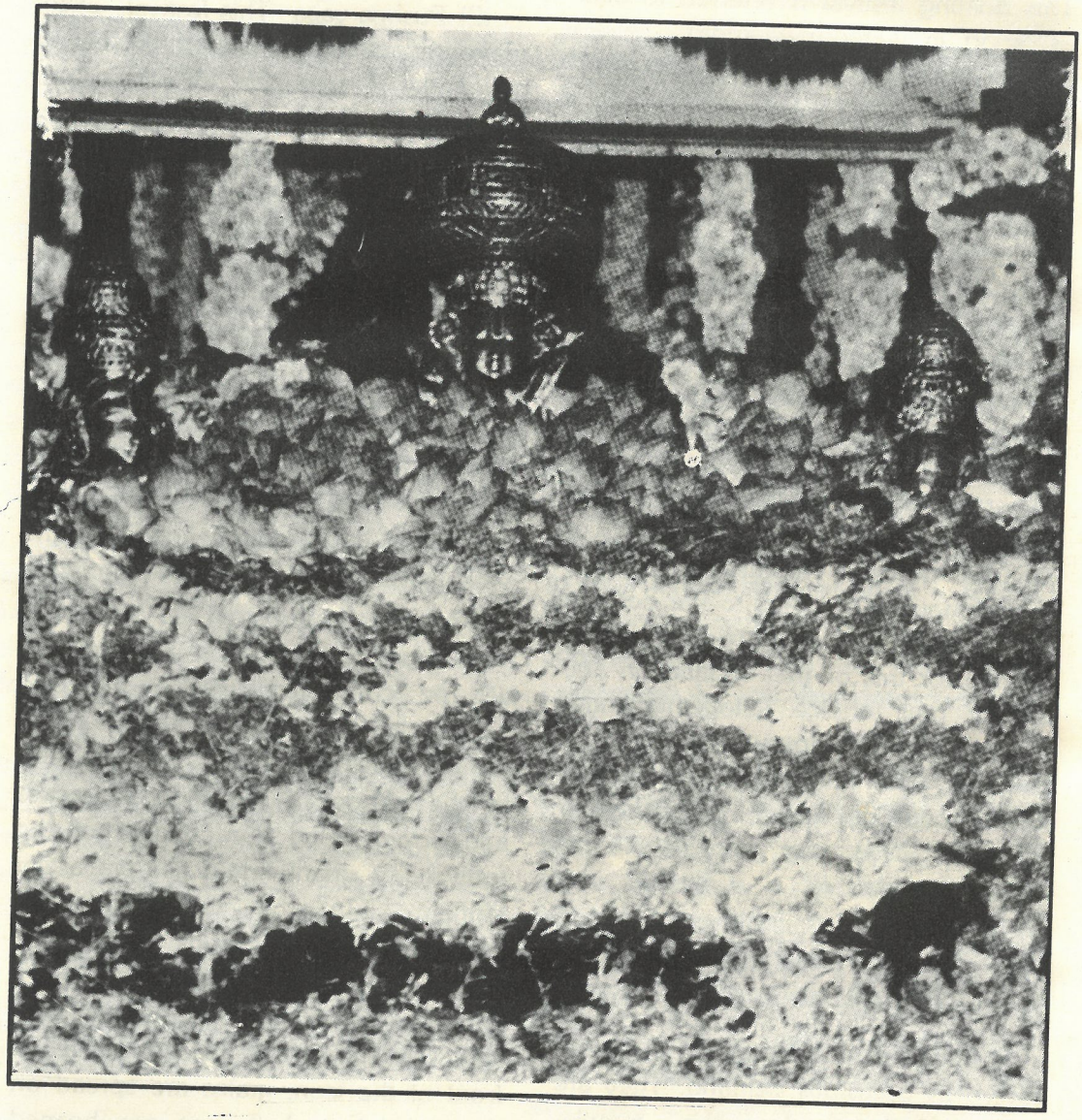
Festivals in this category are conducted as occasions demand. They are largely initiated by the temple-authorities themselves. As examples may be cited:

(1) Pavitrotsava. It is an annual purificatory festival. Its object is the expiation of sins due to the inadvertant omissions and commissions during daily worship. It is a five-day ritual.

(2) Pushpa-yāga. This festival, which makes an extensive use of flowers to cover the Utsava-bera till the chest ('stanadaghneshu pushpeshu'), is accompanied by a fire-ritual (aupāsanāgni). This is undertaken at the end of an installation ceremony, at the conclusion of a festival, on a Sankrānti, or when the country is in distress, draught or fear of aggression. In any event which forebodes ill ('sarvopadraveshu'), this yāga is said to be indicated; it is also conducted for purposes of expiation of sins and correction of errors ('prāyaśchittārtham'). It is commended in the Vaikhānasa texts like *Vimānārchanākalpa*.

Pushpa-yāga (sacrifice with flowers) will be conducted usually after the ceremonial flag is let down after the festival (dhvajāvarohaṇa). This ritual is in the nature of expiation of lapses and errors doing the conduct of the festival ('ajñāna-krta-dosha-prāyaśchittārtham'). In the centre of the decorated hall, the grains are heaped up, and a maṇḍala of lotus with eight petals is drawn, and the processional icon (Malayappa) is placed on it. In front of the icon, grains are spread on the ground, and flowers are heaped

on it. The deity protecting the flowers (pushpa-rakshaka) is invoked, and the icon (Malayappa) is presented with thirteen services (upachāras). With lotus flowers reciting Vishṇu-gāyatri 108 times. The spectacular sequence is when the deity is completely covered with flowers (from foot to the neck, with only the head visible) to the accompaniment of the recital of 108 names of the hill-god. Forgiveness is formally sought (kshama-yāchanā), and the icon is taken round the shrine in procession.



(6)

When the administration of the hill-shrine came under the control of the East India Company (in 1748), elaborate Amul-nāmās, Diṭṭams and Kaiṅkarya-paṭṭis were got prepared. This was meant to specify the worship rituals, procedures followed, articles required, food-offerings, festivals and the incumbents of the various offices and their duties. These documents provide a fairly clear and accurate picture of the time-honoured custom that prevailed during the turn of the century. While the details concerning the worship remain more or less unchanged there have been large-scale changes in the administrative set-up and in the practices outside the area of worship, in the subsequent years. What follows is an account of the personnel involved directly and indirectly in the worship in the hill-shrine: and the basic material is drawn from the Diṭṭams and Kaikarya-paṭṭis. I have, of course, altered the order of offices followed in these documents, and have added explanations.

The incumbents to hereditary offices in charge of the several details of worship in the hill-shrine are known as 'Kaiṅkarya-paras', and they form several categories like archakas (priests), jīyaṅgārs(supervisors), ekāngi (assistant), yāmunat-turai (makers of flower-garlands), gamēkārs (cooks), purohitam (astrologers), āchārya-purushas (several minor services), tāḷ-ḷapākam (musicians), sāma-veda-vādyār (vedic recitation) and golla (temple-servant).

The archakas (also called sthānikas in old records) in the hill-shrine are Vaikhānasas, who alone have the right to touch the Dhruva-bera and offer worship directly. There are four families of hereditary priests (archaka-mīrāsidārs) who are in complete charge of the worship conducted in the temple: Paiḍipalli, Gollapalli, Chiguruvāḍa and Vemūru. They are all known as dīkshitas. They operate in rotation, each family taking charge of the arrangement for worship for a year. The responsibility is handed over to the next incumbent at the commencement of the annual Brahmotsava. These four families claim descent from Gopīnātha-dīkshita, who is credited with having discovered the image of the hill-god and with having consecrated it.

The archaka-mīrāsidār appoints several actual priests (from fifty ot sixty) to carry on the details of worship on his behalf; these latter are called 'gumāstās'. He is in over-all charge, and the entire responsibility is as long as his term (archakatvam-vantu) lasts. The keys of golden Doorway (Baṅgāru-vākili) and of the inner lattice-door (katānjana) are in his custody; the former, he holds in joint-custody with the Jīyaṅgār. He is also in sole charge of all the jewels and ornaments which are meant for constant use (sadā-samarpana) by the Dhruva-bera and other deities inside the sanctum. It is

usual for him to relegate his authority and responsibility to the head-gumāstā (or the chief priest) that he appoints.

The duties of the archaka include being present in the temple while the Golden Doorway is opened in the early hours of the morning, attending to the preliminaries of worship, carrying out the several sequences of worship himself in the precise manner prescribed, making food-offerings, giving of tīrtham of the devotees, and at night closing and locking the Golden Doorway from inside with his own key. He is an important functionary of the temple. All the bejewelled and golden ornaments worn all the time by the deities in the sanctum as well as the golden and silver vessels and utensils used during worship are in the archaka's custody. He is brought to the temple ceremoniously from his residence by the golla every morning, and after the night worship concludes (tīrmāna) he is escorted back to his residence by a torch-bearer. He is assisted during worhsip by an 'ekāṅgi' (who represents the Jīyaṅgār). There are two archakas, who work in shifts. There will also be two assistant-archakas (called parichārakas) and a provider of cooked food for offering (svayaṁ-pāki).

Although an archaka in the hill-shrine is eligible to marry and live like an ordinary householder, he is expected to live as a celibate during the period of his service on the hill. It is usual for him to work in the temple for about twenty days in a month and spend the rest of the days with his family. No archaka of this shrine is a native or permanant resident of the village on the hill; he hails from some place in Āndhra Pradesh, Tamil-Nāḍu or Karnāṭaka. Most of the archakas, however, are from Karnāṭaka, especially from the Kōlār district. They speak Telugu at home and belong to the small community of Vaikhānasas. They also speak Kannaḍa fluently, and many of them are proficient in Tamil also. They are not Śrī-vaishṇavas, and they do not follow Rāmānuja; nor do they recite the Tamiḷ prabandhams.

The Jīyaṅgār, the head of the minor Śrīvaishṇava pontificate (maṭham called Jīyar-maṭham) in the village on top of the hill, has been closely associated with worship in the hill-shrine from the fourteenth century. While the origin of this matham is not very clear, the purpose of starting this matham appears to have been to gain control over the worship in the hill-shrine. It has Pāñcharātra leanings, while worship in the hill-shrine is Vaikāhanasa in nature.

In any case, the Jīyaṅgār is a renunciant monk (a sannyāsin), who appoints his successor so that there is a continuity of office. In fact, there are two Jīyaṅgārs, one senior (hence called Pedda-jīyaṅgār) and the other junior (chinna-jīyaṅgār). It is the former that normally functions in the hill-shrine; when he is absent or ill, the junior pontiff takes over. Between them, they have four celibate disciples

of the śāttāda-śrīvaishṇava community (called 'ekāṅgis', corrupt form of 'ekāki'). The Jīyaṅgār has his duties in the hill-shrine to which, according to the *Kainkarya-paṭṭi*, he must attend for six months in a year; the other six months, he functions in the Govindarāja temple at Tirupati, the town below. Of the four ekāṅgis, two are allotted to the hill-shrine.

The Jīyaṅgār on the hill holds the joint custody of the keys of the Golden Doorway (Baṅgāru-vākili), with the archaka. He (or his authorized representative, mudrā-manishi, or ekāṅgi) must be present when the this Doorway is opened in the early hours of the morning. He goes into the main shrine along with the archaka, the golla, the ekāṅgi and the parichāraka, closing the doors of the Golden Doorway behind him, to make the necessary preparations for the morning worship.

It is also his responsibility to collect the basket of flower-garlands from Yāmunat-turai and bring it to the sanctum. He is present in the sanctum while tōmāla-sevā is going on, and he hands over the garlands to the archaka for being offered to the Dhruva-bera and other deities. On Fridays, he fills the large golden conch with water and gives it to the archaka for pouring it on the Dhruva-bera. He also hands over the cloth for drying the image. It is usual for the ekāṅgi to represent the Jīyaṅgār in all worship-sequences, and assist the archaka on all days of the week, excepting Friday when one of the Jīyangārs will be present in person.

There are seven Śrī-vaishṇava families hereditarily associated with the worship-rituals in the hill-shrine. They are known as āchārya-purushas. The principal family, known as Tōḷappāchārya family, is entrusted with the task of bringing three pot-fulls of pure water from Ākāśagaṅgā-tīrtha every morning in time for tōmāla-sevā; the incumbent appoints three brāhmaṇas for this purpose. The incumbent also recites mantra-pushpa, standing in the Śayana-maṇṭapa, during worship; further, he accompanies the processions of the Utsava-bera, reciting Veda. The other āchārya-purushas (known after their surnames: Bhavanāchāri, Puriśai, Prativādi-bhayaṅkaram, Vīra-valla, Para-vastu, and Kaḍāmbi) are assigned the duty of reciting the Tamiḷ prabandhas during utsavas, and during festivals like adhyayanotsava; they will also be present on Fridays during the ceremonial bath (tirumañjana); and they participate in the temple assemblies (āsthāna).

The Bokkasam-incumbent will be present in the Śayana-maṇṭapa during daily tōmāla-sevā, supplying cloth for the feet of the Dhruva-bera (śrī-pāda-vastra); on Fridays he must provide all the required water for the ceremonial bath, sandal-paste and garments. His job includes attending the ekānta-sevā in the Śayana-maṇṭapa every night. He it is that must control the crowd on this occasion by shouting "care,

caution" (Hechcharika), whenever necessary. He is in charge of the silver cot, the cushion, and other articles present in Śayana-maṇṭapa during the night service. He also presents to the archaka the sandal-paste balls to be placed on the feet of Dhruva-bera during this service. When the deity sets out on procession, he holds the white parasol over the deity; at times, he keeps the 'śaṭhāri' in his hand and blesses the devotees with it, while the procession is in progress. He also attends to the proper custody of the garments presented to the deity, especially after the Friday ceremonial bath.

The Sabhā-incumbent will be present when the Golden Doorway is opened early in the morning. He goes in before the other devotees are admitted, and clears the Śayana-maṇṭapa. He carries the silver cot (after the archaka removes the Śayana-bera to its normal seat in the sanctum) out of the Śayana-maṇṭapa, and keeps it in the room known as 'mañchapu-ara' in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. He also brings the silver cot during the night service (ekānta-sevā) into the Śayana-maṇṭapa, and prepares it. He is also present whenever food-offerings are made, and attends to their presentation and distribution. He is in charge of preparing the vāhanas for processions, and also collecting people to carry the vāhanas around.

The Sāma-veda-vādyār is the Vedic scholar, whose duty is to recite 'Sahasra-nāma' during morning worship every day, and Sāma-veda hymns during adhyayanotsava. He also presents a fresh sacrificial cord (yajñopavīta) every Friday, to be put on the Dhruva-bera after the ceremonial bath.

The Mahant's representative provides milk for daily ceremonial bath for Kautuka-bera and also for the ceremonial bath for Dhruva-bera on Fridays. He also brings fruits for presentation to the deities on festival occasions.

The Tāḷḷapākam-incumbent, a descendent of the famous Aṇṇamāchārya, presents music while the Kautuka-bera (or Kṛishṇa with Rukmiṇī during Dhanur-māsa) is put to rest in the Śayana-maṇṭapa during ekānta-sevā at night. In former days, this service was presented during all the three sequences of worship (prātah-kāla-pūjā, aparāhṇa-pūja and rātri-pūjā).

The gammikārs are in charge of the preparation of prasādams (rice-preparations) and paṇyārams (baked and fried preparations and sweets) in the temple-kitchens (potu in Vimāna-pradakshiṇa). Śiṅga-maras are cooks that prepare the svayaṁ-pāka food-offerings. The pilgrims look forward to carrying with them the food-offerings presented to the Deity and made available to them on payment. The food-offerings are broadly grouped under two heads, and the common items under each head are as follows:

I Prasādams (or anna-prasāda):

1. dadhyodana 2. puḷihora, 3. pāyasam, 4. śira, 5. chakkara-poṅgali, 6. poṅgali, 7. śakkara-bhāt, 8. Kēsari-bhāt, 9. bakāḷa-bhāt, and 10. kadaṁbam

II Paṇyāram (or paḍi):

1. laḍḍu, 2. vaḍa, 3.dōsai, 4. tēne-tola, 5. pōḷi, 6.appam, 7. sukhiyan, 8. jilebi, 9. manoharam and 10. śuṇḍali.

The hill-shrine has an elaborate 'paḍitara-diṭṭam' which specifies what food offerings are to be made on each day of the fortnight or month and on special occasions.

There are also employees for discharging several functions connected with the kitchen, like supplying water, cleaning rice, guarding the provisions, cleaning the kitchen, and so on. There used to be a servant specially employed to drive away the monkeys from the kitchen ('kotulu kāvali-gāḍu'). There was a cook specially engaged to prepare 'pāyasam' for offering to Pōṭu-amma, the goddess of the kitchen ('ammavāri pāyasam).

There are four employees in Yāmunat-turai for the preparation of the flower-garlands to be offered during tomāla-sevā. They must prepare thirty-eight garlands for the Dhruva-bera as follows, according to *Tirumala-tirupati Devasthanamula Diṭṭam* (Telugu, from Fasli 1200 to 1250 T.T.D., Tirupati, 1957, page 51)

1. for being draped on crown-(four)

2. to go round the top-jewel (śikhamaṇi) of crown - (one)

3. to go round the portion below this - (one)

4. to go round bottom of the crown - (one)

5. to go round the portion below this, with tassles - (one)

6. for the nimbus behind the head (śiraśchakra) - (one)

7. for the feet (pāda-padma)-(two)

8. to go round conch and dsicus - (two)

9. for the neck (kaṇṭha-sari)-(one)

10. garland known as uḷ-tāvada - (one)

11. garland known as vaijayanti - (one)

12. garland known as kalyāṇa-tomāla - (one)

13. garland known as śāligrāma-tomāla - (one)

14. big garland known as aḍi-tomāla - (one)

15. for the Lakshmi on the chest (vakshah-sthala) - (one)

16. for the sword (kaṭhāri)

17. for the bracelets and armlets - (eight)

18. to go round the right hand (vaikuṇṭha-hasta) - (four)

19. for the shoulders (bhuja-pada) - (two)

20. for the conch and discus - (two)

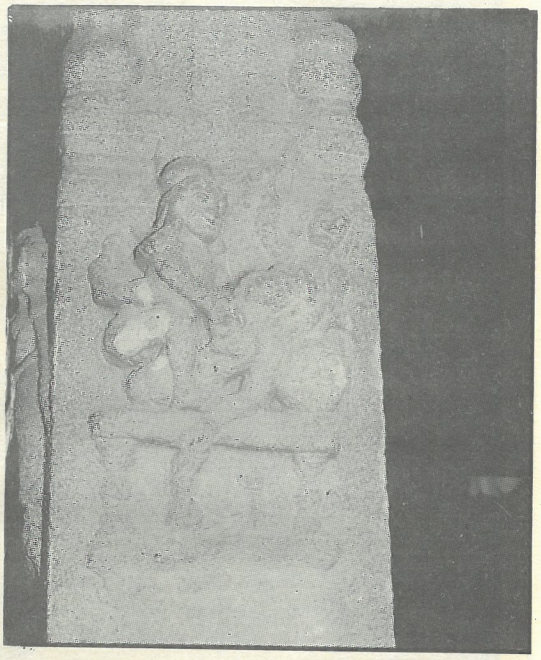
The incumbents of this service also prepare the flower-garlands for the other deities in the sanctum. As said earlier, the basket which contains these garlands (called pōṭṭam), will be collected by the Jīyaṅgār or ekāṅgi in the morning and taken to the sanctum. On Thursdays, during the pūlaṅgi-sevā, the Dhruva-bera will be covered with flower-garlands. For this service 22 kg 400 gms of flowers are used, and supplied to the sanctum from Yāmunat-turai. The incumbents in this service, who are all Śrī-vaishṇavas, will also recite the Tamiḷ prabandhas during worship sequences.

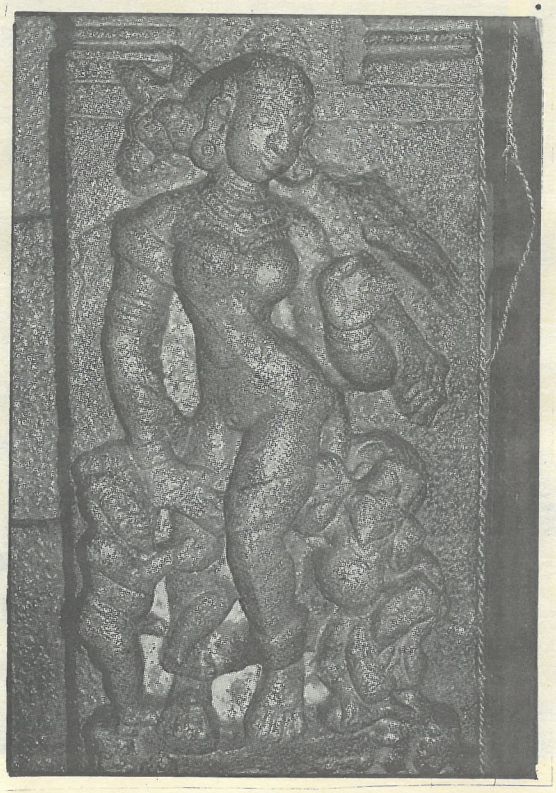
Besides these, the hill-shrine has a number of other employees to attend to several minor services like darji or tailor (to prepare and repair cloth-drapings, festoons and buntings for the ratha), tulasī-gumāsta (to collect and supply tulasī leaves), vādya-meḷa (pipers who play music early morning and in the evening, and during festivals), adhyāpaka (to recite prabandha during tomāla- sevā everyday), siddhānti (astrologer to fix auspicious time or muhūrta for processions and festivals), and so on.

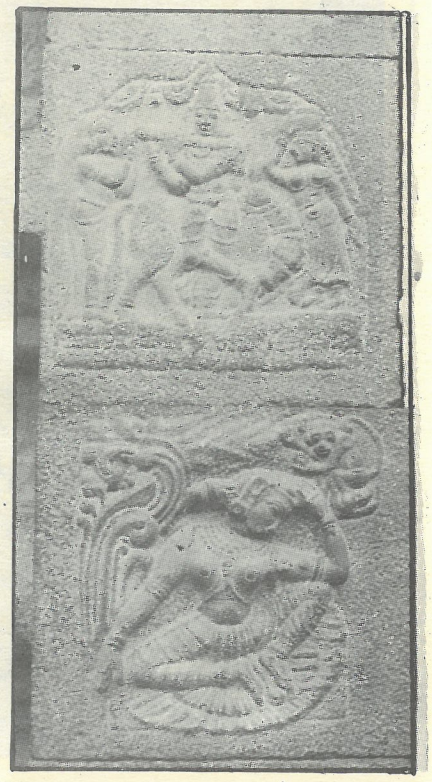
The temple-servant called Sannidhigolla is entrusted with the job of fetching the archaka and the jīyaṅgār, along with the keys of the Golden Doorway every morning, and to assist in cleaning up the premises of the main shrine before the Golden Doorway is thrown open to the devotees in the morning. He is also the watchman (kāvali) of the area of the hill-shrine outside the sanctum till the Golden Doorway. There is another watchman (kaikōḷa) to look after the area outside the Golden Doorway in the Vimāna-pradakshiṇa. The third watchman (from Māmaṇḍūr) guards the area in the Sampaṅgi- pradakshiṇa till the Main Gateway (Paḍi-kāvali).

Sculptures in the Hill-Shrine



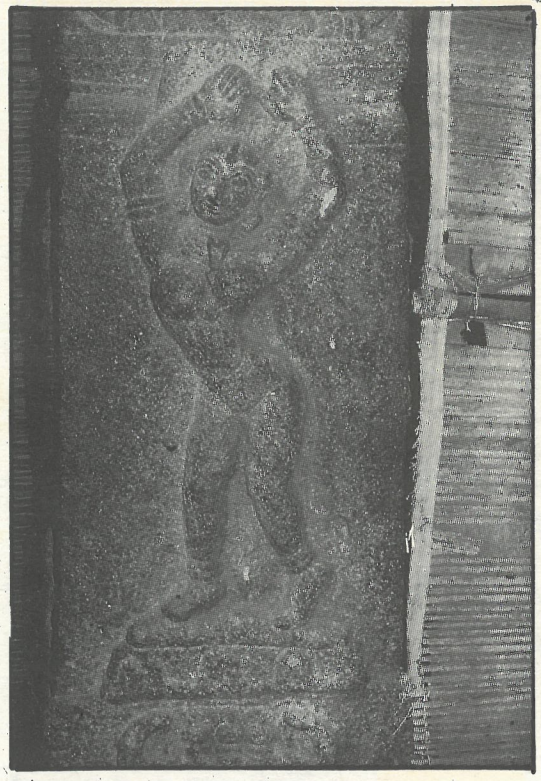
















Dancer on the pillar in the Narasiṁha-shrine (Vimāna-pradakshiṇa)



Rāma and Hanumān in Raṅga-maṇṭapa



Some sculptures on the pillars of the Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa and Tirumala-rāya-maṇṭapa showing musicians

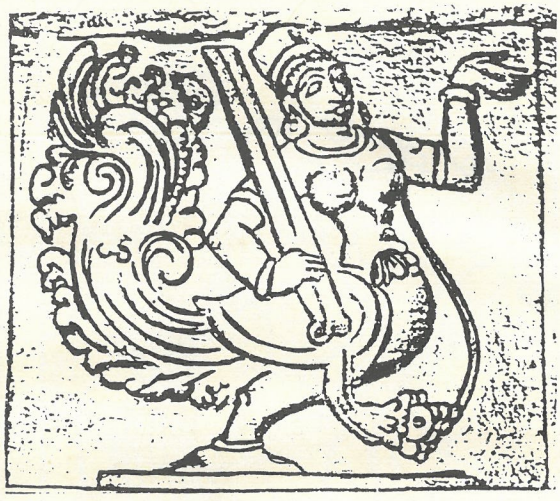






Sītā's message being received by Hanumān, sculptures in Kalyāṇa-maṇṭapa









Sculptural representations of Gandharvas and human musicians in the hill-shrine



Musicians in Narasimha-shrine (viman-pradakshina)



APPENDIX-I

The following is extracted from the Workstudy Project Report of the Defence Institute of Workstudy, Mussorie, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati, 1976.

(1)

The world-famous temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala is administered by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams through an Executive Officer. It attracts a large number of pilgrims and this influx has been on the increase due to the modern modes of transportation. It has been estimated that on an average 15,000 pilgrims come daily for Darsanam of the Lord. The temple management has introduced various darsanam fees for convenience of some of the pilgrims who do not want to wait longer. But for free darsanam, termed as sarvadarsanam, one has to wait on an average 8 hours on peak days. Pilgrims for free darsanam wait in the queue sheds and form a queue there. Then they walk a long distance of 1660 Ft. in the queue from queue sheds to the Deity.

Beginning with the "Suprabhatam" in the small hours of the morning when the Lord is woken up ceremoniously, the rituals continue late in the night when the proceedings are brought to an end with "EKANTHASEVA". During this period, a number of services (Sevas) and Pujas are done to the Diety. Besides, there are Sarvadarsanam (Free Darsanam), paid Darsanam and Arjitham Sevas (rituals conducted for those who pay for them).

The Naivaidyam (food prepared for the Lord), after it has been offered to the Lord, is distributed to the pilgrims, free of cost, as Prasadam. This is done just near the Bangaru Vakili, as the pilgrim comes out after Darsanam.

There exist four queue sheds, North West of the Temple from where the queues for free and paid Darsanam are regulated; pilgrims for paid darsanam getting priority over the others. The length of the present queue from the exit of queue sheds to the deity is approximately 1644 Ft. There are four queue sheds, each capable of accommodating about 1,200 people. On an average, each shed is filled and cleared twice a day, thus roughly 10,000 people are handled in the existing queue system at a time.

(2)

Executive Officer is the head of the Devasthanams administration with a work force of over 4,000. Directly under him is the Deputy Executive

Officer. The Chief Accounts Officer is responsible for maintenance of all accounts, pay and allowances etc. The P.A. (General) to the Executive Officer deals with all temple matters of general nature (maintenance, supplies etc). The P.A. (Estt.). to Executive Officer deals with all extablishment matters. The Education Officer deals with the correspondence relating to all educational institutions belonging to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, all over India. The Inspection Officer carries out periodic inspection of all T.T.D. institutions and is responsible for furniture, utensils etc., held in these places. There are three Reception Officers, two for Tirumala and one for Tirupati. They look after the accommodation, reception, catering etc., Vigilance staff ensures the security of the temple and other T.T.D. units. Peishkar holds a key appointment in the organisation. He is responsible for the entire temple administration.

Peishkar is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the temple and control of the queue in the queue sheds as well as inside the temple. He makes out the daily programmes for the temple in consultation with the Archakas, controls the sales of Prasadam and Arjitham Seva tickets, conducts V.I.Ps. around when they visit and holds custody of all the temple Jewellery. He has under him eight Superintendents. One among whom is designated Parupathyadar who is considered as the Deputy to the Peishkar in the heirarchy. Of the 7 Superintendents, 5 work inside the temple precincts and 2 in the queue sheds.

The four queue sheds are controlled by the 2 Superintendents with 3 Inspectors under them. Each of the Inspector has 6 Peons and one helper. The Superintendents work in two shifts whereas the staff works in 3 shifts.

Inside the temple the queue is controlled collectively by a Padikavali Clerk, a temple Inspector and a queue Inspector in each shift. Each of them has 3 Peons at his disposal. In addition, some vigilance staff are also posted inside the temple to help regulate the queue as well as to check pilferage by the Sweepers etc.

(3)

The daily proceedings followed in the temple are briefly described below.

(a) Preparations (0230-0300): These are made after opening the temple doors at 0230 when priests congregate in Tirumamani-mantapa for a ceremony called "Suprabatham" or waking up of the Lord.

(b) Suprabhatam (0300 to 0330): 29 Slokas are chanted to awaken the Lord and to invoke his blessing.

(c) Viswarupa Sarvadarsanam (0330 to 0530): Pilgrims are allowed Darsanam of the Lord without any payment.

(d) Suddhi (0530 to 0600): The priests do the cleaning of the Sanctum Sanctorum and the vessels.

(e) Thomala Seva (0600 to 0700): The Deity is decorated with flowers. This is an Ajitham or paid Seva. As the number of devotees that can be accommodated in the area from Sayana Mandapam to the Garuda Koil is limited, only restricted number of tickets are sold. The ticket-holders are allowed to sit and watch the service in progress which takes 10 to 15 minutes. The devotees who are watching the Seva have Darsanam of Lord from close quarters (Sayana mandapam). After they have left, a limited number of devotees are allowed Darsanam of the Lord, (after Thomala Seva) for which a fee is charged. A maximum of 200 devotees are sold these tickets in the queue sheds.

(f) Koluvu and Panchangasravanam (0700 to 0730): The Koluvu Murthy which is kept in the Sanctum Sanctorum is brought to Tirumamanimantapa and placed on a throne where the Lord holds his court. Previous days collections from the Hundi etc., are then read out. It is what we may call presentation of accounts to the Lord. The calender (almanac) is also read out.

(g) First Archana (0730 to 0830): Sahasranama (Thousand names) of the Lord are recited. This is also Arjitham or paid service. After payment of required fees, devotees can sit and observe when the service is being conducted. Those who have paid for Thomala Seva can be present and this number again is the same that can be accommodated in the area between Sayanmandapam and Garuda Koil. The devotees who watch this seva then have darsanam of the Lord from close quarters (Sayana Mandapam). After they have left, a limited number of devotees are allowed for Darsanam of the Lord, (after Archana) for which a fees is charged. A maximum of 200 devotees are sold thse tickets in the queue sheds.

(h) First bell, Bali and Sathumorai (0830 to 0900): The Sayana Mandapam is cleaned, cooked food is brought there in vessels as Naivedyam (Prasadam), the door is closed and bells in the Garuda Koil rung. Only Archakas (priests) are present in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The Naivedyam is offered to the Lord with chanting of mantras. The door is then opened and the Jeeangar (Senior priest) leads 10 to 15 Srivaishnavas in front of the Lord for receiving of Prasadam. This ceremony is called Sathumorai. While this ceremony is on, the temple employees make queue arrangements for the Sarvadarsanam (Free darsanam). The Paricharikas set up Prasadam counter in the Garuda (Free darsanam). The Paricharikas set up Prasadam counter in the Garuda Koil.

(i) Sarvadarsanam (0900 to 1200): Free Darsanam of the Lord is available to pilgrims waiting in the queue sheds. Free Prasadam is also distributed to them after they have had the Darsanam.

(j) 2nd Archana and 2nd bell (1200 to 1300): This ceremony is similar to the one in the morning except that no devotees are allowed for Archana.

(k) Sarvadarsanam (1300 to 1900): Free Darsanam of the Lord is again available to the pilgrims. Free Prasadam is also distributed.

(l) Suddhi (1900 to 1930): The Sanctum Sanctorum etc., is cleaned. The surrounding temple area is also cleaned at this time.

(m) Night Kainkaryams and Night bell (1930 to 2030): Divine services for the Lord are conducted and Naivedyam is offered to the Lord.

(n) Sarvadarsanam (2030 to 2300): Free Darsanam of the Lord is again available to the pilgrims. Normally no Prasadam is distributed as available prasadam is already over by this time.

(o) Preparations for Ekanthaseva (2300 to 2330): This Seva involves putting the Lord to bed. A velvet bed is a spread on a swing in the Sayana Mandapam for this purpose.

(p) Ekanthaseva (2330 to 0030): Songs are sung or instruments played while Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy is put to bed. This is also an Arjitham Seva or a paid service. After payment of the required fees, devotees can sit and watch the service. Those who have paid for Amantranotsava and Brahmotsava also can be present. The number is however, restricted. After these devotees have left, a limited number of devotees are allowed for Darsanam of the Lord, (after Ekanthaseva) for which fees are charged.

It is not always that the laid down timings are followed strictly and more often than not, the entire programme gets delayed. The temple authorities however ensure that all pilgrims admitted in the queue get an opportunity to have Darsanam even at the cost of delaying Ekanthaseva. At times the temple has to be closed at 0130 or even 0200 hours. The proceedings described above are subject to modifications as occasions demand such as special festivals. the programme is the same for Monday, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday in Summer months which are considered as peak periods for influx of pilgrims. There are certain changes in the programme on Wednesday, Thursdays and Fridays due to certain special services. In Winter, further changes are effected to the programmes.

On Wednesdays, due to Sahasra Kalasabhishekam, when the Lord is given bath with one thousand pots of water to the accompaniment of mantras there is a change in the normal programme. The Abhishekam is conducted in the Garuda Koil for which preparations are made from 9 A.M. to 10 A.M. and the Abhishekam is done between 10 A.M. and 12 noon. Rest of the programme remains unchanged. This is paid Seva.

On Thursday due to Tiruppavada when special prasadam of rice is

cooked in a particular manner and offered to the Lord, there is again a change in normal programme. The preparations are made from 9 A.M. and offering is completed by 11 A.M. This also is a paid Seva. In the evening instead of the normal programme, the Lord is decorated with flowers. This is known as Poolangi Samarpana and is conducted between 7.30 P.M. and 9 P.M. The devotees can have the Darsanam of the Lord, thus decorated from 9 P.M. to 11 P.M. for which fees is charged. The days proceeding conclude with the Ekanthaseva already described earlier.

On Fridays, due to Abhishekam, the programme is different after Suprabhatham and Sarvadarsanam which finished at 4-30 A.M. Time between 4-30 A.M. to 7-30 A.M. is devoted to Sallimpu and Nithyakatla Kainkaryams, Abhishekam is done to the main Deity from 7 A.M. to 9 A.M. During the Abhishekam, devotees can be present by paying. Devotees can have darsanam after the Abhishekam, for which charged. This Darsanam continues from 9 A.M. to 11 A.M. from 11 A.M.-to 1 P.M. The deity is dressed up and decorated. This is known as Samarpana. A private Thomala Seva and Archana is offered between 1 P.M. and 3 P.M. During this period Naivedyam is also offered to the Lord and Sathumorai described earlier is conducted. Sarvadarsanam commences at 3 P.M. Rest of the programme remains as on other days.

(4)

Cooked food is offered to the Lord daily as "Naivedyam" and is distributed to pilgrims as Prasadam after they had darsanam of the Lord. Normally four types of Prasadams are distributed. Tamarind rice (Pulihora) Cooked rice and dal (Kichadi), cooked rice with Curd and cooked rice with Jaggery. Only one type of Prasadam is given to a pilgrim. The distribution is done in the Garuda Koil. A paricharika (Brahmin who distributes prasadam) and his helper are entrusted with this task. Three to four prasadam vessels are kept on the ground behind a counter and one vessel is kept on the counter. The helper hands over a "donna" (improvised cup made out of plantain leaf) or an open leaf as soon as a pilgrim emergres out of the Golden door (Bangaru Vakili).

The paricharaka takes a large spoonful of prasadam and serves it to the pilgrim who has already been given either a "donna" or a leaf for receiving it. At times he serves the prasadam with his hand. The pilgrim then leaves the Garuda Koil from the side exit. As soon as the vessel on the counter is empty, the Paricharika replaces it with a filled vessel from the ground. The empty vessels on the ground are replaced periodically for the purpose. Some pilgrims eat the prasadam immediately and throw the used leaves donas in the baskets provided for the purpose. They then complete the Pradakshinam make their offering in

the Hundi and drink water if required at the taps provided just near the Silver Door before going out to the Dwajasthambam. Some of the Pilgrims carry the Prasadam with them instead of eating it there itself. Prasadam cooked for the day normally finishes by 7 p.m. and pilgrims having Darsanam after this time do not get any prasadam.

(5)

The daily routine in the temple would be as follows:

(During SUMMER)

I.(Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays & Tuesdays):

3-00 A.M. to 3-30 A.M	...	Suprabatham.
3-30 A.M. to 5-30 A.M	...	*Viswarupa Sarva Darsanam.*
5-30 A.M. to 6-00 A.M	...	Sudhi.
6-00 A.M. to 7-00 A.M	...	Thomalaseva.
7-00 A.M. to 7-30 A.M	...	Koluvu and Panchanga-Sravanam at Bangaru Vakili.
7-30 A.M. to 8-30 A.M	...	Ist Archana.
8-30 A.M. to 9-00 A.M	...	Ist Bell, Bali and Sathumurai.
9-00 A.M. to 12-00 Noon	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
12-00 Noon to 1-00 P.M	...	2nd Archana (Ekantham) and 2nd Bell.
1-00 P.M. to 7-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
7-00 P.M. to 7-30 P.M	...	Sudhi.
7-30 P.M. to 8-30 P.M	...	Night Kainkaryam & Night bell.
8-30 P.M. to 11-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
11-30 P.M	...	Ekanthaseva.

II.Wednesday due to Sahasrakalasabhishekam:

3-00 A.M. to 3-30 A.M	...	Suprabhatham.
3-30 A.M. to 5-30 A.M	...	*Viswarupa Sarvadarsanam.*
5-30 A.M. to 6-00 A.M	...	Sudhi etc.,
6-00 A.M. to 7-00 A.M	...	Thomalaseva.

7-00 A.M. to 7-30 A.M	...	Koluvu and Panchanga-Sravanam at Bangaru Vakili.
7-30 A.M. to 8-30 A.M	...	Ist Archana.
8-30 A.M. to 9-00 A.M	...	Ist Bell, and Sathumorai.
9-00 A.M. to 10-00 A.M	...	Preparations for Sahasrakalas abhishekam.
10-00 A.M. to 12-00 Noon	...	*Sahasrakalasabhishekam.*
12-00 Noon to 1-00 P.M	...	2nd Archana (Ekantham) & 2nd Bell.
1-00 P.M. to 7-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
7-00 P.M. to 7-30 P.M	...	Sudhi etc.,
7-30 P.M. to 8-30 P.M	...	Night Kainkaryam & Night Bell.
8-30 P.M. to 11-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
11-30 P.M	...	Ekanthaseva.

III Thursdays due to Tiruppavada:

3-00 A.M. to 3-30 A.M	...	Suprabatham.
3-30 A.M. to 5-30 A.M	...	*Viswarupa Sarvadarsanam.*
5-30 A.M. to 6-00 A.M	...	Sudhi etc.,
6-00 A.M. to 7-00 A.M	...	Thomalaseva.
7-00 A.M. to 7-30 A.M	...	Koluvu and Panchangasravanam at Bangaru Vakili.
7-30 A.M. to 8-30 A.M	...	Ist Archana.
8-30 A.M. to 9-00 A.M	...	Ist bell, Bali and Sathumorai.
9-00 A.M. to 11-00 A.M	...	Sallimpu, 2nd Archana (Ekantham). Tiruppavada Alankaram, Bell etc.,
11-00 A.M. to 7-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
7-00 P.M. to 7-30 P.M.	...	Sudhi etc.,
7-30 P.M. to 9-00 P.M	...	Poolangi Samarpana.
9-00 P.M. to 11.00 P.M	...	Poolangi Seva (Arjitham).
11-30 P.M	...	Ekanthaseva.

IV. Friday due to Abishekam:

3-00 A.M. to 3-30 A.M	...	Suprabatham.
3-30 A.M. to 4-30 A.M	...	*Viswarupa Sarvadarsanam.*
4-30 A.M. to 7-00 A.M	...	Sallipu and Nithyakatla Kainkaryams (Ekantham).
7-00 A.M. to 9-00 A.M	...	Abhishekam (Arjitham).
9-00 A.M. to 11-00 A.M	...	Abhishekanthara Darsanam (Arjitham).
11-00 A.M. to 1-00 P.M	...	Samarpana.
1-00 P.M. to 3-00 P.M	...	Thomalaseva & Archana (Private), Bell, Bali and Sathumorai.
3-00 P.M. to 7-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
7-00 P.M. to 7-30 P.M	...	Sudhi etc.,
7-30 P.M. to 8-30 P.M	...	Night Kainkaryams & Night Bell.
8-30 P.M. to 11-00 P.M	...	*Sarvadarsanam.*
11-30 P.M	...	Ekanthaseva.

APPENDIX II

The list of one hundred and eight names of the hill God used during the worship in the sanctum every day has been taken from Varāha-purāna (1, 39). It is reproduced below.

प्राक्कथनम्।।

श्रीवेंकटेशाष्टोत्तरशतनामावलिः।।

(वराहपुराणे प्रथमे भागे २१तमेऽध्याये)

अस्ति किञ्चिन्महागोप्यं भगवत्प्रीतिकारकम्।
पुरा शेषेण कथितं कपिलाय महात्मने।।
नाम्नामष्टशतं पुण्यं पवित्रं पापनाशनम्।
आदाय हेमपद्मानि स्वर्णदीसम्भवानि च।।
ब्रह्म तु पूर्वमभ्यर्च्य श्रीमद्वेंकटनायकम्।
अष्टोत्तरशतैर्दिव्यैर्नामाभिर्मुनिपूजितैः।।
स्वाभीष्टं लब्धवान् ब्रह्मा सर्वलोकपितामहः।
भवद्भिरपि पद्मैश्च समर्च्यस्तैश्च नामभिः।।
तेषां शेषनगाधीशमानसोल्लासकारिणाम्।
नाम्नामष्टशतं वक्ष्ये वेंकटाद्रिनिवासिनः।।
आयुरारोग्यदं पुंसां धनधान्यसुखप्रदम्।
ज्ञानप्रदं विशेषेण महदैश्वर्यकारकम्।।
अर्चयेन्नामभिर्दिव्यैः वेंकटेशपदांकितैः।
नाम्नामष्टशतस्यास्य ऋषिर्ब्रह्मा प्रकीर्तितः।।
छन्दोनुष्टुप्तथा देवो वेंकटेश उदाहृतः।
नीलगोक्षीरसम्भूतो बीजमित्युच्यते बुधैः।।
श्रीनिवासस्तथा शक्तिः हृदयं वेंकटाधिपः।
विनियोगस्तथाभीष्टसिद्ध्यर्थे च निगद्यते।।

नामावलिः।।

ओं नमो वेंकटेशाय शेषाद्रिनिलयाय च।
वृषद्दग्गेचरायाथ विष्णवे सततं नमः।।१।।
सदञ्जनगिरीशाय वृषाद्रिपतये नमः।
मेरुपुत्रगिरीशाय सरः स्वामितटीजुषे।
कुमाराकल्पसेव्याय वज्रिद्दग्विषयाय च।।२।।
सुवर्चलासुतन्यस्तसैनापत्यभराय च।
रामाय पद्मनाभाय सदा वायुस्तुताय च।।३।।
त्यक्तवैकुण्ठलोकाय गिरिकुञ्जविहारिणे।
हरिचन्दनगोत्रेन्द्रस्वामिने सततं नमः।।४।।
शंखराजन्यनेत्राब्जविषयाय नमो नमः।
वसूपरिचरत्रात्रे कृष्णाय सततं नमः।।५।।
अब्धिकन्यापरिष्वक्तवक्षसे वेंकटाय च।
सनकादिमहायोगिपूजिताय नमो नमः।।६।।
देवजित्प्रमुखानन्तदैत्यसंघप्रणाशिने।
श्वेतद्वीपवसन्मुक्तपूजितांघ्रियुगाय च।।७।।
शेषपर्वतरूपत्व प्रकाशनपराय च।
सानुस्थापिततार्क्ष्याय तार्क्ष्याचलवासिने।।८।।
मायागूढविमानाय गरुडस्कन्धवासिने।
अनन्तशिरसे नित्यमनन्ताक्षाय ते नमः।।९।।
अनन्तचरणायाथ शैलनिलयाय च।
दामोदराय ते नित्यं नीलमेघनिभाय च।।१०।।

ब्रह्मादिदेवदुर्दर्शविश्वरूपाय ते नमः।
वैकुण्ठागतसद्धेमविमानान्तर्गताय च॥११॥
अगस्त्याभ्यर्थिताशेषजनदृग्गोचराय च।
वासुदेवाय हरये तीर्थपञ्चकवासिने॥१२॥
वामदेवप्रियायाथ जनकेष्टप्रदाय च।
मार्कण्डेयमहातीर्थजातपुण्यप्रदाय च॥१३॥
वाक्पतिब्रह्मदात्रे च चन्द्रलावण्यदायिने।
नारायणनगेशाय ब्रह्मकलृप्तोत्सवाय च॥१४॥
शंखचक्रवरानम्रलसत्करतलाय च।
द्रवन्मृगमदासक्तविग्रहाय नमो नमः॥१५॥
केशवाय नमो नित्यं नित्ययौवनमूर्तये।
अर्थितार्थप्रदात्रे च विश्वतीर्थाघहारिणे॥१६॥
तीर्थस्वामिसरः स्नातजनाभीष्टप्रदायिने।
कुमारधारिकावासस्कन्दाभीष्टप्रदाय च॥१७॥
जानुदघ्नसमुद्भूतपोत्रिणे कूर्ममूर्तये।
किन्नरद्वन्द्वशापान्तप्रदात्रे विभवे नमः॥१८॥
वैखानसमुनिश्रेष्ठपूजिताय नमो नमः।
सिंहाचल निवासाय श्रीमन्नारायणाय च॥१९॥
सद्भक्तनीलकण्ठार्च्यनृसिंहाय नमो नमः।
कुमुदाक्षगणश्रेष्ठसैनापत्यप्रदाय च॥२०॥
दुर्मेधःप्राणहंत्रे च श्रीधराय नमो नमः।
क्षत्रियान्तकरामाय मत्स्यरूपाय ते नमः॥२१॥
पाण्डवारिप्रहर्त्रे च श्रीकराय नमो नमः।
उपत्यकाप्रदेशस्थशंकरध्यातमूर्तये॥२२॥
रुक्माब्जसरसीकूललक्ष्मीकृततपस्विने।
लसल्लक्ष्मीकराम्भोजदत्तकल्हारकस्रजे॥२३॥
सालग्रामनिवासाय शुकदृग्गोचराय च।
नारायणार्थिताशेष जनदृग्विषयाय च॥२४॥
मृगयारसिकायाथ वृषभासुरहारिणे।
अञ्जनागोत्रपतये वृषभाचलवासिने॥२५॥
अञ्जनासुतदात्रे च माधवीयाघहरिणे।
प्रियंगुप्रियभक्षाय श्वेतकोलवराय च॥२६॥
नीलधेनुपयोधारासेकदेहोद्भवाय च।
शंकरप्रियमित्राय चोलपुत्रप्रियाय च॥२७॥
सुधर्मिणीसुचैतन्यप्रदात्रे मधुघातिने।
कृष्णारव्यविप्रवेदान्तदेशिकत्वप्रदाय च॥२८॥
वराहाचलनाथाय बलभद्राय ते नमः।
त्रिविक्रमाय महते हृषीकेशाय ते नमः॥२९॥
अच्युताय नमो नित्यं नीलाद्रिनिलयाय च।
नमः क्षीराब्धिनाथाय वैकुण्ठाचलवासिने॥३०॥
मुकुन्दाय नमो नित्यमनन्ताय नमो नमः।
विरिञ्चाभ्यर्थितानीतसौम्यरूपाय ते नमः॥३१॥
सुवर्णमुखरीस्नातमनुजाभीष्टदायिने।
हलायुधजगत्तीर्थसमस्तफलदायिने।
गोविन्दाय नमो नित्यं श्रीनिवासाय ते नमः॥३२॥

फलोक्तिः॥

अष्टोत्तरशतं नाम्नां चतुर्थ्या नमसान्वितम्।
यः पठेच्छृणुयान्नित्यं श्रद्धाभक्तिसमन्वितः।
तस्य श्रीवेंकटेशस्तु प्रसन्नो भवति ध्रुवम्॥